

Student Reporter



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Grade 12
Korea Liberal Arts School

Building Bonds Through the House Cup



Students are strategizing for the capture the flag game during the House Cup. [Source: Korea Liberal Arts School]

Sometimes, a school community can unite simply by having fun. Running, sweating, shouting, and laughing together helps students build teamwork and strengthen community spirit. This semester, as a student government officer, I had the opportunity to prepare and run a schoolwide sports day.

The Korea Liberal Arts School sports day, also known as the House Cup, is a semesterly tradition. On this day, three hous-

es—smaller student communities within the school—compete and collaborate in various sports and mini-games to foster unity and vibrance. It is one of the most anticipated events of the semester. This year, the House Cup was planned for November 14th, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the gymnasium.

Since the student government had hosted the House Cup for years, I brainstormed with

my fellow officers to ensure the event was meaningful and entertaining. We decided on four activities: a whisper challenge, a silly debate competition, capture the flag, and a relay race. Each activity was chosen to foster collaboration and trust. To prepare, we ran through multiple rehearsals and worked through extensive paperwork to solidify the plan and ensure smooth transitions between the games.

On the day of the event, the Student Government officers and I arrived early to set up the gym and gather the necessary materials. At 3:45, we turned on the music and displayed the presentation slides. At last, the event began with applause from the students. I excitedly announced the instructions and the prize—a pizza party for the winning house. The students' eyes seemed to burn with passion the moment they heard "pizza party." So, I also had to emphasize the importance of sportsmanship and collaboration to prevent the students from becoming overly competitive.

The first game, the whisper challenge, sparked a lot of laughter. Watching anxious par-

ticipants shout and guess words while wearing headphones was hilarious, and the students rolled on the ground, laughing. The second game, however, turned a little chaotic. As students debated silly topics, such as allowing kimchi smoothies, arguments broke out, and the officers had to intervene occasionally. Despite the interruptions, the students seemed to enjoy the lively game.

The third game, capture the flag, was the highlight of the sports day. Teachers joined in to balance out the number of students in each team, and everyone was fascinated at how fiercely they ran and strategized. The final game, the relay race, brought the day to a close while calming the over-competitive atmosphere from the capture the flag. Runners from each house selected the next runner by picking random mission papers, and this rule created heartwarming moments as unfamiliar students got a chance to run together and interact.

The House Cup was a big success. Not only did it foster school spirit and peer interactions, but it also taught me the value of collaboration and spirit.

Student Reporter



Jiyeon Hwang
Grade 12
John Marshall High School

LAUSD 2025 Cell Phone Ban

With advancing technology, it is an ever growing battle in education to keep students' attention on learning. As a high school senior who has now been a student of LAUSD schools for practically all of my education, I remember the slow addition of technology that seeped into our curriculum. It's the norm that students now submit their work through Schoology, the online platform where teachers can post educational content and assignments for students to access, but that was not always the case. With the slow transition from paper to technology there have been benefits, but it has its major drawbacks as well.

There have been many attempts in trying to limit students' access to their technology and what they can access. For example, GoGuardian, where teachers were able to limit what websites students could access, but it only works on school-issued technology or phone storages, where it was mandatory to put phones before entering class. Along with students' shortening attention spans, it has been a struggle for teachers to keep us focused on the curriculum. No matter what teachers or LAUSD do, since there is no serious consequence most of the time, students continue to just keep breaking the rules.

Permitted Products for Implementation

Regardless of the product selected, phones are to be turned off and stored during school hours

Stored in Backpack

Portable Storage

Magnetic Pouches

Velcro Pouches

Classroom Phone Holder







A picture showing how schools may implement this cell phone ban policy.

[Source: KTLA News Screenshot]

In my personal experience, our school does have a cell phone policy where students aren't allowed to be on their phones in class, but most of the time, the teachers can't do anything about students breaking this policy. I admit that I am guilty of being distracted on my phone or the internet on my computer when I should be paying attention.

Recently, though, schools have been taking big steps to enforce these cellphone bans, and it seems that LAUSD agrees. Officially, starting from February 18th, 2025,

students are banned from their phones, earbuds, and smartwatches throughout the school day. The way the policy is being enforced in schools may vary, but for John Marshall, they are employing magnetic pouches or making sure that cell phones are put away when you are in school. This policy means that even during our nutrition and lunch, we are not allowed to have our phones out. According to Yondr, the company that makes the magnetic pouches, 83% of schools have seen a positive impact on student engagement. Personally, I am

very interested to see how this will change things in our classrooms or if they will even have an effect at all. Students obviously don't support this policy due to various reasons, such as in the case of emergencies or the fact that it seems a little excessive to ban cell phone use even during our break times. It seems that there will be a walkout at the beginning of next semester against the Yondr pouches at Marshall. Though there are many takes on the LAUSD cell phone policy I do hope that it brings a change in classrooms across LAUSD.

