



Editor-in-Chief  
Arianna Walker

# Pegasus

*Monthly*

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## Distance Learning vs. In-person Learning

By: Myra Kamal and Ryan Christianson

Rancho Solano has a resilient culture that has survived even the most dire of circumstances, and this pandemic is no exception. Teachers and students each have unique struggles, and while I'll cover the unique teachers' perspectives and the students' in-person perspectives, Myra Kamal will cover the challenges and experiences specific to distant learners, or DL's.

The teachers' experience ,with increased workloads, has given a new sense of satisfaction for teachers. Current Economics teacher and IB Coordinator, Mr. Garbarino, shared his input on the process: "What we are doing is unique to Rancho and how we use the Owls, Blackbaud and multiple laptops. It's more student-teacher centric; we maintain a connection with our students while other schools are more one-directional with their online classrooms. It's not ideal, but it creates that interaction you get in the classroom."

Students, on the other hand, have a more mixed set of emotions and reactions. After being forced to do online learning for the last quarter of the year, students were more than ready to participate in physical

activities and return to the classroom: the powerful feeling of students enjoying and appreciating class was evident! Some students are noticing some decreasing radiance that was first felt during the few weeks back in school after months of online. Luke Hammond labeled it as a "honeymoon phase", but others were quick to call it a mindset only pandemic students would experience.

It is now harder to meet those who are not in your classes, but some are beginning to kindle friendships that were not apparent before. Rancho culture is flourishing like always! Izabela Potocnjak said this, "We have a strong community; I feel like we will get through this pandemic together."

While there are many new rules foreign to new students and veterans alike, everyone is masked up, keeping sanitized and following all the guidelines. You would not be able to read this article if it wasn't for the entire school staff making sure we stay safe and stay open.

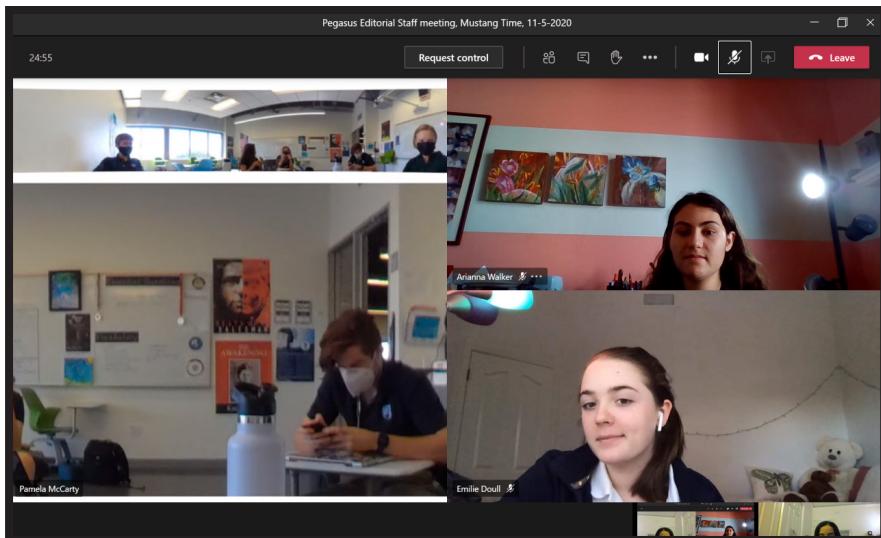
Ryan Christianson provided us with insight into in-person learning, but what



about distance learners?

Rancho's decision to incorporate hybrid learning, split between distance and in-person, accommodates all Rancho families and their needs during the pandemic. But how does distance learning compare to in-person? How do students cope with spending hours staring at a screen? How do they strive for success from the comfort of home? Remote learning is the new norm for most students around the nation as schools have embarked on this "educational experiment." Deciding to stay home is not an irregular choice as the pandemic has restructured our everyday life and limits. Some Rancho families may have at-risk members of their household or believe it is just overall safer to opt for TEAMS meetings. The reasoning for families choosing home over school is personal and completely justified. However, as the pandemic has stretched on, it's produced a "distance learning fatigue" that comes with the monotony of screens. Many students are left weighing the disadvantages and advantages of the learning method.

