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New York City Reopening

Nicole Belyy '23

With the rising number of vaccinations in the United States and the CDC's loosened indoor and outdoor mask-wearing guidelines, many places are reopening at an unprecedented pace. New York is one of them. Recently, New York City announced its plans to be fully reopened by July 1st. For many New Yorkers, this is a clear indication of a return to pre-pandemic life, but it is also a strange transition after fifteen months in lockdown. Indoor capacities and working hours for businesses in New York have also expanded. The indoor dining capacity in the city has recently risen to seventy-five percent, which is consistent with the rest of the state's indoor dining limit. Starting from the middle of May, gyms and other exercise areas can be filled to fifty percent capacity. The increased capacity will help businesses throughout the city, many of whom have been struggling since the onset of the pandemic due to diminished patronage. In addition, tens of thousands of city workers have returned to their offices, and the Metropolitan Transit Association has resumed twenty-four-hour subway service. Furthermore, Broadway, one of New York's most iconic areas, is set to welcome crowds once again later this year, with many shows

aiming to restart in September. With increased capacity and reopenings in the city, New Yorkers are starting to return to their "normal" lives with mixed feelings of eagerness and apprehension. While many New Yorkers are anxious to quickly return to their pre-pandemic lives and be able to go about their day without wearing a mask or worrying about social distancing, some residents are alarmed by the swift reopening of New York City. They are uneasy about living in a maskless world after the pandemic and readjusting their lives to what once was "normal." With differing levels of comfort about reopening, New York's residents are cheerfully, though cautiously, heading into the summer and a post-pandemic future.

"...New Yorkers are starting to return to their "normal" lives with mixed feelings of eagerness and apprehension."

- Nicole Belyy '23



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History & Heritage: Sylvester Manor

Lauren Mlicko '22



It isn't very often that we as New Yorkers are forced to reckon with our own state's past of colonization and slavery. Learning about such aspects of history can usually maintain a comfortable distance from those of us in the American Northeast. We have been taught, after all, that the North was a refuge for enslaved Africans in the South. While this is true to a certain extent, it cannot be denied that the North has its own history, just as disturbing as that of the South - if not made more so by modern northerners' own reluctance to confront these harsh realities. Perhaps even more rare is a historical site which can provide us with the very context we need to better understand our proximity to the past; this makes Sylvester Manor all the more relevant.

Located in Shelter Island, New York, the Sylvester Manor grounds were originally land of the Manhansett Native Americans, neighbored by the Shinnecock and Montaukett peoples of eastern Long Island. In 1651, the land was bought by Anglo-Dutch merchant Nathaniel Sylvester, who turned the property into what the Manor website refers to as a "slaveholding provisioning plantation" for the sugarcane trade with the West Indies. It is estimated that two hundred indigenous and enslaved ancestors are buried on the Manor grounds.

As an educational farm and community center, Sylvester Manor declares its mission is "to preserve, cultivate and share [its history] to ensure that food and art remain connected to community and the land." In other words, the Manor strives to foster the interconnectedness of food, earth, and culture in keeping with the beliefs of the Manhansett hunter-gatherers who cared for the grounds thousands of years ago. The Manor also affirms its duty to make known the narratives of both its indigenous and enslaved ancestors, whose "stories live in the land." Some of the many events and opportunities the Manor provides include regular educational tours, performing arts festivals, a farmer's market, youth summer camps, cultural celebrations of its Native American and Black ancestors, and so much more.



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As a child, I was lucky enough to witness the mission of Sylvester Manor come alive through a tour of the main house and many Shakespeare at the Manor performances. I am now very excited to have the opportunity to work at the Manor this summer as a junior counselor in the Summer Youth Program. I truly cannot wait to have even just a small part in the Manor's beautiful message of both reckoning and celebration, especially in spreading this message to young children.

**"...rare is a historical site
which can provide us with the
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the past..."**

- Lauren Mlicko '22

Vaccinations Across the Globe and D.A. Community

Keira Muller '24

For almost a year and a half, the lives of almost everyone across the globe have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. And while some people have been able to get back to a semi-normal life,

many are stranded in a sea of positive cases and vaccinations.

