

Shark Times

December 2025: News from YHIS

Letter from: Designer, Libby Moon

The members of the Shark Times have worked hard to put together this issue. We are so happy to share these articles with all of you.

The last month of 2025 included several events related to Christmas, including the Christmas Concert and Market held on our campus. Christmas is one of the most significant holidays celebrated worldwide. Therefore, in this issue, we have included articles for you to learn more about Christmas. Not only that, but we also celebrate the quality of the month, which was compassion. Compassion is one of the most important qualities that we can have during our school life and beyond.

By reading the article about compassion, we hope you can learn more about compassion and learn how to be more compassionate to the people around you. Lastly, we also wrote about the different types of recommendations, from book recommendations to movies, and song recommendations. We hope that by reading different recommendations, you can find your favorite one.

We hope you enjoyed your Christmas vacation and will start the new year strongly!

Sincerely,
Libby Moon



Table of Contents

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- JiWoo Hong (G6)

SCHOOL

MS Lock-in 3

Christmas Concert 4~5

Christmas Market 6

WORLD EVENTS

Christmas: Did you know 7

US Military Strikes Venezuela 8~10

LIFEPLUS QUALITY

Compassion 11

RECOMMENDATION

Book Recommendation 12

Movie Recommendation 13

Song Recommendation 14

SPOTLIGHT

Student Spotlight 15

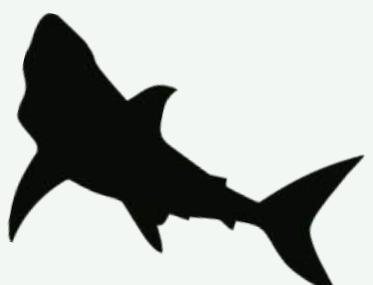
Teacher Spotlight 16~17

COMIC

Comic on snow 18

PICTURES

..... 19~20



Middle School Lock In

Ellie Lee

This year's Middle Lock-In kicked off at 3:40 p.m. with an orientation in the Auditorium, where students had already gathered, excited for the night to come. The first games started soon after, starting at 4 PM, prepared and hosted by Chloe and GaOn in the Collaboration Space. After that, at 4:30, Jiyoung and JiWoo conducted a truly boisterous round of charades, which involved lots of laughter while students attempted to depict words without using their voices.

The night got even more intense at 5:30 when Jackie and Andy presented a StuCo-designed Escape Room challenge. Students collaborated, sought out clues, and solved puzzles in a test of their collaboration and creativity. Then, at 6:30, everyone sat down in the collaboration space for a delicious pizza dinner. After dinner, students headed back to the Auditorium by 6:55 for the high-energy play of "Order Up." The next round of games began at 7:40 led by Jin and Vova while the final games were prepared by Agnes and RaOn at 8:30.



At 9:00 p.m., the long-awaited Gift Time started, the highlight of the night for many. This event included gift exchanges and surprises that filled the room with joy and excitement. At 9:50, some students headed home using the North Gate, although some stayed on campus to enjoy free time, starting late-night ramen at 10:00. At 11:30, students got ready for bed, and lights went out at midnight to bring the night of memories to a gentle close.

This year's Middle School Lock-In was very memorable. The laughter, teamwork, and shared moments throughout the night created memories that these students will hold onto for a long time.



2025 Christmas Concert

Charles Kim

On Friday, December 12th, the annual YHIS & YIA Christmas Concert took place from 9:40 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. The performance demonstrated the Middle School (MS) and High School (HS) Band and Choir students' hard work during the semester, with a variety of familiar, exciting, and beautiful Christmas music.



The concert started with the YIA Middle School Band performing two short, spirited pieces: "Jingle Bells" and "Enchanted Rock," grabbing the audience's attention. Next, the YHIS Middle School Bands took the stage, where the A-Day Band played the cheerful and upbeat "Siberian Sleigh-Ride", while the B-Day Band performed "Ancient Carol", a calmer song. The MS Bands then combined to perform "Nicholas Variations" to finish one chapter of the concert with a beautiful and gentle piece. The performances clearly demonstrated the effort put in by the MS students, and one student noted that he could see the students' hard work they put in to play their instruments as a unified group.

