

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Prevention, Knowing the Signs,
and Its Impact

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*Connection
Prevents
Suicide*

Capturing *Memories* Through A Lens

Jaiprakash Starts *Photography* Business

BANEEN RIZVI

Staff Writer

The hall is brightly lit with the golden hue of the decorated tables and walls as the light chatter amongst guests comes to a comfortable silence. All eyes focus on the stage in the middle of the hall where a bride and groom sit and beside them, a Muslim cleric. They sign papers, their official marriage contract, declaring them husband and wife. It is a candid moment that needs to be captured as tears are shed, smiles are shared and the atmosphere is full of emotion.

Photographer and junior Aswath Jaiprakash is ready to capture the picture perfect memory. As he stands to the side with a camera in hand, he carefully positions the device to his liking. With a soft click, the screen lights up with the picture he has taken. For Jaiprakash, moments like these are meant to be captured and cherished forever through the art of photography. He is proud to have created such memorable keepsakes that bring his clients happiness.

"My favorite thing about photography is delivering the pictures to my clients," said Jaiprakash. "I love the smiles on their faces when I give the pictures to them and I love the creativity behind every shot. I also love meeting new clients and getting free food at weddings."

Jaiprakash first started photography in 7th grade but did not take the art seriously until the summer of his sopho-

more year when he picked up his dad's old DSLR camera and began using it. After constant fiddling with the device, he was able to get the hang of the basics. What might have seemed silly at first had suddenly bloomed into a passionate hobby. He began conducting free shoots for his family and friends, transforming the whole idea into a professional photography company almost a year later.

"My most memorable experience was when I pulled up to a wedding and the groom's family was questioning who I was," said Jaiprakash. "I look pretty young for a photographer and so the family thought I was lying about who I was. I almost got kicked out but I had to show evidence that I was a photographer by showing them my Instagram and pictures on my SD card."

With the creation of his business, Jaiprakash has had some difficulty in the midst of it all. Raking in clients has been a problem given his age since most potential clients are hesitant to hire him over doubts of his experience. Despite this, he continues to remain persistent, building a solid portfolio and better his style to show future clients. He regularly meets up with other photographers around Houston to share tips and tricks as well as to provide advice for each other to expand and diversify their photographic styles.

"Developing my own photographic style took a long time," said Jaiprakash. "At first, I needed to be guided through inspiration. I took on the style of many



Junior Aswath Jaiprakash steadies his camera to perfect his shot. Jaiprakash has progressed greatly since he first began photography and has enjoyed it ever since. *Photo by Mridhini Koppiseti*

photographers and YouTubers. Now, after many mentors and inspirations, I finally developed my own editing techniques, by lowering the whites and crushing the blacks of a picture, and by using a cooler tone when color grading."

Jaiprakash originally took ideas from other photographers as a guide. He originally started off by de-saturating his photos and adding a sharp contrast to skin tones as well as color grading to deepen the blacks. Since then, Jaiprakash has progressed greatly with aid of various inspirations and his mentor and photographer, John Abraham. Jaiprakash met Abraham at a business conference and Abraham offered him a job. But despite developing his own unique photographic style and running a photography business, Jaiprakash had experienced the intense pressure of being a professional photographer and holding important responsibilities to his clients making him fearful to conduct photo shoots. He recommends addressing these fears before pursuing photography professionally for aspiring photographers.

"Something that I wish I knew when I started photography was the fact that photography wouldn't be easy and it is a lot of pressure," Jaiprakash said. "When you are trusted to take pictures of memorable events in an individual's life, whether it

be weddings or baby showers, you are capturing something that happens only once. True emotion is hard to fake, and if you mess up at that moment, then there's really no going back."

Professional photography was initially a difficult road for Jaiprakash, and he stresses the importance of understanding the responsibility that comes with the job. Despite that, he has overcome his initial fears since starting his business and he believes anyone can pursue photography whether as a hobby or a professional career. It is a road filled with obstacles but one he believes is worth it to go on. He recommends picking out simple and easily accessible gear for beginners, gaining experience in basic skills and having self-confidence to start a journey in photography.

"Advice that I would give to aspiring photographers is that it's not too early to start, and you really do not need any expensive gear either," said Jaiprakash. "Master framing, lighting, and the basics of a camera. Mastery of ISO, aperture, shutter speed lets you achieve anything. The next steps are mastery of lighting and editing. If you really think about it, it is not really that difficult. The only thing that is stopping you from crossing the line from amateur to professional is yourself."

Building the Nest: Behind the Scenes of Student Support Principal

ELLA RAY
Editor-in-Chief

With a highly competitive learning environment, it has become easier for students to allow the intense pressure of expectations disrupt their mindset and mental health. To combat this negative impact, Student Support Assistant Principal Kristine Copeland makes it her mission to provide struggling individuals with the extra help that they need. When finding a student who is in a conflict, Copeland typically collaborates with the counselors or school psychologists to schedule interventions in place for that student to help them while they are on campus.

“We just don’t want kids falling through the cracks, struggling,” said Copeland.

Although Copeland shares some similar responsibilities with the grade-level APs, she also explains that the key component that differentiates the two roles is that the other APs deal with discipline and sometimes have to mediate conflicts between teachers and parents. Copeland actually started off as a grade-level assistant principal and continued to hold that occupation for four years until she decided that she wanted to look at a different piece of education. In 2017, Copeland switched careers.

“I just feel really lucky because I feel like I get to step into that role where I’m able to acknowledge those who are afraid to ask for help because they don’t want to seem different,” said Copeland. “When in reality, everybody’s different.”

Copeland explains that her interventions can either be in the form of accommodations or just extra strategies that teachers use to help kids. However, these interventions require coordinating meetings with teachers, resulting in a large proportion of Copeland’s day being spent in

conferences. For an entire hour meeting with that student, their parents get teacher feedback and discuss what she can do to support them. Additionally, Copeland supervises teachers, allowing her to walk into classrooms and sit down to observe a teacher instructing their class.

“We can have programs here at school that help kids a lot, but they require paperwork to prepare for those meetings,” said Copeland.

Copeland’s favorite part of her career is walking out of a meeting and feeling that she was successful in helping make students’ education better. She explains that she offers assistance to students who have a range of conditions including ADHD, dyslexia, diabetes and seizure disorders.

“When I walk out of those meetings, I realize that a student has a condition that they can’t help, but we’re able to step in and support them. That way they can be as successful as a student without a condition,” said Copeland.

