



EAGLE ERA

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The Fremont Run 4 Education brings the community together

Fremont supports sports funding in schools through annual races

Tegbir Kaur | Staff Writer

The annual Fremont Run 4 Education on November 3rd, was an opportunity for community members of all ages to get together and support the Fremont education system.

Kathy Kimberlin, the president of the Fremont Education Foundation, which organizes the event, said, “This year, we had almost 250 participants of all ages run. We offer a 5K, a 10K, quarter and half mile races, and this was our second year offering the Mama Eileen’s Walk for All Abilities. We are hoping to build that up each year to include more students with different needs.”

One of the MCs at the race and AHS alumnus, Brandon Sass, said, “I like being out here with people and seeing people who would not normally have a chance to get together talk to each other. They are smiling, meeting people, and having fun.”

Before his race, Aneek Mandal (11), who participated in the 10K run, said,

“The races impact the community positively because they raise awareness and funds for the Fremont Education Foundation. And for me, running helps clear my mind.”

All proceeds earned at the races go to

the Guy Emanuele Sports Fund, according to the Fremont Education Foundation website. “Former trustee Guy Emanuele started this fund because he did not want any child to ever be prevented from doing

sports because they could not afford it,” said Kimberlin. “We now give funds to elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, for basketball referees or for replenishing playground supplies for elementary schools.”

Warms Spring Elementary School teacher Ms. Casey also participated in the 10K race. She said, “I think it is a really good event to get community members together. In addition to supporting education, it brings in a lot of different vendors. It is cool to see the community members checking out the different [booths].”

Of the sixteen expo booths at the event, many advocated for key issues in the then-upcoming election. John Schinkel, the campaign director for Yes on M-Support Fremont Schools, said, “This is a really great spot for us to talk to a lot of different families that support public education. If they support the Fremont (continued pg. 2)



Participants excitedly begin running the 5K race at the Fremont Run 4 Education. “It’s a lively group of people. It’s a little small, but the people here have a lot of energy, and so it makes you more excited,” said Ms. Casey, an elementary school teacher who participated in the 10K race (Photo Credit: Tegbir Kaur (11)).

FUSD proposes secondary math pathway changes

On October 28th, Fremont Unified School District proposed changes in the secondary math pathways. The proposed pathway gives students in Algebra 1 the chance to go onto the “compressed” pathway by offering two math classes, Geometry and Algebra 2/Trigonometry, in a single year. This pathway has been offered at AHS in the past, but with the proposal, it may be implemented throughout all FUSD high schools.

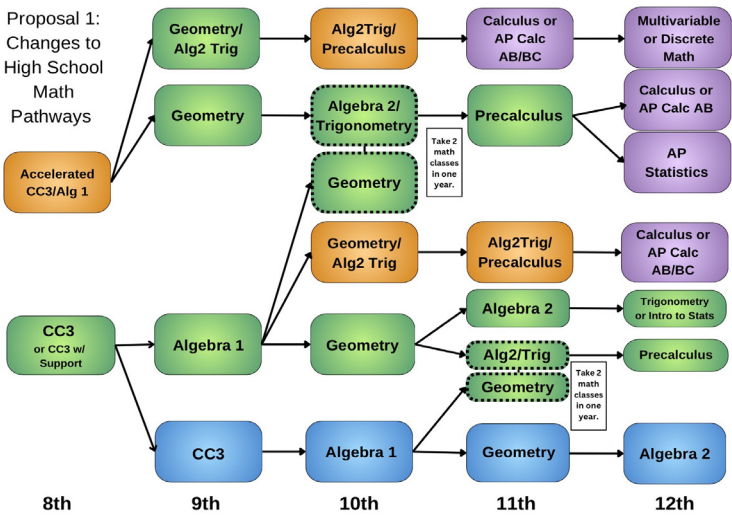
Additionally, students will have the option to take two separate math classes in 11th grade. “The proposal to offer this option to students in 11th grade is a new idea since it has never been offered to these students in the past,” said Christine Tu, FUSD’s Math and Science Program manager. “The idea of including [these options] in the district pathways would ensure that all students and families were aware of the option at their site rather than only offering it to a select group of students who asked for it,” she said.

There have been varied responses to these proposals. In terms of parental responses, Mrs. Tu said, “There are parents who embrace the new proposed pathways and some that have some questions and concerns. Access is not being taken away or limited.”

AHS Math teachers also voiced their perspec-

How the proposal can help students progress

Sampan Mehta | Staff Writer



The pathways above display FUSD’s proposal as indicated on its website: the standard path ending with Precalculus (green), the single acceleration path ending with AP Calculus AB or BC (green), and the double acceleration path ending with Multivariable or Discrete Math (orange). The proposal calls for offering two classes in one academic year, as represented in the image by classes outlined with dashed borders (Art Credit: Amrita Venkatesh (12)).

tive on the changes. Mrs. Kerr, a Statistics, IED, and Geometry teacher said, “The current acceleration pathway that combines Geometry, Algebra 2, and Precalculus in one year, that’s what I think is bad. So, anything that al-

lows them to accelerate that is not that [pathway], I am in favor of. My support is absolutely to give students a chance to get caught up on the path, but

I don’t want that support coming in a way that puts them at risk. I support the two separate classes way more than the current pathway.”

Mrs. Bhasin, a AP Calculus BC and Geometry/Alg 2/Trig teacher, said “The proposals that we have so far allow students to take two math classes in tenth grade, this was a structure we had a few years ago. I honestly feel that it is really useful [since] it gives more options for students. I have taught a group of students who were taking two math classes and they seemed to be very comfortable, [since] they were regular classes, they were not going fast, and students had a satisfaction that before they graduate, they’ll be able to take Calculus. That was a big plus for them.”

In regards to how the proposals were reached, Mrs. Tu said, “All proposals included in the presentation were based on feedback received by stakeholders and research conducted using the 2023 California Math Framework and additional reports that support opening up access for all students in secondary math pathways.”

Mrs. Tu said, “This [proposal] is being shared at the board meeting in November but will not be voted on until December. Once the board gives direction, we will know next steps and can share implementation plans at a future time.”

Fremont voters approve new FUSD infrastructure bond

- POLITICS -

The details and implications of the passing of Measure M

Ryan Liu

Staff Writer

The November 2024 election brought with it the passing of Measure M, a significant victory for FUSD. The measure, which gained significant support among the Fremont citizens, is set to provide funding for much needed structural improvements, technological improvements, and safety enhancements for district schools. With a 64% majority voting for Measure M at the time of publication, the Fremont voters voiced their support towards increased school finances.

According to FUSD, Measure M is a \$919 million bond measure which will be used to provide infrastructure funding for schools in the district. FUSD Board of Education president Yajing Zhang said, "The funding is crucial for structural improvements such as constructing replacement buildings, enhancing science labs, or even eco-friendly lighting."

The FUSD website said that the district, as one of the lowest funded districts in Alameda county according to Zhang, desperately needs this measure, even though the bond would cost voters 4.9 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

This influx of funding also presents the challenge of allocating funds among FUSD's 43 school sites. Zhang said, "There are a number of criteria that the Board uses to determine the amount of money allocated to each school. For example, the Facility Condition Index (FCI) and student enrollment numbers play a role in the amount of funding received by certain schools."

The passage of Measure M could also improve classroom environments and enhance technology, potentially contributing to increased quality of education and anticipated higher



FUSD is one of the lowest funded districts in Alameda County. With Measure M funds, students can expect to see improved education systems and restored buildings (Photo Credit: Ryan Liu (10)).

satisfaction among students at American. "We have been using the same old equipment for years now, from rusty dumbbells to ridiculously slow chromebooks," Rishventh Ramoshan (10) said. "I can't wait to see how the upgrades will change our high school experience." Despite the benefits of better learning spaces, however, the bulk of student growth still lies within their own efforts. "I believe that the new renovations with the Measure M funds will improve student experiences in the classrooms and create better learning environments," Sohumi Kshirsagar (10) said. "However, an upgraded classroom might not directly correlate to learning more, as ultimately the depth of understanding depends on the student and teacher."

