

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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Ninth grade is largest class yet

by **NIKHIL PATEL**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Entering U-High, the Class of 2023 is the largest class yet, but only 18 students are new to Lab this year which is largely due to increased enrollment when the current ninth graders were in middle school.

Four new juniors are also joining the high school this year.



Asra
Ahmed

The size of the class does cause some concern about typical high school activities, such as ones meant to build community like advisories. “We are trying to be conscientious with certain things like advisories, which are supposed to create smaller communities for our students,” Asra Ahmed, assistant principal, said. “Our lead advisors to the ninth grade, which are Laura Doto and Fran Spaltro, are working with the ninth grade cohort of advisers to build in lots of team building and group development activities because when you have a class that big, it’s really a challenge for everyone to feel connected to the school.”

Club shopping is another activity that will be affected by the large size of the class. According to Ms. Ahmed, faculty are working to make sure that every student knows about what is occurring and that they feel encouraged to get involved. Ms. Ahmed also expects the new students to bene-

“We’re doing everything that we usually do, we’re just looking at it with a closer eye because of the size of the class.”

— ASRA AHMED,
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

fit from U-High’s peer-to-peer program, where sophomores work to help their ninth graders classmates adjust to their new school.

Freshman retreat at Cedar Lake, Indiana, Aug. 29-30, served as a good way for new ninth graders to get acquainted with their immediate academic community before school started. Students who were excited to meet the new students were offered an opportunity to get to know them.

“The activities that the peer leaders made encouraged interaction between everyone,” ninth grader Akshay Badlani, who is starting his third year with the Class of 2023, said.

On the whole, however, most things will remain the same.

“We’re doing everything that we usually do,” Ms. Ahmed said. “We’re just looking at it with a closer eye because of the size of the class.”

So far, everything has gone all right.

“Freshman retreat went great, and here we are on the first day of school,” Ms. Ahmed said. “There are some logistical things in places like P.E., where the locker room is still under construction, and it is a large class to accommodate, but so far everything is going fine.”

BACK TO SCHOOL



MIDWAY PHOTOS BY MARIA SHAUGHNESSEY

SCOOTING WITH SPIRIT. Ella Mazurek and Ben Meyer cap off the back-to-school assembly Sept. 3, winning a captivating neck-and-neck scooter race. The assembly featured dodgeball, with teams composed of five members of each class, as well as a scooter race. Student council members introduced themselves and got the year off to an energetic start.



THROWING DOWN. Aden Chon, representing the Class of 2020, competes in a heated game of pom-pom dodgeball against opponents from each grade. Teamed with the Class of 2023, the seniors came out on top after minutes of enthusiastic cheers.

Bobo-Jones arbitration decision remains months off

Lengthy process delays verdict as school begins

by **MIRA COSTELLO**
NEWS EDITOR

The arbitration for the case of Daniel Bobo-Jones, a science teacher fired from Lab in January, will likely not have a verdict until December. The issue remains unresolved as a new school year began.

According to Laboratory Schools Director Charlie Abelman, the first day of the Bobo-Jones arbitra-

tion took place July 16 with another day of testimony held Aug. 30.

The arbitration will likely have its third and final day in early October, later than expected, according to Mr. Bobo-Jones. No new information is allowed, Mr. Bobo-Jones says, so the next date will only consist of rebuttals from each side.

This still doesn’t mean the end of the case, though.

“There’s additional time for each



Daniel
Bobo-Jones



Charlie
Abelman

side to share information, and then the arbitrator makes a decision,” Dr. Abelman said.

Jim Catlett, a science teacher who is Faculty Association president, said that one to two weeks after the arbitration dates, each side receives transcripts.

This is what pushes the date of the decision back: after receiving final transcripts, both lawyers have one to two more weeks to submit written arguments. The arbitrator

then has 30 days to provide a decision, a time frame commitment that was the arbitrator’s choice, according to Mr. Bobo-Jones.

This means that the community may not receive answers right away, but there is a decision in the near future.

Mr. Bobo-Jones’ case created tension and speculation among students, administration and faculty alike.

Dr. Abelman hopes to keep students informed and focused in light of whatever decision is revealed.

