

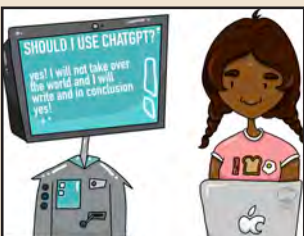
PAGE 6 • ARTS

In Sew-Called Creations, a new one-semester art course, students are seeing for the first time clothing not solely as functional but as an opportunity for artistic expression.



PAGE 7 • OPINION

With the proliferation of AI in academia, teachers must establish proper usage boundaries that will preserve the integrity of learning, rather than ignore the inevitable, developing tool.



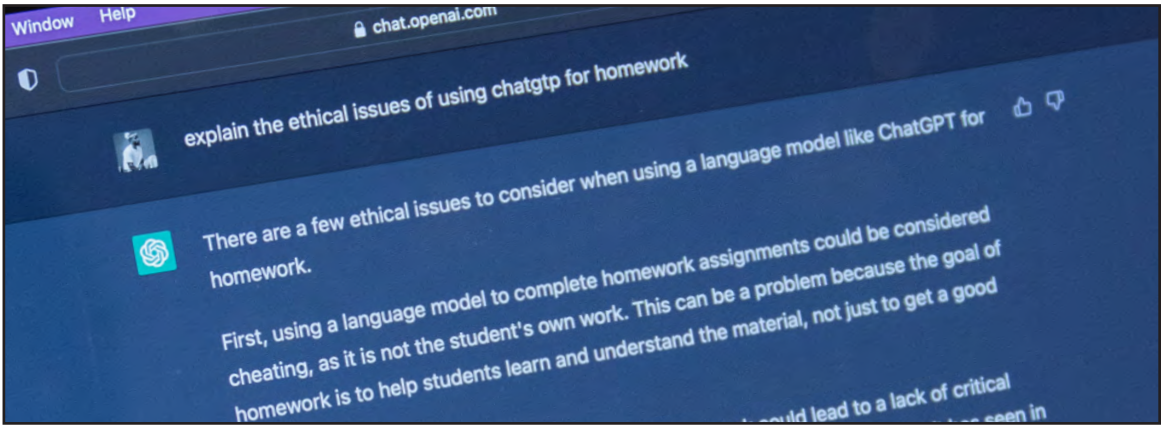
PAGE 11 • CITY LIFE

Almost half of city's teens worry about school safety, and many are concerned with neighborhood safety, according to a citywide survey of high school students, including U-High.



# Helpful or Harmful?

Community weighs proper usage of AI writing software for academic work



Midway photo by Ellis Calleri

## what is ChatGPT?

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence language model prototype that is part of a new generation of AI models designed to converse and produce understandable text on demand. It differs from previous models because it can remember previous prompts in the same conversation and reject inappropriate requests.

The model was trained using vast amounts of internet material written by humans, so ChatGPT's responses sound human-like. However, they may be inaccurate, untruthful and misleading. ChatGPT has a limited knowledge of world events after 2021 and may produce biased responses.

Turnitin.com is capable of detecting some forms of AI writing. It is developing more methods to detect AI writing for its 2023 products. Newly developed programs like GPTZero can detect writing by ChatGPT, and OpenAI developers are considering adding a digital "watermark" for detection.

By LOUIS AUXENFANS  
News Editor

New artificial intelligence writing software has changed the game, and now educators and students must determine the line between academic benefit and dishonesty.

ChatGPT, an AI language model released free to the public by Open AI on Nov. 30, 2022, produces fluent communication and conversation, which enables it to write essays based on prompts that a user inputs. Since ChatGPT combines information from many different sources to create an original response, many plagiarism detectors have trouble flagging the work as AI writing.

However, ChatGPT's writing is unsophisticated, according to Mark Krewatch, English department chair.

He has tested ChatGPT using essay prompts from U-High English classes and noticed it would repeat themes and use evidence superficially, if it is even used at all.

Mr. Krewatch said ChatGPT's unspecific, surface-level writing is exactly what Lab's English pro-

gram is supposed to prevent.

"It's why we do close analysis of literature as opposed to broad thematic writing," Mr. Krewatch said.

He remains confident that current AI will not enable students to write good English papers, but he recognizes technology will quickly evolve, so a watchful eye is necessary.

While ChatGPT could be initially seen as only a shortcut for student work, it can be used to create models to learn about grammar and style, and critique writing, Mr. Krewatch said.

He hopes there is a possibility where the technology can be "co-opted" in a positive way rather than being an untouchable, powerful "third rail."

History department chair Christy Gerst does not believe that students struggling to understand historical concepts should use ChatGPT to ask for summaries since it lacks depth and accuracy. She encourages students to search topic summaries from library databases instead.

To form academic policies on ChatGPT, English teacher Colin Rennert-May said teachers will need to decide when the program allows students to skip the import-

ant learning discovered in the essay writing process.

"I know this can be sometimes hard to believe, but like, it's really not about the production of this piece of writing," Mr. Rennert-May said. "It's about the discovery that happens through the process."

Ms. Gerst and Mr. Krewatch say AI writing programs are currently covered by the general language of their departments' academic dishonesty rules because students' work has to be their own. However, both recognize they still need to determine the exact consequences for using AI to write student essays.

Ms. Gerst recognizes students can view ChatGPT as a "panacea" to essay writing but cautions against that.

"It's not going to be like a cure," she said. "It can jeopardize their own mastery of the material."

Senior Henry Koyner and junior Adam Cheema have used ChatGPT for entertainment purposes and say using the program to write homework assignments and essays has downsides to the learning process.

"I think that a lot of students might see ChatGPT and think

that it's an easy way to get out of writing tests or small writing assignments," Adam said, "but you wouldn't really be learning anything if you do it that way."

Adam says AI has benefits in explaining tricky concepts to students struggling to understand, and Henry says it can help generate ideas for a paper. But, Henry said, students should be wary of the personal dilemma in using ChatGPT.

"I think that if you want to actually learn, you shouldn't use ChatGPT because you're not actually being able to take information that you've learned and put it on paper or put it into an essay or put it in a research paper," Henry said. "I think that it'll just come back to bite you when you have a test or when you have an in-class essay."

Ultimately, Ms. Gerst hopes students understand that the value of learning comes from the process of discovering it on one's own, rather than using outside sources like ChatGPT.

"I encourage students to continue with their own writing," Ms. Gerst said, "because it's a pathway to their own thinking, their own opinion, their own conscience, their own belief system."

# With powerful testimonials of discrimination, groups call for action

by TAARIQ AHMED, MIA LIPSON & TÉA TAMBURIO

Audio testimonials detailing U-High students' experiences with microaggressions and more severe discrimination at Lab were played through the hallways Jan. 17, just days after the Black Students' Association led an abrupt walkout of the annual Martin Luther King assembly — actions urging students and administration to address ongoing incidents of discrimination and promote belonging.

"A lot of the time these things heard within the hallway don't get acknowledged," BSA co-president Camille Bryant said. "We played them so that people can actually hear them out loud, and they can experience what many students go through every day when they just walk down the hallway."

By playing the audio testimonials, which were collected before the assembly through identity-based clubs, BSA leaders hope incidents of discrimination will be openly denounced by administration and called out by students.

"We feel like the general social



Midway illustration by Téa Tamburio

body of the school has this type of secrecy towards things," co-president Michael Ewing said, "and we feel that we need more open-ended determination of how we dismiss that and how we ease that from our consciousness and just have a more opening and welcoming place of mind."

Laboratory Schools Director Tori Jueds acknowledges Lab has been working on diversity, equity

and inclusion objectives, yet progress is still needed. Ms. Jueds said BSA's call to action provides an opportunity to reevaluate Lab's Diversity Action Plan.

Nicole Williams, director of DEI, emphasizes the need for adults to acknowledge the impact of discrimination on students' community experiences.

"Many students here have had experiences of microaggressions

and straight-up racism, all kinds of discrimination," Ms. Williams said. "It's important for them to keep that front and center for us, adults, to not forget what's important, which is student experience."

Harry Bims, a 1981 U-High alum who is on the Alumni Association Executive Board and identifies as Black, has seen current students voice the same issues of racial discrimination as previous students vocalized in the past and believes the root cause has not yet been treated.

"I would like to see the administration look at the short-, medium- and long-term ways to address discrimination," Dr. Bims said. "By doing that, we are working so that Black students feel a sense of ownership at Lab, and we don't just feel like we are renting time here, but we feel like we are actually a part of the fabric of the school."

Ms. Jueds and Ms. Williams emphasized continuing professional development, specifically about how teachers support their students.

Ms. Jueds is planning a DEI

workshop in late spring to highlight the need for allyship.

