



University of Chicago Laboratory High School

PAGE 5 • FEATURES

P.E. teacher Pete Miller's bodybuilding journey gave him lessons which he uses to help members of the Lab community accomplish their goals in and out of the classroom.

**PAGE 6-7 • IN-DEPTH**

The national conversation around cellphones in school has made its way to U-High. The debate will consider expert opinion, data and community input to determine whether a ban is in U-High's future.

**PAGE 10 • HEALTH**

U-High students are joining the trend of using imported skin care, such as Korean and French products, which have increased in popularity due to gentler ingredients and greater affordability.



Interest in election intensifies

Classes, club meetings will be venues for discussions of policy, voting process

by **CLARE McROBERTS**

Editor-in-Chief

With just a few weeks to go in a presidential campaign marked by a late candidate switch, rancor and assassination attempts, U-High students say they are eager to hear in their classes about how the candidates plan to govern the country. The final weeks of the race between Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, and former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, gives students and their teachers an opportunity to discuss what history can tell them about one of the nation's most bitterly fought campaigns.

"So far we have discussed political philosophy to determine the ideal way to run a country," said Alexander Saratovsky, a senior, of the discussion in his AT Comparative Politics class this fall. "A U.S. election is a practical application of our theory."

"Everyone has preconceived notions about the candidates, so it would be more productive to the most important policy issues," Alexander said. "Lab Schoolers have strong opinions, and this should lead to constructive discussions about how to make America better. I also hope we encourage everyone to vote."

Most U-High students will be too young to vote on Nov. 5, but some said that they want class discussions to explore public policy and the integrity of the vote itself.

"I hope they educate us on the voting process and how it works, so that we are prepared for when we can start voting," Angela Fitzgerald, a junior, said.

“Lab Schoolers have strong opinions, and this should lead to constructive discussions about how to make America better.”

Alexander Saratovsky,
senior in AT Comparative Politics

Given the campaign's vitriol, students said they expect teachers to stay balanced, leaving discussions of voter preference for outside school in order to ensure productive conversations.

"If classes ended up talking about the election, I would want them to take the most neutral path, just laying out Trump's and Harris' policies without bias or anything like that," Justin Salomon, a sophomore, said, "I just want to learn more about their policies and what they stand for, so I can have civil and well-informed discussions."

Hearing diverse views, some said, would have value.

"I think through different points of view, I would be able to see how other people view the election and see how it could be similar and different from my view," Liv Rodriguez, a sophomore, said.

Some suggested that the election might be a topic for a number of courses — including English class — but most said their history class would be the best venue.

Sam Fajerstein, who is teaching four sections of AT U.S. History, said he intends to include lessons



Midway photoillustration by Estelle Levinson

ELECTION EXCITEMENT. During the election season, students will participate in dialogue surrounding the political issues defining the 2024 presidential race to enhance understanding of policy debates.

related to the election, particularly as it gets closer. Mr. Fajerstein said he recently asked his students whether they would like to discuss unfolding news events like the election in class. They said yes.

Mr. Fajerstein said he views the campaign as an opportunity to ex-

amine how the nation's history of elections informs the present.

"What does history tell us about this current election," he said, "and how do we feel as Americans in the present moment, while also reflecting on our role as Americans throughout history?"

Oliver Wilson, a senior, said he hopes to learn more about the election in his AT U.S. History class.

"It would be cool to analyze the election right now and its implications for the future," Oliver said, "and how it applies to times when this has happened in the past."

Students appreciate new Native Histories course

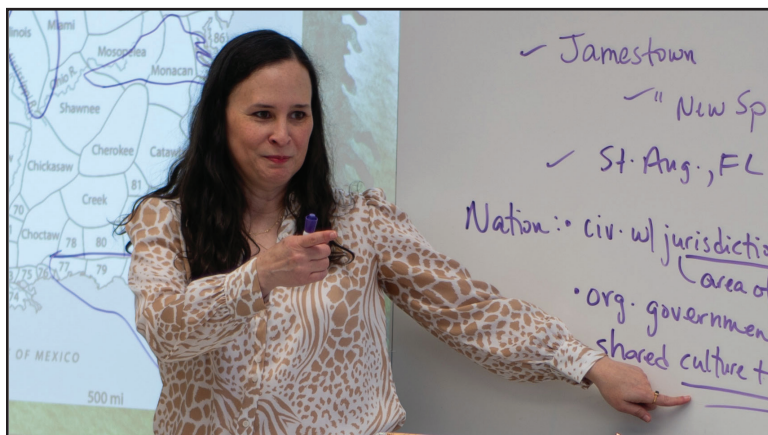
Assitant principal revives passion for teaching history

by **CHLOË ALEXANDER**

Editor-in-Chief

On the first day of school, 20 juniors and seniors filed into their 4th period AT Native American Histories class, a new course focusing on Native American history from the pre-colonial colonial period to the present. As students took their seats, waiting for the class to begin, the history teacher that would be teaching them wasn't a new face but was U-High's assistant principal: Zilkia Rivera-Vazquez.

A group of students last year requested the creation of a class specifically related to Native American history. The history department formed a class, giving Ms. Rivera-Vazquez the opportunity to teach history again and create a course that means so much to her.



Midway photo by Lucy Byrnes

HISTORY IN THE MAKING. Zilkia Rivera-Vazquez, who taught U.S. and Latin American history in Puerto Rico, now teaches AT Native Histories.

At her previous school in Puerto Rico, Ms. Rivera-Vazquez was a U.S. and Latin American history teacher for 10 years and always strived to include Native American history in her classes.

"My kids used to joke, 'Miss, you should call it AP Native American

history' because I always had that lens," Ms. Rivera-Vazquez said, "because that's how I was trained when I did my graduate studies in history during post-colonial studies."

She finds that she can also connect to teachers because of a new

understanding of their day-to-day tasks like taking attendance. This opportunity to teach again and interact with students creates a deeper connection with the school.

"I love my admin role in school," Ms. Rivera-Vazquez said. "It's really great to support the whole academic program, support the faculty and the kids. But here I work with the students directly. I've really missed that. I really love working with young people. But it's also beautiful that I was given this opportunity by the history department."

Senior Asa Bordelon, who is a descendant of the Carolina Algonquian tribe, said that U-High didn't have any focus on Native Americans and its history curriculum until now.

"I can't stress enough how important I think that it has been added," Asa said, adding that there's little focus on Native American history after seventh grade.

Ms. Rivera-Vazquez finds great

responsibility with the curriculum and is proud of U-High for being one of the few schools to have a class like this when some schools are banning classes and discussions of parts of U.S. history.

"It's really unfortunate that we are banning, understanding and knowledge is how I see it," Ms. Rivera-Vazquez said. "We need to explore whatever we need to explore. I think in a way it's disrespectful of our students' intelligence to assume that they're not able to interpret, understand, question and engage with these topics."

Asa said he has a more personal connection with the class, and having a teacher who is so passionate about the topic only adds to his excitement.

"It's gratifying. It feels like being seen and validated," Asa said. "My ancestors' stories will also be told now. It's not just the same thing that has been happening. It's something new and something personal for me. It feels good."

Undersea theme hooks attendees

Delightful dance concludes spirit week, celebrations

by JULIANA DAUGHERTY
Reporter

Shell-shaped balloons hung from the ceiling, while streamers and fish decorations were wrapped around pillars in the lobby of Gordon Parks Arts Hall, as students — 534 in all — filed in with excitement to experience “A Night Under The Sea” homecoming dance held the evening of Saturday, Sept. 21.

In the Sherry Lansing Theater, speakers blasted popular songs, such as Travis Scott’s “Fein,” Chapel Roan’s “Hot To Go” and Flo Rida’s “Low.”

Students could also notice the coral, sea-themed decorations scattered throughout the theater. Cultural Union President Ben O’Donnell said the theme had not been used in a few years.

“Many of us loved the idea because of the various decorations and activities that could pair with that theme,” Ben said.

Students voted for two of their peers for homecoming royalty via the Student Council Website, and seniors Joshua Carter and Emma Heo were selected as the all-school



Midway photo by Ellis Calleri

SEA OF JOY. Dancing to “Wobble” by VIC, junior Xia Nesbitt and sophomore Savannah Woodson sing along at the homecoming dance, themed “A Night Under the Sea,” on Sept. 21. A total of 534 students attended the dance.

winners, with two other students winning per grade.

“I was honestly really surprised that we had won because I was not expecting it at all,” Emma said. “It

was definitely a pleasant surprise and a fun way to end the night.”

On Friday afternoon, students gathered on Jackman Field and in Upper Kovler Gymnasium, to

show support for the volleyball, tennis and boys soccer teams.

During the assembly period on Thursday, the Student Council hosted a schoolwide spirit as-

“
I think homecoming is a great schoolwide event and building community. It brings kids from other grades together, who wouldn’t talk to each other on an everyday basis.
”
Julia Grotthuss, senior

sembly, featuring student vs. faculty tug-of-war, faculty arm wrestling, and competitions among the grades of free throws, knockout and scooter races.

Activities leading up to the “Under The Sea” theme consisted of spirit week, with a different theme to dress as each day. Pajama Day started the week, Tuesday was Anything but a Backpack, Wednesday was Rhyme without Reason, Thursday was Class Color and Friday was Maroon Day. As this is her last homecoming, senior Julia Grotthuss was enthusiastic about what homecoming had to offer.

Julia said, “I think homecoming is a great schoolwide event and building community. It brings kids from other grades together, who wouldn’t talk to each other on an everyday basis.”

European exchange programs foster cultural interaction

by MILO PLATZ-WALKER
Sports Editor

German exchange students arrived at U-High on Sept. 6 and Spanish exchange students arrived Sept. 9, with each group able to explore landmarks and neighborhoods around the city.

Students also shadowed their hosts during school in order to experience the academic and social environment of Lab.

The exchange program provides a safe environment for students to explore Chicago and learn about different cultures from around the world.

While in Chicago, the exchange students were busy shadowing students in school, touring Chicago’s landmarks like the Bean and museums, and attending local plays. Additionally, students were able to take a river tour of Chicago’s architecture.

Spanish exchange student Lia Rubio found the experience of living in a new culture to be one of the most fascinating parts of the trip.

