



Readers still choosing physical over digital books in Media Center

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# The Quill

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Robbinsdale Cooper High School

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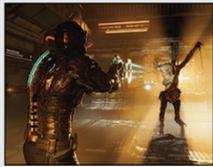


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## HAWK'S NEST PROVIDES SUPPORT TO STUDENTS

After-school program matches teachers and tutors with students seeking help with classroom work



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Ms. Fair-Manke is a Cooper teacher who works with the students visiting Hawk's Nest for help with math.

By NOAH PLAHN  
Quill staff writer

Cooper has now offered students an after-school tutoring program named Hawk's Nest for more than a decade. Held every Tuesday and Thursday after school from 3:30-4:45 p.m. in the Media Center, Hawk's Nest provides students an opportunity to connect with tutors and teachers outside of the regular classroom. According to students and staff who are involved, the additional help can be instrumental for academic success.

"I come to Hawk's Nest because I'm struggling with some of my work, and it's a really good space for me to work and be by myself because sometimes, in class, you get

distracted by others," Hawk's Nest regular Gideon Wilson (10) said.

A key staff member who assists with Hawk's Nest is Mr. Hoffman. Hoffman has played a considerable role in Cooper's student support systems. In addition to helping with Hawk's Nest, Hoffman also created and runs the school's Catch-Up and Suc-

ceed program, which aims to help students who are failing their classes.

Through Hawk's Nest, Hoffman said he puts an emphasis on ensuring students are adequately supported with their school work.

"My own vision is to build a supportive community for all students so they can comfortably, and with excel-

lent support, continue their academic progress," he said.

Hoffman also came up with the idea that student volunteers should serve as tutors during Hawk's Nest. The reception to that idea has been met with great admiration by both students and staff this school year.

"Hawk's Nest was an ongoing, after-school program when I arrived at Cooper. I added the portion of asking student tutors to support Hawk's Nest this year so I can extend the direction and focus of supporting students as they grow in their academic achievements in any way possible," Hoffman said.

The impact of Hawk's Nest on the students who take part is noticeable. Oscar Shaka (10) said he has had positive experiences in getting adequate help through the program, particularly from the student tutors.

"It's great. There's tutors that can help if you need more help or if you don't want to just talk to teachers. They're tutors that will actually sit down with you and help you with your work. You can just go up to a tutor and ask [for help], and sometimes [they'll] even walk around and help you if they see you struggling," Shaka said.

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## Opinions split about usefulness of advisory

While teachers and students recognize the positive intent of advisory, they do not agree about whether or not it is meeting its stated purpose

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH  
Quill staff writer

Cooper has advisory every Wednesday during fifth period before or after lunch depending on what grade students are in. Although advisory is designed to help students through announcements, activities and having a specific teacher a student will see weekly for all four years, staff and students have been in conflict about the usefulness of the advisory process.

The administration has attempted to contain students within the school to get them to attend advisory, but students find ways to exit the building and continue on with their lunch plans. Every Wednesday, some students will be getting spoken to by a staff member and they won't even swivel their head slightly to acknowledge that staff person's words as they walk out the door and skip advisory.

In order to gauge staff and student opinions about advisory, *The Quill* created and released a survey in early November. Overall, 65 people took the survey. Half of the people surveyed were students and the other half were teachers and staff members.

The survey asked respondents to share whether or not they find advisory useful and whether or not they prefer to have advisory. Also, at the end of the survey, people were asked to write a brief statement about their thoughts on advisory.

Based on their responses to the survey, most students felt strongly that advisory is redundant.

"I don't believe advisory is necessary because everything can be read via email or Schoology. Also, if we didn't have advisory, we would have more time in a week to get help from teachers," Levi Christensen (9) said.

A lot of other students had similar thoughts about advisory being repetitive and unnecessary. Gabe Cummings (11) stated that he feels that advisory isn't important every week because there isn't enough to cover on the slides to justify it being every week. He thinks a better option would be to email the important information to students so they have it if they need it.

"I think that advisory would maybe be important once a month. I feel that it is almost the same slides every week and it only takes at most a quarter of the class period to get through everything we need to know," he said.



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

One goal of advisory is to connect students to one teacher for four years.

Several students indicated that having an advisory every week is unnecessary, since it's the same information shared over and over again. In light of that, some indicated that making advisory monthly would open up the week to one more academic HLL session, something that would benefit many Cooper students.

"Once a week seems unnecessary. I think once-a-month, mandatory check-ins would make more sense. Also, for upperclassmen, it is not fun to miss half of your open lunch for info that doesn't usually apply to you. Another option could be making the first hour a few minutes longer, like a homeroom, to give us announcements," a student who did not identify himself said.

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## Group gets high school students connected to local art center

Teens can join the Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council through a yearly application process in the spring

By LEO PEREZ  
Quill staff writer

The Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council (WACTAC) is a program that gives participating teens from the Twin Cities area a chance to participate in events that encourage their creative freedom.

The group, which is coordinated by Simona Zappas, is connected to the Walker Arts Center, a renowned arts institution in Minneapolis that presents, collects and supports the creation of work across the visual and performing arts.

"The WACTAC group meets weekly to learn about working at an art center, connect with contemporary art and artists, and create new ways for the Twin Cities teen community to experience the Walker," Zappas said.

One Cooper student who is taking part in WACTAC is Amarilys Balmaceda (11). She cited several reasons why she joined the group.

"At the beginning of the year, I decided to join WACTAC because I wanted to learn more about art and the possibility to do something after school related to the thing that I like more than anything: art. All WACTAC members are high school artists with a self concept of what art means, as do I," she said.

The applications for joining WACTAC are typically only open in the summer, but Zappas said the group kept the application process open during the fall this year.

"We usually do applications over the summer; but this year, we decided we were going to mix it up and do them in the fall in hopes that it will be a little easier for people," Zappas said.

WACTAC has hosted a number of events for teens

going all the way to the 1990s. Zappas said these events center around art and the Walker Art Center itself. During one event, for example, they have a "teen takeover" through which the members of the group use the whole building to have free food, live music and open galleries geared toward other teens.

According to Balmaceda, the group meets every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. at the Walker.

"Every meeting is unique and special," she said. "Sometimes we make plans about events in the Walker or we just get to know each other and talk about art and our life."

Zappas said that art students and teens who love the arts should definitely check out the group. She said the group's members are accepting and kind. Additionally, she

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## Mental health help accessible to all students

Staff members at the building, district level can make a difference when Hawks need support

By **DRIANA SANMARTIN**  
*Quill* staff writer

High school can be a challenging journey, especially with the added pressures of work and looming decisions about the future after graduating. In these moments, it's easy to feel like you're on your own. However, reaching out for support can make a real difference. Cooper offers resources for managing stress and anxiety. Whether it's school work, job responsibilities or making important choices, talking to someone can provide the support you need.

Ms. Weiers, the school psychologist at Cooper, said there are many available mental health supports for students. At Cooper, students have accessible resources that include the dedicated services of two school psychologists, three school social workers and four grade-level counselors. These professionals are here to provide support, guidance and a listening ear for students who may require mental health assistance. By reaching out to these resources, students can find a supportive network to navigate challenges and prioritize their well-being during their time at Cooper.

"Students can go to their grade-level counselor, one of our three school social workers or one of the two school psychologists for mental health support," Weiers said. "If students don't feel comfortable emailing support staff or going to them directly, they can let a teacher, grade-level coach or other supportive adult at school know that they would like to talk with someone about mental health, and those adults can help connect students to us. After meeting with school-based mental health supports, we can help students talk with their families and access more intensive support such as therapy if needed."

According to Weiers, addressing mental health in high school is crucial and essential. Not only can this help students bring attention to various symptoms and their impacts, it can also guide individuals toward accessing the necessary resources. Understanding and discussing mental health openly helps create awareness, reduce stigma and empower individuals to seek the support they need. Cooper provides accessible resources for anyone navigating mental health challenges in high school, promoting a supportive environment for well-being. Weiers stressed that it is vital to recognize the importance of this dialogue to foster a community where individuals can find assistance and understanding.

"There are many obstacles currently facing students regarding mental health. From my observations and research articles I've read, social media and time on electronic devices are major barriers to adolescent well-being. Stress related to larger issues in the world such as

**MENTAL HEALTH**  
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## ART GROUP

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said they try to bring together everyone's best and brightest ideas in a way that ensures that everyone has their voice heard.

In addition to those benefits, Balmaceda said there are other good reasons to get involved in WACTAC.

"I mainly like the experience in the galleries and getting to know really nice people," she said. "I also get a \$100 gift card each month."

According to Balmaceda, students interested in joining the group do not necessarily have to be artists.

"You don't have to know how to paint or draw," she said. "This is for young students who want to see their generation involved in something special. It is a wonderful place to be when you want to leave behind all the school and personal stuff and just relax."

## Service event aimed at people dealing with loss

Student volunteers worked with the Dragonfly Project to send affirming messages to Minnesotans experiencing grief

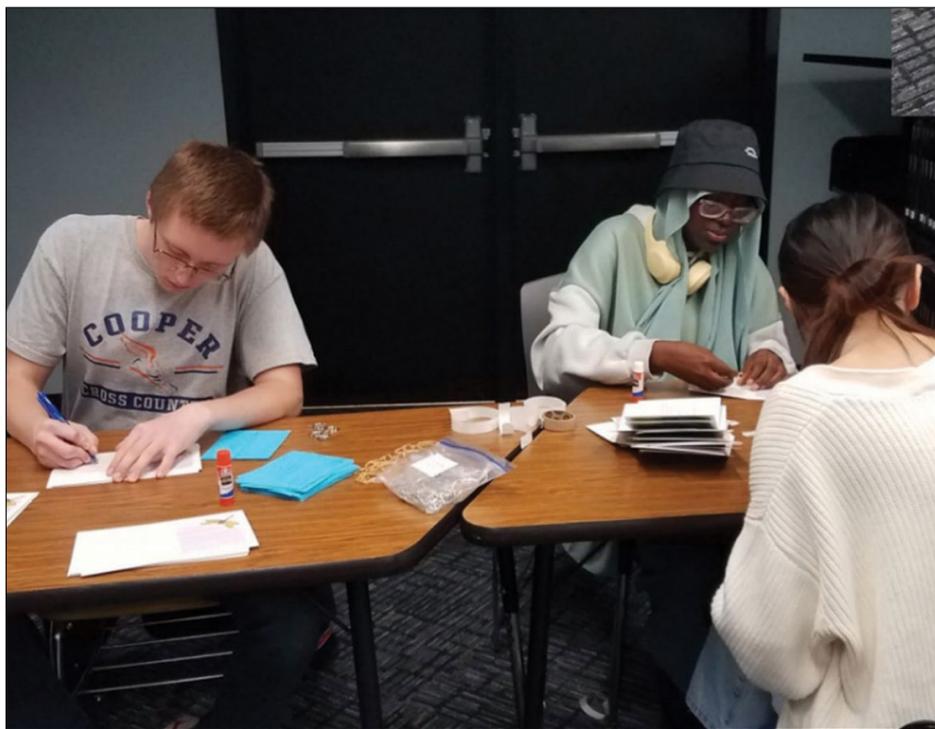


Photo by JODIE MEYER

The volunteers assembled greeting cards during a HLL session that was held in the Media Center on October 23.

