

THE AMITY TRIDENT

LXXVI-No.5

Amity Regional High School

Woodbridge, CT 06525

February 12, 2026

“An Integral Part” School Counselors Celebrated for Vital Role They Play

by Evelyn Kim '27

The school’s counselors work hard to support students, from working with scheduling to specific concerns about a class, to other various issues a student may need support with. To show their gratitude toward these hardworking individuals, students Counselor Appreciation Week. The representatives of the Principal’s Committee held a table during lunch blocks the week of January 26th, letting students sign or write an appreciative message on posters for the counselors.

The Principal’s Committee believes having different weeks dedicated to different groups of people at the school is a needed addition. “Appreciation is an aspect we often overlook as people and especially as students,” said Tony Zhang '26, co-chair of the Principles Committee. “Counselors play an integral part in the experience of every student, whether you visit them daily or once a semester. Behind the scenes, like every faculty member, they put in efforts we never see.”

Abby Zamir '27, the other co-chair of the Principles Committee, adds, “Tony Zhang and I wanted to find a way to show appreciation to more specific groups of faculty in an effort to encompass the school’s theme of ‘One heart, One mind, One Amity’ and build a sense of support and community,” she explained. “This year we felt that it’s important to recognize how much we as a student body appreciate our teachers and faculty.”

They hope, with the gift of the signed posters, to express their gratitude to the school counselors.

“Through the signing of the posters, a small gesture of gratitude, we hope to extend our gratitude and brighten up each of their days. Further, we hope to show that their work is seen and we are thankful for everything they do and will continue to do for us,” Zhang continues.

“I hope to continue to celebrate these national appreciation weeks and days outside of the normal Teacher Appreciation Week to foster a connected community between students, teachers, and other workers at Amity.”

Zamir further expresses, “This is the fourth initiative we have done after Bus Driver appreciation week, and we are excited to continue with these little projects in hopes that we can make the staff happy and involve students in something that that’s important in connecting our



Photo contributed by Eve Marin '27
Counselor Lindsay Ryan talks with a student.

entire school together and strengthening the bond necessary to make Amity’s environment as positive as possible!”

The Principal’s Committee handed out the signed posters after school on February 5th. “The counselors loved the posters! Such a thoughtful gift!” said counselor Alison Staak.

After Bus Driver Appreciation Week, students had a chance to show thanks for their school counselors; with this initiative, both students and counselors feel a sense of happiness in the exchange— both from giving and from receiving gratitude.

Club Week Gives Students Another Opportunity to Get Involved



Photo contributed by Mariha Salahuddin '27
UNICEF and Athletes in Action clubs and their tables outside the cafeteria during Club Week.

by Teesha Godawat '27

For the first time at Amity, students were given the chance to formally promote their clubs for a second time during the school year. Typically, Amity has one Club Day that takes place at the beginning of the school year.

However, this year, students were able to promote their clubs

for a second time. This event was done differently, however, than the usual Club Day. Due to the cold weather, Club Week took place inside, rather than the typical outdoor event with tables lined along the front of the school.

As a consequence of the indoor setting, there was not enough room for every club to set up all at

Continued on page 2

Massive Snowstorm Forces Schools to Close

by Victoria Kim '29

On Sunday January 25th, a massive snowstorm swept through Connecticut forcing schools, offices, and workplaces to close the following Monday. The snow prompted a two-hour delay on the next day, Tuesday the 27th, due to the dangerous conditions of the roads and freezing temperatures.

According to WTNH, a television station in New Haven, several towns experienced over ten inches of snow that day which is much more than usually experienced. Mounds of snow covered the Amity campus as well as the

fronts of homes which caused many to spend time during their snow day shoveling and removing snow from their driveways and sidewalks.

The accumulation of snow was not the only thing that impacted students, staff, and administrators at Amity. Internet and power outages in their neighborhoods caused significant disruptions in people’s lives.

“We lost our internet for a couple of hours,” said Natasha Lenskold '29. “And because I had most of my schoolwork on my computer, it made it hard to do.”

Continued on page 2

IN THIS
ISSUE



Skate for a Cause
News, 2



Student Photographers
Features, 6



Romcom Review
Arts, 9



Nutrition for Athletes
Sports, 10

Club Week Gives Students Another Opportunity to Get Involved at School

Continued from page 1

once. Therefore, rather than one designated day for every club to set up, clubs cycled tables throughout the week.

The topic of having a second Club Day was discussed in the Principal's Committee last year and was able to be put into action this year with the help of Principal Andre Hauser, student members, and other administration members. Students voiced that a second club event would allow students to be reminded that it was never too late to join a club, especially for the students that were not able to attend clubs earlier in the year due to fall sports or other commitments.

During the week of February 2nd to February 6th, students set up information tables outside the cafeteria during all lunch and SSP waves. They used posters, candy, and sign up sheets to encourage students to join; this is similar to what club members would do on the usual Club Day outside. All students were welcome to walk around during their lunch and SSP waves to explore the variety of clubs Amity offers.

Club members and leaders

shared that Club Week was a success and an effective way to keep student participation in extracurriculars consistent throughout the school year.

"Club Week was such a great opportunity for the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) club to increase involvement and membership while bringing awareness to current issues that face our community," said SADD member Isabella Smernoff '27.

Civil Leaders of America (CLA) also set up their table multiple times throughout the week.

CLA Director of Debate Julia Nickle '27 said, "When I ran the table, we were able to get 11 new members on that one day alone. This greatly impacted our club membership. We held a debate tournament the next day, and I was pleased to see some new faces in the crowd!"

Club Week was a new experience for students and teachers at Amity. Many students were seen actively participating in either running tables or joining more clubs. It is safe to say that the week was a well organized way to increase student involvement at school.

Massive Snowstorm Forces Schools to Close

Continued from page 1

The snowstorm not only impacted the daily lives of students, but teachers as well. History teacher Emily Connelly stated that because the week was shortened, she had to make several adjustments to her teaching plans.

"I had to implement a different idea for that Tuesday to try to shorten the lesson for the day and make it fit better," she explained. "The snow definitely made me have to switch things up."

Connelly also mentioned that at first, she did not expect the storm

to be as severe as predicted. "I thought there was a bit of exaggeration happening," she recalled.

"I thought we would just have some snow on Sunday and it would be taken care of, and we would be here on Monday but once it started snowing, I realized, this was a lot of snow," Connelly added.

As a couple weeks have passed, the streets have become clear of snow and most daily routines have returned to normal. However, piles of snow remain along the sides of the roads—a reminder of the impact the snowstorm left on our community.

Yale Professor Enlightens Students



Photo contributed by Christopher Borelli
Professor Akhil Amar sharing his experiences with students.

Guest speaker and leading Yale University scholar Professor Akhil Reed Amar came to the Brady Center to give a talk on Tuesday, February 3rd to the Critical Issues and AP Government classes on government, politics, and U.S. public policy, Constitutional Law.

Skate for a Cause

by Emma Imanov '27

The Color Run Club recently hosted its annual Skate Night fundraiser at the Sports Center of Connecticut. On January 9th, the BOW community came together for an exciting night of skating, music, and community support, all in the name of a great cause: the American Diabetes Association.

The Color Run Club is a student-led organization dedicated to raising funds for diabetes research, community service, education, and advocacy, and Skate Night has become one of its most anticipated

diabetes research and awareness efforts nationwide.

The event brought together students, families, teachers, and community members, creating a welcoming and energetic atmosphere that reflected the strong support for both the club and its mission.

