



The 2024 Heart of Mercy winners, Mrs. Mary Kate Becker and Megan Windham, receive their awards. More coverage on [newsprintnow.net](http://newsprintnow.net)



Heart of Mercy  
Awarded to  
Mary Kate Becker  
2024

Heart of Mercy  
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Megan Windham  
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# Index



## 3 LIFE

The luck and faith of the Irish brings St. Patrick's Day to life

By Tess O'Donnell



## 4 NEWS

Celebs cause a Swift increase in carbon emissions

By Helena Najar

## 5 ENTERTAINMENT

Americans bear no silence to violence

By Reese Kizy



## 6/7 FEATURE

Celebrating women's impact in music

Why is an all-girls' education beneficial?

By Daria Smith & Maura McSweeney

## 8 FEATURE

The impact of the pandemic...four years later

By Megan Sullivan



## 9 FEATURE

Mercy's National Honors Society welcomes new members

By Zaara Ahmed

## 10 LIFE

Mercy students prepare for Lent

By Aneesa Syed



## 11 LIFE

The Mercy community celebrates Reading Month

By Micah Rogers

## 12 LIFE

Is springing forward really a step backward?

By Lena LaJoy

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# The luck and the faith of the Irish brings St. Patrick's Day to life

STORY AND GRAPHICS: TESS O'DONNELL



## Who is Catherine McAuley?

Even though you go to Mercy and you have probably heard of Catherine McAuley, you might be wondering, “*Who is she?*”

Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) was a very important figure in the history of our institution. She was born in Dublin, Ireland and after the passing of both her parents she went to live with a wealthy couple— the Callaghans. After the passing of the Callaghans, McAuley inherited their money, and she decided to do good with it.

“She opened up the first house of Mercy for young, poor girls that she wanted to educate in Dublin,” Religious Studies teacher Mrs. Sandra Mals said.

The Sisters of Mercy are the religious order that McAuley founded. The mission of the Sisters of Mercy, then and now, is to serve the poor, work towards social justice in the footsteps of Jesus and God, and work to educate young women. The critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy— Earth, Non-Violence, Racism, Immigration, Racism— are the focus of members, used to make the world a better place.

## Why is St. Patrick's day celebrated?

Saint Patrick, who lived during the fifth century, is the patron saint of Ireland and its national apostle. Many legends surround him. He is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland and his death is believed to have occurred on March 17, 1461. People in Ireland have been observing the Roman Catholic feast day of St. Patrick on March 17, but the first St. Patrick Day's parade was held in 1601, in what is now present-day Florida, according to History.com.

It was immigrants to the United States who transformed St. Patrick's Day into the day it is known as today.

## St. Patrick's Day in the 1800s

St. Patrick's Day in the 1800s, in Ireland, was celebrated much differently than we may imagine it today. While Catherine lived in Ireland, on St. Patrick's Day, there would be religious services and a feast— the Feast of St. Patrick. People would dance and celebrate, eating traditional meals of Irish bacon and cabbage. Up until the 1970s, laws in Ireland mandated that pubs be closed on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, according to History.com;

Today St. Patrick's Day is celebrated and viewed around the world much differently than Catherine would have celebrated in her time.



## St. Patrick's Day in present day

Today, the colors green, orange, white and gold are associated with St. Patrick's Day. Green clothing, shamrock shirts and tee shirts with cartoons of leprechauns and pots of gold are worn to celebrate the holiday.

“I put on as much green as I possibly can,” junior Kathryn Kizy said. “Before I had my license, my mom always drove me to school and said, ‘Have a lucky day today!’”

Foods such as soda bread, green candy, corned beef, mashed potatoes and beef stew are traditionally eaten on St. Patrick's Day, including the occasional Shamrock Shake from McDonald's. To celebrate, many gather with family and friends.

“We also usually go to our neighbors and spend the night outside around a firepit listening to music, if it's nice enough out,” freshman Kate O'Donnell said.

Other families will celebrate the holiday more light heartedly.

“My mom puts green in the toilet and in the sinks for my brother every St. Patrick's day,” sophomore Nora Gerzema said.

Some families attend religious services on the holiday and many cities have parades, including Detroit, Chicago and Boston.

## St. Patrick's Day fun facts:

- The color blue was actually associated with St. Patrick, not green.
- St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the trinity— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- St. Patrick's Day is celebrated all over the world today— not just Ireland.

-Belief in leprechauns most likely stemmed from Celtic folklore.

-The Chicago River is dyed green (with environmentally-safe dye) every St. Patrick's Day. *Information courtesy of History.com.*



# Celebs cause a Swift increase in carbon emissions

STORY AND GRAPHICS: HELENA NAJAR, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is no surprise that celebrities live very different lives than the average person. From being bombarded by the paparazzi to having bank accounts worth billions of dollars, the biggest celebrities cannot realistically go about their day the way everyone else does but this begs the question: where is the line? Should celebrities be held accountable for their actions? What is okay for them but not okay for everyone else?

In 2023, pop-star Taylor Swift embarked on her record-breaking Eras World Tour. Each weekend Swift and her crew would fly from city to city to put on an exciting concert for thousands of fans. The problem with this is that Swift did not just fly on any old airplane, she used her private jet. Swift's private jet usage gained a lot of attention on the internet. People called her out on the copious amounts of carbon emissions her private jet caused. While traveling back and forth to support her boyfriend, football player Travis Kelce, at Kansas City Chiefs' games, Swift's private jet produced an unbelievable 138 tons of carbon emissions in just three months. It is said that over 20,000 trees would need to be planted to offset the damage of her private flights.

Some people have had trouble understanding the true impact this private jet usage and their subsequent CO2 emissions have on our planet.

"One of the biggest ones is the contribution to climate change," AP Environmental Science teacher Mrs. Christin Schmitt said. "Carbon emissions, even though they are not the worst of all of the greenhouse gasses, they are being emitted way higher than everything else."

Along with private jets everyday vehicles like cars, commercial airplanes, and buses all release extreme amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Knowing that CO2 is being emitted every time a vehicle is used, some people are having a hard time deciphering the difference between the emissions, especially when it comes to private planes vs commercial aircrafts.

"You would have to look at the size of the commercial compared to personal planes, how much carbon dioxide is being put out there," Schmitt said.

"I think the issue is the number of people that have private jets and use them so frequently."

The problems do not lie within the planes themselves but in how they are being used.

"Normally a commercial plane is going to put out a lot more emissions than a private plane but a commercial plane is carrying hundreds of people as opposed to a personal plane carrying just a handful," Schmitt said.

The aforementioned pop star, Taylor Swift, is one of these people who is under fire for frequent use of her personal airplane. But despite the immense amount of emissions her plane releases, she has been attempting to combat the damage.

with more than 5 million. But if Taylor Swift's carbon footprint is not as harmful as others, many fans of the musician are wondering why the controversy is focused solely on her.

