

Through weekly practices and competitions throughout the country, U-High indoor rock climbers have built a supportive and close-knit community.



The Pullman National Monument, Chicago's only National Park Service site, allows visitors to step into the heart of the American labor movement.



Junior Amelie Liu published "Matzo Ball-Wonton Thanksgiving," a children's book inspired by her journey to understand and celebrate her own complex identity.



# U-HIGH MIDWAY

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## Law addresses youth mental health

### Lab policy allows student mental health days

by ADRIANNA NEHME  
NEWS EDITOR

Over 2.5 million youth in the U.S. have severe depression, and multiracial youth are at greatest risk, according to Mental Health in America. With an increase in mental health concerns over the years, the state of Illinois is taking action to help teens.

Starting in January, Illinois public school students ages 7 to 17 can take up to five excused mental health days without the need for a doctor's note under a law signed by Gov. J.B. Pritzker, and while existing Laboratory Schools policy allows student mental health days, they aren't designated.

Students will be able to make up any work they miss.

State Rep. Barbara Hernandez, a Democrat from Aurora, co-sponsored the legislation. She believes it will be an opportunity for students to not only receive a mental break from school but will start a conversation among families, teachers and counselors.

"If there is something that parents need to know early on, they will be able to determine that," Rep. Hernandez said in an interview with the Midway, "because, after a certain number of days, the student will be asked, 'Hey we saw that you're almost at your five mental health days, is there something going on?'"

Rep. Hernandez's own high school experience led her to support the bill.

"I come from a household where depression was not something we talked about, and if I ever did suffer from depression in high school, then according to my family, it was wrong," Rep. Hernandez said. "I know there are a lot more minorities and parents who think that way, so we need to break that stereotype and say, 'You know what, it's OK to have mental health issues.'"

At the Laboratory Schools, a mental health day policy has always been in effect, according to Dean of Students Ana Campos.

A U-High student who wants to take a mental health day must complete a pre-arranged absence form or their parents must notify the attendance office each day the student is absent. The absences are categorized under the "illness" attendance mark, and count toward the attendance threshold, similar to most other absences. After three days of absence, counselors will reach out to the student to ensure everything is OK. After five days, counselors reach out again to create a plan with the students.

"We are trying to identify or pay attention to when we see a trend happening or something going on, and that is the reactive part of it because we only know something is wrong if somebody isn't here," Ms. Campos said. "Parents often are proactive and will notify the school."

Farah Sugrue, a U-High senior, would prefer to have designated



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ALINA SUSANI

mental health days.

"I know some of my friends' families wouldn't necessarily pull their child out if they were struggling mentally as much, which is really sad but true," Farah said. "I think having those days off as a designated mental health day would validate it in parents' minds and normalize it a little bit more,

which is important."

Counselor Teddy Stripling doesn't have a strong opinion about whether designated mental health days should be implemented. He is more concerned about the impact of mental health days and whether they would be helpful for students. He believes the day off is a useful opportunity for

students to have space to reset and come back.

Mr. Stripling said, "Across the nation in the past couple of years, there has been a rise in mental health needs for students, and so different states have been trying to do things to create a little bit of a buffer to support students in that process."

## UChicago, police implement more safety measures

by BERK OTO  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the weeks since two shootings took place blocks from the school on Nov. 9, the University of Chicago and Chicago Police Department have responded with an increased police presence and technology. Some community members disagree with this move and some students have changed their behavior to better protect themselves.

One shooting, an attempted armed robbery, killed a UChicago graduate, while another took place on 53rd Street, damaging businesses and parked vehicles.

On Nov. 11, university leaders announced additional safety measures including adding more surveillance cameras, police patrols and transit options for students. On Dec. 1, Ald. Sophia King (4th) and Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th), whose wards include the Hyde Park and Kenwood areas, hosted a webinar for the community with Superintendent Brown and Eric Heath, the UChicago associate vice president for safety and security. These officials detailed initiatives to improve safety and expand police presence, including foot patrols around high-traffic areas of 53rd Street, more intense lights on police vehicles and more traffic stops.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

**INCREASED MEASURES.** To address recent safety concerns, UChicago implements new initiatives by expanding police presence, including foot patrols and increasing traffic stops.

In what some view as a controversial step, Mr. Brown said police would more aggressively pursue traffic stops, which will allow police officers to check for stolen vehicles or firearms.

"The killer of the UChicago graduate drove around the neighborhood for hours, looking for people to rob," Mr. Brown alleged. "If we were more proactive and

able to stop him, we could have prevented the killing."

Critics of increased traffic enforcement say that stops are ineffective and disproportionately target Black community members. Allison Beaulieu, a Hyde Park resident and Laboratory Schools art teacher, circulated a letter signed by over 800 university faculty, students and alumni that demands

an immediate disarmament and 50% decrease in UCPD's budget.

"I think the university's response is absolutely a step in the wrong direction and it will perpetuate fear," Ms. Beaulieu said in an interview with the Midway. "I understand the fear. I understand that people are afraid. I'm afraid, but we can't afford to make decisions that make people of color in this neighborhood feel even more marginalized."

Although Mr. Brown pledged to increase police presence, he acknowledged it's not the only solution to crime worth pursuing.

"We also acknowledge safety also means dealing with poverty, dealing with employment, dealing with other social services as some of the root causes of crime and public disorder," he said.

The signers of the letter Ms. Beaulieu circulated support reallocating UCPD's budget toward grassroots safety initiatives.

"I do see a role for police in Hyde Park, but it's significantly smaller and fundamentally different than what we have now," Ms. Beaulieu said. Her view is less radical than the letter's demands, which include disbanding UCPD by 2023.

In contrast to this view, Mr. Heath argues that UCPD, one of the nation's largest private police forces, is not large enough.

"We are a large university police department when you compare it to most university agencies, but with our responsibilities and extended area, I would argue we're not as large as we need to be," Mr. Heath said at the webinar. "So we have asked for additional long-term UCPD staffing so we're not pulling our beat officers from the community to address issues on campus."

U-High junior Hannah Maxcy walks to her car after basketball practice nearly every day in the dark, and has noticed the increased police presence. In response to the uptick in neighborhood crime, she now moves her car closer to the entrance of the school, so she has to walk a shorter distance in the dark.

"I definitely see more security and police patrolling the area," she said. "But I would definitely feel safer if there were more security officers specific to Lab."

Although Hannah said she does not usually feel unsafe when walking to her car, she says that she feels uneasy walking around the school when dark at night.

"Sometimes I get nervous when it's completely dark outside and there aren't many people," she said. "So adding more lights outside the school could be a good idea."



# Wellness survey reveals areas of concern

Students express feelings of unease

by ADRIANNA NEHME & SAHANA UNNI

Four of 10 U-High students don't feel comfortable asking for help when stressed, worried or upset. 53% of girls felt happy with who they were, a 9% drop from 62% in 2020.

These concerning statistics are just some of the results revealed in the high school portion of the 2021 Health and Wellness Survey, which was announced Nov. 17 accompanied by a series of infographics.

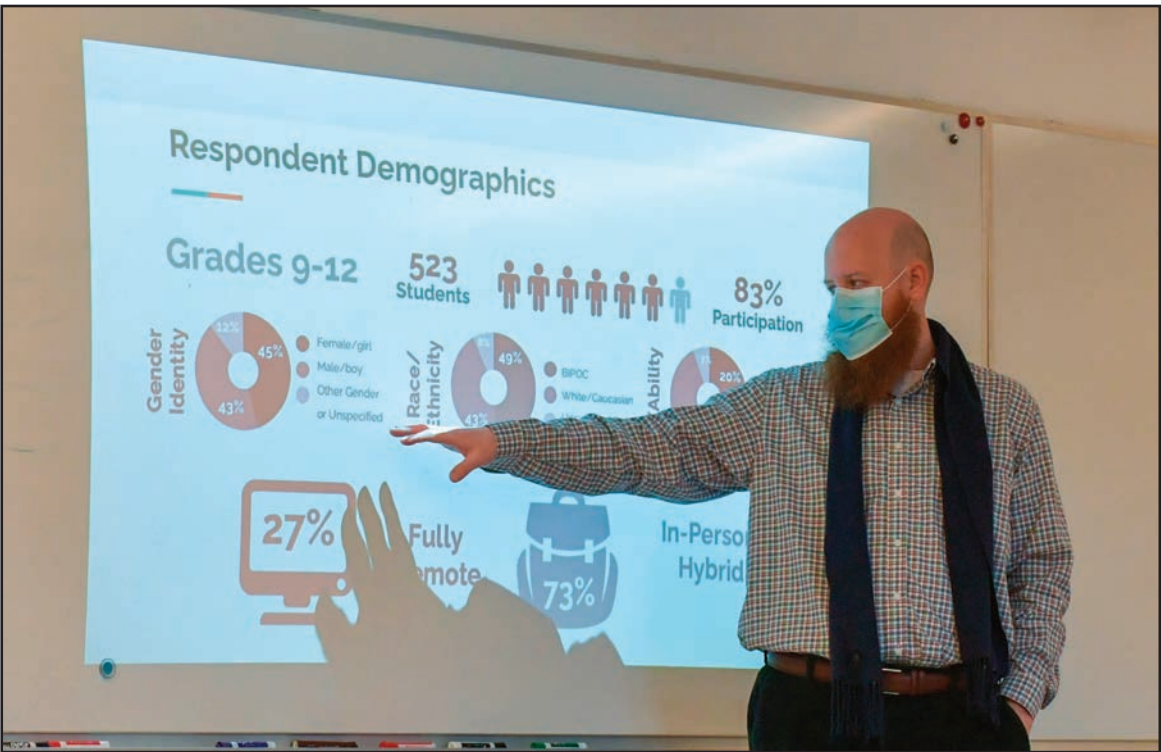
The survey was conducted in March, with 83% participation among students in grades 9-12. When students took the survey, 73% had moved into hybrid learning, while 27% participated in distance learning.

Given how school was experienced differently relative to 2020, counselor Aria Choi was surprised to see how the responses were still similar to how they were when students were in-person.

Wellness and Title IX Coordinator Betsy Noel oversaw the survey and said there were some expected results, such as struggling connecting and more feelings of sadness and loneliness.

