



Homecoming '25 features fun, food, frights

Vampire Ball, Titanpalooza top events of spirited week

By Emily Olbekson & Zemani Moore
STAFF WRITERS

It might have been the busiest week so far this year for Skyline students — and many Titans really sank their teeth into it.

During homecoming week, held Oct. 14-18, Skyline sponsored four spirit days, Titanpalooza, a football game, a dance battle and a vampire-themed dance. A pep rally, originally scheduled for Wednesday, was canceled due to bad weather.

For the first spirit day on Tuesday, students came to school ready to go back to sleep. After all, it was Pajama Day.

On Wednesday, students wore either black or pink for Blackout/Pinkout Day. And on Thursday, they relaxed like Adam Sandler by putting on their baggiest clothes.

While the first three themes

were chosen for Homecoming 2025 by Leadership, Friday's theme was the traditional Class Color Day. Each grade got its own color: freshmen dressed in gray, sophomores in white, juniors in black and seniors in red.

Friday was also Titanpalooza — one of the most anticipated events of the year. Every year, students are released at 1:53 p.m. to enjoy food and activities on the Senior Lawn.

Highlights this year included an active hamburger grill, the taping of math teacher Maxwell Litster to a wall, and a hot dog eating contest won by Weslin Quiquix-Paz of the AED pathway. He ate three dogs in one minute and 47 seconds.

"I'd say it was very hard since I was rushing and ate each hot dog in around two bites," said Quiquix-Paz. "I did this because it was free food and it was surprisingly easy."

More than 60 clubs and sports teams sold a variety of items,

including foods such as crepes, tiramisu and "dirt cakes" (chocolate cake with Oreo crumbs), as well as raffle baskets and zines.

"Selling at Titanpalooza is most definitely the biggest opportunity to get funding for your club," said senior Emily Lucas-Orellana, historian of La Raza. "We made above \$500; we do tend to sell out (of burritos) since it's a club tradition."

After Titanpalooza, students headed to the football game where the Titans lost to Castle-mont 6-28. Still, the Titan fans celebrated the first homecoming touchdown in four years and enjoyed a dance battle between the cheer squads of each school.

The next night, the fun turned "frightful" at the Vampire Ball.

Charlotte Hurowitz, an Alameda High student, said that the Vampire theme convinced her to attend her boyfriend's homecoming dance at Skyline.

"My school's homecoming had a pretty boring theme, but I



Photo by Aleksander Von Komarnicki

HOMECOMING HIGHLIGHT Students fill the Senior Lawn for activities, food and fundraising during Titanpalooza on Oct. 17. Students get out of class at 1:53 p.m. every year for this event.

thought that Skyline's (themes) were really interesting," she said.

The Vampire Ball did not disappoint Hurowitz.

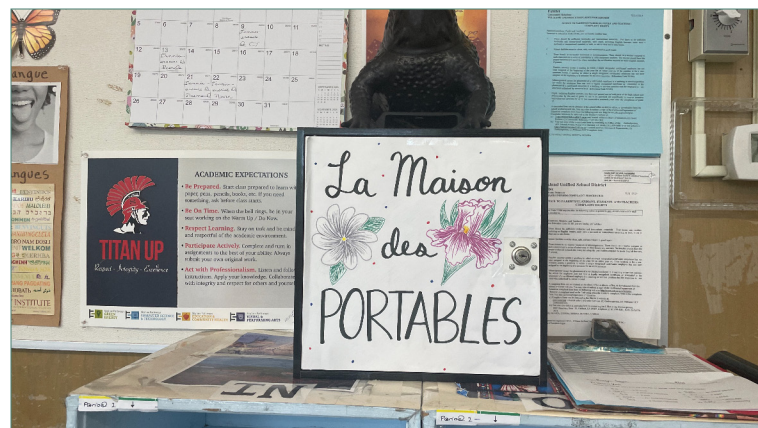
"It was really cool. I saw people responding to the theme, and I loved the decorations," she said.

