Falcon football is back on top, despite rough start

By: Cori Jones, class of 2022
The varsity football team is headed off to Acworth to face off against Allatoona in the 2nd round of the state playoffs. Allatoona appeared in last year’s State Championship game losing to Harrison. As we wish the team luck and hope they come out on top to appear in round 3, here is a look back at the season.

The season began after months of COVID stopping all aspects of life. The first game was the Corky Kell Classic against Brookwood. Along with many precautions, this game was the second to be played in Georgia and the first in Gwinnett County, so all eyes were on Dacula.

This was the first game the Falcons have played on since getting their new turf this past summer. Dacula had never hosted or participated in the Corky Kell. This was a hard-fought game, with the Broncos coming out on top after 4 overtimes being played and the final score being 40-34.

Going into week 2, the team went up against all-timer rivals and neighbors Mill Creek. Last year’s team had an amazing run with a 13-1 record on the season and a win against Mill Creek after about 4 years of losses. The amazing comeback kick from kicker Zach Gerks won the game with a final score of 24-21.

This year going into the game, many were worried how it would go after not having the full summer and spring to get ready for the upcoming season. The Falcons had many setbacks throughout the game such as throwing errors from QB Blaine Jenkins, and also some receiving errors. These setbacks cost the Falcons a score going into halftime of 0-17. In the locker room, the coaches split their players up based on position and talked to them about what they could do and what they needed to stop doing. This brought a new team out for the second half. The Hawks went on to kick for three and Falcons stand out Junior Kyle Efford, scored two touchdowns. This brought the final game score to 14-20. Though a loss, the team fought hard to get up in the game as much as they could.

Game 3 was against another major rival: the Mountain View Bears. The Falcons were coming off a 2 game losing streak which was shocking for most. After a bye week, the team had a whole week to prepare and fix whatever tweaks were needed.

Speaking with standout Senior Kaleb Edwards, about the prepartaion for Mountain View he said, “The dynamics were the same as every other week. The objective was to win. However, in preparation for Mountain View week, we focused more on just having fun and playing the game we love.”

The Bears went on to score twice missing both field goals to bring the score to 0-13. Going into the second quarter the Falcons went on the score twice finishing out quarter 2 with a score of 14-13 and never looking back. In the third quarter, the Falcons scored two more times and the Bears scored one additional time to wrap up quarter 3 with a 28-20 lead. The last quarter was the most important and the Falcons continued to blast through the endzone even with the horrible referees trying to hold them back. The Bears continued to trail the Falcons with a final score of 42-20. This was the best result after the two-game losing streak, showing that the Falcons used the two weeks they had to prepare and fix their mistakes.

Kaleb Edwards runs the ball and is tackled by Brookwood defense.

After this game the Falcons kept a 5-game winning streak until they met last year’s state champs Buford at their stadium for the region game. The game got off to a slow start for Buford after blasting through the endzone within the first few minutes if the game. This game quickly became Buford’s. It became clear for many Falcon fans that this just was not our game with a final score of 35-0.

Buford was the last regular season game as the next week the team would faceoff againstAlexander High. Edwards said the team felt they needed to redeem themselves after the loss to Buford. He said, “It was a great opportunity for us to get back on the path we needed to be on.” Round 1 was a phenomenal comeback for the Falcons blasting thorough Alexander with a win of 49-24.

The game tonight will decide if the season continues to round 3.

Mental & Emotional impacts of Covid

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Community helps with necessities during quarantine

By: Mish Smith, class of 2024
Time and time again during this pandemic it is heard, “We are all in this together.” During this crisis, many people don’t have a hot meal or a comfortable place to lay their heads. People are being laid off from their jobs.

In addition, they cannot provide for their families leaving them without food, heat, lights, daycare and other necessities. It seems citizens are being forced to see rethink things they took for granted like turning on the water to brush teeth or taking the phone off the charger in the morning.

Also, with the winter quickly approaching, many will be left in the cold without central heating. When it comes to helping people in need, Dacula is far from last place. If your family is struggling with food, look no further than Dacula’s very own food pantry. Many did not know that the school has this option, but it’s there and it’s free. In addition, the service is anonymous. If seeking help gives students a sense of embarrassment, there is no problem.

Requests can be made on the eClass home page. Not only does our school have this resource, lunch is now free for everyone. This free lunch includes a provided main course, a fruit, and a water or juice. The meal changes throughout the week, but there is always a pizza option.

Outside of school, there is a food pantry on Pine Road called “The Pantry at HMUMC.” They are open on Saturdays, starting at 8 a.m.

If students would like to help families in need, they can always give canned goods and other items to Dacula’s food pantry. In addition, high school students are old enough to volunteer at “The Pantry at HMUMC.”

If you are too busy to donate their time, they can help by simply wearing a mask wherever they go to stop the spread of the Covid virus.

Students can go on social media and spread the word. The more people that know of ways to help or get help, the fewer people that struggle.

In conclusion, we are all in this together. It is time to come together and feed Dacula. Covid-19 is just a piece of the bigger picture. This is an opportunity to come closer as a community.

This is also an opportunity to build other programs that were not there before the pandemic that will last to help people in need. The goal should be for Dacula to walk away from this pandemic better and stronger than it was before.

Thrifting tips

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Competition Cheer

Check out “The Talon” online at www.daculatalon.weebly.com
Thrifting offers the best steals on clothes, furniture, unique finds

By: Dahiana Rodriguez, class of 2021

With the rise in quarantine boredom, many people are shopping for new clothes and accessories to keep their looks up-to-date or to buy new furniture for a home makeover. This can end up being quite an expensive task, however, there are many alternatives to save some money such as thrifting, visiting outlets and going to flea markets.

Also, thrifting is a good way to help the environment by reusing previously owned things or buying marked down items instead of having these items end up in landfills, but always keep in mind shoppers should only buy what they need and can use as there are others such as homeless and lower income families that can only afford to buy clothes and furniture at thrift stores.