Attendees enjoyed skating alongside friends, listening to music, and good food. Club members shared their excitement about the event's success.

Aubrey McCollum '27 said, "The skate night was so much fun and such a great way to raise money for a good cause."

Zach Cohn '27, the treasurer for the Color Run Club, added,

"I am very pleased with the amount of funding this event produced for our cause, and I have confidence that our next one will be even greater. Please join us at our next event!"

The Color Run Club would like to thank everyone who attended, volunteered and helped promote the event. A thank-you goes to the Sports Center of Connecticut for



Photo by Color Run Club

Color Run Club members at the fundraiser

events each year.

This year's Skate Night was a major success, raising over \$300 in total. Of that amount, approximately \$170 went directly to the club to support future fundraisers, service projects, and educational initiatives, while the remaining funds were donated to the American Diabetes Association to help support

hosting the fundraiser and to all the members who worked behind the scenes to run the event.

With the continued support of the BOW community, the Color Run Club looks forward to hosting more fundraisers alongside our annual run scheduled for April and continuing to make a meaningful difference in the fight against diabetes.

An Update on Amity's New Cell Phone Policy

by Aiza Amir '28

As Amity moves through the second half of the school year, it is important to reflect on how new policies are affecting students and staff. One significant change has been the Cell Phone Policy. It was introduced in response to growing concerns about distractions during class time and their impact on student engagement and learning. It states that during all instructional time, including electives, phone use is not permitted without explicit approval prior to class time and must be stored in backpacks or classroom phone holders.

Many teachers have observed noticeable changes. CTE teacher Matthew Stanley explained that phone use had consistently been a challenge in creative classrooms, even when students were allowed to use their devices responsibly.

"Even with a more open approach to phone use, it was still a distraction and something that had to be addressed multiple times per class," he said. "With the policy in place, having a clear expectation makes it easier for students to stay engaged, and we get more done."

Despite these improvements, student reactions to the policy have varied. Some said the policy helped them concentrate, while others thought it was too strict.

Meher Quadri '27 expressed concern about the intensity of the punishment, saying, "I just feel like the ban is too extravagant for the cause. If someone is actively being distracting, it makes sense to confiscate the phone, but if students are doing the right thing and just have it on their desk, giving them a strike feels unnecessary."

Her comments reflect concerns among some students that the policy's enforcement may be overly strict rather than flexible.

Other students have raised safety-related concerns as well. Gracjan Cuprys '28 says, "There should be some more safety precautions in regards to the phone policy. For example, if we have a lockdown, phones should be easily available instead of hung up in the phone cubbies."

Overall, while the Cell Phone Policy has reduced distractions and increased engagement, student feedback suggests that continued discussion and adjustment may help address remaining concerns.

**P.O.V.
AMITY**
by Margaret Kershner '27

What Is the Best Way to Cure the “Winter Blues”?

“I listen to music because it brings me happiness when I am stressed and some songs bring me back to summer which is where I find happiness.”- Lilly Montiel '27

“I love to watch a hallmark movie by the fire.”- David Kurpios '27

“The best thing for me is to surround myself with stuff I love like friends and family and to still stay active by doing sports or just working out.”- Angelina Charboneau '26

“Go out to eat a nice meal with friends.”- Max Trachten '29

“Get outside and get some sun! I don't mind the cold and it's always great to be outside.”- English Teacher Julie Chevan

“The best ways I cure my winter blues is to try and distract myself with school work, hanging out with friends and doing things that I enjoy like baking.”- Elin Skopp '29

“I'd say shopping for summer clothes and looking through my summer photos, or really anything to pretend it's warm out.”- Abby Sussman '28

“I like to make hot chocolate, read, and watch movies with my sisters to cure my winter blues and it always works.”- Mariha Salahuddin '27

“For me, relaxing on the couch and watching movies like Star Wars with my family can help make the cold days more enjoyable.”- Jacob Klee '28

“It's about consistent exercising, positive mindset and routine.”- Charlie Stabach '27

“A plane ticket somewhere warm because warm weather and sunshine is good for your soul.”- History Teacher Christopher Borelli

Writer's Note: On Groundhog Day, Punxsutawney Phil—the famous Pennsylvania groundhog—predicted six more weeks of winter. Although many claim the groundhog's method of predicting to be inaccurate, with this year's cold weather, it seems very likely to be the case. This year, the Northeast has seen temperatures reach extreme lows with lots of snow, making winter seem everlasting as sports, school, and fun plans get cancelled. With many bearing the brunt of this cold winter, it is especially important to come up with fun activities to stay positive. Activities like spending time with friends, baking, watching movies, and enjoying the snow by sledding or skiing allow us to make the best out of the cold weather. At the same time, sharing these ideas with friends who might be struggling to beat the “winter blues” is an act of kindness that could truly change someone's day for the better. Just remember, spring is right around the corner!

Why Amity Should Bring Back Ski Trips

by Abby Zamir '27

Skiing is a joy shared by so many students at Amity. With incredible stories and countless social media posts about students' eventful days on the slopes constantly circulating our school network, I've seen firsthand how valuable skiing is to our community. I truly hope everyone gets to speed through the snow at least a few times in their life. It's a thrilling experience that combines my love of the outdoors with adventure and adrenaline. Heck, it's an experience we might not even have for too much longer if global warming continues. I feel bad for those Colorado skiers while we New Englanders have some of the best snow in years. This is precisely why we need to take advantage of our NE mountains and ski more often!

I believe it is such a gift to experience skiing with your friends, yet so many people who would love to ski or learn to ski don't have the time or ability to go out on their own. Some might not have family who ski, some might be without a way to get there, and some might really want to learn but aren't able to pay for a lesson. Yes, the Amity Ski team is an option, but the time commitment and structure can be an issue for many who just want to have an occasional friendly trip to the moun-

tain with their peers. This is why I believe we should bring back Friday night ski trips

These trips used to exist back when my mom went to Amity; she was class of '95. The Ski Team coach would organize them and allow anyone to sign up. Then they'd head over to a local mountain on a Friday afternoon. They'd even do full day trips on Saturdays, with an early wakeup to catch the bus followed by rewarding hours at Mt. Snow or other VT mountains. My mom describes these trips as feeling almost like summer camp, being excited to spend time with your friends and go on an adventure. For her, these times were truly core memories.

These trips would not only be ways for students to learn or ski with friends who might not otherwise be able to, but also a great bonding experience for students. Picture it: bus to Mount Southington, gliding across the powder under Friday night lights, laughing with friends. These trips would create memories while allowing students to get to know one another in a more playful and active setting. Friends who both ski but never get to go together would finally be able to share their passion. Friends who'd never stepped foot on skis would finally have an excuse to.

I know I would love to go on a few of these trips every winter and I am confident many other students would too.