The program continued with the YHIS High School Bands. The 5th Period Band performed two stunning pieces: "Greensleeves," a grand and emotional piece, and "Brazilian Sleigh Bells," a jolly, quick-beated song.



The 8th Period Band followed with three pieces. "Joy," which clearly demonstrated its name, the touching and calm "Rippling Watercolors," and finally, "A Very Merry March," which grabbed the audience's attention with eight hidden popular Christmas melodies.

One 11th grader stated that the HS Band performances were incredibly memorable and well-prepared. 10th grade band student MinJun added that he was happy that their songs were performed better than ever.

The concert then transitioned to the choir performances, beginning with the High School Choir. A smaller group opened with a Christmas song that felt lovely and warm, "That's Christmas to Me," which featured a beautiful solo by G9 Jenny and the small choir's flawless harmonies. G9 student Ray commented that this was his personal favorite song they prepared. The HS Choir continued with a perfectly coordinated performance of the classic "Carol of the Bells."



2025 Christmas Concert

Charles Kim

The Middle School students then came on stage. The 6th Grade Choir sang "Deck the Halls" and "Christmas Songs of Joy," which brought jolliness to the auditorium and audience. The 7th/8th Grade Choir then performed "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and "Joy on Christmas Morning." A Grade 10 student commented that the younger students' performances brought back the lively excitement of Christmas from his childhood.

As the concert neared its end, the full High School Choir returned. They performed "Christmas Roundelay," a grand and fun song. Then they sang the famous "O Holy Night," which included glorious solos from Grade 12 student Joy and Grade 11 student Kaiden. Their last song was "Los Peces en el Río," an energetic Spanish carol. To end the concert, a Chamber Choir, composed of some MS and HS choirs, sang "Joyful Joyful," a delightful, jazzy piece. G11 Sarah and G7 Aram stunned the audience with their beautiful solos, and the song's energy brought joy to the audience as the concert ended.



Overall, the 2025 Christmas Concert was an exciting celebration of the holiday season and students' hard work. Many students, teachers, and parents enjoyed listening to all of the amazing pieces prepared. The high school and middle school band and choir performances were praised for how well-prepared their performances were. In the end, the hard work and passion from every student and teacher who performed and worked all semester were what brought together this year's unforgettable Christmas Concert that successfully brought the Christmas spirit to the school community.



2025 Christmas Market

Libby Moon

On Friday, December 12th, the annual YHIS and YIA Christmas Market was held. In the Christmas Market, parents, students, and staff have the chance to sell various items. From various kinds of food and objects, people are able to purchase the items they like. People get the chance not only to buy objects, but also enjoy different activities that are held by various people.

People are also able to earn prizes through a random lottery. The prizes are all very different kinds of tickets from many places, including cafés, restaurants, and enjoyable activities. Also, there are prizes that cost a lot of money; one of those was the first-place prize, which was an iPad.



There are also various performances that happen during the Christmas Market. One of the performances was held by our YHIS afterschool band. It was made up of members Jackie Zhang in 7th grade, Eunwoo Jeong in 6th grade, Lucy Kim in 9th grade, Jiwoo Jung in 9th grade, Charles Kim in 10th grade, Ms. Forstrom, and Ms. Figueiroa.



Comments from various students:

Matthew Shin (G10): I was teaching how to do CPR in the Christmas market booth as part of our red cross activity. CPR is an emergency life-saving procedure to use when someone's heartbeat has stopped. Using hands-on mannequins, we showed people how to do CPR. I believe that it was a very effective time to teach what CPR is, since there are many people around to learn the importance of CPR and how to do it.

Mingyeol Kwon (G10): There were many booths for the Christmas market. Many booths not only sold various kinds of foods to students but also provided numerous fun activities that were helpful to educate students. For example, there was a CPR activity in which students could learn how to do CPR for a sudden emergency situation.