Make sure when visiting these places to keep a couple of things in mind. First, and most importantly, make sure to wear a mask to protect yourself and those around you. Second, try wearing basic clothing, patterns or textures on your body that you are trying on at the moment. Also, always remember to test electronics before you buy because most places do not allow returns.

Some good locations to visit in Georgia are:

- Park Avenue Thrift
  134 S Clayton Street Lawrenceville, GA 30046
  3870 Lawrenceville Highway Lawrenceville, GA 30044

Park Avenue stores have a total of eight more stores spread throughout Georgia currently and they offer a variety of details. The weeks at these stores “start” Thursday where absolutely everything in the store is $2.50 and then the prices continuously drop throughout the week until Wednesday; Thursday (9a.m.-9p.m.) $2.00/each item, Friday(9 a.m.-9 p.m.) $1.75/each item, Saturday (9a.m.-9p.m.) $1.50/each item, Sunday (10a.m.-8p.m.) $1.25/each item, Monday (9a.m.-9p.m) $0.75/each item, Tuesday (9 a.m.-9 p.m) $0.50/each item, Wednesday (8a.m.-1p.m.) $0.25/each item.

Additionally, if you try to choose the best day to shop. Also, always remember to test electronics before you buy because most places do not allow returns.

- Final Cut
  500 Furys Ferry Rd, Evans, GA 30907

Final Cut is essentially where unsold items from a variety stores such as Anthropologie, Urban Outfitters, Free People and a few other names brands go when clothing, furniture or shoes are over-produced or have small damages. Even though this store is two and a half hours away, there are currently only two locations in the entire country, so it would be worth the trip. They are open every day 10 a.m to 6 p.m. However, know that all sales are final and you have to be willing to look through bins for the clothing as they are typically in large bins.

- Pendergrass Flea Market: La Vaquita
  5641 US-129, Pendergrass, GA 30046

La Vaquita is open year-round on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. This location is the largest indoor flea market in the United States. Vendors sell everything from clothes, to make up, electronics, home items and much more.

It is also a great place to get authentic Hispanic food from Central and South America who make their food using traditional family recipes. They also offer restaurants serving homemade American food with items including massive hamburgers, spicy chicken wings, Philly Cheese Steaks and pizza.

Make sure to also look out for special events and celebrations held at this location.

- Fur Kids
  255 Scenic Hwy Lawrenceville, GA 30045

The Fur Kids flea markets have several locations throughout Georgia and are open Mondays through Saturdays from 10 a.m to 6 p.m and Sundays from from 12 p.m to 5 p.m. All of the proceeds from sales go to Animal Shelters and Rescues to help pets find a home. The stores sell everything from furniture, appliances, art, antiques, books, stationery and greeting cards, clothing and accessories for men, women, and children, collectibles, home accessories, lawn and garden, light fixtures, office furniture and even sporting goods. They also offer a 15% senior and military Discount every Wednesday.

These stores are a great idea to plan to go with friends, family or even as a date on a weekend.

Photo courtesy of https://georgiastatesignal.com

Over the last, four years there has been an uprise in thrifting as people find it be a more ethical and a cheaper alternative to fast fashion companies.

Masks protect schools from more than just Corona

By: Mary Mason, class of 2021

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Masks protect schools from more than just Corona

By: Mary Mason, class of 2021
Seven things for seven minutes: Activities to help students relax in-between classes

By: Adli Acevedo, class of 2021

For those of us that are learning digitally at home, throughout the day we may find ourselves with a couple spare minutes in between classes. Instead of just sitting in front of your computer for seven minutes, waiting for your next class to start, how about trying these 7 different things to give your eyes and mind a break?

1. Stretches. While waiting for your next period to start, try doing some simple stretches like the splits, or maybe just a running or hamstring stretch if you are not that flexible. By letting your muscles loosen up for even a couple of minutes, you can save yourself from joint and back pains. A study at Harvard showed that when you stretch, even if you are just sitting in a chair all day long, you can keep your muscles flexible and healthy.

2. Clean your workspace. Honestly, this option is not that exciting, but it is necessary. Organizing your desk can help you be more efficient in your schoolwork, help you remember important assignments and even help you relieve stress by having everything easily accessible. It may not be what you want to spend your time in between classes doing, but if you just sacrifice seven minutes to cleaning your workspace it could really make your school life ten times easier.

3. Make a quick snack. Try making an omelet in a mug. Just crack an egg, put it in a microwaveable mug, add salt, pepper, and mix. Put it in the microwave for about a minute and twenty. Then add any toppings you want such as sausages or veggies and enjoy. If you do not want that, make yourself a quick PB and J or a ham and cheese. Regardless of what you choose, give your body the fuel it needs to help you throughout the day.

4. Homework. Even though you may only have seven minutes, try to get some work done for a class. Maybe you need to find a quote in a book or solve some equations for math. Whatever it is, try to get something done in between classes so that at the end of the day you are not overwhelmed with the amount of work you need to do.

5. Wash your face. This one works especially well in the morning. At the beginning of the day, you most likely are still waking up from the 3 hour sleep you had the previous night, so in between classes go to the bathroom and splash some cold water on your face. This will help you wake up and focus better during your morning classes and give your skin some moisture. As a bonus, splashing cold water on your face could help slow down the natural aging process and greatly reduce the wrinkles on your face.

6. Play with your pet. (If you do not have a pet skip to seven). Many pets at home get very destructive when they are bored. By playing with them for just a few minutes you could reduce that destructive behavior, give them some needed attention and get your body moving as well. It might be a challenge trying to get them to stop once your class is about to start though.

7. Whatever makes you happy. One of the best things you can do to reduce stress and calm down in between classes is to do whatever makes you happy. Whether it be listening to music, drawing, or reading. During such a stressful time it is important that you give yourself time throughout the school day to unwind and relax, even if it is just for a few minutes.

