

Student Reporter

Fun, Food, and Learning at Korean School Bazaar



Amber Lee
Grade 10
La Mirada High School



The main area of the Bazaar, where all the booths were set up for the students to purchase delicious food, was a hit with students.
[Source: Author, Amber Lee]

If anyone attending the Fullerton Korean School branch of the Korean Institute of Southern California is asked about their favorite event of the year, their answer would most likely be the Bazaar Festival. This highly anticipated annual event always brings the Korean School community together through love, fun, and delicious food.

The purpose of the Bazaar is

to raise money for the Korean School while letting kids have fun. Everything at the event is sold with tickets, and one ticket equals one dollar. Thus, before going from booth to booth and buying delicious treats, one has to go to the ticket exchange booth to trade their money for tickets. It was amusing to see kids waiting in line to get their tickets, squirming on their little feet and wanting to go buy food

as soon as possible.

The grand bazaar menu included items like tteokbokki, bulgogi tacos, kimchi pancakes, buchupancakes, fish cake soup, sausages on a stick, caramel macchiato, Italian soda, coffee, tea, chips, ICEE pops, and more. The parents and teachers worked together to prepare the food and set up the booths, which helped make the taste of everything even more delicious as it was made with care.

Since I volunteer as a teacher assistant (TA) for a 4th-grade class, I was only able to enjoy food for myself after guiding all of the students out into the main area. Before letting them into the Bazaar, the teacher and I had informed the students on how to spend their tickets wisely, as well as to not make the event a chaotic mess by following rules and staying in line respectfully. I then watched them run out in excitement, which reminded me of the past years when

I was a student here myself, excited to go explore different booths.

With the other TA that I work with, we bought tteokbokki, kimchi pancakes, buchupancakes, sausages, Italian soda, and some chips. We sat next to our students and enjoyed the delicious food together.

At the end of the day, when the Bazaar Festival finished, I realized how a little event can bring so many smiles to students' faces, as well as my own. When I was younger, I liked the Bazaar because we all got to eat food and skip class time. Though after becoming a student volunteer, I realized how much time and effort it takes for the staff, parents, and TAs to put the event together, strengthening my gratitude towards them. Watching my kids laugh, enjoy the moment, and show me the food they bought was truly precious and reminded me of why I work at this Korean School as a TA.

Student Reporter

Students “Just Keep Swimming” in Finding Nemo



Ava Je
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Orange County School of the Arts

Every year, Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA) hosts multiple musical theater performances. Over the past few months, the Integrated Arts Conservatory middle school students auditioned and worked hard as they practiced for the show “Finding Nemo Jr.” by Disney Theatrical Productions and Music Theatre International. The musical is an adaptation of Pixar’s 2003 hit “Finding Nemo,” well-known and loved by many. On Friday, November 14th, and Saturday, November 15th, students showcased their efforts on stage. With a full audience filled with family and friends, students performed in a total of three extraordinary shows, one on Friday and two on Saturday.

I had the special opportunity to see their second show on Saturday. It was especially thrilling because it was my first time seeing an OCSA musical theater performance, as I recently transferred to the school. Students at my old school were not as interested in theater as OCSA students, so I was amazed by the amount of effort



The Finding Nemo Jr. cast members pose on stage for a photo with friends and family after the show.
[Source: Author, Ava Je]

put into the production. Moreover, it was entertaining for me because I got to see all of my classmates and friends display their talents onstage.

But above all, the costumes and props that the costume designers incorporated into the show were my favorite. The two directors of this spectacular performance were able to rent special puppets from a profes-

sional company. All of the main characters received puppets, which were made out of fabric and were created to rest on the shoulder, with a moving mouth controlled by a clamp or string held by hand. These included Nemo, Marlin, Dory, Crush, Bruce, and Anchor.

The other props were very creative as well. For example, some of the background char-

acters held clear umbrellas with colorful string lights attached to the bottom, so when the stage lights turned off, they looked like jellyfish. Another innovative idea that I noticed was that on both sides of the stage, pool noodles were cut and stuck together at different lengths so that they looked like coral and sea anemones, which represent the wildlife in Nemo and Marlin’s habitat. Small, imaginative ideas such as these made the show so much more entertaining to watch.

After all three productions, one of my friends who was in the show shared with me how she felt after she finished, “I thought that the puppets were really cool and unique to the show, and it was very exciting because it was my first full musical at OCSA.” Her view on the show motivated me to audition for OCSA’s next musical theater performance, and I cannot wait for my school’s next production. In the end, the performance of Finding Nemo Jr. was especially engaging because of the artistic talent and the chance to get to see my classmates on stage.

Student Reporter

My Dog, My Teacher: A New Perspective



Sarah Li
Grade 11
Crean Lutheran High School

Have you ever learned something meaningful at some point in your life? Most people would mention a great leader, a president, or a role model. I, on the other hand, learned mine from someone who drapes in a white fur coat, sleeps for most of the time, and can’t verbally express ideas – my dog. Surprisingly, observing his daily behavior whenever I’m bored has gradually taught me about carpe diem and persistence.

