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We're All In This Together

Multicultural Rally Shows Off Diversity, Positivity of IHS Students, Staff



Students closing the show with the Parade of Nations

By Nevaeh Garcia, Lani Chau, and Darian Domingo

The Multicultural rally brings together the diverse students and staff at Independence High School. With performers from different cultures students were introduced to new traditions. We were shown club's such as VSA, MBC, Desi, Korean, Chinese, Polynesian, and more with their brilliant performances.

One of the clubs that performed was VSA, the Vietnamese Student Association Club. They not only perform but they also create a community that spreads awareness about their culture and what they do within it.

Senior Nancy Tran said, "We had a whole group of students who valued Vietnamese culture to help prepare to perform".

We asked performers about what challenges they had about preparing for the rally. Senior Emily Nguyen said, "One challenge that I had was honestly trying to enjoy the moment. Sometimes, we always get caught up on not making mistakes during a performance that we forget to live within the moment and fully enjoy the moment while it lasts".

Though performers faced challenges, they were able to pull it together and portray a great message and performance for students.

Onlookers were mesmerized by performances lit by multicolored lights, senior Joseph Cheung said, "My favorite part of the rally was the diversity. I loved seeing all the different cultures and their music so bussin".



A wonderful performance from Korean Club



Colors fly high during VSA's vibrant performance

Photos by: Alex Le

Senior Bryanna Cabana who watched the rally added, "I thought the rally was really fun and entertaining to watch. I also learned about different cultures and what they do. I'm glad that the school included this rally because #culture". From the rally students were able to see different cultures' music, clothing, and traditions with the dedication of the performers.

With the performers' hard work, onlookers were entertained through the impressive performances showing a piece of what their cultures are.

SOS: Secure Our School

The following is an editorial. It was written by, and represents the opinions of Independence High School students in the journalism class.

The shooting that resulted in a temporary shelter-in-place on February 8th has drawn attention to an apparent lack of safety on our campus.

On the day of the shelter-in-place, an announcement was made over the intercom alerting students to enter nearby classrooms immediately, with little to no explanation. The next bit of information came when Dean of Students, Dr. Tran, sent a schoolwide message via ReMind. The message read as follows: "Dear Sixers community. As a safety precaution, IHS is on shelter-in-place. SJPD is dealing with an event in a neighborhood nearby. We will send an update as we know more. Thank you for your patience and support."

The shelter-in-place was lifted and students were welcome to come and go as they pleased. There was another ReMind message sent from Mr. Berg divulging still very vague information. He added, "we were alerted by several staff of gunshot sounds off campus from the area of Overfelt Gardens... Out of an abundance of caution, we called a shelter-in-place until we could make sure it was safe for our community... We

"We are concerned about our physical safety on campus."

will continue to investigate this incident and collaborate with SJPD..."

Apart from these messages, the administration has not acknowledged this event, doing nothing to suppress rumors or alleviate safety concerns. While we appreciate our social workers being available to address mental health concerns about the incident, we are more concerned about our physical safety

on campus.

A number of witnesses claim to have heard gunshots coming from the direction of Overfelt Gardens, soon after seeing bleeding students running away from that same area. A popular rumor alleges that there was a driveby shooting near the park and in the surrounding area by the DCP charter school, while another seemingly more credible rumor alleges that a fight occurred in Overfelt Gardens before one of the parties involved pulled out a gun on the other. Although the ReMind messages imply that there will be consistent updates as information is gained, there has not been anything else revealed, nor even recognition by administrators to debunk any rumors. Without any updates, students and staff

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December's Covid-19 Wave

How Students Dealt with Make-Up Finals

By Ashely Pang

Even though winter break may have felt like a long time ago, some students are still reminded of how they were greeted with finals to make up while they were ill.

With finals being done during winter, a time when getting sick can be undeniable—much of the student body as well as teachers were out of the classroom and stuck inside to recover. Students have expressed their opinions on how their makeup exams have gone as well as the preparation they did.

“I’d rather do it during the week itself because I did so much preparation and studying for it,” said junior Ysabel Cano, “Obviously, over a break, you don’t want to study or learn anything at all

because you just want to relax and take your mind off school, because that’s how I felt, but I eventually just studied because I had tests to make up.”

Even though it may seem like the majority of people prefer to do finals on their scheduled days, some do prefer to do it after the break.

“I’d rather do it after the break. The fact that my finals were split up during and after finals week made it so much less stress-inducing,” expressed sophomore Diamond Luong.

Along with the vigorous studying over break, students had been confined to staying at home and coping with their sickness. According to the World Health Organization,

last year during the week of December 12th, there was a spike in global Covid-19 cases that had a 221.72% increase from the previous week. The week after, December 19th, had the highest amount of cases for the entire year of 2022.

“The worst part is saying ‘please don’t touch me I’m sick’ every 5 seconds to everybody I see—like a Victorian child inflicted with scarlet fever,” said junior Diep Van.

Although many teachers required in-person make-up finals for students after the winter break, some teachers instead did the final over Zoom or through Google Forms among a variety of other online platforms.

“I just studied and asked other students or friends about what we went over in class. I got to do some of my finals over Zoom or Google Forms which gave me some sort of advantage because I could do it on my own time,” expressed Ysabel, “The worst thing was just not being able to do my tests after studying a lot. I had to make up a few tests, and even though I studied, some of the material felt like such a blur.”

As the school year progresses, sickness will always be a hassle for students and staff alike. Luckily, as of now, Covid-19 cases have been decreasing in Santa Clara County and there haven’t been any major issues in regard to health school wide.

Indy's Got Talent

By Lyric Sauao & J.S. Mok

History is made with Independence High School’s annual talent show as tickets were sold out in advance, making the audience full of those anticipating the skills shown by performers such as new indie band 7:41 and hype-inducing choreography by C.L.U.B.

With the planning and help of the tech theater crew and the Vice President of Performing Arts Tina Nguyen, the sold-out show was a historical moment, and all the proceeds made from the show would be going directly back to future events hosted in the theater for years to come.

Excitement wasn’t only with the viewers in the audience though, the performers were equally emotional in the preparation room of the C-commons.

“Talent Shows are always such a fun experience but the build-up for it is very anxiety-inducing. I’m always jittery and nervous the day of the performance, especially when we’re in C-commons waiting to be called on stage, but the stress is worth it because performing with friends is so gratifying,” states Paris Martinez, a performer with Ukulele Club.

Martinez continued to explain, “Being on stage is such a blur in the moment, and you don’t even care how you did because you’re caught up in the adrenaline of ‘I just did that.’ I never have to worry about how good the performance was though because everyone in our group is incredibly talented.”

When asked how it felt to create the C.L.U.B set for the talent show, secretary of C.L.U.B, Lewis Nguyen expressed, “It was exciting to see our hard work pay off in the end.”



Members of the Ukulele Club perform. Photo by Alex Le

Heavy Rains Bring Local Flooding Concerns

By Kevin Nguyen

On January 15, 2023, the Bay area was hit by a severe flood that caused widespread damage and disruption to the lives of many residents. The heavy rains and strong winds caused severe flooding in many low-lying areas, resulting in the evacuation of thousands of people and leaving many more without power or access to essential services.

As a resident of the Bay area, the

flood was a shocking and devastating event for many. Jannissa Le, a resident of the Bay area, shared her thoughts on the flood. “I never thought something like this could happen to our community,” she said. “The water came up so fast and it was so powerful, it’s hard to describe. Seeing the destruction and devastation it caused is heartbreaking. I feel for all the people who have lost their homes and possessions.”

Hektor Mitchells, another Bay resident, also expressed his concern for the community. “It was a terrifying experience,” he said. “I’ve never seen anything like it before. The water just kept rising and rising, and it seemed like there was nothing we could do to stop it. I’m just glad that my family and I were safe, but I can’t imagine the fear and trauma that the people who were directly affected must have felt.”

The Bay Flood has caused a major crisis in the community, with many

residents left without homes and possessions. However, the community has come together to support one another and begin the long process of rebuilding. Jannissa Le said, “It’s going to be a long road to recovery, but I know that our community will come together to get through this. We’re strong and we’ll come back stronger.”

Hektor Mitchells added, “It’s been a tough time for everyone, but I know that we’ll get through it. We’ve always been a resilient community, and I have no doubt that we’ll be able to rebuild and come back stronger than ever.”

The Bay Flood has affected many people in the community, but through the efforts of residents like Jannissa Le and Hektor Mitchells, the community will be able to come together and rebuild in the wake of this disaster.



