WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT THE HELIOS NEWSPAPER’S FIRST EDITION. THE FRUIT OF OUR COLLABORATION AND HARD WORK; A DIGITAL AND PRINTED NEWS SOURCE STRAIGHT FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF DOWNTOWN MAGNETS HIGH SCHOOL MEET THE STAFF WHO MADE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE.
For high school students, the word “college” can seem rather daunting. From the different types of applications, to the sheer amount of essays to write, students are often confused as to where to start. Luckily for students of Downtown Magnets High School, award-winning college counselor Ms. McGee always has her doors open for students of any age, providing words of advice as well as last minute SAT fee waivers. The Helios recently interviewed McGee in hopes of obtaining useful college advice for students and parents alike.

With college acceptance rates increasingly decreasing, extracurricular are starting to become a way for students to differentiate themselves. “For UCs and private schools, or even scholarships, you definitely need to write about yourself. Students often sit down and are shocked to realize that things they may have done, whether it was a canned food drive with their student council or participating in church activities, count as extracurriculars,” McGee participate in typical extracurriculars should also know that those responsibilities count. It’s important to write about them so that colleges are aware of exactly how you spend your time.” At the same time, she also encouraged students to participate in activities that they are passionate about, whether it may be Key Club or at their local YMCA. “Try to find at least two things you are passionate about -- there’s something out there for everyone. And of course, write down everything that you do, so that when it’s time to start applying, you already have a list of everything you did in high school.”

However, McGee also advises students to start focusing on their grades as early as freshman year. “Good grades are probably the number one thing to focus on first. The transition from 8th grade to high school can be really difficult, so many students see that they go from being a straight A student in middle school, to struggling in high school. Regardless of how they performed academically in middle school, they should see high school as a fresh start.”

In addition to grades and extracurriculars, a barrier that often stops many students from thinking about colleges is often the hefty price tag it comes with. However, McGee has already compiled a list of scholarships available every month that students can apply to in a binder inside her office. Students can walk in anytime to view the binder, which she adds to every month. She also recommended that students consider “micro-scholarships” available on sites like Raise.me, whose website was actually designed by a DMHS alum.

Students and parents alike who may have more pressing questions are welcome to stop by Ms. McGee’s office at any time. Questions regarding fee waivers for applications, scholarship opportunities, and where to start for college applications are all welcome in her office. Additionally, students are able to access McGee’s advice at any time, through her Instagram account @dmhs_cc or her YouTube channel, Talking College with Ms. McGee.
Hello New Staff!

An Introduction to New Faculty

By KAYLEE SITU & EMMANUEL ROSS HARTWAY, Helios Staff

MS. MICHELLE SANCHEZ (SOCIAL STUDIES)

What are you looking forward to the most at Downtown Magnets High School?
Continuing to get to know the students. I’m helping some students with starting a club, I want to help the AP students, and I want to get to know and be more active in the tight knit community that this school has.

Which school have you previously worked with?
Eagle Rock High School, which was the high school I graduated from.

What is your favorite movie or book?
Book: “Unbroken,” it’s a history book about World War II, as well as “The New Jim Crow.”

Which college did you go to? What did you major in?
I went to Dickinson college as a Posse Scholar. I double majored in American Studies and Spanish. I also ran cross country and did cheer for one season. It was a small liberal arts school, which was great because the professors really get to know you.

Advice for students?
Work hard, but also remember to have fun, it is high school, try to stay organized and advocate for yourself to get the support you need to stay on track. Teachers are not supposed to make your life harder, we’re supposed to help you find the right path.

MR. RYAN BERBA (ECONOMICS/SOCIAL STUDIES)

What are you looking forward to the most at Downtown Magnets High School?
Working with kids and staff. The kids here seem like they really want to learn. The staff has been great.

Which school have you previously worked with?
For 8 years I taught at Chicago public schools. Vernon Hills and Morgan Park. Both were great, this school is sort of an amalgam of the two.

What is your favorite movie/book?

Which college did you go to? What did you major in?
North Central College in Illinois, majored in Social Sciences and my MA was in Curriculum and Instruction from American College of Education.

Advice for students?
I’ll say, enjoy High School, and live a balanced life. After high school things just get faster and faster. Enjoy it, high school is the one time when you can see your friends every day.
MS. MARIA FLORES (LIBRARIAN)
What are you looking forward to the most at Downtown Magnets High School?
Definitely working with older students, before I was working with middle school students. I definitely want to work with kids who are trying to get into college.

