

OCT. 30, 2024

OCCC STUDENT VOICE SINCE 1978

# PIONEER

*GameLab Seeks  
New Players,  
Shoutcasters*

## All That Jazz

Jazz Ensemble Wows Audience with Dazzling Performance

## Puzzle

'Missing Pieces' Team **WINS**  
Great Jigsaw Puzzle Showdown

**Writers' GUILD**  
Lets the Writers Build

Jazz ensemble coordinator Mark Giammarino takes a bow after leading an amazing performance.

Photo by Trey Brite

# Submit to the Pioneer

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Oklahoma City Community College.

The Pioneer newspaper is seeking submissions of all kinds. If you have an event or item worthy of news coverage, a correction, an editorial/letter to the school or even a note of encouragement, please send an email to our editor at:

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The PIONEER is the independent student publication of Oklahoma City Community College through the Division of Arts, English and Humanities. It is published biweekly during each academic term. Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the PIONEER, the college or the publisher.

The PIONEER welcomes letters to the editor and encourages the use of this publication as a community forum. All letters must include the author's name, address, phone number and signature. Email letters should include all but the signature. The PIONEER will withhold the author's name if the request is made in writing. The PIONEER reserves the right to edit all letters and submissions for length, libel and obscenity.

Letters should be no more than 250 words. Students must list a major. OCCC staff and faculty must list a work title. Letters to the editor can be submitted to the PIONEER office, located in room 1F2 on the first floor of the Arts and Humanities Building, mailed to 7777 S. May Ave, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73159, or submitted via e-mail to editor@occc.edu with a phone number for verification included.

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# Step Right UP!

## GameLab Seeks New Players, Shoutcasters

By Khi Davis

The OCCC gameLab is looking to recruit new members, both gamers and the so-called “shoutcasters” who serve as the voices of eSports by providing real-time commentary on tournament games.

“We give scholarships upwards to \$500 for our top four teams,” said Gerardo Thompson, the eSports coach at OCCC. “As of now, it’s Valorant, League of Legends, Overwatch 2 and Rocket League. We ensure that the students have dedicated computers to compete on for free, with the highest specs.”

Located in Rooms 320A and 320B of the library, the gameLab has steadily evolved and elevated its offerings as the eSports industry has continued to expand. OCCC has established 10 different eSports teams that currently compete, including its award-winning Valorant team, as well as teams specializing in Street Fighter 6, NBA2K, EA Sports FC 25, Madden NFL, Super Smash Bros, Mario Kart, Overwatch 2 and Rocket League.

Going forward, the gameLab wants to bring on shoutcasters to commentate gameplay on its broadcaster while also recruiting new members for its up-and-coming teams. The newer teams will focus on Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CSGO), Rainbow 6 Siege, Tekken, Omega Strikers, Sim Racing and Apex Legends. If things go as planned, the CSGO team will

debut in the spring of 2025.

Those interested in becoming a member of an eSports team or assisting on the technical side are encouraged to visit the gameLab or join the Discord server and reach out to Thompson with any questions that they might have. When it comes to joining a team, anyone can try out as long as they are an OCCC student. This can be via try-outs or even just by visiting the gameLab.

“We host try-outs and walk-ons,” Thompson said. “Just really depends when the student comes to us. We usually host try-outs every semester ...

“What I am looking for is how well the player works with teammates,” he added. “I don’t really care for rank, as chemistry and communication are what matter to me. Obviously, having hours in the game is important.”

Being a part of the gaming community here at OCCC can not only help students create bonds with other students, but it can also help polish a leisure skill and create career opportunities for up-and-coming gamers. It would be beneficial for students to start and expand their gaming careers at OCCC, as the college can serve as an introduction to the gaming industry. The possibilities could prove endless for anyone who might feel intrigued.



OCCC gameLab Discord QR code



The gameLab, located in Rooms 320A and 320B of the library, welcomes OCCC students to join in on the fun.