Over the course of history, vaccines have never been developed so quickly. However, that does not mean that these ones are unsafe in any way. The process of developing a vaccine can often take ten to fifteen years to produce, then several additional years to distribute. Take polio for example, the first polio epidemic was in 1894 while a vaccine for the illness was not available until sixty-four years later in 1955. But thanks to modern technology and the vigorous work of scientists and infectious disease experts, the world was presented with several COVID-19 vaccines in just under a year. But have they really been presented to the entire world?

The United States has been one of the most fortunate countries in terms of vaccinations with over 35.5% of the population being fully vaccinated while almost 47% have been given at least one dose. However, even neighboring countries like Canada have significantly lower rates of vaccinations (with Canada only having 3.4% of their population fully vaccinated). But this is not even close to the worst in the world. India, which has had significant news coverage for several weeks due to its high positivity and death rates, has distributed just 174 million doses (2.7% of population being fully vaccinated). The problems being



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seen across the world in relation to COVID-19 are vastly regarding poor countries, which happen to be the countries with the most limited access to vaccines.

Unfortunately, most people do not know what they can do to help the people in these struggling countries. But there are many organizations holding fundraisers for PPE (personal protective equipment) and other medical equipment which will be sent to India to help them through this crisis. There are also things people can do to prevent the U.S. from entering a similar situation, such as getting vaccinated!

Many of the teachers in the D.A. community have already helped do their part by getting the vaccine. Ms. Reardon, one of D.A.'s history teachers, who got her second dose on February 14th, stated the following regarding why she got her vaccine, "I worried about being around vulnerable people who could not get vaccinated themselves, I wanted to return to a modicum of normality as quickly as possible, I was worried about the virus spreading and changing rapidly." She also explained that thanks to her vaccination, she has been able to see family members with more confidence in their safety.

Hopefully, as more and more Americans and people in the D.A. community, everyone will be able to return to some degree of normalcy in the near

future. But all that can be done for now is continuing to practice the safety precautions put in place by government officials.

NYC Mayoral Democratic Primary

Julia Sheehan '23



As one election season comes to a close, another begins. The NYC Mayoral Democratic Primary is in a few weeks on June 22nd, 2021. The primary will use, for the first time, ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting is a system in which voters rank the candidates by preference instead of just choosing one. The candidate with the fewest first-preference votes will be eliminated first. Then, all first preference votes for said candidate are eliminated, raising the second-choice vote for many ballots. The process repeats until there is a winner. There are a few frontrunners for the role of mayor – Eric Adams, Shaun



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Donovan, Kathryn Garcia, Raymond McGuire, Dianne Morales, Scott Stringer, Maya Wiley, and Andrew Yang.

Eric Adams is the current Brooklyn borough president; he has served in this position since 2014. He is the first African American to hold the position. He is endorsed by Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx borough president and former candidate, as well as the *New York Post*. Adams plans to focus on desegregating NYC's public school system, addressing the spike in gun violence across the five boroughs, and installing more affordable housing for New Yorkers.

Shaun Donovan served as the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development from 2009-2014 and Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget from 2014-2017. A native New Yorker, Donovan's plans include focusing on achieving net-zero emissions, improving transit options in lower-income areas, and investing \$500 million a year in community-focused public safety and racial justice initiatives.

Kathryn Garcia was appointed Food Czar during the COVID-19, and in her first month coordinated an effort to distribute free meals at over 400 schools and employed 11,000 taxi drivers to provide over 120,000 meals a day to seniors, COVID-vulnerable, and homebound New Yorkers. She is endorsed by the *New York*

Times. She plans to address racial and economic disparities in healthcare that have been exacerbated by COVID-19, to move NYC to a fully renewable energy economy, and embed qualified mental health workers that can assist with non-violent conflicts.

Prior to announcing his candidacy for mayor, Raymond McGuire was a high-ranking and long-serving African American business executive on Wall Street. As mayor, McGuire plans to hold officers and their commanders accountable for misconduct, expanding equity in the education system, and installing more mental health outlets for students who have lost loved ones through the pandemic.

