

THE IMAGINE SOCIETY

MARCH 31, 2022

TWO YEAR NEWSLETTER ANNIVERSARY!



SPECIAL ISSUE CELEBRATING *YOUTH VOICES*
KIDS MARCH EDITION VOLUME 31!



"I may be young,
but I also have an *opinion* and a *voice*."
- Naomi Wadler

Young Voices: My Voice

by Louis A. Craco III

I ride a school bus to Cooke School every day from my house in Brooklyn. I'm grateful for the ride. But the way I really get there is by listening on my iPhone to music from different kinds of Rock and Roll bands, which is what really warms my heart with gratefulness. When I sing along with the music my spirits lift so high it feels like my body is experiencing ultimate harmony and energy. It's a cosmic concert.

My grandfather had the same name I have, and so does my father. Louis Aloysius Craco, Sr., Jr., and me, the third. I called my grandfather Pa. He was



Thank you Audrey (13) for your special artwork in honor of our 2 year anniversary and *YOUNG VOICES*!

...continued from page 2

born October 18, 1933 and died February 15, 2020. He was a famous lawyer and was the president of the New York Bar Association. At his funeral different people got up to say kind things about him. I wished I could have gotten up to talk, too. I wanted to say how proud I was of him and of my father. I am proud to have the same name and I hope to be like them.

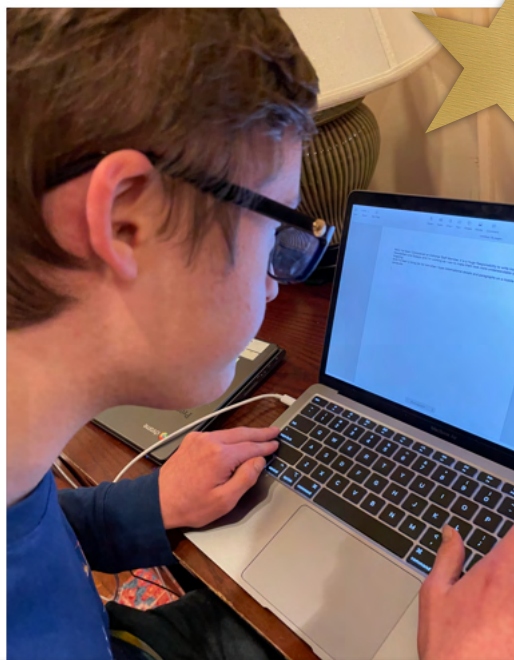
People like me that have Down syndrome sometimes have different ways or powers of ability. I get a lot of Speech Therapy which helps me communicate with others. My Speech Therapist at school, Ms. Taryn, helps us become better readers and writers, which involves using our voices. Some people use their voices even if they are deaf or mute or blind by using sign language or braille.

There are mothers and children in the country of Ukraine right now who are forced to leave their homes and go to Poland because of the invasion. We can help make these Ukrainians feel at home, even if they are not in Ukraine. We can support them with our voices and write newsletters to inspire them that will help them become more Hopeful and more Protected.

Voices can make change. My voice is a friend to the world and your voice is a friend also.

Louis A. Craco III
8th Grade
Cooke School
Advocate for Down syndrome

Dear Louis, thank you for being such an integral part of The Imagine Newsletter. You have truly shown us that Youth Voices can be the most powerful in the world. We sincerely appreciate and support your advocacy for equity, equality, and recognition for all young voices across all communities.



Louis hard at work at his computer, writing this phenomenal essay.

Louis A. Craco III is in the 8th grade at Cooke School. Louis is also one of our most treasured members of the Youth Editorial Staff at The Imagine Newsletter!

Follow us on Instagram! @theimagesociety

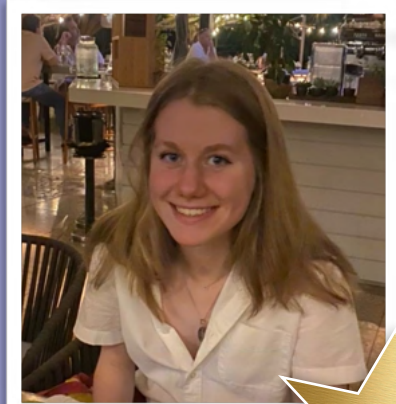
TWO YEAR NEWSLETTER ANNIVERSARY!

Letters from the Youth Editorial Staff at **The Imagine Newsletter**...



As one of the original members and contributors to not just the newsletter, but **The Imagine Society** as a whole, I've had the privilege of watching its evolution over the past couple of years. In that time, I've had several life-changing experiences, including applying to and getting into colleges, doing online school for a year and a half, and finally being able to fully come out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. However, there have been a few constants throughout all those experiences, one of the most significant being my love of writing poetry. Poems have been a means of emotional liberation and catharsis for me, and has given me the opportunity to express my desire to be seen in a way that I want. Submitting original written works to the newsletter have only enhanced that feeling of freedom for me, and the knowledge that it's done the same for other teenagers, or even younger kids, instills a sense of hope in me for the future.

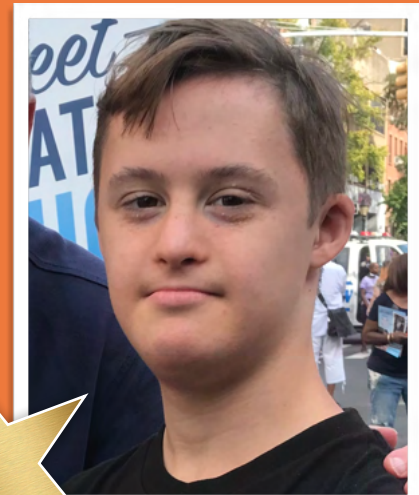
Marre Gaffigan (17)
Senior at Marymount School of New York



This has been a great pleasure for writing these past Newsletters and I hope I make more. Now I've been considered an Editorial Staff Member, I'm working harder every day to make it more inspiring for you guys to read. This is a journey to be experienced as an author. New Imagine Society Members can be authors too and never give up (my Motto)!

