

NSPA Artist of the Year Statement from Alanna Jimenez, El Corazón

As the Illustrations Editor (and sole illustrator) for El Corazón, the yearbook for El Camino Real Charter High School in Woodland Hills, California, I worked to integrate illustrations into our yearbook for the first time in our yearbook's 51-year history as we played with our perceptions of reality through the theme concept "This is Real."

I remember how nervous I was because this year was my first year as a member of the staff. My inexperience fueled my passion, and I was determined to make the best yearbook I possibly could with the amazing resources and staff members that were given to me. Layouts, stories, and illustrations filled my schedule, but I was not complaining. Of course deadlines have a way of keeping a person or staff organized and efficient, but, above all, I realized that deadlines foster creativity. At first, I found it hard to be creative on a deadline, but then I realized that it was the one thing that pushed me to make my work better. Our spreads, which often featured my full- or partial-bleed illustrations, had to make sense, be visually striking, and relate back to our theme. It was understandably a lot of pressure. Much of the art that I created has my own personal touch, but each piece ties directly into the story and the content on each page. For some spreads I went with a more editorial design, like the "Say Their Names" Black Lives Matter spread, and for some I took a more realistic approach, like the profile on Justin Levy which features an accurate depiction of the person and how his life was affected by the pandemic.

The best advice I was given was, "Sometimes, you don't need to add things that don't have to be there." That's the route we were heading at first: Pages filled with aesthetic decisions rather than important content. As soon as I shifted to looking at the bigger picture, the illustrations came more easily. I felt very listened to when it came to creative decisions, and the staff was willing to wait on me because I was producing meaningful and valuable art. Often, I would meet with the EIC and the adviser to develop a first draft, and then, after some lengthy discussion about how we could improve our spreads, we often went back to the drawing board as a staff. We made sure to keep the theme in mind, while being very mindful about how my illustrations could be incorporated into the spreads. We knew we couldn't portray our school accurately and realistically without using reference photos of each person's face to make sure each student or teacher would be instantly recognizable. For us, the illustrations were not decorations, but rather a way to help illustrate how distance learning altered our perception of reality.

Once we finished our book, I was so proud of the staff and of myself for learning to adapt and take constructive criticism for this project. I learned how to manage my part-time job, my school work and my yearbook work while simultaneously building one of the best portfolios I've ever worked on. But I could not have done as much without my fellow staff members. They pushed me to be more creative and taught me the entire process of creating a publication full of stories that are visually and verbally expressed. As illustrations were so integral in telling the story of our pandemic year, I feel very proud to present this portfolio to you all. Even if I am not named Artist of the Year, I am very grateful that I had this opportunity. Thank you for your time.

Descriptions of Each Sample

1. **COVID-19 Diagnosis (pages 40-41)**

It was really important to cover how COVID-19 directly affected the students in our school. One of the people featured had a family member who tested positive, and others had varying degrees of symptoms. I decided to use one unifying color for all the illustrations with a black-and-white theme on the people to keep the focus on the pandemic and the serious nature of the topic. I had many references of the students' faces to make them recognizable, and I varied up the poses around the layout to keep the spread visually interesting.

2. **Profile: Justin Levy (pages 14-15)**

Most of the illustrated profile spreads we created featured students on their own, but this spread also had the focus on Justin Levy's workspace, where he 3D prints face shields for hospital workers. I used as many photos from him as I could to help accurately describe the important work he does for the community. I chose a black background so that the neon orange, blue and green of his 3D-printed items could pop.

3. **Profile: Leilani Hernandez (pages 104-105)**

As lockdowns around California eased, senior Leilani Hernandez was able to express her talent of ice skating again. Since many students did not have the chance to leave their homes during the pandemic, I felt the environment must have the most care and attention in this piece. Much of the emphasis of this spread is put on the detailed mountain landscape and snow details. I thought it was crucial for readers to feel as though they could experience the crisp winter snow just like Hernandez did. Her interview was incredible, and it helped me bring her story to life through the illustration.

