

Editors Column

Young Angels Choir Closes Out School Year with Hospital Performance



Summer Park
Grade 11
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On May 16, 2026, the halls of PIH Health Good Samaritan Hospital got a little brighter. The Young Angels Choir dropped by for a special volunteer performance. Starting at 3:30 PM, the students brought some much-needed music and comfort to the patients, families, and hospital staff.

For many of the students in the choir, the afternoon meant far more than just putting on another show. It was a real chance to connect with people. Dressed in their uniforms, the choir sang a mix of uplifting songs right in the hospital lobby and patient areas. Doctors, nurses, visitors, and patients all paused to listen—some just smiling quietly, while others pulled out their phones to record.

The Young Angels Choir regularly performs at various locations and events, from senior homes and cultural festivals to big stages like the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Disneyland, and even the PBS SoCal Holiday Celebration. Yet hospital visits always feel a little different and carry a special meaning because the students get to experience firsthand how much a simple song can comfort someone going through a tough time. “Music can change the atmosphere of a place,” one choir



Dressed in coordinated navy blue dresses and suits, the choir shared music, encouragement, and compassion through an afternoon of volunteer outreach. [Source: Author, Summer Park]

member said after the performance. “Even if someone is having a hard day, hearing live music can help them feel less alone.”

The visit ties right into the choir’s broader focus on service and community. Founded in 1990, the group doesn’t just emphasize musical skills; it more so encourages students to become thoughtful leaders who understand how to give back. In fact, many of the members volunteer regularly for outreach events similar to this all over the Los Angeles area.

The hospital staff also ex-

pressed much gratitude for the performance. Hospitals can be stressful environments; therefore, having the choir visit brought much warmth and calm to the afternoon. A few people in the audience even softly sang along, and some younger children watched the performers with total excitement.

For high schoolers balancing classes and extracurriculars, events like this serve as a great reminder of how much a small act of kindness matters. The performance showed how music can be

so much more than just entertainment—it genuinely brings people hope and healing.

As the final song wrapped up and applause filled the lobby, the choir members left knowing they did a lot more than just perform. They truly helped brighten someone’s day. The afternoon was especially memorable for four graduating seniors—Madison Bae, Elisa Kim, Edward Lee, and Ryan Park—who all received gold rings to mark the milestone, leaving them with some amazing final memories with the group.

Student Reporter

Vertigo: One of the Greatest Films of All Time



Elizabeth Kim
Grade 9
Beckman High School

Vertigo is considered one of the greatest films of all time. Since its release in 1958, it has received lots of praise from countless critics, and it still reaches near the top of many film rankings to this day. But why is *Vertigo* considered to be one of the greatest films of all time? As a final project for my English class, I was assigned to create a video essay analyzing a film. Through this assignment, I was able to see why it is regarded so highly.

First, *Vertigo* pioneered many filmmaking techniques. Director Alfred Hitchcock created the “dolly zoom effect,” where the camera moves while zooming in the opposite direction simultaneously; this gives the audience a disorienting effect as perspective is distorted. In the film, this “dolly zoom effect” helped me feel the main character Scottie’s acrophobia (fear of heights); the distortion and sudden pulling-away movement visually simulated the fear that Scottie felt high up on the staircase.

Another technique *Vertigo* introduced was computer ani-



Vertigo is easily available as a DVD because of its popularity and praise. [Source: Author, Elizabeth Kim]

mations in cinema. The innovative use of an old gun director and pendulum resulted in very precise shapes, which were later filmed as individual frames to produce a smooth computer animation. Because of this, the dizzying, colorful, and mysterious spirals in the opening scene instantly grabbed my attention. Later, this spiral motif and animation continued to appear throughout the film, establishing it as an important idea within

the movie. Seeing how the spiral shape was repeated not only across shots but also in different forms of media made me realize both its cleverness and importance to the story.

