

ISSUE ONE

PANTHER PRINTS

CAFFEINE: ENERGY COSTS IN STUDENT WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

Being in my second year as editor-in-chief, newspaper has taught me many things, one of which is to constantly be open-minded. I've loved working with this year's staff and I can't wait for the upcoming issues. Thank you to all of our active readers for taking the time to read what we've worked so hard to write. We hope you enjoy our first issue, just in time for Halloween.

This first nine-weeks has been such an amazing learning journey for me. I've loved getting to know our incredibly talented staff members. I sincerely want to thank my former editor, Kayla Vu, for all the tips she gave me and the faith she entrusted in me. On that note, we hope you all enjoy our first issue!

To who it may concern, working on this issue has been such a rewarding experience for me. I am so proud to have watched all of our reporters grow into the writers they are today. I would like to thank them along with my editor-in-chief Sydney Grayson and Creative Director Varsha Jhanak for helping us make this the best possible issue for you guys.

MISSION STATEMENT

At Panther Prints, our mission is to serve as a connection between the Plano East student body and surrounding communities. Through inspiration and high-quality content, panther Prints offers diverse coverage, passionate writing, relatable stories and a unique point of view. Our credible sources allow an in-depth experience that appeals to both the public and the individual. Our publication offers an informative and distinctive outlook on current interests.

DIGITAL MEDIA POLICY

We, at the Panther Prints, commit to responsibly utilize all of our media platforms to unite and inform the student body. We strive to create original content and attribute credit to all sources. We require our staff to uphold these values and to accurately report the news to the student body and community

All student polls were conducted through Google Forms and shared through social media

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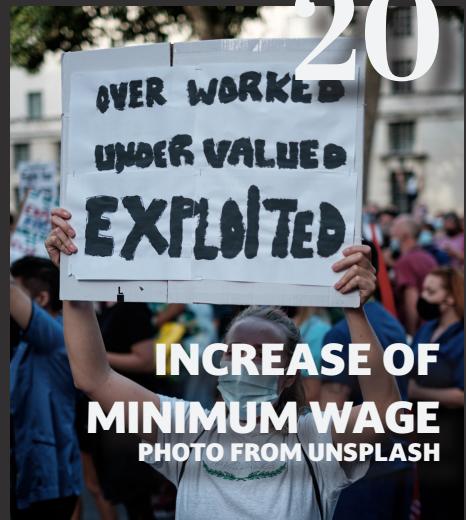
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**TWITTER
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@peshprints

Puzzled Panthers

By Shar Kiefer

How many college visits are allowed in a year and how do you get them excused?

Each junior and senior is allowed 2 excused absences to visit a college each year. These absences can be excused per a parent note or by obtaining a letter from the college admissions office. To get this note, approach the colleges' admissions counselor and ask for a school note; they will fill out the date and sign it proving that you were seen on campus. Turn the note in when you return to school the following day to your assigned sub-school.

When is Pal-o-ween?

Pal-o-ween is scheduled for October 25, at 5:30 p.m in the cafeteria and building 1. The event will end at 7:30 p.m. Pal-O-Ween is a service opportunity and a call out to our community, kids from the neighborhood will trick or treat in the cafeteria, followed by different school groups setting up booths to entertain the kids who show.

What is Stay Day and when is it?

Stay day is scheduled for October 31 and will be hosted during both lunches. The idea of stay day is to encourage students to stay on campus for lunch. There will be several food trucks on campus that students can choose from. Each year, there is a wide variety of foods including halal options, lactose-free options, vegan/vegetarian options and meat options.

Beauty Industry: Base for Inclusion

By Megan Glass

Fashion is an outlet of self-expression many people take to express their individuality. Over the last decade, gender equality and reversed roles in the fashion industry rose. This includes men wearing skirts, crop tops and dresses to express their security in their own being. In addition, women are wearing unisex outfits to promote free choice of style and expression. Although, there is still the prominent issue in society that is not yet resolved of pure equality in the fashion industry, there is an increase in inclusivity in plus size models and people of color within makeup and fashion brands. "Gender-wise, I feel like I do see some inclusivity depending on brands and the people modeling it," fashion club president Jaden Cao said. "Shade-wise, there are only a few brands that have it all."

The makeup industry is also controversial with its shade range pertaining to models and the products, along with gender inclusivity. Foundations, concealers, and blushes that people of all colors use, do not always suffice their shade needs. According to IPSOS, women struggle with foundation and concealer tone and color match, with a majority at least six in ten women. In addition, there is a focus on the women customers in most popular makeup brands rather than equally extending this to all genders. Although MAC has shade inclusive models, they lack gender inclusivity. Some companies are increasingly proactive with gender inclusivity such as Trixie Cosmetics, where all pronouns of the models are included. There is available representation of all genders and ethnicities wearing makeup throughout social media with just a click of a button. Makeup companies such as YSL, Supergoop and Tarte do not cater toward all skin types and shades by only carrying light, medium and dark with no wide range in between. These are physical examples of exclusion in the industry that arise controversy but on the other hand, inclusion are some companies' specialties.

"One thing that I see is that there is more progress with brands in makeup," junior Zara Kamorudeen said. "The newer brands like Fenty and Rare Beauty are showing more ranges but the older companies are a little slow. I hope that one day everyone can find a shade that really matches them." With the media calling out certain makeup brands and clothing companies on their lack of inclusivity, there's a major increase in shade ranges in new makeup brands that hit most people's undertones and shades perfectly compared to the 2010s. According to Insider in 2018, Tarte foundation had a range of 15 shades. Newer brands like REM have a range of 60 shades that accommodate all skin tones. "Women and men have been expressing themselves so much more recently with makeup and clothes that they wear, so being able to see that we have so many options now is so nice," Kamorudeen said.



While scrolling online, a person can pass plenty tall, size zero to two models but the plus sized options remain limited. The lack of inclusivity of heights, ethnicities, and body types leaves online shoppers with a poor image to relate to. "It's hard [online shopping], because things will look different on [stereotypical models] than they do on me," fashion club vice president Carina Kenefick said. "I think that even the plus sized models on websites are around sizes six to eight or there is no range in heights. I think they need to better advertise the fit for different people." With a wide variety of styles that surfaced in the last decade, people have plenty of options to choose from that are still considered in style and trendy. This broadens the scope of possibilities in the fashion industry that people can use to express themselves. In such a competitive environment that the fashion industry is portrayed to be, people begin to learn how to be passionate about this form of art. "I'm at a point where I don't really care what others think and I stand up for myself. I just want to be as authentic to me as I can," Cao said. "I know a lot of people appreciate and like my style, which is nice, but I'm now able to appreciate it myself."

Economic Affairs (Taylor's Version)

By Celine Tan

With 12 Grammys, award-winning albums, and sold out stadium tours, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is at the height of her career. The U.S. leg of the Eras Tour had 52 dates, all of which her fans, called Swifties, immediately sold out. Swift's tour became a cultural sensation in the media, bringing fans together from all different places to watch her extensive three-hour performance. During every show, Swift played two surprise songs, making each show a personal and unique experience for every fan. "I went to Philadelphia night three [with my mom]," sophomore Sydney Vincer said. "I got 'Hey Stephen' and 'The Best Day' as my surprise songs since it was Mother's Day and I was literally crying." This unique element is not seen in many other concerts, which may be a contributing factor that led to an average resale ticket price of \$1619 for the Eras Tour. Comparatively, according to SeatGeek, the average resale price of concert tickets for artists across the board is \$245. According to Chicago's tourism and conventions bureau, Swift's show at Soldier Field stadium contributed to over 44,000 occupied hotel rooms per night the first weekend of June, grossing over \$39 million in total hotel revenue. This set a record for the greatest number of hotel rooms occupied in the city's history. Swift's personality may be a reason fans flock to her concerts, but her generosity to the people in each city does not go unnoticed either. "For every stadium tour that she does, she donates to the food banks in each of the cities," biology teacher Dusty Vincer said. "Not everyone can



Photo from Getty

Taylor Swift performing during her Eras

donate money, but they can donate time, so I think that's a nice philanthropy- a nice message to people." According to People magazine, Swift also gave \$55 million bonuses to workers, including dancers and sound technicians, while giving \$100 million bonuses to her production truck drivers. The value of community is well established for Swifties. Based on the lyric "make the friendship bracelets, take the moment and taste it" from the song "You're on Your Own, Kid," some Swifties decided to do just that; they traded friendship bracelets at the Eras Tour to make it not only a concert but also a priceless experience to meet new friends. Luckily, this component is not only limited to her concerts. "At this organization I'm a part of for volunteering, I didn't really know a lot of people but they started playing Taylor Swift," junior Caroline Hathaway said. "[I saw someone singing] and I was like 'do you like Taylor?' and she was like 'yeah, I love Taylor.'

