
South Texas Virtual Academy Student led Newspaper

Phoenix News

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Above

Creator: Samantha E. (11th grade)

Medium: Digital Media

Upper Left Corner

Creator: Lucia F.

Medium: Graphite Pencil

Lower Left corner

Creator: Ness Galvan

Title: Gyaru Girl

Medium: Digital Media



A inside look into the world of a virtual student

Just like being "regular" student being a virtual student has it's pros and cons as well

by: Sandra T.

Now that the pandemic mostly over, student and teachers are heading back to in-person learning. But even so a majority of students have decided to stay in the virtual learning environment. Some students have found it easier to learn from the comfort of their homes, while others were tired of being at home all day and chose to go back to face to face learning . I've been in virtual school setting since I was in 5th grade and prior to that was in a face to face learning environment. So I have experienced both sides. This year I chose to be virtual again and have a list of the pros and cons of a virtual learning environment.



Virtually learning provides the opportunity for students to travel with their families and still be in school. All they have to do is log into their required Zoom session with their cameras on, pay attention and complete their work.

Additionally, virtual school requires less school supplies. Students are able to keep their notes all in one device instead of having to carry a bag with multiple journals and heavy textbooks. The biggest plus side about being a student with STISD Virtual Academy is all technology is provided to students free of charge!

Due to all the technology that is provided and having to learn new educational apps, it allows students to better understand how to use technology which is super helpful for their classes now and their future.

Lastly, being in a virtual setting allows students to become more independent and responsible when it comes to not only their equipment but for their learning as well.

However, the best thing is that students can chat with their friends anytime and do not have to worry about bullies as much as a face to face school setting.



For starters, one con is isolation since students do not have face to face physical interaction with their teachers and peers. They can feel more isolate than usual.



The next one is students easily get distracted because they are at home. If students are not becoming distracted then the other side of that is students can become less motivated since it is easy to stay at home and not do anything.

For me personally, when I first started virtual learning I did find myself getting lower grades than what I was used to but it's because I wasn't fully focused on my work like I should have been.

Now that I'm in 8th grade, and since I've been virtual for awhile I get better grades because I have adjusted to the environment. This adjustment was easy since students are provided with resources to help them and it also helps that the STISD Virtual Academy teachers are the best. There're always there for you to help and give you time to finish and catch up on any assignments when needed.

This is my opinion, based on my experience that I had at the Virtual Academy. All experiences are different. But I have to say for me this has been an amazing experience and I absolutely love it.



Virtual Academy Staff that's on "fire"

Journalism students take the time to get to know some of the VA teachers

Mrs. Itzahamara Moses, Dean of Instruction

Interview by Joseph M.



Dean of instruction, experienced educator, and inspiration are a few of the many incredible titles Mrs. Moses has earned. At the young age of 21 she began to teach and after 18 years of teaching Mrs. Moses is now the only dean of instruction in all of South Texas ISD.

However, teaching wasn't her first choice as she mentioned "I was originally a pre-dental major". Nevertheless, after helping out at her local church with Sunday school, she became interested in teaching and quickly changed her major to education. But how was Mrs. Moses able to continue her journey through life and never give up her fighting spirit? Well, the answer is quite simple, her father, as Mrs. Moses stated, "my dad more than anything is my inspiration for everything and the work ethic I have".

Now what does a dean of instruction even entail as I'm sure most of us students haven't heard of this title. In Mrs. Moses' words, "my main task is to support teachers to make sure that their instruction is amazing". Furthermore, Mrs. Moses enters classes in order to help our teachers improve their teaching techniques and takes care of all testing matters. Finally, in my opinion, I firmly believe that all students, teachers, and parents should be inspired, and proud to have Mrs. Moses as our very own Virtual Academy dean of instruction.

Mr. Michael Garcia, Social Studies teacher grades 7-8

Interview by Ivory C.S.