"I think the work will focus on positive racial identity development for people who identify as white, like myself," Ms. Jueds said. "I've gone through this training before, and it was very impactful for me, and I feel like we'll benefit by it at Lab."

Ms. Jueds is also initiating conversations with BSA members, faculty and administration to discuss students' needs in supporting effective DEI efforts.

Additionally, faculty and staff have convened this month to discuss their responsibilities, support for students and actions they can take, Ms. Jueds said in a follow-up email to the Midway.

"There are things that the administration can do, but there's also things that us as students and teachers, and even parents, can do to help improve the community," Camille said. "I feel like a lot of people don't really think, 'Oh, I'm part of a community, I have to think about how my actions are impacting others.'"



# Club embraces conflict, conversation

*Political Discourse Club cultivates honest exchanges*

By WILLIAM TAN  
Editor-in-Chief

Raised hands wave wildly to be answered and loud voices clamor over one another as a pointed question ignites fierce disagreement. There is palpable energy emanating from room C406 on Tuesday at lunch as a new club embraces its oppositional nature as part of its identity.

School clubs often bring like-minded individuals together, yet the Political Discourse Club has found camaraderie through unlikely means: allowing students to debate against one another over controversial topics. Sometimes there's unanimous agreement, while other times discussions about issues pit classmate against classmate, but club members agree that this space of unrestricted debate is a refreshing and conducive place for personal growth.

Co-presidents Cassia Collins and Rathin Shah, both juniors, created the club this year because they recognized a growing interest in politics and world events among their peers.

"I just feel like we're living in a very political time," Cassia said. "There was this phase where everything just got so political, and [everyone] had to be in the know about politics. And so we ended up just talking about it a lot."

According to her, many of her peers feel there aren't enough spaces to talk freely and honestly about controversial issues in the school, and she wanted to address this frustration by providing an outlet for discussion.

"And then there's, like, this collective frustration, I feel when you're speaking about things —



Midway photo by Patrice Graham

**SWAPPING IDEAS.** David Ren, a junior, tilts his phone to share a thought with junior Lincoln Richardson. Despite discussing controversial topics, Political Discourse Club leaders try to maintain a space where people can debate without fear of being censored for their ideas. David Ren is a student in Beginning Journalism and was not involved in reporting for this story.

everyone's worried about saying the wrong thing, and politics just come up in every discussion," she said. "I think we're just trying to hold a space to be able to have discussion where people can just sort out their ideas and kind of spitball and not worry about saying the wrong thing."

Ranging from ethical issues about mental health, race and gender to opinions on political theories and leaders, the club tackles one topic a week and welcomes a diverse range of stances. Meetings begin with a short background presentation given by Cassia and

Rathin and then open up to the group for discussion.

"Then we say, 'OK, so what do you guys think?'" Cassia said. "Sometimes it's heated and very contested, and sometimes people don't care as much."

Though discussions can often lead to heated disagreements, the club is still structured and has guidelines to behave ethically. Questions are moderated by the two club leaders, and attention is managed to prevent too many side discussions.

Junior Rory Gilbert appreciates the club format and the freedom it

gives him to speak his mind.

"I like Political Discourse because it's kind of like a student-run thing where we can speak our minds — and there's really no judgment," he said. "There's also no teacher that's in the corner where you got to watch everything you say."

Even though there is an assumption these kinds of topics can get out of hand, Cassia said they've navigated the discussions well, and there haven't been issues.

"Some people who go are usually fairly passionate about the topics, and sometimes they'll end

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We're just trying to hold a space to be able to have discussion where people can just sort out their ideas and kind of spitball and not worry about saying the wrong thing.  
Cassia Collins, junior  
”

up carrying out their conversation outside of clubs," she said. "But we basically just don't want to discourage honesty ... obviously, we don't condone hate speech, but there is a big question mark at what point should you just keep it to yourself."

The club also seeks to educate its members about the nuances behind often-misunderstood issues. It welcomes anyone, no matter how much prior knowledge or association someone might have to a certain topic.

"We're trying to talk about things which are relevant and affecting everybody," she said. "Because a lot of the time, what will happen is you'll be having a conversation about bigger ideas and people point out very small examples, and not everybody has that vast amount of knowledge, so we try and keep it general."

There is a strong emphasis on sticking with facts, and personal attacks and unsubstantiated claims are not what the club seeks to accomplish. Cassia said she and many others will often look things up and "just try and take facts into account."

For junior Lincoln Richardson, the club is not only a space to learn from and challenge his peers but a place where he can engage unabashedly with his passions.

"I'm a huge fan of Political Discourse Club," he said, "because I really love talking about politics, and it's a great time overall."

## New schedule raises concerns, relief

by MIA LIPSON  
Assistant Editor

High school students reacted with a mix of optimistic and frustrated views on the 2023-24 high school schedule, with some students experiencing confusion on the overall structure.

Every school day will start at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. across the lower, middle and high schools. The new schedule standardizes high school class times, and has a variation designated for weeks with co-curricular programming.

Ninth grader Danyal Shah believes standardizing the schedule with the lower and middle schools facilitates a more practical schedule for his family.

"Usually now what ends up happening is my brother has to wait for me, or I need to wait for him, since our classes end at different times," he said. "So I like this new system because it just makes everything more simple for us."

Sophomore Wendell He believes one of the general misconceptions of the new schedule is that students will lose their free time during the school day, since the schedule eliminates the eighth class period and replaces it with four lab or co-curricular periods. Wendell was able to clarify their questions with a teacher, but thinks many other students still have unanswered questions.

"I think this schedule is better for me, but one of the downsides is I'm going to have to adjust a lot of my extracurriculars," Wendell said. "Because I'll be getting out at a later time, I'll have to change all my violin and piano lessons."

quick comparison	
BENEFITS:	DISADVANTAGES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier to remember when classes start and end</li> <li>Makes coordinating pickup easier for families with students in more than one school</li> <li>Free periods built into schedule</li> <li>Ability to schedule UChicago classes maintained</li> <li>Do not have to allocate two periods for a lab science when requesting courses</li> <li>Weeks will be designated for co-curricular programming or labs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 30-minute shift in start and end time does not realistically allow more time for sleep</li> <li>Might disadvantage those with commutes, as traffic can be heavier later in the morning and afternoon</li> <li>Some extracurriculars might be rescheduled</li> <li>During lab weeks, some might have no free periods</li> <li>Only allowed to take seven classes (along with a possible lab-period-only class)</li> <li>No variation in class lengths</li> </ul>
— Compiled by Amy Ren	

Sophomore Juana diSabato expressed frustration over the later end time since her extracurriculars cannot be rescheduled.

Like Juana, Julia Grotthus commutes to school, and she said due to traffic, the 30-minute difference will have a limited impact. They believe their amount of sleep will not improve with the later start time, as Lab parents hoped when they advocated for this change.

The new schedule eliminates a weekly 75-minute period to standardize class times at 50 minutes, a feature junior Carter Chang appreciates, as he said the 75-minute periods can feel tedious.

However, sophomore Henry Auxenfans will miss the variation of attending 45- and 75-min-

ute classes.

"I think now having 50-minute classes, you know, is not bad, but I feel like having one long class that is more than an hour per week is really nice because you get to experience the full class," Henry said.

Ultimately, junior Alex Ruppel thinks the shift can have an overall positive effect but is doubtful that student habits will change.

"I think the change is probably a good thing, but I don't think it will do that much because kids are just going to stay up later," Alex said. "Overall, it's half an hour, it's half a homework assignment, but it's good in the sense of progress."

Additional reporting contributed by Zara Siddique and Taariq Ahmed.

### news in brief

#### Senior named top STEM scholar in competition

Senior Corona Chen has been named a top 300 scholar in the 82nd Regeneron Science Talent Search, a prestigious international math and science competition. Each of the 300 students receives a \$2,000 award, and their school is also awarded \$2,000.

Corona was one of 1,949 students who took part in the competition.

She entered the competition after taking part in a research summer camp last summer and deciding to enter felt natural with her strong interest in STEM.

Corona decided to reach out to professors for research opportunities, enabling her to put her STEM interests to use. Her research project was titled, "Understanding Incidental Microbial Communities Inside Ordinary Concrete Toward Decarbonization."

Corona's favorite part of STS was the satisfaction she said that comes from "sharing the research with other people" and seeing how the "research was having an impact."

— Parmita Kashanipour

#### Summer Link applications open until early February

Applications for three Summer Link 2023 programs are open for current sophomores and juniors.

The science program is open only for juniors until Feb. 3. The



Corona Chen

business, social sciences and humanities program is open to sophomores and juniors through Feb. 6. The computer science program is open to both sophomores and juniors until Feb. 12.

