

Editors Column



Justin Kim
Grade 12
Science Academy
STEM Magnet

This weekend, at the Zion Evangelical Church, the youth prepared for a vaccination day where we gave free flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines to the community. There were a total of five stations - each with its own special task - that a set of students were responsible for operating.

At the front desk, students helped patients register their information and list the type of vaccine they would receive. Then, the patients would come up to where I was designated, the vaccine station, where professional pharmacists gave vaccine shots to the patients' arm. As the participating students weren't professionals, we helped prepare the needles, list the type of vaccine they were receiving on the forms, and clean up the waste.

After they received their vaccinations, I would take the form and hand it over to the form helpers to verify and list the type of vaccine they received. Afterward, the patients would head over towards the blood pressure section. Patients would put out their arm, and we would wrap the blood

Free Vaccination Campaign



A pharmacist is giving a flu vaccine to one of the patients who seems to be in a bit of pain.
[Source: Author, Justin Kim]

pressure cuff around it. When it was all set, we would press start on the machine, and the cuffs would slowly inflate around the patient's arm and measure their blood pressure. If their blood pressure levels were abnormal, we would ask them to have a visit to the doctor to check up on their

health. For the glucose section, we used needles to poke the patients' fingers and extract just enough blood to measure their glucose level. We did warn some patients it might sting a little, and a few did get scared as the tiny needle poked them.

It was my first time handling vaccines, and it made me quite nervous even with the training I received a week before. I first had to uncap the vaccine and recap it with a medium or a large needle depending on the weight of the patient. Then, I had to push the needle all the way up so that all the air was pushed out of the needle and only the actual vaccine fluid was inserted. I also had to take a stick off of the needles and stick them onto the forms to list down the type of vaccine the person would be receiving. Around 60 people came on Saturday, and about a hundred came the day after. It was an interesting experience to see what a pharmacist does as part of their work.

Through this vaccine campaign, I learned the process of giving vaccines to others. Many of these patients are not able to have regular flu vaccines every year, as they do not have a proper pharmacy or a doctor they visit. And although it wasn't thousands of people, I was proud that I could serve and bring positivity within the community along with the other volunteers.

Student Reporter



Irene Kim
Grade 12
University Laboratory
High School

At my small school of just over 300 students, Picture Day is an exciting dress-up day. Standing in the long line for pictures, students buzz with compliments about one another's outfits and happiness about missing class time...except seniors. Instead of the standard Picture Day portrait, seniors submit their own photos for the yearbook.

I initially didn't think much of my yearbook photo and planned to just ask my younger sister to snap a few pictures. My mother, however, suggested I use the opportunity to enjoy my senior year with a special photoshoot. So at the start of fall break, I had a senior photoshoot at a nearby arboretum with a photographer. They let me know in advance that I could prepare two outfits for the day.

I wanted my senior photos to reflect myself, so I decided to go with two very different looks: one a combination of my favorite things and the other on my connection with Korean culture. I wanted my first combo to be colorful and youthful, and my second to be graceful and pretty. To communicate the visual vibes

Yearbook and Senior Photos



boots, and favorite yellow backpack.
[Source: Haylee Do]

I wanted to go for, I created two reference Pinterest boards and shared them with my photographer before the day of the photoshoot. For my first look, I wore casual overalls and my favorite yellow boots. I also brought with me my favorite yellow backpack and stuffed animals as props to fully bring out the concept of my favorite things. My second look was an entirely different vibe.



One of my senior photo concepts centered around my connection with Korean culture. Wearing my yellow hanbok, I wanted to capture my cultural pride.
[Source: Haylee Do]

Whereas my first look was fun and a bit childish, my second concept was elegant, with a flowy hanbok dress. I'm happy I chose two contrasting concepts for my photoshoot, particularly because they brought out two very different but important parts of myself. My photographer was an ex-

pert in leading me through different poses, especially having seen the reference pictures I'd shared prior. However, I would have taken more time practicing poses in advance, while wearing the outfit and using the props I'd use the day of. Getting familiar with the camera and gaining confidence posing in front of it took some time.

Besides photos, seniors also have to submit senior quotes and a will for the yearbook. Unlike some of my friends, who'd kept a Notes document throughout their high school years recording funny lines, I had nothing to directly reference. After trying to urge my brain to remember past dialogue with my friends, I realized I could quote digital messages and ended up relying on chats for the majority of my senior quotes. I would definitely recommend, if planning on doing senior quotes, to keep a record of striking lines earlier on.

Navigating senior year has come with unexpected stress but also unmatched joy. Enjoying the special year at its fullest has brought me happy memories of a lifetime.

Student Reporter

Celebrating Cultural Diversity at Larchmont



Jane Yoon
Grade 11
Larchmont Charter School

The savory aroma of Korean bulgogi, the sweetness of maple syrup, and the scent of charred Filipino skewers wafted through the Larchmont Fairfax Elementary School campus on the 10th of October. Sounds of laughter and chatter also carried through the wind as Larchmont Charter School hosted its 18th annual World Fair. The crowded campus brought together students and families to explore a myriad of cultures through fun games, delicious cuisine, and hands-on activities.