Love from one of your community writers,

Louis A. Craco III
8th Grade at Cooke School
Self Advocate for Down syndrome



I've had nothing except excellent experiences with the Newsletter. The publication provides a platform for myself and other young people to express ourselves and have our thoughts and perspectives heard. I'm ecstatic to have a platform where I can share articles on important or intriguing topics. Everyone on the team is ever so kind and respectful.

I've been able to write about issues that touch my family, friends, and strangers thanks to the newsletter. I have been able to write about the inhabitants of North Sentinel Island and the discrimination that marginalized groups of people suffer on a daily basis. I didn't have access to a platform like this before the newsletter. I was able to write about the ableism that individuals with disabilities, such as my brother, encounter. My class writings were the only platforms accessible prior to this. My teacher had told me she wishes more people could've read an essay I wrote, and now through **The Imagine Society**, I can have my voice heard.

While working on the newsletter, I discovered a lot about other people. The monthly newsletter allows me to hear the perspectives of other young people from different walks of life. I've been able to take what they've stated and apply it to my own life. Each article has its own unique characteristics and stories. Every month, I either learn about or write about a new person of colour.

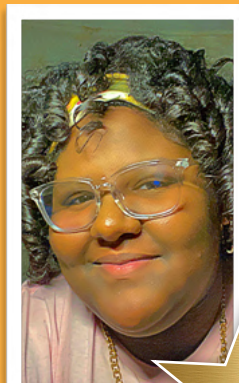
The Imagine Society is filled with loving, caring people and is an outstanding organization and I'm proud to have the opportunity to be a part of it.

Shelby Fenton (15)
Sophomore at St. Timothy's in Alberta, Canada



I feel great love towards the newsletter.
I feel like I'm a part of a community, a community of Love.
The newsletter to me is
a safe place, where voices can be heard.

Nicole Santos-Peña (14)



I've always been a writer, but I didn't always know it. When I was eleven, I read ***A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*** and was introduced to Francie Nolan, an eleven year old who wanted to be (and in many ways already was) a writer. Francie was a role model for me, albeit a fictional one- she was a kid, but she already knew exactly what she wanted. I'm a newly minted adult now (in the legal sense of the word), and I feel incredibly privileged to have had access to channels like the newsletter, through which I could express myself and be heard. It's critical that all youth have outlets and space to speak and be listened to, the same way Francie and I did.

Cheers,

Foster Schrader (18)
Freshman at Vassar College



Being part of The Imagine Society is amazing because it is something that I feel is unique and special that not a lot of my friends know about but I hope they can learn more.

Olympia Hall (9)
3rd grade at Convent of the Sacred Heart

I've learned about helping people for the sake of helping people, and how rewarding it is to help.

Elle Ferretti-Gray (17)
Junior at Avenues School

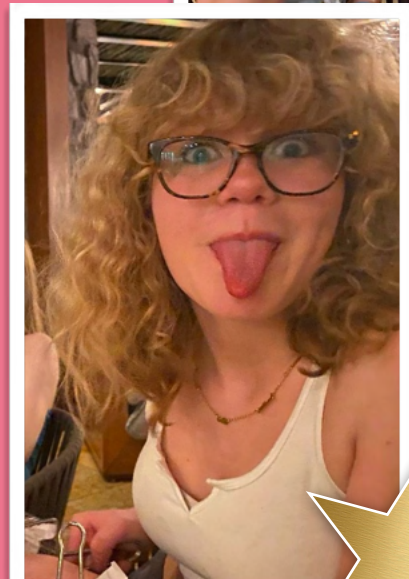
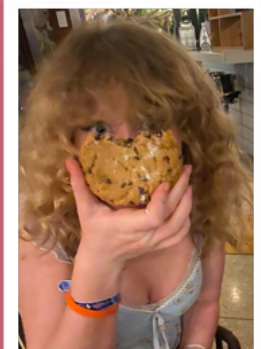


My name is Katie Gaffigan and I am 12 years old in 7th grade at Marymount School. In March of 2020 I was ten years old in fifth grade when the pandemic started in New York City. Everyone was uncertain and nervous about what was going on and I vividly remember that time in my life. It was like another life yet it seems like yesterday in a lot of ways. I had the honor and privilege of being there at the moment of the birth of the very first, original issue of **The Imagine Society Newsletter**. I was happy to be a part of an expression of hope at the very start of such a difficult moment in history. My contribution to the newsletter was creating Fun Pages filled with my favorite memes, colorful images and a word puzzle. My favorite subject in school was and still is English, and it brings me happiness to play with words and create word scrambles, word searches and crossword puzzles. I was thrilled when my adult mentor Danielle Blumstein gave me this assignment. I had no idea at the time that I would be making fun pages for the next two years, but I think that people like the fun pages appearing at the end of the newsletter, and it is a great way to express my creativity and point of view. I feel like I am playing a game with people that I have never met.