Ellie Kaufman, a junior, told me: "Internet connection can be unreliable sometimes. I also live by my planner and my note-taking has changed a lot from last year. I find that virtual learning requires more effort to stay engaged, as it can be easy to distract yourself from the lesson." This is true, as students struggle to define boundaries between school and home.





Learning at home creates a relaxed atmosphere that reduces stress with its “staycation” likeness. However, there is still the danger of students being too sucked into the relaxed illusion, and grades deteriorate. Those missing boundaries reinforced the weight and seriousness of school. In addition, Ellie never envisioned starting IB courses online, so she's learned to “think outside of the box” when given new material. Trevor McKibben, a sophomore, also added, “Yeah, it's definitely really easy to get distracted and it's hard to ask for help, but it's really necessary right now.” Nonetheless, some students thrive in distance learning and appreciate the bare bones focus of school consisting solely of classes. In 2019, when we thought of school, many elements came to mind. School was a whole experience before, but now it can just be attending classes. Some students feel it allows them to prioritize and focus better by just logging into classes. Samik Krishnan, a new freshman, says: “Distance learning is the future of education!”

It has been in the industry for a long time, and this pandemic brought it to the forefront, it promotes agility and innovation to learning. It is not only the future, it is here, and it is now!” And he may be onto something as high schoolers interviewed this August by the New York Times labeled the classroom as “almost outdated now.” Yet, many distance learners miss school as an experience and all the social elements and extracurriculars that came attached. Caroline Parry, a sophomore who manages the varsity volleyball team, told me she's feeling less motivated to get up in the morning for online school because “it's really hard sitting back and watching the girls play” without her. Distance learning undoubtedly makes a student feel a little isolated from the rest of the school community. The nonexistent interactions take a toll on kids and their health. But clubs this year are really making an effort to convene with the fusion of TEAMS links and socially distanced meetings.

All distance learners can agree that they must overcome some challenges in the classroom, like having a glitchy connection, mishearing their teacher and classmates, or feeling out of place for participating. However, students can still function and seem to be embracing it. Lauren Epard, a sophomore, converted to distance learning for a little while and even coined distance learning as a “school reset” because it provides a refreshing and focused break. A lot of the success of distance learning at Rancho should be credited to the teachers who are essentially tasked with merging the two worlds of learning as seamlessly as possible. They truly are masters of technology as everyday I see them juggle many screens, microphones, projectors, and laptops around the class-- which is no easy feat! Mr. Moreno, who teaches high school Spanish, spoke about his experience so far with distance learning: “It's a change from which I have learned a lot. It's a challenge for teachers and students, but it shows me how resilient a society can be and how we can overcome obstacles.”

# Pegasus Monthly

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A Note from the Editor:

As your new Editor-in-Chief, I would like to welcome the Rancho community to the launch of Pegasus monthly newspapers 2020-2021. I am honored to take on this role, following Isabella Rose, who graduated last year. Our staff views this paper as your paper and welcomes any comments, ideas, and questions throughout the year. Please feel free to send any suggestions to [Pegasus@ranchosolano.com](mailto:Pegasus@ranchosolano.com).

Thank you, Arianna Walker



# Editorial: How Has the Pandemic Affected Your Life?

Interviews by: Arianna Walker

Mr. Dempsey, Biology:

Q: How are you holding up during this quarantine?

Dempsey: "Pretty well, but at first it was trying when everyone was on Zoom last spring and we were all trying to learn how to use it – including teachers!"

Q: What lessons, if any, have you learned during the pandemic?

Dempsey: "I've learned a lot. I've learned that we have strong, resilient students who will adapt to trying circumstances to make sure that they learn and I think that is something to be proud of." I've learned that adaptability is probably the most valuable human skill to possess -- especially during difficult and uncertain times:

"According to Darwin's Origin of Species, it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself."

- Charles Darwin

Dr. Jensen, Chemistry:

Q: How are you holding up during this quarantine?

Jensen: I am holding up well during this quarantine by staying active outside as much as possible and contacting friends and family with our current technologies.

Q: What lessons, if any, have you learned during the pandemic?

