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Crafty Corner Creates *Kind Krafts*

By Alyssa Wiboon

“In a world where we see and hear so many acts of cruelty, we believe kindness should be our default for every interaction. When we practice kindness, we make a positive impact and live our call to show love, concern, and mutual respect,” states Mrs. Cindy Wray, Library Department Coordinator. Kindness is a core Fruit of the Spirit celebrated at Lake Highland. Students and faculty exude acts of kindness every day on campus in many different ways, and part of that is taking time out of our busy schedules to be kind to ourselves. Most notably, the Upper School’s *Kind Family Library* has become a crafty corner on the first floor of the *Porter Family Center for Innovation and Academics* for Highlanders to come together and step away from schoolwork to relax and have fun.

From day one, the *Kind Family Library* has always been the place on campus where all students feel welcome, not just for studying, but also as a fun and safe environment to engage with friends and meet new people. Decked out for each holiday and special occasion, the *Kind Family Library* is an inviting and collectively popular spot. Mrs. Wray explains, “We are always looking for ways to engage students in community and student life. This school year, I came up with the idea of having a ‘Kind Kraft’ each month where students, faculty, and staff could gather to do something creative. I teamed up with Ms. Aman-

da Flader, the ‘Creativity Queen,’ to offer crafts related to themes.” *Kind Krafts* is open to everyone, with all supplies included in each event. Although many students may feel concerned that they are not artistic or creative enough, *Kind Krafts* provides the opportunity to create crafts that are suitable for both the most artistic and least artistic people.

This new addition to Lake Highland this school year has resulted in many benefits for both students and faculty. Arts and crafts are clinically proven to be therapeutic and stress relieving for most people, even if they aren’t creative. Ms. Amanda Flader, Upper School Counselor, says, “Mrs. Wray and I know how busy and hardworking all of the Lake Highland students are, and *Kind Krafts* is our way of encouraging students to stop for a moment, take a breather, and enjoy life a little, even if it is only for a lunch period.” Taking a break from a hectic school day is healthy for everyone, and a worthwhile practice. *Kind Krafts* allow Highlanders to effectively handle their workload and balance school life with social and personal time. Additionally, *Kind Krafts* has proven to be an activity that is void of any judgement or labels. Ms. Flader



(Above) Ms. Angie Wohltman, Wellness and Yoga Teacher, and Rachel McKenzie, grade 9, enjoy making “Worry Dolls.” Photo courtesy of Mrs. Cindy Wray.

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Embodying MLK's Spirit

By Savannah Fondo

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the extraordinary and self-made entrepreneur Mr. Derreck Kayongo inspired Lake Highland Preparatory’s Upper School students and faculty members with his survival story as a Ugandan refugee. He shared his successes in entrepreneurship and humanitarianism during a weekly unity meeting. Kayongo encourages people to dream big and do incredible things, even if goals seem impossible. Mr. Kayongo emphasized this through his memorable acronym: S.E.L.F., which stands for Service, Education, Leadership, and Faith. These principles got him to where he is today and were also heavily believed by Martin Luther King Jr. himself. These principles are reflected in not only his civil rights advocacy and speeches, but also in his life, to which Derreck Kayongo shared during his assembly appearance.

As Derreck Kayongo walked onto the stage with his contagious smile and confident, bubbly personality, no one would ever have expected the hardships he struggled with as a Ugandan refugee. When Kayongo was just 10 years old, he watched as a firing squad

mercilessly killed civilians right in front of him in his home village. Eventually, Mr. Kayongo and his family fled Uganda, due to the violence of the Civil War that was occurring, and became refugees. Life as a refugee was a challenge for Mr. Kayongo and his family, but it gave him the desire to help others from a young age. In the late 1990s, Mr. Kayongo and his family were able to move from the refugee camp in Uganda to the United States, where Mr. Kayongo went to college at Clark Atlanta University.



(Above) For Martin Luther King Day this year, Lake Highland Preparatory’s Upper School had the honor of hearing Mr. Derreck Kayongo speak during the routine Unity meeting. Students such as myself and others had the opportunity to speak to him one-on-one and ask him questions about his inspiring speech. Photo by Savannah Fondo.

After settling in the United States, Mr. Kayongo began working in the hospitality industry. One night when Mr. Kayongo was staying at a hotel, he had a simple observation. Mr. Kayongo walked into the bathroom and noticed there were three different types of soap: hand soap, face soap, and body soap. This was odd to him because where he grew up, he was used to one soap for everything, not separate soaps with different functions. He began stealing the soap and watched as it was replaced for multiple days. Finally, he took all the soap

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W.H.O. Leaves Future Uncertain

By Alyssa Wiboon

After being a founding member of the *World Health Organization* for nearly 80 years, the United States officially withdrew on January 20, 2025. President Donald Trump signed many executive orders on day one of his second term, with one of them signaling that America will no longer be an active member out of the 194 countries in the organization. With the rising Trump administration issuing many changes in the U.S. very quickly, the decision to pull out of the *W.H.O.* will have major impacts, resulting in national debate with citizens concerned for the nation's future.

The *World Health Organization* is a global partnership with the *United Nations* established in 1948. This agency coordinates to act on international health issues and helps countries around the world respond to public health emergencies. It plays an important role in protecting the health and security of its members by addressing the causes of disease, building stronger health systems, and responding to health emergencies. The United States has been actively a part of the *W.H.O.* throughout its history, providing support, insights, and regulations. America was one of the highest funders of the organization, contributing millions of dollars annually. However, with our nation's withdrawal, funding has come to a halt, which may restrict lifesaving healthcare for those who need it, especially in developing countries that aren't financially in the position to act alone.

Countries are not allowed to withdraw from the *World Health Organization* until a full year after an official notice. However, during President Trump's first administration, the U.S. stopped funding and began to back out of the organization after the *W.H.O.* alerted the world in January 2020 of the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic through a public health emergency to which the U.S. did not respond. This does not require congressional approval. In 2020, Trump also consistently accused the *W.H.O.* of aiding China in allegedly covering up the origins of COVID-19 and allowing for its spread. According to whitehouse.gov, "The United States noticed its withdrawal from the *World Health Organization* in 2020 due to the organization's mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic that arose out of Wuhan, China, and other global health crises, its failure to adopt urgently needed reforms, and its inability to demonstrate independence from the inappropriate political influence of *W.H.O.* member states. In addition, the *W.H.O.* continues to demand unfairly onerous payments from the United States, far out of proportion with other countries' assessed payments. China, with a population of 1.4 billion, has 300% of the population of the United States, yet contributes nearly 90% less to the *W.H.O.*"

Trump's threats to withdraw from the *W.H.O.* were later reversed by the Biden Administration when Former President Joe Biden was inaugurated in 2021.

He restored U.S. membership and payments following Trump's anti-*W.H.O.* views in his first administration. In 2023, America gave the *W.H.O.* \$481 million.

Since then, the *W.H.O.* has made changes via bureaucratic processes that need input from its member states. According to cbsnews.com, "In 2024, the organization passed several amendments to its regulations

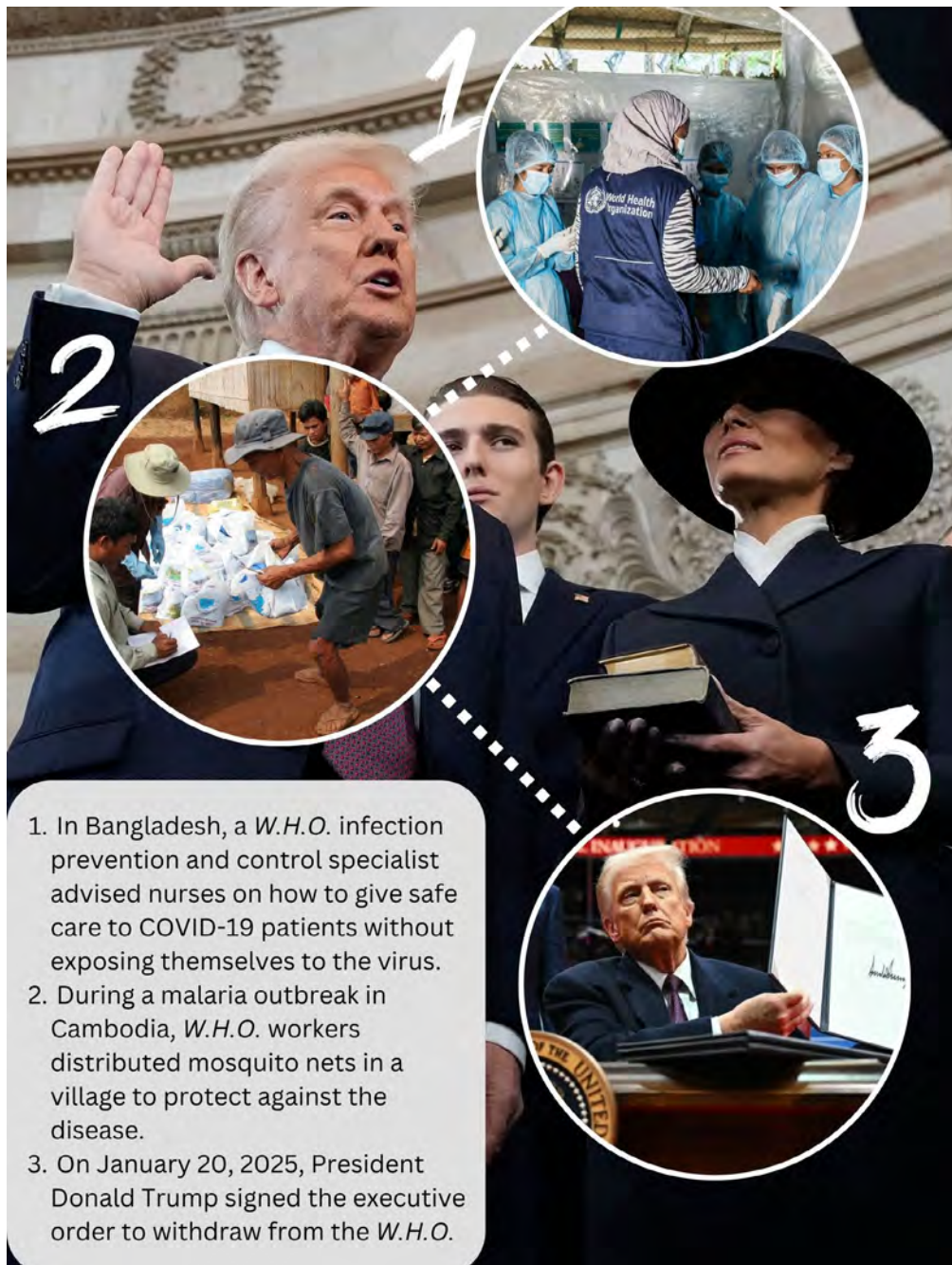
die from flu infections." America would no longer have sufficient updates on the health information that provides the status on lingering infectious diseases, which could leave the American people more vulnerable to global health threats. More losses include the scientific collaborations that take place at about 70 centers in the United States that the

W.H.O. hosts. This includes colleges such as Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University. Through these networks, scientists share findings and come to conclusions.