Dianne Morales is an Afro-Latina nonprofit executive director who runs Phipps Neighborhoods, a social-service organization that fights poverty in the South Bronx. As mayor, Morales plans to end racial inequity in the housing crisis, provide universal Pre-K, 3-K, and childcare, and to ensure that all 1.1 million students have access to some sort of internet device.

Scott Stringer is the former Manhattan Borough President who worked to increase community input and pushed to maintain and create new affordable housing units. As mayor, Stringer plans to invest \$500 million over 5 years to address conflicts within childcare, stop use of the SHSAT test which has long been criticized



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for allegedly keeping schools segregated, and to increase transparency of the NYPD budget and operations.

Maya Wiley worked for the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund before being appointed counsel to Mayor de Blasio. Wiley plans to focus on lengthening eviction moratoriums, expand the ban on lobbying, and ensure that communities are involved in economic recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Andrew Yang is the founder of the nonprofit organization Venture for America, which focused on creating jobs in cities that were heavily affected by the Great Recession. He ran in the 2020 Democratic presidential primaries. Yang plans to install more initiatives for a greener city, expand mental health access in schools, and allow communities to lead initiatives to create a more affordable city.

On Tuesday, June 22nd, all NYC citizens above the age of 18 will have the opportunity to vote for up to 5 of these candidates. One of them will become the frontrunner for the race, and, because NYC is a heavily blue-leaning city, likely our next mayor.

How COVID-19 Changed Real Estate

Victoria Smajlaj '24

The pandemic caused so many losses, shortages, and a whole change in lifestyle, in addition to so many economic problems and declines. In many different industries both demand and supply were severely affected by the pandemic. Despite so many industries in the United States having suffered from decline throughout 2020 and 2021, the real-estate market has experienced growth!

To start off, it's likely best to look at how the real estate market was doing prior to the pandemic. In January 2020, the real estate market wasn't doing so well; despite a low inventory of homes for sale, and a high demand, most people felt uncertain due to a lack of income security and an upcoming election. Inventory declined massively to the lowest point since 2012, declining at 13.6%. There was a declining number of homes available for sale across the U.S. There was a high pace of construction, meaning that there was a large demand for homes. Yet, prices were declining, so new homes had to be built.

In March 2020, people panicked and the whole country was under severe lockdown. Home sales dropped even more significantly than before due to even more uncertainty because home buyers and sellers



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feared what would happen. A large number of Americans feared what would happen to their homes if they lost their jobs. Many Americans feared being unable to pay rent. In November, the U.S. Congressional Research Service claimed that almost half American households had suffered from “at least some loss of employment income since March 2020, when the economic effects of the pandemic first became apparent.” Shelter-in-place and social distancing orders discouraged many home buyers from considering new ways of life. This made home sellers less enthusiastic about selling their homes for fear nobody would buy, and fear of price drop. This caused home sales to decline to their lowest levels since the 2007-2009 financial crisis, in the upcoming months of April and May.

“People are now demanding to live in warmer areas, stabler environments, places they can work from home, and/or affordable housing.”

- Victoria Smajlaj '24

Yet, through the summer, lockdown stopped and people slowly began to leave their homes and go out. People began to look at houses, and sell their properties

again. In November 2020, mortgage applications for new homes increased by 34.7 percent since 2019. This proves a continuously increasing construction and housing demand. Throughout the year of 2020, city home pricing percentages also increased. In August 2020, there were less than $\frac{2}{3}$ the number of homes for sale as a year ago because people were staying in their homes. Yet, the government has been trying very hard to make sure the pandemic doesn't put any home owners under pressure due to another 07-09 financial crisis. Many Americans who were trying to sell their homes during this time panicked and lost a lot of money.

By looking at the numbers, U.S. real estate has actually done well during the pandemic. The prices of homes continued to rise throughout the pandemic., despite all the economic changes.

