

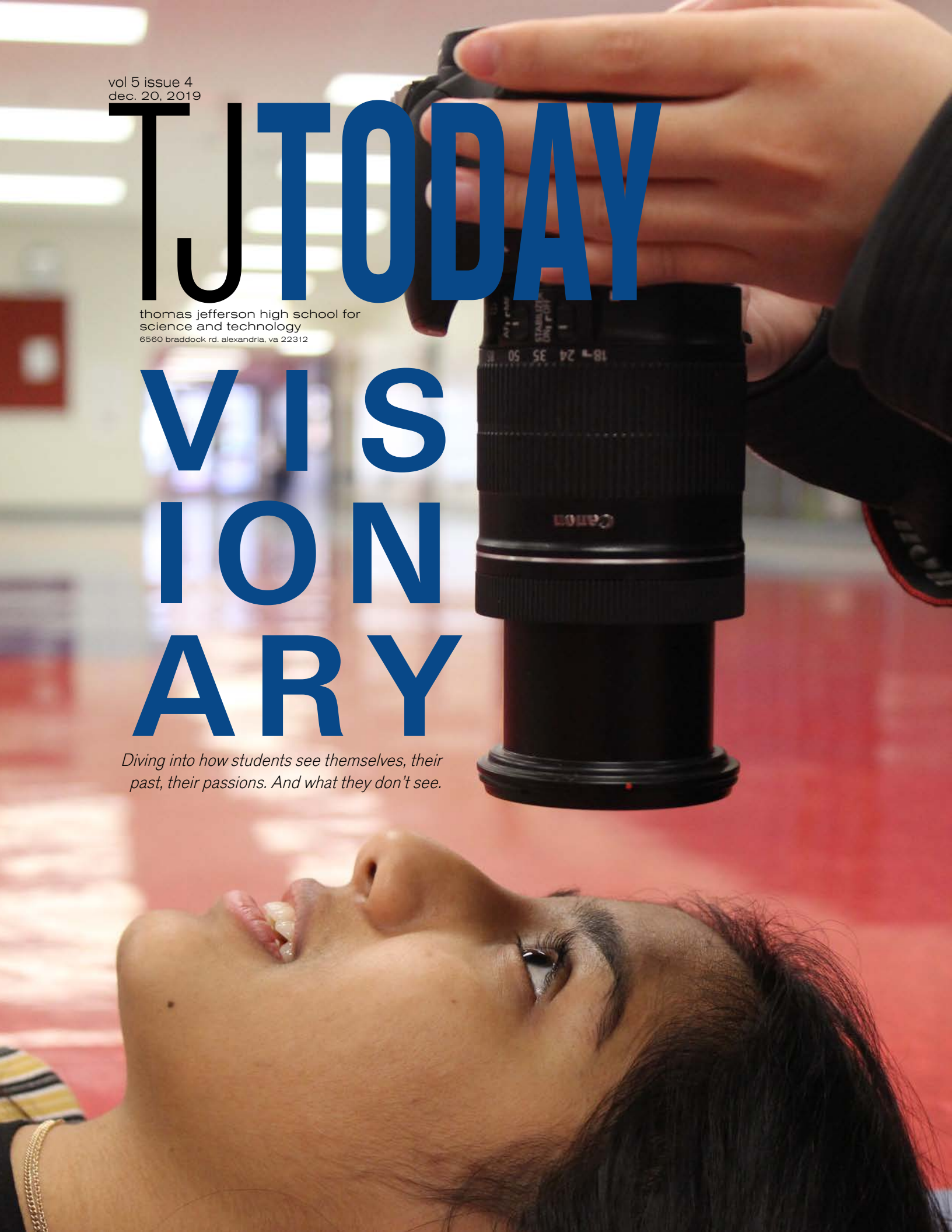
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dec. 20, 2019

TJ TODAY

thomas jefferson high school for
science and technology
6560 braddock rd. alexandria, va 22312

VISION ION ARY

*Diving into how students see themselves, their
past, their passions. And what they don't see.*



ABSTRACT

As Ed Boone in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, senior Evan Howard crouches over his character's son, Christopher Boone, played by senior Joshua Mutterperl. A fifteen-year-old boy on the autism spectrum, Christopher often disobeys his father, which causes conflict in their relationship. "I think Christopher's story is very valuable. It showed me that Christopher is very similar to you and me," Boone said. "It's great to show and teach perspective and empathy towards other people."