Photo contributed by Abby Zamir '27
Abby enjoying a ski day with friends

The Amity Trident

The Amity Trident
Amity Regional High School
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT 06525
203-397-4830
amityregion5.org

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Joy Deng '26
Nicholas Lu '26
Jacqueline Miller '27

NEWS

Eve Marin '27
Shriya Garg '27

FEATURES

Olivia Cummings '26
Rohan Hebbar '27

ARTS

Jake Ricciardi '26

OPINIONS

Sarinah Zamir '27

SPORTS

Akshay Bulsara '26

SOCIAL MEDIA

Claire Theiss '26

FACULTY ADVISOR

Emily Clark

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Evelyn Kim '27, Teesha Godawat '27, Victoria Kim '29, Emma Imanov '27, Aiza Amir '28, Margaret Kershner '27, Abby Zamir '27, Sophia Tashlein '27, Carissa Parker '29, Alyssa Xia '26, Darianna Singh '26, Bryan Lin '26, Isabella Smernoff '27, Harper Binford '27, Theodore Anderson '27, Avery Ketchian '26, Blake Wegman '26, Jacob Storeygard '26, Anika Zivojinovic '27, Tyler Frantz '26

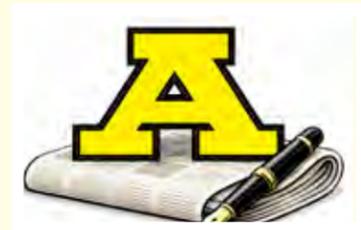
To view the newspaper online go to <https://www.amityregion5.org/arhs/amity-trident>

To sign up to write or take photographs for *The Trident*, contact the Editors-in-Chief, Mrs. Clark, or email tridentstaff@amityregion5.org

The Amity Trident, Amity Regional High School's monthly student newspaper, is printed by Valley Publishing, 7 Francis Street, Derby, Connecticut 06418.

Check us Out Online!

<https://www.amityregion5.org/arhs/amity-trident>



ICE Out Minnesota, ICE Out Everywhere

by Sophia Tashlein '27
and Joy Deng '26

In January 2026, Minneapolis became the center of the national crisis during Operation Metro Surge, a massive federal immigration crackdown that deployed roughly 2,000 agents to the Twin Cities. There were three instances of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) shootings in Minneapolis, Minnesota. On January 7, ICE agent Jonathan Ross shot and killed Renee Good in her car. ICE officers shot Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis in the leg on January 14th and killed Alex Pretti on January 24th. For any American, it is deeply disheartening to watch a community become transformed into a crisis zone where the basic rights and safety of residents are being stripped by federal forces. These three incidents sparked widespread civil unrest and a federal lawsuit from the State of Minnesota. Local leaders hit back against the official accounts, calling them a ‘garbage narrative’ and accusing federal forces of acting as if they were above the law (The New York Times).

These were not isolated incidents.

Silverio Villegas González, Isaias Sanchez Barboza, and Keith Porter all died from encounters with Trump Administration federal agents. There were at least 5 recent ICE-related

non-fatal shootings across the country, from Oregon to Arizona to Illinois (PBS News). Thirty-two deaths happened in ICE custody last year, a record high in the past two decades. Just by October 2025 alone, more than 170 U.S. Citizens have been held by ICE, tased, kicked, dragged, tear-gassed, pepper-sprayed, and had their civil rights grossly violated and trampled on (ProPublica). ICE-enforced deportations have split apart over 5000 families (PBS News), and mistreated American veterans who took bullets for the same country that turned its back on them (Military.com).

In carrying out Operation Metro Surge, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) especially targeted Somali immigrants and racially profiled those of Somali descent, including Minnesota Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar’s son, causing many to be afraid to leave their homes (CBC News). Protests broke out in January on an almost daily basis, especially following the killing of Renee Good.

As a response to these tragedies, the federal government launched a violent messaging campaign to categorize the victims as aggressive. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt and DHS Secretary Kristi Noem led this effort, making definitive claims of “domestic terrorism” hours after the shootings occurred, even before any internal in-

vestigation had even begun. Secretary Noem notably painted a picture of extreme violence to justify the force used against Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis, stating: “What we saw last night in Minneapolis was an attempted murder of federal law enforcement... Fearing for his life, the officer fired a defensive shot” (DHS). However, this account was quickly branded as a “garbage narrative” by Mayor Jacob Frey and Governor Tim Walz as bystander videos emerged. In the case of Alex Pretti, Border Patrol officials alleged he intended to “massacre” agents, yet forensic analysis and witness testimony confirmed Pretti was holding a cell phone, not a weapon, when he was tackled and shot ten times. Labeling a mother, a nurse, and a neighbor as assassins is dehumanizing the victims and shielding federal agents from taking accountability for their wrongdoings.

The impacts of Operation Metro Surge extended far beyond the shootings. Immigrant-owned businesses in Minneapolis and St. Paul saw roughly 80% of businesses close in a single week, as residents feared leaving their homes. Schools were forced into sudden lockdowns. In one instance, agents used chemical irritants and flash-bangs near a campus. Despite the administration’s focus on “criminal aliens,” reports surfaced of agents stopping school vans, raiding restaurants after dining there as

customers, and even detaining a five-year-old boy after arresting his father.

Advocates were deeply frustrated by the lack of political accountability. Although Minnesota leaders tried to fight the surge in court, a federal judge refused to stop the operation on January 31, allowing it to continue despite the heartbreaking impact on the community. The situation was made worse by political divisions. While some progressives pushed to abolish ICE, several moderate Democrats voted to increase funding for the Department of Homeland Security just to avoid a government shutdown. This money essentially powered the “deportation machinery” (The New York Times) that was being used against Minnesota’s residents. To local activists, this felt like a betrayal, a sign that the federal government cared more about budget deals than the civil rights of its citizens.

On January 23rd, over 50,000 Minnesota residents turned out to protest in below 10-degree weather. ICE-out strikes and protests took place all over the country in large cities like Los Angeles, Portland, New York City, Chicago, and smaller cities like Milwaukee and Oklahoma City (The Guardian). Much of the nation is outraged and uniting to demand action, which signals hope.

Yet, we cannot let this happen again. We cannot have citizens shot near side-

walks in broad daylight by federal agents who are supposedly “protecting our communities.” We cannot have apathetic public officials who turn away from the blatant violence that they endorsed and funded, who defend ICE agents for detaining 5-year-olds, and who cover up their atrocities through smearing victims and distorting truths. It’s time we realize that this is not like any other presidency.

We will forever hold the deaths of ICE victims in memory, and we will treasure the lives of our families, friends, neighbors, and fellow human beings, no matter who the government tries to paint as inhumane illegal aliens. Specifically in Connecticut, there have been several raids across the state since January, including raids at car washes in Hamden and Southington (Connecticut NWBNT), so it’s closer to the Amity community than we might think. Therefore, we will continue to have hope and take action. We can call our representatives to defund, fundamentally reform, or completely abolish ICE, donate to organizations supporting families affected by ICE raids, center stories told by ICE victims instead of DHS propaganda, lean on local communities during this difficult time, and stand in solidarity with Minnesota.

It’s a tragedy the country has gotten to this point, but we can and will rise from the grassroots to enact change.

Editorial

How Antisemitism Shaped My Religious Identity

by Sarinah Zamir '27

The shooting at Bondi beach in Australia that killed 15 people, including a child, greatly shocked all of us. But for me, and many others too, it brought a deep anger towards the hatred that still exists towards Jews. Anger that there was nothing we could do to stop it or to help, and anger that hate crimes like these are still something we are not safe from. It is during these times that I also begin to feel a sense of guilt... because I know that I have let the religion I was given slip totally and completely out of my life. Yet when horrific events like this happen, I feel like I shouldn’t have let it go for the sake of the lives lost in devotion to it.

I never felt connected to my religion. When asked, I wouldn’t

even identify myself as religious at all. I’ve felt very secular, even when I was sent to Sunday school by my parents and spent years preparing for a Bat Mitzvah. Recently, I’ve started to wonder how I ended up this way.

Why is it despite such a positive upbringing in a Jewish community I just don’t connect with it at all? What was it that put up walls in my mind and closed out reliance on a religion?

