

# THE PLATINUM PRESS

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## The PLATINUM PREVIEW

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## Pumas Spread Holiday Cheer Through Kindness

During the holiday season, many cultures exchange gifts. However, many believe that it is more important to give than to receive. Student organizations such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), California Scholarship Federation (CSF), Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp (NJROTC), Associated Student Body (ASB), Peer Leaders, and many others have all taken the time to give back to their community.

### Operation Holiday Cheer

Kayla Wiley '24  
School News Editor

Many wait with great anticipation for the holiday season, excited for the traditions they get to participate in each year. While all winter activities are enjoyable, there are greater lessons that can be learned throughout this season. One of the most prevalent is the importance of giving, especially to those in need. On December 8, many students participated in Operation Holiday Cheer. This was an event that allowed students to give back to the community by bringing gifts to those who need it the most.

The whole purpose of Operation Holiday Cheer is to give students the opportunity to discover the incredible impacts they can make in other people's lives. For eighteen years, students have been going to the Valley Restart Center in Hemet, a homeless shelter that aids in getting individuals back on their feet during times of hardship. Throughout the duration of this event, students brought gifts to the children and adults who live in the shelter, and had the privilege to watch as they opened them. After opening gifts, students were able to spend time with the residents of the Valley Restart Center. The night included playing with the new toys, decorating cookies, and dancing to Christmas songs. All throughout the event, hundreds of unforgettable memories were made. It was a momentous occasion that will not soon be forgotten by any of the participants. Along with this, Peer Leaders took on the task of donating gifts to homeless students on campus. Peer Leader

Advisor, Ms. Christiana Gandy said, "[Giving] shows students another side of life, that not everyone has what everyone else has. Some kids don't even have the bare minimum of necessities." She continued, "It's an important way to spread cheer and a little bit of joy and to put smiles on other kids' faces." During this time in which many will be focused on receiving, it is important to remember that the greatest gifts in life come from bringing cheerfulness to others' lives.

### Operation Christmas Child

Chloë Zuñiga '24  
Copy Editor

Most grow up in the annual cycle of excitement for the holiday season, as they anticipate the many presents expected from loved ones. However, many children are not granted this privilege of receiving gifts, due to unfortunate familial or monetary situations. Associated Student Body (ASB) continued their long-time partnership with the charity organization, Samaritan's Purse, to provide gifts to these individuals in need of holiday spirit.

This year's donation drive, Operation Christmas Child (OCC), began October 17 and ended November 7. "Our goal was to utilize the opportunity for our Pumas to make a difference in the lives of others," Activities Director Mrs. Jennifer Deleon shared, "and to support children in various countries throughout this holiday season." ASB collected items to be packed into donated shoeboxes and distributed to the less fortunate. Contributions included small toys, as well as other useful items, such as pencils, paper, and toothbrushes. When the event concluded on November 7, a "packing party" was hosted to put together all of the donations. Once packaged and sent to Samaritan's Purse, the presents were shipped to numerous countries to children suffering from poverty, natural disasters, and even war. OCC demonstrates to the impacted children that, no matter the hardships experienced, they remain loved and recognized. "The season of giving is really important to me. ... The



Credit: Syelana/Hohol

Senior Sophia Dalton with VRC resident, holidays are some of the most stressful times for families," Deleon expressed, "and we have the chance to give and relieve others of their worries."

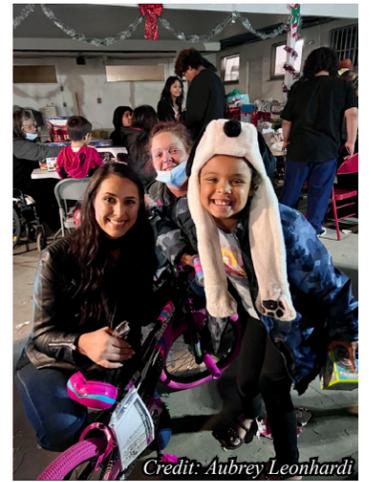
ASB packaged over 120 boxes to be distributed internationally to the children of struggling communities. Sophomore McKenzie Butt, member of ASB's OCC committee, concluded, "It's nice to know that people get happy from just getting the little things that we put our own time into." Students' dedication to helping those less fortunate than themselves has proven to be an admirable and impactful contribution to the lives of many.

### CSF and NJROTC Toy Drive

Daschle Davenport '24  
Staff Writer

To bring cheer to families during the holidays, students in California Scholarship Federation (CSF) and Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) had the chance to bless families in need with presents. Both CSF and NJROTC planned holiday toy drives for the holiday season.

CSF was given the opportunity to sponsor a city-wide toy drive to give club members and students the chance to be a part of the large-scale charity event. Items were dropped off in CSF Advisor Mrs. Grover's classroom until collection date on December 16 for distribution among less fortunate families. Giving to others has an extremely



Credit: Aubrey Leonhardt

Alumni Mia Prio gifts bicycle to resident, meaningful impact on the recipient families. CSF President Peniel Albe said, "Obviously love goes beyond material objects, but during the holidays their circumstances shouldn't get in the way of them being able to receive gifts they deserve from their loved one but can't afford."

On December 15, NJROTC cadets took part in another toy drive, Winter Wonderland, which provides unfortunate families to receive presents and the Christmas experience they deserve. Taking place at the Promenade Mall, cadets donated toys that will make their way to children in need through Devonshire PALS and Child Care Resources. At this event, there were also numerous activities, including holiday music and craft making, to lighten up the holiday times.

### Avid Canned Food Drive

Loretta Topp '24  
Staff Writer

'Tis the season of giving and the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classes hosted a canned food drive to give back to their community. The program began donating on November 28 and ended December 9, bringing in 3,136 cans, which surpassed their initial goal of 2,000 cans. Having done this years prior, this was the first year the AVID program has done it to this scale. Each can was taken to Western Eagle Foundation, which is located in Temecula, in hopes of giving families nutritious meals during the holidays.

Many students began to donate a couple of cans as a way to get their community service hours required for graduation. Junior Alexis "Lexi" Mills brought in roughly sixty cans with the intention of achieving this quota, but her motivation quickly escalated as the days stretched on. Speaking on the importance of donating during the holidays, Mills stated, "A lot of people right now are struggling ... it's good to give to the people who don't have a lot of money to get food." Many other students have donated because they realized how much of an impact it has on them and the people who need it. AVID teacher Mrs. Gayle Trout, as well as many of the other teachers, urge students to give back. "If you have something that you can use to help make people's lives better, to improve the human condition, Trout advised, "then you should."



Credit: Savannah Mendez

Seniors Kaylee Oliveira Neiva, Chloe Herman, and AVID tutor Savannah Mendez organize their class' supply of canned goods.

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

C



Principal Tina Miller

Pumas,

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the 22/23 school year. Our first semester is coming to an end, so make sure to finish strong. Finals will be administered the last two days of school this month. Please remember that finals will not be administered prior to the scheduled dates.

Winter break is right around the corner. During break I hope that you take time to relax and spend quality time with family and friends. I look forward to seeing everyone back when classes resume on January 10th. Have a very happy holiday season! We will see you in 2023!



## The New Miss Junior Teen California

Kayla Wiley '24  
School News Editor

Being in a pageant means one must be willing to put in all types of hard work. It requires characteristics, dedication, grit, and persistence for contestants to confidently carry themselves across a stage in front of so many different people. Freshman Analiya Garcia possessed all of these qualities, and more, to propel herself to the top of the "Miss California" Pageant. From the end of May to early November, nearly every day was spent preparing for the day of the pageant. Even summer break was used to get ready for this extravagant event. Though it was difficult to continuously push herself through all of the preparations, her hard work ended up being worth it. On November 6, Garcia was announced as Miss Junior Teen California.

Before winning the title, Garcia had no experience entering pageants. She explained that it was not even something that had ever peaked her interest in the past. On the other hand, her sister-in-law had been doing pageants her entire life. After a soccer injury led to the tearing of the meniscus cartilage in her knee, Garcia found herself stuck and bored at home for long periods of time. This led her sister-in-law to suggest she try out for a pageant so that she could have something exciting to do during this time of monotony. The initial offer given to Garcia was to be Miss Junior Teen Temecula, but before she knew it, she found herself competing to be Miss Junior Teen California. In order to enter the pageant, Garcia was required to complete a set amount of volunteer hours. Most of the volunteer work that she did encouraged



Credit: Analiya Garcia

Freshman Analiya Garcia is crowned by other fellow contestants of Miss California Pageant.

her to be social and talk to many new people, especially with all of the meet-and-greets she had to do. At the end of the year, Garcia will be given a bronze award for completing over fifty hours of community service. She was also required to do interviews with all of the judges, commit to a lot of public speaking, and put herself out there in ways she never had before. During the times when all the events felt overwhelming, Garcia explained that she had to remind herself of the end goal. "It took so much of my time," she explained. "I put so much work into it, why not finish it?"

Garcia did not just finish the pageant, she ended it as Miss Junior Teen California. "I was surprised [when they called my name]," she explained.

"I was really surprised, but I was happy as well because I didn't work so hard for nothing." She expressed how grateful she was that all of the time and effort she put into the event was able to get her so far. Though Garcia admits this was a one time experience for her, she encourages anybody who holds any interest in pageants to try it out. "Just go for it," she said. "It really helps with scholarships, and it's so fun because you meet so many new girls, and you don't really see that [type of relationship] in school. . .they're your pageant sisters." Following her big win, Garcia has many more events planned for the next two months. Through all of the future meet-and-greets, parades, and other social events, she is sure to remember the importance of never giving up.

## Habitat for Humanity

Daschle Davenport '24  
Staff Writer

While many people may see having a roof over their head as just a simple part of everyday life, having the privilege of living in a comfortable home is far from reality for many families. This is where the non-profit organization, Habitat for Humanity steps in to place and improves the living conditions for people all over the world.

Habitat for Humanity is primarily an affordable housing development organization that provides home ownership opportunities for deserving and hard-working low-income families that struggle to find affordable housing. Instead of simply just giving money to the families, Habitat for Humanity volunteers provide help and physical support to those in need by doing the work themselves and contributing to the construction of homes. In several projects, volunteers have all come together to contribute toward the construction of houses by doing things like hammering nails to painting walls all just to show support to recipients. The Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity in the Inland Valley, Mrs. Tammy Marine, expressed how great of an experience it is to work together and contribute to provide housing to those in need. She said "I just love the synergy that happens when people come together to support each other. That is just one of the many great parts of doing what we do." Habitat for Humanity goes to the extent of ensuring that people are able to have the most suitable living space possible as the organization also completes home repairs for those who are currently not in the right financial position and operates several resale stores that can serve as home improvement thrift stores to give people a chance to adjust their home to their own liking.

