

The Column

SENIOR EDITION





The Column
Established 2018

from the editor...

First and foremost, I'd like to thank every one who supported me and this project from day one. It has been an increasingly fun and enriching experience to work on the newspaper for the past few years.

When I started The Column I was clueless, I had no idea what it was that I was truly getting myself into. However I had my passion, and my dedication. I was lucky enough to have a strong team of hardworking and caring people at my side. It is because of these people that I am here today writing this. They have continually inspired me and kept me motivated in times of doubt.

Prior to reading and experiencing the content we have in our Senior Edition, I'd like to provide context into the background and creation of this grand finale.

My main priority as Editor-in-Chief was to always highlight and amplify the voices of WHSADs student body. I wanted for any and all students to have a platform to express themselves and their passions. In the two years that The Column has been in print, we have worked to ensure that our ambitious vision was accomplished. With the Senior Edition, symbolizing not only my last edition as Editor but also the last edition for the Class of 2020, we knew we wanted to make our mark.

Despite all the challenges and setbacks we have faced in 2020, I, in collaboration with my senior cohort, am proud to present The Column: Senior Edition.

Here's to many more editions of The Column in the future!

Enjoy,



Antonio Dylan Perez

Editor-in-Chief



Antonio Perez is the WHSAD Class of 2020 Salutatorian. In the fall, Antonio will be attending New York Institute of Technology with an intended major in Architecture.



One Day at a Time

Excerpts from the Journal of Antonio Perez

March 2020

I still remember the days leading up to the school closures. I still vividly remember not only the day I found out, but the morning after. The emptiness and silence of the train car as I returned to New York, my empty soul staring out the window. When I found out schools were closed until possibly April 20th I was in bliss, I instantly called Jonah and Ariana, and words couldn't describe the feelings we had at the moment. Not that we didn't like school or want to be there, but hearing that we were getting a break for basically a month sounded relaxing. Although, that was how we initially felt, and then we all thought about it and very quickly, our happiness and excitement came crashing down in front of us. We realized what this meant for us, for our education, for our families, for our jobs, for our lives. That was scary and overwhelming, and that night I fell asleep with a thousand thoughts on my mind: what did the future have in store for me and my life. As for my friends and my family, and work, and school? I went to sleep, hoping that I would wake up with answers and in the cloudiness of the New Jersey sky I found no resolution. In the house with my cousins where I should have felt

happy, I was lost, staring into the abyss for minutes on end. I eventually left. I was coming back to a very different New York than the one I left from on Friday night. A New York of people just as lost and confused as me. I don't believe it was just me, but the energy that day was a polar opposite of what I experienced on Monday. The juxtaposition of Penn Station, 34 St. – Herald Square, the streets of West 33rd did not feel the same. I tried to create hope in my head for the future, find optimism within the walls of those buildings, hope within the view of the people on the street, lit up underneath the Empire State Building, but it wasn't there. My uneasiness and discomfort triumphed over any type of hope I could have at the moment.

While getting home did help ease my mind and bring me some peace, I couldn't help but feel uncertain of whatever prospects the future holds. What are the long term effects of the school closures and what does this mean for the future of our education, and our world? Is a return to normalcy possible? How and when will we as a society start to build ourselves back up, re-open our stores, continue our lives? When? My friends

and family were well aware of the implication that a virus like COVID-19 could have on our lifestyles, yet this, our new reality, seemed surreal and impossible. Although, here we are. To try to label my feelings with one emotion right now would be inconceivable, I'm feeling everything I thought I ever could and some: Anger, Sadness, Confusion, Optimism, Fear, Happiness, Joy, and Hope. How we as a society managed to get to this point is disappointing. While I do understand why we had to self-quarantine and essentially shut down our whole lifestyle, I wish our society was proactive and not reactive. Why should we wait till hundreds have died and thousands are infected, to make change? Time is everything, and it angers me to my very core, to know that if we had had a quicker and smarter reaction April 20th could be a possibility. However, because of how late and rather poor our response was not only does April 20th not look possible but so does Graduation, the Senior Trip, Prom, Senior Breakfast, and so much more.

What I would do to go back, to be in school for the last time. The place I loved like it was my home, because it was, I loved WHSAD with every bone in my body. I could have gotten 1 hour of sleep and even woke up in a bad mood but getting off of Bedford Ave. and seeing WHSAD, and the people I love, nothing could ever top that. And it's sad because my last day wasn't something monumental but it felt like every other day. If only I had known. How much more I would have savored and appreciated the school that day, and the people around me. My heart aches in pain knowing that I can't do anything to see these people, these people that have formed the very person I am today. The fact of the matter is I loved these people, my friends were more like family, and to not be able to see them under any circumstances, I have no words. Every time I go back to the week and that day, I wish we had done more, because if any of us knew what was truly coming and how fast it would hit us, I know there wouldn't be a second that we would be apart.

The week of March 13th was an exciting

week, as of the beginning we had believed that the Senior Trip was going to happen the week after, and to say we were excited was an understatement. My friends and I had been talking of this event and our plans for months. Every time we were together it found a way to come up in our discussions. We were so excited and then Thursday came and we found out, and I know how this is going to sound, but it's the truth. In the hallway when we found out the trip was delayed, I felt nothing, I felt empty. It's as if so many emotions were flooding my mind and I couldn't handle nor understand them. I saw my friends and their faces and we all looked the same, empty and lost. That was by far not the last time that month that we would feel that way. My friends and I tried to grasp everything we had left, making plans and grand ideas of the future to compensate for our recent loss, and even then, we had no idea of what was to come.

It's now Friday, March 13th, the last day, the problem was that it felt like a classic WHSAD day if you want me to be honest. And while that by itself is definitely not an issue, the issue is for a possible last day, it should have been bigger and more memorable. Goodbyes and farewells, yet what do I remember from that day, what did I do that day? For a regular day, it was amazing, but for THE last day, heartbreaking. So much more that needed to be done and said, so many people I may never see again, words I may never get to say, feelings I may never get to feel again. What I would trade to be able to be in WHSAD and be able to make choices, bad ones, good ones, everything. The chance to have choices.

To order Chinese Food 7th period and eat as Codio stares into our soul with the most serious face you have ever seen. To leave work and buy Chipotle and Shake Shack and almost fall asleep in Muji. To clock in after school and work while talking for 3 hours with the people I love. To work for WHSAD and try my best to better the lives of the students who walk through those halls everyday. To make money because of WHSAD and be able to save up for my college education.

To be in that chair in front of the computer doing nothing but talking and listening to the same Spotify Playlist on repeat.

I miss that, I miss everything. To go back to when I was in my little bubble with my friends where all of the world's problems couldn't reach us. Where we could be us, and I could be me. I am more than aware of the position that I am in, compared to thousands of people around the world right now what's happening to me is superficial. I understand that. There are people losing everything, themselves, their families, friends, livelihoods, so for me to sit here and write for an hour speaking of my experience and my feelings, I could understand why one would think that I am being selfish or arrogant but that is simply how I feel. I am able to both acknowledge what is going on in the world and still be upset that my Senior Year, my last year being with all these people I love, has essentially disappeared in front of my eyes. Because when I found out that schools will be closed until at least April 20, but could also stay closed for significantly longer, it felt like my world was falling apart. This event has put our whole existence in perspective and forced us to open our eyes and talk about matters that are important, not because we want to but because we have to. So many of us live in a little bubble, thinking that could never be us, up until the very moment it is you and then what do you do? Because the truth is you don't know, you're not prepared for this, you've never had to face a challenge like this. I hope that once we all make it out of this pandemic, that we come out better than we went in. If something good could come out of this, please let it be that we as a society are more united and in sync than ever before.

April 2020

What is life like now during quarantine, what was it before, and most importantly, what will it be after? Before quarantine I had structure and a routine, it was like a pattern, a rhythm, it came so naturally to me. I understood, and I lived by it. The importance of schedules and structure during quarantine are essential concepts. Years' worth of

buildup and creation of a routine and all it took was a week to lose it all. But why? I've gone on breaks before, I've broken my daily pattern before, so why does it feel like now more than ever there is no structure? Why has quarantine made me feel like I'm losing....everything. What did the future have in store for me and my life, or my structure, and could it fully come back? I sat there on Friday night going into Saturday, having those exact thoughts. I simply couldn't help but wonder: is having great expectations for the future being optimistic and hopeful or are you ultimately setting yourself up for failure? Now, this is a question that I not only don't have the answer for but perhaps never will. Because if I've learned anything during this quarantine, it's that life truly does have the most unexpected ways of working.