Which school have you previously worked with?
LA Academy Middle School.

What is your favorite movie/book?
Movie: the original Carrie movie & Book: Carrie by Stephen King.

Which college did you go to? What did you major in?
UCLA, and I majored in Sociology.

Advice for students?
Believe in karma. Things come back to you, so try to be good and helpful to others. Hopefully down the line people people will remember you for the good things.

MR. “AL” ALBORTANTE (PHYSICS)
What are you looking forward to the most at Downtown Magnets High School?
I'm looking forward to getting more people into physics and sciences, because physics can be hard, but it is also very interesting.

Which school have you previously worked with?
I was a teaching assistant for at Bucknell University for three years in physics and astronomy classes.

What is your favorite movie/book?
Movie/book: Game of Thrones. I know it's not a movie but it's a great series and book.

Which college did you go to? What did you major in?
Bucknell University, I majored in Astrophysics.

Advice for students?
A lot of what you’re learning now might seem useless, but we’re trying to get you to think critically, because it is needed for innovation, which applies to more than just technology; it applies to writing and most other things.

MR. DAVID RIVERO (PHYSICAL EDUCATION)
What are you looking forward to the most in Downtown Magnets High School?
I think meeting all the interesting students and I want to try to be a positive influence in their lives.

What did you do in summer?
It was hot, so I did not accomplish as much as I could and I couldn't travel.

Which school have you previously worked with?
John Muir Middle School 15 years, Los Angeles Academy 7 years
What is your favorite movie/book?
Movie: Pulp Fiction
Book: Great Expectation by Charles Dickens

Which college did you go to? What did you major in?
An AA in Physical Education at Long Beach City College, a BA at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and postgraduate at University of Phoenix.

Advice for students?
Strive high! Aim high! Anything that tries to bring you down like AP classes, sports, or classes in general, you still have to try because you don't know what you are capable of.

MS. PATRICIA MUNGUIA (PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORKER)

What are you looking forward to the most at Downtown Magnets High School?
Getting to know the students and collaborating with teachers.

What did you do over the summer?
I traveled to Peru for two weeks and also traveled to Cozumel for 1 week.

Which schools have you worked with prior to DMHS?
I worked at Virgil Middle School, Alonzo Community Day School, and Holmes High School.

What is your favorite book/movie?
Milk and Honey by Rupi Kaur.

Which college do you go to? What did you major in?
I went to Undergrad at UCLA and double majored in psychology and sociology and double minored in Spanish and Chicano studies. I did grad school at USC for social work.

Advice for students?
Don't sweat the small stuff. Your situation is temporary right now, so things will get better.

MR. BRADLEY WOOD (ART)

What are you looking forward to the most at Downtown Magnets High School?
Having the high schoolers grow into their art skills. I used to work with younger kids, so I have higher expectations. I see some students that are close to professional skills and want to help them improve.

What did you do over the summer?
In the summer I got ready to teach art by taking classes to teach the AP art class.

Which schools have you previously worked with?
112th Street Elementary, Park Avenue Elementary, Ellen Learning Center, Eastside Adult School

What is your favorite movie/book?
Godfather and Shawshank Redemption

Which college do you go to? What did you major in?
I majored in art at Whittier College, and went to Otis College of Art and Design.

Advice for students?
Don’t fall behind & keep up with your work!
The IB Program, Ms. Watt, a Conversation!

So far, it was a normal day. Everyone, or at least a majority of students, in the IB film class were completing their assigned work. From one perspective, everything that day has been quite mundane. Or at least it was normal, until Ms. Watt walked in the room. The school’s IB coordinator, whose day usually consists of meetings, planning, and negotiating, came by Cohort 4’s IB Film class to remind Spanish students of the tutoring classes held that Wednesday. Her visit, a symbol of her dedication to the program, seemed like routine, as always, until we saw a side of her.

“Hi-yah!” shouted Ms. Watt as she moved like a karate master. Her black outfit, almost asserting her authority.

Students in the room were astonished. Some were amused, some were confused. Others were dying of laughter, some crying. She then proceeded to command the students in a jokingly way, in a Slavic or Germanic accent. The laughter continued to manifest itself as Ms. Watt laughed simultaneously with the kids.