"Even though that was expected, that was really sad," Ms. Noel said. "I was glad to see that there was no negative change in confidence in my ability to cope with stress. We want to see those numbers higher in general, but that those numbers didn't go down is good."

While results for students' ability to cope with stress remained relatively consistent from 2020 to 2021, the number of individuals who identified as female and felt



**WORKING ON WELLNESS.** Counselor Michael Bruner points to survey results during the health and wellness assembly held Dec. 9. While several data points were similar to 2020, the results revealed an increase in girls feeling "really ugly" and a decrease in students seeking counselors.

"really ugly" rose by 10%, compared to 2020 results. Ms. Noel attributed this increase to social media.

"Given how much time people spent on social media last year vs. face-to-face interactions, I do wonder how much of it has to do with that," Ms. Noel said.

Noting that girls' self-confidence begins to decline at a young age, Ms. Noel said the lower school is trying to raise positive feelings of self-confidence through a focus on gender identity and creating opportunities for girls to feel empowered.

There was also an 8% decrease

in students who sought counselors as trusted adults. Ms. Choi said she is curious where this 8% difference is allocated and whether students found different sources for support.

Responses also showed a decrease in seeking a teacher or adviser but a slight increase in seeking a parent.

"I don't view that as losing 8% of our student body who turn to us," Ms. Choi said, "I see that and wonder who the folks are that they are comfortable turning to and bottom line what I care about is that students have a trusted peer to turn to, and if it's not me, I'm OK

with that."

The survey also revealed a lack of welcomeness based on gender and race, with 63% of nonbinary students and 21% of Black, Indigenous and other people of color expressing they felt "welcome half the time or unwelcome." Only 3% of white students said the same.

"Regardless of if there are more people who feel unwelcome or fewer people who feel unwelcome, the presence of people feeling unwelcome should be justification for looking into certain ways that we can make people feel welcome," All-School President Brent Pennington said.

## SURVEY RESULTS

In March 2021, 523 U-High students took the wellness survey. These results were compared to the 2020 wellness survey results administered before distance learning. New and remaining areas concerns prompt questions for how to address student wellbeing.

21%

of Black, Indigenous and students of color feel welcome half the time or unwelcome

40%

are somewhat/not comfortable asking for help or support

53%

of girls feel happy with who they are

74%

of boys feel happy with who they are

24%

are somewhat/not confident in their ability to cope with stress

9%

are mostly or very uncomfortable speaking up about bullying/harassment

## HANUKKAH



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CARTER CHANG

**CHEERS.** Members of Jewish Students' Association recite Hannukah prayers while lighting an electric menorah at the Hanukkah party Dec. 3. Attendees decorated cookies, participated in a dreidel-spinning competition and made wooden Stars of David. See more photos on [uhighmidway.com](http://uhighmidway.com).

# Program of Studies modified to better reflect expectations

by COLIN LESLIE  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

U-High teachers will be updating the next Program of Studies to try to accurately display how much work students should expect to do for each class, but the ways they do this will depend on the department.

According to fine arts department chair Sunny Neater, teachers in the fine arts department will include a short explanation of the workload expectations underneath the course description for each class.

"We're hoping that by not embedding the workload description in the body of the text, students will be able, with their advisers and with their counselors and with their families, to better scan the Program of Studies and find something that's balanced in their course load," Ms. Neater said.

For art classes that require more work outside of class time, such as Beginning Photography and Film-making, Ms. Neater said that the different habits and interest levels of students will make it difficult to accurately estimate how much time a student should expect to spend working outside of class. She encourages students to talk to their teachers if they are overwhelmed.

"I really want to encourage students to let teachers know and not to feel weird or bad about it," Ms. Neater said. "Just be like, 'Hey, this work is taking me like two-and-a-half, three hours a night. What should I do differently? Are there smarter ways to work? Can I manage this in a different way so that this isn't dominating my life?'"



MIDWAY PHOTO BY HENRY BENTON

**UNEXPECTED EXPECTATIONS.** To address concerns that workload exceeds expectations course descriptions will be updated to allow students to plan for a more balanced schedule.

Similar to Ms. Neater, science department chair Zachary Hund said the speeds at which different students work as well as the differences in pacing depending on the teacher make it impossible to say how much time students will spend working at home. Because of this, the science department will focus on making the course descriptions more clear instead of trying to estimate a specific time commitment.

"We wanted students again to really understand what they were signing up for, update any of the descriptions in terms of anything that's changed with content and projects, and think about prerequisites and what's been indicative of a successful student in a given class," Dr. Hund said.

Sophomore Mason List said he has experienced many classes al-

ready in high school where the workload was heavier than he expected when he registered.

"It happens all the time," Mason said. "Even at times I've gone into a class with high expectations and I'll still end up with more work than I thought it was."

Mason said he expects that changes in the Program of Studies will resolve most of the problems he has choosing classes.

He said he thinks receiving the expectations from the departments directly will be more reliable than hearing them from former students.

"I'd say the only information that I ever really get about the potential workload of a class would be through my siblings or their friends," Mason said. "Sometimes it's accurate, but not enough that I can usually trust it."



# A monumental neighborhood

Visitor center opens at Pullman to honor labor movement and neighborhood

by LOUIS AUXENFANS  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Crimson brick houses tightly packed together form a perfectly neat row. The spire of a large, red clock tower dominates the sky. Walking along the sidewalk, you feel blasted into the 19th century in a world altogether apart from present-day Chicago — but this area is still part of the city. Welcome to the Pullman neighborhood.

Visit and learn about Pullman, while being surrounded by its historic buildings, to dive deep into the heart of the American labor movement.

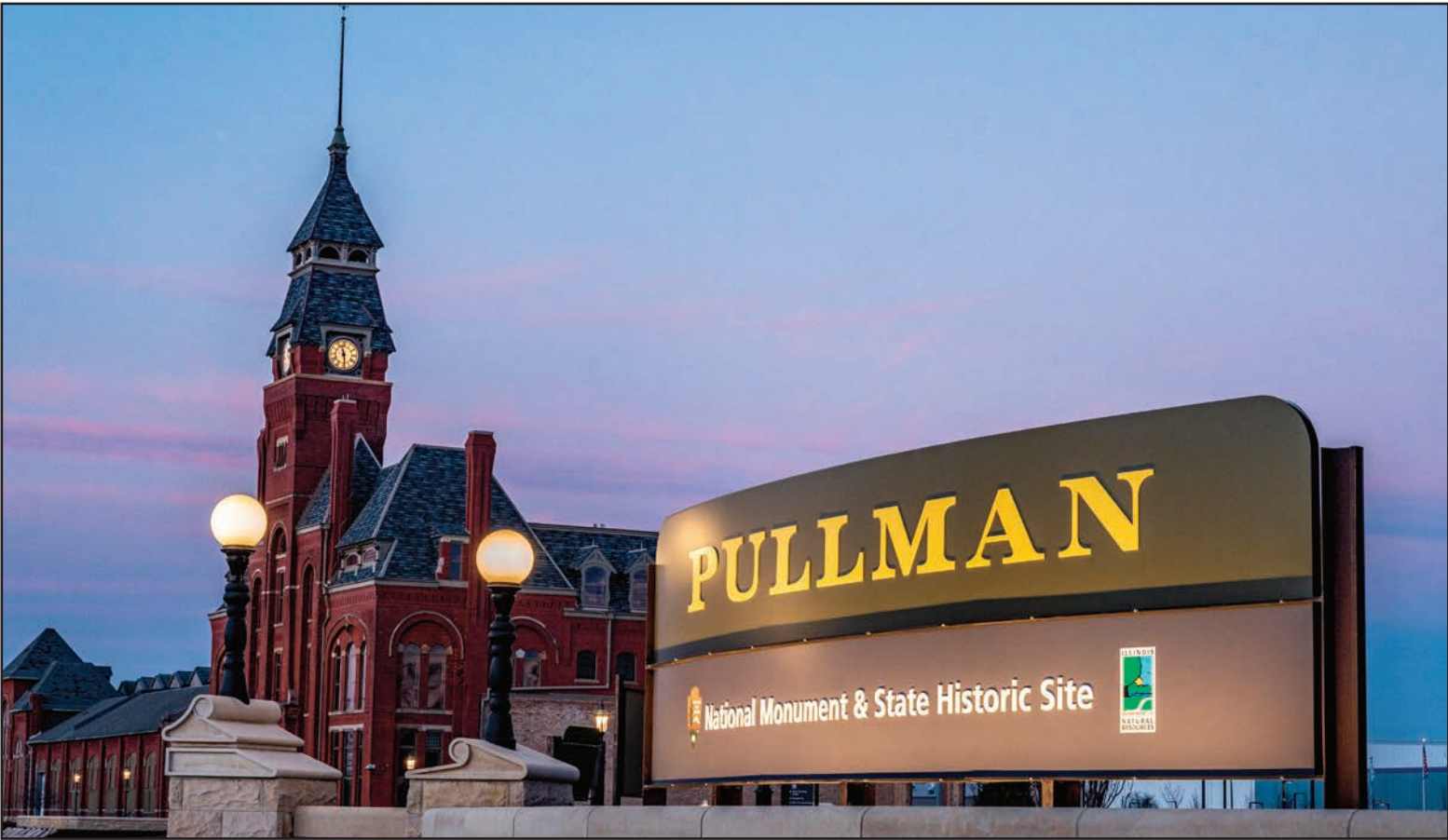
Only a 20-minute drive south from Hyde Park, in 2015 President Barack Obama recognized the Pullman neighborhood as the Pullman National Monument, Chicago's first and only National Park Service site.

During the Industrial Era, George Pullman, owner of the Pullman Palace Car Company, had the goal of building a model industrial town where his workers could enjoy a happy and healthy environment. The company-run town of Pullman was finished in 1881.

Start a visit at the Pullman Visitor Center, housed at the extensively renovated Administration Clock Tower Building (610 E. 111th Street). Fittingly opened over Labor Day Weekend, the center contains an engaging history timeline and exhibit run by the National Park Service.

Step into a Pullman car model to experience first-hand the luxury of the green velvet furnishings, and afterward learn about four key stories: George Pullman, the town of Pullman, the 1894 Pullman Worker Strike and the Pullman porters, which led to the growing African American middle class.