Matt Mahan: San Jose's New Mayor What Does He Plan To Do For ESUHSD?

By Puneet Kaur Johal

Matt Mahan is serving his first term as the Mayor of San Jose.

He previously served as the District 10 Councilman representing Blossom Valley, Almaden Valley, and Vista Park.

When asked about his plans for the district, Mahan said, "East Side Union High School District, like most school districts and facilities on San Jose's East Side, has been historically underfunded and understaffed."

"While the City of San Jose does not operate or oversee schools – which is the job of our school districts and their elected boards – we do operate dozens of libraries and community centers through which I want to scale up after school and summer programming to provide greater enrichment opportunities for our students," says Mahan.

Additionally, Mahan is aware of the issues that San Jose faces; homelessness, crime, dirty and unsafe roads, traffic, etc.

Mahan believes in safe roads and neighborhoods, preventing homelessness, affordable housing, police oversight, and ending mental health stigma.

Passionate about homelessness, Matt and his team spent \$750,000 per door building housing for homeless individuals.

To add, Mayor Mahan places a high priority on the educational system and

wants to give ESUHSD more opportunities.

Mahan says, "I think education is key in everything I will do as mayor. Investing in our children and our education system is perhaps the single most important thing we can do to push San Jose forward towards a better future. In addition to increasing after school and summer programming in our libraries and community centers, I see significant opportunities for the City to expand employment opportunities for young people in San Jose who need that first job experience to get their career on the right track."

With Mahan as our mayor, San Jose residents should have hope for the future of their community.

He is very innovative and passionate about finding solutions to the issues our city faces.

To the students of Independence, Mahan says, "The only way to fail in my eyes is to never try. So many of the world's most important innovations were the result of failure...The point is – whatever your goals are, always be trying something new and learning from mistakes and failures. I wish you good fortune in all your future endeavors."

If you are interested in learning more about Mayor Mahan, visit www.mahanforsanjose.com.



Matt Mahan, San Jose's new mayor

UNIKEY Benefit Show

By Alleah Borrromeo

Independence High School's UNICEF and Key Club had their annual UNIKEY Benefit Show on February 3, 2023 at the IHS Theater. Although the Sanrio themed show was a way to showcase all the talented individuals, it served for a greater purpose. Profits gained from the show were donated to a humanitarian organization, and this year it was towards UNICEF's Cash Assistance Program for Ukrainian Families. With the support of those who attend this event, we are all able to feed families and awareness.

On the other hand, when it came to the process of preparing for this show, Senior Co-president of UNICEF Abigail Tejam expressed, "The planning process of the show was definitely stressful to coordinate because we had to come up with ideas that were

different from our previous benefit show last year...The most challenging part of planning everything was finalizing the dates of shows and rehearsals."

To add onto her statement, Senior president of Key Club Nikita Shetty explained, "Planning this show was in all honestly extremely hectic and it did require a lot of coordination with all the officers of the clubs, performers, advisors, tech crew, etc., and given the limited time we had to prepare, it was definitely a challenge"

In addition to the presidents of the club, who came together and planned the logistics for the show were all the committees of board members from both UNICEF and Key Club. Such as decoration, MC, food, and

performance committees.

Tommy Vo, Junior Co-president of UNICEF celebrated the efforts of the decoration committee and said, "Deco was held everyday after 7th for almost 2 weeks, and we would just work on whatever props we could get done."

As for the lineup for the performances, there were IHS performance clubs such as Mabuhay Bayanihan Club and Ukulele Club. In addition to other showcases from Patrick Biagtan, Cade, Rosemary, Jorge, and Kayla. With band performances from Bazz Jand and 7:41.

7:41, a new band, which first formed because of the recent IHS Talent Show includes: Andre, Jovi, Vero, Sawyer, and Jorge.

When it came to the

process of preparing for the Benefit Show, they explained, "Since we only had 2 weeks to practice, preparing and getting songs and everyone ready was a little stressful especially since a lot of the band members were busy. In the end, we only had 1 rehearsal before we performed for the Benefit show but it turned out well."

Vocalist and current Junior Jovi Wong described their experience with performing as, "[...] really exciting because we can feed off of their energy and present this show that we have been practicing for and being able to execute that and being with our friends on stage just makes it all worthwhile. Most of the band members were a little nervous to perform, but after we got into the songs we were all just having fun and enjoying our time together."

Where are the District Funds Being Used?

By Keyra Aguilera

Independence High School has been given a grant from the district of over four hundred thousand dollars to improve the school climate and quell safety concerns.

The money was granted after a series of LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) meetings during which select Independence staff expressed their desire for the implementation of School Resource Officers on campus. The goal of LCAP is to determine what support schools in the district need and provide them with adequate funding to help them reach their goals.

The specific goals of the funds given to Independence are to hire new

staff members to aid students in different aspects of their experience at school. So far, the funds have been used to hire a new PCIS (Parent and Community Involvement Specialist) and are being used to hire people to fill similar roles, like social workers, campus monitors, and advisors. Because there were four advisors during the beginning of this school year and Ms. Fernandes has since left to pursue a different occupation within the district, Mr. Berg assures, "We are trying to interview for a fourth advisor still."

The limited amount of students who are already informed about the funds have expressed a want for some money to be used for some reparation of the

bathrooms. However, Mr. Berg told reporters, "The funds are primarily being used to hire new staff members... Anything we spend them on has to be approved through the district."

Regarding the desire for the implementation of School Resource Officers, Mr. Berg has also stated, "I personally prefer staff, teachers, psychiatrists, and social workers to work with students, rather than scaring students ... by having people with guns on campus." Mr. Berg assures that these funds are not going to be used to hire School Resource Officers, "there are no plans for our school, or any school in our district, to get SRO's."

Seniors and the End of the Year...

By Jorge Hernandez

As the end of the school year progresses for the East Side Union High School District, our Senior Class of 2023 is soon going to be walking the stage. But how are the seniors feeling about the year almost coming to a close, or what type of plans are they looking forward to after graduation? Some students might be going straight into college. Some other students are also probably going into jobs to make some good money before other plans.

Here we've got our Senior MBC President Andre Fangonilo talking about what he's been looking forward to after high school and what his plans are for the future.

"Starting a new chapter of my life, stepping into adulthood in some sort of way and stepping into the real world where my life can start. Take every advantage you can throughout high school because those types of opportunities are going to be harder to get throughout your life."

Next on the list, we have our 76th Cavalry member/ Prized Trumpet Soloist Shean Mao Talking about what he's been thinking, and what he's been looking forward to after high school and what he's been feeling about the end of the school year coming to a close.

"Getting out of high school,

escaping a system where the government doesn't control my education and my perception of the world. Involve yourself in activities that would distract you from the negative event and the influence of the world of life including school."

The things that differentiate us all is what's been going through our lives and our complete differences, but the main thing that the class of 2023 has is that we are all going to graduate and go on with our lives. The things that have been happening for them for the past three and a half years with COVID, distance learning, and heavy troubles with sickness spreading for a little bit, they've pulled through all the way in the end.

Future Digital AP Exams to be Offered Next Year

By Tanya Desai

In person digital AP exams will be offered this year. The digital AP exam option will be available for Computer Science Principles, English Language, English Literature, U.S. History, and World History.

With the rise of the digital age and the increase in digital learning due to the pandemic, many students have become more proficient in typing than writing by hand. This could have a negative impact on written AP exam scores.

"I feel like especially APs that require a lot of writing, it's really time consuming to write out everything because people have different writing speeds," expresses Jenny Liu, an AP student. "That can be a disadvantage because they are testing you on your knowledge, not your writing speed."

Another benefit of digital AP exams is that they will allow the testing process to run more quickly and efficiently

"[The] administration of the exam is faster and more streamlined using chromebooks rather than cross checking, inventorying, distributing, and returning thousands of pieces of paper," explains Mr. Landshof, associate principal and AP

coordinator. "Test proctors can start on time and test more efficiently so that more student time is spent reading and writing rather than in administration tasks."

The digital AP exams will be administered with a kiosk system, which will be similar to how the SBAC test is taken. The test will have proctors in person that will assist with logging on and fixing any issues with submission.

However, there is another matter that needs to be addressed. In 2021, through distance learning, many students were able to cheat on their digital AP exams by searching their notes or looking up answers. It is a grave concern that the implementation of digital exams this year will encourage students to cheat.

