



## HELLO, RACHEL KHONG



Rachel Khong discusses her writing process during the student-led Q&A session at School Meeting.

By **The Choate News Copy Editors**

Winner of the California Book Award for First Fiction, Los Angeles Times Book Prize Finalist for First Fiction, author of *All About Eggs*, *A Cookbook* and this year's summer reading, *Goodbye, Vitamin*, Rachel Khong visited Choate on September 20 to give the School a glimpse into her writing process — from fading memories to egg recipes. After School Meeting, Ms. Khong experienced a day at Choate, strolling around campus, visiting classes, and enjoying meals in the dining hall.

Described by The New York Times as “a darkly comic yet heartfelt book,” *Goodbye, Vitamin* sheds light on the mundane intricacies of ordinary family life. Ms. Khong drew from her personal experience of having a grandmother diagnosed with Alzheimer's to craft a touching story of the loving yet strenuous relationship between the novel's main character, Ruth, and her father who is suffering from Alzheimer's.

The decision to write this novel in a diary format was Ms. Khong's way of splitting up long writing while still maintaining a forward movement of the novel. On the subject of journaling, she emphasized the need for balance between preserving memories and living in the moment. She brought up the example of Robert Shields, who holds the record for the longest journal by chronicling every moment of his life — even visits to the bathroom.

When writing the novel, she was also interested in balancing humor and grief as a reflection of the duality of life itself. She noted that sad moments in life are not a constant; instead, even in the most depressing situations, hints of humor shine through. She explained that experiences cannot be bound to just one emotion: emotions are tangled and interconnected with one another, especially in human relationships.

Ms. Khong was certain of one thing when writing the novel: it would revolve around the concept of memory. Like all of her projects, writing this novel posed a challenge. It required her to learn



Photo by Ramsey Scott '23/The Choate News

new skills along the way and took six years of emotional growth to perfect. “Writing doesn't make a lot of sense. Writing is not the most efficient thing to do ... The way I became a writer? By not giving up,” she explained.

Ms. Khong opened School Meeting with reading excerpts from the beginning of her book. Afterwards, she participated in a Q&A session with students Lauren Kee '24 and Grace Furtado '23. During the interview, Ms. Khong shared the importance of food in her life, which she infused into her novel. For instance, Ms. Khong highlighted how Ruth spent a lot of time cooking while living with her family to regain control in unpredictable situations.

Ms. Khong also bonded with the audience by imparting advice to Choate's budding young writers: read out of interest rather than out of requirement. As someone who shares Ms. Khong's love for reading, English teacher Dr. Stephen Siperstein noted, “Reading is cool because you get to sort of experience what someone else is paying attention to through reading. The author, the character, you know, whatever

it is you're reading becomes a kind of window.” Furtado also reflected, “She talked about her experience as a writer living in a capitalist society where art isn't appreciated or valued as much and how it can be really hard to make a living off of it, but, for her, writing was never meant to be a job. Instead, she wrote because she loved it and because of that passion, it ended up becoming more than just a hobby for her.”

Later in her visit, Ms. Khong attended Choate's EN490 Creative Writing class. Sharing her insight on the writing field, Ms. Khong explained, “Being a writer is really the act of asking a question (about what it means to be human and the human experience) and then at least trying, in some way, to answer it.”

Students and faculty alike enjoyed Ms. Khong's joyful presence and appreciated her meaningful words of advice.

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## Community Service Day Returns

By **Erin Li '24**  
Copy Editor

Last Friday, September 30, Choate held its first Community Service Day since 2019. The theme “Service Work is Justice Work,” aimed to improve student and faculty awareness for causes such as environmental injustice, housing justice, food insecurity, human rights violations, and access to education with various activities aimed at uplifting communities across Connecticut and beyond.

This year's Community Service Day was kickstarted with a showing of the film “Truth Tellers,” which featured Mr. Robert Shetterly's activism through his portrait series. The movie was followed by a Q&A session with the artist himself.

The film highlighted Mr. Shetterly's artwork and the ways in which he directed his frustration and anger at social and environmental injustice towards something productive. His portraits showcase influential figures for civil disobedience and human rights.

“I have been destroying myself in my own anger, with my own grief, and my own sense of alienation from this country ... But there is also a very strong denunciation through the courage for people to stand up against injustice that are being made or rewarded,” said Mr. Shetterly. With over 260 works to his name, Mr. Shetterly continues to advocate for justice and connect with those who share his goal.

After the showing, Simone Johnson '23 and Noah Molina '23 conducted a Q&A session with Mr. Shetterly where he expanded on the inspiration behind his artwork and his views on civil disobedience. Mr. Shetterly shared advice with the Choate community on simple ways they can combat injustices and advocate for issues they believe in. “There are so many great projects and organizations that need bodies and people who are willing to be engaged. Unless we're willing to take certain kinds of risks, to get outside of our conformity, that can constrain and contain us, we won't be able to find out who we are really capable of being,” he said.

The theme of the day, “Service Work is Justice Work,” was inspired by the growing awareness and call to action against social injustices in recent years. “I want people making these kinds of connections and incorporating issues around human rights and social justice into community service work,” said

Ms. Melissa Koomson, the Director of Community Service at Choate.

Students participating in service activities were divided into groups to work on various assignments that ranged from volunteering at animal shelters, senior homes, public areas, etc., with each service act reflecting the theme of justice. Jimena Acosta '23, alongside the rest of the Bernhard dorm, volunteered at Seymour Land Trust, helping to restore a public park's terrains and to prepare it for winter. “I helped make the environment a more usable space, and this can hopefully be enjoyed by Connecticut residents,” she said.

During their time engaging in service work, students were exposed to a wide range of institutional issues that perpetuate injustices that exist nationally and even globally. Vice President of Community Service Club, Rachel Welcome '24, added, “It was really nice to go out and help the community because, at Choate, we are in such a place of privilege. It was very eye-opening to go out and recognize our privilege.”

Thandiwe Taylor '26, an attendee, shared, “I learned that it's important to be really intentional and make sure you learn everything. Even if you don't learn it in school, you can go outside and do your own research.” Following her experiences on Friday, Taylor was inspired to sign up for more opportunities for community service in the area. “I enrolled in the winter community service seminar, so I'm excited to learn about this community and partner with the organizations.”

Among the activities offered was a civil disobedience workshop with Mr. Shetterly, where he discussed the importance of advocacy on social injustices, or an Entangled and Ingested Workshop with Kat Owens, a local artist, teacher, and researcher who focuses on environmental justice.

As the first Community Service Day in over two years, many students experienced the Choate tradition for the first time. Community Service Day aims to allow students to learn beyond the classroom and to develop a perspective on global, social, and environmental issues. Ms. Koomson shared, “My hope is that students will learn the value and importance and real critical need of community service and that students will make connections with what community service is, and how it's an integral part of Choate education.”

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## Scenes from Community Service Day



Photo by Garrett Curtis '24/The Choate News



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

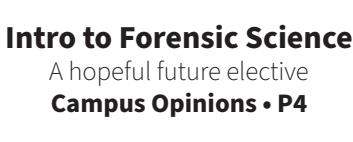


Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

**Exploring Wallingford**  
An introduction to Wallingford attractions  
**Local News • P3**



**Intro to Forensic Science**  
A hopeful future elective  
**Campus Opinions • P4**



**Kohler's Killer Kitchen**  
Choate's celebrity: Chef Janusz  
**Features • P6**



**Swapping Out Skirts**  
Girls' sports teams update antiquated uniforms  
**Sports • P8**



### What's Inside

School News.....	1-2
Local News.....	3
Opinions: Campus.....	4
Opinions: Nation/World.....	5
Features.....	6
Arts and Leisure.....	7
Sports.....	8



Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by Yujin Kim '23 and Chris Childs '24



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## INTRODUCING CHOATE'S NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

By **Marinna Syms '25, Grace Yoon '26, Zoe Dieringer '25, Annie Cady '26, Lucy Domingo '26, Brenden Beng '26, Roshan Desai '26, Ellie Porter '25, Deyi Meng '26, Elsa Haakonsen '24, Kate Tortorella '26, Ellie Bissell '24, Mira Gilchrist '25, Chris Childs '24, and The Choate News Copy Editors**  
*Reporters*

With the start of the school year, Choate welcomes its new faculty to classrooms, dorms, and fields. From administrators to teachers to librarians, the 18 new faculty members have already made great contributions to the Choate community and have all expressed excitement towards continuing to make Choate a better place. Look out for a feature on Ms. Jenny Elliott, Head of Student and Academic Life in the next issue!



Photo courtesy Choate Communications

**MR. JEFFERY ALLEN:** New faculty member Mr. Jeffrey Allen is teaching third-formers in the English department. As an English teacher, he believes that “a good piece of writing has to be true, and the author has to believe it is true.” However, his main goal as a teacher is “to make [his] students feel like they have a classroom community and feel comfortable expressing themselves.” Mr. Allen also serves as Assistant Coach of Boys’ Cross Country. Hailing from California, Mr. Allen was especially excited to come to Connecticut and experience the colorful changing leaves of New England fall.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Azucena Alvarez Alonso

**MS. AZUCENA ALVAREZ ALONSO:** Ms. Azucena Alvarez Alonso is a new Spanish teacher who received her B.A. from Universidad de Valladolid and later went on to earn her M.A. from West Virginia University. After years of immersive teaching experiences in North America, Europe, and Asia, she is excited for her new position here at Choate. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Alvarez Alonso clears her mind through dance, particularly salsa and Latin dances and is excited to practice those very soon on campus.



