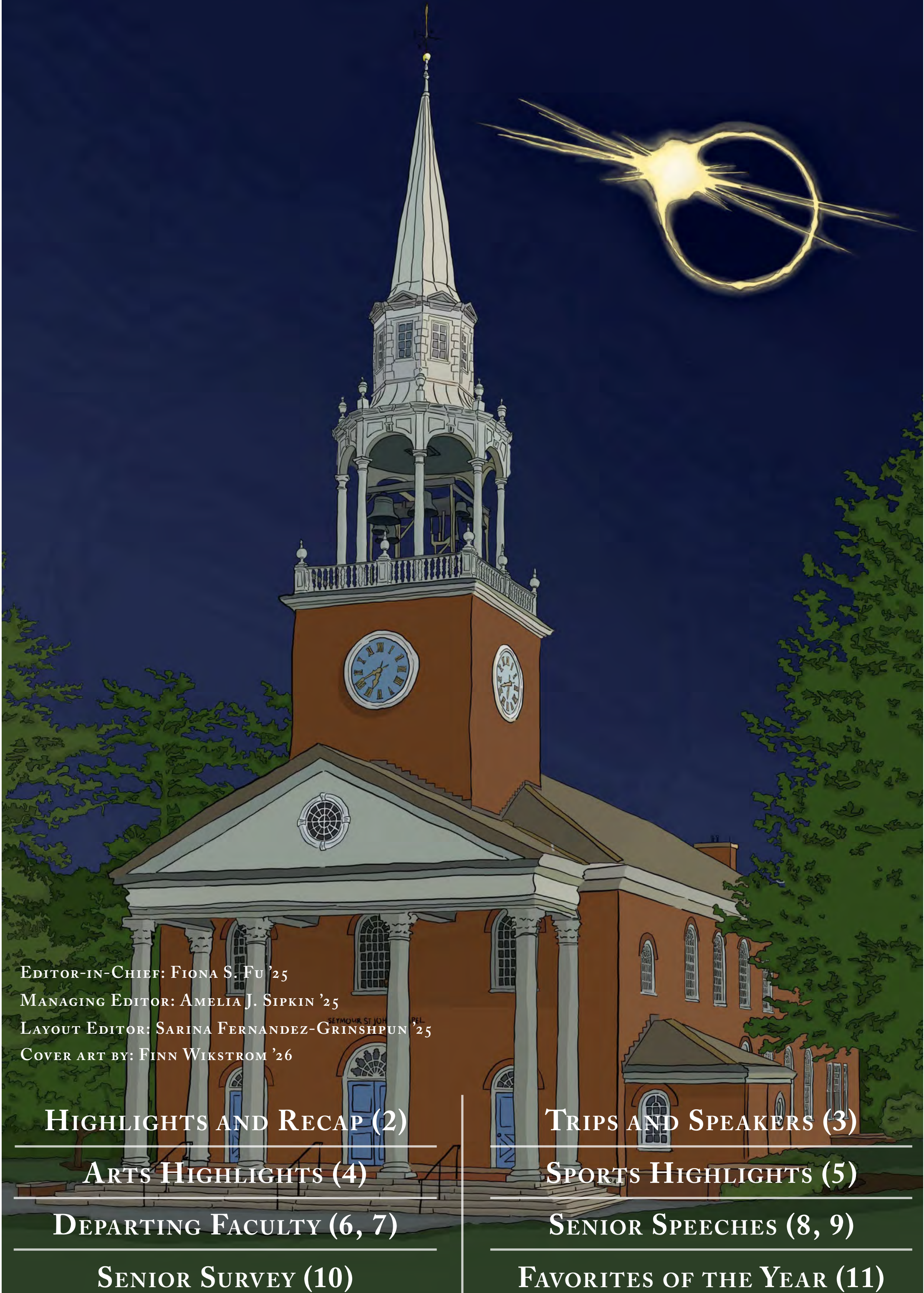


GN THE CHOATE NEWS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2023-2024



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: FIONA S. FU '25

MANAGING EDITOR: AMELIA J. SIPKIN '25

LAYOUT EDITOR: SARINA FERNANDEZ-GRINSHPUN '25

COVER ART BY: FINN WIKSTROM '26

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HIGHLIGHTS AND RECAP

Choate Leadership Institution: August 29, 2023



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Eight days before the school year began, a number of students attended the Choate Leadership Institute (CLI) on campus. The program was designed to prepare team captains, prefects, Pathways Mentors, and International Student Mentors for their respective roles. Following a speech from Dr. Liza Talusan, a professor at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, who specializes in diversity, equity, and inclusion, students reflected on the importance of taking action against injustice and their new responsibilities seriously. Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis encouraged the prospective leaders to embody the values of the School and to set an example for their peers. Over the past year, Choate student leaders have been a quintessential part of the network of support on campus and have strengthened the bonds within the community.

Community Service Day: September 29, 2023

To increase food insecurity awareness, Choate hosted its annual Community Service Day on September 29, centered around the theme "Hungry for Justice." The day before, Choate welcomed a panel of leaders passionate about combating food insecurity: Mr. Brad Fleming from Harvest Pack in St. Paul, Minnesota, Ms. Aubrey Roscoe from Connecticut Foodshare in Wallingford, Dr. Steve Werlin from Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in New Haven, and Dr. Ivette Ruiz from Healing by Growing in East Haven. Students participated in various service activities, from packaging food with Harvest Pack to volunteering at local soup kitchens. Due to the rain, some students gathered in Colony Hall to watch "A Place at the Table," a documentary highlighting the first-hand experiences of families who have experienced food insecurity.



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Family Weekend October 19-21, 2023



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Every fall, Choate hosts its annual Family Weekend, a time for students to welcome their parents, guardians, siblings, and loved ones to campus. On October 19-21, visitors attended Choate classes and extracurricular activities, getting an authentic glimpse into life at Choate. This year, the weekend was packed with dazzling performances by all of the capella groups and instrumental ensembles. Families also attended several athletic competitions right here on Choate's home turf.

Deerfield Day: November 11, 2023

Students accompanied Choate athletes to Deerfield Academy on November 11 to participate in the 101st annual Deerfield Day. After boarding buses in the morning, hundreds of Choate community members crowded around fields and packed gymnasiums to cheer on their peers as they competed in the Choate-Deerfield rivalry. Students celebrated a victory by the Girls' JV Volleyball team and an impressive 44-14 win by Varsity Football by rushing onto the field from the sidelines. "It was really cool to see," Varsity Football Co-Captain Matt Diaz '24 said. "I didn't realize how many people were there until that happened."



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Diversity Day: January 15, 2024



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

On January 15, Choate students took a pause from their typical academic schedule to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy. This year's Diversity Day, themed "For the Culture," prompted community members to reflect on what it means to embrace their identity. In honor of the theme, the Office of Equity and Inclusion invited students to wear clothing that reflected their own cultures during the day's programming. The School welcomed Dr. Todd Boyd, a professor of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Southern California, to Colony Hall to educate the community about the roots of hip-hop and the importance of cultural appreciation. After his powerful message, students attended a number of workshops led by teachers and club leaders to learn more about the unique cultural experiences of their community members.

President's Day: January 29, 2024



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

President's Day, an annual surprise day off from school, was celebrated this year on January 29. After seeing Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis's announcement through the Choate SCOPE Instagram account post and a schoolwide email, excitement poured out of dormitory halls around campus as students rushed to the Student Activity Center (SAC) to celebrate the good news with an impromptu dance. Whether by sleeping in, exploring Wallingford, or spending quality time with friends, students enjoyed the day off in many ways.

Lunar Banquet: February 9, 2024

In celebration of the Lunar New Year, Choate's annual Lunar Banquet, co-hosted by Chinese Club and Choate Korean Friendship Association, took place in Ruutz-Rees on February 9. The event featured Asian food and bubble tea, traditional games, and student musical performances. Kara Wang '24 performed a Mongolian-styled Chinese folkloric dance called "Silent Sky," and Danny Yoon '24, Leanne Parks '25, Nick Aldrich '24, and James Stuber '24 performed "Bom Bom Bom (Spring Spring Spring)" by Roy Kim. Choate's K-pop dance group, SYNK, also performed choreography to seven songs including "ETA" by New Jeans and "Drama" by Aespa. To conclude the event, a group of sixth-formers performed a popular Chinese song called "童话 (Fairy Tale)" to commemorate their years at Choate.



Photo courtesy of Emily Ma '25

Revisit Days April 2, 4, and 5, 2024



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Choate opened its doors to some fresh faces for Revisit Days on April 2, 4, and 5. The families of over 200 accepted students came from all over the world to experience a day in the life of a Choate student. The day featured a welcome speech by Chief Enrollment Manager Mr. Jeff Beaton, information sessions about Choate's programs for parents, and opportunities for visiting students to shadow classes on campus, ending with a Community Fair. The experience gave prospective families a taste of Choate life, helping them envision what it might be like to choose gold and blue.

Eclipse: April 8, 2024

On April 8, Connecticut witnessed a rare, partial solar eclipse, as the moon passed in front of the sun from 2:12 to 4:37 p.m. The School celebrated the phenomenon by hosting a viewing party on the Great Lawn, complete with solar-eclipse-themed desserts, space-themed music, and special eclipse glasses for students to enjoy the event. Students were able to hang out with friends and snack on delicious treats while learning about a rare astronomical event that will not recur in Connecticut for another 20 years.



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Grandparent's Day: May 10, 2024



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Choate celebrated Grandparent's Day on May 10. After opening with the Dean of Students Mr. Will Gilyard '98 and tea with Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis, students then showed their grandparents around campus and took them to classes. To conclude their visit after a peek into life at Choate, grandparents had the opportunity to enjoy the Instrumental Ensembles Concert and Acapelloza in the evening.

New Facilities

Choate has been busy with several construction projects this past year. Renovations to the dining hall were set in motion in the fall. The servery is currently being tripled in size, which will expand the menu



Graphic courtesy of Choate Rosemary Hall

options and reduce overcrowding in the space. Additionally, the Inn at Choate Rosemary Hall has opened to campus visitors after being renovated since Choate purchased the property in 2021. Guests, including prospective families or alumni, will now have additional housing options during campus visits. Finally, the construction of Carr Hall, Choate's future admission center and its underground parking lot adjacent to J.J. Maher Field, began in the spring and is expected to be completed and open to the public in the fall of 2025.

New Schedule



Graphic by Carolyn Chen '25/The Choate News

After five years, Choate has revamped its daily schedule to optimize students' time and prioritize wellness through five key changes: 15-minute later start times in the mornings, extended 50-minute lunch blocks, shorter 65-minute classes, a Thursday

advising period, and the removal of a Thursday conference period. The new schedule worked hand in hand with the new advising system, which has diversified advisory groups across genders, boarding and day students, and forms.

