

ISSUE 23

PUNCHLINE



Psychico College High School

2024-2025



The majestic bird soaring across the cover of our centennial edition is more than just a beautiful sketch created by our 10th grader, Sandy Spyropoulou. Originally a simple black and white sketch, the bird has now taken flight in full color, symbolizing how our school's story has blossomed over the past century: from humble beginnings to a rich, vibrant legacy that now decorates the pages of this celebratory magazine. With its striking blue, yellow, and red feathers, it proudly carries the colors of our school, reminding us of our shared identity and collective journey. Much like this bird, Athens College has spent the past 100 years spreading its wings, rising from its modest beginnings to reach ever greater heights. The bird's open wings represent freedom, growth, and the boundless opportunities that education provides, while its flight signifies our school's continuous forward motion, always aiming higher, always embracing new horizons. As we celebrate this milestone, the bird invites us all to fly boldly into the next century, carrying the legacy, the knowledge, and the dreams of those who came before us.





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Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's special centennial edition of *Punchline*, our Psychico College High School magazine. As we celebrate 100 years of excellence, growth, and tradition, this publication stands as both a reflection of our vibrant present and a tribute to our proud past. This milestone edition would not have been possible without the dedication, creativity, and hard work of our talented HS1, HS2 & HS3 student writers, editors, photographers, and designers, who thoughtfully captured the spirit of our school's journey. We are especially grateful to the Psychico College English Department members for their invaluable guidance and unwavering support, as well as to the school administration for providing the resources and encouragement to make this centennial issue a success. A special thank you also goes to our readers—your enthusiasm and appreciation continue to inspire us to tell meaningful stories that honor our school's legacy and celebrate the spirit of our school community.

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

It is with great pride and genuine excitement that I welcome you to the 23rd issue of *Punchline*. Each page of this collection is a testament to the creativity, courage, and curiosity of our students. The magazine is a celebration of language in all its expressive power.

This year's issue holds special significance as it coincides with the centennial of Athens College, a momentous milestone in the school's history. For one hundred years, Athens College has fostered a spirit of inquiry, intellectual rigor, and civic engagement. This magazine honors that legacy, offering a glimpse into the vibrant imaginations and dynamic voices of our student body—voices that continue to shape the future of the school and the world beyond.

As a Fulbright Fellow at Psychico College High School, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the passion our students bring to their writing. It has been an absolute pleasure to learn alongside students while analyzing novels or crafting original work, and I am grateful for the energy and care brought to discussions in and out of the classroom. Within these pages, you will discover reflections of that steady work. Indeed, you will find poems that whisper quiet truths, stories that defy expectations, essays that provoke reflections, and above all, a deep engagement with the world around us.

I am immensely proud of our contributors, who dared to share their voices, and inspired by the Psychico College English Department, which cultivated intellectual enthusiasm and gave those voices the care they deserve. May this issue encourage you to read closely, think deeply, and—perhaps—write boldly.

Thank you for joining us in celebrating both the enduring tradition of Athens College and the emerging voices that will carry it forward.

Warmly,
Sophia Berkey
Editor-in-Chief
Fulbright Fellow, Psychico College High School



Let us celebrate not just what Athens College has been, but all it is yet to be.

By Marsia Saracaki

This year marks a pivotal milestone in the history of our beloved school, as it will officially have been 100 years since its founding all the way back in 1925! Over the course of this century, our school has evolved from its humble beginning to a beacon of education and learning for the thousands of students fortunate enough to pass through its wide-open doors. This progress stems deeply from the passion shown by the hundreds of educators and members of faculty that have worked within its walls, as well as the students themselves and the unique perspectives, ideas and enthusiasm they have brought with them. As we aim to celebrate this momentous milestone, it is crucial that we not only focus on the past memories and traditions still prospering within, but also hope for an even better future.

Athens College mirrors a great ancient tree. Its roots start from its founding, as all the memories of past students and educators assisted it to grow and grow, breaking through the earth. Our school went from a seed, an idea, something small but precious, to a sapling, something thirsting for evolution, something that with the hard work and labor of countless people eventually became a great oak tree. A tree that holds the fruit of knowledge, eager to be passed to anyone who desires it.

As we stand at this remarkable crossroads between the past and the future, let us take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has been part of this incredible journey. From the founders like Stephanos Delta and Emmanuel Benakis, who first dared to dream, to the current students who carry that legacy forward, each person has played a vital role in shaping Athens College into the extraordinary institution it is today. May this centennial celebration be both a time of joyful reflection and also a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to keep nurturing this great tree.

Within the pages of this year's *Punchline*, you will be able to find the marks and voices of students residing within our institution, as they present works of literature written throughout the year, as well as essays, articles and work done for their English classes. All of these beautiful and precious pieces are dedicated to the celebration of our school's bright past, as well as its prosperous future and everything we hope for it to achieve in the years to come.

It has been a great privilege to work alongside all these bright minds and people in order to honor the school that has provided us with so much knowledge, as well as shaped us into capable individuals of our society. Here's to a bright past, and an even brighter future!

**100 YEARS
OF BRILLIANT
HISTORY**

A Journey Back in Time

By Nektarios Giannakis

Founding and Evolution

The creation of Athens College is closely tied to the efforts of Greeks living abroad and the historical and political climate of the early 20th century. Inspired by Robert College in Constantinople, a group of visionary graduates aspired to establish a similar institution "under the shadow of the Acropolis." Their goal was to create a boys' school that would blend the Greek cultural heritage with the forward-thinking American educational model and contribute to the country's recovery after the Asia Minor Catastrophe. This vision became a reality in 1925, thanks to the support of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, the philhellene Edward Capps, and notable figures such as Epaminondas Charilaos, Bert Hodge Hill, Stephanos Delta, and Emmanouil Benakis.

Early Years

Athens College officially opened its doors on October 18, 1925, and classes commenced the following day in a rented building on Androu Street, near Pedion tou Areos. The initial enrollment was modest—15 students—but quickly doubled within the first month. Many of the students were refugees from Constantinople

and Asia Minor, as well as children from the Greek diaspora. From the beginning, the College established a boarding school and a scholarship program, the latter reflecting the College's commitment to inclusion and opportunity, thanks in large part to Penelope and Stephanos Delta.

Expansion

In 1927, the College acquired a 150-acre property in Psychiko, made possible by the generosity of the Benakis and Delta families. Despite the absence of basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, and heating, the College relocated there in 1928. On May 25, 1929, the Benakeion Teaching Building was officially inaugurated, and Prime Minister Venizelos praised the College's founding principles, which granted it the freedom to pursue educational innovation and excellence. The graduation ceremony, known as Commencement, was introduced in 1931, and by 1934 the College had adopted its official seal and crest, still in use today.

WWII and Post-War Restoration

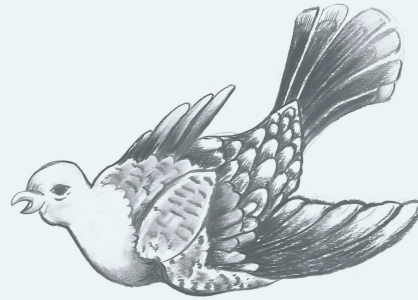
In 1940, the College was repurposed as a military hospital for the Greek Army. During the German occupation, it served the same function, and later,

British forces used the facilities. Even today, satirical murals depicting the daily lives of German soldiers can still be found within the school as historical artifacts. After the war, restoration efforts began in 1946. Davis, a key figure, traveled to the United States to secure financial support from the Greek diaspora and international benefactors, which enabled both the repair of extensive war damage and the awarding of over 300 scholarships. The western wing of the Benakeion Building was completed in 1952. Demonstrating the school's commitment to national service, the student community raised funds in 1949 to help rebuild 20 schools in rural Greece. The College was later honored in 1962 by the Academy of Athens for its national and philanthropic contributions. Throughout the 1960s, additional facilities such as the Central Library and the Science Building were constructed.

The Modern Era

Athens College continued to evolve. In 1977, the Bodossakio Teaching Building in Kantza opened to house the elementary school, and the College became coeducational that same year. The founding of Psychiko College followed in 1980, and in 1982, a modern theater was built. The Latseion Teaching Building was added

in 1995. In 1996, the College introduced the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, expanding opportunities for students aiming to pursue higher education abroad.



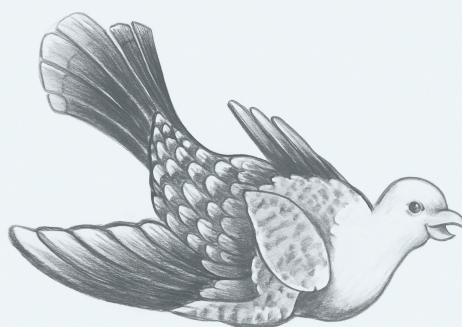
As a student walking the halls of Athens College during its centennial year, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude and responsibility. This is not just a school—it is a living legacy, a place built by visionaries who dreamed of shaping thoughtful, educated citizens capable of rebuilding a nation. Every classroom, every tradition, every stone of this campus holds a story of resilience, generosity, and progress.

What strikes me most is that Athens College has always been more than just an academic institution. From its earliest days, it welcomed students from diverse backgrounds—refugees, children of the diaspora, and those in need—offering not only education but also hope and belonging. The scholarship fund that began with the Deltas still opens doors for students

of different backgrounds, and that spirit of inclusivity shapes our community even today.

The opportunities here are truly extraordinary. We are encouraged to think critically, to explore the sciences and the arts, to embrace innovation while remaining grounded in our Greek heritage. The introduction of programs like the International Baccalaureate shows that Athens College has never stopped growing, always preparing us to thrive in a global society.

As we celebrate the centennial this year, I feel both proud and humbled to be part of this journey. I am grateful to the generations before me who built, protected, and enriched this school through wars, hardships, and triumphs. I understand now that being an Athens College student means carrying forward this legacy with integrity, curiosity, and a deep commitment to serving others—just as our founders intended!



Athens College Today

By Nektarios Giannakis

Drawing strength from its rich history and longstanding service to society, Athens College continues to thrive with the same energy and purpose it always had. It leads the way in many fields—education, charity, and student scholarships, to name a few. With ties to institutions abroad, it proudly runs the Fulbright Fellows program, welcoming young ambassadors from the U.S. into the heart of school life.

At this school, learning doesn't stop at textbooks. Whether it's science, humanities, sports, or the arts, students are constantly exposed to new ideas and experiences. Special days are dedicated to professional development, historical commemorations, and various cultural celebrations. Students engage in public speaking contests, such as the Celebration of the Three Hierarchs on March 25th, Delta, and Howland, that sharpen their voice and confidence.

Philanthropy is more than a value—it's a practice. From volunteering at soup kitchens to planting trees, cleaning beaches, or donating supplies and money to nonprofits, students are encouraged to see themselves as citizens of a larger world. Events like the school Bazaar and the Panigyri, held on the

Psychico campus, raise funds for scholarships to support students in financial need.

Educational trips across Greece and Europe open students' eyes to different ways of life, helping them grow socially and intellectually. Meanwhile, the University Applications Counseling Office supports them in applying to top universities abroad, something Athens College is well known for, as many of its students go on to study at leading institutions in the U.S. and beyond.

But school life here is about more than academics. Students are part of a community where they learn to collaborate, communicate, and sometimes clash—and in the process, grow. With the support of teachers and psychologists, they navigate relationships and challenges. The school's International Baccalaureate (IB) program focuses not just on knowledge but on cultivating essential skills: critical thinking, balance, communication, and integrity. Yes, students face plenty of demanding assignments, but Athens College makes sure they have what they need to succeed: libraries across campuses—especially the one in Psychico, the largest school library in Greece—are stocked with books to

support research, deepen knowledge, and get students ready for university life.

And beyond academics, Athens College invests in athletic and artistic growth as well. Annual sports events like the Deltia, Gavrilina, and Athanasiadeia fuel team spirit and friendly competition. In the arts, students perform in plays and concerts at the College Theatre and the Choremi Theatre. Athens College also operates its own Conservatory, offering top-tier music education. And in celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2025, the D. Daskalopoulos Arts Building is underway—a new home for IB arts classes and creative programs for middle and high school students.

By and large, Athens College doesn't just educate students. It helps shape well-rounded individuals: global citizens who carry with them values, ethics, and a drive to participate in the world around them. Since 1925, it has stayed true to its motto «πολίτας τρέφον» and its mission to “nurture citizens,” serving as a beacon of hope for the future.



Night Filled with Memories and Dreams: Performing with the College Orchestra the 100th Anniversary

By Ioanna Anastasopoulou

There are times when you feel you are becoming part of a story, so much larger than yourself. The orchestra's centennial concert was such a moment. Even in those early days of preparation, it was becoming clear to me that this was not going to be just another musical evening. It would be a landmark, a celebration that would draw generations of students, teachers, alumni, all bound by a common thread: love for our school.

Every rehearsal felt like a little party, filled with laughter, jokes, but also moments of tension. Our teachers were always there, not just to guide us but to support us. I remember our conductor saying: "This concert belongs to you, but also to everyone who has passed through this school. Play with your heart, not just your hands." Throughout every rehearsal and moment of doubt or anxiety, these words from the conductor remained in my heart.

On the night of the concert, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center Hall reached its peak elegance. The concert space itself, renowned for exceptional architecture and acoustic excellence, appeared to understand the special nature of the event. The walls of the hall appeared to tell

stories from a period of one hundred years. The light moved gracefully over the people in attendance who represented a cultural family of students, parents, teachers, and alumni, including those who had journeyed from distant places to experience the extraordinary event. I sensed I was entering an ancient temple that contained the historical footsteps of our ancestors.