Before quarantine, I was riding on the peak of my highs. It felt as if for once in a very long time I could finally sit back and relax. Maybe it's the territory that comes with being a senior in high school, but I didn't feel that I cared any less for school than I did before. In fact, it was the opposite; I was passionate and had huge goals for the school, The Column, the hallways, Bushwick Generator, everything. Now, what do I have to look forward to? Everything is in question: concerts, trips, internships. By looking forward to that am I setting myself up for disaster? Because if you asked me two months ago what I thought I would be doing in June, and asked me now, my answers would have no similarities. Not that I'm not hopeful or optimistic, but it is hard to look forward to a future where everything is back to "normal" when it took a couple of weeks for everyone's lives to come crashing down before them. I don't know how much more some people can handle, in confinement, alone, how much is enough? And even if we as a society reach a point where we are fed up (most of us will), we can't just decide to all of a sudden return back to that point we were at a couple of months ago. I don't think we ever can. The world we return to is not going to be the same. That's not saying it'll be bad, it just won't be what it was before.

This quarantine has shown me the most unexpected things in the most unlikely ways. It has shown me what truly matters in life, and perhaps it is unfortunate that I needed a global pandemic to realize that. T This quarantine has unfortunately created a rift between myself and people that I never expected. How does one stop a divide when they feel it forming? It's hard when you know what's going on around you but feel so powerless and unable to make a change. This not only relates to the bigger picture but in a smaller scope I feel that my loss of motivation and my loss of passion have reached out further than just my school life. It has now impacted my whole life. I don't even feel like doing things that I used to always do. I get a text, and I don't even want to read it. I don't want to do anything. And I know that may sound sad, even concerning, but it just really is difficult at times. It was then at this moment that I realized that I could only imagine what everyone else was going through, my friends, my family. What was happening to us? In times like this, it is important to remember that you're not the only one experiencing this. On top of that, you never know what else someone is going through. This reminds me of a lesson we were having in my AP Literature class in March. My teacher, Mrs. Fields, was talking about how we all as humans react to situations differently, and the way I would react to a situation could be extremely different than the reaction that my fellow peer would have. Everything that's going on is affecting every single person.

This isn't exclusive to one group, or one region of the world. Mostly everyone across the world has had their daily lifestyle impacted by COVID-19. I for one find myself lost in the days, waking up, falling asleep, not knowing when it is or who I am anymore. How is it possible that this could so strongly impact the way my life functions? Perhaps my failed structure is a product of my own misdoings. Did I have a strong structure, or did I lead myself to believe that for convenience and peace of mind? Just as I shuffled these questions in my head, again and again, a friend texted me, and I remembered, and I realized. It's

tough not to be able to be with the people who are in your lives every day. Especially when most of your forms of de-stressing are reliant on being outside or with friends. But I don't think it's fair to yourself to put so much stress on your mind: the stress of comparing yourself to others who are learning or doing something "productive". Everyone is different and everyone is handling this differently. Yeah, it's good to want to do more with yourself. But if you can't or you just don't feel up to the task at the moment, then don't stress yourself out because of that. Your time will come to learn stuff and do stuff and if that's not now then that's not now. You have a lot on your plate and it can be hard trying to manage all of that and then trying to make yourself do way too much at a time. Just try to take things one day at a time...one day at a time.

It is also important to use any extra time intentionally; don't simply drift through the weeks. By giving myself so many great expectations to accomplish, and deadlines to meet, I was hurting myself. In a period of growth and learning, I was forcing myself to handle too much, overwhelming my mind to the point of burning out. By fine-tuning my expectations, and looking at the reality of the situation, I realized I was only hurting myself. And like clockwork, my life in this multi-month period became much easier to digest and understand.

Life now isn't easy to navigate by any means. It never was. However, by taking this journey day by day, it feels as if I've liberated my mind from my own restrictions. I'm going to have goals, and I'm going to break them, and that's fine. I can't get mad at myself if I slip up here and there because if I do then it's all back to square one. Making my journey one day at a time is honestly the best thing I could have done for myself. I don't know what tomorrow or today has in store for me, but I do know that I can try to make the best out of today, and then tomorrow when it comes. In my time alone I find myself reminiscing on the past, on the memories I have. Yes, the past was amazing and beautiful, but I'm

too busy being stuck in the past and not living in the present. I know that this situation is not the most ideal, but if I continue to wrap myself up emotionally, in what was or even what could have been, I'll lose myself. I need to be in the present, even if that is hard for me to do. I know I'm going to make it through, and whatever it is that helps me get through it then so be it. I know that when I'm outside in the future and I see the sunset, I'll remember all those days in quarantine when I stared out my window watching the moon rise on Menahan Street. Will I miss it? Probably not. But, I will never forget the lessons I learned and the experiences I went through. Because to forget that, and leave this without having grown at all, what was it all for? To forget the past and not learn from it is to allow the past to happen again, and I know I don't want that to ever happen.





Four Years

Looking Back

Written by: Jonah Vazquez

It's difficult. I hate it, I love it. It puts into perspective how the world doesn't stop for anyone. We're minuscule specks in a vast universe, yet we're the stars of our own movie, all at the same time. But what is IT? It's everything. It's time moving forward, it's growth, it's the transition into adulthood. It's seeing our lives develop and daring to look back. It's understanding that it's okay to not be okay sometimes and that we're not alone. It's life.

High School has been... interesting, to say the least.. I'm far from the person that walked through those front doors four years ago. But I'm happy. It's been nothing but an amazing journey. I've grown past what I've thought would be the darkest moments in my life. I've talked to people who have given me invaluable feedback. I've seen myself grow in and out of styles-- I never truly thought that I'd end up as different as I did. I never thought things would end the way they did. But it's life.

I don't say "it's life" to set a pessimistic undertone to my writing. Reading it over, it sure does sound like it. At least, it does in my head. It's just, I've learned to accept the obstacles of life as they've chosen to present themselves to me. I know there's still so many that I've yet to come across, and there's still some I'm yet to address. But, it's **fundamental** to the most important lesson I've taken from High School: Sometimes, there are things we can't change. But that doesn't mean we can't work around them. Stagnancy is the reluctance to move forward-- the fear of challenging our problems in fear of greater ones. Don't let the moments in our life diffuse your momentum. You, and only you, can decide how the obstacles in your life affect you. But don't mistake this as a message promoting the refusal of

emotion or the denial of expression. It's okay to not be okay. It's normal to cry, to be sad, to feel alone. But it's not okay to let other people stunt your success. You, no matter who you are or where you're from, are powerful. You are destined to achieve the very success you desire. You're amazing. That's what I've learned. I've learned the truth behind individuality. My truth.

High School is only what you make of it. Although you're going to be regarded, plenty of times, as children, don't think for a second that means you can't begin to develop yourself as an adult yet. These years, in my very unprofessional opinion, are detrimental to who you'll become. These are your first steps out of adolescence and into adulthood. You're going to make mistakes, we all do. Embrace them and move forward. Learn from them. This is the time to make your mistakes and develop into a better person. Take the time to connect with yourself.

It's so cliché, but the years truly flew by. I feel like I've blinked and everything's changed. Life thrust me so abruptly through these chapters in my life, it's concerning. We're all approaching the inevitable. We no longer have the privilege of obliviousness. We're the next generation of adults stepping up to the plate. We're responsible for our surroundings. We're responsible for the equity of our legislation, the success of our economy, and the level of diplomacy that we engage in. My four years in High School have challenged me to believe that I can make the change I desire, both in myself and my surrounding community.

WHSAD, being a small school, has a community that proved most beneficial to me. A community where everyone knows everyone, where it's easy to get involved. A community

where I could develop myself and learn how to effectively be heard. My ability to communicate my concerns, as well as to invest myself in my interests, has truly shined in WHSAD's community. I'm still finding myself and truly honing in on my interests, but my time at WHSAD was fundamental in beginning to explore what I'm most passionate about.

I wouldn't for a second redo the last four years of my life. The people I've met, especially. My personal regard to people has transformed entirely since my freshman year. I keep thinking back to the different mental spaces I've found myself in, and then I look to where I am now. The change has been drastic in such a positive way. Going into High School, I didn't imagine that I'd end up so close to truly incredible individuals. The people I've surrounded myself with have been amazing. They've all helped me develop to have a greater understanding of both my life and the world around me. I've come to better understand the importance of friendship as we progress through life.

We're never alone; we never have to be.



Jonah Vazquez is the WHSAD Class of 2020 Valedictorian. In the fall, Jonah will be attending Vanderbilt University with an intended major in Medicine, Health, and Society on a pre-med track.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Written by: Jessica Juarez

Jessica Juarez

When I think about my high school experience, I think about all the good memories, friends, teachers, lessons, mistakes, and experiences since the very first day. When I was a freshman, I couldn't wait to be a senior and graduate. Now that our time is almost there, I would like to experience my high school years all over again. I have accomplished and done things I didn't know I was capable of. There were a lot of difficulties and challenges but I'm glad I was able to overcome every single one of them to be here today and be able to say I'm graduating. Many teachers at WHSAD have helped me in a way to prepare me for my future. When I started the college process, I was excited but then I realized how stressful it actually was. But my guidance counselor and college advisors/coaches helped me every time I needed help and motivated me when I felt overwhelmed. Although I didn't get to fully enjoy my last year in high school because we experienced a pandemic, overall I'm glad I went to WHSAD.

Every test, homework, lesson, and challenge is paying off now. However, there's still a lot of learning to do. I will continue my education at Guttman Community College and then transfer to a four-year college and major in Psychology.

