



# THE CHOATE NEWS

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## ALL SMILES FOR DR. LAURIE SANTOS



Photo by Ramsey Scott '23/The Choate News

Dr. Laurie Santos discusses tips to restore happiness in 2022.

By **Tyler Kuo '23**  
Copy Editor

Dr. Laurie Santos took the Colony Hall stage on December 6 as this year's Phillips Speaker to share her expertise on how to be "happier." Dr. Santos is a professor of psychology and cognitive science at Yale University whose course, Psychology and the Good Life, became the most popular course in the school's history. The speech focused on ten researched-backed tips as Dr. San-

tos indulged students and faculty in the many ways they can alleviate the stress and anxiety they experience throughout the school year.

Dr. Santos, who specializes as a cognitive psychologist and technician, conducts research comparing behaviors between humans and animals. While serving as the head of Silliman College at Yale, she shifted from her research to finishing her course after witnessing firsthand the mental health crisis of the University's students. She felt a

responsibility to use her scientific expertise to devise mundane ways anyone, in particular, her often melancholy Yale students, can become happier individuals.

According to Nina Kulkarni '23, who introduced Dr. Santos on Tuesday night, "[The psychology of happiness] is her main research. She mainly is a cogno-psychologist, so she is researching the human mind, what makes it unique, and comparing it to primate psychology and canine psychology."

Dr. Santos abbreviated her university course into a one-hour

lecture, creating a list of the 10 strongest tips for becoming happier in 2022. Her presentation began by addressing the multitude of factors causing unhappiness, including isolation from an unprecedented pandemic, an unstable economy, and the volatile development of digital media.

Through example studies, psychological correlations, and relatable examples, Dr. Santos demonstrated why each of her insights is so critical to achieving and maintaining one's happiness. Shared data showed that 87% of students feel overwhelmed and 12% have seriously considered harming themselves, which demonstrated the dire need for a course centered around improving well-being.

From the importance of social interaction to savoring the present moment, Dr. Santos's remarks were both digestible and impactful. She also stressed the importance of healthy habits to succeed in both professional and academic environments, such as preserving self-compassion and finding true fun.

For Spanish teacher Ms. Azucena Alvarez-Alonso, that fun is dancing. "It is infinite. You can always dance to a new song. You can always learn a new type of dance. You can always make a mistake, and you know it doesn't

matter because you have fun. There is no consequence."

Dr. Santos's tips were specifically designed so that anyone, anywhere can do it.

Elizabeth Burgstahler '26 noted, "I took her class during Covid when I was really stressed, and hearing it again made me realize how much I've grown emotionally. We are certainly an overworked crowd that desperately needs these tips."

Some students in the crowd shared the sentiment of having existing knowledge of the advice Dr. Santos provided. To that, she said, "although it may be common wisdom, it is not common practice." Many students understand the importance of expressing gratitude for instance, yet few perform it.

Another sentiment shared among the students was that Dr. Santos's talk was too broad. Many would have liked for her to detail practical applications of her advice in environments such as Choate, where expectations and pressures inhibit students' abilities to balance healthy habits with school work. Savannah Emory '26 felt that the talk was "useful for someone who is already in a good mental state," while Ruby Cameron '23 shared that some of her peers who are neurodivergent or diagnosed with men-

tal illness found that Dr. Santos's tips are more challenging to practice.

Dr. Santos's talk even has effects beyond that Tuesday evening. "We are looking into the idea of collaborating with Dr. Santos to revamp the wellness curriculum at Choate," said Ms. Alexandra Copeland, the Associate Dean of Students for Health and Wellness. "Sometimes people attribute happiness to external factors, but I think a large part of it is internal and about the strategies you can do no matter how much time you have. Are you going to go on TikTok or write in your gratitude journal for five minutes?"

In busy and stressful environments like Choate, students, faculty, and staff alike should remember the importance of preserving their personal happiness. That's what makes Dr. Santos's talk so important. For Zoëy Schamis '26, she plans to take the time to write down things that she's grateful for at the end of every day. When reflecting on the lecture, she says, "My biggest takeaway from the lecture is that happiness is what you make it. You cannot wait for happiness, you have to create it yourself."

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## Student Activities Get Revitalized

By **Amelia Sipkin '25**  
Copy Editor

Now that Covid-19 restrictions have come to a near close, the Student Activities Center (SAC) has been ramping up the quality and quantity of their events, reintroducing trips, dances, and adding a wide array of new events to the table.

In its first year as an official student organization, SCOPE (Student Committee of Programming and Engagement) has taken the SAC by storm. The initiation of this committee has opened doors for student input in the structuring and planning of downtime activities on campus.

The goal of SAC director Ms. Alexandra Long and SCOPE is to always have options for students to unwind. "I never want to hear that there's nothing to do," said Ms. Long. SCOPE Event Chair Noah McBride '23 also explained that for this reason precisely, "the schedule is so jam packed." The Committee always works to create events with an atmosphere that provides a small escape for students from school stresses and academic life. When asked about their system for planning the Holiday Ball and Last Hurrah, McBride explained that they strive to "create an atmosphere that allows students to feel like they're in a new space, not just the dining hall."

McBride believes that increased presence of student input through SCOPE in the planning of events has improved their success. "With a more dedicated committee and SCOPE, there's more student input within these events that help shape which events we do," he said. The range and creativity of the events has also grown dramatically since previous years. "We have a lot more members on board with



Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

different opinions, different ideas," said SCOPE President Annika Lee '23. Innovation amongst the SAC is also a result of restriction on typical activities brought about by Covid-19. "We've also developed creative ways to have events during Covid, and those kind of stuck, and have been reintroduced this year," McBride stated.

Students were ecstatic for the coveted return of the Holiday Ball. Not only was this the first HolBall since 2019, but also the first to not require an entrance fee. Up until this year, events such as trips to NYC, State Fairs, attendance to Harvest Fest, and even the Holiday Ball, all cost each student \$15-20. This year, these fees have been waived completely. "I just felt that it was important for our students to be able to go and not have to worry about finding the money for a ticket. I'm really just trying to bring the fun back, and I think if I offer free events, that's what's gonna get kids to come," said Ms. Long.

Additionally, even smaller scale events such as making stuffed animals, cookie decorating, and movie nights, have become increasingly popular. "The biggest challenge this year

is that more students are attending our events ... for example, when I planned the pancake bar, we ran out of food in fifteen minutes," Ms. Long noted.

More events that will be returning this year include Broomball (Ms. Long's favorite), which is a game on the ice rink with sticks, a ball, and sneakers, and the Lip sync battle, a student idea that premiered last year and achieved astounding success. Lee would also like to bring back some of her favorite events from her freshman year. "The Carnival...there was a Ferris wheel and a bunch of food trucks. It was really fun but definitely very costly." According to McBride, a potential Masquerade Ball may also be in the works.

Moreover, Ms. Long is constantly on the hunt for new ideas and is looking to clubs for new initiatives. "I'd love for clubs to embrace their mission statement and their theme to come up with new ideas that aren't just movie showings," she said. "So, if students have ideas or suggestions, my door's always open and I would love to hear them."

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## SPREADING HOLIDAY SPIRIT

By **Laya Raj '24**  
Copy Editor

This holiday season, the Choate community had an opportunity to come together in the spirit of giving back to those in need through a series of holiday donation drives. These drives were organized by Community Service Director Ms. Melissa Koomson and students from the Community Service Club. Although there have been donation drives for organizations such as Toys for Tots in the past, this is the first time that Choate conducted drives for different foundations for each form and the faculty body. The donation drives were announced during the last School Meeting of fall term and the deadline for donations was Thursday, December 15.

The idea for this event came to Ms. Koomson after receiving notifications from several foundations that they were looking for donations this holiday season. "It just seemed like this was a good opportunity for us to connect with each of the forms while also responding to the need that the organizations had," said Ms. Koomson. She chose five different organizations for donation drives and worked with different student community service organizations to coordinate the event.

Each form was assigned a different donation drive. Third-formers were asked to bring non-perishable foods and hygiene products for the Wallingford Emergency Shelter. Ms. Koomson found that Choate Aids Immigrants and Refugees (CAIR) would be a perfect fit to help organize the fourth-form's donation drive for a Ukrainian Relief foundation at a New Haven based church. This drive was for soup packets and other high protein meals such as

quaker oats because they could be prepared with hot water and the organization already sent over necessary resources. "I think it's a really brilliant solution because all that's needed is hot water, and soup packets are very compact, so they should be easy to get there," added Ms. Koomson.

Zainab Khokha '24, a member of the Community Service Club and co-leader of The Mentorship Project assisted in the organization of the fifth-form's drive for Gleanings Lovingly Offered in Wallingford (GLOW), a Wallingford based food pantry. Brooks Roach '23, the project leader for Choate Veterans Support Group, was assigned to the sixth-form drive for the Marine Corps's sponsored foundation, Toys for Tots. Lastly, faculty and staff were asked to bring gently used clothing for Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS).

The biggest challenge with organizing donation drives at Choate has been getting the Choate student body to contribute. There was talk to make these drives a competition between the forms to publicize the event but Ms. Koomson noted, "we're so focused on always having competitions, and it's really important that we just do what we need to do and there's no reward other than, you know, you're doing something that's needed." With Choate being such a privileged community, it is important that the student body is proactive about contributing to community service projects like donation drives.

Although buying items for donation drives may seem like a hassle for boarders, placing an online order for extra merchandise is well worth the effort given how much these contributions

help those in need. Given the rising inflation during this holiday season, many families are struggling to make ends meet, so it is important that the school community "shows solidarity and support for the surrounding towns and people because it all comes back to humanity," said Ms. Koomson. "I know that kids have the ability to donate so I hope they do that in the spirit of the holidays," said Owen Sessine '25, a co-leader of CAIR.

In the future, Ms. Koomson hopes to conduct more donation drives to continue giving back to the Wallingford community and other communities around the world. Donating to these foundations after the holiday season can even prove to be more helpful since there is usually an influx of donations at the end of the year. The Mentorship Project, a new initiative under the Community Service Club, plans on holding book donation drives to aid their efforts in providing educational and emotional support for children. "We're really excited to expand the outreach of The Mentorship Project and run drives for textbooks and school supplies," said Ava McClatchie '24, a co-leader of the project.

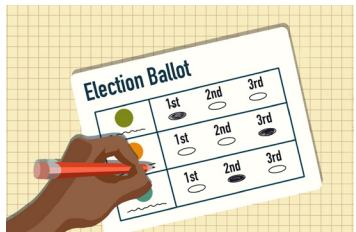
In the coming months the Choate student body will likely have other opportunities to contribute to donation drives as more community members become involved in service. "I'm hoping that, after this year, people will see the collection drives in a new and different light and that in years to come we can take flight with all of this, and it could really become a big thing," said Ms. Koomson.

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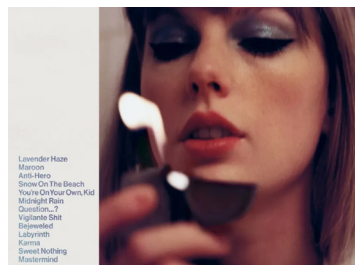
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## FLASHBACK TO THE FALL

## ROE V. WADE: A MULTIFACETED PANEL



Photo by Ramsey Scott '23/The Choate News

Dr. Jerome Adams, Professor Samira Mehta, and Professor Katie Kraschel discuss the implications of overturning Roe v. Wade.

