

N NEWSPRINT

SCROLL TO NOWHERE

Newsprint explores the lasting impacts of technology and social media on the mental health of high school students today.

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PHOTO | Megan Sullivan

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STAFF:

Tess O'Donnell: Editor-in-Chief
Reese Kizy: Web Editor
Megan Sullivan: Design Editor
Zaara Ahmed: Copy Editor
Isa Portillo: Senior Reporter
Aneesa Syed: Senior Reporter
Olivia Lorelli: Senior Reporter
Stella Coe: Junior Reporter
Anna McGavin: Sophomore Reporter
Peyton Caldwell: Sophomore Reporter
Dr Kline-Kator: Advisor



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As Mercy Newsprint staff we promise to keep you entertained and informed with accurate and unbiased information. Our goal is to provide timely news while promoting diversity and representing the entirety of the Mercy community. We encourage letters to the editors and any other feedback you may have. You may reach out to us through our email (newsprint@mhsmi.org), our Instagram (@[mercy.newsprint](https://www.instagram.com/mercy.newsprint)), or through any of our staff members.



SHH raises funds for immigrant families in Metro Detroit area

STORY: **ISA PORTILLO, SENIOR REPORTER**

Mercy's Spanish Honor Society SHH recently held its annual fundraiser to raise money for a good cause. This year, the profits went to support a local non-profit called Strangers No Longer, which supports Hispanic immigrant families in the Detroit area.

"The [organization] brings Christ and comfort to new migrant families in the metro-Detroit area." SHH officer Ella Kizy said.

Helping immigrant families is an important issue to SHH, according to faculty organizer Stacy Guerrero.

"As members of the Spanish Honor Society, we value connecting with and supporting Spanish-speaking communities," Profe Guerrero said. "Since many of the individuals supported by Strangers No Longer come from Spanish-speaking countries, raising money for them directly ties to our mission to promote cultural understanding, empathy, and solidarity."

Strangers No Longer's cause is not only important to SHH, but Mercy as a whole. SHH officer Maeve Casey connects the fundraiser to Mercy's Critical Concern of Immigration.

"We hope to make an impact through this fundraiser by helping to build support and awareness of this Critical Concern and to also help advocate and inspire others to help this cause," Casey said.

Despite the numerous struggles that immigrant families face, the SHH officers are hopeful that their act of charity will improve the lives of these families.

"We hope to help bring comfort and protection to Hispanic immigrants, and we hope to really make a difference in the lives of whoever the money reaches," Kizy said.

Profe Guerrero is just as optimistic that SHH's support will be beneficial.

"We hope the funds we raised—over \$400—will provide meaningful support to Strangers No Longer and the individuals they serve," Guerrero said. "Whether it helps with basic necessities, legal advocacy, or community support, we are proud to contribute to an organization that is making a real difference in the lives of immigrants and asylum seekers."

Although SHH organized the fundraiser, the successful outcome was a community effort.

"We'd also like to thank everyone in our school community who participated in our fundraiser," Guerrero said. "Your support means a great deal, not just to the Spanish Honor Society, but to the individuals and families who will directly benefit from our donation."



Mercy students wear their Catholic schools shirt. Photo By: Anna McGavin



Mercy students Hope Carmona (left), and Khloe Duneske (right) wear their Catholic Schools shirts on Monday, January 27th, Celebrating the Community Day. Photo By: Anna McGavin

Mercy High School celebrates Catholic Schools Week

STORY AND PHOTOS: **ANNA MCGAVIN, SOPHOMORE REPORTER**

Mercy celebrated Catholic Schools Week beginning January 27th. This week was a time where we showed our appreciation for the community that Catholic schools have to offer.

Planning Catholic Schools Week looked a little different this year.

"This is the first year since I have worked at Mercy where Catholic Schools Week is planned out by our Student Ministry Team," Director of Ministry and Catholic Identity Mrs. Mary Kate Becker said. "The events planned for the week have come from students. We value our student's voice in so many areas at Mercy, I'm grateful we now have that student perspective in planning Catholic Schools Week now! What a gift! I'm very proud of the student ministry team and all their hard work."

Sophomore Ellie Jamieson became the head of planning for the week, and had other ministry members helping her. Getting everything ready was hard, but with help from the team, they got things done.

"Leading the planning can be stressful when I am trying to get everything set up and manage all the tasks but it is also really fun because I get to see all of the ministry leaders' visions come to life," Jamieson

said, "I also have a lot of support from Mrs. Becker and the ministry team which makes things a lot easier."

The themes for each day of the week were given by the National Catholic Education Association, but the ministry team decided what day we celebrate each theme. The order for this year's themes was:

Monday: Celebrating the Community

Tuesday: Celebrating the Students

Wednesday: Celebrating the Teachers

Thursday: Celebrating the Nation

Friday: Celebrating Vocations

On Monday the events were the Hands and Feet of Christ Drive and Fleece and Thank You with UNICEF. Students wore a Catholic school top with uniform bottoms.

On Tuesday, Sister Courtney Muscat came to speak to an Anatomy class. The dress down theme was pajama day.

On Wednesday, the teachers had a dress down day, and they were given cards of appreciation.

On Thursday, there was a field trip to Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.

On Friday, the winners of the Heart of Mercy award were announced.

See newsprint.net for full coverage of Heart of Mercy winners and Senior Alumni breakfast.