Jensen: I've learned about several different types of technologies.

Q: What is it like adjusting to digital teaching and in person teaching?

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Dempsey: "At first, it was frustrating because my internet connection at home was not strong and I kept on getting disconnecting with my students at times and at other times it was fine. It was all new and a bit scary but it's amazing what can happen if you try to make yourself a little better each day. I've become more adept at using Blackbaud which is a positive side-effect of this whole situation. I try to look at the positive side of things and if you look close enough you can find them in almost any situation."

Q: What have you done besides teaching to keep yourself busy during quarantine?

Dempsey: "I made sure that I am taking care of my health and trying to get into better shape. If there is a silver-lining in this whole COVID-19 pandemic, it is

Jensen: It has been a fairly smooth transition especially with the hybrid model. It does help to overcome some of the challenges that would be present if it were only digital.

Q: What have you done besides teaching to keep yourself busy during quarantine?

Jensen: I have gone on hikes, runs, walks, talked on the phone with friends/family and made some healthy delicious meals.

Q: What have you learned about yourself over these past few months?

that it allowed me to workout more and go out to lunch more."

Q: What have you learned about yourself over these past few months?

Dempsey: "I've learned that I am able to adapt to on-lining teaching and to hybrid teaching and it has given me more confidence and a higher level of comfort teaching this way. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger!!"

Q: What is the biggest challenge about teaching digitally and in person?

Dempsey: The biggest challenge this year is the inability to get to know students. In previous years, by the end of the first semester, I would normally know more about my students than I do now. Without field-trip and the week-long trip and the Games being cancelled, it limits the ability to get to know not only students, but other staff members too that you don't necessarily interact with on a daily basis."

Jensen: I have learned that I can be resilient and positive no matter what the challenge.

Q: What is the biggest challenge about teaching digitally and in person?

Jensen: The biggest challenge is making sure that all the students remain vigilant about wearing their masks in person and having to get used to teaching with one on as well. Teaching digitally the biggest challenge is having to make sure the owl system is fully functioning and knowing how to change things at a moment's notice if necessary.



Sania Sumar, Sophomore:

Life in quarantine has been a struggle. For me, it is hard to know that you must be isolated in your house for weeks. However, I just keep telling myself that the more we stay isolated, the more it helps our community.

There are so many changes happening in our world like schools and extra curriculars. Since we have been online, it is harder to concentrate because you are surrounded by so many distractions and it is hard to stare at a screen for 8 hours. Another struggle would be socializing with friends. It is harder now to communicate and spend time outside of school together.

However, these “struggles” are nowhere near to the struggles that others face.

So many people have lost their jobs because of corona which makes it harder to provide for their family. It is harder for families to live life because of this disease. Family members are constantly worried if their loved ones are at risk or already have corona. We need to start being more aware and start taking care of ourselves. Also, we need to start looking at the positives like spending more time with family and practicing different skills like learning a new instrument or becoming more flexible.

I have asked my sister how quarantine has changed her life:

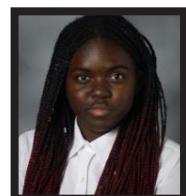
“It took time to get used to this new life, but I have adapted to it and learned

to find the positive aspects of this. The new protocols set in place made sports, specifically club volleyball, different than usual. We were not able to celebrate in our usual manner. However, I realized that, while we all have different struggles we go through during this pandemic, we should be motivated to helping each other out.”

COVID has taken many adjustments but the silver lining is that it had brought the community closer and has instilled the attribute of helping others and for the greater good.

## Pom Team Update

*By: Baraka Kasule*



Though this school year has had quite a tumultuous start, our Rancho Solano Pom team is back and better than ever! As the first students to be back on the Ventura campus in mid-August, our Pommies have been working hard at keeping our school spirit up during these trying times!

One way in which the team has adjusted to the pandemic has been to film performances in advance to be played for our Rancho community during virtual pep rallies. Since only certain people are able to attend games and other athletic events, our spirit line has been more vivacious than ever to keep our Mustang pride alive.