But why is the real estate market doing so well during the pandemic? Why are people so eager to buy homes all of a sudden? There are so many answers to this. One is the higher demand for homes, but limited supply. American banks have been increasing their mortgage bonds since the start of the pandemic. In March 2020, 300 billion dollars were bought by the U.S. home loans in debt securities. An additional \$100 billion per month has been purchased since then, which has been sent to help



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struggling Americans pay their mortgage debt. Also when Americans began to recognize the significantly low rate, they purchased homes due to impulse buying and “fear of missing out” of such a great deal. A pandemic caused lack of supply due to stay at home orders. Also, previous renters feared not being able to pay their rent. This caused many Americans to save up and buy homes. Politics also played a role in motivating people to sell their homes and move. Additionally, the concept of doing work from home is new to people. Many companies are even considering virtual work to continue after the pandemic. Before the lockdown, many people were used to spending more time out of their homes and at work, than at home. When people were stuck at home, demand increased. Many people decided to move closer to their families, or in warmer regions. Many Americans felt they needed more space in their homes for them and their families. Where are people moving?

Millions of Americans moved during the pandemic. Majority of people are moving to the suburbs. Actually, NYC is currently suffering from a huge decline in real estate because the pandemic caused many people to move out of expensive and small apartments. This situation makes city prices cheaper. More people are moving out of their states than ever, actually! People are

now demanding to live in warmer areas, stabler environments, places they can work from home, and/or affordable housing. States that have undergone strict lockdown (NY, NJ, Massachusetts, Illinois, and CA) are moving to states in the south like Florida, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, and Nevada. According to reports done by Redfin, the pandemic brought a 25% increase this year in single family sale transactions. The amount of people moving will cause political differences in these states in future years because people bring their views and opinions with them when they move.

Meet the New StuCo Exec Board!

Ava Filocamo '23

“It is up to us. We must get involved. We must care.” These are the words Paris Geller of the show *Gilmore Girls* spoke as she presented her Student Government speech in front of her fellow classmates. She isn't wrong—to be considered for a leadership position, candidates must have a desire to be involved and intertwined with the student body and faculty. Here at D.A., sisterhood makes this task second nature, there is a seamless division between years; we are all interested in each other's daily classes, sports, and extracurriculars. D.A. StuCo weaves the grades together into a



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comfortable fabric, knotting all the separate threads together into one strong family. This year, over a dozen students endeavored to join the executive board. Prior to the election, they put their goals for the upcoming year into a 90-second speech that included details of their plans and platforms to improve D.A. After the informative posters and speeches were presented, the choice was put in the hands of the D.A. student body.

“Not only [is the StuCo Exec Board] driven academically, but their compassion and kindness towards others shine through.”

- Ava Filocamo '23

The four young women who have been selected for the new Student Council positions are the new voices of Dominican Academy. Not only are the girls driven academically, but their compassion and kindness towards others shine through. The girls at D.A. made the decision to entrust that the student body is in good hands with these four leaders. Let's meet our new executive board:

Rising senior Catherine Yost has been selected to fill the position of Treasurer

and Event Coordinator. She is ready and hopeful for more inclusivity in the student body and event planning. Catherine would like to give the D.A. Student Council Instagram account a makeover of her own. She would like to post mental health resources, school reminders, and general updates to make it more accessible to the students. She is also optimistic about reducing D.A.'s carbon footprint. Outside of D.A., Catherine is a competitive cheerleader and loves to create music on her ukelele. D.A. is thrilled to see Catherine more in the upcoming school year!

Damaris Lindsay has been a Student Council representative for two years at D.A. and has just secured the position of Secretary for the 2021-2022 school year. As she enters her third year at D.A., she is prepared to make various efforts when it comes to diversity and inclusion within the school, especially using school events to help boost her objectives. She is a member of SOCA and is looking forward to expanding programming opportunities throughout all years at D.A. using her new position. She also has a desire to create D.A.'s very own book drive to pass along the gift of education so treasured in our classrooms. In her home on the South Shore of Long Island, Damaris has an extensive CD collection as well as a book collection.



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She would love to donate a majority of her own books to her planned book drive.

MaryAnn Uduebo, a rising senior, is excited to be D.A.'s Student Council Co-President. Outside of StuCo, she is on the board of SOCA and Campus Ministry, as well as being an active member in many other clubs. She hopes to plan a wide variety of events and give students the ability to talk and reconnect with one another after such a long time apart. She wants to create student-led community days, as well as participating in activities with other local high schools and add field day into the school year. MaryAnn wants to find new ways to communicate more efficiently with the student body by possibly creating an upcoming news padlet or having students being included in the Wednesday Weekly email. She is focused on social justice, science, and music.

