

Vincent Hsiao: Photographer of the Year Application 2024

As the school year wraps up, I look back on my photos in awe. It's hard to believe my work has helped contribute so much to our publications to see where we stand today. Four Best of Shows, two Pacemakers and dozens of individual awards top the list. Yes, we have done all the celebration. From jumping up in joy in the Boston airport as we left early and heard the news from the awards ceremony, to me walking out of the publications banquet with a plaque and too many certificates to count, you can surely say we've gotten all the recognition. One such award from the yearbook staff to me playfully reads "The Metal Spine Award" for all the "carrying" I've done for photos in the book. But behind all the glamor I believe there's something more worthwhile. The reason for my strong interest in journalism is having the privilege to tell everyone's story. It's so interesting to see and hear about people's experiences, and more so when I can capture that moment. Raising my camera for a Hail Mary shot of the prince at the school dance, and lowering down to the pool deck for a level shot of a racing swimmer. From the softball team celebrating a win over our rival, the swim team breaking a school record, or maybe a lesser known accomplishment such as a junior helping run a successful restaurant business with his uncle, oftentimes stories like these get lost in all the noise. However, having a picture to look back on whether in the newsmagazine or yearbook ensures people can know, understand and be inspired by the others around them. Being able to be right there, at the right moment and capturing a frame that visually appeals and speaks the truth is what I live for. I bear this in mind every time I'm in the field and know that what I do helps make a difference in the world, whether big or small. So, stepping into my third year of high school, I will be on-assignment not with the goal of taking home all the accolades, but simply to tell a story the best way I know how: with light.



Caption: Will Plassmeyer (10) swims the 100-yard butterfly during the first meet of the season at Clayton High School Aug. 31, 2023. Plassmeyer swam a 1:03.08 in the event, earning him second place. Overall, the Ladue Rams triumphed over the Greyhounds 95-87.

Photographer Explanation: For this shot I had to practice several times and at several past meets to eventually come to this. I wanted to be level with the swimmers, so I used the tilt screen on my camera and laid it flat on the pool deck, trusting the weather-sealing on my lens to endure a few splashes. NSPA awarded this Best of Show Sports Photo at the Kansas City, Mo. convention.

[Link to image here.](#)



Caption: Fellow dancegoers lift up Aaron Lin (10) after being named the first ever Snow Prince at the annual UNICEF Snowball dance at Ladue High School Jan. 27, 2024. Tenny Dibooglu (12) was named king, Sophi Strayhorn (10) was named princess and Rory Lustberg (12) as queen.

Photographer Explanation: Shooting with my camera above my head, “Hail Mary”, is my signature move that classmates know me for, especially at school dances. It allows me to get right into the moshing crowd while getting an appealing and unique angle. Quill & Scroll awarded this First Place Breaking News Photography.

[Link to image here.](#)



Caption: Lily Ta (11), center, embraces Lily Hsieh (12) in celebration as MJ Bezzant (12) reacts after the 200-yard medley relay during the COMO Invitational finals at Mizzou Jan. 20. The squad of Hsieh, Bezzant, Ta and Meg Willmann (11) had just swam a 1:50.50, good for third place in the statewide mid-season meet but breaking Ladue's 2019 school record of 1:51.07. The relay ranked first in Missouri Class 1 teams from this performance. "It was like a fantasy coming true," Ta said. "My freshman year I had a picture taken next to the record board and Gentry, the old coach Hap, was like, 'Oh, you're gonna get your name on that wall one day,' and that had actually happened."

Photographer Explanation: I travelled out to Columbia, Mo. to cover the invitational swim meet at Mizzou while it was in the middle of winter and below freezing. Luckily indoor pools are very warm and humid year-round and the team had several great feats I was there to capture. Quill & Scroll awarded this photo First Place in Sports Reaction Photography.

[Link to image here.](#)



Caption: Co-owner Jerry Li stands next to his nephew Edison Lu (11) in their family-owned restaurant Lu Lu Seafood and Dim Sum in University City, Mo. Oct. 7, 2023. The two spend nearly everyday together greeting customers, serving their famous Cantonese food and maintaining the restaurant. “The restaurant is a family business,” Lu said. “The whole family is working together and contributing their skills to keep the restaurant alive.”

Photographer Explanation: This photo was part of a feature story for the Panorama Food Issue. Me and two writers visited the restaurant to learn more about what Edison and Jerry do on a daily basis. I loved doing this story because I’ve visited Lu Lu’s throughout my childhood and did not know that a classmate helps run it. The Food Issue won Ladue’s first NSPA Best of Show newsmagazine and this photo earned awards from MIJA, Quill & Scroll and St. Louis Public Radio. For this shot, I worked with off camera lighting to achieve the quality of image I wanted.

[Link to image here.](#)



Caption: Ladue softball players Marisa Schreiner (10), Arden Busker (12), Emme Shapiro (9) and Camryn Miller (12) celebrate in the dugout after victory over Clayton 18-9, Aug. 29, 2023 at Clayton High School.

Photographer Explanation: There are a few players on the softball team that know me well as a photographer, so it was very exciting — and convenient — when they let me in the dugout to shoot photos of the game. This proved to be well worth it after the game when they celebrated their first win, as the late-summer golden hour came in just at the right time to light up the players. This frame eventually won All Missouri from the Missouri Interscholastic Journalism Association, and Best Sports Feature from St. Louis Public Radio.

[Link to image here.](#)