

THE HIGHLAND FLING

Art Courtesy of Derek Chen '25, Brook Xu '25

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Photo courtesy of Zari Royal '25

Highlands Voices performing for the ICHSA(International Championship of High School A Cappella) competition.

A CAPPELLA GIVES A COMPELLING SHOW

Highlands A capella performs at the annual Aca-Fest fun show after fierce competition

Henry Roberts '26

Learn about the Northern Highlands A-cappella Festival taking place this May.

In the latest Aca-news, the Highlands A-cappella Festival is nearly upon us. After the unfortunate disqualification of our Highlands groups from the ICHSA competition, with Highlands Voices making it to the

Semi-finals, our groups have been hard at work preparing for the festival.

The Highlands A-cappella Festival is a yearly, two-day festival that is hosted here in Highlands. Groups from all over the area come together to attend professionally taught classes and perform for each other and an audience.

The Highlands Voices have been preparing for Aca-fest since their per-

formance at the ICHSA Semi-finals. Senior and 4th-year A-cappella veteran Nikki Carcarra said "We have three new songs that we're including in our repertoire, so it should be good," signaling that they are planning to give us a show to remember.

When asked for more specific information on what the Voices will be performing, Director Mr. Thomas Paster said "I'm

not 100% sure, but we're excited because Miguel arranged a piece for us," referring to senior Miguel Granda. Paster continued to say that Miguel made "a mashup of 'Love-ly' [by Billie Eilish and Khalid] and 'Faith Consuming Hope' [by Earth-ater], and we're looking forward to doing that."

The Highlands Belles have been on a similar path, with freshman and

first-year A-cappella member Lucy Roberts saying that the Belles' preparation for the festival "has been going really good. We've been learning a lot of new material and it's a lot of fun to do. I'm really excited to perform them, and I'm really excited for people to hear them."

The Highlands Harmonics have also been ...

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FIRST 90-MINUTE LUNCH CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Students celebrate many cultures at the first ever 90-minute lunch cultural fair organized by the CJ-CEE.

Ellie Shrier '27

On Friday April 19, Highlanders partook in a new event; the cultural fair. The cultural fair, organized by the CJ-CEE student group, occurred during a 90-minute lunch which is set to be the only themed 90-minute lunch throughout this school year.

Although 90-minute lunches are not out of the ordinary for Highlands, the cultural fair is. This special event includes new vendors, performances, other entertainment events and so much more. All vendors who made an appearance had never attended a Highlands 90-minute lunch before.

There was also a gallery walk held at the front lobby during this event. Some Highlands students and World Language Teachers came together to help to create a gallery walk which showcased some of the communities' various cultures through posters.

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ADOBE -CRATIC

An inside peak at the graphic design program and their projects.

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MIDSUMMER PLAY

Midsummer receives a standing ovation and multiple awards.

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MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT SEASON'S END

The baseball team makes national news after last second call.

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TEACHER Q&A: MRS. SCRIVANICH

From Freshman Seminar to AP Econ, from Freshman to Senior: Mrs. Scrivanich teaches many



Sebastian Tabakov '26

Q1: What is your name, and what subjects do you teach at Northern Highlands?

A1: My name is Mrs. Scrivanich and I teach Freshman Seminar and Advanced Placement Economics.

Q2: How long have you been teaching at Highlands?

A2: I've taught here for about twenty-six years, and I actually completed my one year of student teaching here as well.

Q3: What is it like teaching such different courses and balancing that difference?

A3: I'm super passionate about Business and Technology as well as Technology and Graphic Design. So while AP Economics affords me the opportunity to discuss high level economic topics with students interested in business...Freshmen Seminar allows me to share technology, graphic design, organizational skills and presentation skills with the freshman.

Q4: What class do you enjoy teaching more, and what did you get out of it?

A4: I Love teaching both. [I] just want to share what I am passionate about in hopes to enlighten students and possibly help to shape their future success or even future interests.

Q5: Other than actually teaching the course, what is one thing you hope

to accomplish with the upperclassmen in AP Econ?

A5: For the AP Economics students, I get so much joy from hearing from them years later and seeing the impact I had on their college and career path. I just hope that I can make a positive impact on them.

Q6: So what is the difference you hope to accomplish with your freshmen?

A6: I feel the same joy seeing how mature they are as juniors or seniors and seeing the role I had in helping them to shape their class choices, club participation, and overall interests. ■



Mrs. Scrivanich teaching a section of her Freshman Seminar class alongside Ms. Lawlor.



Mrs. Scrivanich teaching a section of her AP Economics class.

The Highland Fling

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From the Desk of the Editors-in-Chief

As the school year nears its end, we wanted to take a moment to connect with all of you for the final issue that we, the current editors in chiefs, will be putting out for the school year. The June issue will be created by and dedicated to the graduating class of seniors.

First and foremost, we want to congratulate all the graduating seniors. It's been an incredible journey, and we couldn't be prouder of your accomplishments. We wish you all the best as you embark on the next chapter of your lives and we look forward to seeing the positive impact you will make in the world. Remember, you will always be a part of the Highlands community.

For the rest of the student body, May is a month filled with anticipation and excitement. As AP tests are wrapping up and the weather becomes warmer, we enter the final stretch of the 2023-2024 school year. We want to remind everyone to stay focused and finish the year strong. With final exams and projects approaching, it's important to stay organized and manage your time effectively. Remember to reach out to your teachers and classmates if you need any assistance or support. We are all here to help each other succeed.

May is also a time for reflection and gratitude. We want to express our deepest appreciation to all the teachers and staff members who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide us with a quality education and a safe learning environment. Your dedication and commitment are truly commendable, and we are grateful for all that you do.

That's it for now, we wish you a wonderful summer ahead. We hope you have enjoyed the previous issues of the Fling, and we are excited to share this May issue with you. See you again for September, October, November, and December issues next year. And seniors, we wish you the very best for college.

- Editors-in-Chief Brook Xu and Nolan Rota

If you are interested in joining *The Highland Fling* or have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact fling.eic@gmail.com. If you are interested in placing an ad or subscribing, please contact the email listed above.

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1-800-950-6264

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255) [24/7 hotline]
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EXPLORING ALL OF POETRY

Appreciating the depth and intricacies of the longstanding art of poetry



Photo courtesy of Misha Chhada '27

Misha Chhada '27

April is National Poetry Month, an occasion that celebrates the innovative works of literature and poets that have shaped our world for centuries. In 1996, this widespread celebration was launched in order to increase awareness and appreciation for poetry. Today, tens of millions of readers, teachers, librarians, etc. acknowledge poetry's essential role within their lives.

However, as the years come and go, it becomes increasingly evident that poetry is a dying art. Poetry no longer holds its place on the pedestal. Considering the wide selection of other entertainment forms, poetry just doesn't seem to engage the average per-

son in today's world.

Even if interest in poetry is slowly ceasing, it is still undeniably powerful. Poetry can invite students into a world of literacy and encourage them to explore countless realms of curiosity. When introduced to poetry at a young age, children can feel more deeply connected to a world they so barely know.

Poetry has always been a way to remember, an outlet in which poets can engrave the most significant and subtle times of their life, permanently throughout history. Maya Angelou, one of the most influential poets of her time, wrote poems concerning her

childhood trauma. These topics were sensitive for Angelou to write about, occurrences she may have wanted to forget about altogether.

Still, she was brave to share those scarring experiences with the world. Mainly, she wrote about her experiences so she herself could truly understand and make sense of them. Poetry, as it still is for many others, was a way for Angelou to release the negative emotions within herself.

Poetry is often a source of comfort for its readers, yet for others it can be more harmful than healing. When poetry ex-

plores darker themes, it can bring up painful memories and trigger unwanted emotional responses. But on the contrary, poetry can also be used as a form of self-expression. It is an opportunity for readers to be engaged in an uplifting community of fellow thinkers, imaginers, and philosophers.

Moreover, Northern Highlands fosters poetic outlets of its own, such as the literary magazine, otherwise known as the Loch and Quay. The literary magazine club is available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Additionally, our school offers the award-winning freshman literary magazine. In both of these after-school clubs, members have the opportunity to evaluate student-created art before taking a closed-vote, thus deciding whether or not the piece should be included in the magazine.

Regardless of whether or not you are a member of those clubs, you can still submit your own writing or artwork to your English teacher, Ms. Chiang, or Ms. Strang-Wolf for a

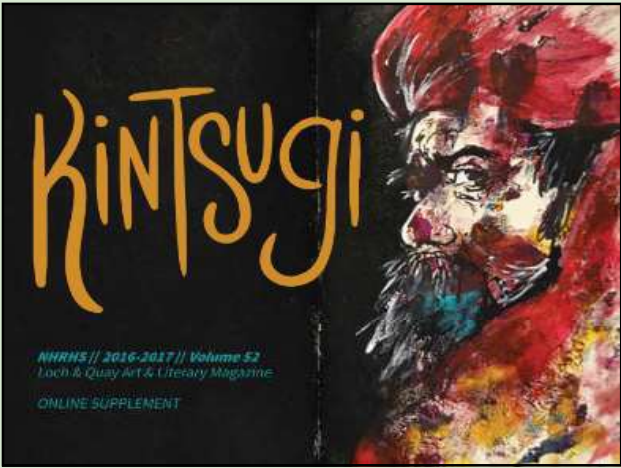
“I truly believe that it is important to understand the ways in which poetry can help us, not only in understanding ourselves, but also the ones around us.”

chance to get featured in the magazine. For example, I submitted a poem to the freshman literary magazine that I wrote in my English class. However, submitted works can also be created outside of school.

I truly believe that it is important to understand the ways in which poetry can help us, not only in understanding ourselves, but also the ones around us. Poetry is a bridge, deeply connecting the reader to a foreign world made more visible through stanzas and rhymes. Despite poetry's fragility, it is also one of the most compelling forms of story-telling in this modern age.

Whether you choose to join the literary magazine club, submit work of

your own, or simply read a piece by your most admired poet, I believe that all students can gain immense value from poetry. During this year's National Poetry Month, I feel that we should all do a little more to include this beautiful form of art in our lives.■



Cover and back cover of the Loch & Quay's 57th volume, *Kintsugi*. This edition was published in the 2016-17 school year.

AP, HONORS, CP, OR NEITHER?

Do we overload ourselves with rigorous course loads to show off to colleges?



Photo courtesy of Henry Roberts '26

Henry Roberts '26

As the year comes to a close, Highlanders are called to their guidance counselor to pick the classes they will be taking next year. For some, this is one of the most stressful times in the high school experience. For others, picking out classes is as easy as counting to ten. Why do some students have so much trouble picking classes while others don't? And why is the whole process so stressful in the first place?

To answer this question we must first look at how the curriculum is designed; if instead of playing games when you're bored, and you read the

school curriculum, you might know exactly what the curriculum entails. Students are required to take four years of English

With this "grocery list" of class requirements that students must fulfill in order to graduate, it's easy to see why there is so

just for the requirement and end up hating it.

Alongside course requirements, for some there is a deep-seated feeling that one must take as many hard classes, APs and Honors courses as possible. Sometimes this feeling can cause a student to thrive, and flourish in an environment they never would have been a part of otherwise. But if a student is taking classes that are too rigorous, they could end up dealing with an impossible workload. It's hard to nail down exactly where this feeling comes from, or how to deal with it, but I have a couple ideas on this matter.

This feeling most likely comes from, in my personal experience, the desire to get into a really good college. There is a pretty simple correlation between taking harder classes and getting into better colleges. If you take an AP class, and do well in it, colleges will most likely take that into account when considering your application.

Before you go and sign up for all the APs you can, you must consider how you feel about a heavy work-

load. The thing that gets students is that they take too many AP classes for the sake of taking AP classes and drown in the increased workload.

I think Highlands especially has this culture because we are a prestigious school, and therefore we must go to great lengths to go to a prestigious college. One of the reasons people take AP classes is because they think it "looks good"

yes. Long answer: yes, but it can be justified. If you are planning to take a lot of AP classes or just a lot of honors classes they should be in subjects you are interested in. When you are interested in a subject and genuinely enjoy it, it takes away so much of the burden that comes along with taking difficult classes.

