

FIRSTsemester

BY Madelyn Augustine

Before we knew it, our summer break was over and a new school year was upon us once again. Like usual, we found ourselves trading in our **sunglasses** and **sunscreen** for **pencils** and **notebooks**; this year was unlike any other though. Greeting the students on their first day was the new statewide initiative, the **#BeKind** movement.

This movement put into perspective what it really meant to be kind in our lives. The home of the Wildcats seemed to transform overnight as **#BeKind** t-shirts, stickers, posters and activities filled the halls and classrooms. The slogan had become so popular that Omaha's Mayor **JEAN STOTHERT** even declared Aug. 24 as the official **#BeKind** day. With the idea of being kind always in our minds the school year was finally into full swing.

As the excitement of the first week of school started to settle, friend groups put the finishing touches on their costumes for the annual **Back to School Dance** and anticipation built as the first week of **Friday night lights** was quickly approaching.

During fourth block on Aug. 27, a rock concert was held to help teach us all a little more on financial literacy. The band 'GOODING' performed to marketing and personal finance classes in the hopes to change the way we all thought about managing our money.

As the weeks went on, we had to find the **balance** between classes, jobs, extracurriculars and homework in our busy schedules. On weekends we looked forward to hanging out with friends and being able to catch up on sleep, but they also brought the chance

to go to Husker football games. We all looked forward to watching and even attending the first home game of the Husker season with new head coach **SCOTT FROST**, a game that made the history books. For the first time ever the season-opener was completely cancelled due to a monstrous storm: forcing all of us to wait yet another week to cheer on our beloved home team.

On Sept. 3, we welcomed 22 new students from **WAIBLINGEN, GERMANY**, into our classrooms. This was the second stage of a new **exchange program** between Salier Gymnasium and Millard West. During the summer, 19 of our fellow Wildcats had traveled to Waiblingen to experience the German way of life, and now it was their turn to experience our **Midwestern charm**.

During our third extended QT of Sept. we had a special guest, **KYLER ERIKSON**, a survivor of the 2014 Millard South school shooting, that courageously shared his story with us, but more importantly he shared his powerful message to the entire student body. His slogan '**You Matter**' went hand in hand with our new **#BeKind** initiative and reminded all of us that each every person is special and has a purpose in this world.

With cool weather quickly approaching, fall sports were in the midst of their seasons and we all started to prepare for the **Homecoming dance**. First semester was packed full with new experiences, challenges and new outlooks on life. We can't wait to see how far our **kindness spreads** and how second semester will push us to share our own **unique kind** with each other.