4. **"Among Us" (pages 58-59)**

Based around "Among Us," a murder mystery computer/phone game that had its spotlight toward the end of 2020, this spread features many different students as if they were playing a game together. I conducted the interviews and asked different students which colors and costumes they chose in the game, and made sure those matched the illustration. Additionally, the artwork features different expressions of the "imposters," which align with the story. It was really important to capture little details in a spread on such a universal game around our school, so I also included illustrated mods, like the tasks each person enjoyed doing in the game.

5. **Black Lives Matter: Say Their Names (pages 26-27)**

For a story that speaks for itself in the writing, I wanted the illustrations to complement well, while also providing a visual memorial for the victims of police brutality during the height of the BLM movement. The orange coloring is a more editorial shading that helped to tie the three-spread package together, but I made sure the line work on the illustrations provided an accurate and realistic representation of their faces to show respect for the four.

AS FAMILY MEMBERS TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, STUDENTS PREPARE TO LOSE LOVED ONES

DIAGNOSIS

As positive COVID-19 diagnoses rolled in for themselves and their family members, some students confronted the possibility, and sometimes the reality, of death.

For senior Julia Gonzalez, who never contracted the novel coronavirus herself, it was her family who kept her worried.

"It was really scary knowing my dad had COVID," Gonzalez said. "I was unsure of what would happen to him because he is 50, but I was also assured that my dad is a very strong and fit man who is active, so that kept me hopeful that he would be OK."

Despite her positivity about her father, she maintained concern over her grandmother, 70.

"The scariest part was hoping my grandma would not get it since she lives with us," Gonzalez said. "Thankfully, my dad fully recovered, and no one else contracted COVID."

Like Gonzalez, junior Daniel Yaacov was most worried for family members after receiving his positive diagnosis.

"I wasn't scared for myself," Yaacov said, "but there were a few high risk people in my household, and I didn't want to spread it to anyone, so I had to quarantine myself."

The desire to protect those who were most at-risk, was at the forefront of junior

Katherine Rosa's mind too.

"I didn't have time to feel scared for myself [once I was diagnosed with COVID-19], because my grandma was in the hospital at the time" Rosas said. "I was also worried about my mom because she has a weak immune system, so I had to live with my grandpa for a month to make sure she was safe."

Rosas recalled little about that time in her family's life, attributing it to the emotional toll of losing her grandmother.

"It all happened very quickly, so we all didn't really have time to process everything, because within a week my grandma passed away," Rosas said. "I'm not really sure how I was feeling at the time. It's like a blur."

Her personal experience with the pandemic will stay with her, Rosas said, long after other signs of these times disappear.

"I'm scared to go back to 'normal' life, because others lost nothing," she said, "and they will feel like nothing happened, and that's good, but I just feel like they will forget. And for me, it's something I won't ever forget, and my life will never be the same. I won't ever forget the feeling of being weak and helpless. I lost the woman who raised me."

Story by Cerasela Hanseter,
Illustration by Alanna Jimenez

"I never got COVID, but my dad did. I was constantly tricking myself into thinking I was sick, or looking out for all of the symptoms."

- Senior Julia Gonzalez

SYMPTOMS optional

Students either do or don't feel COVID-19 symptoms

"I tested positive on May 4, 2020, and I was sick for about four days. I felt very fatigued and weak, lost my appetite and couldn't stand for too long because I felt like I was going to pass out. I spent most of my time laying down. I also had mild fever."

- JUNIOR
KATHERINE
ROSAS

"In November 2020 over Thanksgiving break, I tested positive for COVID. I was sick for a little over a week, with body aches and headaches, and no energy. Oh, and no smell. I was bedridden for most of the time."

- JUNIOR
DANIEL
YAACOV

"I was diagnosed with COVID on July 22, 2020. My brothers and I didn't really feel anything, but we all got tested because my sister was feeling symptoms, as well as my mom and dad."

- JUNIOR MELODY
JAMNESHAN

fine PRINT

Story by Ellis Preston, Illustration by Alanna Jimenez

“Right as the pandemic started, I got my spools and just started printing. I wanted to be able to have a positive impact, and help in any way I could.”

- Junior Justin Levy

3D printing allowed junior Justin Levy to support frontline workers

A large box of neon plastic spools arrived at Junior Justin Levy's doorstep, waiting to be 3D printed into face shields and donated to first responders.