"Digital Exams will be just as secure as paper and pencil testing," assures Mr. Landshof. "Students will no more be able to copy and paste responses digitally than they were able to look at a neighbors' handwritten examination answers. Students will be monitored in the same fashion and kept to the same level of honesty and test integrity."

The Student Aide Experience Passing out Papers. Passing out Pride.

By Jordan Delos Reyes

You are in class and the door knocks. "Who could that be?", your teacher asks. The arriving senior says that this person needs to go home--you all begin to jot eyes looking for who that person may be; The senior leaves off to their next delivery.

Student aide is unique to all other electives being the only Pass/No Pass class offered and exclusive to Seniors. Their work, in essence, is very simple. There is no homework, no tests, no grades, not even a syllabus.

Associate Principal Landshof said, "It's very binary; students either were there and helped...or they were absent."

Student aides are expected to come into their assigned rooms to help with tasks. This can be any classroom or one of the front office buildings (N-01 & N-02). The counseling department looks at a student's skill set & interests and matches

them towards where it is needed most.

Mr. Hennessey commented "For example, students who speak multiple languages are a HUGE support for our office staff and our ELD and Sheltered classrooms, where they can assist parents and students who have limited communication in English."

I myself communicate with parents who only speak Spanish multiple times every week. Although challenging, I find it to be a good opportunity to grow my conversational Spanish.

Aides can find themselves doing all sorts of tasks depending on their location, oftentimes learning new processes on the spot with or without the teacher's help

Mrs. Banack for example makes her T.A.s grade tests or quizzes, filling or sorting, retyping old

worksheets and making them look pretty again, telling absent students about lesson plans they missed, moving supplies between classrooms and even going to help other teachers.

"My ideal T.A. is somebody who is responsible for themselves," said Mrs. Banack "Someone who doesn't need to ask me 5,000 questions, sort of like a self-starter, someone who is trustworthy."

Senior Noah Pomarejos, a 1st period aide for N-02 recalled one particular challenge, "My partner T.A. (at the time) and I delivered passes at a part of the school fenced off. We didn't know what to do so she fiddled with the fence and I squeezed through."

Who would I recommend this class to?

First, someone who really takes pride in their work and who genuinely wishes to contribute to the school

community. Although there are many periods of free time, there are days where you find yourself exhausted.

"I love helping out, it's for the school spirit I wanted to use my remaining periods that I didn't use to help the staff members and office," said 7th period N-01 aid Gabby Hernandez.

This person should be on good terms with their teacher, all of the people I asked said their idea T.A. is someone who works well with them, perhaps a former student. Your relationship with your teacher becomes less of an educational one and more as a professional one as you both work together for the same goal.

"It's good training for students to learn office etiquette, taking direction," said Secretary Becky Robles.

"I learned that it would give me time to be able to do classwork

from other classes along with helping me step out of my comfort zone since my job is to assist the counselors with whatever necessary." said 4th period N-02 aide Sarah Clark when asked about why she joined.

Finally, student aide is something that comes with opportunity costs. You will miss out on one other elective so you should be 100% sure that student aide is the class you want to pick. As someone with a very full plate, I knew that student aide was just right for me.

Mr. Ho said "If I have to stress one thing the most is that overall Teacher's Aides are amazing people that help save teachers a huge amount of time so that we can spend it more effectively on helping students, planning our lessons, taking care of other errands, spending time with our family at home, or even finally taking a nice little nap."



Black Panther: Wakanda Forever Movie Review

By Kevin Nguyen

Wakanda forever has become a powerful symbol of unity and pride, particularly among the African diaspora and the youth. For two high school students, Khoa Tran and Angelina Nguyen, the phrase holds a special significance. These two individuals have used their love for Wakanda, the fictional African nation in which the Black Panther film is set, to inspire their studies and creative endeavors.

Khoa Tran, a high school student with a passion for graphic design, has gained a following for his stunning illustrations of Black Panther characters. His artwork captures the power and grace of the characters, as well as their connection to their cultural heritage. Tran's illustrations have been featured in school art shows and online, and he cites Wakanda as a major inspiration for his work. He hopes to pursue a career in graphic design and to continue to use his art as a way of exploring and celebrating his cultural heritage. Tran said that "the artwork in the suits of black panther is aesthetic, and it really broaden my horizon."

Angelina Nguyen, a high school student interested in film, has also been inspired by Wakanda. Nguyen has been creating her own short films

that explore similar themes of identity, heritage, and representation as the Black Panther film. Nguyen has also been using her films to raise awareness about issues of representation in Hollywood and inspiring more inclusive storytelling. She plans to study film in college and hopes to continue to use her films as a way to tell important stories and change the way stories are told by Hollywood. Nguyen said that "Wakanda is one of the best heritage films, and it really opened my view about heritage films, and in the coming future I will try to incorporate it into my own work."

Both Tran and Nguyen's work, in their own ways, have been influenced by the powerful message of Wakanda forever, which has become a symbol of hope and pride for many people. They have been able to take the inspiration they got from the film and the phrase and use it to create a meaningful impact in their studies and in their communities, even at a young age. It's a clear example of how a piece of pop culture can inspire people, no matter their age, to create something meaningful and impactful.

Is TikTok Addictive?

By Cristina Guizar



So many of us have fallen victim to TikTok and I, like many others, find myself mindlessly scrolling on the app for hours. I see people make TikToks about how it's becoming a problem and an influencer I follow, Enya Umanzor says that she won't download it because it'll just "rot her brain". It's hard to tell if TikTok is used so much because we're bored or if we're addicted. The app is more prevalent among teenagers and young adults so it could be that we use it so much because we don't have enough things to do to fill our days like a job, a house to upkeep, or a family to take care of. I use the app so much because I don't have much else to do throughout the rest of my day when I'm not at school. I even find myself leaving the app because I've used it so much, just to open it back up again without realizing it, TikTok has truly become a part of my daily routine and the same thing has probably happened to a lot of people.

There's even a phrase used for it, "TikTok Brain", people say this because our brains get used to the dopamine hits from the funny or cute videos that are put on our for you pages and we keep going back for more. But how could you not get a dopamine hit after seeing a really cute cat with a huge eye filter? I asked senior, Marjorie Tapia, what she thinks about TikTok and this was her response, "It's distracting... and fun." It is distracting and fun indeed. So many students use the app while in class and more often than not it causes them to miss some of the material taught in class. Speaking of being distracted during class, I asked my English teacher, Mr. Chan what his thoughts are on TikTok causing students to be off task, "Tik Tok can be entertaining and used for educational purposes even, however, when I catch students scrolling through it during my lectures or classwork time I find it concerning. Some students, and people in general, are having a harder time staying focused because of the addictive rewarding system that is purposefully designed in these types of apps to engage and maintain user attention; I've had personal experience with this myself. While there may be no harm in indulging in social media every once in a while, class time is not the time and students could use a break from their phones a few hours out of the day." Now that I have a teacher's perspective on the issue it makes me think more about how much I really use the app during class.

My conclusion on "TikTok addiction" is that we aren't really addicted. Using the app so much is just a habit and it shouldn't be called an addiction, it may be hard to stop doing it but so all habits are hard to get rid of. I feel like a great solution to this problem would be to pick up other hobbies, like cleaning, reading, exercising, drawing, etc. Anything that you do that could keep you off your phone would help, not only with the TikTok habit but also with your screen time in general.

The Reduction of Screen Time

By J. Julian

As the new year begins, it leaves room to new and more resolutions. But through seasonal times, specifically the winter time, it's easy to stay on your phone more often to pass time; nights are longer while days are shorter.

According to statistics, the average American can stare at a screen for about 7-8 hours a day (DataReportal) and because of the pandemic, adolescence's screentime nearly doubled due to having all school work and other forms of entertainment through the screen.

Personally, one of my newer resolutions this year is to reduce my screen time from six hours to about two-three hours a day. And from that, I found it to benefit me rather than to stump me as a person. As basic as it is, I believed that during the last two years, including quarantine and such, I was extremely dependent on my phone to be a source of entertainment, and happiness, when it wasn't. With that, I found that the more time I spent on my phone, I was less appreciative as a person and a whole.

"Though it's not much, I do lessen my screentime at least 2 hours before my sleeping time," (Senior, Janessa Andrade).

There are a multitude of benefits by just the reduction of your screen time by even just two hours than what your initial hours were. Two hours is a lot of time to be doing more productive things rather than scrolling mindlessly through media. You could study, you could do your chores and more.

