

Student Reporter

Students Helping Special Needs Children



Jacob Son
Grade 12
West Ranch High School



West Ranch HALO members attend a club meeting to inform new members of past HALO services.

[Source: West Ranch HALO club member]

On Wednesday mornings, classes at West Ranch High School begin an hour later than usual, but rather than sleeping in, a few students use their extra time to help children with special needs.

The Help A Life Out (HALO) club at West Ranch has built a community of more than 15 consistent students who serve first, second, and third-grade students with mental disabilities at Pico Canyon Elementary School. As HALO

members aid in the improvement of the children's education and social skills, they have received positive feedback from the special education teachers, who have stated that the children look forward to interacting with HALO students every Wednesday morning.

Using educational toys and games is one way that HALO members are able to help the children develop essential skills and knowledge. The elementary stu-

dents enjoy not only using puzzles and word-matching games but also playing with basic toys, which are used for speaking exercises to further their education. For instance, one second-grade student likes to audibly pronounce animal names and imitate the sounds they make from a set of toy animal figurines.

However, many of the games and toys originally used by the children were in poor condition. Damages and scratches were clearly visible on the toys due to heavy usage, and the children had limited options to choose from. In order to improve the children's learning experiences, HALO started a toy drive; many unopened toys and games were collected from West Ranch students and donated to the children, allowing them to play different games and use new toys to refine their thinking skills.

But not all of the children use toys and games to learn. In fact, second-grade students are the only group who learn through

these methods; because of the varying educational needs that the elementary students have, different activities and games are utilized depending on their grade level to better suit their abilities. First-grade students sing and dance to songs that teach them about the days of the week and months of the year. Additionally, they use interactive software that helps them determine basic weather conditions, such as sunny mornings and cold nights. Third-grade students complete coloring worksheets and learn to not only select the correct color but also pronounce the color on their own. Oftentimes, the children also dance to music, complete stretching exercises, and walk in circles around the room to engage in physical activity.

Regardless of the elementary students' grade level or the educational activities that are used, HALO members cheerfully decide to spend their early Wednesday mornings interacting with the children.

Student Reporter

Experience the World of Super Mario in Person Now



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Loyola High School

Super Mario is a very popular game series. The characters and levels are recognizable enough that even people who don't play video games can tell people its origin. So, what if you were able to see the vibrant game in real life? This question does not have to be a fantasy. Now you can experience the game in person at Super Nintendo World, a land dedicated to Super Mario located in Universal Studios Hollywood. Before you are able to enter, though, you will need to set a virtual reservation with the park's application. The reservation will only allow you to enter at a certain time, but you will be able to stay inside the area as long as you like.

Once it's your time, you can show your reservation, and the employees will allow you to enter. You will go through a warp pipe that will create the feeling of being transported into the game. Upon



A statue of Bowser seen by those waiting for Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge. [Source: Author, Sander Im]

entering, you will notice all the details created to make the land appear just as it is in the game; there are even moving characters that help add life to the colorful setting. The main attraction in Super Nintendo World is Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge, an interactive moving track ride. The ride uses augmented reality goggles to display graphics and characters in front of the rider. The goggles are used in conjunction with the

moving track to create the feeling of racing against characters from the series. You are able to interact with the characters with power-ups. This makes the ride more like a game, as it even shows your score at the end. This can provide a sense of enjoyment or replayability after your first ride, as you can reach a new personal record or obtain achievements. Upon leaving, you will go to the merchandise store. While not

important or necessary, there is a purchasable slap band that allows you to interact with certain things in the area. Across the land, you are able to use the slap band to activate various props and activities. Your interaction around the land and ride can be tracked on the park's application. In the app, you can get achievements or stickers for completing various tasks that you can also obtain from riding the main attraction. If you are able to complete certain activities, you can access a second interactive activity. Unfortunately, many of the activities and attractions will take patience.

The main problem you will face on your trip is long wait times. However, the wait can be worth it as there is definitely something for tourists to enjoy. So the next time you are in Los Angeles, try stopping by Universal Studios and entering the world of Super Mario.

Student Reporter

The High School Research Experience



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Woodbridge High School

Research. The term has always remained a mystery in my mind. What exactly is research? How do I research? What do I do with my research? These questions were statements that were never answered in schools or by teachers. To truly understand these questions, the individual must partake in their independent research.