Ella Madden will be serving alongside MaryAnn as Co-President throughout the next year. Ella in her final year at D.A. wants to introduce a stronger mental health support system to the student body. She would like to provide the option for more of New York City's iconic landmarks such as museums, markets, and parks to become an extension of the school building because the city is our classroom. She also hopes to create more volunteer opportunities for D.A. that will expand our

social circle and connect with other schools. Ella would like to provide a course material swap at the end of the school year and give girls the opportunity to share helpful studying tips and resources with each other.

Catherine, Damaris, Ella, and MaryAnn—we know that the upcoming year is in the good hands of smart and intelligent women! There is a clear vision you all have for the future and I know all of D.A. is excited to see what you girls are capable of.

Mother-Daughter Paint Night

Kate Izzo '22



Friday, May 12 was D.A.'s Mother-Daughter Paint Night. In lieu of our tradition of a Mother-Daughter luncheon in the Spring, D.A. was hosted by The Painting Lounge for a special paint night! Our reference picture was a beautiful enchanted forest with black trees and pink petals near a stream.

My mom had attended the D.A.P.A. paint night earlier in the year so she knew



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what to expect and was very excited. I knew that I was going to enjoy it because painting with my mom was one of my favorite things to do as a kid. I was also a little bit nervous because I am not particularly artistic.

However, our instructors provided great instructions and by the end, I was feeling more confident in my abilities. It was also nice to see other families in the breakout rooms in between instructions for our paintings.

Being able to paint with my mom was a wonderful substitute for D.A.'s usual Mother-Daughter luncheon. I miss being able to see my friends and their moms in person but I was very happy that we got to get together on Zoom and create these wonderful paintings that we will cherish forever.

Global Awareness Week: Wear Wisely

Quinn Pasmantier '22

April 19, 2021 marked the start of this year's Global Awareness Week (GAW) -- a DAPs-led event which aims to educate students and staff alike on a specific injustice. The topic chosen this year was Fast Fashion: a manufacturing method focused on producing high volumes of clothing at a low cost, usually at the expense of laborers. Over the course of five days—through guest speakers, dress down days,

and even a Kahoot competition -- all of D.A. had learned a little bit more about this injustice (and what they could do to help).

"I hope that now, maybe we all at least think a little bit more before purchasing a new item, or take the extra step to research or explore alternatives to fast fashion."

- Ms. McCann

The topic for GAW is decided jointly by all of the members of DAPs: everyone gets to vote for the topic they think would be most relevant to discuss. This year, according to moderator of DAPs Ms. McCann, Fast Fashion was chosen in the hopes that it would inspire "members of the D.A. community to think a little more about how we all participate in the fast fashion complex. I hope that now, maybe we all at least think a little bit more before purchasing a new item, or take the extra step to research or explore alternatives to fast fashion." After a theme is chosen, each student is assigned to a different 'committee', where they design and plan events centered around the elected injustice. Tara Larson '22, talked about her experience with the process as a first-year DAPs member: "We select a



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committee that we're interested in- research, art, event planning, communications, or steering committee (which stays in touch with all other committees and to make sure everyone is working together). I was on the art committee, and it was so fun making designs for the prayers during GAW as well as the online posters and Lookbook!"

After planning comes the school-wide events! On Monday, D.A. was honored to welcome Shweta Lakhani and Andrew Caruso, two experts on the issue of Fast Fashion. It was certainly an impressive start to the week. "I always enjoy the kick-off event," Ms. McCann commented later, "because the whole school is together exploring the same topic and information. Even in the remote format this year and last, it felt like a unifying experience for the school community. I really enjoyed learning from our panelists, and seeing the students' thoughtful questions and comments."

On Tuesday, DAPs sent out an email listing resources and organizations for students to utilize in their own time - as well as some quick facts about Fast Fashion in general.

