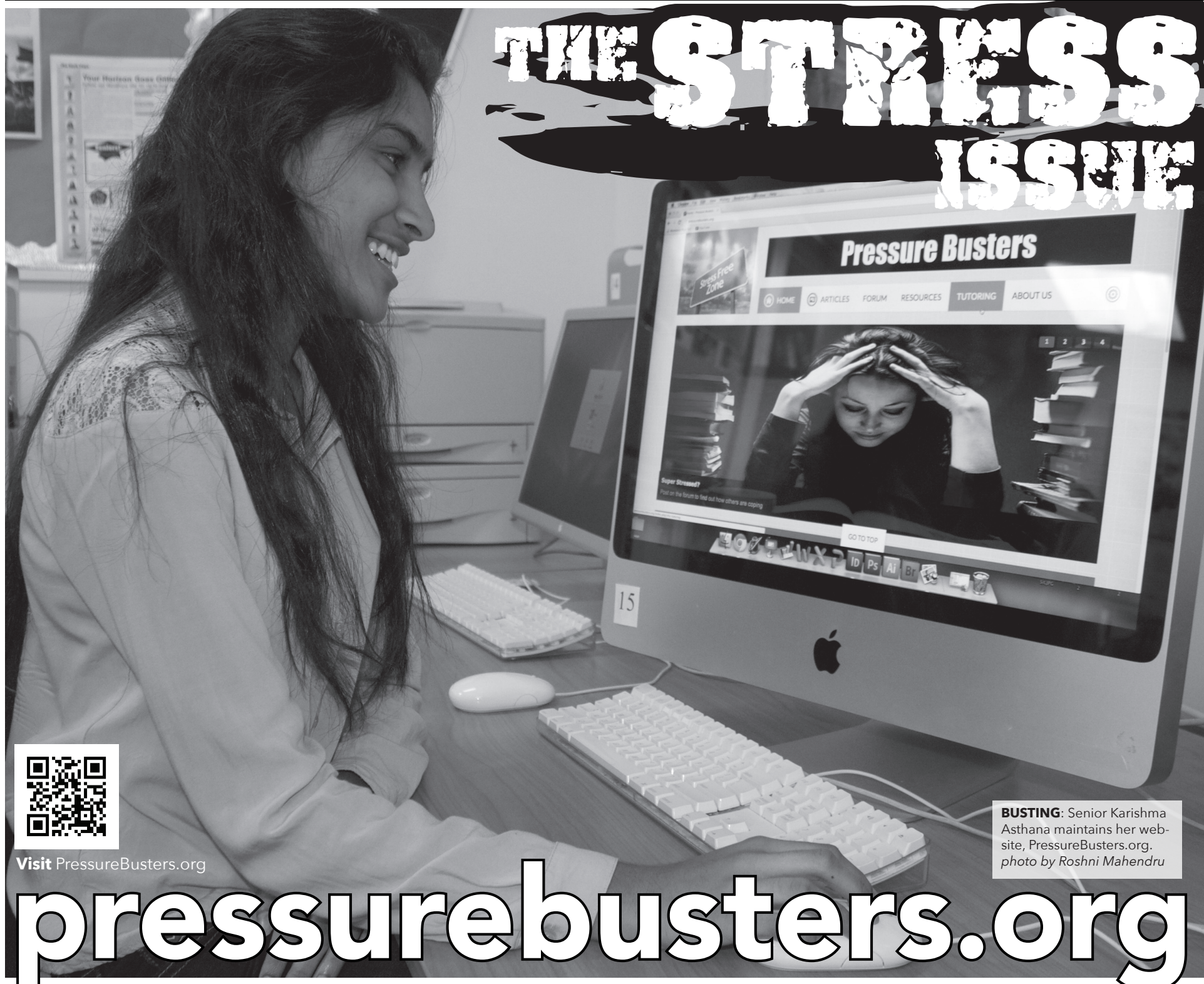


THE HORIZON

WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL | 12400 MELLOW MEADOW DRIVE | AUSTIN TEXAS | DECEMBER 2013

THE STRESS ISSUE



Visit PressureBusters.org

pressurebusters.org

Student's website helps others deal academic pressures

Linda Yoo | News Editor

From SATs to homework, students at Westwood High School are faced with the issue of academic integrity. With extreme pressure to receive better scores and higher grades, some students believe that the short term gains of a good grade will outweigh the long-term harms and risks.

As competition increases and students find academic integrity less appealing, the school administrators are raising awareness of the issue and solutions to solve the problem. Teachers have also changed their policies to make clear the consequences to cheating and copying. However for many students, advice from adults seems unattractive, boring, and nagging.

Westwood senior Karishma Asthana started a website to help students actively pursue a positive approach to learning. Through the website, PressureBusters.org, students are able to access tutoring, read about college

admissions, and discuss issues regarding school. This platform encourages students to "succeed without the pressure."

"I created this website because the pressure of school was getting to a lot of people I knew and they were taking unhealthy paths; I wanted to help them," said Asthana. "My website has a forum where students can ask questions, articles about how success is possible without going to an elite college, reinforcing the idea that grades aren't the end all be all and a tutoring feature that allows students to get help when doing their homework, instead of the morning of class."

