

The Record

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Critically navigating social media: Dr. Noam Weissmann speaks at Unity Week assembly

ANYA MIRZA
Staff Writer

The Upper Division (UD) gathered for the annual Unity Week assembly on navigating social media during charged times, using Wednesday's A-period as a replacement for the canceled Tuesday assembly due a snow day.

The assembly began with a brief performance from the UD music ensemble with a Hawaiian chant about the Lenape land that the school is built on, which was followed by

generation communicates about it is always an important consideration," he said.

While Cassandra Ortiz (11) agrees that learning how to find reliable information on social media and discussing media is crucial, she would have liked to see an assembly with a stronger connection to Unity Week, she said. "I think this assembly could have been presented on a different week when we could have more time dedicated to it and we could hear different voices discuss the topics," Ortiz said.

Ortiz would have liked the Unity

on varying workshops and topics that are important to different people. It's a connection between students with different identities and creating a fun and comfortable environment where they can share issues that are important to them," Ortiz said. Ortiz would have liked to watch Charles Ampah's (12) video on Unity Week which was sent out by the ICIE office earlier this week and hear students talk about their workshops to better encapsulate the sense of community that is central to Unity Week, she said.

Zvezdin, on the other hand, found that the assembly connected to the themes of Unity Week, he said. "It touched on the idea that in order to learn about the world, you have to be open to learning about other people and other ideas, which connects back to the cultural/identity understanding aspect of Unity Week," Zvezdin said. Zvezdin and the Jewish Culture Club hosted their Unity Week Workshop on Jewish culture, specifically the Yiddish language. Although the workshop differs from the topic of the assembly, it contributes to the idea of sharing

culture that Weissman emphasized, he said.

The Unity Week assembly committee had originally planned to include more than Weissman's keynote presentation in the assembly,

would have liked if the assembly had time for a Q&A session at the end, in addition to during the talk-back, she said. This assembly stood out to Shah because Weissman's presentation catered well to the audience, Shah

"I learned to always be open to new perspectives, not be rigid on your viewpoint and read articles that offer multiple different viewpoints to be more exposed to different opinions."

- Oscar Shah (12)

a keynote presentation from the school's new scholar-in-residence Dr. Noam Weissman. Weissman presented on navigating media, social media, and communication specifically surrounding news on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Weissman works in Jewish education and media literacy through the organizations LaHaV and Opendor Media and his podcast, Unpacking Israeli History.

Weissman began his presentation with a critique of the news, discussing the agenda of each media source and how to identify their biases. He then shifted the focus to effective communication within controversial discourse, tying in the importance of empathy and open-mindedness while having difficult discussions.

As a scholar in residence, Weissman will support the school in his area of expertise, ICIE Associate Director and Unity Week Assembly Committee member Natalie Sanchez said. The Unity Week Committee invited Dr. Weissman to present at the Unity Week assembly in response to student requests for more tools on how to look at social media critically, especially identifying false information regarding the Israel-Hamas War, Sanchez said.

Understanding the benefits and harms of social media is important for students to learn even beyond the lens of the current Israel-Palestine conflict, science teacher Oleg Zvezdin said. "I think it is just as relevant to what was going on and is still happening with Ukraine and Russia. There are these 'hot button' issues all over the place. How they are reported on and how the younger



LEARNING HOW TO ENGAGE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Photo by Nicole Au

"It touched on the idea that in order to learn about the world, you have to be open to learning about other people and other ideas, which connects back to the cultural/identity understanding aspect of Unity Week."

- Physics Teacher, Oleg Zvezdin

but because of the snow day, had 45 minutes instead of a full hour. The subcommittee initially planned to have an alumni panel, she said. "We were hoping to have several alumni who were going to talk about how they are promoting unity in their careers and daily lives," Sanchez said. Unfortunately, the panel had to be canceled due to the snow day.

Sarina Shah (10) found Weissman to be an engaging speaker, so she

said. "What I felt was different about this assembly was that it was targeted specifically at young people and our generation. It was tailored to our audience, which made it more effective in helping us advance our social media literacy."

Weissman's presentation has similarities to themes of past assemblies from this year. It had the same idea of having empathy for people with opposing viewpoints and being open to changing your mind, Zvezdin said. One part of Weissman's presentation that stood out to Zvezdin was his analysis of the soldier vs. scout mindset, which emphasized the open-mindedness discussed in previous assemblies, he said.

Weissman brought up this mindset in his presentation to explain how we should navigate arguments and disagreements. Weissman defined the 'soldier' mindset as being defensive about one's opinion, while a 'scout' mindset is a more pragmatic and open-minded approach to arguments that he encourages students to take.

One of Shah's biggest takeaways from the assembly was to take on more of a scout mindset, she said. "I learned to always be open to new perspectives, not be rigid on your viewpoint and read articles that offer multiple different viewpoints to be more exposed to different opinions," Shah said.

Daniel Pustilnik (12) thought that the assembly was an important reminder for him to analyze social media with a critical lens. "I see a lot of inflammatory stuff on Instagram and it's important to know that people are making it to be intentionally inflammatory and to be provocative and polarize," Pustilnik said. "It's easy to lose faith in good people and reporting in general, but you just have to take a step back and remember these are people with an agenda."