"Taylor Swift is such a popular celebrity and she's a woman who's spreading positive feminism so people are just trying to find things to bring her down," senior Addison Abraham said. "Everyone is focusing on the bad things like her carbon emissions because she doesn't really have any other bad qualities."

But other people argue that Swift's extreme fame brings attention to the cause even if she is not the main offender.

"I just think that a lot of celebrities are using their private jets as cars and they need to take accountability for their actions because they are causing a lot of harm," sophomore Mackenzi Duplessis said.

People who already disliked Swift do however admit that the news of her jet's pollution only increased their negative opinions.

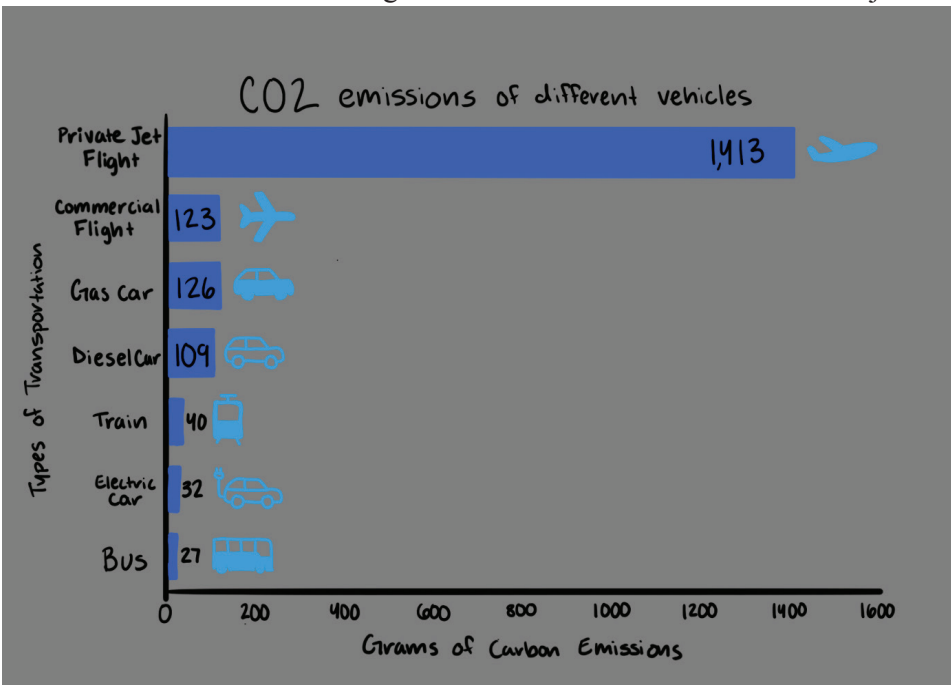
"I am a huge Taylor Swift hater and I think her private jet is a huge contributor to global warming," senior Erin Ikwechegh said.

Despite whether you love or hate Swift, it can be widely agreed upon that each person's carbon footprint matters. And while it is not so easy for someone like Taylor Swift to change her lifestyle in order to help the environment, it can be easy for people living their everyday lives. Change starts with us.

"Transportation is one of the biggest carbon emission sources, so I think more carpooling would be huge," Schmitt said. "I think we can do an even better job with recycling, more availability of recycling, and all kinds of stuff."

Improving the environment is not just recycling or transportation related either. Everyone can make a difference if they put forth the effort.

"Not eating one or two days a week can be huge and not trying to buy all the newest everything," Schmitt said. "Whether it's fashion trends or technology trends, people don't think that one person can make a difference but if you can make that change and get other people to do it too, it can really start to add up."



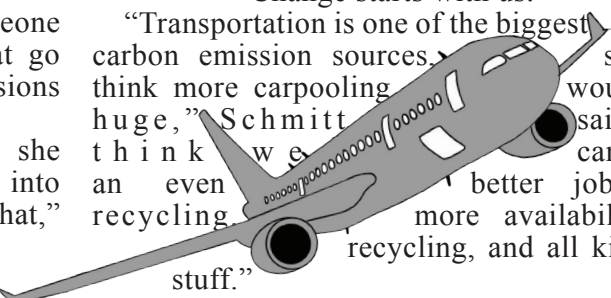
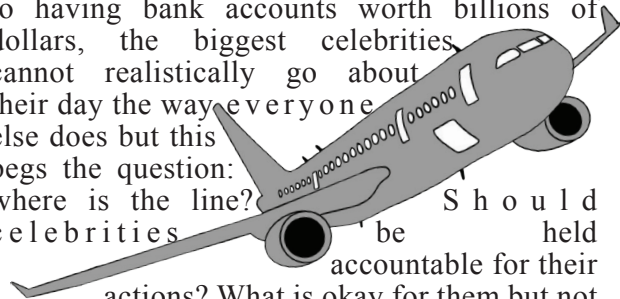
Buying carbon credits is this idea of someone investing in products and companies that go towards hopefully reducing carbon emissions in another way.

"[Swift] is buying carbon credits, so she knows she is putting a lot of emissions into the air but she's at least trying to combat that," Schmitt said.

Many people have defended private jet usage because it would most likely be very difficult for high profile celebrities to fly on commercial planes.

"It would not be easy for Taylor Swift to get on a commercial plane and go to a concert," Schmitt said. "Some celebrities really don't have any way around it, so it can be done better without completely getting rid of it."

The sad fact is that as of 2023, Swift is not even among the top 30 offenders. Rapper Travis Scott's private jet caused most carbon emissions last year, producing over 6 million kg of CO2 and Kim Kardashian was close behind



# Americans bear no silence to violence

STORY AND GRAPHICS: REESE KIZY

Have you ever realized that violence is often a trendy topic? Why do football, true crime and figures like Gypsy Rose Blanchard capture so much attention in America? No matter how you look at it, violence, in many forms, has become a normalized part of modern American life. Entertainment and storylines featuring violence capture an immense amount of attention, even though it seems like those kinds of things should be most censored in society—especially for younger viewers.

It is undeniable that over the past few years, gun violence has sadly taken a rise in American news and society.

“A root cause for gun violence is early exposure in childhoods. Gun violence is a multifaceted challenge that involves a holistic set of solutions,” according to an article on the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence.

This shows that a society that is exposed to violence is more likely to adapt the behaviors of violence. When American trends, media platforms and popular figures are based around violence, it can be hard to understand a society without it. Becoming engulfed in harsh situations is not the outcome of every person viewing hateful or violent incidents.

