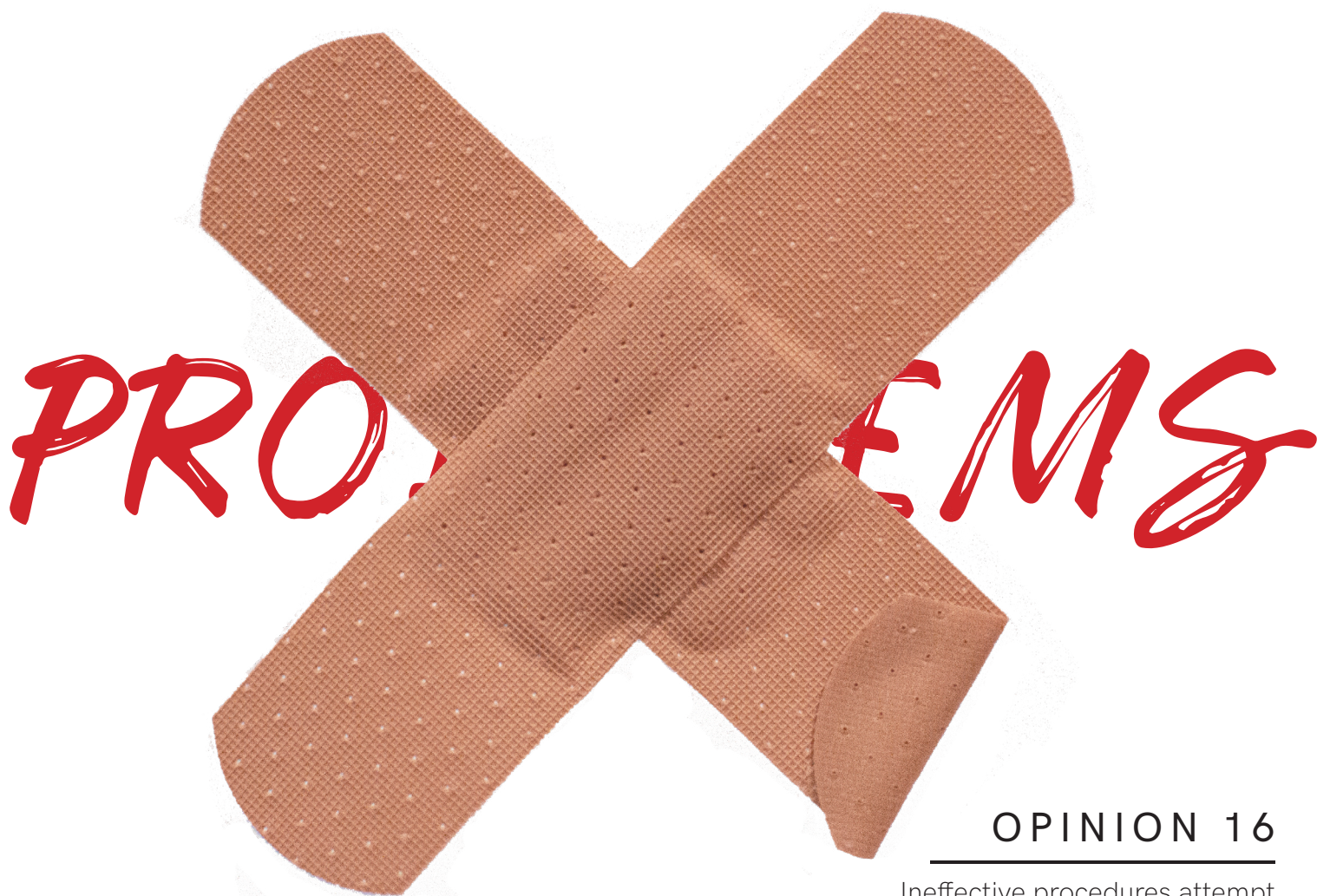


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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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Mission Statement

El Estoque is an open forum created for and by students of Monta Vista High School. The staff of El Estoque seeks to recognize individuals, events and ideas and bring news to the Monta Vista community in a manner that is professional, unbiased and thorough in order to effectively serve our readers. We strive to report accurately and will correct any significant error. If you believe such an error has been made, please contact us. Letters of any length should be submitted via e-mail or mail. They become the sole property of El Estoque and can be edited for length, clarity or accuracy. Letters cannot be returned and will be published at El Estoque's discretion. El Estoque also reserves the right to reject advertising due to space limitations or decision of the Editorial Board that content of the advertisement conflicts with the mission of the publication.

COVER DESIGN | HANNAH LEE

We waited for four long years for our trip to New York only to be told at the last minute that our trip would be canceled — all because of coronavirus.

Coronavirus, now officially referred to as COVID-19, has dominated news headlines, forced thousands into isolation and, worst of all, instigated widespread paranoia. As the number of cases in the U.S. approaches 300, there is a growing concern about attending public gatherings.

Despite major news sources like the New York Times and Washington Post addressing the reality of the outbreak — that the fatality rate in the U.S. is most likely between 0.1 and 1.0% according to U.S. health officials, that the disease is dangerous mainly for the elderly and those in poor health — the fear people continue to express does not seem to subside. In fact, it seems to be growing exponentially.

Across the world, there are some media outlets that, by writing sensationalist articles on the disease's consequences, are contributing to this widespread hysteria. Their actions are now being framed as the face of journalism even though these select publications are not representative of the valuable investigating reporting performed by reputable organizations.

In the midst of this chaos, journalists are continuously attacked for supposedly spreading "fake news." President Donald Trump has declared that he believes WHO's assessment of the global death rate to be a "false number." The public is accusing U.S. media outlets of manipulating numbers and withholding important information.

As student journalists, we believe in the importance of conveying the truth at all times — especially as public distrust in journalism itself continues to increase. It can be difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction, between ethical and unethical, but these challenges should not deter our commitment to acting as the voice of the community. It's more important now than ever to scrutinize, analyze and deconstruct the misinformation that permeates our day-to-day existence and to rely on the hard facts, the data and figures as opposed to hysteria-influenced paranoia. Let the truth determine our actions. Let the truth dictate the way we live out our lives, whether we choose to attend the latest public gathering or not.



Hannah Lee

Anish Vasudevan



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REVEALED

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Instagram account about alleged sexual assault causes stir in community

BY ISHAANI DAYAL, TINA LOW AND RACHEL JIANG

A series of Instagram posts brought an alleged case of sexual assault at an FUHSD site to light on Jan. 9. The author of the posts and alleged victim, who refers to themselves as "One," took to the social media platform to inform readers of their experience. After their dissatisfaction with how the district handled their case, they made the account to help others who have had similar experiences.

One began a relationship during freshman year with the accused assaulter, referred to as "Two" in the story. Two weeks into the relationship, Two became increasingly "pushy," pressuring One to perform sexual favors that they were not comfortable with. At one point in a bathroom on an FUHSD campus, even after One turned Two down repeatedly, they felt coerced into doing what made Two happy.

"I didn't consent to these actions," One said in an Instagram post. "I said 'no' several times, but Two had me trapped in a bathroom, blocking the door."

Feeling manipulated by their partner, One became depressed and feared Two's violent tendencies, which were described throughout One's posts. According to One, the relationship ended after One felt mentally and physically abused by Two, and One buried the incidents until they were later placed in classes together.

"I thought I could go on ignoring [Two] but it was a challenge," One said in an Instagram post. "Just hearing Two speak from across the room and being in the same room as them brought

back horrible memories and feelings I had worked so hard to get rid of."

To their surprise, One's Instagram account, @fuhd.expos.ed, reached many people and gained 726 followers, most of whom left supportive comments and messages for One. Like their case, reports of sexual assault are not always directly passed on to district officials, according to MVHS assistant principal Janice Chen. Instead, the process usually begins with one-on-one smaller interactions with an authority figure on campus who then reports the situation to the district.

"Maybe a student tells a student and then that student friend tells an adult or the student directly goes to an adult, whether that's a teacher or a counselor," Chen said. "But any adult on campus then must report it to administration right away and then that's where we step in."

Initially, One overlooked Two's actions. As someone who has the tendency to attempt to maintain relationships, One says they persisted in trying to fix the situation. It wasn't until they brought the case to the district early in the 2018 school year that they felt they truly understood the gravity of the situation.

"I realized 'Oh, he was doing some really messed up stuff to me' that I didn't even think about because I just tried to forget about every single thing that I ever did with him," One said. "So, [the experience] was really

eye opening, and it's made me a bit more cautious of the relationships I have. I'm more alert for signals [and] warning signs."

After One shared their story on Instagram, a parent brought it to Associate Superintendent and Title IX coordinator Trudy Gross' attention. The Title IX Amendment protects students from

sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying.

To file a Title IX complaint, cases must be filed in written form less than six months from the alleged discrimination incident, unless the district superintendent allows an extension for reasonable cause. The compliance officer must begin an investigation within 10 business days

after they receive the complaint. Sixty days or less after the complaint was received, compliance coordinators like Gross issue a written decision.

However, like One, if the individual who filed the complaint is still not satisfied with the verdict, they can choose to file an appeal to the California Department of Education within 15 days after receiving the district's verdict. In One's case, the appeal was filed after this 15 day deadline, which is why this case had not progressed further despite One and their family's dissatisfaction.

Compliance Coordinators such as Gross are required to investigate and take immediate action once knowledge of such Title IX violations surfaces. When reading through One's posts, Gross realized that the

I DIDN'T CONSENT
TO THESE ACTIONS.
I SAID 'NO' SEVERAL
TIMES, BUT TWO
HAD ME TRAPPED
IN A BATHROOM,
BLOCKING THE
DOOR.

STUDENT AND
ALLEGED VICTIM
"ONE"

story was about a sexual harassment case she had previously dealt with.

According to Gross, there was information missing from the post regarding where the case was sent, which One later realized. Originally, the family had sent the case to Gross, whose decision was to not take any further action; however, after hearing the decision, One and their family made an appeal to the state courts because they wanted to hear a second opinion.

"And unfortunately, that appeal was also not heard by the state," Gross said. "So, there's sort of two situations of feeling unresolved. One, you don't agree with what the district decided, and two, you wanted a second opinion. And then that [second group] said, 'We're not reviewing it.'"

As a result of the state courts' decision, One was not able to make an appeal and the case was closed. Following the investigation, Gross gave further discipline to the individuals involved, but One disclosed this happened after One's family informed the district that One was medically diagnosed with autism.

Throughout this process, One noted that the sexual assault was treated lightly compared to her previous experience in a bullying situation. After joking about harming a student online during their freshman year, the office sent One to a monitoring facility for 24 hours where they were forced to sleep overnight. As a 13 year old, One recalled the experience as "horrifying," especially because of comments that they had no intentions behind.

"[For the bullying incident, the district] contacted police and they put me away for 24 hours," One said. "And then Two sexually harasses someone and [the district administrators] don't even bat an eyelash."

Gross explains that she had to consider multiple factors to make a decision to accommodate both sides of the case. Since sexual assault typically occurs without a witness, Gross relied on the statements coming from the complainant and the respondent, each with their own perspective of the situation.

"[Since cases like this] really are two people, we're trying to make a good decision on behalf of both people, I try to balance that," Gross said. "So it was ultimately my decision, and I do stand by that decision."

Despite the outcome, Gross believes that speaking out about these experiences can be a beneficial opportunity to take further measures in preventing more cases of sexual offenses in the future.

"I wish that we didn't have issues of sexual harassment, but we're hearing about them in all walks of life, unfortunately," Gross said. "I think the important thing is that people feel that they can report it, and that there can be a response."

Agreeing with Gross about the

importance of bringing sexual harassment to light, One says they think there's a tendency to keep these cases quiet.

"If one [shooting] happened, that's a bearing put on the name of the school that's unavoidable; people are going to know what happened," One said. "Whereas, sexual harassment is easier to sweep under the rug."

Gross understands that there may be students who would not trust the FUHSD Title IX system after hearing One's story;


however, she believes that students shouldn't stop reporting cases in general. Though not every case

works out the way everyone wants, she still hopes that students will speak out because Gross wants to support these students.

"I don't think that [the account] should impact other people talking," Gross said. "If they feel that something has not been done appropriately to them, if someone

you know has done something to them or they're in an unhealthy relationship or whatever it might be, I hope that students will still come forward because we do have a process established, we do have a way of supporting students."

As the Instagram account gained traction, multiple individuals reached out to One in hopes of reopening the case. However, One has turned down the offers.

