



## BROADWAY ICON THOMAS VIERTEL '59 RECIEVES ALUMNI AWARD



Mr. Tom Viertel '59 recieves this year's Choate Alumni Award.

By **Steven Kee '27**  
Copy Editor

On April 9, Mr. Thomas Viertel '59 returned to Choate to receive the Choate Alumni Award and share his experience as a Broadway producer with students. In addition to giving a speech and answering questions during School Meeting, Mr. Viertel spoke with students during a luncheon at the Sally Hart Lodge and watched a spring musical rehearsal for *Into the Woods*, a show that Mr. Viertel produced on Broadway.

Every year, an alumnus is awarded the Choate Alumni Award to celebrate their accomplishments in their respective fields. This year, the Development Office invited Mr. Viertel to honor his remarkable achievements in theater.

As a former member of the Board of Governors of the Broadway League and longstanding Chairman of the Board of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Mr. Viertel has proven himself a luminary of the theater industry. "He's had such an outstanding career. Forty years in any business is really impressive and also, he's so vivacious," Director of Development Communications Mrs. KeriAnne Tisdale said. "His work

with the O'Neill Theater is really outstanding. To be the chairman of a board for 24 years [is] quite a lot of your personal dedication and selflessness because that's not a paid position."

In his speech at School Meeting, Mr. Viertel spoke about his experience at Choate and reminisced on former traditions, such as the compulsory attendance of football games and daily chapel gatherings. He highlighted Choate's role in shaping his values, crediting the School's honor code for shaping his strong moral compass. "The theater business is renowned for crooked producers. For me, that was never, and it hasn't been true at all. I think I came into this [industry] with a strong sense of integrity," Mr. Viertel said. "That was something that Choate said; it was important that whatever you do, you do it in a way that's forthright, honest, just transparent, and people will come to trust you."

After School Meeting, Mr. Viertel attended a luncheon at Sally Hart Lodge, where he conversed with Choate students in a smaller, more personal setting. Leanne Parks '25, who attended the luncheon, gained new insights about the theater industry and found his advice reassuring. "I gained a new sense of understanding for

[the role of a] producer. I didn't realize they were so connected to the actual production. He just grounded me because I want to be in the theater business, and seeing someone who would like to make [shows] happen and seeing someone so kind just comforted me," Parks said.

Arts Concentration student Jordan Dodd '25's most memorable takeaway from speaking with Mr. Viertel at the luncheon was the importance of creating shows you enjoy watching and that are truly authentic to you. "He simply said, 'I go with what I like even if it is a flop because I know I'll be able to sit through it 100 times' ... Even though we do a lot of things for money, it's also important to do a lot of things for yourself," Dodd said.

Mr. Viertel's visit gave students a look into how Choate has shaped his success and reminded students of the extensive alumni network they will eventually become a part of: "I hope that students left feeling like 'Wow, I'm tied to this person because we're both going to be Choate alumni,'" Mrs. Tisdale said.

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## Choate Students Attend Diversity Conferences

By **Francesca Howard '26** and **Leanne La '26**  
Copy Editor and Reporter

Choate students explored their identities and connected with students from other schools at various conferences across New England throughout April. At these conferences, they learned and discussed different social issues, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); LGBTQIA+ concerns; and aspects of the Asian American experience.

### CAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference:

On April 7, Choate students traveled to the Hopkins School in New Haven for the annual Student Diversity Leadership Conference, organized by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). At the conference, student leaders from grades 7-12 as well as faculty and administrators from Connecticut independent schools discussed ways to improve DEI, facilitated conversations about social justice, and strengthened the network of diversity advocates across Connecticut. This year's theme, "Reigniting Your Fire For Justice," inspired a full day of workshops and discussions.

The symposium included interactive educational sessions such as "Language & Words Matter," which focused on the impact of language in shaping attitudes and behaviors, and "Moving from Allyship to Co-conspirators," which highlighted the dangers of performative activism and pushed participants to involve themselves in justice initiatives.



Students investigate queer representation at the Spectrum conference.

Blake Steremberg '26 returned to the conference for their second year to bounce ideas off their peers and "learn about the differences and things that have worked at their schools and things that haven't." They particularly appreciated the 10th-grade workshop — "Who Am I & Social Identifiers" — which explored how people define identity and its intersectionality with different aspects of themselves. "Everyone's identity is multifaceted," they explained.

The conference also featured similar sessions for educators. One session, titled "Silence and Inaction Equals Oppression," was aimed at educators who identify as white and provided a framework for moving beyond mere awareness into action. During the session, renowned Black author and nominee of TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People, Ibram X. Kendi, discussed white privilege and microaggressions, aiming to equip educators with actionable strategies to foster inclusive communities within their respective institutions.

The conference allowed Choate students to scrutinize what it means to be a leader and how to effectively integrate DEI into curriculum and communities. It inspired students to carry these discussions forward into their own communities and incentivized them to initiate change and promote a culture that embraces DEI. Steremberg advised future attendees to make the most of the conference: "Stay curious and ask as many questions as you have," they said.

### Asian American Footsteps Conference (AAFC):

On April 14, Choate students attended AAFC at Governor's Academy, joining more than 300 Asian-identifying students from various independent schools in the New England region. Originally established in 2011 by Aya Murata, a college counselor and advisor to Asian students at Phillips Academy Andover, AAFC hopes to create a space for Asian-identifying students to embrace and learn about the cultures they come from, in addition to affirming and challenging their understanding of the Asian experience. The overarching theme for this year, "Creating Our Narrative," focused on empowering attendees and creating an Asian community across the independent school network.

Kaylin Lam '27 signed up to connect with others who shared aspects of her identity by participating in various student-led, interlocutory workshops. One notable workshop she took part in was "China's Path to Democracy," in which students discussed the history of authoritarianism in East Asian countries. In a different session, she learned about the history of H Mart, the largest Asian supermarket chain in the U.S. Lam found the student-led nature of these workshops particularly engaging. "They're all student-led, so it's really interesting to see what they could come up with," she said.

This year's keynote speaker was author, musician, and self-proclaimed troublemaker Simon Tam. Mr. Tam is the founder and bassist of The Slants, an Asian American dance rock and anti-racist band that won *Matal v. Tam*, a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case in 2017 that helped extend civil liberties to minority communities. His work has been highlighted in more than 3,000 media platforms across over 150 countries, including *Rolling Stone*, the *British Broadcasting Corporation* and *The New York Times*. He has spoken at thousands of events across four continents and holds a world record for TEDx

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## RENOWNED JOURNALISTS MODEL CIVIL DISCOURSE

By **Eliana Li '26**  
Copy Editor

On April 17, the Choate community gathered in Colony Hall for a panelist conversation entitled "Global Peacekeeping, Politics, and Civil Discourse." Opened columnist for *The New York Times* Mr. Nicholas Kristof, foreign affairs analyst for *The New Yorker* Ms. Robin Wright, and analyst of Middle Eastern affairs Mr. Aaron David Miller, accompanied by Humanities teacher and Third-form Dean Mr. Jonas Akins, took the stage as they shared their experiences in journalism and diplomacy as well as their thoughts on conflicts in the Middle East.

Throughout the conversation, the panelists offered valuable lessons and advice to the Choate community. Ms. Wright emphasized the importance of consulting different viewpoints beyond the American perspective when covering international affairs. She pulled from her personal experiences covering stories across the world: "All my life I've gone to the other side. Only once have I been with American troops, and that was when I went to Afghanistan because that was the only way to get



Mr. Aaron David Miller, Ms. Robin Wright, and Mr. Nicholas Kristof educate community about journalism and diplomacy.

in and out of [Afghanistan at] the time for me. But I always made this point to make sure I understand what I'm seeing [and] that I'm listening to everyone," Ms. Wright said. "In most conflicts, there are not

just two sides, there are many sides, and when you educate yourself, there's nothing that beats experience."

Similarly, Mr. Kristof urged the community to detach themselves from their inher-

ent confirmation biases and see the world not as they want it to be but as it really is. "As human beings, we're looking for information that will confirm our biases, and we have to be aware of that and resist

that. That comes with trying to reach out to people who take a very different point of view," Mr. Kristof explained.

As an aspiring journalist, Lauren Kee '24 resonated with their messages and recognized that good journalism requires empathy and an open mind. "I think it's very important to leave my biases at the door and approach every story that I'm covering with an open mind," Kee said. "I think my identities and my experiences have certainly informed my reporting. But I hope that it informs it in a way that gives me more empathy and more openness towards different viewpoints rather than clouding my judgment."

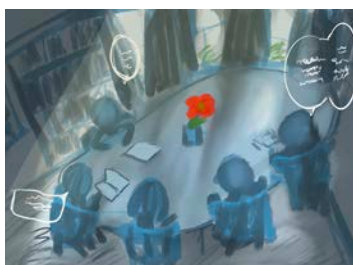
Mr. Miller reflected on the importance of balancing the "we" and "me" to spark change. He encouraged listeners to "commit to a cause larger than themselves," while remaining true to their own values and passions. Expanding upon that,

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Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by Leah Han '27, Rielle Reyes '27, Kate Park '27, and Finn Wikstrom '26.





## CLOUDY WITH THE CHANCE OF AN ECLIPSE

By **Ellie Porter '25**  
Staff Reporter

A partial solar eclipse darkened the skies of Connecticut on April 8 between 2:12 p.m. and 4:37 p.m. as the moon blocked a portion of the sun. In honor of this rare astronomical event, Physics teacher Mr. Jon Gadoua organized a viewing party for the Choate community to witness the eclipse, an event that will not recur in Connecticut for another 20 years.

To accommodate the timing of the eclipse, the typical 30-minute Monday conference period was removed to allocate time before afternoon activities for students to enjoy the eclipse and learn about the science behind the phenomenon.

Hundreds of students flooded the Great Lawn outside of Colony Hall, where special eclipse glasses and trays of food awaited them. Although the moon only partially blocked the sun, solar eclipses are still harmful to the eye when stared at directly. Thus, Choate purchased eclipse glasses for students and faculty to wear.

Many students set up blankets in the grass to watch the eclipse, while space-themed music, such as Elton John's "Rocket Man" and Bonnie



Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart," played in the background. SAGE Dining Services also offered an array of eclipse-themed desserts at the event, such as sun and moon-shaped cookies and orange slices.

Biology teacher Mr. Chris Aguiar thought the event encouraged educational exploration. "It was fun to see the community come together around science," he said. Dana Tan '25 found the event to be very in-

formative and relevant to her own classes. "Even though I've seen a solar eclipse before, this one was very special to me because I could do it with all my friends in front of the science building, which helped me put science in action and apply what I've learned in my environmental science class in real life," she said.

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Students gather on the Great Lawn to experience the solar eclipse.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CELSIUS?

By **Ella Fraser '27**  
Reporter

For many students, the energy drink Celsius is their go-to source of caffeine. However, the Celsius craze recently found itself at odds with the Choate Store. As of April 5, the store no longer sells the beverage due to health concerns.

