

# The Unsung Heroes of American High

*A deeper look into the ways our custodians keep our school running*

Natalie Loo  
Staff Writer

Ringg. Time for first period. We rush toward our classes, glancing at cell phones and waving hurried good-byes to friends. Ringg. Another flurry of chaos begins as we repeat the process, this time rushing toward our second class of the day. Ringg. And again. Ringg. And again. With most of our days spent cooped up in classrooms and with naught but six minutes to walk through the halls between classes, it's easy to overlook the essential group of people at American who spend their days sorting out the destruction caused by these student tornadoes: our custodians.

When students do see our custodians, they're usually cleaning. Jacob Carlson, who has been working at American for around five years, is one of those guys. "During lunch, I make sure there's no big spills in the MPR. And then after that, I clean the kitchen area, the MPR area, and the boys locker room, and then all the bathrooms that are around them," he explains.

But that's not all the custodians do. The day custodians, who get here as early as 6:30 AM, have tasks far beyond just cleaning. "If there's anything to set up for events, they'll do that in the morning—delivering

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*According to Joyce Liu, a senior at American, "After lunch, it looks like a tornado swept through, and by the time school's out, it looks like nothing ever happened. That's kind of magical." Here, Raul Canedo is working some of that magic. He has been a custodian at American High for upwards of seven years and works alongside the rest of the custodial staff to keep our school running smoothly.*

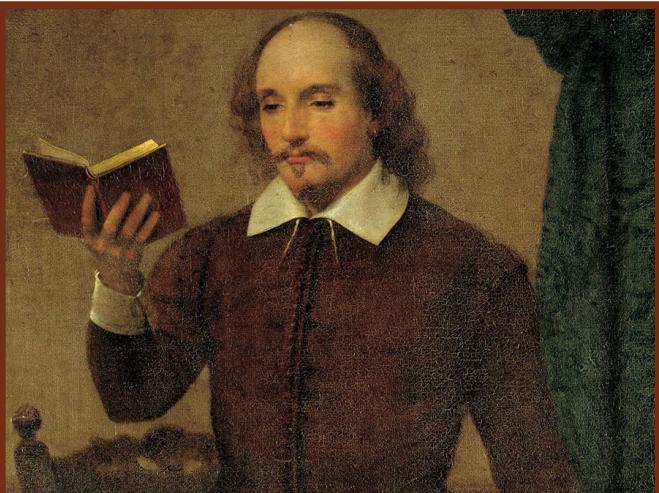
## WHY I HATE SHAKESPEARE

**OPINION: A HIT PIECE ON THE MOST OVERRATED AUTHOR OF ALL TIME AMIDST CALLS FOR A MORE DIVERSE READING CURRICULUM**

Anika Aggarwal  
Staff Writer

I really hate reading Shakespeare. Touted as the greatest writer of all time, Shakespeare had an incredible influence

on English language and English literature. Despite his influence, his plays are no longer relevant for our English classrooms and should be the first to go when we replace them for



PC: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Museum purchase (object no. 1976.35)

a more diverse reading list.

William Shakespeare was one playwright, only one perspective from one moment in time and space. Much of our time is spent reading his plays, with one seemingly popping up every other year [since as early as 7th grade in FUSD]. Reading only one of his plays would be enough, which brings me to another point: Why are we reading plays that were meant to be watched?

Shakespeare never intended for his plays to be read, they were meant to be performed and viewed by an audience in a theater. Much of the writing in place was meant to exaggerate what would otherwise not

be obviously known in a play setting. Many visual aspects were converted to dialogue or monologue in order to make sure the theater could hear, if not see, what was taking place. This results in poorly aged lines such as "O, I am slain!" when Polonius is stabbed to his death in The Tragedy of Hamlet (Act 3, Scene 4). Actions and setting, in Shakespeare's time, had to be verbalized, resulting in awkward and wordy dialogues. In addition, the style of language employed in Shakespeare's plays is now obsolete and outdated. Why force students to read early modern English when even modern slang would be more appropriate for future use?

Most importantly, many of the common themes in Shakespeare novels are antiquated and poorly varied. The most recurring themes

are misogynistic and classist, perpetuating harmful ideologies without correcting them. In The Tragedy of Hamlet, the only two female characters, Ophelia and Queen Gertrude, exist to be harmed by men's actions, much like the female characters present across Shakespeare's plays. Women's deaths are the results of men's actions in the play, and female characters who defy the gender norms and roles in the play are either killed off or tamed into submission as a consequence. Students do not see themselves in the women of Shakespeare; putting oneself in their shoes only limits the full complexities and potential female characters could have. Moreover, the classist narratives skew our perspectives on history and the settings of

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# It's a Rich Man's World in Speech and Debate

*Understanding the importance of funding for American's speech and debate club*

"It's an entire system. And just like any system for any competition, money matters, right? Yeah, money always matters," says Baldwa (12).



**Sahana Narayan**  
Staff Writer

Entering high school, every student is bound to hear about their school's speech and debate team. Either it's at club orientations, where there are huge crowds surrounding the club's table. Or, it's spotting the jackets that display the members' names that are proudly worn throughout the school. Or maybe, they have a friend in speech and debate, who passionately talks about the sport...a little too much. But, beneath the huge crowds, cool jackets, and deep passion for the sport, there is a darker and more serious side to speech and debate. And it all centers around the question of money. It's a common occurrence in this world that no matter how much passion one has, money always gets in the way. And it works no differently with American High School's speech and debate team.

First, it's important to understand the areas of expense in a speech and debate team. In a school team, the main focus is on tour-

nments. Meryl Mathew (11), the vice president of American's speech and debate club, walks through the process of registering for debate tournaments. "To sign up for a tournament, there will be an entry fee. Usually for smaller tournaments it can range from \$40 to \$70. For the bigger tournaments, it can be anywhere from \$80 to \$150." But it isn't just the tournaments that cost money. Mathew says, "And then on top of that, you would obviously be traveling on your own, buying food on your own, you have to buy formal clothes, all of that. People are surprised by how much those cost."

Along with the basic costs, there are additional expenses that vary between the speech and debate aspects of the club. In debate, a main expense is briefs, which can be around the \$200 range.

Mathew explains, "Briefs are just evidence that we use in debate, and it's sort of like pre-collected evidence

*read rest on eagleera.org*

# The Best of Times, The Worst of Times

*Taking a closer look at the different ways people react to the colder months*

**Sinchan Mishra**

Staff Writer

November. The days get colder, the nights get longer, and colorful leaves blanket the ground everywhere you look. For some, this is the best time of the year—a time for anticipating Thanksgiving Break, enjoying Starbucks's winter menu, and having an excuse to spend more time inside. But for others, this marks the beginning of a long, difficult few months spent missing the fun and sun of spring and summer.

Whether they do enjoy the limbo between autumn and winter or don't, everyone has a variety of reasons why—and very

few of them are as simple as merely bad weather or the approaching holidays.

Ashley Yu (11) feels most alive during the daytime. "I love it when sunlight is beaming through my window, all warm on my skin," she says, reflecting on the nearly year-round warmth we experience in the Bay Area. According to WebMD, receiving adequate sunlight is important for maintaining healthy levels of serotonin, the "happy" hormone. Getting enough time in the sun can even assist with stress management; sun rays can trigger the release of a compound called nitric oxide, which can low-

er blood pressure. Naturally, the cooler months aren't the most convenient time to get such benefits.