“It’s very satisfying.” Copeland explains that there is so much stress associated with students keeping up with their classes and performing at the top of their class that sometimes kids do not realize what their peers are carrying with them. She also believes that there is a huge stigma with taking certain classes on campus as well.

“I just wish that kids would realize that there’s lots of different reasons why [other] kids do what they do,” said Copeland. “It doesn’t necessarily mean that they are any less capable or smart, or that they’re going to be less successful in life or that they’re going to get into a good college. There’s lots of different factors that go into those decisions.”



Photo by Amber Gibson

Causes of Suicide and Its Impact on Others

BANEEN RIZVI
Staff Writer

Suicide is an ever growing problem, being a leading cause of death in the U.S. and declared a public health issue by the CDC. In 2020, an estimated 45,979 people lost their lives to suicide; 12.2 million American adults seriously thought about it, 3.2 million planned an attempt, and 1.2 million attempted suicide. It is necessary to know and understand the causes of suicide for suicide prevention and its impact on others.

Causes

According to the Mayo Clinic, causes of suicidal thoughts can vary greatly and many risk factors can contribute to those causes. Usually, the main reason for suicide or suicidal thoughts is the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with a major life scenario. Suicide is a response and often feels like a solution for those described above where suicide seems like the only way out. According to the Alvarado Parkway Institute, common causes of suicidal thoughts are:

Depression & Mood Disorders:

According to the Alvarado Parkway Institute, mood disorders are chemical imbalances in the brain. These imbalances can distort emotions, which can affect one's ability to function properly in day to day life. When left untreated, these disorders can range widely in an influx of emotions from extreme sadness to feelings of emptiness to being excessively happy, also known as mania. Examples of mood disorders include major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), and cyclothymic disorder. According to the National Library of Medicine, among all completed suicides, 60 percent or almost two-thirds were done by those diagnosed with depression or mood disorders.

Grief and Loss: According to John Hopkins Medicine, grief is a

natural response to a significant loss. Grief comes in many forms, most common are behavioral, cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual grief. Signs of grief often appear in certain situations such as the death of a loved one, serious financial problems or a traumatic situation, and can be difficult to cope with. Common signs and stages of grief are shock, depression, physical symptoms, panic, guilt and anger. The overwhelming burden and distress may lead to suicidal thoughts, so it is necessary to be aware and ready to help any bereaved family or friends around.

Risk Factors

According to the Mayo Clinic, risk factors increase chances of and most often contribute to suicide. Common risk factors include:

- Having feelings of isolation, hopelessness and agitation
- Experience of a stressful time in life such as loss of a loved one, financial issues, or military service
- Struggling from substance abuse- this can worsen thoughts and can cause a person to impulsively act on them as well
- Having suicidal thoughts as well as easy access to firearms or weapons
- Having an underlying mental health disorder such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder
- A family history of abuse, disorders, suicide and violence
- A medical condition such as a chronic illness that is linked with suicide
- Being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community in an unsupportive or hostile environment

Impact on Others

Losing a loved one to suicide can leave a profound impact on those the victim surrounded themselves with. These feelings

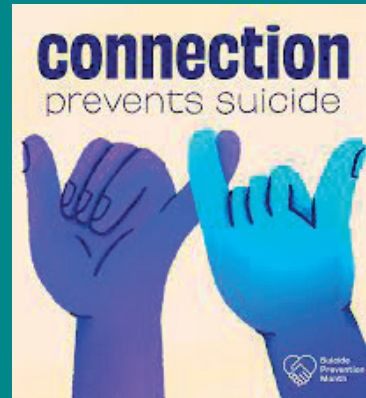
of bereavement and grief are unique to every individual and come in various different shapes and forms. Family and friends are left in a complicated situation on how to respond, cope, accept, and move on with this significant loss. For sophomore Rhea Bhatt, experiencing grief and bereavement was a difficult journey to go through yet one she believes to be necessary to reach the point where she is today.

"I was 12 when my friend killed herself," said Bhatt. "Originally, I was left feeling confused, hurt and upset, but over time, I was able to accept those feelings and understand that my friend is gone and I cannot change that."

It was an initial shock for Bhatt when she learned of her friend's suicide and then came an influx of emotions of grief, confusion, and sadness. According to John Hopkins Medicine, emotions are often seen as a response to sudden loss, often associated with deaths of loved ones, especially suicides. Loved ones are left with questions and a range of extreme emotions. It is crucial during this period of healing to learn to cope with loss and bereavement. For Bhatt, reflecting over the situation and practicing self-care helped her face her feelings and accept what had occurred.

"I let time pass by and with time came a sort of numbing effect to the pain that her suicide caused," said Bhatt. "I spent a lot of time thinking about how she might have had something going on that I had no idea about, but I recognized that in the end, I really will never know and staying on that wavelength of denial and constant questioning will not bring her back."

This period of reflection allowed Bhatt to become more self-aware and think about the consequences and effects of her actions and behavior towards others. She recommends being kind and respectful towards others because no one is aware of what struggles they could be facing or



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

the circumstances of their life. She also stresses the importance of recovering from feelings of self-blame and how harmful it can be to stereotype and desensitize suicide victims.

"I have thought more about what's going on underneath people's facade of being happy and how they really feel," said Bhatt. "I have also thought more about how I affect people and how what I say can affect people in both good and bad ways. People that commit suicide are not weak, nor are they stupid or ridiculous, they are people who are simply tired. Also, we will never know what truly pushed them off the edge to decide that they wanted to die, we will probably never learn the whole story inside out and we're just going to have to live with that."

While suicide is a dangerously increasing problem across the nation, it is important to know that suicidal thoughts will not always be completely transparent. If suspected that someone might be thinking of suicide, please talk with them before proceeding with any action. If the person is in need of serious or immediate help, contact a guardian or loved one or call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.

ELAINE LIU
Co-Managing Editor/Social Media Manager

The suicide and crisis lifeline is 988. It is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365. In a life-threatening situation, call 911.

As Mental Health Awareness Month commences, *The Nest* wishes to speak about suicide and suicide prevention- a topic that deserves recognition and sympathy. According to the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP) on their youth.gov website, suicide ranks as the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24, with roughly one out of every 15 high school students attempting suicide each year. For every suicide death among youth, approximately 100-200 suicide attempts simultaneously occur.

However, despite troubling statistics, suicide is preventable and everyone can help in saving lives and building strong individuals, families and communities. The world continuously grows more aware of mental health issues, but some stigmas regarding suicide remain albeit disproven. Counselor and Tompkins's Mental Health Alliance sponsor Colin Weatherford acknowledges the damage some misconceptions can cause.

