

PAGE 4 • FEATURES

From co-leading Latinos Unidos to coordinating theater productions, senior Juan Chaides strives to both support and change the Lab community. Last June, he recieved three school awards.

PAGE 6-7 • IN-DEPTH

Cultural dishes, like dosas, perogies and jollof rice, are an essential part of tradition and can serve to build strong family bonds for generation after generation. Five students share their stories.

PAGE 8 • CITY LIFE

Brandon Johnson and Paul Vallas advanced to the April 4 mayoral runoff election. Although both are affiliated with the Democratic party, their policies and campaign focuses differ immensely.

Survey shows mental health concerns

Students experience more depression, discrimination than national averages

by KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU
Assistant Editor

Anxiety and depression symptoms among Lab's high school and middle school students are higher than national averages, and Black and multiracial students are most likely to report low equity and inclusion, according to results in the 2022 Health and Wellness Survey.

The survey results, which were announced March 2, reported that over one in four Black students report experiencing discrimination on the basis of their racial and ethnic identity, and over 30% of Lab students report a "low desire to be at school."

The survey was conducted in October by the new survey vendor Authentic Connections, with 87% participation among students in grades 6-12. This year's results combine middle and high school responses, different from previous years. Within the high school, participation was lowest in grade 12 at 68% and highest in grade 10 at 87%.

Title IX Coordinator for Lab Betsy Noel said she was not surprised by the results, given her experience with the Lab student population and the constant concern around mental health among the student body.

"We already knew that we had a significant portion of our student body that is struggling with mental health difficulties, and that hasn't changed in a substantive way," she said. "We were previously above the national benchmark with rates of anxiety and depression and we continue to be above the national benchmark with rates of anxiety and depression."

U-High counselor Camille Baughn-Cunningham said that

students' low desire to be at school is likely caused in part by the pressure of parents and adults at school as well as dealing with a difficult social environment. The Wellness survey reported that 23% of students experience hyper-parenting over academic grades, 4% more than the national norm.

With regard to Black students and multiracial students reporting low equity and inclusion, Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said the first step to making these students feel a greater sense of belonging is hearing their experiences.

"I hope that some of the events of this year will play a role in hearing the day to day experience of many of these students," she said. "The better we know what's happening, the better we are, hopefully, able to make some changes."

She said that an individual's peers can play the biggest role in making them feel unwelcome at school.

"It's not always these kind of big incidents that are the most hurtful. It's the numerous smaller incidents, the accumulation of things, that becomes unbearable on a given day," she said.

Ms. Noel said that addressing mental health difficulties, particularly anxiety and depression, is difficult because they are so multifactorial. Despite this, there are ways the school can help students by using the focus areas, as determined by Authentic Connections.

"We have a huge issue with anxiety but we're not going to address it by prescribing anti-anxiety medication," she said. "We're going to do it by addressing low equity and inclusion, ethnic discrimination, high school standards."

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said



Midway illustration by Eliza Dearing

ANXIETY ATTACK. The 2022 Health and Wellness Survey reported that over 30% of students report a "low desire to be at school," and Black and multiracial students are most likely to report low equity and inclusion.

by the numbers

Here are some of the notable statistics from the 2022 Health and Wellness Survey that middle and high school students took last October.

22.6% experience hyper-parenting about grades, 3.5% higher than the national average

30.6% report a low desire to be in school, 5% higher than the national average

29.2% of Black students reported experiencing discrimination

12.6% experienced anxiety symptoms in the past six months, 4.5% higher than the national average

25.2% of nonbinary-identifying students reported low equity and inclusion

Mental health training program expands to student body

by TAARIQ AHMED
Reporter

More than 40 students are now certified in a teen mental health training program. The teen mental health partner training was offered to students as an expansion of the program that Lab employees took part in last school year.

The students who completed the training in one of two sessions on March 22 and 24 included 28 peer leaders for the 2023-24 year and 17 other students who applied to participate. It covered subjects from recognizing distress symptoms to suicide prevention, as well information on safe methods and resources for students to utilize when assisting peers.

Junior Olivia Quiles said she learned how to better advocate for issues related to mental health.

"Mental health is not something that a lot of people feel comfortable sharing," Olivia said, "and I



Midway photo by Matt Petres

A HELPING HAND. Over 40 students became certified in a teen mental health training program that covered ways to help distressed peers.

think the more that we talk about mental health and the more that we combat negative stereotypes, we can lead to a better future where people are healthier."

Sophomore Theo Hinerfeld,

"I think that the more that we talk about mental health and the more that we combat negative stereotypes, we can lead to a better future where people are healthier."

Olivia Quiles, junior

who will be a peer leader next year, found the training beneficial and believes it will have a positive impact on the Lab community.

"The training lessened the stigma of talking about mental health," Theo said. "We talked a lot about how you should always have a circle of people you're OK with opening up to and talking about your mental health with. At Lab, the people that you think you should

open up to are just counselors or teachers, but if you have a peer to do that with, it might lessen the fear of being judged."

The results of the 2022 Health and Wellness Survey, which detailed Lab's substantial anxiety and depression levels, have ignited larger discussions about the importance of mental health within the community. According to school counselor Teddy Stripling, the skills and knowledge that students gained should be applied in everyday life.

"It's great because there's extra students in the student body that have the expertise to connect with a peer or a classmate," Mr. Stripling said. "Does that mean that anxiety or depression is going to get completely eliminated? Absolutely not. But if some people are struggling with those, the training makes them more likely to get support. I think that's a win."

Students seek principal who understands

by **CLARE McROBERTS**
Assistant Editor

As the search for a replacement for Principal Paul Beekmeyer continues, students say they are looking for a student-focused principal who can balance the high achievement and stressful aspects of U-High and be a supportive figure at school.

Over the past few weeks, the search committee has held Zoom meetings with U-High faculty, all Lab employees and parents of students. The committee held an in-person listening session for U-High students on March 7 during open time, which was attended by just four students, according to some who were present.

Mr. Beekmeyer has announced plans to depart at the end of this school year, and officials have said they hope to announce a replacement by the first or second week of April.

Director of Schools Tori Jueds, search committee, said she noticed common themes when it came to what students are seeking from the next principal.

"They're looking for somebody who's attuned to the balance of your lives," Ms. Jueds said, adding that students had made it clear that they are hoping for leadership from someone who both appreciates the academic rigor of the U-High experience and who is attuned to other concerns.

She said that she heard from students "the fact that this is such an achievement-oriented student body, on the one hand, and we like lots of that, but we want to balance that against excessive stress and considerations of mental and emotional wellness."

Jack Coyer, a sophomore who attended the student session, said he wants the next principal to be student-focused and to address mental health issues for students head on.

Ms. Jueds said students also seemed to be seeking another principal who was deeply connected to the school community as she said Mr. Beekmeyer has been.

"They feel known and seen by

him," she said, "and they liked that and they're looking for that in our next principal."

Ms. Jueds said that the next principal's understanding of young peoples' lives online also seemed to be important to students.

"They would want somebody who understands what your experience in your generation is like," she said, "in terms of technology and the way technology shows up for you in the learning environment and in your social environment."

Carla Ellis, associate director of schools and co-chair of the search committee, noted that much has changed in the four years since Mr. Beekmeyer arrived in 2019.

"The school is in a different place right now," she said.

Dr. Ellis said she hopes the principal search will lead to "someone who can move the work that we're doing in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion forward."

On March 28, the search committee met to consider candidates presented as part of the consulting firm's work so far.

"What they've told us," Ms. Jueds said, "is that a lot of people want to work at Lab, and a lot of people want this job who have really strong backgrounds and really great personal characteristics. I think that that's something that the school should feel proud and encouraged by."

Speakers explore activism, careers at assembly

by **AINSLEY WILLIAMS**
Reporter

Focused around themes of activism, careers and feminism, the Young Women of Color presented its annual Women's History Month assembly "The Many Forms of Activism" on March 23, featuring three panelists who discussed their winding career paths and how they pursue activism in their careers.

The guest speakers included Keewa Nurullah, a former performance artist turned children's store owner; Marshuane Hardy, assistant director of partnerships and strategy at the Logan Center for the Arts; and Cook County Board Commissioner Donna Miller.

Commissioner Miller said that her interest in politics came after working on Capitol Hill in college.

"I wouldn't say I always planned to be a Cook County Commissioner. It kind of came organically," she said. "Then here I am going into my second term. And you know, I feel like there's still a lot of work to do on every level of government. I think we can all participate in our own special ways."

Ms. Hardy came to her current career after jobs in both government and tech, but found herself wanting a career that focused around art.

"I'm a West African dancer, and I had always danced, and I came to realize that the arts and dance was really the career that I wanted," Ms. Hardy said.

Similarly, Ms. Nurullah shares a background in performing arts yet transferred to being an entrepreneur after having her first child



Midway photo by Ishani Hariprasad

SHARING STORIES. Keewa Nurullah, Donna Miller and Marshuane Hardy speak at the Women's History Month assembly on March 23 presented by the Young Women of Color.

and wanting to be her own boss.

"I ended up touring the U.K. performing all over the country and all over the world," Ms. Nurullah said. "I realized that I no longer wanted to ask for permission to do what I knew I was good at [...] and so I became an entrepreneur."

When asked about what activism means to her, Ms. Hardy discussed the intersection between art and activism and how she allows them to thrive through her work at the Logan Center for the Arts.

"To me, art is activism. My form of activism is allowing and making space for that art to happen," Ms. Hardy said. "So I create the spaces in the world for people to present their ideas, to present their forms of social justice, to present the way that they are to you."

Ms. Nurullah spoke about how she encourages inclusivity through her kids store business, Kido.

"At my shop, we promote multiculturalism and inclusivity. We have a wonderful diverse book collection[...] so that every kid that comes in the shop can see them-

selves reflected, and feel seen and feel appreciated and loved," Ms. Nurullah said.

Young Women of Color club adviser Sharon Williams said that the group was inspired by examples of activism in the country and in the school to have the theme centered around it.

"The club wanted to help their peers think about what is activism and broaden that conversation," she said, "and to think about activism as a way to empower people because everyone has a responsibility to help."

BRAVE conference will provide a space to explore experiences

by **SKYE FREEMAN**
Reporter

The Becoming Racially Aware and Valuing Ethnicity conference will be held on April 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The BRAVE conference is a day dedicated to delving into cultural and ethnic topics at Lab and around the world.

For this year's BRAVE conference, students can engage in open discussions, hear from three guest speakers, participate in workshops and watch unique performances centered around this year's conference theme, Uniting Through Unity.

Inspired by incidents involving discrimination at Lab this year, the BRAVE committee decided to host workshops and have discussions on how to move forward and prevent these occurrences in the future.

"We saw the soccer team unite after facing racial discrimination, we saw BSA lead the walk out, we saw the numerous posters put up all over lockers," senior Kavan Pu-

ri, co-president of the committee, said. "We felt that we've seen a lot of movements within the school and we thought it would be interesting to look at the ways that these movements, not only within Lab, have impacted us even after they've ended."

The conference will offer a variety of unique workshops that includes learning about Vietnamese culture through cooking, creating a mural, discussing the importance of people of color and the topic of youth involvement in politics through voting simulators, and more.