PHOTO//Anushka Molugu



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CONTENTS

tjTODAY vol. 5 issue 4 dec. 2019



cover story

12 OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

A look at the lives of the custodial and cafeteria staff.

18 LOST AND FOUND

Over the course of a day, students lose countless things, from phones to time to friends. But everything lost can also be found.

features

04 FINDING YOUR PASSION

Students at Jefferson find their passion in pushing themselves to stay active.

08 HIGHS AND LOWS MAKE US HUMAN

Diving into the hidden nature of mental health and the highs we express in front of others compared to the lows we feel.

22 NOSTALGIC FOR CHILDHOOD

A reflection on childhood memories.

opinion

26 FINDING THE BEAUTY IN PAGEANTS

Pageants empower women as inspirational leaders and provide a platform to effect positive change.

CORRECTION: The opinion piece titled "Volunteering for Graduation" published in the print issue on Nov. 15 contained an error regarding the requirements to graduate. Jefferson students are not required to complete service hours to gradu-

ate. The staff writer who wrote the opinion article in question was referring to the National Honor Society requirement to complete service hours to obtain a seal on their graduation diploma. We apologize for any confusion caused.

A person wearing a blue hoodie is in a starting crouch on a dark track at night. Their hands are on the ground, and they are looking forward. The background is dark with a green light source and a building on the left.

FIND *you* PASS

Whether it's through lifting weights or swimming laps,

Prepared to sprint, senior Brian Hu crouches on the track, focusing on the distance ahead of him. "Track is a good place to alleviate stress," Hu said. "There is a strong team dynamic, and the times get better at meets because of how everything is channeled into running. This makes practicing after school more enjoyable and pushes me to run faster." Photo by Tammy Ding



DING *our* SION

students find their passion in pushing themselves to stay active.



1. While dribbling the basketball, junior Caden Phillips focuses on his job as power forward, keeping an eye out to pass to a teammate. "There's only five guys on the court at a time, so everyone's job is a lot more important and there's a lot more focus and attention to detail required in the game," Phillips said. "I continue to play because I like the team experience and it's really fun to bond with all the guys on the team. It's just a fun outlet for me." //

Connie Ryu **2. Senior Alexis Echano stands on the** balance beam during gymnastics practice, prepared to execute a skill. "[Gymnastics] teaches you how to overcome fear and do things you never thought you would be able to do. The sport makes you feel unstoppable when you land that flip or get that perfect 10.0," Echano said. "Not doing gymnastics [in the future] would feel like a void. I hope to do intramural gymnastics at college or at least go to open gyms and practice some skills in the future." //

Sean Nguyen **3. During wrestling practice, sophomore** Joshua Golden and freshman Nicholas Ta grapple with each other on the ground. "I did jiu jitsu with my sister [junior] Brianna [Ta] when I was four until she came to Jefferson. She saw the wrestling program and because she had grappling background she tried it out," Ta said. "Then my parents took me to a wrestling camp, and it showed me a different perspective on grappling. It opened me up to different ideas and also helped me stay in shape." //

Annika Duneja **4. After Coach Mark Gray-Mendes gives** a pep talk during a timeout, the varsity basketball team altogether puts their fists in the air before resuming the game.