However, this can become more common for violence to exist in our country when it is constantly being a primary thing consumed by the media. According to the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, it is also important that the solutions to violence are holistic. Since America is a melting pot of many different kinds of beliefs and cultures, this can also be difficult to implement in order to achieve a more peace driven society. Not everyone will believe the same about what is good for society and what isn't—we can only make those decisions for ourselves.

For example, an American tradition like no other, football, increasingly influences Americans. Football is as prominent in American culture as it is violent. Many people today argue whether the sport is too dangerous and should have adjusted guidelines to allow fewer injuries. Nevertheless, the game of football is one of the greatest American traditions, attracting hundreds of thousands of fans and viewers. Football always centers around tackling.

Math teacher Mr. Adam Walker is a devout sports fan, especially when it comes to football.

“I fell in love with the sport years ago, and as a rugby player back overseas, we didn't wear the padding, which I think sometimes causes more damage than good,” Walker said.

With helmets, chest padding and more, the game includes a lot of protection, but that sometimes makes injuries worse. The material that helmets are made of, CTE, can cause lots of damage to a person when it hits a hard bone. So, although padding is used in order to protect against injuries, they sometimes can make the game more violent, as Walker explained.

“However, I think with modern technology being able to heal more injuries from football, and also with the more protective guidelines especially pertaining to gear, the sport has become less violent over time,” Walker said.

He explains why he loves football and why so many Americans may love it too.

17.9mil  
AVERAGE VIEWERS OF  
the 2024 NFL season

200  
TRUE CRIME  
PODCASTS ON  
APPLE MUSIC

“American football involves so much pageantry and it really unites people of all different backgrounds,” Walker said. “I think contact sports can be more entertaining than non-contact sports. Something about the physical achievement involved in contact sports is something I really enjoy.”

It may not always be about the violence and brutality of the game that is the cause for all the attention on it. Football has become a classic American tradition that unites people every fall and winter, regardless of how violent the sport really is.

Recently, Gypsy Rose Blanchard has gained a lot of attention in pop culture. According to some Americans, her fame can be credited to her past, when she plotted to murder her mother, but to others, her fame comes from a fascination with her ability to create such a prosperous life for herself while in jail, including finding the man she would marry. From being abused by her mother in her childhood, to conspiring with her boyfriend to kill her mother, to making and releasing a documentary about it, Gypsy Rose seems to have quite the fascinating life. This American allure with Blanchard's story has caught the attention of freshman Sasha Roberts.

“I think it is really cool to see how she rose from her past trauma and really proved herself in her freedom,”

Roberts said. “Her story shows me that even though you can come from nothing, persevering through struggle can still get you to a good end result.”

The attention on Gypsy Rose, especially from teenage viewers, may not be bad, especially because her story can instill a trait of perseverance.

“Her violent past definitely does shape her public image, but I think it is mainly because many people feel bad for her,” Roberts said. Some people can look at her story and feel conflicted over how to support her since she did kill her mother, but it was only because her mother was so cruel to her,” Roberts said.

Gypsy Rose Blanchard does not represent violence. Instead, she is a pillar of perseverance and hope. This can be a good message for young people in America, who can sometimes dwell on and feel overwhelmingly surrounded by other aspects of our violent society.

Additionally, true crime is important to the podcast industry which has recently taken off. Apple Music and Spotify have added many podcasts to their platforms, many of them bring crime based. Why do so many Americans choose to listen to stories about murders?

Junior Sara Samulak listens to true crime with her family, especially on road trips.

“I mostly like true crime because it is interesting to hear the drama of someone's life in the sense of why they chose to kill someone and how severe their hatred was,” Samulak said. “They are usually really ridiculously planned murders and would not pertain to my life at all.”

She also likes to watch police and crime TV shows with her family, like NCIS and Law & Order.

“These kinds of shows are definitely violent, but I only watch them to be entertained, and they can usually portray the process of crimes and arrests very well. I think that's why a lot of Americans also like to watch shows and listen to podcasts like that too, and that's not necessarily a bad thing,” Samulak said.

True crime and crime TV shows are broadening America's scope on violence, but that may not be the problem. In all senses, violence is deeply rooted in American culture and societal trends. Whether it is tackling in football, the deep stories of true crime, or the murderous pasts of celebrities, it is undeniable that brutality is a large part of the intake of American entertainment. The next time a violent image pops up on your screen, consider the virtually obsessive culture that you are increasingly experiencing.

9.9mil  
VIEWERS OF GYPSY'S  
2024 documentary

# Celebrating women's impact in music

STORY AND GRAPHICS: DARIA SMITH

Music has the ability to connect people, tell stories, and is a part of most people's everyday life. With the start of March, also comes the start of Women's History Month. Women's History Month allows for the appreciation and celebration of women all around the world for all that they do, especially those that have and still currently are paving the way for young girls in the future. One of the biggest areas of celebration this month is the impact that women have had on the music industry. Whether that is through record-selling albums, a large amount of Grammy nominations or their ability to tell stories through their songs, their influence on the music industry and how they have currently become some of the top artists in the world should not go unnoticed.

There are so many female artists that are currently at the top of their game, one of which is Taylor Swift. Swift has been releasing music since she was 16, and since the beginning of her music career, has released 14 albums, with album number 15 being released this April. Throughout her career she has been known for her song-writing ability, even at times being put in the same categories as all-time greats such as Bob Dylan and John Lennon.

Not only is she known for her song-writing ability but her accolades speak to the footprint she has been able to leave on music. As an artist, Swift has won 14 Grammys including "Album of the Year" earlier this year, which made her the first artist to ever win "Album of the Year" four times. In addition to just Grammys, she has won Brit Awards, Billboard awards, an Emmy and many other awards.

Though she has won many awards, the impact Swift has had on the music industry is a lot deeper than just the trophies she keeps in her house. Swift has been a role model for so many young girls. They are able to see a successful female artist who started at 16 and now is one of the biggest artists in the world. Her lyrics have also impacted millions of people around the world, creating songs that touch people in ways that are beyond words.

"Taylor's music has impacted my life in countless ways because she has given me and millions of others the ability to relate to her music in so many ways," senior Ana Spanopoulos said. "She has the talent of writing music that

feels as if she wrote it just for you."

Another female artist who has recently come into the spotlight is Olivia Rodrigo. After releasing her first single "Driver's License", she immediately started to transition from pursuing acting to pursuing music more heavily. This single broke many records and resulted in the release of her first album "SOUR" in 2021. Rodrigo is best known for her songs about going through and healing from heartbreak, which allow her fans to connect with her through her heartbreaking lyrics and catchy melodies.

Throughout her career she has won three Grammys, including Best New Artist in 2022,



seven Billboard Awards, an American Music Award and many more. She recently released her latest album "GUTS" in late 2023 and she is currently touring on her sold out GUTS World Tour.

