



# THE CHOATE NEWS

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## THALHEIMER SPEAKERS: NAVIGATING A WORLD WITH AI

By **Deyi Meng '26**  
Copy Editor

During School Meeting on November 12, Choate welcomed this year's Thalheimer speakers: Dr. Joy Buolamwini and Dr. Kate Crawford. These experts came for a panel about artificial intelligence (AI) titled "Exploring Ethical & Sustainable Use of Generative AI." Dr. Buolamwini is a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), artist, and self-proclaimed poet of code who founded the Algorithmic Justice League, an organization dedicated to illuminating the social consequences of AI. Dr. Crawford is a research professor at the University of Southern California (USC), senior principal researcher at Microsoft Research, and the inaugural chair of AI and Justice at the École Normale Supérieure, whose work has focused on the societal implications of AI, large-scale data systems, and machine learning. During the panel, Dr. Buolamwini and Dr. Crawford shared their interdisciplinary work around AI development as well as AI's broader impact on today's world.

Director of Studies Ms. Ellen Devine helped choose the topic and speakers for this year's Thalheimer Series. "It seemed to me that it would be really important that with this being our first academic year where we have clearly articulated new policies around AI, and that we are really committed to engaging with AI in this informed, discerning, and ethical fashion, that we should have some experts come and speak to everybody about that," Ms. Devine said.



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Dr. Joy Buolamwini and Dr. Kate Crawford speak to the School about the implications of AI.

After an introduction by Teniola Obayomi '25 and Sofia Schmidt '25, Dr. Buolamwini and Dr. Crawford engaged in a discussion moderated by Ms. Devine. The speakers shared their origin stories and how they became involved with AI research. Dr. Buolamwini's journey inadvertently started in graduate school at MIT when an AI tracking software failed to identify her dark skin until she wore a white mask. "That was really the exploration, the starting point for me, where I wasn't even looking to uncover any types of biases or harm. I was lit-

erally trying to express myself creatively," Dr. Buolamwini said.

Dr. Crawford recounted how one of her projects, called "Anatomy of an AI System," shifted her perspective as she explored the physical and environmental impacts of AI. "You might think of AI as something that's immaterial, algorithmic, like zeros and ones, or ChatGPT and text on the screen, but it's actually one of the biggest, most material infrastructures we have ever built as a species. If we look at how these systems

work, ... these have enormous material impacts," she said.

Additionally, the panelists emphasized the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to studying AI. "AI is a space that welcomes you, even if you're not in a hardcore technical discipline. It actually needs to have humanistic, social, scientific, and unique artistic approaches to how we deal with the frontier of technology," Dr. Crawford said.

Nonetheless, Dr. Buolamwini and Dr. Crawford highlighted potential concerns with AI, such

as the role of chatbots. "That type of AI [chatbots], when it comes to forming emotional connections, can be manipulative. I think it has to be attended to with a much higher risk profile that it might necessarily be categorized otherwise," Dr. Buolamwini said. On a similar note, Dr. Crawford emphasized the immense environmental burden of the generative AI: "These are the most environmentally-dangerous systems that we've got. Every time you use a generative AI tool like ChatGPT, that is about 15 times more en-

ergy intensive than a traditional search," she said.

Despite concerns, both speakers emphasized the importance of maintaining hope and being proactive as a community when it comes to dealing with AI. "The public has much more of a say than you might imagine. There's a problem around the way that we talk about AI, it feels very remote and abstract, like somebody else is making all of these decisions," Dr. Crawford said. "So this is a moment to think about what is the power of collective pushback around AI when you see systems that can actually cause you harm." Echoing this sentiment, Dr. Buolamwini added, "[It] gave me hope to know that as a student with this experience, with the various skills, there was actually an ability to form this organization [the Algorithmic Justice League] that is literally committed to preventing AI harm by working with many different kinds of people."

Following the discussion, students had the opportunity to receive signed books from Dr. Buolamwini and Dr. Crawford, titled *Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What Is Human in a World of Machines* and *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. Additionally, both speakers hosted class sessions with students later in the day, with Dr. Buolamwini visiting computer science and programming courses and Dr. Crawford visiting sociology courses and the Kohler Environmental Center (KEC).

Students reflected positively upon the panel, finding the ideas

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## Faculty Gain Insight and Forge Connections at PoCC Conference

By **Rachel Fan '27**  
Copy Editor

From December 4-7, 13 Choate faculty members attended the annual People of Color Conference (PoCC) in Denver, Colorado, organized by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). PoCC is NAIS's flagship event, aimed to encourage equity and justice in teaching, learning, and sustainability within independent schools. The 2024 conference theme, "Meeting the Moment: Anchoring and Enriching Our Education Futures," called on participants to draw strength from ancestral legacies and embrace innovative visions to eliminate injustice and cultivate thriving communities. The conference featured an array of programming, including keynote speakers, workshops, and affinity group meetings, all designed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote inclusive and equitable education.

Faculty members interested in attending the conference applied through the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Priority was given to educators of color, particularly those who are new to Choate or who may feel isolated as individuals of a certain identity, as attending PoCC provided them with a valuable opportunity to network with colleagues who identify the same way or work in a similar setting and openly share their ex-

periences as educators. However, this doesn't mean that individuals of other backgrounds couldn't attend. "While we do prioritize faculty of color going, we have absolutely sent white-identifying colleagues to the PoCC [as well]," Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers said.

Choate faculty who attended PoCC valued the opportunity to engage with a community that celebrates diverse identities and experiences while providing meaningful opportunities for growth and reflection. "As an Aboriginal/Indigenous person who also has a multiracial background, ... it was wonderful to see so many other educators who come from a variety of beautiful mixed backgrounds," History teacher Mr. Matthias Baudinet said. He emphasized the importance of finding spaces that embrace complex identities, particularly for individuals who may be white-presenting but identify as people of color.

For many participants, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) workshops were a conference highlight. Assistant Director of Admission Mr. Michael Rodriguez said, "All of the different workshops that I've been able to attend on leadership, and again, specifically what it means to be a person of color but also be a leader in your school community ... [have] been inspiring and motivating, knowing that there are already folk of color in those positions." In addition to the workshops, Mr.



Photo courtesy of History teacher and 4th-form Dean Mr. Timothy Yun

Choate faculty connect with other educators at PoCC.

Baudinet appreciated the affinity group spaces at the conference, where multiracial educators like himself shared experiences of resisting pressures in American society to "pick just one race."

Dr. Myers hopes to utilize the assets that the attendees acquired from PoCC to create a stronger sense of belonging at Choate by ensuring that every student feels represented and valued. "We want to do an even better job of making all of [the community] feel seen, almost like you have a mirror," she said. Mr. Baudinet stressed the importance of continuing to fund DEI initiatives, particularly in the face of national pushback. "Choate needs to stand firm and recommit itself to this important work when those attacks come," he said.

While there was a Student Diversity Leadership Conference

(SDLC) that was held concurrently with PoCC, no Choate students were selected to attend this year due to not being selected through the lottery system for students to attend the conference. However, Choate students have attended SDLC in past years. For the faculty in attendance, the conference was transformative, offering them unique insights and fresh takes. "I would certainly encourage [members of] our school community to attend this conference again," Mr. Rodriguez said. "You're just able to connect with so many different people that can share a similar background or similar ideas as you but also that can think very much differently from you as well."

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## ALUM TALKS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By **Ethan Zhang '26**  
Copy Editor

On November 20, HPRSS teacher Mr. Sam Doak hosted an online conversation with Choate alumnus and author of *Smart Startups*, Mr. Jim Sherman '80. Over the course of an hour, they discussed Mr. Sherman's book and how to be a strong entrepreneur, sharing examples and advice from 18 different Harvard Business School founders.

Mr. Sherman emphasized three key characteristics of a successful entrepreneur: passion, resilience, and knowing when to "jump." He said, "You need to have creativity, a passion to create something." Mr. Sherman also believes it is necessary to also be resilient in an industry that's bound to have many ups and downs. He added, "Knowing when to jump is often going to be a reflection of how risk-averse you are. [Consider,] what are your financial resources? What's important to you?" Mr. Sherman be-

lieves that everybody can develop the traits necessary for successful entrepreneurship. He said, "There is this notion that entrepreneurs are just born that way, but what matters are the three key characteristics ... you don't have to be born with them."

Director of Alumni Relations Ms. Andrea Solomon thought Mr. Sherman's talk was very beneficial for students. She said, "Mr. Sherman is incredibly talented, and the goal was to have a way for him to share his experience in startups ... It was practical advice for the participants with real-world experience and examples."

Ms. Solomon hopes to see more 5th and 6th formers attend similar future alumni events. "They foster networking, community building, and ongoing support for each other and the School among our graduates," she said.

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Mr. Jim Sherman '80 leads a conversation on successful entrepreneurship.

### Joining Forces

Wallingford plans to merge Lyman and Sheehan High Schools.  
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Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by Evelyn Kim '25 and Rielle Reyes '27.



The Whiffenpoofs Holiday Concert  
December 13th, 7:30p.m. in Colony Hall

## CHOATE PARTNERS WITH TOYS FOR TOTS

By **Elizabeth Burgstahler '26**  
Staff Contributor

has and encouraged everybody to donate toys to the cause. Previously, Katelyn Nguyen '27 worked with children in her community as part of her community service. After that experience, Nguyen was inspired to continue helping them by donating a Lego set to the Toys for Tots drive. "It felt rewarding to donate to such a good cause, especially during the holiday season," Nguyen said. "I would definitely encourage everybody to donate something because even a single donation could really brighten somebody else's day and have a meaningful impact."

The toy-giving tradition started with two Wallingford locals, Mr. Jim Fitzsimmons and Ms. Holly Short Lafond, in December 1990. The two locals inde-

pendently collected donations until 1997, when they joined forces with Toys for Tots. In partnership with Mr. Fitzsimmons, Director of Community Service Ms. Melissa Koomson and Chief Communications Officer Ms. Alison Cady set up toy collection spots around campus. All of the toys will be donated to children in New Haven County.

On December 12, local restaurant Gaetano's Tavern on Main hosted an event for Wallingford locals and members of the Choate community to donate more toys to the cause and spread holiday cheer.

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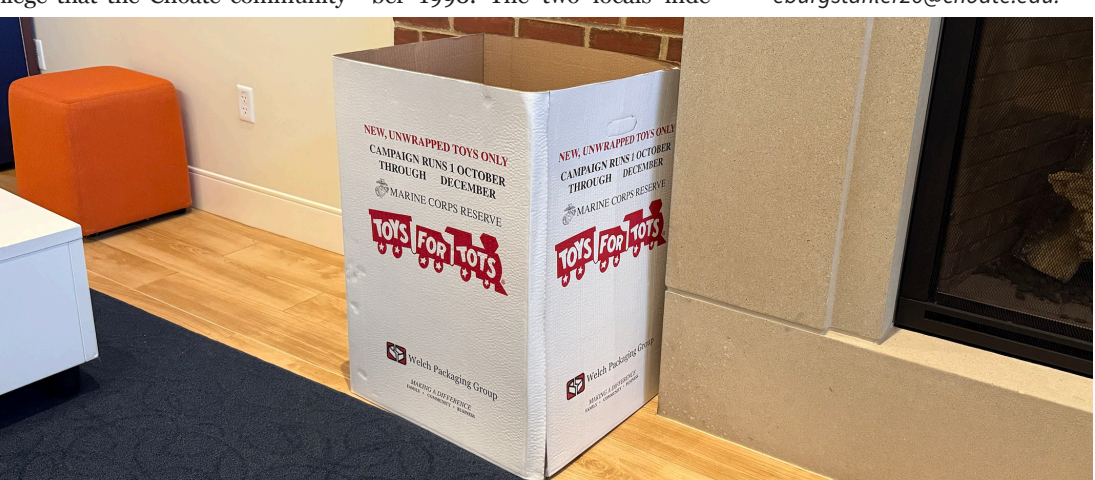


Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Toys for Tots donation box by the fireplace in St. John Hall.

## HOLIDAY CHEER AT THE END OF THE YEAR: LIBRARY DECEMBER DISPLAYS



Photo by Finn Wikstrom '26/The Choate News

Andrew Mellon Library's December displays inform the Choate community.

By **Kaitlyn Yu '27**  
Staff Contributor

Throughout the year various book and archive displays adorn the Andrew Mellon Library's bookshelves, enlightening the Choate community with new information, stories, and Choate history. This month, the Library has an array of new displays, from showcases on seasonal holidays, to the history of our Tuck Shop, to the evolution of school publications like *The Choate News*.

