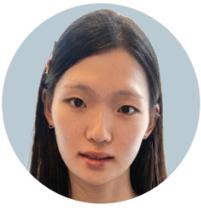


Editors Column

Sunday Mornings at Los Angeles Farmers Market



Sora Ju
Grade 11
Geffen Academy

For many, Sunday mornings might bring to mind late morning sleep-ins and coffee runs. But for many Angelenos, including my mom and me, it means farmers' markets. There's something quietly magical about strolling together, tote bags in hand, past stalls overflowing with colorful fruit and vibrant greens. In a city known for its fast pace and takeout culture, these markets are a rewarding reminder that the simple act of buying fresh, local produce can nourish more than just your body—it also feeds your community and can brighten your spirit.

Two of my favorite markets, both bigger than many others, are the Hollywood Farmers Market and the Brentwood Farmers Market. Hollywood's market, open Sundays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. along Ivar and Selma, feels lively and neighborhood-centered, with musicians playing in the background and locals weaving between stalls. Brentwood, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Gretna Green Way, has a polished, West-side charm but still offers the same abundant seasonal bounty—fresh citrus, strawberries so sweet their fragrance fills the air



Even before the city fully wakes, Los Angeles has a secret ritual: Sunday mornings spent wandering rows of seasonal fruits, avocados, and fresh-baked loaves of bread at its farmers markets. [Source: Author, Sora Ju]

surrounding the market microgreens, flowers, and a rainbow array of homemade dips, yogurt, and all sorts of interesting ethnic culinary items. Families of all backgrounds bustle around the colorful stalls, painting a lively scene that encapsulates the captivating diversity that characterizes Los Angeles.

The joy of farmers' markets lies not just in the shopping, however, but also in the experience. Taste-testing whatever's in season, discovering new flavors,

and supporting local growers is instantly satisfying. Many of the city's established restaurants that are famous for their high-quality ingredients source produce here, so every purchase contributes to a bigger cycle of sustainability and culinary excellence. Santa Monica's Wednesday market, for example, is produce-only, well-known for catering specifically to famous chefs in addition to locals who value freshness above all.

Beyond fresh produce, though, farmers' markets also provide a

rare transparency in how food travels from distant farms to our very own tables. Casual conversations with the local vendors, whether about how the berries are grown, what's next in season, or how the weather has shaped the recent harvests, create a sense of trust that simply cannot be obtained in ordinary grocery store runs. These small interactions turn routines like shopping for this week's ingredients into a personal experience that supports others' livelihoods as well.

For me, the most rewarding part is ritualistic: Sunday mornings spent wandering the aisles with my mom, sampling fruits, picking up vegetables, and sharing little discoveries. It's a chance to slow down, connect with our neighborhood, and feel the tangible impact of supporting local farmers. In a city that can sometimes feel overwhelming and superficial, farmers' markets are a rare space where community, flavor, and mindfulness intersect; every visit is a small but meaningful reward. Regardless of the time of year, paying a visit to one yourself makes for a beautiful experience of nature's seasonal gifts!

Student Reporter

Hosting the Annual KAIAC Festival



Sungwook Ryu
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Seoul International School

On Tuesday, March 10, students from international schools across Korea gathered at Korea International School (KIS) for the annual KAIAC Band Festival. The festival is a large performing arts event where multiple schools come together to share their music and perform for judges and audiences. Many schools attended the festival, including Seoul International School (SIS). For the SIS band members, the performance represented weeks of preparation and teamwork.

Leading up to the festival, the SIS band spent most of the second semester preparing for the performance. For about two months, students practiced with their instruments and worked together to improve their ensemble sound. The band focused on two main pieces: Chant Rituals and Mad Dash. These songs required strong coordination between different sections of the band, including woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Students practiced to stay in rhythm, balance their sound, and perform confidently as a group.

The day of the KAIAC Festival followed a busy but exciting schedule. When the SIS band



KIS, where students from other schools performed their instruments, was an exceptional experience for those who attended. [Source: Author, Sungwook Ryu]

arrived at KIS, they were assigned a homeroom where they could store their instruments, relax, and eat before performing. The room also gave students a place to warm up and mentally prepare for their performance. Although some students were nervous, many were also excited to finally perform the pieces they had practiced for weeks.

After getting ready, the SIS band moved to the stage to perform for the judges. Perform-

ing in front of an audience and professional judges can be challenging, but the band members focused on their music and supported each other. Their performances of Chant Rituals and Mad Dash showed the effort and practice they had put in throughout the semester.

Once the performance ended, the judges provided feedback on what the band did well and what they could improve on. They highlighted strengths, such

as the group's energy and teamwork, while also pointing out areas where the band could further develop its sound and timing. This feedback is an important part of the KAIAC Festival because it helps students learn and grow as musicians.

After performing, the SIS students had the chance to watch other schools perform. Listening to different bands allowed students to experience a variety of musical styles and techniques. Many said it was inspiring to see musicians from other schools performing at such a high level.