By **Erin Li '24**  
Copy Editor

The Choate community gathered for a panel discussion titled “Deepening Understanding Through Intersectional Dialogue: A Panel on Roe v. Wade Beyond Pro-Life/Pro-Choice,” on November 4. The panel featured three expert panelists in the respective fields of law, religion, and healthcare: Professor Katie Kraschel, Professor Samira Mehta, and Dr. Jerome Adams.

Dr. Katie Kraschel, a professor at Yale Law School specializing in reproductive rights and justice, spoke on the overturning of Roe v. Wade from a constitutional standpoint.

She gave insight into the legal ramifications of the overturning of Roe v. Wade and its effects on the legal healthcare field, emphasizing that there were not only effects on women but also other groups, including healthcare professionals and lawyers.

Dr. Kraschel highlighted the widespread effects of this legal turn, extending beyond just Roe v. Wade to consequences on related laws. Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers shared, “Professor Kraschel did an excellent job of giving a historical overview of some of the key litigation around abortion and what legal ramifications of the overturning of Roe v. Wade could also mean for other civil rights-related litigation.”

Dr. Samira Mehta is a professor of women and gender

studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder and focuses on the intersectionality of religion, culture, and gender, in addition to the politics of family life and reproduction. Her work discusses the role of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant voices on the topic of contraception.

During her segment, Dr. Mehta underscored the widely diverse perspectives of different religions. “It’s fascinating to see how different religious beliefs can make this topic so complicated,” said Cassatt Boatwright ’24.

Dr. Mehta discussed how different interpretations of religious texts can lead to a spectrum of conclusions on the question of when life begins, explaining that there is a wide variety of religious perspectives on the topic of abortion.

Dr. Jerome Adams was the 20th surgeon general of the United States and also served as Indiana State Health Commissioner prior to his appointment as the U.S. Surgeon General. He is currently a Presidential Fellow and the Executive Director of Health Equity Initiatives at Purdue University.

Dr. Adams discussed the health implications revolving around the overturning of Roe v. Wade, explaining the many medical reasons as to why an abortion might be necessary.

Arin Tongdee ’23 said, “I was surprised to learn that about 10-20% of women have miscarriages. It was really interesting to hear

about all the medical procedures and potential health complications that would require an abortion.”

Dr. Adams additionally highlighted the healthcare equity issues revolving around abortions. Boatwright shared, “I learned about how minority groups are more likely to get abortions and how the majority of lawmakers are men who cannot make informed decisions about women’s bodies.” There are many complex nuances around the topic of abortion and morality, especially on viable pregnancies and protecting the safety of the mother.

Although there was varied perspectives and knowledge from each expert, each contributed to a comprehensive and nuanced discussion on the complex topic. Students appreciated the opportunity to gain a more well-rounded perspective on a topic rarely covered in traditional academic settings and to learn about contemporary issues.

Johan Shattuck ’23 reflected, “I think having that panel for the entire student body, just to keep us educated and make sure we are really understanding the entirety of the situation is super important. It was a really great conversation to have and to learn about the topic from different viewpoints that I was unaware of before.”

Other students also enjoyed the topic of the discussion and its applicability to current events. Tongdee said, “I think it was a great way for them to

expand the topics that they’re talking about with this panel focusing on current things that are happening right now. Choate is committed to us learning about contemporary issues and cares about education on current topics on a national scale.”

Overall, students found the panel useful in learning about different aspects of the topic of which they were unfamiliar with previously. Boatwright noted, “I’ve heard a lot about it on the news, but I’ve never really researched it deeply. It was interesting to see that the topic of abortion is so complicated and involves a wide variety of perspectives and concerns with health, morality, and equity.”

As an institution striving to create more well-rounded and informed perspectives within the student body, this panel on a current and controversial issue provided great insight into the complexity and nuance of the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Dr. Rachel Myers reiterated, “The overturning of Roe v. Wade is complex to understand. It’s not simply about pro-Choice or pro-Life, and it aligns with our School mission and values. This panel provided a space for diverse perspectives, academic inquiry and expertise sharing, and a program that will hopefully help prepare our students and adults for an ever-changing world ahead.”

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## 2022 STUDENT LECTURE SERIES

By **Eva Li '24**  
Copy Editor

The Science Research Program (SRP), one of Choate’s seven signature programs, presented its annual Student Lecture Series (SLS) on November 9 and 10 that summarizes the research projects carried out by 16 sixth-form participants. Held simultaneously in the Elman and Getz Auditoriums, the 15-minute presentations are followed by a brief Q&A session.

Split into two sections — biological sciences and quantitative sciences — SRP is a rigorous experience that drives students to explore their area of interest in a professional environment. The four-term course sequence begins in junior fall, where students write summaries on scientific writing of interest and reach out to principal investigators to find research internship opportunities that will take place over the summer for a minimum of eight weeks. Participants then prepare for their summer program by training in research techniques and laboratory equipment during junior winter and working towards a sixty to seventy page review article on the subject of their internship in the spring.

As soon as students returned this fall, SRP students dove straight into their three culminating projects condensing their summer work into a professional poster hung around the Carl C. Icahn Science Center, a twenty page publication-worthy journal article, and a public presentation to the School.

Intending to create a clear and easy-to-follow narrative arc for the SLS audience, students worked through a “story-building” phase, in which they drew out the story they wanted to tell on paper. Beginning around the end of the second week, students made practice presentations every several weeks throughout the term, adjusting their talks after exchanging feedback among themselves each time.

Dr. Chris Hogue, the science teacher leading the quantitative cohort of SRP, mentioned how different the process was for each student, “Sometimes they totally changed their idea of how they want to present it multiple times, and other times it’s just little tweaks along the way, but we definitely start the process very early.”

As in the past, the SLS talks covered a wide range of topics. In the biological section, Ava Lee ’23 spoke about system-wide profiling of bromodomain target engagement in cells, Luke Callaghan ’23 presented on investigating synaptic plasticity in the hippocampus, and Chloe Chan ’23 discussed the effects of R290Q mutation in OPA1 on mitochondrial morphology.

On the quantitative side, Ryan Kim ’23 talked about interpreting facial expressions from interactions with a robot, Shauna Schiffman ’23 spoke about deep learning image analysis of melanoma cancer data, and Joy An ’23 presented on searching for lines

of dark-matter-deficient galaxies formed from collisions.

For SRP students, the process of planning and delivering the presentation was both a stressful and thrilling experience. Alex Skrypek ’23, who conducted research in developmental biology, specifically methods of DNA damage repair, said, “It was challenging to condense an entire summer’s worth of research into a 10-minute presentation ... However, I really enjoyed sharing my field of DNA damage research with Choate. It was amazing to present and put up my poster in the science center!”

Je-Won Im ’23, another student in the biological cohort whose research was on finding the differential gene expression of patients with different types of responses to CAR T therapy, echoed Skrypek’s sentiment on the challenging process. “I spent a lot of time trying to simplify the area of study that my research was in into a short presentation that even freshmen in the audience could understand.” She continued, “Fortunately, we also wrote a final journal-style article at the end of SRP, after SLS was done, which gave me a lot more space to elaborate on the detailed aspect of my research.”

The SLS presentations received positive feedback from the school community. Suzie Kim ’24, an audience member of Thursday’s session, said, “The talks were well-spoken and well-prepared. I found Jewon’s presentation, in particular, to stand out to me the most, just because my own family is in the cancer field, so her work is very relevant and interesting. I was also impressed by the amount of work she was able to put in those few minutes.”

Ria Tyagi ’24, another audience member, commented, “I really appreciated how they oversimplified everything but still kept the gist of it.” She continued, “It was a great chance to see my peers doing such amazing things in all those different fields and how they’re contributing to the professional scientific research community!”

As a faculty member who has been attending SLS talks for more than a decade, Dr. Hogue described how teachers like him have actually gotten to see the progression of science: “You know, if you come and watch a single SLS in one year, it might not seem like that much really got accomplished ... but if you look over the course of a longer time, you know you really start to see the progress.”

As SLS is one of the culminating experiences of SRP, Dr. Hogue hopes that participants will learn the skill of presenting their scientific work to a broader audience. “I tell students very early on that if you can’t communicate the work that you’ve done and the discoveries that you’ve made to the outside world, not only does the world not get the benefits of that research, but others can’t pick up your mantle after you’re gone and continue that work or to take it in slightly different directions,” he said.

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## DR. VEAR ADDRESSES GROWTH

By **Jacqueline Yan '24**  
Copy Editor

To raise awareness about disability, Choate hosted two special guests, twelve-year-old local cellist Ms. Emily Reid and Choate alumni Dr. Allison Kessler Vear ’03, during an all-school meeting on November 15. The event was primarily planned and organized by Ryan Kim ’23, who worked closely with Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez ’00, Associate for Alumni Engagement and Development and Sixth-form Dean Mr. Will Gilyard ’98, Instrumental Ensembles Director Mr. Gene Wie, and Sixth-form Dean Dr. Katie Jewett.

The gathering began as many all-school meetings do, with a musical performance. Reid, who happens to play with a prosthetic developed by Yale e-Nable students, played a compilation of themes from Star Trek accompanied by a group of Choate students. According to Mr. Wie, he chose to play music from Star Trek because it “was a show that was introducing concepts like multiculturalism and ideas that people at the time probably found challenging.”

The performance culminated in a special presentation of a new version of the ‘cello arm,’ designed by Kim and Junho Lee ’24, and continued with guest speaker Dr. Vear and the introduction of the Barrier-Free Choate Initiative. Dr. Vear, Section Chief of Spinal Cord Injury at the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab and Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Northwestern University

Feinberg School of Medicine, spoke about her experience as a student with a disability at Choate.

During her fourth-form year, Dr. Vear was paralyzed in a skiing accident, which led to her requirement for a wheelchair. She shared her thoughts on discrimination that people with disabilities face and offered advice to the community on how to be better allies.

Dr. Vear was initially hesitant about speaking to the community because she did not want her experiences to be objectified to benefit or gratify the able-bodied. However, according to Mr. Gilyard, “After she understood that we wanted her to share her full truth about her story and her experience, then she was all in because it would include the good, the bad, and the ugly, which will help us grow as a community.”

Dr. Vear spoke freely about feeling isolated upon her return to campus, the lack of inclusivity in certain Choate facilities and practices, finding a new community within the crew team, and her journey to her current profession.

Students reflected on Dr. Vear’s honesty and the educational value behind her talk. “I loved how engaging and genuine she was as a speaker. I think her message is really important, especially what she said about ‘disability porn’, and it has given me a lot to think about,” said Joshua Ramon ’24.

Selam Olsen ’24, added, “I also liked how she didn’t shy away from calling out the School and her old friends about how they hurt her after the accident.”



Photo by Ramsey Scott '23/The Choate News

Dr. Vear discusses accessibility and inclusivity in Colony Hall.

Mr. Gilyard added, “I was struck by the number of students who in the subsequent days shared their stories about supporting a family member with a disability or their best friend and how happy they were that Choate would create space for this talk and ad hoc conversations that ensued.”

