

AUHSD PLANS TO LAY OFF OVER 100 TEACHERS RIF Notices Sent To 253 Teachers Before March 15 Deadline

By REHANSA KULATILLEKE



Students like Jade Hoang attended the Board meeting to support teachers. (Photo by Rehansa Kulatilleke)

Recently, the AUHSD sent 253 notices to teachers, notifying them that they are at risk of being laid off from their jobs. On Thursday, March 7th, the district held a public school board meeting to discuss a collection of topics including teacher layoffs, which has led students, teachers, parents, and alumni to question whether or not the AUHSD has made the right decision.

According to the district, as a result of the declining number of enrolled students in the district, several budget cuts have to be made. Over 250 teachers received a RIF notice—(Reduction in Force, also known as a layoff). RIF regulations are determined by state law. The final decision, with some exceptions, will be made based on the seniority of the teachers. Teachers who have worked within the AUHSD for an extended period will have a higher chance of keeping their current position, whereas teachers who have only just recently joined the district are more subject to getting laid off. The final decision will be effective at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. Shockingly, teachers who have been working for AUHSD for up to 22 years received notices. The Board did not approve any layoffs in other departments, such as counseling, clerical staff, or district office personnel.

Naturally, people are upset with the news partly because there will be approximately 110 fewer jobs, while so many more teachers received a RIF notice. The district plans on sending the list of teachers who are confirmed to be laid off starting March 15th throughout August. Cypress ASTA Representative (Teachers Union) and Culinary teacher, **Mrs. Karapoulios** shared, “After March 15th, as the district gets a better feel for what all the schools will need in staffing they could possibly start the process of rescinding the RIF notices.” Rescinding the notices can take until the beginning of the next school year. Teachers, students, parents, and even alumni from all over the district attended the board meeting on March 7th, 2024 which was scheduled to include topics including the teacher layoffs. Students wore red shirts to

symbolize their support for teachers with the phrase “Red for Ed.” In the earlier part of the meeting, the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, **Nancy Nien**, explained why making a great deal of budget cuts would be ideal for the future of the AUHSD. Chairperson for the Bylaws Committee—**Alan Walker** also explained what the district spent some of its bond money on, including some things approved by voters such as new renovations and projects that ultimately cost tens of millions of dollars. Some projects included building a cyber security building in Magnolia High School that would cost 47.9 million dollars. Along with that, the district announced that they are planning to pay for a \$450,000 feature that allows eKadence to check for AI on information being received from teachers, while we’ve already spend over \$100K on Google Suite, including Google Classroom.

“...this is their lives worth—to be laid off it just seems like they’re not very considerate about their work that they do and the change that affect students’ lives.”

- Abby Tafesse

Following the news about teachers potentially losing their jobs, students, teachers, and alumni gathered for the open discussion portion of the meeting to relate how teachers have played an important role in their lives and how some of them would not be the people they are without their teachers. A senior from Oxford High School spoke out by saying, “Despite us students being fairly young, we’ve gone through enough schooling to understand the basic math equation. No educators equal no education....Why boast about the pride and the programs that we offer and the facilities we are constructing if we can’t help to keep the teachers that provide the most benefits to our students? Why should they bear the burden of our budgeting problems?... Is AUHSD education working for students, or is it the other way around?” Despite the pleas of students and other speakers, the board agreed to continue with their plans and voted unanimously for 110

layoffs. Board member **Anna Piercy** was absent. Students from all over the district are uniting to help the teachers who have always stood by them. Students from Cypress such as **Gavin Kim**, have helped create petitions to stand up for teachers. On March 14, students at Brookhurst Junior High planned to march to the AUHSD offices in protest. Other students from Oxford have created social media accounts to spread more information about the teacher layoffs, gaining the support of a total of 800 followers of not only students but parents and alumni as well. A junior at Cypress, **Abby Tafesse** shared, “I think I speak for everybody when I say that it’s bad...I can tell you most of those teachers genuinely care about their job—they care about their students...when it’s teachers in the VAPA department that have spent over 20 years, decades, and decades in this department—this is their lives worth—to be laid off it just seems like they’re not very considerate about their work that they do and the change that affect students’ lives.”

Last year at this time some teachers also got the same news that they might get laid off. Different from this year, the number of teachers who were laid off was substantially less than the number of layoffs expected this year.

Students and teachers from all over the district are seeking a way to potentially reverse the call for teacher layoffs. As of March 10, 2024, the initial petition Save Our Teachers Petition has collected over 3,000 signatures signed by students and teachers.



Superintendent Michael Matsuda (rt.) recently posted a YouTube video explaining the district’s reasoning about why teacher layoffs are necessary. (Photo by Rehansa Kulatilleke)

AUHSD Seniors Visit Medieval Times

By ANISH ASHOKKUMAR

High school seniors from across the district gathered at Medieval Times on March 5, stepping into a realm of knights and queens. As students entered the lobby, they were greeted with souvenirs, beckoning them to embark on a journey through time.

The air buzzed with excitement as students eagerly explored the lobby, with anticipation for the night’s festivities. When the doors opened at 7:30pm servers in medieval attire led the students into the arena, where each school was represented. Each color had their own trained knight who competed against other knights in proper chivalry. Cypress was represented by orange. The noise in the arena was thunderous since every high school was showing off their school pride.

Throughout the show, students were treated to a three-course feast. The courses consist of chicken legs, garlic bread and an array of savory sauces. For the vegetarian option, there were crisp carrots, warm pita bread, creamy hummus, soup, corn, and savory potatoes.



