

# THE AMITY TRIDENT

LXXV-No. 4

Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

December 13, 2019

## Bond Referendum Passes

by Audrey Marin '22

A bond referendum to support facility improvements of Amity Regional High School and the Amity middle schools passed on December 4th, 2019. The ballot contained two questions, and both questions passed. The first question concerned the scheduled replacement of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) air handlers in the three schools, and the second question concerned athletic facility improvements to Amity Regional High School, primarily the installation of an all-weather field and new track.

On December 4th, Bethany-Orange-Woodbridge (BOW) citizens had the opportunity to vote at their respective voting locations

at any time between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm. Orange residents voted at High Plains Community Center, Bethany voted at Bethany Town Hall, and Woodbridge voted at the Center Building. There was a collective total of 3,306 voters from the three towns. Bethany passed the indoor facility question by a margin of 118 voters and the athletic facility question by a margin of 21 voters. Orange passed the indoor facility question by a margin of 519 voters and the athletic facility question by a margin of 262 voters. Woodbridge passed the indoor facility question by a margin of 130, but the athletic facility question failed by a margin of 110 voters.

To determine the outcome, the votes from the three towns are added up.

*Continued on page 2*

## Record Turnout for Homecoming Dance

by Audrey Marin '22

The student body enjoyed the biggest-ever annual Homecoming dance, with 888 students in attendance.

The Homecoming dance ran from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm on November 22nd and was fully organized and funded by the Amity Student Government.

Sydney Reiner '20, executive board supervisor of the Homecoming Committee, said, "Homecoming is my favorite school event. It brings joy to everyone who attends, and it's awesome watching your peers simply have a fun time, especially when you were involved in creating that feeling

for them."

Just after 7:00 pm, the main entrance flooded with homecoming attendees. The hallway adjacent to the cafeteria was decorated in streamers and lights, and the committee even set up a photo wall for students. In the cafeteria, trays of food and desserts were provided from a variety of caterers, and in the main gymnasium, there was a DJ and dance floor set up for students to dance and socialize.

The Student Government Homecoming Committee was a group of over 20 Student Government members who planned the event. This group was responsible for purchasing a DJ, decor, and food for the



Students enjoy dinner in the cafeteria during Amity High School's annual Homecoming Dance.

*Photo contributed by Madison Barretta*

*Continued on page 2*

## Pep Rally Stirs School Pride

by Emily Paolozzi '21

Student Government kicked off Thanksgiving break by hosting its annual pep rally on Wednesday, November 27th. From beginning to end, the 2019 rally was full of activity and engagement.

The event opened with a contest to see which class had the most spartan spirit. While the underclassmen put up a good fight, the seniors ultimately seemed to dominate, their yells stronger than their opponents'. There were several performances that followed: a performance of the Star-Spangled Banner by the Chamber Singers, several routines from the Dance Team, spirited chants from the Cheer Team, and music from Amity's band. Finally, students participated in using their hands to make a wave and pretending they were on board a roller coaster. Additionally, members of each class battled in a game of tug-of-war as the audience cheered them on.

Chantal Gibson '21 said her favorite part of the event was watching students "participate and have school spirit" during the tug-of-war feuds between classes.

Anthony Pontillo '20 held a similar view, saying, "It's nice to see the sportsmanship among all the grades."

The pep rally also included routines by both the Amity Dance and Cheer teams. Ella Benjamin '21 said, "[Our pattern] was actually a camp dance," practiced over the summer at a camp held by the Universal Dance Association. Their heavily practiced performance "really brought out interest amongst the crowd," said Liana Bennett '21.

Much work went into preparing this school-wide event. Aliya Dworkin '21, one of the junior pep rally committee chairs, said that preparation consisted of "several meetings with [the] larger committee."

Running through a spoken plan of what the function was going to look like was a big part of the steps taken in anticipation of the event.

Between friendly challenges and prepared performances, the rally brought the community together through an event full of school spirit.

## Themes and Prizes Highlight Spirit Week

by Jennifer Xu '21

The high school's annual Spirit Week ran from November 18th to 22nd, the week of Homecoming. The themes were Pun Day, Decades Day, Wacky Day, Pajama Day, and Amity Gear Day.

Spirit Week was organized by the Student Government. In preparation, a Spirit Week committee held multiple meetings in the weeks leading up to the event, discussing dates, themes, and prizes. One notable change to this year's Spirit Week was the decision to hold it the week of Homecoming. Previously, Spirit Week started at the end of the week before Thanksgiving and continued through the minimum day on Wednesday, but this year, the committee decided to make Spirit Week a continuous week.

Peter Scully '21, a Spirit Week committee member, said, "We considered that many other schools hold their Spirit Weeks in correspondence to Homecoming and thought that making this adjustment might increase participation."

Students had mixed responses to the themes, with Isabella Pfannenbecker '21 saying, "My favorite day was Pajama Day, but I missed Meme Day, which was a fun day the past couple of years."

Spirit Week culminated with prizes being awarded to four different winners: Gillian Nugent '20, Rachel Christie '20, Chantal Gibson '21, and Ava Swain '23. Winners were chosen based on overall participation throughout the week. Prizes this year included a teacher parking pass, an Amazon gift card, a candy basket, and Sports Center passes.

The Spirit Week committee was pleased with how the events went. Committee chair Olivia Gross '20 said, "Spirit Week was really successful this year, especially with the senior class. We got more submissions than ever



Chantal Gibson '21 on Wacky Day

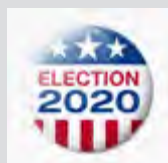
*Photo contributed by Jennifer Xu*

before, and it was a huge challenge to pick the winners."

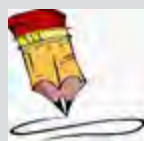
Committee member Brigitte Gagnon '21 said, "I think it's been one of the best that we've had, and I think a lot of people got really into it this year."

Amity looks back on a successful week and looks forward to those to come.

IN THIS ISSUE



2020 Election Opinions, 3



English teacher profile Features, 7



Book Review Arts, 9



Ski Team Sports, 10

# Record Turnout for Homecoming

*Continued from page 1*

dance within the provided budget.

In terms of the challenges of planning, Ava Swain '23, a homecoming committee member, said, "We were all on a time crunch. It was difficult to come up with functional decoration ideas and even finding people to pick up food."

Nonetheless, the homecoming committee managed to acquire an array of caterers to supply dinner, desserts, and even ice cream. These caterers include Chipotle, Stop and Shop, Texas Roadhouse, Trader Joe's and Ashley's Ice Cream.

Swain elaborated saying, "Luckily, this year's committee was able to pull off the evening smoothly and host one of the school's most successful homecomings." The \$15 dollar tickets were sold to 888 Amity students which is the most amount of tickets purchased ever for the Homecoming Dance.

Not only was it exciting for the homecoming attendees to be part of the largest homecoming, but it was also fulfilling for the chairmen. Reiner '20 said, "While it

was certainly a lot of hard work, it was incredible running the most successful homecoming ever!"

Students enjoyed this year's Homecoming and attendees such as Nicole Grosso '22 had very positive feedback.

Grosso said, "I had so much fun at homecoming this year. The decoration, music, and food were all amazing and everyone seemed to really be enjoying themselves."

Homecoming Court was also voted on by the student body and announced during the dance. Each class received a form in which they could nominate two people from their class for the position.

For the Freshmen Class, Nick DiGiovanni and Caitlyn Richards were homecoming court. For the Sophomore Class, Nolan Smith and Emma Schaffer were selected. For the Junior Class, Claudia Lihar and Nikhil Mali were chosen, and for the Senior Class, it was Jayson Hutchinson and Amber Mansourian.

All in all, the 2019 Homecoming event was both successful and enjoyable for the student body and the homecoming committee who coordinated it.

# Bond Referendum Passes

*Continued from page 1*

The indoor facility question passed by a total margin of 767, and the athletic facility question passed by a total margin of 173.

Athletic facility upgrades are predicted to be completed towards the end of summer or early fall of 2020, allowing the facilities to be ready for use as early as the fall season of the 2020-2021 school year.

Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Byars said, "I know the long hours students put into their participation in sports and for the BOW community to endorse those student-athletes with quality facilities speaks volumes to the support the towns have for our kids."

"I also know that the outcome was the result of hard work from PTSOs from the elementary to the high school level, local little leagues, and every voter who came out on a cold December day. I can-

not express enough my thanks and gratitude," Byars added.

Current and future athletes of Amity High School will be able to support users from all field sports during the three seasons. The installation of a new track creates better cushion and support for runners, and the new stadium lights provide for the opportunity of night games for all field sports.

Previously, BOW members voted on a similar referendum that failed. However, the previous attempt only proposed the new turf. Byars also voiced her opinions on the outcome of the vote in comparison to previous attempts, "I also think we were deliberate, transparent, and purposeful in sharing information, and that certainly helped."