New Wi-Fi

This winter, Choate switched its Wi-Fi network from "Gold" to "eduroam," a globally utilized network access service in higher education, with the goal of improving the network's security and speed of internet connectivity on campus. This transition was initiated by Information Technology Services (ITS) two years ago and entailed replacing physical access points in buildings and establishing secure wireless networks to limit external use of Choate's Wi-Fi network. Additionally, faculty residences now have access to "ResNET," a Wi-Fi network that accommodates the internet needs of homes.

"Eduroam" has allowed students to experience a more seamless browsing experience and succeeded in aligning the community with global education standards.



Graphic by David Glover-Barr '25/The Choate News

TRIPS AND SPEAKERS

INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

Seville, Spain



Photo courtesy of Odie Adelson-Groberg '26

Several Choate students taking Spanish traveled abroad to Seville, Spain during the fall term. The city offered immersive cultural opportunities such as visits to Moorish palaces, Renaissance gardens, world-famous ceramic tiles, and operas like *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Students connected with locals, improved their Spanish language skills, and participated in traditional festivals and events.



Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25 / The Choate News

Toulouse, France



Photo courtesy of Camilla Granda '25

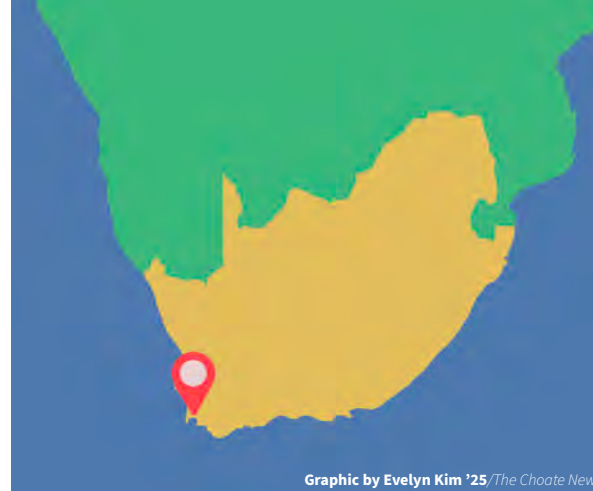
Choate students studying the French language had the opportunity to spend the fall term abroad in Toulouse, France. The immersive experience of living with a local family, exploring the city's narrow streets, admiring water views of the Garonne River, and experiencing traditional Occitan dances left a lasting impression. Students broadened their cultural horizons, earned credits for a variety of subjects, and created memories that will last a lifetime.

Madaba, Jordan



Photo courtesy of Andrew van Dyke '25

Choate students taking Arabic had the opportunity to spend their fall term at King's Academy, a coeducational boarding and day school in Madaba, Jordan. The term-long program aimed to immerse students in intensive Arabic conversation, expose them to Middle Eastern values and lifestyles, and integrate classroom learning with cultural experience.



Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25 / The Choate News

Rome, Italy



Photo courtesy of Reagan Colton '24

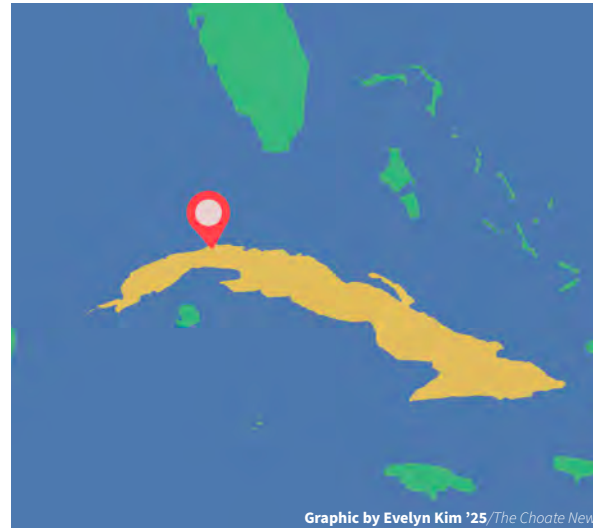
During the fall term, several Choate students embarked on a term abroad at St. Stephen's School in Rome, Italy. Passionate teachers contributed to the enriching experience by providing individualized attention to students. Outside the classroom, students explored the city's many landmarks, museums, and neighborhoods, gaining a deeper understanding of Italian culture and society.

Cape Town, South Africa



Photo courtesy of @gochoate on Instagram

Accompanied by Science teacher Dr. Selena Gell and Director of Counseling Ms. Raynetta Gibbs, several Choate students traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, from March 1-10. They learned about the country's history of Apartheid and its impacts on wealth inequality and public health disparities in the region. Students also collaborated with the environmental organization Greenpop by planting indigenous plants and learning about native ecosystems.



Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25 / The Choate News

Old Havana, Cuba



Photo courtesy of @gochoate on Instagram

From March 1-9, a cohort of Choate students traveled to Cuba alongside Director of Faculty Development and Arts teacher Dr. Jessica Cuni, Sixth-form Dean and History Teacher Dr. Yaser Robles, and History teacher Ms. Abby Kandel. They explored Cuban art, culture, and history through salsa dancing, cooking workshops, and tours of historic sites like Old Havana and the José Martí Memorial.

SPEAKERS

Dr. Roberto Che Espinoza



Photo courtesy of Ms. Ellen Devine

On September 26, Dr. Roberto Che Espinoza, a transgender and Latine public scholar, spoke to students about how they can bridge the radical difference between separated communities with the power of storytelling, diversity, and individuality. A theologian, he also shared insights on the intersections between spirituality and activism.

Ms. Aimee Nezhukumatathil



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

University of Mississippi's English and Creative Writing professor Ms. Aimee Nezhukumatathil, author of Choate's 2023 summer reading book, *World of Wonders*, discussed her fascination with the unique plants and animals in the natural world, as well as her Filipino and Malayali Indian background.

Mr. Chris George



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Mr. Chris George, Executive Director of New Haven's Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS), spoke to the Choate community about the organization's work on November 14. Mr. George explained the struggles refugees face transitioning to their new communities and encouraged students to volunteer with IRIS.

Dr. Todd Boyd



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

On January 15, Mr. James "Maestro J" Racine's opening performance and Dr. Todd Boyd's keynote address introduced this year's Diversity Day theme, "For The Culture." Dr. Boyd shared how hip-hop culture and its history influenced American society in ways we might not recognize, and expounded on the nuance between cultural appropriation and appreciation.

Dr. Ethan Kross



Photo by Emily Ma '25 / The Choate News

On January 30, Choate welcomed this year's E. Phillips Speaker and acclaimed psychologist, neuroscientist, and writer Dr. Ethan Kross. Dr. Kross discussed several strategies to harness "chatter," the inner monologue inside peoples' minds, and how to instead use it to reduce chronic stress and improve mental health.

Mr. Thomas Viertel



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Mr. Thomas Viertel '59, a renowned Broadway producer, visited Choate on April 9 to receive the annual Alumni Award and speak to the Choate community. He shared some of his favorite memories from his time at Choate and discussed how the School shaped his values and experience in the theater industry.

Mr. Nicholas Kristof, Ms. Robin Wright, Dr. Aaron David Miller



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Opinion 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 drew from their experiences in journalism and discussed the importance of open-mindedness in addressing global conflicts.

ARTS HIGHLIGHTS

FALL MUSICAL: *SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD* OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

On October 27-29, Choate students performed *Songs For A New World* in the Gelb Theater. The musical, written by Jason Robert Brown, consisted of 17 songs, with no dialogue and no concrete plot. Instead, the show featured a series of individual stories following the themes of love, loss, rebirth, and reconnection. The show was directed by Arts teacher Mr. Bari Robinson, who created his own narrative for the musical: a story about three couples living in New York City. The cast took away an abundance of new knowledge and skills from this unique artistic experience. "I learned how to bring a story into a song and how to bring purpose into each and every line," cast member Syna Mathod '25 said. "*Songs For A New World* was just so fun because of how small the cast was ... we were all so close."

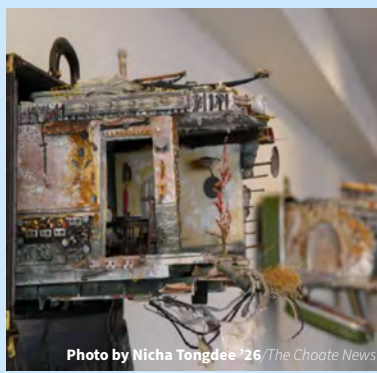


MUSIC CONCERTS TERMLY

Throughout all three terms, Choate hosted instrumental and choral concerts featuring musical groups on campus, including the Symphony Orchestra, Concert Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Festival Chorus, and Chamber Chorus. Conducted by Music Directors Mr. Gene Wie, Mr. Matthew Mclean, and Ms. Julie Hagen, a diverse range of repertoire was performed during the concerts, from 17th-century classics to 21st-century pop. Additionally, Choate hosted instrumental and choral recitals every term, allowing individual students who are passionate about music to perform pieces of their choosing. These performances showcased months of hard work and allowed community members to enjoy the musical talent on campus.



MOHAMAD HAFEZ SHOWCASE SEPTEMBER 12-NOVEMBER 3, 2023



Artworks from internationally acclaimed artist and architect Mr. Mohamad Hafez's collection, *UNPACKED: Refugee Baggage*, were

on display at Choate in the Paul Mellon Arts Center from September 12 to November 3. The collection, which has been featured in top publications, uses found objects, paint, and scrap metal to create visual landscapes that highlight the stories of refugees who fled war-torn regions in the Middle East. Mr. Hafez used his cultural background as an Arab-Muslim artist to incorporate Islamic design, motifs, and patterns in his work. The exhibition aimed to communicate the complex reality of the human condition through art.

PUFFS, A MAGICAL PRODUCTION NOVEMBER 2-5, 2023

From November 2-5, Choate presented its fall theater production, *Puffs, or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic (Puffs)* in the Little Theater. Directed by English and Arts teacher Mrs. Katherine Doak, *Puffs* was a twist on the famous story of a wizard school, chronicling a young student's seven years of school at this magical place. A lot of work was put into the crafting of *Puffs*'s set and props. Led by Technical Di-

rector Mr. Mark Gostomski and Arts teacher Ms. Deighna DeRiu, the inspiration for the set design came from Tudor-era buildings. *Puffs* proved to be an enchanting performance that community members enjoyed. When asked about what made *Puffs* special, cast member Ryan Murray '27 said, "What was really unique about it [the production] was it felt like the audience was able to make a connection to each character."



STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHERS' SHOWCASE DECEMBER 2-3, 2023

On December 2-3, Ballet classes, were also performed. The Student Choreographers' Showcase (SCS), hosted by the Choate Dance Department, featured a diverse array of original student works. This year, for the first time, faculty choreographed works for students enrolled in Choate's afternoon technique classes, such as Upper-level Contemporary and



STUDENT DIRECTED SCENES JANUARY 26-27, 2024

Student Directed Scenes (SDS) took place in the Gelb Theater on January 26-27. This series of short plays chosen and directed by members of the Honors Directing class represented the culmination of two terms of study. The first term focused on the logistics of theater production, where students were tasked with directing excerpts from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; the actual rehearsals for SDS began in the winter. The directors and their respective plays included: Leanne La '26 with *The Future of Sincerity*, Andra Ionescu '24 with *Murder by Midnight*, Qin



Caldwell '24 with *Because the World Needs Unicorns*, Nick Rubino '24 with *A Tale of Two Spectators*, and Grace Walters '24 with *Midnight Cafe*.

A MODERN ODYSSEY FEBRUARY 16-18, 2024



This year's winter production on the PMAC Little Theater stage was *Anon(ymous)* by playwright Naomi Izuka. Directed by Arts teacher Mr. Bari Robinson and inspired by Homer's *The Odyssey*, *Anon(ymous)* tells the story of a young refugee traveling across the United States in hopes of finding her mother. The performance garnered positive feedback from the community, and the humanity of the characters in the play's poetry allowed the audience to see themselves reflected on stage.

STUDENT CREATIVITY TAKES CENTER STAGE FEBRUARY 8-9, 2024

This year, Choate hosted its 12th annual Fringe Festival on February 8-9, featuring four original plays written, directed, and performed by students. The event also showed a selection of films and spoken word performances. This year's plays were *Everybody Talks* by Tristin Hurst '24, *The Writer* by Harper Marsden-Uren '26, *Family Reunion* by Lorraine Hillgen-Santa



DANCE CONCERT DELIGHTS MARCH 12-14, 2024

On March 22-24, Choate's annual Dance Concert showcased 16 pieces choreographed by students and faculty and performed by the Dance Company, Step Squad, Hip-Hop Club, and SYNK in the Little Theater. As the dancers and choreographers watched the concert unfold, they cheered each other on from the wings backstage and helped each other with quick costume changes. The concert was an opportunity for students to share their talents, and the performance was the result of all the hard work put in by all members of Choate's dance community, leaving audience members in awe.



A SPELLBINDING ACT MAY 16-18, 2024



worldwide. Directed by Arts teacher Ms. Deighna DeRiu, this modern classic follows a baker and his wife who set off on a journey to break a spell. Along the way, they meet fairytale characters such as Cinderella, Jack from *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and Little Red Riding Hood. *Into the Woods* was the culmination of persistence, creativity, and dedication from the students and faculty involved, and they were rewarded with a full house during their May 17 performance.

MASCOT MAKEOVER 2023-2024



The 2024 academic year saw a refresh of the School's iconic Wild Boar mascot. This was the first update of the mascot since 1995, as that iteration was falling into poor condition. The new design drew inspiration from other common mascot looks and focused on a more realistic boar image. The School worked

with an English-based design company, Mascot Makers, to create the refreshed mascot. The final version sports a new bright yellow sports jersey with the number "90" written across it — alluding to the School's founding in 1890 — bright blue sneakers, and a wider grin. They also made adjustments to make the boar appear less aggressive, such as making the eyes gold, as the mascot is intended to be not only a symbol of ferocity and competition but also one of friendliness and approachability. BoarPen and Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long debuted the new mascot at the first School Meeting of the year.

FOUNDERS LEAGUE SUMMIT SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

On September 24, nine Choate students and Assistant Athletic Director Mr. Nolan Silbernagel attended the inaugural Founders League Student Summit hosted at Miss Porter's School. The goal of the summit was to learn about leadership and how to build a culture of healthy competition between the Founders League schools. The students began the summit by introducing each school's athletic program. Next, the participants

learned about sportsmanship from Quinnipiac University Sports Psychologist Dr. Devin Markle. They then discussed ways to implement sportsmanship and conflict resolution across the league. To wrap up the day, the students established 10 new Founders League principles. The summit allowed students to exchange ideas about how to grow their respective athletics programs and build healthier competition within the Founders League.



DEERFIELD DAY: BOARS VS. DOORS NOVEMBER 11, 2023

On November 11, the Wild Boars competed against rival school Deerfield Academy in a series of athletic contests as part of a 101-year-long tradition known as Deerfield Day. "Spirit Week," the week leading up to the event, was filled with enthusiasm and various dress-up days — Barbie World Monday, Twin Tuesday, Western Wednesday, Throwback Thursday, and Dress Like Deerfield Friday. The week culminated in the Deerfield

Day Pep Rally in Colony Hall on the eve of the competitions, with performances from fall varsity sports teams. Some highlights of Deerfield Day included the tough battle between the Girls' Varsity Volleyball teams and the victorious Varsity Football game that concluded the day. Whether representing Choate on the court or cheering from the sidelines, Choate's Wild Boars contributed to an exciting field day full of spirit and sportsmanship.



FOOTBALL'S GOLD AND GLORY FALL 2023

The Varsity Football team had their strongest season yet, securing both the Founders League and New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) Championship titles with a perfect 9-0 record, exemplified by their 44-14 victory over Deerfield Academy on Deerfield Day. The team's success was fueled by a focus on teamwork and an aim to build a family-like bond among the members. Head Coach Mr. LJ Spinnato's mentorship and dedication to the Choate Football program earned him Coach of the Year recognition from the New Haven Football Officials Association. The football team's exceptional season and

championship titles set the stage for a promising fall, as they aim to carry forward the same momentum and energy for yet another memorable year.



DOMINANCE ON THE COURT FEBRUARY 18, 2024



The Boys' Varsity Basketball team ended the season as the Founders League Champions with an 18-8 record. Although the team started the season off slow, they took on a 12-game win streak mid-season, securing the best record in the Founders League. According to player Ifeanyi Ndokwu '25, their win streak was a turning point in the season, forming a sense of camaraderie within the team. "[After the win streak,] we learned each other's play styles, and team morale was high," Ndokwu said. The lack of major injuries contributed to the team's success, as key players were able to play consistently. With a successful season behind them, the team will build upon their chemistry and carry it into next year.

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SWIM, SUCCEED, RINSE, REPEAT FEBRUARY 24, 2024

Choate's Varsity Boys' Swim Team snagged a historic three-peat by winning the Founders League Swimming Championships (Founders) title, shattering four Choate records in the process. Ryan Liu '26, Daneel Polakoff '25, Michael Xu '25, and Henry Ding '24 kicked off the meet with their record-breaking 200-meter Medley Relay. With faith in his training and coaches, Xu smashed both the Choate and Founders 100-meter

Freestyle records. Fueled by his passion for the pool, Liu broke the 100-meter Butterfly school record. And, despite Polakoff's in-season shoulder injury, he obliterated the Choate 100-meter Breaststroke record, highlighting his perseverance and dedication to the sport. After a winter of relentless practices and mental battles, the Boys' Swim Team's hard work paid off with their historic victory and four broken records.



CALLI GILCHRIST '25'S PINS AND WINS WINTER 2023-2024

This winter, Calli Gilchrist '25 made history at Choate, clinching the School's first Girls' Wrestling Prep National Championship and first Wrestling Prep Championship since 1939. Her outstanding performance continued at the National High School Coaches Association (NHSCA) Nationals, where she secured the title with three pins and earned the Outstanding Wrestler award.

Gilchrist's dedication and leadership, both on and off the mat, have inspired her teammates and coaches, setting a high standard for high school wrestlers and paving the way for future generations of the sport at Choate. "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," Gilchrist said.



SQUASHING THE COMPETITION WINTER 2023-2024

During the winter term, the Choate Squash program had a successful season, celebrating many team and individual accomplishments. For the first time in over a decade, both Boys' Varsity Squash and Girls' Varsity Squash qualified for the New England Class "A" Division Championships. "Our team grew throughout the season through increased grit and ability to play every match with our best energy," Boys' Varsity Squash Captain Zach Starr '24 said. In January, Jacob Price '27 represented Team USA and became the first Choate student to participate in the British Junior Squash Open. Then, in February, Majo Soria '26 and Lucas Carl-



son '26 won third place in their respective categories at the South American Squash Championships in Brazil. Choate's Squash program showcased exceptional performances this year, marked by notable accomplishments on both national and international stages.

ROWING TO VICTORY MAY 5, 2024



On May 5, the Varsity Girls' Crew Team, led by Captains Brecken Cullinan '24, Suzie Kim '24, and Ella Shafman '24, participated in the Founders' Day Regatta hosted by the Frederick Gunn School on Lake Waramaug. The team compet-

ed against all other Connecticut preparatory schools in the New England Interscholastic Rowing Association and numerous other crew teams from across New England. The team raced five boats in the Regatta, with the first and fourth boats placing second overall and the second and third boats placing first. The fifth boat was second in their race. Choate's Girls' Crew Team emerged as the highest-scorers at the Founders' Day Regatta with impressive performances across all five boats.

SIGNING TO SUCCESS

NOVEMBER 8, 2023, FEBRUARY 7, 2024, AND MAY 8, 2024

This year, three signing days were held for Choate student-athletes to sign their National Letter of Intent. The letters signify their intentions to continue their respective sports in the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I, II, or III levels. Seven Choate student-athletes in the fall term signed on November 8, an additional 33 in the winter term on February 7, and 10 in the spring term signing day on May 8. On all three signing days, the Wild Boars were joined by friends, family, and supporters as they made the decision to pursue their passions and compete in interscholastic sports at the collegiate level.



SAYING “VALE” TO MS. DIANA BESTE

By **Lauren Kee '24**
Editor-in-Chief of the
117th Masthead

Ms. Diana Beste stepped into the Latin classroom at Choate in 1983 as a fresh college graduate in her 20s. Now, 41 years later, she's retiring and returning back to New York, where she grew up. Throughout her Choate career, Ms. Beste has served many roles on campus, from Language Department Head and Memorial House adviser to an admission officer and aerobics instructor.

Ms. Beste has always had a passion for the Classics and dreamed of teaching Latin when she was just a teenager. In 1983, she was teaching at a day school in Rochester, New York, when a position in the Classics Section of Choate's Language Department opened up. Ms. Beste served as Language Department Head from 1998-2006 and 2013-2018. In 2006, she left Choate for four years to try out an administrative role as Principal of Greenwich Academy in Greenwich, Connecticut. However, she realized teaching was the right job for her and missed Choate, so she returned to travel the world with Choate as an admission officer before rejoining the Language Department in 2012. In 2021, she stepped in as interim Language Department Head for the spring term when the position was left vacant.

