

THE GAVEL O.V. HOLMES HIGH SCHOOL

PEOPLE ISSUE

Huskies making an impact:

RIC GALVAN

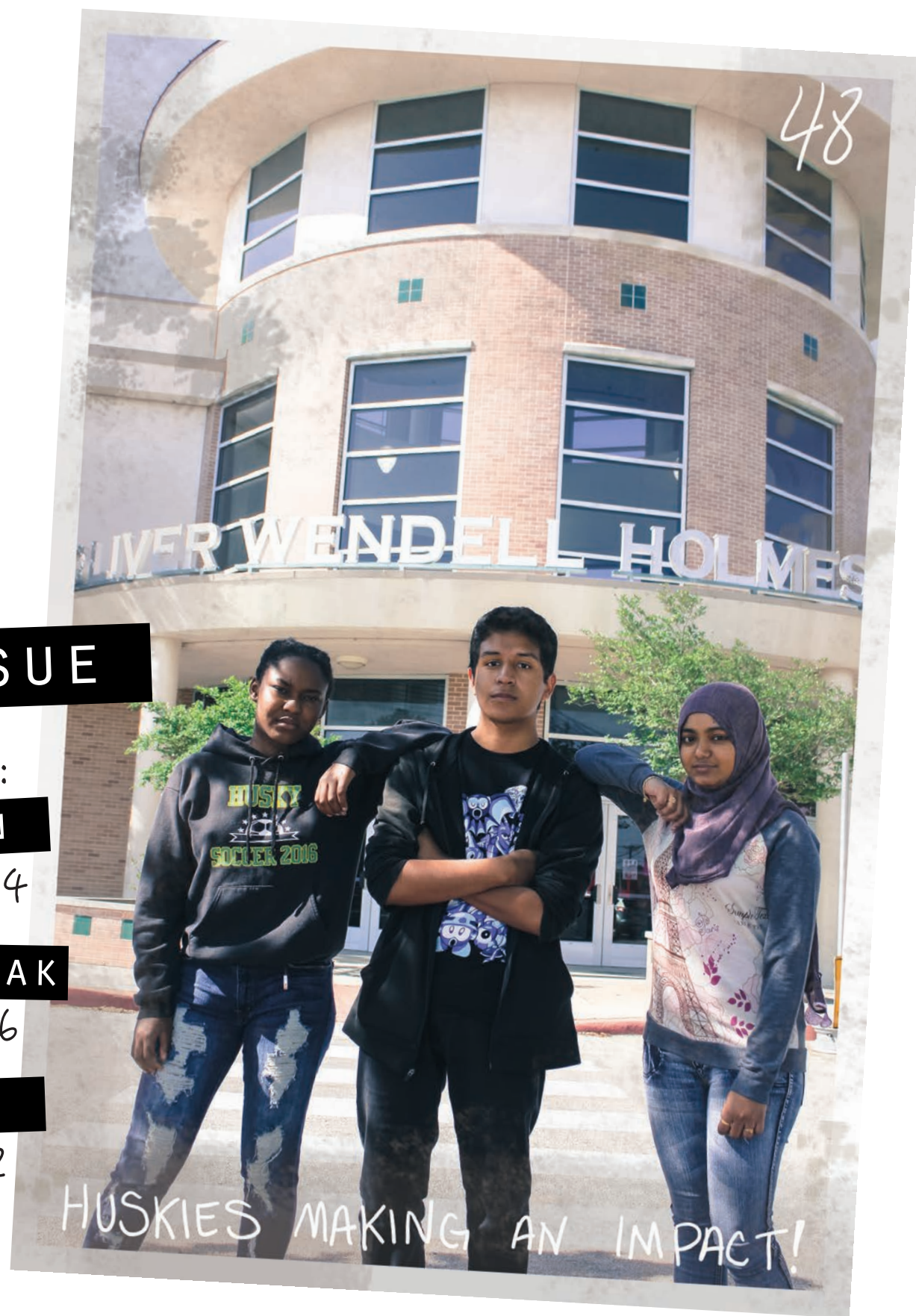
pg. 4

RASHIDA ABDUL RAZAK

pg. 6

MARIE TOUE

pg. 12



LET'S PLAY THE NAME GAME!

These are important people to know on campus who can make an impact on your experience here when you need something or have a problem. See if you know their names and what they do! Answers below!



ANSWERS: 1. Mrs. Bohlen, Holmes Principal 2. Ms. Agüero, Holmes Counselor for last names beginning with Ci-Gom 3. Dr. Flores, Holmes Assistant Principal 4. Mrs. Rodriguez, Holmes Counselor for last names beginning with Loq-Pac 5. Mrs. Pennick, BC Counselor for last names beginning with A - L 6. Mrs. Rios, Grade Reporting Secretary 7. Mrs. Presas, College & Career Readiness counselor 8. Mrs. Mora, Academic Dean 9. Mrs. Pina, principal's secretary 10. Mrs. Masden, BC registrar & grade reporting secretary 11. Mrs. Trevino, Assistant Principal 12. Dr. Cantu, Holmes/BC Head Counselor 13. Ms. Pena, Custodial Staff 14. Mrs. Johnson, Assistant Principal's secretary 15. Mrs. Lopez, Holmes Counseling Secretary 16. Dr. Holbrook, Holmes Counselor for the last names beginning with Pad-Sanc, experience helping DACA students 17. Mrs. Phillips, Holmes Registrar 18. Mr. Castillo, BC Assistant Principal 19. Mr. Hamric, math teacher who hosts SAT tutoring and helps all students 20. Mr. Mears, Assistant Principal, in charge of textbooks 21. Mrs. Navin, Front Office Secretary 22. Mr. Battle, Retention Administrator 23. Mr. Hernandez, Custodial Staff 24. Mr. Enderlin, Assistant Principal, in charge of ID's and student parking 25. Mr. Lira, Holmes Counselor for last names beginning with Gon-Lo 26. Mrs. Hahne, Holmes Vice Principal 27. Mrs. Bray, BC Vice Principal 28. Mrs. Aguilera, Holmes Counselor for the last names beginning with Sand-Z 29. Mrs. Barrientos, Holmes Counselor for last names beginning with A-Ch 30. Mrs. Leal, Custodial Staff 31. Mrs. Contreras, Custodial Staff 32. Mrs. Clack, College and Career Center Director, best resource for figuring out applications, scholarships, and financial aid, as well as internships and job opportunities 33. Mr. Garcia, Plant Manager, in charge of custodial staff, all buildings and the school grounds 34. Mrs. Westernman, Communities In Schools staff, CIS helps students in crisis or with emergencies and immediate needs 35. Mrs. Santellan, Librarian 36. Mrs. Diaz, Holmes Assistant Principal 37. Mrs. Yzaguirre, AVID Coordinator, always makes time to help students 38. Officer Casias, NISD Police Officer 39. Officer Nemcic, NISD Police Officer 40. Officer Perez, SAPD Parole Officer and counselor, graduated from Holmes 41. Mr. Neuenfeldt, Business Careers Principal 42. Mr. Palacios, Custodial Staff 43. Mr. Bowman, Communities In Schools staff

