

SPRING 2024 Vol. 49 Issue 2



THE HOOFPRIINT

the student-run news publication out of buffalo high school, buffalo, mn



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the stories we
want to share

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS :

As we close out the year, we'd like to thank our dedicated staff of photographers, writers, and editors who have put in many hours of work to make this publication a possibility. In spite of long worknights and chaotic BASE time meetings, they've continued to show up and push The Hoofprint in a positive direction. We'd also like to thank everyone for the positive reception of our first print edition this year, and the motivation it gave us to make the second edition even better. The Hoofprint hopes to continue publishing print copies next year, under the leadership of new Editors-in-Chief Ava Peterson '25 and Ella Kragerud '25.

In our fight to make the Hoofprint as relevant as it once was, we haven't stopped being proud of our progress. Three years ago, a group of students had the opportunity to pour their efforts into *The Hoofprint* as opposed to following the regular Journalism curriculum. This allowed the publication to regain its life as a student-led school activity and not just an extension of a class. From desperately seeking student involvement to reinstating the newspaper as an official BHS activity, there are so many hoops we've jumped through to succeed in publishing not one, but two print editions while maintaining a vibrant website. We could not be more proud of where we come from and where we're headed.

Thank you for your support,

*Siviera
Peggie* + *Yiqian
Zheng*

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the minds who put
our paper together

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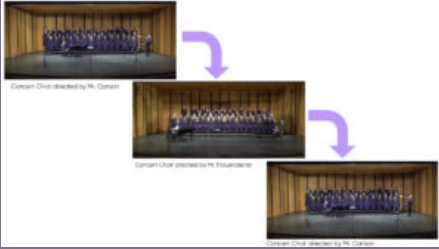
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Zach Carlson Returns to BHS to Lead Choir Program

Mixed feelings from students follow the seemingly constant shift from one Choir Director to the next.

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ACTIVITIES EDITOR: KARALEE PARSONS



Teams use different strategies and Nerf weapons to win the war. Photo by Madison Tabbut

The Dark Side of The Nerf War

How the annual tradition can turn from exciting to dangerous

STORY BY MADISON TABBUT

The Nerf Wars are commonly known in many high schools as a fun game to end the year off, but it is not just fun and games. There are many more serious dangers and emotions than one would think.

The Nerf Wars are a very popular game among Juniors and Seniors, with a \$2,000 cash prize for the last team standing. It can be extremely dangerous, but not everyone has dangerous experiences if you play the game right, as shown by Gavin Collins '25.

"We made this big old spreadsheet about who was a threat and what we know about them," said Collins. "After making the spreadsheet, we started focusing on getting our kills. For our first kill we got him while he was out kayaking. We were driving around until we noticed his truck at the boat launch right at Deer Lake and we were like, 'Holy [expletive], he's kayaking!,' So we camp at his truck and wait for him to get out of the boat launch and then we jump him as he's pulling his kayak up, which was a little bit risky, but it was fun. It's a weird scenario, because you have to dedicate a lot of time to it, but it's also a lot of fun to play."

Even with players that make the game fun to play, the emotions that come with the game aren't all that pretty.

"I'm always scared to leave my house now, which is a little concerning, but it also makes me feel like I'm in a movie," said Liam Morrison '25. "I know a lot of people that will sell me out, but so far it

hasn't happened too much, just a few times. Since I don't know many people, that makes it hard for me to find people to eliminate. My team has eliminated almost everyone we know, so now we are struggling to find kills because we don't know anyone or where anyone lives." It's not just the stress of the game that makes it difficult, though.

"As long as the Nerf Wars are done safely, and kids aren't breaking the law while doing it, then I think it's harmless, but it certainly has caused problems in our community," Resource Officer Cotes said. "We have had multiple calls this year and last year regarding the Nerf Wars. We've had kids running through yards in the middle of the night, kids congregating at stores and causing disturbances for shoppers, along with cars driving extremely fast through neighborhoods."

These games can be super fun to play, but it is also good to be aware of the dangers that come with it.

"In some instances, it's been reported that students use cars to block other teens, jump on moving vehicles, or crawl into homes, garages and/or on roofs without the homeowner's permission," a Robbinsdale area schools website explains. "These games have also been played at night, with teens running around in the dark 'shooting' at each other with Nerf guns that sometimes resemble real guns. Students across the state have been injured, involved in car accidents or killed as a result of participating in the game."

