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D.A. ALL DAY!

Hispanic Heritage at D.A.: I Can't Believe I Lost That Game of Dominoes!

By Arianny R. '30

Hispanic Heritage month is celebrated annually from September 15th to October 15th to recognize the histories, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities. It began as Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 under President Lyndon B. Johnson and was expanded as a month-long observance in 1988.

Dominican Academy celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by bringing students together for an afternoon of food, music, and cultural appreciation. Organized by the Students of Color Association (S.O.C.A) and the Culture Club, the event featured local favorites such as Sophie's Cuban Cuisine, Despaña Authentic Spanish Foods, and Tacombi, known for its Mexican street food. The event went beyond food as students gathered together to play dominoes, putting their skills to the test and more importantly, learning how to win! Meanwhile, songs by popular Hispanic artists like Bad Bunny and Karol G filled the space, encouraging students and staff to dance and sing along. Presentations broadcasted over the loud speaker introduced the community to influential Hispanic figures like St. Rose of Lima, a Peruvian saint who devoted her life to caring for the poor and sick, and Dolores Huerta, a Mexican American labor leader who fought for farmworkers rights and better working conditions. Though their paths were different, both women showed how dedication to others can create a lasting impact. Their stories remind students that making a difference does not require fame or power. Sometimes, it begins with a simple act of kindness. To top it all off, freshman Amara Y. won a raffle basket filled with Hispanic goodies, including plantains, chocolate





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wafers, and the famous dulce de leche cookies!

As part of the celebration, Ms. Spelman, a teacher in D.A.'s English department, shared some of her personal connections with Hispanic heritage, being of Cuban and Spanish descent. Among her favorite traditions is eating lechon asado (roast pork) on Christmas Eve, along with enjoying Spanish Christmas treats like turrones (a type of nougat confection made with sugar and toasted almonds) and singing villancicos (Christmas carols). She also cherishes the celebration of Three Kings Day. Some of her most treasured memories include learning how to read Spanish using a book her aunt sent her from Spain and celebrating Christmas, a holiday that is greatly valued in Hispanic culture.



Ms. Spelman also emphasized the vital contributions Hispanic cultures have made to the United States and the importance of recognizing these tremendous contributions. The cowboy, for example, has its roots in Spain. In addition, the guitar, an immensely popular instrument in the U.S., is the national instrument of Spain. Furthermore, several parts of our country, including Florida, Louisiana, and most of the west, are majorly Spanish speaking.

Hispanic countries are very diverse, each having its own traditions, food, and music. Although they are mostly connected through religion and language, even the Spanish in many countries are different, having their own dialect. Ms. Spelman explains that, despite the countries' differences, as soon as she meets anyone from Latin America, there is a connection - almost as if there were a magic link. Shared language and cultural experiences can create a sense of familiarity across borders. Ms. Spelman also reflected on the value of living in New York City, where people from cultures around the world are represented. She explained that literature helps reveal the similarities between people across countries, but experiencing different cultures firsthand can be even more meaningful. As she put it, "Better than learning about or appreciating is actually experiencing foods, dances, art, literature, music, and even religions, from all over the world."

Dominican Academy's students go beyond simply learning about Hispanic culture by experiencing its food, music and traditions firsthand. Through the celebration, D.A. gave Hispanic students an opportunity to see aspects of their own cultures represented and appreciated within the school community. Whether through sharing a meal, playing dominoes, or singing along to familiar music, students could connect with their heritage while sharing it with others. Ultimately, the event highlighted not only the diversity of Hispanic cultures but also the students who bring those cultures to life at D.A.

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You're a D.A. Girl, Harry Potter

By Alice M. '28

On October 2nd, the new students were given a dress down day and greeted at the doors of St. John's gym by the world of Harry Potter for the annual "New Student Retreat."

The Dominican Academy Preachers (DAPs) and Ms. Gibilaro had brought the Hogwarts houses, characters, and lessons of love, respect, and, most importantly, friendship from Harry Potter to the new students of D.A. to explain our four Dominican pillars: study, preaching, just actions, and community. As a DAP, I had the opportunity to get the inside scoop on the planning, creation, and events of the New Student Retreat. The New Student Retreat is a memorable event for first-year students and transfer students, and takes precision and creativity to bring to life.

My experience at the new student retreat was what made me want to be a DAP. My freshman retreat eased the turbulent emotions I felt because I realized I was truly a part of the D.A. community and I saw where my future would be in D.A. The DAPs made me laugh and led me to center my school life around the Dominican pillars.



This year, every one of us was ecstatic that we were given the opportunity to be a part of the transition process with the new members of our community. The planning process was quick once we voted on the theme (Harry Potter), and everyone readily volunteered to do their part in the creation of the day. I wanted to find out what motivates Ms. Gibilaro, moderator for DAPs, to take on such a big project each year. She said, "The cool thing about DAPs is that there's always 'new blood' working alongside the 'veterans,' and I think this dynamic brings new energy and creativity every year." After many planning sessions, all that was left was the big day.

The New Student Retreat was a big success, being a fun but informative day about what makes Dominican Academy the community of welcoming, funny, and compassionate people beyond the stressful academics of high school, and where the new students' places are in this community. The new students broke the ice between them with fun facts and games, and spent the day learning with and from each other the Dominican pillars with a Harry Potter twist. The first ice breaker was between the DAPs and the new students, where we told our embarrassing freshman stories to show how everybody has an awkward start to high school. Then the new students got to know each other by their assigned groups and through the activities based on community, teamwork, and connection, became fast friends. Ron Weasley, Harry Potter, Draco Malfoy, and even Voldemort explained the pillars and asked questions that aided the

new students in figuring out how they could implement each pillar in everyday life. The end result was a completed Hogwarts crest with symbols to represent the ideas of all our new students on how to prioritize study,



deepen prayer, strengthen community, and execute just actions.

When speaking with the new students about what lesson they took away from the New Student Retreat, I was met with one popular answer regarding how an action as simple as saying "hi" to others in the hallway and trying to learn new things about each other every day could build up the community that we are privileged to call our own. The DAPs New Students Retreat serves as a testament to how small actions can make big changes and formalize our places in the Dominican Academy community - regardless of whether you're a new or returning student at 44 E 68th.