Every day, he has his own “morning routine.” First, he stretches by lying on his chest while raising his hips high. Next, he shakes himself awake. Lastly, he walks confidently to the living room and wiggles his tail to get my attention. He never cares about what happened yesterday or gets anxious about the unknown future. He always lives in the moment and focuses on what is in front of him – in other words, carpe diem – rather than what “occurred” and what “will occur.” This small routine made me reflect on how I start my day. I usually begin by feeling stressed about

past tests that I think I failed. I’m also overwhelmed by upcoming homework, deadlines, back-to-back quizzes, and projects. I get anxious about what I can’t change and miss out on the present moment. My dog’s behavior of cherishing the present demonstrated the power of enjoying the moment. It prevents negative feelings from lingering in my mind and clears my head so I can focus better, which increases productivity. This way of thinking turned out to be very useful during my current hectic junior year.

Perhaps the thing that inspired me the most is my dog’s incredible persistence, showcased through his daily actions. Whenever his favorite toy ends up just under the couch, he never gives up. He’ll run from one side of the couch to another and attempt to squeeze his whole body underneath it to reach the toy. If all these methods don’t work, he doesn’t just walk away. He either barks till I notice him or thinks of alternatives: using his paws to nudge the item closer. I used to laugh



My dog napping during the day shows him living in the present without worrying about the past or future, something he has helped me learn to do.
[Source: Author, Sarah Li]

at his stubbornness, which is apparently perseverance. Yet, I came to understand that I seldom apply the same dedication when dealing with the obstacles I faced. When encountering difficult homework problems, especially math, instead of persisting and approaching them from different angles, I have the tendency to quit. I’m used to telling myself that I can never figure out the answer or that the question is too challenging.

My dog’s behavior reminds me that success is a gradual process that doesn’t happen instantly; it comes from patience and consistent effort.

I never thought my dog would be a life mentor who would assist with my personal growth, but he did. Sometimes the precious lessons don’t come from complicated books but from small things around us that we often neglect to see.

Student Reporter

NohoHacks’ First Hackathon: Ready, Get Set... HACK!



Reanna Lee
Grade 11
North Hollywood
High School



All of the NohoHacks Hackathon attendees in a final group photo as a closing to the event. [Source: Somin Kim]



The first-place winning team of the GenAI track category, Pong Posgotchi — a project focused on solving bad posture in teenagers and adults — posing with their prizes and the panelist judges. [Source: Author, Reanna Lee]

On Nov. 15, North Hollywood High School’s (NHHS) computer science club hosted its first “hackathon.” The club, named “NohoHacks,” was founded this year in the hopes of immersing high school students in the world of technology. However, the idea of hosting a hackathon was born back in 2023 by head organizers Claire and Lauren Han, seniors in the Highly Gifted Magnet (HGM) at NHHS. The twin sisters, alongside HGM junior Jasmine Walia, collaborated together in order to plan and bring this project to life. With over 60 attendees, the event fostered inspiration and creativity in the school’s practice gym.

Claire and Lauren Han, both

passionate about computer science, had attended multiple hackathons when they were beginner coders, but never felt sufficiently supported by their managing team. “This, along with our school being Title 1 with no direct access to the tech industry, prompted us to create NohoHacks,” said Claire when asked about the thought process behind the creation of the club. Lauren had a different but equally impactful approach: “We liked how hackathons let you build something real in a short amount of time and work with other people,” she said. “We felt that North Hollywood could benefit from something like that, so we wanted to bring

a beginner-friendly hackathon to our school.”

Participants of the hackathon consisted of students from the STEM Magnet, HGM, and the School of Advanced Studies (SAS) at NHHS, as well as students from other schools in the county. Participants worked in groups of two to four to program a fully-functioning web service in an attempt to solve a real-world problem in just 12 hours. Addressed issues included physical health and wellness, mental health, fast fashion, and veteran communities, all of which required critical thinking skills and innovative mindsets to come up with creative solutions

on the spot. To further support the participants, NohoHacks also arranged for students from UCLA and USC to mentor and guide them on their work. The best three projects, decided by a panel of judges, received prizes and certificates, including the latest iPads, HP laptops, keyboards, AirPods, and FUJIFILM cameras; all of which were funded by the many NohoHacks sponsors.

How the organization team gathered these sponsors was certainly impressive: companies such as Panda Express, Raising Cane’s, Ume Tea, Taboola, and Costco supported the hackathon by donating money and providing food to be served while participants coded away at their computers. Walia commented on the process of obtaining these sponsors: “This team helped us manage the workload; some stayed after school for hours calling countless restaurants to ask for sponsorships, while others helped market our event through videos and classroom visits.”

Overall, the hackathon was considered a general success by many who attended, and in the words of Walia, they “can’t wait for next year!”

