

# THE AMITY TRIDENT

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Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

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## Looking to the Future: Alumni Panel Offers a Glimpse of Life after High School

by Maggie Kershner '27

The Career Center hosted an alumni panel for the juniors and seniors on Wednesday, November 26th. The panel, consisting of seven Amity alumni, served to answer questions, share their own experiences about college, and give advice to Amity students who might be unsure about where their next steps might take them.

The former students included Ella Urban '25, Aarushi Trivedi '24, Sarah Shaikah '25, Matt Muravink '25, Michael Crisci '24, Samantha Moran '25, and Katie Sim '23.

Among them, they attend six schools: Bentley University, Northeastern University, the University of Connecticut, the University of Michigan, Syracuse University, and Rochester Institute of Technology.

This wide variety of universities gave Amity juniors and seniors diverse perspectives on what col-



Photo contributed by Maggie Kershner '27

The Student Alumni Panel on Wednesday, November 26.

lege could look like. Factors such as school size, location, climate, and major are very significant when choosing a school that best fits an individual, so having such a wide variety allows for an open mind.

When asked about the panel, current students generally responded with high praise.

Christina Corvigno '27, stated, "The panel was extremely helpful in

seeing the different paths Amity alumni have taken and where they have led them today." She emphasized the panel's impact on her thinking about college, noting that hearing different perspectives on what college is like at various schools was helpful.

Additionally, the panel gave the Amity alumni a chance to give back to their school and community, offering their knowledge to the younger classes.

Michael Crisci, who graduated in 2024 and now attends Syracuse University, stated, "It's the best. The fact I get to go back to my alma mater and give some insight to the next class of alumni is really special to me."

His enthusiasm and pride to give back to Amity highlights the strength of the BOWA community in supporting fellow students on their journey to success in life.

## Chilly Start Reduced Heat Leads to Low Temps

by Bryan Lin '26

When students and staff returned to school after Thanksgiving on Monday, December 1, some areas of the school experienced reduced heating during the early morning hours due to an issue with the boiler system.

According to Principal Andre Hauser, the problem primarily affected areas along the courtyard, including the main office, associate principals' offices, and counseling offices. Temperatures in those areas were recorded around 54 degrees between 6:45 and 6:50 a.m.

Hauser explained the issue likely stemmed from the long holiday weekend, during which the boiler did not function as intended. Maintenance staff noticed the issue early in the morning and immediately began working to resolve it.

"They get here pretty early, around 5 or 6," Hauser said, adding

that the problem was resolved later that morning, with heat returning around 10 to 11 a.m.

He also expressed appreciation for the maintenance team, saying, "Thank you to our maintenance staff for recognizing and getting it resolved so quickly."

Some teachers also had noticed the cooler temperatures upon arrival. AP Environmental Science teacher Alison Beres-Nork said that she had realized something was off when she first entered her classroom that morning, noting that it had felt colder than usual.

"The first thing I had to do was check my Galileo thermometer, and for the first time I saw the 64-degree bubble floating," she said. "It would only happen if the water was colder than 64 degrees, so I knew something was off."

Despite the temporary discomfort, the issue was resolved within the school day and classes continued as normal.

## The Trident Goes Digital

by Eve Marin '27

The Amity Trident has existed as a print publication for 70 years, which is almost as long as Amity has existed as a school itself. This year, however, in an effort to adapt to the changing world of journalism, the Trident will also be available through an online website starting in January.

Trident faculty advisor Emily Clark explained some reasons for this development. "To retain readers in today's changing media society, you need to meet them where they are, and we must evolve and that includes the website and a more active Instagram," she said. "With these outlets, even more readers will be able to see the great work that the students put out."

*"We're creating a site that makes the Trident's content accessible and welcoming for the whole community."*

The website is set to be launched around mid-January as a link on the Amity website. The fact that it will be created such that people can access it from the school website is an effort to increase readership. Parents whose children do not bring home the print edition can now access the website edition of the Trident to stay up to date with the happenings of the school.

Additionally, Clark said, "Sometimes with the print edition, relevant stories are delayed because we only publish once a month. I also think this will allow readers to interact with us more and access more news and information."

In order to create such a website, the Trident staff enlisted the help of Elizabeth Forcier, the district website manager and technology

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# Principal's Committee Updates

by Jacob Klee '28

between interested students and Principal Andre Hauser. At their meetings so far, the Principal's Committee has workshoped the potential of including another club day during second semester, Aristotle's overcensoring of student research, concerns surrounding Amity's limited cell phone coverage, and discussed the changing format of classroom walkthroughs.

In a discussion about expanding opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities, the committee suggested hosting a second Club Day two weeks after Midterms. Students involved in this discussion referenced that student schedules change each season due to academics and sports, so having another opportunity to see Amity's clubs could help provide an easier path into involvement. As opposed to the fall event, students suggested that clubs be offered tables during lunch waves. Clubs will have to figure out their preferred day, sign up for a lunch table, and be responsible for presenting their organization.

One student advocated for clubs to be able to sell approved non-food items to fundraise and advertise. Abby Zamir '27, committee co-chair, said, "This would be a great addition to our school-wide activities! It will be an awesome way to re-motivate certain clubs and get other clubs the members and outreach that they need as we come to the middle of the school year. It can help show students that it is never too late to take part in something you're interested in."

Many students have also complained about an increase in Aristotle blocking important websites this

year, therefore preventing some students from doing assigned research or homework. This issue has also been affecting teachers, with some reporting that they have been unable to assign homework because their website is blocked.

Recently, students in the Principal's Committee have been discussing concerns about Aristotle restricting websites used for learning and research. Hauser explained that some of Aristotle's restrictions come from federal and state laws that mandate schools to block certain websites, and that the software is useful for administration in preventing the misuse of school computers.

Students at the meetings discussed that one potential workaround to this issue would be to unblock all websites ending in ".gov", as those are generally safe for students.

Tony Zhang '26, committee co-chair, said, "Changes could be occurring to Aristotle to better promote the use of technology in education."

Students also raised concerns over the rumored existence of "cell blockers" in the building with Hauser. He shared that contrary to student legend, administration does not have or utilize cell blockers, but instead that the school resides in a rural area of Woodbridge with poor cell tower coverage. In addition, he explained that many people trying to get service in one classroom or wing of the building could worsen the connection and make using computers or phones difficult.

However, he did address student concerns about losing contact with family by offering to check with the Amity IT department to see if there are simple ways to improve the service in "dead zones" or use the school's WiFi to improve communication.

# French National Honor Society Supports The Apparent Project

by Phoebe Halsey '26

Continuing its tradition at Amity, the French National Honor Society (FNHS) is partnering with The Apparent Project, an organization dedicated to empowering Haitian families and building future leaders in Haiti. As part of this initiative, FNHS is selling handmade Haitian bracelets created by Haitian artists outside the Cafeteria during lunch waves.

The Apparent Project focuses on providing opportunities for Haitian parents to support themselves and their families through fair-wage employment, job skills training, child care, and early education. By creating jobs, the organization helps

families rise out of poverty, stay together, and become productive members of their communities.

In addition to supporting parents, The Apparent Project prioritizes helping children. Through access to education and a stable environment, Haitian children are given a better starting point in life, one filled with hope, possibility, and the chance for a brighter future not limited by poverty.

The bracelets sold through this project are all handmade using recycled materials such as newspapers. Haitian artists carefully roll, shape, and paint the paper to create durable and colorful beads, which are then crafted into unique bracelets. This process not only reduces waste but also

transforms everyday materials into meaningful works of art, showcasing creativity and sustainability.

Another goal of the project is to highlight Haiti's needs to supporters. By selling these bracelets, FNHS hopes to raise awareness within our school community while directly supporting Haitian families. The organization also strives to inspire faith, integrity, and a strong character as it works to build future leaders in Haiti.

Each bracelet is more than a fashion accessory, it symbolizes opportunity, empowerment, and hope. FNHS encourages staff, students, and families to support this meaningful cause and help make a positive difference in the lives of others.