Although Olivia Rodrigo has not been in the music industry for very long, she has become a voice for teenage girls who feel they are understood through her music. Her lyrics resonate and create a bond between her and her fans, which allows her music to have more of an impact than just winning awards, but by opening up about her personal experiences giving the opportunity for her to connect with others.

"Olivia Rodrigo's music has helped me through a lot of things I have gone through," senior Sienna Aprilliano said. "Her music is not only impactful but her lyrics make me feel heard."

SZA is another artist that is making a huge impact on the music industry. SZA began creating music in 2014 with her EP "Z" and released her debut studio album "Ctrl" in 2017, which first put her in the spotlight and sparked her music career that has lasted for the last 10 years. She is known for her musical influence in the genres R&B, pop and hip hop and her music which touches on the topics of love, heartbreak, and friendship. She has won four Grammys, two Billboard Music Awards, a Brit Award, and countless others. Her latest album "SOS" broke many records including the record for the biggest streaming week for a R&B album by a woman. Despite how long SZA has been making music, she has managed to stay at the top of the charts and continue to impact music with each album she releases. Her ability to incorporate catchy melodies and lyrics into her songs allows for her to continue to succeed in her music career and continue to break records while also connecting with those that listen to her music.

"SZA's music has given me a positive outlet and creates uplifting, calm R&B music that I can listen to when I am stressed or going through something difficult in my life," senior Sage Johnson said.

Women's History Month allows for a time of celebration and to appreciate the impact that women have on our everyday lives in areas such as music. For many people, music is more than just catchy beats and soothing melodies, but it is a way for them to express themselves and feel understood. This month, it is not only important to give recognition to those female artists who may be mainstream, but also to the female artists who may not be getting as much recognition as they deserve. There are millions of female artists out there, therefore it is important to bring to light and give them the appreciation they deserve for the art they put out into the world. This could be as simple as each day listening to a new female artist or promoting underground female artists. The impact that women have had on music is one that has and will continue to be influential in our world today.

# Why is an all-girls' education beneficial?

STORY: MAURA MCSWEENEY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



With Women's History Month happening in March, it is a time to appreciate all the steps forward to encountering sexism in all facets of society. Whether it is in the workplace, in education, in leadership positions, or in sports, women have taken strides to continue to be global changemakers.

Attending an all-girls' high school comes with questions and commentary about what the benefits actually are to being in a same-sex environment. Is it beneficial? What does it offer compared to co educational environments? Well, at Mercy High School, there are clear pros to having the all girls' learning space. The school has taken steps to provide the advantages prospective and current students are looking to gain out of their high school experience.

In fact, Mercy is a member of the International Coalition of Girls Schools, an organization aimed at strengthening women's education inside and outside the classroom across the globe. As the need to empower girls continues to grow, girls' schools are more relevant than ever before.

The International Coalition of Girls Schools outlines different ways all-girls schools around the world are impacting the lives of girls. From increasing interest, participation and confidence in the STEM fields to fostering the voices and leadership skills of young individuals, the sometimes overlooked benefits of the schools. This coalition focuses on research, networking, professional development and advocacy. With its network expanding from our very own community of Mercy High School to Australia and Afghanistan, there is no shortage of empowering women around the world who are looking to become change makers.

Mercy has taken and will continue to take steps to exemplify these values which it can be seen in many of Mercy's graduating classes who excel in leadership, scholarship, character, community involvement and confidence.

"I think going to an all-girls' school taught me how to be more confident in myself," Olivia Gray '23 said. "Being in a woman-dominated environment showed me what true confidence looks like and how we should not be afraid to take leadership roles in any form of environment."

The International Coalition of Girls Schools supports the claim that all-girls' schools "foster increased interest and confidence in STEM" by indicating that Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields are more dominant in all-girls' environments.

According to a study by Goodman Research Group, "girls' school graduates are six times more likely to consider majoring in math, science and technology compared to girls who attended coeducational schools."

One fact that cannot be overlooked is Mercy's commitment to expanding participation in STEM-related activities and classes. Each year, Mercy looks to expand its course offerings to keep up with the ever changing interests and needs of this

educational community, whether it is AP Psychology or AP Environmental Science in the past few years. It is apparent that these efforts have encouraged Mercy students to go into a variety of STEM fields when entering college.

Out of the 67 seniors surveyed in Mercy's graduating class of 2024, 65%, or 44 seniors, are planning to pursue a career in STEM or be a STEM major.

# 65%

OUT OF 67 GRADUATING MERCY

SENIORS PLAN ON ENTERING

STEM FIELDS (PER SURVEY)

Fostering young voices and encouraging girls to advocate for themselves is a central focus at Mercy and fellow all-girls schools as they can dominate the classroom rather than being intimidated by their male counterparts. Without fear of being judged, girls can take charge of their education by participating more in the classroom and asking questions.

"I prefer an all-girls' school because I think that not having as much male influence around me has made me a better advocate for myself," senior Morgan Sarafa said. "I'm more likely to ask questions or go to a teacher for help because, at least in middle school, I felt judged or didn't want it to seem like I was trying too hard."

Cultivating voices of young women doesn't just stop in the classroom as Mercy offers more than 50 clubs and other extracurricular activities outside of our superb athletic program. By having all of these activities, Mercy provides the opportunity for girls to further their education beyond the classroom by taking on leadership roles.

"[Attending an all-girls' school], especially Mercy, helped a lot with advocacy, not just by asking questions, but also getting other things that I wanted like leadership positions," Sarafa said. "I don't think that I would've run for or asked for different positions that I did if there were other influences. A lot of times, women try to tone themselves down or please other people, but when you're surrounded by women who are also advocating for themselves, you feel a lot more comfortable doing the same thing."

Mercy offers many young women a chance to thrive in a supportive environment where they can grow in leadership, academics and extracurricular activities in preparation for a college learning experience. An all-girls school is able to focus on enhancing education through cultural awareness, academic excellence, and community involvement.

# The impact of the pandemic...four years later

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MEGAN SULLIVAN

It was March 13, 2020. Millions went to work and school, unknowing of how their lives would change forever in just a few hours. This day has gone down in infamy as four years ago, the COVID-19 virus shutdowns began, altering our lives, trends, activities, and history forever.

You could ask anyone for an in depth report of the dreaded day news of COVID-19 shutdowns began uprooting the lives of so many. Whether people picked up a new hobby, learned a new language, or did nothing at all, every person has a story of the personal impacts of quarantine and how it shaped us all for years to come. However, just as COVID-19 impacted us individually, it also impacted society as a whole and the trends, media, interactions and society around us. So, as the date March 13 passes, the question arises: how has the pandemic changed us and the way we live?