Seniors cheered as the knights lined up to compete. (Photo by Vincent Hopkins)

As students savored the medieval-style food, there were many great stunts the knights did. Trained horses executed graceful dances to catchy tunes, while hawks soared overhead, shocking the audience with their amazing fights. The knights engaged in exciting sword battles, receiving cheers and applause from the crowd. As the knights were fighting, students were screaming for their respective knights to win, encouraging their own knights.

Senior **Akbar Shaikh** said, “I enjoyed the sword fights between the knights.” The arena was filled with exciting energy throughout the show.

In a climactic finale, victory was claimed by Kennedy’s noble champion, ending a glorious moment in an evening filled with excitement.

How Many Clovers Can You Find?

Pages 4-5



Answer: seven in total!

2 RAMADAN 2024 CELEBRATED

Many Americans have heard of Ramadan but don't know how it works; so what is Ramadan?

By YAZEED ALBADARIN



Muslims participate in Ramadan to worship God, gain moral consciousness and become closer with family. (Photo by UFC)

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar. Healthy adult Muslims fast in Ramadan from dawn until dusk. This includes abstaining from drinking, eating, immoral acts, and anger. Other acts of worship such as prayer, reading the Quran, and charity are also encouraged during the holy month.

Ramadan began on Monday, March 11, the date varies depending on the sighting of the new moon. Muslims believe that Ramadan is the month when the first verses of the holy book, the Quran were revealed. Why does Ramadan start on different dates every year?

Ramadan begins 10 to 12 days earlier each year. This is because the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar Hijri calendar with 29 or 30 days long months. Because the lunar year is shorter than the solar year by 11 days.

The dawn-to-dusk fast lasts anywhere from 12 to 17

hours, depending on which part of the world you are in.

Ramadan isn't just about not eating or drinking, it's about worship. It's about focusing on our Deen (religion or way of life) and removing bad habits, it's about cultivating self-control, gratitude, and compassion, a time to self-reflect and improve. It's about gaining greater God consciousness, a state of constant awareness of God. From that state, we gain discipline, and a greater incentive to do good and avoid wrongs. It's a time to get closer to our religion, to God, to our family, and friends. This year, more kids are encouraged to fast to get an understanding of what life feels like for the kids in Gaza and to show solidarity. A report by The United Nations says "In the north, one in six children under the age of two is acutely malnourished and media reports have indicated that at least 20 youngsters have died from starvation in recent days, including a 14-day-old baby." and "Well over 30,000 people have now been killed amid intense daily Israeli bombardment."

Mohammed Abukhalaf, a sophomore at Cypress High says "I love Ramadan, the vibes are great, we stay up a lot, we pray during the morning, you focus on yourself and your Deen it's only between you and God, and at night you get to hang out with your friends,

eat out...it's just a holy month, you get to wash away your sins and feel holy again." Abukhalaf talked about his experience being an athlete during Ramadan "It used to be difficult, especially the first couple of years I started playing seriously on a team, it was tougher because we would have long games and it would be in hot weather, I still struggle sometimes but your faith has to be strong, you always know god is watching... I've gotten to points where you are really, really thirsty but I would just sleep or do anything to let the time pass by."

Yaman Atwat says "My experience with Ramadan, Alhamdulillah (praise to God or thank God) it's always interesting. During the month, it's tiring, it goes day by day.

And then when Eid (Eid al-Fitr means "festival of breaking the fast" and marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.) happens, it's a beautiful time, everyone comes together."



(lft.) Mohammed Abukhalaf (rt.) Yaman Atwat (Photo by Yazeed Albadarin)

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Cypress High School's Interim Assistant Principal: A Leader On and Off the Court

By MIFRAH BAWANY



Carlo Davis is the new assistant principal, serving the students of Cypress High School. (Photo by Mifrah Bawany)

Cypress High School has a new addition to the staff, interim assistant principal **Mr. Carlo Davis**, who brings a unique blend of educational leadership and athletic skills to the community. He has a lot of experience not only in education but coaching as well. He is a coach at Katella High School and has been the head boys basketball coach since 2017, further enhancing his connection with the students.

With a background in both academics and athletics, Davis embodies the values of teamwork, discipline, and dedication essential for success both in the classroom and on the court. His passion for coaching and mentoring student-athletes started decades ago. Davis' dual role allows him to connect with students on a deeper level,

understanding their challenges and aspirations both in academics and sports. One piece of advice Davis would give to a student is that his demanding role requires a constant commitment to encouraging a cohesive learning environment. He previously taught math at Anaheim Union High School District since 2001 along with teaching at Paramount Union High School District for five years before that.

Cypress High School is glad to have Carlo Davis join its administrative team as the new interim Assistant Principal and looks forward to seeing how he positively influences all students.

Counseling Secretary, **Jessica Olano** said, "We love having Mr. Davis over here and we hope that he works in this school permanently."

Entertainment

Ordinary Angels, Based on a Real Story

By CARLY PEDROZA



Ordinary Angels is screening at Krikorian Metroplex 18, AMC and Regal Edwards. (Photo by Carly Pedroza)

The new faith-based drama film, *Ordinary Angels*, is based on a true story of a lady from Louisville, KN named Sharon Stevens who helped get 5-year-old Michelle Schmidts a life-saving liver transplant. The movie was released Feb. 22, 2024. The movie shows the struggles and challenges that the Schmidts family went through, trying to get Michelle a liver donor.