On Wednesday, everyone was invited to participate in a school-wide Kahoot on what we had learned so far. The winners received gift cards to Goodwill—remember, thrifting is better for the environment! Thursday and Friday's charity dress down

days served as the finale of GAW 2021: every student attending hybrid school wore sustainable clothing (whether that meant recycled clothes, or garments from a sustainable company, and so on). It was a great success: "We were able to raise \$264 to be split between two different organizations working to ensure workers' rights and responsible production practices in garment production," said Ms. McCann.

This tradition has been in the D.A. community for years: although it has taken on a slightly different form recently, due to COVID-19.

"...the whole school is together exploring the same topic and information. Even in the remote format this year and last, it felt like a unifying experience for the school community."

– Ms. McCann

Ms. McCann commented afterward on the planning process, saying "The part that was trickier this year, with hybrid, was selecting times for events when most people could attend because everyone's schedules are so different. We tried our best to select



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times that accommodated most people's schedules, and it seemed like everyone had fun with the Dress Down Days." DAPs also found other ways to work around the issue of conflicting locations, such as Thursday's After-School Zoom Session with Ms. Cerulli, who taught students how to mend damaged clothing (in lieu of just tossing it). Anyone could join, no matter if they were online or hybrid -- this way, everyone had a chance to participate. The greatest product to come out of the entire week, however, was the GAW 2021 Lookbook: an online presentation designed by DAPs members that featured sustainable clothing styles and brands.

D.A. Students' 2020-2021 School Year Reflection

Melanie Robichaux '23

It's safe to say that this school year has been far from normal. Instead of gathering in the halls and conversing, we're standing on arrows six feet apart. As the school year comes to an end, I thought I would gather students' thoughts and reflections on this peculiar year. I sent a Google Form to the student body asking for their input on online and hybrid learning, and the responses were pretty consistent.

Although each student may have had different experiences that motivated their

decision to return to in-person school or remain online, I recognized some patterns within each grade. The freshmen were all keen on going into school to meet their new teachers and classmates, and trying to make their first year of high school as normal as possible, while the sophomores were more mixed with their responses. Some sophomores stayed home to avoid a lengthy commute or to keep high risk family members safe. The rest of them, in school, explained their need for social interaction and learning with teachers in the room. Like most sophomores, a majority of juniors sided with in-school learning for the educational and social benefits. Unfortunately the seniors were robbed of countless D.A. traditions and experiences due to COVID restrictions, so they wanted to make the most of their final year of high school in school. From these results, it's clear that there is definitely a communal goal of social interaction and learning.

When asked to describe this year in one word, most people used words synonymous to exhausting. From this survey and from personal experience, it's apparent how drained students are feeling. "There was so much work and expectations this year even though we are in a pandemic. I felt very overwhelmed with my workload and I feel we did not have enough breaks." says an anonymous junior. Most students



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mentioned how easy it is to lose motivation when you are learning through a screen or sitting in the same chair all day, which definitely contributes to the burnt out feeling that many students across the world are beginning to feel or have felt for a while. This stressful time is not exclusive to only students though. Teachers have been working hard to stay on track and encourage us to keep going. One senior shares appreciation for our teachers by commenting, “I’m really thankful for the teachers though, because I know the year was also challenging for them.” It’s evident that everyone in the D.A. community has worked tirelessly to make this unprecedented year as normal as possible.

We’re surviving a very difficult time and keeping up with work can be hard. Although it’s common to feel unaccomplished or unmotivated, it’s important to remember that everyone is trying their best, and I think we should all give ourselves some credit for that.

“It’s evident that everyone in the D.A. community has worked tirelessly to make this unprecedented year as normal as possible.”

– Melanie Robichaux ‘23

Highlights of the Sophomore Retreat

Daisy Whiting ‘23

On May 21, the Sophomore class gathered at St John’s gym for their Sophomore Retreat Experience. Put together by Dominican Academy’s Theology department, the students were able to reflect on service and kinship while socially distant. The beginning half of the day was spent in small groups, where Dr. Cagney (Jr. year Theology) led the grade in discussion about works and message of Father Greg Boyle, the founder of Homeboy Industries, which is the world’s largest gang intervention and rehabilitation program. Through extensive discussion and reflection, students were able to apply Father Boyle’s message of kinship and service to their own individual service and attitudes toward each other, especially during the second half of the day. The Sophomore class then moved on to the service portion of the retreat. Each group worked together to pack lunches for the New York Common Food Pantry-making sandwiches, packing snacks, writing uplifting notes, and decorating bags-united in service while having fun with each other. When asked about her retreat experience, sophomore Kelly Lukito recounted, “I got to spend time with people I usually don’t get to



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spend time with, and we bonded over making sandwiches.”