Habitat for Humanity does so much for communities beyond building houses by ensuring the air is filled with holiday cheer everywhere. During the holidays Habitat for Humanity holds a bright Christmas tree lane event at the Temecula Mall where members are given the opportunity to decorate colorful Christmas trees to be displayed during the holidays. After display, the trees are then raffled-off to benefit families, veterans, and seniors in need to provide them with a delightful holiday experience regardless of what position they are in or challenges they face at that moment. One of Chaparral's very own teachers Mrs. Cox has been a proud volunteer decorator since 2017 serving as one of the tree designers. Already having a passion for interior designing and decorating, she first gained her interest when the decorated and displayed trees in the mall had caught her eye. After finding out more information about the event and the great things they did to benefit those in need, Mrs. Cox knew she wanted to do just that. She chose to volunteer her skills because she believed in Habitat for Humanity's mission to provide housing and benefits for those who are less fortunate. Cox expressed "I really just love the organization because the people they help and the things they do are just so great." She has curated holiday decor for a-list celebrities such as comedian Mr. Martin Lawrence and actress Mrs. Storm Reid since the start of her journey and plans to decorate many more trees to benefit the community in the near future.

This organization has already provided support to extensive amounts of people and is on track to continue and allow those in need to live with equal opportunities. Moving into the future there is no doubt that this organization will change the lives of many people all around the world despite their situation.

## Temecula Youth Womens Conference

Nerissa Moore '23  
Editor in Chief

With a look into the future, America's next generation of Presidents, lawyers, and noble prize winners are currently sitting in their sophomore English classes. The halls of each high school campus are filled with the next wave of greats, and they look different than how they have been represented in the past. As our world constantly changes, our ideas change as well. From a world where men were the only ones to succeed, today, we invite women to explore what makes them great. On December 7, 2022, female leaders from Temecula came together to help young women explore just that.

Invited from high schools in Temecula and Murrieta, female students from Chaparral High School, Great Oak High School, Rancho Christian, Vista Murrieta, etc. were asked to attend the annual Women's Conference. Being specially selected, students in attendance were leaders on their own campus. Student leaders from Associated Student Body (ASB), JROTC, Peer Leaders, etc. all were excited to meet women who were once, just like them.

Being met with breakfast, students sat down with influential women in Temecula varying from artists, to city servants. The event would consist of various speaking activities that would help students understand the background of the women they were sitting with, and the other influential women surrounding them. Taking an overall presence over the event, Temecula City Council member, Maryann Edwards has made the annual women's conference a priority during her time in office. Being a member of

the city council for seventeen years, Edwards sees the future of Temecula in its young ladies and hopes to be a forever figure for them to look up to. Making it an emphasis that she looks forward to the development of the next generation, Edwards comments, "You have to come behind us, and make things even better." The day was filled with great women, sharing their great stories. From table discussions to panel questions, each leader had the opportunity to connect with students and leave their leadership experience with those who sought it.

Ranging from how they succeed in male-dominated fields, to managing the stress of being a businesswoman and a mother, the female leaders gave great advice to those who would soon walk in their shoes. Michelle's Place Executive Director, Kim Gerrish spoke to her table about the power that came from overcoming perils. Four-year ASB student leader Senior Jaydin Villegas comments, "Mrs. Kim really connected with me tonight, she told me that 'you are

constantly growing in the business world'. . . she made me realize that even if I feel stagnant nothing is linear."

Speaking on the difficulties of being a woman in power, the leaders spoke on how they took that disadvantage and used it to grow in their field. Edwards speaks on the advantage of being a pretty face, and using that to make connections, "I walk down to the front and ask to sit at a random table. . . who I ended up sitting with was the mayor of New York, the mayor of Indianapolis. . . we had such a great time [at dinner] they looked out for me at every breakfast for the rest of my stay in Washington. . . this would have never happened to me if I were just another guy in a blue suit," Edwards shares.

Although Edwards was not reelected to office, she will continue to make the women's conference a priority as she sees the importance of young ladies seeing themselves in power. Students will forever be thankful for the experience and set a reminder for one day, find what makes them great.



Credit: Christina Candy

Selected female Pumas in leadership attend the Young Womens Career Conference 2022.

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## Chad Brings School Spirit to Campus

Navin Gopalan '24  
Copy Editor

Entering a new school halfway through the year is always difficult, but Senior Chad has made the most of it, instantly becoming a friendly-face on campus. In October alone, he performed in the 2022 Homecoming Rally with campus supervisor Ms. Cathy Barber, made a special appearance at the Homecoming football game, cheering the Varsity team on as they defeated Murrieta Valley High School, 62-49, and encouraged his fellow students to attend CAT30 in a P.R.I.D.E. lesson with Student Support Specialist Mr. Chris Morel.

While the community welcomed Chad with a warm embrace, he also reciprocated, contributing to the loving atmosphere by making appearances during lunch and club meetings, while also connecting amongst his fellow peers. "The other students have welcomed me like I'm part of a family," Chad remarked, recalling the Homecoming football game, where he made a special appearance in the stands. Students took the opportunity to take pictures with him, and cheer on the Varsity football team alongside him. "They're super chill, and have embraced my inner Oceanside-ness," Chad said. He also noted a positive change to his personality and behavior. After moving from his childhood home in Oceanside, California, to Temecula, he searched for many years for a sense of purpose and belonging. "I've matured a bunch," Chad observed, "because I was inspired by positivity from all the students and teachers here at Chaparral."

One of Chad's many involvements was with Mr. Morel's P.R.I.D.E. CAT30 video, where he taught the various helpful aspects of the thirty-minute session that takes place after fifth period. In said video, Chad explored the ways that CAT30 can encourage students and allow them to succeed in their classes with help from their



*Credit: Christina Gandy*  
Cathy Barber and Chad perform a skit at the Homecoming 2022 rally to excite Pumas.

teachers and fellow students, like the Peer Leaders. Chad noted that CAT30 ultimately helped him succeed in his most challenging classes. He stated, "I plan to raise my grades with the help of CAT30. My grades have already been going up with the extra time I've gotten and assistance from my teachers in CAT30. So my goal is to have straight A's by the end of the year." Soon after his video was released, Peer Leaders received a large influx of tutoring requests, revealing the positive impact Chad has on the Chaparral community.

Furthermore, Chad praised the positive and considerate staff and teachers on campus. "Every one of them has been super chill," he applauded, "and especially Mr. Rossi. No cap, I've heard nothing but amazing things about how smart he is and how he is the reason for everything positive at

Chaparral." Thanks to the amazing staff and students across campus, new students like Chad have found a home-away-from home at Chaparral. Out of all the amazing teachers and staff, Chad proclaimed that his favorite had to be "Mr. Rossi," stating how Rossi is "just such a super chill guy like that . . . [and] he's such an inspiration to so many dope generations among the children of America. He is the reason for everything positive at Chaparral."

A welcoming campus can truly make a difference to a student's life. "My favorite thing to do at school," Chad said simply, "is to just go around at lunch and dab up all of my homies." With teachers, staff, and students making the Chaparral campus a better and more welcoming place to learn, new arrivals like Chad can truly feel at home and learn what it means to be a Puma.

### NEWS BRIEFS



Liam Rosén '23  
November Student of  
the Month



Sofia Santos '23  
December Student of  
the Month

#### QuestBridge Full Scholarship:

QuestBridge offers full four-year scholarships to a select group of students who successfully match with a college or university of their choice through the QuestBridge National College Match. This year, Ruby Choi was one of about two-thousand people to receive a full four-year scholarship in representation of Chaparral.

#### HOBY Ambassadors:

The Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation (HOBY) works with students around the world on building character through leadership opportunities and volunteerism. Every year, two sophomores are selected as HOBY ambassadors representing Chaparral. This year's HOBY ambassadors are sophomores Lucas Lu and Mohamad Soyod Nabi.

#### Student Wellness Center:

Coming soon a brand new Student Wellness Center will be opening on campus. The center will consistently have two social workers and act as a safe space for students located near the 300 wing.



## Ms. Cathy Barber Dances Her Way Into Many Pumas' Hearts

Kayla Wiley '24  
School News

Ms. Cathy Barber, the school's longest running campus supervisor, has always kept a watchful eye over students. With their well-being in mind, she has continuously worked to help maintain a safe and positive learning environment. "For twenty-three years," she commented, "I walked through the gates of this school as campus security, never knowing what the day will bring." Over the years, Barber has considered each day to be an opportunity to play a beneficial role in students' lives. One of her highest priorities is to make sure that students know how much she, and all of the other staff members, want them to succeed in their school lives. Along with this, Barber does everything she can to ensure that she is someone the students can turn to in times of need. "She's fun to be around," said Roxanne Newton, a fellow campus supervisor. "She loves the kids, she cares deeply for the kids, and you can see that." With a strong work ethic, a listening ear, and a lot of determination, Barber has continuously been somebody that both students and staff can rely on in various types of situations.

According to Barber, being a campus supervisor means to always be alert and ready to act. The first priority in any situation is to keep the school, and most importantly, the people inside, safe and secure at all times. "You have to be ready for anything. You have to be ready for the unexpected," Barber explained. "You're always watching. It's people watching, and you learn a lot from that." While Barber has taught students many lessons throughout the years, she has also found that they have taught her a lot themselves. It is because of her



*Credit: Roxanne Newton*  
Cathy Barber takes time to enjoy herself at events like Prom 2021, all while supervising students on campus.

willingness to listen and genuine compassion for the students' well-being that she has found herself impacted so deeply by her work. Similarly, many of Barber's colleagues have been positively influenced by the time they have spent with her. "She's always been with me, side by side," said campus supervisor MaryAnne Lassens, who has spent eighteen years working with Barber. "Throughout the

years, we've faced many different scenarios ... she's always the one saying let's go get it, let's go find it. She never holds back. She's here 100 percent for the kids. She taught me that we have to be there. They're our kids."

Like any job, each day as a campus supervisor brings new challenges, yet it also brings new opportunities and valuable moments. Barber explained that one of the most

difficult parts of her job is learning how to adapt to each individual student. "We don't know what people are going through," she reasoned, "and they could have their good days and their bad days, but we have to adjust to them." At the same time, there are also many rewarding aspects of the job. She enjoys interacting the school community and when students approach her to say hello. One of Barber's favorite events of the year is graduation, when she has the privilege to watch the graduating students receive their diplomas and move on to the next chapter of their lives. It is a highlight that she continually anticipates and cherishes deeply.

Nevertheless, throughout the duration of Barber's job experience, there have been many changes in the school. Compared to previous years, the campus is now a completely different atmosphere. "[Before], the school was smaller, everybody knew each other, parents were involved in students' lives, and you could really feel the school spirit between the staff, parents and students," Barber continued. "Those were some of the best times I've ever had. Throughout the years, students and staff members have come and gone, but their memories will always be with me." As time has passed, the school has gradually grown larger, with more students and staff, each one different from the next. While it may not be the same as it used to be, Barber still loves the daily ventures that her job brings. It is certain that many individuals on campus have been impacted by Barber, and the same can be said in reverse. "Cathy always brings her love of the school itself. Her own kids went here," Lassens noted. "She truly, truly loves Chaparral. She always says this is my school, I'm a Puma, and it radiates in her. She lets everybody know that."