"[Now] the weather is so gloomy, and it just makes you feel a certain way... it makes you feel down," Yu confirms. "And now that it's becoming more and more frequent, it's starting to take its toll."

The dreary weather we associate with fall and wintertime can translate to some unforeseen effects. "It just makes me feel more introverted... I don't really know how to explain it. I feel more recluse, less likely to talk to oth-

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## "Gifted and Talented" Education

*Is the GATE test ultimately beneficial for students?*

**Japneet Kaur**

Staff Writer

Third grade is an important period in a student's academic journey. It's the year when students master the art of cursive, become experts in multiplication time tables, and expand their knowledge of the world. It's also the year where students in California take the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) test.

For many high school students, this test is a distant memory. After endur-

ing the pressure of the SAT, SBAC testing, and district benchmark tests, GATE is the furthest thing from their minds.

There are even some students and teachers who aren't familiar with the test at all. Of those who are somewhat familiar with it, many feel they are not knowledgeable enough on the subject to provide insight.

The topic of GATE is very indistinct, and not much is known about the background of the test.

"I feel like GATE has just always been there.

Even when I was in school, they had GATE but I don't know where the test came from," says assistant principal Mrs. Pelayo. "I didn't take the GATE test when I was a student and I didn't see the GATE test when I was a teacher because I never taught third grade."

According to the Gifted and Talented Education Program Resource Guide, found on the website of the California Department of Education, the GATE program was adminis-

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*The future of the GATE program in Fremont seems pretty rocky at the moment, especially with the Fremont Unified School District's website revealing that the coGAT testing, which "has been the primary means of qualifying students for GATE identification," has now been discontinued due to budget savings. The district's statement under the section "GATE overview" claims that FUSD is "now in the process of identifying an alternative way of identifying students." The website reveals that "We are currently revising the GATE identification process and handbook FUSD will have an update by Spring 2022."*



*PC: CogAT*



# Winter Session

December 2021 - March 2022

## SAT Winter Boot Camp

**Winter Break Boot Camp:** December 27-30 & January 3-6

**Spring Extension:** January 11 - March 5

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 26	<b>Dec 27</b> Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	<b>Dec 28</b> Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	<b>Dec 29</b> Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	<b>Dec 30</b> Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Dec 31	Jan 1
Jan 2	<b>Jan 3</b> Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	<b>Jan 4</b> Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	<b>Jan 5</b> Test 9:00am-12:30pm Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	<b>Jan 6</b> Class 1:30pm - 5:30pm	Jan 7	Jan 8



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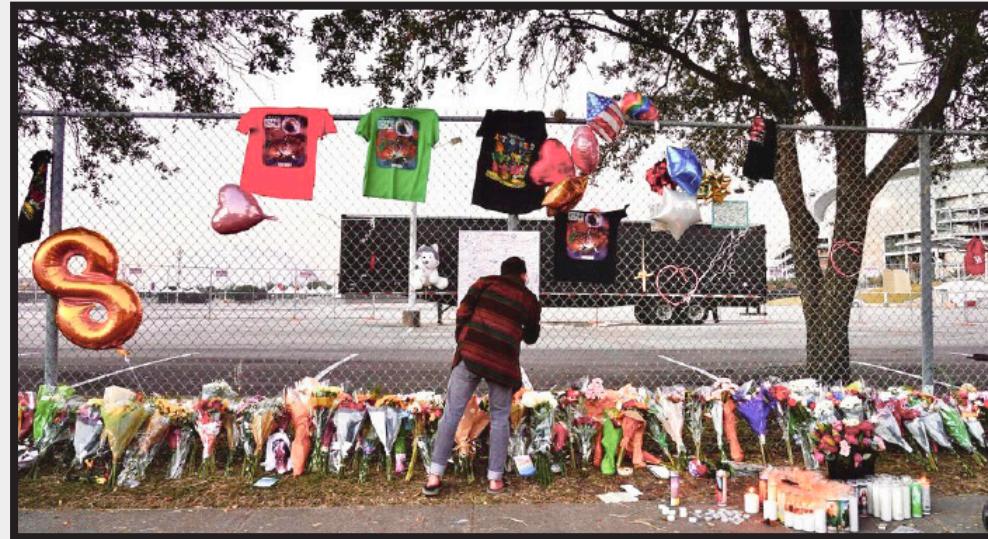
# The Astroworld Festival Tragedy

*Understanding the different factors that resulted in the mass casualties at the Astroworld Festival, and remembering the victims of the festival*

Sahana Narayan  
Staff Writer

On November 5th, Friday, ten people were crushed to death during Travis Scott's performance at the Astroworld Festival. As the crowd screamed and begged for Travis Scott to do something, to do anything, he instead yelled to the crowd, "I wanna make this motherf\*\*king ground shake!" He then continued his show for 30 more minutes and ended the concert by saying, "I love you all. Make it home safe." Ten people wouldn't make it home "safe" that night. Many more would be hospitalized. And the rest? The rest would leave that festival, carrying a severely traumatic experience for the rest of their life.

The Astroworld Festival, the name coined by Travis Scott's 2018 album, Astroworld, kicked off its third installment on Friday. 50,000 people were



*A memorial held for 16 year old Brianna Rodriguez, one of the victims of the Astroworld tragedy. PC: Alex Bierens de Haan/Getty Images*

assembled. A highly anticipated event, the festival brought thousands of fans each year. Due to its cancellation in 2020, excitement ramped up for the festival's return in 2021.

This year, the festival had a great lineup with artists such as SZA, Don Toliver, and Tame Impa-

pala taking the stage. But, the main event that fans were excited for was Travis Scott's concert at 9 PM.

It still remains unclear on what exactly caused the crowds at Scott's concert to push forward, but there were clear indicators that day that the festival was not going to run

as smoothly as hoped by festival organizers.

Before the show on Friday, numerous people were shown rushing through a VIP entrance at the festival, "knocking over metal detectors and other people as well as ignoring staff," according to CNN. At 3:30 PM, there seemed to be an

influx of people who needed medical attention, and it grew to a number that started to overwhelm the medical resources even before Travis Scott started performing. At 8:15 PM, Sami Anjum, a field medic, said, "Many patients were last seen conscious more than 20 minutes prior to receiving any medical attention."

As soon as Scott took the stage, TK Tellez, one of the concert attendees, noted that "The crowd became tighter and tighter, and at that point it was hard to breathe. When Travis came out performing his first song, I witnessed people passing out next to me." Many concert-goers described calling out to security guards, officers, and Travis Scott himself to stop the concert, but their pleas

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## California's Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month

*The core beliefs of the Sikh faith*

Japneet Kaur  
Staff Writer

The month of November is one of the holiest months for Sikhs. It's the month in which the birth anniversary, or Gurpurab, of Guru Nanak Dev Ji falls. Of the ten Guru Sahibs in Sikh history, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism, is the first. On the full moon day in the month of Kartik, Sikhs all over the world celebrate the day when their spiritual guiding light was sent to this Earth to open the door to eternal peace.

California has designated the month of November to be Sikh Awareness and Appreciation month. On September 26, 2019, the California State Legislature filed the Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 133 with the Secretary of State. This resolution recognized the month of November as California's official Sikh

American Awareness and Appreciation Month, stating that "This measure would recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions made by Californians of Sikh heritage to our state and seeks to afford all Californians the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans."

