

Puma Prints

Northtown Academy Newspaper

SEPTEMBER 2026

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

DID YOU MISS US? 'CAUSE WE MISSED YOU!

If you are interested in contributing articles, stories,
or anything creative for our monthly newspaper,
reach out to our Editors-in-Chief

Alissa M.

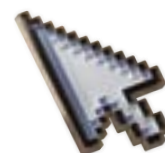
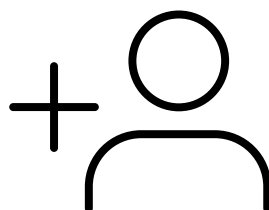
Carina B.

or Mrs. Rosario

for any inquiries/questions.

All emails can be found on the last page of the
newspaper.

MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW @nta.journalism ON
INSTAGRAM TO STAY UPDATED!



SENIOR BABY PHOTOS



Seniors! Make sure you email a baby photo to Mrs. Rosario (krosario@cicsnorthtown.org) to be featured in this years' yearbook!



SPORTS

SENIOR NIGHT: GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL

Chicago - Written by Viriana Lugarda, Student Journalist
September 30, 2026

The NTA girls flag football gave the seniors a night to remember earning a 6-0 victory against Intrinsic High School on the Pumas Senior Night.

With the excitement of the Senior Night surrounding the team, NTA came into the game focused and ready to compete. From the opening whistle, the girls showed strong team work, determination, and defensive discipline.

NTA's defense was a difference maker throughout the game, holding Intrinsic scoreless and protecting the lead until the final whistle. A lone touchdown gave NTA all the points it needed as the team battled through the game and maintained its 6-0 advantage.

For the seniors, the victory made an already special night even more memorable. Senior Night provided an opportunity to recognize the players who have contributed their time, energy, and leadership to the program.

As the final whistle sounded, NTA celebrated not only their 6-0 win but also the seniors and their teammate Viriana L. (side tackler on offense) by making her birthday special as everyone gathered to sing Happy Birthday. Shoutout to the seniors Hiliana R. and Niyah S. They have shaped the team. The victory served as a fitting way to honor them and close out their Senior Night with a memorable win.



INTERVIEW WITH MR. TOMLINSON

Chicago - Written by Lucia Aranda Suqui, Northtown Journalist
September 30, 2026

Q: What or who inspired you to become a volleyball coach at our school? Why?

A: I have always wanted to coach. Even when I was in high school, I wanted to coach basketball. My first job out of college was coaching elementary basketball for boys, and I really enjoyed it. When I got to Northtown, I switched to volleyball because it was easier for students to learn. After COVID, the varsity girls' head coach left, so I asked if I could coach both the boys and girls teams. They said yes, and I have been doing it for the past five years.

Q: Are you proud of how hard your volleyball teams work?

A: Yes, it is a joy for me. Other teachers often tell me that I have a good group of students because they work really hard. I am proud that they work hard both on and off the court. A lot of my players have gone on to receive scholarships or attend four-year colleges because they do well in school and enjoy being students.

Q: How do you build trust and teamwork among players with different personalities?

A: You have to understand that people are different. Everyone has different backgrounds, cultures, personalities, and ways of learning. I try to communicate clearly and understand how each person learns best. When you take care of everyone individually, it brings the whole team together.

Q: What do you want your players to learn from volleyball that goes beyond winning?

A: I do not want to focus only on wins and losses. The girls are learning how to work with each other, and that will help them beyond volleyball. In college, jobs, and friendships, they will always have to work with other people. Volleyball teaches them how to communicate and solve problems in high-pressure situations.

Q: Is there a moment as a coach that made you especially proud of your players? What happened?

A: One of the most important moments for me is after the season when players still want to come back and play during open gym. That shows me that they enjoyed the atmosphere. I want my players to learn, but I also want them to enjoy playing volleyball and want to come back.

Q: If you could change or improve one thing about volleyball at our school, what would it be and why?

A: I wish we had more money to help players participate in volleyball clubs during the off season. Club volleyball can be very expensive, and many families cannot afford it. If more players could play year-round, it would help our teams become even better.