We ended up just talking the whole two hours while volunteering and [we became friends]." Swift's new music and album re-recordings are a popular topic of discussion, bringing many different people together. According to research firm QuestionPro, the Eras Tour has generated an estimated \$5 billion dollars for the U.S. economy. With the Eras Tour movie coming out on October 13, Swift also broke AMC's ticket presale record, selling \$26 million of tickets within the first day, according to Deadline. In addition to this, her impact transcends music and ticket sales as Swift allows her fans to know her personal character, leaving a lasting impact on today's generation. "I feel like she's just a really good role model for students, for children and for adults," Mrs. Vincer said. "She's very much a practice what you preach kind of person. I like that she sends messages out in her songs, that she's just so creative, and that she loves her Swifties."

Aftermath of Affirmative Action

By Camille Wright

On June 29, the Supreme Court case, *Harvard v. Students for Fair Admissions* (SFFA), decided in favor of the plaintiffs, creating a precedent that universities should not consider race when choosing between applicants. Affirmative Action is a general term referring to the effort to improve education or employment opportunities for people previously disadvantaged due to their race, disability, gender, ethnic origin, or age. This ruling has implications for those for and against affirmative action in universities and, in some cases, raises more questions about the fairness of college admissions. The plaintiff, SFFA, argued that Harvard discriminated against Asians and stereotyped them as intellectual and accomplished but also bland and interchangeable. “If it’s really about the race, then that’s wrong,” junior Joslyn Griffin said. “Race shouldn’t be the deciding factor in admissions. But, if it’s also about the credentials, then that’s how they do it.” Those in favor of Affirmative Action generally believe it serves to rectify the discrimination women, people of color, or those with disabilities face. Historically, universities have made efforts to exclude groups because of race. Though *Brown v. Board of Education* legally ended this in schools 70 years ago, there are still discriminatory practices today. Supporters point to the bans of critical race theory or the disparity of resources in poorer communities as reasons why removing affirmative action could have negative consequences, specifically for underrepresented groups. “The loss of Affirmative Action will mean fewer opportunities for the people who Affirmative Action affects to pull themselves out of cycles of poverty,” senior Harper Whittemore said. “There will likely be less diversity in those higher competitive positions, especially in the business world or law because they don’t have those same opportunities.” Many opposers defend the idea that Affirmative Action and, in turn, race is the sole reason they did not get into certain schools. One of the main stories at the center of this debate is that of Calvin Yang, a Canadian-Asian man who applied to Harvard. According to the *New York Post*, Yang had a 1550 SAT score, a 3.9 GPA, played two varsity sports, and had his own political policy startup, all qualities of the ideal Ivy League student. Harvard rejected him, and he could not help but wonder if it was due to the color of his skin. Many people, like Yang, joined the

SFFA Case against Harvard for similar reasons. “Because of how college admissions are structured, it’s very hard to know exactly why you weren’t admitted,” Whittemore said. “There are so many variables in the college admissions system, it’s hard to say whether your race was the factor that put you in or not. Saying I

the 2021 first-year class, revealing 6.1% of black students and 9.1% of Hispanic students reported legacy status compared to 18.8% of white students and 15.1% of Asian students. “Why would you accept someone based on their parents or grandparents having gone there?” senior Soraya Juste said. “More than 30% of Harvard’s admissions last year were legacies, which is a very high number. If we’re talking about cheating college admissions, I think legacies are more cheating than affirmative action.” Universities allowing legacy benefits want a prospective student to be close to their standards for grades, test scores, or extracurriculars. Still, they receive preference over non-legacy students once other factors are considered. Although most universities removed race as a factor in the application itself, race isn’t entirely out of the picture. According to the ruling by the Supreme Court, universities can still allow students to address race in application essays as it applies to their identity. “If you want to [discuss race in college application essays], you should be able to, because college essays are just about what makes you you and what you have been through for them to get to know you,” Griffin said. “If your race has something to do with that, then you should be able to put it in there.” With the college application process undergoing so much change as of late, the removal of affirmative action causes many to wonder how much it will affect future applicants.

Supporters fear students from underrepresented groups may not apply to certain schools, while those against the policy believe its removal will allow many students to feel more comfortable applying to the college of their choice. The class of 2024, the first to apply to universities since the verdict, will be the ones to decide. “I don’t see any hindrance in my applications,” Juste said. “I’m going to include my identity [race, ethnicity and sexuality] in my essays for admission officers to get a better understanding of who I am.”

Students opinion on what type of effect they think the removal of Affirmative Action will have on college admissions

25% of students think it will have a positive effect on college admissions

27% of students think it will have a negative effect on college admissions

5.1% of students think it will have no effect on college admissions

42.9% of students chose not to comment

***out of 352 students polled**

was rejected only because of my [race] and that they’re discriminating against all [people of my race] is something that I don’t think can be fully proven because there are so many factors involved in each admissions decision.” Supporters of affirmative action believe there is another unfair advantage in college admissions: legacy. A legacy student receives preference at a university where a family member has previously attended. Although a large percentage of legacy students are white or from wealthy families, legacy admissions also benefits others. The Harvard Crimson surveyed

SAT Scores Being Made Option-

By Liliana Aguilar

Before the pandemic occurred in 2020, the SAT, a standardized test that focuses on math, reading comprehension, and revision, would determine which colleges and classes were best suited for students. Most top colleges require a student to submit a minimum score of 1300. However, during the pandemic, the SAT became optional to submit and to take. Due to limited school resources, there was a shortage of instructors, monitors and testing sites. As colleges included the option to submit SAT scores in college applications for the time being, colleges discussed if it should become permanently optional. The SAT causes some limitations to students, such as lower economic status, people with learning disorders, and students who are disadvantaged by the school system. The implementation of test optional applications allow those disadvantaged by standardized tests to still have the opportunity to apply to high status schools. "I do feel like if a student's application is weak the SAT score will give the student the opportunity to show out," senior Srimman Donthineni said. "[The SAT] gives colleges a lot more factors to consider when going through applications." According to Forbes, the number of colleges that use test-optional or test-free admissions has nearly doubled over the last three years. Colleges also understand how the SAT may not be an accurate demonstration of college

readiness and do not define students' academic abilities. It has been made optional to submit the score, however, if a student believes the score defines them and does in fact prove college readiness and academic ability, it is advised to submit their SAT score. "[The SAT] does give people who are not good at testing or who have been placed in a bad testing environment the opportunity [to succeed]," senior Ezyan Bhayani said. "I agree that a standardized test does not define you academically." Colleges never base their decision on just one factor. The factors taken into consideration are grades, sports, extracurriculars, recommendations, and essays. If the decision was made to not submit them, the individual would not be disadvantaged in their admissions. However, according to the New York Post the top colleges such as Georgetown University have just under 90% of applicants submit their SAT scores, and 61% of students at Vanderbilt University submitted test scores. Colleges understand how the SAT can cause anxiety for students worldwide. According to an article from College Raptor, about 10-40% of students who take the SAT suffer from test anxiety and often experience it during the SAT. "I don't think the test is a good aptitude that you should be let into college," senior Isha Kurlekar said. "It's stressful and people put a lot of unnecessary pressure on you about the SAT, [but], I think it's a positive thing for applications." It is recommended to start studying for the SAT as early as three months before. Being in the routine of studying for tests in advance will prepare you for this type

of discipline in college. The SAT may not be a good factor to prove how skilled the individual is for college but it can train the mind for this sort of focus in college. "Studying for a test that often takes a few months prepares students for the type of academic discipline that is required in college," Kurlekar said. According to an article written by PrepMaven, colleges receive more applications than ever before as SAT scores are not stopping students from being accepted. Dating back four years ago, the top 20 colleges in the United States had a minimum SAT score of about 1450. If students did not meet that minimum requirement, the application most likely was not seen. With the change of making the scores optional, more colleges have a variety of students to select from. There are also more ways to benefit college applications, such as sports, clubs, and electives to focus on now that the SAT score is not the leading factor. "I think it is a positive because instead of stressing out over a test and getting a certain score there are other things they can excel in and showcase on a college application," AVID teacher Mackenzie McCall said. "I agree with it becoming optional, if you have an excellent score feel free to turn it in, but if you don't, then let your application and essay help you get into college instead of one test score."