"One that I think can be very harmful is when people assume someone is doing something for attention. This can lead to people not taking something seriously when they aren't able to make that determination themselves," said Weatherford.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) explains that suicide is not a normal stress response. Rather, suicidal thoughts and actions serve as indicators of extreme distress that should not be ignored. If you notice the signs of suicide in yourself or someone you know, seek help as soon as possible, especially if the behavior is new or has increased; however, if you wish to help someone else, acknowledge that it is a complex

topic that professionals spend years learning about to assist individuals experiencing suicidal ideation.

"It's important to be supportive and nonjudgmental," said Weatherford. "Make sure they feel heard and loved, but it's also important to know your limitations. Encourage them to speak with a trained professional like the school counselors and/or speak to your counselor yourself to let them know what's going on. Sometimes the best thing we can do for someone in a time of need is get them help, even if at the time they don't want it."

The NIMH states that parents, guardians, family members, friends, teachers, school administrators, coaches, extracurricular activity leaders, mentors, service providers and many others can all contribute to preventing suicide and protecting youth. Within larger society, one of the most effective prevention methods is reducing access to lethal means of suicide; individual protective factors include (1) effective coping and problem-solving skills, (2) reasons for living (e.g. family, friends, pets, etc.), and (3) a strong sense of cultural identity (CDC). Tompkins's Mental Health Alliance president, senior Soha Jashwant, advocates for the acquisition of healthy coping strategies.

"Exercising, doing meditation, and allowing yourself to feel- validating your emotions- are all important healthy coping mechanisms," said Jashwant. "Mindfulness is essential and I think that everyone should learn some mindfulness techniques like setting intentions and deep breathing exercises."

Another extremely important aspect of suicide prevention is a connection to one's environment. According to the CDC, community protective factors include (1) feeling connected to school, community, and other social institu-

tions, (2) availability of consistent and high-quality physical and behavioral healthcare, (3) support for social-emotional learning programs, and (4) support for resilience through education programs; relationship protective factors include (1) support from partners, friends, and family, (2) feeling connected to others, (3) promoting healthy peer norms, and (4) engaging community members in shared activities. Jashwant encourages peers to connect with one another and to provide support when needed.

"Difficult periods can occur in anyone's life. During this time, it's important to surround oneself with people that are supportive and empathetic. Just being there to listen can sometimes be more helpful than saying anything," said Jashwant. "However, if you know just how to bring a smile to someone's face, go for it. It's hard to find kindness in our world today and being someone that can contribute this priceless gem is an invaluable characteristic."

NIMH recommends that if you know someone who has experienced a crisis or received care due to suicidal ideation, to follow up with the person after discharge. Furthermore, according to the CDC, to lessen harm and prevent future risk, support family members of those afflicted with a suicide and report and message about suicide safely. Weatherford finds immense value in continuing support for someone after suicidal ideation or a suicide attempt.

"Make sure the person knows you care about them. Spend extra time with them, do some of the things they like the most, etc. Try to act normally and just include the person as much as possible; make sure they know you're glad they're still here," said Weatherford. "Don't be afraid of the subject if someone brings it up, but you also don't need to be focusing on it."

Mental health affects the entirety of a person's body and health- an understanding that continues to spread alongside mental health awareness. Despite this positive trend, however, the topic of suicide and suicide prevention must be talked about more. Weatherford encourages the spread of accurate information regarding suicide and mental health, as well as seeking help from professionals.

"I think to build methods of prevention is really about making sure people are willing to talk to the appropriate people about it. On-campus that would be your counselors, off-campus parents/guardians, doctors, etc. would all be appropriate," said Weatherford. "The more awareness there is, the more normalized hearing about mental health becomes, the more people are willing to talk about their own struggles."

5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

 ASK "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"	 KEEP THEM SAFE Reduce access to lethal items or places.	 BE THERE Listen carefully and acknowledge their feelings.	 HELP THEM CONNECT Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number (988).	 STAY CONNECTED Follow up and stay in touch after a crisis.
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[nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

ESSENTIAL TRENDS TO FOLLOW: 2023 SUMMER EDITION

Many students look forward to summer because it is a time when students go on vacation and relax all day, where the sun does not set until the moon rises and students have the freedom to hang out with friends or loved ones all day. These fashion trends will help plan outfits for any one of these occasions.

Floral Print

Floral prints will become an essential part of fashion this summer. The summer will bring blooming flowers to all types of fabrics. This print is charming and perfect for summer because it symbolizes the season's ambiance and warmth. It also matches the blooming flowers and gives a vibrant look. It can be worn on clothing such as tops, dresses or pants.

Maxi Skirts

Some trends are not easy to follow, but maxi skirts are very versatile for seasonal fashion trends. These skirts give off a graceful look when paired with a cute crop top. They are perfect for the summer because they keep you cool during the hot months. It also looks put together while giving off a classy vibe. A bright-colored skirt or monochrome skirt can be very flattering.

Crochet

Crocheting has recently become very popular because it is also a hobby that can be easily picked up at home. It is a very popular activity in the summer, people can add their own twist to their clothes with crocheting and it is easy to wear for hot temperatures when it gets to the high 80s. During the summer, students especially have ample time to use their creativity and create their own outfits. People can crochet tops, beach wear, and cute matching bags to wear in the summer. Crocheting is also a little more inexpensive compared to buying clothes from stores. It is easy to get inspiration from social media platforms or online forums

Low Waisted Bottoms

This widely popular trend during the 60s is coming back. At first, these pants rose to popularity during the 70's era. This trend brought up some controversial debates surrounding body image. But now, it has become a vital part of the Y2k fashion culture. Ranging from low-rise skirts to low-rise jeans, these bottoms can be paired with different kinds of tops depending on the type of look. One example is a night out look; a low waist straight leg jean can be paired with tank tops, gold necklaces and a belt.

Denim

Although denim jeans have been trending for a while, it has started to become popular in more ways than one. For example, new trending articles suggest that denim skirts will be indispensable during the summer. Another look that people may gravitate towards is denim dresses. Denim can also be layered to create a complete indigo look. This type of trend is perfect for everyday activities such as hanging out with friends or running errands or even relaxing at home. It provides comfort and can be styled in various ways for contrasting personalities.

90's Inspired Outfit

Back in the 90's this fashion trend was extremely popular. The fashion trend in the 90s consisted of baggy jeans, biker jackets, and high top shoes. Most of the inspiration for this trend comes from the 90's sitcoms. Big brands such as Ralph Lauren or L.L. Bean adds style to the outfit. It was also widely worn throughout the 90's decade and is making a big comeback now.