Kymm (12) attends YoungArts Week in Miami after winning award

ANOUSHKA PARAKH
Staff Writer

After receiving a winner with distinction award in the national

YoungArts Competition, Jisang Kymm (12) attended YoungArts week in Miami from January 6th to 14th. Kymm was chosen to attend for his excellence as a classical



VIOLA VIRTUOSO

Courtesy of Jisang Kymm

violinist. He was one of 150 winners across ten disciplines.

Finding out about the competition at his Julliard's Pre-College Program, Kymm and his teacher compiled a repertoire of songs that best highlighted his abilities as a violinist. In order to prepare for the October deadline, Kymm put in hours of at-home practice and took many lessons, he said.

After receiving a phone call from YoungArts telling him he had won, Kymm was overjoyed. "They called me in the middle of H period, and it was just a complete shock to me, and it was a great way to end the day," Kymm said.

During YoungArts week, Kymm rehearsed for three to six hours in the morning in preparation for the classical music concert at the end of the week, he said. He then attended classes, collaborating with students from other disciplines. "We would

often be assigned a task to compose a quick art piece or some kind of creative performance with the other disciplines that we're not as familiar with," Kymm said.

Kymm also enjoyed collaborating with the other winners and getting to know them, he said. "I've never met someone so accomplished in filmmaking, for example, or met so many dancers who are super talented. I think YoungArts is a confluence of so much talent in many diverse sets of disciplines that you can't really find anywhere else."

The classical music concert took place on Thursday, January 11th, where Kymm performed alongside the other winners. Since the audience was composed of so many distinguished artists, the experience was both nerve-racking and exciting, Kymm said.

At school, Kymm is a part of Orchestra and Sinfonietta,

taught by Music Teacher Nathan Hetherington. "Jisang is a wonderful student who is musically incredibly talented and intellectually curious and he could certainly go into a career in music if that's what he wants to do," Hetherington said.

Kymm has been playing the viola since he was eleven years old, having previously played the violin since he was six years old, he said. He hopes to continue playing viola in college and to join an orchestra afterwards, he said.

"I think music in general is a very abstract form of expression and allows you to express emotions, thoughts, and feelings that you can't really put into words—it serves as an outlet," Kymm said. "When you play music in small groups of people, you form both personal and emotional connections that I haven't found anywhere else."

"Bridging the Divide" English elective wraps up with a visit to Maine prison

GILLIAN HO
Staff Writer

English Teacher Rebecca Bahr's senior English elective, "Bridging the Divide," traveled to the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, Maine last weekend to visit the incarcerated women that they have been working with this semester. In the elective, student groups are paired with incarcerated women in Maine to discuss literature with them. While the elective counts as half of the senior English credit for students, it counts as a college freshman credit under the state of Maine for the women at the prison, Bahr said. The visit lasted three days, and the class returned on Sunday.

The elective, created by Simon Schackner '22, was started during the COVID-19 pandemic. "After watching the documentary 'College Behind Bars', he was really inspired and wanted to do a joint class with students and people who are incarcerated," Bahr said. "One [organization that was willing

to take the class] was the Maine Correctional Center," she said.

During the trip, the students engaged in a number of activities with the incarcerated women. "We read poems, did some choral reading, and in the afternoon we played Pickleball, basketball, Apples to Apples, Scattergories, and much more," Bahr said.

Instead of working with a minimum security prison as the elective has done in past years, this year's class visited a medium-maximum security prison due to logistical changes. "Going into a prison can be a little nerve-racking, so everybody was a little nervous," Bahr said. "But once we got inside, and we saw everybody and we walked through the facility, it didn't feel scary at all."

Being at the facility allowed all of the students to bond with one another, Julia Phillips (12) said. "When we were inside the facility, we couldn't use our phones or technology, so there weren't many distractions," Phillips said. "We just focused on talking and learning from each other."

At the end of the elective, the class compiled an anthology of poems, photos, and other pieces of work that the group developed during the semester. "Something fun we did is that we all signed each other's books

with different messages, which was really special," Phillips said.

For Jah'si Eyre (12), the trip represented the culmination of all the work the class did over the semester with each other. "Meeting

[the incarcerated women] made me realize that they were our classmates, too, and they deserved an education as much as we do," he said. "We really were genuinely bridging the divide."



STUDENTS SMILE WITH INCARCERATED WOMEN

Photo by Rebecca Bahr

**Faces blurred at request of subjects

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Letters Letters to the editor often respond to editorials, articles, and opinions pieces, allowing The Record to uphold its commitment to open discourse within the school community. They too represent the opinion of the author and not of The Record or the school. To be considered for publication in the next issue, letters should be submitted by mail (The Record, 231 West 246th Street, Bronx, NY 10471) or email (record@horacemann.org) before 6 p.m. on Wednesday evening. All submissions must be signed.

