

ROSETTE

The Official Student Publication of PAREF Woodrose School

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FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2022-2023

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WE AIM TO INSPIRE REFLECTION, AND TO ELICIT RESPONSES FROM OUR READERS BY PROVIDING THEM WITH THOUGHT-PROVOKING INSIGHTS. FINALLY, THROUGH OUR WORK, WE STRIVE TO BE MODELS OF TRUTH AND SUBSTANCE, HELPING WOODROSE STUDENTS DEVELOP A BROADER PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE AND ATTAIN GREATER AWARENESS OF RELEVANT ISSUES.

UNIVERSITIES ANNOUNCE Cancellation of CETs FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2022-2023

by Carina Gutierrez

On August 31, Ateneo de Manila University became the first among the Philippines' leading universities to announce that it would not be holding entrance exams as part of college admissions for the school year 2022-2023. Followed by University of Sto. Tomas on September 1 and the De La Salle University and College of Saint Benilde on October 14 and 15 respectively, the cancellation of College Entrance Tests (CETs) for 2022 seems to be the general decision shared among the Philippines' universities amidst the ongoing pandemic. The one current exception would be the University of the Philippines. Although the university did open online applications on October 25, the UP has not yet formally announced the cancellation of the UPCAT, the school's college entrance test, and it has also stated that the school is still discussing the possibility of this exam pushing through.

However, the other universities mentioned will be basing admissions on previous academic and extracurricular records, essays, letters of recommendation, and possibly some other requirements, such as interviews. Each university announced their respective admissions requirements on their websites and official Facebook pages.

This is not the first time that this kind of resolution has been made. In 2020, the aforementioned schools opted to cancel admissions tests in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with other universities such as the University of the Philippines and the De La Salle University. However, unlike last year, this year's graduating batch finished their junior year fully online and went into the college application process knowing the entrance tests would likely be waived again.

Grade 12 student Abie Paguio expresses that "To be honest, I did foresee the cancellation of CETs this year, judging from the country's disposition and the rising cases. Although many of those around me thought that CETs would push through, I found it difficult to imagine how the universities would carry out the exam, whether online or in-person."

However, the CETs pushing through still remained a possibility at the beginning of the year, owing to the fact that both students and those in charge of facilitating the tests have more experience now with conducting exams and events online. Paguio's fellow batchmate, Riana Carag explains that the seniors this year were still very unsure about how the application process would be conducted.

"On one hand, because we've been in this online setup for a year, many were saying that the universities would probably have figured out how to execute the CETs already. On the other hand, the rise of COVID cases limited many students from availing of the proper resources needed to take the

tests, thus opening up the possibility that there would be none again."

Knowing that there was a possibility of CETs taking place this year, several review centers held college review classes over the summer, which Paguio and Carag both participated in. This was despite the uncertainty of whether entrance tests would actually happen. "Though I had a feeling CETs were going to be cancelled, I still attended review class as an added preparation for Grade 12," says Paguio.

Even if to her it feels like the review classes were not completely necessary now that there are no more entrance exams, Carag also adds that "at the end of the day they did help me refresh my knowledge on a lot of lessons." It also helps to make the safe move, which was, in fact, Paguio's rationale in deciding to take the review classes.

While the rest of the universities in Manila have yet to announce their cancellation of entrance exams, it is safe to say that doing so would be the best option, given the country's current state. The Department of Health has declared 165,790 active cases as of September 23,

2021, so factors such as accessibility and safety play a huge role in nationwide testing, especially at the moment.

Both seniors shared this sentiment. "Although the CETs would give many of us a chance to increase our chances and provide an even playing field, the cancellation was probably the best option," expressed Paguio. "Having physical CETs would pose a risk for thousands of minors, most of whom are probably not vaccinated yet, and might just make the Covid situation in the country worse."

Carag agreed that "transportation and opportunities have become very limited..there are many graduating students who already have (difficulty) trying to get the proper documents needed to apply."

She ended by stating her own thoughts towards the decision on the entrance exams. "It is definitely unfortunate that there are no CETs again this year, but with our situation in the country right now, it is a step that has to be taken." ■

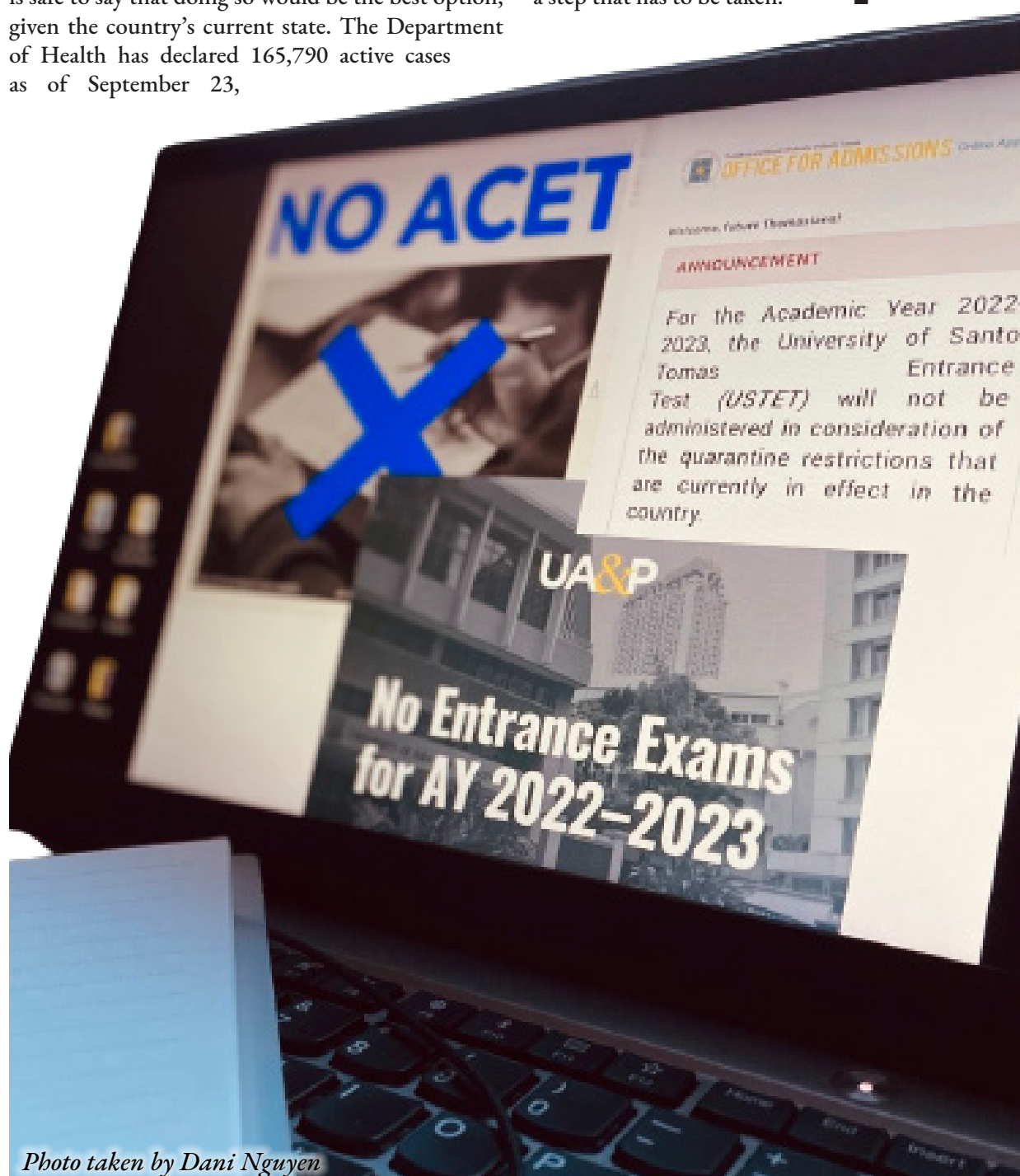


Photo taken by Dani Nguyen

PHase Shield

by Anya Legarda

A part of the Philippine government's way of addressing the coronavirus outbreak was the implementation of the wearing of face shields. In December 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte officially required the use of face shields, whether one was indoors or outdoors. Proceeding into September 2021, Mr. Duterte and his presidential cabinet declared that wearing face shields was not required in secluded, open-aired spaces; however, it was still necessary for tightly compact areas such as indoor settings. Lastly, on November 8, 2021, The City of Manila announced that face shields are no longer obligatory. All 16 of Metro Manila's cities are in discussion of officially lifting face shields, excluding medical facilities. As of this moment, Muntinlupa is the second city, following Manila, to remove the face shield policy.

When global headlines came in, the controversy spread about the inadequacy of face shields. Filipino citizens began to raise questions as to why the Philippines is the only country

with mandatory protocols to wear face shields. The Philippine government set the idea of placing face shields front and center as the solution while some other third-world countries have steadily moved into different points in their journey, defeating the rampant coronavirus of 2019.

In particular, two Asian countries that already seem to be looking forward are Taiwan and Vietnam. Taiwan, a highly-developed third-world country, implemented severe travel restrictions to prolong a strategic attempt to keep the country locked in itself without any foreign contaminants. At the time of writing, Taiwan has an estimated 16,465 COVID-positive cases, with 848 lives lost. On the other hand, Vietnam has been prepared with funded hospitals ever since the SARS epidemic; they also require certain healthcare procedures, such as contact-tracing individuals entering the country. Vietnam, with its 98 million population, has nearly 1,000,897 cases and 22,849 deaths.

Compared to Taiwan and Vietnam, there is a lack of structure in the COVID-19 aid created by Philippine

officials. This was seen in the Philippines' immediate response to the shortage of medical equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPEs), N95 masks, and face shields. As of this moment, the Philippines has 2,811,248 positive infections and 44,866 deaths. Almost two whole years since national coronavirus precautions began, the Philippines has had one of the most prolonged lockdowns ever recorded. The country has not been able to step back from reality as the cases continuously rise.

Former government-official coronavirus task force adviser and Filipino physician Dr. Tony Leachon spoke to ABS-CBN News about the financial response to health support. Translated in English, "We should rechannel our funds meant for face shields and face masks to testing, contact tracings, and aid." Nonetheless, the Philippine government remains firm in its stand to mandate face shields.

The World Health Organization's representative to the Philippines, Dr. Rabindra Abeyasinghe, stated



in a press interview that health professionals are reviewing the potentially significant impact of face shields due to the delayed spread of the Delta variant in the Philippines. During his conference, he mentioned that face shields are meant to induce protection in the eyes to prevent further infection. Even so, the use of face shields will indeed be ineffective if the public continues to wear them as headbands and does not follow mandatory safety guidelines such as social distancing in public places and obeying the proper etiquette of mask-wearing. ■

AS COVID-19 CASES IN THE COUNTRY RISE, Healthcare Workers Resign due to Lack of Compensation

by Sasha Rocha and Nika Ambal

Dissent struck among Filipino healthcare workers (HCWs), prompting them to assemble outside the Department of Health (DOH) on September 1, 2021 to protest the delay in the distribution of hazard pay and risk allowances. Even with the HCWs' vital role as front liners combatting the pandemic, many of them remain overworked and underpaid.

Because of this, a number of HCWs are facing financial troubles. Nurses from private facilities in Metro Manila

make a minimum wage of P537 a day since they do not benefit from the salary standardization law unlike nurses from public hospitals. Despite the proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act's proposed allocation of P53.48 billion for the support of HCWs and the P270 million compensation for COVID-19 infected HCWs, funds are still lodged at the DOH.

To explain the allotment of the special risk allowance funds, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III justified that the budget was allocated to the proposed Bayanihan 3 bill that remains pending in the senate. However, the proper compensation of HCWs has been an issue since the beginning of the pandemic.