"Our displays are a whole team effort, so everybody gets involved in the process," Assistant Library Director Ms. Sam Nelson said. Apart from the Library staff, Ms. Nelson added that Choate community members are an essential part of the curation process. This month's main display highlights different December seasonal holidays, and some artifacts in the current display were donated by faculty members. For example, Ms. Nelson brought in her menorah for Hanukkah, and HPRSS teacher Mr. Jim Davidson contributed his Buddha statue to commemorate Bodhi Day. The Archives added to this display as well, providing

a rotating slideshow with photos of students celebrating the holidays through the ages.

The team also ensures that the Library's displays are interactive and offer different types of media catered to all members of the Choate community. "[There are] lots of different resources; it's not just books," Ms. Nelson said. "There's a Padlet for winter holiday music." The displays include thematic books for all ages, including children's books and nonfiction texts for older readers.

There are challenges when it comes to the layout of these displays. Due to the limited display space for books and artifacts, the Library must carefully select what information to share with the community. "I could put in so much material to help to tell a story, but I really need to ... make it captivating, interesting, and relevant to what the topic is," Archivist and Special Collections Librarian Mrs. Stephanie Gold said.

Nonetheless, most members of the Choate community have had positive reactions to the displays. "I really like the way [the displays] are organized," Norah Wang '27 said. "I think that librarians have put a lot of thought into it. ... Right before I

get my work done, I just browse the displays and see, is there anything new added? Are there any books that are recommended?" Director of Curricular Initiatives Mr. Deron Chang also enjoys the exhibitions. "I love them. These displays make my life complete," he said.

Dr. Sherry Newman, Director of the Andrew Mellon Library and School Archives, highlighted the unexpected members of the community who equally benefit from the displays. "We have a faculty member's little boy that comes in every week and engages with the displays," she said.

Ms. Nelson highlighted the goal of the library's displays — to "spark conversation" and "make sure that students are having fun and thinking about inventive ways to experience media, ... getting them to think a little bit and expand, and grow, and learn." Dr. Newman echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the displays' community-based approach. "It's really to be able to just have conversation and to engage with students on a level, to let them know that this is their space, and come up with questions."

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## AI Education with Thalheimer Speakers

Continued from Page 1

presented to be meaningful and applicable to their own lives. "I thought it resonated deeply because AI is so relevant now — a lot of people use it for a multitude of reasons," Leanna Robie '25, an attendee of Dr. Buolamwini's class session, said. Robie also appreciated Dr. Crawford's mention of the environmental repercussions of AI usage. "Everyone uses AI for so many different reasons, but hearing the talk and the sustainability made me more cognizant of the effects of using it," she said.

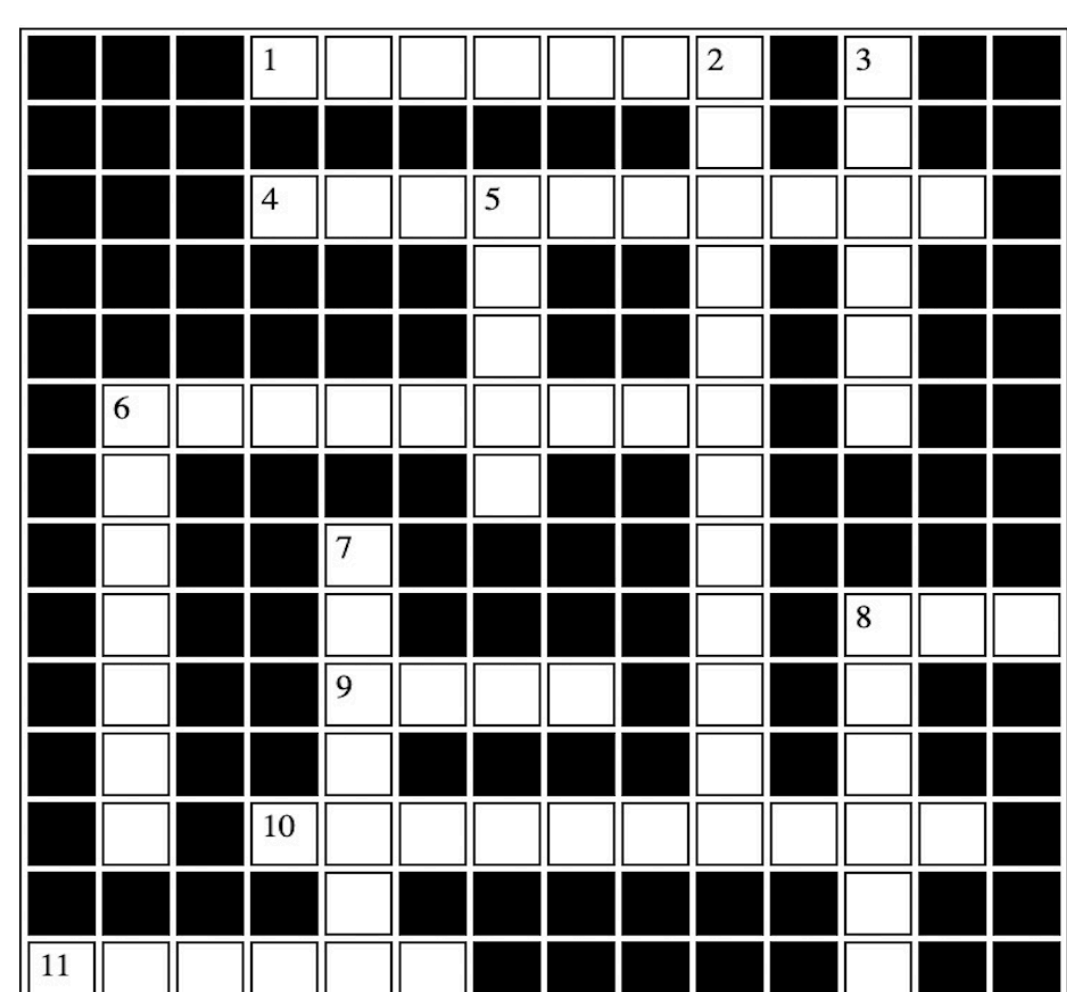
Faculty members also enjoyed the talk and found it to be impact-

ful. Computer Science teacher Ms. Meghan Healey said, "It's not every day that we get to have people in the tech world come and talk to students here. In terms of my discipline and the area that I teach in, it was really exciting to have some people come in and talk about that subject." Ms. Healey has incorporated many elements of Dr. Buolamwini's work into her class curriculum, such as by elaborating on the topic of algorithmic bias during a simulation project. "It's nice to have expanded that unit and brought something that's current and interesting but also really important to the computer science group," she said.

The panel by Dr. Buolamwini and Dr. Crawford gave students and faculty alike an opportunity to learn more from experts about the interdisciplinary research surrounding AI as well as its contributions and ramifications for society. "Choate students have so many interests, it can start to feel narrowed into one kind of topic. I think AI as a technology intersects with all human interests, needs, and challenges, and so trying to bring people who represent that well is important," Ms. Devine said.

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## WARM UP WITH THIS CROSSWORD!



Crossword by Kayla Bashawaty '26/The Choate News

### Across

- "H" of NHS
- "I think AI is a technology \_\_\_ with all human interests, needs, and challenges..."
- New Choate Faculty who also coached at UCONN and Avon Old Farms
- Locale of a common New Year's resolution
- Editor most likely to steal your tiramisu
- Trump's SEC Pick
- Choate dorm with a Santa's helicopter decoration

### Down

- Wickedly good color combination?
- Tone of the Lorem Ipsum Magazine
- Favorite School Meeting speaker?
- Choate teacher and screenwriter of the award-winning "Eire We Go"
- Choate event that celebrated its 40th birthday at the WJAC this past Saturday
- "His \_\_\_ style is characterized by baggy denim and oversized sweaters."

## A TREE-mendous Change to the Holiday Ball

By **Matthew Zhang '28**  
Reporter

As the air turns crisp and the winter chill brushes your skin, a lit Christmas tree near the chapel signals the holiday season. While for many Choate students, Winterlude — a time marked by cold days and exams — might not be a highlight, one event brings warmth and excitement to campus: the Holiday Ball (Hol Ball), the biggest dance of the year.

This tradition, which began in 1984, was created to celebrate the holiday season and wrap up a successful calendar year before students head home for the winter break. Since then, on the last Saturday before break, students dress up in their best suits and dresses to enjoy food, music, and late-night dancing with their peers.

This year marks the 40th year of the Hol Ball. However, there is a major difference between this year's party and the 39 that preceded it: its location.

Due to the renovation going on in the dining hall, the Hol Ball was moved to the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center (WJAC). When asked about the reasoning behind the location change, Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long explained, "With the dining hall unavailable, we needed a space large enough for the entire student body for dancing." She continued, "The gym proved to be the best option ... We will have a bigger setup from the lighting company and can use an ample amount of smoke without the smoke alarms going off."

David Glover-Barr '25 was excited prior to attending the dance despite the change. "I am

a little hesitant because it is different than the dining hall, but overall I am still excited for a good time, and I know the music and the DJ are going to be great," he said. "It's still going to be fun because there's going to be a lot of space on the dance floor to dance with friends."

This year's theme, "TREE-mendous Tradition," drew inspiration from Hol Ball's location — the Wood Court. The event featured a professional DJ, food catered by SAGE Dining Services, and the traditional crowd-favorite chocolate fountain. As students gear up for winter break, this cherished event offered students a chance to celebrate together and create memories that will last well beyond the season.

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Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

## STANDING TOGETHER: NEW HAVEN'S IMMIGRANTS BRACE FOR TRUMP'S RETURN

By **Jai Midha '27**  
Reporter

In New Haven, Connecticut, numerous undocumented residents are voicing their concerns and apprehensions surrounding the immigration policies of President-elect and Former President Donald Trump P'oo, particularly the possibility of widespread deportations. Trump has frequently voiced his plans to issue the largest deportation in American history and a substantive crackdown on undocumented immigration. Ms. Paula Naranjo, a college student from an immigrant family, said, "I go to college, but I don't know what's going to happen when I graduate; I'm scared of my family being separated."

During a gathering hosted by Unidad Latina en Acción (ULA), participants held banners featuring slogans such as "We are the resistance" and "Porque sólo el pueblo salva al pueblo," translating to "Because only the people will save the people." The organization sought to protest anti-immigration policies, raise awareness, and build a supportive community. The gathering included heartfelt accounts from undocumented women, including one named Maria, who shared, "We are very sad that Trump wants to deport us ... it is not fair that they want to deport us." Mr. Brian Timko, who coordi-



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

nates volunteers for ULA, stressed the need for greater involvement and said, "We need to gain political momentum and push for legislative protections for Connecticut's immigrant communities."

During a rally in Hartford, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker highlighted the city's dedication to inclusivity. "New Haven is a welcoming and inclusive city, and Connecticut is a welcoming and inclusive state," he said. "We're committed to doing everything within our power to help ensure our residents, regardless of their documentation status, continue to feel welcomed, safe, and [have] a deep sense of belonging as valued members of our community."

Mr. Richard Furlow, an Alderman from New Haven, attended the rally and stated that he and the Board of Aldermen have been diligently crafting legislation for an extended period focused on ensuring immigration safety within the city. "It's been a few years. We're just trying to get the wording right and protect the city because of the possibility of losing federal funding. There's a lot to this; it's more than creating a law that just magically makes everyone safe," he said.

ULA organizers have been preparing for the possibility of a second administration under Trump for several months now. Mr. John Jairo Lugo, ULA's community organizing director, expressed

his concerns. "I think [Trump] has more experience and tools to attack the community," he said. Therefore, following the election on November 5, efforts have been made to educate undocumented immigrants about their rights, alongside the establishment of emergency group chats for community members organized by location. "We're getting ready for this new administration. We can create the mechanisms to protect ourselves," Mr. Lugo said.

During a meeting on November 11, Mr. Lugo and ULA community organizer Ms. Jenny Cornejo handed out "Know Your Rights" leaflets to numerous attendees. Adorned with the striking phrase,

"¡Cuidado! ¡Si abres la puerta, pierdes!" — "Be careful! If you open the door, you lose!" — the leaflets instruct community members to bar police or federal immigration authorities from their houses unless they have an arrest warrant.

In the meeting, Mr. Lugo focused on the 2007 raids conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), during which agents entered numerous homes in Fair Haven and arrested 32 individuals suspected of being undocumented immigrants. He recognized that comparable operations were not conducted in the city during Trump's initial term, primarily due to New Haven's sanctuary policies.

Organizers have introduced localized WhatsApp group chats to rally activists when ICE raids. Mr. Lugo urged attendees to alert their group chat if federal immigration authorities came to their door, prompting the mobilization of a ULA emergency response team to assist the affected community members. Mr. Lugo stated that ULA's primary strategy involves capturing photographs and videos of federal immigration authorities to share on social media. He pointed out that their strategy was effective when ICE agents unexpectedly showed up at local courts to arrest undocumented immigrants during the initial term of Trump's presidency.