With the referendum officially passed, Amity is prepared to start the upgrades and is looking forward to the opportunities it presents.

# Ice Cream Social 'Links' Freshmen

by Melita Collins '21

Amity Link Crew hosted its

annual Ice Cream Social for freshmen on Wednesday, November 16 after school in the cafeteria from 2:30 to 3:30 pm.

During this time, freshmen had the opportunity to enjoy ice cream and speak with Link Leaders about their quarter one grades.

Link Leader Jenny Liu '21 said, "I thought it was a good way to get to know more freshman. It is also a great way to see where they are at and if us as link crew need to do more things to make their high school experience better."

Like many Link Leaders, Liu was excited to see the freshmen attendance at the Ice Cream Social. Like many other leaders, she believes freshmen attendance is crucial at these types of Link Crew events because they help freshmen adopt strong study skills through advice from experienced peers.

Freshmen and Link Leaders alike found this event to be casual and fun. The casual atmosphere allowed freshmen

to open up with their Link Leaders about their Quarter One experiences, and Link Leaders were able to provide freshmen with meaningful advice.

Clara Cortright '23 said, "I had a lot of fun talking to my friends and getting to eat lots of ice cream. I also got to talk to my Link Crew Leaders about my grades for the quarter. It was great to hear their advice because it was super helpful."

Caitlin Smith '23 held a similar view. She said, "The Ice Cream Social was a success because not only did we get free ice cream, we also got to [see] peers that we may not see on a normal basis."

The Link Crew Coordinators – English teacher Jennifer Bonaldo, Special Education teacher Wendy Carrafiello, Math teacher Scott Demeo, and English teacher Tasia Kimball – played a key role in this event and helped ensure everything ran smoothly.

This Ice Cream Social ended with many smiles and an equal amount of empty tubs of ice cream. This year's event attracted many freshmen and demonstrated the mentorship and guidance that Link Crew was designed to provide freshmen.

# Amity's Alumni College Panel Meets with Students

by Aadya Wijesekera '23

The juniors and seniors of Amity Regional High School were offered an opportunity to help them think about their future in the Brady Center on November 27th.

The annual Alumni College Panel was held with college students from the Amity graduating classes of 2018 and 2019. One session was held for the juniors, and another was held for the seniors.

The panel shared college experiences and insight into the entire college process by responding to various questions from students.

The purpose of this event was to help students to prepare for life after high school and the transition that comes with it.

"We feel it is important for 11th and 12th grade students to hear directly from our recent graduates so they have the students' perspective on preparing for post-high school in 11th grade and getting ready to transition out of high school and into the next phase of life in 12th grade," said Principal Anna Mahon.

Many students found this presentation to be very beneficial because the alumni knew what it is like to be an Amity student preparing and transitioning to college.

Ben Martin '21 remarked, "The panel was very informative and allowed us to better prepare for college life."

The college students discussed a wide variety of topics. With the juniors, the alumni started by introducing themselves and telling the audience what school they attend. The experience for the juniors was very interac-

tive, and juniors were able to ask the alumni questions related to college.

A few teachers helped moderate the discussion by asking some meaningful questions. The questions regarded topics such as writing letters of recommendation, why the alumni chose to apply to their specific colleges, and how they knew which college was right for them.

The seniors discussed different topics with the returning Alumni. Rather than focusing on the application process, the students discussed what happens once your college is chosen.

The students' questions were more directed toward college life and what college students do with their spare time.

Rhea Dey '20 said this entire experience helped her "feel so much more confident in the college application process."

College and Career Counselor Lynn Cocco said, "I think [the panel] went very well. Our panelists were awesome. I think they gave some really good information"

Students had the opportunity to attend an alternative presentation called "Successful Career Paths without a Four-Year Degree."

This was catered towards students not seeking a college degree. Students choose which presentation they felt would be more helpful for their circumstances.

The stories from this talk helped students see all the different ways they could succeed in the future. The Alumni College Panel benefited the students on both a personal and practical level.

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**Happy Holidays, Amity!**

# 'Tis the Season To Not Stress Out

by Ian Glassman '21

Every Amity student knows that the time period from post-Thanksgiving to December break is very hectic. Teachers cram in as much as possible before this vacation to make room for all to come with midterms around the corner; it's not a fun time for anyone.

But at the same time, it's supposedly "the most wonderful time of the year," and yet everyone seems to forget that. My message to everybody is this: Don't forget that.

The workload can definitely become overwhelming this time of year, but that's no excuse for lack of self-care. I am participating in "Poem-A-Day December," in which I write one

poem every day this month. Poetry is something I'm passionate about; regardless of how busy I am, I make the time to sit down and write.

It's uplifting to my mood, and personal well-being is something everyone should prioritize.

I understand that it's cold, but some people find that bundling up and going for a walk or jog helps them de-stress.

"I go on runs to get those endorphins pumping which gives me time to sort out what I'm stressing about. It's just me left alone with my thoughts," says Melita Collins '21.

It's also simply not worth stressing out. Why suffer through homework with stress when you can suffer through it without stress? In fact, people work better when

their minds are less cluttered and they are less stressed. It's easier to work more efficiently, so either way, it's a win-win situation.

Let me make myself clear: I am not at all advocating to brush school out of the way. I understand that a lot of the time doing so will ultimately make you more stressed; it's not fun to have work hanging over your shoulder.

What I am saying is don't let the system control you, stay well on top of things and you will feel a lot better.

Maybe this means going to sleep if you are tired, or perhaps staying up to finish an assignment to free up time for yourself the next day.

I know it's not easy, but everyone deserves self-care this holiday season.

# THE TRIDENT

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## Holding a Clear Advantage: The Mainstream Appeal of Joe Biden

by Alison Bowler '22

From the time he announced his candidacy, former vice president Joe Biden has led nationwide polls for the 2020 election's democratic nomination.

Candidates like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders announced transformative policies and presented progressive platforms, yet cannot seem to break past Biden.

Pete Buttigieg, who embodies the dignity and centrism that drew voters to Obama, still lags behind Biden nationally, despite his surges in Iowa and New Hampshire. Despite questionable comments on the campaign trail and mediocre performances on the debate stage, Biden persists and prevails.

So why is it that voters are drawn to someone who comes off as such an "average Joe"?

Well, it's just that.

Biden is simple, straightforward, and most importantly, a moderate voice in a polarized field. President Barack Obama chose Biden as his vice president because he needed someone to appeal to moderates who were on the fence about voting for a Democrat.

Biden was the perfect vice presidential pick, and his ties to Obama are undeniably an incredible force in his presidential campaign. Biden reinforces that connection in speeches and debates for an uncomplicated reason; generally speaking, the American people were proud of Obama.

You didn't have to love every one of his policies or agree with every stance he took, but he was inarguably a dignified and intelligent president. With President Donald Trump, every action he takes results in division, mockery, and scorn.

Biden reminds people of an easier time, and his

moderate approach is just another reason why so many people support him.

His left-centrist platform and the encouragement he receives from a diverse group of voters put him in front of the pack for the democratic nomination because he is undeniably the most likely to beat Trump.

Other candidates are too progressive, too young, or too female, but Biden is classic, to put it simply; this is why he was Obama's vice-presidential pick. It's for these reasons that Biden polls so well despite not being the most groundbreaking candidate.

As a centrist white man who worked as a praised president's vice president, Biden holds a clear advantage over his competitors. It's the same mediocrity that appealed to Obama that will attract 2020 voters to Biden because they know he is the safest option in the battle of taking back the White House.

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# Congress Is Failing America

by Weiss Yuan '21

Amid modern impeachment scandals and presidential overreach of power from both Democratic and Republican presidents alike, politicians often invoke the framers of our nation. Their intention is often examined in detail by legal analysts, constitutional scholars, and Supreme Court justices. The reason their opinion is so valued today is due to their ingenious solution to creating a fair and equal government. The separation of powers and checks and balances system were brilliant and unrivaled forms of government where the government's power was not enshrined on one powerful leader but three separate, equal

branches where checks and balances allowed the government to hold itself to account.

Today, Congress presents a unique challenge to the efficiency of our government. Members of Congress often poll fairly average, around 40% or 50%. However, Congress, once at around 40% now polls fairly low—near 10%. Congress isn't a bureaucracy, we elected our own Congress. Representatives get elected every two years; Senators get elected every six years. Leadership within Congress is elected by those we choose to represent us.

Today, government is different. I would argue that government has expanded too much—politicians want the government to run health-care; regulations have limited

American enterprise; and, for some, taxes take more than a majority of one's income. At the center of government, involved in Article I of our Constitution, is Congress. This system has betrayed its original purpose. To understand Congress, we must look at the original intentions of the Framers.

