

Student Reporter

Surviving High School 101



Alexis Choi
Grade 10
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Don't miss out on school-wide events! Experiences like these can make high school life more interesting.
[Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

For most students, the arrival of August indicates that the countdown to the first day of school has officially begun. For some highly optimistic individuals, these last few weeks are full of excitement and hope for the brand-new school year. For others, the remaining vacation is taken over by dread, worry, and pure disbelief that summer break is already over. But amongst everyone, there is a group that usually has both the highest expectations and biggest worries: the freshmen! This is for good reason, as the transition from middle to high school is enormous. Especially due to spending nearly two years learning in a virtual environment, current rising freshmen can feel as though they are making

an even larger leap. "When I was an incoming freshman, the summer before school was really nerve-racking," said Diane Joung, a current sophomore at CAMS High School. "It was in a good and bad way. A mixture of excitement and worries." For freshmen who are feeling the same nerves, there are some ways to better prepare yourself and fully enjoy the school year once it begins!

The first step is obvious but helpful nonetheless: prepare for classes ahead of time! Aside from the required summer homework, getting a head start on class material will help you immensely later on. Especially as a freshman, the first weeks,

or even months, of school are mostly focused on getting used to the new environment and classes. As things start to pick up and tests and homework start rolling in, it is reassuring—and time-saving—to have a few subjects that you are already familiar with. It can be difficult to study during summer break, but even getting started on the first chapters of your math course or looking through the textbook for your science class can save you from being stressed in the future!

The next tip is to try everything. Not sure whether you're fit for a club? Attend the information meeting! Wondering if you should go to that school event? Try going anyway! Whether it be clubs, extracurriculars, or events, try to dip your toe into everything that interests you. Freshman year, especially during the first semester, is the time for trying out various things and deciding what to hold onto. By being too selective from the start, you can miss out on precious opportunities and end up with regrets once the year goes by. It can also help you meet different people and become more engaged in your school. To be honest, any

excitement for the school year usually fizzles out after the Syllabus Days go by. After that, the only way to keep school-life interesting is to meet new friends, be present in class, and make use of the events that the school offers. Usually, it ends up being a good way to make new memories!

Finally, find good friends. For most people, friends are what makes the monotony and stress of school tolerable. Surrounding yourself with fun people can help you enjoy school more. That being said, it's important to find people who stay out of trouble! Middle school drama was bad enough, and you will also find that you won't have the time or emotional capacity to go through it again in high school.

Overall, just try to enjoy the year. It may not be like the movies, but if you do your best, high school may exceed whatever expectations you have for it. "It's not too bad," South High School sophomore Erika Mori said. "Seriously, don't be scared of high school. You'll be able to ease into the new life more easily than you think!"

Student Reporter

Graceway Church 2022 Monumental Love VBS



Rubie Choi
Grade 11
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Every year, Graceway Church organizes a VBS, Vacation Bible School, over the summer to gather children of all ages to learn about God and make new friends along the way. However, for the past two years, the event was canceled due to the Coronavirus. Finally, this year, Graceway Church was able to have a VBS, with the first theme back from the pandemic being Monumental Love. After years of being a student, I have now become a teacher's assistant, TA, and, therefore, was able to experience the journey of preparing a memorable summer for the students.

One of the main priorities when preparing for the VBS was the decorations. Previously, the ornamentations that filled each of the rooms and the main chapel were donated by other churches that had also conducted the same themed VBS. However, this was not the case this year, so teachers, TAs, and volun-



Students, teachers, and TAs gathered at the main chapel at the beginning of the event. Teachers were given pink shirts and the students were given green.
[Source: Author, Rubie Choi]

teers had to create, draw, and paint the decor. It took several hours to do so, but in the end, the finished results were priceless! This experience allowed me to realize how much effort the staff puts into the event because when I was a student, I was oblivious to the amount of work that was put into these occasions.

The actual event was from July 21-23, 2022. The first two days were

during the nighttime, so the students' arrival time was 6:30 PM, and teachers and TAs had to arrive half an hour earlier. The last day took place in the morning, so the students arrived around 10:30 AM. They were divided into the same age groups. The pre-schoolers occupied the first floor and the elementary students occupied the second floor. Each lesson, activity, and game was altered to fit the different age groups.

The older kids received a more in-depth class about the Bible, while the younger ones learned about God's words with easier vocabulary and illustrations to help them process what they learned.

Out of all the three days, the day I enjoyed most was the last. Since it was the final day of the VBS, there was a carnival in the parking lot. There were games, jumping houses, water balloons, raffles, gifts, popcorn, and boba. Many students enjoyed running around and collecting raffle tickets to buy gifts from the gift shop.

