



SCHOOL REVAMPS THE DAILY SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT WELLNESS



Graphic by Carolyn Chen '25/The Choate News

By **Sophia Liao '25**
Copy Editor

For the first time in five years, Choate's daily schedule has received a makeover. In the spring of last year, the School announced a new schedule featuring a later start, longer lunch blocks, shorter classes, and an extended Thursday schedule with advising blocks at the end of the day.

The process of creating the new schedule began with a committee led by Director of Curricular Initiatives Mr. Deron Chang. The committee's goal was to craft a schedule that would more efficiently optimize students' time and prioritize their wellness.

"We were doing a good job, but we weren't doing as much as we could be doing to really address the students' wellness needs," Mr. Chang said. "One way to do that is to check if the pace of life that the daily schedule affords is one that is healthy and that allows for the long term health and sustainability of our students."

The committee discussed feedback from students, faculty, and parents about the schedules before and during Covid-19, considering different prototypes of the daily

schedule. Some scrapped ideas include varying class time based on discipline, day of the week, or grade level; shortened transition periods between classes; and a 30-minute sleep-in with classes beginning at 8:30 a.m. After a year of planning, the committee finalized the schedule with five key changes.

One of the most prominent changes to the schedule was the later start time in the mornings. Last year, the school day began at 8:00 a.m.; however, students are able to enjoy an extra 15 minutes in the morning with classes beginning at 8:15 a.m. this year.

For day students like Kayla Bashawaty '26, this change has been convenient. "The extra 15 minutes makes it much easier to commute to school every morning without rushing as much as I did last year," she said.

Boarder Bladen Hawthornthwaite '24 agreed that the later start has made an impact on her morning routine. "Even though it's only 15 minutes, it makes a huge difference," she said. "It has definitely enabled me to get breakfast more often, and I can get up at 7:50 a.m. and still make it to class on time."

While students are enjoying the extra time to sleep in, "changing the schedule by itself isn't going to fix the sleep issues on this campus," Mr. Chang said. He emphasized that students should not see this added 15 minutes as a reason to sleep later, but instead as "a nod that 'you need more sleep at this school.'"

Lunch periods have also been extended with the new schedule. "Longer lunch blocks are so nice because they give me time to go to the mailroom, sign out if I need to, and actually sit down to eat," Hawthornthwaite said.

Some students have utilized the extra time as free time: "Although the 10 extra minutes is nice, I'm not spending that extra time eating lunch, because I had enough time before," Max Lo '25 said. "Now, it just feels like I have some more downtime."

In order to allow for longer lunches and morning sleep-ins, classes have been abridged from 70 to 65 minutes each. Some students feel that it has taken away from class time that could be spent reviewing homework and asking questions. "With five minutes less,

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Choate Combats Food Insecurity On Community Service Day

By **Eliana Li '26**
Staff Reporter

Every year, the Choate community mobilizes on Community Service Day to give back to those around them. In recognition of this year's Community Service Day on Friday, September 29, the School participated in various service activities related to the theme, "Hungry for Justice." The focus of the day was to raise awareness of the struggles families face surrounding food insecurity and food injustice.

The day began with a Q&A session involving a panel of experienced leaders serving the local community — Mr. Brad Fleming, Dr. Steve Werlin, Dr. Ivette Ruiz, and Ms. Aubrey Roscoe — who were interviewed by Selam Olson '24 and Adia Decker '24.

To kick the panel off, Dr. Werlin, the Executive Director at Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK), defined food insecurity and what it meant to him, saying, "I think all of us in this room have felt the feeling of being hungry, but being food insecure and having a consistent lack of nutritious and healthy foods is a completely different topic."

Dr. Ruiz, founder of Healing By Growing Farms, then shared her struggles with food insecurity after having suffered a brain injury. "I don't wish that upon anyone. It's a very hard place to be," Dr. Ruiz said.

She explained how the populations that different organizations tackling food insecurity serve only represent a small sliver of those in need. In her case, being wheelchair-bound and unable to leave her own house, she went days without food. Thankfully, with the help of close family friends, she was able to heal.

Ultimately, her struggles inspired her to create Healing By Growing, which supports trauma survivors through farming sessions and holistic healing activities. The organization also extends aid to anyone who may be experiencing food insecurity without any criteria, including income.

These remarks from the panelists left the Choate community feeling inspired to serve their community the following day. Around 170 students, staff, and faculty participated in a Har-

vest Pack event in the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center gym. Harvest Pack is a national non-profit addressing food insecurity by mobilizing communities for meal packing events.

In assembly lines, volunteers packaged, weighed, and sealed packets containing 40,000 servings worth of nutrient-rich oatmeal. The boxes of healthy meals were distributed to families across New England, and the oatmeal spilled during the packaging

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Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Students package oatmeal, cinnamon, and sugar with Harvest Pack.



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

Choate students packed over 40,000 meals with Harvest Pack.

CAREER FAIR CONNECTS STUDENTS AND ALUMNI



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Choate students converse and dine with Mr. David Desjardins '02 at brunch in Lanphier Center Commons.



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

John Coughlan '87 speaks on his career in finance.

By **Arjun Pathy '25**
Copy Editor

A hallmark of the Choate experience is the vast alumni network that comes with it. On Sunday, October 1, 16 alumni working in fields ranging from media and television to finance and investment visited Choate as part of the School's first in-person career fair since 2015. The event, open to fifth- and sixth-formers, was a joint effort between the Alumni Relations Office and student leaders. Through two 45-minute, career-specific sessions and a brunch, the fair provided students with a unique opportunity to network with alumni and gain exposure to a wide range of professions.

Julen Payne '24 and Junho Lee '24 came up with the idea of a career fair nearly a year ago with hopes to utilize Choate's extensive alumni network to students' advantage. After a summer of planning, the Alumni Relations Office, Payne, and Lee assembled a list of over a dozen professionals to attend the event. Beyond finding speakers, the planning group also grappled with a slew of logistical complexities, such as coordinating with food catering services and scheduling sessions.

Dean of Students, and former Associate for Alumni Engagement, Mr. Will Gilyard '98 worked closely with Nexus, a career networking platform, to organize the event. Months of planning, starting from the event's early stages, culminated in a morning of connection and conversation between students and alumni. "It felt very personalized and very one-on-one," attendee Sundari von Wentzel '25 said.

The event started with a casual gathering in the Lanphier Center lobby, where students introduced themselves to alumni over cups of coffee. Then, once everyone was checked in, students headed to the two 45-minute information sessions featuring alumni from the professional industries they expressed interest in prior to the event. The fields of interest included business development, communications, finance and investment, government, law, medicine, technology, and television and film. In each session, alumni shared about their time at Choate, their professional experiences, and valuable life skills they acquired during their time in the workforce.

After their presentations, alumni opened up the session to questions from students looking to gain insight into their future career paths.

Sebastian Plunkett '24, an Advanced Robotics Concentration student at Choate, enjoyed hearing from Ms. Sarah McKenna '89, the CEO of Sequentum, a technology company specializing in web-based data.

"We discussed her background and her journey reaching her position now and how she feels about tech," he said. "It was very exciting meeting with her and asking questions. I asked her about quality control for programming and training sets for data."

After attending the two sessions, students returned to the Lanphier Center Commons, where a full brunch was held for all event attendees. This casual setting allowed students to dive deeper into more personal conversations with alumni at small tables.

For some students, this portion of the event was the most valuable. In conversation with Mr. David Desjardins '02, Senior Caucus Counsel at Connecticut House Democrats who led a session on Government and Law, von Wentzel said, "It felt like a natural conversation to me ... it was interesting to compare and contrast and talk about [politics] on the state level."

Mr. Desjardins appreciated how the career fair was a chance for students to explore possible career paths. "It's great that you're thinking about [your career] now, and you don't have to have it figured out at all," he said.

The event connected 16 alumni and around 120 students. "People showed up, and they were ready to learn, and they were interested," Payne said. "And that's really what we wanted."

Reflecting on the event, Mr. Gilyard had only positive things to say about attendees' experiences. "Everyone looked sharp... they got business cards [and their] questions answered," he said. Von Wentzel added, "I think getting teenagers to sit in a room and be still and be quiet for an hour is kind of a challenge, and so, it felt less like a class and more like a conversation."

Lee and Payne hope to plan more workshops about resume writing, using LinkedIn, and interviewing skills. "We want it to be something that when we get called back for our reunion, it's still in action. Maybe [it's] something Junho and I can talk at in the future," Payne said.

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A Taste of Town

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Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by Evelyn Kim '25, Melody Qian '24, the Choate Archives, and Mr. Morgan Harris



SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATIONAL SALON

By **Adrian Torres '25**
Copy Editor

In honor of National Suicide Prevention Month, TEDxChoate Rosemary Hall held its first interactive salon event in the Andrew Mellon Library's Reading Room on Friday, September 22. This TEDx event was in collaboration with the Wellness Committee, Counseling Team, and Yale Compassionate Home, Action Together (CHATogether), a program using drama vignettes as educational tools to promote wellness. The presentation featured Dr. Eunice Yuen, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Yale New Haven Hospital, an assistant professor of psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, and the founder of Yale CHATogether.

As part of National Suicide Prevention Month, TEDxChoate founder and director Yoyo Zhang '24 and assistant director Sunny Vo '24 organized the event with the goals of spreading awareness about rising suicide rates among adolescents and discussing methods to support those in need in a boarding school setting.

"We wanted to create a comfortable space to discuss and talk," Vo said. "We also wanted to equip students with necessary skills or tools to prevent suicide from happening to themselves or to the people around them who they care about."

The event began with a screening of the TEDx talk

"The fight against teen suicide begins in the classroom," in which a teacher described her experience with losing students to suicide. Dr. Yuen then followed up the video with research statistics on the increasing trend of teen suicide, along with real-life cases that she has worked on.

"The big takeaway I have from the event is that there's such a staggering amount of people that are considering suicide. The statistic was one in every five, and that was mind-blowing to me," said Kiran Makam '25, a leader of the Wellness Committee.

Dr. Yuen also spoke on using mindful, productive, and human-centered language when discussing suicidal ideation and action. For instance, suicide should not be framed as a crime that is "committed"; rather, one should use neutral phrasing like "died by suicide" to strip away the implicit judgment. "It is important to acknowledge and understand the ways in which our vocabulary can further stigmatize the notion of suicide which can cause far more damage than we realize," participant Zainab Khokha '24 said.