These were questions that I asked myself as I thought about my personal experience. And I realized that in a way, growing up, my religious identity was molded by the antisemitism that coexisted with my learning. I began to see how it was everywhere, even if I didn’t think about it. I can picture the security officers who circled the perimeter of the Sunday school as I sat inside and gazed longingly out. I can remember

being told about how a family name, my middle name, was changed during the Holocaust to try to hide our identity. How it was never changed back. I was raised under the idea that, outside the Jewish community, there existed hateful people who would not be kind to this part of me. That I had to always be aware of that.

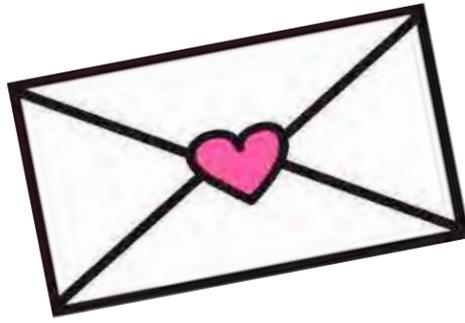
The effect of this was rooted deeper than realized. I didn’t worry about hate crimes as a little kid, but I knew they were there. I wasn’t embarrassed or shy about my religion, but I was aware that I was different from most of the others at school in that way. I never wanted to be public about it. I realize now that, as a seven or eight year old, of course I wasn’t going to want to embrace something that didn’t feel entirely safe. I realize looking back that this hesitancy I always thought was just an inher-

ent part of me might have never been about the religion itself, but just about the world we live in. A world where it is hard to join a community that isn’t accepted by everyone, especially when religion is meant to offer sanctuary, not uncertainty.

I wonder how different my religious life would be. I hope there is a near future where antisemitism has no effect on a child’s perception of religion and where violent acts of hatred are far behind us and Judaism can be celebrated openly. A future where we don’t have a leader in power cultivating ignorance and hatred while sowing division among Americans. Because a beautiful thing like someone’s connection to their god should never result in hurt and anger, so that nobody else accidentally lets go of something that may have meant so much more.

LINES OF LOVE

*World Language Department,
Thank you to our world language teachers for turning language into connection and turning classrooms into communities!*



Sophia, Holly, and Olivia,
Thank you guys so much for being with me throughout high school and being amazing friends. I love you all so much!
DF <3 -Vivi

*Chinese III and AP Chinese classes,
Thank you guys so much for being amazing students. wo ai ni men! -Feng*

**Mrs. Nevolis,
Thanks so much for the laughs in anatomy, I appreciate the advice you provide, no matter how brutally honest it may be.
-Aroush**

Mrs. Nork,
Thank you so much for all of your help within this year, you have stuck with me and helped me tremendously!!
-Alex C

Doja,
keep painting the town red

To G&G,
Happy LeValentines Day
From
LeVal and LeBeleni



*To Kruthi- Will you go to prom with me? From
Your secret admirer*



Lots of love for the bissies!!

We're serious about math

BEING FUN!

For K - 12th Grades

mathnasium.com/milford

Schedule a

FREE Assessment

203-783-1490

201 Cherry Street
Milford, CT



MATHNASIUM
The Math Learning Center

Dedicated Dance Team Takes on Quinnipiac

by Carissa Parker '29

Months of preparation paid off as Amity's Dance team competed at Quinnipiac University on January 24th.

They're only halfway through the season but remain motivated to push themselves farther. Through hours of dedication to building stamina and refining their execution, they are preparing to perform in a highly competitive, subjective environment. But these high demands don't deter them.

The effort put into practices is really what has defined the team's journey this season. Team captain Gianna Kier '27 emphasized their commitment, stating, "We are a talented team, and we put in the work every second, minute, week, and month throughout our season." That devotion has continued to push the team's growth through constructive criticism, while also encouraging one another to relieve stress.

This enthusiasm and drive were evident in their dance routines. Out of the four different categories: Pom, Jazz, Hip Hop, and Kick, the girls performed two of them in front

of three judges. By prioritizing growth in teamwork instead of individual performances, the Spartans were able to place fifth in Pom and sixth in Jazz.

"This is the strongest group of girls Amity has ever had, and it's been reflected both in public and in competition," said team captain Gabriella Kline '27, highlighting that their unity makes them stronger.

While they are a skilled group that stands out among their competitors for their diverse and challenging choreography, head coach Lia Davilla believes that there is a little more to it than just scores. She shared, "The most rewarding part of leading this team is witnessing the pride and joy on their faces when their hard work is finally recognized."

Her perspective stresses the progress the team has made throughout the season. That recognition continues to encourage Amity's Dance team as they get ready for their States competition on February 28th, when they have the chance to qualify for Regionals.

With the school's support and the confidence that came from the performances at Quinnipiac, their determination can get them through the upcoming competition.



Photo contributed by @amitydanceteam on instagram

Amity Dance Team Poses at Competitions



Student Photographers Capture the Action

by Alyssa Xia '26

While parents and teammates alike cheer loudly at games and meets, two students remain silent on the sidelines, waiting to capture the perfect moment. From track meets to football games to swim and dive meets, Evan Lennon '27 and AJ Marcucio '29 stand at the ready to capture it all.

Lennon began photography in a school photography class, and he quickly found a passion for it. Photography became a way for him to test his abilities by going outside and capturing the people and scenes around him.

"I like going out and just taking pictures of people," Lennon said. "Every person is kind of their own thing, and you can capture that."

Lennon enjoys photography for its way of framing a moment in time, with his own unique perspective. This hobby has taught him to look for new viewpoints, especially when photographing unfamiliar sports or styles, where he must quickly adapt.

"When you take a picture of something," Lennon said, "you really want

to understand the moment."

For Marcucio, photography has been a part of his life from a young age. His parents share a passion for photography, which sparked his own interest early on.

He enjoys being involved in sports photography because of the emotion it captures. "I like it because it captures the moment and the athlete," Marcucio said.

"It gives both the athletes and the photographer something to look back on."

While photography is currently a hobby, Marcucio said he is curious to see where it may take him in the future, whether it remains a pastime or develops into a career. For him, photography encourages creativity, strengthens his artistic skills, and allows him to see moments from many different perspectives.

For both photographers, it comes back to a want to capture

the feelings that humans are capable of, whether it is the intense focus that athletes experience or the everyday joys that people share with each other. Whether photography stays a hobby or becomes something more, both students continue to grow as photographers and people with every moment that they capture.



Photo contributed by Alyssa Xia '26

AJ Marcucio pole vaulting

A Dessert From the Heart

by Darianna Singh '26

This is a fitting recipe for anyone who celebrates Valentine's Day.

With a light puff pastry and cream cheese filling decorated with strawberries, then finished by a drizzle of sweet icing, it's worthy of giving to someone special.

To make this Strawberry and Cream Cheese Puff Pastry Tart, first, preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Then cut the strawberries into thin slices. Add the fruit to a bowl with cornstarch and 1 tsp granulated sugar and stir together, then set aside.



Photo contributed by Our Balanced Bowl by Haylie Abele

Strawberry and Cream Cheese Puff Pastry Tarts finished look

In another bowl, whisk the softened cream cheese, vanilla extract, and 2 tbsp granulated sugar until it's smooth.

Moving onto the dough, roll out the pre-made puff pastry dough, or optionally make your own, onto a sheet pan with parchment paper lining it. Cut the dough into 8 small tart sized pieces, or even the shape of hearts for an added detail to the presentation. Then add 1 tbsp of the cream cheese mixture in the middle of the pastry and spread evenly. Place 5-6 of the sliced strawberries on top of the cream cheese and repeat until each tart is filled.