One of the new faces at virtual academy is Mr. Garcia, who teaches history to middle school students. A former engineer who turned to teaching during the pandemic really enjoys this career change, "I really like teaching, I really have enjoyed it".



The middle school students are lucky to have Mr. Garcia and will learn about his favorite historical eras which are Ancient Civilizations and the American Revolution. Although teaching virtually seems like a walk in the park it does come with challenges, Mr. Garcia pointed out at the beginning of the school year students were a tad shy but now that they have gotten to know him they are no longer hesitant to open up.

Despite that small challenge Mr. Garcia loves seeing his students succeed, he helps them do this through engaging lessons that encourage them to love Social Studies. A way that he relaxes from the challenges of work is by participating in his favorite hobbies which are working out, participating in fantasy football, and doing fun activities with his son like; playing sports, or video games. He also enjoys traveling and looks forward to traveling to Egypt and going on a cruise around the Gulf of Mexico.

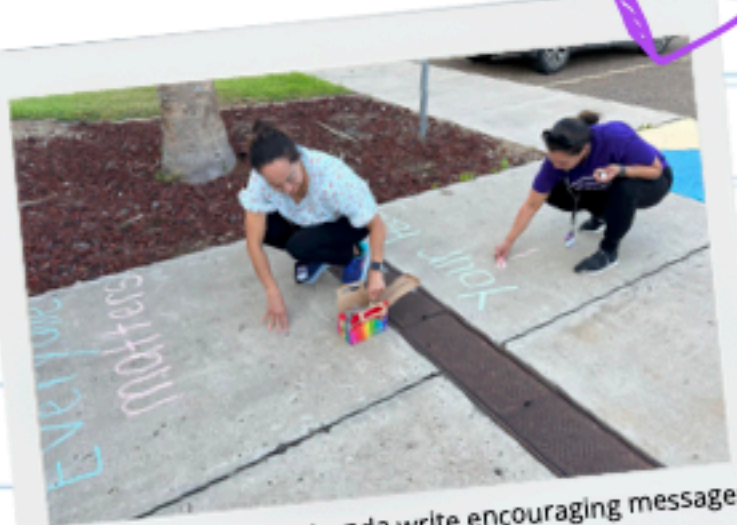


Virtual Academy staff beyond the computer

A look into the work the VA teachers do when not behind the computers



Mr. Davila writes motivational messages for suicide prevention month



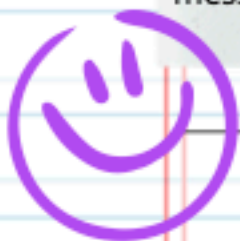
Ms. Delgado and Ms. Miranda write encouraging messages on the sidewalk for suicide prevention month



Mr. Garcia writes motivational messages for suicide prevention month



VA teachers work Alfresco night to promote the school





Virtual Academy Student Feature

What do virtual academy students do outside the virtual setting?

By: Brandon G.

Ryan and his younger brother Danian are both students at Virtual Academy. Ryan is a junior while Danian is a Freshman, even though both brothers have different personalities they both have the love for Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

One aspect they really enjoy about the sport are the competitions. This allows them to make friends with people from all over the world that have the same passion for Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. They do point out that the sport is just more than fun and games though. Both siblings are familiar with the competition worlds as competitive athletes and note that competing requires a lot of preparation. One way they prepare for competition days consists of training their main techniques that they will utilize for their event and a strict diet to prepare their bodies.



Although the sport seems as if it just physical demanding it comes with mental challenges as well.

Ryan and Danian mentioned that the biggest issue they face is when their opponents get stronger and came in with new tricks. Regardless of this they point out that they have to use their minds to get around these obstacles, "I often play it out like a chess match in my mind thinking of my response to a position that will be difficult for them". They expressed how you never stop learning no matter what or how difficult the sport becomes.



Both brothers practice at their families gym, if you are interested in learning about the world of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu it is located in Pharr, Texas. Check out their website at www.checkmatstx.com*

VA Club News

Keep up with the exciting things the VA clubs are doing



Sponsored by Mr. Cellar

Art Club elected officers:

President: Ellianna S.