The museum deftly weaves artifacts and symbols to showcase the history of the town. Films, building models and interactive elements bring the story of the Pullman laborers to life. Match rotating dials to learn the cost of canned goods and listen to the story of the 1894 strike, which contributed to the creation of a new federal holiday, Labor Day. Each part of the exhibit poses reflective questions



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

**LOOKING BACK IN TIME.** After renovations, the Pullman Clock Tower now serves as the Pullman National Monument Visitor Center. In 2015, the Pullman neighborhood was recognized by President Barack Obama as the Pullman National Monument.

*“It’s our history and these are our treasures... This is for all of us to explore and enjoy and learn from.”*

— QUINN WERMELING,  
PARK RANGER

for viewers about workers’ rights, connecting the story of Pullman to today’s visitors.

Quinn Wermeling, a National Park Service ranger, encourages people to come to the neighborhood and learn about Pullman’s importance.

“It’s our history and these are our treasures. These are our resources,” Mr. Wermeling said. “This is for all of us to explore and enjoy and learn from.”

After the visitor’s center, walk across the street to the exhibit hall at the resident-run Historic Pullman Foundation (11141 S. Cottage Grove Ave.). Examine the many antique photos, posters and Pullman Company artifacts residents have collected. Make sure to grab a walking guide map of the neighborhood from the front desk.

Experience the beautiful architecture of Pullman for yourself by strolling along the brick row houses where employees once lived,

now all private residences. Each block of houses has its own distinct style, reflecting the respective socioeconomic class of the Pullman employee residents. On your walk, check out the titanic Hotel Florence and the colorful Greenstone Church.

Many buildings in Pullman are so well preserved because of residents like Wyatt Ollestad, secretary of the Pullman Civic Organization, who is passionate about the neighborhood’s historical significance and architectural style.

“There is an equal part, I think, appreciation for the architecture as it is, the history of the town of Pullman and what it means, and also the preservation of the close-knit community feel,” Mr. Ollestad said.

Another way the community is experiencing revitalization is exemplified in the One Eleven Food Hall (756 E. 111th Street), housing restaurants such as Majani, serving vegan soul food cuisine, and Lexington Betty Smokehouse, serving barbecue.

From the newly opened visitor’s center to meticulous home restorations, the Pullman neighborhood is gaining new life by returning to its roots in the American labor movement.

## Pullman workers central to labor movement

George Pullman, president of the Pullman Palace Car Company, a luxury train car maker, wanted to solve the problems of poverty and labor unrest that plagued factories in the 1800s. He envisioned a town where workers had access to amenities like a school, theater, church, park and shopping mall. He hoped this environment would attract skilled laborers, and lead to a happy, efficient workforce. With this goal in mind, Mr. Pullman bought 4,000 acres of land next to Lake Calumet, 13 miles south of Chicago.

Finished in 1881, each house had sunlight and fresh air, a front and back yard, and a sewage system — all rare at the time. However, not all residents were comfortable with the limitations of a company-run town. For example, all property was owned by the company, so workers had to pay monthly rent.

When an economic depression hit in 1893, the demand for Pullman cars dropped. The company lowered wages, but rents stayed the same. A delegation of workers sought to address their grievanc-

es with Mr. Pullman, but he fired them.

On May 11, 1894, the Pullman workers went on strike, demarcating a bloody period. The American Railway Union struck in solidarity, which paralyzed all railroads west of Detroit; by mid-July, the army eventually intervened.

The Illinois Supreme Court ordered the Pullman company to sell all non-industrial property, so by 1907, workers owned all private residences.

The Pullman porters, many of whom were Black, traveled the country and earned a decent wage, which led to an emerging African American middle class. They even founded the first all-Black union in 1925, The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

The area was threatened with demolition in 1960, but residents banded together to save the neighborhood. Through their efforts, the Pullman Historic District was afforded State National Historic Landmark status in 1970 and National Monument status in 2015.

# Wilkommen back! Christkindlmarket returns



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

**HO HO HO! FOR HOT COCOA.** Many Christkindlmarket vendors who travel from outside the country to attend the annual market are thrilled to be back in Chicago for the holidays. The market takes place in Daley Plaza and will be open until Dec. 24.

by AUDREY MATEI  
CONTENT MANAGER

With the sweet scent of pastries and hot chocolate wafting into the winter air and crowds of bundled-up shoppers forming around a variety of booths, Christkindlmarket is a beloved downtown Chicago tradition that has finally returned. The outdoor market opened in Daley Plaza in the Loop on Nov. 19 and will remain open to Dec. 24, buzzing with people from the early afternoon to late evening. Rows of wooden stands and enclosures adorned with lights and decorations line the plaza, creating a labyrinth of sweet-smelling snacks and brightly colored trinkets.

The market has been an annual event for 25 years and was virtual last winter due to the coronavirus pandemic. This year, it has fully returned with safety measures such as sanitation, touchless payment and mask requirements indoors.

Vendors come from across the world to set up shop at Christkindlmarket.

Tim Johannes, an employee of Helmut’s Original Austrian Strudel and a German citizen, is happy to return to normal after a year of slow business.

“It was really hard not coming,” he said smiling, adding that he felt he had missed a part of himself the past year.

Mr. Johannes and another employee working the stand, Elliot Pilk, took turns pouring hot chocolate and passing small boxes of warm fruit-filled strudel to customers all while making conversation with them.

Brie Kawalek, a new employee at Fehrenbach Black Forest Clocks, a booth that sells wooden ornaments and clocks, recently moved to Chicago from Germany. She feels there are a lot of similarities between her home and the

## Information:

**Address:** Daley Plaza,  
50 W. Washington St.

**Date:** Open until Dec. 24.

market.

“I miss Germany a lot,” she said, adding that the market “really reminds me of some places back home.”

Bart Cajun, an employee of Dinkel’s Bakery on the North Side said that business has been busy as ever with more traffic than previous years. Even with a long line forming outside his stand, he started friendly conversation with every customer, laughing and joking with them like old friends as he handed them their pastries and hot beverages. He explained that the market has been very crowded.

He said, “It’s good to be back to normal.”



# To curb violence, commit to research

Hyde Park violence reveals a need for informed policy

As the Midway sees it ...

In response to a significant uptick in crime near campus, including the Nov. 9 murder of recent University of Chicago graduate Shaoxiong “Dennis” Zhang in an attempted robbery, both the city government and the University of Chicago have scrambled to implement anti-crime provisions. The university quickly improved security measures to reinforce its bubble, temporarily increasing surveillance and giving students more free Lyft rides to and from Hyde Park. Even with the Chicago Police superintendent planning to add 16 new members to the police force around the neighborhood, over 300 UChicago faculty called for more action.

As the university assesses how to improve campus safety after the death of Mr. Zhang and other violent crimes, the university should leverage its academic resources and use empirical study to determine the best long-term path forward.

General sentiment in the faculty open letter calls for the exten-



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY DALIN DOHRN

sion of Hyde Park’s bubble through nonviolent means like more security ambassadors and more numerous bus routes. While this may increase the appearance of security on and immediately around campus, these measures have been increased several times in the past — the tragedies in the last few

weeks prove how ineffective they were. Instead of changing policies to something that simply looks better, the university should leverage its robust crime data resources to find a truly effective solution.

While ineffective nonviolent measures are simply a waste of resources, increased police should

be considered with even greater respect to data. Adding more police could seem like an intuitive solution, yet data suggests that a single police officer prevents only 0.1 homicides per year, in addition to adding quantifiable burden to the lives of people of color and to the federal deficit. Instead, if

the university supports in-school programs like Becoming A Man (BAM), which the university’s own crime lab endorses, youth violent crime could be cut in half and graduation rates increased, bolstering the affluence of traditionally poorer neighborhoods, fighting the problem of crime at the core.

Sociological data has been called into question as a slow or untrustworthy method of deciding anti-crime policies, some arguing in favor of the experience and intuition from the police department. While the police are certainly an asset in fighting crime, surprisingly little police reform has been passed by city legislation, disproportionate to their numerous policing failures and rampant corruption. While the city scrambles to make vast reforms, the scientific practice of peer review has been fine-turned over decades to ensure the honesty and reproducibility of any published paper.

The university funds numerous departments dedicated to finding deep and effective insights on the nature of crime but having people on payroll isn’t enough. Instead of making hasty guesses or putting a band-aid on the issue after every tragedy, we need to turn to the scientists and work together to create an anti-crime system which truly benefits everybody.

# Diversity is about more than just inclusion

by AUDREY MATZKE  
REPORTER

We’ve seen it all too often: Disney touts the inclusion of a queer, polyamorous tree-frog of color in their forthcoming animated feature, Tucker Carlson loses his mind, and the gears of culture-war start turning once again. As soon as the film is released, however, we only see the tree-frog on screen for about three seconds. Blink, and you’d miss it.

When Disney (or any other media giant) fixes to beguile its progressive audience, they aren’t in the business of writing good characters. If they were, the lesbian

couple in “Finding Dory” or the live-action incarnation of “Beauty and the Beast’s” Le Fou would have stories of their own — something real, imbuing them with more than just the trappings of cynical diversity-bait. But time and time again, we fall for it, and Disney keeps turning a steady profit — all the while never truly representing the communities it ex-



Audrey Matzke

ploits.

If diversity is to be our aim, we can’t just limit our aspirations to “inclusion,” thus ceding more territory to the mass market. Instead, we should seek out art created by and for people of the identities we wish to see represented.

If I were to approach this charitably, I’d grant that Disney must be “trying its best” — striving for something approaching inclusion within the inescapable confines of what its audience already knows. But as a multi-billion dollar enterprise, charity’s the last thing Disney needs. This leaves but one explanation: Disney wants to have its

cake and eat it too, media subversive enough for the TikTok crowd but comfortable enough not to turn away evangelical moms and overseas censors.

While we can’t expect major corporations to prioritize anything other than profit, we can engage with the work of less profitable creators. The market for inclusivity is self-evident, but if we wish to uplift these artists at their most authentic, we need to look beyond mere marketability.

And yes, that which is authentic isn’t often marketable. Two years ago, I spent the better half of an English elective reading Les-

lie Marmon Silko’s “Ceremony,” a winding, breathless Native American Renaissance novel punctuated with bouts of Laguna folklore entirely foreign to most of the white Western world. Many of my classmates couldn’t get into it, frustrated by its seeming impenetrability, but the more I allowed myself to delight in its depth, the more rewarding a read it became.