Although there may be differing opinions about differentiating screentimes due to FOMO (fear of missing out) through social media or even just for entertainment, it's still beneficial to keep and reduce your screentime by a minimum amount as much as you can. Benefits being better sleeping times, more productivity, and so much more.



Are the Younger Generations Growing Up Too Fast?

By Jayda Sarabia

Throughout the years, generations have grown further apart, as well as closer together, in terms of how each generation may act, dress, or talk. Younger generations are seen to be growing up too fast by some people, while others do not believe this is true. A few students were asked the question "Are the younger generations actually growing up too quickly?" and gave their input on the topic:

Senior Amy Okuma answers with, "I think so, because my little sister is 13 years old and she cares so much about what she wears and what she looks like. When I was in middle school I did not care what I looked like."

"Yes, because the younger generations have easier access to the internet. The internet is a very unforgiving place. They can very easily google answers

to child wonders which would then cause them to end." another Senior Paulo Jimenez adds.

"Yes, I think they are growing up too fast. My mom is a teacher and she's taught middle schools a couple of times. Recently, she's noticed that middle schoolers are doing what high schoolers might usually do like wearing makeup and being more into social media." says Junior Manasi Shiral.

Senior Theresa Kodenkandeth explains, "I do think the younger generation is "growing" up a little too fast, mostly because of technology. I put quotations on "growing" because some kids grow in a good or bad manner and this all revolves around the fact that children are exposed to technology. Younger generations have been with

technology since they were little, the way they use technology is important. As technology is increasing, I feel as though kids are being too exposed to the internet and with not enough supervision, kids are not being stopped to go onto certain websites which could affect the kid's growth. Overall the way the younger generations use technology is what makes them grow too fast. Whether that is a good thing or bad thing depends on how they use the resources or tools on the internet."

All of the students interviewed agreed that the younger generations are growing up too fast. The common reason for why younger generations are growing up too fast would be due to technology. Older high schoolers now could hardly relate to what some of the younger teens are going through because of the advancements on the internet.

Driving in the Rain

By Sayid Diaz

People drive very often regardless of weather, but during specific rainy conditions, people sometimes forget what to do during a rainstorm, while driving, these people are usually seen braking as if there is no water on the road, and many are seen swerving because people aren't used to the road conditions, people are also driving faster instead of going slower increasing the chance of hydroplaning and crashing, this causes a significant road hazard and increased chances of collisions with barriers or other cars.

These people should decrease their speed and prepare for bad road conditions ahead. Some of these people modify their cars or buy new tires to make them wider to provide more surface area and decrease hydroplane, this increases traction and makes driving in the rain easier and safer than stock tires. Some cars have tires with no tread, which reduces braking distance and makes driving unsafe for the lack of traction, this causes spinouts and less resistance to hydroplaning. While in the rain a driver can lose visibility because of the water on the windshield, this can be stopped by turning on the windshield wipers, but in some cases, these won't work because the water is falling too hard, from personal experience I recommend going on roads that you are familiar with and try to get home as fast as possible.

From what I've seen, people are getting more used to driving in the rain, but I still see bad drivers out there, but they aren't common as you would think, this only happens when weather conditions are terrible. Overall I would rate drivers in the rain a five out of ten, this is because there aren't that many, and good drivers are more common than bad ones.

A New Year: 2023

What Do Students And Teachers Hope For 2023?

By Puneet Kaur Johal



It's that time of year again!

Many individuals create goals and habits and establish new routines at the beginning of each

year to better themselves.

Some habits include: waking up early, drinking two bottles of water, spending time outdoors, going to the gym regularly, etc.

As a senior, I hope to spend time enjoying the present moment. I will be graduating from highschool in a few months, so I want to make the most of my final semester of highschool by creating new memories, reflecting on the friendships and connections I have made, and genuinely living my life to the fullest.

I also want to develop a more positive mindset and embrace kindness towards myself and others.

While thinking more about this topic, I decided to ask some students and staff about their new year goals.

Senior Kimberly Gines says, "A personal new year's goal I have set out for myself this year is to finally get my drivers license. I want to be able to drive myself to places whenever I want to, so that would be something I look forward to doing in the near future."

Obtaining a driver's license is a goal that many students have as it offers a new level of freedom, responsibility, and independence.

"I hope to become the best version of myself, both mentally and physically. I want to be able to take more time to take better care of myself, maybe even have more self care days", added Kimberly.

Students' mental health could worsen due to an overload of coursework and rejections from colleges. Spending time doing activities that bring you joy might be beneficial. It can improve happiness and help to deal with stress.

Furthermore, the Principal, Mr.Berg says, "My main goal is to maintain a safe, peaceful, and positive campus for our students and community. I look forward to congratulating our Seniors as they cross the stage. And helping all of our community continue finding their passion, purpose, and path."

The class of 2023 will be graduating in late May, with the majority of students attending college and others joining the military or the workforce.

"I have a feeling this year will be a great year, especially since I'm going to reach important parts of my life this year like finally being a legal adult, graduating highschool, and finally entering college. I think it's going to be a year where I'll be able to accomplish a lot of things in my life", says Kimberly.

Regardless of where you hope to be in 2023, I hope this year is filled with an abundance of happiness, positivity, and accomplishments for you.

Is Independence a More Athletic or Artistic School?

By Michelle Huynh

The question of whether Independence High School is an athletic or artistic school has been asked a handful of times around campus. Independence has many sports teams for the variety of sports offered on campus. The school also has a variety of clubs that perform for different events, as well as art students who create art pieces, some that are on display. In order to decide whether Independence is more athletic or artistic, a few students were asked the question "is Independence a more athletic or artistic school?" and gave their thoughts and opinions:

Junior Manasi Shirali says, "I think Independence is more of an artistic school because it has a lot of art classes like robotics, multimedia, and photography."

"I think that in my opinion, Independence High School is more artistic because I've seen some very creative posters for the homecoming rallies and spirit week," junior Jona Mae Mutuc mentions.

"To me, Independence is more of an artistic school because the performing arts clubs are very strong at doing what they do. I think many students look forward to club performances at different school events like rallies and spirit week performances at senior stage. Also, the many different murals around IHS show the artistic side of the school," senior Natalia Hernandez adds.

Senior Rafael Medina disagrees, "Hmm, I'd say it's more of an athletic

school because we do well in every sport besides football. But, other than that, Independence is more of an athletic school."

Senior Mathew Balmonte thinks Independence is both, stating, "I think Independence is just about both since we do have quite a few sports that anyone can tryout for and be apart of while we also do have many clubs and electives that fit the artistic part of our school and not just artistic like drawing or painting but also like guitar, orchestra, band, drama, and a few other things."

Although this is just a few students on campus giving their thoughts and opinions, it seems like more people think Independence is more of an artistic school

Love Galore: Love Advice

By N. Tran

With Valentine's Day around the corner, it's not unusual to feel lonely or wishful for a partner by your side. Especially with a big campus like Independence, you're bound to bump into couples around the school asking each other to be one's Valentine or witnessing firsthand your partner in math class receiving a Valentine's Day gram from a special someone.

Because of this, it's easy to slip into an overthinking state.

"What am I doing wrong?" "Am I not worthy of love?"

Well, I'm here to tell you it's all in your head. You are worthy of love and you are in fact beautiful inside and out.

It's a common misconception for many that just because they can't find a special someone as quickly as someone else, that there's something wrong with them. What they may not realize is that the good things take time. Furthermore, being in a relationship can be tricky. So if you're one of those people that wore red on *Stoplight Day*, allow my peers and I to offer you some advice.

First and foremost, Jez Julian suggests that you know your priorities. Though it's easier said than done, being in a relationship can make you easily lose track of what's important to you as you

may want to indulge all your time with your partner.

However, you need to remember that you yourself are your own person with your own responsibilities and a future that you're working towards. This will do more good than harm and in hindsight, will earn the respect of your partner.

The term "red flag" is used by Gen Z to describe the warning signs of an individual who could potentially not be right for you. Therefore, Janessa Andrade recommends that you know what you're getting yourself into (this is why there's a stage where you get to know the other person before committing).

Ask questions, go on innocent dates, and take things slow in order to figure out if the relationship is right for you. Yes, time is limited but it's better to be safe than sorry. As mentioned above, patience is key.

