

The Excalibur

The Online Nazareth RHS Student Newspaper



Celebrating Mass with Music

By: Jaenai Tercius, Class of 2024

Fine arts is an important part of our experience at Nazareth. Music, art, dance, and other Fine Arts are incorporated into practically every event we hold. Naz holds several masses during the school year, and music is an integral part of each one. In order to consistently provide music, we have a choir and band that consists of students and our Music Director, Mr. Alvira. The students who sing or play an instrument each have their own talent which they bring to every practice.

Music helps the audience to become engaged in the event and draws them into a sense of togetherness with one another. Music is something that most, if not all, people can bond over. In order to encourage that bonding, the choir carefully selects theme-fitting songs that not only the audience may enjoy but that we also enjoy so that we can bring our best performance on stage.

Around the holidays, this careful selection of music is especially important so that we can hopefully leave our audience in a positive mood before they go on vacation.

We have many days of practice to coordinate the music, vocal melodies, and vocal harmonies. Sometimes it takes a while to perfect certain parts of songs and sometimes it gets frustrating when we have to repeat it until we get it right, but in the end it all comes together. On performance days, the choir and band members come to school extra early to practice our repertoire one last time before we perform, and in the end, it's worth it to hopefully see the audience enjoy the music. When we share our music at a mass, we hope that everyone will also be uplifted spiritually.

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Thanksgiving/Christmas
Holiday Edition



- Special Events -

- 9/22 Opening Mass
- 10/21 College Fair
- 10/28 Hispanic Heritage Celebration
- 11/7-18 Food Drive
- 11/23 Thanksgiving Mass
- 12/5-16 Toy Drive
- 12/20 Fine Arts Program
- 12/22 Christmas Mass & Show

Mental Health at Naz: How Can We Help Each Other?

By: Amanda Jordan, Class of 2024

What is mental health? The emotional, psychological, and social well being of humans - in particular, of students at Nazareth. Navigating through school on its own is already a challenge but ever since our return from remote learning, how have Nazareth's students been holding up? Repetitive days, lack of sleep, and trouble socializing can all be factors that deplete the mental health of teens.

Mental health is so important because if your mind isn't doing well, your body won't do well. Your mind controls your actions and thoughts, so it's crucial to take note of the things you listen to and watch and then take time out of your day to prioritize decompressing. Taking care of your mental health begins with creating a good environment for yourself by looking deeply into the things you consume mentally. You may discover that you are consuming toxic relationships or negative social media. As the scripture says, "Guard your heart" (Proverbs 4:23).

Guarding and improving your mental health in school is so crucial. Being taught how to manage your mind and emotions can go a long way. Learning how to let your feelings out in a safe, controlled environment should be emphasized more.

What helped my mental health during my sophomore year? We had just transitioned from remote to in-person learning, which was a tough challenge. Relearning how to socialize and establish a good sleep schedule was tough as well. After a few months of being extremely diligent, I began to feel a sense of burnout. During this time, I had teachers who I could talk to and who were very supportive. They did not minimize my struggle, but instead they gave me ways to decompress. They encouraged me to take breaks, which allowed me to regain my composure. Having this support from my teachers is something I am most definitely grateful for. They were able to see the things in myself that I couldn't.



At that time, though I was a diligent student, I still consumed lots of negative social media, had a messy sleep schedule and did not prioritize making friends or doing things that I genuinely enjoyed once in a while. I experienced the most repetitive days where I'd wake up, go to school, come home, do homework, eat, sleep, and repeat. However, due to the support I received, I have been thriving ever since. To this day I am still a diligent student, but I do take time off to regain my composure.

I am so grateful to my teachers for giving me advice that guided me in helpful ways. I have also developed good social skills which have allowed me to develop meaningful friendships and connections. Today, my "unwinding" schedule consists of listening to uplifting music, spending time with my friends as well as with God, and setting aside more time for my own interests. Learning to manage my time and emotions has affected my life tremendously. I value the person I am becoming because of these experiences.

What do students at Naz believe? I have interviewed a few students of different grade levels, asking them about the factors that affect their mental health and the actions they take to unwind.

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Mental Health

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One of the positive aspects for the sophomores I interviewed is the emotional support provided by the school. They feel that they have a lot of emotional support from friends and teachers as well. They find that waking up early for school allows them to be more productive and helps them to manage their time well. They feel academically successful and believe that socializing at Nazareth is good. One sophomore stated, “Socializing at Naz is pretty good. It’s a friendly community, and I have a nice group of friends.”

One of the negative aspects for them is feeling overwhelmed by their schedules and homework given on short notice. They then find it difficult to maintain a good sleep schedule. Lack of sleep leads to tiredness at school and less motivation to work. One sophomore stated, “Sometimes I thrive when working, and sometimes I fall behind. It really comes down to the amount of time you have to finish the work and how you approach it.”