Over the past two years my fun pages have changed a lot, as have I, but there is still part of that ten year old that I used to be in the fun pages I create in the present time. We have all been through so much over the past two years but we can still smile and be silly and creative. When you are sad or down or scared I suggest you look at the fun pages and I think it will brighten up your day. I also recommend that you make up your own fun pages. Here is the recipe: Start with a theme such as "Hope" and then search for and collect a series of memes (love baby yoda), photos, drawings and comics (I love *Liz at Large*) that reflect your theme. Then put them on a page surrounded by colorful elements that compliment your images. Next, make a list of words that relate to your theme and put them together in a word search, a word scramble, or use their definitions and make your own crossword puzzle! If this feels intimidating, there are a lot of online puzzle generators that make your lists of words into different types of puzzles. Of course you have to come up with your words and the definitions yourself, which is actually a lot of fun and also educational as a result.

I also find creating art is helpful with reducing stress, and all of us experience stress in our lives. Sometimes it is embarrassing to admit feeling overwhelmed with our lives when there are so many people in the world with more dire circumstances, but it's okay to say that our own lives are stressful and important to find tools that work for yourself to get through it. Many helpful things are out there that can help such as music, painting, writing your feelings in poems or stories, exercise, and of course, FUN PAGES!

Katie Gaffigan (12)
7th Grade at Marymount School of New York



Introducing New Youth Member of Imagine Newsletter Editorial Staff!

***"I hope readers enjoy what
I write in future issues."
- Olympia Hall***

Let's all give a big Imagine Society welcome
to our newest and youngest member of
The Imagine Society Newsletter
Youth Editorial Staff - ***Olympia Hall*** (9)!

Olympia may be our youngest member, but
she is certainly not short on talent! She has
been impressing us for months with her
enthusiasm and initiative in creating unique
and inspiring newsletter contributions.

Olympia's submissions have also been
incredibly varied - from artwork, to journalism
(February's incredible interview with Fashion
Model Angela Highsmith) and even branching
out into poetry in our August '21 and
November '21 issues.

It's no surprise that the literary spirit is in
Olympia's blood - her grandfather is a writer
and former editor of The Reader's Digest! Her
grandfather tells us: "With Olympia you learn
quickly that she insists on things getting done
the right way. She is against shortcuts and
prefers to know the beginning, middle, and
end of a project before embarking on it. That,
in my view, is the mark of a top lead researcher
- should she become an astrophysicist or a
medical pioneer - or of an effective editor."

Welcome to the editorial team Olympia!
We can't wait to have you on board so we can
continue to build the newsletter together and
you can share your gifts with the world!



"I feel proud that I have become a Junior
member of the Editorial Staff and I feel
that I deserve this because I have always
worked hard on the past issues and was
especially happy to see my art on the
cover of the last issue."

Welcome
Olympia!



What is Ramadan?

by Fahad Husain



Alex: What is Ramadan?

Fahad: Ramadan is the holy ninth month of the Islamic Lunar calendar

Alex: Why is it so holy?

Fahad: It is believed that the Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during this time.

Alex: What do Muslims do to celebrate this month?

Fahad: We fast!

Alex: Oh cool! I run pretty fast too!

Fahad: No, not fast like running! Fast like we take a break from eating and drinking

Alex: Oh! That kind of fast! I know what that is! My mom does intermittent fasting! She says it doesn't seem like it's working out for her, though.

Fahad: No no! Not intermittent fasting, just fasting. We don't eat or drink anything from dawn till dusk.

Alex: Oh my gosh! Why in the world would you do that to yourselves! I mean is there a way to live other than stuffing your face with chocolate?

Fahad: It is so that we feel more grateful for everything God has given us. It helps us understand how fortunate we are to have all of the necessities and luxuries in our lives.

Alex: Cool! So it's just about fasting then?

Fahad: No, there's way more to it than just that! It's also about feeling more focused in devotion and being good in general.

Alex: So you don't have to be good for the other 11 months? Sweet!

Fahad: What?! No, not at all. It's just simply trying your hardest to be the best person you can.

Alex: Ok, so it's just a month about focusing on devotion and then back to normal?

Fahad: Yeah but here's where the fun begins! At the end of Ramadan there is Eid! It's a giant celebration of, well, essentially eating.

Alex: Ha, that's everyday for me, am I right?! High-five!

Fahad: You know what, sure.

Alex: Cool! I think I got it... fasting during the ninth month, and trying to stay more focused on devotion, anything else?

Fahad: Charity! Muslims try to donate to charity during this time. They donate to food drives, clothing drives, hospitals, schools and much more.

Alex: Great! Thank you so much for explaining this to me!

Fahad: Sure, anytime!



Dear Fahad, thank you for teaching us all more about the beautiful holiday Ramadan!

Fahad Husain (13) is in the 7th grade at Trinity School

A New Chapter: A Very Special Interview



The Imagine Society is proud to announce our 2022 **#ANewChapter** drive in support of libraries across The United States, and equity in literacy and learning. We are proud to partner in support of the library at **Green Hill School** in Chehalis, Washington. **Green Hill** is a maximum security fenced facility for young men sentenced to Juvenile Rehabilitation. Their incredible librarian **Julie Forbes** is on an inspiring mission to support the dreams and aspirations of these young men, and to provide for them a world-class library where they can grow and thrive.

Please see below the extraordinary interview between Imagine Youth Leader **Paul Bloom** (18, Freshman at University of Rochester) and **Julie Forbes** Librarian at Green Hill Library. We hope you take the time to read the entirety of the interview, as we are sure you will be completely inspired and transformed by the exchange.

Paul Bloom: Can you tell me a little about yourself?

Julie Forbes: I have always been passionate about working with youth and working with underserved youth is what I find to be the most rewarding.

PB: How did you come to work at **Green Hill**? What was the library like when you first arrived?