“It was surprising to see how everything is so much bigger than in Spain,” Lia said. “There is so much variety in culture and people that we do not have in Spain.”

“
I think the most rewarding experience is seeing how much fun Leah is having here. I like to hear about the different places that the program is taking her. It’s been cool showing her what my life is like and seeing how different that is from hers
”
Charlotte Satalic, senior

German exchange student Laurin Eichenauer was surprised by the flexibility of U-High’s schedule along with the relaxed relationship between teachers and students. Laurin was particularly surprised by the amount of freedom students are given to choose their courses.

“In Germany, we have a very set schedule. Here, it was cool to see that you can choose your own things and advance in topics farther than other subjects,” Laurin said. “I think that was very surprising in a positive way.”

Senior Charlotte Satalic, who hosted Lia, appreciated the oppor-



Photo provided by Ruby Koyner

CHICAGO ADVENTURES. Junior Mihika Prakash and her Spanish exchange student, Deva Martinez, laugh together on a rollercoaster in Chicago.

tunity to share her everyday life with her guest.

“I think the most rewarding experience is seeing how much fun Leah is having here. I like to hear about the different places that the program is taking her. It’s been cool showing her what my life is

like and seeing how different that is from her’s.”

U-High students who traveled to Spain over the summer visited cities such as Madrid, Gijón and Covadonga, where they visited museums and landmarks as they experienced the new culture. For

Charlotte, the hardest part of the trip was learning how to speak the language more fluently.

“At first, it was difficult to understand the new vocabulary and different ways to have conversations with people, but by the end of it I feel like I could participate in conversations more fluently.”

Sophomore Ian Benert traveled to Germany and found the experience greatly improved his ability to speak in German while exploring new cities and landscapes. Spanish teacher Dina D’Antoni, who accompanied the students to Spain, particularly enjoyed seeing students experience the new culture.

“My favorite part of the trip was experiencing it through the eyes of the student. It’s seeing them get surprised, happy, excited or anxious,” Ms. D’Antoni said. “I love getting there and seeing them all stressed and surprised by this new place.”

For the first time, exchange students were able to experience the homecoming dance.

“All the exchange students are excited to go to homecoming,” said Ms. D’Antoni. “They were all talking about how it is like the movies.”

New food vendor implements changes to cafeteria

by CAROLINE SKELLY
Reporter

Changes in food quality, price and the operation of the cafeteria have students reacting and voicing their opinions, both negative and positive. Lab has partnered with HandCut Foods, a new food vendor which will provide meals for Café Lab and the Grind Coffee Shop, replacing Quest Foods, which was Lab’s vendor since 2018.

In a July 26 email to the community, Director of Schools Tori Jueds said, “We were impressed with HandCut Foods’ ability to pair wholesome, made-from-scratch nutritious meals together with highly responsive service, and their vision that food should be both healthy and delicious.”

According to HandCut Foods website, their goal is to combine nutritious food with customizable and reliable service. In order to reduce lines in the cafeteria,

HandCut Foods has implemented a new payment system called Quickcharge. This allows for previous balances to be transferred and credit cards, Apple Pay, Android Pay, IDs and cash to be used at all checkout stations to try and reduce lines. Students can also pre order meals using Quickcharge.

“Our goal is to balance the speed of service at the line where we prepare or serve your food and the speed of service at the cash out stations, so that you can have a better experience,” HandCut Foods president George Madzhirov said.

He said what makes HandCut Foods unique is that their goal is to work with communities on a feedback-driven approach, and continue to improve based on the feedback. QR codes will be posted around points of service to provide feedback on anything having to do with the food service. The feedback will then be sent and re-

viewed by the culinary team, hospitality experience team and leadership. Feedback can also be sent to lab@handcutfoods.com. Students have also been reacting and noticing the differences. Junior Eleanor Koss said she has noticed the cafeteria is more busy, but she thinks it’s moving smoother than before. Differences are being noticed in the coffee shop as well.

“I think that the selection is kind of smaller, and there aren’t as many drinks available as before and honestly, I don’t think the coffee really tastes good, so I think I’m gonna start going to the Medici instead,” sophomore Mira Reddy said.

The Café will still provide grab-and-go options and staples, such as pizza, sandwiches, salad bar and fries, but there will also be daily specials and variety.

Mr. Madzhirov said, “Our goal is to make sure we accommodate everybody with the way they eat.”



Midway photo by Daniel Baeza

NEW YEAR, NEW CHANGES. Café Lab worker Mike Ligon hands a serving of curly fries. HandCut Foods replaced Quest Foods as Lab’s food vendor.

Make support systems a priority

At around 6:40 a.m. on Sept. 13, Lab families received a campus lockdown alert monitoring an external threat. Moments later a second message was sent to notify recipients that it was a false activation. These alerts — like the community experienced last year — brought concern about what to do in an actual emergency, especially just days after the Sept. 4 shooting at Apalachee High School in Georgia.

Security scares, including false alarms, reveal how the Lab community would react to a real threat, and they show that Lab's preventative measures may not be enough to ensure school safety. In addition to schoolwide security alerts, Lab should focus on educating students about what they should do as individuals to help ensure school safety as well as personal safety.

First, students should be educated about what to do if they see someone who might be experiencing difficulties. It is easy to ignore and avoid classmates who may be struggling, and often it is hard to pick up on the signs. If students knew more about what mental struggles could look like, then they might be able to identify them in their peers. This knowledge could help prevent harm.

Support systems within the school should be more widely available and advertised on a much larger scale to ensure each and every student knows they are supported. For example, students

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midway
sees it.

This represents the opinion of the U-High Midway editorial board.

should have easy access to a counselor or a specific adult to confide in if they are experiencing mental struggles or to anonymously report their observations of peers in distress, and this access should be open at all hours of the day. While hotlines are available to the public, students may feel nervous or uncomfortable revealing their emotions outside of their community.

Additionally, it is important that parents and families have access to some of these resources. If there is conflict within a family, student mental health can be ignored, and sometimes it can be hard for a parent to help their student. If parents and relatives have access to tools to notify school counselors of any troubles their student may be experiencing, these troubles are less likely to be ignored.

These are all measures that could be taken prior to any danger that may occur within the student body. However, if it reached a point where the school was locked down and everyone was told to “run, hide or fight,” students would still lack education on other aspects of the situation. For example, if a student



came across a gun, what should they do with it and who should they tell? Should they help others in danger, or only themselves? Should they call 911? Should they call their

parents and family first? These are all questions that could be answered with more student education about the steps to take during a dangerous situation.

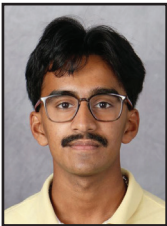
Midway illustration by Ilana Umansky
Making small adjustments like these could save a life. While these conversations are tough, they are essential to keeping the Lab community safe in today's society.

Journaling is an investment, but it gives so much more

by **TAARIQ AHMED**
News Editor

On the eve of my senior year, I scoured my closet for a blank notebook to use for English class. I knew there had to be one in there somewhere. After screening through years of schoolwork, I found not a blank notebook but a full one filled with the thoughts of previous years. It was a journal I had kept from ninth grade.

I sat at my desk and opened it,



examining the words and how they were strung together. During middle school and into my freshman year, I used to sit down every night and write about how my day had gone. Feeling inspired by my younger self, I started journaling again that very night — and my reinstated journaling has been paying off since.

A tedious habit to keep up but a rewarding one to develop, journaling has given me so much since I got back into it, and the truth is that every student in an environment like U-High can mentally and emotionally benefit from the practice.

Journaling is appealing because it gives full agency to the writer. It's an independent project and can be whatever one needs it to be, whether it's paragraphs of reflection or a few words that encapsulate how one feels. My journal had both.

There is no competitive aspect to journaling — it's for the person who is writing and their eyes only. One thing that made me happy while reading my old journal was how I recorded my stories without concern for how my writing looked in the eyes of somebody else. I was free.

Perhaps most consequential of

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Journaling gives one a window into what their life used to be like, bringing back both positives to reminisce in and negatives to reflect on.
”

all, journaling gives one a window into what their life used to be like, bringing back both positives to reminisce in and negatives to reflect on. Reading my writing from years ago was cringeworthy,

but it helped me realize how much I have grown and changed since moving to Lab.

As I learned when moving to Lab two years ago, journaling is demanding of time and energy.

But a person can journal every other day, or every week, or every other week or add just a few words every day.

In fact, it doesn't even have to be planned, it can just be spontaneous, jotting down your feelings and thoughts when it feels right. Journaling is a free therapy session with oneself, and in a place like U-High, everyone can utilize it to de-stress whenever they need.

College shouldn't overshadow high school experience

by **ARI NOVAK**
Reporter

Conversations about college dominate U-High's hallways. SAT prep, advanced classes, grade point average and various ways students plan to “buff” up their résumés always seem to wiggle their way into discussions among students.

Yet these conversations bring stories of burnout: crying in the bathroom between periods after bombing a quiz, or nights that turn into days with mountains of home-



work to complete because you stacked your schedule full with classes. I have repeatedly been guilty of this because I think it's what colleges would like to see.

The emphasis students place on college selection and enrollment shouldn't overshadow students' ability to enjoy the high school experience.

It is daunting to be a student at a high school where it seems that admission to top-tier universities is not just the expectation but the norm.

With how selective the application process has become, students so easily fall into the classic mindset that high school is merely a

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With how selective the application process has become, students so easily fall into the classic mindset that high school is merely a race to the finish line of college acceptance.
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race to the finish line of college acceptance. According to the Common Application, the total application volume rose 30% from 2019 to 2023.

Last year as a ninth grader, it seemed like I was never trying hard enough, and there was always something more I could do. It baffled my peers when I admitted that I allowed myself an extra free period during the week instead of stacking in another class.

I felt unambitious if I did not attend a club during every lunch period and instead chose to enjoy my break period conversing with friends.

It can feel unnerving to listen to your peers list their accomplishments or detail their extracurriculars, whether the sports they play or the summer internship they did. But not every minute needs to be

in pursuit of attaining the perfect résumé.

Ambition is an asset that manifests in various ways among different people, and the “high school experience” is subjective. It carries different meanings and has different expectations among different students. Having a jam-packed schedule was unhealthy for me, but others may manage it better or even prefer it.