Trump Indicted on 91 Felony Charges

By Shar Kiefer

Photo from Getty

With the 2024 election around the corner, Republican candidate Donald Trump received 91 charges spanning four different states at the state and federal level. This makes him the first former president to face criminal charges, with all four trials set for early 2024. The expected date for his final trial leaves around four to five months to accommodate Trump's possible re-election, however the indictments raise speculation on whether or not Trump should be eligible to run for president. "I think the only thing that we can do now is just wait for the results of the trial to come out," IB History Teacher Richard Sklar said. "It could go well for him. It could go terribly for him." With the skepticism of how the trial will play out, many voters find themselves in a dilemma at the voting box. This confusion allows for debate regarding his eligibility in the presidential race. If Trump receives jail time, there is no limitation dictating if he can run. The constitution defines an eligible candidate as being at least 35 years old, a natural born citizen, and having lived in the US for at least 14 years. Trump can still run for president, as long as he meets the other requirements. According to The New York Times, Trump is currently innocent until proven guilty since none of the trials start until 2024. Trump's trials follow the constitution as expected. If Trump is found guilty of all 91 charges including racketeering, falsifying documents, and conspiracy to defraud the government, he could serve up to 717.5 years in prison, according to Forbes Magazine. "His future could go both ways," senior

Aliyan Ladak said. "One that if he is indicted on all the charges, and it goes through even more than it already has then it could hinder his political career." Trump's political career is one filled with controversy. However, his previous controversies have not ensued in this level of legal trouble. If the trial does go well for him and he is cleared to run, he will have a presence in the presidential race as a key candidate. "We have this very strong base [evidence in the case]," Sklar said. "But I'm not sure the level of his support beyond the base he can't win with on only a justice base." As of September 27, Trump's bid to delay trial on his fraud case is being rejected by the court, meaning his first trial will start at the already given time. Of all four cases, Trump could face the most felonies following the January 6 capital riot case in Washington, D.C. This includes Trump's most severe charge, a conspiracy to defraud the US government, which alone lands him a maximum sentence of 450 years in prison according to Forbes, assuming he is found guilty on all charges. Trump pleads not guilty to his involvement in the riot, and the official trial is set for March 2024. Also set for March 2024 is Trump's New York trial claiming he paid Stormy Daniels \$130,000 to keep their alleged affair quiet. Trump pleads not guilty and denies the affair ever happening. "There's a lot of talk currently about waiting until the trial," Ladak said. "I think we should go with what the law says and if the law currently finds him innocent, then he's innocent." Waiting on the trial is important because of

the outcomes that could change the course of the election. With most of the trials occurring in 2024, there is no telling what will happen between now and the trial. "If he is arrested, I believe those who support him will piggyback off that continuing sort of ideology [to fight for his ability to run]," Ladak said. "And now, other Republican candidates such as Vivek Ramaswamy are trying to come on to that bandwagon, and take on support [in favor of Trump]." The 14th amendment includes a clause entitled "the disqualification clause," this clause claims that because Trump took oath during his time as president, he cannot run for public office if he has conspired or rebelled against the government. The trial [capital riot case] that would directly relate to this clause is scheduled for March 2024; as of now he can run since the speculation is not confirmed. The trial will determine Trump's involvement in the presidential race. Historically, Spiro Agnew was Nixon's vice president until 1974 after Nixon's resignation from office. According to the constitution, Agnew would finish the term as president, but instead was arrested for tax evasion, a conspiracy to defraud the government. If Trump is found to be guilty, he will not be able to run for any form of public office in the future, forcing him out of the presidential race, as stated in Agnew's conviction. "If the law finds him guilty then he is guilty," Ladak said. "If the charges have been pressed and those charges are accusations, and if they have been proven then, so be it."

Influx of Persisting Heat This Summer

Photo from Unsplash

By Eva Gonzalez

For many long weeks, blistering heat coated Texas and other southern states with an especially hot summer. Record-breaking temperatures persisted until they became the expectation, and people throughout the state experienced the consequences. The particularly hot weather of the past summer was steadily above a hundred degrees for over two weeks, lasting enough time to cause prolonged impacts on people and the environment. “Everything’s just so dried up that anytime there’s an electrical problem or something like that, it’s really at risk of starting a fire and having that spread,” AP Environmental Sciences teacher Benjamin Wood said. “From a very practical standpoint, we need some rain and it would be nice if it could cool down quickly.” The lack of water and the resulting dried landscape led to a huge outbreak of wildfires throughout Texas and other areas of the southern United States. There was an especially high concentration of wildfires in east Texas, where it is particularly dry and prone to such incidents. More infamous wildfires have plagued other dry areas in the country, including California and Maui. The devastating impacts of these fires on both the population and the environment continued long after temperatures dropped. Even in areas where sub-

stantial amounts of water remain, the signs of desertification arose. “I’m seeing it a lot here because there’s a park by my house that normally, even in the summer months, has grass and trees, and you can see all of that,” junior Devika Ramakrishnan said. “But now that grass is all brown. All the plants are dying because they don’t have enough water or anything to live.” Following this local perspective, the hot weather hindered outdoor extracurricular activities and sports. Marching band requires many hours of practice which occurs in the school parking lot, and can already be taxing when it doesn’t occur in exhausting heat. During both marching band and sports practices, concerns existed about students passing out in the scorching Texas sun. Even softball practice, which currently happens indoors due to field renovations, suffered from the heat and stuffiness of a court without air conditioning. Doing any physical activity for prolonged periods of time without preparing for the consequences led to this kind of poor health. “If you’re not constantly preparing to be outside, drinking water and things like that, it’s not a good idea to be outside at all,” senior Madeline Pittman said. “You don’t even need to be active to be dehydrated right now.” To combat this, coaches move many practice sessions to earlier in the

morning or later in the evening to avoid the hottest time of day. This forces students to be physically active at times which may overlap with school schedules, causing more people to accommodate to the worsening climate issues. The school postponed several events in late August because of the expected hot weather during their scheduled time. Though the postponement of these events can be disappointing, it is an expected outcome of a prolonged climate problem. “We’re seeing what the consequences are that actually affect our lives now,” Ramakrishnan said. “We’re going to keep losing things we’re allowed to do because it keeps getting hotter and hotter.”



PANTHER PROFILE

Student Sets Gold Standard

By Camille Wright

International Baccalaureate (IB) student Anushka Sridhar received the Mary Anne Cree Woman of Distinction Award from the Girl Scouts of North East Texas. The Girl Scouts of North East Texas gives the Mary Anne Cree Award to recipients of the Gold Award who show outstanding leadership and create projects that bring positive change to communities. A luncheon to celebrate the award winners will be held on Friday, November 12. The distinction award is highly coveted; only three were given out of the 100 Girl Scout award winners. Sridhar won the award for the continued development of her 8th-grade science fair project: SPARKS Smart Parkinson's Strap. "In doing science fair, I found a passion for technology and engineering, especially starting [at] the end of middle school toward high school, I started getting more into technology," Sridhar said. "I was really passionate about that project and super excited that I got to spend three years total of my science fair journey doing that project." The Smart PARKinson's Strap (SPARKS) project explored vibrational therapy's impact on people with Parkinson's Disease. Parkinson's Disease affects the nervous system and results in abnormal movements such as unintended tremors and difficulty walking. The strap detects tremors and is a simple replacement for the otherwise costly treatments that only treat the symptoms of Parkinson's. Sridhar worked with neurologists to ensure her invention was noninvasive and did not negatively affect the user's

daily routines. She also partnered with the Dallas Area Parkinson's Society to donate 25 straps, which further supports why she received this honor, as the award recognizes those with good character and the will to improve their communities. Sridhar also had the opportunity to patent her research. "Anushka is a leader," senior Joshika Tammali said. "I could see her as a business type of person or being in charge of a higher degree of something and having the power to control

being able to create and innovate different products and turn them into a business," Sridhar said. "I'm not sure what school or what major [I] would end up taking, but likely [an] engineering major with a business minor." As a member of the IB program, Sridhar is no stranger to the hard work it takes to succeed. She takes her classes seriously and is spoken highly of by teachers. Although she does participate in several extracurriculars like the National Honors Society, her academics play a key role in her life. "I would say school is definitely a big part of my life, especially being in the IB program," Sridhar said. "I would say the workload is, at times, definitely demanding, so it is a pretty big part of my life, but I also think a huge part of IB is making sure that you stay balanced." This award is given in honor of the late Mary Anne Sammons Cree, a supporter of the Girl Scouts and contributor to the founding of the STEM Center of Excellence, a Girl Scout camp focused on science and math. Sridhar's project used science and technology to improve the lives of others and is a reflection of Cree's values. Her character further reflects the values of this award because she also showed leadership and compassion for people with Par-

kinson's Disease through this project. "I've known [Anushka] since first grade and she's a nice, fun, and outgoing person," Tammali said. "She always has a smile on her face, and she's always happy. She can always lift up the mood in a room and she's an amazing friend. She really does make me laugh in many instances and she's really friendly towards others. She's inclusive. She likes to be around many people [and] be herself."

