

Extremely strict or lenient parenting
makes students struggle to connect
with their parents

PUPPETEER PARENTS



ht

Redondo Union High School
Redondo Beach, CA
Dec. 17, 2021
Vol. CII Edition 5

MADAME PRESIDENT

Anika Chandra is the first ever female AP Government President in RUHS history

by ZOE ROSSI

In an historic presidency for the class of 2022, senior Democrat Anika Chandra became the first female AP Government president in RUHS history on Dec. 3. Chandra beat her opponent, senior Republican Patrick Henry, with an electoral win of 320-218 while also winning over 59.5 percent of the popular vote.

“Being president has been pretty exciting,” Chandra said. “I didn’t even expect to make it past the first primary so I’m glad I took a chance and ran even if the election has been a difficult process.”

Since the president was voted on by five class periods, according to Chandra, publicity and exposure were “essential” for the candidates to acquire the votes needed to win. AP Government teacher Michael Henges played advertisements the candidates created during class each week with Chandra utilizing “unique” three-minute videos made by her classmate Hana Gardner.

“I wanted to make the videos very memorable. We were inspired by different shows and movies and wanted to recreate them to promote Anika’s campaign. For example, a video we recreated was the ‘Legally Blonde’ video she sent to Harvard’s admissions,” Gardner said. “All of our campaign ads were meant to be satirical in some way. I am grateful to have the opportunity to be really involved and put my creative side into the election.”

According to Chandra, these videos and other forms of publicity were “crucial” to her win as she received feedback from other students saying they were the highlight of the election for them.

“We have a whole media site for the government class, and you want to be the candidate whose name is always on there. You want to get publicity even if it’s bad. Any press is good press,” Chandra said. “You vote for the name you see more often. We needed to ensure it was my name people saw most in the media and that it was associated with the majority of the positive press.”

Henges saw the “snowballed” involvement of the media through the election and the role it played in the polls. According to Henges, the candidates used this media outlet to “appeal to their peers,” helping to simulate an “actual election” and teaching his students a “hands-on approach” to politics.

“Adding the media into the election is what brought it to life. The students told the story of what was happening during the election by reporting on it,” Henges said. “I decided to make a universal AP Government election with all my classes being involved and to make it feel bigger.”

In addition to the campaign videos and website, after-school debates, which were held in person and online, gave students the opportunity to stay involved and



PHOTO BY VALERIE TISCANERO

up to date on the election.

“You never knew what questions we were going to be asked during the debate because they didn’t give these questions to us,” Chandra said. “Some questions were really broad like ‘What do you think about the education system in America?’ Others were very particular such as, ‘What are your thoughts on the pink tax?’ You didn’t know to what extent you needed to prepare.”

As Henges watched this “historical election” play out, he noticed Chandra’s “hard work” and “eloquence” in her campaign. In addition to her creative campaign videos, Henges notes that Chandra was prepared for all the debates and used them as an opportunity to connect with voters.

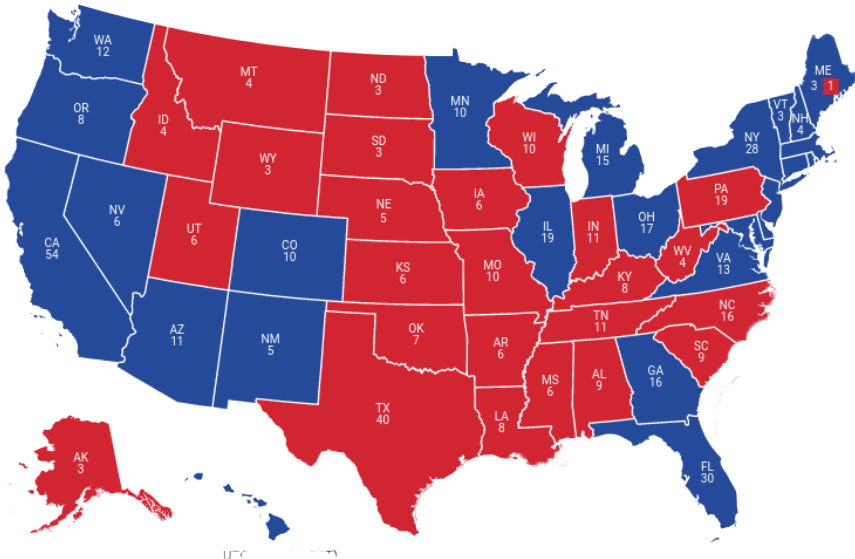
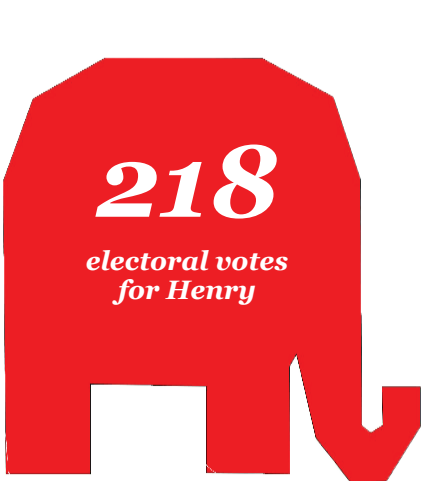
“This year’s election brought the significant change of the first female president. I think Anika just did a really good job of finding a way of building a coalition across different periods,” Henges said. “She was organized and played a really good ground game to get out the vote while also having fun by creating some really good campaign ads.”

For Chandra and Gardner, having female representation in their school’s government was an important issue. They hope that if women are represented in the school government, they will also be more accepted as leaders in government systems outside of school.

“It’s not like females have just never been interested. I can’t speak to how much effort past female candidates have put in, but I know the amount of effort I put into my campaign was running circles around what all my fellow counterparts are doing,” Chandra said. “I felt extra pressure to win. The girls around me were saying, ‘We’re supporting you because we like your policies, but also, we want a female in power. We want someone well-versed in many topics that normal high school males don’t know, for example, paying the Pink Tax or abortion. We want someone who has that female perspective.’”

Although many of her classmates were supportive, Chandra feels that she experienced misogyny during this election. She hopes that even though she felt resistance to her campaign, this will inspire other girls to run in the future.

“I can’t control the guys in my class. To this day, I still meet resistance from my peers. People still write ‘Impeach Anika’ or ‘Vote Patrick’ all over the board,” Chandra said. “Women have dealt with this our entire lives. It’s nothing new. This is known, so to get into that position, you’d have to give up something, and I’ve had to form a thicker skin because some of these articles are not the nicest thing, but they’re never personal attacks. I don’t take it seriously though. It’s all political.”



TREAT YO elf

Elf the Musical is the theatre department’s first musical back in-person

by ARIYA ANVARI

On a stage made to look like a Christmas wonderland, the theatre arts program hosted their first musical back in person with their take on the holiday movie classic “Elf.” Elf the Musical, which was entirely student-produced, was performed four times from Dec. 9–Dec. 12.

The musical is about 30-year-old Buddy, a human adopted by elves, who travels from the North Pole to New York in search of his biological family. Upon discovering that his father Walter Hobbes, an employee at a children’s book publisher, is on the “Naughty List,” Buddy, while exploring love and human society, aims to redeem his father by getting him off of the list.

In addition to its 18 musical numbers and upbeat message to always be “sparkle-jollytwinklejingly,” freshman Kiera Miller, who played Buddy’s half-brother Michael, believes that the musical is “not only about Christmas,” but more about “the spirit of joy it provides.”

“Even though Santa is a big part of the musical, it’s not really about him or even the elves,” Miller said. “It’s more about the fact that Christmas is a time where people can meet up with their family and that the true meaning of the holiday is about coming together.”

To convey this “heartfelt message,” the crew, according to Stage Manager senior Kayla Garcia, worked hard to create the intricate setting and props that were “crucial” to the musical. This was especially difficult due to them only getting six weeks to pre-



JACK BERGAM PLAYED THE BUDDY THE ELF IN ‘ELF THE MUSICAL’ PHOTO VIA RUHS THEATRE SHUTTEFLY

pare rather than the usual nine weeks.

“There was a time constraint and especially because a lot of us just did ‘Anatomy of Gray’ in the fall so it was a bit difficult and tiring,” Garcia said. “The light panel was still being built literally the day before opening night

“

I feel so connected with everyone and I’m so proud of the cast and crew and how Elf turned out.

KAYLA GARCIA
SENIOR

and with all of the chaos, I was so happy to see it all work out and it was so beautiful when in motion.”

According to Miller, the cast also faced challenges due to them having to sing while wearing masks. “It was incredibly difficult singing with

masks on. It is not an easy task in the slightest and it’s probably one of the hardest parts of theater since it requires so much breath control. It’s been very difficult but we’ve managed to pull it off because of how we’ve all been super supportive, positive and just hardworking,” Miller said. “My role specifically includes a lot of difficult singing challenges. It was also hard due to the fact I’m playing a boy and I’m not a boy. I need to change my physique, how I stand and little details which are hard.”

All of these details were, on account of Garcia, “perfected” by the cast during rehearsals that lasted up to six hours.

“Everyone was on their A game, and they came ready to learn and were even willing to learn a little bit at home,” Garcia said. “We always refer to theater as a big happy family and honestly it really is because I’ve connected with these people so much from just being around them 24/7. I feel like these hours we put in together bond us so much closer, and I’ve made so many of my friends from theater. It’s really special and I feel like you don’t have that connection anywhere else on campus.”

With the work and long hours the cast and crew put in, Miller hopes that the audience appreciated the musical and the showcase of the cast and crews’ talents.

“The actors are giving 100 percent at all times, we’re all working to try to make this the best thing we’ve ever done,” Miller said. “Christmas isn’t just about Santa, it’s about being together and hopefully we conveyed that message well.”

A CHANGE IN TUNE

Choir’s winter concert included songs from a variety of holidays

by IZZIE ESCOBAR

As the curtains open and the lights shine, the RUHS choir and their new conductor Aaron Duncan-Schwartz are revealed to the audience at their first in-person concert since 2019. Their winter concert, which took place on Dec. 15, showcased the new changes involving inclusivity and music choice brought to the program by Duncan-Schwartz since they last performed on stage.

“Since families haven’t been able to see a concert in over a year, getting to put on this concert is really exciting,” Duncan-Schwartz said. “Events in general are always a lot of pressure because unlike other subjects, we constantly have to prove that we should exist. The students need an opportunity to showcase their talents in front of a real audience, and I want this concert to be something they can feel good about.”

Duncan-Schwartz feels that every song should have “teaching elements” and “speak

to society and to different groups of people.” Due to this belief, Duncan-Schwartz included pieces that covered different cultures’ Christmas, different winter celebrations and an unorthodox Hanukkah song to make the program more “inclusive.” This

deviates from previous choir winter concerts where Christmas songs and “one token Hanukkah song” were featured.

“I like to find different genres that are not effectively the same,” Duncan-Schwartz said. “[I try to find] pieces from composers of different cultures, identities, orientations and backgrounds because [the music] is more likely to speak to students if it has that kind of wide variation.”

The decision to include holiday songs of

multiple cultures was also influenced by Duncan-Schwartz’s Jewish heritage as he wanted to choose a Hanukkah piece that shows the true meaning of the holiday. He ended up picking “Judah and the Maccabees” by Karen Hart as he believes the piece accurately depicts the “triumphant

rise against oppression that the story of Hanukkah tells” while “merging away from traditionally sad songs about the holiday.”

“Not only does Judah and the Maccabees not sound like a traditional Hanukkah piece, but it’s gospel. It’s much more energetic and it’s funny, it’s got terrible puns in it but that’s kind of what makes it fun,” Duncan-Schwartz said.

Another change that occurred was featuring holiday songs from other countries, written in foreign languages. Senior Meriel Klinkner, who has been a member for four years, helped the students with some of the pronunciations for different foreign languages featured this year.

“I speak French pretty well, and I’m studying Latin, ancient Greek and some very basic Russian. This year, I’ve been able to offer translations so [we] can have a better understanding of the text and thus convey the proper emotions and proper tones,” Klinkner said. “It’s refreshing to see a blend

of music celebrating holiday and just winter traditions that come from around the world.”

Senior Ukyo Vincent who has been a member of the choir for three years, also believes that these choices are beneficial for the program as it represents the program’s evolution.

“This year, Mr. Duncan-Schwartz is doing a really good job of being culturally neutral,” Vincent said. “[The choices] offer a fresh take and it’s good for the choir since choir is a place for people to get out of their comfort zone.”

At the end of the day, Duncan-Schwartz’s main goal for this performance is to give his students the “best performing arts experience possible” by

creating an environment that “focuses on students’ wants and needs.”

“I really want this choir to be [theirs] as much as possible,” Duncan-Schwartz said. “I want to act more as a helpful guide through the process and make sure they have a good and meaningful experience.”

“

[I try to find] pieces from composers of different cultures, identities, orientations and backgrounds because [the music] is more likely to speak to students if it has that kind of wide variation.

AARON DUNCAN-SCHWARTZ
CHOIR TEACHER

“

[The choices] offer a fresh take and it’s good for the choir since choir is a place for people to get out of their comfort zone.

UKYO VINCENT
SENIOR

A chance for *PERSONAL FINANCE*

Personal finance teacher Mike SooHoo took his students on a finance field trip on Dec. 15

by ERIN HARTMAN

In an effort to expand upon the finance he teaches his students in class, personal finance teacher Mike SooHoo took his students on a field trip on Dec. 15 to local businesses in the South Bay.

“The field trip was focused on visiting different businesses and interviewing the CEO’s or the owners of the companies. [Business owners have] gone through a journey of being able to understand how to start up a business, how to keep it running, how to be successful and how to look towards the future. In our class, we talked about how being a business owner can be a very lucrative way to make a lot of money but can also be a way to control how it is you make that money,” SooHoo said.

On the field trip, SooHoo took his personal finance classes to visit different businesses, including Kinecta Federal Credit Union, 68 Labs, a company that develops apps, an optometrist’s office and Surf-Air, a private jet company. The field trip was offered to students from all of SooHoo’s classes.

At Kinecta, one of the companies the students visited, they were guided

ed through the financial struggles of life through a fake profile found on an app.

“All the students were given random profiles, and it was their job to go to all these different stations and budget their annual income. Through that, they needed to be able to buy a house, buy a car, start up their accounts and get general items such as groceries. In the end, [all] of these students learned how much it really costs to live life as an adult,” SooHoo said.

One of SooHoo’s students, senior Jackson Davy, attended the trip. He

originally signed up for the class to learn more about finances and debt.

“I decided to take personal finance because I’ve always been interested in trying to be successful and I want to reach my full potential. I decided that everyone deals with money, and it’d be easier for me to get ahead in life if I knew how to deal with debt, college student loans and stuff like that,” Davy said.

With so many activities and businesses to visit during the field trip, Davy especially liked seeing how different businesses were run and how to build his credit score.

SooHoo was excited for the field trip on the 15th and is looking forward to the next one. He enjoys seeing how these “really fun events” help his students.

“The great thing about this field trip is that it connects the real working world with the class. That’s probably the best part. Students see that what they’re learning in personal finance classes, not just textbook material, but rather real individuals whether they’re CEOs, or directors of marketing,” SooHoo said.



Personal finance seniors listening to speakers at Kinecta. PHOTO BY JACKSON DAVY

This month’s RBUSD board meeting focused on vaccine mandates

by ELISE HAULUND

Starting with a presentation from elementary schoolers about Lego League and ending with a more serious discussion about vaccine mandates, RBUSD held a board meeting on Dec. 14.

Neither RBUSD nor the state of California have mandated the COVID-19 vaccine, but some school districts in the state, such as Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), have. The closing discussion about the possibility of a vaccine mandate in schools was the first time the board formally considered a stance on the issue, following prior board meetings in which numerous parents have posed their concerns.