# All That Jazz

## Jazz Ensemble Wows Audience with Dazzling Performance

Photos by Trey Brite



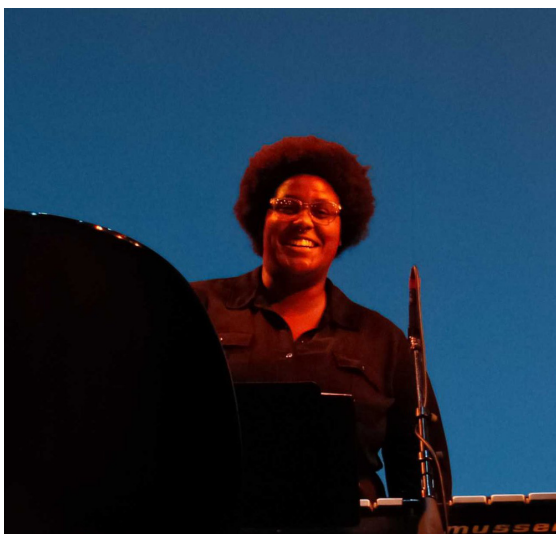
The jazz choir captures the spotlight and staggers the audience with their show.



Itzel Perez (left), an OCCC/Pathways High School student, and Priscilla Trejo-Rains (right) play in unison.



Mark Giammario keeps the band on tempo.



Kenyonna Caples is left beaming after a stunning demonstration.



Music coordinator Michael Boyle illustrates the prowess of the performers.





The band plays in excellent harmony.



Percussionist William Jones takes a rest after an intense solo.



Luis Rivas takes the stage with a phenomenal solo.



Jazz ensemble coordinators Mark Giammario (left) and Michael Boyle (right) jam with the jazz choir.



The choir captivates the audience.



# WRITERS' GUILD

## Lets the Writers Build



**Antonio Guardado**  
Advisor to the Writers' Guild



**Daniel Byford**  
Assistant to the Writers' Guild



**Parker Carothers**  
President of the Writers' Guild

By Trey Brite

To benefit college authors on campus, the OCCC Writers' Guild welcomes students interested in unlocking their literary potential. In the club, members delve into topics related to plot while analyzing potential ideas that could enliven their stories even before they sit down to write.

Meetings occur every Monday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Room 2N5 of the Arts, English and Humanities Building. Each week is different from the last, as the club rotates between structured and engaging topic discussions and an open room for silent writing and feedback reception.

When creating the club, Writers' Guild President Parker Carothers first needed the inspiration telling him that it was possible. He found this in the "Sip 'N Verse" poetry night hosted by Student Life on Feb. 6, 2024. While only expecting a small crowd, Carothers was shocked to find a large group had formed around the guest speaker, Frankie Red.

"That poetry night got a lot of student engagement," Carothers recalled. "It was like ... Wow! Okay! Maybe there's something we can grab onto here."

This was the sign he needed to show that there were students interested in sharing their written work, that there were people who crave artistic expression within the field of literature.

Working with club advisor Antonio Guardado and his colleague Daniel Byford, Carothers managed to gather a variety of perspectives on how to best organize and enliven club meetings and activities. The bouncing back and forth of ideas is part of what makes the Writers' Guild dynamic while still allowing the club to maintain its focus on the core aspects of literary discussion: writing, revising and analyzing.

"Most writing is done in seclusion, but it's always nice to have other writers to talk to when struggling," Guardado said. "Being able to have those outside perspectives to bounce off of helps a lot in the writing process."

Game-writing is a special part of the Writers' Guild that focuses on plot and conflict development, which is specifically designed to prompt direct interaction from the players involved. This style of writing can even help those who may be uninterested in creating games, since it calls for an in-depth exploration of what makes conflict interesting enough to engage a player or, in the case of an author, the reader.

Carothers' inspiration for including game-writing came from the club's advisor.

"In my case, Antonio had presented ideas to me for my Dungeons & Dragons campaign many different times," he explained. "I adapted some of them, and I learned a lot from him. Providing that experience to people in all kinds of writing is the goal of the club."

Writing devices other than games are focused on within the club as well. The reason the club has been classified as a "guild" is due to the variety of genres that the organization explores. This broad focus presents a significant advantage due to the way the club can vary in topics and offer students of all literary interests a place to collaborate with inquisitive peers.

"Not everybody is going to come from the same place; not everyone likes the same story," Carothers pointed out. "Being able to present different people's writing styles and stories gives them an open floor that they may not have elsewhere."

Writers meeting together fosters creative growth, whereas lone individuals can find themselves stuck when attempting to work on their own. By taking advantage of the constructive criticism and the collaborative projects that the Writers' Guild has to offer, its leaders hope, budding writers can strive to create stories that may one day last through the ages.

"Groups of writers who happen to go to the same school or cafe often meet," Guardado noted. "They bounce ideas off of each other. And throughout the years, they turn out to be exemplary artists."

