

The Trojan Times

A NEWSPAPER DEDICATED TO BRINGING YOU NEWS AND UPDATES FROM SIMSBURY HIGH SCHOOL

CT LIFTS MOST CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS

Masks are no longer required outdoors, and are not required indoors for vaccinated people with some exceptions (New York Times). Some of the exceptions are as follows: masks must be worn in healthcare facilities, homes with vulnerable individuals, transit, correctional facilities, schools, and childcare.

FULL ARTICLE - PAGE 5

SHS UNIFIED SPORTS WINS MICHAELS CUP



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FULL ARTICLE - PAGE 7

A NEW BEGINNING FOR LATIMER LANE



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FULL ARTICLE - PAGE 2

SUMMER BREAK AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As summer break is around the corner, students around the world are preparing for this annual change. For many students, summer break is a time of low stress. The lack of looming assignments, to-do lists, and pressure from grades allows for these students to decompress and enjoy a few months of peace. However, summer break can mean something very different for children struggling with mental health issues.

FULL ARTICLE - PAGE 5

A NEW BEGINNING FOR LATIMER LANE

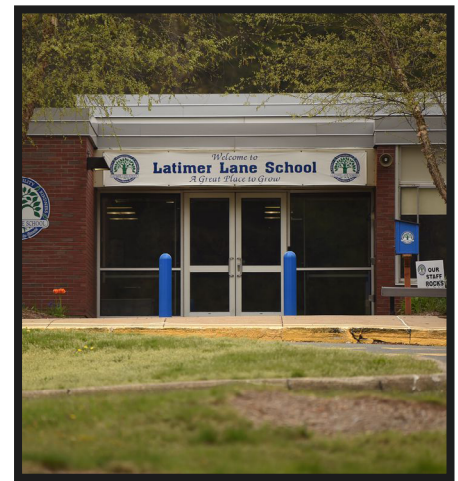
KITTY MARTIN

Kitty Martin is a sophomore who is interested in current affairs and believes it is important to have an informed community. The purpose of this article is to talk about the recent Latimer Lane Elementary school's 36.8 million dollar remodeling and expansion project, why it is necessary, and the outcomes of the recent voting on the topic.

On May 4th, the residents of Simsbury voted on a referendum outlining a 36.8 million dollar remodeling and expansion project for Latimer Lane school. Although considered state-of-the-art when it was built in 1963, Latimer Lane no longer meets the needs of our growing community. In an SCTV interview, Principal Mike Luzietti stated the "single biggest problem is space." This problem will only be amplified, as the student population is approximately 406 children. In light of Simsbury's increasing population, the school is projected to reach over 500 students in the next few years. The cafeteria, as one example, is so small that only one grade can be seated at a time. This necessitates seven lunch waves that extend from 10:30 am to 2 pm. In addition, a lack of adequate space in the gymnasium does not allow for multi-grade concerts and assemblies. Also, the

Latimer Lane library is the smallest in town, although it is one of the largest elementary schools. On average, it holds 2000 books fewer than other elementary schools in town. This global lack of space has also required the administration to be creative about utilizing every available area the school can offer- the auditorium stage now serves as a makeshift occupational therapy room, and the computer/STEM room has been converted to a classroom. Expanding and remodeling Latimer Lane will also allow for the creation of a secure vestibule at the school entrance, enhancing both security and safety for both students and staff. Following the tallying of the votes, Simsbury residents' love and support for Latimer and its community were apparent, as of the approximately 3500 residents who voted, 77% voted in favor of the referendum. Although multiple steps must be taken before the

project can begin, there is a bright day in the future when the students and staff at Latimer Lane can all come together at an assembly and celebrate a new beginning of their school.



SHS EQUITY WEEK: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

AVA DUNN

Ava Dunn is a freshman who wants to make the world a better place. This article addresses the issue of inequality, and how Simsbury High School students were able to become more educated on pressing issues.