The intention behind two branches was that legislation was deliberated on twice, rather than simply once. The Senate was built to be "the most deliberative body in the world." Senate debates were lively and engaged. Committees existed but were forbidden to hold meetings when Congress was in session. Even the filibuster was used to bring forth debate and deliberation. Regrettably, those

lively Senate debates and deliberations are a thing of the past. Clips on C-SPAN are always zoomed in on the person speaking—not to give them attention, but because there's nobody around them. The filibuster today in the Senate is used when Senators want to stop debate. Its purpose is completely flipped, now used to stonewall legislation, adding to partisan divide.

The legislative branch is flawed, only sometimes passing omnibus budget bills every year after a government shutdown, which only occurred for the first time in 1981. The Senate, under Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, often doesn't hold votes on any bills for weeks. Even the executive branch does more legislating than the leg-

islative branch. In the last year of the Obama administration, they added 87,000 pages to the Federal Register; that's 10 times as much as what Congress passed.

This impeachment process brings a new test: will Republicans again vote on party lines and argue their partisan talking points or will Congress step up and defend the rule of law? The body conducting impeachment is Congress, the body that once had the lively debates and had the most deliberative body in the world—but also one that's approved only 10 percent. By electing our members of Congress, we are complicit in their actions; and history will judge whether our generation followed the intentions of our framers.

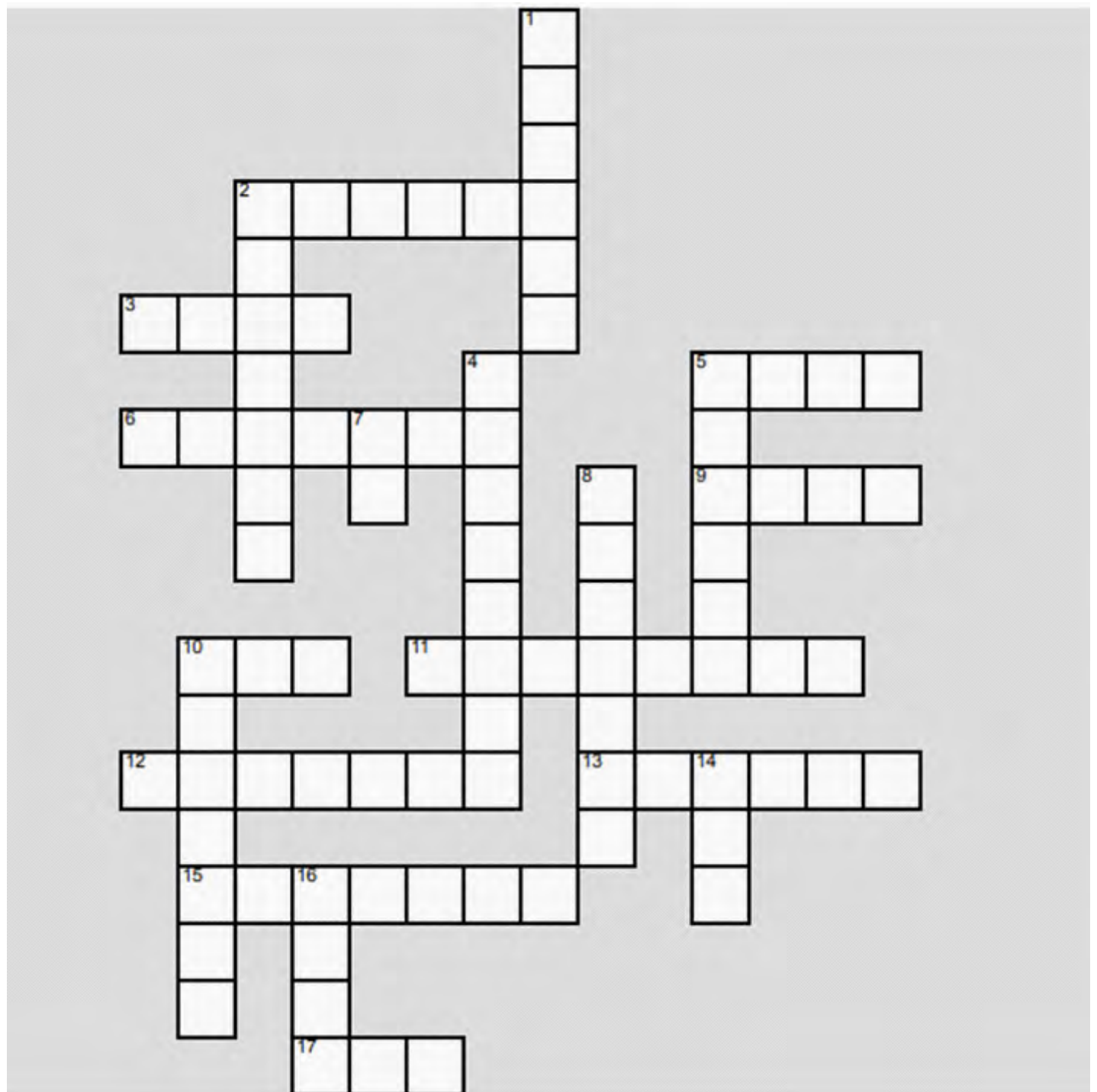
## December Crossword Puzzle

by Zachary Garfinkle '22

**Good luck to those who attempt this very difficult puzzle!**

**Pictures of a completed puzzle should be emailed to [amitytrident-newspaper@gmail.com](mailto:amitytrident-newspaper@gmail.com).**

**The first person who submits a correct puzzle will win a gift card!**



### Across

2. Protagonist of "Breaking Bad"
3. Period of increased birth rates after World War II was the baby \_\_\_\_
5. Abbreviation for the website Amity teachers use to post resources and assignments
6. Friday, December 6th was \_\_\_\_ day at Amity
9. Andrew Yang's abbreviated slogan
10. Nonpartisan political debate organization
11. Amity's creative writing/artwork magazine
12. Eli \_\_\_\_ Museum
13. Surname of climate change-focused Democratic billionaire running for president
15. The class of '20 is comprised of \_\_\_\_\_
17. Bill \_\_\_\_ the Science Guy

### Down

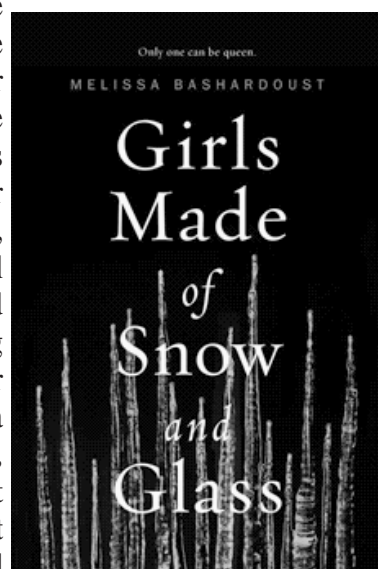
1. Female black senator who dropped out of the presidential race
2. Least populous U.S. state
4. Month when the Iowa caucuses will be held in 2020
5. Trump's Secretary of State
7. These exams are in May
8. Room 106 is a classroom for this subject
10. President Abe Lincoln's assassination
14. Opposite of "start"
16. "Ne" is the symbol for this element

# Six Books to Read This Break

by Annie Liu '23

With the holidays right around the corner and free time just a few tantalizing weeks away, there is no better time to pick up a good book. Be it rereading Harry Potter for the nth time or discovering an intriguing new standalone, a great way to pass the time is with a great story. Here are some fantastic books with elements of winter to read this holiday break.

Everyone knows the story Snow White. Girls Made of Snow and Glass by Melissa Bashardoust is Snow White retold, but cleverly subverted in certain ways to create a unique, fresh take on an age-old fairy tale. A thrilling fantasy epic, Girls Made of Snow and Glass features the perspectives of two female leads: the first is Lynet, a princess created out of snow as an exact model



Girls Made of Snow and Glass  
Photo from Goodreads

of her late mother, the former queen; the second is Mina, her stepmother, who fell ill and died at a young age. Her father, a wizard, cut out her defunct heart and replaced it with a heart of glass. Both Lynet and Mina are spectacular characters, and while the story may be set in Whitespring—a city cursed with eternal winter—the girls' interactions, relationships, and resolve will be guaranteed to warm your heart.

If fantasy isn't your cup of tea and you prefer something more realistic, Brian's Winter (also called Hatchet: Winter) by Gary Paulsen is a survival story for the outdoor enthusiasts out there. The book is a quick read that is set chronologically after the well-known Hatchet, which follows the story of a boy crashed into the wilderness with nothing but his clothes and a hatchet. Brian's Winter answers the question Hatchet raised: what if the protagonist was

not saved at the end of the book? What if he then had to survive the cruel winter to come? The book includes an epic confrontation with a bear—that's reason enough to try Brian's Winter out.