Implications go beyond just the health of the people. The U.S. would lose its dominant position as a leader in worldwide health policy. Dr. Jha continues to state, "W.H.O. is a pretty essential organization—and with America's withdrawal, it creates a political vacuum that only one country can fill—and that is China." China will likely step up for the organization in the absence of U.S. funding and leadership, which could allow China more political influence around the world. As a member, America created valuable ties with countries across the globe. The U.S. can certainly do a lot on its own, but it can't do it all.

But what about the rest of the world? According to Dr. Tom Frieden, former Director of the *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, "Without U.S. membership, the *W.H.O.* would lose its close ties to the *C.D.C.*, which is regarded as one of the world's leading public-health agencies." Scientists from the *C.D.C.* form important connections between other nations and the United States, leading to the trade of ideas on new threats and policies that prevent diseases. The *W.H.O.* relies heavily on U.S. staff and expertise, particularly in tracking global influenza, so responding to such threats will be a challenge. The organization will also have to seek funding from other countries, with China being first in line. This leaves not only Americans scared for the future, but also those from countries around the world.

According to a statement by the *World Health Organization*, "[It] regrets the announcement that the United States of America intends to withdraw from the organization. We hope the United States will reconsider, and we look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue to maintain the partnership between the U.S.A. and *W.H.O.*, for the benefit of the health and well-being of millions of people around the globe." As the United States takes a back seat from the *World Health Organization*, money that was intended to fund the agency can now flow into other purposes, such as military and infrastructure. However, the health of the American people is now vulnerable. With many other laws set in place by the Trump Administration that deal with D.E.I., the *Paris Climate Agreement*, and immigration, the future of America is unclear, and we must prepare for whatever comes our way.



1. In Bangladesh, a *W.H.O.* infection prevention and control specialist advised nurses on how to give safe care to COVID-19 patients without exposing themselves to the virus.
2. During a malaria outbreak in Cambodia, *W.H.O.* workers distributed mosquito nets in a village to protect against the disease.
3. On January 20, 2025, President Donald Trump signed the executive order to withdraw from the *W.H.O.*

(Above) President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance were officially sworn in as the 47th President and 50th Vice President of the United States on January 20, 2025. Katie Mathews, grade 11 and Founder of *Nerd Nite Next Gen*, states, "With the rise of the new Bird Flu, we don't have the research and vaccine access necessary to combat this disease. The decline of our shared resources with other countries might put us behind and isolate the U.S., leading to scary outcomes." Graphic by Alyssa Wiboon.

on health emergencies. These include provisions on transparent reporting and coordinated financing. The *W.H.O.* has overseen negotiation processes to update an existing agreement known as the *International Health Regulations*, and to establish a potential new, "Pandemic Agreement. In May 2024, member states approved a set of revisions to the *International Health Regulations* but decided to extend the negotiation timeline for a pandemic agreement into 2025." Despite these efforts, President Trump has officially decided during his inauguration that the U.S. will no longer be participating in the *W.H.O.* and their pandemic agreement negotiations.

Now, what does this look like for the future of the United States? Dr. Ashish Jha, former White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator, explains, "The most immediate domestic consequence may be that if the U.S. is not privy to the *W.H.O.*'s database of changing influenza strains, more Americans could be hospitalized and



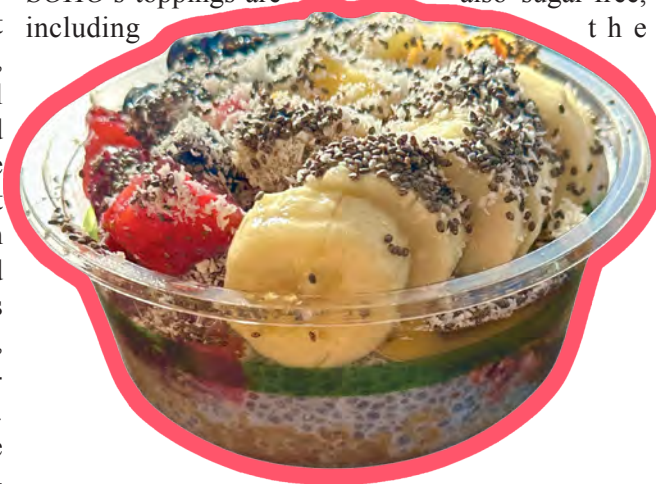
SOHO Debunks Health Myths

By Yara Koteish

Açaí bowls are seen as healthy food when, in actuality, the average açaí bowl contains approximately 600-1000 calories, depending on the size of the treat. This is due to the excessive amount of toppings that people put on top of their açaí bowls, such as Nutella, granola, chocolate chips, and peanut butter, which all have high contents of sugar. *SOHO Juice Co.*, located in Winter Park, is a vegan açaí restaurant and one of the few places that make açaí bowls in a way that doesn't contain high amounts of sugar and has many health benefits. *SOHO*, founded by Justin Basil, opened for business in 2014 and has won numerous awards including the Best of the Bay award in 2016, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. *SOHO* also has two other locations in Florida including Tampa and St. Petersburg.

All of *SOHO's* ingredients and toppings are natural and organic. They even have superfood mix-ins that can be added to açaí bowls and smoothies like sea moss, spirulina, blue algae, aloe vera, collagen booster, probiotic yogurt, and activated charcoal. These superfoods each have numerous health

benefits that range from immunity boosting, inflammation, heart health, skin health, and detox. All of *SOHO's* toppings are also sugar-free, including



(Above) *SOHO* doesn't just serve açaí as a base for their bowls. They also have *Cloud 9*, Coconut probiotic yogurt, blue chia pudding, tropical pitaya, and everyday overnight oats. This allows the customer to mix and match bases to create their favorite combination. Most of these bases are also sugar free.

(Below) The fresh pressed juices and smoothies are a great on-the-go option to have something that is both tasty and healthy at the same time. Instead of adding sugar, they offer natural sweeteners like honey, dates, coconut milk, and fruit. All photos by Yara Koteish.

chocolate and granola. Additionally, *SOHO* sells protein-packed and KETO-friendly snacks.

SOHO's mission is to make their açaí as healthy as it is thought to be by being, "A vegan friendly and allergen focused marketplace serving plant based products made with wholesome ingredients. [O]ffering plant based smoothies, superfood açaí bowls, cold pressed juices and other grab and go items that are vegan and gluten free" According to *SOHO's* website. They also bring awareness to how, "Not all açaí bowls are created equal." They state how other açaí brands started to capitalize on açaí's growing popularity, disregarding what açaí is ment to be: a healthy fruit. *SOHO* also states the different ways these big brands and corporations capitalize on açaí's growth including making it in a powder form, making açaí ice cream, açaí sorbet, and low-grade açaí pulp. With the restaurant striving to be healthy and appetizing simultaneously, *SOHO* is the perfect place to go when searching for an açaí bowl that won't jeopardize your health.



(Above) Instead of ordering up front with a cashier, *SOHO* has the option to order on a screen which allows customers to see the prices of each ingredient and topping. This also helps people who prefer to see photos of each item they are selecting in advance.



(Above) *SOHO* recently renovated and remodeled their store in Winter Park. The kitchen space was extended and blocked off by a wall which took space away from the seating areas. They also re-painted removed their wooden-board design they originally had.



(Below) By filling their store with positive messages that encourage a healthy lifestyle, *SOHO* lets their customers know about the kind of food they offer.



(Left) The snacks like the donuts and cookie dough bites *SOHO* sells may look like desserts, but are actually protein packed, vegan, and plant based.

(Right) *SOHO's* new seating area is more vibrant and tropical than their old design which now matches the vibe of their colorful açaí bowls.





Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler

By Mary Collins

Universal Studios brings back its annual Mardi Gras event once again, celebrating their 30th annual celebration. With tasty foods, live dancers and singers, and massive parade floats, Orlando indulges in a cultural carnival for all to dance, eat, and have fun. Activities such as attempting to collect as many beads as possible, inviting famous singers and bands to perform, and even being able to sit at the top of some of these floats while enjoying a full three-course meal. Park tickets are \$153, which allows guests to enjoy the Mardi Gras festivities while indulging in the thrilling rides they have to



(Above) Colorfully dressed dancers and entertainers, often with traditional New Orleans Mardi Gras costumes, fill the streets, engage with the crowd, encouraging guests to clap, dance, and celebrate with them.

offer. This fun and colorful event brings the spirit of New Orleans to the parks with its festive energy.

One of the park's greatest demands is catering to "foodies." Sometimes, enthusiasts buy tickets to these events just to try what they have to offer. Every year, *Universal Studios* mixes up its menu, bringing fresh, fun flavors for all to enjoy. The chefs try to include a variety of foods so even those with allergies or personal food preferences can indulge in these tasty treats. This year, while walking around the park, kiosks can be found with specialty snacks from around the world. From France to India and Colombia, a wide variety of dishes are included to make sure everyone gets a taste of different cultures they have not experienced before. As for the traditional Cajun New Orleans food, there is a Baked Cajun Mac & Cheese, a Bayou Pecan Milkshake, and Chicken and Sausage Gumbo at Bites of the Bayou. This booth provides the most food, as it represents the true carnival lifestyle of Mardi Gras. There are also multiple other booths from around the world that include a new vegan potato dosa from India, Leb-

erkäse from Germany, a Trapizzini from the Italian booth, duck a l'orange crepe from France, and hot maple lacquered salmon at the Alaskan booth.

Another attraction that brings tourists here is the concerts that are included with the tickets. On the weekends during the months of February and March, celebrities perform in front of the Rip Ride RockEt to entertain with a set list curated for their fans. In the past, a wide variety of artists attended, such as Pitbull, Flo Rida, Sabrina Carpenter, Karol G, Jason Derulo, and Marshmallow. This year, fans rush to buy tickets to see former boy band member Joe Jonas perform on February 8. With certain bands, singers, or performers, *Universal Studios* is flooded with guests and is packed to a capacity of 10,000 guests. This past February 1, 2025, artist T-Pain's show reached max capacity and left fans with an extraordinary performance.