Whilst the deadline has passed for your sched-

“Why do some students have so much trouble picking classes while others don't? And why is the whole process so stressful in the first place?”

courses, three years of math courses, three years of history courses, three years of science courses, two years of language courses, one year of an arts course, one year of a consumer science course, and a semester of a business course.

much to think about when picking your classes. Some might be deterred from taking a class they're interested in because it doesn't fulfill a requirement they need to graduate, or maybe the opposite might happen: maybe they pick a class

There is a pretty simple correlation between taking harder classes and getting into college.

“Whilst the deadline has passed for your schedules to be changed, it's important that you reflect back on whether or not you picked classes that you will enjoy, or classes that are hard.”

in college applications. It's a lot of work to do, but it's somewhat necessary if a student wants to get into a prestigious school.

I think the most important thing is to have a balanced schedule. I personally am going to take three AP classes next year. Is that a lot? Short answer:

rules to be changed, it's important that you reflect back on whether or not you picked classes that you will enjoy, and classes that are right for you. Hopefully you made a decision you're happy with, and it won't be that stressful next time.■

ARE CLASS RINGS REALLY WORTH IT?

Many students ignore the opportunity to acquire one of these keepsakes... but, are they missing out?

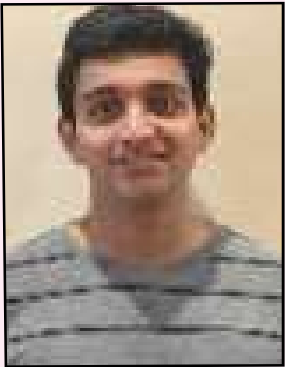


Photo courtesy of Reet Sachdev '27

Ram Raghunathan '25

Class rings are rings worn by students to commemorate the year in which they graduate. It gives students a sense of pride, and connection to

it's a waste of money, and a dying tradition. On average, class rings cost about \$300. That's why college students in particular, whose loans have been increasing precipitously in recent years, have such a strong aversion to class rings.

They don't just have \$300 lying around to spend on them. Plus, many schools, including Highlands, sell a lot of other merchandise that's far cheaper and is just as good a way to express school pride. Also, class rings are

this; but I think it's also because it's a less vivid way than a shirt saying "NORTHERN HIGH-

sports, etc.

In a larger sense, however, class rings could be seen as materialistic and

In a larger sense, however, class rings could be seen as materialistic and elitist.

LANDS CLASS OF 2025."

Finally, class rings can only be worn on special occasions, and not regularly like a shirt, so it's often just a useless memento people leave lying around somewhere.

On the other hand, some say that class rings are distinctive, because they're so intricately designed. Putting some bold text on a T-shirt doesn't require the same effort. So, class rings could be seen as a reward for students who went above and beyond in their own efforts in studying, extracurriculars,

elitist. Some they're an unnecessarily fancy way for wealthier students to display not so much their pride as their wealth.

For this reason, class rings may perpetuate the

ural that high-school students would adopt other methods of displaying school pride without appearing snobbish.

Senior Kyle Jean agrees that class rings "are way too expensive," and added, "it's not even that no one likes them, it's just, no one wears them". For the same reason, Junior Michael Grinberg believes "there's no point in buying them."

I myself wouldn't buy a class ring. I'm not willing to spend \$300 on a ring; even \$50 is too much for me. It definitely

Maybe the school should sell 5 for \$150 each to determine initial interest; if they're all sold out, maybe they can sell 10 more, then maybe 15, and so on.

I'm not some entrepreneurial expert, so this suggestion should be taken lightly. At any rate, this will probably never happen.

Northern Highlands should just continue selling shirts, hoodies, and similar merchandise. They're far less expensive to produce, and have far more demand.

■

I myself wouldn't buy a class ring. I'm not willing to spend \$300 on a ring and even \$50 is too much for me.

their school.

However, there's much talk among Highlanders about its usefulness.

A lot of students think

far less popular than they were ten to twenty years ago.

Obviously the cost of class rings is a reason for



Photo courtesy of Jostens

Example of a Northern Highlands Class Ring

notion that only the rich are educated. So it's nat-

wouldn't be a profitable investment for the school.

BALANCING SCHOOL, SPORTS, AND CLUBS

The pressure at Highlands is immense: can balancing the big three be manageable?



Photo courtesy of Reet Sachdev '27

Eden Holy '26

Let's face it. There is a lot of pressure at Highlands to be involved. Excelling in your classes, while important, doesn't quite cut it when there are no extracurricular activities listed on your resume.

While some students strive to succeed in a sport, others feel passionately about the clubs that they are a part of. Other students show interest and commit to both. Either way, these commitments take time; they also require effort and hard work.

Additionally, students must stay on top of their school work, including studying for tests and doing the homework that's assigned almost every night. To add on to this, students at Highlands tend to want to spend weekends with their friends, taking a break from pressure often felt in the high school at-

mosphere.

These things are not including college visits, time set aside for family, and so many other things that make up a Highlander's life. I know for me personally that these responsibilities can be very overwhelming at times. As a student here at Highlands, I myself am tempted to procrastinate every now and again.

Having to balance not only school work but tennis outside of school, volunteer hours, and club activities can get pretty hectic. Especially since every once in a while, I just want to relax. What's reassuring is that my fellow peers feel the same way.

However, that should change—we can't go on procrastinating and unbalanced, scrambling to

There is a lot of pressure at Highlands to be involved.

appear impressive on our resumes.

When interviewed, my history teacher, Mrs. Ade, agreed as well that it can be tough to prioritize,

balance, and choose not to procrastinate when it seems like the easiest option.

Ade, who not only teaches US History I, Sociology, and AP Research, also coaches field hockey here at Highlands. She has plenty of experience and lessons learned when it comes to talking about finding the right balance.

When asked what she believes should be a student's top priority, she responded with her "unpopular opinion". She stated that without a doubt, "A student's top priority should be focusing on becoming as well-rounded as possible and not on things like how many AP classes they have taken. Sure, school is important and grades are important - but those are a means to an end: college."

High school should not be all stress, and she agrees, "It is the life skills you learn here, the connections you make with peers and teachers, and a development of a love for learning that will truly carry you far beyond your four years in this building."

She's right, but coming up with ways to balance yourself can be tough because there's a lot on everyone's plate. As a student at Highlands, I have

also found that writing out my schedule and what I have to get done for each subject really helps me to remember each assignment. Using this method, you can also predict the amount of time it will take to complete each task, allowing you to move things accordingly.

When not having enough time in the afternoon to finish an assign-

anced while in high school herself as well. However, she has also come up with ways to organize her life and make it a little less stressful every day.

When asked for tips she would give her students, she shares a tip similar to mine, "One strategy I have found helps me is carrying around a paper agenda book with pages for each week and each day in

"It is the life skills you learn here, the connections you make with peers and teachers, and a development of a love for learning that will truly carry you far beyond your four years in this building."

Vicoria Ade

ment, I also find it helpful to get up a few minutes earlier in the morning and come back to it with a fully refreshed mind when I wake up.

Ade, being both a teacher and a coach in the present, has faced many challenges to stay bal-

it. That is how I plan out my chunks of time daily,"

She continues to explain, "When you have it all laid out and written out, you won't forget to get anything done, and you can see that you won't be saving a lot to get done all at once in a very small

time frame. Procrastination is like a poison that creates anxiety - don't let it get you!"

Ade also advises her students not to "take anything too seriously." She tells us to learn from our mistakes and grow as a person each time, stating, "So you forgot to study and you got an F on your history test? Guess what? There will be more chances to get your grade up. A lot more. There is also time to meet with and review with your teacher. You just have to channel your stress and frustration into creating something more positive moving forward. You are the makers of your own destiny."

It is extremely important to know how to balance school work, extracurriculars, and sports—if not done correctly, high school can get pretty overwhelming. If you're struggling to stay balanced, chances are you're not alone. Take these tips into consideration if you seem to be struggling to stay balanced.

■

HAS READING BECOME A CHORE?

Have English assignments stifled the student bodys’ exploration of different genres?



Photo courtesy of Reet Sachdev '27

Anna Russo '27

Imagine this, you decide to read a book for a change. You scour through the library, find a book that looks interesting, check it out, and slip it into your bag. School starts, when you go to English,

signment. Suddenly, it’s not a choice anymore. You aren’t doing it for yourself or to be the educated person you are. It’s like when a parent forces you to clean your room when you already were. Now you’re reading because you have to, not because you want to, and it makes all the difference.

Teachers and students alike have noticed a digression in reading among students, leaving them to wonder what could have caused this gap. Even students in Highlands have stopped reading. There are more than enough books in the world and many plac-

become more and more accessible. So why won’t most kids read unless they’re forced to? That’s it.

Many kids won’t read because they’re forced to. Being forced to read a book along with the entire class defeats the purpose. You’re not reading for fun anymore, you’re reading to analyze and regurgitate. When you’re forced to read as a class, you can’t go at your own pace, you often have no choice in what you read, and you are so busy taking notes and looking deep into the words of the author, you lose what reading is supposed to be, fun.

Everyone reads at a different pace. Some kids could have finished the book within an hour. For some, it takes a week. When the slower readers have to go faster, they miss valuable content. When the faster readers have to wait, it becomes boring. If a student doesn’t understand a word, often, they won’t ask since they’re surrounded

by their peers. Students of all reading levels shouldn’t be reading the same book. Forcing someone to read outside their skillset can be fun, but it also could make the book too easy or challenging.

School-mandated reading doesn’t benefit the relationship between students and reading. I understand why schools would force kids to read. Reading is incredibly important. According to piedmont.com, It improves sleep, lowers stress, improves vocabulary and imagination, and is vastly important for writing. Of course, schools want their students to read, but they’re doing it the wrong way.

Reading should be fun, not forced. Students should be able to pick a book of their choice. It adds an element of freedom. Instead of someone choosing what you read, you chose a book for yourself. It adds independence and makes it feel less forced. Almost every

book has a theme and symbolism. Why do we need to search in one pre-chosen book that schools have been reading for decades, for something every book has? Besides, if you read the same

I didn’t have to read a set amount of pages each day. I could have finished the book that night if I wanted to. In the other two units, I liked the books but I had to wait to go on. When we left

Forcing someone to read outside of their skillset can be fun but it can also make the book too easy or challenging.

chosen genres repeatedly, you miss the opportunity to explore. Exploration in reading is so important. Why are we stifling it?

In my English class in Highlands, I had three separate reading projects where I had to read. In only one of them, was I free to choose my book. I enjoyed that book much more than the other two. I didn’t enjoy it more because of the substance. I enjoyed it because I was reading the book I chose at the pace I chose.

off on an important part of a cliffhanger, it was exciting for the first hour after we read, but as time went on, I forgot the excitement, and having to wait dampened my enjoyment.

If students were able to choose their book instead of being forced to read a book someone else chose for them, students would read more. Reading is about discovery and imagination but when it’s forced, it becomes more of a chore than fun. ■

Now you’re reading because you have to, not because you want to, and it makes all the difference.

it happens. Your teacher announces a reading as-

es allow you to check out books for free. Books have

TEST DODGING: IS IT BENEFITING STUDENTS?

A rise in student absences has prompted us to look at the advantages and disadvantages of skipping tests



Photo courtesy of Reet Sachdev '27

Laney McCrossin '26

Academically, springs in high school are notoriously difficult.

With AP exams in mid-May and teachers trying to stay on track and cram in a bunch of lessons before finals, many students find themselves drowned

for a club in one night, students are in a fight or flight situation, and recently, Highlanders have been choosing flight.

In general, the students at Highlands tend to be very involved not only with the rigor of their schoolwork but with extracurricular activities outside of school as well. This leaves students with minimal time to prepare for what seems to be never-ending tests.

Academic validation is highly important for many, so the possibility of doing poorly or failing a test because you didn’t have time to prepare is petrifying. Because of this, many

can take them confidently versus anxiously, which will alone help their scores

very busy schedules outside of school with many having to take care of their



Students gathered outside attendance

ing schedule.

Also, students taking tests on a later date

means that students who are in class taking the test when they are supposed to have to wait longer to get their grades and see what they did or did not

efits for those who get to take tests at a later date as a result of it, but this may even cause more stress.

Test dodging doesn’t make the work go away- it only drags it into the future. Students who are frequent offenders may find

Test dodging doesn’t make the work go away- it only drags it into the future.

answer correctly. This can be debilitating because the more time elapses before students can see their mistakes, the more likely they are to forget the content entirely, causing the corrections to lose their value.

When students test dodge, it is often many who are skipping on the same date and time. This creates an empty testing environment for students who take tests on the appropriate date and time which can mentally distract them or make them uncomfortable.