"Playing basketball teaches you teamwork and to put in hard work into things that you love because you want to be successful in them," freshman and varsity basketball player Michael Hwang said. "I don't really think when I play, I just go with the flow." //

Connie Ryu **5. Breaking through the surface of the water,** senior and Jefferson swim captain Jay Misener competes in the 500 meter freestyle event. "I began swimming when I was very young, [and] I'd always hated it with a burning passion. Then around fifth grade, I started to get really fast and it became really rewarding and fun as I got to go to all the travel meets and swim on bigger stages," Misener said. "My interest died a bit around eighth grade, but when I got into [Jefferson] the prospect of TJSD caused me to become super dedicated and I have been all in ever since then." //

Antonio Martin **6. In the weightroom, junior Ulis Jung** stands with a barbell behind his shoulders, ready to do squats. "In freshman year, my friends and I started [coming to weightroom] because we were real small and wanted to get a little bigger and we've just kept at it," Jung said. //





HIGHS AND

Mental health problems, stress and physical exhaustion are often covered by a mask of happiness. This photo essay captures the combination of highs and lows that humanizes us, shaping the way we think and feel.

LOWS

MAKE US HUMAN



MAN

The tension behind junior Shristi Nadkarni's eyes can be seen as tears stream down her cheeks. Struggling with depression for the past two years, Nadkarni has worked hard to learn how to love herself. "I had depression and anxiety through freshman year. It went undiagnosed until sophomore year, where I was always anxious to the point where my heart would be beating really fast for nothing, and I'd have chest pains all the time and migraines and stomach aches for no reason. My grades are still not that good, but I'm recovering from a seasonal depressive episode and hopefully I will do better during the rest of this semester and second semester because I'm genuinely trying to," Nadkarni said. PHOTO//Stuti Gupta



1
Sitting on a paper covered with sticky notes of the highs and lows of others, junior Matthew Hwang ponders the highs and lows of his own life. "Of course everyone has different highs and lows but I think it's important to not only think about the lows of your life, but to really learn and grow from them," Hwang said. PHOTO// Stuti Gupta

2. With her friend senior Sanjana Meduri, senior Sabrina Atkin sits laughing at a video. "Some high points in my life were in 5th grade, when I went on pointe in ballet, getting into TJ, and the first time my older brother came back from college," Sabrina Atkin said. PHOTO//Stuti Gupta
3. Practicing for CHS, Chung is doing a traditional fan dance for iNite tryouts. "My friend is in CHS and she wanted me to do it, so I said, 'If you do KCC traditional, I can do CHS traditional.' So we decided to do both of them this year," junior Yea Eun Chung said. PHOTO//Stuti Gupta
3. At TJ Minds Matter's Cozy Corner, juniors Lauren Nathan, Shristi Nadkarni, Sophia Troshynski, and freshman Rachel Rozsa have fun at the special event. "It's such a good way to relax before Thanksgiving break," Nathan said. "We could relax with food and a hot drink, and I really like how we were able to make cards for people we're thankful for." PHOTO//Stuti Gupta

4



"WHEN I'M HAPPY, IT MEANS THAT I AM SELF MOTIVATED AND THERE ARE PEOPLE AROUND ME WHO WILL SUPPORT ME." LAUREN NATHAN

2



3



5



**"I THOUGHT IT WAS
NORMAL TO FEEL
DEPRESSED, SAD, AND
HATE MYSELF ALL THE
TIME. I HAD NO ENERGY
TO STUDY AND I THOUGHT
I WAS DUMB, AND I FELT
REALLY REALLY TRAPPED
IN MY LIFE." SHRISTI
NADKARNI**

5



Sophomore Arjun Jagannathan is exhausted after JV basketball practice.