This excitement among students ultimately reflects the broader potential of this measure to transform not only individual experiences, but also the entire district. As Superintendent Erik Burmeister said on the FUSD website, "This measure would help provide our local schools a chance to catch up to where other districts are now, and help maintain the district's excellence and status as a destination for families."

The Fremont Run 4 Education brings the community together (cont'd)

Education Foundation, they may also want to support some of the ballot measures that support public education. That face-to-face communication is always good when trying to pass measures."

"I think being here has a lot of impact, because it shows support for our students, teachers, and for our schools," said Fremont Mayor-elect Raj Salwan. "[The races also] get people running, walking, socializing, and meeting like-minded folks that really value the community."

Rinu Nair, who ran for FUSD School Board Trustee Area 4, also had



The many expo booths at the event spread awareness about a variety of issues.

"The groups here today boost everything from focusing on mental health to focusing on music and arts, and are also a chance to meet some of the candidates who are representing the community," said Mayor Lily Mei (Photo Credit: Tegbir Kaur (11)).

a booth set up. "As someone who is running for a trustee position, we have to work to ensure that these kinds of events are being supported, that our youth are supported," she said. "We are mostly having conversations with people here and giving kids books, erasers, and markers. We are also distributing our flyers and other material here too."

"Being here allows me a chance to talk to Fremont families and to hear from the students and the community members directly," said Fremont's sitting mayor, Lily Mei. "Sometimes when we have our council meetings, we cannot answer things that are not agendaized, but when we are out in the public, it gives us a chance to be accessible to our residents and vice versa, which I think is really critical. We are part of the community, so it gives me the chance to hear from my peers."

American's take on the 2024 Presidential Election

Students and staff weigh in on key issues and share their reactions to the 2024 election results

Saanvi Deshini, Shiv Gurjar, Aditya Padinjarel

Staff Writers

AHS students prioritized 3 key issues:

1) Character

"Of the two, Kamala Harris seems like a more fair and rational candidate" - Khaashwini Saravanan (10).

2) Economic policy

"I don't agree with Trump's tariff taxes... he will make everything a lot more expensive" - Ryan Garry (12).

3) Foreign policy

"Both are not great, however, Trump is more effective in foreign affairs" - Suraj Rajesh Kumar (11).

Informal survey of 40 students' choice for president

Donald Trump
37.5%
15 students

Kamala Harris
62.5%
25 students

Editor's note: This poll was conducted informally among 40 students and is not a scientific study or representative of the general population.

Of 40 AHS students surveyed, 37.5% of surveyed students supported Trump, while 62.5% supported Harris. Among Harris supporters (25 students), the most important factors in their decision were character (52%), economic policy (16%), and foreign policy (8%). For Trump supporters (15 students), the most significant issues were foreign policy and character, with 40% of students prioritizing each, followed by economic policy at 20%. Generally, 17.5% based their choice on economic policy, 20% on foreign policy, and 52.5% on each candidate's character and capabilities.

Staff and student reactions to election outcome:

"I was hoping for a Kamala victory, but instead Trump won big. He won every swing state, he won the popular vote. He won by a massive sweep. So a little disappointing, but it is what it is" - Aryan Bhagia (12).

"I think one of the biggest things that the news talks about is the language that was used. It seemed like Trump really spoke to the individual, and spoke about issues that mattered to the American people. I think that definitely hindered the whole process. It seemed like a majority of the time was focused on saving democracy or Trump winning. It wasn't really what we can do to make America better. And I think that really hindered support for Kamala" - AP World and US History teacher Mr. McCluskey.

"I am a racial minority, but I don't see myself personally being affected too much by [the outcome]. I would be concerned about things that I've always been concerned about, such as the climate change and the housing crisis" - Bill Wang (12).

"The United States already has energy dominance. [Trump's] just using rhetoric to hide the fact that he is going to pass policies that will benefit the wealthy and corporate interests. It has nothing to do with making energy more accessible to people. It has to do with increasing profits" - English 9 and 10H teacher Mr. Howard.

“Do You Really Think Our Democracy Will Last Forever?” event with the League of Women Voters

- POLITICS -

Speaker at the event and AHS students comment on the state of modern democracy

Saanvi Deshini | Staff Writer

The League of Women Voters held an event at Niles Discovery Church on Saturday, November 2nd, discussing the future of American democracy. With the guidance of Erwin Chermerinsky’s recently published book, *No Democracy Lasts Forever*, members of the league and AHS students shared their fears about the state of modern democracy.

Chermerinsky, a Constitutional scholar and author, writes of his grievances with the electoral college, filibustering in the Senate, and partisan gerrymandering. He believes the electoral college is not representative of the popular vote, that filibustering poses an unconstitutional threat to democratic lawmaking, and that partisan gerrymandering unfairly designates districts for Democratic or Republican favorability. He attributes many of these, and other, criticisms of democracy to a larger divisiveness he notices in the current political landscape.

The event shared an interview with Chermerinsky and opened a Q&A for attendees to discuss

their thoughts on his beliefs and to address Americans’ fears in the week preceding election day. Pauline Weaver, a member of the League of Women Voters for over forty-five years and a recognized Alameda County Woman of Achievement, was the primary speaker of the event.

Weaver said, “This country is more divided now than we have ever been in our history, and we don’t listen to each other. Congress is at a standstill. Nothing is being done, and I find that very frustrating. I can

remember the days of Tip O’Neill in the Senate, and he’d reach across the aisle to the Republicans, and they would come together and reach something in the middle, where nobody was really happy, but everybody got something, and we don’t do that anymore. Congress is at a standstill. I don’t think our representatives and our senators are doing the job that we sent them to Washington to do. I think that’s what worries me—that we are so set in our ways that we don’t compromise.”

Students shared similar sentiments regarding heightened political tensions, highlighting specific issues they have observed in the media.

Editor of the AHS branch of the *Municipal Journal*, Yashwanth Venkata Sunkesula (12) said, “We definitely need a reboot. Democracy has become synonymous with the word ‘fight,’ and defending it has shifted from defending the solutions and propositions people stand for to canceling specific politicians, which is wrong, whatever the reason. We also need more common sense. No matter what side you stand on, radical decisions help no one. There are no winners here.”

Shari Vaidya (10), founder of *Shari Explains Law*, a blog dedicated to making law and politics more digestible, said, “I feel like democracy currently is on a decline because we are in an era of late-stage capitalism where people can’t afford to live anymore, while the rich get ultra-wealthy. The rise of radical groups on both the left and the right have made political tensions extremely high. Things like lobbying and money and political tensions have such a devastating effect on democracy, and ultimately I believe it will be the death of it.”



“Do You Really Think Our Democracy Will Last Forever?” event held at the Niles Discovery Church (Photo Credit: Saanvi Deshini (10)).

Alameda County recalls DA Pamela Price

- POLITICS -

Alameda County residents overwhelmingly vote in favor
of the recall

Sampan Mehta | Staff Writer

Alameda County District Attorney Pamela Price has been overwhelmingly recalled by voters, marking the first time in Alameda County’s history that a district attorney has been recalled. According to the official Alameda County election results at the time of publication, about 63 percent of people voted to recall Price.

Several family members of victims of violent crime have voiced their support for the recall. In an interview with KQED, Erika Galavis, the aunt of two Berkeley teenage brothers killed at a house party in North Oakland in 2022, said “I want her to leave the office so we can get a little bit more justice for the victims. Right now, she’s not doing her job as a DA. Right now, she’s letting a lot of criminals go.” According to KQED, “Price neglected to press charges against two of the suspects in the case.”