Asthana launched her website, PressureBusters.org, in the fall of 2013. The site started with the purpose of providing articles and a forum; however, recently, the tutoring feature has been added. Asthana created this site alone, but had some help from school personnel such as Ms. Kay Minter, who teaches AP Psychology. Asthana also worked with the

National Honor Society Board to allow tutors to gain access to volunteer hours.

"Karishma analyzed the problem of student stress and identified one source as coming from homework pressure. So she added the tutoring program to her website to lessen the stress level by providing tutoring options at night and on weekends when teacher help is not available," Ms. Minter said. "What Karishma has done is take the many skills and abilities she's gained in her life ~ both in and out of school ~ and applied them to a real world problem. I respect her immensely."

Asthana maintains and runs Pressure Busters alone. She researches and puts up articles that she finds interesting and helpful. Her post about the "Top Ten NEW Ivies 2013," has gotten 22680 hits. All the articles she posts are centered around making the right choice when pursuing academic accomplishments.

Westwood High School seeks to be a place that allows

for creativity, innovation, and academic achievement to occur. Polls conducted by Ms. Minter's Psychology class concluded that students are faced with issues of academic dishonesty because of the pressures and stresses of success and achievement. To fix this problem, teachers are advocating that honesty and good character are not mutually exclusive to academic excellence; students can be an excellent student and a role model to others.

Through Pressure Busters, students are able to teach and learn from others. The tutoring feature on the site allows students to actively engage in sessions on certain subject. For example, senior Joyce Tong tutors subjects from Spanish to Algebra 2 on Wednesday and Saturday from 7 to 8pm. Since the tutoring is online, the students are able to get the help they need when its needed; there is no hassle going to tutoring at school, or waiting until the next day. The collaborative whiteboard feature allows students

and tutors to work together and be interactive. With the growth in technology, the individuals don't need to meet in person to study and learn.

"I think it's a great alternative for tutoring because it offers an opportunity for students who have extracurricular activities to be tutored at night when they have time," Tong said. "I think nighttime tutoring is great because students can get homework help on something they don't understand instead of waiting to ask in class the next day."

The future goal of the Pressure Busters creator is to expand the tutoring feature and gain more attention. She wants to make it accessible to students on a daily basis. Asthana hopes to create a network that is similar to the Khan Academy and Spark Notes. Someday, she hopes to add video lessons for students. Pressure Busters fully supports academic integrity and strives to decrease the stress that high school students face.



TOP LEFT: Violinists Deepa Rajan and Dolores Derksen perform at the Westwood Symphony's fall concert.
ABOVE: Director David Chisum conducts the Philharmonic orchestra.
RIGHT: Grace Song, Symphony concertmistress, and Hesoo Cha lead their section.

photos by Tara Froehler



Students Excel at Siemens

Lexi Jovanovic | Forum Editor

Five Westwood students were recognized in the Siemens Competition for Math, Science, and Technology, whose preliminary results were announced last week. Seniors Leslie Tu and Steven Chen were named Semifinalists, while juniors Patrick Guo and Jessica Yu and senior Vinciane Chen were chosen as Regional Finalists.

These students were selected from approximately 1600 entrants in one of the nation's most prestigious math and science competitions for high school students.

To participate in the competition, students were required to submit a research report on a math or science project. Reports are accepted in fields ranging from astrophysics to toxicology, and are judged by a panel of professors and other science experts.

The 300 projects that score highest are named Semifinalists. Out of these, thirty teams and thirty individuals are chosen as Regional Finalists. These winners are invited to participate in one of six regional competitions held at partner universities.

Lunch with the Pros

Linda Yoo | News Editor

On November 18, students from all grades met local business owners and workers to learn the importance of "soft skills."

During A, B, and C lunches, students and adults interacted and discussed how soft skills can translate into the work environment.

"People come into jobs and have all this knowledge that they have learned. What is not taught is to get along with a new family; there are problems and conflicts," said a volunteer from AVP-Business Development and community relations, Mark Matthews, "You need these soft skills to be comfortable and make work somewhere you want to go to everyday."

The Academy Ambassadors opened the program to all students. Lunch with professionals is held every month to encourage students to actively pursue and practice their soft skills, such as proper etiquette, grooming, and professional language.



LEAD IN: Students enjoy lunch and discuss with adults about leadership. photo by Linda Yoo

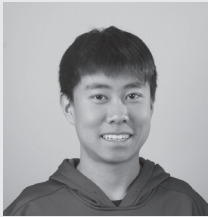
Orchestra Raises the Bar

16 string players ranked among state's top student musicians

Graciela Sills | Features Editor

“We put a lot of hard work in preparing for the audition. I hope it will pay off in the actual performance!”

Min Kim, Freshman



As the Westwood orchestra program continues to grow, so does the number of students who enter music competitions. This year, a record 16 Warriors earned spots in the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) All-State ensembles.

For those new to the All-State process, the challenge lay in anticipating the judges' expectations. Freshman violist Macklyn Hutchison, who practiced her instrument an average of nearly two hours per day, learned that the audition music required a substantial level of refinery.

"What I was most surprised about [with] the whole process was how much work had to go into it. I didn't know the level of detail you had to go into while practicing for All-State, and that particular

'be picky' aspect has improved my playing in unforeseeable ways," Hutchison said.

She acknowledges her mother, who was a four-time band All-Stater in high school, as a source of encouragement on days when Hutchison does not feel like practicing.