The BRAVE committee urges students who wish to learn about new perspectives and cultural roots to sign up for the conference and attend with open minds and hearts.

"We think that the benefit that BRAVE has is that everyone that's there wants to be there, and they really dedicate themselves to these conversations," Kavan said. "It's a place to just be vulnerable, and share your experiences."

news in brief

Applications open until April 21 for Maroon Keys

The Maroon Key Society, a group of student ambassadors that collaborates to create relationships between current Lab students and alumni, is accepting applications from now until April 21.

The group gives students chances to network with successful lab alumni, support the school and learn about philanthropy.

"The main goal of the Maroon Key Society is to help our student ambassadors see themselves as part of the larger Lab community," said Priya Laroia, assistant director of annual giving and alumni relations.

Maroon Key members meet monthly and get to lead tours, work the reception desk at a cocktail reception and attend mentor lunches.

"This is a low-pressure, high-reward activity for those who are eager to make connections, meet new people and polish their networking skills," Ms. Laroia said.

— Light Dohrn

Middle school principal leaves for Latin School

Middle school principal Ryan Allen will be leaving Lab this summer for an assistant head of school role at his alma mater, the Latin School of Chicago.

Mr. Allen has been working at Lab for the past seven years. Throughout his tenure, he has made many changes to Lab and helped through difficult moments.

Although the decision to leave was tough, Mr. Allen believes that it's the next step in his career.

"So this is an opportunity to be the assistant head of school," Mr. Allen said. "I think in the long run, I've always thought about wanting to be a head of school."

Mr. Allen has participated in the National Association of Independent Schools program for aspiring heads of schools.

— Chloë Alexander

GirlUp organizes Hyde Park hygiene product drive

The GirlUp club is holding a hygiene product drive through April 10 to resupply the Love Fridge in Hyde Park with hygiene products.

Hyde Park currently has two Love Fridges, the Rodfei Zedek Love Fridge at 5200 S. Hyde Park Blvd. and the Augustana Lutheran Church at 5500 S. Woodlawn Ave. This year, GirlUp is supporting the Love Fridge located at the Augustana Lutheran Church.

She also noted that students can participate in the drive by dropping off all types of hygienic products in boxes located in areas like the high school lobby and various classrooms.

Elizabeth Grace said she believes that students participating in the drive will be able to stay more closely connected to Hyde Park.

— Edward Park

greece trip



Midway photo by Ellis Calleri

SITE SEEING. Students explore architectural locations in Greece during the world language department-sponsored spring break trip to Greece. Numerous problems arose for the group when trying to return to Chicago after a national strike of Greek air traffic controllers. Still, some students say it was a fun and unforgettable trip. "I still would say it was a really positive experience," Leila Battiste said. "It was one of the best experiences of my life. It's something I'll never forget."

Obesity guidelines confront stigma

Genetics, family habits at core of childhood obesity

by **AUDREY PARK**
Managing Editor

Childhood obesity has tripled in the United States, and according to the 2017-2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, approximately one in five adolescents are affected by this complex disease.

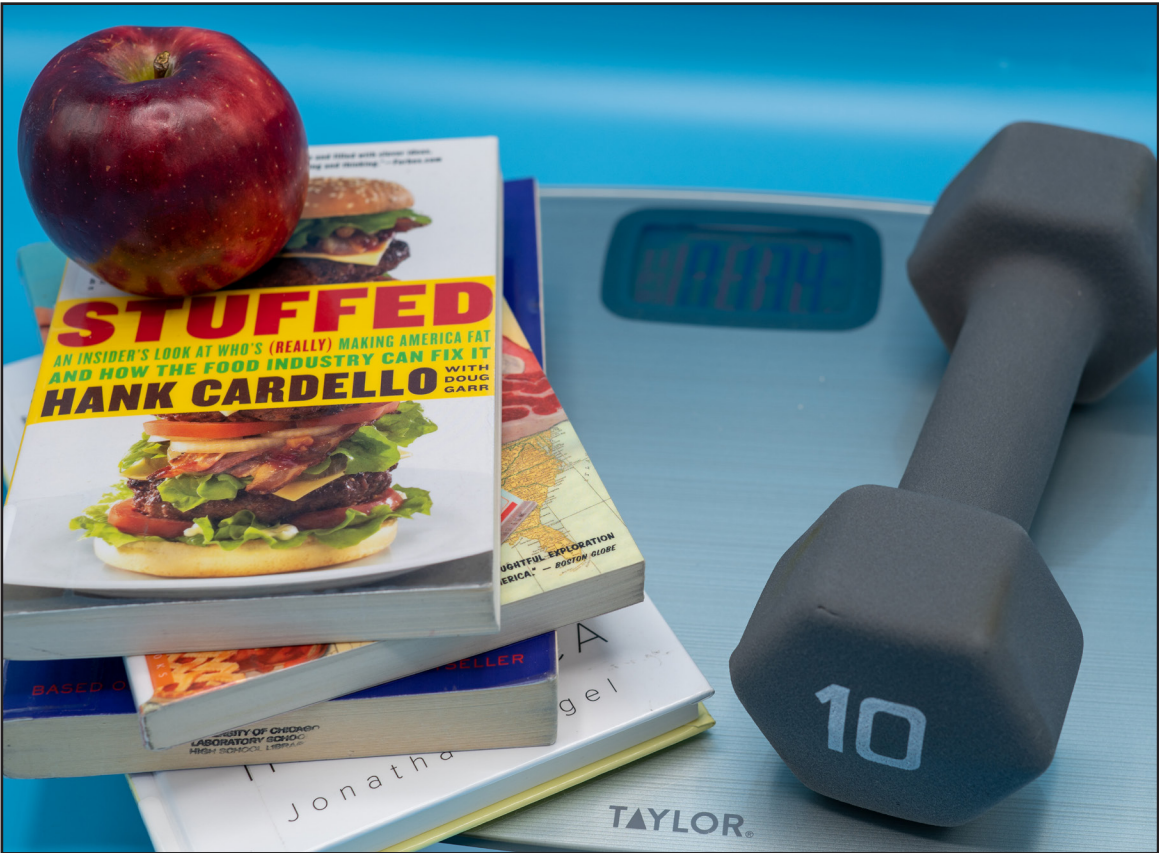
In February, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a 73-page comprehensive report and guideline for the first time in 15 years on obesity in the United States impacting adults and adolescents alike. The guideline confronts the stigma of obesity and the many, sometimes unavoidable, circumstances that create and perpetuate the illness. But it also outlines treatment options ranging from therapy and pharmaceutical prescription to permanent, bariatric surgeries for adolescents.

According to the National Library of Medicine, discrimination toward obese people has significantly increased due to the stigma associated with the disease. A study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago showed around three-quarters of the 1,509 adults surveyed believed obesity results from a “lack of willpower” or laziness.

However, according to the guideline and many medical professionals, obesity is caused by many factors, including in-home and community inequities and insecurities, marketing of unhealthy foods, prevalence of racism in obesity and low socioeconomic status.

Jonathan Klein, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Illinois at Chicago, specializes in adolescent medicine and preventive health services, including eating disorders and public health programs. Dr. Klein has reviewed the AAP guideline and agrees with most of the content. He defines obesity as the intake of more calories than you need or that your body uses. However, he also said genetics play a significant role in obesity susceptibility.

“Part of it is the genes that you



Midway photo by Matthew McGehee

OBSERVING OBESITY. Guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics detail the societal stigma surrounding obesity and the many factors that play a role in contributing to the illness, such as as family history.

happen to have been born with, sort of what your amylase tendency is in terms of body happiness,” he said. “Sure, some of it is a function of lifestyle and exercise, but it is clear that a portion of it is really due to biological factors that you can’t change just by exercise.”

The guideline also says the presence of obesity in a person’s family history may affect how they are evaluated and treated.

Dr. Klein said the availability of healthy foods and safe places to exercise, and an obese child’s environment and stress inducers like racism, can prompt obesity much more than eating less and moving more. The guidelines also cover these factors.

“Especially what we find for people living in poverty is that they often don’t have access to healthier foods because they don’t have stores that carry healthier foods, and they might not have the financial resources to be able to buy them,” Dr. Klein said, “so it compounds the problem where you

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Talking about healthy growth and weight loss doesn’t cause eating disorders alone, but excessive restrictions and struggles over control about food can trigger eating disorders.
Dr. Jonathan Klein, professor of pediatrics at the University of Illinois at Chicago
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are more likely to be buying things that are at a higher calorie rate and are less gracious in terms of balance to keep your family fed.”

He said it is crucial to view the treatment of obese children as a family-focused intervention rather than a child-focused one.

Dr. Klein said, “Parents decide what gets brought into the house and what gets offered. If you just think about the child as the prob-

lem, it doesn’t address the family’s food environment and approach to the availability of healthy food.”

He said part of the solution is helping parents make healthier choices for their whole family.

“It does require having that commitment in implementing a strategy and also the family member’s ability to follow through,” he said. “The parent needs to recognize that they do have some control and opportunity to make different choices, and then help them be able to follow through.”

Dr. Klein recognizes the danger of eating disorders but said that simply discussing food and healthy diets is productive and safe.

“Talking about healthy growth and weight loss doesn’t cause eating disorders alone, but excessive restrictions and struggles over control about food can trigger eating disorders,” he said. “There is a level of caution families should take.”

The guideline discusses how some treatments are more contro-

at a glance

Obesity is meeting or exceeding the 95th percentile of the sex-specific BMI-for-age growth charts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Obesity is categorized as a chronic illness by many pediatricians and medical professionals.

Untreated cases can result in Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, orthopedic and other life-threatening conditions. The guidelines suggest these solutions to treat obesity:

- **Behavioral therapy:** Participants learn how to adopt healthier diets and eating habits
 - **Pharmacotherapy:** The use of pharmaceutical products including medications
 - **Metabolic and bariatric surgery:** Surgical procedures performed on the stomach and intestines to modify stomach size or change hormone levels
 - **Intensive health behavior and lifestyle treatment:** A 12-week program including a nutritional- and educational-based curriculum for families
- compiled by Audrey Park

versial than others.

Dr. Klein views motivational counseling interventions as effective. He said most pediatricians would recommend a lifestyle intervention over a medical procedure, especially for children.

“Surgery is not an unreasonable therapeutic choice for morbidly obese adults and older adolescents,” he said. “However, without being able to make a successful lifestyle intervention, surgery alone is not a magic answer for most people.”

Dr. Klein agrees that stigmatization and negative views toward obesity are problematic. He said he hopes society will shame people less.

He said, “Just because you are larger than somebody else does not make you a bad person, and you can still be quite active in every other aspect of society.”

Body positivity should match personal lifestyle balance

Pediatricians say weight and size is only one aspect of healthy living

by **LOUIS AUXENFANS**
News Editor

The body positivity movement has encouraged people to have a positive mindset about their body size, shape, and weight regardless of traditional societal standards. But taken too far, living an unhealthy life ignoring weight and possible symptoms of obesity can lead to higher risks of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma and joint problems. So how can people balance accepting their body’s size, shape and weight yet make an active decision to feel good about themselves even if it may mean risking health problems?

