

# The Talon

## CROSSING THE OCEAN AN ACT OF FAITH FOR NEW STUDENTS

Three new International Students make PVCA their home amidst challenges and surprises

by Rachel Kaye



Across the Pacific on the other side of the world lies China. The differences between the United States and China are numerous. Living in one country and then moving to another is a huge deal. Elena Yang knows something about this.

Elena is from Henan Zheng Zhou, China. She describes her city as very crowded, especially at night when people shop at the small stores that line the streets. Large malls and food stores attract many people. But at the age of thirteen, Elena left her home town and family to move to an international school located in Bosnia.

During the three years that she lived there, Elena made some good friends. The staff there also really cared about the students. After sophomore year, the headmaster, Ms. Crum

connected with Mr. Keegan, and arranged for Elena, and two other students, Sam Wang and Caleb Qi, to come to PVCA. All three would be making another transition from Bosnia to the U.S. While Elena was nervous to fly, having never been on an airplane before, she was excited to meet her host family.

**“this path is the path that God prepared for you.”**

The exhausting trip took nearly twenty-five hours.

Arriving in the United States presented Elena with a variety of changes. One thing she noticed was the difference in family dynamics. Families in China are more dependent on one another and do many things together, but here she realized people have more of their own time instead. However, Elena has found that she enjoys having more time to herself. Another change was the food. Elena loves potatoes so she thinks the french fries here are really good, along with the other fried food. Caleb and Sam on the other hand, much prefer Chinese food.

The social culture of America was another significant change for Elena. “Here, even some strangers, they are really kind and nice to you,” she explains. A difference that Sam noticed was the drastic increase in expenses. “Phone cases here are maybe ten to thirty dollars but in China it’s like maybe two dollars.”

When asked if she misses China, Elena said no, because most of her friends are in Bosnia. In fact, during the summer break when she returned to China, Elena said she felt “bored.” If there’s any place she misses, it’s Bosnia and the people (cont’d p. 6)

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# Sports

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## ***Overcoming Internal Challenges Makes Girl's V-ball Team Dig Deep***

by Rachel Kerns

This year the girl's varsity volleyball team at PVCA started off with a few setbacks and difficulties. In spite of that they remain confident and uplifted as they power through the rest of the season. After their initial win against East Hampton there followed a rough patch with a losing streak. The reason for this was due partly to the loss of four of their varsity starters who graduated last year.

Coach Souza states that replacing the four starters has been a challenge, but there are a lot of strong players who have great potential, so working together as a unit has been hard but, despite that, she still thinks they are doing very well.

Another struggle for this year's team has been finding consistency. With new players in new positions and a whole new rotation to get used to, getting into a flow and finding the right mix with players who have been on the team for awhile has been a real challenge. Coach Souza notes,



“Consistency is so important in volleyball.”

Illness has also ransacked the team throughout the first part of the season. A few key players were sick for a while, causing more inconsistency and more changes that took awhile to get used to.

Aside from the challenges the team has been facing, their attitude is always positive, uplifted, and persevering. Team captain, Kylie Schmidt says the main focus is keeping the atmosphere positive and encouraging. Her goal is to keep drama and toxicity out of volleyball. Mrs. Souza chose the captains and with the expectation that they would exemplify leadership and... (*cont'd p. 6*)

## ***Season Record Hangs In Balance for Boy's Soccer***

by Jayden Mugisa

The PVCA soccer team started the season with the goal of getting to the Western Mass Tournament. Their first match ended with a tie. Not the start they were hoping for, but not terrible either.

The following Monday would put the Eagles against one of their toughest opponents, Athol. Last season, PVCA had an exciting win against Athol, but then lost to them hard in a difficult rematch. This year, we were able to set the tone again with a 3-1 victory.

Coming into their third match, and first home game, the Eagles were in high spirits. They had an early lead of 2 heading into the second half, with the help of a clean goal from Isaac Souza. However, Pathfinder ended up coming back to win the game 3-2. This was followed by an especially tough loss against Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion. While the game started with a lead of 2 heading into the second half, PVCA ... (*cont'd p. 6*)





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# News

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## **FRESH (RE)START FOR STUDENT COUNCIL**

by Jayden Russell

**T**he Student Council is taking on a new face this year. Though it's been around for some time, recent years have not seen much activity from student council members. School administrators want to change that.

Mrs. Nina Mozdzanowski, Event Coordinator/Student Leadership Director, says that the role of a student council member should be to “raise school spirit, build a liaison between the student body and the faculty, positively influence the student body, initiate new student body activities, and help bridge the gap between school and community through service activities.”