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Middle Schoolers should not be allowed to take the 4pm bus



James Zaidman

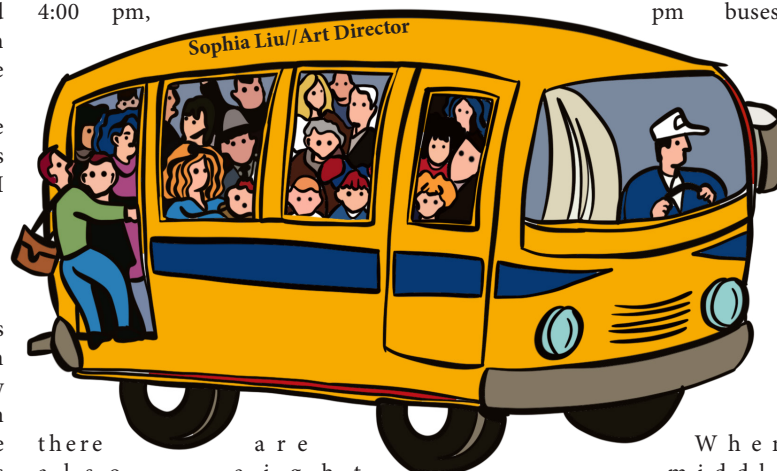
It's Monday during a busy week, and I've just been let out of my H period class. It just so happens that today, I do not have any club meetings. As a high school student, I am obligated to take the 4:00 pm bus. So instead of boarding a bus at 3:15 pm, I make my way to the library—by the time I sit down to do productive work, it's already 3:30 pm. In the 30 minutes before the bus leaves, I don't have enough time to complete a single homework assignment, but such is life. I resolve to relax on the 4:00 pm bus and then work efficiently when I get home. However, when I get on the bus, I am forced to double up because groups of middle

schoolers have decided to take up a block of seats on the bus. Why are they on the bus? Middle schoolers don't have I period, yet they are able to take both the regular bus and the 4:00 p.m. bus on Mondays and Thursdays. Due to a lack of available space on the later bus, as Selby combines routes during the modified Monday/Thursday bus schedule, middle schoolers should be held to the same standard as high schoolers and be required to take the bus at 3:15 or 6:00 pm.

Since my freshman year, I have avoided taking the 3:15 pm bus on Mondays and Thursdays, as I understand that there is no space for high schoolers to take the bus at that time. What I do not understand, however, is how the space exists for middle schoolers at 4:00 pm. This can also be shown through a quick analysis of how bus distributions are made on Mondays and Thursdays. There are roughly 450 middle schoolers and 750 high schoolers at Horace Mann, which means there are around 1200 students who need to get home every day. Assuming that an equal proportion of both groups do not take a Manhattan bus, as the buses outside of Manhattan follow a separate schedule, doing some quick calculations reveals that 37.5 percent of bus riders are middle schoolers and 62.5 percent are high schoolers. To establish a

baseline, I assume that on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the right capacity exists to comfortably fit all middle and high schoolers who take bus transportation. On these days, there are 15 3:15 pm Manhattan bus routes, which cover 171 stops. At 3:15 pm on Mondays and Thursdays, there are eight bus routes, covering 116 stops. At 4:00 pm,

have this distribution to ensure all students are able to have a stop relatively close to their normal stop on these days. Since there are significantly fewer middle schoolers who rely on bus transportation, but the same space at each time for middle and high schoolers, there must be more free space on the 3:15 pm buses than on the 4:00 pm buses.



there are also eight bus routes, covering 120 stops. If the number of buses and stops are identical, the capacity of each bus must be the same, so why are there allowed to be more students on the already more crowded 4:00 pm bus?

While I was puzzled at first by the fact that there are nearly an identical number of stops for the middle and high school buses, due to the geographical range the buses must cover, it still makes sense to

When middle schoolers take the 4:00 pm, they simply further crowd the (already-crowded) buses.

Then, why is there no restriction against middle schoolers taking the 4:00 pm bus just because they want to stay at school for those extra 45 minutes? I understand that there are some clubs in the middle school that meet after school, but to my knowledge, all middle school clubs that meet for 45 minutes or less meet

during D or E periods. In fact, most high-commitment middle school clubs (those that are run by high schoolers, e.g. Model UN, Public Forum Debate, Parliamentary Debate, and more) meet after school until 5:30 or 6:00 pm. Last year, when I participated in Middle Division Public Forum Debate, I saw middle schoolers leaving at 4:00 pm just because they wanted to, and for a middle school program, 30 minutes is not nearly enough time to be productive. In this case, the benefits of restricting middle schoolers from taking the 4:00 pm bus are twofold: not only would the change reduce overcrowding, but it would also ensure that middle schoolers learn more from the clubs they participate in.

While crowded buses obviously aren't the most pressing issue facing our school at the moment, I would love to understand why this rule exists for the high school but does not apply to middle schoolers. In my view, it seems like a logical application of a single standard across both divisions. Restricting middle school bus riders to the 3:15 and 6:00 pm buses will have positive effects for both the high schoolers who rely on the bus system to get home and the middle schoolers themselves.

