

EAGLE ERA

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Two Racial Slurs. One Missing Teacher. A Classroom Left Adrift.

Nearly 6 months ago, an incident occurred which left a classroom without a teacher. Six months later, the students describe what happened.

Emyr Ortiz, Nami Nair, Darcy Chew, Shreya Daschoudhary
Staff Writers

Every so often, a familiar headline pops up in the news: "Teacher Fired After Racist Incident in US High School." Many of us scoff and internally think "Well, that doesn't happen here in Fremont." However, last December, American High School had an incident of its own.

Maggie Sandoval, a junior in Ms. Gonzalez's 6th period English class, recounts

her perspective of the event that occurred involving Ms. Gonzalez saying the N-word.

"Some kid in our class drew a stereotypical image of a Black person with big ears and a big nose and big lips. And [Ms. Gonzalez] has all these different posters on her window, and they, [the student], put [the drawing] up there. And [Ms. Gonzalez] saw them do that and so she went to them,

grabbed it out of their hands, and then told them, 'We're gonna talk about this later.'

As the students attested, Gonzalez used this as a teachable moment and began a discussion with her class about the importance of Black history and anti-racism in general.

"She proceeded to say a lot of comments that were questionable at best and offensive at worst. She referenced one

situation where she had said that her son says the N-word a lot. And he says it in a way that's commonly used to refer to someone as a friend or someone you know. She said that when he says it [the N-word], she'll flip it back at him. We were unsure as to what she meant when she said that, and it was a majority of the class' interpretation that she says it back to him," recalls Ethan Tanaka, another junior in Gonzalez's 6th-period class.

"Even though she gave this speech to the whole class, there are some students who are Black, and she went up to

them specifically and decided to tell them a story."

Erianna Jackson (11) was one of these students.

"[Ms. Gonzalez] comes in, sits down in front me, and was like, 'So Erianna and Mamoun, how do you feel about this? How do you feel about this whole situation?' And I was like, 'I feel like it's good that we're learning about it, but I feel like it could have been done in a different setting. This is a little weird.'

According to Jackson,
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A Letter to Congress

A Letter About the Recent School Shooting

Sahana Narayan
Editor-in-Chief

Dear U.S. Congress,

I don't know if you've heard, but we had another school shooting. This time at an elementary school. At least twenty-one dead. Nineteen students and two teachers. You probably saw it on your silly bird app. Probably tweeted your condolences. Spent time cultivating your response so that it would align with your party's platform.

You're so detached from this reality; it's hilarious. It's understandable as well. Most of you are very old. Most of you didn't live in a society like this; you don't know what this feels like.

I want to ask though: how did it feel to be able to go to school everyday and not worry about being shot? How did it feel to sit at your desks and not jump at the sound of a door banging or a kid screaming? How did it feel to not experience the sinking pit at the bottom of your stomach every time you saw the news

of another mass shooting? See, I don't know how that feels. I don't know if I will ever know how that feels.

That's why I sometimes wonder what you guys do up there. Yeah, I've seen your unintelligent cat fights on Twitter with your partisan opponents. I've seen your speeches, with powerful quotes and fake tears, that end up on everyone and their mother's social media.

But truly, what is it that you do? See, if I remember correctly, you were elected to this office under the condition that you would aim to

serve *all* Americans. By holding this position of power, you are indebted to not only your voters, but *all* the people in this nation. The people in your party, the people in other parties, but most importantly, the people who do not have a voice to represent themselves.

Remember that the children in this nation who have virtually no voice in this government, who hold no vote, are the ones being shot at the hands of your inaction. Kids who have only just started to learn about how the government works are being killed

because of you. Do you think American children care whether this is a Republican or Democrat issue? They don't; they just want to stay alive through the rest of the school year. So while I know this flawed political system has made it difficult for you to remember that you are not only obligated to your voters and your party, try to remind yourself that there are millions of Americans outside of the electorate that you are still responsible for.

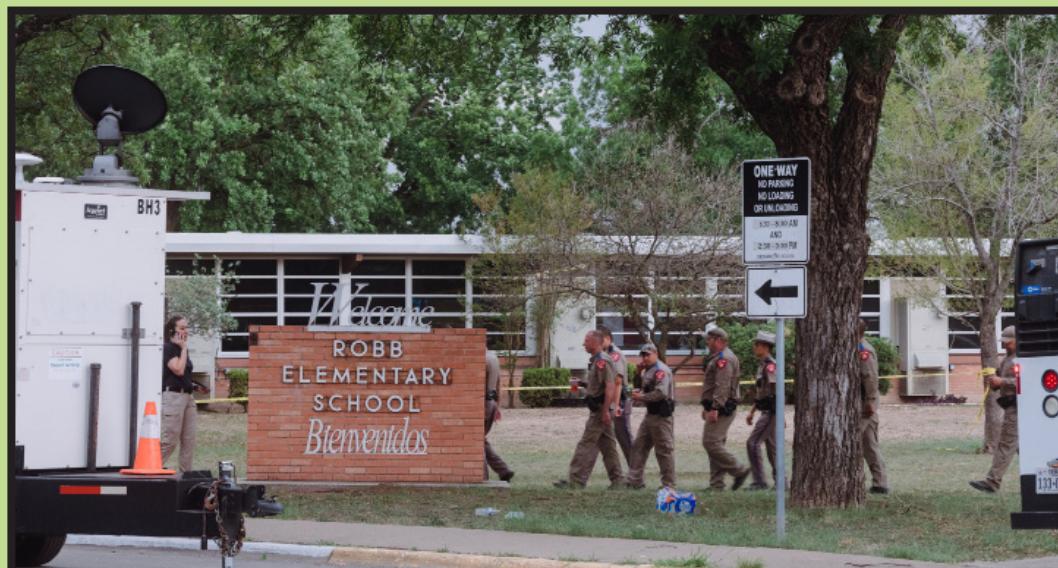
Because lives are at stake here. Lives have continuously been at stake, and you have done nothing. Don't try to convince yourself that these children have died; face the fact that *you* have murdered these children. School shootings are the direct outcome of your political negligence. It's

utterly humiliating that you, the all-mighty, extremely powerful United States government, have been sitting like a lap dog at the feet of gun lobbyists and conservative figureheads who preach about some "right" from three centuries ago.

So I ask you: how many more kids have to be killed? Ten? Fifty? Hundred? How long will you hold on to your silly little partisan loyalty at the expense of literal children? How long will it take for you to pass background checks on gun purchases? How much time will pass until you hold the gun industry accountable?

Your condolences and prayers mean nothing. Your proposed gun reforms that last a total of 3 months and the promise to do more mean nothing. They mean nothing to the heartbroken families of the children shot. To the thousands of families that have been affected by gun violence. And they mean nothing to American students like me, dreadfully waiting for that inevitable day, one that gets closer and more real as you spend more and more time ignoring our pleas.

Handle the power that has been given to you by the American people with more empathy, I beg of you.



Letters from the Editors

Sahana Narayan
Editor-in-Chief

Hi!! My name is Sahana, and I am beyond excited and honored to introduce myself as the next editor-in-chief of the Eagle Era! I am so grateful to have the opportunity to work alongside my good friend, Sinchan, as co-editor-in-chief, as well as an amazing editorial staff! We have some really exciting and fresh ideas for this upcoming year so that you, the readers, and us can give this newspaper the love and care it deserves. The Eagle Era has truly given me so much: from getting to interview the vice chair of the California Democratic Party (yes, I am not so subtly flexing this fact) to having amazing conversations with the staff and students of this school. But those benefits pale in comparison to the one benefit of journalism that I hold closest to my heart: the Eagle Era community. Although I can be painfully awkward and often prefer the comfort of my headphones to a conversation with someone new, community and friendship has always meant a whole lot

to me. Watching teenager Nick Nelson in Heartstopper wonder the age-old teenage question of whether he truly fits in with his friend group has made me come to the realization that I have finally found a place, a community, where I fit. Where the god-awful jokes I make actually produce a few laughs and my references to 2012 tumblr pop culture are surprisingly understood. That's why the end of this year is truly bittersweet for me. While I am overjoyed to be almost done with the tumultuous year that has been my junior year of high school, I can't help but feel somber at the thought of our senior editors and staff writers leaving our journalism community. I'll admit that at first, I was envious of the glorious concept of a second-semester senior. Here I was, slaving away over my calculus homework, and they were basically free from the seemingly infinite confines of high school pressure. But, I have thought a lot about the other aspect of it as well, the difficult task ahead that our seniors face to say goodbye to this place, this time, these people. I read somewhere that gratitude can exist in the same room as sorrow if you have the bravery to allow it. Keep-

ing that in mind, I hope that if you are a senior, you take the time to reach out to the people who meant something to you even if it seems frightening. Don't be afraid to thank the people who taught you what this world could be, taught you about what *you* could be. Give this ending as much sincerity and devotion as it deserves. And for my juniors, sophomores, and freshman: take a break, get some rest, and go live through something. I'll see you next year Eagles.

