

Transgender involvement in women's sports has historically been a controversial topic as policies have restricted these athletes from competing.



John A. List, a University of Chicago economics professor, provides tips on incentives, quitting and how to ensure an idea will have a large-scale impact.



Athletes face internal and external pressure to perform at their peak potential while simultaneously balancing academics and extracurriculars.



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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Victims share barriers to reporting

Posts detail why some don't share stories of assault

by PETER PU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A school club has launched a social media account to raise awareness about issues around reporting sexual assault.

As part of the broader #WhyIDidntReport movement, Intersectional Feminism Club created in February an Instagram account for victims in the Laboratory Schools community to detail the complex reasons culminating in their decision to not report the incident.

Since the 2018 allegations of sexual assault against Brett Kavanaugh during his confirmation hearing for the Supreme Court, more than 54,000 posts have been published on Instagram posts under #WhyIDidntReport. As accuser Christine Blasey Ford was questioned for not reporting the assault when it occurred in the 1980s when they were both teenagers, victims of sexual harassment and assault have revealed factors discouraging them from reporting these incidents.

In the United States an incident of sexual assault occurs on average once every 68 seconds, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. More than two out of three of these incidents are not reported to the police.

All identifying information is omitted in the stories published on the Intersectional Feminism Club Instagram account. According to Will Trone, club co-president, the account is not a platform for reporting incidents of sexual assault. These stories will become part of an art piece to be displayed during Social Justice Week.

The club's other co-president, An Ngo, is an editor for the Mid-

"This platform is not intended to bring anyone justice, the platform was not intended to be a place for people to report. It was just intended for kind of a narrow purpose, which I think has value."

— WILL TRONE, CO-PRESIDENT

way but was not involved in the reporting for this article.

"This platform is not intended to bring anyone justice," Will said. "The platform was not intended to be a place for people to report. It was just intended for kind of a narrow purpose, which I think has value."

Lab encourages victims and witnesses of sexual assault or misconduct to report potential violations of Lab's policies, according to Betsy Noel, Title IX coordinator, in a statement to the Midway. The available avenues for reporting include direct communication to Ms. Noel or another administrator or submitting a Google Form. Ms. Noel is then responsible for connecting victims to resources and informing them of the options.

On the Instagram account, students have voiced concerns of facing disbelief from the community, blaming themselves for the incident, and protecting the reputation of the perpetrator. Nationally, about two out of three incidents of sexual assault involve a perpetrator that is acquainted with the victim, according to the RAINN. U-High counselor Camille Baughn-Cunningham said that the nature and prevalence of the submissions was not a surprise.

"As much as we all have an appreciation for some of the things that sets Lab apart and makes it a special place, unfortunately, it doesn't keep these kinds of things from happening," Dr.



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY TÉA TAMBURO

SPEAKING OUT. On Instagram, sexual assault victims shared experiences of fearing disbelief from the community or trying to protect the perpetrator as they decide whether to report.

Baughn-Cunningham said. "And so it was not surprising that it's happening. It was not surprising that it's not always being reported."

Ms. Noel's statement reiterated that reporting an incident to an outside organization does not constitute a report to Lab, and sharing stories anonymously on social media does not initiate an investigation.

"When Lab learns of these types of anonymous disclosures, the school works to raise awareness in the community about the support that Lab provides," Ms. Noel wrote in the statement. "For example, the school may respond by re-

viewing sexual assault policies, reinforcing and expanding school-wide educational programs, and reminding our community members about available resources, including counseling, health, and mental health services."

Since submissions to the Instagram account are anonymous, the site administrators can't verify the credibility of the stories. Dr. Baughn-Cunningham hopes people use the site for its intended purpose and not take advantage of the space.

Will said, "Are you really gonna have 18 people lie about this? Maybe, but like, I choose to believe that at least some of them are

credible, that there is some truth."

In terms of addressing sexual assault at Lab, Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said the solution starts with education for both survivors and perpetrators. Following the launch of the Instagram account, Intersectional Feminism Club hosted workshops for Consent Fest during the week of Feb. 28.

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said, "Maybe this is a start for many of these people who chose to share and that hopefully somewhere down the line there is an ability to report in a more specific way to address their heels healing and to address the perpetrators actions as well."

FUNDRAISING



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATT PETRES

SWEET TREATS. Prom Committee member Tarini Mutreja writes names on boxes of Krispy Kreme doughnuts April 6 in the high school lobby. All proceeds from the fundraiser will go toward the prom.

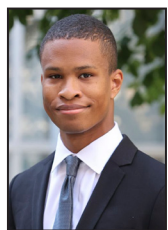
Student Council election begins

by BERKOTO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Student Council election began April 7 with historic changes to the campaigning system. Candidates must submit written statements, their completed candidacy petition and a 90-second campaign video by April 21.

The election will be April 29 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. through the Student Council website. Students will be able to cast votes for declared candidates or write in another student.

In lieu of campaign speeches in the cafeteria, each candidate's campaign video will be played by advisers during the April 27 advisory period. The videos will also be available on Schoology.



Brent Pennington

"We decided to go with videos this year because of the lack of turnout to watch campaign speeches in previous years," All-School President Brent Pennington said. "Hopefully this will boost engagement and turnout for the election."

Brent hopes campaign videos will give candidates the freedom to display their creativity and potentially attract students who would not otherwise have run for office.

"Student Council gives students the opportunity to play a part in their community, effecting change at Lab," Brent said. "I encourage anyone who finds that interesting to run for Student Council."

Brent said he's most proud of his administration's increase in transparency with regularly posted meeting notes and a list of bills in progress.

Brent said, "I hope next year's officers will build on the transparency measures we implemented."

Election timeline:

April 21: Candidate declaration forms due with 90-second campaign videos, completed petition form and written statement.

April 25: Campaigning begins. Candidates may hang up to 20 campaign signs approved by Ana Campos.

April 27: Respective class candidates' campaign videos will be played during advisory period. Videos will also be made available through Schoology.

April 29: Election day occurs from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Voting will take place on the Student Council website and results will be announced by 4 p.m.

SOURCE: BRENT PENNINGTON

BRAVE attendees work toward justice

Dozens of students explore identity, race at conference

by **TÉA TAMBURIO**
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR

With a theme of “Moving Forward,” 92 attendees from the middle and high schools discussed racism, racial justice movements and taking action at the student-led Becoming Racially Aware and Valuing Ethnicity conference on April 8.

BRAVE Committee president Zachary Gin, a senior, said the last in-person BRAVE conference was three school years ago.

“We thought that a lot has changed since then,” Zachary said, referring to the Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate movements. “We have to think about how we can continue these things and how we can acknowledge that these things have happened and address them further.”

Attendees rotated through three core workshops, all centered around the theme.

“We wanted a lot of our workshops to address current issues but also how those outside world issues affect the Lab community,” sophomore Santana Romero, a BRAVE board member, said. “We also wanted to focus on how we can sort of rebuild connections and do more creative things to just build up the community.”

Zachary hosted the workshop “Moving Forward,” where attendees created a timeline listing major national and world events that occurred since March 2020.

“We wanted a lot of our workshops to address current issues but also how those outside world issues affect the Lab community.”

— SANTANA ROMERO,
SOPHOMORE

“The idea of the workshop was to consider, acknowledge and understand how the different events that have happened are traumatic but also very impactful and are important to learn from,” Zachary said.

For sophomore Ella Cohen-Richie, making the timeline was particularly thought-provoking.

“It showed how a lot of us forgot what happened during the 2021 year,” Ella said. “We remembered George Floyd as kind of the big thing that happened in 2020, alongside Breonna Taylor. It was interesting to just kind of see that moving on, and that was the message I think they were trying to get across, which was very impactful to think about.”

In another workshop, “Mural with Jesús Acuña,” attendees collaborated to paint a mural on the second floor of Gordon Parks Arts Hall.

“I very much enjoy art, so being able to work with Jesús Acuña on the BRAVE mural and some of the really big, banner-like canvases,” junior Juan Chaides said. “It was really cool to be able to work with an artist that’s been in the field for so long.”

This was the first year the BRAVE



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

BRAVE BRUSHES. Sophomores Leila Battiste and Ella Cohen-Richie paint the BRAVE logo during the BRAVE mural painting workshop. Mural painting was offered for the first time this year.

conference included mural painting.

“Everyone was able to work on it, and now it’ll be a permanent thing in Lab that represents the conference,” Santana said.

With the idea of progressing racial and cultural justice move-

ments and moving forward at the center of the conference, Santana emphasized the impact of middle and high schoolers coming together.

“The main thing that stuck with me were some of the ideas that people brought up. Especial-

ly with the middle schoolers,” she said. “Just hearing everyone be super engaged, conscientious and invested in talking about identity and race within Lab and in general was super rewarding to be able to see and know that I participated in allowing this space to happen.”

Lab faculty mistreatment disappoints community

Students, employees unsurprised by report

by **COLIN LESLIE**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Reacting to a story published in the Midway March 9, U-High students and teachers expressed disappointment, but not surprise, at the frequency of incidents of mistreatment and frustration over the lack of accountability for racist actions.

Director Victoria Jueds sent an email message to the Lab community after the publication of the article where she shared her reflections on Lab’s commitment to ensuring all students and employees feel like they belong.

“I share the dismay expressed by many that we are not where we want to be, and that in various ways we have failed to accurately support, appreciate, and celebrate BIPOC educators and students,” Ms. Jueds wrote in the letter.

Senior Tech Nix, president of the Black Students’ Association, said BSA members discussed the article with faculty at the club meeting March 11.

“I wasn’t surprised at all,” Tech said. “We ended up talking about the article [in BSA], and none of us in that group was surprised either.”

Similarly, counselor Camille Baughn-Cunningham, who is Black, said she was not surprised.

“The fact that these things happen is not surprising,” said Dr. Baughn-Cunningham, who is also a U-High alumna. “The fact that we can’t as a community address them and prevent them and decrease the number of incidents, the frequency and somehow come out on a better side — that’s the part that surprises me.”

According to Tech, something that was very clear when reading the article was a pattern of incidents of racism being overlooked when mentioned by faculty members of color.

“I think mostly just like listening to them when they say that there’s something that’s

“I wasn’t surprised at all. We ended up talking about the article [in BSA], and none of us in that group was surprised either.”

— TECH NIX,
BSA PRESIDENT

happening,” Tech said. “I remember reading in the article that a lot of people said they would talk about it with other faculty as well as the administration, but they’d talk about it and nothing really happened.”

While awareness and conversation is important, action and accountability are more useful, according to Tech.

“Making an effort to take action past just talking is something that I think a lot of faculty members would appreciate, and really that’s the next step,” Tech said. “I don’t want to speak for them. These are things that I’ve interpreted from our conversations at BSA and through reading the article.”

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham also said action needs to start with accountability.