# The Write **RIGHT** Stuff

An Inside Look at the Writing Center in Honor of National Tutor Appreciation Week



**Antonio Guardado**

Previous tutor at the Writing Center



**Tonja Nelson**

Supervisor of the Writing Center

By Trey Brite

In recognition of National Tutor Appreciation Week, the OCCC Writing Center recently shared an insider view of what makes the department tick and the benefits it has to offer.

The Writing Center has embraced a simple but successful philosophy: meeting students where they are. To break the process down, a tutor begins by listening to a student to identify an issue and then proceeds to focus on that initial problem. If it is trouble understanding assignment guidelines, staff members are trained to help explain difficult subjects to those in need. When writer's block clouds the mind, tutors are experienced at offering different points of view that can often lead to new ideas. Tutors can help diversify the vocabulary of a paper as well.

"Students coming into the Writing Center come out so much more confident and happier with themselves," said Writing Center coordinator Tonja Nelson. "I see growth both academically, as they are better writers and researchers, but I also see that they're coming into their identity by knowing who they are."

"Their strengths and their self-awareness increases," Nelson continued. "Their productivity level becomes really high because their ability to get an assignment sheet and be able to accomplish that goal on their own is much more efficient after coming to the Writing Center."

Coming to the Writing Center as soon as possible is the best way to ensure that a student will get the most help on an assignment before it is due. Students often receive valuable assistance that can stick in their minds and allow them to accomplish the same kind of tasks on their own the next time that similar challenges present themselves.

"Let us help guide you through the writing process," Nelson urged. "Don't just use us for revisions. Let us help you brainstorm, outline, have collaborative conversations about drafting and then some revisions and editing" for the finishing touches.

Those working at the Writing Center have a genuine connection to students needing any level of assistance. Regardless of whether a student's assignment needs a total revision or minor tweaks to the vocabulary, a tutor will be available to help.

Antonio Guardado, a K-12 student success advisor at OCCC who used to work as a writing tutor, knows what it is like for someone to depend on him in a moment of dire need.

"It was my second year as a writing tutor," Guardado recounted, "and I had a 40ish-year-old woman come in who had sons in high school, and she really wanted them to study and go to college. She mentioned

that the only way for her to convince them is if she graduates from college" herself.

After working with her for only a week, Guardado said, she achieved a score of 89% on her English paper – an assignment she once believed had no chance of earning anything higher than an F.

Guardado knew the importance of that grade and how critical it was to get her through that essay.

"Knowing the value of education and how sometimes people don't have the means or support to get that education, while they're struggling and doing their best, had me feeling honored to act as a guide for them in such hard times," Guardado said. "Through statistics and research, we know that English Composition I and II are crucial classes which tend to determine if a student will be successful in college or not, because they are prerequisites for a lot of courses in just about every single major."

For those too busy to meet with a tutor face-to-face, the Writing Center offers an option known as Echo, an online service that allows students to submit their written work along with the guidelines given by their professor and what issues they may have. While the option can be convenient, students should keep in mind that it can take up to 24 business hours for a tutor to respond with suggestions on how to alter the paper for the better.

Face-to-face meetings are by far the quickest and most effective way to solve an issue using the Writing Center. Signing up to meet with a staff member is easy and simple; all one must do is show up and fill out a sheet. In-person instruction has less of a wait as well, with only five to 15 minutes lying between a student and personalized literary aid.

The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the Science, Engineering and Math Building. It is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Both in-person and online tutoring services are offered to all OCCC students free of charge.

*Author's note: The writing of this article was helped by a tutor in the Writing Center! Anne Vanzo noted any issues which stood out while maintaining a professional attitude without any harsh judgments. Every missing comma, repetitive noun usage and questionable paragraph placement was addressed by Vanzo – with the entire session completed in less than an hour!*



# NO EXIT

BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

THEATRE ARTS

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BY JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

DIRECTED BY DON RUSSELL

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## CAST

ESTELLE: Olivia Reed  
GARCIN: Ethan Dwyer  
INEZ: Bailey Satterlee  
VALET: Joseph Dunn

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Director: Don Russell  
Assistant Director: Alyssa Stockton  
Stage Manager: Dash Gibson  
Lighting Design: Sam Binkley  
Costumes/Makeup Design: Rebecca Fisher  
Sound Board Operator: Colleen Callahan

## Tickets

\$10 General Admission  
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[tickets.occ.edu](https://tickets.occ.edu)



# PLC: A Training Ground for Future Leaders



## Dr. Liz Largent

Chair of multidisciplinary studies

Supporting faculty member to the president for PLC

By Ana Arias

The fall President's Leadership Class has recently wrapped up, but highlighting a program is always worthwhile. With that in mind, we asked a campus expert to discuss the PLC program and what it has to offer.