PEOPLE ISSUE

Huskies making an impact:

For the past few years, the publication we do last is the *People Issue*. Even though the name is the same, the focus for this year is different. In this issue, we look at people as well as organizations that are making an impact on campus or on the world around them. From activism, volunteer work, or supporting a household, to students enlisting in the military, there are many students on campus making an impact. We hope with this issue we are able to shine a light on some of the many stories. As we close out another school year, we hope you enjoy the issue.

- Gavel Editors

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Cover photo by Ricardo Ramos; cover design by Gabrielle Estrada



THE GAVEL

MAY 2018 VOL 54 NO 4



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This magazine is published twice a semester, along with regular postings on the Gavel Online (studentnews.nisd.net/holmes), and daily news via our Facebook page (Holmes/BC News), Twitter, and Instagram (@holmesbcnews) by the journalism department at Holmes/Business Careers High School, as a laboratory project for students in advanced newspaper classes. Its purpose is to provide leadership in news and editorial content, and to create a forum for student and staff opinion.

Letters to the editor are encouraged, and may be submitted via e-mail to matthew.singleton@nisd.net, or presented in person in room F101. The staff reserves the right to edit all letters for length and/or appropriate language or libelous content. All letters must be signed. For advertising information or rates, e-mail Matthew Singleton, or call (210) 397-7054.

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RIC GALVAN

GALVAN ORGANIZES WALKOUT PROTEST

by Dezaray Villarreal, Co-Editor

There was palpable fear in the air as the campus was placed on lockdown on February 20. Lights were turned off, doors were locked, and students huddled in corners and in closets, unsure about what was going on. As silence settled, many were left to imagine the worst, not knowing what had happened to cause such a serious lockdown. Thoughts turned to recent school shootings that have occurred across the nation, and left students hoping it wasn't that. Although this lockdown ended without incident, many were aware of how much worse things could have been.

A few days before the lockdown, on Valentine's Day, senior Ric Galvan sat in his Pre-Calculus class idly working, when his teacher James Hamric suddenly paused class to address another school shooting that had just occurred in Parkland, Florida at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Galvan was shocked and at a loss for words that more innocent lives had been taken due to a senseless act. He recalled that this hadn't been the first time this had happened in recent memory, and was struck by the fact that it probably won't be the last.

It was this feeling of empathy and despair that led Galvan to speak up and go out to talk to peers and the community about gun violence as well as this violence spilling onto school campuses. As students across America started to voice their thoughts and organize student walkouts, Galvan became the voice and organizer of the movement on our campus, culminating in a three-hundred-plus student walkout and protest in the front circle that took place on April 20.

Setting out to organize our campus' walk out event was important to Galvan. He wanted to make a statement using the voices and power that students have. He realized that the walkout wasn't going to fix or change anything on its own, but that by using their voices, students can make powerful statements that voice the frustrations of kids in school. Galvan hoped that through the demonstration leaders see that students are concerned about gun control and how it affects students here and across the nation.

"I hope that it shows our people in power; our Congressmen, City Councils, everybody else, what's on students' minds," Galvan said. "This is something important to us and something has to change. We see too many of these events happen, more than there ever should be, and it's time for something to change."

At the march, Galvan pointed to the inaction by the

SENIOR RIC GALVAN

photo by Ricardo Ramos

government since the Columbine shootings in 1999 up through to today in his speech.

"If the government's not going to do it, like they haven't for the past nineteen years since Columbine, I think it's up to the students now to do it," Galvan said. "Our effort doesn't stop at a walkout or a protest. It should never stop until these things are completely fixed and we make sure that they never happen again."

Galvan set about spearheading the walkout because he wanted it to have direction and be an organized movement that had a real message behind it. Unaware of where to start, he decided that there needed to be a way that everyone could be informed and involved, so he made multiple social media accounts for students to get information and ask questions, as well as scheduling meetings with administration, including with Principal Ada Bohlken, to inform them about the intentions and plans of students participating in the walk out.

Hamric, Galvan's Pre-Calculus teacher, knows how much Galvan took on by leading the demonstration, as well as how much this means for Galvan and what a difference his work made.

"I think he has taken on the responsibility well because it's a big thing he's trying to organize and from early on he's understood what it would take to be successful," Hamric said. "Again he's passionate about seeing change on the issue."

At first, Galvan says that it was hard to go out of his way to talk to peers, administration, and even off-campus resources to start organizing the walkout and to get the word out, but because this is something that Galvan feels so strongly about, that pushed him to go forward and continue spearheading the project here on campus.

"It was a little difficult getting out of my comfort zone like that because I'm not someone who usually goes out and talks to people I don't know or who puts myself in positions like this where I can get into trouble," Galvan said. "I met with organizers too to talk about how students can do these things. I read the handbook and the consequences because I wanted to make sure people understood that I was a credible source and I wanted to have all the bases covered."

Galvan's close friend, senior Claire Littlefield, believes that Galvan leading the walkout is unsurprising and that Galvan has put so much work into organizing as well as talking to peers.

"Ric has always been one to take part in speaking up for his beliefs, so it wasn't a surprise to me when he chose to take on the role he did for the walkout," Littlefield said. "I feel that he grew by making this movement a school-wide event, and he took the responsibility by holding meetings after school, making posters, and encouraging people to speak up about their beliefs."

Galvan emphasizes the idea that it doesn't matter how old you are, your opinions and thoughts on national topics matter, and that when you exercise the right to voice your

opinions, you can make a difference. He hopes to show others that if you do things the right way, you can show how powerful your voice really is.

"I'd like to hope that I make a difference, at least just by showing people that you can get involved politically no matter how old you are," Galvan said. "I talked to people from different organizations and pretty much you can do everything except vote [before you're 18]. You can make your voice heard, that's what I try to get people to understand, my friends as well as other people."