Mercy's robotics team builds toward success

STORY, PHOTOS, AND GRAPHICS: **ZAARA AHMED, COPY EDITOR**

On any given Monday evening, the Mercy robotics lab buzzes with activity. Students gather around workstations, brainstorming designs, coding programs and assembling parts for their robot. This is the home of the Riveters, Mercy's FIRST Robotics Team 1481.

The Riveters operate

mix of talents.

"I would definitely say that being a part of the robotics team gives you a large amount of confidence and it really helps prepare you for the real world, specifically because you learn to communicate and collaborate with different companies," robotics FAB leader Ryley Kline said.

The Riveters participate in FIRST Robotics Competitions (FRC), where robots take center stage in matchups. Each two-minute round sees student controlled robots navigate an arena, completing tasks to rack up points while hundreds of spectators cheer them on. It's not just a test of technical skill but also of teamwork, strategy, and adaptability.

"Last year, we won the autonomous award for our robot, which basically means that the robot can do everything by itself," robotics PEP leader Jacquelyn LeVasseur said. "It was really great to get recognized for something that we worked so hard on. We want to win a similar award this upcoming season."

For the robotics team, joining the Riveters isn't just about building robots, it's about building skills and relationships. Team members can earn a varsity letter while gaining valuable experience in problem-solving, leadership and communication. The team is open to all students and a flexible schedule ensures that anyone with an interest is able to participate.

"Robotics is a very male-dominated field, so having an all girls team is really empowering," robotics SAD leader Chandravadana Koneru said. "Being in robotics has exposed me to how the real world works. It's taught me how to overcome issues and find my voice. Overall, it's a really great experience and I love being a part of such an amazing team."



ate year-round, meeting weekly during the off-season and ramping up their schedule from January through April for build and competition season. Practices are a combination of evening and weekend sessions, where every member plays a role, whether in engineering, design, business or programming. With 29 members, the team is a



Jacquelyn LeVasseur:
Group leader of Programming Electronics and Pneumatics (PEP)

"In PEP, we program and wire the robots, which means that we work on all the electro-components parts. I really love all aspects of being the PEP leader, specifically the fact that there are certain rules for everything. There's a certain way that everything gets designed—once you understand the rules and the way that everything works, you can apply those rules to do whatever you want."



Ryley Kline:
Group leader of Fabrication and Design (FAB)

"As a group leader, I help to facilitate all the computer work and building that goes into making a robot. I essentially create the design and put it together with the rest of our team. During our six week build season, I lead the team into fabricating all the parts and eventually we are able to create a finished robot. Our team is really great and we put a lot into building our robots."



Chandravadana Koneru:
Group leader of Scouting and Drive (SAD)

"Being a part of the the robotics team and being the leader of SAD is really amazing. I'm basically the group's drive coach so I help with strategy and I'm the one who communicates with other teams at competitions. Through this team, I've been able to get so much experience in the engineering and STEM field and, overall, it has been really great to work with such an amazing and talented team."



Beatrice Lapuz:
Group leader of Business and Development (BAD)

"As the group leader of BAD, I handle all the money while also doing outreach. My position has lead me to learn a lot about managing money and it's also given me the opportunity to work with big businesses. I've been able to communicate with companies like Ford and Bosch, which has helped me learn a lot. Overall, robotics is a really great way to get experience in the engineering and STEM field and I love it."

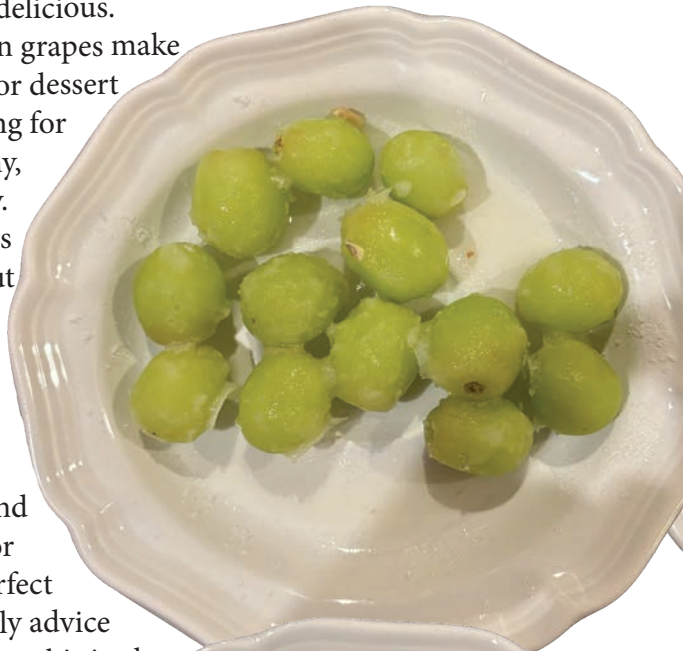
Trying viral Tiktok recipes so you don't have to

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: **PEYTON CALDWELL, SOPHOMORE REPORTER**

I have tested and rated four recipes that I have seen on TikTok. These dishes, representing a variety of foods like breakfast, snacks, and also lunch, are very simple to make.

Frozen green grapes: This recipe is only one ingredient, but it can take up to 3 hours to make. It is easy and delicious.