The next time you find yourself sitting in front of the computer waiting for your next class to start, try doing one of these things to give your eyes and mind a break from the stress of school. It does not matter which you choose or when you choose to do it, as long as you can give your body a nice seven-minute break before your next class starts.

Yummy lunch ideas for Zoom students to snack on

By: Kailah Gordon, class of 2023

For a better taste, put the chicken salad in the refrigerator for 30 minutes, wait if you please. This is a very delicious and healthy meal.

Easy Quick Chicken Salad

1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons sour cream
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
4 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
1-1/4 cups seedless red grapes halved
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1/4 cup chopped sweet onion, optional.

First, make the sauce by whisking the first five ingredients. In a large bowl, mix the shredded chicken, halved grapes, chopped pecans, and chopped onions. Store the chicken salad in the refrigerator and wait if you please. This is a very delicious and healthy meal. It can also be served with some bread, chips or crackers.

The Best Homemade Potato Soup Ever.

6 bacon strips, diced
3 cups cubed peeled potatoes
1 small carrot, grated
1/2 cup chopped onion
1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon celery seed
1 can (14-1/2 ounces) chicken broth
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tube (15 ounces) salsa
1 can (15-1/2 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
1/2 cup mild green chiles, undrained
6 bacon strips, diced
Soup Ever.

Salt
Oval
Egg, beaten (3)

Photo courtesy of: houseo-fyunmm.com

Potato soup taste even better with crackers on the side. For 40 minutes. In a large skillet, cook chorizo over medium heat until it is crispy. Add vegetables, seasoning(of your choice), and the broth.

Nacho Tots

1 package (32 ounces) frozen Tater Tots
7 ounces fresh chorizo or bulk spicy pork sausage
3 cups 2% milk
8 ounces process cheese (Velveeta), cubed
2 green onions, thinly sliced, optional.

Get a large saucepan, cook some bacon over medium heat until it is crispy. Add vegetables, seasoning(of your choice), and the broth.

Mac ‘N’ Cheese Ball

Cheese puffs (like Cheetos)
(1 1/2 cups)
Butter (4 tablespoons)
Salt
Cheese balls (2 cups)

Shredded mozzarella cheese

(Zups)
Cream cheese, 1 block
Elbow macaroni, cooked flour (1 1/2 cups)
Egg, beaten (3)
Oil
Salt

Crush cheese puffs then put a saucepan over medium heat and add butter. Once the butter is melted, add milk, cheddar, mozzarella and cream cheese. Whisk until all the cheese is melted and it is smooth. Pour the cheese sauce over cooked pasta, stir into noodles. Cover it and refrigerate for two hours, when done take it out and make balls with your hands. Drench the balls in flour, followed by eggs before putting them in the powdered cheese puff. Heat oil to 350 degrees and fry the mac balls until it is crispy (not burnt) for about two minutes. When they are done sprinkle salt over them and enjoy.

Even if only for seven minutes, listening to music can help students relax throughout the day.
Starting small business at 15: My Story

By: Mellayne Richards, class of 2023

There is no limit to what can be accomplished. Out there is a world of opportunities for you to be the best version of yourself.

Nowadays, many young people are looking into ways where they can make their own money by starting their own small business. I was one of them.

It started with a small idea in June. It was supposed to be something small to keep my sister and I busy during the pandemic. I was able to make $30,000 by the beginning of September, and reach $1,000 sales by the end of October. Here is how I did it.

During the early stages of quarantine, my family and I were stuck in a predicament we could not control, like other families as well. We took it as a time to relax and reflect on our lives before we were very busy and hectic. My sister and I ended up with a lot of downtime and started thinking of all the cool things we could do to start making money.

When we were both in fifth grade, we started our first “so called” business making woven bracelets which we mostly only sold to our school friends and close relatives. Starting another business had always been in the back of my mind. Then a couple years later, my mom started her own business, and I knew that is what I wanted to do as well.

Together, my sister and I came up with a product that we thought would sell. We came up with a budget for supplies, materials, and advertising. But we did not have any money for a start-up. After drawing up a proposal for $500 our mom approved and we started our business adventure.

I want to describe my journey so that I can help other teenagers like me who go to school and participate in extracurriculars start a business.

Thinking of a Business Idea

Whether you plan on doing a service or selling a product, there are many things to consider: like its profitability, popularity and its ability to sell. Any idea is a good idea but something to think about is whether or not your product is worth buying.

For example selling chapstick online may be a good start, but it is something that can be easily accessed at your local CVS. In order to sell a product like that, provide customers with a reason why they should shop with you. Be unique and make your business stand out.

For me and the product I sell, I am definitely not the first person to do it, but I consider some things that may make me different from other sellers like me. For my shop, it was the price. It is significantly lower than other shops that sell a similar product.

For many customers, shopping for something affordable is their main concern. I took into consideration along with other things while opening my shop.

Utilizing Marketing Strategies

Money does not come easily. It may seem contradicting, but in order to make money, you need to spend money. Do not be afraid to use social media to advertise a product or service. Consider your target audience, figure out where they are in social media.

Whether it is Facebook or Twitter, most social media sites offer advertisements for small businesses. I myself have utilized some of these. My target audience is around my age, so I tried advertising on Instagram and TikTok where a lot of teenagers spend their time.

Is it for you?

Starting a small business is a lot of work. Unless you are comfortable with the fact that you work with, most likely all of the business duties will fall on the business owner.

If you are already a busy individual it may be challenging but not impossible. Many young people look for quick money grabbing opportunities but a business is more than that. So if money is your only interest, you are better off getting a part-time job.

Think about if it is a product that you will enjoy selling to people. Be smart in your decision making process. You will know if it is something that you believe you will succeed at.

Mellayne Richards prepares to ship out customer orders for her online business.