There is so much going on in the world right now. Racism is still a pressing issue everywhere and people continue to be uneducated on the topics and devastating events happening around them. Simsbury High School students were lucky enough to have the opportunity to learn more about equity and culture for a week while attending one-hour sessions. Students went to four one-hour sessions (one per day) regarding a variety of topics on different subjects. Teachers put together presentations and activities to properly educate students about all kinds of equity. Cooking class slots filled rapidly, as many students were eager to make and eat delicious foreign cuisine while learning about the origins of the food. Gym teachers contributed by teaching students cricket, an older sport invented during Saxon times by children living in the Weald in southeast England.

Current issues such as Asian American violence were discussed to spread awareness of Asian American hate crimes, as well as to stop the hate and bias toward Asian Americans. The push for women's equality was addressed in an engineering workshop, offered only to girls and non-binary individuals. This workshop focused on hands-on technology for women in STEM. A lesson on hunting techniques and gender norms in Paleolithic America let students actually throw an old hunting weapon called the atlatl outside (safely) while talking about the men's and women's roles in hunting. The wide variety of sessions gave students a broad perspective on how present inequality is not only in race, but in religion, gender, and more. After a week of focusing on equity, the school hopes that everyone walked away with a better understanding and view to share with other people so that we can

STUDENTS OF COLOR ALLIANCE AT SHS

PARIS ALBRECHT

Paris Albrecht is a freshman who is interested in the culture of Simsbury High School and all that it offers.

Simsbury High School is no stranger to having a variety of clubs and activities for students to participate



in. Comprising a long list with numerous options, students can have the opportunity to find where they fit in. New clubs form rather frequently, but due to the overwhelming lack of communication this year, many have gone unnoticed. Difficulties caused by virtual meetings and quarantine established an empty void of scarce student enrollment. Students of Color Alliance is not inexperienced in facing the trials and tribulations of developing a club during COVID-19. Dedicated to unity, coming together throughout this school year imposed a challenge. However, the group was unwavering in their perseverance to push through every obstacle. SOCA started off completely virtual, the first meeting occurring shortly after the 2020 election. Fortunately, in February 2021, the club was allowed to begin assembling in person. SOCA is separated into two meetings per month; one for students of color, and one for all

students involved. The meetings are constructed this way to offer a safe space for students of color. They can have the option to discuss social justice issues (regarding race) specific to their experience. These topics range from localities in our school and community to worldly events appearing in the news. Students of Color Alliance's comprehensive meetings consist of opening conversations to any students intrigued in speaking about affairs surrounding race at Simsbury High School and around the world. With eight regular members, the club is hoping to gain more leverage and increase their size. There will be an informational meeting in September 2021. Next school year, Students of Color Alliance will continue to focus on methods to create a more diverse and equitable culture for all students in Simsbury.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ART IN QUARANTINE

DYLAN GROSSMAN

Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has kept us all inside and away from other people. Due to this, a large amount of activities and events have been either postponed or cancelled, with many people sadly losing their jobs. Some kind and persistent people, however, have stepped up to help spread happiness and creativity in this dire time of need and loss. This kindness has included anything from an opera singer performing on his balcony, to the first World Art Day, and even virtual concerts and table reads. These various events and celebrations have helped many to hold on to hope and continue to push through quarantine and the pandemic. Quarantine has also allowed some to spend more time on their hobbies and interests, helping them to improve their talents and find more of the little things to enjoy.

In Florence, Italy, a man named Maurizio Marchini posted a video of himself

singing on his balcony to Facebook. He was singing to those around him who are stuck in their homes to lift their spirits, and to add a little more brightness to someone's day. This is an outstanding example of how the kindness and talent of others can bring us all closer together, even if we may be six feet apart. This is also the reason that this year's World Art Day is such a great reminder of the importance of creativity. This date coincided exactly with Leonardo da Vinci's birthday. This celebration was founded by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Association of Art (IAA) in order to spread awareness of global creative activity. Now more than ever, though, we are reminded of the importance in recognizing the abilities of others. This past year has done an excellent job in showing us the impact that bonding together as a community can have on all

of us.

