

# Beauty Standards

## Learning About the Impacts and Evolving out of the Mindset

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GENERAL INQUIRIES  
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# CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT



**Shriya Rajagopalan**  
*Nestline Editor/  
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As the sun begins to set and the moon emerges into the sky, fireworks shoot up, creating an enchanting display that illuminates the starry landscape. The vibrant hues, the loud booms and the boisterous chatter of people are all around. Houses are decorated with oil lamps and lights to symbolize the victory of light over darkness. Families come together to rejoice and celebrate with feasts, exchanging sweets and fostering a sense of unity amongst each other. According to Hindu mythology, Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is a holiday that commemorates the defeat of an evil god representing that light triumphs over darkness. Senior Roschelle D'Souza remembers how as a child she used to look forward to Diwali.

"When I was little, I lived in India for a couple of years, so during Diwali, my family used to decorate our house with diyas (oil-lit lamps) and Rangolis," said D'Souza.

Her favorite memory was walking through her neighborhood and being able to admire people's Diwali lights and rangoli designs on their houses when she lived in Mumbai. She often reminisces about admiring the houses on her street as families come together to perform puja (prayer rituals) and offer sweets to deities.

"I love Diwali because of the delicious traditional food that is prepared," said D'Souza.

Diwali is a time for families to enjoy their time together. Senior Tharshaa Ramalingam also has very fond memories of her childhood. She remembers being with her family at parties with brightly lit lamps and smelling

the delicious food, pongal, a dish mainly part of the South Indian and Sri Lankan cuisine. The main ingredients are jaggery, milk, coconut water, Tamarind, rice and pepper.

"The day before Diwali, we go shopping for new clothes and we also have to clean the house and wipe everything down," said Ramalingam. "The day of Diwali, we change into our new clothes and in the morning we go to do prayers."

Ramalingam enjoys lighting up the candles and turning off the lights in her house. Her most cherished memory is watching the family come together to make traditional food and spending time with her family. She also gets a chance to meet unfamiliar faces and make new friends. Ramalingam feels that Diwali removes barriers between friends and allows them to come together to enjoy a special time. Her favorite traditional sweet is called Payasam. It is distinct for its flavor with cardamom, raisins and cashews. Payasam in English is similar to rice pudding. It can be served warm or slightly chilled. Sophomore Sarah Gupta loves to celebrate Diwali with the ones she loves most and enjoys eating tantalizing sweets.



*Photo from University of Central Florida*

"We usually celebrate Diwali by having a pooja with the same family friends every year and my mom and I make a bunch of sweet baskets and give them out," said Gupta.

Diwali brings the spirit of bringing family and friends together to celebrate this long standing tradition. For Gupta, her unique customs involve crafting special sweet baskets to share with others and performing pooja with her family and friends. She enjoys attending parties and

enjoying feasts alongside others. Although Diwali's significance is mainly attributed to the triumph of light over darkness, it also reminds us of the importance of family.

"My most memorable experience was celebrating it with my cousins from Tennessee which I never get to see and my grandpa came all the way from India to celebrate it with us," said Gupta



Sophomore Sarah Gupta smiles brightly with her aunt and little cousin. She cherishes her time with her family during this holiday.  
*Photo contributed by Sarah Gupta*

# CAMPUS SECURITY, OFFICER LOYA KEEPS TOMPKINS SAFE



Baneen Rizvi  
Editor-in-Chief



The bell rings, marking the end of first period as students shuffle out of their 1st period classrooms into the halls, making their way to the second period. This is Katy ISD campus police officer Timothy Loya's cue to step out into the halls to make sure all students across campus are safe during these unseemingly vulnerable seven minutes. As he strolls through the halls, he observes the students moving around him. He analyzes their every behavior in



1. Campus police officer Timothy Loya and security guard Betsy pose while monitoring during Homecoming Night.  
2. Loya and another officer patrolling during First Responders Night.  
3. Loya and Security Guard Booker at Legacy Stadium patrolling during a football game.  
*Photos by Derek Lee*

the halls to make sure no one is in possession of any unsafe objects or participating in any activities they should not be doing.

Suddenly, he sees something that catches his eye: a student opening one of the entrance doors to a group of teenagers outside. He runs towards the scene, stopping the student from opening the door, he then identifies each of the individuals outside the door as Tompkins students. Although attending to duties like these may seem tedious, Loya enjoys his job and feels proud to ensure safety on campus.

"Every day is different; it is never the same," Loya said. "It is always a new experience, there is always a new story to tell. There are new faces every year because of incoming freshmen. It is a really social job. I do enjoy interacting with students, getting to know them a lot better and trying to help out where I can, especially when they are dealing with day to day life. It is probably my favorite part about it, the social aspect of the job."

Sworn in as a Katy ISD police officer during February 2022, Loya has since then been stationed at Tompkins. Each day, he stays at the school from approximately 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. His work schedule is dependent on whether there are any active threats on campus. During every class period, he conducts routine checks on all the doors and bathrooms,

ensuring that there is no suspicious activity happening throughout the day and that there are no risks posed towards the students. When he is not on call, Loya remains in his office. For Loya, this desk job aspect of his career bores him the most.

"I dislike the paperwork," said Loya. "As a police officer, I never imagined the paperwork would be abundant. I did not know every little thing I would do has to be documented. It is just a lot of paperwork, sitting behind a desk and just typing up reports all day."

When Loya is not in his office, he monitors the halls of the school, to maintain security and safety on campus. Although Loya enjoys being social with the students and faculty at the school, he wishes his job would be easier, given the rising occurrence of school shootings and violence happening in schools. He hopes students can be more cooperative with the policies enforced on campus as it keeps the school safe from any external dangers.

"I mean the simple way to put it, is to just follow the rules," Loya said. "Safety is my number one concern on the job, what I do is safety based and security based. Like there's a reason why rules are in place. The issue I have is students like to open the door for other students and that can cause a safety concern, because we don't know who we're letting on campus. And half the time when we

question students who open the doors, they would say they do not know who that student is, they just think it is a student."

Despite the rigor of his job, Loya is proud of his career. He feels comforted knowing that his presence makes a difference on the lives of many Tompkins students. This motivates him to show up to work everyday. He hopes that with his work, he is establishing enough school security efforts to keep students safe. "My job is my career," said Loya. "Unfortunately it is not something I thought I would be doing when I was older, I kind of just fell into it. I fell in love with it, just being able to make a difference and help where I can. It impacts me in a great way. I get to go home knowing that someone relies on me, someone counts on me. It's a lot of responsibility for sure, but it's nice knowing that even if it's just a little bit, you're appreciated somewhere."



