

Student Reporter

High School Advice from UCSF’s Medical Students



Heeyoung Kim
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The UCSF Medical Students held a Career Panel for the students about different career pathways and how to succeed in high school!
[Source: Author, Heeyoung Kim]

As summer drew to a close, students prepared for another school year filled with both excitement and stress. At a recent University of California, San Francisco summer camp for aspiring high school students interested in the medical field, the most common challenge wasn’t just academics;

it was the pressure to compare themselves to others. Throughout the week, students had the chance to hear from medical professionals and students from institutions like Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Los Angeles, and the University

of California, Berkeley. Their message was that your path doesn’t need to look like anyone else’s. One panel featured Laura Tsai, a second-year medical student at UCSF and a Harvard graduate. When asked how she succeeded in high school, she said, “High school is a time for you to figure out what you love and learn how to pursue it. Everyone has different interests. You don’t need to copy what others do just because it worked for them. Create your path.” Her advice resonated with students who often felt pressured to match the accomplishments of others, whether it was in music, sports, or national competitions. Laura’s reminder to focus on personal growth rather than competition encouraged many to reflect on their personal goals, rather than someone else’s highlight reel. During the Career Panel, UCSF medical students from diverse backgrounds shared their advice on how to handle high school and beyond. “Not everyone has the same path,” said Noah, a current second-year UCSF student. “Just because someone’s journey looks perfect doesn’t mean it’s right for you.” The most powerful moment came from Dr. Binh An Phan, a cardiologist and professor at

UCSF. He shared, “Anyone can become a doctor if you don’t give up. It doesn’t matter if you go to a top university. Many doctors working at hospitals like UCSF, Stanford, and Kaiser come from schools you’ve never heard of.” The panel closed with a lasting message from Dr. Shiva Khayambashi, a family medicine physician who loves her job. She shared a story of the beauty in her work of seeing families and how it helps her be part of a bigger picture. However, she shared a life story about one of her family patients—the father sadly passed away, leaving the family devastated. Dr. Khayambashi did her best to support the family through their loss, and after a year of the father’s death, she received a heartwarming story she will never forget. She received a thank-you note from the entire family, expressing their gratitude for her hard work. She ended her speech with this quote by Maya Angelou: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said; people forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” As students enter the new school year, this message serves as a powerful reminder: someone else’s win isn’t your loss. Focus on what makes you feel fulfilled, and success will follow.

Student Reporter

Lake Tahoe in the Summer: Reasons to Visit



Kristine Park
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When my family decided to take a trip to Lake Tahoe earlier this summer, I wasn’t sure what to expect. I’d heard people talk about its clear blue water and tall pine trees, but I never realized just how many things there are to do there, such as relaxing, hiking, or finding spots to eat. After spending a week at this beautiful location, I found myself wishing my family had stayed longer. So if you’re thinking of visiting Lake Tahoe for vacation, here’s what I learned from my own experience that might help yours! My family and I stayed on the North Shore, in Incline Village, where there are lots of shops and scenic views. On our first day, we explored the area and stopped at Logan Shoals Vista Point. From there, we had an incredible view of the mountains surrounding the lake. There were informative pictures about the Lake’s history and geography, and a short trail nearby that had a hike to take in more of the scenery, which was definitely worth the stop. On our second day, we head-



A view of Sand Harbor Beach, with Lake Tahoe’s famous emerald water and beautiful scenery
[Source: Author, Kristine Park]

ed to Sand Harbor Beach. Even at 9:00 a.m., there was already traffic, so I’d recommend heading out earlier if you want to find a good spot. By the time we arrived, people were already setting up tents and claiming their places near the

water. If you get there early, your chances of grabbing a great front-row seat on the shore are much better! One of my favorite parts of the entire trip was kayaking at Sand Harbor. The water at Lake Tahoe is unbelievably clear, as

you can see down as far as 70 feet in some areas. However, be wary of the water’s deceiving depths if you’re thinking of jumping in. Kayaking out into the lake was peaceful and beautiful, and the views felt surreal. Surrounded by mountains and paddling through sapphire-blue water, it felt like being in a giant swimming pool. On our last day, my dad and I rented bikes and took the Tahoe East Shore Trail, a trail path that winds along the lake between Incline Village and Sand Harbor. The views were stunning. Every turn revealed a small view of the lake, framed by granite boulders and tall trees. We stopped at a few scenic overlooks and even walked our bikes down to a beach for a break. It was an easy ride, but also one of the most peaceful I’ve ever taken. If you’re planning a trip to Lake Tahoe, my biggest advice is to pack layers. Even in summer, mornings and evenings, due to the elevation over 6,000 feet, can be chilly. Lake Tahoe is a beautiful vacation spot, and I would love to visit again!