Over the years, Ms. Beste has taught every level of Latin and Ancient Greek. She's also taught poetry, etymology, and art history with Choate Summer Programs. While Ms. Beste enjoyed teaching literature, philosophy, and art in her upper-level classes, she has been particularly fond of her Latin 100 classes recently for their enthusiasm. "The younger kids are much more comfortable with failure; they have a growth mindset, and they're fun," she said.

Ms. Beste's students know and love her passion and poise in the classroom. Ms. Mary Liz Williamson '94, a Latin teacher and Ms. Beste's former student, said, "She reminds students that Latin and language learning is a discipline and requires steadiness and drilling. [Ms. Beste] will do that, and balance the joy of learning."

Reagan Colton '24, who was in Ms. Beste's Latin 300 and 400 classes, recalled a story she told



Photo by Maia Shah '27/The Choate News

her class about a donkey she met in her days vacationing at a little farmhouse in France. During the textbook unit about a Roman family and a donkey, Ms. Beste made a slideshow with pictures, a video, and Latin text to share with the class. "Sometimes, Latin can be so antiquated because you don't really see Latin in your daily life, so it's nice that she incorporated a topic that is so modern that we would think is funny and relatable," Colton said.

In her senior year, Colton pursued a Capstone project with Ms. Beste as her adviser. Hoping to study English and Classics in college, Colton explored the tensions between love and time in classical literature, modern readings, and artwork. "Ms. Beste has really been the one to help me pursue and expand my Capstone to look at how those two topics intersect," Colton said. "She is so passionate about Classics and Latin as well, and it's just easy to love something when the people around you love it as well."

John Reach '24 agreed with Colton, emphasizing Ms. Beste's profound wisdom. "I know in coming years the students at Choate who have had her as a teacher

will dwindle, yet Ms. Beste's impact will only grow, as her students carry with them her teachings not only about school and the Classics, but about life," Reach said.

For Ms. Beste, art and the Classics are inseparable. Roman paintings and sculptures are largely inspired by Latin texts. "We think that artists only appropriated subjects, but they were intimately knowledgeable about the texts themselves — the Ovid and the Catullus," Ms. Beste said. "It's really exciting for students to see that what they are imagining from literature are the same things the artists were imagining."

Every year, Ms. Beste takes her Latin 250 class on a field trip to the Yale Center for British Art as part of a composition project. Students write a description and analysis about an image related to the sea, which is the theme in a corresponding unit of the Latin textbook. "The amazing thing and inspiring thing is that she's always infused her classroom with art and material culture," Director of Day Students Ms. MaryLiz Williamson said.

Ms. Beste's love language is food. When she was the adviser to the Gourmet Club, a group of stu-



Photo courtesy of Ms. Diana Beste

dents would come to her house on Sunday mornings with cookbooks to cook all day and share dinner together. "I really love just sitting down and having a meal," Ms. Beste said. "Even this year, I've been able to have classes over [to my house] for breakfast."

Though Ms. Beste now lives in Fay House on Upper Campus, she lived in Spencer House with 22 boys for five years, Homestead with senior girls for another five, and five years in Pierce House. However, her five years in Memorial House were the "most taxing but the most fun" because of the energy, innocence, and relationships she formed with 70 freshman boys there.

She then became an adviser to day students. "I love the relationships I've been able to forge not just with them, but with their families," Ms. Beste said.

Colton has been Ms. Beste's advisee since her freshman year. "My friends all know how much I love her," she said. "She's a huge part of my Choate experience. It would have been entirely different and not as rewarding if she wasn't my adviser."

Coming from a Montessori school with no grades or as-

essments, Colton's transition to Choate was jarring. However, she appreciated Ms. Beste's friendly approach to learning and her understanding of her previous experiences. "While she still pushes me to do my best, she emphasizes my love of learning over getting 100 in a class," Colton said.

Ms. Beste's care for her students also applies to her colleagues. When Ms. Williamson went on maternity leave in 2020, Ms. Beste would bring her "vegetable-forward dishes with cheese, just the way [I] liked it," Ms. Williamson said. Additionally, Ms. Beste is renowned for her signature Clafoutis, which she cooks for her classes and advisories.

Ms. Beste's institutional knowledge and professional experience have also been helpful in mentoring new teachers. Dr. Scott Davis joined Choate to cover for Ms. Williamson's Latin classes while she was away in 2020, and Ms. Beste took him under her wing. In his first term of teaching at a high school, he encountered a student who cheated on an assignment. "I had no idea what to do, and she

was able to walk me through all the steps," Dr. Davis said. "That's just one small example of the types of ways that she would always have an open-door policy, both at her home and at her office for us."

Ms. Beste's colleagues admire her for going above and beyond for themselves and her students. A few years ago, she took on teaching an extra class when just three students expressed interest in taking Ancient Greek. A few times a year, Ms. Beste would also host the Classics Department (consisting of herself, Ms. Williamson, and Dr. Davis) in her home for Horation nights, inspired by the Roman poet Horace. The teachers discussed recent literature in Latin studies and the impact of the ancient world while enjoying cheeses, wines, and other delicacies Ms. Beste prepared. "It's just the three of us, but she'll still pull out all the stops," Dr. Davis said. "It's a really spectacular night."

After retirement, Ms. Beste will move to the Upper West Side in New York City, where she will spend more time with family and volunteer to cook at shelters. She will also continue improving her physical fitness. When she first came to Choate, she was known as the "fitness woman," and she has taught aerobics classes, spin classes, and fitness swimming.

In New York, she will attend classes at the Columbia University School of Professional Studies Auditing Programs. In line with her love for learning, Ms. Beste also hopes to learn Arabic and improve her Chinese. "Now, I'm going to learn for me, and acquire knowledge that I haven't acquired because I've been so busy," she said.

Saying goodbye to Ms. Beste will be difficult, but Ms. Williamson is grateful for her wisdom and kindness. "There's always something to learn from her, whether it's pedagogy or how to live life," Ms. Williamson said. "She's always approached her craft with an appreciation for beauty of art and beauty of language. I've tried to teach emulating that, while having my own style, but no one can be Diana Beste."

Lauren Kee may be reached at lkee24@choate.edu

SEVEN YEARS LATER, MR. RONEY EFORD MOVES ON

By **Chelsea Branch '25**
Copy Editor

Over the past seven years, Director of Athletics Mr. Roney Eford has become the face of Choate sports. A formidable leader with an instantly recognizable presence, Mr. Eford has touched the lives of innumerable student-athletes. The 2023-2024 school year marked Mr. Eford's last at the School, and the Choate community will certainly miss him.

Mr. Eford's lifelong love for sports has fueled his professional career. After proving himself as an exceptional player on the Marquette University Mens' Basketball Team, Mr. Eford traveled worldwide as an international professional basketball player. His firsthand experience as an athlete aptly prepared him to guide Choate students through their own athletic journeys. As the Director of Athletics, he has emphasized the importance of being a team player, firmly believing that good sportsmanship is just as important as athletic prowess. Under his guidance, Choate athletes have become better players and teammates.

In addition to managing Choate Athletics, Mr. Eford also coached the Choate Thirds Boys' Basketball Team. Athletes on his team are his biggest fans, praising Mr. Eford for his incredible coaching. Player Nico Clary '26, who has worked with Mr. Eford since his third-form year, shared, "I think his presence made all of us better ... I



Photo Courtesy of Choate Flickr

played with him for two years, and we lost one game."

The team's impressive record is certainly in part owed to Mr. Eford's on-the-court lessons. Clary cited Mr. Eford's basketball mantra, "communication and defense wins games," as one of the most important lessons his coach instilled in him. He effectively trained his team into the powerhouse they have become with his "calm, yet commanding presence," according to Will Garcia '27, another thirds boys' basketball athlete. Garcia continued, "When you hear him speak, people are going to listen."

Mr. Eford's players admire his heart, perhaps even more than his powerful coaching. Garcia described him as "very caring and very compassionate ... You always feel comfortable when you're near him."

Mr. Eford's affable personality especially shined in an intense game against Deerfield Academy. The pressure was on, and a win seemed out of reach as Choate's team was down 20 points. Through his positive attitude, Mr. Eford encouraged the boys to keep fighting, spinning the game on its head. "He gave us a great halftime speech, and we ended up coming back

and winning to finish with an undefeated record," Clary said.

After that same eventful game, Garcia reflected, "I just remember hugging him [Mr. Eford] afterwards, and that was a really impactful moment for me to have that relationship with the coach."

Mr. Eford is not just beloved by his team; many other students love his radiant personality. He has made it a tradition every term to compile and present a slideshow highlighting the successes of every team during that athletic season. He never failed to shout out all athletes — from brand-new players to

committed Division I athletes — and the people working behind the scenes, including managers, coaches, and Choate's facilities staff at American Building Maintenance (ABM) Industries. He truly made sports enjoyable and accessible for everyone.

His efforts in supporting student-athletes went far deeper than his School Meeting presentations. He constantly showed up and supported fellow Choate athletes at student games. Athlete Sophie Park '25 recalled, "I first met him in freshman year ... He came [to] my JV basketball game, actually, and he was just there cheering on the sidelines." She described him

as "energetic, definitely supportive, and also very passionate about everything he does."

Mr. Eford is just as adored by the students as he is by adults on campus. Assistant Coordinator of Athletic Operations and Head Equipment Manager Justin Whittaker lauded Mr. Eford for his incredible work as the Director of Athletics. Whittaker shared that Mr. Eford's experience as a teacher, manager, and athlete "has helped mold the department and the experience for student-athletes really well over the last seven years." In addition to his admirable work, Mr. Eford has been a great friend to Mr. Whittaker. He shared that he loved "just being able to talk sports [with Eford]. We obviously work in athletics for a reason," he said. "We love sports, we love the experience that the students have and springboarding off of all of the sports that we enjoy, [like] basketball and baseball."

As the Choate community prepares to send Mr. Eford off, students wish him the best in his new endeavors. Park shared, "I hope he knows we'll really miss him here at Choate, especially with all of the work and effort he's put into making the [athletics] program better and building it up." Mr. Eford has forever changed athletics at Choate, and we hope that he will remain forever true to gold and blue no matter where he goes.

Chelsea Branch may be reached at cbranch25@choate.edu

Ms. TANISHA CLARK LEAVES HER MARK ON THE SCHOOL

By **Eliana Li '26**
Copy Editor

Whether it's taping an ankle in the training room or offering guidance to her advisees, Ms. Tanisha Clark has left a significant mark on countless Choate students. After five years of hard work and dedication to the Choate community, Tanisha will be going back to school at Montana State University (MSU) for her Master's Degree in Exercise Science. Alongside her studies, she will also be working as a graduate assistant with the football program at MSU.

