

Student Reporter

Church Uplifts Fullerton Assisted Living Community



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Elderly residents at Fullerton Assisted Living Community Center are gathering with smiles and anticipation as the event is about to begin. They are ready to connect, create, and celebrate with the volunteers from the church. [Source: Author, Robin Ryul Kang]

Recently, 20 volunteers from the Torrance Good Community Church went on a short mission trip to the Fullerton Assisted Living Community Center with the purpose of filling the residents with God's love. However, nobody guessed that what began as a simple mission trip would turn into a heartfelt encounter with memories and laughter. The Fullerton

Assisted Living Community Center serves over 200 seniors weekly, so our church saw it as a good opportunity to bring practical aid and emotional connection.

The MC of the event was very interactive and generous with the elderly at the community center. For example, just a single question from the crowd would grant them a surprise gift. The volunteers

hosted several short performances and worship songs, followed by a sermon from the church's pastor. During the performances, which were done mostly by students under the age of 14, the residents of the community clapped on beat, encouraging everyone on the stage. Also, packages containing daily necessities and fruits were handed out. Kyung-ja Yoon, a senior at the community who participated in the event, mentioned that she enjoyed the brush painting project the most. This activity, which lasted about 30 minutes, allowed the seniors to paint a beautiful blossom tree on a paper that quoted John 3:16. Multiple different shapes of trees came out as a result, bringing color and energy to the event while making the atmosphere feel even more joyful. After the event was over, volunteer Huiyoun Yoo recalled, "One senior showed me an old album from her younger years. She said it's the little things, like people sitting and listening, that make her remember stuff from the past."

After the event, when all the participants were asked who be-

lieved that Jesus Christ is our lord and savior; almost all of the seniors raised their hand. We, volunteers, couldn't have been prouder of our 2-hour work. Countless hours of rehearsals and practices in the church late at night were all worth it; this trip had left such a sweet, lasting impression on both the residents and the volunteers, even if it was simply holding hands or being close together during prayers. So, looking ahead, Torrance Good Community Church is planning another mission trip to either the Fullerton Assisted Living Community Center or other senior assisted living centers this coming fall. Volunteers hope to return with even more activities and support to strengthen the bonds between God and the community.

The mission may have only lasted two hours, but the connections the team made with the elderly in the Fullerton Assisted Living Community Center will linger far longer. This mission has reminded us, volunteers and participants, that small acts of kindness and initiation can spread outward in many ways.

Student Reporter

Project Muse Brings Art to South LA



Jane Yoon
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Saturday, May 31st, was a day full of bright colors, creativity, and community spirit that lit up the atmosphere at The Salvation Army Siemon Family Youth & Community Center. Project Muse, an art club under a non-profit organization called Help on the Go, and in affiliation with The Salvation Army, officially launched its mural project with a vibrant and lively Kick-Off Ceremony.

The event brought together community and club members, artists, and families to witness the start of a mural project that will soon decorate the preschool walls of the center. The celebration didn't just emphasize the mural's purpose, but also the values of creativity, education, and connection, which Project Muse stands for. Major Lisa Barnes delivered congratulatory remarks, highlighting the club's role in fostering youth creativity and empowering communities. Dr. Edwin Perry, director of the Siemon Center, also gave words of appreciation and spoke about the collaboration and teamwork that helped make this project become a reality.

After loads of laughter, music, and food, the Kick-Off Ceremony slowly ended, inviting everyone to take up a paintbrush and create the first brushstrokes of the mural. It was a moment of shared



A glimpse of the Kick-Off Ceremony: everyone paints the very first brushstrokes of the upcoming mural! [Source: Julia Jung]



Project Muse artists begin transforming blank walls into color and creativity. [Source: Author, Jane Yoon]

pride, and a signal to not just the start of a mural but also the start of a movement of youth-led initiatives and more art-based engagement in South LA.

As progress is slowly being made on the mural, bright, animated imagery is taking shape on the walls in the heart of Los Angeles. The mural aims to brighten the environment and offer an uplifting atmosphere at the preschool and the Siemon Center. Club member volunteers give their time, energy, and artistic abilities to beautify the physical space. South LA is home to many marginalized and low-income communities, and access to public art and early creative development is either lacking or

very limited in the area; Project Muse hopes to make a change to that.