KATHERINE MOZISEK
Staff Writer



Photos By Ben Sanchez and Marianna Mata



Top 10 Restaurants to Try in The Katy Area

In the Katy area there are numerous places to grab a bite to eat. In shopping centers and along the roads, local companies work hard to bring delicious food to this side of the greater Houston area. Here are the top 10 places to eat at any time of the day.

Little V's

Little V's Vietnamese Bistro is perfect for a cold Texas day with multiple types of Pho among other traditional Vietnamese dishes. Even if the weather suddenly shifts, as Texan weather usually does, it is still possible to enjoy eating spring rolls, sandwiches, fresh fish and other specialties. Little V's can be found at 4031 FM 1463.

Cava

Cava is a Mediterranean cafe that focuses on salads, grain bowls and pita bread wraps. The food profile is briny, salty, and full of bright, fresh veggies and fruits. If you don't want a massive lunch, the meals at Cava are also on the lighter side. Cava is located at 2643 Commercial Center Blvd Suite C300.

Sweet Paris

Everybody loves the French city known for love, Sweet Paris takes you to a Parisian cafe for an escape from American society. Sweet Paris sells crepes, both of the sweet and savory kind, along with waffles, salads, soups and paninis. The French creperie also is a cafe specializing in French style coffee. Sweet Paris can be found at 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd Suite S120, Katy.

Essentials Kitchen

Essentials Kitchen is a local restaurant with food that mixes South American and Venezuelan food. In the restaurant one can find a multitude of dishes that can also be made gluten free or to fulfill other dietary needs. These dishes include arepas, cachapas, tostones and other delicious dishes. Essentials Kitchen can be found at 2731 FM 1463 #800.

Royal Arm

Royal Arm is a wonderful restaurant that sells West African and Caribbean food. On their menu are soup, rice dishes, bean dishes along with

fried plantains. Royal Arm is a splendid choice if you would like to try out some new flavor profiles. Royal Arm is located at 23010 Highland Knolls Dr Ste C.

Halal Guys

Hailing from New York City, Halal Guys provides delicious food with a middle eastern background. In their store you can find gyros, falafels and combinations of the two. Halal Guys is the perfect place to go if you want fast food, but not traditional American fast food. Halal Guys can be found at 23703 Cinco Ranch Blvd Ste B.

Kolache Factory

Kolache Factory is a native Houston restaurant that began in 1982. Their mission is to spread knowledge about the traditional Czech pastry. The traditional Kolache is square of semi-sweet dough with a divot filled with fruit filling, the covered 'Kolache' came later from a small Texas town. Any covered kolache is actually not a kolache, but rather a kolbanosk. Kolbanosks and kolaches are both sold at the Kolache Factory and come in a multitude of varieties. The Kolache Factory has locations at 805 FM 1463 #100 and 23240 Westheimer Pkwy Suite C.

Midway Barbeque

Midway Barbeque is making one of the biggest local comebacks after a fire broke out in February 2021. Now after 6 months of being reopened, the brisket is exceptional as is the coleslaw and beans. Midway Barbeque is located at 6025 Hwy Blvd.

Hasta La Pasta

If you're feeling like it's a good night for pasta, Hasta La Pasta can be found near you. Hasta La Pasta is a local Katy restaurant that excels at traditional Italian food. On their menu you can find a multitude of pasta, soups and other delicious Italian food. Hasta La Pasta is located at 1450 Grand Parkway.

You Know You're at Tompkins When...

ELLA RAY
Editor-in-Chief

Shades of deep crimson and royal navy are displayed proudly throughout the hallways and classrooms.



Several years of achievements from both the athletic and fine arts department are showcased in display cases throughout the halls. Spiritwear such as letterman jackets are worn proudly by students to represent their organizations.



With its image and hand symbol, the falcon is a hard mascot to miss.

MR. & MS. OTHS



Jacob White



Angela Luchetti

BEST HAIR



Landon West

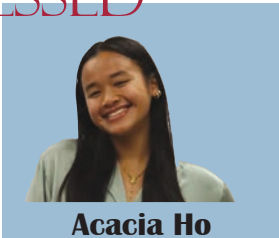


Natalie Salmeron

BEST DRESSED

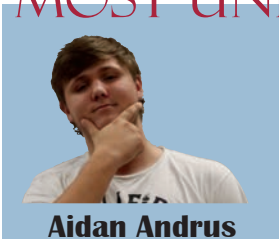


Jason Stone



Acacia Ho

MOST UNFORGETTABLE

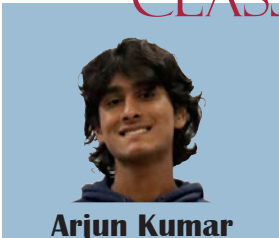


Aidan Andrus

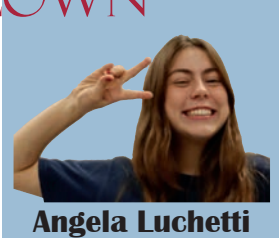


Cindy Tchouangwa

CLASS CLOWN



Arjun Kumar



Angela Luchetti

MOST CHANGED

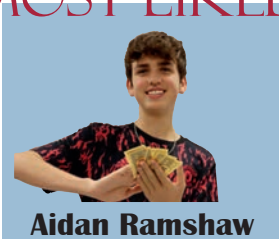


Landon Butler



Celeste Kohout

MOST LIKELY TO MAKE \$\$\$



Aidan Ramshaw



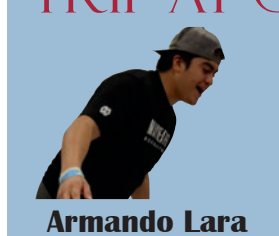
Ahana Bhat

Tompkins' Student Produced Magazine
Senior Issue

the Nest

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TRIP AT GRADUATION



Armando Lara

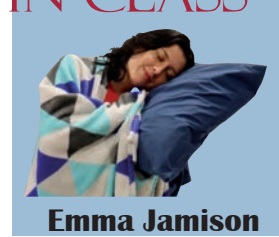


Courtney Richman

FALL ASLEEP IN CLASS



Kyle Jones



Emma Jamison

BEST PODCAST VOICE



Christopher Ageh



Brooke Heath

FAVORITE TEACHER



Lauren Tamayo



Gary Lauderdale

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THE CLIMB TO SUCCESS: PERUNGULAM RANKS AS VALEDICTORIAN

ELLA RAY Editor-in-Chief

For the past four years, senior Sanjana Perungulam has spent hours within her daily life building a reliable work ethic and making the most out of her high school career. All of Perungulam's hard work has paid off as she has been ranked first out of the graduating class of 2023. Although earning the position of valedictorian felt rewarding, Perungulam was also hit with high expectations to continue to climb up with her academic success.