Charlie Gutierrez

These last 4 years were not what I envisioned high school to be. I expected it to be quite a bothersome experience due to what I've heard from other people but I'm glad it didn't turn out that way. Almost all 4 years were enjoyable and the people I met and the opportunities I received made it even more so. Sometimes it's fun to reminisce and looking back to my earlier years of high school the most memorable time was freshman year. Everyone was starting to know each other and it was fun getting to know those who you will spend the next 4 years with and perhaps even more time with some. In terms of opportunities, I would have never expected to learn so much about architecture as I did. After many internships and classes from the school, I learned that architecture wasn't for me which made me figure out what exactly I wanted to do with my life.

Thanks to an internship through WHSAD my interest in computer science sparked. I learned about what made computers work and also a small amount of code which was enough to help me decide what I wanted to study in college. This fall I will be attending Queens College and majoring in computer science. It is something I seriously look forward to studying. Within the next 10 years, I plan to start a tech company or have a respectable title as a computer scientist within a company. I am glad the last 4 years happened. I've been fortunate enough to attend and graduate from WHSAD.

Adrian Garcia Perez

My most memorable moment in High School was when I started WHSAD. I was very nervous when I started High School. I did not know anybody when I started school. I used to be very shy around my classmates. But as the time passed by and I involved myself in clubs and activities, I was

beginning to be more sociable and friendly around people. The best experience I had was when I joined the team entrepreneurship club. In this club, I was able to learn many skills that would suit me best in a job or work place. I was able to say my ideas on how to make money for our end of year trips, and how it will help our business. It helped me to develop skills on how to work with other people and to manage to get the job done.

One of my dreams was to become an engineer. This year I applied to many colleges, and I got accepted to many and I got rejected by some. This year I am going to City College and I am going to major in mechanical engineering. I see myself as a professional engineer in 10 years who is determined to succeed in life. WHSAD has impacted my career choices by helping me understand how college and the real world is. I have learned many things about college and about the real world. All of the lessons that I had helped me shape up my character and be a better person. WHSAD has offered me many opportunities on being part of a group in a work environment, and on leadership. The school has trained me on how to work as a member of a group and on how to lead a group of people. I am really thankful for my family who has supported me throughout my years in High School. I am thankful for my friends and the people who have been with me throughout these 4 years of hard work and struggles. Most of all, I am thankful to God for being with me and keeping me alive these years. I am really proud of myself for making it through High School, for being brave enough to take the challenge and fight for my goals. Now that I am transitioning to a new stage of life, it may be intimidating for me to recognize the new level that I am going to go through, but I stand nice and tall willing to give my best in college and pursue the career that I want.

Terry Beaupierre

I will be honest high school in the beginning wasn't good at all for me until I transferred. Freshman year for me was a year of discovery. The bubble I was living in was rudely popped. In a way I'm glad it was, even though the time after wasn't so positive. In freshman year I wish I knew to put myself first before anyone else. Then again I wouldn't have it any other way because I learned so much.

No one really knows what it's like being a transfer student. The reason you left everyone asks for. My best experiences in high school didn't start until I came to WHSAD. I would say my most memorable moment was hanging out in the hallways after school in junior year. I would meet up with the boys and some of the girls to go to McCarren. The weather didn't matter. It could be snowing and the boys would still go play ball. No matter the disagreements and changes of friend groups everyone treats each other like family, which I wasn't used to. Even though in my eyes everyone was weird. Overall the best experience I had at WHSAD was this year when most of the senior class went to the armory then after Codio took us to Central Park and meeting up in Codio's room to go to McCarren to chill.

Ever since I started mingling with people here, I realized a lot of things and learned a lot about myself with the help of some teachers and counselors. Which impacts my future. If they asked me where would I see myself in 10 years. I would say traveling the world as an architect and travel agent. WHSAD has everything to do with my desired career choice. The architecture, electrical and design classes helped me decide what I wanted to do. Especially when there isn't many schools that offer classes and a reasonable school day like WHSAD does. The connections with different

companies and organizations gives you a chance to not only make money but gives you the experience you need in the real world. No one really teaches that at the school I was at before. In addition for those who want to know, I am going to be attending Alfred State University and majoring in architecture. After a year I plan on transferring to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for my Bachelors and Masters in Architecture and hopefully to study abroad for a year. P.S. Remember to live in the moment I made the mistake living in my mind years ahead!

Genavieve Ramirez

My most memorable moment in high school would have to be the overnight college trip. It was really fun going to see colleges with my friends and making memories with them. Throughout high school, I think the best experience I've had was working at the school. Through that, I gained a lot of experience in teaching, being an assistant, and just gaining new skills. One thing I wish I knew when I was a freshman was how fast time would fly. People told me these four years would fly by fast but I never believed them until now. Because of this school, I will be attending New York City College of Technology and I'll be majoring in Facilities Management. With the help of that, I hope to see myself working for an architecture firm and traveling the world. I've always wanted to do Interior design so facilities management is my 1st step into that. WHSAD has helped me shape my career goal and journey. I've had so many opportunities given to me at WHSAD such as mentoring 8th graders to designing floor plans for companies and giving ideas. Thanks to WHSAD and my friends, I had a great high school experience.

Premnauth Ramchan

Honestly, the most memorable part of high school was when the volleyball team faced another school in Queens. Arturo, who was one of the team members, was able to get the ball over the net with just his feet on the ground. I couldn't believe it myself but it happened. If I were to know more things back in freshman year, I would know to stay calm and stay curious. Curiosity leads you into learning so much more than ever! In 10 years I don't know what my destiny will unfold for me, but

I know I am open minded for the future. City Tech is the school I will be attending for Bioinformatics. I plan to study genetic codes. I soon plan to become a biologist. I love to learn about life because of its fascination. WHSAD is a life long story I will never forget! Knowing the friends I made and the decisions that led me to who I am, I will never go back to change anything. I am thankful for the haters and for the people who stood by me. It shaped me to learn more about myself and who I can become. I became a leader to those who needed guidance. Although I failed so many times, I am not worthy to be the best or to be called the greatest, but the thing I know to do is preserve and give my energy into being the best I can be. I learned so much about other people.

From a shy kid who just wanted to "Fit in," to a young adult who knows not to be afraid of the impossible.

Jordan Gonzalez

One of the most memorable moments in high school to me would have to be the college trip in Junior year. This had to be the best experience for the fact that I got to explore more of my career choices and what kind of colleges I would want to go to in order to pursue my career choice. My best experience would have to be when I met my friends, we had grown to become very close and lift each other up whenever we needed each other. Throughout the years there were many questions that went through my head, having gone through the experience I have now I wish I would have known that I don't have to rush myself to come up with a career choice because it will all come to

me naturally, I don't have to rush my decisions. Even though I went to an Architecture High School I am actually going to major in Mortuary Science at Nassau Community College after I graduate. WHSAD has really helped me in preparing me for college since some classes are taught in a college environment. To be specific the Architecture club, YLI (Youth Leadership Institute), and Incubator had really helped me build up my business etiquette behavior and presentations in front of important companies.

D'Andra Gordon

Time flies, whether you're wasting it or not. We're The words that were said before becoming a freshman in high school and time flew right past me. The memories I created, with my friends and my family. The people who changed my life for better, or for worse; I'm thankful for all that I experienced for the past four years.

One thing I wish I knew freshman year was that, it's all going to be okay, and that making mistakes is a part of life. Being a little more focused on my work is something I really wished I learned then but I helped myself get better at that. I'm just really happy for the memories, for instance, a memorable moment I will never forget was the trip we took with Mr. D'Amato to go see the SpongeBob musical. It was the happiest I felt for a very long time. It took away the stress I was facing during junior year since it was the year that most colleges look at the most. This trip helped me to relax and forget about all the struggles on my mind. The music that was played, the group photos we took, and the mini adventures we went on throughout Manhattan with my friends made me forget my worries and focus on what was really important.

During my senior year, My best experience was when I won a shark tank competition with my teammates on a trip with Mr. Codio. We had won the best product that fixed a problem that people had faced until this day. I was so proud of myself and my team, along with the hard work that went into making this a legit product. This trip wasn't the only trip I was proud of accomplishing, it was others. WHSAD has impacted my life for the better and the career I would love to pursue. I discovered an interest for electrical engineering at this school and advanced my skills of architecture on different platforms, Because of this I wanted a career in electrical engineering and architecture at City Tech, and for sure, In the next ten years, I hope to be at a company I want, doing a job I love. For one, I'm thankful I came to this school and I'm grateful to the staff and students who helped me come this far.



Jessica Juarez is the Senior Editor of The Column. In the fall, Jessica will be attending Guttman Community College with an intended major in Psychology.

QUARANTINED

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN QUARANTINE

Written by: Ashley Mena

This pandemic has affected me and my family in the hardest way possible, especially me being a senior in high school it's difficult for me. I don't know how things will turn out but the fact that they're closing schools for the rest of my senior year; I don't know when they will re-open the schools. I don't know what to look forward to when I graduate and I know prom and my senior trip are out of the question.