When I went up onto the stage and sat at the piano, a multitude of feelings rushed through my body. My heart was pounding, but at the same time, I felt an incredible calm. I knew I wasn't alone—my classmates were beside me, my teachers who had supported me were behind me, and in front of me was the audience, waiting with anticipation. As I touched the keys, every note seemed to tell a story: the endless hours of practice, the dreams born in the classroom, the friendships that blossomed in the school's hallways. The music became a bridge between past and present, between us and everyone who had passed through Athens College over these 100 years.

Beside us, the teachers, with their wisdom and devotion, provided steady guidance and unwavering support.

They taught us that music is an act of giving, that excellence has no meaning without love and togetherness. The alumni, their eyes brimming with memories, gifted us stories from other eras, when the school was different, yet always the same at its core. Their presence was a silent promise of continuity, a staff passed from hand to hand, from generation to generation. It is a community that continues to support, inspire, and unite its people, no matter where they are in the world.

When we finished playing, there was a moment of silence—a silence full of awe and emotion. And then, the applause erupted: loud, warm, sincere. I felt my eyes fill with tears. It wasn't just happiness for our success,

but also gratitude for being able to experience something like this, to be part of this extraordinary event.

In that luminous hall, surrounded by a century of dreams and stories, I sensed the binding force connecting us all, past, present, and future. That experience taught me that music is not just sound, but a living bridge between souls, a language of gratitude and hope. Stepping down from the stage, I recognized that wherever life may lead me, I will always carry the spirit of this night: the certainty that I belong to something greater, and the gentle, everlasting call to keep creativity, generosity, and dreaming together.



INTERVIEWS



From Psychico College to the Press: Giorgos Papachlimintzos on Media, Law, and the Power of Perspective

Interview by Anna Liaou



"Wishing you success in all the goals you've set for this year and the rest of your life," a classmate named Yannis had written in the *Thesaurus* under Costas Papachlimintzos' senior photo. Years later, that line reads less like a heartfelt wish and more like a quiet prophecy. It's a message that now echoes through Mr. Papachlimintzos' career, shaped by purpose and persistence.

He was already well on his way, even then. One other friend referred to him as "Mr Journalist," a nickname that stood out because of how devotedly he went on to live it. And it didn't start in high school, either. Go back further, to sixth grade, and you'll find Papachlimintzos co-creating a

student newspaper with the help of a classmate's artistic capabilities, bringing stories to life just for the fun of it.

After Athens College, he graduated with an undergraduate law degree from the University of Athens and moved to London to get his master's in political science at UCL. During those years, he also wrote about international matters for the newspaper «*Ελεύθερος Τύπος*» as a part-time reporter. He began by reporting on international subjects from Trump's economy or the war in the Middle East to deforestation in Australia. Each day, he wrote on vastly diverse subjects, which aided him in learning more about significant and relevant world matters and gave him opportunities to meet new professionals very early in his career. Political journalism, on the other hand, his current expertise, in his own words, carries a distinct kind of interest. He finds it uniquely appealing because it is the most relevant to the public: it touches not only on our everyday lives, but also on the direction of our country and society, and by extension, our futures.

His decision to study law was intentional and has been rewarding,

as it has broadened his horizons professionally, granting him a breadth of knowledge and a practical way of thinking. Just as there is an esoteric logic between every law from constitutional to common law, he can implement such sense in his research and articles, especially in political journalism, which has been his expertise for many years now. Just like in most careers, new journalists enter the industry blindly. Therefore, applying legal thinking to the ongoing topics in public discourse helps inform interpretation, especially in a world where everything seems legal, whether it's a parliamentary debate on constitutional reform, a court deciding whether a suspect should be detained, or a dispute over maritime zones between Greece and Turkey. These are all vastly different issues, but having a legal background helps you understand them all more clearly.

He strongly affirms how crucial it is for a journalist to have a university degree, not necessarily in law. Many academic disciplines can help a journalist excel in the field, and simply having attended university offers an advantage, especially because it provides first-hand experience in how institutions like universities operate. Something else to consider is how entering such a challenging industry requires a level of maturity that only experience can

bring to an individual. "You never know where journalism will take you, whether the environment, and the 'game' [of journalism] will be fulfilling: it truly depends on the psychology of the person." Just like any other seventeen-year-old, he could not have possibly decided to immediately go into the profession. Even if he were to succeed, he might have wound up not even enjoying it, and "that is not something you can predict as a highschooler." Obtaining a degree gives you the privilege of flexibility. When asked what it takes to keep going in journalism, regardless of the form it takes, whether print, digital, radio, or television, Mr. Papachlimintzos didn't hesitate: The first thing is passion, "Meraki" as he described it. "You have to truly love what you do, not just say you do. You need to wake up in the morning and feel the drive of excitement that you get to keep doing this."



He emphasized the extent to which journalism is a demanding profession. There are no standard hours, and chasing a story can take days, sometimes without results. “You may spend hours, or even days, pursuing a lead or trying to secure an interview, only to end up with nothing. That’s part of the job.” What it requires, he explained, is determination, persistence, and grit.

Beyond passion, he highlighted the importance of method, time management, and being well-informed. “Naturally, I couldn’t not mention you need not only encyclopaedic or historical knowledge, but also a constant, deep awareness of current events—political, economic, or international. That’s what helps you stand out.” And while time is often scarce, he believes that striking a balance between reporting and staying intellectually sharp is what leads to truly strong work.

Without undermining any other types of journalism, he believes political journalists are obliged to have the widest range of awareness on the world around them because of how general politics can be. Of course, working as a political journalist meant entering the “Political Cuisine,” in other words, learning about what happens in political communes, the government, and its opposition,

Parliament, the politicians involved, and debates over their motives, etc. That is, however, just a fraction of the subjects he must cover to be thorough. Economics, for example, sparks arguably the most controversies within politics, from taxes to pensions, the two [economics and politics] are indubitably intertwined.

All of this—the breadth of knowledge, the unpredictability, the long hours—makes journalism a field that requires more than just skill. It calls for character.

When asked what advice he would give to students hoping to enter the field, Mr. Papachlimintzos didn’t sugarcoat it: “Patience,” he said without hesitation. He advises aspiring journalists to be armed with patience from the very beginning, whether that beginning be a month or five years. It’s one of the few things that will keep them steady when things inevitably go off script. “At the start of a journalist’s career, it’s inevitable that they’ll face quite a few hardships.”

He went on to describe the unique satisfaction he felt the first time he saw his name in print next to an article he had written and signed in a published newspaper. It was the moment his hard work became visible, tangible, and accessible to readers. But by the time that moment arrived,

he had already built the stamina it took to get there—a personal attribute he considers essential for any young journalist.

Determination is key—and it comes from nurture, not nature. He urges all of us, young aspiring journalists who are now solely students at the College, just as he was decades ago, to build that quality.

One of the most striking moments Mr. Papachlimintzos shared wasn't from his time in the newsroom, but from his journey getting into graduate school. After receiving a conditional offer from UCL for a master's in political science, he realized he didn't quite meet the required GPA, and with only two courses left in his law degree, there was no way to raise it enough. But instead of giving up, he looked up the program director, sent an email, and booked a flight to London.

"I told him I wanted to meet in person to discuss my application. I believed they were wrong to reject me—that they didn't fully understand my academic background. And so, I showed up. We spoke, I explained why I truly wanted to be there and what I could bring to the program."

In the end, the professor admitted he had already decided to accept him, not because of his grades, but because he had shown up. Because he had proven how much he wanted it.



"That's what really matters," Mr. Papachlimintzos reflects.

"Never back down for any reason. You may fall, get back up, fall again, and still have to get up. But keep going. That's what makes the difference."

"I was a student at the College for 12 years. In no case did I know it [how important determination is] from my very first day. However, I built it over time. My participation in clubs and groups—especially my involvement in the *Thesaurus* during my senior year—was a challenge on top of the studying I had to do for the Panhellenic exams. It took time, but I got a first taste of the heavy workload of a journalist. Knowing what you're doing is the best way to gain confidence and determination," he explained thoroughly.

He had also highlighted the importance of determination during his recent presentation on journalism at Career Day—just the cherry on top of his continued involvement as a proud alumnus of the College.

He has not only written about the school in Parapolitika, but has also returned for SAKA reunions.

So, when asked how it feels to walk back through the school's gates—this time not as a student, but as a professional—he responded without hesitation: “Of course, revisiting the environment you grew up in is always a moving experience. I believe it stirs emotion in any graduate. Naturally, it depends on how you spent those years. Personally, I’d say my school years were, to a great extent, enjoyable. I had inspiring teachers, meaningful friendships, and to this day, my best friends are the ones I met in elementary school! We’ve kept in touch, and those friendships are still playful and full of life. So yes, I always look back on those years with love and I’d say, a sweet sense of nostalgia.”

Events like Career Day help alumni see their school years through a more mature lens—not just as memories, but as foundations. They serve as bittersweet reminders that, in life, everything somehow comes full circle. Exactly 30 years ago, in 10th grade, Mr. Papachlimintzos sat in the audience as another journalist. Mr. Pantelis Kapsis, also an Athens College alumnus and then editor-in-chief of *Tá Nea*, took the stage to speak. Now, decades later, the roles have reversed.

This year, Mr. Papachlimintzos returned not only as a professional,

but as a former student—here to reflect on his experience and inspire the next generation of reporters, just as he was once inspired. And as Athens College celebrates its 100th anniversary, his journey stands as a tribute to where it all began—in a classroom, with a school newspaper, and a subtle foreshadowing written beneath a yearbook photo.

Looking Back with Marianna Georganti, Journalist/TV Presenter at OPEN Channel



As Athens College proudly celebrates its centennial, we had the privilege of reconnecting with an inspiring alumna, Marianna Georganti, who credits the school with shaping both her personal and professional journey. In this candid and heartfelt interview, she reflects on the unique opportunities, lasting friendships, and formative experiences that continue to guide her to this day. From stepping onto the stage for the first time to navigating the challenges of her career in television, Marianna shares stories that highlight the supportive, close-knit community that defines Psychico College—a bond that transcends generations. Her reflections offer valuable lessons for current students: to embrace every opportunity, to cherish real-life experiences, and to always believe in themselves, even when the path ahead seems uncertain.

Looking back, what aspects of your Athens College experience have most significantly influenced your journey since graduation?

College wasn't just a typical school. It offered the opportunity to get involved and explore a wide range of activities. Spending so many hours there, it naturally became a second family. I can say we had some room to get up to a little mischief, but there

were always boundaries, and I think we learned to respect those boundaries and later apply them in life as well. At College, regardless of age, some might see the label "college kid" as a stereotype, but in reality, we support one another, even as the years go by. Whether it's been twenty years or just a few seconds, if you meet someone from College, that shared background becomes an instant

connection. We help each other—that bond never fades.

Can you share a memorable moment or tradition from your time at Athens College that still resonates with you today?

Actually, College helped me realize what I wanted to do in life. I joined the theater class because I was curious to see if I belonged on stage. I still remember my first performance in middle school. The only role left was that of the presenter. Right before the curtain opened, the music teacher, who noticed I was trembling, leaned over and told me, “You’ve got this. This role fits you perfectly.” After the performance, my English teacher, Ms. Katsarou, said something to me that I’ll never forget. I prefer to keep her words to myself, but they meant everything to me. Years later, when I started my career on TV, the first thing I wanted to do was call her and tell her: “I did it.” After the performance, I walked into the classroom, and as I opened the door, I remember Mr. Diplaris, our physics teacher, looking at me and saying, “Why did you come back to class? You should be on TV—that’s where you belong.” I will never forget that day. It was the moment that shaped my goal and my dream: to become a TV presenter. His words—and the support of others—made me feel safe, reassured me that I could make

it. It meant so much to know some people believed in me.

Were there any opportunities or resources at Athens College that you wish you had utilized more fully, now that you see their value in hindsight?

Study English! Foreign languages will help you stand out in your career at the right moment. I wasn’t the best student, but I don’t fully regret it. We were lucky—we were the last generation that truly lived our age. Sometimes we were late to class, not because we were lazy or indifferent, but because we were out playing beach volleyball. We had so many fields, so many chances to discover and develop new talents. I honestly don’t think there’s another school in Greece with that kind of variety—so many subjects, so many opportunities. But looking back, I wish I had focused more on foreign languages—especially English and French.

How did your education at Athens College prepare you for the challenges you faced in university or your early career?

College organized multiple events, so we had to be adaptable to any situation and try to collaborate with different people who are valuable for our future. Additionally, the discussions we had with the teachers, aimed at involving them in various initiatives, helped us enhance our persuasiveness. But I think the most

useful feature of college, which sets it apart from other schools, is the direct connection it offers with top universities around the world. You can establish direct ties with summer schools worldwide, and I went from college to the Oxford University Summer School with all the college students—it makes it easier to have the key to open doors abroad.

What advice would you offer to current Athens College students to help them make the most of their time at the school?

Don't try to act 40 when a 40-year-old would give anything to feel young again. Turn off your phone for a little while. Trust me: one day your phone will become your most persistent demon. Laugh. Have fun. Play. Get into a little mischief, but always respect your teachers. The good ones might even become your friends. Learn to love yourself without chasing validation through likes or comments. No one will ever care more about you than you. Protect yourself. Aim high. Anything is possible. When I first said what I wanted to become, people laughed. But now... here I am. Go out there. Live real experiences beyond the screen. These moments will shape you. No one will remember a TikTok video, but you'll never forget the friendships, the laughter, and the courage you built in the real world. Never settle. You deserve the best.