Despite its popularity, the decision to no longer sell Celsius came after a highly caffeinated substance, guarana, was found in it. Guarana beans contain 2-8% caffeine, as opposed to 1-3% in coffee beans, meaning that a can of Celsius is the equivalent of four to five cups of coffee.

Consequently, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), the National Olympic Committee, and the World Anti-Doping Agency became concerned and banned drinks with the substance. Additionally, the excessive amount of caffeine in the drinks may damage sleep cycles and cause anxiety or irregular heartbeat. "The NCAA banned substances that are in the drink, so the



Graphic by Carolyn Chen '25/The Choate News

School didn't want it on campus," Higher Learning Supply Company (HLSC) District Manager Ms. Kerry Kuhn, who helps run the Choate store, explained. "They keep a close eye on the high caffeinated drinks here [at Choate]."

Anne Coady '26, an avid Celsius drinker, was initially devastated by the change but understands the positive intentions behind its removal. "Honestly, it is a bit up-

setting, however, I understand that Choate is trying to keep their students healthy," she said.

With the newfound removal of Celsius, many students have resorted to other energy drinks. "A lot of them have already transitioned over to something else, like Uptime [Energy]. The Uptimes are actually a little bit healthier for everybody," Ms. Kuhn said.

The Choate Store's decision to remove Celsius from its shelves came as a disappointment to many students. Nevertheless, the Choate Store will not bring the drink back unless concerns regarding sports regulations and health can be dismissed with certainty.

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## PANEL PRESENTS ON CIVIL DISCOURSE

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Mr. Miller also stressed the importance of combining passion with expertise in any career path. "Passion without expertise can be dangerous, and expertise without passion can be unbelievably boring," he said.

Additionally, Ms. Wright explained that in order to fix the world, you first have to understand it. This, she claimed, could be achieved through gaining knowledge and understanding of different languages. "You have to learn two languages. One can be Latin-based, and one needs to be a culture that is so different — Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Urdu, or Arabic — because that allows you to cross that threshold of culture of knowledge," she said. Ms. Wright's advice stuck with Ava McClatchie '24: "Especially at Choate, where we have the opportunity and resources to study second and third languages, I think it is extremely important for this message to be emphasized," she said.

Following the panel, some students opted to join the panelists for breakout sessions to ask more questions and engage with them in a smaller setting.

Xiu Lim '25, who attended Mr. Kristof's breakout session, said, "What I appreciated the most was the fact that he didn't talk down upon students, and he never shied away from some of the more controversial questions," Lim said. "He also always had an anecdote for every question and I felt like that was really helpful."

Director of Studies and English teacher Mrs. Ellen Devine, who also participated in Mr. Kristof's session, added, "I was impressed by the dynamic and the thoughtful discussion students had with Mr. Kristof. Everyone was deeply engaged, thoughtful, and reflective. It was a great discussion to be a part of."

The wisdom shared by Mr. Kristof, Ms. Wright, and Mr. Miller gave the community insight into how to navigate the world with an open mind, an eagerness to hear all perspectives, and a commitment to something larger than yourself. "My hope is that the panelists modeled civil discourse for our community and that we might draw some inspiration from their example to practice it in our own lives," Mr. Akins said.

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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS SUMMIT SPARKS CONVERSATION

By **Ava Hult-Falk '27**  
Reporter

Chaperoned by Humanities teacher Mr. Jim Davidson and Fifth-form Dean Ms. Aliya Cox, a cohort of Choate students participated in Phillips Exeter Academy's Sexual Violence Awareness Summit on April 12. The event hosted eight schools and offered students and faculty the chance to hear from speakers, participate in discussions to understand sexual violence in the context of schools, and create positive change.

Mental health counselor Jenna Kaufman focused her opening speech on navigating trauma in the aftermath of sexual violence, dissecting their psychological and physiological effects. She shared the common coping mechanisms and manifestations that often follow an act of sexual violence and encouraged survivors to reclaim their agency.

Participants then heard from Chanel Miller, acclaimed author of *Know My Name* and a survivor of sexual assault. Miller used the power of storytelling to facilitate her personal healing journey and encouraged others to do the same. Monicke Costa '25 took away the need to stigmatize discussions about sexual assault: "We learned that even talking about [sexual as-

sault] helps prevent it. If we mimic what to do when a situation is happening, we are more likely to walk away with control of ourselves and the situation," she said.

Next, Director of Institutional Equity at Indiana University Southeast James Wilkerson spoke about how toxic masculinity perpetuates cycles of sexual violence and anguish among men. "He was talking about ... how men bottle up their emotions. He talked about this concept of a cup of emotions and those emotions overflow the cup, and that's when men are led to have violent outbursts against women, in this case, sexual assault," Costa explained. "Addressing that root cause [is necessary] ... so that we can prevent these cup overflow moments from happening."

Kenyora Parham, the Chief Officer of End Rape On Campus, and Princeton University professor Shamus Khan spoke together about the concept of intersectionality and how it influences our understanding of and response to sexual violence. Drawing on the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality, they shined a light on the systemic inequities that perpetuate cycles of victimization and marginalization within sexual violence crimes. Parham and Khan underscored the impor-

## Diversity Conferences Foster Community

*Continued from Page 1*

stage appearances. In his speech, Mr. Tam emphasized the importance of artistic activism and the potency of enacting social change through creative mediums.

Lam's favorite event of the day was listening to Mr. Tam's speech. She appreciated how his work sought to control the narrative around stereotypes, specifically about eye slants. Lam resonated with his message and said, "Obviously, there is a lot of systemic oppression in the law and the government, [and] there always needs to be a change. There needs to be pride in the community of any identity to be dignified and proud of themselves."

Lam also advised future participants to "try to get to know as many people as you can. Everyone is pretty open to learning more about each other, and you always get to know people or learn about things that you wouldn't have if you had stayed at Choate," she said.

### Spectrum Interschool Gender and Sexuality Alliance Conference:

On April 14, Choate hosted the 15th Annual Interschool Gender and Sexuality Alliance Conference in the Ruutz-Rees Commons with students and faculty advisers from 15 schools across New England. This year's event, led by Spectrum, Choate's gender and sexuality advocacy club, was themed "Stepping into Frame: Queer Representation in Media." The conference aimed to provide a safe space for attendees and delve into the ways queer characters are portrayed in TV, film, media, and more.

The conference commenced with various opening activities, where participants were given time to socialize with students and faculty advisers from other schools. Humanities teacher Mr. Timothy Yun proposed a few icebreakers for students to get to know one another, such as sharing their "favorite queer icons" and "fun facts no one knows about you."

The first keynote speaker was award-winning playwright, performer, and author Gina Femia, whose work has been featured at the Goodman Theater, MCC Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Page 73, and New Georges, among others.

They shared their experience in facing adversity as an artist aspiring to craft authentic queer stories in an industry where commercial value takes precedence over the merit of the work itself. Actor, director, and educator Brett Radke then spoke as the second keynote speaker about his career and perspective on queer representation in media.

Femia and Radke's presentations broke down prominent queer tropes in the media and allowed students to join the conversation. Questions that were addressed included: "Does the queer character always have to die?"; "What in queer media sells versus what doesn't?"; and "Why do queer stories depicting two men fare better than two women?"

Later in the day, student leaders of Spectrum hosted their respective workshops in locations across campus. Spectrum President Candace Beverly '25 led the workshop "And That's What You Missed," exploring queer representation in 2010s TV shows such as "Glee," "Orange is the New Black," "Grey's Anatomy," and "BoJack Horseman." Other workshops included "An In-Queer-y into Musicians' Lives and Lyrics" by Leanne Parks '25 and Alexandros Antonopoulos '26, "Lesbians in Media" by Nia Watts '25, and "Queering Art: Arts & Crafts" by Blake Steremberg '26.

Beverly appreciated the sense of community and belonging at this year's conference, and Parks described the conference as an "empowering and almost emotional experience." Parks shared that she had "never been a part of a community that is so supportive of this side of [her] identity," and that the conference provided a safe space to explore her queerness.

For future Spectrum events, Beverly encourages all to "show up, learn, and have fun, regardless of if you identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community or an ally!"

These conferences were eye-opening for Choate students. They learned from the experiences of others, networked with peer schools, and discussed ways to advocate for marginalized groups within the Choate community and beyond.

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Photo courtesy of Dr. Cristina Palmer from Phillips Exeter Academy

Students listen to a presentation at the summit.

tance of hearing every victim's story of sexual violence, regardless of their identifiers, and highlighted the voices of historically marginalized communities.

As the summit ended, students broke into discussion groups while faculty conversed about schools' policies and shared their ideas for enacting positive change at their schools. "We talked about what the [visitation] policies were at our schools and what our schools are doing to prevent these things [sexual assaults] from happening," Costa said.

Students realized the importance of changing the way that sexual violence is discussed. "I think normalizing and destigmatizing these conversations where it's like, 'No, we shouldn't talk about that' to a place where it's like, 'No, let's talk about it, and

let's talk about what we can do to prevent it [is crucial]," Costa said. "Let's talk about why it makes us uncomfortable, [and] let's offer support systems so that people who have gone through these things feel more comfortable talking about it and sharing."

This year's Sexual Violence Awareness Summit encouraged introspection and advocacy and challenged its participants to confront the epidemic of sexual violence. "It's always really nice to have some folks who are really out doing the work in the world, to be able to get their perspectives and deeper understanding to deliver to our students in the classroom," Ms. Cox reflected. "It seems like everyone took a great deal from it."

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# UNH HOSPITALITY WORKERS SECURE NEW CONTRACT AFTER SUCCESSFUL STRIKE



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

By **Maia Shah '27**  
Reporter

Union workers at the University of New Haven (UNH) have had enough. On April 7, more than 300 people rallied for updated employment terms involving higher wages and job protections. They demonstrated in favor of Unite Here’s Local 217 chapter, the hospitality worker’s union of Connecticut. In addition to picketing, union members spread posters around campus begging the question, “What good is protection from a layoff if your hours aren’t guaranteed, and you go from 40 hours to 10?” After UNH rejected guaranteed job protection, university students, union hospitality employees, and those favoring increased job security led protests on campus. These rallies were a result of general frustration with the lack of progress at UNH and a need for forward motion in contract negotiations, particularly pertaining to job security, between Unite Here’s Local 217 and UNH. The offer proposed by the union featured robust wage increases and proposed job protection for all employees in response to perceived inadequate accommodations.