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself: your background, your position?
I was born in New York, raised in L.A., and grew up poor. I always believed that I deserved the best education the world has to offer, and my circumstances should not prevent me from having that. When I was given the opportunity to spearhead the IB programme, I was very excited because it meant that I would be able to give to students with similar circumstances as myself an amazing education.

Have you always wanted to become a teacher? If so, why, and if not, what did you want to become?
I originally wanted to be an artist, a serious actress. And I was, for 15 years. Eventually, I no longer chose to pursue theater, and chose teaching, because it was the purest way to make a living, ethically. Honest living, with integrity to impart knowledge.

What do you think is the best advantage of this program for students?
One of the best advantage is the inquiry-based internal assessments: with integrity, creativity, and a reflection of what is expected of you in college. Also, the exams are criterion-based: not based on a curve, hence it has a lot of integrity and the standard is much higher. It is essentially learning how to learn. What makes the International Baccalaureate so powerful is the mission and the IB learner profile. Unlike normal courses one takes, when one is learning all these skills, what does it mean? What will it signify? The IB has a very specific mission: take all your skills, be open-minded, and make the world a better place. Then, there are 10 qualities, which is the learner profile, and giving learning a clear purpose. Most importantly, it is truly student-centered. Students conduct research based on what they want to know.
The kids. They’re the life, the new life force, even though sometimes I have to be strict. What would you tell students who are considering joining the programme? If you have what it takes -- commitment, tenacity -- I believe this is the best education you have. You have to learn how to work with others, collaborate, negotiate. Having taught both AP and IB, I regard IB as superior.

And it is only not Ms. Watt who say this. A couple of seniors agreed to comment on the programme. “There has been progress. Teachers have been reasonable, and people are not dying, which is a contrast to the mostly negative perceptions,” one student said. “IB is about team building and academic at the same time, and it was not as bad as people said it would be,” another student added.

In the school, the IB programme is thriving. With exemplary pass rates and high prestige, Ms. Watt and the rest of the IB teachers have worked hard in order to produce and maintain such a programme. For now, you can find Ms. Watt in her office in the Parent Center, or at the IB Film classroom, showing off her ninja moves.

---

I think I need to start being less observant. In being overly aware of my surroundings and evaluating all of the information I perceive I have learned too much.

Indeed, the “Structural Dynamics of Human Relation” are actually kind of a worrisome subject and I’ve concluded that anyone who has put work into determining new information about it has either completely discounted their accurate results because they believed that they had personally gone insane, or had not observed the correct setting to gather the most accurate information.

High School is where you get the best data. There is no place on earth with a higher quantity of human interaction than High School.

I heard that insane asylums are actually pretty enjoyable places to spend your time, so I might as well reveal my results to you.

A while ago I began to realize that humans are puzzle pieces. People all fit together in a very specific way, and very rarely realize it. I would walk through the halls and occasionally even talk to people and always realize that many certain people should be with other certain people. What’s strange is that they somehow never see it. The culture of relationships often causes people to not get into them unless they intended to at the time of meeting the other person. Really, almost all people get along much better with very specific people they aren't dating and because they don’t realize it (which it often seems that they have to be complete and total idiots to do) and even when you tell them they’ll tell you that the very thought of dating the person that they really should be with (the person who their puzzle piece fits to perfectly) had “never even crossed their mind.” They might be lying, but who knows, either people just don’t want to make sense or they don’t know how.

But all of that doesn’t matter, I mean it does, a lot, really, but that’s not the completely crazy part. I ran into a girl the other day that I had seen a few times before and only at that time did I realize that she dresses like me, stands like me, talks like me, and though she doesn’t really look like me embodies the spitting image and exact idea of who and what I would be if I was a woman.
For instance she has green dyed hair and I have always thought that dyed hair looks amazing on women, and if I was one i would definitely have dyed hair, but I don’t have dyed hair because I think it looks terrible on men. She also wears glasses which I don’t because I have 20 x 20 vision, but my mom doesn’t and I had always thought that if I needed optical assistance I would always choose glasses over contacts- THE LIST GOES ON!

That’s how they get you. Who’s they? I honestly have no idea, probably no one, whatever quantum force of the multiverse made this happen…. Because it isn’t just me, I looked close and nearly everyone seems to have one.