Often, marginalized people produce marginalized art. We need to uplift both, even when the latter lacks the mainstream grip of a Marvel movie, or the ubiquitousness of YA “Hunger Games” pastiche.

# Individual environmentalism is futile without policy

by AMON GRAY  
ARTSCO-EDITOR

As I looked across the Wind River mountain range in Wyoming, what greeted my eyes wasn’t the beautiful mountain view I expected. Instead, a smoky haze veiled the mountains, and the smell of distant wildfires was strong in the air. In the summers of 2019 and 2021 I took courses with the National Outdoor Leadership Schools, where a large part of the curriculum is related to sustainability and climate change. This issue seemed all the more immediate as we watched wildlife move further up in elevation as the areas they previously populated became uninhabitable. We discussed ways we could reduce our carbon foot-

print in our daily lives. However, it was difficult to take these lessons to heart as we saw government inaction and corporate avarice continue to bring the vast majority of damage to our planet.

While personal action on climate change is important, these governments and corporations must also be held accountable, and legislation should be passed to ensure that they do.

Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, trapping the sun’s heat,

and raising the temperature of the planet. The Earth’s average temperature has risen more dramatically in the past 150 years than in the 24,000 years preceding. This has led to rising sea levels, more and larger natural disasters and an increase in the spread of disease due to a rise in mosquito populations.

Even if we all drink out of paper straws, take public transit and buy organic foods, it would not make a dent in the irreversible damage to our planet. China is currently burning more coal than ever to keep up with electricity shortages. Their coal burning produces 14.3% of global industrial greenhouse gas emissions despite promises to become carbon neutral by 2060.

Many other industrial companies have made promises about carbon neutrality and renewable energy sources. However, many have struggled to cut carbon emissions, and steps toward policy change have been frustratingly slow.

In our government, President Joe Biden has not yet made a deal with Congress to meaningfully address climate change on a federal level. A proposed carbon tax would incentivise clean energy and climate-responsible buying practices. However, due to heavy opposition to raising taxes, this likely would not pass. On an international level, tighter restrictions could be placed on deforestation, and ocean-cleaning efforts could

be increased.

We are running out of time to address the climate issue in a meaningful way. Personal responsibility will only go so far, so specific and decisive action must be made on a global scale to sustain our planet. Future generations have a right to their own meaningful experiences in nature and the wilderness, and it is our responsibility to sustain a world that can accommodate them.

As voters and future voters we must make climate action a requirement for our leaders. We can put pressure on our leaders by organizing behind the message and making sure candidates know their climate policy will have a large influence over our votes.

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**EDITORIAL POLICY & MISSION:**  
*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.*



# One book, two cultures

Junior Amelie Liu publishes children’s book representing early experiences with intersectional identity, culture

by **WILLIAM TAN**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The pastel-colored pages of a children’s book open to a young girl celebrating Thanksgiving with her family. Her house is filled with the warm smells of food made by her grandmothers: rich Matzo ball soup, hearty wontons — but wait! Where is the turkey? Can it be Thanksgiving without turkey?

Junior Amelie Liu has recently published her first children’s book, “Matzo Ball-Wonton Thanksgiving,” a heartwarming story of a girl discovering the significance of her multicultural heritage with the help of her Chinese and Jewish grandmothers, just in time for Thanksgiving.

Not a coincidence, the main character of the book is named Amelie, and the story is partly based on her own experiences as a Chinese Jewish dual heritage girl navigating the world of American cultural traditions.

“It’s definitely based on my own life,” Amelie said. “I think it’s a way of addressing and connecting with my own heritage, but I also think it’s a way of utilizing my story, not only to help young children learn from it, but also for young children to see a character that might be similar to themselves, either if they’re Chinese Jewish or have a multicultural identity.”

“Matzo Ball-Wonton Thanksgiving” is currently at Barnes & Noble and on Amazon. All proceeds from the book will go toward the National Alliance for Children’s Grief (NACG), a non-profit that supports and educates bereaved children.

Amelie feels a close connection to the NACG, as her own father passed away when she was 7. She has researched and worked closely with the organization in the past to create a curriculum for teens who have lost their parents.

“It’s a non-profit that’s very close to my heart. I’ve done a lot of grief talks with them, so I wanted to donate the proceeds to an organization that I know will help teens,” she said.

For Amelie, the idea to write a book came during the pandemic after witnessing nationwide movements such as “Stop Asian

*“I really realized the importance of my identity, and the importance of young children understanding their intersectionality and feeling pride in it.”*

— AMELIE LIU

Hate” and “Black Lives Matter,” issues that challenged her to think of her identity as an Asian American and Jewish person in a new way. She said she became hyper-aware of her identity as an Asian American and as a Jew.

“I think also during quarantine, I was forced to confront the loss of my father and the loss of connection to my Chinese heritage,” Amelie said. “Because I had so much time to myself, I had to kind of overanalyze my own brain. I think that’s when I really realized the importance of my identity and the importance of young children understanding their intersectionality and feeling pride in it.”

Amelie worked on the book for over 18 months with the guidance of her grandmother, or “bubbe,” Leslie Lewinter Suskind, and collaborated with Maria Dmitrieva for the illustrations.

“I wrote in an initial draft to my bubbe, and then it obviously went through countless and countless edits, and then to the illustration process. So all of that was about a year and a half, and now we’re here.”

The process had its challenges. Amelie said she initially underestimated the difficulty of writing a children’s book. Since children’s books only have a few words per page, the task of sharing her complex message became even more difficult.

“What I really needed to do was translate a very, very complicated message into very simple words. That was definitely a challenge,” Amelie said. “I had to really refine and truly understand what I wanted to communicate in order to put that simply for



MIDWAY PHOTO BY GABRIEL ISSA

**BUILDING BRIDGES WITH BOOKS.** Amelie Liu poses with her recently published children’s book “Matzo Ball-Wonton Thanksgiving.” The book tells the story of a younger Amelie discovering how her multi-cultural identity fits in the context of Thanksgiving with the help of her Chinese and Jewish grandmothers.

children.”

So far, she’s communicated successfully. Amelie and her bubbe visited multiple primary school homerooms to share the book, including the class of Amelie’s former kindergarten teacher, Delores Rita.

As an Asian woman herself, Ms. Rita found she connected with the book at a deeply personal level. She said even her 4-year-old students were able to grasp parts of the book’s main message, such as Amelie’s decision to spill her grandmother’s Matzo ball soup the night before Thanksgiving.

“They could understand that spilling the soup was a big deal, that grandmother’s not going to be upset by it, and can explain, ‘Yes, you can have whatever foods you’d like at

Thanksgiving,’” she said.

And, of course, Ms. Rita’s students all loved Amelie and the story.

“They did ask if she was going to come back and read another book,” Ms. Rita said, laughing.

Amelie dedicated her first children’s book to her family for their tireless and unconditional support.

“I dedicate everything to them because I think they’ve really helped me understand my identity. They’ve been super supportive throughout this whole process,” Amelie said. “Without them, I definitely would not have written the book, especially because they’ve played such an integral role in giving me a platform and people to talk to.”

# Marvel’s ‘Eternals’ fails to adhere to cohesive plot



**CONVOLUTED CAST.** The large cast of “Eternals” brought a wide variety of characters to the film. However, the amount of characters led to a disconnected set of plotlines. This turned the film into an unsuccessful attempt at a new Marvel superhero team.

by **PETER PU**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Due to the pandemic, I have been trapped at home away from movie theaters. The last movie I remember watching in theaters was “Frozen 2,” released in November 2019. Despite the new concern of the omicron variant, I came out of my shell to see “Eternals” before it hit platforms for streaming.

It was not worth it.

Marvel Studios’ “Eternals,” directed by Chloe Zhao, features a diverse cast that reflects the diversity of their characters and the resulting fragmentation of plot. In one word, it’s a mess.

Because the film makes so many timeline jumps from the present to Mesopotamia, ancient Babylon, the Gupta Empire and Tenochtitlan, viewers are unable to piece together the true storyline until about two hours into this 2.5-hour slog. It turns out that the Prime Celestial Arishem is planning for the emergence of a new celestial to occur on Earth.

He created the Deviants to destroy human predators, allowing for the human population to boom. But as the Deviants evolve, they become the new apex predators, so Arishem programmed the

Eternals to keep the Deviants in check.

In those first two hours, viewers look forward to seeing Sersi develop into a mega-power, the Eternals to unite in their effort to stop the emergence, and Ikaris to live happily after with Sersi. Unfortunately, none of these occur.

Sersi’s journey of finding her true power is plagued by her insecurity as the chosen leader of the Eternals. Though she destroys a deviant in an underwater fight-or-flight sequence, Sprite almost kills her with a simple dagger.

At her critical confrontation with Ikaris at the end of the film, it is Ikaris that caves into his feelings for Sersi rather than Sersi demonstrating her own strength. At the same time, Ikaris’ dilemma between remaining loyal to Arishem versus stopping Sersi is somehow unconvincing. It was truly surprising seeing Ikaris in tears, rather than wiping out Sersi with his laser eyes.

Sersi deserved a compelling fight scene, perhaps with Timut or Arishem, where viewers could witness her full power. But perhaps that fight is just not in her, as her powers seem inherently defensive rather than combative.

At no point in the film did the Eternals seem united. The makeshift Uni-Mind maneuver seemed a last resort to end the film within 15 minutes.

Viewers need a steady development toward unity involving concordance in values and incentives among the Eternals, all occurring earlier in the film.

By building on the Darwinian allusions throughout the film, a more convincing resolution could have been collaboration between the Deviants and Eternals as both share the common goal of maintaining themselves in the universe.

Perhaps part of the reason the film dragged for 2.5 hours is simply because there are too many Eternals. Brevity and unity could be achieved by eliminating Makari, who adds little to the storyline. The role of Karun is unclear as his documentary fails to come to fruition.

For most movies, the lingering thrill keeps me in my seat well into the credits. I left the theater as soon as “Eternals” concluded, disappointed that the ending with Arishem suggested a sequel. I will never get those 2.5 hours back, and I will not be crawling out of my shell for the next one.





MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ALINA SUSANI

# Legacy of Lab: 125 Years

Since 1896, the Laboratory Schools have cultivated communities of scholarship, curiosity and creativity. In commemoration of Lab’s 125th year, students, faculty, administration and alumni reflect on their experiences and future community aspirations.



**1896:** John Dewey opens the Laboratory Schools on 1328 E. 57th street in a house.



**1903:** Blaine Hall is completed. Students wait on the steps after school.



**1904:** Belfield Hall is built as the new center of education.



**1916:** Lab’s Nursery School Program begins.

## Looking Back: The Midway asked Lab alumni to share their most fond memories.

*Compiled by William Tan and Peter Cox*

“I think it goes without saying the teachers were incredible. Some of the best teachers that I’ve had in my academic experience were teachers that I had in third, fifth and I mean, high school. Needless to say, it’s actually remarkable because both of my kids go to Lab and there are teachers that are still there.”

— Chase Chavín, ‘97

“I will say what I tell people whenever I’m talking about Lab, and I really think that it’s so important to me, is my Lab classmates and just other Lab alumni from any year are the most interesting people that I know because of their experience at Lab where they were really taught to think critically but creatively at the same time.”

— Sari Weichbrodt, ‘94

“I know you guys remember Secret Garden too. But it looked very different for me before they did all the renovation of Lab School. I do remember myself that it was like a really quiet little hideaway that I think a lot of us in high school, you know, could kind of go and just peacefully be.”

— Lynn Sasamoto, ‘79

“I didn’t like much of the art class, but there was a thing called cartooning. They actually had a unit where I spent a lot of time drawing the presidential candidates at the time, [such as] Harry Truman. He was President running against [Dwight] Eisenhower. And so I learned what the idea of cartooning was.”

— John Davey, ‘55

“We were very politically active. A number of our classmates went to Washington to petition our senators to get out of the war in Vietnam. And, you know, we were doing all sorts of things, and that is actually one of the things that I remember and am active in until this day.”

— Hannah Banks, ‘70

“We talk about learning by doing, and to learn genetics we did an experiment where we crossbred fruit flies, and I remember it was so much fun, a lot of our fruit flies actually escaped, and so the fruit flies were all throughout the classroom, but we learned so much about genetics, and I never forgot that because we ran the experiment the way we did, rather than reading about genetics.”

— Irene Reed, ‘92

“One of the things that I think I appreciated at the high school level, that I particularly appreciated once I got to college and met other kids who’d been at different high schools, was how much freedom and independence Lab high schoolers had.”

— Sarah Abella, ‘93

“We worked out in the field house every day in the winter, on Stagg Field in the spring. Not only was the university track team on the track at the same time, but the University of Chicago Track Club, which is a world famous track club, with Olympic runners on it. I got to share the track with Olympians and with really good college runners.”

— Marty Billingsley, ‘77

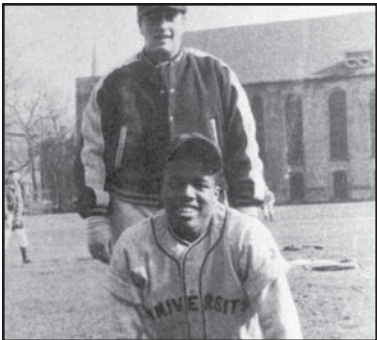




**1931:** Charles H. Judd Hall is completed. Pictured is the interior Lecture Hall (now C-116).



**1936:** The Girls' Club organizes an "Arctic Amble" dance, one of many school dances in Lab history.



**1940s:** Black students are admitted to the Laboratory Schools.



**1940s:** Sailors take over Sunny Gym during World War II, eating in Ida Noyes, marching on 59th.



**1946:** After completing sophomore coursework, students attend UChicago classes.



**1949:** Langston Hughes comes to the Laboratory Schools as a poet in residence.



**1960:** Construction of the high school building is completed.



**1960:** The high school building is completed with expanded programs and new science laboratories.



**1970s:** Lab teachers form a union after faced with economic hardship.



**1993:** Middle School building is completed. Pictured is the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



**2013:** Earl Shapiro Hall is completed.



**2015:** Gordon Parks Arts Hall construction completed.

PHOTOGRAPHS OBTAINED FROM THE  
REGENSTEIN PHOTO ARCHIVE AND  
LABORATORY SCHOOLS  
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT.  
COMPILED BY LUCIA KOURI.

## Looking Forward:

The Midway asked current students, faculty and administrators what they want to see by the time Lab turns 150.

*Compiled by Amy Ren and Sahana Unni*

"I would like, in 25 years, to see the admission process in the Laboratory Schools be need-blind. We're not right now. We have a generous financial aid budget, but it's not limitless. I'd love to see it be big enough to support any student who wants to be here regardless of need."

— Victoria Jueds,  
Laboratory Schools director

"I think for me, kind of an overarching goal is always to carefully balance that tradition with transition and change and how you honor history and tradition and also make decisions that are good for students and their families."

— Ana Campos, dean of students

"I would hope that the school would still maintain some of its certain core values which is to be still a strong and rigorous academic institution that prepares kids well to go to strong and rigorous academic institutions for college."

— Jane Canright, math teacher

"An environment where people support each other more [...] Definitely looking for things like more diversity in the administration, as well as more opportunities for students to talk to administration and really give their input and see real changes happening because of student voices."

— Lucia Austen, '23

"I would hope that in 25 years, we would be able to restructure the architecture of our science labs. Taking into consideration how the science labs, specifically, are treated as laboratory spaces at the university level, we should really structure them so that they're much more flexible, so we can use them in multiple formats."

— Daniel Bobo-Jones, science teacher

"I've seen a lot of people struggle a lot with mental health. And so you know, it's definitely a difficult situation. I would hope that students in the next 25 years feel like they aren't so overwhelmed, and whether that is Lab fixing that on itself or just kind of a cultural shift, I don't know. But, you know, that's something that I definitely would like to see."

— Will Trone, '22

"I hope that the faculty, administration and students develop a better relationship. I feel like everyone is working hard for the betterment of Lab, it's just that people don't communicate at all and that's become a really big problem. I hope we can actually fix that by the time it turns 150."

— Kaavya Shiram, '24

"Given the makeup that we are in the city, I think that the makeup that we are in our school can be a lot better. But I do appreciate that the student body is definitely much more diverse compared to other schools I've worked at, and I hope that we can continue that trend of the student body and the faculty as well."

— Sari Hernandez, English teacher



# Magnificent mini museums

## Exhibit delivers Dunder Mifflin scenes to the city

by **NOA APPELBAUM**  
HEALTH & WELLNESS EDITOR  
For \$55, this “experience” should feature Steve Carell himself.

Steve Carell was, in fact, not at The Office Experience, which sits prominently on the corner of North Michigan and East Grand avenues, but his Michael Scott lives on through the Experience’s iconic scenery, interactive features and many, many desks. The pop-up will run until early February, and tickets usually sell out each week.

The experience is able to account for many of the sets on the show, and the added details and references make some spaces really pop, yet other rooms lack authenticity and vibrancy, making them dull and tedious.

Rooms that are a part of the fictitious “Dunder Mifflin Office Building and Warehouse” are by far the most genuine — even die-hard fans of the show would have trouble finding much wrong with the setup. Pam’s desk, with her signature box of candy, sticky notes and pencils scattered across its surface

greet visitors entering the primary office space. Behind her sit the other characters’ workspaces, positioned exactly how they appeared on TV, but with fun tidbits added that reference the show’s peculiar jokes and mellowed humor. One of Meredith’s desk drawers contains a bottle of wine, an innuendo to her continuous drinking problem. Elements like these add charisma to the otherwise-standard office workspace. Michael’s office, the conference room the Human Resources corner and other classic spaces are also true to the series and exciting to browse.

Unfortunately, the rooms meant to encapsulate other Scranton locations are often less than stellar. In particular, Dwight’s infamous Schrote Farms falls flat. Rather than reflect the interior of Dwight’s lodge, it instead resembles a lifeless, tacky ranch with almost none of the elements that make the farm so endearing. After the office spaces, it seems as if the creators of the experience, unsure what else to add, halfheartedly constructed rooms that only appear in one episode, such as Niagara Falls or the beach from the “Beach Games” episode.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY NOA APPELBAUM

**CHILI CON CATASTROPHE.** Kevin’s famous chili hangs in the air mid-spill, ready for guests to grab and recreate the iconic scene from “The Office.” The Office Experience in Chicago closes Feb. 7.

isode, such as Niagara Falls or the beach from the “Beach Games” episode.

More informative rooms are presented in engaging ways. In one area, visitors can write on the walls to complete “Stanley’s Crossword Puzzle,” testing their show

knowledge.

Masks are required in almost all areas, and hand sanitizer stations are distributed across the building to protect against COVID-19 (although they frequently were empty). Most of the staff were eager to take pictures, and seemed trained

in how to do so by touching your phone as little as possible.

Overall, The Office Experience definitely had its faults, but its authentic office rooms, behind-the-scenes facts, and authentic architecture might make the experience worth a visit.

## Oh, the place you should go: exhibit brings Dr. Seuss stories to life

by **CHLOE MA**  
CONTENT MANAGER  
Bright colored lights, whimsical music and nostalgia-evoking displays create a captivating affair. A new museum-like experience now fills the former Macy’s location at Water Tower Place on North Michigan Avenue and has completely transformed the area.

The Dr. Seuss Experience is a window into the vibrant world of the Dr. Seuss books. While kids today may or may not have had the same experience with Dr. Seuss’ works growing up, the fantastical scenes featured there are more than enough to entertain families and friends alike.

General admission tickets to the exhibit range from \$20-\$45 based on age and time of attendance.

Upon entrance, children stampede to the queue for the exhibit, and parents follow close behind. The line moves quickly and opens to a curtain-lined hallway. To the right is a wall with two colorful



MIDWAY PHOTO BY CHLOE MA

**SEUSS’S SCENE.** An animated “Cat in the Hat” speaks to an audience at the Dr. Seuss experience at Water Tower Place.

backdrops, where parents and kids pose and take photos.

Dr. Seuss quotes and general trivia questions about Dr. Se-

uss books are pasted to the walls. The transitions between the immersive displays include nostalgic sights like Truffula trees from

“The Lorax,” the Sneetches and the Grinch.