Touring Dominican Academy: A Freshman Student Ambassador's Perspective

By: Victoria M. '30

I first began touring high schools, including Dominican Academy, in October of my sixth grade year. At first, I was rather intimidated by everyone. I felt small and clueless when I saw the taller, older students surrounding me. During my first tour of D.A., I was shy when it came to asking questions, and I marveled more at the school building's grandeur than at the students and their achievements. Though I often felt this way when I began visiting high schools, my confidence improved as I toured more schools. I grew comfortable asking student ambassadors my questions and navigating high school buildings. I found myself asking the same questions I had heard from ambassadors: "Why did you choose D.A.?" "What clubs are you in?" "How did you make friends?" "How was the transition from middle school to high school?"



At this year's D.A. Open House, student ambassadors arrived around 9 a.m. and reported to their assigned locations. The prospective families were first welcomed by students and handed folders containing important information about the D.A. curriculum, student life, and interesting statistics. Each family also received a specific colored sticker. Families were later led upstairs to the Auditorium, where they heard speeches from Dr. Egler, Dr. Petit, and Mrs. Checo, and attended a Q&A with

rotating student panelists, ranging from freshmen to juniors. Then, they were taken on tours around the building led by National Honors Society seniors based on the color of their stickers. They were then encouraged to visit the Library or the Cafeteria to speak to individual student ambassadors and parents about their experiences. I was assigned to "mix and mingle in the Library" with other student ambassadors, including many of my freshman peers. We helped answer any lingering questions that prospective families – including our friends, families, and students from our former middle schools – had about clubs and athletics after their tours concluded.



From approximately 10:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. many uneasy, hesitant middle school girls and their families came into the Library and the student ambassadors welcomed them. While some girls opened up quite quickly, others were shy. I tried to be understanding, reminding myself that I had been in the same shoes less than a year ago. Dominic, D.A.'s tiger mascot, caught the eyes of student ambassadors and families alike as he walked around the building giving high fives and taking pictures. At noon, the student ambassadors started taking turns enjoying a pizza lunch provided by D.A.

After 20 minutes, we returned to our posts, refreshed and ready for the next few hours. Open House ran past its scheduled conclusion at 2 p.m. and lasted until 3 p.m. Many student ambassadors had to leave due to sports activities until there were only a handful of us left. By this time, the number of tours slowly started dwindling and there were not as many questions that we needed to answer. By the end of the day, I was satisfied with my experience but also completely exhausted. Still, I went home knowing that I had done what I had previously envisioned myself doing: talking about my personal D.A. experience with prospective families and daughters who walked the same path I did less than a year ago.

A Night of Questions

By Virginia R. '30

On Wednesday, October 21st, Dominican Academy welcomed an influx of new faces at the Mini Open House. They were a mixture of prospective students and their parents, wondering what makes Dominican Academy special. It was our job as student ambassadors to show them exactly what made all of us fall in love with D.A. No matter whether they already knew that Dominican Academy was their dream high school, or if the middle schoolers did not have a clue, they all left with a firm imprint of what it means to go to Dominican Academy: its rigorous academics, its welcoming community and sisterhood, and its beautiful campus.

The first open house at a high school is always important. It's where you meet your future classmates, teachers, and school

overall. After several opening speeches from Mrs. Checo, Dr. Petit, Dr. Egler, and more, the tour guides took groups around the building and answered questions about what they could look forward to at Dominican Academy. Once this was finished, more Student Ambassadors greeted children and parents in our Cafeteria and Library.

One of the Student Ambassadors, a freshman named Eri C., said: "My job was as a "mix and mingler" in the Cafeteria. After families went on tours, they could come into the cafeteria, where people like me asked if they had any other questions and started up conversations. I enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with complete strangers, not as the person asking the questions, but the one answering them. It was a new experience, as I was responsible for how the person I was interacting with would see the people at DA."

As Eri stated, the open houses that Dominican Academy hosts are extremely influential in whether students pick us for high school. The prospective students and their parents learned over the course of the night why we love our school so much. I remember my first open house, all the way back in sixth grade. I already knew that I wanted to attend Dominican Academy. I was extremely eager to see the inside of the school that I had long admired, but the tour of the building and meeting current students cemented DA as my number one choice for high school.

The open houses are the deciding factor for most prospective students. They show what the school life is like and introduce students to their potential future classmates and teachers. The questions asked are intended to show what the high school is at its core. Hopefully, the students touring Dominican Academy walked away with a firm understanding of the warm community that makes up our school.

Four Perspectives on School in the City

How Many Freshmen Can Crowd Around a Giant Dinosaur?!

By: Eri C. '30

On Wednesday, October 21st, all grades of D.A. students went on a trip to different spots in Manhattan, as part of the "School In the City" event. In the morning, all D.A. freshmen gathered in the Auditorium, where we organized groups before leaving for the Museum of Natural History. We would be doing a scavenger hunt, and each group had one photographer to record photos for a science lab. I was very grateful to have been chosen for that role because I can show a selection of pictures in this article!

The day was breezy and the weather was gorgeous, which was a relief as we did have to walk for around thirty minutes to get to our destination. After a nice stroll through Central Park,



we arrived and our mission began. We had to locate different sections of the museum, often having to take a group photo for our lab assignment. There was about two hours allocated for our scavenger hunt before we all met up at the gift shop to be dismissed. As a result, it was somewhat of a challenge to make sure that we finished what we came here to do with enough time. Our group began with the first floor, which included the Biodiversity Hall and the Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. In the former, there were intricate figures of many different organisms, and it looked like a gigantic diorama. The Hall of Gems and Minerals was a feast for the eyes, as there were many shiny objects and trinkets to pore over. The first floor also contained the Hall of Ocean Life, which was otherworldly, especially with the giant model of the big whale. We also took a picture with the *Patagotitan*, the largest dinosaur in the Wallach Orientation Center. It was definitely hard to miss! The Hall of Human Origins was where we saw Lucy's skeleton, and the evolution of our species' skulls. (Lucy was one of the first nearly completed skeletons of an ancient human.) Our group also explored the new section of the museum, the Richard Gilder Center For Science, Education, and Innovation. We almost did not finish the hunt in time, but with a little teamwork (and some speedwalking), we managed to get all the information and photos we needed. Overall, the day with my friends was something to remember and cherish. Any trip to the Museum of Natural History surely warranted a good time. Though it was a bit difficult to navigate the museum in an efficient and timely manner, the puzzle solving was greatly appreciated. Now I feel like I know the area a little better. As someone who is not from the city and has to commute, School in the City was a unique way for me to be more comfortable with a new environment. While it was not my first time going to the Museum of Natural History, the purpose of this particular trip is what will make it memorable for me in the future. After all, it is not everyday you get to do a scavenger hunt, especially in a place where every time you go, there is something new to discover. For the Freshman section of School in the City, it was definitely a wonderful experience. Thank you, D.A.!