Although test dodging may instill more confidence in those absent, it can create more problems for other teachers and students, and may even cause more anxiety for those skipping. Test dodging appears to have many ben-

their work piling up, which not only makes their lives harder but can cause even more anxiety than they had originally.

As academic-related absences rise, do you think test dodging is worth it? ■

...The possibility of doing poorly or failing a test because you didn’t have time to prepare is petrifying.

in homework, essays, and tests.

Also, many students participate in spring sports or activities that host events in the spring which makes the amount of work they have even more overwhelming.

When faced with multiple hours of homework, several tests, a sports practice or game, and work

students chose to skip the test and take it at a time of greater convenience.

Their ways of doing so are creative, ranging from “sleeping in”, to leaving school early, to not coming at all.

In the short run, this can help relieve the stress students are feeling and allow them more time to prepare for tests so they

tremendously.

Many students chose to do this occasionally due to staff inflexibility in administering tests as it is often their only option in taking a test late. Despite the positives this may have on the individual who is test-dodging, there can be many negative effects on others.

Teachers also have

families, advise clubs, coach sports, plan lessons, and not to mention grade the endless piles of tests they assign.

Teachers have to be on very strict schedules for grading, so when students intentionally take tests days later than their assigned date, it makes it more difficult for them to stay on an already unyield-

IT'S A 'FAIR' DAY TO CELEBRATE CULTURES

Several cultures are celebrated at the first ever 90-minute lunch cultural fair organized by the CJCEE

Ellie Shrier'27

..... Aspects of these posters included details such as cultural celebrations, food, clothing, and much more. When creating any of these posters, the students and teachers will be showing their individual perspectives and experiences with their cultures which can help educate many.

Vendors and food trucks play a large part in our school's 90 minute lunches and are always highly anticipated by students. New vendors attending this lunch include



Photo courtesy of Reer Sachdev '27

Junior Mia Roewe representing her culture at the Germany station. Students are able to experience new culture through their food and not be limited.

There were also a variety of performances, entertainment, and events to participate in or to watch.

The theme of this cultural fair holds tremendous significance for many students.

Jamaican Food Truck, Gigi Halal, Rainbao, and Moz-zArepas. These vendors feature a variety of cuisine found amongst many cultures to ensure that stu-

Students were invited to sign-up and perform a small performance in the Auditorium which they had the freedom to select and showcase. There were performances such

as “Bella Ciao”, “Ecoutie Cherie”, and many more.

In addition to all of these new activities, there was also an Athletic Contest in the form of a soccer tournament. These games were played with teams of 8-10 people each composed of students and faculty (if they were willing to participate).

In the event of rain, those who organized the lunch were prepared to switch the athletic contest to Badminton, showing their careful preparation and consideration when planning the event.

There are many ways to represent one's culture, and this was observed in a multitude of aspects of the cultural fair event. One

way to represent culture may be through clothing.

On Friday, the day of the 90-minute lunch, everyone was welcomed to dress up in clothing representative of their culture. This further helps educate students about different cultures they might not have observed in lieu of this event.

The theme of this cultural fair holds tremendous significance for many students. It was meticulously planned by some High-



Photo courtesy of Reer Sachdev '27

The station designed by students to educate about Egyptian culture.

lands students who belong to the CJCEE and Dr. Verdicchio as a way to allow everyone to experience various cultures and educate others on their own.

As mentioned by Mr. Occhino, “the Cultural Fair

It is extremely important for Highlands to help and support students through understanding the cultures of their fellow peers and present their own to help others better understand them.

theme came up from our student group that is part of the CJCEE. . . a group of a dozen students that is run by Dr. Verdicchio through our wellness department. The

according to Mr. Occhino. It is extremely important for Highlands to help and support students through understanding the cultures of their fellow peers and present their own to help others better understand them, and the CJCEE did a tremendous job executing the first cultural fair. ■

idea was for our students to really acknowledge the different cultures that exist at Northern Highlands.”

The primary rationale for hosting this event was “to allow for students to engage and understand and appreciate other cultures”

PLANNING FOR MORE COUCHES AND LESS BOOKS

An update on how plans to rennovate the library to foster more comfort and creativity

Bella Zrebiec'26

As many students have noticed, the library has recently been closed off in some parts and all of the book shelves in the back room are gone. Some may be wondering why this is, perhaps they are even jumping to conclu-

moving hundreds of library books and bookshelves.

While extreme book enthusiasts may consider this a crime against literature, Principal Joseph Occhino reminds us how infrequently the books are being used. “How many times have you taken books out of the library recent-

pose the area to make use of the space in a way that will better benefit the students and staff.

Occhino reassured students worried about where their books had vanished, saying “the books will just be shifted into another area,” and won't be completely gone. But, it did become apparent that students would rather have a relaxing place to do homework, study, or even just take a break instead of looking through all the books on the shelves.

All the bookshelves in the back room beyond where the tables were are empty because it is planned to be filled with comfortable seating “for students to relax and decompress,” Occhino says. Also, the renovations will include taking down the walls between the library back

The school wanted to repurpose the area to make use of the space in a way that will better benefit the students and staff.

sions of theft and mystery. Unfortunately, reality is slightly less invigorating.

Highlands has recently begun renovations on the school library, and one of the first steps entailed re-

ly?” he asks rhetorically.

In fact, the library database has shown that a majority of students don't take books out of the library, which is why the school wanted to repur-



Photo Courtesy of Superintendent Scot Beckerman

A design of the art gallery which will be added to the library and display art work created by students in class.

room and the testing rooms that are currently attached. This is so that there can be room for an art gallery, where students in art class- es can display their works.

This whole process

said that the library is being adjusted to “meet the needs of our students” and will be used in more practical ways now that the space is being opened up.

Superintendent Scot

“Starbucks” feel to the main room of the library, with a more modern feel to it where students can gather.

With so many exciting new features designed to enhance student learn-

The renovations will include taking down the walls between the library back room and the testing rooms that are currently attached. This is so that there can be room for an art gallery.

should be done before the 2024-2025 school year, if it all goes according to the plan. In order to get everything done on time, it is necessary for the library to continue to be closed throughout the process of reconstruction. Occhino

Beckerman has allowed the Fling to publish a picture of the library plans for the back room. While these plans are not completely set in stone, this is what you can expect to come from the reconstruction! Beckerman mentioned that there will be a

ing, comfort, and creativity, we eagerly anticipate the unveiling of the new and improved library!■



A design of the new library space for studying and other activities after renovation.

Photo Courtesy of Superintendent Scot Beckerman

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE WITH NHS

The annual National Honors Society Induction Ceremony inducts its new set of members

Seerat Dhir '26

At our school, your effort and dedication is celebrated. This month we welcomed a new group of exceptional students into the National Honor Society (NHS), advised by Mr. Jeffery D’Elia. The NHS recently hosted an induction ceremony to be remembered. The event, filled with pride and celebration, honored several students who embody the NHS pillars, and strive to be the best

Constitution. It states, “The goal of this chapter shall be to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to serve, to promote leadership, and to develop character in students of Northern Highlands Regional High School.” Before elaborating on the ceremony itself, we are sure many students wonder how to take part in activities like this induction ceremony. Where does this process even begin? Mr. Occhino mentions some requirements that must be met to

GPA requirement has gone up to a 3.95 for the 2024 school year, but the requirement may change.” Along with this GPA requirement, Mr. Occhino considers

ment and exemplary character, highlighting their role as leaders within the school community. As the ceremony unfolded, each

Precalculus for many of the inductees who are juniors. The induction part began with Mr. D’Elia and Mr. Occhino citing a pledge to be recited by the students, and progresses to the students earning their pins. He claims it to be a, “Pretty quick ceremony, about an hour long.”

As the evening drew to a close, the newly inducted members of the NHS embraced their roles with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment. Armed with their NHS pins and the support of their peers, they embarked on a journey of service, leadership, and academic excellence, poised to make a difference in the world around them.

The National Honor Society induction ceremony at Northern Highlands was not only a celebration of individual achievement but also a testament to the collective spirit of excellence that defines the school community. As the newest members of the NHS, these students carry with them a candle that shines as bright as a torch of knowledge and the promise of a brighter tomorrow. ■

“Our GPA requirement has gone up to a 3.95 for the 2024 school year, but the requirement may change.”

Principal Joseph Occhino

versions of themselves and role-models for our school. All NHS members are chosen for the purpose that they can exemplify the traits explained in the National Honors Society

fulfill a chance in the NHS. To begin, there is a GPA requirement. Northern Highlands is one of the schools with the highest NHS GPA requirement. Mr. Occhino states, “Our

requirement, Mr. Occhino also mentions the service requirement. Students must fulfill a certain number of community service hours to obtain a spot in the NHS. There are several other requirements to fill along with a GPA and service hours. And what better way to explain the requirements than the NHS page itself. The page states, “Junior candidates who are eligible for membership in January must have accumulated six service and leadership points from participation in school activities, clubs, sports, and service to the community by January. Senior candidates who

this sacred induction ceremony to be quite “traditional” in its activities and what it entails. Students wait outside, until they are brought into a room with their biggest supporters, including their friends, family, and even educators. The students march in and light a candle, symbolizing the eternal flame of knowledge and the ongoing pursuit of excellence. Mr. Occhino states, “The candle represents their responsibilities as members of the National Honor Society.” Mr Occhino, along with Mr. D’Elia commended the inductees for their dedication to academic achieve-

inductee was called to the stage to receive their NHS pin, symbolizing their commitment to upholding the values of the organization. Proud parents, educators, and fellow students looked on as the newest members of the NHS were officially welcomed into the fold. Throughout the ceremony, there were several speakers, including Mr. D’Elia and Mr. Occhino. There was also a key-note speaker nominated by the NHS itself to present a few words of wisdom and encouragement. This year, it was John Quinn from the math department. Quinn teaches AP

NHS Constitution

“The goal of this chapter shall be to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to serve, to promote leadership, and to develop character...”

SCIENCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The Chemistry Club, Absolute Zero, hosts Boy and Girl scout members for a series of experiments

Dara Kotz '27

Every year the Chemistry Club, “Absolute Zero” invites girl scouts and boy scouts to our school. The members of the Chemistry club spend months on end testing and experimenting to find the best, most entertaining experiments possible. The chemistry consist of students from multiple grades. This year they are welcoming kindergartners, first graders, fifth grad-

ers, and eighth graders. Tailoring experiments to K-8 requires extensive planning. That is why every experiment needs to be designed to educate, entertain, and be simple enough to understand for this age group of students. One of the most exciting parts of the Chemistry Club for the members is the creative and innovative aspect. Members of the Chemistry Club get to pitch their own experiments and ideas, or ones

they find online. This ensures that there will always be new experiments every year for the scout troops. Chemistry club members look forward to developing the skills required to plan and execute the experiments that they get to teach the scouts each year. It gives the club members an opportunity to experience real world leadership skills and teach them how to better interact with younger kids. Students develop patience, confi-



Photo Courtesy of Raya Baghal '26

A picture of the classroom where a unique picture is taken. science and earn badges for their troops. The advisor of the Chemistry club, Ms. Zushma, finds the most rewarding part of hosting the scouts to be, “The full circle moment”. To this day she still receives old photos of her current students who were once in the shoes of those little kindergartners. This event brings together the community in so many ways. It inspires the elementary and middle school students and gives them a glimpse of what learning science at our school is like. Additionally, it gives the members of the chemistry club a chance to tap into their love for chemistry and come up with their own unique ideas that extend from the traditional curriculum at Highlands.

Mr. Occhino and Dr. Larocca have both been very pleased with the work of the Chemistry Club throughout the years. The chemistry club has connected with kids in many towns, including Allendale, Upper Saddle River, Ho Ho Kus, and Saddle River. It offers the scouts the opportunities to learn, grow, and have fun all at once.

Mr Ochino said, “Anytime we can expand our community here at Highlands and get younger kids excited for science and high school is a bonus”.

The Chemistry Club is hands-on, engaging, and allows you to experiment with all sorts of cool crafts you can't do at home. And whether you're in kindergarten or about to graduate high school, there is always an experiment that can peak your interest.

The event hosted by the Chemistry Club takes place in March, April, and May. If you want to be involved or know any scouts that would be interested, you can visit the HASMA newsletter at the start of next school year to schedule this opportunity to immerse yourself in the STEM world. ■



Photo Courtesy of Raya Baghal '26

A picture of one of the experiments from Absolute Zero.