The KAIAC Band Festival is not only about performing but also about bringing together students who share a passion for music. Schools across Korea gather to celebrate creativity, teamwork, and dedication to the arts.

For SIS band members, performing at KAIAC was a rewarding experience. After weeks of practice, they were able to showcase their hard work on stage while also learning from other talented students. The festival gave them valuable performance experience and created memories they will remember long after the event.

Student Reporter

My Experience Performing at Disney Concert Hall



Paisley Park
Grade 10
South Pasadena High School

What would it feel like to be a young musician performing in one of the most iconic music halls in Los Angeles? In the summer of 2025, I was elated to be chosen as a violinist who would take part in the Los Angeles Youth Philharmonic Orchestra's summer youth ensemble, which would be performed at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. It is an intensive music program designed for young musicians in the Los Angeles area, organized by the Los Angeles Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, or LAYPO, an independent youth music organization created to provide young musicians with the opportunity to perform on great stages. It is currently entering its seventh season, and continues to support and uplift young artists while improving musical technique, expression, and teamwork with other musicians in a large orchestra.

In this summer program, participants study and rehearse a variety of orchestra pieces, fluctuating between classical and more modern works. This allows a deeper music focus during the summer, in addition to learning from experienced instructors. The group played several pieces, including Vivaldi's *Summer* and *Anvil Chorus*. This program lasted



A view of the LAYPO orchestra from the audience of Walt Disney Concert Hall, showcasing both the scale of the orchestra and the performance space. [Source: Author, Paisley Park]

just under a week, with each daily rehearsal lasting about six hours. In some rehearsals, we would have small groups, or sectionals, to better fine-tune our playing. We would focus on articulation and different musical passages, with coaches to support our musicality.

Our final concert performance at Walt Disney Concert Hall was a

great honor, as it is one of the most famous venues in Los Angeles. Performing in such a professional environment truly immersed us, the musicians, in the prestige of the orchestra and helped us gain more confidence and experience in such a setting. This was my favorite aspect of the program, as after hours and hours of rehearsing, we were finally able to showcase our talent to such a large audience. Walking

onto the bright stage in front of a massive applauding audience gave me so much courage and confidence not only in my music playing, but also in my stage presence. The sounds of the group's concertos filled the hall in a way that felt almost overwhelming, each note resonating back to us. It was a very inspiring moment in my musical journey. Performing under the flashing stage lights and hearing the echoes of the orchestra truly made me even more proud to be a musician.

I would definitely recommend this program for other students who want to expand their musical experience. Participating can encourage growth and preparation for future advanced music groups. It also helps students build connections with more dedicated youth, and playing such complex repertoire provides a valuable experience. I would especially recommend this program to students serious about improving and who are willing to challenge themselves in a disciplinary but rewarding environment. Programs like LAYPO can further engage youth in their musical journey, and they continue to support this generation of rising musicians.

Student Reporter

Campaign Week: More than a Popularity Contest



Kaylyn Wee
Grade 10
Ayala High School

Recently, Ruben S. Ayala High School held a campaign week for class officer positions. Campaign week is a time for candidates to hang posters around the school, gain votes by passing out goodies and stickers, and take pictures with students to post on social media. The positions offered are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Social Chair; any student in the class can campaign, providing a chance for increased involvement in school activities. Ultimately, campaign week is a very exciting aspect of high school because it fosters leadership, school spirit, and student connection.

Students running for office must understand it is more than a popularity contest; campaigning requires dedication, responsibility, and leadership. Candidates must prepare a speech to be delivered the day before voting, design posters, and develop their overall campaign strategy. Through these designs and physical efforts, students shape their image and how they want to be perceived by their peers. By doing so, candidates



Before campaign week, candidates spend time creating posters to hang around the school and attract voters, showing what qualities they can bring to the school. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Wee]

learn responsibility by planning how they will represent the whole class with their ideas and creativity.

Campaign week brings energy and color to the school. Through the many creative posters and flyers, every corner features a slogan or a themed character, creating a welcoming and happy environ-

ment. Furthermore, the speeches given by candidates make the week more engaging, and students become more excited about participating in school activities. The most popular way candidates push for involvement is through social media; they often bring treats and signs for photos, which are then shared online. This makes students feel included and eager

for campaign week.

Not only does campaign week make the school more welcoming, but it also gives students a chance to vote and choose their leaders. This encourages classmates to consider who will represent them the best and make the next school year as successful as possible... Through this process, students feel more involved in their school community because their voices and opinions are valued, impacting the entire student body. Campaign week runs from Monday until voting day on Friday, during which students cast their ballots online.

Campaign week is more than a popularity contest; it is a chance for students to learn responsibility, for an exciting atmosphere to flourish, and for the students to voice their opinions. The campus becomes full of school spirit, decked out in creative work by the candidates. Overall, the week plays a vital role in building leadership, community, and creativity, making the high school environment more engaging for everyone.