Indeed, students danced in cloaks and fangs, ate Costco pizza and sipped Kool-Aid "blood"

from IV bags at the dance.

Those at the spooky celebration even survived a real scare — a fire alarm. Students briefly took the party outside until the fire alarm was deemed false.

They returned to dance the night away — or at least until the Vampire Ball ended, just a little past 9 p.m.



AU REVOIR CLASSROOM TEXTS Teacher Zoe Ozdemir uses French to show where phones belong. At right, one of her students complies by putting her phone in "La Maison de Portables."



Photos by Huy Kiana Nguyen

More teachers tighten electronics rules in advance of phone-free classroom law

Students worry restrictions will put them in harm's way

By Clarissa Villacarte & Huy Kiana Nguyen
STAFF WRITERS

What's the item most reached for at school? No doubt, it's your cell phone.

What's the number one complaint for teachers during class? No doubt, it's your cell phone.

This has been a growing conflict for students and teachers statewide. So much so that Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the Phone-Free School Act last September to intervene in the conflict and to force all public schools in California to implement a phone-free environment. The law, which takes effect July 1, is designed to help students academically. It also is supposed to reduce cyberbullying, and improve young people's mental health and social interactions.

Principal Rebecca Huang said Oakland Unified School District has not yet informed her about specific changes it will require.

While the specifics of the policy are unknown, many students say they're concerned about safety. In a survey of 104 students conducted by *The Oracle*, many said phones are needed for communication in emergencies.

"When it comes to a dangerous situation, students must be able to contact parents or guardians immediately," wrote AED senior Samantha Granados.

Another student wrote about how her phone had helped her during a school lockdown.

"I was able to text my friends and make sure they were okay, and I was able to text my family, and tell them that I was safe and that I loved them," wrote AED senior Bridget Epstein.

Forty-eight percent agreed that the law could "improve student learning and well-being by reducing distractions and promoting in-person social interaction."

However, 61 percent said cell phones did not hurt *their* learning, and 77 percent said the law was unnecessary.

Principal Huang explained

that the phone boxes now in classrooms are not under district jurisdiction and that teachers, for now, decide how to enforce the no-phone policy listed in the student handbook.

She said the phone boxes "can be a very good thing" because it is hard for students to practice self-discipline when their phones are near.

"It can allow focus," she said.

Teacher Shannon Silberhorn started using a phone box two years ago. She said she finds herself teaching more and spending less time redirecting students.

"Not having a phone on you is important because it makes sure you're able to engage with everyone at your table," she said, adding that students reacted negatively the first year.

Oakland High School started its phone-free classroom policy campus-wide this year.

Kiana Fong, a reporter for the O-High newspaper, told *The Oracle*, "Some students complain, saying, 'I hate how we can't use our phones.'"

Center helps students with everything college, career

By Liam Geissler
STAFF WRITER

TITAN REVIEW

It is one of the most valuable resources for students at Skyline and is located just next to the principal's office in the main office building.

The College and Career Center, or CCC, has six professional counselors to help students with their goals after high school.

They are Jazmine Cisneros Peña (College and Career Readiness Specialist), Ms. Anadeisi Pablo Mendoza (EAOP college adviser), Ms. Ruby De Anda Enriquez (East Bay Consortium financial aid adviser), Benicio Mares (East Bay Consortium college adviser), Nathan Roura (Mills College/Northeastern University Trio counselor) and Patrick Calvin (Career Transition Specialist).

The CCC is not just a resource for college; it's a great place to find out about other postsecondary options. This includes opportunities for work right out of high school, resume building, mock interviews and advice on career training.

Every year, the CCC hosts college representatives from about 25 schools, said Ms. Cisneros Peña, known to students as Ms. Jazmine. This fall, the center will host nearly 30, including five CSUs, six UCs, 10 in-state private colleges and nine out-of-state schools. There was even one international university — University of Abertay, Scotland.