The tenuous compensation caused the resignation of almost 40% of

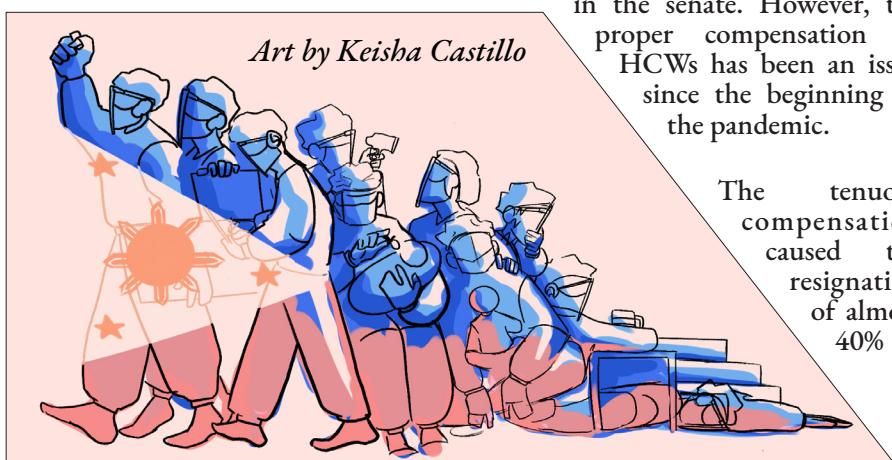
private hospital nurses in 2020, contributing to the number of understaffed hospitals across the country. This issue is also evident in government hospitals, as the Filipino Nurses United coalition stated that these hospitals face shortages of 40-50 nurses based on their bed capacity.

According to the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines, another 5% of private hospital nurses have resigned since April this year. The plea of hospital workers to receive adequate pay was backed by a survey conducted in August last year by iPrice Group, which revealed that Filipinos had the lowest salary among healthcare workers in Southeast Asia by over P20,000.

The heavy workload of nurses, coupled with the lack of compensation for their efforts, has forced many to resign in spite of the record-breaking number of daily COVID-19 cases. "Health care workers are tired and extremely demoralized. Many have already resigned and many more want to," stated Jao Clumia, the union president of St. Luke's Medical Center.

Due to the nature of their job, nurses are among those most exposed to the virus, yet they are still some of the most underpaid. Maristela Abenojar, national president of Filipino Nurses United, added, "Some nurses are working 12-hour shifts and caring for as many as 20 patients. They forgo meals and bathroom breaks to save on PPEs. All of this is putting them at increased risk of COVID infection and adding to their fears of catching the disease."

The problem continues to grow in spite of the plea for nurses to receive more support from the government. Last August 21, health and budget ministries were given 10 days to pay the healthcare workers. Despite this order from President Duterte, tens of thousands had still not received any compensation as of September 2. Health Secretary Duque promised that the government was dealing with the issue, although he admitted that the budget for 2022 had no allocation for the special risk allowance of healthcare workers. At this rate, the number of resigning healthcare workers will rise along with the number of COVID-19 cases in the country. ■



MUNTINLUPA CITY VACCINATION PROGRAM EMERGES AS ONE OF THE Top Performing in the Country

by Isabel Peralta

Muntinlupa City, home to the Woodrose campus and much of its community is also home to MunCoVac, one of the Philippines' most outstanding vaccination programs.

As of this writing, the city deploys hundreds of staff members and volunteers who typically work nine-hour shifts per vaccine day in 16 vaccination sites across its six clusters.

According to one of the cluster heads, Dr.

Cherry Natividad, her cluster alone has a daily quota to vaccinate 1,450 people a day.

This number continues to increase as Muntinlupa introduces innovative ways to cater to the vaccination needs of all its people. One of the most notable is a vaccination site on wheels, tagged as Rolling Bakuna. The MunCoVac team deployed a bus to go around various barangays in Muntinlupa City and bring vaccines to the doorsteps of sick and bed-ridden citizens.

Another feature of MunCoVac is the Bakuna sa Gabi, a program designed for workers of the A4 category. To accommodate uniformed personnel and essential workers who cannot get vaccinated during work hours, vaccination schedules have been extended to 10:00 p.m.

Due to its continued efforts for success, MunCoVac is proving to be more and more outstanding by the day. As of September 24, 2021, a total number of 262,690 individuals have been fully vaccinated. This number corresponds to 68.1% of Muntinlupa's target population.

Additionally, the city's adequate resources have allowed team MunCoVac to open its doors to vaccinate non-local residents

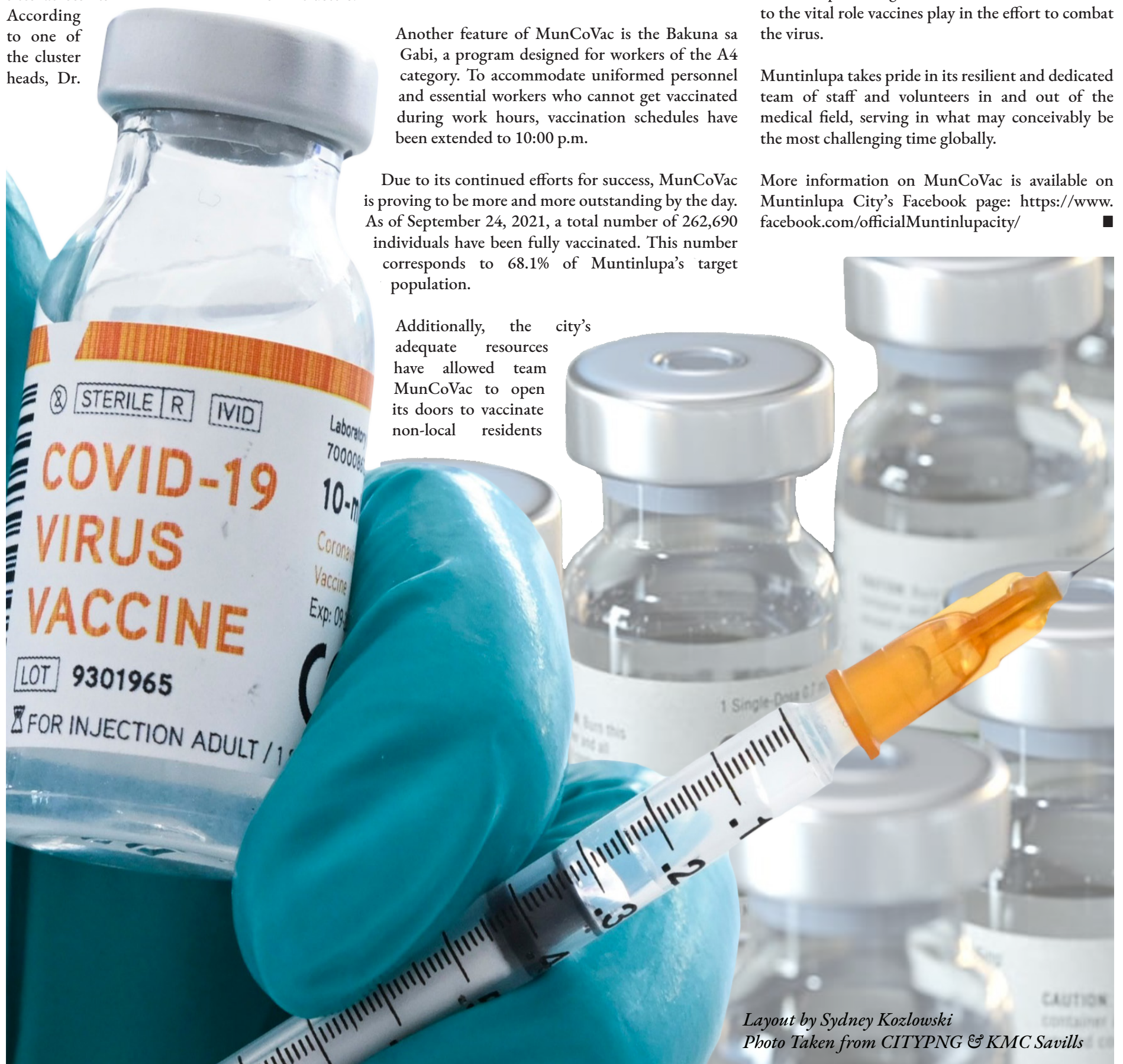
who work within Muntinlupa City.

At this time, the city's vaccination officials have already vaccinated select pediatric residents of Muntinlupa in the A3 category (12-17 years old with controlled comorbidities). Registration is open and can be accessed through this link: <https://vaccine.muntinlupacity.gov.ph/muncovac/>

City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi continues to urge Muntinlupenos to get vaccinated and calls attention to the vital role vaccines play in the effort to combat the virus.

Muntinlupa takes pride in its resilient and dedicated team of staff and volunteers in and out of the medical field, serving in what may conceivably be the most challenging time globally.

More information on MunCoVac is available on Muntinlupa City's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/officialMuntinlupacity/> ■



Layout by Sydney Kozłowski
Photo Taken from CITYPNG & KMC Savills

The Taliban's Unclear Stance ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

by Hanna Marasigan

Last August 15, 2021, an Islamic militia known as the Taliban seized control over Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. This takeover happened just weeks after U.S. President Biden's decision to withdraw American troops from the country. The Afghan government quickly deteriorated as their president, Ashraf Ghani, fled within hours of the event. The seat of authority and control was perfectly open for the Taliban to claim. With the group's past history governing the country, there is a growing concern for the Afghan people, most especially the women.

Two days after the event, on August 17, 2021, a press conference regarding the group's future intentions was held. Long time Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid revealed himself to the public for the first time, bearing claims of a more inclusive Islamic government.

"Islamic emirate is committed to the rights of women within the framework of *sharia*. Our women have the same rights, they are going to be working shoulder to shoulder with us. We want to assure the international community there will be no discrimination against women but of course, within our religious framework," Mujahid said.

More recently, last Sept. 21, 2021, he expressed the Taliban's intentions and ongoing work to reopen girls' schools.

Despite this, however, recent events have made their claims of inclusivity feel empty. Although the Taliban has not established formal policies that explicitly ban women from education and work, they have announced temporary restrictions.

Higher Education Minister Abdul Baqi Haqqani announced that women will be allowed to study, but should do so following the new rules set in place. Classes are now segregated by gender. Women are not permitted to teach male students. The buses to be used by women are required to have covered windows to hide them from the outside and the male driver. They themselves must also abide to a dress code by fully veiling themselves. Haqqani justifies these new rules by asserting the Taliban's desire for a

"reasonable and Islamic curriculum that is in line with our Islamic, national and historical values."

A number of students have already lost hope in their chances of education. "I don't believe the Taliban," one student said. "I'm scared of their rules and I'm concerned to lose my life for no reason under their control."

So far, most women have been instructed to stay home as a 'security measure' and to wait for further announcements. Many have already been stripped of their jobs. Refusing to stay silent, on Sept. 4, 2021, dozens of women marched the streets of Kabul demanding their right to employment and necessity for a role in government. Among these women was Razia Barakzai, who claimed the women were peaceful the entire time but were met with pepper spray and tear gas from the Taliban forces. She further mentioned that she even saw one woman get beaten, who was later featured in the news with a bleeding head.

A female teacher reacts to the Taliban's rules with an unfortunate familiarity. "This happened last time. They kept saying they would allow us to return to work, but it never happened."

The greatest source of skepticism towards the Taliban is their already existing record of oppression and misogyny. The group first emerged in the 1990s and was initially seen as a potential vessel of peace and traditional Islamic values. However, when the Taliban finally claimed power in 1996-2001, it became clear they were only acting on their interpretations of Islamic law. This included highly conservative views towards the role of women in society. Under the Taliban's rule, women's rights to education, employment, and self-expression were reduced to nothing. Social Studies teacher Mrs. Mia Alaras, who specializes in

contemporary issues, stated:

Afghanistan under the Taliban rule has one of the worst human rights records in the world. The Taliban have repressed all sectors of the population, most especially the women, and have denied the Afghans even the most basic individual rights.