**Can you provide us with your name and your position within PLC? How long have you been involved with the program?**

Dr. Liz Largent. My position on campus is chair of multidisciplinary studies. My role with PLC is as the supporting faculty member to the president. I have done this since 2017.

**What does PLC mean to those who join, and what does it mean to you?**

The President's Leadership Class offers a transformative experience, allowing students to connect with and gain invaluable wisdom and mentorship from leaders across all sectors in the OKC metro area. In my role, it is a pleasure and true joy to work with these students and share in their growth experiences.

**Can you give us some history or background on PLC? How long has it been around, and how has it evolved over the years?**

(The year) 2024 marks the 14th President's Leadership Class. While the class goals remain steadfast, President (Mautra Staley) Jones infuses the classroom with a wealth of personal and professional insights, serving as a role model and resource for students both during the class and in the years to come.

**How important is it to be involved in something that can provide motivation for the future?**

The value of involvement inside and outside the classroom cannot be understated. Experiences like the President's Leadership Class is a gift of knowledge that will serve you well for the rest of your life.

**Can you provide some information on the format of the class (including the role of guest speakers and group assignments) and how/why that format was chosen?**

The guest speakers provide students with real-world insights and diverse perspectives that enrich their understanding of leadership. The group presentations and other assignments allow students to work together and individually to explore topics of leadership in more depth, sharing their unique perspectives with their peers.

**What made you want to participate in the first place, and what has kept you there?**

As a part of my work at the college, being a part of the President's Leadership Class allows me to witness and contribute to the growth of emerging leaders, offering invaluable mentorship and guidance. It's incredibly fulfilling to see students evolve, apply their learning in real-world scenarios and make lasting impacts in the community.

**What are some of the benefits the program has to offer?**

In addition to the personal growth students experience as part of the President's Leadership Class, the course includes eight hours of in-state tuition and fees in the fall and six hours of in-state tuition and fees in the spring, as well as a \$500 book stipend each semester.

**Where can students go to apply for the President's Leadership Class?**

[www.occc.edu/leadership](http://www.occc.edu/leadership)



Members of the Fall 2024 President's Leadership Class pose together following their final luncheon on Oct. 9. Photo by Jake Kelley

## Pioneer Word Search #3

E	E	T	R	I	C	K	H	U	E	N	E	R	F
S	R	F	R	E	C	M	E	R	O	N	S	E	T
P	E	C	K	P	O	I	U	U	O	N	T	D	N
O	V	R	E	P	S	V	L	R	A	C	U	N	E
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T	R	E	S	E	U	A	E	S	R	E	O	H	W
S	D	A	A	N	M	T	L	T	E	U	R	T	O
I	E	L	E	D	E	N	T	I	A	T	O	C	L
N	R	P	N	V	S	R	T	E	T	K	V	K	L
P	U	M	P	K	I	N	P	A	T	C	H	O	A
I	T	E	I	S	L	A	T	E	F	A	L	L	H
L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	L	L	A	F	E	N
A	L	T	A	H	L	P	L	C	S	R	L	A	M
S	S	U	S	U	O	N	E	G	I	D	N	I	O

PUMPKINPATCH  
REDRIVER  
PLC  
COSTUMES  
LATEFALL

FALLFESTIVAL  
HALLOWEEN  
INDIGENOUS  
VETERANS  
ESPORTS

TRICK  
OKCTHUNDER  
TREAT  
TUTOT

# OKC THUNDER

## A PROMISING TEAM WITH THE WIND AT ITS BACK



Shai Gilgeous-Alexander dribbles for the cameras during Thunder media day at the Paycom Center on Sept. 30. DOUG HOKE/THEOKLAHOMAN



A huge crowd joins the performer in singing the national anthem at the Oklahoma City Thunder's preseason home opener against the Houston Rockets on Oct. 9. Photo by Ana Arias

By Ana Arias

I am proud to announce that I recently became an Oklahoma City Thunder college ambassador! As college ambassadors, we are given the opportunity to attend Thunder-related events and the freedom to choose how we post about and promote those same sporting events. Through a consensus reached between us college students, the coordinators of the program and the team itself, we have agreed to focus on the idea of being hungry for more. The city, the team and the fans alike are all hungry for more.