“At some level, there were, and I think the article alludes to this, there were opportunities that weren’t taken to really hold people accountable, accountable for actions that they made for whatever reasons that were harmful to someone else, and I think that’s where we have to start as a community,” Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said.

Like others, the mistreatment described in the article did not come as a surprise to art teacher Sunny Neater, who is white. She said she is part of a group called White Anti-Racist Educators at Lab that works to examine the role that white educators play in racism at Lab and beyond it.

“My initial reaction was, like, this is super sad, and made me angry and made me respond to it as like a call to action,” Ms. Neater said. “Not to just be like, ‘Oh, that’s so sad for you guys,’ like no one needs white people to be sad for them. They need white people to do better.”

Ms. Neater had her classes read the article and discuss their reactions to it. She said



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

READ AND REACT. A story in the Midway highlights incidents of mistreatment and frustration by some faculty of color over the lack of accountability for racist actions.

she wanted them to be aware of the experiences of their teachers and to examine their own actions.

“I wanted them to really know about it, because I wasn’t sure if they knew,” Ms. Neater said. “In talking to a couple colleagues afterwards, they were like, ‘You know, what wasn’t stated is, like, students treat us poorly. Students will say, you know, subtly racist things and treat us in ways that are disrespectful.’”

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said failing to hold people accountable for racist actions can perpetuate a community where these actions can be glossed over, and that can lead to losing valuable members of Lab.

“I think, obviously, as adults, as people in general, we recognize that people move on to do bigger, better things that maybe they’ve always wanted an opportunity to do, and that’s a wonderful way to leave,” Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said. “Leaving in this way is not. I think it leaves each one of us with a wound in some way to know that people have left because they have not felt accepted and safe in this space.”

COVID-19 testing ahead of retreat prompts concern

by **SAHANA UNNI**
CONTENT MANAGER

The return to an in-person junior retreat March 30 to April 1 in southern Wisconsin included an unexpected turn of events when several students were informed they were close contacts of individuals who contracted COVID-19.

During the week of March 28, the Laboratory Schools had 14 confirmed cases and 262 students and employees identified as close contacts.

With the number of COVID-19 cases on a slow, but steady rise in Illinois, some students have opted to resume wearing a mask.

Prior to attending junior retreat, all students were required to participate in SHIELD testing. Apart from the bus to and from Camp Lake, Wisconsin, masks were optional for the duration of the retreat.

“We had everyone do a SHIELD test in advance, so everyone who was scheduled to attend the retreat was cleared to attend the retreat,” Dean of Students Ana Campos said. “We did what we could to try to help people to feel confident that we have taken all the right measures and we followed the science.”

Junior Lauren Tapper has seen concern about an increase in COVID-19 cases but believes U-High is taking the proper precautions to keep students safe.

“I think everyone is accepting that it’s really up to that individual if they feel comfortable to take off their mask or not,” Lauren said. “Yes, there is some anxiety among certain people, but they are able to take the precautions without any consequences or negative feedback from their peers.”

High school nurse Mary Toledo-Treviño wants students to know that she is available to respond to any questions, concerns or hesitations about COVID-19.

“It is really important for students to listen to their bodies, and if they’re symptomatic to please stay home and to test themselves,” Ms. Toledo-Treviño said. “That way it helps to keep the community healthier. We all depend on each other and students doing their part helps.”

Weighed down: Are packs harming our backs?

The weight that's on our shoulders may be too much

by **AMY REN**
REPORTER

As students weave through the school, backpacks bounce behind them, slung over one shoulder, worn low on the back, or over both shoulders. Struggling to stand up, students hunch over and lock together as they clog the hallways.

While backpacks can be necessary for high schoolers, back pain does not need to come with wearing one. However, discomfort is normal for many students.

After a day of carrying his backpack, Khairy Barnes' back aches. Filled with materials for class, it weighs him down and forces him to hunch over.

"I kinda see my backpack as like, a giant rock," the senior said. "I keep everything in my bag because, like, I just don't want to go all the way up, back to my locker."

Although Khairy recognizes that the weight of his backpack causes him back pain, he accepts the consequences.

"I feel like this is more something I'm just doing to myself. I could probably fix it, but like, it's what works for me, and since I'm already so close to, like, getting out, I'm not going to bother to change it," Khairy said, referencing his status as a senior.

For people like Khairy who don't want to shuttle materials to and from their lockers, there are tips and tricks to alleviate back pain from heavy backpacks.

Douglas Dirschl, professor and chairman of the University of Chicago department of orthopaedic surgery and rehabilitation medicine, said that there are some principles students can use to reduce back pain, along with some gen-

"Try to balance the weight equally between both of your shoulders and on your hips or your waist. And the best backpacks have a waist belt as well."

— DOUGLAS DIRSCHL,
UCHICAGO ORTHOPAEDIST

eral stretching and strengthening that can help prevent back pain.

"Try to balance the weight equally between both of your shoulders and on your hips or your waist," Dr. Dirschl said. "And the best backpacks have a waist belt as well."

According to Dr. Dirschl, more than half the weight of a backpack can be supported by the waist belt, taking some of the burden off your back and shoulders.

However, he recognizes that people's habits can also help distribute weight properly.

"Now what do most of us do? We just take one strap of the backpack and sling it over one shoulder, and then off we go," Dr. Dirschl said, "and while that gets us from point A to point B, it's not biomechanically the most sound way to use a backpack for your own long-term health."

While most students will not need medical intervention because of overweight backpacks, they can still mitigate the effects of wearing a heavy backpack.

The recommended weight limit for a backpack varies based on many factors, according to Dr. Dirschl, such as a person's size and strength, along with the backpack itself.

Some backpacks, particularly ones meant for hikers, display a recommended weight limit.

"That isn't because the seams of the backpack will rip apart if you exceed the weight limit, but rather because the bag is designed to help distribute that weight well



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

HUNCHED BACKS. The weight that many students carry on their backs can cause damage in the long run. Consistent exercise can help to strengthen the back, core, shoulders and the upper body.

for you," Dr. Dirschl said. "If you go over that, then then you're likely putting stress on your body that the backpack wasn't designed to help reduce."

Exceeding the recommended weight can cause someone to hunch over, since the pack cannot support it well. However, the distribution of weight within the backpack itself is also important.

"If the weight is distributed so that it's a long ways away from your back, then that too makes it very hard to carry," Dr. Dirschl said. "Generally, the heaviest items in a backpack should be fairly low and fairly close to your back."

Along with changing the back-

pack itself, Dr. Dirschl also recommends exercises and stretches to prevent back pain.

He says many YouTube videos work well.

"The most important thing that any of us can do for our back health is to make sure that our core muscles are strong — everything from the top of the abdomen, all the way down to about your mid-thighs. All of the muscles in the core are responsible for keeping your back upright and straight and supporting your body and any weight you carry," Dr. Dirschl said. "Having a weak core is bad, very bad, for your overall back health."

Dr. Dirschl recommends focus-

ing on hamstrings and shoulders.

"Keeping your hamstring muscles stretched is important because really tight hamstrings change how your pelvis is rotated and that puts different stresses on your back," he said. "Most of us who live lives where we tend to get tense and anxious hold a lot of that tension in our shoulders, and keeping that stretched out can also be very helpful."

While heavy backpacks can be unavoidable, paying attention to the amount and distribution of weight and the backpack's design can help ease back pain — and the freedom to stand up straight and move as they wish.

Smoothie additives may not be as healthy as thought

Go-to nutritious snacks might be underwhelming

by **AUDREY PARK**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

On the menu of the acai restaurant are varieties of proteins and antioxidants labeled as "superfoods." Matcha. Collagen powder. Whey powder. These are just some of the many superfoods thought to be nutritionally dense that some people view to be life-changing. The number of options seen in the media or overheard from friends can be overwhelming. But, exactly how beneficial are these seemingly magical ingredients?

Kristen Straughan, director of the nutrition science program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is one of many dietitians who continue to question the health benefits of superfoods. Below are five highly regarded superfoods, which Ms. Straughan evaluates as significantly beneficial, exaggerated or simply unknown due to minimal research.

Chia Seeds:

One superfood, chia seeds, come from a plant called *Salvia hispanica* L. They are the richest source of omega-3 fatty acids, essential to receive in one's diet.

Ms. Straughan said chia seeds serve as a great way of receiving omega-3 fatty acids. However, foods such as fatty fish should be



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CHLOE MA

SUPER SMOOTHIES. Advertising certain additives as "superfoods" represents a marketing strategy exaggerating their benefit.

the primary source.

"Chia seeds are a plant-based version of the omega-3 fatty acids, and because they are plant-based, they are actually not absorbed as well as fatty fish would be," she said.

Ms. Straughan said that although most nutritionists would recommend straying away from relying solely on chia seeds for omega-3 fatty acids, they are a great additive to something like a smoothie bowl.

Collagen:

Another additive, collagen is an animal protein everyone has in their body. The idea is that taking

collagen in oral form can replace the collagen that the body is losing. Some of the proposed benefits of consuming collagen include anti-aging and the improvement of skin elasticity.

Ms. Straughan said there is not enough evidence to support such claims, and as a result, it is misrepresented in the media.

"Because we do not have a lot of research on collagen powder, it is romanticized as having more benefits than it actually will induce," she said. "We will just have to keep watching the literature on that."

Matcha:

Matcha is an antioxidant usual-

ly consumed to combat free radicals. Exposure to free radicals can be heightened due to increased time in the sun, but they are produced every time the body consumes food, regardless of diet.

Ms. Straughan emphasized antioxidants are important in a diet.

"Antioxidants are very important because they help prevent the damage that free radicals cause. Some of that damage can show up as heart disease, cancer and aging," she said.

She said that antioxidants could be consumed by eating whole grains, fruits and vegetables, but sources like matcha and other teas are great additions.

Wheatgrass:

Wheatgrass is the young grass of the plant *Triticum aestivum*. It is advertised to reduce oxidative stress and boost metabolism.

Ms. Straughan said the benefits of wheatgrass are exaggerated and untrue a lot of times.

"The media advertises wheatgrass as life-changing, but in reality, it is not any better than fruits and vegetables," she said.

Whey Protein Powder:

Finally, whey protein or powder is found in many dairy products such as milk and yogurt. The liquid that gathers at the top of yogurt is one of the more visible ways of seeing the protein.

Ms. Straughan said that whey powder is unnecessary if the body is receiving enough protein.

"There is not anything substantial about whey powder where you would see or feel a noticeable difference," she said. "I want to emphasize that it is not bad or harmful, just very needless."

Overall, Ms. Straughan said that the term "superfood" is misrepresented in the media.

"It is a marketing strategy used to portray these additives as something greater than some of them are," she said. "You cannot eat Flamin' Hot Cheetos all day, eat a superfood and expect to suddenly be healthy. It is about the choices you make in the long run."

She said the value of science and social media's power on society greatly influences the choices people make.