JF: I first came to **Green Hill School** to help during the summer, I had to be talked into it because I didn't know what to expect. It turned out that I loved working with our residents as much as the kids in our district so I decided to apply for a position in our maximum-security mental health building helping to teach science and history.

It wasn't for another four years that I accepted the position running the library. The library had the feel of an old thrift store. The books were in bad condition, they were not geared towards our population and all of the series were incomplete.

There were lots of signs stating all of the rules you would be sent back for – the one that still makes me smile was a neon orange poster stating the rule that you were not allowed to ask for various authors, gang books or *Where's*



Librarian Julie Forbes and the Green Hill Library

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Waldo and *I Spy Books* or you would be sent back. We have lots of the books that were “banned” now and nobody gets sent back for asking for the wrong kind of book.

PB: I can imagine that there is a lot of pressure in your job. What keeps you working to improve it?

JF: This question made me laugh, believe it or not the pressure I feel most intensely every day is primarily from the residents – they really need the books they requested and are not shy about dropping in to check to see if I have them daily.

Another pressure that I deal with is that I work for our school district and we contract with the juvenile detention so our priorities are separate. The youth I am supposed to serve exclusively are our high school students but the reality is our residents are between the ages of 17-25 years and my library is the only one on campus. I am making this work because it’s really important for all of our youth to thrive, and besides, some of our older youth I have been working with for years.



Where Librarian Julie Forbes displays new books for her many students excited to read them!

My motivation to keep improving my program is the positive impact it has on our youth. It’s amazing how much someone’s life can be improved by taking the time to listen and provide the tools they need – whether it is a self-help book, an inspiring memoir, a story to get lost in, a drawing book or a book on how to start your own business – the library is here to help them thrive, and thrive they do!

You never know, once in a while a student tells me that I changed their life.

PB: How has your relationship with books and reading changed over the years? Have the people you work with changed your perception about reading?

JF: My relationship with books really hasn’t changed over the years, only the books that I am reading has. Reading has always been a way for me to explore who I am, challenge my beliefs and to understand other people. Once I have satisfied myself on something I just move on to the next question. Throughout my nonfiction exploration I come back to fantasies, science fiction, and literary fiction because I find the creativity exhilarating.

The people I work with and the books they treasure are a wonderful reminder of what makes us so similar and what makes us so different. This is the lesson that has pushed me to stretch in developing a collection that reflects and respects the incredibly diverse population I serve and I have enjoyed learning along the way.

PB: In general, what would you say is special about reading, for you and others?

JF: In general, what I find most special about reading is how close it brings us to another person’s mind and how

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we can share that experience with yet even more people. The magic of creating connections in our brain through someone else's imagination and knowledge is an immeasurable gift. I think most people who enjoy reading recognize the gift that it is.

PB: What has been your experience working with the young men at **Green Hill**? Are there any insights you've gained after working with them for a sustained period of time that an outsider may not have?

JF: My experience working with the young men at **Green Hill** has been really rewarding. In working with them I am always amazed at how respectful they can be and how generous they are. They are funny, creative and talented - the simple act of listening to them and caring can dissolve age and cultural differences and I am blessed to have had the opportunity to break down those barriers.

An insight I have that people who have not worked with this population might not realize is that there needs to be much more support for our youth starting at the community level. Your address should not have an influence of how safe you are or how likely you are to be incarcerated.

PB: Can you share with us what the students enjoy about the library? Why do you think the library is so significant there?

JF: I have been told by many students that they love the library, that it's the only place they feel safe on campus. I try to have a very positive atmosphere where they know they are genuinely appreciated for their input as to what books we carry and what kind of programs I run, they are after all, library guys! There is a certain excitement because I work so hard to get them books that each time they walk in they have to know what's new. Of course, their enthusiasm just makes me work harder!

PB: Working at the library probably gives you a front row seat to watch the growth and progression of these guys' aspirations. Can you share some of the dreams and goals of the students?

JF: Our guys' aspirations are as diverse as our young men are. I have many who love anything mechanical, they are hands on and are working towards being professional mechanics. Construction is another area that appeals to many of our hands-on guys. One of my assistants wants to be a professional chef and someday own his own restaurant, lots of our guys are interested in becoming entrepreneurs and read everything they can get their hands on to do with business. We have books on buying and selling real estate, and books about the stock market, the young men who check these out want to know how to handle and invest money the right way. Many of our talented young men are learning about the music business, some want to go into social work because of their experiences. I often get requests for editing because we have many writers on campus who are writing books on their experiences. This is just a peek at some of their dreams, they emulate what it means to be young and have hope.

PB: What are your dreams for the future of the **Green Hill Library**? Where is the library going and where do you want to see the library go? How can we help?

JF: My immediate dream is to be able to supply the books needed and deserved by our young men in order for them to deal with their anger, anxiety and fear. To be connected to the outside, to be soothed and experience joy, compassion and adventure. To learn about the world and themselves. To see what is possible.

The direction this library is going is to raise awareness as to how important reading is, in this, you are already making a difference. My focus with the library is on our campus community, I am always striving for unity, education and awareness. Because our residents are from all over the state it has been difficult to find support from the larger communities, this I would like to change.

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PB: What would you like our readers - young and old - to know about the community and the experience of young people at a facility like **Green Hill** that we may not know?

JF: I would like to be honest with your readers in that being incarcerated is really difficult for our residents, it's a stressful environment. **Green Hill School** is operating as the only fenced-in facility for young adult males in Washington State, and are serving all of the maximum-security mental health and behavioral needs juvenile offenders for our state. This being said, our young men are surrounded by people who are committed to helping them learn all of the social skills they need to be successful when they return to their communities. We are focused on their education in a way that is highly specialized and gives them a chance to catch up. We have a high percentage of high school graduates and can immediately enroll them into college classes. We also have a strong trades program where they can get job experience and even become certified.