Our Pom team, led by Coach Gamez and supervised by team manager Sania Sumar, has had quite the eventful season so far! Though many don't realize it, being part of the team of twelve is one of the most physically taxing—yet rewarding—activities a student can take part in! The girls, led by team captain senior Stella Dillard, practice four days a week. Practices usually encompass forty minutes worth of cardio, ten minutes of stretching, practicing a wide array of pre-choreographed sidelines, subsequently followed by the filming/learning of dance routines towards the end. On game days, which usually occur twice a week, the girls still practice for two hours before cheering at games until as late as 7:30pm. Currently, the team has even begun to prepare routines for competition next January. Nevertheless, our Pommies are still in great academic standing, with quite

a significant portion of them taking part in the IB Diploma program.

When discussing their favorite part of being on the team, sophomore Julia Dillard said “I like being able to make friends with people out of my grade that I wouldn't have been able to talk to had it not been for Pom.” Many of the other girls share a similar sentiment. All in all, we would like to encourage you to consider joining this powerhouse of an athletics team next year! The girls and Coach Gamez have always made being a Pommie feel all inclusive. This is truly a sport for everyone!

Photos by: Coach Gamez



# Boys' Varsity Soccer Beats COVID-19

By: Logan DeSaye

The boys' soccer team kicked off with an interesting season this year. There's no need to mention the COVID-19 situation that's been going on for some time now, however it never defeated this team's desire to compete. A total of 17 players ended up signing on this year, and they would go on to play like the pandemic never happened. In the middle of the season, however, a situation at school lead to 5 of the soccer players being asked



to quarantine for two weeks.

I asked team captain Drake Leier to comment on how the team was faring with the missing players, and he said "Eh, we [are] losing... lots... But we are gonna win Thursday". Though this temporary loss had impaired the team for the 14-day period, the team was overall optimistic about the end to their hectic season.

Sadly, the players who were quarantining weren't let out to play in the final match, but the team still dominated

the field with a 12-0 victory.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and a quarantine fiasco with some players at the end, the team persevered and finished the season with a record of 5-7.

This win/loss rate truly is a record, though, as it's now the team's most successful season to date (beating last year's record of 4 wins). One of their coaches, Coach Tibor, summed up the season up perfectly: "The most successful team in school history, against all odds and Covid, these boys won more games, and played more attractive soccer, than Coaches Mac and Tibor could have ever hoped for. What a crazy, fun, awesome season.



# Girls' Varsity Volleyball Wild Season

By: Arianna Walker

The girls' varsity volleyball team had a wild season. This season ten girls made the varsity level team and participated representing Rancho with great pride. With the logistics of the COVID-19 pandemic and their coach, Marissa Morah close to giving birth to her first child, it didn't stop this team from having a nearly undefeated season, with a win/loss record of 18-2.

The team was working harder than ever in preparation for the state championships, until recently they were asked to quarantine for two weeks due to the virus and were dismayed to find out they will miss the tournament. Despite the disappointment of a season cut short, Rancho is proud of the team's incredible work. First time varsity

player and freshman Ariel Eytan says, "This season was truly spectacular and I couldn't have enjoyed it more with my teammates."

On Wednesday November 4th, the girls celebrated senior night. It was a day of mixed emotions for the whole team. Senior Amanda Koath states, "I think this season has been the most successful season in Rancho history. We have a lot of new girls on the team, mostly freshmen and they've really stepped up to play. Senior night was a lot of fun and it made me realize how much I'm going to miss this volleyball program and everyone a part of it."

Their coach Marrisa Morah says, "Seniors Mekek Sumar, Luci Roberts, and



Amanda Koath have forever left their mark on this program and I'm so glad we had a great night of celebration to honor their contributions over these last four years. Rancho volleyball is better and set up for success because of their hard work and dedication." Amanda, Mekek and Luci have helped to build the volleyball program and Rancho is grateful for their lasting legacy.

# How Social Media Affects Our Everyday Lives

By: Farah Fehmi

We all know that social media has a great impact on our daily lives, but what we don't know is how different people are manipulated by social media. Do influencers really influence the average person? What impacts have these platforms and influencers made? High school students and younger give completely different perspectives on social media and influencers.

