

Student Reporter

How Oxford Academy Celebrates Global Cultures



Nicole Lee
Grade 11
Oxford Academy



Oxford Academy's International Show featured various dances of different nationalities. In this performance, the Korean Culture Awareness Club prepared a 9-9-member dance to a Korean Pop song from the girl group Twice! [Source: Nicole Lee]

One of the most exciting times for Oxford Academy students is the International Week/Show, in which students of all different ethnicities are able to come together and share their own traditions and cultures. With nearly 100 clubs at the school, a great portion of them are dedicated to the expressions of various nationalities, such as the Filipino Club, Korean Culture Awareness Club, Vietnamese Student Association, and so many more! The International Week and Show play a great role in allowing these clubs to serve their core purposes and

create a sense of pride and visibility, creating a spotlight for them all.

The International Week at Oxford Academy consisted of various activities during lunch. Each day, lines had grown and grown, extending from one building to another, as the students waited curiously to see what the clubs had in mind. Starting with the first day, the OA Japanese Club had students play Kendama, a Japanese skill toy consisting of a ball and stick. It was definitely a special moment, as it served as a new experience for a great

number of the students. The next day, the Fashion Club hosted its own International Fashion Show, where students of all ethnicities modeled their traditional clothes down a red carpet in front of the large Gym stages. The show starred Korean hanbok, Indian sarrees with choli tops, Vietnamese ao dai, and more. The Fashion Show, overall, made such a large impact, as it allowed students to be open about their nationalities and excitedly wear what was out of the uniform and regular dress code. The audience additionally got to learn how the clothes differ from one another but all serve the same purpose in expressing pride of heritage. When it came to the third day, the campus was bustling with the Korean Culture Awareness Club passing out Korean foods during lunch. Students got to enjoy tteokbeokki, spicy Korean rice cakes, and Kimbap, slices of rolled seaweed with meats and vegetables. The club also distributed an assortment of Korean snacks and drinks. It was truly a wonderful opportunity for students to have a taste of foods that were either outside or inside of their comfort zones!

While the International Week was a great success, the most important final day had come: the International Show! This was a moment in which all performers

had been practicing and rehearsing for, as they would be performing in front of students of all grades as well as the faculty. The show, hosted by the International Club itself, featured various dances and music and gave detailed descriptions of each performance on the projected screen. Beginning with the Vietnamese Lion Dance, the Vietnamese Student Association came alive with four lions dancing to the beats of the drum. The lions then went onto the bleachers where the audience sat, and each interacted with the students. This performance truly gave away the most unique impression of the show! During the show, students danced to Korean Pop, Bollywood songs, and the music of Mexico. Overall, in the span of 45 minutes, nearly 100 students had the opportunity to perform and show their greatest acts. It was an integrating and inclusive show that left students blown away!

Providing International Week/Show at schools allows for the embracement of diversity, as it gives everyone a chance to share and celebrate their heritage. Students are given the chance to learn about the world in a more inclusive and enjoyable way. Furthermore, the week strengthened unity, and it was a wonderful experience for all!

Student Reporter

East Valley's Boys Baseball Team



Justin Kim
Grade 10
Science Academy
STEM Magnet



The East Valley Falcons clapping it out with Lakeview Charter Lions after the end of the game. [Source: Author, Rodrigo Casas]

As the high school baseball season is now underway, my school's team, the East Valley Falcons, has high expectations for the upcoming season. The baseball team placed 4th in the local league, with a record of four wins and six losses in the 2024 spring season. They reached the

semi-finals of the 2024 CIF LA City Section Baseball Championships but fell short to the University Wildcats seven to one. For this season, they wish to break the record from the past year and improve as a team.

The East Valley Falcons only played two games during their

pre-season due to the rain in Los Angeles. The drizzle came in random spurts throughout the week of practice, making the grass too wet for play. On the bright side, they won both of the pre-season games they played, against Hollywood and Lakeview Charter, in a very dominant fashion. The Falcons destroyed the Hollywood Sheiks fifteen to four, and the game ended at the top of the fifth inning since the difference in score between the two teams was greater than ten. This is called the mercy rule, where the team ahead by ten points after the 5th inning is declared the winner. Their second game against Lakeview Charter was a bit more interesting. The team drew first blood as they scored three runs in the first inning and continued to rack up points until the Lakeview Lions scored four points in the fifth due to the mistakes on my school team side. The closing pitcher, Gabriel Arvizu, managed to shut down their offense and close the game out eleven to six

in favor of the Falcons.

With these two dominant victories during the preseason, the East Valley Falcons hope to improve their league record from last year. They are also looking forward to winning the CIF Championship for their division in a redemption attempt for last year's run. Their catcher states, "Even with the struggles we had with two of our main guys leaving the team, we are doing fairly well. We still have most of our players from last season and we can build on with the new incoming players as we move forward"

Soon the team will face off against Reseda Regents and it will be their first away game, as all of the previous away games had been canceled due to the rain. It will be a different environment with different conditions, but they hope to get the job done and return victorious. The East Valley Falcons have a bright future ahead of them as they try their best to top the league and win the CIF Division III title.