Dr. Yuen also shared ways to best support others in need, including listening without judgment, validating others' feelings, and suggesting reliable venues for seeking professional help. "What Dr. Yuen stressed a lot was that a person with no clinical experience or

training should not take on the responsibility of being someone who is trying to provide therapy or assistance in that way," Khokha said. "At the end of the day, let them know you're there for them."

During the event, attendees also participated in small discussions in response to prompts and a skit performed by members of the Wellness Committee. "We wanted people to feel empowered to think of and create their own solutions within this given context," Vo said.

Reflecting on the main message of the event, Ada Tianworn '26 said, "It's important for all Choate students to know that you may think you're alone and the only one experiencing some sort of stress or something negative, but just know that you're not, and there are people around you to help."

Providing a safe space to explore difficult topics is crucial for increasing awareness and breaking the silence as a community. "We really hoped to embrace a safe community to talk about suicide prevention, especially in a school setting," Dr. Yuen said. "I hope that we can do something together in creating a supportive community to break stigma about suicide, and we can really do our job to prevent suicide from happening."

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TEDx invited Dr. Eunice Yuen to speak to Choate students for National Suicide Prevention Month.

NEW SCHEDULE BRINGS CHANGES

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I feel like we're hurrying through everything, and we barely have time to go over the things I have trouble with," Lo said.

Another concern with shaving five minutes off class times is that classes may feel more rushed without allowing students ample time to settle in. "In the 70-minute block, you didn't have to start right away talking about what your subject is," Mr. Chang said. "It gives you a chance to touch base with students, and we were afraid that that was the part that would be sacrificed."

So far, shortened classes have not affected how teachers approach lessons. "Because it's just five minutes, there haven't been substantial curricular changes because of this schedule change," said Science teacher Mr. Will Morris. However, teachers may have to make slight moderations to their assessments and class discussions to fit the allotted class time.

Another notable change has been the new advising system. Advisory groups are now mixed between genders, day and boarding status, and grade level. Students also sit by advisory group during School Meeting in Colony Hall, which has gotten rid of sections of the auditorium previously designated to specific forms, such as the "senior section" in the front of the orchestra. In past years, Com-

munity Service day activities were completed by dorm, but this year, students were grouped with their advisory instead.

To emphasize the importance of advising to the Choate experience, a time slot has been carved out for advising every Thursday afternoon in the new schedule. "We really consider advising to be one-third of the three-legged stool here: we have academics, co-curricular activities, and advising," Mr. Chang said. "To have it be the only thing that wasn't specifically scheduled in really made us wonder, 'Are we really as committed to the advising process as we thought we were?'"

Head of Student and Academic Life Ms. Jenny Elliott, said, "I hope that a regular advising block will lead to more consistent and stronger relationships between advisers and advisees, and certainly just provide regular access to advisers."

For some students, however, the advising period has had the opposite effect: "It feels more like family when you're seeing [the advisers] in the dorm," Lo said. "I'm spending time outside of classes just to be there [in the advising block], when I'd prefer to be in my dorm relaxing and meet with them on my own time ... it all just feels a bit forced."

On the contrary, for Lean- na Robie '25, the new advising block feels "intentional": "Even though I lived in the same dorm

as my adviser last year, it was always a catch-them-if you-can type thing, where I'd only really see them if they were on duty. Having definite times to meet each week means that I'm guaranteed to see them, which is always nice," she said.

To accommodate the new advising block, the entire Thursday schedule has been moved up. The Thursday conference period from the previous schedule was cut out completely, and the Thursday sleep-in is 20 minutes shorter than it was last year, with classes beginning at 9:00 a.m.

However, some students miss having daily conference periods, which allowed them to catch a break in the middle of a busy day. "I really liked all the conference blocks we had last year because it felt like we had more downtime to sit in Lanphier or in the [Humanities] rotunda," Robie said. "I'd also have more time to prepare if I had a test next block or just decompress after a hard class."

Mr. Chang plans to evaluate how well the schedule has been working by checking in with the Student Council this fall. He will also do a more in-depth evaluation next year, "allowing everyone to have lived with it for a full school year cycle."

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Hungry for Justice, Eager for Change



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Students package feminine products at The Diaper Bank.

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process was donated to Dr. Ruiz's farm to feed her chickens.

"I would love to see Choate students take away the fact that everybody can make a difference. I hope now that after doing a project like this, the students will see that there is a huge need around them, a huge need that possibly many of us do not even feel or recognize," said Mr. Fleming, a Partnerships Manager at Harvest Pack.

Other students traveled off campus into the greater New Haven area to volunteer at various sites, such as Connecticut Foodshare, Loaves and Fishes, The Diaper Bank, and DESK.

Kara Wang '24, who volunteered at Connecticut Foodshare, sorted over 4,000 pounds of produce. She reflected on her day with gratitude and inspiration.

"I think this year's theme, 'Hungry for Justice,' is a really important one and one that is not often recognized at privileged places like Choate," she said. "I was very inspired by the folks that worked at the Connecticut Foodshare, people who dedicate their lives to help others that are not able to access things that seem to be as abundant as food."

Due to unexpected weather conditions, there were more than 500 students who were unable to attend their hands-on service activities. Instead, these students gathered in Colony Hall to watch "A Place at the Table," a documentary illustrating food insecurity in the United States through stories of families who have experienced it firsthand. The documentary highlighted how food insecurity poses serious economic, cultur-

al, and social implications for thousands in the United States.

While Emma Schwerin '26 could not participate in her original trip to the Massaro Community Farm outdoors, the documentary screening was meaningful to her. "It changed my perspective of how impactful food insecurity is, and it really just informed me more about the problem that is affecting us today," she said.

"Hungry for Justice" was inspired by the effects of Covid-19 on many families experiencing food insecurity. "We've seen so much inequity as a result of the pandemic, and we are at a time in history now where the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' is the greatest that it's been in a really long time," Director of Community Service Ms. Melissa Koomson said.

With this theme in mind, Ms. Koomson hoped to create a space where students could examine and acknowledge their privileges. "Here at Choate, we are in a really cozy environment, with an amazing abundance of food that is offered to us every single day," she said.

Ultimately, Community Service Day is a chance for the Choate community to come together and serve others through learning, giving, and sharing. "It felt great to be a part of a bigger cause and to connect with my fellow peers doing something for the greater community," Antonio Giraldez Greco '25 said.

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EXPLORING CULTURES DURING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

By **Calvin Moon '24**
Staff Reporter

For the second year in a row, Choate celebrated International Education Week (IEW), a joint initiative established by the United States Department of State and the United States Department of Education.

While the national celebration spans from November 13 to 17, Choate scheduled its events to happen during the week of September 29 to October 7, strategically timed to fall before midterms. In collaboration with the Global Engagement Advisory Committee and dedicated faculty members such as Director of Student Activities Ms. Alexandra Long and Assistant Director of Student Activities Ms. Colleen Kazar, Director of Global Engagement Ms. Ashley Sinclair oversaw the organization of a plethora of events.

The week-long celebration featured a diverse array of activities that highlighted the various cultures at Choate. Offerings ranged from international karaoke nights to shopping trips to G Mart, an Asian supermarket, and El Mercado, a Latin American marketplace. French crepe-making sessions with Math and Computer Science teacher Ms. Meghan Healey, class visits and performances by the Spain-based Al Firdaus Ensemble, a global readings event, West Af-

rican dance lessons with Mr. Seny Camara, and international food stations in the dining hall provided something for everyone.

Taking the celebration a step further, Ms. Sinclair invited student-led clubs to share about their cultural heritages. Many student organizations embraced the opportunity to represent their cultures through activities and food. "Many of them said food, and I think that that is so wonderful because it just is so emblematic of how food is a way of sharing one's culture in a very specific way," Ms. Sinclair said.

Choate Korea Friendship Association (CKFA) celebrated Chuseok, Korean Thanksgiving Day, at Choate with a cookout featuring Korean street food such as tteokbokki and cup-bop. "The event turned out to be a great success," CKFA Vice President Danny Yoon '24 said. "I'm glad that a lot of Choate students became aware of the beautiful Korean culture and food."

The Hispanic Latine Forum (HLF) hosted a cooking class making arroz con dulce from Puerto Rico and brigadeiro from Brazil. The event was originally scheduled for Hispanic Awareness Month, but, in a happy coincidence, coincided with IEW. "We had a good turnout for the cookout event, which I hope inspires more people to try more dishes from Latin

America and Spanish-speaking countries," HLF President Sebastian Alvarez '24 said.

In addition, they sponsored a dance in the Student Activities Center (SAC). "For the international SAC dance, I hope people can genuinely enjoy the dance with music from their home countries," Alvarez said.

Many other student organizations also put together events. Chinese Club hosted a mahjong and mooncakes Mid-Autumn Festival celebration, Choate South Asian Association had a samosa cooking event, Caribbean Club offered jerk chicken and roti, Japanese Club had an onigiri-making session, Africanah presented Kenyan street food delicacies, and the Thai Club hosted a krapow gai dinner, among others.

International Education Week at Choate goes beyond merely a one-week celebration; it is an experience that can ignite students' curiosity about one another's diverse cultures. Ms. Sinclair shared, "I want the [students] to feel that they can try something new and to reach out to learn something about their fellow students. Even if they see them in class and feel that they know them well, they can learn a different side of them."

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Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

Local Organizations Provide Aid and Resources

By Eva Swanson '25
Copy Editor

Many non-profit organizations in the greater Wallingford area work to ensure that people across the state receive food and other necessities. Under this year's Community Service Day theme, "Hungry For Justice," members of the Choate community were scheduled to with organizations such as the West Haven Emergency Assistance Taskforce (WHEAT), Haven's Harvest, Healing by Growing Farms, and The Diaper Bank.

Founded in 1975, WHEAT "works to eliminate hunger in Connecticut by providing food assistance, service referrals, and advocacy to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity," according to Executive Director Mr. Michael Savenelli.

Each week, WHEAT distributes between 5,000 and 6,000 pounds of food to around 175 visitors. "By the end of 2023, we'll have served over 2,000 individuals and distributed more than 250,000 pounds of food," Mr. Savenelli said.

Mr. Savenelli said that food insecurity impacts more people than most think. Thus, WHEAT



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

helps anyone in Connecticut experiencing food insecurity, such as seniors, veterans, the unemployed or underemployed, people on disability, immigrants, refugees, and more.

Logistics and costs are primary concerns for the organization, and Mr. Savenelli said WHEAT has "an extensive network of partners" they work with to ensure they "cast the widest net possible."

Similar to WHEAT, Haven's Harvest works to ensure that no

plate is left empty. "Our mission is to build community and reduce food waste, one food rescue at a time," said Ms. Emma Martin-Mooney, Haven's Harvest Operations Assistant.

