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In January 2022, Jacqueline Richardson, now Bozeman High School graduate, started the Bozeman High School Arabic Language Club with support from the World Language Initiative-MT. The club was created with a purpose to “teach the Arabic language to all club members. The club hopes to bring an interest in Arabic to the students of Bozeman High School and to teach Arabic to those who join.”

In a successful first semester, the club hosted 10 students each Monday during student lunch hour. In partnership with the World Language Initiative, students accessed free Arabic language lessons taught online by WLI Arabic Coach, Mouloud Mahi, from his home in Oujda, Morocco.

“A native speaker like Mr. Mouloud can provide cultural insights that we would not get otherwise. A native speaker can understand the connections between language and culture. A native speaker also better understands slang and dialects,” says Richardson.

Since Richardson graduated from BHS in May 2022, a new cohort of rising ninth graders are set to take the reins of the club.

Emerson Smith, rising ninth grader, has taken Arabic with WLI for four years. Smith shares that he wanted to join Arabic through WLI “because I felt like it was important to learn more about this wonderful world we live in. Through the language lessons, I have also learned about Morocco and its culture.”

Smith will be joined by Ginny Dunnington and Nolan Wright, also rising ninth grade students. Together, they will lead the Arabic Club into another year of language & culture learning with Mouloud Mahi.

Dunnington has taken Arabic for two years and is thrilled to lead the BHS Arabic Club in 2022-23. “I have never had the opportunity to routinely have conversations with someone



who lives literally on the other side of the world. It has been fun to learn Arabic alongside some of my best friends (who are students in the WLI as well).”

Arabic is spoken in twenty-six countries, is the sixth most spoken language in the world, and is considered a critical language. Arabic Language Club participants learn the foundations of the Arabic language and culture, leaving them with the ability of basic conversation in Arabic and with the knowledge and experience of learning a second language.

Smith shares that his goal for this year's Arabic club “is to improve awareness of how mainstream Arabic actually is. 25 different countries have Arabic as an official or co-official language. My hope is for Arabic to eventually be offered as an elective alongside Spanish, German, French and all the other school run language programs.”

The first meeting of the BHS Arabic Club will be Monday, October 3rd, 12:05-12:50 pm in room D-108.