The internships will start in mid-June and last from 6 to 10 weeks for 30-40 hours per week, depending on the program. Interns will be paid at least Chicago minimum wage.

Roughly 25 spots are available in the business, social sciences and humanities program, where students will be paired with University of Chicago professors or institutions like the Logan Center for the Arts or private employees like Morningstar and Citadel.

Students in the science program will work in University of Chicago labs in a field of their interest for seven weeks. Those in the computer science program will do interdisciplinary data science research at UChicago.

— Ethan Swinger

#### Debaters earn another bid for national tournament

Two pairs from the varsity debate team competed in the Billy Tate Southern Bell Forum tournament in Nashville, Tennessee, Jan. 6-8, with one pair doing especially well.

The duo of Mahi Shah and Cyrus Esmailzadeh went 4-2 and lost in the octofinals, earning their fourth bid to the Tournament of Champions. Mahi was the 11th best speaker.

Connor Booth and Adam Cheema went 2-4 and did not progress out of the group stage.

— David Ren



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# Breathe in

## School promotes meditation app Insight Timer for student wellness

By **CLARE O'CONNOR**  
Editor-in-Chief

An iPhone speaker plays the clear tone of wood striking a Tibetan singing bowl. The note stays in the air for a few seconds as the volume seems to oscillate. Soon, the chime fades, and calming chords swell and fall, sometimes joined by a lone high note that adds an angelic feel to the mix of sounds. After 60 seconds, Tibetan singing bowl chimes again: 18 minutes left.

The 20-minute session can be dedicated to absolute focus on work or focusing on just breathing in and out. The app Insight Timer tries to create tools that can foster the numerous ways its users meditate.

Last year, Lab's wellness council purchased a premium subscription to the meditation app Insight Timer, accessible to anyone with a University of Chicago Laboratory Schools email account.

Members of the wellness council are working to incorporate the app into students' school lives and to spread awareness of the subscription available for student use.

Insight Timer is one of many apps marketed as wellness tools, but the app differentiates itself through the wide variety of wellness strategies offered. Counselor Tracy Graham-Santoro, a wellness council member, said this variety was a key factor in choosing Insight Timer instead of the many other options.

Insight Timer offers traditional guided meditations and breathing exercises, but it also includes a timer system to help retain focus, courses and live workshops on wellness, live and recorded yoga classes, and a built-in mood journal.

Most of the available activities range from 5 to over 30 minutes, making the app more accessible for students with little free time.

"We thought that it really spoke to the needs of the community as an app promoting well being and thinking about sleep, anxiety, and

### in the app

Insight Timer offers daily mood tracking, meditations and calming exercises to meet varying needs.

**Learn How to Meditate in Seven Days:** If you're a beginner and aren't quite sure how to even begin meditating, Insight Timer offers a seven day course to teach the steps to meditate. Each class is around 11-13 minutes long.

**Timer:** One of the main aspects of the app is the self-meditation bell feature, offering basu, woodblocks, kangsê and more to time your meditation sessions.

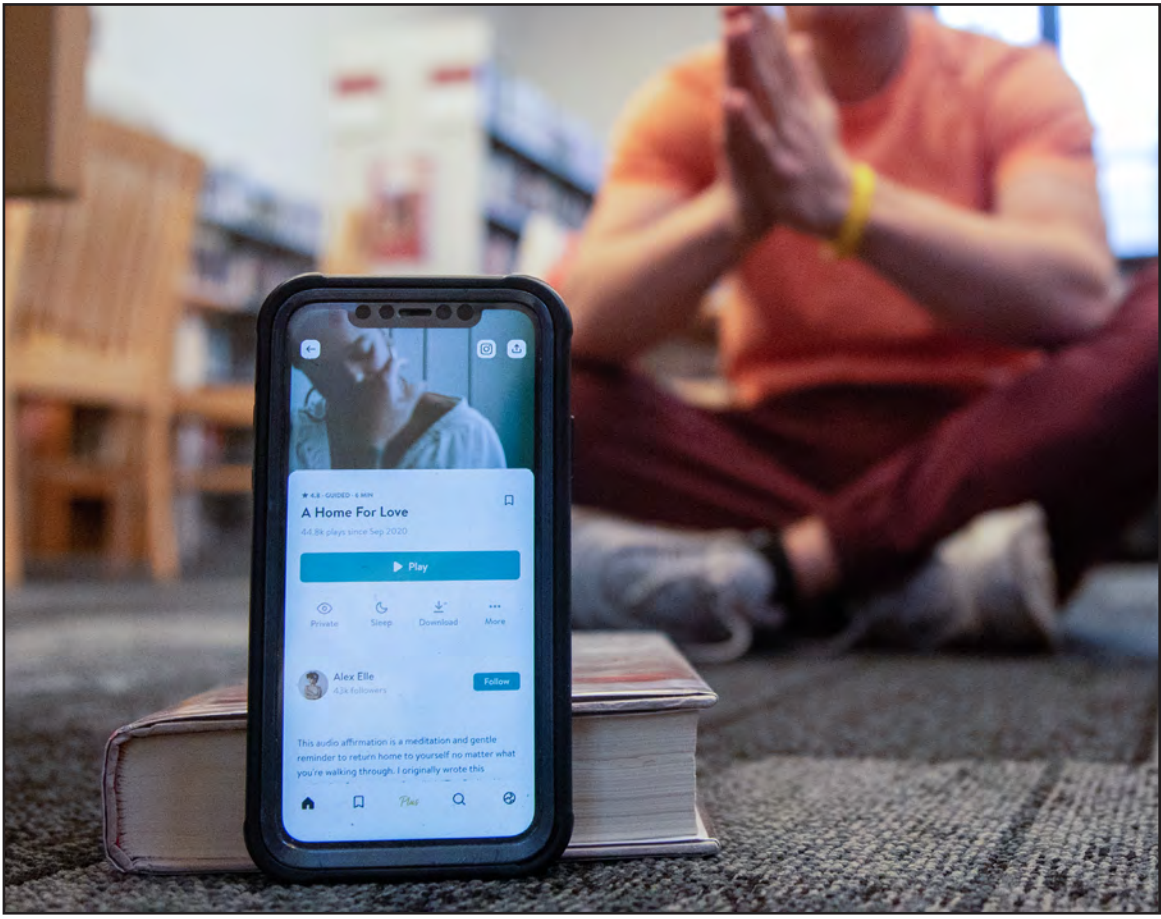
**Sleep:** The sleep section offers music tracks, soundscapes, bedtime stories and sleeping meditations to help with falling asleep.

**Mornings:** The mornings feature offers an array of different morning meditations, workshops and soundscapes to jumpstart the new day.

—compiled by  
Chloe Alexander



Scan this QR code to visit the Insight Timer website to learn more and download the app.



Midway photo by Kaden Moubayed

**DEEP BREATHS.** Students can practice guided meditations and breathing exercises with the wellness app Insight Timer. The wellness council purchased a schoolwide subscription to the app this year and is hoping students will utilize this resource, and that teachers will incorporate Insight Timer into their classrooms.

is beginning soon.

The wellness council is hopeful that these new initiatives will encourage more students to start using the app.

One of the few students who has taken advantage of the school subscription, sophomore Isaac Begle, has been using the app regularly since he learned about Insight Timer at school.

"I started using it after we signed up for our electives in gym. They had some QR codes where you could download it, and it was free, so like, why not try it?" Isaac said.

Isaac found the app particularly useful when his workload spiked before winter break. Re-

flecting on how Insight Timer had helped with his mood and focus during that stressful period, Isaac has dedicated himself to using Insight Timer consistently in the new year.

"I definitely think my performance at school is better," Isaac said. "I'm much more focused and not messing around. I found that it helps me work better."

Moving forward, the wellness council hopes to work with teachers to involve Insight Timer's diverse material into classes.

"One of the things we have heard from students on the high school wellness council, is that they really would enjoy seeing faculty par-

ticipating in some of these activities with them and bring it into the classroom in some small ways," Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said.

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham emphasized that developing an understanding of wellness at a young age can have a long lasting positive impact on students' lives. She hopes that through tools like Insight Timer, U-High is setting students up for success.

"Develop good habits now, and sooner rather than later," Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said. "Even when it's not apparent that you might need them, these are things that are going to be critical to have in your toolbox."

# Protein powder provides unneeded diet supplement



Midway photo by Kenneth Peters

**PROTEIN POWER.** While protein is an essential component of a diet, supplements, such as protein powder, are mostly unnecessary. For some student athletes, supplements are a convenient way to meet diet goals.

