After walkout, BSA shifts focus to community

Club to celebrate Blackness beyond one day, assembly

by CLARE McROBERTS
Features Editor

Last January, Black Students’ Association leaders abruptly ended the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. assembly by walking out of the auditorium, sending a message to the Lab community about discriminatory behavior at U-High.

One year later, there was no MLK assembly at all.

BSA leaders said the decision not to hold an assembly honoring Dr. King this year was careful thought out and reflected their wish that the Lab community recognize the broader scope of student experiences.

Rather than focusing on the MLK assembly, as the club had in the past, BSA has turned its attention to other ways to celebrate Blackness.

“The goal was we need you to really be able to see us and see what our experience is and stand with us,” said Heavenly Hicks, a BSA faculty advisor. “Not just for a one-day celebration, but be present with us each and every day that we are in this building.”

Ms. Hicks emphasized that the decision to not hold the assembly this year was purposeful.

“This was very calculated,” Ms. Hicks said. “There was a lot of planning and discussion about ‘OK, if we want to indefinitely pause the MLK assembly, why are we doing this? What are we trying to communicate?’ Members of the club, she said, felt that honoring the Black community at Lab had been reduced to one assembly.

“Our board really started to get to a point where they felt that the Black experience had been distilled into one day, and that much like the theme Black is not a monolith, that we were so much more than that. We were starting to feel like we were doing it so bad, and sacrifice. We understand that and we embrace that, but we also want to embrace our culture as well.”

The film series will include viewings during the lab periods on Wednesdays, hosted by BSA, along with discussions on Thursdays.

New testing rooms for students with accommodations

by CHLOÉ ALEXANDER
Art Editor

New testing rooms for students with accommodations — extra time, dictation or other special circumstances — opened on Jan. 17 and will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The testing rooms are currently in room S101, which is connected to the registrar’s office.

The rooms, one for high schoolers and one for middle schoolers, each have a capacity for six students.

The room will be monitored by Kelly Shepard, who previously worked in the middle school learning and counseling office. She will make the schedules and provide proctoring for students using the rooms.

Nicole Neat, director of student services, said the spaces were nego-tiated in recent faculty collective bargaining agreements to provide testing services for students with extended time accommodations and students who need to make up tests during the school day.

To reserve these spaces, a teacher will have to register a student for the date and time.

Teachers will designate the time and number of carrels they need to reserve. Then they will input information about the student: the amount of time for the test and how much extended time, and what materials they need. It will then be sent to Ms. Shepard who will create a schedule for the following week.

Unlike the previous testing spaces, the like the after-school testing room on the third floor and during lunch. The series is open to everyone. Ms. Hicks said he believes that the event will generate a dialogue surrounding film relating to the Black community.

“I hope that kind of sparks conversation — it doesn’t necessarily need to be a bad conversation. The conversation could be as simple as, ‘Dude, I didn’t know ‘Get Out’ was that good or that Miles Morales is a much deeper character than I thought,’” Ms. Hicks said. “It could be as simple as that.”

BSA’s decision not to host an MLK assembly ought not suggest anything but admiration for Dr. King’s legacy, Ms. Hicks said.

“Just because there isn’t an assembly doesn’t mean that there’s an absence of ways for the Lab community to dial into the ethos of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s mission, which was a social justice mission, it was a socioeco-nomic-equity mission,” Ms. Hicks said. “You don’t need a one-off assembly to do that work.”
new system implemented for transcript management by TAARIQ AHMED
Digital Editor
Students and families can access transcripts for the current academic year safely and securely with U-High’s implementation of Parchment, a new online transcript management system for long-term storage capability for academic documents.

Students can now digitally obtain both their official and unoffi-
cial transcripts. Students and families no longer need to complete a form and submit it to the Learning & Coun-
selling Office as before. Students can set up their Parchment ac-
count by gaining access to their individual keycode after sending a request to registrar@uchl.s.