Student Reporter

A Trip to Korea: Far Different Than Los Angeles



Justin Kim
Grade 11
Science Academy STEM Magnet

During my two-week trip to South Korea, I noticed many technological innovations that I had not seen during my years living in Los Angeles, from something as simple as having a pedestrian traffic light on the floor for people looking down at their phones to having a shade cloth on the curb for the pedestrians. The culture and vibes are very different compared to other Koreatowns located in the US as well. Nightlife in South Korea offers a diverse experience for teens and adults alike, with affordable costs on various activities such as noraebang, clubs, and cafes. Famous neighborhoods such as Itaewon, Myeongdong, and Hongdae have restaurants and cafes open all night for people to enjoy after a long day at work or for a young group of friends who want to just mess around. Some simple technological innovations I was impressed by were how the floor buttons on the elevators could be canceled. I also enjoyed how every elevator had a door close button that worked, as most elevators do not have a functioning close button in Los Angeles. Every elevator I have been on has been so smooth and quiet that I did not even know it was moving. They are very quick as well. The architecture of Korea has

also amazed me greatly. I was impressed by how South Korea’s traditional gate, the Gwanghwamun from the Joseon era, was preserved in the center of Korea’s largest city, Seoul. People from all over the world come and wear Korea’s traditional clothes, hanbok, and enjoy the Gyeongbokgung Palace. Not only did Korea’s traditional architecture from the Joseon days amaze me, but the massive amount of tall apartments and buildings surprised me as well, as there aren’t many tall buildings in Los Angeles except in the Downtown area. The number of places to eat on the popular streets amazed me, especially the food vendors. During the two weeks I was in Korea, it was very humid and reached up to 100 degrees. People were still out in the streets of Myeong-dong selling meats on skewers, cheese sticks, fish-shaped buns, etc. I was delighted to visit the Korean rest areas. Unlike the rest areas in the United States, where they only offer restroom facilities and vending machines, many of Korea’s rest stops are packed with restaurants serving meals people can eat, along with snacks you can grab on the go. During my trip, I noticed many cultural, architectural, and



The streets of Myeongdong are crowded with people after work hours, with not only Koreans, but foreigners as well, with many shops to buy and eat from.
[Source: Author, Justin Kim]

technological differences between South Korea and the US, and I wish both countries could improve on these traits by tak-

ing the pros from each other and straying away from the cons, and build on these to become safer and more fun countries to be in.

Student Reporter

Dentists Push to Ban Vitamin Gummies



Jaewon Lee
Grade 9
Huron High School



Chewable supplements are overall healthier and more positive than gummy supplements. [Source: Author, Jaewon Lee]

Recently, there has been a conflict between dentists and drug companies over the safety of gummy supplements for children. While exact numbers are currently unavailable, recent industry reports suggest that 20 to 50 percent of dietary supplements (such as Vitamin C and Omega-3) designed for children and teens are in gummy form. However, dentists now argue that gummies are, in fact,

more harmful than helpful. “Anything you eat that contains carbohydrates can promote tooth decay,” Dr. Youngjoo Kim at Treetown Pediatric Dentistry stated. “The longer the carbohydrate is on your tooth, the more time that bacteria can use that carbohydrate to create an acid. That acid is what causes the tooth to demineralize, which leads to a cavity. Gummies often contain carbohydrates.

What’s worse is that the gummies often get ‘stuck’ in the grooves of your molars, increasing the amount of time the tooth is at risk.” Many dental professionals like Kim have warned that gummy vitamins are essentially candy; they tend to stick to children’s teeth, and their acidic ingredients, – like citric acid, a common additive, can wear down enamel over time. Some dentists are even taking legal action against pharmacies and drug companies, claiming that their products are contributing to dental harm in children and teens. Parents, however, are caught in the middle. For many families, gummy supplements are a reliable and convenient way of giving their child all the vitamins they need in one day. But with dentists raising red flags about the truth of gummies, some are now questioning if the risks outweigh the benefits. Meanwhile, local pharmacies, drug stores, and grocery chains have started taking notice. Some companies are beginning to transition to “chewables” instead of gummies, a move Kim says is a step in the right direction for dental health. As the controversy between gummies and chewables continues, families are left to decide for themselves. While gummy supplements seem like an easy and

healthy solution, they can cause dental problems. Chewable supplements, although potentially healthier, are often harder to find on store shelves. This creates a difficult gap that parents and families have to navigate. Until clearer regulations are in place, experts and professionals recommend parents and families stay informed, read ingredient labels thoroughly, and consider alternative supplements when in doubt. “First, determine with your child’s pediatrician if vitamins or supplements are necessary for your child in the first place,” Kim said, explaining how to handle the situation. “If vitamins or supplements are suggested, ask your child’s pediatrician specifically about what is needed, how often it should be given, and what forms of the vitamin or supplement are available.” While vitamin gummy supplements offer a tasty, satisfying solution for children’s overall health, there are still risks of the supplement gummies — for example, as Kim suggests that gummies are as bad as candy to teeth because they stick to kids’ mouths. As more parents, family, and medical professionals pay attention to the situation, perhaps it is time we rethink how “healthy” supplement gummies are.