One of the positive aspects for the juniors I interviewed was feeling proud because of their induction into the National Honor Society (NHS). Being rewarded in this way shows that their hard work has not gone unseen. One junior stated, “School has made my mental health better because it gives me something to do.” He finds socializing positive because the school helps him to feel comfortable enough to express himself. Another junior finds that the school environment is very comforting and affects their health in a positive way because they can strive to reach their goals with the support of the people around them. Though much work may be given, their stress level is not high. For some juniors, negative aspects include feeling as if not enough emotional support is given at times and not getting enough sleep due to the amount of homework that is given.

Positive aspects for seniors include having people who they can confide in for emotional support, feeling academically successful, and being able to socialize in a well-rounded environment. According to one senior, a

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These are the students who are currently involved in making our performances possible:

Jacob Braham (Senior, Percussionist)
 Alexis Brandford (Senior, Singer)
 Keesha Desir (Freshman, Singer)
 Ephrem George (Senior, Singer)
 London Hippolyte (Sophomore, Singer)
 Nyah Hylton (Freshman, Singer)
 Davon Jean-Francois (Freshman, Percussionist)
 Mirdred Joazard (Junior, Singer)
 Charmela John (Junior, Singer)
 Lauryn Johnson (Senior, Singer)
 Lee Anne Lacroix (Junior, Singer)
 Melody Lebron (Sophomore, Singer)
 Briana Patrick (Junior, Singer)
 Abigail Pierre (Freshman, Singer)
 Spencer Sanders (Junior, Singer)
 Jaenai Tercius (Junior, Pianist)
 Gregg White-Crawford (Senior, Singer)

We are thankful for our excellent director, Mr. Alvira, and for the opportunity we have during each mass and other events to share our talents and bring our community together with music.

negative aspect is that “school hurts my mental health because waking up early to get here every day is tiring.” Some seniors are not happy about the workload. Another senior has mixed feelings: “I wouldn’t say I’m thriving, but it’s not harming me. I’d say I’m floating.”

Based on these interviews, I can infer that overall Nazareth students are thriving academically and socially but can benefit from teachers taking a bit more time to focus on their emotional well-being. We need guidance to help us manage our time well and to know how to best approach the tasks we are given.

Knowing how to manage your time can have a great impact on your life. Take time to ask yourself when the last time you ate, did something you genuinely enjoyed, or even just took time to admire nature. Your mental health is important - take care of it!

Toy Drive: Naz Loves Children!

By: Tracey Thompson

Christmas is a special holiday season celebrated all around the world by millions of people. We get more and more excited as we prepare for the 25th day of the month. The Christmas tree is set up, the stockings are hung, dinner is cooking in the oven, and festive music is playing in the background. People gather with loved ones and celebrate what seems to be the most cheerful day of the year. Then, when the morning comes, presents that were once sitting prettily under the tree are opened, as each person excitedly wonders what they have received. It is easy to forget that not everyone has access to such gifts, let alone is able to have a wonderful Christmas.

It is the sad truth that not everyone is able to afford such luxuries. Hundreds of thousands of people, including children and their families, are struggling financially. How can we make a difference in the lives of some of these families? We decided to hold a toy drive dedicated to providing safe, fun and educational toys for their children.

Each homeroom in the building is encouraged to bring in as many toys as possible during a two-week period just before Christmas. The toys brought in by each homeroom are then counted, and the homeroom with the most toys is rewarded with a “dress down” day and a pizza party!

Despite the promise of a reward, not too many toys were brought in during the first week and a half. The goal to help as many families as possible seemed to be drifting away, until a very special individual stepped in and saved the day! This person was the senior class president, Gideon Opoku. During the morning announcements, he talked to the students about how important it was to bring in toys, not for the reward, but to help give families and their children a special Christmas.

After the announcement, Gideon and several of his classmates set a great example by bringing in dozens of toys. His announcement and leading by example seemed to work, as over the next few days, hundreds of toys were brought in. Homerooms that had not been participating in the toy drive “stepped up their game” and brought in toys as well. After the final counting of all the toys, the top two homerooms were Mr. Gando’s and Mr. Trama’s.

Nazareth Regional High School was able to donate hundreds of toys to struggling families. We can imagine the smiles on the faces of their children as they received toys to play with during this season of giving. Our annual toy drive is an example of how we can work together to change the lives of other people. With a little push and encouragement from others, we can make a difference in the lives of children and their families and bring ourselves one step closer to a brighter future.



Editor’s note: The toys we collected this year were given to Providence House in Brooklyn, which “serves and advocates for women and families at risk of harm, who have histories of homelessness or justice-involvement, and provides a safe community where their dignity is recognized, strengths are enhanced and a transition to stability is achieved.” As their website states, Providence House is dedicated to “creating communities and transforming lives” (see <https://www.providencehouse.org/>).

