

VINCENT HSIAO

photojournalist of the year application 2022-23

About a year ago was the end of middle school for me. In three months, I was going to enter a new building with new faces and classes. It seemed so daunting at the time. Then came the first day of school, and in no time, the first meeting that was calling for photographers for Ladue Publications was underway. I did not know where I would be at the end of this school year, but I walked out of that room knowing I was ready to capture the life of Ladue with my camera. The roar of the student section after a touchdown under the Friday night lights, or a layup over our rival school in the middle of December. The intensity of the dance floor at homecoming and prom. The big reveal of total funds raised for charity at Dance Marathon. Putting on a hyped pep rally for the news at 6 in the morning. There were so many events I covered, and I loved every moment of it.

Though, the photos that stuck out to me the most were the portraits. They were feature stories in themselves. A student showing his Mexican heritage. A lacrosse player with a home gym. A star cheerleader that competes nationally. A senior that works on the side as a hockey referee. A violinist who puts hours upon hours every day practicing her craft. So many people have interesting stories to tell that you simply would not know just by looking at them, and this is on the scale of just one high school. I enjoyed learning about my classmates and telling their stories through pictures.

High school is no longer a daunting and unfamiliar place for me. Instead, I see it is a place full of experiences and adventures. Not only did I capture big events throughout the year, but even small happenings by the week. Whether it was the calming sound of jazz on a Thursday morning, fun Link Crew activities with freshmen and seniors, ticket sales and fundraisers on the stage during lunch, or notably a Chinese surveillance balloon visible from our campus, I was there to document it.

Now it is almost the end of my first year of high school, and I am submitting my portfolio for photojournalist of the year. It is such a feat to see the progress I have made in just nine months. As a young photojournalist, my job is to record the history of the world around me and our lives as teenagers. In a few short months, I will be ready to do it again, greater and better. We are just getting started here, so I cannot wait to see where the road will take me and what I will see along the way.



CAPTION: Flashing DJ lights move across the school's multi-purpose room while freshman Will Plassmeyer breaks out dance moves in a circle of students at Ladue's homecoming dance Oct. 15, 2022. "They played a good song, everyone made the circle in the middle," Plassmeyer said. "My friend Owen Prange, freshman, pushed me in the middle, and I didn't know what to do, so I just started dancing."

DESCRIPTION: I took this photo at homecoming with my wide angle lens and a bounce flash. I remember getting down low to capture the quick moment. I was really happy with how the composition turned out, with him as the main focus, and a diverse range of students surrounding him.



CAPTION: Junior Micky Chyu prepares to play her violin for a photoshoot in the student entrance Dec. 5, 2022. Chyu is a member of Ladue’s chamber orchestra, a concertmaster in the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra and is part of a quartet at the Webster Community Music School. “It’s really how much you practice that defines how good you are,” Chyu said. “I would say focus on your technique, but also try and make sure that you’re really getting the point and make sure that you’re having fun with it.”

DESCRIPTION: This photoshoot was for our newsmagazine’s photo issue, only done once per year. I used my off-camera flash gear to get soft and pleasing Rembrandt lighting. It was fun working with Chyu as she played her violin with great skill.



CAPTION: Leaping through the air, junior Piersson Calvert scores against Clayton with a layup during the Coaches vs. Cancer basketball game in the Nielson Gym, Dec. 16, 2022. Ladue beat the Clayton Greyhounds 74-38. “My biggest piece of advice is don’t play with the moment, play with the mind,” Calvert said.

DESCRIPTION: I shot from a sitting position on the floor at the corner of the court with my sharpest lens, a prime 50mm f/1.8. I was able to freeze Calvert midair, while the low shooting position allowed for the large Ladue student section — intently watching the action — to fit perfectly in the background.



CAPTION: Freshman Campbell Cross performs a stunt with the cheerleading team as a TV audience, fellow teammates, athletes and students watch during the KSDK Tackle Hunger Pep Rally on Wightman Field, Oct. 7, 2022. The television station was filming live shots for early morning coverage of their Tackle Hunger food drive campaign that benefits a local hunger relief organization. "It was very early in the morning but my energy was still up," Cross said. "I was beyond excited to be featured on TV, especially because I was representing Ladue Cheer."

DESCRIPTION: Like what Cross said, although it was about 6:30 a.m., I was energized from the liveliness that the cheer, dance, football and other fall sports teams brought that morning. I loved the photo opportunity that this pep rally brought, and I was happy with the composition paired with a beautiful dawn sky.



CAPTION: Junior Gavin Via bends over as he catches his breath after running the anchor leg of the 4x400-meter relay at Ladue's Brusca-Strobach Invitational track meet April 22. Ladue boys finished seventh overall out of 22 teams at the meet.

DESCRIPTION: This was the first big track meet I have been to, so the sheer amount of races throughout the day proved to be confusing to keep track of. I got this shot of Via right after he finished the 4x400 relay, which was the final event of the 7 hour meet. The closeup allows viewers to see not only his exhaustion, but his effort shown by a drop of sweat streaked across his face.