ACTIVITIES

celebrating devotion
to our school and its
extracurriculars

How the Mystery Gang Scooby-Did the Polar Plunge

An inside look at the creation of this year's most iconic Plunge group

STORY BY OLIVIA TELECKY

This story begins across the Atlantic Ocean where the five Mystery Gang members, Tyler Louwagie '24, McKenna Peterson '24, Alex Budde '24, Lindsay Hodge '24, and Laryssa Laho '25 became friends. "We bonded in Germany," explained Peterson. The group was formed during the 2023 BHS language trip to four German speaking countries, and the CIS German classes allowed them to stay in touch after the trip — where the iconic group was thought of.

According to Hodge, the idea to dress up as the Scooby gang was initially thought of for their group assignment to create a movie, "it was a movie first," Hodge stated, though Louwagie claimed it was the other way around. "We were going to do the Polar Plunge and we needed a group of five," explained Louwagie, who was a long time fan of the Scooby franchise which led him to advocate for this theme, even knowing every character's last name: "Fred Jones, Shaggy Rogers, Velma Dinkley, Daphne Blake, and Scoobert Doobert Doo."

According to him, the polar plunge initially sparked the idea and the movie simply inspired them to go all out. They even went so far as to create a replica of the Mystery Machine. Both versions of the story have one thing in common, German teacher Michelle Strassburg helped them plan out the idea. "We came up with one [idea] and Strassburg recommended the other," Budde said. Regardless of which came first, they were still thrilled about the idea.

When creating the costumes, there was much discussion over who would play each character. "I did not want to be Scooby," explained Hodge. "I was sick. I was gone one day and when I came back I was Scooby." Louwagie explained that this decision was made democratically. "It was a unanimous vote that she should be Scooby," he said. Laho was forced into the Daphne role as well. "Laryssa was given no choice," said Peterson, "red hair equals Daphne." Peterson claimed to have gotten her role because she "has glasses," "and Budde looks like Shaggy," Laho said. There was one other secret member of the group, Chris Roehlke '24. While he didn't take the polar plunge, stating, "I don't like cold water," he did help the group create their costumes and the Mystery Machine.

"I really wanted to do it," said Peterson. "Since it's our senior year I thought we should all do it." Louwagie had done the plunge the previous year and said that, "I wanted to do it again, and these people



Laryssa Laho '25, McKenna Peterson '24, Tyler Louwagie '24, Alex Budde '24, and Lindsay Hodge '24 sit in the cardboard Mystery Machine. Photo courtesy of Chris Roehlke '24

agreed to do it with me too. . . Well, some of it was peer pressure." Budde was a part of the group that was peer pressured into doing it. In fact, he mentioned that originally Roehlke was supposed to push him in the water. "Budde needed moral support and I was willing to push him, but I didn't," Roehlke said. Instead, he stood with Strassburg and supported from the sidelines.

The mystery gang enjoyed their plunge so much that they would recommend everyone do it at some point in their high school career. "Just do it," said Peterson. "Don't forget a towel," added Budde, "and a change of clothes," Louwagie interjected. "Peer pressure someone into doing it with you because it's way scarier doing it by yourself," Laho advised. "Scooby costumes get soggy," Hodge shared. The biggest piece of advice the group shared was to "do it and you're cool!"



DECISION DAY: SENIORS TAKE THE FINAL STEPS TO PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

How seniors are navigating college preparations at the end of their final year of high school

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FEATURES EDITOR: ELLA KRAGERUD



An Inclusive Approach

Photo by Ella Kragerud

Can the Tatanka Yearbook maintain its winning reputation as the program welcomes a record number of writers and editors?

STORY BY NOAH KLENKEN

A group of 60 students operates behind the scenes to capture Buffalo High School at its finest. The *Tatanka* yearbook staff is a hardworking group of writers and editors that works all year long to produce a polished book that is consistently among the best in the nation. The success of the program and the unique classroom environment has led to increased interest from students, which has created a new program dynamic and identity.

The yearbook program started at BHS in 1915 and became known as *Tatanka* in 1944. The overall goal of *Tatanka* is to memorialize the school year and the students, all while striving to achieve an important yearbook award: "Best in Show," which the yearbook has won from the Minnesota High School Press Association for the last decade. The yearbook staff consistently produces the most awarded yearbook in Minnesota, including winning several national All-American awards since 2018.

