

Black History Month Provides Forum for Celebration and Discussion

By Ayodele Abdul-Hadi '17

On Monday, February 1, San Domenico upper-school held an assembly celebrating Black History Month. Students rotated through a series of workshops led by the Black Student Association (BSA). The workshops included discussions about Black history and its relevance to “American history”, an explanation and tasting of African foods, and a conversation about how African-American culture has influenced pop-culture. Students find it refreshing to be able to discuss these topics and become better educated about the brilliance of Black culture.

This February marked the 40th anniversary of President Gerald R. Ford official recognition of Black History Month, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” Although Black history week had been established prior to this, Ford made history by nationally recognizing Black History as a month of recognition and appreciation of African American accomplishments

A common question directed at the African American Community is: “Why is Black History Month so important?” Black History is so important because it is a month in which Americans can look to the past for inspiration from the strong Black leaders. It is a month where Americans are able to live in the present and appreciate how influential Black culture has become in our daily lives. It is a month where Americans as a nation can look to the future with assurance that change will come.

Junior Ugochi Egonu explained the importance of including this history in the overall narrative. “Black History Month is important to me because our history,



San Domenico’s Black Student Association coordinated the Black History Month celebration and discussion forums.

although vital to this country’s progress, is often overlooked,” Egonu said. “I think it’s so important to see people who look like me represented in our history and to see how they have contributed to the world we live in today.”

Senior Juliana Johnson noted the differences in her experience as an African-American student and lingering social perceptions.

“Personally, as a person of color, I feel that I have to be extra cautious about the way I speak and act in public especially in Marin (in comparison to my white friends),” Johnson said. “For example, when out at some public place that is not San Domenico, whenever friends (white) start to get loud or immature in some way I tend to either get quiet or try to tell them to tone it down because chances are, people who don’t know us will assume that I, as the black girl, was the cause of rowdy behavior. I don’t think most people realize that the people of color are constantly on our guard even when it comes to life’s simplest activities like being out with friends.”

During the course of the Black History Month celebration, students discussed the importance of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, a prevalent topic right now. Students came to the conclusion that we all have a responsibility in supporting this movement. Whether it is reading articles about Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, or Michael Brown, taking the time to hear the stories of these victims of racial prejudice.

It makes a huge difference when educated youth work together to support a movement. In the coming months please take some time to reflect upon what you learned during Black History Month and perhaps even share what you learned with your friends and family.

Happy New Year, 新年快乐!, 새해 복 많이 받으세요, Chúc mừng năm mới!

By Olivia Holmes '16, Aeqvitas Editor

“Everything is covered in red and yellow and everyday you can hear the sound of the fireworks! Happiness is all around the neighborhoods.” This is how sophomore Guliniali Tuerhong '18, President of the Multicultural Club, described Lunar New Year celebrations in her home country of China.



Students from the kindergarten and Pre-K classes parade through the Upper School with their New Years' dragon.

students are often unable to return home for these celebrations, something Hong described as “very hard.”

She also described how students in China are often given long winter breaks to account for the fact that the dates of Lunar New Year shift. This way, Lunar New Year festivities fell in the time span of the break and students were able to celebrate with their families. Unfortunately,

Lunar New Year is an integral part of

schools abroad often lack this flexible winter schedule, preventing international students from being able to celebrate each year. This is why it's so important that San Domenico continues to honor the tradition of Lunar New Year, seeing as it is an integral part of the culture of a large majority of students.

In early February, the San Domenico Multicultural Club held its annual Lunar New Year celebration for the entire Upper School. Students rotated through different stations including paper cutting, calligraphy and dumpling making, all traditional Lunar New Year activities. Together in Dominican, everyone watched a video that gave a background to the Chinese legend of *Nian*, the monster who comes out to attack people during Lunar New Year but is repelled by loud fireworks and bright gold and red colors.

Meanwhile, several of the students from China and South Korea visited the primary school and Pre-K program to share stories, traditions, and games with the younger students. Later, the students in our Early Ed program did their annual parade, carrying the New Year lion across campus.

Although our school's celebration may pale in comparison to the extravagant celebrations that take place in many parts of the Eastern world, its important that this tradition is honored.



