

Student Reporter



Sooa Kim
Grade 12
Valencia High School

Two Teenagers Bridge the Gap Between South Korea and the US

Two high school students from Valencia High School, Sooa Kim, 18, and Sarah Park, 17, founded a program called "Break the Barrier" at the beginning of this year, a global educational trip to the US that took from July 26 to August 4, 2023. In the span of this program, they were dedicated to sponsoring a student living in Korea who is passionate about their dream but is afraid to start their own journey. Therefore, they persistently fundraised for the selected student to undertake a 10-day educational trip to the U.S., covering their plane tickets, accommodation, and food expenses.

Sooa Kim stated, "I felt that my perspectives and my view of the world were narrow when I lived in Korea because the opportunities were limited there. Although there were many difficulties after moving to the US, I got to expand my views of the world by living in a more diverse environment. Through internship opportunities, club creation, and group activities, I gained more courage, and my view became wider. With this opportunity, I wanted to help students

in Korea look at life from a wider perspective." Sarah Park added, "As a Korean American, I was always interested in South Korean culture and traditions. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities that I had in the US, and I want to help students in Korea to experience and pursue their own passion..."

The goal of this program was not just to travel for fun but to provide a global American educational experience where the student can actually bravely start their path in Korea, showing courage and various perspectives. During the trip, the student is presented with opportunities to reflect on themselves by meeting successful mentors of various ethnicities, life stories, and mentorships.

Among the 40 applicants and the 2% acceptance rate, Lucy Choi was chosen. They chose a student based on adaptability, open-mindedness, and English fluency. Lucy, a 15-year-old student residing in Korea, possesses a strong aspiration to become an environmental researcher - a



Sooa Kim and Sarah Park come together to bring Lucy Choi to America for their Break the Barrier program. [Source: Author, Sooa Kim]

field that is relatively uncommon in South Korea. Sooa and Sarah wanted to support Lucy's passion to give her courage and to provide her with as many resources as possible.

The trip provided advice from various perspectives, including meetings with local environmental researchers, a CEO, a current UCLA environmental major student, and a USC student; she also experienced beach clean-ups and U.S. high school experiences.

It took a lot of effort for Sooa and Sarah to make this passion project come to life. They had to raise \$3,000

in order to sponsor the entire trip. They raised money through various activities, from concession sales at the park to selling clothes online.

The impact that this program had on Sarah Park and Sooa Kim was also incredibly significant. During the program, they realized the effect they had on the student, Lucy Choi. In each meeting with her mentors, she became even more passionate about what she wanted to do, but also more courageous to step out of societal norms to pursue her passion. They realized the impact and difference that they initiated and the mark they placed on the student.

Student Reporter



Eunice Minji Choi
Grade 11
North Hollywood High School

What Courses Are LAUSD High School Students Taking This Year?

On August 14, 2023, LAUSD students started their first day of school. Some students waited their whole summer for this day, checking Schoology, a learning management system, every day for their schedules. On the other hand, some students have already started a countdown to their next summer break. High school freshmen were excited to start a new chapter of their lives, and sophomores were excited to be back. Juniors, beginning their "hardest year of high school," showed a mixture of excitement and nervousness, and seniors seemed bittersweet to start their last year.

All high school students of LAUSD have to take the A-G and LAUSD requirement courses in order to graduate. The two requirements combined include 4 years of English, 3 years of history, 3 years of math, 2 years of science, 2 years of foreign language, 2 years of physical education, 1 year of visual arts, 1 year of a college prepara-

Academic Course	Junior	Senior
AP English Language/Literature	8	9
Honors English/Literature	2	1
AP US History/Government	7	8
Honors US History/Government	3	2
AP Pre-Calculus	2	1
Honors Pre-Calculus	1	0
AP Calculus AB	5	3
AP Calculus BC	0	6
AP Statistics	2	3
AP Chemistry	3	3
Honors Chemistry	2	0
AP Physics	5	4
AP Psychology	2	1
AP Computer Science A	5	4

This chart shows the survey data of the classes 20 LAUSD high school students are taking.