Vice President: Eiza S.

Treasure: Dodie

Historian: Gloria G.



Sponsored by Dr. Aguilar and Mrs. Cano

BPA elected officers:

President: Nayeli L.

Vice President: Manuel V.

Secretary: Aiden E.

Reporter: Vacant

Spanish Club

Sponsored by Mrs. Galnares



Spanish Club elected officers:

President: Angelyn R.

Vice President: Francisco P.

Secretary: Sandra T.



Pending approval:

Journalism

sponsored by Mr. Garcia

Interactive club

sponsored by Mr. Davila



For in-person meeting dates club members will be informed via sponsors.

If you are interested in joining a club it's never too late!



Is Harry Potter still a must read series?

Does the boy who lived still has what it takes to cast a spell on new readers?

By: Ivory C.S.



Harry Potter was published in the late 90's by J.K. Rowling and over the decades has still managed to be a must-read book among readers. However, with the new generation growing up does it have what it takes to still capture young readers attention and continue the Potter Mania? Or is it destined to become a dusty old spell book on the shelves?

There are multiple reasons why people of all ages should read Harry Potter. To start off, It is an amazing series because author Rowling creates two worlds within one universe. She creates a magical wizarding world full of spells, adventures, and mythical creatures. Rowling also includes the Muggle world, which is a *normal human* world. Even her normal human world still has a magical twist because she adds descriptive details about London, making readers want to cross the pond for a visit. For those do not like to read, the books have also been made into a movies series which follow the books closely.

Throughout the series Harry and his friends are taken through multiple journeys that make each novel worthy of reading. Each book is filled with a new adventure, each one part thrilling and a tad bit horror filled.

Additionally, what makes Harry Potter a must read for new generations is the fact the series is a coming of age novel. Harry starts out as an 11-year-old boy in book one and the series ends with book seven when he is 17 years old, not including the epilogue. Throughout the series, Harry goes through various life changes such as when he has his first crush or when he loses people, he cares about. Readers his age are able to follow his journey but are also able to celebrate and mourn his life events that may reflect their own personal lives.

In my opinion the novels are great and will stand the test of time and future generations will hopefully look forward to discovering the world of Harry Potter. I was sad when I finished reading the series and I know that future readers will also feel this when they finish the series. However, they can turn to the movies.



The Harry Potter series is available through various booksellers such as Amazon and Barnes & Nobles. The novels are also available through the public and school libraries as well. The Harry Potter movies are on the HBO streaming platform and they are also creating a new Harry Potter series.

Curious to what house you belong to? Take the quiz at
<https://www.wizardingworld.com/news/discover-your-hogwarts-house-on-wizarding-world>



Wands up for actor Sir Michael Gambon who played Dumbledore in the Harry Potter movies 2-6.

October 19, 1940- September 28, 2023



Roast or Rave Reviews



Staff of the journalism class either roast or rave about trending pop culture and events

Blue Beetle Review

by: Alberto Z.



The movie Blue beetle is a DCEU movie about a boy named Jaime Reyes who was looking for a job and ended up becoming a superhero with a world destroying battle suit. The movie Blue Beetle was overall a good superhero movie with a good main character and a descent plot.

The CGI was perfectly used in the movie to make the explosions, suits, and flying look relatively realistic even with its sci-fi-esc nature. The story part was okay but could have been given more attention like how with the backstory of the female lead, her dad was the previous blue beetle but he mysteriously disappeared with no explanation of how like, where did he go, and who was he, they didn't even say his name in the movie. The scarab was what gave Jaime his powers and the design was cool and was excellently utilized in the movie but again the backstory was lacking like where did it come from, who made it and why was here, these questions were never answered or even brought up at all



Rave, Despite it's plot hole the action in the movie makes it worthy of watching on a big screen

Guts Album Review

by: Vecktoria P.