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# Medical CTE Sets Pumas Into Preperation for the Workforce

Alyza Reclusado '24  
Staff Writer

Although many students are interested in pursuing careers in the medical field, many are unsure just how to go about it. Two Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, the Medical Assistant Pathway and the Patient Care Pathway, solve this problem. These pathways allow students to engage in hands-on activities, expand their knowledge on the human body, and to explore which career in the medical field feels right for them. With each of the pathways having curriculums that expand over more than one school year, students are encouraged to stick with their initially enrolled path to have the best chances of kick starting their medical careers early on.

One of the pathways students can take is the Medical Assistant Pathway. This pathway is designed to prepare students for the Medical Assistant Certification Exam which permits students to become medical assistants straight out of high school. The pathway is divided

into three classes: Medical Terminology and Scribing, Administrative Medical Assistant, and Clinical Medical Assistant, all of which allow students to obtain college credits through Mt. San Jacinto College. The first course in the curriculum, Medical Terminology and Scribing, centers around teaching students about commonly used workplace phrases, abbreviations, and anatomical terms. Learning anatomy helps students develop a better understanding of the body's systems, how they work, and their relationships. Medical Terminology and Scribing student Freshman Aaron Barrios expressed his passion about the course. "I took this class because I am interested in pursuing a medical career," Barrios said. "Back when I was a newborn child, neurosurgeons performed surgery on my head for sagittal craniosynostosis. . . . I [want to] repay the doctors and do what they did for me." The next class in the curriculum, the Administrative Medical Assistant class, further trains students as they learn how to perform medical assisting procedures like patient appointment scheduling, maintaining medical records, procedural and diagnostic coding, as well as how to work with others in the collaborative medical field. The final class in the curriculum, the Clinical Medical Assistant class, essentially tests the knowledge that students have accumulated from the past two classes. Medical assistant students are expected to know about infection control, how to interview patients and complete their medical forms, anatomy and physiology, and the requirements of obtaining vital signs, weight, and height.

The Patient Care Pathway, another beneficial medical course, is divided into two classes, CTE Kinesiology and Patient Care and the CTE Advanced Kinesiology and Patient Care Capstone. The basis of the two classes



CTE Medical Pathway's experienced students analyze the bone structure of a spine in their rigorous course.

is to teach students about anatomy, medical terminology, therapeutic practices for regulating pain and inflammation, nutrition, and injury recognition, evaluation, and rehabilitation. For many passionate learners like Junior Swintayla Williams, the knowledge gained from these classes is very beneficial for their future plans. "I joined to get pre-experience because I want to become a physician assistant specializing in radiology," Williams said, "I truly love the subject and I [bonded] with the whole class." Like Williams, Junior Kean Ledda took the class in pursuit of his interests. "Kinesiology [helps] me understand many functions of the body," he said. "I have always been interested in the medical field. . . . A lot of my family members have taken the medical route which influenced me [to take it]." The curriculum also includes many hands-on activities that demonstrate the proper

patient interaction procedures that are needed and used in various medical careers. Students learn about cardiopulmonary resuscitation, how to take blood pressure and a pulse, taping and wrapping, massages, and stretches.

The Medical Assistant and Patient Care CTE pathways options are both resourceful and great ways for students planning on entering the medical field in the future to obtain the knowledge needed for pursuing such careers. For those who have a strong interest in how the body works and its many processes and for those who have a passion for helping others, these engaging classes can help inspire them to navigate their way into becoming doctors, nurses, firefighters, and the many other medical career options available. With everything a student can learn from these variety of classes, they can get one step closer to fulfilling their dreams.



Soccer player gets wrapped by CTE pathway student.

# Disneyland's Imagination Campus Educates Young Leaders

Loretta Topp '24  
Staff Writer

Disneyland, often known as the "Happiest Place on Earth," offers more than just rides, chances to meet your favorite characters, and amazing churros and beignets. It also provides a chance for students of all ages to

explore leadership the 'Disney Way' through Disneyland's Imagination Campus leadership experience. In this program, students learn leadership skills and teamwork. The leadership conference has proved to be useful, as this was the eighth year many leadership classes and clubs have gone, including

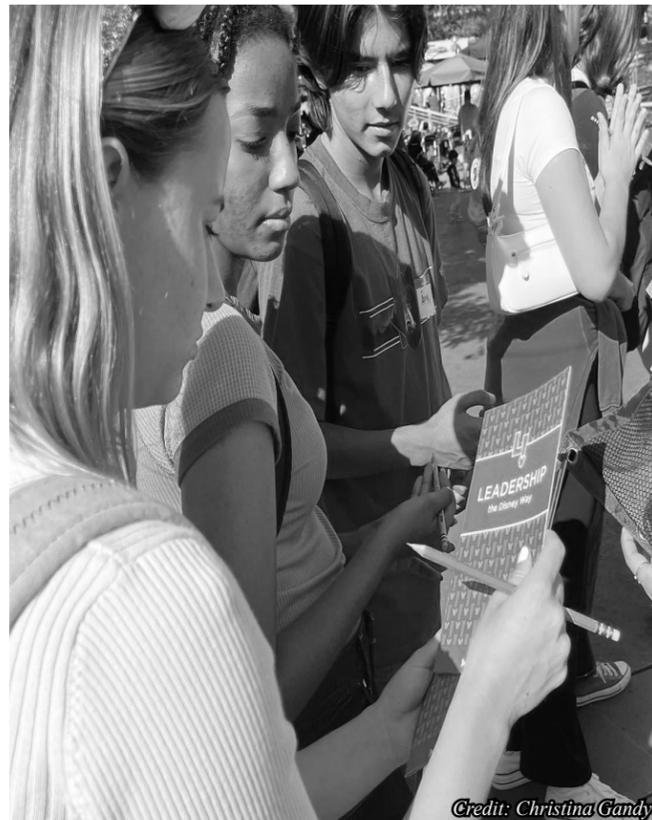
The Platinum Press, Down the Hall, Peer Leaders, Associated Student Body (ASB), The Prowler, as well as a few select students from National Honor Society (NHS). The conference itself, which was held on October 27, was three hours long.

The conference began with the groups meeting their group leaders and talking about what leadership meant to each of them. Key terms were also provided during this introduction to help students define their own version of what a leader should be. Then, the groups moved into an exclusive room only available to cast members and conference participants to learn about the leadership skills that Walt Disney possessed when he created Disneyland. Before the groups went inside, the Disney employee leading the conference explained the qualities of respect and leadership.

the value of applying different styles of leadership, to 'Leadership Bingo', all to demonstrate the variety of aspects leadership holds, and how to utilize them in their respective clubs. This

and how being a leader is more of a mindset than a title. You can't be a leader without a team and you can't be a leader without working together."

After the game, the students asked one of the coordinators of Disney's Imagination Campus some questions to see how many people's leadership skills differ but can be some people's biggest strengths. Before moving into the Disney Gallery, a museum section of the park displaying the history of Disneyland, students demonstrated and explained the meaning of leadership and respect and their applicability to their own classes. Kamel noted, "We learned what it means to be a leader [and] what kind of leader you are. It was a lot of self reflecting too about who you are and what you do and how you can improve yourself while also being a better leader for others." The groups then moved on to see Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln to see how different leadership developed in the last 200 years.



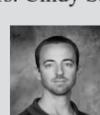
Peer Leaders discuss different leadership styles at Disney's Imagination Campus.

Groups then went on to figure out what leadership style they were best suited for. Presented in the room were four boards, each with a list of different words to help students choose a board that they felt resonated with them. The students did not know the names of the four leadership styles, so when they were revealed, some immediately felt connected to them while others did not. The four leadership styles were warrior, romantic, mastermind, and expert. Students participated in a variety of activities, from card games that taught

game made many students learn the great importance of various leadership skills. Editor for The Prowler, Junior Juliet Valencia, shared one leadership skill that she learned, "Teamwork. . . we did a game during the conference where the instructions weren't really clear so we had to work together to figure the problem out." While some learned how to work well with others, Peer Leader Junior Rania Kamel said, "I learned to be empathetic and I think that was our biggest takeaway. At our meeting we learned how you can be empathetic towards people

Students have seemed to have learned a lot from working and forming new relationships with their peers, to growing as leaders. Valencia stated, "The trip was a great experience and I think it taught me a lot about my own leadership styles and also being able to understand other people's leadership styles. I think that will help me in my leadership positions [with] teamwork and understand where people are coming from.". Students made memories at the "Happiest Place on Earth" but were able to take something equally important away from that day: how to be a leader."

## Staff Facts of the Month

	English and Mythology teacher	Key has been skydiving, ziplining and has been white water rafting on class IV rapids.
	English Teacher	Bricker has worked in the public relations department for the San Diego Chargers.
	Science Teacher	McFadden has five horses and rescued three of them last year.
	Education Specialist	Salazar is related to Abraham Lincoln
	Science Teacher	Stephens loves backpacking and has been on several 90+ mile trips.
	Drama Teacher	Irvin has worked as a cartoonist and had a weekly comic strip in a small-market newspaper back in the '90s.
	Math Teacher	Pruett has lived in eight different states.



The ideas expressed in the Editorials section do not reflect the views of *The Platinum Press* as a staff, but rather those of the journalist who wrote them.

If readers desire to respond to an editorial, *The Platinum Press* values all opinions and welcomes letters to the editor. Just as *The Platinum Press* respects each individual's right to a differing opinion, we ask the same of our readers. Each journalist is well within their rights to express their opinion on any given topic, no matter how controversial that topic may be. This is the intent of an editorial, not only to provide journalists with a medium to express an opinion, but to allow the editorial to be a catalyst for further discussion of a given topic.

All letters must be signed and submitted to Mr. Leonhardi in room 413 or left in his mailbox. They will also be accepted via school email at [rleonhardi@tvusd.us](mailto:rleonhardi@tvusd.us)

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# Christmas: The Most Materialistic Time of Year

Sky Roman '24  
Copy Editor

Christmas remains one of the most popular holidays to be celebrated worldwide. Throughout the year, people always anticipate what is coined as the most "magical time of year." However, it seems that every year, the holiday continuously loses the magic that it once held, the biggest reason being attributed to its over-commercialization. As corporations look at Christmas as nothing more than a cash grab, people tend to forget the actual meaning of Christmas; it is a time of spreading holiday joy with one's family and friends.

Year after year, the decorations and merchandise start appearing in department stores earlier and earlier. In the past, the advertisement of these products often started within the month of November, as the Christmas season was right around the corner. In recent years however, they are being put on shelves much earlier, even before Halloween. This is a trend most noticeable with Christmas because many other holidays do not have their decorations sold until the month that the holiday occurs in. Although it is true that Christmas is considered a bigger holiday than most, there is no reason that it should take away from other holidays that are also commonly celebrated.



The message of Christmas built for family, love, and comfort, has turned to a message about money and materialistic items.