# The Trident Goes Digital

Continued from page 1

generalist. In order to ensure that the website matches the intentions of Clark and the Trident staff, communication is necessary between the two. Clark said that the goal of the website is for it to be very comprehensive.

"It will include links to current and recently posted articles in all of our sections, a list of our editors and frequent polls or survey-type questions that readers can respond to. We'll also have more photos and possibly longer stories that just don't fit in the print editions due to space," she said, adding that the print issues will continue to be published each month.

Forcier explained the construction of the site. "I'm building the page on the school website platform, structuring it for easy navigation,

adding text and images in story and slideshow formats, and optimizing it for mobile and tablet use with Mrs. Clark's input on layout and design.

"We're building a solid framework and refining it as we go, creating a site that makes the Trident's content accessible and welcoming for the whole community," she said.

Overall, in the changing world of journalism, the website will strive to increase readership and provide more content that is not limited to the monthly print.

Although there is no January print edition of the Trident, having a website allows the staff to publish a few timely articles.

Editor-in-Chief Joy Deng '26 stated, "Setting up a digital version of the Trident definitely increases the accessibility of the newspaper and adds in more opportunity for interactivity with the readers."

## Opinions

# Pep Rally Brings School Together

by Aryan Shrivastav '27

Students and staff filled the gym on Friday, November 21, for the school's annual pre-Thanksgiving pep rally, featuring performances and competitions designed to bring school spirit to its peak after Spirit Week. The event delivered what a pep rally always promises: loud music, eager crowds, and the kind of chaos that only a gym full of students can generate. This time, it did especially well. From the moment students packed into bleachers, it felt like one of those rallies where everyone was fully locked in. I, along with many other peers, would probably call this one of Amity's best pep rallies ever.

The headline moment was the much-anticipated students vs. teachers basketball game. For a brief but thrilling few minutes, the students held the lead, before the teachers, thanks in part to a well-timed surge led by business education teacher Micheal Cofrancesco, pulled off a dramatic comeback. It was equal parts entertaining and energizing, setting the tone for the rest of the rally. As a student watching from the sidelines (and as someone who is not usually into basketball), it was hard not to get caught up in every basket and every reaction from the crowd. I could not help but cheer when the students made a basket, and boo when the teachers were winning.

After the upsetting win by the teachers, the students were greeted and engaged with polished performances from the dance team and cheerleaders that brought real energy to the gym. Their routines, clearly the result of extensive preparation, earned enthusiastic applause and helped keep momentum high throughout the afternoon. Watching the synchronized dances and impressive moves (such as the cheerleader pyramids) felt stunning and mind-blowing to me. The talent on display was undeniable.

Another crowd-favorite event was the pie-in-the-face segment. Throughout Spirit Week, each class competed on Instagram, and the class with the most tags earned the right to select five students to choose five teachers, including Principal Andre Hauser, to pie. While the anticipation was high, the execution was slightly anticlimactic for me. Some of the whipped cream missed its target entirely which took away from the dramatic payoff many were expecting. Still, the laughter and reactions from both students and teachers made it a memorable moment.

The class competitions continued with the song-recognition race, where representatives from each grade sprinted across the gym after naming a tune. In an unexpected but impressive victory, the freshmen secured the win, drawing surprised reactions from many of the upperclassmen.

The rally concluded with an intense tug-of-war. After several determined rounds, the juniors emerged as the champions, earning bragging rights heading into break. The junior vs. senior tug-of-war was especially riveting and very close, with cheering and shouting from the spectators building to the climax until the juniors finally snatched victory.

Walking out of the gym and hearing everyone talk excitedly about what had happened, it felt like the school had come together in a way that does not happen often, making the rally both fun and especially meaningful heading to Thanksgiving break.



Photo contributed by Clyde Stolzman '26  
Sparty at the pep rally

**P.O.V**  
**AMITY**

 by Anika  
 Zivojinovic '27

# What memory captures the meaning of “holiday magic” when you were growing up?

“Growing up, holiday magic to me showed up in the traditions my family and I shared—decorating the tree together was my favorite part, everyone laughing, choosing ornaments, turning on the lights at the end. Those moments made the holidays feel warm, special, full of love.” - Brooke Cichon '29

“When I was younger I was determined to catch my elf, Snowball, flying through my house, so one night I convinced my parents to let me sleep on the living room couch in front of the tree because I thought if I stayed up I would surely see him flying. I eventually fell asleep and when I woke up, I found Snowball resting on my shoulder.” - Griffin Davis '28

“My uncle would dress up as Santa and surprise me, my brother, and the other kids in the family, where we would gather around him to open all our presents, never knowing that it was really Uncle Rob in the suit.” - Fletcher Lindsay '27

“One Christmas I woke up to open presents and when I got to the tree, my present was perfectly wrapped but it was put in a Trader Joe’s bag, so I asked my parents if they had given it to me instead of Santa.” - Alyssa Xia '26

“I would have this tradition with my entire family, where we would all get together around Christmas time and we would all make hallacha, a traditional Venezuelan dish, because making this was a family situation that would always take two days to make, and it truly is what symbolizes family in my culture which captures what holiday magic meant to me growing up.” - Algebra teacher Elias Kabeche

“One year my family and I spent the holidays in Europe since I lived most of my childhood years there. We went to Germany for a while to visit my dad’s family which made me feel that holiday magic because I got to reconnect with some family members.” - Alina Konezkey '28

“My friends and I would drive around during Christmas time looking at all the houses decorated with Christmas lights while drinking hot chocolate. This always made the season feel exciting and special.” - Reese Waldon '29

“For me, holiday magic growing up meant the tradition of my family’s Secret Santa each year, and even though we always knew who got who, buying gifts for each other and watching everyone’s reactions as they opened their gifts remained special to me.” - Alex Wyskiel '27

“When I was younger, I would lie down under the Christmas tree to look up at the lights and that just felt really magical for me, capturing the essence of the holidays” - Gabriel Geary '27

**Writer’s Note:** As we grow up, it constantly seems as if the holiday magic we once knew and experienced is slipping away, leaving us with longing and that feeling of nostalgia for when we were young. However, through remembering and reflecting back on moments that truly captured what holiday magic meant to us when we were younger, that joy and happiness is able to come back. When we look back on special holiday memories, we are transported back to their time and place, immersed in them, and provided a sense of comfort and joy knowing they live on in our hearts.

## High Cost of Dismantling the Department of Education

by Armaan Shrivastav '27

After an executive order calling for the dismantling of the Department of Education in early 2025, the Department of Education recently announced agreements with four different agencies to break up and shift responsibilities of the Federal Education Bureaucracy.

This involved a plan entailing that most of the Education Department’s funding programs be offloaded—a step towards the goal of reducing the federal role in education. (U.S. Department of Education).

While some argue that such a policy regarding education would allow schools to have more money and flexibility to serve students, there is widespread concern regarding civil rights. A reduced role might undermine federal funding streams like Title

I, which directs money to schools with students living in poverty. Special education support would likely also take a hit, increasing the vulnerability of low-income, underprivileged students, and students from historically underserved backgrounds.

I believe that giving schools so much responsibility while cutting federal guidance will increase the burden upon school districts, throwing them and their students into chaos.

Therefore, from where I stand, the risks and damage that might be inflicted upon the educational system are far too great. Multiple schools and students rely on federal funding programs to feed and educate vulnerable students, and the loss of these programs will leave families suffering.

Without this support, already underfunded schools will struggle to provide basic resources, widening the gap between wealthy and low-income districts. A lack of adequate education

creates unequal opportunities and a less-informed public, which directly influences the functioning of our democratic American society.

Federal funding does not stifle local and state control. Instead, it supports it by providing a safety net and consistent standards to maintain a quality education for every student, ensuring all students have equal access to what they need to succeed.

Attending Amity has shown me how a strong education shapes students’ opportunities and growth, and it makes me think about how crucial it is for all schools nationwide to have the support they need to succeed, support that is bolstered by the Department of Education.

Dismantling it would be a fundamental weakening of educational equity, and that is something we must oppose if we hope to maintain a fair and thriving education system for every student.

# The Amity Trident

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Check out  
 the new  
**Trident**  
 website,  
 set to  
 launch in  
 January  
 2026!

