

Student Reporter

## Spend a Day at Camp Trask



Tae Lee  
Grade 10  
Science Academy  
STEM Magnet



My Boy Scout troop 173 setting up our tents for the day at our campsites in Camp Trask.

[Source: Author, Tae Lee]

This fall, Boy Scout troop 173 spent a night at Camp Trask for their annual camporee, and it turned out to be one of the most memorable weekends I've had as a scout. Camp Trask, located in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in Southern California, is surrounded by tall pine trees and clear skies, making it the perfect place for me to step away from the noise of the city and enjoy the outdoors with my fellow scouts.

As an assistant patrol leader, I had the responsibility of helping supervise and participate in all the activities throughout the day. We started early in the morning by setting up our campsite and preparing breakfast together. Cooking as a group might sound

simple, but it requires a lot of teamwork to ensure that everyone ate on time and had enough energy for the day ahead. Certain people were designated as chefs and were allowed to have helpers for their meal plan. Watching my friends work together reminded me of how simple and effective teamwork was.

After breakfast, the camp staff gathered together for the morning station games, which were designed to strengthen teamwork skills as a troop. Some stations tested our scouting knowledge, including speed-building a tent, while others were more physical and fast-paced, such as relay races and tug-of-war. I tried to encourage my patrol to stay motivated, even when we didn't win

every round. Although we didn't finish first, every member of my patrol had fun competing and bonding with other troops.

During lunch, I had the chance to talk with some of the senior patrol leaders, who shared how much effort went into planning the camporee and the feedback they received from the participants. Realizing the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes, I also spoke with several other scouts to hear their thoughts about the camp so far. It was interesting to see how other troops managed their activities, and those conversations created effortless connections that made the day even more enjoyable.

In the afternoon, campers and volunteers continued with more

games and finished off the day with dinner cooked over an open fire. The final hours of this long day were spent with free time. Some of the troops used that time for recreational activities, while the rest relaxed inside their tents. The air smelled like campfire smoke and pine trees, and for a moment, everything felt calm.

Even though it was only one night, my experience at Camp Trask taught me a lot about how to guide as a leader, while still having fun as a camp member. The day was packed with activities and fun moments that I'll remember for a long time. I hope that others can have the same opportunity I did to create lasting memories and make new friendships in similar events.

Student Reporter

## ShineLA: Rampart Village Clean-Up



Jane Yoon  
Grade 10  
Larchmont Charter School

On Oct. 25, 2025, Rampart Village at 2801 W. Sixth St. was swarmed with neighbors, students, volunteers, and city officials for ShineLA – a community initiative launched by Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass to beautify the city of Los Angeles.

Hosted at Larchmont Charter School, the neighborhood buzzed with activity from 9 a.m. to noon: trash pick-ups, tree and rain-barrel giveaways, and a resource fair offering arts & crafts for kids. Larchmont Charter families also prepared food such as tteokbokki and refreshing drinks to offer the hard-working volunteers. The event invited various schools, such as New Village Girls Academy and Rise Kohyang, and organizations like Help on the Go and Interact. Many locals near the LaFayette Park area attended as well, along with city officials, including Ysabel Jurado and Maria Durazo, who spoke a few words at the event.

Local organizations, including the Rampart Village Neighborhood Council and the offices of Council Districts, partnered with ShineLA to provide resources and encourage youth participation. The resource fair offered free items for participants and information on city services, which contributed to the event's success in impacting the community.

Personally, one of the main



Volunteers gather at the back lot of Larchmont Charter School before heading out to beautify Los Angeles.

[Source: Author, Jane Yoon]

highlights—and also my favorite—of the event was the community clean-up. I was in a group with many of my friends from Larchmont Charter School, and I had a wonderful time being able to spend time with them while simultaneously beautifying the city around me. We spent the morning sweeping the sidewalks, collecting litter, and connecting with other volunteers. Working alongside friends while doing something hands-on made the event energizing, and seeing everyone from students to families contribute to a common, greater goal made it especially worthwhile.

For those who aren't famil-

iar with ShineLA, it is a citywide program created by Mayor Karen Bass to promote cleanliness, wellness, and neighborhood pride around Los Angeles. The initiative brings together students, residents, and local organizations to participate in community beautification projects, as seen in the community clean-up at Larchmont. Its mission is to unite and strengthen Angelenos through civic connection in these events.

If you are looking to get involved in your community, ShineLA offers an easy starting point as its events are always held on the fourth Saturday of each month. Unlike many volunteer opportu-



Friends from Larchmont Charter School team up and clean a littered alleyway in Rampart Village.