Education and Elite Sports: An Athlete's Take

Interview by Aggeliki Tryfonopoulou & Zoe Hatzigianni



Nowadays, many students engage in competitive sports alongside their education. This reality made us wonder whether these students are able to maintain a balance between sports and academics. Therefore, we decided to interview renowned water polo player and Technical Director of the Vouliagmeni Nautical Club, Artin Elmisian.

Mr. Elmisian began his athletic career at the age of 11, swimming at Ilysiakos. At 14, he was inspired by his sister to take up water polo. His sports career was facilitated by the athletic school model, which promoted competitive sports and structured students' schedules to accommodate two daily training sessions. He attended the athletic high school of Agia Paraskevi. Like many athletes, he struggled to find a balance between sports, training, and school. However,

careful planning, organization, dedication, and the values of sports helped him develop both as an athlete and as a person.

“Without the support of mom and dad, nothing is possible.”

Mr. Elmisian's personal experience and the support of his parents motivated him to adopt the same approach toward his own children, who are now following in his footsteps. According to him, team sports promote essential values: in addition to helping children mature, sports teach patience, dedication, focus, and the importance of setting goals.

Elite sports bring both joys and hardships.

According to Mr. Elmisian, "the memories that stay are the team, the friendships, the pressure, the sorrow, and the happiness." He stated that a team is a mirror of society: each athlete has his or her own personality, and it is the coach's responsibility to shape the team. Undoubtedly, there are differences in skills among athletes, but their shared goals and objectives are what lead to great achievements.

Journeys can be marked by difficult moments, but they ultimately lead to success.

The world of sports is full of hardships and challenges, but athletes benefit from the supportive environment of their club, which helps them navigate these difficulties. Mr. Elmisian emphasized that athletes should prioritize their team's success over individual achievements. They learn to stay focused, disciplined, and to love what they do. In a society where universities and the world of sports

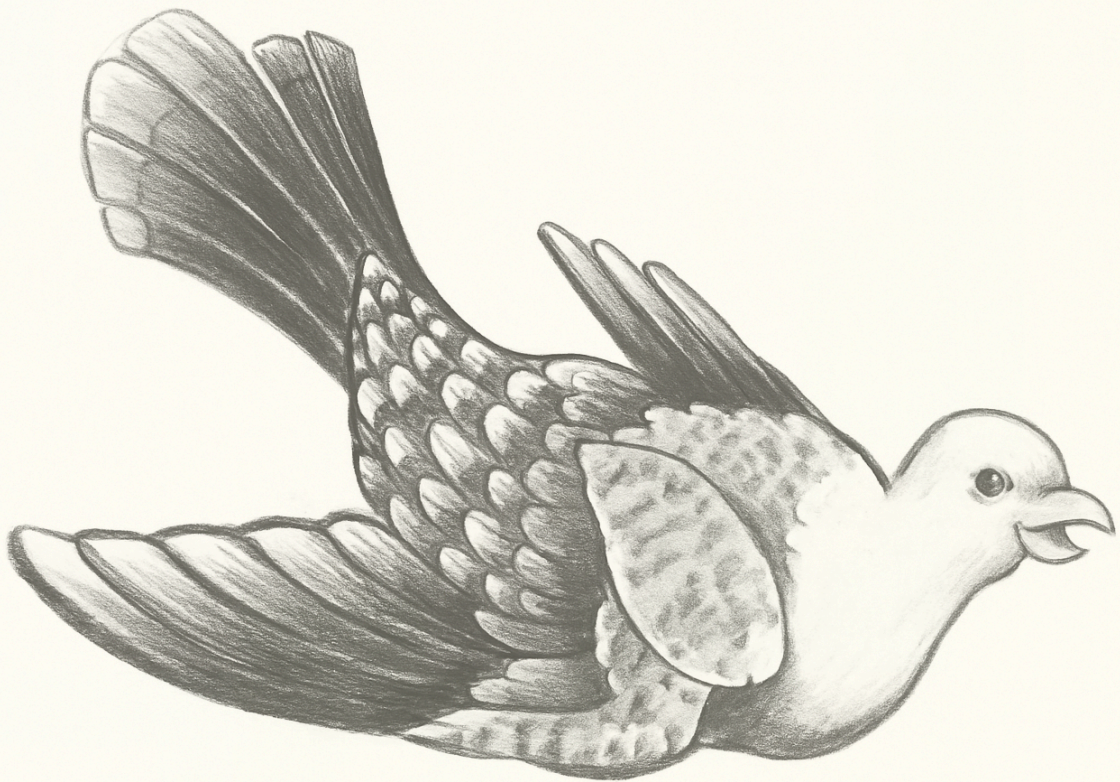
are dominated by competition and high demands, young people develop respect for others and themselves, an essential value they carry into their social life and school. They also experience the joy of being part of a team, which encourages them to seek inclusion and collaboration in various aspects of life.

Balancing school and sports is not easy, but it is achievable.

Indeed, despite immense pressure, athletes learn to make necessary sacrifices, viewing them as gains rather than as deprivations and losses. They also develop resilience as they learn how to manage stress, handle losses, and set long-term goals. "The sacrifices feel as insignificant as a feather compared to what you gain: friendships, mindsets, values, companionships, successes, and intense emotions that are difficult to describe to someone who hasn't experienced them."

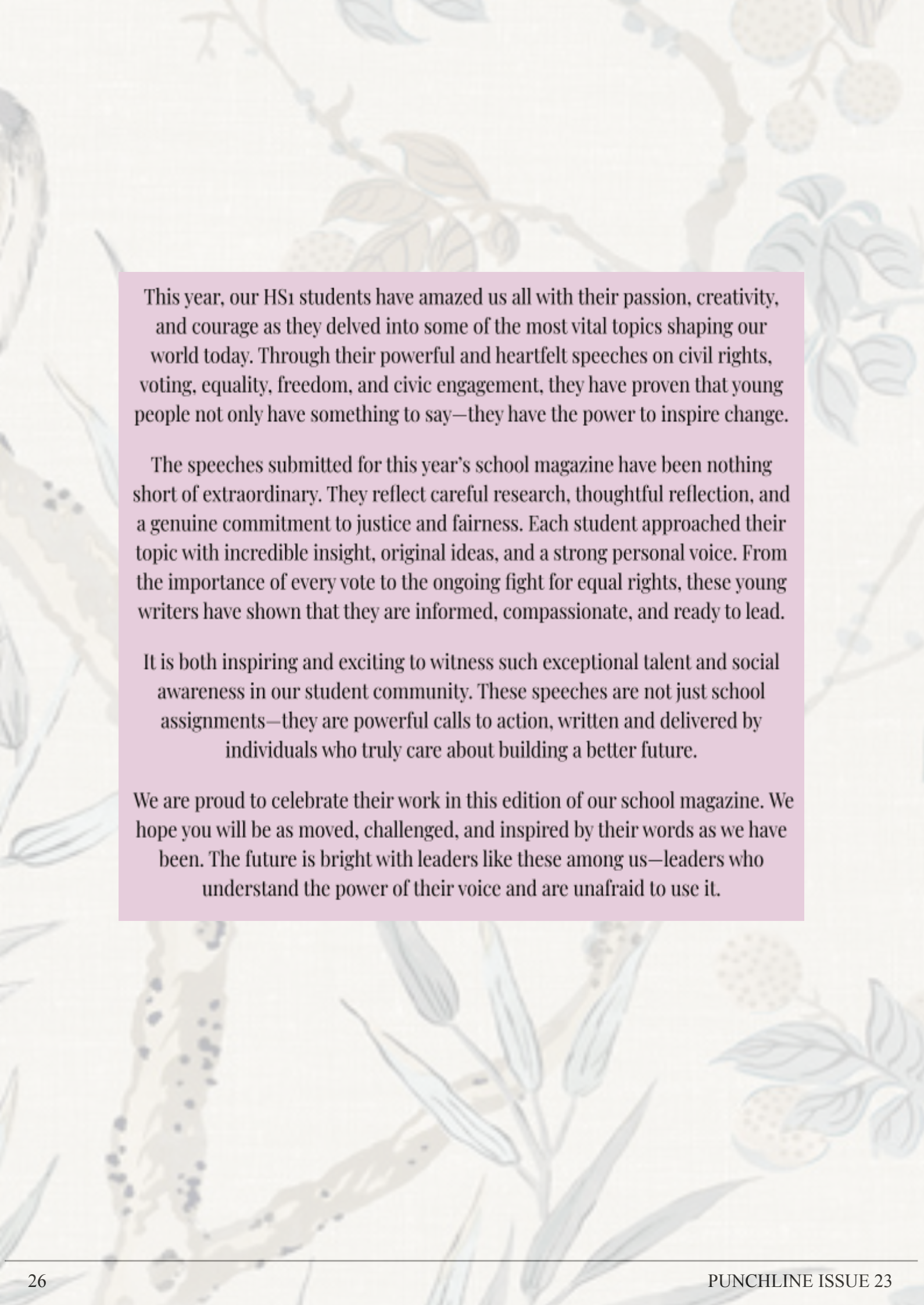
"Children who engage in sports can only gain from the experience. I, too, have only gained."





Echoes of Change: Students Lead the Conversation





This year, our HS1 students have amazed us all with their passion, creativity, and courage as they delved into some of the most vital topics shaping our world today. Through their powerful and heartfelt speeches on civil rights, voting, equality, freedom, and civic engagement, they have proven that young people not only have something to say—they have the power to inspire change.

The speeches submitted for this year's school magazine have been nothing short of extraordinary. They reflect careful research, thoughtful reflection, and a genuine commitment to justice and fairness. Each student approached their topic with incredible insight, original ideas, and a strong personal voice. From the importance of every vote to the ongoing fight for equal rights, these young writers have shown that they are informed, compassionate, and ready to lead.

It is both inspiring and exciting to witness such exceptional talent and social awareness in our student community. These speeches are not just school assignments—they are powerful calls to action, written and delivered by individuals who truly care about building a better future.

We are proud to celebrate their work in this edition of our school magazine. We hope you will be as moved, challenged, and inspired by their words as we have been. The future is bright with leaders like these among us—leaders who understand the power of their voice and are unafraid to use it.

By Anna Liaou

As a member of the Youth Advocacy Committee at our school, I am delighted to join you today and eternally grateful to be given the opportunity to advocate for the fundamental human right to vote. As you are most definitely already aware, this is a human rights conference where we discuss and stress the utmost significance, power, and universal entitlement to human rights. Ergo, we are all aware of how extremely lucky we are to live in a country so democratic. Not only do we practice equality to its fullest extent—for example, we make the right to vote as accessible and effortless as possible—but we are also the ones who invented it back in the Ancient Greek era.

So, why were we one of the countries with the smallest voting percentages in last year's European elections? Why has it become so normalized that most Greek citizens abstain from voting even in our own elections when countries with the largest voting percentages are the ones who borrowed our politics in the first place? I've heard some of my fellow students claim that the reason for this circumstance is that these other countries take more pride in their democratic systems, as they had to fight battles to secure them. While

that may be true to some extent, we've to fight our fair share of battles for democracy, too. Just half a century ago, we Greeks gathered together to end our long night of captivity, Junta, which was a harsh reality we endured from 1967-1974.

Some apolitical people support their stance by claiming that if there were simply a party who represented them justly, they would be the first to vote. Although I understand that, I could not disagree more. We must face the truth: with modern, greedy, self-serving politicians being the rule instead of the exception, there will never be a party anyone agrees with wholly, not even its representatives themselves. That's life. However, we are so, so, so privileged to have been miraculously born in this pro-voting country!

To understand why it is so crucial that everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or financial income, votes, we must first comprehend what voting is. Voting is defined as the fundamental process through which citizens have a chance to have a say in the people who represent them or about an issue that impacts them. It is not just a right or privilege; it is also a responsibility—*our* responsibility—to participate in this deliberately



convenient process to elect government leaders. It is our responsibility to honor our ancestors who risked losing their jobs, their families, even their own lives, to grant us this right. With this right, this responsibility, this honor, we can make a change and impact the future of our country. Honorable audience, your voice is your vote. Exercise it. If you refrain from voting, you not only sabotage the future of your fellow citizens and yourself, but you also strip yourself of your own voice.

So, I urge you, fellow citizens, to vote. If you are an adult, a teacher, or a member of the community, make sure to cast your vote in the next election, whether it is to decide the mayor or the president. If you are a fellow student, I urge you to never stop being politically aware. Remember, we are the future. We are the ones who must protect our democracy and exercise our voices and our rights to vote. It had been up to our parents for our whole lives, but soon enough, it won't just be up to them anymore. It will be up to us.

By Christina Zisi

I am delighted to join you here today at the Student Conference on Human Rights to delve into an insidious and recurrent subject that concerns every person in this room today. It is the right or better-yet, the responsibility to vote. Given that I am addressing not only current but also future voters, I will try my best to convince you of the essentiality of passionately engaging in the voting process. Additionally, I will present to you why this very act is the foundation of modern democracy.

I would like to start, ladies and gentlemen, by mentioning numbers. Numbers never lie. Taking the European elections of 2024 as an example, more than half of the countries had a participation percentage lower than 50%. If I were asked, I would say that this situation is alarming, especially since we are referring not only to a national but to a European scale. Let us take this example into careful consideration.

I would also like to mention an undeniable fact. A vote is a voice. A vote is an opinion expressed peacefully and taken into consideration. A vote is a means of contributing to the ways in which you are governed. A vote does not only define the course of your country's future but also the course of your own future. The abstention from the voting

process is like standing in the corner of the room, simply spectating, while the path of your own life is decided upon without your consent. Instead, you must fight, and this battle can only be won through a vote. Even if you do not win, though, what matters is that you tried. You contributed and had a say in the decision. Contributing matters. A vote matters.