Saving food from grocery stores, bakeries, and schools, the organization hopes to eliminate unnecessary food waste. Haven's Harvest also works with health clinics, daycare, and senior centers, subsidized housing, schools, methadone clinics, religious cen-

ters, and some soup kitchens. They believe that "every mouth deserves food," Ms. Martin-Mooney said.

Founded by Dr. Ivette Ruiz, Healing By Growing Farms provides a holistic healing approach through therapeutic farming sessions for trauma survivors. After struggling to get back into the workforce following a traumatic brain injury and finding many of her peers discriminatory against her disability, Dr. Ruiz turned to her

backyard garden for reprieve and used it as inspiration to establish the organization.

There are also many local nonprofits that serve Connecticut communities beyond tackling food injustice, such as The Diaper Bank of Connecticut. The Diaper Bank's Advocacy & Outreach Coordinator, Ms. Jenny Kohl, described their mission as "three-pronged." The group focuses on the direct distribution of infant and tod-

dlar diapers, period supplies, youth and adult incontinence products while raising community awareness and working on legislative advocacy.

Ms. Kohl said The Diaper Bank serves nearly 10,000 families across the state while working with a network of around 150 community-based organizations. Primarily, they serve those who are making below 200% of the federal poverty threshold in Connecticut, the equivalent of \$55,000 a year for a family of four.

The Diaper Bank does not limit its services to those whose wages are above the federal poverty threshold. "There's probably a lot of families who are making more than those who have access issues getting these products because they're really expensive," Ms. Kohl said, adding that the organization "targets anyone who needs the products."

Through these partnerships' work, these local non-profits help to ensure hundreds of thousands of people across the state are receiving necessities the government does not provide.

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36th Celebrate Wallingford Festival Spotlights Local Gems

By Rachel Fan '27
Reporter

Over the weekend of October 7-8, local residents and visitors united on Main Street and Center Street for the 36th biannual Celebrate Wallingford event. Continuing a tradition of nearly four decades, the event featured over 150 vendors, from local artisans showcasing their work to restaurants offering mouth-watering bites.

Some notable changes from last year include an expanded kid-and-tween area, which encompassed a beach sand area, and a wine garden, which Wallingford Center Inc. Executive Director Mrs. Liz Davis explained had a "full-blown area of drinks compared to the wine tastings in previous years."

A main attraction of this year's Celebrate Wallingford was the Road Race, hosted by the Wallingford YMCA, which kicked off on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. Participants went on a five-kilometer walk or a one-kilometer "health walk" to support cancer and Parkinson's disease survivors.

"Registrations [were] at an all-time high," said Mr. Sean

Doherty, Executive Director of the Wallingford YMCA, who also displayed a vendor booth to discuss their nonprofit programs.

Mr. Nicholas Imbriglio, owner of Passionately Pasta and another vendor at Celebrate Wallingford, detailed what he enjoyed most about participating in the event: "I've been a Wallingford resident my whole life, and this event has been indoctrinated into me, and I love seeing the community come together."

With the ability to draw in 10,000 people in two days, Mr. Imbriglio acknowledged how the festival's outreach encouraged his own participation as an owner of a fledgling business. He said, "I felt like the best way for my little business to get out was to participate in probably the biggest event in Wallingford during the year."

Students who attended Celebrate Wallingford were also able to tune into Choate's booth. Participating for the 12th year as a main vendor, the School aims to connect with the public and "answer questions, inform people about what we're offering in terms of education, and showcase

programs and events that might be of interest to the Wallingford community," said Ms. Alison Cady, Chief Communications Officer at Choate and a board member of Wallingford Center Inc.

Throughout the weekend, Choate student volunteers at Celebrate Wallingford assisted with various tasks, such as helping Wallingford Center Inc. at their tent, putting up "no smoke" signs on the North Main Street side, and preparing flyers for distribution at Choate's tent.

Ian Wu '26, a volunteer on Saturday, recalled that while "the first two hours were the busiest," the event soon settled into a fun, festive atmosphere.

The driving force behind the creation of Celebrate Wallingford was to showcase local businesses and bring the community together. The event was originally founded in the 1980s as "Taste of Wallingford," an exclusive opportunity for restaurants to present local flavors. Gradually, it expanded to accommodate more than just taste buds and was renamed "Celebrate Wallingford" in 1987.

Mrs. Davis, who organized the event, reflected on

its growth over the years: "We used to be just a small committee formed by the mayor when we first got started, but later, it got established into an actual nonprofit organization."

With the roster of vendors changing every year, Ms. Cady said selecting this year's vendors was a careful and precise process.

As a general criteria, the organization looks for Wallingford-based businesses offering "homemade crafts" and local dining establishments that will produce dishes they serve in their restaurants at the festival, ensuring attendees experience a genuine local flavor.

She stressed that while some vendors were brand new businesses that "just want to be out there to sell the product," there were also established participants who "have been part of it for 20 years."

Looking towards the future, Mrs. Davis hopes to expand the comprehensive nature of this year's Celebrate Wallingford to host even more booths.

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Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

INCLEMENT WEATHER HITS CT



Graphic by William Gao '24/The Choate News

By Ada Tiewnorn '26
Reporter

Connecticut was thrust into a flood disaster on September 29 as a result of relentless rain over several consecutive days. The floods exacted a heavy toll across the state, with New Hartford and New Haven bearing the brunt of the consequences.

The heavy rainfall also flooded train tracks and grade crossings throughout the Bronx and the Lower Hudson Valley in New York City, suspending the Metro-North Railroad's New Haven Line from Connecticut to Grand Central Terminal, run by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), for several hours.

Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) Spokesperson Mr. Josh Morgan explained that some of the heavy rainfall this year has resulted in culverts — structures underneath bridges that allow water to pass freely — washing away. "In Scotland, Connecticut, town-owned bridges were washed out last month due to heavy rains and flooding," he said.

Apart from transportation, the flood also impacted many other pre-scheduled events in the state. On September 30, the heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding disrupted the Sound on Sound music festival in Bridgeport, leading to a three-hour delay in its highly anticipated commencement. Additionally, due to the adverse weather conditions, four acts were removed from the

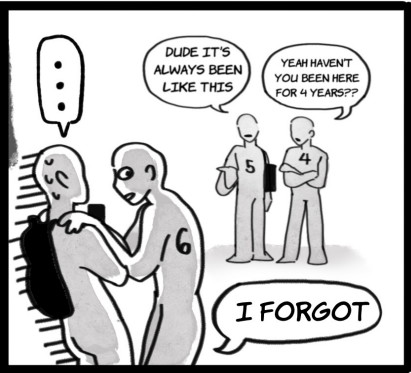
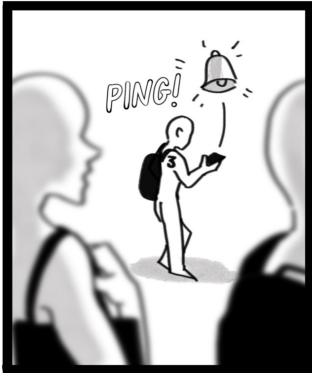
festival's lineup, disappointing both the festival's organizers and the enthusiastic music fans.

Preemptive measures were put in place a day before the storm, including a flood warning for Fairfield County and flood watches for the neighboring New Haven and Litchfield counties. The MTA also announced on September 28: "MTA employees will be deployed throughout the operating region checking flood-prone locations, pre-staging equipment, keeping signals, switches, and third rails operating and attending to any weather-related challenges."

The disruption of transportation networks inflicted hardship on commuters and laid bare the far-reaching repercussions of the flood. "The heavy rainfall has resulted in periodic road closures this year. When watercourses rise and top over the roadway, we need to close the road and then inspect for any potential damage when the water recedes," Mr. Morgan said. CTDOT also shared a photo on X (formerly known as Twitter) showing the closed roads on Route 199 in the city of Washington.

To prepare for future storms and flooding events, CTDOT will continue to work on upgrading the state's infrastructure. "For example, when we are doing a bridge project, we may make the opening under the bridge larger than the current conditions to allow for additional water flow or volume," Mr. Morgan said.

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Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

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REVAMPING NEW
STUDENT ORIENTATION

By **Ava Hult-Falk '27**

Opinions Writer

During their first week at Choate, new students underwent a series of orientation lectures and events. The programming was designed for students to get to know Choate, form new bonds, and be educated on the proper etiquette expected from them throughout their time at the School. While the events were both informative and important, improvements could have been made through clearer communication and more entertaining activities.

The three-day event began by splitting new students into four sections and sending them to various lectures about community building and inclusivity. I wish that I could have been present for the entirety of the presentations, but I often found myself arriving late to events and missing crucial information as a result of being lost on Choate's vast campus without any guidance. Us newly arrived students were expected to somehow find the locations of orientation sessions on our own despite our very limited knowledge of the campus's geography.

These information sessions, while helpful — covering topics such as Health and Wellness and Equity and Inclusion — were missing some key information. Sessions did not explain how to use Reach, navigate campus (this, we learned after the info sessions), efficiently manage time, or understand the sched-

ule. A lack of coverage on these important topics created a discrepancy in knowledge amongst the freshman class and invited chaos to follow. Students were showing up at the wrong buildings, fighting over what was a major school rule violation and what wasn't, etc.

After presentations, we shifted to Playfair, an event designed to create camaraderie and familiarity amongst new students. The problem with this year's Playfair was the weather. Under the scorching sun, it was difficult to focus on anything else but the heat, leading many to question why the event wasn't held in the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center's indoor gym instead of the lawn. Furthermore, since the matriculation dinner was directly afterward, many of us spent the hour stressing about how we could make it back to the dorms in time to shower and change.

There needs to be better communication, more engaging activities, and accommodations for the weather for next year's new student orientation process. Maybe, the School could introduce a committee made up of current students tasked with helping plan new student orientation; this way, the agenda would be shaped by student perspectives. I am looking forward to seeing how the opening days will continue to improve.

Ava Hult-Falk is a third-former from San Francisco, CA. She may be reached at ahultfalk27@choate.edu.



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

New students and prefects engage in Playfair activities.

DO PAJAMAS BELONG
IN THE CLASSROOM?



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

By **Steven Kee '27**

Opinions Writer

Pajamas. Soft, loose clothing that is worn in bed and consists of pants and a shirt. That is how they are defined in the Cambridge Dictionary. Pajamas are meant to be worn in bed, not in class. Choate needs to start listening to the dictionary and reflect the true definition of pajamas in the School's dress code by not allowing students to wear them to class.