Next, as someone who enjoys music, the soundtrack for *Vertigo* is absolutely phenomenal. Composed by Bernard Herrmann, the clever use of leitmotifs, which are short musical fragments associated with a

feeling, character, place, or idea, combined with instrumentation in the soundtrack, subtly tells its own story. Herrmann utilized different leitmotifs and attached them to important scenes. When I watched the film, I especially loved “Scene d’amour,” a leitmotif attached to the idea of love, and found it very beautiful yet familiarly haunting. The leitmotif itself was quite long, but I still felt uneasiness as there was no sense of closure until the end; the resolution of the piece was intentionally extremely delayed. Digging a bit deeper, even though I have never seen the film before, I was familiar with the music because this theme was heavily inspired by Richard Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* “Liebestod.” Herrmann seemed to borrow musical ideas from this famous opera to allude to similarities in the plot, adding even more complexity to the soundtrack.

Overall, *Vertigo* is extremely gripping. The combination of all these filmmaking techniques, interesting visuals, and amazing music wraps up into a beautiful masterpiece that deserves all the praise it receives.

Student Reporter

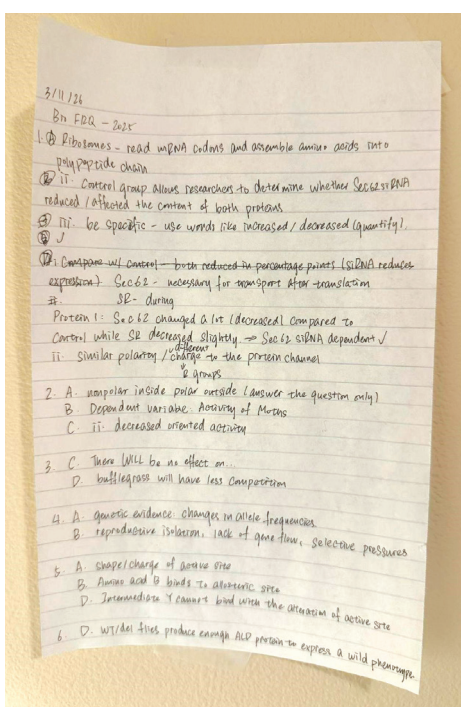
More Than A Score: What AP Preparation Taught Me



Sarah Li
Grade 11
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When people talk about AP examinations, the first thing that comes to students’ minds is the scores. They often equate a “5” with success, while lower scores can feel disappointing. Before AP test preparation, I held the same view. I once thought that the purpose of AP exams was simply to obtain high scores and perfect my college application resume. However, after undergoing several months of studying for AP exams, I gradually realized that this experience altered me in ways far beyond grades.

Preparing for AP Biology and AP Chemistry was one of the most arduous academic experiences I have ever encountered. There were endless chapters to review, practice problems to complete, and concepts that felt ambiguous after repeated rounds of studying, all of which made me more stressed. Initially, I was constantly overwhelmed by the plethora of assignments that piled up like a mountain. I hoped that I could improve rapidly, but AP preparation is not something that instantly yields desirable results. It requires long-term persistence, discipline, and steady



Behind every handwritten note and practice question was a lesson in discipline and resilience beyond test scores. [Source: Author, Sarah Li]

diligence.

During my AP review journey, one of the most essential lessons that I’ve learned was how to ef-

fectively manage my time. I could no longer procrastinate until the last few days or wait until the last minute to study. Instead, I was to develop a plan to review for the exams in advance, break larger goals into smaller tasks, and adhere to my daily schedule. Occasionally, there were nights when I was completely drained and simply wanted relaxation; nevertheless, I compelled myself to finalize studying the notes or correct mistakes from my practice exams. Eventually, doing these tasks continuously transformed into habitual actions. Those routines allowed me to become a more disciplined person, not just in terms of academic work, but also in my daily life.