Why I prefer studying in Lutnick over the library



Brie Wells

Although the library is a popular spot to study and hang out at our school, it is one of my least favorite places to work. Despite its reputation as the best place for productivity, I find the library to be busy, crowded, and too serious. There are usually many other students in the library, which increases the likelihood that I will have to socialize—an absolute nightmare as someone who works best alone. It might seem like the second floor is the solution; however, I feel the second floor lacks any sort of open space and sometimes feels very lonely. On the second floor, I am limited to working in complete

silence. I cannot be the only person who feels especially claustrophobic up there—throughout the library, but especially on the second floor, most areas are separated by bookshelves. I like privacy, not isolation.

On the contrary, I find that Lutnick Hall—particularly the second and third floors—has the perfect balance of seclusion and open space. Despite the sheltered atmosphere, people often walk by and teachers in nearby classrooms sometimes leave their doors open, creating a soft background hum of white noise. Alongside the benefit of having more space to myself, I appreciate the freedom to converse with a friend in a relatively quiet environment, which you are unable to do on the second floor of the library. Lutnick Hall offers a balance to both the distracting group conversations of the library's first floor and the complete silence of the library's second floor.

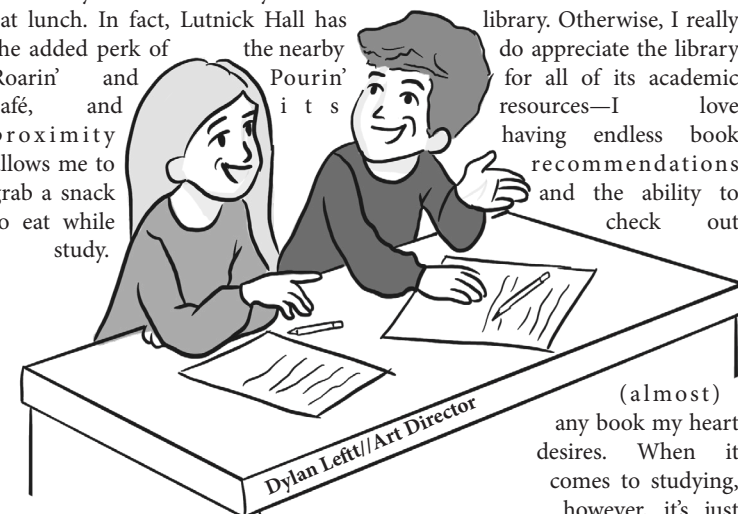
In the library, I face a difficult choice: either work in a study room, at the group tables, or sit alone at an individual desk. This choice makes the space not nearly as versatile as the tables in Lutnick, which can comfortably accommodate three-ish people or provide me with plenty of desk space for when I am working alone. When I am working more casually on an assignment that does not require complete focus, the

inviting space of the Lutnick tables makes it easier for friends to find me and sit down. In the case that I do want to work with a group, the Lutnick tables would still be more spacious and convenient, since finding an empty study room in the library is a challenge in and of itself.

Not only do I have more space to work comfortably in Lutnick, but the library is remote and misses out on several amenities. Food is several buildings away, stairs are involved in entering and exiting, and we can all agree that the bathrooms are so much nicer in Lutnick Hall. To reach the second floor of Lutnick, one must only walk to the building, which is easier if you are already nearby or have a class there after your free period. Personally speaking, I only have one class on the second floor of Tillinghast, and it is all the way on the other side of the building, compared to the library. I also hate stairs, so the walk to Lutnick is much more accessible. I would even consider the short walk enjoyable during the warmer seasons. Aside from desktops, laptop chargers, and stationary (such as staplers, tape, and hole punchers)—which are unique to the library—Lutnick provides similar resources, including printers, outlets, and phone chargers. Even then, you could probably borrow any needed stationary from the science office or

from a Lutnick Hall classroom with a teacher's permission. The only resources completely exclusive to the library are desktops, which may be necessary for students who do not have or want to use a laptop. For those who do, it is very worth bringing your own charger (rather than borrowing one from the library) in exchange for the benefits of working in Lutnick.

My final grievance with the library is that you are not allowed to bring lunch in, which is something you are always able to do in Lutnick Hall. I admit it keeps the library clean, but it does mean I can't go to the library if I want to study while I eat lunch. In fact, Lutnick Hall has the added perk of the nearby Roarin' and Pourin' café, and its proximity allows me to grab a snack to eat while I study.