Tanisha's journey at Choate began in the fall of 2019 after she completed her undergraduate studies at Colby-Sawyer College. "In undergrad, I told myself I would never work at a high school, but when I came to my interview, I just fell in love with the place and fell in love with the people. It felt like it was meant to be," Tanisha said. Since joining Choate, she has taken on the role of an athletic trainer alongside several leadership positions in many campus committees and programs.

Not long after she arrived on campus, Tanisha became an integral part of the Athletic Training team, bringing joy and dedication to her interactions with student-athletes on campus.

"It's always been enjoyable to be around [her] in the training room," Head Athletic Trainer Mr. Brian Holloway remarked. "Her engaging personality makes people feel



Photo courtesy of Ms. Tanisha Clark

comfortable, and that allows her to make really authentic connections with students." Drew McClay-Ward '25 added, "It's evident that [Tanisha] just loves her job and she loves the Choate community."

Over the past five years, Tanisha's expertise in the training room has played a significant role in helping athletes recover from injuries. Piper Cameron '25 said, "When I sprained my ankle, she really helped me get back out onto the field ... and heal as quickly as possible."

Beyond her physical rehabilitation programs, Tanisha

has also ensured that her athletes maintain the right mindset. "She makes sure that you're believing in yourself and trusting the process, knowing that you will come back better and stronger," McClay-Ward said.

Outside of the training room, Tanisha has also devoted herself to various aspects of campus life, participating as a co-coordinator for the Prefect Program, a club adviser, adviser, and a House Mentor. The other Prefect Program Coordinator Mr. Sam Doak praised her work as a colleague: "We've really been a great partnership ... With her

work in the training office, she tends to see and interact with kids in a whole different dimension than a teacher does and that's been really beneficial to our conversations," he said.

As an adviser, Tanisha has also played an important role in many students' lives. When it comes to the challenges of navigating a rigorous academic program, participating in various extracurricular activities, and balancing social life, Tanisha has offered invaluable support and guidance to her advisees.

"She really offers me great advice, a shoulder to cry on,

and a friend to be had," Cameron, one of her advisees, said. "She'll always have open ears and an open mind, and she'll always try to guide you with the right option and give you the best advice she could," Michael Papaspyros '25, another one of her advisees, added.

As Tanisha leaves the Choate community, students and faculty reflect on her presence with gratitude.

"Without her, my Choate experience wouldn't have been the same. I can't put into words how much I'm grateful for [Tanisha] being my adviser and

being that person I can go to anytime," McClay-Ward said.

Junho Lee '24, another one of her advisees, said, "She helped me feel valued and loved. Junior year is a tough year for anyone ... [but] she was always there for me whether I wanted to talk about how I didn't do well on a test or how I got in an argument with a friend."

As Tanisha prepares to leave the Choate community, she has countless fond memories from her time here. However, what she holds most dear are the relationships she has made with the people she's met along the way. "I'm gonna miss the people most ... [and] that feeling of just creating all the memories with people and knowing that you created bonds," she said.

Now that she is moving on to another chapter of her life, Tanisha was able to reflect on her experience working at Choate. "I think my time at Choate has made me a better person," she said. "I think it has helped me mature and really understand who I am as a person. That's why I feel like I'm ready to go back to school."

The Choate community will deeply cherish the impact she's had on the community, and the School wishes her all the best as she continues her future pursuits. "We are really, really proud of her," Mr. Holloway concluded. "She's leaving Choate a better place than when she arrived."

Eliana Li may be reached at eli26@choate.edu

CHOATE ADMISSION SAYS GOODBYE TO Ms. AMY SUN

By **Maia Shah '27**
Reporter

Ms. Amy Sun joined the Choate Admission team in 2021 after 21 years as an accomplished Latin teacher in Southern New England. She currently resides in Farmington, Connecticut with her husband and daughter, and she oversaw day student admissions in her role at the School.

When Ms. Sun transitioned to Choate, she brought her incredible experience and a talent for working with students through her time in a classroom setting. After her arrival three years ago, Ms. Sun shared that she was "eager to interact with students in a new way," and that she was inspired "to shift beyond the classroom to admission." Her deep passion for education carried perfectly into her new role, where she has helped families navigate the application process and understand the opportunities that Choate has to offer.

In fact, many of her colleagues believe this to be one of Ms. Sun's most exceptional qualities as a member of the team. Chief Enrollment Manager Mr. Jeffrey Beaton

particularly appreciated her unique background as a former teacher in the classroom. "She was able to give a different and much needed perspective in the committee room; this is something I will be forever grateful for," he said. "I have learned so much from her."

In the Admission Office, Ms. Sun was recognized for her warm, positive presence. Mr. Beaton said, "Ms. Sun's presence is one that will be missed. Creative, collaborative, forward-thinking, willing to take on and tackle challenges, thoughtful, ethical, oh and so wonderfully fun!" Members of the community value her wonderful listening and empathetic personality, and despite her busy schedule, she was always willing to take time to get to know her co-workers and the students.

Ms. Sun's departure from the Admission team will be felt, whether from her thoughtful eye when reviewing applications, her Voices of Choate podcast, which spotlighted various perspectives on being part of the Choate community, or her admirable work ethic.

Ms. Grace McGee, a Senior Associate Director of the Ad-



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

mission team, fondly recalled her time spent with Ms. Sun and will miss her next door neighbor in the office. "We connect over running, music, southern roots, nerdy quirks, and a willingness to question the status quo," she said. "And she is always willing to bring in some of her amazing cornbread casserole to share! I

value her authenticity, creativity, and drive, and I will greatly miss her passion, persistence, and open-minded approach on campus next fall."

Ms. Cynthia Stahura also admires Ms. Sun's indelible mark on the Admission team, and shared that she learned to "embrace creativity and think out-

side the box" from Ms. Sun's fun and quick-witted personality.

Ms. Sun was an inspiring mentor for those around her, and will be remembered by many Choate students as their first friendly face on campus. She brought the Choate experience alive for so many during the admissions process and

truly helped them imagine themselves as a student here. In the height of admission seasons, Ms. Sun always provided a much-needed chuckle, kind smile, and of course, her infamous cornbread casserole.

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truly helped them imagine themselves as a student here. In the height of admission seasons, Ms. Sun always provided a much-needed chuckle, kind smile, and of course, her infamous cornbread casserole.

Maia Shah may be reached at mshah27@choate.edu

Mr. Jeffrey Allen Departs Choate After Two-Year Fellowship



Photo by Camila Granda '25/The Choate News

By **Deyi Meng '26**
Copy Editor

During his two-year tenure at Choate, Mr. Jeffrey Allen has held numerous positions and made a lasting impact on the Choate community. Mr. Allen taught English to third

and fifth formers, coached the Choate Boys' Cross Country and Track and Field teams, and served as a House Mentor for Logan Munroe and Archbold.

In the classroom, Mr. Allen is a welcoming teacher who encourages participation and discourse. Jacob Head '25, a stu-

dent in Mr. Allen's English 300 class, said, "He really helped me get out of my comfort zone, say my opinion, and engage in conversations with people I don't really know."

Nicha Tongdee '26, a student in Mr. Allen's English 100 class last year, echoed Head's

sentiments. "He fostered a really good classroom environment and made us feel comfortable sharing our opinions. In the end, it was a really memorable class and a good time," she said.

Outside of the classroom, Mr. Allen could be seen coaching the Boys' Cross Country

and Track and Field teams. As a former collegiate runner himself, Mr. Allen brought valuable knowledge and expertise to the field as well as a unique coaching style. Boys' Cross Country team runner Roshan Desai '26 said, "I feel that he says what needs to be said in certain times and I think it was great that he was a runner in college. It was interesting to see his experience, and that was helpful."

Outside of academia and athletics, Mr. Allen has cultivated a strong bond with the Choate community, serving as a mentor for many students.

Felix Fortier '24, who became close to Mr. Allen after meeting him through Choate Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey games, said, "In a sense, he's versatile; he can be serious and he can also be very funny. And there's not many teachers here that can have that kind of relationship."

In the dining hall, Mr. Allen can often be seen fostering bonds on a personal level with students by sitting with them during meals. "Mr. Allen is more than a normal teacher, he's also a good friend. He always comes sits with me and my friends at the lunch table and I can really see who he is as a person, not only as a teacher," Head said.

Mr. Allen cited building a snowman with his English 300 class as a highlight of his time at Choate. He will miss the students on campus and seeing them grow and mature into young adults.

"Choate has been a wonderful place for me to start my career as a teacher," Mr. Allen said. "I've enjoyed working with really talented colleagues and also learning from my students every day, in and out of the classroom."

Deyi Meng may be reached at dmeng26@choate.edu

SENIOR SPEECHES

YOYO ZHANG

“I have a 4.9 unweighted GPA on a 4.0 scale. I discovered a new planet as a part of SRP. I started a column in the *New York Times* freshman year, specializing in exposés on cafeteria food. In my free time, I travel to Antarctica to practice skiing, meanwhile researching local penguin species on the side.

Now, what I’m gonna say next will be hard to believe — but that was all BS. I’m not actually an overachieving cyborg programmed to make you feel inadequate. Shocking, I know.

But what I described in the beginning was the ideal that I strived to reach when I came to Choate. Freshman year Yoyo had one goal in mind: perfection.

I tried my absolute best to be the perfect Choate student, whatever that meant. I told myself that the more things I had on my plate, the better. I joined over 10 clubs, ran for Student Council (got 0 votes), wrote for a ton of publications, did NOT get published by the *New York Times* (but DID get front page of *The Choate News*).

Every time I heard someone say, “I see you everywhere!” I felt like I was seen. I felt like it was validation for my presence.

I moved from China to the U.S. on my own in 7th grade. It’s hard to find your place in a foreign world when you’re 12, when you don’t speak the language well, when you don’t know anyone, and when you don’t even

know yourself. I felt like the only thing I could do was to excel — academically and beyond — to prove that I belonged. I was incredibly lucky to be the first person in my family to learn English and live in America. Getting into a school like Choate was the opportunity to change the future of my family.

When sophomore year rolled around, I was taking six classes, I got club positions, and I started many of my own projects, too, like TEDx and GirlTech Magazine (not to brag or anything). I thought I was in the best position for success.

I was a squirrel on an espresso binge, jumping from one activity to the next, fueled by caffeine and self-doubt. But let me tell you, there’s only so much UPTIME a person can drink before they start sprouting wings and flying off the library roof. (Not literally.)

Before I knew it, I was awake at 3 a.m., breaking down in the bathroom by myself. The world was spinning in front of me, but I had to stay up because I still had 32 pages of history reading to do, a calc test to study for, and don’t even mention the nine emails awaiting my response. This horror stretched from days into weeks, but I told myself to keep going because I thought that’s what it takes to be worthy, to be perfect.

