

Summer School Activities!



By Jessica Chou, Grade 10

Summer break has always been the most enjoyable time for me throughout the year. To be honest, this has been the most fulfilling summer I've had in the past few years. My mind and spirit have been drained after a whole school semester, perhaps that's why the upcoming summer was even more exhilarating. My summer vacation started off by hanging out with my close friends—nothing special, just catching up on our lives. Spending time with dependable and trustworthy friends always brings a sense of warmth. By spending time with them, I am able to shed the weight of academic pressures from schoolwork and just chill out a bit, living in the moment. Following a two-week break, we embarked on a journey to Kenya. The view, atmosphere—everything there just feels right. It is hard to describe in words, and it's hard to believe we're witnessing it firsthand. The whole experience was incredibly surreal,

and the scenery matched exactly what I had seen on Discovery. Saw Wildebeest, dik-dik, African buffalo, rhinoceros, cheetah, lion, leopard, zebra, elephant, giraffe, hippopotamus, etc. The most memorable scene must be the great migration; it was shocking. I never thought I would be able to see all the animals I saw that week for my entire life. After the two weeks in Kenya, we went on to the next stop for this trip—Dubai. We had a whole new experience in Dubai and felt the power of money, LOL. The last vacation spot was in Taiwan, Green Island. The water was crystal clear and everything was visible. There were a ton of fish that were unexpected to see. Nevertheless, I've learned a lot this summer, reviewing how to dive, leveling up my photography skills, and widening my knowledge of the world map. I am grateful to my parents, school, and friends for making this summer perfect. 🌊

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Mid-Autumn Festival School Barbeque

By Zachery Shieh, Grade 11

The annual Mid-Autumn Festival has arrived, and the supposedly annual Mid-Autumn Festival Barbecue has come with it. Despite the woes of having a reduced weekend to rest and catch up on schoolwork, the contents of the makeup day were not completely academic, and this likely reduced suffering for everyone. With half the day designated for other activities, the barbecue took place between lunch and the penultimate period, with the final one reserved for student council candidate presentations. This was the first of many major events arranged for 2023-2024; and the first event that the many new HWIS students who have joined us this year experienced.

To accommodate the new "grass" that was added in the school, the grilling areas moved to the north and east sides of the school, most on the paved path but a few on the turf. There were seven tents in total, enough for one for each grade, and some of the teachers also set up their own area, which had more

permanent grills compared to the temporary ones provided en masse to the students. Opportunities to barbecue started immediately at noon, and there was a prolific quantity of premium meats, coconut shell charcoal, and sodas (ice cream flavored, root beer). In attempts to begin the initial fires, some students decided burning trash was a good idea, contributing to the heavy smoke, but it cleared soon after, allowing everyone to enjoy the great weather.

With temperatures hanging in the lower 30 degrees and minimal clouds, it was pleasantly bright with the least direct rays, which was not an issue due to the tenting configuration (it blocked the sun but trapped other sources of heat). Despite the chance to participate in activities, many students chose to stay indoors and hide from vitamin D. Located in a chokepoint area, the grilling area was constantly bustling with activity, even until the very end when relatively prompt cleanup occurred. 🌞

Stanford Experience



By Miriam Chang, Grade 12

The Stanford Summer Session offered an array of disciplines that high school, undergraduate, and graduate students from all ages and places could explore. I got to experience interactive seminars and insightful lectures that would have been impossible without attending the session. Highlighting a favorite, one of the new classes of this year, Redefining Creativity, dives into vulnerability, working under constraints, and other methods of creative expression such as music. The class feels highly collective and connected, a safe space where strangers can bond and create. The class invited many guest lecturers that were acquainted with the professor from various fields and backgrounds. From the creator of the Apple Genius Bar to a famous producer, we looked at examples of success stories and delved into the mindset of these artists, entrepreneurs, and mentors. The other humanities classes had interactive dynamics where we felt comfortable sharing opinions and ideas for discussion, making space for food for thought. After class, having small conversations with classmates depicted diversity in its rawest form. The mesh of cultures created from various perspectives has become an insightful and exciting environment I hope to see in university again. Straying away from academics, spending the summer in a balanced state of studying, and having fun is always a unique experience. This summer session has offered a taste of college life before my final year of high school, helping me weigh my options and consider what type of university life I would want for four years. The session brought together domestic and international students, creating the opportunity to make lifelong friends

worldwide as I have. Attending college courses is not limited to Stanford, because the exchange of ideas with other peers can happen at any time. But, a new experience during the summer can always provide a fresh perspective for the new school year and perhaps more purpose as to what you want to accomplish. 🌊



Volunteering in Canada



By Ethan Ku, Grade 10

As the final bell signals the conclusion of my three-year journey through junior high school, I can't help but feel a mix of emotions. This bell not only marks the end of junior high but is also the beginning of something exciting: Summer break! While I was thinking of things to enjoy with my friends, time seemed to fly without me even noticing it. However, at this point, you might wonder what's the reason for this sudden whirlwind of activity. It is because I got a camp that started right after school ended!

Right upon reaching Canada, we headed straight to the next endpoint for my summer camp, which is UBC's Future Global Leaders Camp. In just two weeks, I visited numerous museums on the campus and had a tour of the botanical garden. Though it is more like a forest with endless trees covering the campus, I created lasting memories and learned invaluable knowledge and skills beyond textbooks, particularly via the anthropology course.

After the camp, I thought I could finally have a rest. But no, we very soon headed to America. Within just three days, we had crossed five states and visited six esteemed universities.

Coming back to Taiwan, I thought to myself that I finally could get some good rest. However, it just proves the saying that "higher expectations lead to higher disappointment" since now I had to wake up at 7 in the morning consecutively for three weeks to volunteer with the YMCA in remote areas. Even though waking up early in the morning is painful and challenging for me, I found meaning

when interacting with the children as their energy and creativity in doing things always heals me. During my time there volunteering with the YMCA, I found that the children were not afraid of difficulties. Rather, they proactively sought solutions to solve them. Thanks to the children, they remind me of the importance of cherishing every little moment and finding happiness in life.

Looking back on this journey, from the conclusion of my junior high to an eventful summer break and the adventure of volunteering, all of these steps served as reminders to just live happy, and healthy, and cherish every moment of my life. Each separation marks not an end, but a whole new chapter of our lives that should be embraced with the same enthusiasm and curiosity. 🌊