Moreover, I believe it is of utmost importance to understand that power may easily be usurped. History can provide us with a myriad of examples. I am sure of that. Either achieved through propaganda or undignified means, leaders, despots, and tyrants have found ways to rise to power, sometimes with little consent of the people. Now, let us imagine a scenario in which a leader were rising to power without the permission of the people. Let us imagine how the slow-to-organize public would be taken advantage of by the hypothetical tyrant. Let us imagine how its fruits would be utterly bruised and abused and how democracy would be squelched in an instant. Let us imagine how the inestimable foundations and scruples of civilization would be disrupted and forgotten. Remaining neutral and numb means giving the future of your world to someone unknown. It means



unconsciously suffocating yourself,
pushing your own voice down your
throat and letting someone else speak
on your behalf.

If there is one thing I would like
you to remember, it is the word
“responsibility.” “Advantage” and
“responsibility.” We must remember
in the fierce urgency of today that a
vote has not always been a guarantee.
Thus, now that it seems to be, it must
be exercised. It must be cherished,
and it must be exalted. It must be
used, and it must be used widely.
Remember, the future of the
community lies in your hands, but
only if you choose to accept it.

By Dimitris Vrongistinos

Doctor Martin Luther King once stated that “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” What better way is there to voice our opinions on these matters, than voting? The loudest and most effective declaration of our beliefs, our values and our aspirations for the future. Voting is the reflection of our personal opinions, the instrument of change, and the most profound principle of democracy itself. Therefore, I stand before you today, in this Conference on Human Rights, not only to urge you to vote, but also to remind you that voting is the most powerful tool for shaping your future.

The right to vote is the most essential right of a citizen in a democratic country. However, it was not always granted freely to all. Our history is marked by the struggles of those who advocated for this right: the women suffragists who endured scorn, discrimination and imprisonment, or the brave African Americans who marched in Selma in 1967, facing tear gas and several injuries, all demanding the same thing: the right to be heard. Keep in mind that when you do not vote, you dishonor these sacrifices. You make these relentless trials have no worth. You do not cherish the opportunities

offered by a system that has ensured your right to shape the world you wish to live in.

Voting is not just a right—it is a duty. It is the chance to make the necessary changes in your lives, to ensure democracy and all the rights and opportunities it offers. Think of the aspects of your daily life that matter to you, and you want to change or maintain. Whether you care about education, healthcare, job opportunities or any other type of policies, you have the ability to voice your opinion. All it takes is to cast your vote, in order to improve the quality of your life. To make sure that your personal beliefs, concerns and dreams are sufficiently expressed and heard. To make sure that everyone is being represented, not just the privileged few or the ones in authority.

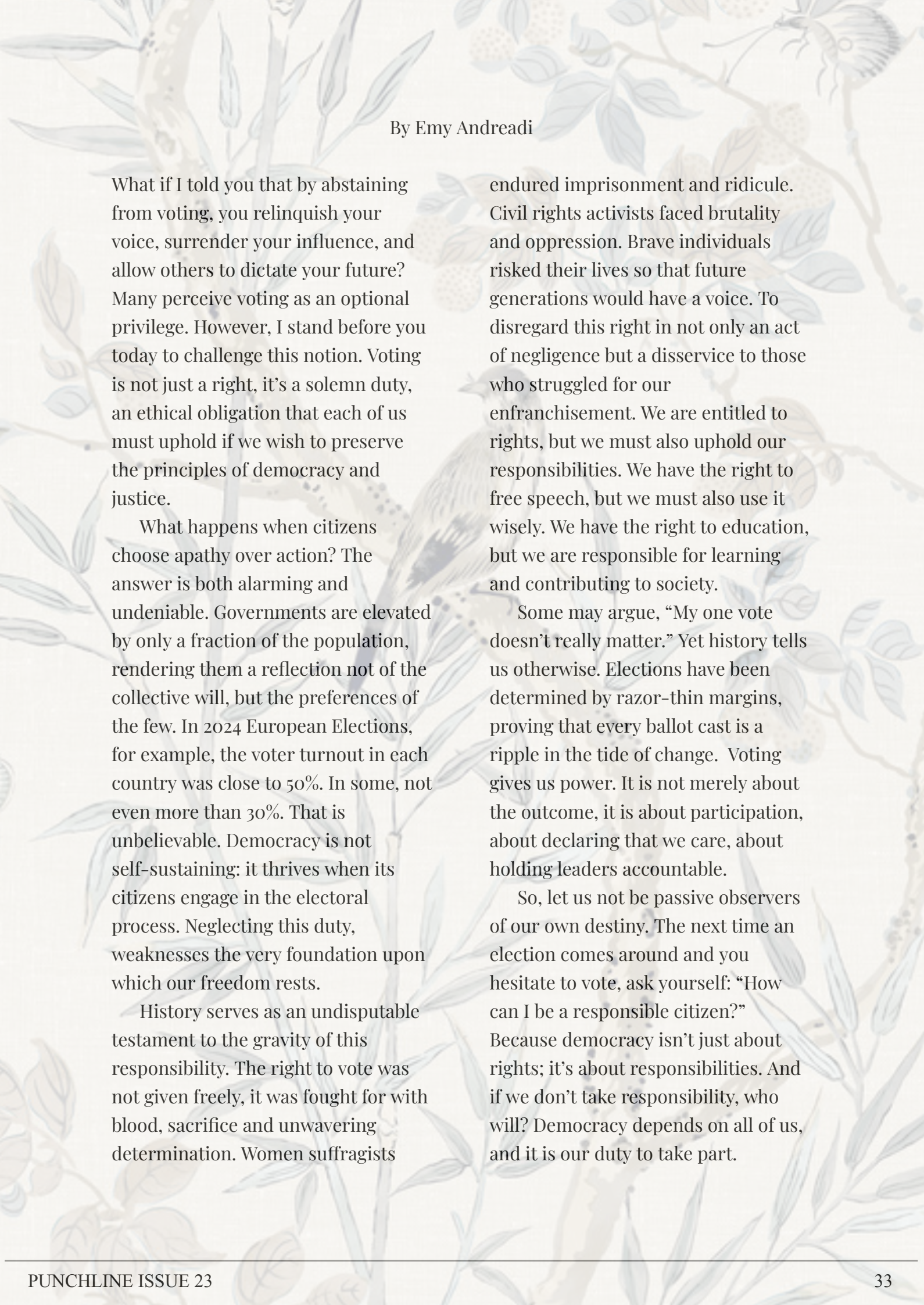
We must realize that our vote is our voice. There is no other more effective means of expressing yourself to society than voting. Imagine waking up one day and there are laws that undermine your rights, policies that harm you and your community, and politicians in office who do not care about your well-being all because you didn't vote. We come to realize that when we do not cast our vote, others will make the decisions for us. Often,



These decisions do not comply with our personal aspirations, since they have never been heard, nor taken into consideration by the government.

So how does voting support democracy? Democracy cannot be sustained by simple, passive spectating. It demands participation. It demands action. It demands that every citizen take the responsibility of shaping the future with their own hands. It demands that during the next election you remember that voting is a hard-fought and hard-earned “gift” of democracy... and that is exactly what I’m here to ask for. To take a moment and realize the importance of voting for yourselves and for society as a whole.

I cannot stress more emphatically the words of Abraham Lincoln: “The best way to predict our future is to create it.” So I urge you to vote, as soon as you are eligible to do so, to ensure that you, the society you live in, and the future generations get to live in a prosperous world that we all deserve.



By Emy Andreadi

What if I told you that by abstaining from voting, you relinquish your voice, surrender your influence, and allow others to dictate your future? Many perceive voting as an optional privilege. However, I stand before you today to challenge this notion. Voting is not just a right, it's a solemn duty, an ethical obligation that each of us must uphold if we wish to preserve the principles of democracy and justice.

What happens when citizens choose apathy over action? The answer is both alarming and undeniable. Governments are elevated by only a fraction of the population, rendering them a reflection not of the collective will, but the preferences of the few. In 2024 European Elections, for example, the voter turnout in each country was close to 50%. In some, not even more than 30%. That is unbelievable. Democracy is not self-sustaining; it thrives when its citizens engage in the electoral process. Neglecting this duty, weaknesses the very foundation upon which our freedom rests.

History serves as an undisputable testament to the gravity of this responsibility. The right to vote was not given freely, it was fought for with blood, sacrifice and unwavering determination. Women suffragists

endured imprisonment and ridicule. Civil rights activists faced brutality and oppression. Brave individuals risked their lives so that future generations would have a voice. To disregard this right is not only an act of negligence but a disservice to those who struggled for our enfranchisement. We are entitled to rights, but we must also uphold our responsibilities. We have the right to free speech, but we must also use it wisely. We have the right to education, but we are responsible for learning and contributing to society.

Some may argue, "My one vote doesn't really matter." Yet history tells us otherwise. Elections have been determined by razor-thin margins, proving that every ballot cast is a ripple in the tide of change. Voting gives us power. It is not merely about the outcome, it is about participation, about declaring that we care, about holding leaders accountable.

So, let us not be passive observers of our own destiny. The next time an election comes around and you hesitate to vote, ask yourself: "How can I be a responsible citizen?" Because democracy isn't just about rights; it's about responsibilities. And if we don't take responsibility, who will? Democracy depends on all of us, and it is our duty to take part.

By Elena Dikaiou

In a world where far-right extremism and political polarization are on the rise, it is our responsibility to make our voice heard in the political scene; it is our responsibility to vote.

My fellow classmates, not only do we need to vote to uphold our right to representation, but also to strengthen the foundations of democracy and ensure accountability from the governments.

In the European elections of 2024, the rates of people abstaining were groundbreaking; and so was the rise of far-right parties voted in, which advocate for anti-immigrant, anti-lgtbtq, and more often than not misogynistic policies that directly harm the aforementioned demographics. As a woman, I am here today to urge all of you to vote; to vote to protect minorities, to protect your morals, to protect yourselves. It is our responsibility to protect our fellow citizens to the best of our abilities.

Furthermore, voting is the pillar of democracy, and right now that pillar is unsturdy and on the verge of collapsing. Without maximum representation, Democracy is obsolete, not serving its purpose of electing governments based on majority vote. It is our responsibility then, to uphold the values of democracy, our responsibility to

prevent backsliding to oligarchies, governed by the minority of people with financial power and influence.

Lastly, voting is the only way to ensure accountability from governments for two reasons. Firstly, because governments need to have someone to answer to. It is the people that give them their power, and it is the people that should be keeping them in check. It is hence logical, my fellow classmates, that the bigger the percentage that voted them in, the bigger the demographic they need to give back to. Therefore, since one of the main incentives of a government is to be re-elected, they will want to keep their voters satisfied and they will engage in populist rhetoric less, because the stronger we, the voting base are, the stronger the accountability mechanism that keeps the government in check is.

“First they came for the communists. But I did not speak out, because I was not a communist. Then they came for the jews. I did not speak out because I was not a jew. Then they came for me. And there was no one left to speak out for me” (Martin Niemoller). My fellow classmates, do not wait until there is no one left. Speak out with your ballot, through your vote, for it is our responsibility to be the change we want to see.

By Evridiki Ziouli

Right now, you are nobody. Your voice is not heard anywhere and thus, you cannot bring about change. You are not part of the society... at least to a great extent. Sounds devastating, right? However, it is not the utmost truth. What might sound surprising, is that anyone above the age of 17 is somebody, has a voice. I believe you can see where I am going with this. Esteemed students, rightful leaders of tomorrow, you need to bring about change, and there is a way of doing that: voting. Because I am one of you, and I understand that your attention span is small, I will try to explain my stance through a historical trip.

Athens, 5th century B.C. An Athenian is strolling peacefully down the Agora, heading straight to the state plenary (Ecclesia tou Dimou). Today, he will be deciding on whether to wage war against the Corinthians, for exploiting the trade agreements. As he nears the place, he hears Lysias arguing in favor of doing so. When he finishes his speech, it is voting time. The vast majority shouts not to wage war. And so be it. You see, this is a really simplified example of democracy and voting. If the Athenians did not have the right to vote, the state would have followed Lysias into a war, that would have been a wide-spread civil war. Moral of

the story, voting is a way of shaping our future. Voting is a way of deciding our fate, our parents', our childrens'. By voting, we make decisions so crucial and nerve-wracking, that are bound to affect us for the rest of our lives.

Talking about the Ancient Greeks, they had a saying: "Μάλλιστα, επί της απώλειας ηγείσθαι παιδεύειν», which quite literally means that in order to learn about something and value it, you need to truly miss it. Fat forward to when missing voting rights was a reality. French Revolution. King Louis XIV is sitting on his balcony at the Versailles. He sees myriads of protesters nearing the palace, and thinks to himself that this is the end. The French have had enough. For hundreds of years, they have been living in desperate conditions, as the Monarchy decided for their fate, and they had no say in it. Whenever they had a problem, or a concern, they could not do anything about it, unless the King assented. What could they do? Well, as you all know, they stood up for their rights, and most importantly the right to a people-based constitution, which could limit the king's power. And so, they did. Not only that, but with this courageous act, they influenced hundreds of other nations to do the

same. They died for freedom, democracy, equality, and so much more. If we were to compare those people in our current situations, we would be left in tears. People have died for the right to vote and be represented, and we, today, are negligent of voting? That is at least an oxymoron, and disrespectful. If we think of the sacredness of voting, its benefits and the simplicity of the operation itself, it seems like voting is not just a right, but a moral imperative.

