

Editors Column



Jonathan Chun
Grade 12
West Ranch High School

Y Nanta Meets America's Got Talent



The Our Kanta team Nanta listens during the meeting while preparing for America's Got Talent. [Source: Author, Jonathan Chun]

I find myself at Disneyland's Lunar New Year Festival, surrounded by red lanterns and majestic pagodas. Sweat rolls down my back as I adjust my prickly Hanbok to prepare for the eager crowd. I take a deep breath and wield my sticks high. With the cry of conviction, I bring my sticks down with a mighty boom, emulating the thunder that once sent shivers down my spine.

Two years later I find myself in the same position, not at Dis-

neyland but rather in Instructor Yoo's reverberant studio. This time around, our team Kanta (K standing for Korea, Nanta for drumming) performs in front of a computer where an America's Got Talent recruiter watches us via Zoom. Over the years our Nanta musical group has taken the stage in many places throughout Southern California, and together we have grown before crowds of hundreds. After a brief intermission from public performance due to Covid, our team is back in action

and this time we set our sights on auditioning for TV.

Leading up to our initial tryout, our coach, Hiza Yoo, reached out to AGT's recruiting department and scheduled a meeting for our team. Ever since arriving in the United States, bringing majestic routines showcasing the history of Hanguk with her, Instructor Yoo has yearned for an opportunity to present traditional Korean musical arts nationwide on the big stage, precisely through a show like America's Got Talent. With the day of the tryout just around the corner, our group held additional rehearsals and discussed how we would present ourselves in front of the producer. We made several adjustments to the usual routine that we performed due to the limited time that would be provided to us, approximately 90 seconds. To accommodate for the shorter time, we devised an updated but more action-packed song that exhibited our abilities to the fullest.

When the big day came, we entered the Zoom breakout room with confidence, but we also couldn't contain the butterflies in our stomachs. As the AGT representative introduced herself to us, we were able to see the variety of other contestants who were also auditioning. When it came to our turn, one by one each member introduced themselves and were asked to give one reason why we chose to play Nanta. Afterwards, we set our drums up and before we knew it, the routine ended in a flash.

"After we advance to the next round," Instructor Yoo told us after our audition, "We plan to perform 'Y Nanta' along with 'Seoul Korea', 'Nanta II' (torch), 'Fan Dance', and 'Samgomo'."

As we await our results, which we expect by the end of February, I can't help but look back at how far our group has come since our initial performance at The Magic Kingdom.

Student Reporter

Why Teenagers Need Music



Sean Kim
Grade 10
Los Alamitos High School

Students wearing earbuds or headphones are common on high school campuses; Apple's AirPods or Beats Fit Pros are familiar sights. Many high-school students enjoy their favorite songs as they walk to class. Why do teenagers value music, and do they listen outside of school?

To answer these questions, I interviewed thirty-two young adults from Los Alamitos High School regarding music usage. Gender was relatively even, and respondents spanned all grade levels. To start, I asked subjects to rank music's importance to them on a one-to-ten scale. The results were consistent, with ninety-one percent of students ranking seven or higher. A fourth of the responses were tens, and a third were eights. I then asked students how they felt during the school year. Reasons such as workload, teachers, or personal situa-



Teenagers improve their day by listening to their favorite playlist. [Source: Author, Sean Kim]

tions can cause students stress. I also wondered if music helped with the issues caused by school. All but one student felt stressed during the school year, and all but two students felt listening to music combated problems with school and elevated their positivity. So far, about ninety percent of students interviewed

greatly valued music and believed it was effective in stress relief. Music help teenagers ease their stress and is very important to them.

To branch to productivity, I focused on when students put on the music rather than why. Eighty-four percent of students listened to music while doing homework, with forty-four percent listening most of the time and an astounding forty percent tuning in every time. Only ten percent never listened, and one unique respondent only chose to for specific subjects. The next question showed eighty-five percent of teenagers interviewed enjoyed homework more while listening to music. Many students expressed their gratitude, claiming their favorite songs helped them stay awake and block out distractions. Respondents answered two more questions to solidify a conclusion: do students

feel they were more productive with music and why or why not? The numbers were lower, but a majority of respondents, sixty-nine percent, claimed more work got done while listening. The subsequent answers were more personal, but most believed they would be sluggish without their favorite playlist or station. A clear majority felt more productive relying on chosen melodies. Music while working has become a crucial factor in productivity for many adolescents.

Teenagers depend on music to get them through the day. High school students turn up the volume, solving a math problem with laser focus. Stressed from school life, young adults wear earbuds and headphones, escaping their problems and boosting their mood. Reflect on your own life. Is music important to you?