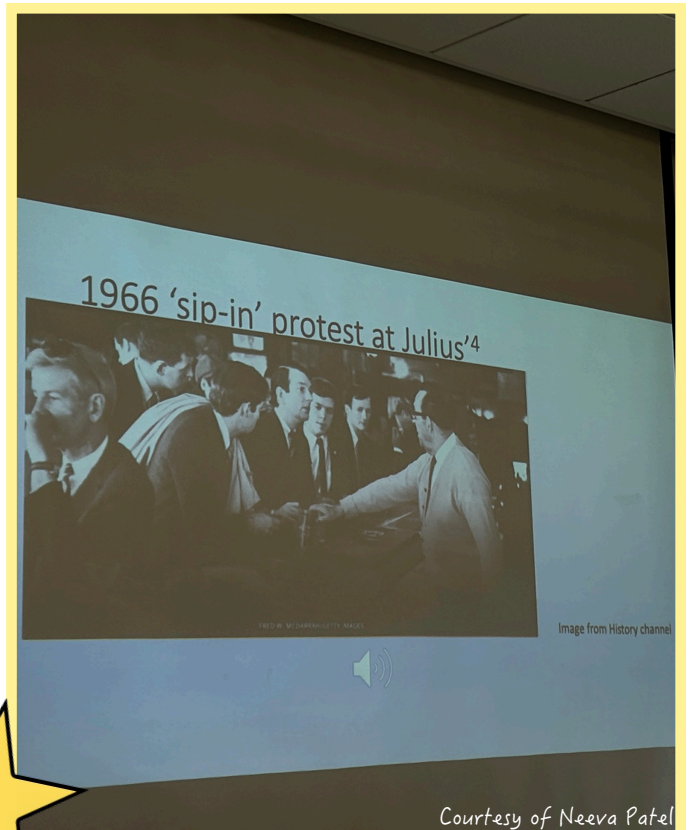
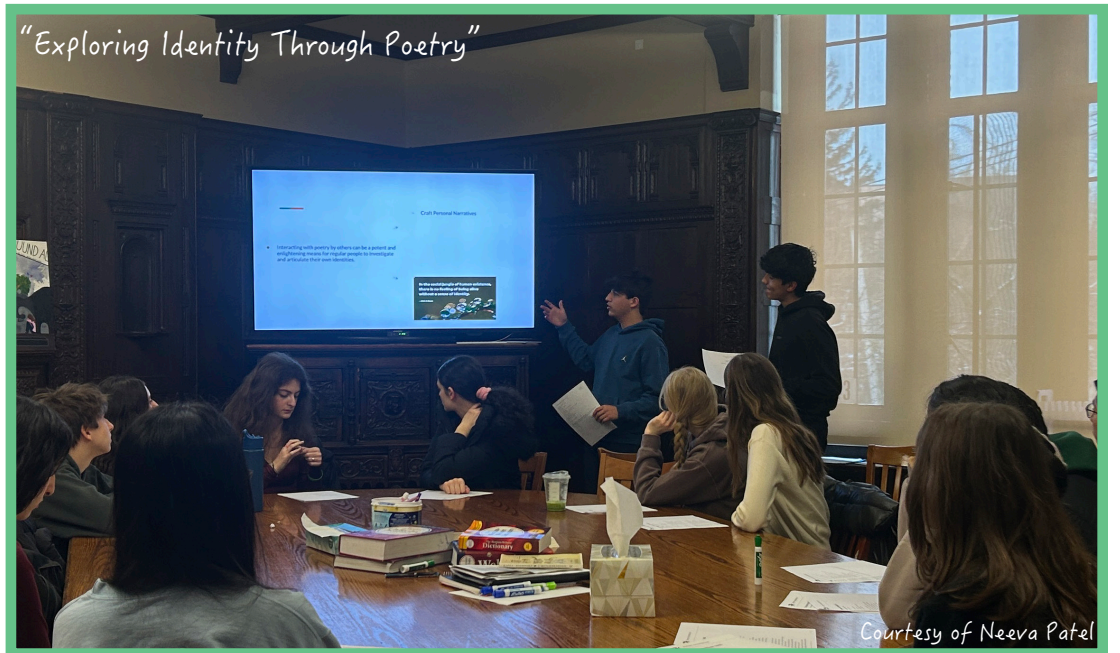
Realistically, I focus much better when I am

not distracted by an overwhelming desire to eat or drink something, which I can't do in the library.

I understand that many people may still prefer working in the library, and Lutnick Hall is often inconveniently far away from the Tillinghast classrooms. People also might enjoy the social aspects of the library. Working there is a very different experience for seniors, who have access to the senior lounge (and nearby group tables). Yet, for the time it takes me to walk to and from Lutnick, I find that I am more productive during my frees there than I would be if I worked in the library. Otherwise, I really do appreciate the library for all of its academic resources—I love having endless book recommendations and the ability to check out

(almost) any book my heart desires. When it comes to studying, however, it's just not my preferred location.

Unity Week Workshops





Courtesy of Neeva Patel



Courtesy of Neeva Patel



Courtesy of Neeva Patel

Courtesy of Aryan Palla

Courtesy of Julia Bouchut



Courtesy of Neeva Patel



Courtesy of Julia Bouchut

Students explore Unity Week workshops

Yiddish, the Myth, the Legend

HENRY PECK
Staff Writer

In the 'Yiddish, the Myth, the Legend' Unity Week workshop, audience members learned that although New Yorkers always boast about the quality of their bagels, the word "bagel" is actually a Yiddish word derived from Jewish communities in Poland.

The Jewish Culture Club partnered

with science teacher Oleg Zvezdin to present a workshop on the origins of Yiddish. The presenters ran through a slideshow which detailed the creation, evolution, and modern usage of the Yiddish language. The workshop explored the development of Yiddish by the Jewish people during the ninth century in the Rhinelands, as a mix of German, Hebrew, and Slavic languages.

Afterwards, presenters Naomi Yae-

ger (12), Shai Kraut (9), Rose Yaeger (9), Joe Brener (11), Lexi Lawskey (11), and Noah Benson (10) showed the audience maps depicting where Hebrew and Yiddish were spoken, religious texts written in Yiddish, videos of people speaking Yiddish, Yiddish pop culture, and Yiddish theater. To demonstrate the similarity between German, Yiddish, and Hebrew, participants were shown three translations of the word

'family' and asked to determine whether the words were Hebrew, German, or Yiddish.