By **CHIMUAL VANG**  
*Quill* staff writer

The Dragonfly Project was a community service event coordinated by Ms. Christensen and Ms. Meyer, who work in the school's International Baccalaureate (IB) Office, for Cooper students in October. The project was designed to support families who have lost a loved one by sending them a "Someone is Thinking of You" card along with a dragonfly keychain.

Students worked on the project during Hawk Lunch and Learn for both the 5A and 5B periods of the school day on October 23. This was the second year of Cooper students participating in the

Dragonfly Project. The event was held earlier in the year compared with last year, when the event took place in the spring. According to Meyer, approximately 23 students participated this year.

"Before partaking in the project, students are required to watch a video to learn more about the project," Meyer said.

This year, the participating students in the Dragonfly Project assembled cards that will be mailed to the families experiencing loss. Volunteers signed the cards and worked on getting the dragonfly keychains adhered to the inside of the card. This required students to get the dragonfly charm on a link, which was then threaded onto a keychain.

"Students were incredibly efficient, so when those were finished, they began actually making keychains for future mailings," Meyer said.

In order to support the students in their work, Meyer and Christensen worked with the Dragonfly organization to make sure students had the proper supplies.

"Ms. Meyer and I helped the students mostly by keeping their supplies stocked," Christensen said.

Meyer and Christensen stated that, during the event, they were fortunate enough to have one of the group's founders, Julie Bonde, attend. She helped make the service project more personal to the students, as she was able to share

stories about recipients and their reactions to receiving a card and keychain. As coordinators, Meyer and Christensen scheduled the student workers and encouraged their work during the sessions.

One student who took part in the event was Andrew Brooks (11).

"I learned about the Dragonfly Project through my involvement in the IB diploma program. Ms. Meyer, one of the IB coordinators at Cooper, reached out to the IB diploma program members to complete hours for the CAS aspect of the IB program. I responded and signed up for a date," he said.

While taking part in the service event helped Brooks meet some requirements of the IB program, he also emphasized that it had a larger importance as well.

"It was a good cause to help those in their grieving know that they are not alone. It was quite fulfilling and attractive to me because of their mission statement," Brooks said.

During the time he volunteered, Brooks said he had a chance to create cards, assemble the dragonfly keychains and prepare the products that they used in the created cards to be purchased by others.

"It was fulfilling, as the thought of helping those experiencing their grief was a very rewarding thing to think of and do," he said. "I am happy and satisfied that I was able to help a select few. This also makes me wonder: If we can all sympathize with grief, unless nobody significant to you has died, then why don't we help each other as often as we probably should?"

As for the future, Meyer and Christensen said they absolutely will continue to work with the Dragonfly Project. Meyer said they've been in contact with the organization ever since last year, and they plan to keep it that way next year as well.

## Physical books still in demand among Hawk readers

While digital resources are popular for research, students are more often selecting traditional books for pleasure reading

By **AMARILYS BALMACEDA**  
*Quill* staff writer

Many students find that reading books is a good avocation. It is a way to explore a completely new universe inside the book. In the old days, the act of reading was done with physical books, but in recent years, many people have shifted to reading digital books.

Currently, the question of what is the most used format to read, physical or electronic, is not easy to answer. As a result, the Cooper Media Center has embraced both formats in order to appeal to the passionate readers at the school. Whether it is physical or digital, the Media Center staff hope students find excitement in reading a new book and talking about the plot for hours.

According to Media Center Specialist Mr. King, the students who go there to read physical books have two favorite categories.

"Manga are the most popular books that students come for. Otherwise, it is romance books," King said.

At the same time, King said the Media Center works hard to give students access to electronic books and resources as well. Most students are

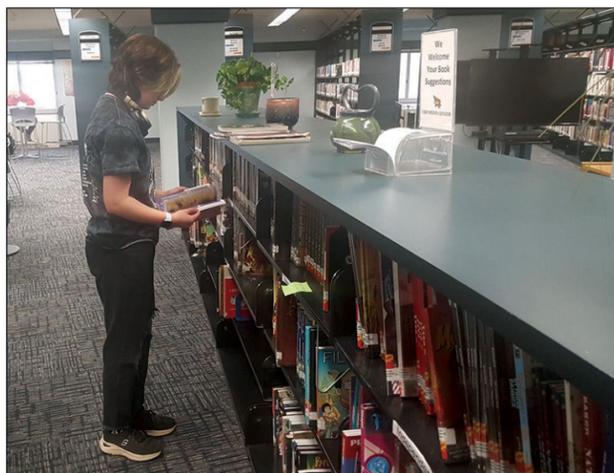


Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

The Media Center's manga section attracts many book lovers during the day.

accustomed to using e-books to find answers for their research-based assignments.

According to King, students may find it quicker and easier to use an e-book rather than looking through the library for a huge encyclopedia. In this case, students can merely access the Media Center search bar online and the results pop out in seconds.

"Educational books are the most

popular e-books," King said.

Although some students prefer to read e-books for pleasure reading based on their easy accessibility and the fact that student Chromebooks have the perfect shape to read an e-book, specialists in the Media Center affirm that the most-used book format is still by far the physical book.

"The reason why students read more physical books is they don't

know about our digital library. It is just outside their minds," King said.

There are additional reasons why students would rather read physical books. For many students, they are more comfortable directly seeing what they are reading by holding it in their hands. Holding a book is also a constant reminder to avoid distractions. In contrast, electronic devices can be a distraction if you are using one to try and do your reading.

"I like to be able to hold books," Lillian Peterson (11) said.

Another issue relates to one's eyes. Taking care of your eye health is important, especially when students spend a big amount of time on their computers. Devices are not always the best option for reading and some students are concerned about this.

"I read both ways, but physical books are a lot healthier because you don't get eye strain from blue light," Lynette Jaimes (11) said.

It is clear from the Media Center checkout rates and student opinions that physical books are still an attractive option and they remain the format most frequently chosen by readers at Cooper.

## October activities guided seniors on their path to college

College Knowledge Month featured college application workshops, counselor meetings and information about the FAFSA

By **DRIANA SANMARTIN**  
*Quill* staff writer

College Knowledge Month at Cooper allowed students to explore post-secondary options. Through various resources, workshops and information sessions throughout October, participants were able to make informed decisions about their academic and career paths. From choosing the right institution to understanding financial aid, the event was a valuable platform for students to enhance their knowledge and plan for a successful future in higher education.

"Something I did was going from senior to senior and getting them to know the different admission options as well as the different scholarships and other great opportunities for them to utilize," 12th grade counselor Ms. Walters said. "Just getting them to think about the future was beneficial and showed a large amount of results from a lot of

seniors going onto Xello and requesting their transcripts."

During College Knowledge Month, Cooper's 11th- and 12th-grade counselors maintained regular meetings with approximately 20-30 students per week, focusing on checking grades, discussing post-secondary enrollment options and planning for life after high school. Walters said there is a greater emphasis on engaging with seniors as they navigate their final year of high school.

Moreover, the counseling team processed a substantial number of transcripts in October, sending around 250 through Xello and an additional 60 through the Common Application process. These large numbers were connected to the fact that most Minnesota colleges and universities waived their application fees in October as part of College Knowledge Month.

"Xello is a fairly new tool for us but it has provided us with information

on its usage and how many students are using it to request transcripts or access different tools like personality quizzes, career matching tests and other resources. Our hope is that in the coming year, it will be more widespread as well with the younger grades as a tool they can use to better look into their future," Walters said.

Another group that played a large role in October's College Knowledge Month events was Get Ready. Many students demonstrated active involvement in the resources Get Ready provided during that time span. According to Ms. Yang from Get Ready, around 75 students actively participated in the group's visits to HLL and study hall sessions. Furthermore, approximately 14 families took part in the FAFSA presentations at the October 12 parent-teacher conference night.

"We held a successful FAFSA night during conferences, where students and their families could learn more

about what the FAFSA was and where they could create their FAFSA IDs. We were also intentional about meeting with students one-on-one and promoting different postsecondary pathways as well as continuing to promote FAFSA and financial aid," Yang said.

Through the various resources provided by the school counselors and Get Ready, College Knowledge Month gave students valuable insights into their post-secondary options. According to the students who took part, the school demonstrated its commitment to making sure every student is thinking about what will take place after graduating this spring.

"This year, I utilized the free applications while applying to colleges since it was an advantageous resource and was beneficial financially as well. I also used the Common App since it made the application process a lot easier. I recommend others to use it to their advantage as well," Aicha Square (12) said.

## Law class offers hands-on learning

Students in Criminal Justice learn about the nation's legal system before engaging in a mock trial event



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Mr. Moen said he hopes his teaching approach and classroom activities lend "a layer of authenticity" to the class.

By AKEYA EASLEY  
Quill staff writer

Cooper's Criminal Justice class sends students on a journey that transcends textbooks by going head first into the world of law enforcement, mock trials and the pursuit of justice.

Social studies teacher Mr. Moen teaches this course. Although it may look like your standard class with summatives worth 80 percent of the grade and formatives worth 20 percent, it is much different than your average classroom.

According to Moen, for the first half of the semester, students get to know the legal system, with the focus specifically concentrated on corrections, law enforcement, court cases and the commission and prosecution of crimes.

During the other half of the

semester, however, students will compete in a mock trial. One class will be the prosecution while the other will be defense, and the classes will carry out the trial against one another.

"This unique simulation lets students apply their knowledge and skills in a practical setting, using teamwork, critical thinking and their public speaking abilities," Moen said. "The mock trial becomes the highlight of the course, providing a real-world context for the concepts learned earlier in the semester."

One differentiating feature of an average day in the Criminal Justice class when compared to many other courses is the presence of guest speakers. Professionals from various fields of law enforcement, including police officers and lawyers, contribute to the learning experience. These

guest speakers bring real-world perspectives, sharing their insights and experiences with the students. Moen said this exposure adds "a layer of authenticity" to the classroom.

According to Moen, the goal of the course is not just to create future lawyers but to "strengthen students' understanding of the entire criminal justice system." Beyond legal professionals, students learn about the roles of corrections officers, clerks and other crucial contributors to the justice system. This approach makes sure that students appreciate the diverse careers available within the realm of law and law enforcement.

Students in the course said they appreciate the Criminal Justice class for expanding their views and offering practical insights for real-life legal situations. One student, Kylander Nelson (9), said

she was not sure about the content of the class when she first signed up, but that changed quickly once the semester started.

"Originally, a teacher suggested it to me when I was signing up for classes. I had no idea what it was, but when I found out, it was super important to me to learn my rights and how the legal system works," Nelson said.

According to Nelson, the class not only teaches legal concepts but also develops practical skills and gives a broader understanding of different roles in law enforcement.

"I enjoy being a lawyer in our mock trial," Nelson said. "It is a super cool responsibility."

For students who are considering taking this class in the future, Nelson said it is a good choice to make.

"Joining the class is a great opportunity to learn about the law. If you ever get into legal conflict in the future, this class could really help you out," she said.

Additionally, Nelson said she enjoys the teacher of the class.

"Mr. Moen is a great teacher too," she said. "He is very understanding."