Have you ever seen one of those shows where people travel to other universes? More specifically have you seen them travel to another universe which is mostly the same except everyone from their universe is the opposite sex in this one? Well apparently our universe is BOTH OF THOSE!

Do you get my meaning? I explained it that way because I feel like the reason is because at some point in history out universe collided with another and now there’s two of everyone, except again, they don’t look to each other, and I’m pretty sure some of them are continents apart. Like I couldn’t find one for my friend Ryan, his is probably in Albania or something like that. But who knows! Maybe there’s 137.29 gods that all got bored one day and decided to screw with us…. I have no idea, but to some extent, I’m starting to regain my composure. I see them all the time, people of the opposite sex who really are just different versions of the same person. Different names and different looks, and for the most part, different puzzle pieces. You see I thought that logic would dictate that all of these people would be each others puzzle pieces but often they aren’t, sometimes they are, but there’s seemingly not any of a higher chance of people’s corresponding puzzle piece being their exact counterpart. And not just because some of them are gay. And yes, the gay men have lesbians and vice versa.

But I should probably talk to her. My counterpart.

You see what I began to realize when I started seeing the puzzle pieces was that I didn’t seem to fit into the puzzle. When you get a jigsaw puzzle sometimes the people at the factory mess up and there are a few extra pieces that don’t fit in anywhere. I think I might be one of those. I don’t believe in soul mates, even if i do believe that every person on the earth has another version of themselves with different genitals (or the same genitals in very specific cases), the puzzle pieces aren’t perfect, they just fit, but all of them fit to multiple other pieces, I don’t fit to any.

But maybe I’m wrong, hopefully I’m wrong, everyone keeps telling me I’m wrong and I really would like to believe them.

What is really most amazing about this discovery is that a while ago I determined a method to determine whether or not you really like yourself. If you were to travel to another universe in which every single person ever born had been the opposite sex, and the world adjusted accordingly, would you be with the other version of yourself, and I always have that a thoroughly and resounding yes. If I’m right, maybe I’m one of the people who’s puzzle piece is their counterpart. Maybe the 137.29 gods that watch over all of us weren’t just trying to screw with us, maybe they were trying to help people. Maybe they were trying to help people like me.
Let the warmth of the sun enlighten you
Summer Activities: DMHS Edition

Brittany Palomo, Exploring Europe

Where did you travel?
Palomo: I went all over Europe with my mother, which is something I’ve been wanting to do since I was 7!

Favorite part of your trip:
Palomo: Definitely being able to visit so many historical places, as I love history! I loved visiting St. Mark’s Square and Lucerne.

Would you go again?:
Palomo: Yes! In particular, I would love to visit Germany and Switzerland due to all

Skating through Los Angeles: Jonathan Perez

Jonathan Perez, a sophomore at Downtown Magnets High School, built his own skateboard over the summer, through the Hope Street Family Center. Through the center, he made a unique skateboard from beginning to the end, by sanding wood to make the deck to attaching the wheels himself.

He has been a part of Hope Street Family Center ever since pre kindergarten. He states, “It was a place where I can do homework, play around, where I have most of my friends. It’s like a family because everybody knows each other. Even when new members arrive, we don't discriminate and everyone quickly becomes a part of our family.”

For Perez, despite being a part of Hope Street Family Center for a while, building his own skateboard proved to be one of the most meaningful activities for him. Skating since roughly fifth grade, skateboarding has been a part of his life since young. However, due to increasing workload as he entered middle school, skating became harder to do. "My other skateboards were old, so I wanted to make one of my own creation," Perez said.

However, Hope Street Family Center does not just provide opportunities for skaters. They providing an enriching experience, from learning how to tie dye t-shirts to dissecting a variety of animals. Students who may have a lot of free time during the summer and want to receive a robust learning experience even outside of school should consider looking into the Hope Street Family Center. Students interested in learning more can visit the Center's website, www.hopestreetfamilycenter.org.
Cabinet Members for the Class of 2021

BY SAMANTHA ALVAREZ & JENNIFER BANUELOS

The class of 2021 has voted in their cabinet, and they have completed their first fundraisers at MORP and parent conference. The cabinet itself would like to showcase three of their elected officials.