"[My] main plan is [to] have my posts [make] a permanent mark on the situation, [put] it in writing and just [have] it be there for anyone to see, for anyone to know about it happening," One said. "That's the bad thing about trauma; if it happened to you and no one knows about it, you're forced to carry that burden by yourself even with the support of family and friends. By putting it out there, I don't have to carry the trauma by myself and that's good enough for me honestly." 

[SINCE CASES LIKE THIS] REALLY ARE TWO PEOPLE, WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE A GOOD DECISION ON BEHALF OF BOTH PEOPLE.

ASSOCIATE
SUPERINTENDENT
TRUDY GROSS



SCAN TO VIEW
ONE'S INSTAGRAM
ACCOUNT



Senior Rukmini Banerjee speaks to families living in Sunnyvale while canvassing for Bernie Sanders' 2020 presidential campaign.

PHOTO | JAI UPARKAR

THE BLUE WAVE

Local community members discuss their involvement in the political process

BY JAI UPARKAR AND EMILY XIA

Clipping pins to his suit as he eyed the side door of the debate, senior Tedman Chai tried to look as official as possible. He wasn't allowed to watch the debate, but he was too curious. He confidently strode past the two security guards and walked into the room, with no one ever suspecting him.

Chai was in San Francisco at the time, attending the 2018 California Democratic Party State Convention as an intern. His passion for politics expanded after his successful entrance into the room of speaker events and panels.

"It was just the fervor of the room and the intensity of the things that they're saying," Chai said. "There's speaker events or panels that just seem to go nonstop, only punctuated by the conversations in

the room. I think that was when I got an overwhelming sense of passion, and to borrow Hamilton lyrics, 'That's the room where it happens,' right? And I really wanted to be in that room."

In addition to serving as the chair of the California Youth Policy Alliance for more than a year, Chai spent two months interning for the Santa Clara Democratic Party, where he had the opportunity to organize events, fundraisers and community engagement. After working at the state level, Chai enjoyed the change of pace through interacting with local representatives who determined policies that directly affected the community.

Similarly, Tracy Edwards, who serves as the a co-president of the League of Women Voters' (LWV) chapter in Cupertino, has

been involved in local civic engagement for almost 30 years. LWV is a nonpartisan political organization that aims to educate people in their community about ballot measures and other policies by holding forums and voter registration drives. Last year, she visited MVHS history classes to pre-register 16 year olds to vote.

"Your generation and my generation [Baby Boomers], are the two big lumps of populations that are swirling through our society, and you're a really important demographic," Edwards said. "We really care that you get engaged and we try to make that point. So we hope we leave you feeling that you're important, you're going to be listened to and you have a very valuable asset called your vote that you need to exercise."

Senior Rukmini Banerjee pre-registered with the LWV last year and voted for her presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, in the primaries that occurred on March 3. To grow more involved in the political process, she canvassed for the Sanders campaign by going door-to-door to inform Sunnyvale residents about his platform and the general election process. For her, the experience was eye opening, as she said she was in a lower-middle class area where she thought that many people didn't care much about politics because they simply didn't have the time. While she understands this situation, she also believes it is her responsibility to try and help them get involved.

"I feel like the best way you can be active in the political process is by using your actions and your words to try to convince people to vote," Banerjee said. "For someone who is young, who still has energy, and who still believes in the process, go for it."

Along with the lack of time that citizens have to learn more about the political process and because California has been a historically blue state, Chai finds that many voters — specifically young voters — don't believe that their one vote will make a difference. He empathizes with this, but highlights that since many young voters choose not to vote, those who do are not represented accurately in the electorate.

"I think, as a generation, Generation Z, I think it's very evident that we care about our futures," Chai said. "We've seen youth organizations pop up at the grassroots level across the nation. But at the root of our issues, I believe is an inability for us to compel change, even with the force of our plans, as the 18 to 29 year old electorate has the lowest voting turnout of any age group. Our legislators really have no reason to listen to us, and until we make it obvious that their jobs are contingent on our futures, that won't change."


On another note, Edwards also emphasizes that voting contributes to more than just party-based elections such as the presidential election: the ballot affects everyone's lives in some way or another.

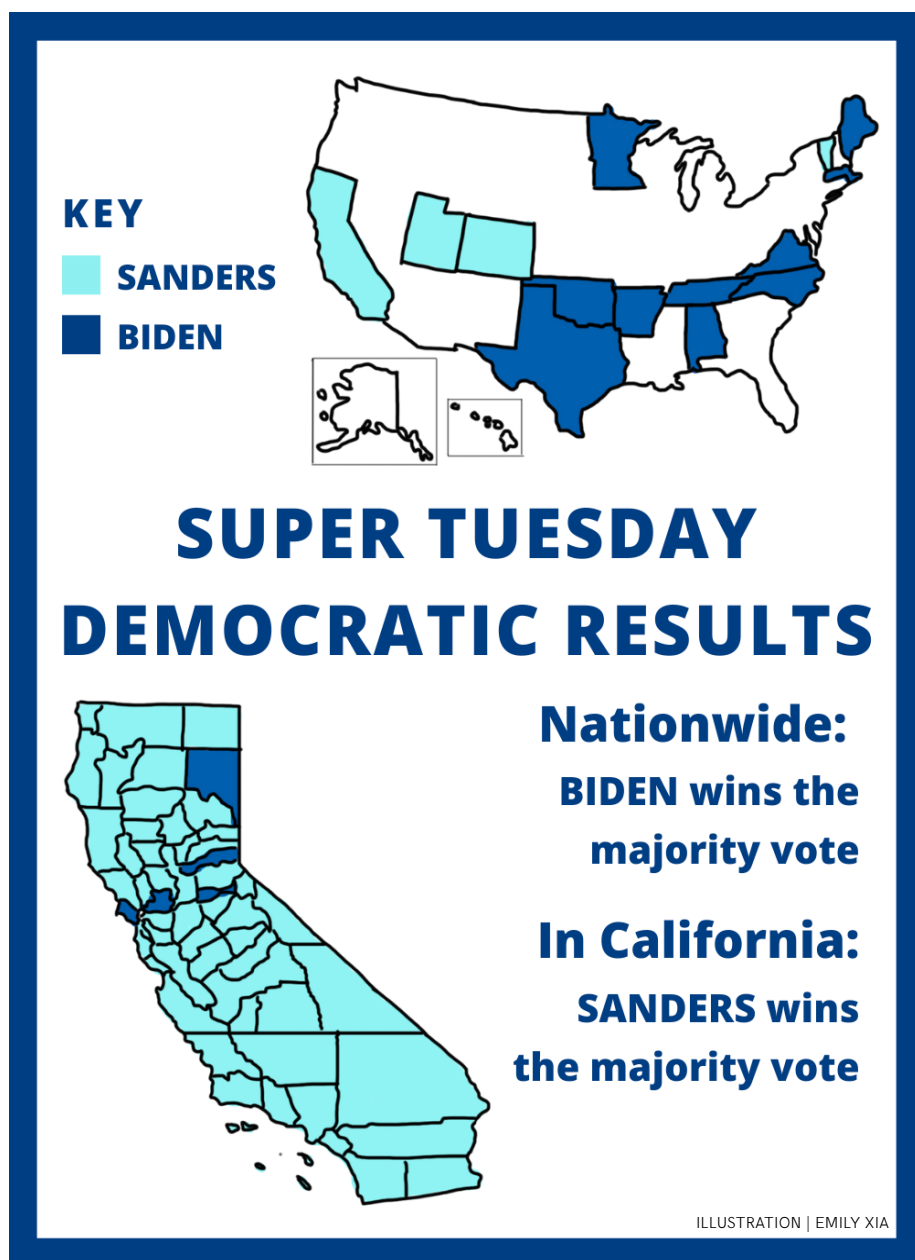
"People say 'What difference does my vote make? I know what the outcome is going to be,'" Edwards said. "But that's just a few of the things that are on the ballot. Your city council is neither red nor blue. Your school board isn't red or blue. The ballot measures aren't red or blue. There's so many things that affect your life that are on the ballot that require you to participate, for which the outcome is not predetermined."

Banerjee agrees with both Edwards and Chai, acknowledging the destructive nature that comes with a lack of political efficacy. Those who are vocal about not voting tend to influence others to act in the same manner, only exacerbating the negative cycle of inaction.

"Even if you think that someone else is going to be doing the work for you so it doesn't matter what you have to say, every single vote matters," Banerjee said. "If you tell yourself your vote doesn't matter, if you tell your friend that their vote doesn't matter, if they tell their friends and the cycle goes on, you're just going to have a group of people who don't want to use their voice for something that will actually affect them in the future."

For Chai, civics has given him constant contact with others who are just as passionate about the same topics. Though he might not have realized it at the time, the room that he snuck into changed the course of his interests and career trajectory.

"When I'm involved in civics, I just feel like [I have] a great sense of purpose, like what I'm doing actually matters," Chai said. "And for me, it's not even completely altruistic. It's just a desire for how I spend my time to be worth something and I see no greater place for that than in politics. I think that the people that I'm constantly surrounded with are just so like intoxicatingly and infectiously passionate about what they do, and that's something I want to be around." 



BREAKFAST WITH VETERANS

The American Studies class holds its annual event with war veterans

BY JUSTINE HA, KAMYAR MORADI AND ANISH VASUDEVAN



PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

After the veterans had breakfast with their group of American Studies students, they posed for group photos. Shortly after, each group moved to another classroom so that students could conduct interviews about each veteran's experiences.



PHOTO | JUSTINE HA

Vietnam War veteran Sam Grinels answers a student's question. In his interview, Grinels expressed strong feelings about how the government lacked urgency in declaring the Vietnam War as a full stage war.

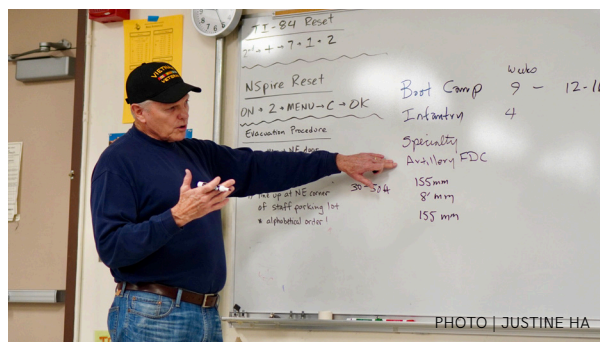


PHOTO | JUSTINE HA

Donald Havens, a Vietnam War veteran, writes the different types of weapons his division used in the war.



PHOTO | JUSTINE HA



PHOTO | JUSTINE HA

Vietnam War veteran Joe Ribera and Korean War veteran Richard Whittington converse with students during the breakfast.



PHOTO | KAMYAR MORADI

World War II Veteran Lawson Ichiro Sakai informs students about how during war time young soldiers had children and got married early because of the uncertainty of their futures.



PHOTO | JUSTINE HA

Delmar Wrench a 76 year old Vietnam War veteran shows students his suitcase filled with the different items he brought with him when he was on duty.



PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

Vietnam War veteran John Bruzus, age 75, talks about his "warm greeting" into the war — a bombing in Manila, Phillippines.



PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

Ribera has breakfast with junior Soumil Gupta. In his interview, Ribera focused on the various locations his fleet was deployed to throughout the Pacific.

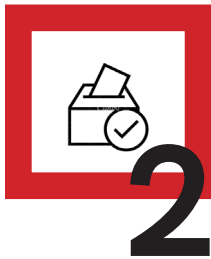


PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

Dennis Whittaker, age 71, tells students about how during the Vietnam War, wealthy people like Mike Bloomberg and Donald Trump were able to get out of the war by saying they were physically disabled while poor people like himself were forced to participate.

PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES

FOR DUMMIES



STATE PRIMARIES

Following the Iowa Caucus, several states, including New Hampshire and South Carolina, held primary elections. A primary election allows voters to cast secret votes for the party candidate they support. Primaries are far less collaborative than caucuses, as caucuses more closely resemble forums of discussion rather than the simple vote of a primary. States can choose to host a primary, caucus or both. Historically, states have also switched between the two options.

SUPER TUESDAY

On March 3, dubbed "Super Tuesday," 14 states, including California, held state primaries. In past years, California has held its primary at a later time; however, it was decided to move up California's 2020 primary to increase its input in the election. The number of party delegates a state has depends on its population. As California and Texas, the two most populous states, held their primaries on Super Tuesday this year, March 3 was one of the most critical moments in the presidential race — the results of Super Tuesday set both the Democratic Party's and the nation's course for the next four years.



