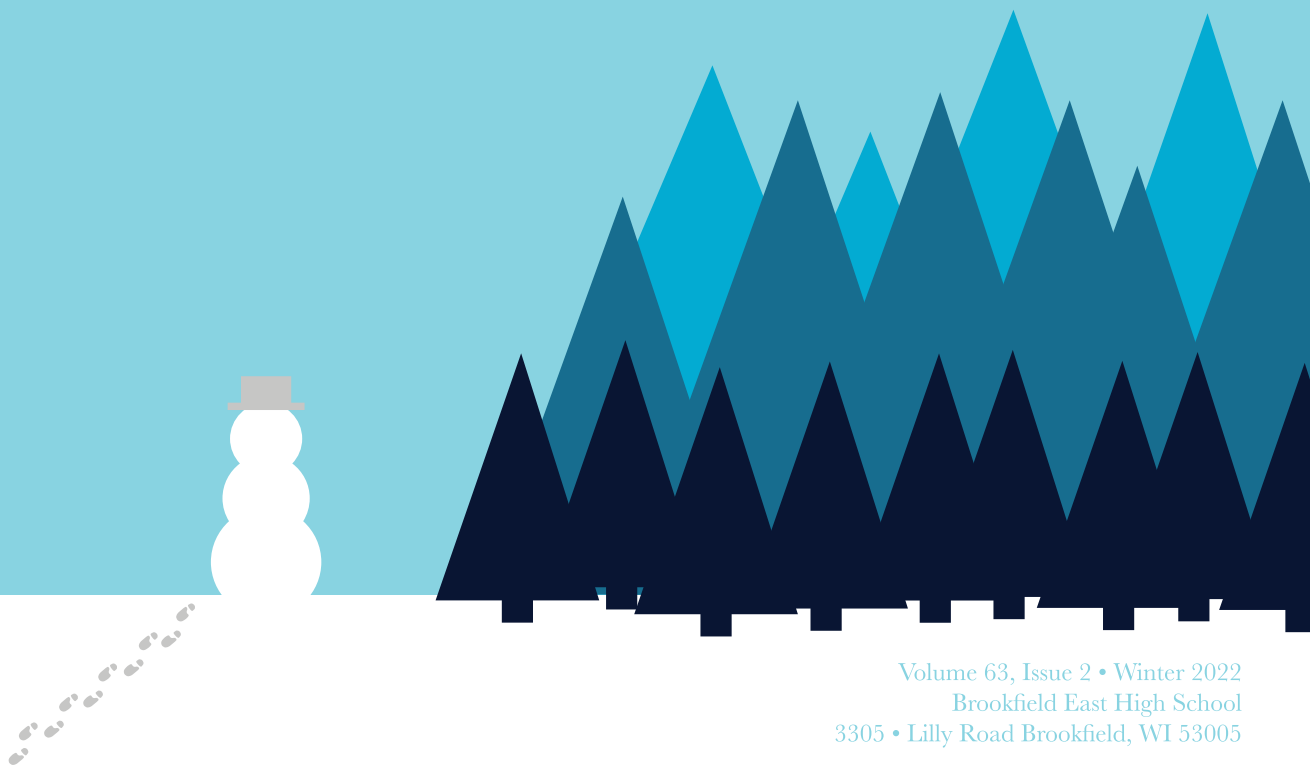




Winter in Wisco



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As we all know, winter in Wisconsin can be pretty unpredictable. From snowstorms to 50°F days, students have to deal with the unexpectedness of it all. To get through this everlasting weather, students throw themselves into activities; whether it be joining the ski team or participating in the Winter Reading challenge, they find something to do. Our Spartan Banner writers actively looked for common activities within the BEHS community and worked tirelessly these last few weeks to provide quality content. In this issue, we cover everything from the new Learning Commons, to welcoming one of the foreign exchange students, to delving into the numerous traditions celebrated at BEHS. I hope you enjoy the hard work the Spartan Banner staff has put into this winter issue.