Freshmen discussing customs and sharing in the tradition of “red envelopes”, which usually contain candies or money.

culture in many countries, including China, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and South Korea. It serves as a celebration of the coming of the New Year and the luck and fortune that it will bring.

Senior Christina Hong highlighted the importance of this holiday in China by comparing it to the American tradition of Christmas. “It's a time that you return to be with my family,” said Hong. Because the exact dates of Lunar New year are based off of the lunar calendar and therefore inconsistent from year to year, international

Students Generate Awareness About Global Human Trafficking

By Rachel Clyde '17

For their Rose Project, Micha Blake '16 and Audrey Webster '16 decided to raise awareness for a topic they were both very passionate about: human trafficking. Many people today do not know that slavery is still relevant and pervasive on a global scale. However, human trafficking is still a major issue, especially in undeveloped nations, but also right here in the Bay Area.

Blake and Webster learned about human trafficking in their Social Justice class during their junior year and wanted to help in the fight against human trafficking by informing their communities on the issue.

Blake felt a particularly strong connection to this topic because she was born in Vietnam, a country where many young boys and girls are very susceptible to trafficking. She also believes that when someone is suffering "if you can do anything, you should help out."

Webster, on the other hand, found herself hugely impacted by the novel *Sold* by Patricia McCormick, which is an assigned reading during junior year. This led to her personal investment in



Seniors Micha Blake and Audrey Webster attended the Freedom Summit at Levi's Stadium to rally against human trafficking.

the topic. She decided to focus her Rose project "on bringing awareness to human trafficking because, to put it simple, it is so scary that so many girls are forced into horrible situations, stripped of their dignity, and then shamed for it while their perpetrators go free." For their ROSE project, Webster and Blake participated in a series of events with the goal of educating those in their community and supporting the eradication of human trafficking. For one, they worked as volunteers at the Free Beauty Fundraiser Run, an SD student fundraising event.

The two seniors also held a formal wear sale at San Domenico with all proceeds going to the *I Am* house, a safe

house for trafficked victims. They also attended the Freedom Summit at Levi's Stadium and worked with the Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition to raise awareness about human trafficking locally.

This duo also interviewed SD students about human trafficking to help bring attention to the topic. Both Micha and Audrey hope to continue doing work in the future to further spread awareness and help end modern slavery.



Social Justice Spotlight: The New Gay-Straight Alliance

By Teresa He '16

The Gay-Straight Alliance, known as the GSA, is a newly reformed club founded by the sophomores Ross Abeje and Aurora Schünemann with faculty support from Kathy Laughlin. The GSA is off to a busy start and has made remarkable progress during this academic year. Last semester, they focused on spreading awareness about LGBTQ history and community by educating the student body through a GSA-led assembly. They also successfully raised money for the SF AIDS foundation. Currently, the club is preparing a group discussion and presentation about the LGBTQ+ spectrum for the freshmen health class. Following is an interview with the two founders.



San Domenico's Gay-Straight Alliance

What was your initial motivation for starting the club?

Abeje: I started this club to educate and inform the SD community about respect and diversity.

Is there anyone in particular who has inspired you, encouraged or supported you during the process?

Abeje: Someone who really inspires me is the vice president of the GSA, Aurora [Schünemann]. She's really on top of things and enthusiastic about the cause. It's awesome to have support!

Schünemann: I think that the San Domenico faculty have been very supportive and open to this endeavor. The teachers have been amiable and we have had a positive response to all of our proposals.

Are there any difficulties your club is currently facing?

Abeje: I'd say that our primary difficulty is low membership. It's really hard to organize activities when not a lot of people are going to help spread the message. We definitely accept everyone, even if you aren't on the LGBTQ+ spectrum.

So far, from the effort and the progress the club has made, is there anything or anyone that gives you an inspiring feedback?

Schünemann: I would agree that the incredible feedback we received from everyone after the

assembly was inspiring. I certainly did not expect to get such positive comments in the aftermath of the post-it note activity and I felt very proud to be a part of this community.

Looking towards the future of the club, what are your major goals? What inspires you guys to move on?