Sinchan Mishra
Editor-in-Chief

Hey Eagles—my name is Sinchan, and I'm so excited to introduce this year's final issue of the Eagle Era as a co-editor-in-chief with my friend Sahana. Our amazing staff writers and editorial team have been working away all month to bring you all this issue, and honestly, I could not be prouder.

When I decided to put Journalism down as one of my course choices last year, I had no idea what I was getting into. A lot of my time as a staff writer this past year has been pretty stressful—scrambling

to take photos, panicking over deadlines, poring over lengthy interview transcripts to find the perfect quote—but, looking back, I have no regrets. So many of the important lessons I learned as a junior came from the work I did for this class: from learning how to talk to strangers, to balancing my time among different responsibilities, to operating a camera. I owe so much to this class and this newspaper, and I'm committed to carrying that legacy forward. Sahana and I, along with our fellow editors, have a lot of ideas that we are beyond excited to implement in the coming year.

But another thing that Journalism taught me has never been more relevant—and that is the responsibility of the press in highlighting significant issues. Over the past month, there have been a number of incidents that have occurred both in our school and elsewhere that deserve attention. In this month's issue, we discuss the unexpected departure of a teacher and the gun violence that has become inescapable in our country as of late. It can be easy to grow desensitized to these problems, which, as students, we often feel detached from.

But what happens when the same harmful, derogatory sentiments we see so much in the national news appear in our own community, from our own classmates? At this point, a lot of us have seen or heard about the screenshots that have been circulating among our student body, and it would only be redundant to talk about how awful and demeaning and heinous they are. We have to confront the reality that we cannot remove ourselves from the injustice we see played out on the world stage every day.

I understand the disappointment, shock, and anger a lot of you probably feel, and I definitely share your emotions. For all the writing I've been doing this year, I'm honestly at a loss for words. However, I do want to say that now, more than ever, it's so incredibly crucial that we support one another as a community, and remain committed to doing the right thing. That means calling our friends and peers out for their discriminatory behavior, no matter how minor it may seem. If there's anything to take away from this, it's that AHS is not at all immune to hate, and we all have the responsibility of holding each other accountable.



Insight Education

College Admissions Counseling, Test Prep & Tutoring

SAT Summer Classes

SAT Advantage Session 1: June 13 - July 8 (Cupertino)		
Pre-Diagnostic Test	Mon (6/13)	9:00am - 12:15pm
Class Days (8 days)	Mon, Wed, Fri	9:00am - 3:45pm
Test Review Days	6/27 & 7/8	9:00am - 4:45pm
SAT Summer Boot Camp 1: June 11 - Aug 13 (Cupertino)		
Saturdays (10 Days)	9:00am - 5:30pm	
SAT Summer Boot Camp 2: July 5 - Aug 4 (Cupertino)		
Tue & Thu (10 Days)	9:00am - 5:30pm	
SAT August Boot Camp: August 1 - 12 (Cupertino)		
Mon - Fri (10 Days)	9:00am - 5:30pm	

ACT Boot Camps

ACT Summer Boot Camp 1: June 14 - July 14 (Cupertino)		
Tue & Thu (10 Days)	9:00am - 6:15pm	
ACT Summer Boot Camp 2: June 14 - July 14 (Online)		
Tue & Thu (10 Days)	9:00am - 12:15pm	
ACT Summer Boot Camp 3: June 13 - June 24 (Cupertino)		
Mon - Fri (10 Days)	9:00am - 6:15pm	
ACT Summer Boot Camp 4: June 18 - Aug 20 (Cupertino)		
Saturdays (10 Days)	9:00am - 6:15pm	

High School & College Admissions Counseling

College Admissions Insight for Seniors:
Building College List, College Essays, Scholarships, Common Application Essays, College Applications, Letter of Recommendation & Financial Aid

High School & College Admissions Planning & Guidance: Covering entire academic profile for 8th - 12th grade students

Extracurricular Activities & Volunteering:
Choose, prioritize, and stand out on your college application!



For detailed class schedule, College Admissions tips, 1:1 tutoring, & more, scan me



Senior Commentary

It's Not You, It's Me

My tumultuous relationship with high school is coming to an end

Shreya Daschaudhary
Staff Writer

Dear American High School,
I'm breaking up with you.

This may come as a surprise, given we've known each other for almost four years now, but...to be honest, I've been thinking about it since January. I'd been so burnt out from working on college essays on top of all of the tests and homework you dumped on me that hitting "send" on the last application towards the end of break felt like drinking an ice-cold glass of water at 2 AM. Unfortunately, after spending both Thanksgiving and winter break in purgatory because of said college apps, once second semester started I didn't have it in me to put effort in anymore. I started off with a C or D in nearly every class because it felt like there was an invisible force keeping me from being able to focus on studying or assignments. But that wasn't even the strangest part.

You know how I am, right? Or at least, how I used to be. I was always someone that craved the exhilaration of academic validation, someone whose only personality trait was trying hard in school. I was someone who had panic

attacks during tests if I didn't know the answer to a question because I didn't want a bad grade, someone who cried over the thought of a B+ because it would ruin my spotless academic record. Yet, I somehow became someone that could look at the 42% I had in AP Stats at one point and not feel a thing. Someone that went from heaving herself out of bed to see you even if she was sick to grasping at straws looking for excuses to avoid doing so.

But you don't have to feel bad about it. I said it before, right? It's not really your fault. Because in all honesty, I don't think I ever loved you.

I didn't really reach that conclusion until after college decisions started coming out though. I've discussed my anger towards the admissions process and the frustration of feeling like none of my hard work paid off at length before, but I've come to realize that those feelings only materialized because you only meant one thing to me: a stepping stone to college. Since before I met you, my Asian parents drilled but one life goal into my mind: get into a good college. Mind you, to them the only colleges in that category are the likes of Harvard and MIT, while even schools like UC Berkeley are "just state schools." In eighth grade, I remember not being able to fall asleep one night because I

couldn't overcome the despairing feeling that I wouldn't ever be good enough to get into one of those elite universities and make my parents proud. I mean, let's be real—most people aren't. Still, I'd been imbued with an overachiever mindset back when I was a child, and that kind of conditioning isn't easy to shake off.

I guess you do deserve an apology. I'm sorry I didn't take the time to explore all of the colorful sides of your personality. I didn't attend a single dance because I was busy with schoolwork, didn't participate in things like Spirit Week or rallies because I wanted to do academic things over summer instead. I was so hyperfixated on realizing an arbitrary goal that I forgot to enjoy myself. And now, at the end of it all, I'm bitter not because that dream never came true, but because I realized it was a dream I never had in the first place. I've still found a place at a great public university, and I'm still happy; I just wish I hadn't sacrificed my time and wellbeing over something so relatively insignificant.

I heard you're not supposed to blame the other party in these things, but you're seriously so, so toxic. Like, what even is your problem? Why do you feel the need to make people want to compare themselves to each other constantly, to make people tie their self-worth to their grades? Why



can't you be kind and warm, and reassure people that everything will turn out alright in the end and that in the end college is genuinely what you make of it? Do you know how much time I spent crying about being a failure without an "Ivy League stamp"? I wish you'd been there to support me when I needed it most, but in the end, the only thing you've done for me is make me feel terrible and insecure for failing to measure up to everyone else. My family's stringent expectations might've been the catalyst that sparked the fire, but I'd venture to say that you were the one that kept providing the fuel.

By the time this gets published, I'll finally be free from you. Not just from you, but everything associated with you. No more desperate groveling for validation, no more wondering if I'm good enough. Everything from this point on is gonna be about me. I'm going to take the classes I want to take, pursue a career I am genuinely interested in. You may not have done much for me, but you did teach me that the things I need to be satisfied can only come from myself.

Goodbye, American High. I won't miss you.

- Shreya

Identity, Where Are You?

Delving into the endless search for one's identity and the process of finally discovering it

Haritha Rajasekar
Staff Writer

"Erik Erikson points to the period of adolescence as a stage of crisis surrounding a teen's identity." When I initially read this statement, I resisted the claim, convincing myself that I was an anomaly to the theory. But soon, the overwhelming epiphany locked inside of me for so long released, and I recognized the root cause of the persistent lump in my throat—I had no idea who I was.

Coming of age books were no help, as novels like To Kill a Mockingbird and Catcher in the Rye highlighted young peoples' acquisition of maturity and change. I had no such moment of realization, nor did I experience any significant

event that permanently altered my perspective. It was like I had skipped over "coming of age" and instead jumped from pre-adolescence to young-adulthood. Moreover, I constantly felt as if my identity was being questioned, as if everyone around me assumed I had already been in possession of it. When confronted with questions like "What do you want to do in the future?" and icebreakers that demanded a description of myself in three words, I scrambled to formulate the right answers to these testing situations.

As those around me seemed to find their places, whether it be through sports, clubs, or people, I threw myself in every direction possible, flailing to somehow acquire this ambiguous "identity." Where was this identity? Was it in the people I shared my stories with? Was it in the clubs I poured my

time into? Was it in my past or in my future? Regardless of where I looked, I couldn't spot this mystery that was my identity. Until I realized—identity wasn't something to be found externally, it was located within. Identity wasn't something that appeared or disappeared; rather, it had always rested deep inside, growing and evolving alongside oneself.