Last but definitely not least, I can't stress enough the importance of self love whilst being in a relationship. There's a famous saying that goes, "you can't love



others before you love yourself" and it's true. Not being able to be secure with yourself is a gateway to a toxic relationship as it could upbring trust issues and even make you question your emotional security with your partner.

Students' Feelings About Second Semester Starting

By Nevaeh Garcia

Independence is half way through the 2022-2023 school year and has started the second semester bringing forth the end of the school year. The beginning of the second semester brings about relief but also stress due to school being reset.

Senior, Caitlin Nguyen expressed what she is looking forward to for the second semester, "I'm looking forward to the field trips that I have this semester because I had three field trips last semester and so in this semester, I will be having three again". Many find the second semester to be more enjoyable than the first semester because the school year is about to end which brings about more events to attend as well as excitement that school is almost over.

Nandine Vasudeva, a senior said, "I feel neutral about the start of the second semester because it's the same thing as the first semester but it's a semester you have to do your best in". Because the school year is almost over, many students see the second semester to be important because it is closing off the school year and it can make or break how well you do.

"I'm looking forward to all the events I get to do with my club because it's fun to perform and hang out with them", said senior, Paris Martinez. As previously stated some students find the second semester to be fun especially for seniors because this is their last year of high school and things such as events are something to take advantage of.

It seems that many are more excited than they are nervous about the second semester starting because of all that is lined up for them to do. I would have to agree with Paris, Nandine, and Caitlin about the second semester starting because I think it is fun that there is a reset and that the school year is almost over. I enjoy attending events and being with friends, but I also intend to do well this semester because it is important especially with being a senior. With being a senior I want to be more involved this semester attending events and taking advantage of what is offered as well as doing well in my classes because it's my last semester of high school.

The Last of Us TV Series

By Cristina Guizar

The popular video game *The Last of Us* is getting its own show adaptation almost ten years after its release. The game is about different characters surviving in a post-apocalyptic world, and of course, there is a lot of tragedy to be expected. Fans of the game initially had mixed feelings about a show for this game because there were a lot of significant and amazing scenes they weren't sure could be captured in a TV show. As someone who was a fan of the video game before the show was announced my friend, Jolie Ngo shared their thoughts on a show adaptation, "I was nervous at first because show adaptations usually fail to fully capture the original, whether it be a book or video game." As I said before, people were really concerned about

whether or not the show would do the show justice. But after the cast was released people were ecstatic, for the most part. Pedro Pascal was cast as Joel Miller, Gabriel Luna as Tommy Miller, Nico Parker as Sarah Miller, Bella Ramsey as Ellie Williams, etc. These are such great actors and we've only seen a few of their performances as there have only been two episodes released so far. Pedro Pascal played the part perfectly as always and Nico Parker gave an amazing performance, although her screen time was short she still left a huge impact on everyone that has watched.

On the other hand, many fans aren't so happy with the actress who was cast as Ellie. There's a huge debate on this topic because people

feel as though Bella Ramsey isn't "attractive enough" to play Ellie and others think that it shouldn't matter how attractive the actress is because she's playing a fourteen-year-old girl. People have even brought up pedophilia in this debate. Personally, I agree that the looks of the actress shouldn't matter at all, she's great at her job and I love how she plays Ellie. And once again, I asked Jolie what their opinion is on the matter and this was their response, "I think that Ellie is fourteen so why would she be attractive anyway... it is very weird how mad people are! Bella is a great actress and she's doing Ellie justice." What are your thoughts on this argument? Is this something that shouldn't have been an issue in the first place?



Senior Portraits Should be Provided by the School

By Darian Domingo

I believe that senior portraits should be free and close to our school and district. The place where we take our senior portraits is called "Now and Forever Studios". From what students have said about Now and Forever Studios is that it is pretty far away and not close to our school. People have to drive far and book their senior portraits, they also have to miss a day of school because Now and Forever Studios only book for weekdays and not for weekends. The studio and the photographer doesn't

even show your photos after the picture taking and just delivers it to you via email.

"The people at the Now and Forever Studio were nice, but I wish I was able to see my pictures while I was there. I didn't have any chance to fix my smile or anything so now I'm just hoping for the best" said senior Hannah Haberstroh

I don't think students should have to pay for their senior portraits. For example, what if you took your senior portraits already, you paid for everything

to make it looks nice and missed a day of school and when you get the email of your photos they turn out bad and now you have to pay more and rebook again which is bad because it wastes your time and you lose money because of it.

"\$35 for Senior Portraits is not something everyone can afford. The school should make senior activities more accessible and financially acceptable to students of the lower income background." said senior Nuha Khan

Piedmont High School was able to take pics at their school, paying \$74 for a picture right after. Now and forever studios are far from Independence High School, you have to pay around \$34 just to take pictures, \$74 for one 8x10 alone. I feel like students should have their pictures at Independence High School because and not have to go so far.

"I have friends from Piedmont High School and they have said that have took there senior portrait and not in some other place like

Now and Forever studios." said senior Nicole Lagazo

My final thought about senior portraits is that it should be less of a hassle for the students in Independence High School. Some people can't afford to take their pictures and have to fend for themselves and others don't have car rides. Independence High School should do more for the seniors and make it simpler by having the senior photoshoot at our school.

How are Student's Sleeping Schedules

By Alleah Borromeo

As high school students, if there is anything that is contributing to tiredness, it is not having a stable sleeping schedule. Some possible results of a lack of sleep are trouble focusing in class, difficulty in completing tasks, and can even affect one's health.

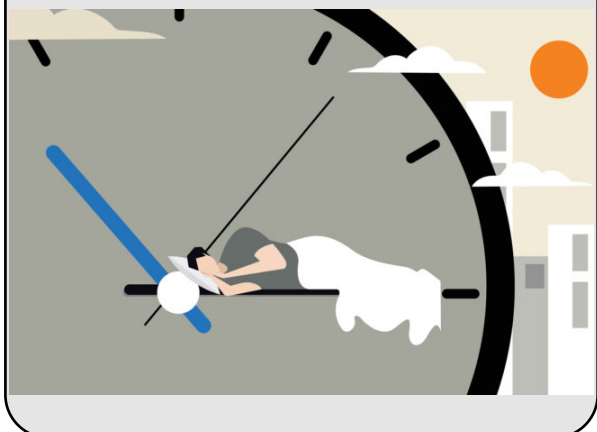
Coming from an AP student Cassie Ly, a Junior at Independence High School mentioned that the major reason why she is up late at 2 am is because of homework and over-welling stress. Additionally, she said her lowest hours of sleep is two hours, whereas seven is the highest yet. That lack of sleep has caused her to space-out during class time, and even when she is socializing with others.

AP Bio student Anna Tran, a Junior at Independence High School reasoned sleeping later is caused by, "...mainly homework. It could take hours to finish and that causes me to lose sleep. Sometimes it's because I would like to stay up to talk or play games with my friends."

She also mentioned that, "... this sleeping schedule has affected my learning and being at school because due to the loss of sleep I get, what's on my mind is wanting to go home and sleep rather than being able to efficiently focus in class. It's harder to concentrate when I am tired. And when the reason I'm up late is because of homework, it's harder for me to want to stay in school and learn."

However, a student whose sleeping schedule worsened over the two-week holiday break is Margaret Martin, a Junior at Independence High School. She has expressed that the reason why she wants to sleep later at night is because she wants to offer herself more time for herself.

On the other hand, it has affected her mental health as she described, "I feel stressed about the schoolwork, I have to do it while I'm so tired."



Independence Needs A Car Club For Car Enthusiasts!

By Jaden Dang

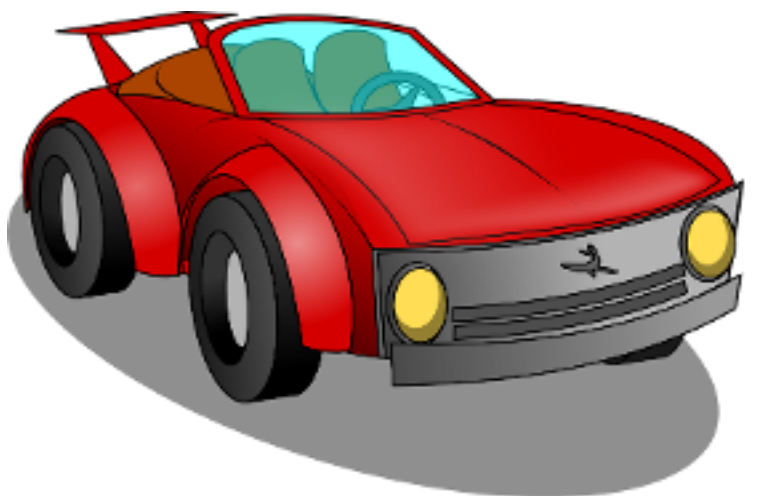
2022 is finally over, a new year to start off in. Semester two is finally now in action. Clubs are booming with new ideas and new activities. Students are happier than before and it would usually mean that a new year would be a great time to achieve new goals. But still, there is something that students are still wondering about here at Independence High School, and that would be. A car club for car enthusiasts. A club that has never been done before here at Indy.