PARTY CONVENTIONS

In July 2020, the Democratic Party will host its convention, where all the remaining democratic presidential candidates will deliver speeches and party delegates will cast votes, based on the results of state primaries and caucuses.

After the party convention, primary season is over and the official Democratic party candidate will begin campaigning for the national election in November.



THE IOWA CAUCUS

The Iowa Caucus is the first caucus or primary in the country. To select a party candidate, a caucus hosts a public gathering of voters, who debate with one another to reach a consensus on the best presidential candidate. The process takes several hours and also allows voters to switch candidates if their candidate did not receive at least 15% of the vote.

The Iowa Caucus receives a large amount of national attention as the results can shape the outcome of the party's nomination, though it has been criticized as the first state because of the lack of diversity in Iowa. The technical difficulties with the app this year only intensified criticism of the Iowa Caucus.

At the Iowa Caucus this year, Pete Buttigieg was in the lead with 26.2% of the vote with Bernie Sanders close behind at 26.1%.

Breaking down America's primary system to select party candidates

BY SWARA TEWARI

As the 2020 presidential election approaches, the list of Democratic presidential candidates has been whittled down from 28 to a few individuals. The frontrunners at this point are Sen. Bernie Sanders and former vice president Joe Biden. America's intricate presidential election process includes state caucuses and primaries to gauge the popularity of different candidates across different states. Explore how the process selects the Democrat who will face Trump in November.

DISCONNECTED

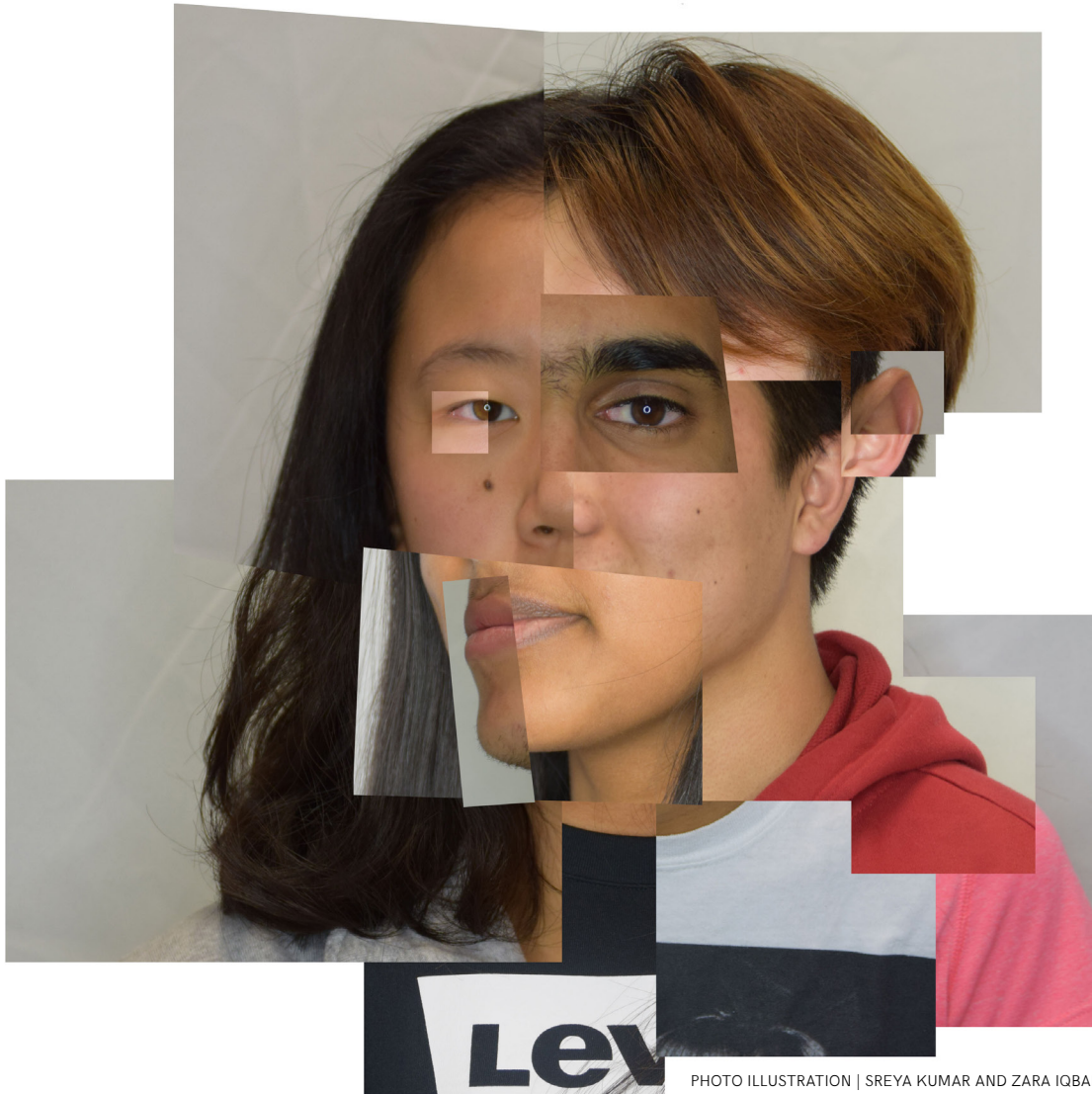


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | SREYA KUMAR AND ZARA IQBAL

From AP classes to SAT scores, MVHS students have a reputation for striving for the highest achievements. Given the intense academic rigor that pervades MVHS, staff and administration attempt to find ways to relieve students' stress. Methods such as time management worksheets and Tranquil Tuesday give students an opportunity to be more reflective of their lifestyle habits. Many also wonder whether cultural differences between the student body and the MVHS support staff affect how effective these efforts are. In this package, we will explore the various perspectives regarding these cultural gaps and band aid solutions.

BRIDGING



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | ZARA IQBAL

CULTURES

Looking at staff responses to working with students from different backgrounds

BY ZARA IQBAL AND JASMINE LEE

A freshman reached out to guidance counselor Jessica Coscia about her concerns for her future career; while the student's parents are both engineers, she is interested in psychology. Coscia provided the student with different resources and then talked to her mother, who explained that being an engineer has been beneficial to her family while living in the Bay Area and is inclined to push her daughter towards engineering so she can support herself.

Coscia explained that it's important for parents to step back and let their child explore their passions because they can still be successful even if it isn't the same way their parents found themselves to be successful.

"There are times where students very much want to follow one path and their families want them to follow something else," Coscia said. "It's our job as counselors to support and advocate for our students first."

Coscia reveals that when encountering a situation like this, she will often reach out to the parents. She hopes that by being the facilitator of the conversation, she can help open doors to other opportunities and show parents that their children can be successful even if they take a different path.

She believes that the difference in ethnicity between staff and the student body doesn't prevent them from providing helpful academic guidance, but she still makes an effort to understand the difference in expectations that may exist.

"I'm knowledgeable enough to know that because I am Caucasian and I grew up one way that I cannot completely understand what it is like to be an Asian student and to grow up in an Asian family," Coscia said. "I have a lot of students that will come in and joke and be like, 'I got a B, but it's an Asian

F, you don't understand Mrs. Coscia.'"

Coscia explains that she tries to listen to the students, ask questions and understand their perspective. According to Coscia, the guidance she gives to her students doesn't necessarily change due to their culture, as it's simply natural for counselors to build connections with their students, regardless of ethnicity.

Student advocate Richard Prinz says that he has recognized the difference in perspectives due to culture, as well as his position in society as a white male, which has played into what model of therapy he has adopted — narrative therapy. This type of therapy allows Prinz to be more

receptive and respectful of different points of views, which gives him the opportunity to help others find better ways of dealing with their problems.

Senior Alekhya Natarajan had scheduled appointments with Prinz during her junior year once every two weeks for a few months. She had gotten into a fight with a friend, and when she realized it was negatively affecting her school and social life, she thought that it was time to get help from a third party.

While her concerns

didn't explicitly relate to her cultural background, she noted that her parents would not have taken her issue seriously.

"[Prinz] was asking if I could lean on my parents and I'm just not close to my parents," Natarajan said. "A lot of that is just because they're really strict and pretty traditional. I remember in sophomore year, I did have a fight with my friend and I told them, and then my mom was like, 'Oh, now you have more time to focus on your grades.'"

Natarajan thinks that her parents are open minded, but talking about mental health with them is difficult.

"[Prinz] let me make a decision, whether I was going to keep being friends with this

person or whether I was going to cut them off and it was a lot more [about] my own well being, which was really nice," Natarajan said.


Additionally, both Prinz and Coscia mention that having student advocate Ya-Huei Chi and counselor Sylvia Lam on campus is a step towards the diversity that MVHS staff needs, as they can connect with students and their parents on a cultural standpoint.

"I always feel weird, like, here I am this young white lady telling these parents what they should do or how to parent and it can be not even necessarily a racial thing, but I always think who am I to tell you how to parent your kids?" Coscia said. "If we could get more therapists or more people in roles like that of different ethnicities that more mirror what our students are going through, I think that that would be amazing."

Prinz also explains that he approaches situations concerning parents with methods similar to Coscia's.

Prinz thinks that since many students are unable to discuss their mental health openly at home, it's important to integrate mental health courses in the curriculum, instead of having "add-ons" without systemic change such as hiring more therapists. To remedy the gap that he feels exists between parents and their children, he makes sure that there are teens in the parenting classes he holds by inviting them to attend.

Coscia finds it a privilege that students are able to share personal stories and information with her, and wants her students to know that if they don't feel like they are able to get the support they need at home, they can get it from individuals on campus.

"I think that you guys are wonderful because your generation is a lot younger and a lot more open to things than the older generations," Coscia said. "I want our students to feel comfortable sharing if they're struggling, getting support from whoever it is. I mean, that's why we're all here at the end of the day." 


IF WE COULD GET MORE THERAPISTS OR MORE PEOPLE IN ROLES LIKE THAT OF DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES THAT MORE MIRROR WHAT OUR STUDENTS ARE GOING THROUGH, I THINK THAT WOULD BE AMAZING.

**GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
JESSICA COSCIA**

SYSTEMIC STRUGGLES

Despite the MVHS time management worksheet, our hectic academic lives remain unchanged

BY CLAIRE YANG

MOST OF US STRUGGLE WITH TIME MANAGEMENT. AP classes, midnight cramming, time-consuming extracurriculars — we just can't seem to get our lives in order. Sadly, it doesn't seem like this lifestyle will change anytime soon, particularly with the half-hearted efforts the administration makes to help us make healthier academic choices. 

