

The Excalibur

The Online Nazareth RHS Student Newspaper



Let Us Give Thanks!

By: Jaenai Tercius

Thanksgiving is often a time we spend surrounded by family, friends, and food. Along with that, we are often encouraged to consider this day as a day of giving thanks - to our family, to our friends, to others such as our teachers and coaches, and to God. However, there is more to thankfulness than simple oral gratitude.

In church especially, we are often told to give thanks to God all the time. Anyone who grows up in church is always reminded that Thanksgiving is a day of gratitude. However, this day should not be the only one where thankfulness is the focus. Every day should be a day of gratitude, and we should be able to show gratitude in ways that extend beyond a simple “Thank you.” I

like to ask myself, “What can I do to show this person my gratitude?” It could be a simple act of kindness, a gift, or even your time and attention. There is always something you can give to show your gratitude, and it does not have to be something physical.

When it comes to giving thanks to God, the same approach can apply. You may not be able to give Him physical gifts, but you can do simple acts for Him, such as following His commands in the Bible and giving Him time in your day through prayer. Treat Him as a close member of your family – as your Heavenly Father – and treat your family with gratitude, not only on Thanksgiving Day but every day of your life!

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Thanksgiving/Christmas
Holiday Edition



- Special Events -

- 9/20 Opening Mass
- 10/24 College Fair
- 11/8-22 Food Drive
- 11/15 International Day Assembly
- 11/16 NHS Induction Ceremony
- 11/22 Thanksgiving Mass
- 12/6 - 1/5 Clothing Drive
- 12/20 Christmas Mass & Show

Impact of New Cell Phone Policy on Students

By: Amanda Jordan and Jaylen Jean-Pierre

As technology advances, we can see the way an individual's attachment to it grows. Cell phones not only affect the way you live, but also the way in which you think. This raises the question of how technological attachment affects a student's learning ability. This year, Nazareth has established new cell phone restrictions by having all underclassmen put their devices in a safe box in the morning and pick them up at the end of the school day. As for seniors, phones are allowed to be kept as a part of their privileges. How are they affected compared to underclassmen? I have interviewed students from each grade to understand how they feel about this policy both socially and academically. Let's hear from the students of Nazareth!

Student Opinions

Freshmen: Their opinions include a dislike of the no phone policy. They feel that keeping their phones throughout the day can be useful in case of an emergency and for doing homework. They also believe that it is good to have their phones during their leisure time. On the other hand, some freshmen feel that not having their phones during the school day has improved their mental health. Some find that their screen time being decreased has led to a better, less anxiety-filled day and that they are more alert during school hours. They also believe that having phones in the classroom distracts them from learning due to social media and its addictive qualities.

When it comes to their social life though, a different story is told. As one freshman says, "Having my phone taken has worsened my social life because I don't talk to a lot of people, but when I have my phone, that changes."

Overall, it seems that freshmen feel more inclined to have their phones since they are new to the school and are still working their way toward finding friendships. They suggest that warnings about when and where to use the phone should be reestablished rather than simply preventing the students from using them at all.



Sophomores: Their opinions include a dislike of the policy as well because they feel a sense of boredom during their free periods. One sophomore who does not use her phone often expresses her neutrality toward the policy, stating "It doesn't really affect me much," while another expresses his distaste for it since he believes that it has worsened his mental health due to attachment to his device.

Like the freshmen, sophomores believe that this policy prevents them from spending most of their time on social media and other applications that can be viewed as a waste of time. "I'm not inclined to look at social media all day, rotting away," says one student. Unlike the freshman, sophomores believe that this policy has improved their social life since they are more likely to engage with those around them instead of staring at the screen. They also add that their phone distracts them due to being "so worried about other people online that barely any time is made for [their] schoolwork." Though the sophomores also desire their phones during school hours, based on this data, we can see that they are now more open to socializing.