Senior Kenny Le says that, "Students could bond together and talk about their passion for cars. The club could also teach students the basic necessities like how to repair the car and maintain the systems in the car."

The knowledge of how

to maintain and repair cars seems to be a very important skill to have. As we use cars on a daily basis for our travel to school and work. Students having this knowledge could greatly benefit from it if there is ever a problem with their car. Not only would this club teach about the repair and maintenance of cars. It would serve as a club for people to get together and share their passion about cars.

"One of the positive aspects that a car club can provide students with, is an opportunity to learn about car maintenance and repair, which can be valuable skills for those interested in pursuing a career in



the automotive industry." Says Huey Park.

Independence is a very large school campus with a high number of students. It is bound that many students here drive all types of cars. Ranging from Hondas, Mustangs, to Corvettes. A car club would open up a gateway of so many opportunities for students to show off their cars and builds.

Senior Huey Park also states that, "Additionally, the club can be a way for students to

bond and socialize over a shared interest in cars. It can also provide a sense of community and belonging for students who may not be involved in other extracurricular activities."

A car club would be the perfect opportunity to build upon a new positive community here at Independence High School. It is only a matter of time before students will spring forward and possibly make this club a reality.

How To Deal With A Muddy And Rainy Campus

By Jaden Dang

For the past month, the weather here in California has never been this harsh before. With wind gusts up to forty five miles per hour, to heavy rain drenching the streets. Independence High School definitely has its fair shares of massive puddles and muddy walkways all over campus. Students would definitely need a way to prepare and deal with these kinds of conditions.

Senior Huey Park highly recommends that, "Students should bring umbrellas and spare shoes, or rain protective shoes. A Good way for students to stay warm is with waterproof jackets."

With heavy rain and muddy conditions, it doesn't help that Independence's campus is large, which means that students must walk a far distance to reach their class. The cold

weather only makes things worse. Dressing correctly and knowing how to prepare for these types of days are a must.

"Don't go on the mud, wear boots, raincoat, don't wear your nice shoes, and check the weather app on your phone to be well prepared." Says Kenny Le.

The weather app is pretty important, it cannot be stressed enough that students should look at it more to get a sense of what the weather will be like the next time they prepare. Imagine wearing your brand new shoes, only for it to rain extremely hard and getting mud and grit all over them. It would be such a pain. February will be a month where this weather will continue. It will be unpredictable, so be sure to always be prepared ahead of time to avoid inconvenience.

Model UN's First Conference

By Ashely Pang

The Model United Nations club participated in its first conference—the Santa Clara Valley Model United Nations Conference, which is the second oldest and second largest high school student-hosted Conference on the west coast

As a fairly new organization on campus, Model UN or MUN is a way to learn about how the United Nations operates and aims to educate students about diplomacy and international relations by simulating conferences involving the UN General Assembly.

“I heard about the program and I realized we didn’t have Model UN at our school,” said sophomore and co-president Katie Hion, “This is probably like in the middle of freshman year and I really wanted to bring the opportunity, and experience of Model UN—something we didn’t have.”

The Santa Clara Model United Nations conference was a two-day affair, taking place at Santa Teresa High School. It is an annual event that takes place annually during January, boasting over 1,000 delegates from around the globe. At the conference, Participants, engage in debates and discussions about creating policies. At the conference, Independence represented the country of Japan.

“There will be a lot of issues that we will talk about, including other countries as well. Independence will be

taking the conference from the perspective of Japan—a lot of the research will be regarding Japanese policies and past events Japan has been a part of,” stated sophomore Ojas Gandhi.

At the event, delegates discussed a variety of real-world issues, such as tensions in the South China Sea and the militarization of outer space.



Pictured from left to right: Chris Vaguez, Adelynn Le, Rovin Inocencio, Sue Nguyen, Katie Hion, Bao Dang, Pionna Portuguese, and Thy Nguyen

“We had to join together with other countries to come up with a resolution, and later we voted for which resolution we thought was best,” mentioned freshman participant Addelyn Le, “For topics, each committee had a different one regarding their jobs and committee goals. It was really interesting getting to know my

country better and trying to find solutions based on my country’s policy.”

The club not only was able to participate in the conference but sophomore head delegate Katie Hion and junior Ethan Ngyuen were awarded for best research paper.

“Getting best research was really unexpected,” mentioned Katie.

As participants in the second largest MUN high school conference in the U.S, the delegates have expressed their experience and are looking forward to future conferences and events.

“We were pretty outspoken and did a good amount talking to other delegates. Still, the only not-so-fun side of the conference was the amount of research we had to do,” said junior Chris Vazquez, “The friendliness and helpfulness of our school MUN club during the whole process made it 100 times easier.”

Cloud 9: The Breakers of IHS

By Lyric Sauao

Independence has many dance clubs, such as C.L.U.B, Mabuhay, VSA, or Korean Club that many see around campus whether it is after school practice at shadows or performing during the rallies.

One in particular that many can find at shadows every day after 6th and 7th period would be Cloud 9, where they freely session and show off their creativity through dance.

Cloud 9 president Jayden Dasalla expresses, “Cloud 9 is one of the few clubs where imagination and creativity are your tools when you dance. It is a club that is active all year round and a club that is welcoming and fun!”

Dasalla continues explaining that, “When joining Cloud 9 you can expect an inviting club and expect any officer or member glad enough to help you in your journey to becoming a breaker. However, if you just want to watch, Cloud 9 is full of

talented and creative young minds where every member has a distinct style who wants to show you what they got on the dance floor.”

“Anyone can join our club at any time! You can honestly just show up at our location at shadows any day after school and let one of us there know that you are interested in joining, we’ll be more than happy to introduce you to the club.” Vice President, Colin Nguyen added.

“There are no requirements or expectations necessary, you can have a lot of dance experience or you’ve never even tried dancing before, we teach you all the basics you need to know and anything you would like to learn we can help with however we can.”

Nguyen continued to promote the club, expressing, “People should join Cloud 9 because we are one of the longest-running clubs

here at Independence and we have a lot of history that many do not know! Not only that though, our club is extremely welcoming and open as although at first sight, but you might also think that you can’t break dance or you aren’t athletic enough to do anything we do, most of us started off with zero dance experience and we just thought it would be something fun to try”

With the upcoming Battle of the Classes season coming up, Cloud 9 will be beginning their practices to showcase their breaking and hip hop talents at the BOTC rally.



IHS Social Society Club

By Alleah Borromeo

Independence High School’s Social Society Club, is a new student-led organization on campus. The purpose of this club is to offer many different opportunities to strengthen social skills, develop leadership skills, and even introduce oneself to other students on campus. All through their primary goal of connecting their members with the community through an abundance of interactive service events, while simultaneously having fun. As described by the team members of IHS Social Society Club, “Our team is actually all class of 25 because 25 times 2 is the number of states in the USA and we are PROUD SIXERS #indepride. Our

charming co-presidents are Argyle Angulo and Rovin Inocencio. Our spicy secretary is Katie Chan and our tasty treasurer is Vivian Vu. Our heavenly historian is Tran Nguyen and our astronomical activities coordinator is Thierry Dao.”

The team, as a whole explained, the reason why they wanted to work together and form a new club was because, “One day, we were scrolling through instagram and we were like ‘WOW PHHS SOCIAL SOCIETY CLUB IS SO COOL’. All of a sudden, our brains clicked and we came together and formed a Social Society Club, but at Independence High School. This is VERY

Lunar New Year

By Lani Chau and Jolina Froma

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar new year, is a holiday celebrated by many Asian cultures around the world. It is celebrated for 15 days in the lunar calendar varying from year to year. Sometime beginning in between January 21st to February 20th.

New Year’s eve and New year’s day are reserved especially for family gatherings and celebrations, such as watching lion dances, lighting up firecrackers, going to temples, receiving red envelopes with money, dressing up in red clothing, and coming together as a family. Each culture celebrates the Lunar New Year differently with different foods and traditions.