Criticizing peers for their different approaches to the college application process only adds more unnecessary pressure. Students should prioritize enjoying high school while it lasts rather than racing for acceptance into college.

Pop culture word play

Faculty use slang terms with students to spark reactions, lighten moods

by JAYA ALENGHAT
Editor-in-Chief

On Sept. 4, the entire high school gathered for the yearly opening assembly, consisting of the routine announcements, speeches and applause. However, one word, said by Principal Martin Woods, made every student — from the nervous ninth graders to the nostalgic seniors — break into laughter, or at least smile a little: demure.

While pop culture terms like these are assumed to be reserved solely for younger generations, they are often used in classrooms by faculty to bring about humor — a method that often works.

After Mr. Woods’ speech, the mood felt lighter in the assembly hall, resulting from the use of just one word. His intention with using this word was spelled out in three silver floating balloons to the right of the stage — to make his students feel joy.

“Because I’m on social media all the time, and because I’m not far removed from the language, I actually use some of it,” Mr. Woods said. “Now, I’m not going around saying ‘demure’ all the time, but I thought y’all would enjoy that. So, I decided to just infuse that in my opening assembly remarks.”

He emphasized the importance of understanding your audience, and how using these terms can help increase engagement.

“It’s just important that you speak the language of the people that you’re standing in front of,” Mr. Woods said.

When Mr. Woods was a teacher, he often used similar techniques.

“Even if I were in the classroom when I was a teacher, I would make sure that I was intentionally, you know, being aware — either culturally aware or just aware of who’s in front of me,” he said. “But I just call it reading the room.”

Similar to Mr. Woods, English teacher Ian Taylor uses pop culture terms in his classroom. He uses these words because it lightens the mood of his students, and he finds their reactions to be humorous.

“I think they feel like their world has been invaded, or like the roof has been blown off some room they thought they were in private-

ly,” Mr. Taylor said. “And that’s funny to me, because they think that there should be no way I know it. If I ever use slang, I’m not using it seriously.”

While Mr. Woods is mainly exposed to this language through social media, Mr. Taylor is exposed to it by spending much of his time with teenagers, both his students and his children alike. As an English teacher, he is also interested in understanding language itself.

“I do have two kids that are in high school, and I also have spent my career working with teenagers. So I spend every day of my life essentially with teenagers,” Mr. Taylor said. “So I’m going to hear it and I have a longer view of slang and so notice when things change, and I’m interested in language a little bit — like what people are saying and what those things they’re saying mean.”

While students may appear to seem shocked or judgmental of adults when they use pop culture terms, many find some humor in the interactions. Senior Marcus Wolfe, a student in Mr. Taylor’s class, shares this view.

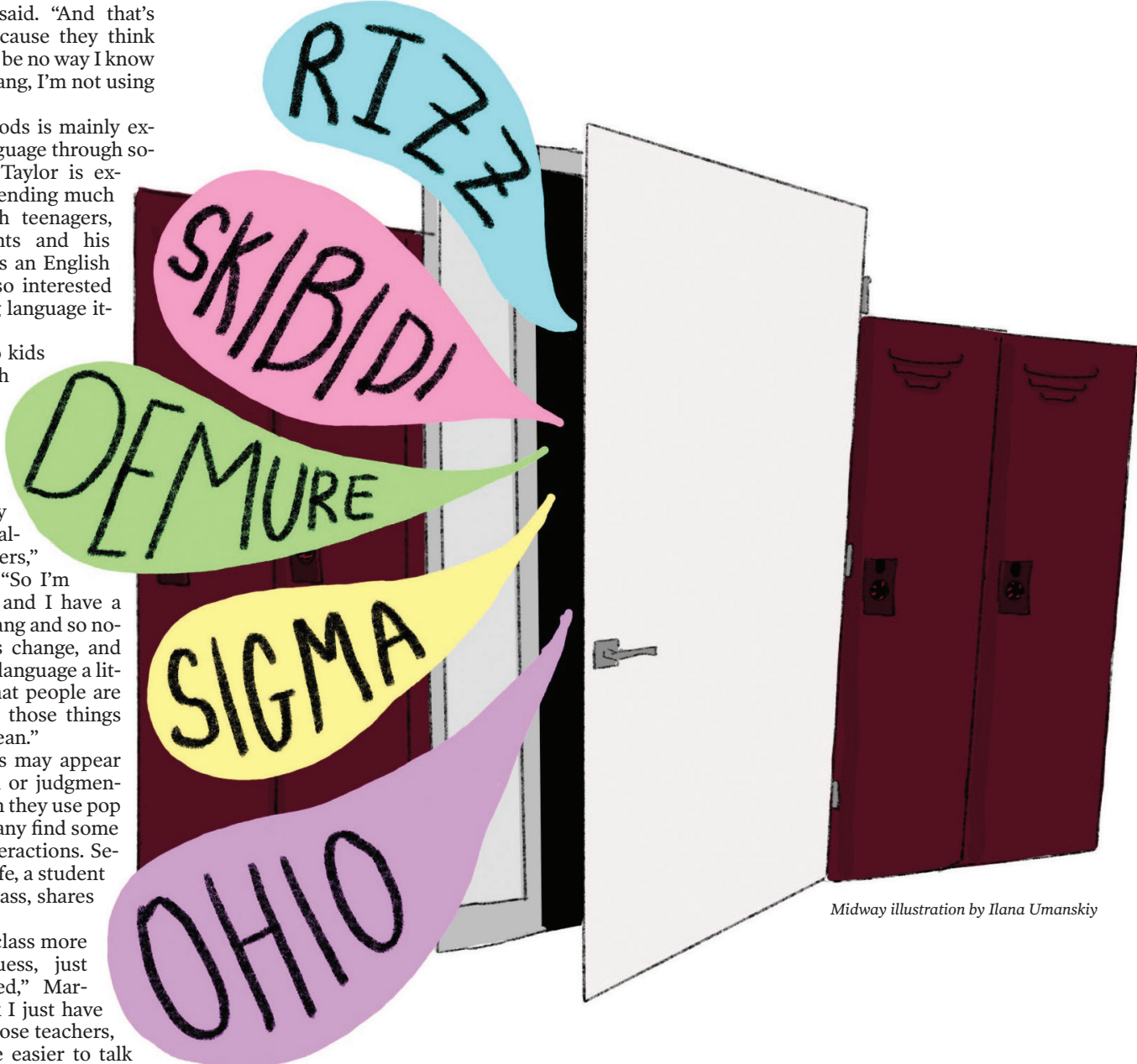
“It makes the class more interactive I guess, just more modernized,” Marcus said. “I think I just have more fun with those teachers, because they are easier to talk to, so, yeah, I like it.”

Sophomore Samara Grossman feels similarly, especially regarding Mr. Woods’ language at the assembly.

“I just thought it was a good way to connect with students and get people to pay attention — to use language that they are familiar with and think would be funny,” Samara said.

Ultimately, the use of pop culture terms in the school environment is relished by both students and adults.

Mr. Woods said, “I enjoy seeing the reaction, and I think they enjoy it, too.”



Midway illustration by Ilana Umanskiy

glossary		
Skibidi Used as an exclamation or an adjective to emphasize a sentence. Originates from the Skibidi Toilet meme. “That’s so skibidi!”	Aura Similar to “vibe,” can be used in a negative or positive way. One can lose aura if they do something embarrassing, or gain aura through nonchalant actions. “He has negative aura.”	Sigma Refers to a person who is cool but doesn’t try hard. Can describe a personality trait or an aesthetic. Not to be confused with “Alpha.” “They’re such a sigma for that.”
Rizz Short for “charisma.” Used to describe a flirtatious action or personality trait. One can have “L rizz” or “W rizz.” “She has a lot of rizz.”	Demure Describes a modest or cutesy action; opposite of the Brat trend. “I’m done with Brat summer! It’s time for demure and mindful fall.”	Ohio Used in humorous comments describing unusual and bizarre moments. See “Swag like Ohio” by Lil B. “That happens only in Ohio.”

Korean-style corn dog chains reinvent American treat



Midway photo by Olin Nafziger

KOREAN CUISINE. Kong Dog, a popular Korean-style corn dog place, specializes in unique flavors, like the Hot Cheeto Kong Dog, and offers other foods and refreshments, such as fries, chicken sandwiches and lemonade. Like Kong Dog, many Korean-style corn dog chains have been emerging in the U.S., and are now appearing in Chicago, to the delight of students.

by ARI NOVAK
Reporter

Kong Dog, Seoul Stick, GoblinBat. These Korean-style food chains are on the rise with a new food choice: Korean corn dogs. Drizzled in condensed milk, sprinkled with cereal or dunked in marinara, these are not your conventional corn dogs, but they are no less delicious.

A popular street food in Korea, they gained international acclaim over TikTok. According to NBC, Korean corn dogs were one of the biggest food trends in 2021, and within years restaurant chains emerged overseas.

The traditional Korean corn dog batter uses wheat or rice dough as a substitute for cornmeal, and once the dog — or cheese — on a stick is thickly battered and fried, it is sprinkled with sugar and eaten with ketchup and mustard. These chains have flavorfully upgraded the classic corn dog with fun fillings, toppings and sauces. From GoblinBat’s Sweet Nacho dog powdered with cheesy tips to Kong Dog’s Buldak Dog covered in ramen crumbs, they are constantly

exploring new flavors.

Senior Daisy Juarez has enjoyed the new variations of corn dogs.

“I like the Cheeto [corn dog] with cheese. It’s different, it’s spicy, which is something that I wouldn’t expect from a corn dog,” Daisy said. “When my cousins came from California, that was the first thing on their bucket list. They said, ‘We’re going to Kong Dog and trying some out!’”

Some chains, like Kong Dog and Seoul Stick, offer other foods and refreshments, like boba tea, french fries and ramen. If you are looking for some variation in your after-school dining, Korean dogs are a tasty alternative.

The Midway visited two Korean-style corn dog places in Chicago, and tried some of their specialty corn dogs.