After Levy saw a Tweet asking for people that would be able to print face shields for hospitals, Levy got to work.

"I saw the need," Levy said, "and I wanted to help out."

He started off by printing 20 face shields in a week, and by May 2020, that turned into 40 a day. As of the following November, he had printed over 1000 face shields with his 3D printer and was still going strong.

3D printing started to catch Levy's interest in 2017 when its community started growing. He first got his own 3D printer in 2018, hoping to have some fun.

"For me it was originally just a toy," Levy said, "but then I started to realize how much it really was a tool."

When he ended up creating a shelf bracket for his mom, he began to realize that he was able to use the 3D printer to help out his family, creating a smooth transition to helping his community.

"It was fulfilling being able to really help and see the need of what was happening," Levy said. "Just seeing the smiles and thanks I was getting was all I needed."

Because of his donation endeavor, Levy was recognized for his 3D printing by the LA times in an April 7, 2020, article titled, "El Camino Real wrestler Justin Levy makes face shields with 3D printer."

"I went off the cuff [in the interview]," Levy said. "It was so quick, and I wasn't really planning on it."

After the LA times interview, Levy was also interviewed by Joe Telling, a YouTube influencer with a channel called "The 3D Printing Nerd."

"[Telling] is actually one of the first people who really started posting videos about 3D printing," Levy said. "Watching him really inspired me to start working on 3D printers."

Each individual face shield took around 20 minutes to print.

"I have to make sure I am monitoring them as closely as I can," Levy said. "It's such a big amount of time."

Levy used the Prusa i3 mk3 model,

which he said is the "gold standard" for 3D printing. The plastic he used to print the face shields is called PetG.

"It's the same material that water bottles and soda bottles are made from," he said.

The plastic cost around \$25 per kilogram, which comes out to about 65 cents per face shield. In order to fund his project, Levy often paid out of pocket, but he also sought out donations.

"I got some funds donated from family and friends," Levy said. "Then through the organization I was working with, Masks for Docs, they donated a few spools of film, too."

Levy worked with Masks for Docs as well as the organization Crash Face LA in order to find places to donate the masks. As the pandemic continued into the new year, Levy also partnered with Toys for Tots to donate printed toys for children in addition to face masks for hospitals.

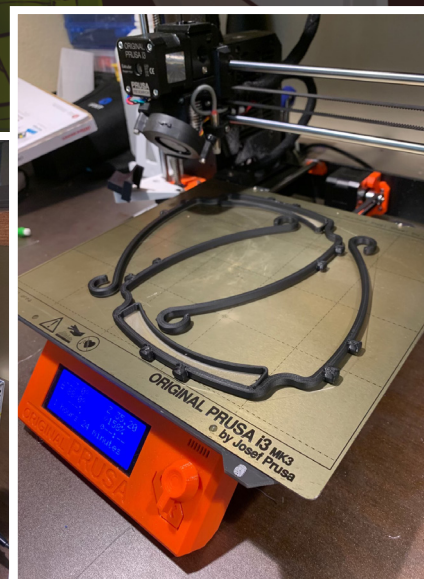
"I just donated a couple of spools of film and we are creating flexible toys for kids in need," Levy said. "I felt really grateful that I was able to help in some way in this craziness that's going on in the world."

Wield shields

The first test-run of face shields print out. Junior Justin Levy chose the public domain design from 3DVerkstan over others because of its strength and minimal material. Photo by Justin Levy, printed with permission

For the kids

As part of a donation program for children, junior Justin Levy's printer runs toy dinosaurs. He began with printing toys and other around-the-house objects, but soon saw 3D printing as a tool for making a difference. Photo by Justin Levy, printed with permission



The Giver

After donating 3D printed face shields to West Hills Medical Plaza, junior Justin Levy shares a few words with a healthcare worker. Photo by Justin Levy, printed with permission

how do you HELP?