Having the most highly gifted writers, editors, and photographers is crucial for maintaining *Tatanka's* quality. Over the past four years, the program has grown in size, moving from a class of 45 students to the current core group of over 60 students working in two different classrooms. This doesn't take into account a staff of extracurricular writers.

Liam Oseth '24 enjoys how large the staff is and involves many students with different talents. "I love the unity of [yearbook] because it involves so many people from our juniors and seniors from different backgrounds, and each one has different skills," Oseth said. "Everyone involved [in the yearbook is] working towards the same goal. I'd say that's the most strong aspect."

Before this year, BHS administration capped the class size at 45 students. However, this year, The *Tatanka* has grown into an inclusive group, accepting nearly every applicant for writer and editor positions.

Many *Tatanka* participants believe that higher standards are needed for the editorial staff, even if it means cutting students from the staff.

"Most, if not all, the people who apply to be editors will have an editor role, and I think it's too much," Trevor Juenke '25 said. "I think we're going to have a lot of editors who are not going to be helpful. That's our biggest problem that we need to address."

Changing things within the program to make it more efficient is the best way *Tatanka* can keep up its success. Regardless of the issues of involvement, the *Tatanka* Yearbook continues to produce a polished product each school year that the entire student body enjoys.

FEATURES

highlighting people, topics, and events



Photo by Ella Kragerud

Registration Night : Where Language Classes Live or Die

BHS decides what classes are offered based on registration numbers, often leaving upper-level World Language classes at risk

STORY BY VEN ESTRADA

Registration night is a monumental moment for many teachers. It can determine whether or not their class is offered next year, and for some, whether or not they'll have a full-time job. At BHS, student registration numbers are the end-all and be-all for classes, and registration night can feel like life or death for many elective classes.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the World Language department.

At BHS, the number of classes offered depends on the number of students registering for a class. Students often pick classes for reasons that go beyond how valuable a course may be to their future, sometimes favoring "easier" classes over more challenging options. The trimester schedule also reduced the number of classes students can take in a year. If teachers cannot attract enough students, classes can be cut. French and Spanish teacher Lisa Nordmeyer described this process.

"Students ask for the courses that they want," Nordmeyer said. "They've got the numbers and say, 'Okay, you've got this many kids that have signed up for Spanish I, which means we can offer this many sections.'"

Many teachers in the language department actively recruit students in order to get student enrollment in the classes that determine their jobs. Some teachers have sent emails to students urging them to rejoin their classes.

French student Rainer McCallum '26, spoke about seeing Swanson 'scrambling for interest' in his classes, bringing up how registration determines his job.

"I'm quite worried about the state of enrollment to be honest,"

McCallum said. "Swanson is a very good teacher but if the French curriculum is forced to downsize too much, then his job is impacted."

Student numbers affect these classes, but to some people, such as D. Hermann '26, it seems that people don't take those classes seriously enough, despite their importance.

"[Language classes are] a lot more important than many people think they are," Hermann said. "It's more important than subjects like biology. You don't need to know what chromosomes you have, you need to know how to communicate with other people."

Work is being done to keep up interest in language classes. Especially with the trimester switch, a student can't take two classes of one language in one year. This means that there are fewer students even qualified or able to join the higher level classes than before, making those classes even smaller with less people registering for them.

"I'm quite worried about the state of [language class] enrollment to be honest."

Rainer McCallum '26

If fewer people are able to sign up for these classes, it means either smaller classes or no class at all for the later levels, potentially taking away CIS options for language students. The work that goes into just keeping these classes existing is astronomical. This is true for many classes at BHS, a common problem where registration determines a class and its continued existence.

Teachers Work for Fair Pay by Demonstrating Unity

STORY BY AVER MCCALLUM

After working for over 200 days without a contract, the Education Minnesota-Buffalo teacher's union reached an agreement with the district that resulted in a historic pay raise for BHM staff.

The union was hoping for a compensation package that kept up with inflation and matched the increases that other industries were experiencing. The district was hesitant because it is now in a cycle of cutting teachers due to declining enrollment. In the weeks leading up to the agreement, the union had been doing demonstrations including attending negotiations with the district en masse and organizing a district-wide walk-in and walk-out that occurred on April 18.