To conclude her speech, Dr. Vear left the community with an important message: “Your leadership not only asked me to come back to talk to you guys today, I was given permission to say, ‘Look around. Maybe Choate should do better.’ That is really powerful for a community to say we’re not perfect, but we’re willing to work and we’re willing to change.”

Born without a left forearm and hand, Reid’s new ‘cello arm,’ adapted from Yale e-Nable’s original design, features two additional degrees of freedom, which allows Reid to play with more flexibility and control. Kim and Lee used computer-aided design (CAD) software and 3D printing to incorporate their improvements.

Although it was Lee’s first time working on a project like this, he particularly enjoyed the design process and watching Emily perform on stage. He said, “If I get a chance to work on something like this in the future, I would make it more user-friendly and work more with the person I’m making the device for so that I can better meet their needs.”

Both Emily and Dr. Vear inspired the community to continue working toward creating a more inclusive, safe, and friendly environment for people with disabilities.

“If we can continue to create spaces and a community that invites all students into the tent, then we are on the right side of history. It was important because we do know that we need to make shifts (which I love about this school), and this keeps that conversation in the forefront of the decision-maker’s mind,” noted Mr. Gilyard.

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Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News





## ARC OF CT FIGHTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

By **Francesca Howard '26**  
*Reporter*

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 61 million adults in the United States live with a disability, and over seven million of whom have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs). In Connecticut, various charity organizations like the Arc of Connecticut (ARC) work to support people with IDD, lobbying to protect their civil and constitutional rights.

Throughout its 70-year history, ARC has expanded and worked with various organizations to promote research into developmental disabilities such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, impact state legislation, and advocate for the closure of institutions housing people with IDD. With funding from donations and outside sponsors, they work to break down barriers and prevent discrimination against people with IDD.



Driven by their conviction that people with IDD are defined by their unique strengths and talents rather than their disabilities, the organization helped create the Supplemental Security Income Program in the 1970s to ensure that people with IDD will not be exploited for their labor. Since then, ARC's work has expanded to advocate for the respect, equality, and safety of other members of society as well, such as preventing abuse and sexual misconduct. They also provide workshops to help families support their relatives who are challenged with IDD. One of the oldest and largest charity organizations dedicated to this cause, they hope to increase the accessibility of voting for all people, expand the affordable housing availability throughout Connecticut, and promote access to Covid-19 vaccines for people with IDD.

Mr. Win Evarts, Executive Director of ARC, reflected on his involvement and passion for the cause. "Like others before me, I got involved because I have a child with IDD. When it came time for him to transition from our local school to adult services funded by Medicaid through Connecticut's Department of Developmental Services (DDS), there was a dis-

connect between what we were told by the people we had relied on when our son was a child and the answers we received when he became an adult. In short, his future went from a somewhat rosy picture to a completely blurry picture with little easily found or understood information." Inspired by his love for his son, Mr. Evarts works to help others encountering similar challenges.

On December 11, 2022, ARC hosted its 8th Annual Harvest of Hope, which featured three chefs who explained the use of assistive technology. In addition, the organization is working with state legislation to foster inclusive communities, a wider array of support systems, and increased accessibility to transportation, employment, healthcare, and housing. They have also grown to 14 local chapters in Connecticut, with 4,094 staff and 1,806 volunteers.

Choate students can help support individuals with IDD and their families. Mr. Evarts encourages teenagers to "contact the local ARC chapters in the towns close to Meriden and offer to volunteer at their events" to continue the fight for those with IDD.

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## WPL COLLABORATORY CELEBRATES 5+1 ANNIVERSARY

By **George Wang '25**  
*Reporter*

On Saturday, October 15, the Wallingford Public Library's Collaboratory celebrated its 5+1 Anniversary.

Led by librarian and Head of Emerging and Creative Technologies Ms. Janet Flewelling, the event showcased the various advanced machines available at the library and offered arts and crafts activities. Popular stations included the virtual reality setup, cookie decorating, and plant potting. "We have lots of really high-tech equipment and software for people in the community to use," said Ms. Flewelling. "We have poster printing, sublimation printing, photo printing, and the Adobe Creative Cloud on our four high-end computers. We have a laser cutter, long arm quilting machine ... and lots of great stuff that isn't accessible to the average citizen. We're lucky enough to be able to teach people how to use it too."

The event also included various workshops led by Wallingford Public Library staff and local residents. Ms. Jill Shea, manager of the Connecticut Flower Collective, gave a presentation on microgreens, young seedlings of edible vegetables and herbs, while Ms. Debbie Jaffe, owner of Kandu Beads in Wallingford, lead a workshop on polymer clay magnets. Local artist Mr. Tim Sway, who has more than 100,000 subscribers on YouTube, displayed his mobile concert hall called "Jambulance," a van renovated with reused material. He also shared his joy in crafting guitars with the community while Ms. Patricia Dellaripa ran a session on painting notecards.



The Collaboratory at the Wallingford Public Library.



Event setup in the Community Room of the Wallingford Public Library.

Opened in September 2014, the Collaboratory encourages visitors to utilize the library for

**"We're looking to do more than just have a transaction; people wanted to stay awhile and make the library feel like their space, which we thought was great."**

*Ms. Jane Fisher*  
Director of the Wallingford Public Library

other purposes beyond merely borrowing books. "We're look-

**George Wang** may be reached at [gwang25@choate.edu](mailto:gwang25@choate.edu)

## Witness Stones Project Honors History of Enslaved People in Connecticut

By **Eva Li '24**  
*Copy Editor*

In recent months, towns across Connecticut have erected several permanent markers to memorialize the lives of enslaved people. The Witness Stones Project, founded in 2017 by Mr. Dennis Culliton, is a nonprofit dedicated to restoring history and honoring the humanity of the enslaved individuals who built our communities. The Project culminates with the installation of permanent markers near where the enslaved people lived, worked, or prayed so that people can be aware of and honor those individuals' lives and contributions.

The impetus for the Project came after Mr. Culliton was inspired by a suggestion from Mr. Dough Nygren, a Guilford

resident familiar with the Stolpersteine Project, an undertaking that has installed thousands of public paving stones to honor victims of Nazi persecution in Europe. Receiving support from by the Stolpersteine organizers, the project has expanded to 40 communities across Connecticut, engaging thousands of students each year. Across Greenwich and West Hartford, the Project collaborated with local historical societies and high schools to spotlight the lives of 56 individuals who had been enslaved.

One of the principal missions of the Witness Stones Project is to guide students to learn about enslaved individuals in their local towns and share their findings with the broader community. To facilitate this, the organization uses a three-tier curriculum.

Students start with a general exploration of enslavement in New England, with a particular focus on the Connecticut colony. Then, students familiarize themselves with reading and interpreting primary source documents. Lastly, students receive primary source documents related to the individual they will be researching and ultimately writing a biographical narrative on. This undertaking strives to help fix incomplete historical records.

Members of the Witness Stones Project team explore local archives and published materials while searching for an individual for students to research. Despite their extensive research, there are still often gaping holes in an individual's story due to scant information. In these cases, "students have opted to also engage in a creative treatment of the material, writing poetry or creating visual art inspired by their research. Students have also written song lyrics, done a photographic essay based on spaces the individual they researched might have known, and composed music," explained Director of Operations Ms. Liz Lightfoot.

As of this summer, there are three markers in Wallingford: one at the Nehemiah Royce House honoring Dick Freedom, a Revolutionary War soldier enslaved by a member of the Royce family and two in front of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, honoring a man and woman named Grace and Esau, who were enslaved by church benefactors. The Project is currently working with Choate on adding a fourth marker to honor Bailey, an enslaved child who lived on what is now the Choate campus.

### The Witness Stones Project at Choate

Over the years, Choate students have made valuable contributions to the Project, highlighting the lives of a woman named Lettuce Bailey and a man named Theophilus Niger.

Lettuce Bailey, believed to have been born in 1765, was one of the several Africans taken in as property by Reverend Jonathan Todd, minister of the First Congregational Church in present-day Madison, from a ship washed ashore near his town. Bailey was first emancipated after Rev. Todd's death, as the latter wrote in his will that he had always believed slavery of Africans to be unjust, promising Bailey and others he would free them and provide land and a cow for their use; however, the statement came with the condition that they would "fall under the discretion of [Rev. Todd's] heirs" if they failed to take care of themselves, which apparently happened shortly after, as Bailey was reverted to the property of Rev. Todd's nephew.

A year later, in 1792, a new Connecticut law provided enslaved men and women between the ages of 25 and 45 an opportunity to be freed under the condition that they could pass a test indicating they were physically healthy. Bailey managed to pass the test and was emancipated for the second time on November 25, 1793.

Despite her newfound freedom, records suggest a series of hardships in Bailey's remaining years. Most likely due to economic challenges, she had to bind out her children, effectively making them indentured servants for a specific period. Nonetheless, research into the lives of two of Bailey's nine children indicates that they seem to have lived their lives committed to freedom and self-determination.

As for Theophilus Niger, little information is known about his

birthplace and actual name. After thorough research, the team estimated that Theophilus was likely born sometime around 1720, a date they used for his Witness Stones Project's marker.

The records on Niger revolve mostly around his enslavement to Thomas and Abigail Hodgkin in Guilford for much of his life. One of these records was for the First Congregational Church of East Guilford, which shows the marriage of Theophilus to Penelope Tantipen was officiated by Rev. Todd, the enslaver of Lettuce Bailey.

Like Bailey, Niger was also promised by Thomas Hodgkin's first draft of his will to be left with two plots of land and freed after Mrs. Hodgkin's death. Although Thomas Hodgkin later rewrote his will to leave Niger with only one plot of land, giving the other to his nephew, Jedediah Coe, the latter offered Niger a plot of land out of "consideration of the respect and goodwill."

While land purchase documents have helped the team confirm Niger's freedom by 1761, it was determined that he died 10 years later at around 50 years old.

Bailey Lettuce and Theophilus Niger are just two of the 72 individuals whose stories have been restored and whose lives have been honored by the Witness Stone Project. Reflecting on her experience participating in the Project, Ms. Lightfoot said, "For me, one of the greatest takeaways from this work is that we are all connected to this history, whether through our family histories or simply through the fact that we live here, and its legacy is part of our ongoing reality."

**Eva Li** may be reached at [eli24@choate.edu](mailto:eli24@choate.edu)



The witness stone for Theophilus Niger at Horse Pond Park in Madison, CT.

### Community Calendar

**Holiday Artisan Market**  
DECEMBER 11TH  
10AM - 3PM

@ *The Library Wine, Bar, and Bistro, 60 N. Main Street, Wallingford, CT*

**Wallingford Garden Club 34th Annual Holiday Tea & Decoration Exhibit**  
DECEMBER 13TH  
1PM - 3PM

@ *Community Room, Wallingford Public Library*

**Wallingford Symphony Holiday Concert**  
DECEMBER 18TH  
2PM - 4PM

@ *Colony Hall, Choate Rosemary Hall*

**Talk to Santa on Ham Radio**  
DECEMBER 20TH  
10AM - 2PM

@ *Yalesville Firehouse, 143 Hope Hill Road, Wallingford, CT*

**Wallingford Community Christmas Dinner**  
DECEMBER 25TH  
12PM - 2PM

@ *First Congregational Church, 23 South Main St, Wallingford, CT*



THE CHOATE NEWS



116<sup>TH</sup> MASTHEAD

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Corrections

In the 100 years of Rivalry Issue:

In the 1971-1972 section, the line below "1971-1972:" reads: "Rosemary Hall girls arrive on Wallingford campus circa 1971". The girls did arrive on campus the fall of 1971.