“We understand some people are really afraid of [the vaccine], and that’s legitimate, and we’re doing the best we can to kind of negotiate through the process with everyone,” board presiding officer Rachel Silverman Nemeth said.

Governor Newsom made a statement in October saying that it is a possibility for the COVID-19 vaccine to be mandated similarly to the other required immunizations for school, such as the tetanus vaccine. The discussion dealt with how RBUSD would react to a state vaccine mandate. No such mandate exists yet; still, parents have denounced a potential mandate.

“My concern with a lot of the proposals that people have asked us to promote are [that they are] against something that doesn’t exist yet,” board member Dan Elder said. “There

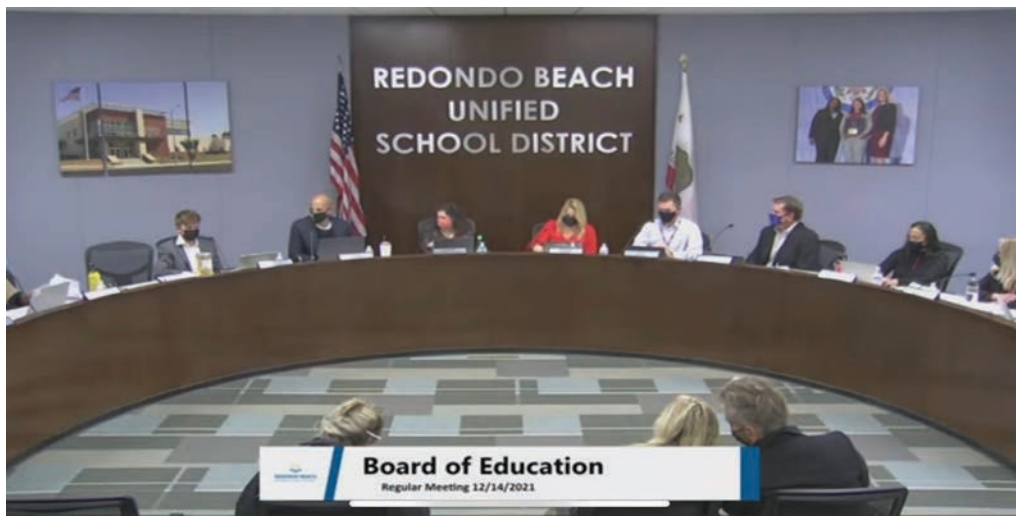


PHOTO VIA THE RBUSD YOUTUBE

is no vaccine mandate, so being asked to take a stand against something that no one’s proposing [...] feels like we’re trying to start a fight that isn’t there.”

Most board members were in consensus that since the vaccine mandate is only an idea and not a reality, there’s no reason to take a stance now (board vice-president David Witkin said, “There’s nothing concrete on the table to support or oppose”). However, board member Rolf Strutzenberg stated that he “certainly” thinks a state-wide mandate is coming and referred to the less than 10 out of California’s 1,037 school districts that have made resolutions against it.

“The feeling I get is that what certain members of the public are calling for is essentially a preemptive strike against it,” Strutzenberg said. “That’s what I’ve seen in some of the other school board resolutions that are coming out. They are essentially preemptive strikes to say, ‘No we are against this,’ and the concept would be that if enough school districts did this, then it becomes a legitimate force.”

Strutzenberg stated that he believed a resolution in RBUSD saying the district will not obey a vaccine mandate “just will not happen.” Board president Raymur Flinn also hinted at why such a resolution may be unlikely, asking if it would be in the “overall best interest for the [...] majority of students.”

“This is one of the [...] valuable tools that we have in this fight against the pandemic, whether it’s indoor masking, washing our hands, social distancing and vaccination, and we’ve been implementing everything we can to keep our schools open,” Flinn said.

In any case, according to Flinn and the rest of the board, the top priority is keeping

kids in school. During the 2021–2022 school year, attendance in RBUSD has decreased significantly from previous “normal” years.

“In a pre-COVID era, when kids had the sniffles, they came to school. Nobody recommends that anymore,” deputy superintendent Dr. Annette Alpern said.

While the decreased attendance caused by the pandemic is unlikely to change, Alpern advocated for the importance of attendance, echoing recent emails from the RUHS administration to students encouraging greater attendance..

“There is a very strong correlation between good attendance, strong school performance and feelings of connectedness in school,” Alpern said. “It’s not just about dollars and cents. It really is about child success and student success. Kids who are successful are kids who come to school.”

Schools’ funding is based on their average daily attendance (ADA) the previous year. As ADA has decreased during this school year, revenues are predicted to decrease for RBUSD, according to the interim budget financial report. However, Alpern assured that the district is still not at big risk of losing too much money due to this.

“Our school community is a stable community,” Alpern said. “Although we have had a loss of enrollment and a reduction in our attendance, relative to most public school districts, we’re still really solid.”

HEARD & SEEN

The Wellness Center hosted their first poetry slam

by DANI OTEY

On Friday, Dec. 10th, the Wellness Center hosted their first poetry slam. Around 30 students came to drink hot cocoa and either hear or read poetry. Rachel Andrews, the Mental Health and Wellness Counselor, hosted the event.

“The idea was to have a safe environment where students could express themselves and understand that others have similar issues,” Andrews said. “Poetry allows you to put emotion into a structured format. It gives you a kind of control over your life when you write.”

After hearing many reports of sexual harassment, discrimination and negativity, she wanted to find a way to let students express themselves.

One of these students was sophomore Ava Ganny, who writes poems in the Notes app on her phone whenever she has “a strong opinion on a topic or [feels] a strong emotion towards something.” Her ideas often flow from just one line she has in mind.

According to Ganny, due to the general formatting of poetry, it’s also easy to read aloud. At the poetry slam, multiple students read out poems about anxiety, self-

esteem, harsh breakups and more.

“I loved the poetry slam,” Ganny said. “It was a great opportunity to hear other young poets and share my own work with a group of people.”

Andrews says the best part was “people getting courageous enough to bring their poetry up and read them.”

Their poems were greeted with silence as they were read and then cheers and applause when they finished. Andrews said she hopes the poetry readings helped the students form a “connection.”

“I hope we created a space where instead of being ridiculed, students could be uplifted for their poetry,” Andrews said.

Andrews is excited to continue to host the poetry slam as part of a rotating cycle of wellness activities put on every month in the Wellness Center.

For those who might not be writers yet, Ganny encourages everyone to try, and to always write ideas down.

“Give writing a shot,” Ganny said. “Just because you don’t like writing English essays doesn’t mean you won’t like other types of writing.”



Students listening to a poem being read. PHOTO COURTESY OF RACHEL ANDREWS

Flyer of the event. PHOTO BY ERIKA GLASS



UPCOMING WELLNESS CENTER EVENTS

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT GROUP - STARTS 1/7/22

PARENT AND STUDENT BOOK CLUB IN THE LIBRARY - STARTS 1/7/22

STRESS MANAGEMENT DROP-IN GROUP - STARTS 1/17/22

WELLNESS CENTER IG: @RUHSWELLNESSCENTER

RUHS establishes after-school tutoring aided by MAP test scores

by STAVYAH NAVEEN

It is widely known that one of the most prevalent effects of COVID-19 on students had nothing to do with physiological symptoms, but rather academic decline within the classroom. In response to this, RUHS is designing a protocol for after-school academic tutoring to be provided to students who have D’s or F’s in their classes, or who have low MAP test scores. The Redondo Beach Unified School District was motivated to implement an after-school tutoring program in RUHS after considering the notable improvement in students’ grades when they attended a similar tutoring program that was established last spring. The goal of the current program is to provide students with a tutor who can help them attain a C or higher in all of their classes, in order for their classes to apply towards A to G college credit. The program ultimately aims to help all students earn credit towards graduation.

“The after-school tutoring is really designed for students who are in jeopardy of failing,” Susan Wildes, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, said. “We want to make sure that we don’t wait until they fail the class to try to figure out how [they can] retake the class. We want to make sure they’re passing it the first time.”

In order to attract a greater number of students to the program, the program aspires to nurture an amiable and friendly

relationship between the student and the tutor.

“[In many cases], there are a lot of kids who get themselves into holes, [but] can’t get out, and they may not feel comfortable talking to their teacher or to their friends,” Wildes said. “So our hope is that, by establishing a relationship with a tutor, the tutor will help them catch up with the work, but also help them to learn to advocate for themselves, ask the teacher questions and

ask for help with note-taking.”

This after-school tutoring program is particularly reliant on the results of the MAP test, which provides insight into trends of the in-class performance of students. Students take this test three times a year, in order to understand the growth from their initially low percentile.

“[The MAP] is going to help us determine whether the tutoring was effective,” Wildes said. “[And], in order for tutoring to be effective, it has to be linked to what

kids are doing in the classroom. It can’t just [teach] the overall concepts of biology, for example; it has to be linked to unit three, helping support the students in unit three of what they’re studying in class.”

Jeffrey Rosadini, RUHS Intervention Teacher on Special Assignment, explained that the after-school tutoring program only hires specialized teachers to tutor students on a specific subject, in order to teach the content accurately and validly.

“If [students] have a better knowledge base in math and English, it would make their classes a lot easier for them going forward,” Rosadini said.

Currently, the after-school tutoring sessions are intentionally planned to take place only once a week. This decision, according to Rosadini, was made in an effort to draw a larger audience to the after-school tutoring program, by minimizing the number of hours taken out of a student’s weekly schedule. The district staff also acknowledge and accept the idea of taking incentive-based actions in order to increase the attendance of students, thus helping them improve their grades.

“The overarching goal is to help students be successful in the classroom,” Rosadini said. “That’s the goal of every single thing we do at school; [it is making sure that] students are successful in the classroom and beyond when they leave us here at Redondo Union.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF PINCLIPART



THE GIFT OF GIVING



RUHS students and staff work to bring joy to those in need during the holidays through drives and card-making activities

by MARLIE CORNWELL

The match strikes. A tiny spark grows into a kindling flame, and the sharp scent of smoke fades out as quickly as it appears. During the holiday season, this light exists in many places: on the shamash of a menorah, in the flames licking a yule log, on the mishumaa saba of a Kinar, or even tucked away in the colored, modern lights on a Christmas tree.

There are so many winter holidays, but it's hard to celebrate when people feel stuck in a financially lacking situation. That's why this year, students and staff at RUHS have taken it upon themselves to give people in need a better opportunity to celebrate this season by sharing and showing their care.

I found out a long, long time ago that it's not just a cliché that it's better to give than to receive.

KEITH VAN SWEARINGEN
TEACHER

Teacher Keith Van Swearingen, for example, has run an annual holiday toy drive for more than 20 years now. Collecting toys for children and teens of all ages, he usually aims for about 200 toys, but his average generally winds up between 250 and 350.

"I found out a long, long time ago that it's not just a cliché that it's better to give than to receive," Van Swearingen said. "I know that I received a

lot of really nice gestures, gifts and help from people growing up. It wasn't monetary because I didn't need that, but it took a lot of time and a lot of effort. And I benefited from that tremendously. Now, seeing others benefit from that really makes me feel good. I hope that it passes down to another generation, to want to help others and realize that it's the right thing to do."

RUHS' National Honor Society club also organizes a holiday food drive that will last until winter break, and its president, junior Olivia Maehara, believes the food drive is one of many opportunities to recognize that even a little good deed can make a big difference.

"It's good to see the impact that can be made from such a small thing like a food drive," Maehara said. "It doesn't sound like a big deal when you get dropped into that, but it could be a big deal to someone else."

All proceeds will be donated to Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. Maehara has decided to focus on Japanese American citizens because many seniors have had a rough time during the pandemic, and she has had good experiences with the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. Maehara has had a passion for volunteering since she was young, and she remains determined to continue doing her part for the community.

"I've been volunteering for 12 years, and I never get tired of it," Maehara said. "I just love helping out the community in different ways. It's a great thing to do."

Van Swearingen and Maehara aren't the

only Seahawks giving to others this season. Senior Grace Molinero, vice president of Key Club, is one of many members who will write holiday cards for hospitalized children. She believes helping people is a major element of the giving season.

"Even if you don't have a lot, if you have even a little bit to give, I think you should always be willing to help others," Molinero said. "No matter what holiday you celebrate, the month of December is such a festive time and I don't think there's any better way [to celebrate] than to help others and reach out to your community."

Joy is something you can't buy with money. It's something you do for somebody else out of your own good will.

GRACE MOLINERO

Key Club wrote letters to many groups of people who were more isolated than most during the heat of the pandemic, including seniors and veterans. But no matter who the letters are addressed to, they are written to spread joy and care among people who might need a little bit of hope.

"Joy is something you can't buy with money," Molinero said. "It's something you do for somebody else out of your own will."



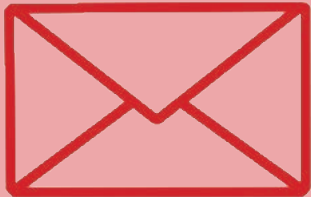
1. The NHS board
2. Sophia Graber and Avery Snyder holding their cards for Key Club
PHOTOS BY KEARA ANTONELLI

As of December 15th, about...



80

presents were donated to Van Swearingen's toy drive



39

cards were written for Key Club's drive



134

items were donated to NHS's food drive

RUHS students share how their cultures celebrate Christmas

by AMINA RAÏSS

Christmas time—this millennia-old holiday conjures up images of Santa Claus, gifts precariously perched under the tree and stockings overflowing with presents. However, not all Christmas celebrations follow these same guidelines and traditions. Senior Ania Magdesian comes from an Armenian family, one with unique cultural traditions that stray from the average American celebration in more ways than one.

“[Armenians] started celebrating Christmas on the sixth, and we’re one of the first people to do it. Then the Pope changed it to December 25th, but we just kept it on the sixth,” Magdesian said.

Regardless, the Magdesian family celebrates throughout December.

“[On December 30th], we stay up all night, and then when it hits midnight, we open the presents,” Magdesian said.

This practice is special to the Magdesian family. They don’t exchange gifts on the sixth because that day is solely designated for celebrating the birth of Christ. On their Christmas day, that’s when the family spends time together and embraces the religious significance of the holiday.

“My favorite [tradition] would be going to my family’s house after church, and then eating Armenian food and other dishes,” Magdesian said.

Some of the dishes they eat include manti, dolma and paklava. Dolma are young grapevine leaves that are stuffed with a lemon-flavored mixture of rice, onion and commonly ground lamb. Manti are traditional Armenian dumplings, consisting of a savory beef filling and a yogurt-garlic sauce. Paklava is a dessert made of phyllo dough, walnuts, cinnamon and simple syrup.

In the Armenian religious tradition, Christmas holds a special significance as it marks the celebration of the “Epiphany,” which was the revelation that Jesus was the son of God.

“Christmas is the second most important holiday [after Easter] because we celebrate the birth of Jesus. [Armenians] believe that he was born on the 6th of January,” Magdesian said.

Junior Danni Manos is Greek Orthodox, and her Christmas traditions look more akin to the traditional American ones. However, like in Armenian culture, Easter is the most important holiday for them and is actually celebrated on a later date in their culture.

“Christmas and Easter are the big holidays for Greek Orthodox, just because we have special services,” Manos said.

Like with Magdesian and her family, Manos’ Christmas meal includes dishes from her Greek culture.

“There’s a dish called pastitsio, and it takes a while to make, so my mom always has it for me and my sister on Christmas at least. There’s also koulourakia; we usually make those around Christmas time, and it’s basically butter and sugar cookies,” Manos said.

Despite a Greek Orthodox Christmas not looking extremely different from that of an average American Christmas, there are still traditions from Manos’ Greek heritage that she enjoys as unique.