Our school is known amongst the circle of boarding schools for having a lax dress code. While some are proud of this notoriety, I certainly am not. Wearing pajamas limits students' academic performance, leads to unfocused behavior, and helps create an unprofessional learning environment.

I consider myself a pretty casual dresser. I admit to wearing sweatpants and hoodies to class from time to time; however, these types of clothing, unlike pajamas, are meant for going outside and designed simply for comfort. A line must be drawn when students start sitting at their desks in what they slept in because such a casual learning environment may stymie their performance at school.

Critics of my belief may argue that students wear pajamas to class because they are comfortable. While I agree, studies show that they are too comfortable for the classroom. According to psychologists Hajo Adam and Adam Galin-

sky, "enclothed cognition" is how a person's choice of clothing limits their psychological processes. For example, when a doctor wears a lab coat, they have increased sustained attention than when they are wearing a painter's coat. Considering this, research backs the claim that students perform better when they are wearing proper daytime clothing in lieu of pajamas.

Another psychologist Dr. Jennifer Dragonette said that as we subconsciously associate wearing pajamas with bedtime, wearing them decreases our motivation and makes us feel sluggish.

When we blur the line between pajamas and school clothes, we are simultaneously blurring the line between bedroom and classroom. This results in behaviors and mentalities that are not fit for a learning environment, causing negative effects on our learning.

I do not believe that Choate should have a strict dress code that requires us to wear a uniform or that bans casual clothing like sweatpants and hoodies because we should be able to wear what is comfortable for us. However, there are plenty of other types of "comfortable" clothes that don't limit our academic performance like pajamas do. A restriction on pajamas is necessary in order to improve student productivity.

Steven Kee is a third-former from Hong Kong. He may be reached at skee27@choate.edu.

By **Pete Areewong '27**

Opinions Writer

I am happy to say that us Choaties love to wear our pajamas to class, and I believe that lax dress is a defining characteristic of the Choate community. At Choate, we have hard-working students who excel in their academic classes while maintaining a casual and comfortable environment, setting us apart from a lot of our peer schools. Wearing suits and dresses on a day-to-day basis would make Choate indistinguishable from Deerfield, who must spend hours each morning sprucing up for the day.

Most students perform better when they feel comfortable not only in their environment, but also in what they choose to wear that day. Additionally, a formal dress code at Choate would be unfair to those who do not have the means to buy a school week's worth of formal clothing. Not implementing a strict dress code ensures that everyone in the community feels comfortable in what they want and are able to wear to class. At its core, the School's support of pajama-wearing reflects its goal of making students feel comfortable by allowing them to express themselves through dressing as they see fit.

Dr. Alan Tepp, a child and adolescent psychologist, ar-

gued that wearing pajamas to class makes high school students more emotionally comfortable as well. In an interview with *The New York Times*, he explained that "during the stress of midterms, Regents, finals, this would be a time when you would retreat to a time of your life when you were taken care of, that whole world of Dr. Denton's and flannel pajamas."

Considering Dr. Tepp's professional viewpoint, it makes sense that Choate students have found solace in wearing pajamas all day, every day. Not only are we almost always stressed, but we are away from home and required to take care of ourselves here. It makes sense that we unconsciously yearn for a time when we were constantly cared for by our caregivers.

In an already rigorous and work-heavy environment, I am grateful that the School gives students the freedom of choice regarding their clothing. Ultimately, the ability to choose what we want to wear to classes is a facet of Choate culture that has solidified itself in our community, and it would be incredibly outrageous to try and change that.

Pete Areewong is a third-former from Bangkok, Thailand. He may be reached at pareewong27@choate.edu.

IT IS TIME WE ABOLISH THE
HISTORIC SENIOR SECTION

By **Francesca Howard '26**

Opinions Writer

We've all been there: the dreaded walk through the senior section of the dining hall. As you make your way through the rows of tables, you feel every pair of eyes turn your direction, and sixth-formers seem to pierce straight through to the deepest parts of your soul. Each of your footsteps echoes louder than the last, and you don't know what they are whispering about, but you are certain it is about you. You feel like you've become a spectacle, an enigma, the protagonist of a story you never wanted to be a part of.

I am aware that this is a dramatic description, perhaps a hyperbole of reality, but doesn't it feel a touch too real? Now, don't get me wrong, I understand the merit of rites of passage. The senior section is a tangible achievement that comes with entering one's final years at the School. It is emblematic of the culmination of one's journey through Choate, and it is a milestone to look forward to. However, the dining hall of our school isn't the place for milestones — it should be a space where every student, regardless of their form, can congregate as part of a cohesive community; yet, the mere existence of the senior section compromises this utopian vision. It sends a message of separation, hierarchy, and exclusion. Carving sections out to separate students based



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

The senior section of the dining hall creates a divide within the School.

on seniority reinforces the idea that there are "insiders" and "outsiders." So why, as a community that prides itself on inclusivity and diversity, do we cling to a practice that palpably divides?

There's a myriad of research suggesting that regular interaction between younger and older students can be incredibly beneficial for both groups. Younger students can benefit from the mentorship and guidance of their older peers. Simultaneously, seniors have the opportunity to impart their wisdom to underclassmen and gain leadership skills. The senior section, in its current configuration, stymies such interactions.

I, myself, have suffered at the hands of the senior section. As a freshman, I felt the dismay of

walking through the dining hall entrance. My first week at Choate, I lamentably made the decision to sit in their seating without the knowledge of the pre-established social contract. I will forever regret this mistake and the words "why are you sitting here" uttered from surrounding seniors. My friends, too, have expressed their anxiety as a result of the dining hall layout.

Moreover, the word I hear surfacing most frequently in defending the merit of the senior section is "tradition." While there may be no overt signage demarcating seating arrangements, the unspoken yet widely accepted and vigilantly enforced rule persists. I think it's time we look beyond elitist

traditions that no longer serve the collective welfare of Choate Rosemary Hall. It's time to reimagine spaces in a way that celebrates all students, not just a specific form.

The thing about traditions is that they aren't stagnant. They evolve, adapt, and change with society, the same way Choate does. The question we must ask ourselves is whether the senior section is a tradition worth preserving. Why honor the past at the expense of the present? The senior section's era has passed, and now, it's time for a change.

Francesca Howard is a fourth-former from New York City, New York. She may be reached at fhoward26@choate.edu.

Barbie in PINK: Politics, Identity, Norms, & Kens

By **Kaylin Lam '27**
Opinions Writer

Warner Bros.'s highest grossing film, *Barbie*, has taken Hollywood by storm. Nostalgia for the famous Mattel doll and its extensive marketing contributed to box office sales of more than \$1.38 billion worldwide. Despite its widespread popularity, the movie's thematic substance on gender politics has left many of its viewers divided.

In light of the microcosm of identity politics spurned by perspectives regarding the film, it's imperative that we crack down on the online culture of denouncing everything and everyone that associates with ideologies we may disagree with. We must encourage people to be open-minded and receptive to other perspectives if we wish to prevent further polarization.

Contrary to expectations for a typical family movie, *Barbie*, in colorful and campy fashion, delivers a slew of feminist ideas, addressing problems with patriarchy, male entitlement, and authentic female empowerment. As such, there have been a large variety of opinions regarding the film and its message.

Some consider the movie an advancement in the modern feminist movement, arguing that it helped expose fourth-wave feminism to unaware bystanders. Others appreciate the movie's stellar production, yet were disappointed by the lack of nuance in the delivery of its call for female independence. And, most notably, many have demonstrated the belief that the movie acts as anti-male propaganda.

As usual, internet discourse has coaxed people to formulate opinions based on those of their favorite content creators or pushed them to blatantly oppose those who disagree with them. In an attempt to protect themselves from criticism, whether it's regarding one's judgment of cinema or outlook on social issues, people are inclined to take the offensive.

As such, many have generated identity-based narratives surrounding *Barbie*; in other words, they have fallen victim to extreme polarization. People fail to realize that despite *Barbie*'s political messaging, there is no "right" or "wrong" opinion.

The film merely attempts to portray the female experience in our current social and political climate. It acknowledges *Barbie*'s flawed execution of female empowerment through unrealistic beauty norms, criticizes those who attempt to establish gender-based leadership in society by ridiculing both the Kens and the Barbies, and assumes an optimistic stance on gender equality and acceptance of a spectrum of identities. You don't have to love

the characterization of Barbie in the film to be a feminist, and you certainly aren't misogynistic if you didn't enjoy the movie. The movie, like all works of cinema, deserves open-minded inspection to fully understand the purpose behind its creation.

Since *Barbie*'s release this July, we have seen many perspectives circulate the web, which provides a platform for people to educate themselves on a myriad of interpretations before coming to their own conclusions on *Barbie*.

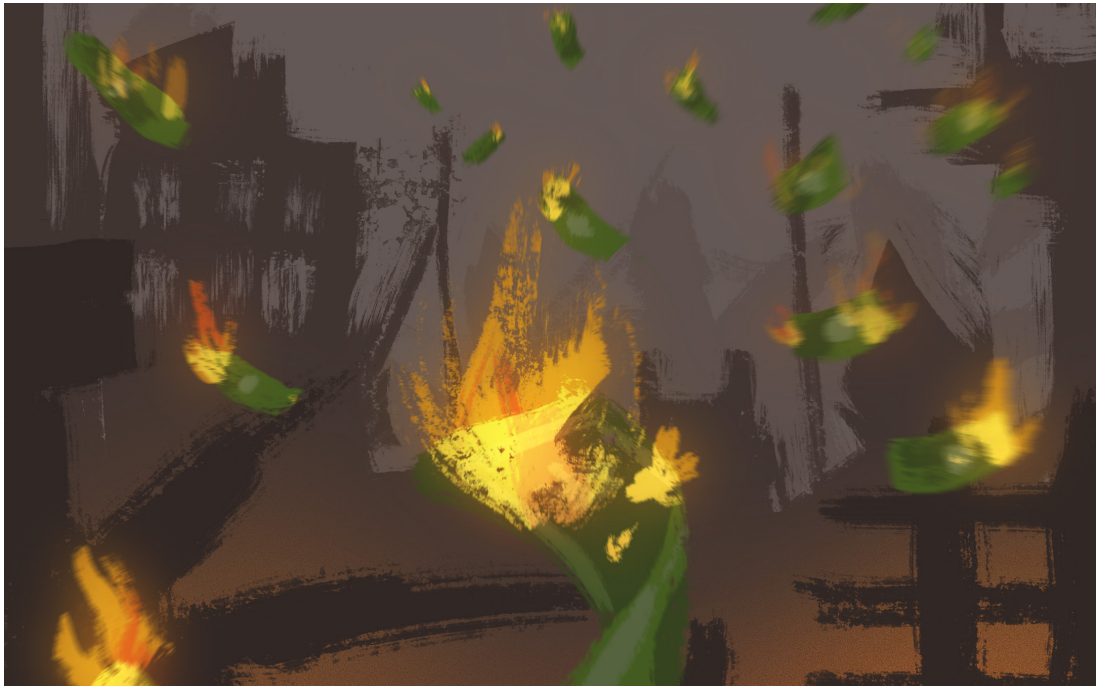
Similarly, when considering identity politics as a whole, it is essential that we are open to listening to the varied, and often clashing, opinions of others so that we can formulate our own ideas on the basis of true understanding. We shouldn't crack down on identity politics by denouncing our opponents. Instead, we need to ensure that everyone is given the chance to speak and be heard. Only then will we have created a constructive environment for discourse.