Student Reporter

LA Heat Waves Disrupt Life



Paul Lee
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Crescenta Valley High School



High school students struggling to find ways to stay cool in sweltering summer weather leads to concerns about outdoor conditions. [Source: Author, Paul Lee]

For a city famously known for its sunny days and outdoor lifestyle, LA’s annual heat waves have been growing harder to bear. While longtime residents are used to hot summers, recent years have shown an emerging trend. LA’s heat waves are not just more intense, they’re also lasting longer. For many of the city’s dwellers, this shift has quietly been changing the way everyday life works, with it being especially true for those unable to afford the luxuries of air-conditioned housing. One evident issue is that rising temperatures will always hit outdoor workers the hardest. From construction workers to LA street vendors, many people cannot afford to use air conditioning while at work. In response to problems caused by heat, some businesses have attempted to adjust their shifts to start earlier in the day, but this approach is ineffective when temperatures reach triple digits by noon. Oftentimes, there simply isn’t enough shade or water access in nearby areas, which correlates to more dangerous working conditions for outdoor laborers. Another group consistently affected by the heat is students. At public schools using outdated and

older buildings, broken AC systems can be common, which often results in students feeling uncomfortable in a learning environment. Not just students, but also teachers are forced to get through long school days in stuffy classrooms. One local student shared that during particularly bad heat waves, “It can get really hard to focus on studies and classwork,

which affects my ability to learn.” While some schools have made upgrades, many others haven’t due to a lack of funding. Although no air conditioning isn’t nearly as common as it was ten years ago, students still feel a constant disdain for hot weather. Aside from work and school, another ignored side effect of hot summers is the cost of staying

cool. As more citizens run their air conditioners throughout the day, the electricity bills can reach sky-high levels. In low-income neighborhoods, this is turning into a serious problem. For many years now, my family has struggled to pay the electricity bill for air conditioning, often relying on fans instead to stay cool. Although fans can provide a decent alternative, for families such as my own, it can be a struggle to stay cool during the hottest days. Eventually, the option to remain comfortable is only available to those willing to pay a hefty price. Some local cooling centers do exist, but they aren’t the best option for those lacking transportation. All in all, the question remains: is LA doing enough to protect residents from extreme heat? Currently, the city has made decent efforts, such as planting more trees and painting streets to reflect heat, but the annual temperature that continues to grow always seems to outrun the attempts to reduce its impact. In a future where the summer heat only gets higher, residents of the LA area hope for more impactful changes, mainly ones that are able to match the growing pace of the heat waves.

Student Reporter

LA Korean American Students’ Summer



Halyn Kim
Grade 10
Harvard-Westlake School

For many Korean American students in Los Angeles, summer offers a chance to reconnect with family, focus on personal growth, and explore opportunities. Some travel overseas to visit relatives, while others spend their time at camps, making the most of the break before the often stressful school year begins. Rising sophomore Katelyn Kim was one of them, spending her summer reconnecting with relatives in Korea. “This summer I went to Korea to visit my family because all of them live in Korea. It’s the one time of the year that I get to see them,” Kim said. “I feel like I made a lot of really valuable memories, especially with my new baby cousin!” In addition to family time, Kim also explored different academic opportunities, completing an internship at a museum and participating in a research program. When she wasn’t working, she enjoyed “playing golf and hanging out with friends.” Kim said that one of her goals for the summer was to find a balance between work and relaxation. “I feel like I want to have a balanced summer, so I think I had a little bit of academic, professional, and growth

focus,” Kim states. Similarly, another sophomore, Rianne Paek, dedicated her summer to family and personal development. “This summer, I took priority in spending my available time with family that lives far from me, including my Korean-speaking grandmother, in Los Angeles,” Paek said. Beyond family time, she joined programs that supported her long-term goals. “Most of my summer activities, such as going to camp and participating in volleyball practices, were to fulfill my personal growth focus and become a more well-rounded and ambitious person,” she said. Paek’s favorite memory was attending the U.S. Naval Academy Summer STEM Camp, where she explored her interests while meeting students across the country. “There, I met students as ambitious as me and mentors who were willing to advise me on the college application process for service academies,” she said. My own summer took me to the other side of the country. I spent six weeks at Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan, majoring in violin and performing in the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, where I was able to play



The sunset from Interlochen Arts Camp, a popular camp where many students go to in order to pursue their musical ambitions. [Source: Author, Halyn Kim]

some of my favorite orchestral repertoire. These included pieces such as Rachmaninoff’s Symphony No. 2, Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 11, and Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess. The highlight of the summer came in the final week, when I was given the incredible opportunity to perform Rhapsody in Blue alongside renowned pianist Lang Lang. Beyond the music, Interlochen introduced me

to a community of passionate, talented musicians from around the world, and I was lucky enough to meet people who became lifelong friends. Whether spending the summer in Korea or Los Angeles, many students this year spent their break with new experiences that will continue to shape their personal journeys beyond this season.