According to a Dec. 8 community email from Sarah Arehart, Laboratory Schools registrar, and U-High principal Martin Woods, Parchment is a system that delivers official credentials between students and recipients. Parchment ensures the privacy and security of student records by eliminating the need to email offi-
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Ms. Arehart said in her opinion, the use of Parchment will mini-
imize the risk of another security compromise. "For the same summer, in which the high school transcripts of members of the Class of 2023 were hacked due to a human error. At the time, Parchment had not been a part of our process, but it was a positive thing for U-High. It was a more secure system, and it was a new concept to the students."

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ENROLL FOR 2024-25
BEGINNING JOURNALISM
Celebrate MLK: address inequality

by Light DOHRN

As the midway sees it.
This represents the opinion of the U-High Midway editorial board.

sent an entire population’s views or opinions. Furthermore, conversations relating to diversity topics often don’t start themselves. Hosting an annual MLK day prompts the student body to reflect and discuss ways to improve our community. Black pride encompasses so much more than the Monday Assembly. An MLK assembly only serves as the jumping off point for meaningful discussion and reflection, but it all begins with understanding what Dr. King is truly about.

If we don’t take the time to understand Dr. King and his philosophy of how we can hold a genuine and authentic community to hold a genuine assembly that reflects his legacy. The MLK assembly should challenge U-High’s U-High to take the lessons we learned this year and focus on the challenges we face in the modern day. Regardless, with or without an assembly, the Lab community should work together to address discrimination, as pointed out by BSA last year.

Hearings center ideology rather than antisemitism

by ZARA SIDDIQUE

Digital illustration by Noah Babai

These women aren’t politicians or activists but academics and administrators whose job is to educate, not to participate in dishonest spectacles.

In 2019, the National Institutes of Health published an article on the importance of face-to-face interaction with friends and family. Now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are unable to see their loved ones in person. However, technology has allowed us to stay connected with those we care about despite the physical distance between us.

While social media platforms and instant video services can provide a sense of connection, they also pose a threat to maintaining healthy amounts of social activity in teenagers’ lives. Talking, FaceTime and watching social media videos aren’t substitutes for social interaction. The reality is that no matter how engaging and de-stressing they may seem, one is still isolated when using them.

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ENROLL FOR 2024-25

MEDIA LITERACY & ANALYSIS
**As attention spans decrease, so does reading popularity**

by CHLOÉ ALEXANDER

Chapters of a history text book, scientific articles, chapters of a novel and scripts in different languages, these reading forms and their variations are things U-High students read daily. Teenagers are reading nowadays, they’re just not reading for pleasure.

This isn’t a new phenomenon, the percentage of teenagers who only read for school purposes has gone down from 9% in 1984 to 27% in 2014. According to a 2017 study, only 17% of 13 to 17-year-olds read for fun at least once a week.

The main question running through the minds of these researches is why aren’t teenagers reading at the same rates they used to?

High school librarian Susan Augustine said in her years here, she has seen a definite decrease in students reading for pleasure, but she has also seen this trend among adults who have come back to reading.

“The thought was not to worry too much if people at this age group are not excited about reading for pleasure because it’s a temporary pause,” Ms. Augustine said. “But I’m not so sure about that now because I know a lot of adults who tell me that they’re no longer able to sit down and read fiction books or they don’t have the concentration, they don’t have the ability to focus for that long — and they blame it all on the Internet.”

Shorter attention spans, which some say are due to social media, have caused a decrease in reading for pleasure.

Sophomore Louis Letinsky says he doesn’t read much because there are more interesting as watching things and because it takes more work.

“I just don’t like that,” Louis said. “It’s easier to pay attention to something you’re going to give much attention to watching things because it’s kinda just there. I don’t have to do any work.”

Similarly, junior Alex Giles says she doesn’t read for pleasure because it’s kinda just there. I do think that reading has helped my mental health to some extent.”