By **PETER COX**  
City Life Editor

Baseball captain Sohrab Rezaei, a senior, is a constant presence in the school fitness center after classes have ended. He works out seven days a week, but that's only part of Sohrab's fitness routine. His diet is also a crucial part of his regimen as a varsity athlete.

"I'm always trying to eat. Whatever I can get my hands on I'm going to eat it," Sohrab said. "What you eat is important. If you're eating salad every day you're not going to gain mass."

Sohrab also supplements his diet with protein shakes. This is a protein supplement blended with a few other ingredients, generally fruit and some kind of nut butter.

Protein in a diet is a good way to reach one's fitness goals, and according to Medical News Today protein helps build muscle, repair tissue and even lose weight. However, it is absolutely not necessary for most people to use protein supplements, including protein powder, to get enough daily.

Protein in your diet helps a person build muscle mass by enabling them to exercise more and with greater intensity than they would be able to otherwise.

According to P.E. teacher Thomas Piane, it's fairly easy to increase protein in your daily diet without any supplements.

Mr. Piane said, "You don't need

“  
**You don't need that much protein to get that effect. You can get it all through your diet.**  
Thomas Piane, P.E. teacher  
”

that much protein to get that effect. You can get it all through your diet. You could still get good protein from plant-based proteins, but really you want it to be meat, fish, eggs, dairy — stuff like that."

P.E. teacher Pete Miller said that while plant protein can be used more effort is required to get the desired effect.

"Plant proteins can be combined to make a protein profile that's equal almost, if not fully equal, to animal proteins," Mr. Miller said. "But that requires a little bit of knowledge on most folks' parts to know how to."

It can take a lot of effort to get enough protein just from diet. Some student athletes choose to use supplements as an easy way to ensure you get enough protein day to day.

"It's a lot easier to get protein using protein powder than trying to center your meals around protein," said junior Poppy Beiser, a multi-season varsity athlete.

There are concerns over possible risks surrounding too

much intake of protein. There isn't currently a clear consensus on these problems in the scientific literature on the topic.

"I haven't really heard tons of risk of getting too much protein," Mr. Piane said. "I've heard about possible kidney damage, but that data's not really there."

According to the National Library of Medicine, risks surrounding a substantial excess of protein in one's diet include bone, liver and kidney damage.

Talking to a nutritionist or even a P.E. teacher about how to safely improve your diet is an ideal way to reach a dietary goal.

"I need to gain weight for baseball," Sohrab said. "So my mom got with a nutritionist and she came up with a protein plan for me, and I started having protein shakes to help me gain mass."

If a student has a particular fitness goal they want to meet, and they're informed about the nutritional science behind protein powder, it can be a great tool.

"I'm pretty serious about running, and weightlifting is an important aspect for sprinting," Poppy said.

Most people can meet their dietary goals through normal food without the need for supplements. But for those who choose to use it, moderate consumption of protein supplements can make planning out an already stressful day a little bit easier.



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# Stitched together

*New elective blends artistic creativity, fashion through experimental approach*

By **AMY REN**  
Assistant Editor

Shick. Shick. Shickshickshick. Sewing machines putter, pins clink against tables, and fabric rustles in Room N316 of Gordon Parks Arts Hall. But this isn't an assembly line or tailor shop. In this class, students create pieces of clothing with fine arts teacher Ana Romero's guidance.

Exploring the intersection and divide between clothing as art and as fashion is one goal of Sew-Called Creations, a one-semester course taught by Ms. Romero.

"The idea behind the class," Ms. Romero said, "was to think about clothing and garments not only as something utilitarian, to protect ourselves — the way we wear our clothes — but as something more of an art form."

Nick Cave's "Soundsuits" inspired Ms. Romero to look at clothing as not just a human necessity but also as an outlet for art. Mr. Cave, a Chicago-based sculptor and fashion designer, responded to police brutality by creating the intricate costume sculptures, which were displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Art in summer 2022.

Ms. Romero hopes to help her students similarly re-imagine clothing's possible purposes. Recently, she gave groups of students a suitcase with random pieces of clothing. The project facilitated creative thinking about transforming clothing.

"The groups had to deconstruct the clothing pieces and then construct something new, completely different," Ms. Romero said. "For example, someone took jeans, and they made it into a small little top... We're recycling, reusing, repurposing garments."

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The idea behind the class was to think about clothing and garments not only as something utilitarian, [...] but as something more of an art form.  
”

Ana Romero, art teacher

Adrija Chatterjee, a ninth grader, said the projects are more relaxing and free-form. Structured in-class tasks can also be very helpful.

"There's, like, stitch samples that we have to do, to learn how to do specific stitches, but the projects, they're very free-flowing," Adrija said, adding that Ms. Romero is "open to any ideas, and she'll be really happy to see us creating."

Junior Stella Sturgill has had prior experience with sewing but said that sewing in class has made it easier for her to practice her craft.

"I think that doing it more consistently, and being more familiar with and consistently working on themes and patterns and, like, stitches and stuff like that," Stella said. "It's made it easier for me to sew on my own because I have more familiarity with what I'm doing."

After satisfying her fine arts graduation requirements, Stella said she took Sew-Called Creations as an elective for personal fulfillment. She took photography as a ninth grader but said she felt the art classes during distance learning were limited in scope and activity.

"I also really regretted not taking an art class last year, just be-



Midway photo by Sarah Abdelsalam

**SEW MUCH FUN.** The new elective, Sew-Called Creations, redefines the artistic potential of clothes and textiles. Ana Romero, who teaches the class, takes a free-form approach with the class and allows students to explore the art of sewing in unique and interesting ways.

cause I think that there's a difference between having a free period and having a class that's specifically, like, for art or just for something that you're passionate about," Stella said.

She also said she likes the course's lack of rigidity, due to figuring it out as they go along, and that Ms. Romero acts as a guide who is also still learning, rather than an expert.

"I really appreciate the way that Romero goes about teaching the elective, which is that it's the first year that it's being taught and so we're, like, kind of figuring stuff out as we're going," Stella said. "Ms. Romero has a ton of experi-

ence with sewing, but she's never taught it before to people, so she doesn't really act as if she knows more than you. It's more like she will help you get to the end result that you want to go to."

Because Sew-Called Creations is a one-semester course offered in both fall and spring, students can choose when to take it.

Some, like Stella, plan to continue in the second semester, while Adrija said she might focus on other courses or explore another art class.

Since this is the first time Sew-Called Creations has been offered, Ms. Romero said that teaching students to sew and reimagine cloth-



Scan this QR code to watch a video of students sewing in class.

ing as an art form was less straightforward than she had thought.

"We really need to have some serious sewing skills, whether that's hand stitching or using the machine or knowing how to cut fabric or even knowing the complexity of fabric and how it wraps around the body," Ms. Romero said. "There's a lot more to it than just what I initially thought, which is, 'Let's just make art with that with clothing.'"

## ‘Sounds Classical’ makes music genre more approachable

*Radio show brings fresh perspective to classical music*

By **KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU**  
Assistant Editor

Lavish symphonies by European composers performed in grand music halls for audiences of stuck up old people — that's what often comes to mind when most teenagers imagine classical music. While this may be the stereotype of the genre, its history extends far beyond these themes, and a new radio show seeks to demonstrate that.

The new WFMT radio series "Sounds Classical" represents a contemporary take on classical music, aiming to increase relevant conversations around the genre. Hosts Kristina Lynn, 31, and LaRob K. Rafael, 29, seek to offer a fresh, youthful and relaxed perspective on classical music as it relates to modern life.

The show runs every Friday at 8 p.m. on WFMT-FM 98.7, wfmt.com or the WFMT app.

The hosts' goal is to excite those who are less familiar with classical music and make it more accessible for 21st century listeners by talking about it through a modern



Photo for WFMT by Mike Grittani. Used with permission

**TUNE-IN.** As hosts of "Sounds Classical," a radio series on WFMT, Kristina Lynn and LaRob K. Rafael aim to recontextualize classical music in a modern way by illuminating overlooked contributors to the genre.

lens.

"Sounds Classical" is a show that aims to live up the way that we talk about classical music," Mr. Rafael said. "Kristina and I are hoping to talk about the classical music that so many people are fa-

miliar with, in a way that might excite someone to go out and seek it out on their own," he said.

They also want to diversify typical associations with the genre, especially by illuminating overlooked perspectives throughout

“  
We can't talk about classical music now without shining a spotlight on voices that haven't been talked about in the past.  
”

Kristina Lynn,  
co-host of "Sounds Classical"

the history of classical music.

"We can't talk about classical music now without shining a spotlight on voices that haven't been talked about in the past," Ms. Lynn said, referring to women and people of color, who have not received recognition in the space.