*Editorial*

# Brown University Shooting and Its Aftermath

## When Waiting for Policy Prevention, Educate on Personal Protection

by Joy Deng '26

at Brown University. More than 80% of that class consisted of freshmen, kids that were barely of age and probably haven't even been away from home for a full year. Two students (Muhammad Aziz Umurzakov and Ella Cook) are dead, and at least nine are injured.

Every year, there are horrific shootings in K-12 schools. One student was shot and injured inside Phillip and Sala Burton Academic High School in San Francisco, California (December 12th, 2025). Two people (one student, one substitute teacher) died from the shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin (December 16, 2024).

Every year, there are the pleas to increase gun regulation and policies drafted to restrict gun access. Every year, there are appeals to the 2nd Amendment and the right to bear arms. Every year, debates rage on, and the status quo is maintained. Every year, more children bleed and die.

For survivors that grow up and attend college, they never expect it to happen to them again. Two Brown students have already experienced mass shootings during their K-12 education. Mia Tretta, a junior, was one of the students injured in the 2019

Saugus High School shooting, which also killed her best friend. She said she chose Brown because she believed its smaller size would translate to greater safety (NBC News).

"No one in this country even assumes it's going to happen to them," Tretta said. "Once it happens to you, you assume or are told it will never

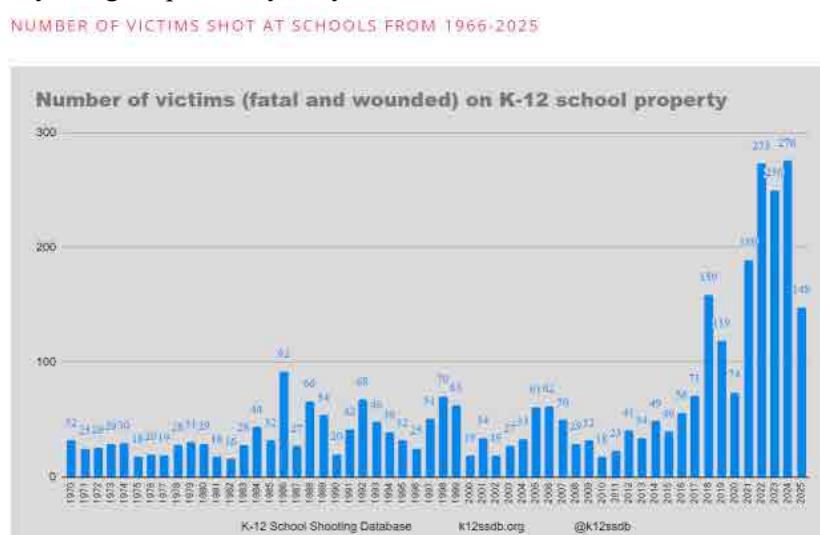


Photo contributed by K-12 School Shooting Database

### Number of Victims from School Shootings (1966-2025)

happen again, and obviously that is not the case."

The odds of a single individual being a victim of gun violence is low, but everyday there are people shot and wounded. The low probability doesn't discredit any fear or anxiety or pain, because the consequence might be the loss of a human life—and for many families, it is a loss that is never expected.

As a current senior applying to college, I don't really know how to evaluate the safety of these schools. We cannot predict where the next shooting will occur. We cannot predict when it will occur. We can wait for policies to change and campus shootings to disappear, or even involve ourselves in that change, but it would still take a very long time.

What can we do more on a personal level, and not just a policy level?

We can first educate ourselves on responding to these emergencies. The American College of Surgeons STOP THE BLEED Program advocates for educating students on gunshot wound response.

When shot in the torso area, covering the wound prevents air from getting in, potentially saving the victim's life, as the induced air could lead to the lungs collapsing and other potentially fatal complications like Tension Pneumothorax and respiratory failure (Verywell Health).

We can also develop drills that are concrete and specific to the surrounding environment, instead of generic "shelter in place" commands.

I also think emphasis should be put on comforting those directly impacted from gun violence and forming spaces to grieve, covering news stories with empathy, and centering the value of human life in debates and discussions on gun control.

It's heartbreaking that so little has changed to stop so much suffering. These instances remind us that life is fragile and fleeting, which is why we must take action now.

The Amity community also mourns the lives lost to another instance of gun violence, just one day after the tragedy at Brown University. The shooting at Bondi Beach in Australia, which claimed the lives of at least 15 people, occurred on the first day of Hanukkah.

## Inclusive Lunch Starts with Allergy-Friendly Choices

by Isabella Smernoff '27

worldwide, you have an allergy. Whether it's a common allergen like wheat and dairy, or a more exotic allergen like kiwi or cinnamon, it is nonetheless challenging to manage. I have Celiac Disease, which by definition is a disease in which the small intestine is hypersensitive to gluten, leading to an inability to digest certain foods.

Over the past five years of eating completely gluten-free, I have experienced all of the ups and downs that come with having an allergy. I sympathize with the inability to share food with friends, having to explain to restaurant staff what gluten is, or feeling limited when it comes to eating out. There are a few places that I feel comfortable dining at without a high probability of experiencing an allergic reaction, but even fewer where I actually enjoy what I am eating. Given that I and many others with allergies are members of the Amity Regional High School student body, one would think that promoting allergy-friendly foods would be a priority; however, our school is severely lacking in this department.

Breakfast is often considered the most important meal of the day. Unfortunately, if a student has an allergy to wheat, soy, or eggs, it can be challeng-

ing to find a suitable option at school. The typical options for breakfast include French toast, cinnamon rolls, turkey sausage biscuit, a wide variety of cereals, pancakes, bagels, muffins, and the list goes on and on. Every one of these options contains wheat, while more than half have eggs and soy.



Photo contributed by Isabella Smernoff

The school's online weekly breakfast menu, not picturing drinks and fresh fruit, with a strikethrough on each breakfast item that contains wheat

It is disappointing that, while many of my friends can have a satisfying full breakfast on school grounds, my only non-drink options are different fresh fruits. Allergies are so common now that I would like to have at least one allergen-free option for myself and others who struggle with allergies. Not only are we unable to buy a safe and

convenient breakfast from school, but the same issue occurs during lunchtime.

A few of the lunchtime options include sweet & sour chicken, cheesy breadsticks, chicken tenders, pasta & meatballs, build-your-own sandwich bar, taco bar, and pre-packaged sandwiches

or salads. I have no problem eating salad; in fact, it's one of my favorite foods. The issue with salad offered by our school is that it has croutons, which are made of gluten. This makes the salad unsafe for me and many others with a gluten allergy.

While every one of these options has some form of wheat, almost all also contain an ingredient with soy. I have discovered that if you are allergic to gluten, your only options for a meal are a taco without a tortilla or the buffalo chicken dip, both of which risk cross-contamination. There is always the option of getting a snack, such as chips or fruit, but it does not suffice as a meal.

Students with allergies often experience significant discomfort when eating out because it is hard to find options in unfamiliar areas. But still, in a place that should be safe and comfortable to eat, such as our own school cafeteria, students and I with allergies experience great difficulty. This should not be the case. Children with allergies should have the same convenience as those without, and at least one completely allergy-safe option, so that our school lunch environment is inclusive for all.

# Thumbprint Cookies

## Easy Recipe to Explore a New Hobby

by Claire Theiss '26

Between classes, sports, homework, and a plethora of other extracurriculars, it can be difficult for students to find the time to try new hobbies. Baking offers an easy way to step outside your comfort zone, with a tasty result.

As long as you have the ingredients, baking can be done whenever it's convenient for you, and this recipe makes a point of including



*Photo contributed by lifeloveandsugar.com*  
The delicious result of this recipe

only basic household ingredients.

Whether you're new to baking or just love a holiday classic, these thumbprint cookies are the perfect treat to make for holiday parties, family gatherings, or just for fun!