With lighting, speakers and some impressive set design, the exhibit pulls visitors back into their beloved childhood stories. One of the most captivating models is a reconstructed room from “The Cat in the Hat” in which a highly animated puppet of the main character speaks to its audience.

When guests walk through the halls, playful benches swing in the Truffula tree room, fantastical puzzles reminiscent of the Dr. Seuss books await children to solve them, and the Throm-dim-bu-lator from “Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?” commands attention from the center of the room.

One of the most enchanting parts of the entire experience is the parade featuring some of the most well-known Dr. Seuss characters like the Cat in the Hat, Thing 1 and Thing 2, The Grinch and Max. Children receive colored ribbons tied to sticks to wave at their favorite characters and are encouraged

to dance by the non-costumed parade leader. Each character does a quirky dance, poses and walks off to let the next life-sized character perform. The ribbons are returned to staff members after the parade for sanitizing.

In terms of coronavirus precautions, conveniently placed hand sanitizer stations are dispersed throughout the exhibit but young children still ran around rampantly without masks. According to the Dr. Seuss Experience FAQ, all guests older than 2 are required to wear masks if unvaccinated while inside Water Tower Place.

Even teenagers who may not feel particularly connected to the books can enjoy a good photo op, with this exhibit being similar to other attractions like the WNDR museum.

With the bright colors, bewitching activities and mind-bending visuals, all that’s missing from the Dr. Seuss Experience is a plate of green eggs and ham.

The exhibit closes Jan. 2.

## Guests drive decision-making research at new Mindworks exhibit

by **RYAN CLARK**  
OPINION EDITOR  
Have you ever wondered what makes some people look more trustworthy than others, or how our surroundings imperceptibly influence our decisions? You may now be able to find out at a new University of Chicago behavioral science exhibit downtown.

The Center for Decision Research at the Booth School of Business opened the new “Mindworks” space at 224 S. Michigan Ave. in the Railway Exchange Building over the summer, presenting it as both a “discovery center” and behavioral science lab. Each wall panel presents some aspects of behavior science — like prospect theory or the science of regrets — with an interactive element, and patrons can even redeem prizes for participating in surveys for be-

havioral science studies. Admission is free, but online reservations are encouraged.

The best part of Mindworks is how beautiful the space is. Each of the eight exhibits is clear and colorful, and the careful attention to design is apparent. The center exposit concepts and emphasizes interactivity in a novel way, such as through written responses or manipulation of photographs.

Past responses from visitors are shown in each exhibit (many regretted drinking so much when they were younger), creating a sense of group involvement. Some exhibits are also designed to be done with friends. And if you have any questions, Mindworks is well staffed with knowledgeable guides.

However, the emphasis is decidedly on patron participation rather than learning about behav-

ioral science. The entire center is just one partitioned room, so the scope of Mindworks is rather limited. More information about the goals and foundations of behavioral research might have contextualized the exhibits better. Mindworks shares the same flaws as other new behavioral economics research, namely that empirical observations seem to constitute a group of unrelated facts about behavior rather than a genuine theory in any substantive sense.

While small, Mindworks is an engaging and novel attraction that succeeds in showing how individuals’ decisions and perceptions are subtly influenced by their environment. Those spending the day in the downtown area, especially in groups, would be well-advised to take 20 or 30 minutes to visit the Center for Decision Research’s engaging new space.



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATTHEW MCGEHEE

**MIND GAMES.** A woman observes portraits of famous thinkers at the Mindworks exhibit by the Univeristy of Chicago’s Center for Decision Research. Guests can learn about the field and contribute to the center’s research by interacting with the exhibit.



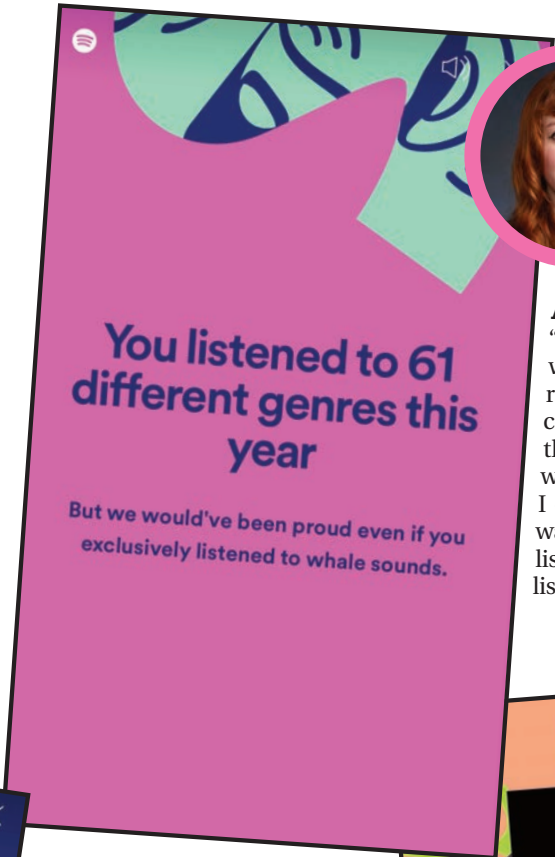
# That's a Wrap

Every December, the popular music streaming app Spotify releases a yearly Wrapped for each user, which includes a unique playlist and statistics about their listening habits. U-High students had a wide range of reactions to their 2021 Wrapped.

COMPILED BY AMY REN



**JAEDYN HUDSON, 12**  
"I wasn't surprised, I thought it was fun. It was pretty similar to the one last year and I listened to the same songs like I listened to. I use Spotify when I do my homework, so it's usually the same playlist. I listened to over 100 genres, and I usually think of my music taste — like, I listen to a lot of music, but I think I mainly listen to the same, but it's actually split up into different categories."



**ARIADNE MERCHANT, 11**  
"I was surprised, but internally, I knew what was to come. I have a very wide range of genres that I listen to. So when it came to its conclusion, I was surprised by the range of how many different songs I was listening to throughout the years. And I could tell from which part of the year I wasn't doing so well by the songs that I was listening to. I was like, 'Oh, that's why I'm listening to way more Mitski.'"



**NORIE KAUFMAN-SITES, 10**  
"I was excited when I first saw my Wrapped, since it was very much dominated by Taylor Swift, who I am a huge fan of, but it was super cool to have Spotify validate that. I definitely was excited and proud [to be in the top 0.1%]. I sent it to my sister, who was in the top 0.5%, and I just was very happy and wanted to share it."



**OSCAR KASTHURI, 9**  
"At the start of the year, I listened to a lot of Kanye West, and then in the last couple months of the year, I started listening to Baby Keem, and it was pretty — I don't know, I was bittersweet about it. Kanye West was still my most-streamed artist, and Baby Keem was my second, so I was a little bit confused."



**Top Artists**  
#1 Kanye West  
#2 Baby Keem  
#3 Drake  
#4 Tyler, The Creator  
#5 Kendrick Lamar

**Top Songs**  
#1 WUSYANAME (...  
#2 family ties (with...  
#3 Feel No Ways  
#4 Time Flies  
#5 booman

**My Minutes Listened**  
19,302

**Top Genre**  
Chicago rap

Spotify SPOTIFY.COM/WRAPPED

## On Saturdays, club engages young girls in science

by **COLIN LESLIE**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Liquid densities measured, origami engineered, eggs fit into bottles and balloons inflated with baking soda and vinegar. These were some of the experiments girls ran on Nov. 13 in a U-High biology classroom. But the students experimenting weren't in high school. They were lower school girls participating in the first Science Saturday of the year.

Facilitated by the Women in STEM club, the Science Saturdays program introduces lower school girls to STEM concepts with the goal of encouraging younger girls to continue pursuing STEM.

According to WiSTEM club president Jana Reiser, the board plans the experiments and presents them to the rest of the club, which then tries the experiments themselves.

Parents of elementary students are notified through the lower school principal and their teachers. This year, WiSTEM raised funds for the materials needed through a bake sale.

"We basically take very basic concepts from STEM fields that can be explained," Jana said. "I know this year we had more kids on the older side, so we were able to explain a lot more of the science."

According to junior Serena Thomas, a member who organized her first Science Saturday, the support of experienced WiSTEM members was essential for her to manage the responsibility of spreading the word about the event.

"It was kind of hard to reach out to different parents and get the word around about what we were trying to do," Serena said. "Talking to people who were part of Science Saturday in the past and helped spread information about it was really useful to me."

Serena said designing experiments so that they are interesting to younger students poses a challenge.

"I think at first they were a little hesitant since it was a new environment being in the high school," Serena said, "but a few of them were with their friends and once we did the first lab, which was the liquid density lab, they all thought it was really exciting. A big part of it was just getting them engaged, asking them questions, what they think is gonna happen, so by the end, they were really excited about each individual activity."

Jana said one of the goals of the Science Saturdays program is to introduce younger girls to a STEM community.

"There's like this leaky faucet theory with women in STEM, which is basically that the higher you go in education of STEM, the more women fall out and stop doing it," Jana said. "One of the ways to combat this is to create a strong network, so to have people you can rely on, and so that's basically what we're trying to do is just foster their own community."

With this goal in mind, Serena said the feedback she received after the event was encouraging.

"A bunch of the parents actually emailed back, saying the kids had just hopped in the



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LILLY COE

**LITTLE LABBIES.** Lower school Labbies Olivia Sanders, Abbie Ott, Lola McNerney and Gabriela Lastra conduct a WiSTEM-designed experiment on Nov. 13.

car and said that they loved it and want to do it again," Serena said.

According to Jana, Science Saturdays also provide valuable experience for WiSTEM members.

"You basically have to teach young kids, and that in itself is a whole experience because you really have no idea what they will understand and what they won't understand," Jana said. "It's a great opportunity to learn how to handle teaching."

The Saturdays provide valuable experience through teaching, collaboration and preparation for the high schoolers, and liquid density, balloons and origami for the younger girls.



# A case of Chronic coaching

## Swim coach and paramedic pushes others to succeed

by CAROLINE HOHNER  
FEATURES EDITOR

Day or night, Coach Kate Chronic does what she does best, what she looks forward to doing each and every day: coaching.

While the sun's still out, she works as operations supervisor for a downtown Medical Express Ambulance Services garage, coaching and overseeing paramedics working in the field. After the sun sets, Coach Chronic heads to Hyde Park for a different sort of coaching: leading swim practices for students from Lab and schools all over the South Side through M3 Aquatics.

