

Student Reporter

High School Club Provides Relief For Child Abuse Victims



Evan Valentine
Grade 11
Dublin High School



Dublin High School PATCH advisors and students at the Dublin High Holiday Stuffed Animal Drive. [Source: @dhspatch Instagram]

Dublin, California - As the new school year has recently started for Bay Area schools, so have the activities of the students. At Dublin High School in Dublin, California, this means that it is peak recruiting and chartering season for clubs. One club that stands out from the rest here is Plushies Aimed to Comfort Hearts (PATCH): a club that works to provide comfort and raise awareness for child abuse victims.

I recently had the pleasure of talking to the current president of

the club, junior David Loo. Loo is an avid participant in extracurricular activities and is no stranger to leadership as an internationally ranked robotics team captain and the president of PATCH. He struck me as someone who is passionate and willing to put countless hours into his mission in order to spark change for the better. Loo's club was founded by his older sister, and he took on the role of Club President in 2022.

"The club started out with my

eldest sister getting physically abused by one of my family friends when she was younger," Loo stated. "She went to the Child Abuse Listening Interviewing and Coordination (CALICO) Center, a nonprofit organization that gives stuffed animals to kids who have been abused, and was inspired by them to make a difference. To keep her club going, we have been maintaining PATCH to help abused kids and give stuffed animals to those who have been abused."

To this date, PATCH has donated over fifteen thousand stuffed animals and has also written thousands of cards for victims of child abuse. However, it hasn't always been smooth sailing for Loo. "Some hurdles we went through were recruiting people who wanted to do fundraisers and [getting] people to join the club early on. When we got more people to join the club, and more places wanted to fundraise our cause, this made it more successful and allowed us to do more events," David said.

During a typical club meeting,

members of PATCH create cards with kind messages written on them, blankets, and stuffed animals for abused children, police officers, and caretakers. Loo describes his club as a tight-knit community in which members can form lifelong bonds of friendship while participating in club activities.

In the future, David hopes to start more stuffed animal drives and give more out to victims of child abuse. On top of this, he plans to bring PATCH to other schools in the country. Currently, there are only two PATCH clubs in the US, and David is in the process of communicating with other schools to expand his mission.

"Running this club has impacted my life because it allows me to support kids who have been abused by parents or guardians. Seeing someone [get] better because they know that someone has given them a plushie is something that isn't shown a lot," David stated. For more information about Dublin PATCH, please visit them on Instagram at @dhspatch.

Student Reporter

The Supreme Court Strikes Down: Affirmative Action



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Grade 11
Grover Cleveland Charter High School

On June 29, the Supreme Court of the United States decided to end affirmative action and race-related programs in colleges and universities across the nation. This decision states that no colleges in the United States are able to take race as a factor when looking at the profile of an applicant, regardless of its status. Proponents of the new ruling stated the benefits of this decision, as they explained that it would allow schools to treat all of their applicants equally, solely basing their decisions on merit.

The decision was specific to the cases of the University of North Carolina and Harvard, where individuals argued that race should not be a factor in accepting a potential student candidate. The courts voted 6 against affirmative action in both cases. They stated that affirmative action went against the Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution, which made it unconstitutional to be employed in college admissions. The decision



Princeton University's campus is a dream to many; will this new ruling affect who is admitted? [Source: Author, Wonjun (Junny) Jung]

came after years of petitioning and lobbying from individuals who felt cheated by the system.

Political experts state that this decision was a major win for the conservative Republican Party, as many conservative figures praised the court's decisions, with Justices such as Clarence Thomas having expressed his optimism in implementing a system that looks solely on merit. On the other hand, the

Democratic Party views it as a step backward and sees it to be discriminatory for certain groups of people. Prominent figures, such as Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Kentanji Jackson, stated their disapproval of the rulings. They believe it to be unfair to individuals with unfortunate circumstances. President Joe Biden expressed his disappointment with the verdict and stated that his administration will work to ensure

inclusivity and diversity in colleges.

This new change to the law presents a vastly different set of issues for the class of 2024 and the future graduating classes as students prepare for college applications. Experts on the issue state that while the court's decisions will not impact the college admissions process in a significant way, it will still take a small part in the decisions made.

The broader implications of this ruling have impacts beyond higher education. The Supreme Court's decision will affect selective schools in lower education, such as middle and high school. However, a sliver of hope remains as themes of race can be included in essays, and extracurricular activities may affect one's application. While the termination of affirmative action might lead to a more straightforward and merit-based evaluation system, it also risks creating additional barriers for underrepresented groups.

Student Reporter

Baking: A Relaxing Pastime



Ian Lee
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With all of the stress in our lives, we all probably need some way to wind down and relax, and for me, it's baking. Baking not only allows you to make something you can be proud of, but it also allows you to taste what you created at the end! Additionally, it doesn't have to be completely fancy, sometimes, all it takes is a couple of eggs, water, and a packet of powder.