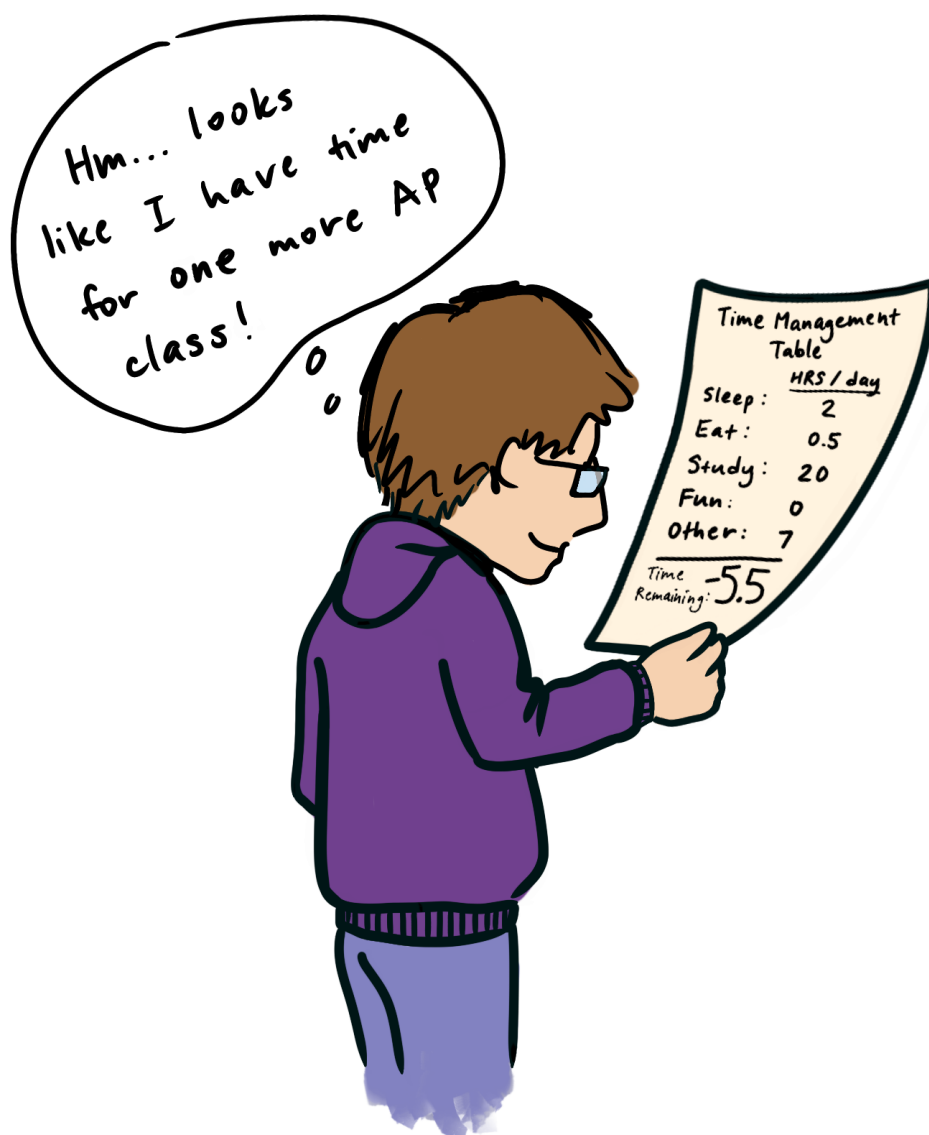


ILLUSTRATION | CLAIRE YANG

THE BAND AID SOLUTION

MVHS should improve ineffective procedures dealing with academic and emotional well-being

BY SHUVI JHA AND SREYA KUMAR

The average MVHS student takes 5 to 6 AP and Honrs classes, spends hours doing homework and takes part in several extracurriculars. To the outsider, this might seem overwhelming, but for many MVHS students, this is their day-to-day reality. With so many commitments to handle along with balancing spending time with family and friends, many students have little time in their schedules to pursue leisure activities.

Comparing this to the typical American high school experience, characterized by a balance of academic and social experiences, the difference in workload is even more evident. However, this gap, brought upon by a variety of different factors, is not necessarily a bad thing.

It is important to note that MVHS is located in the Bay Area, at the epicenter of the highly affluent, technology-based, resourceful Silicon Valley where hard work is rewarded and the population consists of many immigrant families. Many have parents who took a chance in coming to the U.S. and worked from the bottom up to ensure that their children and future generations thrived.

To honor their parents as well as previous generations of immigrants, MVHS students often take it upon themselves to enroll in several AP and honor courses and also participate in a plethora of demanding extracurriculars. For many of them, the stress that they endure is a small token they pay in exchange for the sacrifices their forefathers made.

The large immigrant population at MVHS creates a melting pot of cultures and experiences. Parents have worked day after day, adjusting to cultural gaps and assimilating to American society, in hopes of raising successful children. Much of the students' work ethic mirrors their parents — to strive for the best. And in the eyes of parents, success means achieving good grades, attending a prestigious college and ultimately, landing a well paying job. Often times, this results in a rigorous and demanding course load and concern expressed by the school staff and administrators.

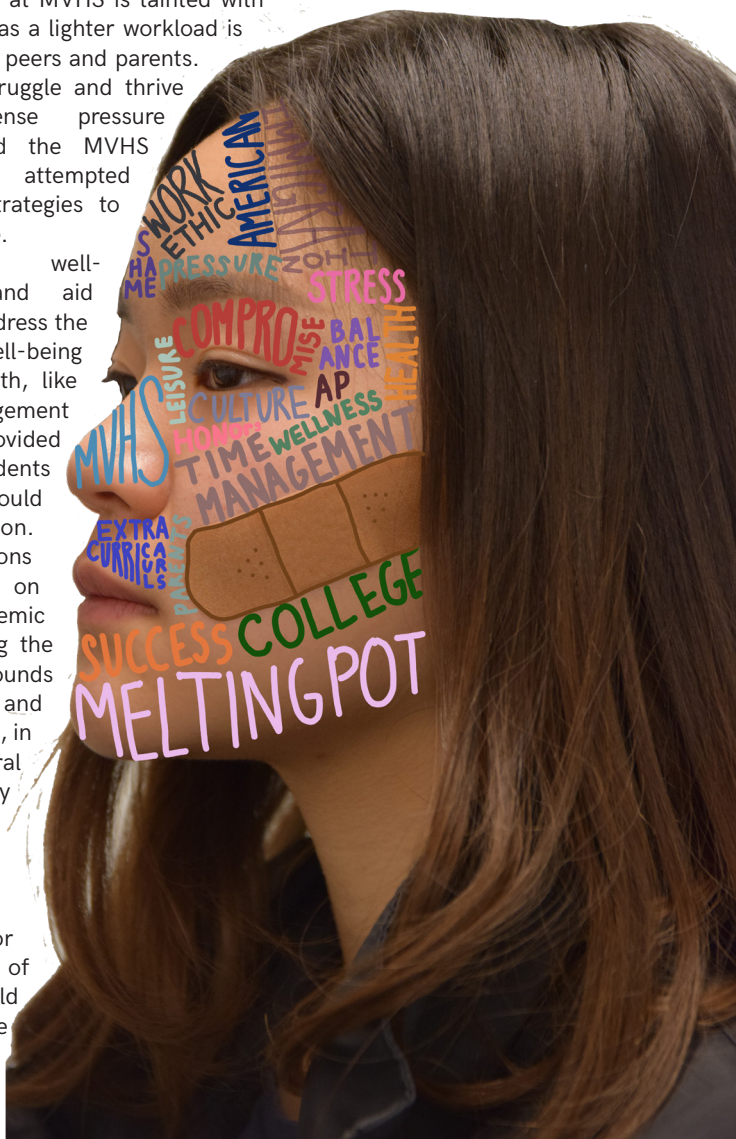
While some students excel and find success, others fall victim to MVHS' notorious culture while trying to keep up with the humdrum of daily life. Year after year, students take increasingly harder courses, and while many may thrive under stress and competition, others start to fall behind. Taking a Math Analysis course, compared to its honors counterpart, is seen as weak. A 1520 SAT score is not good enough and results in retaking the exam. Bs freshman year translate to rejections from colleges—at least in our minds. The academic culture at MVHS is tainted with shame and fear, as a lighter workload is frowned upon by peers and parents. Students who struggle and thrive undergo immense pressure and stress, and the MVHS community has attempted to implement strategies to address this issue.

Though well-intentioned, band aid solutions that address the student body's well-being and mental health, like the time management worksheet (provided to the students every year), could be improved upon. Many solutions seem to focus on decreasing academic rigor and erasing the stigma that surrounds failure at school, and chooses to ignore, in a way, the cultural pressure many students put themselves through.

Future procedures for the well being of students should help them manage themselves better without disregarding

personal beliefs that stem from immigration experience and family background. On the other hand, students who struggle should have easy access to solutions that will benefit them, like being more lenient with course change requests. As students, we should also understand our place in perpetuating this cycle of unhealthy stress, such as by commenting on our friends' easier schedules, and recognize that while it is important to push ourselves to do better, our mental health comes first, always.

It's time we rip off the band aid.



EVERY VOICE MATTERS

Communication and public speaking are important skills to learn and practice in the classroom

Whenever an upcoming Socratic seminar or presentation is introduced, a collective groan is often heard from a portion of the class. And while it is simply an excuse to complain about the amount of work for some, it is a serious concern for others. Of course, it is typical to feel nervous in situations where we subject ourselves to the judgment of peers. However, when this anxiety starts to notably impact our performance, it often causes distress — especially when it is reflected in our grades.

Many have questioned the necessity of activities such as fishbowl discussions, which seem to favor sociable extroverts, as they disregard the preferences of less outgoing students.

Participation makes up a significant portion of the grade in classes such as English, and often depends on how comfortable students are with speaking out. As a result, those who are shy or taciturn by nature are automatically at a loss. After all, what may seem easy to one student can turn out to be a struggle for another, and it's unfair to score a student's performance in such a way.

At the same time, we must keep in mind the state standards teachers are required to meet, which include an emphasis on speaking and listening. Teachers may choose to incorporate discussions during

class because of requirements articulated by the Common Core English Language Arts standards. They assign presentations because students should learn to present information in a clear and concise way that the audience can understand.

These standards exist to help students develop various skills they will likely need in life beyond high school. As daunting as it may seem to have prolonged conversations with people you hardly know, or to voice your opinions for the whole class to judge, it is important to recognize the necessity of verbal communication.

The subjects we learn in classes like math and history are easily forgotten — hardly anyone remembers matrices, and only a few remember the dates of the battles from World War I. Concepts or facts such as these have little use outside the classroom. On the other hand, communication, which is enforced in these discussions, is a crucial skill we need to learn as it allows us to negotiate and form relationships.

Those who are unable to participate in such activities because of disorders such as social anxiety should talk to their parents and teachers in order to find solutions. One possible solution is to obtain a 504 plan with accommodations for participation, such as allowing students to participate in a one-on-one conversation with the teacher.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is designed to provide equal opportunities for students with learning disabilities. In order to qualify for a 504 plan, the student must have a diagnosed disability that affects their performance in an aspect of school.

Teachers should remain considerate while guiding students, and promote an open mindset that aids us in realizing the importance of communication. By stepping out of our comfort zone, we are able to adapt to the unfamiliar and grow to meet new expectations.

Less outgoing and introverted students have a different set of skills and strengths which give them the upper hand in many other areas. However, just like certain students must push themselves to solve math problems and focus in an academic environment, introverts will benefit from stepping out of their comfort zone and learning to converse with others.

We don't need to be comfortable with presentations or discussions to do well. In fact, by learning how to deal with uncomfortable situations, we become prepared for college and beyond. We should devote our effort to refining these skills so we can succeed at them when it is necessary. It is important to remember how the point of the standards isn't to make students uncomfortable, but rather to help us succeed. [e](#)

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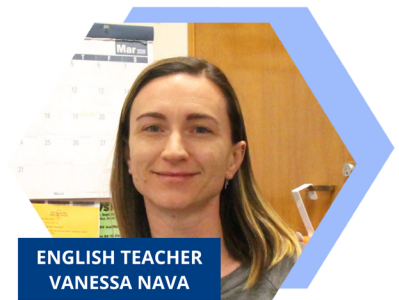
BIOLOGY TEACHER
PAMELA CHOW

"It can be intimidating for someone to raise their hand, so what I will often do is ask a question to the whole class but have them talk to the person next to them."



FRENCH TEACHER
JANISSA ZAHN

"The more active and the more on track participation, meaning speaking French in all contexts, is encouraged"



ENGLISH TEACHER
VANESSA NAVA

"I give students material to work with, and let them have freedom to discuss because then more students will be participating [at] any given moment during class."

REPUTATIONS: EDUCATION

MVHS students' learning preferences and views on education

BY CLAIRE YANG

FAVORITE TEACHING COMPONENT

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| LECTURES | 57% |
| PROJECTS | 19% |
| DOCUMENTARIES/ FILMS/VIDEOS | 16% |
| RESEARCH PAPERS | 4% |
| OTHER | 4% |

*According to a survey of 244 MVHS students

LEARNING STYLE

55%

of students prefer visual learning

*According to a survey of 246 MVHS students



CONTENT RELEVANCE

33% of students feel that the content they learn in school will be relevant in the "real world"

*According to a survey of 245 MVHS students

ACADEMIC QUALITIES

50%

of students think discipline is most important in achieving academic success

*According to a survey of 246 MVHS students

MOST GRATIFYING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Understanding concepts | 55% |
| Getting good grades | 33% |
| Being praised by teachers, parents or peers | 9% |
| Discovering a new interest | 2% |

*According to a survey of 245 MVHS students



ILLUSTRATIONS | CLAIRE YANG



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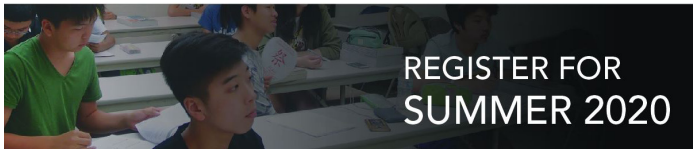
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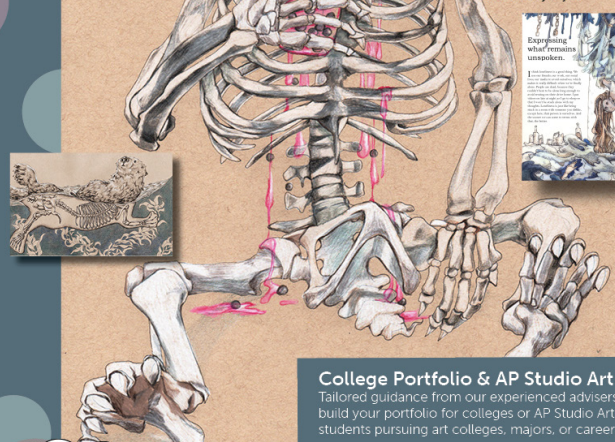


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BEING KINDER

My journey to self love even when I am unable to meet my goals

I am not very kind to myself.