**The pandemic changed the way we learn:** One notable marker of 2020 was the shutdown of schools and shift from in-person to virtual schooling. As students and teachers were locked away from campuses, the school year continued on through software programs like Schoology or Google Classroom. Video calls became a standard as Zoom replaced in-person face-to-face connections for students and educators.

However, online schooling has impacted us and has been shown that it can not completely replace in-person learning. Although some schools, like Mercy, had been using technology for lessons, others had not, leading to difficulties adjusting to the challenges of lockdown. As a result, many students fell behind in their studies and continue to struggle as they lack essential knowledge needed for higher education. The impacts of online schooling and disruptions in learning especially impacted the younger generation, ages where basic disruptions in reading and math fundamentals are taught, leaving many grade schoolers without a strong learning foundation.

COVID-19 also impacted higher education as colleges needed to embrace the virtual classroom. However, an increase in virtual classes and return to in person learning has hindered cooperation within the classroom, creating a new obstacle for teachers to tackle. Sheri Geddes, a professor at Washtenaw Community College deals with these challenges first hand.

“Before the pandemic, students spent a lot more time working together on projects and interacting. Post covid, students are very reluctant to work together and collaborative learning is still absent,” Geddes said. “That is a huge change because students tend to learn from each other as much as they do from a teacher, so trying to find a way to get students to work together is the newest challenge in education.”

Furthermore, due to the increased importance placed on personal health during the pandemic as well as the ability to easily make up missed lessons due to increased online material, absences have become more frequent.

“Students miss a lot more class now than they used to, so if they even remotely have a headache they are not coming to class anymore. And that’s a downside

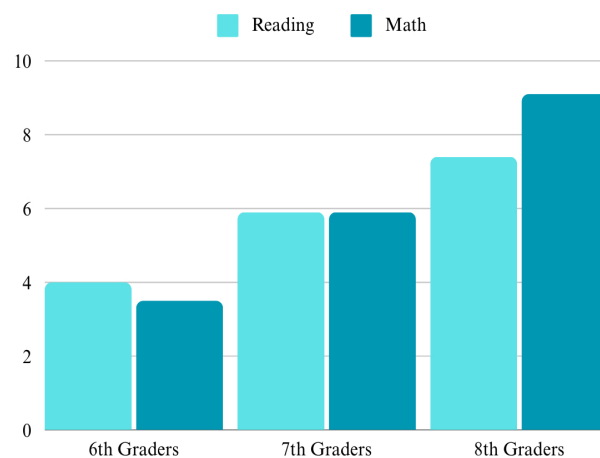
because there’s a lot more learning that happens when students come to class,” Geddes said.

**The Pandemic changed the way we work:** The Coronavirus’ impact does not stop in schools as the workforce has also seen major changes post-pandemic. Due to the quarantine, like schools, many offices continued work remotely using programs like Zoom to communicate like the thousands who worked from home before the pandemic. However, many people have become adjusted to this lifestyle and since the removal of lockdown procedures, have continued to work remotely, even causing a ripple in the commercial real estate economy as expensive office space has become of lesser importance. According to Tim Smart of the U.S. News, in August of 2023, The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that today about 1 in 5 workers telework, a drastic increase from the pre-pandemic rates.

Although remote work has many benefits, the decrease of people coming into the office has led to a decrease of cooperation and connections between coworkers and obstacles for functions such as new hire training and succession planning for important corporate positions such as the CEO and CFO.

“Training is very difficult. Building a relationship with your coworkers is very difficult. The collaborative environment element of working at the same company doesn’t exist.” Geddes said. “If you can’t hear what the issues are in the office, even if it doesn’t impact you, you’re not learning, you’re not growing.”

**The pandemic changed what we wear:** The Coronavirus’ lasting impacts and reach are not limited to only those in education and the workforce. Everyone can recognize the blue face mask that is synonymous with the time of the pandemic. Although the height of the pandemic is over, many people continue to wear masks to protect themselves and others from viruses like COVID-19. Thanks to the now familiarity of mask wearing, many people continue to wear them if they have a common cold as a way to not spread their germs to others.



The amount of months needed in order for different grade levels to return to pre-pandemic academic levels in reading and math. Information courtesy of the North West Evaluation Association.

The addition of masks is not the only thing that has changed in our wardrobes. Since the pandemic led to isolation in our homes, the “I just rolled out of bed” style is defining the next generation. It is rare to see people “dressed up”, and many trending fashion items are variations of sweatshirts and sweatpants. Even at high end stores, hoodies and sweatpants have become one of their many “luxury” items, being sold at Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada, etc.

“I do think that everyone did kind of become a lot more casual,” Mercy freshman Campbell Shore said. “We’re just a lot less formal and more lenient with what you wear.”

**The pandemic changed how we use technology:** Aside from just appearances, the pandemic and time spent inside houses has drastically changed the culture of technology use. One example is the growth in streaming services instead of reliance on traditional cable service for at home entertainment. As COVID-19 loomed, traditional networks were required to shutdown production. With no new material, watching the traditional cable network shows became obsolete. The lack of new material combined with the hours spent with nothing to do, streaming and binge-watching past series became the norm.

This trend of binge watching past popular television series was apparent mid-2023 when the 2011 drama *Suits* became available for streaming on Netflix. According to Yael Palmon of Collider, the series hit a record 4.14 billion streams in a single week.

The growth of delivery services on platforms like Uber Eats or GrubHub also surged. Although delivery services were popular before the pandemic, they saw immense growth as people were afraid to go out in public and instead ordered food. According to a report by e-commerce market research firm, Edison Trends, remote food ordering from February to December 2020 grew at an astronomical rate of 96%! The reliance on apps like these continues today as people grew accustomed to using the apps, and now, delivering food to school or work has now become an accepted norm.

**The pandemic increased mental health awareness:** Although many aspects of human life were diminished post-COVID-19, one benefit has helped millions--the increase of mental health awareness. The quarantine of 2020 was a difficult time for many people with the passing away of loved ones, isolation from others and society, and damage to businesses combining to hurt many people. However, in the depths of our despair, humans came together to uplift and move forward.

Driven by the decrease in mental health during lockdown, mental illness and its treatment is gradually becoming more acceptable to talk about as the focus on taking care of oneself is prioritized in everyday life.

“More people are seeking out help and so there’s a shortage in terms of finding therapists, counselors, or being able to get service in a timely manner.” Mercy Counselor Kristen Casey said. “It could be more people needing services and because there’s greater awareness, maybe there’s less stigma around getting help.”

# Mercy's National Honors Society welcomes new members

STORY AND GRAPHICS: ZAARA AHMED

With National Honors Society induction coming up, it's important to learn about what the NHS is and more importantly what it means to be in the NHS. The NHS is one of the oldest and largest institutions in the nation.