Strikes, while effective, pose a potential for disarray and disruption to operations. However, to be successful and draw attention to the cause, this was a risk worth taking for many members of Unite Here’s Local 217. As widely described in coverage of the story, union members, while excited to demand change, were nervous about its effects on the students and the flow of campus life. Joe Fowler, a custodian at UNH, summarized his rationalization for the protest in an interview with the *Yale Daily News*: “These kids rely on us to provide a service for them. And as much as it’s gonna break our heart to walk away from that, I think it’s actually going to show them a lesson to stand up for what they believe in and what’s right,” he said. Josh Stanley, a prime spokesperson and Secretary-General for Unite Here’s Local 217, said the new contract “will provide stability, confidence, and dignity for our members, their families, and the university community.” The unionized workers had participated in negotiations since the fall of this school year, and after months of waiting for change, unanimously voted to strike. The protests proved effective for members of Unite

Here’s Local 217, and shortly afterwards on April 11, the contracts were ratified, resulting in updated employment terms, newly modified wages, and more vigilant job security for unionized workers. During negotiations, a demand for shortened hours during the summertime, an adequate living wage, and the alleviation of the safety concerns associated with working a job alone during irregular hours were voiced. In response to the concerns highlighted by members of Unite Here, UNH said in a recent statement, “The university respects the union’s decision to exercise its right to go on strike. The university’s priority is minimizing any interruption to university operations and ensuring the safety of our campus and all university community members and visitors.” In addition to promising higher wages and improved health insurance, the university referenced in its statement a willingness to provide “job protection for the life of the contract for facilities employees,” and guaranteed them “regularly scheduled hours (40 per week) and protection against an involuntary transfer to another job classification.”

The site of the protest was a destination for public figures in New Haven. The event commenced with speeches of support from Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, State Senator Martin Looney, and State Representative Bill Heffernan. Senator Looney advocated for the unionization of working groups. He stated in the *Yale Daily News*, “This economy — the whole economy of the region — will only be helped if union jobs grow and expand. You cannot agree to something that allows for the gradual contraction of a bargaining unit. That is suicide.” Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz also expressed her support for the cause, emphasizing that unions are a testament to the future and directly shape the working conditions for younger generations. She articulated their importance in guaranteeing living wages and safe working conditions. Both UNH and Unite Here’s Local 217 are optimistic about the future of these negotiations and the impending introduction of a newly improved contract, one that will hopefully address the needs of all union workers. **Maia Shah** may be reached at [mshah27@choate.edu](mailto:mshah27@choate.edu).

# CELEBRATING ARTIST NELSON FORD

By **Drew Wolfson '27**  
Reporter

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, the Wallingford Public Access Association Television (WPAA-TV) Community Media Center is thrilled to announce the grand opening of the Nelson “Carty” Ford Memorial Gallery. The much-anticipated gallery, set to open on April 30 and located just off campus on South Orchard Street, pays tribute to local artist Nelson Ford, a dedicated member of the organization for many years. Ford, who passed away just before his 90th birthday last year, was a beloved member of the WPAA-TV community. He first worked as a graphic designer and then as a video producer for the organization before landing a seat on the board in 2015. The gallery is an immersive space that stretches throughout the building, and WPAA-TV is excited to see how it is received by the community. “It’s not like just big rooms with stuff in them. It’s in the candidate room. It’s in the hallways. It’s in the foyer; the pieces of art are throughout the building,” the Executive Director of WPAA-TV, Ms. Susan Adele Huizenga, said. She hopes that this intimate setup for displaying Mr. Ford’s work will draw attention to his many contributions to WPAA-TV as a talented artist, a dedicated community advocate, and an inspiration to others. The gallery mostly features activist art: pieces of art which aim to convey a call to action, incorporating social justice themes into their message. “Engaging in the art of the community and what advocacy they can bring to the community is also a key part of the construction,” Ms. Huizenga said. The gallery carries on Ford’s legacy

through its incorporation of justice and activism; one display even raises money for housing and food-insecure Wallingford community members. The gallery displays art of all mediums as well. Among the pieces in the exhibit are works by photographer Charles Buzinsky, sculptor Ann Lehman, and cartoonist Kevin Markowski. When Mr. Ford joined the board, WPAA-TV recognized him as the organization’s artist emeritus. In 2017, he stepped down from his position, passing the role to his son-in-law, Herb Jackson. Mr. Ford was a staunch advocate for the arts, which is exactly what inspired the organization to curate a gallery in his name. To honor Mr. Ford, WPAA-TV gathered all his loaned pieces to include in the exhibition. The gallery was not supposed to be created so quickly, as WPAA-TV had planned it to be a future endeavor. However, after Mr. Ford’s passing, it felt appropriate to bring the gallery to life sooner rather than later. Ms. Huizenga believes that this is precisely what Mr. Ford would have wanted. “I feel it’s an honor to connect to the work that Nelson was trying to do in his life, to bring awareness to the need for the community to broaden their vision,” she said. The Nelson “Carty” Ford Memorial Gallery pays tribute to a man who inspired many people throughout Wallingford. His commitment to helping young artists thrive is reflected in WPAA-TV’s values. Through his legacy and under the hashtag “SocialActionArt,” the memorial hopes to motivate and inspire young artists in Wallingford and beyond. **Drew Wolfson** may be reached at [dwolfson27@choate.edu](mailto:dwolfson27@choate.edu).



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

# CONNECTICUT FOODSHARE RECEIVES \$2 MILLION GRANT

By **Reid Bock '27**  
Reporter

Connecticut Foodshare (CTF), a food pantry located in Wallingford, has been awarded a substantial grant for \$2 million from the government. Large-scale grants were awarded to three other

organizations: \$3 million to Fair Haven Community Health Clinic, \$1.940 million to Connecticut Hospice, and \$1.438 million to the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen. Connecticut Foodshare’s grant will allow them to revamp their facilities. CTF’s Institutional Giv-

ing Manager Ms. Laurie Robillard said this grant will “expand the capacity for refrigeration and freezer storage so that we can distribute more food.” Their storage will increase by an estimated 40%. CTF was founded in 1982 and has since grown to become

one of the leading hunger relief organizations in the state. It operates as a member of Feeding America, the largest hunger relief organization in the United States, and provides its nonprofit partners with more than 40 million meals a year. Ms. Robillard explained the importance of the funding for CTF: “We desperately need this food storage capacity, so we can send more food out to our partner agencies,” she said. CTF also operates various programs and services aimed at addressing food insecurity. One such program, Food Distribution, collects and distributes millions of pounds of food each year to partner agencies, including food pantries, shelters, and community kitchens. CTF also operates mobile food pantries that directly bring fresh and nutritious food to communities in need. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, another CTF initiative, helps individuals and families access crucial food assistance benefits. Additionally, CTF offers nutrition education programs to empower individuals and families to make healthy food choices on a limited budget. United States Representative Rosa DeLauro presented

the grant as part of a community project through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. She said that fighting hunger was one of her legislative priorities during the presentation, and she worked to secure the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children for the State of Connecticut, providing education, food, and support regarding hunger and nutrition. Rep. DeLauro said, “People are hungry and there’s no reason for people in the U.S. or their children to be hungry ... we have food.” In addition to grants from the government, CTF sources its food donations from local supermarkets, farmers, and food manufacturers. They also purchase food items at discounted rates through partnerships with suppliers or wholesalers. Upon receiving food donations, volunteers and staff members sort through the items to ensure they meet quality and nutrition standards. Once organized, the food items are stored in various units and refrigerators. CTF plans the distribution of food based on factors such as demand, recipients’ geographical locations, and available resources. They operate multiple

distribution sites across the state to reach as many people as possible. Ms. Robillard said, “We want to make sure that when food comes in ... we don’t have to turn it away, that we can hold it and store it.” These grants have significantly aided CTF in reaching this goal. Distribution events are a major contributor to CTF’s extensive outreach. These events are organized at community centers, churches, schools, and other accessible areas where individuals and families in need can access food assistance. Volunteers also play a crucial role in various stages of the process, from sorting and packing food items to assisting with distribution events. CTF is proactive in recruiting and maintaining a large number of volunteers. Ms. Samantha King, an intern working under Ms. Robillard, said that CTF hopes grants like these will help “to continue to build our network.” CTF is constantly thinking of ways to expand the reach and impact of their organization. Ultimately, the increase in storage from Rep. DeLauro’s \$2 million grant will help CTF advance toward its many goals and aid hundreds of Connecticut families facing food insecurity. **Reid Bock** may be reached at [rbock27@choate.edu](mailto:rbock27@choate.edu).



Photo by Finn Wikstrom '26/The Choate News

An outside view of Connecticut Foodshare’s headquarters.



# THE CHOATE NEWS



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## How Community Service Builds Bridges



By **Rachel Fan '27**  
Copy Editor

Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

While visiting Choate on April 17 as part of a panel on global peacekeeping and journalism, analyst and author Mr. Aaron David Miller said, “Together, we can turn the word ‘me’ into ‘we.’” His words perfectly encapsulate the spirit of Choate’s community service program: by inspiring and empowering students to positively impact communities through outreach and engagement, we can work together to make a greater impact and transform the world into a better place. Although some may argue that Choate’s community service requirement detracts from its purpose and makes students complete tasks extrinsically, I firmly believe that community service is a valuable opportunity to learn about our surrounding communities.

Having a mandatory requirement at Choate does not detract from community service’s positive impact. Additionally, Choate’s program has done a wonderful job of evolving with society’s evolving needs.

“It has definitely grown over the years as societal needs have become more and more dire,” Director of Community Service Ms. Melissa Koomson said. Considering all the global issues that have occurred recently, I agree that there is an ever-growing need for service work. From the lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic to the growing impacts of environmental degradation, society continues to face challenges that require integrated community service at schools.

I recently learned about Lawrence Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Reasoning in my Introduction to Psychology class, which led me to contemplate the value of community service. The first stage of moral reasoning is “pre-conventional,” where individuals only care about themselves, their wants, and their needs. But by engaging in community service, students can move beyond this stage into the “conventional” and “postconventional” stages, developing a sense of empathy and responsibility towards others.

In these stages, they learn that their actions can positively impact the world around them. Consequently, they become motivated to act for the benefit of their community rather than only themselves.

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## Why Prize Day Celebrates A Biased View Of Excellence



Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

By **Elizabeth Burgstahler '26**  
Opinions Writer

What really defines a Choate student? You have probably seen across campus, on Instagram, or on the main page of Choate’s Website, the phrase “Be Undefinable.” It aims to appeal to the student body, celebrating the different qualities that each individual offers. However, every spring on Prize Day, this sentiment is disregarded. In its current form, Prize Day celebrates academically specialized students while disadvantaging well-rounded students, and it must be reformed to truly celebrate the excellence of the Choate community.

During my time at Choate, I have earned good grades in all honors classes, participated in enough extracurriculars to fill my nights until study hours, and played a varsity sport while being a part of Arts Concentration. But, who decides whether my schedule

is more or less impressive than that of another Choate student? There are people at Choate who dedicate their time to different activities. One student might specialize in an area of academics or athletics, whereas other students are fairly well-rounded.

Every year, each department gathers to decide which student achievements are the most valuable to Choate and should be awarded a prize on Prize Day. However, with the large and uniquely composed student body, Prize Day is an oversimplification of excellence at Choate. It is impossible to quantify and compare students’ achievements when they engage in multidisciplinary studies. Furthermore, prizes are picked by faculty and advisors who are biased in their preferences.