"GUTS" by Olivia Rodrigo is a new release that connects and resonates with the emotions and experiences of many young adults with roller coasters for emotions. The songs and lyrics touch on the topic of feelings of heartbreak, betrayal, and the struggles of "growing up."

Her album is a mix of indie rock and pop, tackling a bit more on Olivia's flexibility as an artist. Her vulnerability about her emotions and life is found in each of her songs, helping the audience empathize with her on a deeper level even if the topics are universal themes such as love, loss and self-image. Many of us have experienced the roller coaster of emotions that comes with young love, heartbreak, and the messy process of how we view ourselves inside and out.



Rave, worth listening to it for both young adults and elders

South Texas Anime Fiesta Review

by: Ricky S.

I just went to Anime Fiesta, and it was awesome. They had multiple voice actors from popular t.v. shows. I was lucky enough to meet my heroes Cristina Vee and Bryce Papenbrook.



They are voice actors from the Netflix show, Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug and Cat Noir. Both voice actors where friendly and flattered when I told them how much they were my heroes. In addition, there were other multiple other actors from a variety of shows such as from Deku from My Hero Academia. He was more than happy to sign my Funko-Pop.

Overall, going to Anime Fiesta was awesome since you can meet a lot of voice actors from your favorite shows.



Rave: Definitely, check it out next year if you can



Roast or Rave Reviews



Staff of the journalism class either roast or rave about trending pop culture and events

You are so not invited to my Bat Mitzvah

by: Madisyn Z.



You Are So Not Invited To My Bat Mitzvah, is a Netflix original that is one of those cringey middle school stories, kinda like how your middle school drama used to be like. Our movie stars comedian actor Adam Sandler along side with his two daughters Sunny Sandlar (Stacy) and Sadie Sandlar (Ronnie) trying to put together Sunny's Bat Mitzvah with the help of her friend (Lydia).

It wouldn't be a middle school movie if there wasn't drama already stirring up. Like no other young teen you develop a crush on what they put as "the cutest guy ever". Of course the movie takes a... Expected turn and (Lydia) the best friend starts dating the boy (Stacy) couldn't seem to get over. And of course the girls get into a fight, and who would've guessed. Stacy uninvites Lydia from her party and completely changes how she felt towards her.

This movie has a lot of cringey scenes that will you make you regret watching it, but its ok because its on Netflix. This type of comedy/drama movie gives you your typical "teen girls getting in a fight and tries getting revenge on the friend then acting like nothing happened in the end". Over all this movie disappointed me at sometimes, but it slowly got better its one of those "trust the processes" you could say.



Roast: Just be happy its not in theaters and did not spend money.

Gear 5

by: David L.

Gear 5 is a hyped up event causing Crunchyroll and, other websites to crash on its release day.

The reason why is because this awakening or power up, which is *Gear 5* is different from other anime power up or awakening reason, is gear 5 awakening is not through rage or sadness it has a funny awakening. For when he gets back up there is a subtle moment of music then we see, our main character Luffy gets up to smile and laugh uncontrollably all throughout. The situation he was in looked helpless but what separates it the most is the power up, it allows him to act freely and liberated from everything. This allows him to grab lighting from the sky, and being able to make his environment around him into rubber.



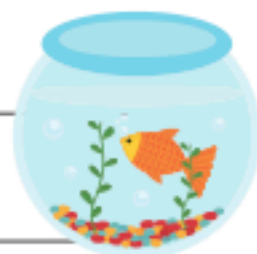
Rave: Check it out if you have time.

Be sure to check out the Spooky edition of roast and rave!



Pets of Virtual Academy

The best thing about learning virtually is that pets get to attend class also!



