

the Chronicle

THE CASE FOR STAYING HOME

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a hometown choice.

See pages 20 & 21

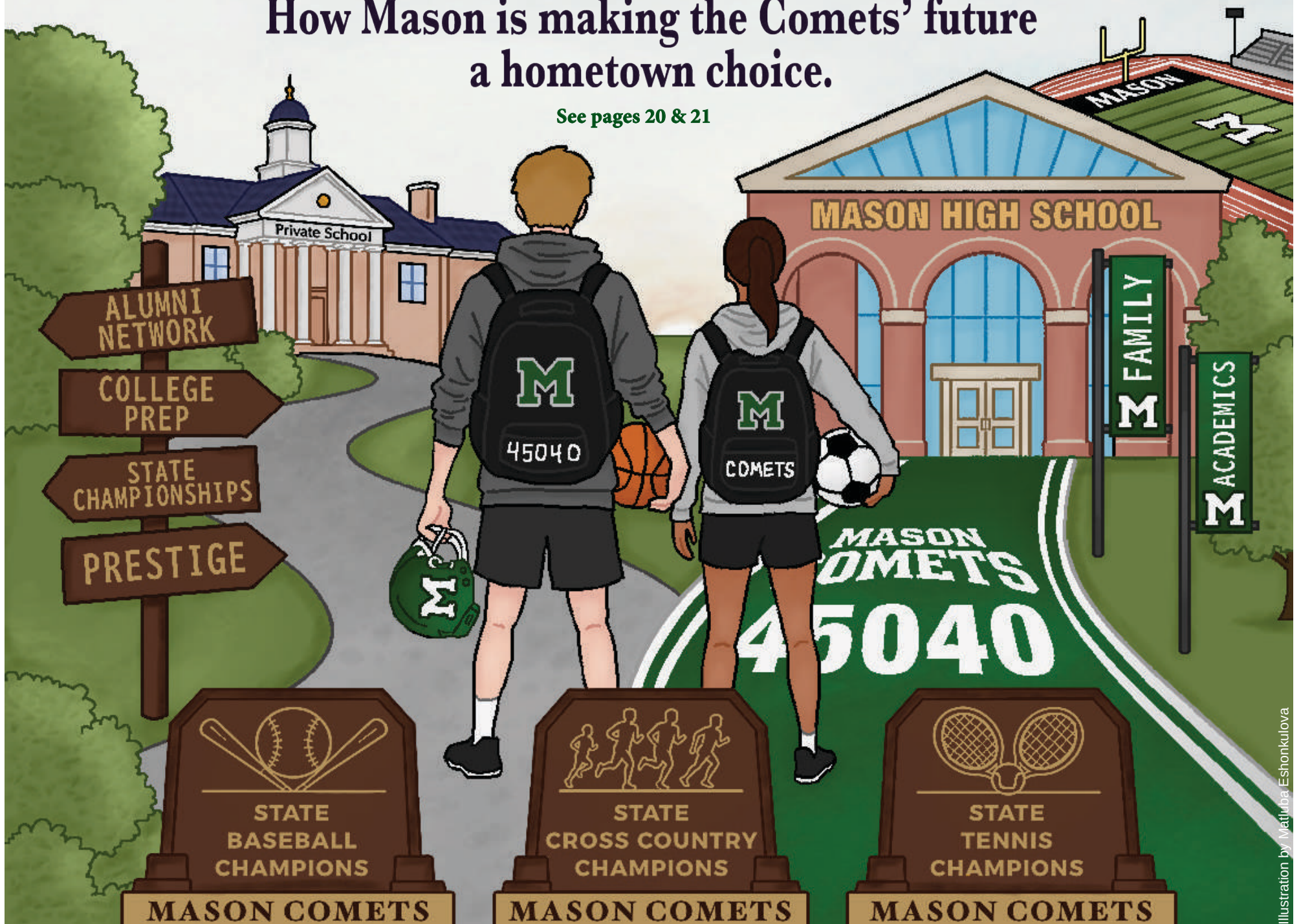


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Japanese students juggle dual education

Kaho Asai | The Chronicle

Mason High School (MHS) accumulates a number of new students every year. Many come from neighboring counties or states, but for some, they are new to the country entirely, and have left their homes for an unfamiliar place 6,000 miles away.

Some manufacturing companies in Japan frequently send their employees to divisions of the corporation in the United States for a few years, resulting in entire families having to move across the world. This is the case for multiple Japanese families living in Mason, with their children attending Mason City Schools. These students must navigate living in an entirely new country with a different language. Not only do they have to adapt to this change, they also have to keep up with their studies back in Japan, because their families will be moving back after only a few years.

Sophomore Sakura Tomii moved to America because of her father's job in 2022. Her family plans to move back to Japan next February, resulting in almost five years living in the United States. She said that during the years she has been in America, she has worked with online tutors to help her study.

"On Tuesdays and Thursdays I meet with a Japanese tutor for an hour [each]," Tomii said. "Tuesdays I learn Japanese language arts, [and] on Thursdays I learn English, the English that's taught in Japan. Then on Wednesdays I meet with an American teacher for an hour to study for the Eiken."

The Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency is a nationally recognized English assessment program in Japan, backed by the Japanese government. Tomii said she attends her Japanese tutor classes along with a full lineup of classes at Mason High School.

"I do assignments given to me by my tutor, and have them teach me things I need help with or watch video lessons from them," Tomii said. "It's hard to balance that with my American high school work. Since I usually get assignments every day from school, I work on that first, and then have a set time for my Japanese studies. So I do both every day."

When she first moved to America, Tomii said she experienced a big culture shock. There were so many differences between school in America and what she was used to in Japan. She said she was

surprised by things like how diverse the students were, the variety in classroom layouts and the amount of lockers in the hallways.

"[It was like] coming to a place I only see on TV," Tomii said. "Everyone is so friendly. I get complimented on my clothes a lot. Japanese people don't really mind what you're wearing, but here, if someone likes your outfit, they'll speak out about it."

Kai Omura is a sophomore at MHS but also attends the Japanese Language School of Greater Cincinnati (JLS). JLS provides students pre-K to 12th grade a full day of classes every Saturday from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., using textbooks and curriculums also used by schools in Japan. He said he moved to America four years ago due to his father's job at Horkos Corporation and has been attending ever JLS since.

"I try to finish all my [American] high school work during my study hall so I can minimize the time I need to work on it at home," Omura said. "But JLS doesn't give too much homework, so [balancing my work] isn't impossible."

Omura said the language barrier was his biggest challenge at the beginning of his years in America. Not only was he a completely new student unfamiliar with his teachers, his classmates, the

school and its culture, but he also had trouble communicating with everyone around him.

"I was so nervous and I had no idea what anyone was saying," Omura said. "The whole time I was anxious if I was in the right classroom. Even if I could say what I wanted, my pronunciation would sometimes be too bad for them to understand. Even now, I sometimes can't communicate well."

Sophomore Masahiro Kitabayashi moved to America this past July, and his family is planning to stay for two years. In Japan, middle school is from seventh to ninth grade and high school is from 10th to 12th. Kitabayashi said he left Japan just before starting his high school years and will be returning right before he enters college. This means he must do his studying for Japanese college entrance exams while in America.

"Since I just moved here, right now I've mostly only been studying English," Kitabayashi said. "I hope to start adding [Japanese work] little by little. I'm just completely occupied with English [right now]."

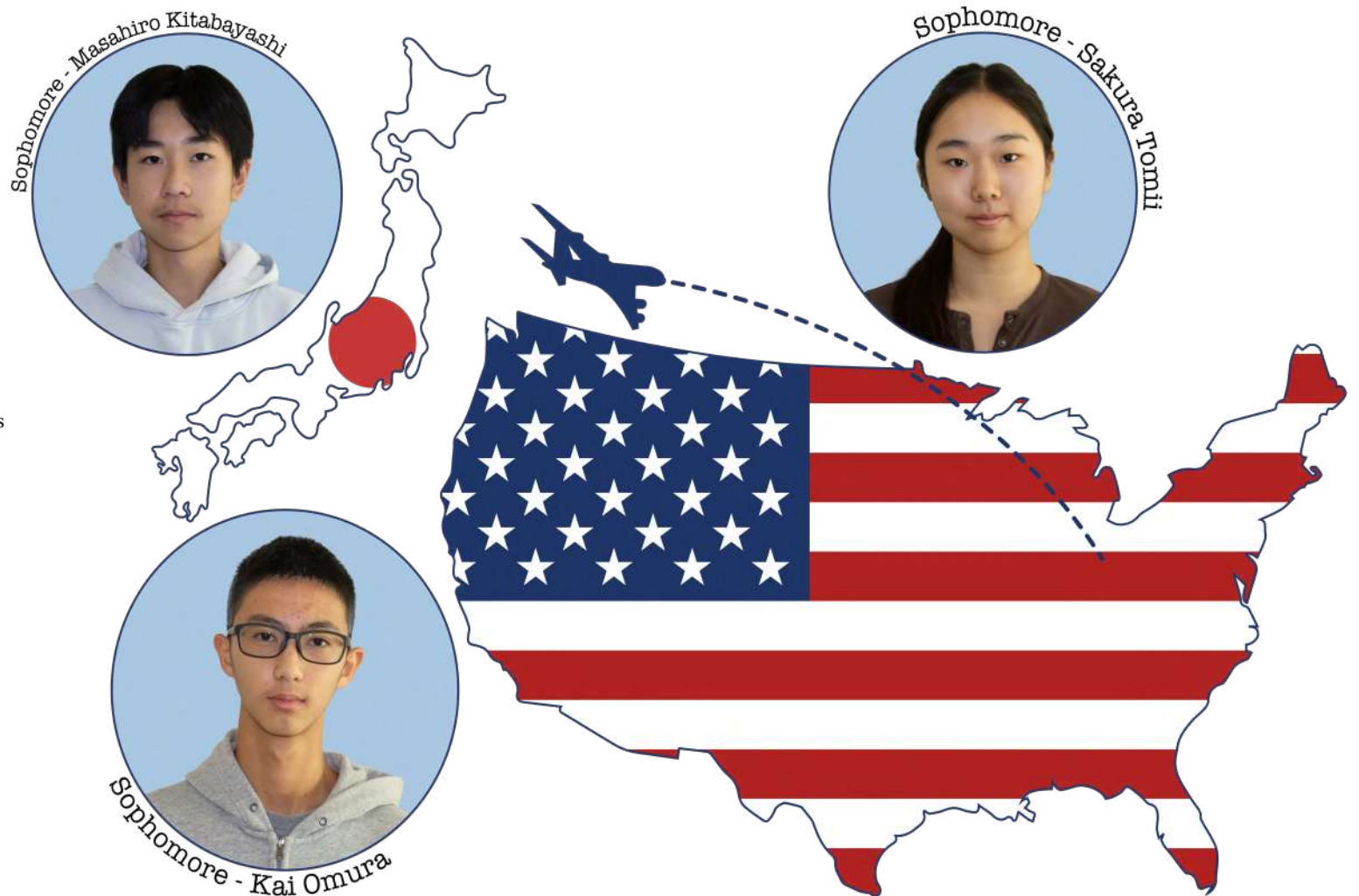
Even though the change will be difficult, Kitabayashi said he is looking forward to unique American experiences and taking advantage of opportunities

here. He said he is excited for the highly enthusiastic festivities surrounding holidays like Halloween and Christmas, the chance to befriend people of different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities and high level sports events. He has already experienced an event that made him excited for more to come.