As one of the co-founders of Project Muse, I believe that art is a powerful way to connect people, especially kids. When brainstorming mural ideas for the center, we envisioned something engaging, interactive, and immersive. With the goal of providing educational initiatives, we developed two distinct designs that wrap around the L-shaped preschool wall. One side features bright, animated backgrounds with elements of the alphabet, such as D for dog or B for buzzing bees. The other side incorporates numerical components with drawings, specifically parachutes carrying var-

ious objects for the students to interact with. We wanted to take full advantage of children's innate behaviour of engagement while playing and make them feel seen, valued, and inspired in doing so.

Project Muse did more than just decorate a wall—it facilitated community bonding and celebrated creative empowerment. In an area where access to art is very limited, the mural conflicts with that. It shows that children equally deserve beauty, joy, and spaces that are a reflection of them. The art has definitely brightened up the ambience of the preschool. I hope that this mural, and our future projects, can show what's possible for young people and that anyone can dream big.

Editors Column

What They Don't Want Us To Read



Rachel Chung
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Book banning is and has continued to be an issue that strikes at the heart of intellectual curiosity and wonder. It is a process that many institutions, such as the government and schools, have used to suppress certain narratives or voices within literature. Although many people carry out these efforts in the name of moral discipline, the culture of banning books has been used to silence rather than protect its readers.

Oftentimes, book banning aims to censor stories that address themes of gender, sexuality, religion, sexuality, politics, or virtually anything that may provoke uncomfortable conversations— even if those conversations are needed. For example, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* thoroughly explores themes of race, racism, and politics in the American South. In addition, Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* talks about slavery and systemic oppression. In my experience at school, I was able to read and analyze both of these books, and although these conversations may have been less comfortable than others, they were completely necessary within the context of our society today.

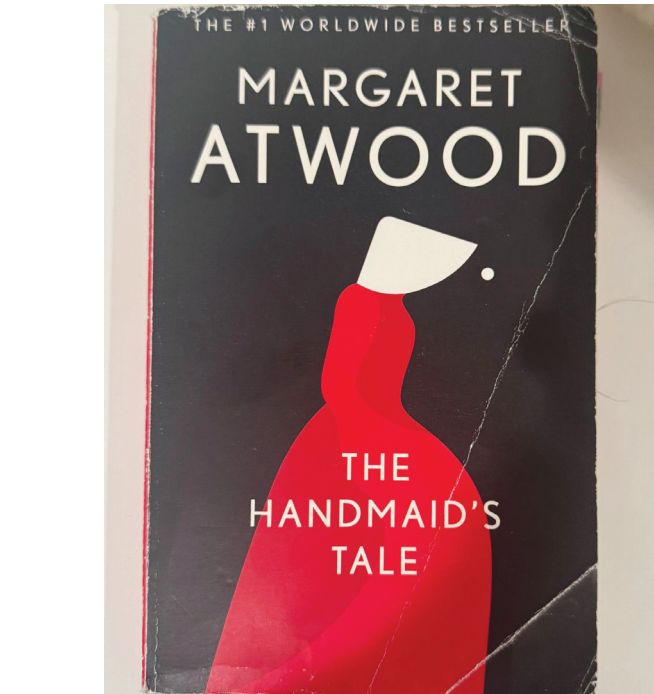
Last year, in my 11th-grade English seminar, we were given

the opportunity to read Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, which proposes a totalitarian government in which women are to be nothing more than people to bear children for the ruling class. Reading it gave us a space to explore themes of bodily autonomy and political reflection, and resistance. It also allowed us to see how fiction can serve as a warning against repeating history.

One of the main aspects of *The Handmaid's Tale* that struck me the most was how easily freedom can be replaced by fear and silence; this is exactly what banning books can accomplish. How can our society hope to move forward if we can never discuss any remotely controversial or difficult ideas?

Book banning is not simply about removing a title from a bookshelf. It is about people in power controlling narratives, and these people then deciding which voices are heard and which are not. Oftentimes, the types of books that are targeted are the ones with marginalized authors— people of color, queer authors, immigrants, women, and others who are already underrepresented in society.