Alex Felberbaum (10) particularly enjoyed learning about the complicated origin of the Yiddish language, he said. "Yiddish was the result of clashing cultures needing to assimilate and it was intriguing to discover that."

Zvezdin hopes that the workshop enabled participants to better understand

and appreciate the language. "I wanted to teach everyone the history of Yiddish and I believe it is important to get to know other people's cultures and be open minded," he said. "People speak languages other than English and we must learn about their development to understand their significance and the culture of the people who speak them."

A hand is shown drawing a geometric pattern on a piece of paper. The paper has the text "THE IDEAL CHILD" and "Vivian Coraci/Art Director" written on it. The drawing is a series of connected lines forming a shape that resembles a stylized 'A' or a person's outline. The text "A l - brecht (9) said. 'The culmination of different skin tones on the wall represents all the different members of the community.'" is written next to the drawing.

Mix Your Skin Tone

ADEN NATHOO
Staff Writer

Art teachers Emily Lombardo and Brian Lee's Unity Week workshop "Mix Your Skin Tone" encouraged students and faculty to recreate their skin tones using acrylic paint. The workshop was based on Angelica Dass and Byron Kim's collection of different skin tones at the Smithso-

nian Museum and represented the diversity of complexions at the school.

"Everybody is being represented in this space," Lombardo said. "[The workshop] is talking about us as a collective, which is what we are, but also recognizing our differences as individuals."

Entering the gallery, participants were immediately struck with the smell of wet paint, the sight of a wall

filled with squares of skin tones, and the sound of shuffling feet. At the workshop, each student was given an art smock and worked at a station assembled with a mixing paper, mixing palette, blank 6in x 6in canvas, paint brush, testing strips, and a paper towel. Once all attendees were seated, Lombardo gave a brief introduction on mixing the paints which ranged from black to red to match students'

complexions.

Participants then combined paints on their mixing paper, testing the new color against their skin using testing strips, and finally filling a blank canvas with swatches of their skin tones. Afterwards, they hung the works on a wall, creating a geometric pattern of complexions.

"It really shows the diversity of the Horace Mann community," Mark

The Insidious Ideology of The Child in Pop Culture

CIANA TZUO
Staff Writer

Has anyone ever tried to convince you of their argument by saying, "think of the children"? Have you ever seen posters in the street with a sad looking child asking you for donations? Yesterday during D period, English teacher Jennifer Little and the SLS Critical Theory Class, un-

packed the idea of the ideal child in Lee Edelman's book, No Future.

Using Edelman's concept of "The Child," the workshop explored the issues with turning "The Child" into the poster child of social causes, through the lens of race, disability, and heteronormativity.

The workshop began by identifying traits of the "Ideal Child" in America by asking students to draw

their perception of the ideal child. Students were then asked to put down a finger if their drawing of a child matched the description of "The Child" -- a white, able-bodied, blue-eyed, blond boy.

The workshop then integrated how the media uses portrayals of children or "The Child" to gain sympathy. Displaying two 1990 magazine covers, one on advocacy and the other

on autism research, Harper Rosenberg (12) explained how the media exploits "The Child's" innocence to elicit sympathy from readers.

Finally, the workshop discussed recent iterations of "The Child" in relation to reproductive futurity, or the concept that policymakers prioritize the abstract idea of a future child over the current situation. After playing "The Sun Will Come Out

Tomorrow" video from the musical Annie and showing posters of Cosette from Les Miserables, Etta Singer (12) demonstrated the prevalence of this narrative not just in media but in pop culture.

A hand is shown holding a sign that says "MY BODY MY CHOICE". The sign is white with black and red text. The text "i n Vivian Coraci/Art Director" is written above the sign.

Unpacking Reproductive Rights in the Government

JULIA BOUCHUT
Staff Writer

"Reproductive justice is more than just abortion," Emmy Odell (10) said. "It applies to everyone; even if the right to an abortion doesn't affect you directly, the right to privacy is really important."

On Thursday, the Reproductive Justice Coalition (RJC) hosted a Uni-

ty Week workshop called Unpacking Reproductive Rights in the Government. Presidents Odell and Eliana Son (10) ran the workshop like a lecture, providing a comprehensive history of reproductive rights to the present day, while also exploring possible changes that should be made to the movement.

Throughout their presentation, Odell and Son focused on the impact of certain legal decisions on the privacy

of marginalized or underrepresented individuals, including people of color, impoverished people, and queer Americans. "We wanted people to understand that reproductive justice intersects with a lot of different issues," Son said."

In planning the workshop, Odell and Son aimed to create a space to expand the conversation on reproductive justice past just abortion, Son said. "A lot of the conversation about abortion

rights and reproductive justice isn't necessarily encompassing the entire issue," she said. "We wanted to take Unity Week as an opportunity to educate the school community a bit more, especially since it's hard to get a comprehensive understanding of the issue just from social media."