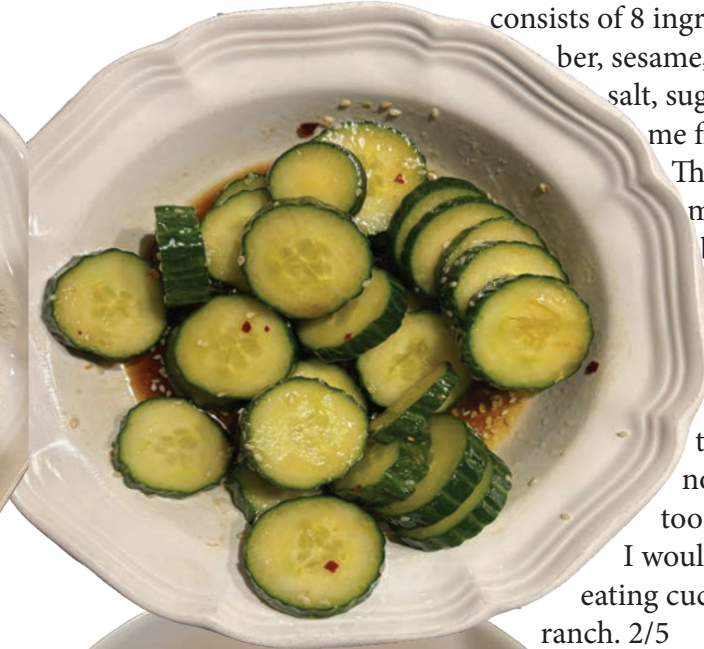
Frozen green grapes make a great snack or dessert if you are looking for something healthy, quick, and yummy. All you have to do is buy green grapes, put them in a container and freeze them for about 3-5 hours. I think this snack is very tasty and easy. I added lemon juice and sugar for more flavor and it made the perfect sour treat. The only advice I would give is; eat this in the summer. 5/5



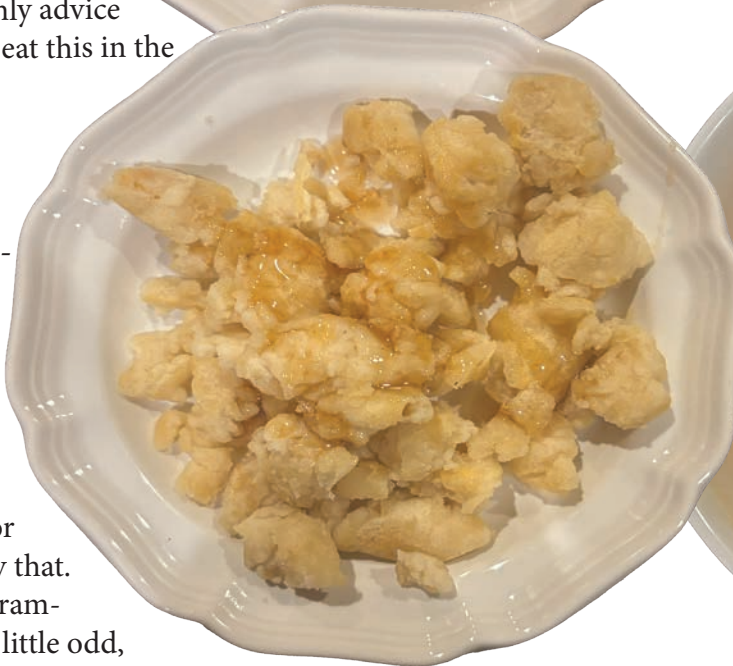
Cucumber Salad: “Sometimes you just need to eat a whole cucumber,” Social media influencer Logan Morffitt said. This recipe is also easy to make, but

consists of 8 ingredients: cucumber, sesame, rice wine vinegar, salt, sugar, soy sauce, sesame flakes and chili flakes.

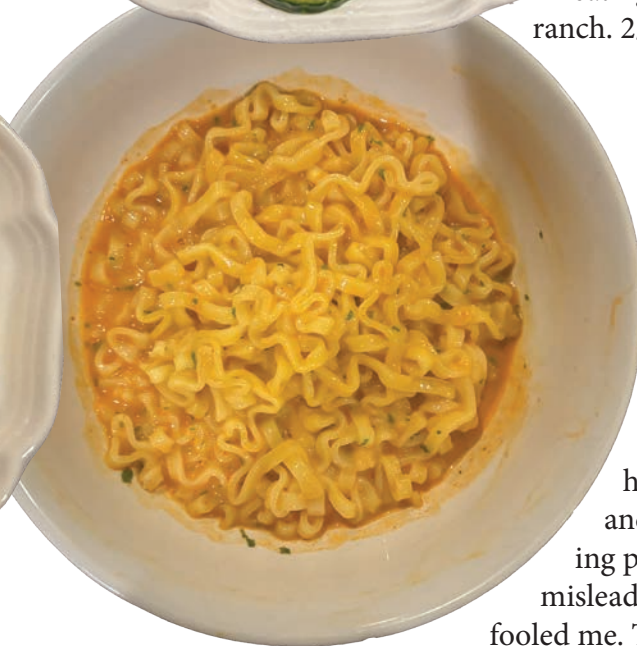
The preparation time and making is rather quick, but again I would recommend eating in the summer. I feel like this recipe is not for me. Although it tasted fresh, the overall flavor was not that good. It felt too oily in a way and I would rather stick to eating cucumbers with ranch. 2/5