Viewing the Roman/Greek Wing of the MET Through the Eyes of a Sophomore

By Kayleen D. '29



It was a typical Thursday morning and all of the sophomores sat tight in the MPR for our group assignments. We were heading to

the Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of my absolute favorite museums, ever! As we departed from the school, my friends and I felt the chilly wind hit our faces as the sun was beaming on us. We walked up scenic Fifth Avenue, enjoying a glimpse of Central Park, which was mostly covered by trees, while laughing and making silly jokes with my friends. We finally made it to the MET, where we sat in a large waiting room, anxiously anticipating our scavenger hunt papers.

This trip was a Latin-based project for us, where we would travel around the museum, find ancient artifacts and sculptures, and document them on our papers with our respective groups. I used my Kodak mini camera to capture the wonders of the museum and some of my amazing sophomore friends to contribute to the school's social media. We tried to complete our scavenger hunt, but some parts of the museum were unfortunately closed. We learned a lot about Roman daily life, including what they wrote with or used in classrooms, the Roman and Greek gods, and we even transcribed into Latin an ancient document of a woman. This was very significant, because women were usually not considered for important documentation in ancient times. Along the way, we also took entertaining photos mimicking the paintings and statues, which was super hilarious. The final piece of work was to pick out a structure that grabbed our attention the most. I chose a woman whose face was shown on an elevated stand and did not show any other part of her, only her face. This structure stood out to me as it allowed me to observe not just her face, but her soul through her dead and somewhat unsettling expression.



This trip gave us the opportunity to cover thousands of years of history in such a short amount of time, reflect on it, and contrast it to our daily lives. If I could rewind time, this is certainly a moment I would go back to for the first time again.



Illustration by Lucy P. '27

The Universe, Pedro Pascal and the Knicks

Setareh B. '28

This year, the Juniors went back to the same spot as our first ever school in the city, the American Museum of Natural History! This time, we experienced the museum in a new way: through the eyes of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein and guided by a list of exhibits put together by Mr. Ponce, the Juniors' physics and APES teacher. We began our day admiring the

changing leaves during a quick walk through Central Park in the chilly fall weather. We arrived promptly at 10:15 a.m. and entered through the 81st St. entrance, ready to experience the museum.

Our time began at the Rose Center For Earth and Space. After breaking off into groups, we wandered through the exhibit that described our place in the cosmos. The display focused on the forces which shape our world, showing things like 168 global rock specimens and the universe's weather activity. Almost immediately, we began answering questions in our packet about our universe, galaxies, stars, and planets. We were able to learn about the 13-billion-year history behind the universe. Walking into the exhibit felt like stepping into a high-tech spaceship, information and diagrams explaining dark matter, astrophysics, and more were displayed all over the walls. The space was both informative and interactive, allowing us to immerse ourselves into the ideas of the universe. The exhibit covered the time from the Big Bang to the formation of stars, galaxies, the solar system, and our own planet, Earth. The exhibit's descriptions explained the contrasting ideas of Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein, which directly tied to our current unit in physics, projectile motion. We enjoyed connecting our classwork to what we learned at the museum.

Next, our chaperones passed out tickets for the planetarium show, "Encounters in the Milky Way." Excitement was high as we heard that the beloved actor Pedro Pascal was narrating the planetarium show, and I could not tell if the Juniors' shared enthusiasm was for the show itself or Pascal's voiceover. Waiting to enter the Hayden Planetarium was probably my least favorite part of the day. We sat around for what felt like hours before being told to enter the planetarium. Once inside, we made ourselves comfortable, excited to see the 24-minute show. The show began and Pedro Pascal's introduction made my friends giggle. I must admit the show was slightly scary at first – the dome of the auditorium, echoing voices, and life-like images made it feel realistic. It was captivating to feel as though we were being pulled away from Earth and into far galaxies. The show explored the dynamic motions of the sun, solar system, and the Milky Way. I grew more interested in the history of the universe as I wondered about the cause of life in our galaxy and the possibility of life in other galaxies. Once the show ended, we shuffled out of the auditorium with more questions than we entered with, wanting to know more.

Our next stop was the "Extinct and Endangered: Insects in Peril" exhibit. It was a photo exhibition displaying 40 massive portraits of insects in order to address insect extinction and conservation. It was fascinating to see the insects so greatly enlarged. The insects' smallest details were visible, which made intricately comparing each insect very enjoyable. We assessed which species were rare, threatened or already extinct, and drew an insect of our choice. I chose the Rocky Mountain Locust and observed how its wings were almost

transparent and looked fragile in such detail. I tried my best to include every aspect and do the photographs justice, but I am no artist. The level of detail was too difficult to depict by hand. Once we finished our drawings, it was time to head to the next and final stop on our visit.

On our way, we passed the Akeley Hall of African Mammals. Until now, it had been my favorite exhibit in the museum, but it may have moved down to second place after we visited our final gallery, The Allison and Roberto Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. The hall included the most miniscule to the biggest gems and rocks I had ever seen. At the center of the room stood massive amethyst (my birthstone) geodes. The geodes' bright purple color and the light reflecting off it caught my eyes almost immediately. I had been to the exhibit before, but doing so with a guided packet helped me appreciate the parts I had never paid attention to, such as the mineral compositions of rocks and gems or the atomic structure of crystals. Within the hall, there was a special exhibition, "For the Win: Objects of Sports Excellence" which will remain open until January 2027. The exhibit's highlight is the New York Knicks' 2025-26 NBA Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy replica, which stands at the entrance of the exhibit for all to see. Immediately, my mind went back to the Knicks' memorable run and championship win last June. It was truly fascinating to see what the trophy looks like up close. The exhibit also housed the NFL's Vince Lombardi Trophy, Jesse Owens's 1936 Berlin Olympic gold medal, Kevin Durant's 2017 NBA championship ring, and so much more. Each piece demonstrated how science and sports, two topics people do not usually pair together, actually go hand in hand.