At Buffalo High School, a teacher is paid based on an expectation of 8 hours of work per day, typically 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.. Yet every day teachers arrive at 7:00 or stay until 5:00 or later in order to get work done, even if they aren't being paid for this overtime.

In order to demonstrate that the district relies on teachers doing unpaid work in the building, the union organized a protest in which all staff entered the building at exactly 8:00 and left the building at exactly 4:00.

"[We walked out] to show unity behind wanting and needing a contract that is fair and competitive," Education Minnesota-Buffalo president Kim Atkins said. "This shows we are all united."

This walkout was a part of Education Minnesota-Buffalo's "[demonstration] to the BHM school district that [the union] will fight for fair and competitive contracts."

This contract was supposed to be settled in July of 2023, meaning that BHM staff

With shows of solidarity, BHM teachers receive a historic pay raise after working over 200 days without a contract

worked almost an entire school year without a contract. Shortly after the walkout, the union's negotiation team attended a mediation with the district and agreed on a contract proposal.

This new contract increased the staff's salary as if they had been working under a 4% pay raise this year, to be received on June 30, as well as securing a 4.25% pay raise next year. This would result in a total compensation increase of just over 12% over two years. Among other benefits, negotiators

also secured paternity leave and ensured that coaches are now compensated for extra time when their teams qualify for post-season play.

"A mediator talked to us at the end, and said we left no penny on the table," negotiations team lead Jeff Lindstrom said in a message to district teachers. "We got as much as we possibly could."



Teachers exit BHS in unison at the end of their contract day on April 18. The show of unity came hours before the BHM Teacher's Union reached a tentative agreement on a contract with the school district. Photo by Aver McCallum



After 34 Years of Teaching, Hygrell Calls It a Career

Students reflect on a fond memories as science teacher Gregory Hygrell prepares to retire.

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NEWS EDITOR: AVA PETERSON



In-process downtown construction. Photo by Sirena Rygiel

STORY BY BASIL LEFEBVRE

Many people feel like construction season trips into their lives, irritating, rerouting, and making noise. Downtown Buffalo's recent upheaval seemed to be no exception. However, David Kelly, the City of Buffalo's Community Planning & Economic Development Director, explained that County Road 25's construction has an outcome that makes the inconvenience worthwhile. Director Kelly has long-term goals for the reconstruction project, from increasing walkability to designing for environmental and financial sustainability.

"The [Highway 25 reconstruction] is actually a state project. . . it was going to happen no matter what. The city had opted to lead the design part. I think one of the big things we wanted to do was recognize that we're in the rare position of having a huge lake right in our downtown. It's gorgeous. ...we wanted to make the lake more of a prominent feature. That was the big thing from the city's perspective, was trying to make the lake more active and better utilized. The strength of the downtown lakefront I think can add to the strength of our downtown. If they want

to spend more time downtown, they're going to want to spend money at local businesses."

The project's long-term goals centered around increasing pedestrian access and safety as well as showcasing Buffalo Lake through the installation of wider sidewalks, narrower roads that are further removed from the lake, and more green space around the lakefront.

"When there's more going on, drivers are a lot more aware and they travel a bit slower too," said Kelly.

Throughout the multi-year planning process, community input has been vital. Kelly explains, "We had a standard procedure for public engagement - reaching out, talking to business owners, residents, having open houses. We also had a number of presentations to [city] council as well, which is open to the public."

"Whenever we can find a way to do it that's reasonable and cheaper, then

Downtown Plans for a Greener Future

David Kelly, director City of Buffalo's Community Planning and Economic development talks about the new construction plans for downtown.

it's green in two different ways - green in terms of the money saved and also great for the environment," said Kelly.

Another thing the reconstruction is doing is incorporating more native plantings and pollinators.

By adding native fescue, which grows slower and is stronger, the city is planning on reducing erosion and saving time for the maintenance and street crew by reducing the number of times it needs to be mowed. "it is also just one extra thing that kind of helps us be a little greener financially and for the environment," said Kelly.

These small, local efforts are the bedrock of sustainability. Impact, whether economic or ecological, often begins with the grass.

"I love anything we can do to make cities more green,"

David Kelly



Why Are Students Choosing PSEO?

Every year, BHS loses over 90 students to Post Secondary Enrollment Options. Why are they leaving and what could be done to keep them at BHS?