Along with inspiring performers and celebrations of art, this year brought us some excellent virtual events. These could range from virtual concerts and live streamed performances, to live table reads or television cast reunions. Among these script reads and reunions were TV shows and movies including The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, Hamilton, Community, The Office, and Back to the Future. A few of these meet-ups or live performances occurred on John Krasinski's YouTube channel, Some Good News, as gifts to their young fans and even to celebrate a couple's marriage. The virtual platform has also provided easier access to those who want to see their favorite band or actors. The experience is amazing. Quarantine has also reminded many that creativity is imperative to artistic expression and individuality. Even if we're stuck inside, it is still important to always keep creating.

OFFICER WHO KILLED FLOYD CONVICTED

NATE GROSSMAN

Nate Grossman is a freshman who is interested in global politics. This article explores a relevant global event as it unfolds.

**CONTENT WARNING:
DEPICTS POLICE BRUTALITY**

Derek Chauvin, one of the four ex-police officers involved in the murder of George Floyd, pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. Prior to the killing of George Floyd, Derek Chauvin had a total of 18 complaints on his record, one notable incident occurring on September 4th, 2017. Chauvin was responding to a complaint from a mother about her two children, and it is said that he was extremely violent with one of them. He allegedly hit a 14-year-old black boy in the head with a flashlight so hard that he required stitches, and then held him down with his knee for nearly 17 minutes. Another report of Chauvin's misuse of power comes from the owner of a Latin nightclub called El Nuevo Rodeo. It is interesting to note that he worked there off-duty as security, while George Floyd was also working at the same nightclub as security. It is unknown

whether or not they knew each other. The owner told reporters that "Chauvin was unnecessarily aggressive on nights when the club had a black clientele, quelling fights by dousing the crowd with pepper spray and calling in several police squad cars as backup". After the events on his withstanding record, on May 25th, 2020, Chauvin murdered George Floyd. Videos of the incident were widely circulated and met with public outrage because of Floyd's death. The next day, Chauvin and



the three other officers involved were fired. On May 29th, Chauvin was arrested and charged with both third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. On June 3rd, Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison amended the charges to include unintentional second-degree murder. In addition to this, Ellison charged the other three officers with aiding and abetting second-degree murder. From October 7th, 2020, to March 11th, 2021, Chauvin was released on conditional bail, the third-degree murder charge was dismissed, and was then reinstated. His trial began on March 8th of this year, and on April 20th the jury found Chauvin guilty on three counts: unintentional second-degree murder; third-degree murder; and second-degree manslaughter. He was the first white Minnesota police officer to be convicted of murdering a black person, and only the second officer in the state to be convicted of murder. Chauvin's sentencing will take place this June.

CANCEL CULTURE'S EFFECT ON ACTIVISM

MAGGIE BERLING

Maggie Berling is a freshman at SHS. In her free time she likes to run, cook, and play with her cats.

Cancel culture is a fairly recent trend circulating around social media. Careers of numerous well-known celebrities are removed, often by social groups who wish for their voices to be heard. When someone is "cancelled", this means that they are ostracized on the internet, often demonetized by the company who funds them, and are forced to make public apologies. Some never return to social media. People can be "cancelled" for many different reasons. These issues range from seemingly trivial to extremely serious problems, such as racism, pedophilia, sexism, and many more.

The rate of "cancelling" celebrities sky-rocketed during quarantine, a time where internet usage also increased. More recently, Dr. Seuss was "cancelled" after racist cartoons depicting people of color came to light in some of his most famous books. These included "If I Ran the Zoo" and "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street." This led to the decision that

these books will no longer be published. In addition, Sia, who is known for her songs "Cheap Thrills" and "Chandelier", was attempted to be deplatformed. Sia recently came out with a movie titled "Music", in which Maddie Ziegler portrays a young girl with autism. Maddie is neurotypical, and the neurodivergent community found this to be ableist and upsetting.

Many look at cancel culture as a positive factor for society, contributing to the expanding rate of activism. Cancel culture allows lesser served communities to speak out on issues that pertain to them. This spreads ideas of equality and diversity to large groups of people. Some even argue that cancel culture is just a modern form of boycotting, one of the most notable tactics of the civil rights movement, which can be used to inspire social change and bring issues to light.