Q: Looking back, what is one thing you are most proud of from your time coaching and teaching at Northtown?

A: I am most proud of having good relationships with my students and players. When you have a good relationship with someone: they want to be there, and they want to try. Over the past ten years at Northtown, I have built relationships with many different types of students and players, and I am proud that they enjoy being in my classroom and on my teams.



Mr. Tomlinson on Adam Sandler Day



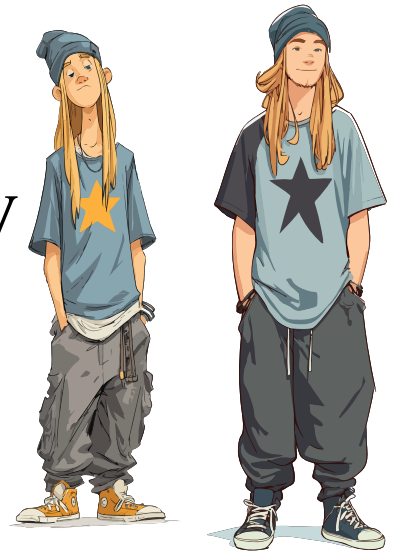
Homecoming Spirit Week!

9/28 - 10/2

Monday: PJ Day



Tuesday: Twin Day

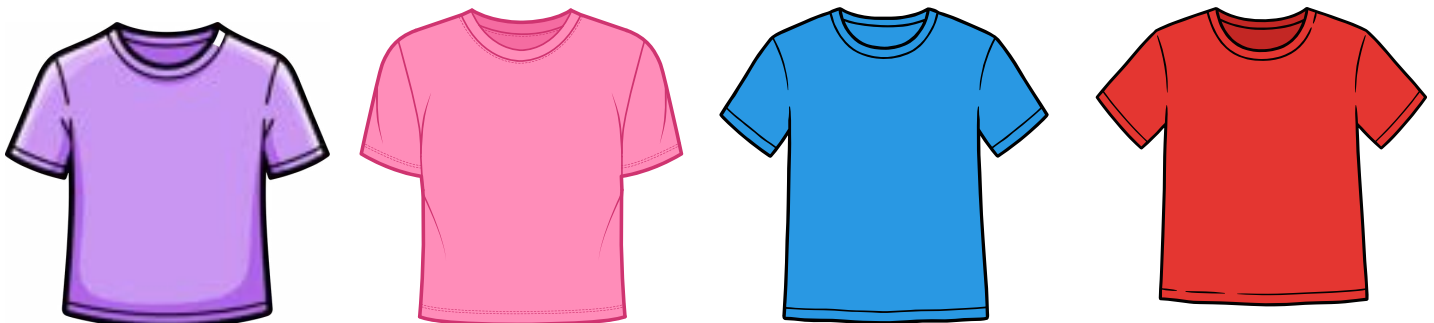


Wednesday: Adam Sandler Day



Thursday: Jersey Day

Friday: Color Clash



Q&A WITH MR. WILLERT!

Written by Sofia Patino and Brittany Navarrete, Northtown Journalists, September 29, 2026

Mr. Willert is a Northtown science teacher who enjoys running. We caught up with him during Spirit Week.

Q. Who informed you about NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) and what is it?

A. Mr. Strybel informed us about eight or nine years ago. They were the next set of standards that were coming through for science.

Q. Why did you decide to switch to a high school science teacher and not stick with middle school?

A. Middle school was a little bit challenging in terms of the age of the students, the maturity of the students, and the role in where they were in middle school, being the top of the food chain. High school science, especially with the ninth graders, they're just coming in, starting fresh at a new school. I enjoy working with those students.

Q. Are you still a runner and is it a hobby you do during your free time?

A. Not running completely, but I do six 5Ks every year.

Q. What is one lesson/activity your past students have really enjoyed?

A. The roller coaster activity is always a good one and last year, we were able to do an egg drop experiment too, which I think students enjoy each time we do it.