Daniel Jung (G9): Overall, it was good because there were so many delicious foods. Also, it was so much fun because there were so many great performances. Overall, it was a fun experience, and if I have another chance, I would like to participate again.



Christmas: Did You Know?

Jackie Zhang

1. Did you know that Santa's original clothing color was green? It changed to red because Coca Cola used Santa to advertise Coke.
2. Did you know Christmas was illegal in USA? In 1659, the USA made Christmas illegal because they thought it made people lazy.
3. Did you know the first fake Christmas tree was made in Germany with goose hair? In Germany, they dyed goose hair with green ink and made fake Christmas trees.
4. Did you know Jingle Bells was not originally a Christmas song? It was first a Thanksgiving song.
5. Did you know Christmas was originally celebrated on January 6th? It changed to December 25th due to changes in the calendar.
6. Did you know that the world's largest snowman is 37 meters tall?
7. Did you know that in Japan people eat KFC on Christmas?
8. Did you know Iceland has 13 Santas?
9. Did you know in South Africa, people eat fried caterpillars for Christmas.
10. Did you know that a town in Italy actually celebrates Christmas with witches instead of Santa?



US Military Strikes Venezuela and Captures President Maduro

Joy Tham

This article was last updated on January 4, 2026.

Introduction

On January 3, 2026, the United States launched a coordinated military strike across Venezuela, including the capital of Caracas, resulting in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, who were subsequently flown to New York to face criminal charges.

Explosions and the sound of low-flying aircraft were reported early that morning, prompting Venezuelan authorities to declare a state of emergency and denounce the operation as a serious act of aggression. U.S. President Donald Trump confirmed the operation in public statements, describing it as a major coup against what his administration labelled a narco-state and pledging temporary oversight of Venezuelan governance.

The U.S. military action marks a dramatic escalation in tensions between the two countries and the most direct U.S. intervention in Latin America in decades.



Timeline

Early on January 3, explosions rocked Caracas and other Venezuelan regions, as U.S. military aircraft struck key military and strategic infrastructure.

Within hours, U.S. forces captured President Maduro and his wife, then transported them to the U.S. for prosecution on charges including narcotics trafficking.



Nicolas Maduro on board the USS Iwo Jima.



Venezuelan state media and official government statements condemned the assault as a violation of sovereignty and aggressive military action, asserting that civilian casualties had occurred.

Later that morning, President Trump held a press conference where he publicly confirmed the details of the operation and outlined the U.S. position. At the podium, he said the U.S. would “run” Venezuela until a “safe, proper and judicious transition” could occur, signaling intent to oversee governance and political reform in Caracas. He emphasized months of planning this operation and defended the military action as necessary to combat drug trafficking and criminal activity allegedly linked to Maduro’s administration, and as part of a broader effort to stabilize regional security.



US Military Strikes Venezuela and Captures President Maduro

Joy Tham



Following the operation, Venezuelan authorities named Vice President Delcy Rodríguez as interim president. Rodríguez has publicly condemned the U.S. military operation as an illegal attack on Venezuelan sovereignty, described Maduro as the country's "only president," and demanded the immediate release of both him and his wife while rejecting claims that she would cooperate with Washington.

Context

This confrontation between the U.S. and Venezuela was shaped by long-standing ideological conflict, layered onto disagreements over drugs, oil, migration, and sovereignty.

From the U.S. government's perspective, officials portrayed Venezuela under Maduro as an authoritarian socialist state that produced economic collapse, mass emigration, and regional instability. Venezuelan officials have been accused of involvement in drug trafficking, tolerating or protecting transnational gangs such as Tren de Aragua, and using oil revenues to entrench power while bypassing sanctions.