Students can thrive mentally, emotionally despite Covid-19

By: Tolul MacGregore, class of 2023

Amongst the other health crises during this pandemic, there is a rise in students with mental and emotional issues. From months without social interaction, school cancelation and the fear of physical health, students are now left to cope with negative impacts on their well-being.

Students have faced the problem of going for months without social interaction and are now facing virtual schooling. Spring sports, proms, graduations and some clubs were canceled. This alone caused students to dis-appoint, moody or down.

According to the World Health Organization, “The more risk factors adolescents are exposed to, the greater the potential impact on their mental health.”

A mental health charity Young Minds held a survey of 2,036 young people aged 13-25 in the United Kingdom in early July who had experienced mental health issues. Eighty one percent of those surveyed said the pandemic made their mental health worse. DHE counselor Ms. Julie Floyd said some emotional and mental issues students might be going through at this time are “isolation, a state of being overwhelmed, anxiety, and disappointment.”

Research shows that levels of loneliness are high in teens and young adults. Loneliness can bring feelings of depression, hopelessness, and mood swings. The World Health Organization said, “Globally, depression is the fourth leading cause of illness and disability among adolescents aged 15-19 years and fifteenth for those aged 10–14 years.”

Students’ surroundings and way of life have changed so much it is important to give them the resources they need in order to thrive and be mentally prepared during this time. Studies show that students get most of their mental health services from the school. Newport Academy, a therapy program for adolescents with mental health or addiction issues, said that most adolescents accessed mental health services in a school setting. Their research said, “Overall, 57 percent of adolescents who received mental healthcare access those services in school. Some of these teens receive services from a school-based clinician. Others attend specialized schools for behavioral or emotional problems or are enrolled in specialized programs at their local school.”

Whether in school or at home students should use resources in order for them to be mentally and emotionally healthy.

Floyd said that over the summer it has been difficult to connect with students to learn what the specific struggles are and how they can help. Floyd said, “I am hopeful that with us returning back to a routine of school, that we will bet-ter be able to support students and that students will feel comfortable reaching out to us for assistance.”

It is important for students to take care of themselves and their mental health. Floyd provided self-care tips and suggestions to stay mentally and emotionally healthy at this time.

Floyd said, “Take regular breaks from your schoolwork, try to get on a schedule, have regular sleep and healthy habits, move around, and stay active. Find ways to connect with friends, even if you cannot see them in person as often as you would like right now. Most important focus on your strengths.”

The pandemic has impacted the lives of many and has changed many of people’s daily lives. Students’ mental and emotional health has been one of the most impacted by this.

Floyd said, “Students should contact a counselor or talk to a trusted adult if they are feeling lonely, depressed, hopeless, or an urge to harm themselves.”

During this time it is important to stay connected to friends, family and your community.

National Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

Georgia Crisis & Access Line (GCAL) 1-800-715-4225
Underrated song artists to listen to during quarantine

By: Faith Farayibi, class of 2023

Many people scroll down the app Netflix daily scanning for anything good to watch since most of the productions and filming are shut down during quarantine. There are so many interesting Netflix shows that go unseen by people every day, especially for those who are home looking for shows to watch. People now have more time on their hands, so here are some recommendations of underrated shows that have grown during the quarantine.

One of my favorites during this time is a Spanish speaking drama that people can watch in English but to me, it is more interesting in Spanish. It’s called “Control Z.” It is about a hacker who started to release secrets about students at his/her school and “the socially isolated but observant” Sofia (one of the main characters) is working to find out and uncover the identity of the hacker. This is a 10/10 and I highly recommend it particularly if you like Spanish and shows with a lot of drama and action.

Another one of my favorites is “Blood and Water.” It is about a teen whose sister was abducted by an adoption agency who faked her birth certificate. The main character, Puleng, sets out to find her sister and bring her back home after years of her parents searching for her. I urge people to watch it because it is thrilling and interesting at the same time and it is based on a true story that happened in Africa. I would give this show a 10/10 especially since stands out about her music is that she always sings about real world topics like puberty, abusive homes and eating disorders, which are somethings that a lot of her listeners can relate too.

Lastly is Brent Faiyaz. He is 25 and is an African American born in Norfolk, Virginia. He uploaded his first EP, “Black Child,” on SoundCloud in 2014. His genre is R&B and Hip Hop. Some of his top songs are “Around Me,” “Bluffin” and “Skyline.” Something that stands out about his music is it is about his struggle in life like drug use and loneliness, some things that his listeners might be going through. His songs are also short, so listeners will not get bored very easily.

In conclusion, These are some very talented artists that deserve more recognition so check them out.

Netflix shows flourish during quarantine

By: Faith Farayibi, class of 2023

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Lastly, the one that really needs more recognition is called “Sweet Magnolias.” It is mostly about three women named Maddie Townsend, Dana Sue and Helen who have been friends for years that carry the struggles of life on their shoulders. I highly recommend this show because it teaches about friendship and character. It is fascinating because of how much the main characters go through and they choose to not give up no matter what. It is also a romance and a drama.

I highly endorse the watching of these shows and promise it will not be a waste of time!
Artists to listen to during quarantine

By: Amar Husic, class of 2024

Music can be an outlet to relieve stress, but there are more options than listening to mainstream artists like the Migos or Drake. People can listen to artists just as good but who are less known.

The following artists deserve a listen during quarantine.

People can listen to Guwop Reign. According to pressparty.com, “Reign built an avid fan base with one independent anthem after another including ‘Money Talk’ [587K plays] and ‘Fly’ [362K plays] and ‘No Love’ [806K plays] and ‘Tastemaker Praise’ from ‘Lyrical Lemonade.’” Guwop Reign is very underrated and has a unique flow. Reign’s best selling song is “Mulan 2” bringing in 2.2 million views. He is one of the best artists and one of the best rappers to listen to while in quarantine. He is a Gwinnett County Schools graduate who writes good song lyrics and has good flow.

