Community unites around Brazilian Culture Night

BY LILA MIKOS

On Thursday, April 14, community members gathered in the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) cafeteria for Brazilian Culture Night, a celebration of Brazilian culture organized by students and staff that included traditional Brazilian food, music, and dance, as well as educational displays introducing partygoers to different regions in Brazil and how to say various words in Portuguese.

The idea was introduced to the school advisory council (SAC) by council member and special education teacher Karen Alliston who, after enlisting the help of Brumelia Magri, began planning for a night of cultural celebration.

This is the first time that an island-wide event to celebrate the Brazilian community has been held at the high school. “There is a huge desire on Martha’s Vineyard to learn more about the Brazilian community,” said Ms. Hardman, the theater teacher who organized the event and introduced the idea to the school community and members of their community who will “all leave [tonight], we’ll know a little bit about each region and its culture.”

Junior Clara Cabral is excited about giving everyone one insight into Brazilian culture. “I think it is great because it’s introducing everyone in the school to what Brazilian culture is from all different regions,” she said. “It’s good because once we all leave [tonight], we’ll know a little bit about each region and its culture.”

Students and staff are hopeful that it will be a tradition that can continue. “I think we need to do a lot more of these events,” said Ms. Thulin.

Junior varsity Coach Cole Hardman-Ditchfield has been working with Brazilian students in her theater class for English language learners (ELL). When Ms. Alliston approached SAC about the idea of the Brazilian Culture Night, Ms. Hardman-Ditchfield said that “our class is focused on helping them learn English through music and theater, so they were very excited about the opportunity to perform something they already knew.” In addition to the Quadrilha dance, Brazilian students sang “Aquarela,” a popular children’s song by Toquinho. “ELL students don’t have a lot of opportunities to perform for the school community and members of their community in a public setting like this, so this was huge,” said Ms. Hardman.

Junior Clara Cabral is excited about giving everyone one insight into Brazilian culture. “[The students] brought the idea of performing to me,” said Ms. Hardman-Ditchfield. “Our class is focused on helping them learn English through music and theater, so they were very excited about the opportunity to perform something they already knew.” In addition to the Quadrilha dance, Brazilian students sang “Aquarela,” a popular children’s song by Toquinho. “ELL students don’t have a lot of opportunities to perform for the school community and members of their community in a public setting like this, so this was huge,” said Ms. Hardman.

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The High School View is staffed and prepared entirely by students from the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School, and published on their behalf by the Martha’s Vineyard Times, with the generous assistance of the sponsors whose names appear below.

Avery Mulvey keeps her eye on the (base)ball

BY JOSIE WELCH

The baseball diamond is a familiar place for freshman and second baseman Avery Mulvey, but her decision to join the team this year marks the first time in Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) history that a girl has decided to try out for the baseball team instead of the softball team.

When girls and boys get to high school, they typically diverge into softball for girls and baseball for the boys. For Avery, this switch felt natural. “I’ve grown up playing and watching baseball my whole life. It just didn’t make sense to me to switch to a new sport I’ve never played just because of my gender,” she said. Although baseball and softball have similarities, they also have significant differences, including different field dimensions, pitching styles, and ball sizes.

Avery began playing Tee Ball when she was 4, and later transitioned to baseball. The youth baseball program on Martha’s Vineyard offers Tee Ball for players ages 4 to 6. Players move up to Minors from ages 7 to 9, then Majors from ages 10 to 12, and finally play in the Babe Ruth League prior to entering high school. From Minors through Babe Ruth, Avery already knew most of her teammates. “I’ve been playing with these same kids on travel teams and in Little League for years, so it’s not that new or different,” she said. “It didn’t make a difference to me that they were guys.”

Avery did experience some nerves when she first joined the team, but did not let that stop her from playing. “It was a little intimidating at first, as many things are,” said Avery. Avery’s brother and fellow baseball player Ben Mulvey is used to seeing Avery out on the baseball diamond. “It feels normal to me, as it does for most other people. She has always played baseball, so it doesn’t feel out of place,” he said.

Ben also respects the passion his sister has for providing equal access to athletics. “She truly fits right in.”

Avery’s decision to play baseball was based on her own love of the sport, but she’s also aware that she might inspire people to pursue their own passions, regardless of their gender.

“I love playing baseball. If I can show people that there doesn’t have to be gender barriers in sports, then I am happy about that,” she said. Avery will be playing alongside her team this Friday, April 29, versus Sandwich High at 3:15 pm.