Scrambled Pancakes: If you are looking for an easy breakfast food, scrambled pancakes may be for you. Yes, it is exactly that. Pancakes that are scrambled like eggs. It is a little odd, but with this recipe you do not have the stress and worry of flipping the perfect pancake. All you have to do is use your spatula like you would with scrambled eggs and you are done. I would do this again, it was quick and easy and just a new and fresh way to eat a basic and plain food. Also, if you know a baby or toddler, this could be more efficient for their benefit. 4/5



Buldak noodles: These noodles will make you cry. The infamous Buldak noodles are seriously one of the spiciest foods I have ever had. The pink and white innocent looking packaging is extremely misleading and definitely fooled me. There are two packets you receive, which are cheese and the hot packet and overall the flavor was good. It was not straight heat which I appreciate, so the experience can be somewhat enjoyable. Despite the heat level, I would make them again, just with half of the spice packet. 3/5



SCROLL TO NOWHERE:

Do Mercy students spend too much time on their phones?

STORY: **REESE KIZY**

PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS: **MEGAN SULLIVAN**

Don't we all roll our eyes when adults start talking about the age of social media and too much screen time? We can find everything online. We can see almost every move of almost everyone around us. Times are changing. And so are we.

As the availability of so much information becomes common for us teenagers at the opening of a tab, our presence online can become obsessive to some of us. After a hard day, or when we really just don't have much else to do, we pick up our phone and start scrolling. Does it damage our self esteem? After a while on the same apps, seeing the same trends, do we all start to conform to some variation of a basic teenage girl?

For Mercy French teacher Madame Campbell, the behaviors of students with their phones is something she has observed over the years.

"I find that the phones are very distracting and students today are increasingly always on their phones, especially in the hallways when they aren't paying attention to where they're going, and when they're on a call using very inappropriate language," Campbell said.

While phones are used for calling and texting, there's also social media, which takes up lots of time for some students.

"When I talk to my students in French and ask what they did the night prior, many say they are tired," Campbell said. "Sometimes they say they're up until one or two in the morning, and I ask why, and they say 'I was on my phone.'"

Too much time on your phone can affect many aspects of your life.

"When you're on your phone all day, it affects your sleep, your ability to stay focused, and take a break," Campbell said. "There can be so much drama with the phones that it gets harder for a student to put it down."

Social media can draw their users in, have them



leave this world, and enter a world with no track of time. In a poll of 16 Mercy students, the average screen time for a Tuesday is 4 hours and 47 minutes. And for a Sunday, the average amount of time spent on phones is 6 hours and 21 minutes. One can only wonder, how much of that time is spent mindlessly scrolling on social media? Are those hours taken for phone time, when they should be for homework time and quality time with family and friends?

"Some social media apps can become so addictive, and that takes away from a student's ability to concentrate and have strong social skills," Campbell said.

According to the Social Media and Scholarly Peer-review journal, "Social media is defined as the collection of online communication channels intended to be community-based input, exchanging interactions, sharing any type of content, and collaboration of all the contributions."

While social media is supposed to be a shared, collaborative space online. But some can begin not to see it that way.

Informational social influence is a reliance on what we see others doing as a source of information to guide our behavior. Whether it is feedback on our posts or seeing how others act online, comparing ourselves to strangers we see on our screens can largely affect our behavior.

"Social media can be harmful to my self-esteem because I often start comparing myself to others," senior Jenna Matigian said. "It is also common for me to be 'easily-influenced,' not just with buying things, but with how I act in comparison to how I see others acting on social media."

When we begin to worry about how we look or act in comparison to others, it is easier to just act like everybody else. So, if we all chase the same praise in our comment sections, or the same aesthetics that seem appealing to many other girls so similar to us, do we conform?

"I definitely think social media can cause

By The Numbers

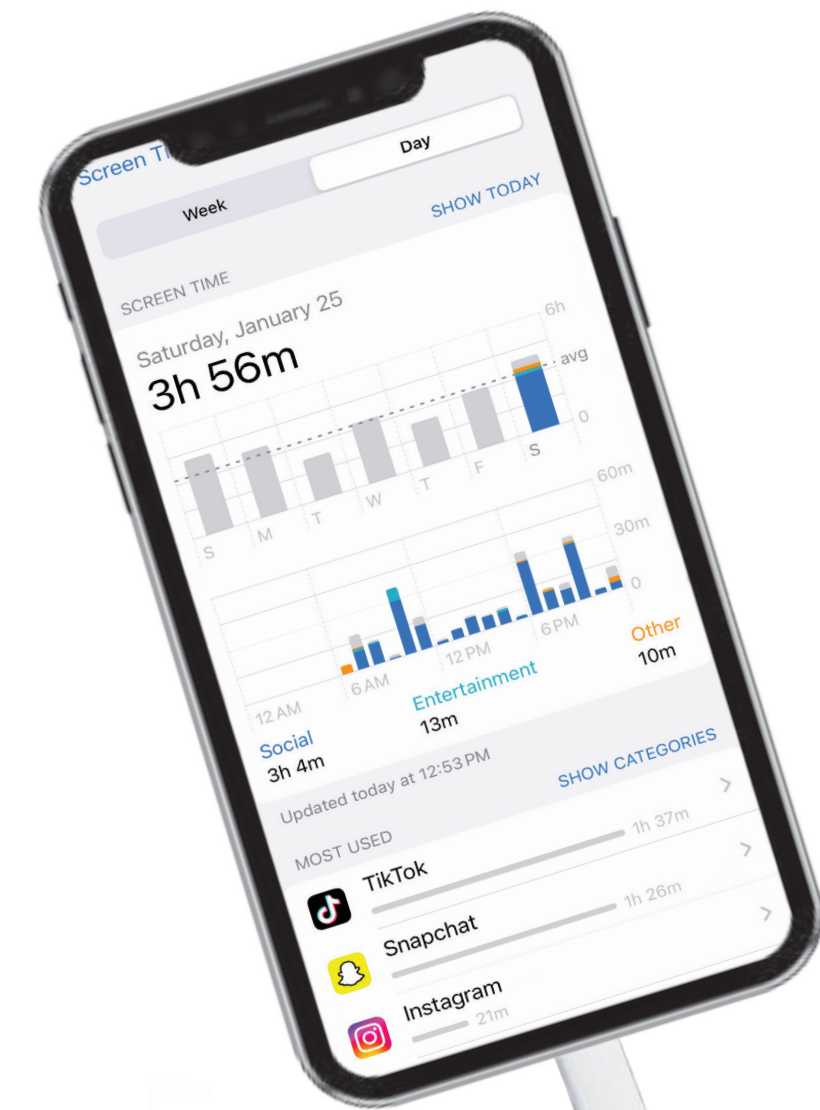
When we asked Mercy students ...