Balancing a positive mental mindset around weight with maintaining physical body health can be thought of using weight as only one indication of health, and reshaping the typical language used around obesity.

According to Bethany Hodges, an assistant professor of pedi-



Midway photo by Kaden Moubayed

MIRROR REFLECTION. Overthinking one’s physical appearance can contribute to harmful ideas of personal body image. Weight, which is influenced by numerous factors, should be viewed in a larger health context.

atricians at the University of Chicago, weight is just one of the “vital signs” of health, along with blood pressure, heart rate and oxygenation, so it should be viewed within a larger health context.

For example, a person can be

thin but very unhealthy, while someone who is not thin can be healthy if they pursue a healthy diet and physical activity.

However, taking body positivity to the extreme by not paying attention to physical health metrics

such as one’s Body Mass Index, or BMI, can create health risks.

Dr. Hodges said a better way to positively address obesity is changing the language surrounding its usage.

“I don’t immediately say something like, ‘You are obese,’ because that sounds negative and judgmental,” she said. “I think it’s a more holistic approach to say, ‘Do you have concerns?’ or ‘How do you feel about your weight and appearance?’ and start from where the person is feeling that they are.”

The body positivity movement confuses Dr. Hodges slightly because it can imply that the default view is a negative body image. She does not want people to think that being overweight is inherently negative, rather it’s more about pursuing a larger healthy lifestyle goals.

“My hope is that you can feel positive about your body regardless of its size and shape,” Dr. Hodges said. “I still want you to feel positive. I just want to help you brainstorm about achieving and maintaining a weight that’s healthy for your body.”

She believes managing obesity as a holistic lifestyle modification can help to destigmatize it. Rather than personal body image being solely focused on weight, other as-

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My hope is that you can feel positive about your body regardless of its size and shape. I still want you to feel positive. I just want to help you brainstorm about achieving and maintaining a weight that’s healthy for your body.
Dr. Bethany Hodges, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Chicago
”

pects of health can help patients see the broader picture.

Simple tips to help make lifestyle changes include matching screen time with physical activity, eliminating sugary beverages and eating protein with carbohydrates.

Dr. Hodges acknowledges that overall, the body positivity movement helps to address the general stigma of obesity in a way that dissuades unnecessary prejudice.

“I think it’s really important to help educate the public about ways to be supportive for all body types,” Dr. Hodges said, “for the individual person who’s experiencing those things.”

Artistic. Advocate. Admirable.

With compassion, senior inspires and leads change

by **AMY REN**
Assistant Editor

Thunderous applause greeted Juan Chaides once, twice, three times as he was presented with awards in June 2022. Students and faculty cheered as he was recognized for his many contributions to the U-High community.

From leading Latinos Unidos as co-president to coordinating theater productions as stage manager, Juan, now a senior, dedicates himself to caring for and supporting others. Last year, Juan received the Citizenship Award, David Scheunemann Award and Betty Debs Sobel Award.

Juan pushed for greater visibility for the Latino community through his work in Latinos Unidos and on the wellness survey, which he strived to make more relevant to and representative of the student body. Juan was born on Chicago's West Side, has several friends on the South Side and a deep connection to both areas, which have many Latino communities.

"A lot of people fail to recognize how surrounded Hyde Park is with Latinos, and how little representation the faculty and admissions really bring to this community," Juan said. "I've always said, like as a joke but it's very real, that I can count the amount of Latinos that are in our grade on my hands, which is very sad but still is something that I wished to accentuate more because we are a community that exists at Lab and should be represented as such."

He is motivated by the "Lab bubble," where people are isolated from certain communities and experiences. He wants the school community to truly be more aware of itself and also discuss their differences constructively and insightfully.

"Being unaware, and being purposely unaware of things, gets me into a space where I need to help them get the full picture," Juan said. "A lot of Lab students don't see that full picture, because of the Lab experience of someone that is a 'lifer' versus someone that came just a couple of years ago, as well as these differences socio-economically, racially, gender-wise



Midway photo by Matt Petres

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES. Throughout U-High, senior Juan Chaides provides comfort and support to those around him. Not only does Juan work to give Latino students more visibility as co-president of Latinos Unidos, he also acts as stage manager for theater productions.

and sexuality-wise."

Being able to cultivate community is important to Juan, since he says many Latinos at Lab don't feel like they belong to the broader community, like he once did. At November's Day of the Dead celebration, Juan thought Latinos finally felt seen and appreciated at Lab.

"Everyone, from all across all divisions at Lab — I was seeing students, parents and the teachers bringing their kids and being like, 'This is so cool' and... 'I really appreciate this; my kids don't really get to see this much representation at Lab, and having Latinos do this for the community was super cool,'" Juan said. "Getting to see that is very heartwarming and is really why we do it."

Juan leads Latinos Unidos with co-president Kariani Rojas, one of his close friends. They met in ninth grade, when they both transferred to U-High, and connected

over mutual interests and similar backgrounds.

"We bonded through... all the stuff that we've been through together, especially since Lab isn't really well known for exploring all the economic differences in students," Kariani, a senior, said. "So we were really able to bond through our different struggles with not having something, not being able to get somewhere."

Together, Juan and Kariani's different personalities and visions strike a balance in the leadership of Latinos Unidos.

"If you talk to Juan, you kind of notice it — how he carries himself with this responsibility he has, and he can always recognize what needs to be done. And he has this way of self-disciplining that he can just create a plan and actually stick to it," Kariani said. "I'm more of the idealist, where I'm making all these different projects, and Juan can be like, 'OK, but realistically,

how are we getting this done?'"

The two also joined theater together in ninth grade, with Karini acting and Juan as set crew.

While Juan, as stage manager, oversees a production with theater members reporting to him, Kariani said he remains friendly.

"There's this calmness Juan usually carries with him that alleviates all that tension," Kariani said, referencing the stress of putting together a production. "He's very approachable and is very clear with all the expectations; he holds all of us accountable in a manner that doesn't feel degrading."

Although not onstage, Juan said he gets his creative outlet fulfilled while supporting others, since his role as stage manager is to make everything go smoothly.

Lucija Ambrosini, theater director, explained Juan coordinates and cues every element in a production — lights, actors and crew — and ensures all of them are on

time and ready to go.

"He's a very friendly, warm person, and he's very together," Ms. Ambrosini said. "It just has been really wonderful to see how much he stepped into all of his duties and responsibilities, and is following through in a very, very likable manner, just really showing a lot of heart in it, but also a lot of industry."

Kariani said she doesn't know how Juan juggles his many duties without experiencing burnout, and Juan said he doesn't know either. He said his personality enables him to keep caring for others.

"Being able to see other people succeed, that is just really fulfilling to me, and seeing other people happier... is something that I like to see because I'm very empathetic," Juan said. "Other people's emotions do very much get at me very easily, so being able to see other people happy will make me happy."

Time to save: Figure out finances for secure future

by **KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU**
Assistant Editor

While the concept of saving money might seem somewhat irrelevant when parents or guardians are likely taking care of most expenses and many of us aren't yet actively employed, learning to save now can be beneficial as we mature and become financially independent.

The main reason for learning how to save now is because we currently have limited spending requirements, and most of us have the benefit of having parents or caregivers that pay for most of our spending needs. This cushion allows us to learn without the risk of running into financial problems.

The concept of saving is simple: You cut back on spending today so you can use that amount to be spent later. This principle demonstrates that sometimes less is more.

There are a couple of easy ways to start saving:

- **Use student perks:** Many businesses offer perks and discounts to students, extending to food, retail and entertainment.

the bottom line.

Students simply have to present a viable school email or high school ID. Some offerings for high schoolers include: Nike, Hollister Co., Urban Outfitters, Levi's, Oakley, AMC Theatres and Krispy Kreme. There are tons more for university students. Hyde Park restaurants Saucy Porka and The Sit Down are among those that offer a 10% student discount. In general, when shopping or dining in areas with a lot of university students, like Hyde Park, South Loop or Lincoln Park, ask if they offer a student discount.

- **Use tracking apps:** Many apps allow students to keep track of their money in one place. Some are specially designed for younger consumers and those new to saving, including Greenlight, Acorns and FamZoo. These apps give students the infrastructure to manage their spending in a way easily maintained by the guidance

why this?

U-High, like many high schools, lacks a finance curriculum beyond statistics or introductory economics. This section intends to introduce discussions on personal finance topics relevant to U-High students. Building strong financial awareness early is useful in the long run, allowing students to prepare for financial independence. Understanding basic personal finance, even in segments, can save time, energy and money.

of a guardian to learn about topics such as recurring expenses, allowance and incentives, spending tradeoffs and even investing.

- **DIY:** Why spend money on something you can do yourself? For instance, instead of buying an iced coffee at a shop every day, perhaps buy the ingredients separately and make your own. The same goes for lunch. While this option isn't feasible for everyone, it's a good habit to take note of —



Midway photo by Kenneth Peters

FUN WITH FINANCE. Through educating themselves on basic personal finance, students can save money while preparing for their future.

one that can have a greater impact than you might think.

The bottom line: Saving and thoughtful spending are helpful habits that are beneficial at every

stage in life. Building these habits now, either in increments or through various methods of goal setting, is a smart way to set yourself for a financially aware future.

Dress code can limit student expression

By CHLOË ALEXANDER
Assistant Editor

Last year, when Charlotte Satalic was in ninth grade, she was told by a faculty member during the school day that the shorts she had to wear with her jersey for a volleyball game violated the dress code. The faculty member said her body was hanging out and asked Charlotte if she had a change of clothes.

For many students, clothing can be a way for them to express themselves and their identity. Deciding what they're going to wear allows them to experiment and come into their own, especially during their formative high school years. Although not often enforced at U-High, teachers and administrators can determine whether a person's clothing is not "school appropriate."

Although it isn't often talked about, many students feel the dress code has specifically targeted girls, which can have harmful effects.

Charlotte has had incidents of being "dress coded," but the lasting effect for her is the uncomfortable feeling she had after.

Charlotte said, "The thing is, it was just uncomfortable knowing that a teacher was, like, looking at my body in that kind of way. It just made me uncomfortable."

Most times it's not comments from other students that make someone uncomfortable. But it's the fact that an adult is looking at her body and clothes as something that is "sexual" or "inappropriate."

"Classmates are a lot better with how they perceive your clothing. They don't comment on it, even my friends, like, if they think that's something is, like, a little showy," Charlotte said. "Then they'll tell me just in case of the dress code, not because they, like, want to make me feel bad or something. But for teachers, it's mostly just like, you don't want them to, like, see you a certain way."

Charlotte isn't the only one who has been at the receiving end of

dress code

- If a teacher or administrator feels a student's clothing is inappropriate, they may discreetly address the student
- Students are required to wear clothing and shoes appropriate to an educational setting.
- Clothing must cover the student's upper torso and buttocks, and be opaque over undergarments.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled activities and weather.
- Clothing should allow a full range of motion without frequent readjustments and should not pose a distraction to the wearer.