Additionally, getting ready for AP tests encouraged me to be resilient. There were a myriad of times when I questioned my own

ability, especially when I missed several questions on the mock exam or struggled to comprehend certain ideas. In some instances, I would be infuriated by the fact that I devoted a considerable amount of time studying for the upcoming exams and yet felt unsure about what I was capable of. From time to time, seeing other students who appeared to master everything effortlessly prompted me to compare myself to them and wonder whether I was genuinely able to handle all of the courses. But ultimately, I figured that making mistakes does not indicate that one is less capable of something. It is just a natural part of progressing. Every one of the errors revealed to me the areas where I need further improvement, so that I would not make the same mistake during the test day. Furthermore, every challenge I faced showed me how to persist rather than quit.

The AP exam itself is a transient process, but the behaviors, my mindset, and the personal growth I gained throughout the preparation process will remain with me well beyond those few hours of testing.

Editors Column

A Real Tour of Washington D.C.



Kaylyn Yu
Grade 11
Chantilly High School

I remember how awed I was at my first sight of Washington D.C.'s most honorable attractions, admiring the complex but simple architectural designs, delving into the roots of the nation's history. In the few years I have been residing in Northern Virginia, I have grown used to the U.S. capital being just a 40-minute drive from my home, forgetting the wonder of the precious capital.

After staying in Virginia for only a few months after arriving in 6th grade, I relocated to Korea and attended Juniper Christian School (JCS) for two years before returning back to the state. By this point, Washington, D.C. had lost its prestige in my eyes because I believed that I had already been exposed to all of the tourism possible. I was wrong.

Recently, I had the chance to meet up with some JCS students who were visiting on a college tour trip near the area, and scheduled to join their tour of D.C. Truthfully, I did not have any crazy expectations from the city—I just wanted to enjoy time with old friends. However, the further we progressed in the tour, I real-



The Washington Monument is a major attraction in D.C., and it was even more amazing seeing it with old friends during our day touring the city.
[Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

ized new insights I had never felt before, and was most importantly able to view Washington D.C. with a fresh set of lenses that my friends introduced.

We started with a college tour of George Washington University, which melded into the city, creating a unique campus environment. Since D.C. is relatively small and easy to walk, our group travelled

on foot the rest of the way. Our next stop was the famous Washington Monument, a tall obelisk built to honor President George Washington. Even though it was the same sight I had seen in every prom photo, its grandeur did not disappoint. Following the pencil, we visited the National World War II Memorial with all of the 50 state names engraved in stone and surrounding a beautiful water fountain, another

historical piece of architecture that honors U.S. history. Lastly, we concluded the tour with the Lincoln Memorial and the National Park Fountain. Another impactful part of history, this site honors President Abraham Lincoln and was the same location where Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream" was given.

By taking pictures and enjoying the scenery throughout the tour, I forgot the familiarity of D.C. and melted into the ease of walking as a true tourist exploring the city, just like the rest of the students from Korea. Joseph Kim, one of those visiting from Korea, described his experience touring Washington D.C. for the first time: "It was pretty fabulous. My favorite building that I viewed was definitely the Lincoln Memorial statue."

Although I had been taking the close proximity of Washington, D.C. for granted during the past couple of years, this short quest reminded me once again of the beauty and regality that the city holds, taking me back to my first experience of these memorable sites.

Student Reporter

LCCHS Hosts an Unforgettable Night of Music Benefit Concert



Irene Sung
Grade 11
La Cañada High School

Members of the La Cañada community gathered in the auditorium Tuesday night as the La Cañada High School hosted its annual Night of Music Benefit Concert (NOMBC). The NOMBC is the school's largest annual concert, attempting to raise funds to support the music department for the upcoming year. This served as a celebratory night, upholding the tradition of showcasing the skills across the middle school and high school's colorguard, band, and orchestral groups.

The night opened with silent auction tables lining the auditorium foyer, parents and staff browsing the items. The bid off items ranged from original paintings, a free booking to an Airbnb, to tickets to a baking class. The crowded foyer buzzed with conversation as guests placed bids, while raffle tickets were sold throughout the evening to raise additional support for the music program.