87.5%

Said they used their phones significantly more during the weekend than during the school week.

68.8%

Had a screen time of over five hours for at least one day a week.



conformity," senior Lindsay Hermann said. "Even though there are lots of niches on social media and you can kind of find what you like, once you are there, sometimes you still want to buy things and act like others."

Our social media presence can

largely affect not only how we act in relation to others, but what we grow to believe and value in the world.

"I deeply care for every young woman I teach, and I want each one to grow up and be themselves, and think critically," Campbell said.

Although it is hard to escape this so-called "new age" of online presence, there are always ways to improve how we behave with social media. Be aware of your feelings of insecurity if you begin comparing yourself to others. Make a smart decision when it comes to putting your phone down. Don't fall into conformity.



Setting the stage

The Addams Family Musical: School Edition actors prepare for music rehearsal by engaging in vocal warmups lead by Mrs. Abha Dearing. Photo by Tess O'Donnell.

Mercy Performing Arts students prepare for *The Addams Family Musical: School Edition* in March.

STORY AND PHOTO: **TESS O'DONNELL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

If you travel to the Drama Hall after school, Monday through Thursday, from the beginning of November to the middle of March, you might hear the dazzling harmonies of music rehearsal or the pulsing beats of dance rehearsal or the directing of performers at blocking rehearsal. These sounds—all different, all unique, all important—are what will become the Mercy High School Performing Arts Program's spring musical: *The Addams Family Musical: School Edition*.

The *Addams Family Musical: School Edition*, is unlike anything audiences might be familiar with from on-screen. The musical will still star classic members of the Addams family—Morticia, Gomez, Wednesday, Pugsley, Fester, and more—but it will also include new characters that have not been seen by viewers before. The story follows an older Wednesday Addams as she brings her boyfriend, Lucas, home to meet her family for the first time. The musical centers around heartwarming family moments, growth of relationships, and the classic Addams Family-style of comic relief.

Throughout the musical, everyone has a different role as they continue to build

the foundation for the performances in March. If someone is a part of the cast, depending on their role, they have different rehearsals and time commitments in the earlier stages of production. Junior Arya Agulto, portraying Morticia Addams, spends a lot of time in rehearsals during the weekdays, preparing for her role.

"A typical week for me consists of music rehearsals on Mondays, blocking rehearsals on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and then dance rehearsals on Wednesdays," Arya Agulto said.

The *Addams Family Musical* will also utilize all eight crews—Costume, House, Light, Sound, Stage, Prop, Marketing, and Makeup.

Various crews have various responsibilities before the show premieres. The Costume Crew spends time organizing the costume shop to prepare the costumes for the show. As the performances come closer, their time commitments and duties increase.

"We have a bunch of different racks, so we'll organize by actor. I think we'll make little name tags for each costume, which we'll put by the mirrors in the makeup room so everyone has their costumes and it's easier for us to organize once we're done," senior head of Costume Crew Molly Whitney said.

Stage Crew operates on a different schedule as they prepare for the shows in March.

"We've been building the set for around two months now, we're pretty close to being done, but we come in every Saturday to work from nine to two," senior head of Stage Crew Claire Rogan said.

The adults involved in the play also dedicate their time and effort into creating the musical. Director Mrs. Shelley Bajorek has high hopes for the product of all her hard work and is excited for the costumes, among other things.

"We have a lot of different inspirations and I think it's going to make for a really cool, technical show,

especially with the lights and the projections and how we're using the set," Director Shelley Bajorek said.

As is custom in musicals, the music is an important part of the show. Because the hired pit only comes in a week before the show opens, during the duration of the musical rehearsals it is just the singers, music director Mrs. Abha Dearing, and rehearsal pianist Hwa-Ling Russell.

"They learn all of the words and notes," Music Director Abha Dearing said. "Lots of harmony. We talk about excellent diction and enunciation and accenting of certain words and long phrases. We discuss the purpose of the music in the scene."