“It’s a small group of people who know all the facts,” Dr. Abelman said. “I think it’s important to ed-

ucate people how to be careful around making judgments without necessarily knowing all the facts, about any issue.”

Despite the emotional nature of the case, which saw strong support of Mr. Bobo-Jones continuing through the end of last school year, Dr. Abelman said he is committed to supporting students.

“I’ll respect whatever that outcome is,” he said. “Lab’s a place with a lot of student voice, and I respect the student voice that’s here. I think it’s important for us to focus on having a great start of the school year and let the process unfold, and be focused on a new year and a new beginning.”

Unisex locker room installed to meet ADA standards

by **AMANDA CASSEL**
MANAGING EDITOR

As of Sept. 3, the gym building locker room and fitness center renovations are incomplete. Athletics Director David Ribbens estimates the lockers will be completed by the end of September.

The lockers were originally scheduled to be completed by the start of the 2019-2020 school year, but due to the spacial needs of Adventure Kids and other Summer Lab programs, the project was not completed.

According to Mr. Ribbens, the

overall goals were to “expand the lockers so kids would have space for their backpacks” and “raise the locker rooms to A.D.A. standards.”



David
Ribbens

The A.D.A., Americans with Disabilities Act, dictates the need for male, female and unisex facilities. Lacking a gender-neutral changing space, the locker rooms

“We’re looking to update the locker rooms to the point where the kids take some pride in it.”

— DAVID RIBBENS,
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

were not up to standard prior to this renovation.

“Part of [the new unisex locker room] was the boys locker room, part of it was the ramp system,” Mr. Ribbens said, “and this renovation is a great step in the right

direction.”

All of the locker rooms will have locks pre-attached to lockers. Students will be able to choose their lockers and will have combinations provided.

The locker rooms will also feature new paint, lighting and Lab logos.

“We’re looking to update the locker rooms to the point where the kids take some pride in it,” Mr. Ribbens said.

Additionally, Mr. Ribbens explained that the building has undergone several adjustments over

the past few years to create a “central hub” towards the entrance of the gym building.

To do this, the P.E. administrative offices, security guard and fitness center will all be in the same location at the entrance.

New physical trainer Erin DeHeer will also be in the fitness center, rather than next to the P.E. classroom on the second floor.

The fitness center was previously on the third floor and the gymnastics room on the first, but these two will switch by the beginning of October, according to Mr. Ribbens.

10 teachers, administrators join U-High

New additions look foward to Lab’s community, flexibility

PAUL BEEKMEYER

Paul Beekmeyer assumes the role of principal. Mr. Beekmeyer has spent time as both an administrator and a high school English teacher. He most recently worked as the assistant head of the upper school for aAcademics at the Brooklyn Friends School in New York. Mr. Beekmeyer has also worked at schools in Morocco, Turkey Australia and Afghanistan. Mr. Beekmeyer said he hopes to build a sense of trust with the students.

“I hope to have an open door. I hope to be able to listen and facilitate conversation,” Mr. Beekmyer said. “Lab brings together students and teachers all with amazing experiences. My job is to foster an environment of collaboration and respect.”

When he isn’t at school, Mr. Beekmyer spends a lot of time with his new puppy, Walter.

CHIMARE EAGLIN

Chimare Eaglin is the service learning coordinator while Hannah Roche is on leave while Hannah Roche is on leave. She comes to this position this position from Bulldog Solutions Inc. where she facilitated curricula, assemblies, professional development trainings, student programs and parent workshops in social emotional learning.

She has also worked on the partnership program between Lab and U. of C. charter schools. She completed her Ph.D. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology in July.

“I was attracted to the opportunity to work in a position that

fused several of my interests into one role: community outreach and service, the chance to work directly with students — mentoring and supporting their growth — and the freedom to be creative in my approach,” Dr. Eaglin said.

She said she hopes to help students find ways to bring their community interests and passions to life through service learning.

Outside of work, Dr. Eaglin spends most of her time cooking, dancing, traveling and spending time outdoors.

KENNY FOURNILLIER

Kenny Fournillier will teach Introductory Biology. Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago, he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biology from Howard University and completed his Ph.D. in environmental engineering at Northwestern University.

For the last four years, he has worked for Thermo Fisher Scientific, where he was an application specialist providing technical support to customers buying scientific instruments.

