

SHARK TIMES

Letter From The Copy Editor



Welcome to the January and February Issue of the Shark Times!

We're excited to present this edition, which highlights key events from January and February. It's also our first publication of 2025 and the fourth issue of the 2024-2025 school year.

The Secondary Newspaper Club has worked diligently to bring well-crafted news stories to the YHIS community, while also providing a platform for students to share their diverse experiences, opinions, and ideas on a range of topics.

2025 has already brought moments of excitement and joy that we're eager to share: we celebrated China Day, our middle school robotics team made us proud by bringing home three victories,

and the high school boys conquered yet another sports season. This edition captures the energy of the past two months. We've also reflected on the values of service and persistence, highlighting lessons we've learned along the way.

Beyond our YHIS community, we've included articles that cover global events, offering insights into the more serious news of war and conflict around the world.

Thank you for your continued support of the Shark Times. We appreciate your engagement and hope you enjoy reading this month's issue!

Sincerely,
Joy Tham,
Shark Times Copy Editor

JANUARY & FEBRUARY NEWS

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CHINA DAY

Sarah Lee



On January 25th, 2025, YHIS and YIA took part in China Day to celebrate the Lunar New Year. The event began at 10 AM, filled with joy and laughter. In the morning, there were many activities related to Chinese culture, and in the afternoon, students and teachers showcased impressive performances.

Students were divided into several groups to participate in various activities. Students wrote wishes and phrases on cards to celebrate the Lunar New Year, created DIY badges, and played relay race games held in the ECC wing. They also stamped designs and auspicious Chinese characters on red envelopes.

Stella, a high school freshman at YHIS, shared that it was nice to experience Chinese cultural activities that she may otherwise not have experienced. Similarly, Judy, another freshman, said that she had a great time enjoying the different cultural activities. Overall, the morning of China Day concluded joyfully, filled with wonderful memories and experiences shared with friends.

In the afternoon, students from all grade levels and teachers participated in various performances. The students and teachers sang and danced to celebrate Chinese culture, building excitement for the Lunar New Year. According to Stella, who performed in the show, the performances from the different grades were diverse and lively, allowing her to fully immerse herself in the experience. She was impressed by how vibrant the overall atmosphere felt. However, she also noted her disappointment in not being allowed to choose the songs she would perform on stage. Despite this, she appreciated the opportunity to mix with students from other grades to practice and perform together.

The China Day celebration concluded successfully, leaving everyone with unforgettable memories. Judy mentioned that it was particularly memorable to prepare props for the activities with her friends and teachers. I would like to express my gratitude to the performers, teachers, and emcees who contributed to our memorable experiences throughout the preparation process and on the day of the event.



THE BEST HS BASKETBALL SEASON IN YHIS HISTORY

Joe Rauhala



The high school basketball season wrapped up with the LifePlus High School Basketball Tournament, hosted by TIS (Tianjin International School), ending as a massive success for the Yantai teams. The YHIS boys' team won their first basketball trophy, as they finished 2nd place, and the YIA boys also impressively reached the semi-finals of the tournament. The YIA girls also had a great tournament, because while they finished last, they tied against ISQ (Qingdao) and overall played very well.

The basketball season started in early November following the end of the volleyball season. Despite scheduling conflicts, the teams practiced hard 2 to 3 times a week. While the YHIS and YIA boys' teams played a few friendly games in December, the YEASA Tournament was the first major event of the season. Hosted by YHIS, despite initial expectations, the YHIS boys' team won the tournament by beating all the teams in the competition: YIA, YWIES (YewWah International Education School), and WZIS (Weihai Zhongshi International School). The YIA boys' team finished in second place, beating YewWah and Weihai.

Then, the LifePlus High School Basketball Tournament was hosted by TIS from February 13th to February 15th. YHIS and YIA sent separate boys' teams to the tournament, and YIA sent a girls' team that included a few YHIS basketball players. The first day of the tournament started incredibly well for the YHIS boys, with the team drawing with CDIS (Chengdu) and beating WYIS (Wuhan). However, the second day's games were more difficult for the team, as the YHIS team lost to TIS in the morning, but the team bounced back and beat both YIA and ISQ to secure 2nd seed for the first time in YHIS basketball history.

Despite the YIA girls' team playing very well, they only drew one game against ISQ and lost every other game. The girls started by playing CDIS and TIS on Thursday but unfortunately lost both games. Friday wasn't much better for the girls' team, because although they drew against ISQ, they lost to WYIS, meaning that the YIA girls' team got last seed and had to face WYIS in the quarterfinals on Saturday. Unfortunately, the YIA girls lost the game to WYIS, thus finishing 5th in the tournament.



THE BEST HS BASKETBALL SEASON IN YHIS HISTORY

Joe Rauhala

Because the YHIS boys' team got 2nd seed, it meant that they automatically qualified for the semifinals and would not have to play their first game until Saturday at 11 A.M. The team would face the winner of the CDIS – WYIS quarterfinal match, which turned out to be the Wuhan team. YIA also qualified for the other semifinal, as they beat ISQ in the quarterfinals. They were to face the top-ranked team, TIS. Despite YIA's best efforts, TIS came out on top in the semifinal, which meant that YIA would play in the third-place match. YHIS's and WYIS's semifinal, however, was much more eventful. YHIS had a slow start in the 1st quarter but caught up with WYIS in the 3rd quarter and even passed them in the 4th quarter. However, WYIS scored a buzzer-beater 3-pointer to tie the game and send it into overtime.

The overtime was incredibly competitive, with multiple major players getting fouled out and incredible buzzer beaters, including Justin Jin's ridiculous 3-pointer, which was shot from very close to half court, to tie the game right at the end of the 5th quarter. With an incredible bounce pass from Eric and great finishing work from Justin, YHIS was able to pull away and win the game in the 8th quarter 39-36. This meant that YHIS reached their first-ever basketball finals and would play against TIS.



Since the YHIS team was exhausted from the long and competitive semifinals, TIS went into the finals having the advantage of energy. They showed hard work and great efforts but eventually, TIS won the finals 38-20. The YHIS boys' team still got 2nd place though, which is something a Yantai team had never achieved before. YIA sadly lost their third-place match, but they still finished in a respectable 4th place position. All in all, YHIS can be very proud of the teams' performances and achievements.



MIDDLE SCHOOLERS DOMINATE ROBOTICS TOURNAMENT

Ellie Lee

Throughout the school year, the Robotics program at our school has expanded students' interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It has also enhanced and promoted teamwork, which was put to the test at the VEX Robotics Competition.

The Middle School VEX Robotics Competition took place on January 11th at Wuhan Yangtze International School. Twenty-seven teams from seven international schools took part in this competition. Six of these teams represented YHIS. Each team was expected to bring a robot to the competition. These robots were designed to complete tasks specific to the tournament, which included moving, grabbing objects, climbing, and balancing. The main objective of the game at the tournament was to use robots to place balls in goals to earn points while working around physical challenges and under the constraints of time. Thus, the hard work that students have spent putting together and reconstructing their robots through trial and error is commendable.