Q. What did you major in at university?

A. Biology is my undergrad, and my masters is in teaching.

Q. Have you always thought about being a teacher or was there something else?

A. No, my plan was to go to dental school, and then I took organic chemistry, and I hated it. I was in the workforce for about 3 or 4 years after working in a pharmacy in a hospital because I wanted to stay in the sciences in some way. Lots of people in my family are teachers and eventually came around that teaching was the best path for me.

Q. What is your favorite part of teaching science?

A. I think now with physics is really being able to do different activities that connect to some sort of aspect in the real world. I know sometimes it's difficult to make a connection of why you're learning something or what we have now is that there's plenty of opportunities to be able to compare it to many different things.

Q. What are the kinds of students you have encountered over the last nine years?

A. All over the place! Some that are complete rock stars that excel in anything that they do, to students that need that extra push on activities but eventually get there. Some students who you just can't make that connection with and just kind of float through the year.

Q. At what point in your life did you realize you wanted to become a teacher?

A. I started going back to school around 25 and it was at that point where I didn't really have a direction and the other thing that I was doing. And so enough conversations with my family kind of just led me back to going the route of teaching.



Mr. Willert on Pajama Day, September 28, 2026



LEVI MACK

Mack gets ready for another basketball season

Written by Saad Patel, Student Reporter

September 30, 2026

Levi Mack is getting ready for another basketball season at Northtown Academy. After playing on the JV team as a freshman, Levi is going into his sophomore year hoping to improve his game and become a bigger part of the team. Last year was Levi's first year playing high school basketball. One of the biggest things he had to get used to was how much faster and more physical the game was compared to middle school.

"The biggest adjustment was definitely the speed and physical intensity of the game," Levi said. "You have much less time to make decisions on the court, so your IQ and reaction time have to be much faster."

One of Levi's favorite memories from last season was a comeback win against a tough rival. Northtown was behind during the game, but the team's defense helped them come back. Levi said the energy in the gym made the moment even more exciting.

Another moment that helped Levi become more confident was during a close game in the middle of the season. He came off the bench and made some important defensive plays and baskets in the fourth quarter. This helped him realize that he could make a difference during important moments.

During the offseason, Mack worked on getting stronger and improving his basketball skills. He spent more time in the weight room, worked on his ball handling, and practiced his shooting to become more consistent.

"I feel my biggest growth has been in my defensive footwork and court vision," Mack said. "I'm able to read plays earlier, disrupt passing lanes, and set up my teammates better on transition." This season, Mack wants to become a key player for his team. His personal goals are to improve his shooting, contribute on both offense and defense, and become a better leader.

Mack and his teammates also have goals for the season. They want to build better chemistry, hold each other accountable, play good defense, and compete for a conference championship.

Going into his sophomore year, Mack feels more comfortable on the court than he did as a freshman.

"It feels completely different," Mack said. "As a freshman, everything felt fast and high-stakes, but as a sophomore, the game has slowed down, and I feel much more locked in and composed." Mack has also built a better relationship with his teammates and coaches. He said there is more trust between everyone, and his coaches now expect more from him. His teammates also know they can count on him to do his job on the court.

For younger players who want to make the JV team, Mack believes that working hard is one of the most important things. "Focus on defense, hustle, and coachability," Mack said. "Shots won't always go in, but if you work hard on defense and communicate on the court, coaches will notice you immediately." One lesson Mack learned from his freshman season is not to worry too much about mistakes.

"Never dwell on a bad play or missed shot," Mack said. "Basketball is a game of quick transitions, so staying mentally locked in on the next possession is what separates good players from great ones." As Mack starts his sophomore season, he hopes to keep improving and help Northtown have a successful year. He also has a message for the students and fans who come to the games. "Bring the loudest energy possible to every single home game!" Mack said. "Having a packed home crowd behind us gives us huge momentum and makes Northtown a tough place for anyone to play."