Instead of asking myself what I wanted to do with my future, I began posing real, identity-revealing questions. What made me happy? What made me upset? What instilled a fire in me that even tears couldn't stop from igniting? What motivated me, what inspired me, what made me think and question and argue? These were the questions that needed to be asked. These were the questions that could unleash my identity rather than keep it hidden in-

side. In the modern day, we constantly focus on some distant, ambiguous future that no one has ever seen. Though we are fully aware of our past and completely alive in our present, we fail to immerse ourselves in what is right in front of us, giving all our energy to a world that can only be built from our imagination. Thus, it is no wonder that identity gets lost in this heap of confusion and fantasy, and realizing the importance of the present is the most important aspect of discovering identity.

I found that I enjoyed speaking. Whether it be spilling loads of tea or lobbying for bills, I was infatuated with the power my voice seemed to have. I learned that a lot upset me: the harsh realities of the world, the seemingly never-ending cycle of prejudice, and the endless array of -isms that destroyed every last bit of

peace and harmony the world could give. I was inspired by those around me—the courageous, the confident, and the loving, who each embraced their identity to its fullest potential. I was pushed forward by strong-willed communities, immigrants who strived for a better future, women of color who destroyed the patriarchal narratives that attempted to define them, and families who supported each other through every disaster. All of these aspects came together to give me an identity behind my name and skin.

And to Erik Erikson, whose words and theories provoked and unfolded the deep creases of my mind, I say thank you. Yes, as adolescents we do struggle to claim or reclaim our identity, and yes, we might have a difficult time titling ourselves with a word or, sometimes, three. But this isn't a crisis, per se. It is an endless journey and a path that only gets longer and more exciting to cross.

“Breaking Free”

Learning to break through identity labels

Darcy Chew
Staff Writer

Who am I?

At school, I am sometimes known as the student that always smiles. The track runner. The Eagle Era editor. The robotics programmer. The choir person. And all those are me.

Labels are easy, convenient. They are normalized.

Yet many people only know one of those labels, they don't recognize other parts of me that are all equally important.

And through the last four years of high school, I've realized how much confinement these labels can force. Because in reality, these labels also often go hand in hand with stereotypes.

Freshman year, I came to this school not knowing anyone. And my first few friends that I made were a group which I like to call “the private school kids” (and Ms. Do, the librarian).



We all had similar experiences with small private schools and had not yet built the courage to join already existing friend groups, so we all naturally gravitated towards each other. With this friend group, I didn't interact with anyone else and we remained isolated from the rest of class. (If you had asked me who the president or vice president of our class was, I would just

stare blankly at you). And I stayed an aloof private school kid until I finally pushed myself sophomore year to join the VEX Robotics Team. Although now I do not hang out with them anymore, I don't doubt that our friendship would have grown beyond a superficial level. But it was interesting to see how my conversations with my friends turned from being very aca-

demicly focused to more casual, easygoing topics.

My other labels began forming as I found my friend group with the girls in American's Girls VEX Robotics Team. We were the future girls-in-STEM. The future computer science majors, the future engineers. It solidified this path that I thought I was supposed to take—one full of science and math APs as well as tech clubs. (If you are interested in reading more about that track, read my other opinion piece titled “Jumping Off the Train” in the April Edition of the Eagle Era! Yes, this is a plug.)

And without my counselor encouraging me to join Journalism, I never would have considered a non-STEM elective. While it seemed nice to have a goal in mine, the identity of being an AP packer and CS competitor would mean never finding my Journalism family. This community is full of such amazing people with different interests that on the surface may not seem all that compatible. There is the sarcastic, grumpy media editor; the first non-native

born US President; the artistic, sleep-deprived design editor; the mind blowingly smart color guard captain; the Marvel obsessed future astronaut; and the extreme school slacker but extracurricular packer editor-in-chief. But, for some reason, we work well together and we would have never met if it hadn't been for Journalism. And this family reminds me of how these are only labels and we are much more beyond them.

I've been pretty lucky with my experiences and opportunities. I think being able to realize that you don't have to stick with one field, hobby, or group allows you to grow as a person. Being able to really enjoy your high school experience means taking those risks in trying new things. Don't let your labels restrict you from finding new passions. You can be that artistic basketball star. Or the high-achieving class clown. Or the wrestling band kid.

Or you can just be yourself. You don't need any labels.

Chemistry in Odd Places

A Senior's Final Thoughts

Namita Nair
Staff Writer

High school is rough. I think that's about the only thing the movies have gotten right about it. We don't run around the halls singing songs about our big championship basketball games, our cheerleaders don't flounce around in their uniforms all day, and the nerdy girl does not suddenly have a major glow-up and get asked to prom by the best athlete in school. But boy am I glad that stuff doesn't happen.

Normally, we get to school at 8:29:99, rush to our seats with our half-open eyes, and pretend to take notes on what's happening on the projector. We survive the first half of our days, get to lunch, and spend most of the time scarfing down whatever we happened to grab on our way out the door that morning. For me, lunch was always a scary time. In freshmen year, I had my set of friends from

junior high, and that was fun and safe. Slowly, one by one, these friends left. Stepping out of their comfort zones, talking to people they never would have thought to interact with, and somehow I was always left behind.

I guess it's really my fault because I was satisfied with my “safe” environment. Sophomore year rolled around and pretty soon, that environment was no longer what I considered safe or comforting. It seemed to me that the only thing we would talk about was our grades. Quarantine hit, and there are two ways that most people coped. Either Facetime was your life-line, or you disappeared into a cave and emerged two years later for in-person school.

Let me tell you, that cave is pretty sweet. The strangest thing is that there were only two people that I talked to—my chemistry partners. We had known each other for exactly one semester and suffered through the periodic table, stoichiometry, and molarity. The friends that I had for 6 years were gone, replaced by peo-

ple who only knew through lab notebooks and Mr. Winger's fabulous dyed goggles.

But that's the strange beauty of human relationships right?

The connections that we make. The people we meet. The circumstances that we live in. We don't have any control over these things, but somehow we end up in the right place. And maybe, yes, that's a little cheesy of me to say.

I am definitely not an optimist, and prefer to live my life around the idea that people are going to let you down; you just have to be ready for it. But meeting my friends in 10th-grade Chemistry Honors of all places put a little ray of optimism in me.

As a socially awkward person, making friends has always been hard. I usually just ended up being friends with



Friendships come from the most odd places, when you least expect it. I guess you could say we had a lot of chemistry.

someone whose parents knew mine, so the unexpected bonding that happened in that lab (pun fully intended) was a new experience. I can say with full confidence that this friendship has been one of the oddest ones I've made, but the most fulfilling and honest one to date. We talked about the most random things, but Star Wars was what ultimately sealed our camaraderie. Our weird but completely justified obsession with Obi-Wan Kenobi, and our serious debates about whether the Prequels were actually any good or if the Sequels were wasted potential (they were) made me feel like I belonged in a group for the first time in a while. And as our senior year begins to end, I can't help but feel immensely grateful to whatever higher force it was that brought me to them. There is a big difference between friends made inside and outside of the classroom, but in this case, I would have to say that ones forged by the suffering of stoichiometry and atom models are ones that stand the test of time. To the two of you, you know who you are. I love you.

Laters Gators!

Nami Nair

Entertainment

The Epitome of “Wait Have I Been Thinking About Them the Whole Time?”

*A review on Netflix’s recent hit *Heartstopper**

Mamata Elangovan
Staff Writer

Falling leaves, sparks when hands touch, literal stars in peoples’ eyes. Love is love, and it pops up in different ways for different people. *Heartstopper* certainly lives up to its name; it stopped my heart while I was watching it for sure. It’s not often you find a heartwarmer like this, let alone something filled with so much hope.

Heartstopper is a show that was released on Netflix based off of a popular web novel. It follows the life of Charlie and Nick as

they navigate high school, friendships, love, and learn to accept themselves for who they are. It’s a little cheesy, a little British, and a little gay. And this show is one that tugs on your heartstrings, as you watch these two lads live life.

It hints at its beginnings as a web novel with lovely doodles that appear here and there to show significance of moments in the show, times where the characters enter a period of growth and understanding, or to indicate that a major decision has been made. Occasionally, leaves glide across the screen to show progression in Nick and Charlie’s relationship.

While the TV show

does not remain entirely true to the original web novel, the show does have its own special allure. New side characters are introduced, other relationships and characters are given more screen time (shoutout to Tara and Darcy for being so obvious yet under the radar as gal pals), conflicts arise that previously weren’t there, but at the core, the characters are the same ones that we know and love.