American officials also linked Venezuela's governance and ideology to increased migration pressures toward the U.S. border, arguing that corruption, organized crime, and socialist economic policies had collectively undermined public order and regional security. Venezuela's authorities rejected these claims and framed the U.S. action as an ideologically motivated attempt to overthrow a left-wing socialist government that challenged U.S. influence in Latin America.

Officials in Caracas argued that U.S. sanctions, not socialism, were responsible for economic hardship and migration. They also denied state involvement in drug trafficking and gang activity and accused the U.S. government of using crime and migration narratives to justify the intervention and gain leverage over Venezuela's oil resources. The state media of Venezuela described the strike as a part of a broader historical pattern of U.S. opposition to socialist governments in the region.

Altogether, the opposing security, economic, and ideological narratives help to explain how years of mutual distrust and escalating tensions culminated in the recent military intervention.

Statements from Other Countries

Many countries strongly condemned the U.S. military action as a violation of international law, asserting that foreign military action undermines state sovereignty.



US Military Strikes Venezuela and Captures President Maduro

Joy Tham

France's foreign minister said the operation violated "the principle of non-use of force" and stressed that lasting political solutions must come from the Venezuelan people. Colombia expressed deep concern, calling for "unity and solidarity among the peoples of Latin America."

Brazil's president stated that the U.S. operation "crossed an unacceptable line" and represented an "extremely dangerous precedent for the entire international community."

China's foreign ministry said it was "deeply shocked" by the U.S. use of force and called for the U.S. to "stop violating other countries' sovereignty and security."

Russia's foreign ministry denounced the strike as "an act of armed aggression" and stated that Venezuela must be "guaranteed the right to determine its own destiny."

The U.N. Security Council scheduled a meeting to discuss the situation, with several member states calling for diplomacy and political solutions rather than further military escalation.



Conclusion

By the time this article is released, Maduro should have made his first appearance in a Manhattan federal court on Monday, January 5, 2026. Right now, observers are watching closely to see how the trial will address questions of sovereignty, legal jurisdiction, and the legitimacy of Maduro's capture. Meanwhile, diplomats and regional leaders are monitoring potential impacts on Venezuelan stability, humanitarian conditions, and broader geopolitical alignments. Whatever the outcome, this event has highlighted the tension between international law, security, and diplomacy, and has set up a consequential period for both Venezuela and U.S. foreign relations.



Compassion

Daniel An

In modern society, where students go to academy and study all day long, it's shown that younger people's average emotional quotient (EQ), or emotional intelligence (EI), scores are decreasing over time. It is also shown that the difference between older generations' and younger generations' EQ scores are getting increasingly significant. This result is actually obvious. Everyone is spending more time interacting with screens rather than face-to-face, and there are a lot of academic pressures and stresses. Now, some might be curious as to why EQ is being discussed in this section instead of compassion. The reason for this would be that compassion is the backbone of EQ, or at least a crucial part of it.

According to *Cambridge Dictionary*, compassion is a feeling of sympathy for people who are suffering and wishing to help them. In simpler terms, it's understanding other people's problems and situations and caring for them. Nowadays, where the average EQ/EI is decreasing, people display compassion less often compared to before, which is a severe problem. If this decline continues, in the future, there won't be any humanity left, just cold-hearted nihilists existing on this planet.

Everyone should not want this future, unless they're mad, so here are some practical ways to apply compassion in your daily life:

1. Try to have more face-to-face interactions with others. In this modern society full of screens, search for ways to have face-to-face interactions with others.
 2. Search for ways to ease someone else's day, even if it's small. If you find small ways to ease someone's day, don't ignore these ways because they are small; just do it.
 3. Think before you act. First, put yourself in another's perspective, think, and then act.
 4. Try showing gratitude toward others. Being grateful will make others feel better but will also develop your compassion.