Photo by Garrett Curtis '24/The Choate News

**MR. ANDREW DICKSON:** Mr. Andrew Dickson is the new Assistant Athletic Director and baseball coach. Mr. Dickson has significant experience in the field of baseball, having coached baseball at Yale University, Northwestern University, and Lafayette College. Mr. Dickson joined the Choate community because he loved the area and wanted to help student athletes find their path. This year, he is looking forward to experiencing a myriad of sporting events and becoming integrated into the Choate community.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Karelyn Skinner

**MS. KARELYN SKINNER:** Choate welcomes Ms. Karelyn Skinner as a new addition to the Math Department, teaching Accelerated Algebra II, Advanced Precalculus, and serving as the Boys’ Varsity Basketball Assistant Coach. Prior to joining Choate, she worked at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy. She came to Choate because of the inclusive community and passionate students and faculty. In addition to getting to know all the “talented and unique people within the community,” Ms. Skinner looks forward to experiencing her first Deerfield Day.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Jillian K. Forgue

**MS. JILLIAN K. FORGUE:** Ms. Jillian K. Forgue is the new Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion for Student Programming. She is also a Spanish 125 teacher and is the Girls’ Cross Country Assistant Coach. Ms. Forgue previously worked at Pomfret School where she taught Spanish, coached, and was part of the Equity and Inclusion team. On joining the community, Ms. Forgue noted, “I just really loved the environment, the commitment to equity, inclusion, and sustainability. I also love the motto ‘Be Undefinable.’ It is an encouragement for students to not be boxed into one label.”



Photo courtesy of Dr. Julie Hagen

**DR. JULIE HAGEN:** Choate welcomes Dr. Julie Hagen, the new Choral Director, who has been surrounded by music her whole life. She said, “My dad was always playing band in our basement, so I grew up with music. I knew I wanted to pursue music around tenth grade.” Prior to Choate, she worked at the University of Hartford as a music education professor. She is excited about the campus’s commitment to sustainability and social justice issues, which are causes that are close to her heart.

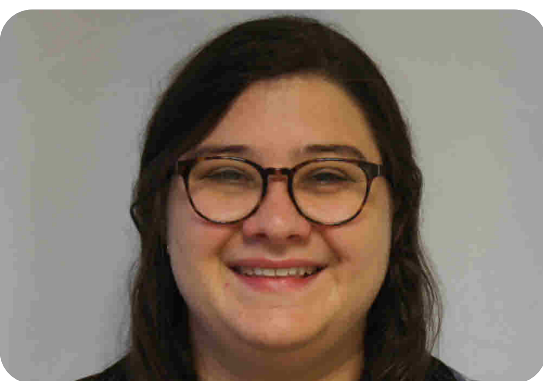


Photo Courtesy of Choate Communications

**MX. KATE HENRICKS:** Mx. Kate Henricks is a new faculty member to Choate’s English Department, teaching American Literature, the Art of the Essay, and coaching swimming and Girls’ Water Polo in the upcoming winter and spring terms. Before Choate, Mx. Hendricks worked in a small publishing company in Arkansas, and completed her bachelor’s degree at the University of Mississippi. “I always wanted to be like the teachers that I had who fostered my love of actually being in a classroom,” noted Mx. Henricks.

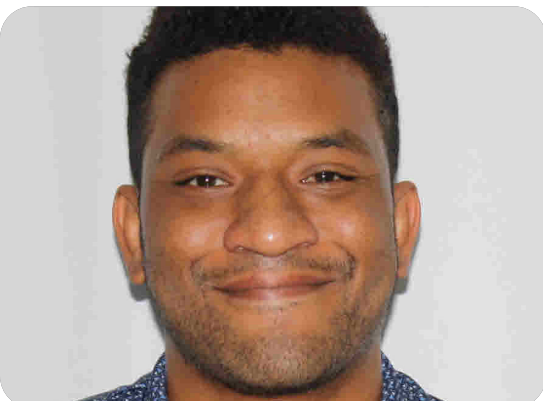


Photo Courtesy of Choate Communications

**MX. KAMDEN HILLIARD:** Choate welcomes Mx. Kamden Hilliard as a new member of the English Department who is particularly enthusiastic about creative writing. Mx. Hilliard was born in La Jolla, California, but calls Hawai’i home, where they graduated from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa with a B.A. in American Studies. An animal lover, Mx. Hilliard is an adviser in Nichols with their sweet and gentle (though seemingly intimidating) great dane and enjoys taking care of aquatic animals when not in the classroom. They can also be found coaching Girls’ JV Volleyball.

**DR. ERIN HOPKINS:** Dr. Erin Hopkins is the third and newest addition to the Counseling team at Choate, expanding the outreach of the team. She previously worked at Northwest Village School, a special education therapeutic school in Plainville, Connecticut, and was inspired to transfer to Choate because of its welcoming and vibrant environment. While she does not currently coach anything outside of her office, she is passionate about yoga, dance, and hiking. Above all, she is eager to meet all of her new students!



Photo courtesy of Dr. Erin Hopkins

**MR. WES JENKINS:** As a new faculty member in the History department, Mr. Wes Jenkins teaches Honors U.S. History and Honors American Studies, coaches wrestling and track, and serves as an adviser in Memorial House. Prior to Choate, Mr. Jenkins worked at the Pomfret School and served as the Dean of Students in addition to teaching and coaching. “As a former dean, I am looking forward to getting back to the basics of teaching, coaching, and advising in the dorm,” said Mr. Jenkins. “I have always found these parts of the job to be rewarding and fun.”

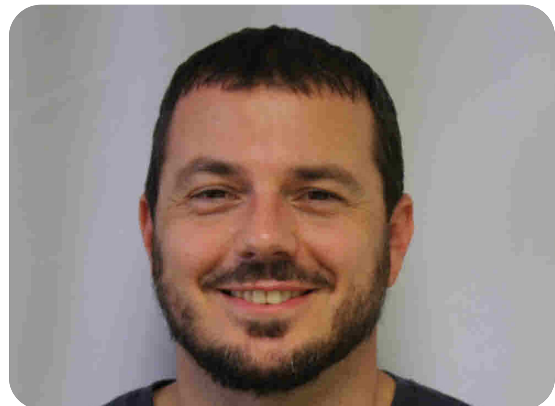


Photo courtesy of Choate Communications

**MS. ABBY KANDEL:** Ms. Abby Kandel is a new U.S. History and World History teacher. On campus, she also coaches the Girls’ JV Soccer and Lacrosse teams. Prior to Choate, she worked at Hawaii Preparatory Academy. “I knew of Choate, and I just knew how highly regarded it is. I wanted to really become a better teacher and be at a school that would challenge me as an educator,” she said. Ms. Kandel is very much looking forward to teaching, as well as learning and growing in Choate’s rigorous environment.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Abby Kandel

**MS. CAHALEY MARKMAN:** Ms. Markman is a new addition to the English department, teaching third and fourth-formers global literature classes as well as serving as an adviser for *The Choate News*. Before joining Choate, Ms. Markman worked at Kings Academy and decided to come to Choate due to its mission in equity and inclusion. Excited by the way the English department has restructured the fourth-form global literature class, she looks forward to contributing to Choate’s mission of equity and inclusion in her classroom.

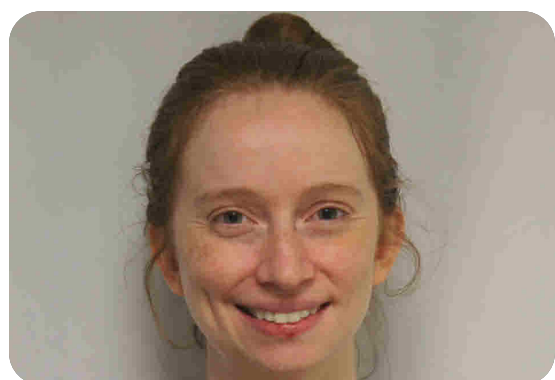


Photo courtesy of Choate Communications

**MRS. SYDNI MARMOR:** Mrs. Sydni Marmor is a new advisor to the Bystander Education Program (BEP). Although this is her first year full time at Choate, Mrs. Marmor is no stranger to Choate as she worked as a part-time faculty member last spring. “I admired being able to witness students with such passion, intelligence, and compassion to explore their identities with thoughtfulness and curiosity,” she said. Mrs. Marmor is looking forward to enjoying her favorite dining hall brownies, realizing new initiatives in the counseling office, and getting to know the student body.



Photo courtesy of Mrs. Sydni Marmor

**MS. SAM NELSON:** Choate welcomes a new addition to the library staff, Ms. Sam Nelson, who will serve as the Assistant Director of the Library and as an adviser in Nichols where she currently resides. When asked about what she is most looking forward to, Ms. Nelson said, “I’m excited for this work, and I feel excited to really get going once I get my feet under me because I want to help contribute to this community and maybe greater.” As an avid reader, it is difficult for Ms. Nelson to choose a favorite book, but one that has stuck with her over the years is *Normal People* by Sally Rooney.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Sam Nelson

**MS. LAURA PACE:** Ms. Laura Pace is Choate’s new addition to the Humanities department where she teaches U.S. History. She also coaches JV Field Hockey and JV Swimming, and is an adviser in Logan Munroe for third-form boys. Coming from Charlottesville, Virginia, she knew she wanted to begin her teaching career at a boarding school after attending a small one in Virginia. She was immediately drawn to Choate because of its kind and welcoming community and is excited to get to know everyone.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Laura Pace

**MR. NOLAN SILBERNAGEL:** Mr. Nolan Silbernagel is joining Choate this year as the new Assistant Director of Athletics and the Head of the Boys’ and Girls’ Swim teams. Mr. Silbernagel has previously worked at The Independent Day School as Assistant Director of Admissions and Xavier Highschool as the Swimming Head Coach. “This is the first school I’ve worked at that has a pool on campus, which was a pretty big draw as well.” His favorite moment so far at Choate has been the School Meetings, and he is looking forward to the swim season!