# Silenced Voices: Book Censorship in High School



The picture of open books chained together represents the removal and censorship of books by school directories around the country, including Katy ISD. Book censorship has caused books including popular made to TV and film books 'The Handmaid's Tale - The Graphic Novel' and 'Are you There God? It's Me, Margaret' to be removed from schools. *Photo by Derek Lee*



**Sydney Jackson**  
Nestline Co-Editor  
in-Chief

The topic of book censorship in the United States has been increased in discussion in recent years, with discourse starting back in 2021, after a 75 percent spike in book challenging cases, according to the Journalism Education Association, causing ripples in libraries across the country, including Texas, which has been leading the nation with the most books challenged cases. At Tompkins, librarian Michelle Tuttle recognizes the importance of maintaining both the integrity of free speech of book writers and the freedom for students to read books, while maintaining Katy ISD guidelines.

"It [books censorship] restricts/removes the freedom to read and select materials for students and faculty," said Tuttle. "But we make sure to follow all KISD mandates and will continue to do so."

Katy ISD school board trustees have so far found 19 books in total to be inappropriate for students, including popular coming of age books 'Milk and Honey', 'Are you There God, It's me Margaret', and more. Their guidelines for the removal of these books follows a checklist of content that is considered inap-

propriate for students; the penal codes 43.24 (a)(2), 43.21 (a)(1), and 33.021(a) states that books containing harmful, obscene and sexually explicit content are eligible for the removal of the book from the shelves of the library. Although Tuttle does believe that Katy ISD school board is in the correct position to moderate students' book content, she does feel that the subsequent outcome of limitation of books to students has the potential to be damaging to students. A similar sentiment is shared by senior AP Andrew Rizzo, who also believes that book censorship can be limiting to students reading.

"I am not a fan of book censorship," said Rizzo. "But at the same time I do feel that schools need to moderate the content they provide for and to students."

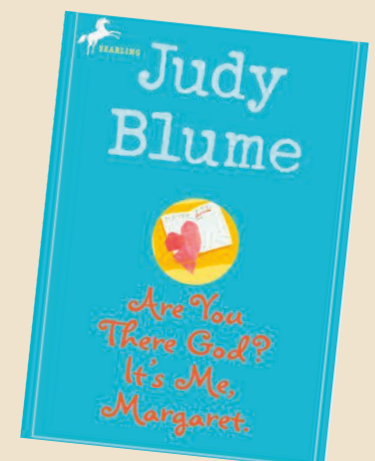
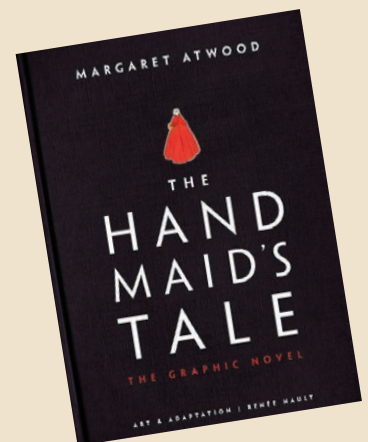
With many of the books that are being censored covering topics such as female coming of age, sexuality, and minority experiences, it begs a concern that the silencing of these stories could silence the voices of the people depicted in these books, resulting in a lack of representation for students who share a similar identity. Each month, the library makes sure to prevent these voices from being neglected and overlooked, celebrating people of various backgrounds to be appreciated. It is important to Tuttle to maintain a sense

of community in the library to make sure every student feels welcomed to pick out a book from the library.

"When selecting books for Tompkins High School, it's important that the books be age appropriate," said Tuttle. "That being said, we have a diverse school community and all students should be able to see themselves represented in books in the library."

Currently, Tompkins makes sure to maintain a fair and balanced compilation of books in the library, maintaining Katy ISD guidelines. Rizzo makes sure to continue to enforce these guidelines at Tompkins, as he feels that schools have a responsibility to ensure the books available to students are appropriate to read. However, he does believe that it is okay for students to challenge what books are permitted to read in the library.

"If the content is appropriate and has an educational value I am ok with it," said Rizzo. "If students would like to access media that may be censored in some forums they are welcome to do that on their own as well. I plan on following state and local guidelines and working with students that are curious about this issue."



Photos by Kyndahl Wiseman

# GLANCE the



Julia Busby  
Co-Managing Editor

## Senior Time Capsules



McKenzie McDowell



Sumyak Shah



Eniola Mobolade

Yearbooks, old letterman jackets, class pictures and old notes are all things that bring high school graduates back to the past, to their former years in high school. Some may remember vague memories that brought them joy or distress, or some may remember things more specific that struck a chord in them. But everyone has a different experience in high school, something that makes their experience special and unique. This distinctive experience may be hard to showcase in something as simple as a yearbook or note, but something more tangible. The concept of time capsules have been around for ages, and it is a common tradition for some to encapsulate their most precious or memorable items and store it in a meaningful place during their senior year. Then, years later, they can re-open their capsules and take a walk down memory lane and revisit their high school years. Senior Eniola Mobolade has many significant memories to put in her capsule. With being born in Nigeria, and growing up in Ghana, she got to experience new things that can only be seen in America.

"My entire junior year was the most memorable moment of my high school years," said Mobolade. "Although it was a tough year for me, I was able to make most of the close friendships I have now and experience my very first trick-or-treating."

As for the capsule itself, there are multitudes of things one can add to make it meaningful to them. They may be items that

remind them of a specific person, specific hobby they like, or even a specific class they enjoyed. It could be something as simple as a piece of paper, or as intricate as someone's old art project. No matter what one decides to put, it does not have to be for anyone else but them. Sumyak Shah, a fan of cricket and a reader, put two items that highlight his love for the sport and for reading books.

"If I could put anything in a time capsule, it would be the book *Red Rising* and a cricket ball," said Shah. "The book really made me get into the sci-fi genre of reading, and it reminds me of good memories I had with my friends in my English III class. As for the ball, it is significant to me because it reminds me of the time I joined a cricket team and made a lot of new friends."

Some may care less about the meaning specific items hold to them personally, and more about how seeing these items brings them back to the years they were a teenager. People who were in high school during the 80s had a very different exposure to technology, fashion trends, old packaging and other common things that made up the 80s. It would be interesting to imagine someone in their early 50s digging up their old time capsule and being hit with a wave of nostalgia upon seeing their previous belongings,

and as unusual as it may seem, one day the things that were popular in 2020 may seem foreign to the newer generations. A time capsule is a perfect way to revisit the culture of the past. Mobolade understands this well, for she has a unique idea of what she wants to put in her capsule.