### Thumbprint Cookies

The following recipe makes approximately 24 cookies

#### Ingredients:

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
2 large egg yolks  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
2  $\frac{1}{3}$  cups all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup jam of your choice

#### Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350°.
2. Cream butter, sugar, and salt together.
3. Beat in the eggs, one at a time.
4. Add vanilla.
5. Slowly beat in flour. Stop as soon as the dough is combined well.
6. Roll each piece of dough into a ball (1.5 to 2 tablespoons). Use your thumb to make an indentation in each ball of dough. Fill with jam until the jam is level with the surrounding cookie dough.
7. Bake for 12 minutes.
8. Enjoy!

# NHS Spreads Sweetness with Birthday Cake Drive for Children in Need

by Harper Binford '27

ity started December off with something sweet; gifting birthday cakes to children in need. The NHS put together a way to spread comfort and joy to children during times of struggle, by running a birthday cake drive, which ended on December 17th.

The drive is one way that the NHS is striving to fulfill its goals of service and community involvement.

"We always want to reach out to the school and greater BOWA community to make peoples' lives easier and brighter," shares math teacher and NHS coordinator Courtney Morrison.

The NHS asked that students donate cake making materials such as boxed cake mix, pre-made frosting, candles, sprinkles, and aluminum foil pans for baking the birthday cakes.

Viviana Pfannenbecker '26, a member of the National Honor Society, stated, "The birthday cake kit drive is to help kids and families who are facing hardships and can't provide a

birthday cake for a celebration."

These donations were dropped off in a bin located near the cafeteria's lunch tables. All donations provided will be sent to local food banks in Bethany, Woodbridge, and Orange area to supply parents in difficult financial times with the materials to celebrate their children's birthday.

The National Honor Society engages with the community by providing aid in the form of donations to charitable organizations like food banks, organizing annual blood drives, and more.

"Kids always feel better about helping other kids," Morrison shares.

Powered by the generosity of the Amity student body, the National Honor Society's birthday cake kit drive is on track to be a sweet success.

In addition to the cake drive,

some of the NHS members spread even more holiday cheer when they visited Coachman Square in Woodbridge on Saturday, December 13th to deliver handmade cards to the residents.



*Photo contributed by Courtney Morrison*  
NHS members visited Coachman Square to deliver handmade holiday cards to the residents in addition to the running the cake drive.



# Word Mash

by Olivia Cummings '26



*Two clues are provided that lead to two specific words or phrases which can be combined phonically. The clues are in order of which phrase goes first.*

#### Example

**Clues:** Small furry mammal + capital of the Netherlands  
**Answer:** Hamsterdam

Jedi weapon of choice + extinct ice age cat

Pointed stick thrown in field event + Hamilton musical creator

Smallish wild spotted cat + form of gambling

Mythical creature reborn in fire + Watergate president

*Answer key will be provided along with more Word Mash in the February issue.*



# Roshambo Fundraiser Supports Columbus House

by Rudra Trivedi '28

pile of necklaces that quickly amassed and changed hands.

"It was a creative and engaging fundraiser that everyone who participated had fun with," Valentine Tavenas '26 said. "I'm still mad that Cora ripped away my victory though."

While the competitive element drew many students to participate, the main purpose of the event was to support Columbus House and its mission. According to the Columbus House website, the organization works to prevent and end homelessness by providing shelter, supportive housing, and essential services that help individuals achieve long-term stability. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go toward supporting these efforts and ultimately work towards a positive impact in the local community.

The Roshambo fundraiser highlights how student-led initiatives at Amity can combine fun, school spirit, and community service. Through events like this, the Community Outreach Committee continues to provide students with meaningful opportunities to give back, which is what Amity is all about.



*Photo contributed by Olivia Cummings '26*  
Students play rock, paper, scissors at the fundraiser.

# Blindness Simulation Explores How Psychology Seniors Understand Senses and Perception

by Olivia Cummings '26

Picture this: you're walking through the hallway on your way to the bathroom in early December. You haven't made it 10 feet from your classroom door when three seniors approach, laughing nervously. One of them is blindfolded, stumbling as they follow the voice of a friend.

As you pass by, you hear someone ask, "Wait where are we?" You mind your own business and keep trudging along, passing two more peculiar groups of blindfolded students before finally reaching your destination.

When the senior psychology classes

explored senses and perception this month, this experience was more probable than you might think.

In order to gain a better understanding of how senses interact with each other, psychology teacher Richard Bourdeau's students explore the topic hands-on. Students pair up, don blindfolds, and guide each other through the hallways of Amity, paying attention to changes in hearing, smell, and touch.

"I wrap up our discussion of sensation and perception with the blindness simulation. During these units we explore how it works when one of your senses goes missing," Bourdeau explains. "How does it affect your ability to perceive things in your environment?

Is it harder? Is it easier? Is it different? The answer can be all three."

These changes in perception are rooted in the brain's ability to redistribute resources when a sense is not working. When students lose eyesight for a period of time, they perceive their hearing, touch, and even sometimes smell to be more intense.

Students find that the simulation is an engaging way to see the real applications of what they talk about in class. "When I couldn't see, my hearing was noticeably more sensitive," said Gabby Tessitore '26. "It was cool that we could experience for ourselves what we learned about in class."

Phoebe Halsey '26 said, "I was excited

to do the blindness simulation after seeing students from past years do it. It's cool to experience the school without sight, and it really made me realize how senses change how I perceive my surroundings.

"Things like the shape of the wall or hearing students in other parts of the building helped me figure out where I was, which are senses I wouldn't normally use," she added.

While the activity is exciting, it also adds an important tangible connection between classroom learning and lived experience.

In a world where so much learning is on screens or textbooks, it's one thing to read about sensory adaptation, and quite another to stumble through it yourself.

## A Sweet Success: Candy Land Homecoming Brings Students Together

by Kieran Dayha '27

This November, Amity held its annual Homecoming

dance with the theme Candy Land, and overall it was a successful, well organized night. A lot of effort clearly went into planning the event, as it showed through the decorations, food, and music. Homecoming gave everyone a chance to hangout with their friends and enjoy the night.

One of the best parts of Homecoming was the decorations. Junior Luca Forte said, "I thought Homecoming was good because of the time I got to spend with my friends and the food I got to eat. It was very fun and I thought the theme was good."

The Candy Land theme was easy to notice as soon as people walked in. There were a lot of bright pastel colors and pink, and there were large inflatable gummy bears that were placed throughout the gym and cafeteria. The decorations made the space feel exciting and fun.

The food was another highlight of the night and something that many people liked. One of the most popular items was bread rolls with whipped cinnamon butter, with the first batch of rolls run out in minutes. They were a big hit and a lot of people came back for seconds. Another favorite was the butter chicken and rice from Coromandel located in Orange.

The food was very filling and it tasted amazing. Having the food from good restaurants made the food more enjoyable.

tween songs which avoided any awkward pauses and kept up the energy which was great. Because of this, the dance floor stayed active and filled most of the night especially towards the end.

What really made Homecoming enjoyable was the overall energy of the night. People were laughing, talking, and having a good time with their friends and others throughout the whole night. Some people spent the night dancing, while others walked around, took pictures, or just hung out. There was something for everyone, which made the night very enjoyable for all.

Homecoming was definitely a success. The Candy Land theme, great food, music and good energy all came together nicely.

Homecoming was a really fun experience this year with the music and everybody dancing. I enjoyed it this year more than my previous years.

"It was something fun to do with my friends and I enjoyed the food that came with it!" said Miranda Vuolo '27.

Another attendee, freshman Rose Drakonikis, said, Homecoming was really fun and a great chance to spend time with people I don't see often. It was fun to get ready with my friends and have a good time after a full week of school."

This year's Homecoming was a great chance for students to make memories, and it ended up being a night that many people enjoyed and will remember.



Photo contributed by Kieran Dayha '27

People dancing in the gym at Homecoming

The music also played a large role in how fun the night was. The DJ did a great job choosing songs that people enjoyed to dance to. He had smooth transitions be-

## How did you do?

### Word Mash Answers from November

1. *Alligator Garfield*   2. *Sassafrasputin*   3. *Polymermaid*   4. *Paleopold II*

Interested in Becoming a Trident Writer?

Contact Mrs. Clark at  
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 any questions!!