Our day ended in the gem hall around 12:30 pm. I walked out with my friends, and we reflected on another memorable School in the City. It was engrossing to see each exhibition, connect parts of the galleries to actual topics we were covering in school, and learn more about the world through a planetarium show, insects, and gems. I felt so fortunate that we had the ability to return to the Museum of Natural History, allowing us to view the exhibits in greater detail and spend a day learning outside of the classroom and directly in the city where we attend school.

A Dive Into the Power of Media and Activism

By: Ysabela S. '27

On the cold, sunny morning of October 22nd, it finally hit me: It was the first of our many last high school memories at D.A. The day began with a refreshing walk down Fifth Avenue. Many students soaked in the autumn foliage and cool breeze, while others engaged in conversations filled with neverending chatter and laughter. Amidst the busyness of college application season, many of us seniors have forgotten the importance of enjoying the company of those around us. Fortunately, we had the opportunity to take a step away from the stress of the college

process and visit the Paley Center for Media for our last Fall School in the City.

As we entered the building on West 52nd Street, many of us wondered, "What are we doing here?" We were greeted by a beautiful red carpet (not prettier than our very own, of course) and walls covered in photos from iconic television shows, movies, and even musical pop stars. Ms. Bekah, our host, introduced herself, and brought us to the tenth floor for a brief overview of the center's history and their extensive archive of media/radio, dating back several decades.

She began the presentation with an open discussion about the importance of media in regards to advocating against particular social injustices. To encourage participation, Ms. Bekah asked us to talk about some issues in our modern society that we are particularly passionate about, with common responses including the ethical debate on the use of artificial intelligence, the inadequate access to education in underdeveloped countries, and women's rights. We eventually transitioned into a conversation about the government's responsibility to protect the rights of citizens, institute laws to promote order, and organize programs and services for the public. When these duties are not being fulfilled for the common good, citizens often protest in various ways such as boycotting, marching, and lobbying.

Ms. Bekah then presented primary footage from the sit-ins during the Civil Rights Movement, displaying the violence, brutality, and dehumanizing treatment towards Black Americans as a result of the Jim Crow Laws. We highlighted how the media portrayed white Americans as the aggressors, while Black Americans were peacefully protesting against racial discrimination, yet the Black Americans were still the ones who were arrested. She then shared a video of high school students planning to protest against police brutality and fight for change. One student in particular exemplified true leadership in a speech where she highlighted the importance of combating racial stereotypes by battling for systemic change in a nonviolent manner. Watching this, I felt empowered. I began to realize that being young should not hinder our ability to take on greater responsibility in advancing equity and justice within our own communities.

To further our understanding on the various forms of activism, we watched a news coverage on Colin Kaepernick, a former NFL player who faced harsh backlash for sitting during the national anthem in protest against racial inequality and systemic oppression. He stated that he did not want to take pride in and represent a country that did not protect the rights of its people, regardless of race and background. In addition to his refusal to stand during the national anthem, he also wore socks that portrayed police officers as pigs, a highly controversial fashion statement intended to address the issues of police brutality and racism. Ms. Bekah then asked us to share our opinions on Kaepernick's form of protest. Many of us expressed our appreciation for his use of his platform to

raise awareness about issues that fail to receive enough attention from the media. Furthermore, I added that in the action of sitting down during the national anthem prior to a football game, Kaepernick did not only appeal to NFL fans, but it later became a headline that attracted the attention of millions of non-football fans. Through this, there came increased discussion surrounding systemic racism and how it can impact American citizens. We concluded this section of the presentation by discussing how the media's portrayal of current events can alter and shape the way the public receives information, for better or for worse, as well as their views on recent events and social injustices.

To conclude, we discussed the issue of gun violence, particularly in the context of school shootings. We watched a unique advertisement from the Sandy Hook Promise that portrayed how school supplies can go from being mere back-to-school accessories to defensive protection in the event of a school shooting. It was interesting to see how television advertisements could stir certain emotions of fear and sadness while being able to capture the viewer's attention and convey an important message about an ongoing issue. To end on a positive note, we viewed a powerful speech by Naomi Wadler, an 11-year-old girl who focused on the impact of gun violence, particularly on Black women and girls at disproportionate rates. It felt inspiring and moving to see our youth take a significant role in advocating for change.

As I parted ways with my friends, I reflected on my own experiences. I thought about the different ways I can serve as a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves, and how each of us could use our unique talents and abilities to advocate for issues about which we are most passionate. Despite the serious subjects discussed, I left light-hearted and hopeful that we would one day live in a world where our efforts for change will pay off.



Illustration by Lucy P. '27

Sing: A Thrilling and Spooky D.A. Event

By Peyton R. '29



On Thursday, October 29th, a special Halloween movie event was held in the Cafeteria. The short film that was played was "Sing: Thriller,"

which follows the characters from the popular "Sing" movies, but with a Halloween twist. As seen in the title, this film was a tribute to honour Michael Jackson's song "Thriller." The film incorporates the eerie nature of the "Thriller" song through an explosion in a vibrant science lab, which mind controls the characters in the iconic "Thriller" dance. The sophomores attending the event fondly remembered the dance class they took last year centred around the song and its choreography. At the end of the film, Buster Moon, the protagonist, has to escape from everyone who is mind controlled, but a surprising twist at the end had everyone asking what was real and what was a figment of Moon's imagination. In addition to the film, the Halloween mood was set in the Cafeteria through decorations and snacks. Mummy and zombie decorations hung from the ceiling over an assortment of snacks that sat in cobweb-shaped bowls on the tables. The Cafeteria, usually filled with loud conversations, was quiet as everyone focused on what would happen next in the movie... and eating their delicious treats. The combination of the movie, the well-known "Thriller" song, and the yummy snacks all resulted in a truly "thrilling" event.



ATHLETICS

The Cross-Country Season: Running Together, Growing Together

By Elnaz M. '28

This Cross Country season has been a time of new challenges, personal goals, and creating memories with teammates. Each race brings an opportunity to improve, while every practice helps us grow as runners. Some of the best parts of Cross Country also happen beyond the course, from cheering each other on to celebrating our accomplishments together.