"I would put a couple of gadgets from now, like a phone or camera, as well as some things that would remind me of what I used to like," said Mobolade. "Things like posters, figurines, clothes and maybe food packaging. All things that would bring me back to the past."

Although what one puts into the capsule is very important, it is not just the items inside the capsule that matter, but the place where the capsule is kept that matters as well. It needs to be put in a place that has much significance to a person and also a place where someone can access years into the future. Where someone puts their capsule can reveal a lot about their life and what they consider their safe place to be, for that is where their high school souvenirs lie. Senior McKenzie McDowell's location for her capsule, which would contain letters to her future self, photos and old birthday cards, and will be stored in a place that is near and dear to her heart.

"I would store my capsule in my backyard because I have lived

in that house ever since I moved to Texas, so it is very significant to me," said McDowell.

The items stored in the senior capsules could also showcase one's growth throughout high school, from adolescence to adulthood. Most teenagers begin to change from immature preteens to mature young adults as the four years of high school go by. When looking back at the past, it is important to reflect on said growth and to recognize changes that may happen, whether mental or physical. It will help one appreciate the beauty of youth, but also to appreciate the wisdom and knowledge one gains when getting older and experiencing more things.

"I think I have grown mentally and physically," said Shah. "When I first moved here from Canada, I had no clue if I was going to survive or not, but as the years progressed, I became more confident with myself and my surroundings."

Everyone has a different experience that they hold close to themselves, and creating a senior time capsule is a great way to reflect back on the experience and to remember the memories that expressed countless different emotions for the individual, whether good or bad. Ultimately, even if one did not have the best high school experience, there is much to gain from preserving memories, for it may showcase one's growth, likes and dislikes, popular things of the past, and create a new appreciation for their teenage years.



# WORK HARD, DEBATE EVEN HARDER

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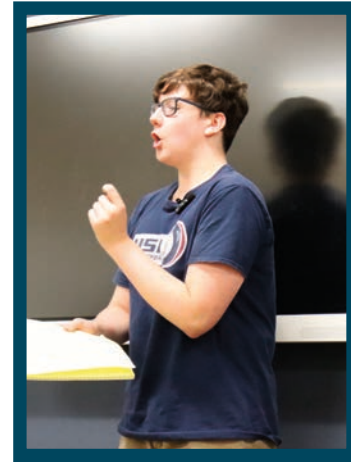
Sanchez



Junior Aaron Piehl and sophomore Grace Ding run a practice debate round in class in order to succeed in debate tournaments. The pair are persistent in their efforts to improve their debating abilities.



Elia Naz  
Staff Writer



Junior Aaron Piehl practices his Congress speech in class. Piehl is determined to succeed in his tournament. *Photos by Ben*

Feelings of nervousness sink in the stomach, hands shake and the brain rushes as it tries to remember the speech. Faces all around in intense concentration, all trying to win. Debate is a team that focuses on hard work, dedication, efficiency, teamwork and, most importantly, winning tournaments. The Debate team participates in local tournaments every Friday and Saturday to better their skills and represent Tompkins.

Junior Andrew Liu has participated in the debate team for three years. He is the debate captain, usually engaging in events like Lincoln Douglas and World School Debate.

"Before, I had a hard time with my social anxiety; sometimes, it was difficult to look people in the eyes. Even talking loudly amongst a group in a debate environment where you are forced to project loudly and be more confident I was able to be more assertive in a room, which helped me establish better relationships and create new ones," said Liu.

World School Debate is an argument that consists of three people arguing over a topic to prove which side is better. There are two categories of World Schools Debate, one of which is the issue given before the tournament. The second category

is an impromptu debate; where the issue is provided to you at the tournament. From there, teams have one hour to develop a compelling argument. The World School Debate seems complicated, but with much practice and cooperation between team members, it becomes easier to be a good speaker and organizer of the speech. Practice and preparation are essential for success at the World School Debate. With dedication and hard work, teams can be successful at this tournament.

"Debate has allowed me to practice my public speaking skills and work on my body movements, which I can use forward in life, and utilize these skills in classes such as AP Seminar," said freshman Parham Ebrahimi.

Ebrahimi has been practicing his public speaking skills with his coach's help and has become more confident in his ability to deliver a strong argument. He is also learning how to think quickly on his feet and come up with creative solutions to complex debates.

A public forum (PF) is an argumentative debate style in which two partners compete against another team. The Public Forum aims to see which side can best present their argument. Partners work on writing a case over the affirmative (AFF)

or negative (NEG) and then at tournaments. The judge chooses which team will present what side. PF challenges debaters to be quick on their feet and practice a lot beforehand. Though Ebrahimi enjoys the event he does, he finds it demanding. Finding time to practice with team members is hard, but PF becomes a delightful event when overcoming those difficulties.

Junior Aaron Piehl has been competing on the debate team since his sophomore year of high school. He currently competes in the varsity Congressional debate.

"Debate has allowed me to create more logical arguments and be better at coming up with things on the spot, while also enhancing my confidence," said Piehl.

Congressional debate, also known as Congress, is a debate-style replicating an actual Congress debate. Congress debates are three-hour-long arguments in which multiple debaters give three-minute speeches and ask rebuttal questions. The overall purpose of Congress is to persuade the chamber and the judge to vote for your side. Even though Piehl has been doing Congress for some time, he claims that keeping the energy going for a three-hour tournament can be challenging, considering that other debate events are 45 minutes

long. To represent Tompkins' debate well, the Congress team runs practice rounds, studies the bills, does speaking drills, and answers practice questions. The Congress team enjoys participating together to work on congressional bills. Some debaters go the extra mile to improve in Congress by practicing independently.

It is important to acknowledge the teachers who are creating these talented debaters. Teachers Rogelio Rios and Meaghan West are the two hardworking people who dedicated their time outside of school to guarantee the debate team's success. The debate team motto is 'mark in history with our messages'. Rios explains how this impacts his views on the debate team.

"We are very fortunate to have a debate team at Tompkins because it is super diverse; we have people from so many different backgrounds, so I think when we give speeches and debate on topics, it is not coming from a single perspective; it is coming from different perspectives from kids who have diverse backgrounds so our team motto hits a lot harder," said Rios.