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OPINIONS EDITOR: ANTHONY LEINTZ

enjoyable to compete anymore.

I started skating when I was five years old. I had all the same struggles as every other kid: I couldn't make snow, I was falling every other step, failed Basic Two, and told my mom I wanted to quit. However, I eventually fell in love with the ice. I enrolled in my first show when I was six and started watching the pros on TV, fantasizing about the beauty of the sport. I loved connecting to the music and feeling graceful and powerful simultaneously. I still do. At least I did, until USFS changed the rules.

In winter 2022, USFS announces that the spin I just finally mastered, worth more than anything else I had learned before, won't count anymore. Now, I have to use their new criteria for a Level 4 spin. My world crumbled. Partially because it was also changed in the middle of my season and everyone else's. In addition, their new criteria are extremely unspecific and confusing. What one judge says, another might disagree with. It became extremely subjective. Even some judges didn't know what the new rules were and messed them up in National Qualifying competitions creating a mess for anyone aiming to qualify.

Not only do my family and I make these enormous sacrifices each day, but the new rule changes... have made the sport completely change direction, so much so that it's not even enjoyable to compete.

These changes lead to where I am now. The harm that I have experienced in this sport is something I will take with me for the rest of my life. I used to want to go to the Olympics and have everyone I know skate with me: friends, family, and future kids. Now, I wouldn't recommend it to anyone. The rules I have to follow force me to do things just for the points. The moves are not pretty or powerful, the whole reason I started skating in the first place. Even if we start to sacrifice our lives for the sport now, as most of us have, we won't make it. The USFS has made it impossible to be a successful figure skater without quitting school, losing sleep, getting injured, and being a millionaire.

More Than One Path

Overlooking a career in the trades can be a costly mistake

STORY BY SAMUEL LARSON

The college search can be a very daunting task, especially when you don't know what you're getting into. The stress from these types of decision is put on us at a fairly young age and most people don't want to mess it up.

Students should know that there are other options after high school besides college. Getting a college degree can significantly help your career, but can put you into huge amounts of debt. With options like the trades, instead of you investing thousands into a degree, a company will invest thousands into you, teaching you how to do your job while having benefits like health insurance and retirement funds.

Say you decide to go down the path of a plumber. The average pay for less than a year of experience according to indeed.com is \$28.86 an hour or nearly \$60,000 per year, which doesn't include benefits or overtime. With 10 years of experience, by the time you are 28 years old, the pay would be around \$41.87 per hour or \$87,000 a year, and that's not including the common benefits offered with the job. These include health insurance and retirement benefits. While someone who went to college is in their tenth year on the job, and only halfway to paying off their student loans, you could be halfway into building your own business that's about to take off. Depending on where you work, you could easily see six figures in salary very quickly after high school, and you wouldn't even need to get a college degree.

There are also unions that have programs to teach you how to do your job and you get paid while learning how to do it. It also sets up retirement and health insurances for you at a young age, so by the time you retire you don't have to worry about it again.

Not everyone is cut out for this type of



Careers in the trades, including welding, can often mean earning more money more quickly than the traditional college route.

Photo by Samuel Larson

manual labor, and a lot of the time the health insurance and retirement benefits are so good because workers' bodies are beat up from years of hard work. However, as long as you take care of your body and stay safe on the job, you should still be able to enjoy your retirement without ever needing to worry about school and student loan debt.

High school summers can be a great time to explore these options, as it allows opportunities for apprenticeships, or just working alongside skilled trades workers. Not only will you learn more about a trade or two, but you will also be able to make a lot more than you would working at a retail store.

Make sure to explore other lucrative options besides college for after high school, like the trades, so you can make the smart decision for you now and your future self.

OPINIONS

Speaking from the heart, for the body

Beyond the Glitter and Glamor

The unseen sacrifices made by figure skaters are often ignored

STORY BY KIERA MCGORRY

Figure skating: a delicate sport for young, skinny girls, right? Wrong. Every four years, people around the world watch the graceful and artistic spectacle of figure skating in the Winter Olympics. Spinning, twisting, and flying in the air, the grace of figure skating is captivating.

But behind the scenes, it is a completely different reality. It's a story of sacrifice. Behind the breathtaking beauty, people are home-schooled at a young age, sabotaging their mental health, and trying their best to succeed in a sport that has made it nearly impossible to be successful, happy, and healthy.

