

Comet News

Hicksville's Homecoming Spirit

By Daiwik Uppal

On Saturday, October 8th, Hicksville's Homecoming Game and the Homecoming Fair was hosted by our district and the Hicksville Council of PTAs.

This annual event brings our community together and drums up spirit in preparation for our homecoming game.

The fair itself supports the PTA, various clubs and elementary schools, while also providing entertainment for everyone.

Widely known as an event for all ages, this year's homecoming fair included small stands with competitive games, inflatables, a wide variety of foods, vast amounts of clothing, and some raffles for you to attempt to win some sort of prize.

The day's events were joyfully attended by families, faculty, staff, and alumni who returned to visit and meet with former classmates and teachers.

Our tradition of the Homecoming parade led the way into the game, showcasing the class banners that were created by our talented



Photo by Sahej Lehal

students from freshman class to senior class. This year, the sophomore class took home the trophy for best banner.

Halftime highlights included the championship-winning Marching Comets who showed their colors during halftime along with a performance by the Hicksville Starlets.

Homecoming was considered a great success in the eyes of the community; providing school spirit to all.

Hicksville's Homecoming Spirit



Photo Courtesy of Armaan Talreja



Photo Courtesy of Samantha Castro



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Marching Band Photos Courtesy of Cory Wright

Pep Rally 2022 - Hicksville High School's Sports Teams

By Zahel Nasari

One of Hicksville's most treasured traditions is the annual Pep Rally event before the Homecoming game and fair, which was held recently on Friday, October 7.

Throughout the week, the student body's excitement was high on the radar, and many people took the extra effort to engage in the different themes of spirit week.

This year, the themes included pajama day, country western day, character day, and spirit day, where students wore school colors.

The excitement culminated on Friday for Pep Rally, held outside on the field. All the teams were heavily cheered on by students, and each grade level competed with one another to show their high levels of enthusiasm.

The students enjoyed a stellar performance by the Marching Band and Color Guard, who showcased great coordination and detail.

In addition to the football team, the high school's sports teams were acknowledged and recognized during the event.

Fall sports offered to students at HHS include cross country, soccer, swimming, tennis, volleyball, football, cheerleading, and kickline.

The importance of student engagement cannot be underestimated; engagement affects student achievement and students' futures by fostering valuable and long-lasting connections. The extracurriculars offered to students at Hicksville

High School encourage skills and habits which give them a deeper sense of belonging and a stronger standing.

Students are bestowed with roles, responsibilities, and collaborative structures to engage in various tasks with their peers. Such interactions and challenges promote creativity and allow students to discover new capabilities.

The Hicksville School district has an interscholastic athletic program with educational values for all students, which serves as a model for life, providing opportunities for students with regard to leadership, cooperation, respect, good citizenship, loyalty, and tolerance.

In hopes of providing a glimpse into Pep Rally and the regimen of different sports, student athletes shared some of their personal experiences.

Regarding the skills and attributes students have acquired through their sport, Samantha Castro, a junior on the Cheerleading team, shared that cheer has taught her to project her voice – literally and metaphorically. She stated, "I enjoyed performing with my team during Pep Rally! Cheer has a special place in my heart. My team has set into place morals and values I carry along with myself every day."

Moreover, Sakshi Kalia, a member of the Girls' Varsity Tennis team, shares that her team



Photo by Shakira Mashriqi

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Coaching for the Comets

By Ellen Michalak

Each year homecoming is triumphant, whether our football team wins or not, it is the hard work that seeps through every volunteer, coach, and organizer that makes this event notable in our books. We see homecoming for what it is, but what we don't see is the people behind the scenes who contribute to this event and make it what it is today.

A role that plays a key part in the homecoming game that tends to be overlooked is the coach. It is one of the most significant roles in executing these games into what we see on the field.

Currently a physical education teacher at Dutch Lane, Mr. Modik has coached several sports teams at Hicksville High School. In addition to coaching boys varsity football, he has an extensive history of playing football, and coaching sports in general.

"This is my 11th year coaching Varsity Football," said Coach Modik, who started out as a coach in island Trees before coaching here at Hicksville in 2019, "and I am now entering my second year as head coach."

Coach Modik on Homecoming

Recognizing what is needed and expected for every game, Coach Modik approaches all games and situations with practice, experience, knowledge, and observation.

To be in charge and coach a team during a major event, such as homecoming, is pressuring. Yet, Coach also sees it as, "a special event, but at the same time, it's just another game that we prepare to win. The excitement around Homecoming is great so that gives our players a little more juice during our week of preparation for our opponent."