The cast itself is particularly charming. Actual teens depicting teens on television; they’re awkward, clumsy, and well, they’re not perfect. None of the *Riverdale*-esque depiction of teens, where ev-

eryone is 6-feet tall and has the body of a Greek god. These teenagers are actually people that we can relate to; they’re young, they’re growing, they’re finding themselves in this cruel world, and by gosh do they have the cutest smiles

Featuring songs from artists such as Lauran Hibberd, Beaabadoobee, and Best Coast, *Heartstopper* begins to set the mood. The soft ambience of the music illustrates just how peaceful and cheery a day can be. That along with amazing camera angles which bring reflections of a rainbow across the screen, a neon lit backdrop surrounding characters, and the occasional warm glow

of the sun is the cherry on top. All of it comes together to capture what exactly it means to love life for what it is.

For me *Heartstopper* was just a little hope. A sign that things may not be all that bad. Because hey, here I am watching this show about two queer boys with my girlfriend and for a second I can forget all the negative rep that the LGBTQ community has around the world. For just a little while I can laugh and squeal as I watch these funky kids go about their day and appreciate just how wholesome it all is.

How Raveena’s Album, *Asha’s Awakening*, Embodies South Asian Culture

How South Asian American R&b Artist, Raveena, incorporates culture and meaning into music

Sonal Agarwal
Staff Writer

An orchestra of tabla, bass, and cartoon-like outer-space sounds opens Raveena’s new album, *Asha’s Awakening*, on the first track, titled “Rush.” Accompanied by upbeat synths in the background, the sound of Bollywood in “Rush” presents a theme that radiates throughout the entire album— an appreciation of South Asian culture.

Growing up in a Sikh household in New York, 27-year-old Raveena Aurora was exposed to different styles of R&b, soul, and jazz, alongside Bollywood, Punjabi, and other South Asian music that she was surrounded by. Throughout her career, Raveena has always

incorporated South Asian culture in her work; however, *Asha’s Awakening* centers around Raveena’s overlapping identities and culture. The album narrates a story about a South Asian space princess named Asha, who travels between space and Earth while ex-

periencing relationships, self-love, and healing. The album’s unique sounds gain more complexity as the album progresses. In the second track, titled “Secret,” featuring rapper Vince Staples, magical sitar strings and a traditional flute are layered on

top of a heavy bass pattern as Raveena sings about her femininity and beauty. The essence of the song delivers a charming effect with transcending strings, and Raveena’s soft vocals embrace femininity in South Asian women. For many young South Asian women, femininity can often be looked-over and lessened by society; cultural roles can create barriers for South Asian women, placing standards on how women are expected to act and look, especially with different skin tones and body types. Raveena serves as an important role model to challenge these topics.

The idea of celebrating women as a whole is one of the many themes Raveena incorporates into her work. The fourth track, titled “Kismet”, translates from Hindi to “Fate.” Raveena illustrates a comfortable life

filled with happiness for her and all the women in her life through lyrics like, “Come into the water/God, I love my women/Let’s all become farmers/ Playing hide-and-seek in the garden.” The song itself echoes summertime with a jazzy bassline, drum pattern, and electric guitar strums. Referring to women that have had to break generational cycles of pain, Raveena depicts a healing, peaceful, and stress-free life for them, “Every day, they got no time for playing/ I just wanna be misbehaving.”

Being an Indian woman in the music industry can be an unnerving experience, due to systemic barriers in place that can exploit immigrant artists’ visions and recycle them in more well-known, white spaces. Raveena’s character in the album recog-



*Cover of Raveena’s, *Asha’s Awakening*, featuring space princess “Asha” sitting on top of crystals in another world.*

Cont. on Page 11

Northern California

UC Berkeley

Om Awate
Mihika Balaji
Dhruv Gautum
Vishwa Iyer
Vedant Jhawar
Maithili Kumar
Jasmine Lee
Abinayaa Murugupandian
Ayush Patel
Haritha Rajasekar
Maria Rufova
Sheza Saiyed
Aarnav Sanghvi
Amani Shah
Jade Wang

UC Merced

Djeinabou Bah
Kimran Brar
Edmund Chao
Alton Chao
Akhil Devarasetty
Lorenzo Montoya
Prachi Trivedi
Varsha Vinod

UC Santa Cruz

Rithika Arulnathan
Kendall Carmel
Tren-An Chang
Sreekari Chinta
Pari Dar
Charitha Gangi
Danyal Khan
Kush Khanna
Jennifer Kim
Rohit Mandal
Pragya Maruwada
Eshaan Parekh
Karan Patel
Kavya Sasikumar
Geoffrey Tang
Amanda Tran

San Jose State University

Divli Bhat
Sukhraj Brar
Claire Cardenas
Christopher Drew
Manasvi Gondi
Alejandra Guzman
Tiffany Huynh
Viraj Johar
Diya Kamath
Jaswanth Kumar Santhosh
Anitha Mahes
Ian Lorenzo
Kashif Majid
John Malvas Paul
Natasha Rodriguez
Makenna Strauss
Tiffany Vanegas
Sabrina Waiezi

West Valley College

Maggie Carroll

San Jose City College

Zara Dumatol

Ohlone College

Daniel Alvarez
Lance Arnoco
Yusuf Azimi
Elisio Barreto
Ardee Bonifacio
Mailia Caluya
Christian Castillo
Lyndon Chan
Giuliana Chapman
Nicholas Chapman
Keely Chen
Kylan Dao
Jizella Diala
Max Dobbin
Daniel Francavilla
Geneth Gadingan Elyza
Ameen Haq
Jesse Henschel
Kalyn Hornung
Zhiyu Huang
Natania Ishananto
Harshini Jayaprakash
Sahil Jhamat
Anant Jhaveri
Alina Kalpin
Lillian Knight
Tiandra Lee
Carolyn Magnane
Dariy Marshaev
Sydney McIntosh
Emily Morales Casillas
Erin Nguyen
Miyoshi Nishimura
Leah Obispo Sai Yesha
Aashna Patel
Matthew Pena
Jocelyn Rohde
Elias Safi
Emma Sanidad
Abhishek Shringarpure
Chloe Tancinco
Gabriel Watson

Stanford University

Shanza Faraz

Chabot College

Alexander Aragon-Zupan
Zubair Azizi
Serena Escobedo
Jordan Knupfer
Vanessa Pacheco-Valencia

University of the Pacific

Joyce Liu

De Anza College

Josh De Gracia
Tiffany Shih

Carrington College

Emily McJunkin

Menlo College

Justis Myles
Shama Wahba

Holy Names University

Thomas Messina

UC Davis

Anika Aggarwal
Chinmay Arora
Saanvi Bapu
Tessa Castellana
Nitika Chaudhary
Grace Chen
Aniket Desai
Skyla Estrada
Jiatong Gao
Harsh Karia
Harshith Karuturi
Gursheen Kaur
Dharsheni Kumar Senthil
Rebecca Li
Angelina Loh
Emily Lung
Komal Purohit
Ellianna Shapiro
Ravneet Singh
Jemin Song
Kirrthana Srinivasa
Eda Tao
Iman Tariq
Falak Vakharia
Keerti Varada
Chuo Zhai Ying