Elvis fills in the position for President. He decided that if he was going to run, he would go big. His posters are mainly known for promoting Ralph’s or Food 4 less, since he understood they were an attention grabber. “My experience so far has been alright. I really thought it would be tougher than I anticipated but so far it’s been great.”

“Any advice for the class of 2022’s council?” Do it for the class, not for the title or popularity. Freshman wanting to run next year for their cabinet should have confidence in running. These roles require lots of preparation. You must be able to connect with the majority if not everyone, and you must be ready to be a voice for all. Remember the importance of communication, and you should be well versed with the school’s events. Overall, the experience is worthwhile and an opportunity you should take.

Glory Figueroa is the Vice President. She promoted herself with fliers, buttons, lollipops, and she credits her mom’s help. “I believed I was a good candidate” she states confidently. After MORP, she claims the experience was okay, not perfect, and acknowledges the first fundraiser as a learning opportunity.

Maggie Wu is the Treasurer for 2021. She agrees with Glory and understands that the cabinet should not be seen as an attention grabber for colleges, but rather benefiting the class as a whole, and the excitement on getting to know more students. So far she knows everything is okay, but stressful, and overall worth the fun and bonding.

“Any ideas or events to be excited for?”

Senior year was a top mention.

“Any advice for the class of 2022’s council?” Do it for the class, not for the title or popularity. Freshman wanting to run next year for their cabinet should have confidence in running. These roles require lots of preparation. You must be able to connect with the majority if not everyone, and you must be ready to be a voice for all. Remember the importance of communication, and you should be well versed with the school’s events. Overall, the experience is worthwhile and an opportunity you should take.
The Internal LAUSD Conflict

BY BRANDON RAMOS, Helios Staff

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you had no teachers for days on end? Sure, you may think to yourself, “Wow, this is amazing.” If the teachers are not there, many people think they can get a day off of school. This situation may become a reality, as Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) teachers and UTLA union are asking for their classrooms to decrease in size, and asking the district for help during a period of financial crisis. As the amount of teachers decrease, class sizes increase. Teachers are outraged that the district is continuously ignoring the their cries for help. If the United Teachers Los Angeles, or UTLA, teacher’s union demands are not met, they are considering to go on strike.

On August 31, teachers in the UTLA union were given the option to authorize a strike. According to The LAist, 98 percent of teachers who voted, voted in favor of a strike. The first course of action to solve this problem is to start a walk out, that may be set to happen at a later date, if problems do not resolve. Many district members are worried, trying to keep in mind the safety and needs of the students. According to ABC News, the district announced a statement in consideration of said students. “There is currently an effort to call for a strike that pits adults versus adults when students and their families will bear the brunt of a strike action. For this reason, we, the Board of Education do not support a strike.” At a stalemate, each side of this argument are trying to reach a resolution.

Having teachers protest for what they believe is a better working environment for students and teachers may be seen as beneficial, but it comes at the cost of potentially halting lessons until demands are met. Teachers are fighting for a change in their classrooms, and a pay raise for their work. At the same time, the district is trying to keep the students’ best interests in mind, without disrupting their schooling.

Breaking Barriers: Jaime Escalante Math Program

By Eunice Gonzalez, Helios Staff

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow is for those who prepare for it today,” Malcolm X once said. Today’s students have more resources to academically prepare for their future, such as the Jaime Escalante Math program which provides students a learning experience that prepares them for pre-college and college level coursework, designed to fit two semester’s worth of class material into 7 weeks.

Students have described the program as “challenging” and “fast paced”. Students attend for about four hours each week day of the program, accumulating to 140 hours of learning. Most of the classwork is done independently to maximize class learning.

With the Escalante program, students receive high school credit they take over the summer and are able to participate in higher level classes during school. For instance, Alice Yao, a participant of the program and student at Downtown Magnets High School, was able to take precalculus over the summer which allowed her to take advanced math courses this year. Yao had passionate math teachers which helped her try her best. She appreciated that the teachers would teach multiple math concepts and material. Alice said that a teacher helped her realize, “I love learning more than I think I know.”