Most of our meets this year took place in Van Cortlandt. This course is notorious for its length and steep hills. However, training three times a week prepares each runner to face this challenge. A new addition this year is Wednesday strength-training practices. During these sessions, we focus on exercises such as planks and burpees to strengthen our core and build endurance, which are important for running. Although the workouts can be exhausting, they remind us that improvement takes time and that each practice brings us one step closer to our goals.



On Tuesdays and Thursdays, practices take place in Central Park, ranging from long recovery runs to shorter hill repeats. Hill repeats can be especially challenging and exhausting, requiring us to push through discomfort even when our legs feel tired. Having teammates beside us makes these workouts a little easier, as we always boost each other. These workouts also help us build the stamina we need during meets.



Cross Country also fosters teamwork and encouragement. During races, you can always hear our cheers on the sidelines, strengthening our teammates to keep pushing through the course. After the meet is over, team members bring post-race snacks, such as Munchkins, bananas, tangerines, hot chocolate, and Gatorade, that we can enjoy. While running is often seen as an individual sport, Cross Country is about supporting one another. Whether cheering for teammates who are still running or sharing snacks after a race, these little moments bring our team closer together.

My favorite meet so far was the Fordham Prep Development race. We all took a bus after school to get to Van Cortlandt. During the long bus ride, we braided each other's hair, added clips, and listened to music. It was a sweet time when we all bonded as a team. Moments like this remind me that some of the best memories from Cross Country happen outside of the actual races.

Cross Country is an excellent opportunity to make new friends. Freshman Sophia T. says, “ Cross Country has played an important role in my transition to D.A., as it's given me the opportunity to meet students from all different grades. The practices and meets have really helped me get to know my teammates and have enabled me to make friends that I probably wouldn't have otherwise.” Sophia's experience reflects how Cross Country brings together students across different grade levels who might not have connected otherwise. At our most recent meet, NYC XC Carnival and Sophomore Champs, we delivered impressive results. Liv C. won her race and broke the tape in the Freshmen Girls Overflow race, while Sophia T. placed 4th and Leela K. finished 14th. Lucy S. took 24th in the Varsity Girls 2.5 Mile race. Maya P. placed 2nd in the Sophomore Girls Champs. Congratulations to all these runners! Their determination and commitment reflect the hard work put into every practice.

These achievements would not have been possible without the guidance of our coaches, Coach Jen and Ms. McGinley. They constantly applaud us to push ourselves, especially when we are tired. They are also very understanding of each runner's individual needs, recognizing that everyone improves at a different pace. Whether offering advice before a race or encouraging us through a difficult workout,

their support reminds us that we are capable of more than we sometimes think.

Looking ahead, we have three more meets left in the season. As we approach the end, we look forward to continuing to challenge ourselves and celebrating each other's accomplishments. There will undoubtedly be difficult races and tiring practices, but the shared effort and team support make everything worthwhile.

Beyond the Net: D.A. Volleyball

By Sofia C. '28

This year's volleyball season has been one of the best as far as team and school spirit! As one of the most popular sports at D.A., volleyball is heavily supported and a central part of our school's culture and team spirit. D.A.'s volleyball team fosters community among the school, as many teachers and students come out to support our Tigers. When the season started, all gears were set to go with pre-season practices that had the team fully ready. Although the season started off slow and went by too quickly, all of our Volleyball Tigers came together and played with their hearts. The players were filled with excitement, especially as they started the last week of their season. As Senior Night came around, team captain, Alia P. said, "I'm really excited for Senior Night because our seniors have been doing amazing this season and I can't wait to be able to celebrate them and all the hard work and dedication they have put into the team!" As their final game started, every single player was ready. Jasmine O '28, a player on the team, shared, "I'm very excited for our game against St. Jean Baptiste. It'll be our last game, so I know that we're going to give it our all and play hard!" And they did, winning 3-1. This season showed the perseverance of our D.A. Tigers and highlighted the community fostered by supporting our players. ***GO TIGERS!***





From Preseason Camp to Senior Night; A Soccer Season to Remember

By: Emily F. '28

Soccer at D.A. is truly special, though I may be biased. Starting in August, our team has been dedicated to attending practices and games for the past two months, with the season ending Friday, October 23. Soccer is unique because before school even starts, the team attends a sleep away camp



upstate in the Berkshires where we hone our skills and bond as a team. This trip is always a highlight and an exciting way to start off the season. It is one of the many activities I look forward to every year.

While at camp, we had multiple training sessions each day and even scrimmaged the girls team from the Darrow School, which has some international students. We worked with the United Soccer Group, and the coaches we met during this trip were so beneficial to our development as a team. However, we did not just spend our time playing soccer, we also had so much fun together as a team. When we weren't training, we were laughing during



meal times, playing on the volleyball courts, and participating in trivia night with fellow campers.

Our season was fairly successful, highlighted by a 1-0 win against St. Vincent Ferrer on Senior Night, a special moment for not just our seniors, but their families and the rest of our team. Our Soccer Tigers ended their season on a high note, beating Cardinal Spelman and Holy Cross back to back, making the end of the season memorable.

The soccer team has made such a big impact on my time at D.A., It allowed me to make some of my first friends in high school, who I still have a deep connection with today, as well as introducing me to upperclassmen and forming a bond with them. It has also allowed me to grow so much as a person, from being a nervous freshman into an assured captain. I am so grateful for this team and the community it has enabled me to be a part of, and I'm glad that now I can be a role model for underclassmen. I am beyond grateful that I still have a year left on the team!

Tennis Tigers Roaring Loudly

By Olivia M. '30

As the sounds of bright yellow tennis balls bouncing off rackets filled the air, Dominican Academy's varsity tennis team just wrapped up another unforgettable fall season. Rain or shine, our team was always ready to train, with a smile on each girl's face.

The Dominican Academy tennis season has now come to an end,but one

thing that certainly has not, are the incredible bonds we formed with each other. At our first tryout, everyone was nervous at the sight of the new coach. There was no denying that. We kept sprinting, doing pushups, and so much conditioning that our



legs were shaking. We wondered if we could even survive. By our first match, our perspective completely shifted. During our first match against Monsignor McClancy, Coach would come up to us and say, "Do not worry about it; play like you." That was all we needed to hear. We gave our all, fought through every match, and ended up finishing as state semifinalists.