As the show comes closer there will be music rehearsals every day so actors can prepare for their singing roles on stage.

"I also spend time with all of the soloists, helping them to execute my vision of what their song should sound like," Dearing said. "But, more importantly, what resonates with them from the choices I give them."

The *Addams Family Musical: School Edition* is a passion project as the cast, crews, and directors spend time perfecting their vision of the show, so when the community comes together to enjoy it in a few short months, it will be a truly one of a kind experience.

"I feel like we're all putting our maximum effort into this and I can't wait to see it pay off," Agulto said.



The Grammys are approaching

STORY, PHOTO AND GRAPHICS: **ANEESA SYED, SENIOR REPORTER**

Has Taylor Swift won too many Grammys? Will “Espresso” be named record of the year? Will Chappell Roan be crowned best new artist? With the 2025 Grammy Awards just a month away, the musical competition between the country’s most dominating artists will be put to rest for the year.

“I’d really like Billie to win, senior Kimora Porter said. “After her new album came out and the tour is up and running she definitely deserves all the hype.”

Just like last year, there were over five nominees for Album of the Year, and the competition only grows stronger with each fan and critic vote.

“There’s a lot of competition this year, so I’m eager to see who will win especially with the artists that have made so much progress over the last year,” senior Jordan LeVasseur said.

While most of the artists will be returning nominees, there are a few first timers. After

“Good Luck Babe” was released in September of 2023, millions of now Chappell Roan fans have been slowly uncovering the rookie artist.

She began her music career in high school and released her most recent album “The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess” almost two years ago. Since Coachella, a popular American music festival, took place in Indio, California, Chappell’s music brought together thousands of fans. Months later, she is nominated for six grammys for her songs such as “HOT TO GO!” and “Pink Pony Club.”

“I enjoy listening to Chappell’s music, junior Kate Guerin said. I’m glad that her songs are different than the usual, because I hear a lot of the same stuff today.”

Similarly, Andre 3000 is nominated for Album of the Year alongside two other categories for his recent album “New Blue Sun,” while Jacob Collier is nominated for “Djesse Vol. 4.”

From Disney Channel to the Hollywood music industry, most of us have grown up

with what fans are calling her the “modern day Dolly Parton”- Sabrina Carpenter.

“I remember watching Sabrina Carpenter on ‘Girl Meets World,’” senior Ryley Kline said. “I feel like it was such a universally kid thing to do waking up and going straight to the couch to watch Disney Channel.”

Carpenter is nominated for six Grammys, all for her sixth studio album and widely recognized “Short n’ Sweet.” Her highest nomination includes Album of the Year, amongst the five others that will make her a first time nominee. Her most popular song, “Espresso,” broke billboard charts and became one of top pop songs of the year. “Short n’ Sweet” highlights her vocal versatility and embraces a nineties synth pop sound. Carpenter kicked off her tour just this past year, gaining millions of fans just with her upbeat choreography and setlist. She even performed songs from her album on both television and award shows.



It sits right next to the four time Album of the Year winner Taylor Swift’s “Fortnite.” Swift’s fourteenth studio album, “The Tortured Poets Department,” has been one of the highest anticipated albums of 2024 and garnered both critical acclaim and commercial success.

The concepts and work behind each song are what captured fans’ attention. The album has been praised for its melodic compositions and signature storytelling.

“I really liked it after listening to it for a while,” senior Mya Mapp said. “At first, it wasn’t something I expected from her because it was so different from her usual music. And the fact that she surprised us all with such a big project especially while touring is just crazy to me.”

Many fans were surprised that she announced a new album, despite her limited time and strict schedule while on The Eras Tour, the highest grossing tour of all time. She even released an alternate version of The Tortured Poets Department, called “The Analogy,” which in total is 31 songs, hence the reason fans are so adamant on Swift taking home Album of the Year along with five other grammys. It will be a tough competition against the other notable works.

Likewise, Billie Eilish’s fifth studio album “Hit Me Hard and Soft” released in May is another commercial success, with hits like “Birds of Feather,” and “Wildflower.” Eilish is known for her unique voice and storytelling which contribute to her Album of the Year nomination. Not only her nomination reflects the album’s impact, but it has influenced the music industry and other artists, as Eilish has collaborated with

a handful of artists.

“I feel like Billie is really relatable and has a strong female voice,” senior Robin Dybis said. “She doesn’t try to conform to the music industry standards.”

Eilish also collaborated with Charli XCX on “Guess”, a single on Charli’s sixth studio album “Brat”. After releasing the album in March, it has achieved significant popularity amongst the younger crowd. Tied with Taylor Swift and Sabrina Carpenter, it has been nominated for seven grammy awards, with a titling Album of the Year. Her past hit songs include “Boom Clap”, and more. Charli even coined the term “Brat Summer”.

Finally, Beyoncé’s eighth studio album “Cowboy Carter” released in March, and has made a cultural impact while blending themes of R&B and country. Beyoncé is leading the Grammy with eleven nominations with strong competition. “I liked Cowboy Carter,” senior Tori Hunter said. “It’s different from her previous albums and I didn’t think she would embrace country, but I think it sounds good!”

The Grammy’s will be airing on CBS at 8 p.m. on Sunday.

Where did the Grammys come from?