“I’m part of the choir at my church, and we usually have a Christmas show. It’s always fun learning songs in both English and Greek,” Manos said.

No matter when Christmas is celebrated, Manos and Magdesian recognize that this festive holiday is a time for togetherness and joy. Some Christmas tables are covered with ham and mashed potatoes, and others with dolma and paklava, but the unifying theme of Christmas is universal.

“Even though we celebrate Christmas differently, the spirit is still [the same],” Magdesian said.

LIGHTS, CAMERA... HOMERUN!

Senior Maria Hoffman combines her joy for baseball and film in her edits of the varsity baseball team

by MARLENA VAN PELT

Out on the diamond with the lights shining down, the ball wizzes by until it slams into a glove. Years later, senior Maria Hoffman looks on from the dugout, no longer with a baseball in her hand, but rather a camera lifted up to her eyes, ready to record the game.

As a former baseball player, Hoffman pursues filmmaking as a way to reconnect with her passion for baseball.

“Growing up, I played little league baseball,” Hoffman said. “I played for ten years, and I stopped when I was fourteen because I didn’t see myself doing it long term. That’s when film picked up and took its place.”

Hoffman attends the RUHS varsity baseball games, prepared to capture the captivating moments that occur out on the field.

“I’m in the dugout the majority of the game, or I’ll walk around the premises of the field to get other shots,” Hoffman said. “I’ll also use my zoom lens to get closer shots.”

With the original intent to study film in college, Hoffman now makes baseball edits “more just for fun,” as she posts them on her Instagram for fans and family members to watch.

“Putting it on Instagram was the quickest and easiest way of getting it out to the team as opposed to sending it to individual people. It’s also a way for the fans of the team to watch,” Hoffman said.

Junior Christopher Thurman, RUHS varsity baseball pitcher, views the baseball edits as an opportunity to get more people invested in the games.

“The film’s main purpose is to hype up the baseball program. It’s good publicity, and it helps us get more people at our games,” Thurman said.

Motivation springs from the edits, influencing the team to play with more drive.

“This is the first time baseball has ever had this,” Thurman said. “All the guys want to get in the videos, and it makes us perform better, knowing we have cameras watching us.”

Outside of the baseball features, Hoffman seeks out other filmmaking opportunities, going so far as to be nominated in the All American High School Film Festival—the largest student film festival worldwide.

“I submitted a short film within the ‘Quarantine Diaries’ category,” Hoffman said. “With my brothers, I made the short film that I directed, edited and wrote, so we sent it in, and it was nominated for the award.”

Hoffman’s passion for filmmaking was nurtured by her mother, Regina Hoffman, who is a film teacher.

“My mom influenced me a lot because she’s the one who introduced me to film,” Maria Hoffman said. “Once she started teaching film, when I was in ninth grade, she let me go on set with her students.”

Regina Hoffman teaches grades 9-12 film history and film production at Windward High School. She studied film and television production at New

York University (NYU) and earned a minor in communications, but her passion for film started in high school.

“In 11th grade, my school brought in a production company to do a video yearbook. We were given these cameras and told to go interview people,” Regina said. “It was just something that I thought I could do as a career.”

Regina encourages individuals to always explore activities out of their comfort zone because “you never know what’s going to click with you.”

“Growing up in a small town in Pennsylvania, film was an eye-opener for me, and I went to New York City to do it,” Regina said. “You can find out a lot when you explore things in high school.”

After graduating NYU with a Bachelors in film art and pursuing a career in the television industry, Regina found an interest in teaching students, believing that she could “teach the craft.”

“I came up with a curriculum, and that’s what I’ve been working on for 8 years,” Regina said. “I basically developed a film production class where film history leads into film production.”

Just like Maria’s introduction to film through her mother, Regina encourages her current students to become more involved in all aspects of the film industry.

“There are certain kids that love film so much that they apply to film school,” Regina Hoffman said. “I’m at the point in my career that I’ve had kids graduate from USC, LMU and NYU programs.”

Regina watched Maria immerse herself in film from a young age to now, seeing her passion grow.

“Maria started out, back in middle school, coming to some of those student’s film productions,” Regina Hoffman said. “She’s always been doing that kind of film stuff. As early as 6th grade, she would make videos with her friends at the beach and edit those.”

Knowing Maria’s prior passion for baseball and seeing her passion for film now, Regina believes the two complement the other greatly.

“Maria played baseball for nine years with the boys. She misses it so much, and I think this is a way for her to use her talents and express herself through the films,” Regina said. “But really, I think she wanted to get in the dugout again.”

“She brought together two of her loves. Baseball and making films, and I think it’s a perfect match for her.”



1



2



3

1. Maria Hoffman with camera. She puts her baseball edits on her instafam: @mhoffmanedits. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARIA HOFFMAN
2. Photo of pitcher Bradyn Schneider.
3. Photo of junior Julien Cojulun on first base.

Stephanie Matheson joins ASB as this year’s new advisor

by YARA EL-HASAN

After a lifetime in Oregon, Stephanie Matheson ventured to California and became this year’s ASB advisor, wanting to make both a change in her life and in our school.

“It’s been bittersweet leaving my family,” Matheson said. “I’ve traveled a lot and I haven’t for the last six years and I didn’t live in my hometown in college so I was used to not having them super close by. I’ve always wanted to live in other places and gain new experiences.”

Being a new teacher in a school with over 3000 students and plenty of teachers provided challenges to Matheson. Matheson believes she has adjusted fairly well, her main obstacle being the size of the campus and its large population.

“It’s a much bigger school, so getting to know students in that aspect makes it hard because I feel like I’ve just gotten to know the students in my classes and not any others,” Matheson said.

Matheson taught at Sherwood High School in Sherwood, Oregon for six years. She started off as a US history teacher, then became their school’s ASB advisor for her last three years. After leaving her family and friends to take her current job, she battles occasional homesickness by focusing on connecting with her students.

“Getting to build relationships with students, having conversations that promote their critical thinking and being able to watch them grow as individuals throughout their high school career is really rewarding,” Matheson said.

She tries to connect her class by starting every ASB class with an icebreaker for all her students to answer that reveals more about their personal lives and opinions.

“My teaching style is very interactive. I like for my classes to be participating so that they are not only just engaged with what I’m saying, but they have ownership of their education and their learning,” Matheson said. “That’s one of the reasons I love ASB because it lends itself really well to that.”

In her old school, they had an assembly dedicated to anonymously sharing students’ stories where they reached an obstacle in their lives and explained how they overcame it. Matheson hopes to implement this in the coming years in order to help reach her goal of further unifying the student body.

“Getting to work with students every day is inspiring. Sometimes the world can feel really heavy and when I talk to my friends who aren’t in education, they see the heaviness of the world,” Matheson said. “I get to interact with students who have these great ideas and who are so caring, and that gives me a lot of hope.”

Although Matheson’s path in life was unexpected, she is satisfied with where she ended up. Even with a sudden move across states, her passion for teaching remains.

“If you would have asked me five years ago where I was going to be in five years, I wouldn’t have said here. But I’m also happy with the life experiences that I had and where I’m at, and it’s all very rewarding.”

Paving the way



Stephanie Matheson poses for a photo. PHOTO BY ELIZABETH PETREY

by SADIE SIMMONS

The rhythmic click-clack of the keys of a keyboard fills the room as an old woman details the major events of her life to a young woman dedicated to helping her write her memoir. Senior Sofia Cielak has been helping Holocaust survivor, Gladys Rubin document her life story into a memoir. As Sofia heard more and more of Rubin’s stories, she grew to appreciate Rubin’s positivity and feel inspired by her life of perseverance.

“She’s been through so many things, but the fact that she was able to live such a whole life [is amazing]. She got married, she had three kids, she was able to travel. She’s been to every continent on Earth except Antarctica. For her to be able to do things like that after having faced so much adversity is such a rewarding experience to just be able to listen to and it’s so inspiring. It’s really incredible.”

Rubin was born in a small town in Poland, which she was forced to flee at a young age due to Nazi occupation. At the age of four, finding a broken gun on the ground that she thought was a toy and trying to pick it up, she was hit in the head with the butt of a Nazi’s rifle and almost shot. After that, her family fled to Russia and then Uzbekistan so fast they were left with almost no money, leaving them sick with starvation and near death; Rubin’s baby sister actually died during this time. However, her hardships did not end there; they stayed in Uzbekistan until the war ended at which time they went to the displaced persons camps in Europe looking for any remaining relatives that might have survived. From there they went to Bolivia, after finding that several family members and close friends had made it there, and eventually she made her way to the U.S.

“I started out scrolling through what she had already had from before and then editing it because English isn’t her first, second, or third language,” Sofia said. “From there, we started writing down new stories and new things that happened in her life. She wanted to add in her world travels because she’s been to a bunch of different places, so we started writing down stories from where she’s been around the world and started putting in photos from her life,” Sofia said.

Rubin and Sofia have a more casual relationship than in a traditional job setting. Sofia gets paid but it’s just because she’s “helping out” Rubin. During their meetings, they enjoy pastries and tea, while Sofia transcribes the sto-

REMEMBER, REMEMBER

Sofia Cielak helps a Holocaust survivor write a memoir

ries that Rubin tells her about her life.

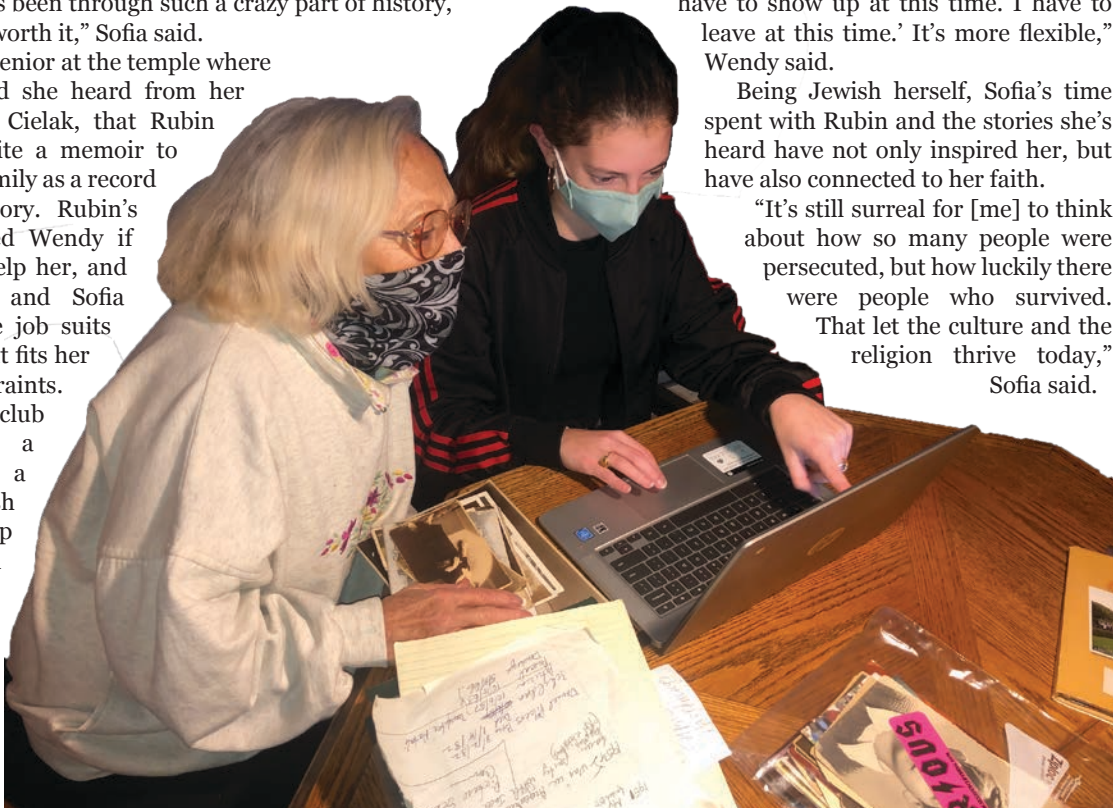
“I get about \$10 an hour, but just the stories and the food and just me being able to have a conversation with someone who’s been through such a crazy part of history, it makes it so worth it,” Sofia said.

Rubin is a senior at the temple where Sofia goes and she heard from her mom, Wendy Cielak, that Rubin wanted to write a memoir to leave to her family as a record of her life story. Rubin’s daughter asked Wendy if Sofia would help her, and both Wendy and Sofia agree that the job suits Sofia because it fits her time constraints. As the Salsa club co-president, a member of a teen-led Jewish youth group called bbyo, an artist, and a member of the RUHS Jewish Culture Club her free time is often limited.

“Not only is she getting that work experience where she’s interacting with someone, she also takes it seriously. It doesn’t feel like she has that pressure that, ‘I have to show up at this time. I have to leave at this time.’ It’s more flexible,” Wendy said.

Being Jewish herself, Sofia’s time spent with Rubin and the stories she’s heard have not only inspired her, but have also connected to her faith.

“It’s still surreal for [me] to think about how so many people were persecuted, but how luckily there were people who survived. That let the culture and the religion thrive today,” Sofia said.



Sofia Cielak listens to Gladys Rubin talk about her life in the Holocaust. PHOTO BY WENDY CIELAK

Exchange student Selma Geerten notices cultural differences

by AVA WARMAN

For sophomore Selma Geerten, living in a different country without her family for a year is a dream come true.

Geertsen, a foreign exchange student from Norway, has attended RUHS for three months, traveling to Los Angeles with a program called Education First (EF).

“I really like it [here],” Geertsen said. “I’ve learned so much about myself. The experience is so good. I’ve gotten much more independent. It’s been so fun meeting all these new people and learning the language.”

RUHS is a large school with over 3,200 students, which is the opposite of what Geertsen is used to. In Norway, she went to a small school, where she was used to everyone in her class being the same age.

“Here, there could be a three-year age difference with the kids in my class,” Geertsen said. “I’m definitely not used to the age difference. I felt closer to the kids at my old school because we were all the same age.”

“Shocked” by the large classes sizes with over 30 students, Geertsen believes students are more “distant” from teachers, a stark comparison to the “close relationship” she had with her teachers in Norway

“It has definitely been a culture shock. Everything is the opposite of what I would expect. Everything is really big. That’s the first thing I noticed when I first got here. The cars are big, the food is big, everything is big. And the weather is not what I’m used to. It’s very cold in Norway this time of the year,” Geertsen said. “And the food is gross. Everything is so unhealthy here. There are such big portions of everything.”

Although Geertsen “really enjoys” being in Redondo, she has faced some challenges along the way. Geertsen is staying with her distant relatives while she’s here for the next year, and while she enjoys spending time with them, she misses her family and friends in Norway.

“It’s definitely had its ups and downs along the way, and I’m not going to lie about that. It is hard to move from family and be here alone,” Geertsen said. “I miss them right now, especially since it’s Christmas time. Now I really want to be with them.”

Geertsen would recommend anyone interested in foreign exchange to “just do it.” She has had an “amazing” experience and thinks others would as well.

“You won’t regret it,” Geertsen said. “You will miss your home, but you’ll never forget going. It’s such an interesting experience to get to see a different culture. If you’re thinking about [becoming a foreign exchange student], do it. You’ll enjoy it very much.”

A SLICE of misery

64% of people suffering from an eating disorder report it worsening during the holidays

Students discuss how eating disorders amplify during the holidays

ILLUSTRATION BY KATELYN PERRY

by ELISE HAULUND

Family members travel from near and far to celebrate the holiday season with festivities ranging from movie-watching to traditional holiday feasts. These “long-time-no-see!” relatives arrive bearing presents as well as opinions, and as they gather round the dinner table they share not only their potluck goods, but oftentimes also a barrage of unsolicited comments such as “You should eat more!” and “Wow, you’re really going to have another slice of pie?”