Sikhism is the fifth-largest religion in the world. Originating in the state of Punjab, it has now spread to regions all over the world. Today, there are over 30 million people who practice the Sikh religion and the United States alone is home to almost 500,000 of them.

The Sikh religion is monotheistic, with the belief that there is one Creator. Sikhs pray three times a day, with five prayers in the morning, and one

each in the evening and at night. The first morning prayer begins with the Mool Mantar, which describes the attributes of the timeless Waheguru (God). The first line of the Mool Mantar states that "There is only one God, and there is no other like Him."

After praying, Sikhs do Ardaas, a supplication asking God to bestow His blessings to all. During Ardaas, Sikhs pray for universal wellbeing and prosperity. Not only do they pray for the welfare of everyone, but they also work towards making it a reality. The concept of Sewa, or selfless service, is prominent in the Sikh religion, and Sikhs are taught to help any and every human being in need.

The ten Guru Sahibs ingrained the concept of

## SAT/AP Teaching

*College Counseling (Application Essay Help)*



Graduated from Blythewood High School  
SAT I: 1460 (Reading 670, Math 790) GPA : 3.8/4.0, AP : Physics (5), US History (5), Calculus BC (5) Extracurricular activities : rugby, Korean tutoring to Korean-American Children, president of the school math team, community services at church

Awards : National Merit Scholar, South Carolina States Math Competition second place, among others

Fortunately, through Steven Academy, I was able to receive a high SAT score, improved my grades, and was finally accepted to **University of Southern California**.

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**AP Environmental Science**  
**AP US History**  
**AP World History**  
**AP European History**

**AP English Literature**  
**AP English Language**  
**AP G&P(US)**  
**AP G&P(Comparative)**  
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## The Best of Times, The Worst of Times Cont.

er people," Yu describes.

The issue with waning sunlight is that it doesn't completely resolve itself until winter ends, meaning that these feelings of social isolation are long-lasting. That can make for a season that feels monotonous and hopeless.

"Everything is so gloomy outside, and you're stuck in this routine of going to school and then coming home and doing homework and then you go to sleep and do it all over again the next day," Yu says. "There's no variety, and it makes me feel like I'm living on autopilot."

On the other side of the spectrum, however, are people like Aradhya Kongara (11), who associate very different feelings with this time of year.

"Something about this season is so cozy and warm," she says. "It's perfect for staying at home all cozy in your blankets, drinking hot chocolate... I really like it because it's a time of togetherness."

Besides the feelings and emotions this time of year

evokes in people, extracurriculars can play a role in their enjoyment as well.

"One of my hobbies is art. And I love getting all cozy in my room and lighting a candle and just drawing or painting in my room when it's colder especially," Kongara states. "I play basketball, too, which is a winter sport."

However much these reasons play a role in why people like the fall and winter seasons, they disregard one of the biggest, most obvious highlights of the fall and winter seasons: the approaching holidays.

"Getting ready for Christmas and looking for presents for other people is so fun," says Madyson Tran (9). "I know it's early, but me and my friends and family have already started talking about it."

Even for those who don't come from very festive backgrounds, the holidays are a source of excitement and provide an end goal to look forward to when life feels dreary and joyless.

"My family doesn't [celebrate,] but I try to go all

out," Kongara says. "I'm the one who's always giving everyone presents, and making plans for Secret Santas or Friendsgiving."

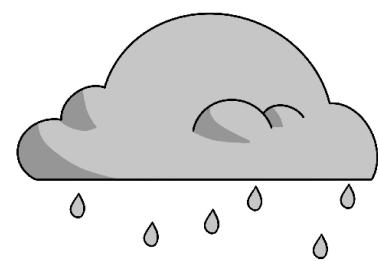
These are just some of the views people hold of this time of year, and what remains true is how polarizing it can be. However, there are some things people on both sides can agree on: it's very important to practice self-care when things feel extra tough.

"Remember that even if it might not feel okay now, and might not feel okay for a long time, things always pass," suggests Yu.

"Let yourself feel things," Kongara adds. "Spending time with loved ones can always make things feel more bearable."

Madyson advises people to keep in mind both the positive and negative aspects of this time of year. "It may be getting cold. It's getting darker, earlier. But you're getting a lot more breaks and some time to rest and re-energize. It all balances out."

## Letter from the Editor



Dear Eagles,

As we settle back into the mundane cycle of going back to school after what was (hopefully) a restful week-long break, I'd like to take a moment to reflect back on November. For those of us graduating in around half a year, it's brought awareness to the fact that college applications are, in fact, a very real threat. For others, it's been a realization that scrambling to polish (or start) CSU and UC applications over break wasn't the smartest idea (I may or may not be one of those students). It also noted the revival of American's beloved fall play, which hundreds of people in our community were finally able to watch live after a yearlong hiatus. And, for athletes and performers, November marked the end of the season for many fall sports such as football, marching band, water polo, and cross country. As this month draws to a close, it's also a reminder that finals and the end of the first semester are just around the corner, and with them, a much-anticipated winter break.

In order to capture the various things November represents for American's student body, this month's issue includes a diverse selection of articles covering topics ranging from seasonal depression to Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month. Additionally, in the spirit of gratitude (Thanksgiving, anyone?), we've also in-

cluded articles covering Friendsgiving and what students and faculty here at school are thankful for.

On that note, I'd like to briefly share some things I'm thankful for. I'm thankful for the friends who've stuck with me throughout these past few years at American, and for the teachers who truly invested into both my learning and wellbeing, and made the experience worth it. Thank you to everyone who reads the *Eagle Era*; it's hard to describe how fulfilling it is to see people enjoying the paper. I'm thankful to the nagging voice in my head that convinced me to join band and journalism, because they've both allowed me to meet some of the most sincere, talented, and hardworking people I've known. Speaking of journalism, I'm thankful to my editorial staff for dedicating so much time to ensuring quality in every single piece of work, and especially my co-editor-in-chief, without whom this publication wouldn't have evolved to be nearly as amazing as it is now.

And last but certainly not least, I'm thankful to be able to work with such a remarkable team of staffers that've demonstrated both excellence and potential in their short time here.

Stay warm,  
Shreya Daschoudhary  
Co-Editor-in-Chief



For some, the cloudy weather that accompanies this time of year evokes happiness and comfort. But for others, it's dreary and gloomy, a source of unhappiness. PC: Kotomi Yamamura

## WHY I HATE SHAKESPEARE CONT.

Shakespeare's plays. Nearly all the plays focus on characters from upper class backgrounds: lords and ladies, kings and queens, princes and princesses. The narratives are limited by the immense privilege the characters begin with.

The struggles of ordinary people are never explored as their circumstances are mocked instead.

Instead of expecting high schoolers to identify with Shakespeare's flat characters, let's give them a more varied list of

books: books with women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and other marginalized people taking the lead. Books written by authors from different backgrounds and cultures, and books that challenge the narratives presented

to us, rather than those which reinforce them.

Shakespeare's plays have importance, but far too much value is placed on his narratives and perspectives. Educators must reconsider whose voices are the most valuable and in-

sightful for the future generations to read, and understand that Shakespeare will never be able to keep up with our rapidly changing classrooms and society.