- Elenore Cornelie, Editor-in-Chief

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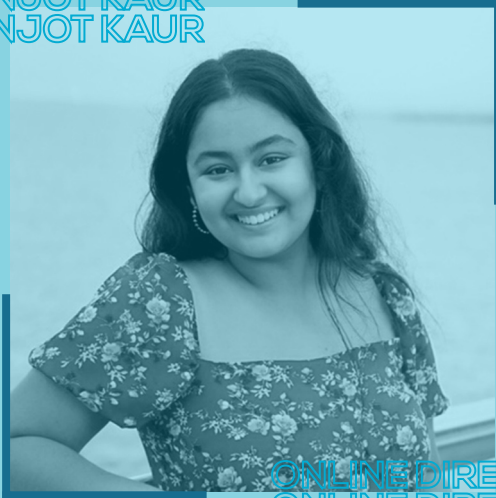
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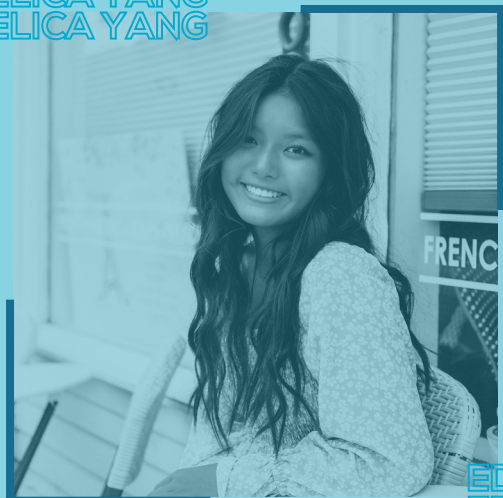
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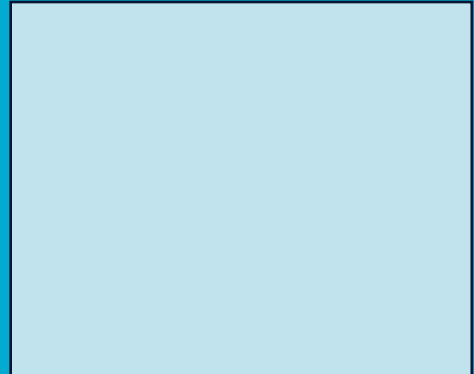
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Winter in Wisconsin

Fighting Seasonal Depression and Climate Change

Writer/Editor: Jaya Sabharwal
Designer: Kathy Sun



There is nothing quite like stepping outside in the morning to below freezing temperatures. And even while the holiday season tends to brighten most people's moods, it is no surprise that winter in Wisconsin can be brutal.

In addition to frigid weather, winter leads to progressively shorter days. On December 21st, the shortest day of the year, the sun sets at approximately 4:20 pm. As a result of this immense decrease in levels of sunlight, many people experience seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a mood disorder characterized by fatigue and depression in the winter.

The science behind this disorder is quite simple. Research suggests that the lack of sunlight in the winter disrupts the body's circadian rhythm, an internal process that regulates the sleep-wake cycle and repeats roughly every 24 hours. This causes an imbalance of serotonin, a hormone that regulates mood, happiness, and anxiety. When asked how cold weather and

shorter days might negatively impact a student's mental health, Nina Anglim (11), a Hope Squad member, adds, "A lot of students feel obligated to shut down when it gets dark outside. These shorter days can be stressful, especially when school picks up at the end of the semester." In addition to feelings of anxiousness, there is an evident lack of motivation among students in the winter. According to a survey conducted among the Brookfield East student body, 63.6% of students tend to lose motivation when it gets dark outside. This disproportionate distribution demonstrates the correlation between fewer daylight hours and a lack of energy.

In response to how she best copes with winter in Wisconsin, Abby Wanezek (12) states, "I try to engage in fun activities that are specific to winter, such as sledding and ice skating. Staying active has always made winter more enjoyable for me." Although it can be a challenging time to stay active, partaking in winter activities has proven to be an effective way to combat SAD.

This December, however, we experienced a change in our typical winter weather. On December 15th, the Milwaukee area experienced record-breaking high temperatures and strong windstorms. The temperature on that day reached a high of 67 degrees, breaking the previous record of 55 degrees for highest temperature on this day.

These changes could be due to shifting climate and atmospheric patterns.

How might students feel about these drastic changes?

A notable 66.2% of students thought that December of 2021 was unusually warm. With temperatures soaring above the typical 30-degree weather in December and no snow in sight, it would be hard to overlook such differences.