[Source: Author, Eunice Minji Choi]

tory elective, and 1 semester of health. Completing these courses is said to be beneficial to the students, giving them equitable access to the high school courses they need to succeed in college and their careers.

North Hollywood High School, one of the top high schools of the LAUSD, offers 27 AP courses and many honors classes. North Hol-

lywood High School is a rigorous school; that being said, the majority of students take honors and AP classes. Most juniors, who make up the class of 2025, usually take AP English Language and AP United States History as a base. Most seniors, the class of 2024, take AP English Literature and AP Government as a base. From what I have noticed, the math and science courses differ for every student because the levels of those two categories range widely. For example, students can choose from AP or Honors Chemistry, Physics, and Biology to AP or Honors Calculus, Statistics, and much more. The same goes for foreign language courses. If one's comprehension of the language is higher than another, they'll take a different course despite their grade level. The courses for electives, which include leadership, visual arts, and extra science, also differ for everyone because there are so many options.

The classes that I am taking this

year, as a junior, are AP English Language, AP US History, AP Calculus AB, AP Physics 1, AP Computer Science A, and Student Councils. I chose these courses because I wanted to be challenged and prepared for my future courses. So far, they are pretty demanding but manageable. I asked 10 juniors and 10 seniors attending North Hollywood High School what courses they are taking this year. All students I have surveyed chose to take at least 2 APs. The majority chose to take most, if not all, AP classes, and some chose to take honors classes.

Just because students are in the same grade doesn't mean they have the same schedule and take the same classes. As mentioned before, there are many different levels of rigorous courses, and some students simply choose not to take them. In the end, it is the students' choices to make as they consider: Will this class benefit me during my college application process?

Student Reporter



Aaron Kim
Grade 10
Cerritos High School

How Books Are Criminally Underrated

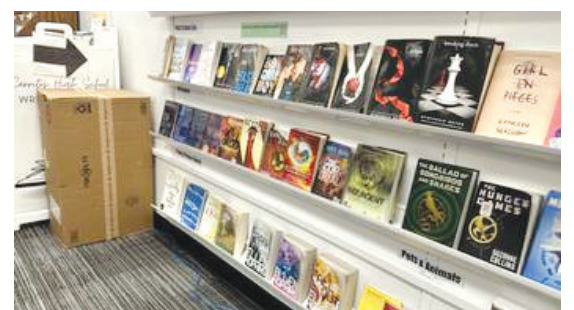
Books are now much less captivating in an era dominated by digital media. Reading is an exploration that expands what is capable and deepens our perspectives. Books offer new ideas and journeys like no other, based on the genre, from classics to best-time sellers. This is being delved into why we read books, the benefits, and my experience of how reading has left a mark on my life.

Curiosity is the force behind the desired act. Books are the pathway to other worlds, providing an escape and a way to engage differently. Literature will unlock the intricacies of the subject of inquiry and more profound philosophy or provide a scientific haven to quench our thirst for knowledge.

The benefits of reading vary, ranging from mental faculties to well-being. Reading helps to in-

crease vocabulary, language skills, and critical thinking. It exposes us to writing techniques, allows us to be creative, and sharpens our communication skills. Following complex stories and characters hones our analytical skills and encourages empathy by stepping into the viewpoints of various protagonists. Furthermore, reading provides an escape from the noise of the digital world, allowing us to engage in deep analysis and discovery.

Reflecting on my perspective, I can understand the power that books provide. As a person who reads when stressed or not busy, I explore genres ranging from fantasy to historical fiction. Each book implanted a lesson in my mind that I can use when making real-life choices. I remember how J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" piqued my interest in epic storytelling and expanded my limitless



A classroom library at Cerritos High School, where books are still an important part of life. [Source: Author, Aaron Kim]

imagination. Through the pages of James Dashner's "The Maze Runner," I gained insight into how life can change, so I must be prepared for the worst.