We spent a lot of money this year, just for our last year of high school. I wanted to make memories but now I'm having to make memories of being quarantined in my home. I'm not complaining, I'm just very disappointed. I was excited and I couldn't wait for what the future had to hold, but this wasn't what I had in mind, it's tough times now, stocks are falling, crime rates are going up, including death rates because of this virus. I can't wait for this to be over. It's affecting people way too much.

One thing for sure, It's hard for my mother. She's a nurse, seeing how she still has to work during this time and help educate my younger sister, we have to spend more money on food than we usually do. Some can relate because we aren't used to being at home for such a long time.

My friends feel the same way, we use social media to document how the coronavirus is affecting us and our households; it brings together some families while others are falling apart because of the stress that's being brought to the table. I don't blame them, this pandemic is hard to swallow in just a short time, but this virus becomes a problem for the kids who are left alone by themselves. Boredom is a dangerous thing for

children in this situation because they are only stuck at home.

D'Andra Gordon

These past weeks have been tough for the world. One way the coronavirus has affected me is that my daily routines changed a lot. With the coronavirus spreading, I am not able to go outside, go to school, and be in groups with friends because I have to maintain a certain distance with people in order to prevent spreading the disease. Because schools have been shut down, me and my siblings have had to do online classes, which is new for us. This is our first time we do remote learning and it's something that we are not used to. Instead of us waking up and getting ready to go to school physically, we now have to wake up each morning and be ready to take our online classes. It was a struggle for us because we had no idea how to use the online platform for online classes and how to complete the assignments that we were assigned. But after weeks of doing online learning, we are now familiar with the technology and the online platform.

Now that we are in May, the city is slowly opening, but it is not secure yet to go outside. The months of March, April, and the beginning of May have been a rough patch for everyone. My family was affected by the pandemic due to the fact that my parents lost their jobs, and we had some family losses. Thankfully, my parents and siblings are safe and healthy, and we're still alive.

I wasn't expecting my senior year to end like this, but I feel like the most important part in my senior

year is being a senior. Being on track to graduate and moving on to the next academic level is what matters the most. It is tough that I am not going to be able to enjoy a live graduation, and spend time with my friends and classmates, but I believe that we are going to come out stronger and prepared from this pandemic. Overall, this was the experience of my senior year.

Adrian Garcia Perez

For the last nearly 2 months, my family and I have been quarantined in my house. At times I visit my grandparents house (who live about a 5 minute walk from me) to check on them and hangout with my cousin and my little niece. But, on a normal day at home, My daily routine is simple, but exhausting since I can't spend the whole day doing anything, except on most mornings and early afternoons. At least, I feel more boosted in the mornings and early afternoons because I technically "go to school" which is in my living room for a few hours online. After that, I do some homework to help continue to be active at home and do some chores to boost my energy for the day. If I have nothing else to do, I head to my bedroom and just hang out there normally until dinner. Throughout most of the evenings, it is a bit exhausting, but I got used to it after a few weeks. At times, my family does worry about how much food is running out and when is a good time to go shopping again.

To keep myself entertained, I usually spend time on my phone/laptop or even watch TV. The only time I watch some television is when there are updates related to the Coronavirus or when there are movies that I do like to watch that I would prefer watching again. Some of the movies I like to watch are *Harry Potter*, *Hangover*, *Fast and Furious*, and a couple of random Scary Movies. I even watched the new *Sonic the Hedgehog* movie which I enjoyed. Some evenings, I do like to watch prime time TV shows such as the *Masked Singer*, *Survivor*, and some wrestling as well. If I feel that I need to talk to my friends about how they're doing, I use social

media to meaningfully connect. That's the best way to connect with somebody outside of your house, in my opinion. Something that I really wanted to do is to head outside and play around, to try to add some energy into me and feel what fresh air feels like. You can't spend all the time inside, at least head outside and walk around your neighborhood to spend some time and enjoy yourself.

Normally when I'm in the mood I spend time outside. However, to feel more safe I usually circle around my neighborhood or walk around near my local park that isn't too far from where I live. I usually go outside at most 3 times a week, once for essential purposes such as food and medicine for my family. When I feel joyous and I'm not too busy with anything, then I would walk around outside on a non-precipitated day. I'll also go out if the temperature outside is not at a point where I personally cannot handle. In my opinion, this can be the best way to add some amusement with yourself, don't feel let down because you're stuck inside, you still have your family to bond with, you are free to go safely outside, and you have social media to make contact with the friends you miss. You may be stuck, but you can't be in a state of bust. I'll end off with this quote: "*The purpose of our lives is to be happy.*" — ***Dalai Lama***. This in my opinion, is the only way we can survive with almost anything that is going on around us.

Tahmidul Haque

“The purpose of our lives is to be happy.”
— Dalai Lama

Errin's Daily Routine

- Wake up at 8:30am
- Clean myself up
- Call my Best Friend and Ryan to wake them up
- Get in my special spot for school remote learning
- Go through the classes and minimize homework
- Complete all homework from school
- Read comics (tons)
- Facetime my friends
- Watch tons of YouTube videos
- Eat, eat, EAT!
- More comics
- Sleep at like 1:00-3:30 AM

Usually, it's hard to get up in the morning especially with all the given circumstances right now. It's hard to not want to just camp out in my room for the rest of the day. It's essential that you don't give in to the immediate urge to sleep in and stay up late. You should set your alarm for your usual time and stick with your morning routine. This is important because it's keeping everything the same so when we can leave quarantine, we can return to work on a good note. In addition, quarantine has separated us a lot. People aren't able to talk like normal so we result to using social media often and being even more glued to our phones. We have to be careful and be sure to use social media wisely. No doubt, social media is your friend when isolated. But resist scrolling endlessly. The result of scrolling through social media can affect your mind or make you feel left out and more isolated than before. It's hard living in these conditions, trying to keep sane, and get things done. Home doesn't feel like home anymore it sounds and feels more like work. My goals are to workout more, try to eat less when I'm hungry, and lessen the time for social media.

Errin Mickels

As the COVID-19 Pandemic takes its toll on the lives of many people around the world, many students have been stuck at home trying to transition to their new lives in quarantine. Practicing social distancing has become very difficult especially for New Yorkers as we are so

used to waking up early and hustling our way through crowds to get to school. We now are expected to change our daily routines and stick to staying at home and learning remotely.

Since the social distancing order placed upon us by the government I have changed my daily routine. I have recently taken up napping which has helped pass the time quicker. I wake up early around 7:30 to try and get a head start on the work that I have to do before the classes on zoom begin, so I am finished with all my assignments by noon. I then eat a quick lunch, watch some TV and fall asleep basically until I wake up. Usually these days I wake up around 2 or 3 o'clock. I usually then spend the rest of the afternoon watching more tv, playing video games or talking on the phone with friends.

Dorsen Sween

I found out March 15th that school will be closed for a month at least due to this Coronavirus. From March 16th to the minimum of April 20th. My life is ruined. This virus has changed my daily routine and affected millions of lives. According to the New York Times, "The closures will alter the lives and routines of 1.1 million children and 75,000 teachers and well over 1 million parents." Meaning this virus has affected millions of people already just by closing school. It's affecting parents, children, and jobs.

My life is ruined. I feel and wish this never happened to me. This article has a connection in my life because everything that is mentioned I am dealing with (these challenges) on a daily basis. The New York Times goes on to also say that , "By March 23, the city will move to remote learning." This is showing the next steps the city is doing as a whole to ensure the safety of the different communities. Due to Covid-19 taking over so aggressively and ruining everything we now have to stay inside, this is really testing my patience with my family. I have never spent this much time with my family like this ever, we each have our own individual life we had. It was more

like “Hey Mom”, “Hey Dad”, and go about our business. Now we actually wake up, see each other, eat food, see each other, watch tv, see each other, and go to sleep seeing each other. I was literally waiting for the day for me to walk across the graduation stage wearing my cap and gown. I was definitely looking forward to prom in my dress looking gorgeous. I also, just recently started my driving lessons with my school and now that’s over.

Chandler’s Daily Routine

- Wake up at 6:45
- Shower
- Get dressed
- Make up (sometimes)
- Tv show
- Make my smoothie/ Breakfast
- Virtual School
- Chill
- Eat
- Night routine
- Repeat

My daily routine has made me less depressed in a sense. Even though I am confined in the house until further notice due to this Coronavirus I still get dressed and do my daily routine to maintain my sanity. If I stayed home all day in my pajamas and lounged around the house I would continually stay depressed. By continuing to develop my daily routine, I am becoming less depressed.

- I have been binge watching several TV shows like *All American* and a lot of different movies everyday on Netflix.
- I have completed all my assignments for my virtual learning, and I stay on top of everything.
- My goals are to be successful at Temple University and commit everything to that school. Another goal for myself is to stay active, and develop healthy ways to cope with being quarantined.