Next, beat an egg in a bowl and brush the sides of the puff pastry with the egg wash. Generously sprinkle some raw sugar on top of the egg wash part of the pastry, and put in the oven to bake for about 15 - 17 minutes. Once done, let them cool for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk together the powdered sugar and a bit of milk to make the icing until it reaches your desired consistency. Finally, drizzle the icing on top of the tarts and enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (13.2 oz) sheet of pre-made puff pastry dough
- 1 pint fresh and ripe strawberries, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp white granulated sugar
- 1 tsp cornstarch

Cream Cheese Mixture

- 4 oz cream cheese, softened
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Egg Wash

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2-3 tbsp raw sugar

Icing

- 1 cup powdered sugar

A Love of Plowing Gets Some Up Early on Winter Days

by Olivia Cummings '26

As the snow piled up last month, students found the relief of a

snow day and beauty in the picturesque winter landscape out their windows.

While his classmates slept, however, junior Matt Crisci was wide awake, driving his plow in the early morning darkness.

"The storm last week was very treacherous, it was definitely one of the worst storms we've gotten in the last five years," Crisci said. "We were out almost all night doing driveways so people could get to where they needed to go on Monday morning."

Crisci entered the profession through family. His older cousin runs the business

LC Landscaping which does everything from plowing to excavation and landscape work across Connecticut.

"When I started to get older, me and him got closer because he's much older," Crisci explains. "A couple years ago he asked me to go with him and help him, and I tried it. I saw the love for plowing."

This love for plowing has been necessary for him to keep going through long winter nights like the treacherous conditions in January. He finds meaning in the service beyond just moving piles of snow.

"I like to snow plow because it helps people, especially older people who can no longer do this work themselves," Crisci shares.

This is an important perspective when considering the job. While he could be enjoying a day off, Crisci plays a part in ensuring elderly people can leave their homes, parents can get to work, and the community is functioning.

Local communities rely on dedicated professionals like snow plow drivers to keep the roads - and the towns - running smoothly at a moment's notice.

One of those drivers happens to be a high school student, who helps out Amity by plowing driveways with family.



Photo contributed by Matt Crisci '27

The truck that Matt Crisci uses to plow the snow



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

Famed 300 BC Macedonian king + F. Scott Fitzgerald's most celebrated book
Alexander the Great Gatsby

Money used to gain favor of authority + land mass of Spain and Portugal
Briberian Peninsula

General group of tailed primates + the main speaker at an event
Monkeynote

Muppets frog + gloves without fingers
Kermittens

Answer key will be provided with more Word Mash in March.



Word Mash Answers from December

1. Lightsaber + saber-toothed tiger
2. Javelin + Lin Manuel Miranda
3. Ocelot + lottery
4. Phoenix + Nixon

Unified Bowling Brings Students Together

by Bryan Lin '26

Unified Sports has been a long-standing program here at Amity that brings together students with and without intellectual disabilities

to train and compete in various sports as teammates. Headed by special education teacher Wendy Carrafiello and business teacher Susan Tucker, Unified has been committed to breaking down social barriers and building lasting friendships between partners and athletes.

On Monday, February 2nd, Unified students headed to Woodlawn Duckpin Bowling, carrying on an annual tradition within the program. Amity was joined by Unified teams from West Haven and North Haven for an afternoon of friendly

competition. Partners and athletes bowled in teams, cheering each other on and celebrating strikes together.

When asked for a comment on the event's success, Tucker reflected on the program's mission, saying, "I think Unified really promotes inclusion not



Photo contributed by Bryan Lin '26

Unified Sports at bowling

just amongst our athletes and partners but in the whole school community and the community at large."

As the program continues throughout the year, students can look forward to more opportunities to compete and connect through Unified Sports.



A Look Back at the Impact of Black Artists

by Harper Binford '27

During Black History Month in February, galleries and museums across America feature numerous Black artists who have had a profound impact on shaping the landscape of art history and culture. The emergence of notable Black artists is seen as a prominent contributor that has influenced various movements and styles over the years. But who are they?

Kara Walker, born in 1969, is an American contemporary painter and silhouettist who first gained attention from the art world with her mural named "Gone, An Historical Romance of Civil War as it Occurred Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart," for which she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 1997. Winning the award at the age of 28, Walker became one of the youngest ever recipients of this award.

Her art explores race, gender, sexuality, violence, and identity, often portrayed in cut-paper silhouettes, addressing the history of American slavery and racism through jarring and unsettling imagery. Walker is

often regarded as being among the most prominent and acclaimed Black American artists working today. Her ability to blend various artistic styles into her work has cemented her status as an influential figure in the art world.



Picture contributed by "Artchive"
"Gone, An Historical Romance of Civil War as it Occurred Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart," created by Kara Walker.

Jean-Michel Basquiat, born in 1960, was an American artist who rose to success during the 1980s as part of the neo-expressionism movement. Basquiat achieved notoriety in the late 1970s as part of the graffiti duo SAMO, writing epigrams, which are short and witty statements, all over

Manhattan. By the early 1980s, his paintings were being exhibited in galleries and art museums internationally. Some notable pieces of his include "Boy and Dog in a Johnny Pump (1982)," "Defacement (1983)," and

"Irony of Negro Policeman (1981)."

His work not only challenged traditional boundaries but also sparked conversation about race, power, and identity. Basquiat used pre-existing poetry, drawings, paintings, figuration, and historical information mixed with contemporary critique. At just 22, he

became one of the youngest to exhibit at the Whitney Biennial in New York. Jean-Michel Basquiat is known as one of the most influential artists of his generation, with his work profoundly influencing contemporary art, as well as redefining and challenging societal norms and art expression.

Njideka Akunyili Crosby, born in 1983, is a Nigerian-born visual artist who has achieved numerous prestigious awards and has been included in influential lists like the "Time 100 Next." Through her art, she effectively demonstrates the cultural terrain between her adopted home in America and her native home in Nigeria, creating collage and photo-transferred-based paintings.

Her art negotiates the challenges of occupying these drastically different worlds. Some of her greatest works include "As We See You. Dreams of Jand (2017)" and "When the Going Is Smooth and Good (2017)." She's incredibly influential for many due to her cultural mixture, representation, technique, and style.

These artists have provided an extensive amount of influence and impact on the art world and will go on to inspire future generations with their art, shaping styles, techniques, and methods, all working together to do so.

Protesting with Images Street Art and Murals Add Fuel to the Fire

by Jake Ricciardi '26

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, when Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was overthrown, art, more specifically street art and murals, has been an integral part of Iran. After the revolution, many of these murals focused on political messages, celebrating ideals of the Islamic Revolution and highlighting leaders of the revolution, such as Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Additionally, a lot of the art was focused on portraying the Western world in a negative light and portraying the Islamic Republic as threatened by external Western threats.

Despite the art initially pushing for the Islamic Republic, that changed in 2022. Iranian police arrested Jhina Mahsa Amini for not properly wearing her hijab. While in police custody, Amini was beaten by the police, ending up in a coma and finally being declared brain-dead by the hospital she was at. The declaration

about her being brain-dead was deleted several days later, and the police also denied beating her, however. After that point, conflicting statements about her death came out from Amini's family, United Nations

officials, witnesses, and the Iranian government, with nothing truly being confirmed.

