

Editors Column

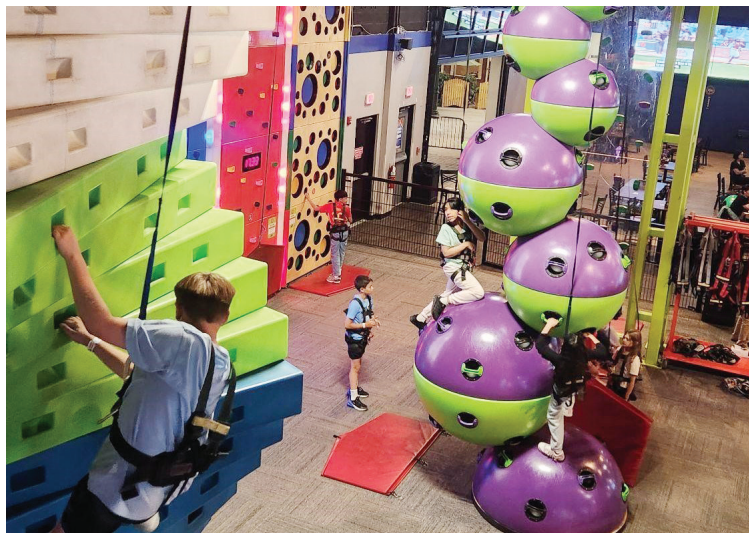
First Job Experiences: Working at Fun Land



Kaylyn Yu
Grade 11
Chantilly High School

The lights from the arcade games flash down at you, brightening the dim floors. A flurry of movement swishes above you from someone on a zip line. A tantalizing aroma fills the air as the kitchen doors open and a party host pushes a cart loaded with pizza and fries. This is Fun Land of Fairfax.

Although it was not my first time at Fun Land, I stood at the entrance, fascinated, adjusting to the lively atmosphere. This would be where I would call my first job. I recalled searching for jobs on websites until I had spotted an attraction attendant here—because it had a close proximity to my home and required no experience, I had applied in optimism that I might become hired. When I received the notification that I had been selected, I was thrilled. After conducting a short interview session with a manager at the site and completing basic information checks, I was officially a member of the team. Now, I followed the manager I had previously interviewed with to an empty party room, where he delivered basic



When atop the rope course to run the zip line in Fun Land, I can see the kids enjoying the rock climbing walls down below. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

instructions to watch a few essential video lessons explaining safety guidelines and equipment use. Once finished, I was taught how to run the rock climbing and rope course part of the amusement park by fellow employees. It was tricky at first, but I slowly understood how to strap the harnesses, clip the rock climbers, and manage the rope course in the sky.

Despite feeling relatively prepared by the brief lecture, I did not expect the rigorous nature of the first day at work. My shift ran from 4-11:30 p.m., which was unexpectedly long for someone as inexperienced as myself. As weekends were typically busy, I struggled to keep up with the fast pace of the environment at my station as I tried to remember

the different steps I learned for each area. However, my teammates were helpful, and I quickly got the hang of the rest of the work. Many kids were very sweet and energetic, and I enjoyed helping them; I was surprised to receive a tip from a proud father as I helped a boy to reach the top of a rock climbing wall, knowing it was rare for an attraction attendant to get tipped. At the end of the night, the supervisors rounded us up to assign individual cleaning tasks.

Over time, I eased into my role at the rope course and made friends with the rest of the workers, who are mostly other high school students. I would say the best part of the job is the friends I made. Even though it is a fun work experience, it can be difficult and demanding at times when busy, and it also pays minimum wage. However, I believe Fun Land has been a great first job experience as it gives me an opportunity to control my finances, and I hope the position will lead me to attain larger roles in the future.

Student Reporter

The Influx of K-Beauty: Olive Young's Debut in California



Paisley Park
Grade 10
South Pasadena High School

It was one of the weekends that my parents had signed me up for a golf academy. My dad had always been passionate about the sport, and hoped that I would share his interest. When I heard that I was signed up for these lessons, I was devastated. Golf had never been a sport that I wanted to pursue, and the thought of waking up at 7:00 a.m. on a Saturday made it even worse; that was supposed to be a day for sleeping in, a chance to recover from the lack of sleep accumulated throughout the school week.