Under the Commencement 1978: section, the caption reads: "Although Choate first introduced the Rosemary girls to the Wallingford campus in 1971..." Rosemary Hall girls lived on the Wallingford campus first, from 1890-1900, before The Choate School was founded in 1896. Rosemary Hall's Headmistress, Caroline Ruutz-Rees, moved Rosemary Hall to Greenwich, CT, in 1900 where the school remained until 1971, and returned to the Wallingford campus in 1971.

The Choate News regrets these errors. To submit a correction, email thechoatenews@choate.edu

KEEPING UP WITH THE KEC



Photo courtesy of Suzie Kim '24

Members of the class of 2024 EIP cohort go on a nature walk.

By Constanza Aportela '25

Opinions Writer

On move-in day, as my father drove the rental Honda through the Kohler Environmental Center's (KEC) driveway, he turned around and said, "I hope you know what you have gotten yourself into." I responded with a confident "yes," but to be frank, I was lying. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy being in the Environmental Immersion Program (EIP) because it challenges me intellectually and emotionally through its specialized courses; however, the program is not just observing birds and taking walks through the woods — it is an academically rigorous experience in a somewhat isolated environment.

Anyone who has been to the KEC knows that the walk there is not particularly splendid or efficient. You need to traverse a road where cars speed around the cor-

ner and walk through either the cemetery (the morbid shortcut) or the cross-country course (the long, albeit scenic, route). I need to admit, however, that walking to the KEC gives you a sense of accomplishment. I often feel like Dora, The Explorer, after conquering an adventure.

Something that most main campus students fail to realize about living at the KEC is that your life is dictated by the shuttle schedule. If you miss the shuttle, you might be left loitering around campus or trapped inside the KEC, ruminating over what could have been on main campus with the beloved friends you miss so much. Many compare living at the KEC to being a day student: you're part of the community, but you don't get to experience it in the way that the majority of students do.

What people never fail to mention about the KEC, and I can't blame them, is the qual-



Photo courtesy of Cathy Liu '24

Students study butterflies at the Kohler Environmental Center.

ity of food produced by Chef Janusz, the KEC's private chef; his food and his kind words make the experience at the KEC infinitely better.

Looking past the morsels of deliciousness, the courses required as part of the EIP are interdisciplinary, meaning that topics from one class relate to ones in other classes, forcing you to think about the thematic intersections between topics that you once thought of as an isolated discipline. These classes are academically rigorous, but, nevertheless, they are extraordinarily rewarding and unique.

It is not hard to say that despite being in this program for only half a term, I have been forced to rethink almost everything about the way I relate to the world. For instance, consider this: why do most people in America relate to the world through a concept of scarce

time instead of one of spatiality or land?

I have always appreciated nature, but before coming to the KEC, I had never dug my hands into weathered soil or pondered the relationship between humans and the Earth. At the same time, I have also never felt such a longing to be on main campus with some of my dearest friends.

With all of this in mind, I can say that I did not know, driving around that day, what I got myself into. What I now know is that all of the butterflies that gracefully meet me in English class and all of the challenges I will encounter and persevere through have and will make me a more grounded and conscientious person.

Constanza Aportela is a fifth-former from Mexico City, Mexico. She may be reached at caportela24@choate.edu

@CHOATE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



Graphic By Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

By Eva Swanson '25

Staff Opinions Writer

We've all heard the infamous phrase, "It's time to put down the phone," spoken across the dinner table or silently communicated across the rows during a school meeting. Personally, the phrase haunts me: I think I've heard my parents say it a few too many times. No matter how many times they do, though, I always begrudgingly yield to their plea for my reintegration into the real world.

As I have grown up, I've fallen into the habit of using social media too much: not because I have an innate desire to scroll, but because I would argue that having an online presence is a necessary aspect of being an informed citizen in any community, but especially at a school like Choate.

Today, we see organizations using the tool of social media to further their brands. A prime example is Wendy's. Known for their vicious insults on Twitter, they've built a reputation beyond being McDonalds' lesser known competitor. Even academic institutions like Choate have taken to social media to expand their reach, engaging prospective students, Choates, and alumni alike.

Choate's official social media pages include: @gocho-

ate, @choateadmission, @choateathletics, @choatearts, and more. Prior to coming to the School, I would always like posts to convey "demonstrated interest" and such. Instagram perceived such attempts at flattery as hardcore interest; now, every other post on my feed is from an official Choate account.

Despite these accounts clogging my feed from time to time, I have never been too upset because Choate's string of social media pages truly show all the facets of our school, whether you're interested in the arts, athletics, or more. During fall term specifically, the social media manager, Ms. Laura Scaviola, did an exceptional job of capturing the essence on campus; alongside pictures of students and various activities, @gochoate's page has been littered with autumn leaves, capturing the true essence of campus in the fall.

"[The purpose of] @gochoate, is to inform," said Ms. Scaviola. Choate's intentions behind the page, Ms. Scaviola explained, is a way to show diverse audiences about the Choate Rosemary Hall experience. By earnestly broadcasting what is going on at our school, Ms. Scaviola hopes to project a positive, yet true, image of life on campus. These accounts are composed of a mix of posts tar-

geted at the outside world — people that do not attend or work at Choate — and those targeted at the school community. The School's social media accounts post frequent updates on campus events and celebrate students' accomplishments. In short, these pages connect us in ways that were not possible prior to the online world.

As much as I may see the official pages, the ones I really interact with are the student-run ones (of which Choate has a plethora). Boasting accounts like @choate.debate, @choate\_waterpolo, and @choatenews (which all of you should follow), the deeper you dig, the weirder the accounts get. My favorite account is @crh.sleeping. These accounts allow students to share the funniest, less-polished aspects of Choate life.

In Ms. Scaviola's words, "who we are as a community is really special, and I'm proud to share it." Though Choate may fall short in the eyes of its ever-critical students, Choate's social media presence is a true testament to our ingenuity and warmth as a community.

Eva Swanson is a fourth-former from New Haven, CT. She may be reached at eswanson25@choate.edu

CHOATE TAKES: WINTERLUDE

PRO

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"I love the Winterlude because it's very festive and brings the community closer together through traditions like Hall Ball and the Festival of Lessons and Carols."  
- Jackson Slater '23

"It goes by super fast and then we're on break again, giving me motivation to just do my work."  
- Sachi Mehra '23

"There is so much less homework, and it's really close to christmas (and my birthday occurs during winterlude!)"  
- Chloe Smith '26

"Although the weather was bipolar and I stayed up too late, this was the perfect time to spend time with friends during the holiday season."  
- Isabel Maida '23

"While I think Winterlude can be a stressful time for everyone., I think it's still nice to be able to enjoy both Thanksgiving and winter break."

"I've had a lot of fun"  
- Cam Merritt '26

"I approached Winterlude with the mindset of wanting it to be Christmas, but looking back it was fun to enjoy the festive spirit with friends."  
- Prim Tangkaravakoon '24

"I enjoyed winterlude because it was a good balance of fun and school work in between the two breaks."  
- Emma Ding '24

"Winter is already the worst time of year to transition into and the winterlude period is just enough for one and a half test cycles, which means everything's overlapping. It's also long enough that midterms feel like they arrive immediately when you come back in january."  
- Gigi Chen '24

"The events are great; however, the workload is less than ideal. Two and a half weeks aren't enough to get anything done so teachers end up cramming random assessments/projects into the last week."  
- Andra Ionescu '24

"It's so awkward. We are given so much work, but it also feels like a vacation because it's only two weeks."  
- Brandon Ma '24

"The days are shorter but workload increases, which makes it hard to fit everything in. But at least we have winter break to look forward to."  
- Sophia Britton '24

"It's probably the weirdest three weeks of the year: too short to completely dive into school but too long to not try at all."  
- Tatum Kent '24

"Winterlude is like waiting for the sweet release of freedom that is winter break, but it's always just out of reach."  
- Sidharth Rao '23

"It's short but not my favorite because you have to quickly transition from two breaks into heavy academics very quickly and abruptly."  
- Elsa Franks '24





# WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE GEORGIA ELECTION

By **Helen Ryan '24**  
Staff Opinions Writer

Herschel Walker’s notoriety as a result of being a football player could not help him win the election, but he did come close — scarily close. The Georgia Senate runoff, which occurred after neither candidate won the general election in November, ended with a win for Democrat Raphael Warnock.

Though this race may be over, its effects are not. Walker, known for his endorsement by former President Donald Trump and extremist views, proved to be unreasonable, arbitrary, and not fit for a senate seat. No matter how irrelevant, untrue, or hypocritical his statements were, he stated them unequivocally and stood by them. The closeness of this race revealed many of the issues America still faces with its polarizing political candidates, and his run will have lasting effects on our nation’s politics.

One of the most divisive issues America currently faces is abortion. Walker took a firm stance on this topic, saying he would support a full abortion ban with no exceptions. It was later revealed that Walker had paid for multiple abortions in his past, showing that he is willing to abandon this ideal when it benefits himself.

Walker also had accusations of domestic violence levied against him, with a judge stating he demonstrated “a clear and present danger of family violence.” Once again, a man accused of crimes has ended up coming too close to securing a powerful position in the country. This tolerance of damaging behavior is dangerous and encourages those who view Walker as a role model to do the same.

Walker has also demonstrated to voters that he’s comfortable disseminating fraudulent information to his benefit. He claimed to have been in the FBI, which has been proven false. He claimed to have served in the military, when a CNN fact check stated that he

only “worked as a paid spokesman for a for-profit company that preyed on veterans.” The lies he pursued were harmful to the integrity of the election, and even when he was fact-checked and proven wrong, his supporters continued to stand by his side.

Trump’s presidency should have been a wake-up call that politicians need to be held accountable and should have emphasized the importance of calling out lies from our politicians. The former president was known for making outlandish comments that frequently demeaned marginalized groups and women. Nothing seemed to bring down his poll numbers. On the contrary, it seemed as though his derogatory comments only riled up his base and strengthened his supporters’ commitment to his cause. Similarly, Walker could state inflation is a women’s issue because “they’ve got to buy groceries,” a sexist and ignorant comment, and he still garnered an immense amount of support.

Walker lost this election by only 2.7%. His statements and actions, no matter how harmful, did not seem to sway many voters. Dana Loesch, a Republican commentator, even said, “I don’t care if Herschel Walker paid to abort endangered baby eagles. I want control of the Senate.” With the check of a box, voters decide what type of person will have a say in major policies that affect people’s lives. Yet, as seen in this runoff, it is no longer about integrity and purpose; it is about one party having control at any cost. Walker’s close call with victory demonstrated how far America has strayed from its original ideal of democracy.

Though it’s easy to brush off the circumstances because of Walker’s loss, this is just one election and just one candidate. There will be more, and it is clear many still have no problem with voting for someone with the temperament of Herschel Walker.

**Helen Ryan** is a fifth-former from New York, NY. She may be reached at [hrayan24@choate.edu](mailto:hrayan24@choate.edu)

# RANKED CHOICE VOTING MAKES A MORE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

By **Xiu Lim '25**  
Staff Opinions Writer

In a letter dating back to October 2, 1780, John Adams wrote to the First Marshal of Massachusetts, Jonathan Jackson: “There is nothing I dread so much, as a Division of the Republic into two great Parties, each arranged under its Leader, and concerting Measures in opposition to each other.”