Approximately 30 million people in the United States have an eating disorder, with 95 percent of that population being between the ages of 12–25, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. An eating disorder is an ongoing battle, but the holidays can exacerbate the urge to restrict or binge food. Two students referred to as Belle and Lidia in the story for privacy, who have struggled with eating disorder, cite multiple reasons for the difficulties during the holiday season.

“When I started losing weight, I was praised for it. At the holidays I’d see family members and they’d say things like, ‘Oh my God, you lost so much weight. You’re doing so good.’ So that kind of fed into [my eating disorder], and it just made my whole situation more and more toxic,” Lidia said.

With the upcoming winter break, Lidia is “a bit nervous” to see family she hasn’t seen since before she recovered from her eating disorder. Lidia struggled with an-

ly, hearing other people talk about losing weight during the holidays is hard. Hearing my mom and her sister talk about how they need to lose weight reflects on me because I know that even though they might not say that directly to me, that’s what they’re thinking,” Belle said.

Not only are unwanted comments harmful, but the celebration part of the holiday itself can make those with eating disorders feel disconnected from their family.

“It’s hard, especially when you try to not eat anything without anyone noticing,” Lidia said. “My holidays are usually with lots of people, so it was always kind of easy to just hide and not grab a plate of food, but you feel isolated. Even though there are some activities, like present-opening, that you can participate in, it still feels like you’re hiding something.”

Even after two years in recovery from her eating disorder, Belle still feels the effects of body dysmorphia, a mental illness where one obsesses over a perceived flaw in their appearance.

“If you’re trying on an outfit that you took holiday photos in the year before, seeing it on your present day body can be really hard because even though you know you’re so much better now, it’s hard to recognize that when you’re just comparing the images,” Belle said.

The culture of the holiday season that encourages bingeing—eating large amounts of food in short periods of time, sometimes followed by purging—can be another triggering facet of the holidays for people with eating disorders.

“I feel like a bunch of people during the holidays regret the amount of food they eat, or they think, ‘Oh my God, I can’t eat for a little while because I just ate so much food during the holidays,’” Lidia said. “Don’t put so much pressure on yourself to feel like you’re such a horrible person for eating that much food.”

Eating disorders and depression tend to go hand in hand, according to Belle, who has had to tackle both during her life. People with depression may use an eating disorder to cope with the sadness, Belle says, because “if you’re so focused on what you eat or how much you’re exercising, then you don’t have to focus as much on

how sad you are all the time.”

“You’re expected to be joyful all the time because it’s the holidays,” Belle said. “It’s okay to just take a step back and realize that you’re not this perfect person and you’re allowed to be sad sometimes. Even if you do mess-up with food and relapse back into restricting or bingeing, tomorrow is always a new day and a chance to redirect your thoughts.”

According to Belle, when she feels sad

“You can’t hate yourself into a body that you’re going to love.

LIDIA ANONYMOUS SENIOR

“Even though there are some activities you can participate in, it still feels like you’re hiding something.

LIDIA ANONYMOUS SENIOR

orexia nervosa, a disorder that causes people to restrict food intakes to extreme amounts, and bulimia, a disorder characterized by bingeing and purging large amounts of food. According to Belle, the comments don’t even need to be about her specifically to have an impact.

“Even if no one says it to you direct-

after recovery it’s easy to romanticize her eating disorder and convince herself she was happier, even though this couldn’t be further from the truth. Chasing contentment and joy can drive teens into eating disorders, but Lidia reinforces that they don’t bring happiness.

“You can’t hate yourself into a body that you’re going to love. If your actions are coming from a place of self hatred and loathing, it’s not going to make you a happier or better person in any way,” Lidia said.

Although it’s easier said than done to reject the pervasive societal messaging to lose weight, Belle says, there is more to life than calories or clothing sizes.

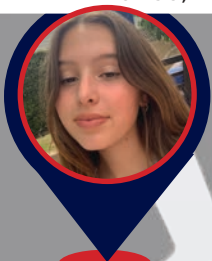
“So what does it matter if you had a two inch smaller waist?” Belle said. “What does it matter if you could fit into a dress that you bought three years ago? What does it matter if someone who is very toxic says you’re not pretty because you don’t fit society’s standards?”

TRACK OR TRUST?

Different parenting styles hurt students' ability to connect with their parents



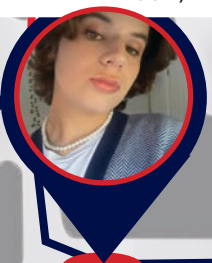
DELANEY ALONSO, 12TH



COLE BARNES, 10TH



MATTHEW JACOB, 9TH



SOPHIA SAFRANEK, 11TH



STUDENTS WITH LIFE360

PRIVACY IN

by ZELIA LERCH

On the App Store, nearly half a million parents have given Life360 and other tracking apps five stars. If you ask teenagers who have had the app forcibly installed on their phones, however, they'll tell a different story. When used by "helicopter parents," or parents who have an overprotective or excessive interest in the lives of their children, tracking apps can feel like an invasion of privacy. According to junior Hayden, who requested to remain anonymous and uses they/them pronouns, these apps can exacerbate already tense parent-child relationships. Since Hayden's "helicopter-parent" father downloaded Life360, which tracks a user's location, phone battery and more onto their phone, their relationship with him has steadily declined. "He definitely has control issues. If something's not his way, he gets really angry," Hayden said.

Hayden's parents have since divorced, and they now live entirely with their mother. A "leading factor" in their housing situation was their mother's belief that using technology and phones is an invasion of their privacy. Evidently, Hayden's father thought differently.

"I don't think he's a good father or a very good person," Hayden said. "He found ways to get around his rules and be sneaky. I would turn off my location, say my phone died or set it in some other mode, like airplane mode," Hayden said.

When Hayden does have to visit their father, such as during holidays or during custody disagreements, Hayden's father exercises his need for control mostly through dietary restrictions or who he allows Hayden to hang out with.

"I'm not allowed to eat any of the food in his house without asking permission first, and I'm just flat out not allowed to do anything that isn't labeled as being 'mine.' He also frequently tracks my weight and sees if I'm allowed to eat the portions he makes," Hayden said.

When Hayden still lived with him, they would only be allowed to hang out with friends if their father had "permission" and approved of each individual. Additionally, he would FaceTime them every thirty minutes to make sure that they weren't lying and was actually with who they said they were with.

Not only did Hayden's father force them to set up Life360 on their phone, but he made all of Hayden's friends download it as well. He linked them all to his account so that he could track them.

FORGETFUL

Parents who are overly lenient can hurt their children

by ALLIE D'AMATO

Is there such a thing as too much freedom? In the case of parenting, the answer is not so clear. While some parents impose strict rules and limitations on their children, others are more lenient, allotting their children an abundance of freedom.

Junior Emma, who has asked to remain anonymous, has parents who fall into the latter category—that of "free range parents."

"My whole life my parents have been pretty free with me. They have never really expressed concern regarding where I go, who I hang out with or what activities I participate in. Unlike a lot of my friends, I'm not tracked on any apps, and I don't have a curfew. In some aspects, I appreciate the freedom they give me, but a lot of the time I feel left alone," Emma said.

The antithesis of helicopter parenting, free range parenting is a parenting style that encourages less adult supervision, prompting accusations of child neglect from some critics. As a result of her abundance of independence, Emma has begun to question her parents' attentiveness, as she says her parents are "uninvolved" and "unpresent" in many aspects of her life.

"I feel as though my parents don't really care. I know they just want me to enjoy my life, but it seems like they aren't taking into account how safe I'm being. I could be potentially inserting myself in dangerous situations."

PIECES

Students share that helicopter parenting, especially through the use of tracking apps like Life360, hurt their relationships with parents

ve rated
u ask
ed on

take an
children,

ain
ex-
e their
tracks a
ne, their

going his

ey chose
their
ech-
ently,

on, so I
uld turn
her place

s on
ather
estric-

without
d to eat
quently
tions that

be
ersonally
e would
Hayden
would be

ife360 on
load it as
“track

them, too.”

“He clearly did not trust me, and it showed when he made my friends download the app and check up on them. I lost a lot of friends because of that,” Hayden said. “I wasn’t allowed to hang out with other people and kids weren’t allowed to hang out with me.”

Even though Hayden does not live with their dad anymore and has since deleted Life360 under the advice of their mother, their father still uses Find My Friends—a program created by Apple to find lost technology—to find their location against their wishes.

“My father and I have always had a rocky relationship. Ever since [my parents] got divorced, my mom really has proven to be better and more understanding than my dad. Our relationship right now is in shatters, which is why I chose to live with my mom over my dad,” Hayden said.

The privacy-breaching also causes Hayden to confide in their mom for advice, rather than their dad.

“I don’t tell him anything because it has never felt like he’s trusted me. I mean, why tell him stuff when he’s just going to find out anyway against my privacy?” Hayden said.

Anonymous junior Claire, whose “strict” parents installed Life360 on her first phone in the sixth grade, expresses a similar outlook on her relationship with her parents as Hayden.

“I feel like I don’t tell them about my problems or even who I’m hanging out with anymore because they’re just gonna find out anyway. So it doesn’t really matter if I tell them or if I don’t,” Claire said.

In contrast to how her parents go about tracking her location to ensure her safety—which included “grilling” her every time she got home from seeing friends or going out to eat—Claire wishes her parents would exercise more patience with her actions and control when using the tracking apps.

“I feel like if they would have used [tracking apps] in a more respectful way that didn’t get me into trouble just for hanging out with my friends, it wouldn’t be such a strain on our relationship,” Claire said.

Sophomore Anne, who also wishes to remain anonymous, generally doesn’t mind Life360 on her phone as her mom displays some self-control in the amount of tracking. However, when her mom does track her, it “annoys” her when that level of mutual respect is violated.

“Sometimes I do feel invaded in my space because she’ll track me randomly, which breaks the trust. I know that the reason that she does it is to make sure I’m safe, so I don’t mind that much, but I still wish she would do it less,” Anne said.

Claire is especially angered by the effects of Life360 on how her parents see her as a person because she does have to “bend the rules” in order to maintain some level of privacy, including utilizing many of the same methods deployed by Hayden.

“When I’m trying to sneak around them and they find out I’m going places where I’m not supposed to go, I think they think I’m much more of a bad kid than other people who know me would assume me to be,” Claire said.

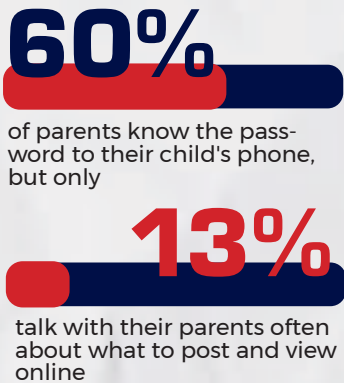
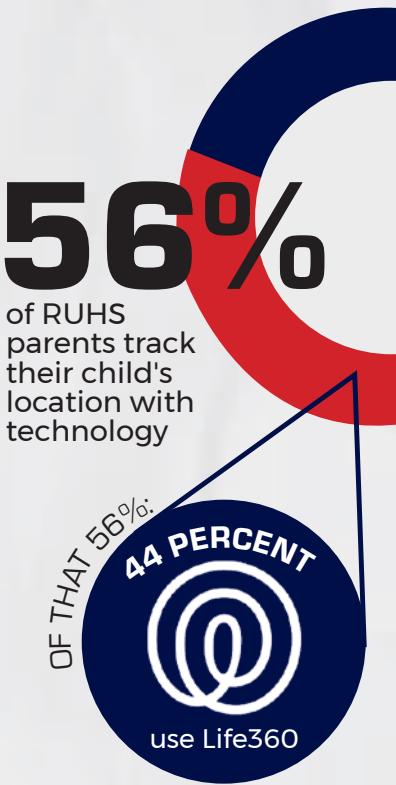
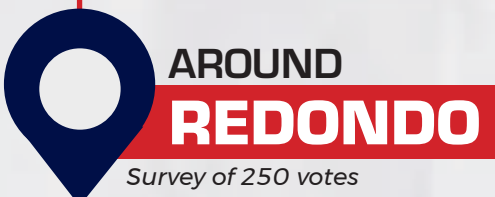
“

[MY DAD] DOESN'T SEE ME AS A HUMAN BEING OR A CHILD, BUT AS A VESSEL THAT HE CAN MAKE DO WHATEVER HE WANTS, AND THAT MUCH IS CLEAR TO ME THROUGH HIS ACTIONS.

HAYDEN
ANONYMOUS JUNIOR

The knowledge that their parents don’t trust them enough to entirely make decisions for themselves has affected how all three students see their emerging relationships with their parents. This becomes especially true when going into adult life, where they will have to be self-reliant without the safety net of Life360.

“[Life360] definitely made me start to look down on [my dad] more,” Hayden said. “He doesn’t see me as a human being or a child, but as a vessel that he can make do whatever he wants, and that much is clear to me through his actions.”



FREEDOM

h hurt their child's growth rather than help, students say

tions with the freedom I’m given, and they wouldn’t know,” Emma said.

There are many reasons as to why parents grant freedom to their children. In Emma’s case, it’s due to the fact that her parents are heavily involved in their jobs.

“My mom and dad have so many other responsibilities that they have to deal with, and they definitely don’t want any added stress to their lives, so it makes sense that they are a bit careless when it comes to taking care of me,” Emma said. “Even though these consequences allow me to develop a sense of independence, sometimes it really sucks because my parents aren’t really aware of the things I’m going through.”

Emma has recently experienced academic hardships along with mental health struggles largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“When the world shut down, I found myself in a really compromising position,” Emma said. ‘I started to develop anxiety, and I fell behind on school-work. I tried to talk to my parents, but every time I reached out, I ended up feeling more isolated. I wish they would take the time to notice what I’m going through and help me, because I need it more than they realize.”

Sophomore Jillian, who has also asked to remain anonymous, is similar to Emma in the sense that she feels “overlooked” by her parents due to the immense amounts of freedom they grant her.

“I feel like a burden when my parents let me do whatever I want. In their eyes, I’m just another thing they have to deal with, and they often disregard my needs. I love the fact that I’m able to be independent, but I crave their support and attention too,” Jillian said.

Jillian believes her parents’ leniency has strained their relationship. She doesn’t allow herself to confide in them and discuss significant events in her life.

“Since I’ve been so independent, I’ve definitely built up a wall with my parents. I’ve learned to deal with my own emotions, which isn’t great because I end up suppressing them. A lot of the time, it seems like my parents don’t care enough, so I don’t bother talking to them about important things in my life,” Jillian said. “I’ve developed depression. There were times where I stayed out really late, and I took part in illegal activities, like drinking or vandalism, just as an escapism; I would come home, noticeably drained, and my parents wouldn’t check in on me.”

Though Jillian and Emma have had a more negative experience with free range parenting, other students, including junior Zerik Griffin, have a more positive experience. Griffin believes this is because “many parents take different approaches in how often they check in with their children.”

“I enjoy how my parents have allowed me to progress independently to an extent. I’m allowed to go out and do a lot of things on my own, but my parents aren’t super careless about my whereabouts. They make sure to check in with me,” Griffin said.

Despite his independence, Griffin’s relationship with his parents has actually “strengthened.” He feels as though his parents “display faith” in his character by giving him so much freedom.

“It feels good to know that my parents trust me to be responsible when I go out, and I’m always happy to fill them in on anything I may have done,” Griffin said. “I think freedom is important for someone to grow up with. It allows us as students to mature and fully experience our lives to the fullest. But too much freedom is never good.”

SHOULD PARENTS TRACK THEIR KIDS?

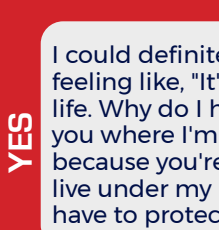
WE ASKED RUHS FACULTY WHO HAVE TEENAGERS OF THEIR OWN.