"When we first got our ranks in the second semester of junior year, I was shocked because it wasn't something that I was expecting because I wasn't specifically working towards it," said Perungulam. "Then, I was also kind of nervous because now I had pressure on me to keep it up."

To maximize her opportunities, Perungulam decided to take as many classes as she could within reason, seeing which courses she could handle and adjusting her schedule accordingly. By signing up for these challenging classes, Perungulam had made sure to carve out an adequate amount of time out of her day to study and prepare. Although she was a part of many organizations on campus, Perungulam also had to consider how the weight of those elective classes would impact her GPA as she ended up dropping those courses and pursuing her hobbies outside of school.

"I just make sure that I can manage my time," said Perungulam. "That's something that's helped me a lot."

While most students prefer to take it easy their senior year, Perungulam was determined to continue to further her experiences as she packed her schedule with activities both in and out of school. On Mondays, Wednesdays

and Fridays, Perungulam works a job. She will come home from school, work until 9:30 p.m. and then come back to do homework until 12 or 1 a.m.. However, on the other days, Perungulam has her internship through PACE, a course offered at the Miller Career and Technology Center. Getting home at 5 p.m., she does homework and studies for her upcoming AP exams until dinner. Because of her heavy workload, Perungulam is not able to do as much. However, she manages to still make time for her hobbies as she still takes runs and plays her violin even though she is not doing it as part of a club or a team.

"You can definitely do a lot of things outside of school that have a lot of value and even in some cases like more value than just your grades," said Perungulam. "I think finding a good balance is important because I don't think someone should just give up on everything they do outside of school. Just try to stay doing things you're passionate about."

Perungulam expresses that her mother has been a prominent role model in her life as she is constantly providing her with clarity and advice that helps her push through this tough semester. While some of her peers and teachers may sugarcoat some things, Perungulam explains that her mother will always be there to tell her the things she needs to hear in order to improve.

"She's been probably my biggest supporter and also someone who's not been afraid to be real with me," said Perungulam. "I think that's been something very important for me to just realize certain things and work harder for some things."

Ever since freshman year, Perungulam has been working to build her strong work ethic. However, with COVID and online school disrupting her rhythm, she had to focus on fixing her time

management skills in order to get back on track. Although the temptation of procrastination may get to her at times, Perungulam makes sure to push through and complete all of her work as she knows it will eventually pay off.

"I think just the fact that I knew I had all these things to do and that hopefully it would pay off helped me a lot," said Perungulam. "I know it's better for me where I can just pace myself."

Senior year definitely had some hardships in store for Perungulam as she now had to balance the well-being of her grades and the deadlines of her college applications. She admits that she felt some intense pressure as both sides required a rigorous amount of time and attention. However, after sitting down and organizing a game plan, Perungulam was able to push through and make her deadlines without letting her grades slip. Now, Perungulam has committed to the University of Rochester.

"It was also just that pressure of college in general because it's like everything you've ever done is kind of working towards this moment," said Perungulam.

Whenever she finds herself struggling with a class, Perungulam makes sure to take advantage of her resources, going to tutorials as well as seeing her teachers during enrichment classes.

While the campus is known for its academic competitiveness, Perungulam emphasizes the importance of reaching out to fellow students in order to gain a better grasp of a course as their different perspectives may aid others to understand the material better.

"One thing I've learned is that it's definitely okay to just go ask for help," said Perungulam. "There are some people that are just extremely good at the subjects they do, and there are different people that are better at certain classes than me. I think that it's important to pull on your friends for support, and then you also share some of that in return."

Perungulam recommends that underclassmen not waste a single moment while their coursework is lighter as they should start building a work ethic as soon as possible. However, she also explains once again that balance is important in order for students to continue to explore their interests and not burn out.

"I think it's also just as important to know how much you can do because you don't want to burn yourself out," said Perungulam. "Everyone has different limits, and that's completely okay. Recognizing your own strengths and then working around that would help you build a better work ethic."



Photo by Amber Gibson

Alex Shi: 2023 Salutatorian Shares His Sincerity



ELAINE LIU

Co-Print Managing Editor

Regardless of the situation, peers often find Alex Shi working intently: he flicks between computer tabs, completing his assignments; at orchestra concerts, he quietly maneuvers his way backstage to capture photographs; and he builds personal connections with his teachers. Throughout his high school career, Shi has proved himself highly motivated and experimental, immersing himself in subjects and activities that spark his interest, executing each new attempt with refined technique. As Tompkins's 2023 salutatorian, Shi maintains the school's strive for excellence and showcases the lessons he has learned in the past four years.

"I would like to thank all those who have supported me throughout my life – this honor belongs to all of them as well. Whether it's the countless sacrifices my family has made for me to have the privilege of attending a wonderful school like Tompkins, the unconditional belief my teachers have in me, or the constant encouragement from my friends to do my best, none of this would be possible without them," said Shi. "High school was a challenging time for me, but a supportive

environment consisting of my friends, family, and teachers made it a safe space for me to grow as a person."

Shi has found guidance from AP Statistics and Data Science teacher Gary Lauderdale and English teacher Jim Haisler, who have taught him to grow as a student and have developed his skills for academic and professional success in statistical analysis and professional writing. His friends, such as senior Julia Hu, who has never stopped rooting for Shi, and senior HaiTian Wu (HTeach on Youtube), who tutors Shi when he needs help, have supported Shi throughout his high school career, for which Shi feels eternally grateful. Through the encouragement of Orchestra Director Matthew Porter to utilize his photography and video editing abilities, Shi has also experienced the opportunity to allow his interests in the arts to flourish as the orchestra historian.

"My parents have never pressured me to get good grades and have always encouraged me to do my best, and as a result, I haven't been afraid to fail. There have been times when I feel stressed or discouraged, but I've always found ways to dig

deeper and push myself to work harder, allowing me to recover and finish each semester with all As," said Shi. "The title of salutatorian to me is a recognition of my ability to overcome vulnerable moments and find new learning methods that work best for me."