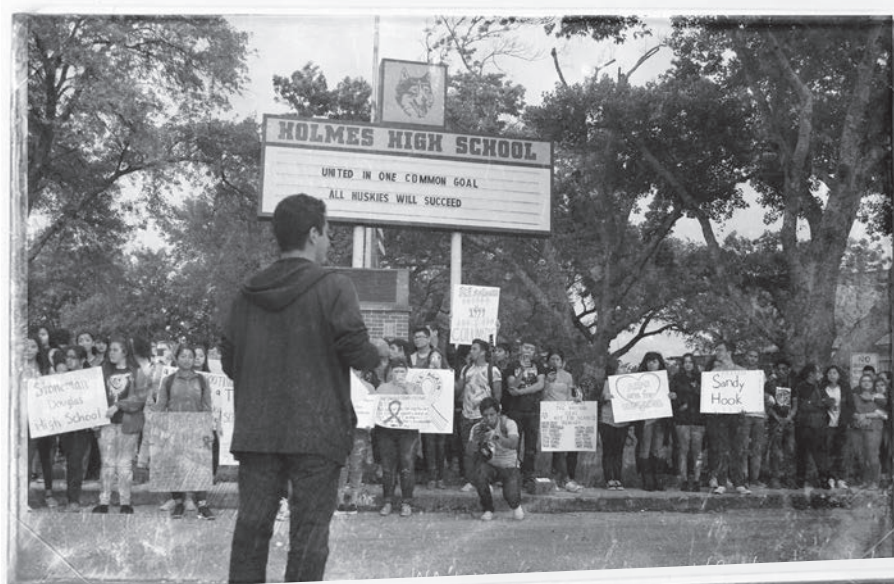
Hamric points out that while Galvan is making an impact on campus, the bigger impact will come in the future, when politics and policies are changed. He has high hopes that what Galvan has started creates a ripple effect.

"I think the difference that Ric is going to make and hopefully many other young men and young women in the 16 to 25 age group, will be in the years to come," Hamric said. "Because change is slow and political change is even slower. Hopefully the impact will be great."

Galvan says that he came forward and voiced his thoughts and opinions about the heated issue of gun control and gun violence because it's a cause that he and many of his peers are worried about. He believes that the walk out is a way for many students on campus to voice their feelings and thoughts on the subject, regardless of consequences.

"I don't think it's right for someone to stay silent when there's something important on their minds in general, so facing backlash is not a problem to me," Galvan said. "When I wrote a letter to the editor for the Gavel, I said an absence, a referral, a suspension, or someone just getting upset with me does not matter as long as no one loses their lives."

Hamric applauds the work that Galvan has taken on thus far, and hopes other young adults can learn from



An Act of Protest

Senior Ric Galvan speaks to a crowd of over 300 students who walked out of class 2nd period on April 20 to protest gun violence. Students protested peacefully.

him.

"I think he legitimately wants to see a change in public policy. I completely commend him for the age he is, a senior in high school, for taking the time and using the energy to become politically involved," Hamric said. "I wish more people would do that."

With Galvan having led a successful demonstration and walkout, Littlefield believes that many students felt they had a place where they could really voice their opinions and remember those that lost their lives to gun violence.

"I feel now, with the walk out, it allowed us to see that a lot of students have the same views and made us feel more comfortable with speaking up knowing we have a support system behind us," Littlefield said. "Ric made us know that we have a voice and that we should use it, even though some say we're 'too young' to understand."

RASHIDA ABDUL RAZAK

01

ABDUL RAZAK BECOMES SPOKESPERSON AGAINST ETHNIC GENOCIDES GLOBALLY AS FAMILY FACES THREATS IN MYANMAR

by Samantha Ruvalcaba, Co-Editor

Knots begin to form in Rashidah Abdul Razak's stomach as her relatives back in Myanmar begin to tell her that the military has set their home on fire. The news made her feel as if her heart's weight increased by a ton, and every other muscle in her body went numb. She knew that this wasn't a feeling she wanted to last. Razak needed to do something--anything--to save the lives of her relatives.

Razak's family is a part of the ethnic minority group Rohingya. Like most Rohingya, Razak's parents come from the nation Myanmar, also known as Burma. The western coastal region of Myanmar is considered a Rakhine state--Rakhine being another ethnic minority group in Myanmar--this is a home to many Rohingya people. Despite being composed of many ethnic groups, Myanmar's constitution does not support minority groups. The Burmese government created an agreement in 1947 to protect the rights of minority ethnic groups, but it was never implemented. In the eyes of the Burmese government, the Rohingya are "illegal immigrants".

Razak was born in Malaysia, where her parents fled to years before to escape the harsh persecution in Myanmar. Although she grew up Malaysia, Razak was not granted citizenship nor recognized as a citizen of Burma. The same Burmese government that failed to see her as a citizen and asked her to drop out of school, is also responsible for the migration of an estimated 700,000 Rohingya people. The widespread migration and persecution have led many Rohingya people to either question or hide their true origin, including Razak.

"When I was in Malaysia, I never wanted to be a Rohingya because I grew up [in Malaysia]," Razak said. "My parents said, 'No you are not, you were born here but you do not belong here. Where we belong, you belong there. You have to accept who you are.' Why was I denying my own people?"

For many decades, the Rohingya people have faced discrimination from the Burmese government. However, on August 25, 2017, the attack on police posts by Rohingya militants led to a security crackdown in the Rakhine state. According to Human Rights Watch and as reported by the *New York Times*, the Burmese military began raping women, burning down houses, and killing people who classified as Rohingya. The acts that news outlets have considered "crimes against humanity" left many Rohingya seeking refuge in neighboring countries like Bangladesh.

"[The discrimination] has been there for a long time, but currently it's getting worse," Razak said. "Nobody

knows about it. Our Rohingya people are trying to put it in the media, and want to let people know what's going on."

In 2015, Razak's family decided to leave Malaysia and enter the United States with the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Razak was 16 at the time.

"I had a hard time in Malaysia for the education, for the schooling. So, my parents decided to move to the United States for the better education. It was hard at first because even though I learned English in my country, it was not really good," Razak said.

Some of Razak's relatives still reside in Burma and are victims to some of the military's crimes. After watching the news and hearing everything that her family was going through back in Myanmar, Razak made it her mission to spread awareness of the inhumane acts towards her people, hoping to make a difference, or to encourage others to speak out as well.

"My relatives were telling me how they were feeling, what was going on, what they were going through. I feel like if I stay quietly and do nothing, I will feel regret in the future. That's why I want to do something that can make a change," Razak said.