Student Reporter



Kaylyn Yu
Grade 10
Chantilly High School

Turkey Bowl: Thanksgiving Korean Church Recreation

What's the number one Thanksgiving activity? For the Korean Central Presbyterian Church (KCPC), it's flag football! High school students combine their efforts to compete in Turkey Bowl, an annual Thanksgiving tournament between several local Korean churches.

Official training for the event began at the end of September, with the church allocating about two months to prepare for the tournament. Practices were held at Bull Run Elementary School, which is located less than half a mile from the church site. Starting as soon as service ended, participants split up into their appropriate team divisions for boys and girls.

With many new to flag football, it was difficult to decide whether players would suit offense or defense, but through trial and error, final members of each subgroup were designated. Training often revolved around two laps of running around the large field, stretching, repeating routes, working on strategies, and scrimmaging. Some challenging drills that were added to improve performance included flag-pulling drills, push-ups, suicides, and extra laps. Coaches did their best to allow athletes to



Turkey Bowl took place at Arrowhead Park from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and was a great experience for everyone. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

develop by demonstrating moves and providing advice. "I wanted to be more active in church and thought that Turkey Bowl would be fun. I learned all the positions and movements needed for each position. My least favorite part was definitely the running because I would always end up very tired," high school freshman Ian Chang said.

Even though it was a wholesome church event for entertainment and bonding, the Turkey Bowl entailed plenty of commit-

ment. Skipping practices were not recommended, and players were expected to acquire knowledge of game positions and rules for the best gameplay. Additionally, a mandatory weekly devotional plan was created, with consequences for incomplete devotionals. For girls, numerous extra practices were conducted by coaches to better learn techniques. Lastly, pre-rally for Turkey Bowl was required for athletes from all the churches, where they assembled as one congrega-

tion to worship a week before the tournament.

On tournament day, players arrived at Arrowhead Park at 8:00 am to check in for the first game at 9:00 am. Freezing temperatures deterred the mood of the teams, but they pushed through with their eagerness to compete, proudly wearing representative church jerseys. Multiple games were held at a single time on different fields, and later plays were organized based on previous victories. After a lunch break, championships continued to decide the final winner of the Turkey Bowl.

For seniors, it was their last chance to participate in the annual game. They shared cherishable memories in their final game this year. "I feel bittersweet as this is my last year playing in the Turkey Bowl. I had such a wonderful experience playing with these sweet sisters and will miss the many practices," high school senior Esther Cho said.

Turkey Bowl 2024 was a memorable experience for every KCPC member, with the girls' victorious championship and the boys' best efforts. The bold encounter left everyone content, and with even greater ambition for the coming years.

Student Reporter

First Time Experiencing an Economic Forum



Hajoong Song
Grade 11
International School
of Beijing



The World Youth Economic Forum invited many people who were interested in learning about stocks. [Source: Author, Hajoong Song]

As a high school student with a deep admiration for finance, business, and stock investment, I was very delighted to have the chance to participate in a World Youth Economic Forum, especially about the stock exchange.

The forum, which took place in one of the largest hotels in Suzhou, China, for five days, provided a valuable platform for learning, cooperating, and developing knowledge in the complicated nature of the stock market.

The first day of the Economic Forum began with a general committee session lesson from a financial economics professor, who taught me a solid overview of the current world trends and the functions of a stock market. It was very interesting to gain deeper knowledge that I could not have been able to learn by myself. Then, I had to pair up with other participants and had to prepare a presentation in front of judges, summarizing the lesson content. I had lots to prepare, starting from the basic concepts of an industry to a variety of tips when analyzing a company, but I cooperated well with my teammates.

During the forum, I could say one of the most engaging parts was a competition activity based on a hands-on stock market. I had to make a hypothetical investment portfolio and explain my decision about whether I should or should not invest in a specific company. This activity helped me to apply a lot of knowledge I learned from the previous lesson into a real-world-like activity,

while also experiencing many emotions as I felt I was using my own money while investing in the company.

Another valuable aspect that I learned by participating in the forum was working with other professionals or participants who all had an interest in economics and stocks. When I had the opportunity to interact with those people, I felt amazed by their passion for stocks, which made me more intrigued by the forum. Not only did I learn some valuable information about investing, but I also made friends very easily since we could share ideas that had a general passion for stocks.

It turns out that there were 1200 participants in the forum in total. Moreover, I was further amazed by the fact that this forum has been continuing for the last 12 years. During and after the event, I was determined to join the forum again next year. Next year's economic forum is going to be more engaging for sure.