— Source: Student & Family Handbook

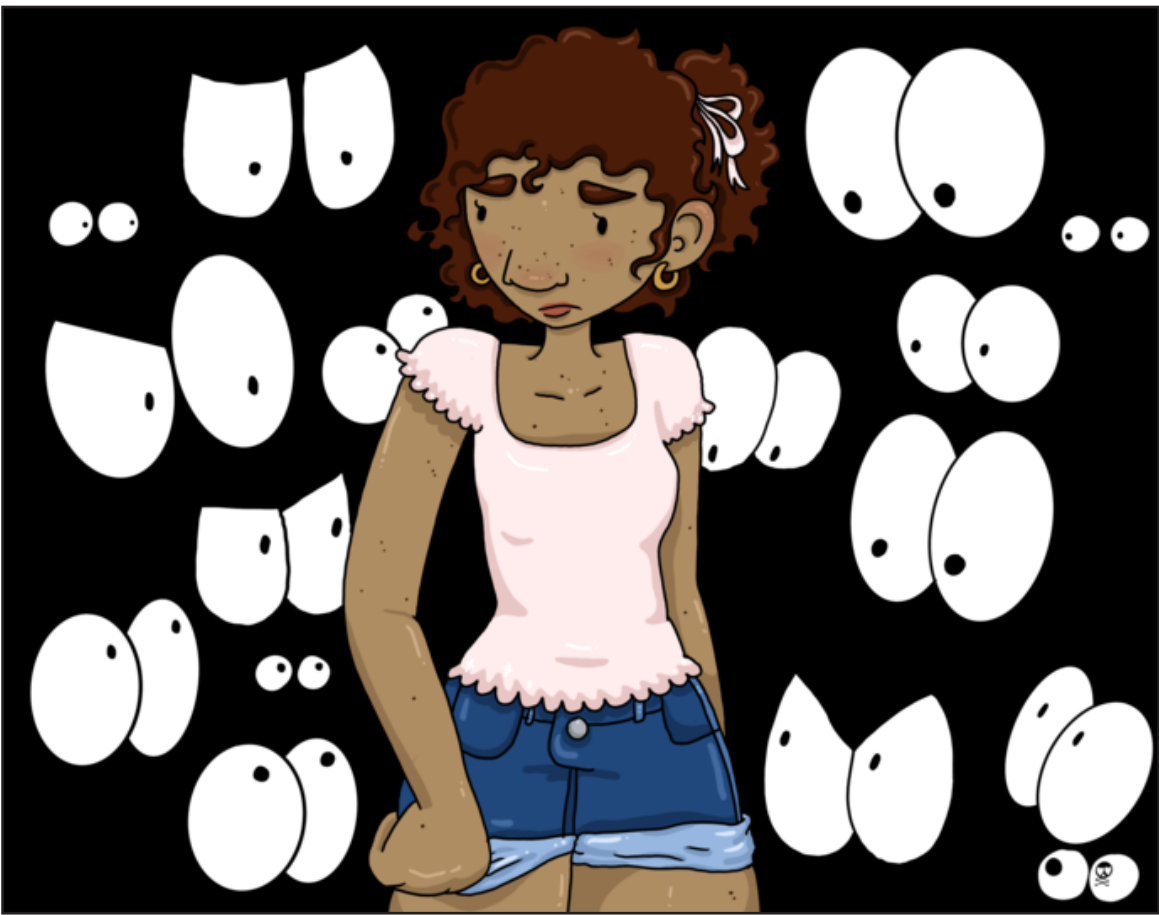
the dress code. She said her friends have had a harder time when it comes to being told to change or that they're not wearing something that's appropriate for school. Not only was it embarrassing, it started to eat away at their self-esteem.

"I think that my friends have experienced a harder time with the dress code. Like, last year, they would get dress coded like every single day," Charlotte said. "It would make their self-esteem go down. It's just like, the whole thing is very, like, inherently bad. And also kind of inappropriate."

Like Charlotte and her friends, senior Lauren Tapper has heard some passive aggressive comments from teachers about her clothing.

"I've definitely had teachers make, I think, inappropriate comments to me about my clothing when I thought it was completely fine," she said, "but it doesn't happen to an extent that would stop me from wearing what I want to wear."

Discovering how clothing can be a form of expression, sophomore



Midway illustration by Dalin Dohrn

Ace Ma started caring about how they dressed in 8th grade and into high school.

"When I was lower school to 7th grade, I just did not care what I wore, and so I dressed kind of terrible," Ace said. "But when I got to eighth grade and high school, I saw a bunch of people dressing well, and so I was like, 'I want to try it.' So I started putting more thought into what I wear and what I present myself with. Dressing well makes me feel more confident, and also I just like to look good."

Ana Campos, dean of students, feels the dress code is applied liberally at U-High and doesn't interfere with a student's individuality and expression. She said she never judges a student's

taste in clothes or body type when she talks with a student about what they are wearing.

"School is preparation for later life," she said, "and there are standards in work and other areas of life where people need to dress for the occasion."

Similar to Ace, Isadora Glick, a junior, feels it's important to have confidence in what you're wearing and that the dress code can block that confidence from being created in a person.

"So I definitely think that, like, being perceived as somebody who shows a lot of skin or doesn't show a lot of skin makes an impact on confidence and just willingness to express yourself and what you want to wear for sure," she said.

"I think that it's really important that, like, dress codes don't hinder people's ability to express themselves in their clothing, outside the dress code."

The dress code's vague wording could be part of the problem, giving anyone the opportunity to say someone is breaking the dress code.

"So I guess I would just say that I don't think that leaving so much of the interpretation up to the community itself, in terms of how to respond to the dress code is always entirely helpful," Isadora said. "Because then it just makes it easier, I think, for individuals to kind of say somebody was breaking the rules without having anything to back it up."

Differing trusts in astrology helps create conversations

From comforting to casual, use of astrology varies
by SAHANA UNNI
Features Editor

Junior Kaavya Shriram was a baby when she got her first horoscope done, outlining specific aspects of her future. Before she was even born, her parents were married in the early morning because astrology told them it was an auspicious time.

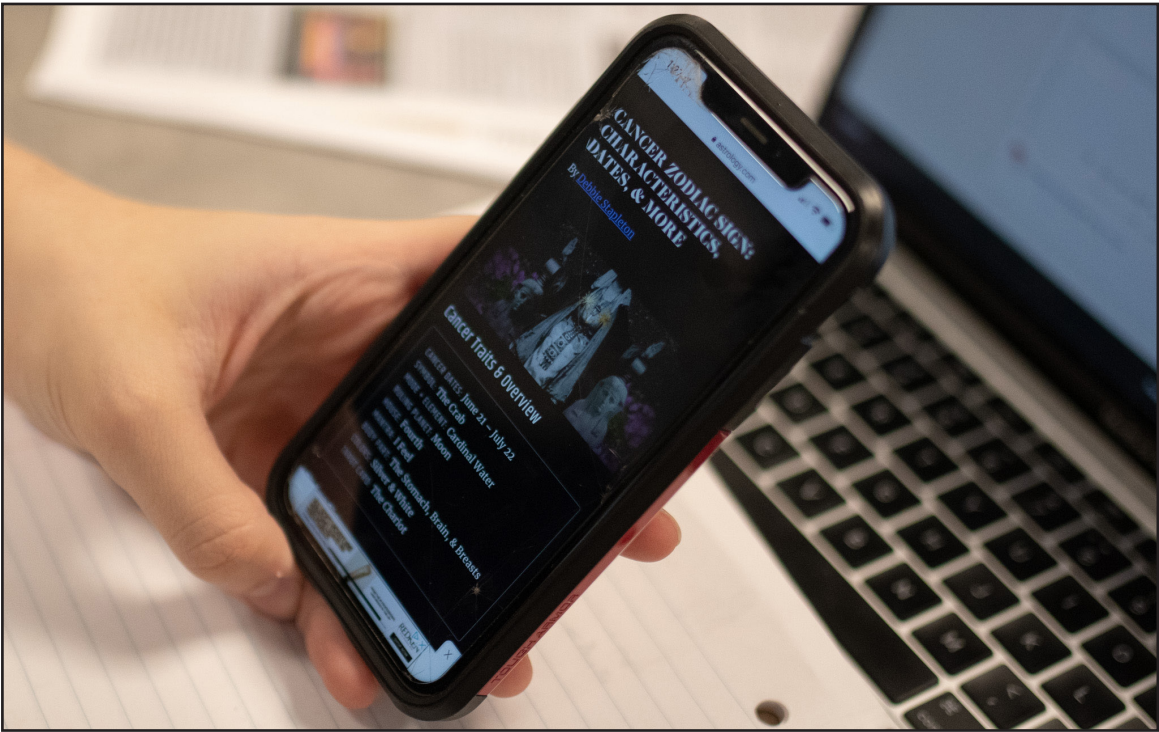
As a Hindu, astrology has always been present in Kaavya's life, and now, with the invention of apps like Co-Star and Nebula allowing astrology to become more mainstream, Kaavya enjoys the new — but perhaps less serious — form of astrology developing in America.

For many teenagers and adults alike, astrology is central to how they make decisions, view themselves and think about their future. For others, it serves as simply a conversation starter and a fun way to describe their personalities.

While trust in astrology is varying, more and more people turn to the sky to seek concrete answers for what is otherwise uncertain.

Astrology has played an important role in senior Ava Wilczak's life, ever since her mother introduced it to her at age 11. While she reads books about astrology recommended to her by trusted friends and used a website called Cappa Astrology to put together her first birth chart, Ava said she is less trusting of astrology apps.

"I feel like it's kind of a double-edged sword," Ava said, "be-



Midway photo by Henry Benton

ASTROLOGY APOLOGY. While most members of the Lab community don't wholeheartedly trust astrology, many appreciate it as an interesting subject and pastime.

cause as I mentioned it is very popular on social media platforms so, without doing any other research with the apps, you don't know who's behind the apps or what sources they're using."

After her best friend introduced her to astrology, science teacher Elizabeth Hubin, a Capricorn, has a more lighthearted approach to astrology, enjoying the pieces of her birth chart she identifies with and using it to connect with others, while still retaining some skepticism.

"I would never make a major life decision based on my astrology sign," Dr. Hubin said. "I probably wouldn't even take my horoscope that seriously. Where I find more interest in it is conversations. If people know their sun, moon and rising, then it's really fun to talk about those different elements and how they might identify with those pieces of their personality because it can just be like a helpful and revealing conversation starter."

Kaavya said she has found that, although a lot of the concepts between Western and Vedic astrology are similar, she was thrown off by Western astrology when she compared her birth chart to that of her twin brother — born only a minute apart — and found that different websites produced varying results.

"I feel like Vedic astrology is just a bit more grounded for me," Kaavya said, "but also I think that's because I have a lot of family who genuinely believes in that stuff and takes it very seriously for, like, marriages — like that's what they look at. So I don't know if it's actually more scientifically correct

related story

Scan this QR code to read more about the astrology app 'Co-Star' and how it provides a fun way to interact with friends and learn dive into astrology.

or whatever, or it's just what I'm used to."

While cosmology teacher Kevin Nihill doesn't believe in astrology himself, he said he thinks it's a fun thing to do, and briefly covers it in his class.