Chandler McLaurin

To myself in 10 years:

Hello, I hope you find yourself well when you happen to read this, and take a moment to prepare to reminisce on your teenage years. Remember how much you suffered, the anguish you had to endure throughout your transition to adulthood. I’m in that fire right now, and I’m trying to work on myself more, trying to give you a better future, filled with more happiness and less regrets. What I’m doing right now may not be much, as it is just the beginning, but I know it will shape you into a more honest, successful person. If you ever feel down, or just want to crawl into a small hole and give up, remember how hard your family worked for you, what they had to endure living with you. You are still at the beginning of your life, live stress free, give it your all, contribute to the world as you have always wanted to since you were my age, don’t forget the value of family, and make your faith stronger everyday. There is so much yet to be discovered in this cruel, yet beautiful thing called life, and I just advise you to stop worrying, as all the worrying I am doing will be useless, and you should enjoy life for as long as you can. It gets hard, but remember to chill and vibe.

Francisco Sandoval

“I always like to look on the *optimistic* side of life, but I am **realistic** enough to know that life is a *complex* matter.”

– Walt Disney

Ashley Mena is the Production Director of The Column. In the fall, Ashley will be attending Queens College with an undeclared major.



Q & A WITH E & A

Written by: Errin Mickels & Ariana Lowery

Question 1: When you were first approached with the idea of starting your own section in the newspaper how did you feel? Now looking back, do you feel as if your emotions to the section have evolved?

E: I was first approached with the idea of starting my own section in the newspaper with me and my friend Ariana at a meeting with one of the teachers Mr. Koestner and his Co-Founder of the paper Antonio Perez. They came because they were trying to get more recruits for the paper so they called on us. At first I thought it was going to be a joke because I've seen many try to start clubs and then they eventually stop but as the months went on and we kept doing our things in the clubs and giving advice the more I got into it. Looking back on I do feel that my emotions evolved. As I was giving out advice I mixed my personal opinions and rational thinking into it as well. Now I do the same thing but with my own personal situations and it gives me great change.

A: When I was first approached with the idea of starting my own section in the newspaper (with my trusty partner Errin, of course), I was ecstatic to be a part of this new project. It was a place for the students to cultivate ideas, produce what they want, and get feedback from teachers and students. The whole idea of a student driven newspaper is something that I have never gotten to experience before, but now, having to undergo the process of it all, I am glad that I have taken this opportunity. When I see what *The Column* was when it was first published to now, the last

edition I will be a part of, there is an obvious growth. Being included in the birth and evolution of a project like this has been a sensational experience that will leave a legacy in WHSAD in the years to come.

Question 2: What was your initial goal with the section? In the end do you feel as if you've fully realized that goal two years later?

E: The initial goal of the section was to get questions from any student in any grade and split them up amongst us so that we could help them. We got questions from all the grades but we tried to focus on the Freshmen, because they were new and needed guidance to make their high school experience easier. As we kept getting questions, we kept helping them more and more. And so we went into more personal issues like handling stress and etc., and Ariana and I - in my opinion - did a great job with handling such topics to help out our entire student cohort. In the end, after two years, I truly believe that I did reach that goal with her and the rest of the team. We kept each other motivated to get those questions done and near or around the deadline.

A: My initial goal with the Q&A with E&A section was to have an advice column where students give advice to other students. Being a student in a new environment that you have no knowledge of can be a nerve wracking experience. I knew how I felt being a lost underclassmen, but with this section in the newspaper, I could help alleviate that feeling for

others who were in the same position I was in not too long ago. Students would be able to ask me questions about being in WHSAD and advice on a topic of their choice, and using my knowledge of going through the excruciating, yet rewarding, process from freshman to senior, I could answer their questions. It has been two years since we've started this section in The Column, and looking back on it now, I do feel that I've fully realized my goal. Through my words, I was able to use this platform to guide other students and pass down what I learned in the past four years of being a WHSAD student to the next generation.

Question 3: Was there ever a point during the development of Q & A with E & A where you felt that you've hit a creative barrier in terms of accomplishing your goal? If so, how was it that you were able to overcome that?

E: There were tons of creative barriers during the Q&A with E&A! We had a hard time trying to ask questions out of some of the students because some couldn't simply think of them, or they were too shy to tell us, or they went back to us late and we already had the questions. Regardless it didn't stop us when it came to delivering advice. Some ways that we were able to accomplish our goal was by asking friends who we knew could answer quickly for questions. We had Mr. Koestner have his students write anonymous questions so that we could pick at random, and we were just patient with the students.

A: There was a point where I felt as if there was no more to say. At this point in time, it felt like I talked about all there was to discuss and that every topic seemed to piggyback off the last edition's answers. My goal was to give as many answers as possible in the limited number of editions of newspaper given, but only being given questions that seemed to be already answered left me in a spot of desperation. I soon realized that the reason it felt like all the questions had been answered is because I wasn't asking the right questions. I needed to stop generalizing my responses and look for students who had

questions that could only be answered by a student. This way I could give an answer not only tailored to the student, but an answer that is in a student's perspective because a student knows student life best.

Question 4: When you heard the news about school being over, what was going through your head? Compared to now, where would you say your mindset is at? Furthermore what words of advice do you have for those struggling to make it through?

E: So when I first heard about the virus spreading I immediately wanted the schools to be closed for the safety of everyone so that it could definitely flatten the curve. Once I heard that schools were closed till the date April 20th and or May 15th I got excited because that meant less people, less lives were put in danger. Now that I know and have heard that schools are canceled for the year I grew sad but I wasn't disappointed. I knew how society was going to act when being told to quarantine. I knew many would go against and hurt themselves and others, because that's just how society now is. The one thing that went through my head was that I won't get the good memories I've been told about, with the groups of loved ones and friends that I have. That we won't all take pictures at prom, the senior trip, and graduation with our families. That we won't have some type of get-together with everyone who makes us smile. Lastly. Some people couldn't even have good moments with the people they wanted to on that last Friday. My mindset is still thinking about getting something similar to that once this is pandemic is completely over. I'm focused on my own and the mental health of everyone I know, love, and care for. Reconnecting with people I didn't before and finding cool things to do at home and making others laugh. Just keeping good vibes within myself and everyone else as well. Some advice for ANYONE who's struggling through these ridiculous times, you can talk to me or anyone that you feel comfortable with about these issues. I'm certain that there is someone who would want to listen to

your pain and try to help you and console you. Know that you AREN'T ALONE.

A: When I first got word of the news that school was over in the middle of March, the first thing that went through my head was immediate heartache. It was my senior year, and being told that I would miss all of the events that make it memorable was devastating. It was as if the finish line was so close, but instead of it being pushed back, it was just nonexistent because the biggest milestone that I have been working towards since I started kindergarten was now gone. Compared to now, my mindset was in a very delicate spot. The thought of my senior year being cancelled on top of not being able to see my friends put me in a very vulnerable headspace. Since then, I have gotten much, much, much better in terms of my mental health and how I handle being stuck in my house 24/7. Words of advice I would give to those struggling to make it through is to distract yourself. Thinking about the sad situation were in and dwelling on what you lost is not going to change what has happened. Finding healthy distractions (such as hobbies or making small goals for yourself) can improve your outlook on the current situation we are in. Although we won't get senior year, we will have other milestones in the future, and focusing on those rather than the ones we missed out on can prove to be truly rewarding in the end.

Question 5: What is one essential piece of advice you would give to all WHSAD students? Why?

E: Some advice that I would recommend to everyone is that you shouldn't pretend to think everything is normal because it isn't, and that's okay! Bad things like this will not last long and we will all come back stronger than before. I know school is hard, PLEASE BELIEVE ME! But everything is going to be hard, it just depends on how you plan to handle it. The year is coming to an end very soon. Guys you are going to move up a grade and everything is going to change again. Get used to change because it's inevitable.

I say this because of experiences. Everything in life changes and most of the time you can't change it. Once you realize that you'll understand what I mean. You'll also get what I mean when you meet these changes and you find your own personal way to figure it out. Everything changes in life, and you can be in charge of those changes.

A: One essential piece of advice I would give to all WHSAD students is to savor all of the high school moments. Even if the rest of my senior year was going to be miserable, I would give anything to go back to high school and be with my friends and teachers who have made my years at WHSAD some of the best of my life. In freshman year orientation, I remember the teachers saying that high school finishes in the blink of an eye, and I never believed them until now. Even through the hours I spent preparing for the SATs, stressing about interim week and stressing about my grades, I only remember the good times. I remember the moments we spent in class joking around with my teachers and friends, the times where we ordered Chinese food and laughed after school for hours until we were kicked out of the building, the times where doing work was fun because I was surrounded by people who make bad times better. High school does fly by. For some that's a relief, but this is the last time of our lives where we get to be a kid. Adulthood is just around the corner, so savor childhood and our teenage years for as long as you can.

Question 6: How does it feel that your journey at WHSAD over the past years is finally over?