As attendees moved into the auditorium, the program transitioned into the performance portion of the night,



Students of the La Cañada High School orchestra before the concert begins.
[Source: Author, Irene Sung]

beginning with a color guard routine. The dancers were striking in their uniforms and flag tosses, cultivating a thrilling atmosphere for the rest of the night.

Following the color guard, the middle school band orchestra groups took the stage, delivering a set that was able to emphasize their hard work and musicality that was developed throughout the year.

Unlike most of the previous orchestra concerts that highlight classical repertoire, this night featured music from movies, TV shows, and pop artists. A few fan favorites of the middle school orchestra were Kingdom Dance from the Disney movie Tangled, and Promise by singer Laufey.

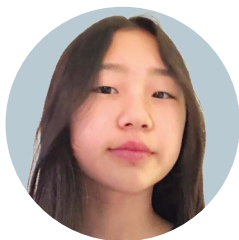
As the high school orchestra group began their selection of pieces, a recognizable melody from popular movie

KPop Demon Hunters filled the auditorium. The ensemble had prepared award-winning Golden, along with string arrangements of modern pop songs that appeared in the Netflix series Bridgerton. The high school band followed with dynamic performances that contrasted the lighter, more cinematic selections of the earlier groups.

The auditorium remained filled with supportive families and students who responded warmly to each performance, reflecting the shared pride in the performers' accomplishments. As the evening progressed, it became clear that the NOMBC was designed to not only showcase individual ensembles, but to celebrate the music program and its achievements as a whole. The shared performances of the middle school and high school groups displayed the continuity of musical development within the district, allowing younger students to perform alongside more advanced ensembles and experience a shared stage.

Student Reporter

Curating the Ideal College List Through Local Campus Tours



Paisley Park
Grade 10
South Pasadena High School

On the streets of Broadway, there lies a space within iron gates, a barrier drowning out the chaos of New York City's streets to hone in on the academic life of a campus. This is what students can feel and immerse themselves in when they visit university campuses in person. High school students spend hours browsing college websites, brochures, and videos, but a single tour can completely confirm or break one's assumptions about a specific school. While data and rankings can initially help get a school get onto your college list, strategic and mindful campus touring, whether that be official, local, or self-guided, is one of the ultimate tools for refining that list.

On paper, Barnard College is known as a historic women's college of about 3,000 students. I had the opportunity to participate in a student-led tour, which widened my perspective of schools like this and college campus tours in general. Barnard College sits directly across the street from Columbia University, and students from both colleges can interchangeably take classes from either school when enrolled. On my campus tour, I could see many people rushing across the streets from



A portrait by artist Kehinde Wiley is displayed in an office in Barnard College, showing art and the appreciation of it in many unlikely places.
[Source: Author, Paisley Park]

Columbia in Barnard hoodies, and it showed the porous boundaries offered by attending either university. Observing how the students seamlessly moved between campuses was intriguing and clarified exactly what type of environment attending this school had.

Visiting a university within

driving distance of one's home is a great way to learn what kind of school environments suit you, big or small, science or humanities-based, among others; it is accessible and quite low-stakes. Utilizing student materials like newspapers, flyers, and student-led events can also give perspectives as to what one's op-

portunities for involvement can look like on campus. For example, when I visited Barnard, there was a design showcase that offered a space of output for students' designs, ranging from art models and creative technology to working prototypes. Student engagement is an extremely important aspect to take note of when touring a campus, and can make or break a school's place on one's college list.

In addition, students can investigate the commute they would have to partake in when considering a school, and in-person tours enable them to see if the campus is walkable or if they are dependent on other types of transport. Campus communities like open lawns, cafes, and lounges are also vital to examine in person, and can reveal where students go when they are not in class or at their dorms.

Ultimately, searching for the right college is much more inspiring and immersive when looking in person, and my walk through Barnard helped me realize that one's college list should not just be rooted in prestigious names, but incorporate a collection of places that I can tangibly see myself growing in.