The Call of the Wild by Jack London, a classic that starts in frigid Alaska, was recently adapted into a film, showing a heartfelt tale about the strength of the bond between a man and his dog. However, this is not the case. Jack London's original The Call of the Wild is about exactly that—the call of the wild. In fact, the book is dark, cold, and unforgiving, and Buck, a dog and the book's protagonist, ruthlessly kills a handful of Native Americans, not to mention several other dogs and wolves. You can not only expect vivid deaths, bitter grief, and tooth-and-nail struggles for survival, but also a message about

love and devotion in what is commonly regarded as Jack London's greatest work. At the very least, it'll make you that much more grateful to be out of the winter cold.

Some books from other genres include Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson, a science fiction story that features a protagonist literally named Hiro Protagonist, along with hacking, geekiness, and satire; Lumberjanes #4: Out of Time by Noelle Stevenson, a graphic novel about a lovable group of girls at camp when a blizzard hits, bringing with it a healthy dose of magic and monsters; and Starfish by Akemi Dawn, a realistic fiction book about a half-Japanese, half-American artist who does not get into the art school of her dreams and learns to give herself a second chance. Starfish is not a winter-themed novel, but this list was lacking some slice-of-life/drama, and maybe the summer setting of Starfish will make you feel cozier this December).

Happy reading!

# Baking, Decorating, Gifting: How to Host the Perfect Holiday Party

by Adithi Wijsekera '22 and Megan Wu '22

The holiday season is a joyous time devoted to celebrating winter, family, and friends. A perfect way to bring your loved ones together is by hosting a holiday party.

To make your event seem appealing, a festive invitation should be designed and sent to the guests. Whether you choose to create a physical or digital card, include holiday colors and pictures that tie into a theme such as Christmas or winter. The information on the invitation should be clear and state the location, time, and date of the party.

A fun party should have cheery decorations that make guests feel jolly. Be sure to purchase holiday streamers that can be hung from your walls or tied around pillars. Candles are a nice addition to make the house feel cozy and create a soothing aroma. If you celebrate Christmas, put your tree up and decorate! The colorful lights, ornaments, and delightful smell of pine will leave your guests oohing and ahing.

A good party should always have yummy food, and at a holiday party, you can make it even more festive than just pizza and chips. While pizza is a food staple to have, a good idea is to make Christmas themed snacks. Some ideas could be cake pops that look like reindeer, a fruit platter shaped like a Christmas tree, red and green colored candy, and peppermint bark. A hot chocolate bar would definitely be a hit- have a drink dispenser of hot cocoa and you can put whipped cream, bowls of marshmallows, crushed candy canes, etc next to it for guests to use.

To keep guests entertained, try to incorporate some activities into your party. Everyone enjoys giving and receiving gifts, so a grab bag or secret Santa activity would definitely be a crowd pleaser. Another idea could be the saran wrap game, where beforehand, you (the host), would wrap various small gifts like candy and fuzzy socks into a saran wrap ball. Then, at the party, everyone would sit in a circle, and while one person is unwrapping the

ball, the person next to them would roll dice, and when they roll two of the same numbers, the ball gets passed onto them. Besides these activities, you can have Wii, Just Dance, or a movie. Some festive movies include The Grinch, Home Alone, Elf, A Christmas Carol, and The Spirit of Christmas.

Baking is a great activity to engage your guests, and it also provides for a delicious snack later. Whether you choose to bake one dessert or an assortment, creating the batter and decorating the food afterwards can be very enjoyable. Be sure to purchase enough baking ingredients and tools for your time in the kitchen. If you have many attendees, your serving size on the recipe may need to be altered to accommodate your guests. Some suggested desserts to make are cookies, cupcakes, and brownies. For your decorations, purchase holiday themed sprinkles or icing to add some extra flair. These cupcakes in the image are in the shape of Christmas trees and have green frosting, with sprinkles representing ornaments. A special, spiral tip was used to pipe frosting in a pine needle-like texture.



Christmas Tree Cupcakes  
Photo by Adithi Wijsekera

Another fun idea could be a gingerbread house making contest. You can put your guests into groups and let them have fun creating a cute (or disastrous) looking house! This activity would definitely create a competitive atmosphere and lots of laughter. Once every group has finished, you can line the houses up and have an impartial judge, such as the host's parents, decide which group won. The prize can be anything- picking out the movie to watch, mugs stuffed with candy, and fuzzy socks are just some suggestions.

A party would not be complete without some great tunes! Compile a list of your favorite holiday songs to play in the background. Your guests will be singing along to the catchy melodies as they engage in other activities. If you do not want to create your own playlist, don't worry: Spotify and Apple Music have already generated a list of holiday songs for your party! A dance party or karaoke are two ways to incorporate music that keep guests delighted.

All of these components have the ability to turn your holiday party into a huge success! Your guests will be asking you for help the next time they are planning their own events.

# New Turf Field...

by Caelan Watson '20



# New Beginnings Club Supports Local Homeless Shelter

by Melita Collins '21

This year, Amity's New Beginnings Club kicked off the holiday season by hosting a clothing drive to support women in need. Throughout the month of November, winter clothing and towels were collected in bins in front of the school for donation. To say that this drive was a success would be an understatement.

The club's purpose is to volunteer and fundraise for New Reach – a women's shelter in New Haven. New Reach offers programs to get many homeless women back on their feet by offering shelter and transitional housing. This club is open to all students that enjoy volunteering.

Aadya Wijesekera '23 said, "The new reach club is an inspiring idea that helps women in need. Working in this club gives me so much satisfaction because I know that I am helping people less fortunate than me. We are constantly thinking of different ways to raise money and supplies. It's also very cool to be giving back to the people in our community and to know that we are making a difference."

After several meetings and rigorous planning, members of the club were able to pull off one of their biggest fundraising events for the shelter.

Eesha Acharya '21 said, "I'm really proud

of what we have accomplished in the last two years and feel that this club has truly helped the many families who experience homelessness."

Acharya founded the club last year and since then has been holding up Amity's core values. She is overall very pleased with the expansion of the club over a span of just two years and very excited for the future.

For the drive, new or used towels, gloves, hats, boots, blankets, and other basic necessities were collected.

"We are extremely grateful that our community has been donating and helping our cause. It is really important to us, especially with the amount of other fundraisers at the time," said Julia Scuccuglia '21.

She feels that this clothing drive had been much more successful than other fundraisers in the past.

To further confirm the success of the club's drive, club adviser Danielle Norris said, "We took over a carload, and when I dropped it off, the women at the shelter were very appreciative. It was the supplies that we needed and we collected a lot for them."

Overall, New Beginnings is very pleased that they could pull off such a successful clothing drive. It would not have been made possible without the hard work and generous donations of not only the club, but also the community as a whole. If you missed out on this drive, New Beginnings will also be hosting more fundraisers. Be sure to check them out!



Boxes of donations for New Reach

Photo by Eesha Acharya '21

# Catherine Piscitelli: Science Research Mentor

by Nicole Grosso '22

Catherine Piscitelli, known as Mrs. P by most of her students, teaches Science Research at Amity. Some upperclassmen know her as an anatomy teacher, as she was until last year, while many underclassmen see her as the Science Research Program teacher.

The Science Research Program is an elective available to students who are particularly interested in a career in STEM fields. The program is available to students from freshman to senior year and allows them to conduct individual and authentic research on a topic of their choice.

In January last year, the head of the Science Research Program, Deborah Day (who was the only other teacher in the program besides Piscitelli), unexpectedly had to leave. Amid all the chaos, Piscitelli stepped up and became the new head of the program, resulting in a full schedule of Science Research classes to teach and restricting her from teaching her anatomy classes. This year, she the head of the program and teaches all Advanced Science Research classes.

Piscitelli attended Eastern Connecticut State University where she was in the Honors program for biology. She was also a thrower for the track team—a continuation from high school where she was also on the track team. Going

into college, she had the intention of becoming a biologist; however, during her senior year, she realized that she was not enjoying the constant isolation that came with being a scientist.

"I'm a people person," Piscitelli explained. After talking with her parents and boyfriend (who is now her husband) about her dilemma, she decided to continue her career in biology as a science teacher so she could have the company of others. This brought her back to her high school, Amity, to teach after she graduated from ECSU.

Audrey Marin '22, a current student of Piscitelli, says she enjoys going to her class each day.

"Mrs. P is a fantastic Science Research Administrator. She is very knowledgeable in the field of science, and she is eager to help each student follow their passion. She does a great job guiding students through an environment where real research is conducted," said Marin.

Adithi Wijesekera '22, another current student, referred to her teacher as "a caring individual who focuses a tremendous amount of time on her students to ensure that they succeed."

Mason Zhang '21, who has been in Science Research since freshman year, said, "Mrs. P is very experienced in science and really invested [in her students]."

When she is not teaching, this Science Research mentor supports her sons in sporting events. She loves to travel with her husband and both of her sons and enjoys reading, swimming, boating, and watching Star Wars.



Catherine Piscitelli  
Photo by Allison Su '21

# FBLA Are Truly Leaders for the Future

by Evan Gorelick '21

Amity's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) aims to inspire and prepare students to become community-minded business leaders through relevant career preparation and leadership experiences. Throughout the year, the club meets on Tuesdays after school in Room 159 to organize and facilitate service projects, raise money for future programming, and prepare for a competition in March.