Not only that, but it takes away from the excitement of celebrating. Part of what made Christmas so special is the anticipation factor, it is only celebrated toward the end of the year, making it something most people can look forward to. However as the season starts to expand, with it starting as early as October, it loses its meaning completely.

As Christmas has become more and more about selling a product, it interferes with the connections made that were once a vital aspect of what made the holiday season a favored time of year. Stores emphasizing the importance of Christmas

shopping contribute to this. Although gift giving and receiving has always been a part of the holiday and is an exciting aspect, it was never intended to be the focus of the holiday. People have become more concerned with what they are going to receive and then comparing it to what others get rather than focusing on the more important things: spending quality time with loved ones, something that one may not be able to do during other times of the year. All it does is encourage younger generations to become accustomed to a Christmas in which it is just that time of year when they receive large, expensive gifts.

They will not be interested in Christmas traditions that surround anything other than materialistic value, because materialism within the holiday is something widespread that is being promoted at an alarming rate every year.

People often get so wrapped up in the idea of having to purchase gifts for others that they do not take the time to enjoy themselves during the holiday. The season becomes a time of stress especially for those who are not in the financial situation to spend a lot of money on gifts especially as products become more expensive. This phenomenon is

completely changing how people feel about Christmas as it starts to feel more like an obligation and less like an exciting time of year.

It is difficult to control the commercialization of such a widespread festivity. If there is money to be made, it is of course expected that corporations will take advantage of this, and there is not much that can be done. However, people should not limit their view on Christmas based upon this. It is up to individuals to find ways to celebrate this holiday in a meaningful way, one that illustrates the very essence of what the Christmas season was built upon.

# Unrealistic Relationships During the Holidays

Hailey Mera '25  
Editorials Editor

It has become apparent that many individuals only enjoy partaking in holiday festivities once one is actively in a romantic relationship with someone. While celebrating the holidays with a partner is an enjoyable and memory filled time in one's life, it should not be the main reason that one looks forward to holiday festivities. Not only that, but through portrayals of seasonal activities, it becomes noticeable

that one can only really find themselves enjoying the holidays if they have someone to do it with. Even though relationships tend to heavily be glorified throughout all holidays, this primarily occurs during the Christmas season.

A prime influence stems from many social media platforms; more specifically, TikTok. Through these platforms, many trends arise where relationships are constantly glorified. For example, there is a massive number of users who continuously show what to do with one's partner now that the holidays are near. As a result, it is as if

spending the holidays with one's partner automatically becomes a goal to achieve, rather than a natural want. With the help of social media, celebrations during this holiday are oftentimes glorified because of the significance that comes with having one's partner involved. Many people are often left discouraged from participating in classic holiday activities because they are embarrassed to do it with family and friends rather than a significant other. Rather than finding the joy in celebrating with family and friends, a certain ideology has been created in

which one can only find the joy in celebrating events once they have someone they can do it with.

In relation to this, it is noticeable with this mindset, that relationships tend to prosper during certain times of the year, as opposed to any other time. This is also heavily broadcasted throughout numerous platforms where certain couples tend to highlight their significant other during the holidays because it essentially glorifies their relationship. Doing this is not a bad thing because ultimately, partaking in trends such as these is simply enjoyable. Nonetheless, those in a relationship should not have to feel pressured to uphold an image simply because it is visibly appealing to an audience.

It is not wrong to want a relationship with someone and have a person to experience significant events with, nor should it be discouraged to look forward to having a significant other to enjoy these times with. Even so, the issue lies when a vast majority of people find themselves romanticizing these things, then find themselves devastated when it does not always go in their favor. Which then raises a question; was that person unhappy because they did not have a relationship? Or was it because they now cannot spend Christmas, partaking in all Christmas activities, with another individual romantically?



Credit: parade.com

People often feel ashamed that they are not in a relationship during the holiday season due to the pressure on social media.

## Developing Political Opinions Young

Brielle Olson '26  
Staff Writer

Teenagers are the bridge between children and adults. As the middle of the two, there are some things that are childish that so many adolescents try to avoid those tendencies and appear more adult-like. One of those things is having an opinion or a voice in politics. Understanding and having an opinion on politics at a young age, or on the cusp of adulthood, is a great way to become ready for adult life. It can help, not only teens to understand some of the bigger parts of society, but also anyone else who is willing to listen.

Having a voice in politics or simply being knowledgeable as a teenager can be extremely beneficial when going into adulthood and becoming eligible to vote. Having an opinion on what is going on in the world of politics is essential to creating a political standpoint. Youth involvement in politics creates an idea of the kind of change that teenagers look for in the future as young voters mature. However, young adults cannot know how to vote if they do not know their rights and the policies that they stand for. Schools have taken to teaching students their rights along with how the government works, while still letting youth form their own opinions on the political stance that reflects their own beliefs.

As more teenagers become adults, more changes are made to fit the style of government that works best for the current generation of voters as well as the youth who are too young to make choices about the government and world they live in. Without the youth, this country would forever be stuck in the past, this leaves the older generations who are educated on politics and who choose to vote with control on what direction the political discussion goes, whether it be liberal or conservative.

Developing an opinion on politics is immensely important, but some teenagers choose to not participate in debates that concern politics, as they are not quite old

enough to vote, so they develop a mindset that if it does not apply right now, that nothing will happen when they do voice their opinion. Without the relevance of the topic to what many teenagers find a necessity or interesting, many choose to ignore what goes on in the world of politics causing the opinion of the youth to be non-existent. Having a political standpoint can be beneficial, however at the age group that voting targets, it becomes extremely boring and hard to follow without proper motivation.



Teenagers within politics is a topic with varied opinions; should teenagers voice their opinion or not?

While some of the younger generation choose to not exercise their rights and voice their opinion, others who choose to care about important political discussions and stand up for what they believe are the ones who will contribute to necessary changes for today's society to function. Involving children in politics can not harm them, it can only help to better the kids and the rest of the nation as a whole. By involving children and teenagers in political discussions, it sets them up as not only successful individuals of their community but also to become a more productive part of society.

## Teens: Stay in School, Not in Politics

Milyn Francis '25  
Newsroom Manager

Since teenagers have been engaging with the media, politics is the number-one thing in today's society. Everyday, political views make or break relationships, just because society has established a "right or wrong" opinion that is often polarizing. This alone is unnecessary stress for students and teenagers today. In past years, students have seen and been through ground-

voting whatsoever. Clearly, the worst part of it all is that minors cannot vote, yet some still talk about politics. When politics are talked about in a school environment, it perpetuates a belief that they can judge another's opinion, when they cannot vote for themselves. Some teenagers seem to not care about today's society because they have no say in what is approved. Due to their limited knowledge and experience with the political world, they are not fully aware of how the political system works, aside from small, assumed bits and pieces. Furthermore, teenagers may have gathered their information about their own beliefs on politics from the environment they have grown up in. Parents and other adults shaped what they have believed, and what is accepted or not accepted in their circle. As these values were passed down, they have added to this standard of "being right" when it is spoken upon in a school setting. As adults judge others for their perspectives, it is found that teenagers have done the same within their age group. Hence, some spread awareness on social media to a close circle of viewers who are not going to change the world, while others do not care at all.

In recent years, some teenagers are developing their political knowledge and identities. Obviously, in the future, they are going to be just as involved as adults. For example, new information on politics may shape young individuals to become mature leaders. As the older teenagers get, the more their beliefs will fluctuate, creating their own opinion to pass down onto another generation. In the United States, this action every four years brings or divides people together. Although, as much as they evaluate the society they want, it may not be the outcome they get. It is a benefit to let teenagers have their own opinion on politics, yet that thought is not going to get far. Since teenagers do not have the knowledge or right to vote, their use of their opinion is simply useless. While it may be good to have an opinion overall on politics, actively voicing it in the media may do nothing good.

Politics is meant for adults, hence why the age to vote is eighteen. With this it is sensible for teenagers to hold off the concept of politics until they come of age.

breaking events like a pandemic, COVID-19, and racial justice protests like the Black Lives Matter movement. However, teenagers are not allowed to vote, so why should they be worried about a concept that is years away?

As teenagers go on with their everyday lives, voting is a last priority. It is uncommon for a high school student to think about voting for the next president on a daily basis. However, when the contrary is correct, that high school student is not able to vote until after they graduate. The upcoming presidential election is always spoken about, yet no action can truly be done since some students have no say in

## The Lack of Prioritization of Women's Needs in Relationships

Editorials Team

In their attempts to impress women, men often portray themselves and act in ways that they believe are desirable, rather than taking into consideration the qualities and actions that a specific individual is looking for. This behavior feeds into the enduring expectation for men to be controlling, extremely masculine partners who search for women that are willing to accept the stereotypical roles and aesthetics of male attraction. In reality, every relationship is vastly different from the next as each partner has unique needs that they need fulfilled in order to be satisfied within the relationship.

Therefore, there is no universal method of pleasing a woman, but rather, men must simply get to know their partner and disregard societal pressures that require them to behave in a toxic manner.

Oftentimes a popular approach in which men exemplify these existing expectations is by demonstrating the "hard-to-get" tactic. This approach primarily stems from social media. Within clips posted on certain platforms, it highlights specific ways in which a man should go about treating a woman, whether it be acting crudely or being overly nice, in an attempt to win her over. While it, depending on the audience, may seem humorous, men tend to subconsciously hold

themselves on a certain pedestal with the many unsaid "rules" regarding getting the attention of females. As a result, it becomes apparent that even though males think they are successfully winning females over, they are actually straying more away from who they truly are in attempts to uphold a certain image. Simultaneously, they are straying away from the actual ways in which a particular woman desires to be treated because of the growing generalization of female needs.

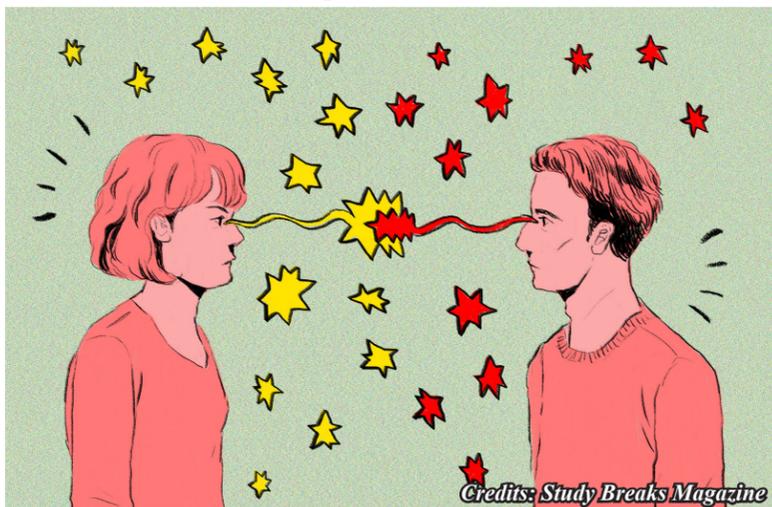
In addition to this, society as a whole turns a blind eye toward how many people on social media and in films negatively portray women and men on screen. Contrary to the belief that society has moved past misogynistic roleplaying, many directors paint female actresses in a way that showcases their sexuality as their strongest attribute. This can enforce very distorted beliefs onto the minds of people in relationships,



Women are often portrayed as sexual objects in the media, which can negatively impact their self-image.

younger viewers, and many other individuals. Not only does this cause young women to feel obligated to expose their sexuality when they do not actually want to, but it permits men to think they are allowed to push this out from women. Furthermore, there is also the issue of both men and women generalizing their needs, roles, and desires, leaving no room for individuality in the relationship. These ideas are completely narrow and prevent partners from tailoring their relationship in the unique way that suits both individuals, often causing a strained relationship between couples.