# DIVING *SKIN DEEP* INTO THE REALITY OF BEAUTY STANDARDS



Shriya Rajagopalan  
Nestline Editor/Social Media Manager

**T**he dictionary definition of a beauty standard is a set of qualities that constructs individuals by defining them according to their perceived physical characteristics. In a society where social media has been accepted as the new norm, the beauty standard has changed substantially throughout time. These ideas dictate our actions, thoughts and behaviors regarding characteristics deemed attractive by society impacting guys and girls. These standards often drive teens' desire to be the epitome of these qualities, often leading to body image issues and a constant compulsion to change. Senior Patricia Valentina Carpio Ron feels the beauty standards have impacted her immensely.

"The beauty standards have changed drastically as time goes on and is mainly due to culture," said Carpio.

According to Carpio, this

portrayal can be very hazardous due to the amount of body issues it can lead to such as bulimia and anorexia. Carpio defines beauty standards as a specific set of beauty traits that is the ideal want. She believes that the media has had a pivotal role in shaping beauty standards by portraying certain features as flawless and unrealistic.

"Models, for example, are considered the ideal example," said Carpio. "They have the perfect face and perfect body because of surgeries. Every girl is easily able to compare themselves which can lead to feeling inadequate."

Carpio feels that the influence of social media has had a tremendous impact on how beauty standards have become idealized over time. Senior Tiffany Sellers also believes that body types are the most toxic beauty standard for young girls because it can trigger eating disorders that can be fatal.

"Beauty standards have always been romanticized," said Sellers. "Makeup, surgery, social media and how you can now edit pictures

have created unrealistic beauty standards."

Sellers sees makeup playing a very influential role in shaping beauty standards. Makeup is used to enhance an individual's appearance or define certain facial features. In the future she sees the styles of makeup changing from full glam to casual makeup looks. On the other hand, guys have very different definitions of beauty standards. Senior Jackson Reuter feels the definition of beauty standards varies based on each individual.

"For me personally, I believe the beauty standard, in general, should be open to new ideas and I think more guys should push boundaries," said Reuter. "Some try and some want to, but worry more about the criticism they would face."

Reuter's perspective sheds light on the need to encourage each other to be open to pushing boundaries within these standards. He strives to push these limiting beliefs and further decrease the negative stigma

associated with the ideal beauty standard characteristics. Reuter strongly believes that toxic masculinity can have a harmful effect and confines guys into a uniform identity.

"We live in an imperfect world where not everyone can meet the beauty standards," said Reuter. "At the same time, beauty standards foster creativity, but if it is not taken with a grain of salt, it can be really toxic and self-deprecating."

Since social media has a very wide range of networks and can be accessed very easily, it can be challenging to try to avoid the perfect example of a set of traits. Social media has expanded to a point where the beauty standard is not only portrayed incorrectly, but has become the new normal.

"If I am just scrolling on the explore page on Snapchat and Instagram, every person I see is fitting the beauty standard," said Reuter.

*Photo from WordPress*





# EVOLVING OUT OF A TOXIC MINDSET: STUDENTS EMBRACE INDIVIDUALITY



Baneen Rizvi  
Editor-in-Chief

*Photo from Pexels*

**T**here is a strong sense of anticipation in the air, the final minutes before the end of second period being those of utmost annoyance, as students wait impatiently in their seats for the bell to ring. As the clock strikes 9:55, the enrichment bell rings and students all over the school feverishly grab out their phones, ready to immerse themselves into the vast world that lies behind the small screen. Some open Tiktok, mindlessly scrolling through videos; others open Instagram, swiping through the ocean of posts from users online, or Snapchat, capturing filtered selfies to send to friends.

Social media is a major part of students' lives, as they constantly consume and upload content onto and from platforms daily. This media consumption from the masses has given way to trends that many high school students participate in, and although these trends allow for people to showcase their creativity and share their ideas, they have heavily altered the perception of beauty in today's world, with ideas such as "glow up culture" (the idea to perfect oneself physically, mentally and emotionally to that of the preset set online) and unhealthy weight loss trends going viral on the internet. When sophomore Zoya Mohammad signed up for Instagram during 8th grade, she was unaware of the insecurities that would emerge from simply downloading the

app.

"Although I was not the type of person to be extremely influenced by social media, it did have some effect on me," said Mohammad. "I saw so many people always trying to fit into this specific 'standard' and looks that maybe in a way, I also started to look at myself in a different way. I feel like on my page I always see things about how to 'perfect' yourself and your looks and if you do not do those things people look at you in a different way. I feel as if social media has significantly influenced the perception of real beauty and has placed a huge emphasis on physical appearance. For example, I never really looked at myself in the mirror until maybe 8th grade and that is where a journey of hair styling and makeup came into play. I saw so many people online trying all these different hairstyles and makeup looks that it influenced me to do the same." Being online, Mohammad began to notice how even altering her appearance to that of what was popular on social media was not enough. It seemed as if those individuals who naturally fitted the type of beauty being promoted across platforms were treated with kindness, whilst those who did not fit in this standard were mocked for trying to participate in makeup and fashion trends. This imbalance in treatment over physical appearance was coined a term: pretty privilege. Individuals considered to have pretty privilege were those who resembled characteristics of the standards emerged from social media: for

women, this was often having a slim but hourglass figure which was a result of the popularization of models on the internet and the obsession with toxic weight loss culture; for guys, this was being traditionally masculine. "Around when high school started is when I saw a major difference in other girls in the way of which everything was about looks and how other guys see you," Mohammad said. "Nowadays, I see my page full of gorgeous people being insecure about themselves just because they don't fit into the standard that social media has created. In the past years I feel like I have gone through multiple phases of perfecting myself just to realize that in the end we are all different, unique, and you just need to be thankful for every little thing."

After struggling with keeping up with the constantly changing trends of becoming perfect or physically beautiful, Mohammad decided to quit the constant cycle of mental torture. With social media always circulating new ideas every other week, trends typically changed very fast and beauty standards were constantly evolving into something new. Mohammad realized that it was not important what others perceived of her just solely because of her looks, but her self-confidence and mental health were. Junior Laurey Day came to a similar conclusion too, when she realized how insecure she was beginning to feel over her curly hair. She decided to stop prioritizing others' opinions over her hair and her body in general and instead, style herself the way she wants to.