Of course, Adams was not the only Framers who warned against our current two-party system. In his farewell address, Washington famously called it a “frightful despotism,” and one that would be “sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension.” Alas, we find ourselves in such a system today — we’ve seen the obstruction of democracy on January 6, and now polarization has seemingly become a hallmark of our democratic system. If America is to escape this partisan nightmare, it must consider ranked-choice voting in its elections.

Currently, the United States uses an Electoral College in presidential elections — 538 electors distributed across all 50 states based on population, typically vote for either the Democratic or Republican candidate. The candidate who reaches the magic number of 270 votes wins the election.

The glaring problem with the system is that the votes of certain states’ residents are far more valuable than others. California, worth 55 electoral votes, is more desirable to presidential candidates than Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New Jersey combined. This inevitably leads to cases where candidates win the election despite not holding the popular vote. The most recent examples being Bush’s victory over Gore in 2000 and Trump’s victory over Clinton in 2016. In short, we end up electing presidents who most people do not want in office.

An alternative ranked choice voting system (RCV) is neither complicated nor revolutionary — many of the world’s leading democracies, from New Zealand and Australia to the parliament of the United Kingdom, have already

adopted this system. There are also instances within the country where RCV is used in elections — from cities such as Minneapolis and San Francisco to the state of Maine. Even the Academy Awards use RCV to determine winners.

The standard RCV system is strikingly simple. If there are four candidates in an election, the system begins with voters selecting candidates in order of preference, one being their favorite and four being their least preferred. A candidate wins immediately after the first round of voting if they win a majority of the votes.

However, if no single candidate in the first round manages to win more than half the votes, the voters who put the candidate with the fewest votes as their first choice have their votes cast for their second choice candidate, effectively distributing their votes. This process continues until one of the four candidates manages to win a majority of the votes.

One of the most important ways in which America’s democracy would benefit from ranked choice voting is the po-

tential to have more than just the Democratic and Republican parties — one where the scope of the values of parties accurately reflects the true beliefs of citizens.

Currently, most Americans who vote for either Democratic or Republican candidates likely do not agree with all of the candidates’ policies, but their votes do not reflect this. With RCV, citizens can be hopeful that through exercising their Constitutional right, they have contributed to what they believe to be a better nation, not to the marginally better of two undesirable outcomes.

Candidates would be able to focus on highlighting the attractiveness of their policies rather than smearing those of their opponent. It encourages higher voter turnout, not only by clearing sludge for the voters by only requiring them to head to the polls once but ensuring that their votes don’t go to waste.

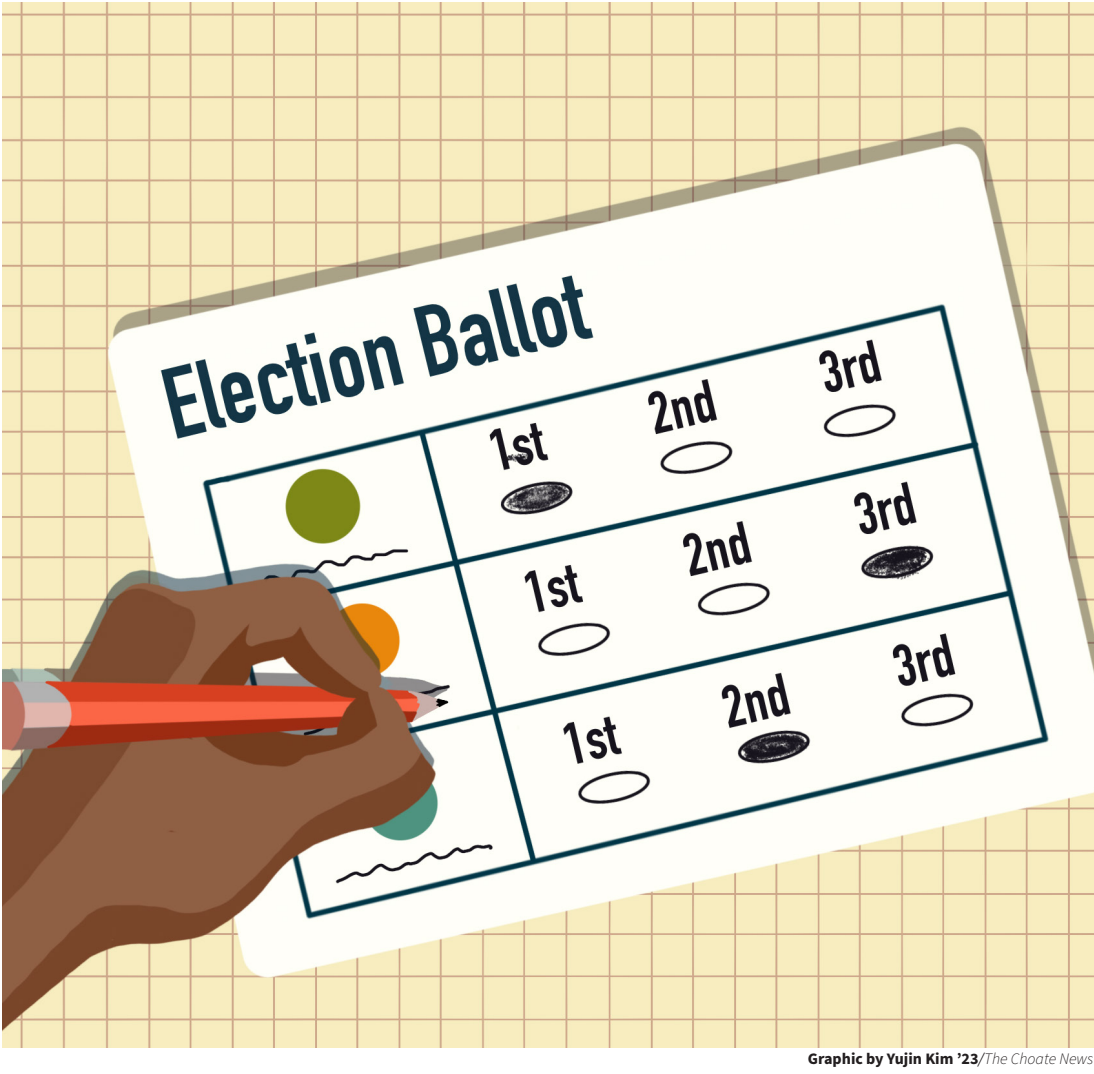
A common point of contention with RCV is the confusion that it could create for voters and the education the implementation would require. Ed-

ucating the United States’ schoolchildren on RCV would likely take no more effort than explaining the current Electoral College system.

Another common point of contention is RCV’s seeming violation of the “One Person, One Vote” rule. If voting “multiple times” is a result of the voters’ first-choice candidate being eliminated, RCV would still be more equitable than the current state-based divide in influence within the “Winner Takes All” system.

As globally consequential issues such as climate change become increasingly urgent, so does the need for the United States to adopt a voting system that focuses more on building a better future by providing more options to the American people. The United States is among the most influential of all democracies across the globe, and through adopting RCV, we can ensure it doesn’t also become one of the least democratic ones.

**Xiu Lim** is a fourth-former from Singapore, Singapore. He may be reached at [xlim25@choate.edu](mailto:xlim25@choate.edu)



Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

# THE BENEFITS OF DROPPING UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

By **Stan Cho '25**  
Copy Editor

U.S. News & World Report is widely known as a primary source for comparing the prestige of universities. Schools modify campus and curriculum to earn higher spots in rankings. But what if major universities stopped cooperating with the ranking system?

In early October of 2022, six members of the T14, the 14 law schools that have been the highest-rated universities by U.S. News & World Report for the last 30 years, have withdrawn from the U.S. News rankings.

This change was made after a panel of the American Bar Association, in which representatives of accredited law schools spoke on a new policy that dropped the mandate of standardized testing for students applying for the class of 2025.

Spokespeople for the schools claim that the rankings unfairly prioritize test scores, grades, and post-graduation employment. Yale, the first school to drop out of the rankings, indicated that the heavily weighted metric that school rankings are based on discourages law schools from championing financial aid and supporting public interest careers, which are often lower-paying.

Choate Rosemary Hall, for instance, does not sell its data to school ranking websites for evaluation, despite the boost that such rankings can have for admissions. School rankings serve as a reliable metric for learning about a school and as a useful tool for comparing multiple institutions, especially for international students who may be unfamiliar with the U.S. educational curriculum and the

unique boarding school lifestyle. For instance, as an international boarding student at Choate, school rankings were a quick and easy way to analyze and compare various statistics to gather a vague sense of each school that I had applied to.

Furthermore, school rankings provide an incentive for institutions to maintain their quality of education, increase the variety

of offered extracurriculars, and broaden the student population. Therefore, some educators claim, even for all of their shortcomings, the U.S. News & World Report school rankings must continue to be considered and updated annually, as they provide a strong incentive for schools to continue adapting and improving.

Despite such benefits, the removal of the school ranking sys-

tem outweighs the benefits of its continuation, at least in its current state. For instance, the exemption from traditional school rankings offers educational institutions valuable opportunities to personalize their curriculum and broaden their student population. These schools claim that the lack of pressure from school rankings allows them to pursue policies such as accepting more applica-

tions of students from underprivileged backgrounds.

A common argument made for the continuation of school rankings is that the lack of such institutions would offer high schools and colleges an opportunity to manipulate their data when presenting it to applicants. However, quite the opposite is true. Recently, Columbia University was accused of presenting false data in an attempt to boost its school rankings; with the growing prominence of school rankings, high schools and colleges are incentivized to manipulate their data and disregard their mission and core values in pursuit of a higher ranking.

Furthermore, the lack of school rankings is unlikely to diminish the number of applicants to high schools and colleges, especially since rankings have stayed somewhat consistent throughout the decades, with minimal shifts between schools that are often inconsequential when determining the material value of the school’s quality. As such, high schools and colleges should turn away from conventional score-based metrics, and instead focus on their academic rigor and the passion of their applicants.

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



Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News



## THE MEDIA MASTERMINDS OF CHOATE

By **Grace Walters '24**  
Staff Reporter

Have you ever wondered who changes the slides during Community Conversations or who presses play on videos made by different clubs during School Meetings? Or, who is responsible for the light effects jazzing up student performances? You may not see them, but they are always present to make school events run smoothly.

The show would not go on without the students and faculty diligently working in the tech booth. The tech booth is run by Justyce Easter-Butcher '24, Qin Caldwell '24, and Ryan

Kim '23, and is led by Sound Technician and Assistant Technical Director Mr. Paul Bozzi. The purpose of the tech booth is to project media and curate sound from microphones and speakers during large gatherings. Anyone new to the tech booth must undergo the initial training phase to learn how to use the soundboard and manage the technology.

In the words of Mr. Bozzi, “They’re all great kids. This is one of the best crews I’ve had.”

Easter-Butcher began working in the tech booth this academic year after approaching Mr. Bozzi about new opportunities and ways

to pursue technical theater. As the supervisor of sound, Easter-Butcher ensures that the microphones are working correctly. Easter-Butcher said, “The most challenging part is the community conversations because the mics get passed around to so many different people. It taught me how to think quicker and more efficiently sound-mix.”