Shi discovered that he holds the most focus in the morning; therefore, he often wakes up at 4:00 a.m. to study before tests, enjoying the quiet time that allows him to solidify his comprehension of the curriculum and build his confidence. Moreover, he seeks to expand his perspective and gain unique experiences: Shi has run in the Aramco Houston Half Marathon and worked at McDonald's for a summer, which provided him with invaluable learning opportunities and self-discovery. Shi continues exploring his interests on the Tompkins campus, serving as Co-President of the Science Olympiad Team, performing as a cellist in the Sinfonietta orchestra, and participating in Key Club and Girls in STEM.

"The opportunities to grow are endless, and I truly encourage every student to reach out and utilize all the resources at their disposal in the nest that is Tompkins High School," said Shi. "I enjoy being able to work alongside others toward improvement and finding comfort in knowing I've helped inspire countless students at Tompkins."

In the fall, Shi plans to attend Cornell University to study Economics and Sociology with an interest in

international economics, market design and computational economics. Despite challenges in his high school experience, Shi has gained a deeper understanding of his identity, motivations, learning style, and curiosity. He will take these lessons with him as he flies away from the nest.

"I am looking forward to 'building the plane while flying it,' as Mr. Haisler likes to say, learning more about myself along the way as I navigate the many challenges and oppor-



POST GRAD PLANS

University of Alabama
Nathan Hubbell

University of Alberta
Georgia Szafron

Anderson University
Peyton Isola

University of Arkansas
Amanda Land
Emma Jamison
Owen Craig

Baylor University
Aiden Ramshaw
Colin Flory

Blinn College
Cadence Apodaca
Emily Bustamante
Grant Perry
Julia Zalewski
Kyle Jones
Novalee Duron
Omar Hai
Samuel Milliger
Skyler Gil
Virginia Schloeter

Brown University
HaiTian Wu
Yujin Chung

Brigham Young University
Connor Wood
Kayley Ong

Brigham Young University-Idaho
Kinsey Smith

California Polytechnic State University
Rachel Davison

Colorado School of Mines
Matteo Lombardi
Nicole Perez
Presley Powell

Cornell University
Alex Shi
Mia Paz

University of Delaware
Sofia Rivera

Greenville University
Andres Esquivel-Garza

University of Houston
Aaron Tran
Abhinav Someswar
Ahona Ray
Alejandro Cortes Hernandez
Alfred Skaria
Angela Meza
Annabelle Nguyen
Anshvir Rehsi
Arnav Bhardwaj
Avery Sparks
Bella Chan
Breanna Rowan
Christopher Fischer
Dhruvi Shah
Diego Miranda
Dylan van Strien
Emmanuel Haddad
Hai-Chau Hoang
Jackson Hanna
Jason Wang
Juliette Hernandez
Kalyan Konduru
Landen Nuss
Laura Le
Luke Orchard
Maryam Haidari
Menatalla Amer
Poorvi Govindaraju
Rodrigo Medina Garcia
Ryleigh Adams
Santiago Barrios
Spencer Cruz
Veronica Tamez
Vikram Rao
Yujin Choi
Zahrah Jilani
Zoya Khan

Houston Christian University
Ava Wade

Houston Community College
Barbara Parra
Celeste Vela
Damini Sewoniku
Emmanuel Ortega
Evan Tymon
Husnain Waseem
Jesse Hoover
Jorge Arambulo
Lucas Pearl
Natalia Chigne
Roberto Escobar

University of Illinois Urbana
Yuwei Cheng

Johns Hopkins University
Naga Veeramallu

Kansas University
Ale Saimoen

Lamar University
Kelyse Dawson

Lonestar College
Ana Ormeno
Diana Chavez
Eduardo Gil
Eric Barruetta
Helen Romero
Joseph Bhan
Malik Alnuswan
Michelle Lataczewski
Nathaniel Bates

Loyola University Chicago
Hibah Bakhtiar

University of Louisiana
Andrew Horner

Louisiana State University
Chloe Townsend
Emma Radovich
El Mutschler

University of Manchester
Samuel Macleod

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
Hayley Levin

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Logan Welch

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Nicole Xu

McPherson College
Ivan Gomez

University of Michigan
Kaden Chen
Marco Boone

Michigan State University
Josefina Arnett

University of Mississippi
Drew Markle

Mississippi State University
Sofia Smith

Mount Mercy University
Gannon Lara

Navarro Junior College
Tayden Alexander

University of New Mexico
Jaxon Hand

University of North Texas
Ashley Van Blarcom
Brianna Nguyen
Claudia Armas

Ohio State University
Francisco Sanchez

Oral Roberts University
Elisabeth Lucio

Oklahoma University
Amari Lewis
Fiyin Adeleye
Frank Booth
Jackson Smith
Kaylynn Smith
Santiago Rocha
Armando Lara

Oklahoma State University
Cassidy Murski

Pellissippi State
Brayden Kuta

Penn State University
Sarah Holmes

Prairie View A&M University
Chris Gilbert
Purdue University
Feiying Qian

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Thomas Brito

Rice University
Cindy Tchouangwa
Landon West
Sanjay Senthilvelan
Srinidhi Srikalyani

Sam Houston State University
Emma Bolling
Isaac Smith
Maria Torres
Natalie Salmeron
Ryan Kendall
Thomas Colihan

Stephen F. Austin University
Emma Bryan
Jaxon McRoy
Macy Spencer
Morgan Choate

Texas A&M University

Aaron Andrade
Adeeba Mohammed
Alexander Subotic
Alexander Vergara
Alexis Gallardo
Allen Holda
Angelo Barnuevo
Annabella Quesada
Annish Pattani
Athena Paz
Bao Tran Nguyen
Brandon Lee
Brooke Heath
Cory Zhang
Daniel Fernandez
Daniel Jiang
Diego Martinez
Elmira Tchagop
Emily Safe
Ethan Bruno
Francisco Alvarez
Gaurang Arondekar
Gayatri Pemmaraju
Griffin Simonton
Haihua Pei
Hana Perez
Harrish Murugan
Harshini Srinivasan
Jacob Ross
Javier Cavazos Ingram
Jian Liang Chen
Jose Gomez-Toledo
Joshua Hsuan
Julian Padovani
Kushi Kolli
Lohit Madineni
Maiah Kirtland
Maira Athar
Mariana Bruzual
Marianna Mata
Mason Hereford
Mausmi Pandya
Mia Culotta
Peter Wang
Rahul Gonsalves
Rajadharshini Saravanan

Oklahoma State University
Cassidy Murski

University of Texas at Arlington
Alaina Rowan
Gautham Rajesh

University of Texas at Dallas
Aarush Sarkar
Arnav Rao
Dareen Gorgi
Ella Ray
Esha Gupta
Eucharist Tan