FIELD HOUSE CONSTRUCTION DELAY

When will the Field House finally be open for faculty and students to use?

Sophia Mamangon '26

In the previous March issue, an article was written about the field house construction in which Dr. Beckerman claimed that the field house would be open at the beginning of April.

Now, it is almost halfway through the month and the construction has not yet been completed. After an entire year of working on the project, you might be wondering, why is it still not ready? What is the cause of this delay? When will the field house actually be completed and open for students and staff to use?

Well, to begin, also include new gym equipment for this building will be utilized for the benefit of students and student athletes, predominantly for spring and fall sports such as football and track. The field house will accommodate lockers, gym equipment, and bathrooms for easy access, as the building will be situated closer to the fields. The building will

“The intensity of the storms led to severe flooding in Northern New Jersey and even caused the second floor of the field house to flood.”

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new fitness center, which was previously on the first floor of Northern Highlands. When will this be available to us? Well unfortunately, as the tri-state area has been receiving a great deal of rain over the course of 2023 and into the year 2024, the construction was forced to

be delayed. The intensity of the storms led to severe flooding in Northern New Jersey and even caused the second floor of the field house to flood. Luckily, no serious damage took place, however, the construction was forced to be delayed by a few weeks.

Luckily for us, “April showers bring May flowers,” and in case you haven’t looked at a calendar recently, we are already approaching April’s end! While we can’t exactly control the weather, we can work around it to predict future events. As the rain seems to be slowing down, the hope is for the remaining construction to be a speedy process.

As Mr. Occhino reassured, “the damage the flooding caused was nothing significant. Give or take, the field house will be finished sometime by the week of Monday, April 22, open for staff and students.” Thankfully, these harsh rain storms will no longer affect construction as they are so close to completion and the favorably warm, spring weather permits no more than light rain. Whether you participate in school sports or not, be sure to pass through the new building on its opening week. ■

“The damage the flooding caused was nothing significant.”

Principal Joseph Occhino

GETTING THE FITNESS CENTER READY

The newly renovated Fitness Center will be ready for use for sports and gym class

Chloe Muller '26

For many, the addition of the new field house near the football field means many Highlands’ sports teams and

January 3, 2024, the administration put up a listing for the equipment from the old fitness center on GovDeals.com, which allows organizations to

on it for students to use, such as exercise bikes and treadmills.

Both the weights and the floor of the fitness center are rubber, which Occhino states was done to, “muffle noise if students drop weights.” The ceiling of the fitness center also has sound panels to further cancel noise.

Gym and health teacher Christina Fitzgerald states that she thinks, “the new equipment is great and gives students another option to work out,” adding to the already robust physical education curriculum at Highlands. Fitzgerald added that the fitness center would be more

once it begins snowing, but that the facility would likely “be difficult to access on days when it’s pouring rain.”

However, she believes she will bring students to the field house when the weather permits.

Some students have also raised questions about the necessity of the renovations as freshman Lorelai Wiederholz explained. While she believes the construction was “beneficial and [she] is happy for the new and clean equipment,” she believes that the old fitness center “could have used a couple of renovations in the future, but was fine as it

In the meantime, the old fitness center will be turned into two new large lecture rooms/classrooms for the Freshman Seminar classes, according to the Scope of Work Plans from the 2023-2024 Referendum. This will open space in four classrooms around the school, potentially allowing for newly freed spaces around the school to be repurposed.

Two new offices will also be constructed in the old fitness center’s space, allowing for the relocation of the Career and Academic Pathways Department and for continued instructional coaching, internship opportuni-

students, coaches, and teachers after school with adult supervision and permission. It will also be used by local Allendale residents and the Women’s Club to promote fitness in the community. ■



What the Fitness Center should look like in the next few months.

Photo Courtesy of Raya Baghal '26

community members will be able to drop off their equipment and rest up during games.

However, since the top floor of the field house will be home to a brand-new, state-of-the-art fitness center, some questions have been raised about what this will look like and what will happen to the fitness center inside the school.

According to the Board of Education agenda published on

sell and bid for assets.

During a press conference with The Fling, Principal Joseph Occhino was able to confirm that the equipment from the old fitness center on the first floor was “sold to another school,” although it was not revealed which school this was.

To replace the equipment, Northern Highlands Regional High School has ordered new equipment with the school’s logo

This will open space in four classrooms around the school, potentially allowing for newly freed spaces around the school to be repurposed.

likely to be used during the colder months of the year as students wouldn’t be able to exercise on the field

was.” Wiederholz used the fitness center for Freshman Volleyball practices and intends to continue doing so.

ties, and staff professional development. The fitness center will be open for use by all sports teams,

TAYLOR SWIFT’S ALBUM DROP

Taylor Swift has shocked fans by dropping her longest album yet

Madeline Knapp '25

Taylor Swift announced that she would be dropping an album titled *The Tortured Poets Department* on April 19 during the 2024 Grammys. Now, she has taken the

was super excited because it doubled the number of songs and [she] just couldn't wait to listen to them all." However, this second surprise drop was not surprising to some. Junior Eve Moodie reflected on some of the signs that

I was super surprised by the double release. I wasn't expecting so many songs."
Junior Daphene Castellano

world by storm by releasing a whopping thirty-one tracks in an unexpected double drop: one at midnight and a surprise drop called *The Tortured Poets Society: The Anthology* at two in the morning. Many students have expressed both their surprise and excitement about this second set of tracks, with junior Daphne Castellano stating, "I was super surprised by the double release. I wasn't expecting so many songs," and sophomore Sorcha Powell expressing that "[She]

Swift had given before the release, stating that "there were some hints in her music videos with lots of twos, but nobody really knew what they meant until she released the second part at two A.M." In terms of the album itself, Taylor Swift has once again proven to be a skilled lyricist, with Powell describing Taylor Swift as a "lyrical genius" due to how consistently powerful her songwriting was throughout all the tracks. "I think it's her telling herself that she can't

hold on to all the happy memories and showing us the bad sides of what went on," freshman Lauren Gartland had stated when asked about what she thought of the album. "I feel like the vibe of the album is happy with a little bit of sadness behind it." Many had also likened *Tortured Poets Department* to *Midnights* and *Evermore*, two of her most recent albums since the release, with Castellano describing *The Tortured Poets Department* as "a sadder version of *Midnights*" and Powell stating how "it was like a mix of *Folklore* lyrically and *Midnights*' synth pop." And though it can be hard picking a favorite out of the thirty-one tracks Swift has released, many have stated that the song, "I Can Do It with a Broken Heart" is farby their favorite. "The lyrics are just so powerful and this song is really diving into her emotions and struggles she has been going through," Powell had expressed. "It is something that a lot of people can

"I think it's her telling herself that she can't hold on to all the happy memories and showing us the bad sides of what went on."
Sophomore Lauren Gartland

relate to since it's about how she was struggling so much but no one knew because she had to hide it all and put on a fake smile." Though there have

the album as a whole. "I really enjoyed listening to this new album. I liked how many songs she released, and I liked the beat of the songs as well as the



Photo Courtesy of The New York Times

Swift, during her speech at the Grammys, announcing the release of her new album, after winning her 13th Grammy.

been many mixed reviews about the album, with some stating that the album was too repetitive, many students have stated that they really enjoyed

meaning behind the lyrics." Gartland had stated, with Powell adding, "The songs were all so powerful and deep and I couldn't think of a better album to ex-

press all those feelings she has been going through the past few years of her life." Overall, Taylor Swift seems to have once again kept her audience on their toes with not only the double release of her newest album but also the sadder look into her personal life, complete with masterful lyrics. Though it may be a while until her next album, there is no doubt that Taylor Swift has once again exceeded expectations with *The Tortured Poets Department*. ■



KAFITSKI OR KAMISSKI?



An in-depth analysis of fashion icon Mr. Kaminski's outfits

Tess Han '27

You may know Mr. Kaminski, but do you know his outfits? The English teacher and style icon has changed the lives of many

plete his signature look. After interviewing the man of fashion himself, I've concluded that the key to capturing Mr. Kaminski's look is simplicity and originality. He stated that

to his tasteful attire but his devotion to his career. After maintaining his signature look for many years, Mr. Kaminski expressed that his shirts have gotten bluer over time, due

shirts. Navy and light blue worn together add sophistication to his look. Occasionally, khaki pants come into the picture, with the blue and sand colors being a great combination, espe-

er is often seen wearing a plain, fitted black jacket. The stylish addition is a genius way to distract people from his graying hair. One may say that pairing his navy pants and

complement his skin tone. Lacking inspiration yet still coming up with original and prim looks, takes talent and aptitude. Not only is he an excellent English teacher, but Mr. Kamins-

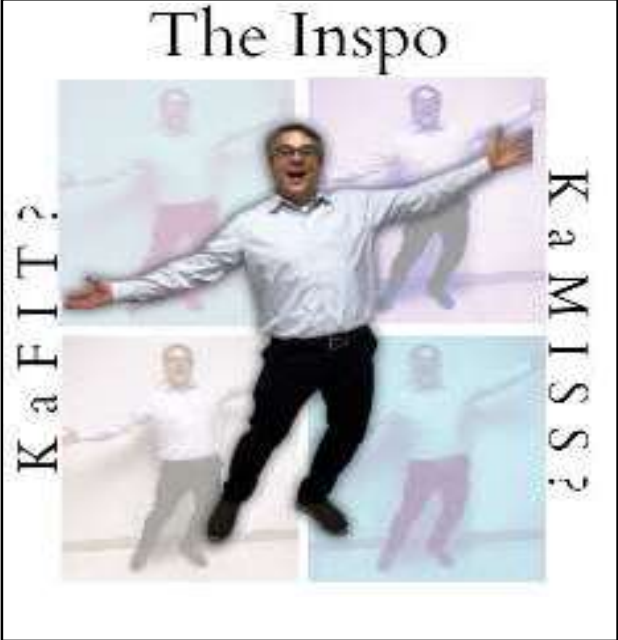


Photo Courtesy of Tess Han '27

Mr. Kaminski modeling his signature outfit.

"Oh my heavens... I cry tears of joy whenever I see Mr. Kaminski's outfits."
Freshman Katie Lee

to his desire to be experimental. I have found light blue to be the best color choice for him. This shade looks amazing on Mr. Kaminski's neutral summer tone, enhancing his features, and helping him achieve a defined look—a genius color choice on his part. I found it interesting that the color blue usually symbolizes calmness and relaxation, which is the exact opposite of how I feel every time I'm in his class. Black or dark blue pants are usually seen paired with the different shades and patterns of Mr. Kaminski's signature

cially when paired with his gray shoes. They provide a contrasting color that gives depth to the outfit. Even though Mr. Kaminski changes his shirts and pants every day, one thing remains the same—his footwear. He made a great choice sticking with the gray shoes since they go well with all of his outfits. Whether he wears his checkered patterned light blue shirt with black or blue pants, Mr. Kaminski's shoes always tie the look together. To accessorize and bring his style to the next level, the English teach-



Photo Courtesy of Tess Han '27

Tess Han '27 seen attempting to replicate Mr. K's swag

students in the worlds of both English and fashion. At first glance, some may think he wears the same clothes every day. However, this is far from the truth. Mr. Kaminski makes sure to pair different shades of light blue shirts and alternating navy, gray, or khaki pants to com-

he doesn't have a fashion icon that he looks up to. However, he noted that he takes inspiration from Einstein, explaining that "[he] heard that Einstein wore the same shirts and pants so he didn't have to think about what he wore", not only showing his effortless dedication

black jacket is a fashion crime. However, from my perspective, Mr. Kaminski pulls the two clashing colors together wonderfully—creating a breakthrough in the fashion industry. Overall, I believe that Mr. Kaminski is a fashion genius, effortlessly knowing what colors match and

ki is certainly a top-notch fashion connoisseur. ■

HONORS GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP PROJECTS

By Madeline Knapp '25

Over the course of this school year, you may have seen numerous infographics, bake sales, raffles, and more held by the Honors Global Citizenship classes. However, what you may not have seen is how all of these fundraisers have come to life behind the scenes.

At the beginning of the school year, each Global Citizenship class spends the first semester learning about all the problems that afflict our world today. Then, in the second semester, each class is able to choose one of these various problems to tackle via spreading awareness about their issue and hosting events to raise money to donate to the charity of their choice.