"At the Cincinnati Open – I really like tennis and played [back in Japan] – I got a sign from [one of the players] Nishikori," Kitabayashi said. "Even just that makes me glad I moved here."

For Tomii, when reflecting on her past five years in the United States, she said she is grateful for the experience. She said that right after moving, she was disappointed because of all the things in Japan she would miss out on and the plans she had to give up, but her perspective has now changed.

"At first I really wanted to go back [to Japan], and every day I said 'I want to go home, I want to go home,'" Tomii said. "My mentality has [now] become a lot stronger, and I've grown in so many ways. I've gotten to meet all kinds of new people and my sense of self has changed a lot."



Graphics by Hazel Davis

Editor's Note: The students in this article were interviewed in Japanese and their responses were translated by the writer.



This story was written by Kaho Asai, a sophomore in her first year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Kaho.Asai15@masonohioschools.com

MHS Marching Band to take part in prized tradition

Sahaj Datta | Editor-in-Chief |
The Chronicle

Katie Samol | Managing Editor |
The Chronicle

On October 16, 232 Mason High School (MHS) Marching Band members gathered for what they believed was a regular rehearsal announcement when they received a surprise invitation: the group had been selected to perform in the 101st Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in November 2027.

The band was selected from more than 100 applicants nationwide to participate in the annual holiday parade in New York City. The celebration included a surprise entrance by one of three Marching Band Directors, Avious Jackson in a turkey costume, New York themed music and a presentation of a \$10,000 donation from Macy’s to support the MHS band program.



Photo by Katie Samol

MHS color guard members (center) celebrate, having just heard the announcement that the MHS Marching Band will be performing in the 2027 Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.



Photo by Sahaj Datta

MHS Director of Bands Avious Jackson (left) and Marching Band Director Jason Sleppy (right) present the \$10,000 check granted to the MHS Marching Band from Macy’s.



Photo by Matluba Eshonkulova

Parents and siblings of MHS Marching Band members await the anticipated surprise announcement in the MHS auditorium on Friday October 16.



Photo by Sahaj Datta

MHS Marching Band director Jason Sleppy pulls the sheet from a “Thanksgiving Day Parade 2027” plaque, revealing the surprise of the band’s selection to MHS Marching Band students and families.



Photo by Matluba Eshonkulova

A mother, father and brother of an MHS Marching Band member react to the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade announcement.

Lights, camera, action: MHS freshman builds acting career

Suhani Datta | The Chronicle

Long before walking through the doors of Mason High School (MHS) as a freshman, Bo Burkhart was navigating audition rooms, memorizing scripts and walking runways. Today, he manages the transition into high school alongside an active career on screen.

Burkhart has already appeared in the TV series “Classroom Confidential” and the miniseries “Shelter in the Mafia,” “Phoebe Phobia,” “Brat Pack TV” and “Obsessed with His Silent Bride.” His screen credits also feature the drama “Our Family Pride” and a Dhar Mann Studios production.

Burkhart got his start in the entertainment industry as a model through his older brother, Eric Burkhart. Along with modeling, Burkhart began breaking into the acting scene around the same time. His first roles were in YouTube series and vertical films, short films designed to be watched on smartphones.

“The first thing I was [featured] in was this small YouTube series on a channel called Brat TV,” Burkhart said. “Overseas, vertical films are very big, [and] I was in one of those as a flashback of the main character. Then, I was in a student film for an acting school in Los Angeles. [Then] it was another vertical film.”

Burkhart’s biggest role came in September 2024, when he worked with the well-known YouTube channel and company Dhar Mann Studios, founded by producer and entrepreneur Dhar Mann. The channel has 27.7 million subscribers and has produced more than 2,000 videos.

Burkhart played Marshall in the video “BULLY Doesn’t Know POOR KID IS A RAP GOD,” which has amassed more than 18 million views on YouTube. Burkhart said moving from smaller productions to a larger endeavor felt surreal.

“[The site] was just gigantic,” Burkhart said. “I had no clue where I was going or what to do, so that part was really hard. But other than that, it kind of just felt like anything else. [It] kind of hit me afterwards when everyone [knew] me as ‘the Dhar Mann guy.’”

Burkhart said the challenges of traveling to different sets and getting booked for roles make external support important for an actor. For Burkhart, that support comes from his family, especially his father.

“All of my family has been super supportive through my career,” Burkhart said. “Especially my dad, who funded everything and put a lot of faith in me and my talent.”

Burkhart said acting feels surreal, regardless of the role he is playing. He also follows a set preparation routine to ensure authenticity in his performances.

“When I act, it’s like entering a foreign world,” Burkhart said. “When I’m working with my scripts, I try to picture everything that happens in the script. Not just the lines, but the thoughts and feelings [of my character].”

While Burkhart is unsure if he will pursue performing long-term, he treats the experience as worthwhile regardless of the outcome. Meanwhile, he focuses on keeping his skills sharp through daily practice.

“If I stop acting, then I’ll be able to say that I did this in freshman year, and that was pretty cool,” Burkhart said. “If I continue, then hopefully I get to the big leagues. But every day I try and practice a little bit of my craft, whether it’s memorizing a foreign script or just working on my character development.”

Burkhart said his experience in the acting and modeling industries has taught him skills that extend beyond performing. These include resilience, persistence and effective communication.

“[Acting] definitely does teach you [how to handle] rejection,” Burkhart said. “A lot of production agencies want 18-year-olds to play 14-year-olds because they have more hours. You don’t get a lot of parts at all. And I’ve learned a lot of communication skills on how to talk to people, especially [to those in] managerial positions.”

Developing thick skin has become a necessary part of Burkhart’s journey through modeling and acting. Knowing firsthand how difficult it is to secure roles, he encourages other aspiring actors to persevere through rejection.

“Don’t stop unless you have to,” Burkhart said. “It’s hard getting in, and you’re not going to get roles often. If you do, good for you. I’m going to be so proud, but it’s really, really hard. So you just need to stick with it.”



This story was written by Suhani Datta, a sophomore in her first year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Suhani.Datta38@masonohioschools.com



Burkhart playing Charlie in Brat TV’s “Boy Humiliates Himself In Front Of Crush”



Burkhart playing Charlie in Brat TV’s “Friends Cause Girl To Pass Out”



Burkhart playing Marshall in Dhar Mann Studio’s “BULLY Doesn’t Know POOR Kid IS A RAP GOD”



Students get head start in healthcare

Alessia Korvessis | The Chronicle

At only 16 years old, Mason High School (MHS) students are stepping beyond the traditional school classroom into the world of healthcare through Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training. These students are able to gain hands-on experience in the medical field and explore their futures all in one.

The CNA program lasts four to 12 weeks and combines classroom instruction, hands-on training and clinical experience. Ohio allows students to begin CNA training at 16 years of age, giving teenagers an early opportunity to learn about patient care, medical terminology and responsibilities of working in health care.

Senior Lillian Tant completed CNA training over the summer. Tant said her two-week course was a rigorous experience.

"There were at least six lectures a day, and they were all 30 minutes long," Tant said. "Then you'd have four days of clinicals, so you learn all the procedures and treatments."

While some students choose CNA training to strengthen their college applications, others do it to help choose their college path. Tant said the experience helped her determine whether she wanted to pursue a career in health care.

"My family doesn't come from a

medically oriented environment," Tant said. "I don't really have many medical connections. I think it was important for me to get an idea of how much time, effort and sacrifice [medicine] requires out of you, and putting it into a real experience helped me decide what I want to do in college."

Senior Kami Useche also completed the CNA program over the summer. She said she learned that being a CNA involves more than mastering medical procedures. Building relationships with patients is also an important part of the job.

"It's called bedside manner, and it's how to really talk to the residents and how to manage them," Useche said. "Especially depending on whatever mood they are in, you just want to make them as comfortable and as happy as possible."

Useche said CNAs can sometimes be overlooked compared to surgeons and other medical professionals who require more education and training. However, she said the level of responsibility CNAs have, especially at a young age, makes the job significant.

"I think [CNAs are] overlooked because [the job] doesn't take as much schooling as people who are higher skill leveled, but we are doing a lot for the patients," Useche said. "It scared me at first a little bit just because I am a kid and they're much older than me,

you have to understand that it's not the age that defines you."

Junior Maggie Schumm completed her CNA training in July before taking the state test, allowing her to officially apply for CNA positions. The test consists of a knowledge exam with online test questions and a skills-based exam in which four skills are randomly selected.

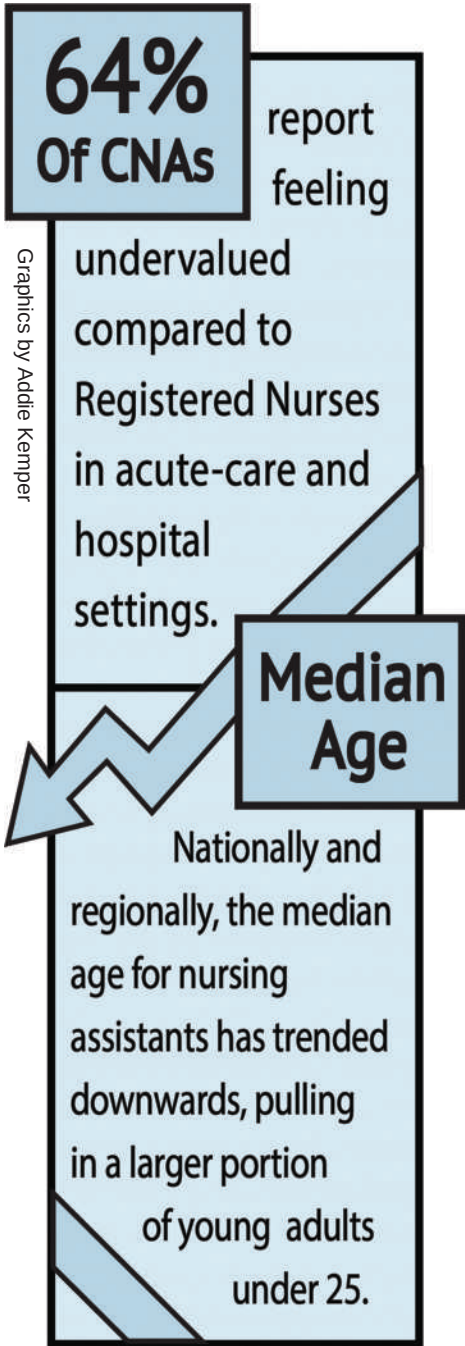
"It went over protocols, different skills, anatomy, medical terminology and even food diets," Schumm said. "After you pass the test, you're on the Ohio Nurse Aide Registry list, and then you're able to apply for jobs and actually start working."

Schumm said the program gave her firsthand experience in health care. She said it helped her consider which area of the medical field she may want to pursue in college.

"I'm glad I got to do it early because if I end up not really liking it, then maybe I would know that nursing isn't for me," Schumm said. "We're so young, and this is one of the few opportunities that we have to do this and see what it's like to actually be in the medical field."