Overall, Alice was able to make new friends that help her with math to this day. She is also more in tune with her math skills abilities and she has grown academically. Escalante has provided the education she needs to pursue higher levels of math, and has given students the opportunity to productively spend their summer.
2018 CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

BY CARLOS MERLO, WRITER

2018 Wildfires have been ravaging many mountain towns destroying everything in its fiery path. The Fires that have ravaged California are the following: The Camp Fire, Woolsey Fire, Cache Fire, Natchez Fire, Millcreek Fire, Garner Complex Fire, Hirz Fire, Carr Fire, Stone Fire, Ranch Fire, Alhambra Fire, and more is to be named. Many homes are being obliterated by the fires; leaving thousands of people homeless. In the town of Paradise, thousands of homes have been destroyed, as well as the schools.

Most of the fires are 100% contained, and some are on the verge of being contained. The fires that were contained already are the Camp fire, which burned 153,336 acres of land in Butte county and had the most casualties: 85 civilians are dead. The Woolsey fire burned 96,949 acres of land near Malibu, with the official death toll of 3. Both fires did some damage on many homes and public places, and many people are left homeless during this holiday season.

The climate and weather is exacerbating these fires, and there is fear of potential mudslides and flooding from rainstorms. The weather up in northern California is actually helping us extinguish the flames but it is making it more difficult to search for the remains of family and friends between the ashes. Many people will need to be evacuated due to heavy floods.

There are some techniques to stay safe if you are near a wildfire or if your residence is close of being burned. First, make a plan of where you are going to go when the fire hits. Then, what you want to do is make a survival kit with all the basic needs that you should probably know. Lastly, evacuate the area. Make sure you didn’t leave anything important behind, like documents, money and birth certificates.

Mass Shooting in the United States

By Rogelio Mejia, WRITER

School shootings have been happening all over the United States, with the most recent mass shooting at Santa Fe High school at Texas, with 8 casualties and several injuries. 21 weeks into 2018, there have been 23 school shootings, with no sign of stopping anytime soon. Just recently, there has been a shooting at the Borderline bar in Thousand Oaks, Ca. Some argue that the reason behind these frequent shootings may be due to the legal access to guns.

Besides school shootings, the United States has the highest homicide rates of all time. Many people also falsely believe that all mass shooters have a mental illness. Michael Stone, a psychiatrist at Columbia university who maintains data of all the mass shootings, stated that only 22% of the shooters had a mental illness. Handguns have been used in many mass shootings, but automatic weapons usage have started to rapidly increase in mass shootings. Many people are trying their best to ban automatic weapons such as AR-15. The reason why people believe that automatic weapons should be banned, because most shooters use them.
Mass Shooting Continued....

These school shootings mostly happen in high schools, than middle and elementary schools. Even though school shootings are becoming common thing, they are preventable. Two students from Columbine high school, were responsible for the death 10 students and a teacher, committed these acts because of bullying. A way to help prevent a shooting is to look for signs to see if a family member, friend, or peer is planning to do these things and exhibiting warning signs such as changing their behavior, showing no remorse, and becoming obsessed with weapons. Many times it all starts with bullying, then students become depressed and need support and kindness from their peers. If you see these signs in someone you should seek assistance and help from a trusted adult such as a parent, a teacher, a counselor, or a police officer.

What should Downtown Magnets High School do to prevent this? Some potential suggestions are to increase security, create programs about gun and bullying prevention awareness, and give instructions on what to do in case of a mass shooting. Our school holds an active shooter drill, in case of school shootings. This will help out DMHS and will help out other schools around the United States. We can also use various platforms such as social media to prevent school shootings.

Dreams Do Come True
BY: Sariah Franklin

Do you believe in dreams
Do you believe they come true
Have you ever wished upon a star
Did that dream come true

Maybe that star didn't shine
Maybe the world left you behind
Maybe you did bad and could catch up
Maybe you finally gave up

Maybe that star didn't shine because you didn't see
Just look in the mirra your reflections the key
It take you for a wish to come true
Stop looking for a star to shine for you
Because that star is bright in front of you

Do you believe in dreams
Do you they come true
The next time you wish upon a star
That dream starts with you
Then...bibbidi-bobbidi-boo!

Let the warmth of the sun enlighten you
PROJECTIFY THIS! Downtown Magnets High School Should Encourage Project Publicity & Collaboration

BY JOSHUA STO DOMINGO, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

To celebrate Downtown Magnets High School's academic diversity with a professional twist by promoting and finding further opportunities for student projects, "Projectify," a new organization formed on campus blending publication and consulting, helps projects flow between the magnets and sprinkle into the world.