I've put a lot of focus on being kind to others in recent years. I constantly check myself to make sure I'm not saying mean things when I'm around people, and I think it's a good thing. I've never had much of a filter between my thoughts and what I end up saying, and I don't want to make comments that upset people. I've always believed that kindness is the best thing we can offer the world.

However, with all of this emphasis on how I treat the other people around me, I've stopped focusing on how I treat myself. I feel terrible about myself when I do badly on a test. I chastise myself for hours when I'm unproductive. Guilt consumes me whenever I eat unhealthy food. In short, I end up in a downward spiral of self-hatred whenever I'm unable to meet the unrealistic expectations I set for myself.

I think a lot of this stems from the fact that I'm a very goal-oriented person. I've always lived by the ideal that you can achieve anything you put your mind to, as long as you try your hardest. But as I've gotten older, and as I've set higher and higher expectations for myself, I've developed an almost paralyzing fear about my goals: What if I work my hardest and it isn't enough?

Honestly, I don't think there is a good way to confront a fear like that. The reality is, there will be innumerable situations throughout my life where I am simply not going to be able to achieve what I want to. The reality is, I could try my hardest and even then, my best might not be enough.

But honestly? That is utterly, totally, absolutely OK.

It's good to have goals. Goals drive me to push myself every day. I want to score well on my tests because I find good grades to be extremely rewarding. I want to be productive because there are a lot of things I want to do with my time, and I want to be able to get to all of them. I want to eat nutritious food because I believe that good eating habits set a precedent for a healthier lifestyle overall, which is something I hope

to lead. The feeling I get when I achieve my goals is what has always driven me to dream big and work hard.

But just because I have goals doesn't mean that I should self-destruct when I don't meet them. So this month, I tried my best to be kind to myself. I didn't adjust my goals or my expectations for myself; I firmly believe that aiming high has always pushed me to

be my best self. But when I didn't score as well as I'd hoped, when I ended up eating too many chips or when I watched "You" on Netflix instead of doing my homework, I did my best to not beat myself up over it.

My main takeaway is that it is extremely important to take care of ourselves. Sometimes, that means putting on a face mask and sometimes, it's dancing to 2000s throwback songs in front of the bathroom mirror. But this month, I practiced self care by having the courage to accept the fact that my best will not always be enough.

There will be times when I study for two hours before a test and not get the grade I want. There will be days where I cannot seem to get any work done no matter how hard I try. And honestly, I'm probably going to be unable to resist eating unhealthy food more

often than not. But even when I don't fulfill my own expectations, I'm going to do my best to take a deep breath and be OK with myself anyway.

After all, I've always believed that kindness is the best thing we can offer the world. I think that sometimes I just forget that applies to myself as well. ^e

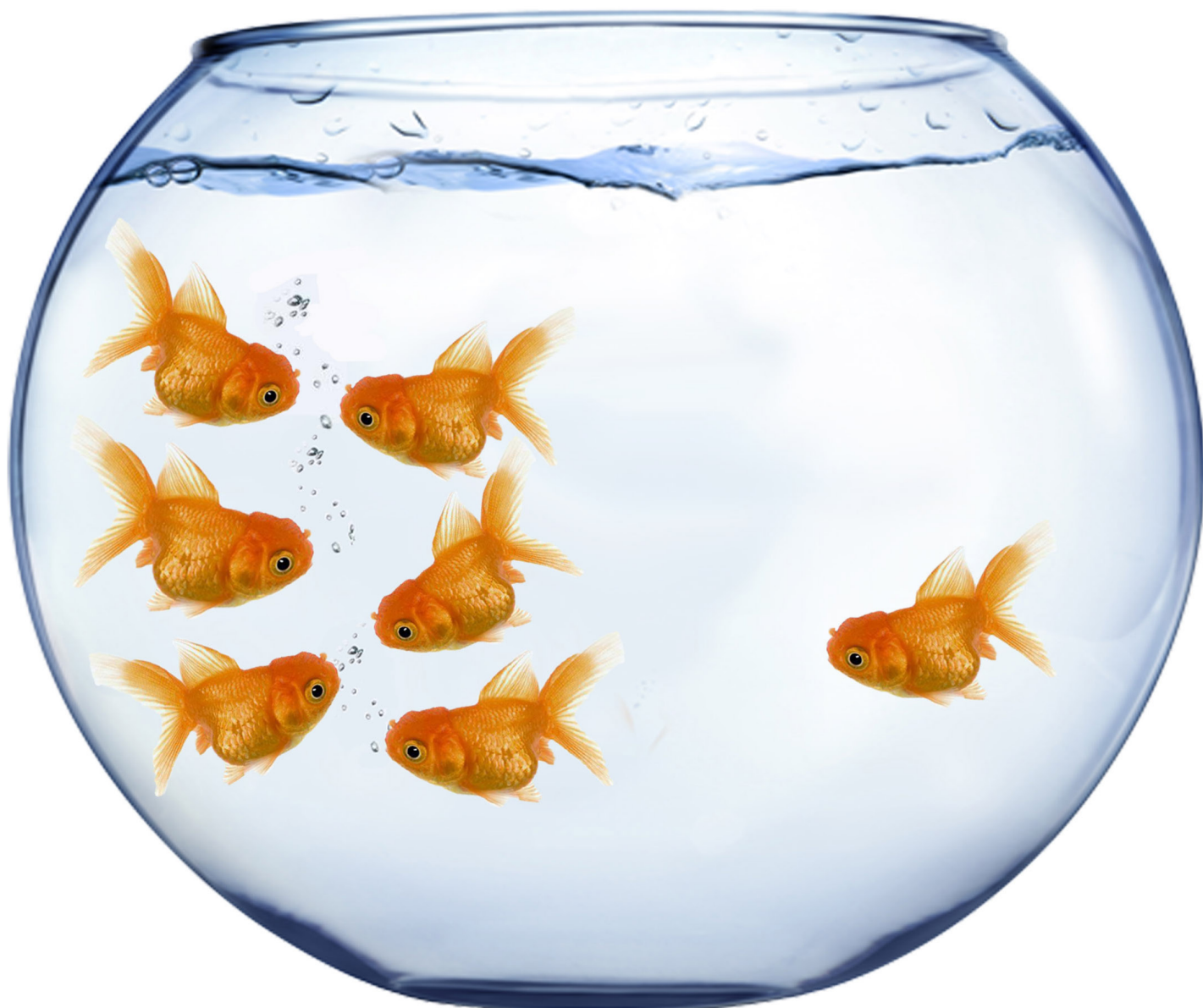


BEING BRAVE

ANUSHKA DE



FEATURES



SPEAKING UP

Teachers explain their ways of dealing with student anxiety when speaking in class

BY SOPHIA CHEN AND ALYSSA HUI

After one of her students went home sick and other students expressed nervousness at the idea of having to present in front of the class, English teacher Stacey Cler realized the stress and anxiety that a group presentation can cause among her freshman literature students. For this particular presentation, students had to dramatically read and analyze a poem as a part of the poetry unit. In order to accommodate those who are too anxious, Cler allows students the option to present only to her, or to her and a smaller group of people who they feel comfortable with.

"I would like it to be me and some other people, so at least if you can't do [it] in front of the class, you're going to do it in front of two or three other people that you're still comfortable with," Cler said. "You are still having that experience of presenting in front of an audience, even though it's not the whole group."

FUHSD English department curriculum lead and Cupertino HS English teacher Greg Merrick uses similar tactics when asking students to speak in class. He recognizes that it is only a temporary solution, and he understands that students will eventually have to be able to speak in front of the entire class. However, Merrick notes that speaking in smaller groups can allow students to feel more comfortable with full in-class discussions and opportunities to speak in public, such as during fishbowls and Socratic seminars.

Merrick had led four seminars in speaking and listening for all FUHSD English teachers in the past two years. At these workshops, he educates other teachers on how to better implement speaking and listening skills into their English curriculum in the classroom, because he notes that teachers often place emphasis on other aspects of the curriculum.

"While there are times when it's important that students need to write and express themselves in writing, we need to make sure that students have lots of opportunities to speak as well," Merrick said. "Because just the process of producing language is actually how students learn and get smarter."

Merrick explains that engaging in academic dialogue can be important and even expected of students as they venture into college and adulthood. Because of this, he also believes being able to speak fluently is a critical life skill to develop young.

"We all have individual life experiences and perspectives based on our identity and how we grow up," Merrick said. "But if that's all we ever encounter, we're probably pretty limited. And we live in a globalized society, so having the opportunity to interact with diverse peers really helps us broaden our sense of what the world is. Again, that's how we get smarter, is by testing our ideas by talking about it to other people and listening to other people's ideas and using them to shape our own thinking."

Because of the importance of public speaking, Merrick explains that instead of taking students out of the situation by excusing them from assignments or providing alternatives to public speaking, teachers should create

“It's sort of like exercise. You start with a drill and you go 'This is what I want you to be able to do, but if you can't do this, try this modification.'”
**ENGLISH TEACHER
STACEY CLER**

“Because just the process of producing language is actually how students learn and get smarter.”
**CHS ENGLISH TEACHER
GREG MERRICK**

low stakes practice opportunities in which students can work through their anxiety by practicing discussions in smaller groups or having practice presentations which won't count towards their grade.

"Psychologists talk about this idea of exposure therapy, where if you're afraid of something, the best way to get

over it is to practice it in small doses, where your anxiety level isn't super high," Merrick said. "[We want to] create opportunities for students who might be experiencing anxiety not to get out of speaking entirely, but [to] give them opportunities to practice speaking where they don't feel like they're in the spotlight, ... to help them work through that anxiety and mitigate it a little bit."

Through practice, junior Natalie Zhou notes that she has been able to gain confidence in discussions and has become more comfortable with speaking in front of others. Whereas in the past she disliked having to participate in class discussions for a grade, Zhou now prefers in-class discussions over a written assignment.


"Whenever I was talking, I would feel really scared," Zhou said. "And I would be like, 'Why am I scared? This doesn't even matter.' But I would just be scared that what I was saying wasn't good enough."

Cler believes the ultimate goal for her students is to be able to give a speech in front of the class. She recognizes that it is a daunting and time-consuming task and that it takes time to get to that place, even if it doesn't happen by the end of the year, because everybody grows at different

rates. For Cler, it doesn't matter how much students need to modify the situation as long as they reach the end goal.

"It's sort of like exercise. You start with a drill and you go 'This is what I want you to be able to do, but if you can't do this, try this modification,' so I think in the same for teaching, you modify the activity, but you're still getting the goal," Cler said. "My goal is to do the activity. I just hope that when they leave me and go on to next year, they get a supportive environment where that happens."

Cler also explains that after she had surgery on her vocal cords, she couldn't speak for three months while she recovered, which made her even more passionate about helping her students advocate for their own voice and ask for what they need.

"I haven't always been disabled, but since becoming disabled, I really understand that I do things differently, but I'd like to think that I get to the same endpoint, and this has influenced my teaching," Cler said. "We can all get to the same endpoint, but it's OK to do it differently, and I really feel that as a teacher, it's important for me to help my students get to the same endpoint, but it's not my right to make them all do it the same way. It's my right to help support them do it in a way that's best for them." 

section 504

Navigating the
implementation and
stigma of the
504 plan

BY JEFFERSON LE AND
ANNIE ZHANG



PHOTO | ANNIE ZHANG

*Rowan is anonymous in order to protect their identity.

The 504 plan is a law within the Americans with Disabilities Act, which states that individuals who are clinically or medically diagnosed with a disability that impairs their academic success are entitled to “reasonable accommodations” — extra time on tests, the option to take an assessment in a separate setting and project extensions are some of the more common arrangements.