- It dates back to 1958, formerly named “The Gramophone awards”.
- It took place at the Beverly Hilton Hotel
- Some of the first time winners include Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra

Photo story: Mercy winter sports

PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS: **OLIVIA LORELLI, SENIOR REPORTER**



Senior Sophie Tursi waits at the goal during the Mercy hockey game against Northville. The Mercy Hockey team won the game 8-0. Photo by: Kristina Sikora.



Mercy Varsity Dance Team performs their hip-hop routine for fans during the half time of the Mercy basketball game. MVDT recognized their four seniors, Julia Wadowski, Lauren Ahmet, Jaylen Pecora and Jocelyn Gursin after their senior night performance.



Seniors Liaden Siegel and Evie Doneth pose on the base of the racing mountain. The home course for the Mercy Varsity Boardercross team is Mt. Brighton. Photo courtesy of Liaden Siegel.



Senior Captain Emily Walker shoots a free throw from the line after being fouled. Walker has been a 4 year varsity player for the Mercy Varsity Basketball team. Photo by: Kristina Sikora



Sophomore Caroline Paluk dribbles the ball into defense. Mercy Varsity Basketball is playing well in the Catholic League mid season, with recent wins against St. Ursula and Marian. Photo by: Kristina Sikora



Senior Hockey captain Grace DeKlerk beats a Northville defensive player in a race to the puck. Mercy Varsity Hockey will continue their season against Cranbrook-Kingswood on February 1st. Photo by: Kristina Sikora.



Mercy Varsity Boardercross team prepares for their race at Mt. Brighton. They will compete in Catholic Leagues in the coming week. Photo by: Kristina Sikora.



Senior Mya Mapp begins her bowling match with a strike. Mercy Bowling will compete against the Divine Child bowling team on February 1st to continue their season. Photo by: Kristina Sikora

Mruzik goes from Mercy Marlin to National Champion

STORY AND GRAPHICS: **STELLA COE, JUNIOR REPORTER**

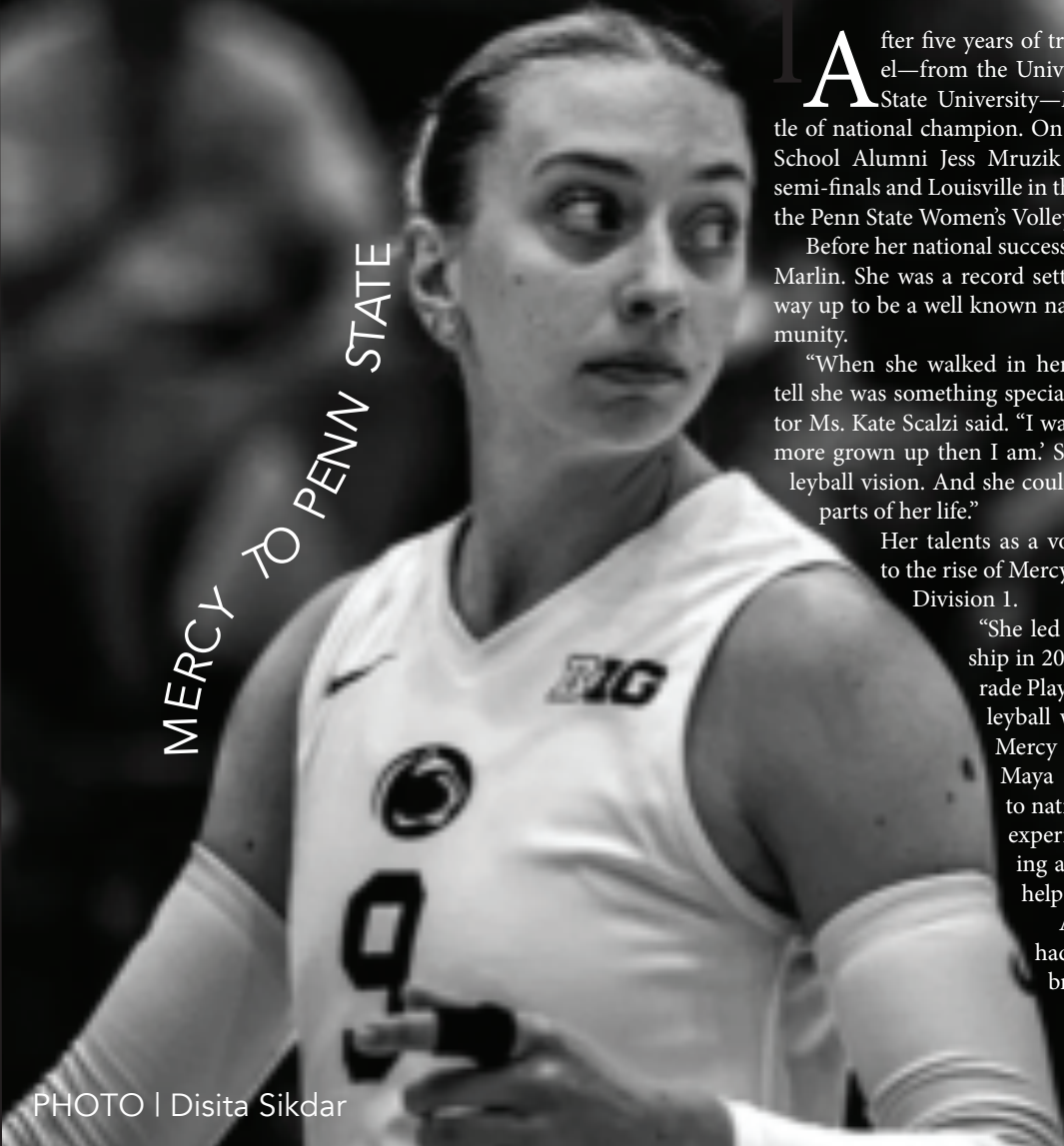


PHOTO | Disita Sikdar

After five years of training at the collegiate level—from the University of Michigan to Penn State University—Mruzik finally took the title of national champion. On Dec. 22, 2024 Mercy High School Alumni Jess Mruzik defeated Nebraska in the semi-finals and Louisville in the championship game with the Penn State Women's Volleyball team.