NHS was founded in 1921 and serves to recognize demonstrated excellence among students throughout the country. Dr. Edward Rynearson, who was principal at a Pennsylvania high school, had the vision to create an organization by which scholarship, service, leadership and character would be the outlining qualities. With the support of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Rynearson was able to officially create the NHS on March 1, 1921.

NHS expanded into middle schools with the establishment of National Junior Honors Society, or NJHS, in 1929 and continued to grow at a rapid pace over the next couple of decades. NHS has evolved into one of the most widely recognized institutions in America, impacting the lives of many high school students. As of today, the NHS operates in all 50 states with more than 1.4 million members.

Joining the National Honors Society comes with numerous benefits, one of the most prominent being the NHS scholarship. Starting from 1946, the NASSP has awarded more than \$23 million in scholarships to certain NHS seniors who are exemplary in their demonstration of the four pillars: scholarship, service, leadership, and character. As of this year, 600 outstanding NHS students are going to be rewarded \$2 million in scholarships.

Along with scholarships, the NHS also serves communities. On average, individual Honor Society chapters have contributed over 1000 hours of school and community service, \$26,000 in charitable donations, and 1100 pounds of food to their local communities. Overall, the NHS is a great way to get involved in your community while also reaping benefits such as scholarships.

As for Mercy, NHS is a significant part of school life and offers lots of benefits to any student who is willing to be a part of the program. The NHS at Mercy is centered around the idea of service and serves as a beacon for academic and service driven students to participate in.

"While there is an academic requirement to get into the NHS, it is very much a service

organization," Mrs. Kelly Muscat, Mercy NHS moderator said. "Mercy is founded on the idea of service, meaning that this is an extension of everything that we are and do at Mercy."

At Mercy, NHS invitations are sent out in February or March to every junior or senior that meets the requirement of a minimum 3.4 grade point average. Once the invitations are sent out, anyone interested must complete a series of self evaluation questions alongside donating at least three items to CARES, a local food bank. Once students are accepted into NHS, they are soon inducted into the program.

One of the most important aspects of Mercy's NHS is the induction ceremony. The induction ceremony is an annual tradition that typically takes place in the April of every school year. At the ceremony, students are recognized for their academic success.

"The induction is a ceremony that welcomes our members to the NHS," Muscat said. "It's an opportunity to share the accomplishments of our juniors in excelling over the last several years. It's really a moment of celebration for our students and their families."





# Mercy students prepare for Lent

STORY AND GRAPHIC: ANEESA SYED

As Easter approaches, many Christians and Catholics take part in Lent, the religious observance lasting 40 days before the celebration of Easter. Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent, where Christians and Catholics wear a cross marking on their foreheads made of ashes, symbolizing their mortality to God. Mercy High School held their Ash Wednesday Mass in the auditorium, with over 300 people attending.

For the next 40 days, one must follow the three pillars of Lent: prayers, fasting, and almsgiving. Many even go as far as sacrificing things like certain foods or drinks, and habits.

“For Lent, I sacrifice all social media. I just wanted to silence any distractions and focus on God. So far, I’ve been doing really well, and I’m glad that I’ve been able to keep up and I feel like I’m really improving,” junior Alex Knapp said.

In addition to this, some foods are prohibited. On Good Friday, a day of fasting and penance, it is not acceptable to consume lamb, chicken, beef, pork,

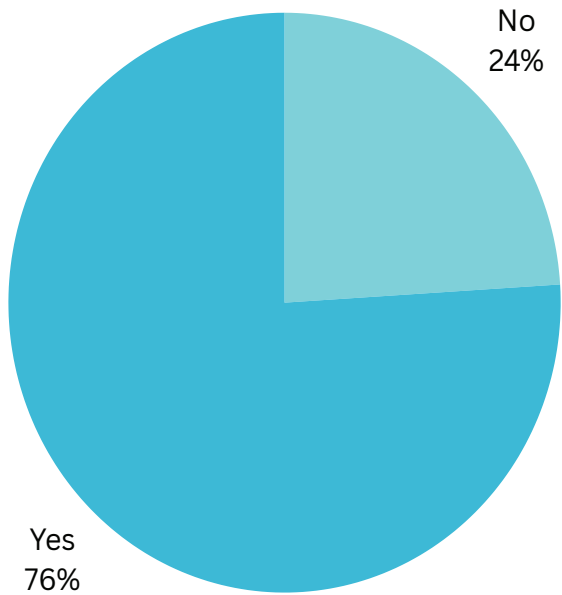
and most other meats. Why? “From the first century, the day of the crucifixion has been traditionally observed as a day of abstaining from flesh meat (“black fast”) to honor Christ who sacrificed his flesh on a Friday.” Reverend Michael A Van Sloun said.

Overall, Lent is extremely sacred to many and a traditional practice all across the globe. But why are all of these practices required? How did this come about? Well, Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, three days after he was crucified by Romans around the year 30 A.D. It dates back to a day in the week in which he rose from the dead. This is an integral part of the faith.

“I really love Lent for a lot of reasons, but one of them, at least this Lent, for me, is the invitation to turn inward and to turn to God and to really be meditative and contemplative. It is to be thoughtful about my faith, life, my spirituality, and I enjoy the invitation that Lent offers to do that”, Mission and Ministry Director Mrs. Kate Becker said.

During Lent, those practicing take place in Reconciliation, which is a service offered through all local churches. It is an opportunity to join one another and ask for forgiveness and healing during the sacred period of Lent. Another word for it is penance.

The most common and easily recognized symbol of Easter is the bunny. Why? Well, eggs and rabbits have been a symbol of fertility for years. Additionally, spring has been a symbol of rebirth: the rebirth and resurrection of Jesus. These ancient customs are still a part of Easter today. We see the easter bunny in all sorts of things, from the popular sweet treat Peeps, to the nostalgic 2012 kids movie “Rise of The Guardians”. Dating back to the 1600s, the original German Lutherans told stories of Easter island where the easter bunny lived, annually bringing eggs, candy, and joy to all who celebrated. over four centuries later, it still stands as one of the most anticipated arrivals for children.



Pie chart logging the amount of people who take part in Lent.

## WHAT ARE YOU GIVING UP?

“This Lent I’m giving up cursing.”  
-Klara Jamalieh ‘26



“This Lent I’m giving up cursing.”  
-Ava Prempeh ‘25

“I’m giving up fast food for Lent.”  
-Liliana Sturgis ‘26



“I’m giving up DoorDash this Lent.”  
-Ryann Toussaint ‘24

“This Lent, I’m giving up sugar.”  
-Addison Schwarzenberg ‘26



“For Lent, I’m sacrificing makeup.”  
-Kennedi Williams ‘24

“This Lent I’m giving up cookies.”  
-Kimora Porter ‘25



# The Mercy community celebrates Reading Month

STORY AND GRAPHICS: MICAH ROGERS

## Highlight : Mercy Book Club

For many, reading may be a hobby that was suddenly dropped after experiencing the stresses of high school. For others, reading is a gateway into fantastical realms, romantic getaways or endless knowledge. No matter which books you most identify with or what books you read, consider broadening your horizons and diving headfirst into Reading Month.