Ollie and Minx

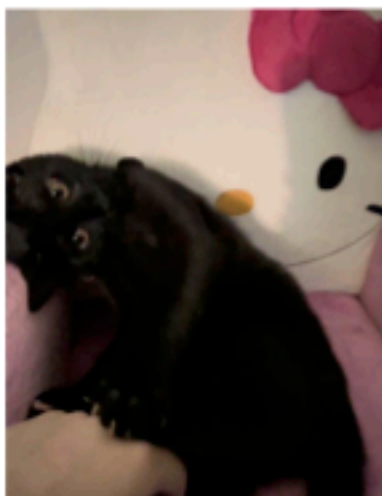
Mr. Davila's cats enjoy keeping him up at night and knocking down his pumpkin pie when he is not paying attention. They dislike the chancla and water. Ollie the orange tabby was adopted from a shelter and originally misgendered.

Mr. Davila did not find out Ollie was female until she went in for a checkup and it was discovered kittens were on the way. Minx is one of Ollie's kittens.

Mazzy Star

Dylynn's kitten loves bells, knocking things down, bug and she enjoys being left alone.

Mazzy is a rescue from the shelter, and Dylynn had always wanted a solid black cat so when she walked into the shelter it was love at first sight. When Dylynn first spent time with Mazzy at the shelter, Mazzy sat on her shoulder like a parrot and Dylynn knew right away she was the cat for her.



Mocha

Belicia's pup who loves chicken, carrots, her toys and going outside. She hates anything that isn't chicken or carrot flavored. Belicia begged for a dog and had her hopes set on a corgi but that puppy was sold.

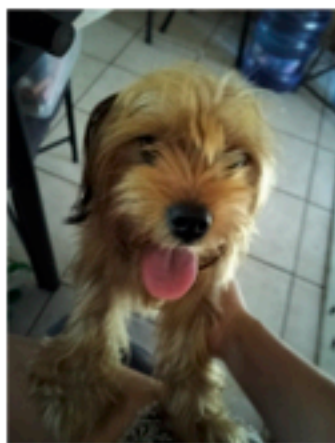


She given up her dreams of owning a puppy when her parents surprised her with Mocha one day when she was in the middle of her online classes.

Jackpot

Madiysn's pup Jackpot like to bite and scratch people, along with tearing up his toys. He hates bath and children. Jackpot was originally a gift for another person but the original owner was too young.

Madiysn was gifted Jackpot for her birthday in 2022 by her mom and when he was a puppy.





Pets of Virtual Academy

The best thing about learning virtually is that pets get to attend class also!



Razzy's cat gang

All four cats belong to Razzy. Scrappy is the tabby, Xae is a siamese cat. Artemis is a red point Siamese and Luna is a Bombay cat.

All four cats love wet cat food and catnip. All cats except Xae were strays. Xae was adopted from Razzy's grandma.

Interested in having your pet featured in the Phoenix Newsletter?



Scan the QR code to make your pet Phoenix famous.





Rounding up RGV events

Check out these local events that will be happening during the month of October



October 19th

Alfresco Weslaco takes place the last Thursday of every month. The event features food and small business vendors. It takes place in historic downtown Weslaco.

Price: Free, cash/card for vendor purchases

Time: 6 pm- 9 pm



October 7th

Market Days in Harlingen takes place the first Saturday of every month. The event features food and small business vendors.

Price: Free, cash/card for vendor purchases

Time: 9 am-3 pm

October 7th

The IMAS will be hosting a Die De Los Muertos Festival and Market in McAllen. The event is great for all ages.

Price: \$5 regular admission, \$3 for children ages 4-12, students w/id and senior citizens 65+

Time: 10 am- 5 pm.





Rounding up RGV events

Check out these local events that will be happening during the month of October



October 28th

The South Texas Book Festival is a celebration of culture and imagination by linking readers of all ages with authors, performers, and publishers. The event is great for all ages. Festival goers will have the opportunity to meet local authors.

Price: Free

Time: 11 am- 5 pm



October 19th

STVT presents Pumpkin Patch Night in Mcallen. There will be a haunted house, food, photo and games for the whole valley. Campus tours will also be available.

