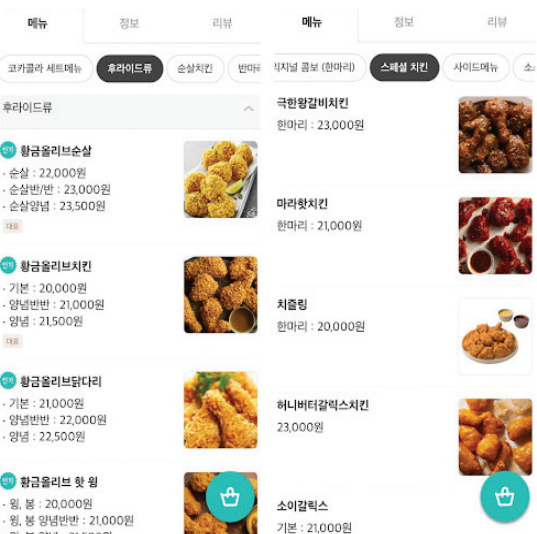


Student Reporter

Food Inflation on the Rise



Jessica Kim  
Grade 11  
Christa McAuliffe Academy of  
School of Arts and Sciences  
High School



Chicken prices from BBQ above 20,000 won  
[Source: Author, Jessica Kim]

Every year in Korea, the prices of various foods go up. From franchise restaurants to small personal eateries, and from supermarkets to mini convenience stores, the rise of food prices is inevitable. However, the unnaturally steep rise in prices this year shocked many citizens.

Starting last year, the three major fried chicken franchises – Kyo-chon, BBQ, and BHC – have raised chicken prices from about 1000

won to 2000 won. This price adjustment was followed by other chicken franchises. Now, it is hard to find a chicken meal below 20000 won. Although chicken has the highest increase rate of 6.6%, other popular menu items such as jjajangmyeon (Black-bean-sauce noodles), tteokbokki (stir-fried rice cake), and ramyeon have also risen by 6.3%, 6.0%, and 5.2% each. Not only have eating-out menus increased in prices, but also the price

of basic food ingredients such as flour, cooking oil, beef, pork, chicken, and fish have leaped. The main factor behind this unusually steep price inflation is the increase of raw material prices.

The first reason for this increase is the Ukraine-Russia war. Russia is a main oil exporter, and they have ceased to export oil to other countries. Less oil in the market has led to increased oil prices, which is directly connected to the increase in all other prices. For example, fried chicken, mentioned above as the food with the highest increase in prices, needs a lot of oil to be produced. Like this example, other foods which use oil in production have increased. Also, Ukraine is a main wheat processor. However, the wheat produced in Ukraine has not been able to leave the country due to the constant war going on. This means a lot less wheat in other countries. Several foods such as ramyeon, jjajangmyeon, and tteokbokki are made using wheat, so in these circumstances, the price increase of these products is obvious.

Another reason for the increase in raw material prices is the constant drought going on in various countries, including South Korea. Even with the recent June rainfall, the government announced that the drought is still a serious problem. This water shortage leads directly to difficulty in growing crops. The drought has influenced other countries' farms as well. Somalia and Kenya have met the severest drought in 40 years, which led to difficulty raising cattle. Many have given up their farms in the Western United States because of the continued drought. Less crop production in other countries makes it difficult for Korea to rely on imports for food.

Food inflation is not a problem unique to Korea or unique to this year. It is impossible to prevent inflation, but it is important to understand the reasons behind it. Tragedies occurring in one country will negatively impact other countries. Hopefully, the current war and famine will be solved so that food prices can be stabilized again.

Editors Column

An Employee, Not a Student



Ashley Kim  
Grade 12  
Larchmont Charter School



As an employee, I place the paper tray cover on top of the tray and lay the dental bib and a basic (pouch) on top of the paper. [Source: Author, Ashley Kim]

When I worked at the dentist as a volunteer, there were tasks that the doctors and managers made the workers do instead of me. Nonetheless, I am now required to do those tasks myself. For example, I used to only work in the back – cleaning instruments, pouching them, sterilizing them, making a basic tray, restocking the instruments after they are sterilized – and

cleaning the rooms. Now, I am being taught and trained to become a dental assistant. An assistant needs to assist the doctor when he is doing a surgical procedure (suctioning the patient's saliva and bringing tools when the doctor asks for them), taking different types of x-rays of the patient's teeth, and more.

There is a big difference between the time I dedicated to working as a student volunteer and as a part-time employee. When I worked as a volunteer, I only worked in the morning once a week. As a part-time employee, I work full-time three days a week.

Last but not least, another difference between working as a student volunteer and a part-time worker is the responsibility of the title you hold. For example, I could be absent on days when I had too much homework or had an important test coming up when I was still a volunteer. However, now I am not allowed not to come to work simply because of my own schedule and things I need to get done.

In addition to learning about the

difference between being a volunteer and an employee, there is also the knowledge I obtained from working at the dentist. I learned the difference between a scissor and a crown remover or an explorer and a scaler, how to suction when assisting the doctor, and how to interact with strangers and not be nervous in front of them. I definitely learned more social skills that are useful when I go out into the real world, which will benefit me in the future.

