

art by mollyann caulfieid, reference photo by jude boitano

“I WAS VERY GRATEFUL TO BE PART OF THE SERVICE AND REALLY HAPPY TO HEAR THE POSITIVE FEEDBACK AFTERWARDS. IT MEANT A LOT TO ME TO BE SO SUPPORTED, AND IT WAS ANOTHER GREAT REMINDER FOR ME OF HOW IMPORTANT THIS COMMUNITY IS.”

- RYAN MATSUMOTO '26



art by mollyann caulfieid, reference photo by jude boitano

“YOU GET A BUCKET, PUT DRIED PLANTS OR ANYTHING THAT COULD CREATE FIRE IN IT, AND YOU LIGHT IT ON FIRE AND SPIN IT AROUND WITH YOUR ARM AND IT'S SUPPOSED TO CLEANSE BAD SPIRITS AND WISH FOR PROSPERITY.”

- MINHA TRAN '27

DIVERSE

but not divided



DOMINIC SO '27 and KAI LOGGINS '26 are also pictured dancing for K-pop Dance Club. art by mollyann caulfieid, reference photo by bethany ma

“YOU GET TO INTERACT WITH YOUR GROUP MATES MORE. IT'S ALSO A LOT MORE VERSATILE THAN ANY OTHER FORM OF DANCE AND CAN COMBINE A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT STYLES. IT COULD BE SUPER CHILL OR SUPER HYPE.”

- PAOLA RANGEL '27

“PERFORMING AT AND BEING ABLE TO RUN THE INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE WAS AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO SPREAD AND SUPPORT THE DIFFERENT CULTURES AT OUR SCHOOL. IT'S SUCH A GREAT EXPERIENCE TO SHARE MY CULTURE AND RECEIVE SO MUCH APPRECIATION FROM EVERYONE.”

- DIYA DESIKAN '26



art by mollyann caulfieid, reference photo by noemie roman

The creation of affinity groups on campus marks a new chapter in the representation of ethnicities at the school.

Although now an integral part of our school community, affinity groups are a relatively new addition to the school. Previously, the only culture-based group on campus was the International Club, which runs the International Showcase. Sofia Blanc, then a Spanish teacher and Senior Class Moderator, started and ran it for decades alongside students. It was one of the only representations of ethnic diversity at the time. However, NATALIE LAI '06 remembers as a student that the International Club alone had felt lacking.

“It felt way too broad, right? That, ‘Okay, if you're interested in doing something with culture or if you are a person of color, just go to International Club,’ and it didn't sit right. We weren't able to fully express ourselves even though it was still great at the time because that was the only thing we had,” Lai said.

To combat this issue, Hector Camacho, then the Guidance and Counseling Director, established a team of educators that formed a department called Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion (SJEI). From there, the educators involved in that department were able to establish affinity groups. SJEI

morphed into today's Culture and Belonging department, of which Lai is the head.

“Affinity groups allow us to dive deeper: talk about challenging topics, know that there are educators on campus who support and identify with that particular identity factor or factors, so that students know that at school, they do have safe spaces to share how they're doing and what they're experiencing,” Lai said.

The very first affinity group established was Black Student Union, founded by counselor Cassandra

Jackson to represent the

smallest race populations on campus. They are also one of the only affinity groups that participates in the State of the Union, an annual meeting between BSU members and the school administration. There, members of BSU can share personal anecdotes, positive or negative, which allows the majority white administration to better understand the experience of Black students. BSU president and Affinity Council member LAUREN WILLIAMS '27 remembers her experience at last year's meeting as she prepared to plan for this year.

“It was really emotional because you could tell that it took a lot for these students to come out and speak personally to the admin about something like that. That, for me, was a huge part of growth because you can see people growing and getting comfortable in their skin and have enough confidence to voice their opinions to the administration,” Williams said.

There have unfortunately been instances of Black students being antagonized with racial slurs, offensive language, or other forms of harassment. The dean's office usually handles these cases by requiring offending students to take a weeks-long learning process with ethnic studies teacher DR. STEPHEN PETELO or Lai. Other than the rare cases of student dismissal, the administration is not usually involved in that learning process. Williams said that the administration was really willing to listen to the stories of others to strive for positive change at school.

“There was a lot of silence in that room and it wasn't a negative type of silence. It was really just ‘I'm here to listen. I'm not here to open my mouth and make excuses for what's going on. I just want to hear your personal stories.’ And it's really a great, great event that we put on,” Williams said.