# Farm to Table Initiative Fights Food Insecurity

by Carissa Parker '29

The spirit of giving and caring is strong at Amity this December.

Recently, the school participated in the Farm to Table Food Drive organized by the Farm to Table Initiative. This club organizes drives, donates locally, and builds community by doing activities such as gardening and cooking for the elderly at Bethany's Human Services.

In mid-November, empty boxes were delivered to Spartan Seminars, and students were given the task to fill them with shelf stable and non-perishable foods to support those who need it.

However, food wasn't the only item collected. Many students - and staff - donated personal care items such as toothbrushes and bodywash. Household products like tissues and toilet paper were also an option.

After a few weeks of classes packing items in their boxes, they were collected, counted, and organized by the destination they would be sent to. Culinary teacher and Farm to Table adviser, Chef Adrianna Linkstrom, delivered items to locations within the three towns that comprise Amity: the Orange Food Pantry, Human Services of Woodbridge, and Human Services of Bethany. These organizations provide food, community support, resources for senior

citizens, and more.

This year, some of the club's donations were also given to Fair Haven School to aid students and families in getting healthy food. Over 1,300 items were split between these locations, passing the goal Linkstrom originally set of 1,000 and inspiring a new goal of 1,500 for the upcoming year.

"I have faith that we can do even better in the future," Linkstrom expresses, confident in our potential as a



Photo contributed by Carissa Parker '29

**Mr. Demeo's Spartan Seminar enjoys their cookie prize after donating the most items to the Farm to Table food drive.**

school. There were students all over the school who made the achievement of this goal possible, but there was one Spartan Seminar that really stood out.

Showing Spartan spirit, math interventionist Scott DeMeo's seminar put together the greatest amount of different types of shelf stable food, ultimately winning the prize of freshly baked cookies for their whole class.

"Our seminar of ninth graders have been engaged in all of the activities we have done so far this year, so it didn't surprise me that they did this one as well," DeMeo stated, happy with his group's involvement.

Joudy Shahin '29 brought in about 30 cans of food on the final day of the drive, saying, "For those who need it, anything would help."

Her classmate, Carla Huber '29, shares a similar sentiment, declaring, "Even if it's something small, we can always do a little something to help. It shows how individuals at Amity can collaborate to create something meaningful."

Along with the drive, Farm to Table recently learned about agriculture and cooking with fresh farm grown ingredients through a field trip to Stoneacres Farm. The food drive and field trip were a major success. If anybody is interested in giving to the community, this is a great way to get involved. It's always the season for giving at Amity!

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by Julian Vanderberg '29

Seth Downs, a freshman in the Band and Jazz Band, has notable guitar and mallet percussion skills. Since he started playing piano at nine years old, Downs has improved immensely in not just his talent with the piano but in many other musical skills as well.

Despite his current day passion, Downs did not come out of the womb knowing that he wanted to rock the guitar. He was inspired by his dad, who, like him, played guitar in multiple bands. Because of this inspiration, Downs was led to explore many instruments, including the piano, before following in his father's footsteps and picking up the guitar.

Out of all of the pieces that he has played, Downs says that his favorite is a song called "25 or 6 to 4" by Chicago, a 70s and 80s rock-and-roll band, containing elements of classical, jazz, R&B, and pop. "25 or 6 to 4" was a song that he

played with the band while in middle school, and this was his favorite because he had a solo, as well as the honor of playing lead guitar.

Whenever he is working with

his instrument, lots of things factor into his playing. Downs said, "lots and lots of practice" got him to this point and that he has had to work on elements like timing and learning new

chords so that he is able to be the best musician that he can be.

Downs has been doing this for a very long time, but why does he stick with it? "It's a way for me to have fun, be creative, and express myself," he said, which just shows how much music means to him as a hobby and a way to truly be himself.

When asked what his favorite part of the whole music process was, Downs said, "My favorite part has to be when I'm just starting to learn new music, and when I am performing it. [However] the whole process is fun."

Regarding the future, he said, "I would like to start a band and at some point make my own music."

He also said he plans to stay with Band and Jazz Band at Amity, as well as making sure that he has music with him his whole life.

This is just the start for Downs. Who knows what he will accomplish with his musical talent in the future? No matter what, we are all eager to see his growth throughout the years.



Photo contributed by Seth Downs '29

Seth Downs '29 playing his guitar

## An Honest Review of *Prelude to a Kiss*

by Andrew Emrich '28

Earlier this  
De-  
cem-

ber, Amity Creative Theater presented *Prelude to a Kiss*, this year's fall play. The play begins with the main characters Rita Boyle and Peter Hoskins, played by Anna Edwards '26 and Tommy Frances '27, respectively. The two begin to get close to each other and marry after a short time.

However, at Rita and Peter's wedding, a suspicious old man, played by David Tobin '27, asks to kiss Rita and does so. During that kiss, the two swap bodies, resulting in Peter beginning to go insane and questioning why Rita's personality changed.

By the end, Rita, in the old man's body, and Peter restrain the old man, in Rita's body, on an armchair,

and reverse the body swap. Finally, the play comes to a close with Rita and the old man back in their original, respective bodies.

I was involved in the play as an usher on the Friday night performance, but that night was not a pleasant one. I personally found the play to not be super entertaining. Act I, the act before the intermission, was probably the best part of the play, as I left at some point during Act II, when I simply started becoming confused about what this play was about.

I found Act II to be pretty confusing, mainly due to the fact that the old man, in Rita's body, makes Peter fall in love with him. Another reason I found this play subpar is that I did not connect with any of the characters that the students, especially the senior class, portrayed. This weakened the

play in my opinion.

One of the cast members, Daniel Del Prete '26, who played Taylor McGowan, said his favorite part of the play was not related to the play. Instead, his favorite part of playing Taylor was "spending time with people who share the same love as me, and of course, making [other] people laugh.

"[Additionally], being comedic relief is something that I really appreciate being able to do. I really like to make people laugh, and being Taylor McGowan, I was able to do just that," he said.

Because Taylor plays a very minor role in the play and is not seen a significant amount of times, it made the character less memorable to me. Despite that, Del Prete still performed wonderfully as Taylor, and that certainly improved my opinion of the character.

Unlike Del Prete, Edwards had a much more significant role as Rita Boyle. Being a major lead makes her role something you would not be able to forget about.

Edwards' favorite part of the play was "getting to finally show [my] hard work to an audience after months of rehearsal!" Her excitement was certainly worth it as she did an excellent job with her character as a whole.

Photo contributed by Theodore Anderson '27  
Tommy Frances '27 as Peter Hoskins

Despite the play itself, it can absolutely be stated that all of the cast members did a wonderful job, both those performing and those working as the stage crew. There was not a single moment when it seemed like they were underprepared. Every actor knew exactly how to play their part and their lines, and the stage crew was flawless in changing around the scene.

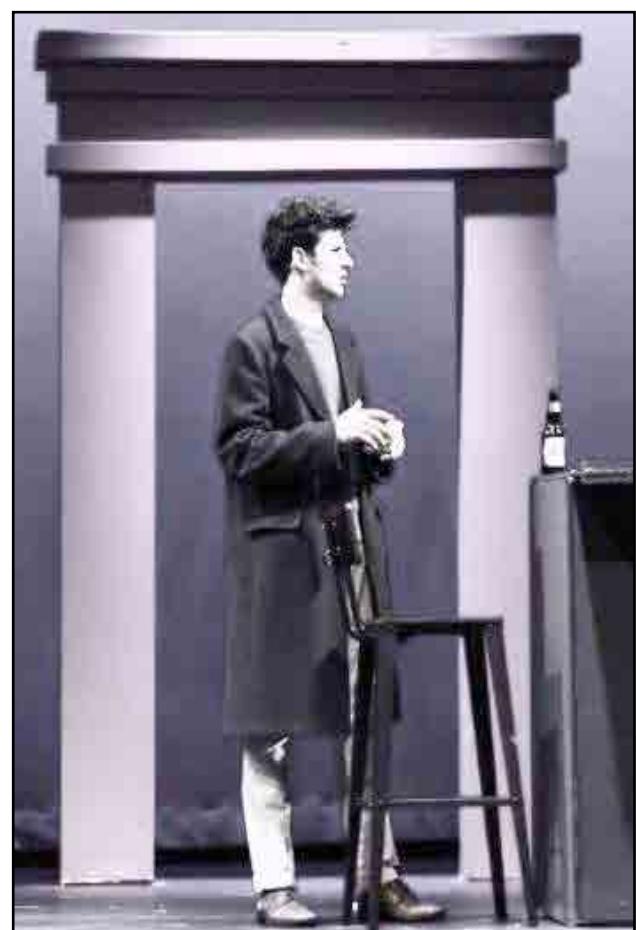
For those who missed out on *Prelude to a Kiss*, fear not, because you can still check out ACT's *My Fair Lady* in the spring. Also, if you can, you should try to go to a showing of the ACT's plays, as you can get in for free with just your student ID.