She continued with a quote from former U.S. President George W. Bush:

Women are imprisoned in their homes, and are denied access to basic health care and education. Food sent to help starving people is stolen by their leaders. The religious monuments of other faiths are destroyed. Children are forbidden to fly kites, or sing songs... A girl of seven is beaten for wearing white shoes. (President George W. Bush, Remarks to the Warsaw Conference on Combating Terrorism, November 6, 2001)

For now, the world has yet to see any real change from the Taliban. With



Photo taken from the Human Rights Watch

their recent activity and past history, many are convinced they merely attempted to mask their old ways. There is still a need to reach out to Afghan women as an international community. When asked what can be done about this, Ms. Alaras responded with:

What the people can really do is to rally against the Taliban and their ideologies. Writing about it is one way to advocate against the social injustices against women that the Taliban have been implementing. The most important move that can be done is to have a dialogue among the stakeholders in the international sphere, mediated by the UN. Also, raising awareness on our rights as women will also help Afghan women realize the things they should be fighting for. Knowing that a lot of people are behind them will hopefully empower them to speak up.

While the Taliban's stance currently remains unclear, it is essential to take action before it is possibly too late. ■

Layout by Cassandra Gutierrez

COA REPORTS

Unaccounted DOH Funds

by TinTin Quianzon

Last August 11, 2021, the Commission on Audit (COA) published a report on their website linking 67.3 billion pesos' worth of deficiencies to the Department of Health (DOH). COA, an independent institution associated with the government, has the primary goal of guaranteeing accountability for public resources, cultivating transparency, and assisting in the development of government operations for the betterment of the welfare of the Filipino people. The underutilization of these funds affected the health services being provided to the Filipino people and added to the already existing problems being presented by the pandemic.

Although the Secretary of the Department of Health, Francisco Duque III insisted that the funds were "fully accounted for" as they were used to purchase test kits and personal protective equipment and were paid to healthcare workers, the report provided by the COA suggested otherwise.

Among the P67.3 billion, according to state auditors, deficiencies at an estimated cost of 66.28 billion pesos were attributed to the lack of subordination to existing laws and regulations. In the report, along with in-kind donations, funds meant to give benefits to the workforce and provide medical relief and facilities to the public were identified as unaccounted for as they lacked proper documentation and the necessary legal basis.

In response to the report, Sec. Duque stated that the P67.3 billion noted by the COA was accounted for. According to the DOH, P68.9 billion of P79.7 billion of funds given to them to respond to COVID-19 were already used by December 31, 2020. "Wala pong kinurakot," Sec. Duque stated. He reassured that the funds were being used for the Filipino people, specifically, "the procurement of test kits and PPEs, payment of HCWs benefits, salaries of HRH, among others,".

To address the problem of the unaccounted funds, the COA delivered a list of recommendations for the DOH and in particular, Sec. Duque. Sec. Duque was prompted to carry out a meticulous inquisition on the inconsistencies in the utilization of funds and provide explanations on the agency's issues regarding insufficient documentation, deficient management, and inconsistent execution. Chiefs of the operating units were told to deliver proper documentation and explanations on the deficiencies mentioned in the audit report, implement necessary corrective actions, and thoroughly plan before purchasing the necessary medical equipment.

Sec. Duque was emotional because of the report made by state auditors. In the virtual hearing held by the House committee, he stated that he felt attacked for this report and that his dignity and the dignity of his colleagues were damaged, which, in turn, caused them to lose sleep. He and the rest of the people in

the agency were deeply hurt by all the allegations and asked for mercy as they were also dealing with the isolation, quarantine, and deaths of their colleagues on top of managing the pandemic.

Instead of violating the honor of the agency, Sec. Duque repeated that the DOH should have been given a chance to send a reply or issue rejoinders to the COA report. He elaborated that the agency already knew of the discoveries made by COA and that its personnel were already attempting to contend or resolve the issues being presented by the state auditors.

President Rodrigo Duterte also defended Sec. Duque and the DOH. In his pre-recorded weekly national address, he shielded them by stating that the papers looked over by COA for the report were simply insufficient and incomplete as it would be impossible to steal P67.3 billion. He also confounded COA for releasing the report and influencing the perception of the public on the agency and its workers. "Stop that flagging. You make a report, do not flag. Do not publish it because it would condemn the agency or person that you are flagging," he said. "Don't follow COA... nothing happens anyways. That's what I don't like, that flagging," he declared to the members of his Cabinet.

The underutilization of these funds made a humongous impact on health services and facilities, affecting how COVID-19 was handled in the country. Though it was sanctioned by Duterte, issued a special allotment release order (SARO), and assigned a P62-million budget, the construction of the Marawi General City Hospital still did not push through in 2020. The DOH attributed their failure to scarceness of manpower, limitations in travel, and several other factors, however, the construction of a P199.9-million Sarimanok Sports Stadium and P180-million Marawi Convention Center still took off.

Local leaders stated that the hospital would have been more beneficial to the 60,000 families that were displaced during the tragic Marawi Siege in 2017. "It is disheartening to know that a much-needed project like the Marawi General Hospital did not push through because of inefficiency or lack of interest on the part of DOH," stated Drieza Lininding, who oversaw the activities of the civil society watchdog Moro Consensus Group (MCG).

Additionally, Health workers have not been

receiving their deserved compensation for all the risks they take every day in line with their job. Because of this, they have been taking to the streets to call for their overdue benefits and Sec. Duque's resignation for his negligence in providing them their rightful COVID-19 allowances. Robert Mendoza, the president of the Alliance of Health workers, discussed how many health workers passed away, got sick, and resigned due to the government's lack of care for them. These occurrences are in line with the COA's report that the funds given to the DOH were not converted into vital health supplies, equipment, and services that could have lessened the dire impact of the pandemic on health workers and all the Filipino people.

Whether or not this underutilization exhibits corruption or incompetency, it should not quickly leave the minds of the Filipino people as it has drastically changed how COVID-19 was managed in the country, especially considering the fact that officials from the current administration may continue to maintain their positions in the upcoming elections. ■



Art by Oren Leonida

THE START OF SOMETHING NEW: LMS Transition from a Teacher's Perspective

by Ruru Gorong

The Senior High School department of PAREF Woodrose officially executed their plan to use Xepto as an online platform for School Year 2021-2022. Their transition to a new learning management system (LMS) was a way to adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic. After using Google Classroom last year, students and teachers of grades 11 and 12 now make use of Xepto to aid their education. One can say that this school year is the start of something new. However, was 2021 the year it all began?

Mrs. Toledo, a Senior High School teacher in Woodrose, explained the change of learning management system (LMS). According to her, the prospect of a different LMS is not something that was abruptly thought of. She mentioned that, "As early as 2019... the management committee and the IT department were already looking at Xepto... Woodrose was already exploring blended learning." At that time, Edmodo was the school's online platform. Though, the school chose to look into Xepto for its features and flexibility, which are qualities that align with the "trend in technology and digitalization" seen today. June 2019 was used for presentations and testing of Xepto. Slow progress was made throughout the year until 2020.

When the pandemic hit last year, things did not go as planned. The school's work with Xepto was put on hold with the sudden change to remote learning. With the subscription to the GSuite package, Woodrose decided to make use of Google Classroom. Xepto only became a backup plan. Though, after having experienced one full school year in this set-up, it was time to continue exploring more possibilities for a stable platform. The school brought back the idea of Xepto and began to work on it further. With that, the students and teachers of senior high school became the pilot batch for this new LMS and school year.

Senior high school teachers such as Mrs. Toledo had to prepare together to make the LMS transition possible for the school. It was essential for them to view reading materials about Xepto and explore the platform on their own. This guided their deeper understanding of the LMS, its background, and the operations within the platform.

Moreover, they had to undergo a two-week training over the summer. As the first day of school quickly approached, Mrs. Toledo mentioned that "collaboration with co-teachers actually helped." Their sharing of experiences and ideas prepared them for the upcoming classes. With their newly-gained knowledge, the teachers were ready to take on the school

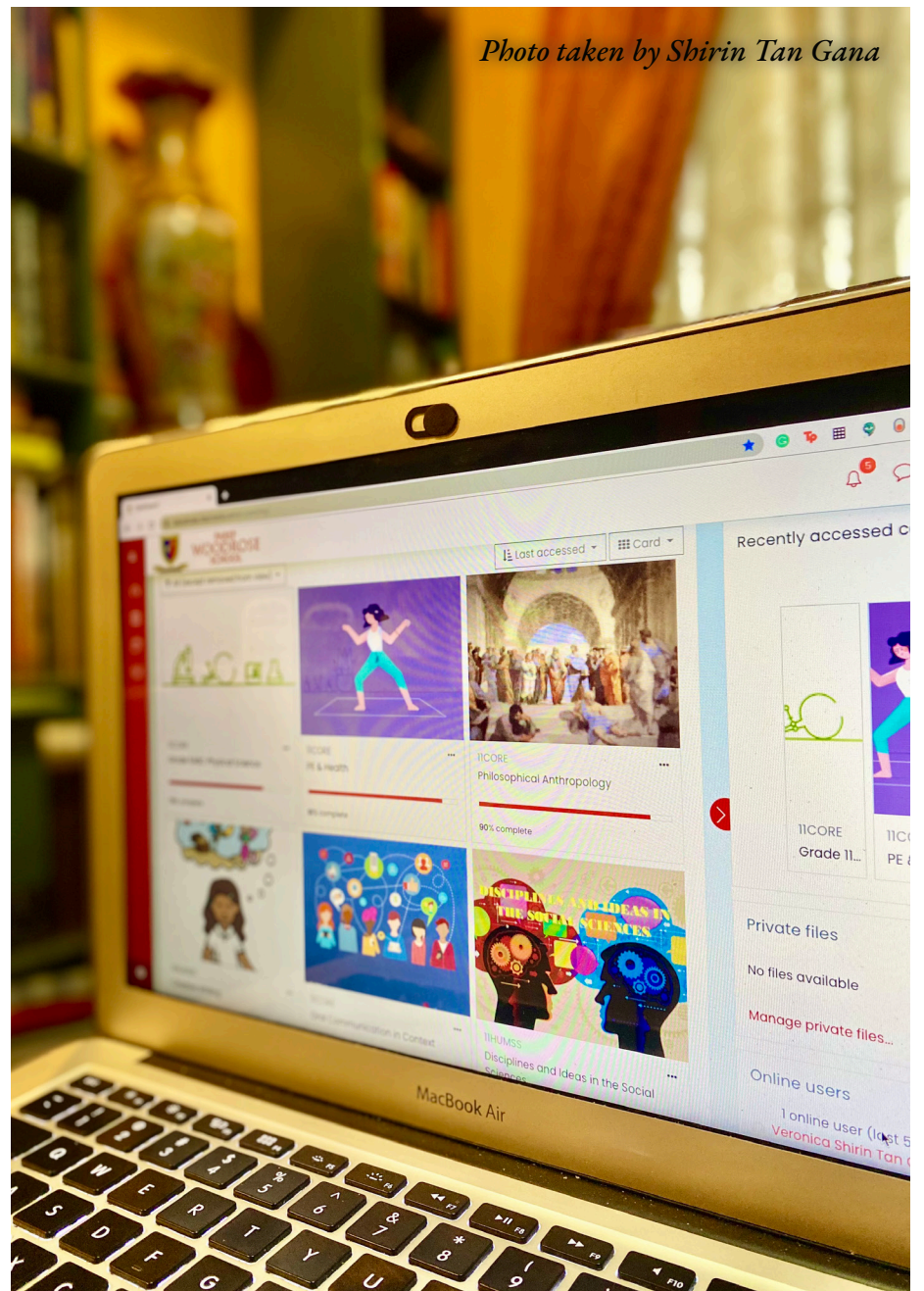


Photo taken by Shirin Tan Gana

year alongside their students. There is value in the communication of students and teachers as they help each other transition to the new LMS. To achieve efficiency, teachers continue to explore and understand the features of Xepto. There is much to learn, most especially in the ways educators can get their lessons across. For Mrs. Toledo, she wants her students to "feel comfortable" and "know what to do" as they go over her course. To do so, she checks on them and makes sure that they are well.