As a figure skater, I skate about eight hours per week during the school year, at least ten during the summer. But skating is only half of the equation. I also have an additional four hours of off-ice training. This time is a huge sacrifice for me. Twice a week, my skate times force me to miss my first hour of school, band, which is my other major passion. These missed classes have had a severe impact on me this year emotionally, since I love band so much, and yet, what I sacrifice is less than most. All of my training mates do half days at a minimum, and several girls that I skate with are completely home-schooled. My best friend is one of them and she doesn't do anything except skate 4-6 hours a day and do school online.



People only care about figure skating once every four years, but the work behind the scenes never stops. Photo by Kiera McGorry

I also sacrifice time driving all over the state for coaching. Driving at least an hour both ways to skating, three days a week, gives me way less time to do homework. I often end up not getting home until 7 or 8pm, having not eaten

dinner, let alone started my homework. As a student who takes many CIS classes, this causes a lot of stress for me. There's been a huge impact on my mental health due to the extra anxiety it causes. In addition to staying up late doing

homework, I also wake up before 6 a.m. twice a week to go to practice. This causes me to be completely exhausted along with the stress of having less time to do homework the night before.

One of the biggest sacrifices made by my entire family when I chose figure skating was the cost. The yearly cost in my family for me to be a figure skater is \$17,115. First of all, skates at my level cost \$1,620, plus \$30 to mount the blade on the boot and \$25 for every sharpening, which is every six weeks. This adds up to almost \$2,000 just on skates which also need to be replaced every 12-18 months. To buy ice time for me to skate costs \$360 per month. In addition to buying ice time, I need to pay for coaching. I have four coaches total, costing \$660 per month. Finally, each dress costs about \$1,500 which I use at least two of per year.

"I fell in love with the ice. I enrolled in my first show when I was six and started watching the pros on TV, fantasizing about the beauty of the sport."

Not only do my family and I make these enormous sacrifices each day, but the new rule changes by US Figure Skating (USFS) have made the sport completely change direction, so much so that it's not even

Adapted Softball is a Home Run

The Coyotes season comes to a close with their final playoff games

STORY BY OLIVIA TELECKY

Adapted softball is one of three adapted sports available to BHS students, along with adapted floor hockey and adapted soccer. Adapted sports bring students with disabilities from Monticello, Buffalo, and St. Michael together to create one team: The Coyotes. The Coyotes have had a great season so far, allowing them into the playoffs, adapted softball for many students is about more than just the sport.

Student Manager Ella Kragerud '25 gets to see the positive effects of the Coyotes team firsthand. "[It's] a great way for players to gain sportsmanship skills. Adapted sports in general have very accepting and supportive environments, so it's great to see everyone cheering each other on — even from other teams." She added that learning how to lose is great for developing emotional skills. Senior Lisa Bull described how playing softball throughout her middle and high school career has helped shape her as a person. "It has taught me that I'm a good Coyote player. . . [I learned] how to be a good team player and have fun." She mentioned she has enjoyed taking a more leadership role in her final year. For BHS graduates, being a Coyote has taught them important life lessons that they can bring into the real world. For Aubrey Sands '23, going to practice was not

always easy. Sometimes more fun opportunities would come up and Sands would struggle with the decision to miss them so the team wouldn't be down a player. "It taught me to commit to things," Sands said, and added that she uses that lesson in her day to day life.

As BHS focuses more on Unified sports, the question of why we need adapted sports has become more prevalent. According to Sands and Bull, the environments of these sports are completely different from one another. Sands mentioned that in Unified, "You're with [a] friend [when] you're on a team." This Unified partner makes it so while she still works with the rest of the team, she gets a built-in best friend. This social aspect is why Sands prefers Unified activities. When asked if she would rather only play adapted sports or only play Unified sports, she quickly responded "Unified." However, other athletes prefer the individualism that adapted sports allow. "I prefer adapted," said Bull. "I do like Unified, but adapted is just so much more competitive. . . You get to play a lot more, and you get that new experience." Bull appreciates that in adapted sports she gets her own space.