Kaylin Lam is a third-former from Vancouver, Canada. She may be reached at klam27@choate.edu.



Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27 / The Choate News

To Borrow Or Not To Borrow: Evergrande's Debt Debacle



Graphic by Melody Qian '24 / The Choate News

By **Mwendwawangai Daisley '24**
Opinions Writer

In recent weeks, the financial world has been abuzz with news of Chinese real estate giant Evergrande teetering on the edge of collapse. While the Evergrande saga has been extensively covered, it is imperative that we examine this crisis in the context of broader issues surrounding debt.

Evergrande's staggering debt load, estimated at around \$300 billion, has cast a long shadow over China's property market and sent shockwaves throughout global financial markets. The once-mighty conglomerate is grappling with a debt crisis of unprecedented proportions, and the consequences could reverberate far beyond China's borders.

Evergrande's plight is a stark reminder of the perils of excessive leverage, when too much debt impedes a company's ability to cover operating expenses. Massive borrowing fueled the company's rapid expansion, leading to an unsustainable debt burden. This situation, while extreme, mirrors a trend seen across the corporate landscape worldwide: companies, governments, and individuals often find themselves drowning in debt as they chase profit regardless of the implications.

The unfolding crisis forces a confrontation of some uncomfortable truths about the interconnectedness of the global financial system. International investors, including major banks and bondholders, are closely tied to the fate of Evergrande, as they encouraged reckless borrowing and mindless spending. This interdependence underscores the increasing need for vigilance and caution.

Moreover, the Chinese government's response to the Evergrande crisis reveals the delicate balance between managing systemic risks and maintaining economic stability. For the past few years, the Chinese government has restricted media coverage surrounding Evergrande in an attempt to squander investor uncertainty, all while encouraging a gradual dismemberment of Evergrande's assets in an attempt to repay its sizable debts.

Still, this cautions response prompts us to question how governments worldwide address financial crises, with their actions having far-reaching implications for citizens and markets alike. The Evergrande crisis is more than just a cautionary tale about a single corporation's downfall. It is a microcosm of the broader issues surrounding debt in the modern world.

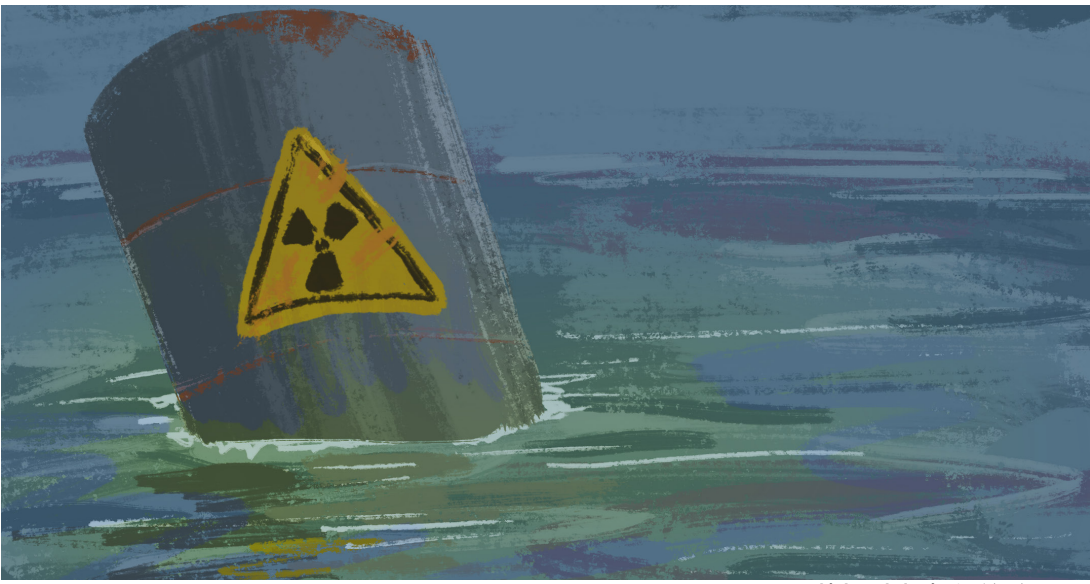
The Evergrande debacle serves as a sobering reminder of the global debt landscape. Borrowing is a double-edged sword; it can fund growth and prosperity, but when left unchecked, it can lead to catastrophic consequences. The allure of easy credit creates a honey trap seducing individuals, corporations, and governments, resulting in a debt-fueled global economy.

As we reflect on Evergrande's precipitous fall from grace, we must evaluate our collective relationship with debt. This crisis should compel robust analysis of financial systems, corporate practices, and government policies. Are we adequately safeguarding against excessive debt accumulation? Are we equipped to handle the fallout when unsustainable debt bubbles burst?

Navigating this complex financial landscape, we should remember that the lessons learned from Evergrande's plight extend far beyond China's borders. The prudent management of debt is a shared responsibility that will ultimately shape our collective economic future.

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THE SELFISH NATURE OF THE FUKUSHIMA WATER RELEASE



Graphic by Melody Qian '24 / The Choate News

By **Jai Midha '27**
Opinions Writer

Twelve years after the infamous incident at Fukushima's nuclear plant, in which an earthquake caused the release of nuclear waste, Japan initiated a 30-year decontamination program known as the Fukushima Water Release on August 24, 2023. The decision to release radioactive water waste into the Pacific Ocean has stirred significant public concern. Many regard it as a demonstration of the Japanese government's lack of commitment to considering the long-term consequences of waste disposal.

Over 1,000 tanks of wastewater are held near the nuclear plant, equivalent to the amount of water needed to fill 540 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Yet, the program received a green light from the United Nations watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Prioritizing public concern is of utmost importance for the government. In the case of the Fukushima Water Release, the domestic public

believed that the government did not adequately address the potential long-term impacts of its waste disposal strategy.

Despite public disapproval, the Japanese government stated that the plan is an unavoidable step in the process of decommissioning the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, built by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). Although some scientists believe that the plan is safe, many biologists are concerned about the long-term environmental effects.

There are also impacts beyond marine life. On the day that Japan announced the Fukushima Water Release, China, Japan's biggest seafood buyer, placed a ban on all Japanese seafood; consequently, many fishermen have protested against the plan as the wastewater has gutted their sales. Haruo Ono, a protestor and fisherman, said, "The government hasn't listened to fishing communities in deciding how to deal with the water. It has abandoned the people of Fukushima to protect TEPCO."

Although the government has allocated over 80 billion yen,

equivalent to 550 million U.S. dollars, to support the seafood and fishing markets in Japan, they haven't been able to address the potential impacts the water release may have on international markets. Rampant protests have circulated throughout nearby territories, including South Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong.

The primary purpose of a government should be to serve and protect its people. In the case of the Fukushima Water Release, both public interest and scientific opinion were completely ignored. The legislators' disregard for the different parties affected by the Fukushima Water Release was not only a clear violation of government loyalty to their public bodies but also a failure to consider the global repercussions of their policies. The Japanese government's oversights regarding this issue underscore the importance of considering public opinion to create a secure and forward-looking society.

Jai Midha is a third-former from Singapore, Singapore. He may be reached at jmidha27@choate.edu.

Morocco's Strategic, Yet Stubborn Reluctance to Foreign Aid

By **Ada Tiaanworn '26**
Opinions Writer

In the wake of a recent earthquake, Morocco's hesitance in accepting international aid has drawn significant attention, igniting controversy and raising questions about their motivations and priorities. Despite the national pride that Morocco hopes to embody with their foreign policies, it is imperative that governments prioritize the immediate well-being of their citizens rather than endlessly consider the repercussions of their dependence on external aid.

Most Western outlets have criticized the Moroccan government for its inability to meet the needs of its citizens; one such voice comes from Lise Storm, a Senior Lecturer in Middle East Politics at the University of Exeter, who argued that Morocco's selective approach to foreign aid is a result of "a mixture of pride and incompetence."

Moroccan officials appear determined not to cast their nation as a helpless victim in need of external assistance when faced

with a disaster of this magnitude. Instead, they aim to maintain an image of self-sufficiency and demonstrate their ability to mobilize domestic resources to address challenges independently. The stubborn decisions made by Moroccan officials have continued to endanger civilians and have delayed reconstruction.

In fact, it appears that Morocco's dismissive stance is a reflection of the nation's desire to avoid falling into political debt to powerful Western countries, especially those that may not reciprocate Morocco's political interests. In a statement, the Ministry of Interior asserted that they are "continuing to evaluate needs and respond in compliance with international standards," as such, Morocco has accepted foreign aid from countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom but has refused the requests for aid from the U.S. and France.

Morocco's refusal to receive aid from France has sparked criticism within both countries: Moroccan officials expressed their disdain for the French, whom they believe perceive Morocco as an unstable coun-

try in need of assistance, while French officials cannot comprehend why a country would actively deny generous offers for humanitarian aid. Though Morocco's reluctance to accept support from foreign countries has diminished their attempts at restoration, these clashing stances represent a fatal flaw in Western interventionism — countries like France believe that they are responsible for forcing their aid onto other countries out of a sense of economic and political superiority.

It is evident that the Moroccan government perceived the act of receiving aid as shameful and pathetic. While it's important for the Moroccan government to adjust its foreign policies to ensure that its citizens receive the necessary resources for relief and restoration, it is imperative that Western countries nurture a foreign aid stance that is not built on a savior complex.

Ada Tiaanworn is a fourth-former from Bangkok, Thailand. She may be reached at atianworn26@choate.edu.