"It's not by any means a big part of the course, but just where it comes from, what it means," Dr. Nihill said. "People will know that they're a Virgo or whatever but won't actually know what that means star-wise, so it's cool to talk about because astrology is a big part of culture, so it's just fun to get a better sense of what that means."

From basing important life decisions on astrology to laughing at funny astrology memes, this belief has provided comfort and security in what can be an otherwise confusing world.

"I think what's really interesting about astrology is that it doesn't just show you where you are in the moment, but it's showing you where you're going or who you're essentially going to evolve into being," Ava said. "I think that a lot of times it helps me specifically center myself and kind of ground myself."

The flavors of family

What's the recipe for home?

1. Start with a cup of comfort
2. Throw in some traditional techniques
3. Finally, let it simmer for a generation

These ingredients aren't essential to a meaningful meal, but for five U-High students of different cultures and backgrounds, food is inextricably connected to their personal and cultural identity and central in forging lasting bonds among generations of family members.

From jollof rice to perogies, these foods are unique staples to certain cultures, but that doesn't mean we can't all enjoy them as well. We've collected recipes similar to the ones shown in this In-Depth that you can make at home. Access them below using the following code. Enjoy!



Amelie Liu finds intersectional identity through matzo ball soup

by ETHAN SWINGER
Assistant Editor

The table is set. She gazes over the typical Thanksgiving dinner spread of turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing and gravy. Yet at the end of the table sits a holiday dish most memorable to senior Amelie Liu: her family's matzo ball-wonton soup, which combines both her Chinese and Jewish backgrounds into a single flavorful dish. For Amelie, this is the centerpiece.



Amelie Liu

"I think that cooking has been really profound in my journey in terms of discovering my identity."

matzo ball-wonton soup into her family's Thanksgiving traditions is a central part of her family's identity and a reminder of the time they have to spend with one another.

"Having the matzo ball-wonton soup at the end of the table, and having everyone go around, and my mom making everyone take a serving of it was really special," she said, "just as an homage to my identity and honoring that, and my siblings at this dinner table with my whole family."

Cooking provides Amelie a way to bond with family members, but it has also been important in helping her find pride in the intersectionality of her family's heritage.

"I think that cooking has been really profound in my journey in terms of discovering my identity," she said.

During the holidays, Amelie's extended family travels from across the country. Even so, the unique traditions that have come to establish what Thanksgiving means to Amelie are experienced and shared with all who share their dinner table.



Photo provided by Amelie Liu
MATZO MOMENTS. Amelie Liu's family comes together over matzo ball-wonton soup at holidays.

"We have a lot of UChicago students or Ph.D. students who are international students who don't have a place to go for Thanksgiving," Amelie said about her family's connection to the University of Chicago, "so it's a blend of many different people."



Midway illustrations by Dalin Dohrn

Tara Sawney experiences meaningful moments by cooking gulub jamun, North Indian delicacy

by ERICH RAUMANN
Deputy Managing Editor

Sometimes, a food is so delicious or regularly eaten that it becomes more than just a food — it's a comforting tradition that brings everyone who eats it together closer. For junior Tara Sawney, the doughnut-like North Indian dessert gulab jamun is just that food.

Making gulab jamun from scratch is a laborious process. Its main ingredient is milk solids, which are derived from constantly stirring milk over a low flame, sometimes for hours, until almost all of the water has evaporated. These milk solids are kneaded along with flour and ghee (clarified butter) until everything incorporates stiff, smooth dough. The dough is then formed into small balls about the size of a doughnut hole, which are quickly deep fried

in butter. The final product is drained of fat, and immediately put into warm sugar syrup to soak for a few hours.

"Typically my grandmother will make it," Tara said, "and we'll have it with my parents and my brother. It's pretty involved — boiling condensed milk, baking it, so on and so on. It takes a while, and is a bit of a process but definitely worth it, though."

For Tara, preparing and eating gulab jamun is a special part of the multi-day festival of Diwali, which she and her close family celebrate every year.

"My family always celebrates Diwali," Tara Sawney said. "It's usually a couple days of celebration, and every year we make sure to have gulab jamun. It's always fun to relax and sit down with family after dinner and have some more food."



Tara Sawney

"It's always fun to relax and sit down with family after dinner and have some more food."

To Tara, gulab jamun is also a reminder of family she can't always eat with. Every so often, Tara visits her extended family in northern India, sometimes to celebrate Diwali.

"Diwali there is pretty different. It's the entire city celebrating," Tara said. "All of the parks are very crowded and very loud. I was there with my parents and brother of course, but we are with my other grandparents, and

all my aunts and cousins. I remember in the evening, we had just lit fireworks, and then we just sat down somewhere and had gulab jamun. It was really nice."

Tara doesn't go to India every year to celebrate Diwali. However, no matter where she is or who she is with, eating gulab jamun allows her to slow down and take a moment to appreciate the flavor of family.

Amira Williams sets her family table with jollof rice, fragrant West African blend of stew, spices

by AINSLEY WILLIAMS
Reporter

Family members huddle around the heart of the home, the kitchen. Vibrant conversations fill the room as some get to work. A large pot sits in the center of the kitchen, a vibrant orange jollof rice inside. The intense, zesty smell of the bouquet of peppers, spices and vegetables fills the air and permeates every room of the house.

Ever since sophomore Amira Williams could remember, her grandmother's jollof rice has been on the table at any important celebrations with her family. Jollof rice is a rice dish that originated in West Africa and quickly became the region's most popular dish with multiple variations depending on the country, some being served alongside meat, fish or plantains.

"Jollof is a dish that my family makes for almost every birthday, or after prayers, or just special occasions," Amira said. "Prayers are super long, like they can go until really late at night, so it is really nice to come home and just have some really good food. And for birthdays, you just have to have it."

She also expressed a strong sense of family connection from the process of making the rice.

"Usually my grandma makes it and my siblings and I watch her in the kitchen, and it is pretty cool to see the dish come together," Amira said. "But when I do help, I get the rice and help prepare it, and in the end you get to have a really nice meal with your family."

The recipe is a flavorful and fragrant blend of different vegetables and spices that gives the rice its



Amira Williams

"I feel a sense of pride and excitement when I cook with my grandma because it's just so good."

iconic orange color.

"So first you have to make the stew. So that's with tomatoes, bell peppers, habaneros, scotch bonnet, bay leaf, and a bunch of spices, and you fry it with a bit of oil. The smell of the spices is so good," Amira said. "Usually you would cook it on the stove, but my grandma always puts it in the oven, and it always turns out amazing."

Amira said, for this dish, the type of

rice used is crucial to it being perfect. "You have to use long-grain rice," she said. "Not basmati rice or jasmine rice, long-grain rice ensures that the jollof comes out nice and fluffy."

For Amira, cooking jollof rice is far much more than simply the process of cooking.

She said, "I feel a sense of pride and excitement when I cook with my grandma because it's just so good."

Anokha Nathan fries dosa, South Indian staple, with grandmother

by WILLIAM TAN
Editor-in-Chief

Homey. It's a feeling that comes to mind for senior Anokha Nathan as she stands beside her grandmother, measuring out a cup of batter.

As she pours the gooey mixture into a hot pan with a sizzle, the bubbly circles fuse into crispiness, releasing an aroma which wafts throughout her kitchen, the smell of comfort.

Anokha's making dosa, a traditional South Indian crepe-like staple often dipped in curry, filled with potatoes or eaten as a side dish.

To Anokha, making and eating her grandmother's original dosa recipe is central to her South Indian identity and a sense of togetherness shared among herself and her family.

Since Anokha's maternal grandparents live with her, food is an essential part of the household, and family meals are often cooked by her grandmother.

On weekends, Anokha wakes up to the smell of her grandma frying dosas and cooking other Indian foods from scratch.

"That is what my grandma makes for breakfast a lot on the weekends," she said. "It's probably one of my favorite foods in the whole world — that's what I'm always looking forward to."

Dosa is made with fermented rice batter. When heated at high temperatures, the batter fries into a thin but chewy pancake.

"We always have the batter, like, on hand — my grandma makes it in bulk," Anokha said. "So if anyone like needs it — and sometimes



Anokha Nathan

"For me, the smell of Indian food is very comforting and I just know that smell — it smells like my house."

it's not even breakfast — sometimes I'll wake up really late one day, and I'll be like, 'That's all I want right now, and Grandma can make it super quick.'"

Anokha's family uses recipes passed down through generations, and that originality gives their food authenticity and life.

Anokha herself learned to make dosa under the careful eye of her grandmother after expressing interest in the process.

"My mom and my grandma cook huge Indian feasts and things you could really only get in India, like stuff they've learned from experience, not from lessons or online. It's all recipes that have been passed down," she said. "I feel very fortunate to have them in my house every single day."

For Anokha, making dosa is more than just a generational technique, it's a personal experience that reminds her of home and allows her to connect with those she cherishes most. No matter what stereotypes are attributed to her Indian heritage, Anokha is proud of the food and culture her family makes.

"For me, the smell of Indian food is very comforting and I just



Photo provided by Anokha Nathan
DOSA DISHES. Anokha Nathan looks forward to her grandmother's dosas made using recipes that have been passed down for generations.

know that smell — it smells like my house," she said. "It's interesting because even if you go to Indian restaurants and you smell the same food, it doesn't smell like my grandma's, and it doesn't smell like my home."

Sophia Shimanska overcomes distance with Ukrainian perogies

by CHLOE ALEXANDER
Assistant Editor

Christmas Eve, Easter and other holiday dinner tables are often filled with different foods, both traditional and more specific to a family's heritage or tastes. For sophomore Sophia Shimanska, holiday dinner tables are filled with traditional Ukrainian dishes and treats — from Easter bread to sweet or savory perogies — that have been carried through her family for generations.

Cooking traditional Ukrainian cuisine is something Sophia looks forward to because it allows her to connect to Ukrainian culture thousands of miles away.

One of the most notable dishes Sophia makes are perogies, a type of dumpling with a savory or sweet filling.

"There's so many steps, like making the dough, then also making whatever the filling is — it could be potato, it could be cherry," Sophia said. "We also did blueberry and strawberry once, and the strawberry ones were really good."

The process of making perogies is somewhat simple: make the flour dough, prepare the filling and put the dish together.

According to Sophia, all you need to do is add flour, eggs, water, salt and seasoning. Then make the potato filling with potatoes, farmer's cheese and cooked onions.

These dishes ignite special memories for Sophia, from traveling back to Ukraine to visit her grandmother to fun holiday traditions that have been in her family for generations.



Sophia Shimanska

"Using the same recipes that my ancestors have used ... I feel like that kind of helps me connect to my culture."

"It makes me remember and connect to the people that are currently in Ukraine," Sophia said. "I remember when I went to Ukraine — I think in like 2019, maybe 2018 — but when I came home my grandma made me pierogies right when we came into the house and they were, like, nice and fresh from the night before."

For Sophia, food isn't just a way to connect to her immediate family but a way to connect her to her Ukrainian heritage and a country that she hasn't been able to visit since 2019 due to COVID-19 and the war with Russia. These traditional dishes have been around for centuries, so being able to cook the same dishes helps Sophia connect to her culture.

