NEWS

"Love is a game for fools to play"
LOVE IS A GAME ADELE

Student-founded brand draws on Yale roots for new collection

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ALEX HONG / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Crew Dog, a college merch apparel brand founded by Yale students in 2024, created a new collection for the annual Yale-Harvard game. Students involved in the collection said The Game presented a chance to incorporate tradition with youthful energy.

The annual Yale-Harvard game in November may be notoriously cold, but a student apparel start-up hopes to keep students and alumni warm this year with a new Yale-Harvard collection.

Crew Dog was founded in 2024 and is led by Constantine Polychronopoulos '25, Coby Wagonfeld '26 and Kiernan Liberman '25.

Within two years, the brand has spread to over 90 colleges and universities across the United States, striving to create merchandise for the diverse styles of the school communities.

"There's so much legacy, and to be such a new brand coming in and sort of being such a large presence within the official merchandising for the game this year has been such an honor," Kiernan Liberman '25, who put together the collection for this year's game, said. "And we want to make sure that we're doing as best we can to pay respect to what's out there."

Liberman said the brand's goal was not to "redesign" The Game's 150-year history as a rivalry between Yale and Harvard. Instead, they took into consideration the different tastes of students and alumni, which can range from preppy to casual, he said.

"The reason why I think entrepreneurship is so important in college is you have a million people around you who come from such different, diverse backgrounds that can just give you feedback, right?" Liberman said. "You can leave your dorm and bring a product out and be like, 'What do you guys think of this? What would you do to make it better?' And the product is relevant to them."

Liberman credited the Yale community, including Tsai Center for Innovative Thinking at Yale, for helping the brand take off and being both the brand's target audience and frequent sources of input for the brand's development.

The team received several grants from Tsai CITY and took part in the institute's accelerator program for student ventures, according to Kassie Tucker, the executive director of Tsai CITY.

"It's been amazing to watch Crew Dog grow from a student idea into a brand that now partners with more than 90 schools," Tucker wrote in an email to the News. "Their drive and willingness to learn made them a pleasure to work with, and we're proud to have been part of their journey."

In promotional material for the collection, current Yalies modeled the collection's catalogue on Cross Campus. Kiana Darko '28, who modeled for the brand with her friend, said the experience allowed her to express her pride for the University.

Darko said Liberman's familiarity with Yale and different spots on campus helped him identify the best locations for a good shoot.

"Being able to express yourself and express Yale and what Yale looks like naturally came through," Darko said.

Crew Dog also incorporated Yalies into other aspects of the collection, such as student baker Tarek Al Husseini '28. Al Husseini, a former contestant on Food Network's Holiday Baking Championship, will be baking the cake for the brand's promotional event in Boston this Friday. Al Husseini said working with the brand was like "working with people who basically are your friends" and attested to witnessing the brand grow in real-time as a student.

"Now they're huge. Like, they're everywhere — expanded so much," Al Husseini said. "And I think that's awesome."

The collection is currently available for sale via the brand's website, and Liberman said he looks forward to paying homage to the history of the iconic rivalry.

"What's amazing about Yale is it teaches you to be super dynamic. And you have the ability to switch between a lot of different things, and put your 100 percent focus into that one thing," he said.

Crew Dog's first Yale-Harvard collection officially debuted in 2024.

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Thanksgiving food voucher eligibility expanded after advocacy

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KAREN LIN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

The change will allow students with a $10,000 parent share or less to use food vouchers for two days of Thanksgiving break when dining halls are closed. Last weekend, the Yale College Council unanimously passed a proposal that called for the expansion.

Yale College is expanding the eligibility for its Thanksgiving break voucher program back to students whose parent share of tuition is $10,000, following a decrease to a $5,000 threshold last year.

The move comes after the Yale College Council approved a proposal last weekend calling for that restoration. The voucher program provides eligible students with an Uber Eats voucher worth $40 per day for select grocery pickup and delivery services in New Haven during the two days when dining halls are closed. The expansion was announced in a Thursday email from Director of Operations Marisa Figueira that was obtained by the News.

"It's super exciting to hear that YCC has successfully advocated for an increase of the threshold back to its original my first year," YCC Dining Policy Director Thy Luong '28 said. "Honestly, I didn't really expect it, but I'm glad that the administration is hearing student concerns, especially the concerns of first generation and low income students who might be more impacted by these kinds of these issues during breaks."

Students who are eligible—undergraduates with a parent share and Eli Whitney or independent students with a student share up to $10,000 who have a Full or Flex meal plan holder—will receive an email from Student Resources on Thursday confirming their eligibility, according to Figueira's email. Other YCC members also praised the change.

Brendan Kaminski '28, the council's current chief of staff who served as its deputy dining policy director last year, wrote in a text message to the News that he and Luong met with Figueira after the eligibility shrank last year.

While the YCC was unsuccessful in reversing the decision for the 2025-26 academic year, Kaminski expressed gratitude that Nancy Javkhlan '29 and Hailey Young '29, who is a staff reporter for the News, were able to spearhead continuing the advocacy on the financial policy team to secure a reinstatement of the $10,000 eligibility.

"They diligently negotiated with Director Figueira and developed a concrete proposal that passed the YCC Senate unanimously," Kaminski wrote. "Sometimes meaningful change takes time and consistent advocacy — I am glad the YCC's policy teams have continued to deliver meaningful support for FGLI students on campus."

Luong said she remembers that last Thanksgiving break, when she was on campus, she had expected to receive the voucher because she had been extended eligibility her first year at Yale, but was surprised to learn at the very beginning of the break that she was not going to receive support from the College to buy food. Luong called that experience a "financial burden."

YCC Senate Speaker Kyler Parker '29 said the restoration spawned as a "direct result of dedicated advocacy by YCC members."

"We were pleasantly surprised at how quickly this change could be made, and we are hoping that the administration will be similarly amenable to rapidly implementing future reforms to our financial support systems," Parker said.

YCC President Alex William Chen '28 said he and Michelle Jimenez '28, the YCC vice president, commend Javkhlan and Young's "unified and consistent advocacy to ensure that students of all financial backgrounds have the resources and opportunities to engage fully with student life and to enjoy basic needs."

The College's Thanksgiving meal vouchers are only available within a 15-mile radius of New Haven.

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