According to school psychologist Sheila Altmann, the 504 plan is administered by the Student Assistant Team — a group of faculty who meet and discuss students experiencing academic or emotional difficulties. The 504 plan is installed to “level the playing field” and grant said students the same access and resources to academic success.

Diagnosed with ADHD in second grade, junior Bailey Kinnet turned to the 504 plan after struggling with geometry and biology during her freshman year. Kinnet’s family believed that applying for a 504 plan would be beneficial, as Kinnet has trouble paying attention in class.

Kinnet's 504 plan entails taking tests alone in a different setting coupled with extended test time.

Kinnet says that because she applied for the plan, she passed her freshmen classes and has been performing well in her sophomore and junior year, as she received the learning accommodations she needed.

"Sometimes if I ... tell myself I can take [a test] in the class and not outside of the class, I struggle with looking around and seeing other kids finish their test before I do," Kinnet said. "And so it causes me to rush through my test faster than I would if I was alone in my own separate setting with no noises or distractions. That's an incident that has been hard for me ... [which is] one of the main reasons why I like my 504 plan so much. It's because I don't have to go through that whole thing."

Kinnet was initially "hesitant" about applying for a 504 plan, as she didn't want her peers to think of her as "stupid," make fun of her or think any less of her. Ultimately, Kinnet decided that she needed a 504 plan, as she knew that the academic assistance the plan offers would benefit her in the long run.

Kinnet believes that students with 504 plans need a "little extra help" with academic management to be able to achieve the same results as students without a 504. However, individuals who aren't educated on what a 504 plan serves to accomplish may inaccurately frame misconceptions regarding the usage of the plan. With this, Kinnet notes that she feels there is a particular stigma attached to receiving a 504 plan in the MVHS student community.

Though the 504 plan brings benefits for individuals who need the aid, Altmann notes that the stigmatization of the 504 plan is "felt commonly," as adolescents are "very conscious" of peer preconceptions. According to Altmann, students who use a 504 plan are wary of what kind of image or misconception will be placed on them.

Kinnet attributes this sentiment to the rigorous academic MVHS culture, as she believes there is a correlation between a student's ability to finish a test efficiently and their intellect. Rowan*, a student clinically diagnosed with ADHD who receives extended test time, agrees with this sentiment.

"We're all in MVHS, so we all don't want to fall behind or lax or feel incompetent," Rowan said. "So me ... and at least the people I know, we try not to use [504 plans] because then we'll start to feel like, 'Oh, we're falling behind these other kids.' But still, it comes to times where I need to use it, so I just talk with my teacher."

To combat this sentiment, Altmann and the Student Assistant Team attempt to preserve confidentiality of students who receive help from a 504 plan by ensuring that the plan's tailored aid is implemented "in a very discreet way." According to Altmann, the purpose of a 504 plan is not to make exams and assignments easier for students, but to allow students to complete the curriculum on the same level as other students. With this, Altmann acknowledges that such a distinction is not a detriment.

"Difference isn't necessarily a bad thing — sometimes it's what enriches our lives, to have a difference or to overcome and persevere in spite of differences that might make it more challenging," Altmann said.


Sophomore Nivedita Menon, who has a 504 plan for depression and anxiety, believes that there is "obviously" a form of stigma surrounding students who use 504

plans, saying, "The idea is, 'are you too weak to handle the stress? Everyone else can do it — why can't you?'" Menon believes that, though present, this stigma is subtle and underlying.

"I feel no one has ever, and probably no one will ever outright say that to my face," Menon said. "But there is the idea of, 'Why did you leave

class when we were going to take that test?' or 'How come you didn't have to turn that thing in when everyone else did?'"

Being comfortable with using her 504 plan herself, Menon agrees, noting that not using a given 504 plan is a self detriment.

"I think we're all so wrapped up in our own selves that we tend to hold ourselves back in fear of what other people will think when in reality, no one cares," Menon said. "When I take tests in the office, nobody notices. Nobody really [says], 'Oh my god, I can't believe you're taking a test in the office. How dare you.' I think people need to realize that being self conscious like this really is just holding yourself back." 

DIFFERENCE ISN'T NECESSARILY A BAD THING — SOMETIMES IT'S WHAT ENRICHES OUR LIVES.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SHEILA ALTMANN

WE'RE ALL IN MVHS, SO WE ALL DON'T WANT TO FALL BEHIND ... OR FEEL INCOMPETENT.

ROWAN

FEUDING FAMILIES

MVHS drama holds Romeo and Juliet play for freshmen

BY HANNAH LEE

1. Benvolio (played by sophomore Tristan Skov) tries to cheer up Romeo (played by sophomore Emily Stolzman), who is depressed about Rosaline.

2. Mercutio (played by sophomore Shruti Sharma) threatens Tybalt (played by sophomore Shriya Dwivedi) in the opening conflict between the Capulets and the Montagues.

3. The Nurse (played by sophomore Rachel Wiley) shares the news that Romeo has killed Tybalt with newly married Juliet (played by junior Sylvana Northrop).

4. Juliet (played by Northrop) listens to her mother (played by sophomore Sophia Bokovikova) share the “good news” that she’ll have to marry Paris.

5. Friar Lawrence (played by sophomore Nica Tofighbakhsh) examines his books before creating the plan for Juliet to fake her death.

6. Lady Capulet (played by Bokovikova) is interrupted by the Nurse (played by Wiley) reminiscing about raising Juliet (played by Northrop).



PHOTOS | ZARA IOBAL

MUSICAL MOOD

Asking people who are wearing headphones what they're listening to at that moment

BY CHARLOTTE CHUI

ENT



"Dream of You" by Camila Cabello

Chosen by **junior Kaitlyn Chan**

This song: "Not all my songs are like that, but this just happened to be one of those hopeless romantic songs that I like. If you like songs about love and romance, more lyrical [and] upbeat, like a ballad, not like a bop, you'd probably like this song."

Music taste: "If I can relate to the lyrics, then I usually enjoy it more. I also like interesting vocals and not bland sounds."

PLAY



"Sativa" by Jhené Aiko

Chosen by **sophomore Manvi Kottakota**

This song: "I go through phases with music. I really like a song for a short period of time and then it changes quickly. I'm probably not going to enjoy this so much anymore, but right now, [it's] one of my favorite songs."

Music taste: "I feel like I don't pay much attention to lyrics until I listen to a song a lot, so the beat [draws me to it] — if it makes me feel I can dance to it and it's fun to sing to it."

PLAY



"Lord of Arkhmar" by Jo Blankenburg

Chosen by **senior Alicia Chen**

This song: "I have a really wild imagination. I'm writing a book and listening to these epic trailer songs [like 'Lords of Arkhmar'] helped me imagine scenarios, and it helped me write. [I'm writing] a fantasy slash sci-fi book with some political drama."

Music taste: "It's a bit all over the place. I like classical music. I like epic trailer music, and I also like old French songs from the '60s. I have some very weird tastes."

PLAY



A POTTER'S TOUCH

Exploring junior Anushka Savale's journey with ceramics

BY LANCE TONG AND STUTI UPADHYAY



Junior Anushka Savale shapes a bowl on the pottery wheel.

Junior Anushka Savale explains she has always been “a crafty and artsy person,” interested in everything from painting and drawing to theater. Because of this, ever since she was young, Savale wanted to try pottery. Still, she never really imagined that she would be seriously into pottery until her friend convinced her to take a class together.

In eighth grade, Savale began taking classes every Friday in Wilson Park Ceramics Studio, following her teacher and learning different skills. Savale first started by making cups, many of which she says were poorly made. Four years — and many bad cups — later, Savale has grown to fall in love with pottery. She now works at the studio at least once a week and makes much larger pieces, including bowls, plates and vases.

Savale explains that pottery comes in two main forms: structural pottery, which tend to be decorative art pieces, and functional pottery, which is pottery one can use, like bowls, plates and utensils. Savale particularly enjoys creating functional pieces, claiming that she is “drawn” to the pottery wheel where most functional items are made.

Savale explains that part of the reason she initially struggled with pottery is because engaging with pottery in general can be difficult. Not only are pottery classes and materials, like clay and glaze, relatively expensive, the artform itself is typically a time-consuming process. Projects like mugs can take up to five weeks, and bowls and plates tend to take three weeks.

“There are moments where [pottery] can be frustrating,” Savale said. “But for me, I don’t see it as work. I just see it as a place where I can find happiness in a way and [just put] everything of me into the piece. So it never becomes like, ‘Now I have to do this. Now I have to do this.’ It’s always just, ‘Great, I get to do this next thing.’”

As she gained experience, Savale began sharing her passion with her friends, even taking junior Cassey Bogdan to a class with her. Although Bogdan never ended up pursuing pottery, Bogdan explains that learning pottery, especially with someone as passionate as Savale, was “impressive” and “super cool.”

“I’m honestly really proud of her,” Bogdan said. “I see professional pottery

work and that's really impressive, but I see her work, and she's come a long way. I remember when she was just taking the class and now she teaches the class."

After noticing Savale's skill in pottery and ability to help others, Savale's teacher Lisa Molaro hired Savale as an instructor for a pottery class the past two summers. Molaro explains that she is constantly amazed by Savale's "ability to rise to a challenge," whether it's developing lesson plans or maintaining the attention of young kids during class.

"She really stepped up when it comes to being the one that attention is supposed to be paid to," Molaro said. "She keeps it interesting. She grabs the kids' attention, she grabs everybody's attention. She's good with that. When she is the assistant in an activity, she doesn't grab the spotlight, she doesn't distract from what's being said elsewhere in the class or being instructed elsewhere in the class."

Over the years, bolstered by both her experience sculpting and teaching, Savale's final products have become increasingly professional. In fact, Savale recently set up a store on Etsy. Although she has not made a sale yet, she is excited to see how she can continue sharing her love for pottery.

"Currently, I think I'm still finding what my unique style is in the sense," Savale said. "But I'm always taking a lot of things

from other artists and kind of manipulating those things. Like my friend, she makes a lot of closed pieces and does a lot of cool stuff with that, but I don't really have a fixed taste or style."

Beyond the products that she is able to make and potentially sell, she appreciates pottery for the community it has brought to her.

"I'm able to connect with people from different age groups and everything is very relaxed," Savale said. "That's the biggest thing that I love about it. Everything's just so calm and everyone seems happy. Everyone takes their worries and they throw it out the door when they

come inside the studio."

Savale says that this community has also helped her a lot as a person. Savale has always been a perfectionist, placing a lot of pressure on herself to perform in every aspect of her life, from academics to extracurriculars. Because of this, pottery became a creative outlet and an important way for Savale to destress.

"Pottery became this thing that I didn't have to perfect, where I could go to it and I could relieve all my stress, but also I didn't have to fit into a certain ideal. I could do whatever I want," Savale said. "And I'm not saying this pressure was coming from my family or from my peers, it was coming from

myself. Pottery became one of those things where it's OK, if I'm failing right now, it's OK. I can do better because everyone was just super supportive in that environment."

While Savale saw her perfectionist attitude as a detriment in some sense, Molaro sees it as a benefit to pottery.

"As a potter, she is patient, attentive to what she's doing. She has a good feel for the clay. When decorating the clay she spends a lot of time on details," Molaro said. "She's got an artistic flair. She looks for the details and she sees things that other people don't necessarily see. She's mindful when she's creating something. She's mindful of the process and sees it through to completion. She continues with something until she gets the way she wants it."

Because of everything pottery has done for Savale, she says that she will continue engaging with the artform. She's not sure how pottery will exist in her life, but she sees herself possibly opening up a studio. She also encourages other students to try pottery, and if not pottery, some other form of art that could do for them what pottery has done for her.

"Especially in this environment we live in, it's always about grades ... and people forget that learning is also a thing," Savale said. "Just being able to learn this new craft, without grades, without the fear of failing, it was amazing at first. Yes, there were moments especially in the beginning where I was frustrated, but I was OK with that frustration, which didn't really happen [at school]. I want people to love learning again." **e**

ESPECIALLY IN THIS ENVIRONMENT WE LIVE IN, IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT GRADES... AND PEOPLE FORGET LEARNING IS ALSO A THING. JUST BEING ABLE TO LEARN THIS NEW CRAFT, WITHOUT GRADES, WITHOUT THE FEAR OF FAILING, IT WAS AMAZING.