The event featured a variety of food booths representing countries across the globe, like South Korea, Mexico, Turkey, and the Philippines. The fair offered an opportunity for families to try foods and take part in activities they might not otherwise encounter, transforming school grounds into an endless space for cultural discovery.

"My son and I just spent hours here trying and looking through all the foods because everything just looks so good, and my kid's been playing with his friends on the [school] playground," one Larchmont parent said. "I think it's great everyone in the community has been showing up for one another and supporting both each other and our school."

The Korean booth offered visitors traditional foods such as Korean snacks, bulgogi bento lunch-



Homemade hwachae, a Korean fruit punch, is ready for visitors to taste at the Korean booth during the World Fair.
[Source: Author, Jane Yoon]

boxes served with an assortment of traditional side dishes called 'banchan', and hwachae, a Korean fruit punch made with strawberries, watermelon, jellies, strawberry milk, and cider. The booth also had a session where children

were occupied with decorating and customizing their own fans with stickers, markers, and loads of glitter.

Other booths introduced attendees to regional specialties. The Canadian booth served a va-

riety of homemade goods such as tarts and mini bars, but was sought out for the brioche French toast topped with maple glaze and nuts, which was my personal favorite... The Mexican booth had all sorts of agua fresca flavors, which are traditional Mexican drinks made from fresh fruits, seeds, flowers, and water with sugar. The Filipino booth drew particularly long lines, where parents and kids were eager to try chicken and pork skewers, along with adobo, pancit, or lumpia.

Beyond the international food booths, the fair featured Larchmont's Culinary Market, where families introduced their special homemade dishes, allowing visitors to have a look and purchase the tasty goods... Nearby, the Young Artisans' Market had handmade goods, while other vendors used the fair to introduce their businesses to the school community. Among the participating businesses was Enchanted Arts LA, which offers art projects and services through school programs and private parties. At its booth, children gathered to work with beads, color, and paint, turning the activity into an outlet for kids to express their creativity.

The World Fair offered more than a day of entertainment through the mix of international cuisine, food stalls, local businesses, and interactive activities.

Student Reporter

Fun at the Annual Brightside Games



Ava Je
Grade 9
Buford High School

Recently, I volunteered at the 2nd annual Brightside Games event hosted by the Brightside Forever Foundation. Located at First Baptist Church of Buford, it was a day for people of all ages with disabilities to come together and freely play and connect.

I arrived at two in the afternoon to help set up for the event, which ended at six. Even though it began at three, there were many people there helping to set up and organize all the games and food. It was amazing to see everyone working hard in hopes of providing the best day for the people in need.

Under pop-up canopies were various activities and inflatables participants could enjoy, such as a bouncy house and hopscotch. The area also consisted of many games like ring toss and a dunk tank, as well as painting. There were also many delicious foods and drinks provided, such as homemade lemonade, ice cream, and pizza.

After the preparation, all of the volunteers went to the entrance of the event at three with



Various fun activities were set up for the second annual Brightside Games event by the Brightside Forever Foundation. [Source: Author, Ava Je]

pom-poms and supportive signs. Waving them around, we cheered and welcomed the guests and their families, who excitedly ran in to try all of the games. Even though this was only Brightside Games’ second year, it was quickly packed with families enjoying their time, filling the church with much joy.

Since I was part of the clean-up crew, I roamed the area the whole time, looking for any waste and assisting in keeping the place organized. Making sure everyone had a safe and clean place to play was an essential part of ensuring

the day ran smoothly. However, being a volunteer also meant giving positive and supportive words to those there, cheering on the kids. Even though my job wasn’t a major role, it definitely contributed to creating a warm and welcoming environment.

In the end, I saw how much commitment all the volunteers put into this event in order to help give those with disabilities in our community the lively day and love they deserve. The leaders of the Brightside Forever Foundation made this day possible, and their dedication did not go unnoticed,

with everyone coming up to thank them. Additionally, seeing everyone playing together and cheering each other on brought us closer together as a community, creating new friendships. Rather than competing with one another for prizes, they supported one another and had fun as a team.

Getting to experience this special day made me grateful to be a part of this supportive community, especially since I have never volunteered at an event like this before. After that special day, I am already looking forward to being a volunteer again next year.

Student Reporter

The Birthdays We Remember



Yale Lee
Grade 10
Science Academy
STEM Magnet

“What did you do for your birthday?”

It seems like a simple question, but when you really think about it, you find yourself wondering if you did anything special for your birthday at all. Maybe you went out to eat, spent time with a few friends, or just treated it like any other day. But it’s strange. Birthdays, which were once the most exciting day of the year, can eventually become just another date circled on your calendar. Think back to when you were a child, when you would look forward to this big day weeks in advance, pondering a birthday theme, handing out invitations to your classmates, and counting down the days until the party. Even the smallest celebration felt like the biggest event in the world. So, when did birthdays stop feeling special? How can we recreate the joy and enthusiasm that made them so memorable?