Mrs. Toledo and other teachers also experiment with the different Xepto features to gauge the settings and techniques that are best for everyone.

They continue to take advantage of their capabilities to post their materials as books, websites, and pages to organize their materials and add variety. Moreover, they accept the feedback and notes from their students to help them improve. This way, the students are able to learn and adjust together.

This transition from Google to Xepto brought about changes and prompted adjustments on both the sides of the educators and the students. Nevertheless, their collaboration and communication aids them to use Xepto to the best of their abilities as new experiences and learnings await. ■



Photo taken by Shirin Tan Gana

COV LAUNCHING: Launch from Home

by Orange Martinez

Last September 15, 2021, the Woodrose Student Council hosted the Clubs, Organizations and Varsity Launching, also known as COV Launching, through a virtual setup.

Extracurricular activities have always played a big part in the Woodrose Community. Pre-pandemic, the launch was usually held at the Woodrose gym for the overall event and the promenade was also filled with sign up spots for each COV. However, due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the COV Launching was conducted online. The Woodrose Student Council planned the launch throughout the whole September. COV Heads and Council Committees also helped in making this launch a success.

COVs and Committees were asked to prepare materials for the Live Event and the online Google site for students to explore. They met with the Student Council occasionally to finalize the flow of the event and to ensure that they were all prepared to present something on the day itself.

The launch took place at 1:30pm, with students heading to the call after classes. As a highschool-wide event, all students were encouraged to attend and watch.

Though some technical difficulties occurred at the start of the event, such as the Zoom call reaching maximum capacity, it was resolved with a quick change from Zoom to Youtube Livestream at the last minute. The event flowed smoothly after the initial technical difficulties with

Student Council President, Carmela Dioko, and Vice President, Raissa Escasa, taking the floor as the main speakers of the event.

Each COV and council committee was given a few minutes to introduce themselves and their clubs, encouraging the students to sign up and join. After the presentations of all the COVs and committees, students were given the time to visit the COV website and sign up.

The lively energy coming from all the speakers made the event enjoyable for the students. As the oldest students of the High School body, it was mostly Grade 11 and Grade 12 students who took on roles of COV heads and encouraged younger batches to join. It was the fun school activity all students were waiting for.

Although this was already the second COV Launching that was hosted in the online setup, it was the first for some students. It was certainly a new experience for Abbey Capricho, a new student from Ateneo De Naga University. Due to the online setup, her previous school did not have any clubs last year.

art by Sample Artist
Capricho also mentioned that her previous school had a different face-to-face setup when it came to launching their clubs and that they didn't have as many COVs.

She said, "I expected it to be like my former school like how they launched their clubs. When I attended the Youtube Live, it was very interesting. Very, very interesting organizations and clubs that weren't in my former school [Ateneo]."

As she watched Woodrose's COV Launching, Abbey was surprised to see the different COVs. The clubs and orgs were all interesting and she felt convinced to sign up. She was still thinking about signing up for an org but she has picked a club already.

Overall, Abbey's first time with an online COV Launching was an enjoyable one. Her experience was a smooth one with no difficulties, she had a fun time watching the livestream, and the Launch also convinced her to join.

Just like Abbey, the other high school students also had fun during the COV Launching of School Year 2021-2022. Even if it was a "Launch from Home", it still succeeded in lightening up the mood and encouraging students to take on extracurricular activities. ■

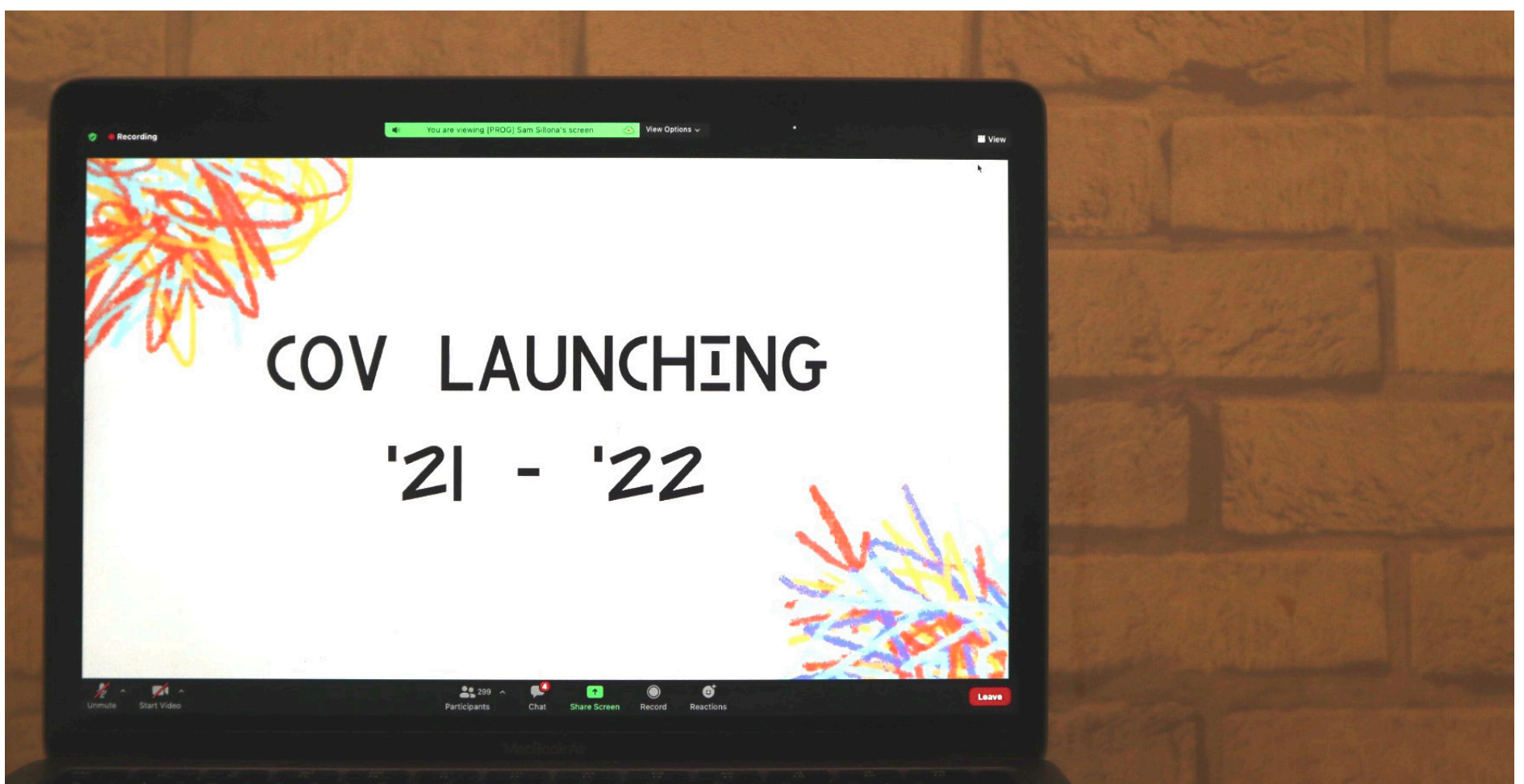


Photo taken by Kaira Uy

TAKE A LOOK INTO THE PAST FROM OUR PHOTOGRAPHY AND ART DEPARTMENTS' PERSPECTIVES IN OUR BRAND-NEW CREATIVES SECTION! FROM WHO THEY WERE LAST SUMMER ALL THE WAY TO THE ALUMNAE WHO HAVE LONG-SINCE GRADUATED, ROSETTE'S CREATIVES BRING OUT THE NOSTALGIA PRESENT IN ALL OF US.



Then

& Now

Date.

Page.



dream a little
dream of me



JUMPING INTO NOSTALGIA



EDITORIAL & OPINION

OBJECTIVITY:

Striving Toward the Unachievable

In the discussion of media and politics, the terms “left-wing media” or “right-wing media” are common terms that one might encounter. It pertains to the political ideology that a certain news organization seems to endorse or lean towards. For instance, the majority of the New York Times’ readers are more consistently liberal while the viewers of Fox News find themselves on the opposite end of the spectrum.

However, the very existence of such terminologies in this context brings into question one of the key journalistic dogmas that news personnel vow to practice. If these institutions all produce content that is meant to cater to the beliefs of their audience, how then can ordinary citizens trust that the news that they base their decisions on, such as who to vote for, is objective? In fact, does objectivity even exist at all?

To put it straight, no, it does not. And as controversial as it may sound, especially coming from an official school publication, this statement does shed some light on the way that all forms of media are produced.

In short, the media acts as an observer of all the different aspects of society, whether that be the economy, politics, culture, or science. This is because, in a world with an infinite unknown, there simply is not enough time nor resources for every individual to get all the necessary information themselves. Hence, there is the need for designated professionals to collate, summarize, and present these pieces of knowledge.

Now, objectivity is a familiar concept to any educated human person. However, Elizabeth Thornton puts it best in her book entitled *The Objective Leader: How to Leverage the Power of Seeing Things As They Are*. She calls it “I see, therefore it is.” It refers to the manner in which journalists must collect data. Regardless of whether or not a certain piece of information adheres to their views and values, they must record it just as they witnessed it.

This part of the journalistic process, for the most part, is simple enough. Objectivity begins to get lost when a reporter brings all these fragments of information together. This is because a mere change in word choice and order of ideas can alter a viewer’s perception of what is being presented. As a matter of fact, the very decision a news organization makes to cover a certain topic exhibits bias in itself because it shows that they deem this issue as more important than others that currently prevail.

All of these influence the masses’ thoughts and emotions, which translate into action. This action could be to share a story, change a lifestyle, or, in the case of the upcoming Halalan 2022, vote.

In a few months, the Filipino people will select who will take a seat in public office based on the information they know and how they interpret this. This is where news organizations come in. According to Howard Ross, an Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society Associate, “The media is usually the most important way people find out about the election and political choices” (Howard

& Gibbs, 2004). They are counted on to be accurate, impartial and responsible sources of information regarding the who, what and how of voting.

This includes answering questions pertaining to who the candidates are -- including their background, history and present state -- and what parties they belong to, if they are not independent. What are their platforms and their campaigning styles? What are their current jobs? What do they do in their positions? What do they say and do during press conferences and debates?

How can voters now act on their decisions, formed through the comparison of the information received with personal priorities and values? How do Filipinos register to vote, and how can they do so when the time comes? During the elections themselves, how is the voter turnout and who is winning? Is the counting of votes lawful and untainted?

The media should never dictate which candidate to vote for, but it should always give the masses the capability to participate. Elections are a crucial determiner of a country’s future, with the elected leaders at the helm of decision-making and the implementation of plans. Voters bestow upon their selected candidates this power, and have the right to do so in this democratic country.

Their freedom to choose should thus be assisted, but never infringed on, by news organizations. By providing information as objectively as possible, voters can remain educated and vigilant. This objectivity, however, cannot be measured by a perfect metric of inclusion or omission, but it can be measured by the pursuit of social good. When journalists show reality as it really is -- with pure intentions -- they can be trusted. Readers, viewers and listeners are free to interpret this intention, and are encouraged to cross-check with other sources and discover what reality is to them. *No view of reality is ever perfect, but this should not hinder the pursuit of perfection.* ■



Art by Oren Leonida

VACCINE HESITANCY:

The Boundaries of Social Responsibility

There were sighs of relief when the Philippine government announced that it had procured stocks of the long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine. Eager to receive what has been heralded as the key to ending the pandemic, many Filipinos have been willing to line up for hours on end to get vaccinated. At the time of writing, the Department of Health (DOH)'s official tracker reports that over 34 million first doses and 29 million second doses have been administered.