This story was written by Alessia Korvessis, a junior in her second year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Alessia.Korvessis73@masonohioschools.com



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Tripathi explores new depths through diving



Nora Ghobril | The Chronicle

Weightless, surreal, and tranquil — words that may not describe everyday life for most people. For Mason High School (MHS) junior Anaya Tripathi, however, they are familiar feelings found far below the surface.

Tripathi said her passion for scuba diving began in elementary school, when her mother took her to countries such as Fiji and the Bahamas to experience some of the best waters. Now, Tripathi spends much of her summers scuba diving around the world.

"You can travel somewhere and see what's above the water, but diving lets you see this whole other part of the place," Tripathi said. "Diving has made me want to see even more of the world."

Scuba diving is not the most common

hobby for a high school student. Tripathi said her hobby often leaves people curious, especially when they learn she is in high school.

"People are usually pretty shocked when I tell them I scuba dive because it's not something you hear about a lot," Tripathi said. "Usually the first reaction I get is just surprise, and then they start asking me a bunch of questions."

Tripathi said scuba diving has become a normal part of her life. She said as she continues diving, it becomes less of an experience and more of something she has become accustomed to.

"I don't really think of [scuba diving] as this crazy thing anymore, but other people definitely do," Tripathi said. "It's taught me how to manage my time and stay consistent with my responsibilities, even outside of diving."

Although diving may look effortless from the surface, Tripathi said becoming certified requires months of constant practice and guidance from the right professionals. She said that experience taught her the difference between being incredible at something and being capable of doing it.

"[Scuba diving] definitely taught me that you can't expect to be good at something immediately," Tripathi said. "Skills like getting used to the pressure

of the water were difficult at first, but you just keep practicing until you get more comfortable."

While diving lessons require rigorous preparation, Tripathi said her skills extend beyond the water. She said breaking away from hobbies that are done for other reasons was a refreshing reminder for her.

"I feel like so much of what students do is connected to school somehow, and [scuba diving] is something I do just because I love it," Tripathi said. "I'm not doing it for a grade or because I need to put it on something. I just genuinely like doing it. Sometimes I think we get so focused on school that we forget we can learn things just because we're interested in them."

Tripathi said scuba diving may still shock many people, but it has become a hobby that gives her a break from school and clears her mind to explore beneath the surface.

"You never really know what you're going to love until you actually try it," Tripathi said. "I think everyone should find something they genuinely enjoy, even if it seems random or different."



This story was written by Nora Ghobril, a sophomore in her first year on The Chronicle staff.

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Photo illustration by Medha Shinde



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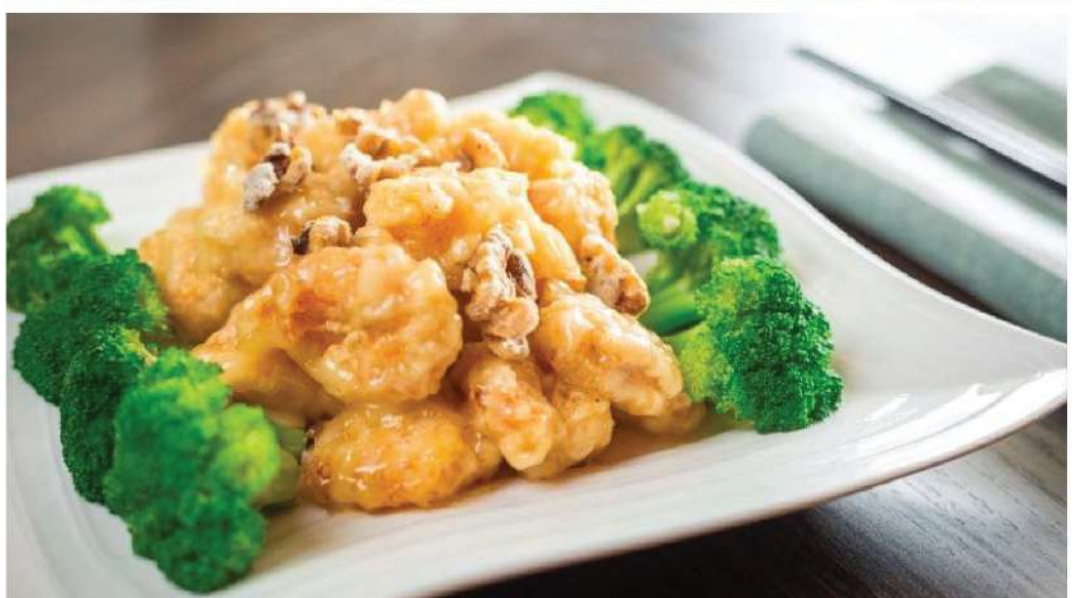
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MHS expands halal food options

Sophie Allen | The Chronicle

After more than a year of preparation, halal food options have been introduced to the Mason High School (MHS) cafeteria as part of an ongoing effort to make the menu more accessible to students with different dietary needs. Earlier this year, the cafeteria added halal-certified turkey taco meat to its daily menu, with plans to introduce a second halal item in the near future.

“Halal” refers to foods permissible under Islamic dietary law. Halal dietary guidelines prohibit pork and pork products, among other foods, and require meat from permissible animals to be slaughtered according to specific Islamic guidelines. Things which are forbidden are referred to as “haram.”

MHS student nutrition supervisor Rachel Tilford has been working towards expanding the menu to accommodate a variety of student diets over the past few years. Her job includes sourcing ingredients as well as communicating with suppliers and distributors.

“We’ve had requests to offer halal foods for a while, but [we] were not able to do a lot of that because they’re very expensive, and we were uncertain how to best handle halal foods,” Tilford said. “We understand that they have to be handled differently in

the kitchen to meet the [Islamic] law, and we didn’t want to mishandle it.”

Tilford said that dining at school is about more than just serving meals; it is about creating a space where every student feels included, valued and ready to learn. Previously, the child nutrition team had focused on providing vegan and vegetarian options, but expanding to halal foods required additional effort to make appropriate accommodations.

“The first thing that we decided to do was take all the pork out of the kitchen because we knew the biggest [consideration] for people who follow [a halal] diet is the avoidance of pork,” Tilford said. “We took all [pork] items off the menu at the end of last school year so there would be no pork in our kitchens at all, from [Mason Early Childhood Center] MECC to the high school.”

Janelle Brunswick, the assistant student nutrition supervisor, works in conjunction with Tilford and the child nutrition team. Brunswick’s work focuses on incorporating new products into recipes for the menu.

“For us, adding halal meat has been more than simply finding a product that meets halal requirements,” Brunswick said. “We have to consider the product’s portion size, nutritional profile, USDA meal pattern contribution, cost, availability, preparation and how well it works within

recipes our students already enjoy.”

MHS junior and Muslim student Rameen Tahir was one of the first students to try the halal menu offerings. Before being introduced to the cafeteria, samples of potential menu items were offered to students during lunch to gauge their reactions.

“Some days, I either don’t have anything that I want to pack, or I only bring snacks,” Tahir said. “[Having halal options] makes it a lot more accessible. If I don’t want to pack, I’m still able to buy something that I can actually eat.”

Tahir said that halal food can be subject to misconceptions. Because she rarely eats meat outside of her home, people sometimes mistake her for not eating meat at all.

“I think I’m the only Muslim person at my lunch table,” Tahir said. “For me to [eat the cafeteria food], and some people know I don’t [often] eat meat, they were obviously questioning, ‘Are you able to eat that?’ Then I can just explain what halal is, and I feel like that educates people, even if it’s the slightest bit. It lets people know that there are other options.”

While halal items remain relatively new among food suppliers and are considered specialty products, Mason’s child nutrition team continues to look for additional foods to add to the menu and better serve

WHAT MAKES MEAT HALAL?

1. The animal must be a species permitted under Islamic dietary law.

2. The animal must be alive at the time of slaughter.

3. God’s name must be pronounced at the time of slaughter.

4. A sharp knife is used to make a swift cut to the neck, severing the relevant blood vessels and airway.

5. The animal’s blood is allowed to drain.

6. The animal should be treated humanely, with unnecessary suffering avoided.

Graphic by Addie Kemper

Mason’s diverse student body.

“I think [offering halal food] normalizes it,” Tahir said. “I feel like when more people understand [that] halal food can be anywhere, then it’s not something that’s so crazy. [For] a lot of people, it’s a distant concept to them because they don’t really know what it means.”



This story was written by Sophie Allen, a junior in her second year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Sophie.Allen10@masonohioschools.com



MHS choir students hit high note with CCM

Evelyn Feldmann | The Chronicle

On October 2, eight select students from the Mason High School (MHS) Honors Concert Choir performed with the University of Cincinnati's Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (CCM) Chamber Choir at Christ Church Cathedral in downtown Cincinnati.

The MHS students joined a small group of students from the Walnut Hills High School Choir and the Cincinnati School for Creative and Performing Arts Honor Choir in a performance that included "Bach Cantata 131," a 30-minute, 38-page, five-movement piece performed in German.

MHS Choir director Jason McKee oversaw preparations for the performance, which CCM Chamber Choir director Joe Miller conducted. McKee said that when Miller reached out in April, McKee was thrilled about the opportunities the performance would create for his students.

"CCM is one of the finest music schools in the United States and probably the world," McKee said. "So, for us to be asked to send students to participate and collaborate with a college ensemble of their caliber is a pretty special thing."

McKee said CCM paid for his students' sheet music, which normally can cost hundreds of dollars. He said the Honors Concert Choir was also fortunate to have the chance to perform a highly difficult piece, allowing the students to gain valuable experience.

"They got to see the level of professionalism and maturity that is expected at the college level," McKee said. "And [they got] to perform a piece of music that we typically would not be able to program here at Mason, and with CCM's [resources and] connections, I think that they got an experience that they would not normally get at very many high schools."

MHS senior and Honors Concert Choir soprano Elise Hartmann said that she finds the high-level music difficult. It challenges her to an extent she had never reached in the Honors Chamber Choir before.

"['Bach Cantata 131'] is definitely a lot to look at at once," Hartmann said. "Your mind's going a million different places [at once] because the notes are fast and the language is difficult. There's a lot of sharps and flats, so it's definitely a lot to master altogether."

MHS senior and Honors Concert Choir alto Kennedy Grayer said one of the biggest challenges for students was balancing classwork with the additional at-home practice required to master the piece. She said learning to sing in a different language was an additional



Photo by Katie Samol

MHS Honors Chamber Choir students rehearse "Bach Cantata 131" with select members of the Walnut Hills High School Choir and the Cincinnati School for Creative and Performing Arts Honor Choir under the direction of CCM Chamber Choir Director Joe Miller on Oct. 2 at Christ Church Cathedral.

challenge.

"[It's] been difficult for all of us: learning German, how the language works [and] the inflections you need to put in your voice," Grayer said. "Being a senior with college [applications] and different classes, then also [practicing for] this has been something hard to balance."

MHS junior and Honors Concert Choir bass Jonathan Gochoel said finding time when all eight students were available to practice together was also difficult. He said the group met during Connect Time and practiced after school.