In both her day and night jobs, Coach Chronic pushes others to do things beyond their comfort zone and to take pride in their successes.

When Coach Chronic moved to Chicago in 2013, she also moved away from a career in clinical psychology. But she found that she missed working in a medical setting, so she decided to train to be an emergency medical technician at Malcolm X College. She later returned for a year of paramedic training.

Throughout all of her training and her start as a paramedic, Coach Chronic continued to dedicate herself as a swim coach. When her commitments to both careers began to conflict with each other, Coach Chronic took on her current job at Medical Express Ambulance Services, where she helps paramedics prepare the ambulances and advises them throughout the work day. It's a job with hours that accommodate her swim coaching.

While her double work day may seem overwhelming to an outsider, Coach Chronic said that she sees both careers not as work, but rather as part of her identity as a coach.

"I look at coaching as more of a lifestyle," Coach Chronic said, "so no matter what arena I'm in, it's just kind of who I am, so it makes it easy."

She said her job overseeing a garage with around 20 ambulances had a new degree of

challenge throughout the past two years of the pandemic, due to rigorous protocols put in place to prevent the spread of the virus.

When a deadly virus could board the ambulance alongside each patient, working on the front lines of the pandemic puts the paramedics in danger as well.

"Our first inclination is to help and to do something," Coach Chronic said. "And yet at the same time, the very people that you want to help are the people carrying the thing that could kill you."

Whether in the garage or by the pool, Coach Chronic hopes she can push her trainees to decide to take risks and try new and difficult things, and then help them follow through.

And, in either setting, Coach Chronic hopes the young people she coaches take away "a sense of empowerment and sense of confidence that they accomplish something that they didn't ever think they could do, or had not thought that they could do prior to being on the team."

Coach Chronic has two sides as a swim coach: the one who pushes her team to succeed during practices, and the one who, according to U-High senior Jennifer Huo, offered to give her swimmers rides if they ever felt in danger, no questions asked.

"She's very strict at times, but she genuinely cares," Jennifer said.

Even after stepping into a larger role as a swim coach in founding M3 Aquatics when U-High students couldn't hold practices during the pandemic, and even after dealing with the stress of working in emergency medical services during a world-wide medical crisis, Coach Chronic's love for coaching never faltered.

"I always said, long ago, if I ever stopped waking up and being thrilled to death to go to work every day, it was time for me to change careers," Coach Chronic said. "I've been coaching for probably 30 plus years now, and have yet to wake up a day and not look forward to practice or not work."

**"I look at coaching as more of a lifestyle, so no matter what arena I'm in, it's just kind of who I am, so it makes it easy."**

— KATE CHRONIC,  
SWIM COACH



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MALCOLM TAYLOR

**CARING COACH.** Swim coach Kate Chronic addresses senior Spencer McKula after she applies a bandage to his hand injury. Using first-aid skills she gained while working as a paramedic, she removed Spencer's stitches at swim practice.

# Size and spirit: Dance Troupe invigorated in new year

## After long break, Dance Troupe returns to court

by KRISHITA DUTTA  
ARTS CO-EDITOR

At the Sept. 8 pep rally, all of U-High cheered under the sun in Jackman Field as the Dance Troupe set the tone for the beginning of the school year with an upbeat, energizing dance performance to "You Make Me Feel" by Cobra Starship.

Little did the audience know about the behind-the-scenes preparation for the dance and the hard work the team continues to put in for upcoming performances.

Dance Troupe has gone through vast changes in its 2021-22 season, resulting in more members, lifted team spirit and an increase in opportunities to grow as dancers.

Dance Troupe's season this year spans from October to February, including various performances such as halftimes at boys and girls varsity basketball home games, Artsfest and the Connections gala. The troupe of 18 members practices twice a week for one to two hours, led by junior captain Lizzie Baker and senior captain Kennedy Bickham.

According to head coach Nichole Magliocco, the team put in sig-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY GABRIEL ISSA

**CENTER STAGE.** During halftime of the girls varsity basketball game on Dec. 7, senior captain Kennedy Bickham leads the dance troupe through their performance of "Worth It" by Fifth Harmony.

nificant effort to begin the season with a strong start. The troupe attended a dance camp during early November in preparation for the season. Instructors from the Universal Dance Association led the weekend-long day camp for the dancers who learned and practiced six dances.

Furthermore, changes also took shape in the team during the shift back to in-person learning. According to Lizzie, there has been an increase in the team's motivation this year so far.

"Overall I've seen a huge lift in team spirit," Lizzie said. "That could largely be because of the

larger team since we've gained seven new members since our COVID year, or because we're in school full-time, but this year, the members of the team seem to be having an especially good time."

Similarly, Ms. Magliocco believes the shift back from distance-learning has been a tre-

**"With all the new members and events and practices, the team's really been working to get everybody to a good level with the various abilities of dance."**

— NICHOLE MAGLIOCCO,  
HEAD COACH

mendous change. During distance learning, the team met over Zoom; however, she said that the team has more than just bounced back with the transition back to in-person learning.

"Everyone's been doing really great this year. With all the new members and events and practices, the team's really been working to get everybody to a good level with the various abilities of dance," Ms. Magliocco said. "Everyone's also adjusted well to the masks, and the environment overall just feels more normal again."

Ms. Magliocco believes that the team is looking forward to the rest of the season and all of their upcoming performances. She is currently working with Athletics Director David Ribbens to explore the possibility of expanding Dance Troupe to include performances at girls soccer games in the spring, allowing students who are currently unavailable to participate later in the year and to showcase their hard work.



# Rock stars: Unique sport draws in students with intense competition and camaraderie

by **ETHAN SWINGER**  
REPORTER

Holding on with white knuckles, the climber's chalky hands grip the peg. She hangs upside-down, straddling two pegs, preparing the strenuous lunge to the last one. If she makes a single false move, she would have to start scaling the wall once again. Only the top of the wall is in her mind.

She jumps. Catching herself with an outstretched hand, she holds on as tightly as possible.

From below, applause erupts. Her teammates' cheers echo the loudest. After numerous unsuccessful attempts, the route up the wall is now complete. This high-stakes situation is one rock climbers at U-High are accustomed to through their years of competition.

These student climbers have earned high achievements in competitions throughout the country, helping build a close-knit community that they recommend to others.

The group, consisting of sophomores through seniors, practices together at the First Ascent gym on Block 37 three days a week. Numerous other accessible locations for weekly climbing are available around the city, such as Brooklyn Boulders in Lincoln Park and the West Loop, and Movement climbing gym, also in Lincoln Park.

Eli Strahilevitz, a sophomore who has been climbing for 10 years, suggests the sport to anyone because of its mental and physical benefits.

"I'd definitely recommend it," Eli said. "In my opinion it's very fun, and it's also good exercise. I use it also as stress relief sometimes."

Additionally, sophomore Jackson Skelly, who has also been climbing for 10 years, said rock climbing may seem intimidating but accommodates people at any skill level.

"It sounds like a really daunting sport, really intense and physical, but it's really not," Jackson said. "There are a lot of options for people who aren't as strong, who aren't

as athletic. It actually is fairly accessible."

Aside from these benefits, the group also practices rock climbing to prepare themselves for numerous competitions. According to Eli, U-High climbers have made it to national competitions and the team typically wins the six-state regional, which attracts competitors throughout the Midwest. One teammate from a different school even holds the speed-climbing record.

Over the past two years, the coronavirus pandemic slowed the rate and scale of competitions. Some competitions required climbers to record themselves scaling a specific route, but some in-person climbing has resumed recently.

Sophie Volchenboum, a senior who has been climbing for eight years, says each member competes individually but still represents their gym. In competitions, rock climbers focus on making as much progress as possible on the route and hopefully reaching the top.

"Competitions are about how high you can get on a route, and when you're climbing in a gym your goal is to finish the route however you can," Sophie said. "You don't get any style points here, you're not timed. You just want to get to the top."

Although physical strength and athleticism are needed in order to achieve this, climbers also build a mental approach in how to scale the wall, she said.

"You get really good at reading routes, which means anticipating what you're going to have to do before you get on the wall," Sophie said.

Talia Lasko, a junior who has been climbing for over three years, believes that one of the most important aspects of rock climbing has been the close group of people partaking in the sport.

"I think it's like a really great community," Talia said. "I think that everyone builds each other [up] and, at least at my gym, the team is very close and good friends."



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

**GETTING A GRIP.** Senior Sophie Volchenboum climbs up a rock wall at her gym, searching for her next hold. "Competitions are about how high you can get on a route, and when you're climbing in a gym your goal is to finish the route however you can," Sophie said. "You don't get any style points here, you're not timed. You just want to get to the top."

## Citing gender dynamic, girls uncomfortable in fitness center

by **LUCIA KOURI**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

When walking between Sunny and Kovler gymnasiums after school, it's not uncommon to see a fitness center packed with U-High students working out. This year, however, a far less common sighting would be a fitness center packed with girls. Though the fitness center coordinator emphasized that the school weight facility should be open to all, some U-High girls don't feel comfortable entering the space because of the male-dominant culture it has cultivated, something that may be indicative of broader issues related to gender within school grounds. Student A, who asked to have her name withheld, said she has been going to the school gym often this fall out of convenience.

"I go to the gym because the one near my house is usually very full and there are COVID precautions that kind of restrict many people in there," Student A said. "It's nice to go to the school one because it's right there and I don't have to drive anywhere else."

Though the convenience of a gym to work out is a benefit, the space doesn't come without its costs. While Student A enjoys the environment when working out, she has noticed that she is often one of the only female students,



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

**PRESSING PROBLEM.** Some girls feel uncomfortable using the fitness center, saying it is male dominated.

and the room is often occupied specifically by male sports teams.

"I noticed that it is extremely male dominated, and there are very few girls in the gym," Student A said.

Student A expressed that this gender dynamic could easily discourage other U-High girls from entering the space.

"It feels kind of one-sided," Student A said. "All-female gyms are becoming more popular now because of the uncomfortableness women typically feel in those spaces."

Thomas O'Connor, a male student and frequent fitness cen-

ter user says he sees how the gender-dynamic affects some girls.

"There is a strong supportive culture in the gym," Thomas said, "but I can only imagine how discouraging it would be to feel like the odd one out."