The American director Jon Gunn has been directing movies since 1999. Gunn has direct-

ed movies such as... "Case For Christ" in 2017, "Do You Believe?" In 2015, "The Week" in 2014, "Like Dandelion Dust" in 2009, "My Date with Drew" in 2004 and many more dramas.

The movie stars many actors including Alan Ritchson, Hilary Swank, Nancy Travis, Sykwalker Hughes, Amy Acker, Drew Powell, Tamala Jones and Emily Mitchell. The movie was filmed in Albany, NY in June of 2022.

Hilary Swank plays the lead part Sharon Stevens, the hairdresser from Louisville, KN who helps the family clear their debt and raise money for Michelle's liver donor by starting fundraisers. Swank starred in movies such as "The Next Karate Kid," "Cheaper By The Dozen," "Something Borrowed" and many more.

Swank has also won two Oscars for the films, "Boys Don't Cry" and "Million Dollar Baby."

In the movie, a struggling hairdresser reads about Schmidts' story in a newspaper and finds her purpose again. Stevens helps Michelle's widowed father raise money and pay off debt, by gathering the community together to help get his daughter a liver donor. Michelle's father refused advice from those around him as his doubt grew bigger. Throughout the movie people see the struggles that an ordinary family can face.

From displayed lessons to the moments of love and support, the movie shows the importance of partnership. By the end of the film the audience realizes how your life and/or other lives around you can be taken in an instant.

Kung Fu Panda 4 Released March 8th

By ROBERTO CARDENAS



Kung Fu Panda 4 is now available at theaters. (Photo by Universal Pictures Canada)

On March 8th the movie *Kung Fu Panda 4* was released. The Dreamworks production is a heartfelt family movie about friendship and trust. It made around 100 million worldwide, making it the 9th highest-grossing movie of 2024.

The movie starts out with Po trying to find a new dragon warrior because he is pressured by Master Shifu to become the new spiritual leader of the Valley of Peace. He

sets off and meets a thieving fox named Zhen but little does he know she is working for the main villain of the movie that goes by The Chameleon. Zhen's motive was to steal Po's Staff of Wisdom to return it to the shape-shifting villain. Po didn't know what was going on so he set off with Zhen to fight The Chameleon. She betrays him and takes the staff, giving it to The Chameleon. Po feels betrayed but beats The Chameleon ultimately saving the day then making Zhen the new Dragon Warrior.

When it was revealed Zhen was working for The Chameleon the audience was sure shocked. There was barely any sign of it which is probably why it got such a big re-

action. Another big jaw-dropper was when Po was shoved off the mountain by The Chameleon. Weirdly a lot of the audience members didn't like Zhen. Audience members had some strong things to say about her, one comment being, "I hate her."

The movie was given a 6.6 IMDb and a 71% score on Rotten Tomatoes. On Google it was given 3.7 out of 5. Surprisingly it had made a lot of money in the box office despite it being so low in ratings. Some of the cast had returned although The Furious Five had not been present in this movie. It could've been because the actors didn't want to do it but in the movie, it was explained that they were all on separate missions.



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Cypress Visual Arts Participates in Color & Light Art Exhibition

By GRACE KIM & BELLE PACCIONE



AUHS's 23rd annual Color & Light Show was filled with visits from art lovers. (Photo by Grace Kim)

On March 18, 2024, works from visual arts students at Cypress High School were displayed at the annual art show hosted by Anaheim Union High School District. At the Center Gallery inside Anaheim Downtown Community Center, 20 high schools displayed student work. Despite the rainy weather, many teachers, students, faculty, and musicians gathered to make this event a success.

At the large gallery located in the center of Anaheim, hundreds of pieces were hung on walls and stands. The prize-winning works were displayed inside acrylic panels with award ribbons. Cypress High's photography teacher **Chris Johnson** explained, "With divisions from jr. high and high school students, 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards are presented for

each category: \$100 dollars for first place, \$75 dollars 2nd place, and \$50 dollars 3rd place. Students are able to win in multiple categories as well. The best-in-show earns an award of \$200 dollars."

Ranging from photography, drawing, painting, ceramics, printmaking, and mixed-media, 300 different types of artworks, including those from scholars with disabilities were displayed. Cypress High's Art teacher **Ross Geerdes** commented, "I like that it's an all-district show so that we can see what students are doing at other schools. It's kind of a nice opportunity for everyone to come together and share the artwork they're doing and see what others are doing as well."

Seeing different ideas and creativity of students, superintendent

Michael B. Matsuda was delighted to be a part of the event. "I think it's really an opportunity for students to express their emotions about themselves and about the world. It's great to see so many topics that students they are covering. There are a lot of expressions about love for their families and their communities--that's what I see from the pieces," he stated.

The community and educational partners were able to celebrate and observe student creativity through this district-wide event. In addition to encouraging student achievement through the kind donations and attendance, the online event fostered community relationships by bringing together local businesses, organizations, and dignitaries to support arts education.