Graphic by Kate Park '27 / The Choate News

HONORING MR. GADOUA’S THREE DECADES AT CHOATE

By **Eric Dubbelde ’26**
Reporter

From physics teacher to basketball coach and House Mentor, Mr. Jonathan Gadoua has contributed to the Choate community in many ways since 1994.

In his 30 years at Choate, Mr. Gadoua has taught all non-astro-physical courses in physics, primarily levels 200, 250, and 650.

Kay Lee ’25, who is in Mr. Gadoua’s Physics 650 class, enjoys his humor in the classroom. “He tells a lot of funny stories,” she said. “He’s one of those teachers who’s good at integrating personal stories that are relevant to the topic we’re learning.”

Lee also appreciates how Mr. Gadoua infuses his creativity into his problems. Instead of the typical rocket or tennis ball as objects in projectile motion, he makes himself the subject of his questions. “Physics can be challenging sometimes, so when the problem is funny, it makes it fun,” she said.

He loves “geeking out” with his 650-level students as much as teaching third-formers in Physics 200 and 250. “I think every kid is curious,” he said.



Physics teacher Mr. Jonathan Gadoua celebrates 30 years at Choate.

He described his younger students as “equally or even more excited” to learn than their older counterparts. He is often amazed by his third- and fourth-form students’ grasp of complicated topics, as well as their high level of motivation and curiosity.

Upon his arrival to Choate, Mr. Gadoua also began coaching Boys’ Thirds Basketball, a position he went on to hold for 25 years. Even now, he still looks back fondly on the time he spent with the team. Although he stepped away from coaching during the pandemic, Mr. Gadoua is still involved in sports on campus by helping keep score at Boys’ Thirds Basketball games and timing meets for the Track & Field teams.

Mr. Gadoua also served as a House Mentor in Hill House before it turned from a boys’ dorm to a co-ed dorm in 2021. “I miss the camaraderie,” Mr. Gadoua said. “That was just something that made a boarding school really special.”

One of his favorite memories in the dorm was when the prefects played a light-hearted prank on their prefectees by

hiding behind doors. It soon became an ongoing activity, with prefectees attempting to scare their prefects in the same way. For the following month, Mr. Gadoua developed a fear of entering his own apartment lest there be kids lying in ambush behind the door.

Even so, he appreciated the time spent with the dorm residents. Whether it was the scaring contest or late-night heart-to-heart conversations, “I knew them as people,” he said.

After meeting students from all around the world at Choate, Mr. Gadoua hopes to spend some time traveling in the future: perhaps to the Happiest Place on Earth.

Carson Ling ’24, one of his prior students, said, “Mr. Gadoua often talked about how he loved Disneyland and how he wanted to visit every Disneyland in the world.”

For now, he will continue teaching the Three Laws of Motion and the Law of Conservation of Mass and Energy, or as he put it, “just taking it year by year.”

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SCHEDULING SORCERY: A LOOK INSIDE THE REGISTRAR’S OFFICE



Registrar Ms. Nancy Matlack helps to build the class schedules of the School’s 850+ students.

By **Rella Wang ’26**
Reporter

Do you go on the student portal and refresh ChoateSIS to check your schedule every day in the last week of the summer? Have you ever wondered how your course requests magically turn into a colorful timetable at the start of the year?

At Choate, all 850+ students have their own unique schedules — each of which has been carefully designed by Ms. Nancy Matlack and other members of the Registrar’s Office.

The scheduling process starts in the spring term of the previous year, when students decide on their course requests with advisers. Once the initial draft has been sent out, students have ample time to make adjustments during the summer or the add/drop period of the first two weeks of every term.

Without the effort put in by the people behind the scenes, the scheduling process would not go nearly as smoothly. According to Ms. Matlack, schedule planning actually starts in the winter of the prior year.

“We start receiving information for staffing, so who we

will have to teach all the classes, which leads to what classes can be offered. In coordination with making the catalogue, we put the classes into the course request,” she said. “In the spring term, after receiving the course requests from students hopefully by June, we have what everyone requested.”

Rather than setting up a timetable first and letting students sign up for what is available, the Registrar’s Office builds schedules based on student requests. To do this, they need to work around various constraints and make sure everything fits together.

The Registrar’s Office goes into overdrive after everyone leaves in May. Using the requests put in by new and returning students, the registrars are able to begin work on scheduling from June to August.

“We take two weeks off and come back in September when adds and drops happen,” said Ms. Matlack.

Although Ms. Matlack is the only current member of the Registrar’s Office, there are usually three registrars during their busiest period of the year when students leave campus for summer break. The workload is evenly distributed across the team.

Ms. Matlack’s role focuses on database building and ensuring that everyone fulfills their graduation requirements. She inputs all the information into the databases, handles transcript requests, and works with the College Counseling Office to verify all course schedules.

Another registrar oversees the general calendar of the year and handles the day-to-day interactions with other offices.

The third registrar collaborates with the other two to incorporate students’ requests while still ensuring that their classes are dynamic in terms of teachers and classmates.

“It’s a giant puzzle. I love that aspect of it,” Ms. Matlack said. Despite the technical nature of the work in the Registrar’s Office, which requires a lot of time on devices and communication via emails, Ms. Matlack loves seeing students coming into the office and talking to her about their schedules face-to-face.

“I love getting to know the kids, not just the names I see all the time,” said Ms. Matlack. “The door is always open.”

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From “Fathers’ and Sons’ Day” to “Family Weekend”: A Brief History

By **Fiona Fu ’25** and **Sophia Liao ’25**
Copy Editors

Generations of students have experienced the excitement of showing their families a glimpse of Choate life since 1928. That fall, the Choate School, a boys’ school at the time, held their first “Fathers’ and Sons’ Day.” As reported by *The Choate News*, the weekend of November 3, 1928 would be “given over entirely to the entertainment of visiting parents” and was “designed to increase the understanding and cooperation between students, fathers, and Faculty.”

In 1941, the Choate School began inviting students’ mothers to campus on a separate date known as “Mothers’ Day.” While Fathers’ Day was typically held in the fall, Mothers’ Day usually happened in conjunction with Prize Day and Commencement in May. There were some years, however, where Choate would conjoin the two in a “Parents’ Weekend.” Or, occasionally, Fathers’ Day would be moved to the spring and include alumni as well, many of whom had children attending the School.

Besides touring campus, sitting in on classes, watching games or performances, and mingling with other parents, Choate’s “Mothers’ Association” and “Fathers’ Association” would also meet during their respective weekends to discuss matters pertaining to the School, such as budgeting.

Records of Rosemary Hall, the girls’ school, are much sparser. However, photos and news clippings affirm that they



A photo from Parents’ Weekend in October 1984.

had their own Mothers’ Day and Fathers’ Day by the 1960s as well. Their Fathers’ Day would coincide with the Hockey Banquet, during which the Rosemary Hall field hockey team would play a game and have a celebratory dinner.

When Rosemary Hall moved from Greenwich to Wallingford in 1971, the schools shared the weekend but held Rosemary Hall’s Fathers’ Day one day before Choate’s. So, while parents were welcome to stay both nights, events would be specific to Rosemary Hall and Choate on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

After Fathers’ Day weekend in 1973, the Administration commenced discussions for future improvements. Some of the questions asked in a memo included how to encourage more parents to visit, and whether or not there

should be an opportunity for fathers of Choate students to meet the fathers of Rosemary Hall students. In 1974, the two schools finally combined their Mothers’ and Fathers’ Days to one Parents’ Weekend in October, and the timing of the event has been fairly consistent since then. It was renamed to Family Weekend last year to be more inclusive to different family structures.

Although the name, schedule, format, and programming of Family Weekend has evolved over the years, many hallmarks of the event have remained consistent. For example, parents have always been invited to attend their children’s classes and see the teachers work their magic firsthand. In addition, Choate’s sports teams, particularly football, have always played major games during Family Weekend.



A photo from Parents’ Weekend, dated 1976.

One of the most important features of Family Weekend are the parent-teacher conferences, an opportunity for parents to meet each of their children’s teachers one-on-one. This scheduled practice only began in 1993 — prior to that, individual conferences were not scheduled into the weekend’s programming, and parents could only speak to teachers briefly by walking into their department buildings without a streamlined booking system.

With the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021, the organization of Family Weekend was dramatically shifted. Instead of holding parent-teacher conferences on campus, families resorted to using Zoom to connect with teachers, advisers, and coaches. While the initial purpose of holding conferences on Zoom was to safeguard the health of the community, it

has evolved to become a convenient and inclusive way to make conferences accessible to families that cannot come in-person.

“As a teacher, it is easier to ensure I can connect with every family no matter how far away they live,” Humanities teacher Mr. Jim Davidson said. “For international families in particular, who feel it’s really difficult to come for just a few days, Zoom really helps them out.”

Even as classes have returned to being in-person, Choate has continued to hold parent-teacher conferences virtually. Last year, parents could sign up for virtual parent-teacher conferences on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. However, this year, conference opportunities have expanded to offer times from Monday through Thursday, in both the morning and evening. This allows families

in different time zones or with other scheduling conflicts to find a suitable time to connect with faculty, coaches, and advisers.

Reflecting on his 48 years at Choate, Mr. Davidson recalls one particular Family Weekend when John Madden, a Super-Bowl-winning football coach for the Oakland Raiders, came to visit his son Joe Madden ’85.

“He came and everybody was all agog. But he just said, ‘I’m here to watch Joe. Let’s turn our attention to the team,’” Mr. Davidson recounted. “Even though a lot of parents wanted a picture taken with him — and he was gracious — he deflected it. It was about watching his kids ... He just wanted to know what his kids’ experience was.”

Family Weekend also highlights the interconnectedness of the Choate community, particularly for veteran teachers who have the opportunity to reconnect with old students unexpectedly.

“I’ve been here long enough that some parents that I’m seeing were students of mine,” said Humanities teacher Mr. Ned Gallagher, who has taught at Choate for 36 years. “They’ll come in, they’ll stop by my office and say hi, and it’s always a fun chance to just reconnect with people that I knew back then.”

Despite the many forms Family Weekend has taken on in the past century, its intent has always been clear: to give parents and families a chance to connect with the thriving community at Choate.

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PMAC INSTALLATION FEATURES SYRIAN-AMERICAN ARTIST



Photos by Nicha Tongdee '26 /The Choate News

Mr. Mohamad Hafez’s “UNPACKED: Refugee Baggage” collection showcases surreal Middle Eastern landscapes. His work is displayed in the Paul Mellon Arts Center until November 3.