"[ICE] rely on nobody recognizing them, nobody recognizing their faces, nobody knowing their movements," Mr. Lugo stated in Spanish. Mr. Lugo is anticipating the increased discrimination that members of the immigrant community might encounter in the coming four years due to the president-elect's anti-immigrant rhetoric. Mr. Lugo highlighted the significance of unity among immigrants. As Trump's reinauguration day draws near, activists are rallying to ensure their voices and rights are preserved. "The thing that will save us during these next four years is unity," Mr. Lugo said.

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## NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS IN NEW HAVEN



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

By **Bella Welch '26**  
Staff Contributor

On December 2, the city of New Haven broke ground on new affordable housing units along Hazel Street for low and moderate-income first-time home buyers. The Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven (NHS) collaborated with students from the Yale School of Law, School of Management, and School of Architecture's Urban Design Workshop on the project.

The Yale Urban Design Workshop runs clinics with students, and their work is shared with nonprofit organizations, such as NHS, to work on special housing projects in the New Haven community. As Senior Critic at the Yale School of Architecture and Director of the Yale Urban Design Workshop, Mr. Andrei Harwell explained, "This was a special project because, at the end of the clinic, we were able to take the work NHS was really excited about and wanted to move forward on into the ... Yale Urban Design Workshop, the Community Design Center that's part of the school."

Yale students, with guidance from Mr. Harwell and other Yale faculty, drafted the initial plans, documents, and proposals. NHS then hired an executive architect who finalized and helped approve the project's construction. Executive Director of NHS Mr. James Paley appreciated the Yale Urban Design Workshop's contributions. "They provided the foundation, the preliminary designs, and they had a relationship with the

State Department of Housing to make it possible for us to get the necessary funding to undertake the project," he said.

NHS strengthens New Haven communities by promoting homeownership opportunities and supporting stakeholders. Mr. Paley explained the increasing role of first-time homebuyers. He said, "They'll become stronger stakeholders in the neighborhood because they have an investment in the neighborhood with owning property, and so they have an interest in making sure that the neighborhood survives and stays strong."

Due to the lack of new housing across the state of Connecticut, "not only can people not find any place to live, ... they end up renting apartments ... or buying houses [that] are too expensive," Mr. Harwell said, "and then they become what's called cost-burdened, which means they're spending more than 30% of their income on housing."

Both Mr. Paley and Mr. Harwell expressed the remarkable efficiency of this project given the unpredictable timelines. Mr. Harwell expressed his eagerness to be a part of more projects for housing in New Haven communities. He said, "The NHS project was pretty special because the sites that the students identified became available, the developer was really excited, and so it just took off and went forward."

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## One School, One Community: The Future of Wallingford's Education System

By **Maia Shah '27**  
Staff Contributor

In 1978, The Choate School for Boys and Rosemary Hall for Girls merged to create a state-of-the-art, co-ed boarding school experience. Now, the town of Wallingford hopes to achieve a similar transformation in its public education system through the One High School Project. This proposal aims to combine Lyman Hall High School and Mark T. Sheehan High School into a single state-of-the-art facility. While the Board of Education first voted on the concept in February 2023, the proposal remains highly controversial and continues to stir debate among students, parents, and city council members.

The time-consuming planning process, budget approvals, and lengthy construction timeline have stalled the process and led to a loss of clarity on the timeline, costs, and resource allocation. Many Wallingford residents are concerned that critical details have been overlooked, creating a sense of frustration over the apparent lack of transparency in such a pivotal shift for public education.

Councilor Jesse Reynolds believes that the issue isn't neces-

sarily a lack of transparency but rather a disconnect in communication. "I think the school district has been pretty open about what their plans and their intentions are. It just comes across as a lack of transparency because people aren't understanding what the process is," Mr. Reynolds explained. He suggested one solution: bringing representatives from the Board of Education or the superintendent to a town council meeting to provide a clear update and address lingering questions from residents. "To the Board of Education's credit, all the information has been presented at public meetings, and it exists in open forums," he added.

The Board of Education has indicated that the new school will be approximately 280,000 to 300,000 square feet and accommodate around 1,600 students — drawing from both Lyman Hall and Mark T. Sheehan High Schools. Mr. Reynolds views the project as an opportunity to revitalize Wallingford and distinguish it from neighboring towns. "I think that it could provide us the opportunity to move Wallingford into the next sort of phase," he said. "And that could draw people

to move here and reinvigorate our economy and all those things, so I look at it as an opportunity."

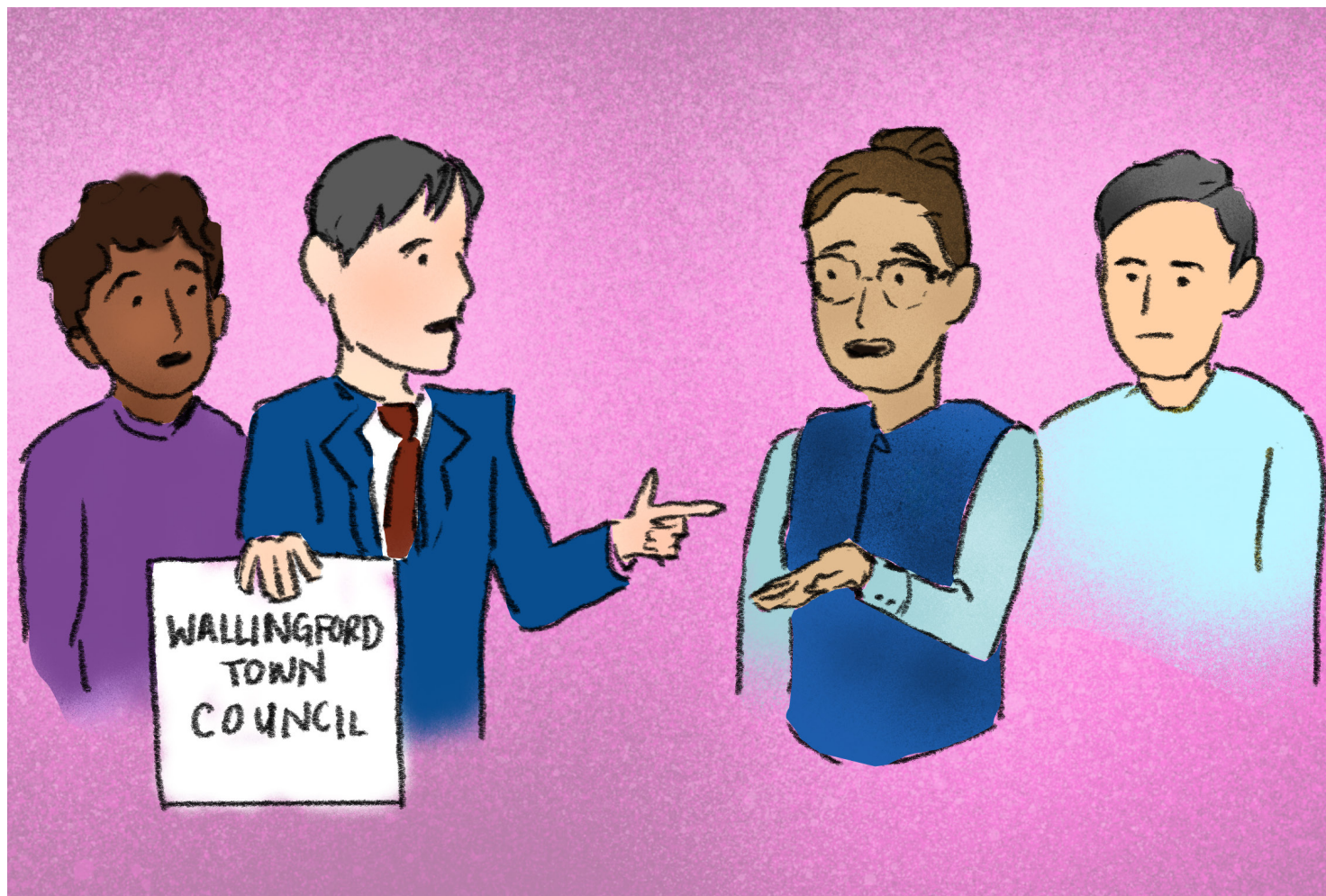
However, not everyone shares this optimistic view. While some see this as an opportunity to modernize and centralize education in Wallingford, many hesitate to embrace the proposal due to the potential risks involved. Many families are worried about the impact of such a large school. Concerns about the student-to-teacher ratio, the potential for overcrowding, and the loss of the community spirit fostered by two separate high schools have been raised. Wallingford has a long history of rivalry between Lyman Hall and Sheehan, which has contributed to increased community spirit in both schools, especially at sporting events. For many residents, the idea of merging the two schools is difficult to accept.

The project's financing has also raised questions. The considerable price tag has led some to wonder whether the money could be better spent elsewhere in the school system. Sophia Saldamarco '27, a day student from Wallingford, has heard plenty of opinions from her family, friends, and neighbors. "When I drive around town, I see more signs that say

"Say No to One High School" than ones that support it," she said. "It's important to provide transparency, not just for this project, but for any major decision. The public should be informed because they're the ones who will be using this new facility — not the people on the Board of Education or the city council. It's the kids who will be impacted." Saldamarco also questioned the cost: "That's a lot of money that could be reinvested into the existing schools. I think we should keep two high schools," she said.

Despite the strong opposition, some residents support the vision for a single high school, believing it could help bring Wallingford into a new era of education, athletic success, and community bonding. However, even if construction on the new school were to begin tomorrow, the Board of Education suggests it would likely take at least seven years before the building is ready to open, making this a long-term project that is subject to considerable change before the school could have its first graduating class.

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Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

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## Balancing Tradition and Efficiency: Rethinking School Meetings

By **Kaz Kousaka '27**  
Opinions Writer

School Meetings are an important part of Tuesday mornings at Choate. However, sometimes, they take too much time for information that could've just been communicated asynchronously. While some meetings are necessary, especially those addressing important topics such as elections or community conversations, many could be condensed into emails, saving time and letting students and faculty focus on other priorities.

One of the most significant advantages of using emails is their convenience. With emails, everyone can read the information when it works for them instead of taking time out of their school day to do so. Simple updates or reminders such as club announcements and scheduling do not have to take up a 50-minute block. Instead, they can be summarized in a few sentences and sent out for everyone to read when they'd like.



Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

Importantly, announcements that address the community at large, such as Head of Student Life Ms. Jenny Elliot's opening speeches regarding the direction of the School, or Head of School Dr. Curtis's announcements of important milestones such as the construction of a new building, do not fall into this category.

Also, with emails, you always have the information saved online if you need to refer to it later, which is more reliable than trying to remember everything in person at School Meeting. Furthermore, from the presenter's side, an email is less time-consuming. They

would not have to create a slideshow and script but rather just type out a message that can easily get to everyone.

That said, there are many things that can't be done over email. School Meetings are essential for building community among students and faculty. Whether it is watching our classmates play an instrument, listening to BoarPen highlight a sports team, spectating stellar performances from Step Squad, or singing the school song, School Meetings are a vital part of our school spirit that cannot be replicated digitally.

Some might argue that emails do not suffice because people need to remember to read them or will struggle to understand the tone. However, this can be fixed by keeping the emails short and clear so students can skim them on the way to class. If the content is urgent, the School could follow up with reminders to read the email so students get all the important announcements.

So what would be the best solution? Save meetings for important things such as community conversations, performances, BoarPen announcements, student council speeches, and guest speakers, and use emails for minor updates and reminders. This way, we can save time without losing the connection that makes our school feel like a community. It is all about finding a balance that works for everyone.

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## 'Tis the Season to be in the WJAC?

By **Elizabeth Burgstahler '26**  
Staff Contributor

Hol Ball requires a sentimental setting to reflect its role as the most important dance of the year. As the only formal dance in which all four forms come together, it fosters upper-underclassmen friendships and boasts a higher attendance than other two or one-form dances. The dining hall is integral to campus life, acting as a social gathering spot and offering an opportunity to slow down between classes and extracurriculars and is the perfect place to hold the event.

Throughout the deliberation process, Director and Assistant Director of Student Activities Ms. Alexandra Long and Ms. Colleen Kazar discussed various possibilities with SCOPE. After successfully housing the Haunted House and Pride Prom, SCOPE deemed Macquire Gym a viable option. However, given the building's isolated nature, SCOPE was concerned about low attendance rates. Addition-

ally, these two events were on a smaller scale than Hol Ball, and there would not be enough space for the entire school.