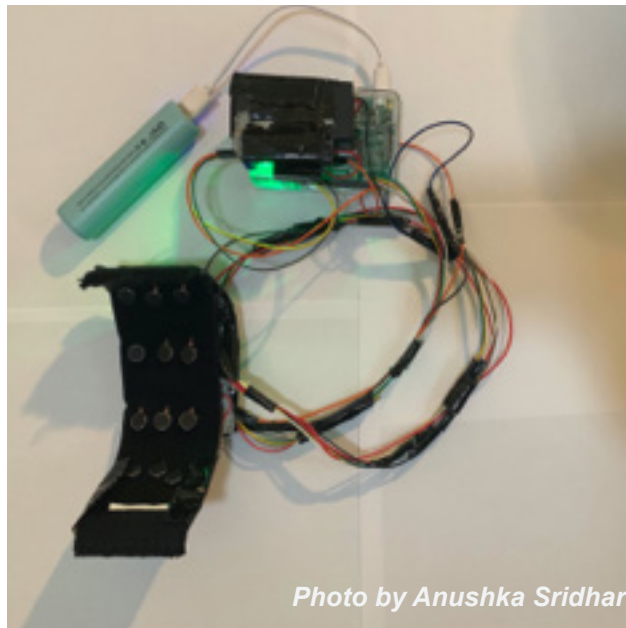


Photo by Anushka Sridhar

Prototype of the Smart PARKinson's Strap (SPARKS) project.

and to manage all of that. She is really good at academics. She's really smart and I think that's really cool about her." In the future, Sridhar plans to continue exploring the many ways engineering can help others when she pursues a college degree. While still undecided as to where she wants to go, Sridhar intends to focus on engineering and economics. "I'm very interested in doing or pursuing a career path that combines entrepreneurship and engineering and

Leaving Legacies: New Principal Changes Environment

By Aveesa Bhayani

Amidst a busy day, students crowd the halls, conversing with one another. Amongst them is new principal, David Jones, rolling desk in tow, working constantly surrounded by students. A Plano East graduate himself, Jones always saw himself back in the halls of his alma mater. Now, he begins his legacy as one of only four other principals in the history of the school since 1981. Starting every day with his optimistic personality, he spends his time in the halls getting to know students. “There’s just something special to me about the campus, you get all this opportunity - any opportunity you can imagine in my opinion-,” Jones said. “[Students and staff] are just super passionate about their interests. You get to go to a place where every day is going to be fun, you get to make an impact on people, you get to know people and build relationships and hopefully set people up for success.” Jones plans to start his legacy by creating new opportunities. Drawing from his own role models as a student, Jones started his career as a social studies teacher and a football coach. Now, he starts off the school year placing his

support behind the teachers and staff. “My job is to make your job easier,” Jones said. “I’m trying to equip [staff] with more time, more resources, and more support because I’m a believer that the best teachers are gonna make the best impact on kids so I’m just trying to find ways to make that job a little bit easier.”

Jones takes an invested interest in each and every one of his students. His long-term goal is to make sure all students are set up for their post-secondary path. Whether a student chooses college, a trade or the military, he plans to make sure students have all the resources they need to succeed. “I want them to know Plano East is a safe place both physically and to take risks, that’s what we want is [students] to get out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves,” Jones said. “Beyond that, I’m an open person, they can always come and talk to me, I’m a problem solver, I always want to help them, it’s going to be a great year.” Jones began his passion early on, during his sophomore year, he visited Italy where he solidified his passion

for the humanities. With every action he takes, his passion shines through as he adds more growth and positivity to the school environment every day. “Mr. Jones, he’s very hands-on, trying to make connections with the students, and I really like that,” senior Taylor Carley said. “He’s an alum and he was a coach here so it’s better for us. He’s more involved with the students and he’s trying to connect with us more and I really really really like that.” The new principal is starting the school year off in the backseat, though not in the way you may imagine. In a school with 3,100 students and over 240 staff members, his plan is to observe and assess before making any changes. Over the summer he met with staff to get feedback and continues to do so as the fall semester progresses. “I think it will make a difference because it does make a difference when students are getting to know who the people are in charge instead of ‘Mr. who? Mrs. who?’ They actually know who their principal is and they can say good things about them,” AVID teacher Summer Simmons said. “The interactions they make, and the relationships they make, I think that’s going to be really important.”

When he is not in the halls, Jones can also be seen in classrooms, whether it’s just popping his head in to greet students or sitting down to ask questions and learn more about the school, the principal stays forever involved, a refreshing sight for most students. “Mr. Jones was there for the football games and he’s sitting on the sidelines cheering on and he’s going into choir classes, or theatre classes and he’s very diverse,” Carley said. “He’s willing to learn about anything and everything and that’s what I think I like about him the most.”



Photo by Megan Glass

Principal David Jones interacting with students before school.

Caffeine: Energy Costs in Student Work-Life Balance

Photo from Unsplash

By Aveesa Bhayani, Varsha Jhanak, and Sydnie Grayson

While for many, the start of the fall season is brought about by the comeback of the Starbucks pumpkin spice latte, for some juniors and seniors, it is also the start of SAT and college application season. As students leave practice, clock out of work or leave social events after school, they struggle to check box after box to complete what may feel like a never ending list of tasks to complete. On top of extracurriculars, academics and jobs, students work tirelessly to keep up with everything that is demanded of them. According to research.com, seven out of ten teenagers ages 13-17 have named anxiety or depression as a main problem in their communities, additionally, 75% of American high schoolers describe themselves as often or always stressed by school

work. “My honest motivation is just doing it all for my mom,” senior Ayro Escobar said. “She’s the reason I work so much, just so I can be able to do my own things

the Chicago News, IB students can receive up to four to six hours of homework a night, although that may change depending on the individual pace of a student, the workload is often described as demanding at the least. For a student to juggle extracurriculars on top of a large portion of school work per night, a job and college applications forces students to push their limits to near breaking point.

“I have no free time in terms of weekdays,” junior Casey Chaloux Jr. said. “I get up, I get

ready and I come here and go through my classes everyday. Lunch is like basically my only time off. Then I go to practice, we typically practice until around 7 o’clock at night.” Although juggling all these things at once may be a challenge, it is important for students to remember it is doable, but above all, prioritize mental health and adjust workload to only what can be safely handled. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that

“Even with a heavy workload, you just need to keep an open mind about the work that you do because it’s going to pay off. You need to have a balance between friends and work, but you also need to remember that you can’t prioritize one over one. Work can’t be over your friends but friends can’t be over your work.”
- senior Mei Chen

and I don’t have to depend on anyone. I just want to have a good education, so when I’m older, I can support myself and all of the people around me.”

Student Workloads: Walking the Line

The school offers a range of academically challenging classes, one of the most prominent being the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. According to

to maintain a healthy lifestyle, one must balance exercise and healthy eating along with a work life balance in order to help alleviate stress. Additionally, meditation, yoga and frequent breaks are good coping mechanisms for performance anxiety.

Even with a heavy workload, you just need to keep an open mind about the work that you do because it's going to pay off," senior Mei Chen said. "You need to have a balance between friends and work, but you also need to remember that you can't prioritize one over one. Work can't be over your friends but friends can't be over your work."

When balancing an obscene amount of tasks, some studies say it is important to reinforce support systems. Often, friends and family have experienced similar forms of stress and burn out.