Ms. Simon's Period Two class, for example, chose to focus on water scarcity. Water scarcity is an issue that affects all parts of the world, but especially Africa. There, many have to trek close to ten miles daily to even find a water source. However, these water sources are usually contaminated. This lack of access to clean water not only limits the education of a community, but is also dangerous to one's health and leads to a vicious cycle of poverty.

Period Two plans to tackle this prominent issue by raising funds to donate to the organization "The Water Project." When asked about why they specifically chose address water scarcity, the class stated "We decided to focus on water scarcity as our topic for this project since we saw how much it negatively impacted so many people around the world."

Ms. Simon's Period Three class, on the other hand, decided to tackle the problem of malaria. Malaria is a fatal disease spread by mosquitoes that is prominent in tropical climates, affecting hundreds of millions of people every year.

Period Three chose to face this issue by raising funds to donate to "Malaria No More," an organization that is committed to ending the spread of malaria for good through spreading awareness about malaria and also by providing relief for those affected by the disease.

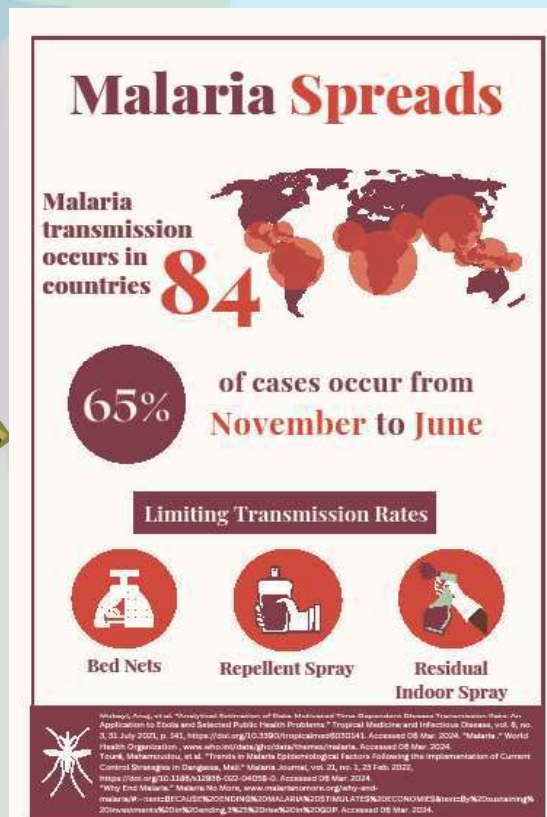
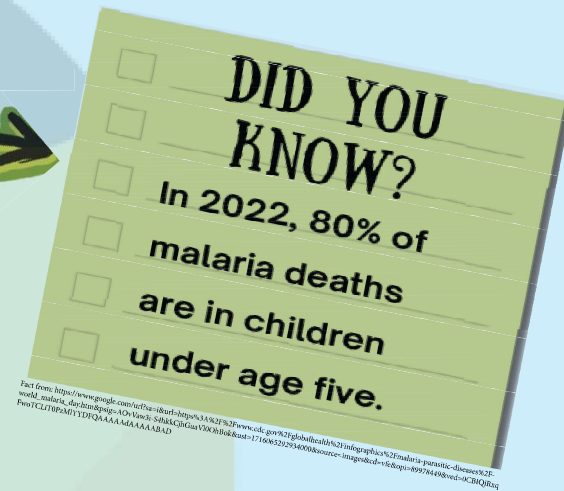
When asked why they chose to tackle the issue of malaria, the Period Three class responded by saying, "Every minute, one child dies from malaria. A single mosquito bite. While we might think nothing of a mosquito bite, it can be deadly to children in other parts of the world."

Once these classes picked their topics and the charities they wanted to donate to, they needed to take action and figure out creative ways to raise money to donate. The classes did this in a variety of ways, whether it be through bake sales, tournaments, raffles, or donations. For example, Period Two is hosting a morning breakfast sale on May 24 and is currently hosting a GovBall concert ticket raffle.

"Any contribution will help us support The Water Project and the hundreds of families across Africa that don't have access to clean drinking water. While you may think of your donation as just a drop in the bucket, we see it as helping us build a foundation to support the people in need," Period 2 stated when asked about fundraising this semester.

Period Three added on by stating that, "With help from your donations, we can provide mosquito nets, vaccinations, and anti-malarial medication that helps to save millions of lives."

With the school year coming to a close soon, let's make an effort to help support all of the Global Citizenship classes in their fight against these prominent issues around the world, whether it be by spreading awareness, participating in fundraisers, or taking the time to read the infographics they have posted around the school.

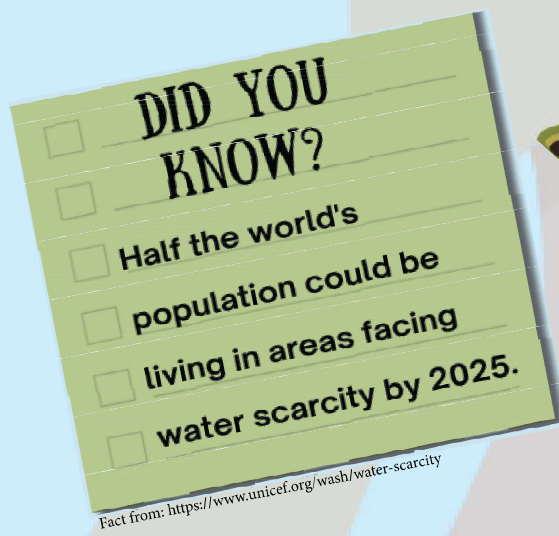


Sponsored by Period 3 Group 2 Honors Global Citizenship Class

This is one of the many infographics posted around the school discussing how prominent malaria is around the world.



This is one of the many infographics discussing the issue of water scarcity that are posted around the school.



MAGICAL PERFORMANCES IN THE MAKING

The band and choir prepare for their future concerts

Henry Roberts
'26

In current Choir and Band news, the Spring Concerts are taking place very soon. While this concert has been combined in the past, this year there will be one band and one choir concert respectively.

Our choir this year has been preparing long and hard for the concert and is planning a performance you'll never forget. When asked about the process so far, Senior Choir Member Alexis Cirillo said, "We've been singing songs every single day in class, it's been fun, we have a lot of pieces so it's a lot to memorize, but we've just been reading the music and singing it, and then learning parts, and then singing it again."

Choir Director Mr. Thomas Paster said, "It's been going well, it's a process and we're in the middle of the process, but it's going well and I think it's gonna be really good."

Paster said that the performing ensembles will be "the Chorus, which is all

freshman, the Honors Concert Choir which is all upperclass-

so we're making the music a little easier, a little lighter in mood,

"The band ensembles that will be performing are the wind ensemble, symphonic band, jazz band, blues band, and the string ensemble."

men, and the three and a *Ms. Taylor Rehe* A-cappella groups." little more fun but Our band has also



Last year's choir concert

been preparing hard for their concert. Band director Ms. Taylor Rehe said, "The band did a concert in March with all our festival music, so this is actually the band's third concert of the year,

right now we're still in the basic stages, but it should be a good concert."

Senior and dual Band and Choir Member Aidan Walsh has also brought up the struggle of this being the band's third

concert, saying that "It's been a little different from other years because there was an extra concert for the band but regardless, other than that, it's been pretty smooth and I don't expect any problems."

According to Rehe, the band ensembles that will be performing are "the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, Blues Band, and the String Ensemble."

With how much the band and choir have practiced their music, they must have created a bit of an attachment

"I've always enjoyed band and choir, they're just fun things to do, and they're an interesting thing to add to your schedule."

to those pieces, right? Sophomore and Band and Choir Member Bradley Hogue said, "In choir, I really like 'Banks of Doon,' it's a really pretty piece. In band I really love 'The Incredibles,' it's just really really good."

Cirillo said, "I definitely like 'Mata

Del Anima Sola' ('Tree of the Lonely Soul'). I think it's very fun, I sometimes catch myself sing-

band and choir and they're just fun things to do, and they're an interesting thing to add to your schedule.



Last year's choir concert with music teacher Mr. Paster

ing it outside of class and it's a really interesting piece." Lastly, Walsh shared that his favorite pieces were

They're pretty great." Walsh shared a similar positive sentiment, saying that "It's a lot of fun to have a class that's different from a lot of the other classes you can take here. The concerts are always a nice time, and overall I would recommend it."

The Choir Concert will be taking place May 8th, while the Band Concert will be taking place May 15th. There are never admission fees for the Highlands concerts, so if you're interested in attending the concerts and rooting on your classmates then these opportunities are perfect for you. ■

Senior Aidan Walsh

"Mata Del Anima Sola', and 'The Symphonic Gershwin.'"

When asked about his personal experience with the band and choir classes Hogue said that "I would absolutely always recommend people to do it. I've always enjoyed



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GRAPHIC DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

Diving into the beloved graphic design program

Salma Hassan '25

From engineering to foods, Highlands offers a plethora of electives for Highlanders to explore and discover their talents and interests. One of Highlands most iconic classes, beloved by all who take it, is Graphic Design.

Taught by Ms. Krista Carpino and Ms. Doreen Albano, in Graphic Design students learn the principles of graphic design and basics of Adobe Illustrator and Photoshoph, giving them the skill to create whatever their

cused on movie poster design and learned about various movie poster designers.



Graphic design room wall with past completed student projects

One of the greatest things Albano and Carpino do that differ from other classes is they not only create project ideas that

dents to envision themselves in a career of Graphic Design. Albano and Carpino show

students that Graphic Design is everywhere

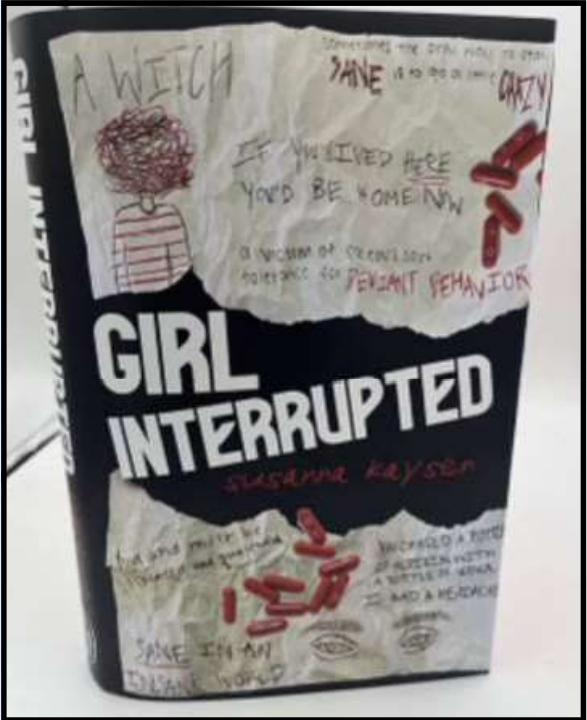
drawn to the Intro to Graphic Design course for its modern approach and practical applications. The mix of creativity and technology appealed to me, presenting an opportunity to explore digital mediums and expand my artistic horizons in new and exciting ways.

I loved Intro to Graphic Design so much so that I took Honors Graphic Design the year after. Honors Graphic Design gives students more real-world proj-

Sophia Galgano said that “throughout the course, I have witnessed a significant growth in my skills and abilities, thanks to Ms. Albano.”

Beyond the tech-

on projects creating a stress-free environment. This stress-free environment also fosters an environment for friendships to flourish through artistic collaboration. I myself



Salma Hassan '25

A mock up of a book cover project done in class

I am yet to meet a single person who has taken Graphic Design and not enjoyed it.

from the packaging we eat our cereal in to the menus at our favorite restaurants.

Senior Carly Klonsky, who will be attending Syracuse to study Marketing and Graphic Design, credits Albano’s class for opening her eyes to Graphic Design. “While traditional art classes certainly offer valuable skills, such as drawing and painting techniques, I felt

ects and also gives students more creative freedom. One such project involved designing a branding package for a fictional company, requiring me to conceptualize a logo, business cards, and promotional materials that captured the essence of the brand. It was a thrilling exercise in creativity and problem-solving, as I navigated the intricacies of brand identity and visual communication.

Klonsky said, “Whether creating logos, posters, or digital illustrations, I have found myself increasingly confident in my abilities to bring my ideas to life in the digital realm, all thanks to Graphic Design.” Carly actually has a small Graphic Design business, where she has made stickers, logos, and party merchandise.