Donations for pandemic essential workers came in a variety of forms

"I've donated my family's extra food for firefighters." - junior Noa Levy

"The club I run, Recycle for Research, organized a snack drive for the medical front line workers." - junior Donovan Martel

"My mom's a nurse, and we had a 3D printer at home, so we [also] made masks." - sophomore Julia Borruel-Oliver

NICE SKATES

Senior Leilani Hernandez scrapes the ice from indoor rinks to frosted-over reservoirs

Story by Janeysi Godinez and Rebecca Tam, Illustration by Alanna Jimenez

Her eyes glowed in admiration as she watched Disney's Ice Princess glide along the ice majestically, twirling and spinning in a demonstration of power. At four years old, current senior Leilani Hernandez looked up to the Ice Princess's grace and love for science. Years later, she would be skating on a reservoir in the great outdoors of Utah.

"After I saw the Ice Princess," Hernandez said, "I was like, 'Mom, I want to start skating like the princess in the movies.'"

At 4 years old, Hernandez took her first wobbly steps onto the ice, and by the time she was 9, she was skating regularly.

"My mom always says she thought I would be discouraged once I fell down," Hernandez said. "I did fall multiple times, but I got back up and I wanted to do lessons."

Hernandez said she knew that falling down would be part of the process, so she did not let those small inconveniences discourage her from consistently improving.

"I've learned so many lessons from skating like perseverance and determination," Hernandez said. "A big part of learning how to land a jump [is] learning how to figure out what I am doing wrong so that next time I eventually get to where I want to be."

One of the jumps that Hernandez

struggled with was the Waltz jump, the first jump she learned.

"I was so scared, [wondering] how I was supposed to get off the ice and get in the air and get on the other foot," Hernandez said. "It took a long time but I eventually got there and now it's the easiest."

Another technique that Hernandez learned was the axel jump, and she has applied her AP Physics education from junior year to her understanding of the move.

"Usually you do it with your arms on your chest to start rotating," Hernandez said. "It's harder if you put your arms over your head but it looks prettier. It's harder because you don't have the center of gravity so when you do it with your arms above you do get extra points in competitions and it is cooler."

Before the pandemic, Hernandez took part in national skating competitions.

"Even though you're competing against most of the people it's nice meeting lots of different people," Hernandez said. "We cheer each other on in competitions even though we are skating in singles, we still have that team spirit."

Though Hernandez was disappointed when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the skating rink where she usually practiced,

she said that skating on natural lakes would have been preferable.

"It has always been my dream to ski on a lake because I feel like that's how [ice skating first] started, and you can connect with nature."

Hernandez's father was able to make her dream come true for her quinceañera.

"It was winter, but there's not much snow here in California, so we flew to Utah on a whim," Hernandez said. "All of the lakes were melted, and we were devastated because we flew here and only had two days to find a lake to skate on or else we just wasted all this money. We drove around, and eventually we saw a reservoir."

After throwing rocks at the surface of the frozen Causey Reservoir to make sure the ice wasn't too thin, they cleared the ice of snow, twigs and rocks.

"I had to put a life vest on because it was a 182-foot-deep reservoir, and there was a possibility that the ice would break," Hernandez said. "Our friend, who is an expert, put a 3-foot plank of wood out on the surface of the ice, so if something happened, I could grab that piece of wood. Eventually, after three hours of [preparing the ice], I got to skate. It was the best experience ever."

SO MUCH YOU CAN LEARN LIKE HERNANDEZ, THESE JUNIORS APPLY PHYSICS TO THEIR LIVES

"There are so many things that I used to experience in daily life that I couldn't explain. But I can with an understanding of laws and concepts of physics."
- junior Daniel Celnik

"Most people do not really need knowledge of 2D momentum explosions, but it teaches elevated critical thinking and problem solving."
- junior Jacob Milchman

"I learned circular motion, which connects the rotation of our legs to the rotation of circles. I never connected the fact that our legs move in arcs like a rolling wheel."
- junior Curtis Manasca

"I'm more aware of the reasoning behind the engineering in the transportation industry, and how they are designed to maximize efficiency and passenger comfort."
- junior Micah Kepe

"The community we create lets us all get really close because we really understand what it's like to fall and get back up all the time."

- Senior Leilani Hernandez

On thin ice

Edging toward the cleared off Causey Reservoir in Utah, current senior Leilani Hernandez prepares to ice skate outdoors for her quinceañera. Photo from Leilani Hernandez, printed with permission.