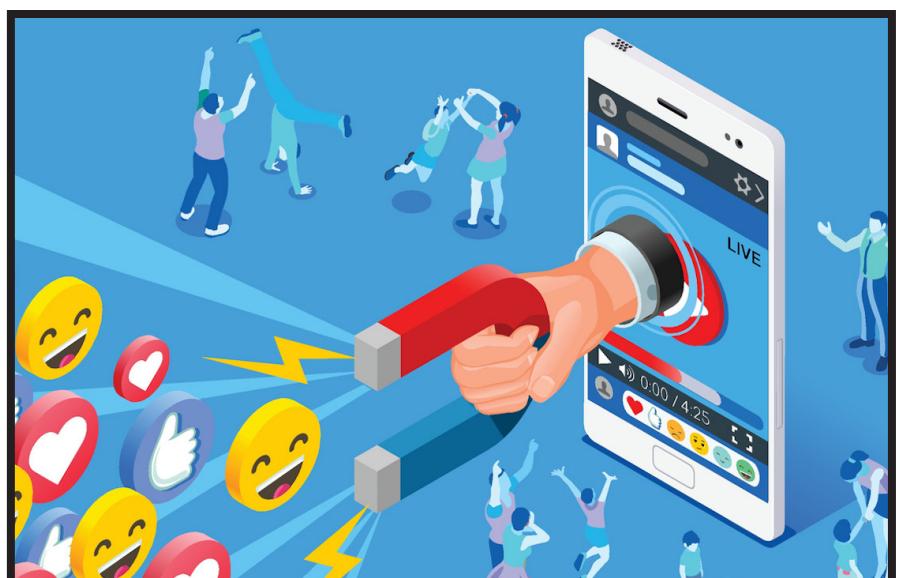
A high school freshman, Riley Murray, says that social media and influencers have affected her daily life: "Yes, I've been influenced by an influencer. I have bought many products that influencers have promoted." Riley has admitted that she spends quite a bit of money on products endorsed or made by influencers she supports: "A lot of makeup brands I see promoted I end up buying. I also try new foods that influencers have endorsed... I bought the James Charles palette, then proceeded to buy his merchandise, then he got cancelled and I regretted it, but whatever." This has led her to waste her money buying things endorsed or made by these "famous" people: "I think a lot of influencers are corrupt and don't care about their fans. Is this going to stop me from wasting my money on them? No." Social media has made quite an impact on Riley's daily life and will continue to do so if she doesn't change. Aryanna Altaha, a Middle School student, thinks that social media has positively affected her and uses it for many hours a day, "Yeah, I do use it a lot, especially Tiktok." She has said to have converted to Christianity through Tiktok and Christian influencers.

"Through Tiktok I was able to become Christian." Aryanna usually isn't really influenced by social media influencers besides big Christian influencers on the app: "No, I'm usually not influenced, but the only thing is the Christian influencers that say if I should get something, like maybe I should I get it."

Aside from Christian Tiktok, Aryanna believes that social media has ways to lie to the general public: "I feel like some influencers face tune?, which is fine, but young kids are very impressionable. Influencers should be transparent about everything." As much as social media has helped Aryanna, these platforms also have very consequential downfalls. These downfalls are what Aidan Mushahwar, a freshman boy, thinks are most important and tries to stay away from the negative side of social media: "I don't use social media for the negative stuff, I only use it to meet new people and for the positivity... I get to know people better from other schools."

He tries to avoid influencers that come and go, so he only follows truly famous people: "I just think it's stupid, all those influencers "dance" online, while real influencers and famous people are working hard for their money." Aidan is influenced by influencers, but a very select few: "The Rock influences me in a positive way because he always gives me motivation to work harder. He always posts on his Instagram that there's only one way to succeed and that's through working hard... Kobe Bryant is paid to advertise BodyArmor and I've bought it simply because he worked with BodyArmor." As you can see, Aidan uses social media for the positive impacts it can have for him, and not for the negativity.

Social media's impact can greatly shape the average person's everyday decisions and future. Everything you do on social media grows, getting you sucked into the never ending realm of social media and influencers.