Agreeing with Nelson is Sofia Swanson (11), who said Moen "makes the class enjoyable" thanks to the fact that he is "very chill and relaxed." Swanson explained that she took the class due to her future career interests.

"I have always been interested in law and becoming a lawyer, so I thought this class was an amazing opportunity to take," she said.

Even if a student is not specifically interested in law or becoming an attorney, Swanson said she still recommends this class.

"It is an interesting class and you learn more about the system and how court works," she said.

## HAWK'S NEST continued from page 1

Similarly, Hector Queah (10) has personally connected with tutors through the program and recommends it for others.

"I recommend other students join because I feel like it's a really safe space to get to know people and do extra work. At Hawk's Nest, we are like a family here. The tutors and students are really like a family, so I feel like people should definitely come. It helps a lot," Queah said.

The positive responses of participating students is a key reason why Hoffman recommends the program for all interested Cooper students.

"I love that the availability for academic support is at Cooper every Tuesday and Thursday. I love that there are three committed teachers and committed tutors available to assist students in every subject matter. I love that it is supported by transportation. So, yes, I recommend it to every student at Cooper," Hoffman said.

Although tutors are a much-needed part of Hawk's Nest, at times the student volunteers cannot help the other students to the fullest extent, and that is when teachers become a must-have for the program. Ms. Fair-Manke, who teaches Algebra 1 and 2 along with AP Computer Science Principles, is one of the teachers involved in Hawk's Nest. This is her first year in the program.

"I decided to join Hawk's Nest because, this year, my schedule is such that I don't have a lot of time to help my students outside of class time, and I felt that the needs were so great that I just needed to make myself available two days a week," she said.

Thus far, Fair said she has enjoyed the experience and recommends more students join.

"I think it could grow even more. Currently, we have four teachers on board: myself, Mr. Balika, Mr. Bruce and Ms. Sutliff. With the population we have coming in pretty consistently, we constantly have pretty good coverage," she said.

One benefit of Hawk's Nest cited by Fair is the ability to get help from teachers who know the classroom content.

"I highly recommend coming to Hawk's Nest, especially if you're my student. It's hard sometimes [to get] help from parents where the classic scenario is when they don't remember how to do that or that math is so different now. But [it is good] getting the help from teachers who know what's going on, what the assignment's about or working with other peers and working on the same thing. Instead of trying to go home and learning how to do it on your own, this is a safe and quiet space. We have the resources you need and we know our students. We're not strangers. When you go out and try to hire someone, they don't know you or how our school works. I think it's a really friendly environment, especially my room, not to brag. It's a good vibe to get help," she said.

As the Hawk's Nest program continues moving forward, Fair had multiple ideas for changes she would like to make.

"I would love more of our tutors to come in so our Hawks could see other upperclassmen helping out so they would be kind of motivated and maybe even see themselves. I would love if you got paid for this, too; that would kind of incentivize more high-quality tutors coming around. I'd love to see it grow. Currently, we're in two classrooms in the C circle, but I'd love maybe an addition-

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Agreeing with the announcements idea was Evie Coombs (12).

"I wonder if it would be better to just make it a Schoology announcement each week with the slides and an attendance form, considering that, after the slideshow is quickly scrolled through, there is not much else to. It's necessary, but it could be done better to get information out to everyone, even those who skip advisory," Coombs said.

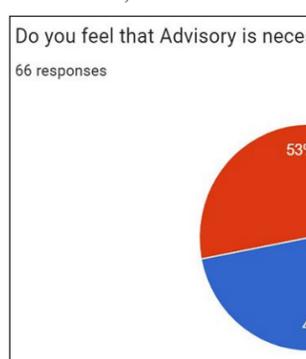
Students also said that no one pays attention during advisory and people just stare at their phones and do nothing.

"I think it goes without saying that most students decide not to attend advisory and the reason for that is pretty obvious: any information that could be discussed in advisory is accessible for any student to research on the home page of Schoology. Most importantly, it goes without saying that most students of this school would probably feel they deserve a 55-minute break from school any day of the week for them to relax, eat or hang out with their friends. Advisory takes away half of that time. Most students ignore the teacher and sit on their phone while the teacher blows past all the information in at least 10-15 minutes. Students are then held in the classroom with nothing to do," Zachary Wittig (12) said.

As the detailed responses indicated, most students said that advisory seems to be unnecessary to have every week. However, staff members seem to

have a completely different stance on advisory.

"As a ninth grade advisory teacher, I know that advisory can be important because we can address all students at the same time. However, when students do not attend advisory, it can be difficult to get that information to everyone, which I think can make it feel difficult for attending students and staff to feel effective," social studies teacher



Infographic by HEATHER HOLZERSMITH

Forty-seven percent of respondents did not see the value of advisory.

Mr. DiSalvi said. Another teacher who did not state their name had a similar opinion.

"I think advisory could be a really beneficial part of students' experience at Cooper, if they would attend and take it seriously," they said.

Many of the teachers who responded stated that advisory loses its effectiveness when people don't attend. Teachers often feel frustrated by stu-

dents' spotty attendance.

"There is info that needs to be shared for grade levels. If we don't do it here, it falls to taking away instructional time to do it in a core class. There is also the opportunity to build community for students who struggle to find a place to fit in. It might help to attach some sort of requirement or credit so more students attend," English teacher Ms. Eisfelder said.

Another theme mentioned by teachers is the importance of advisory in helping create community.

"I think that advisory is a great opportunity to re-align students. It helps remind them of expectations and upcoming events happening at Cooper and in the surrounding community. I believe that it can help to foster a stronger feeling of community. I just wish that it took place more than once a

week. If a student consistently misses that Wednesday period, they are not going to be well-informed. Many students currently believe that advisory is an optional period and they do not prioritize attending it. If advisory took on a homeroom model where it met more often, if not every day, we may see better outcomes," math teacher Ms. Fair-Manke said.

Some teachers also indicated that advisory is a useful tool to create structure in students' schedules.

"As a teacher, I like advisory because we have a community for four years that feels like home. It's also a good time to share information that goes under the radar if it is only communicated via email. I try to do fun things with my advisory so that it isn't such a chore to attend it. I can understand how some kids are annoyed by it, though: you don't get a grade for it and it doesn't always have urgent information. I do still think, however, that it is a good way to come together," a teacher who did not indicate their name said.

Based on the 65 responses, students seem to feel advisory is unnecessary while staff think it is a good way to build a community at Cooper. The voices of students and staff will likely influence what future decisions are made about advisory. For the time being, advisory may continue to be a contentious subject that divides adults and students.

## The Quill

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The Quill welcomes Letters to the Editor. If you would like to send The Quill your thoughts about a story that ran in the paper, or your thoughts about an issue affecting our school or community, please word process and email your letter to [eric\\_zuccola@rdale.org](mailto:eric_zuccola@rdale.org) as a text-only file. The Quill reserves the right to edit all Letters to the Editor for space.

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### Editorial Policy

The Quill is an open and public forum for the thoughts and opinions of all students at Robbinsdale Cooper High School. Editorials contained in the Opinion section of the newspaper are the views of their respective authors alone. They do not necessarily represent the views of Cooper High School or Robbinsdale School District 281.

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## Composting is next frontier in recycling efforts

Now that cities are offering compost pickup, Cooper should consider this practice

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO  
Quill staff writer

Composting is a form of recycling that is done in a natural process. Many of us around the world may have heard of it but never have attempted to try the process. I, for one, have heard of it loosely but have not tried the process at home. Due to the growth in popularity of composting, many homes, organizations and businesses are starting this practice. While most schools do not have the option to compost as they do not have specific bags or a site to throw the waste away, I believe Cooper should begin composting as well as all of the other schools in the Robbinsdale Area School District.

First, composting can help students understand the concept of decomposition and energy circles. This is a way to teach students, specifically elementary school students, who are already taught about recycling. By teaching students about composting, they will also learn about agriculture and how plants can grow larger and more pristine due to compost. According to The Green Team, Massachusetts has a food waste disposal ban, meaning that food cannot be thrown away but must be composted. If Cooper were to compost, we would see a lower amount of food waste. This includes open lunch food that students cannot finish and do not want. Although this would not limit the amount of people that would bring food back to school, it would help maintain a cleaner environment.

Second, a garden could be made around the school. Having a garden could help students who are interested in gardening and also show how compost helps plants grow. An after-school group could maintain the garden and we could see a possibility of food being grown for cafeteria use, which would help the lunch menu by adding new fruits and vegetables. This could help raise funds for the school as well. Farmers markets are quite prominent and Cooper students could go into these markets, selling fruits and vegetables to the community.

Third, composting is now going to be more common with the passing of a state budget bill that hopes to help reduce the amount of waste in landfills and incinerators by 90 percent by 2045. This bill proposes that recycling and other means to reduce waste will be used more often so the state will not carry more waste. All products will now have to show they can be recycled. If we can teach all the schools in the district to compost, students would be affected positively.

Ultimately, composting would be an amazing addition to schools and the state overall. Composting can be taught to the younger students in elementary school to raise their awareness about plant growth and agriculture. Gardens could also become more common and help students discover a new activity that might interest them. Finally, composting will become more common in the future and help reduce the amount of waste in Minnesota by 90 percent. By composting, we can help our environment and school become healthier and cleaner along with teaching students important lessons for life.

### Correction

The December 1, 2023 issue of *The Quill* featured the story "Orchestra trip exposed Hawks to new music," which covered a field trip Cooper musicians made to the Ordway in St. Paul to see a performance by Sphinx Virtuosi. In that story, students who went on the trip were interviewed to share their reactions to the concert. The name of one of the students interviewed was misspelled in the final article that ran in the newspaper. We apologize to Ripley Vesel (9) for the error in that story.

## Stairwell closure annoying but necessary

Concerns about student safety, classroom attendance drove the decision to lock the back staircases during the school day

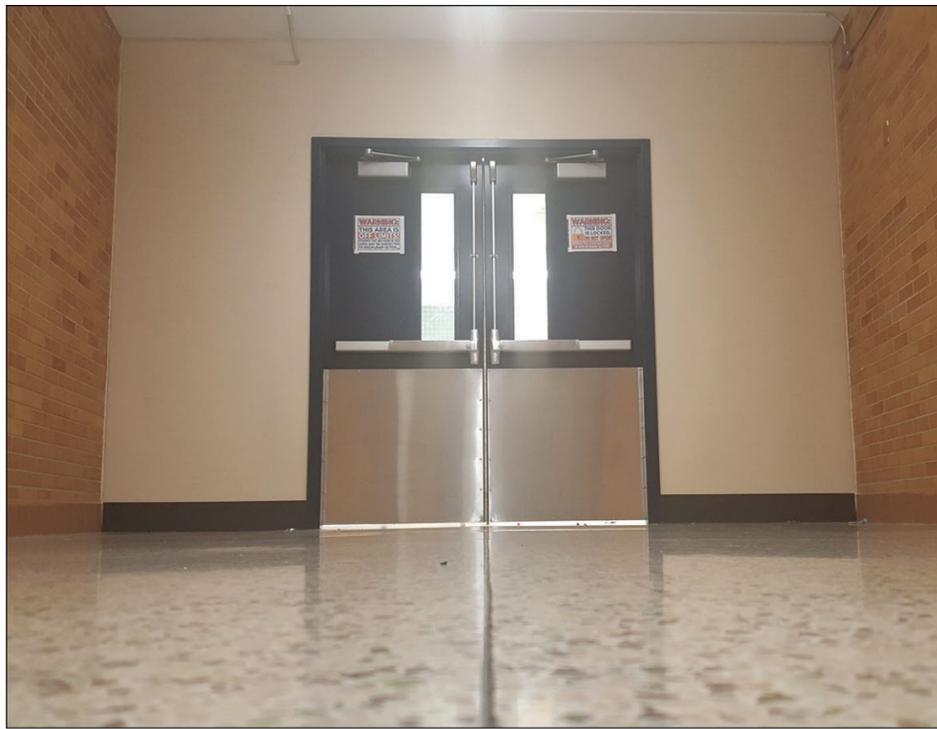


Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Students entering the stairway through the blue doors will be trapped unless they fully exit the school.