Dr. Fournillier is familiar with the Lab culture, as he is the parent of two young Lab students.

“One of the things that motivated me to apply for the position was the flexibility. In terms of the content we want to teach, all of the teachers have agreed on that, but I have the freedom to teach the way I want to teach,” Dr. Fournillier said.

“If you don’t understand the big concepts, then it doesn’t always make sense and you can’t reason through it.”

ELIZABETH KELLEY

Elizabeth Kelley will teach Chemistry C. Before coming to U-High, Ms. Kelley earned her Masters of Science at the University of Chicago. She said that as a teacher, it is most gratifying when

teaching students that are truly excited to learn.

“I’ve taught students with a spectrum of interests. Some are really excited to be in the class and some are bitter and are just there to fulfill a requirement. I feel like the students at Lab have a lot of enthusiasm and are really excited to learn,” Ms. Kelley said.

When she isn’t working, she can be found reading books on a wide variety of topics or playing with her puppy.

COLLEEN MCGOEY

Colleen McGoeY will teach English 1. Previously, Ms. McGoeY taught English and yoga classes at the Zurich International School in Switzerland. She has also taught in Chicago and in Colorado.

With her background in yoga, Ms. McGoeY said she is excited to implement mindfulness into her classes as Lab.

“I would really like to contribute to the wellness efforts that they are talking about in the new strategic plan,” Ms. McGoeY said. “I really hope I can also get freshmen to find an interest in reading and writing while igniting a passion in English.”

When Ms. McGoeY isn’t teaching she is constantly seeking out live music in Chicago and spends time going to different shows and festivals.

KATHARINE MCJIMSEY

Katharine McJimsey will teach English 1 and Expository Writing. Before coming to Lab, Ms. McJimsey taught at Curie High School for 13 years.

Ms. McJimsey said she decided to teach at Lab for a career change and the opportunity to be part of a different community.

“Lab has a great reputation and it’s an honor to be teaching here,” Ms. McJimsey said.

She is excited to bring her experience with theatre and the “Poetry Out Loud” group into her English classrooms.

Outside of work, Ms. McJimsey loves to garden and spend time with her two children.

ANA ROMERO

Ana Romero will teach middle and high school studio art. She previously worked at Lab’s primary school, where she taught first and second grade art for six years.

Prior to Lab, she also worked with kindergarten through eighth grade students for 10 years at Chicago Public Schools.

Her graduate work and national board title, however, were both focused on high-school aged students. She said she is excited to move back to teaching older students.

“From what I hear, the high school students have so much background knowledge and experience, so I’m excited to feed and nurture creativity,” Ms. Romero said.

JAYNA RUMBLE

Jayna Rumble will teaching Beginning Journalism, Yearbook and Photojournalism. She previously taught journalism at Troy High School in Troy, Michigan. Ms. Rumble has a bachelor’s degree in journalism and English from Michigan State University.

Ms. Rumble explained that she has a photography business, so she is excited to be able to bring her experience to the program here.

“I am a super-spirited, enthusiastic person. I embrace being a bit of a nerd in some ways, and I just feel like I fit in here,” Ms. Rumble said.

Because she has only lived in Chicago for less than a month, Ms. Rumble explained that she has been exploring the city through food, slowly making her way

through each neighborhood.

ZANA TRAN

Zana Tran is the newest addition to the math department teaching Pre-Calculus and Introduction to Calculus. In addition to teaching, she is earning a Ph.D. in mathematics at the University of Chicago.

Previously, Ms. Tran earned her masters in mathematics from Cambridge University, along with her bachelor’s degree from Bard College.

Ms. Tran explained that in addition to teaching by the book and meeting the requirements, she wants to teach the subjects in depth.

“They give me a lot of freedom here and textbooks don’t focus on teaching depth, so I want to see if I can,” she explained.

When Ms. Tran isn’t in the classroom, she can be found dancing tango at different studios throughout Chicago.

KIMBERLY WILLIAMSON

Kimberly Williamson is the new director of human resources. Prior to joining Lab, she had the same jobs for both the Hyde Park Day School and the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School.

“As a Chicagoan, specifically a South Sider, I am acutely aware of the rich history and reputation of the Laboratory Schools and the University of Chicago, which is why it was a great honor to be offered this role to add value and bring my expertise to this leadership team,” Ms. Williamson said.