Mr. Rafael describes the show as "readdressing classical music history," in a world that puts white, male European composers at the forefront of the genre. "It's important to me that we dive into that conversation," he said.

The host duo works together well because of their shared experience being classically trained musicians and for their curiosity, creativity and passion for learning. While the show is a lot of work to produce, their friendship allows them to connect seamlessly

throughout the process.

"I'm glad I have a partner in it that I can bounce ideas off of and really create this wonderful conversation," Lynn said. "Having this opportunity to make this new show and have the ability to tell these stories and give a fresh take and be ourselves on the radio is honestly a dream come true," Ms. Lynn said.

They wanted to pair the laid-back nature of their interactions off air with the energy and excitement of dialogue. This comes from having a duo-hosted show, which they believe in part makes the atmosphere different from other shows on the same topic.

"It's a real conversation with the audience, which I don't think is a vibe you always get when you listen to classical music radio," Ms. Lynn said.

"Sounds Classical" has much more to offer than just discussion on classical music.

The show as a whole can help listeners understand more about themselves and the modern world around them.

"We are at a point in history where our world is changing all the time," Mr. Rafael said. "Classical music is not just the music of the 17th and 18th century. It's happening right now."



# It's time to establish boundaries for AI use

Students must understand how to use artificial intelligence within education

Everyone's seen the dystopian movies — the ones with robot takeovers, machines gone rogue and the human subjugation that follows. They succeed in stirring great fear, or at least caution, in viewers. One thing is for certain: movement toward that bleak future is getting increasingly difficult to avoid.

Since their creation, Google and library search engines have provided a powerful resource for students to guide and enhance their work. They'll continue to do so, especially as the programs behind such sources learn and improve to “humanize.” The proliferation of AI is somewhat inevitable — according to Global Newswire, the global artificial intelligence market size is projected to more than triple to almost \$1.4 trillion in 2029.

The questions is how those in academia will balance that fine line between convenience and contamination. As society looks for faster and more efficient means for progress, there comes the need for a choice between speed or integrity — and soon.

As artificial intelligence continues to develop, evolve and popularize, its existence must be addressed, and distinct boundaries

must be established in academia to prevent confusion and cross-over into academic dishonesty.

Deliberating the use of AI in an academic context is essential to even begin to define any boundaries, especially as they will differ by department or course.

According to the Student and Family Handbook: “Each teacher may have course-specific expectations regarding academic integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and understanding their teachers' expectations about shared work, use of outside help, assessment and assignment protocols, source citation, and plagiarism.”

If a student is responsible for understanding the expected use of AI writing software, the boundaries should be made consistent or clearly established across all courses. Teachers should bear the responsibility, at least initially, of clearly defining how AI can be used in their classrooms, especially when a breach of academic honesty, according to the student handbook, can be as dire as a failing grade.

The handbook defines plagiarism as “words, ideas, opinions, compositions, or images deriving from or belonging to another person or source.” By this definition,

using AI writing software to generate an entire paper is inherently plagiarism, but there are still a multitude of circumstances where boundaries are unclear.

For example, without restrictions on AI use, a student may use AI writing software to simplify a complicated concept when a teacher would prefer the student to utilize a more conventionally accepted source or their own material. Whether the student should be held liable for “academic dishonesty” could become ambiguous because no universal “course-specific expectations regarding academic dishonesty” exist.

Teachers must establish these boundaries. Outside academic settings, it is up to the student or individual to dictate their own boundaries and to control reliance on AI. Long-term use of AI could cause codependency on the software, disrupt the learning process and in a nonacademic setting, diminish human authenticity.

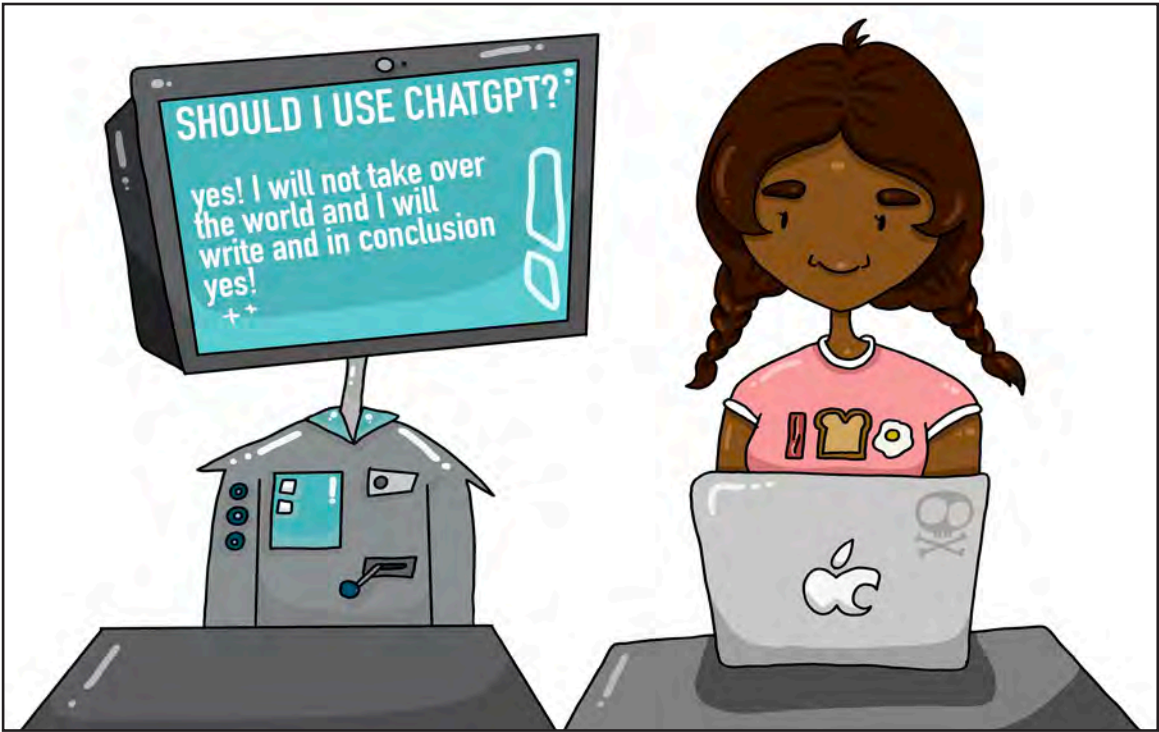
Another concern of AI is misinformation and disinformation — users should regard AI-generated text with the same level of caution they would anywhere else to prioritize overall trustworthiness and

credibility.

AI writing software may eventually perfect its capacity to incorporate human idiosyncrasies and nuances into its outputs, and lesser quality may no longer be an adequate justification against using AI.

We must start to turn our focus to what it means to preserve the integrity of learning and growth. But more immediately, teachers need to clearly establish boundaries in the classroom instead of ignoring or dismissing an inevitably developing tool.

*This reflects the opinion of the U-High Midway editorial board.*



Midway illustration by Dalin Dohrn

## Individual ownership of media platforms threatens reliability

By VICTORIA WASHINGTON  
Audience Engagement Manager

On any given day, millions of users interact with feeds across the globe. Users can count on finding the news-related information through popular social media sites like Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat.

But another social media site has a user base that's just one-eighth of the total for Facebook yet consistently among the top two platforms for U.S. journalists: Twitter.

The not-so-new practice of billionaires like Elon Musk acquiring media outlets and social media companies is dangerous for

the spread of misinformation, especially as accounts are suspended to promote filtered content and construct a narrative around its owner's ideology.

While billionaire ownership of media companies is not recent, Mr. Musk's policy decisions could have a greater impact on mainstream coverage.

Billionaire Washington Post



Victoria Washington

owner Jeff Bezos and Rupert Murdoch, (the executive of Fox Corporation and News Corp) have control over some of the most popular media companies in the United States.

While Mr. Bezos and Mr. Murdoch have significant control over their companies, they are not involved in day-to-day content restriction or publication.

Mr. Musk's controversial decisions as owner/CEO of Twitter call into question the speech privileges users have on the notorious blue-bird app.

In a controversial move, Twitter has temporarily suspended the

accounts of several reporters from The Washington Post, The New York Times, MSNBC and CNN.

A novel policy prohibits the free promotion of Facebook, Instagram and Truth Social among others.

It will remove posts that include links or usernames from any of the restricted sites.

Mr. Musk has already made significant policy changes relating to the circulation of misinformation and disinformation on the platform, by lifting a ban on COVID-19 falsehoods.

He has openly catered to a conservative agenda and has been praised for allowing previous-

ly banned opinions of users (including former President Donald Trump) to circulate on the app.