In an effort to gauge students' perspectives on a warming climate, Grace Greene (12) says, "As rough as winter might be, it is unfortunate to see temperatures rising so late in the year. Humans are contributors to climate change, so I think we all need to do a better job at reducing our environmental impact."

There is plenty to unpack from this winter season, and it is important to acknowledge the good with the bad. Being that most Wisconsinites are accustomed to long winters, students find ways of embracing the season rather than dreading it. Whether this involves participating in winter sports, celebrating holidays, or simply appreciating the picturesque snowfalls, there are lots of opportunities for enjoyment.



From Library to Learning Commons

Author: Eiman Mir
Editor: David Jia
Designer: Ava Gomez
Photographer: Eiman Mir

Read how East's traditional school library became an inviting learning space for students!

Historically, libraries have been essential in providing students with the resources they need. However, the growth in the abundance of digital resources has drastically changed the way we access these resources, leading to decreased library usage. Regardless, libraries are just as important as they were 200 years ago - the only difference is how they operate. Libraries in the 20th century are shifting away from storehouses for books to multifunctional spaces that foster creativity. The Brookfield East Library renovation has taken this vision to heart; transforming the library into The Learning Commons. Mr. Farley explains that the Learning Commons prioritizes, “literacy, learning, collaboration, access to technology and resources, learning facilitated by accessible educators, and more.”

In 2018, Mara Tetzlaff, Ava Zimmerman, and Travis Marquart pitched an idea to rework the design and functionality



of the Learning Commons to the School Board's Finance and Operations Committee. The result was a 3-0 vote in favor of financially supporting the renovation, which eventually went to the full Board of Education, passing on a 7-0 decision. Tetzlaff states that her inspiration came from other libraries around the community, wanting to "create a better environment for BEHS students to study and further their learning."

Besides aesthetic appeal, the new library incorporates newer functions and capabilities, providing space for small and large group meetings. The two squad rooms are perfect for presentations, holding zoom meetings, or even podcasting. Because of the recent renovations, the learning Commons can accommodate more students for other clubs and activities.

For instance, the writing center operates on the right wing of the Learning Commons during Excellence. Michael Kelley (12), a writing tutor, explains that the Learning Commons allows more students to seek writing assistance and provides a nice learning atmosphere. Additionally, Battle of the Books meets in the Learning Commons for excellence, using the area to read and discuss the books of the month. Elsa Gregory (11), a member of the club, enjoys using the Learning Commons because of the variety of seating choices, making it easier to watch practice battles and play Kahoot. The Learning Commons is also open after school hours thanks to library supervisors like Andrew Lucas, a former BEHS student now attending UW-Whitewater.

Students, faculty, and guests alike have also benefited from the Learning Commons. Mr. Bergren, an English teacher, explains "the layout of the Learning Commons allows students to experience a different learning environment and explore the vast collection of print and online resources."

Although the function of libraries continues to expand and change, investing in the right resources to create a stable learning environment can do everything from improving test scores to inspiring students to bolster their learning. In the coming years, the Learning Commons looks to uphold this mission and foster a generation of academic excellence.



A ONE WAY TICKET TO BROOKFIELD: P A R T I

Writers: Lucy Irwin and Ella Kelsey Editor: David Jia Designer: Audrey Hameister

Life as a foreign exchange student at Brookfield East.

For the majority of high school students, it's hard to spend more than a few weeks away from their family and friends. However, despite the challenges of leaving one's home, Brookfield East's foreign exchange program provides rewards of growing roots in communities across the ocean as well as experiencing a multitude of insightful encounters, making it well worth the cost. Minges Nachtigaeler, (10) a 16 year old from Germany, shares his experiences with leaving his whole life behind to start a new one for a year in Brookfield, Wisconsin.



Nachtigaeler shares that “the hardest aspects of the exchange program are not being able to see my family and friends, and being completely immersed in English every day.” Despite some previous exposure to the English language, communicating in such a constant and fast-paced manner is both difficult and tedious. Fortunately, after rigorous practice, Nachtigaeler is now nearly fluent and speaks comfortably with both his teachers and peers.