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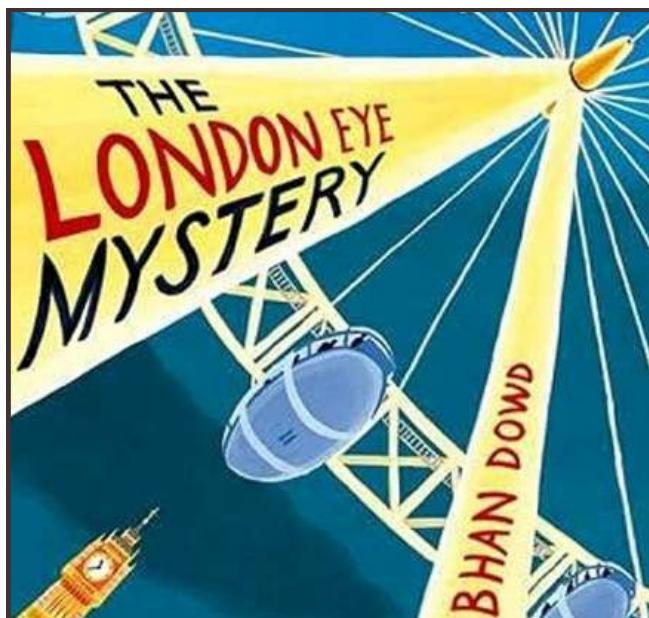
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Book Recommendation

Ella Kim

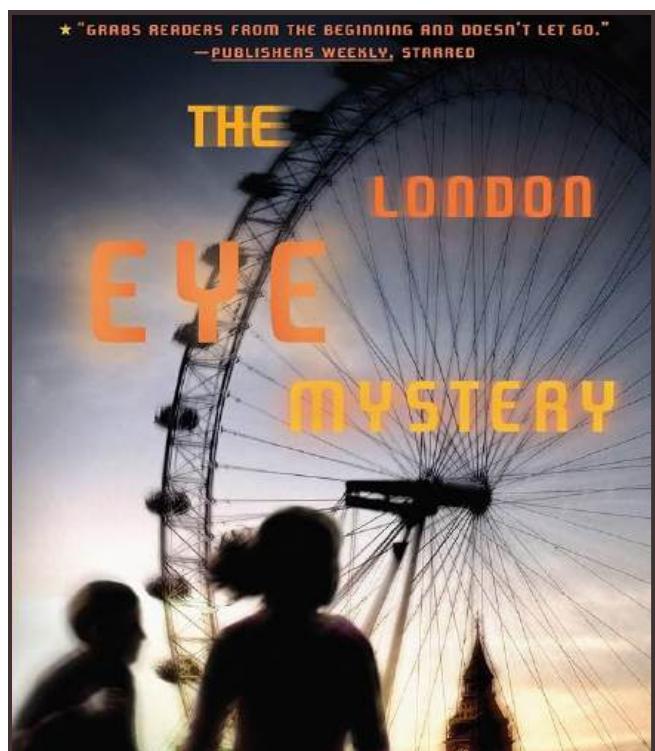
Recently in English class, we learned about suspense stories, and read *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd. We started to read this book in class but stopped halfway. After reading only half of it, I was already very curious about the ending so I finished it at home.



The book is about two siblings, Ted and Kat, who live in London. One day, their cousin Salim comes to visit, and they all go to see the London Eye, which is a huge Ferris Wheel. Salim gets in one of the capsules, but when it came back down, he was gone. Nobody can figure out what happened to him. Ted, who has a unique way of thinking, decides to use the clues that Salim left to solve the mystery. The story includes his investigation as he tries to find Salim.

What I most liked about this book was how incredibly suspenseful it was. Most of the chapters ended with a question or a clue about the mystery. I also liked Ted's character, who used a special way of thinking to solve mysteries. After reading *The London Eye Mystery*, I realized that paying attention to every small detail is helpful, especially to solve mysteries. For example, Ted noticed things in a picture he saw that others missed.

I would highly recommend *The London Eye Mystery* to anyone who enjoys mysteries and suspense stories. This story is one that keeps you guessing until the end of the book.