This summer, I will continue to learn what it is like to be an employer who goes to work every day and not a student who attends school and classes. I might never use the knowledge I learn at the dentist in the future, but I believe this experience will help me grow as a person and become a better worker.

Student Reporter

Notable Films Setting Hollywood's New Standard



Eunseo Yoon  
Grade 12  
Rancho Cucamonga High School



Crowds in line during the Everything Everywhere All at Once Showing [Source: Author, Eunseo Yoon]

The film industry has existed for decades with “Once upon a times”, children singing about “happily ever afters” for weeks, and becoming entranced by stories of the prince slaying the dragon. But the real antagonist is that for decades, our children have not received proper representation in the media they consume. The same tired plots were “revolutionized” by the occasional strong female leads but failed to continue growing past this weak attempt at inclusivity.

However, recent filmmakers who understand this frustration have taken steps towards a change on the big screen. The hit movie Encanto not only became a box office sensation but also hit top charts on Billboard for 6 weeks, breaking records as a Disney production. It is clear this is what the world has been waiting for. With the rise of films attempting to make up for a lost time, it is imperative that the meaning behind these films is not lost on us. Encanto challenges the hero versus

villain trope because the antagonist is not a crooked character with morality issues; the main character fights against strife in her family that's inevitable with generational trauma. Her Abuela in this magical Colombian family becomes so focused on providing the best for her family and not letting her struggles go to waste, that she loses sight of what family really means. This film tackled familial roles and the pressure to meet these expectations, all while accurately introducing Colombian culture.

Following this hit, Pixar redefined what it meant to be a child born in the 21st century in the movie Turning Red. This hit gained considerable amounts of support for its attempt to break the stigma around menstruation and other normal aspects of adolescence. The diversity in this movie also surpassed any previously because of its realistic incorporation rather than forced inclusivity. Turning Red captures the experiences of Asian American

children and how they overcome hardships in the modern age.

But, despite this growing list of representations, Hollywood's latest hidden gem, “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” has its audience in a frenzy, whether it is for putting Marvel's multiverse concept to shame or for capturing the accuracy of a painfully stretched Asian family dynamic. At first glance, this indie sci-fi film doesn't seem to revolutionize beyond a diverse Asian cast. While this is still an accomplishment, given Hollywood's ten-

dency to recycle the same five Asian actors, Everything Everywhere All at Once laughs in the face of bare minimum representation. The plot is based on the dynamic of a Chinese immigrant and her daughter across infinitely many universes, facing the consequences of pushing too hard.

On its own, the film will leave you breathless as chaos and comedy meet on the screen. But paired with the painfully raw experiences shared by many Asian American families, this film delivers emotion never introduced before in theaters.

Editors Column

Bringing the Community Together Through Music



Suhh Yeon Kim  
Grade 12  
Beverly Hills High School



The Jazz Quintet, Maya Goldkorn (piano), Maxi Liker (clarinet), Ethan Stone (trumpet), Brian Chang (alto saxophone), Eli Ramer (euphonium), play the piece "Fly Me to the Moon" arranged by Jerry Nowak. [Source: Author, Suhh Yeon Kim]

This year, the Chamber For Charity group showcased its first performance of the year at the sunny Roxbury Park in Beverly Hills. As a club at the Beverly Hills High School, Chamber for Charity had hosted weekly meetings to prepare for the performance. This finale event was a joint celebration along with Generations, another club at Beverly Hills High School that frequently volunteers at senior centers.

The performance program consisted of 7 pieces, all chosen

and rehearsed by the students at Beverly Hills High School. "The students hand-picked arrangements to play and put together groups of the proper instruments. We rehearsed together during weekly meetings and practiced outside of our rehearsals" recounts Maya Goldkorn, co-president of the organization. Not only did a Jazz Band subgroup form, but there was also a String Quartet as well as a singing duo.

"It was really beautiful to see how the performance brought

seniors and teens in the community together," notes Maya. "We played a lot of oldies, like "Fly Me to the Moon", "Isn't She Lovely", and "Smile", so those were a big hit with the seniors. After nearly two years of COVID isolation, it was wonderful to see students and seniors dancing together to the music we played."

When asked about her final thoughts on the performance, Maya replied: "I think the performance went great! We had a wide variety of musical styles and instruments so it kept things interesting. We also had a great audience with about 30 seniors who were all very engaged." Many seniors joyously participated throughout the performance, engaging with the crowd and dancing in pairs as the students played on.

Although the park allowed a range of participation from the performance onlookers, several

members of Chamber For Charity recounted the new and testing environment the outdoor park provided for its performers. "The music flew everywhere," notes Jasper Carafa-De Ricci, a violinist in the String Quartet. "At one point during the performance, our sheet music had nearly closed on us because of the wind." However, despite these challenges, all of the members agreed that playing at a park had its special benefits. The open setting of the performance allowed people to freely stop by and enjoy the music, while the elders were encouraged to participate in the performances. Playing in a public space was a challenge but it made the performance even better when people from the park stopped by to listen and connect with the music. Ultimately, the Chamber for Charity performance brought together both the Beverly Hills community as well as the seniors through the music that passionate students created.