Ms. Long also proposed hosting the dance on the first floor of the Student Activities Center (SAC), but as one of the few formal dances of the year, I believe Hol Ball should not be held in the same place as casual SAC dances. Additionally, even though there are separate spaces in the dining hall for refreshments and dancing, the first floor of the SAC has too many barriers to feel like a cohesive dancing space instead of a SAC event.

Given all these considerations, SCOPE settled on the Wood Court in the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center (WJAC), where there will be adequate room as well as a rectangular space similar to that of the Hill House dining hall.

Ultimately, nowhere on campus is a better space to host Hol Ball than the dining hall. The dining hall holds historical significance and sentimental memories and creates a formal atmosphere that no other space on campus can.

As a member of SCOPE, I've prioritized preserving as many other aspects of Hol Ball as possible, including having a Christmas tree at the front of the dance and similar winter-themed treats. Yet, at the end of the day, the most important thing about Hol Ball is that the entire community can come together as one amidst the intense and dreary winterlude.

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## THE ART OF MAKING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS LAST

By **Casey Lippman '26**  
Opinions Writer

Millions of Americans set their New Year's resolutions with hopes of turning over a new leaf each January. Promises to hit the gym, start eating healthy, and other innumerable self-improvement strategies dominate January, but many of these plans are long forgotten by February. These lost resolutions leave many with a sense of guilt or failure, and while a fresh start is exciting to many, deciding to completely change your life on an otherwise random day is often a setup for disappointment. With that said, I do not believe that self-improvement is a waste of time; however, to improve the efficacy and longevity of New Year's resolutions, we must approach them from a new angle.

Last year, one of my resolutions was to gain the stamina to run five miles on the treadmill by the spring. I despise running and wanted to improve leading up to the summer. As March neared, I slowly increased the distance I was running each week so that I could quickly and easily run five miles by April. As I worked toward this goal, it was gratifying to see the distance I had run on my watch increase week after week.

After I hit my goal, a friend and I decided to run a 10k together towards the end of the summer. However, by this point, the runner's high had died down, and I barely crossed the finish. So, while my New Year's resolution was ultimately a success, I finished it still hating running, probably more than when I had started, and I haven't run a 10k since.



Graphic by Cora Slowe '26/The Choate News

Each year, the collection of people slowly abandoning the gym is, from my perspective, the outcome of having vague goals with unrealistic expectations. Although my experience wasn't perfect in retrospect, I successfully reached my defined goal of running the 10k thanks in part to the smaller goals I had set along the way and the fact that I kept it fun.

If your resolution is to shave two minutes off of your mile time, you can track your progress and set mini, more achievable milestones that keep you motivated to reach your ultimate goal. While running, I would increase my distance and speed every week. Even if I hated running by the end of the experience, feeling the gratification of achieving small goals at least got me to the five-mile target.

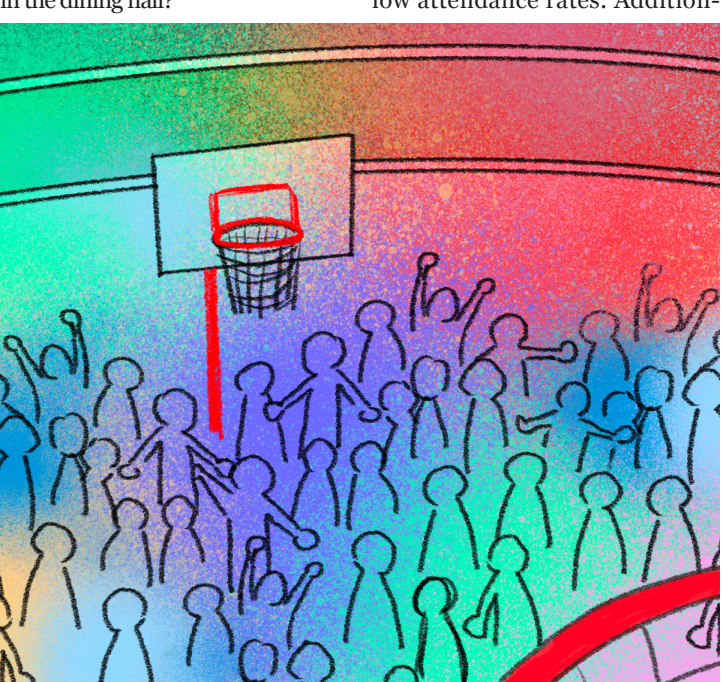
Setting attainable goals is equally, if not more important, than being specific. Making your resolution attainable within the time frame you set for yourself makes you less likely to give up on your resolution. If your goals are beyond your control, you may feel discouraged from continuing them, which I see as the main

reason people stop their resolutions once February hits.

In my opinion, the biggest downfall of resolutions is that people give up on themselves too early. It takes time to get used to a new way of eating or more consistent gym visits, but it is vital to not give up. Sometimes, achieving that lofty goal you set in late December appears intimidating, but getting started is the hardest part. Once you get into the habit of whatever self-improvement strategy you are attempting, it becomes significantly easier, and once you beat the January rush, you have made it through the hardest part.

If I could take away anything from this experience, it would be that even with incremental goals and realistic habits, resolutions can end negatively, as in my case. This is not a reason to abandon self-improvement; rather, it should serve as a reason to approach New Year's Resolutions from a point of opportunity as opposed to the expectation of a fixed outcome.

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Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

## LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION: THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF GROUP QUIZZES

By **Teya Tejavibulya '28**  
Opinions Writer

"A group quiz will help us learn more." "Why does the other class have a group quiz?" Such conversations addressing evaluative methods often circulate leading up to assessments. Group quizzes can be an effective method for teaching and learning, as they promote collaborative teamwork, enhancing the student's understanding of their subject and engagement overall.

Unlike regular assessments, which focus on individual answers, group quizzes allow students to share their thoughts and learn from each other. When hearing from different perspectives, this kind of team-

work helps everyone understand the material better, often clarifying misconceptions and building confidence among students.

Explaining a concept to someone else helps solidify their knowledge and your own. In group quizzes, students often answer their peers' questions, leading to deeper comprehension for both the explainer and the listener. From my experience, I not only learn from the teacher's explanations but from my peer's questions as well. They sometimes ask questions that are significantly outside the box and make me think about the material in new ways. This collaborative inquiry strengthens the learning experience in ways that individual study cannot.

Group activities are more engaging than individual assessments, and quizzes are no exception. The interactive nature of group quizzes and friendly competition can make learning more enjoyable and motivating. For instance, I've always liked using platforms such as Kahoot and Quizlet in collaborative settings. Competing with friends while answering questions changes what could be a separate task into an exciting group challenge.

Moreover, group quizzes teach valuable interpersonal skills beyond academics. Students learn to navigate differing opinions, resolve conflicts, and settle differences to achieve a shared goal. These activities also provide leader-

ship opportunities, encouraging quiet students to step forward and contribute in smaller, supportive group settings.

While group quizzes offer numerous benefits, they should differ from traditional assessments or lectures. Instead, they can be supplementary activities that add variety and interactivity to the classroom. Given their ability to make the classroom more balanced, group quizzes should be used as a review tool to reinforce new concepts alongside traditional testing methods.

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Graphic by Cora Slowe '26/The Choate News

## TRUMP IS BUILDING THE VERY SWAMP HE PROMISED TO DRAIN

By **Zaki Shamsi '26**  
Staff Contributor

Former President and President-elect Donald Trump P'oo didn't just promise to "drain the swamp" in 2016 — he vowed to obliterate it. He sold himself as a warrior for the forgotten, a crusader against elites who treat Washington D.C. as their playground. But in 2024, the swamp hasn't just survived, it's thriving — decked out in gold-plated tiles, stocked with custom jets, and overflowing with billionaires cannonballing into it.

What exactly is the "swamp?" The swamp refers to the revolving door between wealthy corporations and the government, where billionaires and lobbyists pour millions into campaigns through independent expenditure-only political action committees (also known as Super PACs). In return, politicians write laws benefiting their donors, such as slashing corporate taxes, weakening worker protections, and giving out massive subsidies. Trump's 2016 appeal rested on his promise to shut this practice down, branding himself as the wrecking ball that would destroy the system.

Instead, Trump has ironically become its most enthusiastic builder. His 2024 cabinet is packed with billionaires and corporate insiders like Scott Bessent, a hedge fund manager, as his Secretary of the Treasury pick, and Paul Atkins, a cryptocurrency advocate and a former Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) commissioner, as his choice for Chair of the SEC. These aren't just wealthy individuals — they're key players in a system designed to preserve their own power while leaving the working class behind.

Take Scott Bessent: as a hedge fund billionaire, he made his fortune speculating on financial markets that most Americans neither benefit from nor understand.

Hedge funds thrive when rules are few and risks yield massive rewards. But when those risks backfire, as they did during the 2008 financial crisis, ordinary Americans pay the price. During that period of economic disarray, millions lost jobs, homes, and savings while Wall Street was bailed out. Now, Trump wants Bessent to lead the Treasury, the very department tasked with safeguarding the public from financial recklessness.

And it's working-class Americans — Trump's most loyal supporters — who stand to lose the most. Deregulating financial markets, as figures like Bessent and Atkins support, removes safeguards that prevent billionaires from gambling with everyone else's future. The factory workers, farmers, and small business owners who cheer Trump on, falsely believing he's fighting for them, are unaware that his policies funnel wealth to the very elites they despise.

Trump's SEC pick Paul Atkins is no different. The SEC exists to protect small investors and prevent corporate misconduct, yet Atkins has spent his career arguing for fewer regulations on big businesses. His appointment signals a return to unchecked financial markets, where billionaires write the rules and everyone else bears the risks.

Then there's Elon Musk, Trump's pick for co-leader of the Department of Government Efficiency. Musk's companies Tesla and SpaceX depend on billions in government subsidies, and he's consistently fought against workers' rights and unionizing efforts. Under Trump, Musk isn't just a businessman — he's in charge of making the government "more efficient." Efficient for whom? Billionaires like him.

This isn't governance — it's a business deal. Trump's cabinet selections ensure that billionaires and corporate insiders will con-

tinue to shape policies for years to come. By installing figures like Bessent, Atkins, and Musk, he's rewarding his donors and fortifying a system that prioritizes corporate interests over public welfare.

The irony is staggering: Trump appears anti-establishment while being the establishment's loyal servant. He rails against elites but remains deeply beholden to them. His 2017 tax cuts enriched the top 1% of the wealthiest Americans, and his 2024 cabinet picks promise more of the same.

But this isn't just about Trump — it's a systemic issue. For decades, both Republican and Democratic parties have enabled the revolving door between government and corporate power. Former President Barack Obama bailed out banks during the 2008 financial crisis while homeowners lost everything. President Joe Biden's 2020 campaign leaned on tech billionaires and pharmaceutical companies, ensuring their interests were protected. Promises of change repeatedly deliver policies that enrich the wealthy while leaving the rest behind.

Trump proves how entrenched this establishment is. His cabinet shows billionaires and corporate insiders wield more power in D.C. than voters. The longer this system persists, the harder it will be to dismantle.

But the swamp isn't inevitable. Its strength lies in convincing us it can't change. The truth? Change is possible. We need leaders not beholden to billionaires, policies prioritizing workers over corporations, and a government truly representing its people.

If we let the swamp grow unchecked, we won't just live with it — we'll drown in it.

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## THE CLOCK IS TICKING FOR THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

By **Dominique Zen '28**  
Opinions Writer

With President-elect Donald Trump P'oo's emergence as the victor in the 2024 presidential election, incumbent President Joe Biden is on the final countdown to execute his last actions. Now in his "lame-duck" phase as president, there are limits to President Biden's power. Any policy that President Biden executes can be overturned or rejected by Trump if it has not been fulfilled before Trump's presidency, a highly likely scenario. However, there are a few things that he can do in his final few weeks for his presidential administration to make a lasting impression on American politics.

### Nominating Judges

Federal judges are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. While Democrats are still in control of the Senate before the new Congress convenes on January 3, President Biden should nominate as many federal judges as possible and aggressively push for the Senate to confirm them. Any position left open when Trump enters office on January 20 will be filled by him with judges who may be just as extreme, if not more, than his nominees during his first term in office.

Some of Trump's nominated judges during his first term have gained attention for their controversial decisions. Federal Judge Aileen Cannon, whom Trump nominated in May 2020, halted Trump's classified documents

case. Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk, nominated in January 2019, halted the approval of mifepristone, one of the most commonly used abortion medications.