What really does bring this whole experience together is the parade itself. The parade features massive floats that roll down the streets of *Universal Studios* with bright and exciting colors, costumes, dancers, and performers. Guests on sidewalks can catch these beads that are tossed at them and either keep them or try to hang them on the famous bead tree before heading to the parking lot. For an extra fee, guests are allowed to ride on the floats and are driven around while throwing these beads to those below, adding to their collection.

Along with the extra bonuses the park offers, *Universal Studios* usually extends their park hours to allow guests to have more time to enjoy everything this carnival has to offer. For a more exclusive experience, people can book a VIP Tour Package during Mardi Gras, giving visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the park, along with some added perks. The VIP experience often includes front-of-the-line access to rides, shows, and attractions, meaning guests can spend more time enjoying the Mardi Gras festivities rather than waiting in line. A VIP guide will walk patrons through the event and help parkgoers navigate the best parts of Mardi Gras and the park, ensuring that no one misses out on the highlights. Ticket holders also receive special seating for the Mardi Gras parade, ensuring an unbeatable view. Last but most defi-



(Above) The history of Mardi Gras goes way back and is a completely different experience when understanding why it came to be. Mardi Gras, which means "Fat Tuesday" in French, has roots that go back to ancient times. It started as a way to celebrate before the season of Lent, which means they fast. People would eat fatty foods on the day before Lent to use them up before the fasting began. It was brought to America by French settlers, and overtime became a big festival. Today, Mardi Gras is known for its grand celebrations, especially in New Orleans, and is a huge event before Lent begins.

ninitely not least, some VIP experiences may include a gourmet meal at one of *Universal Studios*' fine dining locations or food tastings with a Mardi Gras twist.

Universal Studios' Mardi Gras event in Orlando, Florida offers an exciting celebration that perfectly blends the vibrant traditions of New Orleans with the unique flair of *Universal's* theme park. With this being the 30th annual celebration, it's clear that the event has evolved into a major draw for both tourists and locals, offering a display of activities, experiences, and entertainment. From the lively parade with its stunning floats and bead-throwing fun to the delicious food offerings from around the world, guests are treated to an unforgettable cultural carnival. The addition of live concerts featuring big-name artists and the opportunity for VIP experiences elevates the event to another level, making sure visitors of all tastes and preferences have something to look forward to. Whether you're a food enthusiast eager to try innovative dishes, a fan of live music excited to see your favorite artists, or simply someone who wants to experience the magic of Mardi Gras in a fun atmosphere, *Universal Studios* provides the perfect setting for a memorable celebration. The Mardi Gras event not only highlights the spirit of the holiday but also reinforces *Universal Studios*' commitment to creating magical, diverse experiences that cater to everyone, making it a must to visit for anyone seeking fun, food, and festivity in Orlando.



(Above) Thousands of guests were denied at entry due to the overflowing amount of people trying to see T-Pain perform his iconic set list. On this set, he included songs such as "Good Life," "Buy U a Drank (Shawty Snappin')," "I'm Sprung," "Bartender," "Hey Baby (Drop It to the Floor)," "Low," and "All I Do Is Win." All photos courtesy of Josh Greenstein, grade 12.

R E V I E W S

Former *Eurovision* Star Rises to Fame

By Hiba Bilal

When it comes to modern pop songs with a catchy beat, there is a wide variety for every subgenre, with some of the most popular including “Can’t Stop the Feeling” by Justin Timberlake and “Levitating” by Dua Lipa. But recently, Freya Skye’s new song, “Can’t Fake It,” has been grabbing everyone’s attention on social media, from *Spotify* to *TikTok*. This song has several energetic beats, along with Skye’s powerful vocals. Her performance and lyrics go through many complex emotional themes, including confusion and frustration, which makes it more relatable for her fans who may be going through the same struggles. Freya Skye’s songs stand out from many other mod-



(Above) Freya Skye has been growing in popularity all over social media with thousands of followers. According to favikon.com, “Freya has cultivated a vibrant presence on social media. Across *TikTok*, *Instagram*, and *YouTube*, she shares not only her musical performances but also snapshots of her daily life, her creative process, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of her projects.” Social media is where she can connect with all of her fans around the world. It is also where people can show her support for her songs and other projects. All photos courtesy of *MOXIE*. All graphics courtesy of *Canva*.

ern pop songs because they provide an important message for people who cannot let go of their pasts.

As an English actress, singer, and dancer, Freya Skye’s popularity has been skyrocketing recently on various social media platforms. She has been receiving recognition for her incredible and versatile voice and intriguing music videos. She has released many captivating songs, but also she will be making her first acting debut in *Disney’s Zombies 4: Dawn of the Vampires*. Due to all her success recently, she has been a role model for many younger singers and actresses around the world. Her dedication to her career and her talents have been the reason why she is rising and becoming a star. Many are excited to see her progress and her amazing projects in the future of the entertainment industry.

Freya Skye has had a passion for singing and acting since she was five years old, according to junioreurovision.tv. As the COVID-19 lockdown occurred, “The singer-songwriter took the opportunity to release her debut single and write more songs, including ‘Love the Way,’ which featured on *BBC Introducing*.” The debut of this song showed the audience her commitment and creativity to her art form. The recognition of her earlier songs also pro-

vided her the path to grow her career and explore more opportunities in the industry such as acting and dancing. Later on, Freya became a contestant in the *Junior Eurovision Song Contest* in December of 2022, according to *MOXIE*. At the contest, she sang her song “Lose My Head,” and many viewers were quick to recognize her incredible talents. Many of her fans have been adoring her due to her connection with her fans at a more emotional level, unlike other young pop artists. She not only has an incredible voice but also has an amazing presence on stage.

When it comes to “Can’t Fake It,” the main message behind the song discusses a battle with her emotions and trying to move on from a relationship. The lyrics are very personal, and it shows all of the mixed emotions that come along with the complexity of break-ups. The theme of the song is very relatable because many people have struggled with letting go or moving on from the past. Some of these lyrics include, “I can’t stop myself from looking at that old picture” or, “Can’t let you go, and it’s so frustrating.” This shows how genuine she is because she is



(Above) Many of Freya Skye’s songs have been hits so far. According to alisaltrojantribune.com, these songs include “Who Says,” “Walk Over,” “Someone to Love,” and “Winter Dream.” It also states that out of all of these songs, “Winter Dream” has grown the most attraction as it is, “A festive song perfect for the holiday season.” Her songs have unique tunes and many themes, from intense and emotional to festive and happy.

showing how she is not perfect and that she has gone through many of the struggles that many teenagers and young adults go through. What’s very interesting about this song is that it does not have melancholic instrumentals as one would assume, but has more of a catchy and energetic ambience to it. This makes the song more empowering and the message stronger.

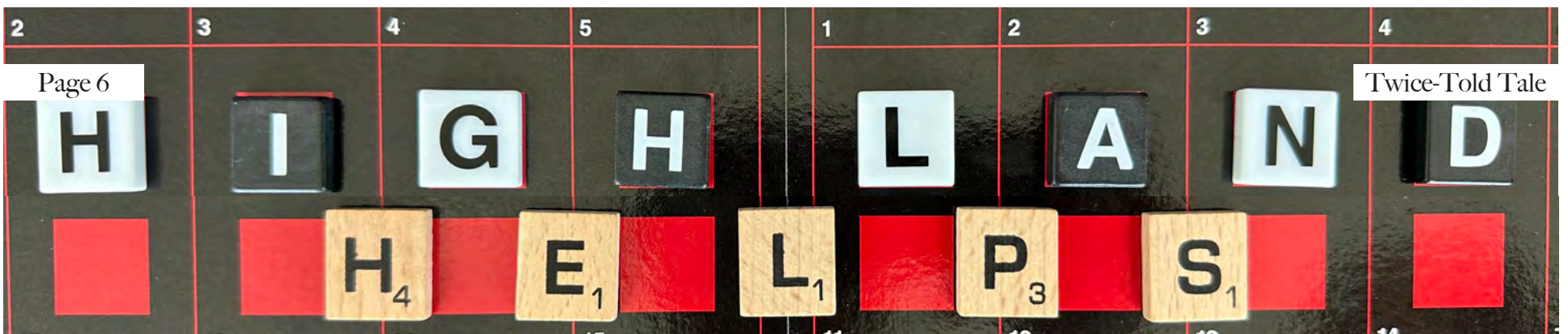
Freya Skye is ready to excite her fans with more of her projects in the future. “Can’t Fake It” is just the beginning of her journey as an artist, and she is eager to write more songs for her fans. As we look ahead, her future in the entertainment industry is very promising, as she is willing to use all of her talents for incredible projects in acting, singing, and dancing. Many people believe that she will leave a legacy behind as a 15-year-old artist in the singing and acting industry. If someone would like to come and support her, they can come and buy tickets to her *Descendants/Zombies: Worlds Collide Tour*, all of the information is on her website, freyaskye.com. Let’s all show this aspiring artist some love and encouragement as she continues to charm everyone with her music.



(Above) There are many fun facts about Freya Skye that not many people would know. In October, *PopFiltr* decided to do rapid-fire questions with Freya Skye, where her fans got to know more about her. When asked about her favorite song, she said, “Gracie Abrams’ whole album *The Secret of Us*, but specifically ‘Blowing Smoke.’” Another question that was asked was what color suited her personality the best, and she replied with, “Depends what mood I’m in, but I think all-around...maybe a lightish blue.” These fun facts help fans understand what Freya is like and how she is inspired every day as an artist.



(Above) Freya Skye is on set for her music video, “Can’t Fake It.” According to vipertimes.com, it states that the music video, “Takes place in a regular office with cubicles, papers, copier machines, etc. Skye, along with her background dancers, all dressed in work attire, are shown doing synchronized dancing and Skye singing as multiple settings in the office rotate throughout the video.” This could show the message of struggling to let go, and the office setting shows how she, in a way, is trapped as life keeps moving forward.



Backpacks Pack a Fresh Start

By Zane Rimes

Human trafficking, “Is the unlawful act of transporting or coercing people to benefit from their work or service, typically in the form of forced labor or sexual exploitation” according to the *Oxford* definition. In the state of Florida, there have been over 7,472 cases of human trafficking documented that have led to 17,467 victims being identified in these cases since 2007, according to the *National Human Trafficking Hotline*. Every year, human trafficking is an issue that plagues the world. Evan Patel, grade 12, has been hosting a backpack drive event dedicated towards the elimination of human trafficking since his Freshman year. By making backpacks to give to victims, he creates the opportunity to provide men, women, and children affected by human trafficking with a second chance at life—a fresh start.