By NOAH PLAHN  
Quill staff writer

On November 8, seemingly out of nowhere, a new rule was implemented at Cooper. The new rule required the locking of the back stairwells and banned students from taking the back stairwells of hallways as a shortcut between floors. The rule was instantly met with much student opposition. On the surface, students may think of this rule as pointless, but with more information provided, you will soon learn that Cooper's administrative team was backed into a corner and forced to follow through despite the backlash.

The ongoing issue of students skipping class and hanging out in the unlocked stairwells is solved with this new policy. I am not ignorant enough

not to acknowledge the fact that it's unfortunate students who properly use the stairwells have to abide by these rules and pay for the actions of students who abuse these luxuries. Still, the school must take action to address this crisis. For years, students have hidden in the back stairwells and avoided hall monitors throughout class periods, sometimes even for the whole school day. Students skipping classes directly correlates to failed classes, and failed classes lead to a drop in a student's overall GPA and the public image of Cooper. If the school's public image and student academic success fall any more, less funding may be provided, and the school will dig itself an even deeper hole.

Another reason for locking the doors is not related to student behavior.

The door problem stems from the removal of Cooper's previous doors during the summer of 2023. The doors were old and did not meet current fire codes, which meant that the need for new ones was immediate. The new doors were installed right before the start of school, including in the back stairwells. Throughout the first few weeks of the school year, the door magnets had many repeated errors, resulting in door stoppers being used to keep the stairwell doors open. This was a direct fire hazard and was another crucial reason why the back stairwells are now locked. Upon the introduction of the new policy to keep the stairwells locked, the New Hope Fire Marshall checked the state of the doors and decided the new policy was safe and met all fire codes.

You may immediately think: Why don't we just leave the back doors unlocked so students can still use the back staircases? That's a valid question. The reason is that if the doors are left unlocked, it becomes a safety hazard. The stairwell doors are not supposed to be opened, and that's been the conflict since the start of the year. The stairwell doors are meant only to be used in the situation when a fire occurs and we need to evacuate through the stairways. For the convenience of students, the administrative staff has long allowed this rule to be stretched until some students took advantage of this hospitality and used the staircases to skip class. Fortunately, this is no longer possible.

Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson provided additional insight for students who are upset by this policy. After many complaints from parents and students, Nelson has recommended that students who genuinely need back stairwell usage speak with him.

"I totally empathize with them and I get it. I'm not a big fan of crowds myself and getting around the busy hallways and stairwells is not fun. If that is really an issue with some of our students, we're always willing to make accommodations for students. That is what we do here at Cooper. We want to help everyone," he said.

Nelson also explained that another reason for the change in stairwell policy is the lack of staff members at Cooper. The staff cannot adequately regulate the halls and ensure everyone in the building is safe if the back stairwells are open to traffic.

I know that the new policy is infuriating. At first, I was very much against this new policy, but upon learning more about it, I know now this is the best way to handle a messy situation. Moving forward, be patient with administrative and hallway staff members. They do a lot to keep the building safe and are willing to support you if you ask for help.

## Starbucks practices deserve increased scrutiny

The company's pricing structure, reactions to unionization should give consumers pause before spending money at chain

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH  
Quill staff writer

There is no denying the overwhelming popularity of Starbucks. When walking through Cooper in the morning, there is almost always someone carrying around a Starbucks cup as though it is an accessory. Starbucks' increase in popularity has no sign of fading away. In fact, as of November 2023, Starbucks has a market cap of \$119.62 billion.

A big reason for the company's success is the amount they charge for a drink. The question many people ask themselves when faced with the price tag of their \$7 beverage is: Are Starbucks drinks really worth their price?

A lot of companies use inflation as an excuse to overcharge and Starbucks is one of them. In a recent article, a Starbucks spokesperson said, "We are forced to raise prices due to inflation and supply-chain issues." Not too long after that, a Starbucks report to investors said the company's "profit just went up 31 percent and we gave our CEO a 39 percent raise to \$20.4 million." Clearly, this might be where some of the money we spend on expensive drinks ends



Photo by AMARILYS BALMACEIDA

Starbucks continues to open new stores domestically and abroad.

up going.

Starbucks continues to have a number of sneaky business strategies that have had dramatic effects on employees and consumers alike. First and foremost, the sheer amount of ice put in their cold drinks is enough to raise an alarm about the costliness of their beverages.

Of course, consumers have been paying attention to this fact. There was a recent time when people were sharing concerns about

Starbucks' shady business tactics on social media. Big users of social media platforms would order two or three cups of ice in different sizes and a Starbucks drink with no ice, then pour said drink into the series of ice cups to prove that Starbucks was overcharging.

That's not even scratching the surface of Starbucks' shady business actions. On average, a beverage from Starbucks can cost anywhere from \$4 to \$10 depending on the

size and additives. The cost of the ingredients to make the drink are purchased in bulk and cost a small fraction of the price charged for the drink itself. Of course, coffee is an expensive product and a leading cause of deforestation. While coffee is understandably expensive, it is not expensive in proportion to what Starbucks charges customers.

But the company's issues don't stop there. In March 2023, Starbucks violated U.S. labor laws by withholding the credit card tipping option exclusively from unionized stores and by giving pay raises that were far less than those given to the nonunion counterparts. According to the U.S. Labor Department, Starbucks did not want its workers to unionize and that left workers feeling like their needs were not accounted for in the workplace. Workers are furious because the money from electronic tipping could increase their paychecks by hundreds of dollars.

As of June 2023, more than 8,000 workers began to unionize at 360 Starbucks locations out of the

**STARBUCKS**  
continues on page 8

## Skipping school can cause long-term life problems

Going to class is not just about learning the content, it is about taking on responsibilities and learning the value of hard work

Showing up to school seems like its optional to some students, but it's not. There are serious ramifications for not coming. These ramifications can range from small to big. A small consequence is that you could have open lunch taken away. An example of a big consequence is being kicked out of school for a few days. Of course, being kicked out for a few days just seems like a vacation when you don't come already. Regardless, it is important for all students to come to school.

Some students seem to think that not showing up to school is not a big deal. Since school work is done on Chromebooks much of the time, some students think that we should just make it like online school. However, the school is required to have a set amount

of days that you attend, and not doing so can lead to truancy issues, not to mention lower grades than you would get by being here.

It is important to remember that most of your work in class starts with lectures or other information you get from teachers in person. Going to school is where you learn where

to find "x" in math and where you count sig figs in chemistry. Skills like these are important if you hope to go to college or get a job in a related field.

Interacting with other people is something that students need to know how to do for life after high school. Be-

ing able to be a "people person" is a big thing. Knowing how to talk and interact with people is a skill not everyone has. For example, salespeople need to be good at interacting with new people for their job. This skill can be developed in high school and later perfected in college and as an adult.

Many teenage students say that they hate school, but most of us miss it when summer comes because we may not see our friends. We also miss the planning that goes into school and knowing we have a schedule of what's happening next. Having a day all mapped out is a benefit of school that we don't get

when school is not in session.

Even if you don't come to school in order to learn, you should come to see your friends and be around other people. You might meet someone in advisory while watching a presentation or you might make new friends at football practice. Who knows: you might find someone you like.

In the end, showing up to school isn't just about the school work. Showing up to school is about being responsible and getting ready for the real world. School shows us how to be on time and how to get things done on time. Let's show up to school and make memories. This will help us show our younger siblings and family what we can do and how successful we can be.

### From the Editors

## Dead Space reboot improves on a classic

The notoriety of the original game, which was first released in 2008, prompted Motive Studios to revisit the game in 2023

By LEO PEREZ  
Quill staff writer

*Dead Space* is a game first released back on October 13, 2008 before being rereleased on January 27, 2023. The remade version comes from Motive Studios and it was designed to be a resurrection of a “dead” franchise, bringing back old players and bringing in new ones, all of whom would come to love this game. Since its 2023 release, it has sold nearly two million copies and received stunningly positive reviews. As my review of *Dead Space* will show, the hype around the remake is well deserved.

*Dead Space* is a horror and science fiction shooter that focuses on world building, game mechanics, in-game lore and AI systems that completely shake you to your core. While playing the game, you will encounter horror like no other game and experience a story that messes with your head, betrays your instincts and provides the most amazing plot twist in gaming history. The original version of the game was a staple of the industry back in the day and was used as an example of how to make a good horror game. The original *Dead Space* took inspiration from another massive horror shooter, *Resident Evil 4*, without ripping off that excellent game.

The first thing of note about the game is its story. You are in the boots of Isaac Clarke, an engineer on board an emergency maintenance crew ship. Along with other crew members, you enter the famous planet-cracking ship, USG Ishimura. Once aboard, you quickly find that there is clearly something strange going on: the dock is empty, half the Ishimura is in the red and no one is picking up on the communication channel.

After turning on the power, the room you entered on the ship immediately goes into quarantine mode, with doors shutting and orange lights flashing. One of your crew explains that he hears something crawling around in the vents before a monster, taller than the average human, falls from the ceiling and kills that crew member.

The player soon learns that the entire ship was taken over by a cult to get an alien artifact that was on

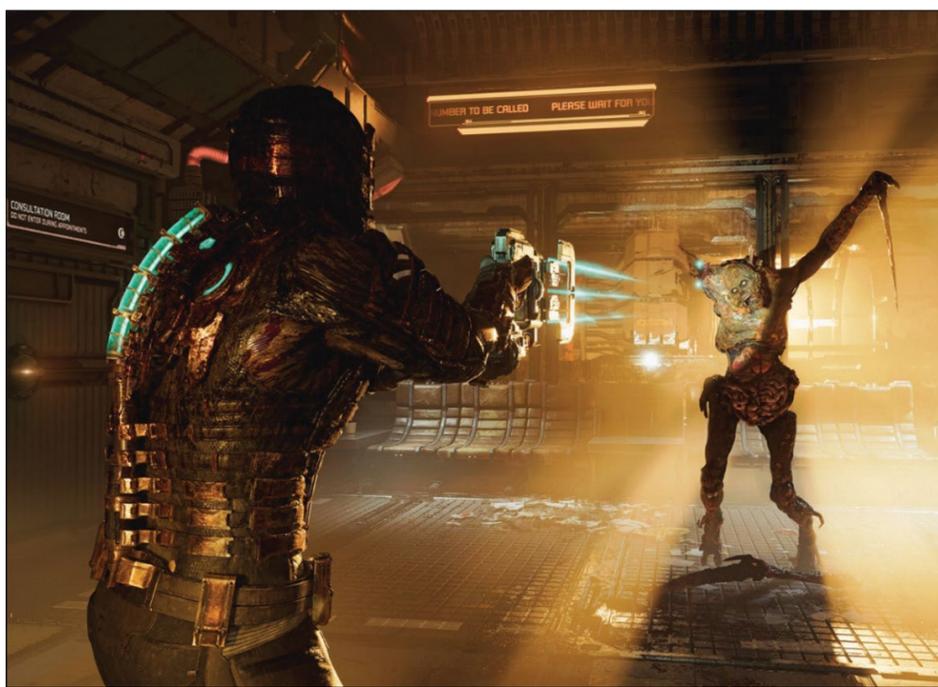


Photo by MOTIVE STUDIOS

*Dead Space* is a trailblazer in the shooter game genre thanks to its blend of horror and science fiction.

board. It was their belief that the artifact holds the next step for humanity, which is what inspired them to activate the object. As it turns out, the symbols on the artifact are the genetic code for undead monsters known as the necromorphs.