During these visits, representatives speak about their institution, programs, financial aid, campus life and majors. They

also provide guidance on how to complete fall applications.

The CCC doesn't just support students pursuing four-year degrees — it also offers resources for those exploring other paths. With growing interest in the trades, Skyline has partnered with Oakland Unified School District to organize a field trip to the Cypress Mandela Training Center.

In the spring, the center also hosts fairs highlighting Career and Technical Education and community college options.

The CCC is not a resource purely for seniors; students of all grades can learn about college and work experience, explore post-secondary options, create a resume, receive support for the SAT and ACT, receive assistance in applying for financial aid, and get guidance in applying for internship and job opportunities.

"Ultimately, our hope is that all students feel welcomed in the College and Career Center, regardless of their grade level," said Ms. Jazmine.

Overall, the CCC is an incredible resource aimed at assisting all students every step of the way, no matter their path.

Quick tips from Ms. Jazmine for using CCC's many resources:

1. Join and check out your grade level's CCC Google Classroom

2026: pqctoxe

2027: 5h4bv6w

2028: vsqmfjn

2029: tb4ypwsp

2. Follow the CCC on Instagram: @skylineccc,

3. Schedule a 1:1 appointment by using linktr.ee/skyline_ccc.

Hot Takes #1: Fashion No No's

By Esey Gebregiorgis & Jesse Rocha-Valadez
STAFF WRITERS

We will set out to get hot takes, or unpopular opinions, every issue. These views represent the opinions of the speaker, not necessarily *The Oracle* or its writers. The focus here is fashion.

"I don't like Crocs; they're giving house shoes."
— Oumou Cisse
CHED 12th



"If you're gonna wear sandals, wear socks. You're not going surfing after this, put some shoes on please. Nearly as bad as Crocs without socks."
— Reginald Westbrook
Prometheus 9th

"Those round hats, sunhats, they're dookie."
— Juan Bautista
AED 12th



"Crop Tops. They look tacky."
— Rory Hackett
Prometheus 9th

"I don't get crop tops. I don't find them comfortable."
— Jayda Mitchell
Prometheus 9th

"Wearing a ski mask isn't 'hard.'"
— Ajmal Naji
AED 10th



"Shorts and sweatpants are cool, Y2K fits and baggy clothes are mid."
— Dahe'lyn Ewings
Prometheus 9th

"Back2Skool Vans are chopped, really not my thing. Also bag tags. They're literally just pieces of paper."
— Nicole Camp
Gaia 9th



Dear Oracle

HOW DO I LEAVE TOXIC FRIENDSHIPS?

By Fanny Lucas-Orellana & Leah Schatz
STAFF WRITERS

Dear Oracle,

My friends always exclude me and leave me out. How do you leave a toxic friend group?
— Concerned Student

Dear Concerned Student,

We've all been there — it's tough to leave a toxic friendship, and it can often feel like navigating a minefield. It's important to remember that you deserve happiness, so though it may feel scary to leave, it will be worth it in the end.

We'd recommend making plans with yourself — learn what you like to do outside of your friend group, whether that be art, sports, going to places by yourself just to have fun, etc. Having spaces where you're not in that toxic environment, branching out and making friends in new communities can also help you ease out of a toxic friendship.

The Oracle also sought advice for you from Tatum Ochoa O'Sullivan, a social worker with an office in the 50s building.

"It is okay for you to leave mentally and emotionally before you leave physically," she said. "There's nothing wrong with you, it's a human situation. You deserve people in your life who are going to include you and consider you — there are nine billion people on this planet, and you're going to find your people."

The Oracle would like to offer more advice to students. Use this QR code to submit your concern.



The Oracle

The Oracle is a vehicle of student freedom of expression and a public forum for the Skyline High School community. It is produced during the academic year by the journalism class and advised by Lisa Shafer

We welcome feedback about our content and would also like to hear ideas for future coverage. Signed letters on topics of concern to our community are welcomed.