Abeje: I think one of our large goals is to promote acceptance in this school. We really want everyone to feel safe at San Domenico since it's such a great school in so many other aspects. It makes me want to work harder when I think about the people who's lives are going to be made better by our club's efforts.

Schünemann: The big goal of the GSA is to provide a forum for members of the student body to voice their concerns about the diversity of the SD community and for the club to work together to improve San Domenico.

We want our community to be one in which every single person feels welcome and accepted, regardless of their sexual or gender orientation

If you're interested in joining, GSA meets in Mr. Bowermaster's classroom on Mondays from 3:15-4:00.

Emmy Koagedal bring Cyber Smarts to Area Seniors

By Olivia Holmes '16

Take a moment to think about sending an email. It's pretty simply: turning on your phone, typing in your passcode, clicking on the mail icon. Seeing a new message, hitting reply and typing in a quick message back. For those of us in these past two generations this may seem easy, natural. Now think if you weren't able to do this, weren't even able to do the most basic technological tasks. This is the plight of many senior citizens who are



Senior Emmy Koagedal with her "cyber senior" students.

than ever before.

This is the social justice issue that senior Emily Koagedal chose to tackle for her ROSE project. Koagedal worked with senior citizens at the Redwoods, a local retirement home located in Mill Valley. She started out by teaching basic technology classes to larger groups of seniors, instructing

them on fundamental skills ranging from turning on an iPad to setting up an email to changing the brightness on their screens. Koagedal also took part in the "cyber seniors" Redwoods sector in which seniors are paired individually with students for one on one tutoring sessions. She also actively recruited other San Domenico students into cyber seniors, an immensely popular program at the Redwoods which still has a long waiting list of seniors ready to be paired. On her experience, she said " it made me realize how much we take for granted of our knowledge of technology. All of us are lucky enough to have grown up with this technology right at our fingertips, unlike this entire generation of people who feel totally isolated from it. "

However, her service work was not a one-way street. Although Koagedal put time and energy into helping seniors better understand technology, they gave her something as well. "These seniors were teaching me life lessons, telling me stories of the time they traveled across the world, or stories about their grandchildren's accomplishments," Koagedal says. "These seniors were actually my friends and I looked forward to working with them every week."

Koagedal has continued her work at the Redwoods and urges other people to volunteer at programs like cyber seniors.



Emmy Koagedal teaching her students how to access and organize photos on their digital devices.

increasingly unable to function in a world dominated by technology. It's commonly known that seniors tend to be isolated from society because of physical, mental and even ideological barriers.

However, as technology is taking a larger and larger role in our lives, the generational gap is widening. Healthcare, banking, and just plain communicating are being tied more and more to the Internet and technology, leaving many seniors confused, helpless and more isolated

Seniors Engage Animals for Summer Service

By Elizabeth Clark-Christie '19

For their ROSE Project, Evelyn Wallace and Tara Sola both participated in organizations that aid animals in need and help in their adoption. Over this past summer Wallace volunteered at Family Dog Rescue (FDR) in San Francisco. Over her time spent at FDR she met and formed relationships with many of the dogs and staff there. She contributed in a variety of ways. For example, three of the jobs she did there were bathing, feeding and grooming the dogs.

This was a big step for Wallace because of a childhood incident, which left her with a fear of dogs. On her experience, she said, “I worked at family



Senior Evelyn Wallace at the Family Dog Rescue in San Francisco.



Senior Tara Sola at the Peninsula SPCA. dog rescue where they take care

of and work hard to adopt dogs and get them happy families. It was incredibly rewarding because we don't generally see animals powerless when we have them as pets, but it's important to remember it is part of our duty to take honor and protect them. It's easy to overlook issues in animals because they are only part of our world, but it's their entire world.” The issue of dogs being abandoned on the streets and not cared for of is a serious problem and a serious social justice issue for the animals that are being neglected.

Tara Sola worked over the summer and during this year at the Peninsula Humane Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals. Some of her jobs included feeding, socializing and playing with the dogs. Tara says, “I absolutely loved my time working at the humane society, it was very fulfilling working with the dogs to socialize them and watch them get adopted after a few days, or few years at the shelter.” Both Wallace and Sola gave their presentation last month and have sustained their passion for helping neglected animals.

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