### Madison Slater (9)

"I would normally go to my cousin's house and spend Thanksgiving with my family. We go there at noon, and then maybe around six, five or six, we would leave. So we have a pretty good time there. Just, you know, spending time together. My favorite part is just being able to spend time with them because I don't really see them often throughout the year. So it's just nice to spend time with them during that time and have a meal with them."



### Sowkya Nambaru (11)

"My plans for Thanksgiving this year are going to Oahu, Hawaii with my parents and my cousins who are coming over from Texas and New Jersey. We are going to celebrate my mom's birthday. Out of everything, I'm most excited about spending time with my cousins over break because I haven't spent time with them since July and they're my best friends. I'm thankful for my family this Thanksgiving. To show that I am thankful, I planned a sunset cruise for them to enjoy and relax as a way to show that I care."



### Vani Pethuraj (12)

"I really enjoy Thanksgiving because, of course, it's just the time to give thanks. Also, I enjoy that it's at the very end of the year and after my birthday because I'm feeling very thankful for everyone and I think many people don't get the opportunity to say that they're thankful throughout the year. So it's just a great time to just tell everyone how you're thankful for them; it's also not cringey whenever you tell them because there's a whole holiday dedicated to it."



### Jai Kaushik (10)

"On Thanksgiving I'm going to have some family come over, we haven't seen them in a while especially through COVID, and so we're going to have a really really big dinner. On Thanksgiving, my mom cooks up an absolute storm, like 20 dishes, it's going to be amazing. The number one reason I love Thanksgiving is because of the food, the food is absolutely amazing. I really like meeting my family because they're just awesome people and I get to spend time with them and all of them have a bunch of cool stories to tell me."



## Grateful to be Thankful

***How AHS students planned to express their gratitude this Thanksgiving break.***

Haritha Rajasekar  
Associate Editor

# Fall Into Friendsgiving

## *Tips for throwing a great Friendsgiving*

Sinchan Mishra  
Staff Writer

Thanksgiving is a time for community and celebration, and what better way to spend it than with your friends? Follow these tips to host the best possible Friendsgiving.

**Understand what Friendsgiving is.** Before you plan anything, it's important to know the basic idea of Friendsgiving, which is actually pretty simple: the point is to eat a large meal with your friends sometime around the Thanksgiving season. This can happen indoors or outdoors, and with as few or as many friends as you would prefer. The nice thing about Friendsgiving is how flexible it is—you can do whatever works the best for you and your guests.

**Make a plan.** Things to consider would be food, location, guest list, date, and activities. You don't need to have every detail in place, but having an idea of what you will need and already have available will make planning a lot less stressful.



**Decide what your food situation will be.** Potlucks will take a lot of pressure off you, the host, but if you would rather provide food, then you can choose to be responsible for that. There are no strict requirements for what the food should be. Classic Thanksgiving dishes include mac and cheese, turkey, and pie, but you can always choose to bring other ones if you prefer them. The main thing to keep in mind is that good food means a good Friendsgiving. Also, make sure to be aware of any dietary restrictions that your guests may have.

**Come up with some activities.** Food is important, but it shouldn't be the focus of your Friendsgiving. When brainstorming activities, keep in mind the location of the gathering and the interests of your guests. Fall-themed activities specifically could be a lot of fun: consider bobbing for apples (with separate bowls for each guest to be Covid-safe) or painting acorns or pinecones. You usually can't go wrong with a good movie or board games, but if you're looking for something more creative, it's never a bad idea to simply ask your guests what they would be interested in doing.

**Think of how you can create a strong Thanksgiving and autumn vibe.** Without one, you would have a generic friend gathering instead of a fun and atmospheric Friendsgiving. Earth-toned colors, fall candles, and other such Thanksgiving decorations can do this for you without burning a hole in your wallet.

Friendsgiving is an excellent event to host this holiday season, and it can be incredibly fun and rewarding to pull it off for your friends. However, it's important not to get overly caught up in the details of planning. Remember that this is supposed to be a fun thing to do with your friends, and a great way to show your gratitude and appreciation for them. Happy Friendsgiving!



Jessica Le (11) and her friends celebrated Friendsgiving two years ago. "I like Friendsgiving because it's a wonderful time to celebrate all the memories you made with your friends over a delicious dinner," says Le.

# The Unsung Heroes of American High Cont.

books, packages that come in, [etc]. Instead of cleaning classrooms or areas like I do and the night crew do, they assist the principal and the assistant principals and other people who need help throughout the day," Carlson continues.

Even the night crew, which includes Daniel Nava, a custodian who has worked at American for seven years, does more than just clean. Beyond "cleaning up after lunch, dumping trash cans, [and] walking around picking up garbage, [we have to] try to fix everything [and] keep the school maintained. We change light-bulbs, try to fix doors and stuff that breaks, lock up the school, [and], turn on the alarm," Nava adds.

With all the responsibilities they have, it's unsurprising that the custodians have faced their share of challenges on campus. Throughout online school, they were especially impacted by the rules that prevented them from working in close proximity with one another. "You can't do the work we do and maintain a six foot distance because [of] the machines. Everybody's got to be in a classroom together. You can't just have one person running all the equipment, [and] using all the materials. It's too dangerous. And so what we had to do is find a way to adapt to that, but still be productive. One of the things we did was, since we were outside, we asked to buy a power washer. And so we power washed the whole school when the kids weren't here. And because we had time, [we could do] little things like changing light bulbs, [and] looking for graffiti in all the areas that you may pass by every day because there's so much to do," Carlson explains.

With school back in person, the custodial staff has had to continue to find ways to adapt to the changes at American High, including our pushed-back start time. "School

used to get out at three, so [by] 3:10 [or] 3:15 we would start. But now that school gets out at 3:15, we're starting at 3:25 or 3:30ish, so that extra thirty minutes put a big delay on us, cutting our cleaning times," Nava reflects.

And with all the new Covid protocols, their workload has only increased. "They go to every single classroom and spray it every single day. And that obviously takes a lot of time," recognizes Mr. Howard, an English teacher at American. Along with that, "on our end as custodians, we're really short staffed, so it makes the school look a little bit worse [and] sometimes we get overworked a little," Carlson confesses.

With all the work and challenges they have on their plates, it's especially admirable to see how much pride our custodians place in their work. "I like doing good work and getting compliments from teachers and the principal," Nava says.

Carlson puts similar thought into his work. "A lot of people feel inadequate, or maybe insecure about jobs like this. Like being a custodian or a garbage man. But not only are those jobs very important, it's important to take pride in it too. Because when you do your job well, it affects other things down the line, like a ripple effect. If I do a crappy job, then the students are going to notice," he reflects.

The custodians are clearly essential to the running of this school, and teachers are grateful to have them. Mr. Howard, an English teacher at American, can attest to how helpful they've been. "The head custodian for the daytime- if I need anything, I have his cell phone number [and] he'll make sure I get it that day. If I need stuff moved out of my room, they're on call. [They're] very collegial, very professional, and supportive," he recounts. Even beyond what students and

faculty can see, the custodians are constantly doing things to better the school. "Over the summer, they pull out all of the furniture in every classroom and clean the carpet. Over the weekend or over breaks, if there's a special event, custodians need to be there to make sure that bathrooms are open and clean. And if any accidents happen, like someone throws up at a game, the custodians need to be there. A lot of the time it's not needed and we just take for granted that someone's going to clean up vomit or something," Howard continues.

