

Editors Column

Every Fifteen Minutes At Los Alamitos High School



Sean Kim
Grade 11
Los Alamitos High School



Griffins watch with tears as classmates read speeches in front of a casket.
[Source: Author, Sean Kim]

It was a beautiful spring day, and the sun was shining down on the Los Alamitos High School campus. In my first-period classroom, I studied for my Spanish test as I waited for class to start. Surprisingly, the bell rang ahead of schedule. I had just looked from my desk when the speakers said, "Ryan Ramirez and Kenna Dougherty have passed away from a fatal traffic accident. Their car was destroyed by an intoxicated driver speeding ninety miles per hour. They will be missed."

This wasn't the first interrup-

tion. Every fifteen minutes, an announcement declaring the unfortunate deaths of my peers left classes silent and eyes watery. Black tablecloths were draped where my classmates once sat, replaced with framed portraits of their smiling faces. Friends I had talked to daily for the past three years disappeared throughout the day. By the end of school, I was thoroughly grateful for the Every Fifteen Minutes program.

Every Fifteen Minutes is a program that aims to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking and

driving among high school students. The program is designed to simulate the consequences of a fatal car crash caused by a drunk driver, including the impact on the victim's family, friends, and the community as a whole. Through a series of staged events, including a mock crash scene and a memorial service for the "victims," students were shown the devastating effects of drunk driving and were encouraged to make responsible choices behind the wheel. The Every Fifteen Minutes program has been implemented in schools across the United States and has proven to be an effective tool in reducing instances of underage drinking and impaired driving.

Having my friends who I've known since elementary hypothetically pass away throughout the day was incredibly impactful for me. Expecting that announcement to come on every fifteen minutes was saddening and provocative. Despite knowing our

"deceased" classmates would return the next Monday, it was difficult to contain feelings of grief when seeing the desk portraits. I could tell my classmates felt similarly. In my last period, one of my friends even cried in her seat.

Every Fifteen Minutes was significant to many at Los Alamitos High School. Now, these students know more about the effects of drunk driving and are more likely to take precautions. Looking back on the experience, I can say that the Every Fifteen Minutes program was one of the most impactful demonstrations in high school. It opened my eyes to the dangers of drinking and driving and showed me the devastating consequences that can occur. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to participate in the program and for the lessons that I learned. I know that I will carry these with me for the rest of my life and strive to make responsible choices behind the wheel.

Student Reporter

THE ATTIC Teen Center



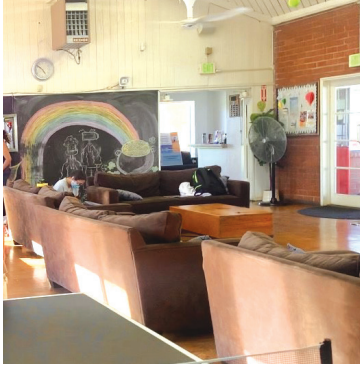
Alexis Choi
Grade 10
South High School

School is stressful. Many teens go through relationships that are often affiliated with drugs, alcohol, and other negative influences that are detrimental to their lives. This can cause students to want to break away from these negative influences and their everyday routines. THE ATTIC Teen Center, located in Torrance, Ca, is a facility for 14-18-year-old students that offers a safe, friendly environment where teens can not only feel protected but also improve themselves. The center is a drop-in program that gives students unique opportunities to participate in special events, classes, activities, fitness, sports, and more.

The center is a large facility with multiple rooms, beginning with the main common room, which has long couches and tables scattered across it. There are three 60-inch flat-screen TVs, and other sources of entertainment, including a full pool table, a foos-

ball table, air hockey, ping-pong, and shelves of board games. This makes THE ATTIC the perfect place for students to rest and hang out with friends after school. THE ATTIC also contains a computer room, fitness room, game room, and a full-service kitchen (ATTIC Café). There is also an open outside area with a basketball court for students to enjoy.

Not only are all facilities open for teens to benefit from, but the center also offers programs and monthly events organized by THE ATTIC Advisory Committee (AAC), a council of high school students that plan and implement activities with adult supervision. The committee hosts various events, from recreational ones, such as the Friendsgiving Event in November and the Holiday Mixer in December, to more educational events, such as the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Awareness Event in



THE ATTIC Teen Center is open to all teens in Torrance, California.
[Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

March and Mental Health Month in May. Through games, crafts, PSAs, team activities, and other hands-on activities, these events encourage new connections and experiences that can help people grow and have fun.

The event hosted last month was the 24th anniversary of April Pancake Breakfast, which took place on April 1 from 7 to 11 A.M. at THE ATTIC. This event was

sponsored by the City of Torrance Community Services Department and run by the AAC and Torrance Youth Council. Hundreds of tickets were sold, and residents of Torrance visited the teen center for a breakfast of unlimited pancakes while enjoying entertainment provided by students from high schools in Torrance. These ranged from students singing, playing the piano, doing stand-up comedy, reading poems, and even school bands coming to perform. As a city-wide event, people were able to explore and learn more about THE ATTIC while also supporting the center and its programs through the funds raised from selling tickets.