Her goal is to create a space that supports all employees by making sure everyone feels their voices are heard.

Outside of work, she loves to spend time with her daughter and play with her French bulldog.

— Compiled by Abigail Slimmon and Madeline Welch

New editors commit to accuracy, diversity of voices

from NIKHIL PATEL, ABIGAIL SLIMMON and AMANDA CASSEL

Through 96 years of school change, the Midway has stood for the same core values: to inform, educate and serve the community with accurate and timely reporting. Throughout the upcoming year, we aim to uphold and expand on these standards by producing reliable, accurate and unbiased content, showcasing a diverse arrangement of voices and presenting well-rounded content



Abigail Slimmon



Nikhil Patel



Amanda Cassel

corresponding to the interests of the student body.

In the last year, the relationship between the student body and the administration has been un-

easy, to say the least. In the face of this, the Midway worked to provide information both efficiently and without bias. Not only do we plan to sustain this good work, but also improve our reporting through ensuring that it is both accurate with thorough fact-checking and authoritative sources.

Additionally, we have expanded

our media coverage, but are aware that there is a large area for improvement. By maximizing content on different social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat while also continuing to improve and expand our website, we will strive to make the news as accessible as possible.

Our community is full of diverse interests, activities and opinions. Largely due to our website, we have a unique opportunity to push the boundaries of our coverage and include larger swaths of the community, rather than a se-

lect few. We hope to increase engagement with the U-High community to fully represent the interests of our consumers.

Lastly, it is critical that as the school continues to grow, we push to include this larger, more diverse group of voice. We will do this not only through guest columns but also expanding to a wider variety of sources for all kinds of stories.

We recognize our unique opportunity to want to offer an accessible platform for people to share their unique voice in the Lab community.

U-HIGH MIDWAY

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Chicago, Illinois 60637
Phone 773-702-0591 FAX 773-702-7455
Email laimone@ucls.uchicago.edu

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EDITORS-IN-CHIEF*Abigail Slimmon, Nikhil Patel	BUSINESS MANAGER.....	Max Garfinkel
MANAGING EDITOR*Amanda Cassel	ASSISTANT EDITOR.....	Leland Culver
NEWS EDITOR*Mira Costello	REPORTERS.....	Caledonia Abbey, Christian Gluth, Olivia Griffin, Julian Ingersoll, Berk Oto, Peter Pu
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SPORTS EDITOR*Ella Beiser		
OPINION EDITOR*Madeline Welch		

ADVISER Logan Aimone

EDITORIAL POLICY: 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 created by students, for students.

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*Members of the Editorial Board

Junior kayaks around Superior over summer

Route covered over 310 miles in 25-day trip

by **AUDREY MATZKE**
OPINION EDITOR

Crossing open water is bad enough on a clear day. She could hardly make out the tip of her kayak, and the ache in her left arm was growing unbearable. Nonetheless, the next campsite was miles away, and she had to keep paddling.

Throughout their Advanced Mariner program, YMCA's Camp Manito-Wish draws upon an oft-repeated maxim: Challenge builds character, especially when there's no Wi-Fi. For Izzy Kaufman-Sites, a junior who spent 25 days kayaking Lake Superior, this sentiment rang true.

Izzy's group consisted of two adult leaders and five other campers, all of whom were entering either their junior or senior year of high school. Each day, the adults would appoint two campers as "co-leaders," who made sure the group stayed together on trips and checked to see that everyone was drinking enough water. For Izzy, the experience made her a more confident and self-assured communicator.

"It definitely pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and take on a leadership role," Izzy said. "While at the same time, collaborating with someone else."

In the days leading up to her



MIDWAY PHOTO PROVIDED BY ISABELLE KAUFMAN-SITES

KAYAKING KAUFMAN. Junior Izzy Kaufman-Sites kayaks on Lake Superior on her 25-day sea kayaking trip this summer. The trip was through YMCA Camp Manito-Wish and she traveled 310 miles in Ontario from Agawa Bay to Silver Inlet.

trip, the thought of traveling 310 miles in Ontario from Agawa Bay to Silver Inlet; seemed incredibly daunting. Though she'd participated in similar, less advanced Manito-Wish programs for the past seven years, this was, by far, her longest and most challenging.