Beyond what they do for teachers, our custodians also go out of their way to help out students. Senior Link coordinator Joyce Liu explains that during freshman orientation, "the janitors did a great job helping us get all the doors open [and] making sure no one was locked out of their classroom. That's really hard to do, especially [with] the sheer number of people that we had to deal with and organize."

Amongst the students and staff I spoke to, it seems that the overwhelming message the American High School community had for our janitors was one of gratitude. "This year, more than ever, we feel the effects of not having a strong enough custodial staff. And I mean, that in terms of numbers, not in terms of the work that they do. We just don't have enough of them to do the work that the school needs. So they're busting their butts, and I appreciate that," Mr. Howard reflects. Liu shares Mr. Howard's grateful sentiment, saying "just a big thank you to janitors, I think they're very, very, very under appreciated."

## Medical Column: Jeff Never Had Cancer. What Could Have Happened?

Vrinda Chhatrapati

Guest Writer

Jeff Henigson was diagnosed with anaplastic astrocytoma in 1986. 35 years later, he received a call from neuropathologist Karl Schwarz saying Jeff never had cancer. What could have happened?

Anaplastic astrocytoma is a rare malignant brain tumor with a survival rate so low that Henigson's current existence baffled medical professionals. When Henigson managed to survive for over 35 years, he was seen as somewhat of a medical miracle to all but Karl Schwarz. Having seen only three cases of anaplastic astrocytoma patients outliving their life expectancy, Schwarz recalled that two of them were misdiagnoses, that is they may never have had

cancer in the first place. He promptly gave Henigson a call and told him that his survival was so unlikely that his medical records must be revisited. For their next phone call, Henigson was told to find his records.

As Henigson stared at decades of medical records sitting on his coffee table, he stated, "In one package was my treatment protocol: intensive brain radiation for six weeks, followed by six sessions of chemotherapy drugs to be delivered over the next year. My immune system responded poorly to chemo, so the therapy had dragged on for an additional six months."

*read rest on eagleera.org*

## Satire: Silicon Valley's Newest Start-up *A look into the rising local start-up*

Nami Nair, Darcy Chew

Podcast Editor, Managerial Editor

A new Silicon Valley start-up, Meta, has risen from the depths of innovation in the Bay Area. The multinational technology conglomerate holding company is based in Menlo Park, California, our very backyard! The up and coming founder, Mark Elliot Zuckerberg, states that "The metaverse is going to be both future platforms and social experiences."

This exciting new development in the already exponential growth of social media means that people have the opportunity to immerse themselves completely in the digital experience. The metaverse consists of several social

media platforms where young teens and adults can interact with other like-minded peers. Meta is similar to another infamous social media company that was recently put in the limelight, Facebook. The big tech company was subject to a congressional committee hearing on October 5th, 2021 in which a whistleblower testified against Facebook saying that their algorithms were endangering the public. However, Meta will be different.

*read rest on eagleera.org*



## “Gifted and Talented” Education Cont.

tered “to develop unique education opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving pupils in the California public elementary and secondary schools.” The exam tests students on their intellectual ability, creative ability, specific academic ability, leadership ability, high achievement, and visual and performing arts talent, according to the guide.

The guide also provides descriptions of various special programs that the GATE program can offer, depending on the choice of the governing boards of school districts, including special day classes, enrichment activities, independent study, and postsecondary education opportunities, as well as services for “underachieving, linguistically diverse, culturally divergent, and/or economically disadvantaged” GATE testers.

Additionally, the GATE handbook, linked in the Fremont Unified School District website, also includes a section entitled, “What Opportunities are Provided to Gifted Students?” and lists under the section, “Elementary students who qualify as gifted will be placed in a

classroom with a trained GATE-certified teacher when available. Students will receive instruction aligned to the state standards. Instruction will be differentiated allowing them to reach their full academic potential.”

For Hansa Atreya (11), however, the actual outcome of the test has been pretty disappointing. “We were all told that if you get a good grade on the GATE test, then there will be some special programs you can get into. They said that it would give us opportunities. [But], after receiving the news whether or not you got into the GATE program, that was kind of it. No one ever mentioned it again until sixth grade when you automatically got into the Honors English and science classes.”

Some students did have experiences with different opportunities being offered to students who qualified for the program. Jessica Le (11) reveals her school set aside separate activities, but her experience with the situation was negative. “What really struck me was how throughout the whole year, all the gifted kids would have different activities than the non-

gifted kids. They would get to build gingerbread houses and build airplanes and the non gifted kids would just stay in doors and work on math worksheets. Most of us felt like we weren’t really special or worth it because we weren’t given that title of being gifted.”

The idea of labelling certain kids as gifted doesn’t sit right with many students. Manasa Maddi (11) believes that rather than being an educational boost for students, the GATE test only brings them down in terms of their education. “When people who don’t qualify learn that they’re not as smart as everyone else, it demotivates them. It just makes them feel worse about themselves and makes them not want to try as hard in school. It’s not a good mindset to have.”

Mrs. Mehta, a Living Earth teacher at American, feels that the GATE test is the first step in evoking feelings of stress within students. “This is the age where students need to enjoy their childhood and make more memories. It’s not a time where students should be put through that stress. They are told that if you want to qualify, you have to study, and hence

parents put on more pressure. They learn to get into that stressful condition from a very early age.”

Not only do many people feel the GATE test is detrimental to the students who did not qualify, but it also doesn’t seem to have much of an effect on those who did. “I don’t know if it was because the school didn’t have the money and other schools that had more money were able to do more with the GATE program, but at least for us, the parents really expected that getting into GATE would open a lot of doors for their kids,” Atreya says. “There are some kids who are super interested in science and math and they would benefit from extra learning in those areas. But the GATE program never brought that to them.”

The reliance on a single test score to determine whether or not a child is gifted is another factor in many people’s disapproval of the GATE test. Mrs. Mehta believes that such a narrow range of factors isn’t enough to label a child “talented...Every child is different and has their own share of weaknesses and strengths. Letting a child know that they

are gifted only because they are academically driven, or academically doing well, is not the right way of assessing someone.”

She asserts that passing this academic test at such a young age is not enough to guarantee success in their secondary education. “I’ve seen many students qualifying for the GATE test, but then when they come to high school, the pressure is something that they are not able to handle. They have to be holistically developed. They have to holistically do well and then we can qualify them as a gifted student.”

As of right now, GATE testing, at least in Fremont, seems to have more drawbacks than advantages. Although the intentions seem promising, the results just don’t reflect the program’s true intent.

Like Mrs. Mehta says, “It would have benefits if it was implemented well. If there is a set curriculum for the gifted students, then yes, [it would be beneficial]. If not, then putting everyone through the rat race doesn’t make any sense.”

## The Astroworld Festival Tragedy Cont.

were to no avail, as Scott continued on with the show. At 9:39 PM, a “mass casualty event” was declared, and 30 minutes later, the show was stopped.

After the festival, social media was quick to spread videos and information about what happened at the festival. One of these videos was of a young man climbing up on the camera rig and screaming to the cameraman and the crowd around him to do something. He cried out that the people dying “could be somebody’s kid.” That young man was right. Ezra Blount was only nine years old as he was trampled to death.

His father took him to the concert because his favorite artist was Travis Scott.