On the other hand, some say there are many downsides to cancel culture. The presence of cyber-bullying and harass-

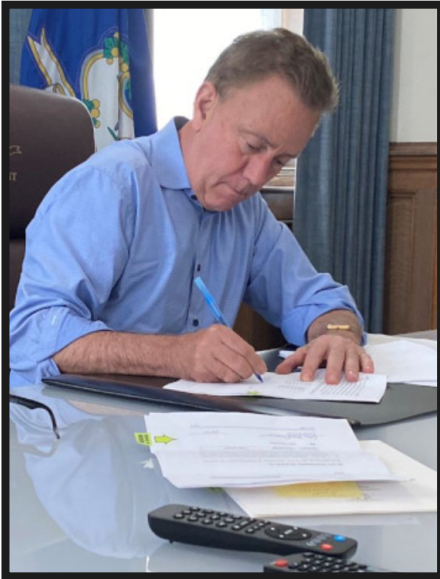
ment can become more prominent. More often than not, influencers who are "cancelled" will receive hateful comments and even death threats from thousands of users on the internet at a time. Cancel culture can also be deemed as unproductive, as a way for one to take down anyone who disagrees with them, leading to more intolerance within democratic societies.

Although influencers can be labelled as "cancelled", the people "cancelling" them contribute to their monetary value and success. "Cancelling" someone usually leads to frequent conversations regarding the event(s). Because of this, influencer's views, likes, and overall attention increases by a great amount. Now with the presence of cancel culture being so intense and widespread, it is unclear whether or not the internet can achieve a point of middleground resolution.

MOST CT COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

ALEXA GREEN

Alexa Green is a freshman and is deeply interested in COVID-19: what it is, how we can stop it, and all of its information. This article explores the lift of COVID restrictions after a long year of limitations.



Gov. Ned Lamont signs legislation in his office.
CREDIT: Gov. Ned Lamont

Throughout the past year, we have experienced virtual family dinners, zoom meetings, outdoor gatherings, and socially distanced events; however, the world, and Connecticut, is slowly reopening. Connecticut, the first state to vaccinate half of its adults, has also recently been lifting COVID-19 restrictions. As of June 7, over 64% of adults in Connecticut have gotten at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. With Connecticut's COVID-19 numbers being some of the lowest in the United States, the state has a chance to reopen. On May 19th, Governor Ned Lamont lifted restrictions on businesses. Masks are no longer required outdoors, and are not required indoors for vaccinated people with some exceptions (New York Times). Some of the exceptions are as follows: masks must be worn in healthcare facilities, homes with vulnerable individuals, transit, correctional

facilities, schools, and childcare. Along with lifting mask mandates, the capacity levels are also increasing. Restaurants can now return to full capacity, gatherings are larger, and sporting events can host more people. Governor Ned Lamont has stated, "I'd like to think Connecticut has really earned the right to get back to this normal." Due to the responsibility of Connecticut citizens, we are able to have a glimpse of the normal world again.



THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUMMER BREAK ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

AMANDA KELLY

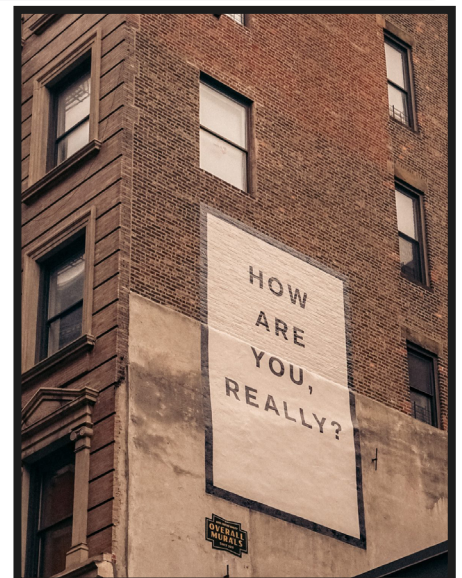
Amanda Kelly is a freshman interested in the fight for equality within and beyond our community.

As summer break is around the corner, students around the world are preparing for this annual change. For many students, summer break is a time of low stress. The lack of looming assignments, to-do lists, and pressure from grades allows for these students to decompress and enjoy a few months of peace. However, summer break can mean something very different for children struggling with mental health issues.