Given the chance in his second term, Trump will likely appoint judges who may have records of or are prone to make controversial decisions to any seats that President Biden leaves open. Taking that power out of Trump's hands would require President Biden to nominate as many federal judges as needed before the end of his presidency.

### Presidential Pardons

Historically, presidents have pardoned more people during their "lame-duck" period in office than in the rest of their term combined, despite the short period of time. Trump pardoned 27 people before the 2020 election and 116 people post-election. Former President Barack Obama issued pardons for 70 people pre-election in his second term and 142 people during his "lame-duck" phase.

President Biden's recent pardon of his son, Hunter Biden, was criticized by many as an unexpected betrayal. It came after months of repeatedly stating that he would not pardon his son for his crimes. For some, this decision portrays him as a man seemingly above the law, whose personal interests and familial relationships take priority.

Instead, President Biden should focus on pardoning those who have been convicted of crimes under the umbrella of leaking classified government

documents. By pardoning these whistleblowers, such as the founder of WikiLeaks Julian Assange, President Biden would promote freedom of the press and transparency in government agencies.

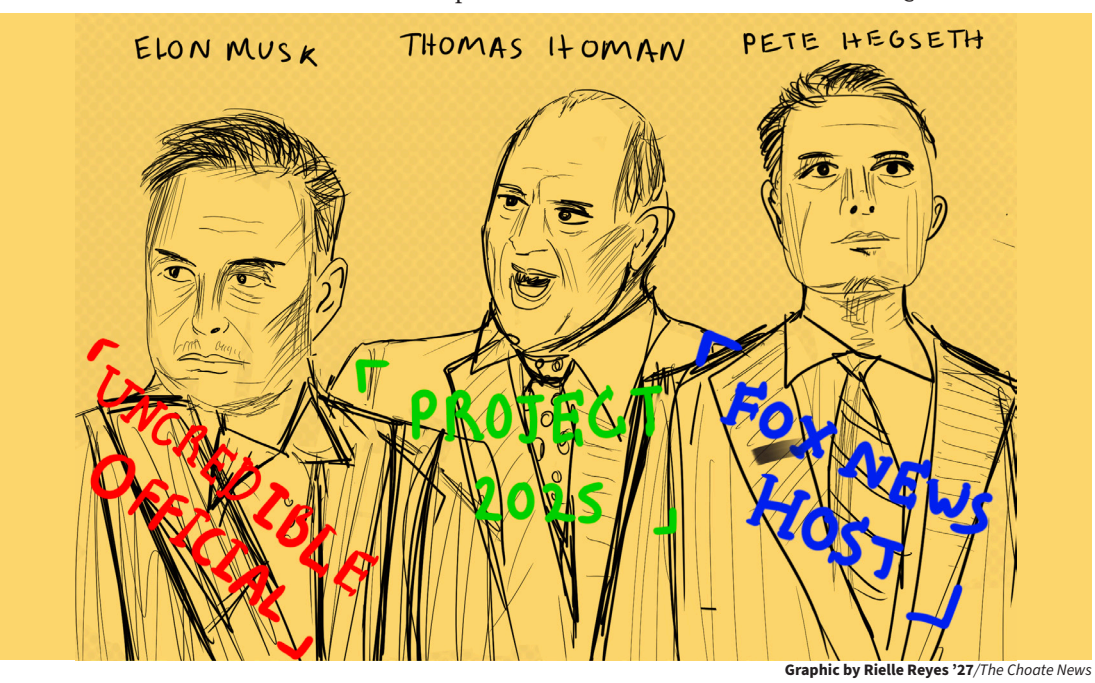
### Transfer of Power

With tensions high and continuing to rise in our politically divided country, President Biden needs to continue to promote a peaceful transfer of power. Around half of the country is dissatisfied with the current Biden administration, and the other half disapproves of the incoming Trump administration.

The storming of the United States Capitol Building on January 6, 2021 by Trump's supporters, who refused to recognize the election results, and the two assassination attempts on Trump's life during his 2024 campaign, are a testament to the U.S.'s extreme political polarization. There are people now who still harbor ill feelings towards either the current president or the president-elect. To ensure a smooth transfer of power, President Biden must stress to the people the importance of a peaceful power transfer in maintaining the integrity of the country.

The window of power for President Biden and his fellow Democrats is closing every day. Between now and then, President Biden's actions are limited, but if he plays his cards right, his final actions will have a lasting impact in the years to follow.

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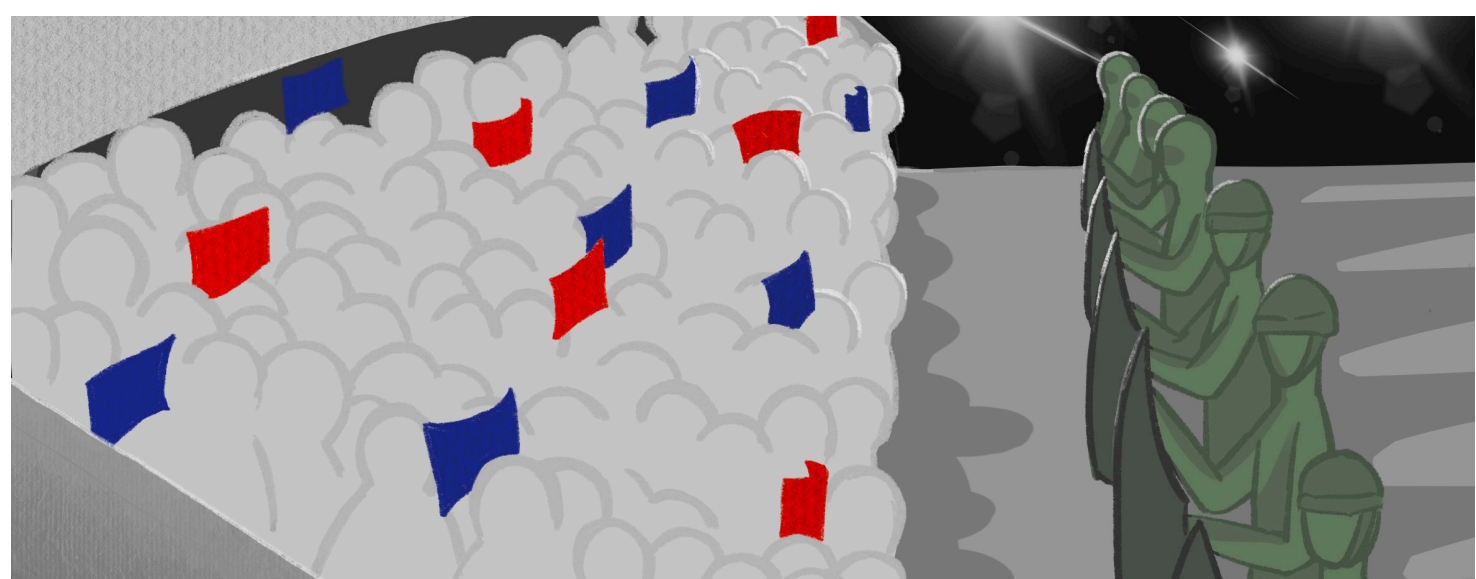
Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27/The Choate News

## Martial Law: President Yoon Must Be Impeached

By **Ben Lee '27 and Harry Kim '28**  
Opinions Writers

On December 3 at 10:27 p.m. KST, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol officially declared martial law in the country, temporarily replacing civilian authority with military control. President Yoon's decision has introduced political and economic tumult in the nation and aroused mistrust among the citizens of South Korea; consequently, he should be held responsible for the chaos he has induced, and impeachment is the necessary step forward.

South Korea witnessed its last declaration of martial law under President Chun Doo-hwan's authoritarian regime from 1980–1988. Chun left indelible scars on the country's history by sacrificing many innocent lives of Korean citizens due to extreme military coercion. Despite the country's history of suffering under martial law, President Yoon chose to declare it anyway, stating that he wanted to "eradicate the root of all instigation, the criminals of the anti-state forces who have



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

been supporting the country's rival, North Korea, and committing atrocities so far." However, President Yoon's decision was driven by his own political agenda rather than national security reasons.

Within hours after martial law was declared, South Korea faced severe economic consequences. The share prices of the nation's leading companies like Samsung, Hyundai Motor, and LG experienced losses of 1%, 2.4%, and 2.8%, respectively. Benchmarks of

Korea Stock Exchange platforms KOSDAQ fell 2%, while KOSPI fell 2.4%, shocking average citizens who invested in retirement savings and personal assets. Though these percentages aren't unseen in stock markets, the simultaneous drop in stock amongst several of Korea's largest conglomerates and the Korean Won's (KRW) weak international value was concerning. Consequently, the middle class, already struggling with inflation and rising living costs, was confronted

with heightened anxiety regarding their financial futures.

While South Korea has long been known for its stable economic growth in Asia, its positive reputation instantly collapsed after Yoon's martial law declaration alarmed foreign investors. Their loss of trust and confidence has directly impacted South Korea's export-driven economy, further burdening manufacturing businesses that depend on international demand.

Amidst the decline of the South Korean economy, the nation is also struggling with political turmoil. Immediately following President Yoon's address, a unanimous vote by the Korean Parliament proclaimed the declaration of martial law to be null and void. Likewise, the two main political parties in the South Korean parliament have recently come to an agreement to suspend President Yoon's presidential power.

While economic and political burdens overwhelm South Korean citizens, they have unified together for President Yoon's impeachment. Over the past few days, thousands of people have gathered around the Seoul City Hall square, shivering in the cold and holding protest signs, fiercely demanding President Yoon's impeachment.

Trust is a crucial aspect between the president of a country and its people, but with President Yoon's nonsensical decision to enact martial law, he has lost his credibility. From plummeting stock markets to the weakening of the country's democracy, the declaration of martial law has not only brought chaos to the nation but also set the groundwork for President Yoon's impeachment. Democracy should give voice to the people of a nation, and President Yoon should acknowledge the rising demand from Korean citizens and be removed immediately from office.

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## Making The Season Bright: Choate's 2024 Holiday Decorations



Photo by Sabrina Liu '28/The Choate News

The 52-foot Christmas tree stands beside Seymour St. John Chapel.



Photo by Sabrina Liu '28/The Choate News

Mrs. Emily Osterhout decorates the lawn outside of Edsall House.

By **Sabrina Liu '28**  
Reporter

'Tis the season when the Choate campus transforms into a winter wonderland of festive cheer, adorned with glittering lights, vibrant wreaths, and towering Christmas trees. Each decoration, big or small, carries a deeper story — a cherished tradition or the efforts of individuals devoted to spreading joy and creating magic for the community.

### The Big Christmas Tree

The 52-foot evergreen next to Seymour St. John Chapel is a striking centerpiece of Choate's holiday decorations. Behind this impressive display is the Facilities Services team, led by Assistant Director of Facilities — Grounds, Maintenance, and Vehicles, Mr. Mike Klimaszewski.

Decorating the massive tree is no easy feat. "We use the bucket truck to decorate ... and it tends to be windy up there," Mr. Klimaszewski said. It takes 10-12 people working over six days to complete the project.

For Mr. Klimaszewski, the effort is part of a long-standing tradition. "The large ever-

green tree in front of the Chapel, wreaths on large signature buildings, staff party at facilities carpenter shop, poinsettias at the Chapel, Sally Hart Lodge, have been decorated for as long as I have been at Choate — 41 years," he shared. This enduring dedication ensures that the tree remains a symbol of community through the early winter chill.

### Edsall House

By the towering Christmas tree, the holiday spirit radiates from Third-form Dean Mrs. Emily Osterhout's festive home. A whimsical Santa helicopter perches on the roof, a decoration she fondly calls her favorite. "We started decorating when we moved into Pitman in 2012, and every year, we seem to add more," she said.

This year's newest addition, Santa's mailbox, has been a hit with faculty children, giving them a chance to send their letters to Santa. "This season for me is all about joy and sharing it with others," she said.

### Nichols House

In the largest third-form dorm on campus, Nichols House, holiday cheer has taken

root in the form of a beautifully lit Christmas tree. Thanks to Prefect Virginia Nelson '25, who found the tree during a Black Friday sale, the common room now radiates a festive warmth. "I was really feeling the Christmas spirit and wanted to spread that across the dorm," Nelson shared.

With the help of her fellow prefects and dormmates, setting up the tree was a communal effort, sparking joy and excitement throughout Nichols House. "It wasn't just me — it was my fellow prefects who came together to make it happen," she added. The tree has quickly become a centerpiece of dorm life, uniting everyone and bringing the magic of the holidays closer to home.

### Memorial House

In Memorial House, French teacher Dr. Donna Canada-Smith has embraced the holiday spirit with cozy seasonal decorations, including a Christmas tree adorned with blue lights that remind her of her mother and grandmother. "Having my Christmas tree makes me feel more at home," she shared.