In addition to support from the school administration, Williams has seen a lot of support for BSU from the school community. Although they represent separate ethnicities on campus, affinity groups are also there to support each other if assistance is needed. For example, ROSALYN MOORHOUSE has been quick to offer Williams support from Filipino American Student Union, the largest affinity group on campus, if they need anything from economic assistance to extra manpower.

“Ms. Moorhouse sees it as ‘BSU is the first established affinity group. They should be getting the most help and it's really amazing and it's kind, but it's also just so everybody

gets equal opportunity. Everybody gets the same amount," Williams said. "It shows the community."

BSU has been trying to expand their school community by communicating not only with students currently attending the school, but prospective students as well. Williams said that expanding the on-campus community is important in order to create somewhere Black students feel safe, appreciated and represented.

"A lot of the time, the Black American has to put on for other people, and that's why the issue is so important. It's really about putting on for ourselves, having time within ourselves, and connecting within our own community, so we do have a lot of events within ourselves when we do outreach events specifically towards getting more Saint Francis black students. We really like to do onboarding events for any oncoming eighth graders or ninth graders," Williams said.

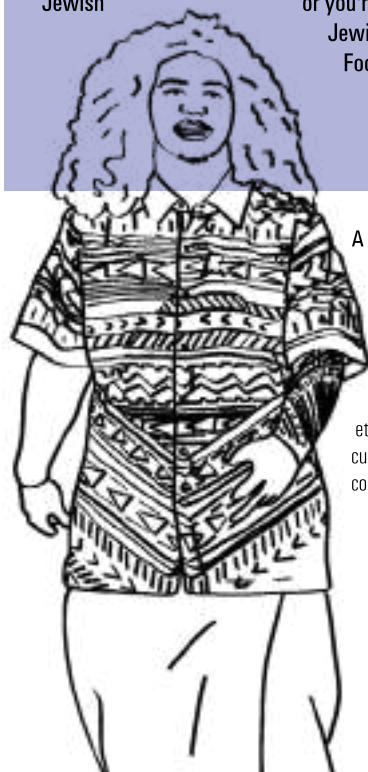
Another affinity group that has been attempting to recruit more members is Jewish Student Association. They are the only affinity group on campus that represents both an ethnicity and a religion.

"I think it's a very unique position that we're in. We have the opportunity to not only represent a faith, we're representing an entire people. I think that's something very special," Eli Fooksman '28 said.

Since Fooksman's freshman year, JSA's mailing list has grown from eight people to a total of 60. They have accomplished this by attracting both Jewish and non-Jewish students. They try to make their meetings and events accessible to the entire community in order to share the history of the Jewish population. For example, they are planning a meeting with a Holocaust survivor for next year, which Fooksman anticipates will be an informative experience for all those attending.

"That is through this organization that really tries to bring together Jews and non-Jews. And through the story of the Holocaust, I think we can all resonate that it's not just a Jewish question. It's a question for everyone. We all need to learn this history and to hear from an actual survivor, it sounds very powerful, whether you're Jewish or you're not Jewish,"

Fooksman said.



A Praiseworthy Parasol Performance
Slinging her parasol over her shoulder, **KIMBERLY NYUYEN '26** performs a Vietnamese Umbrella Dance. This was the first time VSA performed at the Multicultural Showcase. "We were able to be represented for our ethnicity and introduce Vietnamese culture to more of the Saint Francis community," Nguyen said. **Fatherly**

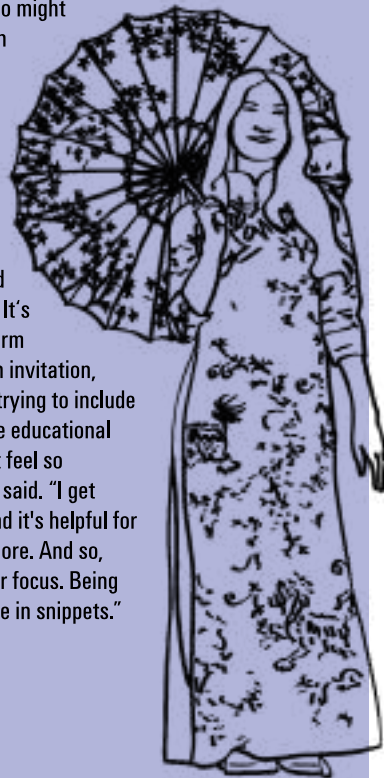
JSA's efforts have attracted students like **TANITH FELDMAN '28**, who is ethnically but not religiously Jewish.