These monsters get into your head and use your worst fears, guilt and memories against you. For example, if you have a dead family member that you feel responsible for, the monster will make that family member get you to accept “the marker” in your mind before, finally, you give your body to it. It is with this setup that the rest of the game gets going.

*Dead Space* has creative and innovative gameplay features. You play in third-person view through which your health and stasis (freeze power) bar is displayed on the spine of the suit on Isaac’s back. If it is blue, you are at full health; if it is yellow, you are a little hurt; and if it is red, you are going to die if you get hit a few times. This is a change from the standard health bar, which is usually in the corner of your screen.

Similarly innovative is the ammo counter. In the game, you see it as a holographic counter beside your weapon. This clearly plays in the game’s lore because, if you were

in that universe for real, you would want to see how your buddy is doing at a glance and how much ammo you have in your tool or weapon.

The AI in this game is also top notch. The gaming system knows how a player acts and can gather data on how you play. For example, if you always back up in a fight, the enemy will spawn right behind you through vents, coming out of one behind the player to attack. If you tend to run through levels, then the game will recognize that and spawn enemies quickly as jumpscare.

The game also features creatures that actually do not die from a bullet to the head. Instead, you must shoot their limbs off and stomp on their corpses to get items from them. On that note, if you enter a room with multiple bodies, make sure to stomp them into pieces or an enemy called the “infector” can invade the room and transform the corpses.

Another fun element of the game is the collection of neat little details that the developers have put in. For example, you can hear Isaac’s heartbeat and breathing race if you stare at a body too long. Likewise, if you lose oxygen in zero gravity, then Isaac will gasp and choke.

The setting of the game is also effective. The game takes place in

the year 2508 and features missions on the USG Ishimura and on the planet Aegis VII. While you are on the ship, you will see horrors in the scenery around you, with blood and corpses spread everywhere. You can even find writing on the walls from survivors. There are messages about family, lists of regrets and rants from people who have completely lost their minds. The writing also has symbols from the alien language that can be translated if you want to know what those weird symbols mean.

When it comes to the planet Aegis VII, the setting is vast. However, the threat of death is always in the air. On the planet, you will see the bodies of the scientists, the cult members who were stupid to think that giving themselves to an alien artifact was going to be the next step in human evolution. Instead, all it resulted in was the taking of innocent lives, the lives of people who just needed the right kind of guidance.

Overall, *Dead Space* deserves your time if you truly want a scary, story-rich game that gives you a sense of fear and dread. It is the type of game in which you will feel defenseless and vulnerable even if you have a gun to protect yourself. *Dead Space* earns five out of five stars. Everyone should play this game.

## Punisher sees Phoebe Bridgers hit her stride

Singer-songwriter Bridgers marries meaningful lyrics with excellent musicianship

By AKEYA EASLEY  
Quill staff writer

*Punisher* by Phoebe Bridgers was released on June 18, 2020. It is the follow-up to the singer’s debut album, *Stranger in the Alps*. *Punisher* includes a multitude of genres: indie rock, emo folk and indie folk. This album was a pivotal part of my high school experience and I still remember how I felt listening to *Punisher* for the first time. Whether or not you are a fan of Bridgers or her style of music, I highly recommend checking out this album.

While *Punisher* is a solo album, Bridgers is not only a solo musician. In fact, more people know about her now because she is also in an indie rock supergroup, Boygenius. Her bandmates in the group are Julien Baker and Lucy Dacus, who make contributions to Bridgers’ sophomore album as well. The responses to the album were relatively positive upon its release, with *Punisher* receiving a rating of 8.7 out of 10 from *Pitchfork*, a popular music blog. In comparison to Bridgers’ debut album, *Punisher* is my reigning favorite. In my opinion, you just can’t compare the two due to the differences between them.

The lyricism in *Punisher* is unparalleled. One standout track is “I Know The End.” The song features an apocalyptic narrative in which acceptance and disappearance intertwine. This song reveals a consistent disappointment in the mundanity of the world, yet rather than allowing this to cause her to retreat, Bridgers urges the listener toward confrontation and acceptance.

Another great song is “Kyoto,” the third track. This song delves into Bridgers’ complex relationship with her father. Through the lyrics, she expresses a desire to see the world through his eyes. As she grapples with the perplexing nature of his actions, she questions why someone meant to be her greatest love could cause her such continuous hurt. The lyrics suggest a longing for understanding, even though the answers may be unsatisfying, as her father may knowingly perpetuate a harmful cycle.

The musical spectrum of *Punisher* is notable, extending from melancholic tones to more upbeat and experimental sounds. The shift from the slow, banjo-led “Graceland Too” to the vibrant “Kyoto” is seamless, creating a captivating musical journey. Bridgers’ adept navigation through these varied styles enhances the album’s cohesiveness, reflecting both her artistry and narrative depth. Each track offers a unique sonic experience, showcasing the intricacies of her songwriting and solidifying Bridgers’ willingness to experiment. The album emerges as a compelling artistic statement with a rich, textured soundscape.

The quality of Bridgers’ vocals also stands out. Her singing reveals an emotional depth, resonating with a profound and authentic intensity. Her singing isn’t just heard; it’s felt. There’s a rawness and vulnerability in her delivery that establishes a direct link between the listener and the profound emotions embedded in the lyrics.

A prime example of this is found in “I Know The End,” where her vocals don’t merely convey the words but carry a palpable sense of urgency and despair. These vocal nuances elevate the song, intensifying its apocalyptic themes and leaving an indelible impression on the listener, as if each note is a brushstroke painting a vivid emotional landscape.

In summary, *Punisher* isn’t just an album; it’s a resonant artistic declaration. Bridgers’ bold exploration of diverse genres, intertwined with the emotional intricacies woven into her lyrics and vocals, crafts an immersive musical experience. Beyond the music, the album beckons the listener toward introspection, confronts disappointments and navigates the web of human connections. This isn’t just an album: it’s a lasting imprint on the hearts of those who venture through its deep pathways. I rate *Punisher* five out of five stars.

## La Rosa de Guadalupe is a guilty pleasure

Although the acting is sometimes cheesy, the storylines are interesting and the messages are consistently uplifting

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO  
Quill staff writer

*La Rosa de Guadalupe* is a melodrama television series from Mexico that is focused on the Catholic religion, specifically The Virgin of Guadalupe, which is an apparition of the Virgin Mary. The intent of the series is to teach lessons to children and families while supporting religious faith. In each episode, audiences are shown that praying to Guadalupe can help with making sure people are safe.

The series started airing on February 5, 2008. It is directed by José Ángel García and is produced in Las Estrellas Studio in Mexico City. I chose this television series to review because I watched it when I was very young and I still watch it to this day. My mother was the one who would put on this television show in order to teach me morals and to give advice on what to do in certain situations. I believe any viewer can find something to enjoy about *La Rosa de Guadalupe*.

While I enjoy the series, it is often criticized by viewers who say the acting by the performers is not the best and the premises of the episodes are cheesy. Although these observations are valid, there are a few episodes that are quite good at showing realistic situations and what can happen to people who face them.

One episode that I feel captures what the show is all about is named “Nomofobia,” which is the 105th episode of the series. This episode shows some of the dangers of being obsessed with your cell phone. Nomofobia, which is known as “nomophobia” in English, is defined as,

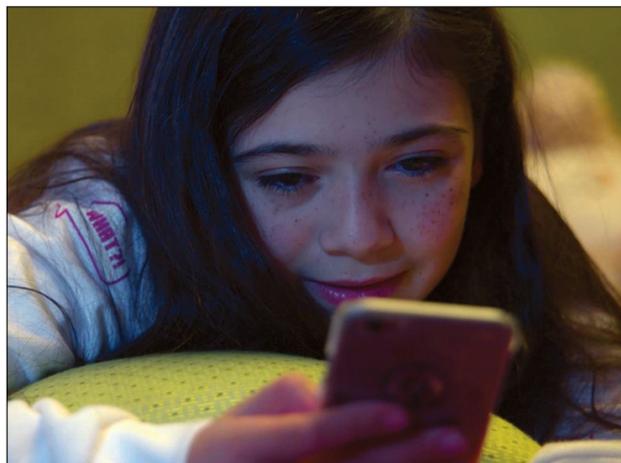


Photo by TELEVISAS.A. DE C.V.

This Mexican series, which started airing in 2008, is available on Amazon.

“a psychological condition when people have a fear of being detached from mobile phone connectivity” according to the National Institutes of Health. In this episode, the main character, Ana, gets a phone from her mother when she begins middle school. The episode is about Ana slowly getting addicted to the phone, which escalates to the point that she steals and lies to her mother and grandmother. This episode is popular on social media such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok due to the climax of the story.

The acting in this episode by some of the performers is good, while the acting by others is just okay. First, the child actor playing Ana behaves in a way that feels believable for a young child or a young teen. During the climax, after Ana’s mother takes her phone, Ana throws a tantrum and throws a vase and a few school supplies onto the floor. The actions of the actor in this

sequence seem accurate to what a childhood tantrum looks like.

At the same time, it is the adult performers who diminish the acting quality in this same scene. The mother’s actions feel unbelievable and the grandmother displays stale acting.

However, not all of the adult actors are bad. In the episode, the performers playing the teacher and the counselor demonstrate better acting. Overall, the acting in this episode could have been better.

A better part of the episode is the music. The music throughout the episode is what gives the drama more of a climactic feeling. The moment when Ana is in her bed and her mom comes in asking why she is not ready, and Ana tells her mother not to worry about it, is when the music starts. There is a dramatic sound of drums and string instruments that makes it seem crazy that Ana is still in bed.

This happens again when Ana

is told by her teacher that she will be holding her phone until the end of the day. When Ana goes to try to get her phone back, there is a guitar solo with a few wind instruments creating a melody that makes the viewer know that she is doing something she is not supposed to do. This type of music plays when Ana is in trouble throughout the episode, which cues the viewer’s response to those moments.