MARINA CAPANNI
ATTENDANCE OFFICE

I’m the one paying for the phone, so I have the right to track my son. It’s in case of an emergency, or if he goes out at night for parties.

YES



NANCY HAMMOND
COUNSELING SUPPORT

I could definitely see a kid feeling like, “It’s my private life. Why do I have to tell you where I’m going?” Well, because you’re still a kid. You live under my roof and I still have to protect you.



KEITH VAN
HISTORY TEACHER

Tracking, while it is a temporary answer to a question I may have, the overall damage is tremendous. I think it’s well known that kids who have no privacy don’t love and respect their parents for it. They feel violated. They feel like in a world that is out to get them, now their parents are out to get them too.

NO

Just Natural

Senior Zoe Scherer is involved in several esteemed music programs

by LAUREN CHOY

Walking into a room filled with numerous gifted students, she listens to the unified voices of 183 students. Senior Zoe Scherer reflects on her experience with Southern California Vocal Association (SCVA) honor choir and her recent acceptance into All-State Choir. “I didn’t realize how hard it was going to be. So, at the audition, I had that moment of, ‘Wait a minute, maybe I won’t get it,’ and that was kind of scary. Then the results came out and I was super excited,” Scherer said.

In the past year, Scherer has participated in the SCVA Honor Choir. This choir is for all of Southern California and at the end of their rehearsals, a concert was held at the end of November in Redlands, California. Out of many hopeful contestants, only 184 people were selected from an audition to be a part of it. And Scherer was one of them.

“You walk in and everybody’s tone was so blended and everybody sounded so good together. I’ve never been somewhere where everybody’s voice matched so well,” Scherer said.

The harmony of the voices together was something Scherer noted was “much better” in the Honor Choir opposed to the RUHS choir. Comparing the Honor Choir to the RUHS choir, Scherer explains how the Honor choir further allowed her to challenge her skills. The competitive atmosphere of the Honor Choir full of aspiring singers pushed Scherer to improve her technique where the RUHS choir “just wasn’t as competitive.”

During her audition into the Honor Choir, Scherer experienced a slight scare that she wasn’t expecting. In the audition, Scherer had to sing a whole solo in Italian, and unfortunately at the last minute, she had to change her key, which meant she had to audition with a different voice level than she had practiced.

“This key was significantly lower than I had been practicing and my group members said we’ll just try it. That wasn’t very nice because I was super unprepared for that,” Scherer said.

Another choir she has been accepted into recently is All-State Choir which is highly selective and hard to get into. All-

State Choir takes place in February in Fresno, California and soon Scherer will begin her rehearsals.

“It’s kind of cool. I did not expect to get in because I thought my score was low. So it was really surprising when my friend texted me that I got in,” Scherer said.

Scherer’s passion for singing is also illustrated within the leadership roles she has here at RUHS. She is a section leader in the advanced chorus, a secretary for Choir and the school’s Acapella club president. Just three years ago when she walked in as a freshman, Scherer remembers taking an open spot to go to a major festival where mostly only upperclassmen attended.

“So I got to go with the advanced choir even though I was still in the beginning choir as a freshman. And that was a super cool experience for me because that was the first moment that I had been in an actual choir. It was cool because I was just coming out of middle school and I was like this is what choir’s supposed to be like.”

In her freshman year, Scherer had the opportunity to go with the advanced choir

to a large festival that was led by a major person in Acappella, Deke Sharon. Sharon produced some of the 2012 movie Pitch Perfect’s biggest hits and Scherer was excited to have this experience with one of her idols. Another one of Scherer’s inspirations when it comes to style is Regina Spektor.

“The way she sings is unique because she uses her voice to come up with all of these crazy different sounds. It’s like so unlike anything anyone else is doing,” Scherer said.

Spektor attracts singers like Scherer who want a challenge with the songs they sing. Scherer took inspiration from Spektor and is performing her solo song in choir’s upcoming winter performance on December 15th. The song she’s chosen called “Rejazz” by Spektor represents how Scherer will sing anything that exhibits hard work. The song focuses on someone going through a break-up and realizes they’re going to be okay in the end.

“It has cool intervals and it sounds really weird but it’s really hard and it’s really interesting,” Scherer said.

PASSION

Caylah Olay redesigns old clothes and turns them into something new

by ORIANA CHOVIT

As altering and personalizing clothing has become trendy, major platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and most of all, Pinterest, scramble to give advice and create “Do it Yourself” (DIY) tutorials. Senior Caylah Olay has felt the drive to make her own clothing growing stronger over others in the sew-has recently spent clothes/fabrics into

“I like to take old clothes that I don’t use anymore, cut them up, and sew them into something new

CAYLAH OLAY
SENIOR

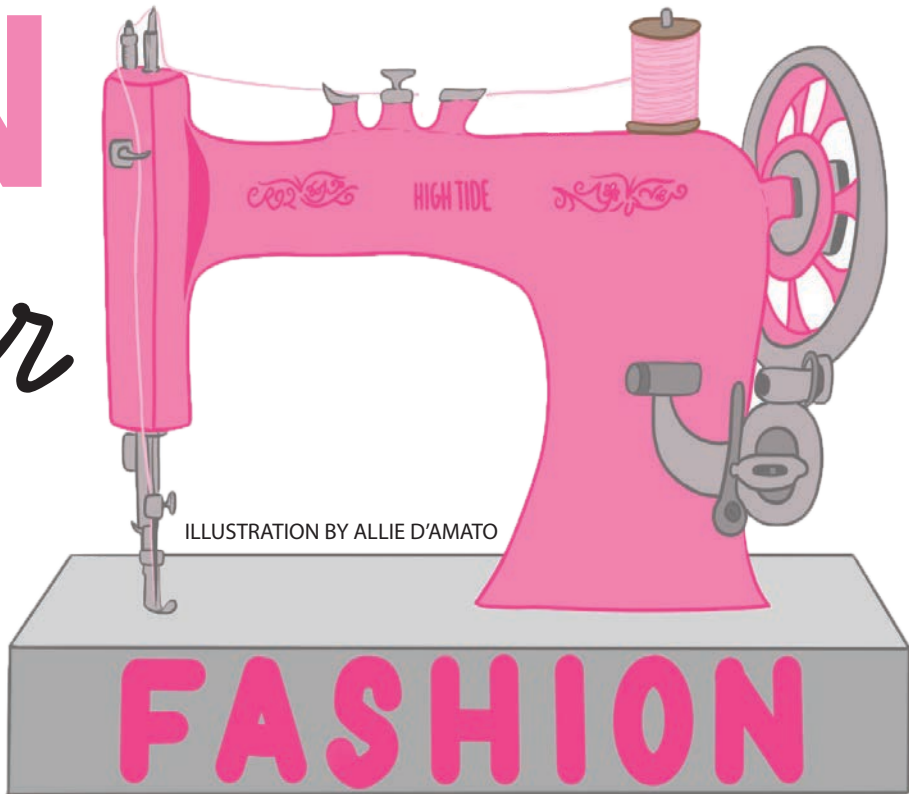
Through sewing and re-working, she has been able to transform old and worn down clothes into bikini tops, skirts, tank tops and more.

“Sometimes I’ll wear shirts as skirts if it somehow works that way. Like a button up

dress shirt- I can turn that into a skirt if I want,” Olay said. “Or sometimes I’ll wear skirts as dresses and dresses as skirts. I’ve also worn old fashioned bloomers as shorts. [My style] is kind of more unconventional, I guess.”

According to Olay, there are not many high schoolers who participate in this trend, even if sewing has been popular online. Due to this, most of her inspiration comes from online photos and videos with a “heavy influence from Pinterest.” A specific DIY aesthetic found

for



on Pinterest shows tutorials and sketches geared to help people with their homemade endeavors.

Of the many people taking up new skills during the pandemic, Olay started to dedicate more of her time to sewing. Out of boredom while quarantining, many of her ideas were born, including turning Nike pants into a bikini and short pants set, a zebra print dress and a yellow summer tank.

“My parents actually got me a sewing machine last year when COVID-19 shut everything down, so I had something to do. And I’ve made a couple pieces since then,” she said.

Another reason for her interest in home-

made clothes is the effect that fast fashion has on the fashion industry. Many companies break local labor laws and encourage their employees to work long hours in harsh conditions. For this reason, Olay decided to steer away from purchasing items from their stores.

“With some of [my clothes] I’ll take inspiration from a piece that I see from a fast fashion company, but I don’t want to give my money to them or support that type of business,” Olay said. “So then I sketch it out on a piece of paper and then try to figure out how to take old pieces that I have and rework it into improved ideas that have a better impact on the environment.”

ILLUSTRATION BY
ALLIE D'AMATO

IN HER BLOOD

Victoria is involved in SOY, fighting Leukemia after her aunt passed away during the COVID-19 pandemic

by MADISON KURIHARA

A diagnosis of leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma can be devastating news for any individual and their families. With the hope of preventing more lives being lost to these diseases, sophomore Lauren Victoria is finding ways to make a difference.

In Sept. 2021, Victoria joined Students of the Year (SOY), a branch of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) that chooses a select few high-school applicants to join and help raise money for blood cancer research.

“A few months before [I joined], an aunt of mine passed away from leukemia,” Victoria said. “Even though I wasn’t that close to her, I was still able to see the effects that cancer has on its victims and their families. I’m always looking for an opportunity to help my community, and I never found that until I found this program.”

Students in the program must work with a team of about 10 people to help contact businesses, friends and family to obtain sponsorships. From Jan. 27 to Mar. 18, SOY runs a fundraising campaign where donations can be made to help fund LLS. Although the official campaign has not started yet, Victoria still finds some challenges in balancing SOY along with her

other responsibilities.

“I think it’s good that I’m still hanging on and trying to do my best, even though it’s hard at times,” Victoria said. “This is all very new for me, and I’m still trying to navigate through things. Even though things are pretty foreign and difficult, I’m still persevering, and I’m going to do my best no matter what.”

Even though the program mostly leaves the brainstorming and planning to the students, they aren’t completely alone in the process of preparation. Over the course of her time in the program, Victoria has been working with LLS campaign fundraising manager Kelly Dulaney who provides her with advice and coaching on how to gather sponsors. Being a leukemia survivor herself, Dulaney has a closer connection to how beneficial funding for cancer research is.

“In 2001, I was diagnosed with a really rare type of leukemia,” Dulaney said. “There was about a 20% survival rate in

2001, but with research, funding and donations, in 2021, it’s about a 95% survival rate.”

When she was in high school, Dulaney was a SOY candidate, as well. Her time in the program helped her better connect with the new challenges current candidates may be facing.

“Setting up business meetings can be very scary for some people that are not good at public speaking or who are a bit more shy,” Dulaney said. “But then that’s why this program is so great because it can really make them more confident and get them to voice their opinions.”

Victoria feels grateful for the opportunity SOY has provided for her. Hoping to enter the medical field herself as an NICU nurse, LLS and SOY have given Victoria insight of how much of an impact cancer research makes.

“LLS funds research for blood cancer, [but] that research doesn’t just go to blood cancer,” Victoria said. “It actually indirectly

helps a lot of other treatments”

Additionally, Victoria has been taught a lot about communication and networking through SOY.

“I’ve had to really connect with people that I know,” Victoria said. “I’ve even had to spark connections with people that I haven’t talked to in a really long time. I’ve been trying to put myself and the campaign out there. I’ve had to communicate more than I have ever had to in my life; following up with texts, emails, and Zoom meetings, things like that, which I’ve never had to do before. It’s been really interesting.”

Watching Victoria grow throughout her time in the program and her diligence in it has greatly impressed Dulaney.

“There’s already so much she’s done,” Dulaney said. “She’s already set up our first team meeting, and there’s four in total, so we’re getting closer and closer to that goal. She’s really great; one of the best. She’s really got it all down.”

“I’ve had to communicate more than I have ever had to in my life

LAUREN VICTORIA
SOPHOMORE

WELLNESS MATTERS.

Teachers prioritize mental and physical health in challenges

by CHARLOTTE GOLDSTEIN

Chaos ensues as the day unfolds in the administration office. As a last minute meeting gets called to order in the conference room, a critical phone call takes place in the office across the hall. A student is rushed from the sports field to the health office with an injury. Around the corner, someone clicks away at a keyboard and sends an urgent email.

With the constant disarray, it is easy for school staff and teachers to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the day. Luckily, Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) understands the needs of school employees and, for the first time this year, an Employee Wellness challenge has launched in Redondo Beach Unified School District (RBUSD).

Redondo’s Wellness challenge coordinator and Vice Principal Jennifer Chatmon says the goal of the challenge is to promote both physical and mental wellbeing amongst school staff.

“Work well, live well’ is our motto. We are trying to bring some wellness habits, both into the workplace and also into our

personal lives. You can do this by completing different activities. You can log your steps, log your activity or you can read about different mindfulness or wellness habits to increase that in your life,” she said.

As a certified yoga teacher, Chatmon is very intentional about being well.

“It’s something that’s important to me, and I feel that I have a really solid foundation in regard to wellness habits,” Chatmon said.

Throughout this school year, three challenges have been planned that each focus on a different aspect of both physical and mental wellbeing. Activities include desk stretches, breathing breaks, step logging and more. Wellness challenge number one took place from October to November. Wellness challenge number two will be from February to March, and then wellness challenge number three will take place from April to May.

Every school in the district has gotten involved, and there is a competition between the staff at each school to see who can participate the most.

“Redondo Union was at the top of the leaderboard for our last challenge, and we are competing not just against ourselves by trying to improve our wellness habits that we have personally, but we are also competing against the other schools in the district,” Chatmon said.

The challenge has its own web page where staff members can track the activities they participated in and the amount of points they have collected. To promote wellness, at the end of each challenge, there is a leaderboard and based on how the staff scored, they will be able to pick out a prize.

“The prizes are all wellness-oriented. Things like backpacks, bento boxes, mini speakers and yoga mats with the RBUSD logo are all options,” said Chatmon.

Excelling at the challenge, school health technician Terri Garcia rose to the top tier and became one of the highest scoring participants with 3600 points for the first challenge.

Both Garcia and Chatmon believe that the healthy competition and rewards from the challenge had a large impact on partic-

ipation.

“We have a psychological and physiological response to those rewards. So activating our reward centers I think is a very strong approach to assist in enlisting people to participate,” Chatmon said.

Garcia agreed that the point system and rewards helped her to stay on track. She noted that logging points and working with a website helped her be more focused and be less lazy.

She also thought the program was enticing not only because of the rewarding feeling of gaining points and earning rewards, but also because of how accessible it was.

