



Macy Crosser

NSPA Photojournalist of the Year 2023 Portfolio

The Harbinger | Shawnee Mission East High School | Prairie Village, KS

Balancing Defense



Caption

In the SM East vs. SM West season-opening game, sophomore George Hartman uses his body to keep the ball in his possession near the goal box. With two periods of overtime and players dropping each minute from cramps, the game ended in a 3-3 tie.

Description

There were few games with better lighting than this 7 pm season opener. As the sun set, the shadows intensified. With every turn in direction, the lighting changed. I've mastered the skill of controlling harsh light such as this to make the players glow in the light, instead of blowing them out.

Just Breathe



Caption

In the district championship meet, freshman Wheeler Sullivan takes a breath as he swims the 50-yard freestyle event. Competing against all other Shawnee Mission Schools schools, SM East won the meet by 155 points.

Description

Freestyle is a particularly tricky stroke because the swimmers only breathe on one side, so I knew this photo could only be captured during the first half of the lap. To freeze the water droplets in this photo, a high shutter speed is required. My shutter was set at 1/1250 to perfectly sharpen every drop.

Voice over Violence



Caption

Sophomore Kris Roth and freshman Kimberly Morales hold a sign to protest gun violence during the national walk out on April 5. "It's our generation and we keep losing people each year," Morales said. "I feel like the school needs a safer environment to protect its students."

Description

As my peers protest the fear for their safety they feel at an American high school, I capture their surge of emotion with my wide lens, so close to their faces I can feel them breathe. You can see it in their eyes — the story is always in their eyes.

Super Bowl Scene



Caption

SM East Seniors huddle around the TV screen in anticipation as Chiefs' kicker Harrison Butker makes the game-winning field goal in Super Bowl LVII. For current seniors, the Chiefs' last championship win was their freshman year, creating a full circle moment. After the win, the senior celebrated by tearing through the streets of Prairie Village.

Description

Crowded inches from the TV screen, my eyes are focused in my viewfinder instead of the game-winning field goal. Although it's hard not to be a fan at this moment, separating myself from the group and assuming the role of a photojournalist rewards me with a shot like this to capture the energy of being a Chiefs fan.

Titration Trials



Caption

Junior Margot Beaver over-titrates one of her trials in the IB Chemistry individual assessment lab during experiment week. "I hypothesize that I hate titrations," Beaver said, and started over with a new solution.

Description

From my chemistry experience, titrations are persistently tedious, especially when IB students are conducting their own data collection. Drip after drip, I sat patiently waiting for the genuine reaction, whether relief or frustration. Sure enough, one drop too many turned the solution bright pink and her face perfectly encapsulates her annoyance from having to start from scratch.

Personal Statement

Every person has their own unique story, and it is my passion to capture each with impact through the lens of my camera. As the head photo editor of the Harbinger, a national award-winning student-led paper, my job is to lead a group of thirty talented photographers while capturing the student life and community engagement at my school. Additionally, my responsibilities entail designing print layouts, organizing the website galleries, teaching new photographers, handling conflicts, and the hiring and firing of staff.

After three years of experience on the Harbinger, I keep working towards mastering the strategy behind capturing the picture perfect image. Knowing the spot to be in the right place at the right time and anticipating the memorable moments comes with the reward of a powerful shot. It is important to follow the action after a goal is scored. Sit on the right side of the field because the majority of soccer players drive up that sideline. Position yourself on the correct side of the pool to guarantee a coming up for breath shot and make the most of the 25 seconds in the water. Squat in front of the football captain's girlfriend as he scores a touchdown. Placing myself in these situations with the right lenses and perfectly curated settings makes all the difference. The preparation is just as important as the moment captured. Additionally, talking to the people involved in the story or action beforehand may reveal insight or unbury intimate storytelling moments. A genuine conversation goes a long way to build a trusting relationship with the subject of the photo as well as learning more about the shots to take. Key word: genuine.

As a photojournalist, finding impactful moments is where the best story is told, and my photos give people an outlet of expression that words cannot always convey. My lens captures East students protesting against gun violence at an American high school, fearing their everyday safety. My lens captures Black Lives Matter demonstrators facing policemen with fists in the air and posters reading "I can't breathe." My lens captures efforts to support mental health where school clubs gather to let students know they are not alone. My lens captures the blood, sweat and tears of athletes as they pour their hearts out onto the field. I've witnessed fear, pride, joy, and rage that people display over their beliefs. Each click of my camera captures the power in a given moment. I take it upon myself to convey each story I encounter with maximum impact. I've created art through my camera to support inclusion and show acceptance. My passion for sharing others' unique stories with the community through photojournalism has only grown senior year, and I feel incredibly lucky to have the resources to do so through the Harbinger. With my camera in hand, no one is left out of our community, no perspective can go without understanding, and no story remains untold.