Bharti Shahani, 22, a first-generation American and senior at Texas A&M, died that night as well. Her mother cried her eyes out as she said, “This was not a concert. You know why? Because my baby didn’t come back.”

Axil Acosta Avila, 21, was another one of the victims. His father described him “as a great kid, an excellent student and someone who loved his family dearly, especially his grandparents.”

John Hilgert was a ninth-grade student. Brianna Rodriguez was sixteen years old, a junior who

“was known for her love of dance.” Jacob Jurinek and Franco Petino, 20 and 21, were best friends. Madison Dubiski was 23. Danish Baig was 27; he was trying to protect his fiance from being trampled. These people weren’t just people at a concert. They were someone’s child. They were someone’s siblings. They were someone’s partner. They weren’t just names and ages; they meant something to someone.

After the concert, billionaire Kylie Jenner posted an apology on behalf of her boyfriend. And it took two days for Travis Scott to talk about what happened, never once actually

mentioning the words, “I apologize” or “I’m sorry.”

This lackluster response from both of them forces us to consider an increasingly relevant question: How much are we willing to sacrifice in the name of celebrity culture? Do people, little kids, have to die for us to see the way we have allowed celebrities to walk all over us? At the end of the day, it’s only about fame and fortune to celebrities like Travis Scott.

They have been glorified for so long that it’s impossible for them to just get out of their heads for once and be sincere. Instead we get half-assed apologies, and we continue to just

accept it for what it is. But this tragedy has shown that we simply cannot allow that to happen anymore.

We should continue to call out Travis Scott on his narcissism and ignorance. And more importantly, let us stand in solidarity with the families of the victims and continue to remember what they meant to the world.

# i-Ready or Not Ready

*Evaluating the pros and cons of the i-Ready English diagnostic*

Nicole Wu  
Staff Writer

"This test will not be counted toward your grade." It isn't often students hear teachers utter this phrase except in the case of district-wide assessments, such as the i-Ready English diagnostic. Administered three times throughout the school year to FUSD students from first to twelfth grade, the i-Ready English diagnostic was adopted at the beginning of the 2021 school year in lieu of the Illuminate Online benchmark. This shift to a new testing program elicited mixed responses from staff and students.

teacher, elaborates on how the time allocated for taking the i-Ready diagnostic causes unexpected lesson plan derailment. "I think as English teachers, we are very sick of them taking over our instructional time. We've got things to teach. I'm a person that plans extremely ahead of time because I want to feel comfortable with what I'm doing. When they threw this out, I didn't plan correctly, so I had to move a lot of things around. There are a lot of fun things that I couldn't get to or we didn't get to go over because it takes up instructional time," she explains.

felt overwhelmed by this. We already had plans, we already had so much to teach and so much to learn on our own selves and distance learning did not make things easier. I know there are things in my class that I wish I got to instead," Ms. Christensen adds.

In response to the concern of i-Ready testing taking away teaching time, Ms. Christensen suggests setting aside FLEX time for students to take the i-Ready diagnostic.

"I would personally like to see a closed FLEX or something like that because it just takes up so much of our time, on top

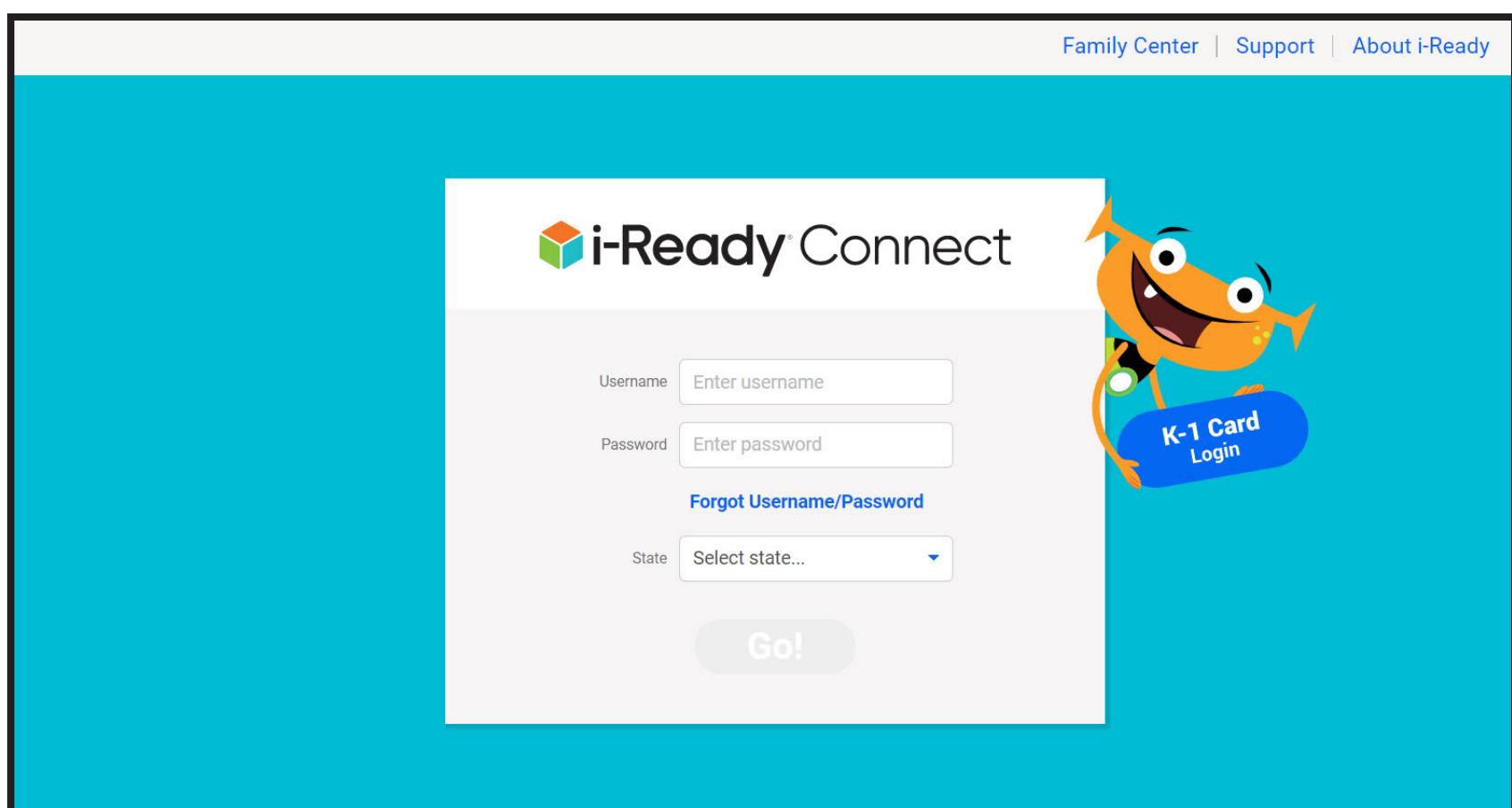
ticed, when we took it during class, a lot of people didn't finish with the amount of time we had, and we had quite a lot of time. So, it would just take up a bunch of FLEX time that maybe other students might want to use to study for their test, do other homework, or utilize that time for something better," Mallikarjun expresses.