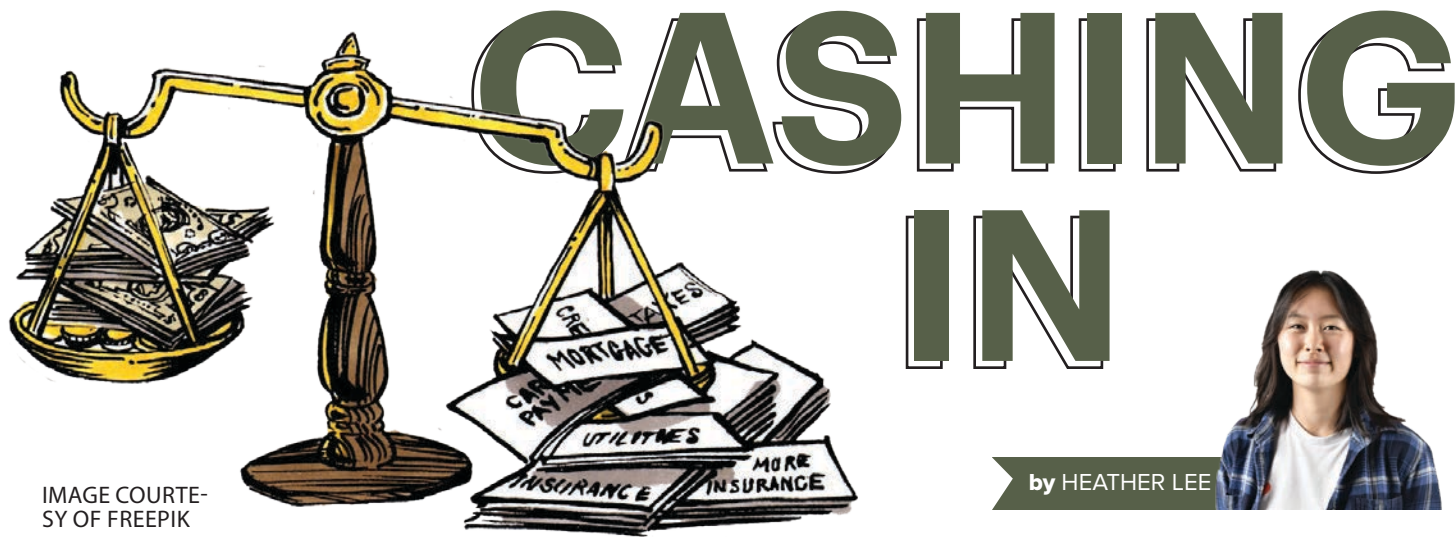
“I really loved the desk stretches. For me, because I am pretty much tethered to my office, having the opportunity to learn how to do stretches to help me disconnect is really helpful,” Garica said.

Looking ahead to future challenges, both Garica and Chatmon have high hopes.

“I hope that we’ll be able to gather in person for some of the yoga and mindfulness breaks because I think that it strengthens the bonds that we have here and it’s important that we do that,” Chatmon said.



ILLUSTRATION BY
ALLIE D'AMATO



by HEATHER LEE

IMAGE COURTESY OF FREEPIK

What do students think about a minimum wage salary?

As another generation participates in the American teenage rituals of learning how to drive and paying for gas, an array of minimum wage jobs around the South Bay go unfulfilled. Minimum wage in California, as of 2021, is \$13 for businesses with fewer than 26 employees and \$14 for businesses with 26 employees or more. The wage offered to students around Redondo is roughly minimum wage, anywhere from \$13 to \$17 an hour, just enough to allow a teenager to save for college, a car and maybe splurge on the occasional dinner with friends. As teenagers find themselves working for the same pay their adult counterparts use to pay for rent, groceries and childcare, it raises an important question: is minimum wage enough to live on? After asking around campus, it seems most working students at Redondo find that while their wages aren't six-figure, they are satisfactory enough to function as a generous allowance. Senior Julianne Tran makes \$14 an hour—exactly minimum wage. Tran personally feels that “[she’s] being paid a little more than adequately for her work,” although she notes that she has only started working and is still in training. But for now, she is satisfied with her hours and pay. Junior Zoe Zekan is paid \$13 an hour due to an employment shortage at her coffee shop but is also satisfied

with her pay. Like Tran, she finds the experience valuable and enjoys her work as a barista, running the storefront and frequently meeting new people. “Honestly, I think my wage is not the best,” Zekan said. “But I’d rather be happy doing my job than have a better pay. I mostly think about my tips because my tips are pretty good, and that evens it out for me.” Zekan’s pay typically goes to gas money. She estimated that she spent around half on maintaining her car and occasionally treating herself every so often, while the other half went into her savings account. Zekan intends for the savings to go to college tuition. As California marches onwards to a \$15 minimum wage in 2022, RUHS students’ experiences working as teenagers without three babies to feed still hasn’t completely answered the question: is minimum wage enough? Being enough for teenagers who are fed, clothed and otherwise financially supported by their parents does not necessarily equate to being enough for full grown adults with mortgages and student loans to pay off. While it is responsible of the state of California to fight for a higher minimum wage in a self-conscious effort to make up for its sin of being 38% more expensive than the nation’s average city, only the numbers will tell. According to the California Budget and Policy Center, in Los Angeles County, the average 4-person household’s living ex-

pense costs about \$5,961 a month. Given that minimum wage is \$15 an hour and the average work week is 40 hours, excluding the evil pay dodging methods that many businesses have developed, weekly wages are \$600. In a month, they will have earned \$2,400 – \$3,561 short of living expenses. Obviously, not everyone makes minimum wage. Only a few people can get by making minimum wage at just one job. Though minimum wage satisfies RUHS students, it raises a red flag by emphasizing how unaffordable life has become.

AS OF 2021...
MINIMUM WAGE
IN CALIFORNIA IS



Real life events are encroaching on the joys of fiction



by TROY NEVIL

In order to ignore common world problems, many turn to watching TV shows or movies and reading books; however, several shows and movies have started implementing COVID into their productions, lowering their overall quality and interfering with their purpose of providing escapism. “Grey’s Anatomy” is a good example of this. Season 17, which aired from Nov. 12, 2020 to June 3, 2021, introduced COVID-19 into the show, in which Grey Sloan Memorial faced an overflow of COVID-19 patients. The main character, Meredith Grey, was also diagnosed with COVID-19, causing a lot of panic throughout the season. Other shows such as “black-ish”, “The Good Doctor” and “This is Us” are also incorporating COVID-19 into their storylines, highlighting the effects it has on their characters and overall plot.

While I find it heartwarming that producers and scriptwriters spread awareness about COVID-19 and other real-world issues in their productions, it isn’t necessary. News outlets report on such occurrences daily. Since fictional TV shows and movies are not real, it also means that showrunners’ incorporation of COVID-19 or other world problems does not have to be entirely correct. Scriptwriters have the freedom to exaggerate and emphasize whatever they’d like, and this could easily lead to misinformation or over exaggeration of certain things. They can pick and choose what to showcase, and while that is beneficial in some ways, it can be detrimental in others. Overall, the majority of these TV shows and movies that are

highlighting current world problems are doing so with good intentions. In an interview with NBC news, showrunner of Grey’s Anatomy Krista Vernoff mentioned how she felt that production had the opportunity to emphasize the perspective of healthcare workers that many Americans didn’t have to deal with or understand, which is why the show chose to implement COVID-19 into its 17th season. However, I do find that most news outlets cover our daily complications regarding COVID-19 and politics while also shining a light on our healthcare workers who work extremely hard to fight this pandemic. In addition, there are other ways to highlight current issues and honor the lives lost from the pandemic. By funding memorials or creating documentaries, we could easily educate the world without letting it interfere with the things meant to entertain us. In essence, when I watch a TV show or read a novel, I don’t want to feel stressed out about COVID-19 or the U.S government. There are places where people are meant to be informed about current issues and stress about them, but there are also places where people should be able to disconnect from reality and immerse themselves into something creative and fictional, where worries fade out and happiness fades in.



IMAGE COURTESY OF FREEPIK

HIGH TIDE
STAFF

- EDITORS-IN-CHIEF**
Nadia Bidarian
Chrissa Olson
Meghan Jacob
- NEWS EDITORS**
Elise Haulund
Erika Glass
Sara Miyake-Singer
- FEATURES EDITORS**
Katarina (Haven) Beches
Mia Dowdell
Ruby Crosthwait

- OPINION EDITORS**
Allie D’Amato
Emilie Takahashi
- ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS**
Heather Lee
Zelia Lerch
- SPORTS EDITORS**
Ty Soria
Jess Alvear

- WRITING EDITORS**
Simra Zargar
Mia Schrift

- COPY EDITORS**
Romi Riss

- ONLINE EDITORS**
Ben Ringel
Ria Lopresto
Ansel Reyes
Troy Nevil

- ADVISOR**
Kerri Eastham

- STAFF WRITERS**
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Kat Otey | Lauren Greene |
| Micah McFadden | Zoe Rossi |
| Yaya Kitagawa | Sarah Bronstein |
| Amina Raiss | Ryan Parhizi |
| Marlie Cornwell | Andrew McKenna |
| Stayyah Naveen | Madison Kurihara |
| Ethan Chi | Lauren Choy |
| Sadie Simmons | Laura Strazzeri |
| Marley Van Pelt | Rena Felde |
| Sydney Lamich | Erin Hartman |
| Hadeel Azzam | Jade Montoya |
| Lara Magdesian | Nicolas Tomsio |
| Lucy Davis | Yara El-Hasan |
| Rome Kanouse | Ethan Lerner |
| Strachan Ambrosi | Sydney Palmer |
| Michael Aprahamian | Cristina Couch |
| Ava Warman | Scarlett Mische |
| Ella Silberling | Charlotte Goldstein |

- PHOTOGRAPHERS**
- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Pete Paguyo | Meagan Ching |
| Celina Moreno | Spencer Rogers |
| Rider Sulikowski | Sascha Perdue |
| Elizabeth Petrey | Collin Cruz |

- ILLUSTRATORS**
- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Carly Carter | Katelyn Perry |
| Cecilia Aptiz | Heather Lee |

LETTERS TO THE
EDITOR

The High Tide encourages great input of opinions from both students and staff. If you have an opinion about one of the articles, letters can be sent to the editor at: **hightideonline@gmail.com** We reserve the right to edit for content, grammar and space constraints. Letters must be signed and are not guaranteed to be printed. Please keep letters to a maximum of 250 words. Longer guest opinions are also accepted.

The *BREAK*ing point

Extended winter breaks may seem preferable but in reality longer holidays hold more cons than pros



by LARA MAGDESIAN

As a senior in high school, holiday breaks are the only things that keep the senioritis at bay, despite having finals the minute we come back to school. It's easy to get caught up in the gloriousness that is the two weeks off from the copious note-taking and prolonged lectures, yet compared to other countries, it seems that we barely have any time off at all.

Students often look forward to December, more so for the break from school rather than actual Christmas day. Sure, Christmas is a fun holiday to receive gifts and rejoice with family. But Christmas break is where all the fun comes in. The two weeks allotted for Christmas Break in the U.S. is the longest time off of the whole school year, excluding summer vacation. Who

wouldn't want an extra long break coupled with endless presents and lots of delicious food?

While it sounds like the U.S. has a decently long holiday break, the Philippines takes the cake by far. Their Christmas holiday starts in September and ends on January 9th. That's about a four month break, which is significantly better than just a measly two weeks. They throw parties and celebrate all throughout that time, with nine long masses leading up to Christmas day. In that time, you could easily cross everything off your bucket list and then some. Taiwan also has about a one to two month break off from their work and studies, yet their summer break is cut shorter,

which brings up a burning question: is a longer Christmas break worth it?

While time off from school is a great time to refresh and enjoy having no homework, it can honestly get quite boring. Especially with COVID-19 still circulating, there isn't much to do that isn't restricted by all the necessary precautions. Having the same routine everyday can get strenuous, even on a vacation. Personally, being in the same household all day with my family would get tiring without the seven hour school days to keep me preoccupied. Students around the world have struggled with the pandemic, leading to teachers being more likely to accept late work. Some students take ad-

vantage of their teachers' good graces and let grades and academics slip. We let our brains turn off, so when we come back after break and prepare for finals, it's as if the school year started all over again.

If students struggled with their grades only after two weeks, I can't imagine what it would be like to come back after four months of zero academic work and just jump right back into the school year. It would clearly take an enormous toll, not just on the students but the teachers, as well. I can vouch that just after Thanksgiving break, it was difficult to remain focused and remember prior material. I was still stuck in the headspace of relaxation and was forgetting important things I had to do just after a week break.

While a longer break does seem like the more enjoyable option, there are definitely more con's than pro's. Having a longer winter break means a shorter summer break, and I would definitely prefer having a longer vacation during the warmer time of the month.

Granted I, as a senior, will no longer have the restriction of just two weeks off for winter break after graduation, but it still remains relevant for underclassmen to consider whether an extended time off would be preferable. It's nice to wonder what the possibilities would be if we did have a longer time off.



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF FREEPIK.COM

Corrupt Culture



Fitness culture is unrealistic and promotes harmful lifestyles



by BEN RINGEL

Especially for men, in order to obtain a certain physique, they cut their calories to a dangerously low amount, then workout for a ton of hours. This is widely accepted, and people are praised for their body, but it's also indicative of an eating disorder. How harmful are these practices, should they be accepted, and if not, what are alternatives?

A healthy relationship with the gym is hard. While many people see a good workout as a critical component of a successful day, unrealistic expectations of what our regimen should include or what our bodies should look like can easily lead to a strong link between exercise and self worth, which is incredibly harmful.

The issue with exercise arises when we are too focused on an end goal. Of course it's good to set guidelines for what we'd like to achieve in the gym, but it's important to realize that media and large corporations prey off of our idealization of unrealistic bodies and the relentless, hopeless pursuit of achieving these physiques. When our goals are based on toxic standards, they become unrealistic and unsustainable.

Humans hate failure, so when we aren't reaching our goals, we'll do almost anything to change that, whether that be through the overconsumption of caffeine, under-tested pre-workout or post-workout supplements,

weights that are too heavy or extreme calorie deficiencies.

When people resort to unsafe measures in the gym, it's almost always because they're chasing a goal that's so unrealistic and undefined that it'll never be fully satisfied. Resorting to these practices almost never ends happily. It's up to all of us to consciously reject dangerous practices.

It's unsustainable and incredibly harmful for our mental health to rigorously track our input and output of calories and deny ourselves food because an app on our phone says so; our bodies aren't math

equations, and they're pretty capable of telling us when we want food.

Honestly, it's an insult to the biological capabilities of humankind to overrule our body's natural signals of hunger and calculate calories like a robot in an effort to manipulate our own metabolism. I'm not saying all forms of calorie tracking are inherently and completely toxic, but the emphasis should be on providing our bodies with whole foods full of nourishment. Over-focusing on calories holds a strong similarity to disordered eating, according to Duke Health, and calories do not tell the full story: consuming nourishing carbohydrates, recharging proteins and whole fats are more important than the number of calories.

Fitness culture is toxic, and it would be great to avoid it completely, but that's unrealistic. Even if we know that standards are unrealistic, and we don't engage with toxic "fitness" influencers, inevitably we'll still come across it from time to time. So, if we can't ignore gym culture, the key way to reject it is developing a plan for yourself that is both rigorous enough to help you achieve your (reasonable) goals and mindful enough that you know you can sustain it (without dread) longterm. Rather than basing objectives on idealistic physiques, form physical goals you are confident you can achieve and prioritize goals that have less to do with merely appearance, like longer endurance or greater strength.

I can't stress enough how much more important it is to listen to our bodies than it is to conform to idealistic standards set to make us miserable. The simple truth is we'll never definitively fit these harmful expectations, so just save yourself the trouble and develop a gym plan that's long-term, beneficial and enjoyable.



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS

PepperMINT-to-be

Which coffee store offers the best peppermint mocha?

by RIA LOPRESTO

The holidays are here, and as always, that means so are the peppermint-flavored drinks. As arguably the most popular winter flavor, peppermint coffees are prevalent in almost every coffee shop, which begs the question: Which one is the best to go for your seasonal peppermint cravings?

I went to four stores that sell coffee—Starbucks, Klatch Coffee, Peet’s Coffee and McDonalds—and tested the quality of their holiday specialties with a classic peppermint mocha, to find the true answer to this pressing question.

My first stop was Klatch. From the moment I walked into the shop, I was welcomed with the warm smell of coffee and holiday music. Topped off with cute holiday decor and friendly staff, this shop put me in the right mood for a delightful cup of coffee, and I was not disappointed.