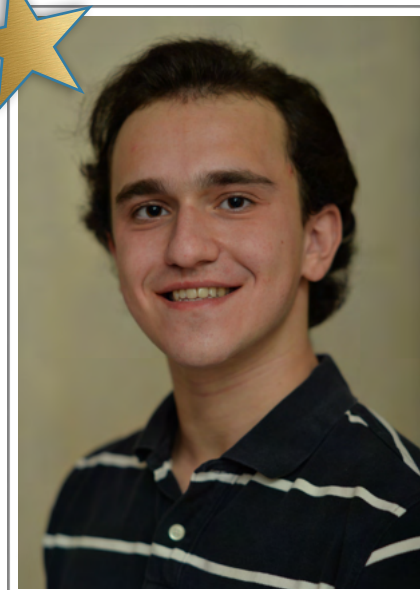
I myself have had up to six assistants I've worked with at a time teaching them everything I know about running a library - yes, many of them want to own book stores now.

PB: Do you have any final thoughts for the young people that will be reading this interview?

JF: My final thoughts would be to say thank you. Thank you for giving me a chance to share what I am most passionate about. Remember, reading is more than a pass-time; reading creates connections or pathways in your brain, it increases empathy and compassion, it gives us a greater ability to express ourselves. Reading can give you a way to deal with your anger or grief, a break from ruminating thoughts and many opportunities to experience adventures, to feel joy and love. And even, a good cry once in a while. This is why I love what I do.

When my guys are released they often stop by the library to say goodbye and I make them pinky promise me that reading will be a lifetime habit, I hope it really is for them as I hope it is for your readers.

Paul's Final Thought: After corresponding with Julie, I began to realize how many formative resources I take for granted everyday. The things that have shaped my life are not guaranteed to those in other communities – whether that's material (books and spaces to work) or even just mentors who want to see me thrive. Julie's work is incredibly important for any empathetic community to progress in today's world, but Julie's contributions also remind me of how much people like me still have to give to make the world a better place for those growing up and those who aren't blessed with the same luxuries I was. There is always work to be done, but Julie reminds me that the work is never in vain.



YOU Can support **Julie Forbes** and the **Green Hill Library**
by purchasing a book from



[Julie's Amazon Wish List!](#)



"Why Books? Books are a lifeline for our young men. They inspire, educate, stabilize and soothe. They take them to other worlds, help them understand other people and ultimately open them up to seeing themselves. Our guys are bright, funny, resilient and they are always learning, thank you to everyone who has made literature a connection to the outside world."

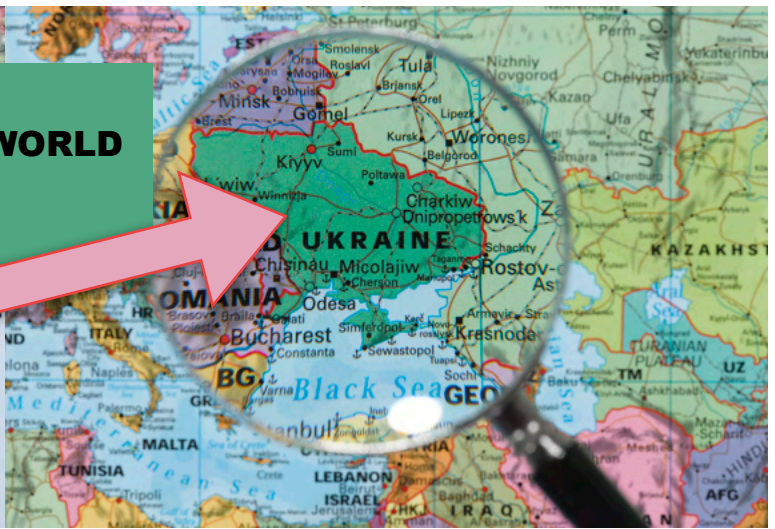
- Julie Forbes

Phenomenal interview Paul!
Thank you!!!



LENDING A HAND FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

by Allie Frazer



From Wednesday, March 2 to Saturday, March 5, Ms. Flynn of **Wantagh High School** and the Wantagh community ran a collection drive to help support the victims of Ukraine impacted by the current Russian invasion.

On Wednesday, Ms. Flynn sent out flyers that she would be collecting essential supplies to give to the **Ukrainian Americans of Long Island**, and that she would like to have all supplies collected and ready to be sent to **UALI** by Friday.

In the three days of collecting, according to Ms. Flynn, the elementary schools, middle school, and the high school had collected “about 100 boxes” full of donations – so many that she had to go out to buy more boxes multiple times.

On Friday, with the help of students, teachers, and members of the community, Ms. Flynn spent all day organizing the donations into boxes. Aidan Tracy, a senior, helped out by donating “clothes, blankets, socks” as well as helping organize the donations into boxes alongside Ms. Flynn. Mrs. Federico was one of the teachers that lended a hand, as she helped every free period she had on Friday, as well as after school until 4:30.

After the organizing, there was the task of bringing the boxes to the **UALI** center in Uniondale. Ms. Flynn called in some seniors to help drive the boxes to the center, and her parents rented a small U-Haul truck to accommodate for the immense amount of donations received. One senior, Jack Lee, says he was at the collection site for about two hours, and that he volunteered to help because, “It makes me feel good that I’m able to help people that need it.”



Part of the enormous donation that the Wantagh community was able to put together for the people of Ukraine under the leadership of Ms Flynn!