Juniors: Like other underclassmen, many juniors are not in favor of the policy. One junior believes that it does prevent students from cheating and can enhance productivity. However, he states,

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Impact of New Cell Phone Policy on Students (cont.)

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“At the same time, it didn’t really change anything because students still bring their iPads and Apple watches to school.” Another junior feels that it impacts students greatly, improving their social skills but also limiting their ability to be creative during leisure time.

Though this policy enhances sociability, the students feel as if it harms online friendship because they are unable to text during the school day. They also feel anxious at times due to lack of communication with their family. Furthermore, one junior expresses how the policy harms her mental health due to adding on stress. She explains, “Normally, I’m on my phone during my free periods and am able to relax a little bit, but now I’m stressing over the next class because I have nothing else to do.” We can see the anxious feelings brought on by this policy and the uncertainty due to not knowing what to do with themselves. Lastly, the juniors suggest that a system where phones can only be kept on one day, such as Friday, should be enforced.

Seniors: They convey a sense of understanding but also dislike this protocol in some ways. Though they are exempt from turning in their cell phones, the seniors will still face consequences like the underclassmen do if they are seen with their phones out. They understand the policy, knowing that students should not be using their phones during class, but they believe that there should be warnings before a phone is taken away. One student explains that phones are sometimes taken for the wrong reasons. In some cases, a student could be receiving a very important call or attempting to silence their device. However, teachers can take away the phone on sight, a policy which is not beneficial. They also miss the convenience of being able to communicate with those who have different class schedules.

Unlike the underclassmen, the seniors believe that having their device taken away does not affect

their productivity since they can work well with or without their phones. One senior states, “Whether I have my phone or not, [the policy] doesn’t really do much for me. Even when I’m not able to connect with my peers, there’s still something I can do like connecting with them before or after school.” This input displays how seniors can utilize time management and are not as dependent on their phones. They suggest that phones should be used as an attendance system, where they are given to the teacher at the beginning of each class and received at the end. They believe such a policy would be more convenient since students who leave early would not have to stay until the end of the school day just to retrieve their belongings.

Conclusions

Though these experiences are only a fraction of a whole, we can deduce that phones are huge distractions but can also be used as a means of productivity. This policy is proving to be beneficial, even if students cannot see it now. Based on the input from each grade, we see how the attachment to phones has affected students tremendously. Having their phones taken away has made them aware of this attachment and has enhanced their learning ability but has also diminished their sociability in some respects.

I have also noticed that grade level affects phone attachment. For example, those who are in the earlier stages of their education, such as freshmen, rely more on their phones as a means of connection since they are still adapting to their new environment, while seniors can thrive better without devices since they have already become familiar with their surroundings. Though students have expressed their distaste for the no phone policy, it is ultimately helping them to be more present and utilize their time well. What new challenges will appear as technology, including AI, advances? Watch out for the next article!

Halloween Event for Our Community!

By: Jazmyn Leger

Boo! Merry Christmas! Weird start you say? Let me explain. During the December holiday season, we celebrate the birth of Jesus and all the joy that is associated with His coming. We come together, helping and giving to those in need. It is a beautiful season to bless one another.

Earlier this year, we enjoyed a season that can bring us together in a different kind of way. Spooky season! During this pumpkin time of year, children are excited to put on their Halloween costumes, and giving is also an aspect of this season. We buy candy and fruit that we give away to children as they show off their costumes. This year, Nazareth decided to take it a few steps further and have our first haunted house!

Led by Ms. Davis, Nazareth students and teachers had the chance to participate as different types of people to give fun frights to the groups of people who came in. We had a headless horseman, a crazy/dead doctor, zombies, scary twins, Michael Myers, grim reapers, clowns and a lot more!

As visitors enter, they are welcomed by the scary twins into the gym, where they see a wonderful and frightening performance by the Cheer team. The members of the Cheer team are all dressed as zombies, and their amazing performance fits right into the Halloween vibe, making it fun for all the kids, teens, and adults who are willing to brave our haunted house. Thank you, Coach Katrina and the Cheer team!