By **Leilani Gao '26**
Reporter

Featured on the *National Public Radio*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The New Yorker*, internationally acclaimed artist and architect Mr. Mohamad Hafez’s art is on display in Choate’s Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC), where it will remain until its closing reception on November 3.

The exhibited artwork is from the “UNPACKED: Refugee Baggage” collection. Through a blend of found objects, paint, and scrap metal, Mr. Hafez crafted visual

landscapes that tell the stories of refugees who escaped war-torn regions of the Middle East.

Mr. Hafez described his art as a “self-taught artistic expression regarding the tools and methodology.” The years he spent as an architecture student now play an important role in his modeling work.

Coming to the U.S. as an international student from Syria and Saudi Arabia, Mr. Hafez’s cultural identity has influenced his artwork. “My background as an Arab-Muslim artist shows up in my art through calligraphy and use of Islamic design, motifs,

and patterns,” Mr. Hafez said. “[It’s] just brainstorming for a long time and looking at a lot of photos of old Damascus, where I come from. And then I start modeling.”

Art teacher Mr. Aaron Sober led the process of putting together the installation and contacting Mr. Hafez. He appreciated Mr. Hafez’s ability to communicate personal, political, and economic narratives through an artistic medium. “I have been an artist for all my life now, and I believe in the power of creativity. It’s a great tool for understanding the world,” he said.

Visual artist Dana Chung ’26 was inspired after seeing Mr. Hafez’s work on display. “You see the cross-cultural dimensions of street art intertwined with sculptural work through his cultural background,” she said.

Mr. Sober, on the other hand, admired the juxtaposing nature of Mr. Hafez’s collection. “His work fuses domestic scenes and situations, like a breakfast table set in the morning, with a huge amount of disruption and violence,” he said. “I think that the dissonance between the very domestic, comforting, family situations and a total upheaval is really interesting.”

One of Mr. Hafez’s more abstract pieces caught the eye of Arts Concentration student Katherine Chong ’25. “Compared to the other hyperrealistic dioramas of war-torn regions, it was a dystopian city built of little wires, bricks, and blocks,” she said. “It was touching more on the idea of home and belonging, and I was really drawn to it.”

In November, Chong and her fellow Arts Concentration classmates will visit Mr. Hafez’s studio in New Haven. There, they will create their own projects using found objects, which will be featured in the PMAC Gallery alongside Mr. Hafez’s work. They will also stop for a bite at Mr. Hafez’s Pistachio Cafe, which features Middle Eastern and Mediterranean drinks and desserts.

By reflecting on and exploring his past experiences, Mr. Hafez has found a unique way to tell his story through art. Through Mr. Hafez’s display, Mr. Sober hopes students can learn “how art can communicate the complex reality of the human condition in a way that no other subject can.”

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Al Firdaus Brings Multicultural Music and Harmonies to Choate

By **Dana Tan '25**
Reporter

“I felt like the music belonged in a movie. It was so alive,” Mariana Verdi ’25 said after watching the Al Firdaus Ensemble’s performance at Choate’s Andrew Mellon Library on October 2. Hailing from Granada, Spain, the ensemble was invited to perform a medley of original and cover songs for International Education Week.

Founded in 2012 by Mr. Ali Keeler, the Al Firdaus Ensemble consists of musicians from England, Spain, and Morocco. The members’ diverse musical and cultural backgrounds contribute to their distinctive style of music. According to the band’s percussionist, Mr. Muhammad Domínguez, they make use of elements from Celtic, Andalusian, Turkish, Arabic, and Levant cultures to arrange music.

“As someone who plays European classical music, it was really cool to look at how the ensemble used different musical textures and harmonies,” Peyton Li ’25 said.

To create these unique sounds, the ensemble uses a variety of instruments from the East and West. Choate students in language and Humanities classes had the opportunity to learn more about these diverse musical traditions in masterclasses conducted by the ensemble on October 2 and 3.

Steven Kee ’27 was introduced to the ensemble’s instruments and learned a simple rhythm on the drums during his Arabic class. For him, the most memorable instrument was the qanun, a string instrument that resembles a Persian harp.

According to Kee, a qanun can produce sounds with nine to twelve microtones, allowing for a more diversified and mystical sound as compared to semitones. “As a freshman learning Arabic for the first time, their masterclass was a great insight into what Arab culture is like,” Kee said.

Many of the ensemble’s song lyrics follow the Sufi tradition, with some original compositions and some poetry from Sufi masters in the 10th-12th centuries. “Sufi tradition is based on the spiritual deeper meanings of the Islamic religion,” Mr. Domínguez said. “Its central theme is focused on the improvement of human character and the acknowledgement of the human spiritual essence in relation to the divine.”

One of the pieces the ensemble performed was a poem by an Andalusian Sufi poet from the 13th century. Mr. Keeler used this poem to highlight the group’s larger message about sharing one God regardless of different cultures or names and promoting harmony. This piece was Spanish teacher Ms. Le’ah Griggs’s favorite: “I really resonated with the lyrics promoting love, togetherness, and acceptance,” she said.

Arabic teacher Mr. Yassine Benzinane, who met and fell in love with the work and values of the ensemble in Granada nine years ago, hoped that students would be able to see the musicians’ unique focus on the spirit of *convivencia*.

Convivencia is a Spanish word that refers to the peaceful coexistence of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities in medieval Spain. “I think that the spirit of *convivencia* is really lacking in our political climate and extremely polarized society today,” Mr. Benzanine said. “It is amazing to have them use music to show the beautiful harmony amongst differences.”

This harmony is reflected in their use of fusion in both music and lyric composition. Many students taking Spanish, French, and Arabic participated in the masterclass because the ensemble performed songs in all three languages. “It was amazing to see how many different students speak different languages,” Mr. Domínguez commented.

Attendee Maya Bashawaty ’24 said, “It was very interesting to see how both Spanish and Arabic music influenced their work.”

Zaki Shamsi ’26 agreed, saying, “This performance really struck down some of the common stereotypes of instruments and sounds that are associated with Arabic and Middle Eastern music.”

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Photo by Zoie Wang '26 /The Choate News

Al Firdaus Ensemble plays a performances for the Choate community.

CHOATE TEACHERS UNVEIL MUSICAL TALENTS



Photos courtesy of Reverend Aaron Rathbun

Reverend Aaron Rathbun playing guitar in high school (left). He plays at School Meeting (right) 22 years later.

By **Grace LaPlaca '25**
Copy Editor

Choate is home to a myriad of talented musicians. However, this talent is not confined to just students and the Music Department; many non-music faculty members have extensive musical backgrounds. From being high school rock band members to competitive pianists, five teachers recounted their past experiences as musicians and spoke on the continued influence of music on their lives on campus.

Mr. Morgan Harris

Music has played many roles in the life of Humanities teacher Mr. Morgan Harris. An experienced musician, Mr. Harris’s first exposure to instruments was through piano lessons at age nine. Throughout high school and college, his skillset expanded to include the bass, guitar, mandolin, banjo, drums, and singing.

His experience attending transcendent music performances during and after college was a primary source of inspiration for his inclusion of music in both his Moral Reasoning and Spiritual Journeys classes. He often begins class by playing a song thematically related to the content and then discusses it with students.

“It helps us sync up our energies together and go through [a] communal experience that touches on aspects of our humanity that go beyond merely the intellect,” he said.

Mr. Joe Lampe

Humanities teacher Mr. Joe Lampe, who played both the piano and the tuba throughout his childhood, primarily specializes in choral music and singing. While at Wesleyan University, Mr. Lampe was a member of the

Wesleyan Spirits acapella group, as well as a professional vocal group, The Vineyard Sound.

A film major, Mr. Lampe worked in the entertainment industry in New York after graduation while also singing with an acapella group (who sang the national anthem at a New York Mets game in Shea Stadium, a highlight of Mr. Lampe’s choral career). With a strong love for music, Mr. Lampe continues to be involved in the arts at Choate through taking guitar lessons and jamming with Mr. Harris.

Reverend Aaron Rathbun

Like Mr. Lampe and Mr. Harris, Reverend Aaron Rathbun started his musical career with childhood piano lessons. Through these lessons, he discovered his ability to play by ear.

In high school, he learned how to play the guitar and sang in his school choir. Rev. Rathbun played in two bands: a metal band called Fleshwound and an emo band called When Heroes Fall.

On campus, he plays the guitar with Choate’s music faculty and experiments with a multi-effects pedal at home. On December 6, 2022, he played guitar at School Meeting in a band with Mr. Harris and two other students. Occasionally, he also plays songs related to the curriculum in classes to prompt further class discussion on the topic.

Mr. Yassine Benzinane

Mr. Yassine Benzinane is a self-taught musician. He grew up playing the guitar, learning styles derived from Spanish flamenco, North African, and Middle Eastern music.

In his Arabic classes, he introduces his students to both the guitar and drums as well as different styles of music and dance.

Eventually, he assigns the class a task to create their own songs and dances together. On occasion, the students will perform their original pieces at School Meetings. Beyond pushing students out of their comfort zones, these performances also expose the greater Choate community to cultures they may not be familiar with. “It’s a full immersion into the culture,” he said.

Dr. Viva Zhao

When Dr. Viva Zhao was one-and-a-half years old, her parents noticed that she had perfect pitch. She would often tap her fingers or make a beat with her chopsticks at dinner, which prompted her family to sign her up for piano lessons at age five.

Throughout her childhood, she played piano competitively, always placing within the top three. When she moved from Canada to the U.S. in high school, she transitioned from competitive piano to solo recitals. “[The recitals] were pure enjoyment,” she said.

In college, Dr. Zhao was a double major in neuroscience and music at the University of Rochester and the Eastman School of Music. While it is difficult to find time to practice in her everyday life now, she hopes to perform again one day in a more relaxed environment.

These teachers demonstrate the many ways a love for music can manifest in one’s life as both a medium for learning and a passionate hobby. The ethos exemplified by these talented faculty members reflects the interdisciplinary spirit of Choate’s curriculum and student body.

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UPCOMING

GAMES

10/21

Choate Fall Record

47 - 23 - 1

Varsity Games

Girls' Soccer

vs. Hotchkiss @ 2:30 P.M.

Boys' Cross Country

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:00 P.M.

Football

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:00 P.M.

Girls' Volleyball

vs. Hotchkiss, @ 3:30 P.M.

Boys' Water Polo

vs. CT Premiere @ 3:30 P.M.

Girls' Field Hockey

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:30 P.M.

Girls' Cross Country

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:30 P.M.

Boys' Soccer

vs. Hotchkiss @ 4:30 P.M.