Jimin Yu, a YHIS participant in the competition, said that her team faced several challenges during the tournament. Despite being disappointed by the overall outcome of her team's performance, she acknowledged that this experience allowed her to identify her weaknesses and ways to refine and improve her robot.

There were eleven awards up for grabs at the tournament, and the YHIS middle schoolers won five of them. Additionally, four YHIS teams finished in the top five.

After the tournament, many students asserted that this competition is possibly the most successful one we will have during this academic year. However, it is still too soon to draw conclusions: there are two major sports tournaments and additional competitions scheduled for the year. Nevertheless, the middle school robotics teams made us very proud during the Middle School VEX Robotics Competition.



WHAT'S COMING UP IN MARCH?

Ania Lasiewicz

Model United Nations–International School of Qingdao (MUNISQ)

From February 28th to March 1st, the International School of Qingdao (ISQ) will be hosting an MUN conference. Secondary students from schools all over China will travel to Qingdao to participate in this event. This is a good opportunity for students to refine their debate skills. Furthermore, as each student represents a country, they get to research global issues and construct solutions for them.

LifePlus Fine Arts Festival

Starting on March 13th and ending on the 16th, students representing YHIS will be traveling to Tianjin International School (TIS) to participate in the Fine Arts Festival. Whether it be for art, choir, drama, or band, students will get to grow in their skills and perform their talents with students from other LifePlus schools.

LifePlus Senior Departure Seminar

This is an event for the high school seniors that will be happening from March 20th to 22nd. The purpose of this event is to help the seniors prepare for the challenges they will face once they have graduated. It also serves as an enjoyable experience as seniors create new friendships with students from other schools or meet old friends again. This event also allows the seniors to create lasting memories with their classmates.

Creative Writing Competition

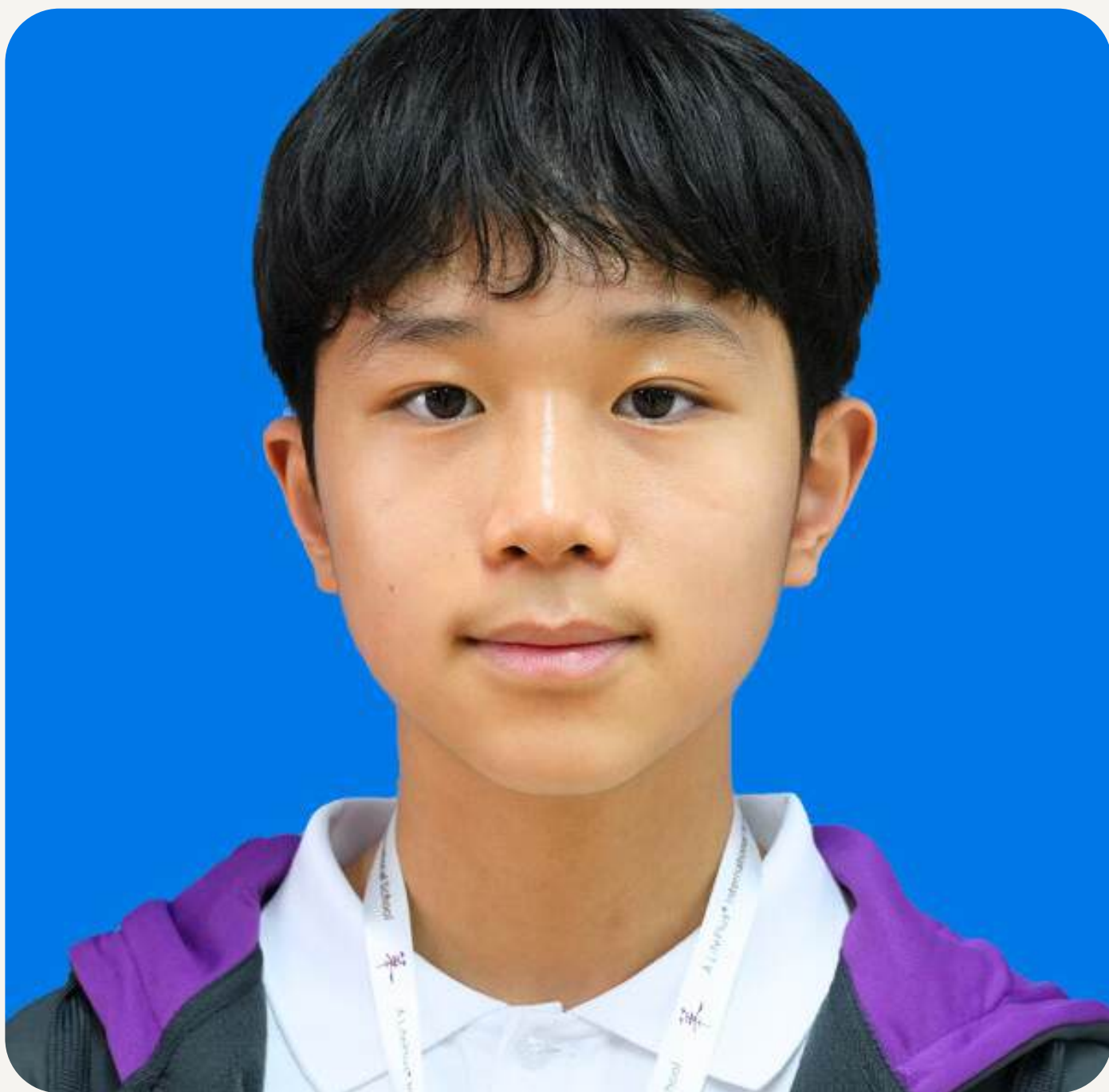
The YHIS Creating Writing Competition is going to be held on March 22nd. It's an event where secondary students have the opportunity to compete in their writing skills. Students who participate exercise their writing skills as they interpret a picture prompt. Judges will choose the story they find best, and the competition includes 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes, as well as honorable mentions.

2025 MARCH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
				MUNISQ		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
				Fine Arts Festival		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
				SDS		GWC
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
					Spring Break	
30	31					

www.calendar-to-print.com

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Do Jin Kim



The following is an interview conducted by student journalist Jin Kim with 8th grade student Roy Kim, a member of the middle school robotics team that won three trophies at the 2025 Middle School VEX Robotics Tournament.

JIN: Hello! Please introduce yourself first before we begin.

ROY: Hi, I'm Roy from 8th grade. I recently participated in the Wuhan Robotics Tournament, and that is why I'm having this interview. Before I talk about the tournament, here's some information about me: I am interested in sports, video games, and sleeping.

JIN: How did your team win first place at the robotics competition?

ROY: This is my personal opinion. I didn't expect that our team would win the competition. I was focusing on having an experience at such a big competition. However, we had tremendous results. We got first place for the skill challenge and the teamwork challenge. This gave me great motivation to persist and work harder to get to the next competition.

JIN: Can you tell me the challenges you faced during the competition?

ROY: I faced various kinds of challenges. One thing was that there were robots that were unable to move. This challenge was the most memorable in the competition.

JIN: How did you overcome it with persistence?

ROY: Contrary to my expectations, our team and the other teams kept discussing what the immobile robot could do. Finally, we found the proper use of the robot. This was possible because we were not discouraged by these defects.