The Student Council should understand the importance of, and wish to have a more visible and viable presence in the school. Ms. Mozdzanowski described how an ideal candidate in such a council would be “comfortable or eager to grow in leadership, responsible, enthusiastic, diligent, creative, work well with others, organized, and is loyal to PVCA.”

The responsibilities of a student council member include serving at pep-rallies, leading or creating school spirit-building events, and becoming involved in community service projects. Members are also tasked with coordinating school dances and open-houses. The Student Council is expected to initiate, coordinate, and serve in these events, to lead by example and display willingness to actively participate in the events they organize. Another responsibility council members are to uphold is being a liaison between the school and administration. It is their charge to represent the wants and needs of the student body to school leaders.

In this new direction for the Student Council, the administration wishes to have responsible leaders who are fit to take upon themselves the duties and...

*(cont'd p. 5)*

## **FALL RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS STUDENT COMMUNITY**

by Aleannys Centeno-Cruz-

**T**his year's Fall Focus retreat experienced a facelift with a new location at Camp Hume. The high schoolers had an amazing kickoff the first night by spending quality time with one another and bonding with their teacher and staff. The speaker for this year's retreat was Sean Villanueva, an associate pastor at Faith Assembly of God in Hyannis, MA. He was an exceptional speaker, capturing the attention of the youth with a powerful message as well as fun games during his sermons to keep everyone focused on the message.

The trip to the retreat was a lot of fun, with classes separated into two different buses; one specifically for the Juniors and the other for the rest of the high school. According to junior, Jayliana Cabrera, “the dinner was delicious and the bus ride was quiet so I took a nap and listened to music. I

**“I had a better understanding of who God is, so I definitely felt like my relationship with Christ strengthened from that night.”**

woke up 5 minutes before we arrived and when we got there, we walked down the hill to get to our dorms. The dorms were tiny.” This was a fact that the majority of the high school girls agreed with.

During the chapel time, students had a memorable time praising

and spending time with God. Our phrase for this year was “Scarred for Life,” which at first made people curious as to why they would choose that phrase for a high school retreat. Eventually, the meaning behind the phrase was revealed to us.

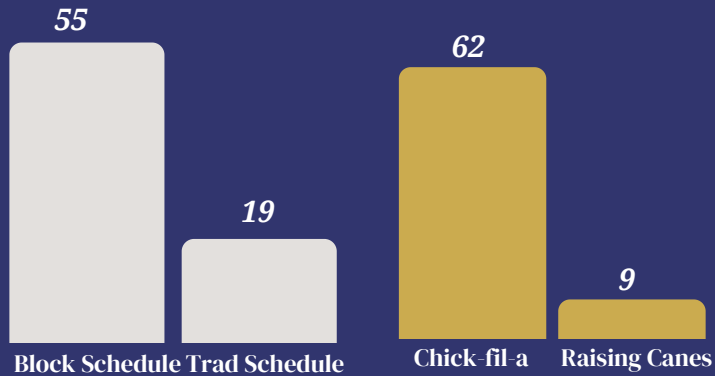
The word “Scar” was used as an acronym representing four words: Simple, Concerned, Acknowledged, and Resilience. Each time we had chapel, Pastor Villanueva introduced each word to the audience and applied it to the overall message from the Bible. On Friday night, Pastor Sean gave us time to acknowledge God and pray. This particular night was extraordinarily moving for the students--tears were shed, friends prayed for each other, and people were very moved by the Holy Spirit and the atmosphere in the room. Sophomore... *(cont'd p.5)*

# Opinion

## SURVEY RESULTS!

compiled by Andrew Griffith-Reynolds

Thank you to all our high school students who took the time to give heartfelt and honest responses. It looks like Rafi has the best hair and Alejandro will most likely be working in space. But people need to get on the Raising Canes train.



## ALY'S CORNER

*Why singing in Spanish and learning a second language is good for you.*

by Aleannys Centeno-Cruz

Every Sunday I get to experience the privilege of attending the Spanish Service at Restoration City Church. One of the things I'm grateful that I get to practice is singing and praising the Lord in Spanish. In a way, it makes me feel a deeper connection to the Lord; it makes me feel more like He's my Father rather than just "God".