"Honestly, going into the trip I was pretty nervous," Izzy said. "We

were mapping it out beforehand and I was like, 'Wow, this is a lot of miles. We didn't do that many last year.'"

Surrounded by nothing but open water, the girls would often turn to one another for fun and encouragement. While kayaking, they would sing camp songs (or pop songs, so long as everybody

knew them) and tell funny stories to pass the time.

"We definitely had some tough days, and I very much relied on support from my other group members," Izzy said.

For Izzy, the intimacy of shared tents and mealtime chats formed somewhat of an unbreakable bond.

"It definitely pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and take on a leadership role, while at the same time, collaborating with someone else."

— IZZY KAUFMAN-SITES

"We all got really close by the end," Izzy said. "I had kind of known these people before, but some of us had never met. We all have a text group chat, now, and the people I live near to I'll probably go visit."

In Izzy's case, hitting checkpoints and staying on schedule was never really an issue. When asked to stop and explore, however, she resisted — immediately and internally. Being in a group setting forced her to re-evaluate her priorities.

"People have different attitudes towards kayaking," Izzy said. "Some people like to push as much as they can. Even if we have a short day, they think, 'No we have to push more so we have less to do later.' Other people were more like, 'no, we want to explore more, and even if that means we don't necessarily make it as far as we would have.' I've always been more goal-oriented, but people pushed me to appreciate the journey."

So, with a refreshed mind, increased confidence, and renewed love of exploration, Izzy begins her second-to last year of high school.

Sports teams gain players, train harder, set goals

Cross Country

The cross country team is poised to repeat as conference champions and continue to improve both individually and as a team. To start the season where they left off, athletes have been running all preseason to get in good shape.

This season, they will look to fill the gaps of two graduating seniors who contributed greatly to their success. Despite not having them this year, team captain Luke Sikora is confident the team will be able to pick up their slack.

"From what I have seen already in preseason... we will be very good. Maybe even better than last year," Luke said.

Luke is excited to invite only events such as the Peoria Notre Dame Invitational and the Niles West since they have been previously picked to attend such events. However, he says the biggest events of the year are the IH-SA championships.

"It's a very long road to get there, and once we are there it's more just enjoying and running your heart out one last time," Luke said.

The team's first event was the St. Patrick Invite in Schiller Woods on Sep. 4.

— CHRISTIAN GLUTH

Golf

With an influx of freshmen to support the already substantial team, the golf teams are motivated and prepared to gear up and build upon last season.

Preseason training has increased from last season in time and in intensity. On a regular practice day, both teams train for about four hours a day at the Harborside International Golf Center practice facility.

Senior Constantin Carrigan is the captain of the boys team. He said that the increased training will help the team sharpen up on the technical aspects of the game.

"We have really focused on improving the small aspects of our games so that we can cut unneces-

sary strokes," Constantin said.

Constantin is looking forward to the ISL championship game, despite North Shore Country Day School winning the past 10 years. He believes that if the team plays their best, they "can give [North Shore] a run for their money."

Both the boys and girls teams face Latin on Sept. 10 at the Sydney R. Maravitz golf course in Lake View.

— CHRISTIAN GLUTH

Sailing

With the addition of 12 freshmen, the sailing team roster currently lists a record 27 sailors, compared to 10 the season prior.

Coach Kurt Thomsen said, "It will be a little tricky having some of the newer sailors sailing with the varsity kids, but the learning curve should be pretty quick."

Many students sailed over the summer including sophomore Benjamin Wild, junior Philip Lengyel and senior Ava Wilson. Due to this, Coach Thomsen believes the team is becoming a stronger contender each year.

Some of the most important competitions will be the Cressy Championship and Great Oaks Qualifier in October and the Great Lakes Championship in November.

— PETER PU

Boys Soccer

The soccer team features new coaches for both varsity and JV teams and a record 28 players on the varsity team, including two freshmen.

The relatively large number of players on the varsity team will be especially beneficial when players get injuries during the season according to senior Miles Rochester.