JIN: How did you feel when you won the competition?

ROY: When I won the competition, I felt an undefinable happiness. This happiness was even more special because the win was unexpected before the tournament.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Jenna Belcher



Ms. Kaur is the middle school English teacher at YHIS. This is her second year teaching at our school. Let's get to know her better through this interview conducted by student journalist Jenna Belcher.

JENNA: Welcome to this interview, Ms. Kaur!

MS. KAUR: Thank you, thank you, Ms. Jenna Belcher!

JENNA: I would like to ask you a couple of questions.

MS. KAUR: Go ahead.

JENNA: The first one is... How long have you lived in China?

MS. KAUR: I have lived in China for 11 years already. For my first job, I was based in

Fuzhou for five years. Then I moved to Zhengzhou for four-and-a-half years and came to Yantai last year. One step at a time, one year at a time, and I'm still here by the grace of God.

JENNA: Alright second question, why did you choose to work in China as opposed to your home country?

MS. KAUR: Before I came to China, I had been teaching in Malaysia for five years. Then I started feeling very restless, and I felt like God was going to lead me to another place, but I wasn't sure where. So, I applied to teach at different organizations in Malaysia as well as outside of Malaysia. It seemed like all the doors were closed outside Malaysia, and at the time, it seemed like I would still need to stay in Malaysia. So, I accepted another post before I decided to teach that subject.

I asked the other prospective boss, "Can I take a month off?" and I decided to go on a trip on unpaid leave. I said when I come back after a month, I will start with this new job. She said, "Yeah, sure, go ahead."

So, I went to Vietnam and Laos, and I did my volunteer work, but my heart was not fully at peace, because I had to go back to work in Malaysia, but I felt that it was time for me to leave.

When I came back, I happened to read my Facebook messages, and there was this particular post on one of my ex-boss's Facebook. He simply said that if you're interested in working in China, call this person or agent. I decided to apply.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Jenna Belcher

Long story short, within two days, I signed the contract for China. That was the fastest I had ever signed a contract, but I felt such peace. My family and my pastors were all not only shocked, but they were all saying things like, “Are you sure this is where you're supposed to be? You made the decision in just two days.” I told them, “Yeah, I was also surprised, but I just felt such peace.” And so, that’s how I started work in Fuzhou, and I told myself to take China one year at a time, and I am still here.

JENNA: What do you like most about your job?

MS. KAUR: What I like most about my job is having a relationship with the students. Every student comes from a different background, and so I am learning a lot of things from every student. This is one thing I keep telling myself: I am a teacher, and I'm supposed to have this knowledge to teach my kids. At the same time, I'm learning a lot of things from my kids. I learned about their culture, the way they think, and the different approaches that I need to use to help, teach, guide, and work with them. Through my interactions with them, I feel and see how God has been using all of these experiences to shape, mold, and transform me.

For example, I am learning to be more patient, humble, and kind. I was not such a kind person in the past. I used to be very critical of people. Now, I'm learning to give the benefit of the doubt to the students and not jump to conclusions. I think I have changed a lot in my dealings and interactions with the kids.

So, I think that is one thing that I enjoy about my job. I'm constantly learning new things about myself as I'm being with my kids.

JENNA: Lastly, what advice do you want to give the secondary student body?

MS. KAUR: My advice to secondary students is that it is OK to fail. This month, the LifePlus quality is about persistence. I am actually really benefiting from teaching this to my advisory class. One of the things that I have been trying to encourage my kids, and even myself, is that it is okay to fail over and over and over again, as long as you don't give up. If you really want something, just go for it, and if you really like it, no matter what obstacles you may face, pray and ask God for wisdom and patience. Just keep going. The more we encounter setbacks, the more we will grow. So, never take setbacks or even failures as something bad but take it as a learning curve.

Every time I move to a new place, I feel like I'm a new teacher all over again. I felt very inadequate as a teacher when I first came here, but over time, through prayers and the constant support of my peers, family, and friends, I have learned to not give up and just keep believing, hoping, and praying that I will do and feel better.

JENNA: Well, thank you very much for your time.

MS. KAUR: You're much welcome. Thank you!