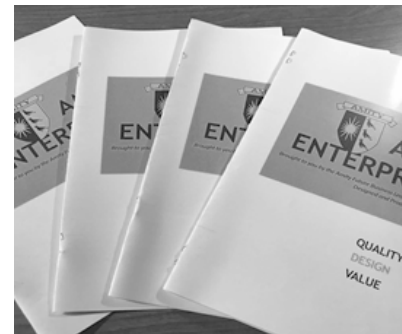
FBLA chapters around the state compete in an annual community service competition, leading and developing service projects throughout the year in preparation. Chapters compete to develop the service project with the widest reach and impact. For this year's service project, Amity FBLA has elected to begin a school-wide recycling campaign.

Although Amity already has recycling bins in the cafeteria and classrooms, negligence to properly utilize them has greatly diminished their intended impact. FBLA aims to rejuvenate recycling efforts by providing incentives. Although the club has not yet finalized its plans, it will launch a campaign in the near future.

Weiss Yuan '21, a member of the club, said "Amity Future Business Leaders of America focuses on developing and growing business skills in a way that benefits the community."

Simultaneously, Amity FBLA will be continuing its annual Amity Enterprise program.

Each year, members of the club sell items and use the profits to benefit Amity's Career and Technical Education Department. Amity Enterprises is a student-led business that focuses on connecting Amity's manufacturing class with FBLA. Students in these classes build and paint various manufactured products (including custom cookware, games, and home decor) to be sold by Amity FBLA members. Every year, the club markets



Amity Enterprises pamphlet

Photo from @amityenterprises

its products in a catalog and on social media. The money raised from Amity Enterprises also helps fund club field trips, particularly the yearly state FBLA conference, or it goes back to benefiting the school.

Members attend the annual leadership conference with club advisor Sue Tupper in the spring, and they compete in many categories. Some examples are public speaking, computer programming, entrepreneurship, economics, and marketing. Before attending, members prepare diligently for the competition. Last year, students in the club received awards at the state level, which qualified them to compete at the national competition.

Peter Savelyev '21, one of the students who attended the conference last year, remarked, "I am extremely grateful that I was given the opportunity to attend an FBLA competition to learn about business firsthand and how it impacts so many people's lives."

Needless to say, FBLA members will be hard at work for the next few months, improving leadership skills and helping the community all the while.



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Coupon Expires on January 1st

# High School Cafeteria Spices Up the Lunch Waves

by Will Rotko '20

Amity Regional High School is a school that is a majorly student driven community. This statement is true for many activities in the classroom, on the sports field, and even in the cafeteria. Some schools are just given the same basic meals every week, but Amity is always trying to spice it up.

Every high school has to provide their students with a sufficient and nutritious lunch. Amity students eat this necessary meal in the comfort of the school's large, open cafeteria, and spacious picnic bench area just outside the building. During lunch waves, the entirety of the room and outdoor area is hopping with students. Amity not only provides the food that they need; they also give them what they want.

Recently, the cafeteria had set up a table with free samples for all students to try. The name of the table was Student Choice, Food Your Way. Students were given choices between curry chicken and spicy fried chicken. Once the students tried both samples, they texted their favorite choice to the staff. When the votes were tallied, spicy fried chicken won by a landslide. Soon after, students and staff saw the new chicken item offered on the menu.

These spicy meals are just what Amity students want. According to numerous seniors, their favorite meal is the buffalo chicken wraps.

"I'm all about the buffalo chicken," said Tanner Santos '20. Whether it be pre-made or rolled up, buffalo chicken is the majority favorite.

The cafeteria has a lot more to offer than just spicy food, including options from all dif-

ferent ethnic backgrounds. Whether it be Asian noodles, Mexican burritos, Italian pasta, or your classic grilled cheese and tomato soup, Amity is offering it in the cafeteria.

"My favorite meal to eat in the cafeteria is anything Italian," says Hanna Brochinsky '20. "I like their pastas, but especially their garlic bread and Italian dunkers (stuffed breadsticks)."

Brochinsky was unsatisfied with the frequency that she saw her favorite meals. She was only getting the option to eat the Italian dunkers once a month. After voicing her opinion to the student government, she was able to see the dunkers offered at least once a week.

In recent years, the cafeteria had to offer healthier options. This was because of the Obama Administration and the work First Lady Michelle Obama did with schools and the overall health of the nation's youth.

Shifting away from just the food, something that the Amity High School cafeteria does differently than most high schools is remembering those who have come before them. When you walk into the cafeteria, there is a brick wall to the left with numerous plaques listing the names of so many Amity alumni. These former students all gave money to the school to engrave their names and to better the future of Amity. These donors enjoyed their time at the high school and care about the incoming students who are eager to get the same quality education they received.

The Amity cafeteria serves as an area for students to socialize and eat while also providing them with a mental break from all of the challenging classes they partake in during the day.

## Student Government Raises Climate Awareness

by Abigail Ball '22

Over the past few months, climate change activism has grown to a new high, showing real promise and spreading awareness globally. One of the largest campaigns called the Global Week for Future held climate strikes from September 20-27. Dozens of young adults, celebrities, and more activists are now involved.

Organizations like Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, and others have been tackling climate change or helping those negatively impacted by it for years. Activism like this is a necessity, but sometimes these global organizations outshine smaller communal strides and achievements, which are equally crucial in tackling climate change.

On Friday, December 6th, Amity High School hosted its own Climate Day concurrently with the National Climate Awareness Day. While world leaders met for the annual United Nations Climate Conference, various climate strikes took place across the globe. Even though Amity did not participate in the September strikes, its effort to join this strike is a step in the right direction.

The Amity Student Government organized this event. They invited students and faculty to show their support for the cause in three ways: wearing blue to bolster support for a healthier earth, abstaining from using or buying plastic water bottles, and donating unwanted or uneaten food from their lunch to Amazing Grace Food Pantry in Middletown, CT, to reduce food waste. Tables were set up in the cafeteria for these contributions.

Although the three goals might seem simple, smaller steps, when supported and followed by large groups of people, they can attain great change. Aditi Chalasani '22, a member of the Amity Student Government, said, "Walking around the school, I was happy to see hundreds of students in so much blue. Even the smallest

of movements has the ability to make some sort of difference, and that's what we tried to do."



Poster for Amity Climate Day  
Photo by Abigail Ball

Amity Student Government's Climate Day did make a difference not only through reducing plastic use and food waste, but by encouraging students to consider their everyday choices that may negatively impact the environment. Smarter choices regarding climate are incredibly significant in fighting it.

Spreading the word about current issues and advocating for them is vital to implementing change in the Amity community and others'. Nayana Wright '22, also an Amity Student Government member, noted, "One of our jobs as student government representatives is to take these issues and spread awareness throughout the student body."

It is paramount at a time like this for facilities like Amity to work towards being as climate-friendly as possible. Amity's strides are definitely auspicious, and perhaps if we and other schools had a day similar to this one every month or even week, we could generate more of an impact.

Climate change is a crisis that already does or eventually will negatively influence all of us, and Amity Student Government's involvement on the issue was precisely the kind of activism that Amity and the world needs.

## Staff Profile: Christian Allard

by Evan Hollander '20

"Take me seriously—but not too seriously" is one of the first things that Christian Allard said at the beginning of the year to his Advanced Placement Language and Composition (AP Lang.) class.

The motto says a lot about him: Allard can be one of the more demanding teachers, yet he is regularly cracking jokes to lighten the stress of being students.

Allard came from New Haven Public Schools, which was a population with the majority being minorities. Thus, when Allard moved to Woodbridge, he had been used to a community much more diverse yet less academically sound than Amity.

Entering the suburban school district in fifth grade "was kind of a culture shock," Allard remarked. "It was a little bit shocking education-wise... educationally, I probably stuck out... for the first couple years, but I had some good teachers who helped me out."

Allard

planned on entering the United States Armed Forces upon graduating from Amity. However, a leg injury prevented him from doing so (though, in retrospect, he said he's "not cut-out to get yelled at—I'm too sensitive").

His injury also forced him to "branchfer" from the Storrs campus of the UConn, the application for which he overnights the evening before it was due, to the Waterbury campus of UConn.

At his new school, Allard acknowledged that he had "a couple good English professors," whom he asked how he could make a career out of an English degree. They helped him realize that a job as an English teacher would make appropriate use of his education.

So, Allard transferred to Central Connecticut State University, where he enrolled in the School of Education and Professional Studies.

Now a certified teacher, Allard entered the workforce twelve years ago, first teaching in Derby for about three years, after which he taught in Cromwell for at least five years before coming back to his alma mater. He came to Amity seeking "some level of growth," which he said, "is still possible here. [Another reason is that] I think that the leadership here

is amazing."