One of the perks of being placed into a new setting is all of the additional opportunities-- opportunities like meeting new people, making lifelong friends, improving language skills, and participating in athletics. Nachtigaeler recently joined the JV Hockey team, greatly enjoying the new sport, “Except, of course, when I have to get up at 5 am for practice.” Along with hockey, Minges partakes in the ski racing team and has a furthering idea to try baseball in the upcoming spring season. With peers wondering what life was like on the other side of the world,

Nachtigaeler described an average day in Germany. Nachtigaeler is one of two million people who live in the bustling city of Hamburg -- the country's second largest city. He starts his day at 7:00 AM, wishing goodbye to his two younger sisters, Skylar and Anna. Nachtigaeler then pedals his way to the train station to catch the subway to school. His high school is similar to BEHS in starting time, but varies in the manner of schedules. Unlike common systems of block scheduling, Nachtigaeler's German school schedule incorporates over fifteen classes every single week. On Mondays, German students receive new schedules for the week and are required to attend the assigned classes. Similar to American norms, after school, Nachtigaeler typically completes his homework, attends field hockey practice, and hangs out with friends.

Because America is such a diverse and broad country, foreign exchange students who spend time here are



exposed to a wide variety of demographics. Nachtigaeler explains how participating in the exchange program is a popular decision among German teens. There are several teens from his friend group that choose to spend the year in the U.S., spreading out in states across the nation, including Tennessee, Michigan, and Texas. Nachtigaeler would not have chosen anywhere else, as he loves his host family and is getting the full American experience,

here in Brookfield. Mrs. Mckenna, school counselor at Brookfield East and coordinator of the exchange program, says, "Every year East hosts exchange students from around the world. The students add a different lens from a cultural perspective that enhances the Spartan community. It has been amazing to get to know these students and hear about the high school experiences in their home countries in comparison to Brookfield East. It is great to learn about different customs from their countries."

Nachtigaeler has overcome challenges like starting a new chapter all on his own, leaving comfort and family behind, and being thrown into brand new activities with new people and a new language. He is making the most out of this opportunity. Mckenna adds, "Minges has been an awesome addition to Spartan Nation and our students have been so welcoming. I am more than pleased that we have this opportunity to learn from each other."

A Look at High

Writers: Lucy Irwin and Ella Kelsey Editor: David Jia Designer: Audrey Hameister

Brookfield East is well renowned for its athletics program. Students at East train for months in preparation for their upcoming seasons. Both on and off the court, these coaches and athletes put in blood, sweat, and tears to perform at their full potential.



The first interview is from one of the boys varsity team's top contributors, Danny Gherezher (12). He was recently awarded second team in the Greater Metro Conference and is playing his second year on the varsity team. Gherezher is a team player with a winning attitude.

What is your favorite aspect about being a part of the team? The journey. I love every minute we spend together as a team; dinners, hanging out in the locker room with the guys, the ups and downs of winning and losing games.

Based on what you've seen, what areas of the team need improvement? Being vocal and adjusting to the new guys on the team. Holding each other accountable and getting on each other when mistakes are made; playing off each other's strengths.

Do you see a future for your basketball career? I have two D2 offers and I have some interest from some D1 and D2 schools. I definitely see myself playing in college.

What is your favorite aspect of practice? The 5 on 5 competitions because playing against each other makes us tougher.

What position do you play? Point guard. This is my first year playing point guard and I had previously played shooting guard.



Mr. Rux is the current varsity head coach of the Boys Basketball team. Rux has held this position for five years and also coaches the boys Junior Spartans team. Last season, he led the team to a 19-5 record. He also teaches 20th Century American History and the leadership class here at Brookfield East.

Why do you like coaching?

Coaching is like teaching, you get the opportunity to bring out the best in each person and help surpass their goals and achieve the impossible.

What is the most important skill to teach the team?

Self-awareness. We spend a lot of time talking about how to have the courage to be the best version of yourself. Athletics present a number of challenges that require each athlete to take risks that can be uncomfortable so we want to help athletes learn how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Have you played basketball your whole life?

I've played basketball from 5th grade all through high school and one year in college. During my time playing I had a number of coaches who challenged me and I enjoyed that experience and decided that I wanted to provide that to other people.

What's it like to have two jobs at school? Is it hard to combine coaching with teaching?