After Amini's death, public protests emerged across the country, focusing on the slogan of "Women, Life, Freedom." Numerous people, including just ordinary citizens, began creating street art to portray their frustrations with numerous social and politi-

One example of this was in Tehran, the capital, when protestors dyed the water in several water fountains a red color to look like blood.

The Iranian government, however, views this art as expressions of defiance. Beyond just removing the murals and art, they are also persecuting the artists. This includes punishments such as kidnapping, detaining, and threatening the lives of the artists. The artists have stood strong, and the art has continued even in the face of opposition.

This has all culminated in major protests across the country of Iran, especially around Tehran. Although protests started near the end of December 2025, they accelerated on January 9th, when protestors burnt down a government building in Tehran. Although security in Tehran has appeared somewhat restrained, that is different in other, cities, where at least 34 citizens and 4 security personnel have died, and at least 2,000 citizens have been arrested since the protests started.

Art has allowed these citizens to fight back, even in a peaceful way, against a government that they felt was oppressing them. However, these people have felt that art was not enough, and have started to directly fight back against their government. No matter what happens, it is important that the Iranian citizens stay safe and are no longer oppressed.



Photo from People's History Museum
Graffiti Depicting an Iranian Artist Using His Art to Combat the Police and Government

cal issues. Despite the government's efforts to erase and paint over the art, people continued to make art depicting the government poorly, making art of the government killing citizens and detaining activists.

“Prelude to a Kiss” Displays the Talent of Amity Creative Theater

by Theodore Anderson ‘27

This fall, Amity Creative Theater Department put on the play “Prelude to a Kiss” with a level of professionalism that was surprising to see in high school actors. The production, which ran at the beginning of December, drew in the audience and provided comedic re-

who appears to be his wife is not quite herself anymore. Meanwhile, Rita remains stuck in the body of an old man with health issues, separated from the man she just married.

Tommy Francese ‘27 as Peter, Anna Edwards ‘26 as Rita, and David Tobin ‘27 as the Old Man handled the challenges of a complicated plot with impressive skill and professionalism, not often seen in high school performers. The actors stepped into each other’s roles, creating an experience that kept viewers engaged and appeared seamless.

Stage manager Tiari Young ‘27 said, “I’ve had the opportunity to see each and every actor grow and develop a strong stage presence that the audience adored every night [of the showing].”

While many viewers enjoyed “Prelude to a Kiss” as a romantic comedy, cast member David Tobin noted the play’s deeper significance, saying, “While this show is recognized as a ‘romcom,’ it also serves as commentary on the AIDS crisis of the 1980s... At its center, this play confronts the constraints of unconditional love.”

The theater department’s success in this production sets high expectations for the spring musical, “My Fair Lady,” a classic which will feature a live pit orchestra. Performances for the musical are scheduled for March 19, 21, 26, 27, and 28. Tickets are on sale on the Amity Theater Department website; do not miss your chance to see Amity’s student performers bring another compelling production to the Brady Center! You will not want to miss this!



Photo Contributed by Theodore Anderson ‘27
Anna Edwards ‘26 and Tommy Francese ‘27 in “Prelude to a Kiss”

lief, even with the play’s potential for deep interpretations.

The story follows lovers Peter and Rita, whose honeymoon takes a turn after a strange elderly man kisses Rita at the wedding reception. This results in a body swap between Rita and the old man, causing confusion and complexity in the newlyweds’ relationship. The first act of the play establishes the fast-growing love between Peter and the genuine version of Rita, while the second act explores Peter’s realization that the woman

Romcom Review

“Always Be My Maybe”

by Avery Ketchian ‘26

Are you looking for a romcom to watch this February? Always Be My Maybe “may be” the movie you are looking for. Released in 2019 on Netflix and set in San Francisco, this movie shows the importance of family, friends, culture, and love. Always Be my Maybe is a friends-to-lovers and second-chance romance, where the main characters, Sasha Tran and Marcus Kim, were dating as teenagers, broke up due, and then met up again later in life.

Sasha is played by actress Ali Wong, who is a comedian and is known for her Netflix specials “Baby Cobra” and “Hard Knock Wife,” and Marcus is played by actor Randall Park, who is known for playing Jimmy Woo in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Louis Huang in “Fresh Off the Boat.” Additionally, famous actor Keanu Reeves, most known for being the lead role in “John Wick” and Neo

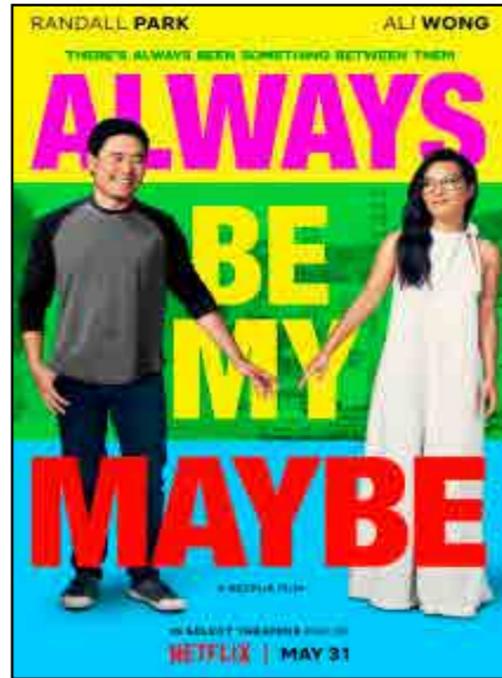
in “The Matrix”, also makes an appearance in the movie.

The beginning of Always Be my Maybe shows the start of Sasha and Marcus’s relationship. Sasha and Marcus Kim are neighbors and best friends, and they always hung out at Marcus’s house because Sasha’s parents both worked. Sasha often felt lonely, but Marcus and his family made her feel at home. She enjoyed cooking meals with Marcus’ mom, and since her parents worked a lot, she would often eat at their house. Sasha became passionate about cooking and dreamed of opening her own restaurant, wanting to become a businesswoman and a chef. On the other hand, Marcus wanted to continue to be in his band from high school and work with his dad in the family business.

A tragedy hits the Kim family, and in the end, Sasha and Marcus stop talking to each other. After Sasha became a successful restaurateur, she returned to her hometown to open another restaurant there. She rented out a house, but the air conditioning was not working, and her assistant called an AC company, which ended up being Marcus and his dad’s company.

Reuniting with Marcus and Mr. Kim while back in town, Sasha and Marcus start to repair their relationship, but it is still rocky. They had to talk about their past issues for them to be able to move forward together. Additionally, both of them were in separate relationships when they reunited. The two best friends, however, ended up realizing that they are better together than apart. In the end, Sasha’s new restaurant honored Marcus’ mom and their culture, helping to heal Marcus and Sasha’s relationship.

Make sure to watch Always Be my Maybe this February for Valentine’s Day!



Picture Contributed by ScreenRant
Poster for Always Be My Maybe

A Star Pianist Shines Bright with Solos

by Blake Wegman ‘26

Throughout the past eight years, piano has been at the forefront of junior Michael Baker’s skill set and free time. When asked why he started playing, Baker said, “Because I had a strong feeling that I would enjoy it, and I couldn’t have been more right.”

Throughout high school, he has become a prominent figure in the music department, contributing to any and every performance he could. When asked about his favorite performance, he immediately said that the Theory of Relativity musical was his favorite and the most memorable for him. Beyond the musical itself, this performance took place in Edinburgh at the annual Fringe Festival with a small group of ACT students, which is an experience he says he will never forget.