YOUR STORY IS NOT DONE; YOU ARE A VITAL ONE

Written By Dhani Patel, Student Journalist



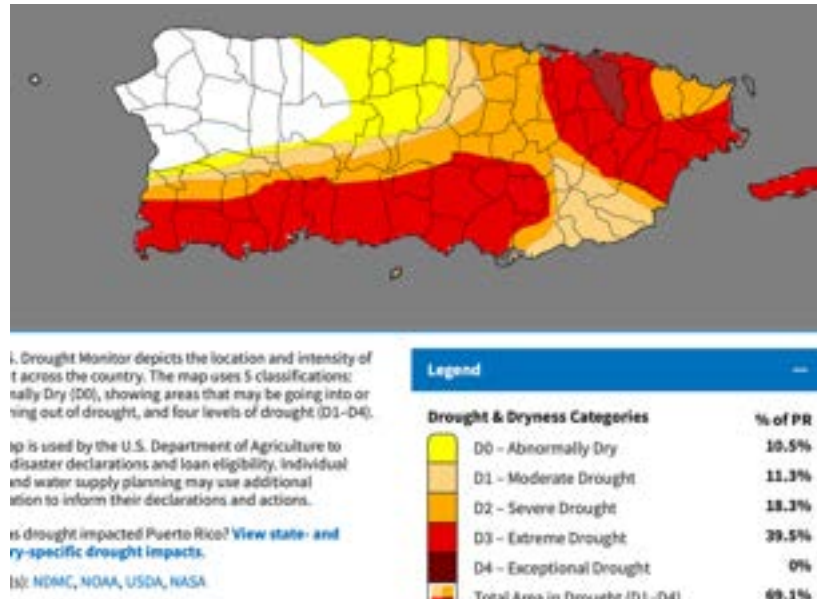
According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been an estimated 49,000 suicide deaths in 2025. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death among people ages 10-34. Some warning signs are isolation, inability to do daily tasks, statements about wanting to depart, talking about ending themselves, etc. To think how many lives of people around our age or even younger than us were gone brings more heartache than any physical pain.

I did not even know children who were younger than us – children who never got the chance to experience life – were gone too soon. Every life that is lost brings pain to their family, friends, spouses, and any other people around them. This was not just a life but a story that finally wrote its last chapter. Each story is an essential part of this world, as it can influence our lives, whether it is big or small. So far, I have not made a big impact on the world, but to some people, I changed their stories, and they made me realize my story is not over, but it is just beginning. This cause is not forever, as every voice can slowly help someone who is struggling. One talk, one conversation, and one voice can change the perspective of anyone's life. When a person puts themselves out there and is willing to talk, it makes you feel more carefree than a bird.

If you or anyone you know is suffering from suicidal thoughts or going through a rough time, please call or text 988. They will be available to you 24/7, and they will help you see the light of life. Remember, your story does not have to end at the last chapter of your life; it's a vital one.

PUERTO RICO'S WATER CRISIS

Written by Alissa Malagon
Political /World Event(s) Reporter
12 September 2026



(Original photo can be found with color on drought.gov)

Puerto Rico has weathered many droughts before, but none quite like this one. Across the island, Puerto Ricans are going without water, one of the most basic necessities of life. That means no showers, no brushing teeth, no cooking, and no way to keep homes clean. For more than half a million people in the San Juan metro area alone, the taps run only every other 48 hours under a rationing schedule the island's water authority put in place in early August.

The crisis is partly a weather story. July 2026 was the driest month in Puerto Rico in over 120 years of records, paired with record-breaking heat. By late August, roughly three-quarters of the island was experiencing at least moderate drought, with zones of extreme drought spreading. The governor declared a state of emergency for more than two dozen cities and towns, and the U.S. government issued a drought disaster declaration.

But the water crisis is not only about the weather and that's the part that frustrates residents most. The island's Water and Sewage Authority estimates that about 60% of water is lost through old, broken pipes and failing infrastructure. Hydrologist Amira Odeh puts it starkly: the amount of water lost through leaky pipes equals about three lakes. "While people are suffering from scarcity," she says, "the government is talking about just mitigating the crisis right now. But they are still not talking about solving the crisis from the root, fixing the broken infrastructure."