Before her national success, Mruzik started as a Mercy Marlin. She was a record setting player and worked her way up to be a well known name within the Mercy community.

"When she walked in her freshman year you could tell she was something special," Assistant Athletic Director Ms. Kate Scalzi said. "I was like 'oh okay she's already more grown up than I am.' She had a vision, like a volleyball vision. And she could also bring that into other parts of her life."

Her talents as a volleyball player contributed to the rise of Mercy as a top competitor within Division 1.

"She led them to a state championship in 2019 and won National Gatorade Player of the Year and Miss Volleyball which is incredible," Junior Mercy Varsity Volleyball player Maya Zarow said. "From Mercy to national champion, I think her experience leading and also playing at a big stage in high school helped."

Aside from the awards, she had a natural talent that she brought to the Mercy team.

"She had a sense of where on the floor everyone should be, she could see that," Ms. Scalzi said. "You're like okay this is

someone who gets it."

After she graduated from Mercy she spent time on the University of Michigan's Volleyball team. Then she decided to further her education as a masters student at Penn State and advance her skills on a new college team.

"She's an amazing passer and attacker, especially in high pressure moments," Junior Mercy Varsity Volleyball player Ella Andrews said. "I feel like she remains calm and she's really able to compete at a high level and maintain confidence."

Ms. Scalzi, who has watched her grow from Mercy to the collegiate levels, said the same: "She just continues to improve. I thought she was an amazing player as a freshman. She could jump before, but now it was like five times that. I hope the Olympic committee is paying attention and brings her on."

Although the next Olympics are some time away the Mercy community is cheering for Jess and her success.

"Professional volleyball will go well for her as she's a hard worker and keeps getting better and better," Zarow said. "Hopefully she will be on the Olympic national team in 2028!"

"I definitely think she'll get to the Olympics like right now she's playing Love Volleyball Houston, which is a professional team and she is doing really well," Andrews said. "On her rookie debut she had the most kills in a match, which is crazy."

Mruzik's future is bright and her Mercy Volleyball legacy will and has inspired future Mercy volleyball players.

"She's not only left a legacy in college volleyball, Penn State, University of Michigan, but definitely at Mercy," Ms. Scalzi said. "I think she's a big part of the way we got players like Julia Bishop, Ellie Tisko, and Amina Robinson who played with her. And like Campbell Flynn. I don't think Campbell would have been standing there winning if Jess had not gone there first—not to take away from Campbell's amazing playing, but Jess was like 'hey Mercy Volleyball' and made that spotlight shine a little better."

Campbell Flynn '25 wins Volleyball National Gatorade Player of the Year

STORY AND PHOTO: **REESE KIZY, TESS O'DONNELL, AND MEGAN SULLIVAN**

Today, Mercy graduate Campbell Flynn received the Volleyball Gatorade National Player of the Year award. Under the guise of an interview, Flynn walked into the Mercy gym and was immediately surrounded by family and friends as she was presented the trophy from retired professional volleyball player April Ross, three-time Olympic Medalist in beach volleyball and 2000 Volleyball National Gatorade National Player of the Year.

Flynn celebrated the prestigious award, the highest high school athletic recognition she has received, with a press conference, interviews, and photos with family, friends, and coaches.

"I had a feeling something was happening," Flynn said. "I didn't think it was going to be this. It was so crazy, but I wouldn't have had it any other way. All my family and friends were there and it was just such a surreal moment."

The Volleyball Gatorade National Player of the Year award recipient is chosen by a selection committee composed of a range of sports advisers, coaches, high school sports experts, and journalists in order to get a wide variety

of viewpoints. Athletes are chosen based on their athletic performance, academics within the classroom, and their character, including involvement in the community.

Flynn became the second Mercy student to win the Volleyball National Gatorade Player of the Year award, following Jess Mruzik '19, who received the award in 2020. Mruzik went on to play volleyball at the University of Michigan and Penn State University, eventually winning the 2024 D1 Volleyball National Championship with the Penn State team.

When asked how she felt being now the third volleyball player from Michigan to win the award Flynn answered simply:

"It's an honor." Flynn said. "Putting another Michigan name [on the award] is very special."

Flynn accepted her trophy alongside her mom, dad, brother, sister, and grandparents, all filled with pride.

"I've worked really hard for this and I think I deserve it but there's also other amazing athletes that also deserve it, so I'm just really honored to get it," Flynn said.



Campbell Flynn receives the National Gatorade Player of the year on Jan. 10. She celebrated with her team and Mercy Varsity Volleyball Coach, Loretta Vogel. Photo by: Reese Kizy.

Take this quiz to find out who you will be in the new year.

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What is your mood entering 2025?