Movie Recommendation

Libby Moon

The *Zootopia* 1 movie was an animated movie made in 2016 produced by Walt Disney Animation Studio in the USA. When it was released in 2016, it quickly gained popularity and earned one of the highest incomes for a Disney animated movie. Now, *Zootopia* 2 has been released, causing people to talk about these movies even more.

Voice cast

- Ginnifer Goodwines: Judy Hopps (Bunny)
- Jason Bateman: Nick Wilde (Red Fox)
- Idris Elba: Chief Bogo (African Buffalo)
- Jenny Slate: Dawn Bellwether (Sheep)
- Nate Torrence: Benjamin Clawhauser (Cheetah)
- J.K. Simmons: Mayor Lionheart (Lion)

Brief description about the main characters

- Judy Hopps: She is one of the main characters in the movie, who became the first rabbit police officer in the Zootopia police department. She tries to show passion and courage in all of things she does.
- Nick Wilde: He is also one of the main characters in the movie and is a con-artist. He gets forced by Judy to help her unwillingly. He uses his charisma and slyness to make a living.



Summary of Zootopia 1

Zootopia 1 is about Judy Hopps, an optimistic rabbit who moves to the city of Zootopia to try and become the first rabbit police officer. Facing prejudice and relegated to parking duty, she seizes an opportunity to solve a case of 14 missing predators, forcing her to partner with a cynical fox con-artist named Nick Wilde. Their investigation leads them to a conspiracy that threatens the city's harmony and forces them to challenge their own stereotypes.



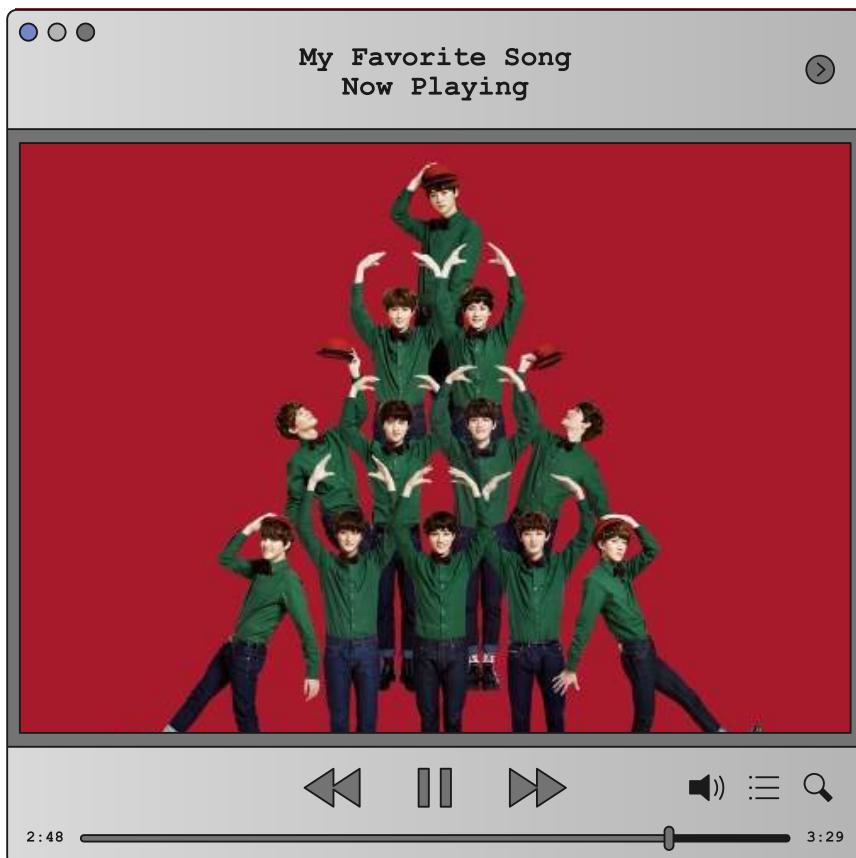
Teachers' thoughts on whether or not to watch Zootopia 2

- Mrs. Carson: It made me laugh out loud! It's super funny, has an important message about loving one another despite our seeming differences, and has a fun, fast-paced plot. I definitely recommend watching it!
- Ms. Carpenter: Movie sequels are often not as good as the original, but *Zootopia* 2 was just as funny and entertaining as the first. It has a great message about learning how to accept your differences with people and still work together. I really enjoyed going to see it during the midnight premiere.