Razak's opportunity to make a change came when she met a professor from Trinity University at a protest. The professor was putting together a panel on the Rohingya refugee crisis, and she asked Razak if she'd be willing to give a speech about her experience. Razak did more than just speak about her experience. She utilized this platform to talk about the lives of her relatives and those still trying to survive in the Rakhine state. This has led to other opportunities.

"I'm giving speeches about my experience, what I have gone through and what is going on in my country, including the opportunities we do not have. My relatives have told me what they have experienced. I'm representing their voice," Razak said.

Senior Esperance Nyabikiza has been friends with Razak since 2015. Nyabikiza is also a refugee from a country that has suffered a genocide of their own: Rwanda. Nyabikiza helps Razak memorize her speeches and sits as the audience as Razak practices. She recognizes the importance of what Razak is doing, speaking out for those

who don't have the opportunity.

"I'm really proud because her country is in the same [situation] as mine. We have to speak for our countries. Rashida has to continue that because if people start following her, it would be good for her and for the country. Then, people will understand her, what's going on, and try to help her," Nyabikiza said.

After high school, Razak plans to go into health care and become a physician's assistant. Seeing the lack of healthcare back in Malaysia makes her want to go back in the future to aid her people who are living there as refugees. All the while, spreading awareness remains crucial to Razak because the Burmese government has blocked off all media near the conflict area, making media coverage of the crisis unlikely.

"I'm trying to work hard for [my future]. At the same time, I will do the research and get information about my relatives and what's going on in [Myanmar]. That way I can give the speeches," Razak said. "I just want things to be fine very soon."

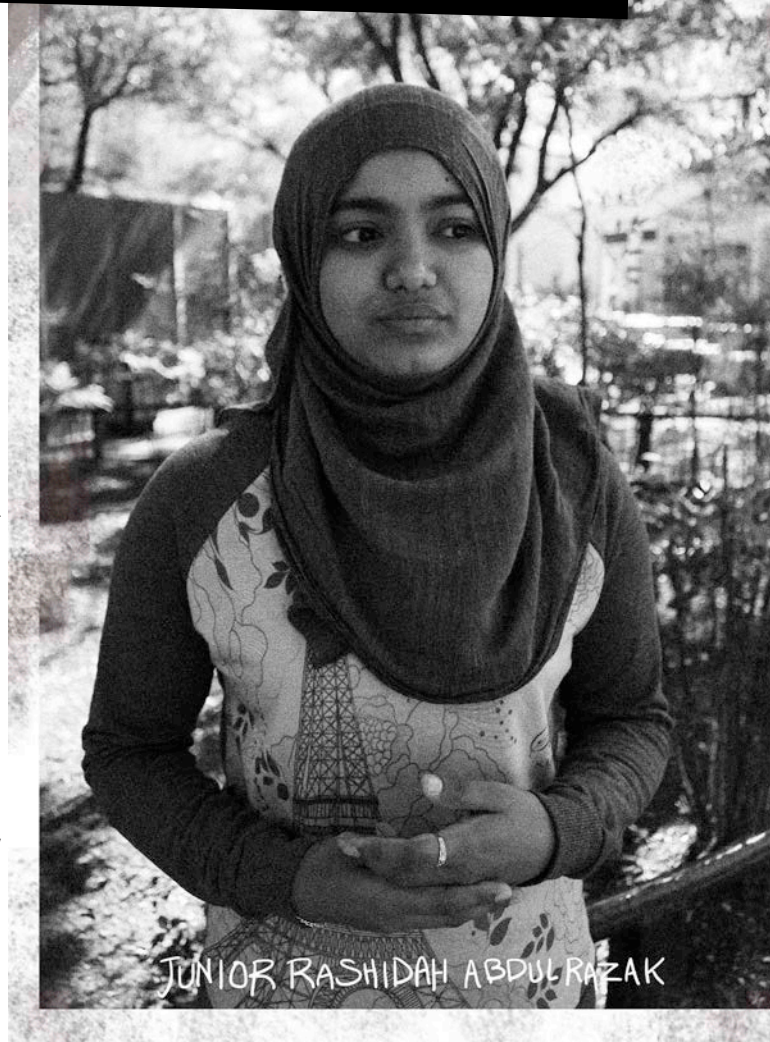


photo by Ricardo Ramos

HUSKY FAMILY HELPS OUT

WHEN TEACHER'S FAMILY FACES MEDICAL BILLS, STUDENTS CHIP IN

by D'Mitre Dimas, Staff Writer

A mother and father hold their beautiful newborn baby daughter's hand delicately as she rests in a plastic incubator in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). The baby is hooked up to systems that beep, connected by wires and she is being prepped for surgery in just her first few days in the world. Her parents' fear grows as the bills for the medical stay rack up. But that fear won't last long. In another room, halfway across the country in New York City, a recent Husky grad decides to help out. From his cell phone in his dorm room, he creates a fundraising campaign and donation after donation pours in. The family, still in the NICU, swing from feeling fear to being filled with relief.

Theatre arts teacher Annie Bridges experienced this first hand after giving birth to her baby girl, Grace Carolina Bridges, on February 16. Grace was born with a serious genetic disease called cystic fibrosis that affects the digestive system and lungs, which caused complications and had Grace in the hospital for the first 68 days of her young life. She couldn't come home with her family.

"When she was born, the doctors figured out that her intestines weren't fully connected. On the first full day that she was born, she had to have a series of surgeries to correct that. She's since had it corrected and her intestines are doing what they are supposed to do," Bridges said. "But along with cystic fibrosis, there are a lot of breathing issues, so she had a lot of problems with her lungs."

The Bridges family had initially prepared for Grace to be in the hospital for a short stay; about two weeks. When the doctors informed them that their daughter would be there for six months, the Bridges were devastated and saddened that their newborn would start life in such a predicament. And that wasn't the only problem they would be faced with.

"My husband had just gotten laid off from his job the week before she was born and didn't have work. I wasn't getting paid, because teachers don't get paid for maternity leave, and Grace has this long hospital stay with all these procedures and surgeries," Bridges said. "So our next thought was, 'how are we going to afford this.'"

Those that know Mrs. Bridges say she treats her students as if they were her own children and is open with them about her personal life. Many of them knew cystic fibrosis would be a possibility in her pregnancy (Bridges' oldest son, Josiah has the disease), but they didn't know the full extent of Bridges family's tough situation.

One recent Holmes graduate and former student of Mrs. Bridges, Jared Pereida, heard about their dilemma and decided to help out by creating and promoting a GoFundMe fundraising page for the family.