"Our meal and nutritional patterns matter, but not one superfood additive or food is not going to make a difference in our health," she said. "We really have to think more generally about what foods we are eating in our diet instead of relying on one gimmicky tip we saw on social media."

While the names of certain superfoods and additives may look and sound intriguing, ultimately, prioritizing a balanced diet and only supplementing it with such additives is critical to see notable changes.

"No one food is going to change our life. We have to think more generally — what foods we are eating," Ms. Straughan said. "As opposed to saying one additive or food is good for us, think in the long run."

The Point still needs to be saved

As the Midway sees it...

Almost 20 years after first organizing against the city's push to replace the limestone steps at Promontory Point with concrete, Hyde Park community members are expressing concerns about the plans and are ready to organize all over again. Replacing the limestone revetments removes the Point's historical significance, is less aesthetically pleasing and overlooks the durability and accessibility limestone would gain if restored.

Promontory Point is a 40-acre peninsula on Chicago's lakefront running from 54th to 56th streets and surrounded by large limestone rocks that lead to the lake. "The Point," as locals refer to it, serves as a serene landscape where people go to jog, build campfires, walk dogs, swim and much more.

The limestone revetments have always faced the danger of erosion and a lack of maintenance. In 1980, the city, Chicago Park District and United States Army Corps of Engineers created a \$300 million plan to replace the limestone revetments with concrete. Members of the Promontory Point Conservatory, an organization that grew from the Save the Point campaign in the early 2000s, is raising awareness about developments in Chicago's efforts to reconstruct lakefront



MIDWAY PHOTO BY GABRIEL ISSA

barrier walls and are supported by U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush and Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th).

Chicago's limestone lakeshore barriers were built almost 100 years ago and have historical significance for the Point. With the city's plan to establish concrete lakefronts, limestone ones like the Point's will become rare and something to cherish, not replace. The Point was added to the National

Register of Historic Places in 2018.

Located within walking distance of the Laboratory Schools, many students have experiences visiting the Point during P.E. classes, summers, holidays and with friends. With the revetments leading directly into the water, students and Hyde Park community members use the Point as a place for socializing, campfires and swimming, making it a quintessential part of

the Hyde Park and U-High communities' memories.

The revetments are arranged in a stair-like formation, giving a gradual transition from the water to the park. Replacing this with concrete would create a flat and one-dimensional appearance, tarnishing the Point's aesthetic.

The Point's lakeshore barrier needs restoring no matter the material used, so restoring the lime-

stone would be less invasive compared to removing the limestone and laying concrete. Concrete is also less durable compared to limestone, making limestone a more environmentally friendly option when facing erosion.

The main concern Rep. Rush and Ald. Hairston are raising are disability access concerns about the Point. Because the revetments are uneven, steep and lacking ramps, they're practically impossible for people with some physical disabilities to independently access. Due to the Americans with Disabilities Act amendments, any restoration of the Point must meet modern accessibility protocol. Therefore, restoring the Point's revetments provides an opportunity to add accessibility features like lifts, ramps and platforms that could integrate into the existing limestone features.

While Rep. Rush and Ald. Hairston have a valid concern, it does not need to be resolved by making the Point's lakefront entirely concrete. Instead of removing the limestone entirely, the focus must be put on restoring the current revetments to preserve the historic, nostalgic and more environmentally friendly aspects of the Point that Hyde Park has cherished.

This editorial reflects the opinion of the U-High Midway Editorial Board.

A no-fly-zone in Ukraine would only exacerbate violence

by ETHAN SWINGER
REPORTER

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began Feb. 24 has shown little signs of resolution, and although Ukraine has put up impressive resistance, the situation continues to gravely threaten the lives of civilians and the country's infrastructure. In desperation, the situation prompts Ukrainian officials to request a no-fly zone be instituted over Ukrainian airspace.

The establishment of a no-fly zone in Ukraine would ban any unpermitted aircraft in Ukrainian airspace, ensuring further safety and protection of Ukrainian civilians. Any aircrafts violating the air-

space will be shot down.

Despite arguments from Ukrainian leaders and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a no-fly zone should not be formed over Ukraine since it would significantly increase the threat of large-scale war and it would not prevent further invasion and civilian attacks.

For the successful formation of a Ukrainian no-fly zone, safety and control are needed over the desig-

nated Ukrainian airspace. However, Russia possesses long-range air defenses, and numerous aircraft and airfields situated in Russian territory, that pose an existing threat over Ukraine. Attacking them is the only viable option for successfully operating a no-fly zone, and doing so would almost certainly lead to a declaration of war with Russia, which currently possesses the world's largest nuclear arsenal. The need to prevent an expansive conflict is a situation NATO and the United States recognize, reflected in their cautious actions in their pursuit of aiding Ukraine, including rejecting the idea of a Ukrainian no-fly zone.

Additionally, Russian attacks have largely not been by aircraft, so establishing a no-fly zone would almost certainly involve more nations in the war but still not halt terrestrial Russian attacks on civilians. Moreover, maintaining a no-fly zone would also be extremely resource-intensive and would require continuous air patrols, surveillance and maintenance.

The payoff for a potential Ukrainian no-fly zone is minimal compared to the cost of escalating to a full-scale war.

Although a no-fly zone is not effective for ensuring the safety of Ukrainians, its purpose of protecting vulnerable Ukrainian civilians

and infrastructure from violence is a necessity that cannot be ignored. The United States recently finalized a \$13.6 billion aid package to Ukraine, but the administration should take additional steps in aiding Ukraine such as providing additional military equipment, including available aircraft that were going to be decommissioned. The United States also possesses valuable intelligence, which, given to Ukraine, would aid in pinpointing the location of Russian forces.

Despite the duty the United States and allies hold to support Ukraine, the de-escalation of potential conflict is a key factor that a no-fly zone would endanger.



Ethan Swinger

Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' bill conflicts with true goals of education

by SAHANA UNNI
CONTENT MANAGER

On March 28, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law the "Parental Rights in Education" bill, which restricts discussions about gender identity and sexuality with young students, and requires teachers to notify parents when any "mental, emotional or physical health" services are provided to a student. Critics nicknamed it the "Don't Say Gay" bill and say it will make schools more dangerous for LGBTQ-identifying students.

Schools should work to create a safe and educational environment for students, focusing on student needs above parental input. This law allows parents to sue for any violation, intimidating faculty who would have otherwise been willing

to have confidential conversations with students. Curriculums being taught need to prioritize the education of students, not satisfying parents.

The "Don't Say Gay" law potentially poses a threat to students residing in other states where Republicans dominate the legislature, with Louisiana already having filed similar legislation. Although Illinois has a Democratic governor and legislature, 23 states are run by a Republican governor and legislature, allowing legislation to threaten students receiving an educa-

tion in almost half of the country.

Many supporters have claimed that the legislation focuses on parental rights, not ostracizing certain communities, but the vague language leaves LGBTQ students' rights up to interpretation. Of course, parents should be able to have conversations about gender identity and sexuality with their children, but that doesn't mean educators shouldn't also have the ability to facilitate them. Despite appearing to focus on young students, provisions can impact all grade levels due to highly subjective wording, such as requiring discussions about sexuality and gender to be "age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate." Topics in general being taught to young children should absolute-

ly be age-appropriate, but it is in targeting LGBTQ students that the law becomes harmful.

Student identities are not up for debate and do not change based on parental approval. The debate incited by this bill is harmful to queer students across the country, as it ostracizes them from their peers, whose rights and identities are not now being scrutinized.

The classroom is an environment where students should be able to learn about and discuss topics that are prevalent in their lives, which includes conversations about sexuality and gender identity. Many LGBTQ people have played important roles in history which should not be dismissed because of their gender identity or sexuality. Likewise,

books featuring queer characters or themes should not be deemed inherently more sexual. Learning about LGBTQ themes in no way sexualizes or grooms children, as many supporters of the bill have claimed, but rather teaches them about real-world topics they may not otherwise be exposed to.

The "Don't Say Gay" bill is unlikely to be passed in Illinois and even less likely to affect students at Lab, but that doesn't make the issue any less important. Sign petitions. Attend protests. Work to ensure queer students in Republican-dominated states can feel safe expressing their identity at school. This bill politicizes the well-being of children and diminishes student input on school curriculums necessary for a true education.



Sahana Unni

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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In a time when the press is criticized, the U-High Midway seeks to inform, educate and serve the community of University High School. The Midway is developed and managed by students, for students.

In every story we write, the Midway should give a voice to the experiences of people at U-High. We will report on the people, activities and thoughts that make our school unique, striving to include the voices we haven't heard yet.

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A fresh beat for...

Reggaeton music unifies singing, history, culture

by **AUDREY MATZKE**
REPORTER

It's dynamic. It's inventive. It's enormous fun for newcomers and veteran listeners alike. Reggaeton, a Panama-born musical genre stemming from dancehall, American hip-hop, and various Latin-American and Caribbean styles that combine singing and Spanish-language rap, is making its way through the Anglophone world.

Touting "the biggest Latin lineup to hit Chicago," the Sueños Music Festival is drumming up a weekend of rhythm and rhyme.

Between May 28-29, Grant Park will host 21 different Reggaeton acts, including Wisin y Yandel, Ozuna, Farruko, and J Balvin, referred to as the "Prince of Reggaeton."

While J Balvin has sold 35 million records worldwide, his music hasn't quite taken hold among Lab students.

Isabella Alvarez, a ninth grader, said she wished more people at Lab knew what Reggaeton was all about.

"Unfortunately, there's not many Latinos at Lab," Isabella said. "I know it's popular overall, but it doesn't feel like it, because there's so few people at Lab who have that same interest."

The syncopated beats and clever turns-of-phrase we hear today, she said, are a few decades in the making. Reggaeton took hold throughout Central America's youthful underground in the '90s — angering Puerto Rican censors and law enforcement — and has since trickled upward into mass culture, topping the charts with singles such as "Despacito" in 2017. The actual genre, however, remains somewhat niche.

"I love talking to the people who do listen to it, because I can connect with them on a deeper level," Isabella said.

For her, reggaeton — in all its depth and variation, conveys a snapshot of the human experi-



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY DALIN DOHRN

ence. If listeners feel like dancing to it, they can dance, and if not, they can simply listen.

"It's very upbeat, and it's very danceable. If I were to imagine it in some way, it'd probably be played at a Latin club," she said. "It can range from party music, to just lay-in-your-bed, imagine-a-different-reality type stuff."

One of Isabella's favorite tracks, Bad Bunny's "La Canción," features J Balvin on alternating verses. She said despite the language barrier, it tells a story to which many can relate.

"It's about a breakup," she said. "You know how some relationships, like, have a song? It's about how he's at a club, and when they played that song, he remembered her."

She praised two other headliners, El Alfa and Farruko, for their

artistic and performance-based ferocity.

"They give like, 'Pitbull energy,'" she said, referring to the Miami-based singer and businessman. "Very strong beats like that, definitely dancing music."