Some faculty members have chosen to abstain from the voting process entirely. English teacher Mr. Andy Arcand has abstained from the voting process every year.

“Prize Day is an external motivator that makes people who don’t get the prizes feel like they haven’t done much for this school,” he said.

In the past few decades, Choate has made efforts to limit the number of prizes awarded to shorten the ceremony. However, 2023 prize recipient Isabella Wu '24 believes Prize Day should be more inclusive. She would like the event to prepare more prizes, and said, “Cutting down the amount of prizes makes the whole event more exclusionary.”

On the other hand, Elle Hardy '26 thinks that the balance between the prizes awarded by different departments is adequate. However, “if you get an award,” Hardy said, “it’s almost worse than not getting one because you constantly feel like you’ve got to go back and live up to getting a prize.”

As this year’s Prize Day approaches and the voting process begins, I encourage the Choate community to think carefully

about the ethical ramifications of Prize Day.

Of course, the event reflects years of tradition at elite institutions around the country, and by no means do I think the day should be eliminated. Instead, it should be revamped to become a celebration of the multidisciplinary excellence of Choate and the end of an academic school year. Impactful solutions include capping the number of prizes that can be awarded to an individual and allowing students to influence the selection of prizes for effective student leadership and positive community impact. By acknowledging the negative impacts of Prize Day and pursuing reforms, Choate can maintain a cherished tradition while reflecting students’ diverse range of achievements.

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## The Fault In Our Table: The Harkness Method’s Flaws

By **Francesca Howard '26**  
Copy Editor

As a Gold Key Ambassador at Choate, I’ve toured countless families through the halls of our Humanities building. Each time, I make it a point to stop outside a classroom and gesture towards the iconic oval Harkness table sitting proudly at its heart.

The premise of the Harkness pedagogy is quite straightforward: students sit around a table and discuss topics freely, without the need to raise their hands. The teacher acts more as a facilitator than a lecturer, letting students pilot their learning and making the classroom more participatory. While the Harkness method is not utilized in every classroom every day, it is incorporated into often unpopular “graded discussions.” In these infamous conversations, students are assessed on their ability to converse amongst themselves articulately, thoughtfully, and productively. Talking about how this method revolutionizes our Choate classroom discussions and promotes an equal exchange of ideas is built into the tour guide script.

But, when I’m sitting at that same Harkness table as a student, the reality is often quite different. It’s time to set the record straight:

the Harkness method rarely matches the exaggerated sales pitch aimed toward prospective families because it fundamentally misunderstands how students interact. It is important to acknowledge that each teacher adapts the Harkness method to their preferences and instruction styles. In this sense, most in-class discussions blend the Socratic and Harkness methods. Nevertheless, broader issues with the Harkness method precipitate into Choate classrooms and must be addressed.

More often than not, the Harkness method stifles participation in classroom discussions. In a typical Harkness discussion, it becomes apparent that while all students are indeed equal, some are, to paraphrase George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, more equal than others. Ironically, while the Harkness method aims to democratize the space, it ends up privileging a particular type of student: the quick, the bold, and the articulate. Conversations are dominated by a self-selecting few, turning the classroom into an oligarchy.

Meanwhile, more reticent students struggle to interject or find their voice amidst the extroverted students’ rapid-fire exchange. They wait for a gap that never comes. Whenever they muster the

courage to speak, the discussion has already moved on. Or if they do decide to interpose, they are interrupted before they can finish their thought.

Traditional classrooms where students raise their hands and teachers moderate who speaks provide a level of order that helps all students know when and how they might contribute. On the other hand, the Harkness method takes away that comfort, replacing it with an anxiety-inducing pressure to perform rather than learn.

Furthermore, teachers will often draw “conversation webs” to track student participation. These visual representations of student contributions are a constant reminder of each student’s involvement in the discussion, exacerbating the need to perform. To validate their presence and relevance to the table, students feel compelled to make highly articulate remarks, even at the expense of interrupting or restating others’ ideas.

As someone who typically engages in discussions under the Harkness method, even I find it lacking. There is a redundancy in hashing out ideas with the same few classmates day after day. To be frank, it’s boring and frustrating. One of the great things about going to a school like Choate is being

around a diverse group of students with a wide range of ideas.

However, this diversity is not accurately reflected in Harkness classroom settings. It’s not even that these dominant voices are more insightful or have better ideas; it’s simply because the Harkness method tends to value quick wit over substantive dialogue.

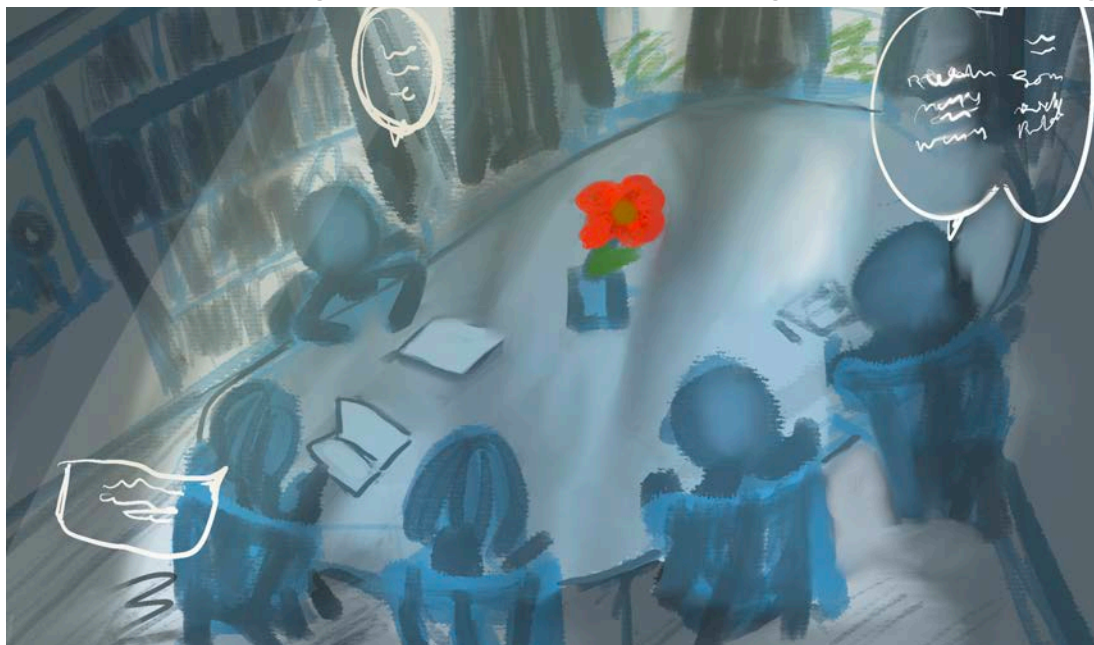
While there is merit to having a classroom setting that prepares students for real world conversations, we should combine Harkness techniques with traditional learning methods to maximize their effectiveness.

My English teacher, Mr. Joe Lampe, has successfully done this in our classroom. First, he integrates reflective pauses and journaling sessions into discussions. By allowing brief interludes for students to gather their thoughts and formulate responses, Mr. Lampe encourages more thoughtful and substantive dialogue. Then, we move to small group discussions that ensure everyone’s ideas are heard. Finally, we transition to a larger discussion with designated times for students to speak, thus enhancing both the depth and the quality of dialogue.

Although teachers like Mr. Lampe have already endeavored to make these changes, they must be expanded to all Harkness-centered courses and used regularly to encourage participation.

If Choate genuinely cares about inclusive education and practical learning, the School must acknowledge that students contribute to discussions in different ways. We should aim for a classroom where every student feels valued and confident enough to share their thoughts. That’s the kind of learning environment we should be selling on school tours, and more importantly, it’s the kind we should strive to create every day.

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Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27/The Choate News



# Why The Ivy League Needs To Implement NIL

By **Reinah Lee '26**  
*Sports Editor*

Would you rather go to a non-Ivy League school and make one million dollars or attend an Ivy League School and incur a debt of \$400,000? Unfortunately, this hypothetical scenario has become a real dilemma for some student-athletes.

With the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Council implementing new Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) protections aimed at safeguarding college athletes earlier this year, the controversial debate about compensating college athletes for their play has made a comeback, raising concerns about the Ivy League's unique take on the matter.

College athletes in NIL-allowed schools were allowed to monetize their name, image, and likeness with brand deals without risking their competitive eligibility. However, each collegiate school has a different stance on NIL — the eight schools that make up the Ivy League remain adamant about keeping a distance from NIL.

The primary objections to NIL commercialization revolve around the concern that it could shift student-athletes' focus from education to financial gain. Currently, this group of prestigious universities



Graphic by Kate Park '27/The Choate News

does not provide athletic scholarships to their student-athletes. Priding themselves on their highly selective admissions, Ivy Leagues view sports as a secondary to academics and, in turn, have received pushback on their firm stances.

Since the NCAA enacted NIL, new policies and regulations facilitating athlete transfers have generated a national conversation over the function of NIL collectives in player development and recruitment. Additionally, it has put Ivy Leagues in an unfavorable position because the money players can

make in other schools trumps the elite education Ivies offer.

By remaining reluctant to adopt NIL rules, the Ivy League risks losing talent from not only prospective high school athletes, but also current stars tempted by the transfer portal. In an interview conducted by *The Harvard Crimson*, Harvard's Athletic Director Erin McDermott said she was willing to take the risks of student-athletes transferring to other schools.

Take Harvard Men's Basketball star Malik O. Mack, named the Ivy League's rookie of the year, as

an example. Mack averaged 17.2 points with an average of 4.8 assists per game, ranked fourth in the Ivy League in scoring, and ranked first in assists. However, Mack did not receive any compensation for his contributions. On the contrary, Duke University freshman guard Jared McCain, who averages less than Mack with 14.3 points and 1.9 assists per game, has a NIL value of a whopping one million dollars.

Through utilizing self-advertisement, McCain has been able to monetize his status as a college athlete and grow his social media,

where he currently has 2.8 million TikTok followers. With the opportunity to have similar financial benefits and fame as other college athletes, more Ivy League players are sure to look into transferring. Despite the top-notch education Harvard and the Ivies offer, college athletes like Mack may prioritize the different opportunities offered by NIL that the Ivy League lacks.

Although the Ivy League does not have donor-funded NIL collectives, its students are still trying their hand at profiting from their contributions. For example,

Gabby Anderson, a guard on the Women's Basketball Team at Harvard University and Chief Executive Officer of the shoe customization business Graffiti by Gabby, is signed under an NIL deal where she can make money off her athletic and artistic abilities.

In July 2023, Harvard Athletics disclosed its adoption of the INFLCR athlete app, enabling student-athletes like Anderson to access media content independently. In contrast, Harvard Track athlete Fabiola Belibi found INFLCR inadequate, explaining the need for more transparency to make NIL opportunities easier to secure. If the Ivy League supports the usage of self-advertisement aids like INFLCR, why do they refuse to implement NIL collectives?