Student Reporter

Preparations for the First Robotics Competition (FRC)



Jacob Kwon
Grade 10
North Hollywood High School

Eager to tune in to the live stream, my school robotics club settled near the TV at our captain's house. For protection, everyone had taken proper safety precautions, such as a double vaccination requirement, a negative test result, and an indoor mask requirement. The livestream revealed the game details for the FRC competition this year, which involved robots shooting cargo balls into a structure nicknamed the "Hub," as well as climbing rungs laid out in an ascending order. Points are awarded to the robots that shoot their cargo in the upper hub, which fall back out from chutes jutting out of them. Processing this, our team immediately went to work in strategizing game plans to work out the most efficient strategy to constantly score points.

We laid out a couple of whiteboards and began discussing possible methods of successfully

getting a continuous stream of cargo into our robot. Some adult mentors made a visit to watch over our plan along with providing tips from their own experiences in the competition. It was a magical opportunity to see everyone hard at work, scribbling down the specs of this year's arena and drawing specific movements.

Back at school, we started to work on the actual robot, organizing each important mechanism that accomplishes shooting cargo and climbing bars. Then, we brainstormed potential designs for the climb which involved the whole robot swinging like a monkey from the lowest to the highest rung, guaranteeing the most points. Our team went to work in disassembling the various parts from the previous year's robot to add to our new one.

So, what exactly is this First Ro-

botics Competition? Founded by Dean Kamen and Woodie Flowers, the FRC is a rigorous robotics competition for eager STEM high school students. With only a few game rules as guidance, students are expected to construct their own robots every step of the way, from the manufacturing process to the designing of the robot. The motto "gracious professionalism" applies to all members, who are expected to appropriately respect opponent teams and promote an uplifting environment to all participants.

During these processes, I felt extremely satisfied to see the hard work that was put into our robot. Seeing members toil away, from racking their brains trying to figure out the best design for the task, to even sawing big metal pieces, made me feel that we were putting that much of an effort into our own creation. This was my first ro-



Students surveying the FRC arena in VR and working on their robot for the First Robotics Competition.

[Source: North Hollywood High School Robotics Member]

botics competition since I joined at the start of my sophomore year. Through this experience, I was absolutely thrilled to work cooperatively with my school team for countless hours in order to finish our robot for this season.

Student Reporter

The Power of Debate; A Guide



Mary Kim
Grade 10
Troy High School



Debate Team with awards and trophies [Source: Author, MaryKim]

I started Debate at the age of 12. As a naturally talkative person, debate trained me to back up my claims with evidence and speak with confidence. Often required to argue on both sides, I learned to consider multiple perspectives when approaching issues without clear answers. In an increasingly polarized society closed off to opposing arguments, debate has taught me the art of being both confident and humble, firm yet gracious, ready to listen to others' perspectives, and stand up for

what I believe. For any seeking to build confidence, navigate conflict, and gain perspective, debate is a powerful avenue to gain these qualities.

There are multiple formats of debate, ranging from Parliamentary, Lincoln Douglas, and Public Forum. While Parliamentary and Public Forum contain a two-versus-two team, Lincoln Douglas is an individual event with one person on each side. Every debate format has a

'resolution,' or topic/claim, being challenged. The two sides are called 'affirmative' and 'negative,' one supporting the resolution and the other opposing it. Whether you like working with a partner or by yourself, any style of debate can teach valuable lessons of communication and teamwork.

As debaters, for every claim we make, we automatically create counter-arguments and refutations, seeking multiple perspectives of any issue. Instead of dismissing what opponents say, it is crucial to think deeply about any claim they make. It is increasingly common to click away or ignore conflict when we see it, especially on social media. Our attention spans have become incredibly limited, unable to focus on one topic for a long period of time. However, debaters partake in active discussions of various conflicts,

ranging from politics to human rights.

The effects of debate extend beyond tournaments and practice rounds, spreading into everyday conversation. Whether presenting in front of a class or working with classmates on school projects, debate enhances the ability to express opinions, big or small. This activity enables students to take ownership of their beliefs, not being easily swayed by others, but to pick a side and defend it. Inherently, debaters become bolder and more confident, in the way they carry themselves and respond to conflict. There is never an age too young to take ownership of our opinions. From as early as elementary and middle school, young debaters learn to handle conflict maturely and safely. Conflict will always be a part of life, and in a constructive environment, debate teaches how to face and overcome these differences.

Student Reporter

The Salvation Army and How You Can Contribute



Aiden Lee
Grade 9
The Science Academy STEM Magnet

Over 40 million people in the US are in poverty, and over 20 million households are not able to get food on the table. Many people struggle to get basic necessities and are forced to live paycheck to paycheck. COVID-19 has also put many people who are unable to get masks and other sanitary items in danger.