While she hasn't quite made converts out of any of her peers, this hasn't stopped her from raving about it, bringing her fandom to their attention.

"I've definitely made people aware of it, like my friends. They don't really listen to it, but they didn't really know about it before I started talking about it," she said. "A lot of them just don't speak Spanish."

For nascent fans, Isabella recommends Latino Mix 93.5, a Latin American radio station.

"It plays all of the main hits right now. It's always good to start out

"There's so few people at Lab who have that same interest,"

— ISABELLA ALVAREZ
NINTH GRADER

with the main hits, but if they really wanted to get into old-ish reggaeton, I'd recommend young Daddy Yankee," Isabella said. "I would say he's the one who really started, I don't know, this generation of reggaeton."

As for the Sueños Chicago festival itself, Isabella is too young to attend. Nonetheless, she hopes to one day see her faves in concert, provided none of them have fallen off.

"It's like, 18 plus, and I'm not 18. I really hope they keep it going until I'm old enough to attend, and that the artists are still good."



IMMERSE. Familiarize yourself with Reggaeton music using Sueños Chicago's official playlist. Scan the QR code to stream on Spotify.

'Sueños Chicago'

Date: May 28-29

Time: Noon to 10 p.m.

Ages permitted: 18+

Location: Grant Park
337 E. Randolph St.

Genre: Latin Reggaeton

Headliner artists: J Balvin, Wisin y Yandel, Ozuna, Farruko

Ticket prices: Two-day general admission tickets for \$275 (sold out), two-day VIP tickets for \$600, two-day platinum tickets for \$1,500. Additional fees are added on to all ticket prices.

Official website:
suenosmusicfestival.com

'Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy' is inspiring yet convoluted



SOURCE: NETFLIX

CAPTURING GROWTH. Netflix's "Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy" allows viewers to watch Ye West grow as both a person and a singer as his career progresses. Pictured is Ye next to his mother, Donda, in front of her home.

by **AUDREY MATEI**
CONTENT MANAGER

Kanye West. Yeezus. Ye.

Anyone who has stayed up to date with pop culture for the past two decades has probably heard at least one of the notorious rapper-producer's nicknames. Whether you've been a fan since the late '90s or you've seen the lucrative and controversial headlines in recent years, it's clear his story is not one to miss.

So, it's surprising that Ye, whose name change became official in October 2021, is not actually the protagonist of the nearly five-hour docu-series following his story, "Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy."

The Netflix documentary has its light-shedding, emotional and inspiring moments, but it's also almost as convoluted, long-winded and disjointed as Ye's career. Maybe this is a part of the beauty of the film or maybe it's the downfall. However, after the first two episodes, I was left wanting more — more authenticity, more narrative and most importantly, more Ye.

The documentary was filmed, produced and narrated by Clarence Simmons, referred to as Coodie, who became the focus of the narrative as the documentary progresses. Coodie has been planning this documentary since he dropped everything to film Ye's journey as an established producer and rising rapper in 1998.

Coodie started following Ye after meeting him during a brief interview for his Chicago-based TV-channel, Channel Zero, when Ye was still only a producer in Chicago. He followed Kanye's every move for five years through his tumultuous struggles to sign to a label, recover from a car accident, self-fund his first music video, release his debut album and eventually win Grammy awards.

The events spanning from 1998-2003 are covered in the first two episodes of the series, "Vision" and "Awakening," via a handheld camcorder and narration. These episodes show a Kanye that's almost unrecognizable to the controversial 2022 Ye. He's a kid with an unbreakable drive to be not only successful, but the most successful.

However, there's still an undeniable humility in these first episodes. Viewers are taken inside the Chicago house of Ye's mother, Donda, whose kind, motherly advice resonates with not only Kanye, but every viewer.

We see Kanye taking out his retainers so he can rap demos to record executives, reminding viewers of how far he had to come. We see Kanye having to make a decision whether to get corrective jaw surgery or record a self-funded music video. With episode two concluding with Kanye winning three Grammy awards for his triple-platinum debut album, this narrative is a compelling hero's journey of rags to riches and

reached a logical conclusion for this part of his life.

If the documentary were to continue on the same detail-oriented and grounded course for the remainder of Ye's career, it would be 20 episodes. However, mostly attributed to Coodie and Ye drifting apart the more success Kanye accumulated, about 20 years of Ye's career are condensed into 90 minutes.

The last episode is mostly just about Coodie as an outsider watching Ye, rather than a documentary about Ye. We see the birth of Coodie's daughter more than his interactions with Ye.

All the while, Ye divulges into countless controversies and mental illness spirals, completely transforming into a new person and artist. What private moments we do see do not satisfy the precedent set in the first episodes.

In a few intimate moments included, we hear Ye discuss mental health, brief phone conversations with his father and studio sessions, still I don't learn much more about Ye since 2003.

We miss out on the mind and life of Ye so much so in these last 20 years that I don't think it's fair to really market the series as a tell-all documentary on the entire career of Kanye West. Still, the narrative surrounding Ye's rise to fame changed my perspective of who he is today.

The involvement of transgender athletes in sports has long been a controversial topic ranging from school to college to the Olympics. Policies have historically restricted these athletes from competing.

Amid a national culture war over trans rights, as states consider regulation and lawmakers claim sides, sports leagues face increasing pressure to take a stance, asking...

CAN THEY PLAY?

Amid controversy, athletes seek inclusion

by CLARE O'CONNOR
MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

As she held up the NCAA Division I national championship trophy with one hand, University of Pennsylvania swimmer Lia Thomas made a peace sign with the other. On March 17, she swam the 500-yard freestyle in 33.24 seconds, winning by almost two seconds. However, the crowd was unusually silent as Thomas took the podium, because, for the first time, a transgender woman stood in first place. As reporters interviewed Thomas about her win, members of the crowd yelled "cheater" and "shame" at the champion. Outside the aquatic center, a small group of people held signs, protesting Thomas' participation, chanting "Save women's sports."

Thomas's story is part of the larger national debate about transgender athletes' participation in sports, specifically transgender women. There aren't any openly transgender athletes currently playing on U-High teams, but many students feel impacted by the national discourse, and the school is beginning to consider how to build a policy to accommodate transgender athletes.

Why is including transgender athletes in women's sports controversial?

As more transgender women have moved to join women's sports teams, critics argue that their inclusion disadvantages cisgender women athletes. Some student athletes worry about their ability to succeed in their sports if they were to play against transgender competitors.

"Competition is a big part of why I run. There is this kind of thrill

you get from even the idea of winning," Sophia Park, a senior on the track and field team, said. "Without talking about really thoughtful rules, a lot of people like me could lose the ability to have a chance."

Another cross country runner, Maya Mubayi, echoed Sophia's concerns about competitive fairness. Both runners emphasized that they believe transgender athletes deserve to be included in a way that prioritizes transgender athletes' comfort, but at the same time, Maya and Sophia feel that a good solution will be difficult to reach.

"It's really important to feel like you can be successful in sports, so this kind of situation just really needs to be handled carefully," Maya said.

People with higher testosterone levels can have athletic advantages. Athletes with higher levels of testosterone generally have less body fat, more muscle mass, higher bone density and an increased capacity to carry oxygen in their blood.

While sex assigned at birth impacts testosterone levels, hormone levels aren't binary. Some people have hormone levels that are naturally outside of what is considered typical for their assigned sex at birth, and this variance is especially prevalent among professional athletes.

The impact of testosterone can also be effectively reversed through hormone therapy. While experts disagree on the exact amount of time on hormone therapy needed to fully resemble the typical hormonal makeup of a particular sex, most studies agree that prolonged hormone therapy can almost fully emulate how the hormones would manifest in a cisgen-

der person.

Some differences caused by an athlete's sex assigned at birth aren't impacted by hormone therapy. People assigned male at birth are more likely to grow taller, have broader shoulders, have larger hands and feet, as well as larger hearts and lungs after puberty. These changes are not consistently reversible.

Martin Oliver, a transgender junior, doesn't view these factors as meaningful dividers.

"Cis women all have vastly different bodies in the first place, especially athletes. There are cis women over 6 feet, so why can't trans women be tall?" Martin said. "This whole talking point just perpetuates the idea that all women need to fit into one mold."

What response has the debate surrounding transgender athletes prompted nationally?

The conversation has quickly become highly politicized. Since 2020, 12 states have passed laws in quick succession that restrict transgender athletes' ability to participate in school sports consistent with their gender identity.

Restricting transgender youths' involvement with sports could have grave consequences. Transgender and nonbinary youth already report more than four times greater rates of suicide attempts than their cisgender peers, according to 2021 research.

"It's hard to know that there are people in the world who are working really hard to hurt people like me," Martin said. "Excluding trans kids from normal activities, treating them like they don't belong, that's really a death sentence."

Many cisgender athletes have criticized the hateful response and

stood up in support of their transgender competitors. Earlier this year, over 300 NCAA swimmers signed an open letter to the NCAA in support of including Lia Thomas and other trans swimmers. Some athletes at U-High also criticized the negative public response.

"People have said a lot of horrible horrible things to transgender athletes," Maya said. "I definitely think politics and hate should not be a part of this conversation. We need to have peaceful communication."

Martin also feels what could have been a productive dialogue has become a vessel for hate.

"A lot of the rhetoric about 'protecting women's sports' is rooted in transphobia and misogyny. I mean, if you really want to make sports fair for women, not allowing trans women to join is not how you do that. You do that by paying women's teams the same amount as men's teams; you do that by creating equitable opportunities for athletes from all different kinds of backgrounds; you do that by encouraging young girls to play sports, but no one is passing laws to make those things happen."

How would U-High accommodate transgender athletes?

Currently, there aren't any publicly transgender athletes on U-High sports teams, but the school wants to be prepared to accommodate transgender athletes in the future.

"We should be proactive," U-High swimming coach Kate Chronic said. "There could be students that want to say something, but are scared because they don't know how they would be received. Having an outlined policy could make it easier for those students."

Athletics Director David Rib-

bens said some administrators are starting to think about how the school would create a policy. He said that any decision would be deliberated by a large group of people and would aim to support and include all athletes. Assistant Athletics Director Laura Gill said U-High's community standards would have to be reflected in any decision reached.

"Any policy would be written with the school's mission in mind," Ms. Gill said. "Athletics adhere to the same mission of being supportive and inclusive."