Student Reporter

East Valley Girls Volleyball Team Making School History



Katie Lee
Grade 10
The Science Academy
STEM Magnet

After months of intense games, practices, and endless determination, the Girls’ Volleyball team at The Science Academy STEM Magnet and East Valley High School has made school history by winning the CIF Division 2 Championship title. From early morning to after-school practices until 6:00 PM, the girls’ hard work all paid off. From weight rooms to challenging drills, these moments challenged the girls every day, allowing them to find a new strength in themselves. Their journey was anything but easy. Through every challenge, the team continued to give it their all and kept building on their team chemistry to bring out the best on the court. Now, they stand proudly as champions, securing a title never before achieved in my school’s history.

This season was filled with many unforgettable memories that showcased the team’s growth from the beginning of the season. Both Varsity and Junior Varsity had a strong team bond. From the first match of the season to



The East Valley Girls Volleyball Team, after winning their championship game, brought home the title ‘Girls Volleyball CIF Division 2 Champions’. [Source: Author, Katie Lee]

the championship game, the girls proved they were capable of facing any challenge. They battled tough opponents and adapted their play style throughout the games. Each one played boosted their bond - whether celebrating a point or reassuring a teammate after a mistake. The girls also celebrated their seniors with a gift basket and poster showing gratitude for what they have done to positively impact the team. By the time the playoffs arrived, the girls were

ready, ultimately earning the top seed in Division 2.

The road to the title went through North Hollywood High School in a thrilling semifinal match. For the first set, both teams were filled with the energy of a potential championship berth the following Saturday. The crowd for both North Hollywood Huskies and East Valley Falcons was filled with excitement and tension as both

teams were blocking, digging, and hitting the ball very effectively. The Huskies won the first set, but that didn’t stop the Falcons as they bounced back to win sets 2 and 3. The Falcons lost the 4th set 24-26, ultimately bringing the game to the decisive 5th set. Both teams gave everything they had to win the last 15 points. The Falcons brought home the win with a score of 15-11, winning the match 3-2.

The CIF Championships game was the moment the East Valley team had worked toward all season, ready to bring home the title and make everyone proud. From the very first serve, the atmosphere in the gym was tense. With many supporters on the bleachers cheering them on, the Falcons won the first set 25-17, the second set 25-19, but lost the 3rd set 23-25. The Falcons rallied behind their coaches’ words of encouragement and the roar of the crowd to win the 4th set 25-8, bringing home the title ‘Girls Volleyball CIF Division 2 Champions’.

Student Reporter

The Death of Uber: Waymo



Tae Lee
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The Science Academy
STEM Magnet

For more than a decade, Uber has been seen all over American streets. It quickly became a common mode of transportation for citizens, but today, as fully autonomous vehicles start being implemented on our roads, human drivers are becoming less noticeable. Waymo is a software company owned by Alphabet, which is Google’s parent company. Since 2020, Waymo has been developing robotaxis that do not require a steering wheel or a driver. With improving technology, many citizens question whether Uber’s era is coming to an end.

Walking through Koreatown, I noticed a pedestrian staring at a Waymo vehicle navigating a tricky left turn. “I never thought I’d see the day a car drove itself better than half the people I know,” she said. “Honestly, if this keeps up, Uber drivers might have competition, maybe even be replaced.”

Waymo’s pitch is simple: safer roads, cheaper rides, and consistent service, all without rely-

ing on humans. For many riders I’ve spoken to, their statement resonates deeply. One customer I interviewed outside a local grocery store told me, “I used Uber for years, but it was never consistent. Every ride had a different driver, and the waiting time felt longer. Waymo shows up exactly when it says it will. No small talk, no surprises.”

Others, however, still feel apprehensive. A friend of mine, who frequently orders rides late at night, shared her mixed feelings: “I like the idea of fewer errors, but something is unsettling about getting into an empty car. With Uber, there’s always someone to say hello to, someone to keep you grounded.”

During school, I pitched a discussion idea regarding Waymo’s impact on Uber to my friends at lunch, which erupted into a full-blown debate. One friend, who was always interested in preserving tradition over change, argued that autonomous cars threaten the livelihoods of thousands. “People forget that Uber



Alphabet Inc.’s Google Waymo makes a turn without a driver in the vehicle. [Source: Author, Tae Lee]

wasn’t just about convenience,” he said. “It gave a lot of people a way to earn when they had nowhere else to go.” Another friend countered that technology has always replaced jobs while creating new ones. “You can’t stop progress because it makes us uncomfortable,” he said.

As these conversations continue, one thing is undeniable: Waymo has tapped into the flaws that built up beneath Uber’s surface of unreliable pricing, inconsistent driver quality, and safety concerns. Unlike previous com-

petitors, Waymo isn’t another human-centered service trying to out-Uber Uber. Rather, it represents a different view of transportation.

In my point of view as an everyday citizen, the story isn’t as simple as “Uber dies, Waymo wins.” What seems to be dying instead is the outdated idea of labor, unpredictable availability, and fluctuating costs. With improved technology, we may be witnessing the birth of a more automated society, more efficient, and a step towards the future.