Adding on to Mallikarjun's viewpoint, English 9 and English 10H teacher, Mr. Kim, agrees saying, "During FLEX, some students have other commitments for other teachers that they need to make up tests or exams. Class time

and complete the assessment. Mr. Musto, the director of the FUSD Assessment and Accountability Department, describes the time difference between previous benchmarks and the i-Ready diagnostic.

"The previous benchmark could be done usually within one class period, or at least a block period, whereas this one requires, probably the first time you do it, an hour and a half to two hours to complete, depending on the grade level. That is a burden on teachers and definitely my least favorite thing," he points out.

While the i-Ready diagnostic takes a toll on



PC: i-Ready

The i-Ready login page will redirect students to their dashboard where they can complete lessons based on a personalized learning path. Mr. Musto comments on the supplemental online lessons which, unfortunately, have not been developed for high school students yet. "Depending on the age level, oftentimes these are actually games, and they're fun. A teacher could say, 'Here, work on these lessons in your computer time, which is found in more elementary classrooms. Let's see how you're doing.' They can do a recheck to see if they're understanding the concepts. That's a nice feature of i-Ready at the younger grades."

A major frustration for teachers is the amount of instructional time eaten up by the i-Ready diagnostic. With tight schedules and a set curriculum, having students take the i-Ready diagnostic multiple times per school year interferes with teacher's lesson plans, especially since teachers are still familiarizing themselves with the i-Ready testing program.

Ms. Christensen, an English 9H and English 10

Frustrations with instructional time deviations result in overwhelmed teachers. Teachers are struggling to teach current material while covering learning gaps from distance learning concurrently.

"Having kids come back from distance learning, as teachers, we feel like we're making up for that last year quite a lot. And to put it on us when we're already doing so much, I know me and many other teachers

of everything else we've already been asked to do."

While teachers would like more control over their class periods, would students feel that their loss of FLEX time impacts their time to address their educational needs? Ishika Mallikarjun (10) feels like taking the i-Ready diagnostic during FLEX time would not be a good idea.

"During FLEX time, you don't really have a lot of time. From what I no-

is where you have your roster. In FLEX, you don't know where students are. They might be in different classes. Having it administered in English and Math classes ensures that everyone has an opportunity to take it. If they were absent or didn't finish, then FLEX is another opportunity for them to make it up."

Another inconvenient aspect of the i-Ready Diagnostic is the amount of time it takes to administer

instructional time, it still has benefits as teachers can gauge student reading levels and identify student strengths and weaknesses in ELA. Based on the results, teachers can modify lesson plans to address areas that may need more attention.

## California's Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month Cont.

Sewa in the hearts and minds of Sikhs by setting an example through their own actions and deeds. In 1663, there was an outbreak of smallpox in Delhi, India. The eighth Guru Sahib, Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji, selflessly served the ill with utmost devotion and alleviated their suffering.

More than three hundred years later, in the spring of 2021, the same city of Delhi was ravaged by the Delta variant of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals ran out of beds as well as oxygen cylinders, leaving the helpless people with nowhere to go. Overnight, Sikh volunteers set up makeshift hospitals on the streets of Delhi and mobilized their own resources to arrange oxygen cylinders. Khalsa Aid, a well-known, international aid organization founded and run by Sikh volunteers, played a major role in serv-

ing the COVID patients.

According to the Associated Press, COVID-19 patients, "arrive[d] in their cars, on foot or in three-wheeled taxis, desperate for a mask and tube attached to the precious oxygen tanks outside the [G]urdwara in a neighborhood outside the capital, New Delhi." The word spread throughout the city and cars carrying COVID patients began lining up on the streets. The makeshift hospitals began being referred to as "Oxygen Langar."

The concept of Langar dates back to back to the late 1400s, and is an integral part of every Sikh temple around the world. Langar is a free community kitchen and provides free meals to anyone who needs it, regardless of their faith, race, or social class. For over 500 years, Sikhs have been coming together to volunteer and

run this service. The Sikh temple in Fremont (Gurdwara Sahib Fremont) runs this service continuously every single day.

The Sikh religion teaches its followers to stay humble and serve all humans as if each and every one of them possess the light of God. Sikhs focus on the constant meditation of God's name which rids them of negative thoughts and actions and brings them humility. Sikhs are taught from the very beginning to live a life devoted to God and fulfill their time on Earth serving humanity. In a world of turmoil and suffering, Sikhism provides a pathway to peace, goodwill, and righteousness. This November, Sikhs come together to celebrate their faith and spread the message of love and universal brotherhood.

art was regarded as one of the most famous actresses; she was plastered on the front page of every tabloid and was the face of all the popular clothing lines.

But, while *Twilight* did cement her place among the most distinguishable people of the 2010s, there's no argument that the film series was a largely unpleasant set of movies. With a hilariously bad script and the sheer awkwardness of the actors' performances, it was as if the Internet had been given the ultimate gift: hours of meme content. And while the memes were admittedly hilarious, somewhere down the line, the hate over *Twilight* stopped centering around the movie and started centering around Kristen Stewart herself. And the proof for that lies directly in her counterpart in *Twilight*, Robert Pattinson.

Pattinson played Edward Cullen, the romantic interest for Bella Swan in *Twilight*. He first began his career in the Harry Potter film series as Cedric Diggory, but gained worldwide recognition as Edward. Similar to Stewart, he was extremely famous during the time of the films and also subject to the many ruthless jokes of the Internet. But the key difference is what happened after the height of their combined fame.

After *Twilight*, people acknowledged Pattinson as a formidable actor and allowed him to develop a fulfilling indie movie career with films such as *The Rover* and *Maps to the Stars*. He is now entering mainstream success with his upcoming role as Batman. The world looked at *Twilight* as a blip in his career, a mere bump on the road as an actor. But, with Kristen Stewart, the world believed that *Twilight* was all that she had to offer in terms of her acting skills.

Stewart noted in a 2015 conversation with Patti Smith, "Say I do a big franchise movie about a vampire that falls in love with a normal girl. It's like, 'Now do you want to show them that you can be a real, serious actor?' It's like, 'Was I not being a real, serious actor?'" So she worked harder, focus-

ing on smaller, independent films instead of bigger movies to prove that her acting skills were not just narrowed down to what she showed in *Twilight*.

In 2014, Stewart starred in *Clouds of Sils Maria* and her performance garnered critical acclaim and received the César Award for Best Supporting Actress. In 2016, she acted in *Certain Women*, a film that also received raving reviews. In the same year, she also played a leading role in the film, *Personal Shopper*. Critic Manuela Lazic from the publication, *Little White Lies*, commented, "[Stewart] offers a refined version of her *Twilight* saga performance, which oscillates between discreet twitchiness and vocal outbursts, as if emotions had to fight against in order to be felt."

Charles Taylor from *Newsweek* also said, "Stewart is in nearly every scene, and she's phenomenal."

When asked about her successes in the smaller independent films, Stewart said, "I was finally given a chance to be looked at, not as this thing in this celebrity-obsessed culture that was like, 'Oh, that's the girl from *Twilight*.'

Her most recent movie, *Spencer*, is a film that centers around the decline of Princess Diana and Charles' marriage in the early 1990s. Stewart, who plays the role of Diana, has again received tremendous praise for her performance, with the actress even being considered as an early frontrunner to win an Oscar for the role. Stewart mentioned that she "was scared, for sure," playing the role of Diana and making a return to the center Hollywood stage but she was pleasantly surprised by the overwhelming support and enthusiasm for the movie and her performance.