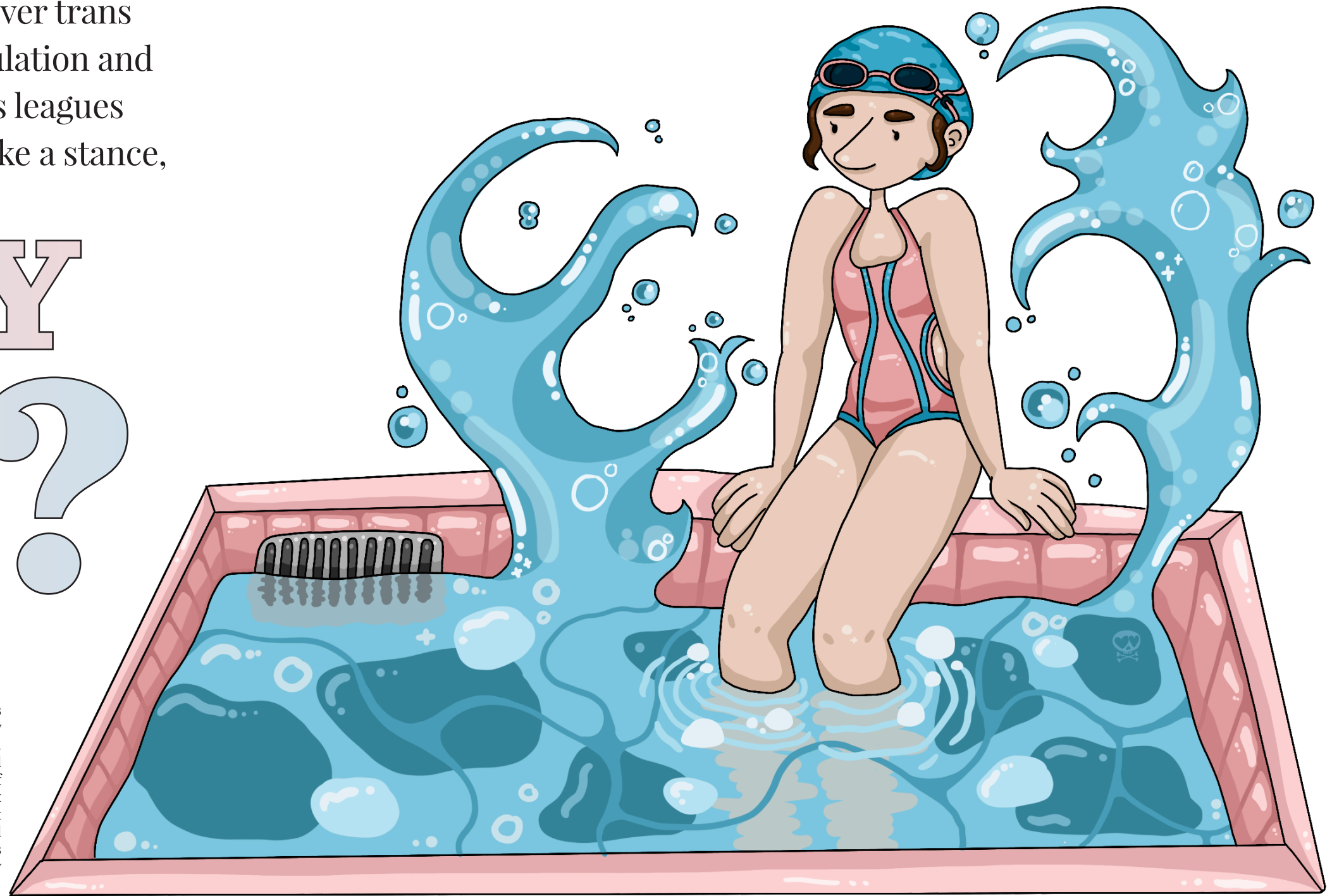
A policy would have to account for many variables. Ms. Chronic and Mr. Ribbens both said that details like uniforms, locker rooms, student and coach education, and student anonymity would all have to be considered in creating rules. Any policy would also have to consider other organizations' policies, including the IHSA policy.

Ms. Chronic feels student mental health should be the priority of any policy about transgender athletes.

"It's so upsetting to see transgender people, who are really going through so much pain already, berated and excluded," Ms. Chronic said.

Acknowledging previous upheaval surrounding athletes' sex or sexual orientation, Ms. Chronic hopes transgender athletes will become more widely accepted, but she believes it might be a long process.

"I can't imagine feeling like you're in the wrong body and like everyone sees you the wrong way. Our first reaction should be to look at how we can give support, but instead, a lot of people have responded by causing even more pain."



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY DALIN DOHRN

Include trans athletes in group sports

by MEENA LEE
SPORTS EDITOR

It's a sunny day, a slight breeze blows, and the turf field I'm standing on is near perfection. The referee blows his whistle and the game is on. I'm transported to another world as my teammates and I execute crisp passes, our cleats flying and our encouraging voices floating through the air. As we continue to play great soccer together, I think about how lucky I am to be a part of this team of talented girls. I feel like I could take on the world.



Meena Lee

This empowering feeling of being on a team is irreplaceable. Yet, across the country numerous bills are being considered that would rob transgender athletes, particularly trans girls, from this opportunity. According to the American Psychological Association, at least 36 states introduced anti-transgender student athlete bills since

2021. So far 10 states have enacted a variety of such legislation.

There is no reason to exclude transgender girls, especially at the middle and high school levels, from the incredibly valuable and rewarding experience of being on a girls sports team.

Some argue that transgender athletes can have the same team experience by participating on the teams that match the sex they were assigned at birth. However, forcing transgender girls to play on boys teams invalidates their transgender identity and is nowhere near providing a gender-affirming experience for them. If a transgender athlete does not feel validated on their team, it is unreasonable to believe it could be a safe, let alone empowering, environment for them.

Proponents of these bills claim that transgender girls have an advantage over their cisgender counterparts due to testosterone levels or other physiological differences. Not only have many of these scientific reasonings been proven false, this argument fails to recognize the varying levels of athletic ability

"Forcing transgender girls to play on boys teams invalidates their transgender identity and is nowhere near providing a gender-affirming experience for them."

that exist even among cisgender girls. Some girls may be taller or have a better ability to gain muscle mass, yet these advantages are perceived to be more "natural" or "normal" than any potential differences or advantages of a transgender girl.

This claim also fails to address the horrible discrimination that transgender youth often face. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and published by the Trevor Project, transgender youth have reported much higher rates of depression, victimization and suicidality than their cisgender peers. According to research from the National Center for Transgender

Equality, 78% of transgender or gender-nonconforming students in grades K-12 reported harassment. Thus, it is both ignorant and hurtful to claim transgender athletes have an advantage by being transgender.

Finally, the NCAA and the International Olympic Committee both allow transgender athletes to participate on teams that match their gender identity, given that they follow certain rules and regulations about hormone levels. In contrast, bills that target transgender athletes in high school and middle school completely ban them from competing on a team that matches their gender identity. High school and middle school athletics should not be stricter than the most elite athletic organizations.

Sports at the high school level are more about promoting well-being, relationships with peers, learning social-emotional skills and just letting kids have fun. U-High's no-cut policy demonstrates this philosophy perfectly. Every child should be given the opportunity to be a part of a team and feel invincible.

Glossary

Transgender & Intersex: While the two groups have faced barriers in sports, they have key differences. Transgender people have a different gender than assigned at birth, while intersex people are born with variations in their anatomy that does not align traditionally with one gender or another.

World Athletics: The international power that determines the regulations imposed on athletes, including the eligibility of transgender athletes.

Gender testing: Historically these tests have been used to confirm an athlete's gender. They were first required by the World Athletics and have ranged from physical examinations to testing chromosomes and hormone levels.

NCAA: The National Collegiate Athletic Association regulates college and university athletes across the United States.

PAVING THE WAY

Renée Richards

In 1975, tennis player Renee Richards underwent a publicized gender-affirming surgery. After being formally barred from playing in the professional women's league by the United States Tennis Association, Richards spearheaded a court case which eventually led to a New York Supreme Court decision ruling in favor of her right to compete as a woman. Her case set a precedent for future cases.

Maria José Martínez-Patiño

Maria José Martínez-Patiño was an Olympic hurdler and one of the first women affected by sex verification testing in sports. While she had always identified as female, the old chromatin-based system of gender testing eliminated her from competing when she was found to possess XY chromosomes. After fighting the loss of her World Athletics license, she competed in the 1988 Summer Olympics.

Caster Semenya

Caster Semenya is a two-time Olympic gold medal winning runner. She is intersex and possesses XY chromosomes. In 2019, new World Athletics rules prevented women with testosterone levels above 5nmol/L from competing in certain track events unless they consumed testosterone-suppressing medications. In response, Semenya filed an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights. The appeal was rejected.

Laurel Hubbard

Laurel Hubbard is a weightlifter and in 2021 was the first openly transgender woman to compete in the Olympic Games. Hubbard's competition was met with criticism on an international scale, though she met all eligibility requirements to compete. Hubbard was selected to compete in 2020, with transgender athletes being permitted to participate since 2004. Hubbard did not obtain Olympic medals.

Lia Thomas

Lia Thomas is a swimmer at the University of Pennsylvania. Her case has spearheaded controversy over transgender participation in college-level sports. After undergoing hormone replacement therapy, she has broken records in collegiate swimming for a variety of events including 100, 200 and 300-yard freestyle. In March 2022, she became the first trans woman to win a NCAA Division I national championship.



SOURCE: PUBLIC DOMAIN VECTORS



SCALING for SUCCESS

UChicago economist teaches students how to grow their ideas

Whether it is trying to grow a public policy or school club, scaling – increasing an idea’s scope without slowing growth – has often seemed like an art. Some great ideas make it big while others fail to take off. In his new book, “The Voltage Effect,” John A. List, a University of Chicago economics professor, turns that art into a science and lays out five key elements that ensure an idea will scale. He is also a former chief economist at both Lyft and Uber, and a longtime Lab parent. Dr. List also provides tips on quitting, incentives and scaling culture to make an idea have large-scale impact: be it a school club or activist movement.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

by **LOUIS AUXENFANS**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Midway: There are many policy initiatives regarding topics like climate change or poverty that have seemed promising initially, but then either no one hears about them anymore, or they fail to work out. Why is that?

Dr. List: I think it’s fundamentally because of one reason: ... We’ve gone about the research in the exact opposite way than what we should be doing. Most of the time, what people do is they have a research project they want to work on, and if they run an experiment, they use the best possible inputs and the best of breed to give their idea its best chance, and then they write it up and they forget to tell everyone else that they’ve just done an efficacy test – that they’ve used the best of everything. ... The evidence we need for scaling is what I call policy-based evidence. I want people to bring all of the warts and all of the constraints and all the problems that you’re going to face at scale back to the petri dish, and I want you to say, “My idea works in the worst case scenario, or in the realistic scenario.”

How would you explain your five key elements of scaling to high school students?