Adapted softball serves an important role for high school students who might not have many options available for them. "The biggest benefit in



The Coyotes wait for their adapted softball playoff game to begin. Photo by Lexi Zheng

having adapted sports is the opportunity for all people of all abilities to be able to enjoy sports," said Kragerud. Bull added on to that notion, saying "I'm so glad there's adapted [sports] because so many kids, and so many new players can try it who haven't done it before." However, adapted softball isn't just important for students with disabilities. "It's important for everyone to be more supportive and kind to each other, especially in competitions like sports," said Kragerud. Even though Sands has graduated,

she still enjoys watching the Coyotes play.

"I like to see my friends," she added, showing that the support doesn't end after graduation.

With playoffs fast approaching Bull has one main goal for the team. "Good sportsmanship," she said. "I want the Coyotes to win, but if we can't, let's just have fun."

This message coming from a highly competitive player perfectly displays what adapted softball is all about: supporting each other.

SPORTS EDITOR: ADLER NEU



Support On and Off the Track

A circle of Bison support in the track community. From Junior Bison track meets to the state championship supports athletes to be their best.

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Girls Lacrosse Gives Back



The Bison Girls Lacrosse team celebrates Youth Night. *Photo used with permission from Edlund Media*

How high school players are inspiring the next generation of lacrosse players

STORY BY ADLER NEU

As many teens spend their summers hanging out with friends, a few athletes from Bison Girls Lacrosse devote part of their busy summer to giving back to the youth program through coaching.

Girls Youth Director Adrianna Strode said, "These young girls look up to the high school girls so much as a role model or as players they emulate."

Having coaching role models isn't a new thing for many of the high school athletes who have decided to coach. Chole Bachmeyer '26 is excited to start impacting the next generation of lacrosse players in Buffalo. She was inspired to coach because of one of her youth coaches, Bella Weiche.

"She made a huge impact on my life and lacrosse skills. I always looked up to her

and said that I wanted to coach like her someday," said Bachmeyer.

Bachmeyer believes it's important for young girls to have the opportunity to learn lacrosse from people who play and understand it.

Bachmeyer said "I love being a role model for the youth girls to look up to, and someone they can go to when they need. I think learning the game from a young age is so important and beneficial and can really make an impact on their life."

Hattie Toussaint '25 coached with the youth program over the summer and fall of 2023. She emphasized the new relationships she has made because of coaching.

"Even though the girls I coached are younger than me they are still my best friends," said Toussaint.

For Toussaint, coaching was something she decided to try on a whim and ended up loving. Making memories that will last a lifetime.

"I remember once the team made me dress as goalie and I played goalie at our last practice," said Toussaint.

Jenna Eng the former youth club president and girls director and current U18 and volunteer coordinator loves to see the verve that the high school girls come into the youth program to coach with.

"Having the high school girls involved with the program infused a new sense of life into our players." Said Eng, "our high school coaches bring recent real-life experience and can relate to learning a complex sport, they give our youth players role models to look up to."

SPOTLIGHT EDITORS: GAVIN COLLINS & SIRENA RYGIEL



BHS Barber: Christian 15 Lagunas

Christian Lagunas '24 embarked on a hair cutting journey after an on-the-whim dare. He now runs a thriving "business" in his front entryway.

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It's Never Too Late

Olivia Benson saved the best for her final year at BHS

**STORY BY DANIEL
JUNGWIRTH**

It's all too often that seniors don their caps and gowns and inevitably leave Buffalo High School to begin the next stage of their life, without ever being able to pour their knowledge and experiences into the heads of those younger than them. One BHS senior, Olivia Benson '24, has made the most out of her last year at BHS. Her philosophy? "Try everything."

Benson's list of activities she participated in throughout high school is a long one, but many additions were only during her senior year. Cross country, the Tri-M leadership program, and the spring play were among these additions. "I used to feel like I had to be good at an activity in order to join it," Benson said. "But then I just thought of it as doing it for fun, not how good I am just because it's my first year doing it, so I need to cut myself some slack."

This philosophy of putting yourself out there, even if you might lack the skills needed for an activity at first, isn't one that Benson always had, but it's something she wishes she would have adopted sooner. "I always had the idea that it was too late. Even in freshman year. I thought it was too late to join new things. I wish I didn't have that mentality sooner. I would tell anyone to try new things," Benson said. She continued, reflecting: "I think that if I



Olivia Benson '24 (left) during the spring performance of *Treasure Island*. Photo by Hope Bjornson

would have been in all the activities I'm in now, I would have had a more successful high school career."