[Source: Author, Jane Yoon]

nities that require long commitments or specific skills, ShineLA events are always open to anyone willing to help. Whether it's picking up trash, handing out supplies, or talking to residents, every role counts in bringing Los Angeles together. Participating also helps teens connect with people outside of their usual circles —city workers, local leaders, and volunteers— which allows room for networking and shows the result of civic engagement. Events like that at Rampart Village show that giving to the community isn't complicated at all; all you need to do is put in a few hours of your time during the weekend to help your neighborhood.

Student Reporter

## Echoes of Language and Identity



Sarah Li  
Grade 11  
Crean Lutheran High School

I am an echo. I never make the first sound, but I hold them. Whenever it is mentioned, people often think of the word "repetition." But to me, "echo" means far more than that. I live in silence after a voice fades. I remember and absorb different voices around me, balancing them simultaneously.

Since I was a toddler, multiple voices surrounded me: Korean from my grandparents, Mandarin from my parents, and English from school. My grandmother's stories lingered in my ears, just like the melodies of my favorite song. She would tell us the history of Cheuseok (Korean Mid-Autumn Festival), how to make Kimchi, and her laughing and running barefoot on the muddy floor. My parents used to read Chinese folk tales like The Cowherd and the Weave Girl beside my bed, teaching me the pronunciation and meaning of the words I didn't understand.

I always fell asleep before the story ended and dreamed about the story too. The huge alphabet chart and colorful posters in my kindergarten classroom introduced me to English.

Many students around me, whether in school or the community, share my experience: balancing multiple cultures and languages. I've seen how my classmates struggle to understand and communicate in English, but also how language brings us together. Recently, I noticed my new classmate from China was perplexed by the lab instructions in chemistry class. She kept looking back and forth between us, searching for help. She picked up the pencil and put then put it down multiple times, confused by unfamiliar English words. I moved my seat beside her and whispered the steps in Mandarin. After the experiment ended, she grinned at me in a relieved way and thanked me for

translating. At that moment, I realized the voices of cultures that shaped me formed my own voice, a voice reflecting and assisting others.

During the weekends, my family used to visit my grandmother. The house would be filled with laughter, the scent of my favorite foods, and I would get to make dumplings, which is a skill she taught me. When I was folding and pressing the dough yesterday, it reminded me of her teaching me to knead it countless times. Her wrinkled hands would guide my small hands and move in a perfect rhythm, folding and sealing the dumplings into a perfect shape. Now, I can no longer hear her gentle instructions, but I still quietly make dumplings in the kitchen. Each fold and pinch of the dough reminds me of her presence, as if she never left us. After her voice faded, I carried everything she taught me.

Many people's lives are filled



These are dumplings I made – my grandma said they looked just like hers, the words she spoke echoing in my mind. [Source: Author, Sarah Li]

with echoes – voices of many cultures and languages. Balancing cultures is not only about expressing ideas in multiple languages, but about carrying traditions and helping one another.



Student Reporter

## What Intergenerational Cooperation Means to Me



Angel Song

Grade 11  
Harvard-Westlake School



We filmed individual shots as well as group interviews for the intergenerational leadership video featuring older and younger leaders from Los Angeles. [Source: Author, Angel Song]

As a youth representative on my neighborhood council, I frequently discuss pertinent community issues with older members for the betterment of our neighborhood. This has taught me the importance of good communication

with older representatives, who all have wisdom to offer in return for my perspective. As such, I was pleasantly surprised earlier this year when the Institute for Citizens and Scholars, an organization I'm working with, reached

out to offer an opportunity to spend a day filming a video covering intergenerational leadership, featuring both youth and older leaders.

My role was to share my own experiences working with older members of my community, which came naturally because of my involvement in neighborhood council initiatives and large-scale events like the 2025 Los Angeles Congress of Neighborhoods. I was excited to participate as I've observed how persisting generational differences often discourage youth from taking important civic roles, and I hoped my participation in this video would encourage more of my peers to take active community positions.

Along with three other youth leaders, I arrived at the studio to prepare for the main filming portion of the day. Each of us partnered with an older talent and shared our previous experiences with intergenerational work, sometimes being asked questions by the director as needed. I was glad to share much of my own positive experiences working with others, and also hearing from my partner about how she worked with younger changemakers. The highlight of

the day was discussing what we each wanted from one another, addressing the overarching topic of what leaders expect from those around them.

This opportunity was entirely new to me, but I learned a lot that day, both from my peers and older community leaders. It was helpful to hear the honest perspectives of older changemakers, as now I feel confident knowing what many of my other changemaking colleagues wanted from each other. I was glad to have gained new insights from this experience, and it taught me that there are many more ways to spread awareness about youth leadership other than community events, workshops, and booths.