Clearly, there is unfortunately a large amount of men who do not realize the tendency to lead discussions concerning women's "wants" that only value the opinions of other males rather than the females themselves. Without consulting women on an individual basis, their treatment of women is dependent upon their own ideals. In order to combat this, it needs to be recognized that both genders have their own beliefs, and instead of trying to apply previously learned beliefs that are oftentimes harmful, people can work to understand each other and their love languages more effectively.



The male and female view completely contrast, leaving for unequal expectations in relationships.

Chaparral High School - The Platinum Press - December 16, 2022

# Edwards: Talent in the Makeup Field One Festive Performance

Athena Ebuena '24  
Staff Writer

Makeup for special effects (SFX) have played a significant role in a variety of media, including movies, photography, theater, and the cosplay industry. This makeup style has grown in popularity as well as opened up employment opportunities for students who wish to pursue a career other than mainstream makeup. Senior Madi Edwards is among the many students interested in SFX and planning to pursue a career in makeup.

Edwards has been practicing makeup for the last two and a half years, beginning with the 2020 quarantine. With the amount of time she had during the COVID-19 pandemic, she was able to do much research on the variety of products commonly used, their purposes and functions, and see what is safe for their skin. Edwards can do about any makeup style if a reference is provided, however, she mainly specializes in SFX. "[Particularly,] I like doing SFX makeup because it allows me to define myself while also expressing my creativity and ideas that some people may not have had," she explained. SFX makeup has always amazed Edwards with how a normal-looking person can turn into something completely different. This style of makeup achieves far greater character looks that traditional makeup cannot. To gain more experience, she provides

makeup assistance for actors in Advanced Drama, specifically characters that have detailed facial appearances. In Madame Odette's Cabarete, she helped with actors with characters like Beetlejuice, Adam Barbara, and others. This experience enabled her to develop her skills with other students, which



Credit: Athena Ebuena

Edwards (left) applies setting powder to finalize Junior Liam Davis (right) look for Harvey.

enhanced her creativity and led to a more in-depth understanding. In general, makeup is a challenging field that involves lots of trial and error, especially SFX makeup since it requires an understanding of fundamental makeup products and techniques. Edwards recommends starting with small looks first because they can "always transform a smaller look into a bigger look" with ideas. In the beginning, students can use simple eyeliner and highlighter but as they learn, they can begin to transform a simple look into something much

more elaborate. As well as having a basic understanding of makeup, it is necessary to be confident to achieve the quality of SFX looks. "If you're not confident with it, it's not going to make you happy, and you're going to set yourself up for failure," Edwards stated. It is becoming more and more common for makeup artists to cater

to many clients in a short period of time, resulting in a lowered standard of perfection and increased level of stress. Even so, they continue to do what they enjoy despite the stress created. She shared that no matter what project you take on, there is always going to be "fun and stress" combined that makes it "worth it."

Edwards is continuing to presently develop her portfolio to demonstrate her skills and to enter cosmetology school. She will continue to grow as makeup artists with the opportunity available and hope to pursue careers in the field.

Riley Sy '26  
Staff Writer

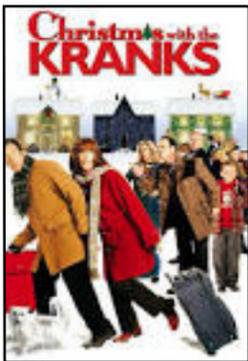
As the semester slowly comes to a close, performing arts classes all across campus have been preparing to end the year with a variety of performances. Orchestra is one of these many groups. Led by Director of Music Mr. Juan Jasso, students practiced for countless hours for their first concert of the school year. After all, the quality of music is determined by practice and perseverance. Their talents were presented on December 15, with the pieces "The Barber of Seville" and "Carnival of the Animals." Each of Jasso's music groups gathered in the gym while the seats were filled with the families and friends of the performers, the entirety of the audience was ready to see what they have been working towards.

The orchestra consists of stringed instruments that each carry a different range of pitch and volume. As a result, each student has to put in heavy amounts of effort to ensure they can blend and balance with the sound around them. This is a necessary skill the orchestra had to gradually learn as they became accustomed to one another throughout the semester. "When you're playing in an orchestra ... you develop a skill of ... kind of using both parts of your brain," explained Concertmaster and Senior Ruby Choi. To improve their balanced listening alongside other skills, many of the members have dedicated their time to practicing

outside of class. Each of Jasso's music classes have a mentorship program in which students are paired with another student who has a greater understanding of the instrument to refine their skills. Orchestra students utilized this opportunity and scheduled practice sessions, typically after school, to assist one another and build up their experience together.

Unfortunately, progress is not always linear. The obstacles some students had to overcome through time added to their experience and growth. Sophomore Maya Huisinga expressed, "I do feel that I'm constantly pushing myself [to get better]. I'm trying to learn ... how to expand my range of how I can play the music." She only recently picked up the cello, however, she grew in skill just as much as those around her.

Music is a universal language everyone shares, and the ability to speak it is a skill not many have. Orchestra students went above and beyond to demonstrate their dexterity in the language of music. Their efforts paid off tremendously, as was shown during their performance. On another note, the future of the orchestra class could see a turn for the best. With the new combination of string orchestra and a wind ensemble, Jasso has plans to upgrade the current class to a symphony orchestra, which expands the possibilities of music curriculum on campus. Students who are interested in seeing what the music ensembles have to offer should consider attending their next concert, coming in spring.



Nerissa Moore '23  
Editor in Chief

With the recent sending-off of their daughter Blair, Luther and Nora Krank are hoping for a Christmas like no other in the 2004 film, *Christmas with the Kranks*. As the holiday season pressures catch up to the couple, the Kranks leave behind their Christmas spirit to prepare for a cruise. From not putting up a Christmas tree to not throwing their infamous Christmas eve party, the couple does everything in their power to "skip" Christmas. Through their efforts, the previously loved pair soon become the scrooges of Hemlock Street as neighbors failed to make the Kranks put an end to their endless efforts. With everything finally looking up for the pair, the Kranks' fun is cut short when Blair calls to make a surprise visit home. With Blair's expectation of a Christmas consisted of Honey-Baked ham, a decorated tree, and Frosty on the roof, the Kranks kick aside their vacation plans and scrap for a regular Christmas eve. From stealing a neighbor's tree to serving smoked trout for Christmas dinner, the Kranks make the greatest effort to give Blair what she deserves. Falling back into old habits, the couple throw the largest party of the year, making that Christmas truly one they will never forget.

Family favorites Tim Allen and Jamie Lee Curtis depict a couple we can all relate to. As the holiday season approaches, viewers see themselves in the Kranks as they try to justify their Christmas spending. *Christmas with the Kranks* is truly a family comedic classic, made to make you feel the rush of the Christmas spirit.



Navin Goplan '24  
Copy Editor

*Violent Night* is a 2022 action-comedy Christmas film directed by Tommy Wirkola and written by Josh Miller and Patrick Casey. Some violent content in the film is not suitable for younger audiences, so viewer discretion is advised. The plot follows the wealthy Lightstone family, along with their young daughter, Trudy (Leah Brady), who are kidnapped and held hostage by a paramilitary mercenary group, led by Mr. Scrooge (John Leguizamo), seeking to steal their enormous fortune. Soon after, however, a depressed Santa

who has lost his 'Christmas spirit,' (David Harbour), arrives at their mansion to deliver presents. After realizing the family's predicament, and considering that Trudy is on his 'Nice List,' Santa brutally strikes back against the criminals to save the Lightstone family.

This movie has the perfect amount of action and dark comedy. Underneath the violent, yet comical, action sequences, is a heartfelt Christmas story celebrating the joyous holiday spirit. Harbour's and Brady's performances steal the show, turning the R-rated film into a wildly entertaining—and unexpectedly emotional—feature. Norwegian director Tommy Wirkola's stylization of action creates enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing action sequences, heightening the movie experience. Releasing on December 2, it has garnered many positive reviews, received a ninety percent Audience Score, on the website Rotten Tomatoes. Overall, *Violent Night* is a memorable holiday movie, taking advantage of modern visual effects and filmmaking techniques, to create an entertaining Christmas film that I highly recommend.

Svetlana Hohol '25  
Editor in Chief

Directed by Sergio Pablos, *Klaus* is Netflix's first animated movie to receive an Oscar. It follows the story of a spoiled son named Jesper, whose father is the director of a postal training academy. For months, the academy tries to teach him about how to be a successful postman. However, Jesper refuses to listen and slacks off with the luxuries he has due to his father's success. After so many failed courses and ignorant mannerisms, Jesper's father sends his son to the poor, rigid town of Smeerensburg as a last resort. For one year, Jesper must be able to run a successful postal office and send out 6,000 letters. If he fails to do so, he will be cut off from all his family riches and left on the street. With no choice but to accept, Jesper's adventures out to the small town.

Upon his arrival, Jesper is faced with the violent and creepy behavior of the townsfolk. Soon to find out that this town is the home of one of the most dangerous rivalries of the world and has exiled multiple postmen before him. Amongst all the fighting and rage of the people, Jesper tries his best to adjust to his new lifestyle.

Little does he know he will be met with an intimidating, but heartfelt man who goes by the name of Klaus, who will turn his postal business and the town's fearful behavior into something amazing. The film not only contains humorous one liners, but also has heartwarming moments that will leave you feeling better than ever before. It is certainly a must watch for all ages during this holiday season.



Milyn Francis '25  
Newsroom Manager

*Zoey's Extraordinary Christmas* is a comedic, musical drama released in 2021 that follows Zoey Clarke, a coding manager, spending the first Christmas without her father. Every year, Zoey's dad, Mitch Clarke, plans Christmas with his family and without him, Zoey feels lost. She invites her family to dinner and figures out how to honor his death, but they are busy and turn her down. Even her co-workers try to make her feel better yet nothing seems to work, so her boyfriend, Max, has the superpower of hearing other people's thoughts through song and decided to plan the best Christmas ever. After Max brings up his plans of leaving for Christmas, Zoey realizes she misses her dad and it feels wrong to not celebrate it without him. With Max's agreement, this Christmas, she recreates her dad's Christmas traditions with his gifts, decorations, and dinner. Officially, the "Mitch Christmas" is on. However, while Christmas tree shopping, Zoey noticed her mom, Maggie Clarke, was interested in the manager, Jack, which scares Zoey. Later, before they eat dinner, Zoey finds out Max invited Jack because Max knew Maggie liked him. However, when one of her father's decorations breaks, Max realizes that he has regretted everything he has done and how Zoey just wanted Christmas to be normal again.