It is evident that NIL is here to stay, and the Ivy League needs to form some sort of collective — even if it is minor or includes restrictions on what Ivy college athletes can and can't do. From missing out on prospective top talent to losing their very own athletic stars, avoiding NIL prevents Ivy League Athletics from reaching its full potential and could be detrimental to the league in the future.

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# Reinventing Yourself in Tinseltown: Child Stars Rebranding



Graphic by Eveytin Kim '25/The Choate News

By **Matt Trudell '25**  
*Opinions Writer*

The maturation of child stars in the entertainment industry is oftentimes as interesting and dramatic as the roles they play on the silver screen. JoJo Siwa, a child star who has reaped major success following her appearance on "Dance Moms," has recently attempted a cosmetic and content rebrand doomed to fail due to the inauthenticity of the campaign and the inability to meet the expectations of her audience.

The rebranding of child stars is not merely a physical makeover or the adoption of a new fashion style, but instead a transition into a new identity and personality different from how they have been perceived since childhood. Unfortunately, not all rebrands are successful, leaving many child actors forgotten, as they fail to continue pandering to their audiences throughout rebrands.

After appearing on the reality television show "Dance Moms" from 2015 to 2016, JoJo Siwa secured her position as a national sensation. She has since worked with her manager Caryn Sterling to build a lucrative brand: JoJo branded T-shirts and shoes, castings in Nickelodeon shows, and an endless slew of social media content. She was even included on *Time's* annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2020.

And despite her guaranteed success, fans of Siwa were caught off guard when she underwent a dramatic rebrand — Siwa replaced her side ponytail and G-rated entertainment for dry humping another person in a black skintight unitard in her new single "Karma."

People become fans of celebrities because they want to see more of their work. Rather, fans want to see more content that emulates the things they previously enjoyed

from these artists. Sure, fans might be amenable to their favorite celebrities taking on ventures that are unrelated to their expertise, but only as long as those very celebrities return to their trade.

The same goes for Siwa. There's a reason why Siwa continued making content of the same tone as was seen on "Dance Moms" — fans want more of the "Dance Moms" JoJo. The success of artists is hugely dependent on their audience, and so they're compelled to give the people what they want. And that's what Siwa's been doing for nearly a decade.

But, at a certain, point, there comes this semblance of repetition that kills the soul of artists. They're tired of making the same thing over and over again. They want to try something new — and that's what incites an artist to pivot in their creative process. Though we'll never truly know Siwa's intentions with the rebrand, it's not farfetched to assume that she no longer wants to be known as the little girl who wears pink clothes and lip-syncs on reality TV. And so, Siwa decided to undergo a complete social makeover to try to free herself from labels and stereotypes that had once limited her from creative freedom.

But the problem with these drastic rebrands is that they often clash with the desires of the fanbase. Though it's hard to put into words, there was clearly something about Siwa's old content that was so appealing to a certain age demographic.

The companion article written by Kim Kardashian for the aforementioned *Time Magazine* list notes, "You just can't help but smile when you see her rainbow ponytail. She's a great role model for children." Fans know what they want and they're used to their favorite artists giving them exactly that. And so, when they're presented

with something so jarring, it's bound to confound them.

In an interview with Access Hollywood, Siwa explained that the rebrand has been a long time coming, citing her inspiration as Miley Cyrus: "I want to do what she did with *Bangerz*. I want to have that moment." This might've been the final nail in the coffin for Siwa's rebrand — by insinuating that the rebrand would be permanent, it ensures that the Siwa's remaining fans who had hoped "Karma" was a one-off venture would slowly lose interest in Siwa.

To make matters worse, fans are questioning if Siwa's rebrand was merely an attempt to attract a wider base of fans. It has since been discovered that "Karma" was not written by Siwa (as noted by her exclusion in the song's songwriting credits), but could potentially be a scrapped Miley Cyrus song from 2011. Siwa's attempt to emulate the aesthetics of Cyrus's rebrand by copying her fashion and using her unreleased music implies Siwa isn't actually interested in the new art she's making. Instead, it seems Siwa is interested in the success Cyrus attained after her rebrand.

And so, Siwa's most recent rebrand confirms once more that a rebrand shouldn't stem from an attempt to capitalize on an untouched demographic, but from natural publicity attained via passion projects and genuine interests. Moreover, celebrities must learn to balance "pleasing" their audiences by giving them the content they want while prioritizing their creative freedoms. Though Siwa has faced immense backlash from this rebrand, this may be her first step in realizing what kind of artist she wants to be and how she needs to approach this transition.

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# SAMPLING: CREATIVE TRIBUTE OR UNETHICAL THEFT?

By **Chelsea Branch '25**  
*Copy Editor*

Our perception of music is constantly redefined by artists who dare to challenge convention. It is the musicians who pride themselves on originality that catch the ears of audiophiles. As music evolves to feature new singers, genres, and sounds, the art of sampling ensures that the songs of the past are brought with us to the future.

Sampling occurs when a producer or artist incorporates another musician's work into their otherwise original piece. "Otis" by Kanye West and Jay-Z, which remixes "Try a Little Tenderness" by Otis Redding, as well as "Redbone" by Childish Gambino, which features "I'd Rather Be With You" by Bootsy Collins, are two hits that use melodic samples for the entirety of the song. "Never Lose Me" by Flo Mili, "Run the World (Girls)" by Beyoncé, "What-cha Say" by Jason Derulo, and even "Toxic" by Britney Spears are just a few more examples of musicians singing and rapping over borrowed beats.

Some critics claim that sampling promotes unoriginality amongst artists, weakening the potency and authenticity of modern music. On the contrary, sampling was founded upon innovation, and the sheer talent required for remixing music proves otherwise.

The roots of sampling trace back to the beginnings of hip-hop when the founders of the genre, DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash, were spinning their first turntables. Their mastery of record manipulation allowed them to repurpose and

remix beats, adding an unforeseen depth and attraction to the original songs. Sampling established an entirely new music genre that has since become a defining characteristic of Black and American culture.

Even contemporary artists and producers who sample songs possess undeniable creativity. Take Drake's newest album, *For All the Dogs*, as an example. Several of his tracks feature sampled beats and introductions, such as "Calling For You." On this song, Drake and his fellow producers showcased their musical ingenuity by taking the somber ballad "Livin' Without You" by Nohelani Cypriano, splicing it, pitching it up, slowing it down, and eventually turning it into the perfect beat for 21 Savage to rap on. Likewise, "Ghost Town" by Kanye West featuring PARTYNEXTDOOR, a personal favorite, samples "Take Me for a Little While" by the Royal Jesters. This song's sobering melody, coupled with lyrics that tell the story of a dejected lover, directly juxtaposes the cathartic crescendo of "Ghost Town."

Sampling extends beyond just borrowing beats, for artists have also experimented with borrowing lyrics. One of the most beautiful and heart-wrenching songs of the 21st century, "White Ferrari" by Frank Ocean, is a prime example of poetic sampling. In the song's fourth verse, Ocean uses the line "Spending each day of the year," a lyric taken from the Beatles' song "Here, There, and Everywhere." As Ocean wrote his album *Blonde*, he suffered a seemingly incurable case of writer's block. Ocean could only overcome his

creative impasse by drawing inspiration from his favorite Beatles hits. Sampling both lyrics and beats enables even more creativity and allows artists to pay homage to their musical role models.

Some music lovers denounce sampling out of fear that the process is unethical. They worry that affluent musicians recklessly steal the work of minor or lesser-known creators with no repercussions. These apprehensions are undoubtedly well-founded, but fortunately, the music industry has taken several measures to ensure credit is given where credit is due.

Sampling without permission is illegal. An artist interested in remixing a snippet of another musician's song must receive approval from both the original artist's record label and the copy-right company. These parties then negotiate deals on how the sampled artist can be compensated and credited for their contributions to the new song. Sadly, there will always be instances of corruption when it comes to creative license, but this is a reflection of the greediness of dishonorable corporations, not the art of sampling itself.

The next time you head to a Student Activities Center (SAC) dance or listen to your favorite workout playlist, keep your ears open for sampling. If you hear a song you suspect is not the original work of the named artist, go the extra mile to find the original piece. You may find that you and your favorite artist have similar music tastes.

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Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27/The Choate News



## CHOATE DAY STUDENTS DRIVE IN STYLE

By **Katie O'Meara '27**  
*Reporter*

Whether it's waking up 45 minutes earlier than your boarder friends, battling traffic, or forgetting your iPad at home, being a day student at a school where most students board can be tricky. Yet, amidst the chaos, there's a silver lining for these students: the ability to decorate their cars! In fact, many have found that sprucing up their vehicles brings them joy and relief. John Freeman '24's parents gifted him a bright orange Subaru once he received his license. To personalize his car, he adorned it with a mini model of his beloved vehicle, which he placed on the dashboard. For Halloween, Freeman decorated the hood of his car as a big jack-o-lantern, inspired by its unique color. Freeman admitted that, as soon as he got the car, he knew he would dress it up: "it's just something that [was] going to happen," he said. Connor Zeitlin '25 uses his car to share his whimsical nature with the world. As Choate's most famous Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) player, it's no surprise that Zeitlin's steel gray minivan sports a sticker from Critical Role, a D&D web show. As a surfer, he also has a sticker with waves that say "Seize the Day." Zeitlin had

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Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27/The Choate News

## SCHOLARLY SENIORS: CAPSTONE PROJECTS OF 2024



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

By **Deyi Meng '26**  
*Copy Editor*

The Capstone Program merges classroom learning with real-world application, allowing students to complete an independent research project in their chosen field. Every year, numerous seniors pursue this rigorous academic undertaking. Each capstone consists of four classes within the existing curriculum and a directed study in the spring. Choate supports these endeavors by providing each participant with an adviser who meets with them regularly and a librarian who helps them identify research material. This year, students have explored a wide range of topics from sustainability to reproductive justice. Here are some of the many incredible capstones from this year's cohort.

**Creative Writing**  
Andreas Wimmershoff Gonzalez '24 wrote a novel manuscript for his final project. Wimmershoff Gonzalez described the story as "a road trip novel that follows an insomniac, a student filmmaker, and a restaurant critic as they move through the Midwest [and] East Coast." Having always been interested in English, Wimmershoff Gonzalez said, "I think Capstone really gave me that niche to be able to focus on what I want to do."

Time management proved a major challenge for him during the yearlong program. He attributed his ability to overcome this obstacle to adviser support, sharing, "All the advisers in Capstone are really great at ensuring you get what you need to get, especially considering you're the ones who reach out to them."