"We have a lot of work [to do] and it had been a tough practice, Jagannathan said. "I was just a bit tired, but we are getting a lot better, and we are looking forward to a great season this year." PHOTO//Sean Nguyen

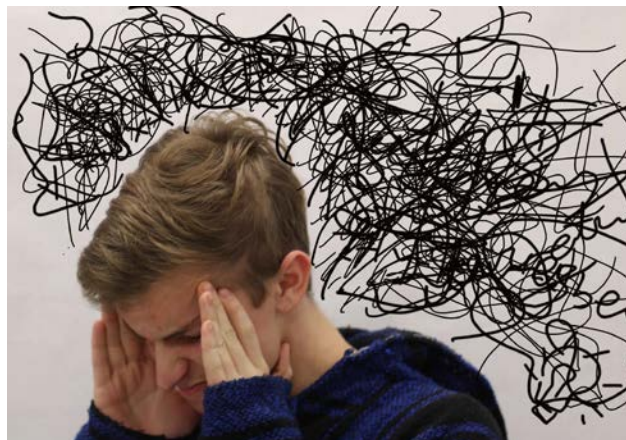
6



6. Playing with the shadows, half of sophomore Sahil Gupta's face covered with a masked smile lies in the light. Due to the stressful, competitive environment at Jefferson, Gupta sometimes finds it challenging to stay positive. "I tend to deal with lows by staying isolated and not sharing my feelings with others, but a low point is simply an opportunity to forget the past and build yourself back up," Gupta said. PHOTO//Pratika Katiyar

7. After being knocked down by a fellow wrestler, senior Jack Bellamy lies on the floor. "A low I experienced in wrestling was going on a losing streak of matches," Bellamy said. However, "My teammates and my desire to win inspire me to continue to wrestle," he said. PHOTO//Annika Duneja

8



As his thoughts drain out onto the paper, junior Josh Malley's stress is strewn across the page. "A low point for me is probably just times when I specifically wish things were better. I'm actively thinking of better alternatives that could or have been, but aren't," Malley said. photo illustration//Eric Feng

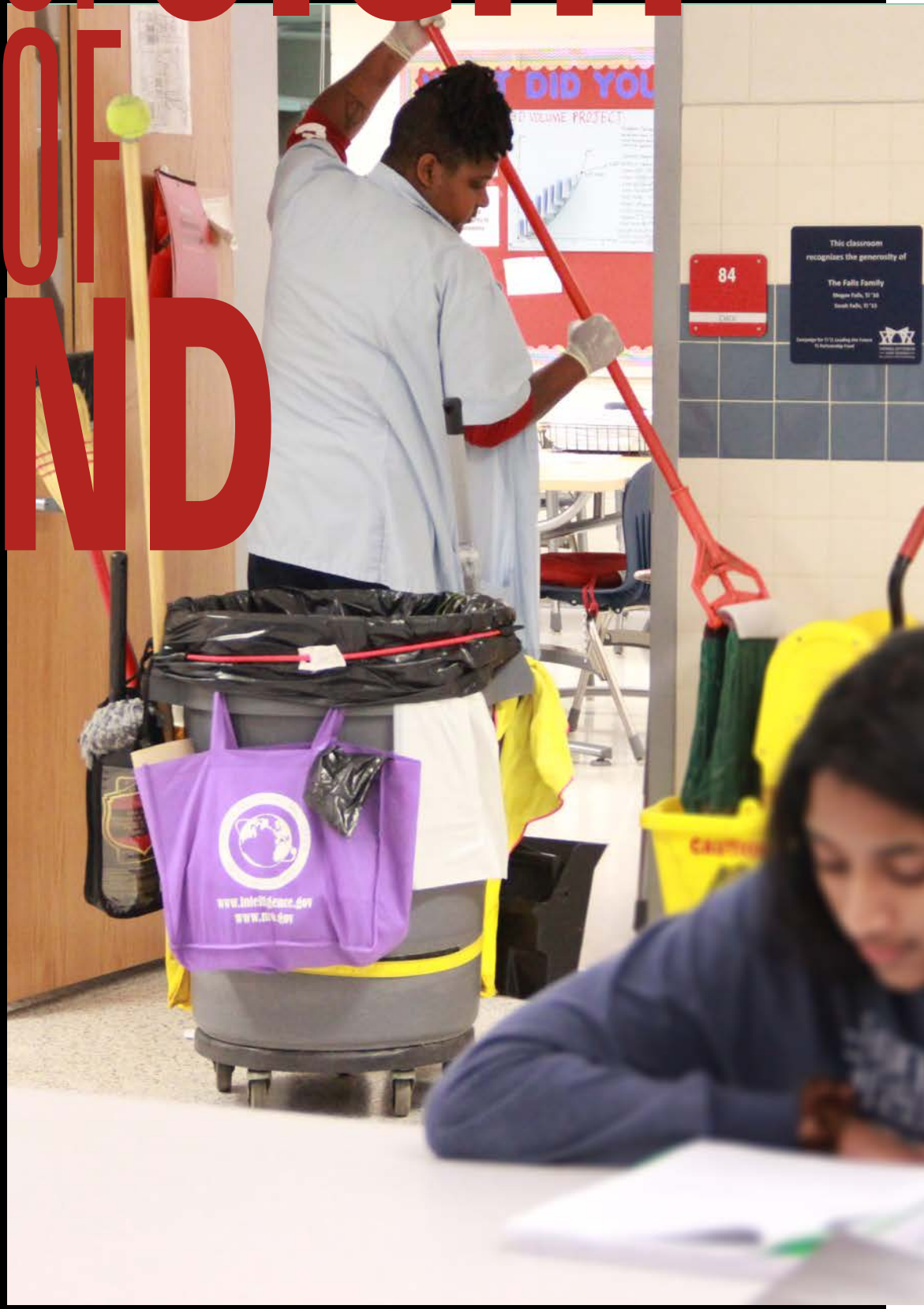
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OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND

Photos by Justin Chang, Irina Lee, and
Grace Mak

Wetting the mop, custodian Synde Johnson cleans the room as junior Aditi Kodali studies at 5:30 p.m., approximately one and a half hours after school ends. The custodians are each in charge of cleaning different areas of the school.



Constantly seen, but perpetually out of sight, this photo essay hopes to shed light on the lives of the custodian and cafeteria workers of Jefferson.



onstantly seen, but perpetually out of sight, the custodial and cafeteria staff of Jef-

ferson arrive to work when students are still in bed and stay at school long after students are enjoying the comforts of home. With the morning shift from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and the evening shift from 3:30 p.m. to midnight, the collective amount of work the custodians put in exceed the hours of the average school day. Synde Johnson is one of several custodians who works the evening shift. Like Johnson, building supervisor Junpei Yuan also works after school hours, and his efforts go beyond the requirements of his schedule. Although he works the morning shift, Yuan sometimes arrives at 6 a.m. to check the building and leaves after the evening shift has started. Through this photo essay, we hope to be the eyes that help students see the lives of Johnson, Yuan, and the custodial and cafeteria staff of Jefferson.



1
PHOTO // Justin Chang, Irina Lee, Grace Mak

1. Fixing a trash bag over the can, custodian Hae Park works behind-the-scenes during a basketball game. Park typically works the night shift at Jefferson alongside a couple other custodians. “The night shift comes in [later and] does all the real bulk work of buffing, waxing, stripping the floors, mopping the bathrooms and changing the paper towels,” custodian James Gibbons said. **2. Grabbing a new trash bag,** custodian Synde Johnson

restocks supplies in classrooms located around the downstairs math hallway. As a night shift worker, she helps restore the school to pristine condition for students. “We just maintain the school to make sure there’s not a mess,” Gibbons said. “You see us going around constantly and making sure you guys have a safe and clean environment.” **3. An assortment of disinfectants** hang on rolling trash cans that accompany custodians as they work.

During the day, custodians can often be seen cleaning after students. “I think they all work incredibly hard while always staying positive and happy to chat with students which is really impressive given how many students leave their lunch space a complete mess,” senior Zoë Gomez-So said. “It’s easy enough to throw away your trash when you’re done and say hello to them in the hallways to show we appreciate them.”



4. On a buffering machine, assistant building supervisor Tico Barclay works through the commons of the second floor. Each custodian is designated specific responsibilities and jobs to carry out around the school building. "We each have a section of the school [and] walk around, sweep, mop, clean any accidents that you guys have," Gibbons said.