The first morning was brutal. I struggled to get out of bed and performed horribly during the lesson. I could barely get the ball near the green, and it took countless attempts just to sink a putt. Frustration quickly set in. I felt like I was holding everyone back.

The struggles did not disappear after the first lesson. Week after week, the ball aimlessly flew through the air every time I tried to get even slightly closer to the target. Improvement felt painfully slow, and there were many moments when I questioned whether the effort was worth it. Yet, over time, everything eventu-



The new Olive Young store, displaying many brands, both Korean and American, had many shoppers eager to see what the store was all about. [Source: Author, Paisley Park]

ally became a routine. Waking up no longer felt impossible, and my skills gradually improved. With each lesson, the ball inched closer and closer to the hole. Progress was not immediate, but it was steady. Looking back, I realize that golf was teaching me something far more valuable than how to swing a club. What initially was

a hardship shaped my resilience. Today, I naturally wake up at earlier times, even on the weekends, and use the extra hours productively. Although I no longer play golf, the lessons I learned from the experience remain with me. I discovered that meaningful growth often comes from doing things we do not initially want

to do. A true difference becomes visible when we continue working productively, while others may choose comfort or convenience instead. Whether it is reading during those extra morning hours or getting a head start on work, those small investments of time accumulate and eventually set us apart.

Most importantly, I have come to the realization that initial challenges are not something to endure, but rather something that contributes to who I am becoming. Ultimately, as time passed, the burden revealed itself as a source for growth even if I could not see it at the time.

Looking back, many of us can identify a burden that ultimately taught us discipline, patience, and resilience.

As you reflect on your own life, consider a burden you are currently facing. Instead of viewing it solely as something standing in your way, try to ask yourself what it might be teaching you. The answer may not be obvious today, just as it was not for me standing on that golf course years back. However, you may discover that this burden of yours was preparing you for growth all along.

Student Reporter

Hot Pot: Individual Servings or Communal Style?



Evalyn Yu
Grade 10
Palos Verdes High School

Hot pot is a deeply symbolic and culturally significant dish synonymous with community. Every hot pot comes with fresh vegetables, umami meat slices, and aromatic sauces and soup, but the food is only a small aspect of what makes this meal meaningful. The beauty of hot pot lies in its social aspect — trading side dishes around the table, lovingly cooking meat for one another, concocting communal broths, and lingering over conversation long after stomachs are full.

In the Chinese culture, the simmering pot at the center of the table represents reunion and harmony. Because everyone shares a heat source, hot pot naturally fosters a tight-knit atmosphere for enjoying good food, stories, and company.

Given the hot pot's deeply communal nature, I was in for a surprise when I visited Mumu Hot Pot with my friends and found that we would be dining from individual pots. We were also instructed to place our orders virtually through a QR code at our table while a server briefly explained the pot settings. As we instinctively reached for our phones, I



Although not exactly the same as the original, at Mumu Hot Pot, diners enjoy hot pot individually by cooking fresh vegetables and succulent meat in personalized pots. [Source: Author, Evalyn Yu]

was surprised by how quickly our group of five fell silent. Instead of asking for recommendations or debating over side dishes, we tapped away at our screens while a server stood right in front of us. While the process was undeniably efficient, it reinforced the tone set for our meal: a dining experience focused on individual choices rather than collective participation.

After our server left, we were still puzzling over which soup bases and meat cuts to order — indecisiveness that could have been

avoided had we each ordered different options to share collectively. Eventually, three-fifths of my group opted for the same broth, sukiyaki, which made having an individual pot feel slightly redundant.

Once the food arrived, my qualms quickly disappeared. The dishes were fresh, beautifully presented in bento box-like trays, and extremely savory and comforting. As a slow eater, I enjoyed having complete control over my pot and dunking fresh bok choy, vermicelli noodles,

and beef toro into the bubbling soup at my own pace. My vegetarian friend especially appreciated being able to enjoy her meal without worrying about cross-contamination.

However, I couldn't help but notice the occasions when conversations trailed off as we became absorbed in our separate meals, monitoring when the red marbled beef turned to perfectly cooked. In those moments, I felt oddly disconnected, like I was eating in a group, but everyone was immersed in their own bubble. Once the meal ended and we playfully argued over the bill and whether or not we should get dessert, the sense of community came flooding back to me.