At a school as big as Brookfield East you don't see your students as much off the court, but being a teacher and coach gives you the opportunity to see your players as more than just athletes and that allows you to have better relationships with them. Without those relationships it would be tough for athletes to trust you enough to take risks while playing their sport. So being a teacher and coaching in the same building is critical in creating a well rounded athletic experience.

School Basketball

Exclusive insight from your varsity captains and coaches!



Mr. Saxton is the current varsity coach for the girls basketball team. A World History and AP research teacher, Saxton loves balancing school, both in the classroom and on the court. The ability to get to know his players in a different setting allows for the team to form a tight bond, as well as showcase their skills outside of basketball.

What do you like most about the team?

This team in particular this year, I love how competitive they are and how well they work together towards a common goal, which is to become the best we can be.

When coaching tryouts, what is the most important thing you look for in a future player?

One big one is their coachability and their willingness to get better and improve. Obviously their skill level is important but also how committed they will be and their attitude. Forming teams is really tough because you try to put each girl in a position that will maximize their level. Each team has different needs so it's tough to sort them out and meet those needs.

What's your favorite NBA team?

I was born in northern Michigan so my favorite team is the Pistons but they stink... so the Bucks.

What does an average practice look like?

We start the same way everyday with partner shooting and a drill we call Florida just to get their bodies moving up and down the floor. Short sides games to get ready for five versus fives. The team we are about to play really dictates how practices are going to be set up for the most part.

What would you say in a pep talk after an atrocious loss?

We just need to try and keep getting better. Reflect and watch films, make adjustments and go from there. No sense in mulling on it, you can only move forward. I would say the same thing if we won big too. Constant improvement whether we win or lose.



The final interview is from one of the Varsity Girls' captains, Annika Pluemer (11). This point guard has been an asset to the team since her freshman year. Outside of high school, she keeps her skills in touch by playing on AAU Wisconsin Impact with some of her other BEHS teammates.

How long have you been playing basketball?

Since around the age of five, so about 12 years.

How do you prepare for games?

We have a scouting report which is a summary of the other teams key players and what they are good at and how to defend them. We also watch films, go over our plays and what we are going to do against them.

What does your basketball future hold?

I want to play in college at any level really. I wanna coach, especially if I have kids.

Overall, Brookfield East's basketball program is a fantastic way to be involved in our community. Whether it's balling on the court or cheering in a sea of fans at each game, this sport provides an opportunity to show off your skills and make amazing high school memories.



Author: Mehru Siddiqui
Editor: Bennett Kinney
Designer: Audrey Hameister

Find out why PRISM club sponsors this yearly important event.

WORDS HURT WEEK 2022

Words hold power. Students are constantly placed in tough situations where words are weaponized and used in hostile manners. Even within places of safety like Brookfield East, these events are both frequent and damaging. Because of this, it can be hard to recover from verbal abuse. PRISM club, a major club at East, aims to mitigate this. “Words Hurt Week” is an event brought to students at East, with the goal of raising awareness towards the prevention of hate speech, discrimination, and ignorance within school borders. PRISM is a club for LGBTQ+ youth where students can freely express themselves amongst peers that they relate to. PRISM creates a safe environment where students can learn about differences in sexual orientation and gender identity. Former member Natalie Poe explains that “one of the main points of this club is to allow queer people and their allies, those who are closeted or out and proud, to participate and get to know each other and form these support systems they may not get at home.”

Similar to
 W o r d s

Hurt Week, many other schools have taken part in events to motivate students to address the negativity spread by hurtful comments. The idea has been around for years. Emily Schwab (12) explains, “we took inspiration from another school that did it several years ago which was around 2015.” Last year, Words Hurt Week took place in February, during the week of Valentine’s day. The prompt for last year centered around inclusivity. During the event, cards were cut and bracelets were sold, a tradition that will carry over this year. Ms. Woodson comments, “I think it’s really great to see an impact visually since you can’t see words unless you spell them out. The pictures and the notecards will help to give students a visual reminder of their impact on those around them.” Another recurring tradition is the Safe Zone contract. Bre Hoepfner (12) explains “it’s a piece of paper we put out at lunch for students to sign.” students could either buy an additional bracelet along with

it or receive a free ribbon pin. Hoepfner furthers, “I remember people would take time to look at the stuff we put up and respond thoughtfully. I think people anticipate this year’s Words Hurt Week because of the impact it had last year. It made people reflect by putting those words out there right in front of them.”