Ultimately, I'm happy that I was not just able to share youth points of view on a majority-adult neighborhood board, but also reflect on the intergenerational relationships I've built over the years. Knowing that this video will soon be featured on PBS NewsHour, I hope it empowers both younger and older community leaders to better understand each other's perspectives and experiences. I now feel one step closer to inspiring youth nationwide to take initiative and assume civic leadership roles.

Student Reporter

## Students Participate in OCSA's Annual "Thriller"



Ava Je

Grade 8  
Orange County School of the Arts

"Thriller" is a classic Halloween song by Michael Jackson and is well known for its sensational music video, where he transforms into a werewolf zombie in a horror film. The song was released in 1982 and, since then, has become a classic, timeless hit beloved by many, especially by the students and faculty at my school.

Every year, Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA) performs "Thriller" in the center of the school on Halloween. Students either participate in the famous dance or enjoy the event by watching and filming it to keep a part of this unique memory. This long-standing tradition allows for both new students and returning ones to experience an unforgettable school-wide event that is fun and memorable.

So that students are ready to perform their best on the day of the big event, they are taught the famous dance routine by their elective teachers. Since most electives are different types of dance, such as jazz, ballroom, and tap, most already have a minimal understanding of dance. Students learn the choreography to "Thriller" instead of their normal class routine during the week before Halloween.

Since Halloween was on a Friday, students got an extra-long



Orange County School of the Arts students gather outside to perform the annual "Thriller" dance together for Halloween. [Source: Author, Ava Je]

lunch because of the special Friday school schedule, allowing more time for fun and memories. Everyone went around to compliment other people's costumes and to connect.

During the second half of lunch, it was time for the extraordinary event everyone was looking forward to. Slowly, a giant crowd formed as all of the students gathered together to watch or perform "Thriller," with everyone cheering as the beginning of the song began to blast through

the speakers.

What made it especially memorable for me was the view that I had. When I looked around, I could see the extra huge clump of students all in sync, dancing together while laughing and having loads of fun. I also saw the sea of phones behind me, all trying to record the moment that they could only experience once a year. At my old school, Halloween wasn't celebrated much, so seeing this event for the very first time changed my view on

the holiday forever. I was able to experience what it is like to see all of my classmates, friends, and teachers dressed up as something else than what they usually wear to school.

In the end, I had the opportunity to participate in something truly special and unique, which turned into a memory that I can look back on. It's after Halloween now, and I already cannot wait to go back to school to talk about the things I did that day, and to get to see "Thriller" again next year.

Student Reporter

## The Performative Male: Meme or Trend?



Reanna Lee

Grade 11  
North Hollywood High School

Tote bags, feminist literature, matcha lattes, and wired earphones — all items that can be spotted at a local bookstore. But what if these were combined into a single person? They would be found on someone called a "performative male," in the words of Gen Z internet users. If this term doesn't sound familiar, here's a breakdown:

Characterized with baggy jeans and emotional sensitivity, the performative male is a term that describes a popularized archetype of men that first arose on social media earlier this year. Typical traits include the aforementioned as well as a progressive lifestyle and enjoying female indie music artists. This trend created a population of men seeking to aesthetically appeal to women through the image of an educated and politically aware person. Amusingly, because more and more men are being seen using this rather mindless strategy to pursue romance, many have joked about them online for their typical traits.

However, as this meme of

the performative male cruises around the internet, another aspect of it is surfacing with appreciation: fashion. A performative male is never complete without his outfit. This may include a polo shirt, flannel, baggy jeans, Doc Martens, and of course, a carabiner and keychains (such as a Labubu) to accessorize a belt. Although these clothing items are commonly worn in today's society, the rising image of the performative male has led to them being associated with the meme. It has grown so popular that schools are using it as inspiration for students to participate in school spirit. On Oct. 29, North Hollywood High School (NHHS) hosted a performative male contest in the main quad as part of a Halloween spirit week. The winner received a Raising Cane's coupon for a combo meal, all provided from the school's very own intervention coordinator. Tote bags replaced backpacks, and earphones replaced AirPods all around campus that day, making everyone a copy-and-paste figure.



The Performative Male contest hosted in North Hollywood High School's main quad as part of the school's spirit week. [Source: Author, Reanna Lee]

That day was a fun opportunity for students to get creative and demonstrate their interpretation of the performative male trend. Pictures of the event were featured on NHHS's social media pages, where students also interacted through comments and shared their thoughts. It was quite lighthearted and further proved how large a trend can grow.

Because the performative male image has grown popular

among young people, many are also taking it as an opportunity to explore new music, particularly those that are recently mainstream: Clairo, Laufey, Beabadoobee, Mitski, and other indie artists. However, whether people decide to view this meme as inspiration or a topic to joke about, it is certainly agreeable that it has dominated (and possibly will continue to influence) a great portion of the internet.