As hot pot becomes increasingly popular outside of Asia, I understand that its presentation adapts to accommodate different dietary needs, preferences, and dining styles. However, if given the choice, I would stick with tradition. For me, sharing a hot pot reflects kinship and a shared sense of togetherness. There is no better feeling than the delightfully messy and beautiful art of communal eating.

Student Reporter



Elizabeth Kim
Grade 9
Beckman High School

The Half-year Point: A Needed Reset

At the beginning of 2026, most of us probably set a long, ambitious list of New Year's resolutions and goals. From going to the gym and studying daily, to qualifying for a competition, the start of the new year is when a lot of us dream big. Sometimes, we stick with these resolutions and steadily work on them throughout the year. Oftentimes, we try for a few weeks, then give up. The second Friday of January is even known as "Quitter's Day," aptly named because it is when a lot of people quit their New Year's resolutions. As the year goes on, the long list looks more and more daunting. New Year's resolutions will stay unchecked on the list until next year, when it is time to make the list once more.

However, it is not too late to start. You do not have to wait until next January First to attempt goals, or even set new ones. The hesitation to start can be seen in the habit of waiting until a five-minute increment of time to start a chore. Staring at the clock until it hits 8:25 instead of 8:21, then starting my work, is an experience I have had con-



Using a planner to set aside time at the half-year point of the year to work on goal setting again can be very helpful. [Source: Author, Elizabeth Kim]

stantly; the total time I spent waiting likely adds up to many hours. The new year is treated as this "perfect" time to start working on goals, but the reality is that it's not that special. You can start at any time.

In fact, the approaching half-year point, around the

very beginning of July, is a perfect time for revisiting New Year's resolutions. Summer break is approaching, or has already started for many schools, and students have a lot more time for reflection and change. Summer is a great time to work on goals again, building steady habits and an effective system

before the busy school year starts again. This point also leaves six months to work on goals before the start of the new year.

Yet, simply creating another long list again will likely lead to the same outcome as before. It is crucial to set realistic goals in an approachable manner so they are easier to stick to. Ways to do this include using the SMART goal framework and splitting up goals into tasks. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. The detail added through specification makes it easier to start actionable steps, and the achievable and relevant qualities ensure the goal is realistic and helpful. The measurable and time-bound parts mean that progress is trackable against a time frame, helping with motivation. After writing down a goal you want to accomplish, identify the main tasks you have to do to accomplish it. This creates actionable steps you can take to work on the goal every day. These smaller tasks also seem less daunting, so it is much easier to start.

Student Reporter



Heesue Shin
Grade 10
New Covenant Academy

A Sophomore Year to Remember: A Recap

I cannot believe we are already halfway through 2026. I remember when it was the first day of sophomore year, and I did not know what I was stepping into. This school year was definitely a change from freshman year. To help students transition into their second year more smoothly, this article is dedicated to things I wish I had heard and the lessons I learned from my experience!

First, it is important to maintain the academic spark and drive that you began high school with. As a freshman, I cared a lot about my grades and went out of my way to earn all A's. However, the sophomore slump was real, and it affected me. I did not have the same level of care and diligence, which reflected in my grades. I still ended my classes with all A's, but there was an unnecessary stress that could have been avoided if I had studied more. So, you must keep that academic drive in you throughout sophomore year.

Carrying on with the same



Having hangouts with friends and doing things like eating out is a memorable part of sophomore year. [Source: Author, Heesue Joy Shin]

theme, it is crucial to try your best not to procrastinate. Especially with bigger assignments, such as projects or information-heavy homework. Procrastination really affected me mentally and physically. I would just doomscroll and avoid the thought of homework, pushing it to the back of my mind. This would eventually cause me to stress out, and I definitely felt guilty. On top of that, cramming a project in one night physically fatigued

me when it could have been avoided.

Next, the sophomore year is a good time to start exploring opportunities at your school, like clubs and ASB. I mainly joined clubs during this year, and I really recommend it, as it was a great way to be more involved in my school and build closer connections with a lot more people. I learned things like how to lead well and be more extroverted.

Another good habit to implement is to start studying for the SAT whenever you have time. I did not do this, and now that it is summer, it is kind of difficult to know where to begin. It would have helped a lot if I had studied a little during the second semester.

This is also the time when you start figuring everything out and building a routine for yourself, so make sure to build a balanced and healthy. To have a good one, some key tips are to not procrastinate, to follow a healthy sleep schedule, and to be productive.