This year's Sophomore Retreat was filled with uplifting messages of unification and kinship, and an engaging service opportunity that put the aspects of our discussion into practice. If there's one thing we take away from our experience, it's that when we unite in service or common goal, we grow closer to one another as friends and community members. A special thank you to the Theology department and all those who helped make this wonderful day possible.

“Sour” by Olivia Rodrigo

Tara Larson '22



Olivia Rodrigo's highly anticipated debut album, *SOUR*, came out this month on May 21st. Rodrigo, a new act on the music scene, broke records with her debut single, “Driver's License.” Rodrigo's entrance into the music industry was a triumphant success. Within mere days, the

song was everywhere: it broke the Spotify record for most streams of a song in a single week and debuted at number one on the Billboard 100 within the week of its release. The popularity of “Driver's License,” which has 722 million streams on Spotify and 200 million views on YouTube (and counting!), is a massive achievement, almost unheard of for a new artist.

Rodrigo's success does not stop there. On April 1st, Rodrigo released her second single, “Deja Vu.” Both songs have dominated the charts. According to Billboard, Rodrigo is the first musician to have two debut singles in the Top 10. Following her groundbreaking accomplishments, it was announced on May 3rd that Rodrigo would be making her Saturday Night Live debut as a musical guest on May 15th. With songwriting inspiration from Lorde, Taylor Swift, Fiona Apple, and Phoebe Bridgers, Rodrigo has transformed the way people listen to music. Rodrigo's unique lyrics tell a story. Her songs have meaning and a sense of vulnerability, something music critics and listeners alike have been craving. As some criticize Rodrigo's songs for writing “only about heartbreak,” Rodrigo defends her art: “I'm a teenage girl, I write about stuff that I feel really intensely—and I feel heartbreak and longing really intensely—and I think that's authentic and natural. Something I'm



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really proud of is that this record talks about emotions that are hard to talk about or aren't really socially acceptable, especially for girls: anger, jealousy, spite, sadness, they're frowned-upon as moaning and complaining. But I think they're such valid emotions." A fearless and confident young woman, Rodrigo is sure to be a teen idol for the years to come.

Although she is only eighteen years old, Rodrigo has taken the world by storm and become a household name. Olivia Rodrigo's explosive introduction into the music industry proves that she is a force to be reckoned with. Be sure to give SOUR a listen this month!

August Wilson's 'Century Cycle'

Damaris Lindsay '23

August Wilson is an American playwright who is most famous for his 'Century Cycle', a collection of ten plays spanning the decades of the twentieth century. The most known of these plays are *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*, both of which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. His plays describe the lives of Black Americans after liberation all taking place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The plays describe their struggles and triumphs all while sustaining an inner commentary on prejudice that black communities face in American society,

whether obvious or not. Wilson describes in the prelude to *King Hedley II*, "I wanted to present the unique particulars of black American culture...into cultural rituals that defined and celebrated ourselves as men and women of high purpose. I wanted to place this culture onstage in all its richness and fullness and to demonstrate its ability to sustain us in all areas of human life and endeavor and through profound moments of our history in which the larger society has thought less of us than we have thought of ourselves."

Over the past month, I have read all 10 plays, and with each play I read, I was left in awe of the amazing stories being told. From beginning to end, Wilson's writing encapsulates love, pain, loss, wonderment, and everything in between. Reading each book entailed a rollercoaster of emotions for the reader. My favorite of the plays is *Jitney*. Taking place in 1970s Pittsburgh, *Jitney* follows the lives of the drivers at a Jitney Station. What is so captivating about *Jitney* is the way Wilson portrays the characters. When I was reading, I found myself getting attached to their relationships and lives, and hoping for the best. In *Jitney*, the characters Youngblood and Rena, two young lovebirds trying to figure out how to tackle the necessities of life alongside love, are displayed alongside Becker and Booster, a father and son duo attempting to get over



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their disputes and differences. I admire how August Wilson is able to portray his characters with passion and honor instead of pity. Jitney is my favorite because in the end, although tragedy strikes, there is still an optimistic energy in the air that leaves the reader hoping for the best.