Music provided by the Loara High School Jazz Combo and foods and amenities from the Anaheim Hills Auxiliary accentuated the event. (photo by Grace Kim)



Prize-winning artworks were displayed inside acrylic panels for people to see. (Photo by Belle Paccione)



Cypress VAPA teachers Mr. Geerdes (left) and Mr. Johnson enjoyed viewing student works across the entire district (Photo by Grace Kim)

Meet the 2024-2025 ASB Leaders

By DEBORAH SON, YAZEED ALBADARIN & CARLY PEDROZA



The 2024-2025 ASB leaders are working together to provide a great year for students at Cypress High School. (Photo by Deborah Son)

The Cypress High School Associated Student Body (ASB) elections concluded on March 1, 2024. After heavy competition, officers elected include: **Aimee Bunsirisert** as President, **Alexander Safo** as Vice President and **Alicia Villegas** as Senior Class President. Students started voting on March 27, 2024, to choose their top candidates. One vote for every student was given during Check and Connect.

The 2024-2025 ASB President is **Aimee Bunsirisert**, a junior at Cypress High School. She previously served as the Class President of ASB and fulfilled the duty of bringing students of Cypress High School together. "I've been doing ASB for a long time, so it felt right to run for president," Bunsirisert said. ASB has been a major part of her life and she hopes to continuously bring passion for students next year. Her main priorities are to lead by example, make Cypress spirited and to interact with a variety of students. "Savor the moments; you will miss out on the experience if you don't try," she said.

Alexander Safo was chosen to serve as the 2024-2025 ASB

Vice President of Cypress High School. He has been in ASB for several years and is ready to take on a new challenge to guide the students with determination. "For the campaign, I planned it out and brainstormed ideas with some friends and executed it," Safo said. His main goal for next year as the ASB Vice President is to ensure the positivity and enthusiasm of the students at Cypress High School: "I hope that everyone will look forward to next year."

Alicia Villegas was elected as Senior Class President of ASB after being a part of the student body since sophomore year. "As the senior class president, I hope to involve the senior class more, ask questions about what they want to do and are looking forward to," Villegas said. She decided to run for Senior Class President with the desire of constructing a solid plan for seniors next year. "I am honored to be able to organize all the activities for our class and represent it in some way," she said.

The ASB leaders will ensure all students at Cypress High School have a fulfilling year.

"Savor the moments; you will miss out on the experience you don't try"

-Aimee Bunsirisert



Centurion Games Raise Awareness

By YOSHI VASQUEZ MORENO

ASB runs the Centurion Games annually, raising money for the CHOC Foundation, as well as awareness for CHOC and their cause to help children patients from their hospitals in need.



Students are currently participating in the Centurion Games to showcase school spirit and raise funds for support of CHOC. (Photo by Cypress Journalism)

On Wednesday, March 20, the entire school was on assembly schedule in order to allow all students to see the Dodgeball team finals.

This year, the games being played include: Inner Tube Water Polo, Dodgeball, Human Foosball, Cornhole, Home Run Derby, and Spikeball. ASB Athletics Commissioner, **Jackson Houston**, says, "Any Cypress High student is allowed to participate."

This year's games allow the students to have fun and

commit to the five C's, as well as play to help raise money and awareness for children in need.

The games include communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and character/compassion between all the teams, the orange team, Freshmen and Seniors versus the blue team, Sophomores and Juniors. As of now, over \$3,000 have been raised from the games, with the goal of \$5,000. **Alex Safo**, Spirit Commissioner, is confident CHS will reach the goal. "Last year we raised six thousand dollars," he said.



The orange team was defeated 1-3 by the blue team in Human Foosball on 3/18. (Photo by Cypress Journalism)

Choir Delivers Their Competition Showcase With High Voltage 5

Early Microphone Issue Doesn't Stop the Show

By JAYDEN KAY LINAYAO



The choir show on March 8th featured the competition sets of all three choir groups. (Photo by Mr. Meza)

The Cypress Choir program had an extremely busy competition season. At the Burbank competition, all levels placed with High Voltage placing third, Pink Thunder placing third, and Voltage Unlimited placing fourth. And on March 8th, they held their competition showcase in the Centurion Theater to display what they have been working on since October. On Saturday, March 16, they performed at their last competition for the year at Los Alamitos.

At the beginning of the show, the Centurion singers battled issues with the microphones. They handled the situation with professionalism and grace, and the show went on perfectly. Junior **Dylan Mortera**, bass on High Voltage, and Junior **Leah Rivera**, alto on High Voltage, had their microphones off during their duet. "Well, as a performer, when you're on that stage and you know something's wrong, you still have to get up there and perform. Halfway through the song, we noticed that her mic was off, and she still carried on with the show," Mortera replied, "It's kind of like a natural thing when you're on that

stage, the nerves only came on after we came off the stage." Luckily, after intermission, the couple got to redo their duet with both voices loud and clear through the speakers.

The three groups had their very own themes for the show. High Voltage "cooked" with their food chef-themed songs such as "Be a Chef" from Disney's *Mulan* and "Le Festin" from Disney's *Ratatouille*, and their food-themed costumes. Pink Thunder had a pageant theme, wearing gorgeous gowns and tiaras. Last but not least, Voltage Unlimited opened the show with an upbeat list of songs, and sequin-covered sparkly uniforms. **JC Delgado**, Junior tenor on High Voltage commented, "At Burbank, I felt amazing after hearing that we won third place out of nine schools. It was something that we worked really hard on, and to know that we were competing against some of the top schools in the country was unreal. It felt amazing to be considered a top group alongside them." Another member of High Voltage, **Eshani Banerjee**, mentioned, "That was a really big win for us because we didn't expect

to place that high against nine schools." In another huge achievement for the choir, **Farah Aqmal**, sophomore alto on Pink Thunder earned best performer at the Los Alamitos High School, Brea High School, and Chaparral High School competitions just this year. "I felt really happy and excited. The first time I won it was kind of hard to process. Even now it's still hard for me to process that I've won three." Aqmal's goal is to do choir all four years of high school, and she believes that choir will expand further and hopes that people will see "how fun and cool it is."