On a personal note, playing with this team was the greatest thing to ever happen to me. Since tryouts started in late August, I was able to create so many new bonds, not only with freshmen, but with sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Every bus ride to our practice spot or match spot, would be filled with chattering and laughter. I could not single out a girl who was on her phone- we were always caught up in the moment. Playing with a new coach helped us improve our skill sets so much, and we were able to learn many new things that helped us earn our way to becoming semifinalists for states. Through this tennis team, we were given so many great opportunities, such as being able to play at USTA, which welcomed us under its blazing lights, or West Side Tennis Club, which gave us the chance to play on a new court surface. Being a freshman in the lineup has shown me how my hard work and dedication paid off. For every match I would give my all, though sometimes that was not enough. The team has gone through some tough losses, where the bus rides home were almost silent. But, being together as a team helped us realize how strong our friendship really is, no matter wins or losses. I could not have asked for a better team-or a better doubles partner. We collectively made this a tennis season to remember!

OUR TEAM ROSTER
SENIORS- Gemma C. , Grace T. , Eileen L. , Christine J.
JUNIORS- Mary S. , Kamilla C. K., Francesca G.
SOPHOMORES- Isabella S. , Isabella T.
FRESHMEN- Olivia M. , Lara K. , Sadie B.
COACH- Mr. Emmett E.

COLUMNS

Book Review- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

By Alice M. '28



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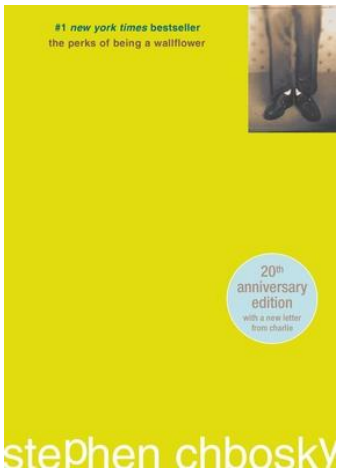

Rating:
Title: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*
Author: Stephen Chbosky

I was first introduced to *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky through the movie adaptation, starring Logan Lerman and Emma Watson. The movie changed my life and my perspective of the world. The main character, Charlie, haunted my very being. I looked to the book for more answers about who he was, what Hollywood had missed, and how I could continue to uncover more about this story that struck me deep in my soul. I sprinted to the 40th Street Barnes and Noble and purchased this coming-of-age epistolary novel. I voraciously read the book in a single night, not even bothering to pause my reading for some sleep. By the time the sun went up, I knew that *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* had surpassed any expectations I could have set for it. It manages to make me feel nostalgic for a life I have not lived and people I have never met.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower follows the timid high school freshman, Charlie Kelmekis, as he battles his mental health issues while starting at a new school and making friends with a group of seniors that changes his life. He writes letters to the reader and always signs off with "Love Always, Charlie." The letters are witty, sweet, and always lead you to uncover one more piece of the real story behind who Charlie is at his core and all he has overcome.

This four Tiger token book entrapped me in its pages and left me wanting more when I turned the final page. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is the perfect story for high school students but does deal with heavy things including depression, sexual abuse, and grief. It will take you on a journey of love and friendship, but lacks what I consider to be healthy relationships, making it not five Tiger token worthy. I recommend watching the movie after reading this book because it is a wonderful book-to-screen adaptation. Overall, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a must read, so grab your tissues and settle into this wonderful story.

If you have any suggestions on what I should read next, please email me at amorrison2028@dominicanacademy.org!

Art and Architecture- Artistic vs. Artificial

By Iris M. '27

This week alone, I have noticed a video ad for a pharmacy on the subway, hair

inspiration photos on Pinterest, a poster advertising breakfast combos at a local coffee shop, and another advertising Trivia Night at D.A. that were all clearly created with generative AI (genAI). I undoubtedly also viewed countless other AI-generated images of which I was unaware. Media platforms and businesses are increasingly replacing advertisements or general imagery that would traditionally be created by human artists or graphic designers with images generated using AI.

Can AI images ever reach a point where they can truly be considered art? And in a world where it is becoming difficult to distinguish what is made by humans and what is not, how can human artists preserve the relevance of their craft in order to find employment? These questions and more remain unanswered – it is difficult to find definitive, quantitative statistics on how many artists or images are currently being replaced by AI as it is a technology that is ever-advancing and used by so many. It is unclear what genAI's rise will mean to the art world even just a few months in the future, but Pope Leo's recent words have sparked dialogue about this issue of AI-generated "art" within the Catholic Church.

As of August 2026, a digital news and analysis publication reported that over 150 million people use genAI to create images each month. According to IBM, generative AI is defined as "artificial intelligence (AI) that can create original content such as text, images, video, audio or software code in response to a user's prompt or request." This technology analyzes huge sets of data on the internet (including artworks and images), identifies patterns within these data sets, then uses the information it has stored to produce images tailored to the request it is given by a user. For businesses, it is often cheaper and more efficient to rely on AI images than to hire human artists. AI also offers the option to create highly-customizeable images tailored to each business's requests. However, besides generating images modeled on the existing work of artists, genAI also creates the potential for misinformation and disinformation, and poses a major threat to the environment by using extreme amounts of energy and polluting water from data centers.

In May 2025, Pope Leo XIV released a five-chapter encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas,* focused on AI's growing influence and the ethics surrounding this developing technology. He emphasized how while AI is not a technology which is inherently evil, it is ultimately controlled by humans and therefore must not replace human impact or be used for purposes that threaten the common good.

Following the encyclical's release, on October 2nd, Pope Leo hosted a meeting organized by the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education with artists and curators called "The Art of Possibility: Weaving Together" at the Vatican's Apostolic Palace. Referencing *Magnifica Humanitas,* he addressed artificial intelligence and art through a Catholic moral lens. In his speech during the meeting, Leo

stressed that the fundamental difference between human-made artwork and images created with genAI is that while true art is a result of creativity and inspiration, AI generates unoriginal images simply inspired by work already done by humans. He explained that in the Catholic Church's perspective, art is reflective of human experiences, goals, and emotions, and is a catalyst for internal thought and reflection. He referenced St. Augustine's idea of the "restlessness of the human heart in search for truth," saying that art is born out of this same restlessness. He called for a renewed relationship between cultural institutions, artists, and the Church. "The Church needs you. This is especially true in this age of artificial intelligence, in which we urgently need to distinguish human art from what is produced by machines," he said.