"I feel more in touch with my culture. And I feel like I could speak up about anti-Semitism around, and bring more awareness to people around me. I feel like I've got opportunities to learn more not just from the kids around here, but also, bringing other people in. That's going to be a big deal because I can learn about real world people," Feldman said.

Even more than serving as a community where students of various ethnicities can feel represented, affinity groups help educate students on campus about a variety of cultures and individual experiences. Like JSA, other affinity groups make accessibility a goal and encourage students to participate and explore regardless of their ethnic background.

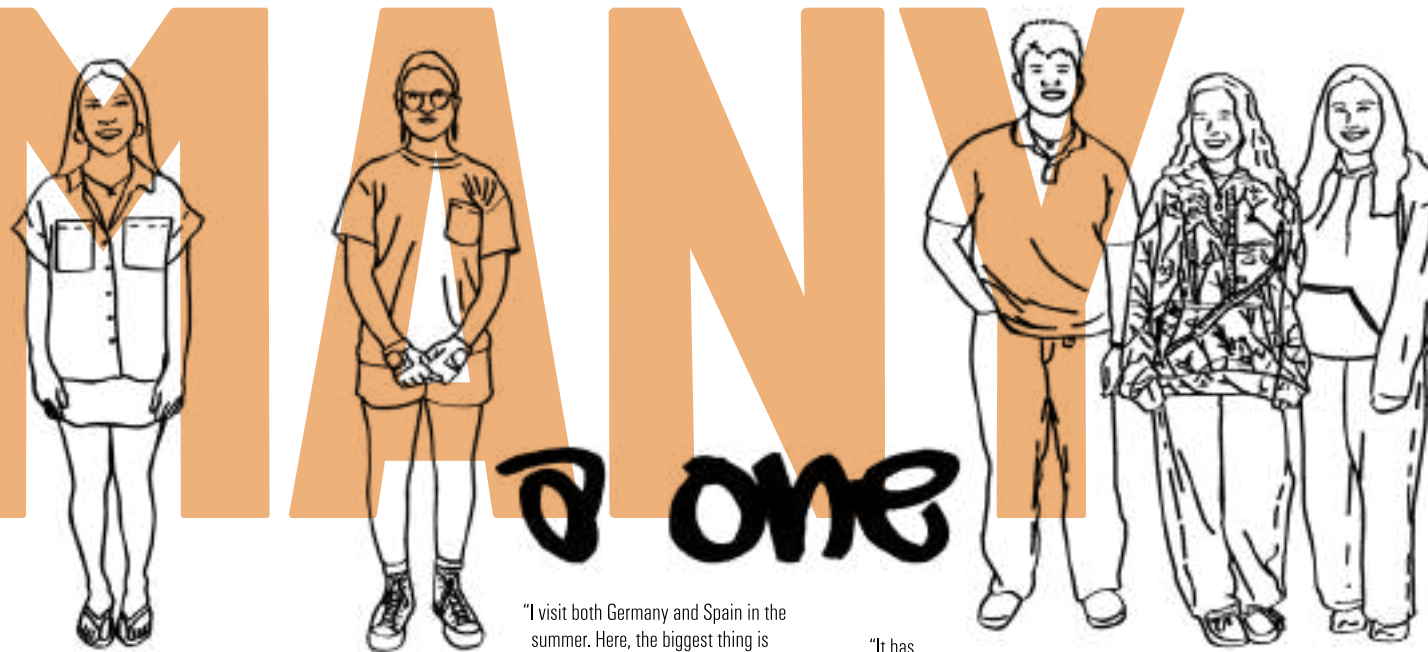
"There will be students and adults who might feel hesitant in coming because they're not really sure and it's unfamiliar.

What we try to do is extend the invitation. It's all about a warm welcoming, an invitation, but then also trying to include pieces that are educational that might not feel so daunting," Lai said. "I get scared too. And it's helpful for me to know more. And so, that's been our focus. Being able to educate in snippets."



Fashion After the Interfaith Prayer Service, **INA SUNIA '26** hangs out in the Alumni Gym while waiting to take club photos with Tagata Pasifika. Sunia wore a shirt that belonged to his father. "I wore it to represent him and my Samoan culture. The symbols represent the boats and the traveling on the water to get to island," Sunia said. *art by mollyann caulfield, reference photos by jude boitano & lia payne*

Students share their unique experience being of multiple ethnicities, whether that be discussing different aspects of their cultures or how their ethnic identity affects their life.