JUNIOR ANUSHKA SAVALE

In early 2020, Savale began selling her pottery on the website Etsy. Although she has not sold any pottery yet, she hopes to grow her store in the coming months.



PHOTOS | ANUSHKA SAVALE





Sophomore Gabrielle O'Donnell shows off two looks done within 15 minutes.

PHOTO | AYAH ALI-AHMAD

PAINTED HORROR

The horror side of special effects art

BY AYAH ALI-AHMAD

Special effects art, also known as SFX art or visual effects, is an art medium used in films, costuming and performing arts. SFX artists use makeup to transform people into different characters, make realistic gashes or create new body parts. The art extends beyond the use of molds to change actors' faces, like in the live-action movie "The Grinch," or using both makeup and programming, like with characters in X-Men or Marvel movies. SFX is used across all genres of entertainment — but some find its excitement in the horror department.

Sophomore Gabrielle O'Donnell started with pen ink on her hands and arms to recreate cuts she obtained from her cats, then graduated to using scar wax and liquid latex to make her fingers fall off, expose her thigh muscles or make other parts of her body appear bruised. She was inspired by her older brother, who would prank others into thinking he had harsh cuts, and received professional SFX tools from him last Christmas, which helped her practice and get her hands on nose and scar wax.

"I would try and trick people into thinking I got a really bad cat scratch," O'Donnell said. "One of the kits is just a bunch of different types of scalpels that you can make different designs on or [mold] the scar wax. The ones with pens obviously didn't look super real. I still got reactions out of it, but more people could tell that [it's] pen. But with the scar wax, and the more and more I've been doing it, the more realistic it looks, and the more people think that it's real and get honestly scared."

Junior Alisha Saboowala loves horror films and shows like "Supernatural," but she also likes shocking people. Every Halloween, Saboowala creates an elaborate costume, whether it's dressing up as Liv from "Lord of the Rings" or someone with a sliced open mouth and throat. For the past two Halloweens, Saboowala has used the knowledge she gained from watching

YouTube tutorials to get creative with SFX art.

"I was basically inspired by Halloween — I enjoy going all out for Halloween, and I thought that instead of just wearing a costume, I'd focus more on the scary aspects of Halloween," Saboowala said. "[Halloween is] a connection with my childhood. Every year we would go trick or treating no matter what ... I've always liked to do scary stuff more than just being a character from a TV

show or movie — I find that to be not that original in my opinion, so I wanted to do something that's completely on my own."

Saboowala's latest look for Halloween was of a large jaw that took up her entire face, hanging open to expose 20 large, bloody teeth and her neck as the inside of the mouth. She used plaster and moldable plastic from her mother's dentist's office, liquid latex, a palette of colors from a

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IN THE MOMENT, TO
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**SOPHOMORE
GABRIELLE
O'DONNELL**

bruise wheel and fake blood to achieve the look. She sat in her mother's dental chair as her mom worked on molding the jaw the day before Halloween, and then added makeup and fake blood at 5 a.m. These two looks have been Saboowala's only experiences with SFX art, which she uses purely for Halloween.

Saboowala puts effort into her SFX costumes as she enjoys the reactions she gets from people. She loves the subtle looks students give her as she passes them on campus and scaring her friends with her bloody face with dangling skin.

"I got a huge response, like anyone I would see, they were in awe when I'm walking past them, and that just makes my day because this work is actually being appreciated," Saboowala said. "They really appreciate the amount of effort I had to go through to make this. I was really surprised that anyone would come up to me. The first year, when I went trick or treating, the adults were scared when they opened the doors. It was fun."

Unlike Saboowala, who uses liquid latex, O'Donnell prefers scar wax for her horror looks, as she can mold the look with scalpels and Vaseline to make 3D wounds. With liquid latex — what Saboowala uses — O'Donnell can only make her skin look as if it is peeling — she is unable to take on intricate looks like a split or missing finger. She also spends time deciding on the right colors to use — she uses foundation and shades of paint to make a look realistic.

"I also use fake blood, and then I use blue and red paint, as well as Vaseline to make the scar wax more like flesh with the skin," O'Donnell said. "The blue is used

first for the background color and veins, to [then] put red on top of some of the area to get more of a purple so that it looks more like bruised or infected. And then if I really want to do [an infection], I'll use some yellow, and then like bruises [I'll] use green and purple in the paint."

Stephen Evans is the Entertainment Coordinator and puppeteer at Happy Hollow Zoo and recently led workshops on SFX art — both the horror and character side of it. Inspired by the show "Face-Off" and courses he took in college, last October, he instructed his first workshop called "Blood, Guts and Gore." The workshop allowed kids to experiment with makeup kits to make z o m b i e looks, which served as a trial for his week-long camp in February, where he ran daily workshops to teach kids how to use prosthetics and makeup to create characters.

"The kids really loved it. Once you start with the makeup, it's hard to get them to stop and get them to do something else — they just want to experiment and play," Evans said. "SFX makeup and puppetry sort of go hand in hand in that a lot of puppets are made with things like silicone or latex, and so you do have to do molds of the faces. [My interest] sort of bled over from wanting to try making latex puppets to making things with latex on my own skin."


Evans says that the department wanted to show kids that SFX art, makeup and other skills surrounding it can feed

into many careers — not just horror effects — and says he tried to do so with the workshops.

"It's just a skill that I know a lot of people have interest in, and it's hard to know where to get started," Evans said. "We instruct [the kids] and let them know if you like doing this, there are opportunities for makeup artists that you don't necessarily have to go and do horror movies ... Obviously the horror is what the most recognizable portion of special effects makeup [is], but even there are simple things like using latex on your skin to make yourself appear older. It's sort of a gateway into other art."

While Saboowala only uses her SFX skills every Halloween, O'Donnell and Evans continuously practice the art. O'Donnell does not like horror films

and doesn't find inspiration from them the way Saboowala does. But they all agree that sharing their work with others is worth it for the reactions.

"I enjoy doing it as well as scaring other people — I like the reactions but I also like doing it in general because it makes me feel like [I can do what professional artists can]," O'Donnell said. "In movies, you know it's fake, but it looks so real in the moment, to the point where it scares me, which is the reaction that I get from others." 



SCAN FOR MORE COVERAGE



The material O'Donnell uses to create looks like cuts on arms and knees.



PHOTO | ADITI DIXIT

NAILED IT

A glimpse into nail art in our local community

BY CHARLOTTE CHUI AND ADITI DIXIT

SENIOR JACKIE YEUNG

Since February 2017, senior Jackie Yeung has posted photos of her nail art and designs on her Instagram account, @jynailed, at least once a week. Two months earlier, Yeung had watched YouTuber Cristine Rotenberg's — known better as Simply Nailogical — 100 layers of nail polish video and "fell into one of those holes" online. She began to watch more nail videos and finally, on a whim, decided to buy supplies for herself.

Over the past three years trying different styles of nail art, Yeung's also grown her collection of nail supplies. Though she initially started by borrowing polishes from her mom or buying them from the drugstore, she's now amassed 150 to 160 polishes and expanded her supplies to more theatrical, decorative items, including 20 to 30 stamping plates and over 100 glitters.

When Yeung began experimenting with nail art, she would post pictures of her creations on Snapchat. With her friends' encouragement, she transitioned to Instagram, where she could document and look back at her previous work.

Some of her favorite styles include gel, stamping, powder, line art and glitter, as well as blue and purple colors. Depending on the design, it can take Yeung anywhere from 20 minutes to three hours to complete

her nails. Due to her schedule, which includes working at Kee Wah Bakery and constructing sets for school Drama shows, she has encountered some challenges.

"You use a lot of your hands, and even though we have gloves, your nails break, polish comes off and it's really upsetting when something that you've worked so many hours on just goes to waste," Yeung said. "One chip, for me, ruins the whole manicure."

Even with the difficulties in maintaining her nails, Yeung has consistently posted updates, and says her level of investment was unexpected for her too.

"I'm surprised how deep I got into it just [because] I've never really been that much [of] a feminine person," Yeung said. "I don't like makeup — fashion was never really a thing for me. I guess because when I got into it, I was 14, so it seemed like something that only adults do, [and] I thought that was cool."

Now, Yeung uses Instagram to look for inspiration from other nail artists.

"I follow a bunch of nail polish companies and nail artists, and my entire feed just gets

filled up with it," Yeung said. "I like to scroll through and I pick the ones that I'm feeling for that week. Nowadays, I can take more inspiration from just pictures."

Typically, Yeung scrolls through her own posts once a week, whenever she posts a new photo.

"My reaction has been like, 'Wow, that design looked better than I thought it did at the moment,'" Yeung said. "I knew in the future, I'd probably get better at doing it, so I can look back and be like, 'Wow, I've really improved or changed.' Sometimes, I get into a habit of just doing regular [designs], like one color, and then I'll be like, 'Wow, I got really inspired by my own [designs from] months ago.'"

Though her initial motivation behind creating a nail Instagram account was for her own reference for future designs, Yeung also shows it to family and friends and has discovered some unexpected benefits.

"It's become [something] I've been able to show my friends, especially my relatives because I don't see them a lot, and I'm like, 'Oh, this is something I do,'" Yeung said.

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YEUNG

"I was also surprised how I was able to use them [on] my college apps and my resume. Since I am going somewhat into the arts, it's useful to have that."

Yeung currently takes Advanced Drama Honors and does set design, which she wants to pursue in college. Though she has no intentions of a career in nail art, she plans on continuing nail design through her Instagram account.

BUSINESS OWNER ROSE NGO

Tucked in the small plaza at the intersection of Homestead Road and North Stelling Road, Town Nails Spa owner Rose Ngo has been here for 20 years. However, Ngo started nail art 27 years ago and had ample experience prior to opening the salon.

Ngo attended San Jose City College School of Cosmetology before taking the nail technician exam to become a licensed manicurist. Even with 1,600 hours of experience already under her belt, Ngo sought more experience — including working at Just Nails in San Jose at her sister's nail salon — before opening her own nail salon.

"Before opening, you have to learn," Ngo said. "After you [get a] license, you know nothing. The school and the real feel — it is completely different. You have to learn a few years to practice how to do nails, to deal with the clients, to open your mind, how you open your business, how hard you work — you have to ready everything before you open it."

When Ngo opened Town Nails Spa, she initially ran the business with a friend, though she bought her out after 10 years and now has full control over the salon. She feels that having ownership and managing the salon is a stressful job, entailing many behind-the-scenes tasks, ranging from paperwork to payroll. An occupational hazard of being a licensed manicurist is that now, Ngo "never" does her own nails — she never has the time.

"Some day[s] we're busy, we have no lunch at all, so [it's] very stressful," Ngo said. "[We] make sure that every day, everybody gets service on time. At the end of the day, 10 fingers have 10 different colors because I tried to color on my nails. The customer [asks] how it looks, [so] I try it on my own."

Though finding time is difficult while owning and managing a salon, especially during the weekends (which Ngo says are Town Nails Spa's busiest days), she also believes that customer service is one of the most challenging tasks of the job.

"Customer service is very hard," Ngo said. "It doesn't matter how hard you work,

how nice you are — people still complain. One hundred clients — you cannot make all [of] them happy, right? Luckily, in Cupertino, we have very nice clients, very nice people. That's what helped us stay longer here."

Town Nails Spa celebrated its 20th anniversary on Feb. 2.

After this landmark anniversary, Ngo reflects on what she finds rewarding.

"To me, after 20 years, my big reward is [to] make my customer happy," Ngo said. "Of course you work to earn money — of course, right? — but besides that, the real business is you have to make your customer happy and return."

JUNIOR EMILY REYES

After seeing her brother's girlfriend's nails and noticing recent trends, junior Emily Reyes was inspired to get her own nails done. Though she started getting her nails done at 14, she especially wanted longer acrylic nails. She gradually experimented with different styles, starting with short stilettos and medium ballerina nails, and at 16, was allowed to get longer nails.

Though Reyes wishes she knew how to do nail art on herself, she goes to salons, her favorite being Angel Nails in Monterey. From start to finish, the process takes about an hour and 20 minutes, but the resulting

nails last her about a month. However, Reyes says that if people don't know how to manage and maintain their nails, their acrylics might only last them three weeks before starting to fall off.


"You have to be careful sometimes because sometimes your nails get caught in things," Reyes said. "Like if you open a car door, your nail will get caught."

I'm used to it now, so I'm not very careful anymore because I know where not to put my hands and where to put my hands."

Though she regularly gets her nails done, Reyes says that she still receives a steady stream of comments about her nails.