The first one is – just make sure it’s not a false positive. The way I want you to think about a false positive is that, you go and get a COVID test, and it might say that you’re COVID positive, but some of the time it’s just wrong. It’s a false positive. We need to recognize before we launch our idea that it’s not a false positive. Vital sign number two is make sure you understand your consumers or your audience. There are ways to figure out “Who is my idea good for, who will it work for?” The third one is about, “Are there unique features that cause your result to work in the petri dish, but those features can’t be replicated at scale?” ... A lot of



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARYLYN LUCY GENTLES @THROUGH LUCY ZEYES ON INSTAGRAM

ECONOMICS FOR EVERYONE. University of Chicago economics professor John A. List signs a copy of his new book, “The Voltage Effect.” In an interview with the Midway, Dr. List shared tips for how his methods for scaling ideas can be applied to the lives of high school students.

restaurants have tried to scale and the ones that have worked, they’ve worked initially because of ingredients that they could replicate at scale. The fourth one is spillovers, and here, you have to recognize that any idea will have some kind of spillover. A spillover is a person reacting to a new setting and then changing their behavior. The fifth one is a very economic one and that’s, “Does your idea have economies of scale or does it have diseconomies of scale?” If it gets cheaper as you grow, that’s called economies of scale. If it gets more and more expensive, that’s called diseconomies of scale. ... You always have to be careful not to try to expand the ones that have diseconomies of scale.

Oftentimes people, including high schoolers, want to be seen as the innovator, the creator, but not really the implementer. What do you have to say about that perception?

There’s an old biblical passage that goes as follows: “It’s the pearls before the swine.” And what that means is the innovation is the pearls – that’s the beautiful part of it. The swine is the implementation. A lot of times academics

think of it that way, too: “Look, I want to be the innovator, I want to be the headliner,” and the implementation of it, “Who gives a damn? I don’t have time for that because I have to go innovate some more.” There’s a problem with that because if you’re not an appropriate implementer in rolling it out, you’re not going to affect change. And we’ve seen that for years.

The fact that we’ve ignored the implementation side has led us to have great ideas in the small, and great ideas that look like they should work, but the science of using science is not well understood, and because of that, we haven’t made big progress like we should, so I want to turn the culture around. We have enough innovation, enough ideas – we have to innovate now on the implementation

In “The Voltage Effect” you talk about your own experience quitting your college dream of becoming a PGA golfer and write that people should not be afraid to quit. For high school students who have invested many years in an extracurricular club, but who are not improving anymore and feel the pressure of college

admissions or a social group to continue that activity, what do you have to say about the importance of quitting?

I’m glad you asked that because – bottom line – we don’t quit enough, and the reason why we don’t quit enough is twofold. One, society tells us that if you quit, you’re a loser. Society tells us that quitting is the most repugnant word in the English language. Now, the other reason why we don’t quit enough is our own faults, and what I mean by that is, we tend to neglect the opportunity cost of time. Steve Levitt and I started a project a long time ago that adds science to the fact that some people were very close to whether they wanted to quit or not. We had them flip a coin – if it came up heads, they quit, tails, they didn’t – and then we tracked them for months. What you find is people who quit are a lot happier, so there’s actually science behind this too.

Quitting to me is stopping one activity and starting another, and that’s also called pivoting, so if we reframe what I’m talking about here, we can all agree we should do it more. People often say, “John, I hear you, it makes sense that you should quit more. When should I decide to quit or not?” Here’s the

answer: You quit when your outside option is better. If you’re talking about a club, there might be another club that uses your comparative advantage or that you can help more. You quit your existing club and go to the new one. Your outside option is better – that’s when you quit. I’m not saying just go on a whim and do it – make sure that it’s a real outside option, and then go ahead for it.

Moving into the second half of your book, what tips would you give to students who want to scale up their club or large social issue they’re trying to improve?

I leverage simple economic tools or simple economic ideas to get what we want. The first chapter talks about incentives and most of the time when people talk about incentives, they think it’s going to be money, money, money, but it’s more much more than that. Incentives are in many cases, non-financial, and those are the most important kinds of incentives. So in this chapter, I talked about Uber and tipping. Here’s some facts about tipping on Uber – only 1% of people tip on every trip in Uber, three out of five people never tip at all. But when you look at those same people when they ride in a traditional cab, you get in the backseat and at the end you pay face to face. In those cases, 95% of people tip.

The social norm and social pressure of doing it face to face leads people to do an activity much more than when they’re doing it on their couch alone, which is how you tip at Uber. So this chapter gives you some insights about nonfinancial and behavioral incentives that your club can leverage to get more people on board or the officers to work more.

The other one I want to point to is culture, because I think many clubs and organizations end up putting together a rotten culture. What I mean by that is a culture that’s dominated by a few people.

They don’t give everyone a fair chance, maybe one type of person is treated differently, whether they’re younger or they’re male or female, people don’t feel like it’s an inclusive setting, and I think from the very beginning every organization should appreciate individuality, should appreciate diversity and should welcome and try to build on that diversity of thought.

For a high school student, interested in public policy, politics, etc., what could they take away from your research on scaling?

I think you should take away first of all that there is a science to scaling. Secondly, when you collect data and do science from the very beginning, if you’re testing an idea, you should change the manner in which you do your research, or generate your data to account for the fact that you want to scale. You want that idea to be big. The reason why we haven’t come to resolution on key public policy issues, is because we haven’t done the necessary research to come up with proper solutions. We have solutions to the wrong questions and we don’t have solutions to the correct questions. The correct question is, “Will this idea work at scale?” We have solutions to the question, “Does this idea work in an efficacy test? Or does this idea work in a petri dish?” That’s a great start, but it can’t be from there to scaling. It has to be, “Can this idea work in the scale or in the wild?”

Ramadan's return: Balancing work and religion

Holiday connects students with faith and family

by ANATHEA CARRIGAN
MANAGING EDITOR

During Ramadan, junior Noori Zaki starts her morning around 5 a.m. She takes part in the first prayer of the morning, Fajr, with her family, before breaking fast. She goes to school, and abstains from food and drink until later that night, around 7. This time every day, she opens fast with her family, and they eat a long meal and pray together again.

She repeats this day after day, from April 2 until May 2 to celebrate the holy month from dawn to sunset.

Despite the additional challenges posed by fasting within the school environment, Muslim students at Lab observing Ramadan find it a rewarding way to get closer to God and their families and to form connections within the Muslim community.

Last year, the celebration of Ramadan was limited due to restrictions resulting from the pandemic. Noori found it harder to build community due to quarantine.

"Last year was COVID — we were in quarantine, we couldn't go to mosques, or we couldn't, like, do a lot of group activities, which is what I think you do during Ramadan," Noori said.

However, junior Yaseen Qureshi noticed that the remote learning setting also had its advantages when observing Ramadan.

"Last year, when we were remote, observing Ramadan was much easier because I had more control over my sleep schedule and my workload," Yaseen said.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY PATRICE GRAHAM

TASTING TRADITION. Areen Khan organizes prepared dinners at the end of the Ramadan Ramp Up event. The event, which took place on April 7, was hosted by MSA and featured student leaders of the club, who explained the significance of Ramadan in the Muslim faith and how it is practiced.

At school, Noori finds it hard to focus as students around her eat.

"Within the school environment, concentrating, it's really hard to stay focused during class because everyone around you is usually eating a snack. You can smell food on the first floor in the caf," Noori said. "It's really hard to concentrate when the only thing running through your mind is food."

To accommodate Muslim students who are fasting, the administration has opened a room, C121, for them to spend time in during lunch.

"Being able to have our own

room to talk and keep fast without looking at food has been a great help," Yaseen said. "It shows that there is a lot of consideration from the administration and faculty for our unique experience as Muslim students."

The challenges they face are not only mental but also physical. Fasting leaves the students with less energy than normal.

"I also get a little dizzy or nauseous sometimes," Noori said. "Today during choir, she said to stand up when we had to sing. When I stood up I was swaying a lot, and it's just really hard."

Although Yaseen tries to fast

during Ramadan, he has found it difficult while participating in his tennis season.

"This year, I'm trying to fast as much as I can," Yaseen said. "The problem with that is that Ramadan is in the middle of the boys tennis season, meaning I have to stop fasting each day I have a match, which is typically two to three days a week."

Noori's teachers have been accommodating with work, which has been helpful to her when trying to manage school and Ramadan.

"My teachers are a lot more lenient, and I think all the teachers,

"When I'm not functioning at 100%, it makes it even more important to be mindful of the schoolwork that we have to do."

— YASEEN QURESHI

if you talk to them, they're a lot more lenient about the workload because they understand this is a really hard month," Noori said.

Yaseen has had a different experience, and finds it tough to keep up with the flow of homework.

"It is incredibly challenging to manage workload while fasting, but the best I can do is to make the most of my free periods and manage my time effectively. When I'm not functioning at 100%, it makes it even more important to be mindful of the schoolwork that we have to do," Yaseen said.

Because they spend more time together, Yaseen also sees Ramadan as a time to get closer to his family.

"Family dinners have always been a staple, but during Ramadan we've made sure to break fast together as a family. Although fasting can be tiring, it also brings us closer together," Yaseen said.

Despite the challenges, Noori finds celebrating Ramadan rewarding. She enjoys the community-building opportunities it provides.

"We always have to go to the mosque and pray at nighttime. It's like extra prayer just for the holiday, and it really brings the whole Muslim community together," Noori said. "There's even other students at Lab, like Hala Atassi and Maya Atassi, they go to the same Mosque as me. Now we're making plans to go to the mosque together, whereas last year we couldn't really do that."

Art teacher facilitates student conversations regarding racism

by SOPHIE BAKER
REPORTER

"Missouri teen shot by police was two days away from starting college."

"Vigil For Mo. Teen Killed By Police Officer Spirals Into Violence"

These 2014 headlines plastered newspapers and radio broadcasts alike. Their message: an 18-year-old Black man named Michael Brown had been shot and killed by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, forcing people all over the nation to confront the dire existence of racism in the criminal justice system. Art teacher Sunny Neater was one such person.

On a school morning in September 2014, her first year at Lab, Ms. Neater heard about Mike Brown's death and immediately wanted to initiate a discussion about him in her Laboratory Schools classroom.

Ms. Neater said, "I learned about [Mike Brown's death] on the news on my way to school, and I was, like, we gotta talk about this right away, first period. And there was only one Black person in the class and he was a young Black man. It was the first time that I've ever had to talk about anything like that with only one Black person in the room."

Since then, Ms. Neater, who values her students' uniqueness above all else, has endeavored to create a welcoming environment for all of her students by immersing herself in antiracist work that she believes to be necessary to combat the systemic prejudice against Black, Latinx and other people of color.

Ms. Neater started teaching in Chicago Public Schools in 2003, where she learned the importance of talking about race and became comfortable doing so.

She said, "I came from teaching on the far West and South Sides of Chicago, where the schools were all Black or all Black and Latinx, so when I came here it just felt very different. At those other schools we had conversations about race all the time, and I was always the only white person in the room. So I got very comfortable with my students and my colleagues talking about race."

When she came to Lab, Ms. Neater found that conversations about race were quite rare, and often uncomfortable.

Ms. Neater, ever true to her values, felt obligated to do something about this.

She said, "[I saw] a need for change at Lab and [saw] that it was falling on my Black colleagues to explain to the community what was wrong with how things were going. And I don't feel like racism is a problem that Black people need to solve, I think it's a problem with white people."