The audition process began in late October, when Region 26 students recorded run-throughs of eight excerpts from various solo and orchestral pieces. During the initial Pre-Area round, judges only listened to the first four of the cuts, which they used to determine preliminary rankings.

From there, the students who advanced to the second round had the latter halves of their audition tapes scored by another panel of judges, who decided the musicians' final placements.

Some students have gone through these motions for years. Deepa Rajan, a senior violinist, used her past experiences to develop a manageable yet highly effective practice regimen.

"I honestly don't know how much I practiced because I often hide clocks and electronic devices when I practice so that I can focus more. To me, focus is more important than time," Rajan said.

She believes that some of her fellow All-Staters may have also improved their habits in preparation for the Westwood full orchestra's upcoming performance at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago.

Westwood High's 16 All-State orchestra members, listed below, will perform with their ensembles at the annual TMEA convention in San Antonio this February.

2013-2014 All-State Orchestra Members

Violin: Grace Song, Steven Chen, Hesoo Cha, Deepa Rajan, Eileen Jau, Joann Gu, Jesse Gu, Patrick Guo, Grace Lee, Dolores Derksen, Min Kim
Viola: Macklyn Hutchison
Cello: Daniel Kang, Kyungseok Jung, Emily Ma, Alina Park

Final Exam Schedule

Tuesday, December 17 (Regular School Hours: 9:05 - 4:10)

9:05 - 12:05 5th Block Study and Exam
12:12 - 1:55 7th Block Study and Lunch
2:05 - 4:10 7th Block Exam

Lunch Schedule: (Follow your white day dept./subject lunch assignment)

A Lunch 12:12 - 12:45
B Lunch 12:50 - 1:20
C Lunch 1:25 - 1:55

Wednesday, December 18

9:05 - 11:05 2nd Block Exam
11:15 - 1:15 6th Block Exam

Thursday, December 19

9:05 - 11:05 1st Block Exam
11:15 - 1:15 3rd Block Exam

Friday, December 20

9:05 - 11:05 4th Block Exam
11:15 - 1:15 8th Block Exam

Students Recommend Best Albums of the Year

Mackenzie Farkus | Staffwriter



Recommended by **Hayley Blaha**, sophomore

Album: Modern Vampires of the City

Artist: **Vampire Weekend**

Release Date: May 6

Genre: **Indie**

Image from www.fontsinuse.com



Recommended by **Erin Morris** and **Kylie Shannon**, sophomores

Album: Save Rock and Roll

Artist: **Fall Out Boy**

Release Date: April 12

Genre: **Pop-punk**

Image from www.kisscasper.com



Recommended by **Alex Sigg**, junior, and sophomores **Nivi Natarej** and **Nathan Wuthnow**

Album: Native

Artist: **One Republic**

Release Date: March 22

Genre: **Pop rock**

Image from www.billboard.com



Recommended by **Madelynne Fontenot**, freshman

Album: Wretched and Divine

Artist: **Black Veil Brides**

Release Date: January 8

Genre: **Glam metal**, hard rock

Image from www.wikipedia.org



Recommended by **Madelyn Knauss**, sophomore

Album: Midnight Memories

Artist: **One Direction**

Release Date: November 25

Genre: **Pop rock**

Image from www.wikipedia.org

Cookies for a Cause

Grisham student raises money for the disabled by baking

Shefali Arimilli | Journalism 1

Khira Patel, an eighth grader at Grisham Middle School, has a little more on her “plate” than others do...she has cookies! Patel is the founder of Cookies 4 A Cause, a foundation that donates 50% of its profit to ADAPT, the American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today.

“Cookies 4 A Cause is an organization I created to continue my passion of baking but give back to the community at the same time,” Patel said.

Last year, Patel participated in a competition for National History Day, and her team’s project focused on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Through the research they conducted, she became aware of the struggle that people with disabilities must go through to gain their civil rights. After working closely with ADAPT of Texas, Patel learned that they organization strongly influenced the passage of the ADA. The idea of Cookies 4 A Cause evolved from the desire to help people with disabilities.

“Besides baking every weekend, I love the feeling of being able to help make a difference in my community. It feels so good to know that what you are doing is helping others,” Patel said.

Every week for three to four hours, depending on the amount of orders, Patel bakes a unique cookie brittle that comes in a variety of flavors including Classic, Peanut Butter Chocolate, Minty Mayhem, Sugar Toffee, Cookies n’ Cream, S’mores, and Double Dark.

“We also have limited edition flavors for the holidays and different seasons. Currently, I am selling Iced Pumpkin Spice as a new variation,” Patel said.

Patel promotes her business through her website (www.cookiecause.weebly.com) and Instagram (User: cookies4acause). Also, to spread the word, she participates in different community events.

“Recently I participated in a local fall fest and

raised over \$100 for ADAPT!” says Patel.

Patel’s family is very supportive, and without them this business couldn’t continue to flourish, or for that matter, even have started. They help buy groceries and on a busy weekend, they are more than happy to help pitch in.

“Time management is definitely the most challenging part, but in the end, it is for a great cause,” says Patel.

She isn’t stopping here though.



THEY'RE GOING FAST: Khira Patel mans her table at Canyon Creek Park in October, selling cookies and raising funds for ADAPT, an organization that benefits the disabled. *photo courtesy of Khira Patel*

“I would hope for Cookies 4 A Cause to expand, as I will continue it throughout high school, and for more people would be aware of the importance of disability rights,” says Patel.