United Abolitionists, founded by Tomas Lares in 2004, is the group Evan partners. When asked about his connection to the group, Evan stated, “I met Tomas at a dinner, and as he shared his program, I wanted to get involved. It started with my family. Then my sister ran a backpack drive at her school, and I wanted to do the same at my school and speak up for those who don’t have a voice.”

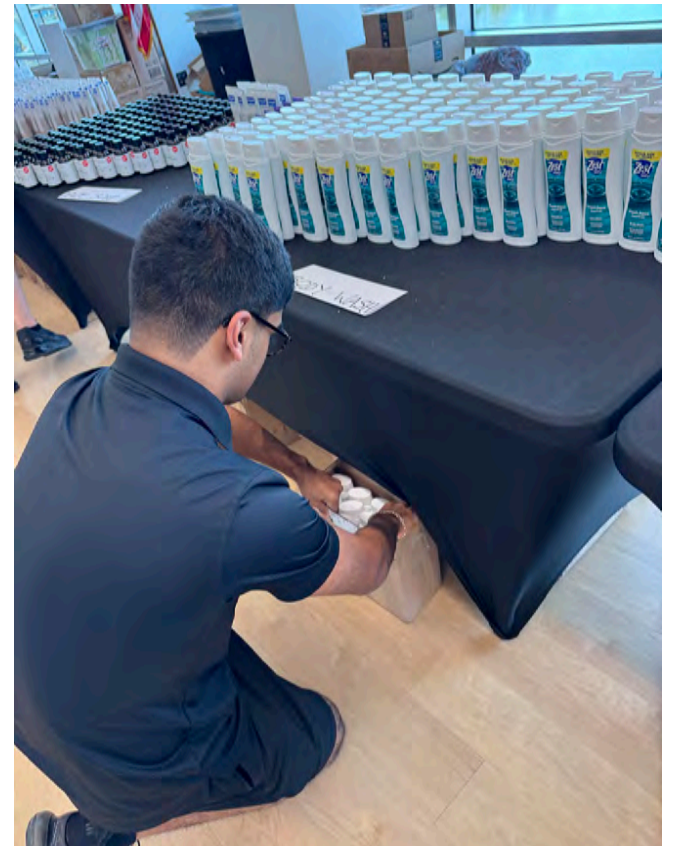
The event has been a great way to gather students from school, along with gaining involvement from teachers, administration, family members of Evan, and *United Abolitionists*. Evan explained the benefits of the drive to the community, saying, “We provide backpacks with clothes and supplies for children when they are first rescued by law enforcement from traffickers. We pack pants, shirts, underwear, bras, flip-flops, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, face wash, hairbrush, hair ties, sanitary feminine products, deodorant, and a *Squishmallow*.” Over the four years of this event, volunteers have helped fill 25 bags in the first year, 100 in the second

year, 300 in the third year, and 320 in the fourth year, which was held on January 29, 2025.

When Highlanders come to help with the backpack drive, they are first divided into groups to either bag backpacks or bag hygiene items. With so many volunteers each year, the pace of the event goes by very quickly. Evan states that the most fun part of the backpack drive is, “Trying to see if the student or the teachers are quicker in assembling a backpack” and, “Watching students compete to see who had the most backpacks filled.” Volunteers enjoy making the event fun and competitive while also giving back to those in need. Leaving a lasting impact on the outside community, while also building the Lake Highland community within, is a central pillar of the school’s mission.

The community benefits immensely from this backpack drive, as it allows the trafficking victims to start a new life. In deeper detail, Evan explained, “When Orlando detectives first find trafficked children, they can give these children a backpack with a set of supplies from which they can start their new life. It is meant to help these children know that they will be cared for and decreases the chance they will relapse into being trafficked again.” Overall, the dedication to this drive is extraordinary, and a lot of time and effort is put into it. It takes around two to three months to set up the drive, not including the fundraising. This extensive planning shows how much thought and effort is put into this event as a whole.

Being able to help with this drive is a really fun way to give back to the community and those in need. The impact that it has on the *United Abolitionists* and the families that they support is tremendous. Attend-



(Above) The whole drive had numerous amounts of different shampoos, conditioners, and various amounts of cleaning supplies in stock for the victims to use. Students would form a conga-line and walk through the tables to fill up Ziploc bags with hygienic products. Trevin Curry-Davis, grade 12, stated “It’s one of the best events I’ve been to at Lake Highland. The bonds you build here are great and it’s very rewarding to help others who have been trafficked.” Photo by Zane Rimes.

ee Jack Sly, grade 12, stated, “It was a great experience. It was a great and fun way to help others. Evan did a fantastic job and did a great thing for the community.” Overall this whole event served as a great way to connect with and learn more about *United Abolitionists* for future volunteer work and projects.



(Above) The people who showed up for Evan’s special event in the Starling Gallery ranged from 7th graders to Seniors. Evan kicked off the event by thanking those who showed up and demonstrated the ways to pack the bags. Overall everyone who attended was very enthusiastic and very willing to lend a hand for the greater good. People enjoyed both the adrenaline of filling up a bag perfectly but also having playful banter about whose backpack looked better. This event in Evan’s eyes was very fun, and he hoped that the students involved had as much fun as he had. Photo by Zane Rimes.

(Right) This event filled over 300 bags. There was a large amount of support from students and teachers. Layouts for the tables were divided into sections. One side was dedicated to the different sizes of clothing, ranging from small to double extra large sizes, while the other side was all specifically hygiene-related products. Down the middle were the last of the hygiene and clothing items with things like toothbrushes, deodorant, and hair brushes to various types of different hair ties. All of these items were very crucial to the process. Graphic courtesy of Canva. Photo by Mrs. Sejal Patel.



(Right) Once people had their bags filled they would take them to a bag checking station, with the help of teachers like Mr. Joseph Sharkey and Mrs. Amanda Flader, to determine the sizing of the clothes. Clothing items extended from shirts, sweatpants, flip flops, to many other kinds of clothes. Evan stated, “The event itself was both a huge success and a blast. I enjoyed watching both my fellow teachers and friends compete with each other to see who could fill the most bags out of everyone.” Evan, getting into specific detail, mentioned, “Most of the articles of clothing and hygiene products were purchased from Dollar Tree. This was the best place to buy the items and make sure that I had enough.” Photo by Zane Rimes.





Unraveling Curly Hair Stigmas

By Tessa Guerra

The popularity of natural curls has risen in recent years as they become increasingly celebrated and showcased in the media. Spikes in “curly hair influencers,” advocates of confidence in naturalness, and general information being taught about patterned hair, all contribute to the widespread pride that curly heads have recently felt who didn’t before. But why now?

The exact percentage of those with textured hair is debated, as many people, especially women, are unaware of their natural hair pattern because they don’t know how to care for it. This leads them to treat their hair as straight and end up with hair that dries frizzy and poofy, which is blow-dried or straightened. The reason so many people’s natural hair texture goes unacknowledged

harder to control than straight hair, it pushes the stigma that curly-headed people don’t care as much about their appearance and that their hair is “messy.” People with curly hair are often told to “tame” their curls or to straighten them to appear polished, while those who style their hair naturally may be perceived as neglecting grooming. Maintaining curly hair usually requires careful handling, moisturizing, styling products, and styling tools more than straight hair, and individuals who embrace their curls often engage in extensive self-care routines to keep their hair healthy and well-styled. A third, more nuanced stigma about curly hair is that it’s “unusual,” a term used to describe curly hair in a way that diminishes its cultural and personal significance. This stems from the portrayal of curly hair as something strange or belonging to ethnic groups, especially Africans and Latin Americans. While it may appear complimentary, labeling curly hair as “unusual” actually objectifies curly hair. It also perpetuates the idea that curly hair is outside of mainstream beauty standards, reinforcing the idea that it’s foreign or “other.” This can result in those with curly hair feeling that their natural appearance is only valued for its novelty rather than its inherent beauty.

The best thing to do to battle these curly hair stigmas is for those with curly hair to rock it. If you aren’t sure if you have curly hair, pay attention to how it dries. Is it frizzy or poofy? Do some pieces of hair curl up while others look wavy? Does hair frizz out rather than stay close to your scalp when styled in a ponytail? If you said yes to any of these, it’s worth trying some techniques to style your natural curls.

It’s called a “Curly Hair Journey” for a reason. From finding the right products to tools, styling methods, and more, learning to care for curls takes patience and time. The two most basic products most curly-haired people use are a curl cream to encourage the curl, then a curl gel to support its hold. Curly heads also often use leave-in conditioners for hydration. Popular styling methods include brush styling, finger coiling, and the bowl method, which is where you flip your head upside down and dunk it into a bowl of water, then rake your products through and dip again before scrunching. Important tips curly heads would recommend to prevent frizz and make curl definition last longer are to make sure the hair is soaking wet when styling (using a spray bottle tends to be helpful in this process), use a microfiber towel to dry hair, and sleep on a silk or satin pillowcase. The growing visibility of curly hair in fashion, entertainment, and beauty standards is helping to shift perceptions, showing that there is no “right” way to look. The “Natural

Hair Movement,” in particular, emphasizes self-acceptance and pride in one’s hair texture. Still, the stigma can persist in certain spaces, but the trend toward embracing diversity and breaking down outdated beauty standards is gaining ground. We can participate in this trend by committing to embracing our natural texture and being unapologetic about it.



(Above) Curl creams are used to provide curls with definition while still maintaining your hair’s natural pattern. It can be applied by raking it in your wet hair using your fingers, or applying with a hairbrush that has both plastic and boar’s hair bristles. Different ingredients like avocado oil, shea butter, or rosemary oil can be used in different products. Therefore it’s helpful to experiment and find what works for your hair. All photos by Tessa Guerra.



(Above) The type of hair you have is important for knowing what products and techniques would and would not work for you. On a 1A to 4C scale, Tessa Guerra, grade 12, has type 2B hair, meaning her hair’s pattern is on the looser side. She also has high prosperity hair, meaning her hair absorbs water, products, and oils much easier and faster than low prosperity hair, which does the opposite.