Another rapper that has a unique voice draws comparisons to highly recognized rappers Young Thug and Lil’ Baby. That rapper is Toosii and he has multiple flows ranging from love songs such as “Love Cycle” or songs to get hype to such as “Truth Be Told.” According to a very well respected website across the rap community, Complex, Toosii stated a very well respected website across the rap community, Complex, Toosii stated in one of their articles about his new hit single “5 Stars” “I like my music videos to show my personality and for people to feel like they know me.” Toosii has many songs just like “5 Stars” and has potential to be on the top 100 charts. Toosii said about “5 Stars,” “I really didn’t want to do too much with the video. The song has good vibes and a nice flow to it. To be honest, the same day I recorded the song, I checked into my room at a 5-star hotel, living that 5-star life. This is everything I hoped and prayed for!!” “5 Stars” totalled in at 10 million views and continues to climb up the charts on artists on the come up.

One last artist born in Jamaica but raised in New York, Sleepy Hallow is on the come up with potential to be one of the greatest coming up. At the age of just 20, he already has a hit song “FreestyLe” as of right now with over 27 million views on YouTube. Some other great songs are “Water,” “Tip Toe” and “Flows,” almost all three with over 10 million views. Like most rappers Sleepy Hallow likes to keep up with his jewelry just like his clean flows. According to an article about the rapper, he explained the significance of his new pendant. Hallow said, “My pendant is the sleeping emoji, but he looks like me. I was the inspiration for it. I had them add twists, so people know it’s me, and I added the zzz’s as the ball.” This shows a little about his personality and how he’s just chill and a great person to listen to and has good vibes.

All these rappers are great but have unique flows of their own and deserve a listen.

Netflix sustains backlash after releasing new movie “Cuties”

By: Faith Farayibi, class of 2023

The new Netflix movie “Cuties” underwent backlash after being accused of promoting pedophilia and sexualizing young girls. The film is about a 11-year old girl who rebels against her conservative family to join a dance crew. On the website Deseret News it talks about how some of the scenes in the movie depict child pornography and they also talk about how this movie normalizes the sexualization of young girls.

This film is absolutely disgusting, yet Netflix still continues to leave the movie up even after petitions were made to “cancel Netflix.” People started to cancel their Netflix subscriptions and “#cancel Netflix” became the top hashtag on Twitter.

According to The New York Post they affirm, “More than 619,000 people have signed a Change.org petition demanding Netflix subscribers cancel their subscriptions to protest the company’s decision to stream the film beginning Sept. 9. Despite the public outcry, including the #CancelNetflix Twitter trend, the streaming giant is standing by the movie, recommending that critics actually watch it before condemning it.” I would have thought Netflix would have taken down the movie but instead they reacted and told people they should watch the movie before judging it. This is outrageous. Netflix should have taken action and taken the movie off the platform immediately, but it seems they care more about the money that this movie makes than how it affects their viewers.

Some people might argue that these kids are expressing themselves and people do not have to watch it if they do not like it, but little do they know that it affects everyone. Netflix is promoting more pedophilia and child pornography into the world by making a movie like that with young girls.

The company chose to apologize for how people have misinterpreted “Cuties,” but Netflix continues to keep it up in the U.S. because of the money they would lose. They did delay the release of the movie in Turkey because of how much backlash and hate they got for releasing it in the U.S. That was still not enough to satisfy people who continue to cancel their subscriptions anyways.

In conclusion, Netflix movie “Cuties” destroyed their reputation in the eyes of some subscribers, and the platform continues to defend and condone “Cuties.” I understand the money they could lose, but this decision should not be about the money or about the kids expressing themselves in that way, but it should be about the lesson that comes from it. Finally, the movie shows a lesson that sexualizing kids is okay. Therefore, “Cuties” should be taken down on Netflix no matter how much money it could make.

"Cuties" has faced criticism in various forms of media for exploiting and sexualizing young girls.

photo courtesy of toosii2x Twitter

Toosii states on his Twitter account, “are you proud of me” -- in other words put respect on his name.

photo courtesy of bbt.com

"Cuties" has faced criticism in various forms of media for exploiting and sexualizing young girls.
Editorials

President Joe Biden says college students should not pay for tuition

By: Katya Marseille, class of 2024

The term “Broke college student” is normalized in today’s society of young adults. Before college, high school grads did not have to swipe a card or pay cash to get their education. They did not do it in grade school, middle school or high school. Why start now?

A majority of the young adults, 66.6%, tend to go to college because they want to become in the future requires a college degree, they need to find their direction or their parents simply want them to attend a university. Out of the 66.6% of students that attend, 51% drop out due to college tuition and too expensive.

With this information our now elected president of 2020, Joe Biden, has taken into consideration his opinion on why these young adults should not have to worry about paying for school. On February 25th, 2021, Vice President Joe Biden told host Trevor Noah that he supports going to college with no support. Sometimes it can be from a scholarship, but it is proven that the majority of parents tend to pay for their child’s education or they will help with the finances. College is about finally being on their own, but when student loans and tuition starts to come due, many look to their parents for that support and can also put a strain on the parents financial stability, because now they have bills, taxes, and their child’s future to pay for.

On Marketwatch.com is what a mom had to say: “Realistically, there is just no way my husband and I will be able to afford to send four children to college and pay for it all, we watched students around us flunk out because they were on their own with their parents’ dime.” Even though parents help with paying, they still want their children to be independent, and when a parent cannot afford the cost, that can cause the student to drop out.

Even though the students and parents pay for tuition that can be anywhere between $3,440 to $32,410 depending on what type of college or university they choose, there are many ways to not struggle as much when paying. They can save up. The majority of college students get jobs to help with the cost also, while in high school students can join extracurriculars, which can open the door to scholarship opportunities.

Joe Biden is on the right track when agreeing that paying for college can cause a strain on both the adults and students, resulting in financial stress and higher drop out rates. With his election as president of the United States, his plans have caused people that attend a university/college to have hope for their future. College is not for everyone, but with his promise multiple young adults will pursue their dreams and attend because of tuition not being a problem.