"Using the same recipes that my ancestors have used, who lived in the Ukraine for their entire lives, I feel like that kind of helps me connect to my culture. Because you don't really see a lot of Ukrainian restaurants," Sophia said.

Cooking and baking traditional dishes lets Sophia connect to her culture and family in Ukraine.



Photo provided by Sophia Shimanska
PLATING PEROGIES. The Ukrainian dish is often seen on the holiday table of Sophia Shimanska.

From helping her mom prep in the kitchen to enjoying the freshly made perogies that her grandmother made in Ukraine, cooking is something in Sophia's life that connects her to family thousands of miles away.

Candidates show a sharp contrast

Education, safety became key issues in April 4 runoff

by MIA LIPSON
Assistant Editor

★ OVERVIEW

Moderate Vallas slight favorite in close race with more progressive Johnson

After no candidate received 50% of the vote in the Feb. 28 municipal election, the two top candidates, Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson and former Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas, advanced to the April 4 runoff, setting the stage for the two, and their vastly different policies, to face off to replace incumbent Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who finished third.

In the primaries, Mr. Vallas gained 33.2% of the vote, countered by Mr. Johnson's 21.1%. While both candidates in the officially nonpartisan race are affiliated with the Democratic party, Mr. Vallas has dodged questions over his conservative views, and their policies and campaign focuses greatly differ.

Mr. Vallas, who unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 2019, served as CPS CEO and the city's budget director. His campaign revolves around three main issues: public safety, education and funding. His campaign emphasizes a tough-on-crime message, citing a goal to take the "handcuffs" off of the police. He wants to address the issue of CPS funding and the city's economic development.

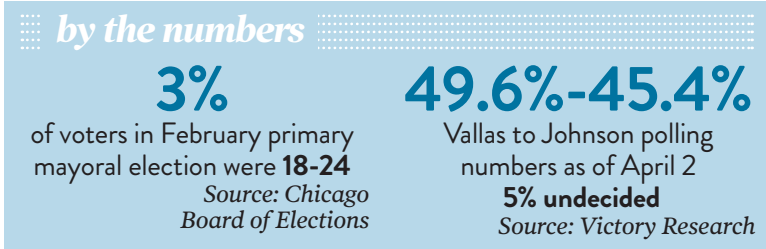
Mr. Johnson's campaign message centers around progressive ideas for the city that cover Mr. Vallas' concerns as well as topics such as environmentalism, LGBTQ rights and immigration. Before becoming an organizer for the Chicago Teachers Union and elected commissioner for the 1st District of Cook County, he worked as a public school teacher on the Near North and West sides of the city. Mr. Johnson's goals consist of investing \$1 billion in city finances and in the school system. Mr. Johnson also calls for extensive police department reforms and the opening of mental health centers.

Editors note:
Election results were not available at the time of printing.



Midway photo by Matt Petres

BRANDON JOHNSON. A former CPS teacher and union organizer, Mr. Johnson's campaign is built around progressive, socially-focused policy to improve the standard of living in Chicago.



★ POLICY POSITIONS

Campaigns have same big issues, but approaches to solving them are different

Both candidates cite their experience with CPS as driving forces for their planned education reforms. They share a goal of re-instituting schools as community centers by implementing year-round youth-oriented programs, but they diverge from there.

Mr. Johnson calls for holistic expansion of the education system, from pre-kindergarten to city college, through direct investments into schools. Mr. Johnson proposes shifting from the student-based budgeting model, which he believes disadvantages communities, to one where CPS can receive adequate state funding. He also proposes ideas like universal child care, paid for with the money provided if "corporations paid what they owed in taxes."

A charter schools advocate, Mr. Vallas focuses on safety and funds, so that "money follows the kids into the classroom," allowing citi-

zens to "empower and trust local communities to know what's best to do with your money for your children." Vallas would like to keep schools open for weekends, holidays and after school by bringing in community and religious groups. He would like to dismantle central education administration and shift the power to elected Local School Councils.

Mr. Johnson's plans are contained in his Better Chicago Agenda, which aims to invest \$1 billion in the city without raising property taxes. His Bring Home Chicago ordinance would impose a one-time tax on home sales over \$1 million, providing funds to address the housing crisis.

Mr. Vallas' plans include creating an Independent Community Development Authority, a Fair Share Investment Trust for second and third generations, and a strategy to claim empty properties on the West and South sides by using property tax, local and state incentives.

When addressing public safety, Mr. Johnson's police reforms include a violence intervention, an efficiency audit, 200 new detec-



Midway photo by Matt Petres

PAUL VALLAS. Mr. Vallas was CEO of CPS from 1995-2001. His campaign focuses on improving public safety and decentralizing school administration. He unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 2019.

tives and a streamlining of positions. He also plans to institute restorative justice groups and a trauma response network. His plans include addressing racial profiling by ending no-knock warrants and erasing the gang database. In the weeks before the runoff, Mr. Vallas claimed Mr. Johnson will defund the police, a statement Mr. Johnson has rebutted.

With his "tough on crime" message, Mr. Vallas wants to institute a community policing model, which he will initiate by hiring more officers and replacing the leadership team of former Superintendent David Brown. Mr. Vallas would like to eliminate redundant positions and end overtime initiatives. He would also like to encourage community-based agency leaders to take action against street violence.

★ CAMPAIGN

Johnson relies on youth vote while Vallas polls well with older white voters

Mr. Vallas raised \$6.3 million, over \$100,000 from himself. A majority of his donations were personal contributions from the executives of private equity firms. Mr. Johnson raised \$4.2 million, primarily funded by labor groups.

Chicago Sun-Times reporter Mitchell Armentrout said in an interview with the Midway that in the primary election Mr. Vallas gained support from affluent areas

in the far Southwest and Northwest sides of the city. Mr. Johnson received votes throughout the South and West sides and the north lakefront, which were highly sought areas in the primary. Leading up to the runoff, candidates spent time focusing on communities of color particularly on the South Side. Mr. Armentrout noted it is difficult to determine the influence of endorsements.

"I think Chuy García is a pretty significant endorsement for Brandon Johnson, because they were viewed as both very progressive Democrats, and in the first round of voting there was a lot of talk about them splitting that progressive vote," Mr. Armentrout said. "As for Paul Vallas' endorsements, you know, the week after the first round, he announced [former Illinois Secretary of State] Jesse White's endorsement, and that's got to be a big one since Jesse White is arguably one of the most popular politicians in Illinois in the last few generations."

Mr. Armentrout believes the runoff will be an extremely close race, which will ultimately depend on voter turnout.

"I think that there's a pretty stark generational divide," Mr. Armentrout said. "I think that sort of divide might play better in Paul Vallas' favor only because older people tend to turn out to vote more. It's harder to energize the youth vote, so I think that's another focus for Brandon Johnson here in the homestretch."

Refugee center in Woodlawn produces support, criticism

By AUDREY MATEI
Arts Editor

Once home to hundreds of students bustling from class to class, Woodlawn's closed James Wadsworth Elementary School, at 6420 S. University Ave., now serves a new and different purpose: 250 asylum seeking migrants temporarily reside in the building despite some pushback from community members and South Siders.

Regardless of the controversy surrounding the temporary shelter from community members, support for the migrants has sprouted in the neighborhood.

After months of delays back and forth regarding the city's plan to house in Woodlawn the migrants who were relocated from Texas, the temporary housing plan has finally come to fruition. At community proposal meetings, many Woodlawn residents expressed concerns over resource distribution and culture rifts with the arrival of the migrants.

Despite some negative pushback, parts of the community welcome the migrants with open arms. The Chicago 4 All initiative is a newly launched program that aims to help ease the transition for the migrants through resources in Spanish and English and volunteering opportunities. Concord Missionary Baptist Church is a partnering local organization that hopes to help migrants through the new Home Away from Home Center which will offer a variety of resources.

Rev. Kenneth Phelps of Concord Missionary Baptist Church said that the mission of the partnership stretches beyond the bare minimum of basic support.

"Our goal is to not only welcome them, but to empower them and to help them to integrate into our particular community because we believe that Woodlawn is a great place to live," he said. "That's why we also align with Chicago 4 All because we want to help change the narrative, so it's just for us, a

no brainer."

He also said that despite the discourse, the response to the Chicago 4 All programs has been very supportive across the board.

"In terms of the presence of the residents and the shelter, there are some legitimate reasons for everything, but from our perspective, you know, they're here, they're human, they need help," he said. "The majority of the Woodland Community and Chicago at large, has been very, very supportive to our efforts as it relates to the Home Away from Home Center and the things that we're doing as it relates to ministry to the migrants."

Rev. Phelps wants Woodlawn residents to know that the programs reach beyond migrants and serve the entire community and hopefully bring together South Siders during a tough time.

He said, "I think it's important for the community to know that what we're doing is not only just for the residents, but it's for the community too."



Midway photo by Matt Petres

PROVIDING REFUGE. The refugee center at 6420 S. University Ave. houses 250 asylum seekers, operates out of a closed elementary school.

A leading Light

From behind the scenes, Dory Barnard shines in theater technical crew

by **TAARIQ AHMED**
Reporter

Editor's note: Dory Barnard uses they/them pronouns, which have been substituted for different pronouns that were used in quotations from sources.

Lights, Camera, Action! The school musical is underway as harmonic voices and beautiful melodies charge the atmosphere of the Sherry Lansing Theater. All the expected vibrance and liveliness of a theater event is proudly displayed toward the audience, which then erupts into a burst of cheers. However, concealed upon a balcony evading the vision of the spectators, lies the diligence and dedication of the lighting crew, directed and supervised by their leader, sophomore Dory Barnard.

Dory was a ninth grader when their sister Jane Barnard, a 2022 U-High graduate and former theater program member, suggested Dory should join the backstage crew.

From that moment on, Dory became heavily involved in the lighting department, working for all performances since fall 2021.

Now, Dory is the official master of lighting, a role that has given Dory substantial leadership experience in technical theater.

"I think being the head of the crew has been interesting for me because it's a lot of management kind of stuff," Dory said. "So I'm responsible for everyone and making sure everything gets here and is on track. I have to communicate with the directors, and make sure everything's working out in that sense."

Dory said that they have become close friends with the lighting crew and have developed a sense of community within the theater program overall.

“If I have theater to think about, then I think it takes my mind off school. In that sense, it's really enjoyable because I feel accomplished.”
Dory Barnard, sophomore

"The crew itself is great, so we have a lot of fun," Dory said. "Before shows, we'll play Nintendo Switch games, and we often hang out outside of school as well, so I think it's obviously gotten me a lot of friendships over time."

Typically graduating backstage crews instruct younger, developing crews as to the mechanics and technical aspects of lighting work. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, collaboration among the generations was severed, and the theater department was forced to start from scratch.

Theater teacher Allen Ambrosini said that upon arriving into this predicament, Dory thrived both with learning new material and helping others learn the ropes.

"Dory is very conscientious. [They] learn very quickly and [they] are a very good leader," Mr. Ambrosini said. "[They] were thrown into the situation last year, but [they] picked it up quickly and pulled together a group of people to do lighting. [They're] also very efficient and very straightforward. We're very happy for [them] to be working in the theater and [they] bring a whole palette of information and positivity to the theater."