In addition to Galavis, several other victims of crime have been impacted by Price’s crime policies, which critics argue are too lenient. Despite Price’s efforts to emphasize justice and equity through her policies, many voters have expressed dissatisfaction with their progressive nature.

According to a report from KTVU, every police union in Alameda County went on the record to support the recall efforts. As reported by *The San Francisco Chronicle*, the Alameda County Police Unions said in a joint statement, “Unfortunately, as peace officers who work in

Alameda County, we have seen the revolving door of our justice system—justified in the name of ‘reform.’ We see the same people, committing the same crimes, getting arrested repeatedly only to be released back into our communities to victimize more of our citizens. We cannot use reform rhetoric to allow criminals to continue victimizing our citizens with little to no consequences.”

Several people have voiced against the recall. An article by *The Independent*, a tri-valley based news organization, said, “[Price] is a believer in restitution, rehabilitation and alternatives to incarceration in mental health courts. . . Perhaps, not every single decision turns out to be appropriate. . . but that doesn’t justify a recall.”

Teachers have also explained their views on the recall. Mr. Arora, a Government and Economics teacher, said, “The Board of Supervisors will appoint her successor [who will] serve out the rest of [Price’s] term. When she was elected in 2022, there was a different political mood in the air, and now we are seeing a reversal in that. We have generally seen a removal of incumbents in this election, so we have seen dissatisfaction with our current leaders.”

When addressing the opposition to the recall, Mr. Arora said, “I am aware that the Pamela Price campaign views this as undemocratic, I actually think it is the opposite. I think this is the most democratic thing we can do. People have the right to recall elected officials. The people gathering signatures got the certain amount they needed, and it went on the ballot and people voted affirmatively to remove her.”



Political signage from SAFE calling for voters to vote “Yes” on the Pamela Price recall (Photo Credit: Sampan Mehta (12)).

Fremont’s veil on property crime

A rise in crime creates frustration for its residents

Shiv Gurjar | Staff Writer

Fremont is facing a significant rise in crime, with burglaries, vandalism, assaults, and theft becoming major concerns for residents and business owners.

Mayor Lily Mei, who campaigned on a promise to improve the safety of the city, said in an interview with *Sri Sree Iyer*, “When we’re going through a period of challenges for economics, you see a rise in general crime.” She applauded police officers and their efforts, lauding Fremont’s ranking as the “largest safe city in California for many years”; although, no organization has backed this claim.

According to police records, in 2023, Fremont’s aggregated crimes totaled 10,485—an increase of over 52% compared to the 6,897 incidents reported in 2022. Notably, 82% of those were crimes against property—burglary/breaking & entering, robbery, arson, fraud, etc. Comparing Fremont to cities of a similar population, Irvine—a city with a slightly larger population of 314,621—recorded 10,102 offenses; Chula Vista reported 9,137 crimes.

Lieutenant Veronica Rodrigues of the Fremont Police Department explained that staffing shortages significantly impact the department’s ability to address rising crime effectively. “Staffing is one of the biggest inhibiting factors for us,” she said. Due to “the profession being villainized, there’s been a reluctance for people to want to be a police officer. . . [so] the productivity kind of tends to go down.”

This staffing challenge has cascaded onto the community, leaving residents and business owners feeling the strain of slower response times and a diminished police presence.

For business owners, this impact is personal. “[Just] last Saturday people tried to steal our gas,” said Kevin Gose, the manager at Cresco Equipment Rentals in Fremont. “I did a [crime] report on Saturday. It took them 3 hours for them to get here. Even if you call the police, they’re not going to come here right away, so you’re on your own.”

Another store owner voiced similar struggles. AJ Martell, the manager at VIP PetCare, said, “people stole a bunch of stuff from our tents.” He added that the situation has been worsened by “crazy people walking around breaking stuff.” These incidents have led to costly repairs. “Having to replace big glass windows like that is not cheap at all,” he said.

While police are eager to respond to crime, they are constrained by legislative hurdles.

“The biggest challenge is Prop 47—it downgraded many crimes, including theft and drug possession, from felonies to misdemeanors. This means repeat offenders often just get a ticket and are back on the street, which makes it harder for us,” said Rodrigues. However, the recent election has brought hope, as voters approved Prop 36, a measure to reverse some aspects of Prop 47 and restore stronger penalties for certain offenses.

As Fremont enters a new phase of leadership—both mayoral and presidential—there’s growing pressure for actionable solutions.

Trump’s been elected; it’s not good for education

An analysis on what impact Trump’s proposed policies will have for education
Lance Wang
Staff Writer

With the election now over, Donald Trump has now been given a say in the future of education for K-12 and college students nationwide. President-elect Trump’s Agenda 47 lays out a general overview of what students should be expecting from his policies. Of the policies that directly affect students, he focuses on changing what students are taught and how schools and students are funded. Although there are issues plaguing education such as staff shortages, lack of funding, and declining student performance, Trump’s policies not only fail to address these problems, but actively threaten to worsen them. His proposals, including closing the Department of Education and restricting the scope of classroom content, prioritize his political agenda over the well-being of students and the quality of their education.

Trump’s Agenda 47 proposes removing the Department of Education, stating on his website that, “We are going to close the Department of Education in Washington, D.C. and send it back to the states, where it belongs, and let the states run our educational system as it should be run. Our great teachers, who are so important to the future well being of our country, will be cherished and protected by the Republican Party so that they can do the job of educating our students that they so dearly want to do.”

A side effect of the removal of the Department of Education may be the decline of federal grants. According to the Office of Federal Student Aid (which is an office of the Department of Education), “1,400 employees help make college education possible for every dedicated mind by providing more than \$114 billion in federal grants, work-study funds, and loans each year to more than 9.7 million students paying for college or career school.” The potential removal of government aid, unless replaced at the state level, is a heavy blow to students planning to

apply to college or career schools. Best case scenario, these financial grants get pushed onto other departments in order to keep allowing students to afford education. Worst case scenario, millions of students are required to take out private student loans to fund their college education. Another one of Trump’s core promises is to “cut federal funding for any school pushing critical race theory, radical gender ideology, and other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content on our children.”

Trump’s proposal to cut funding could significantly shape what students are and aren’t allowed to learn in the classroom, as the broad description used in the policy includes a wide variety of topics. This limits the depth and diversity of our education, making it harder for students at AHS to engage with topics that encourage critical thinking about social issues, history, and identity. A wider range of topics taught allows students to build up a healthy and unbiased opinion of the political stage.

Agenda 47 isn’t centered on helping students. Since K-12 students are not eligible voters, they lack influence over the election’s outcomes. Rather than wasting resources appealing to students, politicians prioritize targeting parents, who hold the power to vote. In fact, one of Agenda 47’s goals is to “Restore parental rights in education.” By shifting control of education onto parents, parents can be reassured that what is taught at schools aligns with their personal beliefs and values if the policy goes through.