Allard described how strange it is to be both an alumnus and a teacher at the same school.

"It's weird seeing the other side of things; it's strange walking through the halls," he said. "Almost every day I walk through the halls, and I go 'oh I remember something that happened over here. It's kind of a trip... even though things are a little different, it's largely the same.'"

Because he joined Amity in the middle of a school year, Allard had no say in the courses he taught, though he claimed he was "kind of lucky in taking on my predecessor's classes."

He now teaches four sections of English III and one section of AP Lang. Allard takes particu-

lar pride in teaching AP Lang, saying, "Mrs. Mahon gave me permission... to redo the curriculum, and it has been a stimulating process for me [that] I've really enjoyed."

The tailor-made curriculum often leaves

room for classes that are less prescriptive than those of many other courses. Nicolas Lopez-Vila '20 expressed, "Mr. Allard has been a great teacher because his classes are educational and engaging."

Through his courses, Allard wants students "to be able to understand what [they're] being bombarded with in the world... and be able to confidently interpret that, [as well as] come up with ideas and confidently express [themselves] in a way that's measured, in a way that's thoughtful, in a way that galvanizes and brings people together instead of pushing them apart—we have so much more in common than we act like."

"Any way that I can help people to bring themselves and other people together is valuable," he added.

Allard's unique background and teaching style have made him popular with many students.

Emily Kline '20 described him as "one of the weirdest teachers I've ever had. And my favorite teacher I've ever had."

Allard shared that he always leaves students with the same message at the end of the year: "I hope... you find work that fulfills you, and that when you find someone you love, they love you back... that's the truth."

This is a true testament to his teaching and his personality.



Christian Allard

Photo by Evan Hollander

## “Dancing at Lughnasa” Impresses Audiences

by Natalie Prinz '20

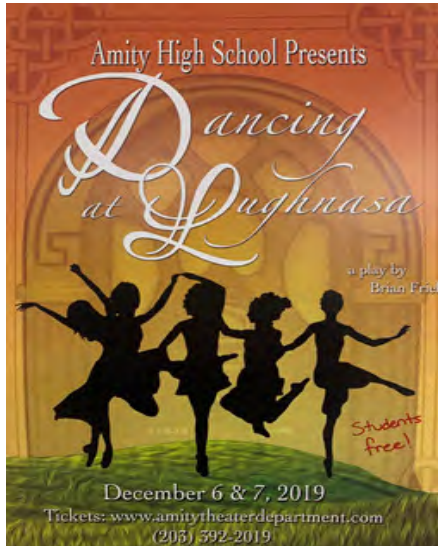
The Amity Creative Theater put on the play *Dancing at Lughnasa* by Brian Friel on December 6 and 7.

The play was about a family of five sisters living in Ireland in 1936 and battling societal expectations versus their own dreams.

There are five sisters: the oldest is Kate (played by Talya Braverman '20) who strictly enforces ideals of responsibility, then there is Christine (played by McKenna Maxwell '22), Maggie

hold ended up falling apart with family drama.

Ella Marin '20, who watched the show on opening night, said, “I thought that the actors and actresses did an amazing job with the show. The accents were incredible! I truly felt like I was inside a



### Official *Dancing at Lughnasa* Advertisement

Photo contributed by Ella Marin '20



### Amity Actors Onstage During the Show

Photo contributed by Robert Kennedy

(played by Macie Cox '22), Agnes (played by Audrey Jurzyk '22), and the youngest sister Rose (played by Grace Blanchard '21).

They work in their household with daily tasks, all the while dreaming about what each of their lives could be. Christine dreams of a future with Gerry (played by Marty Gnidula) who makes appearances to dance around the stage and talk about his many career experiences.

The play was narrated by the character Michael, played by Ryan Kennedy, who presents the play as a young man telling a story about his childhood.

He witnesses the dynamics between the sisters and tells the story about how his Uncle Jack (played by Jacob Lee) came back from wartime and had to adjust back into their life at home.

Although the plot mostly consisted of the characters talking about their daily tasks, there were some really fun dance scenes performed and it was exciting to see how the seemingly stable house-

hold ended up falling apart with family drama.

Amazingly, each and every one of the actors and actresses performed the entire two hour play with perfect Scottish accents.

This play was especially memorable for Talya Braverman and Marty Gnidula, who played the roles of Gerry and Kate, respectively, because it was their senior year.

Talya Braverman said, “It was really meaningful to perform in this play, as it was my last one at Amity. Playing a young sibling in *Fiddler on the Roof* as a freshman and having upper classmen play my older sisters then, it’s been really cool to come full circle and to take on the role of an older sister to this show’s underclassmen now that I’m a senior. I’m definitely going to miss it!”

The play also had an awesome set depicting the sisters’ household. Every set for each performance put on by Amity Creative Theater is created by the parents of ACT and some of the students in Construction class.

Rob Kennedy directed the play and seniors Emily Kline and Sarah Foley were the stage managers.

The play was overall very amazing, and every actor, actress, and production staff played their role to their utmost ability to show their pride and dedication to Amity. They all have truly found their passion, and it shows with every word that they say onstage.

## For Deadlines and Decisions, Seniors Rely on Counselors

by Gabby McGovern '20

Amity High School seniors are in the home stretch, pushing through these last few months narrowing down their college list, touring their last few schools, and completing the final touches to their college applications.

Many students are overwhelmed by the college selection and application process during the start of senior year, but there are many ways to manage the pressure and stress of the decisions and the deadlines.

“When considering a school I look at the size, the campus life, the programs, and even the food,” says Alex Palermo '20. “Once I look at all of these factors I compare them with other schools on my list to find the best fit for me. This makes the decision process a lot more organized and much less stressful for me to deal with.”

Members of the senior class are not the only ones rushing to meet deadlines. The Amity Guidance Department has just as many. Guidance counselor Alison Staak said each counselor is responsible for approximately 50 students in the senior class. They must

send transcripts, read senior sketches, and even write a letter of recommendation for each senior they are responsible for, all by the November 1st deadline.

“I would say of my seniors 85% of them apply early action to schools,” says Staak. “Most of them have a November 1st deadline, but only a small handful (5-7) each year apply early decision.” The guidance department is responsible for making sure each of their assigned seniors is on track with their applications.

The guidance counselors have been helping the senior class with their college search for most of the students since the end of their junior year. They help them with college visits, sending SAT scores, and much more.

Staak says her most important responsibilities are making sure her students have a good list of schools for them, understand the application process, and to get their school materials to their colleges on time

“Things always seem to work out and fall into place,” says Staak as she gives advice to many stressed out students. The guidance department is a great place to go if you need assistance with

your common application or if you just need a friendly face to talk to.

Every student has their own way of coping with the stress and making decisions. So if guidance isn’t for you, there are many other options.

Ephemia Nickola-kis '20 says the career center is a great way to learn about schools to assist you in your final decision.

This center, run by Lynn Cocco, is somewhere you can go to visit a variety of college reps, get information on SSLP, or even get some advice. Cocco frequently tells students to go to college and try anything and everything. She has great advice if you need some college counseling, but she also offers great life advice as well.

Whether you are stressed about college applications, school work, or making decisions, the Amity Counseling Department doors are always open. With the December and January deadlines approaching fast, this time of year puts extra pressure on the seniors.

So next time you are feeling stressed, confused, or overwhelmed, schedule an appointment or just pop in to say hello.

## Filmmaker Karyl Evans Enlightens Students with Documentaries

by Anthony DiStefano '20

Karyl Evans, an acclaimed documentary filmmaker, visited Amity Regional High School at the end of October. The presentation focused on Evans’ career and how she became a six-time Emmy award winning filmmaker.

Evans’ passion for filmmaking has been present throughout her entire 40-year career. During her presentation she explained to the students that documentaries are based on truth and facts.

Documentary filmmakers do not have the liberty to add fiction to enhance their story.

She also described the different genres of documentaries including historical, social justice, biographical, and “slice of life” documentaries. “Slice of Life” documentaries focus on an event or moment of

someone’s life that had a great impact. Evans mentioned that there is a misconception around what documentaries are like. Most people think documentaries are boring, his-

torical, at sports events, and with feature films, seeks to make it known how broad of a field documentary filmmaking actually is.

Evans has a broad repertoire of documentaries, including some about her home state of Connecticut. Even with expertise in such a broad range of genres, Evans’ favorite to produce are historical documentaries. In the past 10 years, she has been concentrating on highlighting people who do not typically have a voice.

These documentaries focused on the history of African American in Connecticut which included a segment about the New Haven Green. Evans said, “I love the passion it created.

It makes a difference in people’s lives.”

Evans’ presentation brought documentary filmmaking to light and what messages it can send to people across the world.



Karyl Evans winning her 2016 Outstanding Director Emmy award

Photo from [karylevansproductions.com](http://karylevansproductions.com)

torical retellings.