Former varsity middle school girls soccer coach David Vadeboncoeur will be the new U-High varsity assistant coach; former varsity girls coach Bannon Stroud will be the new boys junior varsity head coach, and Chris Birch will be the

new junior varsity assistant coach.

"The new coaches have done a really good job of gradually getting used to us and how we play and how we act as a team," Miles said. "Instead of trying to change us, they become part of us."

According to Miles, the loss of seniors from last year, who brought a lot of energy to the team, changed the team's dynamic. Miles anticipates that this will be a challenge throughout the season.

Some of the most important games of the season according to Miles will be against Parker on Sept. 6, St. Ignatius on Oct. 10 and Whitney Young on Oct. 12.

— PETER PU

Girls Swimming & Diving

The girls swim team dives back into action with new changes in the team. All of the girls are trying to get back into their best shape for the season.

The team is anticipating new freshman swimmers, and are combining their skills for the first competition Sept. 13. The team makes great efforts to include incoming freshmen.

"We switch around practice lanes and we organize things outside of the pool to get to know the new swimmers and divers better," junior Lea Rebollo-Baum said. The team has also established locker buddies with the freshmen to facilitate team-building for everyone on the team.

The captains have not been chosen yet.

— JULIAN INGERSOLL

Girls Tennis

Since Aug. 12, the girls tennis team has been practicing in preparation for the school year. Major changes on the team include new captains, having separate varsity and JV practices, and incorporating new freshmen into the U-High tennis community.

Varsity Captains Macy Beal and Isabella Kellmermeier and JV Cap-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MACY BEAL

SERVING SENIOR. Senior Audrey Kim practices her serve during preseason in late August. Varsity, JV and freshman volleyball teams will compete in the Westminster Tournament Sept. 14.

tain Kara Xu, have been appointed by the coaches. The first matches of the season happened Aug. 22.

A large increase in team members motivated the coaches to have separate practice days for JV and varsity.

"Incorporating the freshmen into the team has been pretty easy," Kara said, "but because the team is split up its harder to be a 'team.'"

— JULIAN INGERSOLL

Volleyball

The volleyball team is up and running, winning the first two consecutive games of the season on Aug. 27 and 28 against Mansue-

to Charter High School in the Timothy Westmont Invitation.

With new additions to the team, creating a welcoming environment will be a priority for the varsity team, according to junior Cindy Wu.

"Most of varsity this year are returning varsity players, but we do have some new players and, as a team, we've all been helping them integrate," Cindy said.

Another focus for the season is working on communication and not overthinking during games, according to Cindy.

— JULIAN INGERSOLL

Students reconnect with family abroad

Summer visits help to shorten the distance

by **AMANDA CASSEL**
MANAGING EDITOR
and **OLIVIA GRIFFIN**
MIDWAY REPORTER

Gabby Gruszka:

Zakopane, Poland is a small resort town to many but a second home to senior Gabby Gruszka. A destination for spectacular views, never-ending mountains and national parks, Zakopane is also home to many of Gabby's friends and family.



Gabby Gruszka

Every summer, Gabby travels to Zakopane to visit her dad's side of the family, including her aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandma whom she takes care of while she's there.

"I take her on walks in her wheelchair," Gabby said.

Her grandma is 89 years old and is living with Alzheimer's, a disease which requires her to be with someone at all times.

Gabby said, "I feed her, take her to the bathroom, and just sit and talk to her, even though she can't speak."

Gabby's dad was born in Poland. He moved to the United States in his 20s, leaving his Polish family behind.