The power in controlling media is evident: once all public shares are bought by the owner, they have complete control of the type of information that circulates, as well as the suspension of accounts. This has large effect on journalism and the overall media that must be looked at soon.

Within a media matrix so incredibly critical to the work that journalists do, the danger of random opinions circulating in the newsroom is a large area for concern.

## Supporting ‘Hogwarts Legacy’ condones author’s transphobia

By ERICH RAUMANN  
Deputy Managing Editor

At first glance, the ordering website for the upcoming video game Hogwarts Legacy looks like any other, with flattering screenshots of gameplay and a few paragraphs of text describing the epic Harry Potter-related adventures you can experience when the game is released Feb. 10. The section of user-defined tags includes words like adventure, magic and role-playing game. One tag at the very top stands out, though: transphobic.

As the game approaches its release date, an outspoken group

of people grows who are boycotting the game due to the views of the creator of the Harry Potter universe, J.K. Rowling, who self-identifies as a TERF, or a feminist who believes trans women aren't real women and shouldn't have access to gender-affirming surgery.

In order to make positive social change, we need to show that transphobia,



Erich Raumann

and hate in general, isn't tolerated in our society — that includes not supporting openly hateful and transphobic artists.

The game itself, like the Harry Potter universe, won't have transphobic elements or a transphobic message, but that doesn't mean that purchasing the game won't be damaging to transgender people. If “Hogwarts Legacy” is a financial success, it will send a clear message that as long as someone creates something of value, their harmful views can be conveniently ignored for the sake of entertainment.

Fans who are still excited for the

game's release argue that it's possible to separate art from the artist, especially in this case, since Ms. Rowling had little involvement in creating the game, and that a boycott of the game is too extreme. Ms. Rowling created a world beloved by many people, including myself, and while Ms. Rowling's involvement in the actual production is minimal, in a modern world of licensing fees, royalties and merchandise sales, the question of whether someone can separate art from its creator is already answered.

Buying this game will, to some degree, directly financially sup-

port an outspoken transphobe.

This isn't just about Hogwarts Legacy, or even the Harry Potter universe in general. Beloved artists and creators are increasingly using their platforms to normalize hateful, toxic, highly damaging views and practices.

It's not enough to disagree with the artist and continue contributing to their success; there are enough video games, book series and other well crafted pieces of media without connections to harmful people.

There is no excuse for looking the other way when creators are hateful.

### u-high midway

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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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# An absence of attraction

Students grapple with labels, find joy in community

by CLARE O'CONNOR  
Editor-in-Chief

Labels are hard. During adolescence, new emotions, thoughts and fears complicate students' sense of self. For queer students, this period of growth and confusion can be even more difficult. Finding and identifying with a label can provide a revelatory sense of belonging and community, but some experiences are hard to articulate, making a comfortable label difficult to find.

This is especially true for people who identify as aromantic, asexual or both — labels that denote the absence of typical experiences of romantic and sexual attraction.

Myriad experiences of attraction exist along the spectra between allosexual or alloromantic and asexual or aromantic. People who are allo fall within the broad socially expected model of attraction, experiencing sexual and romantic attraction at varying frequencies, while on the other end of the spectrum are people who have a more atypical relationship with attraction. Separated from social norms, these people often find comfort in adopting labels to articulate where they lie on those spectra, building a lexicon of labels under the umbrella term A-spec.

Unlike many other LGBTQ+ identities, what separates A-spec people from social norms is an absence rather than a tangible presence. A senior who asked to have her name withheld expressed that the nature of aro-ace (aromantic and asexual) identity can easily lead to feelings of exclusion.

"It's a lot lesser known than other queer identities, so it can be isolating or confusing for people who are aro-ace," she said. "If you don't have the terminology or if you don't know other people in the aromatic or asexual communities, it's like you're missing some-



Midway illustration by Eliza Dearing

“My friends are like me in the way that they’re not like other people. We’re similarly different. So there is this empathy, this understanding that everything else is built on.”

Aaron Moss, junior

thing that everyone else has figured out.”

Assumptions of attraction and romantic interest are ingrained in everyday life, constantly reminding A-spec students of their differences. Aaron Moss, an aro-ace junior, said they have never experienced a deliberate attack toward their identity but that accidental discomfort is commonplace.

Aaron's sentiment was echoed by the senior and another aro-ace junior who asked to have their

name withheld.

"There are a lot of very small microaggressions because of how normalized sexual and romantic relationships are," the junior said. "It's just not something people ever consider, so it just kind of slips out."

Seemingly harmless questions from friends about relationships or crushes, and jokes from parents about future weddings are not ill-intentioned, but they can feel uncomfortable. The senior girl said even her classes sometimes created frustrating and confusing situations like when her world language class had a unit on dating.

"Our assignment was to basically make an advertisement for what your ideal partner would be. I ended up just kind of saying what I like to see in a friend," she said. "Even though in my class the teacher really tried to emphasize that it could be a boyfriend or girlfriend or a partner, there were no options for if you just didn't want to date someone."

There are countless other examples. The senior mentioned that a friend had told a trusted school adult that they identified as aro-ace, and the adult responded by questioning the validity of aro-ace identity. Additionally, all three of the aro-ace students mentioned frustration with peers making assumptions about their platonic relationships.

"I feel like a lot of people at school and in society in general automatically assume that you want to be dating someone, or that that's a major goal in life," the senior said. "I know a lot of people at school think I'm dating one of my friends, and it can be frustrating because that's the only option people see."

Through the many frustrations and discomforts they feel, all three students said they have found solace among U-High's A-spec and queer communities. Several students who identify as ace and/or aro have formed a close community, united by their shared experi-

ences. At U-High, A-spec students from different grades have come together through group chats, community in-jokes and unique complaints, combating feelings of isolation.

"Being friends with other aro-ace people, it means that there are people I can talk to about this stuff who can really listen, people who have had the same experiences, who deeply understand what I'm feeling," the junior said. "That's really valuable."

The larger LGBTQ+ community at U-High also provides necessary support to A-spec students. Aaron said that while many LGBTQ+ identities are very different from A-spec identities, all queer people share the experience of subverting social norms.

"My friends are like me in the way that they're not like other people," Aaron said. "We're similarly different. So there is this empathy, this understanding that everything else is built on."

## Tattooed teens: Getting inkwork despite red tape



Midway photo by Patrice Graham

**SLEEVE SECTION.** Despite being 17 at the time, senior Michael Pan was able to legally get a sleeve tattoo at a parlor in Indiana with parental consent. He chose to get flowers on his arm in tribute to his uncle in China.

While underage, students find ways to receive tattoos

by SAHANA UNNI  
Features Editor

When one of Ava Wilczak's friends asked if she wanted to get a tattoo, Ava agreed. She said the friend had been practicing for a few months, and Ava wasn't thinking about the permanence of the ink.

That day, setting up lawn chairs in the living room, three of Ava's friends wielded a tattoo gun Ava presumed was bought off the internet. Then they took turns tattooing an "exquisite creature" on her ankle.

While she said she only felt a tickle at first, the needle pricks quickly became extremely painful, making Ava bite her lip to stop herself from making noise.

Many people get tattoos for self-expression, for sentimental value or simply to have fun with friends. While temporary tattoos have long been a pep rally favorite, teenagers are now turning to permanent options by using real tattoo guns or pressing an ink-covered needle into their skin to give themselves stick-and-pokes.

"This was like a total impulse decision," Ava said, "but I trusted them. I still do trust them, and I really like it."

Illinois law states that a person must be 18 or above to receive a tattoo at a tattoo parlor. However, some students have found workarounds — like going to Indiana parlors, where a minor can get tattooed as long as a consenting parent is present, which is what senior Michael Pan opted for when he got flowers tattooed onto his bicep.

"My uncle in China, he had this flower bed that he really liked and it eventually got destroyed," Michael said. "It was more a representation of my uncle than the flowers themselves."

While Ava's tattoo experience was very painful, Michael did not have the same experience in a tattoo parlor, where he received numbing beforehand, although it wore off during the six-hour tattoo process.

"I think if it's very brief, then it doesn't really hurt," Michael said, "but it's like if someone pokes you with a needle, eventually your skin kind of hardens up."

Professional tattooers typically communicate specific aftercare instructions to avoid infection and possible damage to the tattoo. However, without access

“Some people pointed it out, and some people’s comments were not as great, but that’s OK. I 100% don’t regret it. I’m very happy to have it on me for the rest of my life.”

Ava Wilczak, senior

to special bandages and disinfectants, Ava said she somewhat improvised the aftercare process, washing the tattoo with antibacterial soap and regularly applying moisturizer.