University of San Francisco

Josh Bascos
Lauren Cervantes
Alvin John Gonzales
Savanna Johnson

San Francisco State University

Antonio Arroyo
Vaishnavi Bharti
Jalyn Javier
Gio Reyes

Sacramento State University

Andy Luu

CSU East Bay

Ian Knickerbocker
Felix Nguyen
Heila Shokoor
Donnyeah Tate

Santa Clara University

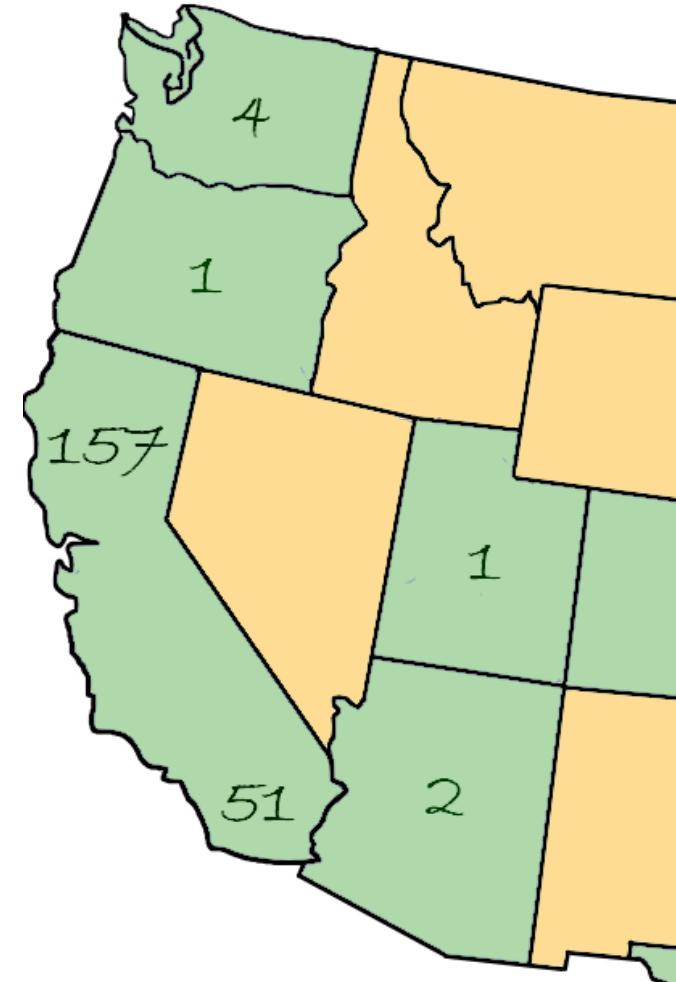
Dev Pathak
Yesenia Sandoval

Diablo Valley College

Sofia Resendiz

Trade School

Gabriel Austin
Ray Ignacio



Purdue University

Deepti Kumaran
Sonal Naik
Trisha Raman
Anushka Singh
Arav Tewari

Northeastern

Isha Kansal

Georgetown

Saachi Baldwin

Georgia Tech

Ananya Garai
Divya Rama

UIUC

Rachel Abramson
Preetha Chaitanya
Rushi Kakkad
Pranash Kriplani
Raymond Tan

Gonzaga University

Madeline Hwang

Carnegie Mellon

Runxin Zhou
Allen Zhu

University of

Perry Chien
Siheng Li

Ringling College of

and Design
Catherine Wu

Howard University

Shekinah Taylor

Case Western Reserve University

Darcy Chew

Texas A&M University

Joshua Dumalig

University of Dallas

Aaliyah Ramirez

Fordham University

Natalie Loo

University of Toledo

Navya Muppudi

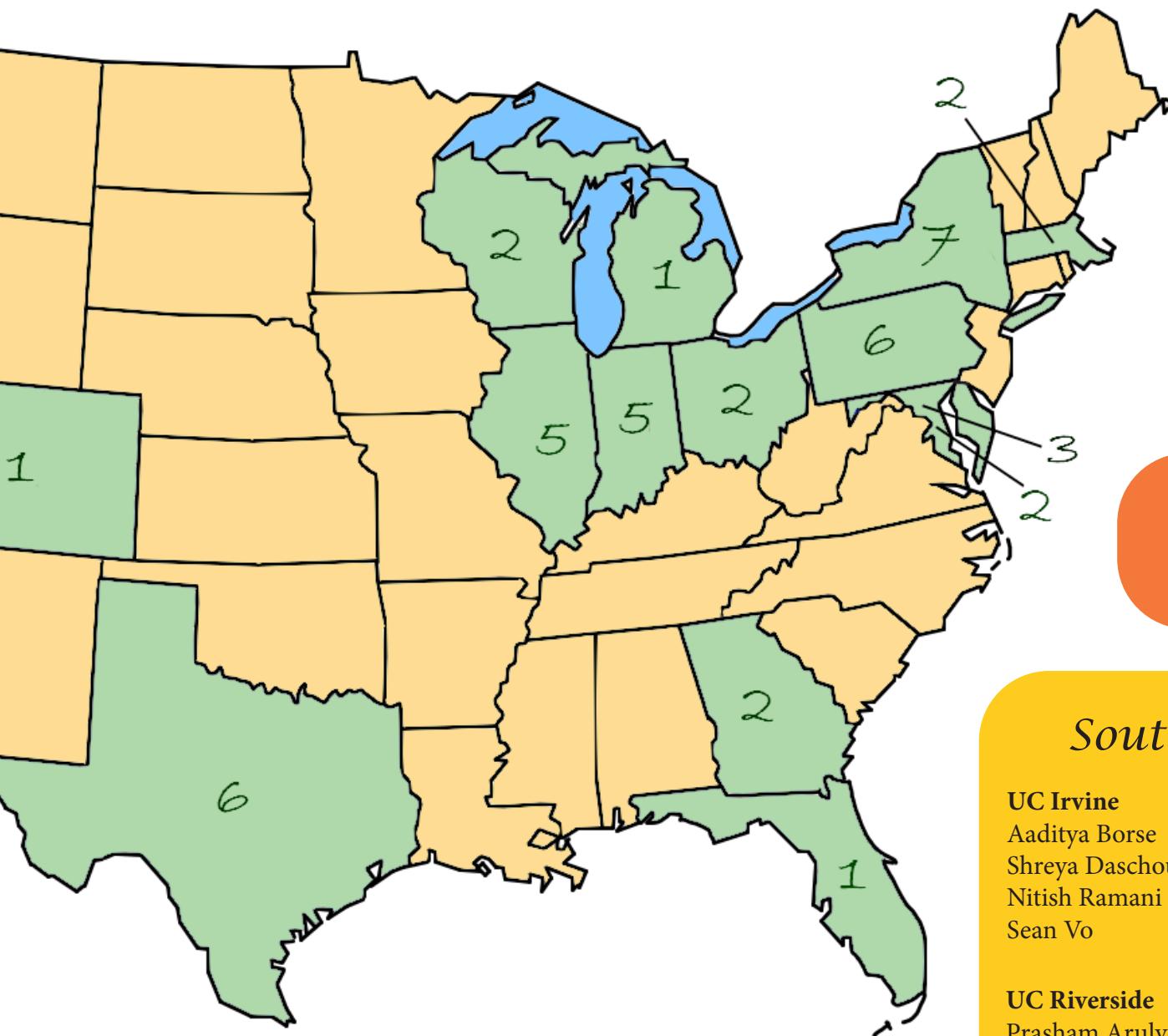
Seattle University

Grace Liu

Bingham Young University

Jessica Wiseman

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2022!



Out of State

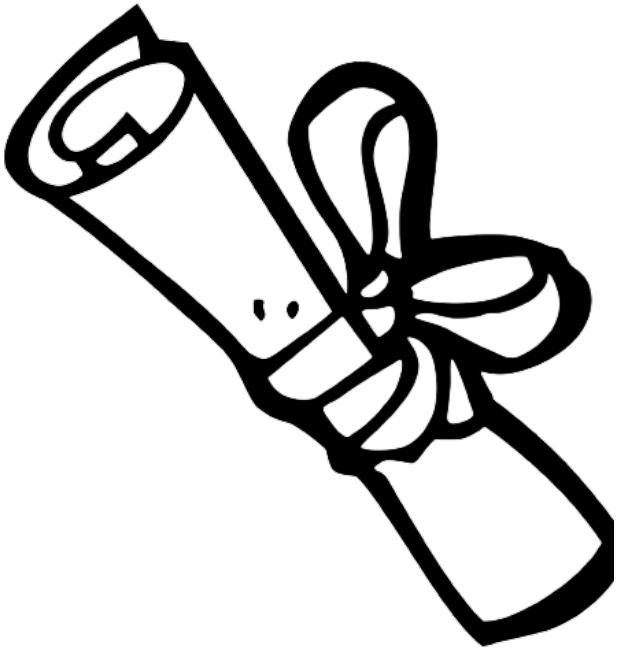
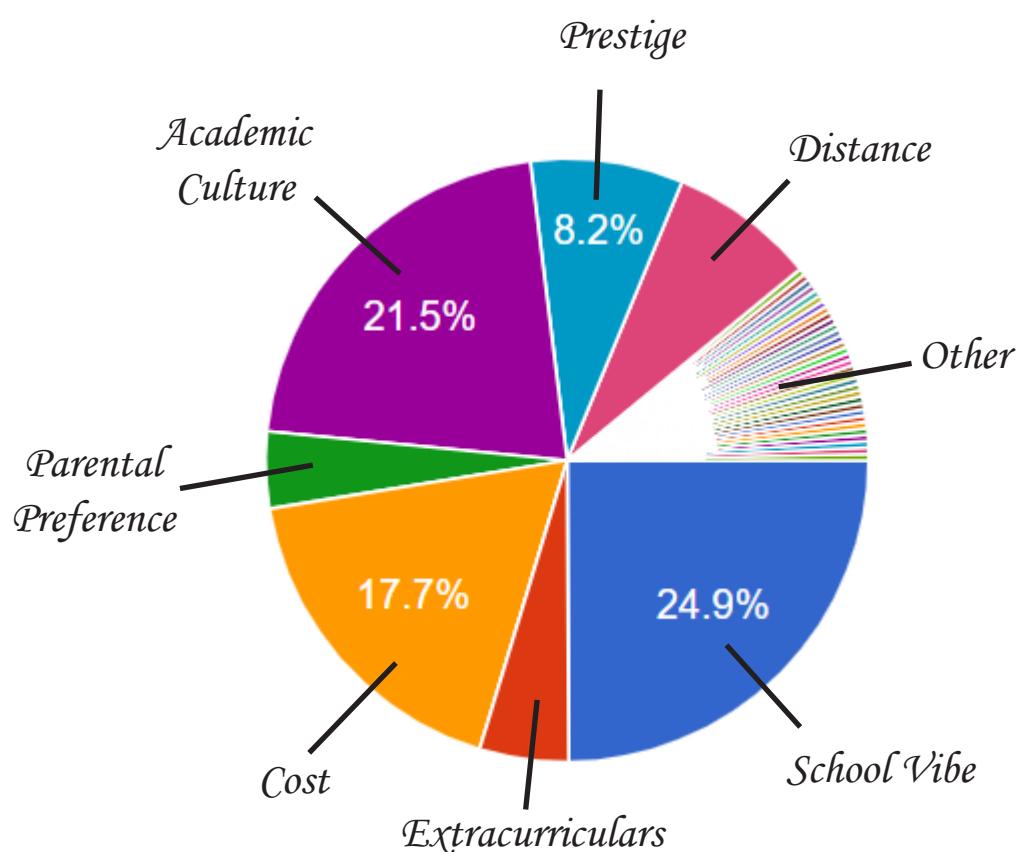
University of Pennsylvania	UPenn Megha Govindu Ashna Khemani	Colombia University Vaneet Pani
Johns Hopkins University	John Hopkins University Wenhai Xu	UT Austin Sriya Gonuguntla Rhea Shah Shalini Sundar Nikhil Thirumalai
NYU	NYU Deeya Jain Aksha Srinath Andrew Yuen	Drexel University Akshaj Nair
University of Michigan	University of Michigan Sara Fang Kavin Goyal	University of Colorado-Boulder Namita Nair
Arizona State University	Arizona State University Mehtab Samra Ritwik Sharma	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute James Liu Nathan Streater
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Ruth Lu	University of Maryland, College Park Asmita Brahme
University of Oregon	University of Oregon John Heibel	University of Wisconsin-Madison Akshay Gona Krishna Ramesh
Penn State University	Penn State University Rithvik Mungara	