Song Recommendation

Jiwoo Hong

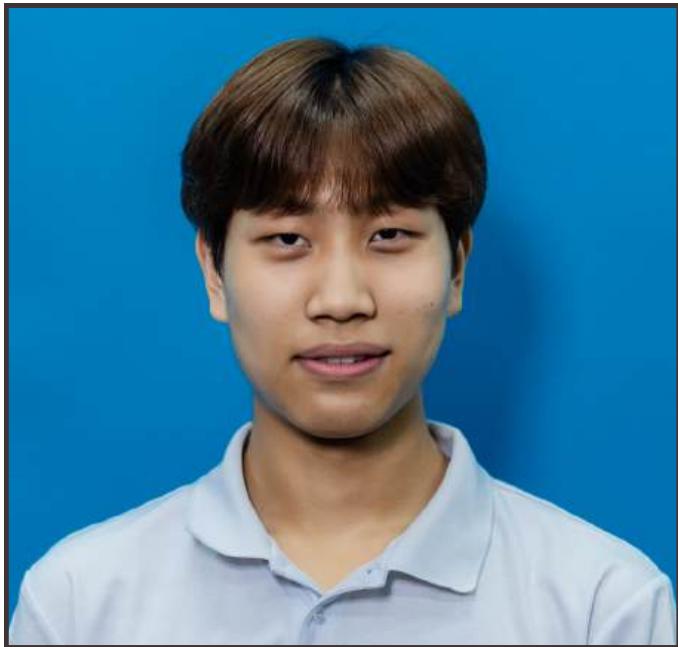


What song will you listen to this Christmas? If you don't have one to listen to, I strongly recommend you listen to "First Snow" by Exo. Even though the lyrics are in Korean, the beat is very good and catchy.

The song starts out saying “그래도 만약 너를 만나면 / 눈물 차올라 / 바보 같은 난 아무 말 못 해 / 말해 줘 메리 메리 크리스마스/ 안녕 잘 지내는거지” which means 'If I ever see you again, tears would fill my eyes / I'd stand there like a fool, unable to speak. / Just tell me, 'Merry, Merry Christmas,'/ and ask me softly, 'Have you been well?'. The lyrics' meaning is to say words to one's loved ones, specifically one's ex. In Korea, the first snow symbolizes first love and cherished memories.

Student Spotlight

Sarah Lee



In December 2025, *Shark Times* had the opportunity to sit down with Kaiden Jung, a junior at YHIS, who is soon leaving us for Korea after completing this semester. The interview, which reflects on his story, resonated with many, encapsulating the essence of growth, change, and the lasting impact of experiences shared during his time at YHIS.

Q1: Could you briefly introduce yourself?

Kaiden Jung: I am Kaiden Jung and am in 11th grade at YHIS. I am from Korea and was born in 2008.

Q2: Could you share what initially brought you to this international school in China and how you felt during your very first days here?

Kaiden Jung: Due to my parents' jobs, I attend this international school since it offered a great opportunity for me to learn English. When I first arrived at this school, I found it challenging to adapt.

Q3: Looking back, how would you describe the transition from Korea to an international school environment? Was it easier or harder than you expected?

Kaiden Jung: It was more difficult than expected since attending a Korean school meant I would not have to learn a new language. However, at my current school, English is the primary language, which makes it challenging for me to understand what others are saying. For this reason, I would say it was slightly harder than I expected.

Q4: Was there a particular event, project, or activity that had a meaningful impact on you?

Kaiden Jung: I believe the Assembly time has had a significant impact on me, as we learn many valuable lessons that have positively influenced my life.