"[When we have] inside of school practice, we really have to focus on [what] we're doing," Gochoel said. "We can't really move on until we nail it, so we have to go step by step instead of putting [hard parts] off until later."

Gochoel said the performance carried more pressure than a typical choir concert because the students performed alongside college-level singers. He said performing in front of a larger audience meant facing pressure from people who are more critical of music.

"[Normally] there's not a lot of pressure," Gochoel said. "But [this time] we're going to be performing with some of the best kids in the area, performing [a] really advanced piece in front of people that have high expectations for music."

Hartmann said that though the difficulty of "Bach Cantata 131" may be stressful, she was determined to persevere. She said being selected alongside talented CCM singers gave her a look into the life of someone training to become a

professional and opened up opportunities to improve.

"My favorite part was getting to perform with the CCM chamber choir," Hartmann said. "You could tell that they really loved what they were doing, and they taught us a lot about how to be good choir members. It was definitely [a] very insightful [experience]."

McKee said that the mission of the MHS choir program extends beyond teaching students how to sing. He said the program aims to give students skills they can carry beyond high school and use to connect with their communities.

"We want our students to take the skills that they learn through singing and choir here, and use that for the rest of their life," McKee said. "Whether it be a community chorus, a church choir or community musical theater."

Over their years in MHS choirs, students like Hartmann, Grayer and Gochoel have found a sense of community among their fellow performers. Grayer described choir as a place where she has found people who share her passion for singing while developing her skills for the future.

"Choir has been a great place to foster friendships and to grow in something that I love," Grayer said. "We're lucky to have a group that strives for excellence; we all want to work to produce something really good. [I] definitely think doing choir in high school has made me want to continue it in my future."

Hartmann said she admires the other students selected for the performance, and enjoyed working with them. She said the

singers in the CCM chamber choir helped her improve and develop her vocal skills.

"I was sitting next to a [doctoral] student for most of my [rehearsals]," Hartmann said. "I was really listening to her and how she was singing and matching her tone. I think that really helped me grow a lot. That's what I would say [is] a [real] benefit to doing something like this."

Grayer said she is glad that this event is close to home, while also giving a sense of what it is like to be a part of such a high-level group. She said she is proud Mason was selected for this opportunity and that they did so well.

"CCM is literally a world-renowned program," Grayer said. "I think it's an amazing opportunity and something right in our backyard. I'd say for me, it's a cool opportunity to sing with some really, really talented people."

Gochoel said the eight students spent months preparing during Connect Time, after school, and at home. He said he wants to showcase how the performance unified them as singers and display what they can do.

"We each have our own special talents or something that really brings us together that translates musically," Gochoel said. "I hope that [doing] this performance shows that with all our talents and the eight of us [together], we have what it takes to sing this."



This story was written by Evelyn Feldmann, a sophomore in her first year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Evelyn.Feldmann16@masonohioschools.com

Mason community honors Sable Gibson, commemorates senior year

Divya Khan | The Chronicle

Most Mason High School (MHS) seniors have spent their entire lives in Mason, from childhood all the way up until the present. Reflecting back on their elementary years, the Class of 2027 is approaching their final months of high school. But this year, as talk of graduation begins and seniors think about their walk across the stage, they remember the Mason student who is no longer here to take her walk.

On Feb. 20, 2019, 10-year-old Sable Gibson passed away due to cardiac arrest following a diagnosis of influenza and strep throat. Sable was the youngest of six children, and was a fourth grader at Mason's Western Row Elementary School. Over the past seven years, Sable has left an impact on not only the people around her, but the town as a whole. As a member of the class of 2027, Sable would now be in her final year of high school, and it has not gone unnoticed.

Holly Gibson is Sable's mother. She said she has taken notice of the town's efforts to represent Sable throughout the years, and especially this year.

"I think it is so awesome how even people who don't know [Sable] or know the story [of her passing] are learning about her," Gibson said. "Through the years people have been so good about remembering her, and that just means so much to us."

Pink ribbons tied around trees lined the town for the first day of school; a water polo senior banner of Sable hangs in the natatorium to honor her and pink painted hearts can be found on several seniors' parking spots from the Shine Like Sable foundation. Gibson said that she appreciates the acts the community has taken to represent her daughter and that she was thankful Sable was being remembered.

"Most places don't do what they're doing for Sable," Gibson said. "Most communities seven years later don't remember, and so I think Mason's so unique in that they really pull together and remember her."

Gibson said a Mason teacher suggested painting hearts on the senior parking spot. She said she was afraid no one would participate in the activity.

"So many [people participated]," Gibson said. "It was around 70 [seniors from Mason], and I even had two or three [seniors] from Kings, [and] two from CHCA reach out to me [asking], 'Will you come paint [a heart] on our parking spots?'"

Gibson said that she knew this year would be hard for her and the rest of Sable's family as Sable's senior milestones passed, including activities like senior sunrise, the first day of school and homecoming. She said that she acknowledges how fast senior year is passing and that she is aware that she is unable to participate in being present for the senior year activities with her daughter.

"It is so crazy when it's already fall break, then it's Thanksgiving, and then it's Christmas," Gibson said. "After this year, everybody will scatter and start their lives, so I feel like this is kind of the big last year to remember [Sable as a community]."

Though the town is making efforts to represent Sable in her senior year, the community has done much in previous years to honor Sable and her character by helping the people of Mason who may need more help than others. Holly and Scott Gibson, Sable's parents, created the ShineLikeSable Foundation after her passing, which has been used to fundraise for children's hospitals, bring service dogs into those hospitals as well as Mason elementary schools and create a weekend food program in Mason.

According to the ShineLikeSable website, the ShineLikeSable Foundation has worked with Mason City Schools to create a weekend food program that makes "Shine Packs," which are lunches given to students who may not be financially capable of accessing a lunch on weekends when school lunch is not available. Shine Packs were created in honor of Sable packing a second lunch for school in case a student came to class with no lunch.

"[Sable] has such a love for kids who did not have enough food to eat, whether it be homeless people or kids at school," Gibson said. "We thought [Shine Packs were] a way to carry on her memory and honor her."

Gibson said that the foundation has helped many students in Mason. She said that before the passing of her daughter and creation of the initiative, there was no weekend food program in the city.

"Our biggest pack is the first Saturday of every month," Gibson said. "We take care of about 900 students at Mason."

Reflecting on Sable's impact on the community and the people she knew, MHS seniors Parker Evans and Bella Anderson said their lives have changed in the past seven years. Evans and Anderson were two of Sable's closest



Photo contributed by Holly Gibson

The Gibson family in Florida September 2026, holding a framed photo of Sable. The youngest child of six kids, Sable's family often referred to her as "Little Sister."

friends and said they continue to honor her as they walk through their senior year. Evans said that throughout her childhood, Sable was known for being a fun and giggly person.

"I think [this year] is hard because she could have been here, she could have been doing all [of the senior activities]," Evans said. "I think [it is important] to see she is probably still watching over [us], and she is not missing out; she is still looking down, and she's still [here]."

As they started their senior year, Evans and Anderson said they began to find more ways to honor Sable, including going to the cemetery on the anniversary of her passing and spending the day with Holly Gibson on Sable's birthday.

"We got backpack photos and had a picture frame of Sable that we took with it," Anderson said. "We [also] had a keychain of an angel, and it [had a pink little stone that we put] on our backpacks."

Anderson said that she feels like the loss has continued to impact many and that the Class of 2027 is different due to it. She said Sable's passing was hard on everybody in the community.

"Our whole grade was impacted; [all of the seniors] lost a person in their grade," Anderson said. "I think our grade is tighter because of what we have been through."

Anderson said that she has seen the

community honoring Sable in a variety of ways throughout the years. She thinks that this remembrance has helped the friends and family around the passing in a way they could not have expected.

"It has been really fun to just see all of the things throughout the years that are still honoring her," Anderson said. "It is really cool to see [the way people are remembering Sable], as a community."

Gibson said that these acts to honor her daughter around town have meant a lot to her and her family. She said everything the town has done for her family has not gone unnoticed.

"[My family and I are] grateful that she is so remembered and honored," Gibson said. "[Sable] is my favorite thing to talk about; the best gift you can give me is to bring her name up."

Gibson said that she has one takeaway she wants people to reflect on leading up to what would have been Sable's final year of high school.

"What you do in the day-to-day matters," Gibson said. "Whether she was sitting next to somebody on a buddy bench that did not have someone to play with or sharing her food at lunch. Those little [acts of kindness] make a difference in people's lives."



This story was written by Divya Khan, a senior in her first year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Divya.Khan86@masonohioschools.com

MARCH OF THE LIVING

May 2 - 14, 2027

Never Again is Now

Open to Cincinnati high school seniors with at least one Jewish parent.

Come learn about March of the Living, an opportunity to join Jewish teens from all over the world to study the history of the Holocaust and to examine the roots of prejudice, intolerance and hatred. Observe Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) in **Poland**, where you will march from Auschwitz to Birkenau, the largest concentration camp complex built during World War II.

Afterwards, you will travel to **Israel** to observe Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day) and celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day). The program will help strengthen Jewish identity, connections to Israel, and build a community of future Jewish leaders.



"Since going on March of the Living, I have felt closer to my Jewish identity than before. This is both because of the opportunity to be surrounded by other Jews and because we saw and learned about major aspects of Jewish history."

- Ben Reinicke
MOTL Delegate

This trip is generously funded by The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, and organized by the Mayerson JCC, in partnership with The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center. Grants are administered by the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. Cincy Journeys grants are not need-based and are offered to Cincinnati Jewish high school seniors who have not already used their Israel travel grant. Exact trip dates and details may vary.

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STUDENTS SHOWCASE



lot,” Jones said. “The great thing about it is that [I am] able to reuse them and get [my] money’s worth out of them.” Although cosplaying is often associated with anime, students also create costumes based on shows, movies, music and games. For many, one of the most creative aspects of the hobby is the connection it creates between people and characters. Rosenzweig said she mainly cosplays Shiho Hinomori from “Project SEKAI,” a rhythm and story-based mobile game. Rosenzweig said one character allows her to express aspects of both the character’s personality and her own.

“My personality is very different from [Shiho Hinomori] in the way that she’s very introverted and I’m very extroverted,” Rosenzweig said. “[But,] I think overall I have a pretty similar personality to her. Like [how] she’s an awkward character, but she loves and cares about her friends. When I’m dressing up, I prefer to be myself because I’m giving that character embodiment and I get to show different aspects of my personality.”

However, others like Chang discover creativity and connection through cosplaying multiple characters from different media as well as their own original characters. Chang said cosplaying certain characters without established designs allows for more creative freedom. The character connection cosplay provides has also introduced Chang to a potential career path.

“I like going into different universes and diving into worlds that other people have created,” Chang said. “I like interacting with those worlds when I read and watch shows. Even as I’m dressing up as someone or something else, I really connect with the characters, and I want to go into a field where I make characters for others to connect with.”

Rosenzweig focuses on cosplaying one character rather than multiple. Rosenzweig said that she stays with the original looks and actions because of her deep connection and respect for the character.