Despite a desire to work out in the gym's convenient location, Student B, who asked to have her name withheld for fear of repercussions, chooses not to go there for this reason, stressing that it is more common than most might think for girls to feel discomfort in male-dominated spaces.

"This is not just something that I feel," Student B said. "I know none

of my friends want to work at the school gym. They either have gym memberships, or don't work out at all because they don't feel comfortable."

Luke Zavala, a P.E. teacher and coach who monitors the fitness center, expressed concern when hearing about this discomfort, adding that in past years the gender split has not been quite this drastic, as many girls sports teams have trained in the space.

"I've done workouts with the girls soccer team in the past, the girls basketball team in the past," Mr. Zavala said. "This year, you know, I'm not sure why it hasn't been as prevalent."

One possible explanation, Mr. Zavala suggested, is that hesitancy to enter the gym space is a reflection of larger social issues that girls face in gyms around the world — even if they don't directly take place within school grounds.

"Part of it has to do with the idea of misogyny," Mr. Zavala said. "Unfortunately, there are people in the world that do treat women poorly and try to make them feel bad for a myriad of reasons."

Mr. Zavala added that discomfort in gym spaces expands beyond gender to general issues with body image as well.

"I've done projects with classes where we look at the impact of

body image — the idea of what society says a man should look like versus what society says a woman should look like," Mr. Zavala said. "A high school fitness center, with all the concerns that all students have around body image, can be an intimidating place."

Student B suggested that perhaps an alternative that would make girls feel more comfortable would be for sports teams to sign up for designated workout periods, so students could predict when the gym will be occupied.

"If there were other times when sports teams weren't there, I think I would be more open and feel more comfortable working out, because nobody's there to watch me lift weights or run on the treadmill," Student B said. "And it's also less overwhelming."

Regardless of contrasting views, Mr. Zavala expressed that it is a genuine goal to make the space accessible for all, whether this be through getting the word out that the space is open, or being thoughtful in how students are encouraged to attend. But he said the hope is that the space can eventually fulfill its original purpose of accommodating all.

"The idea is that we're creating a welcoming space for all people," Mr. Zavala said, "to be able to come and feel safe."





MIDWAY PHOTOILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW BURKE-STEVENSON

by MEENA LEE  
SPORTS EDITOR

With cloudy days and early sunsets, many U-High students are used to going through the day without seeing the sun. This shortened amount of daylight hours may alter students' feelings, and while a slight shift in energy levels can be attributed to "winter blues," counselors say a drastic change in mood may be associated with something more serious.

Seasonal affective disorder, also known as seasonal depression, is a mood disorder that can affect people's sleeping, eating, or social habits and occurs specifically with a decreased exposure to sunlight.

According to U-High counselor Camille Baughn-Cunningham, SAD is a subtype of depression with similar symptoms. These symptoms include a generally sad mood, sense of hopelessness, changes in sleeping or eating patterns, social withdrawal or isolation. Dr. Baughn-Cunningham, a licensed clinical psychologist, noted that the specific time frame for seasonal affective disorder distinguishes it from generalized depression that can occur at any time of the year under any environmental circumstances.

"You're going to see all those same things, but with seasonal depression you're going to see it at a certain time," Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said. "People who have

### Sun lamps can help with SAD

The amount of light an individual gets is important in regulating the chemicals in their brain and body systems. Sun lamps, also called light boxes or SAD lamps, are becoming more popular. Sun lamps imitate natural light by providing the full spectrum of light without the potentially damaging ultraviolet rays. They are used both as a treatment specifically for seasonal affective disorder and as a general way for people to get more natural light during the winter. Though it won't cure seasonal affective disorder completely, phototherapy, or light therapy, through the use of sun lamps can help ease symptoms and improve well-being.

— MEENA LEE

SAD tend to experience those symptoms in late fall or early winter through to the spring."

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham shared two other important aspects of seasonal affective disorder. She said there tends to be a gender difference, where women experience higher rates of seasonal affective disorder. Additionally, there is a genetic component that comes down to an individual's family medical history.

*"Depression, seasonal depression or any depression, is going to be something that's going to impact our lives in a really pervasive manner. It's going to affect how you think, how you feel and how you function."*

— CAMILLE BAUGHN-CUNNINGHAM, COUNSELOR

Dr. Baughn-Cunningham emphasized a clear distinction between the general sense of low energy experienced during the winter — what she calls the "winter blues" — and diagnosed seasonal affective disorder. Clinical seasonal affective disorder would affect an individual's life in more extensive ways than just a shift in energy levels.

"Most of us, if not all of us, feel some shift in our mood, our energy, our desire to sleep more when it gets cold and dark. Noticing those things is important, but that is typically not seasonal depression," Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said. "People should be paying attention to those shifts, but not being quick to kind of rush to judgment or over-diagnose themselves."

Because of this significant distinction, Dr. Baughn-Cunningham advises people to steer away from using the term in casual conversation.

"I think all of us do that to some degree. I would want to remind all of us to be more thoughtful about the terms we use to describe how we're feeling," Dr. Baughn-Cunningham said.

Senior Sarah Brady experiences some of these changes in her energy during the winter, though she is not diagnosed with SAD.

"I definitely get tired earlier. I get home from school and all I want to do is take a nap," Sarah said. "I feel more worn down when it's cold outside and there's no sun."

Many people may use the term "seasonal depression" to describe their mood during winter months, but Dr. Baughn-Cunningham emphasized that clinical seasonal affective disorder would affect an individual's life in more extensive ways than just a shift in energy levels.

"Depression, seasonal depression or any depression, is going to be something that's going to impact our lives in a really pervasive manner. It's going to affect how you think, how you feel and how you function," she said.

Many of the treatment options for depression are used to approach seasonal affective disorder, including counseling, psychotherapy and medication. An option more specific to seasonal affective disorder is phototherapy, or light therapy, primarily through the use

of sun lamps.

According to Dr. Baughn-Cunningham, sun lamps are becoming increasingly popular as a way to help with fatigue in the winter, even for those who do not have seasonal affective disorder. Sun lamps, also called light boxes or SAD lamps, imitate natural light and act as a substitute for when people can't get enough throughout the day.

Sarah started using a sun lamp last winter while U-High students were still in distance learning. Her psychiatrist recommended a VIP-EX light therapy lamp to help her get enough natural light, which she uses for about 30 minutes at a time.

"In online school I would use it in the morning, but now I use it after school, but I make sure it's not too close to when I go to bed," Sarah said. "I wouldn't say there were crazy effects from it, but I really just think this will make the winter just a bit better."

During these dark winter months, Dr. Baughn-Cunningham suggested that everyone, regardless of if they have SAD, listen to their body and their emotions and reflect on their mental health.

"Be thoughtful about what health means to you," she said. "Think about living a healthy life in terms of your sleep, your nutrition, your relationships, your workload, and to think about that balance and what it means for you."

## Non-medicinal remedies may offer health benefits

by ANNGO  
CITY LIFE EDITOR

Whenever he gets sick, Will Trone's mom prepares him a mixture of echinacea tea and milk to mellow the flavor of the flower.

"She gives me a cup of tea. And then I drink it. And then she goes and makes me another one — keeps on going over and over again," Will, a senior, said.

Will said he's not sure if the tea makes him feel any better, but he appreciates his mom's care.

Echinacea contains a variety of active compounds that make it a popular herbal remedy. The flower is linked to reducing inflammation, improving immunity and lowering blood sugar levels.

Will's mom's concoction is one of many natural remedies people use to strengthen their health. As people re-enter the world outside their homes after months of curtailed activities, it's important to be protective against diseases — even if it's just the common cold and flu.

Chinese traditional medicine has historically used foods, herbs and spices to help alleviate symptoms and improve health. Scientists are now looking into why many of these remedies actually have an effect.



MIDWAY ILLUSTRATION BY AMON GRAY

**HEALTHY EATING.** Although vaccines and drugs are normally scientists' first defense against disease in Western medicine, some foods help to boost immunity.

While spending 40 years exploring how different kinds of food affected her body, Ann Marie Chereso, a U-High parent, discovered food can be used as a source of fuel and healing for her body. When she was a teenager she participated in Weight Watchers, a weight-loss program, and noticed how changing what she ate affected how she felt.

"I did it to lose weight...But what I started to realize was when I changed the way I was eating, I started to actually physically feel better," Ms. Chereso said.

Science teacher Sharon Housinger said that while some traditions have proved to have no scientific evidence for their medicinal properties, scientists have discovered many true benefits. One

example is food seasoning.

"It used to be this kind of myth that the reason we put seasoning on our food is because it kills all the bacteria and we can eat spoiled food," Ms. Housinger said. "Turns out, you can't eat spoiled food, even if you put spices on it."

Although some beliefs have proved to be wrong, Ms. Housinger said some spices and herbs do have medicinal properties.

A 12-week study found that participants who took daily garlic supplements had 63% fewer colds than subjects who didn't take them. The lengths of cold symptoms of participants using garlic supplements also decreased by 70%.

Ms. Chereso also uses garlic for its medicinal properties but believes people should be conscious about how different foods may interact with their unique bodies.

"I think garlic is also a really good herb that I tend to rely on a lot, but I also have come to see that it depends on your ecosystem. We each have a unique ecosystem," Ms. Chereso said.

Another herb known for its health benefits is turmeric.

"Turmeric is one herb that I think is a really good source for keeping your immune system happy and healthy," Ms. Chereso said.

The pigmented spice has a long history of use in India, dating back 4,000 years to the Vedic culture and has since been discovered to have many medicinal purposes.

"Turmeric is traditionally used in India, like on the skin, if you have a rash or something because it's anti-inflammatory," Ms. Housinger said. "In fact, I take turmeric every day, because there's a lot of evidence that it helps with joint inflammation and cardiovascular health and things like that."

Both Ms. Housinger and Ms. Chereso said that the most important thing is to know your own body. Paying attention to what makes your body feel better and learning what to avoid is the best way to use food to improve your health.

Many foods are attributed with having vast healing properties, but Ms. Housinger said there are limitations with what each herb can accomplish. Furthermore, she advises against trying to self-treat medical conditions. For example, some plants can have antidepressant effects.

"Having unregulated antidepressants can also cause other problems," Ms. Housinger said, "so people shouldn't try to treat themselves."