Coming in at \$5.85 for a small, the mocha was thick and rich with a smooth chocolate taste that complemented the coffee nicely. The milk foam on top was creamy (not bubbly), which only added to the drink’s texture, and had a slight nutty aftertaste. The peppermint taste itself was solid, but could have been stronger to emphasize that it was a peppermint mocha. The strength of the peppermint came in second to Starbucks,

me from getting it again. Klatch also had an average but cute presentation. The cup was a boring plain white, but the heart latte art made up for it, adding a touch of homeyness to the drink. If you want a slightly upscale cup of coffee and are willing to pay a little extra, Klatch is the place to go.

On the contrary, Peet’s Coffee was fairly disappointing. Peet’s is known for being a quality coffee chain, but it lacked severely in the peppermint department. Most of the flavor came from the smell (which was hardly noticeable). After paying \$5.10 for a small, I was hoping for more, especially considering there was no latte art or holiday design on the cups.

Then, inevitably, I went to Starbucks. Obviously, there were high expectations, seeing that it is one of the chain’s go-to drinks for many. Suffice to say, I see the hype. The drink had all the qualities that I was looking for: strong peppermint taste (without making me feel like I’m eating toothpaste), quality chocolate that doesn’t taste artificial, good presentation and reasonable pricing.

Starbucks had the strongest peppermint flavor out of the four, but it wasn’t overpowering. I still got chocolate (not super strong, but I could

of artificial flavoring. It wasn’t too thick, but definitely not watery. With every sip, my mouth filled with what my friend called “liquid chocolate.”

Additionally, Starbucks has the best presentation. It was topped nicely with a swirl of whipped cream, on which were delicate chocolate curls, which served a double-purpose. As I reached the bottom of my drink, I was pleasantly surprised by the occasional globs of chocolate that were the melted chocolate curls. Overall, this drink gave me the most “holiday energy,” and it wasn’t overpriced for what I got—at \$4.75 for a tall. If you want a good quality, fast cup of deliciously warm peppermint mocha, Starbucks is the place for you.

Last up: McDonald’s. Now, I know the burger chain isn’t exactly known for providing good cups of coffee, but it’s easy, it’s cheap, and it’s fast. More importantly, it sells peppermint mochas.

As expected, this drink felt more like a hot chocolate than a coffee. However, I noticed as I finished the drink that the strength of peppermint in the drink increased. I assume that the peppermint syrup might not have been well mixed or naturally is stronger towards the end of the drink, but

peppermint was too strong upon taking my last sips.

Unlike the other coffee shops, McDonald’s topped its peppermint mocha with whipped cream and chocolate syrup. While I liked the topping on Starbucks’ drink, the chocolate syrup was too artificial. I honestly would have preferred it with just whipped cream or nothing at all. I did, however, like the cup it came in, accented with winter-themed drawings. I left McDonald’s unhappy, my wallet \$2.19 lighter, but not too surprised—it is a fast food burger chain after all.

It was interesting to see how different chains and locations made the same drink, and I was shocked to see how much they varied in taste and quality. Of the four places I went to, I would recommend Starbucks first; it’s very accessible, the second cheapest, and offers good quality for what you pay. In second is Klatch Coffee; although the most expensive, I felt like Klatch offered the best balance between authenticity and flavor. Next up is McDonald’s; I didn’t expect to rank it higher than Peet’s Coffee, but it has the advantages of being cheap and easy, and at least I could taste the peppermint in it—I got what I paid for. Peet’s Coffee is a good place to go if you’re willing to splurge a bit for good coffee, but when it comes to peppermint mochas, it just wasn’t worth the price.



ILLUSTRATIONS
COURTESY OF
ALLIE D'AMATO

Review: Unconventional holiday movies

by SYDNEY LAMICH

For fans of Christmas romantic comedies, “Happiest Season” definitely makes the yuletide gay. Even though this Christmas movie was released around Thanksgiving in November 2020, it still kept up with the Halloween spirit, as it’s about the horrors of fitting into straight people’s expectations.

Best known for her role in “Twilight,” Kristen Stewart takes on the role of Abby, a warmhearted young woman who wants to propose to her girlfriend on a family trip to meet her parents. The only problem is that her partner, Harper (Mackenzie Davis), kept their relationship a secret to her uptight family and hasn’t come out yet. Abby follows the heterosexual charade despite numerous protests from her best friend, John (Daniel Levy).

I usually hate romantic comedies because they create an idealistic reality where every love story is perfect and happy. However, “Happiest Season” shows just how messy, frustrating, and complicated relationships are—especially around the hol-

idays. Christmas is supposed to bring joy, but for Abby it’s the opposite. When her partner has to lie to her family about their true feelings for one another, it takes a toll on the state of their relationship, illustrating the challenges they need to face.

Throughout the movie, it lives up to the esteemed expectation of “rom-com,” as Levy’s sarcasm and Abby’s love commitment to Harper fulfill the comedy and romantic aspects respectively. It’s more than just another stereotypical Christmas Hallmark movie, though, because it highlights the realities that queer people face with societal’s heterosexual expectations, especially within a genre typically defined by straight couples.

Hopeless romantics tune in to unrealistic Christmas movies almost every December, searching for mistletoe kisses and predictable plot twists. Most, if not all of them, are cheesy Hallmark films, but Netflix’s “Operation Christmas Drop” is all business this Christmas.

This untraditional rom-com isn’t in a winter wonderland with impressive decorations. Instead, it takes place in the tropics and teaches the importance of giving back to small communities.

Based on real-life missions the U.S. military participates in to give supplies to remote islands, “Operation Christmas Drop” focuses on the people we normally don’t see during the holidays.

Most people know Kat Graham as “Bonnie” in the Netflix series “The Vampire Dia-

ries,” but in this rom-com, she plays Erica, an aide sent to Guam to evaluate whether or not she should defund the military facility. Eventually, she meets her holiday-loving guide and love interest, Captain Andrew, played by known “Hunger Games” actor Alexander Ludwig. Seeing these characters bicker and take stolen glances made my heart warm up to their evident connection.

Throughout the film, instead of incorporating only westernized Christmas traditions as most Hallmark movies do, it also includes the traditions that the Guam culture celebrates. From decked-out tree festivals to a Christmas Eve candlelight service, it’s the perfect paradise for Erica and Andrew. Furthermore, the whole movie felt more feel-good rather than the typical Christmas romance due to its practicality.

Overall, with its enemies-to-lovers storyline and determination to make sure everyone around Erica and Andrew has a great Christmas, this movie will definitely warm any cold-hearted Grinch during the holidays.

Every December I am bombarded by movie studios and directors of the new Christmas movies coming out but am disappointed by the lack of representation for other winter holidays. Even though Hanukkah has existed for almost a thousand years, it is unfortunately less represented in holiday movies. “Mistletoe and Menorahs,” although not the best movie in terms of quality, at least is a starting point for the beginning of more portrayals of the Jewish

holiday.

In the movie, determined toy-company executive Christy (Kelley Jackle) needs to learn about Hanukkah traditions in order to prove herself to her clients at a holiday party. Along the way, she meets a charming Jewish man, Jonathan (Jake Epstein), through her coworker. At first, like every other rom-com, things don’t go too smoothly. As time goes on, in the Hanukkah spirit—which is about celebrating miracles—they eventually come together.

With the compromise of Christy helping Jonathan try to learn the Christmas tradition in order to impress his new girlfriend’s family and Jonathan teaching Christy how to learn about Hanukkah for her job, the two saw their similarities and relished in it. As they got comfortable, Jonathan took Christy to his grandma’s house and gave her a Menorah which strengthened their connection even further.

Between their flirty jokes and exchanged smiles, they both still had relationships to return to. Christy’s jock-like boyfriend, however, has many secrets that Christy doesn’t want to be a part of, hence the closeness she feels for Jonathan.

While the cheesy jokes sprinkled in were sometimes unnecessary, that’s what makes a typical rom-com. Although the movie is entertaining, its main message is to educate viewers that important steps need to happen to represent all traditions during the holidays.

“Doc, I’m in love!”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (1), NEW YORK TIMES (2), AND DEADLINE (3)

Steven Spielberg’s retelling of “West Side Story” is a masterpiece

by LUCY DAVIS

The first thing I have in my notes is “Opening motif: chills.”

More than 60 years after “West Side Story” took Broadway and Hollywood by storm, Steven Spielberg’s reimagined 1950s gang-war Romeo and Juliet is a masterpiece. Critic—and now theatre kid—approved, its sweeping score, breathtaking production and incredible acting make it a classic in its own right.

The film follows the love story of Tony (Ansel Elgort) and María (Rachel Zegler), star-crossed lovers from rival New York City gangs. The Sharks, led by María’s older brother Bernardo (Daniel Alverez), and the Jets, rallied around Tony’s best friend Riff (Mike Faist) are faced with an evolving West Side of New York City where the homes of juvenile delinquents and immigrants are torn down to make room for a new and shiny neighborhood—a place society knows neither gang “belongs.” In a desperate move to keep what’s left of the West Side for themselves, the Jets challenge the Sharks to an all-out, winner takes all street fight. Tony and María are caught in the crossfire, and it goes just as well as you might expect.

Spielberg had everything to lose while making this film. Namely, he risked being

lumped in with the dozen sub-par “remake” movies that Hollywood churns out, despite being an adaptation of the 1957 Broadway musical and not a remake of the 1961 film. But by staying true to the 1957 production and updating the best from the 1961 film, this “West Side Story” is stunning in every possible way.

It’s mesmerizing to watch from the very first shot. Tony and María’s New York City is a true urban wasteland: vibrant and gritty, overcrowded and congested. It’s in this metropolis that we first meet the Sharks and the Jets. The gangs are separated by race (Puerto Rican and Polish) and united only by concrete rubble and a fierce hatred for the other. In the midst of the mess is María, a newly immigrated young woman joining her brother and his girlfriend Anita (Ariana DeBose) in America. She meets Tony at a dance he isn’t supposed to attend, per orders of his parole officer. “You’re not Puerto Rican,” she smiles under the slanted light of the bleachers. “Is that okay?” He asks.

“Do you want to start World War III?” Anita grins dryly.

Every frame is dynamic. There is always something different to look at, be it splashes of bright paint during the prologue or

the array of vibrant 1950s dresses mid-spin during the electric “Mambo.” Clearly, Spielberg appreciates interest: saturation against dullness, wide shots and tight ones, layers of background to create a three dimensional world on a two dimensional screen. Broadway and cinema together. Not perfectly melded at times, but not far off.

The script itself saw a few changes. Doc, Tony’s mentor, has been replaced with Valentina (Rita Moreno), Doc’s widow. The dialogue comes rolling out in a mix of English and Spanish—no subtitles—so it’s up to the audience to keep up. This bilingual aspect is a double edged sword; I’m fresh out of three years of high school Spanish, so I understood most of what was said and pieced together the rest. I could see the Spanish dialogue as a storytelling roadblock for some, but having the two languages side by side completes the authenticity of the narrative itself. Being based off of a Broadway musical also gives it a longer running time (2 hours 36 minutes). For me, the first half went slowly and the second half picked up; for some of my friends it was the opposite. You do feel like you’ve sat through a Broadway musical by the end of it. Do with that what you will.

A quality script and all-out production

would mean nothing without convincing performances, and thankfully “West Side Story” delivers on one of the most essential aspects of a great film. Rachel Zegler is an absolute star as María (her voice had my inner theatre kid crying tears of joy), balanced well by Ansel Elgort as Tony. I don’t understand why Elgort got so much hate during reviews; he sings, dances, and acts well enough to hold his own next to the rest of the cast. Ariana DeBose’s Anita is magnetic and commanding next to Daniel Alverez’s complicated Bernardo. Rita Moreno, who earned an Oscar for her performance as Anita in the 1961 adaptation, never fails to impress. I could gush over Mike Faist as Riff, but I won’t. You’ll have to go see his incredible performance for yourself.

Our main characters are backed by a great ensemble of Sharks and Jets, with all of the Sharks played by Latino actors or those of Latin descent. Compared to the brownface done in the 1961 version, it’s a victory for representation.

An iconic score. A breathtaking cast. Off the charts production. A film that left me crying and searching online for the next available showtime.

The last thing I have in my notes is “Classic. Period.”

I still hear you: Juice WRLD’s second posthumous album

by HAVEN BECHES

We are still living in Juice WRLD’s world, even if he was taken from it far too soon. I’d never been more aware of this fact than when the late rapper’s second posthumous album, “Fighting Demons,” was released on Dec. 10th, 2021—two years and two days after his accidental overdose, just six days after he turned 21. The loss of emo-rap’s biggest star was felt around the world, and his collaborators and devoted fans still mourn the passing of one of the greatest freestylers and lyricists of our time.

This is not Juice “Jarrad Higgins” WRLD’s first album from the grave. “Legends Never Die” came out on July 10, 2020—seven months after Juice WRLD’s death. This album highlighted the enthusiastic side of Juice WRLD, while this second posthumous album reveals the self-destructiveness that shocked even those producing this album.

In an interview with Complex.com, Lil Bibby, who signed Juice WRLD in 2017, stated that when putting together this album, he and collaborators hadn’t heard “a lot of the music until he passed away. Some of the songs sound like a cry for help. I always get in my feelings when I listen to it.” For this reason, Bibby found it necessary to do Higgins justice in “Fighting Demons.”

The intro track is “Burn,” opening with a futuristic beat that reminded me of a sci-fi movie, preparing me for an album different from the music I know and love from Juice WRLD. Higgins sings: “Hands up in the fire, burn, burn, burn, burn” with each ‘burn’ followed by a decisive gunshot. Artfully crafted, I enjoyed this song because it emphasized Juice WRLD’s storytelling talent. He described scenarios and feelings

with metaphors that made the listener really feel what he was feeling, something I especially appreciate when discussing difficult issues such as drug addiction and anxiety.

The second song, “Already Dead,” takes the cake for my favorite song on the album. Nostalgic, this song reveals Juice WRLD’s mindset in the weeks leading up to his overdose. He sings “Voices in my head / All I can hear them say / Is everyone wants me dead / B*tch, I’m already dead.” With the anxiety Juice WRLD feels as a famed rapper, this song tackles the feeling of exploitation and sadness experienced by those exposed to the drug scene at a young age. This beat was incredibly catchy and it made me pause and really listen to Higgins’ words.

Every song on this album mentions drugs at least once, something any past listener can attest to be true about Juice WRLD’s past work. However, the difference between his past albums and this album is clear: in past albums, he sang about his growing addiction and his proximity to death in a fun, almost playful manner. In “Fighting Demons,” Juice WRLD’s admission of addiction seems more like a cry for help. Listening to Higgins’ posthumous album and hearing lyrics about him taking so many drugs he barely wakes up in the morning takes on a new meaning now that those drugs have killed him.

In “You Wouldn’t Understand,” “Doom,” and “Feel Alone,” Juice WRLD reminisces on his love life, constant drug consumption and how he’s constantly on the run from his troubles. “Doom” is really chill—I could listen to it whilst driving on the 405 late at night with the windows open and I would have a main character moment that rivals

“Perks of Being a Wallflower.”

The most awaited song on the album, “Girl of My Dreams” featuring SUGA of BTS, was my least favorite. The song felt like an unfinished love ballad that would have benefited from more polishing, and the feature did nothing to aid the already lacking chorus. This song was reminiscent of “Man of The Year,” from “Legends Never Die,” but lacked the uniqueness that appeared on other songs. Similarly, “Wandered to LA” felt disingenuous to Juice WRLD’s style, magnified by Justin Bieber’s collaboration. Both songs felt like throwaways and neither deserved a feature, leaving me disappointed that Juice WRLD’s label decided to ignore the 2,000 other unreleased and recorded songs Higgins worked on prior to his death to focus on these.