"I always had the idea that it was too late. Even in freshman year. I thought it was too late to join new things. I wish I didn't have that mentality sooner. I would tell anyone to try new things," - Olivia Benson '24

Another benefit to joining many activities? Gaining new perspectives. "I always have multiple outlooks because of all the things I've learned [in my extracurriculars]," Benson stated. "I've found a lot of different groups that I can fit into, and I end up talking to all of them."

Although she appreciates each activity in a different way,

Benson has to admit that she likes one more than the others at any given time: "Depending on what I'm in, I do pick a favorite. When I was in the spring play, track, and orchestra, it was really easy for me to pick the play as my favorite because it was new."

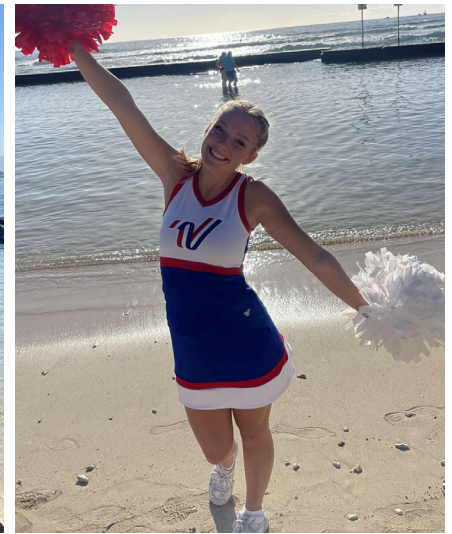
There is a lot that can be taken from Benson's outlook on school and on life, especially for underclassmen looking to make a mark during their time in high school. And Benson is not done with these practices: she's already looking at new activities in college. "I was messing around with the idea of doing lacrosse again, and I want to find a group painting thing, or if I could find a ceramics club, or find a running group. I'm so excited." These experiences serve as a reminder for those inside and outside of high school that it truly is never too late to branch out and learn something new.

SPOTLIGHT

Shining a spotlight
on the Bison's best

Spreading **Cheer**

Kate Hendel's experience on the BHS cheer team propels her to the National spotlight



Kate Hendel '24 traveled to Hawaii as a part of the UCA All-American Cheer Team. Photos courtesy of Kate Hendel

STORY BY GAVIN COLLINS

With little to no school funding or attention, Buffalo High School cheer teams are still making it work, competing weekly and showing up at several major games to represent the Bison. Cheer is one of the lesser talked about activities at BHS, but the amount of work cheer athletes put into their sport makes up for the lack of support.

Kate Hendel '24 describes cheer as a "positive and fitting environment for very energetic people. It's a great community. It's a nice group of people that are very welcoming."

Hendel has developed her leadership skills throughout the 3 years she has been in cheer, by going to state and even being nominated for and participating in the UCA All-American cheer team, which took place in Hawaii December 2023. This is all so she can contribute to a team of great people who are willing to show and represent our school.

"I felt like it was the right place for me and the right fit for me. I'm also a performer, I love to put things out there for others to see. So it fits the performing aspects that I like to do," said Hendel. The cheer team relies on each other and works with each other to achieve the high expectations this school sets for them.

"It's a small group and you need to take a role in it. It's also made me more of a positive person, I already was, but now I've learned to look past the hard things and keep working through them," Hendel said.

With everything being said, cheer is still often not recognized as a sport despite "a lot of practice and a lot of work [going] into it," according to Hendel. "I understand because [during games] you're just cheering on the side. For the competition part [of cheer], you are playing a game. You're competing against other schools and you're putting out a routine."

To be in cheer, you have to be willing to put in the work, teamwork, and

commitment to not disappoint an expectant student body and admin. However, cheer still isn't considered an official school sport.

Despite the activity being denied the classification of an official BHS sport, the team still acts as other sports teams do. The cheer team annually attends a camp to hone skills and team bond.

"It's like boot camp for three days. You're getting up early and you're doing cheers throughout the whole day, these hard-working stunts," Hendel describes. After all this work the team has a chance to bond, "at like 10 pm, our team would all gather in one room and do these team bonding games." Even while being exhausted and tired, the team ends their nights on a good note.

Despite all the hardships and rough patches with cheer, Hendel can make it work with the help of her team and form a bond like no other connected by passion and effort.