Our current political scene sacrifices education for short-term political gain. Instead of addressing issues that schools face, policies are designed to align with political goals that only benefit certain groups of people. According to the Northwest Evaluation Association, the gap in pre and post-COVID test scores widened by 36% in reading and 18% in math. As schools recoil from the pandemic, the need for something to change the school system for the better is as urgent as ever. Policies need to focus on creating a system that places students first—something that cannot be achieved while education remains a pawn in a political game.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE ISSUES PLAGUING EDUCATION... TRUMP’S POLICIES NOT ONLY FAIL TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS, BUT ACTIVELY THREATEN TO WORSEN THEM

Alameda County residents do not, in fact, make their voices heard in the 2024 election

- HUMOR -
I honestly can’t tell why any real person wouldn’t vote in this election. That’s why this is a humor article

Aruna Harpalani
Staff Writer

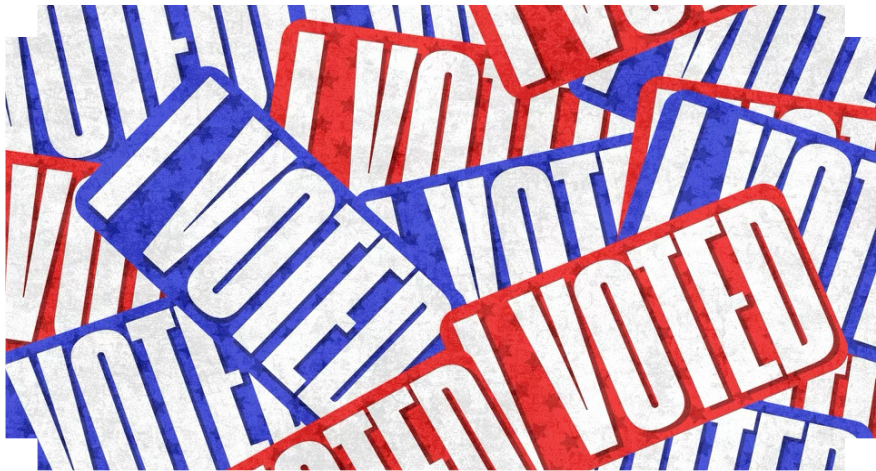
71.02% of eligible voters in Alameda County voted in the 2024 election at the time of publication, per the county election website. These responsible citizens and the natural high they get from making the most baffling decisions known to man every two years are covered enough in the news as is. 28.98% of the Alameda County electorate kept their butts in their couches and ballots in their recycling bins, which is arguably the strangest choice to make in any election.

These are often people like non-voter Doo Mer, who was found weeping at the electoral college map. “Voting will not fix the corrupt nature of government or the self-sabotaging, cruel state of humanity,” he said between sobs. “We have to choose between two flawed, corrupt candidates in a broken two-party system. Despair is the only appropriate response.” Upon being

studying for the final exam I have in half an hour. Don’t judge me. I know you’ll turn in this article minutes before the 10:00 P.M. deadline on your high school journalism course’s Google Classroom.” For the record, California sends mail-in ballots to every registered voter about a month before the election, according to Vote411. (I also had a month to get this article done.)

At the local community hub known as the American High School Pickup Loop, Unna Ware was found in their Toyota trying and failing to cut in the line of cars on the edges of the parking lot. “There...was an election? I’m too busy partaking in classic Fremont pastimes like constantly refreshing my kid’s Aeries portal. That ballot went straight into the recycling, along with my daughter’s math test, which she got an 89% on.”

Local old person Elle Derly isn’t having any of it. “Back when I was eighteen years old, I had to walk



“Now that anyone can do their research and take their time to vote from the comfort of their own home or nursing home,” said local old person Elle Derly, “there’s really no excuse” (Art Credit: Kingston Lo).

told that the ballot is not just one question—which Mer should have inferred since there are multiple pages enclosed in that vote-by-mail envelope—Mer responded, “Wait, that’s fascinating. I didn’t hear about this stuff on Twitter.” Mer will soon realize that the names printed on yard signs littered across cities in the most random places and the omnipresent YouTube ads pleading voters to “Vote Yes on Proposition Thirty-Whatever!” are actually relevant to his life.

College student Professional Procrastinator, found at a coffee shop, had to be gently woken up from her pillow made of stacks of lecture notes. “Didn’t do my research in time,” she said. “I realized that I should probably look into voting at 7:59 P.M., but apparently the polls close at 8:00, so that ship sailed. I really do work best under pressure, as you can tell by how diligently I’m

uphill BOTH WAYS to the polls. I endured deadly snow storms. I braved hail and annoying political conversations in those hundred-mile long lines just to perform my patriotic duty. The youngins have no idea how easy they get it. They can get their ‘I Voted’ stickers mailed to them, no physical labor involved. Can you imagine that?”

The car was invented over a century ago, it doesn’t snow in Alameda County, and Derly is a very questionable source; however, her point stands. Universal mail-in voting, online resources, and that having to walk uphill both ways is physically impossible—which, according to Derly, is a newer development—should enable even the laziest populations to vote. Maybe some people need to be more engaged citizens, or maybe the government should make it downhill both ways next time. Who knows?

How performative politics failed

Gen-Z voters crave substance, not just social media stunts

Shiv Gurjar
Staff Writer

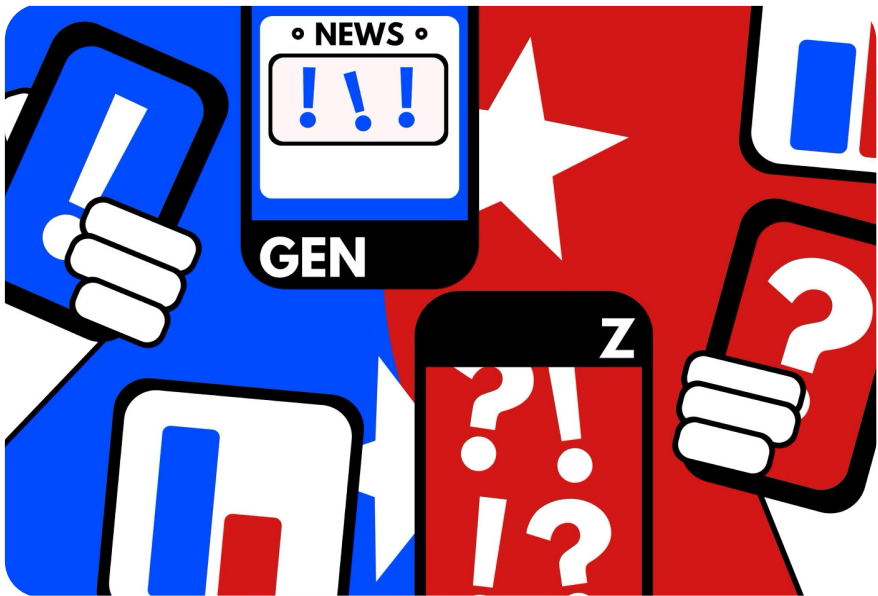
In 2024, Kamala Harris led the first Gen-Z campaign. Tim Walz acted as a football coach, Harris danced up a storm, her legion of fans and supporters created viral edits and videos, and an array of endorsements from popular figures came in. It was a campaign designed to resonate with the youngest eligible voters, a generation born with the internet.

However, she ended up losing the election significantly.

According to Tufts University, Har-

justices are domestic terrorists.”

This phenomenon of oversimplification to incite voter outrage was repeated several times. In another instance, Harris commented about Donald Trump sending COVID-19 testing kits to Vladimir Putin, saying, “You remember people by the hundreds were dying...and this man is giving Covid test kits to Putin.” While this comment ignited outrage online, one thought that stays devoid of this conversation is foreign rela-



This election, the two presidential candidates employed diverging strategies to appeal to Gen-Z voters, who supported Vice President Harris at a slightly greater rate than President-elect Trump (Art Credit: Kingston Lo (12)).

ris gained 52% of the Gen-Z vote, a far cry from the Democratic Party’s 2020 coverage of 65%. Despite attempting to harness positive energy, their great vibes struggled to connect to voters. The Pew Research Center shows that Gen-Z voters prioritize substantive issues—abortion rights, economic stability, and immigration reform.

Instead of unpacking policy nuances or addressing geopolitical affairs, the Harris Campaign relied on bite-sized content that often distorted reality. This created two major faults: the oversimplification of complex ideas and an increase in emotional decision-making.