Patel is excited about the holidays with two new flavors - SnowCane, which has white chocolate and peppermint, and a vanilla/chocolate Christmas swirl cookie. The numerous orders have already started piling on as Patel gets ready to sell at the Tree Lighting Festival hosted in Canyon Creek on December 7.

JROTC Survives Cut

Hannah Canter | Staffwriter

Westwood’s own Aeroflight Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps just escaped probation by recruiting students into their program making it a total of 102.

JROTC previously held less than 100 students, and if they did not get more than 100 students, or 10% of the school’s population, by November they would’ve gone on probation for a year, and could be shut down if they did not reach their goal in that time.

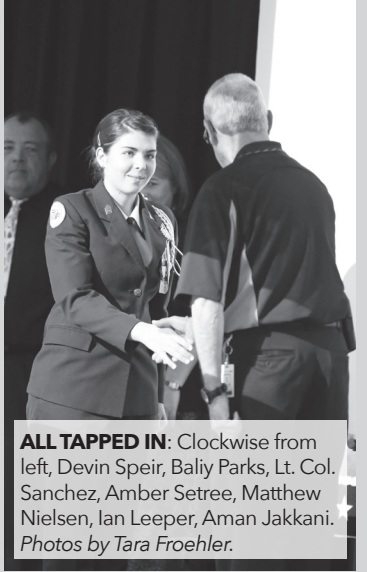
To reach their goal, many students from JROTC talked to others in the school and convinced them to join. They did not just want to recruit any teenager, but more to help prepare teens for the outside world after high school.

“We’re not recruiters, we want to see the students be successful when they walk across that stage,” said Aerospace Science Instructor Mark Janik.

According to Janik, if one joins JROTC, it does not mean they are committed to the army. Students can do whatever they want after school. Joining the army is not the only option for the students.

“We’re here to make them ready for the rest of the world,” said Janik.

Students at Westwood can leave the program during any year. But, JROTC is like a big family, and families always stick with each other and never leave. As more students join, the bigger the family gets for JROTC.



ALL TAPPED IN: Clockwise from left, Devin Speir, Baliy Parks, Lt. Col. Sanchez, Amber Setree, Matthew Nielsen, Ian Leeper, Aman Jakkani. *Photos by Tara Froehler.*



Vikas Reddy | Staffwriter

Student Works as Math Tutor

Westwood junior Angela Park not only shows her passion for math inside school but also outside the classroom. Park has a part-time job as a math tutor at Mathnasium on Anderson Mill

Road.

“I like my job because I get to hang out with little kids,” Park said. “I know that sounds pretty lame but they are cool.”

Park has been working at

Mathnasium since the start of the school year.

“It’s a good experience in the long run because I gained more work ethic and the bonus is that I get cash money,” Park said.



Homework: How Much Is Too Much?

Hannah Canter | Staffwriter

Every day students are sent home with homework, which takes them from a couple of minutes to hours to complete. This load often prevents teenagers from participating in after school activities.

Homework is a good way to help students learn and apply what they are taught, but too much of the work brings stress and pressure.

“I get stressed out because of the

amount of homework and trying to keep my grades up, I never had low grades,” said sophomore Bree Lyerly.

Teachers give their students worksheets and textbook pages to help them remember what they learned during the day, but they give so much homework that students have no way to complete other activities without stressing out.

Parents present another problem. They want their students to do well in school and push their children to perform satisfactorily.

“I have 6 AP and TAG classes and my parents want me to make straight A’s,” said junior Matthew Mahoney.

The heavy workload and the pressure to perform can create anxiety in many students who feel the most stress from the workload.

This anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Many teens also do not get the recommended six to eight hours of sleep per night, which compounds stress.

“Lack of sleep gives me the most stress, because I have to wake up early for band and go to bed late because of homework. I get around four to eighthours of sleep a night,” said freshman Brenna Snow.

Teenagers are kids too; they deserve to have a little bit of fun in their lives. But due to homework, students do not get the chance to have fun and just relax a bit.

Ultimately, it is essential that students get time to themselves to rest and relax so they can do their best work and actually reflect on the things they do every day.

Daily stress a long-term danger for students

Stress, lack of sleep lead to health problems

Stephen Chao | Editor in Chief

Homework. Sports tournaments. Extracurricular competitions. College applications. All of these sources of stress seem to add to the unhealthy state of academic and athletic competition that grips Westwood.

Of course, teenage stress is hardly a local phenomenon. A 2007 study by the Associated Press and MTV found that 85% of 13-24 year olds felt stress at least some of the time, a rate 10 points higher than the 75 percent rate among adults. Among 13-17 year olds, school is the most commonly mentioned source of stress, while among 18-24 year olds, the major sources are jobs and financial matters. Additionally, the results indicated that females tended to experience more stress, with 45 percent of girls and young women reporting experiencing stress frequently compared to 32 percent of boys and young men. Adolescents from middle-income households, defined in the study as earning between \$50 thousand and \$75 thousand, also experienced more stress than those from both lower and higher-income households.