She, along with Allison Beaulieu, her co-chair of the fine arts department, are part of WARE, or White Antiracist Educators, an organization seeking to combat racism at Lab.

Ms. Beaulieu said, "She comes from a public school background and so the ease that she has around antiracist work and social justice work comes from that. And so in WARE that's kinda the stuff that we talk about. She does not ever feel uncomfortable talking about her whiteness and that is a really great thing to show other teachers."

Outside of WARE, Ms. Neater, who can hardly ever stand to be stagnant, participates in many other antiracist initiatives.

Ms. Beaulieu said, "We run semester-long antiracist courses.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

ENABLING DISCUSSIONS. Sunny Neater has committed to teaching antiracism at Lab. Ms. Neater draws from her teaching experience at schools with most minority students to facilitate conversations about race with her students, while acknowledging the racial demographics of Lab.

es. Sometimes it's a podcast or a seminar that we all take together and then have discussion groups, sometimes we read a book, but it's usually about something or subjects about decentering whiteness. We have asked the school to look at the numbers of the retention rate of Black faculty and folks of color, so we hope that the numbers will show how much antiracist work is needed."

At a time where police violence and racism dominates the head-

lines on an almost daily basis, this message is ever more prevalent. And while she does not want accolades for her actions, Ms. Neater can be used as a model to implement future antiracist discussions in classrooms.

"Awards and honors are not for me," she said. "I don't give art awards or art honors because I guess it makes me feel weird, it makes me feel like I'm othering somebody, excluding people, not honoring everyone's amazing-

ness."

Years ago, Ms. Neater made the decision to spark a conversation about race based purely on a feeling. Her values and background make it not a choice, not an obligation, but a necessity to take action against racism.

She said, "[T]hat was the first time I started talking about race and racial violence and racism and white supremacy with my students, and it just felt like, how could you not?"

Pressure to perform

Student athletes say managing their workload, sports comes with a cost

by WILLIAM TAN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Earbuds in, junior Maya Atassi warms up before a basketball game. She stretches fully, jogs a few laps and dribbles the ball, making sure to break a sweat. Adrenaline is pumping, and her body is energized, raring for game time. Maya is eager to get on the court, but the excitement comes with an equal amount of anxiety to perform at her peak potential.

Maya isn't alone. High school and collegiate athletes face a similarly tough expectation to perform consistently, and an overwhelming amount of constant pressure can lead to mental health concerns. Even world-class athletes such as gymnastics champion Simone Biles and tennis star Naomi Osaka have experienced mental health challenges in performing well at competitions.

Along with expectations to maintain academic and extracurricular excellence, U-High athletes grapple with both internal and external pressures to perform athletically at the highest level, a struggle that has at times adversely affected their well-being.

According to soccer player Milo Jarard, a source of pressure comes from the desire to fulfill the expectations of others. He believes the ambitious standards that his coaches and teammates set contribute to a significant amount of stress.

"When you play at a certain standard, you're expected to perform well," Milo, a junior, said. "I don't know how to explain it, but you kind of have to perform, or you get moved down or you don't play. So you have to maintain a certain level."

Ninth grader Juliana Walker holds herself to a similarly high standard when playing volleyball, but her pressure comes internally instead of originating from a coach or a peer.

"Personally, I've been playing volleyball for a very long time. So I always feel like I want to be better. I feel like I need to be the best on

"Even though it's a no-cut team and there are not supposed to be expectations, everyone definitely feels pressure to compete and be one of the best players and play as well as they can."

— MILO JARARD

my team," she said. "I feel like I've been playing for so long, I should already be good at this, and when I make a mistake, it can get hard."

For Milo, as the pressure increases, the fear of disappointment and losing also compounds, turning the situation worse and negatively affecting his performance.

"Your coach pressures you to play well, and then you're like, in your own head, 'Oh, I have to play well,'" Milo said. "And then if you mess up, then you're like, 'They're probably mad at me.' And then you get nervous, and you continuously play worse."

To make matters more difficult, student athletes must manage their academic workload and other extracurricular activities, all while taking on intensive athletic practice schedules.

Junior Xavier Nesbitt has experienced the strain of balancing academics and basketball, which has led to negative consequences such as sleep loss and cutting back on the sport itself.

"Being at Lab, there have been times where I had to cut down on the amount of basketball I was playing in order to fulfill my responsibilities in school," Xavier said. "And, when I don't want to cut back on anything, I will sacrifice — you know, like anybody — sleep in order to get more time in the day to do everything I want to do."

Maya finds it difficult to excel in taking a full schedule of advanced classes while juggling sports commitments.

"That sort of mental strain and stress also affects how I perform in class, how I do on tests and things like that," Maya said. "At school, it's



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

FINDING A BALANCE. On Feb. 1, junior Xavier Nesbitt dribbles the basketball in a game against Morgan Park Academy. Xavier and other U-High athletes expressed often-overwhelming feelings of stress when trying to perform at a high level athletically and academically at the same time.

sometimes sort of hard to balance, you know, the tough classes, and it seems sometimes close to impossible to get an 'A' in this class and also be doing sports at the same time."

Xavier said in addition, when things aren't going well athletically or academically, it can lead to hard times, like nothing in life is going his way.

"I feel like that creates really low lows," he said. "Personally, I can't say that has put me into certain

depressions, but I can say it has made me days-on-end pretty upset, pretty sad. It has affected my mood greatly."

Both Maya and Juliana appreciate Lab's no-cut policy for athletic teams, as they believe it encourages players of all levels to enjoy the sport while improving in a low-stress environment. However, Milo believes external expectations still permeate the athletic environment, so even though teams are deemed no-cut, in reality there is

always pressure to perform better.

"You want to show the school and your friends when you go out and play and people watch you — like, you want to play well for everyone," he said. "So like, even though it's a no-cut team and there are not supposed to be expectations, everyone definitely feels pressure to compete and be one of the best players and play as well as they can."

Read an extended version of this story at uhighmidway.com.

Commitment, spirit, guidance define senior sailor

by ERICH RAUMANN
CONTENT MANAGER

A traditional image of sailing might be big yachts, fast boats and the wind in their hair. But to senior and captain Eli Erling, sailing is so much more — it's miles-long races, frigid practice in drysuits, spending late hours rigging, docking, undocking and derigging, or corralling a group of children who share his love for the sport.

From the dramatic moments of exhilaration and adrenaline to the drudgery of preparation and clean-up behind the scenes, Eli is an ambitious, committed member of the sailing community. What sets Eli apart from his teammates at U-High is his unwavering enthusiasm and contagious optimism. Whether he is the skipper or crew, Eli insists on doing everything to the best of his ability and with a smile.

"Eli has to be the most spirited person on the team," said senior Benjamin Luu, a varsity sailing captain. "He's very enthusiastic about everything, and is very good at motivating people. When Eli and I sail together, we do very well."

Eli joined the U-High sailing team in ninth grade, but he's been on boats in one way or another



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CHLOE MA

SAILING SAVANT. Senior Eli Erling peers over the edge of a sailboat at practice on Oct. 5. Eli's teammates described him as a spirited motivator and a hard-worker.

er since he was in fifth grade. He started out as a camper at the Chicago Park District and the Jackson Park Yacht Club, and he eventually worked his way up to being a full-time sailing instructor for the Jack-

son Park Yacht Club.

"Teaching sailing has been really interesting for me," Eli said. "I had to learn how to manage a bunch of kids. When I was doing the course I was like, 'Yeah! I get to

teach kids sailing!' What you don't realize is that the teaching part is a lot bigger than the sailing part."

While Eli admits that teaching other kids sailing wasn't what he expected, he is grateful for the op-

portunity it gives him to improve himself and others.

"I think I'm doing my part in showing other children my love for sailing," Eli said, "and I think it has really taught me a lot about how to push through adversity and stay independent running my group."

Eli is also adamant about going the extra mile on land, always willing to help people out with the less glamorous, menial work which goes on in the background of the sport.

"He's very hardworking," said Bryan Pan, a junior on U-High's varsity sailing team. "He always does a lot of the manual labor, he helps pull the boats up out of the water when other people don't want to."

An excellent team player both at Lab and his yacht club, Eli's love for sailing comes from a surprising place: the opportunity for individualism and self-reliance it offers him.

"The one thing that keeps drawing me back to sailing is how personal it is," Eli said. "There is this kind of singular focus that sailing gives me, just being the master of your own fate. I command this ship. Wherever I go is wherever I go."

Niche sports offer fun, stress-free opportunities

Upcoming spring favors outdoor park activities

by **BERKOTO**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Spring is officially here and with it the opportunity to participate in the numerous outdoor sports that the Chicago outdoors have to offer. Aside from traditional warm weather athletic activities like basketball and golf, Chicago parks offer niche outdoor activities that can be just as fun. Bocce, disc golf and badminton are three of these options which require minimal equipment or experience to play recreationally.

Bocce

Bocce is a ball sport based on games played in Ancient Egypt, developed into its modern form in Italy and popularized around the world by Italian immigrants. The game is played on a long, rectangular walled court.



Bocce is played in two teams of one to four people and each team is given four 90- to 100-millimeter diameter bocce balls, made of wood or clay, painted in the respective team's color. One team, chosen at random, throws the smaller white ball known as the pallino within an agreed upon zone of the court. Once the pallino is placed successfully, the same team begins the first round by throwing one of their team's balls as close to the pallino as possible. Balls that touch the walls of the court are deemed "dead" and don't count for the rest of the round. If a team hits the pallino with a ball, the game continues from that new location.

The teams take turns throwing their balls until all eight are on the court with the pallino. To calculate points once the round is over, the team that threw its ball closest to the pallino counts the number of its balls that are closer to the pallino than the other team's best attempt. Rounds continue until one



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

HOLE-IN-ONE. Senior Spencer McKula throws a frisbee toward a putting basket at Nichols Park on April 5. For a full disc golf course, players can go to the Illinois Institute of Technology at 33rd and State streets. In Hyde Park, putting baskets are located in Nichols Park and near Promontory Point.

team reaches 12 points.

Bocce can be played throughout Chicago in public outdoor courts in some city parks, or indoors in several bowling alleys, restaurants and arcades.

Disc golf

Disc golf is similar to golf, but instead of balls and clubs, players use discs and their arms. Players take turns throwing their disc from a designated tee area toward the target, which is usually a steel basket with a chain neck above it to catch the discs.

Once players have each thrown their disc from the tee, they continue to take turns throwing their

disc toward the target from the place it landed after their previous throw. The golden rule of disc golf is to always throw precisely from the spot where the disc landed and make no changes to the surrounding landscape that may ease the shot.

The round continues until all players have thrown their discs into the basket (ricochets don't count). At the end of each round, players tally how many throws it took them to make their shot. Disc golf courses have either nine or 18 targets and, as in golf, the player who threw their disc the least at the end of the course is deemed the winner.