Teens create effective change on social media

By: Tolu Macgregor, class of 2023

The youth are changing the world right at their fingertips. They have taken social media and turned it into a place of activism and social change. Teens voice and challenge political reforms, social norms and racial issues. They effectively use social media to call attention to issues that have been embedded in their society and reach people around the world.

They take on issues like gun control, racial discrimination, climate change and women’s rights. Some might say that social media may not be as effective as present protests. However, social media has created national attention for issues all around the world. It effectively reaches people all over the world and has held authorities accountable.

For as many years that teens have been involved in social change, social media has been the most effective in reaching large numbers of people. Not only are they reaching people in their society, but they are taking their issues globally. Greta Thunberg is seventeen years old but is 2019 Time Magazine’s Person of the Year for becoming the face of climate change.

Thunberg has awakened people around the world to the danger of climate change and human existence. She started a strike outside the Swedish parliament with a poster that translates to “School strike for climate.” She also started a movement in 2018 #Fridaysforfuture. Her hashtag and the photo of her protest went viral and inspired many students around the world to join her campaign.

From there she has spoken with many political leaders such as the Pope, the Swedish government, and the U.N. Thunberg has held leaders accountable for their actions towards climate change. In the UN climate change conference, she held a speech that said, “Since our leaders are behaving like children, we will have to take the responsibility they should have taken long ago.”

Thunberg has taken drastic action by interacting with her ten million followers, and she held the largest climate change demonstration of 4 million people.

The youth in this generation know how to effectively use social media to advocate for global issues.

During this summer, the nation witnessed a gruesome violent unethical death of a black man by a police officer. A white police officer was seen by millions kneeling on the neck of African American named George Floyd after he repeatedly gasped for air, saying, “I can’t breathe.”

Floyd’s name and his last words became a chant and motivated the fight against police brutality and racial discrimination around the world. Social media spread his name and chant around the world and provoked millions of teens to take to the streets.

Many use their social media as a way to form local protests or to promote political reforms. DBS students participated in the protests in Lawrenceville and Hamilton Mill by informing their peers and other students through social media. They have also encouraged their peers to educate themselves and to take a stance against racial discrimination.

Social media has allowed individuals to be heard and given them the ability to voice their personal experiences. Through that individuals have helped others with related issues such as abuse and domestic violence.

Kenidra Woods, an 18-year-old, is a part of Teen Vogue’s young activists making history. After a school shooting in her community she has been the voice in taking a stance against gun violence. She created the Hope for Humanity project in her hometown of Illinois. During this event people shared their personal experience with gun violence through various forms of art. Woods has also voiced her personal experience with sexual abuse, has advocated for women empowerment and has spoken against domestic violence.

She started the CHEETAH (confidence, harmony, enlightenment, encouragement, tranquility, awareness, and hope) Movement. She started this movement to help others who have gone through self-harm, suicide ideation and abuse.

In a Teen Vogue interview Woods said, “I know what it feels like to feel ignored, insignificant, or like no one’s listening. Every person is unique, and we all have stories that someone needs to hear in this world as a source of hope.”

Woods has been on her healing journey and has helped others in the process. She has also spoken out on social media about various issues concerning Black Lives Matter.

Some people theorize that social media has not created effective change but instead has caused harm. Many believe that social media has caused people to hide behind their screen and post issues but do nothing to make an effort to protest.

This has now been termed “slacktivism” which means supporting political or social cause with very little effort or commitment. Yet this is not true because social media has effectively taken many social and political issues and taken them to a global scale. It has also brought the attention of many important political leaders to key issues. It successfully coordinates many social and political events around the world.

Looking back at history teens have always been at the forefront of social change. With the student movement in the 1960’s that arose, young activists inspired by the civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam war movement and the women’s movements. Though today’s teens are taking the world by storm, social media has allowed them to break barriers from different backgrounds and walks of life. Social media has changed the way activism is conveyed. Through social media teens are spreading information and advocating for issues around the world, allowing for their voices to be heard.
Americans scream out, ‘Black Lives Matter,’ two familiar, contrasting voices are heard

By: Miah Smith, class of 2024

The Black Lives Matter movement is the biggest one in American history with over 26 million people participating in protests. Some believe this sudden outrage was from George Floyd’s death: one of many killed by defective officers around the country. Others believe it is all about the pent up frustration of quarantine coming out in the form of protests. Citizens who have been with the Black Lives Matter campaign believe it was just the right time for the right change. But no matter what sparked this movement to reach such heights, it is evident that this bewildering year of 2020 will go down in history as another important stage in reaching equality.

The civil rights movement of 2020 shares a lot of similarities to past scars on American history. Back in the fight to end segregation, there were two distinct groups that led the movement: the Black Panther Party and the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement. The Black Panther Party was a group willing to do anything for a change in their lives. They followed a strict set of rules which required the members to read two hours a day, avoid narcotics, submit a daily report of work and 22 other requirements. However, the country had a problem with this group because they used tactics of violence to push back against the police.

The founder of The Black Panther Party, Huey Newton, allegedly killed an Oakland officer and faced 15 years in prison. A year later, he killed an Oakland officer and faced a lifetime sentence. However, there were no break-ins, thefts, or incidents last night. Images circulating, claiming to be of Lincoln Park Zoo animals out of their habitats, are false.”

The nonviolent Civil Rights Movement was led by Martin Luther King Jr. and encouraged peaceful change. These acts included sit ins, marches, protests and flooding polling places. The concept was to show the world that black people were people too.

This concept peaked when at a Birmingham march, a crowd of full of black teens were shown on national television being hosed down by firemen, beaten down and attacked by police dogs, beaten with batons and tear gassed at a peaceful protest. After the world was forced to see such a horrific sight which was the daily bread for those of Birmingham, Alabama, tons of people rushed to join the Civil Rights Movement and make a change.