Student Reporter

Breaking Free: How to Get Rid of Unwanted Habits



Chloe Je
Grade 9
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Bad habits are frustrating and difficult to break, but they aren't defining factors of your life! Whether it's something substantial like procrastination or something as small as biting your fingernails, the key to overcoming these habits lies in understanding them, taking action, and being patient with yourself. In the long search by humans to break bad habits, many proven strategies are able to help eliminate these things and build healthier, positive routines.

First, the most important part is understanding the root of your habit. Habits are often formed because they provide some form of comfort, relief, or pleasure. For example, smoking may help relieve stress, while procrastination might be a way of avoiding feelings of overwhelm. Identifying the underlying emotions or triggers that drive your behavior can help you find healthier alternatives. Self-reflection and mindfulness are useful tools for gaining insight into your habits.

Next on the list: set clear and specific goals. Don't make



Repetition is one of the most important pieces in solidifying a new habit as well as breaking old ones. [Source: Author, Chloe Je]

vague intentions like "I want to stop procrastinating" or "I need

to eat healthier." You need clear, specific, and measurable objec-

tives. Setting specific attainable goals helps keep your progress on track and stay motivated. Another common way to break a habit is to replace it with a more positive alternative. Our brains are wired to seek rewards, so instead of focusing on what you're trying to avoid, shift your attention to the new habit you are trying to create. For example, if you are trying to break the pattern of mindless snacking, replace it with healthier snacks or drink water when the cravings hit. By creating new patterns that are just as satisfying, you're more likely to stick with them.

Breaking bad habits is challenging, but with the right mindset, consistency, and kindness to yourself, it is entirely achievable. By understanding your habits, setting specific goals, and replacing them with positive alternatives, you can make lasting changes in your life. Remember, progress takes time, and setbacks are a natural part of the process. Stay patient, keep going, and remember to celebrate the small wins along the way.

Student Reporter

The Impact of Genetic Modification



Yejoon Choi
Grade 10
Northwood High School

GMOs have been around for nearly four decades, and for their relatively short life span, they have grown significantly in popularity and notoriety. Many recognize the beneficial impacts GMOs have brought to our society but also fear the unknown capabilities and side effects genetic modification might have on our environment.

The concept of genetically modifying or changing an organism's traits and phenotypes has been used for nearly 10,000 years. Humans have selectively bred animals to be more suited for living or being a sustainable food source in a domestic ecosystem. However, over time, the advancement of genetic modification grew exponentially as understanding of it increased. One of the first GMO products was a medicine cultured to treat diabetes by creating human insulin, which became FDA-approved in 1982. From then on, GMOs' promising impacts on society caused several agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate biotechnology products created through genetic modification.

Besides countries and agencies recognizing their promising future, genetically modified products have combatted mal-

nutrition concerns and dilemmas in developing countries such as the Philippines, where people lack sufficient vitamin A consumption, preventing many from developing blindness and various health complications. Genetic modification has additionally benefited the commercial growth and selling of crops, as although the development and sale of foods that provide additional nutritional values were not strongly desired, GMOs that could grow faster and withstand pesticides or stay ripe for a longer time, such as the FLAVR SAVR tomato that was approved by the FDA in 1994, which would delay the release of an enzyme that would degrade and "soften" the tomato.

Due to their exponential rise in fame, there have been many concerns surrounding GMOs that are not entirely unfounded. Some might think that the problems discussed regarding genetic modification might be concerns about "consuming food made in a laboratory." Still, such claims are not as popularly argued against for GMOs, as we not only cross-breed genetically modified plants or animals to "dilute" the organisms but a heavier concern on eating "tainted" products would come from pesticide use or pathogenic outbreaks, which genetic modification often helps in cre-



Most agricultural or food products, such as these tomatoes, come from genetically modified products, signifying the exponential rise in fame GMOs have had over their relatively short lifespan. [Source: Author, Yejoon Choi]

ating viral resistances.

The true concerns surrounding GMOs are often about their ecological impacts. Although they are contained to minimize cross-contamination with native species, proliferating GMO crops and products are spread nearly everywhere in the market and grown in hundreds of farms, which would make containing the seeds and pollen of such plants almost impossible. If not appropriately contained, many GMOs built to resist in-

sects and develop rapidly would outcompete the native flora and become an unstoppable invasive species, damaging our efforts to preserve our native species.

GMOs have become prevalent products that have changed our world's political, economic, health, and ecological aspects. They should be an invention that is not blindly supported nor irrationally feared but recognized as a novel technology that society should adapt and try to benefit from.