However, the results of all of this pressure can take their toll all over students’ bodies. Though mild stress can be useful in improving students’ attention and increasing their capacities to store and integrate important information, chronic stress—associated with increased intensity or persistence of distress—is quite problematic. Studies have shown that prolonged stress increases the risk of disease and cardiovascular conditions. Additionally, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, there is a strong correlation between chronic stress

Prolonged stress increases the risk of disease, cardiovascular conditions, and drug abuse.

and drug use. Even though alcohol and drug abuse is often associated with lower-achieving teenagers, there are surprising amounts of drug use even among academically competitive students as well.

Lack of sleep, stemming from a deluge of extracurricular activities, work, and studying, is also a danger. Even sleeping less than six hours of sleep a night can be harmful to the body. Of course, sleep deprivation has long been associated with impaired brain function, causing decreased alertness and reduced cognitive ability. However, prolonged sleep deprivation has also been shone to directly correlate with reduced immune response, causing an increased susceptibility to illness. Additionally, lack of sleep is directly connected to the disruption of energy regulation in humans, a process that can lead over time to weight gain, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other health problems.

With Americans already facing a deluge of health problems today—about 35.7 percent of U.S. adults and 17 percent of children and adolescents are obese—it is important that students begin changing their lifestyles.

Though it seems near impossible to decrease the amount of pressure, there are some ways to manage stress. The American Psychological Association recommends individuals suffering from chronic stress to identify the sources of their stress and recognize how they deal with it. It is also important to consider healthy, stress-reducing activities such as meditation, exercising, or talking things out with supportive friends and family.



Students shared their thoughts about stress and how to deal with it through a survey sent through student email accounts in November.

“There is so much stress placed on the students to perform well, **we forget** about why we really go to school: **to learn**. In the process of trying to get good grades, we don't learn the material we memorize it... On top of all this, we add our own stress, our own desire to succeed. We lose sight of what is important and that is when we become truly stressed.”

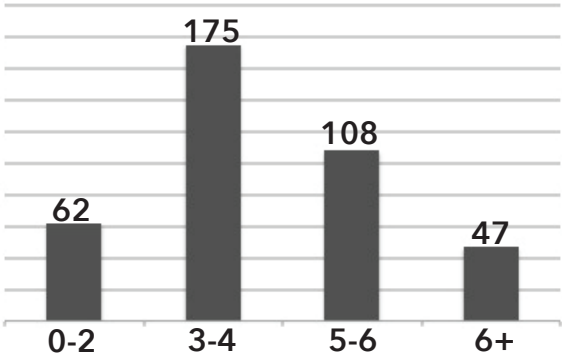
-Nihaari Josyula, junior

“You can't go into Westwood hoping you'll float by and avoid stress, especially if you want to achieve academically or get into a good college. You have to, from the second you walk in the door, commit to focusing your attention on working hard even if it means putting yourself into stressful situations.”

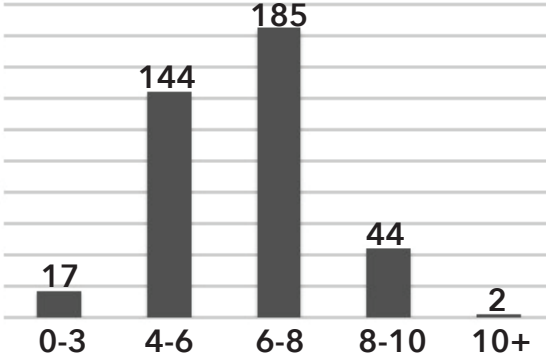
-Anonymous



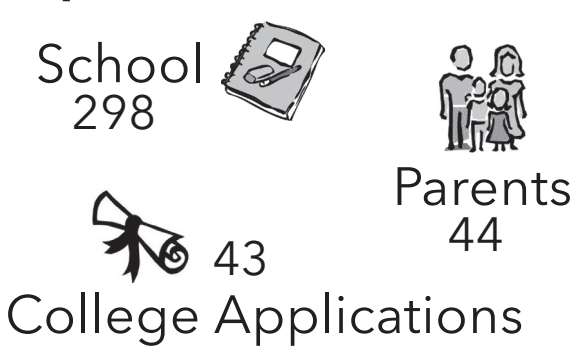
Hours Spent on Homework



Hours Slept per Night



Top 3 Sources of Stress:



“I take the time to breathe and pet my dog, Raffi. I also try to be kind to my mother.”

-Mia Benedek, freshman

“I usually eat, sing, **dance**, run, anything to take my mind off the stress!”

-Jasmyn Arteaga, sophomore

I
EAT
...a lot.

-Ashley D’Souza, freshman

“The only thing I really get to do on a regular basis [to de-stress] is listen to music whilst I do homework and spend time with my friends via google chat or at lunch.”

-Madelynne Fontenot, freshman

“Running, and working at my job. I'm lucky to have a job I enjoy, even if it's a job that's stressful in its own way.”

-Christina Houser, senior

“When I am feeling stressed, I take a deep breath, and realize that the stress should be cherished. Stress is a reminder that I am alive, that I am learning, and that I am a human, and that is pretty cool.”

-Emily Black, senior

“You choose the stress. The stress does not choose you. Life is only as stressful as you let it be. Create a game plan by prioritizing your to-do list.”

-Priya Mehta, senior

“Hopefully, it'll all be worth it in the end. Even with procrastination comes the (somewhat quixotic) hope that things might be better sometime in the future.”