Despite this enthusiasm, a survey conducted by OCTA Research in July showed that only 53% of adults were willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Although this number is up from the 19% recorded in January, it is still far lower than the vast majority of the population that must be inoculated to achieve herd immunity.

Those who were reluctant to receive the vaccine cited doubts about its safety and effectiveness as their main reasons for not wanting it. According to a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations, some of the top specific reasons that Filipinos are uncertain or unwilling to be vaccinated are "It's not safe and effective" (21%), "I have comorbidity/I'm too old" (11%), "I'm afraid/I don't trust the vaccine" (11%), and "I might die/I heard reports of fatality" (11%).

In certain cases, the latter two fears may have a connection to vaccine conspiracy theories and misinformation flooding online platforms, or stories that have gone around. Another reason Filipinos entertain these fears is trauma from the Dengvaxia controversies.

Dengvaxia launched in 2016 accompanied by an immunisation programme by the DOH. In 2017, Sanofi, creator of the Dengvaxia vaccine, discovered that those with no previous exposure to the dengue virus may experience severe infections if they receive the vaccine and get infected after. In

the following years, the vaccine was linked to the deaths of multiple children, and its licence was revoked in the Philippines in 2019. Vaccine trauma due to this

controversy, messy and inefficient health crises responses by the government, and the misinformation flooding online platforms has instilled many Filipinos with fear and hopelessness. The Philippines once had some of the highest vaccine confidence in the world, which has dropped to approximately 32% over the years according to the DOH.

Due to this, it is understandable that many Filipinos are hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. It is uncertain how such vaccines may affect different people in the present and in the future. Additionally, the process of getting vaccinated is time consuming and can be expensive. Travelling to a vaccination center, waiting in line for many hours, and possible consultation with a doctor for Filipinos with diagnosed or potential underlying health conditions takes away resources that many need to survive.

However, can it be said that those opposed to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine are irresponsible? Is getting vaccinated a defining act of social responsibility?

Yes, it is.

Social responsibility is the application of ethical and moral principles into personal or professional acts and fulfilling civic duties to prevent harm to the society and the environment. Therefore, acts that contribute to the improvement of one's surroundings can be deemed socially responsible, such as wearing a mask, practicing voting rights, and donating available resources to healthcare workers and the sick. Along with this, getting vaccinated is an absolute act of social responsibility for those who are eligible.

The vaccine is not a cure, nor is it completely foolproof. However, it plays a crucial role in decreasing the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. Vaccinated individuals are less likely to contract the virus after exposure to it, and are less likely to develop critical symptoms in the event that they do test positive for COVID-19.

Moreover, because inoculated individuals are less likely to be infected with the virus, they are also less likely to transmit it to others. This indirect protection offered to people by virtue of their proximity to someone who is vaccinated is the underlying concept behind herd immunity. However, in order to achieve this, a high percentage of the population must be vaccinated.

The fear and stress brought by uncertainty in the ongoing pandemic is almost impossible to dispel, even more so when it is linked to past experiences. But the pandemic has affected much more than just the health sector; the economy, the education system, and even everyday life have all been disrupted by COVID-19. Considering how the pandemic has affected so many sectors of society, is it not every eligible citizen's responsibility to do their part?

The only way for everyone to achieve optimal protection against the pandemic is through vaccination. Citizens with the privilege must fulfill their civic duty by using their access to education and reliable sources to understand the vaccines and consult a doctor, and by getting vaccinated themselves. For the Philippines to overcome this COVID-19 pandemic, those who can be socially responsible must be. ■



FROM PELIKULA TO PULITIKA:

From Entertainment to Elections

by *Sasha Rocha*

Getting into the world of politics is no easy task. From a minimum age requirement to a natural-born citizenship status, the requirements to run for public office seem easy enough. However, as I scanned the 5-item list, I noticed that one major requirement seemed to be missing from the bunch: actual experience in law, politics, or anything similar.

The lack of requirements specifically targeted towards those with any administrative experience in governance means that any Filipino adult who was born in the country, is literate, and has been living here their whole lives is eligible to run for a government position. This also means that even those with careers completely

unrelated to politics can potentially win an election. That being said, I noticed something over the years that both confuses and worries me: celebrities in politics.

The history of Filipino celebrities making the transition from entertainment to public office is a long and interesting one. From 1967 to 1986, former actor Joseph Estrada served as Mayor of the Municipality of San Juan. He then went on to be a Senator from 1987-1992, Vice President of the Philippines from 1992-1997, and President of the Philippines from 1998-2002. In 2004, Fernando Poe Jr., a highly popular actor at the time, lost by only a slim margin to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during that year's Presidential Elections in spite of being a high school dropout and having no prior

experience in governance.

The list goes on, and with the 2022 Elections fast approaching, there seem to be more celebrities who have their eyes set on running now than ever before. Senator Manny Pacquiao, a man known more for his skill in boxing than his success as a lawmaker, has confirmed his Presidential candidacy in the upcoming elections. Even Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, another former actor, has also been making headlines for the same reason.

While it is inspiring that these celebrities are showing the public that there is more to them than meets the eye, I also cannot help but wonder why they even feel the need to run in the first place. Were they unhappy in the entertainment industry and that they desired a change of scenery in the

form of transitioning to politics? Do they have visions for the future of our country that they believe will come to fruition should they be elected into office? Are they running in a selfish attempt to make even more money than they already do even if they make far more than the average Filipino?

I am not saying that all celebrities-turned-politicians do not have the country's best interest at heart. A lot of programs founded by these celebrities end up being long-term and highly beneficial to the communities they serve. However, these celebrities have a massive following just from their careers in the entertainment industry alone, and many of the people that do end up voting for them only do so for two reasons. As researched by Lara Zwarun, an Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and

Angela Torrey, a Marketing Communication Manager, the first is basic name recall or familiarity with the celebrities' work. Their popularity before entering the field of politics is more than enough to convince some that they are worthy of office despite not knowing their political party platform. The second reason, which was confirmed in the book "Celebrity Politics" by Darrell West and John Orman, is that the media prefers to highlight more famous candidates by giving them more television airtime and space in a newspaper column. Uninformed voters are easily swayed by what they see in the media, and entertainers who end up running for a government position lessen the chances of those with actual administrative experience to win.

The 2022 Election Day draws closer, and more celebrities make mention of transitioning into the political scene. Whether they are truly concerned about the state of our nation or capitalizing on an opportunity for an even greater financial gain, we have seen this film before, and we didn't like the ending. This upcoming 2022, the Filipino people are presented with an opportunity to write the course of history and undo the damage caused by administrations of the past. Let us make the most of it. ■

Art by *Gaby Molina*

CANCELING CANCEL CULTURE: A Toxic Approach to Retaliation

by Nika Ambal

The magical thing about the internet is that once something is published, it stays accessible and available online forever. With this in mind, most of us double-check whatever goes into our posts to avoid offending anyone who may see it. But what happens to those who post content that is far, or even a stretch, from the truth? Should they be admonished? What about those who did not know the whole picture?

The discussion of establishing punishment for posting any false, distorted, or problematic information brings us to the world of cancel culture, or the act of exerting social pressure that is usually done on online platforms. Through this, support is withdrawn from public figures or companies that engage or support problematic ideals and advocacies.

Consumers, for example, began boycotting cosmetic companies that test their products on animals. One of these companies was NARS cosmetics, a popular French cosmetics and skincare company. Ever since the company's animal testing policy announcement in 2017, numerous consumers have spurned off from buying NARS products, as the company states that they "do not test on animals nor ask others to test on their behalf, except where required by law." The unethical practices of the company led it to be canceled by many online consumers. Online dissent such as these sheds light on the taboo issues that happen behind closed doors. But why choose to ostracize figures publicly? After all, the main purpose of cancel culture is to hold notorious personalities accountable.

A Grade 9 student believes that people cancel others publicly because they think that the person has done something unethical and deemed undeserving of a platform. Perhaps the online community thinks that it is rightful punishment for promoting corrupt ideals. In line with this, a Grade 11 student responded that people are canceled because their actions and views are seen as unacceptable or immoral. However, a

lot of times, people are also canceled due to biases and personal motives. As much as cancel culture leads to calling out several traditional, misogynistic, sexist, or racist practices and remarks, it has its fair share of drawbacks. The motives behind imparting liability lie in breaking the structural inequalities that have long existed in our society. For normal individuals, cancel culture is a means of situating accountability despite not having the greatest influence or power.

Unfortunately, cancel culture has also perpetuated this idea that people are incapable of growth and improvement. The Grade 11 student mentions, "It sends the message that once someone has done something bad, they cannot possibly become a better person and make reparations for their actions. Additionally, when someone is 'canceled,' it typically happens at a fast rate, meaning that the person who is canceled cannot speak for themselves, nor defend themselves." It may seem like some cases of online canceling are deemed inequitable, since the accused aren't given a chance to defend their case. "Cancel culture also can be quite unfair. This is seen when people cancel others for things that are not that extreme or for things they have grown from," as stated by a Grade 9 pupil. This goes to show that when cancel culture is pushed to a destructive extent of provoking the accused, it disregards the idea of growth.

Consequently, the malicious side of cancel culture can instill fear in social media users. "Cancel culture regulated my

activity on social media because it creates quite a negative and critical space which makes me afraid to make mistakes and grow as a young person," said the Grade 9 student. Calling out others for their mistakes may be the most moral thing one can do, but we must avoid doing it in a manner that requires engaging in hostility. So how can one draw the line between holding someone accountable and engaging in unnecessary backlash?

"Don't hate, educate," as stated by the Manchester Community Central's 2016 campaign against negative remarks towards race and religion. It may be easier said than done but educating those who have said

problematic remarks may encourage them to alter their dubious beliefs. On the other hand, retaliating hate with aggression may increase unwanted hatred or injustices. Educating others is a plausible solution to halt the rising of toxic cancel culture while serving as the most cordial approach to prejudice. Once people are faced with the facts, they will be inhibited to make prejudiced comments in the first place.

Although freedom of speech is exercised in online platforms today, keep in mind that we are bound to encounter opinions that are different from our beliefs.



FOND FAREWELLS: HOW THIS YEAR'S SENIORS ARE Preparing to Make Their Exit

by Isabel Peralta

[The interview portions of this article have been edited for length and clarity.]

Senior year. When we hear these words, it may be possible that many of us imagine that final scene from *High School Musical 3*, where the graduates are holding back tears and soaking up every remaining moment they have left with each other. Truth be told, it might not be so different for Batch 2022 after all.

Carefully tiptoeing around their emotions, the graduating batch is finding striking ways to each make their marks as the sands of time slip by until all 83 students will bid the brick walls a fond farewell.

These remaining months feel almost dream-like to the seniors. A seemingly unreal wave of emotions runs high as they prepare for a great inevitable change in their lives—an unstoppable change that feels like day moving into night. Very soon, these students will flip a page in their books to reveal a new chapter in both their academic careers and their lives. They'll soon be going down their paths of choice, each of them intending to make a difference in the world.

For most, having to face the idea of a completely different atmosphere in the near future means holding onto memories just before they slip through their fingers. This could be basking in the joy of

the simplest moments like CAP kwentuhan or the occasional late-night group work session. Or, as a matter of choice, relishing in all the worry of unforgiving days and sleepless nights.

Some might think that this last year simply means getting a chance to see the people they love do what they love. “[I would’ve liked to have] Family Day face to face and see all my batchmates do their thing. We’re the heads, we’re the captains, it’s our class who’s on top and I want to see them up there being leaders. It makes me whole! It warms my heart to see that they’ve worked their way up,” Kass Cantos says in regard to the last and what could have been the most extravagant Family Day for Batch 2022.

