u-high midway

University of Chicago Laboratory High School

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Turning down the volume

To reemphasize library as silent study space, librarians enact new policies

by LUCY SHIRRELL
Reporter

The librarians have met their limit.

After lab periods filled with rising chatter, they're calling for a return to the quiet, productive space the library is intended to be.

Due to excessive noise disrupting the library, librarians have implemented new restrictions during lab periods to limit the number of visitors and reduce talking.

The doors leading to Gordon Parks Arts Hall are now closed during lab periods, so students have to check in with a librarian before entering the library. Students' volume will be regulated closely.

The librarians decided to act after observing that the library was becoming too loud and not a place where productive work could occur during lab periods.

"It just wasn't a place where you could actually get work done and have a quiet place to think and focus, so we decided that we needed to do something," librarian Shirley Volk said.

Junior Kathryn Bean frequently works in the library, even before the noise policy was implemented, as she finds it the most convenient place to study. She finds she is more productive now that the library is quiet.

"It used to be really loud in here," Kat said, "but now it's very quiet and I can focus on my work."

Although sophomore Zoe Cobb understood the need for the restrictions, she feels they limit community-building opportunities that the library provides.

"I feel like the library is definitely the place where I would just run into people all the time to start small conversations, and I would always see different groups of people interacting and meshing in the library," Zoe said. "I feel like that has definitely been hard with the new library restrictions."

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>
> — Shirley Volk, librarian

Zoe, who acknowledged she enjoys conversing openly in the library, also understands why restrictions are in place.

"I completely understand where it's coming from because there has been a lot of disruption in the library recently," Zoe said. "It is honestly not a good place to go if you're needing somewhere quiet to get work done."

Ninth grader Abhi Majumdar also supported the changes.

"I used to hang out in the library to be honest, but I think it's actually good because there's really no other place to, like, study quietly," Abhi said. "It used to be just like another lounge."

Ms. Volk and fellow librarian Susan Augustine also recognized the lack of dedicated quiet study spaces in the school.

"It's not that we're against socializing," Ms. Volk said. "It's just that during these periods when everyone's free, we feel like the school really needs to have a place where students can do that and it feels like the students that are in here appreciate that."

In response to the new library policy, the sophomore Student Council has passed a bill that asks administrators to supervise more rooms during lab periods, creating more space for group work.

Class of 2027 president Aiden Yu said the Student Council received student feedback last year about the limitations of working in the library, but now that the library's policy has become stricter, the council decided to move forward on the bill.

Zoe and Abhi reacted positively to student council efforts to open up rooms for less-quiet work. They say having more rooms available during lab periods would be helpful.

Zoe said, "It's hard to find spaces, especially where you can go, that isn't just like sitting in the middle of a hallway, to work on group projects ... I definitely think supervised rooms is a great solution."

Since only a few non-co-curricular weeks have passed since the policy was implemented, Ms. Volk and Ms. Augustine plan to continuously monitor the progress.

"We'll just see how well the students have taken our message, like the Schoology posts and tons of signs... I think it's really good evidence when the kids that are in here are working quietly and helping each other be quiet," Ms. Volk said.

Midway photo by Estelle Levinson

CUT THE CHIT-CHAT. Junior Danyal Shah works in the library during Lab C on Oct. 23. To promote a focused environment, librarians are now closing the GPAH doors, requiring check-ins and controlling noise during lab periods.

Dig Pink raises funds, awareness for cancer research

Midway photo by Alex Diamond

MORE THAN A GAME. Senior Kaavya Peddinti hands her grandmother, Vijaya Vedantam, a bouquet at the Oct. 23 Dig Pink volleyball game in Upper Kovler Gymnasium.

by KARINA HANS
Reporter

The stands were filled to the brim with a swarm of pink on Oct. 25, with U-High students cheering at the top of their lungs at the annual Dig Pink volleyball game to raise awareness for breast cancer and raise money for cancer research. The U-High varsity team ended up losing 0-2 but raised around $2,300, and donations are ongoing.

Before the varsity game began, head coach Lisa Kirchhoff, a breast cancer survivor herself, gave a speech about the significance of Dig Pink and the guest of honor for this year, breast cancer survivor Viyaja Vedantam, senior player Kaavya Peddinti's grandmother.