Without the familiar routine of school, students can feel unstructured and confused. In the absence of resources like a favorite teacher, guidance counselor, or regularly seen friends, students can feel alone. From a study by the Polaris Teen Center, it was concluded that 1 in 5 teens (aged 12-18) struggle with mental health, and roughly 50% get some form of coun-

seling or help. Unsupportive parents, inability to pay for mental health resources, or simply a lack of availability to seek this care can cause these teens to spend the summer feeling lonely and isolated.

As summer break comes into view, it is highly imperative that friends and family of teens who struggle with any mental illness remain vigilant. By respecting these students' boundaries, listening to them, and providing them with the optimum amount of support that they need, these students can feel safe in the summer.



FACT CHECK: COVID-19 VACCINE THEORIES

ELIJAH EDWARDS

Elijah Edwards is a sophomore at SHS. He is interested in technology, history, and politics. This article investigates theories circulating about coronavirus vaccines to determine if they are true or false and provides reliable information about coronavirus vaccines.

On May 12th, 2021 the CDC approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in people ages 12-15. Despite about 84 percent of the U.S. population¹ now qualifying to receive the vaccine, only 71 percent of people say they will try to receive--or have received--the vaccine.² Why is this number important? Well, in order to achieve herd immunity (when there are so many immune people the virus cannot spread anymore)³ experts say we need at least 70 percent or more of the population to be vaccinated.⁴ Most of the people who said they will not try to receive the vaccine say they don't trust it. Let's examine some reasons why this group says they won't take the vaccine and decide whether they are true or false by utilizing peer reviewed journals and scientific sources.

"The vaccine was created too quickly." First off, let's look at what is true about this statement. Scientists developed the COVID-19 vaccine in record time (less than one year). Although the development was shockingly fast, researchers used the same verified techniques they had used before in other vaccines for development and testing. Here are a few reasons that the vaccine was developed so quickly: scientists were already working off decades of research on other coronaviruses⁵, so they weren't starting from scratch; the worldwide collaboration on the vaccine development and distribution between governments were unlike anything seen before; and instead of going through different phases during clinical trials, health officials ran tens of thousands of tests simultaneously in order to ensure safety, while still keeping the fast pace of development.⁶

Verdict? FALSE: There is no reason to believe that the speed at which the vaccine was developed impacted its efficacy or safety.

"The vaccine isn't safe because it hasn't been tested enough."

During development, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was clinically tested on over 43,000 participants⁷, with fewer than 6 percent of participants reporting symp-

toms like headache or fatigue after receiving the vaccine. As of April 26, 2021 more than 95 million people in the United States have received a vaccine from Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson.⁸ Out of that group, the CDC reports only 9,245 confirmed COVID-19 infections in those who are vaccinated.⁹ This data indicates that less than 0.01% of fully vaccinated people have been infected with COVID-19.

Verdict? FALSE: These vaccines have gone through rigorous clinical trials. In the 18 days since the CDC's report, 30 million more people have been fully vaccinated, totalling 120 million nationally. Vaccinated people have not reported any serious problems.

"The vaccine causes blood clots."

Six individuals have reportedly developed a rare and severe type of blood clot after receiving the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine, just one of three vaccines currently available. The CDC temporarily paused use of this vaccine in order to investigate further, in which they found no serious threat to the average person.¹⁰ This investigation took place when more than 6.8 million people had already received the J&J vaccine, meaning that this condition only occurred in 0.009 percent of people who received this vaccine. Since the pause, no reports of this condition have been filed.

Verdict? FALSE (except in extremely rare circumstances): This only applies to one company's vaccine, which uses different technology from the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Those under the age of 18 are not eligible to receive the J&J vaccine. There are no reports of blood clots in the Pfizer vaccine (available to ages 12+) or the Moderna vaccine (available to ages 18+).

"The vaccine causes infertility."

There is no evidence of a COVID-19 vaccine causing these issues. Studies show that contracting COVID-19 actually has a much higher risk of infertility than any vaccine could cause.¹¹

Verdict? FALSE: All three companies with currently approved coronavirus vaccines have conducted clinical trials on

this subject and have found no evidence that the vaccine could be linked to infertility or pregnancy loss.¹¹

"The vaccine doesn't prevent COVID-19."