KONG DOG
Dish sampled: Original Kong Dog with sausage, \$6.99; Potato Kong Dog with mozzarella cheese, \$7.99

Serving 10 different types of corn dogs, Kong Dog offers flavors for everyone. The Original Kong Dog, which is just sausage and sug-

ar-coated batter, is expectedly uninteresting. The sugar coating is an interesting addition to the classic corn dog that contrasts nicely with the otherwise savory and salty palette, but the flavor overall was nothing special. However, the Potato Kong Dog filled with mozzarella cheese was delicious. Crispy and salty, the taste was similar to a sugary hash brown turned mozzarella stick, and made for a filling meal. Kong Dog has locations in Little Italy, Chinatown, the Loop, Lincoln Park as well as the suburbs.

SEOUL STICK
Dish sampled: Hot Cheeto Dog with mozzarella cheese, \$7.99

Coated in Hot Cheeto dust, Seoul Stick’s Hot Cheeto Dog is a great choice for spice lovers. Paired with the melted cheese and crispy batter, the Hot Cheeto Dog is tangy and sapid, and a perfect after-school snack. Seoul Stick is in the Wicker Park neighborhood at 1571 N. Milwaukee Ave. Seoul Stick also offers Stick-Bokki, pan-fried rice cake skewers and a variety of bubble tea and lemonade flavors.

Mind, Body & Soul

P.E. teacher Pete Miller shares his bodybuilding past

by MIA LIPSON
Managing Editor

When Pete Miller was 17, he quit his childhood sport for good. For years, he had played hockey, and being a hockey player was a core part of who he was.

As he got more interested in weightlifting, he attended a competition called Teenage Mr. Chicagoland. When he saw the young men on stage, he never thought he would one day join them. But soon he had a new title: bodybuilder.

“It was probably 15 minutes into the competition when I thought I could probably beat some of these guys with a little bit of education, a plan, and a lot of training,” Mr. Miller said, “That’s where it all launched, and I took it from there.”

Mr. Miller participated in numerous bodybuilding competitions, and even won the Mr. America title in 1990.

A P.E. teacher at Lab for almost 25 years, he is known as being an unfailingly kind presence and can be found in Lab’s fitness center coaching students on training plans or saying hello to his students in the halls of Kovler and Sunny gym buildings.

Curious students have seen a glimpse of Mr. Miller’s life as a bodybuilder in a YouTube video, posted 17 years ago, which has comments from countless Lab students. Despite their speculations, they know little about his past, and how for almost seven years he was dedicated to his bodybuilding career.

Using the lessons he learned as a bodybuilder, Mr. Miller encourages students to chase their goals, both in his classroom and beyond. With his dedication and support, he helps everyone in the community reach them.

“I learned that in order for me to be successful at the level I wanted to be, I had to work hard in order to accomplish what I wanted to do. Nobody in my life at the time would have ever pegged me as the guy that’s going to accomplish this,” Mr. Miller said, “but, I did realize that with the capacity to to work harder than a lot of folks, I could fly past a lot of people who



Midway photo by Aubrey Felsen

BRAVE BODYBUILDER. P.E. teacher Pete Miller came to Lab from a long and impressive background in the sport of bodybuilding. After dedicating almost seven years to his bodybuilding career and winning the Mr. America title in 1990, Mr. Miller uses the lessons he learned as a bodybuilder to encourage his students to reach their goals.

would have probably been ranked way higher than me.”

Beyond the weight room, his sleep, diet and rest regime played a key role in his success in contests. Yet, the need for a strong, healthy mentality throughout his time in the sport taught him a lifelong lesson.

“I enjoyed the training, but what I really, really liked was being able to see progress. Bodybuilding taught me the importance of the simple act of setting goals,” Mr. Miller said. “Setting those, working toward them and then reaching them was such a satisfying thing,

and I’ve applied that to everything in my life.”

Despite his dedication to his lifestyle, he was found to have contracted Epstein-Barr virus, causing chronic fatigue and pain that prevented him from training.

Mr. Miller decided to pivot from

“
I enjoyed the training, but what I really, really liked was being able to see progress. Bodybuilding taught me the importance of the simple act of setting goals.
”

Pete Miller, P.E. teacher

bodybuilding, and turned to something he’d always thought about: teaching. He knew he’d be able to combine his passion for fitness with his affinity for helping people.

P.E. teacher Luke Zavala started at Lab 10 years ago and has been friends with Mr. Miller ever since, working beside him when teaching health to ninth and tenth graders. Mr. Zavala has noticed how helpful Mr. Miller is, often helping with students and fellow Lab faculty and staff who go to him for advice on building individualized training plans.

“It can sometimes be intimidating for somebody who wants to start to exercise more but doesn’t know where to start. And Mr. Miller is such a friendly, welcoming guy that he makes it easier and helps them out,” Mr. Zavala said. “He doesn’t get paid extra for staying after school to help kids out, but it’s something that he always does because he’s always wanting to show up and help people reach their goals.”

Last year, junior Austin Siu created the Powerlifting Club, and asked Mr. Miller to be the club’s faculty adviser.

“Mr. Miller is always willing to sacrifice his time for others and is a perfect facilitator for the club,” Austin said. “He is free-spirited and overall kind. He is always willing to speak to you as a person or an athlete.”

Mr. Miller draws upon the lessons of his career, knowing how far you can come when you believe in yourself and put in the work.

He now holds another title: helper.

“I just always want to do my best to try to help people,” Mr. Miller said. “What I attempt to do is just help people see that process that I loved in bodybuilding: working, seeing the improvement, feeling the satisfaction of that and then setting new goals over again.”

Creativity, fashion expressed in game Dress to Impress

by EDWARD PARK
Health & Wellness Editor

It’s on the screens in the lounges. It spills into conversations in the hallways. It’s even featured in the recent homecoming advertisement video.

The Roblox game Dress to Impress, a fashion-themed competition game where players dress their avatars according to a randomized theme, has risen in popularity among U-High students.

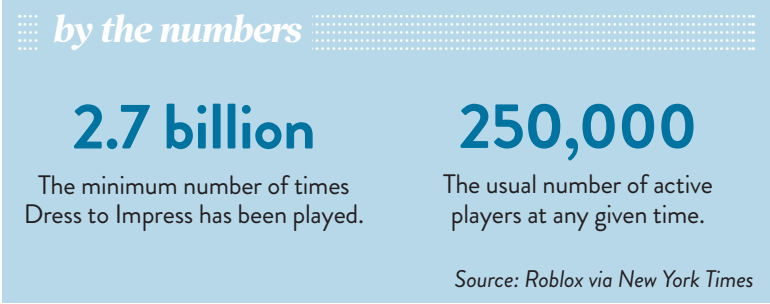
Due to the creative freedom and the casual, stress-relieving fun it offers, the game is a staple for free-time bonding among friends, providing light-hearted competition.

Despite the game being related to fashion, students seem to be more attracted to its other aspects.

Senior Katharine Christensen found more value in how the game strengthened the bonds with her friends.

“I mean there is the fashion aspect, but I think people kind of just take it in their own way,” she said. “Sometimes people don’t do fashion at all. I think it’s just more like a fun game.”

Sophomore Ezra Peek Taylor



added that the social aspect of the game plays a bigger role than fashion itself.

“The game hasn’t influenced my style in any way,” he said. “People on Roblox will never see the greatness of your outfit, only your friends will. And you can laugh with them, which is super important.”

Sophomore Kiera Hogarth appreciated not only the bonds she could create with friends but also the game’s ability to spur students’ creativity.

“What’s so special is to be able to play with your friends, first of all, and it’s a fun activity to do,” she said. “Another favorite part is the themes that are chosen and the

different types of outfits you get to pick and just the creativity of it all matches up together.”

The graphics and quality of the game seems to differentiate itself from the other Roblox games.

“People found that the quality of the game itself was pretty good because it didn’t have the normal Roblox graphics like the Lego people,” Katharine said. “There are different avatars and just overall different graphics.”

It might be the graphics. It might be the fashion. It might be creativity.

However, one thing is clear: the game’s true appeal lies in the connections students make — both in and out of school.



Roblox

FASHION FORWARD. A Roblox player poses in an outfit they created for the theme “Harajuku.” The Roblox game Dress to Impress released on Nov. 11, 2023, and it has attracted many U-High students.

DIALING UP DEBATE

States and school districts across the country, from New York to Los Angeles, are implementing restrictions on cellphone use in school. Meanwhile, U-High is weighing the benefits and harms of students having phones at school.

Cellphones in schools draw national scrutiny

by LILA COYNE
Reporter

As the new school year approached, readers of major news outlets were inundated with articles and opinion pieces about high school cell phone policies. The question: To ban or not to ban?

A study conducted by the Pew Research Center in June revealed that 72% of high school teachers in the United States believe cell phones pose a major distraction in the classroom.

According to an article from Education Week, as of Aug. 28, 13 states have introduced some kind of legislation or created a pilot program out of concern for students' use of cellphones in schools.

The California legislature recently passed the Phone-Free Schools Act, which is expected to be signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Citing a 2015 study by the London School of Economics and Political Science and the book "iGen" by Jean Twenge, the bill requires schools to adopt a policy to limit or prohibit student smartphone use by July 2026.

Banning phones in the classroom could prevent students from being distracted in class by notifications or even just the thought of their phone. Many educators and administrators believe it is important to ban phones all day; in the hallways, at lunch and during free periods. While this might face the most objection from a student

Faculty committee researches phone effects

by LILA COYNE
Reporter

A committee of U-High faculty has been formed to research the potential benefits of restricting student smartphone use in the high school.

The idea was born when two students approached art teacher Sunny Neater.

On an exchange trip they had spent time at schools where phones weren't allowed and felt it made a huge impact on the social environment.

"They were like, it was so different being in schools where not everyone was defaulting to being on their phones during the downtime," Ms. Neater said. "They were like, it was so nice and people were outgoing toward us. People were curious."

Ms. Neater put out a call for interested faculty members. Librarian Susan Augustine responded after hearing concerns from fellow U-High parents.

"If I didn't have any children I might see it in school but not think about it as much," Ms. Augustine

“
They really became kids again. We heard conversations occurring again, lunchtime was no longer quiet — it became a real schoolyard with real activity.
Darvina Barley,
Los Angeles principal
”

body, it also might be the most effective kind of phone policy.

This year Chicago's Francis W. Parker School expanded its ban on phones during class to the whole day because administrators felt the previous policy didn't have enough of an impact on the school community outside of lessons, according to The Parker Weekly student newspaper.