This is exemplified by Harris’s appearance on a podcast with Howard Stern, when she discussed the Trump vs. United States Supreme Court case. Their conversation was converted into a 60-second TikTok clip, where Harris said, “The former president is immune to anything you do in office.” This analysis of the president’s official immunity is a major oversimplification of the case and the court’s decision; yet since it was presented in this way with no prior context, Harris and Stern’s portrayal demonizes the Supreme Court, demonstrating how social media often trades nuance for easily digestible outrage.

One of the top comments left on the TikTok read, “Supreme Court

tions: during the pandemic, medical supplies were scarce, so in exchange for a batch of ventilators, the U.S., just like many other countries, sent testing kits to Russia. Beyond the pandemic, this exchange might help with the Biden Administration’s attempts to reduce tensions and end the Ukraine-Russia War.

Without including these facts, it is easy to point blame on Trump and the actions of his administration, reacting with one’s emotions rather than reality.

On the other hand, Trump employed a contradictory approach, yet it received significantly more attention. The day before Election Day, he appeared on Joe Rogan’s podcast for roughly three hours—Harris’s longest interview was around an hour. Viewed over 50 million times, the interview showcased Trump as an accessible candidate, even if riddled with misinformation and incoherence. Trump’s appearance gave voters the perception of authenticity, presenting himself as willing to reveal his true self in a way that seemed more genuine, in stark comparison to Harris’s soundbites.

Harris’s campaign misjudged what Gen-Z really wants: not just outrage-driven messages, but leaders who are able to take risks and be vulnerable.

The “best” gifts for the holiday season

- HUMOR -

Quirky gift ideas that will have your friends wondering how they ever lived without them!

Lance Wang
Staff Writer

The holiday season is back, and with great Christmas spirit comes the obligatory need to get friends gifts that they didn’t want or need. This year, how about you get them gifts that they didn’t know they needed. With these gifts, make yourself the expert in any gift giving event this holiday season.

Number one, freeze dried ice. The holiday season means the mass consumption of hot drinks like cocoa, and the risk of scalded tongues and burnt lips run as high as ever. Consider buying freeze dried ice for your favorite yap-per to protect their talking talent and spare them a scalded tongue. Freeze dried ice uses cutting-edge technology in which water is dried, then frozen into cubes. With a 0.0% moisture con-

tent, not only is freeze dried ice portable and lightweight, but easy to use. Simply drop a few cubes into any drink, add some water and watch the cooling commence!

#2 is the number zero pencil. You’ve heard of the #2 pencils, the gold standard of writing tools. Perfect for the friend who insists on borrowing your eraser every five minutes, it’s ideal for those who want to write without the pressure of messing up. Tailor-made for note-taking when dealing with the indecisive. No smudges, no mistakes and absolutely no visible marks. Satisfied customer, Messi Riting (11), claims, “Ever since I got a #0 pencil, my writing has never been clearer.”

Flying in number 3 is the McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle fighter jet. Looking to outdo everyone around you this year? Forget those useless gift cards or ugly sweaters, try giving the gift of air superiority! Boasting an impressive one thousand six hundred and fifty miles per hour, this gift

ensures your friend that lives a quarter mile away from AHS might show up on time for once. Sure, it’s a bit of an investment, but can you really put a price on aerial dominance? Warning: Some assembly required, and you might want to alert the neighbors.

Ever wish that words weren’t as hard as they are? With item number four, the Vocabulator, any and all diction-dictated distress can be directly dispelled! It’s like a calculator, but for words. With a complex database spanning thousands of words, almost any words that are entered will return an in-depth definition. According to Diction Aerie (10), “Every week, my friends would complain about having a weekly vocabulary quiz. You would think that after a few weeks, they would start studying. After getting them a Vocabulator, they still haven’t

stopped complaining, but at least they’ve started to study.” If expanding vocabulary sounds a bit too studious, our next item takes a much more calming approach to academic life.

When everyone’s locked in with a test that could mean making or breaking their GPA, nothing’s louder than a water bottle falling onto the floor. If you know someone who can’t seem to walk straight even if their life depended on it, try getting them a water bottle airbag to spare them the shame of causing an unscheduled drum solo during class. Perfect for those who can’t be trusted to keep their bottles upright.

If you feel like none of these gifts solve your present-delivering dilemma, consider just giving up. Maybe what’s needed isn’t a perfect gift, but a different view on the holiday season entirely. The attitude where Christmas is a time to impress people with flashy presents and elaborate purchases adds unnecessary pressure on a stressful time of the year. Knowing that someone cared enough to get something for you should be a great gift in itself.

FLYING IN AT NUMBER
3 IS THE MCDONNELL
DOUGLAS F-15 FIGHTER
JET. LOOKING TO OUTDO
EVERYONE AROUND YOU
THIS YEAR? FORGET
THOSE USELESS GIFT
CARDS OR UGLY SWEAT-
ERS, GIVE THE GIFT OF
AIR SUPERIORITY!



Q: Favorite fall Pie?
A: I don't really have one.
I guess butterscotch?
(Isabelle Lichten)
A: Probably pecan
or apple
(Divya Murali (11))

Q: Fav fall drink?
A: I really like cold drinks
like ice coffee & boba
(Lillian Garcia (10))

What are you thankful for?
"My parents,
coming here from
another country to
give me a good place
to live with plenty of
opportunities"
-Matthew Luoh

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING?
We get a
really special
dinner, either
duck or chicken"
- LARA
REYES-TERRY
(10)

"My extended
family comes
together for
dinner"
- ARYAN
BHAGIA
(12)

Q: Favorite food?
A: I like
my jeans
and keep
It's 100%
(10)



The trailblazers of American Cross-Country

A season summary of the 2024 cross-country team and its accomplishments

Kaya Misra
Staff Writer

This year, American’s cross-country (XC) team had immense personal and team growth. Their stand-out performance was the Mt. Sac Invitational: the biggest high school XC meet in California, with over 12,000 runners in 100 races. American secured first place as a team in the Men’s and Women’s D1 3 Mile Sophomore races. This meet, a testament to the team’s drive and talent, is one of their many successes in the 2024 season.

The team’s performance at Mt. Sac showcased both the team’s present skill and the promise of the younger runners. “Mt. Sac was such a great experience. It was really nice to have an opportunity to do such a famous course,” said



Participants in the 3 Miles D1 Varsity race boys posing after a race at Mt. Sac L-R: Konnor Tan (11), Aneek Mandal (11), Abhivadya Soi (11), Gabriel Wang (11), Benson Tang (11) (Photo Credit: Aneek Mandal (11)).

Brianna Su (10), who placed fifth in the 3 Mile D1 Sophomore Women’s race out of 102 runners with a time of 21 minutes 33 seconds.

Underclassmen like Su have especially stood out. “We have improved significantly this year, especially the sophomores and freshmen. They’re a huge part of our varsity team,” said Abhi Soi (11). “We can continue this streak of success by continuing to put in the work—coming to practice every day, conditioning over the summer, and not bailing. We have to stay consistent.”

The coaches used fresh perspectives and their positive mindsets to

encourage the team. “We wanted to build an environment where runners would want to come back every day and push their limits,” said Coach Javier. “We had many athletes get multiple personal records throughout the season.”

Especially key to the team’s success were the new training strategies implemented, which the assistant coaches picked up from their time in college. “Students who started conditioning from the first week already had ten weeks of preparation before official practices began. By then, they were running 30 miles a week,” said Coach Javier.

Training also included practices in Coyote Hills in preparation for courses with challenging terrain, which was particularly beneficial at Mt. Sac. “Mt. Sac was the most difficult for me because it was very hilly, but I knew I could do it so I kept going,” said Su.

In an intense sport like cross-country, the coaches emphasized a focus on mentality this season. “My brother and I always say cross-country is a mental sport, so we always encourage our runners to fight off negative thoughts. We tell them that they should just try their best so they can focus on that sense of accomplishment,” said Coach Javier.