“Zarak said. “I go to search for a little distraction. If you’re used to bouncing around from thing to thing and not getting too deep into anything, it’s uncomfortable to sit still. I’m not going to be sitting around, I’m going to be doing something else.”

**Dwindling attention spans.** In the Pritzker Traubert Family Library, sophomore Zander Feigenbaum reads on a beanbag. Pleasure reading has become increasingly unpopular, especially among younger generations. Simultaneously, the daily social media usage average is six hours a day.

**If you’re used to being bounced around from thing to thing and not getting too deep into anything, it’s uncomfortable to sit still.**

Susan Augustine, U-High Librarian

As attention spans decrease, so does reading popularity

**Not just a knock-off:** Once stigmatized, ‘dupes’ have risen in popularity among teens due to retained quality and low price

by NADIA BENTON

Reporter

Estelle Levinson sits at her polished white desk and reaches to grab a shiny tube. As she unwraps the cap, an Iniquous Barbie-pink liquid drops from the applicator. Estelle brushes the gloss over her lips. She walks out of her house to head to school with a sense of satisfaction in knowing that she has the $40 Dior lip oil and the cheaper, attracting shoppers with their easy accessibility and variety. Mihika Prakash, who has two cheaper dupes of the Dior lip oil: NYX Fat Drip lip gloss and Elf Glow Reviver lip oil. Mihika said she finds cheaper dupes provide great value and quality for much cheaper, attracting shoppers with their easy accessibility and variety.

**Honesty I think the Elf is better quality, because the Elf one is so much cheaper it makes it feel worth it.**

Estelle Levinson, sophomore

**SOUJEE BARGAINS.** Dupes provide great value and quality for much cheaper, attracting shoppers with their easy accessibility and variety.

Sophomore Sam Oyler has multiple pairs of off-brand shoes, a notable pair being the fake Yeezy Slides. Sam says he is not embarrassed that his shoes are not brand names and feels proud wearing them through the halls.

“It’s a lot cheaper, so it’s a lot easier to get more shoes,” Sam said.

Senior Cassia Collins believes that this shift has had a net positive impact on our culture. While the trend of buying dupes does “reflect a consumeristic culture,” said Cassia, “It makes luxury more accessible to everyone.”

Quality is another major factor when considering dupes, according to students. Brands like Champion have the ability to raise their prices because of their familiar and desirable brand logo, Cassia said. When people detach from these notable brands, they can begin to search for a sharper quality-price ratio, in clothes and makeup.

“People value quality over just brand names,” Cassia said.

Sam puts his Yeezy slide dupes on before walking out of his house on his way to school. Sam walks with a pep in his step, feeling good because he saved money on his shoe purchase, and still feels stylish and comfortable.

From makeup to shoes, students feel confident in their less expensive and off-brand versions of products.
Troves of trinkets and treasure

Student collectors develop variety of sources for passion

by EDWARD PARK

Every morning, senior Siddharth Earle paces back and forth in his room while scrolling through videos on TikTok. He's getting ready to share his collection with his viewers.

"Collection isn't really the point of what I do," Earle said. "At some point, probably relatively soon, I'm going to get rid of most of it, and I'm not going to be very upset, because for me it's more about the process and search of finding ones I like over looking at the ones on a shelf."

His collection originates from his middle school passion in Marvel movies.

"I started collecting them for Marvel and I had 10 or 15, which is no more than like someone else might have," Siddharth said.

As he grew interested in anime, his collection expanded, making his interests in Funko Pops grow.

"In terms of anime, there's a lot of really expensive figures, but again, I didn't really want to buy them. I just started expanding my Funko Pop collection," he said. "At some point, I started looking more into how the Funko Pop system works and how they're made and how easy it is to get and more really online."

Since then, I just sort of fallen into the Funko Pop rabbit hole."

How easy it is to get and more раз the Funko Pop collection.