This Christmas movie followed actress Jane Levy who starred for two seasons in the series, *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*. After the show was canceled, this was a good way to bring the whole family together to see the actors back-in-action for the last time. It was nice how they touched upon grief, romance, comedy, and was overall a good holiday film to watch with loved ones.



Chaparral High School - The Platinum Press - December 16, 2022

## Old Town's Santa Electric Parade

Riley Sy '26  
Staff Writer

A plethora of brightly colored lights, the crisp chill in the air, and earlier sunsets are all tell-tale signs of the holiday season. With winter break growing closer, students, staff, and families alike are all preparing to celebrate. However, it would be dull to end the semester without a proper celebration. The 30th annual Santa's Electric Light Parade was hosted in Old Town by Temecula Community Services and consisted of a wide variety of groups from within the community. The path started on Jefferson Avenue and ended on Overland Drive, and the establishments lined up across the street were decorated with brightly colored lights to add to the atmosphere.

Hosted on December 2, Temecula's 30th Santa's Electric Light Parade featured ninety-five different participants, ranging from Chaparral, Great Oak, and Temecula Valley High School student athletes to the mayors and council members of the city. This year's theme was "Temecula Safe for the Holidays," with the intent to encourage all entries to decorate their floats to the fullest and perform full of spirit. The Chaparral Marching Band performed their student-written cadence as well as their rendition of the classic Christmas tune "Sleigh Ride." Behind them, cheer added energy to the scene with festive choreo of their own, while football followed close behind. The audience was densely packed, with many attendees of varying ages who all shared the same appreciation for spending the holidays with their community. "It's a good opportunity to mingle with the community and



Credit: Jennylynn Carpio

*The Marching Band plays their various sets at Annual Santa's Electric Parade.*

see how much each [of the] schools have progressed this year towards the work they've been moving towards, and generally just to have fun," expressed Senior Jack Wang, who participated in previous parades.

This event, despite being a yearly occurrence, was a sentimental moment for the upperclassmen who have attended for several years. Senior and Varsity Cheer Captain Jaydin Villegas who led the cheer line during the parade discussed how emotional the event was for her. "With this being my last parade, I'm really excited. It's kind of a bittersweet moment because I've been doing this since I was a freshman. To be at the very back of the line to now leading it, it's really fun for me, and I think that it's a [milestone]... It's really cool to see my progression," she expressed.

In contrast, many of the first years from each group saw this as a building block that contributed to their experience. Freshman Aliza Chon shared, "With this being my first parade, I hope to have many more years of being festive, having fun, and playing fun music with the people I care most about."

Santa's Electric Light Parade is one of Temecula's many events that connects the community and creates an environment for everyone to bond over the holiday season. Many of the students who participated and watched from the sidelines took away a bit of warmth from the sense of unity created by everyone celebrating the holidays together. Those who want to add a little more to their holiday experience should consider attending next year's parades to share their Christmas spirit with everyone.

## Popularity of Digital Art

Athena Ebuon '24  
Staff Writer



Credit: Ian Foronda

Traditional art has allowed artists to express their artistic side on a physical canvas. The cost of supplies, however, have limited the ability of artists to express themselves fully. With digital art, students have access to a larger amount of supplies with a click of a button, as well as other advantages unavailable in traditional art. In recent years, the advancement in technology has facilitated students' creativity to extend beyond traditional drawing limits.

Digital art has allowed students to push the boundaries of creativity to help make artwork that is appealing. Many traditional artists have experimented with this field, including Sophomore Katey Skinner and Junior Ian Foronda. Skinner found herself in the arts back in 2016 after following YouTuber *DrawingWiffWaffles*. Her interests in art were sparked by this YouTuber, who provided speedpaints of their artwork with voiceovers rather than showing how the artwork was made. Though she is a flexible artist, her main focus is on cartoons and semi-realism. As for Foronda, he started drawing his own digital work in 2020 after seeing YouTuber *ABD Illustrates*'s artwork. In addition to semi-realism, he also practices an anime-inspired style of art. The two students embraced digital art as an opportunity to expand their creative boundaries in a new direction. The popularity of digital art has increased as more students can access art necessities more easily compared to traditional art. "It has more options for [artists]," Foronda explained, "You can get specific colors and not worry about messing up because you can use the [undo] shortcut to get rid of the mistake." Student artists can also incorporate "so many different mediums

*One of Foronda's many creative art works, and textures" and achieve results that are not possible with traditional art, according to Skinner. With illustration software, like ibis Paint X and Clip Paint Studio, students have access to a variety of colors, brushes, and tools that will enable them to create the artwork they desire right at their fingertips. Creating digital art is not much different from making traditional art. Other than the digital brush customizations, the amount of work and effort remains relatively unchanged.*

Digital art is becoming prominent because it is cheaper and more efficient. In contrast to traditional art, it is more affordable as it only requires a device and an art program. Despite these features being advantageous, artists are often confused by the shortcuts, blending options, and functions associated with these brushes. "Don't be afraid to watch tutorials. You won't know what half of the buttons [on the software] mean. [Even] I still don't know," Skinner suggested. Foronda also advised beginners to become familiar with these tools and watch YouTube tutorials to gain a better understanding of their functions.

The pursuit of creativity is something students strive for on a daily basis. Now, students are able to create artwork that they would not normally achieved on paper. It has not only expanded creativity, but also opened access to digital art supplies worldwide.

## Dancers Come Together at Annual Valley Fusion Showcase

Reagan Delahunty '25  
Managing Editor

The Valley Fusion Dance Show is a second-time event where dance teams from Temecula Valley High School (TVHS), Great Oak High School (GOHS), and Chaparral High School (CHS) put together a Christmas show for all families to enjoy this holiday season. This year, Puma dancers spent weeks in preparation for the event and put on a spirited show bringing holiday cheer to everyone involved.

This year, both Varsity, A G I \* L I T Y and Junior Varsity (JV) dancers performed on Thursday, December 8, and Friday, December 9 at TVHS. Varsity and JV Dance performed multiple sets including one dance in collaboration with the students on campus who are a part of the Bridge program. Multiple sets included dances to popular holiday songs including "8 Days of Christmas," "Holiday Cheer," "Christmas Morning," and more. Dance Director Mrs. Alyssa Salas pushed her dancers to the best of their ability while also making sure they were enjoying the moment and it paid off in the end with a successful performance. "You just do it with love and you're passionate about it ... these are the types of experiences that help you grow as a dancer and you will just enjoy it way more," Salas explained. "It's really really fun for us to be part of this ... [and] it's more of a community-based event ... so we are here to just showcase something we all have in common and that's dancing," Salas added. After many weeks of choreographing, practicing, and rehearsing, Varsity Dance and JV Dance showcased their skills perfectly at the Valley Fusion Dance Show through the various styles showcased including contemporary, jazz, hip-hop, and lyrical.

One of the Varsity Dance Captains, Senior



Credit: Reagan Delahunty

*Varsity and JV Pumas spread holiday cheer through engaging song and dance during the yearly Valley Fusion Dance Show that they have prepared tirelessly for.* Gwenneth Cobb, expressed her excitement before the performance saying that the team was ready and "really excited for this [show]." Cobb was one of the many choreographers for the dances and was thrilled to see her hard work in play, stating "to see it come to life on stage with everyone is really cool ... it's just really rewarding." She continued by expressing her gratitude and thankfulness for her teammates and fellow dancers, saying, "I feel really proud of all my girls, all my teammates ... [and] it was just a nice little community where we all just hyped each other up." Varsity Dancer Sophomore Ashley Gonzales explained that not only is dancing in shows similar to this fun for the team and a way to show off everyone's skills, but said, "it is a place that I can go and I know that nobody will really judge me, and I can have fun with it and it lets me express how I feel." Performing dances choreographed by fellow team members and allowing themselves to "feel the music" helped bring the performances to life. With dance being more than just a hobby for most of the dancers, they were able to connect through the dance and put on a great performance for the audience members and themselves. The Temecula Valley Fusion Dance Showcase had another amazing performance to end the year and brought holiday cheer to the students and families involved. The JV and Varsity Dance teams, as well as the coaches from all three schools, have put together another successful year at the Valley Fusion Dance Show and brought holiday spirit through their creative choreographing and storytelling on the grand stage.

Chaparral High School - The Platinum Press - December 16, 2022

## Exploring Within Religious Pathways

Lauren Padilla '24  
Copy Editor

Religion is a substantial part of one's personal identity as even the absence of strong beliefs contributes to their view of the world, with many spending their lives attempting to find the faith that most strongly aligns with their life journey. While parents and guardians may assist in this search by passing on their own beliefs to the next generation, some may not identify with those morals and views, provoking a thoughtful search to self discovery and acceptance. Whether it manifests through total devotion or a completely new religion, unique and distinct beliefs become defined.

Many people find peace within religion, and although they may not come across it in the same fashions, it becomes a grounding aspect of their lives. Despite not being born into any certain religion, for Junior David Toschak, being a part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) has provided him with valuable lessons and guideposts. Deciphering which religion fits best for oneself is certainly a challenge, but after frequent visits from LDS Church missionaries, Toschak concluded, "eventually, it felt right, [my family and I] were influenced by what we know as the Holy Spirit, which helps to affirm decisions to us." The LDS Church, like many other Christian religions, is heavily dependent on the Holy Spirit and a variety of religious texts that has assisted Toschak in making the right decisions. "One of the things that we have is the Word of Wisdom, that essentially tells you what things you should and shouldn't put in your body ... It's like guidelines that just help you live your life and it has really benefited me," he explained. It can be difficult to find friends who support you wholeheartedly for who you are and for your beliefs, but Toschak has been fortunate to not "have to change who I am around my friends because a lot of my morals and values already line up with those of the Church."

## Destress from the Pressure of Finals

Madalynn Chavez '24  
A&E Editor

Throughout the school year, students of every grade level have endured constant stress from assignments, quizzes, and projects. The three weeks between Thanksgiving and winter break can be the most intense as they are full of studying and exams. For many, finals week can be the most challenging time of the year, and as such, it is important that students take care of themselves in order to better handle the stress and academic burden that come with it.

Approaching finals week, students tend to be the most anxious as grades, parents, and teachers pressure them to perform well. Advanced Placement Psychology teacher Ms. Sonja Grover noticed, "there's so much emphasis in some classes on finals, [students] are worried if they don't do well it'll drop them by a grade." For some students, this can be an opportunity to pass a class they are on the brink of failing, or maintain a high GPA. Junior Avita Tinsman expressed, "Tests are horrible enough as is, and then the idea that everything you've learned since August is going to be compiled into one huge exam, that's horrifying." To decrease testing pressures, improving time management and scheduled studying prevents cramming information the



Credit: Giselle Shupe

Senior Giselle Shupe joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at age eleven.