While it's too soon to know the effect of Parker's new policy, other schools across the country are observing the long-term effects of limiting phones.

At Dymally High School in Los Angeles, the administration spent around \$12,000 to get magnetic pouches for students' phones, according to reporting from the Los Angeles Times, one of the solutions many schools have turned to. Students place their phones in these pouches when they enter school and a special magnet

is used to open the pouch on students' way out each afternoon.

At first, students attempted workarounds like putting old phones in the pouches or buying their own magnets to trigger the magnetic release function. However, almost five years after the ban was originally introduced — with a break during the coronavirus pandemic school closure — fighting is down, test scores are up, and teachers have noticed a real shift in the hallways and the cafeteria. Students talk to each other; they play games during lunch.

Dymally High School principal Darvina Barley said, "They really became kids again. We heard conversations occurring again, lunchtime was no longer quiet — it became a real schoolyard with real activity."

Students' antisocial tendencies have increased since the pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that 40% of students experience "persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness."

Poor mental health in teenagers may be exacerbated by their ability to hide behind their phones during school. High school faculty and administrators are looking to phone bans to strengthen their school communities and help curb the shift toward isolation. They must weigh the new influx of research against inevitable student concerns to chart a course of action regarding phone-use.



Midway illustrations by Sygne Stole

CROSSED CONNECTIONS: 2 perspectives on cellphone restrictions

by CHLOË ALEXANDER
& DECLAN SMITH

Chloë: Hi Declan, have you heard about the possible phone ban that is being proposed in states and counties across the country?

Declan: Yes, I've heard that it's been spreading all over Illinois. I think it's a good thing that we are standardizing regulations over phone use.

Chloë: Really?! I think that a possible phone ban, like what they did at Francis Parker School, is an unnecessary rule and takes away a vital resource for safety and security.

Declan: I don't think an outright ban is the best solution, but I think more rules should be in place. So students can use their phones without worrying about it being confiscated for no reason. What do you suggest Chloë?

Chloë: I think that teachers should be able to choose their own regulations based on their own



Chloë Alexander



Declan Smith

What do you think?

Declan: I have had past experiences with teachers taking away or threatening to take away my phone while using it in the hallways. I think to avoid confusion the entire school should have a standard rule for when and where it is OK to use phones. I think that phone bins work well in theory, but sometimes you can lose your phone or it

can also be a distraction in itself.

Chloë: I hear you, and I understand where you're coming from. I think that perhaps a rule about phone usage, in general, would eliminate experiences — like what you had — from happening to students. But I think the idea of fully getting rid of phones would cause many difficulties for students like finding friends during free periods, arranging transportation with parents or even getting in contact with authorities during an emergency.

Declan: I don't think we should outright ban phones, but we should have some ideas about a standardized regulation. I think maybe we can find a middle ground.

Chloë: Sure, I can see that. If a teacher chooses to collect phones from students, based on their own observations of phone usage in



their class, then it would prevent the distractions that phones may cause to students. But at the same rate, laptops and iPads provide the same possible level of distraction as phones, yet we would not ban those tools. I just think that we have to figure out where we draw the line.

Declan: I agree, it's hard to determine when and where we should use our phones. Maybe there is no right answer.

Chloë: This situation just feels very paradoxical, and yet we need some solution that benefits all parties involved.

Declan: Well, we agree on that much. Anyway, see you later Chloë.

Chloë: Wow what a great, mentally stimulating discussion. Have a great day Declan!

vox pop.

Do you think there are more harms or more benefits to having your cellphone at school? Why?

"I think with the recent uptick in school shootings and stuff, even though we're really protected here, it's important for people to feel safe and having their phones, just to reach out to their family or anything or if something happened, just to have a way to communicate. I feel like that's really important."
— Skylar Murphy, ninth grader

"I would say there are more harms. I think a lot of times people can get distracted in class or that can lead to academic dishonesty, like when you see people using ChatGPT or Photomath during math tests."
— Gabi Novak, sophomore

"I think there's more benefits. If you take away phones people are still gonna have them, but they're gonna get in more trouble and it's gonna be more work than it's worth."
— Rebecca Rupp, sophomore

"There are definitely a lot more benefits than harms. Phones allow for students to communicate with homework and is an overall academic booster. Also, putting restrictions on high school students just doesn't prepare them for college when you have full range and access of your phone. In order to start preparing you for college, you should be able to manage your phone."
— Angela Fitzgerald, junior

"More harms because I would say they pose a distraction to any student that has them in class, and they make us a little bit more disconnected from each other as well."
— Asa Bordelon, senior

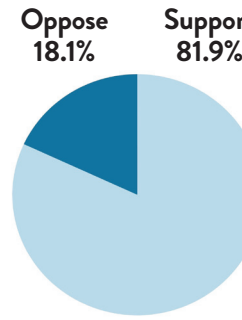
"I think there are more benefits. If you use them responsibly you can check in with your friends during the day or your parents during the day, and I think not having phones is not helpful in the long run."
— Ainsley Williams, senior

— compiled by Lucy Shirrell

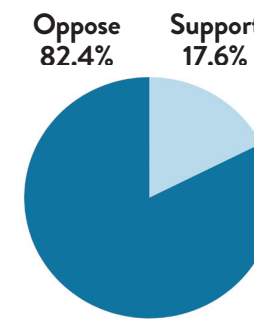
Poll finds students overwhelmingly shun phone limits at school

In this unscientific Midway survey conducted on Sept. 12, students shared their opinions on the notion of restrictions on cellphones at U-High. Of the 188 students who took the survey, 47 were ninth graders, 40 were sophomores, 52 were juniors, and 49 were seniors.

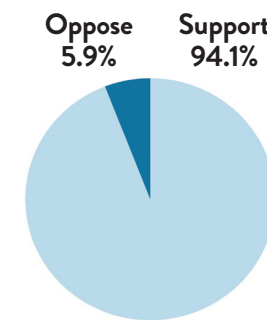
Cellphone use in class should be determined by teacher



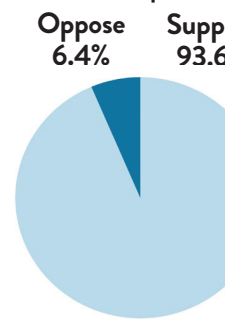
Cellphone use in class should be banned



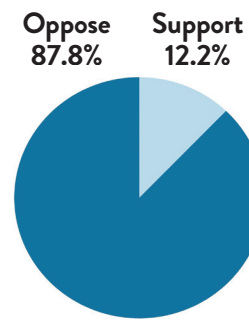
Cellphone use should be allowed before/after school



Cellphone use should be allowed during passing times and free periods

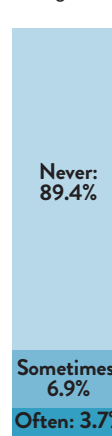


Cellphone use should be allowed only during lunch



— compiled by Clare McRoberts

How often does your cell phone distract you during class?



Are there more harms or benefits to having your cellphone at school?



Windy City Wizards

‘Harry Potter and the Cursed Child’ appears in downtown Chicago

by LIGHT DOHRN

Arts & Entertainment Editor

A new generation of wizarding drama landed in Chicago on Sept. 26, with Tony Award-winning hit “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child” opening at the James M. Nederlander Theatre in the Loop.

Chicago is the first stop for the production’s first-ever North American tour after opening in London in 2016 and on Broadway in 2018.

The creative team has condensed the two-part, nearly six-hour epic from those two cities into a streamlined touring version that runs just under three hours — but the shortened production is filled with magic tricks and theatrical inventions that will have the audience wondering, “How did they do that?” for days afterward.

The plot of “Cursed Child” takes place 19 years after the events of the seventh novel, “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.” Harry is now married to Ginny, and they’re dropping off their son, Albus Severus Potter, at King’s Cross Station on his way to Hogwarts. Ron and Hermione are married and dropping off their own daughter, Rose. Draco, too, is watching his son Scorpius leave for school after the death of Draco’s wife and Scorpius’ mother, Astoria Malfoy.

Over the next three hours on stage, unexpected friendships are forged, battles occur, and the past and future are changed forever. Much of the focus of the play’s creative team seems to have been on creating a magical spectacle that could live up to J.K. Rowling’s vision and the high-budget Hollywood special effects of the film series. Christine Jones, who won a Tony Award for the play’s scenic design, said in an interview with the Midway that making the magic work in different locations and theaters during the tour is a chal-

“A show like this really is singular in how the collaborative elements are what make the magic. It’s not just one department that makes a magic effect. We all work together to create an illusion.”

Christine Jones, set designer



Photo provided by Gaby Godinez

NEXT GENERATION. “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child,” which follows the children of Harry, Ron, Hermione and Draco 19 years after the events of the “Harry Potter” series, opened at the James M. Nederlander Theatre on Sept. 26. Chicago is the first destination of the production’s international tour.

lenge for the designers but becomes incredibly satisfying once the pieces come together.

“A show like this really is singular in how the collaborative elements are what make the magic,” Ms. Jones said. “It’s not just one department that makes a magic effect. We all work together to create an illusion, and everybody has to be in detailed communication about what the specific needs are. So, it’s like solving a very complex puzzle.”

Ms. Jones recalls the early days of designing the set as incredibly fulfilling in terms of both creation and community. Many of the production’s designers felt that the creative process was, in its own way, a trip inside the world of Harry Potter with a group of close friends.

“We all would say that we felt like we had gone to a school for magic, and that’s really what it felt like,” Ms. Jones said. “Like we had all gone to our own version of Hog-

warts. We all went to London, and we worked in a warehouse building just outside of London, and we got together literally with paper and string and cardboard and tape and fabric and fans, like kids playing a game together.”

That creative collaboration seems to have paid off. The play also won Tony Awards for its New York production: best play, direction, costume design, lighting design and sound design. The set, lights and magical design come to-

gether to create visual effects such as characters being sucked into coin slots, transforming into entirely different people, or having steam blow out of their ears before your very eyes.

So, the play arrives in Chicago after a multi-year award-winning run in London and New York and appears ready to enchant audiences as it sets out on its national tour. Catch it now before it disappears — it will run in Chicago until Feb. 1.