Southern California

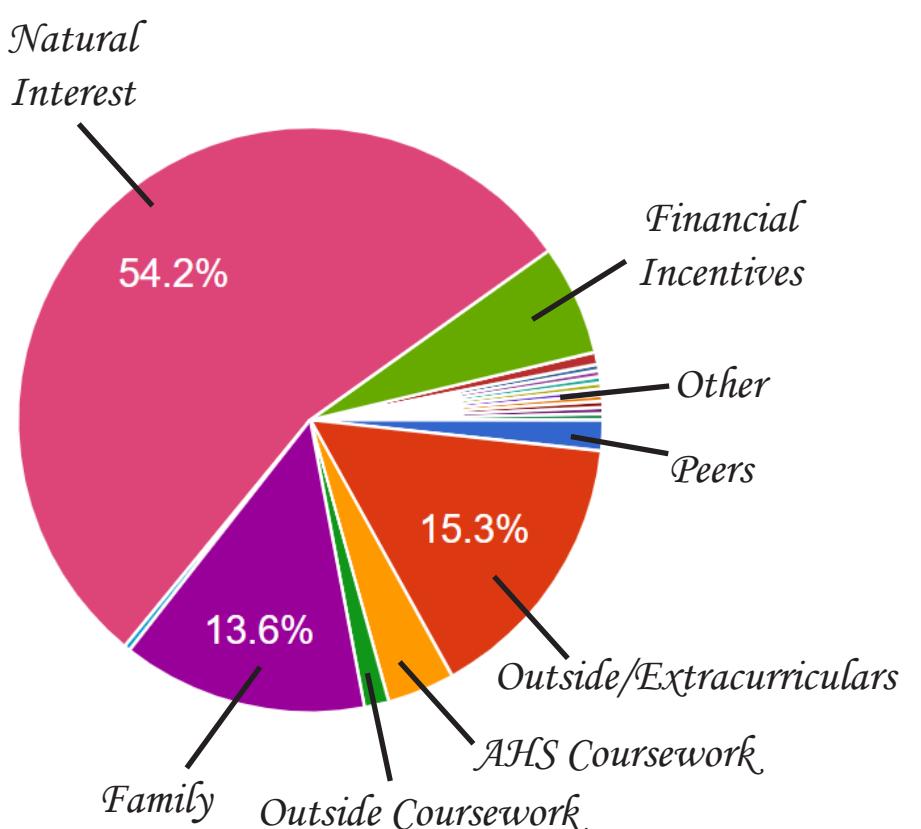
UC Irvine	UCLA
Aaditya Borse	Rachana Aithal
Shreya Daschoudhary	Gautam Anand
Nitish Ramani	Joyce Chen
Sean Vo	Brian Chung
UC Riverside	Asilah Maryam
Prasham Arulvel	Ashita Singh
Mayank Banerjee	Daniel Wang
Padma Dondapati	Maxine Wu
Mamata Elangovan	Florence Zhao
Nimisha Gupta	Larry Zhi
Rishitha Kona	Nyla Zia
Krish Patel	
Noopur Satsangi	
Vimal Selvarajan	
UC Santa Barbara	UC San Diego
Phillip Loo	Meghana Hariprasad
Nathan Nhieu	Allison Huang
Vinish Viraj	Peter Li
Frank Wang	Andrew Zheng
Cal Poly SLO	University of Southern California
Katarina Di Paola	Tiya Jain
Sahith Karra	Harshini Karthikeyan
Ronisha Leenusrich	
CSU Fullerton	CSU Long Beach
Aleina Ruaboro	Kelly Li
David Sheade	Katrina Ng
Jonathan Tong	Kiara Pineda
CSU Los Angeles	
CSU Channel Islands	Gauri Chahal
Mahika Amin	
Chapman University	
ArtCenter College of Design	Mandy Fang
Sharon Tahk	
Bakersfield Community College	
Irvine Valley College	Erin Richardson
Jennie Zhou	
San Diego State University	
	Thuyan Nguyenlun

GRADUATION DATA

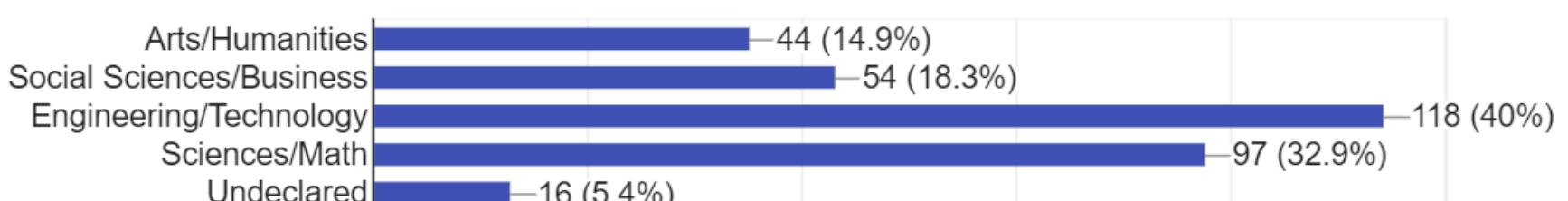
Biggest Influence on School Choice



Biggest Influence on Field of Study



Field of Study



Words From Me To You

A Letter to My Sister

Nydia Kuo
Staff Writer

Dear Zhi An,

I can't believe that you grew up so quickly and in a few days it will be your promotion soon. I remember how I was having fun watching you learn how to walk, and I would be next to you, getting ready to catch you before you fell and hurt yourself. I also remember other things like how I would try to get you to say the words jie jies (older sister) before the words Mom or Dad. Unfortunately, I did not succeed but I still remember the overwhelming joy I felt when you did something for the first time. First crawl. First roll. First walk.

After finishing elementary school, you will be starting at Thornton. While I was excited about the transition to a new school, I was also terrified of the changes I would face. The thought of being surrounded by students from

five other schools and building new friendships or facing six different workloads for each class stressed me out. Just when I thought moving from elementary to Thornton was hard enough, the change

or not being able to get to class on time.

After starting school, I realized that the thing I struggled with the most was not changing to a big campus or facing six different workloads; it was picking the

up taking the classes I heard others were taking. Big mistake. I ended up having a hard time learning and had to suffer in silence since it was my choice to do so. Make sure that no one influences your choice

struggling on your own. This applies to any transition in your life. Anytime you do not understand something in class, ask your teachers and have them explain it to you again or even ask your friends to explain it if possible but never hold it in. Knowing you, you would probably much rather struggle on your own and pray for the best on test days. Reach out, ask for videos to watch, and ask for tips they have.

As you get older, I hope that your junior and high school life goes by without any trouble or problems. I hope you will be able to surround yourself with good friends that will constantly support you for what you do. Lastly, I hope that you will join journalism one day and take my position (this one is the most important one). I'm writing this letter to you because the road ahead of you is still long, but I want you to know that I am only one text away, ready to guide you in every step of your future.



My sister using her free time to drag me into gardening with her

from junior high to high school turned out to be tougher. While I got used to the increase in students and the workload, I was not prepared for how big the campus would be. I was actually nervous about getting lost

right class and learning the materials that were being taught by the teacher. Every year when they handed me the course registration papers, I would stare at it for days not knowing what or how to pick and I usually ended

when choosing your classes, including Mom and Dad. You should pick the ones you can handle and have an interest in.

While this advice is more on the practical side, the biggest advice I can give is to ask for help instead of

Two Racial Slurs. One Missing Teacher. A Classroom Left Adrift. Cont.

Gonzalez went on to explain why the drawing that the students made was offensive, but Jackson's opinion was that the student meant no harm in drawing it, saying, "What we drew was just our imagination of somebody with overexaggerated features. Nothing to do with [Ms. Gonzalez], [her] son, or the poster." The motive behind the creation of the drawing still remains unclear.