"I decided to start the page because they have helped

me in many ways that I would never be able to repay them for. It wasn't a question to start the GoFundMe because she would do the exact same for any one of us," Pereida said. "Since she created a GoFundMe page for me when I had my NYU audition, I wanted to do the same to help them any way I can because they deserve it."

When the Bridges found out that Pereida created the GoFundMe, Mrs. Bridges was blown away that Pereida took the time out of his life to create the page for her baby.

photo courtesy the Bridges family



"It's beautiful knowing it goes both ways. As much as he impacted me and who I am as a person and teacher, that I had some kind of an impact on him also made me feel so humbled," Bridges said. "My students impact my life and there is actually a song from the musical 'Wicked' that Jared and I both loved. The song talks about someone being in your life and changing you for good."

Pereida hoped that people would donate and help Bridges' family. He hoped that past and current students would step up and remember what a kind teacher Bridges was. They did, along with friends, family, and Husky alumni who went to school when Mrs. Bridges was a student on the Holmes campus herself (she graduated in 1999). Pereida's GoFundMe raised \$19,148 to help with Grace's

medical bills and to provide a way for the Bridges to spend time her while she was in the NICU.

"Everything that came out of the GoFundMe is exactly what I expected because they have changed so many lives and they are continuing to do that at Holmes. Mrs. Bridges and her husband are so kind-hearted and selfless, and when you have people like them, you expect people to help them out when they need it," Pereida said. "The amount of people that helped them was just amazing. I had a really good feeling about it, I just didn't know how big it would get."

A student who contributed to the page and also babysat Bridges' sons so she could spend time with her daughter is senior Krystin Menchaca. Like other student responses, the reason Menchaca decided to contribute was because of how generous Bridges is towards her students.

"I decided to donate because when I came in as a freshman, she donated her time whenever I needed help and I felt like giving back because that was the least I can do for her and her family," Menchaca said.

Menchaca felt a range of emotions from helping Bridges. She felt a warm feeling inside knowing that she could take stress off of Bridges by babysitting her sons while she spends time with her baby, which several other students did as well.

The community of current and former Huskies, along with the others, not only took care of the Bridges financial needs, but touched something deeper in them.

"Looking through the GoFundMe page and the notes, the comments on social media, and the emails we received helped us feel like we weren't going through this by ourselves," Bridges said. "Grace is going to grow up knowing how many people, including so many Huskies, loved her through this time and she'll grow up knowing people had an impact on her life."

While the support from the Husky family has done its job, the littlest Husky, Grace, did hers as well, meeting all of her goals in order to leave the NICU and go home with her family a whole three months earlier than the doctors predicted, representing the school motto that "Husky Fight Never Dies." Now, as Grace adjusts to life at home with her mom, dad, and two brothers, Mrs. Bridges took an opportunity to imagine her child's future.

"I picture sitting there on her graduation day and thinking back on all of these people who helped get her through her first few months," Bridges said. "And every-time I look at Grace and when she has had an accomplishment in life, I am going to look back on this season and know that a lot of it has been because of all of our Husky family and others that have taken care of us."

MAKING AN IM

GROUPS ON CAMPUS MAKE AN IMPACT

by Kodi Oehler, Photo Editor and Samantha Urdiales, Digital Media Manager

For most students, their day ends the minute the bell rings at 4:05, but for some students, the day doesn't just end there. Students all across the campus participate in classes or extracurriculars that strive to make a difference on campus or around the community. From acting on stage for elementary students, to picking up paper for recycling across campus, and everything else in between, these groups strive to make an impact all around us.

"I like Friends Having Fun because we get to hang out with the ALE kids and they really enjoy when people come down and see them."
-Krista Villareal, 11th

"You watch the trash pile up for weeks and then we take it out, and it's pretty heavy in just the small doses that we take it out in."
-Byron Cox, 11th

COSMETOLOGY

hosts "Princess for a Day" for children in the community



"Princess for a day is a day where we pamper little girls. They can get their hair, nails, and makeup done. We provide food and drinks and we have props that the children can use to take pictures with."
-Kristal Valdez, 12th

ROTC

completes a multitude of service projects



"I love interacting with little kids and it makes me happy to see them satisfied with their service."
-Fernanda Hernandez, 12th



"All the projects make a small impact on the actual thing we're doing. They also help raise awareness to all the things we are involved in and I think it usually goes to a good cause no matter what we do."
-Angelica Bonilla, 12th

RECYCLING CLUB

runs the campus recycling program



"We go around to each classroom in every building and we take the bins of recycling to the recycling dumpsters by the tennis courts. We do this once a month."
-Lindsey Wilkes, 10th



PACK T

MENTORSHIP

"I participate as a mentor because I love giving back to the community and being that big brother to someone who doesn't have someone to lean on."
-David Chavira, 11th



"I participate in AVID service projects because there are many people who don't know the reality that others have to face."
-Ricardo Ramos, 12th



"I would say the personal projects Mrs. Y gives us make an impact, things that you have to talk about to your classmates and what not, because you get to show how you are."
-Camryn Cardenas, 12th



THEATRE

performs free shows for elementary students



"My favorite show was Charlie in the Chocolate Factory. The friendships that I made, and the memories which I've collected will last a lifetime!"
-Dante Rodriguez, 11th



"I just wrote an essay about how influential the arts can be. I've had elementary kids come up to me the following year explaining how we changed their perspective. It's a phenomenal thing."
-Angel Montufar, 11th

AVID

completes a multitude of service projects and projects that raise awareness for many issues



"These projects make a difference because we are showing kids what kind of people they can become."
-Maira Yebra, 11th



SIGNED UP TO

STUDENTS ENLIST IN ARMED FORCES

1 by Gabriel Wilson, Managing Editor

With the end of the year, seniors are left with making new choices and leaving behind lasting impacts. One such example of leaving a powerful impact are those that have enlisted in the military. While the few on this page may not be the sum of all students who choose to serve in the armed forces, they have been chosen to represent something larger than themselves.

6 Jorge Garcia Zavala

Marine Corps

Ever discouraged?

"Yeah, many things discouraged me, but I'm going to keep going and serve my country."

7 Phillip Garcia

Navy

Hardest thing about joining?

"The hardest thing about joining would have to be learning all the ranks and just the general information about the Navy because I didn't do ROTC and I regret that a lot. So having to start off with a clean slate and teach myself all these things is kind of challenging."

8 Nicole Guzardo

Navy

Reason for joining?

"First, college, a financially stable job generally speaking, because it's the military. Other reasons would have to be the feeling that you get from being a team. You are supporting one another and that's how I like to go about it."