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it’s all about the areas

Within a school environment, students regularly face challenging ethical questions. Without much formal guidance on how to orient their moral compass in and out of academics, students find different hidden definitions and right of wrong, students.

Any time we see ourselves thinking about an activity—whether rules or guidelines are set, that’s a formative experience where we begin to learn how not to harm another. How to think about the activity, and do it in a conducive environment where students feel safe and are guided.

Teens learn ethics from many places

By MIA LIPSON

Throughout their high school years, students are surrounded by a plethora of educational contexts: their social lives, extracurricular activities, and club advertisements, to the books delved into within Gordon Parks Arts Hall, to affinity group discussions and activities. Surrounded by symbols of values—from the murals and art displays in the library, to even the messages on television and in club advertisements, to the books delved into within Gordon Parks Arts Hall, to affinity group discussions and activities.

As early as elementary school, students are taught about the importance of ethics and ethical decision-making. They learn about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. But as they progress through school, the concept of ethics becomes more complex. Students are exposed to different ethical philosophies and concepts, and they are challenged to apply them to real-life situations.

For many students, this exploration and evolution of personal values and ethical foundation begins in high school. According to Ms. Choi, early exploration and evolution of personal values and ethical foundation begins in high school.

“Ethics Bowl forces you to think about the level of ethical dilemmas in real life and be able to think about how to handle them. It’s a pretty good way to get students thinking about real life situations. They have to think about what’s right and what’s wrong, and they have to think about how they would handle those situations if they were in them.”

Ms. Choi said that the Ethics Bowl is a great way for students to think about real-life ethical dilemmas and be able to handle them. It’s a great way to get students thinking about real-life ethical dilemmas and be able to handle them.

Ms. Choi also emphasized the importance of ethics and ethical decision-making in the modern world. She said that it’s crucial for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She believes that this exploration and evolution of personal values and ethical foundation begins in high school.

“I think it’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s crucial for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. It’s really important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing.

In her role as a teacher, Ms. Choi said that she tries to help students think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She believes that it’s important for students to think about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She wants students to be able to think critically about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She wants students to be able to think critically about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She wants students to be able to think critically about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She wants students to be able to think critically about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She wants students to be able to think critically about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing. She wants students to be able to think critically about the consequences of their actions and the idea of doing the right thing.

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**Resolutions that stick**

by HALEY MAHARRY

Experts say New Year’s plans must be gradual

January sees one of the biggest rises in gym membership each year. The reason is clear: gym, workout, and fitness posts are go-to New Year’s resolutions for many, each year. And yet, after a few days, weeks or months, people find themselves less motivated to continue their yearly goals. The key to building and maintaining resolutions is designing a doable, rewarding goal that is personalized to you that you can build upon as the year progresses.

Liz Smith, a yoga teacher and studio owner, recommends working up to a more complicated resolution in order to build your confidence and prolong your resolution.

“Start small. Instead of setting a goal to work out every day, plan to do so once a week in January and February. Then up it to twice a week if it feels manageable in March,” she said. “You can keep building toward a final goal incrementally while ensuring that you feel successful. This provides time to build confidence, establish sustainable habits, and sets you up for success.”

Similarly to Ms. Smith, Kris Lohue thinks that working up to larger fitness goals is the key to maintaining a resolution. Ms. Lohue is a personal trainer who recommends making very achievable resolutions that can be easily accomplished in a day.

“Don’t set the expectation too high,” she said. “Make a list of things you want to work on. Make sure you do them three times a week, then work your way up to more.”

Hannah McCarrell, U-High’s PFAS, cancer-prone chemicals, are in many of resources, much of the public is highly unaware of the dangers and consequences that come with exposure to these chemicals, PFAS are in all nonstick, waterproof and stain-resistant products; drink filtered water and spread awareness. However, this is only a small fraction of what is needed to come to the individual to get 1% better every day, so next year I can hopefully improve myself—Mia Deliu, ninth grader.