Lastly, make sure to have fun this sophomore year and make the most of your high school days, since the next two years come with a lot of work cut out for you. Hang out with your friends and say yes to spontaneous ideas if it does not interfere with your academics, because those are often the memories that you enjoy looking back on. This year went by in a flash, so make sure to be grateful for it and cherish it when you are living it!

Student Reporter



Kaylyn Wee
Grade 11
Ayala High School

Discounted Trends: Pacsun HQ Warehouse Sale Event

Pacsun, a popular retail clothing brand, had a HQ warehouse sale event on Friday, May 29, to Sunday, May 31. Hundreds of shoppers gathered at the Pacsun Headquarters in Anaheim, California, to get their hands on clothing items and accessories at a major discounted price. The lines were long, and the crowd was bustling with excitement, especially with the help of social media platforms that boost events like this. Alongside the publicity, social media apps also provide insight into the benefits of engaging in events like these. The Pacsun warehouse sale event was a great chance to purchase discounted, trendy items and take advantage of exclusive, limited-time deals.

The Pacsun HQ warehouse sale event had bins and racks of discounted clothing items and accessories, divided into three sections: general merchandise, Brandy Melville, and Essentials items. Throughout the line and tents, there were signs for the discounted prices, and while the Brandy Melville and Essentials items were still on the expensive side, there was a 50% discount for each category of clothing. Looking through the bins of items, the jeans and tops were around 10 to 15 US dollars, and even the accessories like purses and sunglasses

ITEM	PRICE
SMALL ACCESSORIES (SUNGLASSES, JEWELRY, ETC.)	\$3.00
BAGS & HATS	\$8.00
FOOTWEAR	\$15.00
TEES & TANKS	\$10.00
DRESSES	\$15.00
SWEATERS, FLEECE & OUTERWEAR	\$10.00
SWIM	\$5.00
SHORTS & SKIRTS	\$5.00
DENIM & PANTS	\$10.00
WIDE ITEMS	\$5.00

BRANDY MELVILLE / JOHN GALT ONLY	
ITEM	PRICE
BASIC TANKS & B&S TOPS	\$10.00
L&S TOPS	\$15.00
SHORTS & SKIRTS	\$20.00
DENIM & PANTS	\$25.00
DRESSES	\$25.00
SWEATERS & FLEECE	\$20.00

ESSENTIALS (FOG) ONLY	
ITEM	PRICE
B&S TEES & TANKS	\$25.00
L&S TOPS	\$35.00
SHORTS & SKIRTS	\$45.00
HOODIES & FLEECE	\$50.00
PANTS	\$60.00
JACKETS	\$75.00

These signs were displayed throughout the event and showed the much-discounted prices of items at the PacSun warehouse sale. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Wee]

es were only 3 US dollars. To keep the shoppers excited and the event going, employees continuously restocked their merchandise and helped keep the event organized. Despite the long lines, many attendees felt the discounted prices made the wait very worthwhile.

Regarding publicity matters, the Pacsun HQ warehouse sale event was buzzing on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where users were quickly spreading the news. Multiple posts were made by potential custom-

ers to encourage people to come out and use the event to their own advantage, becoming hot news on social media. All of the posts were also a way for people to ask questions about the event and to get more information about it. After the event happened, users and attendees were posting their hauls and what they purchased, which again, encourages people to attend other events like this.

Events like the Pacsun HQ warehouse sale provide many benefits for both shoppers and retail

businesses. Customers are able to purchase trendy clothing and accessories at significantly lower prices, making fashion more affordable and accessible. These events create excitement within communities by bringing together large groups of people, usually with similar interests. Again, social media promotion helps increase publicity of the brand while encouraging more people to attend future events. For the company, warehouse sales help clear out excess inventory while strengthening customer engagement and brand popularity; in return, customers are able to purchase affordable clothing.

Overall, the Pacsun HQ warehouse sale event demonstrated how retail events can successfully benefit both businesses and customers. The long lines, discounted products, and strong social media presence contributed to creating an exciting and memorable shopping experience for attendees. Through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the event was able to gain more attention and popularity, with more people wanting to attend other similar events that Pacsun holds. Events like warehouse sales illustrate how retail businesses can successfully attract customers and build up their brand.