We asked students what their favorite part about the Lunar New Year is. Senior Emily Nguyen said, “I believe the best part about Lunar New Year is how everyone comes together to hangout, celebrate, and give new year wishes to one another. The way everyone is willing to gather and see each other again after the pandemic for lunar new years is an example of how love will always overcome distance.” Showing the importance of being with family she also mentions, “I celebrate Lunar New Years by going around to my relatives’ houses to wish them happy lunar new year.”

When asked about why it is important to many cultures to celebrate the Lunar New Year, senior Chloe Tran said “The Lunar New Year is the most important social and economic holiday for many asian people. The Holiday is tied to the lunar-solar chinese calendar it was originally observed as a time to honor household and heavenly deities and ancestors.”

The significance of this holiday is to celebrate and reunite with family, cherishing the moments you are spending together. To ensure that arriving into a new year comes with good luck, fortune, and health.

important to have on IHS because we NEED to unite the students and make them socialize. We are after LIFE LONG FRIENDSHIPS, social students, and a happy community.”

The club’s first general meeting took place on January 23 at B-306, and will be having a general meeting every Monday during lunch from that point on. To learn more about the club and to receive updates, their Instagram account is @indesocialclub. Ultimately, through encouraging students of Independence to reach outside of their comfort zone, this will allow them to gain new experiences that carry with them beyond their High School career.

Art Department Spotlight

By Keyra Aguilera, Alleah Borromeo, & Lyric Sauao

A new art exhibit has been added to the central area of the B-100 building, celebrating and demonstrating the different art classes that Independence has to offer.

Ms. Hart, an art teacher at Independence High School explained her love for teaching here at Independence, "I love our Sixer's culture... I enjoy helping people, especially those who don't think they can draw...to stretch themselves a little bit and try something new and hopefully discover that they can create something that they didn't know they could create."

With all the art displayed at the art department, Ms. Hart elaborated the purpose of spotlighting the art students and their talents as, "These are art pieces

from a collection of all the art classes... At the end of the year I like to show every student, but right now we are doing a promotional thing for our students and showing off what our students can do... so people can see what each class does for each department."

Considering that art can be almost anything, when asked how some art teachers "grade" art, Ms. Hart responded, "It is very hard to grade art. Usually, I'm just looking for specific things. Right now, we are working on shading so I wanna see if they have highlights, shadows, and there's a specific thing they are demonstrating and learning. So, it's not, this is good, this is bad. It's like, we are trying to teach this skill and wanna see if they are able to do that skill."

Going back to the idea of there being multiple forms of art, especially abstract, she described it as her favorite topic to teach because "...it's really fun...sometimes students will throw paint down on the paper and they're like 'can I do this' and I'm like 'yes.' You know, it's abstract, it can be whatever you want. It's very free and also it opens their minds, and I get really interesting art pieces when we do that project."

Lastly, although art is a skill that many might believe is difficult to acquire, the art teachers at Independence, "...want them to know how many art forms there are and how it can be kind of anything. It can be happy, it can be sad, it could be beautiful, it could be ugly... people have come in and look at it and relate to it."

Shooting for the Stars

By Jordan Delos Reyes

The Girls Basketball team competed in another season. Although they won the BVAL championship for the first time in 29 years last February, they failed to defend the title. Independence placed 4th (behind, Sobrato, Santa Teresa and Piedmont).

"Last year, we were undefeated until the last game but we won the league," said Senior Marielle Penoringan. "This year we [were] still trying hard."

One reported reason was that much of last year's winning team members graduated.

Senior Jane Lee said, "We lost 7 team members. We had to focus on building."

Senior Hailey Jarin added, "I think that we may have done better by putting more effort and being taller."

The team still does have their coaching.

Coach S., now in his second year of coaching the varsity team said, "We definitely [went] the extra mile to prepare ourselves for opponents and the game."

Below are the updates for all of the games on the home court.

The girls team won dominant victories on their home court against Andrew Hill 48-28 (1/17), and Overfelt 50-21 (1/26). In both games Independence took the lead early and the other teams failed to catch up.

Against Sobrato the girls had lost 21-46 (1/31). Against Santa Teresa 36-45 (2/7), it was a close game, at the start of the 3rd quarter both teams were matched with a score of 25-25.

The girls senior night against Piedmont 35-45 (2/9) was a hard fought battle. Hundreds of people as well as the cheer team encouraged the team to give it their all.

"I feel weird about this being my final season," told Senior Jenny Liu "It's a bit sad that this might be my last time ever playing basketball in a competitive setting."

"I feel good about doing it again next year. I look forward to my senior night" said Junior Ashjeet Kaur

Despite that however, that does not mean that the team has scored many other successes. Coach S. aims for more summer training and to try again for next year's championship.

Coach S. described "I love coaching. I love seeing the girls compete out there and build a chemistry and camaraderie...We didn't have a "winning season" we had a lot of success in the sense that kept pushing through difficult times."

Girls Soccer's Senior Night

By J.Do

A new season has begun for the 2022-2023 year. The season has started off to a brilliant start although many seniors have expressed that it is also a sad feeling as well since it's their final year part of the team.

Senior Gabrielle Garrido says "This season was amazing, but also quite sad as it's my last year. However, something that pushed away the sadness was meeting the new girls on the team and reconnecting everyone as well."

Since the season has started, some of the expectations for the new year are to make it to CCS, as it seems that there is a lot of potential on the team and the stakes are high for the girls since they've been working very hard too.

Throughout the seasons, many current and past players have had nothing but good memories about the community as



Leslie Amaya congratulates senior Gabrielle Garrido

Photo by: Alex Le

Junior Jeremy Jimenez says, "My last year's experience was wonderful. Our soccer community does a great job of bringing everyone together into one whole small family. We have unforgettable memories that we all cherish. Soccer has been one of the best things that has happened to me. It has taught me so much over the years. During last year I was able to learn that I am very capable of overcoming many obstacles. It has shown me strength and perseverance."

So when asked, "Why do you like playing soccer?" Senior Gabrielle Garrido says, "The reason I like to play soccer is because of the team. I was looking forward to all the laughter we share during practices and the games. It's always the best moments when we laugh so hard and then fall to the ground. I really will miss these moments after the season ends" and past player Jeremy Jimenez expressed that soccer has allowed her to go out of her comfort zone and try new things, she said that "It has been a way where I was able to let everything go on the field". And if she were given the chance to play soccer again in the future then she would gladly accept.

The soccer season is almost coming to an end, the girls have put their blood, sweat, and tears into their performance this year. Let's hope for their next few games to be successful and give a round of applause to the team for their extraordinary game play and especially to the departing Seniors. We wish them the best of luck for their future!



Soccer Girls cheering on the soccer field

Photo by: Alex Le

A Lights Out Season

By Arwin Flores

The Independence boys basketball team has been through hard-fought game over game, but the regular season is finally complete. To start the season, the basketball team faced Leigh at home in a 50-64 loss. From this loss, the team bounced back and got their first win after their second game of the season in a 68-65 double overtime win against Pioneer. Next, a 66-70 loss came to Branham at home, but the Sixers stormed back against Lincoln HS in a nail-biting 76-75 victory. The team's match at Piedmont Hills came down to critical free throws from guard Shea Mattox to defeat the Pirates, 56-53. Another loss came at the hands of Leigh, 63-78, but a blowout win of 70-55 against Pioneer was



Gabriel Arroyo looking to pass the basketball.

Photo by: Alex Le

spearheaded by forward Brandon Gualberto. The tight defense of Branham stifled our players as forward Gabriel Arroyo tried to keep the team afloat with an 18 point performance, losing 58-63. Against a rematch with Lincoln, sophomore guard Joshua Villanueva came in clutch with a game-winning layup in the final seconds of a 57-55 win. The last game of the regular season against Piedmont was the most important game of the season. Being a rival game and senior night, it also served as a game that solidified the

team's spot at 2nd place in the BVAL standings. The Sixers ultimately came out with a 56-46 win, with junior forward Quavario Ford electrifying the crowd with a huge 20 point performance. There was also a surprise appearance of the team manager, senior Devin Secreto, who came out on the floor at the end of the game and quickly became a fan favorite. With the win against Piedmont, the Independence Boys Basketball team's regular season record

stands at 6-4. Commenting on the team's success throughout the season, Gabriel Arroyo said, "I'm beyond proud of my teammates for going out there and competing with me this season, it's felt like this team really has each other's backs through thick and thin. I believe that this unity is the main factor towards the success we have had this season. I'm excited to see what we can accomplish during the playoffs."