Following COVID-19 depression and anxiety rates have skyrocketed, reinforcing the notion that the struggle to find the sweet spot between work and life may not be as easy to find as some may believe. "In previous years I've fallen behind, I've procrastinated, thinking I could do stuff later," junior Chaloux said. "Just getting stuff done as soon as I possibly can has

really helped me, especially this year because then I can have time to do stuff that is assigned to me later." Procrastination is defined as a self-defeating behavior pattern marked by short-term benefits and long-term costs. However, the

warding yourself, stay productive even during breaks, break down assignments into smaller tasks. Oftentimes, the need to succeed, and the fear associated with such ambition can manifest itself in the form of "chronic procrastination,"

a term used to describe extreme and repeated forms of procrastination. While someone may seem put together on the outside, they may be struggling internally with their own idea of perfection. "Students are afraid that if they don't get all A's and if they're not in every club or activity then they're not going to get into college which I don't think is true and I know that it's not true," IB English teacher Karen Holloway said. "But, I understand why they think that." The accumulation of the skills learned in highschool can help throughout college into life. To find the sweet spot between work and life is a struggle most will face for the rest of their lives, however, now, with the support and friends and family, students should

take the opportunity to learn, try and then try again, "Don't give up," Escobar said. "Everything has purpose. Keep fighting because this is only temporary; school doesn't last forever and there's a reason we're doing all of this. When it's over, it'll all be worth it."

Amount of Homework Students Have Daily

17.4% of students have 5+ hours of homework

39.4% of students have 3-4 hours of homework

28.6% of students have 1-2 hours of homework

11.6% of students have little to no homework

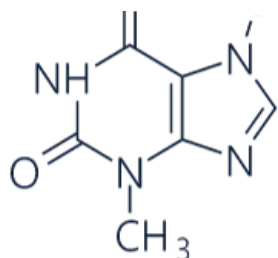
2.8% of students chose not to comment

***out of 353 students polled**

common practice can be linked to fear, anxiety, OCD and ADHD according to the American Psychological Association. Anxiety, a factor in many teen issues today, can be a very large portion of why a student may be struggling to complete an assignment or multiple assignments. Here are some tips to get started: find ways to increase motivation by re-

Caffeine Addiction: Its Rush on Society

Caffeine is a drug stimulant that increases brain activity; different forms of caffeine include energy drinks, teas, coffee and soft drinks. Caffeine usage is prevalent among many different groups of people including adults, college students and teenagers. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 75% of adolescents report some kind of daily intake of caffeine with 85% of adults utilizing caffeine. “I go over what happens when you don’t have your caffeine,” AP Psychology teacher Giselle Devillier said. “My caffeine drinkers have a bit of a headache and I say ‘that’s withdrawal.’ I’ve got enough people that are drinking caffeine on a regular basis that I can use that example. Everybody gets it. Usually, we have a conversation [like] ‘how many drinks do we have?’ There are some really big health risks with [caffeine] as well.” Over the years, caffeine has grown in popularity as establishments, such as Starbucks and Dunkin’ Donuts become the usual pit stop on the morning drive to school or work. In some circumstances, caffeine can have a good effect, but when it starts affecting



sleep cycles, it can affect the nervous system as a whole.

For example, caffeine can affect brain development at a young age. Heathline states that caffeine, at certain levels and times, can affect a child or teen’s sleep cycle which can hinder brain development. Caffeine also has side effects if not taken in the proper way. Some side effects of caffeine include jitteriness, dehydration and upset stomach.

“The reality is that with too much caffeine, you could have cardiac issues with a racing heart and all those issues,” Devillier said. “It can really be a thing. The reality is that students are using caffeine as a band-aid for not getting enough sleep. That is dangerous in itself because it is proven that lack of sleep makes you more susceptible to illness. You’re susceptible to catching whatever’s going on: the flu, a cold, and in this day and age, COVID-19.” While caffeine can affect formations in the brain which affect development, some use caffeine as a way to increase their energy throughout the day. There are several different forms of caffeine: energy drinks, coffee and teas. According to the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the main sources of caffeine for teenagers are coffee and energy drinks. In 2023, the most popular drinks are Red Bull with 111 milligrams of caffeine and several drinks at Starbucks, including the pumpkin spice latte with 75 milligrams. “After my late night shift at 12 a.m., I start taking [caffeine] so I can stay up until 3 a.m. to finish my work,” Escobar said. “It does mess me up when I wake up because I feel groggy, which in turn leads me to drinking caffeine more in the

morning to not be sleeping during class.” Because students tend to have books and homework stacked higher than themselves, they utilize caffeine as a way to maintain energy throughout the day. Whether they drink one or two cups per day, caffeine keeps them awake to finish out their school day. Despite this, there is a maximum that Michigan Medicine suggests that teens and adults should consume 100 milligrams per day. Despite this, teens continue to drink more and more caffeine as 83.2% of teens consume caffeine daily, according to Medical News Today. “I drink coffee in the morning because I can’t wake up and I drink coffee throughout the day when I do,” senior Kyle Skinner said. “I give myself a little cup and I drink [coffee] throughout the day. You do what you gotta do.”

Simple Solutions: Stress’s Highway to Caffeine

According to a study done by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 73% of high school students do not receive an adequate amount of sleep each night. Many factors contribute to teenagers’ lack of sleep. Teenage bodies go through hormonal shifts causing the production of melatonin, the sleep hormone, causing teens to stay up later. Teenage device use also plays a role, as blue light from devices suppresses melatonin production. One of the main causes, however, is due to the sheer volume of assignments and homework that teenagers must complete in one night.

"I don't see very many students who get enough sleep at all," Holloway said. "I know this because they'll tell me and I know this because they'll send emails or submit work at three in the morning. They just get in this loop where they're not sleeping enough." According to UT Physicians, many students rely on caffeine to keep themselves awake during the day. According to Medical News Today, 3.2% of teenagers consume caffeinated beverages regularly, and at least 96% consume them occasionally.

"I see a lot of caffeine in class these days," Holloway said. "I think the caffeine is coming from the lack of sleep, which is definitely a problem."

Since caffeine is a drug it has addictive properties which can lead to dependence and health consequences, especially for adolescents. An excess of caffeine may result in negative side effects. As teenagers are in the middle of their growth process, they require a higher amount of sleep compared to adults. However, a high intake of caffeine may result in less sleep due to caffeine's energizing properties. In addition, caffeine overload can also increase blood pressure, agitation, anxiety and behavioral issues.

"I drink Red Bull almost every single morning," Chen said. "It's really bad but I need it. It might be a placebo effect. I might be thinking I need caffeine and I really don't. I sleep really early, I sleep around ten or eleven even though I have so much work, I just sleep anyways. When I wake up I just feel tired and when I feel tired, I just drink the Red Bull." Caffeine not only has short term side effects, but also long term side

ing caffeine dependence may be a difficult task, however, there are many ways to combat this issue. One solution is to gradually lower caffeine intake throughout the course of time. This solution allows for a smooth transition without withdrawal symptoms. In addition, simply getting more sleep combats caffeine dependency, as a person will not rely on caffeine for energy. The key to this solution lies in having a good work and life balance.

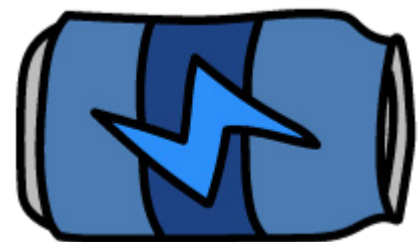
For many students, work may overtake life activities, causing stress and lack of sleep. "I honestly don't [think students have a good work life balance]," Holloway said. "I think it's a mistake we make and I understand how it happens. Because this is our life and if you separate the two, I think you're taking hours out of your day when you're saying 'I'm not going to live my life, I'm just going to work.' That's our life. We can't do that. I think the trick is to balance work and play, if you will, but I don't think many people are good at it. Honestly, we just

never know how long life is going to be. I just don't think you postpone your life for work. I think you try to find a way to do both."

"I think the trick is to balance work and play, if you will, but I don't think many people are good at it. Honestly, we just never know how long life is going to be. I just don't think you postpone your life for work. I think you try to find a way to do both."

- English teacher Karen Holloway

effects. Caffeine may instigate long term side effects for adolescents with underlying health conditions. Caffeine has the power to remove calcium from bones and worsen health issues like heart problems. "I don't wanna get into [caffeine]," Chaloux said. "Everyone else that's had coffee, they live on coffee and I just don't wanna get into that." According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, teenagers should avoid consuming caffeine altogether, due to its addictive properties and expansive side effects. Break-



Cross Country Benefits More Than Health

By Megan Glass

Some of the first high school students to wake up in the morning belong to the cross country team. They are at school before the sun rises to begin their morning stretches and prepare for their run. For those one to two hours in practice Monday through Friday, they have expectations to perform at their very best and improve each day. “The goal for any team is to be competitive within the teams we compete against,” cross country coach Robert Reed said. “I just want them to improve every year. It just starts with showing up every day.” The responsibility each person holds on the team goes much farther than placing at a meet. An athlete is expected to hold themselves accountable in and outside of practice. Whether this refers to maintaining good grades to be able to compete or running on days practice is not being held, being in a sport like cross country teaches athletes to keep a balanced mindset. “[Cross country] is all about how you manage your time,” Reed said. “When you’re at a school like [Plano East], it’s so academically demanding, so you have to prioritize.” The life of a student athlete can be challenging mentally and physically, therefore being able to manage academic life on top of intense practices is a balance to be perfected. With the support of the team and

the strong connection between athletes, it fosters a social environment that is encouraging and proves to benefit athletes’ mental health. According to Halifax Health, participating in team sports reduces anxiety, depression and the risk of

morning exercise stretch far beyond just being cardiovascularly healthy. A protein called the brain-derived neurotrophic factor, is released during exercise which increases memory, serotonin levels, ability to learn and improves mood.