Student Reporter

Neuroscience Q&A at Science Academy STEM Magnet



Ryan Park
Grade 10
The Science Academy
STEM Magnet

On February 28th, I hosted my first neuroscience Q&A session at my school, The Science Academy STEM Magnet. The event was about the journey of a University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) student, Ziane Djenidi, majoring in neuroscience. Arranging for the event took months, and the process remains something I need to build upon for future events.

Before I had even met Ziane, I created a club at my school called Paratus Learning. It is dedicated to giving students opportunities to explore different majors before college. A lot of the work required behind the scenes is related to networking, as I utilize apps such as LinkedIn to find potential speakers and also connect with old friends who are currently attending universities.

I met Ziane on a Sunday morning in October at the local YMCA. We were both playing basketball when we began sharing about our own lives. As the conversation went on, I learned he was studying neuroscience at UCLA and also about the research he was doing. One detail that caught my attention was how he also at-

tended a high school in Los Angeles, allowing me to connect with him on a personal level. After playing for a bit, we exchanged information and eventually parted ways.

As time went by, scheduling a set day proved to be harder than anticipated. There were many scheduling conflicts due to the constant exams that UCLA gave and the LA wildfire that forced students to relocate off campus. However, after some time, the issues cleared out and we finally had a day planned out, February 28th. Now that the date was set, a lot of preparation needed to be done so that everything could go smoothly. I had to gain approval from teachers and the principal, gather the members of 3 clubs, and post advertisements to inform the students at my school of the event. Though it was challenging to complete on top of maintaining my academics and other extracurriculars, I was, thankfully, able to handle everything in time for the day.

Due to the recent phone ban within the Los Angeles Unified School District, keeping in con-



Students in the front row are attentively listening to Ziane's presentation during the neuroscience Q&A at the Science Academy STEM Magnet. [Source: Author, Ryan Park]

stant contact with Ziane served to be a trouble. Thankfully my vice-principal allowed me to use my phone in preparation for the event. Despite my previous preparations, some of the simple things, such as bringing down the projector screen and announcing the event on the speaker, were forgotten. Though it was stressful

in the moment, I was able to accomplish all of it in time.

In the end, the event was successful with 25 student attendees. I believe the presentation was perfect for these students, as it gave them advice on college and the pre-med track and answered any additional questions the listeners had.

Student Reporter

Exploring Rights & Responsibilities: The Power of NHD



Rachel Choi
Grade 9
Orange County School of the Arts

Imagine stepping back in time and unraveling the threads of history, allowing you to bring the past to life through your own creative lens. This is the essence of National History Day (NHD), an innovative educational program that transforms students into passionate historians and storytellers. The 2024-25 NHD theme, "Rights & Responsibilities in History," allows participants to explore the delicate balance between individual freedoms and societal obligations.

On March 8, 2025, Sierra Vista Middle School in Irvine, California, buzzed with excitement as young historians showcased their unique projects at the NHD-OC Contest. From captivating documentaries and intricate exhibits to powerful performances and insightful papers, students dedicated countless hours to research, creativity, and passion. The county champions of the contest would advance to the California state contest at Sacramento State University from May 2-4, 2025, where over 1,600 students will converge in a vibrant celebration of historical inquiry and academic excellence. The most outstanding projects will earn the honor of representing California at the national competition in Maryland this June.



Asmi Aggarwal, a talented sophomore at Orange County School of the Arts, is a county champion in the podcast category and will now compete at the state level in the National History Day competition. [Source: Author, Rachel Choi]

Asmi Aggarwal, a five-year NHD veteran, and county champion, describes her experience, "For me, participating in NHD has definitely been one of the most rewarding experiences of my academic career so far; it has really provided me with a forum to openly explore my passions while also honing my own historical reasoning and research abilities. NHD always has something for



The OCSA team made a remarkable impact at the Orange County National History Day Awards Ceremony, advancing an impressive 15 projects to the California state competition. [Source: Author, Rachel Choi]

everyone, no matter how diverse your interests and mediums in which you express yourself are, and I really believe that the skills you learn while creating your project are sure to stick with you for the rest of your life."

The historical research necessary for each project often exposes the students to unexpected connections between past events and present-day issues. This enhanced understanding of history cultivates a sense of civic engagement and empowers young people to become more informed, active citizens. NHD encourages participants to exceed their own expectations by fostering confidence in their research abilities

and a lifelong interest in historical inquiry.