11 David Salazar

Navy

Hardest thing about joining?

"The hardest thing about joining is probably trying to keep yourself in military standards while being a civilian still."

12 Lindsey Stief

Navy

Hardest thing about joining?

"Being homesick, and leaving my family."

13 Yesenia Ramirez

Air Force

Reason for joining?

"Along with following my father's footsteps, I also chose it because I knew I would end up being able to have all the benefits and travel."

2 Angelica Bonilla

Air Force

Reason for joining?

"There were a lot of different factors. It just seemed like everything was pointing that direction financially and for what I wanted to achieve in the future, it was the best way I could do that."

3 Lauren Caban

Marine Corps

Reason for joining?

"I wanted a challenge, opportunity for jobs, to travel and just see life in a new perspective."



SERVE

4 Colin Cope

Navy

Reason for joining?

"I wanted to get out and see the world and make my great granddad proud at the same time."

5 Serena Walker

Marine Corps

WALKER COMMITTED TO SERVE AS MARINE

by Chantal Melesio, Staff Writer

As seniors start to prepare for college, others have chosen a task that historically takes bravery and courage; to enlist in the military.

For senior Serena Walker, it has been an expectation by family to follow in the footsteps of relatives and help our country. Throughout this journey, she found herself wanting to make a change for women, and represent their strength and bravery. In order to do so, she enlisted in United States Marine Corps.

Serena grew up under the influence of family serving in the military and encouraging her to follow the same path, creating a desire in her to do likewise.

"Ever since I was little, I knew I wanted to be in the military. College wasn't going to be the way for me and a lot of the men in my family had gone Navy, so I knew the military was an option. The Navy was there from when I was little, but I talked to some of the recruiters and that's when the Marines came up," Walker said.

Doubts are natural when enrolling in such an adventure, but she chooses to ignore every negative thought that tries to persuade her off of her path.

As the time comes to serve, she finds herself missing her husband the most as they both leave and take time apart to train.

"He's joining too and so he'll be going through the same process as me--going through boot camp, schools together or separated--it is going to be hard," Walker said.

Even while she has her mind made up and support from many close to her, there are still those who question her.

"My mom was really supportive from the get go about any military branch, though she kind of questioned me whether the Marines would be the right fit for me," Walker said. "[The others] tell me to go Airforce or they tell me to go to college."

Throughout her journey, she has found that instead of making her give up, obstacles only motivated her to fix the disadvantage and move forward to what was expected.

"I wanted that bigger challenge," Walker said. "I always thought of myself as an athletic person until I actually went to one of the meetings and got my butt kicked. I realized I wasn't that physically fit, but I didn't really just want to give up there. I wanted to look as strong as all the girls in the Marine uniforms and I wanted to build up that confidence with not only the strength of my mind, but also strength in my body."

9 Arias Maldonado

Marine Corps

Reason for joining?

I really don't like college and my parents are very "do whatever you want, I'm behind you" so why not join the hardest branch to get in to.

10 Gabriella Posadas

Navy

Reason for joining?

My Grandfather, he had joined the Navy when he was at Vietnam, that was a big impact for me.

14 Alyssa Vance

Coast Guard Reserves

Ever discouraged?

"Yes. Well my family is mostly Air Force so they wanted me to join the Air Force, but didn't want to."

15 Jason Dick

Marine Corps

Ever discouraged?

"Yes, my entire family and everybody at my job and my martial arts school--literally nobody wanted me to enlist."



MARIE TOUE



photo by Krissie Ruiz

SENIOR TOUE MAKES IMPACT CLOSE TO HOME SUPPORTS FAMILY, PLANS MOVES FOR FUTURE

by Krissie Ruiz, News Director

She tugs her backpack higher as she walks away from the bright Whataburger sign after a graveyard shift. The music plays low as she drives home after a long day of school and work, and all she can think about is the homework that is due tomorrow. As she arrives home to an unlit house, she's very careful not to wake her younger siblings and mother as she begins to get her homework done. When she feels satisfied with her work, then, and only then, will she allow herself to drift into long-awaited sleep.

Senior Marie Toue is a top student, a competitive athlete and works part time at Whataburger. Toue is a person who has to be a "do-it-yourself" kind of girl, having to find time to balance school, work, and social life, while trying to ensure that she doesn't step out of line and cause any kind of disappointment to her family. While the work at school has been rewarded with an academic scholarship to Denver University, what's more impactful is everything else she's done in order to support and make a lasting impact on her family.

"I do have a big family," Toue said. "We don't really have that much money, and my mom makes a little more than minimum wage. So I do have to contribute some

stuff."

Being a middle child, Toue has had to live up to her older siblings' standards, her mom's expectations, and be an example for her younger siblings as well. On all sides of the spectrum, people are looking at her to see if she can step up to the plate. She has seen her brothers take initiative with helping the family in any way they can in order to ensure that all the pressure wasn't on their mother alone. By handling so much responsibility in her family as well as in her own personal life, it has helped Toue mature as a young adult.

"I think because I'm not the oldest, and I've seen my older brothers [help the family financially], you just kind of fill in the role," Toue said. This responsibility of supporting the family financially has landed on her because it was something that was done by her older siblings first.

"It helps you mature, honestly. Me now compared to my peers, I feel as if I have more responsibility, and I'm more mature by having to make decisions," Toue said. "I'm more experienced in life to where it wouldn't be a big jump living on my own than living with my parents."

Since she has had to get a job early on, she's gained

life skills through making hard decisions that some of her peers might not be used to making, and might have never made.

Between the long hours at school and the late-night hours at work, she is dedicated to being successful in her life. While most seniors fear the unknown of what faces them next, Toue's experiences have her ready to tackle that future. This story of focus and hard work goes all the way back to the beginning, with Toue recognizing that her family has had to struggle, fleeing Nigeria, and then leaving the Ivory Coast where they stayed as refugees when Marie was a baby, and ending up here.

"For me to come to the United States and not try would be disrespectful to my past and future family. I do have family that would die to be in my position back at home," Toue said.

Being the first grown girl of her family to have an experience of what really happens in schools, she has a lot of pressure on her shoulders. While she is a middle child, her mother expects a lot out of her and sees her as a person she can depend on too.

Marie's mom, Lovtte Treka, is from Nigeria, Africa, and had to bring her family from the Ivory Coast where they originally fled to, to the United States. It was a lot of work for her, and the stress of being a single mother didn't help. She chose to work harder and grow stronger in order to overcome the difficulty. That struggle created a close-knit family, which has made Marie's decision to go away to college, something that her mom struggles to accept.