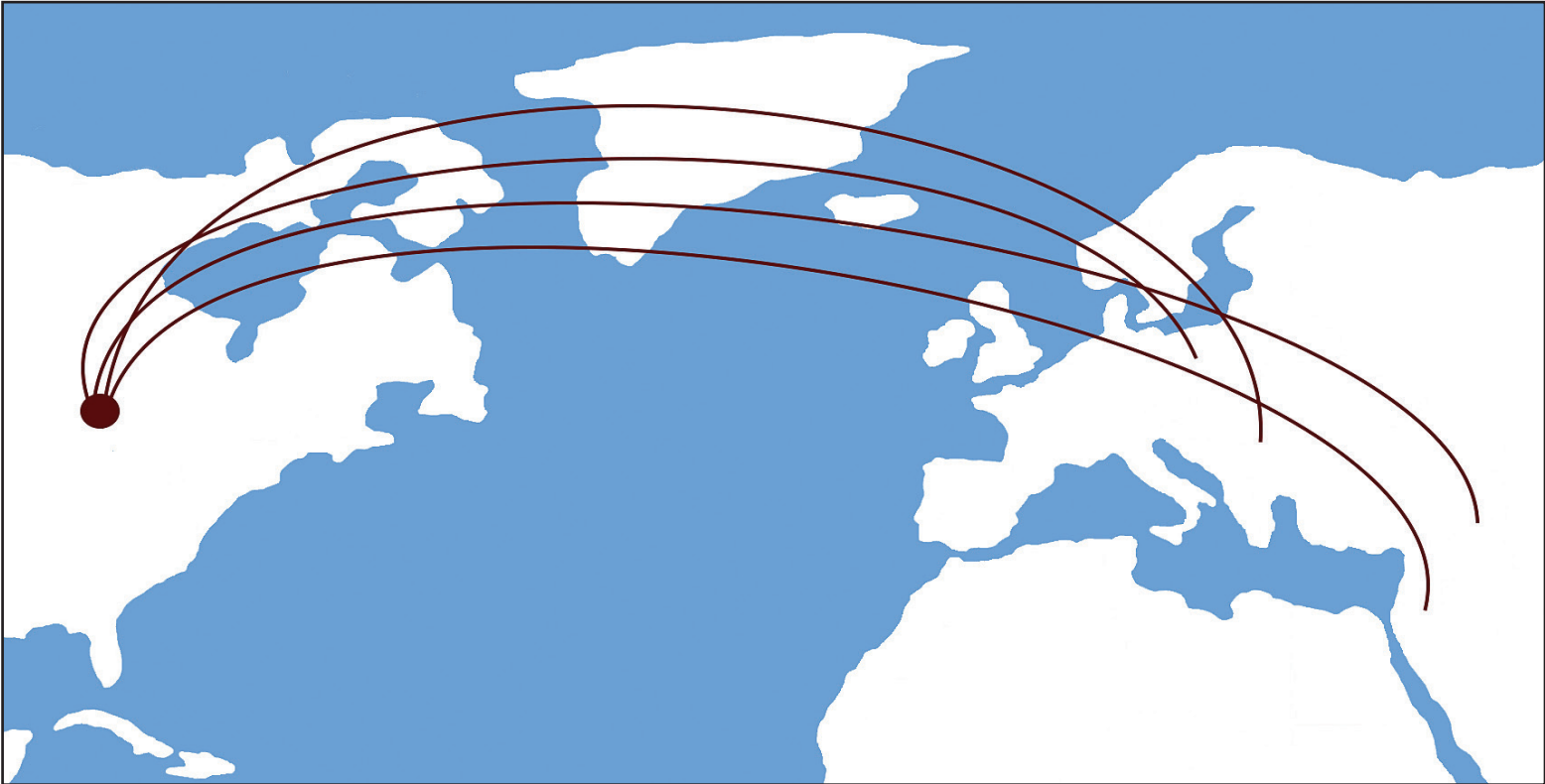
"I always get really excited. I get that feeling of being home," Gabby said, describing what it's like to see her family after spending most of the year in Chicago.

Gabby has been visiting Poland since she was 6 years old and spends about 2 months with them every summer.

She said, "Since I've been doing this for so long, I think about it more as just going home."

David Libes:

After a long flight to Azerbaijan,



PHOTOILLUSTRATION BY AUDREY MATZKE WITH PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE FROM CLKER.COM

David Libes arrives in the suburbs of Baku very late at night. Tired and hungry, he, his mom, and his extended family all await their beds. However, no matter the time of their arrival, David's whole family always musters enough energy to greet one another with a small, late-night party before finally going to bed.



David Libes

David visits his family once or twice a year and will spend up to 2 months with them at a time, spending the time "chilling, eating, and speaking Russian," David said.

With more than 30 people in his extended family, David says he meets new people every time, and gets closer with his family every time he sees them.

His mother has 4 siblings, spread around Azerbaijan and Russia, each with several children. David says his uncle in Moscow

is always planning activities such as their annual ski trip or even activities no one else in the family would've thought to do.