...continued from page 13

Mrs. Carr joined the caravan to the collection center, helping to unload the boxes from the U-Haul truck. On getting involved, she says, "I feel fortunate and blessed, and I feel we need to help [the people of Ukraine]."

After the boxes were unloaded from all the cars and the truck, everyone admired the sea of donations. Mrs. Coons commented that the donations filled "two huge rooms," and Ms. Flynn said the amount of donations "was easily the size of our library [and] about five feet high."

On Saturday, some of Wantagh's teachers returned to help the Ukrainian Americans to organize the donations and prepare them to be shipped straight to Ukraine. Mr. Scarabino stayed at the **UALI** collection center from 10:30 until 1:30, and he says his job was to "stack and organize [boxes] and then assist others in locating new boxes to pack materials into." He also commented on the Warrior spirit, stating "Wantagh is a community that cares. Regardless of how things are here, we are aware of what is happening in the world and that we will always try to do the best we can to help others."

Mrs. Coons also joined Mr. Scarabino and Ms. Flynn at the site on Saturday. She saw that "everyone from the church had a family member to worry about in Ukraine," and that by helping here locally, she can help at least one person affected in Ukraine.

Mrs. Butler helped by donating to Ms. Flynn's collection. Mrs. Butler has family that live in Ukraine, and she says, "As a Ukrainian, it is unbelievable and overwhelming knowing that people from here care so much, almost the same on 9/11, how everyone just pulls together to help others in need – there are no words to express it."

Ms. Flynn's collection was an overwhelming success, and she thanks everyone that helped by donating and those that took time out of their days to help organize the donations.



All of the students and Ms. Flynn (red jacket) who went to deliver the boxes at St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Long Island!
Incredible work from a compassionate group of young people!

Thank you Allie for helping to document this extraordinary service!
Well done Wantagh!

Allie Frazer (17) is a Senior at Wantagh High School!

Online, or Out of Line?

By Ezekiel R. Salazar



Will. Intellect. Locomotion. Freedom. These are some of the gifts God has given us. To me though, one of the most important gifts from God is communication, or the ability to converse with other people. According to Aristotle's model of communication, communication is made up of 5 parts: speaker, speech, occasion, audience, and effect. But what if your audience is far away? The answer to this question has brought us social media, which is a way to communicate ideas, thoughts, and emotions to your relatives, friends, and even strangers through the use of gadgets. With over 4 billion people using social media, it's no wonder it's one of the driving forces behind society today, with many more accounts being created every minute. So, let me ask you this: *Why exactly does social media have such an impact on our world?*

I will now answer my own question because otherwise I wouldn't have to type this. Social media is probably so popular because of what is called the "herd mentality." This describes how people can be influenced by their peers to adopt certain behaviors on a largely emotional, rather than rational, basis (Wikipedia). For example: Everyone in your class is playing a videogame, like Minecraft. So, to be able to join your classmates whenever they talk about this game, it's likely that you will start playing it to join in with the discussion and be with the "cool kids." This is likely why social media became the sensation it is now.

Social media also has its uses. For example, you can communicate with people you know even if they're miles and miles away from you. Seeing as the Earth's circumference is about 40,000 kilometers, and the fact that you can post something on Facebook in the Philippines that can be seen by someone in New Guinea (possibly the other side of the Philippines) is amazing.



Ezekiel enjoying a little screen time...

Social media also helps the millions of people who use it become aware of important current events. Stories about politics like elections, treaties, national visits, war, and projects of our government can be accessed and spread through the use of social media. But not just politics - stories on our favorite actors, basketball players, automobile races, movies and more are all on social media. Education is also a prime factor in the usefulness of social media. Online classrooms like Edmodo are very popular in most schools like PSHS, or the Philippine Science High School. You can also ask questions online about your lessons if you're having a hard time. This also makes it easier for students like me to research on topics to gain more information about them.

Social media sounds cool and all, but nothing is ever perfect. Studies have shown that Filipinos spend an average of 3-4 hours on social media EACH DAY! In a day, we are most likely awake in 16 out of 24 hours of that day, so we basically spend one-fourth of our whole day staring at our computers. Personally, I like this, but everyone over the age of 40 disagrees so I'm just going to... buy some food. (Mom stop staring at me like that). Social media has also contributed to the rise of cyberbullying, which is bullying people on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. To most people, this bullying is worse than face-to-face bullying, so it's definitely bad. It's also easy to lie on social media. For example: Someone posts "Going on vacation" or "Just won the lottery" or "No classes" on Facebook, and you can't verify if they're lying or not. This habit of lying on social media has contributed to the spread of fake news, but that topic is for the Grade 9 writers so I'll stop now.

Social media is a very powerful tool, but with great power comes great responsibility. And since some netizens aren't very responsible (including me), I would like to suggest some ways that they could be more responsible in posting. First of all, think before you post. Once you post something online, people will see it within seconds, and then there's no turning back. And if it's a hurtful post then you can't take it back. If you're on the receiving end of the post, then don't reply. That's exactly what the poster wants you to do so remember - the best response is no response. Overall, social media is a very powerful tool, but it's good or bad depending on how you use it: sword or pen.



Amazing essay EZ! So thought-provoking!
Thank you for being a superstar member of The Imagine Society!