"I am often insecure about my hair because of how different it is compared to the videos of

girls I see online," said Day. "I was starting to get sick of thinking that way about myself because it is extremely mentally draining, constantly comparing yourself to others, especially since it is every time I reach for my phone or open a social media app. I decided to start posting pictures online for my own enjoyment rather than pleasing others, to shift out of this awful mind space, and it feels really good. It is very important for others to embrace their features, because that is what makes them unique." Day thinks it is necessary for others to realize how important it is to be proud of their unique characteristics. She believes that self-care is necessary in the face of these beauty standards, given how much they can harm a person with the promotion of a multitude of unhealthy ideas. Likewise, Mohammad has set herself on a journey of acceptance to appreciate her body and self for who she is. She believes that authenticity is essential to grow out of the toxic mindset that comes with today's beauty standards. She advises other students to be wary of what they see online and to stand their ground when it comes to matters regarding their body.

"I have learned to change my reaction towards these standards, every time a new trend emerges online," said Mohammad. "It has been a process of self-discovery and growth, going from comparing myself to actually accepting and appreciating who I am. I would tell others that authenticity is your biggest strength. It can be hard to not be influenced when online, but it is important to remember that you think for yourself. No one else can take that away from you."



Baneen Rizvi  
Editor-in-Chief

The room is quiet, rays of sunlight peeking through the curtained windows. There are paint bottles scattered everywhere, a vast assortment of brushes laid out by a fully loaded palette of vibrant hues. With a look of concentration on her face, senior Hajra Rahim strokes her brush back and forth in short, yet swift movements across the white canvas. She stands back to observe the progress she has made thus far, picturing the final result she has in mind for her latest work, on the canvas. Dipping her brush back in the palette, she smiles to herself, as she eases into the groove of painting, the comfort of being here, in this moment, engulfing her body.

For Rahim, art has always been a medium for expression and a pastime she can release all her emotions in. Her journey began in 8th grade, on a whim, where she was placed in the junior high art class because the physical education class had run out of spots. Rahim did not have any expectations going into the class, and quite frankly, had little interest in pursuing the subject with great passion. But to her surprise, she found herself enjoying the course and even found herself signing up for Art I in freshman year. From there, Rahim started attending sessions at a private art studio, and after completing her first work, she secured a part time job as an art assistant at the studio. Rahim began to teach children art, and sooner than later, she was beginning to teach adults as well, and now she offers private lessons for all ages. Having advanced so far in art in such little time, Rahim reflects on her progress from messily colored drawings as a kid, to full fledged paintings being publicized in museums.

"As a toddler, I would also paint a lot at birthday parties, and I would draw everywhere I possibly could. Art was always something that I have loved, it is just that I recently got serious about it. As a kid, I would always visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. It is kind of crazy to know that I now have a piece there. Like, I have come full circle. I am incredibly blessed, and

# Painting Your *Dreams*:

## Rahim *Reflects* On Growth As An *Artist*



Senior Hajra Rahim diligently works on her latest piece. Art has been a sacred medium for Rahim to express her identity.

*Photos by Kyndahl Wiseman*

I could not have done any of it without the support system I have at home, in the studio, and in the art classroom," said Rahim.

Growing up in Houston, Rahim feels she has had great exposure to art. Attending festivals and galleries with her parents as a kid, Rahim recalls how observing the art pieces displayed at the Museum of Fine Arts as a kid cultivated her love for art so early on. Now that art has developed into her full time passion, Rahim is eternally grateful for the support the people around her have with. She feels her family, friends and teachers have been the biggest influence on her art and catalyzed her growth with every work she creates.

"My mom and sister are my number one cheerleaders and the best art critics," said Rahim. "They encourage me to embrace my Muslim Pakistani-American identity with my works by creating more Islamic art. I also really look up to my teachers, like Mrs. Skinner, who teaches AP Studio and gives the best feedback and tools, and Dr. Gresham, who encouraged me to incorporate art into my research last year. Interacting with people and gaining experience is generally what inspires my pieces."

Rahim feels that the progress

she has made in her art has not only allowed her to develop as an artist, but as a person as well. She believes that the most beneficial thing about art is that there is always room to improve and try again. As a result, she has found herself with a stronger sense of determination and perseverance in the things she does. She believes that this is what has kept her on the art track: the idea of reaching another milestone that she has not achieved yet or delving into new experiences that she has not tried before.

"The most rewarding thing about art is not the awards, it is that there's always room for improvement," said Rahim. "And I do not just mean in pieces, I also mean as an artist. Even though I have been able to establish my name in the art world, which is something I am incredibly grateful for, I am still not there yet. I never will be. Because there will always be a different style that I'm not doing. A competition I have not won yet. A museum I have not landed a deal with yet. A collection of works which I have not created yet. A medium I have not yet tried. There is always something more, something left to do, skills to improve on."

Now that Rahim has gotten her works exhibited in various

museums and galleries, she has thought a lot about the change that she has gone through from the beginner art student she was in freshman year, learning the ropes, to the professional artist she has evolved into now. She feels that now that she is being publicly recognized as an artist, she has started to understand how real the art world is, and how far her passion runs deep. Rather than focusing on acquiring awards, Rahim wants to express messages in her paintings and extend her perspective out to others; she wants to change mindsets and challenge ideas and unveil the beauty of simple things in the world. She advises future artists to have perseverance, and to not be let down easily because progress in art takes time.

"I would tell future artists to try everything, and be patient," said Rahim. "Stay humble and do not be afraid to ask for help from anyone. I ask my friends to critique my pieces all the time, even if they are not artists themselves. Set goals for yourself, tell them to someone who will keep you in check. Create time in your schedule for art, but do not let it consume you. These are all much easier said than done, but keep in mind how rewarding it all is, and enjoy the process."



# FROM MENTOR TO MENTEE



Seniors Patricia Carpio and Munira Sattani show posters which symbolize positivity and mental health awareness. The pair have developed a close bond through the club. *Photos by Amy Haseltine*



Seniors Sarah Ahmed and Tiffany Sellers make posters for the M&M club. They have enjoyed being a part of the M&M community and hope to share the passion with others.



Elia Naz  
Staff Writer

Many students have the experience of being in a difficult class, having to go through the stress, exhaustion and borderline confusion that it entails. Even though students are expected to learn and understand things on their own, there is nothing wrong with having someone that will provide help. Almost like a tutor, but someone who a student can be comfortable around and not have to worry about fear of judgment or ridicule. Having similar thoughts, senior Hajra Rahim and a friend, senior Daniel Malki, founded a club that helps students improve in their studies, which they call the M&M Club.