High Voltage sophomore Soprano **Yunalesca Chem** said, "It's fun to perform and showcase to other schools' choirs and also see what kind of sets they have been rehearsing for. **Mrs. Jones** and **Karina Alfajora** have pushed us a lot with both vocal and dance practice and I'm really thankful for all the hard work everyone has put in for us, including the students and chaperones too."

This competition season has been undoubtedly eventful for the Cypress show choir.



Junior Julie Dubois (left) demonstrates how to really deliver a performance to the audience. (Photo by Mr. Meza)



Senior Sal Cervantes is totally comfortable in any role, even a stick of butter. (Photo by Mr. Meza)



Freshmen Aidan Lam, Brandon Truong, Stephen Mihindukulasuriya (lft. to rt.) serve it up during a performance of the song "Put It In the Oven." (Photo by Mr. Meza)



Pink Thunder's sophomore Ashley Ong helped the audience "See Stars" within themselves. (Photo by Mr. Meza)

Harmonizing Academics and Music

By BELLE PACCIONE



Band life is the best life! (Photo by Belle Paccione)

Cypress High School's band members exemplify dedication, camaraderie, and resilience. Through their shared passion for music, they navigate the challenges of academic life while fostering meaningful connections and creating unforgettable memories. As they continue to pursue their musical aspirations, they inspire others to dream big and strive for excellence in all aspects of life. Mr. Quirion, who has been teaching at Cypress since

1999. His duties include directing the Marching Band and Pageantry – Sound in Motion, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra Club, Percussion, and Pageantry. They boast a vibrant and talented band community, where students not only excel in their musical pursuits but also find ways to balance academics and extracurricular activities. Let's dive into the experiences and perspectives of some of our band members:

- Kristin Buttner**, 9th Grade
Her Instrument is Saxophone. Favorite Pieces: "Glorious Victory" and "Cajun." Favorite Artist: Drake. Kristin finds joy in playing the saxophone and cherishes the camaraderie within the band. Balancing academics with school life, she emphasizes the importance of time management and values the supportive environment within the band.
- Joseph Arcilla**, 12th Grade
His Instrument is an Alto Saxophone. Favorite Pieces to play is: Marches. Favorite Musician: Leo P. Joseph enjoys playing marches and values the friendships he's formed in the band. He highlights the Arcadia Band Review as a memorable performance and stresses the significance of managing time effectively to balance academics and band commitments.
- Joshua Nguyen**, 11th Grade
His Instrument is the trombone. Favorite Pieces: "Urban" and "Sleigh Ride." Favorite Artist: Mac DeMarco or "The Sundays" Joshua appreciates the sense of community within the band and trea-

tures the lasting friendships he's made. Despite the challenges of balancing academics and band, he finds inspiration in the dedication of his peers and values the life lessons learned through music.

- Alaa Hassouneh**, 12th Grade
Her Instruments are a Clarinet and Bassoon (during marching season) Favorite Piece: Korean Folk Song. Favorite Artist: Bruno Mars. Hassouneh reminisces about the beautiful moments during rehearsals and performances, emphasizing the electrifying atmosphere of band events. With support from their teacher, Mr. Q, and structured study periods, Alaa manages to excel with the support from her teacher, Mr. Q and Ms. G and structured study periods, Hassouneh manages to excel in both academics and music.

"I'm really proud of my students, they have come a long way, they also have improved musically and they are getting stronger by the day," Quirion said. Cypress High School band has learned that true harmony is not just found in the music they create but in the unity of their spirits.

6-Sports BADMINTON TEAM SMASHES THEIR WAY TO A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

Cypress badminton debuts their season with winning scores against, Cerritos, Kennedy, and Gahr High School.

By REHANSA KULATILLEKE

After only two weeks of practicing in the gym, Cypress Badminton played their first game of this season, winning 13-8 against Cerritos followed by a score of 17-4 against Marina and 17-4 against Kennedy. After last year's successful season when Cypress finished as Co-Champions for CIF with Cerritos, the badminton team is training hard in hopes of another triumphant season.

The team's formula for their success includes rigorous warm-up routines before each game. In addition to the standard footwork drills, they kick off every practice with dynamic stretches. These stretches are designed to target several muscle groups, with the main focus on the lower body. Players are independently guided throughout a series of stretches that span the length of the court, promoting

flexibility and injury prevention. This routine prepares their bodies for the games and helps improve their overall performance on the court. Junior, **Linda Taing**, said, "Legs are definitely the most important part—like having strong legs in badminton is a necessity because you're moving a lot." Following that, they move on to their normal warm-ups which include jumping jacks, mountain climbers, ski jumpers, and many more. During the first two months of the year, the main and practice gym are typically unavailable due to the CIF Basketball games, leaving the team with limited space to practice. As a result, the team usually focuses on conditioning exercises near the tennis courts to ensure they stay in shape before the games begin.