The young – and clearly talented – Oklahoma City Thunder team made a deeper 2023-2024 season run than most spectators initially expected. Some notable accomplishments consisted of being the youngest NBA team to clinch the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference and the youngest to win a playoff series at that. Despite the magnitude of those achievements, however, the team's playoff success ultimately came to an end in the Western Conference semifinals, as the Thunder fell to the Dallas Mavericks following a 2-4 series. For the Thunder, learning from the entirety of that season will prove essential to progressing and going even further over the course of the upcoming year.

Any consistent Thunder fan knows that the team needed a player of a bigger size who has both physicality and overpowering strength to go head-to-head with whichever opponent the team happens to face. This is not to say that some inconsistencies were not already present within the team, but why not outsource to bridge this particular gap? To boost its chances, the Thunder signed Isaiah Hartenstein to a three-year deal worth \$87 Million. Yes, the Thunder has 7-foot Chet Holmgren, but Hartenstein has both the height and strength that invites a better chance of success when put against an individual on the opposing team. With this addition, the team's top-five-ranked defense has been taken to the next level.

Secondly, the Thunder acquired Alex Caruso from the Chicago Bulls in a trade for Josh Giddey. While Giddey may have been essential to the Thunder's dynamic and chemistry, both teams gained from the trade, and to be frank, the Thunder may reap the benefits from the

swap much more. After all, Caruso is a two-time member of the NBA All-Defensive Team. Based upon a comparison of the two players' achievements, Caruso brings more to the table – and understandably so, since he has been in the NBA longer than his counterpart has.

Meanwhile, NBA fans have already gotten to know the usual suspects on the team: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Jalen Williams and (of course) the 7-foot wonder Holmgren. Most Thunder fans also appreciate players like Isaiah Joe and Aaron Wiggins, both of whom have consistently stepped up to the plate in moments when that extra effort was needed the most.

As a fan of the Thunder for about 13 years (and counting!), I have been chasing the peak emotion that came from the Thunder's 2012 appearance in the NBA finals more than a full decade ago. If there has ever been a time when the Thunder looked strong enough to achieve that same kind of success, that time would have to be now.

Over the years, the Thunder organization has produced talent but has not necessarily sustained it. Big-name players such as James Harden, Russell Westbrook, Kevin Durant, Paul George, Chris Paul and others have departed from Oklahoma City for teams located in larger markets. Meanwhile, Oklahoma City has not been given a second look – until recently. Thanks to the rebuild pulled off with the help of this new wave of players, Oklahoma City could finally achieve the same kind of lofty status enjoyed by some of its major-market peers.

The entire organization – from the general manager to the head coach to the full roster of players – deserves credit for this progress. This Oklahoma City Thunder team stands a good chance of making the conference finals this season at the very minimum, and it will most likely go on to win a championship over the course of the next six years.

The city, the team and the fans are all hungry for the ultimate prize. The organization may be young, but the future is bright, and the team needs to capitalize on its momentum while it continues to build.



# SOONER CHECKUP

## STILL MORE PAIN TO COME?



Isaac Ruiz, OCCC student and longtime Sooner fan

By Ana Arias

The college football season may only last from August to December, but being a fan lasts a lifetime. A fellow OCCC student who counts himself among the many long-time fans of the Oklahoma Sooners recently chose to share some thoughts on the team's season thus far and what still could be yet to come.

### Can you give your name and state how long you've been a fan?

My name is Isaac Ruiz, and I have been a Sooner fan since I was eight years old. Having grown up in Oklahoma, being a Sooner is practically in my blood.

### What are some concerns you had about the Sooners leading up to the annual Red River Rivalry game against the Texas Longhorns?

It was clear from the very beginning of the season that the Sooners would be facing a multitude of challenges, the first of which being the team's transition into the SEC (Southeastern Conference), arguably a tougher and more competitive conference. The loss of our starting quarterback, Dillon Gabriel, to the transfer portal did not help this transition process whatsoever. Since his untimely departure, filling that significant gap of talent and experience has proven cumbersome. While Jackson Arnold and true freshman QB Michael Hawkins have shown flashes of potential, their lack of experience has been quite apparent against more experienced teams. In addition to this, the Sooners have also been plagued by injuries, which has hampered our ability to execute efficiently on offense. Leading up to the Red River Rivalry game, teams have taken advantage of this lack of cohesion, and it has resulted in underwhelming performances by the Sooners. Although I despise Texas as much as the next person, I had to keep my expectations realistic and realize that this matchup would quite possibly result in the toughest game all season.