-Simon Zeng, senior

Dance Class Tries Guided Relaxation

Shreya Dasari | Staffwriter

With the amount of stress that Westwood places on many students, it’s no wonder people complain about homework, extracurriculars, and grades. Everyone has their own method of dealing with stress. Some people play sports, some people play music. Others meditate or do yoga. With the limited options that we have at Westwood, it’s nice to have a block where you can get the stress relief that you need. In the Westwood dance program, every so often, a day is set aside for guided relaxation. “Guided imagery is a form of focused relaxation that helps create harmony between the mind and body. It is a way of focusing the imagination

to create calm, peaceful images in the mind, thereby providing a ‘mental escape.’” The effects of this form of relaxation are significant. It is proven to “tap the inner strengths” to find emotions such as hope and courage that will aid in dealing with many different situations. As a student who takes a dance class at Westwood, I had the chance to experience guided relaxation firsthand. The exercise, led by dance instructor Shelby Kelly, was titled, “Floating on a Cloud.” We began by relaxing each part of the body individually, including the eyebrows, the lower back, the fingertips, and the toes. It was amazing to finally

realize how much stress is built up in your forehead. Not many people know it, but the eyebrows are sometimes extremely tense. We then had to pretend as though we were floating on a cloud, hence the title of the exercise. We were asked to go somewhere on our cloud. It could have been anywhere that we desired. Overall, the entire experience was mind-blowing. It truly does work to relieve stress and felt like there was no difference between reality and dreams. I strongly encourage anyone who suffers from stress to try guided relaxation. The experience was surreal.

SOUND OFF

Students & Staff on Cheating at WHS

Neil Choudhury
Freshman

“Cheating is bad because it’s bad for society.”

Marv Schmidt
Counselor

“Cheating is like stealing from yourself.”

Madeline Tenner
Sophomore

“People shouldn’t cheat. You’re not learning anything, you’re just writing stuff down.”

Kimberley Payten
English Teacher

“I do think it’s a problem. If you choose to do that, it says a lot about your integrity.”

Consider the Moral Cost of Cheating

Lexi Jovanovic | Forum Editor

Cheating is immoral. Cheating is dishonest. And cheating doesn’t pay. That is the message fed to us by countless academic dishonesty posters and impassioned speeches by guidance counselors. And while the first two statements may be undeniably true, the third is far more questionable.

Obviously, cheating can create immense feelings of guilt and shame. It can bear serious consequences for students caught in the act. Nevertheless, if properly managed, cheating can also have large benefits, and any attempts at preventing academic dishonesty will be futile if they fail to address this fact.

This year, Westwood has made an effort to promote academic integrity among its students. All students were made to sign an academic integrity pledge at the

start of this year, and the school even sponsored an anti-cheating film contest-with SXSW tickets as the reward

These endeavors are well-intentioned, but they fail to address the realities of cheating at Westwood. Cheating is not necessarily a ticket to exposure and shame. There is no denying that people do get caught, but the probability of being caught is extremely low and that is what prompts people to cheat. The most commonplace forms of academic dishonesty-sharing answers to a worksheet or telling friends in a later block which topics are on the test-are especially low-risk.

This presents an issue. Most anti-cheating materials focus on the damage to the perpetrator: the risk of being found out, the attendant sense of guilt. But the kinds of cheating Westwood students

most commonly engage in simply don’t come with those risks and if attempts to prevent cheating focus solely on its personal disadvantages, they will be ineffective at best.

The reason cheating is wrong is not that it hurts the cheater, but that it hurts everyone else. It undermines the integrity of a meritocratic academic system and negatively affects the academic profiles of other, more honest, students. This is obvious, but most anti-cheating materials hardly mention it at all.

If the Westwood administration really wants to prevent cheating, it needs to acknowledge that people cheat for a reason, and focus its efforts on the source of cheating’s immorality: the damage it does to others.

Westwood teachers should stop telling students that, by giving their friends in later blocks information

about a quiz or a test, they’re only hurting themselves. It makes academic dishonesty seem generous and potentially even sacrificial, and, no matter how driven, most students aren’t mercenary enough to be swayed by this kind of argument.

An alternative kind of anti-cheating campaign is needed. Presentations and materials should focus less on the plight of cheaters who get caught and more on the damage done to honest students when others misrepresent their academic capabilities. The current, vaguely cynical approach needs to be abandoned, and efforts need to emphasize the moral code that makes cheating wrong in the first place--one that emphasizes honesty, fairness, and consideration.

Dolores Derksen
Senior

“Preparation is the key to success and cheating won’t get you anywhere.”

George Scheer
Substitute Teacher

“I don’t think it’s the thing to do in order to get the best education.”

Chang Baek
Sophomore

“People cheat because they value grades more than what they actually achieve by learning.”

Austin Martin
Senior

“It happens every day, so you can’t really stop it.”

compiled by Emily Field, Shefali Arimilli, & Shruti Patel

Skip the media; just be social.

Tristan Seifert | Staffwriter

With new social networks popping up almost daily to cater to needs that people didn’t know they had, it’s not uncommon for people to spend hours on innumerable social networks. Whether it is talking with friends, sharing pictures of cats or cramming for that final, social media has many uses, but it should not be taking over people’s lives as it currently is.