**SLOW BUT STEADY.** Healthy-related plans are some of most common New Year’s resolutions. To maintain them, experts say that the key is to gradually integrate healthy habits into your routine, great, but make sure it pertains to you, and the specific things that you need. Ms. McCrall doesn’t recommend dieting, and she suggests focusing on what you can do instead of limiting yourself. “Sometimes people restrict themselves when it comes to New Year’s resolutions, like ‘I can’t do this, I can’t do that,’ and it’s great sometimes, but only in a balanced case,” she said.

She believes that it is more important to be healthy and balanced than it is to simply cut things out of your diet.

Along with physical health, mental health is equally important to keep a long-term resolution. Ms. Cho, a U-High counselor, believes that allowing yourself to fail is the most important part of upholding a resolution. “If you do slip back into older habits that you were trying to change, just have grace for yourself, and know that habits are really difficult to change, but it’s not impossible,” she said.

Ms. Cho also recommends avoiding setting cut-outs on a resolution journey alone and suggests instead to find someone who can help you on track, even just by checking in or so often. “I think having an accountability system is really beneficial,” she said. “Let someone know what changes you hope to make. If you can have an accountability partner to make those changes alongside you or to, once a week, check in with you to ask about your progress, that can be really helpful”.

**It’s very hard, since they’re everywhere, for the individual to limit their exposure.**

Dr. Linda Birnbaum, former director of the NIEHS

“PFAS, they’re manmade, they’re not natural,” Dr. Luo said in an interview with the Midway. “PFAS entered human society less than 100 years ago, so many things are not known — especially the health effects that result from exposure to PFAS.”

Cancers, endocrine system disruptions, neurodevelopmental disorders (autism, ADHD), fertility issues, kidney and liver diseases, and immune and thyroid function disruptions are just a few of the many health effects that have been proven to occur after exposure to PFAS.

Linda Birnbaum, former director of the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, recognizes how concerning PFAS are to society as a whole.

“How can’t you prove on an individual basis, it’s a public health issue?” Dr. Birnbaum said in an interview with the Midway. “You have to look at populations of people. And what you see is increased risk for populations.”

While the Environmental Protection Agency and Food and Drug Administration have some safety regulations on PFAS and are working to implement more, Dr. Birnbaum understands how difficult it is to limit chemicals as widespread as PFAS.

“We have the best policies, the best regulations, the best laws that money can buy,” Dr. Birnbaum said, “I think it just takes a very long time for anything to go into place.”

While government action is one step toward improvement, the public must also be aware of the issue.

“I see articles from The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal — all these newspapers have reported PFAs,” Dr. Luo said. “That’s a good sign. We see some efforts to inform the public about PFAs and PFAS exposure, but this may not be enough.”

To help minimize their risk of exposure, individuals can stop using nonstick, waterproof and stain-resistant products; drink filtered water and spread awareness. However, this is only a small fraction of what is needed to completely restrict exposure.

“It’s very hard, since they’re everywhere, for the individual to limit their exposure,” Dr. Birnbaum said, “We really need policy changes for that to happen.”

**Constant danger: ‘Forever chemicals’ pose grave harm**

by JAYA ALENGHAT

Pet, pans, clothing, tablecloth, packaging, wrappers, toiletries, makeup, cell phones, medicines — the list of chemicals and dangerous products goes on and on.

From the nonstick pans we use to cook our food, to the stainless-steel clothing we wear every day, almost every human-made product contains “forever chemicals” — chemicals that will reside in our bodies forever. They are more efficiently known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

Despite the extreme abundance of PFAS in everyday products and resources, much of the public is highly unaware of the dangers and consequences that come with exposure to these chemicals, PFAS are in all nonstick, waterproof and stain-resistant products, and they can contaminate other substances people consume — like drinking water. PFAS enter our bodies when we breathe, eat, drink or touch them.