In 2020, with history being made, two distinct groups have emerged like in the 1960’s: the rioters and the protesters. The rioters follow in the footsteps of their predecessors of The Black Panther Party. Rioters are burning down buildings, vandalizing property, and making sure their voices are heard. It seems most are either with or against them. The media has chosen their side: against. Grotesque, fake news has recently been circulating on social media. Many media outlets alleged that the rioters of Oakland, Philadelphia and Chicago released wild animals into the concrete jungles of their cities. The statement went far enough that the Chicago Lincoln Park Zoo spoke out about the statements in the form of a tweet: “All animals at the Lincoln Park Zoo are accounted for and safe. There were no break-ins, thefts, or incidents last night. Images circulating, claiming to be of Lincoln Park Zoo animals out of their habitats, are false.”

Although some accounts on the rioters are false, it is still a reality of violence being spread. In Denver, a group of anarchists devastated the city. They damaged property, set things afame and left an officer injured. Weapons were brought along with the group including machetes, explosives, axes and guns. With such an army, it can be assumed they had been planning and organizing this for a while and came with intent to harm the officers.

Although condemned by the media, like the Black Panther Party, the notorious swarm said they had good reason for what occurred that night. Many said they were fighting for Elijah McCain, a young man killed by the police during a stop in the area. This brings remembrance to the death of the Black Panther treasurer, Bobby Hutton, who died at the hands of the police at seventeen years young. Elijah McCain was just twenty-three at the time of his death.

Some rioters seem to not care for the cause at all and are citizens in disguise taking an opportunity at looting stores.

In Atlanta, looters can be seen on video breaking into the high-end Lenox Mall, specifically, the Louis Vuitton store. Once the horde was done, the store was stark and empty. The rioters did not miss a single thing, even taking the cash registers. Brian Kemp, Georgia’s governor, had to deploy the national guard to restore calm. However, it was too late as the looters had taken 10 million dollars worth of Louis Vuitton merchandise.

Regardless of what is felt on how this crisis should be dealt with, history is being made once again. Something that has been put on the back burner for centuries of American history is now glaringly obvious in 2020 as millions of protests, riots and fights.

The people are letting it be known that the treatment they have had to endure will no longer be tolerated. The history and pain of the black Americans will not repeat itself anymore. A blind eye will not be turned to police brutality and an unfair justice systems.

All summer long Americans, black, white, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander and biracial protesters have been screaming out, pleading out from their raw throats for the world to understand: “Black Lives Matter!”

BLM protesters march in Atlanta (on right) to protest the many police shootings like the marches that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (on left).
Nabbed, neglected, normalized: Chinese Muslims, other minority groups “re-educated”

By: Miah Smith, class of 2024

Imagine being taken from your home, possibly with your family and friends, possibly alone, held at gunpoint. This is the reality for many, many Uighurs: a minority group native to the land of China. Their stories have not been told until recently. Modern day concentration camps, holding as many as 3 million people, are being run by the Chinese government.

In an interview with the “Human Rights Watch” program, 110 women and children explained their current poor living conditions. Families were automatically separated into groups of men, women, children and teenage boys and girls once arriving. They explained how they are forced to sleep on the floor in freezing rooms they referred to as “kueilers” (coolers), huddled up in cages with only Mylar blankets, similar to sheets of foil.

Many spoke of not being allowed to shower several days at a time and not receiving any personal hygiene products such as soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Even on the occasion that they had some in their personal belongings they brought with them, they were taken away upon entry and not given back. Several women also shared that menstrual hygiene products and diapers were not made available to them.

Recently there have also been complaints being submitted at the Irwin County facility in Georgia, where an alarming number of unconsented hysterectomies have been performed on women. Dawn Wooden, a licensed practical nurse employed by the center who has represented the Government Accountability Project and Project South, was sent in to investigate. She explained that she was able to find a gynecologist working at the center performed a hysterectomy on every single woman who undergoes a surgery under anesthesia, without the knowledge of the gynecologist and the number of women who underwent this procedure. It is impossible that every last woman this person gave surgery to had a faulty uterus.

This same gynecologist has also previously received complaints when he took out a wrong ovary on a young lady during surgery, who supposed to get her left ovary removed due to a cyst and ended up having her right one removed. This ultimately resulted in a loss of both of her ovaries, leaving her unable to ever bare children.

These women who were given hysterectomies were never given an explanation as to why they needed it or even asked if they wanted to undergo the procedure. They received harsh treatment from doctors and nurses and many underwent surgery fully conscious with no anesthesia. The choices a woman makes with her body are never to be decided by someone else whether that be her husband, other family members or even her doctor specifically in situations where said woman’s life is not in danger.

Having a hysterectomy is a very serious and personal decision, and it is not something that should ever be forced upon women in such a traumatic manner because it is something that will affect them for the rest of their lives.

To make the situation at these centers even worse, Representative Ted Deutch, a Democrat from Florida, released documents the night before a House Judiciary Committee hearing about the Trump administration’s policy of family separations at the southern border, revealing 4,556 complaints in four years about the sexual abuse of immigrant children who were being held at government-funded detention facilities in just four years from July 2014 to July 2018.

The records contained information on children who entered the country alone or had been separated from their families and in detail explained the allegations of adult staff members assauling and harassing minors by doing things such as fondling and kissing them, watching them as they shower and raping them just to point out a few common cases.

Unfortunately, many of these cases end up being dismissed due to “lack of evidence,” but the number of allegations only continue to increase and ignoring them without some form of reform in these camps is irresponsible and immoral.

Additionally, many of these detention centers are privately owned and run, and not run by the government, so there could be much more foul play at hand than is even known about.

Separating a young boy from his family is already traumatic enough on its own for many immigrants but the cruelties experienced at these places makes these situations even more unjust and heart wrenching.

It is just another reminder of how important it is to register to vote and cast a ballot on election day to help get people in office who are willing to make a change for the better not only in this situation but for other movements as well such as “Black Lives Matter.”

