

Student Reporter

Summer Church Activities



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The skit team performing during sermons at the Cornerstone Church vacation bible school [Source: Cornerstone Church]

VBS, or vacation bible school, is a summer event where children in grades pre-K through 6th from any church background can learn about the Christian religion through fun activities and engaging services. For my church, Cornerstone, VBS was held during three interactive days of spiritual bonding, from July 28th to July 30th. It was much more difficult to recruit than the last time I was a VBS camp counselor, especially because of the omicron resurgence of COVID. But it was truly a blessing to see as many kids as we did for our first time back in person since the begin-

ning of social distancing. Campers spent most of their time in student classes, small groups where leaders guided their students according to grade. The students spend a great amount of time bonding with their small group teachers as well as their peers, as they engage in relationship-building and fellowship activities throughout the day.

One of the more exciting aspects of VBS was the games we played in order to teach the importance of building a relationship with God. Whether set indoors or outdoors, games

like sponge pass, sitting volleyball, or water balloon darts were ultimately formulated to serve the same purpose: teaching children to cooperate and trust in each other while having faith in God. These were some of the more engaging ways for students to become motivated and continue looking forward to VBS. Another big part of the VBS experience was arts and crafts. Here, kids tapped into their creative sides to express their spiritual connection with God through crafting journals, making lockets and bracelets, and constructing interactive toys featuring Bible verses. This activity is especially appealing to kids interested in the arts, and the crafts serve as extremely helpful reminders of why they want to continue coming back to VBS.

Perhaps the most significant contribution that VBS can make in a child's life are the worship services. This is when children get to listen to the pastor speak about the importance of our relationship with

God. These sermons also feature a skit where a group of people acts out a funny story that teaches the children lessons about the significant role church should play in our lives. The funny characters keep the kids entertained and attentive while inspiring them to continually look for God's treasures in life and spread the knowledge to others. Here, they can truly realize their relationship with God and decide how big of a role they want the church to play in their lives. This is the most emotional part of VBS, as all the parents, teachers, and volunteers come out to pray for the children. At the end of camp, the kids were treated to a great carnival that is complete with face painting, delicious refreshments, and prizes for all ages! Overall, VBS is an amazing experience for anyone. Sharing spiritual knowledge together in person was a relief after all this time, a touching opportunity to become involved in a younger person's spiritual development.

Student Reporter

Tooting My Flute



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I was first introduced to the flute in fourth grade. I was in band at my elementary school when I was given the chance to play either flute, clarinet, trumpet, tuba, trombone, or saxophone. Out of all the choices I was given I chose the flute purely out of convenience because, unlike the other wind instruments, the flute was the tiniest and easiest to bag. It was also similar to and in the same key as the piano, which is what I played at the time. Never would my fourth-grade self believe that I would grow to have a passion for the flute.

Skipping to today, I continue to grow as a musician by looking for opportunities where I can play and learn more about the flute. One of these chances this summer was the Northern California Flute Camp, or NCFC, which is located in Carmel Valley, California. A particular thing that drew me to NCFC was that everyone was a flutist. I had experiences with performing in duets, quartets, trios, band, and orchestra, but never in an environment where all 39 students mainly played the flute. Another reason was the faculty. Fellow



My friends and I performed our chamber music on the last day of the Northern California Flute Camp. [Source: Author, Annette Je]

flutist Isabelle Ly described the camp as "an oasis for flutists because the entire staff is accomplished world-class flutists that we get to use at our disposal." Another plus of the camp was how every summer a new guest artist would join to teach, and this year was Linda Chesis, Professor of Flute at the Manhattan School of Music. As someone who studied with renowned flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, won the Paris Conservatories coveted Premier Prix de Flute and is someone who often appears on Youtube, I was very excited to learn from her.

NCFC took place over 9 days, from Friday, July 15 to Saturday, July 23, with the first day starting with an

audition. The audition consisted of a sight-reading test and one-piece players would have to perform. This hearing determined which of the four groups a performer would be placed in: Barrere, Taffanel, Moyse, and Kincaid, who were all acclaimed flutists that had contributed greatly to the flute repertoire. Seminars, masterclasses, practices with the piano, electives, flute choirs, and chamber music time were all decided on which group the flutist was placed in. I was placed in the Moyse group and thus had my masterclass on Thursday, where I performed Fantasie by Gabriel Faure. The Fantasie was commissioned by Paul Taffanel in 1898 for a flute competition held by the

Conservatoire de Paris. Because this piece was created for a competition, the piece challenges its examinee on expression, rhythm, tone control, phrasing, breathing, and virtuosity, making this piece difficult, but a chance to display and master a variety of skills. After the masterclass, another solo playing opportunity was the student recitals that were held every night. This was where students presented whatever other piece they prepared to everyone at the camp. I found it very helpful that after masterclasses and recitals I would receive sheets of paper with feedback from the faculty, thus allowing me to be aware of what I had done well and what I could improve on.

Overall, NCFC was a learning experience on a whole different level because not only was I given feedback and multiple classes to learn about new music, but I also made friends and met teachers who had the same passion as me. Through them was where I really grew as a flutist. I recommend this camp to any musician who has a love for the flute.

Editors Column

What I Got Out of UC COSMOS



Jaemin Kwak
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The summer for a rising Junior is very different from any other summer. You start to study for the SAT in the fall, apply for internships and attend other educational programs as well. To be honest, I never thought this summer would come, but it eventually did. Everything here sounds like hard work and just a pointless task you need to go through to get into a good college later, but after experiencing UC COSMOS myself, I realized that was not true.

When I first applied for UC COSMOS San Diego, I didn't expect to be selected to attend the program at all due to its acceptance rate being very low. I also had little to no prior experience in Machine Learning, which was the topic I studied there for a month. I, myself had no idea that this program would be such an unforgettable experience.

One of the biggest reasons why

COSMOS was such a memorable experience was because of its exceptional education system, including professors and teaching assistants throughout the entire program. As mentioned, I had little to no coding experience and a lack of knowledge of Machine learning. However, the professors provided us with information that was very easy to understand although we were learning very advanced algorithms, and they took all of their efforts to get each and every one of us to understand every concept they had prepared. We were able to learn about certain machine learning algorithms such as Logistic regression, Neural Networks, and Sentimental analysis, which were all completely new concepts to us at first. But with the help of all of the staff there, we were able to end up being masters on these algorithms.

Another reason why COSMOS was such an amazing experience



COSMOS allowed me to learn in such a great environment, and also meet so many great people. [Source: Jaemin kwak]

was due to its community and the new friends I made there. Although it was a hardworking, competitive program at a college, it was still full of activities and trips on weekends. And since everyone had to live with each other for a month, most of our clusters got very close, and even after the program has ended, many of us are still in contact. Most of us were learning, but at the same time creating memorable memories at COSMOS.

Prior to entering COS-

MOS, I had no idea what I would actually do in college except maybe think of going into engineering school. Experiencing COSMOS let me explore a section of science I never thought of looking into and has let me realize what I want to study in college. And adding to that, it let me meet new friends interested in the same topics as me that I still contact today. I recommend for any high school student to try and enter a summer program of any kind to experience the joy I was allowed to have.