Lana Sawalha, a mentor and judge who has guided 15 projects to the state level just this year, emphasizes, "National History Day is all about allowing your passions to shine through the topic you choose and amplifying your voice as you decide how to showcase the narrative and bring history to life. You are sure to be inspired by each new detail you uncover, and whether it's a documentary, exhibit, website, paper, or performance, NHD gives you the chance to dive into the past and make it matter today. It's not just a project—it's your history, your way."

Student Reporter

Pros and Cons of Getting a Driver's Permit



Summer Park
Grade 10
Harvard-Westlake School

One of the most exciting things about your 16th birthday is getting your driver's license. What could be more exciting than driving yourself to meet friends and do activities? But before getting a driver's license, you need to get a driver's permit, which requires a written test. Here are some pros and cons of getting a driver's permit.

There are many prerequisites to taking the written test. The first is an age requirement, you must be at least 15 1/2 years old to qualify for the written exam. However, you must also complete a driver's education program and have permission from a parent with a valid driver's license and ID card. To the appointment, you must bring the application fee, your birth certificate, and proof of residency. There is also a vision test you must pass. Oh yeah, don't forget to make an appointment to avoid the long lines.

Though the application process is complicated, there are



Practice makes better, daily 30 minutes of driving practice. [Source: Author, Summer Park]

benefits to getting a driver's permit. First, doing so taught me how to be responsible and the importance of following rules. Missing even one of the prerequisites on the day of the written test could set you back a few

weeks. Second, a driver's permit allows me to practice driving, getting valuable tips from instructors and my parents to obtain the freedom to go hang out with my friends whenever I want with my driver's license. There

is also the benefit of opening the doors for more job opportunities with a driver's license and spending money from any job to buy your favorite stuff.

There are more benefits to getting a driver's permit, but I do want to touch on a few negatives. First, to prepare for the behind-the-wheel road skills test the DMV recommends 50 hours of driving practice, including 10 hours at night and 6 hours of driver's training with a licensed instructor, which requires you to manage your time. The additional hours to study for your tests or hang out with friends will need to be sacrificed in preparing for the test. Second, there are financial implications, such as car insurance, which is required for all drivers, and adding newly licensed student drivers can be quite expensive.

All in all, the benefits outweigh the negatives, and I look forward to getting my driver's license in the near future!

Student Reporter

Voices of Dissent: Tesla Protests Spark Nationwide



Dana Rhee
Grade 11
La Canada High School

On February 22, 2025, anti-Elon Musk demonstrators took to the streets in Glendale, California, at the Americana at Brand, as part of the broader decentralized movement known as Tesla Takedown. From 3:30 to 6:00 p.m., protestors rallied across the Tesla Dealership with chants such as "Democracy is gone!" and "Elon Musk has got to go!" These feelings were echoed in the signs that participants held up, likening Musk to a fascist leader and denouncing the CEO's affiliation with President Trump. In recent months, the movement has extended beyond the community level with voices reverberating nationwide and even taking scope in the international landscape. What started as a peaceful, grassroots movement may have inadvertently spurred a series of more radical actions, such as violence and vandalism, which have targeted Tesla charging stations, retail showrooms, and even people's vehicles.

Tesla Takedown has labeled itself a peaceful protest movement, unaffiliated with recent acts of violence against Tesla. It follows that the emergence of radical extremists engaging in sporadic acts of crime, such as arson and gunfire, is unlike the sustained effort of the larger movement in action. These individuals are like-

ly driven by personal ideologies and are held accountable by law enforcement as perpetrators of criminal acts. On March 11, 2025, at the White House Tesla showcase, President Trump agreed with the notion that those who protest against the "great American company" should be labeled as domestic terrorists. The event promotion was a response to the precipitous drop in Tesla's stock performance, which can be attributed to the backlash Musk has received since his foray into the political world. Meanwhile, Tesla Takedown protestors are encouraged by the fruits of their labor and continue to exercise their First Amendment right to peacefully protest, planning organized demonstrations.

Over 170 coordinated protests are planned to take place in the following two months. While destroying private property as a political gesture is an act of intimidation and violence that should be condemned, the right to peaceful assembly should be protected as a cornerstone of our constitution. There are parallels between these ongoing protests to an event that occurred four years ago. On January 6, 2021, a heavily armed mob of Trump supporters led a violent insurrection on the Capitol to stop the certifi-



Demonstrators from across the Tesla dealership at the Americana at Brand hold up signs condemning President Trump's and CEO Elon Musk's actions. [Source: Author, Dana Rhee]

cation of election results. Prior to the rioting, President Trump had issued a tweet that galvanized his followers to march. Afterward, he would pardon their criminal convictions and hail the participants as true patriots and warriors, but not as domestic terrorists. De-

spite President Trump's threats against Tesla protestors, demonstration efforts will not be deterred by his warnings. There exists an inherent contradiction in expecting people to refrain from retaliation after he has breached boundaries.