Now we reach our final stop of our trip. Today. Today, less than half of the population are active voters. Today, so many political parties that represent certain minorities are left out, because those who vote are always voting in a wrong way. That means that they either vote without having any idea what policies the candidates represent, or without being mature enough, by choosing extremely radical parties. Both situations harm today's political system, and both of those situations harm other minorities. For example, in Germany, where only 51.5% voted, a radical, almost fascist party was elected, which aims to the complete deportation of immigrants, and to them being rendered stateless. In such a world, if we don't vote, we will not be heard or represented, and thus we

most probably will be harmed in the long run. Finally, by voting, we protect our fellow citizens from discrimination, as we prevent radical parties from rising to power.

I hope you enjoyed our trip. As you can figure, history repeats itself. We might end up in a totally democratic system, as Ancient Greece, or in an authoritative one, as the French were. It is up to our hands. You, dear students, we, they, I, he, she, can, and will change the world. We can change the world by voting. We can change the world by drawing some shapes on paper. This is so simple, but such a dangerous weapon. We were endowed with it, and we must use it correctly.

By Georgia Papachristodoulou

Today, I am honored to talk to you about something that lies at the very heart of our school Community: the power of student voice and our responsibility that shapes the future. As many of you know, our school is very soon holding elections for the student council, an event that provides us with a unique opportunity to exercise our democratic rights and shape the future of our school. Today, I want to discuss why student involvement in this democratic process is this simple act, a way to make our voices be heard, develop necessary life skills and bring meaningful change.

Firstly, I would like to remind you that voting is very important for our community and it's a powerful tool for amplifying our voice. More specifically, our voice can inspire and help other people to vote. The right to vote is one of the most basic human rights and everyone should be allowed to practice it freely without being judged. Through voting, not only do we show interest as active members of our society but we also express our political thoughts that will lead us to having a bright and better future. Let us not forget that some people in the past, like African Americans and women did not have the right to vote, what would they say if they were alive

today? They would have been happy that we have this right. So, it's important that we take advantage of it and honor them.

Moreover, voting is a responsibility that shapes the future. First, as students it is our duty to vote. Voting makes us responsible human beings because we have to follow the rules and it makes us respect one another.

In conclusion, the power of the student voice is undeniable. By practicing in student council elections, we demonstrate our commitment to our school community, amplify our collective voice, and foster leadership and responsibility among students. Let us not underestimate the impact that our votes can have or the role that each of us plays in shaping the future of our school. So, I urge you all: let your voices be heard, your votes counted, and together, let's continue to make our school a better place for all.

By Iro Stamouli

What if I told you that a single vote could change the course of history? That your voice, your choice, could shape the future of our community, our country and even of the world? These immense benefits come along with the basic right of voting. Ladies and gentlemen, we have all gathered here today to expand on one of the most basic rights in each democracy. One of the most important rights outside of the original Bill of Rights. One of the most hard-won rights in the history of mankind. As we reach the age of 18 and thus the right to vote, my fellow students, we must be aware of the magnificent opportunity that we are given by being able to vote. Voting is not just a right, but a responsibility that shapes the future. But why is voting so important? Why have citizens around the world fought hard for this basic right?

Voting refers to the fundamental process in each democracy during which each citizen is offered the chance to have a say in the people or the party which runs the government. Informed voting and participating in elections is not just a right that is given to the citizens of a nation—it is a responsibility under the law.

Moreover, voting is a fairly straight-forward procedure in the U.S. An eligible citizen must simply

register to vote, carefully study the candidates or ideas, look up their voting place and finally, cast their ballot during the elections. But why then do people refrain from voting? Why did 90 million citizens, out of the 245 million who were eligible to vote for the 2024 general elections, according to a study by the University of Florida Election lab, chose to remain silent and not cast their vote? Imagine the difference that their opinion would have made. In order to not repeat the same mistakes in the future we must understand the reasons why a citizen must vote.

To begin with, when voting you exercise your constitutional right to voice your opinion in order to elect representatives, make a change in leadership and influence the future of your country. Many times, we take our vote for granted, without thinking about the millions of people throughout history who were stripped of their voice, of their vote. In the beginning of the American republic, only white men who were landowners were able to vote while African Americans, women and other disadvantaged parties were disenfranchised. Thus, we must take advantage of our basic right to vote and express our opinion. Furthermore, voting is a civic

responsibility which belongs to a democratic process and it is the only way in which the citizens can choose the party that they want to rule their government. We must not forget that your vote is your voice. In order for a democratic system to be established, each citizen had the right to voice their opinion on political matters. But because it is physically impossible for everyone to be in charge, people must decide on one leader or a larger party to rule. Therefore, voting is the most immediate way to have a say in the political life of your country.

“There is no such thing as a vote that is not important.” This inspiring quote by former president Barack Obama proves that everybody should voice their opinion on their political beliefs. Ladies and gentlemen, though you might believe that your single vote is meaningless in such a big country like the US, it is necessary that every person votes. By voting, you can decide on the quality of life you want to have for yourself but also for future generations. By voting, you can stand up for important issues that concern you such as taxation, healthcare, foreign policies. By voting, you can have a say in how your taxes are being spent. By voting, you can contribute to your society and participate in a democratic procedure. By voting, you contribute to the problem-solving of significant matters such as the

preservation of the environment, marriage equality and climate change. Voting is a golden ticket to a society where every citizen is politically aware and voices their opinion. It is the path to a more civilized and democratic world.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, having the basic right to vote is a responsibility for each citizen to shape the future of their nation. The importance of voting can only be understood through the historical and civic importance of civil rights. Millions of people were deprived of this basic right but fought in order for us to be able to vote. The historic march on Selma on March 7th, 1965, led by Martin Luther King Jr. resembles an attempt for the African American community in the South of the US to voice their complaints. So, we have to be aware of their efforts and use our rights. Imagine a world in which every citizen would be able to speak their voice and our government would be run by people who actually support our beliefs and needs. This idealistic world begins with a simple action: voting.

By Josephine Ioannidou

How would you feel if you were silenced? If your voice were stripped away from you, and your opinions were disregarded as if they had no value? I assume that it wouldn't be pleasant, correct? So, why is it that some strip their own voices away? Why is it that some refuse to stand up for their beliefs? Why is it that some refuse to vote?

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope I managed to grab your attention because this is a matter of great importance. The right to vote as we see it today has been hard-won. Ladies, are you aware that if you had the misfortune of being born a little more than five score years ago in the United States, you wouldn't have been able to vote? And, you would probably be laughed at for assuming that your opinions mattered. Every single one of us who is gathered here today is more than lucky to live in a democratic society. There are still countries where citizens are forced to obey authority regardless of their beliefs. There are still countries where citizens face serious harm for questioning tyrannical political systems and leaders. Those citizens, those people, would relinquish anything to be in one of your spots today. It is solemn, truly, how in order to appreciate what you have, you must

imagine living without it.

It is a known fact that the concept of democracy originated in Greece. Our ancestors created constitutions that respect our civil rights. They are the reasons why we hold local elections today. Yet, in the 2024 European elections, the voter turnout from Greece was 39%. Less than half of us showed up.... Less than half of us stood up for what we believe in.... Every single thing you do in your everyday life is impacted by whatever political party is in power. But, we tend to forget that it is we who choose who is in power. It is our duty as citizens to do so.

I am not attempting to force you. I am attempting to remind you of the power you hold. If there is one thing I hope you keep from my speech today, it is that we get to shape our future. Every single person who submits a ballot is different, raised differently, with different values and interests. The one thing we collectively share is that we want what is best—not only for us, but for our fellow citizens, too. I urge you all to educate yourselves on political parties, news, and the rights that you have. We shape the future one vote at a time.

By Kostis Vaitos

Thomas Paine once said that “voting is the right upon which all other rights depend.” Without the right to vote there is no right to freedom of expression, equality, or political representation. So, we've gathered here today as students and members of the future generation to talk about the importance of voting not only as a right but as the fundamental responsibility of a democracy. Voting is a practice that is based upon the values and ideologies of ancient Greece. Despite that, it seems to be that most Greeks have chosen not to stand on the foundations of their nation. It is devastating to see that we've come to the point when voting is considered a chore, a burden, something to avoid. Such a burden that in the country's national elections of June 2023 almost half of the Greek registered voters didn't vote.

We often hear the claims: “My vote doesn't matter so I won't vote;” “Politics are not important and do not affect me, so I won't vote;” and “I don't agree with any of the candidates, so I won't vote.” If voting is as insignificant as these people say it this is why did the African American protests in Selma, Alabama marched even though they had to face violence and police brutality? Why did thousands of women write petitions and marched

on the streets of Washington and many other cities in the early 1900s? Why did the black citizens of South Africa relentlessly fight for their political and voting rights? All these people risked their lives to acquire a right which was considered a privilege. The right to decide the quality of their own lives as well as that of future generations. A right to stand up for issues in our everyday life that we care about, from the public bus schedules to our taxes and minimum wage. The right to be represented in decision making and have an impact on society. The right to participate in problem solving regarding personal issues to global ones like climate change. A right that provides us with vast capabilities and yet we do not appreciate it but disregard it and take it for granted.

Voting is the key to growth. It's like building a bridge; each ballot is a brick contributing to progress. If people stop laying bricks, then we're left stranded. It's a tool through which ancient civilizations and societies had evolved. It's up to us to continue this practice if we really aim for future advancement. So instead of just complaining about the politician's flaws and incapacities we should do something about it, go make a change, cast a vote.

By Maira Kossida

We are gathered here today to honor the importance of Democracy and Human Rights. Well, let me ask you, how many of you value your freedom, your voice, your human rights? All these values are engraved in the name of democracy. They are fundamental for the establishment of a true democratic constitution. We can't expect to be in charge of our human rights if we aren't active citizens in our nation, if we aren't informed on basic, local national, European and world news, if we don't peacefully participate in activities for local, national, European and International issues and most importantly if we don't take part in the most significant procedure in which Democracy is rooted, "voting."

"Voting is the foundation stone for political action," stated by Martin Luther King Jr. And it's true. The only way to make an actual impact for the future of your country is through exercising your constitutional right as a citizen to vote and elect leaders that will represent you, your ideas and your "interests." If we don't fight for our beliefs, then how do we expect the government to do so? Martin Luther King fought in order to break the pattern of disenfranchisement and discrimination in the area of voting rights for African Americans, many

participants of non-governmental organizations fought in order for Black men and women to have the right to vote through the 15th Amendment in 1870 and the 19th Amendment in 1920. And yet we don't truly appreciate or take advantage of it. All the hard work and difficulties those activists have faced in order for us to be completely and utterly free in every perspective has gone unnoticed and ignored by today's generation. In 2024 roughly 42% of Greek citizens took part in the voting procedure and an average of 50% of citizens took part throughout Europe. By doing so all these people essentially took away, inhibited and ignored their own right to vote. They stripped away their voices. So, I plead with you here today not to do the same. Don't ignore the chance to voice your opinion. Don't ignore the chance to fight for what feels right to you. Don't ignore the chance to make an impact.

All in all, voting is a truly sacred procedure in which all citizens including yourselves get or will get, for some of you, to express your concerns on our constitution and fight for change. Don't make the mistake of letting the minority choose for you and force their beliefs on you. Your opinion matters, so make sure you share it.

By Miranda Efstathiou

Imagine, marching down the Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama, facing gas and batons, just for the right to vote. Imagine the courage it took for Dr. Martin Luther King and thousands of others to risk their lives so that everyone has a say in our democracy. The right to vote wasn't a gift. It was won through struggles, sacrifices, and determined individuals full of hope for the future.

Michelle Obama in her *Becoming* reminds us that change doesn't happen overnight. It happens when people come together, demand rights, and believe in their power as citizens of a world that refuses to be silent. Voting is not just a duty, but the declaration that we care. That our voices deserve to be heard.

Voting is our way to reassure various others of our rights. Elections form our schools, our neighborhoods, our public transportation, or access to healthcare, how are tax money spent. As Abraham Lincoln stated in his Gettysburg address, we need "a government of the people by the people for the people." Don't let the principles of democracy crumble to pieces by letting apathy win.

New voters, your future lies in your hands. With your vote, you are exercising your constitutional right to elect representatives, make changes in

leadership, and have an impact on society. "Voting is the foundation stone for political action" said Martin Luther King. Fill out the ballot, and don't let anyone else decide for you.

Voting is freedom. Voting is freedom and that is why African-Americans continued fighting after the 13th amendment. Voting is freedom and that is why women came together and managed to guarantee their right to vote in 1919 with the 19th amendment. Voting is freedom and that is why we have to fight for the women in Afghanistan, and Somalia that still don't have the right to vote. Voting is freedom and that is why myself, you, and the person next to you have to vote.

Do not let the fights of those before us go in vain. If you have ever felt ignored or frustrated by the system, your vote is the way to demand change. The march to justice is not over. It continues with us. Be an active member of our society and vote.

By Nektarios Giannakis

“I for one believe that if you give people a thorough understanding of what confronts them and the basic causes that produce it, they’ll create their own program, and when the people create a program you get action.”