"At one point, he literally called up some people, got the police to roadblock parts of the highways, got a camera crew, got us in the news, and organized a bike ride for the family," he said.

Alexandra Nehme:

"When we first see each other, there's always a lot of emotion and sometimes a little shock at all the change in a year," junior Alexandra Nehme said. "But then, we just click back into gear."



Alexandra Nehme

After almost a year in Chicago, Alexandra travels to Lebanon and Jordan each summer for a few weeks to visit both sides of her family.

Alexandra explained how, once the family is back together, it's as if they were

never apart.

"We do normal things, like, go to the beach and eat together and go to the mall and really just enjoy each other and spend time together," Alexandra explained.

Both of Alexandra's parents left the middle east and came to the United States pursuing higher education. They both settled down for their schooling, and with busy schedules, and a family of their own, it isn't always easy to reconnect.

Alexandra explained how it has always been a tradition in her family to try and shorten the distance by skyping routinely.

"If you do have family nearby, and you do have a good relationship with them, really do reach out and try to take advantage of the fact that they're here," Alexandra said. "Because when you don't, you really wish you could."



Julia Anitescu

Julia Anitescu:

Julia Anitescu travels each summer to Romania for a few weeks to visit her mom and dad's parents, otherwise, she doesn't see her extended family for almost a year.

"The holidays are when we really see the distance," Julia said. "Everyone talks about their family and holidays, and we can rarely spend them with our family, but we do have this wonderful community of other Romanian families who are experiencing the same thing and it's like a second family."

Outside of the holidays, Julia also feels the distance when her parents tell her stories. They both describe childhoods with less freedom and opportunity and give advice to Julia and her sister based on their experiences.

Her parents both came to the U.S. for graduate school and medical school.

"To a certain extent, I feel like as much as my parents were teenagers once, it's just a different experience for me and I need to figure it out on my own," Julia said.

Former campers seek Summer Lab employment

by **CALEDONIA ABBEY**
MIDWAY REPORTER

For many, Summer Lab is nothing more than a time for little kids to run rampant through the halls of U-High. For others, it's an opportunity to earn money as a camp counselor.

For a select few, however, Summer Lab's Adventure Kids Day Camp is more than just a summer job.

Gigi Reece and Cole MacSwain are part of this select few. Both have been involved with Adventure Kids for over a decade, this past summer being their 11th year, spending eight years as campers and the last three as counselors.



Gigi Reece

"Since my dad works at the school, he wanted me to do a camp at Summer Lab, so I picked Adventure Kids because it had the most field trips so it seemed like the most fun," Gigi said. "For a long time, it was where I had these specific camp friends, friends who didn't go to Lab, and that'd be the only time I'd get to see them throughout the year."

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Gigi, Cole and the other counselors would take campers on "ad-

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— COLE MACSWAIN, JUNIOR

ventures" like going to Navy Pier, arcades or rock climbing. On days when they're not on trips, campers participate in art, movement, and sports classes led by teachers along with other special activities.

"Since I liked the camp so much and had done it my entire life, becoming a counselor just seemed like the next step," she said. "Switching wasn't much different because I already knew how the camp worked and where everything was. I was still able to have fun with the games; it just came with a lot more responsibility."

Gigi works with third grade campers, saying that it's her favorite age because "they're mature enough to joke around with and play more complicated games but are still at a stage where they're down to be friends with everyone."

According to Cole, "the transition goes from a camper to an unpaid counselor, or counsel-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY YANNI SIMMONS

READY FOR ADVENTURE. Arms outstretched, counselor Gigi Reece assists her Adventure Kids group on a water slide. Gigi says she enjoys playing with her campers and leading group activities.

or-in-training, to a full counselor going into sophomore year."

"I just keep coming back, because, ultimately, I love the idea of a Summer Lab camp not centered around academic studies and more around making sure these

kids have fun," he said.

As both a camper and a counselor, Cole describes "fort wars" as "the best activity by far." The game follows the usual rules of dodgeball, but with the mats in the gymnastics rooms as forts.

Both Cole and Gigi love to work with kids and see being a counselor as good experience for future jobs.

Gigi said, "It's work, but it also doesn't always feel like work, because I'm playing along."