To plan for this year’s special events, PRISM club has been actively working on interesting ways to engage the student body. Recent projects include posters for the different education departments at East, which are then used in promotional videos for the upcoming week. During one meeting, members got together to create unique and thoughtful prompts for classmates to respond to. Unlike last year, the prompts are more tailored towards specific departments. There will be lunch sales for bracelets, ribbons, and more innovative crafts. PRISM also plans to cut cards again for students to respond with experiences, suggestions, and com-

passionate words relating to the week’s theme. Another idea that the club has been working on is creating scripts for morning announcements, which will then be broadcasted to the whole school. Additionally, PRISM plans to reach out to other clubs to help with preparations and publicity, including Hope Squad, Best Buddies, Creativity club, as well as several other organizations.

The influence words possess is large, which is why educating and inspiring youth to spread positivity is exactly what the world needs to build a more welcoming future. In the coming years, PRISM club is sure to make a tremendous impact on inclusivity at Brookfield East.

CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE WORLD: BROOKFIELD EAST EDITION

Get a glimpse at Brookfield East's cultural celebrations during the winter holidays!

Writers: Coda McMullen and Mellynda Jia **Editor:** David Jia **Designer:** Audrey Hameister

The atmosphere here at Brookfield East encourages cultural diversity, whether it's through classes or extracurriculars; different styles and practices come and go each year. To help spread the existing culture of acceptance, Spartan Banner interviewed students with different cultural backgrounds to garner insight of the various winter holidays celebrated by the student body.

CHINESE

Chinese New Year, also known as the spring festival, is a holiday that marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. This tradition has no fixed date as it's based on the lunar calendar, but usually takes place between late January and mid-February. Brookfield East student, Kathy Sun (10), recalls a legend she once heard about the origins of Chinese New Year. "There was this monster that came at night and ate children so villagers set off fireworks and firecrackers to scare it off." It was rumored that the beast feared the color red, strange creatures, as well as loud noises. Hence, every year around that time people would come together, starting a tradition that continues to this day. Despite the name, Chinese New Year is actually celebrated in many other Asian countries due to the influence of Chinese culture. Festivities take place all over Asia, usually for 2 - 3 weeks, varying from region to region. Decorations are seen throughout, primarily in the color red, to bring good luck and joy. Some people exchange red envelopes with friends and family in hopes of good fortune, and in almost every household, dumplings will appear on the table due to their resemblance to gold ingots.

Common sights during the holiday are lion and dragon dances taking place in the streets, accompanied by musicians focused on chasing away evil spirits and welcoming prosperity of the upcoming year. When asked about her favorite aspect of Chinese New Year, Sun exclaimed, "I love spending time with family and friends. It's a time for me to get in touch with a part of my identity that I often feel detached from." Chinese New Year is a holiday rich with customs, serving a purpose to not only celebrate the start of the new year, but to also gather communities together in celebration of culture.

NEW YEAR

DIWALI

Diwali is known widely as the festival of lights. This holiday originates from India and has no fixed date, as it's based on the Hindu calendar. Typically taking place during late October or early November, Diwali is one of the country's most important festivals of the year. It signifies the start of harvest and Hindus recognize it as the commencement of a new year. Joshitha Senthil (10) states, "Diwali celebrates the triumph of good over evil. Each part of India has a different story for its origins but the main principles are light over darkness. A common tradition is to use clay lamps called diyas to decorate our entire house. Lighting them gets rid of all the negativity and welcomes in prosperity, health, wealth, and happiness."

Another Diwali custom is to wear new clothes, symbolizing a new beginning and the burying of old, painful memories. People wear attire that honors their respective gods and religion. At celebrations, gifts are exchanged, and a large assortment of dishes are eaten -- some savory, others sweet. Although traditions can vary, Senthil comments, "Diwali is my favorite holiday because it involves so many good things. Family, friends, and good food. It is one of the most defining holidays in my culture and celebrating it makes me feel so much closer to my roots. If happiness was a holiday, it would definitely be Diwali."