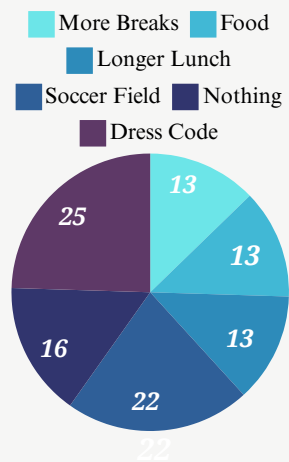
Personally, I grew up around a family who, for their whole life spoke Spanish. Therefore, I had to keep up when it came to understanding another language. This led me to having to switch between English to Spanish and vice versa, pushing my brain to focus more on the words someone else is saying. That is why I think that the majority of the United States population should be able to speak more than just English-- especially since the population is seemingly increasing in its cultural diversity.

Learning more than one language can be particularly favorable, especially when it comes to career opportunities and creating more meaningful connections with the world around you. Health benefits also come with those who can understand more than one language as studies show that because of the constant pattern of having to switch from language to language can help prevent dementia later in life. Additionally to this fact, learning a second language also increases your attention span since bilinguals and multilinguals have to switch between different languages in their head.

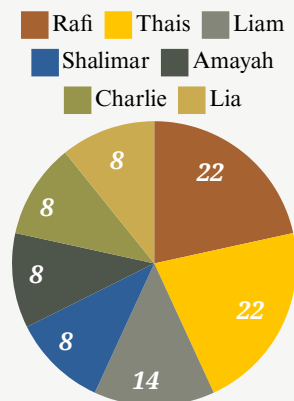
All in all, I think that it is extremely beneficial and important for people to learn a second language, even if you aren't striving to be perfectly fluent. Many countries and nations, such as South Africa and Russia, have many official languages spoken. As Americans, we should work towards becoming more of an inclusive nation by motivating ourselves, as well as encouraging others, into expanding our knowledge by learning a foreign language.

[Delaying Alzheimer's and Dementia by Learning a New Language - Live Lingua](#)

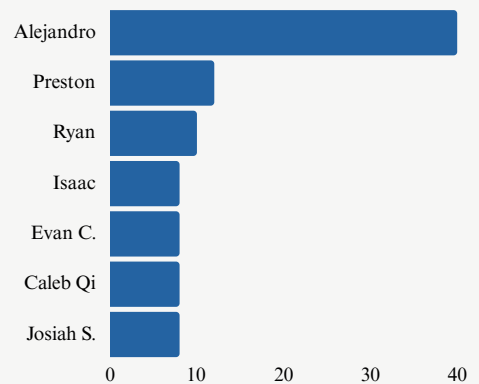
## WHAT WOULD YOU FIX AT PVCA?



## WHO HAS THE BEST HAIR?



## MOST LIKELY TO BECOME AN ASTRONAUT



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# Reviews

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## ARENA

Review by Jayliana Cabrera

*Arena* by Karen Hancock is a fantasy sci-fi about a girl pulled into an emotionally volatile virtual world. Feeling like she needs to overcome her fears, Callie Hayes volunteers for a science project, which leads to her being trapped in a virtual reality with nothing but a cryptic manual to help her escape. Dangerous beings are trying to trap her and kill her. Will she make it out alive?

When I read this a few years ago, I didn't pick up on the

biblical and spiritual allusions-- escaping evil forces, a wise old man with Christ-like qualities, and the manual that leads them to life.

Written by a Christian author, *Arena* deals with Christian values and gives examples of things we deal with in the world today. Callie's struggle against evil represents the struggles of Christians in our world. This action-packed, tear-wrenching story is truly an amazing read. It made me not want to stop turning the pages, I highly recommend this book for middle to high school students.



## MOCKINGJAY

Review by Rachel Kaye

Katniss Everdeen is faced with one of her greatest challenges yet in Suzanne Collins', *Mockingjay*. The districts have entered into a rebellion, and she has become the face of it.

Katniss' love for her family and fearlessness both in and outside the arena help shape her as a person. I also connected with her character when reading her thought process amidst her many difficulties. The conflict surrounding Peeta was very captivating and made me like

his character a lot more. And the plot twist within the second to last chapter came as a surprise.

However, the ending of the book felt rushed. I wish the author had gone into more detail about Katniss' return to District Twelve and her recovery from the war. But, overall, I enjoyed the book and definitely recommend 'The Hunger Games' to anyone in search of their next read and hoping to deeply connect with a brave and determined character.

## (FALL RETREAT CONT'D FROM P.3)

...states that, "I had a better understanding of who God is, so I definitely felt like my relationship with Christ strengthened from that night."...time to acknowledge God and pray. This particular night was extraordinarily moving for the students-- tears were shed, friends prayed for each other, and people were very moved by the Holy Spirit and the atmosphere in the room. Sophomore Jayden Mugisa states that, "I had a better understanding of who God is, so I definitely felt like my relationship with Christ strengthened from that night."