Rajbir Goomber
Rakshaa Ramalingam
Rebecca Lee
Regina Wu
Ria Mistry
Rumaisa Ahmed
Samhita Vemuri
Samsritha Pochanapeddi
Siri Krothapalli
Tanya Philip
Tavishee Shishulkar
Tony Sun
Trevor Davie

Texas A&M Corpus Christi
Reagan Witten

Texas A&M Galveston
Brendan Porter

University of Tennessee
Hannah Brashier

University of Texas at Austin
Aadhithyavarman Manachai
Shanmugham
Aarthi Salver
Ahana Bhat
An Vo
Anish Sathe
Bhavika Kamma
Bisma Ali
Bonnie Man
Daniel Chen
Emma Zuo
Kate Pasia
Kavya Chowti
Kiara Alves
Kliya Ashtekar
Neelanjana Chakrabarty
Nico Osgnach
Pooja Dave
Sunishka Bera
Uma Kamath
Vaarij Betala
Victoria Zhang
Vihaan Mehta

University of Texas at Arlington
Alaina Rowan
Gautham Rajesh

University of Texas at Dallas
Aarush Sarkar
Arnav Rao
Dareen Gorgi
Ella Ray
Esha Gupta
Eucharist Tan

Muhammad Ullah
Robert Tantiado
Sarthak Das
Tarana Nagarajan

University of Texas Permian Basin
Emmanuel Lawton

University of Texas at San Antonio
Alba Rengifo
Atena Abedini
Fernando Gilarranz
Greg Ilagan
Ryan Welch
Valeria Rincon

Texas State University
Alyssa LaCorte
Amber Gibson
Angela Lins
Colleen Cromwell
Dionne Motta Teran
Isabelle Addison
Jacob White
Kaila Ilagan
Kayi Sanal
Luke Stoddard
Mateo Vineyard
Mia Parra
Sarah Hennig

Texas Tech University
Alyssa Hogan
Brett Kelley
Caleb Garza
Emily Schlak
Gabriella Donnelly
Grace Hunter
Jenson Welshons
Kenechukwu Agbaroji
Manuel Hernandez
Natalia Lyle
Navya Kavuri
Pamela Ilagan
Poppy Torrance
Thomas Burgard

Texas Wesleyan University
Trent Mcgrath

St. Thomas University
Adam Benavidez
Ilyse Lehmann
Kaden Bertrand

University Of Toronto
Paulina Di Blasi

Trinity University
Audrey Vanegas
Jonathan Wang
Kayla Boven

Utah State University
Brinley Snyder

University of Washington
Kelvin Zhang

West Texas A&M University
Cody Chapman

Wharton County Junior College
Blake Criswell

Wiley College
Nakiara Green

William Peace University
Gabriela Vazquez

Wilberforce University
Darius Woodson

University of Wisconsin
Grace Nyamapfumba

Gap Year
Ayden Elsasser
Christopher Whipple
Ezri Terry
Gearld Allen
Jacob Miller
Kaz Artley
Tristan Valdez
Tryniti Morgan

Workforce
Brandon Welch
Elizabeth Adams
Estefhany Villalobos
Jorge Garza
Louis Daher

Military
Haoran Hou
Kristen Bryant- Space Force
Noah Anwdino
Patrick Thompson- Navy

Top 10 Soar from the Nest

Sanjana Perungulam



#1

School: University of Rochester
Major: Cell and Dev. Biology
GPA: 4.8857

Favorite HS Memory: When she went to the Girls in STEM Science Night

Alex Hai Shi



#2

School: Cornell
Major: Economics and Sociology
GPA: 4.8676

Favorite HS Memory: When he went to CMU for Science Olympiad.

Julia Hu



#3

School: UT Austin or UT Vanderbilt
Major: Pre-Med
GPA: 4.8636

Favorite HS Memory: When she joined Multivariable Calculus.

Yujin Chung



#4

School: Brown
Major: Neuroscience
GPA: 4.8615

Favorite HS Memory: When he went CMU to compete.

Rachel Suh



#5

School: UT Austin
Major: Public Health
GPA: 4.8525

Favorite HS Memory: Performing at the TMEA Music Convention in San Antonio

Kaushik Jayaprakash



#6

School: A&M
Major: BioMed Engineering
GPA: 4.8438

Favorite HS Memory: When he went with his friends on a state trip.

HaiTian Wu



#7

School: Brown
Major: Mathematics
GPA: 4.8308

Favorite HS Memory: When he participated in competitions for computer science.

Neelanjana Chakrabarty



#8

School: UT Austin
Major: Biology
GPA: 4.8276

Favorite HS Memory: When she competed in Science Olympiad.

An Xuan Vo



#8

School: UT Austin
Major: BioMed Engineering
GPA: 4.8276

Favorite HS Memory: When he played in a full orchestra for the first time.

Aditya Ramaswamy



#10

School: UT Austin
Major: Computer Science
GPA: 4.8246

Favorite HS Memory: When he made his own game for a project.

Class President Ahana Bhat: A Trip Down the Memory Lane

SHRIYA RAJAGOPALAN
Co-Managing Editor

Senior Class President Ahana Bhat balances her academic school work with her duties as president of 2023. She has helped the senior class in so many ways by organizing countless events to ensure that the class of '23 is able to reminisce over their high school years. She gets her inspiration from other people and her past experiences. As a senior, she wants to bring back old memories to her classmates.

"Bittersweet is definitely the best word to describe it," said Bhat. "It's so weird to think that it's already senior year. I remember walking in and doing my first class president election and now we're nearing the end."

Being the class president all four years of high school, Bhat has learned a couple things during her journey such as how to work in a group setting and listen to others' ideas. In the past, she frequently asked others in her class for their opinions to plan events. But with being in five AP classes, Bhat has figured out how to manage her time wisely during the past couple years.

"I try to make sure I am giving equal time to all my commitments," said Bhat. "For class president, I always set aside my enrichments and make sure I am not doing anything else that day. Whenever I am doing something for class president, I make sure to put my complete focus so I don't have to worry later."

Working with a team and being Class President has been really rewarding for Bhat because she has been able to see the class grow each year from

being freshmen. Seeing the Polar Express night on Dec. 5 go from being an idea to an event that was able to become an enjoyable and memorable moment for a lot of seniors was an achievement for Bhat. Although she has had gratifying moments as Class President, Bhat has faced some struggles in the past.