Last week, when my sister and I went over to Walmart to do some light shopping, my sister bought a bag of sugar cookie mix from Betty Crocker to make at home. I thought it would be super hard to make cookies, as I didn't have a lot of experience, but I couldn't have been more wrong. When we arrived home, we started following the directions,

and to my surprise, there were only 3: preheat the oven, mix in the powder with eggs and butter, and bake it in an oven. It was pretty simple. In fact, the hardest part was waiting for the cookies to finish baking! Like I said earlier, although I had little to no experience with baking, the cookies ended up tasting delicious.

Around a few months ago, I also baked something new: a strawberry cake. My mom had bought a cake mix from Duncan Hines, and we were all excited to make it. The cake was slightly harder to make, because not only did we have to make a bigger loaf for the body, but we also had to make the frosting ourselves. We mixed together heavy whipping cream and sugar and whisked it until it made



A homemade strawberry cake, complete with frosting and fresh strawberries. [Source: Deanna Lee]

a cream, and then spread it evenly across the cake. We also decided to add strawberries on the frosting, to decorate it some more. Looking back, it was an extremely fun experience, and I greatly enjoyed eating the cake. After all, why buy cakes when you can make it home, right?

Overall, I am really glad I dis-

covered baking. It is a fun pastime that anyone can pick up, without any past experience. And, best of all, when you finish, you can look at your finished product, pat yourself on the back, and feel like a professional chef (don't forget to eat it, too!). If you're stressed, baking is one of the best ways to blow off some steam.

Student Reporter



Isleen Lee
Grade 10
Harvard-Westlake School

Transitioning to the Upper School

While most high schools span from grades 9-12 on one campus, Harvard-Westlake School is unique. The school consists of 1,620 students, split across two campuses in Los Angeles. Students in grades 7-9 are in the Beverly Hills campus, often called the “Middle School Campus,” and 10th-12th grade students attend the “Upper School” campus, located in Studio City.

This year, I entered my sophomore year of high school, meaning it was my time to transition from the middle school campus to the upper school campus. New to Harvard-Westlake school as a 9th grader, I had only spent one year at the middle school, but I was still curious to explore the new campus. I am the type of person who does not like falling behind or, even worse, being lost in a new place. Therefore, holding my schedule in one hand and a printed map of the campus in the other, I explored the new campus a few days

before school started. I had heard from the upperclassmen and teachers that the upper school would have many more stairs than the middle school campus. I was dreading the sheer amount of stairs I would have to travel up and down each day, but stepping foot on this new campus made me feel like a true high school student. I had hoped that my classes would be mostly on the first floor, but the majority of my classes required a trek up a few staircases. Even now, the walk up to my history class makes me out of breath.

Another noticeable difference that upperclassmen stated was that there would be a substantially higher amount of workload given by teachers. Most of them said that expectations would be higher, which is understandable, considering all upper school students only have a few years left until they progress onto college. Having heard this so many times, I mentally prepared myself for a tough



The upper campus's football field can be seen from Munger, the science building at Harvard-Westlake School. [Source: Author, Isleen Lee]

transition of keeping up with all of the homework, frequent quizzes, next-level essays, and more. A pro that came out of this transition was being able to eat lunch with my friends during the same lunch period. In middle school, we were assigned specific times to eat, so unless a friend had the same lunch period as you or they happened to have a free period during that time, it was hard to eat lunch all together. You may wonder what a free period is. A free period is when a class does not meet, leaving you with an empty block to get work done, eat lunch earlier, or meet with teachers. My schedule at the middle school con-

tained many more free periods, but because of the rotating block schedule now, I have fewer free periods.

Personally, I would say that my classes are definitely harder and require more work than ever. Harvard-Westlake is known to be a rigorous school and I am now understanding why many people say that. However, I'm a strong believer in thinking that things will always get better with time, so recently, I have been doing my best to be patient. To the students who feel the same way and are reading this, know that we're all in this together.

Student Reporter



Joanne Kim
Grade 10
La Canada High School

Building a House for Mexico with KAWA

The Korean American Women's Association (KAWA) is a women's group focused in Koreatown, Los Angeles, which has the goal of helping women in need by educating them, providing for them, and helping them feel empowered. Recently, they formed a junior group (JKAWA) which I was fortunate enough to join. Together we fundraise, plan events, volunteer at various events, and help the community.

The most recent event KAWA and JKAWA participated in was the project of building a house for a family in need in Mexico. With the help of many volunteers, we met together at a church and got to work. Since we couldn't fully build the house in America, we only built the basic components, such as the walls and roof panels.

We started the day off by splitting into groups to prep the materials we would be using. This included nails



Everyone who attended the event was working very hard to build a nice structure for the future home. [Source: Author, Joanne Kim]

and a variety of wood. The nails were sorted and put into containers, which were each specific to a station. The various stations worked on distinct parts of the house, thus needing different amounts of distinct nails. While some were sorting the nails accordingly, other groups measured and cut the wood into planks and strips.