Studies conducted by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna show that their vaccines reduced the likelihood of contracting COVID-19 by 94-95 percent after recipients are fully vaccinated.¹² In children ages 12-15, the Pfizer-BioNTech prevented 100 percent of possible COVID-19 infections.¹³

Verdict? FALSE: There is a preponderance of evidence by these companies and independent health groups that verify the effectiveness of these vaccines.

"The vaccine implants a microchip inside me so I can be tracked."

This idea originated from a study conducted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in which they developed a type of "invisible ink" that could be injected alongside vaccines when vaccinating children in third world countries, or in refugee camps.¹⁵ Since these groups cannot maintain medical records on paper, some children grow up never knowing if they have been vaccinated against these diseases. Furthermore, the largest gauge needle used for COVID-19 vaccines is 25 gauge which is about 0.02 inches in diameter.¹⁴ The average tracking chip size is 11mm, or 0.4 inches in diameter making it physically impossible to inject one by needle. Not only is it impossible to do so, it wouldn't make sense to fear it. By allowing certain functions on your phone you are already allowing some entities to "track" you.

Verdict? FALSE: This "invisible ink" technology cannot track you, nor is it currently in use in the United States. Read more about this topic here.

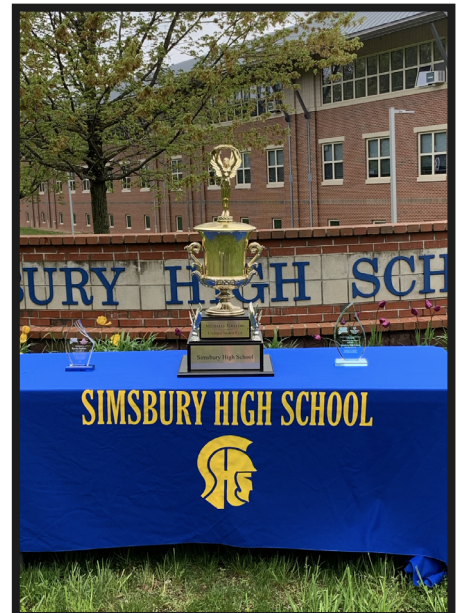
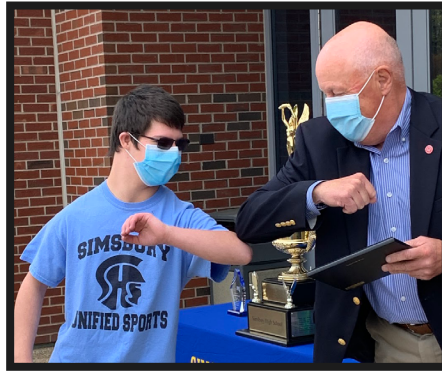
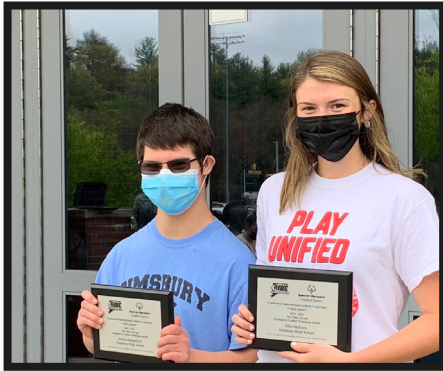
As of June 2, 2021 63.5 percent of residents in Connecticut have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine.⁹ COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Do your part by getting vaccinated, visit: ct.gov/covidvaccine for more information.

Find the sources for this information [here](#).