Beyond the benefits, books are companions in times of isolation and uncertainty. They offer comfort in difficult times and create hope when the world seems hopeless. The pages can spark conversation, stimulate curiosity, and connect with fellow readers

across cultures and generations.

In our modern world, the appeal of literature is declining due to technology. Reading books is not just a story, it is an experience that challenges our assumptions and enhances our well-being. As each page turns, we embark on a journey of growth. So, let's get around the written word celebration because we find ideas and an infinite source of inspiration for the future.

Student Reporter

Weighing the Options of At-Home Exercise



Audrey Park
Grade 10
Northwood High School



Adjustable equipment, such as modifiable dumbbells, is key to tailoring one's home environment to favorable fitness goals.
[Source: Audrey Park, Author]

The summer provided ideal conditions for many students and athletes to exercise, with several finding the gym to be their second home. Now that the usual weather conditions have subsided and the workload from the starting of school has begun to increase, however, the average gym-goer may become dispirited from taking trips to these training institutions.

Due to these issues, it may be the ideal time to implement some physical training in an accessible, home environment. One way to do this would be to blur the line between a home and a gym. At-home gyms were made popular during the pandemic and involve the use of gym equipment inside garages or open spaces. Furthermore, many of my athlete friends who did not want to drive to the gym brought the qualities of the gym to their own garage. One student-athlete, Kayla Kim, began making progress in strength endurance this summer and stated that "Clearing up some space in my garage and setting up a few mats gave me enough space to do HIIT workouts as a warm-up. I only had to bring out some weights to do the next part of my training. I think the range of things I can do in one space is a big factor in continuing my training outside of summer." While this experience is

beneficial for this student, there are several things to consider when tailoring your home to your ideal gym experience.

For instance, one must first look into getting adjustable equipment. More often than not, changing weights and using increasingly difficult variations of simple workouts have been linked to efficiently training different groups of muscles. Because increasing both spatial awareness and physical fitness is key to having an at-home gym, only one of a few adjustable pieces of equipment is needed to satisfy several fitness goals. Some popular examples of these machines are power racks, adjustable dumbbells, suspension trainers, and weight benches. Over time, the intensity behind each equipment's workout will adhere to one's progress. Additionally, the "adjustability" of equipment can also be defined as

providing many uses— one can use a yoga mat to increase flexibility through stretches and also to support bodyweight workouts.

Furthermore, some will find that weightless workouts— or bodyweight exercises— will suffice for their fitness goals at home. Avid gym goers who stick by machines that increase cardiovascular endurance may have a better experience with at-home gyms as similar or better exercise can be achieved with High-Intensity Interval Training. Many videos and articles that outline cardiovascular exercise are available online and encourage the seemingly non-stop body movement that is tied to treadmills or ellipticals.

After weighing these options, you may find in the future that the differences between your home and gym are not large!

Student Reporter

The Flashy First Game



Ashley Seong
Grade 9
Ruben S. Ayala High School

As the glistening sun of summer dims away, a new season of school arrives, bringing the empty football stadium into a familiar overflowing arena. At Ruben S. Ayala High School, students are seen anticipating the fast-paced throws, tackles of aggression, and the decorative spirit splattered across their faces. The start of the weekly football games on Friday nights induces a nostalgic and frenzy notion, accompanied by the heavily dwelling aura of salty snacks with fruity smoothies.

Students begin piling in after school, with first a quick trip to the Shoppes, a popular shopping center, or getting themselves into the school spirit by dressing up with the given themes on home games. The glorious Ayala Bulldogs line up, presenting a uniform mentality of teamwork, as well as the cohesive colors of black and red on their shiny jerseys. The football season marks the official start of a new school year, ready to be supported by the student section on the fields.