After the Cheer team performance, the zombies all pile on top of each other as the

visitors hear a big, loud alarm. It warns them about a missing person and what is happening as they are directed upstairs to be greeted by two scary clowns and a wolf!

After that, the twins lead them into the scary maze. Ribbons, smoke, and hanging decorations fill the hallway and all the rooms. They receive candy and enter the maze, where they see a scary doctor who stares at them and teases them, and then they are “jump scared” by a zombie.

They then exit the maze and enter the scary hall of doom, which is filled with freaky delights and playful scares. There is a table every couple of steps where they receive a handful of candy while they are being scared by our students and teachers. After receiving candy from all the stations, they are free to leave the haunted house, but not before being greeted by all our monsters!



Overall, this was a successful event that brought joy to the people who attended, especially the visiting children from our community, and allowed the students and teachers to have fun. Thank you to Ms. Davis and her helpers for such a fun and active event for our community!

International Day

By: Briana Patrick



Melody Lebron and Maureen Marcel

Here at Nazareth, we have a variety of cultures, and to showcase them we put together our International Show. In the showcase we represented cultures from around the world, including those of Canada, Barbados, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and New York. There was singing and dancing, speakers, and spoken word, and the students who participated did a fantastic job representing each culture.

Representing Barbados, Melody Lebron and Maureen Marcel sang “Diamond” by Rhianna. Next, representing Canada, Jaenai Tercius sang “My Heart Will Go On” by Celine Dion, in both French and English. After that the Dominican Republic was represented by the music and dance of Dominican Bachata.

Samiyah Duncan followed by reading a poem she had written entitled “Love.” Then Maureen Marcel sang “Love” by Keyshia Cole. The Nazareth Cheer Team then took us to Carnival with their presentation.

Melody Lebron gave us a wonderful rendition of “Empire State of Mind (Part II)” by Alicia Keys. The show concluded with the Dance Club giving a stirring performance to the song “Carnaval del Barrio” from the film “In the Heights.”

The students presented a marvelous show, and everyone enjoyed watching all the acts and getting a taste of the different cultures represented in our community.



Briana Patrick and the Dance Team

Clubs and Sports at Naz

GIRL SCOUTS

By: Lizmarie Recio and Jasmine Augustin

“Building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place” - Girl Scouts Mission Statement

Nazareth's newly established Girl Scout Troop is here! No, it's not just selling cookies but also learning, having fun, and making a positive impact on the community. Meeting every one to two weeks, the girls do different activities such as making jewelry with a variety of charms. Led by our very own science teacher, Mrs. Recio, the Girl Scout Troop is a space where participants can meet others and feel comfortable.

Earlier in the school year, some of our very own girls got to experience the Girl Scouts Leadership Institute. The Leadership Institute consists of many opportunities to choose from such as the Changemakers Path, which allows us to take part in two Changemaker Week Prep Workshops (Spring 2024) and to attend the Changemakers Week at Camp Kaufmann (July 7-12, 2024). What a great opportunity!

Of course, make sure to support us by buying some delicious Girl Scout Cookies. And make way for the Girl Scouts to come through!



Lizmarie and other Naz Girl Scouts

FOOTBALL

By: Tyler Boone



Being a part of the school's football team has been an honor and interesting experience. This year was the beginning of a new journey for the school's football team since we did not have a team last year. We faced many challenges such as the lack of commitment of some players who quit and having the odds stacked against us in other ways. But we persevered with the help of Coach Gooden and Coach Korey, who motivated us to come together as a team and give it our all. They also helped each of us to understand the meaning, morals and value of football for all of life. Our two football coaches are two of the most loving, caring and wise men I have ever met.

When I first heard of the idea of a football team coming to Nazareth, I did not think it was true. I heard some stories my freshman year about the old football team and did not think there was a chance the program would return anytime soon. The idea of starting a football team started to become a reality in February 2023 when I first met Coach Gooden. At the time it was a handful of students on the team – not even enough to

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Sports at Naz (cont.)