Sabrina Carpenter establishes herself in ‘Short n’ Sweet’



sabrinacarpenter.com

SOMETHING NEW. Sabrina Carpenter’s “Short n’ Sweet,” out Aug. 23, exceeded expectations with strong vocal range, sweet lyrics and catchy melodies.

by KABIR JOSHI

Opinion Editor

When I first heard of Sabrina Carpenter, I could only think that Taylor Swift had another clone, taking over TikTok with her catchy lyrics and blonde hair.

I never found her songs very appealing when listening to the radio, but they were short and catchy, leaving the lyrics stuck in my head for hours. Over the last month of summer break, there were more and more headlines about her in newspapers, magazines and radio stations. On Instagram, every five Reels featured a backing track of one of her songs — typically either “Please Please Please” or “Espresso.” On Aug. 23, Ms. Carpenter released her newest album, “Short n’ Sweet,” featuring 36 minutes and 12 songs of Ms. Carpenter’s latest work. The album features popular songs such as “Please Please

Please,” which topped Billboard’s charts for five weeks and was nominated as song of the summer.

For the week of Sept. 7, three of Ms. Carpenter’s songs from “Short n’ Sweet” are ranked 2, 3 and 4 on Billboard’s Hot 100 list.

“Short n’ Sweet” is not only successful but has a song for everyone.

When I first started listening to it, I found myself enjoying “Please Please Please” with its upbeat melodic arrangement and tendency to relate to artists such as Lana Del Rey with its smooth vocals. The song initially went big on social media platforms due to its familiar rhythm.

For country fans, “Coincidence” and “Slim Pickins” shine out with their guitar backgrounds and soft lyrics, giving the songs a warm feeling. Ms. Carpenter does a great job expressing her amazing vocal

range throughout the album and closes it out with “Don’t Smile” which features a quiet piano opening and a very club-feeling melody showcasing soft lyrics and a quiet drum beat in the background.

The song takes on the popular topic of sad romance with a different approach. With its repeating theme, the song cements itself as the closer of the album, solidifying it as a whole as it incorporates themes of other songs into it, making it one big mixing pot.

Overall, my opinion has changed. From my thoughts of Sabrina Carpenter being a Taylor Swift clone, I have come to enjoy her music, which has a touch of everything: some romance here and some heartbreak there. She is a generational talent who will continue to grow exponentially, and with every album, the music will get better.

vox pop.

What was the most notable culture from summer 2024?

“Brat summer definitely was the best.”

— Millie Norton, senior

“‘Espresso’ by Sabrina Carpenter. I heard it a lot and it’s fire.”

— Asher Huner, senior

“Lollapalooza because of the community, dressing up for it and dancing.”

— August Nyenhuis, sophomore

New directors offer brand-new vision

Matt Boresi and Ryan Wantland revitalize theater

by SKYE FREEMAN
Features Editor

When the final curtain fell on the long-running scene of U-High’s theater directors in June, it marked the end of an era.

Yet, a new act has already begun with the refreshing arrival of two new directors of U-High’s theater department. Matt Boresi will assume Liucija Ambrosini’s former role as director, and Ryan Wantland takes on Allen Ambrosini’s former role of technical director. Although they’ve only been at U-High for a few weeks, they are eager to continue where the Ambrosinis left off yet incorporate a more contemporary perspective in their work. Raised in an artistic household, with his mother, a dance teacher, and his grandfather, a photographer, Mr. Boresi has been performing, directing, and teaching theater ever since.

He’s taught at Lake Forest Academy, Carthage College and North Central College. Mr. Wantland has had a particularly unique journey before arriving at U-High.

He went to college for architecture, changed his mind, sought a bachelor’s degree in business marketing, realized that wasn’t fulfilling either, and after taking some time to reflect, decided to pursue technical theater professionally.

Mr. Boresi recognizes that with

“Theater is something that can happen anywhere there is an empty space and an audience and some performers, so we want to tell stories in whatever space is right.”
— Matt Boresi, theater director



Midway photo by Lucy Byrnes

NEW ACT. Incorporating contemporary perspectives, Ryan Wantland and Matt Boresi started serving as U-High’s technical director and theater director at the beginning of this school year. They are eager to bring in a new era to U-High’s theater department.

the rise of technology, more people choose to stay home and watch TV or a movie rather than engaging with art in person.

He wants to direct shows that encourage the community to step away from their screens and see the arts in real life.

“Theater is something that can happen anywhere there is an empty space and an audience and some performers,” Mr. Boresi said, “so we want to tell stories in whatever

space is right.”

They plan on exploring this, whether through taking their performances out of the Sherry Lansing Theater and into nontraditional spaces, interacting with the audience, moving the audience around, implementing new technology in lighting and set design, or collaborating with the university, Lab and Chicago communities. Above all, though, they’re eager to collaborate with

the students.

“The students that I’ve met at Lab have all been so enthusiastic and hungry to learn new things and try new things,” Mr. Wantland said, “They’re just hungry to learn in general in a way that students at other schools and institutions that I’ve worked at and toured through just didn’t have.”

In addition to supervising the theatrical productions, they will be teaching their respective classes,

Mr. Wantland in Technical Theater Production and Mr. Boresi in Directing and Acting Studio.

“I’m excited about the newness,” Mr. Boresi said. “Mr. Wantland’s new, and I’m new. This is a new space for us. We are new to the students. They’re new to us. All students, no matter how long they’ve been doing it, are somewhat new to the art and the craft, so I want all of us to have this exciting, fun, scary experience together.”

‘Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice’ delivers spooky nostalgia

by LIGHT DOHRN
Arts & Entertainment Editor

“The juice is loose.”

Uttering these words from atop a table in his striped suit and moldy green hair stands none other than the ghost with the most, the end-all-be-all of the undead, the impish demon known as Beetlejuice (Micael Keaton). Say his name three times, and he’s back on the big screen after 36 years.

In all its idiosyncratic chaos (and with a few sour notes), “Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice,” which opened in theaters Sept. 6, makes for an exciting and delightfully Tim Burton watch as Keaton dances across the screen with plenty of lewd jokes and macabre party tricks, and Winona Ryder dons her iconic blood-red wedding dress once again.

The movie’s acting shines even when the writing does not. Ryder embodies trembling adult Lydia Deetz, now a mini-celebrity with her own talk show titled “Ghost House With Lydia Deetz.” She’s traumatized and paranoid, which makes sense for a woman who almost had a marriage with an undead prankster freak forced upon her at the ripe age of 15. Ryder’s portrayal remains just as convincing and enjoyable as the 1988 original.

But the movie’s real scene-stealer is Catherine O’Hara, playing Lydia’s delicate stepmother Delia Deetz — a brutally untalented performance artist with an inflated ego and remarkable emotional neediness. O’Hara wrings her hands, primps her hair, and



Warner Bros.

BACK FROM THE DEAD. “Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice,” which opened in theaters on Sept. 6, 2024, makes for an nostalgic and exciting watch 36 years after the original was released in 1988.

delivers surprising wit that gets a laugh from the audience with nearly every line.

One of the film’s notable weaknesses comes in the form of Astrid Deetz (Jenna Ortega), Lydia’s eye-rolling and rebellious daughter.

Astrid is meant to be charmingly morbid, a gothic oddball who dances to her own rhythm with a side of precocious intelli-

gence. We see her stapling global warming awareness fliers to her school’s bulletin board that read “Wake Up, We’re Toast” and dressing up as Marie Curie (already in the late stages of radiation poisoning) for Halloween. It’s intended to be adorable, but her witty humor comes across as derivative at best, obnoxious at not-so-best, and dips its toes into misogynistic at worst — when a group of girls at school

prank her by swinging a fake ghost in her face as she enters a room, she turns and snaps, “When you all are on your third kid and second husband, we’ll see who has the last laugh.” Real zinger, huh?

Several of the movie’s many subplots seem to have been invented out of thin air or at the last minute. One example is Beetlejuice’s undead bride Dolores (Monica Bellucci), first seen reattaching her

chopped-up limbs with a staple gun before going on a rampage to find her ex-husband. She was not mentioned a single time in the first movie, and even in her extremely flattering dress and full face, it’s tough to be convinced she fits in.

Going in, I wondered if anything could ever stack up to the original — and of course, the answer is no. But this movie shouldn’t be trapped within the shadow of the first.

Even with many of the flaws that Hollywood sequels often have, “Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice” has a nostalgic familiarity and deftly reworks many vintage elements — and actors that are now much older — to create an edgy and hilarious trip back into the underworld.

by the numbers

\$15 million

1988 “Beetlejuice” budget

\$84.5 million

1988 “Beetlejuice” box office

\$100 million

“Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice” budget

\$272 million

“Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice” box office

— Light Dohrn

Global Glow-up

Use of imported skin care increases due to affordability, gentle ingredients

by CAROLINE SKELLY
Reporter

Milky toners, moisturizing cleansers and small glass bottles of serum are meticulously lined up on Jianna Hong's vanity, ready for her elaborate and multi-step skin care ritual. All the products she uses are from South Korea.

Jianna, a sophomore, is not the only one opting to use imported skin care products, specifically, Korean skin care products. These products and other imported skin care products have been steadily rising in use in the past 10 years, appearing in Sephora and other beauty stores across America.

Korean skin care products have risen in popularity because of their use of more natural and gentle ingredients. Another reason is their affordability. Western skin care contains more harsh acids that can be harmful to the skin when used incorrectly. Western products are also more expensive.

Korean skin care uses ingredients like snail mucin and rice products, which both promote hydration and youthful glow. Western skin care uses acids like salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide that can damage skin.

"I think that the ingredients used to make Korean skin care are a lot better for the skin, and that the ingredients in American skin care are just mediocre compared to Korean skin care," Jianna said.

For example, the United States has not approved a higher quality chemical filter in sunscreen because of a law, yet countries such as Korea and France have. Korean SPF and the French sunscreen brand La Roche-Posay have become more popular in the United States because of their higher quality filter, despite the fact that

“
I think that the ingredients used to make Korean skin care are a lot better for the skin, and that the ingredients in American skin care are just mediocre compared to Korean skin care.
”
Jianna Hong,
sophomore



Midway photo by Bryce Light

BEAUTY SQUEEZE. Going viral on TikTok has propelled many imported skin care products into spotlight, with influencers driving the products' growing popularity, particularly among Gen Z consumers.

the filter has not been approved in the United States. Korean skin care is also more desirable because it is less expensive than American products. The price of Korean moisturizers and cleansers can range from \$15 to \$60, but the price of moisturizers and cleansers in America can be over \$100.