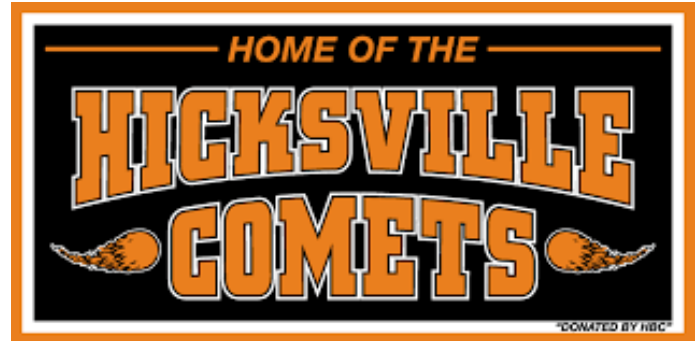


Photo: Google Images

"Preparing for Homecoming is special because we get an increased amount of fans, but at the end of the day, we prepare the same way during the week. We cover the necessary situations as usual and study our opponent like usual." disclosed Coach Modik.

It is evident that with the increased hype and environment, players and even coaching staff feel that energy in their stomachs. The frenetic air adds to the surroundings, and the screams of the community echo in the players' and coaches' heads. The excitement to go out and play while hearing the bleachers rattle with cheer is a one-of-a-kind feeling, but Coach Modik knows how crucial it is to have fun and feel excitement ahead of a game like this, but to also stay focused, and not get easily distracted. To this, he says, "The motivation and focus not only needs to be reminded by the coaches to the team, but has to be intrinsic or come from within. I tell my players to stay focused on the game, enjoy the moment, but also to not get distracted by the events going on around them."

The pressure is not only felt by the players, but it is also heavily placed on the coaches. The pressure to execute a good game, and the pressure to win is always there, but how is the head coach able to manage and cope with this type of pressure?

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Coaching for the Comets (continued)

By Ellen Michalakakis

His strategy is, "Going into a game knowing we prepared the best we can during the week, I expect positive outcomes. Sometimes there is adversity and how the team deals with that adversity obviously dictates the outcomes. I try to keep a calm, focused mind to be able to deal with any positive or negative situation during the game. Whether it's football related or anything else involved with the players, we must understand that life is about working to overcome those challenges and grow as individuals."

Modik's Coaching Philosophy

Coaches play a vital role in players' and students' lives. They get the opportunity to watch their players grow and become disciplined and full-fledged young adults.

Coach Modik is keen on molding his players into mature young men, not only in the sport of

football, but also in the real world.

"The most important part of being a coach for me involves two things. The first is seeing our players evolve as better football players, and the second is watching them become disciplined young men. There is no better feeling than teaching our players something and watching them succeed at that. Football is the ultimate team game and translates to life after football."

Modik closed off this interview by saying, "I feel a coach plays a very important part in their players' lives. We are with them 6 days a week for 3-4 hours a day when in-season and 3-4 days a week for 1-2 hours a day in the off-season. We as coaches are here to not only try to win games, but to mold these young men into model people of their communities now and for their future."

Pep Rally 2022: Hicksville's Sports Teams (cont'd)

By Zahel Nasari

members are highly supportive, and her experience has led to lifelong friendships. Sakshi said, "I loved running out with my team during Pep Rally. I realized that we were more than teammates, rather a family."

Additionally, Mayuri Kumar, a member of the Girls' Cross Country team, expressed that running motivates her to build on her skills. She stated, "Although our team is small, we motivate each other constantly. Every run presents a new challenge, an opportunity to push myself, and time to reflect on everything."

Another member of the Girls' Cross Country team, Vazira Khakimova, said, "My coach, Ms. Stuber, is highly motivating and caring. She

pushes my teammates and me to strive to do better each day."

As evident in the responses of these students, cohesiveness plays an important role in their sport. Hicksville High School has embedded the values of teamwork and sportsmanship in its competitive teams. Although winning games can be considered a measure of success, many other aspects must be considered. The development of the person and allowing each student to become all that they are capable of being holds great importance.

Planning for College

By Sadaf Farid Ahmad



Photo: Google Images

Applying for college can be stressful, and preparing for it can often be confusing for some people. I am here to provide any guidance I can, especially for incoming freshmen. If more students are prepared for what they will face, it could be less stressful for them.