In addition to “Already Dead,” I genuinely enjoyed several other songs on this album, including “Rockstar in His Prime,” which illustrated a light-hearted Juice WRLD recognizing his talent and destiny for greatness. This song is melancholic, highlighting Higgins’ talent and making me wonder what he could have produced if he were still alive. “Go Hard” is another favorite of mine, an ode to Juice WRLD’s girlfriend Ally Lotti and their intense relationship. This was amplified by Lotti herself when she posted photos of them together. This album really hit home as I realized that once someone is gone, that’s it. They’re gone. There may be more posthumous tracks and albums released, but Lotti will never hear Higgins say he loves her, and I will never hear another new sound that wasn’t made before the morning of Dec. 8, 2019.

Even through the endless drug men-

tions, this album managed to highlight the importance of avoiding drugs and seeking help by integrating interludes of Juice WRLD speaking as well as a monologue from Eminem. As the sixth track on the album, “Eminem Speaks” shows the now sober rapper recollecting his almost fatal history with medications, warning listeners that they should seek help and listen to those who care about them. Even though Juice WRLD sings about the highs of his beloved Percy’s (Percocet) and pills, Eminem’s story and Juice WRLD’s reflection on his addiction show a different story—one of hope and resilience. Eminem and Juice WRLD are showing audiences that they can be strong, they can get help, and they can do what Juice WRLD never could—stay clean.

The premise of “Fighting Demons” was to spread awareness for mental health and give the fans what they want — more of their treasured Juice WRLD. The interludes and music videos, which always began or ended with a message of hope and inspiration, urged watchers to seek help and never give up.

One quailm I have with this album is I wish some more poignant collaborators could have been featured. Why was Justin Bieber chosen over The Kid Laroi, who shared a mentor-like relationship with the late rapper up until his death? Some songs felt like they were mismatched and pulled together from obviously unfinished sound bytes, but as Juice WRLD isn’t here to embellish them, that is to be expected. Despite these flaws, I enjoyed “Fighting Demons.” As Juice WRLD laments in “My Life in a Nutshell,” “Worst case scenario / You still hear my songs on the stereo, forever.”

All Nets Are Off

Girls Basketball makes their way to the championship in the Gary Houston Classic but falls to South Pasadena 53-49

by JESS ALVEAR

Girls basketball came out strong last week at the Gary Houston Christmas Classic hosted by Arroyo High School, winning three games up until the championship, losing to South Pasadena 53-49.

According to co-captain Brillana Boyd, junior, the team went into the tournament “super positive and excited to improve their record.” The girls dominated against Temple City 48-24, starting their tournament tenaciously on Monday, Dec. 6.

“We did a great job working together to get the highest percentage shot. We were handling pressure well, we had big leaders on the court, and just executed well overall while working together,” Boyd said.

The girls continued putting up points as they beat Arroyo High school in the second game 56-5.

“We were all just super excited, and we were winning by a lot of points so our momentum was super high. When we won a game, we were ready to come out and win the next one,” Boyd said.

In the championship game, the girls were down by nine at halftime. Boyd believes South Pasadena’s three point shooting made them fall a bit behind as it took RUHS “a while to adjust and get out as quick as possible to block their shots.”

“I would say we need to work on keeping our composure on certain plays because we had more turnovers and lost possession of the ball more times than South Pasadena. I think we just needed to be more calm,” Boyd said.

According to shooting guard Genavieve Sileo, junior, the defense played a key role in the team’s success as they realized they had a height advantage over most teams early on in the tournament, which allowed them to do “good things on the court.”

“Our defense was amazing. We held our opponents to extremely low scoring, which helped us win games immensely. Our defense proved to be really strong and if we keep it up, we will do well in the future,” Sileo said.

Sileo feels confident about the upcoming tournament, the Larry Doyle Winter Classic, starting this Monday, Dec. 20. She hopes the team will continue to utilize the strong skills the team showcased last weekend.

“This tournament really helped us all blend together really well. Now, we just have to carry on this energy and momentum. Coming out extremely strong and ready to score shows how eager we are to win games,” Sileo said.

“

This tournament really helped us all blend together really well. Now, we just have to carry on this energy and momentum.”

GENAVIEVE SILEO
JUNIOR

A LOOK BACK

- L Cathedral Catholic 65-37
- L Serra 56-51
- W Lynwood 60-43
- W St. Anthony 53-43
- W Temple City 48-24



A LOOK AHEAD

- Calvary Chapel 12/20
- Culver City 1/7
- Santa Monica 1/11
- Peninsula 1/14
- Orangewood 1/15

Boys Wrestling places second in the Irvine tournament without their injured captains

by RYAN PARHIZI

Boys Wrestling placed second overall in a single-day tournament in Irvine on Dec. 11 The team walked away with three first placers, three second placers and five third placers. Staying disciplined, in control, and enduring the heat of the match, Redondo ascended to a stellar performance, according to junior wrestler Kyan Wong.

Wong, who placed first in the 120 pounds weight class, maintains optimism for the season.

“We have a lot of camaraderie and pride in what we do,” Wong said. We still need to improve as a team and as individuals, but we have locked in the mentality to get there,” Wong said.

Senior wrestler Collin Cruz, who placed first in 140 pounds weight class, shared the same perspective as Wong, attributing their wins to an increase in live matches in practice that pushes the team to get closer and learn from one another.

“The increase of live matches before the season helped the team get back into the wrestling mindset. And, to win matches, things like this help us build our chemistry and make us a stronger force together,” Cruz said.

The team didn’t have their team captains, Connor Kaplan and Brock Morishige, both seniors, who are injured. According to Wong and Cruz, the captains would have certainly pushed Redondo Union to that 1st place win.

“

We have a lot of pride in what we do. We still need to improve as a team and as individuals, but we have locked in the mentality to get there.”

KYAN WONG
JUNIOR

“I wish I was out there and competing. It kinda sucked. We would have definitely grabbed first place, but the subs did great, and it was a nice way to prep for the rigorous season ahead,” Morishige said.

According to Cruz, the team is possibly on track to have one of its best seasons but still needs to get over the hump of the highly competitive tournaments.

“The Irvine tournament was a relatively easy competition,” Cruz said. “It was a great way to get the team prepared for the Tournament of Champions.”

The Tournament of Champions will take place on Dec. 29 and 30, and it’s a compilation of 30 of the most competitive teams from around the state.

If all the starters are healthy, Wong feels confident they will have a great showing on Dec. 29 and 30.

“Our team fights to the very end no matter what. We practice hard every day to come out with the best possible outcomes, and it shows in our tournaments and our dual meets,” Wong said.



1. Sophomore Keoni Torres wins his match. PHOTO COURTESY OF KYAN WONG



2. The team celebrates on the podium after the tournament. PHOTO COURTESY OF KYAN WONG

Kicking Off The Season

Girls Soccer dominates Torrance High School with aggressive defense and quick scoring

by TY SORIA

Girls Soccer left the field with contentious grins on Saturday, Dec. 11, crushing Torrance High 9-0 in the South Torrance Tournament. RUHS continued the series of wins by beating North Torrance, San Pedro and South Torrance each by five goals or more.

During the game, center back Abby Johnson, junior, believes there was a relaxing team atmosphere, keeping the girls calm when Torrance came on the attack.

“We dealt with our attacks pretty quickly, and we were very organized and calm in the backfield as well,” Johnson said.

On the defensive side, Torrance could not keep the ball for very long, as RUHS quickly overturned possessions and prevented them from getting close to the goal, according to center back Malia DeCastro, senior.

“We did a good job at winning the ball back,” DeCastro said. “We didn’t let them possess the ball enough to get any good opportunities. We just kept getting it back and it felt automatic.”

As the physical aspects of the game seemed to be intact for the girls, working on on-field effective communication may prove to be the best way to enhance their current coordination on both sides of the field.

“I would like to work on improving our communication so we can minimize other teams’ counter attacks,” Johnson said.

This year, according to DeCastro and

Johnson, the team has many younger players with a high ceiling for talent, such as freshman Vailana Tu’ua. Playing forward, she plays successfully when being aggressive.

“She is a big impact player. She is really good with the ball on her feet and is good at taking on a bunch of their players by dribbling

“

We’re crushing teams that we would usually win by just one or two previously, so I’m really confident for the Bay League games.”

MALIA DECASTRO
SENIOR

through all of them,” DeCastro said.

Tomorrow, with the conclusion of the tournament, the girls look forward to the commencement of Bay League confidently after holiday break, with a winning record to back it up.

“We’re crushing teams that we would usually win by just one or two previously, so I’m really confident for the Bay League games with our talented, innovative new players this year,” DeCastro said.



Senior Megan Sweeney sets up for a shot on Wednesday, Dec. 8. PHOTO BY INGRID SOMMERER

Girls Water Polo secures three wins after losing first two games

by ANSEL REYES

Girls Water Polo placed 25th in the Villa Park tournament, playing five games from Dec. 9 to 11. The girls were down two starters for the whole tournament, but were able to secure wins against three teams due to effective communication according to co- captain Caylah Olay.

After losing their first two games against Northwood and Santa Monica, the girls won against Villa Park by taking advantage of good shot opportunities and helping back on defense.

“We were more hungry for a win since we lost the first two games,” Olay said. “I also knew one of the players on the other team personally, so I had a drive to beat them because she committed to the same school I did.”

Redondo’s defense-oriented game plan led them to success despite Olay’s rival not actually playing. After their first two games, the girls focused on improving their awareness to ensure a victory against Villa Park.

“We didn’t make too many attempts to score in earlier games,” Olay said. “There were also a lot of turnovers, and we kept letting the clock go down because we weren’t aware that we were running out of time.”

Olay and co-captain Jorja Davy encouraged their teammates to “fight to win the game” due to the girls having “mixed feelings” about how they would perform.

“We talked about our highlights from previous games in a meeting without the coaches before we played Villa Park,” Olay said. “We didn’t want to have a losing streak throughout the whole tournament, and that’s what I think turned it all around.”

“

I should have pressed more instead of dropping back, and we also needed to keep our hands up for shot blocking.”

CAYLAH OLAY
SENIOR

After emerging victorious from their third game, the team’s confidence levels went up.

“We were so excited to play the next two games,” Olay said. “It also felt good to go home winning after a long day.”

During their first game of the tournament against Northwood, RUHS led by one point for the first three quarters, but lost as a result of “giving up too early” in the fourth.

“We got cocky, and the other team scored three back-to-back goals, which led to them winning by two points,” Olay said. “We weren’t coming back on defense as much, and we weren’t focused on playing well for the rest of the game despite having an entire quarter left.”

According to Olay, the opposing team had strong outside shooters, but a weak set.

“I should have pressed more instead of dropping back, and we also needed to keep our hands up for shot blocking,” Olay said.

“Even if you feel like you’re not doing anything, it might throw the shooter off since there’s something in their view.”

Olay emphasized that “playing smarter ball” would have benefited the team.

“Since we were up against Northwood, we could have run the clock and used our whole possession versus letting them get easy goals,” Olay said. “Taking not-so-smart shots led to turnovers, and that gave them more opportunities to score on us.”

This was the first varsity tournament for

some of the players on the team.

“I’m proud of the girls who came to the tournament,” Olay said. “There were a lot of games played back to back and I know we were all tired at the end, but I’m happy that we pulled through with three wins.”

The girls improved on spatial awareness and looking at center cage for open passes through the tournament, but Olay believes that there are still skills that need to be improved upon.

“It’s still early in the season, so we have all of winter break to focus on what we need to do better for the rest of our games,” Olay said.



1



2



3

1. Caylah Olay passes to a driving teammate.
2. Freshman Stavayah Naveen blocks a shot.
3. Kylie Pierce looks for an open pass into set.
PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH PETREY

STRINGS STILL ATTACHED

How the children of immgrants feel the ties back to their parents' country of origin

by EMILIE TAKAHASHI

In an immigration nation like the US, the experience of a child of immigrants is as diverse as the country itself.

While immigrant parents are commonly known to emphasize education, especially if they hail from a country with less opportunity than the US, the mindset of immigrant parents is hardly limited to this strict stereotype.

Junior Karen Malaty has always been told by her parents that they immigrated from Egypt because of the American Dream. Even if Malaty doesn't see her life this way, she notes that compared to life in Egypt, America is "absolutely amazing."

With a family-oriented culture, her family tends to scrutinize any interactions or outings she has with friends. She describes their mindset as "thinking friends are a complete waste of time."

"This strictness comes from their grandparents' strictness, which comes from their grandparents. It's our culture. You don't need friends, you need grades. That's everything for them. They talked so much about being successful. When I'm not, it feels like their love is kind of conditional to my grades," Malaty said.

Back in Kyro, Egypt, anyone who leaves Egypt to settle in America is seen as highly successful. According to Malaty, by traveling to America and observing American life, her parents developed an outlook that "education leads to money" and that "the more intelligence you have, the easier it is to find opportunities."

"They think 'My kid needs to be super smart because I did a lot to come over here and be successful. I'm not over here so they can sit down and play video games,'" Malaty said. "I used to study until I didn't really have anything else to do. All I've done is study my whole life. That's the only way I could deal with that pressure, to just try and catch up."

Prioritizing grades because her parents prioritize grades, Malaty finds herself "freaking out" whenever she receives low scores. All she can think about is, 'How is this going to affect my future?'

Similarly, junior Ashley Agustin describes her family's parenting style as strict but not overbearing—when it comes to grades, she knows the unspoken expectations. She strives to achieve good grades, feeling the need to prove herself worthy of her parents' pride.

Her father immigrated from the Philippines around his early twenties and was naturalized. Her mother, seeing more opportunity in America, immigrated from Mexico when she was 18.

"I know how much they struggled to be where they are now. Financially there were some troubles trying to get jobs, trying to get a place to live," Agustin said. "I want to be purely independent and work hard, so they don't have to see me struggle."

Agustin's household has always emphasized that she has an abundance of opportunities simply because she was born in America.

"I was already meant to be here, and I'm welcomed. I don't have to struggle for my place here. My mom is always telling me to take advantage of that and make sure you make a name for yourself because you have that privilege, unlike me," Agustin said.

Almost every year, Agustin's family sends clothing they no longer wear to her aunts, uncles and cousins in the Philippines. Knowing that some of

her family can't afford nice things, her family is always open to sending excess shoes and clothes. Agustin believes this tradition helps further her understanding of her family's situation, but she highlights how she doesn't feel out of the ordinary.

"I just feel like a normal teenager. It just doesn't cross my mind that my parents are different or my family is different from other families, but I think that applies to everyone. Everyone has different experiences," Agustin said.

In contrast to Augustin's strict household, junior Joey Wang doesn't feel his immigrant parents fit the stereotype.

Wang's parents immigrated from China to follow their careers and have taken on a loose parenting style in juxtaposition to the commonly referenced Asian stereotype. He notes the stereotype's inaccuracy and believes it is not necessarily the only factor that plays into parental expectations.

"I think it's just a human thing. Every parent has expectations. After all, it's their offspring, and they want them to continue what they couldn't. That's a natural thing. They want you to leave off from where they started," Wang said.

“

I know how much they struggled to be where they are now. Financially, there were some troubles trying to get jobs, trying to get a place to live. I want to be purely independent and work hard, so they don't have to see me struggle.

ASHLEY AGUSTIN
JUNIOR

Although he believes his parents hold their own personal expectations for him, he finds that they prioritize his happiness and encourage him to pursue his passion in history, despite the fact that a career path after a history major won't necessarily grant him future financial success.

"Every parent has a certain amount of expectations for their kids. If you were a parent, you'd certainly want them to be a bit more successful than you were," Wang said. "What they tell me is to just be happy. I'm lucky, I'm really, really lucky."

1. Embroidered stars via United States Flag Store.
2. Needle and thread photo by Chrissa Olson
3. Flag embroidery by Chrissa Olson