"It's so annoying sometimes," Reyes said. "I get a lot of negative comments, like, 'Oh, how do you manage? How do you wipe? Oh, I could never do that,' or they're like, 'Oh, those are too long.' Most people, they do say, 'Oh, yeah, but they're very pretty. I like them.' I'm like, 'Yeah, thanks,' and they're like, 'But they're really long.'"

Despite the reaction she gets from people, Reyes enjoys how having longer nails makes her feel and plans to continue.

"I like it because it makes me feel a little extra," Reyes said. "It gives me more confidence and I feel more cool I guess. If I know a special occasion's coming up, I'll get something cute for that occasion." 



SCAN FOR
JYNAILED



PHOTO | CHARLOTTE CHUI

Senior Jackie Yeung paints on coats of green, sneaker-textured nail polish.

UNHOMELY FANDOMS

BY TABITHA MENDEZ AND ANISH VASUDEVAN



PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

SENIOR SEAN FELL

When he was younger, senior Sean Fell would participate in heated Madden and NBA 2K video game battles with his older brother. His brother, a fan of the Bay Area teams, never let Fell choose the same team as him, forcing Fell to find football and basketball fandoms from other areas.

Fell chose based on the aesthetics of the various mascots for teams in the NFL. Since Fell's favorite animal was an eagle at the time, he chose the Philadelphia Eagles as his favorite football team — a team he still supports today. While his football team was random, he based his NBA team support around a player he had admired: Carmelo Anthony of the Denver Nuggets.

According to Fell, the hardest part about being a fan of two teams outside of the Bay Area is the isolation; and explains that the only time he is able to share his passions with other people is when he gets recognition while wearing a jersey on vacation.

"The only difficult part is that people here can talk about their team and support together," Fell said. "I also can't watch a game with my friends that often since I'm not a Niners fan or a Warriors fan."

Even though Fell has to defend his support for teams often, he explains that the way he was able to form his opinions about teams through video games is something only specific to his generation of sports fans.

"Most people end up growing up a fan of the local team, but then they'll move to the East Coast maybe and [not be able to] support them over there," Fell said. "I see more people recently support random teams, and it is a very interesting balance."

SCIENCE TEACHER JENNA SMITH

Growing up, science teacher Jenna Smith's father, originally from Brooklyn, then later a Los Angeles resident went from supporting the Brooklyn Dodgers to the LA Dodgers and Rams until their family moved to the Bay Area. Smith decided that she wasn't happy with the quick changes in her family and decided to start scouting on her own for a team their family could support.

Smith immediately gravitated to the San Francisco 49ers, but after the team unfairly released an injured player during free agency, Smith decided not to support a team that would cut a player because they were unable to play at that moment. Another team that caught Smith's eye at the time was the Green Bay Packers, which is a team she and her family still supports today.

"I discovered the Packers and was like, 'Wow, they're having fun,'" Smith said. "And I was watching them play and I was like the team is way more exciting. I just fell in love with players and then watched the fans and said, 'These fans are awesome, they're good, they're nice people.'"

Smith explains that she also enjoyed that the team was owned by the city residents instead of a wealthy business or family like other teams. According to Smith, even though she lives so far from Green Bay, she is able to support her team through events they have in the Bay Area. She explains that she was able to go above and beyond for her love of the team by going to Lambeau Field, the Packers stadium.

"One thing that's awesome about being a Packers fan is you'll just walk and you'll hear somebody say 'Go pack go,'" Smith said. "It's like a family."



PHOTO USED CURTOSY OF JENNA SMITH

Even with the Bay having multiple powerhouses in professional sports, some members of the MVHS community choose to support teams from other parts of the country for a variety of reasons. Members of the MVHS community share their unique fandoms.

JUNIOR KESHITA UPADHYAY

Growing up, junior Keshita Upadhyay didn't consider herself a dedicated fan to any specific team, but rather a specific player — quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs, Patrick Mahomes. There are a few reasons why Upadhyay admires Mahomes, his character being one of them.

"Patrick Mahomes is someone that I can look up to a lot just because of his overall personality," Upadhyay said. "He's hard working, he's talented and he's got charisma too."

The other reason Upadhyay supports Mahomes is because of luck. Upadhyay says the year he started playing was a really good year for her, and she now credits Mahomes as her "lucky charm."

Supporting a team that isn't from this area causes Upadhyay to get questionable looks or assumptions that she's from Missouri. However these comments or glances don't bother Upadhyay.

"It's just part of being a fan - I don't mind telling people why I like who I like or why I follow who I follow," Upadhyay said.

When it comes to supporting a team, focusing on an athlete's story and looking at more than just the game is Upadhyay's way of admiring the sport.

"I generally tend to get impressed by the story or work ethic of a certain player, and that's what makes the game fun for me to watch," Upadhyay said. "I guess a lot of it is just the respect I have for the player than the game."



PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

FRESHMAN LEONARDO SZE

Born into a family of Los Angeles Lakers fans and a school of Golden State Warriors fans, freshman Leonardo Sze stands out. Sze is a fan of the NBA's Boston Celtics, a team he first started to support as a long-winded joke to mess with his family, knowing Celtics and Lakers were rivals. However over time, he truly liked them more and more.

According to Sze, supporting an out of area team can be challenging as it means being part of the minority at games. Sze explains one experience watching a Lakers game at the Warriors arena with his family.

"There's definitely a lot of tension between the fans especially since the Lakers get LeBron and they're expected to win," Sze said. "But the Bay Area is relaxed and there really isn't a lot of hate towards fans that support different teams from different arenas."

Sze explains that unlike fans of the Golden State Warriors, he has not witnessed his favorite team win an NBA championship since he started supporting them shortly after the Celtics NBA title in 2010. He says that he is still waiting for his team to get over the hump and reach the NBA finals.

"In past years they've made to the Eastern Conference finals three times in a row and most times they lost to LeBron James, which is kind of frustrating," Sze said. "For the young core of the team I think they've had a lot of good playoff experience and I think within a few years the team has a pretty good shot of making the finals and potentially winning."



PHOTO | ANISH VASUDEVAN

THE RISE OF MV GYMNASTICS

How the once deserted team is being restored

BY JAYANTI JHA AND RUCHA SOMAN



At the start of the 2019-20 school year, after the MVHS cheer team fell apart, athletic director Nick Bonacorsi overheard a girl who was previously on cheer hoping for the creation of a gymnastics team at MVHS. After looking into the logistics of starting one, Bonacorsi realized MVHS once had a gymnastics team — it just needed to be revived to its competitive state.

"At the [athletic director's] meeting [in the fall], the Cupertino athletic director [said], 'If you have any gymnasts, we'll take them and they can compete under your school's name, but we'll run them through [our] practice,'" Bonacorsi said. "So that's not uncommon — for instance, our dive coach coaches Lynbrook HS divers because they don't have a dive coach or dive pool. So we'll try and share coaches when it makes sense [for] individualized sports like that."

Bonacorsi began to form the team in November of 2019. While four students at MVHS were initially interested in the gymnastics team, the current team only consists of sophomores Kelly Hui and Marlys Kutach.

"I had heard from my friends at my gym that they started their own teams at their schools," Hui

PHOTO USED WITH PERMISSION OF MARLYS KUTACH
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | JAYANTI JHA

said. "I thought it'd be fun to compete with my friends, and represent [MVHS]."

Although she only recently became involved in high school gymnastics, Kutach has been doing gymnastics since she was five, beginning with recreational gymnastics and later moving up to the competition team at Gold Star Gymnastics. Kutach found out about the gymnastics team through Hui and was initially interested to use it as a chance to get her PE credit. However, Bonacorsi shared that the two MVHS gymnasts would not be receiving credit for their participation, as they do not start training at the start of the school spring season, which started on Feb. 3.

Their lack of attendance at the practices at Cupertino HS is due to their participation in club gyms outside of school, where they usually practice.

"Right now, we're in our club season for gymnastics, and we're not allowed to compete in a high school meet until after that's over," Kutach said. "Right now we're in a regular season, and then we'll have our regional competition sometime in April. And that's our last meet of the year. And then from there, we'll be able to start doing high school gymnastics. So our first meet will be sometime at the beginning of May or late end of April. And then usually you end up going to League finals and then most likely CCS from there."

As the MVHS gymnastics team will not be competing in many meets, its focus is to increase gymnast participation and MVHS representation at gymnastics meets.

"Personally, my goals for this year would honestly be to have fun because if I've looked at the scoring systems and it shouldn't be too hard to score well enough," Kutach said. "Club meets are a little bit more stressful than high school gymnastics, which seems to be kind of a more chill, fun thing."

Hui hopes to also increase the amount of participants by advertising the gymnastics team on the announcements. Due to its lack



PHOTO USED WITH PERMISSION OF KELLY HUI
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | TYLER CHO


of members, the team cannot qualify for a competitive team placement, according to Kutach. She suggests MVHS students try out for the gymnastics team next year, regardless of experience, and hopes to see greater participation in the coming years.

"This is really new, so I'm pretty sure there's only my close friends and Kelly's close friends that actually know about the gymnastics team," Kutach said. "And also just letting people know that you don't have to be a top level competitive gymnast to get on the team. You could if you can do things like a forward roll or a cartwheel or a handstand. Like if you've ever taken any sort of gymnastics classes you might as well try out, you can make JV and possibly even varsity." e

WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

Dancer Ariyal Jain shares some of her essentials

BY HANNAH LEE

Sophomore Ariyal Jain grew up watching her mother, a Bollywood teacher, hold belly dancing classes. Jain has been dancing since she was 3 years old and competitively dancing since she was five. She has experience with many genres, but her favorites are hip hop, contemporary and jazz funk. As a member of the MV Dance Team, she travels with the team to competitions about four times a year. Jain shares some of the essentials she carries with her. 

Touch ups

Jain brings makeup, hairspray, hair gel, bobby pins and hair ties with her to touch up on-the-go, especially at competitions.



Shoes

There are four types of shoes Jain needs for competitions: red sneakers for hip hop sequences, the MV Dance Team sneakers, black and tan jazz shoes and half-soles.



Outfits and accessories

When she attends competitions, Jain brings her costumes and complementary accessories like earrings, chokers and hair pieces.



AirPods

AirPods are an essential for Jain when she is practicing. She prefers AirPods because they don't have a wire, allowing her to move around freely. She explains that with wired earphones, she has to constantly make sure they don't get tangled or fall out.



Rollers

In order to relax her muscles, Jain carries a roller to massage her thighs and calves.



Fuzzy socks

Something meaningful Jain brings is a pair of red fuzzy socks that she received from another member on the MV Dance Team. She explains that carrying around these socks helps remind her that she is always supported by her team.



Snacks and water

Jain typically brings healthier snacks with her to competition because she doesn't like to eat something too heavy before she dances. She likes to bring fruit because it's light, healthy and sweet. Jain admits that at times, she brings some of her favorite sugary snacks like Oreos and Sour Patch.



Wraps or KT Tape

Jain makes sure to bring wraps or KT Tape when she has an injury to provide additional support when she is experiencing pain.



ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

SOTIRIS KOUGIOURS

The adrenaline rush of jumping over hurdles for 65 and 300 meters gives sophomore Sotiris Kougiours the motivation to keep progressing in his track career. Kougiours started hurdling in elementary school as his parents took him to a track clinic every Sunday. By participating in multiple events at the clinic, his interest in hurdles blossomed and prompted his engagement in the Kennedy MS track and field team. Currently, Kougiours is a member of the MVHS Varsity hurdles team.

"It's something I had to conquer a fear to do, I mean falling during hurdling can have bad consequences," Kougiours said. "I don't usually give myself a lot of credit, but for hurdles I'm proud of myself for doing it."

Kougiours, who also participates in the 4 X 400 meter relay, sees hurdles as his best event since he won leagues for both the 65 and 300 meter hurdles events last year. One of Kougiours' current goals is to get an offer from a college team with an emphasis in hurdles. Kougiours, who is making the jump from JV to Varsity this season, is excited about the social aspect of being around upperclassmen, but is nervous about the level of competition. As one of the only sophomores on Varsity, his goals are to keep breaking his personal records and to stay in shape.

"In terms of jumping over the hurdles, for me at least, it feels like the whole world kind of stops and it's just me jumping over the hurdle," Kougiours said. "Then an instant later I'm on track again sprinting to the next hurdle."

10.30

SECONDS FOR 65m*

44.37

SECONDS FOR 300m*

*2019-2020 season

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