Preparing

One important question you should ask yourself: Do you have an idea of what field you want to pursue in the future? If the answer is yes, and you are either a freshman, sophomore, or junior, try taking classes that help you prepare for this. If you are seeking for more challenging classes, there are honor classes, college classes, and advanced placement (AP) classes, which can all help you prepare for the college style of learning and workload.

Open Houses

Colleges often hold open houses either in person or virtually. These can be found through a simple online search, or some receive notifications through their email or mail. College fairs are also held, to help students decide what college is right for them. Having an idea of what career path you want to pursue helps determine what college is best for you. Also, it is important to know your learning style, as some bigger colleges contain lecture halls, and some people learn better in smaller classrooms.

FAFSA

(Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

Always keep in mind that even if you have never been a part of reduced fee or financial aid programs, it is still a good idea to apply for financial aid as there is a chance it can help you. There is no maximum income that would restrict you from being accepted. It is dependent on factors such as the amount of people in the household, or the size of the school.

Drawing Up Some New Inspiration

On Friday, October 28th, students from Mrs. Lesser's drawing class visited the Hecksher Museum of Art. Students strolled the grounds to find inspiration for their latest drawings, and took a tour of the museum to view exhibits and artwork, many of which showcase creations by local high school students.



Photos by Kiara Rakhar and Menaal Faisal

The Impact of Pandemic Isolation on Adolescents

By Keelin Livingston

When the term "Covid 19" is brought up people think of the widespread virus that attacked and continues to attack the entire planet, and years from now when young children will sit in their classrooms they will learn about the virus that conquered the world just before they were born.

One may wonder if, in recalling these days, people will talk about how the virus not only had an impact on our health, but also the impact socially and psychologically.

As a teenager social interaction is a crucial part of your life, it allows you to maintain a good mental health and stay happy, and allows your physical health to improve.

When the world was locked down it stopped that interaction. While there was always texting, FaceTime, and Zoom meetings, it did not at all compare to the idea of being able to run around the mall, or go over to your friends house and physically see them.

United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on education and social experiences by stating, "The COVID-19 pandemic further altered their experiences at home, school, and in the community, and the effect on their mental health has been devastating. The future well-being of our country depends on how we support and invest in the next generation...we also need to focus on how we can emerge stronger on the other side."

The Physical Impact of Lockdown

In addition to the impact on mental health of adolescents, the physical health of this generation especially during lockdown was ruined.

In a study where they asked the teenagers of America to reply to an anonymous poll, it was found that 52% of teenagers stated they were less active than they were before quarantine, 33% reported absolutely no physical activity, and 25% told of less than one hour a week of any physical activity.

According to an article written by the Frontiers of Psychology, "It is important to note that physical activities (PA) and exercise not only maintain physical and psychological health but also help our body to respond to the negative consequences of several diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory diseases."

Conflict on the Homefront

Mental health was, and continues to be, a huge factor in teenagers' everyday lives. It was not just the lack of social interaction with peers that ruined a perfectly happy person's mental health, it was also monotony surrounding lockdown and being around the same few people in their households.

Whether it be good or bad, being stuck in the house all day kept these children locked inside

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The Impact of Pandemic Isolation (continued)

By Keelin Livingston

with no other in-person social interaction aside from those in their household. This led to tension within homes.

This tension among parents, siblings and other family members had a strong impact on teens. For some, it caused teens to become more distant from their families and parents in conflict.

According to Harbor Psychiatry and Mental Health, "Effects of divorce on children's mental health may increase the risk for mental health problems in children and adolescents. Regardless of age, gender, and culture, children of divorced parents experience increased psychological problems."

Lack of Representation in the Media

Finally, there is the lack of representation in the media.

During covid while being locked inside with nothing to do teenagers had too much time to sit and think about themselves.

When they found themselves scrolling through social media they were faced with unattainable beauty standards of women in their 20s, girls who spent an hour editing themselves, and other people using other effects causing the altering of faces and bodies.

While all this is going on the only time people saw each other in person was when a mask was covering most of their face. Then when the mask mandate was lifted and the mask was taken off people became even more insecure many

believing that it would help solve those insecurities.

As my final quote, the Harvard Health publishing website states, "If a child seems sad or irritable, or less interested in activities they used to enjoy, they tend to think of it as a phase, or teen angst, or something else that can be ignored. The mental health of our children is crucial. Not only does mental health affect physical health, but untreated mental health problems interfere with learning, socialization, self-esteem, and other important aspects of child development that can have lifelong repercussions. And for some children, untreated mental health problems lead to suicide."