**Executive Function: Implications For Education**  
Zainab Khokha '24 researched how motor movement and rhythmic activities strengthen executive function skills in children ages 6-10. Over the past year, she has developed games to improve the attention spans and academic performances of young children. However, when Khokha began planning her Capstone project, she was not sure exactly how to connect two topics she was interested in: neuroscience and education. "[Taking] what you want to learn and then being able to funnel that into something tangible ... was really difficult," she reflected. Nonetheless, Khokha's project allowed her to further her interests and develop essential research and life skills.

**Feature-Length Screenplay**  
As an avid participant in all things theater on campus, Grace Walters '24 is the first student to write a feature-length screenplay for her capstone project.

Walters, a native Virginian, hopes to "capture the beauty and misgivings of Virginia and what it means to be coming of age in the 2020's" through her screenplay. Walters cited "A trip to the Shenandoah River State Park, [her] summers growing up in Virginia, and the aesthetics of Call Me By Your Name" as inspirations for the screenplay.

**Natural Swimming Pools**  
Lauren Hsu '24 investigated water quality issues in swimming pools. More specifically, Hsu looked into "how regulations, chemicals, filtration mechanisms, and new technology affect water quality, public health, and sustainability." A challenge Hsu faced during her project was the small size of the water quality research field. "It's good in the sense that all the professors I've reached out to know each other, [but] it means there's not a lot of information out there. It can feel a little limiting sometimes because there just aren't a wide variety of perspectives," Hsu said. Hsu's work culminated in the creation of a website, allowing her to compile her research and allow others to see her hard work and passion. Reflecting on her work, Hsu said, "It's definitely reinforced the idea that I want to be involved in the water sector."

**The Sociocultural Progression of Reproductive Health**  
Mikayla DaSilva '24 undertook an interdisciplinary project, which culminated in a paper about the sociocultural impacts of the Dobbs v. Jackson decision, the Supreme Court case that ruled that the United States Constitution does not guarantee abortion rights for low-income women. Through Capstone, DaSilva further developed her passion for reproductive justice through classes like Crime, Deviance, and Social Control and American Studies. DaSilva noted that many adults have helped her overcome the challenge of maintaining a yearlong project. "I've tried to have conversations with teachers in different disciplines to find other perspectives to analyze my research through, which definitely makes me more motivated to keep going," she said.

To prospective applicants of the Capstone Program, Humanities teacher Mr. Jim Davidson said, "I think certainly one of the things I try to emphasize with kids who apply, this has to be something they're really motivated to do." These students' hard work will culminate in their Capstone presentations, which will be held on May 20 in the Library Reading Room.

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## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CHOATE'S SEVEN NEW CLUBS

By **Ethan Zhang '26**  
*Copy Editor*

After Spring Break, the Choate community welcomed seven new clubs to its roster. These seven groups passed through the lengthy club initiation process, which commenced in the winter term when prospective club leaders submitted proposals via a Google form. Upon receiving submissions, the Student Committee on Programming and Engagement (SCOPE) offered interviews to clubs with promising potential to learn more about their respective missions and goals. Finally, SCOPE narrowed its list, accepting a handful of clubs to add to the vibrant array of student activities at Choate!

**Astronomy Club**  
Adrian Torres '25 and Kay Lee '25 started the Astronomy Club to provide a space for students of all expertise levels to develop their passions for the stars. One of the most unique features of their club is their bi-weekly stargazing nights. Using Choate telescopes, space lovers can observe planets and stars light years away. The Astronomy Club also plans to invite guest speakers to campus, host sci-fi movie nights, and discuss recent news and phenomena in astronomy.

**Choate Gamer's Association (CGA)**  
Andy Chin '25 established the Choate Gamer's Association (CGA) to foster a community for those interested in video games.

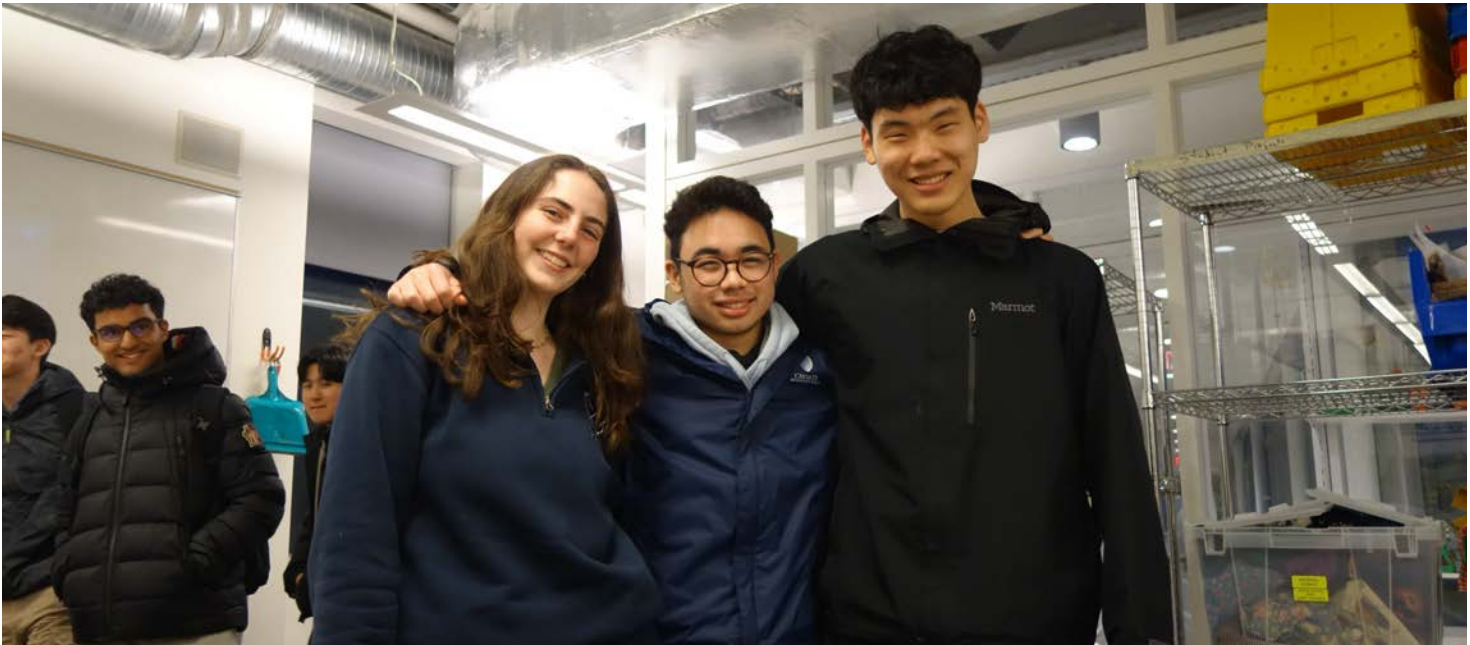


Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Emma Bowles '25, Jai Hall '25, and Jayden Dai '25 pose for a photo at the last Drone Racing Club meeting. "We're inclusive to anybody and everybody. It doesn't matter if you are a serious gamer or casual Hay Day player," Chin said. Some events on the horizon include a schoolwide Minecraft survival multiplayer world and a Brawl Stars tournament open to veteran gamers and new recruits. Chin also plans to host club meetings twice a week, alternating between virtual hangouts and in-person meetings. Through CGA, gaming enthusiasts can join a fun-loving family of like-minded players.

**Choate Political Union (CPU)**  
Monicke Costa '25, Kevin Lawlor '25, Nev Rathbun '26, and Brayden Bratti '27 founded the Choate Political Union (CPU) to provide a neutral space for respectful political discourse. Club meetings will follow an Oxford

Union debate style, meaning participating members will work beforehand to prepare a speech rather than present their stances on the spot. "We want to create an environment hospitable to people who may not be well-versed in politics," Rathbun said. CPU also plans to host various guest speakers to share their unique perspectives and spur conversation. Through this club, students of all political ideologies can develop healthy beliefs that recognize and are open to the opinions of others.

**Drone Racing Club**  
The Drone Racing Club, founded by Jayden Dai '25, is the perfect group for students passionate about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) "to apply their knowledge," Dai explained.

Using his background in drone design, Dai's vision for his club includes hosting educational workshops about drone design and aerial mechanics for curious students. Next year, he hopes to acquire club-funded drones, allowing new members to pilot their own aerial vehicles. Future pilots, budding engineers, and inquisitive learners are welcome to pursue wtheir passions through the Drone Racing Club!

**Le Club Culturel Français de Choate**  
McCormick Breviu '25 created Le Club Culturel Français de Choate to provide a space for interested students to learn about French culture. The club also plans to host fundraisers by selling French pastries, organizing a potential Student

Activities Center (SAC) dance, and hosting French cooking classes. Le Club Culturel Français hopes to bring the sounds and flavors of France to curious Choate étudiants.

**Spanish Club**  
Founded by Leia Caro '26, Noelle Brighton '26, and Owen Holbrook '25, Spanish Club allows students to immerse themselves in Spanish culture. The bi-weekly club meetings will include fun activities such as fan painting, cooking events, and discussions of current events in the Spanish-speaking world. The inspiration for their club stemmed from their term abroad in Sevilla, Spain. Holbrook reflected on his experience, saying, "I fully absorbed the culture there, and I wanted to share that influence ...

from the cooking lessons [to] fan painting and soccer matches."

**Yarn@Choate**  
Yarn@Choate was launched by Teniola Obayomi '25, Kaya Weerasuriya '26, and Chloe Lee '26 for those interested in the fiber arts, particularly knitting and crocheting. The club aims to make the craft more accessible to students by leading bi-weekly workshops that provide crochet hooks and yarn. Through the club, Obayomi hopes to make the fiber arts "an activity to take your mind off of work." The Yarn@Choate cabinet also hopes to help those beyond the Choate community by donating baby blankets and organizing visits to local elderly homes. Whether you have a closet full of crochet projects or you've never seen a pair of knitting needles, Yarn@Choate is a great way to create something beautiful and practical!

From a passion for the cosmos to a thrill for gaming to the exploration of different cultures, clubs at Choate offer a platform for students to cultivate community and pursue their passions. With the addition of these seven unique clubs in mind, Assistant Director of Student Activities Ms. Colleen Kazar said, "Creating spaces for students to pursue their passions is exciting, and I'm eager to see what students this year will achieve."

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# FROM A DREAM TO A REALITY: ASPIRING MUSICIANS AT CHOATE

By **Dani Aseme '25**  
*Reporter*

Beneath Colony Hall’s tranquil ambiance, a faint, yet emerging sound rings throughout its corridors. Here, amidst the grandeur of the Choate Symphony Orchestra’s showcases and the Dance Company’s rehearsals, a group of dedicated novice students immerse themselves in the musical arts. Whether through the saxophone’s vibrant notes or the piano’s harmonious sound, these students embrace the pursuit of a new instrument with an unfaltering weekly commitment through one-on-one lessons.

For many non-musicians, the idea of learning a new instrument seems daunting. However, some can find the motivation to do so through a desire for personal development, self-expression, or fulfilling childhood aspirations.