Once created, and in our bodies, PFAS are extremely difficult to break down because they have a linked chain of carbon and fluorine atoms. These bonds are very strong and do not degrade, ultimately earning PFAS the nick-name “forever chemicals.”

Jiajun Luo, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Chicago, has done research on PFAS and the health effects that result from exposure to PFAS. “PFAS, they’re manmade, they’re not natural,” Dr. Luo said in an interview with the Midway. “PFAS entered human society less than 100 years ago, so many things are not known — especially the health effects that result from exposure to PFAS.”

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**What is your new years resolution? Why did you choose it?**

“My New Year’s resolution is to sleep more because I’ve been working hard, and I deserve it.” — Adam Cheema, senior

“My New Year’s Resolution was to procrastinate my homework, because this has been a pattern in my life and it causes so much stress, so I’m really just trying to fix that bad habit.” — Brianne Chang, junior

“My New Year’s was to play more video games to get better, because right now I need to improve exponentially — because I’m way behind.” — Sam Piccola, ninth grader

“My New Year’s resolution is to check my email more and read less. While I miss a lot of assignments from teachers and emails, it’s good to limit my email more.” — Lucy Shirell, ninth grader

“My New Year’s resolution was to get 1% better every day, so next year I can hopefully improve myself—Mia Deliu, ninth grader.

**VOX POP.**

What is your new years resolution? Why did you choose that?

— Mikey Skolarus, ninth grader

— Sam Piccola, ninth grader

— Brianna Chang, junior

— Rumi Johnson, junior

— Aria Choi, a U-High counselor

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**Midway photo by Delaney Connell**
Unique market glows with culture

New Gangnam Market provides a flashy experience

by LIGHT DOHRN

As soon as K-pop music flows through the aisles and illu- 
minated signs "Coldpress bar," "produce," "seafood," "dairy," "spicy siu mai," Lena said, grinning. "I started working here just last Tuesday," Leslie said. "It’s my first time working at a grocery store, so it’s been interesting. We get different clients every time, and I love to see, like, what they take and what they would buy from an Asian store."

The grocery store is connected to a small food court that offers an array of culinary delights catering to diverse tastes and preferences, with options available for take-out or dining in. Whether you’re in the mood for sushi, pastries or tacos, you can find it in one of the food stalls in the market along with a large and comfortable seating area.

Leslie Melendez, a recently hired cashier at one of the check-out counters, said she enjoys noticing all the different things people buy in the market while she scans their items. She believes it provides her with a glimpse into people’s lifestyles and preferences.

"I started working here just last Tuesday," Leslie said. "It’s my first day, but I’m excited to see how things go in the market."

The Happy Life of the Market

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CREATE MORE THAN JUST A BOOK

Working as a team, use your voice and creative freedom to record history for the high school community. Gain and develop skills in writing, design, publishing, communication and leadership. Make memories people will cherish.

ENROLL FOR 2024-25
BEGINNING YEARBOOK JOURNALISM
Kayin Bradford unlocks comfort in his two passions: basketball and singing

by MILO PLATZ-WALKER

In the bustling halls of U-High, there exists a student whose quiet demeanor conceals his talents found on the basketball court and in the choir stands. Although his quiet manner may suggest otherwise, junior Kayin Bradford has been a member of Bel Canto, earning accolades for his remarkable solos. Beyond the harmonious melody, he contributes to the basketball court, proving to be a strong team player. Juggling these diverse passions, Kayin appreciates the rewarding challenge of finding harmony in both his musical and athletic pursuits.

Kayin found his passion for the game in sixth grade, signing up for choir as a music requirement. As Kayin grew, his passion for singing also continued to grow into a strong presence as a tenor. “I joined choir in sixth grade and never really looked back,” Kayin said. “I decided to sign up for the high school choir as well and then I joined Bel Canto my sophomore year.”