To help combat poverty, the nonprofit organization Salvation Army was founded by William Booth and his wife Catherine. The two wanted to fight for the souls of lost men and women, and convert them to Christianity. Over 250,000 people were converted and found the way of God through the organization. Today, The Salvation Army has made it their mission to spread the message of God and help those in need, and has been spread out through 131 countries. The organization has provided 225 million meals for households in need and has provided more

than 81 million dollars in utility assistance in just 18 months. The organization has many services that can help to change lives, one of which is the Angel Tree Program, where The Salvation Army helps to provide Christmas gifts for hundreds of thousands of children around the country. They also have homeless shelters and provide permanent supportive housing. The organization also has food pantries, after-school programs, and programs to help abused children.



To help combat poverty, the nonprofit organization Salvation Army was founded by William Booth and his wife Catherine. The logo for both in English and Korean [Source: Aiden Lee]

COVID-19 has helped us to realize that we all must be united and work together, and The Salvation Army has helped to make this world become a better place. I have personally been a part of services provided by the organization, such as the Red Kettle Campaign, which has helped to assist millions of people during the holidays. I have also done toy drives and helped to provide toys to kids for Christmas through the Toys for Tots program. I have even done food drives, giving out food

to those in need. Throughout my experience working with the organization, I have come to truly see all the perspectives of life. Seeing the number of people coming in to receive Christmas gifts, for they were not able to afford them, was truly enlightening and has made me realize how truly lucky I am. With the resources that we have, we should share and help those who do not have the access to basic necessities. It was truly heartwarming seeing the kids happy to be able to pick their favorite gifts and families getting food.

You also can do your part in helping people in need by either donating to the Salvation Army via their website or by volunteering for these services. Volunteering with the Salvation Army has been a very heart-warming and enlightening experience and I have learned to value the importance of sharing and helping those who are not in the same position as I am in.

Student Reporter

Should Students Play Sports in High School?



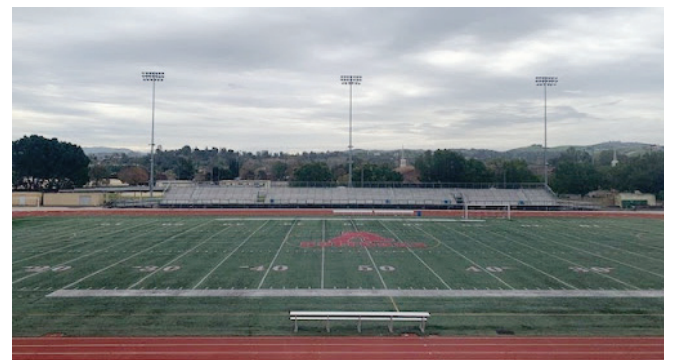
Justin Yoon
Grade 10
Ayala High School

High school is one of the most important periods of life for many people, and your actions as a high schooler can greatly impact the trajectory of your future. However, it is difficult to determine what you should and should not do during these years. One decision is whether or not to play sports.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention's 1991-2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data, about 57% of high school students played sports for their high school. As I conducted my own survey, I found that 70% of athletes chose to play sports to make new friends and gain leadership skills, and contrary to popular belief that students want to continue sports at a higher level, only 28% of athletes reported this. Sports is one of the easiest ways to make new friends, as you share the same interest with your teammates. It is likely that the bonds and friendships you

create on a sports team will carry on past high school, sometimes through the rest of your life.

However, while there are many positives to playing sports in high school, there can also be many downsides. For one, high school sports are very time consuming and do not leave much spare time for athletes to study, participate in other extracurriculars, or rest. An Ayala High school survey found that athletes only got around 5 hours of sleep daily. Studies by the CDC report that high school students should get between 8-10 hours of sleep daily in order to get sufficient rest and stay healthy. Not getting enough sleep can lead to fatigue during the day, a decline in grades, and many other health issues. The amount of sleep is not the only thing that is limited by sports, as student athletes usually have much less time to study and do schoolwork. An Ayala High



Ayala High School Football Field, where student athletes practice and play their games. [Source: Author, Justin Yoon]

School survey found that on average, school sports teams practice 5-6 times a week, around 2 and a half hours each time. This means that if school ends at 3:00 PM, athletes would get home at around 5:30 PM. Due to arriving home so much later than other students, athletes reported that they had only approximately 3 hours to study and do homework, significantly less than other students.

Although sports may be a fun way to bond with others and learn

many life lessons, according to a survey at Ayala High School, 86% of student athletes said that they would not recommend future high school students to play a sport during their secondary school years. Eugene Seong, a student athlete at Ayala High School recommended, "...playing only if you are really passionate about the sport you play, or have great time management skills. Otherwise, sports are going to make your entire high school experience miserable."