However, Evans, someone who has worked on public service announce-



# National Art Honor Society Hosts Exhibit in Woodbridge

by Sydney Cohen '21

The National Art Honor Society hosted their first annual November art exhibition at the Woodbridge Town Library on November 26th from 5 to 7pm.

Students were able to display a range of artwork in a gallery open to the public. Participating students matted and framed their artwork afterschool while the NAHS members helped them hang the pieces in the gallery.

That evening, many students and community members were able to visit the gallery and enjoy a fun evening of admiring amazing student artwork and socializing.

For the first time, the event was open to any art-

happy to see new faces.”

Members of the National Art Honor Society who attended, including advisors Zamachaj and Lisa Toto, felt that the exhibit went very well and was a positive and rewarding experience for young artists.

Additionally, students and community members got to view many different styles and mediums of artwork while enjoying food and refreshments.

NAHS member Tracy Lu said, “I found it really inspiring to see other people’s work and thought the vari-

one had been working on all semester.”

Dizenzo submitted a large-scale painting of an eye, which was her self-portrait project of the year.

The pieces were on display for the majority of the month of November, allow-



Artwork by Zoe Dizenzo and Tracy Lu

Photos contributed from Zoe Dizenzo '21 and Tracy Lu '20



ety of pieces on display showed the artistic diversity at Amity.” Tracy was able to submit 3 pieces of her artwork to the

exhibit.

Another NAHS member, Zoe Dizenzo, also had an enjoyable time at the event and said, “I liked hanging out with my friends while getting to see the artwork every-

ing the community to admire student work even after the event.

There will be another “All Call” exhibit hosted by the National Art Honor Society in January, and everyone is encouraged to submit their artwork as well as pay a visit to see the display.

Lu said she “recommends people to come look at future exhibits or take a look around Amity halls to appreciate the art that students make.”

ist in grades 9 through 12 at Amity High School, making it an “All Call” art exhibit.

Many new students were able to participate and advisor Jessica Zamachaj said the Honor Society was “so

## Calling All Artists!

The National Art Honor Society is sponsoring an exhibition open to all students at the Clark Memorial Library in Bethany in February 2020.

Please bring your drawings, paintings, photos, sculptures, etc. to room 375 after school on January 28th or 29th so you can prepare the work for display.

We hope to see new faces and new artwork.

Your artwork should have been created within the past two years. Any questions? Please contact Mrs. Zamachaj at [jessica.zamachaj@amityschools.org](mailto:jessica.zamachaj@amityschools.org) or see her in room 370.



## Book Review

# Things Fall Apart

by Elizabeth Amankwah '22

Things Fall Apart by acclaimed author Chinua Achebe tells the story of Okonkwo, an affluent Nigerian man from the village of Umuofia who, with no help from his father who bore a disgraceful reputation and was known for indolence, negligence, and endless debt, had risen from nothing to a revered position in his clan. Okonkwo became a significant figure in the community, unlike his father.

This novel was the

first work published in Heinemann's African Writers Series. It was published in 1958 and discusses pre-colonial life in southeastern Nigeria and the arrival of the Europeans during the late nineteenth century.

It is revered as one of the first modern African novels in English to receive global critical acclaim, and it is a book commonly read in schools in Africa.

In the story, Okonkwo had made a name for himself not only in wrestling, but in war. He defeated Analinze the Cat in a wrestling match regarded as “one of the fiercest since the founder of the town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights,” as the elders of Umuofia remarked, and became revered on the battlefield for his numerous defeats of warriors.

Okonkwo worked hard to ensure he would never become anything like his father, who he regarded as weak and softhearted. Okonkwo was able to take three wives, have a barn full of animals, and a staple crop in his community.

Due to the fact that Okonkwo hated failure, a situation he likened to becoming like his father he ruled his family with an iron fist. Chinua Achebe's story mostly takes place in Umuofia, an area in the lower Niger river region of Nigeria consisting of clusters of villages. The people of Umuofia are revered.

Their power and influence as a clan is centered on war and laden with stories about their pride, conquests,

and beautiful people.

The novel begins with the killing of an Umuofian woman by Mbaino, a neighboring clan. To avoid war, Mbaino gives Umuofia one virgin and one young boy. The girl becomes the wife of the husband whose wife was killed, and the boy, Ikemefuna, is taken in by Okonkwo. He lives in Umuofia as part of Okonkwo's family for three years before the Oracle decides to sacrifice him.

While under Okonkwo's care, Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son, comes to love Ikemefuna as a brother, and adores him for everything he does.

After three years the village elders decide to kill Ikemefuna. Under the guise of returning him home Ikemefuna is taken to a forest and killed. Okonkwo, still fearful of being

thought of as weak as his father before him, aids in Ikemefuna's death, despite being advised by an elder not to.

The novel might begin with the killing of an Umuofian woman, but the story truly begins after the death of Ikemefuna.

Chinua Achebe weaves his tale utilizing African proverbs, history, and the culture of his Igbo people. Throughout his tale he sprinkled in pieces of African culture, beliefs, and tales, culminating in an ethnically enriched novel with historically accurate expressions of the integration of the white-man into Africa.

His establishment of a character for Okonkwo expressed in a way that the reader can truly comprehend his experiences, sympathize with his plight, and acknowledge the fact that while some are blessed with good parentage, some are forced to live for themselves without aid. Although this situation can lead to the established of a person with a valuable character, it can also lead to a heavily flawed individual subsisting on a flawed moral system.

Things Fall Apart showcased the time when white-men first arrived in Africa with their idea of spreading Christianity and the response typically expressed by tribes in Africa when confronted with new ideals and religion.



Stay Tuned for More Reviews...

# A Preview of the Boys and Girls Ski Team

by David Sugarmann '20

During the winter, many sports teams practice and compete indoors. The Amity Ski team, however, embraces



**Amity Ski Team Alumni**  
Photo from @amityskiteam

es the cold temperatures. No matter what the weather, this team is always ready to ski.

Before each ski race starts, all the racers are allowed to inspect the courses. Captain Victor You '20 explains that this is to "pinpoint potential troublesome points on the course." After this,

each racer skies down two courses, and the times from each are added together. And similar to swimming, "the lower the time, the higher the place."

Even though they can't practice at the ski mountain every day of the week, this group of student-athletes still makes effective use of each day. When they are not at the mountain, they do dry land practices at Amity.

As Captain Natalie Prinz '20 said, "we usually start by doing a couple laps around the school." After this warm-up, the team focuses the majority of the practice on improving fitness. When Prinz was asked to go into depth on this, she explained, "we do more running, ab work, interval training where we do lunges and squats... and then end with wall sits and a cool-down stretch."

This regiment of training is by no means arbitrary. To the contrary, these workouts are designed to "to get our

legs really strong so that we can handle the turns when we're racing on the mountain."

Prinz also explained the mentality that has helped the team flourish over the years. Prinz said that all the skiers "want to get better and work hard which leads to us having really successful ... race times throughout the season. A team will go nowhere without a hard-working mindset."

In a sport where every second counts, this mindset is definitely crucial for victory.



**Amity Boys Ski Team**  
Photo from @amityskiteam

Unlike many other sports at Amity, the boys and girls on the ski team practice together. Even though they race separately, they still feel like one team. You stated that "the guys and girls are essentially one team."

Because sports can often get intense and stressful, this group of Spartans always make sure to create a positive team atmosphere. According to Prinz, this is accomplished by making sure the team is "relaxed and happy when we train and race." When You was asked the same question, he mentioned that "we always go to Mount Snow in Vermont for a day" and "near the end of the year, we also have a pasta party." All of these things combined makes it clear that having a good time is a team goal in addition to winning races.

As the Amity Ski Team looks at the season that lies ahead, one thing is clear: Amity is ready to hit the slopes!

# Where Are They Now? Profile on Abby Harbinson

by Ben Martin '21

As we all know, in the fall of 2018 Abby Harbinson '19 had an amazing season for the Amity Girls Volleyball team.

But what has she done since this season? Also, how did she get to having this amazing senior season? Well, to start that story let's travel back to the fall of 2015 where a 5'11 freshman went to try out for volleyball. After the tryouts, that freshman by the name of Abby Harbinson made the varsity team.

When I asked Harbinson how she felt after making the varsity team in her freshman season, she stated that, "it was honestly really nerve racking. I wanted to play as well as I could for the rest of the older players."

Being a freshman on any varsity team is nerve racking for anyone. This is because no one really knows what your skills are, and as a result you have to prove yourself to everyone on the team and the coaches.

Fast forward to 2018. The young freshman was

now a 6'1 senior. When I asked Harbinson how she felt going into here senior season, she said, "I just

seed in the Class LL State tournament, and they went on to win the championship.

After Harbinson's high school career was over, she had to make the decision of where to play in college. After some thinking, she signed to go play for Rollins College on a scholarship.