Kim began working in the tech booth during the fall of his junior year and enjoys working in the booth because he loves seeing how everything comes together. Kim’s favorite memory from his time working in the booth is the bittersweet

School Meeting at the end of the last academic year and saying goodbye to the members of the Class of 2022, including students who used to work in the booth.

Kim emphasized that prior experience is not required to join the crew. Also, because the current tech booth comprises of only upperclassmen, underclassmen are strongly encouraged to get involved.

Caldwell decided to join because he wanted “to do more and enhance [himself] outside of just doing productions.” Caldwell manages the projector, runs the slideshows on the computer, and transitions between media, such as videos or posters, presented during School Meetings and Community Conversations. Working in the tech booth and other technical theater opportunities at Choate has “directed what I want to do [and is] helping me learn more and do more around the world of tech theater,” said Caldwell.

According to Caldwell, an added bonus of working in the tech booth is the comfy chairs.

To anyone interested in joining the crew: “If you enjoy working and doing the behind-the-scenes stuff,” the tech booth is for you!

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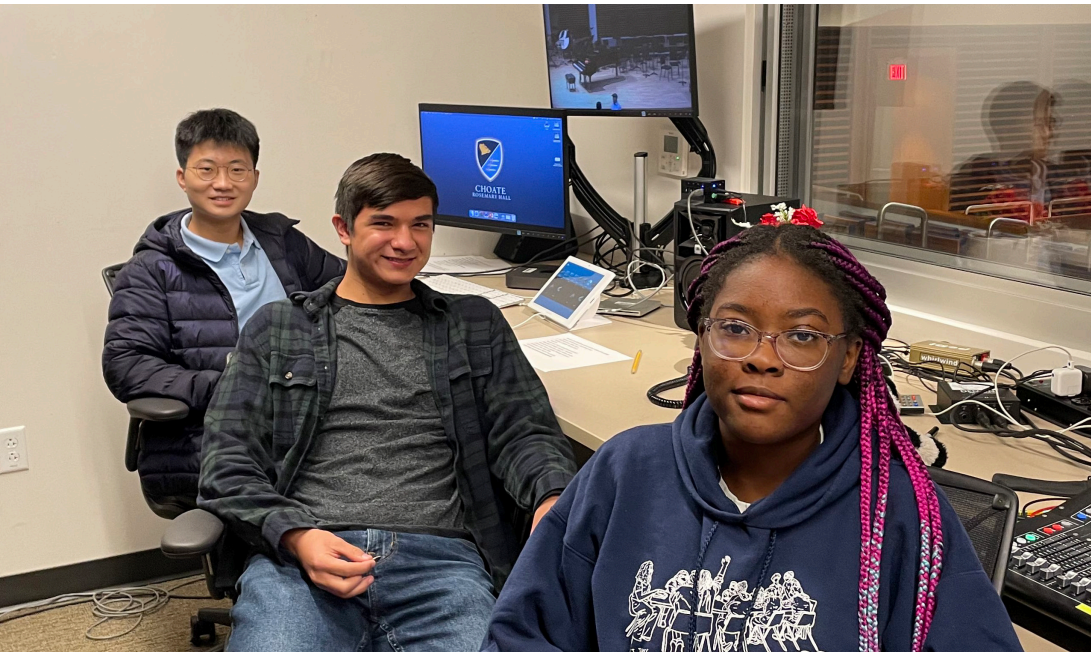


Photo courtesy of Ryan Kim '23

Ryan Kim '23, Qin Caldwell '24, and Justyce Easter-Butcher '24 assist Mr. Paul Bozzi in the tech booth.

## “MEM EVENTS” CELEBRATES NEW DORM CULTURE

By **Amelia Sipkin '25**  
Copy Editor

To all of the haters who put Memorial House (Mem) last on the dorm lottery last year: You are missing out.

Recently, significant changes have been made to Choate’s largest dorm, the most historic being the switch to co-ed housing; however, a new upgrade has sprung into the spotlight: Mem Events. Prefects and prefectees of what is called the “New Mem” are in for an endless series of parties, contests, and dances unlike anything that any dorm has ever done before. Ice skating, a haunted trail, pie-eating contests, dodgeball tournaments, and a spring fling dance — these are only a handful of all the events that Co-Head of House Mr. Timothy Yun and the whole team of Mem advisors have in store.

Ultimately, the Mem team is looking to make several grand changes during this consequen-

tial year for the house. Mem advisors are looking to transform the reputation of the dorm into one of laughter and festivity.

“This is a very historic year,” said Mr. Yun. “This is the first time that Mem, which has historically been an all-boys, freshman dorm, is now a co-ed space.”

To accomplish their goal of building a fun-filled dorm community, the Mem advisors have created a year-long calendar of Mem Events. Mr. Yun, the brain behind the initiative, came up with the idea over the summer after doing some of these events on a smaller scale with his advisory.

“I love doing these kinds of things ... this is fun stuff,” he said. Becoming Co-Head of House finally provided Mr. Yun with the opportunity to achieve his dream. “I was like: Yes! I have control! I’m gonna make [fun events] happen for the entire dorm!”

Currently, a calendar is posted with a list of all the

planned events on the roster for the year. A highlight for many students so far was Mem Hunt: a Halloween-themed treat.

As a study break during the stressful week of midterms, the whole herd of Mem-ers took a trip over to the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center. All the lights had been turned off — the normally bustling athletic building was in a never-before-seen silent, pitch black, and spooky state. One group of students was assigned to be zombies and the other humans, and all 70 ran around hiding, chasing, screaming, or pretending to be zombies in the dark.

“I had so much adrenaline pumping through my blood. I went for it. I was running around screaming with glow sticks in my hair,” said Jordan Dodd '25.

Ellie Bissell '24 described the activity as a stress-relieving and bonding experience. “It was a great way to take our minds off schoolwork and have fun doing a physical activity

at the same time. I remember that afterwards everyone said they loved it and wanted to do it again,” she said.

Mem Events are not, however, limited to the calendar on the common room bulletin boards. Mr. Yun has several other surprising ideas. “They’re kind of ambitious, but epic,” he noted. He is concocting scavenger hunts, DJ dances in the common rooms, and many more activities that are yet to be revealed.

Bissell looks forward to the future events in store, saying, “These activities make living in a big dorm fun, because you still get to interact with everyone and meet new people.”

For the next event, the dorm is going together for a walk of terror on the cross country course — who knows what surprises next week in Mem will bring?

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## Midnights: the Album



Photo courtesy of Genius

Taylor Swift releases her 10th studio album, *Midnights*.

By **Nicha Tongdee '26 & Hannah Quan '26**  
Reporters

Nearly two years after releasing *Evermore* in 2020, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has released *Midnights*. The artist released her tenth studio album at midnight on October 21, featuring 13 tracks, and then dropped an additional seven tracks three hours later in the “3 a.m. Version” as a special surprise for fans. Known for her carefully crafted lyrics, Swift’s latest album has already broken records across the music industry. With that, let’s see what the favorite quotes from *Midnights* are from the Choate community after their first listen.

## CHOATIES’ FAVORITE LYRICS

### Question...?:

“Cause I don’t remember who I was before you painted all my nights / a color I’ve searched for since”  
– Maddy Childs '26

### You’re on Your Own, Kid:

“I didn’t choose this town / I dream of getting out / there’s just one who could make me stay / all my days”  
– Emilia Stahura '26

### Dear Reader:

“Dear reader / burn all your files / desert all your past lives / and if you don’t recognize yourself that means you did it right”  
– Ada Tieanworn '26

### Maroon:

“The rust that grew between telephones”  
– Campbell Pflaum '23

### Mastermind:

“I’m only cryptic and Machiavellian ‘cause I care”  
– Reinah Lee '26, Nila Rajan '26 & Ms. Stephanie Neul

### Bejeweled:

“Familiarity breeds contempt”  
“Didn’t notice you walking all over my peace of mind”  
– Kaya Weerasuriya '26

### Sweet Nothing:

“I’m the wind in the sails / liquor in cocktails”

### Sweet Nothing:

“And the voices that implore you should be doing more / To you, I can admit / I’m just too soft for all of it”  
– Adam Fleischman '25

### Anti-Hero:

“It’s me / hi / I’m the problem it’s me”  
– Jolie Zhang '26

### Snow on the Beach:

“One day / I’ll watch as you’re leaving / and life will lose all its meaning for the last time”  
– Virginia Nelson '25

“This scene feels like what I once saw on a screen / I searched aurora borealis green”  
– Prim Tangkaravakoon '24

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## SQUIRE STANLEY: THE OLDEST BUILDING ON CAMPUS

By **Rafia Pasha '26**  
Reporter

Squire Stanley, known for its distinct red exterior, is the oldest building on Choate’s campus. This girls’ dorm dating back to the 17th century currently houses 10 students and holds the rich history of Choate and Wallingford in every creak of the floorboards.

“The Red House” or “The Big House,” as it had commonly been referred to in the past, was first built in the 1690s before the eastern wing was added in 1770. The original building was owned by Judge Squire Oliver Stanley and was often used as a haven for Revolutionary War patriots.

Most famously, the dorm hosted the first president of the United States, General George Washington, while he was on his way to Cambridge in 1775. Washington had written about “the big house on the hill” in his old diary, according to former

archivist Ms. Lee Sylvester. Records also say that Washington bought a supply of gunpowder from Atwater’s store, which is now known as Atwater Cottage, a current boys’ dorm on campus. In celebration of their meeting, Judge Stanley named his newborn son, George Washington Stanley, after his special guest.

With regard to General George Washington’s visit, Squire Stanley prefect Farah Kabbani '23 remarked, “I think it’s something great to be able to talk about, and it also gives a lot more meaning to the building ... People kind of categorize Squire as an old dorm that needs refurbishing, but, in reality, when you hear about its background and its history, it just makes it so much more meaningful.”

In 1896, Judge Choate and Mrs. William Choate, Edgar Atwater’s niece, founded The Choate School for Boys. At the time, Headmaster Mark Pitman resided in Squire Stanley alongside Dr. Huntington Atwater, his three daughters, and four

students. The house was later vacated, and the boys were moved to Atwater House and other new dormitories.

In 1938, Squire Stanley was purchased from the Atwaters and was utilized as a dormitory until 1975. Unfortunately, in November 1978, there was a large fire in the western part of Squire Stanley, which led to major renovations of the building. The first round of renovations involved painting, clearing, and replacing much of the western wing by sixth-form students in the spring of 1980. Later on, these sixth-formers also implemented phase two, which concentrated on the renovation of the eastern wing. Squire Stanley, which was once located directly on Christian Street, was moved 300 feet backward in order to create another entrance to the School.

Though current students cannot relive the experience of seeing George Washington walk out of Squire Stanley, dorm residents had a lot to say about the

calm and vintage aura that can be felt throughout the building.

According to Chelsea Branch '25, “It’s so peaceful. It’s like your own little library.”

Many Choate students have disregarded Squire Stanley’s beautiful history due to the building’s age; however, for many residents, this distinct archaic aspect is loved. According to Squire Stanley prefect Manuela Sepulveda-Cortina '23, “I think you can actually feel the antiquity of the building just by being, you know, old ... you can really feel that it has a lot of history behind it.”