(Above) Sometimes the amount of products available for curly hair can seem overwhelming and impossible. There is a variety of masks, oils, mousse, gels, creams, leave-ins, brushes and much, much more. The best thing to do is experiment. Tik Tok is a great resource to learn and do research on how to care for your curls.

or uncared for is because of stigmas that curly hair is “unprofessional,” “unkempt,” and “exotic.” One of the most common stereotypes we hear about curly hair is that it’s unprofessional. This stereotype stems from historical standards of beauty and professionalism that Eurocentric norms have shaped. Straight hair is often associated with European-descended ideals and is considered the standard “neatness.” Because curly hair has volume and texture, it is sometimes seen as unorderedly or messy compared to straight hair. This belief is present in work and academic spaces as workers or students are asked and expected to wear straight hair. This encourages the harmful idea that natural curls are inherently wild or less professional. The next stereotype is that curly hair is unkempt or messy. Because of the assumption that curly hair is



(Above) Elena Cardona, grade 11, has type 3C hair and has a two-hour long curly hair routine that she does every Sunday. She detangles, shampoos, and leaves in conditioner to prep her hair for brush styling. She then diffuses for 30 minutes.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Epcot Blooms into Spring

By Savannah Fondono and Yara Koteish

Walt Disney World's International Flower and Garden Festival hosted at Epcot is Orlando's annual transition into the Spring season. The International Flower and Garden Festival has been a tradition at Epcot since 1994 and lasts from March 5 through June 2 and uses this time to embrace the blooming season by adding beautiful plants and flowers around Epcot. The festival takes visitors around the world through 11 countries and immerses them in the culture, food, and traditions of each nation. This year's Garden Rocks Concert Series consists of performances by Tommy DeCarlo, former lead singer of Boston, on March 7 and 8, Air Supply on March 9 and 10, Blue October on March 14 and 15, Rick

Springfield on March 16 and 17, Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone on March 21 and 22, 38 Special on March 23 and 24, and Jason Scheff, longtime singer of Chicago, on March 28 and 29. Since Epcot is known for its signature food set-ups around the countries, they enhance these carts for the Spring season. Disney also highlights the importance of nature and animals during the blooming season, because animals such as butterflies are needed to pollinate plants. Butterflies are represented by the butterfly enclosure tent they have where visitors can walk through and not only see hundreds of butterflies but also get to learn about how they make Spring the season of blooming through their pollination.



(Above) Walt Disney World's Epcot has a diverse selection of country pavilions to capture the around-the-world effect. The China pavillion is one of the two Asian countries that are a part of the park's pavillions: The China pavillion highlights nature during the International Flower and Garden Festival with attractions such as this pond that has lily pads, tadpoles, topiaries, and gardens. All photos by Savannah Fondono.



(Left) In the British-themed pavillion during the International Flower and Garden Festival, they add decorations that relate to British culture and British-themed Disney movies. One of Disney's most popular British characters is Winnie-the-Pooh, which has been a staple character since his creation in 1926 and appears in dozens of books and films.

(Right) As guests walk into Disney's Epcot park, the first thing they see when entering the park during the International Flower and Garden Festival is large, gorgeous pink flowers and beds of smaller, colorful flowers underneath. To announce the flower garden festival as people enter the park, they use a sign that resembles a post marker that would be used to hold the names of seeds, flowers, plants, and vegetables.



(Right) Disney's Epcot is known for its yummy food booths that pop up throughout the park and change depending on which country guests are in or what is going on in the park. For the festival, there have been new pop-up food places that are exclusive to the event, and one of them is called, "The Honey Bee-stro" and includes foods with honey in them, hence the name of the food pop-up. The theme is bees because they are essential to harvesting.



Epcot Blooms into Spring, Continued on Page 9...

SPECIAL

FEATURE

Epcot Blooms Into Spring

By Savannah Fondo and Yara Koteish

...Epcot Blooms Into Spring, Continued From Page 8.



(Above) Walt Disney World's Horticultural Team makes dozens of topiaries exclusively for the International Flower and Garden Festival each Spring. The topiaries are shaped and colored to look identical to iconic Disney characters. As guests walk through the park they can see these topiaries such as these sculptures of Bambi and Thumper, which are characters from the beloved *Bambi* movie. All photos by Savannah Fondo.

(Right) Located in Disney World's Epcot is a variety of countries including Japan. Japan offered a unique spin on the festival by adding plants such as the bonsai tree that are common in Japanese culture. One of the bonsai trees that Epcot put on display inside of the Japanese pavilion is the *Ulmus parvifolia*, better known as the Chinese Elm, which is a Hollow Trunk Style bonsai that is 35 years old. This specific tree has been a, "Tree in training" for 20 years, which means that the owner of this tree, Joshua Brown, pruned this tree with a technique to form a shape.



(Above) In Epcot the British-themed pavilion which represents England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, is one of the pavilions that has the most character out of all of the wide variety of countries. One of the most popular shops in the British-themed pavilion is *The Tea Caddy* which features *Twinings Tea* and has any type of tea imaginable. To represent the shop, during the International Flower and Garden Festival there is an *English Tea Garden* that has plants that correspond with a *Twinings Tea* available for purchase. This photo shows the Lemon and Lemon Grass that correspond, with the Lemon and Ginger Tea available in *The Tea Caddy*. Graphic courtesy of Canva.



(Above) Located in World Nature is the annual *Butterfly Landing* enclosure which is exclusive to the International Flower and Garden Festival. The *Butterfly Landing* is a walk-through butterfly enclosure where guests can see hundreds of butterflies of a wide variety of species up close. As guests walk around the enclosure looking at the beautiful butterflies and flowers, there are signs that educate guests on facts about butterflies and their part in Spring blossoming. Not only do guests get to see butterflies, but they also get to see chrysalises where butterflies will develop until they hatch and dry off their wings before taking off.



(Above) With the blooming of the International Flower and Garden Festival is the blossoming of new festival-themed merchandise. All across Epcot there are tents set up with merchandise for the festival including shirts, hats, Mickey Mouse ears, cups, pins, and other items that will attract adults and children. This merchandise tent carries collectibles featuring *Disney's Orange Bird* character, that debuted in 1971 as a mascot for the *Florida Citrus Commission*. Not only can guests purchase merch for themselves, but they can also purchase items for their homes such as chia plants shaped like *Disney* characters.





Mr. Thomas Transforms LHP Sports

By Hayden Roberts

As the athletic programs expand at Lake Highland Preparatory School, the school has also taken on new staff. LHP Athletic Director, Ms. Charmaine Schreiber, and Associate Director of Athletics, Mr. Michael Greci, added a new Associate Director of Athletics to the team: Mr. Brian Thomas. Mr. Thomas brings experience from the collegiate level of athletics, but how does Mr. Thomas plan to help strengthen Lake Highland's athletic program? How does he plan to promote more student involvement?

Growing up, Mr. Thomas loved sports and believes they helped shape his character today. Mr. Thomas explains, "I have been involved in sports since I was six years old, and they have shaped me into the person I am today. Athletics taught me how to lead, handle adversity, and stay disciplined. The lessons I've learned through sports laid the foundation for my life, which is why I'm so passionate about my role now. Having the opportunity to give back, share my experiences, and help student-athletes grow is what makes this job so rewarding." Mr. Thomas continued his love for sports into college, studying Higher Education Leadership and earning his, "M.Ed. in Higher Education Leadership from Florida Atlantic University, and completing [his] undergraduate degree at the University of Florida."

After college and earning his M.Ed., Mr. Thomas immediately began working with colleges, helping universities for over eight years, working with different universities as the Director of Operations. He worked with Power Five Division One programs



(Above) Mr. and Mrs. Thomas love to travel especially over the holidays and school breaks. Last year for Christmas the couple took a trip to New York City, where they stayed at the *Plaza Hotel*, recreating the iconic *Home Alone 2* Christmas without the chaos. Although Mr. and Mrs. Thomas are from Neptune Beach, they also love to spend time up north in the snow on Christmas vacation.

like Florida Atlantic University, the University of Mississippi, and Jacksonville University. Mr. Thomas states, "Most recently, I was with the Jacksonville University Baseball Team. Prior to that, I spent four years in Oxford, Mississippi, working with the Ole Miss Softball Team, as well as time with the baseball program at Florida Atlantic University." As a former athlete, Mr. Thomas chose to work with Lake Highland sports, "Because of the impact I can have on each



(Above) Mr. and Mrs. Thomas have adopted Ollie into the family. Ollie has become one of their favorite travel buddies, taking him on most family vacations, especially at the beach. Ollie loves to spend time with his family and loves to play on the sandy shores of Neptune Beach. All photos courtesy of Mr. Brian Thomas.

program I support. High school sports play a crucial role in the development of student-athletes, both on and off the field, and I want to be part of that journey."

With the new athletic facility's fundraising almost complete, construction will start soon. However, this will not be Mr. Thomas's first time working with the construction of a new facility. During his time at Ole Miss, Mr. Thomas, "Was part of the planning, design, and construction process for the new \$30 million softball stadium, which is set to open in a few weeks." Mr. Thomas is just as excited about the new athletic facility and looks forward to its opening. He says that he hopes, "To bring my experience from that project to the development of the Orlando Health Jewett Orthopedic Institute Athletic Center here at Lake Highland."

While the new athletic facility will be Mr. Thomas's first big project with the school, he hopes to be a key part of every program's success. He states, "My goal is to serve each program, coach, and athlete as if they are the only program on campus. Every sport is unique and deserves a tailored approach to ensure its success. Additionally, I want to contribute to the development of student-athletes beyond their sport—helping them grow mentally, spiritually, and emotionally to become well-rounded individuals." Not only does Mr. Thomas work directly with the school's athletic program, but he looks to help the campus anywhere he can, reflecting on what it truly means to be a Highlander. He explains, "I plan to be actively involved by stepping in wherever I'm needed. One of the most valuable lessons I've learned from the head coaches I've worked with is that no job is too small. Whether it's grabbing a rake, setting up the gym, or painting lines on the field, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to support our coaches and make their jobs easier."

Since he started, Mr. Thomas has impacted the lives of many coaches and student-athletes. He explains, "Since joining Lake Highland, I've had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people and gain a deeper understanding of their roles in supporting our student-athletes. I've focused on

streamlining communication and information-sharing processes, making it easier for coaches to access what they need while ensuring student-athletes have the best possible experience. Additionally, I've also prioritized finding ways to support coaches with logistical needs so they can focus on coaching and developing their athletes. As I continue to grow in this role, I look forward to creating even more opportunities that elevate our programs and contribute to the overall success of Lake Highland athletics."

Mr. Thomas has also been able to watch the Winter and Spring sports in action, although, "I might have a slight bias toward baseball and softball since I've worked in those sports for so long, but I'm excited to branch out and experience new ones. Basketball and soccer have been a lot of fun to watch, and earlier this month, we hosted our annual wrestling duel. It was my first time watching the sport; it was an incredible experience!"