"A lot of people would misconstrue my actions by saying I was trying to become Class President for power and it was

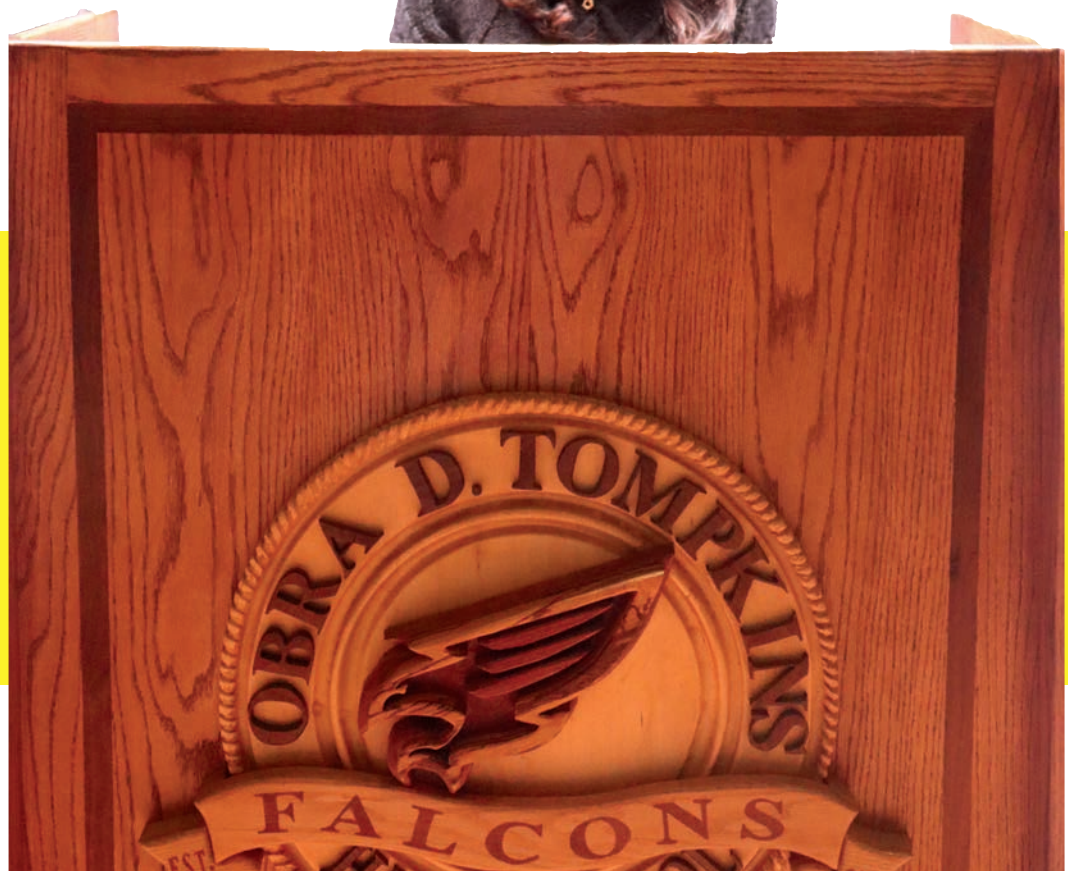
really sad for me because I want to do stuff to help our class," said Bhatt. "That's why I try to stay out of conflicts with people and focus on what I want to do for the class instead of trying to resolve conflicts."

The best advice Bhat has for current and future class presidents is making it fun for the class as well as keeping the class updated so they do not miss out on events. She also advises finding any opportunity to plan

events like the Polar Express nights, which Bhat wants to become a tradition at Tompkins for future seniors because it is a fun night for all the seniors to get together.



Senior Ahana Bhat executes a speech in the PAC. Bhat hopes she has made a positive impact at Tompkins during her four years. Photo by Kyndahl Wiseman



Pack It Up: Essentials For College

Going from high school to college can be an overwhelming experience for incoming freshmen in college. At times it can start to feel like an ocean of stress when making a list of what to pack so nothing is forgotten at home. However, knowing exactly what to pack can help ease the pressure and make the transition much easier.

Calendar or planner:

Having a planner is a great way to help to stay organized. It can help you keep track of things to do especially when there is a huge agenda for the day. In college, the amount of homework and exams can become overwhelming at times so using a planner keeps track of classes, assignments, deadlines, and other activities/hobbies. It also allows for more because they are able to get their assignments done.

Medications:

Carrying a first aid kit can come in handy during an emergency. Since it is impossible to predict when symptoms of sickness will occur, the security of knowing there is medicine available 24/7 can help save a costly trip to the doctor. For people with allergies, allergy medications are also an important item to consider bringing along on the trip.

Dorm room items

Since dorm rooms do not come with comforters, bed-sheets and pillowcases, bringing these items from home can be helpful. Decorative desk items such as lamps, flowers and organizers can make studying more relaxing.

School supplies:

For college, a sturdy backpack is necessary for everyday use. It can be used to hold notebooks, pencils, pens and other stationary items. These items are useful in taking notes for classes and studying for tests. The type of stationary items and school supplies used also shows people's personality.

Laundry Basket:

Living in college is very different from at home. At home, doing laundry is accessible daily. However, finding time to do laundry in college can be difficult. One thing that can make this problem easier is a laundry hamper. A laundry hamper can temporarily store clothes in an organized way when unable to access the washing machine.

Toiletries:

The most basic essentials are bathroom items such as shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, body soap, skin care products, a shower mat and a shaving kit. Bringing these items from home can make it easier because freshmen do not have to worry about buying it.

Coffee maker:

Biologically coffee is designed to block the adenosine receptor, preventing the body from sleeping when tired. Waking up early in the morning to go to class can get tiring and even be draining on some days. Having a coffee machine handy would provide a boost of energy. It can even help in between classes as a quick drink to increase energy stamina.

Kitchen items:

Bringing kitchen items and utensils can spare students the visit to the store. Bowls, plates and cups are used to hold, serve, and handle food and drinks. Cutlery is also important to have when eating food. Reusable food containers come in handy when eating a quick snack before heading to class.

Throw pillows

The name was coined because people throw these pillows onto a piece of furniture. With that being said, throwing the pillow onto a piece of furniture gives off a casual look. In addition, these fluffy pillows are extremely comfortable to use when taking a quick nap in between classes. They can add a subtle aesthetic to the dorm room. It can be used as decoration to the room as well.

Snacks:

Food is a vital part of everyday life. For students that do not have enough time to eat meals between classes, snacks can help postpone hunger for a little while. Some healthy snack options are avocado toast, PB&J sandwiches, pretzels and Ritz Crackers.