"I told her, I said, 'Marie you're going, so I give you my blessing. But think about what we went through, how we came here, and why we came here,'" Treka said.

In the hope that her daughter gets the most out of her life and enjoys it, Treka is allowing Marie to leave because she trusts her to do the right things even when she is not looking over her shoulder. Understanding that her daughter really wants this, and wants her mother's blessing to go across the country to study, Treka gave it to her.

"I told her, 'Marie, you don't need to make me be who I can be, or my friend,'" Treka said. "You are the only one standing that I can depend on here right now, and that I can even share my story with, the way I'm going to talk to you, as a woman."

The struggles that Marie's mom has faced throughout her life, has made her want to ensure her daughter knows that she is a major pillar in her life, and that she wants nothing but the best for her as she begins her own life.

Senior Ali Waliyow has been Toue's friend since kindergarten and is impressed with her effort to support her family while also supporting herself. Waliyow described her as a person that never seems to take a break. He admits that it's hard to keep up with his close friend, as she always seems to be on-the-move and rarely takes time to worry about herself. In order for her to have enough

money to support her family and herself, she has works long hours, and for days. Waliyow is always reminding her to take time for herself.

"She needs more free time. She works everyday," Waliyow said.

Waliyow has been a major character in trying to get her to relax at times. Her time is limited and she is often busy and doing all of the things she needs to do to support her family and fight for her future; if it's not homework, it's work, and if it's not work, it's homework.

Although keep up a tendency and not give completes it.

"She is al- and fo- said.

He has driven in one of her

Senior close friend and has ingly Marie when it She de- person who ing by her in trouble, person to wrong'

seems off about her. Their friendship has been one where the two can come to each other in times of need.

"I think it's really good that she [helps out her family], and it's good to have her as a friend because it motivates me to do the same," Roel said. "I always lean on her for hardships; for times that I go through it, she is always there."

When times get rough, both friends tend to lean on one another, regardless of busy schedules.

The hand that Toué has been dealt is not one where things get handed to you. She has had to work for everything she owns now, and helps her family out as often as she can. Even while making the grades, working the long hours, and finding ways to support her family and friends, Marie keeps perspective. She makes an impact on her family and friends, because she does all of this without thinking it's anything special, and stays humble.

"You kind of get frustrated at the fact you don't have enough money for all of the stuff your peers do because their parents pay for it," Toué said. "But you just kind of have to take a step back and realize that you can't take it for granted because there are people in worse conditions."

"I told her, 'Marie, you don't need to make me be who I can be, or my friend. You are the only one standing that I can depend on here right now, and that I can even share my story with.'"

Waliyow tries to with her, she has to have a goal set, up until she com- ways determined, cused," Waliyow

seen that she is life, and sees it as greatest qualities. Devyn Roel is a of Toué as well, seen how car- puts herself last comes to others. scribes Toué as a is always stand- side when she is and is the first ask her 'what's when something



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SPORTS SENIORS MAKE MARK

TEAMMATES GRATEFUL FOR IMPACT MADE BY GRADUATING SENIORS

by Maria Garcia, Sports Director

Whether athletic teams on campus won or lost, they were impacted by senior leaders who will be moving on after graduation. The Gavel Staff talked to underclassmen athletes about the impact specific seniors made on their team.

B2-EJ Trevino, Basketball

"He changed the program by the way he comes ready to practice every day and being willing to give it all out on the court every day. He brought leadership, the way he carries himself, hardwork, and willingness to give himself up for others."

-sophomore Robert Gil

B5-Dana Yamzon, Tennis

"She's really welcoming to everybody that's new on the team. She's a really big part in making us feel like a part of the team, and she's really helpful with the freshman and JV. She really tries her best to help them out."

-junior Julia Lopez

B8-Kyran Fichter, Baseball

"Kyran brings laughter and joy to the team no matter what happens on the field. He has such a big heart that anything outside the baseball world, if it affects us, we can always go to him."

-junior Jacob Longoria

B11-Emily Brieno, Golf

"She was a good influence to the team. She helped us with our swings and hitting the ball. She's brought a lot of personality to the team."

-junior Chastity Martinez

B1-Jorge Garcia, Soccer

"During the season, he had a good attitude, and he brought us up. When we'd lose a game, he'd tell us not to give up and go harder for the next game."

-junior Samuel Estrada

B4-Jazlyn Benson, Swim

"She's like the mom of the team, and it's a lot more organized with her. She's inspiring because she took both swimming and diving, and she put a lot into it."

-junior Cora Crocker

B7-Lisa Montano, Soccer

"She's been very motivational, and when she got hurt, she was still with us, cheering us on, and encouraging us to do better throughout the season. She brought work ethic and good spirit to the team."

-sophomore Ashley Arriaga

B10-Crystal Cernas, Basketball

"She helped put the team together even during rough games. She's made everyone laugh, and she's kept everyone's head up on their bad days, even Coach G."

-junior Destiny Rosas



B3-Taelr Lowe, Cheer

"She was a great captain. She helped me a lot my first year and made me more confident. She made everything seem like it was easy, that it wasn't going to be that hard."

-junior Jocelyn Sanchez Govea

B6-Mercedes Vergara, Softball

"She brought a lot of commitment, heart, going hard, being hungry, and wanting it to the team. She's really given us that push factor."

-jophomore Erykah Guerrero

B9-Marquis Jones, Football

"Marquis brought more of an edge to the program. One day we were in the weight room, and I was struggling to lift a 45, and he kept yelling at me to get it up, and I picked it up with ease."

-junior De'quare'yon Haney

B12-Torri Perkins, Volleyball

"We had very few wins this season, but when we'd win, she was definitely the one who made an impact on the whole team. She always produced kills and helped contribute to our wins."

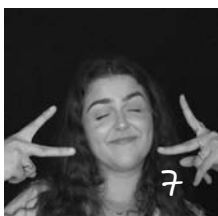
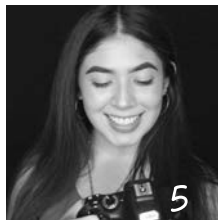
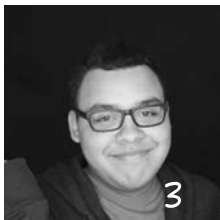
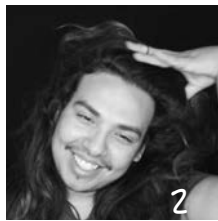
-junior Arianna Agueros

NEVER BE THE Same

MEET THE GAVEL STAFF

by Kodi Oehler, Photo Editor and Samantha Urdiales, Digital Media Manager

Over the past months that have made-up the 2017-2018 school year, this has been the staff to bring you the Gavel newspaper and Gavel online articles. To get to know them a little better, we asked them to answer one question, what or who has made the biggest impact in their lives. Here are their answers:



Dear Gavel Readers,

Journalism is an art that has the power to change people, bring people together, and most importantly, is able to bring out the truth. Every year, a select few work tirelessly all year long to construct the print magazine and post regularly to the online newspaper.

