

Student Reporter



Kaylyn Yu
Grade 10
Chantilly High School

Announcing the Truth: Youth Church Services at KCPC



The Announcement Team dressed up for a Valentine theme for the month of February. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

Praise Team. Welcome Team. Events Team. These seem like standard church leadership roles to take on, but how about an Announcement Team? It seems like the odd one out within the group of youth church services, but should not be overlooked. In fact, the announcement portion of a regular Sunday service can create a large impact on the church, especially if delivered effectively.

Announcement time is a short break within most church servic-

es that is intended to spread the week's news to the students. Yet it is easy to become distracted during this brief period following the message and prayer, leading students to check phone messages or talk with neighbors. On that account, it is all the more crucial to engage the audience closely. Ellie Yun, a member of the announcements team, explained how she serves by "planning out the announcements and suggesting ideas to keep the announcements

entertaining, as well as going up on stage and presenting the announcements."

In Joshua Generation (JG), the Korean Central Presbyterian Church (KCPC)'s high school English ministry, the idea of an announcements team is relatively new, only adapting from the primary welcome team a year ago. As I first joined the church and sought out a way to serve in the community, I was placed in the announcements team due to the welcome team already being full. Initially, this placement made me slightly nervous, as I considered the potential changes to the environment I would be in. Although not used to public speaking, I managed to grow significantly confident and apt at handling my role as JG's representative to present the current news to the church body.

Last year, the Announcements Team mostly consisted of seniors who had graduated over the summer. As the new school year began, both the leader and member list altered completely. At first, the team went through a challenging period due to all of the former members leaving to pursue other leadership roles. I had also chosen to sacrifice the Announcements Team to join the events team, as I wanted to experience other branches of JG. How-

ever, I was convinced to return to announcements after reviewing its grave state.

Even with my recommitment, conditions were still rough, with the team only having two members. Despite the lack of members, we were able to pull through the load of sharing announcements under the guidance of our new leader. We successfully planned creative themes and games to interact with the audience and captivate their attention with news.

When the prospect of reopened leadership positions presented itself with the new year, the Announcements Team grew excited for possible additions. Fortunately, five new members signed up and connected with us right away. Harrison Kim, the new director, gave insight into his positive experience with organizing the Announcement team by remarking, "Being with the students gives me joy and really warms my heart. With the huge increase in number, we can tackle more ideas when it comes to giving the good news to our ministry! I'm very excited to see what my team and I can cook up in the future."

With extra students uniting, the announcements team sprung into motion. I am so proud to watch the team's continual development and call it my own.

Student Reporter



Emily Lee
Grade 10
Sunny Hills High School

Making Every Moment Count for Dementia Care

Dementia is a condition that robs individuals of their independence, sense of self, and most tragically, memories of their loved ones. As a volunteer from PAVA (Pacific American Volunteer Association), I made it my mission to assist elderly patients with dementia through one of the most powerful forms of support: human connection.

Walking into the Korean American dementia center for the first time was nerve-racking. Residents sat quietly, some staring into the distance, others talking in hushed voices. Unlike other volunteer activities where I usually participate alongside other volunteers, this time, I had to look after a patient by myself. Knowing that I am not the type to strike up conversations first, especially when there is a language barrier, I headed toward my patient with an uneasy but empathetic heart.

The patient I had was a very reserved woman, preferring to go about her daily tasks on her own, making it challenging to interact with and assist her. Nonetheless, I persisted by opening up conversations about herself and her life and staying beside her the whole time. Volunteers helped the residents with activities such as hand and leg exercises, making Korean rice balls, and playing Yutnori, a



All of the PAVA volunteers who cared for elderly patients with dementia at the Korean American dementia center lined up for a photo after helping the residents with a game of bingo. [Source: PAVA World]

traditional Korean board game. During these events, my patient would just stare at me blankly whenever I asked her a question, which made me wonder whether she was ignoring me or whether she could hear me. However, as I stayed with her for longer, I heard her mutter a soft "thank you" every now and then, which allowed me to feel appreciated and satisfied with my services.

One of my favorite activities I did with the residents was the karaoke session. It was remarkable to see how one familiar song could bring light back into their

eyes. A lot of the residents, even the quieter ones, would hum along and dance to the beats. My patient would suddenly clap her hands and sing softly when old jazz music was played. Although she did not join her peers as they sang and danced, she was entertained and content in her own way, which, to me, was more than enough. At that moment, I learned that music has a way of reaching individuals when words fail. It serves as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing me to realize that music builds special connections with not only



Author Emily Lee massages her dementia patient's shoulders while the patient completes leg exercises demonstrated at the front of the room. [Source: PAVA World]

the residents but with people in general.

Overall, volunteering at the Korean American dementia center has taught me that even when memories fade, emotions remain. It has shown me that kindness, patience, and understanding can bring light to even the darkest moments. This experience has undoubtedly shaped me into a more open-minded and compassionate individual, and I vow to channel these traits to further unite my community, whether through caring for these patients or assisting in other acts of service.