Therefore, over this past summer, I decided that the next level of challenge and pursuit of knowledge would be writing a research paper based on my passions. In order to find my topic of interest, I looked into activities that captivated me. Personally, I leaned more toward environmental science and policy, and decided that I would write my paper on the topic of climate change.

After deciding on my topic, I outlined the structure of the paper and my methods of research. However,

as a high school student, I did not have the same resources as college students or professors to take actual data and measurements in the field. Fortunately, I had one powerful weapon: the internet, or a search engine. Through the internet, I found various articles and previous research that had been done, and collected the data from the articles to add to my findings, as this would help with the gaps in knowledge and further research that needed to be done.

The process of researching greatly improved my ability to use a search engine more efficiently and precisely to find the exact information that I needed. I also gained analytical skills through the constant reading and study of scientific literature and learned new information about my topic. The research process truly made me an "expert" on the topic to the point where I could present and

talk about it for hours. The research did not only impact my education but also my knowledge and passion for environmental science and policy.

Unfortunately, the paper was not all smooth sailing. I experienced many challenges in obtaining and finding connections between data and results. The paper also required many hours of peer revision and rewriting. With every revision, it seemed that my paper was ever more flawed or missing information. Nonetheless, through perseverance and consistency, I was able to complete the paper and look towards publishing. And even through the hardships, the skills and takeaways from the process are priceless to me.

Hopefully, this article will not only encourage you, the reader, to embark on your individual re-



Research requires an extensive outline and background research. [Source: Author, David Han]

search journey, but also to persist through challenges and roadblocks that you may face, knowing that in the end, you will have crafted your own piece of literature. Like Ernest Hemingway states, "It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

Student Reporter

Michigan Debate Camp



Justin Kim

Grade 10

St. Mark's School of Texas



Eating at The Seoul in Ann Arbor with friends during the Michigan Debate Camp. [Source: Author, Justin Kim]

Every summer, debaters gather from across the world in the town of Ann Arbor to attend the Michigan Debate Camp. With a rigorous yet rewarding curriculum, debaters can hone their skills alongside their peers and some of the best coaches in the country. There are multiple programs allowing one to match the certain style of debate a student wishes to participate in, but all of them are geared more toward policy debate.

Students arrive in late June and are

assigned dorms where they live for the next seven weeks. Since students are allowed to travel to the university campus and part of the city of Ann Arbor, they can purchase anything they forgot at home or think they will need before orientation. After getting settled, making friends with your neighbors is advisable, as they will be a source of companionship, and even food, during camp. I may not remember how to defend the use of non-uniform fifty-state fiat from the states counterplan lecture, but I do remember being overrun by

my friends when I made the terrible decision to bring chips back to the dorm.

A consistent schedule makes it much easier for students to plan their days out. Lectures on the debate topic from professionals are given in the morning, throughout the entire 7-week camp. After these lectures, people then split up into their separate labs, numbering around 40 students each, to receive specific help, work on research, and/or listen to lectures from lab leaders. The first lab takes up most of the afternoon, followed by an extended dinner break, during which students can eat out at any of the many restaurants in Ann Arbor, such as Tomukun, a Korean BBQ, or Slurping Turtle, a Japanese bistro. Following dinner is a shorter lab and a grace period for everyone to rush back to the dorms.

One of the most fun yet stress-

ful occurrences is the practice debates. Debaters can use their newly acquired skills against fellow debaters, whether they be from their lab or another, and obtain valuable advice from judges, usually lab leaders, on how to improve. The preparation that must be done beforehand can be a chore, but having an argument pre-written and on hand is worth the time it took to write it. Moreover, the bonds made between partners during the late-night prep sessions and speedy Panera runs are unbreakable. Finally, practice debates are especially useful for getting and staying warmed up for the season ahead.

Overall, I found the Michigan Debate Camp to be very fulfilling. I learned many things and made many new bonds with new friends. If you enjoy debate, and are willing to put seven weeks of training into perfecting your skills, the Michigan Debate Camp may be for you!