This VBS was one of the most memorable occasions of my summer, as I was able to get hands-on with preparing for the event, meet so many new people, and make more refreshing memories with my friends. I can't wait for next year's VBS and I hope more people come!

Student Reporter

Why Indoor Plants Make You Feel Better



Catherine Han
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Usually, people tend to feel more at peace with themselves when surrounded by natural environments. But ironically, the environments we spend most of our days—workplaces—are devoid of much of their connection to nature. And even worse, we may not be aware of the plethora of health consequences these types of areas could bring. For instance, the harmful blue light released from our digital devices can damage our eyes, resulting in difficulty focusing, headaches, and eye discomfort, among other common side effects. Furthermore, sitting at a desk for hours on end often leads to increased risks of bad posture and mental health issues. At times, it seems that modern-day technology can be interpreted as both a blessing and a curse.

A simple solution would be to spend less time in workplaces and

more in the great outdoors, but in reality, a lot of us have responsibilities to uphold. As a high school student constantly studying and completing assignments, I need to work. So instead, the next best option is to keep an indoor plant. Indoor plants are lovely, in my humble opinion. Aside from the shades of soothing green they offer, indoor plants come with major positive benefits. For example, plants help to reduce stress. A 2010 study by the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia, discovered significant reductions in stress among workers when plants were introduced to their workspace; A 37% fall in reported tension and anxiety, as well as a 38% reduction in fatigue. Clearly, plants can lift people's spirits and therefore promote well-being and productivity.

Personally, I keep several indoor plants in my workspace. What be-

gan as an unassuming trip to Home Depot resulted in bringing back home a lucky bamboo, a potted snake plant, and a trio of dwarf succulents. Positioned on a table adjacent to my workplace, I found myself habitually looking back at my plants. Gazing at them helped calm me down and allowed me to take a few deep breaths before turning back to my work. My plants were a comforting presence, especially when I had to study through the night and my mind was a scrambled mess. In addition, taking care of the plants instilled a sense of purpose and responsibility within me. Watching my snake plant shoot up inch by inch was rewarding, and only fueled my love for plants even further.

I believe that taking care of indoor plants is a worthwhile hobby to take on. Plants are wonderfully fascinating and diverse, all the while lower-



Taking care of plants can instill people with a sense of responsibility and purpose, increasing productivity and positively influencing work ethic.
[Source: Author, Catherine Han]

ing stress levels and even purifying the air we breathe, and plants can be a meaningful reminder that we're still connected to the bigger scheme of nature as we go about our busy, everyday lives.

Student Reporter

It’s Time to Explore!



Aspen Lee
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Middle School



The Statue de Forme Humaine in the Louvre is a stunning piece many travelers go to see while visiting Paris. [Source: Author, Aspen Lee]

Can everyone now break out of their shells and see the wonders of the world now? After almost two and a half years of staying at home, people are finally beginning to travel again, to new destinations and old favorites. The number one on many families’ lists includes the wondrous Paris,

France. First comes the mention of vacation months before the actual trip, then carefully planning it to be the perfect vacation ever. That’s everyone’s dream and expectation, right? But in reality, the long-awaited Europe trips tend to end up with last-minute booking and touring. What is the first place tourists think of when they arrive? The Eiffel Tower, of course! Do they think the lines to view the city from the top are incredibly long? Not until they physically see the ant-like people waiting in circles around the gates of the tower.

Besides the fan-favorite tower, museums like the Louvre, Musee d’Orsay, and the Palace of Versailles are always packed with tourists and groups. In the Louvre, ancient hieroglyphic print was written on walls and stone, accompanied by statues and beautiful paintings. Some of the most

fascinating statues in the Louvre included an ancient animal statue that was brought from Egypt to France and was made with five legs to create an illusion that from any angle, the viewer would see four legs. Unfortunately, the creators failed, and from the right/left sides of the figure, all five legs are seen clearly. Another fascinating statue in the Louvre is the Statue de forme humaine. It is estimated to be created in approximately 7000 BC, recording as the oldest discovered statue in the Louvre. Made as a form of photography of children, parents crafted statues to look like their sons and daughters in a creative form.

Well-known paintings, such as the Mona Lisa, the Coronation of Napoleon, and the Wedding at Cana, are viewed carefully, with tourists loving to take photos to commemorate the moment. While

some Leonardo Da Vinci paintings are just walked past, certain tour guides take the time to tell the students/families about the hidden meanings in his paintings. Saint John the Baptist is an oil painting done by Da Vinci. At first glance, it’s just a normal portrait, but when looked at carefully, there is a cross in the background, hidden by the artist for a deeper purpose.