To someone like Kass, this closing year also means “remembering and appreciating all the work we have left to do, and have done in the past.” Surely, if there’s one thing a graduating student wants, it is to cement their legacy: to simultaneously leave something behind, and take something with them.

Long-time Woodrose student, Abby Maravilla does exactly that. She brings justice to the notion that your final year of high school isn’t too late to start new things, even in the most unordinary of circumstances. “I created a new club for students to enjoy despite being locked in their houses! I guess you could say that’s leaving something in Woodrose for the younger students to enjoy and take care of once I leave,” Abby says referring to ExplorASIAon,

Woodrose’s latest addition to the club scene.

Many others see these concluding months as a period of reminiscing—a time to be thankful for what has been, and to dream about what could be. When asked what things she would like to experience for the last time, Riana Carag was quick to answer with the big events such as Intrams and Family Day. But ultimately, what does her soul really long for? To experience what constitutes an ordinary pre-pandemic weekday—the kind we’ve all seemed to take for granted. “I miss training with WDC. Just one training in the promenade would make me the happiest girl ever. All in all, I would want to experience a day in Woodrose one last time. A day where COVID didn’t exist and everything was just normal,” Riana says.

A few might view this crowning year as the time to execute a memorable high school swan song—the final few gestures, the last hurrah. “At the start of the school year, I’ve made a goal for myself to end things with a bang. It’s my last year in Woodrose, this is how I would want it to go. I told myself that this year, I would step out of my comfort zone and do things I normally wouldn’t have done in my past years,” Faith Villaluz says.

Maybe for some, senior year is about crafting the perfect goodbye. “Thank you to everyone I’ve crossed paths with here, for making every second since I first stepped foot into gate 5 an escapade I’ll never forget,” Gabi Romeo says, knowing that she’ll also be saying goodbye to barkada trips to the small canteen for popcorn.

For me, the girl who only got the chance to experience Woodrose during the pandemic, senior year is about reflecting on the wild ride fate takes us on. Even though I may never get the chance to roam around campus or to rock the plaid for everyone to see, I will always be eternally grateful that life brought me to Woodrose. I have built friendships I will nurture for life, and have encountered teachers that inspire me to be better. I know that despite my brief time here, I will always be a Woodrose girl at heart.

It isn’t over yet, seniors. Let’s make our final year count and bring down the curtain on this extraordinary journey in the greatest way we can! ■



Welcome to (Virtual) Woodrose!

by Francesca Mariano

When I first moved to Woodrose in 2018, I begrudgingly accepted that I would most likely spend the first few months alone. After all, how could I adjust to a tight-knit community so suddenly? But within the first day, I had already made friends whom I still talk to today. After one year as a student, I felt a sense of belonging that I never did in my previous school, which I attended for far longer.

I credit my easy adjustment to the openness of the Woodrose student body. If it weren't for my classmates who eagerly introduced themselves, my friends who patiently explained each Woodrose tradition, or my teachers who regularly asked me, "Are you adjusting well?", I doubt that I would have looked back on my first year as fondly as I do now.

And so, when remote learning was announced, I wasn't too overwhelmed. Despite the unfamiliarity of the setup, I was comforted by the fact that behind a new platform was the same family that I had grown to love.

But for the new students of our school, their experiences were not as smooth as mine. Not only did they have to adjust to a new mode of learning, but they also had to adjust to a new community. They met their new classmates through a laptop screen, where genuine connections are difficult to foster.

When Victoria Ramos, from Grade 10, moved to Woodrose last school year, she knew that her experience would be unique. Although she heard that Woodrose transitioned to online learning well, the move was still difficult.

"It was very different. Because it was remote, it was so much harder to make friends. The first couple of months were a struggle. The learning style and workload were different – it was more work than I was used to. For the first couple of months, it was

hard to ask for help because I didn't have a point person to contact," she shared.

But like me, it was her classmates who helped ease the difficulty of moving to a new school.

"I was fortunate to be in a class with chatty and outgoing people," she revealed. "Everyone's very nice and open to help and talk. It is hard to make friends online because it's hard to just mingle. But after being in Woodrose, I can say that to me, it's so much more than just a Catholic school now. It's a big community of people, and everyone is kind and open."

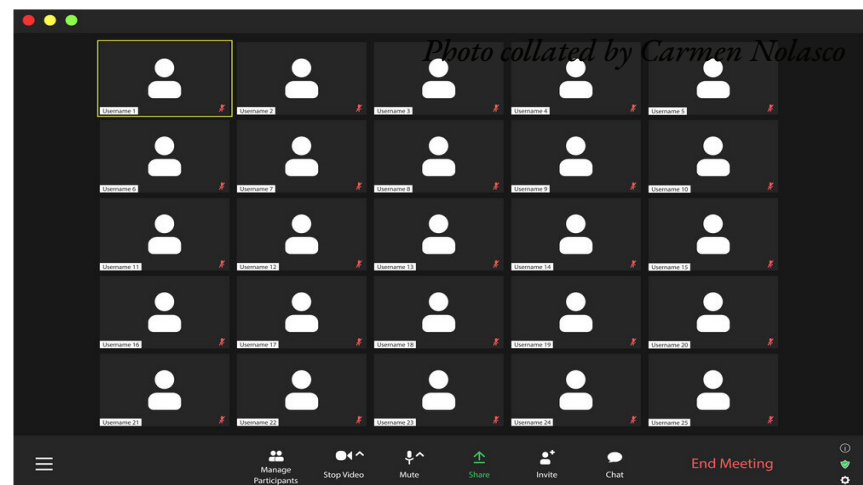
Victoria also credited her mentor, Ms. Zamora, for helping her adjust. "I've never had something like that. But it really helped me, because mentoring was the bridge between me and my teachers who I was too scared to ask for help. Mentoring was my gateway."

Meanwhile, for Tyler Sipin, also Grade 10, who joined the Woodrose community this school year, her first impression of Woodrose was less warm.

"Honestly," she began. "My first impression was the feeling of intimidation because most of the people I knew from Woodrose were from higher batches and they seemed so accomplished – it was scary."

Tyler also mentioned how the Woodrose Dance Crew helped cement this 'intimidating' impression. "The first time I saw WDC, I was scared for [my old school]," she admitted, before laughing.

Although her initial thoughts of Woodrose weren't so pleasant, Tyler has spoken more favorably about the school after two months of being a student. "It's been pretty welcoming so far, and I'm enjoying



it better than my old school. The New Student's Orientation was plenty helpful." Like Victoria, Tyler also credited the Mentoring Program as a vital part of her adjustment to Woodrose. "The Mentoring Program is really helpful. Mrs. Monastrial [her mentor] really helped me settle in!"

As I chatted with Victoria and read Tyler's messages, I couldn't help but reflect on my own experience as a new student. While the circumstances are different, one thing remains the same. The Woodrose Spirit. The willingness to help, the enthusiasm to know, and the eagerness to welcome continues despite the physical distance.

We are all eager to return to face-to-face classes. But when we do, let us keep in mind that for some of our batchmates, the campus is not the same familiar home as it is to us. When we find ourselves surrounded by the red brick walls once more, let's find a moment to share the whole of Woodrose with the newest members of our community.

And finally, to our new students: Welcome to the Woodrose family. We can't wait to meet you in person! ■

[The interview portion has been lightly edited for length and clarity.]

PRINCESS DIANA: A Timeless Inspiration

by Tin-tin Quianzon

Everyone held their breath as they awaited for the woman to exit the carriage. Wearing an ivory silk taffeta gown with a 25-foot train and a 153-yard tulle veil, the moment she came out of the carriage onto the red carpet looked like something borne out of a fairytale. At the wedding of the century in Saint Paul's Cathedral, I don't think even the woman knew the extent of how her life would change and how much she would give back to the world so much so that the public would take her in as one of their own. Whilst engaging with around 100 philanthropic and charitable causes in fashionable attire, she exuded warmth

and compassion that just drew people to her and impacted the way people perceived British royalty. This woman was Diana Spencer, Princess of Wales.

When the epidemic of AIDS was at its peak, at the London Middlesex Hospital, Princess Diana opened the first unit in the United Kingdom dedicated to treating the virus. During that time, as victims of misinformation, the public shared the same belief that one could catch the virus simply by touching a patient, which is why the fact that Princess Diana shook hands and hugged those diagnosed with the virus and did so without wearing any gloves were such monumental moments that challenged

the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. She became the official patron for the National AIDS Trust and avidly participated in their events.

Princess Diana was also essential in the global effort to ban landmines. In January of 1997, she took a trip to Angola wherein millions of scattered landmines caused the nation to have the largest number of amputees. Despite all the political backlash she received, at one point she was even called a "loose cannon" by a government minister, wearing only body armor with chinos, she still walked down an active minefield, detonated one, and continued to show compassion and attention to

amputees. She also raised awareness of the issue of landmines by participating in campaigns and conferences. Her dedication and passion for the ban of landmines undeniably contributed to the approval of the Ottawa Mine Treaty three months after her death, which was a "legally binding international agreement that bans the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of antipersonnel mines."

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Princess Diana was one of the first prominent figures of the world to speak about issues surrounding mental health. She inspired others to be more open about their own mental health, which was once considered taboo. She implored women and men alike to look at the roots of their mental illnesses rather than suppressing them as it is normal to be unable to cope and suppress all the unhealthy/toxic emotions they are feeling. Her candidness and honesty about her own mental health such as her experiences with bulimia served as encouragement and support for others to open up about their own problems with mental health and seek help. In fact, the rates of women with bulimia seeking help doubled. Because of Princess Diana, the general public became more empathetic to those with this disorder. Despite making known to the world her feelings of emptiness, worthlessness, and her struggles with mental health and crying out for help, the public, most especially tabloids, used that against her as they identified her as unstable and problematic.

It was the night of March 3 in 1994 when paparazzi photographers Mark Saunders and Glenn Harvey made their way to the Chelsea Harbour development as they heard that Princess Diana was there with a male companion. Although her Audi was empty, they saw an unidentified man materialize to bring her car to an underground garage. The pair were heavily in pursuit of her, and although the traffic lights were red and they were down the wrong side of a traffic island, they continued to chase her. When she began to turn to the entrance of Kensington Palace, Harvey fired his camera at the car and hoped for a clear picture. His photograph of the Princess driving Oliver Hoare, a millionaire art dealer, was bought by News of the World, a British tabloid, in an exclusive deal.

Princess Diana was no stranger to such scenarios as she experienced it every day of her life when she joined the royal family. The creation of tabloid

newspapers started by the Sun caused a large market for paparazzi shots. As Princess Diana started to be known as the “People’s Princess” after her highly publicized marriage to Prince Charles, her relevance to the paparazzi rose immensely. She slowly became the most photographed person in the entire world. The paparazzi would make hundreds of thousands of dollars from selling pictures of her, whether they were grainy or state-of-the-art quality. Although she only pursued legal action against the paparazzi once, she was doubtlessly frustrated and humiliated by their invasion of her privacy. She began to confront them the year before her death, and she even screamed “You make my life hell!” at them. Despite this, the paparazzi continued to pursue her and liken themselves to “big hunters of another age.” They even named instances wherein Princess Diana tearfully faced them as “loon attacks.” Later on, instead of confronting the paparazzi, Princess Diana would just put her head down while tearfully giving them the silent treatment. When she died in a car crash, the jurors decided that she was “unlawfully killed” by the irresponsible driving of her chauffeur and the paparazzi that were chasing her.