Studies show that vigorous exercise for over 40 minutes, shows the greatest elevation of BDNF. By a student kicking off their morning with exercise to get their body moving and blood flowing, they have a surge in awareness and focus surpassing many other non-athletes. “I like exercising because it helps me wake up in the morning,” varsity team captain Natalie Cotton said. “It makes me feel more motivated and better about myself. If I ever have to skip

my run one day, then I just feel lazier throughout the day. Starting my day with a run makes me feel like the whole day is productive.” By participating in a team sport like cross country, an athlete will gain the ability to manage their time effectively along with grasping the concept of accountability through teamwork and hardship. By performing at high levels alongside team members, strong companionship is formed. “The people really do make the sport,” Chavez said. “My teammates have done more than just push me in practice and during races. They’ve guided and encouraged me in different aspects of my life. I’m grateful to have them in my life and could not imagine running without them.”



Senior Lydia Chavez participates in a cross country

teen substance abuse. From running at conversation pace to chat, to preparing for the school day together, these athletes are a close community. By engaging in such a tight knit team, athletes will see benefits mentally, just as well as physically. “The whole morning I spend getting ready for school and at meets means we spend a lot of time together and get to know each other,” varsity junior Grant Sammon said. “I really enjoy the people and I enjoy racing with them.” Although the people in cross country may have a great effect on their teammates through their support and encouragement, an athlete’s day improves even greater after morning exercise. The impacts of

Desire in Athletic Training

By Liliana Aguilar

Shining bright lights beam down on the stadium as crowds cheer from the bleachers. Athletic trainers run across the field acting as the unseen heroes of the game. The hot, summer sun reaching temperatures of 110 force players to work harder than ever before to keep up on the field. Running back and forth, athletic trainers seen on the sidelines provide help to the football players as the whole school goes wild. “They’re a lifesaver,” senior Varsity football player Chima Chineke said. “The athletic trainers help by just giving us water on the field, it has been a hot couple of weeks. They’ve been there for us, very supportive, giving us water constantly, and checking up on us.” Junior athletic trainer, Aurora Garcia, participated in athletic training for the past three years of school. As she works in the field, she spends time bonding with the players and her other trainer members to keep in touch with what is going on with the players and the game. Her training first started during the spring football game in her freshman year. Since her first game, she continues to learn a lot about being a trainer. The training of athletic trainers consists of

building up patience and giving support to the team. Athletic trainers have implemented ankle and knee braces to keep players safe during practice. Additionally, they offer recovery days where players can receive therapeutic offers. One of Garcia’s motivations for athletic training is the rewards. There is a reward system that goes on with all the members of athletic training which consists of points. You get points awarded when you wrap a player as well as how many games you work. These points can often add up and the big main prize is a Letterman jacket. “I used to think training was just for fun and all but it’s like a whole job but it’s nice because everyone helps you,” Garcia said. “A positive that comes from this is that you get to be with your friends, and you get to feel like you’re part of a team, and you’re more involved.”

Senior athletic trainer, Kinsley Slaughter, first joined athletic training in her junior year. Her motivation to continue her pathway in athletic training was her desire to become a physical therapist. The training process can be time-consuming. It takes hours of their days and sometimes even some hours during the weekend. A positive that came from her experience during athletic training is that she met one of her best friends there, as well as it’s so much fun for her and she gets to meet tons of new people. There is a lot to learn in athletic training aside from just the training part, communication is key in things like this. “[Athletic training] made me fall in love with the medical field, physical training, and the aspect of the career,” Slaughter said. “It has taught me to be patient with the players and about the career field I want to go into and physical training kind of set in place.”



Photo by Megan

Athletic trainer Avery Morty helps athletes during a football game.

East v. West: Generations of Rivalry

By Aveesa Bhayani and Sydnie Grayson

Through a sea of blue and a sea of black and gold, Plano West and Plano East fight for their spot as the better high school football team. In history, the idea of an East and West rivalry started in the early '90s with hip-hop music ranging from the East coast with the Notorious B.I.G and the West coast with Tupac. Although less contentious, in Plano, this rivalry continues with the Wolves and the Panthers as they participated in last week's Friday night lights. "There's always the fans that are talking, so the energy gets a lot higher," senior offensive lineman

Corbin Glass said. "I think, myself included, along with the team, we're always playing hard, but it means a little more for the rivalry games." Student section leaders are students that keep the student section pumped up and energized for the entirety of the game. Senior Amelia King, one of these leaders, collaborates with others to maintain the title of the student section that is 'The Jungle.' They work to pack the stands with students and keep the energy alive for each football game; for the East and West game, they brought pink and red sun-

glasses for the 'pink out' theme. "We're all participating in the themes, and we all just get really passionate for these kinds of games," King said. "Besides the first game and the homecoming game, the West game, or as we call it, 'wuckfest,' that'll be the most populated game we have for sure." After the team's triumphant win

games are important and high-tense, but the Senior game and the West game, we're battling for control." The two teams have been fighting for control for almost two decades. The wins have been teetering back and forth for five seasons, with the win going to Plano West last year, the team kept up the rivalry with their win against Plano West last week.

As many of Plano West's star players graduated last year, the rival team has a single win against Plano Senior, a team already bested by this school. "There's always been the district rivalry, but it comes more down to the West and East side,"

"There's always been the district rivalry, but it comes more down to the West and East side"

**- offensive lineman
Corbin Glass**

Corbin Glass said. "I think, myself included, along with the team, we're always playing hard, but it means a little more for the rivalry games." Student section leaders are students that keep the student section pumped up and energized for the entirety of the game. Senior Amelia King, one of these leaders, collaborates with others to maintain the title of the student section that is 'The Jungle.' They work to pack the stands with students and keep the energy alive for each football game; for the East and West game, they brought pink and red sun-

against Plano, the team is optimistic about future games. Sitting at five wins and three losses, the team is already up from previous years with their three-win total last season and two-win total during the 2021-2022 season. In anticipation of their game last evening against Plano West, the team practiced an extra hour each day and planned to sneak in a few trick plays. "I'd say the East v. West game and the East v. Senior games are the most hyped games because they're Plano and we're fighting for the kings of Plano," Glass said. "The other district

Glass said. "There's the blue and there's the gold, so yeah there is a rivalry. It's just Texas football and that's how it is for games." After both teams defeated Plano Senior in past weeks, East remains the ultimate champions of Plano. "Of course we want to show school spirit for all the games and we want to get pumped up," King said. "We want our team to win and since it's our last year, it's the last one we're gonna see so we especially [wanted] them to win. I definitely think it makes the stakes higher because it's our last hurrah."

Golden Girls perform during a football game.