FOOTBALL (cont. from p. 6)

put on the field during a game. At first barely anyone came to practice consistently and the hopes of having a football team dwindled. But a couple of months later in June during the time of Regents Exams, 18 students showed up for practice. I know that is a small number but compared to the number of students attending practice previously, it was a significant difference. The team was finally trending upwards!

During the summer, the football team really came together. More and more students continued to join and the small hopes of having a football team turned out to be a reality. We practiced every day together, Monday through Friday, and most importantly we became a family. We loved each other as if we were a biological family and turned a football team into a big family.

At this time the season was quickly approaching, and our first game was against Holy Cross. Unfortunately, we lost that game, but we bounced back and beat New Utrecht the following week. The season was short for us with only five games, but my teammates and I made the most out of it, enjoying every single moment.

In conclusion I am glad to have been a part of this new journey for the school's football team. During this experience I made new friends and built relationships with people I care for greatly. I learned this season not only about football but also things about myself and life in general. I am more than thankful to Nazareth, Coach Gooden, Coach Korey, my teammates and God for making this possible, and I can't wait for next year!!!

Korey Armstrong: Coach and Mentor

By: Rosalie Henriques

Korey Armstrong plays many roles as a wonderful part of our community. He is a strong team player, motivator, photographer, amazing teacher, supportive coach and knowledgeable “tech guy.” In all these roles, he leaves a positive impact on his students and others around him. Many of us turn to him to get advice, whether it is about school, sports, or life. His door is always open, and he is willing to do what he can to help. He helps students to realize their true potential and to work towards their dreams. His positive affirmations and wisdom show how much he cares and believes in us.

As a student at Nazareth, I have been lucky enough to experience “Korey-ism” and his creative teaching skills. He has introduced me to a new hobby. I am now interested in digital photography after taking his class during the beginning of my senior year. I learned different skills from how to use a camera to editing my own photos. Expressing ourselves through taking photos has truly been very fun and exciting. We had a chance to not only learn a new skill but also to gain some new friends on the way.

He has also been a great track coach, helping me and my teammates by giving great advice that improved our running techniques. He is always there for our track meets and cheers us on while we run. Having his support and guidance every step of the way has truly been a blessing. I am so thankful for all that Korey Armstrong, one of our alumni, continues to do for the Naz community, as a track and football coach and so much more.

The Freshman Experience

By: Liam Smalling

Hi, my name is Liam Smalling, and I am a freshman here at Nazareth Regional High School. I'm writing this short article about how my freshman year at Nazareth is going so far. So, my freshman year at Nazareth so far is going well. Most of the teachers here are nice and most of the work is not too difficult. I love the atmosphere, and everyone seems to be excited about coming to school. The food is okay but could be better. Also, I love the fact that they have so many events going on at the school and it's never boring around here. So, overall, it's amazing!

But I do have some suggestions. My first suggestion is that we have an active anti-bullying organization. The reason I'm saying this is because especially some of the freshmen need to understand what behavior is and is not acceptable in our community. I would also like to suggest that the students always be given the option to use their Chromebooks to take notes instead of handwriting them. I wonder if the teachers would consider reducing the amount of notetaking that is required in class? It's a lot of notes and slides!

My freshman year at Nazareth has started well and I'm excited to see what else is going to take place in the next four years here. I hope that I can get more socially active and more involved in different activities and sports so I can become more fully a part of the Nazareth community. I also hope that I can do something extraordinary that will benefit our community, such as volunteering outside of Nazareth to boost publicity for the school or hosting a special event to raise money for the school.

In closing, my freshman year at Nazareth has been amazing so far and I'm excited for what's going to come. Thank you for the privilege of writing this short article and I hope this article will give you a little insight into Nazareth from a freshman's point of view. God bless you and have a very Merry Christmas!

Senior Spirit Week & Trip Photos





The Excalibur Staff



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