Price: Free

Time: 4 pm- 7 pm



October 21st

The 9th annual Los Muertos Bailan celebrates life, memory and the Mexican Borderlands. Takes place in downtown Edinburg.

Price: Free

Time: 6 pm -11 pm

Meet the Phoenix Journalism Team!



Raziel is a Junior at Virtual Academy. He likes to play video games and guitar in his free time. His favorite subject to learn about would be Egyptian Gods.

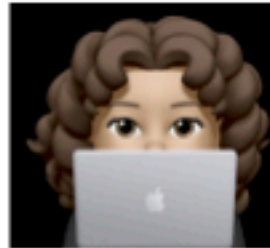
David enjoys weightlifting, video games and anime. In addition to these things he also enjoys meeting new people, going out and the cold weather. Some of his favorite games are Party Animals, Call of Duty, Roblox and Garry's Mod.



Andrew's favorite hobbies are collecting Neca figures and Shoes. He also enjoys playing games, watching movies and playing football. He enjoys reading *Dog Man* and *Captain Underpants*. His favorite movie series are Lord of the Rings and Star Wars, His favorite game is Insomniacs Spiderman.

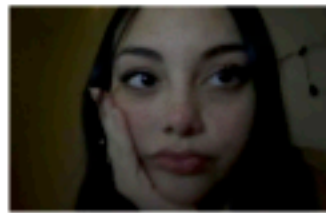


Juan is an outdoor person with too many hobbies and interests. He likes to watch the stars, fish, and play video games. He is also guitarist and loves to listen to all sorts of rock.



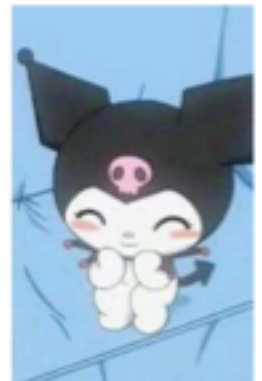
Vecktoria enjoys going on walks, hanging out with friends, reading, watching movies. Two of her favorite movies is *The Lorax* and *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*.

Alberto enjoys watching movies, and series shows. Mr. Iglesias is. his favorite show on Netflix. He has no official pet but have claimed a stray black cat that comes by as mine and named her Blanka.



Dylenn is a witty, sweet, introverted student. She immerses herself in a myriad of interests; she is an avid movie watcher and book reader, and her favorite movie is Saw. She loves music and anything cute or horror-related. Her goal for the future is to be a librarian.

Madisyn who enjoys cooking, playing horror games, collecting hot wheels to fill up her walls and doing makeup. When she is not cooking or playing games or practicing making she is sleeping. She is always asleep, never awake.



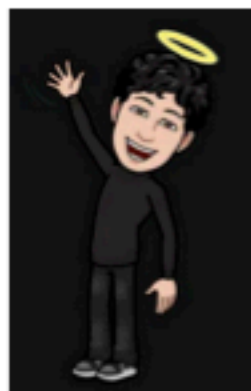
If you are interested in contributing to the Phoenix Newspaper please contact roberta.zamilpa@stisd.net

Meet the Phoenix Journalism Team!



Angel's favorite hobbies are collecting Neca figures, Reading graphic novels, drawing, listening to music and his favorite anime is *Naruto Shippuden*. He enjoys playing *Red Dead Redemption 2*, *Assassins Creed* franchise, *We happy Few*, *High on Life*. He also enjoys reading about Greek mythology.

Brandon G. enjoys working out and hanging out with his friends on the weekend. He also enjoys working and spending time with his family. His favorite food is wings and in his free time he likes to spend money.



Samantha enjoys being within the confines of art and is in constant turmoil by the concept of it. She also heavily indulges in listening to music and talks over anime with her sister. *Mob Psycho 100* remains her favorite topic to discuss presently.

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**Catch us if you dare...next month
for our Spooky Edition,
publication date: October 31st.**