Photo courtesy of Mr. Nolan Silbernagel

**MS. LEELA K. WOODY:** Choate welcomes Ms. Leela K. Woody as a new member of the English department, Head of House of Library, and JV Volleyball Assistant Coach. Before joining Choate, Ms. Woody worked at a boarding school in Pennsylvania. What stood out to her about Choate was the continuous desire for growth and perseverance through societal challenges the world has recently experienced. Her first few weeks at Choate have been busy and exciting, and she is looking forward to making more connections with members of the community.



Photo courtesy of Choate Communications



# WHAT’S IN WALLINGFORD?

By **Tyler Kuo ’23**, **Eva Li ’24**, **Jacqueline Yan ’24**, **Laya Raj ’24**, **Amelia Sipkin ’25**, **Sarina Fernandez-Grinshpun ’25**, **Mira Gilchrist ’25**, **Roshan Desai ’26**, **Deyi Meng ’26**  
*Copy Editor, Copy Editor, Copy Editor, Copy Editor, Copy Editor, Staff Reporter, Reporter, Reporter, Reporter*

## On Track Karting Wallingford

984 N Colony Rd.

Hoping to find a competitive and fun activity to do with your friends on the weekend? Located on North Colony Road, On Track Karting offers customers an authentic racing experience. It provides sophisticated timing and scoring services, so customers can focus solely on the thrill of racing their advanced, gas-powered karts along the twists and turns of the indoor track. Usually, On Track Karting runs eight-minute heats, where up to 12 adult or junior participants attempt to complete as many laps as possible and are ultimately ranked based on their best lap time. The price for each driver’s first race of the day is \$25, with an additional \$20 per every following race, but On Track Karting has a rewards program that offers customers one free additional race after completing eight. Even better, On Kart Tracking provides all necessary equipment, so you can just show up ready to have fun!

## Iron Chef

930 N Colony Rd.

For anyone craving an authentic Japanese meal, Iron Chef is the perfect place to go. Offering a wide variety of choices, Iron Chef has been a staple restaurant among Choate students since its opening in 2002. The restaurant hosts multiple hibachi dining tables, a comfy bar, and a quiet dining room. The signature hibachi dining tables allow for guests to enjoy their dinner being cooked directly in front of them by experienced, charismatic chefs. Guests deciding to enjoy a meal at Iron Chef are guaranteed to experience fresh, high-quality food at a reasonable price.

## Cafe Luca Belle

169 Center St., Wallingford

## Green Kettle Coffee

208 Center St.

Looking for some joe beyond the Lanphier Cafe? Wallingford’s two newest cafes – Cafe Luca Belle and Green Kettle Coffee – are just weeks away from opening! Run by Amanda DeLuca, Cafe Luca Belle is named after her children, Luca and Belle. Green Kettle Coffee is owned by Kristen Gilbride, sister of former Choate Chinese teacher Ms. Amanda Gilbride. Both stores offer a variety of beverages, from coffee to tea and hot chocolate, along with a range of delicious bagels and pastries.

## Toyota Oakdale Theater

95 S Turnpike Rd.

The Toyota Oakdale theater is a bustling performance venue just an eight-minute drive from Choate’s campus. A wide array of musicians, dancers, and actors perform in this indoor auditorium year-round. In the past, stars such as Jethro Tull, Kevin Hart, Dua Lipa, Chicago, Snoop Dogg, and John Fogerty have graced the stage. Upcoming performances can be viewed on the Toyota Oakdale Theater’s website so keep an eye out for any events that pique your interest. Depending on the artist, the ticket prices range from \$24 to a couple hundred dollars. Most recently, Demi Lovato performed on October 9.

## Trail of Terror

60 N Plains Hwy.

Wallingford’s local haunted house, Trail of Terror, operates every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday throughout October. Rated a 9.4 out of 10 by the Haunted House Association, this venue is certain to get you into the Halloween spirit. Costing \$25 for a regular ticket and \$40 for a VIP premium pass, Trail of Terror has donated over two million dollars to local charities, organizations, and community projects in the past 27 years. From walking through 30 different horrifying sets, journeying across bridges to creeping through tight crawl spaces, and even setting sail aboard a boat, set changes occur each year, so even if you have already visited, swing by again!

## Bowlero

980 N Colony Rd.

Less than a ten-minute car ride away, Bowlero: Bowling Alley, Party Venue & Sports Bar stands proudly in all of its bright and neon glory. This Choate hotspot features 40 bowling alleys, an arcade, an on-site pro shop, a sports bar, private rooms, and a massive lounge area. Known for its weekly special deals, including an unlimited bowling Night Strike for only \$17.49 or a Triple Play night with \$3.33 rentals, Bowlero makes for a perfect weekend hangout spot for those looking to wind down and have some fun with friends. As a dorm-bonding experience, Tenney House visited for an exciting night of bowling. Tenney Resident Joshua Ramon ’24 commented, “It was a great opportunity and a super fun way to connect with other members of the house I had not met in the dorm yet. The environment, setup, everything was amazing, and I had a lot of fun.”

## Wallingford Garden Market

78 S Elm St.

Located in Doolittle Park, Wallingford Garden Market is a certified farmers market selling a medley of fresh and authentic products – vegetables, fruits, bread, meats, cheese, drinks, and more. Various events are hosted throughout the year, such as corn shucking and potato sack races during National Farmers’ Day (October 12) or features of various cheeses during National Cheese Day (June 4). According to Mr. Jon Scagnelli, the supervisor of the market, “The overall goal of this market is to provide our community not only a gathering place but also gives a centralized location to shop local, small farms and businesses. It’s important to support our local agricultural community.” Open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. April through October, the market is home to good food, drinks, and local businesses that are worth checking out!

## Wallingford Public Library

200 N Main St.

Less than a five-minute walk from campus, the Wallingford Public Library offers a quiet reprieve from Choate’s hustle and bustle. Unsure of how to check out books if you’re not a day student? Good news: being a student at Choate automatically makes you eligible for a library card! In addition to the vast shelves of books spanning all different genres, the library has study rooms that can be booked and reserved in advance and a Collaboratory with laser cutters, 3D printers, embroidery machines and more! The building operates from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and is closed on Sundays.

## Holiday Cinemas Stadium 14

970 N Colony Rd.

Holiday Cinemas Stadium 14, located on North Colony Road, is a perfect weekend activity. Conveniently located near restaurants like Iron Chef and Kiwi Spoon, Piper Cameron ’25 said, “I went there nearly every weekend last year to watch movies with my friends. The decorations are all based on the Hollywood Golden Age and they really add to the atmosphere.” In addition to the old-timey atmosphere, the theater serves everything from candy to hot dogs and popcorn. Open every day of the week for both afternoon and evening showings, the theater has popular movies like *Don’t Worry Darling* and *See How They Run*.

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## THE CASE OF THE MISSING CLASS: INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC SCIENCE



Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

By **Teniola Obayomi '25**  
Staff Opinions Writer

Choate has a large assortment of fascinating electives. From “Chemistry of Food” to “Music Production,” there are numerous ways for students to explore new topics and pursue their passions. Despite all of the options offered, I believe that there is a crucial class missing from the course catalog: “Introduction to Forensic Science.”

Forensic scientists analyze crime scene evidence using scientific methods. A prime example of forensic science is the study and analysis of fingerprints. On crime TV shows, it is common to see items such as firearms, tools, and steering wheels tested for fingerprints to identify possible suspects. Though fingerprint analysis is a crucial part of forensic science, there are many other sides to a forensic scientist’s job. According to the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), disciplines in the field of forensic science include forensic molecular biology, forensic chemistry, trace evidence examination, handwriting analysis, and forensic toxicology. An introductory level forensics course would not teach students how to perform all of these tasks. Rather, this class would focus on the examination and identification of basic forms of evidence such as fingerprints, fibers, and blood samples. Students would learn how to collect, preserve, and analyze this evidence in order to help solve mock cases.

Due to the nature of the course, “Introduction to Forensic Science” would require two terms. The first term could be solely focused on teaching students about forensic methods. During the second term, students would be utilizing these methods. The latter part, of course, would mostly take place in the lab, where students would work in teams. As mentioned prior, solving mock cases would be a large part of the “hands-on” curriculum. By repeatedly solving such cases, students would become more accustomed to assessing crime scene evidence. The course’s final project would be to solve a “real case.” Working in groups, students would identify an unsolved “crime” and work to solve it based on their knowledge of forensic science. For example, if the dorm fridge is constantly getting ransacked, a group of students could work to identify the culprit. By analyzing clothing fibers found on the fridge shelves or empty food containers found in the trash, the suspect could be caught!

In the world of crime, forensic science is the key to solving cases. Through several forms of media, such as crime shows like CSI and NCIS, large audiences have been exposed to the importance of this scientific field. As such, introducing forensics to students would teach them how to solve problems by making thoughtful observations and paying attention to even the most minute details.

**Teniola Obayomi** is a fourth-former from Milford, CT. She may be reached at [tobayomi@choate.edu](mailto:tobayomi@choate.edu)

## 7 Things I Wish I Knew Before My First Year at Choate

By **Grace Walters '24**  
Opinions Writer

### On Time Management

Plan your week out in advance. That includes all extracurriculars, classes, homework, and free time. Yes, free time, especially during busy weeks such as the week before term-end experiences. It is easy to get lost in your work and forget to take care of yourself, so set that time aside and schedule reminders so it does not escape you.