Players shared that they have grown closer to the people on

the team. The captain of both the JV and Varsity teams, **Fiona Huang** says, "I tend to not get too close to people, but this year I have a lot of people on the team that's really close to me right now." As players form stronger bonds with their teammates, they get more opportunities to strengthen their self-confidence. Junior—**Gabby Duran** shares, "The best part of being on the team is...knowing that even if you do bad, or having an off day, your teammates are always there to support you and reassure you that it's okay...and knowing that there are people who are proud of you no matter what."

Badminton's most recent game against Gahr ended with a winning score of 18-3. As the season continues, there is no doubt that Cypress badminton will end up with another successful season.



Last year, Cypress earned their spot as co-champions in CIF. (Photo by Rehansa Kulatilleke)



Cypress defeated Marina High School 17-4 on February 29th. (Photo by Rehansa Kulatilleke)



Team Captain, Fiona Huang (lft.) and Varsity player Gabby Duran (rt.), know that a close team bond is important. (Photo by Rehansa Kulatilleke)

Building Legacies: Cypress Golf Teams Soar – Girls Set the Stage, Boys Rise to the Challenge

By GRACE KIM



Even rainy weather can't stop the boys from practicing at the golf course. (Photo by Madison Spicer)

Cypress boy's golf team began their season impressively. Continuing the legacy left by the girls this year, boy's golf started strong with a victory at Brea Olinda with a score of 203-243. The boy's team demonstrated skill and determination, setting a positive tone for the rest of their season.

Ending the season with a tie-breaker at Empire League Finals, girl's golf equalled Crean Lutheran with a score of 198-198. Varsity girl's golf captain **Tania Maheshwari** commented, "I think the best thing we felt this season together was our last game, in which we played against Crean Lutheran. Celebrating this impressive progress, even our injured play-

ers that came back, was truly one of the best moments." Shortly after the end of girl's golf season, on February 28, the boys' team took off to their first game, facing a tough challenge against Portola High. Despite a closely contested match, they were narrowly defeated with a score of 198-195. In spite of this setback, the boys rebounded quickly in their next game against Brea Olinda High School on March 7, with a solid score of 203-243.

Setting a bright tone, Coach **Susan Metry** explained her excitement for the upcoming season. "We're just starting—we just had our first match last week, and we had a couple of freshmen that were really clicking it up. Even having a

senior that signed for a D1 school playing college golf, I think everything will be pretty exciting. I think we're going to be a hard team to beat in the future."

With Varsity players like **Ryan Slevcove** signing with Iona University boy's golf team, the boy's golf roster is filled with talented players looking forward to an exciting season. Gearing up for the upcoming games with Marina, Valencia, and another match with Brea Olinda High School, boy's golf considers the first few games as warm up games that can help them prepare for the future. Boy's golf is focused on improving their skills and preparing for success, aiming to go far and soar on the field in their future competitions.

Track and Field Speeds Towards Victory

By DANICA DIZON & MINNIE VEGA



Senior Ethan Montoya dominating hurdles. (Photo by Jonathon Rice)

The Track and Field season includes multiple events like; sprinters, distance runners, hurdlers, jumpers, and throwers.

Coaches include Head Track and Field Coach **John Eyman**, Sprinters Coach **Morgan Rose**, Distance Coaches **Matthew Tweed**, and **Brooke Montgomery**, Hurdles Coach **Karen Frank-Johnson**, Long-jump and High-jump Coach **Dan Falt**, and Throwing Coach **Michael Cobleigh**.

With a new track being built, Coach Eyman has said for practices, "We have been going to various locations... and doing many things here at Cypress High School. So, just do the best we can to proceed with the construction."

While having fun, the track team practices hard to win as many meets as possible. Competing in Empire League, the Cypress Track and Field team has competed in three invitationals with Mater Dei and Edison, St. Paul, and Triton. They also competed in a quad meet with John

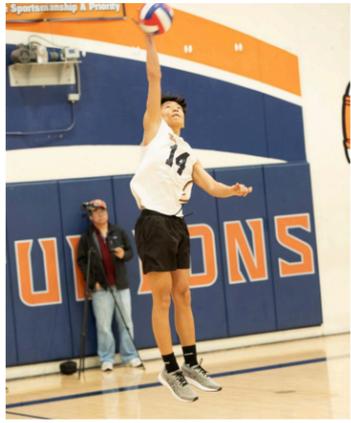
Glenn, La Habra, and Bellflower as well as a tri-meet with Cal High and El Monte. The track team has also competed in a dual meet with Crean Lutheran.

As a high jumper, senior **Marrissa Krebs** advises athletes to, "always give it your all and have fun." Experience is at play when it comes to new athletes or old athletes, junior **Hector Castellanos** said, "listen to your coaches and anyone who has a lot of experience because they have so much knowledge of the sport and they can help you pursue the sport when you need it."

Something that makes the track team here at Cypress High School stand out from other schools is that the athletes here like to work hard and have fun. Later into the season, Cypress will be competing against other schools like Kennedy, Pacifica, will be a part of the Arcadia Invite, and Tustin. After all meets are completed, Cypress will be going to compete in Orange County Championships, League games, and CIF.

Boy's Volleyball Team Dominates On The Court

By CARA KARPAN



JV starter Ryan Kim uses great serving skills, to help the team to 1st place in Empire League. (Photo by Cypress Yearbook)

The Cypress High School boys' volleyball team is making noise this season, showcasing their talent and dedication on the court. With every serve, set, and spike, they're proving themselves as a force to be reckoned with in the league.