SHS UNIFIED SPORTS WINS MICHAELS CUP

KATHARINE BATCHELAR

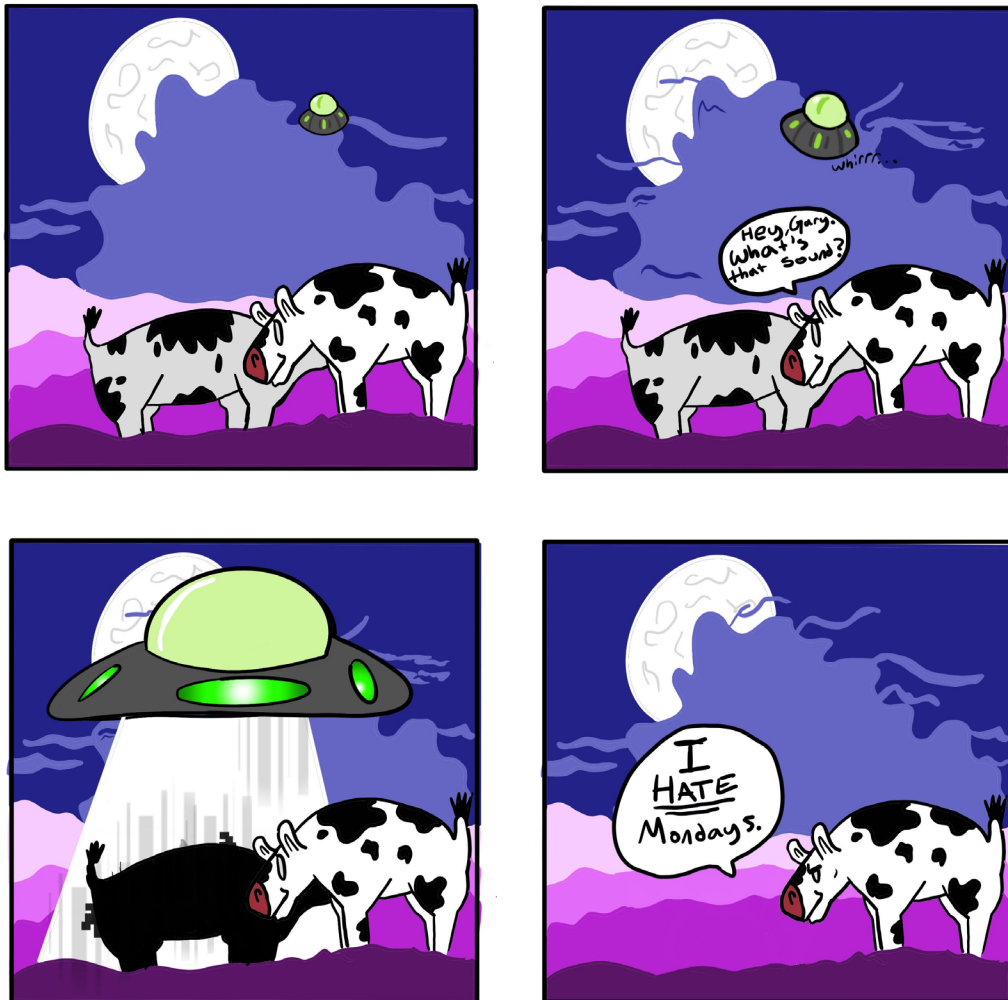
Kate Batchelar is a sophomore who loves sports and who participates in Unified Sports. This article is about the Unified program and the award they won.



The Michaels Cup Award is designed to recognize CIAC member schools for exemplary athletic programs. On May 4th, Simsbury Unified, which began in the late 1990s, won this prestigious award. Additionally, Coach Bulmer won a coaching award. Ellie McElroy and Josh Staskiewicz both won the Mike Savage teammate award. Josh also won the essay contest for athletes. Two partners within the program, Kelsey and Megan Alonzo, share that they always have fun at practices, and that getting this award “means so much because it really shows the positive impact you can have on others’ lives”. The program would not be what it is without its amazing coaches, Coach Bulmer and Coach Spector, who took over the program together in 2013. Coach Spector participated in Unified Sports in high school, paving the way for the career he

has today. A quote from Coach Bulmer shows her love for this program; “Unified Sports has changed my life. I look forward to seeing the kiddos, both athletes and partners every week! It’s a highlight to see their happy selves on the field or on the court. They inspire me every day”. A huge congratulations goes out to the coaches, partners, and athletes for such a fantastic program and for achieving this amazing accomplishment! Way to go, Simsbury Unified!







THANK YOU!



Thank you for reading the Trojan Times! If you are interested in joining our Google Classroom, please use the code: **swpewda**. We look forward to putting out more editions next school year!

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