Ezekiel (EZ) R. Salazar (16) is in grade 10 at Philippine Science High School in The Philippines



Taking a Bite Out of Hunger

by Jacob Toboroff



"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest invention" - Oscar Wilde

Needless to say, the pandemic has adversely impacted thousands of individuals, yet even for those who never caught the virus themselves they continue to fight another affliction: hunger. In 2021, approximately 42 million American households confronted food insecurity, a 10.5% uptick increase from 2020 and a 20% uptick from 2019. Furthermore, even as society begins to rebuild itself, inflation is at all time highs. The pandemic not only jeopardized people's health it also impacted their ability to survive. All of these factors inspired and compelled me to do something to try and address this problem. Beginning in October of 2020, I partnered with Woolco Foods, a wholesale food distributor, and launched my business **Bite Out Hunger** (www.biteouthunger.com), a food supplier positioned in Tenaflly, New Jersey that specializes in selling staple goods at below market prices. **Bite Out Hunger** works to ensure everyone has a meal on their plate and is extremely proud to donate all of the proceeds to fight food insecurity, including my involvement with **The Imagine Society** to serve our common purpose of making a difference for the better.



Jacob (left) and (right) volunteering at The Ascension Food Pantry!
Thank you Jacob and **Bite Out Hunger** for volunteering with us and for your generous donation to March's pantry service!

Jacob Toboroff (16) is a Junior at Tenaflly High School in Tenaflly, New Jersey.



Incredible Youth Volunteering at The Ascension Pantry for #FOODFORFAMILIES



Saturday, March 19th was an incredible day of service at **The Ascension Food Pantry** and truly what **The Imagine Society** is all about. Youth Volunteers from **The Imagine Society, The Boy Scouts, MV4NY, The Spirit Squad, The St. Patrick's Warriors, Sacred Heart, and Xavier High School** dedicated to helping 365 of our food insecure neighbors. All these incredible youth volunteers worked for hours sorting, organizing, distributing and serving the pantry clients with dignity and respect. These pantry services are important now more than ever as so many people struggle to put food on their family's table. A special thank you to Youth Leader **Jacob Toboroff** (16) who volunteered and put together an extraordinary donation from his own company **Bite Out Hunger**, an organization he founded during the pandemic to help families gain access to groceries amidst the growing costs of food staples. Thank you also to **Woolco Foods** for your continued compassionate partnership and incredibly generous donations. Services like this are not possible without donations from our amazing community of love and support!



If you and your family would like to volunteer with or donate to #FOODFORFAMILIES please email us at outreach@theimagesociety.org for ways to get involved!



What Ramadan Means to Me...



Ramadan to me is when we can fast and enjoy the honor of being in the month when the Quran came down. It's also a time when we can be grateful for all the things around us and focus extra on charity.

My Favorite food:
chocolate chip pancakes

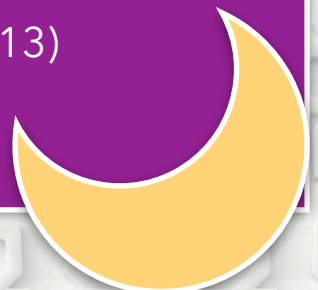
by Salaar (11)



Ramadan is a special time when I can hang out with my family and learn new things about Islam.

My Favorite food: Pizza

by Miyakal (13)



SPOTTED

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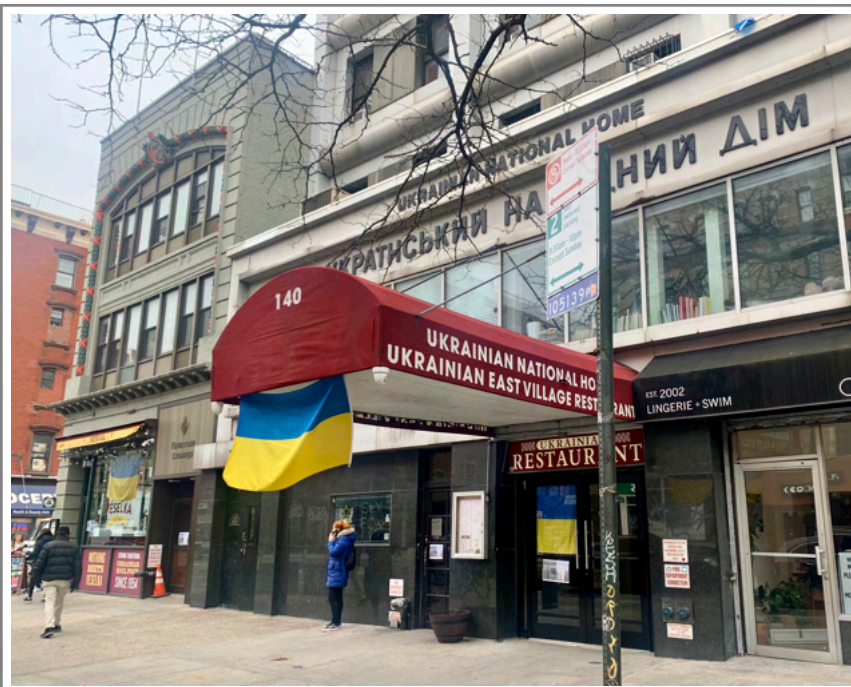
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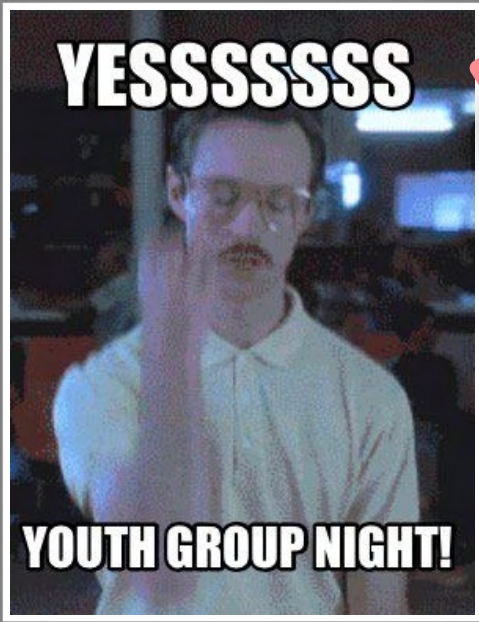
EET!