Currently, he is preparing for “My Fair Lady” this spring, which offers its own challenges and experiences. During this process, there are numerous rehearsals, as well as additional practice outside of the schoolday, which is crucial to providing the best performance possible for the Amity community in the spring. Baker said, “My favorite part

of being in the pit orchestra is performing with like-minded individuals who are passionate like I am about music.”



Photo contributed by Michael Baker ‘27
Michael Baker ‘27 playing a solo

love, which is to play music, and use their abilities to share their love for music with others. This is both inspiring and extremely impressive, considering the already busy schedule many students have with academics and other extracurricular activities.

When asked about Baker, Nathaniel Luciano

‘26, a trumpet player in both the band and pit orchestra, expressed his thoughts, saying, “His talent and dedication [to the piano] are inspiring, and his musical ability is moving.” Baker simply has immense talent and potential with the piano.

In the pit orchestra, Baker is the lead pianist, which comes with its own unique set of challenges. Baker emphasized the amount of time and effort that is required to master a specific song and perform it consistently in a group setting. However, he also said, “I am so grateful to have been given such an opportunity [to be the lead pianist].”

Throughout this entire process, one of the main things that can be taken away is the passion that Baker has for not only the piano but also for the entire music department at Amity. When he is not playing the piano, Baker also assists Choir Director Marcia Rizzotti with vocals during rehearsals.

Baker also wanted to encourage other people to join the pit orchestra if they are passionate about music and willing to put in the necessary time to perform well. He said, “Performing is truly an amazing, unforgettable experience, and I would recommend it to anyone who is passionate about their respective instrument.”

Baker also wanted to encourage other people to join the pit orchestra if they are passionate about music and willing to put in the necessary time to perform well. He said, “Performing is truly an amazing, unforgettable experience, and I would recommend it to anyone who is passionate about their respective instrument.”

Baker also wanted to encourage other people to join the pit orchestra if they are passionate about music and willing to put in the necessary time to perform well. He said, “Performing is truly an amazing, unforgettable experience, and I would recommend it to anyone who is passionate about their respective instrument.”

Baker also wanted to encourage other people to join the pit orchestra if they are passionate about music and willing to put in the necessary time to perform well. He said, “Performing is truly an amazing, unforgettable experience, and I would recommend it to anyone who is passionate about their respective instrument.”

Food is Fuel

Nutrition Shapes Performance for Student-Athletes

by Jacob Storeygar '26

Many students at Amity are involved in after school activities and among the most popular include some form of exercise. Whether it be competing at the varsity level on an Amity team, lifting weights, or even tossing a ball around outside, nutrition plays a key role in performance. Getting the proper fuel for your body before, during, and after exercise can impact not only performance but also recovery and consistency.



Photo contributed by @EZ.vision_ on Instagram

Senior teammates Caleb Oladele and captain Tyler Frantz celebrating after a crucial goal

Many notable student athletes at the school emphasize this phenomenon.

Senior swimmer Aarya Mulmi claims, "Good nutrition is the foundation of athletic performance; what you fuel your body with directly impacts your strength, endurance, and recovery." She continued saying "student athletes who prioritize nutrition gain the energy and focus needed to excel both on the field and in the classroom."

Senior Lexi Sklarz, who served as a captain of the girls field hockey team, agreed and added "keeping good nutrition allows me to feel my best while also fueling me to perform my best."

It's clear that both Mulmi and Sklarz believe nutrition plays a significant role in performance, knowing first hand the importance of nutrition between practices and games.

Senior Benjamin Miranda also found, during his lacrosse season, that "if you eat good you feel good and when you feel good you perform better." He plans to continue with this ideology as the spring season approaches.

One of the three macronutrients is carbohydrates (carbs) and arguably one of the most important components for young high school athletes. This is because carbs are what gives your body energy in both short and long term boosts. Carbs also help protect your muscles when recovering.

Tyler Frantz, senior captain of the boys soccer team last fall, emphasized the importance of carbs in his diet while he was in season. "Going into a game or practice it

was always important I ate carbs prior or I wouldn't have been able to make it through while giving 100%."

Frantz's teammate senior Caleb Oladele shared similar habits.

"Going into practice and games, I always tried to eat a low fat carb heavy meal before activity and get adequate rest after."

Tennis player Valentine Tavenas '26 added onto this idea saying, "When I am in tennis season, I find myself hungrier all the time, so I have to make sure I eat a more carb heavy diet in order to sustain my body with all the extra physical

activity the season brings." Carbs play a key role in energy levels and learning to take advantage of their benefits can help you exercise more efficiently. Another macronutrient that has been on a kick recently

is protein. Protein is essential for muscle growth and athletes that are actively seeking to put on more muscle mass onto their body prioritize the amount of protein they consume.

Like carbohydrates, it is important that you eat enough protein to sustain your training habits.

A key part in performance, however, is hydration. When you are hydrated and exercise, your muscles work efficiently, your heart rate stays steady, and your focus is sharp. Proper hydration also prevents cramps, dizziness, and fatigue, allowing an athlete to train harder and recover more efficiently.

Senior Akshay Bulsara, who will serve as a tennis captain in the spring, shared his personal experience on the importance of water and staying hydrated.

"Being well hydrated has allowed me to perform better on the tennis court and recover faster. I also feel my focus in the classroom has improved."

Many nutrition teachers at the school have also shared their thoughts on this topic and continue to see student athletes dehydrated and not performing to their fullest capabilities. They suggest that athletes that may be feeling symptoms above try and hydrate more efficiently and hope to see more success in them.

In summary, having the skills and techniques to exercise is only half the race. Nutrition plays a key role in how you perform and if you can fuel your body smarter, you will see better performance in your everyday exercise.

Ski Team 'Powders' through Challenging Winter Season

by Anika Zivojinovic '27

The Amity Ski Team is a strong and persisting group of athletes who work incredibly hard in practice, whether inside for conditioning or traveling to Southington to practice racing down the mountain, to do their best come race day.

They are put in a position that most of the other winter sports are not. The team is forced to constantly adjust based on the weather. They race no matter what the conditions are and must adapt to them in order to ski successfully. As the weather got colder, the conditions began to shape how the ski team's practices looked and how they performed during their races. While skiers are accustomed to racing in cold snowy weather, ideal conditions, this winter season was unique.

Throughout the entire season the weather was changing affecting the athletes performance. In the very beginning of the season, before the truly biting cold had settled, the conditions were warmer than preferred, still lingering from the fall season, and this caused the snow to turn slushy. Contrasting to that is the numbing cold that took over about halfway through the season and significantly towards the end.

While one might think that cold conditions mean ideal conditions, that is not always the case. Junior Jenell Sauer highlighted this struggle with the big changes in weather saying, "When it is warmer out, the snow turns to slush, causing most of the skiers to go slower during their race but when it gets too cold, it can cause the snow to freeze throughout the day of the race, especially as more people continue to ski down the same path, pressing down the snow and freezing it."

"Having too much ice in this

condition makes it harder for us to control our turns."

These freezing conditions make it easier for the skiers to fall due to the ice patches that form, causing a majority of racers to be disqualified. Other athletes from the team have also mentioned that the cold, especially during this time of year, has caused their toes to completely freeze up as well as their legs due to the inability to ski with jackets, only wearing their ski suits.

Despite these difficult conditions athletes from the Amity Ski Team have thrived. One of these standout athletes is senior Claudia Manuele. Manuele has had an incredibly successful season, recently earning a position on Team Connecticut. In order to become a part of this competitive state team, the skiers compete in a two day competition against 12 other states. The top ten boys and top ten girls from this race earn a spot on the team, and Manuele did just this. Even though the temperatures were below freezing and conditions might not have been ideal, Manuele persevered and achieved a huge accomplishment.