Their philosophy helped the team not only excel at Mt. Sac, but at other key meets including the Farmer’s Invitational, where the boys’ frosh team earned a second-place plaque in the 3 Miles Frosh/Soph race. AHS XC also succeeded in league meets—placing in the top three of eight teams each meet. At the MVAL Finals, Gabriel Wang and Benson Tang, two first-time junior runners came first and second respectively in the JV boys’ 2 mile race with personal records of 11 minutes 33 seconds and 11 minutes 35 seconds.

For many runners, this season was a journey of personal growth and improvement. “My proudest performance was the opener. It showed me that I improved a lot and got a better time than any race last year,” said Carlos Enrique Arroyo (12).

Like Arroyo, Su felt pride in her improvement from previous years. “It was very surreal to place first in the MVAL opener. Last year, I took the lead for the first half of the race but ended up getting third place. This year has shown me how much I’ve grown.”



Brianna Su running in the Mt. Sac 3 Miles D1 sophomore girls’ race. Su came in 5th place with a time of 21:33

Unique leadership brings boys cross-country team historically-successful season

Shortly after the team’s record-breaking season, Aneek Mandal (11), Coach Javier, and Konnor Tan (11), XC co-captain, discuss Mandal’s leadership as a team co-captain
Caleb Trunch | Staff Writer

Aneek Mandal, boys XC co-captain

Coach Javier

Q: How have you seen other members on the team advance their teammates and help them [become] better?

AM: As one of the team captains, I see this a lot. People of similar speeds [don’t] just talk to each other, but end up pacing themselves so that they push themselves to get faster during races. So they [develop] these small rivalries and they will keep pushing themselves to get faster.

Q: Beyond success in races, how do you define success as a member of the team?

AM: As a whole, I think a strong team starts with how you communicate with the team and how we all interact with each other. How, for example, we all feel like one big family because we all hang out after school and we talk—and that stuff is very important.

Q: As a team captain, how have you seen Aneek encourage those around him?

CJ: Aneek is really resourceful. He knows so much about running. He is always helping explain things to the freshmen. For example, what kind of shoes to wear or helping freshmen with their form. So he’s been really resourceful. I really appreciate how he is always open to explaining things to any newcomers in general, and especially [for] long distance, the techniques and proper form that one should have.

Q: What made you join the cross-country team?

AM: I joined the cross-country team my freshman year because in eighth grade I really liked running. That was the one sport that was bearable to me. So I was like ‘I’ll try out for the cross-country team.’ I practiced over the summer, I tried out, and I barely made it.

Q: What has your favorite moment on the team been, this year?

AM: MVAL Finals, because this season has not been the best for me, but I managed to get a two-minute PR in the three-mile [race] in my last MVAL race of the year.

Konnor Tan, XC co-captain

Q: What do you think the most impressive thing you’ve seen him do related to cross country has been?

KT: I’d say the way he bounces back from injuries because he’s like the most injury prone person on the team, and that kind of puts him out for a good few weeks. And then he just puts work into recovering from his injuries and then he gets even faster after them.

Q: What would you say separates him from other runners on the team?

CJ: He really likes running long distance. He likes running half marathons and [in] cross country, we focus mainly on two-mile races and three-mile races. To have an athlete like him who actually really enjoys running the longer distances is really nice to see because he brings a different side of long-distance running that cross country doesn’t tend to focus on.



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The course of love never did run smooth

AHSPA brings Shakespeare’s wildest rom-com, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, to the stage

Carolyn Baskar John
Staff Writer

AHSPA’s fall production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream opened on November 7th to a full house, bringing this timeless Shakespearean play to life with humor and fairy magic. Set outside of ancient Athens in an enchanted forest, the tale explores themes of love and the complexities of relationships—where meddling fairies ensure that nothing goes quite as planned.

The story follows four young lovers—Helena (Elisabeth Szeto [12]), Demetrius (Hakim Radhanpurwala [11]), Hermia (Vanessa Hinh [12]), and Lysander (Ayaan Arif [10])—who find themselves lost in the woods. Tangled in a complex web of miscommunication and conflicting affections, their plight becomes even more contorted as Oberon (Chase Hsu [12]), the King of the Fairies, and his mischievous servant Puck (Divya Eashwer [11]), intervene. Using a magical flower that causes its victim to fall in love with the first thing they see, the fairies create pure hysteria. The messy love triangle that ensues brought many gasps around the theater as the lovers stumbled through the forest, oblivious to the fairies’ mishaps.

Meanwhile, a group of Athenian craftsmen attempts to put on a play for Theseus (Arunav Sharma [10]), the Duke, and Hippolyta (Zyanya Ortiz [11]), the Queen of the Amazons, hoping to entertain them at their wedding. Yet, the oddest among them, Nick Bottom (James Chen [11]), unexpectedly gets swept into the fairy world, where he captures the heart of the fairy queen,

Titania (Tanvi Bhide [12]), under bizarre circumstances. Don’t fret; by morning, love triumphs.

AHSPA’s performance was mesmerizing. The set, with its overgrown vines and dense forest backdrop, captured woodland’s magic through soft lights and lush greenery. The sound design, every subtle sound effect, especially those tied to the fairies’ magic, enhanced the immersive experience. Together, these elements created a bewitching, dream-like realm that perfectly complemented the tantalizing story and the careful-



Cast members (Ismail Patel [12], Madyson Tran [12], Orna Paul [11], Rizelle Ochoa [12], and Arushi Naidu [11]) rehearse a scene from A Midsummer Night’s Dream, set in the lush, whimsical forest outside Athens. Their blend of classical costumes and naturalistic backdrop captures the timeless charm of Shakespeare’s tale (Photo Credit: Christine Szeto).

ly-selected crafts of the cast. The fairies stood out the most, with their glow-in-the-dark outfits that emphasized their ethereal presence. Their glittering wings—Hsu’s rising dramatically with his booming voice, adding intensity and power to his character, while Bhide’s moved gracefully to reflect her serene demeanor—seemed almost alive. The deliberate, flowing, waltz-like movements added a magical quality to their scenes, making them captivating to watch.

Though deciphering Shakespeare’s language was a challenge, the actors’ expressive delivery and clear gestures made it approachable. Physical comedy, like exaggerated reactions and perfectly-timed falls, added hilarity and conveyed the play’s chaotic tone. These moments of farce had the audience in stitches.

Each actor brought their own charm to these familiar roles. Hsu portrayed Oberon with a commanding presence, delivering his lines with grand authority. In contrast, Chen brought humor and energy to the role of Bottom, drawing many laughs with a playful interpretation of the character.

This rendition of A Midsummer Night’s Dream impressed with its seamless blend of immersive design and dynamic performances. The show thrived on the energy of the cast’s on-set chemistry and the amount of effort put into all the technical sections. The play’s layers of magic, chance, and erratic romances cast a spell over the audience, leaving them captivated long after the final bow.

Seniors balance college applications, schoolwork, and extracurriculars

Seniors try to manage their existing responsibilities along with college applications and their upcoming deadlines

Sanika Yadav | Staff Writer

As the first semester continues, seniors find it increasingly difficult to manage their college applications alongside schoolwork and other extracurriculars as they aim to meet major application deadlines.

As stated on the Best Colleges website, early decision and early action deadlines were in October and November while regular decision applications are due later in January 2025. The application filing period for University of California (UC) applicants began on October 1st and ended on December 2nd, as stated on the UC website.

These deadlines essentially span over the entirety of the first semester, meaning that students can have multiple college applications due every month.

A senior, Elisa Varghese, who is applying to 19 colleges, said that she had deadlines “on October 15 for UT Austin, five early action deadlines for a couple out-of-state universities on November 1st, and then [a] final deadline [on] December 2nd for UCs and CSUs.”