Ms. Vedantam was diagnosed with ductal carcinoma four years ago. It was detected early because of her regular screenings. Ms. Kirchhoff said her story shows why it's important for women to get screenings.

The volleyball team received $1,165 in donations on their website and sold all 60 of their shirts, which were each $20. The proceeds go to the Side-Out Foundation, an organization committed to funding research and raising awareness through volleyball.

Ms. Kirchhoff said she expects to learn that the players reached their goal of $2,500 later this week.

Despite losing the game, the team still reached their goal of raising awareness and money for breast cancer.

Captain Maya Pytel agreed with this, adding that it was really exciting to have their opponent, the Latin school, involved too.

"It shows that although we're playing against each other, there's a big uniting cause that we're both fighting toward with finding a solution for breast cancer," Maya said. "It's an exciting thing and an important cause for all of us."

by the numbers

$2,300
amount raised for Dig Pink night

$1,165
amount raised on website

60
number of $20 shirts sold

Source: U-High volleyball

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mission and editorial policy.

The Midway is an independent newspaper that strives for excellence across all of our platforms. We are a student-run newspaper for the entire University of Chicago Laboratory High School community. We aim to not only represent the multitude of thoughts and experiences at U-High but also inform community members through transparent, timely and complete reporting.

In a time when the press is criticized, the U-High Midway seeks to inform, educate and serve the community of University High School. The Midway is developed and managed by students, for students.

In every story we write, the Midway should give a voice to the experiences of people at U-High. We will report on the people, activities and thoughts that make our school unique, striving to include the voices we haven't heard yet.

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Autumn Action

During the fall, athletes showed determination and commitment to their sports — with some even breaking records and winning medals. Here are some of the season's most intense, action-packed moments.

FINISHING FIRST. Racing toward the finish line, senior Simon Lane leads the pack on his way to first place at the Lincoln Park Latin Prep Invitational on Sept. 25. "It felt really good to get the win," Simon said. "It was the fastest time in a long time, so I felt very good about that." Simon qualified for the state meet Nov. 9.

Midway photo by N.C. Gunning

DETERMINED DIVING. Senior Uma Malani flips from the diving board during the team's meet against Mother McAuley on Oct. 2. Uma had an exceptional season, securing multiple victories and breaking her previous record with a score of 368.90.

Midway photo by Peyton Palmer

SOARING SPIKE. Leaping to the top of the net, sophomore Kylie Carter spikes the ball during the varsity volleyball team's game against Morgan Park Academy on Oct. 10. The Maroons won 2-1. "During that moment I was really focused on trying to get the ball to a certain spot on the court, so we could get that point," Kylie said. "The volleyball season overall has been so much fun. I love the team and how it fosters community. It's also been so fun to get a lot closer to the people who are important to me on the team."

Midway photo by Suleiman Sufi

SETTING UP THE SERVE. Varsity doubles player Xia Nesbitt, a junior, prepares to serve the ball with focus and precision. Finishing off the season strong, the girls tennis team won fourth place in the IHSA 1A state championship at Hersey High School Oct. 24-26, where both their first doubles team and first singles player placed second. "Being on the tennis team has been a great experience so far," Xia said. "Not only is there so much talent, but also the culture couldn't be better. We've become like a family who supports each other unconditionally."

Midway photo by Lucy Byrnes

STRONG SWING. Following through on his swing, senior Aneesh Pushparaj watches the ball during the boys golf team's win over Mount Carmel at Jackson Park Sept. 18. "I've really enjoyed my time on this small team. We're all close friends outside of golf," Aneesh said.

Midway photo by Nathan Li

HIGH HOPES. Ninth grader Alex Yamini and junior Danny Aronsohn jump up for a header during the varsity boys soccer game against North Shore Country Day Sept. 24. The Maroons lost 4-2. "Going up for a header is always exciting," Danny said. "It's such a vulnerable position, and you never know what's going to happen, but the excitement of scoring always overtakes the fear of getting hurt."

Midway photo by Bryce Kenny

for more

Scan the QR code to learn more about how the cross country, golf, volleyball, girls tennis and boys soccer teams performed during the final weeks of the fall season and postseason.