For Nia Bradford ’25, her dream of playing the guitar, which began at the age of 10, stemmed from watching the Disney Channel’s *Lemonade Mouth*. In the movie, the five protagonists aimlessly estab-

lish a pop band in the modest basement of their high school. This popular coming-of-age tale about spontaneity and creativity deeply resonated with Bradford, spurring her passionate pursuit of learning the guitar.

Bradford, who has long dreamt of this opportunity, said, “I’ve always really wanted to play guitar, but just never had the time [or] opportunity to do so. I thought it was a good opportunity to do that now [at Choate] because it’s hard to find time [outside of built-in lessons] in your school day for lessons.” Lost in a tunnel of romanticization and *Lemonade Mouth* scenes, Bradford mentioned that her desire to play the guitar has not faltered since childhood, and she is eternally grateful that she can do so now.

In contrast, Charlotte Flynn ’25 began playing the piano at a young age. Despite the early start, Flynn decided to discontinue her practice while still a novice. Upon entering Choate, her aspiration to continue learning the instrument returned, leading her to reach

out to the Arts Department earlier this year. Flynn said, “The Music Department head is really flexible about previous experience.” This flexibility allowed Flynn to comfortably pick up from where she left off, reigniting her passion. “No matter what level you are, you can still pick something up ... Don’t be too hard on yourself if you’re not good at it right away, even if you were pretty good when you were younger,” Flynn said.

Students aren’t alone in enthusiastically embracing the opportunity to learn new instruments. Physics teacher, Director of Sustainability, and Fifth-form Dean Ms. Katrina Linthorst Homan began learning the ukulele with guitar instructor Mr. Brian Hartly. She admitted, “I’m not very musically gifted.” Yet, Ms. Homan has dedicated half an hour per week to ukulele lessons, which she calls “me time.”

“Regardless of the level one is at, Choate’s music lessons offer an inclusive and supportive nature,” Ms. Homan said. “It’s really helpful and a lot of fun.”

There are also numerous benefits to taking up an instrument. Mr. Noah Baerman, who has been teaching jazz and pop piano since 2006, said, “Studying music on a one-on-one basis — in addition to whatever gratification you get from the music itself — is a really great opportunity to work on problem-solving and discipline [in a] systematic and patient [manner], building up a skill set in something, which is a life skill.” Mr. Baerman encourages those considering taking lessons to do so, even if they initially feel afraid.

For many, Choate has stood as the bridge between their musical dreams and a reality — a catalyst for the formal development of a deep-rooted love for music. “There’s a myth that music is for people who are born naturally gifted, and if it doesn’t automatically come easily to you, then you’re just not one of the lucky ones ... in my experience, that’s really not true,” Mr. Baerman said.

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Nia Bradford '25 practicing guitar.

# MAKING MAGIC WITH MR. ABBATIELLO



Mr. Abbatiello working in the tech booth.

By **Carolyn Chen '25**  
*Reporter*

“If you can actively hear me doing my job, I’m not doing a good job,” said Mr. Michael Abbatiello, Choate’s new Assistant Technical Director and Sound Technician. From mainstage productions to all-school meetings, Mr. Abbatiello is responsible for ensuring that all the events in Choate’s theater spaces run smoothly.

Mr. Abbatiello brings a unique background as a “jack of all trades in terms of tech,” as he said, to his role. He has enjoyed focusing on sound tech at Choate, along with enhancing the presence of the arts on campus. “He is very interested in the way arts integrate into our community here as well as how we can challenge our current understanding of those arts,” Technical Director Mr. Mark Gostomski said. Justyce Easter-Butcher ’24, who regularly works with Mr. Abbatiello, agreed, “It’s very clear that he loves what he does and he tries to share that with everyone.”

After Choate’s previous Assistant Technical Director Mr. Paul Bozzi left last year, Easter-Butcher noted that Mr. Abbatiello had big shoes to fill. Easter-Butcher said, “I’m really glad that we got Mr.

[Abbatiello]. He’s a really great guy and I’m excited to see what else he does.”

Throughout the past year, Mr. Abbatiello has also integrated himself well into the Choate community. “[Mr. Abbatiello] definitely has been a fun addition to the Arts Department and the theater program as well as to the arts facilities,” Mr. Gostomski said.

Mr. Abbatiello said his favorite part about his position is his ability “to work with the students and see them learn and grow.” Qin Caldwell ’24, who often works on technical projects such as musicals and concerts, said, “He’s my main resource when I need help with something [technically].” As a mentor figure, Caldwell added that Mr. Abbatiello is “always helpful for being able to effectively teach you or help you get to whatever you are, whatever problem you’re in, or help you fix whatever problem you’re trying to work on.”

Mr. Abbatiello’s contributions to the Choate theater community have already positively impacted so many students. “I’m very excited for my growth here at Choate,” Mr. Abbatiello said.

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# AMERICAN ROOKIE: BRIDGING CULTURES AND IDENTITIES

By **Ethan Zhang '26**  
*Copy Editor*

On April 5, first-generation immigrant and Choate alumna Dipti Bramhandkar ’96 visited campus and performed her one-person play, *American Rookie*, in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) Little Theater. *American Rookie* is Bramhandkar’s own autobiographical story depicting her dynamic upbringing and “what it means to be an immigrant at a time when the country can’t stop talking about it.”

At a young age, Bramhandkar moved from Mumbai, India to central New York. In 2016, after spending her youth in New York, she was compelled to write *American Rookie* because of a jarring racially-charged incident: a group of men verbally assaulted her mother outside of an Italian restaurant. Originally, *American Rookie* was only meant to be an article she hoped to publish. However, after discussing with a few trusted friends, Bramhandkar was convinced to transform her article into a solo show.

With *American Rookie*, Bramhandkar hoped to share her experience navigating her cultural identity as a coming-of-age tale about her upbringing. “[writing *American Rookie*]

was a personal need to address what happened [to my mother] ... and I wanted to tell the story of someone who faced the static of code-switching and assimilation,” she explained.

Bramhandkar’s experience at Choate shaped her use of social commentary and comedic satire in *American Rookie*. Reflecting on her experience at the School, Bramhandkar said, “[Choate] was the first time where I thought being Indian was actually interesting. It was a place where we were encouraged to talk about our culture.”

Bramhandkar wanted to include Choate’s influence on her ideas of cultural identity in *American Rookie*, and her script mentions the School directly: “Choate Rosemary Hall. It wasn’t just a school. It was a hall! ... On move-in day I saw a sign that said, ‘Culture Club.’ Wait a second! They wanted people to come out and say that they’re not from America?”

Choate students received Bramhandkar’s coming-of-age tale well. “*American Rookie* gave me more insight on someone’s experiences immigrating from different countries,” Norah Davis-Jeffers ’26 said. “Seeing that in such a personal play was very powerful.” Following the performance, Davis-Jeffers also had the opportunity to speak

with Bramhandkar in Lanphier Center and her Acting II class. “We talked about playwriting, and she pitched us some of her ideas for future plays and projects,” Davis-Jeffers shared.

Similarly, Friday Acuna ’26 resonated with and was inspired by *American Rookie*. “As a person of color, it’s awesome to hear someone go out there and talk about their experience,” Acuna said. “My parents were also immigrants, and I felt empowered to write my own story.”

Bramhandkar felt her return to campus was an insightful experience, shaped by her personal growth and Choate’s affirmation of diversity, equity, and inclusion. “Attending a post-colonialism class, I was just amazed at how in-depth and robust the conversations were,” she said. “And I think coming back as a more formed person and confident in my Indian-ness helped me appreciate it more.” Bramhandkar was also proud to see how much the Choate community has grown regarding diversity and inclusion because “back then, there weren’t a lot of affinity groups,” she said.

Through sharing her experiences of cultural identity, Bramhandkar kindled inspiration and sparked conversations between students. Acting teacher Mr. Bari Robinson hopes to welcome more alumni like Bramhandkar in the future to learn and take inspiration from. “[Bramhandkar] showed if you have a truth you want to speak, it will come through in whatever style you want,” he said.

Davis-Jeffers would also like to see more artistic alumni. She said, “It was great getting a different insight from a person of a different background, and I hope I have the chance to see that again in the future.”

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# The Inner Workings of Choate’s Music Production Class

By **Leanne Parks '25**  
*Reporter*

From the soothing lo-fi beats that power you through that American Studies paper at 3 a.m., to the Taylor Swift album you scream to with your friends before a Student Activities Center (SAC) dance, music is a vital aspect of work, culture, and life here at Choate. While the science behind the creation of music is often overlooked, Choate’s Music Production class, taught by Arts Department Head Mr. Matthew McLean, helps bring to light this fascinating topic.

The Music Production class covers a wide range of themes, from the intricacies of mic placement to envisioning the next hit song. Mr. McLean describes the curriculum of the course as having three pillars.

The first pillar involves understanding the basics of audio engineering, such as recording live instruments, mixing, and mastering microphone techniques. Farrah McQueen ’25, a student in the course, commented on music production’s complexity. “It’s almost like physics, the mic positioning ... producing the sound, how to position the mics at a certain angle to catch the sound, reverb, and all that.” This mastery of acoustics allows music listeners to feel the thump of the bass, the crash of the hi-hat, the groove of the 808, and the flow of Jay-Z’s rap.

The second pillar of the class is understanding the creation of modern music using digital audio workstations, such as Logic Pro and Ableton Live. Miles Bronson ’26 was inspired to take Music Production due to his prior experience using the software Garageband to create various beats. With the resources of the studio Choate provides, Bronson was able to bring his work to the next level.



The third element of the Music Production class entails grasping the crux of music production. Mr. McLean emphasized the importance of understanding “what it means to be a music producer and either create your own original music or help another artist realize their vision for recording.”

The class actualized this aspect with their midterm project, where Mr. McLean only provided the students with the vocal track to Adele’s hit song “Easy On Me.” With this limited information, students were tasked with composing an entirely original song, including creating samples and live recordings from scratch.

Danny Yoon ’24 has had a lifelong passion for music, whether it was singing, playing the guitar, piano, or drums. However, Yoon was unfamiliar with recording and mixing music, which prompted him to enroll in the class. Throughout the course, Yoon’s perspective of music production shifted, as he realized how many hours of work sound engineers put into creating just one song. Yoon said, “I think my appreciation towards music has grown immensely.” This change in Yoon’s attitude gave him a deeper understanding of music and the pieces that come together to create it.

Unlike Yoon’s desire to learn how to record music, Mc-

Queen sought to better understand the inner workings of the studio to bring their compositions to life. By learning nuanced techniques such as the acoustics of each instrument, and how to effectively use the soundboard to mix, they were able to take their newfound expertise and passion to create new and exciting pieces.

The overlap in art forms also attracted other artists from different artistic backgrounds to take the Music Production class. One of these artists was Tristin Hurst ’24, a filmmaker, who took the class to expand their knowledge on music. With a greater understanding of the recording studio, they gained knowledge that would also serve as a nice addition to their films.