(Continued on page 13)

COSPLAYERS BUILD COMMUNITY ON THEIR OWN TERMS

Michelle Zuo | The Chronicle

With pop-culture-inspired costumes, character-accurate makeup and detailed props, Halloween serves as the finale to October’s festivities. The holiday has long been an opportunity to dress up and showcase personal interests. But the tradition has evolved into a hobby: cosplay.

As media such as anime, manga and cartoons become increasingly popular, cosplayers have found community through conventions and events. Mason High School (MHS) junior Carly Chang started cosplaying in 2021. Since then, cosplay has become an outlet for self-expression, and Chang has incorporated it into parts of their daily life.

“I feel more like myself when I’m doing cosplay,” Chang said. “[People will] see me in the halls wearing some sort of elaborate clothing. I’m always thinking

doing something each week because I just like dressing up.”

Another aspect of cosplay is the creative freedom it provides. Freshman Karina Sherman was introduced to cosplay in 2020. Since she was young, Sherman said the styling and fashion aspects of the hobby have given her the opportunities to learn new skills.

“I was a little 2020 cosplay baby and it was kind of like throwing together whatever I could,” Sherman said. “Now, I spend a little more money, but a lot of the time I will just use what I have. I’m really into doing design stuff, and I’ve learned how to sew for [cosplay]. I’ve also learned about materials in general [from] pinning stuff together so that it looks normal.”

Creating a cosplay can require a variety of skills, from sewing and painting to styling wigs. Junior Arlo Rosenzweig said crimping, styling and altering wigs and

clothes have become one of the most enjoyable parts of the process.

“I style each individual spike with a ton of hairspray and it takes forever,” Rosenzweig said. “[But,] I love doing wigs because it’s just so much fun. I also love altering, as I’ll get cosplays and they’re not exactly high quality. So, I’ll paint and stitch them to be the right size and color.”

Cosplayers often purchase cosplay materials from online retailers such as Amazon, Alibaba, Taobao and AliExpress, but the hobby can come with many challenges, including expensive materials and hard-to-find merchandise. Senior Brody Jones began cosplaying a year ago and focuses on Anaxa from “Honkai: Star Rail,” a role-playing gacha game. Jones said focusing on one character can help make the cost of cosplay more manageable.

“In the next convention my friend and I [are going] to, we both want to try a new character because we reuse cosplays a

INDIVIDUALITY THROUGH COSPLAY ★★

(Continued from page 12)

"I'm scared that if I do something that isn't canon then I'm ruining her image in my own eyes," Rosenzweig said. "Her voice actress is a real person and is pretty involved with the fans. So if I'm giving her a bad image, what does that make her voice actress or production team feel? Hypothetically, if she were a real person, I wouldn't want to destroy the image she's built up."

Portraying characters can also lead students towards future interests. Sophomore Tobias Fishback cosplays characters from horror films and theatrical bands, which he said has allowed him to discover parts of his passion for filmmaking and acting.

"I want to pursue filmmaking and acting, so [cosplay] plays a part in that [because] I like the idea of just pretending to be a character," Fishback said. "[Cosplayers] get to embody that character [they] love so deeply, and I'm neurodivergent [and certain] bands are my special interest. Cosplaying for me brings out a lot of joy, artisticness and connection on different levels in a different kind of space."

At conventions, events and online, community is another aspect of cosplay that students find comforting. Jones said the accepting environment drew him further into the hobby.

"It was really surprising to see how accepting and open the community was in my first time cosplaying," Jones said. "I met a cosplayer who was extremely experienced, and I could tell by her cosplay price and quality alone. But she was very kind and showed me a lot of hidden

things about cosplaying that make it easier and more fun."

Jones said that like any community, cosplay has aspects that can drive people away from it. With uncomfortable situations occurring online and at conventions, Fishback said these portions of the community can be a challenge for cosplayers.

"It's not representative of the community but things do happen," Fishback said. "You honestly have to get away from the situation and ignore it in the best way possible. [It's] not ignoring that it [happened,] but don't let it get to you if it doesn't affect you personally."

Sherman said parts of the cosplay community are often misunderstood. She said that being involved in cosplay has changed the way she sees cosplaying.

"Half the people who go to these conventions are just people who like arts and crafts," Sherman said. "A lot of convention-goers that I meet are just teenage girls dressing up because where else do you get to wear colored wigs and very eccentric outfits? I see people [cosplayers] as more normal now [and] everyone's there to just be friends."

The welcoming environment of cosplay has also allowed the community to express themselves in different ways. Rosenzweig said she's seen how, in both her own personal experience with ADHD (Attention

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and in the community, cosplay provides a place for those facing struggles to

come together.

"I had one of the worst experiences of my life and I kind of just spiraled," Rosenzweig said. "I started spending hours on [Project SEKAI] and got to unlock more stories. As I read more about the characters, I became emotionally attached, and now [they're like] comfort [to me]. It's not something to generalize, but people who have mental differences or disabilities typically feel accepted in these communities because everyone's got that kind of weirdness to them."

In addition to providing an open space, cosplay allows people to find enjoyment in becoming something or someone else without involving their real identities. Fishback said this is one of the main reasons why he is drawn to the hobby.

"It's so easy for me to have that concealment of not having to worry about embarrassing myself," Fishback said. "Especially with cosplaying my main character, he wears a mask and makeup so nobody will know what my face looks like or remember it. I have bad anxiety, and it just allows me to have fun without worrying about anything."

Fishback said cosplay is a hobby that takes time to develop and that starting with the basics can make the process less intimidating. Especially when starting, Fishback said that his biggest recommendation is using events such as Halloween as an opportunity to start without worrying about having a perfect costume.

"It's important not to expect [a] cosplay to be 100% perfect on the day it 'debuts,'" Fishback said. "When I first cosplayed, my cosplay wasn't done, and I didn't have a mask or any hair for the character, but I was able to thrift and collect more items at concerts. [It's important to] get a base first and have a starting position [without] nitpicking about the little things."

With cosplay often centered around animated media, Fishback said he faces additional challenges when cosplaying characters from theatrical bands, music and horror films because they are less represented in the main community.

"Music has a big impact on my life," Fishback said. "It's how I regulate myself when I'm nervous, and most of my cosplays are music or horror-related. So it sucks being someone who doesn't really like anime [since] cosplay is [already] going against social norms, and when you make norms for that community, there's this little fraction of people who are pushed out because they're not doing what the rest [of the community] is

doing."

Fishback attends mainstream anime conventions such as AnimeOhio with his friends while also attending horror and music conventions. He said that going to both types of conventions has given him different experiences and appreciation for the hobby.

"It's just so cool to see how deeply your friends care about [cosplaying] and I love being able to hang out with them," Fishback said. "I felt a deep sense of being left out [at AnimeOhio] but I got to be around my friends with their happiness. I also love being able to see people be together and artists com[ing] together."

Rosenzweig started cosplaying in 2021. Despite having prior experience in the community, Rosenzweig said dressing up has given her a new perspective on the effort behind the hobby.

"When [someone] sees pictures of cosplayers, [they] don't think about the hours that go into the wig or the hundreds of dollars that go into the costume," Rosenzweig said. "When you cosplay, you get to see that and recognize it. [Then] you can talk to other cosplayers about it, and you can see them light up [because] they get so excited that someone acknowledges their efforts."

Sherman said the cosplay community has provided her with a welcoming space to learn and start conversations with new people. She said that this has changed the way she approaches conventions and interacts with others.

"I feel like a friendlier person and I want to talk to all these people who have made a lot of their own stuff," Sherman said. "I've learned how to be kinder to people in general and that I can spark a conversation. You just [have] to be out there, make friends within [the community] and it becomes more fun."

Chang said some may find the hobby to be daunting because of social expectations from both inside and outside of the community. She said that overcoming this can start with small steps, whether it's dressing up on your own or finding community online.

"No matter what you do, there's always going to be people who call you weird," Chang said. "If you like it, it doesn't matter if no one else does because it's for you and not anyone else. [So] you might as well make what you're doing something you enjoy [and just] go for it."



This story was written by Michelle Zuo, a junior in her second year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Michelle.Zuo90@masonohioschools.com

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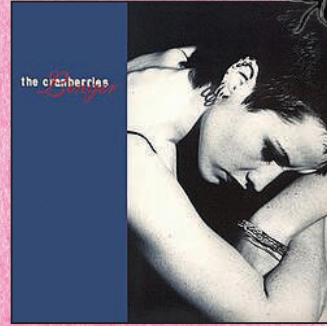
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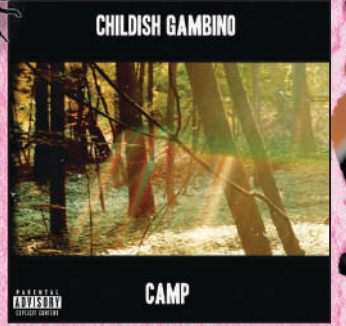
SONGS ON REPEAT:



"we fell in love in
october"
girl in red



"Linger"
The Cranberries



"Les"
Childish Gambino

Students' Favorite:

candy



Ingrid Bernardo, senior



Pica Fresa



Gummy worms



Nolan Evans, sophomore



Andrew Zhang, freshman



Swedish Fish



entertainment

STAR TREK STRANGE NEW WORLDS



SEASON 4

SEASON REVIEW

by Sophie Allen



We are once again beamed aboard Capt. Pike’s starship Enterprise for a fourth season of “Star Trek: Strange New Worlds.” Packed into 10 exciting episodes, the season does it all, from horror to noir to soap operas to Muppets. While some fans may find the lighthearted episodes gimmicky, they balance the heavier episodes and capture the episodic, often playful tone of “Star Trek: The Original Series.” Standout episodes include “Off-Hour” and “Tomorrow’s Enterprise,” which spotlight supporting cast members such as Scotty and Uhura while bringing them closer to the characters they become in “The Original Series.”

My biggest gripe with the season is the lack of screen time given to Capt. Pike. Despite being the main character, Pike seems sidelined in favor of introducing a new face of Capt. Kirk, receiving far less attention than in previous seasons. While I enjoy Kirk’s character, this shift is especially disappointing considering Anson Mount’s performance is one of the show’s highlights.

Overall, although less polished than previous seasons, season four still delivers the drama, character interactions and experimental fun that fans love about “Star Trek.” The season proves the 60-year-old franchise is still going strong.

“OTHER MOMMY”

MOVIE REVIEW

by Suhani Datta



“Other Mommy” captured the attention of audiences with its bone-chilling trailer, but unfortunately, the film’s entire 93-minute runtime falls short of the story viewers were promised.

The film follows an 8-year-old girl, Bela, haunted by an entity that looks and sounds like her mother, attempting to win her heart and take her place on Earth. Jessica Chastain delivers a haunting performance as Other Mommy, with plenty of jump scares and paranormal activity. However, the plot falls flat.



The ending is boring and cliché, reading like a typical Netflix original. More disappointing is that the book that inspired “Other Mommy,” “Incidents Around the House” by Josh Malerman, has a more interesting and unique conclusion that the film abandons.

“Other Mommy” may have impressive visuals, phenomenal acting and a scare every few minutes, but it ultimately lets down viewers drawn in by its promotional campaign.



VACATIONS

“Pursuit of Anything”

ALBUM REVIEW

by Michelle Zuo



With indie rock and pop woven into each track, Vacations explores the endless possibilities of the “Pursuit of Anything.”