"It definitely took a while. I didn't exactly know what to do," Ava said. "Like, we didn't wrap it or anything, but I was wearing shorts at the time, so I didn't have to. I was just, like, extra careful."

These tattoos won't be the last for Michael or Ava. Michael is scheduled to get a tattoo of a phoenix on July 18, and Ava plans to get another tattoo from her friends in a few weeks.

"Some people pointed it out, and some people's comments were not as great," Ava said, "but that's OK. I 100% don't regret it. I'm very happy to have it on me for the rest of my life."



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★★ **chicago mayoral election** ★★

# City student survey says ...

## Half of surveyed worry about safety on campus

★ **SAFETY & SECURITY**

By **CLARE MCROBERTS**  
*Assistant Editor*

Nearly half of high school students around Chicago say they worry about safety in their schools, and slightly fewer are concerned about violence in their neighborhoods, a new survey of city teens shows.

The survey, which included the views of U-High students, found that 49% of students were concerned about safety inside their school campuses, while 44.5% of students said they were concerned about violence in their neighborhoods. The remainder were either neutral or not concerned.


“I think that everyone, at some point, has thought about it,” Oliver Wilson, a U-High sophomore who participated in the survey, said of the possibility of gun violence at school.

Students who took part in the survey were divided on what measures, from lockdown drills to security guards, might alleviate their concerns. But no single measure eliminated students’ worries about the potential for violence, according to the survey.

At U-High, the percentage of students concerned about neighborhood violence was similar to students citywide: 69 people said they were concerned about danger, while 35 were unconcerned and 62 were neutral. A number of shooting incidents have been reported in the Hyde Park area in recent years. Last fall, two shootings took place near the Jackson Park Golf Course, leading the U-High golf team to change practice locations. In 2021, a UChicago graduate student was killed in what the authorities described as an attempted armed robbery only blocks from U-High, and a second shooting was reported on 53rd Street, resulting in damage to busi-

more online

Scan this QR code to visit the Midway website and see the survey results from U-High students compared to the survey results of Chicago public school students.



nesses and parked vehicles.

“Hyde Park isn’t so much a safe place anymore, and you’re starting to see violence spill out from some of the other neighborhoods nearby,” said Connor Booth, a junior who lives in Ravenswood on the North Side, “and so, I think policing has definitely become a much bigger issue to me than it had been in the past.”

Even students who said they worried about danger in their neighborhoods suggested that solutions were not easy.

“While I am concerned about safety in my neighborhood,” a U-High junior responded on the survey, “I do not want my answer to be interpreted as a desire for more police presence and surveillance. More police would, in fact, make me feel less safe.”

In terms of safety inside of schools, students around the city expressed ongoing worries, more than two decades since the school shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado and amid more recent incidents in communities like Uvalde, Texas, and the December 2022 shooting outside of Benito Juarez High School in Pilsen.

New federal data from public schools around the country released this month shows schools have significantly increased their security efforts in recent years, including panic buttons and locks on classroom doors.

In Chicago, students who ex-

U-High recently participated in a survey about issues in the mayoral election. The survey was organized by the Scholastic Press Association of Chicago and Northwestern Medill School of Journalism. Survey questions were creat-



Midway photo by Patrice Graham

**POLICE PRESENCE.** Two students pass a parked police car as they exit Kenwood Academy. Many Chicago public schools have armed CPD officers posted in and around their campuses.

pressed an opinion overwhelmingly supported school security guards. At U-High, 64.7% of students favored them and felt safer having them present; overall, 48.8% of students agreed or strongly agreed that school security guards made them feel safer.

“I have a ton of respect for all the security guards at Lab,” said Connor, who also responded to the survey. “They definitely make me feel safe, but also they’re just great people in general.”

At U-High, students pointed to security personnel as one of the most important reasons why they feel safe in school each day.

“There is safety in knowing that if something were to happen, there’s someone there — a trained professional who would be ready to stop that threat,” Oliver said. “It’s a more feasible solution to the violence, and I think that it’s more effective than hiding under desks during lockdown.”

Lockdown drills, which have be-

come standard practice in schools across the country, are held nine or more times a year in almost a third of the country’s public schools, according to federal data. They drew mixed reactions from the Chicago high school students who were surveyed. 75.2% said that lockdown drills did not make them feel safer.

“I don’t feel like they’re super necessary or would actually do anything to stop a shooter if they were in the school,” Connor said of lockdown drills.

Initially, the exercises did little but heighten students’ stress, though that has lessened as they’ve become more accustomed to the drills, some U-High students said.

“Recently, the teachers have let us know if we’re having a lockdown,” Chani Patterson, a U-High sophomore who responded to the survey, said. “I feel like in the past, when we didn’t know we were having a drill, a lot of people would tend to feel very anxious.”

School, Northside College Prep, Whitney M. Young Magnet High School, Butler College Prep, and Pritzker College Prep.

The survey received 1,288 responses, 1,042 from public and 246 from private schools.

### vox pop.

U-High students responded to the citywide survey’s open response questions, which provided the statistics and quotes below. Submissions were anonymous.

#### MENTAL HEALTH

**73%**  
of students are concerned

“The school doesn’t care enough about students feelings and stress. U of C is where fun goes to die, and that is applicable to Lab as well.”

— U-High sophomore

#### NEIGHBORHOOD VIOLENCE

**50%**  
of South Side students are concerned

**32%**

of students from other neighborhoods are concerned

“I am concerned about safety in my neighborhood, I do not want my answer to be interpreted as a desire for more police presence and surveillance. More police would, in fact, make me feel less safe.”

—U-High junior

#### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

**48.5%**  
of students are concerned

“Reproductive rights concern me and every other woman/girl who has a period. People should be able to choose what they want to do with their bodies whether it’s having children or getting an abortion.”

— U-High sophomore

# CPS students concerned about health care, climate

★ **CPS RESULTS**

By **AUDREY PARK**  
*Managing Editor*

The increasing cost of living expenses, health care, global warming and reproductive rights are the top issues for Chicago public school students, according to the December 2022 survey of teens throughout the city ahead of the mayoral election.

Students were asked to select three issues from a list of 15 or enter another topic not already listed. The increasing cost of living was one of the most concerning issues with just over 26% of the 1042 total responses.

“When I become a functioning adult in society, I would like to own a house,” a sophomore who attends Jones College Prep High School wrote. “Every day that gets hard-



er as the cost of living increases and meanwhile inflation increas[es]. I am going to have to

work more and longer than my predecessors to just have a home.”

Similarly, a senior from Lane Tech College Prep High School wrote that the increasing costs of everyday items concerns them.

“My family has had to resort to local food pantries/local supply giveaways/clothes giveaways to avoid any further losses,” they wrote.

The third most concerning topic to public school students was health care, with just under 30.3% of students selecting it.

A junior from Mather High School said they have never had health insurance.

“Thankfully everything is OK now,” they wrote, “but many others struggle with the same con-

cerns that I do, and many are struggling with much worse injuries or health issues.”

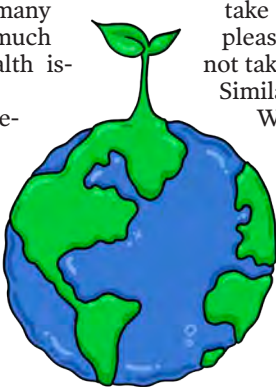
Several other responses shared that the cost of products like gas is increasing at an unsustainable pace.

A senior from Kenwood Academy High School said necessities are becoming increasingly more inaccessible.

“I believe that families are struggling greatly due to inflation. Many families struggle to pay for necessities like gas, food, etc.,” they wrote. “I simply hope we can figure this out so we can help families more.”

Global warming and environmental problems were also high on the list for public school students.

“Global warming is a huge issue and we as people have little to no time,” a ninth grader from Pritzker College Prep wrote. “We must



take action today. I am displeased how our country not taking action or helping.”

Similarly, a sophomore from Whitney Young Magnet High School wrote that he is “incredibly” concerned with the state of the environment.

“The main goal is to make sure the planet is habitable,” he wrote. “Encompassing legislation must be

passed to act in the very near future, not some arbitrary goal like 2050, but now, to cut emissions tenfold and move greatly towards renewable energy, and this needs to be done by not listening to oil and coal lobbyists, but by focusing on the planet’s survival.”

Reproductive rights was

the most popular response with 32.5%.

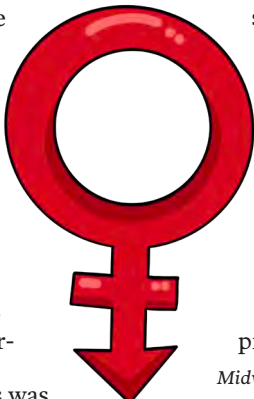
A Lane Tech senior wrote, “Although living in a blue state and Democratic city where reproductive rights are still protected, I fear for other parts of the country and women across the U.S. who will lose access to the right of abortion.”