Once the preparation was complete, we were treated to breakfast by the chairwomen of KAWA. They had worked hard to prepare a

healthy meal for us as we still had a long day ahead. The various stations worked on different parts of the house, and I was able to aid in building a roof panel and a wall. The work was simple but tiring as it involved nailing various wooden planks together to create the base of what we would transform into a part of a masterpiece.

Although we were unsure of how we were supposed to put the pieces together, we were able to successfully complete the basic structures of

the majority of the walls. The volunteers who accompanied KAWA and JKAWA were extremely helpful, as it was not their first time working on a project like this.

With everyone working together, we were able to finish a majority of the components just a little past noon. After taking a quick lunch break, the parts were checked and then loaded into the truck that would be transporting the structures to Mexico.

Although it was an exhaustingly long day, it was an amazing experience. Knowing that the house was for a good cause, a family who was in need, kept me going through the tough times. My mom, who joined me in the event, claimed that the hard work “was more than worth it.” Overall, it was an amazing bonding experience and I hope more people are able to join us in our next mission of restoring hope to those in need.

Student Reporter



Eunice Minji Choi
Grade 11
North Hollywood High School

The Rise of Korean EVERYTHING

We all know BTS and Blackpink, right? How about notable director Bong Joon Ho and his most famous work, Parasite? Globally well-known soccer player Son Heung Min, a.k.a. Sonny? Apart from being rich, famous, and record-breaking, there is one thing that all these famous figures have in common: they are proudly Korean.

When most people think of K-Pop, BTS and Blackpink are the first groups to jump in their minds. However, many new groups have been stealing the spotlight. NewJeans, with hit songs like Hype Boy, Attention, and Super Shy, broke BTS's record of reaching one billion Spotify streams the fastest. Le Sserafim, with hit songs like Unforgiven, Antifragile, and Fearless, broke the record for the highest number of album sales in one day. A Korean indie-rock band, wave to earth, sold out on almost all their concerts for their world tour. They recently gained popularity with their vibey songs, love., seasons, and sunny days. Their recent show at the Belasco in August sold out. Even I wanted to go to the concert, but by the time I searched Ticketmaster to purchase my ticket, they were selling for \$500. It is evident that even outside of BTS and

Blackpink, Korea's music industry is breaking records back-to-back and gaining a lot of popularity worldwide.

Sports, especially soccer, is becoming a stage for many Korean players. A notable example is Son Heung Min, one of the most recognized soccer players in the world. Being named the best soccer player in Asia, Son became the first Asian player to win the Premier League Golden Boot and to score 100 Premier League goals. He is known to be one of the most likable players of all time and is even the captain of the South Korea National team and his current team, Tottenham Hotspur F.C.. Another Korean soccer player entering the global stage is Lee Kang In, midfielder of South Korea's soccer team, who joined Paris Saint Germain F.C. this summer. Some famous PSG (ex) players include Neymar Jr., Lionel Messi, and Kylian Mbappe. He first started his international soccer career in Spain, where he became the youngest non-Spanish and the first Asian league debutant for Valencia CF. He also broke the record for being the youngest non-Spanish goalscorer. The two most famous, record-breaking, Korean soccer players have made quite the impression and have a growing



A stand in a street food market in Seoul, South Korea, selling tteokbokki, corn dogs, fishcakes, and skewers. [Source: Author, Eunice Minji Choi]

fanbase worldwide.

Korean athletes are rising in collegiate sports as well. Noah Kim, half Korean and half American, is the starting quarterback of Michigan State University's football team. He is the first Korean, as well as the first Asian American, to become QB1 of the NCAA Big Ten Conference Football. With over 10 million people having the last name “Kim” worldwide, Noah Kim inspires and represents his father's homeland.

Additionally, Korean food has reached people of all ages around the world. Trader Joe's recently launched its frozen Kimbap, selling out quickly as people were eager to get their hands on a few. Bibigo, a company specializing in frozen Korean foods, has been selling in many American markets, including Costco. Local

Korean restaurants are also getting new customers. Whenever I go out to eat Korean food like tteokbokki or sulungtang, I see many non-Koreans filling every seat in the restaurant. Gwangjang Market, a popular street food spot in Korea, is receiving a lot of foreign visitors as well. I see Tiktoks of non-Korean people eating food at the market almost every day. Convenience stores in Korea have also been a part of the hype. Viral videos of convenience store drink combinations, dosiraks, and diverse cup ramen have flooded Tiktok FYPs.

Korean everything is getting more popular day by day. With many foreigners visiting Korea, buying Korean food, and listening to Korean music, I am so happy that so many people know about my country. And I hope that this representation will only continue to grow.