In a society that sometimes seems to value grades over intellectual stimulation, it is hard for adolescent readers to become fully immersed in a narrative that isn't for school. One way for Mercy students to become engaged readers is by joining Mercy's Book Club.

"After being a part of my middle school's book club, I wanted to bring something similar to Mercy," Book Club leader junior Rayleigh Banka said.

The Book Club is a relatively new addition to the Mercy community, however they hope to make a serious impact. With meetings taking place about once a month, the club welcomes readers of all interests to join. Typically, their meetings consist of discussions about the club's current literary selection, however new members are encouraged to participate. The club leaders include a variety of genres and interests in order to attract prospective members.

"My favorite genre is fiction or non-fiction; I love learning about events and hearing people's perspectives on them," Book Club Leader junior Mackenzie McDaniel said.

Even when used as a recreational activity, reading can still have educational benefits. By indulging in realistic fiction or nonfiction genres, readers can enjoy novels while gaining new insights on societal issues and philosophical ideas.

## How to Take Advantage of Required Courses

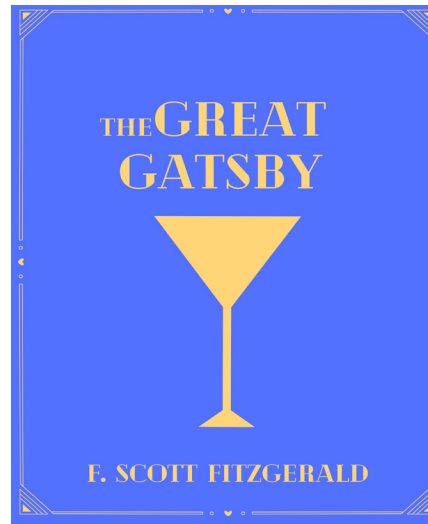
For those who do not gravitate towards recreational reading, required reading for English classes may become an obstacle in school. With selections including *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Joy Luck Club*, perhaps joining engaging courses such as Women's Literature can be a remedy.

"Each [novel] does a good job showing our students that no matter what you are presented with, there are ways you can overcome it as long as you rely on yourself and the other women around you," Women's Literature teacher Mrs. Gillian Herold said.

The Women's Literature course features four realistic fiction novels that tackle themes including sexism, mental illness and discrimination. The class resonates with many students at Mercy, urging them to read closely and discover relatable characters. The English department as a whole is making efforts to give more autonomy to students in hopes of reaching more students through literature.

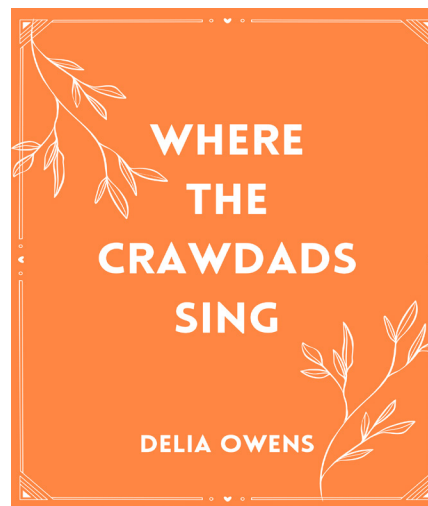
"We want to do more independent choice reading in the English department," Herold said.

Whether it is through making thoughtful book selections, participating more in English class, or even reading to a younger sibling, there are many ways to celebrate National Reading Month. If you need a starting point, however, consider picking up one of the featured novels recommended by fellow Mercy students.



**The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald**  
Set in 1920s New York, *The Great Gatsby* is narrated by a young Nick Carraway, eager to assimilate into a world of extravagant wealth and savvy businessmen. As he settles into his new Long Island neighborhood. After scoring an invitation to one of Jay Gatsby's legendary parties, Nick forms a friendship with his new neighbor, leading to a whirlwind of upper class ideals and controversy as he attempts to reconcile estranged lovers Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan.

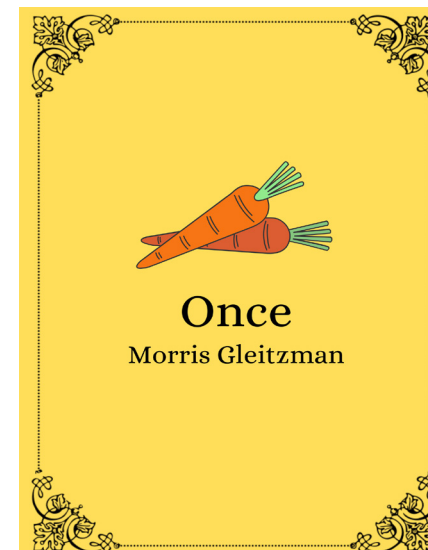
**Recommended by Mackenzie McDaniel and Rayleigh Banka.**



**Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens**

*Where the Crawdads Sing* is a coming-of-age turned murder mystery that follows the narrative of a young girl named Kya. Kya, abandoned by her family at a young age, calls the marshlands of North Carolina her home and scrapes by on the profits from her business selling mussels at the town store. Her somewhat quiet life is suddenly disrupted when one of the townspeople that she has interacted with is found dead. Naturally, rumors start to fly and Kya is tasked with defending her innocence to the town that has turned against her.

**Recommended by Maizy Borys.**



**Once by Morris Gleitzman**

Set in Poland riddled with the violence of World War II, *Once* tells the harrowing tale of 10 year old Felix caught in the midst of the Holocaust. Felix, separated from his parents in the war, witnesses the burning of Jewish literature at the orphanage where he resides. Inspired by this, he sets off accompanied by fellow orphan Zelda in search of his parents. Told in the perspective of Felix, the novel reveals the true horrors of the Holocaust through his innocent eyes.

**Recommended by Aniba Raza.**

# Is springing forward really a step backward?

STORY AND GRAPHICS: LENA LAJOY, DESIGN EDITOR

Like clockwork every year during March, time resets taking away an hour of the next day. This slight change not only steals an hour of sleep, but it also gives us more time before the sun sets. Daylight saving time has had a long history in America. This time change has been implemented and repealed countless times and then re-established for many different reasons. However, daylight saving time was not first established in the United States.

“Daylight saving time actually started in Germany and it was during either the end or right after WWI and the idea was to save energy,” Social Studies Teacher Mrs. Gretchen Faunce said.