Fall Sports Corner

VOLLEYBALL

By: Jaenai Tercius

Volleyball is one of the fall sports at Nazareth. We have a girls Varsity team and a girls Junior Varsity team, and our season lasts for about two months from September until the end of October. We practice frequently, starting in the summer, and it requires a lot of patience and energy to master each skill such as serving, passing, setting, and hitting. When the season starts in September, we can test our skills in games against other schools.

During our first game, I was surprised to see how many people were watching. It was very encouraging and somewhat nerve racking to have so many of our classmates and friends cheering for us. Some games were at Naz while others were at other schools. When we had away games, we would get back home very late, even at midnight! These late nights took a bit of a toll on us, but the euphoria we felt in the heat of competition made up for it.

During this season there were of course both wins and losses, but as a team we stuck it out and kept pressing to see better practice and game days. Now we are preparing to say goodbye to our senior players. Although our season is over for this year, hopefully in our future seasons we can keep improving and see even more victories!



TRACK

By: Zander Nangle

The track team at Naz has been “zooming and booming” in their track meets and practices. On October 15, we went to Van Cortlandt Park to run our first 4K of the year. Even though this is a race, you may not be running for 4000 meters. You can run, jog, and even walk if necessary, because a 4K will definitely tire you out! However, with such amazing workouts and practices led by Coach Gooden, everyone finished their race in under 25 minutes. We felt a great sense of accomplishment and were encouraged by our progress. Next, on October 29, we went to our next 4K at the same park to conclude our outdoor track season.

To start the indoor season, we went to Ocean Breeze Park in Staten Island for a relay race meet on November 29. Everyone on the Naz track team was amazing: Zander, Emmanuel, Patrick, and Ethan took second place in their 4X2 race; Jaivin, Javane, Dennis, and Jayden took first place in their race; and Shane, D’Andre, Joshua, and Alex took third place in theirs.

The girls also did well at the relay race meet in Staten Island. They all ran in a 4X4 race, and each runner improved her personal time. They did so well that they each received an award and a special water bottle to signify that they really did “pop off” that afternoon.

The track team is off to a great start this year, with new people joining when they discover this great opportunity to compete and be part of our track family. Everyone is becoming more and more efficient in their running skills and proving to themselves that they are capable of being the fastest. Coach Gooden is also showing that he is a great coach for everyone, from the novice to the more experienced runner. He is the best and most fit person for our amazing team and shows that he cares deeply for each one of us.

Pre-Med Club Has It All!

By: Jazmyn Leger and Lizmarie Recio

The Pre-Med/Science Club has it all – challenging activities, links to relevant websites and applications, and even Halloween and Christmas parties!

The club is hosted Mrs. Recio, one of our science teachers. We meet every Wednesday and new people are always welcome. The club does not just do “gross” things like dissections, but we also incorporate the holidays into our meetings: We had a Halloween and a Christmas party for the club members. At these parties we listened to music, watched movies, had snacks, painted pumpkins, and enjoyed drinking delicious hot cocoa.

Of course, we also do dissections! We have done dissections of a frog and of a sheep's eyeball. The sheep's eye, according to Mrs. Recio, is almost identical to the human eye. We also plan to dissect a shark very soon. Although this aspect of the club might be gross to some people, as budding scientists we find it fascinating to examine carefully the inner structure of other species and how that structure compares to ours.



Mrs. Recio supplies everything we need to have a successful club. She helps us to grow in our scientific knowledge in many creative ways, such as providing us with links to science and health academies and scientific challenges. Mrs. Recio is a super sweet and amazing host, and we are always open to welcoming new members!

Dance Club is Back!

By: Briana Patrick

The Dance Club is back in action! As the dance club captain, I started a petition to bring the dance club back, and everyone who was interested in restarting the club signed. The dance club currently has eleven members: Adeyinka Adetunji, Alexis Brandford, Akela Garraway, London Hippolyte, Nayah Jean-Charles, Mirdred Joazard, Lauryn Johnson, Briana Patrick, Cassandra Perrin, Leah Springer, and Jaenai Tercius.



With Mrs. Blair Thompson as our faculty advisor, the Nazareth Dancers are in full force. They just performed at the Winter Fine Arts Show, where they danced to the music of the Sugar Plum Fairy and “Oh Santa.” The Dance Club will continue to grow as part of the wonderful Fine Arts program at Naz.

Chess Club Connections

I have participated in the chess club since I was a freshman and have enjoyed playing chess while also connecting with others, including some of my best friends. Playing chess also builds your self confidence while developing problem solving and decision-making skills. Now when doubt, giving up, or failure enters my mind, I apply those skills to building myself up so I can keep on moving. I also appreciate the support and encouragement of our advisor, Mr. Meyerend, who is helping us to master a game that has become one my favorite hobbies.

By: Rosalie Henriques



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