However, this is not always the case. In western culture, prominent beliefs align with that of Christian theologies, which often causes many to be less accepting, or even ignorant, to those that oppose these dominant religions. Junior Hailey Akbarzada has experienced this firsthand as a Muslim woman living in the United States. Akbarzada has followed the religion of Islam her entire life, but only recently truly found and began to devote herself to it alongside the choice of embracing the hijab. This act garnered her more support from her fellow Muslim family members, but negatively impacted some of her friendships with people who were less accustomed to this tradition. Akbarzada does not let this affect her relationship with faith as "at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter because I did gain a lot of friends from it as well. . . people will talk no matter what, so just doing you helps." Like Toschak, Akbarzada found that putting her trust and relying on God has helped to ease the difficulties of life and mental illness.

Yet, some do not partake in organized religion at all for a varying number of reasons, most commonly

they find that religion tends to contain gaps of information that make it difficult for them to fully accept and follow it in an appropriate manner. For Junior Amelia Rogers, Christianity once was a passionate part of her life, but as she grew up, she found herself doubting her given beliefs. Rogers expressed, "I'm more of a . . . 'believe it when you see it' type of person, and I feel like it's kind of hard to have faith in something that I can't physically see happen." Still, like most, Rogers believes there is some form of a higher entity in this universe, but that they are not as selective as the Christian God.

Nonetheless, exploring, or simply learning, about different customs of religions helps to bring about a more accepting society and open minded culture that does not feed into inaccurate, harmful stereotypes sprouting from simple ignorance or lack of education. Throughout one's life, the process of seeking out different religions may shift between rejection or commitment, but no matter the path taken, each person's individual journey to religion is a validating and fulfilling experience for those on it.



Credit: Chloë Zuñiga

Senior Nalani Rathbone utilizes different stress relieving techniques to prepare for finals.

night before. A study schedule can look like taking a few days a week to review for thirty minutes, or one day for a few hours. Taking time weeks ahead to review learning material can encourage a full eight hours of sleep, or more, before the exam to improve performance. Between study sessions, it is important to take breaks that can help the brain rest and process. Junior JoyCelina Smith, president of Self-Care Club, explained that the club "will always find an activity whether its drawing, painting, listening to music, or just study grouping [as] a way for us to be accessible and try to get those negative thoughts out, and we also go to a cafe or animal shelter." Creating a relaxing environment or going out can aid in solidifying information

whilst encouraging self-care.

During finals week, anxiety is heightened most while taking the final. With a block schedule dedicated to multiple finals throughout the day, entering each testing room with a confident and positive attitude is the best way to set oneself up for success. Smith expressed, "I tell myself I know this stuff and it's okay, I don't have to be perfect ... get in a good mindset, don't strive to be perfect." Although external pressures are uncontrollable, internal pressures are. Self reminders, focused on personal trust and confidence, and patience can aid in performance to create a calmer experience. If the information is unfamiliar, "take a deep breath ... answer the [questions] you know first ... try to relax as you're taking

## Contreras' Message

### Navigating the Holidays



Aura Contreras

MSW, LCSW, PPSC  
Temecula Valley Unified School District  
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

The holidays can be an amazing time for many people AND they can also be a really difficult time for some too. Maybe you are not close with your family or have challenges at home that make home not feel like a happy place. Maybe you lost someone you love and that grief is heavy. Maybe you experience more seasonal-depression (yes, it's a real thing! Oftentimes related to the increase in melatonin and decrease in serotonin levels). Maybe you feel pressure and stress from expectations of the holidays. Whatever you are feeling, it's valid.

Here are 5 tips for navigating the holiday season:

- 1. Set boundaries with family and friends:** It's okay to say no to things you do not want to do. Remember boundaries are not mean—they can (and should be) set with respect. AND, how somebody responds to your boundaries is not YOUR responsibility.
- 2. Have realistic expectations of yourself and others:** Don't overextend yourself and don't overspend. We all have this idea in our heads of what the holidays "should" be; however, keep in mind that no family, no holiday, no person is perfect.
- 3. Rest, relax, and reset:** PLEASE spend your winter break actually taking a break. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Remember if you do not rest, your body will do it for you- meaning, you will probably end up sick or being forced because you didn't take the time to do it.
- 4. Stay connected with people that make you feel your best:** Whether it's in-person or virtually, spend time and energy with people that value you for who you are and make you feel your best.
- 5. Stay present and grounded in the moment:** It can be so easy for all of us to focus on the past and worry about the future. Find time to be present and focus on the here and the now. Take everything around you in. One way you can do this is to connect with your senses. For example, the next time you see lights hanging up, really look at them and take them in. Notice how you feel looking at them. Being present can help us really appreciate and find gratitude in the little moments, even if there are other things we are struggling with.

Stay safe and take care of yourself!

taking it," Grover recommended. People tend to forget to provide their brains with the oxygen required to process information when they are tense. Learning breathing exercises to use during testing can help control stress in a less taxing manner. When deep breaths are ineffective, using anxiety-relieving toys can distract the mind away from the issue. Some people find fidget spinners, stress balls, or pop-its useful. "I'm allowed to bring in stress balls and stuff like that, so any anxiety thing will help," Tinsman explained when discussing ways that she gets through testing. Once exams come to an end, having a reward such as movies with friends, a spa day, or baking can act as a reassuring reminder that it is over.

Although finals can certainly cause the last weeks of school to be harder than most, a two and a half week long winter break follows, which allows students to be temporarily relieved of most school responsibilities. This break can be used to relax and take time to prepare destressing methods for the spring semester and finals. In general, remaining mindful can encourage individuals to develop patience with themselves while testing. Even after finals, these tips are applicable to every test and quiz throughout the school year. Grover advised, "take a deep breath ... it's just a test, it's not a life or death kind of a thing, if you studied and you've been doing well in the class, you're probably going to do fine."

## Jacob Groves: "King of the Court"

Dallin Grey '24  
Sports Editor

The school record for the most three-point shots in a Varsity Boys Basketball game was nine, set by Alumnus Dwain Williams and later tied by Alumnus Bert Whittington. But on November 16 in the Varsity Boys Basketball game against Yucca Valley High School, twenty years after the record was set, Freshman Jacob Groves broke it, knocking down ten in the thirty-two minute game. He did not stop there; by the end of the game he had scored forty of the team's collective ninety points. Within his first two Varsity games, Groves collectively scored seventy-nine points—more than half of the team's total 145.

Groves started his basketball career seven years ago when his father, a basketball player when he was in high school, taught him how to play basketball. His talent was immediately apparent, exceeding that of football, baseball, and other

sports that he played. Today, he is ranked among the top five Varsity freshmen in the nation, averaging 28.5 points per game and shooting an impressive sixty-four percent from the field. To stay on top of his game, Groves strives to exhibit more than the typical amount of dedication to a sport. Instead of simply "show[ing] up right when practice starts and leav[ing] right when practice ends," he puts in extra effort, practicing twice a day, attending zero-period workouts with the Varsity team, and practicing with a trainer at 7AM on non-school days. When he and his father go to the gym together, sometimes right before or after one of his other practices, he tries to put up around 500 shots per session.

It is very difficult for freshmen to be accepted onto the Varsity team, and oftentimes they struggle to find a key role amongst the other athletes who are upperclassmen. But even while Groves has found it "hard to be a leader on the team," he is committed to "step[ping] up, changing into that leader role ... [and] being more vocal with [his] teammates." Groves attributes his success to the help and effort of his coaches, specifically Varsity Boys Basketball Coach Mr. Brad Smith. "The majority of the reason [for] my success [is] because of my coach," he stated. "He's a great coach, and finding, like, what roles and what ... everyone's good at. And, you know, honestly, I have confidence in myself but I know that he has confidence in me ... and I have confidence in every single one of my teammates," Groves continued. "[Basketball] is about playing your role, but honestly ... it's hard to play your role when your coach doesn't ... believe in you, and I know that he believes in all of us ... Huge credit to Coach Smith for that."

Basketball has had a large impact on Groves, building new relationships, teaching social skills, and keeping him fit. He also has high aspirations for his basketball career. "The main goal is obviously to go to the NBA (National Basketball Association)," Groves stated. "The chances are slim to none, but ... if I can just go Division 1 [for college], get ... a high-level education. I mean, even if I don't make it to the NBA, just getting that ... Division 1 education would be huge so that I can, you know, hopefully pursue a great job in the future, even if it's not playing basketball, which I would love for it to be." As Groves continues his high school career, he looks to break more school records while continuing to improve alongside the rest of his teammates.



Credits: @jacob\_groves\_socal

Freshman Jacob Groves makes basketball his top priority.

## Football Earns Big West Honors



Varsity Football makes great achievements in new Big West League.

### First Team

Stacy Dobbins - WR  
Caron Tyler - QB/ATH  
Devyne Pearson - RB  
Raymond Valencia - WR/DB  
Izaiah Souriolle - OL  
Jacob Alvarez - TE  
Blake Lowe - S  
Aiden Alefosio - DE



Devyne Pearson '23



Cedric Jefferson '23

### Second Team Offense

Cole Fuller - OL  
Liam Potter - OL  
Cedric Jefferson - OL  
Dah Beierly - GB  
Robert Besanson - UTL

### Second Team Defense

Justin Selway - LB  
Jayce Venable - DB  
Shane Kingelberg - LB  
Izaiah Rivas - DB  
Robbie Stebbing - DB  
Vincent Perryman - DL  
Elijah Errese - DL  
Jake Williams - DL  
Nate Smith - DL



Aiden Alefosio '24  
Nate Smith '23



Jacob Alvarez '25

## Athlete Spotlights

Photos and Spotlights by  
Paityn Perry '26  
Staff Writer



### Breckon Robirds '23 Boys Soccer



Senior Breckon Robirds, a goalkeeper on the Varsity Boys Soccer team, has played soccer since five years old. Robirds began playing soccer for the fun of it, but, after watching the 2014 World Cup, he realized that he could go far and became much more dedicated to the sport. As a goalkeeper, Robirds has been a great leader on all the teams he has played on, but he claimed he needed to

improve on using his weaker foot during certain, necessary situations. Impacted by playing on the varsity team, Robirds exclaimed, "Soccer is my number-one commitment. I put almost all my time and effort into improving at every aspect of the game." Robirds makes it a priority to surround himself with people who have the same goals as him, in hopes to improve himself without being distant from his friends. He explained how the people he spends his time with help him stay focused on bettering his soccer skills. "Chaparral has [had] a very positive impact on my life," Robirds explained. "Through my experiences here, it has taught me that if you [persevere] through challenges you face, good things will come." Robirds hopes to future his career in soccer.