Although there are not many instances of special effects throughout the series, there is one that happens in this episode that is effective. When Ana’s mother learns that Ana has nomophobia from the counselor, she prays to a small statue of La Virgen De Guadalupe. She asks the apparition to help Ana get through the illness that she has. After praying, a choir sings a tune and a white rose appears. The white rose means that La Virgen has heard the prayer and will do what she can to help those who need her help. The special effect is the rose that appears. There is an effect of a type of smoke appearing before the rose comes into the frame. Again, the special effects are modest, but they have an impact on the viewer.

*La Rosa de Guadalupe* is an excellent series that is focused on showing kids and families good morals and giving them advice on what to do in certain moments. The show features okay acting, a good soundtrack and some suitable special effects, which help make it memorable. I believe that if you want to watch this series, go for it. It might not be everyone’s cup of tea, but I enjoyed it quite a lot. *La Rosa de Guadalupe* earns three out of five stars.

## Premier Performers

The story of the musicians and artists who bring their talents to Cooper

### Nicholas Johnson

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Nicholas Johnson (12) is involved in a variety of curricular and extracurricular activities. On the performance end of the spectrum, Johnson takes part in music and art classes.

"I am in choir, which I started in middle school," he said. "I am also in art, which I started my senior year."

Johnson said he first decided to join choir because he likes to sing. Meanwhile, his decision to give art a try came from his general love of art.

Now that he has spent some time in both activities, Johnson cited "seeing friends and making new friends" as his favorite aspects of taking part in choir. As for art, he said he likes the process itself.

"I like drawing pictures," he said.



Photo by C. VANG

A favorite memory from his involvement in the arts came this and last fall through his work in choir. Specifically, Johnson said he liked the chance to take part in the annual Fall Festival.

"I enjoyed going to Orchestra Hall," Johnson said.

In addition to his experiences in the arts, Johnson is also an accomplished athlete. Johnson takes part in the Robins Adapted Athletics program, through which he plays soccer, floor hockey and softball. As part of this program, Johnson has been part of teams that have won the Minnesota state titles in adapted sports.

Outside of school, Johnson enjoys spending time watching YouTube videos and traveling with his parents.

Johnson said he is looking forward to graduating and planning for his future after high school.

### Elias Contreras Tapia

By CHIMUAL VANG  
Quill staff writer

Elias Contreras Tapia (12) is a musician who participates in Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Marching band, Jazz 1 and Jazz 2. Contreras Tapia started Concert Band this year and has been in Wind Ensemble for three years. He has also participated in the Marching Band and both Jazz 1 and 2 for four years.

He said he decided to start Concert Band this year because there was "no foods class teacher available." Meanwhile, he started with Marching Band and

Wind Ensemble because he "simply enjoyed both subjects, even back during the COVID years in 2020 when school was taken online." Finally, he stated that he wanted to learn how to play trumpet, which is why he decided to join Jazz 1



Photo by C. VANG

during his second year of high school.

What he has learned throughout his experiences in Concert Band so far is how to play the trombone. In Jazz, he has also learned how to play the trumpet. He added that he loves Marching Band and Wind Ensemble as a passion. Overall, he enjoys playing music and being in a "fun community full of surprises."

In Marching Band, Contreras Tapia is the drum major and plays a huge role in leading the group. In Jazz, he helps make sure the group knows what they are doing through his role as section leader playing the tenor saxophone.

After high school, Contreras Tapia will attend St. Cloud State University for a major related to engineering. While he is still unsure about what degree he wants to pursue, he said he will definitely continue with music.

### Serenity Lee

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH  
Quill staff writer

Serenity Lee (12) has been a member of the Cooper choir program since she started at the school during her freshman year.

"I started choir in ninth grade because I enjoy singing and learning more about music," Lee said. "I've been in Freshman Choir, Bel Canto Choir and Concert Choir, and it's been a really great experience."

Lee said that her favorite memory from choir was when she got

to perform at Orchestra Hall during the annual Robbinsdale District Fall Festival. Orchestra Hall is a concert venue that is located on 11th Street at Peavey Plaza in downtown Minneapolis. Lee said it was truly an honor for



Photo by C. VANG

anyone involved in music to perform there because it is a professional concert space.

In addition to that show, Lee said she is excited for the upcoming concerts the choir has yet to do this year.

"As for performances in choir, we will have many throughout the school year like the winter concert and the A World of Music March concert," Lee said.

In addition to singing, Lee is also involved in the fine arts. She said her favorite class is painting because she enjoys creating art.

However, Lee shared that she has no future plans for continuing her involvement in art as a career after high school. Instead, she plans on attending Hennepin Technical College to get her associate's degree.

### Addison Garfield

By NOAH PLAHN  
Quill staff writer

Addison Garfield (12) has gone to Cooper for years, but heading into her final year, she decided to join the performing arts. Garfield made the decision to start her first year of choir this year and has quickly found it enjoyable.

"This is my first year in choir. I started singing because it's really fun," she said.

Garfield cited multiple things she has enjoyed about choir thus far. Specifically, she said she has enjoyed spending time with friends more than anything else and has enjoyed the opportunity to further bond with them in class.

"[I enjoy] hanging out with friends," Garfield said.

While she is still in her first year of choir, Garfield said she has already



Photo by C. VANG

developed a favorite memory from her time in the group.

"My favorite memory is when we [sang] 'Children Go When I Send Thee,'" she said.

Beyond singing in choir, Garfield narrowed down her two favorite subjects at school to math and reading. She chose those two courses because they both benefit her outside of the classroom.

"My favorite classes are math and reading because it helps me," Garfield said.

Regarding the out-of-classroom activities that she enjoys, Garfield cited bowling and swimming as key pastimes.

Following high school, Garfield plans to pursue a career in the performing arts.

"I want to be an actress," Garfield said.

## Keshi gains new fans with *Gabriel*

The hit song "Limbo" helped this Keshi album get increased online and streaming attention

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO  
Quill staff writer

Keshi is a Vietnamese American singer and songwriter who not a lot of people knew about before one of his songs, "Limbo," became popular. That song, which got a lot of attention from people, is from his album called *Gabriel*. Music fans should check out this album, which features many songs as good as "Limbo."

Something interesting about Keshi is his name. His name originated during his childhood. At that time, his girlfriend's family called him "Keshi" as his nickname, which is based on his real name, Casey Thai Luong. Since his girlfriend's family called him Keshi, he started going by that name all the time.

Before Keshi became an artist, he graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School and got his Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of Texas in Austin. Eventually, he successfully moved into making and producing his own songs. Now, people around the world listen to his music. One reason for that is that Keshi's songs, especially those on the album *Gabriel*, all have their own interesting meanings.

One great song on the album that demonstrates this is called "Understand." This song isn't about love alone; instead, it is about getting married to the person you love, the person who you want to be with the rest of your life. A song lyric from "Understand" that demonstrates this is, "Take you by the hand; you're the only one who understands." That is one of the lyrics that made this song a popular one on his album.

"Limbo" is another great song



Photo by ISLAND RECORDS

Keshi is the performance name for musician Casey Thai Luong.

from the album. This song is about the way in which people struggle to define their own identities. Keshi attributes the meaning of the song to a time he was lost and unsure of who he was as a person. A part of the song that demonstrates this is when Keshi sings, "But this is all that I am; I only show you the best of me, best of me." This lyric gets to the heart of the emotion he is trying to communicate in the song.

Another song I enjoyed on *Gabriel* is called "Angel." This song is about a person in love who believes that this love is reciprocated. In the song, we see the protagonist pouring their heart into a relationship in which the other person is not respectful and does not give the same amount of attention in return. As Keshi sings, "What could I do? I thought you were

an angel and lost myself when I caught sight of you."

Another song that serves as a highlight of the album is its title track. "Gabriel" is a song about two lovers who are separating even though one of the lovers does not want to leave. As Keshi sings in the song, "I don't want you to go." Needless to say, the song expresses how both people will experience some pain when they separate, which he emphasizes in the line, "Know that I'll miss you so."

Thanks to these many great songs, *Gabriel* is an album music lovers should check out. The angel Gabriel is often used as a symbol of faith and protection. That is a theme that pops up often throughout Keshi's excellent album. Overall, Keshi's *Gabriel* earns five out of five stars.

## MENTAL HEALTH HELP AVAILABLE TO ALL HAWKS continued from page 2

racism, global warming and poverty also contribute to mental health problems for teens. On an individual level, conflict with friends or family members, and concerns about grades and school deadlines, can negatively impact the mental health of students," Weiers said.

Echoing many of Weiers' points is Ms. Willis, one of Cooper's social workers. Willis had many important insights regarding the challenges students face in school. One prominent issue is the lack of student engagement, which can be seen through the number of students not attending classes. Willis highlighted that anxiety is a significant factor contributing to this disengagement. Some students, grappling with anxiety, find solace in avoiding larger crowds and utilizing the restrooms as a means of escape. Fortunately, to counteract these issues, Willis said there are many things a student can do at school and outside of school to improve their mental health.

"To maintain good mental health, students can take advantage of several resources. These include seeking support from positive and uplifting friends; listening to music or watching videos that promote

feelings of well-being; engaging in creative activities such as coloring and journaling; exercising regularly; and spending time outdoors. Additionally, the staff has implemented the use of aromatherapy in their classrooms by providing lotions for students who wish to use them. This approach can help to create a soothing and relaxing atmosphere, further promoting good mental health among students," Willis said.

Another resource for helpful mental health practices is Cooper health teacher Mr. Rooney. According to Rooney, there are many practical ways for students to manage stress and anxiety. He emphasized the importance of getting between eight and nine hours of sufficient sleep nightly, regular exercise, healthy eating and balancing responsibilities. Rooney also advocated for the use of school planners for organization and advised against using drugs or alcohol as coping mechanisms. Additionally, Rooney said he likes to see students fostering a holistic approach to mental well-being at Cooper by embracing habits for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

"Schools in our district do a

good job of helping students work through their mental health issues in my opinion. As I mentioned earlier, our support staff at Cooper is good at providing support. The problem arises if the student doesn't seek help or the signs [and] symptoms go unnoticed," Rooney said.

Overall, Weiers encouraged students to remember that Cooper is here to provide resources for anyone feeling stressed or anxious. Whether juggling school and work, or feeling overwhelmed by making life decisions, talking to someone can help. She encourages each student to lean on the support systems around them: friends, family or teachers. According to Weiers, Cooper wants to create a community where everyone feels comfortable seeking help when they need it. She said that students are not alone, and there are people ready to listen and offer support.

"Know that every day can't be your best day ever and that the hard days won't last forever either. It's normal to have ups and downs in your emotions. If the low points start to feel longer than usual or are interfering with you doing things you used to enjoy, be sure to reach out for help," Weiers said.

## HAWK'S NEST PROVIDES SUPPORT TO STUDENTS continued from page 3

al classroom. The needs tend to be mainly math, from at least what I've seen, so maybe another math teacher could come and help as well. Maybe if it expanded to three days a week. Tuesday or Thursday might not work for sports or doesn't work during [different seasons]," she said.

A veteran Hawk's Nest teacher is Mr. Balika. Balika teaches AP Biology and Modern Biology, which allows him to work with the students who need help in science among other subjects.

"The school [offers this program] to help give students support and space to work on their classwork outside of the normal school day. Not all of our students have access to a study hall during the day and some students have to stay after school for a variety of reasons. Offering a place to work on assignments and get support from teachers can be really helpful for some students," Balika said.