Bird of paradise

Senior Leilani Hernandez performs at a US Figure Skating Showcase competition at Iceoplex in Simi Valley. Photo from Leilani Hernandez, printed with permission



TASK OR pass

68 Among Us players name their least favorite task



DOWNLOAD/UPLOAD
It's just two clicks, right, but when you're waiting for it to finish it just makes you nervous." - junior Fredy Herrarte

FIX WIRING
It's not really hard, it's just one of those tasks you have to do over and over." - junior Hana Yu

SWIPE CARD
It can be very annoying. I either did it too fast or too slow." - senior Randi Ramirez

CLEARING ASTEROIDS
You're kind of vulnerable, just standing there. And if there's no visual tasks, you can't tell if someone is faking it." - junior Ashley Sotnik

COLOR theory

Two colors stand out as most suspicious



"RED"

would always be mysterious and more defensive than other people while we were voting and discussing." - senior Rachel Perez

"CYAN"

is really sus honestly because they pretend to be safe, and they keep you alive, gaslighting you." - junior Heather Montrose

Out of 98 Instagram votes: Red got 47, cyan got 38 and other colors totaled to 13

freshman Paul Ecklund



"I LIKE KEEPING AT LEAST ONE OTHER PERSON I CAN TRUST WITH ME." - senior Amber Karimee

"I LIKE PLAYING DETECTIVE AS CREWMATE, BUT AFTER I DO MY TASKS, IT'S FUN PLAYING AMONG US LIKE A MURDER MYSTERY." - junior Jorge Rangel

kinda SUS

SPACE STATION MURDER-MYSTERY GAME GAINS NATIONAL POPULARITY

Join code: THISRL

Let's play one game. Can you guess who the imposters are among us?

The players begin in Cafeteria and all make their way together to the card swipe.

Everyone gets their task completed in less than four swipes, and everyone leaves except for sophomore Dan Lehavi and senior Gwendolyn Goldenberg.

After Goldenberg completes her wires, the lights go down, and she sees her report button light up.

"Body reported" pops up on screen.

Where'd they die?

And wait... who was with them last? Actually... Where was everyone else?

Players huddle around a large round table to discuss who the murderer could be.

Junior Jorge Rangel had been sticking with Senior Tijana Karovic for quite some time, and the others think that was starting to become a little suspicious.

"White seems good but is always sus," Lehavi immediately interjects.

Offended, Rangel fires back that he simply "[likes to] make some friends and have fun."

Jumping in, freshman Paul Ecklund states that senior Amber Karimee is safe because they had been together the whole time doing downloads and watching vents.

Suddenly, Karimee turns an accusatory eye towards Goldenberg.

Defensively, Goldenberg desperately pleads, "I [can't] be an imposter

because I'm really bad at being sneaky, low-key."

Of course, this is not enough for the lobby, and the familiar voting sound fills the air as Goldenberg is voted out. Her body floats across the black space void as the team ejects her from the ship.

White letters show that Goldenberg was not the imposter, sending everyone into a panic.

But who accused her?

Was it Karimee?

Pressing the emergency button once again, Ecklund accuses Rangel of being the imposter:

"He could have moved around in the vents, sabotaged the map, and killed pink!" Ecklund says.

Both Karovic and Lehavi immediately vote White along with the rest of the lobby. Horrified, Rangel is ejected into space as the letters reveal that White

was not the imposter.

Wait, so it has to be Karovic and Lehavi?

They both just accused a crewmate.

There are only six people left now, though, which means that a double-kill is all the imposters need to win.

Tensions rise, as three of the crewmates hit the "Use" button and watch the countdown go off. But the imposters use their sabotage to turn on the reactor, so all the crewmates have to run there, giving the imposters more time for the cooldown to run off.

Double kill. Crewmates see "Defeat" as Red and Orange are lit up on screen, Karovic and Lehavi victorious.

Now you know who the imposters were.

Did you vote correctly?

senior Tijana Karovic

sophomore Dan Lehavi

senior Gwendolyn Goldenberg

FOUR'S a CROWD

A fourth map is announced named "Airship" sparking new excitement



"The new map includes more intricate details than the other maps. I'm really excited to play on it. Hopefully it won't be too confusing with the added tasks and features." - junior Nida Yar-Khan

This is now

Two crewmates stand in the cockpit region of the "Airship" Among Us map. The map was announced after the game won Best Multiplayer at the Game Awards.