We, as journalists, continue to do what we do because journalism allows us the freedom to express our thoughts and opinions, tell the stories of seemingly "normal" people, and to deliver people the truth.

Lastly, here's a big thank you to all of you who have kept up with all of our news stories, and to all those who continue to share our work.

Sincerely,
The Gavel Staff

1. Evan Alban, Staff Writer

"The person that has made the biggest difference in my life is my Robotics teacher, Mr. Olvera. He has been a great teacher and is always there when I need him."

2. Elijah Cano, Staff Writer

"The person that has made the biggest difference in my life is Coach Salas, he really taught me everything I know."

3. D'Mitre Dimas, Staff Writer

"My cousin has made the biggest impact in my life because she steered me to what my life is now and has helped me through any of my problems."

4. Gabrielle Estrada, Design Director

"Mr. Singleton has definitely made the biggest impact in my life. He helped me see something inside myself that was worth putting the time and effort into."

5. Maria Garcia, Sports Director

"Being involved in sports has made the biggest change in my life because it's given me a family outside of my own and has helped me grow as a person."

6. Lucille Gradillas, Cartoonist

"I'd say Julia, we've been best friends forever so she shaped me into who I am."

7. Damaris Malave, Staff Writer

"The person that has made the biggest difference in my life is Mr. Singleton. He's seen me grow and become a better person."

8. Chantal Melesio, Staff Writer

"I've never had someone motivate me into something I genuinely loved doing until I took journalism and met Mr. Singleton."

9. Kodi Oehler, Photo Editor

"Taking journalism has made the biggest impact on me because the class set me on track to who I am and what I want to do for the rest of my life."

10. Krissie Ruiz, News Director

"My parents make the biggest difference in my life because they do everything for me."

11. Samantha Ruvalcaba, Co-Editor

"The person that has made the biggest difference in my life is my old supervisor was the first stranger to genuinely believe in me."

12. Samantha Urdiales, Digital Media Manager

"The person that has made the biggest difference in my life is Mr. Singleton. He gave me hope when I didn't think I had any, he gave me my motive to keep going on in life."

13. Dezaray Villarreal, Co-Editor

"The person that has made the biggest difference in my life is Mrs.Y, she has completely changed and impacted my life for the better."

14. Gabriel Wilson, Managing Editor

"My friends made the biggest difference in my life, they have always pushed me to try new things."

SPORTS SHORTS

VARSITY SOFTBALL

23 WINS, 7 LOSSES, AND 1 TIE
DISTRICT CHAMPIONS
REGIONAL QUARTERFINALIST

Softball players laugh and stay loose as they engage in their pregame player announcement routine before their regional quarterfinal playoff game against New Braunfels Canyon. The team won the district championship and produced yet another deep playoff run as the most consistent playoff-bound team on campus. They defeated Judson in the first round and Vista Ridge in the second round, dropping their final game against Canyon in a one-game, close fight.

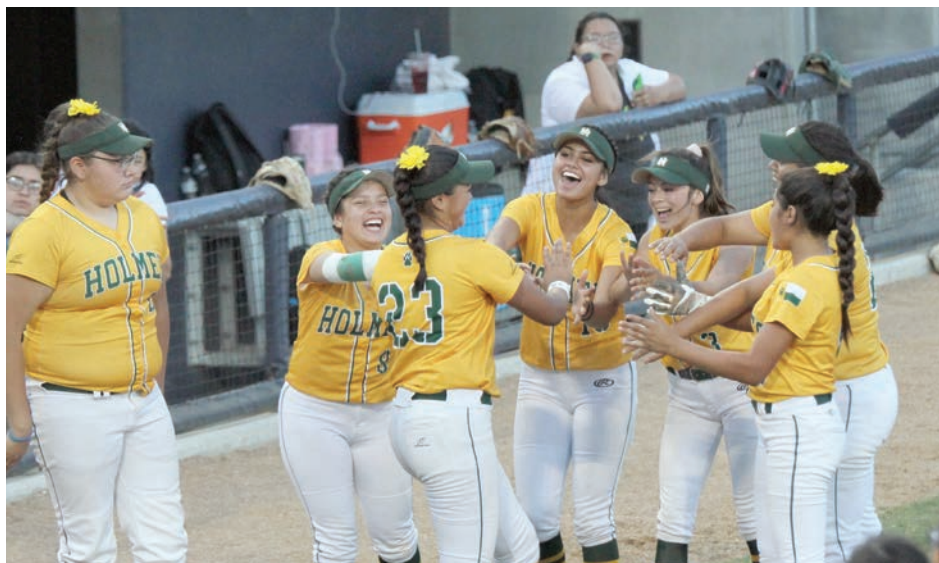


photo by Maria Garcia

VARSITY TRACK & FIELD

TORRI PERKINS, SHOT PUT
9TH PLACE IN STATE

Senior Torri Perkins winds up to begin one of her shot put throws at the State Track Meet in Austin. Perkins dominated district, area, and region, and represented Holmes at the state level, earning 9th place out of all 6A schools in Texas.



photo courtesy Jason Reynosa

VARSITY BASEBALL

4 WINS, 25 LOSSES, AND 1 TIE

Senior David Morgan stares down a John Jay batter from the pitching mound, waiting on a sign from senior catcher Ryan Kalka to know what pitch to throw next.



photo by Sofia Briones

COMIC RELIEF



"MISSION ACCOMPLISHED" written and illustrated by Lucille Gradillas

SHOUT OUT

The "shout out" section is dedicated to those making a positive impact on our campus, whether it be students, faculty, or organizations. We appreciate your time and dedication to making our school a better place. In this issue we would like to give a shoutout to:

Class of 2018 - Getting through the past four years of high school and making the most of their senior year. We wish you the best of luck!

Marcus Tinajero - For taking the time to help students with 'Saavy Saturdays' and allowing them to get credit retrieval.

Softball Team - Who won the title of District Champs and led us into the third round of the playoffs yet again, Go Huskies!