THE ATTIC aims to provide a safe place for students to escape stress and boredom, and it encourages high school students to stop by, check it out, and participate in monthly events.

Student Reporter

All You Seed Is a Garden



Sarah Kim
Grade 7
Marlborough School

Gardening may seem like a hassle, almost a chore, but if done correctly, it is not only a great way to reduce stress but will also be a gift. So... why gardening? It sounds like a bunch of weed-picking, back-bending, and dirt-digging, right? It's most certainly not! Gardening has many advantages, including reduced stress levels, increased exercise, more time outside, and a healthier diet.

Having a garden in your yard is a great resource. Growing and eating fresh produce from your home can benefit your diet. It's also great to have many fruits and vegetables at hand anytime they're blooming and in season. In the spring, I can enjoy crunchy lettuce and green onion for salads, while in the summer, I can snack on sweet peaches and loquats. In the fall, I always look forward to eating an apple or a tangerine daily, and in the winter, I can eat juicy pomegranates and avocados, which I always

use for guacamole! And best of all, I always have colorful flowers that decorate my garden perfectly every season.

Tending a garden can increase one's exercise by digging, raking, and other such things. Most gardeners will have to perform a squat or lunge, enabling full-body functioning. This can improve balance, strength, and even flexibility! If back pain is an issue, you can get smaller pots with less soil, raised gardens, or a stool to help you. Who knew gardening could burn calories?

Being outside in nature is great for physical and mental health, as it reduces heart rate and muscle tension. It also helps digestion, improves lung health, increases oxygen levels in the blood, and boosts immune response. In addition, routines from gardening, such as watering, can provide an easier path to reduce stress. Community gardens are also a great



A spring garden is a healthy and productive way to spend your time, and it also gives you great rewards.
[Source: Author, Sarah Kim]

way for social connections to strengthen.

Gardens may be exciting, but if it's your first time, you should start small. You don't want to begin by planting an overwhelming amount of plants. Instead, you should begin slowly, with just a few pots, which will not be too much work. As time passes, you can research different plants you would enjoy growing and then test them yourself. Eventually, you can

find more pots or a garden box to start growing your own flowers for a beautiful bouquet or some produce to share.

Without any pesticides or chemicals, food from your garden will always be guaranteed fresh. Tending a plant is almost like growing a child. You have to give it water, make sure it gets enough sunlight, trim it, and as a child would, it would grow on you, and the result is definitely worthwhile.

Student Reporter

In Our Hands Dance Show Review: Creative with a Message



Summer Park
Grade 8
Harvard-Westlake School



Dancing "Healing" to Music by Ibeyi [Source: Author, Summer Park]

The artistry, camaraderie, and love will make you want to cry, at least it did for me, as tears rolled down my face.

Good evening! This is Summer Park, reporting live from Saperstein Theatre at a dance show titled In Our Hands. I hope you are ready for an amazing review, as I am actually one of the dancers in this show.

I have been a dancer for over

ten years now, and as you can tell, I have developed a deep passion for it. Proudly, I am part of Dance Production, my school's most advanced dance course. Over the past month, my classmates and I have been preparing for this big showcase. The program articulately describes the synopsis of our show: In Our Hands is a love letter to our planet. We begin with an invocation of the four elements: water, earth, air, and fire. The Elements assemble and combine

forces to reveal the divine embodiment of Mother Nature in triplicate – past, present, and future.

Led by our extraordinary director, Mr. Schenck, the dance performance showcased multiple dances choreographed by the students. Under one theme, each of the dances had unique interpretations of ways in which we are part of the earth. The final days of rehearsal were rigorous and tough. Practices consumed everyone's days, leaving less time to study for tests and do homework, but contributed to the success of the show. Leading up to the big event, several dancers experienced injuries and muscle aches from constantly dancing, jumping, and stretching their bodies to limits. Nevertheless, all of the hours sacrificed were well worth it. After the show, Mr. Schenck shared, "What an incredible Opening Night performance!" He added that the

dancers brought the show to life so beautifully, passionately, and skillfully.

After the show, I asked several peers what they thought In Our Hands meant, and they mentioned words like belonging, giving, community, and caring. In Our Hands examines "our ever-evolving societal relationship with nature, the destructive effects of humankind on our environment, and our responsibility to course correct, work towards climate justice, and ensure the survival of our planet together," wrote Mr. Schenck.

I hope our performance moved the audience with the beauty of nature and further fueled our decisions and actions to protect the Earth from destruction. These choices are, indeed, In Our Hands. Knowing this, what choices will you make?

Student Reporter

A Journey of History, Justice, and Healing



Jenny Jang
Grade 11
St. Paul's High School

This past March, I was given the fantastic opportunity to participate in an off-campus trip over spring break. The trip was exactly one week, from March 2nd to March 9th, and featured nine St. Paul's students and three faculty members. The trip afforded participants an opportunity to travel to Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham. Participants visited significant sites of the Civil Rights Movement and worked with people of diverse backgrounds to advance the greater good. The main goal of this trip was to help the students understand the impact of historical events, reflect on the work that needs to be done in the future as young social activists, and indulge in the rich Southern culture that traced back to the Civil Rights Movement.