While Mr. Thomas has been able to watch our student-athletes and has been able to accomplish so much already, he has faced a few challenges. He says, "The biggest challenge I've encountered is familiarizing myself with all the sports on campus. In my previous roles, I was on the coaching staff, so transitioning to the administrative side of athletics has been an adjustment. Also, I keep getting stuck in the afternoon car pickup line—hopefully, I can figure out a more strategic way to avoid that!"

With Mr. Thomas's immediate success in Lake Highland's athletic program, while working



(Above) During their Christmas vacation, Mr. Thomas and his wife loved to try different types of restaurants, including the popular Italian restaurant *Emilio's Ballato*, opened in 1956. It has recently become one of the most popular restaurants in the city. It was voted one of the best Italian restaurants in New York City last year. With a cozy family feel of the restaurant, this was the perfect spot for their Christmas Eve vacation dinner.

with Ms. Schreiber and Mr. Greci, Lake Highland's athletic program will reach new levels of success starting with the construction of the new athletic training facility. Working closely with the coaches and student-athletes, Mr. Thomas is bringing his college experience and expertise to Lake Highland. With new projects the future is bright for Lake Highland's athletic program. LHP cannot wait for improved athletic facilities and stadiums!



Gen-Z Motivates *B&N* Expansion

By Emily Cypher

Six years ago, in 2019, *Barnes & Noble* was about to go bankrupt, and now it is once again a best-selling bookstore, all thanks to James Daunt. The hedge fund, *Elliott Management*, the parent to *Waterstones* bought *B&N* and appointed James Daunt as the CEO. Since then, Daunt has made major moves and changes concerning cheaper retail spaces, ending specific publisher deals, and allowing stores to make personalized displays that fit their communities. Recently, he made an addition to the list of changes: re-designing the entire layout and aesthetics of the store to fit the store’s audience. The primary target is Gen-Z.

Gen-Z has reinstated hope for the future of bookstores because of the surge in young readers, massively due to *BookTok*. In fact, “Almost two-thirds (59%) of 16 to 25-year-olds say that *Book-*

have missed us as much as we have them. This new, beautifully designed *Barnes & Noble* is a dramatic improvement on the old store.” This redesign he talked about is all in connection with the company’s choice to expand with 60 new stores. *B&N* has hope to achieve an aesthetic that includes an open, brighter layout that is geared towards their target audience.

This approach, however, does match the traditional branding background. Daunt commented on the new remodel, claiming, “Any design agency would have a heart attack if they could see what we’re doing.” He added, “We don’t have any architect doing our design at any stage. There’s no interior designer.” Even so, this new style has positively mixed with the customer base. It would start with positive reviews

such as when, Rida Kola, grade 11, praised it saying, “I really liked the design of the bookshelves in the store, especially compared to the old design of the *Barnes and Noble*.” The choice of this new design not only impacts the brand at a service level but also its identity. Daunt emphasized, “The identity [of the company] would have a complete crisis,” referring to all the different parts of the branding process. He realized that, “It’s breaking all the rules.” But even so, it must have been the right rules to break.

Getting rid of the old and bringing in the new, Daunt thinks, “We’re much better off with something that’s bright, that welcomes the world.” This follows the common theme Daunt is presenting, which is being in touch with customers. It’s necessary to not only understand what the customer wants, but also what is



(Above) One of the benefits of the new open layout of the *B&N* is the store’s opportunities to integrate multiple sections of products.



(Above) Part of Gen-Z’s influence on book culture is the modernized effect of sprayed edges on special edition copies of books. This generation’s take on an old tradition is just another way that young readers are making an impact. All photos by Emily Cypher.



(Above) Part of the luxury shopping aspect that *B&N* offers is the variety of products outside of books, such as stationary and journals.



(Above) The new location is now open, and as the store manager Joe Nimrod, emphasized, “I am incredibly excited to open a new *Barnes & Noble* in *Waterford Lakes*.”



(Above) The updated design aspects of the store’s layout add a welcoming and modernized feel throughout the store, even throughout the kid’s section.

Tok or book influencers have helped them discover a passion for reading,” according to the *Publishers Association*. *BookTok* reaches past the screen, pushing readers to go into stores so much so that the *Publishers Association* found that, “49% of respondents visit a physical bookshop to buy a book they have seen on *BookTok*.” Because of this, Daunt knew he needed to change the previous design that he described as, “Quite a masculine aesthetic.”

One of these new locations was opened this past November. *Barnes & Noble* opened that store in Orlando, Florida, inside the *Waterford Lakes Town Plaza*. The plaza previously had a *B&N*, but it was closed after its lease expired. Daunt explained, “Happily, we have secured a new storefront just a few doors away from our previous bookstore. We look forward to welcoming back our longtime customers who we hope



(Above) Part of Daunt’s newly implemented strategy is including a community aspect to each store. He explained, “We can’t wait to start up events again, including our very popular Storytimes and Book Clubs. The enthusiasm from the community has been palpable — customers have been over the moon to learn of our return!”

being sold. Janine Flanigan, a project manager working at the company since 1985, explained that, “You need to love books, and you need to know how our customers shop for books,” to be successful. Ultimately, that’s what *Barnes & Noble* does best. Daunt highlighted, “The enjoyment and the social experience of that engagement with books in a bookstore? That’s our game.”

The chain is continuing to grow and expand to fit their customers’ needs. The company’s hard work has done nothing if not paid off as, “*Barnes & Noble* had an annual growth rate of three percent in 2023,” according to *Zippia*’s latest report. If readers continue to enjoy the luxury book shopping experience that bookstores offer, *Barnes & Noble* will take pride in continuing to meet their needs. The future of reading rests in Gen-Z’s hands, and so far, it’s off to a great start.



Crafty Corner Creates *Kind Krafts*

By Alyssa Wiboon

...Crafty Corner Creates Kind Krafts, Continued From Page 1.

explains, “We have had the athletes, artists, ‘techie’ people, and students with all different interests participate in *Kind Krafts*. We have had students who claim, ‘I am not artistic at all,’ walk away feeling proud of what they just made. Who wouldn’t want that?”

With *Kind Krafts* occurring every month, Mrs. Wray and Ms. Flader like to add something new to the table in each activity. Every craft has a purpose and a theme, making each event unique and memorable in its own way. Mrs. Wray explains, “We like to think about how a craft could connect to a season, holiday, or nationally recognized month like *Women’s History Month*.” They also like to incorporate the Fruits of the Spirit into each event, whether that be through the craft-making itself or the environment of Highlanders coming together.



(Left) Ms. Katie Gallagher, Student Activities Coordinator and Head Volleyball Coach, creates mini calming jars with Allison Morales-Ramirez, grade 12, hoping to start the new year off right. All photos courtesy of Mrs. Cindy Wray.

(Below) Highlanders decorated mini pumpkins with Mrs. Allie Dunaway in November, using several elements, such as paint and mirrored tiles. Janiya Warrell’s, grade 11, finished pumpkin is a frosted pink donut with sprinkles.



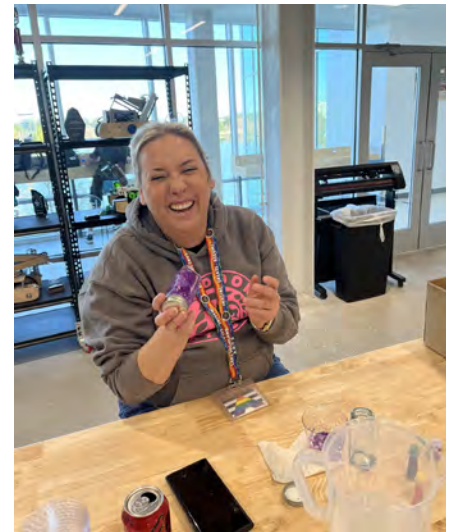
Kind Krafts has had many memorable moments in its first year at Lake Highland. As part of *Hispanic Heritage Month* in October, students and faculty created “Worry Dolls,” which are small dolls that originated from Guatemala designed for children to tell them their worries so that they can worry for them, according to an ancient legend. In November, Highlanders created fall mosaics and painted pumpkins with the help of Mrs. Allie Dunaway in correlation with the autumn season. Before Christmas Break in December, *Kind Krafts* hosted a beaded ornament-making event for students and faculty to put on their Christmas trees. After New Year’s Day in January, Highlanders created mini calming jars to start the year off right by focusing on mental health. February’s craft correlated with Book Week. In honor of the book *Breathe and Count Back from Ten* by Natalia Sylvester, *Kind Krafts* offered a seascape “Paint Along with Mrs. Dunaway.” With the planning

of March’s event still in the works, Mrs. Wray estimates that it will tie into *Women’s History Month*, which will no doubt be a fun time for all Highlanders.

Although Lake Highland’s Upper School includes over 90 student clubs, *Kind Krafts* has not yet collaborated with any of them because *Kind Krafts* is sponsored by the *Kind Family Library*. However, Mrs. Wray and Ms. Flader are willing to do so in the future. If any students have any ideas or requests for future projects, they are welcome to email Mrs. Wray or Ms. Flader to share those ideas.

Kindness is one of the most lifelong qualities a person can have. It’s important to remember to show kindness not only to others, but also to ourselves. *Kind Krafts* has made Lake Highland a happier and healthier community, and will certainly be around for years to come. Participating in *Kind Krafts* is one of the most effective ways to practice kindness, so be on the lookout for more upcoming craft events!

(Right) Ms. Amanda Flader, Upper School Counselor and Co-Founder of *Kind Krafts*, makes glitter calming jars too. They serve as a reminder of positive changes and relaxation, consisting of a mixture of oil, water, food dye, and added glitter.



Embodying MLK’s Spirit

By Savannah Fondo

...Embodying MLK’s Spirit, Continued From Page 1.

waste so much soap daily. Mr Kayongo explained that 2.6 million bars of soap are thrown out every single day by hotels in the U.S. alone. This caused Mr. Kayongo to think about how so many children die due to lack of hygiene, ultimately sparking the idea in his mind to figure out a way to repurpose soap for better use.

This prompted Mr. Kayongo to ask, “How do people recycle soap?” Cleaning the dirty soap makes it more expensive because of what is used to clean it. Mr. Kayongo saw a product being marketed that vacuum-sealed meat in a bag. He put soap in a similar vacuum-sealed bag for two weeks, and the germs ended up dying without altering the chemical components in the soap. Soon after, the *Global Soap Project* was born. Mr. Kayongo’s *Global Soap Project* would first go through the process of collecting discarded soap, recycling it, and then distributing it mostly to refugee camps and areas with poor sanitation. To help families for a whole year, Mr. Kayongo would give each family a box of 161 bars of soap.