Gonzalez continued her discussion with them, and Jackson states that "She was like, 'How do you feel about this? How would you feel if somebody called you the N-word?' But she actually said it [the N-word]. She actually said it with the -ER. She said it twice."

According to Jackson, Gonzalez had used the racial slur two times, when trying to explain how offensive certain behaviors and words could be to the Black community.

Jackson was stunned. "[Gonzalez] said it so freely, without any hesitation or nothing."

Jackson ended up walking out of the classroom and to her counselor Ms. Barwani's office, shaken by her conversation with Gonzalez.

Jocelyn Tamboura, another Black student in the class, felt strongly about what Gonzalez was saying and decided to confront her.

"I said, 'Why do you feel the need to feel offended when something like this happens to the Black community when you're not Black?' And she just kept bringing up that she

has a Black son. So therefore she has a right in what to say."

Sometime later during the period, according to students, Gonzalez began to backtrack on her statements.

Tanaka recounts that "She had said that the mask was muffling what she was really trying to say. She said, 'Oh, I did not say the N-word. I said the phrase.' And people really didn't buy into that. That, I think, upset people more, that she was trying to cover it up."

After winter break, students returned to their English classroom to find that Ms. Gonzalez had not returned, leaving all of her class periods to be supervised by either substitutes or other teachers until the students were dispersed into other 11th grade English classes.

Sandoval explains, "We got

literally nothing. We kept getting thrown subs for a bunch of weeks. We did not have work for two or three months. And then all of a sudden... they were assigning work. We had no due dates, eventually people were like, 'Why do we need to do this? She's not coming back. There's no due date.'"

An investigation was opened, but not much information has been released about what happened to Gonzalez after winter break.

Sandoval states that "Ms. Barrington, later on, I think in March [or] April interviewed a couple of us that were talking and asking about it. So I feel like they did an actual investigation... everyone kept saying she might be back and other people saying she [was] suspended. She was under in-

vestigation. Then it turned into she was suspended. And it turned into early retirement. And then after we heard about early retirement, we got switched into a new teacher."

According to the "2022 FUSD Retirees Video" posted on the Fremont Unified School District Channel on YouTube, Ms. Gonzalez was officially announced as one of this year's retirees. The motivation behind her retirement is unclear, and at this time the Eagle Era can only confirm that she will not be returning, not the reasons that led to this decision. Ms. Gonzales has not responded to a request for comment on this story. AHS administration also has not provided a comment.

Roe V. Wade On The Line

People's concerns on abortion rights in response to the leaked Supreme Court draft to overturn Roe V. Wade

Anika Aggarwal
Staff Writer

Earlier this month, *Politico* obtained a leaked Supreme Court draft to overturn the landmark Supreme Court Case, *Roe V. Wade*, which declared abortion a legal right. The 98-page document, written by Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, states "*Roe* was egregiously wrong from the start." An abortion is a medical procedure used to end a pregnancy, in which the specific procedure may vary based on the trimester of pregnancy or on other factors. Many women across the nation were outraged at the possibility of abortion restrictions in their state, as were many students at American High. Katherine Dzyuba (12) shares her reaction to the news.

"It's not exactly shocking, but it's sad because a lot of women need access to abortion. Just potentially overturning *Roe v. Wade* ruins it for some women," Dzyuba says.

Falak Vakharia (12) is the vice president of Girls Learn International (GLI) club at American High. She expresses her concerns for other rights in America.

"This could really overturn a lot of human rights. In my government classes, people are very worried about it. It could be a huge setback for a lot of people," she shares.

In the United States, about 1 in 4 people who can get

pregnant have an abortion at some point in their life. Sofia Martinez (11) describes reasons women may need an abortion.

"There are many reasons why women need abortions. If you can't afford a baby, and you're forced to have a child, then putting it either through adoption or put up to adoption, or the foster system doesn't help them to succeed. Some women were like raped or sexually assaulted and don't want to carry the child of their rapist. It's also just their choice, if they don't want to tell, they don't need to have a child. Some women, if they give birth, can die. Avoiding the baby could save their lives," she says.

Abortion was one option many women had access to in case of an unwanted pregnancy. Winter Abernathy (11) explains how devastating the consequences could be if abortion access was denied.

"I've read a lot of people say, 'I would rather kill myself than give birth to a child that I don't want, because there are so many people who have that belief that if I do, I'm not going to be a good parent.' I think that forcing people to have children is just going to give you another generation of traumatized children," they explain.

In California, abortion is legally protected in the state legislature, so women have legal access to abortion, regardless of whether *Roe* remains or is overturned. Abernathy continues:

"In California, it won't do much, but there's a list of about 23 states that already have anti-abortion legislation in process, so that's worrying. I think it's just going to cause a kind of crisis. What we've seen is that

anytime any kind of human right is rolled back, a lot of other ones have a very shaky foundation. California is not going to do too much because we've already had lawmakers here say they want to put it into the state constitution because then it becomes a protected piece of legislation," they add.

Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA 14th District), who works in the House of Representatives, predicts the possible outcomes of the overturning of *Roe V. Wade*.

"The intention here among the group of people that are promoting this, and it's a small minority, when the majority of Americans want to retain *Roe*, it's just the beginning. Then they're gonna want to cut contraception. They're going to prevent women from crossing state lines to get an abortion. They're going to penalize companies that support their employees in getting abortions. It's

really diabolical," she explains.

To create lasting change, Dzyuba says that increased conversation around traditionally taboo topics like the female reproductive system will help increase people's awareness.

"I think feminists, through multiple generations, have been trying to make discussion about reproductive rights more open. We've had to fight in order to be able to talk about periods and the actual function of the female body openly," Dzyuba shares.

Mr. Rojas, a social studies teacher with a Juris Doctor degree, believes that the people must actively fight and lobby for abortion access at the state and national level, and keep working towards the legalization of abortion.

"We know in American history, social movements have had an impact on government, civil rights movements, anti war and Vietnam movements,

even the women's rights movement has had some changes. If you truly believe that you have the right to an abortion, go and fight for it at the courthouse, at the Statehouse, lobby, the legislature. Elect people that you believe will get this codified into a state law. If you want to do it, not only at the state level, do it, select them at the national level," he stresses.

Congresswoman Speier conveys her sentiments on the leaked draft and the progress needed to keep abortion legal.

"It is a diabolical decision written by a judge who is an angry white man, unfortunately. He thinks that somehow it is okay to take the personal freedoms away from women who have had them for 50 years, and we're not going to let it happen one way or the other way, we're going to prevent it from going forward, and it may take a little bit of time," she declares.

Despite the platform many politicians preach on keeping abortion legal, no lasting change will occur until the right to an abortion or other reproductive services is codified in the law.

On another note, Martinez expresses the need for more conversation and shares how men should try to understand the importance of abortion at a more personal level.

"I think men should just open their ears and listen to women and their stories and understand why needing access to abortion is so important."



"Right now, politicians are controlling the conversation around abortion. It's predominantly people who don't have a uterus, and they don't ever experience something like that," says Winter Abernathy (11).

The Grading Dilemma

Exploring teachers' and students' views on rounding grades

Nicole Wu
Staff Writer

May 31st, 1 AM. While checking Infinite Campus before bed, you notice a bright red number one above the notification bell, begging to be checked. Upon clicking on the message, it says that you have an updated grade of B+ (89.99%) in English: Semester Final. Your eyes pop wide open as your mind races through a list of things that could have resulted in being 0.01% away from an A-minus. You quickly compose an email to send to your teacher, pleading for a grade bump. And now the hardest part comes: the wait.

The decision of whether to round up grades for students is something teachers deal with at the end of each semester. The teachers at American High School are not exempt from this tough decision.

History teacher, Mr. Hunt, is a teacher who rounds up grades on a case-by-case basis. "I don't round up grades for everybody. If students do not ask me to round up grades, I will consider it because I go off of effort and improvement but very seldom do I round up grades. I'm not a big advocate," he explains.

AP classes are often challenging and rigorous,

so rounding up grades do not always accurately demonstrate a student's effort and ability, according to Mr. Hunt.

He elaborates, "My classes are pretty difficult, especially at the beginning of the year. The essays are very hard to get good scores on, so I grade for improvement. If you, at the beginning of the school year, were writing 1's and 2's, but towards the end of the year, you're writing 5's, 6's, or 7's (a perfect score), then I see that as improvement, and I go back and try to make the grade reflect that improvement more than the overall points."

With teachers having the final say in student's overall grades, some students take it upon themselves to ask for a grade bump. One such student is Pengbo Wang (11).

Wang recalls, "This year, in one of my classes, I was extremely close to an A; I had an 89.7 or 89.8. I was one point away on the final to get that A, and I requested for my grade to be rounded up. The teacher gave me one extra point on the final, so I could have an A for my overall grade. I appreciated the teacher very much, and in return, I should study more and try harder."

He is not the only student who believes rounding up grades is helpful. Avan Vadivila (11) mirrors a similar point of view. "Rounding up grades gives you better grades, happy students, and teachers [that] are less annoyed of students continuously asking for extra credit. If you know you are a hard

teacher and you teach a hard class, make it easier for the both of us, just round the grades," she remarks.