Photo by Megan Glass

Golden Girls: Bond of Sisterhood

By Sydnie Grayson

As the half-time clock dwindles down, there's a hush over the crowd of dancers as the leaders begin a small pep talk. The dancers walk onto the field, ready in their outfits as the stadium lights reflect their sparkle and shine. Senior captain Mackenzie Winters prepares the rest of the team as they gleam with confidence. "Performing is super fun [and] being involved with school activities and events, being able to do stuff there and not just watch," Winters said. "It's definitely sometimes overwhelming, but it's just fun being able to see everyone and [they] are usually super supportive." Transitioning into the new school year, the Golden Girls gained a new director, Nikki Marquez. With a history of teaching in dance, her transition was swift as she transferred from Williams High School, leading the Cheyannes, to leading the award-winning Golden Girls in her, now, eleventh year of teaching. "One of the most exciting parts for me is the fact that I get to follow kids that I've had in the past," Marquez said. "Going from the first two years to the second two years is the

coolest part, the fact that I get to watch their entire high school experience." As the Golden Girls transition into the new school year, the team also welcomes new leaders, such as Winters and senior social president Payton Niven. Along with practices, the social officers create events where the team can bond and enjoy each other's company. "Watching them bond and get together and make new friends is definitely my favorite part," Niven said. "I love to see us having fun in a non-practice setting. It's just good to let go and see friends that you can have fun with outside of practice." After starting their football season practices in July, the team practices during the school year from 2:50 p.m to 4:25 p.m with an extra period for officers. Before the first football game of the season, the Golden Girls practiced on the band pad to perfect their routines, especially because of the new cluster routines they had prepared. "Overall I think it was a great show of sisterhood within the drill team," Marquez said. "It was an amazing halftime and a great opportunity for all of the girls that are part of the program to be able to experi-

ence that moment together and kick off the big, giant East side group." Golden Girls is a large team, consisting of 38 dancers from all grade levels. This includes the dance officers, such as captain and first lieutenant and the social officers. With a range of girls involved in all different clubs and activities, such as NHS, theater and HSA, they all come together for events inside and outside of school. "My favorite part is definitely [the] community and having people to go to and be around no matter what," Niven said. "I like being able to end my day with people I know I love to hang out with and spend time with. It makes practice fun. You get to meet so many people and just make a community of girls that have the same interest and just love to dance together and have a good time. That's what always makes me love it more; not just the dancing, but the people."



Increase of Minimum Wage

Staff Editorial

Minimum wage has long been a topic of debate as many wonder whether employees receive a fair wage for their labor. Minimum wage, introduced in 1938, began at the rate of \$0.25, equivalent to about \$5.19 in modern currency. The rate of minimum wage fluctuated throughout its history, reaching its peak in 1968, valued at \$1.60 per hour, around \$14.12 in today's currency. The current rate, \$7.25, remains unchanged since 2009, however many states such as California increased their minimum wage rates. This brought up the debate over whether all states should increase their minimum wage rates. Minimum wage in Texas should be increased due to many factors. Minimum wage generates barely enough money for the cost of living in Texas so increasing minimum wage can eliminate poverty. In addition, higher minimum wage has the potential to boost employee morale. According to data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the yearly, average cost of living in

Texas is much higher than the yearly salary of a minimum wage worker. The average total personal consumption cost in Texas is \$45,114 per year. However, according to the Center for Poverty and Inequality Research at the University of California Davis, the annual earning for a full-time minimum wage worker is \$15,080. This is barely enough money for minimum wage workers to sustain themselves. The annual earning of workers versus the average cost of living have a difference of almost \$30,034. This difference makes it extremely difficult for minimum wage workers to support themselves and their families. In addition, minimum wage workers may not have extra surprise purchases such

as medical issues or car issues which puts the workers in danger. The highest priority for businesses should be the safety and quality of living for the employees. By increasing the minimum wage, workers will maintain a more secure way of living as their overall salary will increase. Poverty has always been a problem in the United States. According to the US Census Bureau, 37.9 million people in the US are in poverty. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimates that a \$15-per-

employee morale. Increasing the minimum wage can boost worker productivity as they will earn more and be able to support themselves. A small raise would boost worker productivity while decreasing employee turnover and tardiness. Raising the federal minimum wage will stimulate consumer spending, improve business profits, and help the economy grow. It would also benefit the overall economy by increasing consumer demand. Many argue that increasing the rate of

minimum wage workers may be harder for businesses. Concerns include the fact that businesses will have to cut jobs to maximize profitability or the fact that overall profitability will be decreased. However, businesses should ensure that workers are the priority. Business profitability is extremely important however it is important that businesses prioritize their minimum wage employees. In addition, increasing minimum wage is not only a benefit for the workers themselves but also for the whole country. Increasing minimum wage has the power to boost the economy and increase consumer confidence,

thus making it a benefit for everyone. Minimum wage has been a controversial topic for years. Minimum wage workers deserve an increase in wage. Increasing minimum wage has the potential to eliminate power and increase the salaries of the workers, ensuring their financial stability. In addition, overall worker morale can boost due to increased wages. As the country progresses, it is time for us to put the people who work so hard for so little in priority.

**Minimum wage was first
introduced in 1938**
**First minimum wage
\$0.25/hour**
**Current minimum wage
\$7.25/hour**
**The minimum wage rate
was last changed in 2009**

hour increase in the minimum wage could lift more than 1.7 million workers from poverty and lower income inequality. Low-income workers, many of whom are members of marginalized communities, depend on minimum-wage jobs to make ends meet and provide for their families. If the minimum wage were raised to \$15, those workers would be able to afford to pay for essentials like food, rent, and health care. By increasing the minimum pay rate, the quality of living for many employees can increase. Poverty has extremely dangerous health and financial implications on workers so lifting them out of poverty will be beneficial to workers. Raising minimum wage can also improve

**The Panther Prints staff voted 9-0, with majority opinion believing that minimum wage rates should be increased*

Community College: Perfect Pick for Untraditional Students

By Eva Gonzalez

The most common path traveled by students developing their education to a higher level is acceptance into a four-year university. According to the National Center for Education, the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in four-year universities is 43%, while the number of students entering community colleges is 19%. Attending a traditional university is an effective way of specifying a person's passion into their career, making it understandable why students make such huge efforts to be accepted into reputable universities. As many as seven million students attended four-year universities in recent years, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, and almost twice as many people choose to attend traditional universities over community colleges. Other post-graduation students may choose to begin a career directly after high school, enter the military or attend a boarding school. Despite these many options, the aforementioned study also presents the intriguing fact that the number of high school graduates who enroll immediately in community colleges is growing. This is likely correlated to the increasing recognition of the financial and logistical benefits of attending a two-year college. Attending a community college is a great option for people with demanding lives who still want a higher education before their career. The cost of attending a four-year university is significantly more than that of a two-year college, with tuition costs that are easily over five times more expensive than a community college. For some students, pouring tens of thousands of dollars into a traditional university for a degree they are still unsure of is a difficult decision. It is also financially difficult for some people to attend a traditional university and pay four years of tuition, but still worth the effort of getting a degree because of the career opportunities it provides. Going to a community college instead allows them to develop their education and prepare for their career

without having to pay the steep prices of a traditional university. Some students may prefer to transfer to a four-year university upon getting full credits from a community college, and from here can further develop their higher education to get a more prestigious degree. The flexibility of community colleges also caters to non-traditional students who have other obligations that overlap with the schedule of a traditional university. These courses often move at the pace of individual students, with accommodations such as individually scheduled classes and night school. These classes can provide the foundation for future education in a four-year university, and some courses even offer bachelor's degrees despite taking half the time to acquire them as in a traditional university. For freshly graduated students unsure of what to do for their careers and adults intending to reach higher education, community colleges prepare and allow for such lifestyles. However, the degrees that can be received within a community college do not always have the same significance as a degree given from a traditional university. The number of two-year colleges that can award Bachelor's degrees is still limited. Community colleges also lack the level of reputability that most traditional universities have, which creates difficulties for people who depend on their level of education in their career. For students who worry about the difficulties of transitioning from community college into a full career with a degree that may not have the respected nature to come from a traditional degree, there are many options to transfer into four-year universities. The foundation for a higher education can begin in a community college and develop through one of the many options to enter a university, where a higher degree can be achieved. Many transfer paths exist in the state of Texas alone, all of which give the opportunity of transferring two-year college credits into a traditional university. This process provides an advantage for students

looking to develop their education further before ever stepping foot on the campus of a university. Even reputable schools such as the University of Texas in Austin, Texas Tech University, and Texas A&M provide programs to assist students with stronger personal obligations to pursue their full education and careers. A student can enter Austin Community College to directly transfer to the University of Texas in Austin, or Blinn College to transfer into A&M, provided that all the requirements are met. These goals are often more attainable, given the fact that incredibly flexible courses are available within a community college, meaning that there is enough time to develop and receive a degree regardless of the obligations of someone's personal life. Developing a higher education is key to being successful in a career, and college acts for many as a foundation for the knowledge they will develop in their careers and lives beyond school. This information is vital in reaching a career and is often more effective when it originates from a reputable institution. For people with a strong desire to develop their career but who have specific responsibilities or are simply unprepared to enter a traditional university, community colleges provide the perfect beginning to understand the balance between educational development and life experiences.