Another member who has been very successful this season is Gianna Perfetto '26. Perfetto finished her races with some of the fastest times, finishing top 20 almost every race and even qualifying for shootouts. This race invites the top 50 skiers to compete against each other where the 30 best finishers move onto the following race where members for the state team are chosen.

Overall the Amity Ski Team has seen great success from its athletes, even if the weather tried to cause otherwise. The team wrapped up their regular season on February 5th with a 37-17 record, qualifying them for states. They will compete in this race February 24th at Mount Southington.



Photo contributed by amity.ski.team on Instagram

This year's Ski Team seniors at their final regular season race

World Unites as Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games Open across Italy

by Tyler Frantz '26 and Akshay Bulsara '26

the world together for one of the most anticipated global sporting events.

Athletes from dozens of countries are com-

The 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano-Cortina, Italy, have officially begun, bringing

d'Ampezzo, and several alpine venues, allowing organizers to use existing facilities while highlighting Italy's diverse geography. This approach also reflects a growing Olympic focus on sustainability and long-term community use of venues.

Many Amity athletes enjoy watching the Olympics. David Babic '28 said, "It's amazing to see people come together and present what they have been practicing at such a high level. I enjoy watching such high level competition."

Senior ski captain Evie Leblanc added, "I watch the olympics because I feel very patriotic during this time and find it very impressive. I also really enjoy watching the alpine events because I myself ski."

Senior ice hockey captains Christian Costanzo and Cristian Luciano had a more personal connection to the winter Olympics. Costanzo, who once dreamt of playing on the Olympic team for ice hockey, said, "The Olympics are very interesting and I am especially looking forward to watching the ice hockey events."

Luciano commented, saying "I am also looking forward to watching our country compete in the ice hockey

tournament. I hope they can perform well."

Cortina d'Ampezzo last hosted the Winter Olympics in 1956, making this a historic return nearly 70 years later. Italy also previously hosted the Winter Games in Turin in 2006, reinforcing the country's strong connection to Olympic winter sports. The theme of this year's Olympics is innovation and tradition, blending modern technology and international competition with historic alpine settings and winter sport culture.

The Games will continue through February 22, when the closing ceremony will mark the end of the 2026 Winter Olympics, celebrating athletic achievement, international unity, and Italy's role as a host on the world stage.



Photo contributed by us.HeadTopics

Team USA at the 2026 Winter Olympics opening ceremony

peting in 16 disciplines across seven sports, including alpine skiing, biathlon, bobsleigh, cross-country skiing, curling, ice hockey, and ice skating. Millions of viewers worldwide are tuning in to watch elite competitors perform at the highest level of winter sport.

This year's Games are unique because Italy has chosen to spread events across multiple regions rather than host everything in one compact city. Events are taking place in Milan, Cortina

Spartan Leaders Nardecchia and Spodick Anchor Season's Basketball Teams

POSITION	SMALL FOWARD
CLASS	2026
POINTS PER GAME (PPG)	19.1
COLLEGE	FRANKLIN PIERCE
NAME	NINA NARDECCHIA
ROLE	CAPTAIN
JERSEY #	SF #22

POSITION	SMALL FOWARD
CLASS	2026
POINTS PER GAME (PPG)	21.0
COLLEGE	UNCOMMITTED
NAME	MILES SPODICK
ROLE	CAPTAIN
JERSEY #	SF #10

by Akshay Bulsara '26

Spodick (Boys) have been clear leaders for their teams this year on both offense and defense.

Nardecchia is a small forward averaging 19.1 points per game. She plans to continue her basketball career at the collegiate level at Franklin Pierce University.

Spodick, also a small forward, is averaging 21.0 points per game. Most recently he led the team to beat East Haven scoring 30 points and 10

Senior basketball captains Nina Nardecchia (Girls) and Miles

rebounds. Spodick also plans to continue his career at the collegiate level but has not chosen which university he will take his talent to.

When asked about the season so far, Spodick said, "I am happy with what the team has accomplished and when everyone is locked in playing well, our team has great potential. I'm especially grateful for the bond I have made with my teammates and the family that the Amity basketball program has given me."

Nardecchia spoke about her appreciation for the game. "Basketball is more than a sport to me, it's a privilege," she said. "Every time I step

on the court, I'm reminded of how much I love the game. It has shaped me, challenged me, and given me a passion, along with lessons and joy that will never fade."

It's clear the sport has shaped Spodick and Nardecchia into who they are today and will serve as a highlight of their years at Amity. Both are outstanding basketball players and represent what it means to be a Spartan.

Catch them in action as the regular season comes to a close and the SCC tournament and CIAC tournament start up.

Images created by Akshay Bulsara '26

Long Road to a License: The Struggles Teens Face

Many Say Stress Is Worth the Independence

by Isabella Smernoff '27

As the student parking lot begins to fill, it marks an exciting yet stressful time for the school's juniors and seniors. Obtaining a driver's license is notoriously known as liberating and exciting, but the dangers of driving and the difficulty of the process can affect many students' ability to fully enjoy their newfound freedom.

A student driver's first challenge begins with the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Permit Test. On top of managing schoolwork and extracurriculars, scheduling appointments or driving lessons around activities makes it harder for many teens to obtain a driver's license. Appointments at the Connecticut DMV are notoriously difficult to book unless made months in advance.

For many prospective drivers with birthdays during the school year, it is challenging to book an appointment so far in advance and ensure there are no conflicts at the same time.

Lilly Montiel '27 stated, "I originally had an appointment to take my permit test at the Connecticut DMV in Cheshire during November, but I was forced to reschedule due to a sports conflict.

"The next appointment available was in January, which was a huge setback for me and my timeline of acquiring my license," Montiel continued.

For student drivers with their license test scheduled for Sunday, January 26th, or Monday, the 27th, the snowy weather conditions produced mixed emotions.

On Monday, the 27th of January, schools across Connecticut were closed due to heavy snowfall from winter storms that made road conditions

unsafe, with some towns receiving up to 18 inches of snow.

Maggie Kershner '27 said, "While I ab-

scheduled for the 26th of January would be cancelled."

Snowstorms require the DMV and other partnered driving schools to cancel appointments due to safety concerns. After much dedication to completing the required driving course and in-person training on time, rescheduling test dates creates frustration and stress for teens because tests are typically booked weeks or even months in advance.

If a student is fortunate enough to find a new test date close to their previous date, it is likely to be in an unfamiliar area. Learning to drive requires memorizing many rules and regulations and plenty of practice.

Some students, like junior Tommy Francese, talked about the classes themselves. "We schedule online classes now, and they can be hard to get through," he said.

Fellow junior Jaden Skoop agreed. "One time, after the break, the instructor didn't even come back!" she commented.

The key to navigating this process is finding a balance, but in certain extenuating circumstances, such as unusual weather patterns, online classes, or last-minute schedule changes, students may become discouraged from pursuing their license.

Overall, despite the struggles of the licensing process, the independence that comes with a license is well worth it for students. Always keep practicing your driving skills, and always stay safe on the roads!



Photo contributed by Isabella Smernoff '27

Senior Nick Romanacci after obtaining his license

solutely love snow days and having an extra-long weekend, I was slightly disappointed by the news of a snow day because that meant my license test

Enjoy the February break - and drive safely!



CALL US AT 203-387-3810