Typically, her tree features a beach theme with handmade seashell ornaments and a driftwood star, though this year, she opted for non-breakable decorations to protect them from her cats.

Decorating for each season is a tradition she partakes in at home and in Steele Hall, where she and her office mate, French teacher Ms. Anne Armour, add festive touches to their door year-round. For her, the decorations are also a way to make students feel more at ease. "Maybe for some, it makes them feel a little bit closer to home, or more like the dorm is homey," she said.

Choate's holiday decorations are much more than festive displays — they reflect deeper stories of tradition and community. From the Chapel's evergreen tree that has been decorated for decades to Mrs. Osterhout's Santa helicopter and Dr. Canada-Smith's lights, each piece is a testament to Choate's strong sense of spirit and bonding.

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Photo by Sabrina Liu '28/The Choate News

Nichols prefects pose in front of their mini Christmas tree.



Photo by Sabrina Liu '28/The Choate News

Dr. Donna Canada-Smith decorated her house with lights and greenery.

## UNDEFINABLE FACULTY: CHOATE TEACHERS' UNIQUE HOBBIES

By **Chloe Yeung '28**  
Reporter

"Be Undefinable." Choate's slogan extends beyond us students and to our teachers, who have much more going on than what we see in the classroom. Like students, the adults on campus pursue external hobbies crucial to their identity and background. If you take the time to ask, perhaps you'll find out that your dean is a former gymnastics champion or that your Chemistry teacher is a cooking connoisseur. Here are some fun hobbies our teachers hold close to their hearts.

### Ms. Kyra Jenney — Miniature Collecting & Diorama Creation

HPRSS Department Head Ms. Jenney collects anything miniature, from figurines to Mini Brands. "There's so much hardship and tension and heaviness [in the world]," she said. "Collecting cute little toys is just fun and silly."

Her love of tiny toys began the day she stumbled upon a diorama kit. Surprised at how fun the activity was (especially as she thought diorama kits were for children), she continued with the hobby. As a "fun self-care activity," Ms. Jenney appreciates diorama building for giving her a "little escape" in an increasingly hectic world.

### Mr. Tom Larsen — Boat Building

Physics teacher Mr. Tom Larsen took his first sabbatical in 2015. Wanting to try something new, he began working on something both practical and novel: constructing a wooden boat.

With no previous wood-working experience, Mr. Larsen learned as he went, building a sailboat in the then-empty ceramics studio. Mr. Larsen finished the sailboat during his sabbatical and varnished the ship the following summer.

Mr. Larsen called boat-building "a lesson in patience and perseverance" and has continued his hobby nearly 10 years after beginning his first project. Having since made a family motorboat and a scull boat for his wife, Mr. Larsen plans to make a stand-up paddleboard during his coming sabbatical this spring.

### Ms. Courtney DeStefano — Roller Derby

An inline skater as a kid and a lacrosse player in college, HPRSS teacher Ms. Courtney DeStefano has always had a love for athletics.

During the pandemic, she was stuck on campus without much to do. One day, she saw a roller skating advertisement and tried her hand at jam skating and dance skating. In the fall of 2021, she decided to try out roller derby, a full-contact sport played on

quad roller skates. As a part of the Connecticut Roller Derby League, Ms. DeStefano has grown as an athlete and a team member.

With the team's close-knit community, Ms. DeStefano looks forward to practicing every week, using roller derby to relieve stress and develop her confidence.

### Mr. Carey Kopeikin — Pencil Collecting

Math teacher Mr. Carey Kopeikin is known across campus as a JV Lacrosse coach, an NFL fan, and perhaps less notably, a pencil collector. When he was seven, Mr. Kopeikin asked his mother to buy him a cool-looking pencil. She refused to do so, so he decided to save up his money and buy it himself. Since then, Mr. Kopeikin has only broadened his collection; mugs filled with an array of multi-colored pencils line his office and living room shelves.

His pencils each have a unique story. For example, he has made pencils for important events, such as the announcements of his children's births. Many other items in his collection are gifted by students or acquired at museums and corner shops when he travels, and he often tells people how many pencils he acquired on each of his trips. "People are like, 'How was your vacation?' And I say 'seven,'" Mr. Kopeikin said.

Pencil-collecting holds incredible sentimental value to Mr. Kopeikin, and he encour-

ages others to find niche but fun passions too.

### Mrs. Emily Osterhout — RV Road Tripping

For many households, the pandemic allowed for more family time. Unfortunately, staying at home felt restrictive for some parents, like Third-form Dean Mrs. Emily Osterhout. Determined to explore the country and expand family bonding activities outside the confines of her house, Mrs. Osterhout bought an RV camper for summer travel.

She traversed through the Halls of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, and Canton, Connecticut, and explored beautiful scenery in Lake Erie and Niagara Falls. Mrs. Osterhout enjoyed the time off screens and learned the value of appreciating nature. Although learning how to use the RV was initially tricky, Mrs. Osterhout said that the family bonding time was extremely worthwhile.

From pencil-collecting to boat building, hobbies allow us to step away from the seriousness of life; part of being undefinable is embracing opportunities to grow and learn, after all. No matter what your circumstances are, it's never too late to try something new!

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## 118's Wrapped

These past couple of weeks, you may have heard the question "What was your top song this year?" Members of *The Choate News* masthead, as you may know, are a unique (and music-addicted) bunch. Here are a couple of songs these editors had on repeat and what it says about them.



### Fiona Fu '25 — Editor-in-Chief

Too Sweet — Hozier  
Infamously busy, *The Choate News*'s leader does indeed take her coffee black and her bed at three. With a soft spot for artistic introspection, this Editor-in-Chief's love of Hozier's silky voice seems almost self-explanatory. Well, to be fair, who doesn't love Hozier?

### Amelia Sipkin '25 — Managing Editor

All I've Ever Known — Reeve Carney, Eva Noblezada  
When this Managing Editor isn't hard at work in the newsroom, she's captivating audiences with her angelic voice. A Broadway aficionado through and through, it's no surprise that this ginger strawberry blonde's top track comes straight out of a playbill.



### Sophia Liao '25 — School News Editor

Skinny Dipping — Sabrina Carpenter  
This School News Editor is not much of a swimmer, but whether this Girls' JV Hockey "juck lord" is swiping pucks, hunting for the best slice of tiramisu, or raving about the latest *Love Island* episode, her lighthearted and adventurous vibe matches her top song.

### Adrian Torres '25 — School News Editor

Merry-Go-Round of Life — Joe Hisaishi  
Who's that nonchalant guy wearing sunglasses? What's he listening to? Adrian Torres's top track says it all — without saying a word. Adrian's not afraid to embrace vulnerability in his music or his daily life (please bubble-wrap him before Senior Soccer)!

### Nilan Kathir '25 — Local News Editor

Sarah's Place — Zach Bryan, Noah Kahan  
Ever wonder what this Local Editor is listening to on the bus to Choate's boat-house, in the car as he drives to school, or while preparing for MUN? A nostalgia junkie at heart, Nilan Kathir's love of Zach Bryan makes total sense.

### Anya Shah '25 — Local News Editor

Silver Springs — Fleetwood Mac  
"You'll never get away from the sound of the woman that loves you" — or the sound of one of Choate's most chic editors, Anya Shah. A downtown LA native, this classic pop-rock song perfectly mirrors Anya's classic style.

### Arjun Pathy '25 — Ops (Campus) Editor

Lucy — Still Woozy  
Single-handedly keeping Guayaki Yerba Mate in business, you can catch this Wall Street Journal enthusiast living in tune with his top song's funky basslines on the Mayeros or seeking out adventure (which might mean a later study session at the library).

### Stan Cho '25 — Ops (Nation/World) Editor

Trae the Truth in Ibiza — J. Cole  
When he's not busy praying to his Kanye shrine or reading feminist literature, this SRP quant kid (what are the physics of those gains...?) spares some time for his prince J. Cole. From all places around the Nation and the (Cole) World, this editor found the truth in Ibiza.

### Eva Swanson '25 — Features Editor

Playing God — Polyphia  
Detailed, energetic, and way too loud — is this a description of Eva Swanson or her top song of 2024? This Intramural Squash Captain's number one track is as unique as her section's articles (which she won't hesitate to call "the best").

### Grace LaPlaca '25 — Arts & Leisure Editor

Divorce — 070 Shake  
Let's face it, this dancer's music taste is truly as artsy as her section. Don't lose your cool, but her dedication to *TCN* pales in comparison to her dedication to her top artist/celebrity crush. It's undeniable ... 070 Shake's psychedelic hymns echo Grace LaPlaca's +319 aura.

### Reinah Lee '26 — Sports Editor

Run for the Hills — Tate McRae  
This year, the core contributor to the 118 playlist listened to tunes that will have you running for the hills; it only makes sense that this Canva pro and Boys' Varsity Squash manager would have such an indie and eclectic music taste.

### Sarina Fernandez-Grinshpun '25 — Layout Editor

Fire for You — Cannons  
Magenta puffer? Check. Butterfly backpack? Check. Contagiously fierce and fun personality? Off the charts. As the genius behind *The Choate News*'s illustrious layouts, it's only natural that this 4'11.75" InDesign wizard's top song of 2024 is as radiant and unstoppable as she is.

### Evelyn Kim '25 — Graphics Editor

Igual Que Un Angel — Kali Uchis, Peso Pluma  
It makes sense that this Spanish 500 star and theatre whiz's top song was one of Kali Uchis' tracks. As a recovering Blink and Arianator (or so she'll tell you), Kali's more low-key vibe fits that of this masthead's Graphics Editor perfectly!

### Emily Ma '25 — Photography Editor

In Your Eyes — The Weeknd  
You'll often find this "photography friend" (and *The Choate News*'s senior Photo Editor) lost in the music as she blasts her top song of 2024 in the dance studio; it wouldn't be a surprise to catch Emily jamming out to chill tunes as her camera clicks.

### Finn Wikstrom '26 — Photography Editor

Ode to the Mets — The Strokes  
Wherever this New York Yankee fan and pro photographer goes, the crisp melodies and catchy baseline of The Strokes walk right alongside him, running on repeat through the wired headphones that he never takes off.

### Chelsea Branch '25 — Copy Editor

Dream Police — Mkg.ec  
Whether she's lending a helping hand to her Nichols prefectees or on her way to a cappella, this New Jersey native's top song was as unique and flowy as her. After all, nothing but the best for 118's only 6th-form Copy Editor!

Graphics by Evelyn Kim '25, Eva Swanson '25, and Leah Han '27/The Choate News

## FALL DANCE SHOWCASE HIGHLIGHTS STUDENT TALENT

By **Eliana Li '26**  
Copy Editor

Held on December 7 and 8 in the Colony Hall Dance Studio, the Fall Dance Showcase (FDS) featured 15 diverse dance pieces choreographed by Choate students and faculty across a variety of styles. The event offered a close-up view of raw, unfiltered dance, inviting the community to experience a glimpse of the unique artistic talent present on campus.

Formerly known as the Student Choreographer's Showcase (SCS), the event was renamed to FDS this year to better embody its broader purpose. Reflecting on this change, Director of Dance Ms. Pam Newell said, "I wanted to invite different ways of presenting dance because not everyone is a choreographer. When you are a dancer, you can also be an interpreter, and that's just as important. We really wanted to present all sides of the Dance Program."

For some students, the showcase provided an opportunity to choreograph for the first time. **Gopika Sheth '27**, who both choreographed and performed a fusion of classical Indian dance and contemporary elements, described the challenges associated with her first piece. "It was really hard to figure out what works well, especially because it's my first time. You don't know if you have enough movement on stage or if it's visually interesting for the audience," she said.



Photo by Finn Wikstrom '26/The Choate News

Maddie Baldwin '27 was one of multiple student performers at the Fall Dance Showcase.

For others who had choreographed before, the showcase represented an opportunity for personal creative freedom. "This is my first piece that's truly just what I want," choreographer and dancer **Leanne Parks '25** said. "For the spring [dance] concert, I'm not performing in my piece, and for the musicals, it's about what fits the director's vision. But this — this is what I like to do, what I want to choreograph."

Despite facing challenges, many students found the process

to be deeply fulfilling. Sheth said, "Choreographing is so personal since you're taking your own emotions and inspirations from the music and incorporating them into the dance. It's going to be so rewarding looking back on the entire process as a whole." Echoing this sentiment, Parks said, "When I find that perfect movement and it clicks, there's a moment of pure joy. It's like everything aligns."