54.5% of students do not plan on attending community college

14.5% of students plan on attending community college

27.3% of students are not sure whether they will attend community college

***out of 352 students polled**

Staff Picks

By Sydnie Grayson



Photo from Wired

Coraline (PG) - 90% Rotten Tomatoes

"Coraline" is a stop motion film directed by Henry Selick, famous for his unique directing style. The story follows a teenage girl named after the title as she ventures through the experience of moving to another home. The audience explores this new home with Coraline and her new friend, Wybie, as they go through the obstacles and challenges of her second world. With button eyes and a funky setting, the film allows both children and parents to enjoy its jumpscars and emotional nature.

The Sixth Sense (PG-13) - 86% Rotten Tomatoes

Directed by M. Night Shyamalan, "The Sixth Sense" is a thriller film about a child psychologist who helps a child that sees dead people. With famous actor, Bruce Willis, the film encapsulates suspense as the audience follows Willis and child actor, Haley Joel Osment, as they try to uncover Osment's character's powers throughout the entirety of the film. This film does require some parental guidance for children, but for thriller movie lovers, this film is the perfect combination of suspense and thrill.



Photo from ABC



Photo from Variety

Edward Scissorhands (PG-13) - 89% Rotten Tomatoes

"Edward Scissorhands", directed by Tim Burton, is a film about a teenage boy who was built by a scientist, yet left unfinished, leaving him with a unique look. Played by Johnny Depp, Scissorhands falls in love with Kim, played by Winona Rider; the film follows the two as they combat the comments and bad looks given to him by the outside world. Like Burton's other films, the visuals in "Edward Scissorhands" are very exaggerated, especially with makeup and costumes of the characters.

Hocus Pocus (PG) - 39% Rotten Tomatoes

A film about three witches coming back on Halloween to steal the souls of the children, "Hocus Pocus", directed by Kenny Ortega, excites the entire family with its humor and likable characters. The audience watches as Max, Allison and Dani try to stop Winifred, Mary and Sarah as they frolic around Salem attempting to become immortal. As a Disney film, it is enjoyable for the entire family on this upcoming Halloween season.



Photo from Vogue



Photo from Variety

The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG) - 95% Rotten Tomatoes

With characters, Jack Skellington and Sally, "The Nightmare Before Christmas" follows them as they adventure through the lands of Halloween and Christmas. Because of this, the film is highly debated as either a Halloween movie or a Christmas movie. Although Christmas is mentioned throughout the film, the majority of it focuses on the elements of Halloween with scenes in a graveyard and Halloweentown. Directed by Henry Selick, the film is similar to his others, with emphasis on longer movements and exaggerated features.

Suburban Charm of Downtown

By Celine Tan

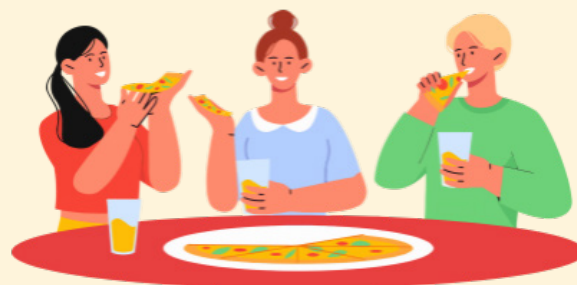
In the midst of teenage lives filled with school and stress, students looking for a place to relax and have fun with their friends might find a lively spot in Downtown Plano. Located in the heart of the city, spanning 14th and 15th St, Downtown Plano boasts a variety of captivating mom-and-pop stores.

A shop for people of all ages is The Gelato Cone. Anyone looking for a quick treat to satisfy their sweet tooth is bound to find an appealing gelato flavor. The Gelato Cone, which started as a family-owned business in 1956, opened in Plano in December of 2018. Originating from Turkey, the owner's history with gelato is apparent in the quality of every flavor they sell. A traditional best-selling flavor, Milk Ocean, is inspired by the flavor of Marash ice cream in Turkey, which is thick, sweet and creamy. The Gelato Cone also has familiar flavors like Pistachio, which uses pistachios imported from Turkey. The Ferrero Rocher flavor tastes just as rich, chocolatey and nutty as the actual candy and Chocolate Cherry is a great option for anyone wanting a fruitier flavor. The shop also offers milkshakes in flavors like Strawberry Banana Boost, providing classic ice cream treats for everyone.



A local favorite cafe is 1418. Similar to other cafes, many people come here to study or catch up with friends. The cozy environment, with couches, plants, wooden accents and a blue ceiling give the cafe a retro, homey vibe. 1418 sells all different types of coffee, as well as tea, breakfast tacos, bakery items and sandwiches. The best-selling drink is the Purple Haze signature latte with lavender syrup and vanilla; the aromatic lavender flavor is prominent without being too overpowering and the vanilla gives it an extra hint of sweetness. Another signature drink, the Beez Kneez, which has honey and cinnamon, is perfect for people who prefer to drink their lattes naturally sweetened. For the upcoming fall season, the David Mason latte makes you feel warm and cozy with maple sugar and brown syrup. In addition to these signature lattes, snacks like the Sugar Loaf Cinnamon Rolls, although on the sweeter side, are perfectly warm and soft to complement any drink. With friendly baristas, masterful latte art, and prices similar to Starbucks, 1418 is definitely a cafe worth trying.

When it comes to restaurants, Urban Crust has a large plethora of mouth watering pizzas and pastas. The multi-story restaurant has a rustic, moody yet casual feel with brick walls and unique lighting that defines historic downtown buildings. The fresh ingredients and the crispy crust in all of their pizzas work together to create an unforgettable experience for your tastebuds. The Margherita pizza, with buffalo mozzarella from Italy and a welcome hint of basil, is a perfect vegetarian option. Another signature pizza is the Black & Bleu with pesto and sirloin. Urban Crust also offers a multitude of toppings to either customize an order or build your own pizza. For pasta lovers, a classic dish is Pappardelle Alla Bolognese, which uses a homemade beef bolognese sauce and soft, al-dente noodles. Not only are the main dishes delicious, but the desserts are also noteworthy. Jeanne-Marie's Chocolate Cake is made up of layers of dark chocolate cake and rich, indulgent chocolate frosting to appeal to chocolate lovers. Overall, Urban Crust's tasty food and quick service make it an ideal place



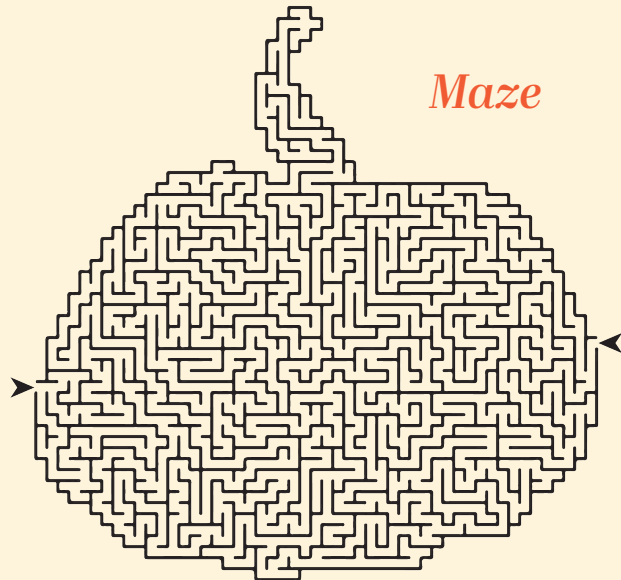
After eating to your heart's desire, Lyla's Clothing Decor & More is the place to go for clothes and other cute trinkets. Named after the owner's grandmother, Lyla's originally started out as an online boutique before moving into a building in Downtown Plano. The store has a charming small town feel to it and sells all kinds of items ranging from clothes to board games to cook books. It sells staple souvenir items like Texas shaped trays and magnets while also carrying women's clothing items picked out by the owner herself. There are fall sweaters, day dresses, and a variety of sneakers and bags. The store's personality is seen in sarcastic little gifts like mugs with funny sayings on them, making Lyla's a staple store to buy gifts for others or to treat yourself.

While downtowns are usually busy and swarming with people, Downtown Plano is a bit more relaxed, making it a relatively safer area for everyone to enjoy in their freetime. These stores, as well as others, characterize the special charm of Downtown Plano and contribute to making it a unique experience for visitors.

HALLOWEEN THEMED GAMES

Enjoy these Halloween themed games!

- From the Newspaper Staff



Maze



Coloring Sheet

Unscramble the following words:

HTIWC

REMPVIA

UNHDEAT

CRITK

FRWOEEWL

NEALHWELO



**To participate in a raffle, bring your completed game sheet
to the Newspaper room
Building 4, Room 201**