Birthdays were a once-a-year event filled with traditions and festivities that made the day truly feel like it was yours. From competing with friends at the bowling



As we get older, birthdays may not seem as important as they were when we were children, but taking time to celebrate and enjoy your special day is important. [Source: Author, Yale Lee]

alley and breaking open a piñata to having the Chuck E. Cheese mascot sing “Happy Birthday” as you blew out your candles, every little moment made the fun more enchanting. The best part was having a day solely dedicated to you, surrounded by friends, family, presents, and of course, cake. These were the moments that became the childhood memories, ones that stayed with you long af-

ter the party was over.

However, somewhere along the way, the celebrations that made birthdays so memorable were replaced by simpler gatherings or, sometimes, no celebrating at all. A day filled with playing arcade games at Dave and Buster’s or an entire classroom wishing you a happy birthday is now a quiet get-together

with close friends or an ordinary day at home. As we grow older, birthdays gradually become less about the celebration itself and more about a reminder of another year passing, leaving you wondering where all that childhood excitement went.

But growing up doesn’t mean birthdays have to lose their magic. Sometimes, all it takes is bringing back the little traditions that made the day so exciting. Whether it’s throwing a surprise birthday party for your friend or revisiting nostalgic places like Chuck E. Cheese or Dave & Buster’s, it can help recreate the fond memories of your childhood parties. Celebrations don’t mean throwing an extravagant gala or spending a lot of money, but about making time for yourself, surrounding yourself with people and events that give you something to look forward to each year.

So, the next time someone asks, “What did you do for your birthday?” maybe the memories you look back upon will be something more than just another night out.

Student Reporter

Walk to End Alzheimer's Unites Hermosa



Evalyn Yu
Grade 11
Palos Verdes High School

Nearly 400 participants streamed through the streets of Hermosa Beach, California, in a fierce demonstration of their fight against Alzheimer’s disease on Saturday, Oct. 10, during a 2026 Walk to End Alzheimer’s event hosted by the Alzheimer’s Association. In total, 68 teams from the Beach Cities raised over \$241,249, surpassing the goal of \$235,000.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common form of dementia and affects memory and thinking abilities. Over 7 million Americans live with this progressive, irreversible disorder. Through this event, the Alzheimer’s Association hopes to “Raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer’s care, support, and research,” as stated on their website. The walk is hosted annually in more than 600 communities across the United States and is the world’s largest event of its kind, according to their website.

Booths, photo opportunities, music, live performances, refreshments, raffles, and activities were available at the Walk, transforming the streets of Hermosa into a lively, interactive event. Many booths, such as senior centers or memory care facilities, have attended the Beach Cities’ Walk for many years due to personal connections. “It’s very near and dear



At the opening ceremony of the Walk to End Alzheimer’s event, participants raised flowers in solidarity, with different colors representing different motivations for attending the walk. [Source: Author, Evalyn Yu]

to our hearts. A lot of our clients have Alzheimer’s or dementia, and we just want to give back to the community and support the agency,” Tonia Stigeler, a care coordinator for Visiting Angels Senior Home Care and long-time Walk participant.

At the event, attendees donned purple Alzheimer’s Association shirts and were encouraged to take colored flower pinwheels from the Promise Garden to represent their motivations for attending the walk.

Blue flowers indicated one had Alzheimer’s or dementia; yellow meant one was supporting or caring for someone with the disease; purple signaled one had lost someone to the disease, and orange represented one supported the Alzheimer’s Association’s vision of a world without Alzheimer’s.

During the Promise Garden ceremony, walkers raised their flowers in solidarity. “Together, [the flowers] make a garden filled with

strength, courage, and purpose. I am confident that one day, we will add a flower to this garden: a white flower representing the first survivor of Alzheimer’s. Wouldn’t that be an incredible addition?” an Alzheimer’s Association representative addressed the crowd.

Guest speaker Tiffany Alisaje, a Memory Program Director at Belmont Village, gave an emotional speech about her experience with Alzheimer’s. While training to become a nurse, she cared for a memory care resident, Beverly, who rarely spoke. However, one day, Alisaje asked if she could think of Beverly as her honorary grandmother, and Beverly said yes. “That moment stayed with me and made me fall in love with memory care. 11 years later, I am still here because of the relationships I’ve built with my residents, their families, and my team. What started as a stepping stone in 2015 became my passion, my purpose, and my calling,” she said.

The event concluded with a 2.2-mile walk between Hermosa and Manhattan Beach. Together, these participants, with their purple shirts, Promise Garden flowers, and zealous energy, demonstrated the power of communities to support their loved ones and walk towards a cure for Alzheimer’s disease.