These days, it’s not uncommon to find people using Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, and Google+ all at the same time to get their news and daily ‘social fix.’ Often, several hours can disappear just like that, often interfering with real-life socialisation or work.

Additionally, social networks often become hosts of pointless arguments and abuse. Because it is done through a computer, rather than face-to-face, people seem to think that they’re invincible and can do anything. Perceived anonymity often leads to people believing they can get away with harassment such as sending rude messages or leaving inappropriate comments on others’ posts.

With social networks on the rise, they’re

even seen by some as replacements for reading newspapers or watching news on television. However, the very thing that makes social media great — the fact that all content is generated by users — hurts it in this regard. It can often lead to differing reports, as well as significant differences in the quality of content.

However, social media isn’t entirely bad. People can reach out to long-lost friends or communicate with relatives in another country instantly, without having to pay for long-distance phone calls or postage for letters. Social networks also permit people to express themselves effortlessly, something that has been the centerpiece of many of the recent uprisings dur-



ing the Arab Spring.

Absolute dependence on social media is not the right way for this generation of people to develop. For thousands of years, people had no problem communicating face-to-face or writing letters, so why should we have to rely on something as impersonal as a computer to end relationships or talk with old friends?

hot right now

Trending Social Media Sites of 2013



I like Google+ because it’s integrated with all Google products such as Gmail and YouTube. It’s more efficient for switching between entertainment and communication.
--Chris Han, Senior



Facebook is the largest social network, with over a billion active members. **Twitter**, however, is the fastest growing network, with over half a billion people sharing news, content, and opinions in real time and relevant #hashtags.

Over 126 million blogs are now powered by **Tumblr**, which is



billed as the simplest way to blog. **Google+** is now the second largest social network, and since it is now integrated with the insanely popular **YouTube**, it’s growing fast. Locally, it helps that students have all been given a Google account.

Instagram recently launched



video sharing capabilities to complement its popular photo filters and easy photo sharing. A new arrival is **Snapchat**, which has the unique appeal of photos and videos that self-destruct after a few seconds of viewing.



James Snow,
Junior

“I talk to them in person, because, sadly, I’m normal that way. The better of a friend they are to me, the more I talk to them.”



Simon Zeng,
Senior

“I prefer to talk face-to-face but I tend to chat a lot on this thing called the Internet — I talk with friends every time I can: basically all day, every day.”



Sophie Mathieu,
Sophomore

“I like to talk to my friends in person because I like being able to interact with them and see their expressions. I feel like texting creates a barrier.”

compiled by Tristan Seifert, Haerin Kim, & Jenna Zhang

Sports Snapshots



Volleyball: sophomore Vanessa Robinson

Basketball: sophomore Kendall Krumme and junior Jamie Hammock

Football: sophomore Jack Swensen

photos courtesy Heritage staff



Moving Forward, Stroke By Stroke

Freshman succeeds at first extensive kayaking effort

Emily Field | Journalism 1

Waves crashed over the sleek sides of a golden-orange kayak. Every struggling push of the oars sent the small boat moving forward, slowed only by the opposing current. Sitting inside, breathing heavily and soaked in water, was a teenage girl.

Only 14, freshman Nicole Roan plowed through the bay towards Matagorda Island last weekend, on her first extensive kayaking trip.

“It’s about a four hour drive to the location, and after setting off, it’s at least a six mile trip in kayaks,” Roan stated.

Contrary to her experience of kayaking in lakes, Roan found rowing against the current challenging. The wakes from fishing boats made it even harder.

“Kayaking is much harder than it looks,” Roan said. “After about 30 minutes of kayaking against a current, your arms, core, and hands start to hurt really badly. It takes a lot of endurance.”

Roan couldn’t complain, however. She was the youngest of a group of 10 people, all of whom were adults.