Even for students not currently enrolled in the Music Production class, numerous opportunities to produce music exist on campus. Audio suites, located in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC), can be used by any Choate student who wants to record or test an original song. Additionally, practice rooms in Colony Hall provide a welcoming and secure environment for music production, whether it’s just for enjoyment or to become the next pop sensation.

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Graphic by Kate Park '27/The Choate News



Photo courtesy of @superdiptiwrites on Instagram

Bramhandkar during her time as a student at Choate.





# THE CHOATE NEWS SPORTS

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## FIELD REPORT

Choate Spring Record  
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### Varsity Games

**Boys' Baseball** (8-2)  
vs. Westminster, 1-0

**Girls' Water Polo** (3-2)  
vs. Andover, 11-7

**Boys' Golf** (8-2)  
vs. Hotchkiss, 189-206

**Girls' Crew** (1-0)  
vs. St. Marks, NMH,  
Worcester, 4-1

**Girls' Tennis** (3-1)  
vs. Andover, 3-1

**Boys' Lacrosse** (5-2)  
vs. Avon, 9-12

**Girls' Softball** (5-1)  
vs. Loomis, 3-5

**Boys' Volleyball** (0-5)  
vs. NMH, 1-3

### J.V. Games

**Ultimate Frisbee** (0-2)  
vs. RHAM, 8-13

**Boys' Baseball** (1-1)  
vs. Loomis, 5-3

**Boys' Tennis** (3-0)  
vs. Exeter, 4-3

**Girls' Lacrosse** (3-3)  
vs. Andover, 3-12

## BOARPEN ENLIVENS THE SCHOOL WITH SPRING SPIRIT

By **Drew Wolfson '27**  
Reporter

Behind the tournament brackets and megaphones stand the ultimate forces of school spirit: Choate's BoarPen. Whether it be at athletic competitions, Friday-night activities, or theater productions, BoarPen fills the community with excitement and gold and blue pride. Over the course of the spring term, they plan to host several friendly competitions for students to enjoy.

The six seniors that make up BoarPen — Ximena Castillo Núñez '24, Brecken Cullinan '24, Tariq El Mammann '24, Philip Harris '24, Carter Linardos '24, and Sophie Sharko '24 — are in their final term at Choate and are running their last events for the School.

This month, BoarPen took advantage of the spring weather and held a spikeball and a kickball tournament. The spikeball tournament took place on the Class of '76 Field on April 12, with over 150 participants. There were 77 teams, with Silas Streeter '25 and Will Henderson '25 playing five games before winning first place. Spikeball partners since freshman year, Streeter and Henderson were excited about their win and expressed their appreciation for BoarPen. "BoarPen did an amazing job facilitating the tournament. I think everything was very organized and planned out, which made for a super fun event," Streeter said.



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Students play in BoarPen's spikeball tournament.

Being on BoarPen, however, comes with several challenging responsibilities, such as scheduling events and maximizing student participation. Castillo Núñez shared, "I think people not submitting [sign-ups] by the deadline makes organizing things the most challenging, because we want to include everyone, but we can't because of logistics." In addition, there's an extensive to-do list for event preparation. "We had to figure out how to get the nets, chaperones, and the field. There's a lot that goes into communicating with the faculty and facilities," Harris said.

Even so, BoarPen does a great job of hosting accommodating events open to students with diverse interests and athletic skill levels. Fernanda Opazo Aravena '25 is a fan of the versatility of spikeball and participated in the tournament with partner Em DeGrand '24. "I really like spikeball. I feel like everyone enjoys spikeball, and it doesn't matter if you're an athlete or not," Opazo Aravena said.

The following week, on April 19, BoarPen organized a kickball tournament on the turf fields where six teams competed. For everyone on the field, including both the nearly 70 students who participated in the event and those

who came to support, the vibes were electric. Savannah Emery '26 said, "Even being on the sidelines was really fun because everyone was cheering together." Team One, composed of 11 students, ultimately brought home the title after winning three hard-fought games. Finalist Sophie Li '26 said, "It was a great atmosphere thanks to how BoarPen organized it. We got the bracket a few days before, and I feel like there was enough notice that it went smoothly."

In anticipation of the year's end, BoarPen is preparing two of its signature events: the President's Softball Cup (P-Cup) and the Powderpuff Tournament. Named after

the 35th President of the United States and alumnus John F. Kennedy '35, the P-Cup will start on May 5 and continue for the next four Sundays. The tournament consists of a multi-week shortened softball game where teams separated by dorm compete for the trophy.

Another highly anticipated BoarPen event is the upcoming Powderpuff Tournament, an all-form girls' flag football competition on May 11. Each grade is given a team color every year, and the night begins with the seniors against the freshmen and the juniors against the sophomores. The winner of the two matches faces off for the opportunity to win the Powderpuff title. For larger events like Powderpuff, BoarPen's extensive planning proves beneficial.

"We sat down at the beginning of the term and outlined each event for each week. Then we send the forms out and someone does the graphics. It's a lot of behind-the-scenes work," Castillo Núñez said.

From Deerfield Day to Senior Soccer scrimmages and from fall to spring, BoarPen works around the school year to deck our community out with gold and blue. As their last duties quickly approach, BoarPen wishes to end the year strong, encouraging Choate students to attend all of the upcoming games and sign up for P-Cup. Roll Boars!

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## Getting Gold: Calli Gilchrist '25's Wrestling Success

By **Kate Tortorella '26**  
Reporter

This past winter, Calli Gilchrist '25 made Choate history as the School's first Girls' Wrestling Prep National Champion and first Wrestling Prep Champion since 1939.

In preparation for Nationals, Gilchrist wrestled in the Boys' Division at the New England's Class 'A' League Tournament, becoming the first girl in tournament history to win in the Boys' Division. In this tournament, she faced intense competition in the 114-pound weight class. She said, "I had some hard-fought matches, and I think those got me in the right mindset to wrestle my best at Nationals." Gilchrist's hard work and success at these competitions built the momentum that translated into her run at Nationals, where she captured the title by going 3-0 with three pins. Gilchrist was also awarded the Outstanding Wrestler award.

Most recently, Gilchrist traveled to Virginia Beach, North Carolina and clutched the National

High School Coaches Association (NHSCA) Wrestling National Champion title for the 120-pound weight class; a competition comprising teams in both preparatory and public schools.

Gilchrist's success resulted from the hard work and dedication she has put in throughout her wrestling career. Her prowess certainly does not go unnoticed; Gilchrist's fellow teammates and coaches praised her for her commitment and talent. "She's a great competitor, and honestly, she just enjoys what she does ... She's looking for the best competition and just truly loves to wrestle," Head Wrestling Coach Mr. Ryan Roddy said.

Gilchrist's competitiveness was evident during meets and everyday practices, where she led by example as a tough competitor. Georgina Wolfson '25, who trained alongside Gilchrist, said, "We train five times a week, and she's been a real leader on the team. During practices, she gets us all motivated, and she's a fun teammate to have, but she's

also a very experienced wrestler." At the same time, Gilchrist has been a great role model for all of the newer, less experienced wrestlers, showing them the importance of bringing their best game during tournaments and training sessions. "She gives 110% on and off of the mat, and she is always dedicated to improving her techniques, which is what has driven her to become such an amazing wrestler," Vivi Jenkins '26, a new member of the team, said.

Her victories have increased the Girls' Wrestling Team's recognition and inspired more women to participate in the sport. As wrestling welcomes more female athletes, Gilchrist hopes to be remembered as a part of the growth and legacy of women's wrestling. "I want to continue breaking barriers to show girls what we are capable of. I want to be a role model for young athletes who want to achieve the things I have and more," she said.

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Photo courtesy of Calli Gilchrist '25

Calli Gilchrist '25 wins big at the National Prep Wrestling Championship.

## CHOATE'S MULTITALENTED STUDENT-ATHLETES

By **Bella Welch '26**  
Reporter

Soccer recruits hopping in the pool for water polo, linebackers cleating up for ultimate frisbee, and field hockey players switching to netted sticks for lacrosse — Choate's trimester-based system encourages students to step outside of their athletic comfort zones and try new sports in their off-season. The School's requirement for students to participate in at least two athletic activities throughout the year has driven varsity athletes to find enjoyment in a new medium of athletics.

These crossovers have helped athletes enhance their skills for their primary sport. Maddy Childs '26, who is mainly a wing forward in soccer but currently plays for Girls' Varsity Water Polo, reflected on the similarity of the two sports. "It's that same idea of picking up whoever that one really good player at the top is, and basically just trying to stop them from getting the ball," Childs said. The strategies might differ due to the unique dynamics of each sport, but the core principles remain the same: prevent the other team from scoring. "Tracking back and man-marking to a player translates from soccer [to water polo] a lot," Childs said.

Childs has also learned the valuable lesson of thinking ahead by participating on various teams. She said, "Soccer definitely helped me with just having a sports mind, like understanding who is open, where they're going to pass the ball to next, and trying to think a few plays ahead." In the spring, she translated this mindset to water polo, which has helped her find success.

Similarly, Mary-Jaine "MJ" Malonis '27 has found many benefits in participating in various sports, namely Girls' Varsity Field Hockey and Girls' Varsity Lacrosse. "I think that my communication skills on the field have gotten better, and it has crossed over to both sports, as well as just being in shape," Malonis said. "My strength, teamwork, and attitude [have also improved]." Through the sports-crossover culture at Choate, Malonis has also been able to experience

the simultaneously inclusive and competitive team dynamics of the School's varsity teams. Because many of her teammates also play both field hockey and lacrosse, she has been able to form deeper connections with her teammates on and off the field.

Using tactics and skills from Varsity Football, Pearson Hill '24's spring term began with his breakout season on the Varsity Co-ed Ultimate Frisbee Team. Hill said, "I see every long throw like a fader out in football. I can be patient with it and then see where the angle that it is going to be, and then run to it at the last moment so my defender doesn't have a chance to get it." As a wide receiver in football, Hill's running routes translate to moving into open space for passes and tracking the frisbee.

Originally a hockey recruit, tri-varsity athlete Maggie Swanson '26 brings her game from the ice to the field hockey turf and the softball field. Although Swanson grew up playing hockey and softball, she tried field hockey for the first time as a freshman at Choate. "I feel like there's a lot of crossover between field hockey, softball, and also with hockey. A lot of the stick skills are similar, so when I was joining new to field hockey last year having never played before, it was easy to pick everything up and gain the skills quickly," she said. On the other hand, navigating between three sports came with challenges. "There are very different forms and also the rules are very different, so it was hard to change the way I played at first, but I adapted to the different amount of contact with each," Swanson said. Furthermore, many of her Girls' Varsity Hockey teammates were also on Girls' Varsity Field Hockey, making it a fun season full of team bonding.

Within the complexities of tactical plays and traverse skills, it is easy to overcomplicate distinctions between sports. However, open-minded Choate athletes can identify the connections between these activities and use these similarities to dominate multiple fields.

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