Photo: Google Images

Taking a Seat

By Danna Taboada

It is no longer the beginning of the new school year as students read through pages of American history and solve the last problem on their math worksheet with the clock at their bedside that reads 12:01 am. Where students sleep on the bus ride to school and baristas memorize their coffee orders.

Regardless of the grade, it seems the stress of deadlines and piles of work is starting to seep its way back into students' lives.

According to Globe News Wire, a Newswire distribution network, 45% of high school students report feeling stressed all the time.

The Washington Post found in 2019 that 75% of high schoolers and 50% of middle schoolers described themselves as "often or always feeling stressed" by their schoolwork.

So, in order to maintain at least some sanity and balance as the school year progresses, taking a seat might be beneficial.

Whether it's reading a book or scrolling through shows on your Netflix account, just a couple of minutes of relaxation can ease the mind from hours of work. As stated by the health department of Cornell University, taking a break from doing one's schoolwork can refresh the mind and body as well as increase one's "energy, productivity, and ability to focus" compared to if one does their work with no stops in between. If the break is not conducted, then it'll be more likely for students to do poorly on their schoolwork with a lack of energy and concentration.

Although it may feel weird when you go on your phone to scroll on TikTok with unfinished work on the side, this short period of time

may actually help you complete that work with your best effort.

What you do during this time can be anything that peaks your interest. It can be as simple as scrolling through your phone or watching TV with family or by yourself. Make some tea or coffee as you read a new book or pick up where you had left off. If the weather is tolerable, take a walk across the block with music in one ear or your dog's leash in your hand. Crack some bones as you stretch on your bedroom floor. Or take a twenty minute nap to recharge your batteries.

Although this break can be filled with anything that you find calming, don't try to abuse it. Phones are obviously distracting and everyone can admit that. So, if you know that instead of spending twenty minutes on your phone, you'll find yourself stuck in a web of videos for an hour, then hold yourself back and choose something else to do. It can be very easy to fall into situations like that so just remember the purpose of these breaks: to refresh the mind and body. Not to distract yourself from your work.

Schoolwork can pile up and most people don't want to do it, but getting it done with the best of your ability will truly help you in the long run and make the school year a little less of a bumpy road.

So, as the days go by and we keep moving forward, make sure to just take a couple of minutes and stop whatever you're doing. Take a deep breath in and out and get away from the papers for a bit. They'll still be there when you come back. But you'll be different. You'll be ready to get it all done.

Separation Anxiety Disorder: an Overview

By Christine Luna-Badillo

What is separation anxiety disorder (SAD)? It's an anxiety disorder that can happen at any age. This causes the person to often feel worried about people they have close relationships with if separated from them. This makes the person feel anxious, worried, homesick or even depressed.

How common is SAD in adolescents?

SAD is more common in young children than adolescents, and it's so common that it's considered a normal part of child development. It's considered a good sign within a child, because it indicates that the child cares for their guardian/parent, but in young teenagers it is less prevalent and as they get older it becomes less and less common.

What causes SAD in adolescents?

There is no single cause for separation anxiety in adolescents or young teenagers. It can be a combination of genetics and how certain life events have affected them, stressful situations, or being diagnosed with certain mental health issues. Usually genetics and their environment are the reason they develop SAD.

What are symptoms of SAD in adolescents?

As explained earlier in the article, being separated by a loved one is a major cause of SAD in any person of

any age, but a symptom can be that the adolescent suffers consequences due to their anxiety, and it may interfere with school, work, or their relationships. In severe forms, SAD can cause young people to miss school and be socially withdrawn from peers.

How to receive help for SAD

The best recommendation is to see a therapist or someone to talk to about your fears of being separated from a loved one. It can help relieve the anxiety of fear, and can help you get through your worries.



Photo: Google Images

Mexico Adopts Marriage Equality

By Aanya Rawal and Christine Luna-Badillo

Recently Mexico's largest state approved equal marriage. This happened in the State of Mexico that also surrounds Mexico City, which has the largest population of any other state in Mexico.

Then, following suit, the state of Tamaulipas, the last of 32 Mexico states, adopted marriage equality on Wednesday, October 26th.

"Today by becoming the 29th state to approve equal marriage we will be reducing inequality, and letting the country know that in the state of Mexico we do not leave anybody behind," said the state legislator Paolo Jiménez .