I want to close with the words of the late Marion Isaac McClinton, who directed Jitney when it first hit theatres and who wrote the introduction to the play, “August Wilson is the griot, our Homer, our Shakespeare, our grandfather sitting on the front porch telling us the stories that we need to know. We need these stories. They matter. They mean so much to so many different people. They’re honest and they say ‘This here is our place,’ a place that is inherited, just like our blood and bones, a place where stories live that help to define who we have been and who we are, so we might wonder at the possibilities of who we can be. This is our place to stand upon, so that we can snatch the future and claim it forever, never to lose it again.”

The Psychology of Music: Why does music make us happy?

By Isabella Quatela ‘21

Do you have that one song that makes you want to just get up and dance? Or a song that immediately makes you smile

even when you are in the WORST mood? If so, have you ever wondered why music can have this impact on your mood? Music of any kind, while it may seem like a conglomeration of notes, can actually have a positive effect on many different parts of our brain.

Music can enhance our frontal lobe functions, our cerebellum can store the melody to our favorite tunes, and our amygdala can process the music and associate it with emotions.



When we listen to music, specifically music that gives us the chills or music we love, our brain releases a chemical called dopamine. Dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with motivation, memory, and attention, is also part of a reward system in our brain. When our brains experience something pleasurable, or anticipates such, there is an increase in dopamine production, which is why our moods can be boosted. Additionally, dopamine levels in our brain can be attributed to enjoying specific



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musical pieces and motivation to listen to a specific song again. Music can also decrease stress and anxiety levels in our bodies by lowering cortisol levels in our bodies. Cortisol is a hormone that is connected to our bodies' stress response. When cortisol levels are constantly high, our mental processes can be hindered. Lowering cortisol levels result in a calmer, more relaxed state, allowing us to experience more regulated, positive moods.

For years, it was believed that classical music was the only kind of music that could stimulate our brains in positive ways such as maintaining positive emotions and raising IQ. However, it has recently been found that all types of music have the power to stimulate our brains in positive ways, especially music we are familiar with, music from our childhood. But why?

In a recent study done by the University of Central Florida, researchers found that patients with dementia responded better to music they grew up listening to. This study showed that our brains are able to store sensory memories AND emotional memories as well. Positive emotions are connected to music we listened to during our brain's formative years and our brains not only store the actual musical patterns in the songs, but the emotions connected to them.

So next time you wonder why you want to dance when listening to your

favorite pop, jazz, hip-hip, or classical piece or smile when listening to your nostalgia playlist, you can thank your brain.

Meet the Editors

Shaun Smith '21 & Gabriella Montalvo '21

We have been so lucky to serve as Acting Editors-in-Chief for this final *Student Prints* issue of the 2020-2021 school year. The two of us have been writing for the Prints since we were just freshmen, recruited by Mr. McDermott in the hallways after Global History. Shaun's favorite article she's written is a piece on Period Poverty and Gabby's favorite has been a look into D.A.'s DEI Initiative.

Shaun: I've been a writer for *Student Prints* since freshman year, I've really enjoyed writing miscellaneous articles about topics from my summer jobs to social issues and I am so happy to have been made co-editor. At D.A. I was also involved in Student Council, Student Ambassadors, Book Club, and soccer and swim. Next year, I will be studying history and social anthropology at the University of St Andrews in Scotland where I hope to continue writing. I have really enjoyed my time at D.A. especially on *Student Prints* and will always be grateful for the person D.A. has helped me become.



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Gabby: In addition to *Student Prints*, I've also been involved in Women's Empowerment, Literary Journal, Mock Trial, and Social Action Service Club. I love history and sharing other people's stories, and I hope to continue that as I attend Columbia University in the fall. I really do love D.A.

Student Prints has held a very special place in our hearts—not only has it informed the way we write and think, but it has also brought us closer with the Dominican Academy community. We could not be more thankful!