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Performing arts showcase talent during successful Preview Night

By Elena Wenzler & Ivoneth Garcia
STAFF WRITERS

TITAN REVIEW

It was a preview of the year and it succeed in its mission — the audience was left wanting more.

During Preview Night on Oct. 8, Skyline brought together students, families, and staff for an evening full of energy, creativity, and emotion.

The event featured performances from drama, dance, orchestra, jazz band, music production and choir, giving the community a peek at what Skyline's students have been working on this semester.

The night kicked off with the Skyline orchestra, directed by Adam Green, performing dramatic music that filled the theater and immediately grabbed the audience's attention. The haunting sounds set the tone for a night full of talent and powerful storytelling.

Next, Ms. Awele's Beginning Drama and Advanced Drama classes presented three original pieces exploring identity, equality and social justice. One of them, "We the People" by junior Alyssa Ortega, focused on the importance of unity and equality.

"My first piece was about being equal, we should all treat one another equally, no matter what," Ortega said. "I am the people; I stand with the people."

Her second piece tackled reproductive rights and personal agency. "It's not fair that we got it taken away from us," Ortega explained. "I wanted to talk about birthright and how it just wasn't fair."

The audience responded with a long round of applause, clearly connecting with the message



Photos by Lisa Leal

TITANS TAKE THE STAGE Kari Ly (upper left) and Tiffany Cheung dance to "Train Wreck" at Preview Night on Oct. 8. Below, Edwin Ngo, Siris Bradshaw and Van Williams (trumpets), Carson Proudfoot (trombone) and Liam Geissler (alto sax) also perform at the event.

and emotion of Ortega's set.

After the drama performance, Music Production students shared their project "Rhythm and Routes," which combined music, podcasting and film sound design.

"I'm happy I can pass it down to a new generation," said Mr. Harris, the Music Production teacher.

The dance department, directed by Dawn James, also impressed the audience, starting

with a beautiful duet that immediately earned cheers from the audience.

The final group piece closed the night with high energy, leaving the audience excited for the rest of the year.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the Spirit Technical Crew, who handled lighting, set changes, and sound. Their work kept everything running smoothly and made each performance shine.

Red Cross surpasses goal in blood drive

By Viviane Toure
STAFF WRITER

One Skyline club has already done enough to save 240 babies.

That's because Skyline's Red Cross Club collected 40 units of blood during its first blood drive on Oct. 8. Each unit can save up to six infants, according to the American Red Cross.

"Our original goal was 20 units, and we collected 40," said co-president Angelica Truong, a Community Health and Education junior. "It's amazing having a small thing we can do at school affect so many people."

The event exceeded the club leaders' expectations with nearly every student who signed up showing up to donate. Even those who were ineligible had replacements fill their spots.

The drive was held in honor of Sickle Cell Awareness Month, and members also worked to spread awareness about the disease and the need for more diverse donors.

Co-President and Green Energy junior Jia Sharma said hearing a donor share that her husband relied on transfusions



Photo by Aiden Ye

FROM THE HEART Students who participated in the first Red Cross Club blood drive gather for a photo in the library on Oct. 8. Students and staff members donated 40 units. The club will also be making disaster kits for Skyline classrooms along with other service projects.

is the type of reminder that "what we do can impact people in a good way."

As part of the nationwide American Red Cross organization, Skyline Red Cross focuses on community service, aid and health education.

"It's basically a Red Cross location," said Sharma. "Our main mission is to support the Red Cross mission."

Every Monday, Red Cross gathers in Room 73 to plan service activities and learn about new outreach initiatives. The 44 members get one volunteer hour

for each meeting they attend, which they can use on their resumes and college applications.

"One week we'll discuss a really important topic, and the next week we might have a more calm community building day," Sharma explained.

The club plans on training all members in Stop the Bleed methods. Other goals include certifying members in CPR, making disaster readiness kits for classrooms and running another blood drive in February.

Students who want to join the club can attend a meeting,