Q5: Among your friendships and relationships here, is there a moment or memory that stands out as especially meaningful?

Kaiden Jung: During the Spring trips, I had a wonderful time with my classmates and built strong relationships with many people in my class through various activities.

Q6: What's one thing about our school community that you think you'll miss the most?

Kaiden Jung: I will miss the great teachers who helped me overcome difficulties.

Q7: How has being in an international environment affected the way you view cultures, people, or even yourself?

Kaiden Jung: When I started at this school, I spent the first two years messing around. Now, I want to study harder and connect with more people.

Q8: If you could leave a message for your friends or teachers here, what would you want to say?

Kaiden Jung: I appreciate my teachers for motivating me and forcing me to grow. I also want to thank my friends for making wonderful memories together.

Q9: Finally, as you close this chapter of your life, how would you describe what this school and community have meant to you?

Kaiden Jung: I would say growth is the most significant outcome, as this school has profoundly influenced my understanding of personal development. Since I started attending, my growth has been so remarkable that I no longer recognize my former self.

Teacher Spotlight

Eunwoo Jeong



Q1: Could you introduce yourself to our audience?

Dr. Aquino: I'm Dr. Jess Aquino, and I am from the Philippines. I have been in the field of education for almost 20 years. I have had experience teaching in the United States, being a principal in the Philippines, and then, last year, I moved to China.

Q2: How did you end up teaching here in YHIS?

Dr. Aquino: I applied for several teaching positions in some other schools, but I think I am meant to be here because it made my relationship to God closer. I had started drawing further away from God after I had this unfortunate event where I lost my younger brother to cancer. I think this is the answer to my prayers because when I came here it restored my belief in God and I have the time to reflect on my life. This was also the school that never gave up on my application.

Q3: What do you like about our school?

Dr. Aquino: Our school is a diversified school so we have a lot of students with many different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, and I like that I can learn from all of these students with different backgrounds and that they can learn from me.

Q4: Why did you become a teacher, especially in math?

Dr. Aquino: My ultimate dream was really to become a doctor--a physician--but life is hard and I only got a scholarship to get a teaching degree. Since I am not fond of memorizing a lot of terms, which is required if I chose science, I decided to take math even though my math in high school was not that strong. However, I was able to overcome it when I enrolled in getting math as my specialization in college. In college, I learned a lot and it was a good thing that my professors were very good at teaching. A bonus was that I graduated with a Latin honor, *cum laude*.

Q5: What is the most challenging thing when you teach and manage students?

Dr. Aquino: The most challenging thing is when students are not interested in the lesson that I am teaching because I think it is really hard to connect with the students if they don't really like the lesson or if they don't like the subject. When I was teaching in the US, it was a very different group of students. Most of them don't like math and that makes it really difficult to teach the subject. One challenge for me is making math lessons interesting so that students would be willing to engage in discussions.

Q6: What has been the most memorable or rewarding moment for you while teaching at YHIS?

Dr. Aquino: I have one student who usually doodles artwork on the whiteboard telling me that they love my class and that they love geometry. For me, one of the most rewarding things for me is seeing students loving the subject or their learning experience in my class.

Teacher Spotlight

Eunwoo Jeong

Q4: What goals or plans do you have for your future at YHIS?

Dr. Aquino: Actually, now in my almost one year of staying in YHIS, I got promoted to the director of online learning, so I am only teaching part time until my replacement can come. I think the goal that I have now is to focus on my work as a principal and teacher.



Q8: What is one piece of advice you would like to give our secondary body?

Dr. Aquino: For me, based on my experience, high school is the most fun, enjoyable, and memorable experience in life, so enjoy every moment of your learning journey because this happens once in a lifetime. This makes it important to enjoy your stay, learning, and every opportunity used to learn. Also, the teachers here are very supportive, and we all want you to succeed. Just focus on what you want to be and your goal while not neglecting that you still need to enjoy this time while in high school and what you are learning.



I will come soon



PICTURES



PICTURES