The album reveals deep, raw emotion through its signature slow but rich rhythms. Beneath layers of melancholy and nostalgia, there is also room for surprise. Songs such as “Yesterday” capture a bright, abstract confrontation with a younger self, while “Lucky Forever” evokes connection and hope for the future.

However, the album’s greatest strength lies beyond its lyrics and instrumentation. It lies in the story. Lead producer Campbell Bruns draws from his bandmates’ changing lives, weaving pieces of their experiences into each song. In the end, “Pursuit of Anything” becomes more than an album. It becomes an animated portrait of the tension and beauty of growing up, unfolding frame by frame. Each bandmate embarks on their own pursuit of the possibilities ahead, and Bruns embraces the uncertainty. The album marks a turning point for the band, leaving listeners to reflect on their own hopes for the future and imagine their own pursuits of anything.



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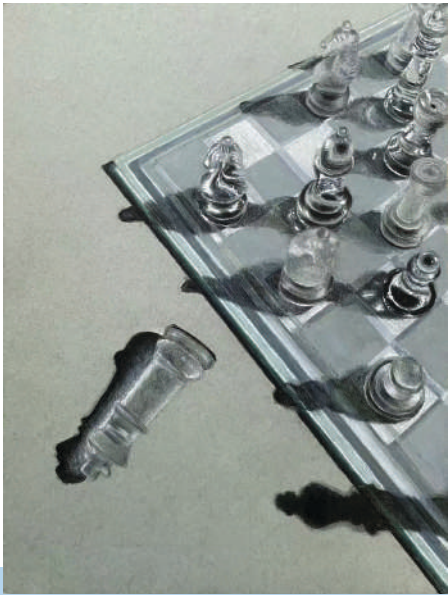
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Student Feature:

Leo Qin

Junior Leo Qin has been drawing since he could hold a pencil and painting since second grade. He creates realistic artwork inspired by nature and moments from his life.



"Make or Break"



"Light Inside Out"



"It's over. I have the high ground."

the Games

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scuba
performance
cosplay
goalkeeper

halal
tennis
japan
model

Wagner’s winning legacy reaches beyond the court

Caitlynn Begley | The Chronicle

Immediately after winning a state tennis championship as a Mason High School (MHS) freshman, Emma Wagner stepped behind the court curtain with her partner, sophomore Pratyusha Chaudhuri, to collect her gear and catch her breath. Then the curtain burst open. Her teammates flooded in, cheering and celebrating. This was the moment Wagner realized the magnitude of what she had accomplished.

Starting high school with a state title could have left an athlete nowhere higher to climb. For Wagner, it was only the beginning. Now a senior on Mason’s Varsity girls tennis team, Wagner has won five state championships, including back-to-back doubles titles, and contributed to Mason’s team state championships. She also holds a top-four state ranking. However, Wagner said the trophies are not what she wants to leave behind. Instead, she said she hopes her legacy reflects perseverance, joy and family.

For many young tennis players, the sport can be isolating. Solo play in singles matches, having personal coaches and frequent travel can create a competitive environment where athletes have few teammates to rely on. Wagner said she experienced that isolation before high school, traveling to tournaments nearly every other weekend and returning to school on Monday without many classmates knowing about her success.

“I never really had a team until Freshman year,” Wagner said. “I felt really lonely up until high school. I could go win a tournament in Michigan or whatever, and nobody would really know. Building that connection, it’s just been fun.”

Mason tennis changed that dynamic, but it also brought new challenges. By her junior year, the weight of expectations pressed down. Balancing rigorous class schedules that earned her a GMC fall all-academic honors with the watchful eyes of college recruiters turned every match into a high-stakes spotlight. Wagner said she felt the need for perfection. When outside pressure threatened to make the court feel suffocating, Wagner said she had to rely on her team rather than battle alone.

“Tennis has always been there. It just hyped up a lot, and then schoolwork hyped up a lot at the same time, so it was a double whammy,” Wagner said. “And it was just taking one day at a time, and then just kept finding the fun in playing.”

That behind-the-scenes work ethic and genuine vulnerability earned her the deepest respect from her coaches. Mason’s Varsity girls tennis coach Mike Reid said Wagner stands out for her doubles play, sportsmanship and leadership.

“I cannot say enough positive things about Emma. She is arguably the most decorated player in program history,” Reid said. “Her work ethic and modest demeanor will influence her teammates and our program for years to come.”

During Wagner’s four years on varsity, her teammates have recognized her ability to win championships while also encouraging them through the smaller moments at practice. Younger teammates such as junior Aditi Srinivasan said she hopes to continue Wagner’s legacy and honor her spirit.

“Emma Wagner is my mentor, teammate and captain, but she is first and foremost my friend,” Srinivasan said. “I would not be the tennis player I am today without her kindness and encouragement.



Photo contributed by Emma Wagner
Wagner returns a serve in a match during the 2026 tennis season.

She is consistently inspiring me to work harder and put 100% into everything I do.”

As Wagner prepares for her final high school matches, she said the isolation she experienced before high school is a distant memory. She said the banners will remain in the gym, but the tight-knit culture she fostered will define the Mason program for years to come. Wagner said the greatest win wasn’t a state title but finding a family on the court.

“I always had that goal to win. But at the same time, I always wanted our team to win,” Wagner said. “Honestly, more because team state is a lot more fun because you are with your whole team competing and cheering.”



This story was written by Caitlynn Begley, a junior in her first year on The Chronicle staff.
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Infographic by Hazel Davis

4

STAR RECRUIT

★★★★☆

23

STATE DOUBLES CHAMPION

PARTNERED WITH PRATYUSHA CHAUDHURI

FRESHMAN

24

STATE DOUBLES CHAMPION

PARTNERED WITH PRATYUSHA CHAUDHURI

SOPHOMORE

25

STATE DOUBLES FINALIST

PARTNERED WITH PRATYUSHA CHAUDHURI

JUNIOR

26

STATE DOUBLES CHAMPION

PARTNERED WITH SAANVI REDDY

SENIOR

Standing alone: Soccer goalies find their place

Evelyn Bahm | The Chronicle

There is one player on a soccer field that stands out from the rest. They have a unique objective, unique privileges and a unique responsibility. The goalkeeper is an individual position that acts as the final layer of defense against an opponent.

Being a soccer goalie means holding a unique role for the team, as well as affecting the pace of play, the defensive side of the field and the score of the game. But what does being in that role mean for the goalie? This means lots of waiting for action, but also a role full of quick, high-pressure moments.

Junior Ella Krimpenfort is a goalie on the Varsity girl's soccer team. Starting to play soccer when she was just five years old, Krimpenfort said she began her soccer journey as a field player rather than a goalkeeper, but was encouraged to play goalie around 10 years old. Krimpenfort also performed as a multi-sport athlete. She said she played softball until seventh grade and quit basketball this year to focus on her role on the soccer team.

While most of the soccer team works directly to score against their opponent, Krimpenfort said that being the goalie puts her in a unique position. She said that while she would never wish to play any other position, goal tending presents some of its own difficulties. She said she finds it hard to focus when so much of the game does not revolve around her role.

"Something that's really hard about [being a] goalkeeper is you might have a lot of downtime," Krimpenfort said. "But one save could change the course of the game. It's super important just trying to stay in it yourself."

Junior Landen Darling is a goalie for the Varsity boy's soccer team. Darling said he was thrown into the position when he was around eight years old and did not like the position at first, but as he grew up, the position grew on him. Darling said he finds focusing to be key in games.

"I make sure I'm always communicating [with my team] and staying focused," Darling said. "I don't want my mind to [get] off the game because then one thing could happen and then I get scored on. So I just have to stay focused."

While a high scoring soccer game can be intense to participate in, there is typically much less action going on for the goalies. But the short moments they are needed for have large impacts, especially since soccer is such a low scoring game. Darling said having such a big impact on the game's outcome is a lot of stress to put

on goalies.

"I put [pressure] on myself," Darling said. "When we're up one with 10 minutes left, I'll look up at the score and be like, 'I can't get scored on,' and then [the other team scores] and I end up putting that on myself and getting in my own head."

Along with the individual pressure goal tending puts on goalies, the unique position makes the sport more personalized. They are the only players who can touch the ball with their hands and put their body on the line to keep their team in the game. Because they play such an individualized role in the team, they cannot approach the sport in the way that other players would.

"[My role] is definitely different [in practice], because you're not as with the team," Krimpenfort said. "I really like [the independence goalies get]. I've always lived off [the mindset] that if you want something done right, do it yourself, and I feel like having a more independent position I can work on my own things each day."

For both the girls and boys soccer teams, the goalies are depended on to perform at the highest level and support their team. Along with the pressure the position puts on players to defend consistently every game, Krimpenfort said being in the goal by yourself can make it challenging to connect with the rest of the team.

"It's harder [socializing with the team] because you definitely do less with them in terms of practices," Krimpenfort said. "That's definitely where you build the bonds with your team, but I feel like they're super understanding of that, and we do so much outside of soccer too, which helps."

Though Krimpenfort said she finds connecting with her team to be harder, she said she still has built strong ties with her teammates. For Darling, the social aspect of soccer has come effortlessly, because he spends a generous amount of time with his teammates off the field. Both goalies said that though the time spent during practices and games can get mundane, the relationships on their team are why they continue to play.

"Building those relationships with my team [makes me want to continue]," Darling said. "You hang with your teammates in classes, in lunch and also on the field. For me [being a goalie] doesn't make socializing harder at all."



This story was written by Evelyn Bahm, a sophomore in her first year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at Evelyn.Bahm47@masonohioschools.com



Photo contributed by Ella Krimpenfort

Mason goalkeeper Ella Krimpenfort clears the ball upfield with a powerful kick, defending the net and setting up the next play.



Photo contributed by Dahyun Choi

Mason goalkeeper Landen Darling secures the ball as an Upper Arlington opponent stands nearby, ready for the next play.

PRIMETIME PERFORMANCE



LANDON MILLER

JUNIOR | SOCCER

Landon Miller, Mason High School's junior soccer captain, has demonstrated leadership and offensive skill throughout the season. According to GMC statistics, Miller ranks 12th among conference offensive leaders across all games. He has recorded six goals and seven assists for a total of 16 points, contributing to the Comets' offensive production. As a captain, Miller's performance and leadership make him an important contributor to Mason's soccer team.



Photo by Dahyun Choi

GAMEDAY ESSENTIALS

VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM



Aidan Sheehan, senior

"My game day essential is my Bible because it gives me a good sense of confidence going into the game."



Jamein Martin, senior

"My game day essential is my AirPods because music is a big part of my routine, and music helps me get locked in."



Justin Paciolla, senior

"My game day essential is Geometry Dash because it makes my reaction time faster and gets me in a good mood."



COACH'S CORNER

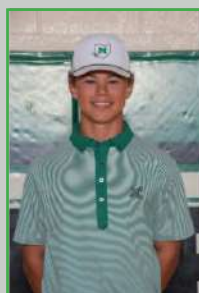


GIRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL - ERIC SCHATZLE

"The way this group comes back with confidence is always awesome to see. We have improved our ability to find spots on the floor and add to our toolbox as attackers. Our serve-receive has anchored us throughout the season. Volleyball is the ultimate team sport. When there is a collective effort of everyone in practice and in a game to all move in the same direction, it is contagious. I'm pretty lucky to work with the athletes, families, coaches, and Mason staff every year. I understand that I am in a pretty good spot with a great support system and great people that care about Mason, Mason Athletics, and, of course, Mason Volleyball."