In advance of the workshop, Odell and Son researched the most relevant legal cases on reproductive justice and

learned the context behind them. "We wanted to not only look at cases but also the perspective of historians and people who analyze these events and the context to bring everything together," Son said.

Urban Farms: Improving environmental sustainability, nutrition, and community

OLIVER KONOPKO
Staff Writer

20 students packed into room 239T yesterday during F period to listen to Rena Salsberg's (11) presentation on the need for increased Urban Agriculture in the Bronx. Her presentation highlighted the lack of proper nutrition that plagues the Bronx, as well as the overconsumption of nutrient-lacking foods. "People talk about food insecurity a lot, but really understanding what it means is a totally different thing," she said. "Some people think, 'Oh, people can't afford food,' but it's what types of food they can't afford that is really impacting their lives."

Salsberg began her presentation by having each student take a survey about their daily consumption of fresh produce and their weekly fast-food consumption. The survey also asked students to estimate the time from when a banana is picked to when it is sold

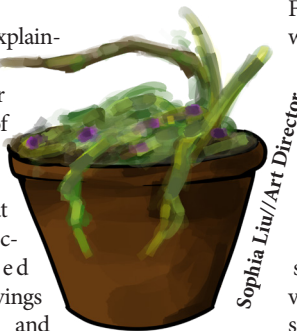
in-store. (Surprisingly, it can take over a month!)

After explaining that only four percent of Bronx residents consume at least the recommended daily servings of fruits and

vegetables, Salsberg argued that Urban Farms can help alleviate food insecurity while also building up local communities. For example, Salsberg talked about Black Joy Farm, a local Bronx community garden that grows organic produce which they then sell to the local community at lower prices.

While Urban Gardens can mean small plots of land, they also include vertical gardens that can be housed inside buildings and apartments, Salsberg

said. Salsberg has begun to experiment with vertical gardens at home and in the future hopes to bring them to the school, she said. "A full-blown community garden is a lot for the school to manage, but I hope that we can set up hydroponic kits in the science lab in the future."



Girls Varsity Squash team rallies with resilience against Poly Prep

HANNAH BECKER
Staff Writer

Despite the Girls Varsity Squash (GVS) team's hustle on the courts this Wednesday, they lost 2-5 against Poly Prep.

This week, the team felt confident entering their games since they had beaten both Poly Prep and Grace Church earlier in the season, GVS Captain Mira Bansal (12) said. Unlike many of their opponents, GVS has more than five members who play the sport outside of school, making the team a strong competitor, she said. "Normally, the girls squash teams we play against have one or two really good players, and those matches are always fun to watch because people really get into them," Bansal said. "The rest of the teams, however, usually consists of tennis players, giving us an advantage and making their team less strong overall."

Since the Lions' fourth-in-line player could not attend the game on Wednesday, each team member had to move up by one spot in the lineup, Bansal said. "I think we all tried our hardest and played well, but we were a little out of order since we were missing a player that is usually high in the lineup, causing most people to play against a more skilled opponent than they typically would," she said.

Due to the team's missing player on Wednesday, Erica Jiang (12) moved up from seventh to sixth in the lineup and had an exciting, close match, Bansal said. "Erica was

losing by two, but then she had a comeback and tied the score," she said. "She just barely lost in the last match, but she still played really well overall and definitely stood out among the team."

Despite their loss on Wednesday, each player performed well and to the best of their abilities, GVS Head Coach Olufemi Salako said. "There was nothing that the team could have done better at the game since the school we played against did have a few players that were better than the players on our team," he said. "Also, we were missing one of our players, so everyone had to play a spot up, meaning they had to play someone who was above their level."

During the practices leading up to the games, the team held challenge matches, where players compete against each other to change their spot in the game-day lineup, Lily Sussman (10) said. "The challenge matches help to ensure that everyone is playing in the best position to help us win," she said. "Since the first and second players in our opponent's lineup are the best on their team, we want to make sure that our first and second players are the strongest on our team."

To prepare for matches, the team played group games such as Queen of the Court, smaller matches to simulate real games, and used drills to focus on specific skills such as serving, Bansal said. "To practice serving and returning—the first two shots of a match—we break up into smaller groups in which one person will hit five or six consecutive



ERICA JIANG (12 GOES FOR THE BALL

Courtesy of Anoushka Parakh

serves, and the other person will receive the serves, and then they switch places and repeat the drill," she said. As the team practices their shots and serves, Bansal and Co-Captain Ashley Scherer (12) encourage the players and give them feedback on how to improve, Bansal said.

Going into the games this week, Sussman focused on improving her serve and serve return, a crucial part of the sport, she said. "My serve is definitely the weakest part of my game, but I want to improve it because if a serve is powerful, deep, and accurate, especially if it is tight and in the corner of the court, it can

be really difficult for an opponent to return," Sussman said.

Alex Leichter (11) concentrated on refining her backhand before the games this week, working to make it more powerful and accurate by practicing with other members of the team, she said. "I really wanted to make my backhand stronger and deeper in the court, as it is a common but important shot that, when very powerful, can significantly improve your overall skill," she said.