Dory said that they did have to figure out a balance between the commitment that comes with being the master of lighting and regular schoolwork.

"Before the fall play and Stu-



Midway photo by Gabriel Issa

IN THE SHADOWS. Sophomore Dory Barnard works the light board in the balcony above Sherry Lansing Theater. They serve as the master of lighting which has taught them skills in leadership and responsibility. Despite receiving less recognition than some of their peers in theater, Dory still finds fulfillment in it.

dent Experimental Theater, I had to come in a lot, especially during free periods, so it was often hard to balance lighting with homework," Dory said. "It's easy to get stressed, but if I have theater to think about, then I think it takes

my mind off school. In that sense, it's really enjoyable because I feel accomplished. It's given me a lot of connections, something to do, and something to be proud of."

At the end of a show, the crowd erupts into a thunderous applause

as the entertainers take a bow, welcoming the praise.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Dory and their crew dim the lights, celebrating another successful performance.

Hyde Park exhibit explores American veteran experience

by **PETER COX**
City Life Editor

Serving the nation is honored as the greatest sacrifice that a person can make, yet many veterans struggle to reintegrate into society after their service, making the conversation around veterans one of the greatest hypocrisies of American civil culture.

Sparked by this conversation, The Hyde Park Art Center unveiled on March 17 a new exhibition, "Surviving The Long Wars: Unlikely Entanglements," which explores the experiences of veterans in the two longest conflicts in American history, the American Indian wars and The War on Terror, with a specific focus on the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The exhibit provides insight into the complex experiences that veterans, particularly those who are Black and Indigenous, associate with their service.

The exhibition was curated by Aaron Hughes, a former artist in residence at The Hyde Park Art Center. Two other sections of the exhibit are on display at the Newberry Library and Chicago Cultural Center.

Allison Quinn, director of curation and residency at The Hyde Park Art Center, had seen an earlier version of the exhibition three years ago and was interested in displaying some of the art in the center's gallery. She wanted the



Midway photo by Ishani Hariprasad

STRIKING SCULPTURE. On exhibit at the Hyde Park Art Center, "Surviving The Long Wars: Unlikely Entanglements," uses art to dive into the complex experiences of Black and Indigenous veterans in America.

center to be part of this show.

"I just felt like it was an important audience that we hadn't had any programming for and wanted to be open to," Ms. Quinn said.

Whereas the Chicago Cultural Center is displaying work from more established artists and the Newberry Library's exhibition focuses on print, "Unlikely Entan-

glements," the The Hyde Park Art Center section of the show, mainly consists of experimental art. Media vary from abstract painting to mixed media projects such as Joe Devera's sculptural piece "And All The King's Men," which depicts a creature that loosely resembles a horse made from pieces of wood and is draped in sheets of fabric.

Another piece, "Suture," is a box made of camouflage material with metal and packs of gauze taped to it by Ruth Kaneko, a native Hawaiian.

Veteran Rodney Ewing has a series in the exhibit layering photos of Black laborers working in the early 20th century with patent sketches for machinery from

“It wasn't about bullets and sunsets and helmets, it was about psychological effects and trauma, but also about brotherhood and connection and all these other things that make it so much more complex.”
Allison Quinn,
director of curation and residency

the same period, showing the relationship between industrialization in the United States and the exploitation of Black labor.

The exhibition displays the creativity of the veteran community and the complex relationship that Black and Indigenous veterans feel serving a country that so often turns its back on them. This is the reason that The Hyde Park Art Center took an interest in the show.

"It wasn't about bullets and sunsets and helmets, it was about psychological effects and trauma, but also about brotherhood and connection and all these other things that make it so much more complex," Ms. Quinn said. "I felt like it was a very up-to-date notion of all the good and bad of defending this country."

Mental health, rigor stand at crossroads

In the 2022-23 Laboratory Schools Report on Wellness, given to students in grades 6-12, experts from Authentic Connections suggest teachers should maintain high expectations but make it clear that academic and extracurricular success should never come at the expense of student well-being.

This is unfortunately a contradiction when it comes to Lab. Lab cannot thoroughly deal with a demand for increased mental health support while simultaneously keeping the label of an academically rigorous institution.

When students enroll at Lab, they expect that they will develop the skills needed to excel academically and find success in the college process. Lab students should not expect a smaller workload as part of the school's mental health response but should instead advocate for more consistent coordination among faculty on the assignment of work. Lab's 2019 strategic framework ide

ntified workload as the root cause of many students' stress and mental health struggles, citing responses on the health and wellness surveys given to students.

*as the
midway
sees it.*

Despite having new external facilitators and survey questions in the 2022-23 school year, the overall trends of the survey results remained mostly the same. When given the opportunity to offer areas of improvement for faculty, students most frequently mentioned reducing workload as a way to address the issues they face.

When enrolling at Lab, students and their families are signing themselves up for the Lab workload and culture. An individual student's workload is not entirely dictated by their teachers. Students who choose more difficult classes should expect a heavier workload, and the responsibility of managing time outside of school should go

to students. Lab's culture of competition can even lead to students bragging about the many hours they spend studying and the few hours they spend sleeping.

This culture has also caused students to hesitate when reaching out to their teachers when they feel overwhelmed. The change students should be looking for is in the systems for assigning work, and positive change has been made in that area. In the past two



Midway illustration by Amon Gray

years changes have included restrictions on assigning homework during weekends and after breaks. However, there are still improvements that can be made.

Another Authentic Connections suggestion was to coordinate the volume and scheduling of assignments across the faculty and program of studies in each division, to ensure a manageable week-

ly workload. This would require departments to ensure that tests and major projects are somewhat spaced out.

Promoting student voice and advocacy is another way to promote a balanced workload rather than a lighter one.

If students have a way to enforce the rules and boundaries on how assignments are given, a lot of

stress could be reduced. Lab's demanding academics are a fundamental part of the school. If students expect the results that the school promises, then it is more important to advocate for a fair and balanced system of assignments rather than a reduced workload.

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

With harmful oil project, fight against climate change takes a hit

By **ETHAN SWINGER**
Assistant Editor

The Willow oil drilling project was proposed by ConocoPhillips, a petroleum refinery company, in 2020 and was originally approved during the Trump administration. The project is located on Alaska's remote North Slope, the nation's largest public land expanse. The Willow project was annulled in 2021.

During his campaign, President Joe Biden promised not to initiate new oil drilling projects on public lands, yet the administration nonetheless reapproved the construction of three drill pads on March 13. However, this decision was somewhat constrained as the alternatives to the Willow project would be to allow additional oil and gas drilling in the Arctic.

Reapproving the Willow proj-

ect is a step in the wrong direction since it harms local communities, wildlife, and most importantly the environment due to its immense carbon emissions. In the face of a climate crisis, the United States needs to prioritize alternate energy source development and not increase sources of fossil fuel production.

The Biden administration has notably banned drilling in a large region of the Arctic Ocean and is working to limit or prevent the practice in 20,000 square miles of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. The Willow project is projected



Ethan Swinger

to churn out 629 million barrels of oil over its 30-year duration. The endeavor will produce carbon emissions equivalent to 1.7 million gasoline-fueled cars annually and target the disproportionately warming Arctic Circle.

Additionally, the drilling site neighbors the Native Alaskan village of Nuiqsut, which is already surrounded by oil and gas activity and has caused concern for wildlife and potential gas leaks. Others believe that the project may lead to more oil drilling projects in the area. In response to the Willow project's environmental impacts, the climate organization Earthjustice unsuccessfully attempted to stop the project after filing a lawsuit on March 14.

A week after the reintroduction of the project, the United Nations released a monumental climate

report on March 20. According to the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to prevent the worst outcome of global warming it is vital to eliminate almost two-thirds of carbon pollution by 2035. The pace and scale of what has been done so far and current plans are insufficient to tackle climate change," IPCC chair Hoesung Lee said. "We are walking when we should be sprinting."

While the United States has gradually decreased its carbon emissions over the past decade, emissions have increased 1.3% compared to last year.

The switch from predominantly using fossil fuels to renewable energy sources is a must for future sustainability. Yet the government's focus on fossil fuel production and willingness to break promises to achieve this sends

a dangerous message about the country's drive for economic profitability over sustainability.

Some may argue that the Willow project is necessary for the United States due to recent increasing oil prices and high demand following the Ukrainian invasion.

However, the project will take years to build since many legal challenges have hindered the development of its infrastructure and construction can only be done during winter. In the wake of the U.N.'s distressing climate report, climate change poses a catastrophic threat to future sustainability. The government's willingness to break promises that fight against it, as seen in the Willow project, serves as a harrowing reminder of the country's lackluster efforts to sufficiently address climate change.

For summer activities, students should prioritize passion over résumé

By **KATIE SASAMOTO-KURISU**
Assistant Editor

As students begin to organize their plans for this summer, they are faced with many choices about what to pursue during their free months. While activities range across the board, an especially popular decision is participating in some kind of educational or professional enrichment, often a selective summer internship or pre-college program at a university.

Often students are drawn to these selective programs because they want to build their college résumés rather than explore a topic of genuine interest. It is important that students understand that engaging in experiential activities

can be equally or potentially more valuable than a pre-professional position, offering both a character- and résumé-building summer.

Academic or professional programs themselves can be valuable and rewarding for participants, offering professional guidance and exposure to a specific field of interest. Despite this, a large part of their attraction stems purely from the desire to use academic experience as a key component for applications, checking a box.



Katie Sasamoto-Kurusu

This fosters an overarching sense of unnecessary competition with students wanting to further themselves over peers, even between students who have entirely different interests and personal goals. Students should be genuine in their intentions in any activity, doing it for themselves and their interests, not for an application.

While these opportunities have their value and can be the right choice for some, students should understand that summer is a time to unwind, explore interests and take time for themselves, not "get ahead." It is the only part of the year that is not consumed by school and should be considered differently than year-round activities or programs.

There is value in non-academic or nonprofessional summer experiences, such as getting a job working as a lifeguard or at a nearby restaurant.

While these activities don't boast a title upheld by a high-ranked university, they do invite a host of valuable skills such as learning how to work with different types of people and time management on a schedule that can be gained through participation and time commitment.

These are real-life experiences rather than topics one can learn in a class.

The habits the participant learns from the experience will supply them with transferable skills that could be used as effectively on

a résumé later on. Working on a team, showing up on time, building personal relationships — these are all résumé skills that can be gained from an experiential program.

As students plan their summer schedules, they should think about what really interests them and how the option they choose aligns with that.

One can have an enriching and fun summer without the need to participate in a competitive or selective program.

Regardless of what they decide, students should choose their summer activities, like any activity, for the right reasons: genuine interest, curiosity and enthusiasm, not as a selling point or prestigious title.

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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Take a step into nature

Starved Rock State Park offers source for views, Indigenous history

By ERICH RAUMANN
Deputy Managing Editor

L ayered sandstone cliffs covered in moss and lichen are split by a stories-high waterfall tumbling down into a stream, which meanders its way through a forest of oak, maple and aspen trees toward the sandy banks of the Illinois River. This scene is almost commonplace in Starved Rock State Park, which abounds with spectacular cliffs, bluffs, waterfalls and other geologic formations practically unseen in Illinois, famous for its flatness.