Led by Coach **Alex Griffiths**, the team has been training tirelessly, improving their skills and perfecting their strategies. By winning their first two league games against Crean Lutheran and Pacifica, having a record of 11-1, and being runner up in the Foothill tournament by going 5-1, their hard work is clear in their flawless teamwork and impressive performance in every match.

Captains **Trace Oswald** and **Noah Zapanta** lead by ex-

ample, inspiring their teammates with their exceptional leadership both on and off the court. When their team is faced with challenges on the court, Oswald stated he "Gives them advice when they are struggling" and when they are in need of support off the court they "Do a lot of team dinners which gets them more comfortable with each other." Whereas, Zapanta makes sure to show support to his teammates by "cheering them on and if they mess up I make sure to let them know it's okay."

Oswald's goal this season is to "get league MVP again" and in order to do that "as a team they need to win league." Similarly, Zapanta's personal goal is to "get better and as a team it's to win CIF this year." With their guidance, the team has developed a strong sense of coordination and unity, and these goals are in reach.

Some advice from the captains would be to "work hard, and if things don't go your way, keep at it." And also that "you're going to start off slow but you're going to pick up momentum really quickly," finished Oswald.

As the season progresses, the Cypress High School boys' volleyball team continues to set the bar high. With their talent, teamwork, and dedication, they are destined for greatness on the court.



Senior Arthur Hoang has been unstoppable on offense. (Photo by Cypress Yearbook)



Senior Noah Zapanta excels on offense and defense. (Photo by Cypress Yearbook)

Boy's Tennis Is Swinging For Victory

By MIKAELA CAMPOS



Boy's tennis is always practicing hard during this rebuilding year. (Photo by Mikaela Campos)

The boy's tennis team plays an exhilarating sport that combines athleticism, strategy, and fitness.

Head coach **Joseph Paul** got into the sport playing in college for fun but then took a turn in 2006 when he got serious about the sport. Paul said this year is a "rebuilding year," for Cypress, reflected in the current 4-7 overall record. Paul said that the team is working on playing new positions and getting the team comfortable with each other. He says that the difference between a good team and a great team is that "a great team is a team that has the desire to win and to push

themselves to be successful." Freshman JV player **Issac Chun** said, "I like being involved in a sport here at Cypress and the tennis team is very welcoming and a good way to be in something that I love doing." He plays tennis simply because it's the sport he has played since he was a little kid and likes the competitive matches in the sport.

As the boys started their new season, they stepped onto the courts, ready to conquer the challenges that awaited them. There is no doubt that the boy's tennis team will accomplish another successful season.

Baseball Makes Cypress Proud This Season

By ELIAS TUBBS



Baseball has endured a tough schedule so far this season. (Photo by Stacie Codd)

Cypress' Baseball team, CIF Division 1, is currently 6-5-1. Cypress has had a tough schedule, competing against nationally ranked high school teams such as Notre Dame, Huntington Beach, Orange Lutheran, and Marcus Texas.

Cypress fell short to Gahr High School in their first game, 6-2 on February 10th. Cypress bounced back in their second game beating Mira Costa High School 6-0. Facing three great high schools, Cypress unfortunately fell short to Notre Dame losing 3-9, and Huntington Beach losing 3-7, but fought hard to their win over Marcus Texas, coming out on top 7-6.

After a loss to Orange Lutheran 1-2, Cypress then continued for a three-game win streak beating Damien 8-2, tied with JSerra Catholic 2-2, then re-matched JSerra and won 4-2, and in Cypress' most recent win, they beat Mira Costa once again, 8-7 on March 9th. On March 25th, Cypress will compete in a Vegas Tournament ending March 28th.

With a total of 28 games in the season, only 17 games remain. Cypress' only disadvantage is how young the team is. All pitchers are new, and many other starters came up from JV to Varsity.

"A lot of young talent is present such as Cypress' best pitcher, Junior **Wyatt Rosales**, and Cypress' best hitter, Senior Catcher **Nick Montgomery**, but the team is still young and experience is missing," said head coach **John Weber**.

Even with such a young roster, Cypress was ranked as the fifth overall team by Orange County, sixth in the Southern Section, and ranked in the top 10 by the Los Angeles Times. They are ranked fourth in the Empire league with a record of 1-1, and their California rank is one hundred twenty first, according to Max Preps Rankings.

Softball Leaves Their Mark On The Field

By BRIANNA NARANJO



Cypress softball maintains their winning streak by working together as a team. (Photo by Stacie Codd)

The Cypress varsity softball team has a record of 7-6 this season, even though they had a recent loss against Los Alamitos High School, losing 1-9 on March 12, 2024. They also had an incredible victory on March 5, 2024 against Sunny Hills High School with a score of 13-4. Their victories don't come easy; they have to constantly work hard together as a team to win each game.

Many of the girls thank their families and coaches for the way they push them to strive for greatness. They also recall the support they have given to them even at such a young age. Head coach, **Terry Thompson**, and assistant coaches, **Kevin Dull** and **Kristen Baker** have been the ones to lead the softball teams to victory and will go on to have an amazing season thanks to their great

coaching skills. They will need to work hard to beat their biggest opponent this season, Pacifica High School, which is currently ranked number one in the United States. "I think if we play well, we are capable of beating any other team," said Dull. Even though family support is very important in an athlete's career, it is just as important to have a great connection with their teammates. Without great teamwork, the magic on the field would not be possible. **Delaney Faus**, junior, advises younger players to "always work hard, always have fun and always be a good team" in order to be successful even if the game isn't always easy to play. For these girls, relying on each other is a crucial part of playing the game because without doing so they wouldn't be the great team they are today.