E: The journey feels sad. I know my friends are going to spread apart and I'm going to miss them so much, but I'm glad I got those great memories with them. I'm proud to say that I graduated, as a scholar, honor student, persevering through a pandemic. I'm glad that I got front row seats to see all my hard work for 4 years pay off! Being a student from WHSAD contributes to who I am and who I want to be in the future. The teachers, staff, students all added into helping me become

me. As a freshman, I came through the school doors and befriended someone who wasn't even from the same school. She definitely helped calm me down but she helped me realize that people are there to help you or help you realize things in life even if they don't stay there long. I extrovertly made five friends on my first day and came home happy. As that crazy year went by I had realized I had friends in all the grades. Then sophomore year came. I had friends but then my group grew larger with me still keeping those special ones close by. I went on tons of business trips with Mr. Codio, networked with many, and shared great moments with friends. Junior year came. My upperclassmen friends were working towards graduation. I was stressing out with colleges and working in classes, trying to ensure I stay on the honor roll, pass these AP courses, and as well as get my Advanced Regents Diploma. It was incredibly tough but I had friendships, a relationship, family, sports team family, to all keep me sane. Junior year was most definitely a year to remember. The College trip was super fun and I was so happy I got to enjoy every single inch of it. It was completely worth the hardships. As a Senior now, in my last year, I continued to make more memories, network more, get jobs and make more friendships, reconnect old ones, and understand life more. Being a student at WHSAD is worth all the drama because you do meet great people. All who are diverse beyond their facades. It's amazing to say that I'm a student from WHSAD. I'm sad to say my goodbyes but I know that many will remember me, and stay in touch with me, and know that I'm always going to be there for them to make more priceless memories.

A: My time at WHSAD has definitely been an experience that has taught me more than I think even I realize. Looking back to freshman year me to (almost) college freshman year me, I am most definitely grateful for how much this school has changed me. I remember at the beginning of high school, I was very distant and put all of my energy into my schoolwork. My main priority was class because everyone painted this narrative that high school is supposed to be completely serious

where your only priority should be grades, and if it isn't, you won't get into college, you won't get a job, and you will live with your parents for eternity. Having this mindset for the first year of high school taught me how to manage my time, push myself, and be a successful student, however, I did not feel like a successful person. My grades were amazing but I was not happy with who I was. It was later in the year where I started to join more clubs and meet more people. This helped me reach out and soon become friends with my peers.

These were the people that taught me that, yes, school is important, but being happy while doing it is just as much of a priority. As unscholarly as that sounds, making the place that I go to for 8 hours or more a day enjoyable and gratifying rather than a place of misery and depression has been such an important step to getting to where I am today, and this is thanks to the many people, teachers and students alike, who I have grown closer to over the years. With these lessons and experiences, I have been able to do so much gratifying work and have so many eye-opening experiences that have made me who I am today. I have been able to speak with senators at City Hall, work with women-led entrepreneurial firms, meet the mayor of New York City, teach middle school students about architecture, see Broadway shows, visit world wonders and immerse myself in the New York City culture. These people have led me down a path that has shown me what a diverse city I live in and how the differences between the millions of people that live here make this city the best place on earth, and I would not give anything up for it.

Little did I know that this was coming to an unexpected stop. Due to the hit of COVID-19, my senior year was cut short and all New York City schools were forced to close. I had to give up my final year of high school, where we celebrate the ending of this chapter of our lives with celebrations, traditions, and surrounding ourselves with the people we have grown to love. We were a week away from our senior trip when they

announced that school was closed. It started off with closing for two weeks. This soon turned into two months, and later, closed indefinitely. We all knew that when the first state cancelled the rest of the school year, it wasn't far until New York City schools did the same; and still, the announcement of the year being over took a toll on everyone. Everyone experienced the news differently. Some students were happy that there was no more class and would prefer online classes. Others, like myself, hated the idea of class being over a screen because it's not the same.

The thing that makes class worth going to is the people. When you walk into a classroom, you see the people you've been beside for years. You're all on the same playing field and are in the classroom to learn as a collective group. You crack jokes with the teacher, you voice and listen to each other's thoughts and opinions, you make awkward eye contact when no one in the room knows the answer- that's what makes class worth going to. It's what we have been doing since kindergarten, and abruptly stopping and transitioning into online learning was a joke. For the first two weeks of online classes, we didn't have assignments, so it was mostly learning about a topic for twenty-five minutes and moving on to your next class. When the teachers started assigning work, it soon became so difficult to keep up. I would put off work for the next day because there was no face to face confrontation with a teacher telling me to do work; there were emails and phone calls which didn't really scare me enough to actually complete my assignments. This made me push off work to the next day and the next day until the next day was the final day of the marking period and all assignments were due. This was the first time I experienced not liking school since Freshmen year. I have had my moments in high school where I would rather not go for a day or two, but what was happening in this moment wasn't learning. It was teachers telling us to use what we learned from September to March to complete assignments that had no real meaning. School wasn't about learning anymore, it was about pressing the "Turn In"

button on Google Classroom on time. The way I viewed the world and my current situation at the time was very pessimistic. I came to the conclusion that there was no point to anything if it could so easily be taken away at any moment. Prom was gone. Graduation was gone. My friends were gone. I was on lockdown and shut out of everything that I had hopes and dreams for. I didn't see a point in trying anymore because it didn't matter. There was no upside to this situation. After about two months of this mindset, I got tired. I got tired of waiting to feel motivated enough to do something. Being trapped in the four walls of my house forced me to find other outlets to my desolation. I started to work on redecorating projects for my room, I started painting again, I learned new instruments, I learned new ways to make myself happy and look for what I was missing: the feeling of completing something. The action of putting effort into something meaningful and being rewarded by seeing how much progress you made and how much effort was put into it was fulfilling. This is the reason the cancellation of graduation hit me the hardest. The effort that was put into it for the last 17 years meant nothing without being able to be in a cap and gown, walk across an auditorium stage to your diploma, moving the tassel from left to right, and throwing your hat in the air as the principal states "Congratulations to the Class of 2020". After months of pondering it, I came to the realization that this isn't true. The lack of celebration can never take away the effort I have put into getting my high school diploma and completing the last four years through many trials and tribulations. I am proud of myself to have gotten as far as I did and thankful to all of the people who have gotten me there.

Although I will not have a ceremony with balloons and confetti, I will have the countless memories of being in high school. I will always remember ordering food with my friends and sitting at the conference table joking around with everyone in the classroom. I will always remember coming into school on my days off, miserable to work, only to be greeted by my

friends who would make my day astronomically better. I will always remember going to teachers' rooms and talking to them about absolutely everything. I will always remember staying in Codio's room until the building closed, listening to music and laughing until our stomachs ached. I will always remember the times we had and the people who have put in the time and dedication into helping me cross the finish line to college.

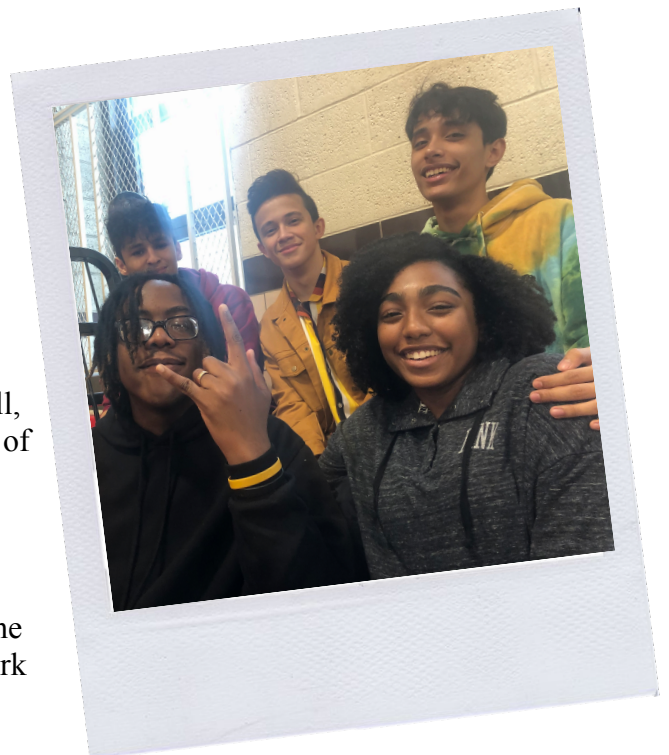
Thank you WHSAD for the lessons you have taught me and making me a proud graduate in the Class of 2020.



Ariana Lowery is the Editorial Assistant for The Column. In the fall, Ariana will be attending University of Buffalo with an intended major in Architecture.



Errin Mickels is the Senior Media Correspondent of The Column. In the fall, Errin will be attending New York Institute of Technology with an intended major in Interior Design.



FAREWELL

WHSAD staff bids farewell to the Class of 2020

Written by: Daisy Sucuzhañay

Dear Seniors,
I am saddened by the fact that the year had to end this way for you all. I could not imagine how it must feel missing my senior prom, trip, or graduation. I will empathize with you all forever. Despite this, I, personally, could not be more thankful for this academic year. Some of you are aware that this is my first official year as a teacher. My rookie season. You were my first students EVER. I will never forget you, the WHSAD class of 2020. You will always have a special place in my heart and I cannot thank you enough for showing me that I chose the right career. With that, I am looking forward to seeing the impact that the WHSAD Class of 2020 will have on the rest of the world.