Even in the early spring, Starved Rock State Park is a fantastic place for any length or difficulty of hike. Trails offer views and sights special enough to make it worth the significant, nearly two-hour drive from Chicago to Oglesby.

The park's namesake landmark, Starved Rock, is only a few minutes' hike from parking via a paved trail. The trails leading up and around the almost sheer bluffs which make up the landmark are dotted with signs explaining the area's rich pre-colonial Native American history. According to partially substantiated legend, this was the site of the downfall of the Illinois Confederation of Native Americans, who, fleeing from several other tribes, had no choice but to climb the cliffs of Starved Rock and defend themselves. A battle eventually turned into a siege, and the Illinois Confederation slowly starved. Whether that particular story is true, the area, like many others in Illinois, is full of history describing the Native Americans' growing desperation and hardship as European settlers encroached on their land and massacred their people.

The view from the top of Starved Rock, if somewhat eerie,



will be refreshing for most Chicagoans: forest, sliced by the wide Illinois River, stretches out in every direction, an expansive amount of horizon. Walk the trails on top of it, and you'll also be able to see the breathtaking, river-facing side of the bluffs, which meet the river like a 40-foot wall.

While Starved Rock itself has some stunning scenery, it's only the beginning of what the park has to offer. Several miles of trails, fairly well-maintained even in the early spring, follow the river upstream, providing a scenic mixture of riverside views and deciduous forest. While the forest doesn't become lush until the late spring, the lack of leaves makes the beautiful geology more visible. The highlights here are the waterfalls, which flow in full force during the middle of spring and are always spectacular to witness. If you plan on going, the falls in Wildcat Canyon (two miles round trip) and La-

Salle Canyon (four miles round trip) are some of the best, having carved the sandstone over which they flow into nearly alien rock formations.

The Starved Rock Lodge website touts the park as "a world apart from anything else in Illinois!" While this is arguably true, it's worth mentioning that it doesn't have a lot of competition. Hikers expecting the postcard-level beauty more abundant in other places of the country might be somewhat disappointed. The park is pleasant, often beautiful, but not necessarily awe-inspiring.

However, Starved Rock State Park doesn't really need to be awe-inspiring to be worth a trip. It almost feels like a theme park stuffed full of geology, water, views and history, coaxing you longer and longer along its peaceful trails until you can hardly imagine you're just a few hours away from the city.



Midway photos by Erich Raumann

NEED FOR NATURE. Starved Rock State Park boasts 13 miles of well-marked trails — including picturesque views of rivers, bluffs and unique rock formations — all just 90 miles from Chicago. Additionally, the park features 14 canyons with waterfalls that trickle into the expansive Illinois River.

Reconnect at nearby, leisurely Palos Heights



Midway photo by Louis Auxenfans

SERENE SCENE. A picturesque lake in the Palos Heights trail system is surrounded by a budding forest. The peaceful trails are only 21 miles away.

By LOUIS AUXENFANS
News Editor

The sunlight filters through the sparse pine trees, illuminating the golden brown leaves covering the forest floor. A robin stands on a pile of leaves, rummaging for a twig for its nest, while frogs croak non-stop in a nearby marsh. The tranquil sounds and sights of nature transport you to a world away from the buzz of the city.

Located just a 30-minute drive southwest from downtown Chicago, the Palos Heights trail system in the Forest Preserves of Cook County offers dozens of miles of trails for a refreshing morning walk or afternoon stroll. Visitors can take leisurely walks on paved paths, hike through the forests or bring mountain bikes to explore the trails.

The trail system is filled with rolling hills, deep ravines and beautiful views to take in the beautiful oak forests. Lakes and marshes also line the trails.

Before leaving, make sure to examine the online trail map to help pick the length and type of trail. It also clearly indicates parking lots and trail entrances to help find directions.

Many trail sights also have their own picnic grove, so consider bringing lunch or a snack to eat while enjoying the nature.

The Swallow Cliff Woods offer an enjoyable hike and quite a picturesque view. Enter from the north side to find a 100-foot bluff that provides a demanding stair workout.

The uneven granite steps provide a hefty challenge to climb, but the lookout observatory at the top provides a beautiful view of the forest preserve and even a glimpse of the city skyline on the clearest of days. A café at the bottom of the stairs can provide a quick snack or smoothie treat.

Beyond the stairs lies a network of trails for a peaceful walk in the forest. Pine trees line the path and off-the-beaten path trails go into rolling streams at the bottom of hills or prairie grasslands. Birds chirping, squirrels fluttering and frogs croaking supplement the peaceful walk in the fresh air.

The 8.1-mile Yellow Unpaved Loop winds around Swallow Cliff Woods and connects to the ravine-filled Cap Sauers Holding Nature Preserve and Calumet-Sag Trail along the channel.

As the spring season comes, the Palos Heights trail system will come to life out of its winter slumber with more wildlife and budding trees. Consider taking a casual stroll as the weather gets warmer to regain a peaceful touch with nature.

how to hike

Who doesn't want to make the most of their hiking experience? Knowing what to bring and how to prepare for a day, or even overnight, trip will help ensure an enjoyable and refreshing time outdoors.

When planning a trail, be aware of its length, difficulty and your own abilities. Having a park map is especially helpful for gauging distances and orienting yourself in the grounds.

Check the weather forecast before hiking and prepare for changes in weather.

If hiking solo, inform someone beforehand that you are hiking and where you are going. Having a means of communication on hand is crucial.

Bring essentials:

- Food and water are necessities to prevent dehydration and, in hot temperatures, heat exhaustion and stroke. Some parks may not have clean and accessible water sources
- Other very useful items that are recommended are a hiking backpack, first-aid supplies, a repair kit, sunscreen and insect repellent.

Information about overnight hiking can be found on a park's website.

— complied by Ethan Swinger

Sprinting to success

Poppy Beiser perseveres through all obstacles, finds joy as a leader and top athlete in track and field



Midway photo by Gabriel Issa

READY TO RUN. Junior Poppy Beiser practices starts on the Jackman Field Track. Poppy's passion for and dedication to running has given her success, leadership and direction.

By **VICTORIA WASHINGTON**
Audience Engagement Manager

Running is complex. Some days are harder than others, but it's always something she comes back to. Ultimately, the happiness and thrill running new trails and tracks makes her feel like she's flying. Running makes junior Poppy Beiser feel alive.

An accomplished sprinter on U-High's track and field team, Poppy initially never saw herself as a runner, but her passion and attention dedicated to the sport has become critical to her success at the 200- and 400-meter races.

Poppy joined the track and field team in 2021 as a ninth grader to provide a social outlet during the pandemic. Joining the team al-

lowed her to get outside and meet new people, she said. Poppy started to enjoy running after her hard work and endurance paid off.

From the first time sprinting coach Lynne Ingalls saw Poppy run, something clicked.

"She just has innate ability," Coach Ingalls said. "She's just a powerhouse. She's also very mentally focused so it adds to all of her innate physical abilities when she's out there on the track."

The energy and time Poppy dedicates to running shows by the time on the clock. Her personal best is 61.25 seconds for the 400 meter.

"Running is definitely the most important extracurricular for me. It helps both my physical and mental health, it gives me something to look forward to, it's something I re-

ally enjoy, and because I enjoy it and I put a lot of work into it, I've had a lot of success," Poppy said.

Poppy competed in the 400-meter race the Illinois Top Times on March 25. She was the only athlete on the U-High track team to qualify. Poppy was made a co-captain last year as a sophomore. Her strong leadership skills and the positive energy she brings to practice make her successful.

"She was made a captain for the very reason that she has strong leadership qualities," Coach Ingalls said. "She is excited about her own abilities and her own willingness to be as successful as possible on the track, and she wants to bring all her teammates along on that same page."

Co-captain Carter Chang has

been running with Poppy for three years. This is their second year leading the team together. Carter believes Poppy's leadership qualities extend beyond her own athletic abilities, and she strives to help everyone on the team improve.

"She's really enthusiastic and a really good captain," Carter said. "She always makes sure the team knows what they're doing before going into a race."

To Carter, Poppy's passion and dedication is undeniable.

"If you ask anyone, it's pretty clear that she's pretty passionate about it," Carter said, "especially given the amount of time she puts in outside of school."

Poppy's passion for running has not only been driven by the community and her teammates but al-

so her own aspirations.

"Most of it comes from my personal goals and my dreams," Poppy said.

Poppy's focus has allowed her to push past the tough training and reach a high level of endurance.

"A lot of people say 'Our sport is your sport's punishment' and they don't give it a chance to actually find a passion or see what running has to offer," she said.

The mental focus and dedication has paid off for Poppy and has allowed her to truly reach her potential as an athlete.

"A lot of people stop running before they reach the point where it becomes enjoyable," she said, "When you reach or pass that threshold, it feels like you're flying."

Team managers organize behind the scenes and on the field

by **ZARA SIDDIQUE**
Audience Engagement Manager

The distinct echo of basketball fills the gym prepping for a game, as a student sets up a video camera. The soccer team warms up before a game, as a student sets up drills. The dance team meets in the hallway before half time, as a student sets up their music.

This school year many varsity sports teams have opened a new role, one that will never see time on the field or court: manager. This role goes to one or two students who display a passion for the sport but are unable to participate.

Grayson Smith was a member of the girls soccer team in ninth grade and now as a senior is the manager for the varsity team. Due to course load and other extenuating circumstances she opted out after that first season, but because of her love for the team and the sport, she chose to take on the role of manager.

"I get to be involved in soccer again and hang out with the people I'd become friends with through soccer, so it feels pretty natural," Grayson said, "and there are a lot of people there I know so it's a lot of familiar faces and a familiar setting."

While Grayson believes her role to be on the more relaxed side — setting up drills, blowing up balls and passing a ball around with injured players — other managers have a higher commitment.

The managers for the dance team are responsible for setting up the music studios, and are responsible for the music at games and competitions.

"They are a part of our team," coach Nichole Magliocco said. "They are included in everything that we do as a team — locker buddies, team practices, games, meetings, senior night, everything."

Senior Camille Bryant had a unique experience as manager for the varsity boys basketball team, where she was in charge of filming games and taking statistics.

"It was nice getting to watch my friends do something they love, and I got to meet a lot of cool people," Camille said.

Like Grayson, Camille became a sports team manager as a way to interact with a sport without a large time commitment.

"I became a manager because I wanted to feel like a part of something, but not have a huge time commitment due to this being my final year," Camille said.

Ms. Magliocco noted that sports



Midway photo by Blake Dunkley

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT. As manager of the varsity boys basketball team, senior Camille Bryant was in charge of filming games and taking statistics.

team manager is becoming an increasingly popular position, as many students have approached her about it.

"I really appreciate them and their help throughout the season," said Ms. Magliocco. "They are a

great addition to the team."

As the basketball players take the court, Camille focuses the camera and presses record. Grayson sits with the coaches watching the soccer game begin knowing her behind-the-scenes work is done.

The dance team managers stand ready at the music prepared to help overcome any technical difficulties. With the help of these managers, the sports teams can begin their game without any worries blocking their concentration.