

On Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Mount Mercy Academy AP English Literature class, under the direction of teacher Mrs. Joanna Weld, presented an assembly in honor of the birthday of William Shakespeare. April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 marked Shakespeare's birthday and also the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. To commemorate this occasion, the class organized a whole-school celebration that included eleven literary performances and ten student-run activities.

As students and staff entered the gym for the assembly, they were provided with party hats and necklaces. The literary performances began with a comical introduction into the life of William Shakespeare. Students Molly Dedloff, Emma Alvarado, and Megan Miller educated students with facts about the biography of the famous playwright. This information helped students to answer trivia questions during the activity portion of the assembly.

Students worked independently and in groups to present original and modernized scenes and monologues from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *As You Like It*, as well as dramatic readings of Shakespeare's sonnets. Highlights of the performances included *Romeo and Juliet's* fight scene reimagined into a high school dance off, presented by Grace Greenan, Laurel Bodensteiner, Rebecca Pinterpe, and Alison Prendergast. Catherine Radwan, Sarah Zulawski, Claire Jackson, and Molly Bardwell presented Hamlet's famous "To Be or Not To Be" soliloquy in its original form and two creative rewrites titled "To Go to College or Not To Go to College" and "To Save Money or To Spend Money." The final scene of *Hamlet*, complete with swords and British accents, was presented by McKenzie Cerrone, Kerilyn Kostek, Tara Kennelly, and Brigid Keane.

The second half of the assembly featured a variety of opportunities for students to interact with the life and literature of Shakespeare. These activities included "Pin the Quill on the Bard," build a Globe Theater out of play dough, take a "selfie" with Shakespeare, and create a toilet paper wedding dress for Juliet Capulet. Prizes were awarded to winning students and a basket featuring English tea, movie candy, and a DVD of *Gnomeo and Juliet* was raffled off. To conclude the assembly, students enjoyed "Romeo and Juliet's Angel Food Cake."

Due to the success of this assembly, Mount Mercy Academy will continue to celebrate Shakespeare's Birthday as an annual event.

(pictures on next page)