"Growing up in general, you get more comfortable in your own skin. You feel less of a need to prove yourself to other people. But then, another thing was I feel like I found my own Asian community outside of my family with my close friends... They're also full Asian, but I've never had any problems with them making jokes about me being the white one or anything. I feel very equal with them. And when they talk about Asian things and stuff, it's a conversation I can participate in. So I don't feel like I have to prove anything to them."
- **KEANA FAIRBAIRN '26** 75% Asian (Chinese, but immigrated from Vietnam), 25% White (unknown)

"I visit both Germany and Spain in the summer. Here, the biggest thing is around the holidays. Both of them have a secondary holiday around Christmas. So, in Germany, it's on the 6th of December, and it's a much bigger thing. You clean your shoes, and you put them out front, and then Nicolas would come and put sweet treats in your shoes. 6th of January is 3 Kings Day. That's a Spanish holiday that's really, really big. We have Rosca de Reyes, which is a little circular cake. You have like the little baby Jesus and then whoever finds the baby Jesus wears a crown."
- **SONIA QUINONERO KOCH '26** 100% White (50% German, 50% Spanish)

"It has been a very supportive environment... I think Coach Williams makes me feel welcome a lot because I'm only half African-American, and he treats me with a lot of respect, and I feel like he cares about my opinion and my well-being a lot. I can be walking in the hall and he'll greet me like he's the happiest guy in the world, and that just is really refreshing."
- **TYLER CANNON '28** 50% African American (Malian), 50% Asian (Taiwanese)

"Everyone in my house can speak Japanese. When my brother or I talk to my mom, we talk in Japanese, then when we talk to my dad, we talk in English, and then my parents talk in English. When we're having dinner, all at a table together, if we're talking to my mom, we'll speak in Japanese. My mom will speak in Japanese if she's talking to me or my brother, but if she's talking to my dad, she'll speak in English. If I speak to my mom in English, it's kind of weird just because I've always spoken to her in Japanese. But if I'm talking in Japanese to my mom then I switch and I'm talking to my dad, I'll start talking in English."
- **COCO ROTHENBERG '26** 50% Asian (Japanese), 50% White (Ashkenazi Jewish, Polish, Russian)

"Especially as a very mixed person, I've gotten many assumptions made about me that aren't necessarily true. I've gotten [called] Filipino or Pacific Islander a lot because of just the way I look. It doesn't necessarily affect me much in social life, but I definitely do get a lot of questions of interest like, 'Oh, what ethnicities are you?' And then when I tell them, they're like, 'Oh, really? I wouldn't have ever expected that.'"
- **KAI LOGGINS '28** 25% White (Dutch), 25% African American (unknown), 50% Asian (25% Chinese, 25% Japanese)

bet patterns HAVE MEANING

Rugby head coach BEN MCEVOY designed their jerseys to incorporate Pacific Islander patterns at the request of KEALA KEANAANA.



"The bigger foundation of our team were our Polynesian students. And so they were bringing that knowledge of the game, a community, you wanted to represent that as the founding component of the teams."
- **BEN MCEVOY**

"The inclusion of Pacific Islander patterns made me feel included. It's very rare Pacific Islanders get recognition on campus but also in general, so the patterns on the jerseys make me feel represented in a good light."
- **CHARLOTTE HISATAKE '28**



KNOW THE demographics

The school's ethnic makeup is majority minority and reflects the demographics of the surrounding area.

Saint Francis:	Silicon Valley:
Latine/Hispanic 10%	Latine/Hispanic 25%
Asian 27%	Asian 43%
White 36%	White 27%
Multiracial 19%	Multiracial 5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 3%	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <1%
unknown 2%	*no recorded unknowns
Middle Eastern/North African 1%	*included in white category
Black/African American 1%	Black/African American 3%
American Indian/Native Alaskan <1%	American Indian/Native Alaskan 1%

data from school admissions office and census.gov for san mateo and santa clara counties

Canción de Puerto Rico At the International Showcase, **MARIAJOSE BETANCOURT '26** sings *Soñando con Puerto Rico*. "The song is about the beauty of the island and wanting to go back. "I dedicated it to my grandpa as a tribute to my Puerto Rican heritage," Betancourt said. *art by mollyann caulfield, reference photo by lia payne*