COMET SHOUTOUTS

BOYS VARSITY GOLF



Logan Harter
Junior
1st Team GMC



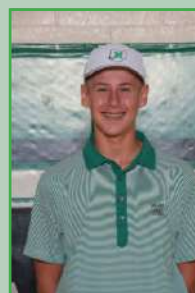
Jaxson Hutzelman
Senior
1st Team GMC



Joshua Morneau
Senior
1st Team GMC



Elijah Goebel
Junior
2nd Team GMC



Ben Klopfer
Freshman
2nd Team GMC



Andrew Atchley
Senior
Steve Shuck
Sportsmanship Award

Other schools want Mason's athletes.

Eshal Firoze | The Chronicle

From the rise of club and travel teams to early sports specialization, young athletes have an unprecedented range of choices in the athletic opportunities they pursue. With the increase in opportunities has come an increase in high school selection beyond an athlete's home district. This shift is pushing the Mason athletic department in their goal to retain Mason talent.

Talent retention in Mason Football

Mason High School (MHS) Varsity football head coach Brian Castner said that he recognizes the need to maintain skilled eighth grade athletes as they enter high school, understanding that it is important to the program's culture and success. Castner said competing against private and public schools for athletes has grown more challenging as it has become more common for players to transfer for other opportunities and high school coaches to recruit talent.

Castner said that encouraging young players and motivating them to become a part of the high school team and brotherhood is a priority. He said that in recent years, the program has lost around six to eight players to other schools each year, and it is his goal to lower that number.

"You have to believe in what you have and in developing everybody," Castner said. "When you look at the eighth grade class, it's great to have talented athletes, but it's also great to have a group of young men that want to wear the green and white and be proud of the athletic program that we have."



"It's great to have talented athletes, but it's also great to have a group of young men that want to wear the green and white, and be proud of the athletic program that we have."

- Brian Castner

Castner said that many players often do not find the opportunities they believe they are seeking when they leave, which is why he emphasizes showing athletes the benefits of remaining a Comet. He said giving middle school players game-day experiences and showing individuals

what the high school team has to offer are essential steps in maintaining young Mason athletes. Castner said that students and parents have higher expectations, making it difficult to maintain athletes.

"We work harder than we really should [have to at] keeping kids," Castner said. "I also want to do it with the ones that want to be here. I want volunteers, I don't want hostages. I want guys that want to be a part of what we're doing because of the passion."

Efforts across MHS to improve student experience

While Castner has witnessed the transferring effect distinctly in football, MHS athletic director Scott Stemple has seen the long-term growth in athlete choice across many sports. In his 21 years, Stemple said he has watched athletes' range of possibilities for athletic opportunities widen when entering high school.

Stemple said that one way MHS works to retain athletes is by placing an emphasis on culture and building strong player-coach relationships. He said that from Mason Middle School (MMS), coaches try to build a consistent philosophy that players can see themselves being a part of when they enter MHS.

"Our coaches have always tried to nurture their programs," Stemple said. "We talk to [the coaches] about running a program and not running a team. We stress that here at the high school because we think that it is important in terms of kids understanding the culture and the program [they are a part of]."

Stemple said another top priority for MHS is maintaining elite facilities and

equipment for student-athletes. He said that from maintaining fields to expanding the MHS strength room, there have been many efforts to further athletes and develop their skills.

"One thing that our school district has always done a great job of is

[maintaining] good facilities," Stemple said. "I don't think there's anybody in our league that has a strength room like ours. There are so many students that go through that wellness center [and] the performance center, and that's what motivates the district to keep those up."

Stemple said that retaining athletes is important when competing with private schools in athletics. He said he understands that there are several factors that influence a young athlete's decision to go to a different school, whether it be academics, following family legacy or even socioeconomic factors and affordability in Mason. He said that many young athletes often transfer with goals of finding better opportunities, which is why Mason continues to work to uphold standards and keep talented athletes in the district.

"Students can feel like they want a break, or they want a fresh start, and then they realize how limited the opportunities are elsewhere."

- Jen Mott



Fostering involvement and culture at the youth level

MMS Athletic Director Jen Mott said she understands the importance of showing kids the available opportunities for Mason athletes. Mott coached volleyball, lacrosse and basketball at both the high school and middle school level before taking on the role of MMS Athletic Director. Through her experience, Mott said she has witnessed the increase in popularity of selecting a high school beyond a student's home district over the years.

"I have seen the trend of more competition early on [for kids]," Mott said. "When I was a student-athlete, I grew up wanting to play for my school from 7th through 12th grade, and never considered leaving. It's interesting now to see people having more choice and not as much of a connection to the school."

Mott said that one strategy the district is using to encourage student athletes to stay at Mason is creating a sense of belonging and purpose for younger students that they can carry into high school. Mott said that one initiative that

further this goal is the Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT). SALT is a group of student athletes that work to be learners and grow sports involvement within the student body. Mott said that SALT works to bridge the connection between MMS and MHS athletes, and she believes that initiatives like SALT are important to maintain athletic participation.

"Students can feel like they want a break, or they want a fresh start, and then they realize how limited the opportunities are elsewhere," Mott said. "It's important to help students see what they have to offer [to] the community and why it's worth staying, and [to] recognize the influence they can have on giving future Comets that same experience."

Like Stemple, Mott said collaborative coaching from seventh grade up to 12th

grade in Mason sports works to build an experience that students will come to love and value. She said she hopes that through invested coaches and the relationships students build early, athletes can feel that they find their place in Mason athletics as they make their way toward high school.

MHS Varsity girls basketball Head Coach Gideon Dudgeon said that fostering young athletes from the middle school is important to strengthen the program as a whole and support the team's future success. Dudgeon said that efforts like youth nights and summer camps allow young athletes to see themselves being a part of a program bigger than themselves.

"Creating a program starts at the youth level," Dudgeon said. "[We] want kids to feel like they're part of something from an early age so that they want to stay here in Mason, and then continue on through high school. That's really where the culture comes from."

Dudgeon, having coached at the middle school and high school level, said he understands the need to create

What is Mason doing to keep them?

(Continued from page 20)

an environment where athletes can reach their full potential and want to wear green and white for their high school career.

“We want to make sure we provide an opportunity for our best athletes to be successful,” Dudgeon said. “Whether it’s the facilities or schedul[ing] hard games, wherever they can have the opportunity to display their skills, I think will help keep them here.”

“*At Mason, we don't want to undercut our integrity or our values to try to shirk the system.*”

- Ben Brown



A school-wide approach to preserving homegrown talent

MHS Principal Ben Brown has taken a school-wide approach to retaining students through efforts like the MHS Open House, hosted for the second year on November 18. He said he understands that to keep student-athletes at Mason and compete with other schools, Mason must show what opportunities it offers.

“We have won the All Sports Award 19 years in a row in the GMC,” Brown said. “If we kept our own, I think that we would be incrementally better. If you live here in Mason, we want you to go to school here in Mason.”

Brown said retaining homegrown athletes would benefit MHS teams. He said that working to keep athletes will result in a clearer picture of Mason’s true talent.

“My hope [is] that we would be a full representation of who should be here, and then let that play out,” Brown said. “It would be a clearer representation of if you live here, you go to school here, you play sports here.”

Brown said that to compete with other schools, Mason must continue to maintain their strong athletes. He said that it’s important, while competing, that Mason continues to adhere to OHSAA guidelines.

“There’s been a long-time narrative in the playoffs in particular, in certain

sports, [asking] should there be separate playoffs for private schools [and] public schools,” Brown said. “There’s a real competitive balance issue even within the GMC because of the open enrollment. I know at Mason, we don’t want to undercut our integrity or our values to try to shirk the system.”

Brown said that the best approach to retain athletes is by showing what is available at Mason. He said that

through the students’ experience and teams’ success, athletes will continue to want to be a part of MHS teams. He said ultimately, it comes down to giving athletes reasons to stay.

“If our families live here, I want to give them the best educational experience as well as athletic experience,” Brown said. “We want to keep our own, and we want to just let it play out. If it’s good enough, great. If it’s not, then we have to keep investing in it until it is.”



Retaining athletes through lasting success

MHS Varsity baseball Head Coach Curt Bly has worked to build a successful program and showcase players’ talent for years. Having been the head coach since 2014, Bly came up with the idea of rallying around 45040 to create a sense of pride not only for the players but also for the community.

“The idea of the zip code was not

“*You have to attract that next crop of student athletes through what the current crop of student athletes are doing.*”

- Curt Bly



Photo by Hailey DeGross

MHS Varsity baseball Head Coach Curt Bly talks to junior shortstop and second baseman Christian Ramirez (center) and junior pitcher Ollie Stuart (right) before an outdoor workout on Thursday, October 15. Bly has made 45040 an integral part of the Mason Baseball program’s culture, representing a connection to Mason and a pride in the program’s roots.

ways off the field that our community can be proud of,” Bly said. “You have to attract that next crop of student athletes through what the current crop of student athletes are doing.”

Bly said that it is important to show that players can achieve both academic and athletic goals at MHS. He said he prioritizes maintaining an environment where athletes feel empowered to strengthen both aspects and be successful in their own community.

“The goal was to build a baseball community in which people wanted to be a part of, stay a part of, and invest in,” Bly said. “The zip code is a representation of who we are and loving who we are.”

meant to be a shot at private schools,” Bly said. “It’s meant to be something we could rally around and connect with.”

Bly said that athletes have the ability to achieve their goals at MHS when it comes to playing at high levels and finding individual paths to success. He said it is important to focus on current success to showcase for future athletes.

“We work hard every day to be a championship caliber program that not only wins on the field, but wins in



This story was written by Eshal Firoze, a junior in her second year on The Chronicle staff. Contact her at

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Performative activism has lost the plot

Michelle Zuo | The Chronicle

“Cute winter boots,” “Cornell, it’s SA, not ESSAY,” and “I love the Disney cruise too!”

What do these phrases mean and what are they considered? Are they codes, protests or slang? As major events, such as the Gaza genocide and the recent Cornell Seven case have become major topics of discussion on platforms such as TikTok, social media users take to their own — albeit questionable — methods of activism online.

The Cornell Seven case and the explosion of online commentary surrounding the situation and lawsuit are what brought me to this topic. The case involves a lawsuit against seven Cornell University Chi Phi fraternity members for the sexual assault of a former Cornell student identified as “Jane Doe.” The incident occurred in September 2024. I remember seeing a screen recording of someone blocking the Cornell Birdwatching Club’s Instagram account, the text on the screen reading, “It’s a shame that I have to block them.” None of the people involved were in the Cornell Birdwatching Club, so it made me wonder: what does blocking that account actually do?

I’ve seen people spam Cornell’s social media with messages, comment repeatedly on posts covering recent issues with the “secret codes” relating to the Epstein files and post slime rant videos about boycotts over the Gaza genocide. I understand the intent of holding those responsible for these issues accountable, but I’ve questioned the effectiveness of these approaches. To me, it seems like it is “just for show.”