### What are your thoughts on the OU-UT game? What does such a monumental loss mean to the program?

Regarding the OU-UT game, I was honestly not surprised with the eventual outcome; it was an unbalanced game through and through. Of course, I was praying for a miracle, but you can only have so many miracles a season. Tennessee not giving us the same treatment

in week four is one of them! Such a monumental loss, although as painful as it seems, will allow the Sooners to make the necessary adjustments to become a better team. The aforementioned issues plaguing this current iteration of the Sooners pretty much solidified our loss. I wouldn't be surprised if Texas went on to win the national championship this year, given the strength and cohesion of their squad.

### What do you think this loss means long term? Should a fan feel concerned about what's to come?

Long term, this loss will serve as a great learning experience. I think that fans should remain hopeful for what's to come and keep their expectations realistic for a developing team that's faced a multitude of setbacks, changes and challenges this season. All in all, this loss only reiterates that the path forward for the Sooners should be focused on rebuilding and finding solutions for their various offensive struggles. Developing a consistent and effective game plan for a more competitive conference should be a top priority.

### What are your predictions for the rest of the season? Now that OU has entered the highly competitive SEC conference, how many more games do you think the team can reasonably expect to win this year?

I think the rest of the season will be more of the same: close but statement wins and even tougher losses. I can see the Sooners realistically winning about two to three more games this season. Given the strength of the schedule and the Sooners' early struggles in SEC play, winning all six of the remaining games on the schedule is a longshot. South Carolina, Ole Miss and LSU are the matchups I believe will end in tough losses. However, given head coach Nick Saban's departure from the Alabama Crimson Tide last year, I can see the Sooners fighting hard against a once-nightmarish Alabama squad in Week 13.

*Editor's note: The Sooners did, in fact, go on to suffer a brutal loss to South Carolina following this interview. The team responded to that embarrassing blowout by firing its offensive coordinator less than one full year after appointing him to the post.*



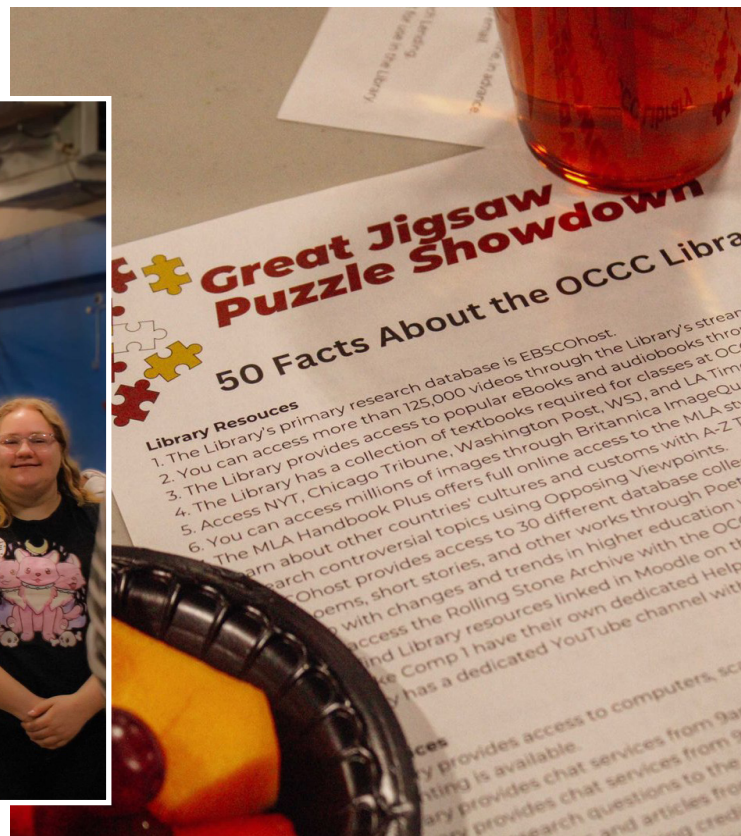
# Puzzle SOLVED!

## 'Missing Pieces' Team Wins Great Jigsaw Puzzle Showdown

Photos by Trey Brite



Members of the first-place team, "Missing Pieces," join together in victory.



Students participated in fun library trivia games to win prizes.



Players race to be the first group to complete their puzzle.



Gathering over tables, students compete for the Great Jigsaw Puzzle Showdown prize.



Time ticks down as participants race against the clock.



People keep a keen eye on what pieces are left to place.