According to Balika, it is witnessing the academic improvement of the students with whom he works that is a specific highlight of Hawk's Nest.

"Personally, I do this because I really enjoy working with students one on one. I occasionally get to see small victories like seeing a student pass a test or pass a class that they were struggling with before they decided to join. It is really enjoyable to help a student experience those wins," he said.

Similar to Fair, Balika recommends that students join Hawk's Nest but also stresses the importance of discipline and consistency.

"I do recommend students join if they need help with their classes. As long as you are willing to work, and ask for help, you will find the tutoring sessions helpful. We can provide adequate support to students as long as students are reaching out for help while they attend the Hawk's

Nest session. We have more teacher and volunteer support this year, so students have a variety of people to work with. Some students come just to work on assignments with friends, and that is fine. However, I have seen students experience more success by coming in and regularly working one on one with the teachers or volunteers that attend our sessions," he said.

Balika echoed Fair's hope for the future that more tutors will join Hawk's Nest given their importance to the program.

"I would like to see more peer tutoring [and] mentoring. It is one thing for a teacher to assist you with your work, but it can be really beneficial for students to help tutor other students. It helps students work on communication skills and can help the peer tutor reinforce different concepts they learned about in past years," Balika said.

# Hawk athletes entering winter sports season

The second year in the Tri-Metro Conference is giving many Cooper teams the ability to be more competitive against their opponents



Photo by TALONS

The Cooper boys basketball team features many returning players this year, which allows them to start the season with strong chemistry.

By MILO ATHIAS FINN  
Quill staff writer

In the state of Minnesota, the cold climate is inevitable. Despite conflicting opinions about winter, Cooper's countless athletic activities make up for the chilly weather. Winter sports tend to be extremely festive for the Hawks players and fans, with the sheer quantity of sports drawing in a large number of participants.

## Boys Swimming

The boys swim team is coached by Mr. Valek. He said there were numerous highlights last year.

"Some highlights from our last season were getting to compete at the Maroon and Gold Invitational at the University of Minnesota and placing well at sections, even with our small roster of nine swimmers," Valek said.

Due to Cooper's low number of swimmers, the Cooper team combined with the Armstrong team this season.

"This season, we are becoming a cooperative swim and dive program with Robbinsdale-Armstrong. It will be exciting to merge and be more competitive as a district. We have a loaded meet schedule this season, so it will be exciting to get to compete against as many teams as we are," Valek said.

Practice is an opportunity for the team to work on various aspects of their craft. Valek said a lot of planning goes into the structure of his practices.

"A typical swim practice includes a warm-up with stretches and a discussion about the practice so that we are all on the same page. After that, we are in the pool to work on technique and endurance. Every day has a different focus, so practices aren't always the same. We put a lot of yards in while learning new techniques and honing in on ones we know," he said.

According to Valek, swim meets give athletes a chance to test the waters against other competitors.

"A typical competition has eight individual swimming events, three swimming relays and one diving event," Valek said. "Though individuals swim their own times, everyone scores points based on how they place, making it a great individual and team sport. This season we have 14 regular season meets, so it's going to be a great opportunity to get good races in before the section meet in February."

The swim team offers a variety of benefits for students, establishing skills that can be used not only in the pool but in the classroom.

"Swimming and diving get you in incredible shape and offer a setting for reaching individual goals while competing as a team. The camaraderie is a big piece of why swimmers and divers love the sport. Every practice is different and challenging, but we emphasize having fun and reaching our goals. It is a great sport to be a part of if you are considering joining a winter activity," Valek said.

## Dance Team

The Dance Team is coached by Ms. Braden. She said she is looking forward to the upcoming schedule and future competitions.

"[We had] our first competition on November 28 at Columbia Heights. We will have three conference meets, a conference championship and two invitationals in Big Lake and Monticello," Braden said.

The Dance Team is not lacking in experience, with a lot of the athletes being returning veterans.

"We have a lot of veterans on the team so we are hoping for another successful year," Braden said.

Braden said that practices follow a set structure.

"We typically practice three days a week. We do a warm-up, which may include jogging, conditioning and stretching. We move into a time of technique, where we review new skills and practice moves in our dance. We then learn choreography or work on cleaning our dance," Braden said.

As for competitions, Braden said they are organized by school and style of dance.

"Each school competes in their style of dance. It is like a big show. At the end, awards are shared with every team out on the gym floor," Braden said.

Despite the season already being underway, students are still encouraged to try out for the Dance Team. The coaches are flexible about students' schedules, creating a stress-free environment. This allows

also encourages students to try out the sport for themselves.

"We have a strong, fun group of returning girls, but if anyone is interested, hockey is a fun game and we are happy to teach it," Cook said.

Hockey is a very skill-based sport, requiring prowess and efficiency. Cook said a typical practice is designed to work on technical skills.

"We work in groups, working on skills and team play. We practice at the New Hope Ice Arena after school," he said.

As for games, Cook said they normally have two a week: one home and one away.

According to Cook, playing hockey has benefits for student athletes.

"Hockey is a great sport. It can teach you everything you would ever need to know on how to work together inside of a group. It creates great relationships and gives you a chance to compete and be aggressive," Cook said.

## Nordic Skiing

The Nordic ski team is entering its new season. One athlete on the team is Malik Williams (11). He said he had many personal highlights from last year.

"My personal highlight was the annual costume competition at the end of the season. It's always so much fun seeing

over the question of the day and then we get into our workout," Williams said.

For students who are considering joining the Nordic team, Williams said there are cross-sport benefits that Nordic ski provides.

"Anyone joining the sport would benefit greatly from participating. I joined as a freshman and it did wonders for my running technique. I also met lots of really cool people and I was pushed to raise my limits and work harder," Williams said.

## Wrestling

This year's wrestling team is coached by Mr. Wong. He said there were many highlights from last year. First, 2023 graduate Bright Deku made it to state in the heavyweight division. At the conference level, 2023 graduate Taten Shroyer was All-Conference, while Deku and 2023 graduates David Giron Leiva and Yussef Shabazz were All-Conference Honorable Mention. Finally, the team as a whole won a Silver Academic Team Award for their grade point average of 3.2.

With the majority of last year's roster having graduated, Wong said the wrestling team is now in a rebuild phase.

"We are looking to rebuild our program with a new crop of students. We return a young group of underclassmen that have had some varsity experience this

Wong encouraged interested athletes to join wrestling due to the relevant lessons it teaches.

"Wrestling teaches many valuable life lessons, such as battling through adversity, goal setting and the value of hard work to name a few. Wrestling also is a great way to get in shape for other sports as well," Wong said.

## Boys Hockey

The Cooper side of the Armstrong-Cooper boys hockey team is represented by Zach Allen (12).

"I would say probably the biggest highlight from last season was us having a winning record," Allen said.

Allen has several aspirations for the upcoming season and some teams he is looking forward to playing.

"I believe the upcoming season will be a strong one. Last year, we competed with some teams that were better, but we now want to face off against teams like Maple Grove, Edina and Rogers," Allen said.

According to Allen, hockey practices begin with warm-ups before moving into skill-building drills.

"Usually, all the drills we do we already know, so we don't have to take much time out of practice to explain them. We just hop into them. Near the end, we just talk about strategy," he said.

As for game days, Allen said the team usually follows a set routine.

"We usually travel to the arena site, have a team meeting and have our warm-ups. We then get into the game itself," Allen said.

According to Allen, Cooper athletes should consider joining the team because it is challenging but fun.

"Incoming students should have the ability to work hard. The coaches really like to see hard workers. They also like you to be very communicative with them so that they know what you're doing and see how much you're working," he said.

## Adapted Hockey

Nicholas Johnson (12) is one member of the successful adapted hockey team at Cooper. He said the team is looking to follow up last year's triumphs with another strong year in 2023-2024.

"The adapted hockey team won the Minnesota state title last year. We have a great coach, good skills being learned and we met people from other schools," Johnson said.

Despite the team's success, Johnson said there are still areas in need of improvement. For example, the adapted hockey team's lack of players makes dividing play time difficult. Johnson said the team has aspirations for a larger roster.

"I am hopeful the team's roster will grow this year. We need more players. We have fun but need to sub in. Most players keep on playing every year. Even siblings are on the team," Johnson said.

According to Johnson, a typical practice in adapted hockey is similar to a practice in any other sport.

"Our practices include warm-ups, instructions from the coach and a look at the playbook. We then practice passing, walking fast and eye-balling the net," Johnson said.

Johnson said the connection with teammates is one reason why more students should join the sport.

"I think students should join because you can make new friends, get better and get more skilled at something. We are rock stars and win a lot," Johnson said.

## Boys Basketball

The boys basketball team is looking to make an immediate impact on the conference this year. One varsity starter is Chance Wicks (12), who said there were numerous highlights from last year.

"I liked hanging out with teammates and the overall vibe of the team," he said.

As many of the players are returning athletes, Wicks said they already have a strong bond and sense of camaradery. Those elements will be important parts of the team reaching its goals for the 2023-2024 season.

"We're going to look good this year. I think we're going to go far. We might end up getting to the Target Center. That's our goal," Wicks said.

Wicks explained what a typical practice looks like for folks who are not as familiar with the sport of basketball.

"First, we start out with a little bit of stretching. Sometimes, we'll run around the gym for a good 30-45 minutes. Then,

WINTER SPORTS  
continues on page 8



Photo by TALONS

The Hawks swim squad is joining forces with the Armstrong Falcons this year due to low numbers on both teams.

students to focus on their craft, regardless of external factors.

"We provide a safe space to learn and try something new. We have dancers help choreograph our dances so you get to work on your creativity. It is overall so fun and the season goes by so fast," Braden said.

## Girls Hockey

The girls hockey team is coached by Mr. Cook. Cook said there were some enjoyable moments from last season.

"We had fun team bus trips and we beat Wayzata in the section tournament," Cook said.

The girls hockey team is primarily made up of returning athletes, but Cook

people race in costumes," Williams said.

Williams said one aspiration for the new season is to recruit more participants.

"I think the outlook is to get more racers. We have a very small roster of racers for both genders right now and expanding that would be very beneficial," Williams said.

Nordic ski practices are taken seriously, as they give athletes a chance to improve their skills.

"Our practice starts with everyone meeting in the AVID room or in the little foyer next to it. The coach will go over the plan for the day whether it be an indoor weight lifting day, a distance run or an off-site ski practice. We stretch while going

past season," Wong said.

Helping prepare the new wrestlers for competition is Wong's practice plan.

"A typical practice includes strength and conditioning workouts, drilling wrestling moves and live wrestling with partners," he said.

When it comes to wrestling meets, Wong said it is "mostly an individual sport with a team aspect as well."

"Competitions are duals, which is team versus team; individual tournaments, which is when each weight class wrestles in an tournament-style, bracket format; and dual team tournaments, which is team versus team in a tournament-style, bracket format," he said.

## Cooper Competitors

The story of the athletes who strive for success in Cooper sports

### Catiya Dyar

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Catiya Dyar (12) just finished her final season with the Cooper volleyball team. Dyar has been playing volleyball since seventh grade.

"I had to find a sport to play because my mom made me," she said. "It also seemed cool hitting a ball around the court."