"I am one of the club's founders," said Rahim. "I created M&M's with my friend, Daniel Malki, who is our current vice president. The idea for our club started through a conversation

we were having about what could have made our sophomore year more successful and the value of having upperclassmen friends to support us. After that, we talked to my friend Vivian Tran, and she became our secretary and found us our sponsor, Mrs. Toledo."

The M&M Club is designed to help younger students in their classes, and is a great way to provide tutoring while not having to worry about payment or the initial awkwardness, for the club consistently works on building relationships between mentors and mentees. Not only does the club provide benefits for the underclassmen, but the upperclassmen as well, who gain volunteer hours and something unique to put on their resumes. Senior Tiffany Sellers, the Officer of Public Relations, is well versed in the ins and outs of the club's goals and under-

stands the benefits that being a part of the club will provide.

"In our club, freshmen through juniors can receive mentoring in any subject," said Sellers. "This can include core classes like math and sciences, athletics like soccer and volleyball, and electives like art and band. We assign partners and groups for mentoring so that everyone has someone they can befriend. If someone wants to be a mentee, they can apply by filling out a google form, which is linked on our Instagram, our Remind, or one can simply ask an officer."

Despite the uniqueness and advantages that go into the club, the size remains relatively small. Because of this, the club consists of a few students who are closely connected, which may be more beneficial than originally meets the eye.

"In all honesty, I like how cozy and small M&Ms is," said Rahim. "It's easier to promote personal growth with a small community of tight knit members instead of a large group of loosely bound people."

The hours one gains at being a part of the club and the cozy atmosphere it provides along with the tight knit friendships that can grow from it, highlight the duality and respectability of the club. The club's leaders are bound to be proud of themselves for creating a club that prioritizes relationships between students and academic progression.

Photo from Dermstore



Skin care can be a difficult and overwhelming topic. While many people rave about the benefits of having a skin care routine, how does one know where to start? While doing research is extremely beneficial, the amount of information given on this topic can lead to others feeling buried by information. Today you will be learning simple ways to start and put together research to provide an easy guide to skin care. The first question to be asked is; what should your routine look like? Dermatologist Divya Shokeen answers it perfectly. While many skin care routines have as many as ten steps, as a beginner starting you should have about three simple steps; keep it simple. Start with your basics and expand as you see fit

While starting simple might seem easy, finding what products to start with are another area people struggle in. Michele Farber, dermatologist recommends using three products is the best way to start; cleanser, moisturizer, and depending on night or day SPF, or other serums and toners.

Cleansing the skin is one of the most important parts of the skin care routine. While there are many different cleansers to choose from, finding the cor-

rect one can feel overwhelming. Which one is right for your skin? Which one is a good brand?

According to Real Simple, if you have oily skin, clay-based products can help your skin because they have antibacterial antifungal and anti-inflammatory properties, which will pull the oil out of your skin. One clay-based cleanser recommended for oily skin is Kiehl's Rare Earth Deep Pore Daily Cleanser, which can be bought from Sephora.

According to Real Simple, if you have dry or dehydrated skin then cleansing oils and milks will be best suited to your skin type because they do not contain an excess of surfactants, which strips the skin of natural oils. A recommended cleanser for dry skin is Laneige Cream Skin Milk Oil Cleanser. For skin that is a combination of oily but also has acne, gel cleansers are typically the ones aimed for your skin type. Gel cleansers are typically water based and contain gentle surfactants, meaning the formula will be more refreshing and lighter than foamy. One recommended is Neutrogena Hydro Boost Gel Cleanser.

According to Real Simple, if you have normal, dry skin then cream cleansers are the best for

## Skin Care: What Is There To Know?



Hannah Antonini  
Staff Writer

you. Cream cleansers are creamy in texture and tend to be gentler on the skin. The use of humectants in this product hydrates the skin. Cream based cleansers also contain emollients to support the skin barrier preventing overdry. One product recommended is Korres Mini Greek Yoghurt Foaming Cream Cleanser.

According to Real Simple, if you have sensitive skin then you should use Micellar water. Micellar water is made up of tiny cleansing oil molecules. In other words, think of this product as the ultimate superpower cleanser, it can be used as a facial wash and double as a makeup remover plus moisturizer at one time. One recommended is the Bioderma Sensibio H2o Micellar Water.

Lastly, according to Real Simple if you have a combination of all these skin types then a foaming cleanser is the best for you. A foam cleanser is basically in between a cream cleanser and a gel cleanser. One recommended is the Caudalie Vinoclean Gentle Foaming Cleanser.

According to Allure, use an oil-free, fragrance free-moisturizer- as this will be tolerated in all skin types, from acne-prone to sensitive. Moisturizers hold many ingredients and need three ingredients to make it a good moisturizer for everyone. These three ingredients are hyaluronic acid, ceramides, and vitamin C.

According to Allure, hyaluronic acid plumps the skin and restores lost hydration. Ceramides are crucial for the skin-barrier strength and overall health, and it is important for dry skin or eczema. Lastly, Vitamin C provides antioxidant protection and overall brightening skin.

Some dermatologist approved moisturizers consist of; La Roche-Posay Toleriane Double Repair Face Moisturizer, Vichy Aqualia Thermal UV Defense cleanser, and Clinique Dramatically Different Moisturizing Gel.

Sunscreen is also an important part of skincare, as it helps protect skin from UV ray over-

exposure. Sunscreen is a part of all skincare and is used only for daily routine. According to Allure, Sunscreen is your first line of defense and protection against skin cancer, if you were to do nothing else for your skin, sun protection is the most important. It is important to apply sunscreen that is SPF 30 or higher and apply it daily (even when it is cloudy), some examples are EltaMD UV Active Broad-Spectrum Sunscreen 50+, Supergood Glowscreen SPF 40, and Coppertone Pure & Simple Sunscreen Lotion for Face SPF 50, which is formulated specifically for sensitive skin.

Lastly, serum. This is used specifically in your nighttime routine. Using a serum is especially important because it provides lost lasting effects such as tightening the skin or giving it a glow. According to Cult Beauty, adding a serum into your routine is optional. It is not a necessity. Though, a good one to use if you decide to use a serum is; NIOD Multi-Molecular Hyaluronic Complex MMHC2. This Contains 12 forms of hyaluronic compounds, which intensely hydrates the skin.