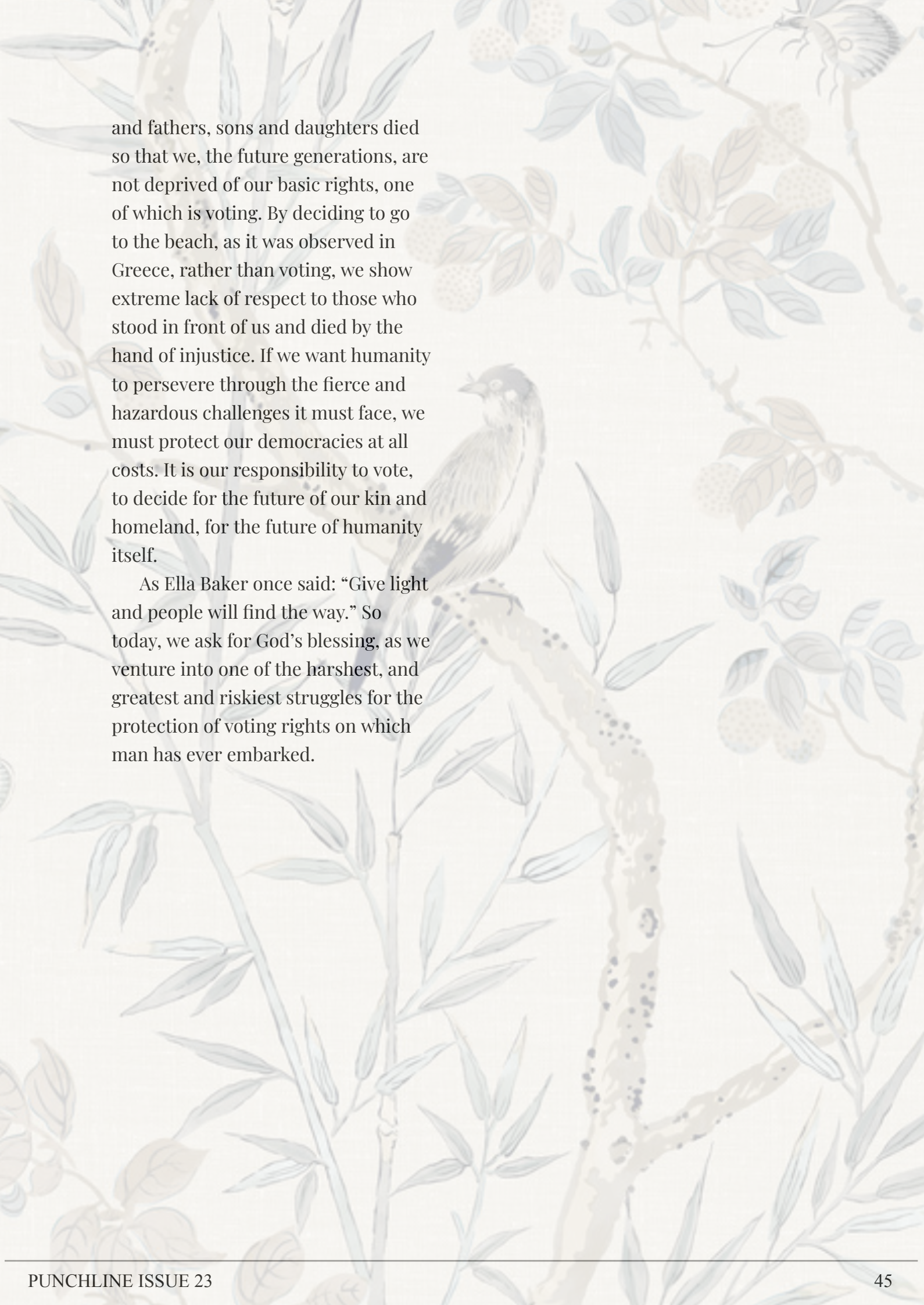
-Malcolm X

In 2024, all members of the European Union are organized democracies, all functioning under their Constitution, which is characterized by the protection of the rights of the people. Every single civilian has the right to vote and take responsibility for the future of his country by electing the federal government. Everyone has a voice. A voice that matters. A voice that can change the world. However, the statistics from the last European elections of 2024 were shocking. Most countries had significantly low rates of voters. For example, Greece had a voting rate of 41,59%, Bulgaria 33,79%, Portugal 36,54% and France 51,5%. What is the meaning of democracy when half of the population abstains from voting and neglects one of their basic rights? From my standpoint, the four columns of democracy: constitution, voting, voices and values are all connected to each other. If one falls, then the others will too.

This is the reason why we must all act. We must all take voting seriously and not throw away our opportunity to shape the future. As I mentioned before, the foundation of democracy

is the vote of the general public. Democracy is like a plate. It has four ingredients but if you take out the one then the plate will still look the same, but it will taste different. The same happens with all the European nations with low voting percentages. When the majority’s voice is muted and the people do not take action, then the few decide for the many and most of the population is not satisfied with the elected government. We have something that looks like democracy, but with one of its basic ingredients missing. This is where Malcolm X’s words apply. If we stress out the issue to the general public, then the people will act in order to change the political system of their country.

This is what exactly happened during the greatest Revolutions known to mankind. The fires of the French Revolution, the Greek Revolution of 1821 and the American Revolution were all lit up by educated people who pulled the veil that obscured the basic rights of the people. Millions of men, women and children, students, couples, mothers



and fathers, sons and daughters died so that we, the future generations, are not deprived of our basic rights, one of which is voting. By deciding to go to the beach, as it was observed in Greece, rather than voting, we show extreme lack of respect to those who stood in front of us and died by the hand of injustice. If we want humanity to persevere through the fierce and hazardous challenges it must face, we must protect our democracies at all costs. It is our responsibility to vote, to decide for the future of our kin and homeland, for the future of humanity itself.

As Ella Baker once said: “Give light and people will find the way.” So today, we ask for God’s blessing, as we venture into one of the harshest, and greatest and riskiest struggles for the protection of voting rights on which man has ever embarked.

Imagine a world where major decisions are made for you, a world where your opinion does not matter. On the surface, it may seem as though I am talking about the time when our governments were not democratic. However, the time period I am talking about is today. Even today, at a time when we have gained the right to vote because of long, persistent battles, there are still many people who choose not to vote, when voting is not just a right, but a responsibility.

Every United States citizen is granted the right to vote yet only 66% of the citizens voted in the 2020 elections. The percentage of votes for each party does not oscillate much, and decisions often depend on a very small difference in vote percentages. The votes of the other 34% of the citizens would be more than enough to change the outcome of the election. The more people who take part in voting, the more the outcome reflects the most widely held views, and that is the exact goal of democracy. With democracy every person's voice can be heard and the most widely held opinion prevails. So, in order for this to happen, we need to understand that every individual vote will not make a difference, but collectively they are extremely significant.

We are the next generation. We are

the ones who will live in this society and by not voting we are enabling the votes of our elders to be deciding factors to the world we will inherit and live in. Because taxes are dependent on the government, public schooling is dependent on the government, the judicial system is dependent on the government, healthcare is dependent on the government. We have to elect someone who will represent our opinions because we will be living in this world in the near future. Older generations might have different or more conservative views compared to ours and we must not let that jeopardize our rights, our future, and the progress we stand for.

Now imagine a world where everyone votes, not because it is a right, but a responsibility. As we all know, with great power comes great responsibility. If we have the power to vote, it is our responsibility as well, to voice our opinion, whatever that may be. The government that will be chosen reflects our standards. Democracy is based on the collective effort built on the engagement of every citizen. We must do our duty as citizens and remember and honour, in this way, the efforts that older generations made for our right to vote.

By Sofia Gaitani

Today, we gathered to reflect on one of the most fundamental rights to any democracy, the right to vote. Voting is not just about marking a ballot, it's a powerful tool for shaping our future, empowering individuals and ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. So why is voting important? It's more than just a right, it's a responsibility.

Voting is what allows us to actively shape our communities. It ensures that no voice goes unheard no matter a person's background or status. When we vote we are contributing to policies that reflect our shared values and address the needs of the community. For a democracy to thrive, we need active participants, citizens who are not just voters but informed individuals who know their rights and responsibilities. Civic responsibility goes beyond voting. It means being aware of our obligation, staying informed about local, national and international issues, and participating in our communities.

When we think about democracy, it is not just about elections. It is about holding leaders accountable. Voting rights are the mechanism through which we the people choose those who represent us. Without voting, power would be concentrated in the hands of the few, making it difficult for the needs and voices of people to

be heard. Think about this for a moment: How can democracy thrive if some voices remain unheard?

The struggle for voting rights has been long and hard, especially in the US. The right to vote has not been accessible to all and its evolution is deeply intertwined with the history of civil rights in the US. This is why as citizens, we should understand not only the history of voting rights but also our role in protecting them.

So why do we all need to vote? Every vote matters. By casting our votes, we are directly participating in the democratic process. Voting is a way to voice our opinions, to influence policies that affect our lives and to ensure that our communities are represented fairly. When we vote, we choose leaders who align with our values and we make our needs and concerns known.

Our future depends on the choices we make now, so we must all make a difference. As students, we have a unique responsibility to face our future, not just for ourselves but for future generations. Our actions today will pave the way for a better tomorrow. Voting is not just a right, it is a responsibility that we must cherish and actively engage with. The future of our democracy depends on it

By Vassiliki Michou

I stand before you today to talk about something that stands at the very heart of our democracy: voting. We often forget that it is not just a right, but also a privilege and a civic duty that we must neither forget nor ignore.

Many of us do not actually know what voting really is. It is not only our responsibility as citizens: it is a powerful action that declares our values as well as our future. By voting, we are given the chance to voice our beliefs and stand for what we believe in by influencing the direction of our community. Voting is not about choosing a president or representatives. It means making choices that directly affect each and every one of our lives. It means building a society with bricks made of our hopes, our dreams, and our needs. It means ensuring that the principles of democracy are still upheld.

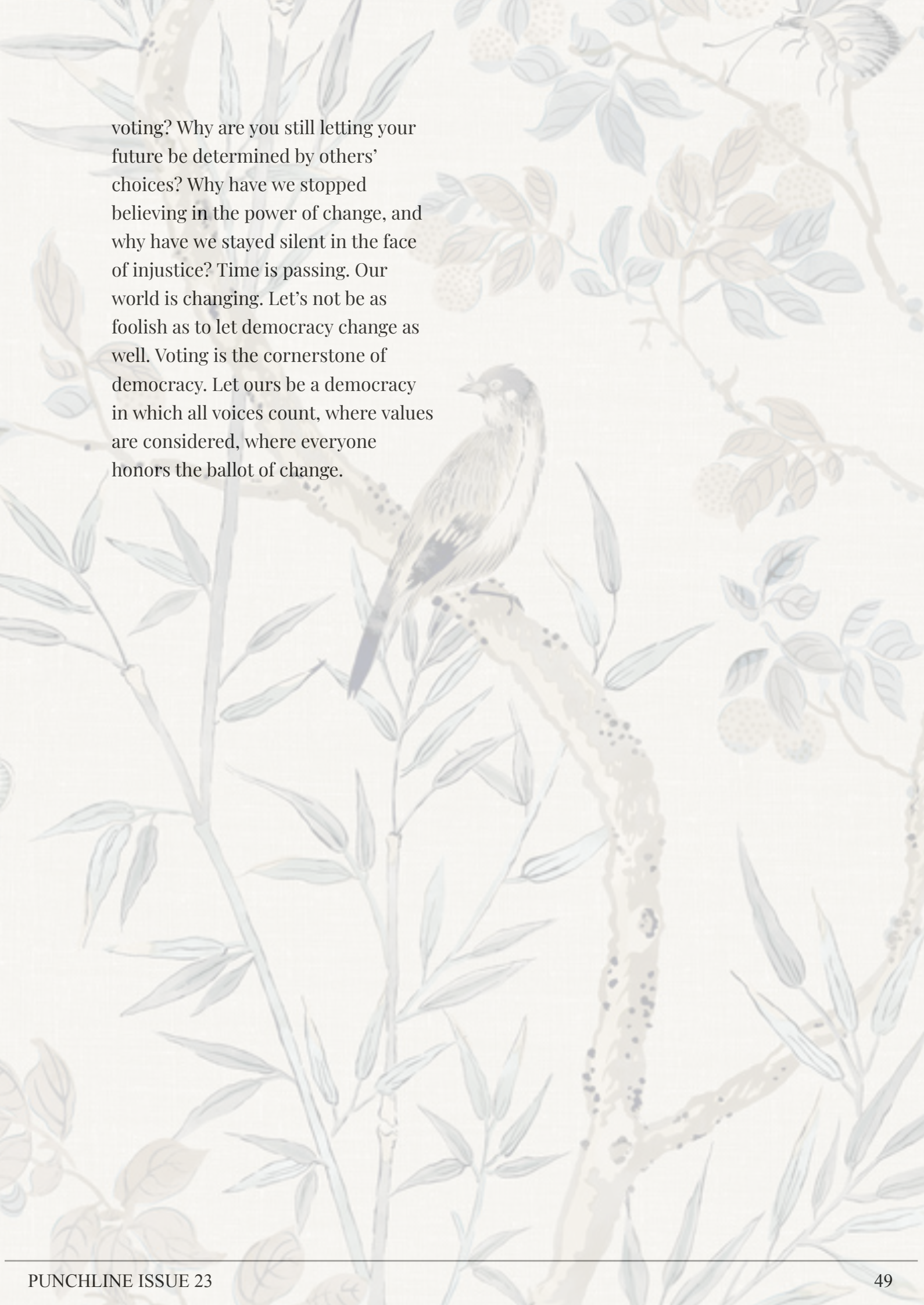
If we were to dig a hole in the past, we would see that not everything was as it is now. People have actively fought for us to have the right to vote. I encourage you to think about all the women who campaigned for their right to vote. I encourage you to think about the civil rights activists who worked tirelessly to break down barriers that prevented people of

color from voting. None of us should ever forget that voting was not always a given. It was earned.