During distance learning for his seventh and eighth grade years, he found that being online made him miss the value and engagement that he found in the choir classroom during in-person school. “I kind of missed around during choir remote learning,” Kayin said. “By the end, I actually really missed the class because my teachers were fun and I found the choir classmates. It made me realize that I really loved singing.”

Kayva Peddinti, a junior and chorister of Kayin’s, said that although he may be quiet at times, Kayin is definitely a leader both on and off stage. “Everyone within Bel Canto are friends, but Kayin is mostly considered the funny one,” Kaavya said.

Kayin Bradford in the halls, by Midway's Reporter

Kayin as a strong presence on the team, always providing teammates with positivity and energy. “I’d say Kayin definitely has a connection with everyone on the team,” Noah said. “He’s super easy to talk to and off the court, always bringing good energy!” Despite his quiet demeanor, Kayin has proven himself a leader on both varsity and JV teams this year.

“Sometimes Kayin can be quiet,” Noah said, “but when he does talk he always has something meaningful to say.” Despite having a passion for both singing and basketball, Kayin finds it challenging to commit to both sports. Between practices and competitions, Kayin has trouble navigating his demanding schedule.

“Already this year I’ve had to miss a couple practices just because of choir performances,” Kayin said. “It’s definitely difficult trying to navigate both, but it’s worth it in the end.”

Although managing both Bel Canto and basketball can be difficult for Kayin, the two have made a harmony within his life that he appreciates. “I had to learn how to manage both choir and basketball,” Kayin said. “It was a challenge but it was also super helpful. They have both created a sort of balance in my life that I really like. I really love both groups, and I have learned a lot over the last couple years on how to find a good balance.”

Katie Sasamoto-Kurisu

**ARTISTIC VISION.** Iranian artist Maryam Taghavi’s latest installation in the ongoing Chicago Works exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art titled “Nothing Is,” pushes boundaries of language and communication.
VISUAL STORYTELLING WITH IMPACT

Go beyond the classroom to experience a different kind of storytelling, where your work is worth thousands of words. Starting at any skill level, collaborate closely with peers on your team to showcase the truth in visuals. Get involved from a different perspective.

ENROLL FOR 2024-25
PHOTOJOURNALISM
Winter wonders

Sledding brings fun in snowy weather

Joyful memories and stronger connections made in the cold

by SAHANA UNNI

Senior Tomasz Witkowski has enjoyed sledding for months Chicago provides. While perhaps not as many activities are at their finger tips as there are in the summer, there are still many opportunities to enjoy themselves despite the freezing temperatures. From outdoors to indoors, here are five activities that students will surely enjoy.

Chicago Restaurant Week

Chicago Restaurant Week began Jan. 19, hosting over 397 restaurants from the Chicagoland area. The 15-day event through Feb. 4 features 41 cuisines from around the world, ranging from Brazilian to Pan-Asian. The week showcases restaurants from 51 neighborhoods, hoping to pull some new restaurants into people’s minds. Meals are $25 for lunch/brunch, and $42 or $59 for dinner.

Sledding

Available whenever there is snow, Chicago has a few hills around the city featuring slopes that reach up to 200 feet, making it a must for those who seek a thrill. One mini-mountain in particular is the Soldier Field Sledding Hill just south of the stadium. The hill sports a panoramic view of the skyline and Lake Michigan as well as easy access with parking lots and bike trails leading to it.

Cold Weather Animals

While Lincoln Park Zoo is open daily, lots of the year is spent indoors for Tafari and Skua, the pair of polar bears. During the frigid winter months, they venture outside rolling in the snow and going for swims feeling their natural habitat. But not everyone enjoys the frigid temperatures Chicago offers, so take advantage of the many indoor facilities such as the bird house offered.

Polar Adventure Day

Have you ever wanted to watch huskies pull a sled through the barren arctic tundra but never got the time to do so? On Feb. 17, go to Big Marsh Park, 15359 S. Stony Island Ave., to watch many activities ranging from watching husky sled teams to guided bird hikes to listening to stories over a warm campfire. It’s free to anyone from noon to 3 p.m.