Before each game, Salako gives the team a pep talk to prepare them for their matches and remind the team of their goals, Sussman said. "He always tells us that we should

just try to have fun and appreciate the sport, which takes off a lot of pressure and calms the team's nerves a bit," she said. "Sometimes, he says, 'It is not the U.S. Open, so everyone should try to have fun,' which really helps to make sure everyone is not only playing to win but is also enjoying themselves."

Remaining calm, focused, and confident on the court is key to a successful match, Salako said. Salako always reminds the players to be relaxed and have a strong mindset before and during each game. "I also tell them to study the pattern of their opponents' game while on the court," Salako said.



ASHLEY SCHERER (12) READIES HER STANCE

Courtesy of Anoushka Parakh

Record Sports LIONS' DEN

JANUARY 19TH, 2024

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Hoops bring hope at the Court of Dreams Classic

JULIA LOURENCO
Staff Writer

Girls Varsity Basketball (GVB) and Boys Varsity Basketball (BVB) stood with Lion's pride against the Fieldston Eagles during the Courts of Dreams Classic (CoDC) last Friday. Both teams faced tough losses, with GVB losing 22-56 and BVB losing 54-75.

Founded in 2006 by Marc Cornstein '88 P' 24 and Natasha Cornstein P' 24, Court of Dreams' mission is to restore outdoor basketball courts in New York City, Danny Cornstein (12) said. Cornstein, who is currently injured but plays for BVB, began his leadership at CoDC during his ninth-grade year. "I love basketball, and [CoDC] gives me a way to combine my two biggest passions of giving back while being able to grow the game of basketball," Cornstein said.

Before the GVB game started at 4:45 p.m., families were already lining up outside of the Richard A. Friedman '75 Gymnasium, making their \$5 donations and getting their free T-shirts from the student representatives for the charity.

Student representative Sofia Sahai (10) had the opportunity to represent the Court of Dreams Foundation's mission during the game on Friday. "I handed out T-shirts and managed the raffle on Friday, and being off of the court, I could see the overwhelming excitement from the crowd, which made the event all the more special," she said.

In preparation for CoDC, Cornstein, along with other members of the Upper Division student body, helped advertise the game by creating an Instagram account for the

organization and setting up for the raffle. "Social media has been extremely helpful for us not just in terms of spreading the word about the event, but also raising money," Cornstein said. The raffle was another way to get students excited for the games, and to make it more entertaining for the younger cubs, he said.

Both the GVB and BVB teams played against Fieldston as the main event of CoDC. With one hour between the two games, the race was on to get as many donations as possible, while also bringing attention to the main event, the basketball games.

GVB was down 2-21 in the first quarter, but they continued strong, feeding on the raging support of the crowds. The environment was like no other, with audiences full of excited students, faculty members, and parents from both schools ready to cheer on their players. Despite a tough loss for GVB, there were some emotional shots, like a series of baskets from Ava Parento (10).

The environment of the crowds served as motivation for BVB and inspired them to continue fighting against the Eagles, BVB team member Jack Mogelof (12) said. "It was really nice to have a bunch of our friends there, and support from [GVB]. It made us want to keep pushing, even against a great team like Fieldston."

As the Lions fought to stay in the game, star players like Matthew Fratepietro (10) kept the team hopeful, Mogelof said. "[Fratepietro] hit a deep 3-pointer in the first minute of the game—that was a great moment."



SASHA MERMELSTEIN (11) MAKES A SHOT

Courtesy of Barry Mason

The impact that CoDC has on making basketball accessible for communities around New York was important to BVB during their game, Mogelof said. "We knew that the money from the raffles and everyone's donations to watch us play was going straight to the [Court of Dreams] foundation, so we felt like we were promoting a good cause even though we lost," he said.

The CoDC was an amazing opportunity for the student body to come together for an important

cause, Sahai said. "The dedication of the players on both teams was apparent, and it reflected [the school's] and Fieldston's support of a wonderful organization."

Since the CoDC is a charity game, it can break longstanding sports rivalries like that between the Lions and the Eagles, Cornstein said. "Logistically coordinating the event was seamless, with both schools involved," he said. "I was happy to see Fieldston's athletic department so engaged with the initiative."

The main concern for planning CoDC was to make sure that GVB and BVB's games were not overshadowed by the need to raise donations, Cornstein said. "We had to figure out how the raffles and donations were not going to interfere with the [basketball game], which was a challenge because we had to think about how to raise money while still keeping everyone engaged with the games," he said.

The most sentimental addition to this year's CoDC was the Robert A. Annunziata Courts of Dreams Classic MVP Award, Cornstein said. The award was created in honor of Annunziata's work as the school's Athletic Director before his retirement last year, he said. This year, both of the winners were a part of Fieldston's Varsity Basketball teams.

The money received from CoDC, in addition to all the money raised online, will be used later this year in the construction of the organization's third basketball court in the past four years. "The [CoDC] on Friday was also in preparation for a new project that we haven't announced yet, but am excited to work on," Cornstein said.

Sahai looks forward to continuing with CoDC. "At the end of the year, the representatives will work to restore an outdoor basketball court, and I am looking forward to seeing the impact of Court of Dreams beyond school walls," Sahai said.



CAROLINE EIZENSTAT (8) GOES FOR A LAYUP

Courtesy of Barry Mason