With the death of Breonna Taylor, Aatianna Jefferson, George Floyd and many more who have unfortunately lost their lives undeservingly and received no justice, there is no better time to get informed and prepare to vote.

Reflecting on the Black Lives Matter movement, its purpose is to fight for justice issues and this time it seems many companies have decided to side with the Black Lives Matter movement to their brand which has pushed the Black Lives Matter movement to their fan base to defend their claims so many companies continue to increase and ignoring them without some form of reform in these camps is irresponsible and immoral.
Social media has turned into toxic place for teens

By: Heidy Bethencourt, class of 2024

Teens using social media are able to hide behind a screen to skip out of responsibilities. It is common for others just to make themselves feel better, and it has caused many suicides due to cyberbullying. On social media, students have the ability to speak their opinions for anyone to see whether people agree or disagree with them. However, when discussing controversial topics like politics, teens post on their stories and expect to have their opinions validated because they have a voice yet they do not have the information on politics. Many teenagers who are minorities have a lot to say about it but they might not be educated on everything there is to know about politics. Some of these teens do not know why their research is being done or what their research is being done for.

There are many distractions like digital learning devices and family members. People can either come sometimes share nice things in the comments to give them the security they need. However, when people comment to tear others down, it affects the targets of the comments whether the comments are made online or in person. Some like to keep their emotions all locked up and it can lead to bad results. Teens are able to make new friends online but that is not always the best way possible. People like to automatically “cancel” them meaning that they will no longer support them, associate with them and look down on those people. Instead of “canceling” others because it is normal for people to mess up, teenagers can educate them on what they did wrong and let them know good from bad. People can mature and grow better that way instead of participating in “cancel culture.”

False information can be spread on the internet about people and the people reading those rumors like to believe everything they see online. These rumors lead to bullying because of false information which can really torment a teenager throughout their lifetime. Many teens are sensitive to these types of topics. Everyone needs to keep to themselves and not worry about others personal life. There is a huge amount of people who do not have the knowledge or information about where millions of people can see. It can impact a teen’s life.

Girls spending time on social media feel pressured to live up to society’s beauty standards.

The internet has the good side to it, but over the past few years it has turned into a place that people cannot go to for the comfort of others. Instead people go on social media to spread negativity. Social media has more toxic traits and sadly a low amount of benefits for people. The internet sees everything.

Students voice their experiences with digital learning

By: Tolu MacGregor, class of 2023

Since early March, students have been out of the classroom and have been furthering their education at home. Students have faced many issues with the new structure of learning, including not having proper devices, not having proper devices and having the pressure of meeting assignment deadlines.

For some, students say digital learning has been beneficial to them with working around their schedules. Students stated their standpoints on their experiences with digital learning and what can be improved. Digital learning is not the ideal learning environment. Being in a classroom is vastly different from learning virtually. There are many distractions like devices and family members.

“Students Really Think About Digital Learning,” an article on the website The Talon, asked students questions about their experiences with online learning. One student, Evelyn Vang, is a junior at Luther Burbank High School that stated he is not the ideal learning environment like at school. Where there are teachers, other students, learning tools, desks/tables, chairs, a library, lots of space and those who you can get support from. Vang said, “At home is like a sleeping or resting environment. In the classroom, I can focus more on my assignments/work and get engaged in the subject.”

In a classroom, a student can get involved with the material and be more hands-on. Students are better able to understand the subject and be more attentive. Students are now allowed to go back to school, and many have made the switch to digital learning.

While some students have taken the initiative and gone back, some have said they enjoy the digital learning because it is much easier. While some students have taken the initiative and gone back, some have said they enjoy the digital learning because it is much easier. Vang is a junior at Luther Burbank High School that stated he is not interested in learning at home. They no longer have the rhythms of lunch, recess, and special events. They are not walking through the hallways or stopping at their lockers. All of that time adds to a normal school day and isn’t built into a virtual environment.

In virtual learning, it is much more isolated. There is no time for a mental rest or break. Students often use their lunchtime to catch up on school assignments. They are kept staring at a computer screen.

Students already spend hours on the screen during school hours and now have additional screen time from piles of assignments. Students have said that it is hard to keep up with work and assignments.

Students have multiple assignments handed to them daily while having other activities such as work and sports.

Melanye Richards, a sophomore and cheerleader at DHS who also started a wallpaper décor business during COVID, said, “Digital learning allows me to do my business while in school. Especially when we have a high volume of orders there is always stuff that needs to be done, but with that being said it is still stressful because I get tired with everything I have going on and I am a huge procrastinator when it comes to school work.”

While some students say it is hard to get motivated and stay on task, some students want a self-paced alternative, outside Zoom learning or in school at this time. Some students are individually driven and are able to pace themselves and stay on track.

Having a self-paced option will allow these students to go as fast or slow as they want. A self-paced option will allow these students to go as fast or slow as they want. A self-paced option allows students to understand the new material and choose when they want to learn it.

Students take in their environment and look down on those who do not have the resources. This can lead to a disaster. For any person to see whether people agree or disagree with them. However, when discussing controversial topics like politics, teens post on their stories and expect to have their opinions validated because they have a voice yet they do not have the information on politics. Many teenagers who are minorities have a lot to say about it but they might not be educated on everything there is to know about politics. Some of these teens do not know why their research is being done or what their research is being done for.

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The competition cheer team enters the gym to begin their performance. The flyers' body positions look good in the air. The cheerleaders chant their cheer loud and proud in the high V pose and kneeling with hands on hips. The team works together to keep the pyramid up. The team starts their routine at the Lanier Cheerleading competition. The team peps up the crowd during their dance routine. The competition cheer team enters the gym to begin their performance. The flyers' body positions look good in the air. The team starts their routine at the Lanier Cheerleading competition. The team peps up the crowd during their dance routine. 

Quarantine Word Search

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