# Masks At Rancho Solano

Throughout the course of the pandemic, debates have begun over the topic of modern safety precautions. The ultimate question is always: should we, or should we not, be required to wear masks in public? Recent studies show that around three in ten people “sometimes,” “rarely,” or “never” wear a mask, labeling themselves as anti-maskers. This is mostly because they either believe it is unconstitutional and/or unhealthy. On the flip side, the remaining seven people will almost always wear their masks outside, as they typically believe it will stop the spread of COVID-19.

I approached some of the freshman students of Rancho Solano, both in-person and digitally, to ask if they identified as pro or anti mask.

*By: Bella Delmedico*

While everyone that answered claimed to be pro-mask, I still got varying degrees of importance they placed on it. Some students, like Devon Miner and Riley Murray, have deemed wearing masks as both medically and societally beneficial, and do it without protest. Riley states that “even if you feel wearing masks don’t do anything, it’s still a sign of respect for those around you,” and Devon argues

that “a thin piece of cloth will not restrain your breathing in any way.” Other students, like Dylan Capshaw and Nylah Brown, have said that they “don’t really mind” having to wear a mask, but would rather not. They feel it interferes with their daily activities, as many people do, but are compliant nonetheless. It seems that everyone has a similar way of thinking here at Rancho Solano Preparatory School.



## One-Act Plays

*By: Jasmine Signeski*

This year, the students in the Upper School Creative Writing class and Upper School Acting class joined together to collaborate on original one-act plays. These plays will be performed by students in both classes in early December in the Arts Commons. The students in Mrs. McCarty’s Creative Writing class were told to write original one-act plays that involved masks and three or fewer characters. Mrs. McCarty then chose six of the plays to be rehearsed and performed on stage by the acting students. Those in the Creative Writing class whose plays did not get chosen for performance, however, got to audition and were cast in the plays or assigned to production teams to be costume designers, stage directors, or set and sound design.

Students have been rehearsing for a while and here is what they’ve had to say. Sophomore distance learner Caroline Parry said: “It’s been fun working on the one-act plays. I’m in charge of costumes so it’s pretty easy. I think the hardest part about not being at school is the communication with the different directors

and playwrights about what they want, sizes, etc. I wrote a one-act play last year so it was pretty fun to write another one.” Junior Ryan Christianson said: “It’s been super productive and while inclusion of virtual learners is a challenge, it’s still worth it! I am writer, director, and actor. It was a wonderful experience to write this play!”



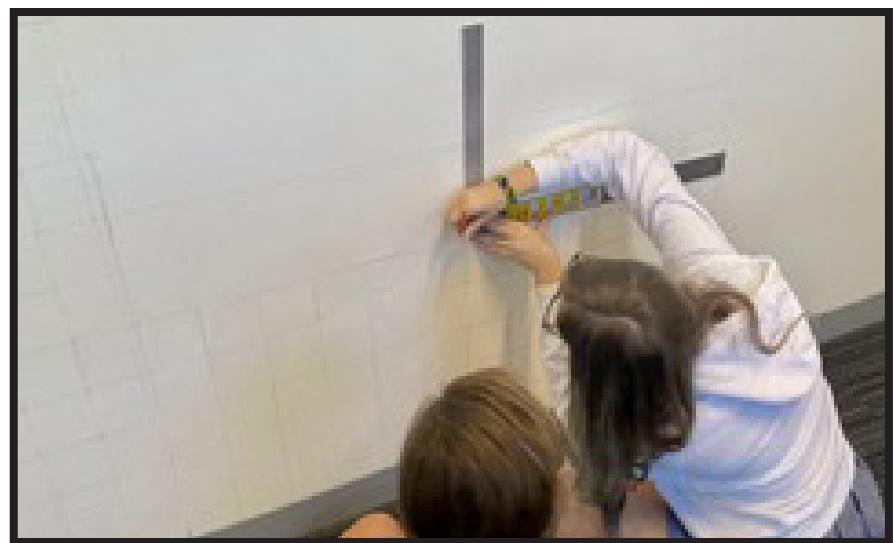
# Update on NAHS: The Phoenix Skyline Mural



By: *Emilie Doull*

Over the course of these past few months, the National Art Honor Society has started progress on some exciting new projects around campus.