DIWALI

CHRISTMAS

Alex Brandau (12) celebrates Christmas, the most common winter holiday in the US. Even though the majority of Americans celebrate it, Christmas means something unique to everyone. To Randall, “Christmas is coming together to celebrate without any kind of conflict and also a time for us to completely detox from the stress life brings and reflect how the year went for us as a whole.” Brandau shares. “We do a tradition that some families also do, which is known as the Christmas pickle. Sometime on Christmas Eve, our parents hide an ornament shaped like a pickle somewhere around the house. Whoever finds the Christmas Pickle first gets to open the first present of Christmas. I’m pretty sure it’s meant to prevent people from rushing to open their presents and take some time to appreciate the gifts they’re receiving.”

Christmas Day also calls for unique foods. Brandau and his family “make special cookies called lebkuchen, a German cookie. My great-grandmother started the tradition and I still remember eating them at her house. They’re made with honey, brown sugar, regular white sugar, and we put different kinds of nuts in them.”

According to Brandau, “my favorite part about Christmas is just being able to spend time with my family in a friendly environment where I don’t have to worry about schoolwork or anything like that. Sometimes I don’t see certain family members for a while, so being able to see and spend time with them brings out the feeling of

Christmas for me. Spending time with and giving and receiving gifts with my friends is also a really fun part, and it also gives me time to appreciate those who I’m close with.”

THREE KINGS DAY

Kenneth Patten (12), celebrates Three Kings Day -- a holiday that Christians in Spain and Latin America commemorate. The holiday honors the biblical story in which Three Kings (also known as the Three Wise Men) visit baby Jesus after his birth to give him gifts. To Patten, “three kings find baby Jesus by following the path of a star across the desert for 12 days. After finding him, they gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Three Kings Day is typically celebrated on January 6th, 12 days after the traditional Christmas holiday in order to represent the 12 day journey through the desert spent by the 3 Kings.

The holiday is often compared to Christmas for its similarity in origin; however, the former celebrates the birth of Jesus, while the latter represents the day of his baptism. When asked for his favorite aspects of Three Kings Day, Patten explains, “for my family, the main event is the pinata. We fill the pinata with candy, fruits, and sometimes money and then hang it up for the kids together and take turns trying to break it. We also sometimes like to end the day with a nice fireworks display.”

Hu Plig (pronounced hoo-plee), is a traditional Hmong custom -- a soul-calling ceremony performed by shamans when a frightened soul is to be called back. This is usually done through chantings and offerings of food. Pakou Thao (12) celebrates this holiday, explaining that “it’s acknowledging that the current year is ending and a new one is soon to come.” The Hmong host this special event to alert their ancestors to wish for good health, guidance, and fortune. Though the occasion doesn’t have a designated time for celebration, there remains a condition that it must be done before the end of the calendar year, typically from late November to December.

Like most holidays, Hu Plig has its unique surplus of traditions. One tradition of Hu Plig that the Hmong participate in is The Soul Calling Ritual. According to Thao, “We choose a chicken from a farm, and we take care of that chicken for a couple of days. The condition of the chicken will determine how the year will look for our family as a whole. We then sacrifice the chicken during Hu Plig so its spirit can protect us through the upcoming year. The blood and feathers are saved to be used on the sahka, which is in every traditional household. This is what we pray to. Make sure to be very specific so the ancestors can make their blessing to you as effective as possible.”

Hu Plig is a holiday that has different foods, unique traditions, and is celebrated by more than 11 million people worldwide. Thao enjoys Hu Plig and looks forward to celebrating it every year because “Everyone comes together... It’s nice to see how many people care about your family and what happens to you. Everyone being there resembles a unifying feeling that speaks on many different levels. It really means a lot when others come and help out because that’s basically saying that they wish a good year upon you. We also try to help out with other people and help them set up, as we want everyone else to have a good year as well.” It’s not the holiday itself that makes it special, but rather the people you celebrate it with that makes it memorable.

HU PLIG

Diverse holidays and traditions are both unique and an important part of life. Being able to cherish and share our differences is an eye-opening experience that broadens our knowledge of one another, allowing us to appreciate the distinctions between individuals. Consider taking part in new traditions in the next winter holiday season!



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