"It's very affordable, so kind of accessible to everyone," Jianna said. "Whereas, I feel like if you would go to a Sephora in the United States, it's a lot more expensive, and the value and the quality of it

may not be the best."

The most popular and viral imported skin care brands are Glow Recipe, Laneige, Dr. Jart+, Hero Pimple Patches and La Roche-Posay. Many of these products became popular because they went viral on TikTok. Influencers have played a big part in the rise of imported skin care products, specifically in marketing them to Gen Z audiences. Popularity of these products also stems from the wish to have "glass skin," or dewy-looking, healthy skin that is seen in

popular Korean dramas. Korean skin care is also effective over a diverse range of skin types, and takes an overall skin health approach, versus Western skin care's corrective approach, focusing on the overall improvement of the skin, rather than using harsh chemicals to remove blemishes.

"I think they really try to focus on different skin types," Jianna said, "especially sensitive skin, acne skin, and really use specific ingredients for those specific skin types."

Patch Perfection: Pimple patches provide stylish, subtle solution for acne relief and skin protection



Midway photo by Peyton Palmer

PLACE A PATCH. Junior Summer Pinc puts on a pimple patch on her right cheek. Pimple patches, with their ability to cure zits, have found a place as both an acne treatment and a fashion statement.

by ORLIE WEITZMAN
Reporter

Stars. Hearts. Cherries. Surprisingly, these aren't the latest update of emojis or Snapchat symbols — they're popular skincare patches that more and more teens have turned to deal with their acne.

Ranging from \$2 to \$12, hydrocolloid pimple patches absorb excess fluid and bacteria through a gel layer, reducing inflammation and the overall redness of the zit.

Many U-High students have turned to pimple patches as a cheaper acne treatment option, and while some prefer subtle patches for effectiveness, many are embracing their blemishes by selecting stylish patches.

Ninth grader Dorothy Jennett, who uses the patches roughly once a month, prefers them for their cosmetic abilities.

"The patches are somewhat effective for making the pimple go away," she said.

Dorothy also uses them for aesthetics.

"I really like the ones with cute

“
I really like the ones with cute colors and designs. They are convenient when you really don't want your zits to show, whereas other treatments don't actually cover up the zits.
”
Dorothy Jennett,
ninth grader

colors and designs," she said. "They are convenient when you really don't want your zits to show, whereas other treatments don't actually cover up the zits."

Senior Ben O'Donnell also finds the patches useful for that exact purpose.

"I mostly wear them at night, and when I take them off in the morning, the pimple is usually less visible," he said.

While many male-identifying students wear pimple patches, manufacturers tend to market pri-

marily to female-identifying audiences.

Sophomore Siena Moore has noticed the popularity of pimple patches among girls but suggests everyone struggling with acne try them.

"I think guys tend to be more self-conscious about this stuff, but I honestly recommend them to everyone," she said. "They make pimples look more fun, and have saved me so many times."

Similarly, sophomore Aiden Yu, who uses pimple patches at home but avoids wearing them in public, agrees they work well.

He believes the reason more guys don't come down to individual aesthetic preferences.

"Personally, I don't like the look of stickers on my face, especially not the yellow stars or other colorful ones," he said. "But I've never really heard a guy make fun of someone for wearing them. It's a personal choice."

No matter the color, style or size, students seem to agree that pimple patches are worth it.

for more

These imported skin care products are highly regarded for their gentle ingredients and affordability. Check out some of the most popular options.

• **Round Lab Birch Moisturizing Sunscreen SPF 50+, PA++++**

This lightweight Korean sunscreen is vegan, fragrance-free and reef safe. It uses four chemical sunscreen filters. It has a UVB rating of SPF 50+, which measures the sun protection factor. It also has a UVA rating of PA++++, which means the sunscreen shields over 95% of UVA rays. This product is \$24 on [oliveyoung.com](https://www.oliveyoung.com).

• **Haruharu wonder Black Rice Hyaluronic Toner**

This lightweight toner is marketed toward sensitive skin. It contains hyaluronic acid, a star hydrating ingredient in skin care. It contains rice extract, or *oryza sativa* extract, which contains antioxidants like ferulic acid, which calm the skin. This product is sold on the Olive Young website for \$18.

• **Beauty of Joseon Revive Serum: Ginseng + Snail Mucin**

This serum is meant to enhance elasticity and hydrate the skin with its two key ingredients: ginseng and snail mucin. Snail mucin, a favorite in Korean beauty, is the mucus that snails secrete, and is known for its hydrating and soothing properties. Ginseng is an herbal ingredient meant to improve the appearance and texture of skin. This serum is available on the brand's website for \$17.

• **Biafine emulsion cream**

Created in 1971, this cult-favorite French product is used to treat anything from redness to burns. The cream is water-based and includes squalane, a hydrating ingredient, and avocado oil, an antioxidant, which protects the skin from free radical damage. This product is available on the French pharmacy Moncoinsanté's website for about \$8.

— Mia Lipson



No license, no problem

For ease, convenience students utilize public transit as their daily commute

by **LUCY SHIRRELL**
Reporter

As the 172 bus arrives at the corner of Kimbark Avenue and 59th Street, a large group of Lab students flash their IDs to the driver — their ticket for the route — and quickly rush to find seats. The bus pulls away from the stop, leaving behind school, and turns North onto Woodlawn Avenue.

For senior Alexander Saratovsky, this has been his after school routine since fifth grade when he began taking the bus home from school.

U-High students navigate their long commutes in various ways, balancing factors such as distance, convenience and safety.

A large part in Alexander’s decision to take public transportation regularly is the freedom it provides.

Alexander said, “It’s nice to have the freedom of public transportation, so if I’m doing something after school I have a ride home.”

Although safety is a concern for many people when traveling via the CTA, Alexander said that being conscious of your surroundings during the times when you’re commuting is key.

“You have to be smart about it,” Alexander said, advising people to be careful of traveling on the CTA after dark.

A major inconvenience about the bus is the inaccuracy of tracking apps, Alexander said.

“It’s inconvenient mostly because they don’t have a great way of tracking the bus, so you don’t know when it will come,” Alexander said.

For sophomore Ilana Schopin, the distance from her house to school deterred her from taking public transit. Instead she relies on a van service to get to and from school.

“Since I live far away and my parents weren’t always available to pick me up, especially after volleyball practice, we decided to take the van, just for convenience purposes,” Ilana said.

Much like Alexander, when Ilana does take public transit, awareness is her biggest tip to feeling safe.

“As long as you pay attention and make sure you’re responsible with your items and your actions, I really don’t think public transport is a non-useful tool,” Ilana said.

Senior Maxine Hurst relies on driving to get to school, despite her

cta facts

Here are some CTA train and bus lines that run through Hyde Park and are convenient for U-High Students:

- **L train:** Red and Green lines
- **CTA bus:** 2 Hyde Park Express, 4 Cottage Grove, 6 Jackson Park Express, 10 Museum of Science and Industry and 28 Stony Island
- **171 and 172 CTA buses** can be access through student U-High IDs
- **Metra Electric District Line**

— Chloë Alexander

brother’s passion for the CTA. Carrying her golf clubs makes commuting on public transit difficult.

“I mostly drive because I carry my golf clubs with me wherever I go,” Maxine said. “I’m on the golf team, and sometimes I want to meet up with my dad and play, and it’s harder for me to carry my clubs and my backpack on public transit.”

On the weekends, Maxine regularly uses public transit rather than driving.

“Whenever I’m traveling downtown, where parking is a nightmare, I would definitely take the

bus over the car,” Maxine said.

Although navigating public transit can seem overwhelming at first, once routes are learned it is straightforward.

“Once you clear the initial hurdle of learning what route you need to take to get to a destination that you’re going to, it becomes very easy,” Maxine said.

Sophomore Justin Salomon takes the Metra Electric to get to and from school every day. Before Justin moved to the downtown area, he was commuting via a van service, a commute that was very frustrating for him.

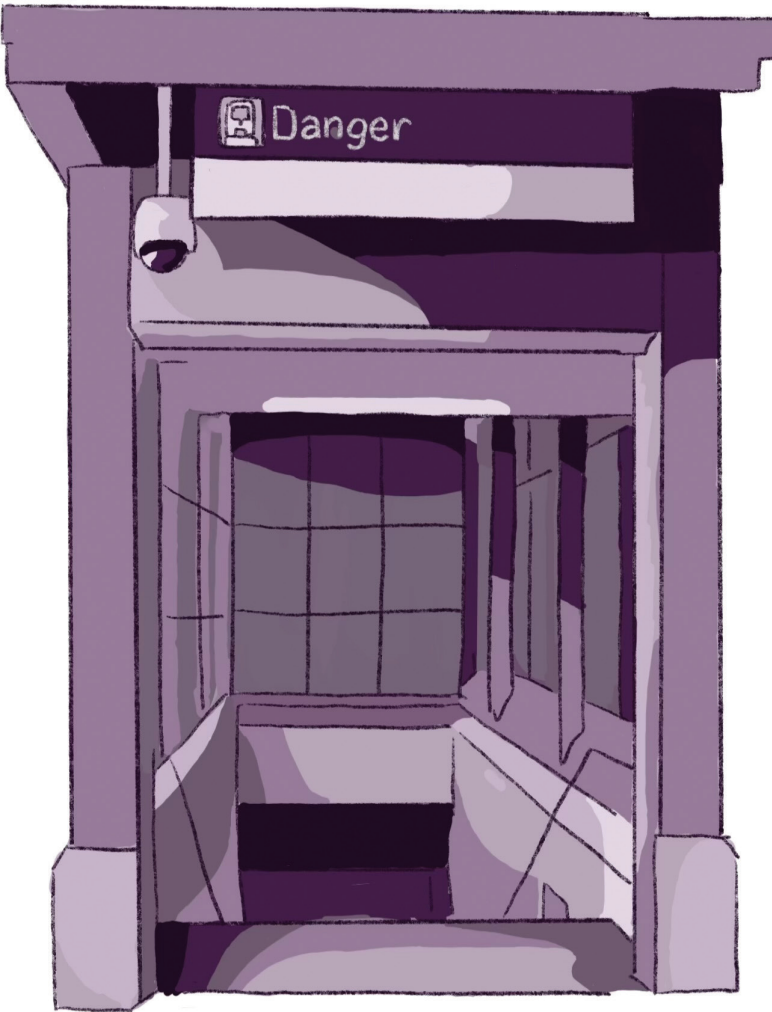
“It was just long to get home, the rush hour traffic especially with the construction,” Justin said. “It just took forever to get home, which just really made me angry.”