Hopefully, in the future, students can look at Squire Stanley and see a building that honors the origins of the School. As Sepulveda-Cortina said, “Without a place’s history, it loses its ... potency, and you don’t really have a background of what it was like to determine what it is currently.”

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Photos courtesy of Choate Archives

Squire Stanley retains its integrity throughout centuries.



## Exploring Vulnerability and New Beginnings with Salvation Road

By **Lauren Hsu '24**  
Staff Reporter

Written by D.W. Gregory, *Salvation Road*, a haunting story that shed light on the dangers of conformity, electrified the Choate community. The production took center stage on the evenings of November 4, 5, and 6 in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC). The play, directed by theater faculty member Mrs. Kate Doak P '22, follows the lives of a teenager named Cliff, his younger sister Jill, and his childhood friend Duffy. After Cliff's older sister, Denise, joins a religious cult in college to "do good" in the world and severs contact with her family, Cliff and Duffy set out to look for her. On the search for Denise, they find clarity in their lives and learn about empathy.

Mrs. Doak was drawn to *Salvation Road* because it highlighted the vulnerable reality that all students, no matter how intelligent or ambitious, face when transitioning into an unfamiliar environment away from home. "I have two kids going off to college, and I also teach freshmen here, so I often spend time thinking about how hard the transitions can be coming to a new school, especially someplace that's really big, and how students work to navigate where they land in terms of their friendships and what they get involved in," Mrs. Doak said.

A notable change made to Choate's production of the play was the switch of Duffy's gender from male to female. With the permission of Ms. Gregory, Duffy was played by Andra Ionescu '24, whom Mrs. Doak thought perfectly fit the role. Mrs. Doak appreciated that this change showed "a male and female friendship from

middle school that's endured through high school."

Another unique addition to the play was the music produced and provided by singer and songwriter Dora Jar '15. Since graduating from Choate, Jar has released two singles and three EPs. She has also opened multiple Billie Eilish tours. One of her songs, "Did I Get It Wrong," was featured in the opening scene. Snippets of instrumental sections from her song "It's Random" were also used to underscore transitions in the play and during the final curtain call.

In addition, two guest set and lighting designers collaborated with Choate to enhance the play. Mr. Martin Marchitto, who has extensive theater experience and has been a faculty member at multiple colleges, served as set designer. Mr. Kevin Michael Reed, who works as a theater designer, producer, and director designed the lighting and projections for the play.

Special features of the play that Mr. Reed helped design included the four projections on stage. Projections, broadly defined as using moving or still images to complement a live production, are "a trend in designing, and it allows you to shift location really quickly and be artistic without it being confusing, and it helps clarify the spaces for people," according to Mrs. Doak.

Mr. Reed used a software called QLab and hardware functionality to manipulate and control the images. Lighting angles and colors helped differentiate three periods of time in the play — past, present, and future — without changing the overall set. Mr. Reed, who thinks of the past as "a warm experience," used warm orange and yellow tones to light the stage, while colder colors were used for scenes taking place in the future to

highlight the unknown. "That goes to show how personal experience as a designer reflects in the art that you create on stage," he said.

Much of the rehearsal process took place in the PMAC's Chase Bear (Black Box) Theater, and the cast shifted to the main stage a couple of weeks before the performance. According to Ionescu, there were more factors to consider after shifting to the main stage because of the addition of props, lighting, and set, which were not present previously.

Throughout the rehearsal process, actors built a sense of trust in one another, which was essential because "when it comes to fast-paced scenes, you have to trust that the other actor will catch you, go back and forth with you, will increase the tension with, and create the scene with you," said Noah McBride '23, who starred as the protagonist Cliff.

Assistant Stage Manager Candace Beverly '25 noted, "I think my favorite part was getting to see actors build relationships on stage in their own roles, but also offstage. It was cool to see friendships being formed."

Mrs. Doak was happy that audiences understood the play to be about the vulnerable experience of a person joining a new school "and how you have to really rely on your best judgment to find a group of people that support you and have your best interests at heart."

McBride said that despite a few mistakes and obstacles, the play was a success: "We caught each other when we made those mistakes and kept on going, kept on pushing, until we saw the end of the play."

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Andra Ionescu '24, Noah McBride '23, and Amelia Sipkin '25 perform in *Salvation Road*.

## POTTERY JOINS ARTS CONCENTRATION

By **Savannah Emery '26**  
Reporter

Every day after school, dancers, musicians, actors, and visual artists in the Arts Concentration Program (Arts Con) visit their studios, stages, and practice rooms to hone their crafts. This year, ceramists have joined them in their afternoon artistic endeavors.

The ceramics branch in Arts Con was established last year when adviser Mr. Aaron Sober noticed a few students were particularly passionate about ceramics and pottery. His main priority for this new program was to give these students a space in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) to work on their art. He also hopes that students "will find a way for art to be a meaningful part of their lives," as it is "a meaningful tool for communicating and is a lens for understanding themselves in the world."

The ceramics Arts Con program currently has three students — Beverly Renshaw '24, Selam Olson '24, and Jada Dixon '24, who is also interested in mixed media. They must fulfill the requirements that other visual Arts Con students have. Over their four years at Choate, the students must take a series of studio courses and art history classes.

They also work and create in the PMAC in the afternoons instead of

athletics to focus on their artwork. The third floor art studio in the PMAC has now been transformed into a miniature pottery studio. Housed with wheels and clay, the studio was specifically designed for Arts Con students to work in during the afternoon activities block.

Olson stumbled upon pottery at Choate. "My friends were taking the ceramic class in the fall term last year and said, 'you should come into the open studios on Tuesday nights and just mess around a little bit. We can teach you how to make simple stuff, and it will just be so much fun,'" they explained.

Renshaw, on the other hand, developed her interest in pottery at a small pottery studio in Camp Monterey in June 2021. Upon her return to Choate, she spoke with Mr. Sober about working in the Choate pottery studios, and "it just kept on rolling."

The ceramics branch in Arts Con has created a new and intensive opportunity for students who love to make pottery. Their work was featured in the winter term visual arts student exhibition.

After a term of exploration, Renshaw presented a combination of big pots and small jars at the exhibition.

One of her works has "mutilated pineneedles" written on it, which was inspired by how her mom described a sidewalk. "A lot

of times when I decorate, my pots are based off of experiences I've had," Renshaw said.

Renshaw also wrote a sign by her work that encouraged viewers to touch her work. "I trust the people who are walking in this gallery, and I think it's an important experience specifically to be able to pick it up," Renshaw said. "There are things that you can see visually when you look at a pot, but there's just as much, if not more, that can be discovered about that pot where you could get up and you actually touch it."

Moving forward, Renshaw is looking to branch out and try new things. "This first term was fairly comfortable — trying to get into systems and understanding how things work — but right now, I'm trying to branch and push my comfortability a little bit," she said.

Student artists continue their ventures with the support of the Arts Con community. Olson particularly appreciates that students in Arts Con receive individualized focus and personalized feedback on their work. They believe that "there is a community of people who just like art and love talking about it. Seeing everything they can create makes it a wonderful environment."

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## Choate Theater Performs Mr. Burns Starring The Simpsons

By **Zoe Dieringer '25**  
Reporter

While stepping into the Gelb Theater for the fall production, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, audiences were met with a time-traveling and musical-esque play featuring *The Simpsons*. Directed by theater faculty member Mr. Bari Robinson and starring nine Choate actors, the play discusses how society rebuilds itself after a traumatic and apocalyptic event.

The first act introduces the audience to survivors who gather after a nuclear apocalypse. They bond over the only thing they have in common: the fuzzy recollection of *The Simpsons* episode "Cape Feare." Working together, they summarize the episode while recounting their familial losses.

The second act follows those same characters, who form a theater troupe together. The ensemble creates a television show composed of their memories, which are used as currency in the new society, while trying to dominate competing troupes. As the characters adjust to this new reality, the effect of the nuclear event on their mental health is highlighted.

The final act — set 75 years later — is a musical version of "Cape Feare" that has been codified into a religion. In the final scene, electricity is reintroduced into this post-apocalyptic society.

Getting the play off the ground was no easy task, but the students involved shared positive experiences with the rehearsal process. Harper Marsden-Uren '26, who played Colleen and Bart, said, "A lot of what I was working on in the rehearsal was building my con-



The cast of *Mr. Burns* performs a scene featuring *The Simpsons*.

fidence and feeling comfortable with my classmates and in front of my director. I feel like a lot of the knowledge that I garnered from Bari was so valuable."

The cast also grew extremely close over the rehearsal process. Judah Brecher '25, who played Gibson, Sideshow Bob, and Homer, particularly enjoyed tech week. He said, "It was a mix of everyone being panicked, excited, and exhausted. It was fun because the bonding of the cast really happened then."

Other cast members spoke about their interest in the musical aspect of the play. Jasmine Khuu '24, who played a toy glockenspiel and sang, did not have any speaking lines. "My character in the play is very specific to the musical experience," she said. "What I thought was very intriguing about the play was that most of its songs are either based on very characteristic, unique melodies that everyone has heard from *The Simpsons* before."

Mr. Robinson chose *Mr. Burns* partly because of the valuable learning experience it would provide for students. "I think *Mr. Burns* is a really good teaching play because it has a lot of different theatrical styles that you have to touch

on in order to be successful at the play. There's really straightforward narrative storytelling, commercials where they have to mimic other performances, music, mask work."

Furthermore, Mr. Robinson saw a message in the play that resonated with him and the cast. "Thematically, the play, in a lot of ways, is about what people do after a very traumatic event. We've all experienced a very traumatic event recently with Covid-19. How do people build back their lives in this case, after all their family members died from a nuclear event? How do you get society back up?"

The message was one of hope: "It won't be like what it was before, but maybe it's something new and interesting; we will go on and survive," he described.

The performances lived up to the actors' hopes. Brecher simply described the feeling of being on stage as "dopamine."

Khuu said, "The audience was great, and it really brought the mood and ambience up. Everyone was having so much fun and enjoying themselves."

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## Welcoming New Additions to Choate's Dance Program

By **Grace LaPlaca '25**  
Reporter

As the curtains rose on the 2022-2023 school year, dancers met with two new dance faculty members: Ms. Ricki Stevenson and Ms. Lynn Peterson. With Ms. Stevenson teaching ballet and Ms. Peterson teaching contemporary dance, the two are exciting new additions to Choate's dance program.

Ms. Stevenson has always been naturally drawn to dance. From studying ballet throughout her childhood to performing nationally on her collegiate dance team and teaching at various professional studios, her passion for dance is evident. "It's just that element of exertion that's enlivening, but also the fact that you can just really express who you are," she said.

Ms. Peterson has danced professionally for over 20 years, with extensive training in American modern dance. Inspired by the work and legacies of Jose Limon, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and other pioneers of modern dance, Ms. Peterson co-founded the Syren Dance Company in 2003. Based in New York, the group has performed internationally, including in France and Dubai.

Although Ms. Stevenson's time teaching at Choate has been relatively short, her experience has been positive. She particularly enjoys the incorporation of live music in her classes. Mr. Bob Bernger's piano accompaniment allows for a unique level of flexibility during group classes because the tempo can be adjusted to accommodate certain combinations and better serve the dancers.