“Of all the ironies about Diana, perhaps the greatest was this --- a girl given the name of the ancient goddess of hunting was, in the end, the most hunted person of our modern age,” her brother, Earl Spencer said at her funeral. Princess Diana cared about what was said about her by the press that constantly hounded her and followed every single one of her moves. Although her experiences with the press were frustrating, she found a way to regain some control and use their attention for the betterment of the world. With the press, she was able to strengthen her relationship with the public and share the realities of her life including her struggles with loneliness and mental health in her biography called *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words* and in several other interviews. People were able to connect with her and take her in as one of their own. She supported countless charities, especially because she knew that her advocacies would gain the necessary attention of the world. “If I’m going to have cameras pointed at me the whole time, I might as well use all this publicity for good,” she once said. She provided the needed publicity for her devotion to humanitarian movements such as the lack of compassion for those with leprosy and lack of support for those with no home, which boosted and made an impact on them.

Beneath the glamorous and meaningful life that the public saw was earth-shattering mental illness, intense scrutiny, and other struggles. Despite explicitly sharing her story with the public, others saw it as a woman making excuses or a woman

vying for attention instead of the call for help that it was. She was the most photographed person in the world, yet no one stopped her from struggling alone whilst the paparazzi continued to feel no sympathy for her, exploited her for their gain, and tried to twist the narrative to gain more views. Just as she was finally finding her path to happiness, she left this earth in an attempt to outrun her hunters.

Though she has passed, she continues to make waves in society today. Aside from her well-known compassion for the vulnerable, many women, especially women present in the media and entertainment industry, resonate with her and her story. The way she embodied charisma, grace, and magnetism continues to inspire women today to embrace their femininity. She opened the door for women, whether famous or not, to be more open about their experiences with motherhood, their struggles with eating disorders, their relationships, and their lives in general, as well as to be more fearless in using their voices to help in movements that matter to them. She inspired women to not only be the best version of themselves, but more importantly, the version that makes them proud to be in their own skin. She transcended her background and the enormous expectations placed upon her as she fought gender stereotypes directed towards women in various ways such as juggling her many responsibilities with motherhood whilst in style and defiantly having an identity beyond the wife of Prince Charles.

Despite the press emphasizing certain actions, words, or aspects of her life in general, such as her relationships and public breakdowns, Princess Diana was one of the first to graciously use her voice to change the story being sold by the media to the general public. She has made the general public aware that she is more than the intrusive judgments and speculations circulated by the press that gains the attention of the public. Because of her, people, to this day, would be happier to hear directly from those in the spotlight in order to ascertain the truth, would be more willing to call out the media’s mistreatment, and would be more empathetic towards women like Princess Diana rather than being crass and

insensitive. Tighter laws with regard to the paparazzi have also been created and enforced in light of what happened to her.

“I think the biggest disease the world suffers from in this day and age is the disease of people feeling unloved. I know that I can give love for a minute, for half an hour, for a day, for a month, but I can give. I am very happy to do that, I want to do that,” Princess Diana said herself.

In a time wherein stigmas surrounded so many important issues, Princess Diana was the first high-profile woman who sought to destroy discrimination against all people by embracing them both literally and figuratively. Despite all the political backlash, marital problems, and mental health issues she faced, she smiled, and she still found it in herself to listen to people, to give back to them, and to simply touch them. She not only challenged the monarchy but also breathed new life into British royalty when they were considered to be “stiff” and established a relationship with the public that eventually mourned her as a mother, sister, or someone they just genuinely knew and cared for. Although she was hunted by the unsympathetic paparazzi all throughout her life as a royal, she was able to regain some of her power by willingly sharing her story and by gaining understanding from the general public. Especially during a time wherein the media were relentless in botching their portrayal of women to gain more viewers, she won over the hearts of many by simply remaining true to herself, which started a

chain reaction in the hearts of women. Though people over time tried to make it otherwise, out of all the things remembered about her, Princess Diana’s genuine willingness to connect to people and especially help those who were outcasted by society will never be forgotten.■



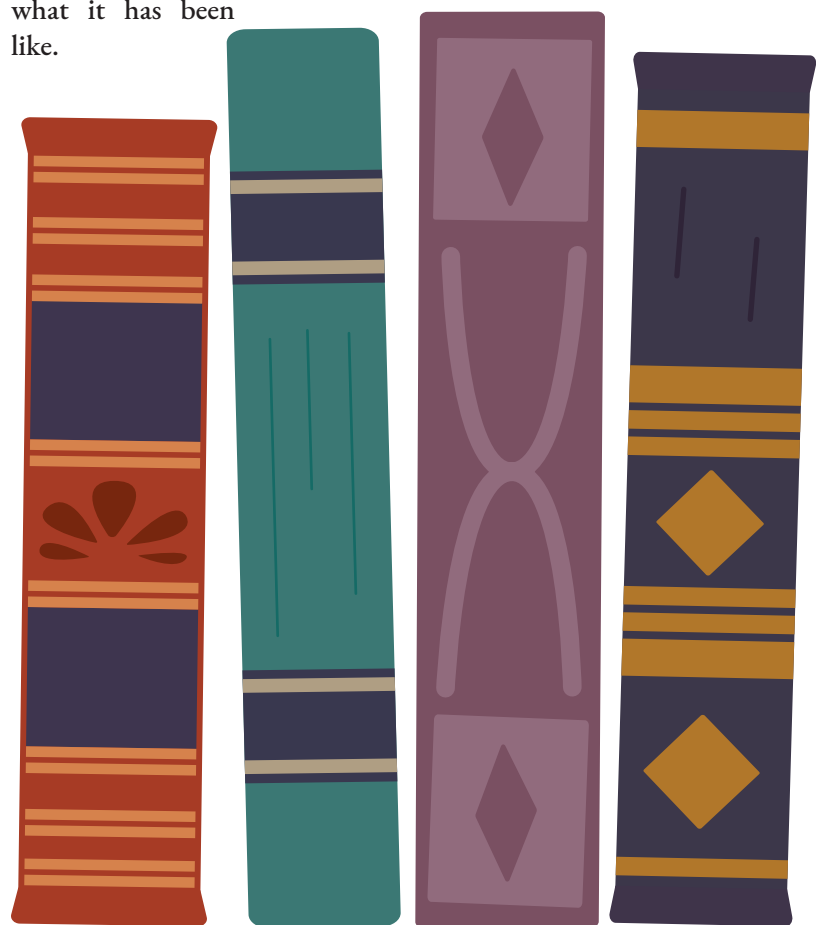
photo from People.com

Layout by Katrisse Santos

Keeping Independent Bookstores ALIVE IN THE PANDEMIC

by Carina Gutierrez

It's a good kind of challenge." When asked about how she manages her business, Anna, a small bookshop owner, is happy to say this. Keeping an independent bookstore afloat in an era of ebooks and community quarantine is indeed nothing short of demanding. Despite this, shop owners find that keeping their business alive has been a worthwhile journey during the pandemic. We talked with business owners Anna and Jeremine to get some insight on what it has been like.



Anna's bookstore, Mura Kami, was only created "because of the pandemic." She originally marketed her books on Instagram, Facebook, and Shopee, she says. However, Instagram has become her main platform for selling at the moment. "I am a one-man store so I source preloved books, look for brand new books that I can buy at lower prices. I market them, I prepare and ship them."

Just like Anna, Jeremine also runs a one-man business, taking care of just about everything, from promotions to logistics, from operations to accounting. While Anna markets general fiction, Jeremine focuses more on books and materials for children. However, she has long been operating online. "Even before the pandemic, I have already taken advantage of e-commerce as it is one of the booming platforms to position products since 2010," she explains.

Independent bookstores, called "indie bookstores" for short, have a unique appeal to them. For one, these spaces have become more like communities

than markets. "I have established friendships and we would often say hi and send messages even if they were not about book-related (things) or anything that I sell; we just talk about life," says Anna of her business, Mura Kami. Jeremine also adds that Baby Brain does not just offer products, but even free advice sometimes for moms who like to inquire about what is best for their children. "There are many moms chatting with me and consulting... I enthusiastically converse with them and recommend resource people that can help them further." She says that all mothers want to be able to give the best to their children, and through her business, she wants to be able to help them achieve this.

It is also more personal. From the handpicked titles to communicating with buyers to adding small thank you notes for their customers, supporting these stores has become not only about the products, but about the experience. Mura Kami may be named for the well-known Japanese author, but Anna's collection of books ranges from books of poetry, to classics to popular fiction—another reason many have turned to stores like hers. In fact, many of her books do not remain on the shelf for long; comments claiming and reserving titles are often seen on her posts many times only mere seconds after the upload.

The love for reading among the shop owners themselves is what gives them true passion in carrying out their operations. Even when ebooks are readily available, for them, nothing beats a physical book. Anna candidly expresses her fondness for the printed word.

"One of the sacrifices I made personally, (was) to temporarily stop buying physical and just read the books I want to digitally.. (because it is more economical that way)..but I just went to SM today and I dropped by BookSale, and I could not help but buy myself three books which are all super affordable just because I have missed holding a book and annotating. So yes, physical books will always be a necessity to all readers."

More than just a personal preference, Jeremine states three main reasons for choosing physical above ebooks: spatial memory, mental mapping, and

safety.

When I read a physical book, the environment plays a big role in remembering what I read. It adds to the experience; I am able to mark the important information and it is easier to remember the location of the line or at what page I am at because I physically feel the page based on the thickness or the thinness of the book. It also helps to experience the weight, width and length of the book..these sensations help our comprehension process and memory. It's also safer because physical books do not emit UV light.

She also mentions that she has always been a book nerd and though she does have a collection of ebooks, oftentimes she loses focus and her eyes get tired when reading them, so she ends up printing them anyways.

Aside from talking about the current runs of their shops, Anna and Jeremine also mentioned some of their hopes for their businesses. The two are keeping their dreams simple, at least for now. Anna wishes

To someday be able to build a physical store of Mura Kami although this is still a dream because I do not really see myself spending that much for a brick and mortar store...Another thing that I want to achieve is to be able to just sustain and add more followers to our IG account, which is the only account I will be keeping once I go back live again (from my break).

The business owner also has a few plans post-pandemic. "Nothing grand," she says, "To go back to selling more worthy books and pricing them low so more readers can get a hold of them. I also plan to release a few items of the book's merch. I have been planning to start with t-shirts and mugs". For Jeremine, her bigger dreams are for the future. "Someday hopefully, this business becomes capable of helping Filipino mothers and children on a larger scale. But for now, collaboration with other small businesses is what I am currently doing." ■



Layout and Graphics by Victoria Ramos

No Written Formula

by Hanna Marasigan

I have never been one for numbers. Growing up, I had many meltdowns that stemmed from anger at whoever created the concept of math. I nearly lost it when fractions came along. It's especially frustrating because it's all supposed to be simple, right? We learn methods and we are given formulas that are supposed to help us reach the answer. Despite all this, I always seemed to get it wrong.

But still, I was used to teachers giving us instructions on how to do things. It was sort of reassuring that I had something to follow. At least they were there. But by the time I reached Grade 10, I didn't have instructions to follow when I wanted them the most. Once again, I was losing my mind over a number -- the number in Grade 10. The number 10 meant that I was almost done with Junior High, and by adding 1 to that number, I would be in

Senior High. And everything ahead of me all depends on the decision of what strand to take: GAS, STEM, ABM, or HUMSS.

Whenever the topic gets brought up in conversations, I am always presented with what seems to be an overwhelming amount of perspectives. This, of course, is inevitable, because different people have their own ideas to offer; nevertheless, it is nerve-racking and I can't help but fear the uncertainty that comes with the absence of a clear process. But upon thinking about it a little more, I realize that there may be

beauty to be found in that obscurity.

The pandemic does strange things to time. Just a few moments ago, I swear my batchmates and I were just 13 to 14-year-olds, eating honey mustard fries in the classroom without a care in the world. All of a sudden we're two years older, stuck at home, having to contemplate what we want to do with our future. "Picking a strand feels like such an enormous and "grown-

we haven't fully experienced it yet is daunting.