Student Reporter



Justin Cheong
Grade 10
North Hollywood High School

North Hollywood High Celebrates Korean Lunar New Year

Last week, my school, North Hollywood High School, hosted a Korean Lunar New Year celebration to bring students together to experience the traditions of Seollal. As a Korean student and one of the event helpers, I was excited to introduce my culture to my peers and help to ensure everything ran smoothly. Seeing students from different backgrounds participate and enjoy the festivities made the event more meaningful.

One of the most memorable parts of the celebration was the opportunity to play traditional Korean games. Many students recognized Ddakji from the TV series Squid Game and eagerly joined in, trying to slam their paper tiles hard enough to flip their opponent's. We also played Gonggi, a game similar to jacks, and Jegichagi, which quickly became a favorite. In this game, players kick a small shuttlecock-like object repeatedly to keep it from touching the ground—kind of like Hacky Sack. It was fun watching my friends compete, especially as some competitive students were truly invested in increasing their streaks.

Beyond the games, we also introduced some of the most important Seollal traditions. Students learned about sebae, a deep bow performed to elders as a sign of respect, and sebaetdon, where elders give money to younger family members after receiving a bow. As a fun twist, some students even bowed to the principal, and to everyone's surprise, they actually received a cash prize! Moments like this made the event even more enjoyable, blending tradition, humor, and school spirit.

We also served traditional Korean food, which was an experience in itself. While many non-Asian students tried and liked it, the biggest surprise was that many Asian students did not enjoy it. Those who grew up eating Korean food were just as hesitant as those trying it for the first time, which caused a laugh. It was definitely not the home-cooked Seollal feast I was used to, but it made for some great conversations.

Overall, the event was a huge success. Many students mentioned they had never celebrated



A photo of some of the students bowing to the principal for a dollar during the Korean Lunar New Year celebration at North Hollywood High School. [Source: Harold Kim]

the Lunar New Year before and appreciated the chance to learn about Korean culture interactively. As someone who grew up celebrating Seollal with my family, it was interesting to share these traditions with my school community. It wasn't just about playing games or learning customs, it was about fostering cultural appreciation and bringing students together.

Seeing how much everyone enjoyed the event, I hope our school continues to host more cultural celebrations in the future. Events like this not only introduce students to different traditions but also bring the student body closer together. Sharing one another's cultures helps us understand each other, and I'm happy to have been part of an event that made that possible.

Student Reporter

Revealing the Latest Addition to the WNBA



Audrey Choi
Grade 7
The Nueva School



A Valkyries fan wearing merch in delight and anticipation of this coming season. [Source: Author, Audrey Choi]

As the beginning of another women's basketball season arises, so does the newest addition to the WNBA league and the Bay Area community. This year, the Golden

State Valkyries—the most recent addition to the league following the Atlanta Dream in 2008—will play a significant part in the basketball season. With the Chase

Center as their home stadium, the Valkyries will play their first game against the Los Angeles Sparks there.

Valkyrie translates to “chooser of the slain,” and in Norse mythology, Valkyries were female warriors who guided the dead to Valhalla. They are known for their fierceness and strength, appearing as powerful female figures. There are several meanings behind the chosen Valkyries logo: the logo illustrates the Bay Bridge, located in San Francisco Bay, which displays their connection to the Bay Area. Additionally, the cables of the bridge, which look like feathers on wings similar to the ones that Valkyries wear in mythology, are shown in the logo. Its color, purple, represents royalty, due to the fact that the color was a rarity in the past and therefore primarily given to those of nobility.

The head coach, Natalie Nakase, was born as a third-generation Japanese-American in Anaheim, California. She attended UCLA where she played from 1999 to 2003 before starting her playing career. After graduating with a bachelor of science, she played in the NWBL as the first Asian-American. She coached in Germany and Japan before spending eleven seasons as a coach with the Los Angeles Clip-

pers and later served as an assistant coach for the Las Vegas Aces. As a five-foot-two Asian-American woman, Nakase is an inspiration to those who dream of reaching their ambitions.

Also on the team is Kate Martin, who was drafted to the Valkyries on December 6, 2024. She attended the University of Iowa where she played for the Iowa Hawkeyes from 2019 to 2024. Martin played with Caitlin Clark, one of the best collegiate players, on the Iowa Hawkeyes for four seasons before joining the 2024 WNBA season together. After being drafted by the Las Vegas Aces and playing in the 2024 season, she was picked for the Valkyries. She is known for her “team-first” attitude when playing and her selflessness. Despite this being only her second season in the WNBA, she proves to be a great player and teammate.

Hopefully, this season will be successful and entertaining for everyone who is part of the Valkyries team and those on the sides cheering them on. As women's basketball increases in popularity, so will the league and the fan base. The Valkyries will not be the last addition to the WNBA, and in the future, more fun and games will be shared among those participating this season. Let's go Valkyries!