The team overall has a talented roster filled to the brim with players who can produce night in and night out. Factors such as senior guard Daryn Benipayo's playmaking, Brandon Ruanto (12) and William Chattman (11)'s skilled three point shooting, Osmar Rodriguez (12) and Dawson Lai (12)'s physical interior defense, accompanied by juniors Muntazir Mohammed and Shaedon Flores' hustle plays, all played a crucial role in what was a hard-fought season for the Sixers.

Joshua Villanueva talked about his growth as a player and what he plans to



Brandon Gualberto and opposing player helps teammate Joshua Villanueva

Photo by: Alex Le

improve on moving forward, saying, "As a player, I feel like my growth has had lots of ups and downs, but my sophomore year is where I have been able to hit my stride as I continue to improve on myself as a player. In the future, I plan to try and expand my game offensively by finding new ways to score and be a defender on the defensive end."

The coaching staff also deserves praise, for bringing the players together as a unit and growing them not only as basketball players, but also as individuals to prepare them for life after high school. Head coach Skipper Yenchik, along with assistant coaches Greg Duarte and Nelson Tran all motivated the players by instilling the right mindset to them. In addition, Greg Duarte plans to retire from coaching the basketball team after this year. The Sixers earned a spot in the 2nd round of the CCS playoffs, but ultimately fell to Branham in a blowout loss, 56-72. With that, the season is over, but all the player's hard work and dedication paid off in the end.

Independence HS Boys Soccer Team

By Nevaeh Garcia

With a slow start in the first few games the boy's soccer team is back on the rise and looks to advance in upcoming games.

The soccer team has been working hard to improve and saw results in their previous game motivating them to improve even more and keep winning. Junior, Aurelio Junior, a player on the team said, "I feel like the way our team has been advancing and all the hard work we're putting in we have a great chance of having a great season. Our team knows how great it feels to get a win, we saw it when we faced Oak Grove and beat them. Ever since then, our team has been putting in the work to feel that accomplishment again. I think we have a great chance this year!"

The team is motivated and determined to keep winning and plans to practice hard with the help of their coach. Ms. Carson, a teacher at Independence, provided information about the team's coach, Coach Fernando, "Coach Fernando says that he runs detailed practices and makes sure that in practice the team works on correcting their mistakes so they don't happen again during a game."

With the assistance from Coach Fernando as well as practice the team looks to improve and lessen their mistakes during the game along with correcting their mistakes then

rather than later to overall keep winning games. Ms. Carson said, "Coach Fernando expected to have more success this season than they've had so far, but he's confident in his team and knows they can win their remaining games. This season will finish on February 10th with a 7pm game at Piedmont Hills High School."

Though the team has not done as good as they expected there are still remaining games to make up for their past performances and they plan to keep working hard to end the season with a bang. Aurelio Junior provided a motivating quote to which he hopes others will take advice from "You can't expect success without hard work, success doesn't come overnight."

It can be seen that the team is strong and intends to work hard to improve and with that hopefully wins these upcoming games.

Recent Incidents Demand Attention

Continued from page 1

continue to attend this campus unsure about the severity of this incident and whether measures are being taken to prevent a similar one.

Students have furthermore expressed confusion about the way the shelter-in-place was handled. Without the confirmation that there was in fact not an active shooter on campus, students continue to believe there was and that the shelter-in-place was a code red lockdown. While the two are comparable, there is a clear difference between the seriousness of an active shooter lockdown and a shelter-in-place, and students have not been notified nor educated about that difference by administration.

All that we, as a community, have received are statements that this incident took place

"As students who must abide by the rules and attend this school every day, we deserve to hear the truth from our administration."

(technically) off campus, and that our administration has acted with an "abundance of caution." Other than these words that we have received from those two very short ReMind messages, we have no assurance that anything is being done about this issue. We have had events in the recent past that resulted in shelter-in-place orders, but nothing with such controversy as this one.

As students who must abide by the rules and attend this school every day, we deserve to hear the truth from our administration. We deserve to feel secure on this campus, away from people who may stray in from surrounding areas, like Overfelt Gardens. In addition, more than once over the past two years, both homeless individuals and parents of students have trespassed on our campus with the intent of causing violence. People riding motorcycles and ATVs have accessed our campus during non-school hours. While no public statement about these trespassers has ever been released by administration, students here know about the incidents, and again, rumors have spread in the absence of facts and communication.

We appreciate our campus monitors and student advisors for responding quickly to these dangerous situations and doing their best to protect students. Securing our campus would go a

long way in alleviating the danger these staff members face when responding.

There is no reason that there should be such easy access to our campus. Over the years, it's been acknowledged that because the Independence campus is so big, and surrounded by public parks and major streets, that securing the campus is impossible. We, as students, refuse to accept this as fact. All other campuses in the East Side Union High School District are more secure than ours.

Records show that years ago, the school board approved a fence to be placed in the grassy area behind the C Villa bathrooms between our school and DCP, yet years have passed and no action has been taken to implement this fence, allowing yet another avenue for trespassers to wander onto our campus undetected. The temporary fence behind the D Villa and the K buildings is a good start, but

insufficient in securing the campus.

The administration should better recognize and acknowledge the true concerns of their students, and implement a more transparent communication policy. We realize that privacy laws prevent administration from sharing every single detail of these security lapses, but in the absence of any real follow-up, rumors fill the void, rumors which may not be true and may act to make anxiety on campus worse.

First, we demand that access to and from Overfelt Gardens from our campus be shut off and shut down. Second, we ask for more transparency in communication following violent incidents on campus. Third, the fence between our campus and DCP should be completed. It should be a permanent fence, not a temporary fence like the one that exists behind the D-Villa and K buildings. And finally, we ask for proper enforcement of city law and Education Code to dissuade people from trespassing on our campus. This would also include enforcement of parking permits in our parking lots as well as our closed campus policy, which very few students are even aware of, let alone pay any attention to.

In short, this a call to SOS: Secure Our School!

Rihanna's Triumphant Super Bowl Show

By Arwin Flores

The Super Bowl's halftime show starred Rihanna, coming off the birth of her first child. She had taken a break performing for months, and this show marks her return to live performances. Rihanna first comes out on the stage performing *B**** Better Have My Money* on multiple floating platforms. These floating platforms move up and down throughout the show. She dons a red outfit, revealing her 2nd pregnancy by showcasing a baby bump. Male and female backup dancers accompanied Rihanna both on the platforms and on the ground stage.

Rihanna then proceeds to the next two songs, *Where Have You Been* and *Only Girl (In The World)*. The platform she sings on lowers and soon she begins performing on the ground stage. The backups dance with Rihanna, following her and going into formations as she sings *We Found Love*. The camera angles transition to a ground floor shot, with a cameraman following her as the song

goes from *Rude Boy* to *Work*. The show slows down when she performs *Pour It Up*. Flashing lights in the State Farm Stadium shine on Rihanna as *All of The Lights* plays. Backup dancers flood the floor and a band shows up when *Run This Town* comes on. This transitions to the last two songs, *Umbrella* and *Diamonds*. She goes back on the middle platform and it rises her back up above the ground. Rihanna ends her performance as hundreds of fireworks shoot up into the sky.

The performance was met with much praise, as people commented on her voice and the overall spectacle of the show. There were many different reactions from the audience and our school as well.

Senior Hannah Haberstroh talked about her thoughts on the overall performance saying, "I thought it was slay and her outfit was nice, it wasn't as good as Shakira's performance a few years ago.

She played some good songs, but there were many other songs that she could've played as well."

There were some mixed opinions about her pregnancy and gestures made during the performance. A particular crotch grab was one that many critics and radio stations were quick to point out.

Ara Molina, senior, mentioned, "I was waiting for her performance since it's been six years. I honestly thought that she was still pregnant. But she wasn't, and that'll probably mean she won't perform more, but overall I'm happy for her."

Along with the halftime show, the Super Bowl commercials were also a point of conversation with the public. Famous companies and celebrities came together for different ads that gave viewers a roller coaster of emotions. Overall, the Super Bowl was filled with many different moments, both exciting and heartbreaking.

Indy Insider Staff

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Email us with story ideas, letters to the editor, and comments at
IndyInsider76@gmail.com