Albano and Carpino both do a great job at giving constructive feedback throughout the creative process to students, allowing them to grow. Junior

nical skills gained, I believe that the graphic design class offers invaluable lessons in creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration that are applicable across various fields and disciplines. In an increasingly dig-

became great friends with Klonsky and Galgano in Honors Graphic Design last year.

I am yet to meet a single person who has taken Graphic Design and not enjoyed it. I am so grateful for having the opportunity to



Ms. Doreen Albano in her room

hearts desire. Among the various art classes available, Graphic Design stands out as a dynamic space where students can delve into the realms of digital creation, blending artistry with technology to craft compelling visual narratives.

What makes graphic design different from other conventional art classes at Highlands is the structure. Albano and Carpino correlated each unit with a specific art technique, a real world application and then a “spotlight artist” who specialized in it. For example, in our graphics unit, which specialized in digital drawing, we fo-

simulate real world applications of graphic design, but they also have Highlands



Tote bag cricket machine project mock up from a class

Alumni who work in Graphic Design come and talk to the classes about how they apply what they learned at Highlands to their current jobs.

This allows stu-

that graphic design offered a contemporary twist that resonated with my interests in marketing,” she said.

Personally, when faced with the choice of art classes, I was



Ms. Doreen Albano with students Nikki Carcara (senior), Addie Harrington (sophomore), and Jenna Finkelshteyn (sophomore)

ital world, the ability to communicate visually is more important than ever, whether in the realms of marketing, media, or design.

In addition, Graphic Design is a great class due to its relaxed structure. Unlike conventional classes there are no tests or homework assignments and Albano and Carpino both give class time for students to work

take such a class as it fostered my passion for Graphic Design. I recommend it to anyone and everyone, it doesn’t matter if you have not an artistic bone in your body or are an experienced painter, Graphic Design is the perfect class to expand your artistic digital horizons.■

ACA-FEST IS FUN, FAST APPROACHING, AND FULL OF TALENT

Learn about the A-cappella Festival taking place this May

“...It’s not a competition, everybody leaves happy, nobody leaves feeling like they got robbed, nobody roots for another group to do bad so they can win, everybody wants everybody to do as best as they can. I like that atmosphere.”

Mr. Thomas Paster

Continued from cover

... working hard to prepare for the festival. Freshman Charlotte Kao said “Our group’s preparation has been pretty good. It’s been a little rushed, but it’s pretty good; I think the songs are coming along very nicely.” How do the people partaking in the festival really feel about it? In particular, what do they like about it? Carcarra said, “I love how you get to interact with other people from great teams and you get

to learn things from really skilled coaches and really valuable workshops.” Paster reiterated a



Highlands Voices performing at the ICHSA Semifinals.

similar positive sentiment, saying that his “Favorite thing is that it’s not a competition, everybody leaves happy, nobody leaves feeling like they got robbed, nobody roots for another group to do bad so they can win, everybody wants everybody to do as best as they can. I like that atmosphere.” This positive atmosphere that Paster describes has led to the freshman being filled with emotion for the first time attending the festival. Roberts said “I feel a bit of excitement and nervousness, I’m definitely very excited. I’ve heard it’s a



Photo Courtesy of Raya Baghal '26

Highlands Voices performing at the ICHSA Semifinals. really fun experience from a lot of people who’ve gone in the past. I’m nervous to see what it’s like but I’m sure I’m gonna have a great time and it’s gonna be a lot of fun.” Kao also had to say, “I’m both excited and nervous because it is my first Aca-fest, but at the same time, I know how it works and I know how the festival works in general, so I’m pretty confident.” The Highlands A-cap-

pella Festival is going to be so fun this year, it will be taking place on Friday, pella or you’re just a music lover, you are highly encouraged to come and

“It’s been a little rushed, but it’s pretty good; I think the songs are coming along very nicely.”

Freshman Charlotte Kao

cheer on our Highlands A-cappella groups!■ May 3, and Saturday, May 4. If you’re a fan of a-cap-

MARCHING BAND AIDS IN DRUMMING UP MIDDLE SCHOOL INTEREST

Marching band invites middle schoolers to join the musical journey

James Weng '27

On April 19, Ms. Taylor Rehe, Northern Highlands Regional High School Director of Bands, and several student musicians will visit 8th graders at the Ho-Ho-Kus, Brookside, and Cavallini middle schools. The assemblies they are conducting aim to introduce aspiring musicians to the band program at Northern Highlands, which offers a wide range of musical genres to explore, opportunities to perform at various events, and a supportive community of fellow musicians. When I asked Rehe what she would be orchestrating during these visits, she explained that she wanted to captivate the interests of incoming first-year students. She explained, “We will play some ‘stand tunes’ (football game prep songs), demonstrate the drumline, demonstrate the color guard, let students try the drums/flags, and answer any questions they may have.” Letting students have the opportunity



Photo courtesy of @highlandsband on Instagram

Highlands Marching drumline and woodwind section performs for interested middle schoolers. to listen to the marching band and try out the equipment allows them to be immersed in the band and decide whether or not they are interested in joining. Junior and Band member Canon Chiu added, “I am a percussionist and a drumline captain. My goal is to promote the joys and wonders of the marching band. I want to show students that I had a great experience during my three years in the Highlands marching band and that I want them to have a positive experience.” He wants the first-year students to have the enjoyment that he had while participating in the band. While being in the band may seem daunting, especially to students who have little to no musical background, rest assured. Rehe wants all students, regardless of their level or age, to know that they can join. It’s never too late! “Marching band is a great way to get involved, make new friends, and have the best seats in the house at football games! We’ll find a place for anyone who’s interested and teach them everything they need to know to be successful. They just have to be willing to work hard and learn!” This program is designed to embrace and nurture all students, making them feel valued and included. As a final note, Chiu wants to tell our readers personally that “My experience with the band direc-

tor, Ms. Rehe, has been a fantastic journey, and she’s a really good band teacher. Though it is her second year, she has really put the program into good hands. I believe we’re winning a lot of championships and making memorable and bonding experiences. I recommend that everyone look at the Northern Highlands Regional Band and have a similar experience to anyone who wants to join the band!”

Why not join in on the fun and exciting world of marching band? Pick up a new skill, meet new friends, and improve your cardio along the way—many thanks to Rehe and Chiu for sharing their thoughts with the Fling. Good luck to everyone in the band, and keep up the great work. Stay sharp! This is not just a band, it’s a community of fun and joy waiting for you to be a part of it.■

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STANDING OVATION TO MIDSUMMER

The fall play receives seven Foxy Award nominations

Nina Misantonis '25

This year's fall play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was already a fantastic show that was appreciated widely by the student body. The entire cast, crew, and staff were dedicated to making a production unlike any other, and their work

tire cast for outstanding achievement for an ensemble in an elevated language play. This means that if they win the award, all of the actors will be recognized for their performance with a script that contains Shakespeare language.

Along with this nomination, the Northern

dent costume technician for a play, sophomore CJ Einhorn for outstanding achievement in student makeup design for a play, and sophomore Jenna Finkelshteyn for outstanding achievement in hair or wig design for a play.

McWilliams, nominated for her work on the play's costumes, expressed her opinion on her nomination by stating that "I'm pretty nervous for the awards ceremony, but at least my award is early on in the night, so I won't have to be anxious for too long." McWilliams plans on majoring in fashion design, and she added, "It's something I'm able to put on my resume so young when I have very little experience in the costume industry, and it's really nice to have some recognition and have an accomplishment so early on."

The theater company also received its first act-

ing nomination in a while for junior Ash Kim as an actor in an elevated language play. They remarked

in dramaturgy and the Jo Ann Fox award for veteran directors. Strang-Wolf mentioned how "The Jo

that's community based is competitive is complicated for me." Despite this, she is very proud of the fact that her kids get recognition for their hard work.

Ms. Jennifer Winkler, who produced the show, voiced "I'm thrilled because the students and staff put their blood, sweat, and tears into every production and to see how many nominations we received, I'm elated." The awards ceremony will be taking place on May 20, 2024 at Montclair State University, and the cast, crew, and staff are all invited to attend. ■



Photo courtesy of Adam Keeble

Some of the principles of the cast in Act V.

was not left unnoticed.

Montclair State University nominated the play in several different award categories, including one that nominated the en-

Highlands Theater Company received six others. Three production elements, which are for senior Katie McWilliams for outstanding achievement for a stu-



Nominee Katie McWilliams '24 (right) and her costume designs.

"I definitely put in a lot of effort because it was the first lead that I ever got to perform in front of people," adding on to both their nervousness and excitement for the ceremony.

Mrs. Shaina Strang-Wolf, the director of the show, was nominated for not one, but two directing awards, which include outstanding achievement

Ann Fox award means a lot to me because it recognizes people who are able to build a community as directors and I feel like that's one of my strong suits."

Strang-Wolf also expressed her opinion on the awards ceremony itself saying that "I feel like the purpose of theater is to build community, and so the notion that something

THE FRESHMEN TAKE THE STAGE...

The Class of '27 Starts Rehearsals For The Freshman Play

Ben Sherlock '26

At the end of each school year, the freshman class has an opportunity to shine on the Highlands stage. Recently, rehearsals have started for the freshman play which, as the name implies, is a play exclusively made for the freshmen. This truly allows the upcoming class to showcase their special skills and talents in a show of their own.

Something very unique about the freshman play each year is the importance of the student directors. While student directors are a part of every Highlands production, they hold a bigger significance in the freshman play. Seniors Hannah Altman, Alexis Cirillo, Katie McWil-

liams, and Ella Gorga have stepped up to be an important part of the production as a student director.

When asked about her role as student director, McWilliams said that "I decided what scenes I want to direct, I helped cast those scenes with students that I think would fit well within those roles and I came up with blocking, concepts, and ideas, and I helped the cast execute them."

Allowing the upperclassmen to take these leadership positions is not only a good opportunity for seniors, but also provides the freshman with an opportunity to get to know and work with these upperclassmen in a way they otherwise would not have.

"My favorite part about it is creating a re-

lationship with the kids," Cirillo shares. "It's so fun to be a positive role model in their life and getting to watch them have fun: that's the most important thing to me."

All four of these student directors have been heavily

signing the costumes, or taking the stage, they all have plenty of experience.

Gorga says that "For on stage, you just need to learn lines and listen to the director. But as a director, you have to make it up. You have to make up the

"It's so fun to be a positive role model in their life and getting to watch them have fun: that's the most important thing to me."

Senior Alexis Cirillo

involved in the Highlands Theater Company before. Whether it be being a previous student director, de-

blocking, how they say their lines, the casting, and a lot goes into it."

The show's director, Mr. Joseph Kiely, is now taking on this show after stepping back from the musical. "Last year in Actors Workshop, we had an opportunity for the advanced acting kids to direct students in Intro to Theater and Acting class and it was a really great experience doing that," Kiely stated when asked why he took on the role. "So I knew that I also liked working as a facilitator for upperclassmen to be directing ninth graders."

The show isn't done how the typical Highlands show is. "Instead of



Some members of the Class of '27 rehearsing a scene.

a full-length, mainstage show; we do a series of one-acts and short scenes," Kiely describes. "I think that giving ninth graders all scenes that are for people in their fifties wouldn't necessarily make sense and might not help their acting as much. So we tried to select plays that were enjoyable to the audience."

This allows each student to have a chance to shine in a scene of their own. Freshman actor Julianne Levine, who was seen in the previous Highlands production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, said that "I didn't know that there was a play just for freshman so that I didn't have to worry about whether I would get in or not."

Kiely describes this show as "a very fun and funny night out." Not only that, but he states that "pretty much all the

shows are comedies and they cover the scope of everything from being a young kid to being in the workforce." So you are almost guaranteed to laugh.

Be certain to catch this year's freshman play in Hopkins Hall on May 16th and 17th, as it's sure to be a blast. ■



Photo courtesy of Ben Sherlock '26

Alexis Cirillo '24 directing one of her scenes

Photo courtesy of Alexis Cirillo '24

GIRLS LACROSSE DOMINATES IN PA

The Girls' Lacrosse team soars past competition in Pennsylvania

Sorcha Powell '26

From the very beginning of the year, the girls lacrosse team has seemed very promising. The team is consistently good every year and we are excited to see how they perform this spring. Just two days after tryouts ended, the team started their season with a thrilling trip to Great Wolf Lodge in Pennsylvania for a fun-packed four-day and three-night stay.