Dyar pointed to the bonds she formed with teammates and the ability to learn new skills as some highlights of her time in volleyball.

"Meeting new teammates every year and connecting on and off the court was great. I also loved being able to learn and master new things every practice," she said.

Among her favorite moments from this season was her success in

blocking her coaches during practice and having a 5-1 record at one point in the season. During this season, she also had the chance to become the team's only setter.

"I think that led to me becoming a leader," she said. "I was always there to get my teammates up after we were falling low or struggling."

When she is off the court, Dyar said she enjoys painting, coloring, drawing and completing puzzles.

"I love to do puzzles," she said. "I enjoy 500-piece puzzles, 700 pieces and 1,000 pieces."

Although Dyar is not sure if volleyball will be in her future, she is focused on studying to become an architect.

"One day, I want to start my own home and landscaping business," Dyar said.



Photo by B. ARIAS

### Jasmine Wilson

By CHIMUAL VANG  
Quill staff writer

Jasmine Wilson (12) is a volleyball athlete at Cooper. She has been playing volleyball for five years now. She said that she originally started playing volleyball because she was inspired by an anime.

"I picked volleyball because, and this might sound kind of lame, I began watching *Haikyu*, which is an anime about volleyball," she said.

Wilson said she loves being able to work together with her teammates during volleyball practices because they are supportive and determined to do their best. This year in volleyball, Wilson was a setter and right-side hitter. She explained that nothing feels better than connecting with the ball while hitting it.

"Nothing felt better than hitting the

ball and getting a kill, as well as giving my hitters a dime, a perfect set so they could hit their best," she said.

Wilson was co-captain last season and was captain this season alongside Attoria McDonald (12) and Tracy Nguyen (10).

Wilson's favorite classes during the school day are Anatomy and Physiology and IB Art. She said that she loves the first subject because it allows her to study the human body and mind, and the second because it gives her a safe space to channel creative energy and be free of herself.

Outside of school, Wilson enjoys painting, going on walks and playing with her cats.

After high school, Wilson will attend Minnesota State University, Mankato for either sports medicine or elementary education.



Photo by B. ARIAS

### Vojtech Anderle

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Vojtech Anderle (12) played soccer in the fall and plans on joining Cooper's lacrosse team in the spring. As a foreign exchange student, Anderle said his decision to play soccer was an easy one.

"Soccer is the most popular sport in Europe, therefore, I was familiarized with the sport before I joined the Cooper team after my arrival here in Minnesota at the start of the school year," he said. "I played countless times with my friends at home in the Czech Republic."

It was that same desire to play with friends that was Anderle's favorite aspect of his time as a Hawk player.

"The moments I enjoyed the most from the soccer season were the practices," he said. "I enjoyed training with other students from Cooper and having

fun with them."

During the season, Anderle cited the first half of a match against Breck as being a particular highlight.

"In that half, we showed our capability to compete against higher-level teams and we controlled the game," he said.

With the fall season at its close, Anderle said he is looking forward to playing lacrosse this spring.

"Lacrosse is a sport that is not so popular in the Czech Republic, thus it will be something new for me," he said.

Outside of sports, Anderle said he enjoys his U.S. Government and English classes. In his free time, he said he likes to exercise, read, study and play guitar.

While he is not exactly sure about his plans for the future, Anderle said he will likely go to college after his return to the Czech Republic.



Photo by B. ARIAS

### Julianna Smith

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Julianna Smith (12) was a member of the Hawks volleyball team in the fall.

"I have been playing for five years," she said. "I started in eighth grade because my friends were joining."

The importance of friendship was cited by Smith as a major reason why she continued with the sport. She said she liked being part of the growth of the team over her five years on the squad.

"I have enjoyed playing with my friends and making new ones," she said.

Having been involved with the sport of volleyball for half a decade has allowed Smith to witness her own progress as an athlete. She said she was able

to continue to pick up new skills along the way.

"I liked seeing myself improve and learn how to do new things," she said.

With the fall season now complete, Smith said she is turning her attention to doing well in the classroom. She said her math class ranks among her favorite subjects in school.

"My Functions, Statistics and Trigonometry class is interesting and fun," Smith said.

Outside of Cooper, Smith said she enjoys spending her free time playing volleyball, playing bass guitar, watching television and exercising.

After graduating, Smith hopes to work toward becoming a veterinary technician. She added that she intends on staying involved in athletics in the future as well.



Photo by B. ARIAS

## Christian athletes unite in faith

Cooper's chapter of Fellowship of Christian Athletes is now in its third year



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

The FCA group meets in Ms. Meredith's room, 389, during both the A and B HLL sessions every Tuesday.

By AMARILYS BALMACEDA  
Quill staff writer

The Cooper chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) is now entering its third year. The group is part of the national FCA organization, a nonprofit first founded in 1954.

"FCA has been challenging coaches and athletes on the professional, college, high school, junior high and youth levels to use the powerful platform of sport to reach every coach and every athlete with the transforming power of Jesus Christ," a statement on the FCA website explains. "FCA focuses on serving local communities around the globe by engaging, equipping and empowering coaches and athletes to unite, inspire and change the world through the gospel."

Serving as the advisor for Cooper's FCA chapter is Ms. Meredith. In addition to teaching math, Meredith is also an assistant coach for the Hawks Nordic team, which sparked her interest in starting a chapter of FCA at Cooper.

"I have a passion for my faith in Christ, and when I learned that a colleague of mine at Armstrong advises FCA, I got encouraged to start FCA here at Cooper. A graduate from Cooper, Chris Hunt, is the West Metro FCA director, and he was instrumental in helping this group get started here as well," she said.

While there is a focus on Chris-

tian athletes within the group's mission, Meredith explained that they also emphasize skills that can help athletes and non-athletes outside of the context of sports.

"The intent is to encourage our members to live their lives like we are runners in a race: to be disciplined, goal-oriented and encouraging," she said.

The FCA meets during HLL sessions A and B on Tuesdays in room 389. According to Meredith, meetings tend to follow a similar pattern.

"Typically, we share praises and struggles. We read from the Bible and ask and answer questions about the text. We pray for each other and enjoy each other's fellowship," she said.

One student who has enjoyed his time with FCA is Shadrack Otero (10).

"I joined FCA because I wanted to get closer to God and just learn more about him in a school setting," he said.

Although Otero is a basketball player, he said the group is not just for athletes.

"I feel like this club isn't only for athletes. Anyone who is interested in it overall can come," he said.

According to Otero, his time in the FCA meetings has allowed him to deepen his faith and develop new friendships.

"I have benefited from FCA by having a stronger relationship with God in his word and just meeting people with similar interests and views,"

he said.

Based on his positive experience in FCA, Otero said other students would benefit from attending a meeting.

"I would encourage anyone to get involved with FCA that wants to improve their lifestyle and is looking for someone to take their problems to," he said.

Another student who is enjoying his time in FCA is Rithy Sam (10), who takes part in football and track.

"I joined FCA because I wanted an opportunity to get closer to God and I wanted to know what FCA was all about," Sam said.

As a member of the group, Sam said he has developed a "stronger relationship with Jesus" and "a stronger connection with the people around [him] that have the same mindset." It is for those reasons that he hopes other students join FCA.

"I encourage anyone to get involved with FCA that wants to improve their relationship with God and wants to improve as a better person in general," Sam said.

Students who are interested in attending a FCA meeting are invited to sign up in Edificiency for the A or B session any Tuesday. Students can also contact Meredith via email at [lorraine\\_meredith@rdale.org](mailto:lorraine_meredith@rdale.org).

"[I want students] to be encouraged in their personal faith and walk with Christ and to enjoy one another's company," Meredith said.

### STARBUCKS PRACTICES DESERVE INCREASED SCRUTINY continued from page 4

9,000 corporate-owned locations in the U.S. Starbucks workers in 40 states in the U.S. have voted to unionize, but none have gotten a collective bargaining agreement.

The National Labor Relations Board has found Starbucks guilty of a slew of labor violations, along with worker intimidation, discriminatory rules and unlawful discipline. They also found that Starbucks terminated union organizers.

This year, The Red Cup Rebellion is a strike that the Starbucks workers have put together. Since Starbucks' biggest sales days are around the holidays, Starbucks workers decided to initiate a three-day strike starting on December 16, 2023 to protest low wages, understaffing and broken equipment, and to promote their desire to unionize.

It would be nice if Starbucks

could use some of their billions of dollars to help with innovating a sustainable way to farm coffee and pay their workers fairly.

As Starbucks continues to grow, so does the overall desire to drink their beverages despite all of the concerns just described. In fact, Starbucks has remodeled more than 15,000 stores since 2007. With such costly labor prices and materials, that is a miraculous number to see.

Even more staggering are the big numbers Starbucks pulls in for yearly sales and revenue. According to [macrotrends.net](https://www.macrotrends.net), "Starbucks revenue for the 12 months ending June 30, 2023 was \$35.016 billion, a 9.48 percent increase year-over-year. Starbucks annual revenue for 2022 was \$32.25 billion, a 10.98 percent increase from 2021. Starbucks annual revenue for 2021 was \$29.061

billion, a 23.57 percent increase from 2020."

Is the convenience of Starbucks really worth the big price tag attached? Not really, as the wait time to get your beverage at Starbucks takes longer than it does to make a drink at home in the morning. Moreover, with Starbucks being a greedy company engaging in union busting, it's safe to say people shouldn't be supporting them by buying from them.

Consumers have the strength in numbers to decrease their sales, but Starbucks will most likely continue to be the largest coffee shop chain unless people get sick of their ridiculous prices and terrible business practices. Considering all of this and possibly more that wasn't covered, will you continue to buy from Starbucks?

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we'll hop into our plays and drills.

Basketball is a sport with an abundance of professional leagues inside and outside of the U.S. It is one of the most popular sports around the world, giving opportunities to a variety of young athletes. Wicks said those are key reasons why people should take part in the boys basketball program at Cooper.

"It can get you in shape, and if you're very good at it, you can get scholarships for it, and get an education as well. That's how it can benefit you," Wicks said.

#### Girls Basketball

The Hawks girls basketball team has Ms. Rich as its new head coach. According to Rich, the team had a 20-6 record last year, but that was just one of the ways in

which they were successful.

"We had five seniors graduate and sent four of them to college on a scholarship," Rich said.

With a large portion of last year's roster being graduating seniors, it will be a relatively young team to start the 2023-2024 season. Rich said a main goal for the season is building chemistry between athletes who may not have played together on the court yet.

"This year we're going to be very young, so honestly, just getting chemistry isn't just about wins and losses. It's important, but not the end-all, be-all," Rich said.

As a new head coach, Rich said she will emphasize having structured practices designed to help her players improve.

"Typically, we start practice off with a warm-up and stretching, making sure our girls are focused and locked in. Then, we do some sort of skill work and conditioning as a whole program. Then, during the rest of the practice, I'll split the group into our prospective teams. At this time, we usually work on game playing, if we have a game coming up, or plays and defense," she said.

Whether the player is a novice or a veteran, Rich said they can benefit in many ways from joining girls basketball.

"I think sports help teach you things you can't learn in the classroom," Rich said. "Being on a team teaches you camaradery and how to work hard for something. It teaches you how to be a leader and also how to multitask because you have to be a student athlete."