Besides the museums, tours, and cruises, my personal favorite part of our new adventure was the food in Paris, specifically the croissants and macarons. The soft, baked croissants, different from any you can find in America as do the delicate, flavorful macarons in cute packaging from the famous La Duree shops.

Everything was such an incredible experience, and I can’t wait to go again in the future!

Student Reporter

Save the Polar Bears!



Angel Song
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Many places on Earth have been experiencing extreme weather over the past few years. Take a look at Hawaii, where the peaceful island recently made headlines for tall, giant waves that crashed ashore and were surprisingly big enough to cover a two-story house. Then, take a look at England, where people are suffering from heat waves. This may seem like nothing to those living in California, especially Southern California, as the hot weather is normalized. However, most English citizens, who never needed air conditioning before, now do.

These strange occurrences are all related to global warming. It seemed like global warming was not an issue for most of us in California because we weren’t immediately affected. However, the aftermath of the greenhouse gasses that we have been emitting for the past few decades shows that even though there aren’t any signif-



It’s a bit cloudy, but it’s also warmer than years before, caused by climate change. [Source: Author, Angel Song]

icant climate issues affecting California right now, other parts of the U.S. are. This brings us to the conclusion that California may be the next to be affected by global warming.

So far, sources show that California has been experiencing climate change. According to the Environmental Protection Agency the overall temperature rose three degrees over the last century. As a result, heat waves are becoming more common, snow is melting quicker in the spring, and

rain is becoming more scarce in Southern California.

But all of these things have been over the last century, right? So you would think it wouldn’t affect us now. However, that’s not the case. Experts predict that by 2050, eight to ten billion dollars worth of property will be underwater, and by 2100, two-thirds of Southern California beaches will see the same fate. This would result from the rising sea levels as the global temperature rises and icebergs melt.

Not only are there problems regarding property damage, but there are also problems of animals going extinct. For example, polar bears rely on the ice to catch prey; however, if the ice is gone, polar bears and other animals that reside on the ice will lose a home and a reliable food source. Climate change isn’t just a concern for humans.

Are there any feasible solutions for this giant problem looming over the world? Well, there is one idea to consider. As the greenhouse gasses destroy the ozone layer that protects Earth from some of the sunlight, the heat gets worse. Some have suggested building a giant umbrella shielding the Earth from sunlight to slow global warming and bring down temperatures to fix this problem. We don’t know if it would work, but if it did, we would have the opportunity to try and restore the Earth as much as possible.

Student Reporter

Luau; A Great Way to Learn and Enjoy Hawaiian Culture



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There are many different ways to be entertained while you are on your vacation. Some like to go watch shows, eat nice food, or spend time with loved ones. However, there is a place where you can do all these things at once. A luau is a Hawaiian feast with lively music and performances about Hawaii and greater Polynesia. It’s a place to have fun with your friends and family while learning about the culture and traditional food in Hawaii.

The food that they serve at luaus is pure traditional Hawaiian cuisine. At the start of the show, they serve poi, which is a Hawaiian dish made from taro, then pounded into a paste. The main meal is Lomi salmon, poke, and kalua pig, which is cooked beforehand in a hole in the ground for about twelve hours. After the food, you can enjoy the entertainment.

Before the show, there are lots

of fun activities, like hula dancing, getting a Polynesian tattoo, and coconuts-headband weaving. During the show, performers demonstrate how people climbed up trees to get coconuts; in Hawaii, climbing up coconut trees is a competitive sport. Another exciting interactive activity at luaus is learning how to throw a spear. There are also stations to take ukulele lessons, where you can learn a couple of chords and notes of traditional hula songs. Lei making is another fun activity to do at luaus. Traditional luaus welcome guests with fresh flower lei, which represent the symbol of friendship and aloha.

Each island has its own unique dance that is performed on stage. There is also a special dance called fire knife dancing, in which performers spin flaming machetes. The luau dance performances are about the four islands: Samoa, Tahiti, New Zealand, and Hawaii.



Luau Dinner Show at Hale Koa Hotel in Waikiki Oahu, Hawaii [Source: Author, Olivia Shin]

Each of the islands are represented by dancers that tell about that island. Samoa is the Polynesian homeland and the center of Polynesian lifestyle, music, dance, and visual art. Tahiti is the most well-known island and also the largest island in French Polynesian. New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. And lastly, Hawaii is known for its volcanoes, culture, and rich cuisine. The dancers dress in each island’s traditional costumes and dance to their own music.

Luaus can be easily found in Hawaii, but some places require a reservation. The prices and locations vary, but they all have traditional meals and cultural performances. All contain many activities and tons of fun for people of all ages. Luaus are a great way to spend a night with food, a show, and friends and family, while learning about Hawaiian culture. You can enjoy your time while not having to worry about food or entertainment.