Seymour Papert, Massachusetts Institute of Technology mathematician asserts that “Project-based learning that freely crosses disciplines provides an education superior to the traditional structure.” As a magnet school emphasizing career diversity, Downtown Magnets High School is ripe to promote interdisciplinary learning and openness to academic challenges.

(In the interviews below, a = Mr. Dinh, b = Mr. Lee, c = Mr. Sewall, d = Ms. Wang)

How have classroom projects contributed to the real world?

a. It depends on the project. The finance class used to ask teachers about their retirement plans to make presentations about how much they should contribute.
b. I had my students research climate change and the importance of renewable energy. They create solar panels that run more efficiently.
c. Mr. Sewall’s 10th-grade class create magazines, in which they design ads, write poetry, essays, and interviews.
d. In my classes, projects equate studying one’s identity and life goals as well as gaining self-esteem.

2. If you had a chance of letting your students collaborate with another academy on a project, what would it be?

a. Engineering: in biology, experimentation often lacks physical means, so when it comes to projects like aquaponics, they can engineer a model.
b. Engineering and business: business teaches my students cost-benefit trade-off; engineering is inventive. c. If students were to make solar panels, it lowers the logistics cost.

Fashion and digital media: I had an English students in the fashion magnet that applied their skills. My IB Film class can recruit actors for their short films. The Humanitas was a teacher’s organization that combined English literature and historical analysis.

It seems that a crossover can materialize some conceptual projects, specifically with engineering’s abilities to enhance theoretical classes. In fact, the MIT professor formerly mentioned also opined that children should learn to engineer before progressing to theoretical math. Meanwhile, the combination in the humanities seems more intuitive and implementable.

3. Do you encourage your students to attend competitions and fairs? Specify.
a. I do not, but the Los Angeles County Science & Engineering Fair would be interesting.

b. We currently have robotics competitions and Academic Decathlon. Science Olympiad used to exist but is underfunded and discontinued; I remember making hydrogen cars that cost $2,000 back then.

c. My film students can send their projects to high school and local film competitions, like those in LA, Newport, Santa Barbara, and Mill Valley. Students with an interest in writing, poetry, and short fiction can check out online contests -- even LAUSD holds an essay contest. My student magazines can enter these competitions with separate artistic and literary components, as I saved digital copies of them. AP Language students can enter short story contests.

d. No. I encourage engagement with the community instead of competitions. Although I know of the National History Day, a competition for students to research history and present it to judges as historians.

While it is important to keep in mind one’s care for the community, external factors can motivate students to reframe their classroom projects and possibly win the prize of their projects being materialized. Projectify wishes to explore this area alongside faculty and students to maximize a student’s productive outcome.

4. Do you encourage your students to do independent research?

a. No, my classes cover that.
b. Although research is important, the core is to gain a critical mindset. I know that Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) helps teach researches and drafting plans to improve the world. Roybal’s fracking background is probably a good starting point.
c. In class research in the humanities is great. My English class has specific units on synthesizing information. My father studied storytelling in college and his class had fun researching the agricultural situation in South Africa by buying livestock for the village.
d. I do. Furthermore, teachers could collaborate on teaching research skills, it would make for nice interdisciplinary research projects.

Is high school really preparing students for college level research?

Yes, if the subject is the formalities of research papers. Research awards seem like a distant concept as of now, yet curiosity and synthesizing abilities is all a students needs. Further investigation is needed.

Here’s what the teachers above have been working on:
A book that sums up one’s scientific repertory, an organization that unites science teachers that graduated from UCLA, a feature film, a Tree of Life. Stay tuned — we will report on student projects in the subsequent issues.
Downtown Magnets High School, despite its miniature features and lack of sport fields, has a thriving and vibrant sports culture. From the highly competitive Men’s and Women’s Tennis, praiseworthy Men’s Basketball, to highly acclaimed Women’s Volleyball, sports cannot be excluded from the school dynamic. This year, another addition to this growing athletic family is Downtown Magnets High School’s very first Women’s Soccer Team. Co-Founders Dahlia Marquez, Christine Monrreal and Karen Reyes are three amazing seniors, who have contributed to the cultivation of the first girls’ soccer team happen at Downtown Magnets High School along with the generous help of our own Assistant Principal, Mrs. Leonor Buza. An interview from Helios’s correspondent, Briseida Garcia, highlights the behind-the-scenes of the creation of the Women’s Soccer:

Why did each of you join the soccer team?