Students flew from Concord, New Hampshire, to Atlanta, Georgia, on March 2nd. In Atlanta,



The 58th annual Edmund Pettus Bridge Crossing [Source: Purvis, Gabby]

we visited The National Center for Civil and Human Rights and the King Center and departed for Montgomery by van the following day. Not only did we stop by museums and monuments, but we also immersed ourselves in the rich history of the civil rights movement where we were. Along the way, we stopped by for soul food, went street shopping, and even attended a brief music concert for

the full cultural experience of the trip. Then, once we crossed over to Alabama, we visited places such as the Rosa Parks Museum, and the King Memorial Baptist church, and we even got to hear President Joe Biden give a speech, in person, at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. After visiting each station, our trip advisor, Rev. Wynder, would gather us to discuss what we had seen and debrief. Over the course

of the trip, the students developed a more intense understanding of the civil rights movement and what it meant to be an activist.

After such an amazing trip, I was able to interview and gather lots of positive comments from my peers. "I really loved the visual displays of each of the museums and the fact they had actual documents from history," said Jaeleen Baffour, class of '24. When asked if she would return, given the chance, she responded, "I would definitely go again. I think I love the South now." When asked about which part of the trip was most memorable for students, the majority of them recalled crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. "It really felt like we were making history, crossing that bridge," one student said. "I felt like I was really contributing toward real change, and it was different from just talking about it in a classroom setting."

Student Reporter

The Experience of a Teenline Volunteer



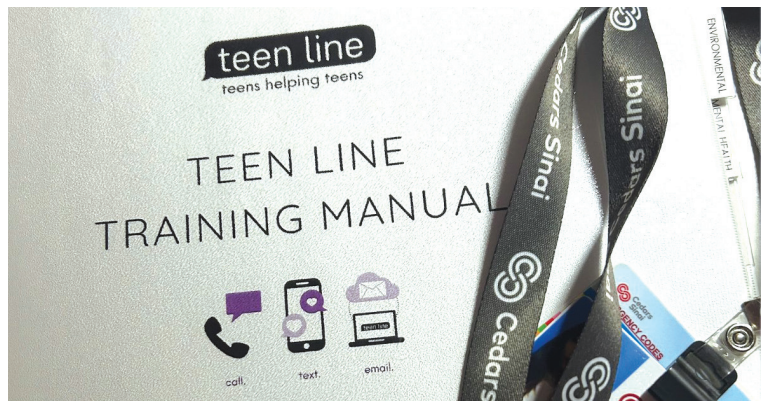
Crystal Shin
Grade 11
Northwood High School

Teenline is a nonprofit organization that offers a confidential hotline for teens to call and receive emotional support, crisis intervention, and information on various issues that they may be facing. Many teenagers who reach out to the hotline simply need someone to talk to and listen to them without judgment. As a volunteer for Teenline, you will be trained to provide non-judgmental and empathetic support to these young people. Working at Teenline can be an incredibly rewarding experience, as it provides an opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of teenagers.

As a volunteer, one of the most fulfilling aspects of working at Teenline is the opportunity to provide support to others who may feel alone or isolated. Many teenagers may not feel comfortable talking to their friends or family members about their problems, and Teenline provides a safe and confidential space for them to share their concerns. As a volunteer, you will have the chance to listen to their experi-

ences, offer empathy and support, and help them find resources that can assist them in addressing their issues. I've learned that these skills can be applied in various settings as well, including in your personal life, and can help you develop greater empathy and emotional intelligence. This knowledge can help you develop a more nuanced perspective on the issues that affect youth and may even inspire you to advocate for policies or programs that support their well-being.

However, being on the listener side of these calls can require a lot of training and strict protocols. Becoming a Teenline volunteer begins with the process of extensive training. During the summer, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in their training program, which lasted approximately a month. During the month of training, Teenline trainees receive comprehensive lessons that teach them in-depth information about a variety of mental health issues as well as how to actively listen, pro-



The training manual binder that the Teenline volunteers received during their training, which covers all mental health topics. [Source: Author, Crystal Shin]

vide emotional support, and manage the caller's problems. For me, the training process was an eye-opening experience, as I was able to learn many new skills about the ins and outs of mental health, assess risk, and provide appropriate support and referrals. After learning and absorbing all of the material, the trainees must undergo a series of roleplays in which they act out a real-life call. The trainees have to pass every roleplay in order to become a certified caller/listener and to participate in real calls.

Working at Teenline can be a fulfilling and impactful experience that allows you to develop valuable skills and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges that youth encounter. However, it is important to remember that this work can be emotionally taxing and requires a significant amount of self-care and support. If you are passionate about helping youth and feel prepared to handle the challenges that may arise, then working at Teenline may be a great fit for you.