### On Asking for Extensions

Avoid asking for extensions unless you truly need them. If you ask for too many extensions too early on, it is likely that you might be exacerbating your situation by drowning yourself in both the assignments you have to make up as well as all future assignments you must complete on time.

### On Taking a Break

If you do not have any activities on the weekends, do not stay in your room all day (no matter how much work you have). Take a shower, go for a walk, meet your friends outside, go to the gym, grab a latte from Half Moon Cafe — anything that will force you to get some fresh air, leave your room, and move around will be worth it. Trust that when you return back to your room, you will be able to finish your work much more efficiently and energetically than if you had stayed in your cavelike, dimly lit room the entire day.

### On Storing Snacks

Keep plenty of food options in your room. If you have a conflicting activity such as a late rehearsal, game, or club meeting during dinner hours, you can avoid worrying about how you are going to complete three hours of homework without dinner by eating the food you have stored in your room.

### On Trying New Things

Do not be afraid to try something new. Audition for the musical, try out for a sport you have never played, or join a new club. One take away from my time at Choate thus far, it is that you can be anyone and try anything you want without receiving judgment from your peers because you are surrounded by many others who are also trying as new things.

### On Taking Time for Yourself

Although you should try to immerse yourself in the community as much as possible by attending events such as dances, games, and performances, it is also okay to take time for yourself. An occasional night of ordering food and watching a movie in your room is more than okay; these nights are good for you. You should never force unrealistic expectations onto yourself to constantly socialize. A little alone time to recharge can make all the difference after a long day of activity.

### On Prioritizing

Make a list of priorities to avoid stretching yourself too thin. You might want to do ten different clubs on top of extracurriculars and more classes than you can realistically handle, but you have to come to terms with the fact that you cannot do everything. It's better to have a manageable schedule than one that you cannot sustain. Make a list of your commitments in priority order and evaluate whether you do, in fact, have enough time for all of them.

**Grace Walters** is a fifth-former from McLean, VA. She may be reached at [gwalters24@choate.edu](mailto:gwalters24@choate.edu)

## SUMMER READING: WHERE’S THE STUDENT VOICE?

By **Eva Swanson '25**  
Staff Opinions Writer

Every year, the school assigns a mandatory summer reading. And, every year, some students will annotate every page, while others only read the first couple of lines. I always hear people saying (myself included) that summer reads are chronically “boring” and “repetitive.” However, despite regular complaints, to the best of my knowledge, nothing has been done to improve the reader’s experience. As students are the ones required to read, analyze, and discuss these books, we should take part in choosing the summer reading.

The main question I have about summer reading is one of intention: is the point of a summer reading book to teach the community about something new? Is it to provoke potentially thoughtful discussions? Or, is it simply to entertain the readers? I think the selected book should aim to do all of these things, thus, putting the goals of contemporary relevance, intrigue, critical thinking, introspection, and retrospection at the forefront of the selection process. Together, students and faculty can make a realistic assessment of what the campus needs, and wants, to read.

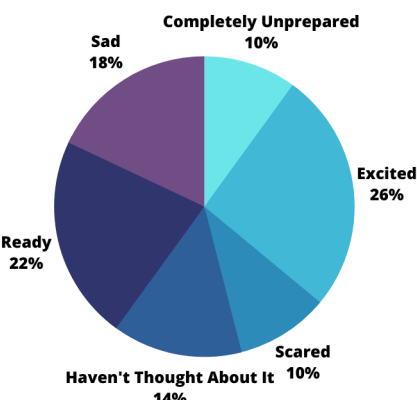
Currently, the summer reading book is selected by a committee of teachers. Potential books are proposed to the committee — typically by teachers — read by its members, and eventually narrowed down to a few finalists. The committee then has to reach out to the authors to determine their availability and willingness to come visit Choate. I propose that students should have the opportunity to present books to the committee through a form that includes a few basic questions pertaining to why they believe the book is a good selection. Each year, there should be a theme for summer reading to inspire both student and faculty proposals and ensure that over the course of their Choate career, students read a diverse selection of books.

The first step to motivating students to engage in an activity that takes away from the leisure of their summer is by including them in the process. Whether it’s picking from a short list of books or encouraging more forums for open dialogue, Choate should allow students a platform to partake in the decision-making process, ultimately keeping students more engaged and eager to participate.

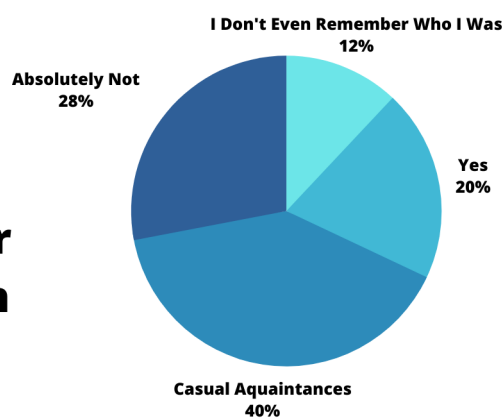
**Eva Swanson** is a fourth-former from New Haven, CT. She may be reached at [eswanson25@choate.edu](mailto:eswanson25@choate.edu)

## Class of 2023: Senior Survey

### How Do You Feel About Graduating?



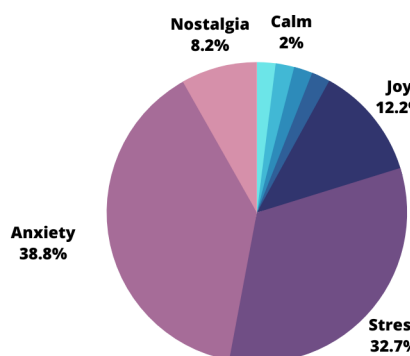
### Would You Be Friends With Your Freshman Self?



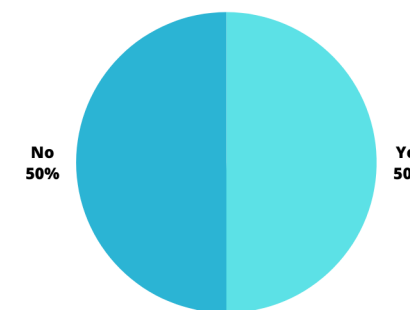
### Do You Have Any Regrets?

- not kayaking at the KEC
- not branching out to meet new people as freshman
- not trying a new sport until junior year because I was scared of failing
- taking Honors Spanish because I still don't know what pluscuamperfecto is
- not reaching out for help when I should have
- studying for tests and doing homework when instead of going out with friends
- the all-nighters

### Right Now, What Emotion Do You Feel Most Often?



### Are You Confident About Your Plans for the Future?





# THE DISASTROUS EFFECT OF PRIME MINISTER LIZ TRUSS’S NEW TAX POLICY

By **Stan Cho ’25**  
*Copy Editor*

Recently, Liz Truss, the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and her administration announced that they would cut taxes while increasing government spending to mend the economic repercussions of exorbitant energy prices. Unfortunately, the recent change has negatively affected the British market and created a plunge in the value of the pound sterling. Financial markets tend to allow wealthy, politically stable nations to run large budget deficits without creating a run on their currencies. Deficits that economically-advanced nations run tend to increase the value of their currency as a result of high-interest rates that manage

inflationary rates and attract an influx of capital from abroad. This economic phenomena is possible because investors expect a nation to pay off its debts and consistently limit inflation. In fact, under the administration of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, tax cuts paired with a surging budget deficit led to a “strong dollar.” Though increasing government expenditure while cutting taxes has been done in the past, economists often discourage this “economic fallacy” for its risky nature. For instance, economists highlight that Reagan’s tax cuts allowed for a high level of consistency in gross domestic product but also note that the U.S. economy grew faster when these tax cuts were reversed by the Clinton administration a decade later.

In 1976, Britain experienced a pound plunge and a high rate of inflation, forcing Britain to turn to the International Monetary Fund for a loan, which was granted on the condition that the U.K. would make deep reductions in its public spending. Former U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher then made tax cuts in an attempt to garner political support and increase government spending in Britain. Thatcher’s decision brought about economic growth at the high cost of rising unemployment and labor unrest, which economists condemn as an irrational, large-scale gamble. Despite discouragement from economists, Truss was an ardent believer in economic growth incited by tax cuts, deregulation, and largely free-market economics.

Now, the Bank of England has raised interest rates seven times to curb surging inflation rates, halting Britain’s economic growth. Economists and investors are doubtful whether the Bank of England will be willing to tighten its funds enough to offset the inflationary impact of Truss’s tax cuts. England must raise interest rates to make borrowing money more expensive, encourage savings, and reduce consumption to allow for economic growth during the tax cut period. Moreover, the Bank of England plans for inflation rates to fall to around a target of 2% from the current 11% in two years, but this may take longer depending on the long-term effects of Truss’s tax cuts. Despite the detrimental effects the U.K. has experienced over the last week, the country can benefit in the long term. For the tax cuts to have their desired outcomes, companies would need reassurance that the policy will not be reversed by a new government in two years. Furthermore, the Bank of England must ensure that inflation rates are controlled, devastating blows to the economy are endured, and interest rates are gradually normalized. Now, due immense political and economic backlash, Truss’s administration has backed down from its tax cuts policies.

It appears that Liz Truss’s disastrous economic endeavor will prevent world leaders from engaging in ambitious economic practices, especially decisions that risk so much for an infinitesimal chance for immense profit. On the contrary, developing nations or countries facing a stagnant economy may be encouraged to participate in such “high-risk, high-reward” policies to maximize their potential economic growth.