The game began with students



Friends decorate themselves to follow the neon theme of the first football game of the school year. [Source: Author, Ashley Seong]

flooding in as the USB staff checked their tickets and welcomed them to the bleachers that were taped up with supporting messages to the team. The gentle hues of purple and orange paint the sunset a beautiful shade that plastered across the entire stadium. The first football theme was neon lights, where students came fully dressed with various colors of vibrantly lit lights. Traffic cones, traffic vests, and athletic attire were seen repeatedly, and the bright colors of orange and yellow were smeared across cheeks. The Ayala cheerleaders entered the field with admirable flips and tricks, all

cohesively wearing the same blissful smile, with big bows to match their uniforms. The captains of the spirit leaders welcomed the varsity football team with a great chant, allowing the bulky athletes to tear through the poster and onto the vibrant green field.

The game started with a sharp whistle, and the visiting team began with a far kickoff. The Ayala Bulldogs started off on the wrong note by missing to catch the kickoff and ascending to defense, where soon the opposing team earned a touchdown. The cheers from the

far side of the visiting team were met with an overbearing boing from the packed side of the Ayala Bulldogs. Students began chanting and cheering along with the cheerleaders, encouraging their team to win back the points. The Ayala Bulldogs soon became familiar with their talents and techniques, scoring back the lost points, as well as winning a few more touchdowns. The fast-paced game earned a lot of commentary from the stands, where their reactions to the aggressive play added comedic enjoyment. At the half-down mark of the game, the Ayala band entered with great enthusiasm roaring out of their instruments, followed by the ecstatic dancers and the swirling color guard team.

The last quarter began as people were heading back in from getting treats from the stands below. The anticipation was felt by everyone as the scores were closely met, but a last epic touchdown from the Ayala Bulldogs secured their first win of the season, as well as kicking off the school year with a victorious feel.

Student Reporter

Bike-Sharing Program in China



Hajoong Song
Grade 9
International School of Beijing



The bicycle-sharing system in China is widely accessible in all locations.
[Source: Author, Hajoong Song]

Bike-sharing systems have become increasingly popular in China in recent years, and have been praised for their convenience and affordability. According to a report by the World Bank, bike-sharing has many benefits, including saving energy and reducing carbon emissions. In 2017, bike-sharing reduced carbon emissions by around seven million tons, with a total riding distance of around thirty billion kilometers. The report also noted that bike-sharing has changed Chinese urban residents' mobility habits, with people taking advantage of the convenience of shared bikes to travel

short distances.

One of the key benefits of bike-sharing in China is its affordability. According to a study by Dong Fureng Institute of Economic and Social Development of bike-sharing users in China's first and second-tier cities, the low cost of bike-sharing is a major factor in its popularity. The study found that users' willingness to pay for bike-sharing was influenced by their perception of the value they received from the service. Bike-sharing is also seen as a cost-effective alternative to other forms of transportation, such as private cars or taxis.

Another benefit of bike-sharing in China is its convenience. Unlike traditional bike-sharing systems with fixed stations and parking docks, the dockless model allows riders to lock and unlock a GPS-enabled bike using a mobile app. This makes it easier for riders to find and use bikes, and also allows them to park the vehicles anywhere when they are finished using them. This flexibility has made bike-sharing a popular choice for short trips around the city.

However, the rapid growth of bike-sharing in China has also brought some challenges. One of the biggest problems has been the oversupply of bikes, which has led to a waste of resources and an ugly cityscape due to the disorderly parking. To address these issues, the Chinese government has adopted regulations to oversee the bike-sharing industry, including requirements for companies to obtain licenses and limit the number of bikes they deploy.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of bike-sharing in China

are clear. In addition to its affordability and convenience, bike-sharing has also been shown to have health benefits. A case study in Shanghai found that using shared bicycles as a mode of transportation may help users conserve energy and decrease emissions while also increasing their regular physical activity. Individually, it is very convenient for me to pick up any bicycle and ride it to school. The cheap price and fun ride make me delighted.

Bike-sharing has become an important part of urban transportation in China, providing an affordable and convenient alternative to other forms of transportation. While there have been some challenges associated with the rapid growth of bike-sharing, the benefits of the system greatly outweigh these problems. As the bike-sharing industry continues to evolve, it will be important for all market participants, including the government, bike-sharing companies, and bike users, to work together to ensure that the system remains sustainable and beneficial for all.