(Above) Mr. Derreck Kayongo’s story from being a Ugandan refugee to founding the successful *Global Soap Project* is an example that anyone can do what they want to do if they really want it. All that dreams need to become a reality is a simple observation and a passion to impact the world. Mr. Kayongo presented inspiring slides in the HCCA during the Unity meeting. All photos by Savannah Fondo.

Mr. Kayongo shares his story because he wants it to be known by everyone that they can achieve their dreams and make an impact on the world. Mr. Kayongo moved to the United States after being a refugee and was able to help save lives throughout the world just through his simple observation of the mass soap waste. Mr. Kayongo encourages people to stay motivated by S.E.L.F. To serve others and the community is an amazing way to make a difference and get an idea out there that will make a lasting impact. Leading people through business ideas will help get them on board with the developing idea. Having faith

within is one of the most important steps because without motivation and determination, that dream cannot be possible. Mr. Kayongo advises those who are inspired but struggle to get started. He explained, “People always think they do not have the right resources because they have their imagination locked in a small box. There are resources all over the place. In school, teachers are a great resource because they know a lot, or in a university, the professors know a lot. Staying in touch with all the people that go to school with you is a great resource because one day you might need them. You would be surprised how many people are resources, such as your friends.”

By sharing his story, Mr. Kayongo hopes for everyone to use their imagination and believe in themselves to get places they only dreamed of. Martin Luther King Jr. heavily believed in equality, and the *Global Soap Project* unifies humans with a basic right: sanitation. As Martin Luther King says, “The time is always right to do what is right,” which correlates with Mr. Kayongo’s message of striving for people to start now on whatever ideas they have that could impact the world in a tremendous way.



Florida Dips Into Canes

By Emily Sacco

Raising Cane's has rapidly taken over the fast food industry in recent years. Their delicious fried chicken, one-of-a-kind *Cane's Sauce*, and upbeat atmosphere set a new standard for other fast food chains like *Chick-fil-A*. Although *Raising Cane's* has been popular since its opening, the company has grown nationwide in the last few years. A lot of their advertising caused a skyrocket in marketing, which can be accredited to social media platforms like *Instagram* and *Facebook*. However, one of the most influential advertising platforms is America's beloved *TikTok*. With over 283 million *TikToks* of their food, *Raising Cane's* receives a ton of recognition and fame from the app. It became very popular to film "mukbangs," which are videos of people eating and trying new foods. Many fans of *Raising Cane's* have filmed mukbangs eating *Raising Cane's* chicken tenders and their unique house sauce.

Todd Graves and Craig Silvey founded this chain back in 1996, and the restaurant has only been growing since. *Raising Cane's*'s first location was in front of Louisiana State University's school entrance. On August 28, 1996, the first ever *Raising Cane's* was opened and has since spread like wildfire across the nation. Today, Texas takes the lead with the most *Raising Cane's* locations with a total of 167 restaurants across the state. This exceeds the number of restaurants in every other state. Starting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, *Raising Cane's* has now made it across 41

The first *Raising Cane's* to open in Florida was in Homestead, Florida—a Miami suburb. The location officially opened on November 8, 2022, with hundreds of Floridians at the opening ceremony excited to celebrate the arrival of *Raising Cane's*. That morning, around 200 people were waiting outdoors when the restaurant was officially opened, and by the end of opening week, 38,000 people had made a trip down to *Raising Cane's* to get their first taste. In the last two and a half years, 16 more restaurants have been opened across the state. Currently, two more locations have been released as "Coming Soon" in Altamonte Springs and Lutz.

Raising Cane's differs from other fast food chains in many different ways. First, and most notably, is their extremely limited menu. Unlike most fast food restaurants, there are no burger, dessert, or breakfast options. Their only options contain their fried chicken, which is what ensures their focus remains on

a lot of fast-food restaurants. Each *Raising Cane's* has a row of disco balls as a signature decoration, which adds a lot to the atmosphere of the restaurant.

Raising Cane's has the best of both worlds: quality cuisine and a pleasant atmosphere. It is hard nowadays to find a fast food chain that offers both, if even



(Above) The atmosphere of *Raising Cane's* locations are unmatched compared to other fast food chains. The usage of vibrant, stark colors and graphic designs makes the interior not look drab and bland like some other fast food chains. It creates a welcoming environment that fosters a dine-in experience just as much as a drive-through experience. Today, it is common for most places to be more of a drive-through kind of restaurant due to the lack of atmospheric aesthetic and cost that dressier interiors require.

one. *Raising Cane's* puts a lot of thought and effort into surpassing customer satisfaction. Personally, I think that *Raising Cane's* is one of the best fast food restaurants I have ever been to. I would easily recommend it to anyone who wants something fast but delicious.



(Above) *Raising Cane's* food trays demonstrates their mastery and care towards the curb appeal of their food. The trays are always neatly organized and equally as delicious. (Left) is their *Box Combo* which comes with four crispy chicken tenders, a piece of Texas Toast, a cup of coleslaw, and a side of their famous *Cane's sauce*. It is also an option to replace the cup of coleslaw with a second piece of Texas Toast.

(Right) is their *"Three Finger Combo"* with three crispy tenders, a piece of Texas Toast, and a side of *Cane's sauce*. Their overall attention to food presentation is a huge factor that makes them stick out from other fast food chains. All photos by Emily Sacco.



(Above) *Raising Cane's* two new upcoming locations are in Altamonte Springs and Lutz. A huge bonus that *Raising Cane's* has against their competitors—such as *Chick-Fil-A*—is their wider range of operation hours. Most *Raising Cane's* close anywhere from 12:00A.M.–2:00A.M. For example, the one in Winter Park, Florida on Semoran Blvd. closes at 1:00A.M. on weekdays and 2:00A.M. on Fridays and Saturdays. This is a major increase for their growth and amount of income, as many fast food restaurants are closed earlier. For example, most *Chick-Fil-A*'s close around 10:00P.M. Not many other fast food places are open past 10:00P.M. besides some 24-hour chains such as *McDonald's*.

the quality of their food. By contrast, instead of serving these tenders with the typical side of just fries, they have put a creative twist. With every meal, customers have a choice between curly fries, Texas Toast, and coleslaw. In addition, customers are allowed to customize and ask for more or less of each side.

Of course, their sauce cannot be forgotten. Their *Caniac Sauce* is one of the most notable features of the restaurant. Recipes attempting to replicate the sauce have been put online. People get the sauce in bulk purely to save for later. It is a one-of-a-kind taste that has the perfect mixture of everything. Customers can even request an entire fountain cup size full of the *Cane's sauce*, which shows how crazy people are for it.

The atmosphere of the restaurant is also a huge plus. The vibrant colors and decorative art make the restaurant feel a lot more lively and upscale than



(Above) The *Box Combo* displays their special *Cane's sauce*. It is possible for people to order an entire fountain sized drink cup full of *Cane's sauce*. The craze over their sauce is one of the main attractions that makes *Raising Cane's* different from other fast food chains.

states in America with over 800 restaurants. In only the first half of 2024, *Raising Cane's* year-over-year revenue, which is how much revenue is increased or decreased in a year, increased by 33%. At the end of the year, *Raising Cane's* made nearly \$2.3 billion in sales.

FASHION

Fashion That Makes a Splash

By Hayden Roberts

As Spring Break approaches, the question on everyone's mind is, "What do I wear?" With new fashion trends and older classic styles, the ideas are infinite. What about a day at the pool or hanging out in the sun? With different location spots for all kinds of vacations, the options seem so hard to fit into one's suitcase. However, with tropical-themed outfits coming back into the spotlight, trends like blue and white button-up striped shirts, denim skirts, maxi and mini dresses, maxi skirts, and sunglasses, pairing these vacation staple pieces can make packing for your trip easy. With seasonal pieces, creating an outfit is as simple as mixing and matching different tops and bottoms together to create the perfect outfit for any occasion this Spring Break. Even with more seasonal items it still can seem almost impossible to come up with ideas for what to wear. Let our newspaper staff help you create combinations, and inspire you with different outfits for your vacations using our tips.



(Above) Mary Collins, grade 11, loves to spend time by the pool. She creates the perfect casual look with a nice flowing top and a light wash jean skirt, paired with a casual zip-up. Even though she is not dressed to jump on the diving board, she can watch all the action with her perfect pool shades without getting the sun directly into her eyes. Photo by Alyssa Wiboon.



(Above) Emily Sacco, grade 11, and Ashley Taddeo, grade 11, kick off Spring Break fashion from the starting block of the pool with matching outfits. The Hawaiian prints are reminiscent of vintage surf art and Hawaiian travel, bringing a nostalgic aesthetic to their outfits. Hawaiian patterns are inspired by plumeria, palm trees, and ocean life. Photo by Alyssa Wiboon.

With the perfect outfits for every occasion this Spring Break, where are people going to be spending their time? Alyssa Wiboon, grade 12, plans to visit New York City this Spring Break and can't wait to walk down the busy city streets with her mom and sister in their flowy dresses. Zane Rimes, grade 12, can't wait to take his tropical outfits down to the sunny beaches of Miami. With his outgoing outfits, Zane plans on spending time at the beach with family while exploring the city in style. Similar to Zane, Mary Collins, grade 11, also plans on spending her Spring Break in Miami walking down the streets in style. Emily Sacco and Ashley Taddeo, grade 11, plan on spending their Spring Break together in Sarasota with their matching outfits.



(Above) Zane Rimes, grade 12, shows off his wild flamingo shirt and matching shorts. Zane pairs his tropical-themed outfit with the Nike Dunk Low SE Los Angeles to create the perfect tropical look. Zane can easily go from poolside to dinner by swapping out his shorts for long pants. Photo by Alyssa Wiboon.



(Above) Alyssa Wiboon, grade 12, lounges with her tropical maxi dress and Adidas Campus shoes. With dreamy waters the shade of sea glass and aquamarine, Alyssa's Marshall's find proves that great fashion does not need to come with a hefty price tag. Photo by Ms. Ginger Bryant.



(Above) Savannah Fondo, grade 11, enjoys tropical outfits for Spring Break. She paired her white flowy maxi dress and her white and blue striped button-up shirt to get ready for a full day in the sun, with staple pieces she can put together. Savannah's outfit is perfect for any fun-in-the-sun activity like picnics, going on a boat with family and friends, going to lunch or dinner, shopping, or walking through the city. Photo by Hayden Roberts.