**Stan Cho** is a fourth-former from Busan, South Korea. He may be reached at [scho25@choate.edu](mailto:scho25@choate.edu)

# A PROBLEMATIC POLITICAL STUNT

By **Olympia Wolff ’25**  
*Staff Opinions Writer*

In a time of political turmoil on the Southern border, instead of seeking lasting solutions, two Republican governors have proceeded with a different strategy: political stunts. In April, the Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, sent buses full of migrants to the Northeast, planning to drop them and their belongings off in Washington, D.C. The same tactic was used in August in New York City. Then, on September 14, escalating the situation, fellow GOP Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida sent two planes of migrants from San Antonio, Texas, to Martha’s Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts. These inhumane acts treat people as pawns in politician gamesmanship, undermining the future and success of migrants in this country. Unambiguously stated in the 1980 Refugee Act, those who cross into the country illegally and request refuge are entitled to be heard by the government. In 2010, under the Obama Administration, the U.S. experienced an uptick in asylum-seeking migrants who came to reunite with their families. Many migrants crossing the border were from Central America, seeking refuge from gang violence. In addition, Venezuelans are now fleeing because of governmental circumstances ranging from socio-economic situations to personal autonomy. Since these people don’t have specific destinations in mind, luring them onto buses and offering free rides was easy for the GOP governors. In 2017, in response to former President Donald Trump’s increasingly harsh rhetoric toward documented and undocumented immigrants, three of six towns on the island of Martha’s Vineyard voted to become “sanctuary cities,” a location where government officials may refuse to report the immigration status of undocumented immigrants in the area.

When the two planes carrying unexpected immigrants arrived in Martha’s Vineyard, the island lacked the resources to provide safety and support for these families, which included children. Although community members on the island provided them with shelter, food, clothing, and Covid-19 tests, they were overwhelmed with confusion. Later, the migrants explained they had begun their day in San Antonio, Texas, but were instructed by the Florida governor’s office to board the planes. A spokesperson for Desantis pointed out that residents should be thrilled, considering they’ve voted to be a sanctuary state. However, Desantis’ action escalated the situation and was only intended to incite public indignation rather than offer assistance to these migrants. Governors are in charge of providing security and refuge for people, a task Desantis and Abbott failed to do. These migrants didn’t know or fully understand the circumstances they were about to encounter. A free ride and an opportunity for a fresh start sounded promising, but Desantis didn’t have their best interest in mind. Instead of establishing a path for migrants to build a life and contribute to the economy, they chose a different route. Border policies are tough for all parties involved, but one thing is definite: immigrants should not be used as puppets. Migrants often come from vulnerable situations, seeking stable and secure conditions for themselves and their children. It’s insensitive for GOP governors to employ these migrants in a scheme to target their liberal counterparts without providing the migrants proper guidance, transparency, food, shelter, and alternative options. By practicing these political stunts, the governors display their disdain for the promise this country offers: dignity and rights.

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Graphic by Brian Yip '24/The Choate News

# ARMENIA HAS TO GIVE UP NAGORNO-KARABAKH

By **James Chen ’24**  
*Opinions Writer*

While the world’s attention has been focused on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, increasing energy prices, and the Queen’s death, one critical event has gone under the radar. In the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan launched another attack on Armenia over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to Armenian media, hundreds of soldiers on each side died, and 7,600 civilians were displaced from their homes. Nagorno-Karabakh is the focal point of conflict. It is a contested mountainous region that holds both Armenian and Azeri heritage. During and immediately after the collapse of the USSR, Armenian residents unsuccessfully called for Nagorno-Karabakh’s transfer to Armenia from Azerbaijan. Over the last few decades, Armenia — once the most powerful nation in the Caucasus — has lost control, as Azerbaijan now has the upper hand in both manpower and technology. Its neighbor to the north, Georgia, does not have a favorable view of Armenia. The dominating Armenian population in Georgia’s Javakheti region has created tension between the two states, with Armenians protesting against Georgian Orthodox clergy’s occupation of Armenian Apostolic churches. Internationally, Georgia voted in favor of UN Resolution 62/243, calling for the withdrawal of Armenia from contested Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia, on the other hand, voted against UN Resolution GA/10708, recognizing separatist Abkhazia as part of Georgia.

Still, Armenia relies on Georgia as its only way to access the international market. Turkey has blockaded Armenia since 1993 and demanded withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh as a precondition for lifting the blockade. This blockade has devastated the Armenian economy: Armenia has few natural resources and relies on energy imports from its neighbors, which are now no longer available. Its solution is to reactivate the Metsamor nuclear power plant, triggering further protests from Turkey over environmental concerns. At the same time, Armenia has been excluded from lucrative economic deals between its neighbors: the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline carrying Azeri oil, the South Caucasus Pipeline carrying natural gas, and the newly operational Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. Through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Armenia’s only natural ally is Russia. The Armenian military is weak compared to Turkey and Azerbaijan, so it relies heavily on Russian technology. Thus, ties with Russia create a self-reinforcing process where the military’s demands necessitate closer partnership with Russia at every turn. Before last year, Russia was a stabilizing influence in the Caucasus, brokering peace deals after every Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and deploying peacekeepers. However, Russia’s intervention ended when its own invasion of Ukraine was bogged down and exposed its hidden weaknesses. Russia focused itself on Ukraine, turning away from its usual goal of force projection. The absence of Russian power in the Caucasus left

a power vacuum which Turkey is poised to seize. With Turkey’s support, Azerbaijan launched the September attacks on Armenia. Despite all the difficulties holding Nagorno-Karabakh entails, it is a vital part of the Armenian national identity. Following the Armenian defeat in 2020 that led to the confirmation of Azeri war gains in Nagorno-Karabakh and the cessation of land gained by Armenia in the first war, the enraged protesters stormed the parliament building and attacked Mr. Ararat Mirzoyan, then Speaker of the House. Protestors demanded Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s resignation, which forced Pashinyan to call for an election. Pashinyan’s party retained the majority but lost 16.49% of the vote, which translated to 11 seats given to new opposition parties. Future territorial losses will no doubt open the door for further domestic instability. Armenia must make a decision: either hang on to Nagorno-Karabakh for as long as possible while suffering painful military defeats, facing domestic instability, and losing time to advance economically or tear off the band-aid and give up the region altogether. It is impossible to hold Nagorno-Karabakh long-term: following the 2020 war, the only remaining corridor into the region is tenuously controlled by Russian peacekeepers, essentially isolating it. Giving up Nagorno-Karabakh will be a traumatic experience for all Armenians, but the benefits outweigh the costs. Under this plan, Armenia trades land for a better future. Maintaining control of a contested war zone is a constant drain on both material and human



Graphic by Brian Yip '24/The Choate News

resources that can be better used in civil society. For example, during the 2020 war, Armenia mobilized its domestic industry, which was a major cause of a sharp 7.5% drop in GDP. The ever-present threat of war forces Armenia on the back foot, unable to focus on the region’s peaceful development. If Armenia evacuates the region, it can turn its full attention toward improving the country. Refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh can further boost the economy, giving Armenia a step up. At the same time, Nagorno-Karabakh-less Armenia will no longer be diplomatically isolated. Turkey agreed to normalized relations in the Zurich Protocol on the condition of an Armenian withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh. Exchanging

the region for Turkish friendship is a win in the long run. A friendlier Turkey can restrain Azerbaijan from an unlikely adventure into Armenia territory. Yet, revival of economic ties with Turkey is the most valuable prize. It will shorten the distance between Armenia and foreign markets, with the potential of Armenia being included in future deals in the South Caucasus. At the same time, Armenia, without the need to constantly defend itself, can safely detach from the Russian-led Eurasian Union and pivot to the Western sphere. Armenia and the European Union (EU) have recently signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The CEPA paves the way for Armenia to reap the benefits of mutual trade, de-