Although students are largely in favor of rounding up grades, Mr. Shockley, an AP Physics 1 and AP Physics C teacher at AHS, disagrees with the idea of grade rounding.

"I think that rounding grades are arbitrary. I think it doesn't represent what it necessarily should. Students who want grades rounded want to appear to have a better grade than perhaps the scores indicate."

Mr. Shockley adds, "If it's done, it's usually based on whether a student asks for it or not. It favors students who are vocal. They are concentrating more on argumentative skills than the actual curriculum,

and I think rounding grades favors negotiating skills rather than performance."

Mr. Shockley has a system built into the semester grades called the C3 which stands for commitment, contribution, and citizenship with the aim to give students the extra nudge in their overall grade.

"Contribution reflects your involvement in class and group work. The citizenship portion of C3 is determined by your conduct, attitude, effort, participation, helpfulness to other students, and attendance as demonstrated in class," his syllabus outlines.

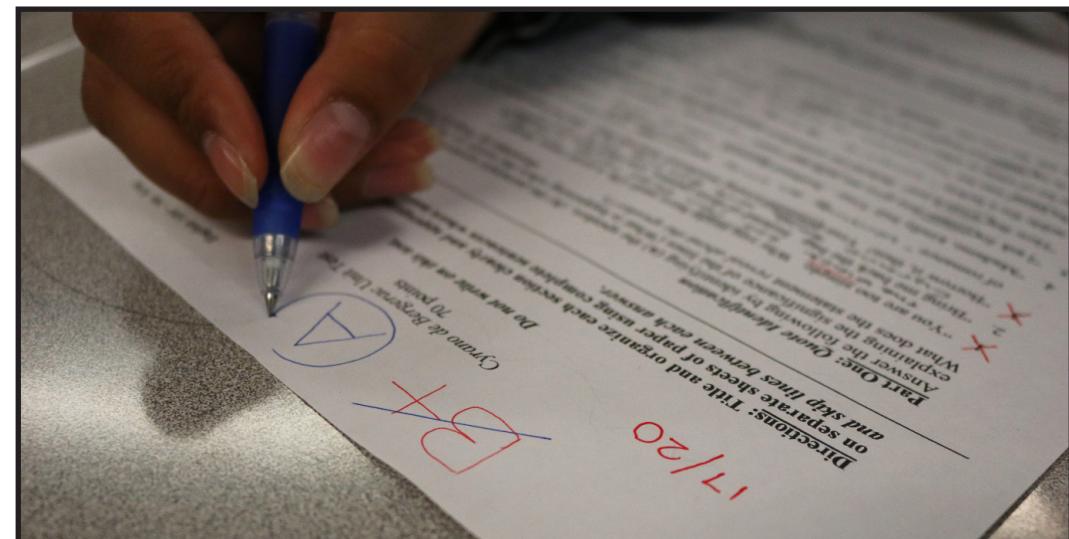
The C3 category is not the only way students can receive a grade boost. Mr. Shockley allows students to do test corrections as a way for them to not only reflect on their learning but also

to raise their test grade.

Mr. Hunt also provides other opportunities throughout the school year for students to bring up their grade.

"I offer fun, little extra credit things which can go into participation grades and stuff that can help a little bit. Overall, grades should be a reflection of how well you do for the entire semester and not just the end of the semester," he notes.

Grade rounding is a controversial topic without a consensus. Nevertheless, each side of the argument has its own merit. Ultimately, it's up to a collaboration between teachers and students with a goal of achieving learning and acquiring knowledge.



The concept that grades are earned and not bargained for is a widely known yet debatable subject. Mr. Shockley, believe grades and bargaining are two different things. "Why should bargaining power, when it comes to grades, be more important than the actual performance? That doesn't make sense to me. If a grade is supposed to indicate proficiency in a subject, that's proficiency in a subject, not the student's ability to negotiate. Negotiation skills are wonderful. I value those separately," Mr. Shockley remarks.

How Raveena's Album, *Asha's Awakening*, Embodies South Asian Culture Cont.

nizes this fetishization of women of color and expresses it in the fifth track, called "Kathy Left 4 Kathmandu." Raveena sings, "Rich hippie better check your balance/ I'm her Hare Krishna Hare Rama/ I can open up your third eye/As long as you can pay the price," mocking aspects of hippie culture and recognizing that Raveena's character might fit this fetishization for certain crowds.

After the halfway point in the album, the tone shifts to a more

meditative and calm state following two intermissions, consisting of ethereal synth sounds and soft vocals. The 10th track, called "Asha's Kiss", featuring Indian soul/jazz singer, Asha Puthli, is a peaceful and mystical song layered with flutes, tabla, and bells. A groovy bassline adds a neo-soul element to the song. The song itself channels a nature-like, meditative feel in which both Raveena and Asha Puthli vocalize. The most notable aspect of this song is Asha Puthli's inclusion; Puthli being one of the earliest Indian R&B/

soul artists in the United States, her influence and legacy plays a big role in the song and album- as well as for many other South Asian American artists.

Track 12 of Asha's Awakening is a song titled "Love Overgrown," in which Raveena talks about the hardships that come with relationships and heartbreak. The instruments carry a bittersweet tune to them, and the drums play lightly throughout the song as Raveena sings about being deep into a relationship that eventually leads to heartbreak. As an LGBTQ

artist, Raveena singing about emotions that come with heartbreak personally to her, serves as an important representation for LGBTQ communities, which is often lacking in mainstream artistic industries.

As the album comes to an end, a 13-minute meditation is included as a unique gesture true to Raveena's purpose with Asha's Awakening. With healing and self-love being a topic heavily touched throughout the album, this meditation at the end of the album allows the listener to indulge in that healing

for themselves. Raveena guides the meditation with reassuring phrases such as "Settle into your protective field of light/ In this space, you are unconditionally loved/ You are beautiful." Deep vibrations and cosmic sounds continue throughout the duration of this track as the phrase "Born Again" repeats within the final few minutes. Asha's Awakening immerses the listener into another world and plays out as a journey of self-discovery.

Time Well Spent

Retiring teachers discuss their years at American, and look toward the future



Mr. Johnson

What are you looking forward to most in retirement?

"A saner world.

I'm pretty comfortable in what I do [at American] and in my skin. Talking about being genuine [in the classroom] and stuff, but you get busy in anything. I'm sure I'll be finding something to do in retirement. I'd like to travel some. Yeah, teachers can travel in the summer I know, but [I'd like to travel in] other times of the year. I'm a grandfather now, I have grandkids, I can do some stuff with that."

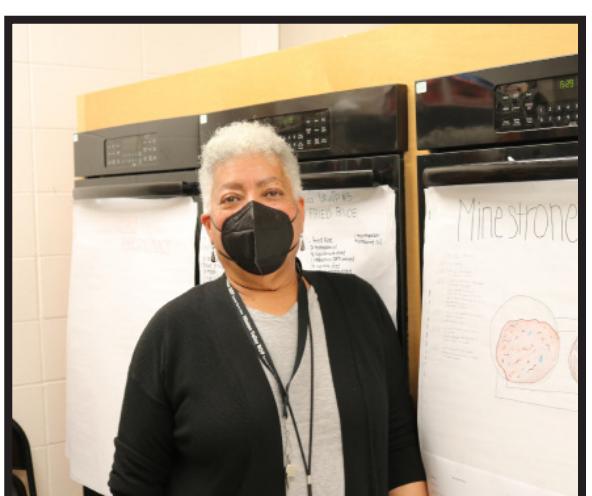
Emyr Ortiz
Staff Writer



Mr. Takacs

Do you have any doubts about retirement?

"Not at all. Not at all...People, they always say 'oh, you're gonna get bored. You're not gonna know what to do.' I say, just leave me alone. Can't you just give it a rest already? That's the most irritating thing about retiring: other people saying 'what are you going to do?' What do you care? What do you care what I'm going to do? I'll try different things and see where it goes ...So what I want to do is do lessons...Do lessons and then put them on a teacher's pay site and make them really reasonably priced. And I don't need the money. So I wanted to donate the proceeds to the Wildlife Fund. So anything I make, because I don't need the money, just donate it to the wildlife fund. And I've always been a big advocate for animals. I hope I can pull that off."



Chef Rosen

What are you most proud of having accomplished over your time at American?

"I lived. I made it. Nobody got food poisoning or sick while I've been sick...I don't know that I can distill it down to one thing. You know, I hope that I've created a sense of community and responsibility back here. And if I watch student behavior, because when people come into my classroom [they're] like, 'we've heard you're really scary.' I'm like, 'I am really scary.' Because I expect people to do things a certain way. And in the beginning, maybe they're not so happy about it, but at the end they understand why we do things the way that we do. And when I come in and the kids just automatically do what they're supposed to be doing, I've done my job. I don't know if it extends beyond this classroom, I hope it does. I don't have any regrets about leaving here at all... I came to do the job. I did the job. And I'm gonna leave before I beat it to death."

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