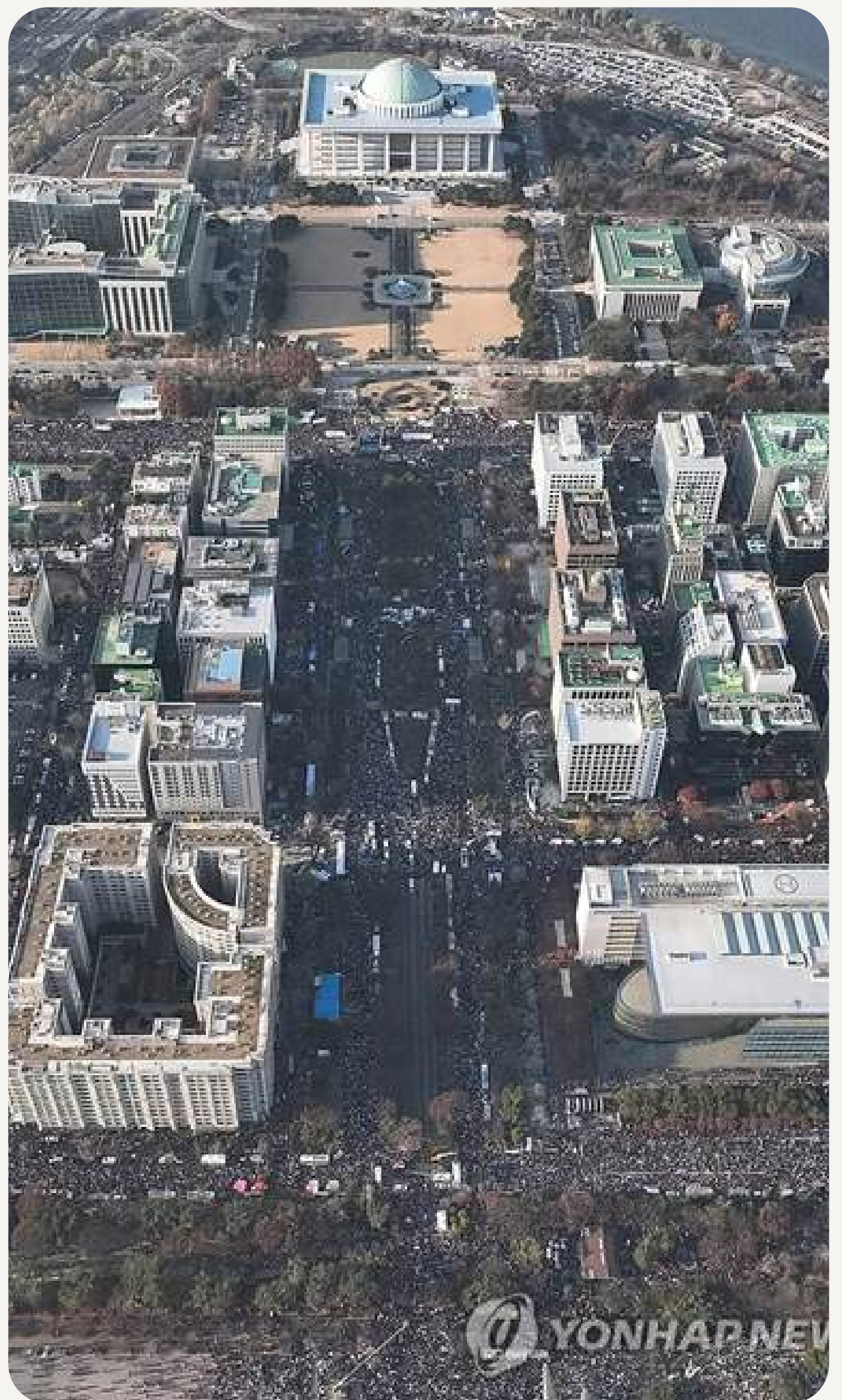
MARTIAL LAW IN SOUTH KOREA AND THE IMPEACHMENT OF PRESIDENT YOON

Eunsu Kwon

South Korea's Short-Lived Martial Law

On the night of December 3rd, 2024, South Korea's president Yoon Seok Yeol announced that the country will be going under martial law. After referring to the opposition's political attack on the night of the 3rd, President Yoon declared an emergency decree, stating, "We will fight off the anti-state forces that confuse." After this declaration, the military took over the situation and said media and political activities were prohibited. Lee Jae-myung, the leader of the opposition party, pointed out that the president's declaration of martial law was inappropriate. After President Yoon declared martial law, many citizens gathered in Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul to demand the immediate lifting of martial law. The South Korean media broadcasting at the scene reported clashes between protesters and police at the entrance to the National Assembly. Even then, tensions did not escalate to physical violence despite the presence of heavily armed military personnel. Furthermore, members of the National Assembly were able to enter the voting room building quickly despite the military blocking the entrance. Around two hours after President Yoon's declaration of emergency martial law, 190 of the 300 lawmakers in the National Assembly unanimously voted to invalidate the president's declaration.

Six hours after martial law was declared, President Yoon stated, Yoon Suk Yeol's declaration of martial law shocked the world, and the rapid development of that cold night in Seoul left the entire country in chaos."



Citizens protest at Gwanghwamun Square

MARTIAL LAW IN SOUTH KOREA AND THE IMPEACHMENT OF PRESIDENT YOON

Eunsu Kwon

The Aftermath

The last time South Korea declared martial law was only a few decades ago. After taking power through the May 16 military coup of 1960, former President Park Chung-Hee declared martial law 12 years later with a constitutional amendment to extend his power. Therefore, after December 3rd, Middle-aged and senior citizens who had personally experienced martial law during Park Chung-Hee's military dictatorship came to Gwanghwamun Square to protest the current government. After martial law was lifted, citizens demanded Yoon take full responsibility for the civil disruption he had caused and insisted on his impeachment. The incident on December 3rd exacerbated the divide between citizens who oppose and citizens who support Yoon.



President Yoon's impeachment hearing at the Constitutional Court

The motion to impeach the president was in accordance with Article 65i of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and Article 130ii of South Korea's National Assembly Act. However, on December 7th, the first motion to impeach Yoon failed as his party boycotted the proceeding. The second motion for impeachment was proposed on December 12th and passed with 204 votes in favor and 38 in opposition.

Two days later, the impeachment process was officially initiated, and as of the time that this article is being written, it is still underway at the Constitutional Court. After passing the impeachment motion, the court must complete the hearing and deliver the sentence within 180 days of receiving the case. Currently, the most recent court hearing was on February 13th, which was the eighth and final designated hearing on the original schedule. However, during that hearing, the head of the Capital Defense Command (CDC)'s security team appeared as witnesses to testify about the December 3rd incident. In the process, there was a conflict of opinion between the president and the witnesses. Yoon strongly opposed the testimony, denying claims of the role he played concerning the recent martial law. After the hearing concluded, the court announced an additional hearing for this case, which has been scheduled to take place on February 18th.

FROM TRADITION TO TREND: LUNAR NEW YEAR

Isabella Kim

The Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is one of the most significant holidays in many Asian cultures including China, Korea, and Vietnam. In 2025, the Year of the Snake, the New Year began on January 29th and the festivities lasted until February 12th. While rooted in tradition, the way people celebrate this festival has changed significantly in recent years with a shift in consumer behavior and the rise of digitalization.

The Lunar New Year places great importance on family reunions, honoring ancestors, and ushering in good fortune for the coming year. Additionally, people practice traditional customs such as cleaning houses to remove bad luck and giving red envelopes. However, particularly among younger generations and urban populations, these celebrations have seen a dramatic shift as they have taken on a digital twist with the rise of e-commerce and mobile payments.

One of the most significant changes is the dominance of online shopping. Throughout the New Year week, when online platforms such as Taobao, JingDong, and Douyin are in their sales period, they experience record-breaking sales as consumers purchase gifts and clothing. Even the tradition of giving red envelopes has transitioned from giving physical red envelopes to digital transactions via WeChat Pay and Alipay, allowing people to send New Year's blessings quickly and conveniently across distances.



Another key shift is the rise of Guochao, a national trend, which has reshaped consumer preferences. This movement places the commercial spotlight on domestic brands and products with strong cultural identity. Rather than seeking out Western luxury brands during the sales period of the New Year, younger consumers now tend to buy products designed and made in China, such as New Year-themed limited-edition shoes or tea sets.

Despite these transformations, the Lunar New Year continues to be a festival with a powerful expression of cultural unity and social cohesion. In this evolving society, the festival remains both a traditional and highly commercialized event, bridging the gap between tradition and contemporaneity.



ISRAEL-HAMAS CEASEFIRE

Justin Jin

This article was last updated on February 16, 2025.

A ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas was reached and implemented on January 19th, marking hopes for the permanent end of the 15-month war. Mediators of the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar were key in finalizing the deal. Biden's May ceasefire proposal helped shape the agreement. Trump's January 20th inauguration is also credited with indirectly aiding the deal, as he had threatened Hamas if Israeli hostages weren't released before taking office. While hostages and prisoners return home and the war pauses, Gaza's future remains unclear.



Negotiating Peace

The first significant progress toward a ceasefire occurred in May 2024, when, under global pressure and with mediation from the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar, President Biden's three-stage ceasefire proposal was accepted by Hamas. Israel, however, rejected the deal, and the war continued beyond its eighth month, with Israel launching a new military campaign in Rafah, southern Gaza. It was clear a ceasefire would not happen without stronger motivations from both sides.

Trump's impending inauguration may have provided that push. By the end of 2024, he repeatedly warned that Hamas would face "hell to pay" if hostages weren't released before he took office. The U.S. continued working toward a peace agreement.

Finally, on January 15th, 2025, Qatar announced a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas. Israel approved it on January 17th, and it took effect on January 19th after a delay, as Israel refused to implement the deal until Hamas named the first hostages to be released.