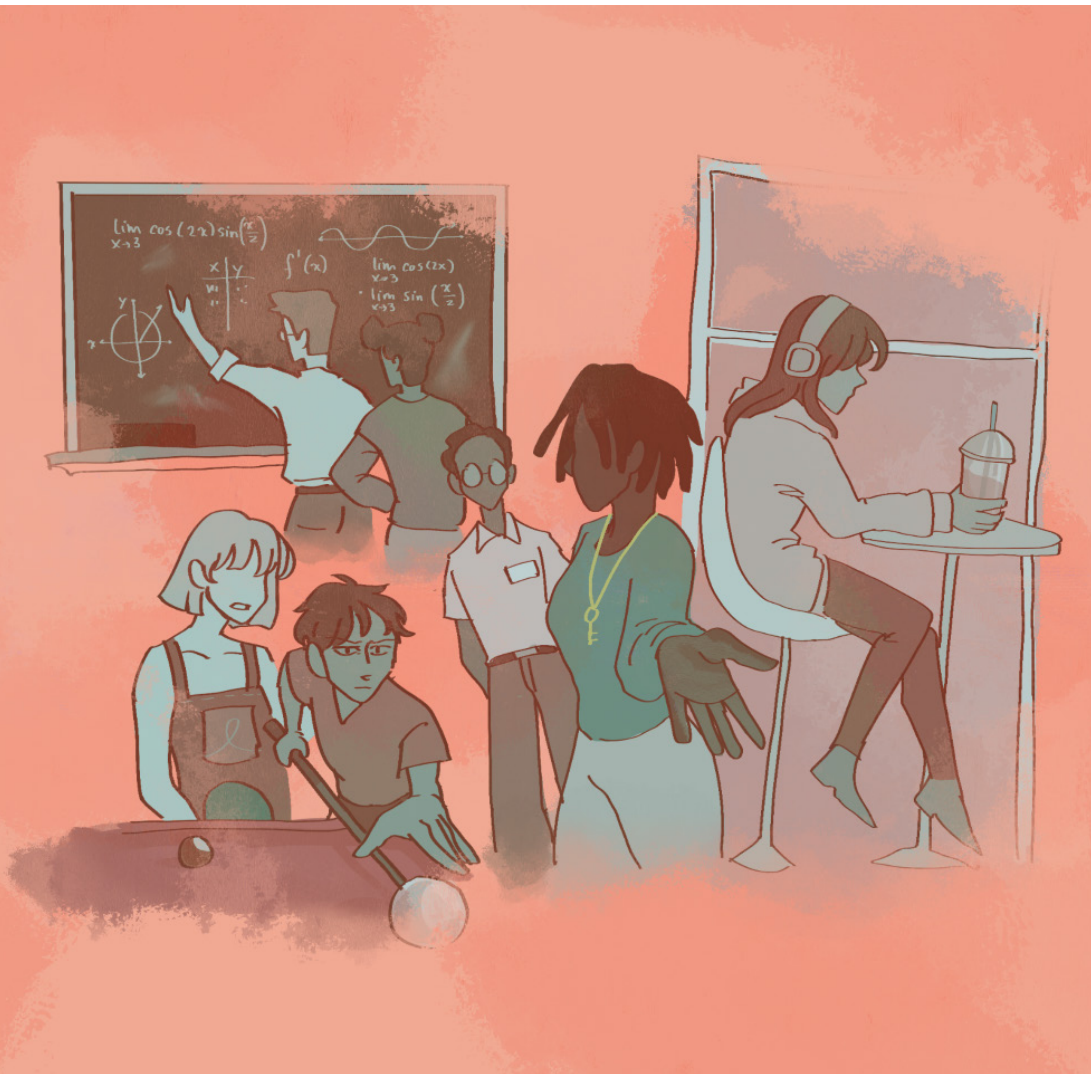
velopment, and exchange with the EU. If Armenia manages to completely exit the Eurasian Union and eventually join the EU, it will be a great boon for its future. There is a bright future for Armenia, but only if it has the will to seize the opportunity. An unburdened Armenia can become a full member of the Caucasian community, uplift its economy, and join the rest of the free world in prosperity. If not, there is no way out for Armenia from its present situation. It will always remain under the shadow of Turkic states until the Nagorno-Karabakh situation is resolved by force.

**James Chen** is a fifth-former from Lexington, MA. He may be reached at [jchen24@choate.edu](mailto:jchen24@choate.edu)



## Best Ways to Spend Your Free Block

By **Andrew Kim '25**  
*Reporter*



Graphic by **Melody Qian '24**/*The Choate News*

During the rigorous academic day, Choate students are given a rewarding time of relaxation in the form of free periods. These blocks give them three to six hours a week to do whatever they please, such as taking casual naps in their dorm rooms, doing homework in St. John Hall, or working out in the gym. Let’s take a look at some of the ways students like to spend their free time to the fullest.

### Lanphier Cafe

Cait Ahn ’25 likes to spend two of her free periods during the week doing work. “During those few blocks, I usually try to cram as much homework as I can into them, so I don’t have as much work that night,” she said. Her favorite location to get work done is Lanphier Cafe. She regularly sits on one of the chairs in Lanphier Commons with a bagel or a banana in hand. Ahn also enjoys the presence of other studious Choate students around her, all focusing on their own studies. In her opinion, this atmosphere is what makes Lanphier Cafe a “good study place.”

### Gold Key

Ahn added that she uses her one remaining free block for Gold Key, where she tours prospective students around campus. As a Gold Key Ambassador, Ahn believes that being a part of the team is worth trading in a free period. Danny Yoon ’24 agrees: “I’m happy that I get to represent my school now and showcase it to the guest families.”

### St. John Hall

Edward Yan ’26 uses many of his free blocks as opportunities to have fun and recharge. “I spend my free periods in the Student Activities Center (SAC), sometimes doing homework and sometimes hanging out with friends,” he said. Yan enjoys the recreational areas, such as “the foosball, the pool table, and the game room.” These hangout areas in St. John Hall are what entice him to spend his free periods relaxing.

### Extra Help

However, Yan’s free blocks are not always spent in St. John Hall. When he needs some additional instructions on homework or preparation for an assessment, he “would just talk to a teacher if they have a free block, and then get some extra help.” Yan recounted a particular experience: “I went to Mr. Larson for some physics help, and that helped a lot with the next quizzes and assessments.”

All students at Choate have their own unique ways of spending free blocks – whether it be catching up with friends, grabbing a snack, or getting ahead on schoolwork. No matter what free blocks are used for, they are always valued and highly anticipated.

**Andrew Kim** may be reached at [akim25@choate.edu](mailto:akim25@choate.edu)

## Chef Janusz Fosters Community with Cooking

By **Constanza Aportela '24**  
*Reporter*

A platter of neatly stacked rice and vegetables snugly wrapped in a seaweed blanket gleams alongside freshly baked focaccia bread. The hands that concocted these delicious creations are those of Chef Janusz. Who is graced with these heavenly dishes? The answer is: people living at the Kohler Environmental Center (KEC).

Chris Childs ’24, a student at the KEC, is a big fan of Chef Janusz’s cooking. “It’s all very organized, and everything is cooked absolutely perfectly,” he said. “The dinner meshes together; flavor profiles all come together.” Childs’s favorite dish by Chef Janusz is Spanish Rice; this comforting and flavorful rice dish is also a favorite of KEC resident Ria Tyagi ’24.

Chef Janusz’s culinary masterpieces are not limited to the realm of savory foods; his sweet creations are also a big hit at the KEC. Jasmine Khuu ’24 raved about his olive oil ice cream, “I’ve never had something like that before, and it’s so mind-blowing.”

The most special thing about Chef Janusz is not his home-made ice cream or his molten lava cakes; rather, it is his loving personality. His kind words and comforting energy make students feel at home at the KEC. Khuu is an international student from Hong Kong and often finds herself longing for authentic steamed dumplings. Thus, when Chef Janusz proposed having a dumpling-making session on Sunday, October 3, she ecstatically agreed. She recalled the experience of making dumplings as “representing being together,” framing the activity as a means of fostering community at the KEC.

Childs, a Wallingford native, highlighted the important role Chef Janusz plays in the KEC community. He mentioned a time when Chef Janusz brought a fantastic local cheese called “Luizzi” for the KEC residents to try. According to Childs, Chef Janusz’s small gestures of kindness, broad smile, and kind conversations are what make him an incredible person. Childs even went on to say, “He wants to make food that we all enjoy,

and he really wants to make sure ... that we have an amazing experience.”

Tyagi, who grew up in India, shares the affectionate sentiments toward Chef Janusz. She once asked Chef Janusz to make Indian food so that she could feel closer to home. “The flavor is definitely there; the spices are there. That makes me happy, makes me not so homesick,” she said. Tyagi also noted how Chef Janusz is not only an amazing chef, but also an amazing person to talk to.

As people gather around the long table centered in the KEC commons, eagerly awaiting Chef Janusz’s masterpieces, everyone recognizes the hard work and genuine love and care behind the food they devour. As people help themselves to multiple servings of the foods that remind them of their homes, they are grateful to the man who took the time to ask and listen to what they wanted to eat, or, really, what they wanted to feel.

**Constanza Aportela** may be reached at [caportela24@choate.edu](mailto:caportela24@choate.edu)



Chef Janusz dresses the dinner entrée — chicken drumsticks.

Photo by **Chris Childs '24**/*The Choate News*

## Behind the Scenes at the SAC

By **Hannah Quan '26**  
*Reporter*

Walking into the Student Activities Center (SAC), one can always find students working on projects, hanging out at the Tuck Shop, or attending various club meetings. It is a space where people can feel comfortable and relax with friends after a long day. On the weekends, the SAC is always full of activities and events for members of the community. Behind all of this is a team of faculty and students who work tirelessly to make the SAC a welcoming and vibrant space for students to enjoy.

Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long and Assistant Director of Student Activities Ms. Colleen Kazar are the people who make St. John Hall the go-to gathering place for everyone. Though maintaining the physical space is one of the main priorities for Ms. Long and Ms. Kazar, their responsibilities extend far beyond the building that students see daily. Behind the scenes, they are always trying to coordinate and plan events — a weekend activity at the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center (WJAC), an off-campus trip to New Haven, the Pep Rally, and much more.

“[For] something like Deerfield Day, Pep Rally, Holiday Ball, or Last Hurrah, Ms. Long and I begin at least two months in advance with the planning, [but for] something as simple as hosting a movie night in the SAC, we could pull it together in a week or realistically even less time,” said Ms. Kazar.

The SAC team also supervises the 96 active clubs on campus. The club cabinets and the SAC staff work together regularly to plan club-sponsored events or reserve meeting spaces through the Event Management System (EMS).

Ms. Long and Ms. Kazar are also in charge of other logistical aspects of student life outside of events. Ms. Long, for example, oversees the E&R Laundry service on campus. The SAC also manages transportation for boarders over breaks or long weekends. This practice includes coordinating vehicles and chaperones as well as accommodating those who cannot go home during shorter breaks.

Another part of the SAC’s responsibilities is to collaborate with students. The Student Committee on Programming and Engagement (SCOPE) works closely with Ms. Long and Ms. Kazar in multiple areas of the planning process. The Events Team helps with

brainstorming for activities; the Marketing and Engagement Team is in charge of promoting and facilitating events. For SCOPE President Annika Lee ’23, her “biggest goal for SCOPE is to help the community have fun,” she said. “The core of the organization is to make engaging events.”