The human cost shows up in daily life. At Residencial Luis Lloréns Torres, Puerto Rico's largest public housing project, residents depend on government-installed cisterns and water trucks. Aida Luz Peña, who lives on the third floor, says water rarely reaches her, and she still gets a bill. "They've left us without water, yet we still get the bill," she says. "Charge us for what we actually use when the water is on".

Many residents argue this crisis was preventable. "This isn't a question of today or the day before yesterday," says community leader Erwin González. "This is something that you could have been working on and repaired with anticipation years ago, government after government." Scientists warn the situation will only grow harder to manage as climate change brings hotter temperatures, faster evaporation, and longer, more intense droughts to the Caribbean.

For now, Puerto Ricans are left to cope day to day, turning to bottled water to cook, waiting for water trucks, and hoping their reservoirs hold. The drought may have been a shock, but for many, the broken system behind it was no surprise at all.

NEW CLUB OPPORTUNITIES

Cooking up new clubs

Written by Mary Zaya, Student Journalist

September 28, 2026

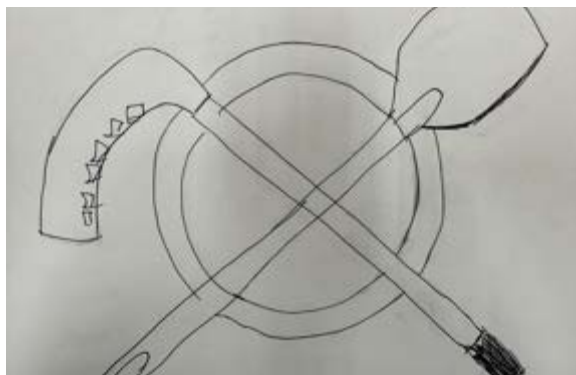
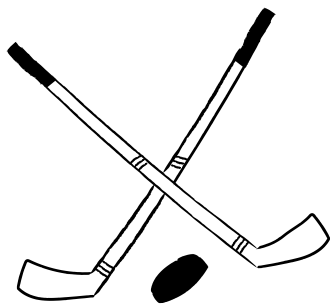


Illustration by Mary Zaya showing symbols of potential new clubs (hockey stick crossed with spatula)

Potential new clubs at Northtown will give students more options to be involved. Northtown should have more club options like floor hockey and cooking club. This would attract more students with different interests. A floor hockey club would help students who may not have time for a full time sport still get exercise and be part of something. A cooking club would teach students important cooking skills that they could use throughout their lives. We do not currently have a cooking class at Northtown, and this would be a great option for the students who enjoy cooking and baking. Cooking also opens a door to other cultures. Members of the club could teach one another how to cook dishes from their culture. This would help students better understand, and learn more about their classmate's cultural foods and traditions. Ms. Rosario was quoted in an interview saying, "I would love a cooking club!" Some people may say "we already have enough clubs"; however, there are still some student interests being missed. Students could get a group together, find a moderator, and present their club ideas to the principal. It is important to keep students involved and make them feel like they belong to a group. We can help involve more students by offering more clubs such as cooking and floor hockey.

OFF CAMPUS, WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH IT?

Chicago - Written by Josh Flowers, Sports Writer

September 28, 2026



Image of the entrances at CICS Northtown - [Homes.com](https://www.homes.com)

As of the week of September 21, students were able to leave school grounds during their lunch periods to get food elsewhere. But the real question is, why were some people able to leave while others were denied this opportunity? What are the rules?

One of the many rules for off-campus is that students must be compliant; the simple fact is that you must be passing all of your classes. The school allows students to leave as long as they understand that their current grades at the beginning of the new cycle must be above seventy percent.

Another one of the rules that students must abide by is that students must be medically cleared to be able to leave the building during school hours. To be medically compliant with the school's system, you must complete a few small tasks that go along with the CPS Health Policy requirements. This includes undergoing a physical exam from your primary doctor or physician before/during your freshman year. Students must also provide the school with a form from said doctor that acknowledges said student's medical examination, permitting them to participate in any kind of school-related activity. Along with the medical form that you must turn in, students also must receive permission from parents/guardians, which they must read and sign before the cycles of off-campus begin.