Now, Justin enjoys commuting alongside some close friends who live near him.

“There’s a couple of people who I’m really close with who live in the Loop, and it’s really nice to get to see them every day and talk with them a little bit,” Justin said.

While the students on the 172 bus pull away down Woodlawn, other U-High students are opening the doors of vans, hopping into the driver’s seat of their cars, and rushing off to the nearest Metra stop to begin their own long journey home.

Students must stay safe while on the CTA



Midway illustration by Ilana Umanskiy

DANGER BEWARE. Even though crime rates in the CTA have declined, students should still try to ride in groups and without two headphones on.

Here are tips for staying safe while riding on the CTA

by **KABIR JOSHI**
Opinion

For many U-High students, public transportation is the way to and from school, being easy, cheap and reliable. But, with the ease of public transportation comes issues of safety and security.

The Chicago Transit Authority reported 3.4 crimes per million riders among all trains and buses. This has trended down since 2021, which saw a peak of 4.2 crimes per million riders but has nearly quadrupled since 2015. This combined with the stereotype and the focus on negative incidents on the CTA has led many riders to drive or take other forms of transportation or just avoid public transportation completely.

According to a January 2023 poll conducted by WBEZ of 2,000 daily CTA riders, 45% of riders said they felt “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe” while riding the bus.

However many of these incidents are easily avoidable through a few simple tips recommended by Michael McGehee, Lab’s director of safety and security and a former Chicago police officer.

“Whether you’re taking the train or the bus, a good practice is to sit in a place where there are people, and if you don’t feel comfortable,

go to where the conductor or driver is,” Mr. McGehee said.

Even if you don’t know anyone, sitting in a crowd makes you a less of an easy target, and riding near an employee is an extra form of protection against possible dangers while riding on the CTA.

Sitting with a group of people may not be possible because sometimes trains and buses are empty, so riding with someone you know like a friend or a family member can provide a sense of safety and entertainment.

For many students, having airpods or headphones is a common occurrence, but while they can allow you to be in your own space when you’re , they can isolate you from your environment.

“If you’re going to have headphones in,” Mr. McGehee said, “I always recommend one with an AirPods or with headphones, put one ear cup to the side, just so you can hear and be aware of your surroundings.”

One final tip Mr. McGehee suggested: students should use their common sense and judge their surroundings to make the right decision.

“Use your common sense, if it’s a really late night, it might be worth the extra money to Uber. If not, call a friend for a ride and just let people know where you are. If it is your parents or older sibling, just communicate with people, especially if you are traveling alone,” Mr. McGehee said.

vox pop.

A reporter asked students: do you take public transportation? If yes, why do/don't you? If no, what would make you?

“I’ll use public transportation from time to time if my parents are super busy. I like using it because I feel like I get to see the world, and I just really like going on the train, but it can be really dirty sometimes.”

— **Colin Williams**, ninth grade

“I use public transportation because it makes it really easy to get around the city. It’s also really fun to use with friends. Sometimes it can smell bad and there can be weird people, but other than that it’s all right.”

— **Atticus Richard**, sophomore

“During the winter, I use the 172 bus in Hyde Park a lot. I like how convenient it is, and it makes me feel better about myself not using as much gasoline just for myself. The main downside is how inconsistent the times are.”

— **Zoe Cobb**, sophomore

“I use public transportation over the summer usually. I think it’s pretty efficient compared to just nagging my parents all the time. I don’t really like having to plan a certain time to leave, but overall it’s pretty good.”

— **Hailey Purcell**, sophomore

“I take the Metra every day from school and back. I think the Metra is a lot easier just because there’s no traffic. Also, the trains come frequently, so if you miss it you can still get to school on time.”

— **Mo Lyi-Ojo**, junior

“I take the train every morning, and I like it because I don’t have to worry about traffic. The timing is really consistent, so I don’t have to worry about being late to my classes, and I get to sleep in because the station is close to my house. The only downside is that I find it really hard to do work on the train.”

— **Ben Troutman**, senior

“I take public transportation because I don’t have my license, and it’s hard for my parents to drive me around everywhere. There’s always interesting people to see, and I really like the independence of taking public transportation. It’s also really convenient because it’s cheaper than Ubering, and I feel like I see a lot more.”

— **Only Eggner**, senior

— *compiled by Milo Platz-Walker*

Starting fresh

Ninth grade varsity soccer starters appreciate positive team environment

by SOHANA SCHNEIDER

Reporter

Ninth graders Alexander Yamini and Santiago Bravo have been fiercely committed to soccer all of their lives, engaging in both club and school teams.

After years of hard training and competition, their commitment has paid off as they become members of the varsity boys soccer team.

As some of the youngest members on the team, Alex and Santi bring talent to their starting positions in the midfield.

After their summer practices, a team bonding trip in Michigan and their first win, Alex and Santi reflect on how their newfound relationships with their teammates have improved their high school experience.

What do you like about soccer?

Santi: I like the environment, especially how it feels and the passion.

Alex: I like when you kick the ball causing an assist or scoring a goal. Everyone goes to celebrate that goal.

What was it like to play futsal as an eighth grader?

Alex: That was fun, because especially with the seniors last year, they were super fun to play with. And everyone is super nice here, and it was a super cool environment to play in.

Santi: It was kind of challenging, but it was so much fun.

What was it like to start the soccer season without starting high school?

Santi: I wasn't sure if I was going to be playing, or get any playing time, but once I saw that the coach trusted me enough, I was very proud and excited for the season to come.

Alex: As a freshman I did not think I would get as much playing time as other juniors or seniors, but it really worked out.

How has soccer affected your high school experience so far?

Santi: We have connections now in school. Our relationships went from not knowing each other to being family and being together, which was very amazing.

Alex: Soccer has helped me so much already, especially that Michigan trip. I love everyone on our team.

Have you learned anything



Midway photo by Aubrey Felsen

NINTH GRADE GOALS. Ninth grade varsity soccer players Santi Bravo and Alex Yamini have embraced their new roles as starters on the team. Alex and Santi value their positive experiences as varsity starters, highlighting the supportive team environment and strong bonds they have formed with their teammates.

about leadership?

Alex: Looking at Danny (Aronsohn) and Noah (Hoereth), I think I learned a lot about being calm and knowing what to do.

Santi: If someone makes a mistake, it hits the captains, too, as if they were the ones who made the mistake.

Have your teammates done anything to take you under their wing?

Santi: Mo (Iyi-Ojo) Ty (Quiles) and Danny (Aronsohn) have. Whenever I'm lost and I don't know my way, because I joined last year, they help me around and talk

to me in the halls, which makes it very fun.

Alex: Danny, of course. He's super supportive.

What is it like being some of the few freshmen on the team?

Santi: Before the Michigan trip, practicing with the upperclassmen made me nervous, but after the Michigan trip, I trust everyone a lot more, and I know them a lot better.

Have there been any highlights or memorable moments for you so far this season?

Santi: Winning our first game, because everyone just got together

and celebrated. The emotions were all over the place. We went from being stressed and nervous to being extremely happy.

Alex: Winning our first game was so cool and super fun, when Spencer (Davis) scored last minute.

What is the team environment like?

Santi: It's amazing.

Alex: People are super nice. Like, it's just great to be around them. At my club team, I don't really like the people as much, but over here, I love them.

What are some of the things

that you have learned from the upperclassmen that have improved your experience or you think will help you in the future?

Santi: I've learned many new soccer skills, but unrelated to soccer, they gave me lots of advice about how to manage sports and school work.

What are some of your personal goals or goals for the future on this team?

Santi: I want to build and get better for the team and for us personally.

Alex: Win state.

Athletics department welcomes three new administrators

by DECLAN SMITH

Reporter



Midway photo by Leila Rezanian

NEW ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS. New athletic administrators, Josh Potter, Becky Chmielewski and David Ribbens display recent U-High athletics awards in the fitness center.

David Ribbens, after a year of retirement, has returned as the new interim athletics director, working alongside new assistant athletics directors Becky Chmielewski and Josh Potter. The athletics department is focused on strengthening the experience at home games and increasing the amount of lower school students who attend sports games.

Mr. Potter, a former physical education teacher and soccer coach, transitioned to his new role in May. He wanted to expand his impact on athletes beyond soccer.

"It has always been a dream of mine," Mr. Potter said about his new position. "I've always admired the administrators that I've worked under, especially Dave Ribbens."

As a goal for his future in this position, Mr. Potter wants to expand the athletics facilities at the school.

Mr. Potter said, "I would love to offer more facility options for our student athletes. I think one of the

“
I'm just really excited for opportunities for growth and development of the athletic program and visibility of that whole program within our whole school community.
Becky Chmielewski, assistant athletic director
”

biggest concerns that I hear a lot from our student athletes is the constraints we have with facilities.”

The athletics department is also unveiling a new sixth grade intramural sports program following last year's budget cuts. Ms. Chmielewski previously was Lab's associate director of family life, and she served as interim assistant principal at the middle school and and nine years as a middle school

girls basketball coach.

"We're also piloting a sixth grade intramural program this year," Ms. Chmielewski said. "We're having two four-week seasons for our sixth grade sports."

Ms. Chmielewski thought it was an opportune time for her to change roles.

"I'm just really excited for opportunities for growth and development of the athletic program and visibility of that whole program within our whole school community," Ms. Chmielewski said.

This year, Mr. Ribbens is looking forward to increasing school spirit at home games. He has planned to bring food trucks to the Homecoming games and to increase advertising games throughout the year. The department aims to boost student engagement by enhancing game day experiences.

"Our goal is to offer a great quality athletic program to our students," Mr. Ribbens said, "We want to put them on a path to be successful."