The Boar Pen also collaborates with Ms. Long and Ms. Kazar. “On a regular basis, we’re trying to partner with [Boar Pen] to make sure that we bring the hype and excitement to all aspects of the community,” Ms. Kazar said. Some activities, such as the Spikeball Tournament, were organized by the Boar Pen in collaboration with the SAC.

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes at the SAC to provide the Choate community with ways to relax on weekends and to advertise these fun de-stressors. Every successful event has a team of people — Ms. Long, Ms. Kazar, and the members of SCOPE or Boar Pen — collaborating to coordinate it.

As Ms. Kazar put it, “behind the scenes, we’re just thinking about ways to make events creative and new and engaging for students.”

**Hannah Quan** may be reached at [hquan26@choate.edu](mailto:hquan26@choate.edu)



Photo courtesy of Ms. Colleen Kazar

Ms. Alex Long and Ms. Colleen Kazar are the powerhouse behind the scenes at the SAC.






## 2022 Fall Arts Events




<p><b>Oct 7-8</b></p> <p><b>Music from the Sole</b></p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>PMAC Stage</b></p>	<p><b>Oct 17-19</b></p> <p><b>International Week Arts Initiatives</b></p> <p>- Flamenco Workshops</p> <p><b>Oct 17-18</b></p> <p>3:45-5:15 p.m.</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Dance Studio</b></p> <p>- Chinese Dance Workshop</p> <p><b>Oct 19</b></p> <p>3:45-5:15 p.m.</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Dance Studio</b></p> <p>- Flamenco Demonstration</p> <p><b>Oct 19</b></p> <p>5:15 p.m.</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Auditorium</b></p>	<p><b>Nov 4-5</b></p> <p><b>Salvation Road</b></p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>PMAC Stage</b></p>
<p><b>Oct 20-22</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play</b></p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Geib Theater</b></p>	<p><b>Oct 14-21</b></p> <p><b>Zhimi Li Exhibition: Bringing Chinese Traditional Culture into Contemporary Art</b></p> <p><b>PMAC Gallery</b></p>	<p><b>Nov 4</b></p> <p><b>Normandy Allen "The Place" Exhibition Closing Reception</b></p> <p>6:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>PMAC Gallery</b></p>
<p><b>Oct 28</b></p> <p><b>Family Weekend Performances</b></p> <p>7:00 p.m.</p> <p>- Dance Program Showcase</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Dance Studio</b></p> <p>- Choral and Instrumental Music Ensembles</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Auditorium</b></p> <p>- Acapella Groups</p>	<p><b>Nov 13</b></p> <p><b>Voice and Piano Recital</b></p> <p>1:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Auditorium</b></p>	<p><b>Nov 13</b></p> <p><b>Instrumental Recital</b></p> <p>3:00 p.m.</p> <p><b>Colony Hall Auditorium</b></p>

Graphic by Grant Koh '23/The Choate News

## What is Choate listening to? (September Edition)



Compiled by Aria Ramnath '24/The Choate News

## SYNK Fires Up the K-pop Scene at Choate

By **Eva Li '24**  
Copy Editor

Every Sunday afternoon, students walking through Colony Hall will hear upbeat K-pop (Korean popular culture) music coming from the dance studio where SYNK rehearses. Led by President Ernie Mok '25 and Vice President Cathy Liu '24, SYNK aims to produce and perform dance covers to K-pop music. Together with their fellow K-pop lovers, they share the fun of dance and promote the genre to the wider school community.

Mok and Liu were inspired to found SYNK during their rehearsals for the Student Choreographers Showcase. Both Liu and Mok began learning K-pop dances through official dance practice videos and the "Random Play Dance" series on YouTube before coming to Choate. They quickly recognized their common passion when they danced together during rehearsal breaks. "A lot of dance classes here at Choate are more technical, like ballet, pointe, and contemporary. We thought this would be a bit more trendy and also more modern," Mok said.

Mok revealed the word "SYNK" is, contrary to most club names on campus, not an acronym. "We didn't want it to be called 'K-Pop club' necessarily, because we didn't want to limit ourselves," he said. "The main purpose is K-pop, but we just felt like a team name was a bit more suitable." He fur-

ther elaborated that their decision to use "sync" is an abbreviation of synchronization, a major component of K-pop dances, and ending it with a "k" represents K-pop.

Recently, SYNK held its first-ever auditions and welcomed 12 new members onto its team. Including the three cabinet members — Mok, Liu, and Treasurer Sophia Schmidt '25 — SYNK now has 15 members in total. The auditions began with warm-ups and a basic introduction from everyone in the room. Then, the cabinet members taught the choreography for a section of "Back Door" by Stray Kids to prospective members and recorded them dancing it.

While finding the audition piece challenging, many auditionees expressed positive feelings toward the club's atmosphere. "The dance was difficult, but the Vice President and President, the ones teaching us, were extremely helpful and approachable," said Eva Swanson '25, who was at the auditions. "Everybody there was very excited to be back dancing, which definitely calmed me down, as I always find tryouts and auditions stressful."

New member Arissa Lee '25, who is half-Korean, expressed her gratitude to SYNK for bringing her into the world of K-pop. "Sadly, I never truly got into K-pop or expressed my interest out of fear of being judged by my predominantly white classmates ... Here at Choate, I feel more comfortable shar-

ing who I am and hope to embrace my culture," Lee also commented on the inclusive nature of the club: "SYNK is great because it allows everyone and anyone who enjoys it to come together and showcase that. There were people of every form, both boys and girls, showing how diverse K-pop fans can be."

After a successful first audition season, SYNK is currently preparing a three-minute remix piece for its performance at the annual Pep Rally. Although members are anxious about the club's inaugural performance, the energy at weekly rehearsals is high. Lee expressed her excitement, saying, "After watching the BTS concert in person, I hope to be able to channel some of the same energy they did that night at Pep Rally."

Although Mok is unsure what to expect from the audience, he hopes the reception from the School at the Pep Rally will be positive. "I know the setting we're in is a diverse setting, so some people will definitely like it. But, Choate is still a place where K-pop is not the mainstream music, so I hope people receive it well."

Nonetheless, Mok also sees the Pep Rally as an opportunity to promote SYNK as a club. "We really hope that next year and the year after, we'll get a lot more freshmen or newer students who will see the Rally and want to join the club."

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Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

President Ernie Mok '25 and Vice President Cathy Liu '24 lead SYNK during rehearsal on October 2, 2022.

## BRIAN YIP '24 FUNDRAISES THROUGH NFTS AND ART

By **Laya Raj '24**  
Copy Editor

Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are a recent addition to the artistic side of the virtual world; however, NFTs still remain far removed from physical society. These digital images and videos that can sell for millions of dollars are possible because of cryptocurrency transactions recorded on unfathomably large databases called blockchains. Though NFTs themselves aren't tangible possessions, Brian Yip '24 is using them to benefit people in a very palpable way through his charitable initiative, 1000 Suns.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Yip was inspired to start his organization by Mother's Choice, a local charity that he has volunteered at since 2019 that serves children without families and pregnant teenagers. At Mother's Choice, Yip plays with and looks after children at their child care home. Kindled by his experience taking care of his ten god-siblings, Yip has always loved interacting with children. "I just know how to play with them and take care of them," he said.

Having found volunteering for Mother's Choice so fulfilling, Yip wanted to help support the

children there and did so through one of his main passions, digital art. His organization's name, 1000 Suns, stems from an experience he had on his first day at the organization. "I was very nervous, but then when I went and sat there, there was this girl who came up to me and just sat on my lap. She looked up and she smiled, and I relate the warmth of that smile back to 1000 suns," Yip described.

Yip collaborated with four young artists to create four se-

ries of NFTs, which he sold in an exhibition at an art gallery, SHOUT Contemporary, in Hong Kong from August 20-28. Yip raised over \$27,000 for Mother's Choice through selling NFTs. In addition, Yip was interviewed by *South China Morning Post*, a prominent Hong Kong-based newspaper, about the event.

Yip began planning the logistics of the exhibition on his own at the beginning of this summer and worked with local youth artists Alysha Lai, Ashley Kan, John

Chan, and Zachary Cheng on the art pieces. To facilitate the NFTs's transactions, he had to create 80 cryptocurrency wallets. Yip's experience with trading NFTs as a hobby helped him execute this highly technical affair.

The art pieces in this collection were inspired by the children Yip had gotten to know while working at Mother's Choice. He chose to depict nine children whose personalities stood out to him the most. Yip created the first series of the four, "The Lit-

tle Ones", where the children are depicted through different animals that represent their personalities. This narrative continues into the second series, "Their Aspirations," by Kan. Each child's animal is drawn as a different professional, such as a vet, police officer, or artist, based on their interests. "During my childhood, people always loved to ask me what I wanted to do, so I wanted to ask those kids what they wanted to be when they grew up," Yip stated. Some of the children were

too young to speak, so Yip observed the toys they played with and their personalities to predict their aspirations.

The culminating art piece was named after Yip's initiative and shows three of the children from "The Little Ones" — the bunny, panda, and turtle — looking into a horizon of 1,000 suns. The animals in the first two series are drawn with a reflection of the sun in their eyes to convey that the children supported by Mother's Choice are looking into the radiant future that awaits them.

Yip plans to do more collaborations with artists to organize fundraisers for foundations in Hong Kong whenever he is back at home during breaks. He intends to focus on organizations centered around helping children and animals. While on campus, Yip shares his artistic talents with the Choate community through his graphics for *The Choate News*, *Choate Public Health*, and *Girl-Tech Magazine*. To expand 1000 Suns, Yip continues to explore digital art and the ways in which he can give back to his community using the NFT platform.