Which is where the term “performative activism” comes from. Activism is attracting new supporters, but not in the way that it should. Social media is an incredibly impactful tool; it allows individuals, especially young people, an easily accessible place where they can advocate freely. However, I’ve found that an unintended consequence of this is that activism has become a “trend” for many to prove themselves the “most moral.”

We all have our own versions of morality, and it’s also in humans’ nature to want others to perceive us as moral or “good” people. Especially in an age where social media shapes how we see others and how others see us, wouldn’t we all want to look like the best versions of ourselves?

In 2020, there was a surge in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement — an international social movement that focused on fighting racism, anti-Black violence and police brutality — following the murder of George Floyd. My brother was a high schooler and encountered his classmates’ Instagram reposts that said, “If you’re not against BLM, repost this on your story (I can see everyone who views my story).” He was torn between two sides: he didn’t want to be a “bad person” by not reposting, but he also didn’t want to put others in a similar situation by continuing the chain.

These types of posts do spread awareness, but they also taint the severity of an issue. People begin to associate important movements like BLM with guilt-tripping stories, instead of the actual purpose of the movement.

Another example of this was during the ICE protests at the beginning of 2026. The harmless-appearing phrases, “I prefer my ICE crushed” and “cute winter boots” were originally used to bypass shadowbanning on social media. But the issue arose when people began using these codes with silly, inappropriately placed graphic interchange formats (GIFs) in comments and posts. Users, including myself, began associating the ICE protests with these codes that were viewed as jokes on social media.

The more widespread an issue becomes, the more knowledge shared, and the greater the impact. However, the larger scope of awareness also amplifies the negative consequences of performative activism. Advocacy like this becomes a game of telephone; the more people sharing over and over, the more information that’s lost in translation. This leads to misinformation, exaggeration that can create fear mongering and the reversal of progress through activism.

On all social media platforms, there are creators that work to accurately inform, represent and educate on major issues impacting our world. For all the harm that performative activism can cause, there are just as many ways to counteract it. Whether it be through supporting these creators, reading the news or engaging in real conversations, everybody is capable of advocating for what they believe and keeping themselves accurately informed.

Society cannot uphold its virtue and righteousness if it is unable to properly hold its own members accountable, nor can it progress with large numbers of members that are unaware of the world around them. Activism is the start for improvement, but it can’t just be an appearance to keep up on social media — we must be genuinely invested in positive change if we wish to see it. After all, what good is a society that prides itself on having morals if morality becomes a competition to be won?

STAFF EDITORIAL

Are we living out the culture we claim?

Mason High School (MHS) has over 3,000 students in its halls, yet compared to the population, few show up for athletics, fundraisers and drama performances. Cross country meets, choir seasonal performances and even the National Honors Society (NHS) fashion show have proved dwindling attendance in recent years. For each big event of the school year, MHS has a repeated scene. A lit up stage, a primed field of players, but a measly student section. We love to advertise school spirit and Comet Culture, but when it comes down to it, is it really there?

Cracks have been growing in our community. This individualistic culture has overpowered students’ desire to support their peers. Friday night lights, traditionally a staple for many high school students, hasn’t drawn the same crowds as years past. This is a trend across the board.

Mason culture needs to be reevaluated to truly build a well-rounded student and community. Each grade of students should not be filled with individual bubbles, but rather be a collective class that genuinely makes this big school feel smaller by showing compassion to support one another. High school achievement shouldn’t be measured by the number of advanced courses someone can stack on their transcript, but by how we intentionally engage with our peers sitting in the desk next to us.

Blackhole attendance is down, not because of the leadership or lack of rivalry games, but simply because students aren’t supporting students. Students aren’t deliberately choosing to be selfish and consciously push aside their peers’ activities, rather, this trend is an impact of the norms in place in our community. Clubs and athletics are struggling to find ways to engage students in their events, because students are overwhelmed with events of their own. The mentality that has crept in for many students is that being a notable Mason high schooler means having every moment of their schedule jam-packed with rigor, leaving

no room for community building and supporting peers at extracurricular events.

The district has put an emphasis on building the community; however, culture hasn’t shifted away from expecting every student’s schedule to be full. A quintessential highlight of high school life is being able to watch your classmates under Friday night lights or engaging in fundraisers. Now, due to this shift toward individualistic mindsets and packed agendas, NHS has to come up with new fundraisers to help students with prom tickets, because standard community building isn’t rallying support how it did in the past. We are working against ourselves, filling every hour to the brim while setting aside important memories we could be making over these four years.

At the same time, it is just as much the students’ fault for these bubbles being formed as it is the collective culture’s. As students, at times we have allowed self-preservation and prioritization to morph into apathy. It takes two hours or less to join the Blackhole and fill the bleachers for a football or soccer game, ninety minutes to watch a drama production, and a few dollars to help your peers make foundational memories at prom. Supporting our classmates isn’t a distraction from our personal goals; it is the foundation of a functional community.

It is time to decide what high school experience we actually want. A lot of the time, it can be easier just to send a quick good luck message than to actually show up to support. Most people have hours of homework every night and can’t fit going to watch a friend into their schedule. The competitive culture at Mason encourages rigorous courses, club participation and leadership. Balancing your friendships and future creates a difficult decision for many students that causes them to miss making memories. But if we want to practice what we preach, we should choose to step out of our schedules and show up for the athletes, the actors, the musicians and each other. The lights are on, and the stands are empty. It’s time to fill them.

THE CHRONICLE’S POLICY

The Chronicle is the official student newspaper of William Mason High School.

The Chronicle promises to report the truth and adhere to the journalistic code of ethics through online and print mediums.

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Pay attention to who is watching

Emily Kemper | The Chronicle

In an age of constant surveillance, from Meta glasses to blindly clicking “accept all cookies” without a second thought, our privacy is constantly being eroded. Our personal lives aren’t confined to the walls of a house or pages of a diary, they become public through the posts we like, the sites we visit and the information we search for. Even in person, cameras of all kinds (license plate readers, cell phones and wearable recording devices) are out and ready to record every moment of our lives. It might not be possible to escape surveillance in 2026, but staying informed about who is watching and how is vital to protecting your privacy.

Devices we have willingly brought into our lives like Echo Dot, Ring doorbells, dash cameras and, of course, our cell phones improve everyday life in many ways. And not just the convenience of a personalized Instagram feed: more cameras means more documentation of crimes, accidents, and police injustices. But even the most noble of causes can’t justify the rapid increase of surveillance in our everyday lives.

This year Amazon’s Ring aired an advertisement during the Superbowl for the smart doorbell’s new feature Search Party. In the ad, the AI-powered tool scans footage from other Ring doorbells in the neighborhood to help a family find their lost dog. The ad received heavy backlash as customers worried the technology could be used to track people as well as pets, and users had to manually opt out of the new surveillance feature. While I doubt anyone would want to stop a family from finding their pet, these devices expose the tension between rapidly improving technology and the expectations of privacy most of us still hold.

At the very beginning of this school year I was shocked to hear another new device, Meta glasses, being discussed when teachers set their AI and technology expectations. Sure, I knew the wearable recording devices existed, but I had no idea they were common enough to be a cheating concern, even a minor one. Devices like this, where proper use and knowledge of privacy laws falls solely on the customer to be aware, have major potential to be used improperly. 12 U.S. states require that every person being recorded in a private area gives consent, and making sure every individual does so when the recording device isn’t easily identifiable, like a phone, is completely up to the individual. Personally, I don’t trust

that every person with a pair of Meta glasses or even just a cell phone will do the right thing. Instead, I suggest you take matters into your own hands by learning your rights: who can or cannot record you, what you can or cannot record and what spaces you have a reasonable expectation of privacy in. We might not be able to escape surveillance, but we can inform ourselves about it.

Online surveillance is another area raising privacy concerns. While it is a given that social media and other online platforms track some personal details about you, data brokers may know far more about you than what you’ve ever shared online. Data brokers find information to sell to ad companies based on inferences drawn from your online activity: sites you visit, people you talk to or information you search. From this information, they can discover aspects of your identity you never actually stated online. Additionally, according to a 2023 study by Pew Research Center, 77% of Americans do not trust leaders of social media platforms to publicly admit data misuse, so even the few protections that are put in place for our data don’t have much public faith. Rather, it is up to individual users of any of these technologies, from smart doorbells to YouTube, to be aware of how these technologies affect their privacy.

But why does any of this matter if you don’t have anything to hide? Because privacy isn’t just about hiding secrets or wrongdoing, it is about protecting your right to determine who knows what about you.

When I was about seven or eight, my mom made an offhand comment that someday you wouldn’t even have to write out comments, because Facebook would just automatically post what you were thinking. And it horrified me, not because I thought my thoughts needed to be kept secret, but because I wanted to control who gets to know what I think.

My mom had to spend the next few minutes convincing me it was just a joke that could never happen. But with each passing year, I worry we are getting closer and closer to that dystopian movie future. Maybe Facebook will never actually be able to post a comment without you clicking a few buttons, but our rights to decide what we let others know or not know about ourselves is being compromised. Even if we can’t escape the cameras, being aware of how you are being tracked puts some of the power to protect your privacy back in your hands.

EDITORIAL CARTOON



Recognize the value of equal effort

Alessia Korvessis | The Chronicle

“As he should” is a phrase I commonly see used when addressing guys in a relationship. Whether it’s paying for dinner or buying a \$200 necklace, the endless list of requirements keeps building. When did going above and beyond become the expected?

Recently, the bar for where “bare minimum” is has been raised significantly for boys. This is due to many things, like traditional gender roles and increased feminism, but I think it is mostly due to social media. Many relationships are now posted online, and we are able to see what other couples do and act like, which can cause comparison with what we do with our own. Wanting to “top” or “do better” than other couples is an ominous pressure in the back of many’s minds, therefore creating this pressure for one side to pull all the weight. Instead of asking, “are we happy together?” People begin to ask “why didn’t they do that for me?” Many young people with no actual dating experience begin to build their perception of relationships off an online standard and not what they think personally.

This doesn’t mean that basic standards or preferences should be erased. The real problem is when it gets to a point where unreachable standards are created and entitlement takes over. “As

he should” should be in reference to loyalty, respecting boundaries and being respectful, not automatically expecting expensive gifts frequently or going above and beyond in any area.

This doesn’t only go for boys, but also girls. It just happens in different ways. Girls who have to pull all the weight or don’t stand up for themselves are often considered to be “birds,” a term used online. While in some situations guys are expected to do everything, in others girls have to go above and beyond just to get them to stay in the relationship.

So many people in our generation have trouble finding healthy relationships for a multitude of reasons, but I find that a lot of them are caused by a lack of respect (from both parties). At the end of the day, relationships should not be one sided, no matter the circumstance. Both should be putting in effort and care and, most importantly, communicating with each other to find a happy medium.

Ultimately, I think one of the biggest issues our generation faces when it comes to relationships is that we have become so focused on what our partner should be doing for us that we often forget to ask what we are contributing ourselves. Relationships shouldn’t be transactions, they should be equal, fair and appreciative of each other.

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