A disc golf course is located at the Illinois Institute of Technolo-

gy at 33rd and State streets, while putting baskets are nearby at Nichols Park and near Promontory Point. Courses usually have more varied landscapes than traditional golf courses, so players must often curve their shots around obstacles, making each target a new challenge.

Badminton

Although games with shuttlecocks (a piece of cork with plastic attached to one end in the shape of a cone) have been around for centuries across Eurasia, the modern game of badminton was developed in



India under British colonial rule. Badminton, a racquet sport played using rackets by hitting a shuttlecock across a net, can be played in teams or in a player versus player format, much like tennis.

Players score points by hitting the shuttlecock (a piece of cork with plastic attached to one end in the shape of a cone) into the other team's side of the court. A match consists of the best of three games of 21 points each. Although the game is traditionally played indoors in courts resembling volleyball courts, it can be played informally on a park, tennis court or the beach.

The Chicago Park District has official badminton courts at Ping Tom Memorial Park in Chinatown.

Fantasy game brings challenge with beauty, freedom

From dragons to knights, 'Elden Ring' offers a difficult adventure

by **ERICH RAUMANN**
CONTENT MANAGER

Having cleared out and plundered the ruins of an old cathedral, the player rides on horseback through the swamp to investigate a small fire that they can see in a clearing. Seeing a few minor enemies, they dismount, thinking they'll be able to clean them up quickly and maybe find a new item. As they approach the ground shakes. They hear a roar and, toppling trees, torching the camp, a colossal dragon lets out a roar in challenge. All of this happens five minutes away from the tutorial area.

Casual gamers or students swamped with work might be turned off by "Elden Ring" as part of a genre famous for its unforgiving, sometimes unfair, difficulty.

While the game can be difficult to the point of frustrating at times, its beauty, freedom and flexibility make it well worth purchasing.

What sets "Elden Ring" apart from FromSoftware's library of infamously hard games like "Dark Souls" or "Sekiro: Shadows Die

Twice" are the huge amount of flexibility given to the player and myriad items and abilities to use along a vast open world.

When faced with a seemingly insurmountable challenge, players have a suite of tools at their disposal: they can summon friends or friendly AI, hang back and use magic or ranged attacks, sneak past a tough group of enemies, or cook food for temporary buffs. When all else fails, the player almost always has the option to explore the surrounding area, level up and become more experienced before returning to the strong foe ahead.

The open world is one of the game's biggest selling points. Its robust and fun to explore. The player is heavily rewarded by taking time to stop and smell the roses, so while the way forward is always clear, dungeons, bosses and loot lie behind every diversion. However, don't be totally fooled by the green fields and picturesque ruins at the beginning of the game. Despite the freedom, "Elden Ring" still is a FromSoftware game



IMAGE SOURCE: FROMSOFTWARE

GAMING GLORY. Developed by FromSoftware, "Elden Ring" was released on Feb. 25 to Playstation, Xbox and Microsoft Windows.

and quickly becomes grisly, hostile and unforgiving. It still manages to maintain a sense of awe and tantalizing adventure throughout even the most desolate, impossible areas, but you won't be paragliding

off mountains or collecting mushrooms in forests like you might in "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild."

Writer George R.R. Martin, whose books were adapted in-

to the "Game of Thrones" television series, worked with FromSoftware to create the world in which "Elden Ring" takes place, and it shows. Unlike other games in its genre, "Elden Ring" has a simple, understandable story on the surface, a perfect pairing to the game's awesome aesthetic and backstory. While you'll be fighting your fair share of cookie-cutter dragons and knights, there is an equal share of totally unique wonders: nobles cloaked in the skin of gods, a great-tusked behemoth who rules the stars, or a temple floating above an unending storm.

Difficulty isn't the only thing that could turn a player off. The game has fairly intensive graphics, and while a PlayStation 4 or Xbox will be able to run the game satisfactorily, a disproportionately good personal computer is required to play with passable graphical settings.

Additionally, while the game does have fairly developed multiplayer mechanics, it's more of a secondary feature. Players who want competitive multiplayer might be able to find it in "Elden Ring" if they work hard enough, but they would be best off looking elsewhere.

Preserving the Point

Lake lovers rally to protect limestone shore

by **ADRIANNA NEHME**
NEWS EDITOR

The waves of Lake Michigan crash below while the limestone rocks wait to emanate a warm, comforting feeling within students like senior Feya Epel, who sits on top of them as she flips through pages of a book she recently began. They wait to don a soft glow as students surround a campfire while sharing laughs. The rocks have always been there, waiting to provide each individual with a unique experience.

Feya has always enjoyed visiting the Point.

"I love just sitting on either the rocks or trees behind the rocks and just drawing, staring out or reading," Feya said. "It's just really a pleasant place to be."

However, with the city's plan to tear out the limestone rocks and replace them with concrete slabs, the Point was named on March 9 to Preservation Chicago's "most endangered" list, an annual list that spotlights sites in danger.

The 40-acre, human-made peninsula is a popular place for swimming and strolling. However, concealed within this joyful ambiance, the limestone revetments have always faced danger due to the lack of maintenance over its long history, which has caused them to erode. In 1980, the Chicago Park District, the City of Chicago and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked to develop a \$300 million plan to repair and replace the revetments with concrete.

Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago, expressed how the concrete is often slippery and doesn't have the same lifespan as the limestone rocks — 85 vs. 35 years for concrete. Furthermore,



MIDWAY PHOTO BY GABRIEL ISSA

ENDANGERED. Organizations including Preservation Chicago and Promontory Point Conservancy have come out against plans to demolish and replace the limestone rocks with concrete.

repair and rehabilitation is significantly less expensive than demolition and new construction of steel and concrete.

"We feel that this is kind of an insensitive approach to this beautiful spot on Chicago's lakefront," Mr. Miller said. "This sort of man-made peninsula that was designed with utmost care."

Promontory Point Conservancy, an organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the Point,

follows a preservation approach to repair and rehabilitate the limestone rocks, rather than demolish them. Founder and president Jack Spicer said that in 2000, the Park District and the City's Department of the Environment made preliminary plans for proposed changes to the Point.

"I think virtually the whole community was really upset because the Point has always been a really special place for people," Mr.

Spicer said in an interview. "It's a place where everyone feels welcome, and they can do what they want to do."

Over 20 years have passed since the first proposed changes, yet members of the Laboratory Schools community still echo similar sentiments of fear and concern regarding the replacement of the limestone rocks.

Feya fears the removal of the limestone rocks will impact the

"The Point is one of the few places in Chicago where you can be by the lake peacefully. I just feel like it is such an important place to every Hyde Parker and Chicagoan in general, and if the limestone rocks were removed, I would be really sad."

— FEYA EPEL, SENIOR

pleasure she experiences at the Point.

"The Point is one of the few places in Chicago where you can be by the lake peacefully," Feya said. "I just feel like it is such an important place to every Hyde Parker and Chicagoan in general, and if the limestone rocks were removed, I would be really sad."

Mr. Miller is glad the list can spotlight the need for groups like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and agencies to come together and address replacing the limestone rocks.

Mr. Miller said steps are being taken to speak and write letters to elected officials to continue to shine light on the issue.

He hopes students at the University of Chicago and Lab can join with the Hyde Park community and people who use Promontory Point to highlight the issue.

According to Mr. Spicer, it is not just the limestone that people are trying to save, but the way it has come to be a part of the community's life and nature.

"When we try to save something, it's not just the structure we are trying to save," Mr. Spicer said. "We are trying to save the kind of cultural and community activities and traditions that have grown up around a particular space."

Shawn Michelle's spreads love with every scoop

Bronzeville ice cream shop employs, gives back to neighborhood

by **ETHAN SWINGER**
REPORTER

Even on a cold day, Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream remains a hot spot for the Bronzeville community to gather. The liveliness of the restaurant flows through the classy jazz music, echoing laughter and the aromas of caramel and fudge.

Thanks to hard work, entrepreneurship, and both community and grant funding, the success of Shawn Michelle's has allowed it to give back to its community in Bronzeville, a message they hope other

small businesses in the neighborhood can carry on.

According to co-owner Nataki Muhammed, "Bronzeville does not have a business like Shawn Michelle's."

Shawn Michelle's was first founded in 1996 and operated in Blue Island, and later Avalon Park. For the past three years, the shop has been located in Bronzeville's historic Rosenwald Courts Apartments at the corner of East 47th Street and South Wabash Avenue.

During the pandemic, Shawn Michelle's thrived and expanded since many regulations other restaurants faced did not apply to them due to their lack of seating. Ms. Muhammed said Shawn Michelle's opened another successful location last year at the Time Out Market in the West Loop and plans to open another restaurant in south suburban Olympia Fields in May.

Ms. Muhammed believes Shawn Michelle's has worked hard to propel itself as a pillar of the Bronzeville community. In the past few years, the store has raised nearly \$5,000 in scholarships for five students.

"We have community members that work here at Shawn Michelle's," Ms. Muhammed said. "We have volunteer community clean-ups. We donate our time. We donate our ice cream. So anything that the community needs, we're there for."

The introduction of the Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Act by U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush, which will include \$10 million in federal funding, will help the expansion of small businesses in Bronzeville, such as Shawn Michelle's.

"We donate our time. We donate our ice cream. So anything that the community needs, we're there for."

— NATAKI MUHAMMED, OWNER

Wadi Abdullah, an employee at Shawn Michelle's, credits grants with allowing them and other small businesses to flourish and give back to Bronzeville.

"When we get opportunities to make something our own, then of course we care," Mr. Abdullah said. "And those opportunities, they come in forms of grants."

Mr. Abdullah wants to see more small businesses in Bronzeville prioritizing the community, and giving back. He believes a grant can make this change a reality and further incentivize small businesses in Bronzeville to foster the creativity and entrepreneurship that had previously been hindered.

He believes that businesses in Bronzeville deserve this grant to give back to the community and fulfill their intentions of what the neighborhood can be.

"Because we should be able to represent ourselves," Mr. Abdullah said. "We should be able to build our community the way that we envision for the future."

The staff at Shawn Michelle's acknowledges that love is put into every scoop of homemade ice cream.

"Here at Shawn Michelle's our big emphasis is just love. That's the first ingredient in all of our ice cream," Mr. Abdullah said, "and when you come in here, first thing I say is 'Welcome home.'"

Additional reporting provided by An Ngo.

Federal bill would designate Bronzeville as heritage area



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

TOWERING HIGH. The Light of Truth Ida B. Wells Monument honors the journalist, who lived in Bronzeville.

by **CHLOE MA**
CONTENT MANAGER

Jazz icons, historical monuments and civil rights — these are just part of the many reasons why the U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush has been fighting for over five years to make Bronzeville a national heritage area.



Scan the QR code to read the full story at uhighmidway.com



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

SUPER SCOOPERS. Shawn Michelle's credits its success to grants and the support of its community.