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Photo Courtesy of Brian Yip '24

Brian Yip '24 presents at the opening event of his 1000 Suns NFT artwork exhibition on August 20, 2022.



Photo Courtesy of Brian Yip '24

"My Superheroes" (top row), "The Little Ones" (middle row), "Their Aspirations" (bottom row), and "1000 Suns" (bottom left) are displayed at SHOUT Contemporary.





# THE CHOATE NEWS SPORTS

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## FIELD REPORT

**Choate Fall Record**  
**26 - 14 - 6**

**Varsity Games**

**Boys' Soccer** (5-1-1)  
vs. Exeter, 1-1

**Girls' Soccer** (4-1)  
vs. Westminster, 4-1

**Girls' Volleyball** (7-1)  
vs. Exeter, 2-3

**Boys' Football** (2-0)  
vs. Kent, 53-0

**Girls' Field Hockey** (2-3)  
vs. Westminster, 1-4

**Girls' Cross Country** (0-2)  
vs. Taft, 44-17

**Boys' Cross Country** (0-2)  
vs. Taft, 38-21

**Boys' Water Polo** (4-1)  
vs. Exeter, 6-11

**J.V. Games**

**Boys' Soccer** (1-1-1)  
vs. Exeter, 0-0

**Girls' Soccer** (2-1-2)  
vs. Westminster, 1-1

**Girls' Volleyball** (3-1)  
vs. Exeter, 2-3

**Girls' Field Hockey** (1-0-2)  
vs. Westminster, 1-1

## NEW BOAR PEN STIRS UP EXCITEMENT FOR CHOATE ATHLETICS

By **Anissa Wang '24**  
*Reporter*

The start of the school year's athletic competitions has been thrilling, and the new Boar Pen is ready to unify our campus teams. The Boar Pen is a group of seniors carefully selected by the previous year's members based on their outgoing personality and commitment to school spirit. This year's members are Andrew Goddard '23, Ava Parker '23, David Hallal '23, Rachel Miller '23, Sachi Mehra '23, and Enzo DeFranco '23.

Boar Pen now has six members rather than its usual four in hopes that school spirit will be a focal point of our community in a post-pandemic era. The Boar Pen's goal on campus is to unite the Choate community across different grades and sports teams. They support student organizations on campus, organize themed sports events, announce games on their Instagram account, and create the energy on campus that makes Choate's school spirit unique.

These members hope to bring back the energy and connection within the community that was lost when Covid-19



Boar Pen poses for a photo showing off their jerseys.

restrictions were implemented. Hallal said, "School spirit has definitely taken a hit over the past few years thanks to Covid-19, so I hope I can help revamp some of the energy that drew me to Choate in the first place." Goddard added, "There

are a lot of new students this year, and I want to make sure everyone feels involved."

Boar Pen encourages the community to show up for one another. Miller claims that it is essential for students to "treat Choate as a family, and to show

up for that family when it matters. I want us to help everyone succeed, even if we don't know them personally." Similarly, Mehra's goal is to "support a variety of groups on campus" to ensure that every group gets the recognition and support it de-

Photo by Ramsey Scott '23/The Choate News

## Choate Welcomes the Newest Assistant Directors of Athletics



Photo by Garrett Curtis '24/The Choate News

Mr. Dickson poses for a photo.

By **Carolyn Chen '25**  
*Reporter*

This year we welcome two new Assistant Directors of Athletics to our faculty at Choate: Mr. Andrew Dickson and Mr. Nolan M. Silbernagel.

**Mr. Dickson:**

New Assistant Director of Athletics, Varsity Baseball Head Coach, and Tenney adviser, Mr. Andrew Dickson arrived at Choate with his wife this fall. As he settles into the Choate community, Mr. Dickson shared, "One thing I really value is being able to help student-athletes or students reach their goals or potential."

Mr. Dickson is very passionate about athletics and is excited to work with student-athletes to help them succeed beyond Choate. He believes that some aspects of athletics, such as "the ability to test your limits" and "to mentally push through things at times," are valuable even beyond the field.

As a former college baseball coach, he looks forward to using his experience at the collegiate level to help student-athletes at Choate navigate the recruiting landscape. He also stated, "My main goal is just helping student-athletes in any way that they need and to just make sure that they feel supported."

One of Mr. Dickson's favorite parts about working as an Assistant Director of Athletics is interacting with different students at Choate. "There are so many different students that are interested in so many different things, and it's really kind of broadening my horizons outside of being just baseball focused." For instance, Mr. Dickson recently enjoyed attending Choate water polo and field hockey games.

Mr. Dickson and his wife are excited to be at Choate and to be integrated into the community. He is also looking forward to "getting settled in a little bit more and just continuing to meet many more people around campus."

**Mr. Silbernagel:**

The new Assistant Director of Athletics and Boys' and Girls' Swimming Head Coach Mr. Nolan M. Silbernagel is very excited to be a part of the Choate community. He said, "I was very fortunate that both positions were open; Assistant Director of Athletics and Swimming Head Coach, which I've been incredibly interested in. Swim coach jobs are relatively rare on the high school level. They don't always pop up, so for a swim coach job to come up here at Choate, along with an assistant director of athletics job, was like one in a million. I really felt like win-



Photo by Garrett Curtis '24/The Choate News

Mr. Silbernagel smiling at the Choate pool.

ning the lottery. I was fortunate to be chosen for it."

Mr. Silbernagel mentioned that he knew Choate would be a "wonderful place to be," even before arriving on campus. Mr. Silbernagel previously worked in Admissions at the Independent Day School in Middlefield, Connecticut. Mr. Silbernagel had the chance to meet several Choate families even before arriving on campus. He said, "They always spoke very highly of Choate; they were incredible people as well, so I knew going in as I was looking at Choate that it's a great community full of really dedicated, strong professionals that are good-natured people as well."

Mr. Silbernagel added: "I'm just honestly thrilled to be here. Everyone has been incredibly helpful and incredibly kind, so it's definitely the right decision to be here. I just look forward to doing everything I can to just help keep on making this community as warm and welcoming and as impressive as possible."

In addition to being the Assistant Director of Athletics and the Swimming Head Coach, Mr. Silbernagel will also be helping out in the Admission Department, managing Choate's sports media, and working with an alumni group regarding athletics.

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## A POSITIVE CHANGE: NEW UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS' FIELD HOCKEY AND LACROSSE

By **Simeon Levesque '25**  
*Reporter*

Starting this year, students playing Girls' Field Hockey and Lacrosse can swap out their traditionally worn skirt uniforms for athletic shorts. In the past, some players in these sports have found wearing skirts to be an antiquated practice, leaving them feeling exposed and having their mobility restricted. Consequently, players raised their concerns about the issue, wanting their voices to be heard.

One of the players with these concerns was Asher Ciardiello '24, who first brought this issue to members of the equipment room. When asked about the issue, Ciardiello said, "Well, I personally think that wearing a skirt while playing a sport is kind of restrictive at times, and when I was talking to the girls on my team about this issue, a lot of them completely agreed. They felt exposed and that it wasn't what they wanted to wear."

After getting consensus from the team, Ciardiello decided to take action: "I went to talk to Justin (Mr. Whittaker, the Head Equipment Manager and Assistant Coordinator of Athletic Operations), and I was like, 'hey, this is an issue we need to fix' ... and once I explained it to him he was completely on board."

On the topic of Ciardiello's suggestion, Mr. Whittaker shared, "they [Ciardiello] had listed some concerns that individuals had about wearing skirts as opposed to shorts, and we had that conversation. I spoke with the coaches, and everybody seemed to be on board. We were able to offer any athlete in Field Hockey or Lacrosse the option to pick either a skirt or shorts for their uniform." When Elisabeth

serves. DeFranco said he wants supporters at any game, "whether it's a varsity soccer game or a thirds volleyball game." He noted that Boar Pen is trying to have a SAGE grill before each game to increase participation.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Choate-Deerfield rivalry, and Boar Pen is looking forward to hosting this special Deerfield Day at Choate. This year marks a centennial celebration; Parker wants to "make it the best Deerfield Day yet." Deerfield Day always brings a strong sense of unity among the Choate students and intensifies athletes' grit during the games. Miller hopes that the Choate spirit will make Deerfield students "cry all the way back to Massachusetts."

As the athletic schedule fills up, a new school year is in Boar Pen's hands. It is clear Boar Pen is passionate and excited about Choate. They hope the rest of the Choate community will share in their enthusiasm as they work towards maintaining the togetherness and energy that makes the community unique.

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Hargett '25 was asked about this change, she said, "I think it shows how much the School values inclusivity and allows their players to express themselves because I know a couple of people were insecure."

Furthermore, Mr. Whittaker said this change may be implemented beyond Choate. "If you look at programs across the country, they're starting to move in that short direction... I think you'll start to see shorts become the main bottom option for Field Hockey or Lacrosse players."

But, this isn't just about uniform changes. Instead, it's about supporting athletes first. In celebrating the 50th year of the landmark Title IX law, preventing discrimination based on sex in sports, this change encapsulates what Title IX is all about: equity. Although women in sports often don't garner the respect they deserve, providing this choice is "a good step in the right direction," according to Hargett.

Ciardiello said, "I specifically did this, so we have the option ... I fully believe that whatever you're comfortable in is what is most important."

While this change may only affect those playing Girls' Field Hockey and Girls' Lacrosse, this shift is a fundamental step in creating a more inclusive athletic environment at Choate. The courage Ciardiello displayed in noticing a problem and taking steps to fix that problem with members of the equipment staff shows that through determination and collaboration, members of the Choate community can listen to each other and promote positive change.

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Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News