J.V. Games

Girls' Volleyball

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:30 P.M.

Girls' Soccer

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:30 P.M.

Boys' Soccer

vs. Hotchkiss @ 3:30 P.M.

SENIOR SOCCER: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

By Reinah Lee '26

Copy Editor

In the midst of college apps, many sixth-form students gravitate towards Senior Soccer for their fall term sport. A popular pick, Senior Soccer is coached by French teacher Dr. Katie Jewett as well as English teachers Mr. John Cobb and Ms. Megan Shea on the soccer field between Ayres-Yankus Field and Horsebarn Field.

Senior Soccer began at The Choate School during the pre-consolidation days of The Choate School and Rosemary Hall, between 1972-1978. In its early days, they would compete against Senior Soccer teams from nearby schools such as Avon Old Farms and Deerfield Academy.

Now, with 50 students, the program has become a vibrant hub of teamwork and camaraderie, reflecting the spirit of the senior class.

Practice occurs every Monday through Thursday. The coaches divide players into three new teams each week based on experience levels to foster connections between players while maintaining balanced teams. Each team plays the other two teams twice, for a total of about six 8-10 minute scrimmages per practice.



Photo by Nicha Tongdee '26/The Choate News

Chloe Benson '24, Cassatt Boatwright '24, and Dr. Katie Jewett pose at practice.

Another fun feature of Senior Soccer is their unique weekly rituals. On Tattoosday (Tattoo Tuesday), everyone gets a temporary tattoo following a theme, such as dinosaurs or Lilo & Stitch. The next day, players dress up according to another theme, such as pajamas or fun socks, for Wacky Wednesday.

Thursdays are dedicated to Trivia Thursday, when each of the three teams are tasked with answering 10 trivia questions outside of practice. The team with the highest score wins a baked good from the coaches. Finally, The Eye of the Tiger is a weekly honor voted on by all the players and awarded to two people who em-

body what Senior Soccer is about: community and inclusion.

"We're all about fun. We're also all about generous play, making sure that people are passing to each other, and not all about the glory. The glory comes communally," Dr. Jewett said.

Relatively new to coaching despite her 17 years at the School, Dr. Jewett joined the coaching team in 2017 and currently manages warm-ups. Her favorite Senior Soccer tradition is when students gather for one last game at sunrise on graduation morning.

Mr. Cobb has coached Senior Soccer since 1999 and views the activity as "more of a lifestyle choice

than a sport." He understands the pressures of senior year and aims to make it an "oasis from the craziness" and let students be kids again. "It's a place where we can all let down our guard a bit," he said.

Nick Aldrich '24 appreciates the laid-back nature of the sport. "I was a little worried you would go in, and they would spend half the season teaching you how to play soccer, but I walked in the first day, [and] we were immediately just playing."

Having coached Senior Soccer for 10 years, Ms. Shea highlighted the sport's diversity, noting the blend of genders and abilities. "We have lots of kids who have played

soccer before, but we also have kids who haven't, and yet they're all out there spirited, playing together," she said.

Ethan Zhang '24, previously on Boys' Thirds Soccer, praised Senior Soccer for its ability to provide an escape from academic stress. "It's a really nice break between schoolwork and college applications," Zhang said. "Everyone has fun. That's the end goal of the sport, for everyone to enjoy their afternoon, enjoy being around each other, and just kick the ball around."

For Cassatt Boatwright '24, Senior Soccer was a gateway to bond with peers and partake in iconic events, such as the Deerfield Day pep rally and the student-faculty game during the final practice of the year. "I really want to connect with the rest of my grade in ways that I haven't before," she said.

Whether it's getting dinosaur tattoos or having a laugh during stretches, Senior Soccer allows the soon-to-be-graduates to relieve stress, bond with their class, and get some exercise.

"It's a joy watching the seniors bond and enjoy each other's company," Ms. Shea said.

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FOR THE LOVE OF HOCKEY

WITH COACH MCGEE



Photo courtesy of www.choate.edu

Coach Grace McGee fosters team spirit on the field hockey team.

By Gisele Yeung '27

Reporter

Coach Grace McGee balances multiple responsibilities on campus. She is the Girls' Varsity Field Hockey Head Coach and Senior Associate Director of Admissions. In addition, she serves as an adviser and sits on several committees, including the Community Service Advisory.

Coach McGee grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where the National Field Hockey Team Training Center is located. "As a kid, I had my eyes wide open to a lot of high level play, and I just loved the sport," she said.

She played throughout middle school and high school, winning the National Field Hockey Festival with her club team in high school.

As a recruited athlete and team captain at Washington and Lee University, Coach McGee played midfield and defense and was recognized as a scholar athlete and Most Valued Player for the defensive side of her team. One of her proudest moments was successfully shooting a stroke (penalty shot) in college.

"It's a high pressure situation, and as a defender and midfielder, [I] don't have as many shooting opportunities, so that was pretty awesome," she said.

After college, Coach McGee did color commentary, providing analysis and background information for collegiate field hockey games. She trained as a coach with the U.S.A. Field Hockey Coach Education and Learning Program, and officially began coaching when she came to Choate in 2015.

Last summer, Coach McGee competed in a National Adult

Club League tournament. "I really didn't want to let field hockey out of my life," she said, "so I did a lot of different things to try to stay engaged in this sport."

On the field at Choate, Coach McGee emphasizes communication. "We talk about exactly what kind of words to use. We set norms within the team about how we're going to talk to each other, which has to do with providing positive words and constructive feedback," she explained.

Girls' Varsity Field Hockey member Cora Slowe '26 appreciates Coach McGee's steadfast support. Once, in the middle of a game, Slowe's stick split down the side. "She helped me get a stick from the X [Worthington Johnson Athletics Center] in lightning speed," she said. "She was really there for me because I was a little panicked."

Co-Captain Bladen Hawthornthwaite '24 has known Coach McGee for four years. "She's pushed my physical and mental limits to places I never thought I'd go before," she said. "She taught me the extent to which I can push myself, and you can't always see that without another person."

Coach McGee takes great pride in helping players grow through sports. "Sports are fun. It's a joy and a way to represent the school. It's leadership and strength, which is a big thing, especially for female athletes," she said. "There's a sense of pride that comes with being part of the growth trajectory of each athlete."

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WJAC Gets a Summer

Roof Makeover

By Proud Tangkaravakoon '27

Reporter

This summer, the roof of the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center (WJAC) received a revamp. The previous 30-year-old paneling that had begun deteriorating and developing leaks has now been replaced with insulated and translucent panels.

The School made the decision to use insulated translucent panels over glass ones with the goal of sustainability in mind. "The reason that it is chosen over glass is that it's more energy efficient," Director of Facilities Mr. Ben Szalewicz explained. "It diffuses the light, so it gives you more even light in the court, as opposed to blasting it directly from the sunlight."

This was an improvement from last year. Prior to this summer's renovations, the Tartan Court received very little natural light, most of which was very dingy and yellow. "It was past its useful life, so [it] was beginning to be expensive to maintain," Mr. Szalewicz said.

During the construction process, the panels were removed one-by-one, which left holes in

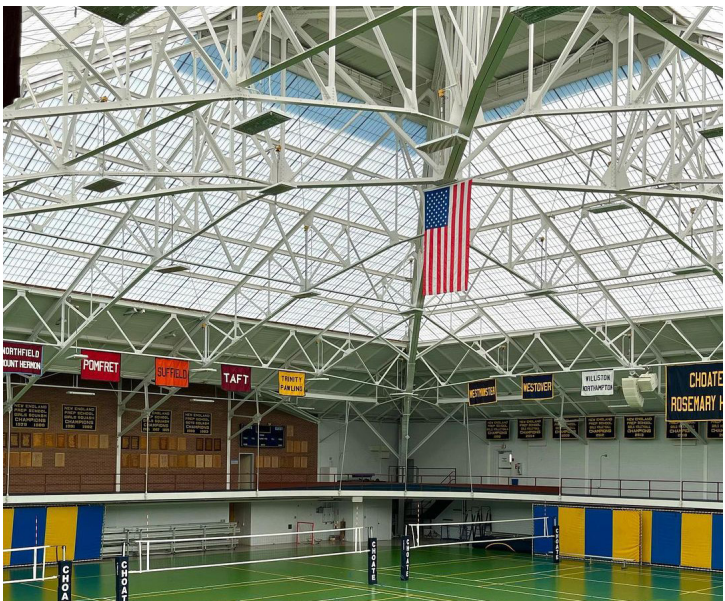


Photo courtesy of @choateathletics Instagram

Sunlight streams through the new WJAC roof.

the roof. And so, the facilities team had to ensure that they were replacing as many panels as they were taking apart each day in the event of a storm.

The project officially began in 2022, but supply chain issues caused delays with construction until after the Class of 2023's commencement. Choate's Project Manager Mr. Tom Hinde led the facilities team in the undertaking alongside New Hav-

en-based contractors at the Bab-bidge Construction Company.

"For the most part, it was a pretty straightforward project and stayed on budget and on schedule," Mr. Szalewicz said. Athletic teams that train in the WJAC's Tartan Courts will now enjoy a better quality of light.

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STUDENT SUMMIT

BUILDS SPORTSMANSHIP

By Roshan Desai '26

Reporter

Nine Wild Boars and Assitant Athletic Director Mr. Nolan Silbernagel represented Choate at the inaugural Founders League Student Summit, hosted by Miss Porter's School, on Sunday, September 24.

"The whole idea was to come together and learn about leadership and building a healthy, competitive spirit amongst the schools," Mr. Silbernagel said.

Students began the day crafting a short pitch explaining how their school's athletics program was unique and enjoyable.

Next, Quinnipiac University sports psychologist Dr. Devin Markle lectured on sportsmanship. "The sports psychology aspect was beneficial for the athletes in the room to learn the important factors of how to men-



Photo courtesy of @choateathletics Instagram

Students represent Choate at the Founder's League Student Summit.

tally prepare for games and how to mentally prepare to lead a team," Mr. Silbernagel said.

Then, students discussed conflict resolution scenarios with peers from other schools. "My scenario was what you should do if people from your school are chirping at [insulting] the referee," President of the Student Athletic Advisory Committee Virginia Nelson '25 said. "We talked about how it shouldn't affect your game, and that we should be leaders and

embody good attitudes," Finally, participants made posters of 10 new principles the Founder's League should have.

Cross Country Captain John Reach '24 appreciated attending the summit. "It was a great opportunity to share ideas about how we can best help our teams grow. And I'm glad to be able to represent Choate," he said.

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