

Student Reporter



Jeremiah Chun

Grade 10
West Ranch High School

Summer Church Activities



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



Annette Je

Grade 11
Redondo Union High School

Tooting My Flute

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, Moyses, 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 Moyses group and thus had my masterclass on Thursday, where I performed Fantasia by Gabriel Faure. The Fantasia 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

Grade 11
Torrey Pines High School

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.

Student Reporter



Lumi Lee
Grade 11
The Buckley School

Looking Towards Sustainability at a Natural Dye Workshop



Two indigo vats sit in front of a hibiscus pot at the natural dye workshop. [Source: Author, Lumi Lee]

Recently I had the opportunity to visit the Textile Dye Garden, located within the Pratt Institute Campus in Brooklyn New York, for a dyeing workshop. The garden houses several different plants, ranging from sunflowers to magnolia, but these plants all have something in common: they can be harvested, dried, and used as a

natural dye.

Our instructor's opening words that day were: "Fashion is bad for the Earth." My peers nodded in assent. Indeed, clothing manufacturing processes toil on the environment. Those processes include textile dyeing, which is the second largest polluter of water globally according to the United Nations Environment Programme. A solution to this problem may be natural dyes, which are non-toxic and easily decompose in nature compared to their synthetic counterparts.

We were given cloth dyed using madder roots and turmeric. Madder, a plant harvested only once every three years, had produced a pink color. Turmeric, a dye that may be more familiar as a food ingredient, had produced a warm yellow. Our task of the day was to cre-

ate a pattern on the cloth by dyeing it again with Japanese Indigo. The pattern-making method we used was a resist technique, like that of tie-dyeing. In tie-dyeing, the resist that prevents the dye from contacting certain parts of the fabric is the rubberbands. In our case, the resist was clayslip.

Amongst the colorful patches of sunflowers, cosmos, dahlias, and many others, our group took seats at a table in the shade, each with a paintbrush. We thinned out the clay slip into the right consistency, and with a paintbrush applied it onto the fabric. Once the clay dried, we opened the Japanese indigo vat. The bucket contained an oily-looking deep blue liquid with bubbly foam floating at the surface. It was essential that when we submerge the fabric in the liquid, we did not stir, because air is detrimental to an indigo vat. Gently

massaging the cloth was enough. Too aggressive, and the clay would wash off. Right out of the vat, the fabrics looked a yellowish green. However, as they sat and oxidized, the color changed to a vibrant indigo blue. Then we washed the clay and excess dye to reveal the pattern. We let it dry, and Voila! Our finished fabrics were dyed pink, yellow, and indigo with various patterns, with some featuring a repetition of architectural shapes, others more organic, floral silhouettes.

Our instructor acknowledged that one natural dye garden cannot change the course of fashion production and consumption. However, she did hope that from this experience, we stay aware of the environmental impact of the current fashion industry, and continually seek to engage in sustainable fashion consumption.

Student Reporter



Soo Young Yoon
Grade 10
Bergen County Academies

My Ongoing Journey to the Cross Country Team

High school students are often encouraged by their schools to participate in a sport. As I am entering my Sophomore year in my high school Bergen County Academies, I decided for the first time to participate in the Cross Country team for the fall semester. Since the season starts in September, I realized I needed to start practicing running longer distances over the summer.

I set up my own resolution to run at least two miles every day. On the first day, running two miles was extremely difficult, and I often had to stop running to catch my breath. I gritted my teeth and felt disappointed as I realized my stamina was below my expectations. I always thought of myself as an athletic person, but I realized that training for Cross



My running watch that I use everyday to keep track of my time when practicing for cross country. [Source: Author, Soo Young Yoon]

Country was not going to be easy. Fortunately, after practicing for two more weeks, running two miles became a much easier task. I could finally run the entire length without stopping at all. This was a

big accomplishment for me, and I felt proud to see myself progressing and improving day by day. Before I knew it, I was able to run further and further distances without feeling like I was dying.

While training my endurance, I also had to focus on my speed. I started timing my runs with my watch to keep track of my time every day. There wasn't much significant progress in my mile times, and on some days, I was slower than I did the day before. Despite this, I kept pushing myself to run faster, and this helped me improve a lot over the course of my practice runs.

Another big motivation that kept me going was my friends. Many of them are great runners and were part of the track team

in their freshmen year. I also found some college students in my church who did cross country in their high school years. With them, I ran three miles every morning at 5 am. As I was running alongside them, I pushed myself to run harder to keep up and not fall behind. My friends from school and church played a huge role in allowing me to grow as a runner.

As the Cross Country season comes closer and closer, I feel excited and enthralled to be part of the team. Practicing not only helped me run faster and longer, but also to be more diligent and persistent. I would encourage any high school student to start a sport because your journey to joining the team will help you grow more as a person.

Student Reporter



Veronica Hankil
Grade 12
Bishop Montgomery High School

Memories from the Red Cross Leader Development Camp

Every year in August, the American Red Cross holds a week-long event known as LDC, or the (Leadership Development Camp). Besides the unfortunate pause due to Covid-19, LDC has been an annual event since 1948. This year, on August 1, 2022, over fifty high school students arrived at a campsite in San Bernardino. Here, they began the exciting journey of gaining lasting memories and learning leadership skills.

Every day, staff members presented a new topic for the delegates to explore. Delegates also participated in presentations, group activities, discussions, and competitions. Delegate Rachel Cadavid recalled that one of the most memorable activities was "the diversity lesson which involved people being extremely vulnerable with one other and sharing some of their deepest struggles in life." She stated, "I've gained so much more empathy for others, which I will carry with me for the rest of my life." Camp Lead-

er Tran also remarked, "I think LDC made me more cognizant of other people's struggles and led me away from judging people without knowing who they actually are."

As a delegate myself, I enjoyed many aspects of this camp. My favorite parts were the activities and lectures. We learned about the different aspects that make up an individual's identity, the kinds of individuals in group projects, and about the American Red Cross and their mission to help others. A particularly memorable moment was when we hiked up a mountain to watch the sun set--despite our sore legs and breathless lungs, my friends and I strived to fully appreciate the beauty of nature as well as the company of one another.

With each activity, delegates and staff bonded more and more with one another, forming intimate relationships. Noting the formations of closer bonds, Tran remarked "I learned how impor-



Delegates reach their hiking destination at sunset, San Bernardino Mountains, California. [Source: Author, Veronica Hankil]

tant community and trust are. The trust that was created in the camp led everyone to form close relationships so quickly, which in return created a really supportive community in a span of a week." In fact, by the end of the camp, while going back home, Rachel Cadavid states how "everyone laughed, cheered, and sang like old friends---really showing our newly formed bonds."

As a fellow delegate this year, I hope others will have the opportunity to experience LDC as I did. It was a fantastic way for me to develop skills in speaking, communication, teamwork, and first-aid. I made friendships with peers from all over the state of California; friendships that I hope to maintain for years to come. If you would like to participate in LDC or learn more about the Red Cross, visit @ldcregion on Instagram!