It'd be worth your time as much as attending any other Amity event!



Photo contributed by Theodore Anderson '27

Tommy Frances '27 (left) and David Tobin '27 (right) playing a scene



# Book Review

## In a Dark Wood Wandering

by Catherine Kohncke '28

The book, *In a Dark Wood Wandering*, written by Hella S. Haasse in 1949, is a historical fiction novel set in the Middle Ages during the Hundred Years' War between France and England.

A few weeks ago, while reading this book, I was filled with emotions and with thoughtfulness; the book made me really think deeply about the purpose of life, about human nature, and about the cost of honor. The Milwaukee

bols, especially The Forest of Long Awaiting. It is in this metaphorical forest that Charles wanders his entire life, always bound to some promise or obligation.

"In The Forest of Long Awaiting, riding by various pathways, I set out in this present year on the journey of Desire. My stewards have gone on ahead to prepare my lodging in the city of Destiny, and they have taken for me and my heart, the hostelry of Thought." This poem from Charles d'Orléans is included in the novel as an example of the metaphorical forest.

On top of being a profound and inspiring story, *In a Dark Wood Wandering* offers superlative educational value. The novel unfolds some of the most important turning points in the Hundred Years' War, such as the deadly battle of Agincourt, and the arrival of Jeanne the Maid, known now as Joan of Arc. It also includes prominent figures like King Charles VI of France, King Henry V of England, and Duke Jean (the Fearless) of Burgundy. The story is crafted very meticulously, with great attention to detail.

One of the most amazing things that this book achieves is telling a very old story in a way that is charming as well as relatable. So many themes are addressed: regret, honor, love, family, faith, and true happiness. The vivid descriptions and imagery help bring the story, and Charles, alive in one's mind; I even cried on multiple occasions over the course of the book because the writing was so moving.

I think *In a Dark Wood Wandering* will remain one of my absolute favorites because of how enjoyable and entertaining it was to read. The tragedy, the resilience, the struggle, and the price of keeping one's word are all elements that come together into a powerful, passionate story I believe is absolutely worthy of anyone's time.

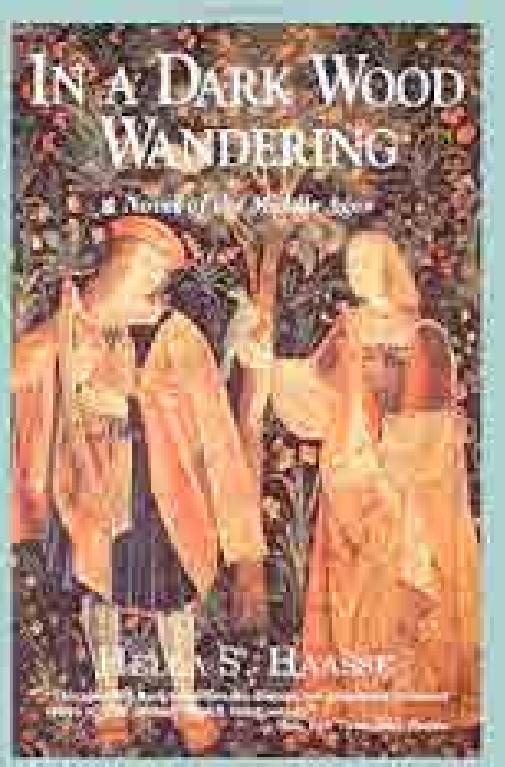


Photo contributed by Goodreads  
Cover of *In a Dark Wood Wandering*

Journal praised this book, saying, "Engaging life as it does, this book creates its own quiet passion of the mind." It truly does.

With stunning historical accuracy, it depicts the tragic but honorable life of Charles d'Orléans, born into an aristocratic life but destined to live out his youth in vain. When he inherits the title Duke of Orleans, he also inherits vicious rivalries and an oath to gain vengeance for the death of his father. The book uses many sym-

## Former Teacher Don Barkin Returns to Share Poetry

by Christopher Ma '27

Early in December, during periods 2 and 3, students gathered in the Library Media Center to welcome Don Barkin, a retired Amity English and poetry teacher and a published poet whose large collection of work has appeared in prominent literary journals.

Barkin's return to gave students in classes including AP Literature and English I, II, and III, a chance to meet a writer who once taught in the classrooms that they all learn in today.

Barkin read selections from his own poetry, including *The Caretakers*, *To a Teacher*, and *School*

## Practice Makes Perfect

### Winter Concert Offered Holiday Hits

by Blake Wegman '26

With Winter Break just days away, Amity hosted its annual winter concert, featuring performances by the Band, Choir, and Rhythmix groups. These groups have had just over a month to be introduced to and learn their music following their respective fall performances.

In addition, this concert was centred around the theme of the holiday season and celebrating this joyous time with others.

One band student, Ronak Parmar '26, expressed how excited he was leading up to the concert, saying, "This is one of my favorite performances for the band because of its formal, yet also fun nature."

He also explained how the holiday songs that the band performed are often easier to initially learn compared to other music, but the perfection of these songs is the challenging part.

This performance was possible because of Philip Dolan, the Band director, and Marcia Rizzotti, the Choir director, who ran the concert and the preparations involved in it.

Dolan stressed the importance for the students to be attentive during classes when rehearsing, as well as practising their music outside of school. This way, students can be properly prepared to rehearse with their peers during class time and work through the music.

However, this comes with

its own challenges, as Dolan explained. "The difficult part about it [preparing] is that there are four different band classes that do not ever rehearse together until the day of the concert," he said.

All of the classes contain a different array of instrumentation, and they only rehearse during the two-hour rehearsal time on the day of the concert. Despite this, Dolan was confident with the development of the music, and this was shown in the wonderful performance put on by the Band.

Additionally, Liam van Tonder '26, a member of the Choir, explained how this year's winter concert was especially special for him, because this was the last time he would do a performance of this type with the Choir. He said, "The Choir aimed at going beyond the surface level of many holiday arrangements selected for the concert. Instead, the choir wanted to offer a more in-depth performance of these songs, which also meant that practising both inside and outside of school was imperative."

The variation in types of music, combined with the hard work of the students involved in the performing arts program, allowed this winter concert to be a unique experience for the Amity community. They are a way to celebrate the hard work that many students put in during both their school days and outside of school, making for a great way to celebrate the end of this year and the beginning of the next.



Photo contributed by Jake Ricciardi  
Trumpet players Nathaniel Luciano '26 and Benjamin Smith '28 practicing in band class

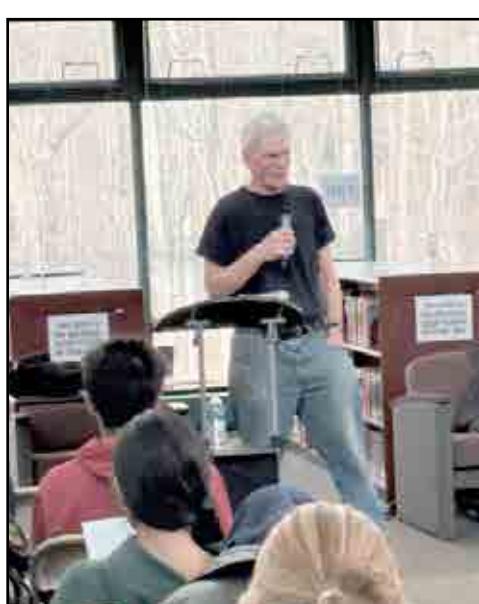


Photo contributed by Emily Clark  
Poet and former Amity English teacher Don Barkin shares stories and poetry with students

Photographer. Such poems capture the small moments people often overlook: a couple dusting a library no one enters, a teenage habit in class, and a photographer behind the camera trying to pull a smile from a student.