"I think the game needed a change to keep it alive, and that is exactly what they did. This will quite literally add a whole new element to playing, and I'm so glad they started developing it." - sophomore Sierra Ferrante

Layout by David Dablo and Alanna Jimenez, illustrations by Alanna Jimenez

**BLACK LIVES MATTER
MOVEMENT PICKED
UP MOMENTUM**

SAY their NAMES

Story by Nida Yar-Khan,
Illustration by Alanna Jimenez,
Layout by David Dablo



The killings of four black lives sparked protests throughout the nation over the summer, as advocates risked their lives to support the Black Lives Matter movement and call for an end to systemic racism.

These events inspired many students who joined protests and posted to social media over the summer and during the first months of the school year.

GEORGE FLOYD

When George Floyd was killed by a Minnesota police officer May 25, 2020, worldwide protests soon followed, including many local protests in Los Angeles county.

Some students on campus participated in the protests or posted on social media.

"I was in shock," freshman Ria Voodi said. "It was so cruel and inhumane and it's the first major police brutality attack to get a nationwide spotlight. The reaction was far greater, and that was just so many mixed emotions"

BREONNA TAYLOR

When police officers stormed Breonna Taylor's Kentucky apartment and opened fire March 13, 2020, they hit Taylor with six bullets, killing her.

"The death of Breonna Taylor was another reaction that fueled this inert push that would really flourish into what I portray as my moral compass," junior Glen Caballero said. "It is something that should have never happened, and the amount of information to really just forget about cases like these are unforgivable."

AHMAUD ARBERY

When Ahmaud Arbery was jogging in Georgia Feb. 23, 2020, three men confronted and shot him.

"[Arbery's death] brought light to the realization that there were so many other stories like his," junior Victoria Aguilar said, "and that because BLM wasn't 'trending' at those times, their voices and stories would never be heard and instead they would be looked over and turned into statistics."

ELIJAH MCCLAIN

When Elijah McClain was walking home from the store, someone reported a "suspicious person" in a ski mask, and when police officials approached McClain, he is said to have resisted arrest. The officers pinned McClain down and injected ketamine into

his bloodstream. Days later, he was declared brain dead after having a heart attack on his way to the hospital.

"With the death of Elijah McClain, that's when I began to really invest in the fight against racism," Caballero said. "Knowing that myself, a POC (Asian American) and part of the LGBTQ+ community, that I should stand up for what's right, and with that I developed empathy for others and my loved ones."

Caballero said he felt that different instances of institutionalized racism have changed, and that more change beyond protests is required to improve the treatment of people of color.

"Some change happens here and there, but really more often than not,

oppressive systems are just rebuilt and remodeled," Caballero said. "And then a lot of us tend to just stay implicit and comply with these horrendous events, time and time again. Change has been made, but only at a minimum level."

Social media was widely used to spread of information connected to the Black Lives Matter movement during these protests, and it also created the rise of online activism through posts, as seen on the next two pages. Aguilar saw pros and cons to the development.

"I feel as though now people are more aware of the issue due to news, protests, and social media circulation, and through this, people were educated. But because BLM was treated like a trend it will not have

a lasting effect," Aguilar said "The issue is more prevalent and changes have been made, but only constant advocacy will get society to where we truly want to be."

Caballero said he was proud of how he changed as a result of the events.

"I've never really got into politics, social movements, and human rights. But after what I've experienced in the last year, I can confidently say I'm a better and different person than I was in March 2020, and that we all have the opportunity to grow and learn," Caballero said. "It's truly something that this pandemic has taught me, however it should have never taken a pandemic to focus my attention on those who are hurt. It's only a matter of if your willing to consider your ignorance as a factor."

Spreading the word
The ecr2021 Instagram account posted the flyer below to their grid June 9, 2020. "Come show your support for Black Lives Matter," their caption said.

EL CAMINO REAL CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
MARCH WITH BSU
FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH
12-1 PM

NO JUSTICE
NO PEACE

BLACK LIVES
MATTER

On the next page
The social media activism during the Black Lives Matter movement