Student Reporter

Adding Your Own Charm: The Popularity of Keychains



Elizabeth Kim
Grade 9
Beckman High School

Walk into any high school hallway, and you are likely to hear a distinctive jingle and jangle from backpacks as students walk hurriedly into their classes. Look a bit closer at the zippers, and you may see clinking souvenirs from travels, soft plushies of beloved characters, and colorful name tags. Little glimpses of everyone's personality are shown, making keychains a popular way for students to express themselves.

Many people like to use keychains as a way of recording memories. Keychains are readily available when traveling, so they are easy to pick up along a trip. They can also be collected from events like sports competitions. They usually feature a mascot or illustrations of famous buildings or nature. Whenever you look at a keychain, you can be reminded of those memories and physically hold a piece of it with you. Jamie said, "One of my favorite keychains is the Buc-ee's mascot I got from a robotics competition in Alabama. It hangs on my backpack and brings me memories of that tournament." Additionally, souvenir keychains can also be



This keychain collection with gifts from friends, handmade keychains with beads, and souvenirs holds many happy memories for its owner! [Source: Author, Elizabeth Kim]

thoughtful gifts, showing friends and family you think of them fondly even during your own travels.

Not only can keychains be bought as souvenirs, but they can also serve as a creative outlet with endless possibilities. It can be very simple to make these keychains. For example, drawing and heating shrink plastic can create

unique, personalized merchandise and gifts. This is quick and easy to do, only requiring a marker, a sheet of shrink plastic, and an oven to heat it in. Figurines or charms can also be turned into keychains with the addition of a simple metal loop. It allows you to carry these little creations out into the world, adding a little bit of joy to daily life.

Different techniques and skills can create an even greater variety of keychains. A combination of beads and charms can imitate the shape of a jellyfish, or woven threads can make a thoughtful friendship bracelet. Creating your own keychains can be a great way to learn artistic skills like jewelry-making and weaving.

At its core, keychains are also just fun. Kara, a student who has a lot of keychains on her backpack, says, "I love the jingling sounds keychains make when I am walking. I also love getting cute characters as gifts from friends!" Furthermore, keychains can be a quick conversation starter for students. Shared interests can easily be seen and shared through cute characters, avid collections, or any activities.

Overall, little things like keychains bring a lot of joy to students' lives and give them an accessible, fun way to express themselves. Try putting some keychains on your bag if you do not have any, or try making your own for a fun yet quick activity!

Student Reporter

The Importance and Disappearance of Third Spaces



Chloe Je
Grade 10
Orange County School of the Arts

In the past, daily life included places to gather outside of the home and office. Sociologists call these environments "third spaces." If the home is our first space and work or school our second, the third space represents the informal public environments where one has no deep connection to anyone. Think of the local coffee shop, the public library, a park, a community center, or a small local diner. These spots were once the backbone of community life, but they have been steadily disappearing as technology advances and social isolation climbs.

The real value of a third space is the lack of strict expectations and obligations. At home, individuals are tied to chores and family; at work or school, every interaction is structured and goal-oriented. We are constantly "code-switching" to fit our environment. Third spaces, however, create a setting where people can simply exist together. There are places where friends meet casually, strangers strike up conversations, and community bonds grow organically through repeated interactions. They foster a brand of social connection that formal institutions just cannot replicate.



Libraries are considered important third spaces as they promote literacy and can be a point of convergence for all demographics. [Source: Author, Chloe Je]

Historically, these third spaces were the glue for local communities. In many towns, people regularly met and gathered at clubs or community events in public parks or libraries. These environments have encouraged spontaneous encounters, helping individuals feel a sense of belonging. Over time, these everyday interactions created social networks that strengthened trust within communities. However, the last

few decades have seen a sharp decline in these communal hubs. Rising urban costs have pushed out small "mom-and-pop" businesses that once served as neighborhood anchors, replaced by large chain stores and online services. And this trend has reduced casual interactions important for strong community bonds in the past. At the same time, our social life has migrated online, spurred by the rapid adoption of digital

technology. While social media allows for instant communication, it often leads to parasocial relationships—digital connections that feel intimate but lack the depth and presence of shared physical space.

Commercialization has also changed how we "hang out.". Many spaces that once welcomed people to just linger now require a purchase to stay. Even coffee shops, the classic third space, often function more like workspaces where you're expected to keep buying products to keep your seat. Meanwhile, truly open public environments like public parks and community centers frequently face funding cuts. The loss of third spaces has a tangible social cost. Without accessible places to gather, isolation becomes a risk. When casual interactions with neighbors become rare, the sense of community begins to fray.

Third spaces might seem ordinary, but they are essential; as they disappear, we lose the everyday connections that keep us from feeling alone. Reinvesting in these shared areas isn't just a luxury—it's a necessity for a connected society.