Dahlia M: “I joined because I want to have a group of girls I can always rely on and to make new friends”

Christine M: “It was something i was interested in trying out and also to have a community of girls to count on to make it interesting. As Well as to look for something to look forward at school and have fun.”

What do you need to be in the team?

DM: “I think you just need a sense of commitment and you want to be able to feel the need to be there with the girls on the days were supposed to be there”

CM: “I agree with the commitment part as well as just having the mindset of willing to try new things because any sport is about giving it a try and just trying to work together and learning new things especially. So coming in with like an open mindset is really helpful... just like with a good attitude to learn to pay, to win and lose together which i think is the most important part.”

Have you ever played soccer before for example outside of school?

DM: “I’ve been playing since i was four competitively so yeah I’ve been playing for a total of thirteen years now”

CM: “I actually have never played soccer so this going to be my first year here actually playing and even though I'm coming in as a new comer I'm putting in the effort to try new things. I hope this shows that any girl can do it, like you don't need to have so many years of playing soccer but with the passion and the right mindset then you are good to go.”
What do you think it takes to be in the team”

DM: “Like i said before all that it really takes is commitment and passion because as long as you put in the time and effort anyone can join”

CM: “I agree it’s all about the commitment like being able to commit not only yourself but to each other. Like you will be on the team and work as a team which is the most important thing in a sport. Not a one man team but everyone together.”

How do you feel about being the first official girls soccer team at Downtown Magnets High School?

DM: “I personally feel really proud because it took a long time and a lot of effort on our half. Also Ms. Buzza who helped us get everything started and I appreciate everyone who has helped us out through this process.”

CM: “It was a long road like there were some disappointments but in the end it was all worth it because the team is now official. Honestly it is hard to explain how we feel to see that this team is coming together. We could not have done it without Ms. Buzza who played a big role in this team being here today but overall i feel blessed to have this team.”

How would you describe your coach and what is your coach looking for in a person wanting to join the team?

DM: “We just meet him on Monday and had a meeting with him. We actually appreciate him taking his time to meet with us and work with us. He is very professional and really emphasized the point that anyone can join regardless of your experience”

CM: “Yes, i like how he mentioned that mindset was everything and that he didn't care about experience as much. So i really like that on his part because it shows that he is willing to give every girl an equal opportunity to be on the team.”

Any tip for girls who want to join the soccer team?

DM: “Like I said before putting that extra effort and work hard if you really want to try. Also it is going to take some time but its all worth it.”

CM: “I feel like there are some girls who are interested but are just too scared to come out and ask us questions or go to the meetings. Therefore it is important that the girls are informed about the meetings for them to attend and know that it doesn't matter if they played for years or are just started playing yesterday. It really doesn't matter how long you have played all you need is the mindset, commitment and your good to go. Just attend the practices, go to the try outs, go to the meetings because it makes a big difference. Just take that extra mile because i know they can join the team and they all have that opportunity.”

For these set of question any of you can answer. Do you pay for the uniform?

DM: “No, the school provides the jersey and the shorts but obviously that's because we reuse those so the socks we have to buy on our own. We do not want to reuse those.
What are the paper works needed to join?

CM: “You just need your physical, your copy of your insurance card, an emergency card and a minimum GPA of 2.0.”

Are you accepting any girls from any grades or a specific grade level?

DM: “Any grade. However we are expecting younger girls too because next year when the seniors graduate they can continue the team.”

CM: “Were open to anyone so all grade levels.”

About how many girls are in the team right now who want to join?

CM: “We haven't had an official trial so we don't have the official number to say. An estimate that were looking for is about 15 to 20 girls approximately.”

To be on the official team will there be tryouts?

DM: “Were having four days of tryouts and from there the coach will decide what he wants to do”

Do you know what days practice will be?

DM: “Were practicing every Monday through Friday”

CM: “The good thing the coach understands if a girl has other commitments after school.”

For practice what kind of clothes do you need to wear?

DM: “For the most part anything that is comfortable for you works but usually you will see girls wearing shorts, a t-shirt and appropriate shoes.”

As they've paved the way for women to express their immense interest in soccer, we, as proud students of Downtown Magnets High School, can expect great things from our very own women’s soccer team. Go Suns!