Recap of the War

The Gazan War, or the Israel-Hamas War, lasted over 15 months. It began on October 7th, when Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel's southern border, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages back to Gaza. Israel retaliated with a full-scale invasion on October 27th. For the next 15 months, as Israeli forces devastated Gaza, international powers repeatedly called for a ceasefire. Both Israel and Hamas were largely obstinate and unwilling to compromise. By the end, 2.3 million Gazans were displaced, and around 46,700 were killed.

A ceasefire became likely by late 2024. Hamas, losing Palestinian support and the value of its hostages, was ready for peace. Trump's upcoming inauguration pressured Netanyahu to settle instead of pursuing further retaliation.

With these motivations, a peace agreement was finally reached in January 2025.

ISRAEL-HAMAS CEASEFIRE

Justin Jin



Contents of the Ceasefire Deal

The ceasefire deal includes three separate stages.

Stage 1, already in effect, aims to halt military actions in Gaza and begin hostage exchanges. Hamas will return 33 hostages in exchange for 1,900 Palestinian prisoners. Israeli forces will leave populated areas and aid lorries, previously blocked by Israel, to enter Gaza to distribute supplies. Some Israeli forces will remain near the border.

Stage 2, set to begin 16 days into the ceasefire, requires Hamas to release all hostages, with Israel returning additional prisoners. Israeli forces will withdraw completely from Gaza.

Stage 3 involves returning the bodies of Israeli hostages to Israel, rebuilding Gaza, disarming Hamas, and ending Israel's blockade of Gaza. If successfully executed, the deal will gradually end violence in Gaza and allow hostages and prisoners to return home.

The State of Gaza

Gaza is in ruins. The strip is mostly uninhabitable, with water supplies down,

buildings destroyed, agricultural lands ruined, soils likely polluted by chemicals from the destructions, and trash piling up around camp areas. According to the UN Environment Program, cleaning up the 50 million tons of war debris will take over 20 years.

Even when peace is restored in the region, it can hardly be called a home anymore.



The Future of Gaza (and Trump's Plans to "Own" It)

Amid discussions about Gaza's future, U.S. President Trump shocked the world by announcing in a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu that "the U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip" and assume a "long-term ownership position." He described his plan, likening it to a real estate venture, to reconstruct and stabilize the region—by forcefully relocating Palestinians. Trump clarified in interviews that Gazan Palestinians "will be living beautifully in another location," with the U.S. owning the Strip, and emphasized that "it's a big mistake" to allow them to return. If his controversial plan comes to fruition, the Gaza Strip may become owned by the U.S., no longer tied to the Palestinian people.

ISRAEL-HAMAS CEASEFIRE

Justin Jin

It remains unclear whether Trump's statements are truthful or tactical.

Meanwhile, Egypt plans to reconstruct Gaza and form a new Palestinian government separate from Hamas, aiming for a two-state solution.

Despite differences, both Trump's and Egypt's plans agree that Gaza urgently needs reconstruction and help from neighboring countries. Whether Israel will contribute, as part of its goal to ensure "that Gaza never poses a threat to Israel again," as Netanyahu stated, remains uncertain.

Recent Developments

The second week of February nearly saw an end to the fragile ceasefire deal, with Hamas postponing the release of promised hostages, accusing Israel's blockade of aid, and Israel threatening to resume full-scale war if the hostages were not released by Saturday noon. Thankfully, interventions from mediators in Qatar and Egypt helped resolve the situation, and Hamas released the three hostages as promised. In return, Israel freed 369 Palestinian prisoners to Gaza and the West Bank.

The near collapse of the agreement reveals its fragility and Israel's obstinate hostility despite it. Israel continues to block humanitarian aid from entering Gaza, demolish homes, and injure civilians in Rafah (southern Gaza) despite the ceasefire's requirement to reduce forces in the region. Considering Hamas' similarly volatile nature, many are concerned that the ceasefire may not last as long as hoped.



SERVICE

Libby Moon



In the busyness of life, it's easy to forget others. Service is a way to make a real difference by helping and giving back to the community. It can be as simple as assisting a neighbor or volunteering with a local charity.

LifePlus Definition of Service:

- I make available my gifts, talents, time, energy, and enthusiasm to serve the needs of those around me.
- I show love towards the world around me by being a responsible caretaker of our resources.

Why Service Matters:

Service matters because it supports those in need. Helping someone shows kindness and can brighten their day. For example, volunteering at a food pantry ensures families have meals. Visiting nursing homes brings companionship and joy to residents.



SERVICE

Libby Moon



The Benefits of Helping Others

Helping others brings joy and fulfillment. It builds empathy, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility. It's also a great way to learn new skills and meet people.



Ways to Get Involved

There are many ways to serve:

- **Volunteer**: Organizations like animal shelters, food banks, and community gardens always need help. Ask a parent to join you!
- **Fundraise**: Support a cause you care about with a bake sale, car wash, or fun run. Every contribution counts.
- **Help Neighbors**: Sometimes, service is as close as your street. Offer to carry groceries for an elderly neighbor or mow their lawn.
- **Join School Projects**: Schools often organize service projects. Participate to make an impact and meet new friends.

Final Thoughts

Service connects us to our community and creates positive change. Every act, big or small, matters. So, let's roll up our sleeves and work together for a better tomorrow. Helping others is not just a duty—it's a privilege.



PERSISTENCE

Jenna Belcher



The student writes and rewrites their essay,
Covered in ashes of graphite among mountains of
papers,
Slowly perfecting their work with every sleepless day,
Until the last period on their final papers.

Tirelessly, he practiced his shots
Till beads of sweat ran down his face.
Drained, he pants; beet red, he grins ear to ear
As the board shows the winning point.
His team comes in first place.