The team has taken pre-season trips before to places as far as Florida, but for the first time to Great Wolf Lodge it was nothing but a positive experience. Throughout the trip, the team played two games and racked in a dominant win for both, even with almost no time to prepare.

The gameplay was a lot of players' favorite part, Sophomore Caroline Kern said in

an interview, "My favorite part had to be playing in the games. It felt perfect to win the first games we played as a team and gave everyone a confidence boost. When we were playing we were able to just have fun and try new things with each other. This helped us to set the tone for the season."

She couldn't have said it better, the score lines reflect the team's success and hopefully will be the script for the rest of the season. The first game finished with a large margin win of 12-5 and the second ended with an even greater margin of victory with a score of 13-2. Despite the competition not being as fierce as the highlanders are used to, they never let up and gave their full effort to comfortably win both games.

"These games were really good to work on

our play as a team. We have a lot of new players this year so we took this opportunity to work on plays and figure out where each person fit best," Sophomore Caroline Kern said in an interview, giving good insight into the games aside from the scoreline.

The team graduated ten seniors last year and despite the big shifts in the team, the Highlanders didn't disappoint. The team stayed four days and only played in two games, so a lot of free time needed to be spent, so the trip focused on that pre-season team bonding a lot of other programs don't always get the luxury of having.

When asked about the team experience during the trip Kern responds, "We spent a lot of time together as a team whether it was playing games, going on bus rides, hav-

ing dinner together. fore. Whether it was trip did make the team



Photo courtesy of Reet Sachdev '27

The girls lacrosse team poses for a team picture.

There were just a lot of fun moments and it was great to be able to spend time together in an environment outside of school and practice."

She recalls all the fun team bonding moments that were able to be shared on the trip that made the team closer than be-

time spent in the hotel playing board games, meals shared, or an exciting water park visit the team had loads of time to really connect and hopefully this good team chemistry will reflect on the field.

Kern couldn't agree with the bonding being a success stating, "I think the

closer and made everyone feel more confident in each other and ready for the season." We can only hope this thrilling trip sets the lacrosse team up for a great season ahead and we can't wait to see how they perform in their upcoming season. ■

WRESTLING GOES DOWN TO ATLANTIC

Ethan Mendel gets Sixth Place in the State at Championships

Samantha O'Connell '26

The wrestling team had a fun experience going down to Atlantic City to compete in the state tournament in Boardwalk Hall. We spoke to one of the seniors on the team and he had some input on how the trip went for him.

"Atlantic City was one of the coolest experiences of my high school career. The state tournament in Boardwalk Hall is the biggest stage in New Jersey high school wrestling, and to be able to find success and compete in that environment was an incredible experience, I'll never forget," said Ethan Mendel.

On this trip, they

were able to compete in a high-level environment with some of the top wrestlers in the state. So we were wondering how you plan well enough to have success over some of the best wrestlers out in New Jersey.

Ethan stated, "Planning for the trip was stressful because I didn't find out I qualified for the tournament until five days before we left, and the brackets only came out a day before we went down (two days before the tournament). Game planning consisted of many conversations with my amazing coaching staff, Coach Rechain, Coach Buckley, Coach Rusch, and Coach Travis. They



Pictured left to right, Coach Travis Irata, Coach Adam Rusch, Ethan Mendel '24, Coach Dan Rechain.

helped me mentally and physically prepare for competition, and cannot be given enough credit for my success. I spoke a lot with my Dad about what I would eat while down there, as diet is an important aspect of the

tournament process."

Even though that sounds like not enough time to prepare for the competition, he wrestled in six matches in AC, and Mendel placed sixth in the state. He was able to get two of his wins

from pinning the other person and one which was an upset over the fourth seed- Ethan he was the twelfth.

This was an exciting event for Ethan because he got to learn a lot from the trip down there. His position on the podium was a big accomplishment.

They were not down there for long.

Mendel explains, "We arrived at the hotel Wednesday night, and then competed Thursday through Saturday, returning home Saturday night." Mendel had an amazing time down in Atlantic City. He was one of the All-stars this season on the wrestling team and it was shown during this competition.

More than 30,000 people gathered at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall in March to watch the state high school individual wrestling tournament. It's one of the biggest high school wrestling events and Mendel did a great job representing Northern Highlands. Congratulations Ethan on being sixth in the State, and closing off your successful wrestling career. ■

EXPANDING FENCING IN NEW JERSEY

Mr. Krzysik wants to expand Fencing to other schools

Samantha O’Connell ’26

Mr. Krzysik wants to expand the knowledge of fencing so we have more articles and topics covered and not just scores of each game. This year the fencing team at Highlands had some individual state competitors.

The Boy Sabres finished 41-40 and received recognition at the Bergen County tournament. Team leaders Joseph Hull (15-7), Peyton Russ (13-8), and Junior Christain Pochatko (14-12) all had impressive individual results and their victories indicate promise for the future.

The Highlander Girls epee’s record was also impressive as they finished 50-40 as a sword team. Junior Captain Remy Blanchard’s bout record of (22-5) and Junior Emma Depisch (16-6) also impressed spectators.

Derrick Chen, Peyton Russ, Christain Pochatko, and Remy

Blanchard, represented Highlands at the state individual tournament.

As you can see these individual competitors had very good competitions throughout the sea-

“We’re looking to get more schools involved in Bergen County as well as Besseya County.”

Fencing Coach Matthew Krzysik

son and all qualified for state. Fencing is something not a lot of people participates in or know enough about.

We asked Mr. Krzysik for more information on the fencing season, “Well, let me share with you when the fencing season begins and when the fencing season ends. Typically, it starts the week before Thanksgiving.

There is a tryout period. It’s Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Then officially,

the season begins the Monday after Thanksgiving. We have a couple of weeks before the holiday break at wintertime, Christmas break, I would call it. Then we

er side, in the Passaic League, you have Pompton Lakes, you have Butler, Wayne Hills, Wayne Valley, Passaic Valley, and a few others ones.”

He explains more about how many tournaments there are, including, one big tournament held at Drew University, called the Santenelli for girls and the Santrulo which are the biggest tournaments of the year with 53 different teams and high schools coming to compete. There are about 600-1,000 fencers that come out to compete each year.

“We’re looking to expand the overall enrollment, let’s say, of fencing. At Ramapo, this past year, we had 20 boys. We’ve had as many as 30 on a team, which is very good. Some teams might struggle a little bit.

Now, in a fencing meet, there are three weapons: saber, foil, and epe. In a meet, three fencers fence each of those weapons for a total of 27 bouts.

The team that gets to 14 wins first wins the meet. Now, they could win 20 out of 27 bouts.

We’re looking to get more schools involved in Bergen County as well as Besseya County. But I think our focus is to get more teams in Bergen County, and other schools. There are a couple of schools. I believe Sparta is starting a fencing team this year or next year.

There’s another school as well. I don’t recall what the name of that school was,

but we’re looking for more Bergen County schools to start a fencing program, whether it’s boys, girls, boys, and girls, whatever the case may be,” says Mr. Krzysik. If you have any interest or questions about fencing make sure to talk to Mr. Krzysik or Mr. Patel. ■

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but we’re looking for more Bergen County schools to start a fencing program, whether it’s boys, girls, boys, and girls, whatever the case may be,” says Mr. Krzysik. If you have any interest or questions about fencing make sure to talk to Mr. Krzysik or Mr. Patel. ■



BASEBALL REACHES NATIONAL NEWS

Devastating call ends Varsity Baseball Season

Gabe Tejeda ’26

On May 22, 2024, the Highlands baseball season ended with a disputed game against Mount Olive. In fact, the game ended up being on Fox News.

After an intense, game-changing three-run home run by Beckham Stern, the unexpected happened. Despite Stern’s shot, which he showed by boldly flipping his bat in the air, the umpire declared that the first baserunner had never actually touched home.

Mt. Olive had immediately agreed with the umpire’s claim, and it was validated as a

true appeal, removing all three of Highlands’ points. This secured the win for Mt. Olive, beating Highlands 3-0.

The pitcher had also walked towards the umpire immediately after to tell him that the first base runner had never touched home.

However, the claim was heavily disputed. In the videos of the event, it is not clear whether or not the baserunner really ever reached home plate.

Paul Albarella, the Northern Highlands coach, and the runner both argued the claim. However, Mount Olive coach Pete Zocco-



Game breaking call as the first baserunner misses home base.

lillo claimed that Stern had jumped over home plate and missed it by three feet.

Zoccolillo went far

enough to say, “Everybody saw it. Myself, the crowd, everybody saw the kid completely jumped over home

plate.”

This heavily disputed situation unfortunately led to the end of the Northern Highlands Varsity Baseball season.

Ryan Morik, a Fox News correspondent, covers major sporting events on-site and has interviews with many esteemed athletes. On May 24, he covered this intense high school baseball game. Fox News addressing this event truly shows how rare a call like this is. This year, there has only been one other similarly sized controversy in the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association

during a basketball game.

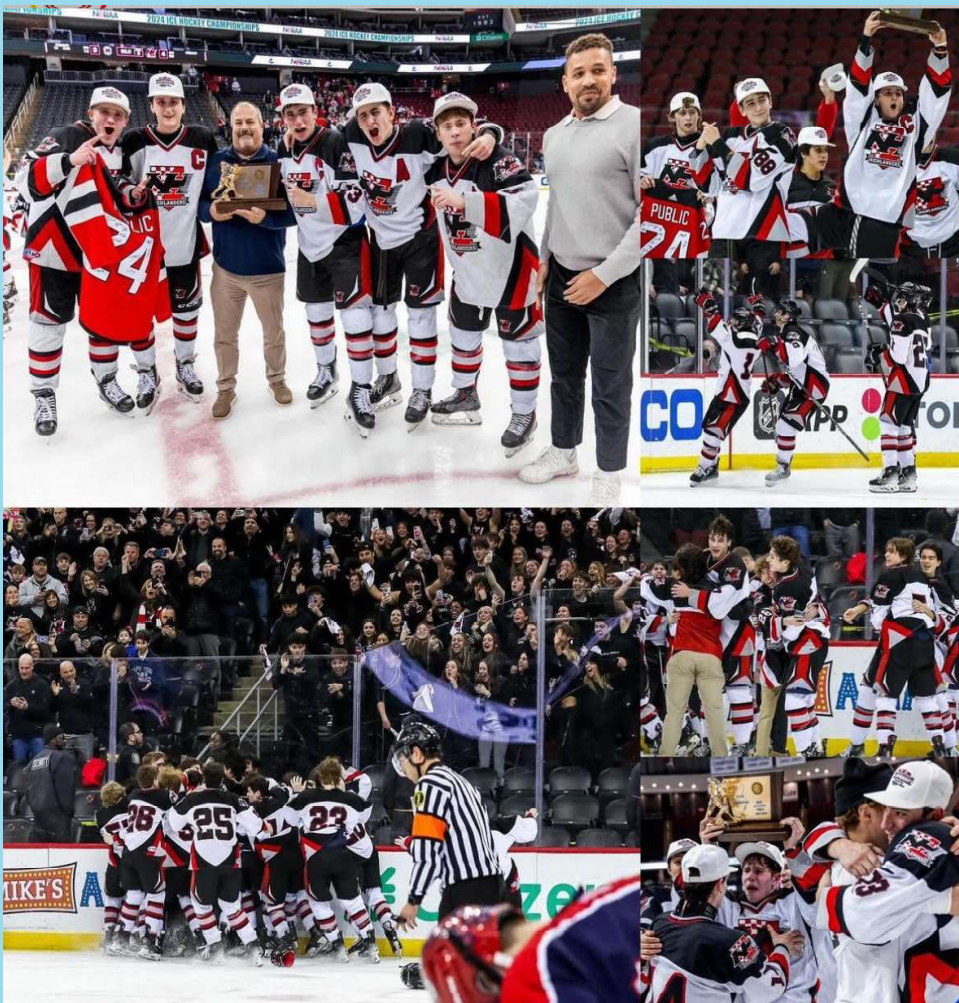
Despite this heartbreaking end to the season, we still want to congratulate our varsity team for making it to the NJ state playoffs; their effort this year deserves recognition and admiration. ■

“RING ME” NH HOCKEY CELEBRATION

The boys varsity ice hockey team are being rewarded 2023-2024 state champion rings

Gabriella Ragazzo '26

The varsity boys ice hockey team are 2024 state champions. To reflect and earn this award was something great. Another factor that came with the win was a ring to reflect upon the season. From past years, the captains of the team got to pick what the ring looked like and the size. Now Vincenzo Capano, Collin Prugh, Matthew Gershengorn, Blake Klein, and Daniel Kulbanskiy have the opportunity to make Highlands hockey's third ring great. On Thursday at 2:45, the boys receive a ring sizing for a remembrance of a lifetime. Throughout the hockey season, they called it "ring season" because they knew that their victory was soon at reach. Over the past years, the ring size had been enormously big, although this year the captains of the team decided to make an adjustment and have it as something the boys can wear without having to worry about it falling off. Throughout the two



The boys winning the championship game.