Skincare is also used to clear the skin. Breakouts are not preventable, so finding a cleanser or something to use when that occurs is important. Blog writer, Sarah Holden has a women's confidence blog as a UK skin care and lifestyle blogger. Niacinamide targets breakouts, minimizes pores and decongests confused complexions by regulating sebum production. It also helps renew and restore the surface of skin against moisture loss and dehydration by helping skin improve its natural production of skin-strengthening ceramides.

Some products to shop for the evening are: The Body Shop Camomile Sumptuous Cleansing Butter; 11 for 90ml. CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser, 9.50 for 236ml, and The Ordinary 100% Cold-Pressed Virgin Marula Oil (optional) 8.10 for 30ml

While finding products can be difficult, how do you know which





Zainob Azeez  
Staff Writer

# What is your Most Embarrassing Moment?

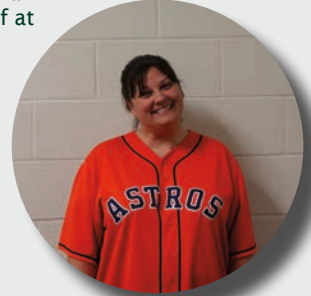
Photos by Austin Craig



"One of the most embarrassing moments I can think of is when I was in second grade and my teacher said we can not raise our hand, pee, or anything, and that she was going to be in the hallway while we were taking our tests. I had my hand raised the whole time that she said don't raise your hand, but she just ignored me. I had to sit in an island because I was a bad kid. So I was in this island, shaking and everyone was staring at me so then I just ran out of the classroom and ran to the hallway to go pee and the teacher was like 'you are sitting by yourself at lunch!' and 'I am moving your clip to red!'," Journee Duncan, 12th.

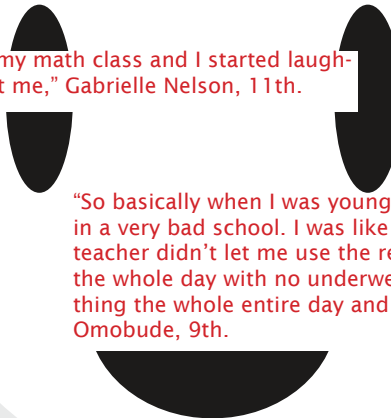
"The most embarrassing thing that happened is when I called a student by the wrong name the entire year and at the very end of the year he let me know what his real name was and I was super, super embarrassed," Dana Kestler, SPED-Resource ICS - English.

"My most embarrassing moment was when I was waving at my friend because I thought they were waving at me, but they weren't," Luci Galindo, 10th.



"This one time we had guests over and I forgot that they were sitting there and I sighed really loud and they all turned and looked at me. I was just tired," said Tryphena Joseph, 11th.

"One time in freshman year it was dead silent in my math class and I started laughing hysterically and everyone just kinda looked at me," Gabrielle Nelson, 11th.



"So basically when I was younger I was in school, but I was in Nigeria and I was in a very bad school. I was like 3 years old and I had to use the restroom but the teacher didn't let me use the restroom, so I pooped my pants in class, had to go the whole day with no underwear and I had to use my shirt to cover up everything the whole entire day and that was my most embarrassing moment," Dodavah Omobude, 9th.



"When I was a kid I was in the hospital for paralysis and the first time they put an IV on me I was like screaming and crying, and the nurse told me that, if I hated it so much next time I could slap her in the face, and I did," Kyndahl Wiseman, 12th.

"At a science camp, we got to look at dead organisms in a jar. I fainted at the sight and slammed my head on a desk behind me, in front of everyone. For my safety until I got tested for a concussion, they rolled me around the camp in an office chair because I was not allowed to walk until I got tested," Dee Sewoniku, 11th.



"One time I explained a problem wrong and I did not realize it until the next day, so I had to go back and explain it," Chester Hahn, CTE-Principles Of Engineering.

# Which Popular Christmas Character Are You?



**Sydney Jackson**  
Nestline Co-Editor-in-Chief

- What is your typical mood during the Christmas season?
  - Moody. You cannot wait for Christmas to be over.
  - Jolly. You start decorating for Christmas in Nov.
  - Neutral. You are indifferent to the Christmas spirit.
  - Excited. You cannot wait to give out Christmas presents to friends and family.
- What is your favorite Christmas color?
  - Vibrant Red.
  - Festive Green.
  - Crisp White.
  - Sparkling Gold
- Pick a popular Christmas Song.
  - 'Last Christmas' - Wham!
  - 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' - Mariah Carrey
  - 'It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas' - Michael Bulblé
  - 'Silver Bells' - Bing Crosby.
- Pick a Christmas Treat
  - Fruitcake.
  - Gingerbread Cookies.
  - Candy Canes.
  - Hot chocolate with marshmallows
- Lastly, if you pick a gift to give, which one would you give?
  - Santa Claus mug
  - Pine scented candle
  - Fuzzy Christmas sweater
  - Homemade Christmas ornament.

If you got mostly A's...

You are most like the Grinch. You are not too fond of the holiday season. Whether it is because of the flamboyant festivities, cliché music, or a preference for another season, it fails to give you the proper jolly spirit. Much like the Grinch, featured in the movie 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas', you have an aversion to the joyous season. As Christmas enters Whoville, the Grinch does everything in his might to prevent Christmas from happening in the whimsical and eccentric town due to his dislike of the holiday.

If you got mostly B's...

You are most like Buddy the Elf. During the Christmas season, you can be seen smiling ear-to-ear, radiating joy for the holiday season. By Nov.1, your room is already decorated in the festive hues of red, green, and gold to ring in the Christmas spirit. Similarly, Buddy the Elf, featured in the movie 'Elf', your adoration for the season can be seen evidently. Raised in the North Pole with elves as a human, Buddy absolutely loves the Christmas season.

If you got mostly C's...

You are most like Kevin McCalister. Other non-holiday related activities take up your time during the holiday season, as you might see it as more important. Similarly, Kevin McCalister, featured in the movie series 'Home Alone', is also not too focused on the holiday season. When forgotten at home on Christmas Day by his family, and faced with intruders, McCalister uses his savvy and resourceful skills to protect the family house.

If you got mostly D's...

You are most like Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer. Your endearing and generous nature leads you to prefer giving presents rather than receiving them. Similarly, Rudolph, featured in the book 'Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer', is kind to his fellow reindeers, and is willing to help others along the way, despite his mistreatment from them due to his unique red nose.