Even though book banning stops the production of certain books and even prohibits them in some states, many other stu-



The Handmaid's Tale explores a woman's role within a dystopian world and serves as a warning for the future of our American society. [Source: Author, Rachel Chung]

dents, schools, and teachers still encourage their stories to be heard. These actions affirm the sentiment that reading is more than just reading. It is a form of resistance and a way of asserting a right to think for ourselves.

Ultimately, banned books matter because they propose and answer the questions that

society is sometimes too afraid to address. They ask us to confront what we try to ignore, whether that be parts of American history or the political sphere. Instead of fearing them, we should embrace them. In doing so, we defend the right for people to read freely, think deeply, and discover their own opinions.

Student Reporter

Beat the Heat with Your Neighborhood Council!



Reanna Lee
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Congresswoman Luz Rivas discusses her job as a California representative and her opinions on heat awareness to the guests of the heat awareness event in North Hollywood, California.
[Source: Author, Reanna Lee]

School is over, the sun is out, and summer vacation has begun. Before (already) worrying about the next school year, students are traveling to tropical islands, bustling cities, visiting their grandparents, and throwing pool parties with their friends. Camping trips and beach holidays are popular as

well, meaning that the next time we see our classmates, they will probably have a fresh haircut and nice tan. This, however, also means that heat safety and awareness is needed during this time—not to be the party pooper—but we can all learn in an enjoyable way!
The North Hollywood North-

east Neighborhood Council (NH-NENC) hosted an extreme heat awareness event at the Los Angeles Fire Department Station 89 in North Hollywood on the 14th of June. As the youth representative board member, I was there to help set up for the occasion, cutting and folding informational brochures, organizing the photo booth, and participating in the meet-and-greet with the guests. Different stations were placed around the venue: an arts-and-crafts table, a photo booth, a lemonade and fruit bar, and informational booths promoting different resources in the neighborhood. At the lemonade bar, guests were able to customize their drinks with flavored syrups and mint, as well as a honey straw and frozen fruit for an added natural richness. I personally made myself a peach lemonade with mango chunks—a tropical treat to start off my summer journey. At the fruit bar, there were a variety of treats to enjoy: yogurt pretzels, melon, grapes, pineapple, you name it. It was the perfect way to cool off from the blistering weather outside.

At the meet-and-greet, guests were able to get to know each of the NHNENC members present,

including me! After some idle chatter and a relaxed game of Jeopardy!, we also had a few special guests join us for a friendly discussion. Congresswoman Luz Rivas visited to speak about her job and how she represents California in the 29th congressional district. I have personally already met her from a previous visit to my school, in which she toured North Hollywood High School with her associates and spoke with our very own LAUSD Student Board Member (of 2025-2026), Jerry Yang! It was very interesting to see her discuss her policies again, making conversation with the guests in a very approachable manner, which I thought to be admirable as well. She talked about the importance of air-conditioning in the heat despite the common debate about electricity bills. I found her points to be engaging, most of which I agreed with.

I believe that there is always a fun and relaxed way of educating oneself about heat awareness and its importance. Because I also reside in California, I definitely think it is a good idea to attend events like these, spreading the word about these topics to keep everyone safe (and healthy)!

Student Reporter

Matcha Is a Good Choice For Summer



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The popularity of matcha has recently risen. There have been a lot of accounts or blogs recommending matcha cafes and how good the matcha is. Matcha has a bitter-sweet and vegetal taste, which offers a sense of refreshment. As the temperature goes up, people often look for drinks, not only to cool down but also for other benefits. Matcha helps your memory and focus, boosts energy, and improves metabolism. It also contains caffeine, which will help you stay awake when you are tired. Unlike artificial energy drinks that hurt our health, matcha helps us by giving us various health benefits.

One of the main reasons that matcha is a good option for a summer drink is that it comes in various forms. Matcha can be enjoyed chilled in smoothies, ice creams, and iced matcha lattes. The earthy flavor of matcha perfectly blends with fruits, milk alternatives, and sweeteners, providing various options for people who want to try out matcha this summer. One recommendation that has earned the likes of many is the strawberry cold foam with an iced matcha latte at Starbucks, which is perfect for anyone who wants to try a new matcha order.