Building on last year's SCS success, the showcase also fea-

tured works choreographed by dance faculty for students enrolled in technique classes. Despite having just three weeks to prepare, the dancers were nonetheless able to put on a spectacular show for the Choate community. "The work that we have been cultivating all term through the technique we've learned was put into those dances," dancer **Sofia Schmidt '25** said.

Among these works was a piece choreographed by Dance teacher Ms. Laurel Lynch for her

Upper-level Contemporary Ballet Class, performed to Cinderella's Waltz by Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev. "To me, the music sounded a little bit spooky, so I had six young ladies dance like witches casting a spell," Ms. Lynch said. As an experienced choreographer, she enjoyed "seeing the students have a good time with choreography and even laugh at it sometimes."

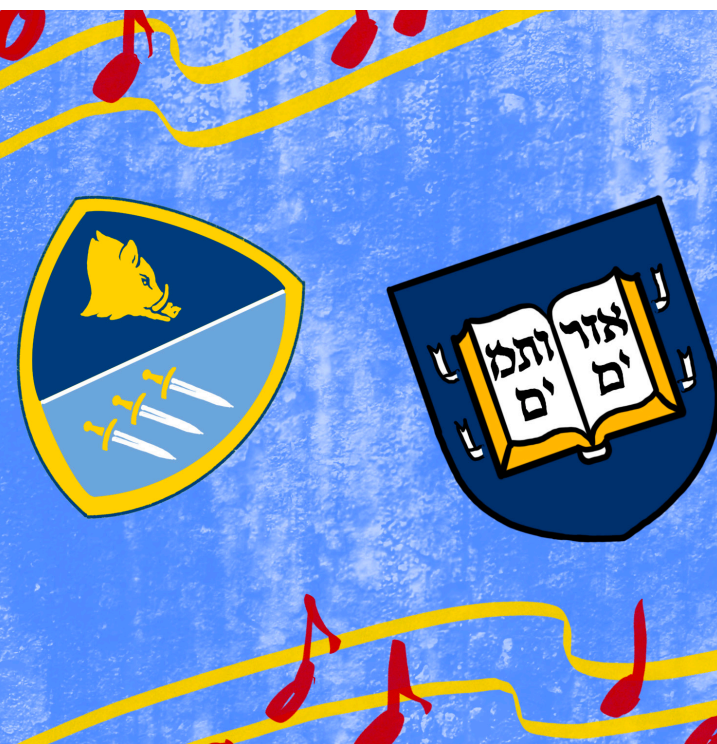
This year also marked the introduction of the Dance Program's 2024-2025 Past Forward

Guest Artist Initiative. Under the guidance of guest artist **Mr. Brad Beakes**, a former member of the Limón Company and current teaching artist for the José Limón Dance Foundation, Choate dancers explored the legacy of modern dance icon José Limón. For FDS, Mr. Beakes collaborated with students to create an "original movement language that could evoke both the echoes of the past with the voices of the present," Ms. Newell wrote. Recalling the collaborative experience, Sheth said, "He gave us words, and then we created our own solos based off of the words, and he incorporated that into the dance."

FDS highlighted the creativity and talent that defines the dance community at Choate. Reflecting on the showcase, Ms. Newell said, "I loved to see work that's informal and raw and not covered in beautiful costumes and beautiful lights. Instead of seeing a dancer perform, I'm seeing a person perform in all of their rich life experiences." Parks echoed this sentiment and expressed her hope that audience members leave with a deeper appreciation for dance: "I hope [the audience] admires dance more. I think it's one of the arts that doesn't get appreciated as much, but I hope it becomes a language they understand, even if they've never danced before."

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## Yale Whiffenpoofs Share their Craft



Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

By **Gopika Sheth '27**  
Reporter

After years of anticipation, Yale's iconic a cappella group, the Whiffenpoofs, finally made it to Choate on November 3 for a workshop with the School's a cappella ensembles. Organized by Ms. **Le'ah Griggs**, the faculty adviser for Choate's a cappella groups, and Arts Department Manager **Ms. Carol Jones**, the workshop offered students a glimpse into the art and discipline behind the Whiffenpoofs' performances.

"We've been trying to bring them here for a while," Ms. Griggs said. "It was an honor for the students to experience their expertise." The entire Whiffenpoofs group — around 10 members — performed a jazzy gospel piece, bringing score sheets and sheet music for Choate singers to learn from.

Following the performance, students split into sectionals in music rooms based on their vocal parts for further collaboration. In their sectionals, students received individual guidance on posture, breathing, and vocal techniques. **Nana Winston Ashie '27**, a member of the Whimawehs, Choate's oldest all-female singing group, found the experience to be inspiring. "It was really cool because we also have [small musical phrases before we perform], and [the Whiffenpoofs] just seem really put together.

They had really good team dynamics," she said.

For **Jordan Dodd '25**, co-president of the Melatones, Choate's newest a cappella group, the workshop offered invaluable guidance into how the Whiffenpoofs approach their craft. Dodd said, "They have a lovely blend, a lovely group, lovely teamwork, and their voices are actually insane [and] really awesome." Dodd also found inspiration in the Whiffenpoofs' rehearsal techniques. "I liked that they started telling us how they would start every rehearsal, and how they work in order to be able to get you thinking about your voice as one whole thing instead of different sections," he said.

Ms. Griggs hopes to make this workshop an annual tradition, mentioning that it showcased both the Whiffenpoofs' professionalism and was a valuable learning experience for students. "It was just an hour-[long] workshop, and by the end, everybody knew their parts [and] it sounded great," she said. Looking forward to a Whiffenpoofs Holiday Concert on December 13 in Colony Hall, where Choate singers will join the Whiffenpoofs on stage, students are already bringing newfound skills and energy into their a cappella groups.

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## KEEPING WARM AND MAINTAINING STYLE: STUDENTS' WINTER WEARS

By **Ellie Porter '25**  
Staff Contributor

As winter approaches, students at Choate are embracing the frosty weather with a wide variety of fashion styles, each reflecting their unique backgrounds and personalities. From prep school aesthetics, to "grunge" styles, to vibrant, color-coordinated ensembles, winter fashion at Choate is as diverse as its student body. Here's how some students are staying warm and stylish throughout the season.

**John F. Kennedy**, like many other Choate students at the time, is often pictured in expensive Brooks Brothers attire: tailored trousers, fitted blazers, and intricately patterned ties that produce single outfits totaling hundreds of dollars. Associated with brands such as J. Press, Ralph Lauren, and J. Crew, prep school style continues to be a staple on campus, especially for those who appreciate the timeless, classic aesthetic.

**Jason Cao '25** appreciates the formality and maturity associated with the iconic JFK-era prep school styles. Each winter day, Cao dons a quarter zip sweater over a fitted button-down, often pairing them with khakis and a thick jacket when the temperatures drop. While he still wears patterned shirts, he prefers solid sweaters over them. Cao is heavily inspired by his father in his sense

of style, citing that his family, like JFK's, are "Brooks Brothers loyalists." He encourages other students to place more consideration into what they wear as he finds presentation valuable in gaining self-confidence and respect.

Similarly, **Owen Sessine '25** also gravitates towards the traditional prep school aesthetic, appreciating the layering possibilities that come with dressing in colder weather. He often layers Barbour staples over Ralph Lauren cashmere sweaters and button-downs and, when especially cold, Sessine enjoys the warmth of Canada Goose jackets. Other brands in his closet include J. Crew and Moncler. "I'm excited to wear Polo Bear sweaters this winter," he said. "It's a line from Ralph Lauren." While Sessine doesn't accessorize as much with hats or scarves, he often enjoys wearing leather gloves as part of his winter ensemble.

While prep-school outfits remain popular, many Choate students have evolved their looks to reflect more contemporary styles, merging practicality with personality. **Friday Acuna '26** is a perfect example. "I would say it's west coast adjacent," he said. "I'm from LA, and I used to skate a lot before coming to Choate." Acuna also enjoys grunge bands, and his baggy denim and oversized

sweaters reflect his affinity for the style. While Acuna enjoys wearing brands such as Levi's and Dickies for "jackets that are not puffers," he often finds himself in the thrift store. In the winter months, Acuna enjoys styling darker-colored oversized sweaters and splurging on Uniqlo for winter essentials, such as thermal undergarments and thick socks, to stay warm. All in all, Acuna prioritizes warmth: "I love to be swallowed by my clothes," he said.

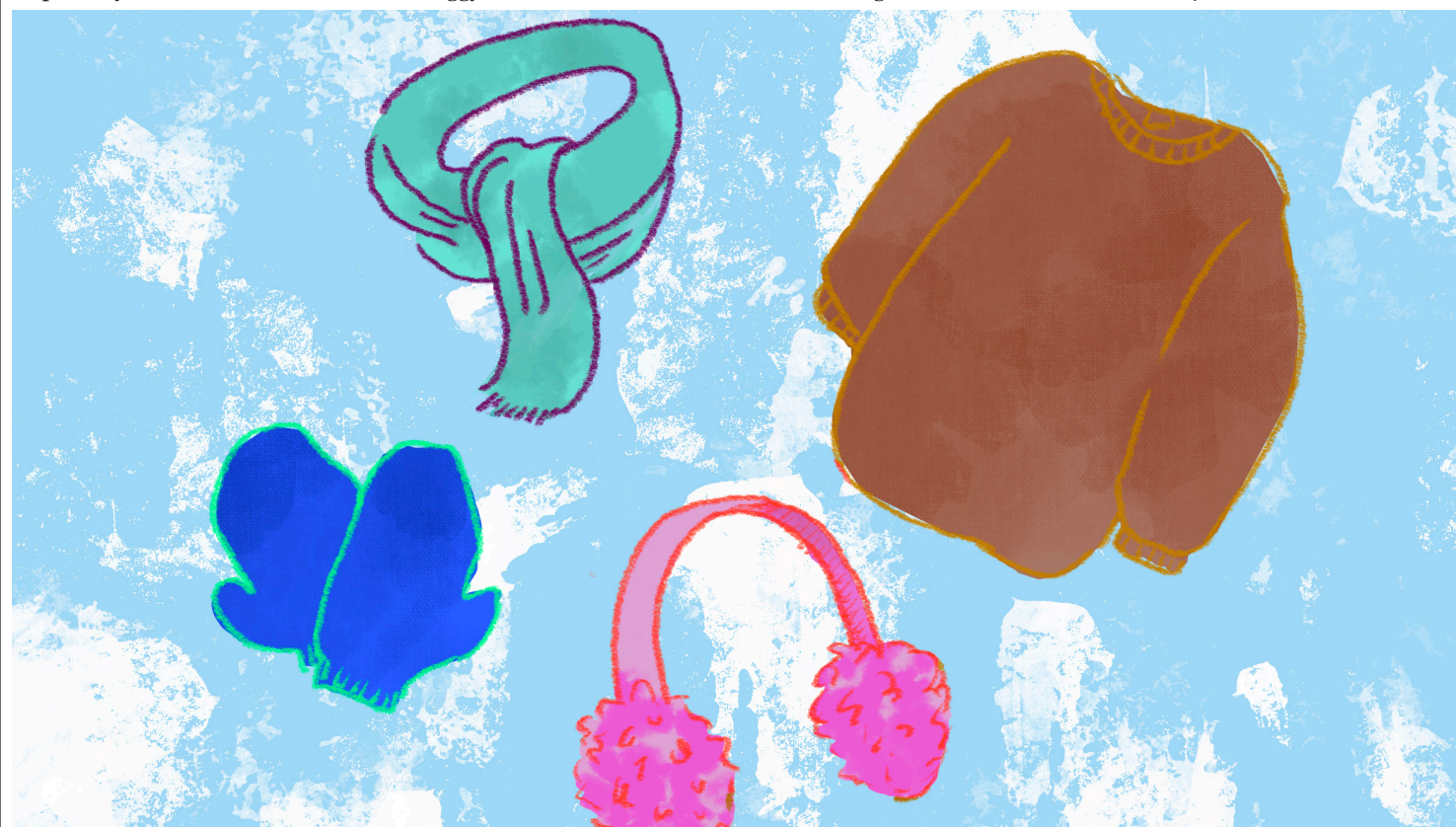
For other students, fashion becomes an art of color and coordination. Every outfit becomes a curated masterpiece, where colors and layers create a harmonious look. **Lois Kahu '26**, who recently completed a Korean color analysis, has placed much thought into using a color wheel when styling her outfits. While being a loyalist to no specific brands, Kahu prioritizes both warmth and harmony in her looks. She noted her love for color-coordinating layers based on the environment while still adding splashes of color. She is a big fan of winter accessories, particularly bomber jackets, and is excited to bring back scarves into her wardrobe this winter. Though she enjoys traditionally warmer clothing, Kahu doesn't let the winter cold hold her back from styling midi or maxi skirts. She recommends students invest in thermal tights that match their

skin tone so that they can wear skirts without sacrificing comfort.