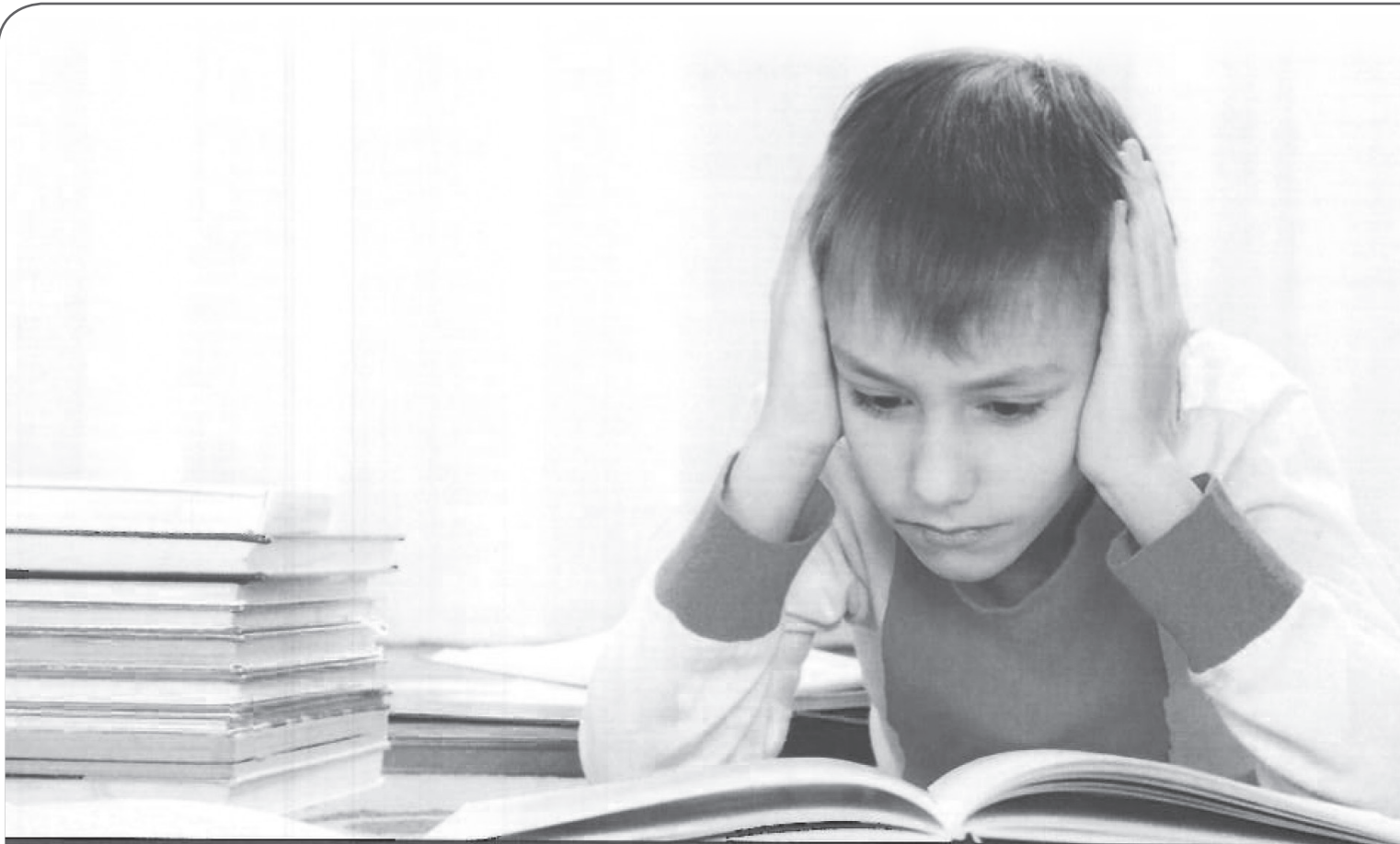
“There is nothing you can do but suck it up,” Roan said. “How I got through it all was staying positive.”

Despite the age gap, Roan was able to surprise the veteran kayakers. When tested on how to get out of an overturned kayak, Roan did better than the majority of the people tested.

“It’s very enjoyable to see people’s reactions when they first realize a 14 year old is joining the team and then to prove them wrong about my abilities,” Roan said.

Looking back on the trip now, Roan said she was satisfied with how it went, and the challenges she overcame.

“Everyone was super cool, funny, friendly, and they always have the best interest in the group,” Roan said. “The trip gave me a pleasant break from reality, and my group are the kind of people that always makes you want to come back next year.”



Attention deficit? Hyperactivity? Discipline or behavioral issues?



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If your child is experiencing problems with attention, learning, discipline, or is having behavioral issues, the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Clinic at Scott & White Clinic - Cedar Park West can help you find answers.

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About Dr. Lal

Dr. Lal believes children need a dedicated physician who will help them successfully manage their condition so that they may lead healthy, active lives. To read a complete professional biography on Dr. Lal or to schedule an evaluation appointment, please visit sw.org/Dr-A-Lal or call 512-336-3400.

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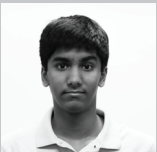
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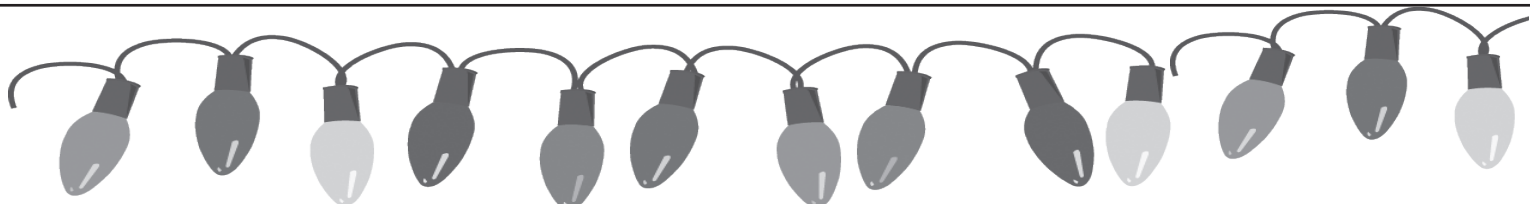
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Holiday Fun Opportunities

Mackenzie Farkus | Staffwriter

WHEN?

Nov. 24 - Jan. 6

Nov. 27 - Dec. 29

Dec. 1-24

Dec. 7-23

Dec. 8-22

Dec. 12

Dec. 17-24

Dec. 26

WHAT?

Ice Skating

A Christmas Story

Project X-Mas (lights)

The Nutcracker (ballet)

Trail of Lights

Elf Quote Along

Armadillo Christmas Bazaar

Trans Siberian Orchestra

WHERE?

Whole Foods Lamar

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1912 Crystal Shore

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