**With love,
Mr. Giambrone**

Dear Seniors,
Congratulations! I am so proud of each and every one of you for all of your accomplishments during your time at WHSAD. I have seen you all grow into mature young women and men over the past 4 years and have learned as much from you as I hope you learned from me. There is no pandemic strong enough that can take away from your current and future successes. You all have faced an immense challenge these past few months and have shown such maturity and strength through it all. While we can't celebrate in the traditional ways, please know that all of us at WHSAD are excited to see what the future has in store for you. You are all capable of doing such good in this world, and we are lucky to have you as our future leaders. My advice to you is just like

what Christopher Robin gave to Winnie the Pooh, "Promise me you'll always remember: you're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

**Love,
Ms. Weinstein**

Dear Seniors
I'd like to thank everyone from the Class of 2020 for choosing to come to WHSAD. It has been a pleasure to serve you as your Principal for the last four years. You impressed us with how you reacted to the loss of your senior activities due to Covid-19. You faced this setback with aplomb. You could have complained and acted like victims. Instead, you kept attending classes, carrying on with after school projects and making the best of it through online celebrations of your four years together. You should be proud of yourselves for that. You are a model cohort of students. You will be missed when we return in September. We look forward to your visits in years to come. Goodbye – for now.

- Mr. Cornell

Dear Seniors,
I miss you! My heart breaks when I think about how abruptly our time together ended and how you have lost out on so many important traditions. Graduating high school is a significant milestone and you all should be so very proud of yourselves and all that you have accomplished during your four years at WHSAD. I am very proud of all of you and how well you have persevered through this historic time. You, all of us at WHSAD, and

the rest of the world will always remember the Class of 2020. College life just came a little earlier than expected. But now I have no doubt that you are ready to take on your next adventure. I know you will all come out of this more powerful and determined as ever. You all have the vision, insight and fortitude to shine. Celebrate yourselves (insert round of applause here). Congratulations Class of 2020!

**Love,
Ms. Terraferma**

To the Class of 2020,
You've been one of my favorite classes. I've enjoyed learning and growing with you in the past four years. I wish you all luck in your next chapter(s).

**Mr. Mark
Speech Teacher**

Dear Seniors,
Congratulations on all that you have accomplished during your time as WHSAD students. It has been an honor for the Creative Connections team and I to work with you all over the past three years.

Despite the challenges and setbacks this year has brought, I hope you all continue to relentlessly pursue your personal aspirations. After graduation, each of you will embark on your own unique path that can lead to self-fulfillment and having a meaningful impact on your communities.

You are a class that is full of personality, talent, and ambition, and you will certainly be missed."

- Mr. A

Dear Class of 2020,
As you leave WHSAD know that you have left a permanent mark on our school. Each of you has contributed to our school's story. Wherever you

end up always know that you will forever have a place at WHSAD. Congratulations on all you have accomplished and all that you will accomplish. Stay strong and keep up the great work.

**Giovanni D'Amato
Assistant Principal**

Dear Class of 2020,
It seems that the word "congratulations" does not suffice for the amount of your work, dedication, and perseverance you have shown over the course of this year, especially in our current time. Like the other teachers and staff members, I was excited for you all to walk across the stage in June. I am deeply saddened that we will not have that specific moment that I had in my mind. Life, however, is full of twists and turns, and in some ways, it is better to learn that now.

Even though many of you have had moments of frustration at me and or at the work for my class, I hope you know it was meant to help prepare you for your next journey. I hope that all of you feel more comfortable reading complex texts and writing literary analysis essays, but at the very least, I hope all of you have an appreciation for hearing and reading stories. Stories are passed down from generation to generation to teach us about humanity. If nothing else, I hope you enjoyed just one story from my class. I hope that it made you more human.

It has truly been an honor to teach you this school year. I loved seeing your faces when you volunteered for the first time in class, or when you finally wrote a complex thesis. I loved when you, after a few essays, turned in the essay on time. My favorite thing, though, is when you made jokes and allusions to the literature we read.

Lastly, here is my parting advice. You are given so much freedom in college, so try to remain true to who you are while still figuring out who you are. Don't be afraid to change course, but know

when to stay on track. Be merciful to yourself as you figure out the world, and when you figure it out, email me all the answers and secrets.

**Love,
Mrs. Fields**

Dear Seniors,
With such limited space, it's impossible to express my gratitude and feelings for the graduating class of 2020. You have brought me such joy through your diverse personalities, idiosyncrasies, and passions. The time spent in sophomore year was special, but my most complete memories of you all have been seeing you grow in junior and senior years. As you responded to the needs of your peers with tremendous fellowship and solidarity and how so many of you carved unique paths based on your visions for your futures enlivens me as to what comes next. In our tete-a-tetes, you proved yourselves witty and intellectual adversaries, and I will treasure the afternoon visits when you provided me with perspective that has made me both a stronger professional and a better person. As I write this, I think of anecdotes for each of you, but in the interest of brevity (and Antonio's sanity), I'll hold these to my heart and add them to the storehouse of memory. I love you all.

- Koestner

Dear WHSAD Class of 2020,
As we get nearer to the day that should have been your graduation, I know the pain that you have experienced during this uncertain and unprecedented time will likely grow more sharp before it feels better.

I hope you are able to find a small comfort in the knowledge that your WHSAD family shares some of this pain with you. Just as you wanted to walk across that graduation stage, we (your teachers, parents, and classmates) so badly wanted to see you walk across it.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have taught so many of you—you have brightened my days with your creativity, humor, passion, and compassion. As a small token of my gratitude, I wanted to share some of the lessons I have found most useful (so far) regarding a life well lived:

1. Take chances and chase opportunities. If it scares you, you're probably headed in the right direction.
2. Be kind, and pull others up around you. The world is a much more enjoyable place when we can share our joy, our success, and our adventures with others.
3. There will come a time to travel again. And when that time comes, make the most of it. See your city, your country, your planet. We are lucky to live in an age where distances don't feel as far as they once did—take advantage of this.
4. Figure out what makes you happy, and pursue the life that you want to live. This will require hard work, and you will likely fail several times along the way. But when you eventually succeed, it will be worth it.
5. Make friends with people who are different from you—in interests, upbringing, culture, gender, age, or geographic origins. This is the single best way to grow your heart and your mind.
6. Forgive others, forgive yourself. Life is too short to hold onto the negative energy created by resentment or regret.
7. Make your voice heard, but don't forget to listen. The wisest people know how much they still have yet to learn. That being said, don't let uncertainty prevent you from standing up for what you believe in. (If you can vote, vote!)
8. Read, read, read. Read often, read anything—books, articles, recipes, music reviews. It is the cheapest way to travel across places, time periods,

or alternate universes. And the more you read, the better you'll understand how to effectively express your own thoughts and ideas.

9. Remember the experiences, places, and people that have played a role in making you the person you are today. Use your unique life story to expand the collective knowledge of the world, and think about how your actions and decisions will impact those you love, as well as those you will never meet.

10. Strive for meaning, not perfection. There is no way to live a life free of mistakes, heartbreak, or tragedy. But nurturing connections with others, pursuing your passion, or working toward a larger goal can help sustain you even through the most trying of times. The world is yours and it is waiting for you.

**All my best,
Ms. Connors**



Daisy Sucuzhañay is the Associate Editor of The Column. In the fall, Daisy will be attending York College with an intended major in Biology

Q: Describe your time at WHSAD in ten words or fewer.

A: Strangers have become family, and hobbies have become a career.

Q: What was the moment that you wanted to start The Column?

A: The moment I clearly remember wanting to start The Column, was a culmination of instances. I remember that I personally wanted to expand my horizons in terms of exploring my writing at WHSAD. It was around 2017, and I had originally been recruited by Mr. Koestner to write articles for whsad.org. I started off writing articles about trips I would go on, and as I wrote more a realization occurred; I had a genuine interest in journalism. Going on trips, and meeting new people was exciting to me, as well as learning

was extremely receptive to my ideas, it was unbelievable. I was surprised that there was such a strong student body interest in wanting to have a newspaper. Don't get me wrong, I love WHSAD, but it is rare to find an idea that a majority of students are not only receptive towards but supportive of. It was at this moment that I became more serious about this proposal, I really wanted this for each and every student. I was lucky enough to not only have support from the student body but also from staff, teachers, and administrators. It was a very surreal experience, and I'll never forget the time I brought my idea to Mr. Cornell. He loved the idea, and showed extreme interest in having this become a reality. While my original plan for The Column seemed straightforward enough yet ambitious, my conversation with Mr. Cornell very quickly

The Column

The Final Issue by Editor-in-Chief Antonio Perez

Interview by: Christopher Koestner on Antonio Perez

about different environments and people. As I continued to post on whsad.org, I wanted to do more, not just for myself but for the community. While I loved the digital work I was creating at WHSAD, however I felt that WHSAD needed an outlet that felt more grounded and personal. A majority of the articles featured online were amazing but the content felt like it was for another demographic. This is what kickstarted the earliest conception of a student run newspaper. A newspaper that would feature art and articles written by students for students.