Fr. Peter Martyr Yungwirth, OP, who is the pastor of the Parishes of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Catherine of Siena and regularly leads Mass for D.A., elaborated on the importance of the relationship between art and the Catholic Church, saying, "Beautiful art helps us to recognize God and his goodness, and to be able to offer Him our gratitude and our love and thanksgiving for what he's been able to do for and through other people."

The responses I received from D.A. students in a survey about their opinions on AI and art largely echo the sentiments of Pope Leo and the Catholic Church. While only 16.7% of responders had generated their own images using AI, all reported seeing AI-generated images in their everyday lives in some iteration. "AI generated images have become a part of everyday life. At local delis, I constantly see AI images of goods and services. Even in my own education, I see AI images or perhaps AI wording. It bothers me that people cannot tell the difference between AI and human effort," responded senior Natalie Y.

Most D.A. student responders also expressed that AI generations and true, human-made images are not, and can never be the same and that AI cannot be considered art because it is simply based on the real work of humans who used their own inspiration and physical skills to create their work. Sophomore Audrey P. responded,"AI-generated images are not made with the struggle and depth that real art is made with, therefore, no emotions can be conveyed to the person interpreting it. It just doesn't fit the definition of what it really means to create art."

While I believe there are certain areas in which artificial intelligence can be used positively, I will never consider an AI-generated image to be art. Art is inspired and created through deliberate and conscious thought – whether that be a painting, a novel, or a song. AI algorithms can mimic inspired thought, but cannot think for themselves, meaning they cannot create art. I am also much more likely to enter a business or a restaurant with unique images. To me, human-made art signals hard work, thought, and care, and if I see a business with AI-generated posters out front, I view it as a sign of carelessness and unoriginality.

Finally, real art has the ability to spark important dialogue or positive change. Positive change cannot come from a system that actively harms families, pollutes the environment, and potentially steals work from artists who have dedicated their lives to mastering their craft.

Further reading:

- The Rise of AI Art in Everyday Visual Culture
- Pope Leo on AI art: Beyond aesthetics, 'there is an ontological difference'

Faculty Feature- Former No. 1 Junior Player in the U.S. Coaches Tiger Tennis: Coach Emmett Egger

By Sophie A. '29

Tigers, have you heard? Following a season's worth of countless serves, sets, and matches and under the guidance of a new coach, D.A.'s Varsity Tennis Team advanced into the City Championships and the State Semifinal! I had the opportunity to speak to Coach Emmett Egger, our new Varsity Tennis Coach, and learn about his passion for the sport, his position, what it entails, and his life prior to joining our Athletic Department.

Having begun playing tennis after church on Sundays, Coach Emmett quickly developed an affinity for the sport, beginning to pursue it competitively at the age of seven and later participating in numerous esteemed local, national, international junior championship matches, including the Junior Davis Cup. His rank and prestige grew with his passion: Coach Emmett was ranked as high as number one junior player in the nation for singles and doubles, while simultaneously taking part in several global tournaments and playing Division One tennis at the University of Washington. Regardless the stage of his tennis career, coaching others, which served as constructive reinforcement and ensured understanding, remained an integral component of his daily four-to-eight-hour training. At the age of twenty-two, he concluded his exceptional competitive career, later coaching numerous recreational and high-performance junior players at a country club and tennis academy before pursuing a law degree from the University of Miami. Coach Emmett has practiced law at multiple firms in Florida and New York for the past seven years, indulging in the occasional recreational tennis game when time permits.

Although Coach Emmett was relatively unfamiliar with D.A. prior to learning about the available coaching position from a close friend, he perceived the opening as an attractive opportunity to implement his love for tennis and to support players as they grow both in regards to, and outside of, the sport. Having sought to connect with players promptly upon receiving the position, he maintained the belief that "a day in tennis" initiates before, after, and during practice. He worked to communicate effectively with individual players and spent time with the team preceding and following practices, which were supplemented by matches, with his objective being to perform valuable analysis

and reflection and establish a system of communication that addressed differences in how information was processed among players. Witnessing the fruits of the team's efforts, especially player improvement and growth, has been incredibly rewarding for him, having understood the substantial effort put forth by Tennis Tigers both on the court and in the classroom, and the difficulty that comes with effectively doing so.

In subsequent seasons, Coach Emmett seeks to continue to help Tiger Tennis prosper as an environment in which lifelong friendships, mutual respect, and a constant pursuit of excellence can be cultivated among players. He recognizes that, although he is significant to the team's success, the players act as the heart of the team, whose personal goals - whether they be short-term or long-term - he aspires to add value to. Encouraging them to work diligently through triumph and adversity, particularly with teammates, Coach firmly believes that the players have grown both within the sport and as individuals. Upon the conclusion of the Fall 2026 season, he is filled with tremendous gratitude for the privilege to have been a part of the team's outstanding journey into the City Championship and State Semifinal.

The remarkable achievements of Tiger Tennis throughout the 2026 fall season serve as a testament to the determination, persistent work, and zeal shown by the team and Coach Emmett alike. We are incredibly excited to witness all that he can bring to the Athletic Department at 44 E 68th!

Finance- The Biggest Liar: *You Can See Everything*

By Paloma G. '28



Has your Tikok FYP been filled with videos of people in vests dancing to "How to Love" by Lil Wayne? Mine has, and this Tiktok video is a recreation of a scene from a new documentary called "You Can See Everything". This documentary talks about the rise and fall of a multi-billion dollar company called Theranos and its founder, Elizabeth Holmes. Her story is one of the most interesting, yet uncanny, cases of financial fraud.

After dropping out of Stanford at 19, Elizabeth Holmes founded a start-up company called Theranos. In summary, this company claimed that by analyzing the blood from the prick of a finger, their advanced technology would be able to identify and diagnose illnesses. This was a revolutionary idea as people would no longer have to endure long, painful blood tests that require many vials of blood. Instead, blood testing would not only become more efficient, but also less expensive. Initially, Holmes' start-up was a success, amassing over 700 million dollars

of investment. Her company also had extremely influential figures on the board, including George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, who were both former U.S. Secretary of States, as well as Richarch Kovacevich, former Wells Fargo CEO. Holmes even managed to get a partnership with Walgreens that would bring her company's groundbreaking blood test machines into stores.