My idealism started to fall apart when I was sleeping through class-

es unless my roommate dragged me out of bed (Lauren Kee, I love you). Everything I thought I enjoyed doing started to weigh me down, and it got to the point where I was timing myself folding laundry to make sure that I didn’t “waste any time.” That’s how you know sh*t’s really going down.

I was so burnt out by sophomore summer that I didn’t want to see anyone or do anything. Instead, I went to live in the suburbs of Maryland for two months — very popular option, I know. Without a schedule that’s filled to the brim, I finally got back in touch with reality. I started writing again for pleasure, and I eagerly prepared for the upcoming SRP tasks without feeling overwhelmed. Together with the new people I met, I learned how to kayak, how to crab, and how to play pool. I liked the last one especially, but I also learned that you might never get good at something you like.

By my past standards, that summer would’ve been a failure. I wasn’t even close to finishing a perfect to-do list, but I enjoyed the imperfect adventures more than anything. Only by the beginning of junior year did I realize that life is so much more than chasing after an ideal. I had been so focused on being perfect that I lost sight of who I was.

This year especially, I’ve been cherishing the fleeting



Photo courtesy of Yoyo Zhang '24

days, as the countdown turns from 100 to 40 to five in the blink of an eye. I learned to be grateful for the moments I share with the ones I love, like:

Staying up until the unholy hours in the Library — this time, not because I have to, but because I get to have random chats with my prefectees and the best co-prefects, Jules and Giebs;

Frolicking on the outdoor track in the dead of winter with my favorite workout buddy (also my favorite blondie);

Sprawling under the sun on those sticky, spiky wooden chairs

(even if that means getting a tube-top tan);

Singing FEROCIOUSLY to any One Direction song that comes up during a SAC dance (because I don’t care if you judge).

Those are moments that will stay with you.

Looking back, it seems stupid that I was stuck in my head. But it’s also really difficult to let go of a vision that you’ve built for yourself for years. Sometimes we all fall into the rat race, wanting to achieve more and be more perfect. It’s hard to let go, but we live and we learn.

Sophomore year Yoyo would have never imagined herself being sad to leave this place. Now, I’m glad that I can’t say the same. I’m holding onto the imperfect, yet astonishingly beautiful memories I’ve made here. I don’t need a perfect GPA to be happy; I don’t need the perfect resume to prove my passion. I’ve realized that there’s so much more in life once you move past the idea of “perfection.” When I walk across the commencement stage, I’ll be proud of myself for un-becoming perfect.”

John Freeman



Photo courtesy of John Freeman '24

“As soon as I arrived at Choate Rosemary Hall, all I wanted to do was leave. Now don’t get me wrong, I loved those first couple weeks of taking zoom classes from my gaming chair and watching YouTube during those little breaks between classes. But once we got on campus and I was surrounded by a bunch of strange humans, expected to spend tens of minutes walking up and down a hill, and forced to participate in the strenuous sport of “ping pong and pickleball,” I developed a fool-proof strategy on how to survive Choate.

1. Get to school immediately before my first class.
2. Go to an empty room and finish my homework during free periods.
3. Leave immediately after my last commitment.
4. Play an obscene amount of Minecraft at home.
5. Repeat.

This strategy got me through the fall and spring terms, and was even easier when day students were virtual that winter. And with a vast assortment of Discord friends to join me with the aforementioned Minecraft, I was having the time of my life. All I had to do was keep my grades up for the next four years, and cruise my way to college.

However, there was one minor roadblock to this flawless plan: the complete schmucks known as “my advisory.” These so-called “school friends” were very insistent on me joining them in unpleasant activities such as “having fun,” “eating lunch,” and “being around people.” Thankfully, I was frequently able to dodge their sickeningly thoughtfulness

invitations, favoring my favorite school-time activity of sitting in an empty room and doing homework. Despite the best efforts of those around me, my freshman year concluded with the bare minimum of a couple casual friendships, and a few distant acquaintances.

Then came sophomore fall. After realizing that playing ping pong outside was impossible on a windy day, I decided to escape the harsh Wallingford weather and switched my sport to fitness and conditioning. This placed me on an exercise bike three times a week next to fellow advisee Andrew Kim, who was extremely excited to have someone to chat with. Naturally, this made my isolationist policy a good bit more difficult. As the year progressed, I found myself becoming better acquainted with Qin Caldwell and Evelyn Kim in my English class, then Carter Foster and Ryan Cheng through world history, and Will Gao and Andrew Zhong through math and chemistry. By the time I met Melody Qian in winter running, I was surrounded by a series of really cool people that I was honored to call my friends.

I know, I know, that all sounds very terrifying, but trust me, it gets worse. Those friends, and I know this may come as a surprise to you all, had other friends too. Completely independent from the aforementioned friends I had already met. And it turns out, when you spend enough time among friends of friends, those friends of friends start to turn into friends in their own right. Over the course of the next two years, my fear of finding friends fell apart

as I found myself in the midst of what I can only describe as, and this isn’t me being hyperbolic here, the greatest group of friends anyone has ever had, ever. And I will fight you on that.

After all of that, I find myself looking back on my Freshman philosophy of “let me out, I want to go home” from a new angle. Trust me, I’m not going to stand here and tell you that Choate is going to be the best four years of your life, and that it will all fly by in the blink of an eye. Nothing can make me forgive the amount of Minecraft time I’ve lost to a never-ending flurry of homework assignments. But what I will say is that there are parts of Choate I am not too excited about leaving behind. Not the workload, or the mandatory extracurriculars, or getting home after 8:30 p.m. because clubs end at 8 p.m. for some reason, but the genuinely awesome people that go here. Yes, I am still very excited to head out this year, and see what life is like beyond high school. But no matter what, wherever I find myself, I will always miss doing random stuff with the friend group I’m leaving behind. I will miss movie nights in the SAC, Dungeons and Dragons in the PMAC, and singing Queen way too loud in a Lanphier study room. I will miss playing Game Pigeon during fitness and conditioning, celebrating birdies in disc golf, and stopping at Subway during winter running. I will miss going to the Museum of Natural History in New York, watching “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” in Philadelphia, and participating in what must have been the coldest, rainiest, and muddiest game of paintball that anyone has had the fortune of experiencing.

So I guess I’m expected to wrap this all up with some wise words of wisdom for the freshmen and sophomores, because I think that’s the point of the whole senior speech thing, but I really don’t have anything too fancy. All I can say to the younger students out there is, whatever you do, don’t be an idiot. Don’t treat Choate as a four year hiatus between your childhood and college, and don’t treat it as a place where you go learn a bunch of nerd stuff. Trust me, hanging out with people is only about twenty percent as scary as you think it is. And once you get past that step, it is entirely worth it. And to those of you who aren’t being idiots about the whole “spending time with people” thing, find someone who is and be as annoying as possible until they snap out of it. If you’re lucky, they’ll make a senior speech thanking you for it a couple years down the road.”

LILY HRAZDIRA

“A navy Ralph Lauren or Vineyard Vines quarter zip up sweater. Some white or beige khakis, and high socks slipped into some Gucci shoes on a nice day, and on casual ones donning their Hey Dude slippers. This is what I thought of freshman year if anyone said the word economics. The quintessential econ bro.

I never thought I would become one of these people interested in economics. I thought “those people” always looked like the ones I just described. Now, about to graduate, I have taken five economics classes, and plan to have it be one of my majors in college starting next year. I’ve become fascinated by the subject, how it intersects and adds numbers, data, and quantity with my interests in public policy. As I learned and learned more, especially in microeconomics with Mr. Minneman last spring, I realized economic principles don’t just apply to monetary transactions. They also apply to some of the most important lessons that I’ve learned in my high school years at Choate.

The law of diminishing marginal returns states that additional output will decrease after a certain point of adding input. This occurs because fixed input becomes a restraint, limiting the effectiveness of each additional unit on the output. The phrase “too many cooks in the kitchen” perfectly encapsulates this law. And no, I’m not dishing your hashtag five year plan.

When we learned this in class, Mr. Minneman had us all cut and draw on paper to make makeshift pizzas while increasing the amount of people that worked on it. The amount of pizzas we could make would increase less after a certain amount of workers. As much fun as it was to see the person next to me frantically cut, pass to me, and then I pass folded papers to the subsequent person, when thinking about the application of the law of diminishing marginal returns to my own life, which is of course the last thing I do in bed before I fall asleep every night, I think that it’s not about an amount of people that are going to diminish an optimal output of whatever you’re striving for — whether it’s good grades or happiness. If you’re a little more superficial, maybe popularity or money. It’s not about the amount of people that will eventually stunt your output. From my experience, it’s about who.

I think I’ve changed a lot since I’ve been here. If you’re someone that knew me well freshman and

sophomore year and now we’ve somehow drifted: I’m Lily, and I’ve changed God knows how much since we first became friends. Believe me, it’s been all for the better. The amount of people that have contributed to my output of happiness has ebbed and flowed throughout these four years. When I’ve had the most friends, it’s sometimes when I’ve felt the most excluded. My output has been nearly zero sometimes — it’s when I’ve felt the most alone. When I haven’t been scared to change things around, to take initiative to see people that fill me up and not empty me, it’s when I get the highest marginal returns. It’s not my own fault, or even those that don’t contribute to my output with increasing returns, for the unhappiness I’ve experienced socially at Choate. Whether it’s a boyfriend, girlfriend, friend, maybe even a teacher, or your best friend’s situation that she seriously needs to get away from, some people just aren’t meant to provide a lot of output for one another. And that is completely okay, coming from someone who used to have a chronic need to be liked by everyone, even if it tore her apart. So just don’t be afraid to change things up.

Additionally, scarcity is at the core of economics. How does one allocate limited resources to a society with unlimited wants? Predictably, I have seen scarcity play out often in my life itself. Life is filled with limited resources, and sadly, high school is filled with a limited amount of time. How do we deal with scarcity in an environment that is going to be so hard to leave in just a few short days? Choate is an environment that is nearly impossible to explain to people that have never heard of it. Many people think boarding school is a place troubled kids are sent to, by parents who don’t love them. Although this reigns true for at least a couple of us here.

On the contrary, in a Board of Trustees meeting I was in a couple of weeks back, someone described it perfectly within one word: Choate is a utopia. It’s a place crafted for students to learn, eat, play sports, and shoot each other with water guns — I mean buddies — during senior assassin. And that is what’s going to make it so hard to leave — its familiarity. Whether we know each other or not, we are so inclined and used to seeing each other around the halls, paths, and dorms here. I thought for a while that Choate is us inside Plato’s cave, chained and forced to see just a fraction of the world around us. But I realized as I’ve become

more comfortable here, learning in a diverse environment, that Choate has opened me up to new experiences, opportunities, and learning that have made me someone outside of the cave. Choate is a utopia, crafted so we can have an optimal learning environment and be conscious of the world that I’ll be entering after graduation.