This was an ambitious goal at the moment, and looking back I'm shocked that The Column took off the way it did. Before I went public with my idea I wanted to be sure to touch base with my peers to get feedback. To my surprise, everyone

changed everything. I saw the potential of The Column, I saw beyond the surface level of what it could become, and realized what it was that I had on my hands. The potential to start a discussion, to create a movement, the international implications that The Column could have knew no bounds.

Q: How has the process of creating The Column changed over time?

A: The process of creating The Column has changed drastically. Even to this day the way we operate is ever changing. Starting off with the first proposal, I had no idea what I was doing or getting myself into. The first proposal was very rough around the edges (literally), once I started developing ideas of what an issue of The Column would look like I began drawing. I'll never forget

what the first draft looked like. I took a stack of copy papers from Mr. Codio's old classroom and began sketching different variations. Bi-folds, Tri-folds, everything. The draft I ended up with looked very similar to what a regular issue of The Column looks like; a four page bi-fold with one column per page, roughly 3-5 articles, and art on the last page. With this initial draft I began to promote the idea of a student led newspaper to staff and students alike.

Once I gained enough traction, and I got more serious about the project, I wanted to create a final draft to present to administrators. This issue was created on Microsoft PowerPoint using pre-existing articles and art from whsad.org. It stayed true to what the original draft was proposing yet had a much more refined and polished appearance. This final draft also recognized the potential limitations of the newspaper in terms of budgeting and supplies. However keeping that into consideration definitely didn't limit my ideas, it did help me create a more digestible and understandable product for my audience. Once I presented the definitive final draft to Mr. Cornell, the conversation about the actual development of the newspaper began. To create

the newspaper we would use Microsoft Publisher, then send the file to a printing company to be mass printed. The constraints of the newspaper were clear: 4 pages, Black & White, and 11"x14" paper size. We would have 5 issues per school year, the last issue being solely reserved for the Senior Edition. Unfortunately due to COVID-19, development on the 4th and 5th issues of The Column had to be shifted online to whsad.org. While the 4th issue was more spread out and less structured, the 5th issue (the one you're reading now) is the most ambitious version of The Column thus far. It is our biggest issue ever, and has our widest catalog of creators, and contributors featured. Writing this I am excited to see the outcome of my final issue as Editor-in-Chief, a project that I along with my team have devoted hours upon hours of thought, and dedication to.

Since 2017 the team at The Column has grown exponentially. That is the biggest reason why the process of creating The Column has changed so drastically: the team. If it were not for my team of content creators, artists, writers, none of this would have been possible. The only reason why the Senior Edition is as big as it is is because of

the team, and the passion that each member has had for this project over the years. Every year I've had the pleasure of watching the team go from just me, to a team of over 10 loving and dedicated students. As we've recruited more students the way The Column looks and operates has shifted completely, our techniques and stylistic choices have advanced completely. I've always been proud of each and every issue that has been published but seeing the minor changes and upgrades going from issue to issue has made me immensely proud and reminded me of why I started doing this in the first place.

Q: What have you learned from your writing experiences and working on stories and editing the newspaper that you will carry into your future endeavors?

A: I've learned so much in just the few years I've been working on The Column. The entire experience has been extremely enriching in every way possible. Not only have my writing skills improved drastically, but so have my communication skills. Looking back at my earlier work not only on older issues but also on whsad.org, I can instantly recognize the improvements in all aspects of my writing. Of course, my writing isn't perfect, and it never will be, but it definitely goes without saying that the more I wrote, the better my writing has gotten. While an improvement in writing and communication skills is almost a given when it comes to working on a newspaper, I also improved in various other areas.

Being on The Column taught me how to be a leader, and how to work with all of the duties that came with that. Prior to my experience on The Column I had little to no experience with leadership. Being a leader and having to delegate work to my team of editors was an issue that I struggled with for a long time. The Column for so long was and still is something that I am immensely passionate about. This is part of what made it so hard for me to initially get other students involved. Not that I didn't want students

working on the newspaper, I did. It was personally complicated for me to hand off something that felt so personal to me to other people. Regardless of what my editors were working on, I always felt that I should be the person to work on that article or to do that interview. This led to me biting off way more than I could chew. Over time I began to realize the error in my ways and see that what I needed to be doing was delegating work to the team. If I continued to take every opportunity for myself and not give anyone else the chance, I was not only hurting myself but my team of amazing editors. Working on The Column I learned what it truly means to be a leader and how to properly handle the responsibilities of a leader. Moving forward from The Column, and going into college and even further into my professional life, I will take everything I've learned with me, every experience, every lesson, every story.

Q: Describe the challenges of putting an issue together and what you have done to navigate those challenges.

A: When putting an issue together it is always an interesting experience, to say the least. One thing I always loved about working on The Column was that you never knew what to expect. Every issue would always bring something new, that we've never done before. So, we were definitely learning with every issue we created. However, that may sound like a positive impact of the spontaneity of The Column. There are several challenges that come into question when creating an issue. For starters, deadlines. Deadlines have always been one of The Column's biggest weaknesses. You would assume that because of our fairly small team, that we would be able to have all of our work done at a reasonable pace or at least have control over ensuring that everything is completed on time. Well, it was quite the opposite. The root of the issue with deadlines lied within the lack of a strong structure within The Column. For a while the team at The Column fluctuated **a lot**. While it was great to always have new people interacting and collabor-

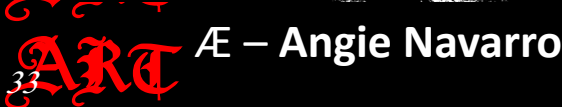
-ating on an issue, this is where the deadline issue finds its roots. Most of the new editors we had working on an issue would be aware of a deadline but see it as less of a finalized due date and more of a suggestion. With time, this issue was remedied. It definitely was not a fix that happened over night, but as we recruited a more permanent team and had a more stabilized structure of operations, deadlines were always met.

Q: If you had the chance to sit down and have dinner with three people, who would they be and why?

A: If I had the chance to sit down and have dinner with three people they would be: Ariana Lowery, Angie Navarro, and Jonah Vazquez. If you read that and don't know who those people are, they're my best friends but honestly they're more like family to me at this point. I know this may seem like a fairly silly answer for a question that has a lot of potential. However, when I think of people who have impacted my life and shaped the person I am today, they are one of the first groups of people that come to mind. No matter what each and every one of them has been there for me every day. No matter the circumstances or situation. When thinking about The Column, their direct involvement with me and the newspaper, is one of the reasons why it has been so successful and is the way it is today. I'll never forget the times when I would be working on the final draft of an issue for the newspaper, they would always be there for me, literally. There would be days where I'd be working from 2:40 to almost 6:00 PM, just trying to finish this issue, and they'd always be there. They'd be there to help me, keep me company, listen to Spotify with me, and make sure that I don't lose my mind. As a result of COVID-19, it wasn't only school that ended prematurely but so did my last year of school with these amazing people. That is why I would choose to have dinner with the three of them, not only because of their impact on me and The Column but also because I haven't seen them in months. I would want to have a night that felt like

any of our days pre-COVID where we would leave school once the sun set and go eat at Blue Collar or Starbucks, and talk for hours on end.







Shaun – Shaun Cromwell



Battleship Flying Over City – Brian Baculima 34

The Column

Editor-in-Chief

Antonio Perez

Creative Director

Angie Navarro

Associate Editor

Daisy Sucuzhañay

Editorial Assistant

Ariana Lowery

Senior Media Correspondent

Errin Mickels

Production Director

Ashley Mena

Senior Editor

Jessica Juarez

Contributing Editors

Genavieve Ramirez, Chandler McLaurin, Jeremy Ceballos, Silas Rodriguez, Deselle Thompson, Jonah Vazquez, Mahalia Saint-Eloi, Johnathan Walker, Bryant Perez, Melina Jorge, Mekhi Brown, Jordan Gonzalez, Maya Ortiz, Mayra Gomez, Tyler Ng, Se'Lahh White, Xochitl Rodriguez, Joshua Luna, Annaya Fountaine, Mayerli Barzola, Aviva Benderson, Pedro Astudillo, Raymundo Gomez, Mychael Edwards, Iana Torres, D'Andra Gordon, Amelia Velez

Art Curator

Benito Montalvo II

Art Contributors

Benito Montalvo II, Henry Zuniga, Marcus Sierra, Genavieve Ramirez, Kemiah Frazier, Jordan Gonzalez, Diego Sernadas, Anthony Ramzey, Antonio Perez, Saba Shukvani, Leins Barthe, Avril Marlana, Angie Navarro, Xavier Graham, Silas Rodriguez, Kevin Garcia, Elliana Duran, Andre Rose, Jesus Diyarza, Joseph Lorenzo, Daniel Zajac, Matthew Luciano, Jimon James, Chris Andrade, Dimitri Brown, Christiana Luna, Mayerli Barzola, Annaya Fountaine