As for sports and game activities, the results were quite impressive. Sophomores won in a competitive soccer game against the seniors. In volleyball, the Juniors won against the Freshman. As for the mechanical bull, the Freshman lasted the longest with 2 minutes and 21 seconds.

This year also brought a new event called the AA relay-- a timed activity that consists of hula-hooping, ump rope, leapfrog and singing happy birthday twice all while answering a randomized question between each activity. Freshmen took the win with 3 minutes and 31 seconds.

All in all, the high-schoolers had an amazing time at Hume. All the students spent an awesome time with each other and made numerous new memories with friends.

## (STUDENT COUNCIL CONT'D FROM P. 3)

...responsibilities required. They also wish for members to have initiative and the willingness to lead in example, and the ability to coordinate and serve well with others. "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way." – John C. Maxwell.

### ANIMALS

by Bella Tobias

Animals are wonderful creatures.  
Some are playful, kind, and gentle.  
Some are dangerous and pests.  
Some are pets like dogs and cats.  
Some animals are endangered and threatened.  
Please protect the animals around you.

### FRIENDS

by Emma Townsend in 4th grade

Friends are here,  
A reason on this earth.  
Friends are here,  
They have so much worth.  
No matter what they look like  
Short and tall,  
Friends are here  
For us all.





**(FEATURE STORY CONT'D FROM P.3)**

...The next several weeks leading up to the first day of school Elina felt curious and excited about PVCA, especially after seeing the school's website. It is the largest school she has ever attended.

After only three weeks, Elina said she not only liked the school, but she noticed the kindness of the students here. Caleb described the students and teachers as "warm hearted and helpful."

Still, Sam, Caleb, and Elina have each had their challenges. For Sam the most difficult has been speaking and understanding English, "All the slang words and the jokes I could not understand right now," he admits. Like Sam, Caleb also struggles with his English. He has also found US History a challenge because,



understandably it's a subject he's never studied before. "My classmates all know it, so there's some questions I even cannot understand." But he is quick to add, "I'm figuring it out and hopefully I will be better."

Some of Elina's biggest concerns about coming to America revolved around her relationships. She wondered if she would be able to make good friends. She described herself as a person who does not like to 'hide things in her heart,' but rather share things with people. She wondered if she would find trustworthy friends here.

Elina also said she worried about what would happen to her relationship with God. A friend of hers who had previously gone to America told her their relationship with the Lord became more distant after coming. This was especially concerning because her friend was going to a Christian school, but there weren't many Christians. Elina said she worried, "will I be influenced by the non-Christians?"

After getting settled at PVCA, Elina says feels more at peace and thankful for the overall environment here. But it has required trusting God throughout the process.

Throughout this journey, Elina says that her mother influenced her the most. When hesitating whether or not she should come to America, Elina's mom was always encouraging her to go. She told Elina, "I feel like this path is the path that God prepared for you."

**(VOLLEYBALL CONT'D)**

encouragement. Both captains, Sadie Keegan and Kylie Schmidt, have been exceeding the standard.

An example of this that stood out is when Sadie was injured and had to sit out a game. Despite that she still encouraged, helped, and was there for her team and the JV team as well. The captains also organized a lunch every Monday for the varsity team to have fellowship and do a Bible study.

Gracen Baxter, a floater for varsity and JV A, and also a first year player, has noted that, "Varsity is competitive in a different way. It's nice playing up and having the challenge of being on varsity. All of the girls are super encouraging and are always giving the glory to God."

Following this, PVCA (who is division 5) most recently won against a division 3 team. In fact, in the last three games they have shown a glimmer of better things to come, with three decisive wins over Chicopee and SABIS. After working through so much at the beginning of the season, the wins feel that much sweeter.

**A FALL HAIKU**

by Mrs. Samantha Mozdzanowski

Gourd season is now  
Runny noses do abound  
Sub plans are ready

**(SOCCER CONT'D)**

"I feel like a challenge for the team has been our teamwork, as well as putting our practice into the actual game," shared senior, Andy Axtmann.

The next game against Smith Voc was also tough, with a lot of pressure on our defensive game, and ended in a loss. But a few strong wins like the 6-1 victory against Putnam have kept the boy's spirits alive.

"Not wanting to let my team down and knowing my teammates feel the same way is what keeps me going," says sophomore, Nate Hill. Although the Eagles have had a rough start to the season, they continue to play hard and to work on playing together.



**Angelina Donoso**



**Aden Howell**



**Alaia Spivey**