Along with the requirements listed previously, students must also have an attendance rate of at least ninety percent. This includes not only showing up to class, but also showing up on time before your class period starts. As information was provided to students previously in the year, the rules of tardiness have been altered this year. As it was last year, students had ten minutes to show up to class before being marked LC (Late to class), whereas this year it was changed to a mere five minutes before being marked LC. This provides less leeway for students to be on time to their classes, so make sure to show up on time to every one of your periods!

The last of the rules is that students must also have zero unserved detentions by the time the new cycle begins. As tardies are easier to receive this year, that also means that detentions are also easier to obtain. Receiving two tardies in a single day means a detention will be put on your record for the week and must be served the week of. If not served, that detention will then be turned into a Saturday detention, in which students must come on their day off and serve it then.

Leaving the school for off-campus lunch comes down to one simple idea: staying accountable. Between the updated tardy limits, the new academic standards, and medical standards, keeping your off-campus privileges requires daily effort. Knowing the new system, where are you going for food?

IS GRETA GERWIG CHANGING NARNIA TOO MUCH?

Chicago - Written by Aphrodite Cambouris, Student Reporter
September 30, 2026



Emma Mackey portraying the character Jadis the White Witch, *Netflix*

Director Greta Gerwig has made changes to Netflix's *Narnia: The Magician's Nephew* that fans of the book oppose.

The Chronicles of Narnia is a series of short children's novels written by C.S. Lewis follows various adventures that occur in the magical world of Narnia. The books have been adapted by Walden Media and Disney, and now Netflix is releasing *Narnia: The Magician's Nephew* on April 2, 2027.

The Magician's Nephew is a prequel to the series and explains how the world of Narnia was created and where the villain Jadis came from. Usually in book to screen adaptations there are some changes to the source material, but Gerwig is changing the most important character, Aslan.

Gerwig has Aslan voiced by Meryl Streep but will keep him as a male lion in the movie. Also, to match the movie's rock and roll theme, Aslan's design will be inspired by David Bowie. These decisions have outraged many fans as C.S. Lewis wrote Aslan to be a variation of Jesus Christ if Christ were in a fantasy world.

"In reality however he is an invention giving and the imaginary answer to the question "What might Christ become like if there was really a world like Narnia and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in that world as He actually has done in ours?" C.S. Lewis writes about Aslan in *Letters of C.S. Lewis*.

The Netflix adaptation should honor the Christian themes of Narnia since Narnia is a Christian story rather than changing the most central character.

MOVIE REVIEW

Written by Quincy Birts, Student Reporter



Spiderman Across The Spider Verse is a movie that was released on June 2, 2023 in the USA as a sequel to *Spiderman Into The Spider Verse*. It was made by directors Bob Persichetti, and Justin K. Thompson.

Spiderman Across The Spider Verse is about a boy named Miles Morales as he tries to come to terms with a new discovery about himself. He is racing against time to stop a villain named Spot from killing his father. In this action thriller, Miles is trying to work against everyone in the Spider Society, but some of his friends are determined to help him against his new foes.

This is a great movie because it has a great cast of characters who bring the film to life. You can really start to feel for the main character when they go through something in the movie. Something else that makes the movie really good is the villain. The villain really seems too powerful for the main character in this movie so as he goes through everything else, it keeps people wondering how he is going to deal with the “Big Bad.”

With that being said you should swing on over to a streaming service and watch this amazing film for yourself.

SUDOKU PUZZLE

Carina Baez, Editor
September 19, 2026

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GAMES

SUDOKU PUZZLE ANSWERS

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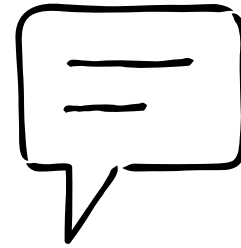
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