The issues least selected were housing insecurity, COVID-19 precautions and accessibility.

Many CPS student responses indicated that they were unsatisfied with their schools’ response to several matters, but more notably, mental health.

“I feel that my school needs to handle [mental health] better,” a sophomore from Butler College Prep wrote. “I think it will be best to provide students with programs or opportunities to help them with mental health problems.”

Midway illustrations by Dalin Dorhn





# Rising Stars

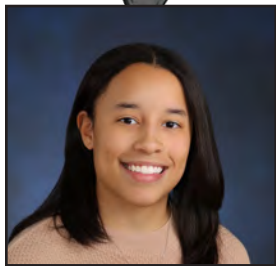
With winter sports underway, athletes demonstrate potential

## Fast Facts

## What has been the highlight of the season so far?

## What do you feel your role has been within the team?

## What are your goals for the season?



### Alex Giles

**Sport:** Girls basketball  
**Position:** point guard  
**Years on the team:** two  
**Grade:** 10

— interviewed by  
Chloe Alexander

“I think the highlight of my season so far was probably scoring my career high of 20 points. At first I missed like every single shot in the first quarter, but as soon as I let go of the fear that I had, I was able to do anything”

“I think as a point guard it’s kinda my job to lead the team. Especially like attitude, though. I feel like my attitude affects how people play. So I feel like coming to practice with a good attitude, it makes you know it’s going to be a good day.”

“My goal for the season is to just improve, not just as an individual but like collectively as a group. Find a way to work with each other so at the end we are an even better team.”



### Simon McCune

**Sport:** Boys Basketball  
**Position:** shooting guard  
**Years on the team:** one  
**Grade:** 9

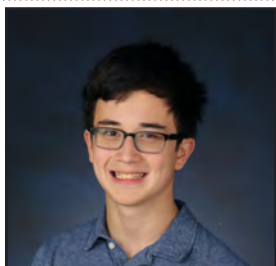
— interviewed by  
Audrey Matei

“Probably the Evergreen Park game. Even though I didn’t play, it was just a really good game. I’m pretty sure Xavier had like 40 points, and we ended up coming back when we were down 15, and the crowd was talking a bunch of stuff about us. It was just a really crazy moment.”

“Right now, I’m hurt. So, I mean, really just supporting the team from the bench, doing everything I can by showing up to practice, paying attention and, when we talk at halftime, just telling the coach what I see.”

“When I can play, really I just wanna shoot and do my best on defense. That’s what I do.”

“When I get back, I want to start playing more and just play harder overall. Just because, I mean, the first time I played I was really nervous, so I was making stupid mistakes and missing shots, stuff like that. I just want to get better with all of that.”



### Charlie Lichtenbaum

**Sport:** Squash  
**Years on the team:** one  
**Grade:** 9

— interviewed by  
Téa Tamburo

“Well, I guess it’s just been getting to know some of the upperclassmen through the squash team, and once you have a common link it’s a lot easier to talk, and you say ‘hi’ in the hallways, which is nice since it’s the first year of high school and you’re still adjusting.”

“Well, it’s hard to say since I’m definitely, like, one of the better players on the team already. I guess in that respect I’m there to still grow, but it’s, like, almost just to show other people because there’s, like, one main person that I could really play against. Besides that, it’s mostly me just trying out new things.”

“I think less about improving at squash because I still do more practice outside of school. More just like getting to know some more people, like the upperclassmen who know different things about the school that I don’t. I don’t know, just my role as a player seems really set right now.”



### Delaney Connell

**Sport:** Dance Team  
**Years on the team:** one  
**Grade:** 9

— interviewed by  
Ainsley Williams

“I would probably say a highlight of the season would probably be just going to our first competition because it was the first competition the Lab dance team has ever done in, like, the history of the school.”

“I feel like I definitely bring a lot of personality and enthusiasm to the team. I’m very talkative and try to have a lot of fun with my teammates.”

“My goals for the season are to definitely improve my technique a lot and get closer with my teammates.”



### Sebastian Gans

**Sport:** Boys Swimming and Diving  
**Position:** sprinter  
**Years on the team:** two  
**Grade:** 10

— interviewed by  
Katie Sasamoto-Kurusu

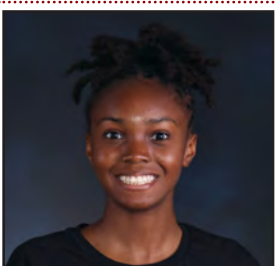
“A highlight has been the bus rides to meets and getting to talk to everyone.”  
“I feel like everyone on the team, we all get along really well, so just hanging out with everyone is really nice.”

“I feel like we all have a pretty similar role — it’s just contributing to the team and meets.”

“I can help other teammates and help people push themselves to be better.”

“I’m close to club state, but I think that’s what Coach Kate [Chronic] wants me to do.”

“I honestly just want to push myself a lot more in practice and keep up with all the swimmers on the team, too.”



### Nana Akoto

**Sport:** Fencing  
**Position:** épée  
**Years on the team:** one  
**Grade:** 10

— interviewed by  
Victoria Washington

“I think it’s been the competitions. We drive pretty far away, but then we get to play a lot of people. In a day, we get to compete several times because we start early. At a team competition I might fence five to six teams; three people on each team. In individual, you fence people in a pool that’s selected to your skill set and that’s about six people.”

“I actually have a pretty big role because there’s not that many of us on the team. I’m just a team player. I work with the rest of the team for warm up and a quick game. Then I practice rounds with the members of both men and women’s épée to prepare for the upcoming competition.”

“I would like to become a more experienced fencer. I want to work on my footwork. There’s a lot of things you can choose to do with in the competition. You have to just ‘fill it out’ to make sure you’re doing the right steps.”

## Futsal season expands; now coed, grades 8-12

by KRISHITA DUTTA  
Opinion Editor

High energy is all around as players kick the ball to their teammates and everyone cheers in Lower Kovler, Sunny Gym, and Upper Kovler — all three gyms filled with players on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This is what it’s like throughout the season for futsal, a soccer-based sport played indoors on a hard floor rather than on a field.

Futsal season allows soccer players to stay active in a similar sport indoors during the winter. While U-High boys have played futsal for several seasons, this is the first year U-High has had a combined team of boys and girls. This year, futsal is exponentially larger than previous years, expanding from last year’s approximately 50 members to around 100 this year in grades 8-12.

Futsal players and coaches this year are incredibly happy with the shift to being coed, and have found that it has allowed players from both girls and boys soccer teams to learn from one another.

The move to a combined futsal program came from futsal coaches

Joshua Potter, who coaches both U-High soccer teams and teaches P.E., along with David Vadeboncoeur, another soccer coach.

“People were kind of like, ‘What! Are you serious?’ when I pitched the idea, but I felt like both teams could learn from each other,” Mr. Potter said. “The game for the guys a lot of the time is a lot more physical, whereas for the girls, technical. And I thought putting them together could ensure they both learn from one another.”

Mr. Potter said he has seen this method work even more effectively than he expected.

“The girls team is also very compassionate with one another, whereas with the boys team there’s more power dynamics,” he said. “But meshing the whole thing together has really helped. They hold a sense of respect for each other now, the girls and the boys, and they seem to be rubbing off on one another, too.”

According to Mr. Potter, around 100 students are split into 10 teams with two captains each, one girl and one boy. Girls team captain Jackie Slimmon, a senior, believes the dynamic has been healthy.



Midway photo by Matt Petres

**SHARING THE FIELD.** Junior Haley Sturgill approaches the goal during a futsal match in Lower Kovler Gymnasium on Jan. 18. This year’s season now includes the girls soccer players and eighth grade players.

“Everyone’s just there to play soccer. It’s great,” Jackie said. “It can get competitive, but I don’t think the girls feel undermined at all. There’s still more guys than girls, so we can feel out of place or outnumbered at first, but it’s not really bad at all.”

The inclusion of players from both soccer teams and five grades has led to some bumps on the road.

Player Charlotte Henderson, senior, said while the spirit has been harmonic, she was nervous at first.

“My initial perception was that the boys team was upset that games would be less competitive with the addition of girls soccer, but after a few weeks, I think everyone’s gotten to a point where we’re close and get along,” Charlotte said.

Senior player Eitan Malani said the environment has become more inclusive.

“I think more than boys versus girls, it was a struggle with dynamics across the grades,” Eitan said, “but I think us seniors have learned to give more space and play to the younger grades who haven’t had a soccer season or a chance to play yet.”