— Story by Kåble Jushi, photo by Kaden Moubayed

As the ground is filled with layers of snow, the brisk wind leaves a chill in the air, many students are left locked inside unsure of what to do exactly apart from avoiding the seemingly endless winter months Chicago provides. While perhaps not as many activities are at their finger tips as there are in the summer, there are still many opportunities to enjoy themselves despite the freezing temperatures. From outdoors to indoors, here are five activities that students will surely enjoy.

activities to do

McCormick Tribune Ice Rink

Through March 1, Millennium Park hosts the McCormick Tribune Ice Rink weather permitting. The rink is at 1 N. Michigan Ave., and features Park Grill, an American Bistro serving cuisine with Chicago-themed food and breathtaking views. The rink is free of charge (including skate rentals for all ages) as well as skating lessons on the weekends and select CPS winter break days. The rink is open 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily.

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— Story by Kåble Jushi, photo by Kaden Moubayed
I only first year of high school, Bomi Johnson is making his name known as one of the top varsity boys fencing team. For some, it's just an extracurricular to list on applications, but for Bomi, it's a hope for the future.

Bomi grew up in a sport-loving family, with his dad playing soccer and his mom running track during his school careers. He also derived much of his inspiration from his older brother when deciding to join basketball. His brother played on a travel basketball team from elementary school to high school. Bomi remembers tagging along to practice when he was only 3 years old and trying to copy their drills. He's been playing ever since.

"I think basketball is just something that can take you away from all the other things that are going on in the world, and, like, I think that's something that you'll always be able to have fun with," Bomi said.

Bomi played as a double-rostered player on both JV and varsity for the first month of this basketball season, but was moved up to varsity when he showed consistent improvement. Senior Michael Suwaged, varsity co-captain, has recognized Bomi's hard work and expects to see him play throughout high school. "His composure for a ninth grader is something you don't see very often," Michael said. "For someone so young, being able to have the composure of an older person, like he does, and still to be at the varsity level, is wonderful."

Michael said the other team members are a big reason why Bomi is where he is today, and he feels he brings up the team's energy. He thinks Bomi has the potential to do great things both on and off the court.

"I've been playing with Bomi for quite a long time now and his progression has been amazing. His ability to learn and take things in, from not only the coaches but the leaders on the team, has been great," Michael said.

Bomi qualified for the USA Cadet All-American First Team two times and is 69th in the country. His hard work and effort have been highly noticed by his coach.

Head Coach Andre Battle shares Michael's sentiment. He's worked at Lab for around seven years, has spent time coaching Bomi's older brother, and sees Bomi's distinct dedication.

"He wants to be as good as he can be. He's seen him over break running the Midway Plaisance running sprints with his older brother," Coach Battle said. "I think he has great potential. I say, at this age, he has a lot to learn, but he's not afraid of the moment, and I think he'll turn into a fine player."

The boys varsity team meets almost every day after school, with practice running from 5-7 p.m. Not only does he have to balance late practice times with school work, but he also plays for the Chicago-based travel team, Team Rose, which is only with youth basketball players of the same age group.

While Bomi enjoys his time on Team Rose, he is excited to continue playing with his peers at U-High, where the difference in grades has introduced him to new experiences.

"It's amazing to feel the same, as he's known for his personality, specifically his humor. I think Bomi is one of the funniest guys on the team, if not the funniest," Bomi said.

"He brings the team closer together, he's funny — just having fun. There just doesn't seem to be any happier and their effort and energy goes up," Michael said.

Despite his talent and dedication, he stays humble and appreciates the support of his teammates.

"I love seeing how different pieces can come together. I feel like clothes are like a canvas," Bomi said. "I know I'm able to do it if I just keep myself dedicated and put the work in." Bomi said. For now, though, he said he has only one goal.

"This school year? I just want to win something."