Photos from around
the East Village neighborhood
in New York City



Send in your "Spotted on the Street" photos to: outreach@theimagesociety.org



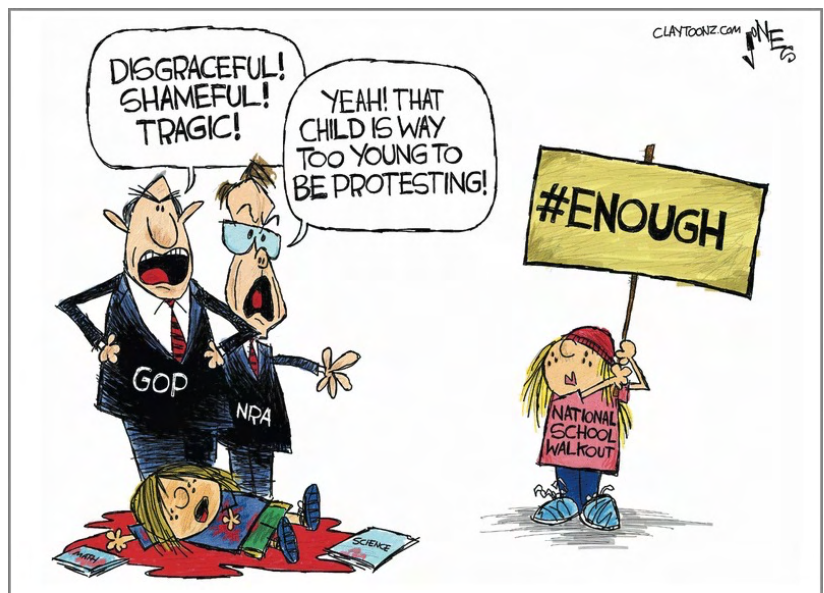
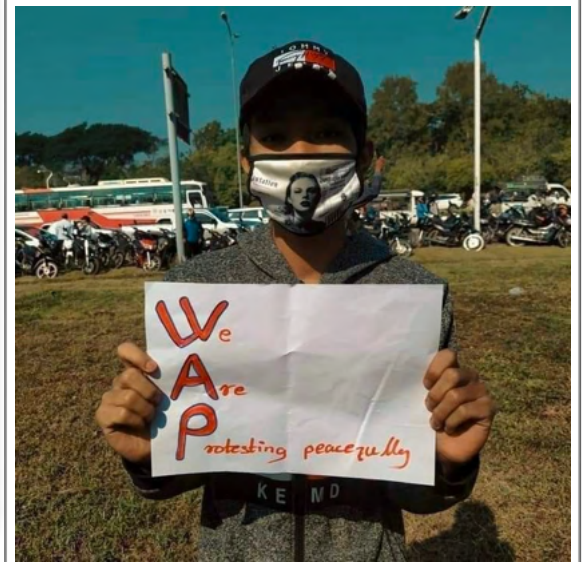
FUN PAGES

Edited by
Junior Member
Katie Gaffigan
(12)



Katie's
Fave
Memes
:)

Lol!



WORD PLAY

Edited
by Junior
Member Katie
Gaffigan
(12)

Celebrating Youth Voices Word Search

e	l	j	c	i	i	h	l	w	e	w	d	q	d	l
m	r	c	c	l	t	k	g	r	e	e	n	f	n	y
e	g	e	n	f	f	h	f	r	e	s	h	u	g	j
r	z	a	v	r	c	d	v	n	v	e	z	n	y	v
g	b	c	u	o	i	v	s	j	a	o	c	c	l	j
e	g	x	t	t	l	u	i	b	c	m	b	e	x	x
m	e	r	g	q	h	u	o	r	i	g	i	n	a	l
e	n	a	q	v	u	e	t	y	x	y	h	s	h	b
r	u	d	a	t	c	w	n	i	a	t	w	o	o	n
g	i	i	e	q	z	x	p	t	o	x	n	r	t	c
i	n	c	w	w	r	u	z	c	i	n	p	e	r	q
n	e	a	f	g	w	c	a	y	h	c	a	d	u	c
g	i	l	n	y	h	i	j	p	s	j	q	r	e	q
i	n	n	o	v	a	t	i	v	e	a	v	e	y	l
t	m	m	s	f	b	l	o	s	s	o	m	i	n	g

Revolutionary
Authentic
Emerge
True

Blossoming
Radical
Fresh

Innovative
Original
Green

Uncensored
Emerging
Genuine

ANSWER KEY

Celebrating Youth Voices Word Search

e l j c i h l w e w d q d l
 m r c c l t k g r e e n f n y
 e g e n t f h f r e s h u n g j
 r z a v r c d v n v e z n y v
 g b c u o i v s j a o c c l j
 e g x t t l u i b c m b e x x
 m e r g q h u o r i g i n a l
 e n a q v u e t y x h s h b
 r u d a t c w n i a t w o o n
 g i e q z d t o x n r t c
 i n c w r u z c i n p e r q
 n e a f g w c a y h c a d u c
 g i l n y h i j p s j q r e q
 i n n o v a t i v e a v e y l
 t m m s f b l o s s o m i n g

Revolutionary	Authentic	Emerge	True
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