In regards to this decision, Harbinson stated, "I was really looking for that student athlete balance. Rollins has a great environmental studies program, and the Sunshine State conference is one of the most competitive. It was the combination of both that I loved."

In her first season at Rollins, she played in 31 games and had 155 kills, 68 digs, 76 total

blocks and 54 aces. When I asked Harbinson about her future plans following college, she said, "After college I'm going to focus on my studies. I won't be playing pro. I would, however, love to coach the sport one day."

Who better to be a coach than a former player. Hopefully Harbinson gets a coaching job some day in the near future.



**Abby Harbinson sporting her Rollins uniform**  
Photo from rollinssports.com

felt really confident in that group of girls. We had gone through all the hard wins and the harder losses together. That made me really confident."

Her confidence in herself and her team showed throughout that season. She finished her senior season with 442 kills, 37 total blocks, 50 aces, and 245 digs. Along with this, the team earned the number 10

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# Spartan Athletes Surge to the Next Level

by Evan Arovos '20

Over the course of their four years, many senior athletes spend countless hours training for their sport while also managing a rigorous academic course load. However, not many are able to take athletics to the collegiate level.

On signing day, some of Amity's finest athletes were able to announce their commitment to where they would be playing their sport next year.

It is an exciting day for the athletes knowing that they can continue their sports on a collegiate level.

After an impressive field hockey season, Ana Carney '20 verbally committed to stay in state and play at the University of Connecticut. Many other schools were appealing for



**Marissa Dwyer '20 signing to Stonehill College**

*Photo contributed by Marissa Dwyer*

Carney, but she particularly like UConn's campus environment and the team's personable coaching staff.

When it came to her decision, she wanted to be somewhere that would make her happy, regardless of if she could not play field hockey anymore.

Carney described how staying as late as 5:30 at practice was worth it in the end. Even though she will not play with her Amity teammates again, she is grateful for the time she had with them.

Carney attributes all of her triumphs on the field to her coaches.

She said, "My coaches have taught me a lot and encouraged me to become the teammate and player I am today. Coach Hale has showed me how far teamwork and a positive attitude can take you."

To make it to the collegiate level, Carney stresses the importance of being able to take criticism and advice to better your skills in the sport that you play.

Next spring, Marissa Dwyer '20 will be taking her

talents on the softball diamond to Stonehill College. After visiting the school, Dwyer knew that it had the academics she wanted, and the environment to thrive athletically.

The Amity softball program has been an integral part of her life, giving her best friends that she'll keep in touch with long after she graduates. At the hot corner,

Dwyer has had an outstanding career both offensively and defensively with a state championship on her resume. Dwyer credits her success towards both her father and coaches.

She said, "My coaches have always been there supporting me to help me achieve my goals. However, I definitely owe my success to my Dad. He has helped me on and off the field with whatever obstacles I have faced. Without his guidance, I would not be the athlete or person I am today."

Finally, Dwyer advises others with similar aspirations to play athletics in college to stay committed to a goal and put in the extra work in order to reach that goal.

Signing day for Peter Gianquinto '20 was one he will remember forever as he committed to Johnson and Wales University for baseball. It was a humbling day for Gianquinto with his family at his side.

Instantly, he felt a strong connection with the coaching staff at the school. Walking around campus, he felt it had a vibe that appealed to him.

He is grateful for the guidance he has received from the Amity coaches and outside coaches at CT Grind Baseball.

He said, "Each coach has a different thing to teach and also has a different coaching style which made

me push myself to train to get where I am today."

Gianquinto followed one motto throughout his high school career which



**Peter Gianquinto '20 signing to Johnson and Wales University**

*Photo contributed by Peter Gianquinto*

is: "You should always be the first one at practice and the last one to leave practice to get the full workout in."

Although Tess Cjeska '20 will not be putting on an Amity jersey again, next year she will be sporting one for Boston University field hockey. Cjeska is ecstatic to continue her education and athletics in Boston.

It was a relief for her to finally put the pen to the paper with her friends and family watching. Over the past four years, Cjeska has seen the field hockey program grow. Cjeska played club field hockey (HTC), which helped her get into communication with college coaches.

Throughout her high school career, Cjeska's father has been an important figure in her development. She said, "He drove me to all of my practices and games along the East coast. He sup-



**Tess Cjeska '20 signing to Boston University**

*Photo contributed by Tess Cjeska*

ported me in my decision on what school I wanted to pick in the end. It wouldn't have happened without him."

Cjeska urges other athletes to take time to thank the coaches, and be respectful to opponents.

In the end, she said, "You never know who might be watching."

## Support Amity Athletics Upcoming Winter Sports

### BASKETBALL (BOYS)

Varsity: Notre Dame-West Haven @ Amity - December 19, 7:00 p.m.

Junior Varsity: Notre Dame-West Haven @ Amity - December 19, 5:15 p.m.

Freshmen: Notre Dame-West Haven @ Amity - December 19, 3:45 p.m.

### BASKETBALL (GIRLS)

Varsity: Amity @ Career Magnet - December 17, 7:00 p.m.

Junior Varsity: Amity @ Career Magnet - December 17, 5:30 p.m.

### ICE HOCKEY (BOYS)

Varsity: Daniel Hand @ Amity (West Haven HS-Bennett Rink) - December 18, 8:00 p.m.

Varsity: Amity @ West Haven - December 26, 6:00 p.m.

Varsity: Amity @ Staples - December 28, 6:00 p.m.

### ICE HOCKEY (GIRLS)

Varsity: Hamden @ Amity (Hamden-Lou Astorino Ice Rink) - December 16, 4:30 p.m.

Varsity: Amity @ Branford-N.Branford-East Haven (Hamden-Lou Astorino Ice Rink) - December 18, 4:15 p.m.

Varsity: Ridgefield-Danbury @ Amity (Hamden-Lou Astorino Ice Rink) - December 23, 4:30 p.m.

### SWIMMING (BOYS)

Varsity: Amity @ Hamden - December 19, 4:00 p.m.

Varsity: Sheehan @ Amity (Orange Community Center Pool) - December 27, 6:45 p.m.

Varsity: Amity @ Shelton - January 3, 3:45 p.m.

### WRESTLING

Varsity: Cheshire @ Amity - December 18, 6:00 p.m.

Junior Varsity: Cheshire @ Amity - December 18, 6:00 p.m.

Varsity: Amity @ Morgan - December 23, 7:00 p.m.

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# Monthly Feature

## Holiday Traditions from the Trident



**Kayla Morgan '20**

*"Each year my sister and I wake up really early on Christmas Day and wait an excruciating two hours before my parents wake up. My family's Christmas breakfast tradition is eating chocolate panettone and Peruvian hot chocolate before we open presents."*



**Zachary Garfinkle '22**

*"My favorite holiday tradition is lighting the menorah. The tradition is performed every night for all eight nights of Hannukah, and it had great religious symbolism and significance. This tradition unites my family and ties us closer to Judaism."*



**David Sugarmann '20**

*"My favorite holiday tradition is the annual Chanukah party my family does. At these parties, I get to catch up with relatives that I don't see too often, eat delicious food, and have a great time. Whenever Chanukah approaches on the calendar, I always look forward to this wonderful family gathering."*

**Sophia Wang '20**

*"Over the holiday break, my family goes to New York City. The night lights, snow, and festive spirit make my holiday season. During New Year's Eve, we sometimes watch the ball drop, and even though we stand for eight hours waiting, when the confetti falls, nothing else matters!"*



**Tracy Lu '20**

*"Every holiday season, I spend a day in New York City with family. It's a great time to enjoy unique attractions and seeing the entire city in the holiday spirit is really amazing."*



**Allison Su '21**

*"My favorite holiday tradition is Secret Snowflake. I usually do it with some of my friends and we also do it in Science Research class. It's fun to get presents and guess who may have you. Then, on gift giving day, everyone finds out and can enjoy the holiday spirit."*



**Ella Marin '20**

*"My favorite holiday tradition is the Elf on the Shelf. When I was younger, I strongly believed that my elf (Jimmy) was watching me at all times and reporting back to Santa. Now, I enjoy hiding Jimmy for my younger sister Eve and watching her find him."*

**Caroline Chen '21**

*"Every year, my whole family gets together for Christmas at my grandparents' house. We have dinner together and then give out gifts. Being able to see all of my family is definitely my favorite part of the holiday!"*



**Ryan Anastasio '20**

*"I spend every Christmas Eve with my mom's side of the family. I have nine cousins on that side so it is always a very hectic but fun night. My grandma fills the floor with presents and we take turns going from youngest to oldest for opening the presents."*



**Sydney Reiner '20**

*"My family fully embraces the holiday season as my whole family is Jewish but my mom is Catholic. We light candles for Hannukah, do the traditional Chinese food dinner on Christmas Eve, and then welcome Santa come Christmas morning. It's incredible seeing how, regardless of religion, the holiday season is simply about spreading joy and spending time with the ones you love."*