### Aubree Crump '24 Girls Soccer



Junior Aubree Crump, a player and team captain on the Varsity Girls Soccer team, has played soccer since six years old and eventually moved up to a club team at ten years old. Growing up, her family has always been very athletic and had a love for sports. She initially wanted to play football, but there were not many girls who played and all of her friends played soccer, so she decided to participate

too. Crump immediately fell in love with the sport and improved greatly as time went on. She also has had her biggest supporters by her side, "My parents and siblings pushed me to be the best I could be and do everything I could to get better," Crump exclaimed. Even when she cannot play, being team captain, Crump shows up to every practice and every game to support the team. "Soccer takes up a lot of time and you have to make sacrifices in order to play and commit that time to it," Crump said, "But overall, it is very rewarding and I wouldn't have it any other way." Crump is also positively impacted by the team's connection, "I have gotten so much closer [with] my teammates and I have made so many memories with them." Crump said, "It makes us all better players and we can all have that support system."

### Onelo Lorberter '23 Boys Wrestling



Senior Onelo Lorberter, a participant and team captain on the Varsity Boys Wrestling team, began his wrestling journey in 8th grade on the team at James L. Day Middle School. "I was just looking for a sport I could genuinely have fun in and enjoy no matter the outcome of the game/match," he explained. "But over the years, I began to realize that this sport began to influence my life." Aside from the sport

itself, Lorberter's personal inspirations keep him going as well; including his mom and Louie De La Torre. De La Torre was his club coach at Dan Henderson Athletic Fitness Center and always showed Lorberter how the wrestlers were his top priority. His mom has always pushed him to his best and told him to keep going no matter what. Lorberter needed this encouragement his junior year when he realized something about his wrestling style had to change due to the aching pain he endured. This setback caused him to put too much pressure on his joints that were then put in bad positions. Since becoming a student-athlete in high school, Lorberter's career has been unmistakably encouraging. Lorberter claimed that the wrestling program has only benefited him and made him a better version of himself.

## Varsity Boys Soccer Takes the Field in Preparation For Success

Chloë Zuñiga '24  
Copy Editor

The Varsity Boys Soccer team faces a high-stakes season as they return to the field in pursuit of maintaining their Southwestern League Champion title, for the fourth consecutive year. The team concluded the previous season with impressive achievements, including both their League Champion title and making it to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) tournament. Some players took the summer off from the sport, while others practiced with club teams or organized friendly games amongst themselves to stay in shape. Regardless of individual preparation, Head Coach Mr. AJ Covarrubias shared that the team has spent their first few practices focusing on "fitness and technical work. [They are] mainly refining their skills ... to get the players season-ready." Despite the team's rough beginning, having lost their first preseason game and tying in their second, the coach and players are optimistic about their upcoming season and challenges ahead.

The team's main goal this season is to maintain the achievement of the League Champion title by dominating the in-season games. "I think we have a good chance of [winning league], I don't think it's not obtainable," Coach Covarrubias shared. "I think we can definitely accomplish that goal, but it's



Credits: David Magbagbeola

Junior Naseem Abedsalam fights for the ball from an opposing player.



Credits: Chloë Zuñiga

Senior and captain Angel Parra rushes past his opponents from going to come down to the team and their preparation for the season." His optimism towards the future games increased as he observed the large amounts of effort that the players gave during their first few practices. Coach Covarrubias elaborated, "The commitment levels [from the players] are there and the overall intensity is there as well. You can tell that they're hungry and wanting to put in the work to be ready." The team has proved their willingness to remain determined and work hard, which is hoped to be exemplified on the field as the players pursue their shared aspirations for the upcoming season.

Although the team has already put in the levels of time and effort needed at each practice in order to succeed this season, members of the program are still aware that there are aspects of the game they need to improve on. Senior Angel Parra, one of the Varsity Boys Soccer team captains, explained that a key focus for him and his teammates in training is to "[get] more fit because a lot of [players] ... get tired quickly, which won't work for [the team] in season." Coach Covarrubias elaborated on the need for players to work on their physical fitness. He stated that they should strive to be "as strong as they can be and as fast as they can be, to give

Vista Del Lago High School in hopes for an outstanding goal themselves an edge over the competition." Furthermore, there are mental aspects of the game that are vital for success in soccer as well. For example, the sport requires large amounts of trust between teammates in order to have good communication on the field and perform more in-sync with each other, something that is crucial in order to properly and effectively execute plays. Coach Covarrubias stressed the importance of this component as a major feature of the game that his players need to improve on so they can perform to the best of their abilities this season.

Building trustworthiness within the team is something that the players have not found difficult to achieve, due to their strong personal bonds with one another. "We really just see each other as another family," Parra shared. "We're all very close to each other and talk to each other about anything." It is clear that the road to achieving the Varsity Boys Soccer team's aspirations will prove to be a strenuous one this season. However, with their lengthy and committed preparation, the team has a fighting chance at reaching their goals. Parra concluded, "I am very optimistic because I think our group is very talented and I think we have the ability to compete at the best level."

## Ramer Honored as Coach of the Year

Alyza Reclusado '24  
Staff Writer

With his strong leadership skills and outstanding performance this season, Head Football Coach Mr. Andrew Ramer earned the title of the Big West Coach of the Year. Ramer began his coaching career at Chaparral in 2009, and being his fifth year of leading the football team, to be recognized for his commitment towards helping students fulfill their passions held a lot of value to him. "Helping young men reach their goals and aspirations and helping them on their journey ... to potentially go on to play college football [is] one of the most rewarding things that I've done," Ramer stated. "There's a lot of hard work and dedication done behind the scenes that people don't see." Ramer attributed his success to his relationship with his players. He explained that, without his team, he could not have achieved such an accomplishment. "It's nice to be recognized but at the same time it's about the team overall ... without everybody else I wouldn't have been honored like this."

With his guidance, the team was able to make a great comeback after a series of setbacks in previous seasons. Many players on the team, including Senior Cedric Jefferson, owe a lot to Ramer's coaching. "[Ramer] cares a lot about his players, he pushes [us] to be better everyday and he is a great coach overall," Jefferson said. "He did a great job turning our season around. A lot of us lost hope after we lost to Temecula Valley but he helped [restore] that hope to us ... We had a great season after that."

Ramer also thanks his fellow coaches and team. "My assistant coaches and players did a phenomenal job of getting the season back on track. We started slow but they went to work," said Ramer. "[Without] their dedication and commitment to the whole process and program, we wouldn't have had this success ... it's the whole program and the whole team that won the award." Fellow coach Mr. Robbie Robinson stated to have had a great season with Ramer and expressed, "He's an outstanding head coach [and is] very supportive of his assistant coaches ... We have a great coaching staff and he does a great job leading it, he led this team to great achievements." Ramer will continue to lead and fulfill the role of Coach



Credits: @coach\_ramer

Coach Ramer makes a great impact on and off the field, making him Big West's Coach of the Year.



Credits: Aidan Mante

Junior Adain Mante has a drive and passion to be an outstanding leader and mentor in the water polo pool.

## Adain Mante: A Shark in the Water

Julian Stanfield '24  
Staff Writer

As one of the Varsity Girls Water Polo team captains this year, Junior Aidan Mante is prepared to enter her third season of water polo with unwavering determination and passion to be a leader in the pool. Over the summer, Mante was chosen to be a captain because of her exceptional level of skill and dedication to attend practices and is prepared to show off her exceptional skills as a leader for everyone to see.

Before she started playing water polo in the eighth grade, Mante did competitive swimming as her sport of choice. However, after her father mentioned extending her love of swimming into water polo, Mante decided to try Chaparral's water polo camps over the summer and later found the sport enjoyable. She soon became a part of the Junior Varsity Girls Water Polo team as she joined high school and rapidly moved up to the Varsity Girls Water Polo team the next year. According to Mante, water polo has helped her build "a lot of trust with [herself] and other people," as well as grow her leadership skills. Mante makes it a point to practice balancing her

skills in the pool as both a player and leader. "You have to be really good in the water," she shared, "so you know what you're doing and you know what other people are doing so you can help them. But you also have to [make sure that you] step up and take the lead."

Outside of the preseason practices, Mante trained with the Temecula-based non-profit club, Apex Water Polo, to improve her skills in preparation for the season. She affirmed that her goal this year is to ensure that everyone on her team does their best while also having fun and developing chemistry with one another. As of now, she is mainly focused on strengthening the chemistry of the team and being a player whom others can come to for advice and encouragement. "I try to be there for my team ... I'm trying to plan for more team bonding stuff so the team can have something outside of water polo to get that deeper connection. After high school, Mante is considering continuing water polo through club sports and hopes to continue her athletic career at The University of California, Davis.

# Winter Festivities

\*Pictures by the Platinum Press staff\*

What is your favorite seasonal activity?



"Putting up the Christmas tree because it represents the significance of gift giving and spreads holiday spirit. It also just makes the house so cozy and pretty."  
- Summer Rashidi '23

What is your favorite holiday food?



"My mom always makes brigaderio for the holidays. It's a popular Brazilian dessert and tradition to have at get togethers; I grew up always having it around holidays."  
- Natália Ferrette '24

Do you have a favorite holiday tradition?



"My favorite holiday tradition [is]... our elf on the shelf because I remember when I was younger I always wanted one... We finally got one and it's really fun to wake up every morning and see it do random stuff."  
- Elizabeth Sandoval '26

What are your plans for winter break?



"I'm really just going to relax and try and get my habits up for school better so I can study for next semester and do better for school overall."  
- Austin Jones '25



"[My favorite seasonal activity is] snowboarding because it is such a fun and carefree thing to do and it's one of my favorite sports."  
- Samantha Fish '24



"My favorite holiday food is probably tamales during Christmas time because it's a tradition we have every year."  
- Briseida Martinez '24



"My favorite holiday tradition is when you get the red envelope on Chinese New Year, because I get money!"  
- Simon Wong '24



"I plan to walk around in pajamas all break and keep the heater blasting and cuddle with my friend."  
- Robert Covarubias '24



"My favorite seasonal activity is, setting up the lights outside and decorating the Christmas tree because it involves family time and good vibes."  
- Angel Gonzalez '25



"It's a Filipino food, palabok, [because of] the flavor of the sauce, and the chicharon on top and the shrimp on top."  
- RJ Umali '23



"My favorite holiday tradition is sitting in the living room with my family and sharing our favorite Christmas memories from past years."  
- Kori Walker '23



"My plans for winter break are finishing my common apps and hanging out with Angel Parra out of pity."  
- Carol Bautista '23



"My favorite seasonal activity is baking goods with my mom. It's really fun to just spend time with her and at the end we get to enjoy what we made."  
- Sonia Parande '26



"My favorite holiday food is tamales because I have a lot of memories of making them with my grandparents."  
- Deanna Velarde '25



"My Favorite Holiday tradition is the cookie making competition my family has every year."  
- Jordan Josey '23



"I plan on enjoying Christmas with my family and I'm going to Texas to visit my grandparents."  
- Katie Holdstein '24