Not only did Holmes attract investors with her innovative idea, but also through her charisma and presence. In order to give the appearance of a respected figure, she changed herself to fit a persona, specifically Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple. Holmes purposely made her voice deeper and wore a black turtleneck, which was signature of Jobs. By acting and dressing in this way, Holmes was deemed an honest and powerful person, someone with whom you would not want to mess. She also gained many impressive titles, such as "Youngest Female Billionaire" by Forbes, "Woman of the Year" by Glamour, and "Bloomberg's 50 Most Influential."

There was just one problem. Because of her credible demeanor, Holmes was able to manipulate studies and research to make it seem like Theranos was legitimate. In reality, the blood testing device that Theranos claimed to have created never worked and failed quality control. This led to the misdiagnosing of many patients. Her company went downhill after an investigator from the Wall Street Journal revealed that Theranos was conducting its studies using regular blood testing methods and not their own. After this article was published, it was further proved that Elizabeth was faking results and lying to investors about the actual capabilities of her company and its financial condition. Eventually, Theranos had its lab privileges removed and was sued, leading to its downfall.

Finally, Holmes was sentenced in 2023 to 11 years in prison, but she is now serving a reduced sentence of 10 years. Elizabeth Holmes is one of the most infamous manipulators that we have seen throughout history. Through the story of Theranos, we can learn the importance of researching the companies you are looking to invest in as well as not falling for scams. Due to the increased use of social media and A.I., scams have gotten harder to avoid. Therefore, it is crucial to remember to never share personal information (such as your social security number) unless it is a trusted source, look into online retailers before purchasing an item, and have a good sense of when something looks fishy. So, next time you get an ad from Tiktok Shop and want to buy the product, take some time to check it out and read reviews, you never know when something is a scam.

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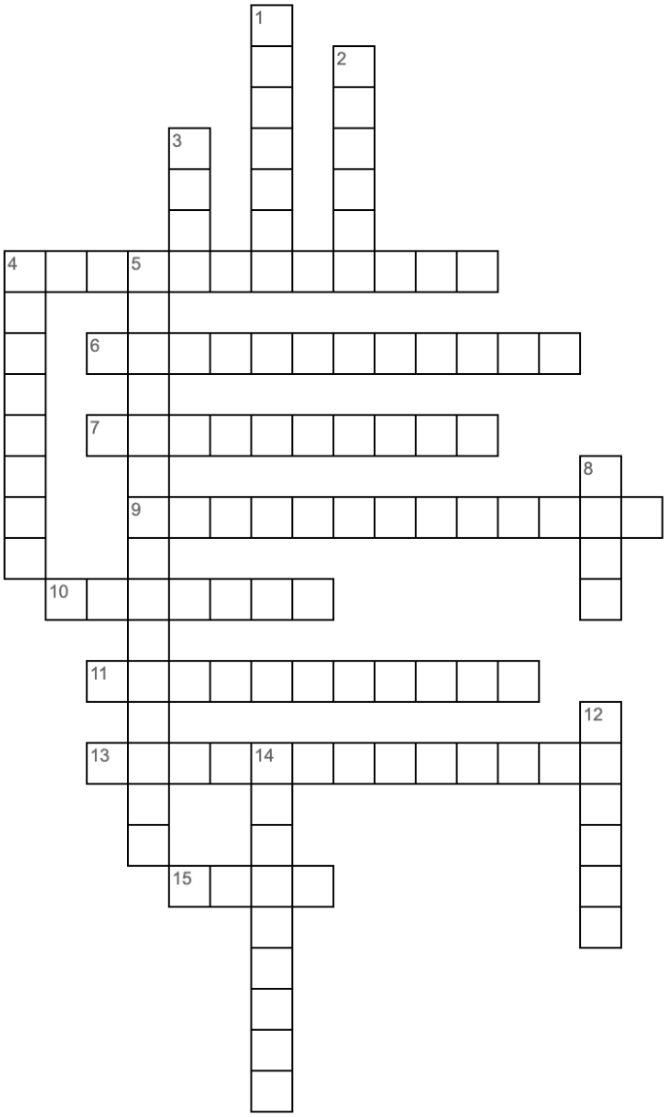
Crossword #2- Fall at D.A.

By Mara L. ‘27



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CLUES

Across

4 Catholic holiday celebrated on November 1st

6 “Who you gonna call?”

7 What one might say when casting a spell, and the name of a classic Halloween movie

9 D.A. juniors and seniors visited the United Nations for this cultural celebration

10 In *Coraline*, her “other” family has these for eyes

11 Try saying this ghost’s name three times fast!

13 This smaller version of 14 down was held on the following Wednesday

15 Color worn for breast cancer awareness (hint: it goes with everything!)

Down

1 “It’s the Great ___, Charlie Brown!”

2 This D.A. varsity sports team made it to city and state semifinal championships. Go Tigers!

3 This club hosted a flavorful celebration for Hispanic Heritage Month

4 D.A. celebrated Italian heritage with these traditional savory rice balls

5 Twice a year, students take their learning outside the classroom in this event

8 Name of the Pumpkin King of Halloween Town in *The Nightmare Before Christmas*

12 Word meaning “to worsen over time,” and also a member of the Addams family

14 National Honor Society members and student ambassadors ran tours during this event

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ANSWERS

Across

4allsaintsday

6 ghostbusters

7 hocuspocus

9 italophonyday

10 buttons

11 beetlejuice

13 miniopenhouse

15 pink

Down

1 pumpkin

2 tennis

3 soca

4 arancini

5 schoolinthecity

8 jack

D.A. IN PHOTOS

Open House






Hispanic Heritage Month







Freshman Year School in the City





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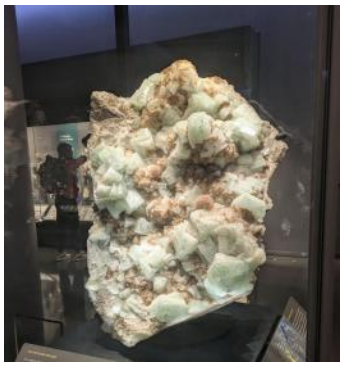



Athletics- Continued

Cross Country




Volleyball





Soccer











Tennis




Alumnae Reunion

D.A. held an Alumnae Reunion on October 24th attended by over 130 alumnae representing every class year ending in the numbers 1 or 6 from 1956 to 2021.







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WELCOME BACK
CLASS OF
1981


WELCOME BACK
CLASS OF
1991




WELCOME BACK
CLASS OF
2021





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WELCOME BACK
CLASS OF
2006