Found at the entrance to the media center, the skyline mural is starting to come to life, sporting the Rancho mission statement: “We cultivate in our students the ingenuity to thrive in a global society and to be architects of their future.” The mural encompasses an outline of the Phoenix Skyline, filled with at least 350 small 4’x 4’ canvases, on which Rancho students will paint! Yes, it will be made up of a little piece of everyone, as all high school students will collaborate on the project. This effort goes hand in hand with the message of the mural; working to become architects of our future. What better way to illustrate this than by actually engaging students to be a building block in the project! Ms. Isurin adds: “By making the mural composed of small individual canvases, many students can participate while still socially distancing.”



She explains that the mural was proposed by members of NAHS last year but was sadly not able to be completed due to COVID-19. Amanda Koath, current president of NAHS, discusses the intention behind it: “The new mural has a similar message to our last one in that it’s connecting everyone in our school. This mural provides an opportunity to showcase how we’re all sticking together. [...] This mural really embodies the idea of Rancho United.” She also told me about what she wants to achieve this year as president of NAHS: “I’m really hoping to add some fun and creativity to Rancho during these strange times.”

After weeks of brainstorming and bringing the mural’s main concepts into place, the painting of the mural has finally commenced; Esmée Breece elaborates: “NHAS has finished the outline of the mural and we are currently working on gridding all the squares for the canvases along with the lettering. I would say that we are about 35 percent done with it. We are advancing at a good pace.” What will be painted on the canvases is still under discussion, but you may want to start thinking of some ideas! Be ready to take part in a fun experience on painting day during advisory! As always, NAHS is working hard to promote Rancho values, and to bring everyone in the school community together through art. On a final note, Alissa Persten, vice president of NAHS, reminds Rancho: “If you have any ideas or suggestions of how we can integrate art into the community, email one of the officers or speak to Ms. Isurin. I would love to hear any ideas!”



## Alumni Spotlight On Amelie Clark

By: Myra Kamal



This November, Pegasus Monthly had the opportunity to interview Amelie Clarke, class of 2020 and our very own Editor-In-Chief of the literary magazine, on her life after high school graduation. While at Rancho, Amelie was a member and officer of countless clubs and extra-curricular activities, including: Pegasus, Stugo, Basketball, Soccer, Mu Alpha Theta, and NHS. She came to Rancho in her freshman year and graduated with the full IB Diploma. Amelie now attends ASU Barrett Honors College, majoring in Civil Engineering with a concentration in Sustainability. When asked if she felt the IB program prepared her, she said, "With all the classes I'm not overly stressed in college, a lot more of it is up to you. Because of IB I think my essays and my discussions are thriving." I also asked her what aspects of college she was enjoying the most: "I'm starting to study things I'm more passionate about. Meeting new people has been hindered a bit

because of the virus, but there is still a club event for everything." Amelie is even a part of her college's literary magazine as the Associate Art Editor, making Pegasus proud! The pandemic has of course altered her college experience and she told me: "It would've been a lot livelier but the campus is now quite dead. I'm pretty much all online, except for labs. I was really looking forward to going to ASU football games!" She also adds it is even harder to meet people because everything is over Zoom. On ASU's pandemic precautions, she tells me they are doing "a pretty good job- students are required to take COVID tests, and they're free." She also adds that it has been challenging to develop

a relationship with her teachers because she's "just another black screen on a Zoom call."

When speaking about her future plans, I found out that Amelie hopes to participate in volleyball soon and study abroad one year.

In addition, I asked her about how she chose her college and her response consisted of some practical advice for Rancho seniors: "Definitely don't look down on ASU- it's easy when you live in Arizona, but in the end some people just need to consider their realistic student loans and debt. Acceptance rates aren't the most important thing. I was adamant that I did not want to stay in state, but once I got acceptances and financial aid, that changed. Online school is worth it at ASU. The whole college transition was comforting." Upon starting college, one misses high school or home more than once. This was true for Amelie, who said she missed all of her teachers and friends, the whole community —"just everyone knowing your name!" We wish our Editor-In-Chief of the literary magazine luck as she begins her college career!