Student Reporter

The Old-Timey History of the Saugus Cafe



Ethan Chang

Grade 12

Stockdale High School



My brunch meal of medium-cooked steak, hash, toast, and eggs. [Source: Author, Ethan Chang]

Within Los Angeles County sits an unassuming roadside diner, which happens to be the oldest surviving restaurant in LA County. This old-timey diner, specializing in American comfort food, still stands after 130 years of serving meals to anyone looking for a quick bite. When I went to the restaurant with my family, I enjoyed a brunch meal of medium-cooked steak, hash, toast, and eggs. While eating, I also took notice of the interior of the diner, which looked as if it was trapped in time during the early 1900s, from the color, seating placement, menus, and even the doors and windows of the establishment.

Opening its doors in 1886, the Saugus Cafe started off as the Saugus Eating House, which was attached to the train depot. This train depot just so happens to be part of the larger greater Southern Pacific rail network, making the restaurant a perfect stopping

point for visitors to relax and have a quick bite. The diner itself received its name from Saugus, Massachusetts, the birthplace of businessman Henry Newhall, who was granted naming rights to his 46,500-acre property previously known as Rancho San Francisco. Saugus received considerable privilege when it was visited by U.S. President Benjamin Harrison during his visit to California in 1890 and later by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. Eventually,

the diner would be moved to the other side of the railroad, where it kept a relatively low and obscure profile until the rise of Western films. Since Santa Clarita Valley was popular for shooting shots for Western films, Saugus became a prime destination for many actors and film stars, such as John Wayne, Clark Gable, Marlene Dietrich, and James Dean. Today, the Saugus Cafe still stands, though it has returned to its previous sleepy and low profile in LA County, with

the exception of this status quo on weekends, where crowds of people gather to eat at the cafe. Even today, antique artifacts such as old newspaper clippings from the 1800s and early 1900s, stock movie shots, and ruffled curtains give a sense of identity and history to this otherwise inconspicuous restaurant.

My impression of Saugus Cafe after my family and I left was that of a fairly enjoyable experience. It honestly feels odd to eat at one of those old-fashioned diners that are seen in old movies from the 1900s, especially when compared to eating at a fast-food restaurant like McDonald's or a typical modern restaurant like the Cheesecake Factory. This, combined with the variety of old items from the 1800s and 1900s, gives the impression the cafe also serves as an old museum to the past where visitors can see what LA County was like during its formative years.

Student Reporter

Electric Bike Safety Rules



Anthony Park

Grade 10

Northwood High School



Being attentive while cycling is crucial in order to prevent bike accidents. [Source: Author, Anthony Park]

Electric bikes are a great way of getting yourself around town and are generally much quicker and require less effort than traditional bikes. Because of this, e-bikes have gained significant popularity within the past few years. In the school that I attend in Irvine, California, there are over a hundred students who use an e-bike to get to school every day!

However, because it is accessible to everyone and doesn't require a driver's license to operate, electric bike accidents caused by inexperienced or reckless riders have continued to increase over the past five years. These accidents don't only affect cyclists but pedestrians and cars on the road as well. To prevent these accidents, it is crucial to be aware of traffic laws and basic etiquette.

Firstly, wearing a helmet on any bicycle (not only electric bikes) is the key to keeping yourself safe from accidents. The California

Vehicle Code requires all cyclists under the age of 18 to wear a cycling helmet while riding a bike. Research by the National Institutes of Health states that wearing a helmet can reduce serious head injuries from bike accidents by up to 60 percent.

Riding a bike in unsuitable conditions can also increase the chances of accidents. Cycling in heavy rain or snow significantly increases the chances of accidents, such as slipping on wet surfaces or losing control. If possible, taking a different transportation option is much safer, and in the case where that is unavailable, biking at slower speeds is recommended. Electric bikes travel at higher speeds and have more significant risks of injuries from accidents. Cycling in the dark increases the chances of colliding with pedestrians and other vehicles. Having light reflectors and a headlight during the night lets others know that you're passing by!

In addition, attentive behavior while cycling is crucial. When on a bike, always look up and avoid using a phone or a mobile device. Don't have both ears covered with earplugs or headphones so you can be aware of the situation around you. Over two-thirds of fatal bike injuries happen in intersections, so be extra careful and focused when crossing a street.

Knowing basic cycling eti-

quette shows respect for others while cycling. Some of these include not overspeeding on sidewalks or crowded places, knowing traffic rules and following them, staying to the right side of the road if moving slower than traffic, avoiding sudden acceleration/deceleration, bringing down the headlights when a pedestrian walks towards you during the night, and much more. Following these etiquettes will keep you and others safe.