On the other hand, practicality is at the heart of other students' winter wardrobes, where comfort and functionality may take priority over style. As a student-athlete, **Caleb Capone '25** is very practical in the way he dresses, especially to stay warm in the winter. "I like to wear hats," he said. "I also like more baggy clothing, and maybe a scarf as well." He generally favors performance wear for the warmer months, but in the winter, he adapts by balancing baggy clothes with more fitted pieces to stay warm. Darker-colored sweaters are a staple in his closet, though he will also often throw on a sweater when the temperatures drop. While it can be hard to balance staying warm and being stylish in the colder months, Capone tries to "find those right rhythms and proportions, which can be hard with baggy clothing."

As winter settles in, Choate students continue to blend timeless styles with modern influences. Although the frigid season can seem like a dismal time, the unique fashion on campus provides a splash of creativity, showing that dressing up is as much about self-expression as keeping warm.

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Graphic by Evelyn Kim '25/The Choate News

## FIELD REPORT

Choate Winter Record  
8 - 2 - 0

### Varsity Games

**Girls' Wrestling**  
St. Pauls Tournament,  
1st Place

**Boys' Wrestling**  
Hotchkiss Tournament,  
7th Place

**Boys' Hockey** (1-0)  
vs. Lawrence, 3-2

**Girls' Basketball** (1-0)  
vs. Exeter, 62-38

**Boys' Squash** (1-0)  
vs. Squash Haven, 7-0

**Girls' Squash** (1-0)  
vs. Squash Haven, 7-0

**Boys' Basketball** (1-0)  
vs. Zero Gravity and Mas-  
ter's (CT), 82-41

**Girls' Hockey** (0-1)  
vs. Lawrence, 3-4

### J.V. Games

**Girls' Squash** (1-0)  
vs. Squash Haven, 7-0

**Boys' Squash** (1-0)  
vs. Squash Haven, 7-0

**Girls' Basketball** (1-0)  
vs. Hopkins, 29-5

**Boys' Hockey** (0-1)  
vs. Kent, 1-6

## Clean Slates, Clean Skates: New Hockey Coach Welcomed

By **Eliza O'Neill '27**  
Reporter

This year, Choate welcomed Mr. Mike Pereira as the new Head Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey Coach. With an extensive background in competing and coaching at elite levels, Coach Pereira brings a wealth of experience and leadership to the program. After graduating from the University of Massachusetts where he was named the 2011 Hockey East Co-Rookie of the Year, Coach Pereira played professionally in the American Hockey League and East Coast Hockey League for a total of three seasons. Having coaching experience at Avon Old Farms and the University of Connecticut, Coach Pereira knows how to handle tight 0-0 third-period games and unexpected scenarios. His depth of knowledge and valuable insights allow him to prepare the team for any situation, and his players trust that they are learning from a coach with strong credentials.

Coach Pereira's approach to the game and commitment to team culture is rooted in his belief that "everything matters." Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey Assistant Coach Rob Sanders applauded this mentality. "[Coach Pereira emphasizes that] showing up to the rink on time, everyone being in the same uniform pre-game, and everyone doing things together is going to translate to a successful season," he said. Co-Captain Rowan Aggarwal '25 also appreciates the changes Coach Pereira has made in the team environment. "It always gets reflected on the ice," he said. For example, Co-Captain Will Henderson '25 explained, "One thing that wasn't really emphasized last year was punctuality; it's a huge thing this

year. [We learned that] if we wait, it affects everybody."

Over the past fall term, Coach Pereira had the team meet weekly in Elman Auditorium to prepare for the season ahead by analyzing game film. "We had a lot more meetings in the fall, whether it was film or team meetings, and a lot more skates," Henderson '25 said. Co-Captain Michael Papaspyros '25 reflected on recent practices leading up to the winter season such as where Coach Pereira had the players do a drill that mimics those last five minutes of a hockey game that requires them to be the most conditioned. In their first game of the season against Lawrence Academy, Papaspyros recalled his conditioning kicking in during overtime. "We were more conditioned and that was a huge part of our win and why we won. Our coach emphasizes a lot of conditioning for those moments, and ultimately it paid off for us," he said.

Coach Sanders also shared an impactful strategy that Coach Pereira introduced to the team: "He sends out articles from previous Stanley Cup champions, current college coaches, and other motivational articles that the team has been reading." Coach Pereira's objective with this practice is to inspire the team and create a sense of unity and shared purpose.

Coach Pereira's goal for the 2024-2025 season is to create a strong team identity. He highlighted the non-negotiable importance of bringing 100% effort to both practices and games. "Effort is something we can control, and trust is something that we have to build," he said. He pointed out

that his players "have an opportunity to set the standard" for wearing a Choate jersey.

Initial impressions of Coach Pereira among the Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey team have been overwhelmingly positive. His approachable, energetic, and optimistic demeanor has significantly boosted team morale. Aggarwal said, "He's always got a smile on his face and is willing to crack jokes, but he also knows how to maintain that line between player and coach. He's someone we can go to for anything, whether it's hockey-related or not, and that's important to us."

Whether it's cheering them on during lifts or ensuring that the team spends quality time together off the ice, Coach Pereira understands that success begins off the ice with prioritizing strong bonds between teammates. "I would say we have a much stronger bond as a team this year rather than last year, and I think our new coach has a lot to do with that. Just building a lot of good relationships in the locker room with the players is a big, big thing for us," Papaspyros said.

The team is filled with anticipation for what's to come. With a clean slate and a motivated group of players, Coach Pereira aims to create a program where effort, accountability, and trust are paramount and is eager to lead the team through a successful season. His leadership and commitment to developing skilled players and well-rounded individuals opens a new, exciting chapter for the Choate Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey Team.

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## STUCO BOLSTERS SCHOOL SPIRIT



Graphic by **Rielle Reyes '27**/The Choate News

By **Norah Wang '27**  
Reporter

If you've ever turned on the TV to watch a game of basketball or gone to a Super Bowl watch party, you've probably heard the commentary of a public address announcer. This is the person who turns seemingly random moments or confusing referee signals into words that a typical sports watcher can understand. Announcers act as "eyes" for those who cannot see the game completely, and without them, it can be difficult for spectators who aren't well-versed in the sport they are watching to comprehend each play. This is why Student Council Fifth-form Representative Jack McGuane '26 and Student Body Vice President John Jannotta '25 created the Public Address (PA) sports announcing proposal to promote sports culture on campus. Through a series of training sessions, students will be able to serve as announcers for the School's sporting events.

Jannotta was inspired to come up with this proposal after finding himself asking what was missing at sports games. Jannotta believes that sports announcers "can really just increase the spirit and energy of every game on campus," which is why he collaborated with McGuane to bring this proposal to life. Echoing this sentiment, McGuane said, "We believe the announcement program is going to bring a lot to the athletics community and the Choate community as a whole."

After drafting the proposal, McGuane and Jannotta needed to get approval from the Administration to send out a form to students interested in becoming a PA announcer, as well as run down the logistics of the program with BoarPen so that they would know what to expect. Reflecting on the process, Jannotta said, "It's definitely not an easy task to get a proposal passed. The easiest part of it is passing the Student Council itself. It's getting it through the Administration and getting it actually implemented, which is the hardest."

Jannotta and McGuane are both grateful for the Choate Athletics Department. "They've been great to work with this entire time

and really helped along the way to form it into its final shape," Jannotta said. Additionally, McGuane pointed out the greater effect of this proposal beyond the Choate community. "It's not just an in-school thing; people that may not be affiliated with Choate are going to see this as part of our public image," he said.

While designing their plans, the Student Council considered the various aspects of the current spectatorship conditions, such as students having difficulty understanding the rules of the game or the meaning of certain referee calls. Additionally, the spectator seating at sports games isn't always optimal; many fans have an obstructed view of the game, leading to confusion as to what is going on. PA announcers will be able to clarify all of this by acting as the eyes of the crowd in between plays. Director of Athletics Mr. Thomas White said, "We have great fans. They show up really, really well for our teams, and anything that's going to help even more of them become fans or appreciate the games, I'm in favor of."

PA announcers will begin reporting at games starting this winter. These announcers will be student volunteers who have gone through training and evaluation by Assistant Director of Athletics Mr. Nolan Silbernagel, designed to ensure that they can deliver clear and engaging coverage of games. PA announcing candidates will first submit a recording of themselves announcing an archived game recording. Based on how well they do, they will be placed into games to begin announcing. Kadija Benzinane '27, a student interested in becoming a PA announcer, said she is excited by "the idea of keeping a crowd hyped." Benzinane thinks that having announcers will "keep people who maybe don't know that much about sports engaged." Although the initial sign-up form to become a sports announcer is now closed, McGuane and Jannotta are still accepting prospective PA announcer applications via email.

**Norah Wang** may be reached at [nwang27@choate.edu](mailto:nwang27@choate.edu).

## CONGRATS ON SIGNING DAY!



Photo courtesy of photos.choate.edu

Class of 2025 athletes celebrate their official signing day.

## RUN, GOBBLE, TURKEY TROT: CHOATIES LACE UP ON THANKSGIVING

By **Ava Hult-Falk '27**  
Staff Contributor

Whether you choose to celebrate Fall Break with a Thanksgiving feast or just take the time to relax with friends and family, everyone is invited to come together to run in their local turkey trot.

### Wallingford:

On November 24, the Wallingford community gathered for the annual Turkey Trot through town. This year's trot offered both a 3.5-mile and 5-mile option, which attracted participants of all ages and fitness levels. From casual joggers to experienced runners, the town of Wallingford enjoyed the New England autumn and was united in running for the goal of supporting a charitable cause.

The event, which took place the Sunday before Thanksgiving, was hosted by the Wallingford Kiwanis Club, a local community service organization. Proceeds from the race go toward Kiwanis-supported

initiatives, including college scholarships for local students. Adding a sense of purpose to the intense physical challenge, the trot served as a way for participants to give back to the community.

Despite the recent chilly weather, participants were treated to a beautiful race day, where the festive atmosphere matched the holiday spirit. Many runners sported turkey-themed costumes, and some even donned colorful tutus. For some participants, this was their first-ever long-distance run. However, for others, like Science teacher Dr. Selena Gell, this event is a yearly Thanksgiving staple.

"I've done the turkey trot for three years now," Dr. Gell said. "It's a great way to check my fitness, push myself a little harder than usual, and, of course, see some friendly faces in the community. It's a tradition that helps me feel connected to Wallingford and also to support a cause that matters, like the Kiwanis scholarships."

Starting at the EC Stevens Elementary School, the route wound through the picturesque streets of Wallingford. Both 3.5-mile and 5-mile runners started at the same time but eventually separated in front of the Wallingford Family YMCA to run their respective courses; participants running 3.5 miles turned back while the 5-mile runners continued on for a longer loop. The 5-mile runners passed many quintessential Wallingford landmarks like Doolittle Park, the Wallingford Public Library, and our very own campus! The route directly passed by Dr. Gell's house, adding an uplifting perk to the run. "It was kind of fun to run by and have my kids come out and wave [and] cheer me on," she said.

As the race drew to a close, runners were greeted by familiar faces and lots of encouragement. "The best part is definitely crossing the finish line and seeing people cheering you on," Dr. Gell

said. "It's a small race, but the community spirit is huge."

Out of 82 total runners, the top time for five miles was an impressive 25:59.50. With its mix of friendly competition, fun costumes, and support for local youth, the Wallingford Turkey Trot has become a cherished and meaningful tradition for many.

### New York City:

The sense of gratitude and community is true not just for Wallingford but also for turkey trots nationwide. On November 30, Lilli Goldman '25 ran in the annual New York City (NYC) "Gobble Wobble Turkey Trot." Starting promptly at 8 a.m. on the Saturday following Thanksgiving, the 5k race took runners through Riverside Park, offering stunning views of the Hudson River.

The runners' excited attitudes mirrored the day's bright sunshine. "Spirits of gratitude and community were high, and we ran with a purpose," Gold-

man said. Much like Wallingford's event, this NYC trot attracted racers with a wide variety of running experience, from seasoned professionals to first-time trotters. "Everyone was there for their own reasons, and no one was being overly competitive," Goldman said.

For Goldman, the benefits of participating in a Turkey Trot go beyond just physical fitness. She explained how running is good not only for the body but, more importantly, for the mind: "After I run, I always feel in better spirits, and my mind is clear." She plans to trot again next Thanksgiving while keeping her running in the interim, and she encourages others to give turkey trots a try.

In the spirit of gratitude, Choate community members enjoyed participating in their local turkey trots for a greater purpose and to spread the joy.

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