Hopefully, the success of *Spencer* will forge a new path for the actress, and more importantly, encourage a more constructive way of looking at Kristen Stewart's career.



PC: India Today

## "That Girl from *Twilight*"

*Examining how the *Twilight* Saga film series defined Kristen Stewart's career*

**Sahana Narayan**  
Staff Writer

Kristen Stewart. If I had to guess, you saw her name and thought, "Oh, that's the girl from *Twilight*!" And that response is understandable considering that it's not uncommon for an actor in Hollywood to be known for a movie, especially one as controversial as *Twilight*.

But Kristen Stewart has not simply been known for *Twilight*, her whole career has been defined by the film series. It's important to note, though, that *Twilight* wasn't the start to her acting career. Stewart, born in 1990, first gained notice in 2002 for her role in *Panic Room*, and her performance earned her Young Artist Award nomina-

tion. She continued on to star in *Speak*, *Catch that Kid*, and *Into the Wild*.

Then, in 2008, she rose to stardom for her lead role as Bella Swan in *The Twilight Saga* film series, a movie adaptation of the book series, *Twilight*. The film series continued to put out movies until 2012 and became one of the highest-grossing film franchises. During those 4 years, Stew-

# The Substitute Teacher Shortage

## *The causes and effects of a substitute teacher shortage worsened by the pandemic and a lack of funding*

**Anika Aggarwal**  
Staff Writer

The entire nation, including Fremont Unified School District, has been hit hard by a substitute teacher shortage. Without substitute teachers, schools are left to fend for themselves, requiring teachers to substitute for other classes.

"Almost every day, I've

of it. I'm tired of asking, they're tired of covering. It's just part of what we have to do. It's part of our jobs. It's part of making sure that students have somebody in the class to teach it, or at least to guide them through something or whatever it is. It's stressful for everybody. It's stressful for me, because I have to ask them, to copy because I need to get the photocopier, I have to photocopy lots of sheets or several sheets... Sometimes during my prep period, I sometimes like to have it as a way to breathe in, and breathe out from the stress of the day. It's an excellent way to de-stress and be stabilized and not have to worry."

simply because of COVID. This year, we would need more subs, but we have fewer as a result. I don't blame the school, because it's not the school's fault. The district, if they can't get enough subs with what they're paying right now, then they need to pay more or figure out some way to do that."

working towards a solution.

"One of the frustrations of being a teacher is we have very little control or say over policies and over a huge multitude of things. People are frustrated, but there's nothing that we can do" Mrs. Jeung adds.

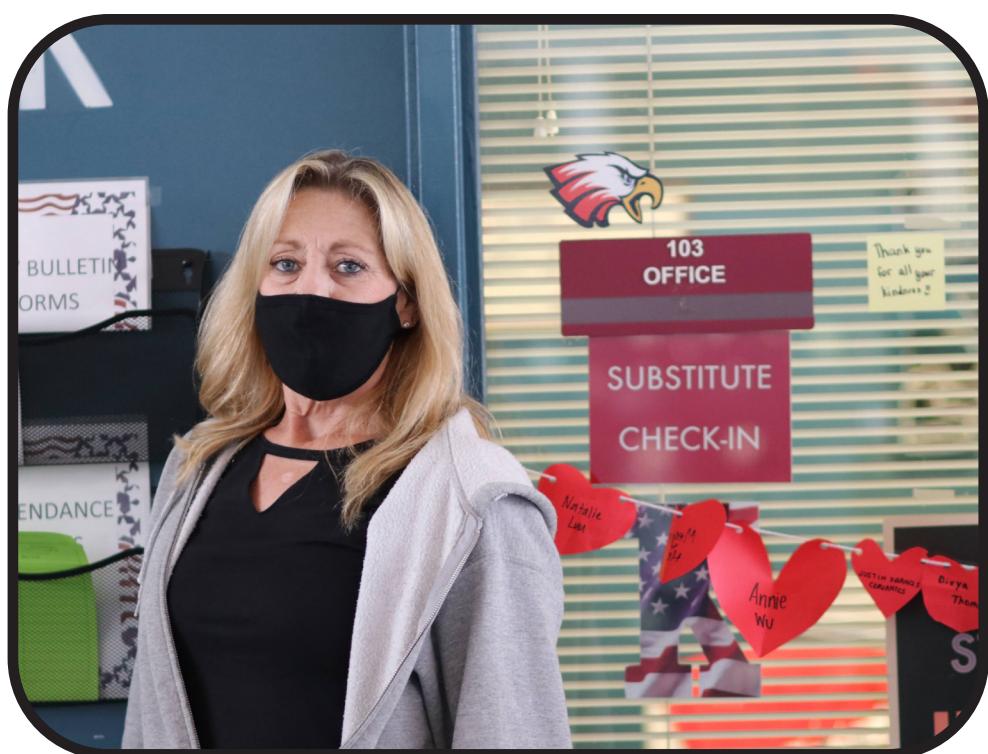
Teachers work tirelessly to teach students, and much of the work goes unnoticed and taken for granted. There is some concern as to whether the district understands the full gravity of the substitute shortage.

"There is a teacher shortage because more and more teachers are retiring, and less people are entering teaching. I entered the teaching world because I started off as a substitute" Mr. Rojas shares.

Mrs. Jeung notices the lack of people going into education as a nation-wide trend as a result of low wages and a lack of benefits.

"We need to spend a lot more money on subs and teachers, in order to simply keep what we already have. The reality is, we know that the number of people going into education has dropped significantly. We are simply not getting people going into teaching anymore, so this is only going to continue to get worse. Until we do something, until the district can show that they truly value those that are in the classroom, it's just going to continue to get worse, but I would like them to recognize that reality and spend significantly more on teachers in the classroom."

"If more parents in the younger kids from 5 to 11 start getting vaccinations then maybe more substitutes will come back on board, and they'll be able to do some of what's keeping some of them from not working. That's a lot of a large age group, 5 to 11 that without a vaccination, that could potentially spread without having symptoms. By Christmas time or January next year, when we do second semester maybe this will be less. Pray it happens because I really need to not tell teachers to do all this every day."



*Mrs. Chase stands in front of Office K, where substitutes are normally checked in before heading to the classroom. With the substitute shortage, Mrs. Chase keeps track of when a teacher needs to sub for another class. "Since we started in August, ever since day two of school, almost every single day, I've had to cover teachers with other teachers," she shares.*

had to cover other teachers with current teachers in school to cover teachers who are absent," Mrs. Chase shares.

Mrs. Chase, the attendance clerk at American, is in charge of covering teacher absences and assigning substitutes to classrooms. She finds the situation exhausting for teachers as they lose valuable time for an unplanned assignment.

"I'm sure they're tired

you'll give them all the extra work, and it's hard to tell teachers every day that they have to help out."

Many teachers use prep periods for planning lessons, grading work, and day-to-day tasks needed to run a functional class. Mr. Rojas, a social studies teacher at American, expresses his frustrations with losing his prep period to sub for another class.

"I won't be able to pho-

And he's not the only one who feels that way. Ms. Jeung, a social studies teacher, shares how the pandemic has worsened not only the substitute teacher shortage, but an increase in teacher absences as well, worsening the issue at hand.

"We have more teachers that have to be out due to quarantine or kids they have to quarantine with. There are more absences

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