After first being used in 1916 by Germany, the U.S. attempted to implement the same procedure. Despite being an ongoing conversation for years, the system we use today for daylight saving time has only been around since 1987. There have only been slight alterations in regards to when exactly daylight saving time occurs. Otherwise it has remained largely unchanged.

“They did change daylight saving time in the U.S. a few years ago because the fallback used to be in October and the Spring Forward was in April,” Faunce said. “Now we fall back in November and we spring forward in March.”

On a global scale, around 70 countries also implemented daylight saving time. Despite there being multiple other countries that use daylight saving time we do not all lose an hour at the same time.

“Europe does it on a different day than in the U.S. and when I lived overseas there was a three week window between the countries,” Faunce said. “All of Europe does it one day and the U.S. does it another time.”

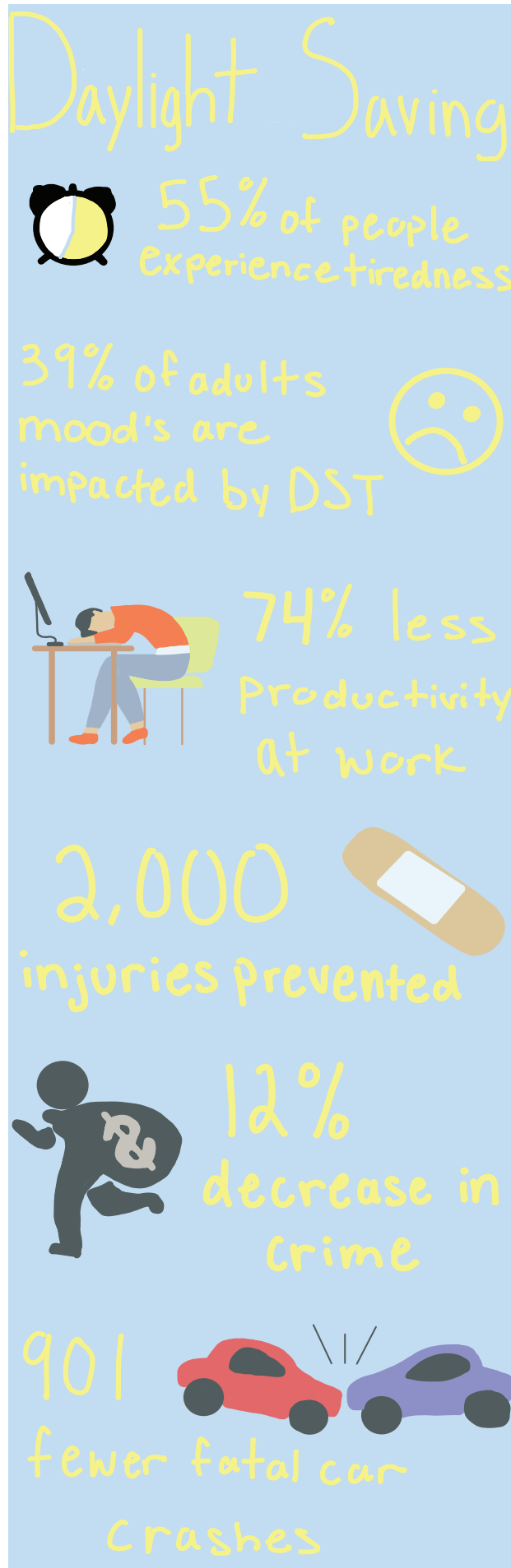
Furthermore, there are many ways that daylight saving time has a positive impact on communities. Increased lighting later in the day results in people enjoying the outdoors more before the sky darkens.

“It’s important to have daylight saving because there is less of a demand for other energy sources for warmth which means less carbon emissions,” senior Jess Koehler said.

When there is more daylight at night, people tend to use daylight instead of indoor lighting. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to turn the lights in your room on by 6:00 p.m. When daylight saving time occurs lights are not needed until around 7-8 at night. This helps us preserve energy and limit the amount of energy used in a day.

“When you have more light coming in you are less likely to turn on lights so you can save electricity,” AP Environmental Science Teacher Mrs. Christin Schmitt said.

Another benefit of daylight saving time is that when there is more sunlight later in the day people can do more activities. It is far easier to play sports, hang out with friends and feel safe walking outside when it is light out. Therefore, when daylight saving time occurs there is a chance less people will spend time on their devices. Instead, they will spend time with friends and



Sources: sleepphones.com, lucideircus.us

enjoy the sunlight for as long as possible.

“I personally like to have more light at the end of the day so I can go on a walk or take my kids to the park,” Schmitt said.

Finally, when the sun is present for longer, driving on the roads can become safer. When people drive in the dark, there is a higher risk of crashing because of less visibility. Also, when it is dark, people driving are more likely to become tired and fall asleep behind the wheel.

“Being able to see using natural lighting rather than headlights makes night time driving safer,” Koehler said.

Despite these pros of daylight saving time, there are multiple negatives. When people lose an hour of sleep, there can be impacts on their overall health. Sleep is necessary for us to maintain a steady existence and be able to interact with others. However, when someone’s sleep schedule is thrown off, even for an hour, there can be side effects.

“All of our body parts function on a 24-hour cycle so when daylight saving time happens the sleep wake cycle is impacted which causes many disruptions,” Nurse Patricia Attaway said.

Since our bodies are accustomed to 24-hour days, when it is darker or lighter at different times, our bodies can become confused. This confusion results in problems with hormones, digestion and sleep cycles. When these different elements of the body are impacted there can be serious consequences.

“Our bodies know when the sun goes up or down and there is an expectation so when it does not happen you are imbalanced,” Attaway said.

Specifically, an hour of sleep loss can cause disruption to the circadian rhythm. When people consistently gain less sleep there can be serious consequences mentally and physically. Therefore, even small shifts can have some effect if people do not change their sleep patterns in order to adapt.

“Lack of sleep impacts your mental health and can make you nauseous which leads to lower energy ending in perpetual tiredness,” Attaway said.

Overall, there have been discussions recently about completely getting rid of daylight saving time. Both Hawaii and some of Arizona have already decided to stop using daylight saving time. Also, a bill was brought forth from the Senate to stop daylight saving time yet there have been no moves to either approve or disapprove this option.

“Two years ago, the Senate passed a bill saying they wanted to end daylight saving time yet it has not gone to the House yet and it is not clear what will happen yet,” Faunce said.

There are many reasons why daylight saving time is good and many other reasons why people think it should no longer be continued. In the end, it is not clear if daylight saving time will end anytime soon. Therefore, for now we can only sit back and enjoy the extra time of sunlight at the end of the day and embrace what daylight saving time has to offer.