Students responded strongly and enthusiastically to the visit.

Enoch Liu '27 said, "I thought the speaker had a very interesting outlook and way of approaching life that really made me think."

Another student, Emma Fotjadt '27, commented, "I thought that he explained how he got his poetry in a way that I've never heard before."

It shows how everything in poetry really has a deeper meaning, and I found it very fun and benefi-

cial," she added.

Additionally, Jennifer Pascale, a current Amity English teacher who worked with Barkin for many years, said, "He always had such a creative way of thinking, and it was great to see that again."

Don Barkin studied at Harvard and Cambridge universities and worked as a teacher the Amity English Department from 2003 to 2019 alongside his wife Maggie, also an English teacher.

He retired from teaching in June 2019.

His visit was a meaningful experience, and the school was fortunate to welcome back Don Barkin, this time not as the teacher assigning essays but as the poet sharing a lifetime of words.

# From Couch to Coach

## The Thrill of Fantasy Football

by Kieran Dahya '27

What is fantasy football? Fantasy football is a digital game and app in which players act as if they are football coaches of their own teams. On your team you have real NFL players with real stats from the games that they play in each week. These player stats correspond with points in the app and the better your players perform, the more points you are awarded each week.

At the beginning of the NFL season, a group of people form a league between four and eighteen players who all create their own

more competition at the end.

In many leagues people have fun prizes or punishments given to the winners and losers of the league, the people in the league with the most or least wins. Me and some of my friends participate in a fantasy league and I personally find it very fun and entertaining. It gives me a good reason to follow football games and creates some friendly competition between all of us.

When asked what he thinks about fantasy football Dustin Drane '28 responded "It's a fun thing to do with my friends because it's competitive and it's football, a sport I enjoy watching."

Some other friends expressed why they enjoy it.

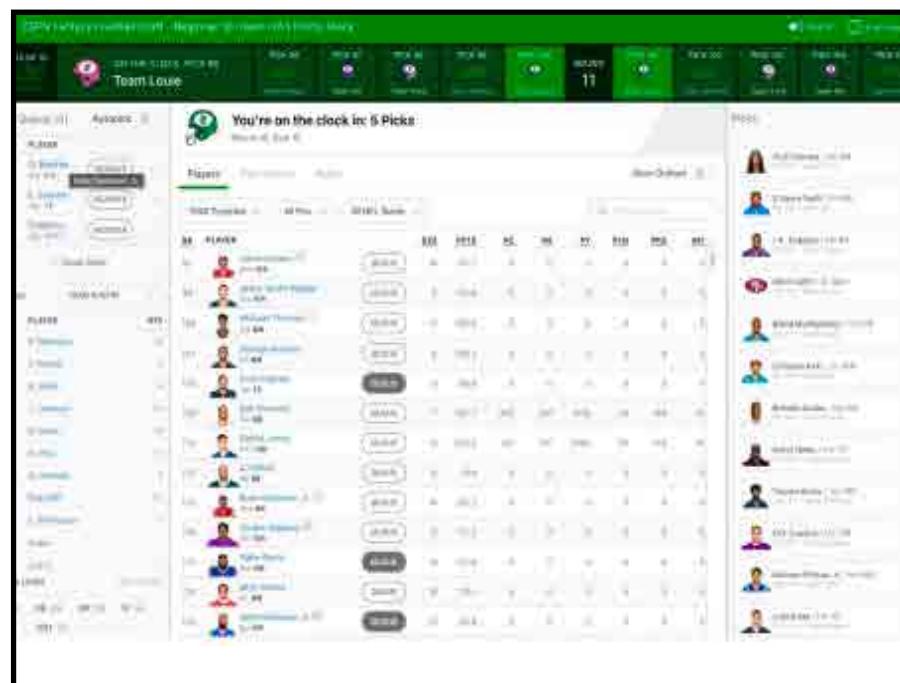


Photo contributed by The New York Times

**This image shows an example of a fantasy football draft where participants in the league each one by one pick up players to add to their team.**

team names and then partake in a draft. All of the people in the league pick a player one by one based on known stats and who they feel will do well and score them the most points throughout the NFL season.

Then for each week during the NFL regular season, you are head to head against another player in your league, and whichever person gains the most points from their players during that one week wins that week of fantasy. At the end of the regular season in most leagues there is a playoff which is a bonus for everyone in the league with

"I like competing with my friends and it makes the games interesting to watch" stated Andrew Garfinkle '27

Nicholas Drakonikis '28 continued "It's a fun conversation starter for talking to friends and a way to add some friendly competition to hangouts."

As you can see, many people enjoy partaking in Fantasy Football and it gives excitement to many friend groups.

Fantasy football is overall a great way to get involved with a sport that so many people love without necessarily playing it.

## Staying Active at the Holidays

### No Extra Credit in Physics Class Leads to Broken Meter Stick



**Lack of extra credit leads to Liam van Tonder '26 making good on his threat to break a meter stick in Physics. Disclaimer: The meter stick was already broken. No new meter sticks or people were harmed in the making of this. This was entirely supervised and approved. Van Tonder '26 is not in any trouble and will not be for these actions.**

# All Roads Lead to Abu Dhabi

by Jake Ricciardi '26

British Formula 1 driver Lando Norris has won the World Driver's Championship in a dramatic conclusion. Norris signed for McLaren in 2019 and has stuck with the team even during their struggles, finally seeing the loyalty pay off in 2024.

Due to strong upgrades to the car, Norris, alongside Australian teammate Oscar Piastri, was finally



Photo contributed by Sky Sports

**Lando Norris pictured at Abu Dhabi in 2025**

able to consistently fight with the top.

Norris was often mocked online as he struggled to finish in first. However, that changed at Miami in 2024, where, after 110 races and 16 podium finishes, Norris secured his maiden win, silencing doubters. This surge then continued for the rest of the season, where Norris got multiple podiums and four wins, and Piastri also achieved his first win and multiple podium finishes. Because of their success, Norris and Piastri were able to lead McLaren to winning the World Constructors' Championship.

Despite this newfound success, Norris was unable to catch up to Red Bull driver Max Verstappen, who won his fourth championship that year.

With high hopes for the new season, Norris won the opener in Australia. For the rest of the season, Piastri and Norris battled left and right, even having an incident where the two collided in the Canada Grand Prix, causing Norris to retire from the race. Although he led at the start, Norris lost the championship lead to Piastri, who began to

Piastri were disqualified for technological infringements. This meant Norris had a lead of 24 points over Verstappen and Piastri, who were tied with just two races left.

Norris failed to secure the win at Qatar, allowing Verstappen to cut the gap to 12 points, meaning that, if Verstappen won in Abu Dhabi and Norris got fourth or worse, Verstappen would become the champion. Otherwise, Norris would become world champion.

Because of Verstappen's controversial first championship, which he won in 2021 at Abu Dhabi, fans began saying "All roads lead to Abu Dhabi."

This is a play on the phrase "All roads lead to Rome," which means, no matter what happens, the same outcome will be achieved, which would be Verstappen winning in this case. Despite Verstappen winning the race, Norris finished third, winning his first driver's championship by two points.

Being the new champion, many fans are eager to see if Norris will be able to continue beating out his opponents and when his next championship may be.

Story and photos contributed by Nicholas Lu '26

# Back-to-Back: Lady Spartans Prove Last Year's Season Was No Fluke

by Akshay Bulsara '26

Concluding their season in November, the Lady Spartans had another outstanding volleyball season. Led by senior captains Lily Simons and Nina Nardecchia, the Lady Spartans won the Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC) title for the second year in a row. They ended their season with an overall win to loss ratio of 20-5, ranking them the 17th best team in Connecticut.