## Holiday Christmas Puzzle



**Elia Naz**  
Staff Writer

H	E	I	C	T	A	A	I	O	Y	A	C	S	S
A	O	E	H	T	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	T
E	S	T	R	T	L	X	M	A	S	U	I	C	H
S	A	Y	C	T	L	E	L	F	H	O	A	A	G
T	N	E	N	O	S	M	L	H	R	Y	C	H	I
O	T	R	O	O	C	A	G	N	L	A	E	C	L
C	A	A	R	S	R	O	M	N	N	R	K	N	A
K	C	C	N	N	M	M	A	T	I	O	T	I	E
I	L	H	A	G	F	O	M	E	S	G	X	R	R
N	A	A	M	T	I	A	L	U	G	I	S	G	R
G	U	I	E	O	S	C	M	E	O	D	R	I	A
S	S	R	N	S	L	R	C	S	S	R	O	H	E
R	F	A	T	G	F	I	A	A	C	R	L	A	C
H	A	M	S	C	A	F	A	M	I	L	Y	O	N

## Word Bank

ORNAMENTS  
CHRISTMAS TREE  
MARIAH CAREY  
LIGHTS  
REINDEER  
GRINCH  
HOT COCOA  
STOCKINGS  
X-MAS  
FAMILY  
ELF  
SANTA CLAUS



H	E	I	C	T	A	A	I	O	Y	A	C	S	S
A	O	E	H	T	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	T
E	S	T	R	T	L	X	M	A	S	U	I	C	H
S	A	Y	C	T	L	E	L	F	H	O	A	A	G
T	N	E	N	O	S	M	L	H	R	Y	C	H	I
O	T	R	O	O	C	A	G	N	L	A	E	C	L
C	A	A	R	S	R	O	M	N	N	R	K	N	A
K	C	C	N	N	M	M	A	T	I	O	T	I	E
I	L	H	A	G	F	O	M	E	S	G	X	R	R
N	A	A	M	T	I	A	L	U	G	I	S	G	R
G	U	I	E	O	S	C	M	E	O	D	R	I	A
S	S	R	N	S	L	R	C	S	S	R	O	H	E
R	F	A	T	G	F	I	A	A	C	R	L	A	C
H	A	M	S	C	A	F	A	M	I	L	Y	O	N



# Hidden Little Treasures

December 2023 15  
The Nest



Hannah Antonini  
Staff Writer

Living in Katy, just outside of the bustling city of Houston can seem boring from a bird's eye view. Not much to do, not much to see, and not much to experience. Well, here is a little guide to the treasures around this town. While it might not look like much, its hidden treasure holds all the importance. It's the small stuff that makes this town something to love and cherish.



MKT Railroad Depot/Katy Heritage Park, 5615 1st St, Katy. This is a steam locomotive depot located in the heart of Katy. This little park serves as a museum as well, serving as a tourist center and information center for people visiting this town. It is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. This park holds a restored caboose, marking this unique park. You can also visit and tour the museum, uncovering the history of our little town. This attraction lends to a more historical side of Katy, Texas, but it can be

Dewberry Farm, Brookshire. As the season of Thanksgiving and Christmas come closer, being able to find a spot just as magical as these holidays makes it all feel that much more special. Dewberry farms have a fall festival and Christmas festival. For Christmas they have Berry Merry Christmas, which features 2 million lights as you ride a hayride looking at the beauty of Christmas. If you come early, you can come and cut your own Christmas tree in their 40-acre lot. While Katy is in between the city and small town life, these little treasures can take you on an adventure you did not expect. I challenge you to find your own hidden treasures and pass them along. Taking a day off, to recognize some places that might make Katy feel at home to you.

First stop, The Showboat Drive-in, 22422 Farm to Market 2920, Hockley. If you love old romance, or even want to do something different, the drive-in movie under the stars is just that. It offers a chance for magical memories. This drive-in gives you a chance to pick your own adventure, while some people enjoy it in their car, others have brought foldable chairs or even couches. With the Era's Tour movie premiering, there is not a better time to experience the concert feels outside, in the new cool weather. All you need is a radio.



Momentum Climbing Gym is on Katy Mills Parkway Katy. This offers many activities and types of fitness: yoga classes, climbing classes, fitness classes, youth classes, bouldering leagues and personal instruction. The gym at momentum has an expansive top rope and lead climbing terrain that ranges as tall as 55 feet in height, cracks, a 15-meter speed wall, bouldering area, auto-belay zone and full fitness gym. When coming to Momentum you can become a monthly member or enjoy a single-time rate. Momentum also offers an REI outlet store specializing in climbing equipment to ensure beginners or even monthly members are outfitted and ready to climb. Momentum also offers great outreach online, through blogging, TikTok, Instagram, etc. It is easy to be part of the community and feel a part of something.



Another place to stop at in Katy is Mary Jo Peckham Park. This is located at 5597 Gardenia Ln, Katy Tx, 77494. As fall begins, being able to walk and find a hidden area to read, write, or relax is a great way to feel free. Who doesn't love being the main character or being Rory Gilmore in real life. While many people love the romantic vibe around parks, this one is for sure to give you the feel of a movie. This park is known for having picnic areas and fishing. It also has mini-golf, disc golf, a pool and exercise center.



If you want to do something unusual, then you should participate in the world's largest car wash. This includes 255 feet of suds, scrubbers, and blow dryers. This is located at Bu-ees in Katy Texas. While Buc-ee's is a stop usually made on long road trips, many people have found it unusual and fun to do this with friends. It takes five minutes to get fully through, which is unusual. Though sometimes unusual things can make the biggest statements.

Andretti Indoor Karting and Games, 1230 Grand W Blvd, Katy. While something also unusual, this is guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping and heart racing. This features electric go-karts that have instant acceleration as you race the track and your friends. Going through elevation changes, speed changes, and straightaways to just go. Not only does this attraction feature racing but it in fact also holds classic arcade games. It has something for everyone, and that's not it. It also has Hologate VR, a hyperdeck, an omniverse, VR universe to experience. As well as Laser tag.



# 2023 recap



## Superbowl and Rihanna's Performance February 12

*Photo from Pexels*

## Eras Tour March 17- December 8

*Photo from Unsplash*



## Oceangate- sinking of the submarine June 18

*Photo from Pexels*

## Barbenheimer July 21

*Photo by Derek Lee*



## Texas Drought August-October

*Photo from Pexels*



## Falcon Frenzy Pep Rally August 24

*Photo by Derek Lee*



## Homecoming Game September 28

*Photo by Kyndahl Wiseman*



## Homecoming Dance September 29

*Photo by Derek Lee*



## Band goes to State September 28

*Photo by Derek Lee*