PERSISTENCE

Jenna Belcher

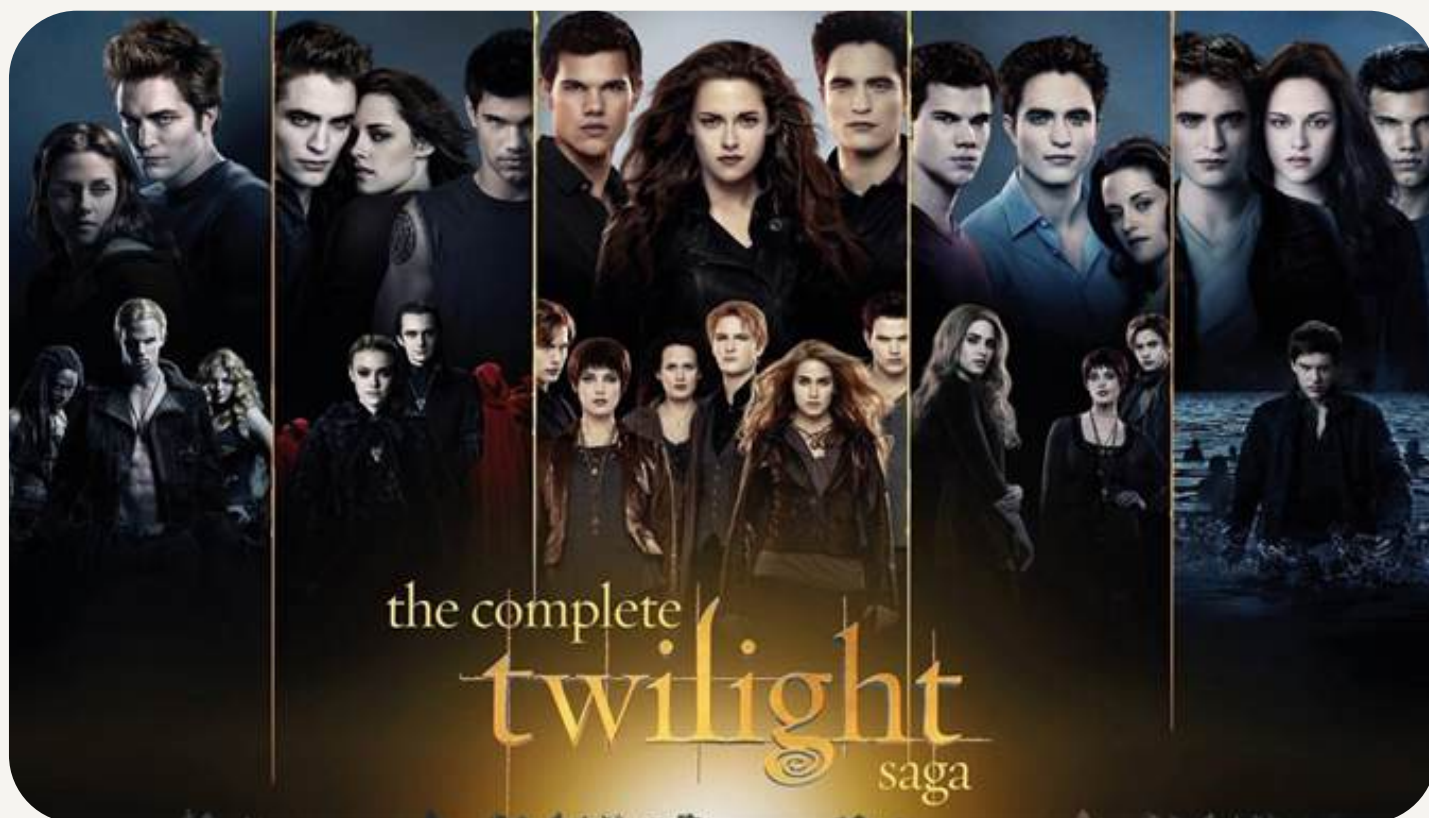
She rehearsed night after night each day,
Her voice hoarse, every movement
Like a weight, exhausted.
Soon her eyes twinkled with the warmth of the bright
stage lights
Illuminating her show day.

Behind the lenses of the achieved hides a face
Of determination, practice, diligence, and grit.
“We must persist to look failure in the eye and rise
above it!”
That’s what persistence means to those who believe.



THE TWILIGHT SAGA

Kate Bower



About the Author

The *Twilight* Saga was written by the American author, Stephenie Meyer. She was born on December 24, 1973, in Hartford, Connecticut, but grew up in Phoenix, Arizona. She graduated from Brigham Young University in 1997 with a degree in English. She was a stay-at-home mother of three boys when she first began writing *Twilight*, the first book of the series, with the idea originally coming to her in a dream.

Synopsis

The *Twilight* Saga, by Stephenie Meyer, is a young adult fantasy-romance series. The main story circles around a teenage girl, Bella Swan, who falls in love with a vampire named Edward Cullen. Her adventures through the mysterious ways of Edward's complicated life of danger managed to make the book a number-one New York Times bestseller. The first novel, *Twilight* (2005), introduced the series to the world, which later included the novels *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007), and *Breaking Dawn* (2008).



Popularity and Success

The series has sold millions of copies and received several young reader awards. The *Twilight* Saga has also been adapted into a movie series that has earned over three billion US dollars.

Along with the four main series, Stephenie Meyer has published spinoffs of *Twilight*, which are equally as thrilling, including one from Edward's perspective and one that reverses the genders of all the main characters.



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Thematic Elements

Twilight, in many ways, is a story of good (the Cullens and Bella) conquering evil (James, a vampire who tracks Bella down to hunt her). However, the story twists the perspective of what is good and what is evil, highlighting the gray area between good and evil. For instance, Bella is portrayed as a good and kind girl, but to Edward, she's also a challenge because, though his family only eats animals, Bella's scent encourages his thirst for human blood, which makes Bella the very thing that could destroy his family's way of life. On the other hand, Edward is a dangerous predator by nature, but is not ill-intentioned toward Bella.

"You're dangerous...But not bad...No, I don't believe that you're bad." - Bella

Overall Recommendation

Of course, I recommend reading it, but it's not just me.

When Stephenie Meyers was writing the book, she got mixed recommendations about it. However, when *Twilight* was first officially released on October 5th, 2005, it exploded with love from millions of fans, becoming a New York Times bestseller within a month of its release. For the most part, she ignored clichés, and her fantasy world just so happened to awaken a force within all those who loved it. The book series has been translated into over 37 languages and has sold over 120 million copies worldwide.

To my fellow *Twilight*-obsessed fans, we can all agree that The *Twilight* Saga seems to have a sort of comforting feeling to it. It could be the smoothness and overall glow of the story, or it could be the movies that truly draw us in with the muted blue tint, the soundtrack, or simply the lure of the story.

Many believe it to have no charming appeal, and that it is essentially an amusing joke. And maybe I'm biased, but once you dive deep and see the story for what it truly is—a masterpiece—it's almost impossible to put down.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Jesmin Jung



Basic Information

Movie Title: *The Pursuit of Happyness*

Director: Gabriele Muccino

Starring: Will Smith, Jaden Smith, Thandiwe Newton

Genre: Biography, Drama

Runtime: 117 minutes

Release Year: 2006

Movie Summary

Chris Gardner (Will Smith) is a struggling salesman trying to provide for his family. As financial difficulties mount, his wife leaves him, and he is left alone to care for his young son, Christopher (Jaden Smith). Despite becoming homeless, Chris secures an unpaid internship at a prestigious brokerage firm where he competes for a full-time job. Through countless hardships—sleeping in shelters and subway restrooms—he refuses to give up. His perseverance and determination ultimately lead him to success, proving that persistence and hard work can turn dreams into reality.

Main Characters

Chris Gardner (Will Smith)

- A hardworking, determined father who refuses to give up despite overwhelming obstacles.
- Endures homelessness while fighting for a better future for himself and his son

Christopher (Jaden Smith)

- Chris' young son, who trusts his father and remains hopeful despite their struggles.
- Represents innocence, love, and the motivation that keeps Chris going

Linda (Thandiwe Newton)

- Chris' wife, who leaves due to financial hardships.
- Reflects the harsh realities of struggling families

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Jesmin Jung

Lessons on Persistence

“Never give up, no matter how hard things get.”

Chris refuses to quit, even when facing homelessness and extreme hardship. His consistent effort leads to success.

“Failure is not the end, but part of the journey.”