Matcha is also known for its high antioxidant content. It contains epigallocatechin gallate, which helps fight oxidative



Matcha einspanner, which is one of the various forms of matcha, gives refreshment throughout the day.
[Source: Author, Chaewon Wi]

stress and brings benefits to overall health. During summer, a lot of people enjoy going out, doing activities outdoors, and are more exposed to environmental

stressors like UV rays. However, antioxidant helps protect the body and maintain wellness. So, when tanning this summer, don't forget to bring some matcha dur-

ing the session to help protect your body.

Matcha has a unique combination of caffeine and L-theanine. Unlike coffee or other artificial energy drinks, which often cause a quick spike and crash in energy, matcha gives a calmer and subtle focus boost. The L-theanine in matcha helps in relaxation while still keeping the mind awake. This makes matcha the best drink for staying energized on hot summer days without feeling anxious.

Lastly, matcha also helps in metabolism and fat oxidation, which can be helpful to people who stay active during the summer months. Matcha can help support wellness goals when it's combined with regular exercise and a healthy diet. It does not harm the body, unlike other energy drinks, which contain a lot of sugar, making it a safer alternative.

However, even with all of its benefits, matcha can bring negative effects if it's too much is consumed. Matcha still contains caffeine, which can cause insomnia if you are sensitive to caffeine. So, we have to be careful about how much we drink. 1-2 cups is perfect for a day, which is safe and very healthy for the body. The temperature is rising as the days go by; so, let's grab a matcha to feel refreshed and cool during the next few months!

Student Reporter

Inside Korea's Costco: A Global Giant with a Local Twist



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Grade 10
Sunny Hills High School

Walking into a Costco in South Korea felt nostalgic with its wide aisles, towering shelves, and that unmistakable warehouse smell. However, after just a few minutes inside, it was clear that this was a whole different Costco experience. While the layout stays true to the brand, the products were uniquely Korean, which kept me excited as I pushed the cart through each section.

Unlike the single-level layout in most U.S. Costcos, this Korean Costco had two stories. The ground level was dedicated to essentials, such as skincare, beauty products, clothing, kitchenware, and household goods. Rows of Korean sunscreens, snail creams, and hydrating sheet masks filled entire aisles, and brands like Dr. G, Manyo, and AHC were being sold in discounted bundles. There was also a wide selection of sun hats, light jackets, and even traditional kitchen tools like earthenware stone pots and rice cookers, items not commonly found in American warehouses.

Taking the escalator brought me to the underground level, where the grocery sections and

food court are located. In the refrigerated and frozen food aisles, there were typical American items like Kirkland pizzas and chicken nuggets, but among them were packs of knife-cut noodles, spicy seafood noodles, kimchi stew, and milky white bone broth soup. There was also every kind of dumplings imaginable, from beef and pork to shrimp and kimchi. The bread aisle even featured sweet red bean pastries alongside the traditional croissants. The variety was overwhelming but exciting; I was not bored for one moment during my trip here.

Out of the vast selection of groceries, the fresh sushi and sashimi were one of the most impressive parts. While American Costco's might offer a limited sushi tray or two, there were full displays of salmon, tuna, and octopus, beautifully arranged in large, shareable trays. Some included thick slabs of sashimi with soy sauce, wasabi, and pickled ginger. Others were combo sushi sets with Korean twists like crab sticks, eggs, and perilla leaves. They looked restaurant-quality and added a



Fresh sushi and sashimi trays are displayed for sale in the deli section at the Costco in Korea.
[Source: Author, Emily Lee]

vibrant pop of color in the cold warehouse.

What truly surprised me the most was the food court. While the famous \$1.50 hot dog combo still shone right in the center of the menu, it was accompanied by unique Korean options like the bulgogi pizza and tteokbokki. Although I did not try any of these dishes this time, I have watched many online reviews

reporting that they are delicious.

Shopping at a Korean Costco was like walking into a cultural remix of something familiar. It still has the scale, value, and chaotic charm of American Costco's, but it has been carefully adapted to fit local tastes. From underground food courts to shelves stacked with K-beauty, it is a shopping trip that feels global and distinctly Korean.