So the decision of which strand to take exists as this big reminder towering over our heads. I think what makes the decision so scary is what it represents. It's a mile marker of how far we've come and a crossroads to what comes next. And we will never be sure of what awaits us until we pick a path to take. Looking back at the last year, we have been basked in the unfamiliar

exams. I saw it as a good idea, so since then, I basically decided I would choose STEM. But after I did a bit more research, and after a few mentoring chats, I realized that HUMSS is somewhat more suitable to my interests! So at the moment, I'm very, very unsure on which strand to take.

We are often encouraged to take the 'practical' path or a direction we don't completely understand yet. It can be hard

Since it's our responsibility, we're going to have to face the consequences of whatever we choose, the good and the bad. We put pressure on ourselves to make a decision we won't regret.

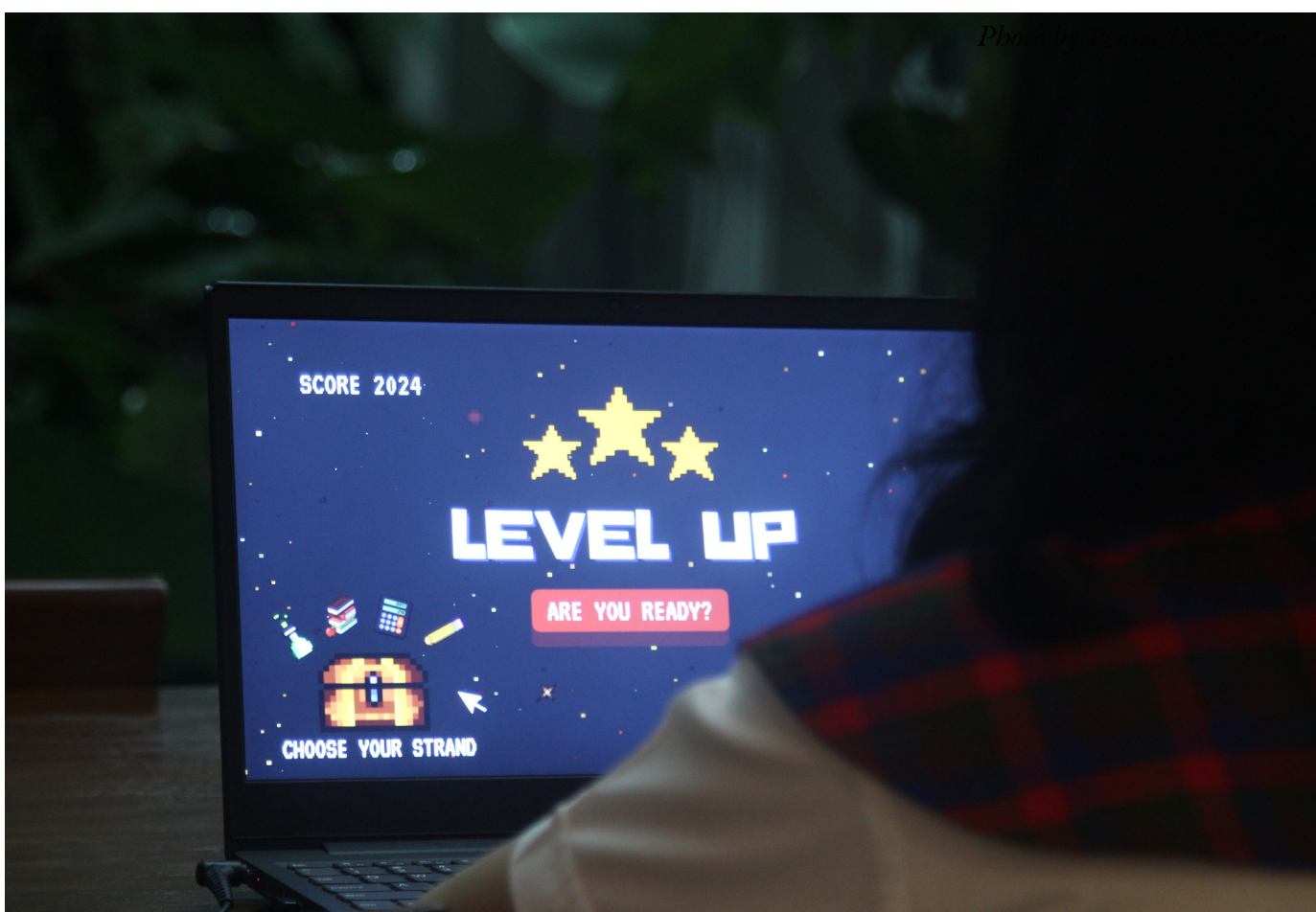
But I would say the most intimidating aspect of this all is noticing the pace of those around us, and Patrice agrees. "It's not just pressure from me, it's not just pressure from parents, but it's also pressure from peers. Everyone

seems to have it together. I know people who have decided, who are head-straight set on something. It's kind of pressuring because it's like "Oh, they've figured it out, and I'm still stuck here in the middle between two of these strands." We all know those types of people. They appear to have calculated and planned everything in their life going forward. To many of us, they seem to have figured everything out and don't have to worry about it anymore. Seeing them can make us

feel like we have to catch up to where they are.

Ysa Villa is one of those people. She's known since Grade 7: she's going to take STEM and she's going to become a pilot. But of course, she didn't just wake up one day and pick a random strand and career. It was a whole process. When weighing your options, Ysa highlights the importance of having a conversation with yourself first. Yes, other people's input can be very valuable to know, but you rank number one in whose opinion matters most.

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up" decision, so it is, to an extent, pretty terrifying," my batchmate, Rafa Peralta, expressed. And I couldn't agree more. With everything that's been happening in the world, growing up felt like yet another burden we had to face. To make matters worse, because of the pandemic, we've lost opportunities to enjoy the good parts of growing up. We can't just go to TimeZone with our friends and have fun in the karaoke, or watch a movie premiere in the cinema, or even hug many of our loved ones. No one ever gets a second chance in being a teenager, so moving on from that when we feel like

and we just don't know if we're ready for more of it yet.

The experience of it all can be particularly isolating. There are different types of pressure that come from different origins. Unfortunately, the strands aren't like people, who we can befriend, talk to, and see if we like. That information is relayed to us by the people around us. Rafa continues to share her experience:

Late last year, my mom proposed that I take STEM because, according to one of my titas, it would help in passing college entrance

to determine whether that's what we really want or if it is just an idea we have been accustomed to for so long.

A lot of pressure can most definitely come from within ourselves. After all, we are given the responsibility of determining what comes next in our lives. You'd think this is the ultimate liberation after years of being told what to do, but ironically, this freedom can feel so suffocating. Patrice Madama feels the weight of it all: "I have to make a decision, and if I make the wrong decision, I'm going to have to live with that for two years. It's very anxiety-inducing."

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“Sometimes when you don’t talk about it with yourself first, and you immediately talk to others, your choices will differ. Then you’re gonna be like ‘Oh my mom wants this for me’, and you’re not asking yourself, what do I really want to do in the future?” she said.

By now, there’s a chance you may just be even more frustrated or inclined to figure it out like Ysa does. But she has expressed her fear of something else: “I’m thinking, what happens if I don’t pass the

STEM exam? What strand will I go to after that? Because STEM is really the closest thing to what I want.” Even if people around us have figured out the part we’re still going through, it doesn’t make them any less scared than we are. They just happened to be scared of something else. You might argue that they’re at least done with it, but I would say that they are where they are now because that’s where they need to be. It’s not them being ‘one step ahead of you’; they are simply in a different step. If your grounding is different from others, it doesn’t mean you’re wrong. Cliché? Absolutely. But that doesn’t make it any less true.

The way we make our decisions like these, the ones that carry the weight of our future, is beyond anything we will ever be taught in the classroom. Our teachers can’t give us step-by-step instructions that are ensured to lead us to the perfect answer. But take comfort in that. Take comfort in the fact that no one can truly tell you that your answer is wrong. You don’t have to do it the way I do and vice versa, because I’m me and you’re you. In this decision, there is no written formula. There is only the way that makes sense to you. ■

Team Service: CHANGING THE WORLD FROM HOME

by Ruru Gonong

The world is changing, and so are the ways in which we can help those around us. However, the service that the organizations in Woodrose provide to those in need continue to impact the lives of many. Organization officers, such as Fran Silva of World Youth Alliance (WYA), the vice president of Bata Batuta (identity withheld), and Mica Sator of Flourish, to name a few, take action and live by the saying “To lead is to serve”. As Woodrose students, they find various ways to reach out in the community and achieve their goal: to make the world a better place and unite in the face of adversity.

Once regular members of their organizations, Fran, the vice president of Bata Batuta, and Mica, along with other officers, now take on new responsibilities. With their positions, they plan, organize, and reach out to moderators, members, and beneficiaries in and out of the school. Collaboration with fellow leaders is essential as well, in order for the operations of the organization to run smoothly. Moreover, these officers engage in activities, such as games and projects, with all the members to develop a sense of teamwork. This also allows them to get to know each other better and help everyone find the drive and passion to fulfil the different purposes of each organization.

In WYA, the officers and members stand for human dignity. They aim “to unite us all through our human dignity and find peace with one another... despite how we may differ.” Thus, the officers plan and execute activities that align to their purpose. They are able to provide the members with interesting talks and collaborations with other organizations, which allows for in-depth discussions and involvement of the members. These are some of the ways they can reach the youth who live around the world and work together to fulfil their mission as a part of WYA.

In a similar way, the Bata Batuta members aim to achieve their goal through planned activities. As the name of the organization suggests, Bata Batuta was established under the initiative to help children in the country. Interactions with them have always been made possible and hold great value for those suffering. The organization is also set to continue with season two of BataBakes this year. This will

be able to help abused children. To prepare for this, the members have been educated and made aware about these children’s situations through talks. In addition, the organization will be holding a book drive, BataBooks, to continue reaching more people. Doing such projects opens the minds of many to the realities that children around the country and world face. With the help of the Bata Batuta members, the children, in a way, are saved and protected.

The effect that Bata Batuta projects have on those in the community is one thing that it has in common with Flourish. This new service organization was created to empower women in the community, which includes its very own members. The officers’ plans to have fundraisers and donation drives allow them to reach more people and give awareness that their purpose is worth acknowledging. Through discussions with the members and possible speakers, relevant topics will be brought up to encourage them to help fellow women. This benefits all the members as they help themselves, while fighting for the rights of those around them who deserve to be validated, supported, and recognized for their accomplishments. However, working with an advocacy in mind requires time and dedication, seen in the way all the officers and members of the organizations find ways to serve others in an online set-up.

The pandemic was not a hindrance to the organizations. More than anything, it made students realize that the power of their service is needed. “This whole pandemic is a reason to believe that it is still possible to help out other people despite this disconnect that we all have”, says the vice president of Bata Batuta. All of the officers were creatively challenged to organize projects that will still be effective, engaging, fun, and influential. Though the experiences of physically being with each other and having hands-on activities are lacking online, there is a wider scope of people to reach. Social media is used as often as possible to promote the organizations, and even interact with people all around the world that face all kinds of experiences and struggles.

Exposure to today’s society has made the members of the organizations find more importance and value to the work that they do. The officers agree that the world’s view on people of different backgrounds, cultures, and genders must change. Thus, they use the power in their hands to serve and act. “Even a

single act of service and kindness can make a bigger impact than you think”, said Fran. The vice president of Bata Batuta mentioned how easy it is to overlook one’s worth, which is a reason to keep encouraging others and supporting them. In this same sense, Mica’s Flourish recognizes that “our society has started to break down gender barriers.” This now prompts for more of the youth to come together and work towards achieving their goal.

Seen in the dedication to their missions, Woodrose students push for ways to make their voices be heard through the activities of service organizations, such as World Youth Alliance (WYA), Bata Batuta, and Flourish. Their way of promoting human dignity, along with the rights of children and women, continue to open the minds of many to the needs of those struggling and suffering. Given one’s resources and capabilities, it is important to take action today and give others a chance to live better lives. ■