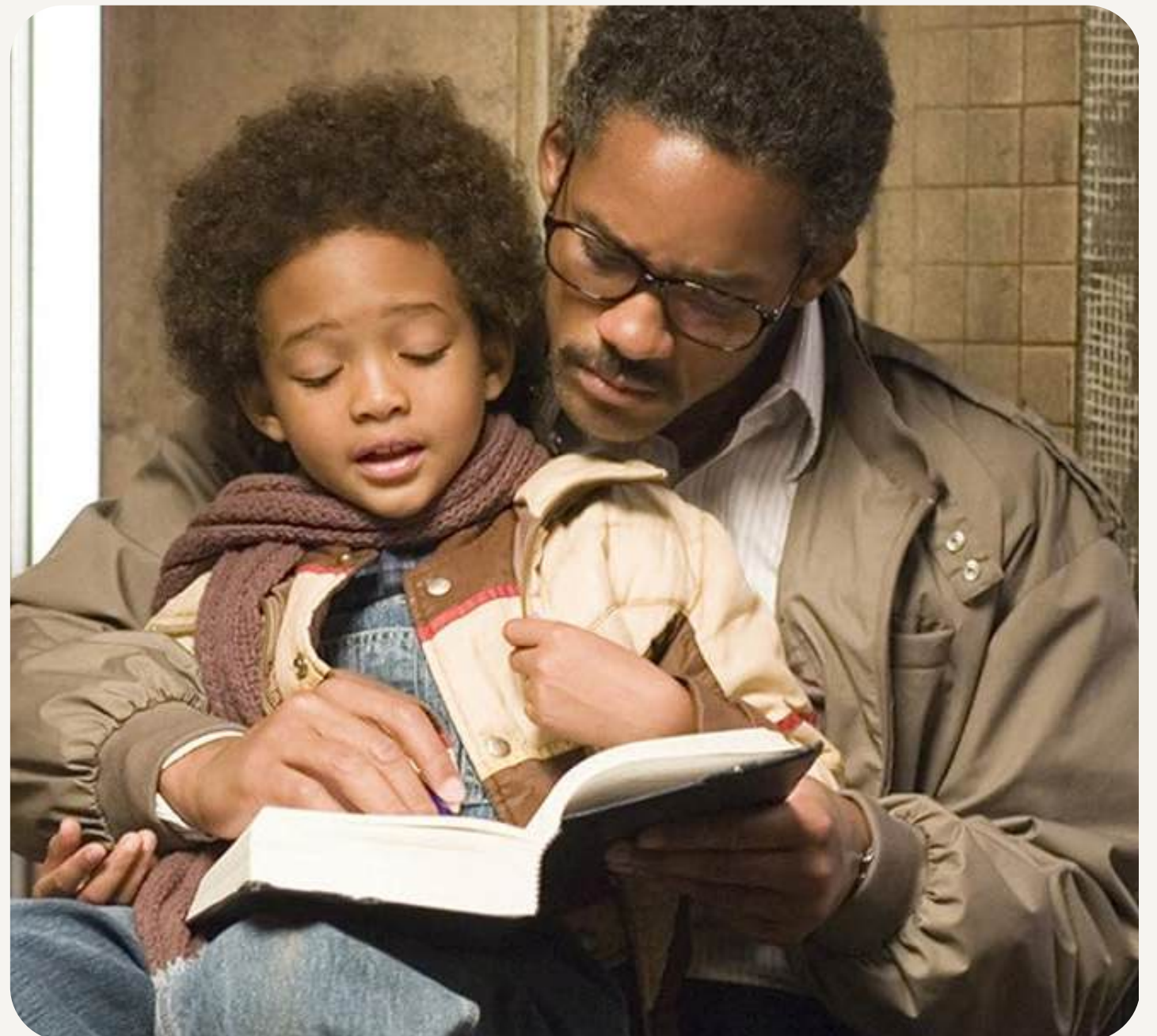
Despite facing rejection and difficulties, he keeps moving forward, believing in himself. Persistence eventually pays off.

“Belief and effort create change.”

Chris maintains a positive mindset and works tirelessly, proving that hard work leads to transformation.

“Happiness is earned through effort.”

As the title suggests, happiness is something you pursue, not something given to you.



Why Should You Watch It?

- Based on a True Story – Inspired by the real-life journey of Chris Gardner.
- Incredible Acting – Will Smith delivers one of his best performances, earning an Academy Award nomination.
- Powerful Message of Resilience – Shows that perseverance, not luck, leads to success.

Who Should Watch It?

- Anyone chasing their dreams
- Those going through tough times and need inspiration
- Fans of emotional, real-life stories
- Anyone who loves Will Smith’s acting

Memorable Quote:

“Don’t ever let somebody tell you... you can’t do something. Not even me. You got a dream, you gotta protect it.”