In her Multi-level Ballet class, she often focuses on a specific technique, which she then develops throughout the class. For example, balance exercises at the barre at the beginning of class help prepare dancers for turns later in the center. While working to perfect all aspects of technique is the goal in ballet, dancers receive a more tangible indicator of improvement

when Mr. Stevenson identifies a specific focus for dancers.

On Thursdays, Ms. Peterson teaches the Upper-level Contemporary Dance class. She first guides students through "a foundation technical warmup," which includes movements that mirror ballet and provide the strength and technique necessary for combinations after the warmup. "To then apply those to contemporary dance movement sentences or phrase work that ask our bodies to go off balance, go upside down, curve your spine, [and] do all these things in the blink of an eye, requires a lot of tools and a lot of training," she said.

Ms. Stevenson also offers private ballet lessons at Choate to provide students with more personalized coaching and more targeted feedback. With a background in physical therapy, she is able to make specific adjustments and corrections.

Lucy LaPlaca '26, who attends private lessons once a week, recalled, "When I go into ballet class now, I'm thinking about her corrections and making sure I'm doing things right, even if she's not teaching it."



(Top) Ms. Lynn Peterson teaches Upper-level Contemporary class. (Bottom) Ms. Ricki Stevenson leads plies in ballet class.





# THE CHOATE NEWS SPORTS

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2022

## FIELD REPORT

Choate Winter Record  
25 - 10 - 3

### Varsity Games

**Boys' Basketball** (5-0)  
vs. St. Paul's School, 68-46

**Girls' Hockey** (3-1)  
vs. Noble and Greenough School, 0-4

**Girls' Basketball** (2-0)  
vs. Kingswood-Oxford School, 67-22

**Girls' Squash** (2-0)  
vs. Taft, 4-3

**Boys' Hockey** (0-3-1)  
vs. Loomis, 0-4

**Boys' Squash** (2-1)  
vs. Hopkins, 7-1

**Wrestling** (2-2)  
vs. Greens Farms Academy, 18-60

### J.V. Games

**Boys' Hockey** (0-0-2)  
vs. Deerfield, 2-2

**Girls' Squash** (3-0)  
vs. Squash Haven, 8-6

**Girls' Hockey** (0-1)  
vs. Danbury Hat Tricks, 2-5

**Boys' Basketball** (3-1)  
vs. Kent School, 51-13

**Boys' Squash** (3-1)  
vs. Squash Haven, 8-6

**Girls' Basketball** (0-1)  
vs. Marianapolis Preparatory School, 24-25

## CHANGES TO FITNESS AND CONDITIONING

By **Lauren Hsu '24**  
Staff Reporter

This past fall term, the Athletics Department launched a pilot program that restructured the existing Fitness and Conditioning program. Historically, students in Fitness and Conditioning earned their athletic credit by working out independently in the gym during their assigned one-hour time slot, three days a week.

Beginning this year, students participated in structured group fitness classes led by an instructor. The six class offerings for the fall term were yoga, P90X, strength training for girls, introduction to free weights, cardio, and Cybex.

A contributing factor to this decision was whether the previous Fitness and Conditioning program optimized student and instructor time and the gym's equipment. The new program structure aimed to improve this by providing

guidance on using equipment and the benefits of different machines. Doing so allows all students to have a well-rounded and productive workout, thus positively impacting their overall wellness.

"Having an instructor teach the class helped us pace ourselves; the instructor also helped correct our posture," said Prim Tangkarakavoon '24, who participated in P90X in the fall.

One challenge from the fall term was making space for students to participate in their first-choice class. Many students gravitated towards weight lifting and cardio, and Cybex. With limited spots in those programs, some students could not be placed into their top-choice fitness class.

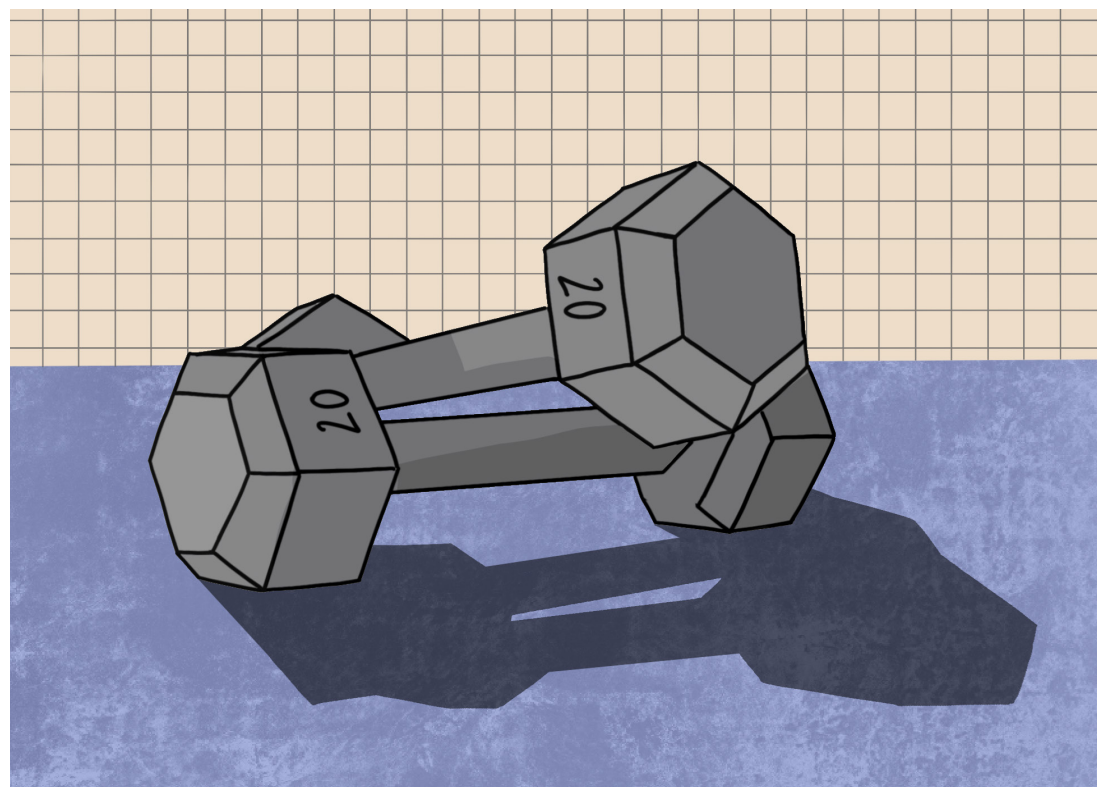
If this model of Fitness and Conditioning continues into the next school year, students will be able to see descriptions of each fitness class listed in the course catalog. They will

then choose a fitness class alongside their advisors while making course selections for the following year.

Two new fitness classes centered on weight lifting were added for this winter term. "There's less to do outside; we want to offer a little bit more opportunity for students to be able to train and utilize the spaces," said Assistant Athletic Director Mr. Andrew Dickson, who teaches a winter weight training class.

With a wide range of fitness options, the Athletics Department hopes that students will be able to find a workout regimen that best suits their needs and interests. Mr. Dickson said, "We're continuing to find better ways to make it more open to students, and we also want to make sure that we're providing a worthwhile opportunity for them."

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Graphic by Yujin Kim '23

## GIRLS' SOCCER RECAP



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Girls' Varsity Soccer supports one another in the huddle.

By **James Levien '24**  
Reporter

The Choate girls' varsity soccer team had a memorable season full of exciting moments and impressive victories. The team's 15-2-1 record earned them a spot in the New England Playoff Semifinals, where they gave a strong performance before ultimately losing to Westminster. However, the team's successes were not limited to the semifinals; they also claimed victories in the Founders League and WVNPSA league titles.

The season began on a high note with the team's annual pre-season trip to the Berkshires.



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Captain Emma Kirk '23 in action.

The trip included team bonding activities and intense workouts, which helped set the stage for the team's impressive 12-0-1 streak.

**"We've grown immensely this season, and I feel fortunate to play with such an amazing group."**

Alex Hassett '23

Head Coach Rick Koczak's hard work and leadership alongside Assistant Coaches Susan Peel Farrell and Emily Kaplan were recognized, as he was named Connecticut Girls Soccer Association Coach of the Year for the Prep/Private School Division. Despite the loss in the semifinals, the team's successes this season are a testament to the players and coaching staff's dedication and talent. More than ever, it is evident that Choate will continue to be a dominant force in girls' soccer for years to come.

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## THE SUCCESS OF FALL SPORTS



By **Anissa Wang '24**  
Staff Reporter

**Girls' Varsity Soccer:** The Girls' Varsity Soccer team had an outstanding season this fall, with an impressive record of 15-2-1. With a mix of four-year players and newer recruits, the team had a successful season and a great team bond. Their success in their interscholastic competitions made them both WVNPSA (Women's Western New England Prep School Soccer Association) Champions and Founders League Champions. Boar Pen was enthusiastic about gathering Choate students to support the team's games, and one with the largest turnout was the black-out-themed game against Westminster.

**Girls' JV Soccer:** Girls' JV Soccer also had a great fall season. Difficult practices involving drills and intense conditioning paid off when the team ended with a record of 10-2-3.

**Boys' Varsity Soccer:** Boys' Varsity Soccer had an exceptional season, finishing with a record of 13-4-3. The players' skill and close team bond set them up for success, making them Founders League Co-Champions. In addition, the team went undefeated in league with a record of 6-0-2. One notable game that the school community supported was the game against Deerfield, in which the soccer team won 2-1.

**Varsity Football:** Choate football has a famous reputation among New England prep schools, and the Varsity Football team



certainly lived up to it this fall. The team had a record of 7-1 and earned the 2022 Founders League Champion. The school community had a blast bringing the school spirit to cheer the football team on this fall, notably at the pink-out-themed game against Avon Old Farms, which attracted hundreds of Choate students. The football team also had hundreds of fans cheering on their big 40-32 win on Deerfield Day.

**Girls' Varsity Volleyball:** Girls' Varsity Volleyball had an impressive season with a 14-5 record. With six seniors, well-rounded players, and sharp skills, the team improved together this season and experienced success. Volleyball is a school favorite, and the team had many fans at their games this season.



**Boys' Varsity Water Polo:** The Boys' Varsity Water Polo team had an outstanding record of 12-3 this fall season. Many Choate students stopped by the Larry Hart Pool deck to watch their exciting games. The team had great success, especially in their 10-8 win against Deerfield. They advanced to the semi-finals and ended with an impressive fourth-place overall finish at the New England Championships.

**Girls' Varsity Field Hockey:** After a notoriously challenging preseason, the Varsity Field Hockey team had a fun season filled with exciting games and improving stick skills. They had a busy schedule of practices and 17 games, ending the season with a 4-13 record.

**Girls' JV Field Hockey:** With a large team of 21, the



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Girls' JV Field Hockey team had many wins and only one loss this fall season. The team had a wide range of experience, some players having multiple years of experience and some being brand new to the sport. Nonetheless, they finished the season with a record of 8-1-2, which included a long shut-out streak and an impressive 3-2 win over Deerfield.

**Cross Country:** Both teams had great seasons, the girls finishing 3-2 and the boys finishing 2-6. Long runs through Wallingford, campus, and the cross-country course brought the runners closer together and improved their endurance for success during intense races.

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