1. Piles of frozen pizza lie on a tray as food services workers carefully lays individual pieces in neat rows on an adjacent tray. 2. In the early minutes of lunch, food services workers bustle about the background, restocking trays with nachos, fries, and pizza slices as the long line of students make their way through the cafeteria. 3. Slicing fresh oranges into thick wedges, food services worker Jenny Lee smiles at a joke her coworker across the room cracks. 4. swiftly placing pepperoni slices on top of frozen cheese pizzas, food services worker Jong-Suk Lee works efficiently alongside coworker Nadeem Khan to prepare food for students in time for the busy lunch block. 5. Steam rises from a metal tub filled with dry pasta as food services worker Tung Tran pours boiling water over it.

PHOTO // Justin Chang, Irina Lee, Grace Mak







Over the course of a school day, students lose countless things, from phones to time to friends. But everything lost can also be found and often students end up doing just that too.

LOST & FOUND

LOSING & FINDING

FRIENDS

1A. Arm outstretched, freshman Anisha Talreja attempts to keep two friends from walking away. Talreja finds losing friends to be a disheartening thing. "I wondered about them and thought about how they were doing, and I regretted that we couldn't get in contact," Talreja said. **1B. Sitting on a set of stairs,** Talreja, having found a new set of friends, chats with freshmen Harini Ramaswamy and Sara Yoon. Talreja credits Jefferson's environment as well as programs such as the BigSibs with fostering an environment in which it's easier to make new friends. "With the BigSibs program, at the start of the school year, you have at least one person you know," Talreja said.

PHONES

2A. Walking to their next period, a student steps over a missing phone in their hurry to get to class on time. However, care is crucial towards avoiding losing items. "Routinely just always check your pockets it's a good habit to have. Just make sure you have everything you need," senior Nathan Ma said. **2B. Recovering**

the phone, a student picks it from its place on the ground. Ma recommends increased awareness in order to get to more situations like these. "Whenever people go, 'Hey you lost a wallet,' encourage more people to be like, 'Hey, you know, can you return that wallet?'" Ma said.

THINGS

3A. Amidst lost items, sophomore Ryan Lien attempts to find his lunchbox in the lost and found closet. Lien, who hates losing items, appreciates that other mediums in addition to a physical lost-and found are available. "There's a TJ Lost and Found found Facebook group that a lot of people are in that's really helpful." **3B. Smiling in relief, Lien** cuddles his lunchbox after finding it through various methods of securing lost items. For Lien, after the stress and effort put into finding lost items, finding lost items is a euphoric feeling. "It's like the weight's lifted off your shoulders, it's like, mission accomplished, we can go home boys. It's just like walking on sun shine because everything is how it was."

TIME

4A. Hands pressed against her head, freshman Niharika Chandna attempts to glean information from her bio textbook hours into the early morning. With time often being a commodity for students at Jefferson, this is a common sight not just for Chandna, but students at every grade level. "I am doing so many extracurricular activities, many provided by TJ itself, that I find it hard to get everything done in the little time I have," Chandna said. **4B. Arm held back in** anticipation of the returning ball, Chandna, who manages to find time for herself as well, plays ping pong on a school night. Although Chandna notes that making time to do activities that she enjoys often makes it harder to get everything done on time, she adds that it is worth it. "Doing things that I enjoy gives me a great break during the day. I get some time to destress and think about something other than school," Chandna said. "Having something to do other than school-work also makes me more efficient while working because I don't have as much time to waste."



1a.

1b.

3b.

4b.

3a.