As a citizen of today's world, I am well-aware of how tempting it is to think that a single vote cannot make a difference. However, this mentality was one of the factors that contributed to the disappointing voter turnout in 2024. Some of us may already know that the average percentage of voters in the European elections did not exceed 50%! If you abstained from voting, I am not asking you to feel remorse. It is easy—and common—to feel disconnected or disillusioned. Believing that no one out there represents you is a phenomenon with which many people struggle.

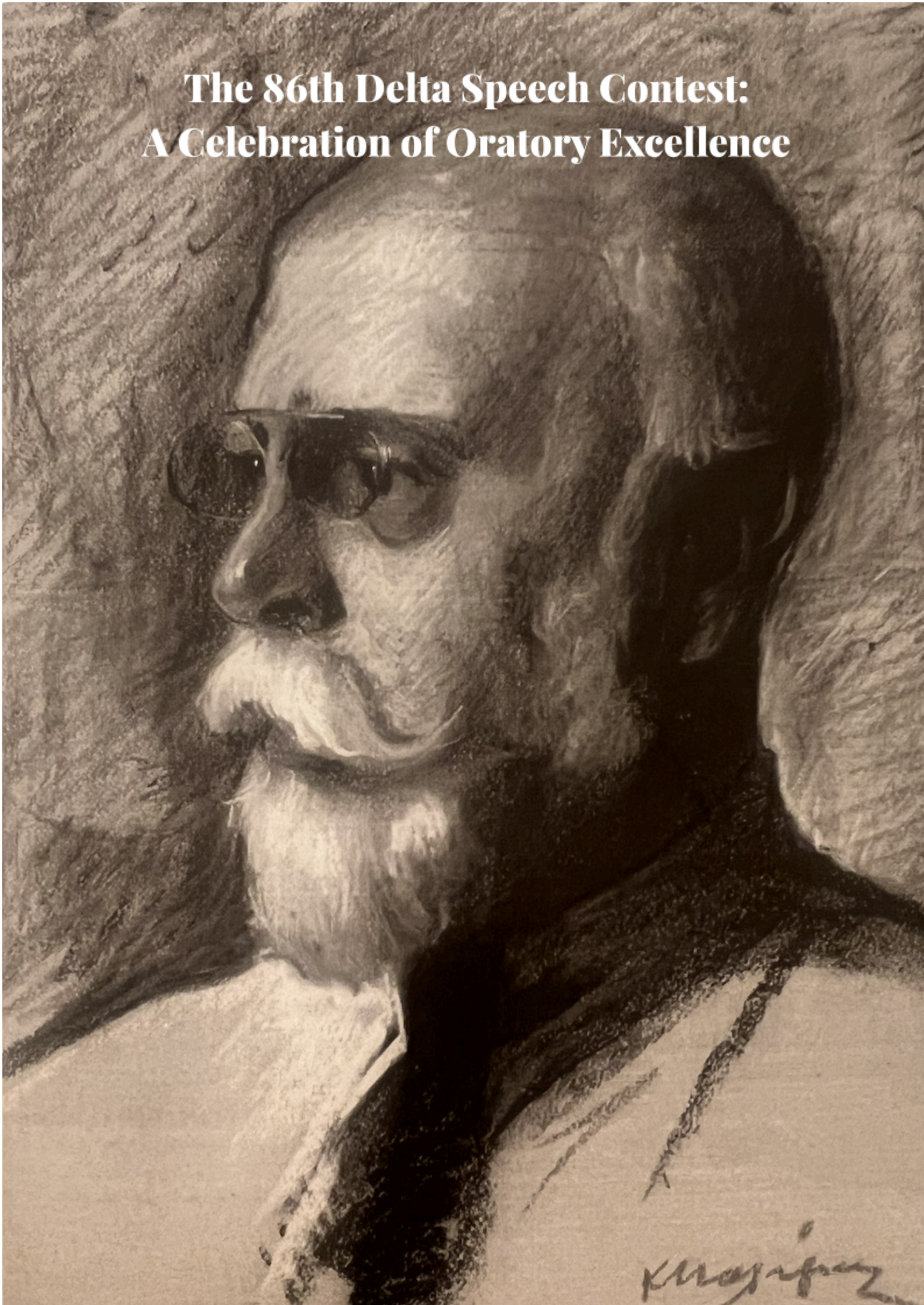
Nonetheless, these low percentages of voters are not justified. Everyone ought to take part in the fight to enact true democracy in our world, where democracy is not just a word but a founding principle of our societies. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism." This is a time of urgency in which every person's single vote can tip the scale to victory from defeat, to freedom from oppression.

So, what is stopping you from



voting? Why are you still letting your future be determined by others' choices? Why have we stopped believing in the power of change, and why have we stayed silent in the face of injustice? Time is passing. Our world is changing. Let's not be as foolish as to let democracy change as well. Voting is the cornerstone of democracy. Let ours be a democracy in which all voices count, where values are considered, where everyone honors the ballot of change.

**The 86th Delta Speech Contest:
A Celebration of Oratory Excellence**



This year, Psychico College proudly hosted the 86th annual Delta Speech Contest, continuing a cherished tradition held in honor of Stefanos Delta, a key figure in the founding and growth of our school. The contest is a hallmark event that promotes public speaking, critical thinking, and civic engagement among students.

The final round of the "Delta" Oratory Competition – in English took place at the Athens College Theater on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Participating were Psychico College High School 3 and IBDP Year 2 students. The students competed using the words Catalyst, Manifest, Peace, Timeless, Trust.

Winner of the "Delta" Prize for school year 2024–2025 was Artemis Papastavrou.

The panel of judges was comprised of Ms. Maria Georgopoulou, Director of the Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Ms. Emmanouela Kantzia, Assistant Professor of Modern Greek Literature and Intercultural Literary Studies at the Department of Language and Intercultural Studies of the University of Thessaly, and Ms. Maria Nefeli Bernitsa '09, Financial Services Lawyer and Delta Prize winner of 2009.

The final round took place in a packed auditorium filled with classmates, faculty, and members of the wider school community. After a rigorous preliminary selection process, five outstanding finalists were chosen to present their speeches live on stage. Each student tackled a unique and timely topic, offering well-researched insights, persuasive arguments, and personal reflections. Their delivery showcased not only strong rhetorical skill but also a deep commitment to the values of thoughtful dialogue and responsible citizenship. The finalists captivated the audience with performances that reflected days of preparation, mentorship by faculty advisors, and a genuine passion for making their voices heard.

In addition to recognizing individual achievement, the contest serves as a reminder of the importance of communication in shaping ideas and inspiring change. Events like the Delta Speech Contest continue to uphold Athens College's mission of fostering articulate, informed, and empathetic leaders for the future. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all participants whose words left a lasting impression on everyone present. Their courage, insight, and eloquence made this year's contest truly memorable.

Finalists:

Antoniadou Sofia-Maria

Bersi Eirini

Papastavrou Artemis

Parthenis Giorgos

Valetta Faidra



Semi-finalists:

Chryssochoides Aphrodite

Drosos Theodoros

Labraki Aristeia

Panagiotaki Faidra Anastasia

Papadimitropoulos Athanasios Orestis

Passion: The Catalyst for Success

By Artemis Papastavrou, Delta Speech Winner 2024-2025



What do you want to study? What do you want to be when you grow up? Two questions that all of us have had to answer. I must confess, the answer that I give is a lie. I respond, “I want to be a lawyer.” This is, of course, an acceptable answer. A well-paying and stable career, ideal for an ambitious and intelligent student. But the truth is, I would hate to be a lawyer. Because my true passion, my intrinsic motivation for my every action, is theater. I dream of performing, of being on stage. But acting, passionate as I am about it, is not considered an acceptable career path. So, I’ve had to hide my true love about it, as people advise me to give up on passion, and follow something stable.

Fellow classmates, as we approach our college years, we all must make a choice: take a risk for passion, or play it safe for success? Many push us away from our passions, especially passions about the humanities and arts, and towards fields such as STEM, which many perceive to be a “golden ticket” to success. This is a false dichotomy. Because in reality, passion is the spark that ignites excellence. It is the catalyst for success. So, as we approach the end of our school years and the beginning of our university career, let us consider the systematic societal push away from the humanities and towards STEM, the interdependence of these two fields, and the importance of passion for driving success.

As a society, we tend to overlook the value of the humanities and art. This starts from a very early age: even in elementary school, there exists an unspoken academic hierarchy. There is an underlying assumption that students concentrating in STEM fields are more intelligent. We ignore that the humanities are a quixotic pursuit of knowledge. As Mr. Keating said in *“The Dead Poets’ Society”*: “Medicine, business, engineering; those are noble pursuits, necessary to sustain life. But

poetry, beauty, romance, love, those are what we stay alive for.” We often sacrifice the humanities in the face of scientific discovery. But we forget that in times of need, of personal crisis, the humanities—literature, art, film, philosophy—are what we turn to, to remind us of who we are.

The humanities also have practical applications. In an increasingly globalized and industrialized world, our routine becomes automated. We lose ourselves in the low-level hum of digital connectivity; we become tangled in the vastness and blind sports of big data. It is essential that we bring human judgement back into these junctions. The humanities give us the skills we need to succeed in STEM: the ability to express ourselves and communicate, relentless creativity and drive for knowledge, an appreciation for empathy and ethics. STEM fields, scientific innovation, they are dependent on the humanities and art. One cannot exist without the other.

So then, how do we choose which path to follow? How do we know which path ensures success? The choice, ladies and gentlemen, boils down to passion. Passion fuels every meaningful pursuit. The road to success is not simple; it is full of turns and obstacles. There is no shortcut. So, when we approach these obstacles, passion is what will fuel our perseverance. Passion teaches us that success is not synonymous with money and fame. It is a sense of self-fulfillment. It is the ability to look back at your life when you’re old, and feel content, feel at peace with the choices that you’ve made. Success is not a given. No business, or law, or medical degree will ensure that you succeed. But waking up every morning excited to go to work, being genuinely happy to study for your degree, these are what will lead to persistence and hard work. This is what leads to success. To the question “which path should I follow?” poet Robert Frost responds with his poem “Road Not Taken”: “I took the one less traveled by, and that made all the difference.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I’m tired of lying to myself and others. I want to be an actress. I long, I burn, I yearn to be an actress. Doing anything else in my life, even if I would make more money, even if others would respect me more for it, is not worth it. And despite my insecurities and fears, I know I will succeed. Because my pure love, my passion for acting, will push me to continue despite failures and rejections.

So, when people ask you “what do you want to be,” don’t limit yourself to stability. Allow yourself to be truthful. Because it is your passion that will catalyze your success.

CREATIVE WORK

Celebrating Student Voices: Honoring Teen Perspectives on Self-Care

This year, many of our talented students took part in a prestigious writing contest organized by *Issues Online* in the UK, where the focus was the vital and timely topic of *Teen Self-Care*. In a world that moves faster than ever, where young people face immense pressures both in and out of school, self-care has become more than just a personal choice—it is essential for maintaining mental health, emotional balance, and overall well-being. It was crucial that this conversation came directly from teenagers themselves. Who better to speak about the realities, challenges, and strategies of self-care than those who are living it every day?

Our students approached this topic with honesty, creativity, and incredible insight. Through their original entries, they shared personal experiences, thoughtful advice, and fresh perspectives that can resonate with their peers and inspire others to prioritize their own well-being. Their writing highlighted not only their exceptional talent and expressive ability, but also their deep understanding of what it truly means to care for oneself in today's world. We are immensely proud of their courage, their voices, and their commitment to shining a light on such an important issue. Their contributions remind us of the power of youth, originality, and informed storytelling. Congratulations to all!!

Why is Aestheticized Self-Care Holding Us Back?

By Anna Liaou

In the world of TikTok and Instagram reels, Self-Care wears designer pajamas, drinks lettuce smoothies—and enjoys it—after, of course, waking up before the sun to conquer the day. In my world, self-care is a heavily caffeinated drink, a missed alarm, and forgiving myself anyway.