Student Reporter

Beneficial Devices for Busy Highschoolers



Austin Ahn
Grade 10
Orange County School of Art

Throughout our school journey, the use of technology has significantly increased, whether we would use our phones to burn time, or when we substituted digital notetakers for lectures. Many students heavily rely on technology to keep up with assignments, communicate with their peers and teachers, and organize their schedules. While such devices as computers and phones have played a crucial role in our lives, they have become even more essential as work gets harder over time. My MacBook and iPhone played a major role in helping me stay productive, whether I'm completing homework or managing everyday tasks.

Ever since I got the new MacBook M3, it has been the most essential tool for my academics. Whenever I am researching, writing essays, or just completing simple assignments from math to music, it is the easiest tool to use. Adding on, having a lightweight laptop makes it easy



The thin MacBook laptop, which helps students with schoolwork efficiently. [Source: Author, Austin Ahn]

to carry around school, allowing me to easily work on projects anywhere, eliminating the hefty stacks of paper. Apps on my MacBook like Notion and Grammarly ensure that I stay efficient when studying or writing.

Deciding to get a MacBook is a hard decision among high school students with one problem. Videogames. The reason

why my peers and I bought a MacBook was our strong gaming relationship. Everybody in my circle has at least one game or even played one online. Videogames such as Roblox, Minecraft, and Valorant are ones many people at my school talk about and play for hours on end. I knew I had to stop and focus on schoolwork, since, ultimately it would play a big role in my future. “Ever since I stopped playing video games and focused on school work by buying a Mac, I've been more disciplined and on task with the school.” - Lucas Cha, a fellow student who relates. Quitting video games and relying on a minimal device ensures that I and other students trek away from a sickening reliance on video games and ultimately focus on schoolwork.

Aside from my laptop, my phone is another device I rely on, particularly speaking about my iPhone. It helps me keep track of deadlines, communicate with

classmates, and access crucial resources that I can access anywhere. Apps like reminders and the Google Calendar app allow me to schedule my tasks and stay on top of due dates. Whenever I have study sessions, I can also use my phone to play background music, helping me lock in and stay focused. Although social media apps like Instagram and TikTok can be very distracting, I make sure to discipline my mind and limit my usage, especially when I have to be productive.

Technology is an essential part of a high school student's daily life. Whether it's just students typing up a storm of an essay on the MacBook or setting reminders on our phones, these one-of-a-kind tools help busy students manage their workload efficiently. As I venture through high school through college, many rising students have a strong conviction that technology will remain a key part of their academic success.

Student Reporter

Connecting Cultures Through Traditional Music



Tae Yang Lee
Grade 9
Science Academy STEM Magnet

The lights dimmed and the crowd silenced in an instant. As the first notes of traditional Korean music filled the room, an unfamiliar yet enchanting energy captivated the audience. Row by row, the listeners start to shift their focus onto the main stage. In that moment, language and culture didn't matter, it was a reminder of music's ability to connect one another.

Sharing Korean culture through music is both a privilege and a responsibility. Musicians dedicate countless hours to mastering each instrument, perfecting harmonies, and syncing with fellow performers. Oftentimes, preparation for these events is challenging, requiring a lot of focus and motivation. However, the joy of performing and seeing pleasure on the audience's faces makes every challenge worth it. All the effort transforms into magic when the audience responds with happiness, clapping along and experiencing cultural appreciation for something they might be encountering for the first time. When listeners clap along or simply sit in awe, it is evident that all the effort is transformed into a performance that sparks enthusiasm and cultural appreciation.

The Lunar New Year event offered a perfect chance to create bridges in communities. For many in the audience, it was their



DoDream Samulnori team performing at Huntington Library. [Source: Author, Tae Lee]



Huntington's Library was greeted by a high school Sangmo performer from the DoDream Samulnori team. [Source: Author, Tae Lee]

first time hearing the dynamic rhythms and melodies of traditional Korean music. It also gave the musicians the opportunity to share a piece of their cultural identity with the audience. Cultural events like these are more than just entertainment, they are opportunities to bridge gaps and connect communities. For example, DoDream, a Korean American Samul Nori band led by high school students, performed several jaw-dropping pieces since its assembly. Buk Sori 7, a piece spotlighting all of the instruments, showed appreciation for every sound made by the players. After the piece, the viewers were visibly astonished, acknowledging

the efforts and contributions that each player made to performing the piece.

For the performers, it was more than just playing notes, it was about storytelling, conveying emotions, and helping the audience to understand their culture better. In a world that has growing diversity, sharing cultural heritage is imperative to approach community unity and respect.

Spectators, on the other hand, gained cultural insight and a new perspective for their newfound appreciation for Korean culture. Many walked away with admiration and respect, conversing with others about the musical heritage they had just experienced. The

performance fosters connections between many through shared joy and wonder.

Looking back, the impact of this performance is a testament to the power of music. It has its own unique way of stretching limits and warming hearts, providing people with the chance to experience different cultures in a welcoming manner. Sharing Korean traditions through music not only preserves cultural identity but also builds deeper connections that extend beyond personal differences. As these efforts continue, it is important to cultivate the exploration and appreciation of Korean culture, one performance at a time.