The boys winning the championship game.

years of earning rings by winning a state championship, they have always used the phrase "ring me" and it showed this season.

Creating the ring and sizing it is a whole process that the boys have to go through. Although, in the end it's

all worth it just to express the victory of the season. The reasoning behind this ring is simple. It not only shows the hard work

the boys put into the team to achieve the championship win, it proves that a team, a family, and an organization can make something great. The ring symbolizes something great in sports and now they have something that they can show future generations of Highlands hockey. No matter the decision of the design or overall perception of the ring, the boys are making it meaningful

by having everyone's input on what they want the ring to look like and state. The one thing that the captains were sure of was making the ring smaller in size due to previous year struggles. In the end, the captains want to award their team rings to commemorate their success and to serve as a reminder of their hard-work and effort they've put in throughout the season.■

THROWBACK TO SOFTBALL FLORIDA TRIP

The varsity girls softball team took a trip to Orlando, Florida to bond, play, and have fun

Gabriella Ragazzo '26

The varsity softball girls team took an annual trip to Florida. This trip has been taken for the past five years and has always earned high standards. It's a great experience for the girls and an overall bonding experience that shapes the season and their overall victory. A freshman who is new to the team and program named Elisa Valdes. She shares with me her experience in Florida and how it was a trip to be remembered. Valdes says, "We stayed at the Cabana Bay Beach Resort in Orlando." She also states, "The overall experience in Florida was great, I feel that our team got a lot of bonding on and off the field before our regular season." This proves that their trip ultimately worked to get that chemistry forming right before the competitive season began. On the field the girls strived and played great. They had a mix of wins and losses and battled hard. Off the field I asked Valdes what they did. She explains, "We visited Top

Golf, and the Universal Parks during our stay." This helped shape the trip and allow the girls not only play the sport they love together, but have fun too. This was an important trip because of the chemistry and relaxation that needed to be embraced before the season. It was important to tackle this early so the girls had time to bond and understand each other's form of play. Strengths and weaknesses also showed



The softball team at the airport in Orlando Florida.

If they understand their teammates better, they can play like a team. classmen suggested things to bring for our activities we would be doing and I

about was the weather because it could affect whether they played or not. Although, their chances lucked out since it was full sunshine throughout the entire trip. I asked Elisa Valdes what she individually learned from the experience and what she got from playing with her brand new team. She explains, "During this experience, I got to learn and understand what my coaches are expecting of me and our team this season. I also learned how fortunate I am to be able to go on the trip with a bunch of older girls who already had varsity experience." This alone shows the purpose of having a bonding experience and how much it affects the season



The girls in bonding in Orlando Florida.

in Florida which made it easier for later games in the season to be dealt with.

For planning for the trip, Valdes states, "Before going, a lot of upper-

also checked the weather." The only major thing the girls were concerned

and its overall victory. Lastly Valdes explains, "I feel that we bonded on the field of course, but also during our team dinners and when we were together at the Universal Parks." To wrap up, the trip was a success on and off the field.■

MADDIE WILLKOMM OFF TO UC BERKELEY

Maddie Willkomm expresses her commitment and journey about playing lacrosse at Berkley

Gabriella Ragazzo '26

Maddie Willkomm has been a determined and hardworking student-athlete these past four years and gets to continue her time at her dream school. Willkomm plans to continue playing lacrosse at a higher level throughout college. She is committed to Cal Berkeley. She states, "I am so excited that I get to play lacrosse for another four years!" Her excitement and determination for the sport never shied away. She continuously puts in effort for the sport day and night. After school, she spends time at practice and games working hard at the sport she loves. Knowing that she gets to continue lacrosse for another four years is something special that she won't take for granted. Throughout it all, her leadership with the girl's lacrosse team proves that a winning team needs a warrior mindset and a great leader. Later, I asked her how she led to this accomplishment by continuing to play at Cal Berkeley.

Willkomm says, "I worked really hard my whole sophomore season at Highlands and during the summer with my club team. I had tournaments and camps all summer, which were super important during my recruiting process." Throughout her sophomore year, she knew that her love for the game would not be on pause. She wanted more out of her sport and she knew that she could offer her talent to another school that would appreciate it. As her training went on, she continued to strive at camps and club games/practices. She later says, "Yes, I had a really fortunate recruiting process, but I had to work really hard all summer to get in front of coaches that I was interested in." This all together helped her get recognized and recruited. Since her determination was never put off, she explains how long she's been dedicated to the sport. "I have been playing lacrosse since kindergarten, and have been playing club since fourth grade." With her tremendous



Maddie's instagram post of her applying to Cal

Photo cred to Maddie Willkomm

amount of time and effort toward lacrosse, her childhood dream became a reality when Berkeley recognized her extreme passion for lacrosse. Her overall love for the game was never second guessed and it proved throughout her years of playing experience. As the years went on,

not only her ability to perform improve but her love and passion for the game grew. There were also a lot of other factors that came into play that helped Willkomm reach her goals. She explains, "All my coaches, my teammates, and my parents. My parents especially, because they drove

me everywhere." These important people made her journey and destination as memorable as it was. Her life and overall victory to her commitment would not have been possible without the help of her coaches, teammates, and parents. With all of this support and capability, she made a

hard decision on where to continue her sport and her education for the next four years. She states, "I wanted a school where I could not only continue my athletic career, but I wanted to go to a strong academic school, and Cal is a perfect mix of both for me," Cal's school and sports administration is rated very highly and is well respected. We are confident that Willkomm will fit right into the school. Lastly, I asked Willkomm if there was anything she would change about her journey or any other specific event. She states, "I wouldn't change anything. I am so happy with my result and couldn't be more excited to continue my career at Berkeley!" Congratulations, we are all rooting for you. We all know you have a bright future ahead of you in school and lacrosse and wish you the best. ■

ALANA ARJONA BECOMES A SEAHAWK

Alana Arjona has announced her commitment for her soccer career at Wagner University

Catherine Main '27

Wagner's soccer program just gained a shooting star straight from Northern Highlands. Alana Arjona, currently a senior soccer player at Northern Highlands just committed to Wagner College of New York where she will continue her soccer career for another four years. Alana's hard work and dedication throughout her athletic experience at Highlands and on club teams, has led her to accomplish this lifelong goal of going to a Division 1 college and playing at a top level for the sport she loves. When asked what she is looking forward to most at Wagner Alana replied, "I feel very excited to be a part of a new team and meet new people. I look forward to creating new memories at Wagner." Alana started playing soccer when she was just a toddler, and ever since she was a little girl, she remembers always having a love for this sport. Throughout her early years as a player, Little Alana tried out for a club team called World Class, in hopes of building her con-

fidence and bringing her skills to the next level. Arjona joined the soccer club, World Class as a 6-year-

the soccer season. However, during her sophomore year, she decided to end her running career, so she

Since Freshman year, Alana has been a varsity player. She had a very strong impact on the team's

and made twenty two assists. Because of these stats that clearly show Alana is an all-around

she left us with the following, "I would like to thank my coaches, family, and teammates because without them I wouldn't have been able to achieve my dreams." Tara Madigan, Head coach of Northern Highlands Soccer program says regarding Alana's past four years with the program..."Her achievements both on and off the field, coupled with her selflessness and team-oriented mindset, speak volumes about her character and dedication. It's evident that she's made a significant impact on her team, both in terms of performance and leadership. While her departure may leave a void, it's clear that she's left a lasting legacy and will undoubtedly continue to excel at the next level." We wish nothing but the best for you at Wagner! Best of luck in your future endeavors. ■



Alana striking the ball in her past fall season



Alana playing a home game at Highlands

Photo cred to Northern Highlands

Photo cred to Northern Highlands

old and has been playing with this team ever since. As a Freshman, Alana entered Highlands signing up and trying out for the soccer team in the fall, and the Highlands track team in the Winter and Spring. She felt that being a multi-sport athlete was great because she found that running track really boosted her stamina for

could focus solely on the future of her soccer career. Overall, Alana feels that she progressed to the pinnacle of her soccer career due to her hard work all year-especially off-season- and her dedication to being the best that she could be. Alana has made a clear impact on the Northern Highlands soccer program since joining the high school.

success during her Junior and Senior years. As a Junior, Alana was named 2nd team all-league, and as a Senior, she led her team to the state sectionals and onto the finals of counties. Arjona scored ten goals in league games this senior season and had many assists. Throughout all four years, she scored 26 goals

player, Arjona was awarded first-team all-league, first team all county, and NJSCA all state honors. While Alana's impact as a soccer player at Highlands will allow her to leave a lasting imprint on the walls and field of our school, she is off to Wagner to continue her journal as a scholar athlete. As she leaves Highlands,

EARTH DAY TAKEOVER

Students share what they do to celebrate Earth Day, every day

Gabriel Tejeda '26

Since 1970, Earth Day has taken place on April 22 every year. Originally, the holiday was only recognized by the USA, but now it takes place in 190 different countries.

Around the world, people celebrate this holiday by planting trees or simply appreciating the world around them instead of taking it for granted. Sophomore Mary Brusselback plants flowers every year saying, “I feel like it’s my responsibility to protect the earth I live on.”

Sophomore PJ Strandes does something different yearly. “Last year, I planted a tree in my backyard. This year, I’m probably going to plant a flower or two. It’s the little things.”

And he couldn’t be more correct. In the grand scheme of things, it may seem like a dull effort to plant a tree or recycle your plastics, but in reality, small things like that impact the local community more than you might



Photos of the Earth’s beauty taken by fellow students throughout the year.

Photos Courtesy of Madeleine Knapp '25

“It should be ‘Earth Year’ because every day we spend on this Earth should be spent admiring and protecting it.”
Mary Brusselback '26



The Honors Global Citizenship and Service class celebrating Earth Day by helping teacher’s kids solve an Earth Day bingo puzzle for take your kid to school day.

Photo Courtesy of The Northern Highlands Education Association

“There’s only one Earth, let’s make sure we keep our home clean.”
PJ Strandes '26

think.

A singular mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide, a gas that contributes to the greenhouse effect, and release oxygen in exchange. With the thousands of trees in our district, tons of carbon dioxide will be absorbed and released as healthy oxygen.

The importance of celebrating Earth Day doesn’t go past Helena Montanye, a sophomore who has been celebrating this holiday since she was a little kid. However, she celebrates it in a different manner than Brusselback and Strandes. Montanye tends to go for hikes with her father on Earth Day.

“Every Earth Day, my dad and I go on a hike and admire nature. Embracing the beauty of Earth is very important,” Montanye shares, showing her values regarding this holiday.

However, the holiday is not the only time that we should celebrate the beauty of the earth. Strandes says, “There’s only one Earth, let’s make sure that we keep our home clean.”

To truly keep our world clean, we need to make an active effort to preserve it. In Highlands, we have multiple different garbage bins in each classroom. Every student should make an effort to sort their garbage according to the bins.

There are many ways to celebrate Earth Day, but overall, the most important thing is to acknowledge climate change and nature and try to make a change within your environment to contribute to positive change in the global environment.

“It should be ‘Earth Year’ because every day we spend on this Earth should be spent admiring and protecting it,” says Brusselback, “but Earth Day is a nice way to spread awareness.”

Brusselback believes that we should be celebrating by loving and nurturing nature every day, which adds to what Strandes said about making sure to keep our planet clean. The overall message of the holiday is to spread awareness, but there should also be awareness spread about the importance of taking care of nature every day.

No matter what your Earth Day routine is, it is important to share the nature-love with friends and family. If you know someone who consistently litters and doesn’t show respect to the landscape around them, encourage them to read about climate change and celebrate Earth Day with you, even if that means a quick walk. The small things can go a long way with environmental conservation.

Have a happy 54th anniversary of Earth Day.