Mexico's isn't the only Latin American country to accept equal marriage in their states. Brazil and Argentina, including Mexico, are the top Latin American countries to approve equal marriage rights. Even though it happened a couple of years ago. There has been discrimination and political arguments. It didn't let the people who supported equal marriage stop fighting to prove that "love is love".

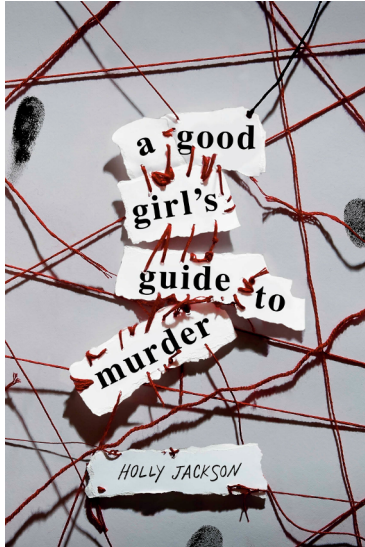


Photo: Google Images

The Comet News Book Revue

By Tasmiya Rahman

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder



by Holly Jackson

Holly Jackson, a British writer, is the author of *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, which is a crime thriller young adult fiction book and the first part of the AGGTM trilogy. It follows the story of Pippa Fitz-Amobi, a high school girl in Little Kilton, who investigates a closed

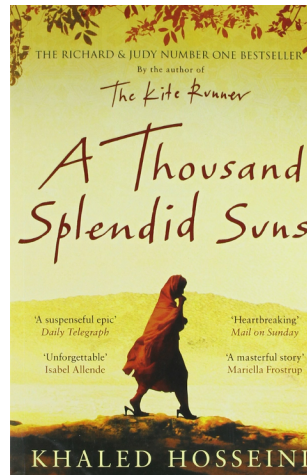
police case for her final year project. Five years ago, a girl from the same area named Andie Bell was supposedly murdered by her boyfriend, Sal Singh. But Pip had her suspicions, she doesn't believe that Sal was guilty of murdering his girlfriend. Throughout the story, Pip uncovers the secrets of Little Kilton, even the ones that are buried deep in lies. With the help of Ravi Singh, Sal's brother, she is able to figure out who really killed Andie Bell.

I read all of the books in the AGGTM trilogy and I can confidently say that it's one of the best books I've ever read. Initially, I was a bit bored because of the lack of action in the story, but after the first few chapters, I was addicted. Holly Jackson writes in a way that as you follow Pip on her journey, you get to see every single dead end she faces, her thought process when she puts all the clues together, and all the emotions she feels. Holly Jackson builds suspense as Pip connects the dots and concludes something that the readers probably didn't expect. I had to literally take a break from reading sometimes just to process what happened in the book. One thing I love about this book is that all the characters are unpredictable. I had my guesses on who murdered Andie, but they kept changing throughout the book because of the bad actions of other characters. The ending is unique and

something I definitely wouldn't have seen coming. I would definitely recommend this trilogy to people who enjoy thriller books.

A Thousand Splendid Suns

by Khalid Hosseini



The book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is written by Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan-American. He also wrote *The Kite Runner*, and is great at depicting stories about life in Afghanistan during a crisis. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is about two different girls: Mariam, a poor illegitimate child and Laila, a beautiful

“modern” girl. Mariam is forced to comply with an arranged marriage to a 42 year old abusive man, while she is only 15, due to her mother's death. Laila and Mariam cross paths and their friendship is rocky at first, but they eventually seek comfort in each other.

I was an absolute emotional train-wreck while reading this book and I think that Khaled Hosseini did a phenomenal job with it. He conducted a lot of research when writing this book including talking to Afghan women for their perspective on the difficulties of life during the crisis. There are many heart-wrenching moments in this book that are written nicely. I love how the book is based around poor and uneducated women who have to endure hardships in Afghanistan and the treatment of abusive men, because the life of a woman in a middle eastern country is normally not represented accurately, or at all. Hosseini gives detailed descriptions of war and terrorism that help the reader better understand the context of what's occurring in the novel. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is not just a book, it is so much more.

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The Club Fair Keeps HHS Active

On Thursday, September 30, Hickville Student Activities hosted a Club Fair. Students had a chance to meet and greet with advisors and members of HHS Clubs to find out more about each one and sign up for after school activities. It was a great afternoon.



Photos by Emma Mayer

Comet News would like to thank the following people for their support in helping us spread the news.

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