(Above) Tessa Guerra, grade 12, proves that you can pack lightly and still look fashionable. Tessa picked out this dress from a local beach shop in Daytona, showing that you do not need to pack your entire wardrobe for vacation. Treasures can be found locally in small shops allowing vacationers to bring back a whole case of treasures. Her white dress is the perfect choice to showcase her fresh tan from time in the sun. Photo by Hayden Roberts.

S P O R T S

Lacrosse Embodies Warrior Mentalities

By Ashley Taddeo

Lacrosse has become one of the most popular sports in America today; yet most people don't actually know the true meaning or background behind it. When hearing the word "lacrosse," most people solely think of the modern-day high school sport, and it never crosses their mind to ponder its history. Being one of the oldest sports, its history is rich and meaningful to how the game is played today. Honor, determination, and pride are three words Native American tribes prioritized when playing the game, and it has subtly been carried into this new generation of lacrosse players. The Lake Highland Varsity Boys' Lacrosse team is starting their season strong with each game and practice, and instilling these warrior-like traits.

Lacrosse has been played by millions, dating back to the 17th century when Southeastern tribes like the Cherokee, Haudenosaunee, and the Iroquois first created it. The game used to be called, "The Medicine Game" because it was used to solve wars between tribes," states the midfield varsity player John Miller, grade 11. With this in mind, he and many other Lake Highland lacrosse players like to, "Think about how they settled wars with the sport and played with a lot of grit and energy." Lacrosse was played by many Southeastern tribes that played the game with much higher stakes, contradictory to today. At the beginning of its creation, lacrosse was a resolver of conflicts, and the winner of the game would essentially win the war. Obviously, in today's society,



(Above) Varsity player Camden Richards, grade 12, takes a knee near the goal line during a game. As the Highlanders prepare to play, they keep in mind their main objectives of the season: beating Bishop Moore High School and Winter Park High School. The team encourages everyone to come support the players at their first home game on February 25. Photo courtesy of Reily Green, grade 11.

the game is played more with a recreational appeal, but the players still use this determination, deriving back to the game's beginnings, to win their games.

As the 2024-2025 Spring lacrosse season starts, LHP lacrosse players prepare to represent both their school and the tradition of lacrosse itself. Player John Miller, grade 11, emphasizes this, saying, "I like to honor my family when playing, I take pride while I play for the school I represent." Back in the 1200s, many young Native American men used to play lacrosse to toughen them up in preparation for war and any other battles they may encoun-

ter. Since lacrosse is considered a very high-contact sport, the rules have been changed over time to reflect today's safety standards. Now, multiple layers of padding are required, and certain moves are considered "illegal" as they may be used intentionally to harm opponents. However, this is not the case for the Haudenosaunee and the Iroquois tribes. To this day, its people still play with no padding, and those aged 7 to 80 will all play together in the same match.

This fast-paced and constantly-moving game has created a major name for itself, as its popularity



(Above) Varsity player Griffin Shapiro, grade 11, walks onto the field preparing to push for the win. Griffin says he plays with honor because, "Everytime [he] puts on [his] jersey, [he] has to be ready to play and win as many games as possible." Photo courtesy of Reily Green, grade 11.

has increased more than 60% since the late 1980s. It is most predominantly played on the East Coast of the U.S. but has begun gaining popularity in the Midwest and the South. Compared to hundreds of years ago, lacrosse may seem to have lost its traditions, as it was created as a very rough and physical game. However, this is not entirely true. Although safety measures have been put in place for high schools in America, the rules are still very loose, and players must be cautious. This is partly to honor the original version of lacrosse and stick to its roots without changing the game too much. Since lacrosse is so fast, it is important to, "Constantly keep your head on a swivel in the protection of not getting run over," says defensive midfielder, and varsity player Christian Swanson, grade 11. This is something that has

(Right) Varsity player Tristian DeFelice, grade 12, (Left) and his team have just won their game. The Boys Lacrosse team's goal for the 2024-2025 season is to win States. Photo courtesy of Reily Green, grade 11.



been practiced by all players from the earliest dates and is key to a successful player. The LHP JV and Varsity Boys' Lacrosse team make sure to run fast-paced drills to prepare the players for instances like these.

Another crucial aspect of the game of lacrosse is the mental challenges that occur when playing. While it is mainly a physical sport, mental challenges can set players back if they do not have the right mindset. In its earliest phases, lacrosse was sometimes viewed as a spiritual and cultural game, and players heavily leaned on their faith to perform to the best of their abilities. This is still true for many players today, and it has become very common for them to have talks and huddles to set their mindsets in a way that will allow them to perform to the best of their abilities. It is common for athletes to get mental blocks when they are playing a sport they love and cannot play with 100% of their talents 24/7.

Athletes must be able to perform well under pressure, be quick thinkers when executing shots, and predict what their opponents will do. Many teams will practice specific drills focused on the mental side of the game rather than just the physical. This has been practiced since the beginning when



(Above) Number 22, Midfielder John Miller, grade 11, is preparing to pass the ball to one of his teammates. Approaching the goal, they are inches away from gaining another point, pushing them closer to the win. The Highlanders play their game with the determination to represent the greatness of the team before them. Photo courtesy of John Miller, grade 11.

stakes were higher, and players had to think more diligently about where and how they were placing the ball, as the punishments were far more severe.

Lacrosse is not just a regular sport; it embodies the values, emotions, and culture of a warrior. Many people fail to realize the importance of its history and only take the game at face value. The Cherokees, Haudenosaunee, and Iroquois have made a huge impact on the game, as the sport's inventors and lacrosse would not be the sport that it is today without their influence. While there have been changes over the years, lacrosse is a sport that tends to stick to its roots, honoring those who created such a unique game. The Lake Highland JV and Varsity Boys' Lax Nation has and continues to embody these values as the sport rapidly gains more and more popularity.



Good Morning Ravenswood Bluff

By Jay Fredel

We've all played *Mafia* before, right? Everyone sits in a circle, a storyteller picks the roles, and so forth. Without a doubt we've all had this experience at least once: you sit down, get ready to play, and... nothing. You aren't anything special, just regular townfolk. This is but one of the many flaws in the classic game of *Mafia*. However, for those who want a similar social deduction game that, in mine and many others' opinions, fixes many of these issues, check out *Blood on the Clocktower*. *Blood on the Clocktower* is a social deduction game similar to that of *Mafia* or *Werewolf*, where a majority of players who are on the "good" team try to find and eliminate the "evil" team. The catch is that the "evil" team knows who their members are and the "good" team has no clue who they are working with or against. The good team is made up of townfolk: characters who have abilities that help the good team, and outsiders: characters who have abilities that hinder the good team. The evil team is made up of minions: characters with abilities to help the evil team or hinder the good team, and the demon: the main leader of the evil team that does all the killing. The demon is also the one the good team needs to execute to win.

The game is spread out into two phases: a day phase. And a night phase. During the day players talk to each other in private conversations sharing information, and then come together to discuss publicly and execute one of the players by majority vote. During the night, certain characters wake up to act, some learning information and some having other effects, namely the demon, who is killing people at night. This continues until the demon is dead or only two players live and one of them is the demon. While on the surface this seems almost identical to *Mafia* and other games like it, it differs in some key areas which set it apart and make it, in my opinion, so much better.



(Above) Before a player storytells any game, it is imperative to explain the rules of the game in a way that is easy to understand. The presentation may have been overboard, but I wanted to make sure everyone had a fun time while playing my most favorite game. Photo courtesy of Aishwarya Vangala, Class of 2024.

One of the main differences in *Blood on the Clocktower* versus games like *Mafia* is how the dead players are treated. In the *Mafia*, dead men tell no tales, and players who are dead are no longer able to talk or participate in the game. This can and often does feel bad for players who die early, especially in games with larger player counts. I have had many times where I was excited to play a game with all my friends, only to die on the first night and have to sit around doing nothing for the

next 20 minutes, waiting for the game to finish. *Blood on the Clocktower* fixes this issue in a couple of ways. First off, the demon doesn't kill until the second night of the game, meaning that all characters that wake on the first night are guaranteed to use their ability, and everyone is guaranteed to be alive on the first



(Above) *Blood on the Clocktower* has sold over 30,000 copies worldwide as of 2024, and it's easy to see why. The pieces for the game are all very high quality and made for player and storyteller convenience. The grimoire, which is the box pictured above, allows the storyteller to stay organized. The reminder tokens that come with the game make that even easier. Photo by Jay Fredel.

day. Additionally in *Blood on the Clocktower* when you die, the game is not over for you. Dead players are still allowed to talk and discuss with everyone else, and they are still allowed to vote one more time. More often than not, the game is decided by the dead players. This makes dead players, still in fact, players which leaves the game feeling more fun for everyone.

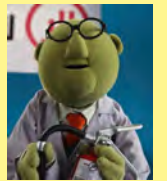
Another one of the main differences between *Blood on the Clocktower* and *Mafia* is the characters. In the *Mafia*, generally, there are between one and three special characters like the *Mafia* or the Doctor. However, in *Blood on the Clocktower*, everybody's character has an ability that affects the game. The washerwoman can learn information, the monk can protect people at night, the evil spy can learn people's roles, or the imp can carry out the killing. No matter what character you are, you will have an impact on the game and have something to bring to the table. Additionally, this variety of characters means that no two games are ever the same. The ability of the storyteller to pick and choose what characters are in play means they can craft a game to suit their players. So sometimes games might have a lot of starting information, and the players have to go off of social reads or more mechanical information, and sometimes it's the opposite and there is more ongoing information and almost no starting information. Each game is different, and it's part of the reason that *Blood on the Clocktower* has so much potential.

Blood on the Clocktower takes the classic formula of the *Mafia* and refines it into a more engaging and inclusive experience for all players. By ensuring dead players remain active participants, and giving every character a unique role with meaningful impact, it addresses many of the frustrations that can arise in similar games. Whether you're unraveling mysteries on the good team, or sowing chaos as part of the evil team, *Blood on the Clocktower* offers a dynamic, strategic, and endlessly replayable social deduction experience.

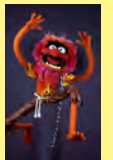
CONTRIBUTORS

Theme: Who is your favorite Muppet?

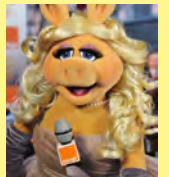
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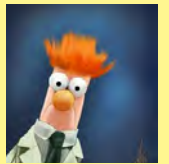
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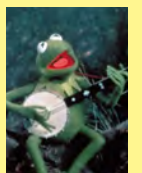
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