PHOTOS // Anuj Khemka, Aafreen Ali, Ananda Kalukin

nostalgic





for childhood

*As students grow older,
they still cling to what made
them happy as children.
And who they are today.*
Aumena Choudhry



1. Playing on a duck at the Fair Oaks Mall, freshman Laasya Ravipati decided to relive childhood memories when she found the lineup of animals and vehicles, which move when provided with a quarter. "It was hard to cram my feet into them, but fun to feel like a kid again," Ravipati said. **2. Freshman Charu Mehta reads a book** in her free time during lunch. While Jefferson students are known to be very busy, they enjoy their free time and days of middle school when they had time to pursue smaller interests that have taken a backseat in exchange for rigorous

academics. That doesn't mean they have forgotten their previous passions. "In my free time I like to read; if it wasn't winter, I'd play tennis," Mehta said. **3. Greeting Santa by a warm fireplace**, freshman Kalagee Mehta visited a Christmas event titled "A Visit with Santa" with friends. "Seeing Santa reminds you of the magic of the holidays and the same carefreeness of being a kid," Mehta said.

4



4. With his hands gripping the handlebars, sophomore Bhas with Suresh gets ready to ride his bike. It provides him with not only a good hobby, but also as a way to connect with his brother in college. "My brother and I used to bike around, and now that he's off in college it really helps me connect with him even though I don't see him as often anymore," Suresh said. **5. Senior Jialin Tso plays the piano** during lunch. Tso has played piano since she was a child. "Piano is a way for me to relax and let out stress in a way no other medium can. I

love how I can express my emotions through paino and connect with different audiences," Tso said. **6. Getting ready to color a series of orange circles,** junior Ananya Bagai, like many of her peers, enjoys the arts and views it as a creative outlet to channel her emotions. "Whatever you're feeling at the time that you create comes out in what you create, and I think that's really cool. Life is more fun when you color outside the lines," Bagai said.



MISS



FINDING THE BEAUTY IN PAGEANTS

Empowering women as inspirational leaders and providing a platform to effect positive change

Beauty pageants aren't all about the beauty anymore.

Pageants are opening up to include and consider various qualities including personality and extracurricular activities. Junior Anjali Nair, winner of the 2019-2020 National American Miss Jr. Teen competition, was recognized for her achievements in STEM research, among a variety of factors.

Although these pageants may judge contestants on subjective qualities and create a standard upon which beauty is judged, at least they are moving in the right direction. Competitions all around the world are ditching the swimsuit segments and adopting more opportunities for contestants to showcase their talents and skills and to give them a voice. They recognize women for their contributions to society and allow them to effect change philanthropically as role models for others.

For those who might not have the resources or opportunities to enact change, pageants also give contestants a platform to promote a cause and kickstart a project to help people and make an impact around the world.

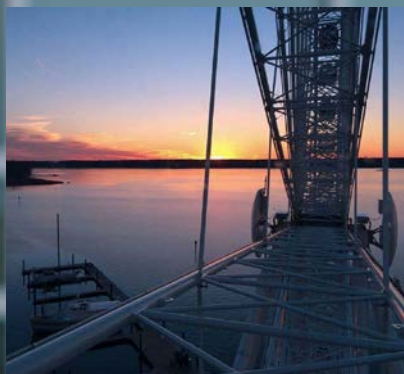
Beauty pageants can open doors to new opportunities. Many went on to have successful modeling and acting careers, and some even went on to become successful broadcast journalists and entrepreneurs. Scholarships given by Miss America can help contestants gain access to a better education and possibly a better life.

The hard work and dedication these women have to compete in pageants and the platform they provide to empower women must not be overlooked. We must acknowledge and find the beauty in pageants.

Illustration by Muhib Zaman

“So, I’m your self taught. My dad had bought me Udemy lessons, but they were kind of bad. It just started developing into a hobby. [It was] sophomore year when I really improved.

PHOTOGRAPHER IN FOCUS



I post a lot of my the photos I feel are good [on Instagram]. This one was taken in middle school on a phone. The composition was really nice [and] the color was perfect.



I think this is one of my better photos. It’s a 30 second exposure of the Milky Way. It was at 12 AM.



This was the first few photos I took with my new DSLR.



PHOTO // Maria Abramova
REPORTING // Sid Ram

WHAT I’VE LEARNED

Junior
Forrest
Meng