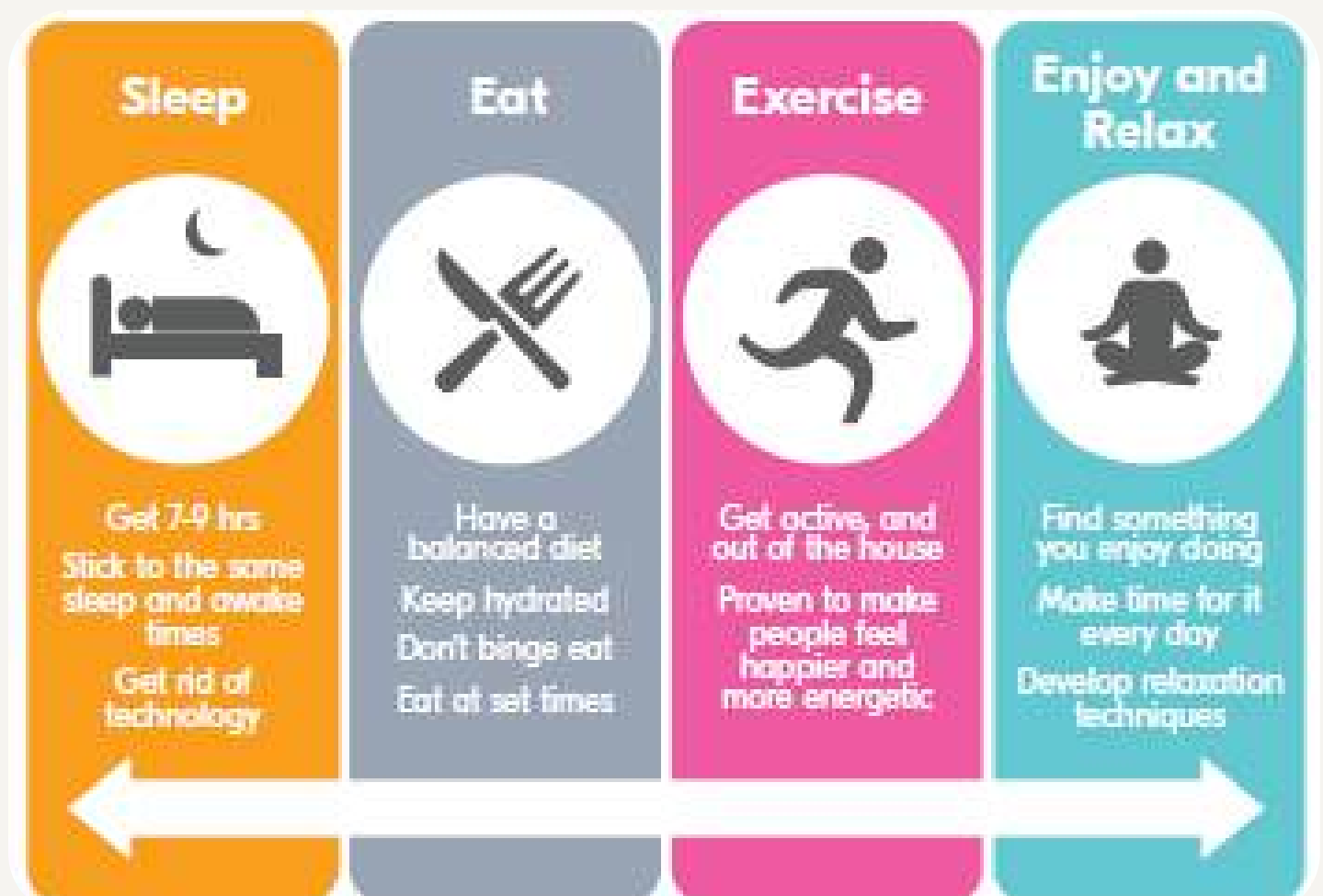


PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

Jay Vars

Physical well-being is defined as “the ability to perform physical activities and carry out social roles that are not hindered by physical limitations and experiences of bodily pain, and biological health indicators.” It affects people every day and is important because it helps many aspects of life.

Physical well-being helps everyone in multiple ways. The first is that it helps us think better, but scientists do not fully understand why. Some explanations are that when exercising, blood flow is better and gives more oxygen and energy to the brain. Another explanation is that when someone is physically active, the part of the brain that helps people learn, the hippocampus, is very active. This causes a boost in cognitive functions. Exercising can also reverse the naturally-occurring hippocampus shrinkage, thus strengthening memory. Furthermore, being physically healthy reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. Improved physical well-being also helps to calm anger and lower the risk of disease. This is because it lowers blood pressure and raises the level of good cholesterol in the body. It will also help prevent bone loss or weakening. Overall, having good physical well-being benefits many parts of life.



There are many ways to improve physical well-being, but one easy way is to have a healthy, balanced diet while also staying hydrated. Exercising for thirty minutes a day is recommended as well, whether it is walking, playing sports, or weightlifting. Another beneficial thing to do is to get enough sleep—eight hours each night. Overall, there are a variety of things people can do to improve their physical well-being.

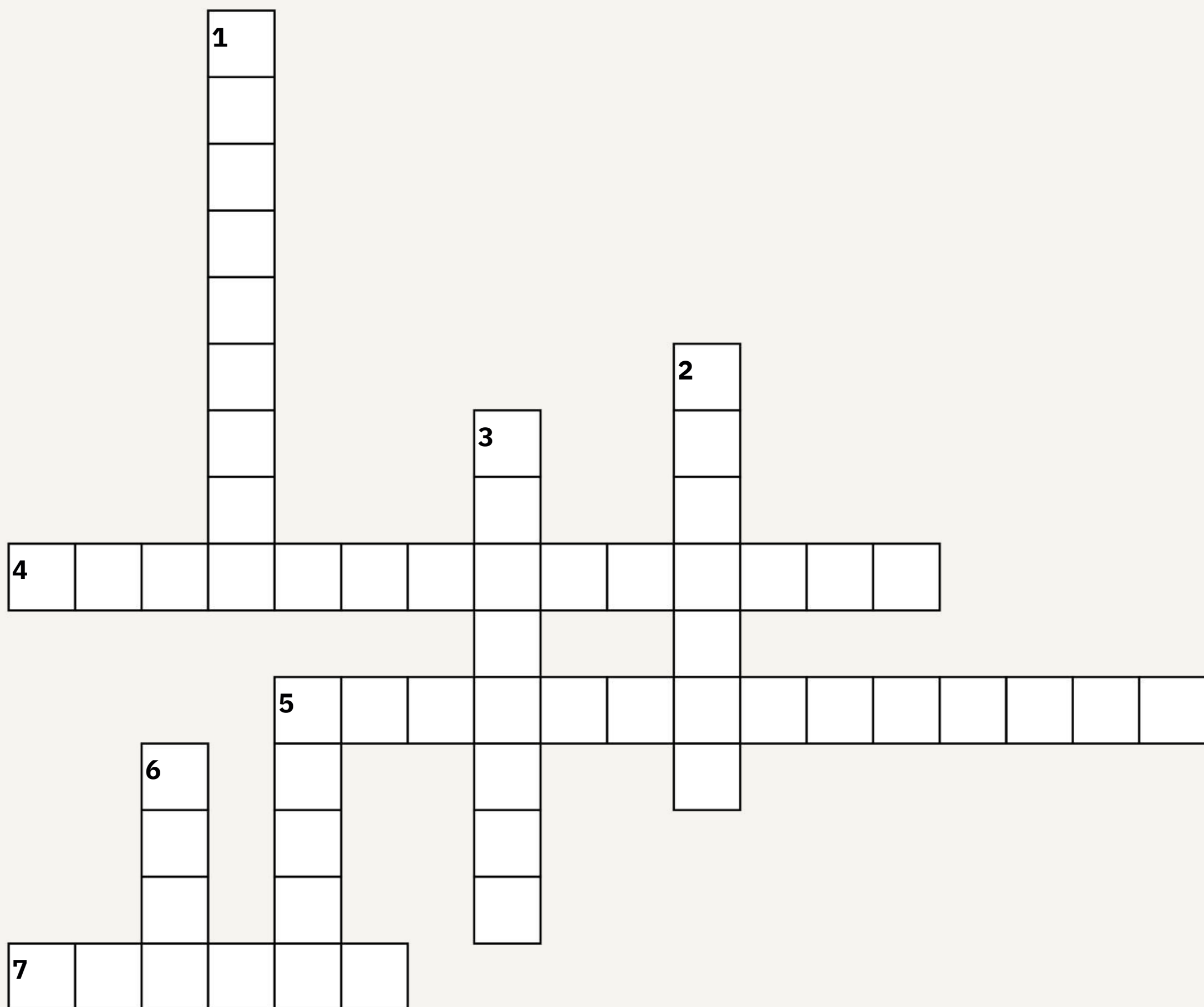
There are many motivators to urge a person to act on improving their physical well-being, but one common suggestion is for a third party to hold the person accountable, which may also improve mental well-being if done properly.

All in all, physical well-being is an essential part of life, and improving it will positively affect other aspects of life.

CROSSWORD

Joy Tham

Find the answers in the articles!



Across

- 4. The actress who played Linda in *The Pursuit of Happyness*
- 5. The author of the Twilight Saga
- 7. The number of years Ms. Kaur has lived in China

Down

- 1. The HS basketball player who shot a 3-pointer from halfcourt
- 2. The location in school where relay race games were held on China Day
- 3. The third interest Roy Kim listed about himself
- 5. The 2025 zodiac animal
- 6. The number of awards the middle school robotics teams won (out of the eleven available)

HIGHLIGHTS

January & February



HIGHLIGHTS

January & February