As the Cypress varsity softball team continues its season, it is evident that their success is not just a result of individual talent but of the strong bonds forged within the team. Even though the pressure will only increase, it is important to remember that the love of the game should always come first. "As we get older, although the stress and ambition becomes greater, it shouldn't stand in the way of the love for the game," said sophomore **Kiyoko Saunders**.

"Don't worry about what other think of you, dare to be great," advised freshman **Genevieve Gonzales**.

Retiring Teachers of 2024 Will Be Greatly Missed

Representing over 100 years of experience, these teachers have left their marks on Cypress

By DEBORAH SON & CARLY PEDROZA

Cypress High School is lucky to have valuable teachers supporting students in their goals. These teachers have declared that they will be retiring at the end of 2024. For years, they have provided hard work and dedication and persevered through challenges and pushed Centurions to be the best versions of themselves.



English teacher **Nancy Mitchell** has taught students for 30 years. She has taught courses including English I, English II, English III, World History, Dance, Art, Crafts, Health, English As A Second Language, Study Skills, and Theater I. Her fondest memory at Cypress High School was teaching *The Miracle Worker* about Helen Keller. Three activities were separated into "blind walking," "blind taste," and "blind smell." "Blind walking" involved individual students who were blindfolded while their partner guided them through various activities. "Watching those students, I never laughed harder," Mitchell said. Before beginning her career, Mitchell has been inspired the most by her father, as he influenced her to start her teaching career. Mitchell hopes to travel, spend time with her friends, build a massive garden, make tie-dye items, and care for her puppy. "I would hope that the students who had me as their art teacher appreciate the art class they took. I spent \$1000 per year of my own money for nine years just to get enough supplies to keep my art classes going and to give a good, solid art experience to all my art students," Mitchell said.

Mr. Payne, the Co-Department Chair of English, "I'm very happy for Ms. Mitchell. She is retiring and we're definitely going to miss her in the English Department. She is an amazing teacher and has a heart of gold. She is highly creative and just brings her own unique

perspective to literature and writing. I'm going to miss her big heart and her contributions to the English department. She's very funny, she loves to laugh and she just has a way about her that is very original and she can't be replaced. Hopefully she still comes around, because we want to see her at social functions. We wish her the best and want her to enjoy her retirement."



Kevin Dwyer taught Math at all grade levels for his first 12 years at Cypress High School. He then transitioned to teaching Physics for 12 years. Finally, for the last six years, he has been teaching Engineering. His fondest memory at Cypress High School were the physics activities and events over the years – the boat races, egg drops, trip to Astrocamp, and Disney. Dwyer loved to see the student's excitement when the projects came out to be successful. He has decided to retire as he has been teaching for three decades and also worked as an engineer for eight years. "I still love teaching but I wanted to retire while I was still young enough to enjoy retirement. My wife retired three years ago and she has shown me how to do it," Dwyer said. Other interests he has besides teaching are reading, learning about new topics that interest him, traveling, and spectator sports. During his retirement, he hopes to look for new adventures, travel to new places, and get involved in new endeavors. Dwyer said, "I will stay involved at Cypress High School though! I am also looking forward to sleeping in every day!"

Aaron Gartner, a teacher at Cypress High School said, "[Dwyer] makes whatever he teaches interesting. He cares about his students. He is "the GOAT" of teaching. As a teacher, you want to be someone like Mr. Dwyer. When I first came here, he helped me adjust and get used to the norms. I'm sad that he's retiring, but I am happy for him because he gets to spend time with his wife and get to travel to England. I am sad for the school because we are losing an amazing teacher."



Jon Lundberg has been at Cypress High School for 20 years, teaching Anatomy and Biology and coaching Wrestling. Lundberg has been coaching boys varsity, boys JV and frosh on top of girls varsity and JV. He has been coaching for 19 years and has been part of the district for 26 years. He said, "This has been a really good school. I like the demographics of the students. They generally want to learn and I think I found a perfect little area – the science department has been super. It has been a good experience." For his retirement, Lundberg is looking forward to sleeping past 6 a.m., discovering new hobbies, and fixing his house and improving his health. "We were planning on staying in California for now, but we might move to another, more affordable state," Lundberg said.

Trent Lebaron, a 11th grade wrestler at Cypress High School says Lundberg "has demonstrated commitment and has shown that he really cares about his wrestlers—he has always tried to push me further to do my best."

As beloved teachers of Cypress High School head to retirement, they will be greatly missed.



Craig Herrick, a Social Science teacher, has taught at Cypress for 31 years. He has taught History for 30 years and in his first year he taught junior English. He also worked with his wife, Judy Herrick, who was in the English Department, as the Assistant Activities Director, a Yearbook adviser, and with Peer Counseling. His mentor throughout the years has always been his wife. When Herrick retires, he looks forward to "More flexibility in his time to read, travel, spend quality time with people, and to not be on anyone else's schedule." Although Herrick has been teaching for three decades, he says he does not have just one favorite memory because he has been blessed with many good memories over his career.

Kylie Madrid, a student at Cypress High School said, "I don't think you fully understand the impact Mr. Herrick has on his students and coworkers. For 31 years he has made Cypress a warmer, more accepting place simply by being kind. He has forever altered the course of my life, and I don't think I can truly express how grateful I am."

Promposal

By TYLER HERNANDEZ