Tanvi Bhide (12), in addition to having similar deadlines for November and December, also has a few more private university applications due in January which she still wants to get done before December.

As Varghese manages her college applications with schoolwork and extracurriculars, she also said, “There are pockets of time where I have felt really overwhelmed. I have definitely had breakdowns in the last couple weeks regarding college applications and not being able to balance it with my schoolwork. Extracurriculars wise, I feel like I have taken it down a notch for senior year, but school work and

college applications have not been very well balanced in the last couple of weeks.”

In terms of her balance between college applications and extracurriculars, Bhide said, “My extracurriculars take up most of my time because I am part of the play. That has been a big stress factor because I am there for three hours after school every day, and I get home by 6:00 or 6:30 P.M.”

Another senior, Pradhi Waghray, said, “I try to prioritize my college applications on the weekends, so the weekdays aren’t as packed. Usually, my weekdays are super busy with schoolwork, especially because I have sports and other ex-

tracurriculars that I am a part of. That’s why weekends are very important for productivity for college applications, because I try to maximize the amount of time I spend. And if I have a long weekend, that’s a big blessing, because then I can find more time to finish my applications.”

Waghray, due to having busy weekdays and wanting to stay organized, said, “I typically write down everything I need to do in my Notes app because that’s how I have always written a to-do list for everything that I have to do for the day. And for college applications specifically, I have a Google Sheet where I have all the colleges I am applying to. Before I started my applications, I specifically sorted out how many supplements each university has and which ones are test-optional.”

Pragathi Panigatti (12), who applied to multiple UCs and CSUs, also said, “I use Notion [a managing tool] to write down my assignments, so it makes it easier.”

To manage her stress or when she feels overwhelmed, Bhide said, “I just go to sleep. Then, I wake up early the next morning, like around 4:30 or 5:00 A.M., to do the work that I didn’t do.”

Similarly, Waghray said, “I just take a nap when I feel overwhelmed because I love sleeping. When I wake up, everything seems like it’s better.”

When asked about any advice she would give to incoming seniors, Bhide said, “Start in the summer. Make a list of each college you want to go to and don’t stress over the acceptance rates. And don’t stress yourself out too much because in the end, you are going to get in somewhere, so you’re going to be fine.”



A student finds it difficult to manage all of their extracurriculars along with college applications (Art Credit: Sanika Yadav (12)).



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A month of celebration for Sikhs in America

The month of November is dedicated to Sikh awareness and filled with festivity surrounding the Gurbpurab

Tegbir Kaur | Staff Writer



Many families visit the Fremont Gurdwara Sahib on the day of the Gurbpurab, or November 15, 2024. “Every Gurbpurab, I go to the Gurdwara Sahib with my family and friends to celebrate. Going there is nice because it helps remind me of my roots and Sikh history,” said Gurnaksh Kaur (10) (Photo Credit: Reddit r/Sikh).

The month of November is dedicated as California’s Sikh Awareness Month, an effort to appreciate the Sikh community and spread awareness about the religion’s philosophies, according to California’s Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 220.

Mrs. Kaur, a Health Education and Ethnic Studies teacher and practicing Sikh, said, “In the wider context of the community and America in general there is a lot being done for Sikh Awareness Month. A lot of organizations take part in raising awareness, especially on social media, going out and doing events and talking to people, which puts us on the map.”

For Gurnaksh Kaur (10), the month makes her feel seen. “I remember a couple years ago, at Thornton Junior High, every day of November, they would share a fact about Sikhism over the announcement. It just made me happy, because people would actually pay attention and ask me questions about them,” she explained.

“I would say there is a little more awareness about Sikhism than in previous years, considering that Fremont has a Sikh population,” said Mrs. Kaur. “But I don’t think there is much awareness on who exactly we are, where we are from, what we believe in, and so there is room for misunderstanding there. There is also not much knowledge among the

student body about why we carry certain identities, to name an example, like why we keep our hair covered.”

The awareness month coincides with the Sikh celebration in mid-November of Gurbpurab, the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first of ten Sikh Guru Sahibs. The Harvard Pluralism Project website states, “Guru Nanak’s divine hymns praised the One who cannot be defined by human categories or confined to human institutions. His simple path of hard work and ebullient praise eventually became a new re-

ress through high school with the least amount of setbacks, and we do that by giving them weekly help. Basically, there are a lot of people here who speak a lot of different languages, and we try to have tutors who can speak different languages as well so they can communicate and help students.” EL tutoring is not only limited to receiving help with English itself. Rabbani said, “We’re helping students in all subject areas, but the main focus is language. If someone speaks Hindi and then the person tutoring them speaks English, even if they’re studying math, their English is also improving.”

Facilitating connections over shared language is also a focus of EL tutoring. “We try our best to make pairs language-based so

that it’s easiest for everyone to communicate to each other because that’s the whole point,” said Rabbani. Helping students is rewarding, as tutor Akshath Prakash (12) described. “I came here from a different country, and I didn’t know about this when I needed help. So I wanted to offer it. The fact that I’m helping people with the same struggles I once had is a really good feeling.” Of course, there are more concrete incentives to learning and helping others in the program. Mrs. Smith said, “Certain teachers will offer extra credit

for students who come who need help. We don’t offer extra credit for tutors, but because tutors are providing a service, they can earn service learning hours.”

There are no requirements to become a tutor. Prakash said, “If you want to be a tutor, all you need to do is just know some stuff, right? There’s not a minimum level of education or anything.”

Due to the focus on shared language in the program, multilingual students are especially welcome to help, according to Mrs. Smith. “It is certainly an advantage for our particular program if you have a language other than English that you’re fluent in. We’re always in need of Spanish speakers. But we have a wide variety of languages and a wide variety of subjects that students most enjoy tutoring in.”

On the tutees’ side, Safi recommends the tutoring service to English Learner peers. “Come here—learn from here in your own language!”

ligious tradition.”

“This time is humbling for me,” said Gurnoor Kaur (11). “It grounds me and reminds me to serve others. On the day of the Gurbpurab, I am planning to go with my family to the Fremont Gurdwara Sahib, and perform Sewa there.”

The importance of Sewa, or selfless service, is a core belief of the Sikh faith. “Sikhism teaches that Sewa is an act of service towards Waheguru [or God] and therefore must be done regularly in order to become closer to [Him],” explains BBC’s website. It describes, “Many Sikhs perform much of their Sewa by helping at the Gurdwara, including cleaning, washing dishes or serving in the langar.”

“The day that Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to this world was a revolutionary moment for us,” outlined Mrs. Kaur. “[The Gurbpurab reminds us of] the very high-standard principles that keep us living in a certain dis-

cipline, so that we can look at ourselves every day and meet our eyes with ourselves, being content with our lives,” she said. “Sikhism is a way of life for us. And while we don’t impose it on anyone, everyone is always welcome to learn about us. So maybe this Gurbpurab, people can come to the Fremont Gurdwara Sahib and see how we live our life and how we celebrate it.”