Although considered underdogs by many, the team rode the energy from their SCC win into the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) Class LL tournament, stretching to the quarter finals. The team had some outstanding players throughout the season whose performances led them to being recognized throughout the state.

When the captions were asked about their thoughts on the spectacular season they had, they responded with enthusiasm.

Simons said "The feeling of accomplishing back-to-back championships was incredibly special because it showed the dedication, hard work, and growth the team had over time."

She continued, "The season itself was filled with moments that highlighted the strong chemistry among teammates; everyone supported each other both on and off the court, creating a bond that went beyond just playing volleyball. This closeness made every practice and game so much fun and enjoyable."

Her favorite memory she made this year was sweeping Southington when they played them and stated she had never felt so close to a team before. Along with the success the team had as a whole, the Senior Libero Lily Simons made the

Senior All Star Team.

Her counterpart Nardecchia shared similar ideas when looking back on the excellence of the season and how Amity volleyball has shaped her as a person.

"The volleyball season taught me more than just skills on the court," she explained "As a senior, I learned the value of teamwork, leadership, and pushing myself outside my comfort zone. I'm grateful for the memories, growth, and lessons I'll

it was about the countless practices, the teamwork, and the determination it took to get there. This championship is a memory I'll carry with me forever."

Nardecchia also had immense individual success this season which led her to being named, in October, SCC athlete of the month presented by j.roos Restaurant in North Haven. This feat is one she will remember as she leaves her mark on Amity girls volleyball.

Another player who stood out was junior Olive Hubbard. Hubbard plays as a middle hitter and middle blocker for the team. Her performance throughout the season led her to achieving the CIAC first team all state.

Looking back on the year, Hubbard described it as "my favorite so far." She values the relationships she's made and said she "truly believes our relationships with one another is what led us to so much success. We took practices and games seriously and pushed each other to a new level of competition daily, while still having fun."

It's clear that Hubbard enjoys the team and the sport as well as the success they had this season. She shared her gratitude for her coach, Seth Davis, saying, "He was able to take a group that has never been on the same court together and made us into a cohesive, confident, and championship winning team."

Hubbard truly believes that her team's success along with her individual success came from the positive team environment and is excited to continue competing next year.

Overall, the top-20 ranked team strived through-



Photo contributed by @amitygirlsvolleyball on Instagram  
**Amity Girls Volleyball after winning the SCC Championship**

carry with me beyond this season."

Like Simons mentioned, winning the SCC title was also an unforgettable experience for Nardecchia. She said "It wasn't just about the trophy

## Class, Camaraderie, and Competition Combine for a Flag Football Season to Remember

by Emma Fotjadhi '27

This year's girls flag football team has made the 2025-2026 season one to remember. Led by senior captains Gabby Tessitore, Sophia Cohn, Angelina Charbonneau, Phoebe Halsey, Cashlyn O'Neill, Alexandra Melingonis, Cayden Millinson, Olivia Cummings, the team brought energy, talent, and excitement to every game they played this year.

One of the biggest strengths of this year's team was how well the players worked together. Coach Rick Bourdeau, when reflecting on the season, said "Overall, the season went great. We figured out early that we had a lot of team speed, so we designed formations and plays to take advantage of that. The girls picked up things quickly, which translated to success on the field."

Coach Bourdeau's passion for coaching is clear. He explained "I love coaching flag football for several reasons. First, I love the sport and enjoy teaching people how to play. Second, it helps me get to know a large part of the senior class every year outside the classroom. Third, I love how it helps the girls of the senior class know others outside of their cliques."

"The senior class starts to bond a little more because of this activity. Finally, it's a blast. Although we take it

seriously, we also have a lot of fun with a lot of laughs," he added.

Senior Eliza Rathjens continued on this idea, saying, "It was re-

gagement. teammates celebrated touchdowns together, picked each other up after tough plays, and stayed focused even during close games. That positive

energy carried over onto the field and helped the team stay motivated all season long.

Coach Michael Stockmal feels the team's main reason for success comes from the athletes.

"This team is filled with many talented athletes, which made the games enjoyable to watch," he said. The

players' speed,

teamwork, and determination were

clear and set the tone for the season.

One of the team's biggest moments came in a 30-18 win against Southington, a game that showed how much the Spartans had grown. Strong offensive drives and key defensive stops helped Amity pull ahead and hold their lead, making it one of the most exciting games of the season.

Senior Valentine Tavernas expressed "We had fun cheering each other on and having friendly competition." Many of her teammates shared the same experience, including senior Evie Leblanc

"Even though I only played for a few weeks, I instantly felt the close bond between all the girls and had a really fun time," she said. It's clear that they enjoyed their season and will serve as a fond memory of their senior year.

Molly Bosma did not get the full experience because she was a varsity field hockey player. However, she was able to experience the game and play as if she was there from the beginning.

The Spartans last game was "kinda crazy because it was against Shelton and they were aggressive," Bosma explained. With a final score of 19-24 the Spartans persevered and gave the game their all.

The Flag Football program, run by coaches Bourdeau, Gunnar Paulimas, Stockmal, Abigail Allen, Courtney Morrison, Greg Twohill, and Randy Bourdeau, continues to serve as an exciting opportunity for girls in the senior class to look forward to.

Finishing with a final win loss record of 1-1, the girls showed class at both games and represented what Amity stands for: stronger.



Photo contributed by @amityflagfootball on Instagram  
**Lady Spartans with North Haven's Nighthawks after initial scrimmage**

ally amazing to be on a team and talk and laugh with girls that you normally wouldn't. It was nice to have a sport to bring people together."

On the team, you are able to pick your position and number, allowing the girls to truly feel themselves and their best while playing. From warmups to the final whistle, the sidelines were always loud with encour-

# Thomas Sirichantho's "Unforgettable" Orange Bowl Experience

by Vince Forchetti '28

The Orange Bowl is a prestigious junior tennis tournament, considered a rite of passage for future tennis stars. With matches occurring in Florida, this elite event features top ranked players in various age groups spanning from age 12 and under to age 18 and under.

Competing in the Orange Bowl was an "unforgettable experience" for junior Thomas Sirichantho. Going into the tournament in early December, Sirichantho felt "extremely nervous" because of how prestigious and historic this is.

Knowing that tennis legends like Roger Federer, Andre Agassi, and other world No. 1 players had competed there before made the moment feel even more intense.

In his singles match, Sirichantho started off slow and dropped the first two games while trying to settle into the match and calm his nerves. Once he found his rhythm, his confidence began to grow and his level improved a lot.

He started trusting his shots

and playing more aggressively, which helped him win 6–2, 6–0 against a strong opponent. The win meant a lot to Sirichantho.

"It felt like breaking through a mental block I had struggled with for years," he said. He was especially proud since his opponent was considered better on paper.

Sirichantho won his three qualifying matches which put him into the main draw. The main draw highlights the top 64 players in the world for the respective age group. Although he lost in an extremely close match in the first round of the main draw, he proved that he belongs in the top 64 juniors for his age.

One of the highlights of the tournament was watching his sister Priscilla, a freshman, compete. He saw her entire match, including her win in the Orange Bowl. Her victory was "incredible," he said, as it made her world No. 1 in the under-16 category at just 14 years old. Seeing his sister achieve such success made the experience even more meaningful.

Sirichantho also competed in doubles, where he and his partner played at a high level. They held match point while leading 5–2 in the second



Photo contributed by Thomas Sirichantho '27

Thomas Sirichantho and his sister Priscilla at the Orange Bowl

set, but unfortunately they were unable to close out the match and ended up losing. While the result was disappointing, it was still a valuable learning experience.

Each year, this elite event brings together over 700 of the top-ranked boys and girls in the 12-and-under and 14-and-under divisions, representing 76 countries.

Overall, one of the most meaningful parts of the Orange Bowl for Sirichantho was "simply being able to compete in such a historic tournament."

Being part of an event with such a strong legacy in tennis motivated this exceptional junior to keep improving and working toward his tennis goals.

## Happy Holidays!



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