Sadly, scarcity comes into play in this utopia that I’ve had the opportunity of experiencing, and I’ve been limited to four years. There are a scarce number of SAC dances. A scarce number of late night dorm conversations. Weekend spikeball games. Trips to Walmart to wander around. Sunday brunches. Times the swim team sings “Build Me Up Buttercup” before diving happens at meets. These moments are far and too infrequent, yet the culmination of them becomes an almost unlimited amount of serendipitous moments that make all the homework, questionable test grades, and living away from home worth it. Moments that make this place nearly impossible to leave.

So, even if you have absolutely no interest in taking an economics course during your time at Choate, which I once believed was in the cards for me, I bet you already understand how the law of diminishing marginal utility and scarcity applies to the Choate experience. Now we all know we don’t need to buy a pair of Hey Dudes to know economics.

I hope listening to this speech was not a waste of your scarce amount of time, and that you make sure to cherish and savor the moments that come and depart, as I really never thought I’d reach a point where I’d have to leave the moments, the people, and the classes that have become home. Thank you.”



Photo courtesy of Lily Hrazdira '24

KAYA TRAY



Photo courtesy of Kaya Tray '24

“I can’t wait. Three words. Four years filled with: I can’t wait. I can’t wait for this week to be over. I can’t wait for Long Weekend. I can’t wait for break. I can’t wait for spring term. I can’t wait for nice weather. I can’t wait for the summer. I can’t wait for senior year, I can’t wait for senior fall to be over. I can’t wait for college acceptance. I can’t wait for senior spring. I can’t wait for senior speeches. I can’t wait for graduation.

Four years are filled with: I can’t wait: spending time looking into the future, excited for what is to come. But all of a sudden here I am senior spring, giving my senior speech and now there are only a few days left before I graduate. I think back to all those years I spent waiting for this, and now that it’s almost over — I wish I didn’t spend my time looking ahead.

If I learned anything from my time at Choate, it is do not spend your time waiting for the future. It is hard not to constantly think about what’s to come. A large reason why we come to Choate in the first place is for college. We are socialized to believe that we should give up happiness, sleep, and social time, for the sake of our futures. We spend our years at Choate sacrificing things because we are taught if you work harder, you will get better grades, which means getting into a better college, which means a better job, which means success. Now, I

will admit this has some truth to it, you need to be willing to work hard to thrive at Choate and in the larger world, but as a result we end up looking forward to those moments without work, those long weekends and breaks and summers where we think we won’t be stressed or overwhelmed. Essentially just looking ahead to the future, and not enjoying the present moment. If Mr. Harris has taught me anything it is that we are people of the past who devote our lives to the future. So often, we dwell on our past experiences yet can only seem to be motivated by the future. In truth, the future doesn’t exist. It’s just a concept we made up, yet soon enough, Choate will be in my past. Just a blur of memories that I look back fondly on. I will be one of the people who will constantly be thinking of my past, of Choate, for the rest of my life. I will think about those teachers who made me love learning, those crushes I looked for on the paths, and those friends that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Trust me I know, Choate is hard, the classes are hard, the sports are hard, the friendships can be hard, but looking back in a few years you will think more about your friends, teachers, and exes more than that one 4/8 you got on your bio pop quiz or getting cut from thirds tennis as a senior. It’s easy to get caught up in stress, anxiety, and pressure,

but if you let the negatives take over your Choate experience, you will lose sight of what’s right in front of you.

Everything is right in front of you. So don’t wait. Enjoy those little things, the little moments. Playing in the snow, laying on mem field on a sunny day, the feeling of leaving a test confident that you did well, the unexpected friendships you make in English class, and the feeling of excitement — of butterflies. Appreciate the grind, the hard work, the tough practices, I promise it will all be worth it. Appreciate those around you who push you to be the best student, athlete, musician, artist, and friend. Think about those random people on campus you met through a club, sport, or class that aren’t in your immediate friend group but who you always look forward to talking to. The side characters you look for in the dining hall, especially the ones you’ve never spoken to. The baristas at Lanphy and the attractive upperclassman. We wouldn’t be here without them. So lean on them, lean on each other, because there is no other time in your life where you will be here with this exact group of people. Make the most of it.

Don’t wait for that next moment, that next day, next chance, because soon enough, there will be no next day. No more long dinners after practice. No more noise complaints for laughing in the library. No more dining hall classes, or spike ball tournaments. No more games, or the feeling of having a sleep-in. Sure, even no more time in the quiet section during term experience, or dare I say, School Meetings. No more Long Weekends to look forward to. No more summers knowing you will be coming back to Choate in the fall. Just like that, you’ll be walking across the stage at graduation wishing you spent your time at Choate living in the moment — enjoying each little moment.

As my older brother once told me, the days and weeks are long but the months and the years are terrifyingly fast.

So ground yourself, love yourself, your friends, your teachers, this community, because as everyone says, Choate is a special place and your time here will go by so much faster than you think it will.

Thank you.”

Cassatt Boatwright

“If you were to ask Choate students what their least favorite building is on campus, what would they say? ‘Oh, Cassatt, everyone has a different opinion! There is no right answer.’ WRONG. It is indisputably Ruutz-Rees. Although I do appreciate its Pathways barbecues and Lunar Banquets, that brown-auburn colored building at the top left corner of campus is practically only known for tiring treks to IT and AP tests.

Now, to the underclassmen who don’t know, I arrived at Choate during the pandemic. One of the many changes to accommodate for social distancing was makeshift dining halls across campus. You could eat in the PMAC gallery surrounded by art or in the tuck shop with your friends. Or, like I was assigned every Tuesday night, you could eat in Ruutz-Rees.

As a scared freshman who got lost even going back to her dorm at night, this was the worst thing that had ever happened to me. I could not imagine being stranded in the most obscure building at Choate, at night, at a school I was new to and without anyone around. That is when I met Lauren Hsu.

Lauren Hsu was the only other freshman girl assigned to Ruutz Rees on Tuesdays nights. We did not know each other, but her roommate happened to be one of my friends and she connected us. Through the power of Instagram messages, I sent my opening line.

“Ello. Want to get dinner together tonight?” And the tradition of Tuesday dinners began.

Born out of necessity and continued out of a genuine friendship, Lauren and I have had dinner together every Tuesday night since freshman fall. When she was home in Hong Kong, we would FaceTime while I ate my dinner and she ate her breakfast. If swim practice went late on Tuesdays, we would reschedule to Wednesday or Thursday. When both of us only had 10 minutes before our next commitments, we would eat in five. Ask anyone who knows us and they’ll tell you: there is nothing that could get between Lauren’s and my Tuesday dinners.

I never told Lauren this, but those Tuesday dinners got me through some of the most intense moments of my life. She auditioned with me for my first play when I was too scared to go alone. She stuck by me through my struggles with friends and crummy break ups. She supported me while dealing with my father’s incarceration. I knew no matter what happened, I would always have Tuesday dinners with Lauren.

See, it is not just a silly tradition. It is one of the most amazing things I have had the pleasure of experiencing at Choate. Lauren Hsu and I likely would not have befriended or even met each other if it had not been for that Ruutz-Rees assignment, but she is now one

of my closest friends. In the hustle and bustle of Choate life with its myriad of activities, assignments, and social obligations, it is easy to lose sight of the positives. But in the regularity of shared moments, in the reliability of a friend’s presence and SAGE dining, I found a light. Having someone who sticks by you through thick and thin is invaluable.

Everyone has their own Tuesday dinners. It might be meals with a friend like mine, but it could be a person, a passion, or a place. Maybe it’s daily meditation in your room with your roommate, walks on the cross country trail with your best friend, or even just a set time every week to just sit and relax. These anchors keep us grounded and provide a light when the world around us is constantly in flux. For me, my anchor showed me how an irritating trek up to Ruutz-Rees can become the favorite part of my week. As we all continue pushing through the motions of Choate, whether it be for our first or final year, I wanted to remind everyone to cherish the small moments, the stability in your life, and a nice meal with a friend. My tradition with Lauren is one of the reasons that in the bittersweet goodbye to this ‘school upon the hillside’ I will always remember how lucky I am to have spent four amazing years here.

Thank you so much for listening, and Lauren, I’ll see you tonight for dinner.”



Photo courtesy of Cassatt Boatwright '24

RACQUEL WELCOME



Photo courtesy of Racquel Welcome '24

“When I first got here, I thought four years was going to feel like eternity, but next thing I knew, it was my junior year, and my sister was going to school with me as a freshman.

When my sister tells the story about applying to Choate, she’ll probably lie to you and tell you that I didn’t want her to come here, and sure, maybe that’s because I said it to her face and behind her back a couple of times, but that doesn’t exactly make it true.

If I’m being honest, my sister has a way of holding me accountable that is extremely intimidating and awe-inspiring. Whether she knows it or not, whenever I know

we will be in the same place, either school or camp, I immediately try to act in a way that would make her proud. She’s annoying in the way that I can’t help but want to make the world a better place for her.

A better student.

A better athlete.

A better person, all because I can’t shake the feeling that she just might embody everything that is good and perfect about my family. Lame, I know.

To most people, it’s probably confusing why I wouldn’t want to be around someone who inspires me to be the best version of myself, and the truth is, my sophomore year sucked. I could tell you

the reasons, but then we would be here for a while. Just ask my sophomore year adviser to shout out to Ms. Ellis. But I was at a point in my Choate career where I was perfectly content letting things happen to me.

As toxic and useless as this mindset was, I was comfortable with it, because why should I take control of something that doesn’t even feel mine? Why should I take responsibility for something out of my grasp? I knew that my sister’s coming to Choate meant I would have to take control of my last two years here.

Despite my many protests and multiple attempts to bribe the Ad-

mission department, my sister was accepted into the Class of 2026.

So my junior fall is characterized by my existential crisis regarding how, for two years, I thought it was cooler to let myself be miserable and complain than to take actionable steps to take advantage of my time and opportunities.

In my sister’s never-ending wisdom, such as how ugly outfits are, why my ears are her personal fidget toy, and the fact that my closet is her closet, she also taught me that misery and boredom are comfortable while joy and fulfillment take work.

Quick side note: I’m guessing that it’s becoming clear that my motivation for this speech was to sing my sister’s praises in front of the entire school, but I promise I have a broader message, so just bear with me.

The best thing about having a sucky sophomore year — maybe the only good thing about it — is what you’re able to learn from it, which is really true about anything awful that happens to anyone. My sophomore year provided me with an ample list of what not to do.