What goes into EL tutoring at AHS

Understanding the effort put into—and rewards that come from—this resource available to English Learners

Aruna Harpalani | Staff Writer

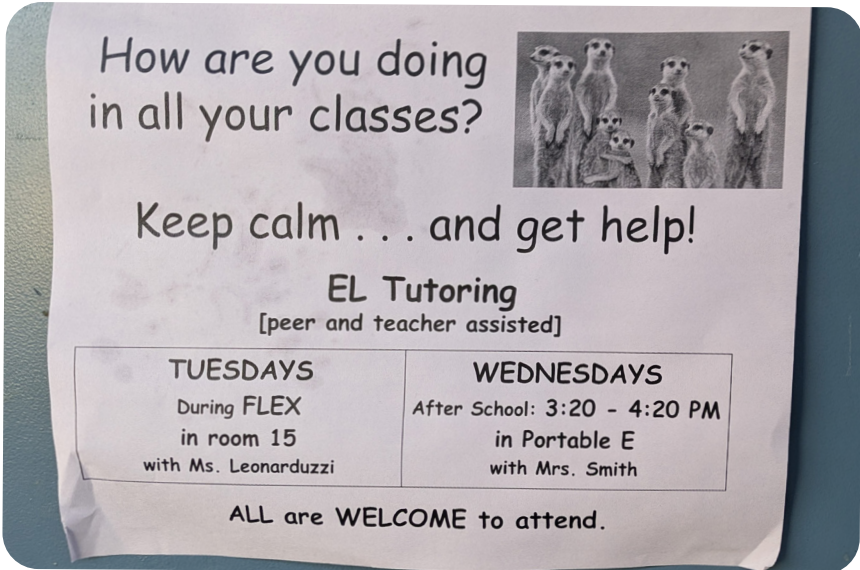
The tutoring program for English Learners at AHS was born out of student initiative. “I had a student in one of my English classes who came up to me and said that she had been an English Learner when she was in elementary school and remembered people who had helped her,” Mrs. Smith, an ELD 3 teacher said. “And she wanted to know if we could set up after school peer tutoring to give students an additional way to get help from other students.”

“The tutoring program is open to all of our designated English Learners and those who have been reclassified as fluent English proficient in the past year,” said Mrs. Smith. Safeullah Safi (12), an EL student and tutee, briefly summarized how he heard of the tutoring program. “I’ve come here for around two years. My teacher told me that I can come here, and they’re going to help you in every subject in your own language.”

Raveeha Rabbani (12) helps coordinate EL tutoring. She said, “The goal is to help English Learners progress through high school with the least amount of setbacks, and we do that by giving them weekly help. Basically, there are a lot of people here who speak a lot of different languages, and we try to have tutors who can speak different languages as well so they can communicate and help students.”

EL tutoring is not only limited to receiving help with English itself. Rabbani said, “We’re helping students in all subject areas, but the main focus is language. If someone speaks Hindi and then the person tutoring them speaks English, even if they’re studying math, their English is also improving.”

Facilitating connections over shared language is also a focus of EL tutoring. “We try our best to make pairs language-based so



A sign on Mrs. Smith’s door advertising EL tutoring. “The tutoring program is open to all of our designated English Learners and those who have been reclassified as fluent English proficient in the past year,” Mrs. Smith said (Photo Credit: Aruna Harpalani (11)).



From blank walls to bold spaces

- OPINION -

Classroom decorations and their effects on students

Kaya Misra | Staff Writer



Mr. Fornwald's English 12 class, which is decorated by student projects and includes a sitting area (Photo Credit: Kaya Misra (12)).

Thoughtfully decorated classrooms feel different. Being surrounded with fun posters, other student projects, and encouraging words play a powerful role in student learning and engagement.

"I've put up fun decorations, student work, and educational guides for students," said Mr. Iglesias, an AP World History teacher. "The fun stuff breaks the ice and makes students more comfortable—especially underclassmen. Putting up student work creates camaraderie by opening up discussions. Students also tend to like to see their own work on the wall."

Decorations not only help students feel at ease, but also make a classroom feel more dynamic. "When I taught AP European History, students started competing to see who could make the best project about Louis XIV. I put up the ones that I thought were the best, and had the students do a sort of museum walk around." It is this kind of interaction that makes a class fun and gives students independence and a sense of ownership in the space.

Students also agree that decorations can make a big difference. "It is important for teachers to make their class-

rooms feel inviting. Whether it's with posters of words of encouragement or fun artwork, it really encourages me and makes me actually look forward to the class," said Nikhita Kadam (12).

Sometimes, it's the teacher's personal touches that make the biggest difference. "My Donald Duck collection definitely gets people talking at the beginning of the year, which is generally the time when they don't particularly want to," Mr. Iglesias explained. "AP World is usually also sophomores' first AP class, so I think those kinds of decorations take away the intimidation." Decorations may even

spark conversations that might not happen otherwise. "Decorations get students to ask questions, which creates a dialogue, even if it has nothing to do with school." These moments of connection encourage non-academic conversations to take place, helping students feel more comfortable in the classroom.

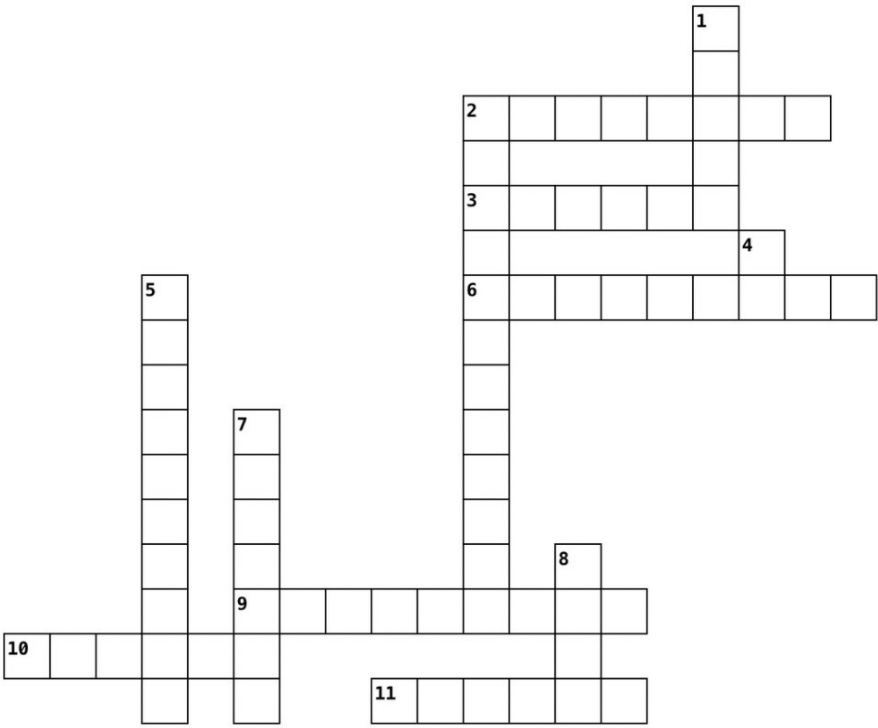
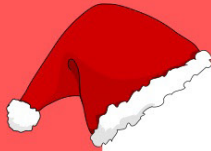
Still, it's important to maintain a balance. "It can be overstimulating to have too much classroom decoration, so I try to balance things out," said Mr. Iglesias. "There are things that can be educational learning tools and others that are artwork from students. I just don't want things to be too overwhelming, especially according to the fire department!"

Decorations can also show a teacher's effort to make everyone feel included. When Mr. Iglesias put up Christmas decorations, he asked two Muslim students to see how they felt about it. "They loved it! It's definitely more of a traditional thing."

At the end of the day, it's the little details that matter. Whether it's goofy figurines or interesting posters, classroom decorations create a space where students feel seen, welcomed, and excited. "When I first came to high school, decorations made me feel like teachers actually wanted me to have a good experience," explained Dyuthi Karedla (9).

December Crossword Puzzle

Nanki Kaur, Amrita Venkatesh | Broadcast Editor, Co-Editor-in-Chief



Across:

- 2. The company that produces your predictable, but favorite, Christmas movies
- 3. Rhymes with "Durkey"
- 6. Christmas classic starring Macaulay Culkin
- 9. Look for love under the _____
- 10. The character in Wicked who's not green
- 11. The sound a turkey makes, supposedly



Answer Key!

Down:

- 1. "Damn _____, you so vicious"
- 2. Your favorite holiday beverage
- 4. Ho, ho, _____
- 5. "Walkin' in a winter _____"
- 7. Frosty the _____
- 8. You'll find this in your stocking if you're naughty

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