Student Reporter

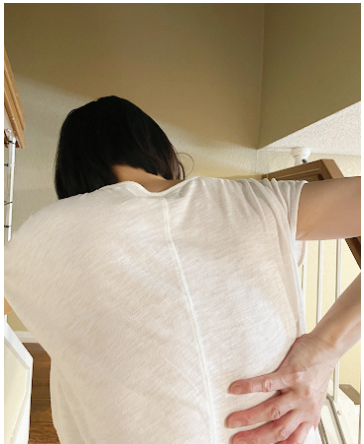
How Long- COVID Can Potentially Become Mass-Disabling



Catherine Han  
Grade 12  
Diamond Bar High School

For more than two years our definition of "normal" has been thrown out the proverbial window. The COVID-19 outbreak took the world by storm and led us to spend more time quarantining and adopting masks as everyday wear. There is a tangible fear in the air as society resumes its course like the pandemic is over: reopening shops, allowing large in-person events, and letting masks to be shed. Part of the fear that we feel is not just the fear of death, but the risk of long-term illness affecting us for a very long period of our life. This virus is a real threat that, frankly, everyone is not taking seriously enough.

According to "Ill, abandoned, unable to access help: Living with long COVID" written by Maria Cohut, various reports have shown cases in which indi-



Long Covid effects include fatigue, shortness of breath, and long-term breathing problems [Source: Author, Catherine Han]

viduals have been experiencing symptoms even after the illness was supposed to subside. Long-COVID, or post-COVID-19 conditions, refer to COVID-19 symptoms that persist beyond the initial phase of a COVID-19 infection. While this phenomenon is still new and currently

being studied by various medical organizations, the World Health Organization has defined common symptoms as fatigue, shortness of breath, cognitive dysfunction, and even psychological effects.

For instance, people like Michelle Bae- a healthy, hard-working mother of three- experienced the long-term consequences. "After confirming there were no more traces of COVID in my body, I began to feel the aftershocks of the disease. I was always exhausted, and my body felt heavy and limp. My limbs ached and my back in particular felt very uncomfortable. But what concerned me the most was having trouble breathing. Doing any physical activity tended to take my breath away far quicker than before I had contracted COVID," said Bae. Determined to avoid

overexertion, Bae carefully paced through her everyday chores and fitness activities. "I tried my best to maintain my level of health by doing yoga routines and running on the treadmill regularly. And I had to take time to consider when to do certain activities throughout the day based on my energy levels."

This proves that regardless of how healthy you may be, contracting long-COVID is a very real and incredibly disabling possibility. The Center for American Progress published a report that 1.2 million more people were disabled than before the pandemic. A vast swath of the American populace is saying, "Well, if we get COVID, it is what it is." We can say that now, but in a year and a half when you suddenly lose the ability to speak or walk because of COVID, what will you do then?

Student Reporter

A Day at the Watermelon Festival



Olivia Shin  
Grade 6  
Granada Hills Charter Middle School

The Watermelon Festival, located in Lakeview Terrace, California, is a great place to be on a hot summer day. The festival comes with a full package of fun games, food, and entertainment. There are vendors at every corner selling all types of watermelon-themed food, as well as toys, clothing, and other local items, such as handmade candles and jewelry. There are tables with people carving watermelons and live bands playing music.

My experience at the watermelon festival was very exciting. They handed out fresh watermelon slices the near entrance that were very refreshing, especially on a hot summer day. The food vendors had watermelon juice and even deep-fried watermelon. They also had watermelon popsicles and other refreshing drinks. Not all foods were watermelon-themed though., They also sold brisket, funnel cake, and ice cream.

Next to all the food stands there were live bands playing music. They had several bands playing different genres of music, such as 50's swing, Latin rock, and 80's new wave, which added to the festivity of the event. There was a large seated area for the audience to cool down from the hot weather and enjoy the music. They also had music events for the kids such as 'Rapunzel Sing Along Story Time,' where the youth could enjoy listening and singing along.

Behind the band was a hall of vendors selling a variety of goods. From crazy socks to beaded bracelets, people were selling various sorts of things. For example, there was a stand full of bows and another with kids' toys. There were also fancy candles, hats, and other clothing items. They also had stands for kids to do arts and crafts.

The festival also offers an exhibit of invented cars, which are



Local watermelon carving artists creating exciting artwork out of watermelons at the Watermelon Festival in Lakeview Terrace, California. [Source: Author, Olivia Shin]

custom designed and made by a group called Cacho Customs and Partners. Many of the cars from the exhibit had very unique designs and shapes. Carnival rides, such as the Ferris wheel, roller coasters, swings, and the Viking were also at the festival to add to the all-inclusive fun day activities.

Overall the day at the watermelon festival was very enjoyable. It had activities and events that could be enjoyed by people of all ages. It's a great place to spend time with your family and friends. Not only are you spending the day with laughter and having fun, but you are also enjoying a slice of watermelon to go with it.