Don’t skip classes you’re already doing poorly in.

Don’t only start your work at 12 a.m.

Don’t spend all your money at Tuck.

Needless to say, my sophomore year changed me for the better.

During junior year, I was more motivated, more dedicated, and more appreciative of the opportunities and people around me.

I fortified the bonds I had already established and reignited some distant ones.

I created new ones, ones with people I can barely believe have only been in my life for less than two years, when it feels like I have known them forever. Something I never would’ve been able to do without my sister’s influence, along with the fact that I realized that even though I had been here longer, she already had double the number of friends I did.

For the first time in a while, I was going out of my way to take control of my life. I was excited about my classes again, I was hanging out with friends more, I was the life of the party on the bench for Girls’ Varsity Volleyball. My sister turned me into the leader and mentor adults in my life knew I could be. She helped me realize what I wanted to leave behind at Choate, what I wanted my legacy to be.

I knew all too well how easy it is to feel like a face in the crowd at a school like this, so when thinking about my legacy, I regressed back to the mantra my preschool teacher had about clean-up time, which was “*leave things better than you found them.*”

The things I care about most from this school, like being a Nichols prefect or being president of Choate for Women, are all because of this mindset and therefore all because of my sister.

In honor of “*leave things better than you found them,*” here’s my advice for all of you: you will get upset, you will get frustrated, and you will be bored — these are just facts. What’s not a fact is how often you have to feel these things and your ability to do something about them.

As easy as it is to let yourself feel miserable, it is also a waste of your time and there is nothing worse than being a senior and feeling like you have wasted your time. So yes, while it can be frustrating and draining to take control of your life and your time, it is effort well spent considering the alternative. Passivity is easy, but it is not worth the regret you will eventually feel. So please, please, please don’t let yourself be passive and let things happen to you rather than making things happen for you.

To my juniors, my sophomores, and especially my freshmen, I hope I made this place a little better for you, that I’m leaving it better than I found it. And to my sister, I love you, sorry for not always answering your texts, and please, please, please keep the visits to a minimum.

Thank you.”

SENIOR SURVEY

RESTAURANT YOU WILL MISS THE MOST

1st Place: *Za-Onn Thai House*

2nd Place: *Mr. D's*

3rd Place: *Half Moon Coffee & Grille Cafe*

COULD BE SIBLINGS

1st Place: *Jacqueline Yan and Junho Lee*

2nd Place: *Sophie Sharko and William Colasanto*

3rd Place: *James Frushone and Em DeGrand*

SAGE MEAL YOU WILL MISS THE MOST

1st Place: *Cornbread, Brisket, and Mac and Cheese*

2nd Place: *Breakfast for Dinner*

3rd Place: *Gyros*

BEST SENIOR-TEACHER DUO

1st Place: *Elia Ahmadi and Mr. Ned Gallagher*

2nd Place: *Gavin Boudreau and Mr. Gene Wie*

3rd Place: *Lily Hrazdira and Mr. Jonas Akins*



MOST LIKELY TO BECOME A CHOATE TEACHER

1st Place: *Carter Foster*

2nd Place: *Aidan Geaney*

3rd Place: *John Reach*



BEST LAST HURRAH PROPOSAL

1st Place: *Toffy Prakittiphoom and Helena Burger*

2nd Place: *Danny Yoon and Kaya Tray*

3rd Place: *Lauren Kee and Junho Lee*



MOST LIKELY TO WIN A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

1st Place: *Isabella Wu*

2nd Place: *Amanda Benneh*

3rd Place: *Ava McClatchie*

Note: Results were sourced from 144 anonymous responses on a survey sent to the Class of 2024.

24 Tips from the Class of 2024

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>“Smile.”
-Kelvin Liu</p> | <p>“Sign up for football.”
-Aidan Skelly</p> | <p>“Choate is only as fun as you make it.”
-Brecken Cullinan</p> |
| <p>“Go to the KEC!”
-James Bae</p> | <p>“Reconnect with nature.”
-Shawn Yang</p> | <p>“Separate work space from rest space.”
-Nick Aldrich</p> |
| <p>“Be organized.”
-Constanza Aportela</p> | <p>“Put your phone away when doing homework.”
-Christian Madon</p> | <p>“Act like a senior even if you’re not — be bold!”
-Dena Chawaldit</p> |
| <p>“Take Choate one step at a time.”
-Luciano Morizio</p> | <p>“Enjoy every last moment.”
-Cathy Liu</p> | <p>“It’s just not that serious.”
-Leyee Dai</p> |
| <p>“Go to breakfast.”
-Max Zhu</p> | <p>“Take a class you never thought you would take.”
-Grace Walters</p> | <p>“Day students: stay on campus as late as you can.”
-Tav Assaf</p> |
| <p>“Don’t be afraid to try new things.”
-Wyatt Morgan</p> | <p>“Go to bed early.”
-Tess Taetle</p> | <p>“Your homework can wait. Go to every event.”
-Cassatt Boatwright</p> |
| <p>“Don’t be afraid of being on JV.”
-Lahee Lee</p> | <p>“Don’t do things solely to get into college.”
-Junho Lee</p> | <p>“Go to extra help.”
-James Chen</p> |
| <p>“Protect your peace.”
-Tatum Kent</p> | <p>“Always bring lip gloss !!”
-Jacqueline Yan</p> | <p>“Write for <i>The Choate News</i>.”
-Lauren Kee</p> |

FAVORITES OF THE YEAR

SCHOOL DANCE OF THE YEAR



Photo courtesy of Sophia Liao '25

CHOATE PET(S) OF THE YEAR



LANPHIER DRINK OF THE YEAR

Chai 



OREO FRAPPE

Iced Vanilla Latte 

Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

TUCK SHOP SNACK OF THE YEAR

Curly Fries



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

SAGE MEAL OF THE YEAR

Grilled Cheese & TOMATO SOUP

Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

LOCAL RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR



Photos by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

CLUB EVENT OF THE YEAR



Photo courtesy of Emily Ma '25

Lunar Banquet

ELECTIVE OF THE YEAR



Photo by Finn Wikstrom '26/The Choate News



Photo courtesy of Emily Ma '25

Note: Results were sourced from 134 responses on a survey sent to the student body.

YEAR IN PHOTOS



FROM THE EDITORS

As Choate students, we are often caught up in the chaos of our own lives — the 10-page history paper we procrastinated on and now have to finish before our next class, rushing to make practice on time so we don't get our sixth "late," or the fast-approaching deadline to submit a Directed Study proposal. We hurry from point A to point B, driven by purpose with each step; there's so much to do, so many places to be, and we (very reasonably) decide to dedicate most of our time, energy, and thoughts into what we consider to be the "big" things going on. These "big" things — looming projects, school dances, or what have you — are what we define as the Choate experience, and although that isn't necessarily a wrong assessment, we tend to overlook the little interactions and people behind the scenes that actively make our lives here better. In our roles as journalists, we are perhaps the most guilty of this. We always want to find the next headline, stay attuned to the happenings of both Choate and the wider world, and ask ourselves what is "important" enough to write an article about. And yet, as the year's end approaches, we find ourselves asking: what are we missing? How do we fill in the gaps within this incomplete narrative of Choate?

Has a stranger ever held the door open for you on your way into Steele Hall? Has a friend amongst the crowds between classes ever smiled at you on the path between Humanities and Lanphier? How many dogs have you seen prancing alongside their caregivers outside on your way to your afternoon activity? As important as the "big" things are, it is these small gestures and ordinary occurrences in between our busy schedules that sprinkle small bursts of joy into our days at Choate, and we want to take this opportunity to pay homage to those that have enlivened our Choate experiences.

1. The heroes who walk their dogs during passing times

Whether they know it or not, every time a faculty member steps outside with their dog, they instantly brighten students' days. We are both lucky enough to live on Memorial Circle, an area of campus home to many adorable Choate pets. On our walks back to our dorms to change before sports and rehearsals, we are sometimes lucky enough to have a dog run up to us, dragging their owner by the leash. Despite the excessive slobber that gets all over our freshly laundered clothes, we can't help but laugh as we play with the pup. In these moments, the weight of all our homework and other stressors disappear, even if only briefly. No matter how tired we may be, the moments of joy with a dog that is simply just happy to be there never fail to make us feel a little bit of love. Special shoutouts to Brick and Callahan (Dr. Hodge's dogs), and Lennon (Aliya's dog), and thank you to all the dog caretakers who choose to walk their dogs during passing time.

2. The heroes who keep us smiling

So many people contribute to making our days at Choate run smoothly and seamless. The SAGE staff, who always greet us warmly at the Crossroads counter and go the extra step to make sure they are building our omelets or burrito bowls to perfection. Whenever we thank a SAGE cook for our food and they respond, "of course, enjoy," we walk back to our tables with grins plastered across our faces. Plus, who doesn't love hearing Antonio sing in the dining hall or talking football with Derek at the tuck shop? The friendly faces of the ABM staff, who we see bright and early on our daily 7 a.m. trudge to the bathroom, rubbing sleep from our eyes. They hold the door for us on our way in and greet us with a warm smile and "good morning." Often, this simple interaction is what keeps us from marching back in bed and snoozing through first period.

The Community Safety officers who stoically hold up the stop signs and hit the "yellow lights are flashing" button at the crosswalks during passing times, keeping us safe from speeding vehicles. When we yell a "thank you" over the din of chattering voices, they dip their heads in noble acknowledgement and offer us a "no problem, have a great day."

There is something so lovely about these light-hearted interactions with near-strangers. Their kindness and dedication add a special warmth to our daily routine, sending us to our tables, bathrooms, and classes in a slightly better mood.

3. The heroes who hold open doors and smile at passersby


We both recall numerous times when, running late to class with an armful of books and scrambling to find our Choate ID in our pockets, a benevolent stranger saves us the trouble and graciously opens the door for us. Or, those moments when we happen to be alone on a path and pass by someone who acknowledges us with a smile and nod. It's these small, unexpected moments of kindness that make our days just a little bit better. At a school and in a world that often feels rushed and impersonal, strangers who hold the door for one another or smile at each other on the paths create moments of human connection that contribute to our sense of community.

Our responsibility as journalists is to tell the full story; we would not be telling the full story of Choate if we didn't also consider the in-betweens, the casual interactions and moments that fill in the gaps of our time here. So, a huge thank you from the bottom of our hearts to every dog walker, everyone who has ever held the door for us, everyone who has waved or smiled at us on the paths, and every SAGE worker, ABM worker, and Community Safety officer who has shown us care and kindness. You make Choate, Choate.

With love,
Fiona and Amelia

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Fiona S. Fu '25
Editor-in-Chief

Amelia J. Sipkin '25
Managing Editor

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