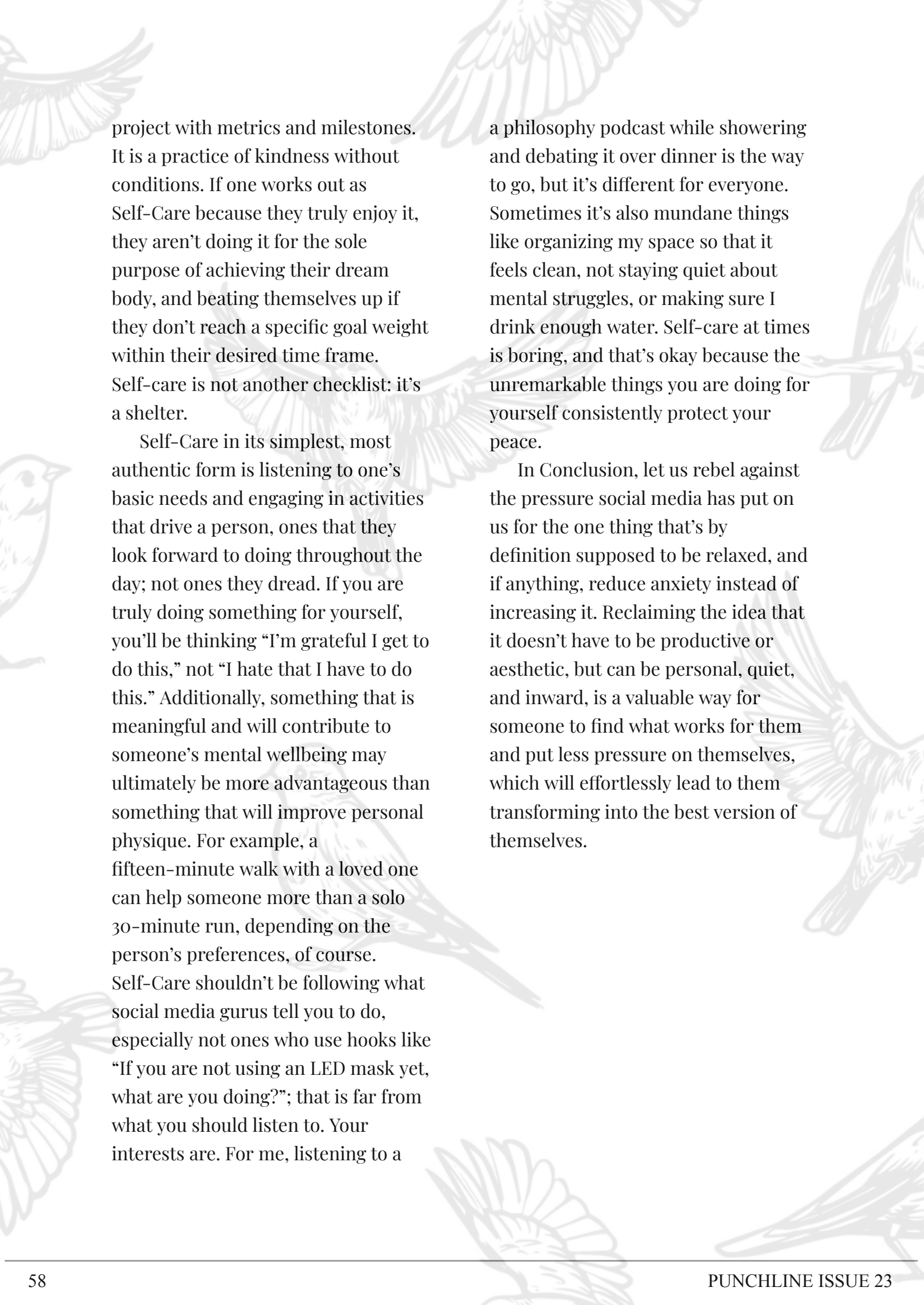
Since Covid-19, the “That Girl” trend has been all over TikTok, epitomising the transformation of self-care into a curated competition over who is more “productive.” This subculture of “#SelfCareTok” has been more harmful than beneficial to the vast majority of teenagers on the platform in my opinion, as showcasing early morning routines, flawless appearances, and sometimes even extreme workouts; and while I am the first person to emphasise on the importance of exercise and being active, I don’t find it to be Self-Care. Waking up at 5 AM for a two-hour workout before school is the only way to love yourself, it seems.

The ideal that “That Girl” culture promotes is frequently unattainable and exclusionary, as it requires financial comfort and a lot of free time. Critics argue that such trends reinforce narrow beauty standards and socio-economic privileges, and

potentially lead to feelings of inadequacy amongst viewers and followers. That’s mainly due to the reason that whereas Self-Care used to be about rest, social media has made it about everything besides that, “it must be productive and aesthetic, otherwise, it’s just wasting time.” The main reason why this lifestyle has been so romanticised by the media is arguably capitalist, as its end goal is to induce overconsumption and thereby profit.

Studies have shown that engaging with curated Self-Care content can and has contributed to mental health struggles, as the participants’ constant exposure to idealised images correlated with increased anxiety, depression, and even body dissatisfaction, inducing the risk of developing an eating disorder, particularly among adolescents. Instead of the routines encouraged taking care of individual needs, it neglects them, prioritising performative acts over individual well-being.

One ought to reject the culture of “self-optimisation,” as it makes Self-Care just another way in which individuals optimize themselves to be more “efficient” and “perfect” as humans. True self-care is not a



project with metrics and milestones. It is a practice of kindness without conditions. If one works out as Self-Care because they truly enjoy it, they aren't doing it for the sole purpose of achieving their dream body, and beating themselves up if they don't reach a specific goal weight within their desired time frame. Self-care is not another checklist: it's a shelter.

Self-Care in its simplest, most authentic form is listening to one's basic needs and engaging in activities that drive a person, ones that they look forward to doing throughout the day; not ones they dread. If you are truly doing something for yourself, you'll be thinking "I'm grateful I get to do this," not "I hate that I have to do this." Additionally, something that is meaningful and will contribute to someone's mental wellbeing may ultimately be more advantageous than something that will improve personal physique. For example, a fifteen-minute walk with a loved one can help someone more than a solo 30-minute run, depending on the person's preferences, of course. Self-Care shouldn't be following what social media gurus tell you to do, especially not ones who use hooks like "If you are not using an LED mask yet, what are you doing?"; that is far from what you should listen to. Your interests are. For me, listening to a

a philosophy podcast while showering and debating it over dinner is the way to go, but it's different for everyone. Sometimes it's also mundane things like organizing my space so that it feels clean, not staying quiet about mental struggles, or making sure I drink enough water. Self-care at times is boring, and that's okay because the unremarkable things you are doing for yourself consistently protect your peace.

In Conclusion, let us rebel against the pressure social media has put on us for the one thing that's by definition supposed to be relaxed, and if anything, reduce anxiety instead of increasing it. Reclaiming the idea that it doesn't have to be productive or aesthetic, but can be personal, quiet, and inward, is a valuable way for someone to find what works for them and put less pressure on themselves, which will effortlessly lead to them transforming into the best version of themselves.

The Importance of Self-Care

By Anthi Zouganeli

Self-care is not something you can bottle, sell, or schedule neatly between homework and dinner. To me, it's a quiet rebellion against a society that does not view people as human beings who have their limits but as machines that are not acceptable for them to break. When I first heard the word "self-care," I just thought of relaxing. Over time, though, I realized that self-care is much more than that. It is about giving yourself time to breathe and grow stronger on the inside and out.

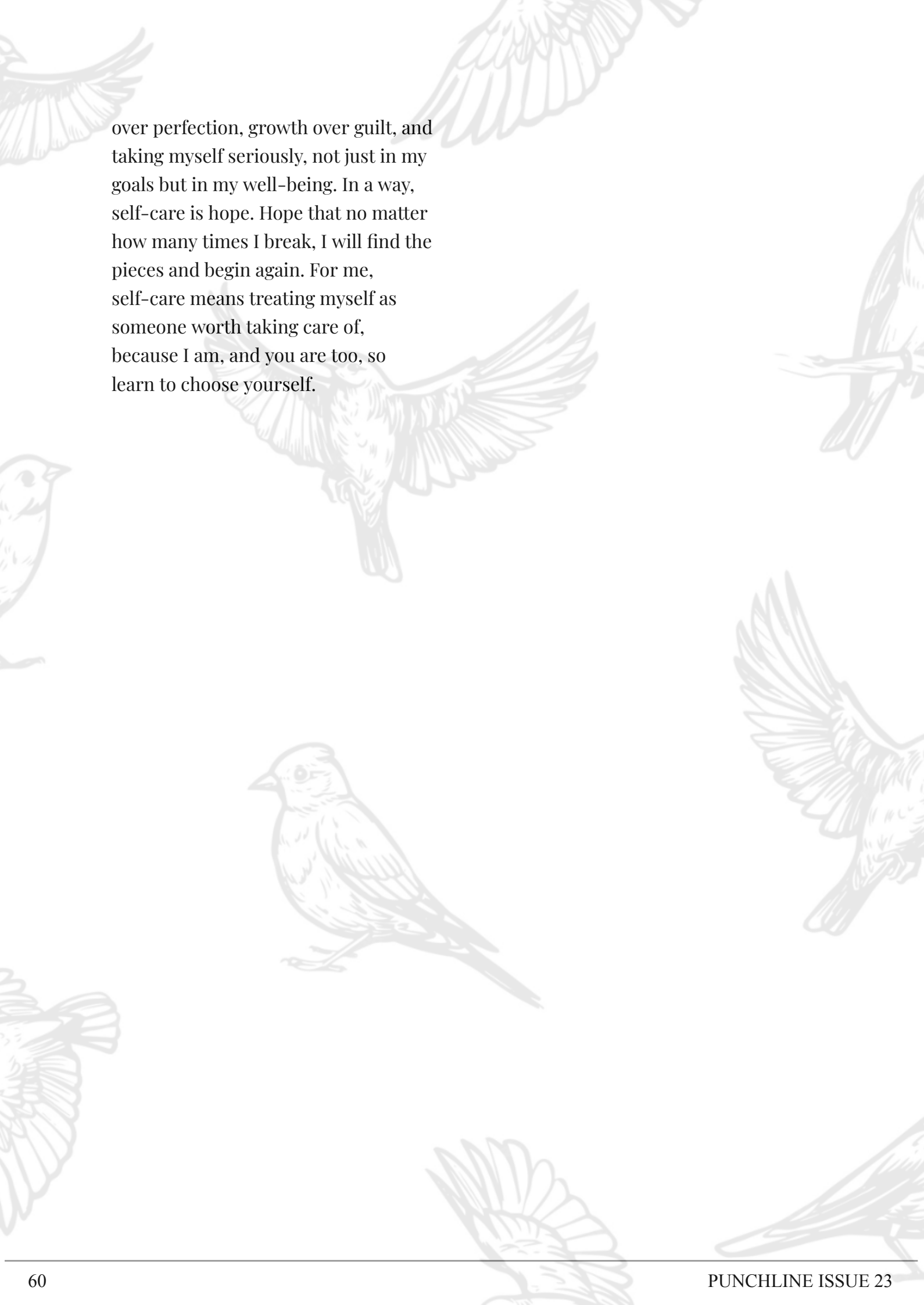
Self-care is important to me because sometimes life can feel like a race I never signed up for. Between school, extracurricular activities, and all the responsibilities, it's easy to feel like you are running out of energy and suddenly not feel like yourself anymore. The times that I've felt like a candle that is almost burned out are countless. You can get caught up in expectations and forget you are not a robot or a machine that never gets tired. It's crucial to remind ourselves that it's okay to slow down. Of course, we have to work hard to accomplish our dreams, but respecting our limits is incredibly essential.

My self-care methods are straightforward yet effective. When I have a lot on my head and my mind

feels cluttered, I write in my journal, pouring every thought, I take a long walk and let the fresh air clear my head or I have an honest conversation with a friend. When my energy feels low, I take a power nap to reset and feel lively after. Sometimes self-care is as easy as saying "I'm tired" and letting myself rest without feeling guilty. One thing I've learned is that self-care is not just about doing what feels good in the moment, but it's about making choices that help stay healthy mentally and physically in the long run.

Today's society sometimes talks about self-care as if it's a reward for being busy, like you have to earn your right to rest. I stopped believing this years ago. Self-care should be part of life, not an afterthought. We shouldn't have to reach the edge of exhaustion to deserve kindness, particularly from ourselves. Self-care means turning down the noise to hear the whisper of my soul. It's in building a life so rooted in authenticity that no storm can tear it down.

By and large, self-care means remembering that I am a human being, not just a human doing. It means being respectful of my limits, celebrating my small victories, and trusting my needs. It's choosing peace

The background of the page is a light gray illustration featuring several birds. At the top, there are two large birds in flight, their wings spread wide. In the center, a bird is shown from a side profile, perched on a thin branch. To the right, another bird is perched on a branch, facing away from the viewer. In the bottom left corner, a bird is in flight, and in the bottom right corner, the tail and wing of a bird are visible. The overall style is a simple, sketchy line drawing.

over perfection, growth over guilt, and taking myself seriously, not just in my goals but in my well-being. In a way, self-care is hope. Hope that no matter how many times I break, I will find the pieces and begin again. For me, self-care means treating myself as someone worth taking care of, because I am, and you are too, so learn to choose yourself.



Self-Care: A Pillar of Improvement

By Elena Dimtsa

You get home after a long, tiring day. Taking off your shoes at the door and letting your bag drop to the floor brings you a sense of enormous relief, since it signals that the majority of your struggles are over for the time being. You don't have to worry about paying attention in class, and you don't need to concern yourself with the latest drama disrupting the social life of your school. There are no expectations to perform in any sense—no swimming practice you have to do well in, no class in which you are expected to thrive in, no nagging friend whose superficial troubles you must try to sympathize with, when in reality you have a million of your own. You know, in the back of your mind, that this feeling of liberation does not mean much. The following days are set out to be equally exhausting, and even your free time at home is limited due to the infinite tasks and responsibilities you need to take care of. The rest of your evening will be filled with heaps of homework, and you need to find time to study math concepts you cannot even begin to grasp for the upcoming exam. Nevertheless, entering your home fills you with a renewed strength to take on these obligations, if only for the hope that at some point you will be

done, and will afterwards be able to finally enjoy some time to yourself, every minute of which will do wonders to make up for the draining day you have experienced. Even the thought of this potential free time rejuvenates you significantly, and you plan for how you will spend it in advance, scribbling the phrase 'self-care' next to a smiley face beneath your to-do list of tedious tasks. This time to unwind, even for a little while, to give yourself the freedom to engage in all the activities you yearn for, fills you with purpose; you know that it is one of the few things making your difficult routine bearable; you're not sure how you could manage without it.

In the 21st century, a hectic, rapid pace undoubtedly characterizes the lifestyle of the majority of people over elementary school age. The days of most are filled with anxiety and countless responsibilities, to a point where it feels as though, no matter the amount of effort one makes to complete the necessary tasks to their entirety, attempts at finding time for respite seem completely fruitless. In order to keep up with this exhausting rhythm, it is crucial to manage to maintain a healthy balance and spend some time indulging in self-care.



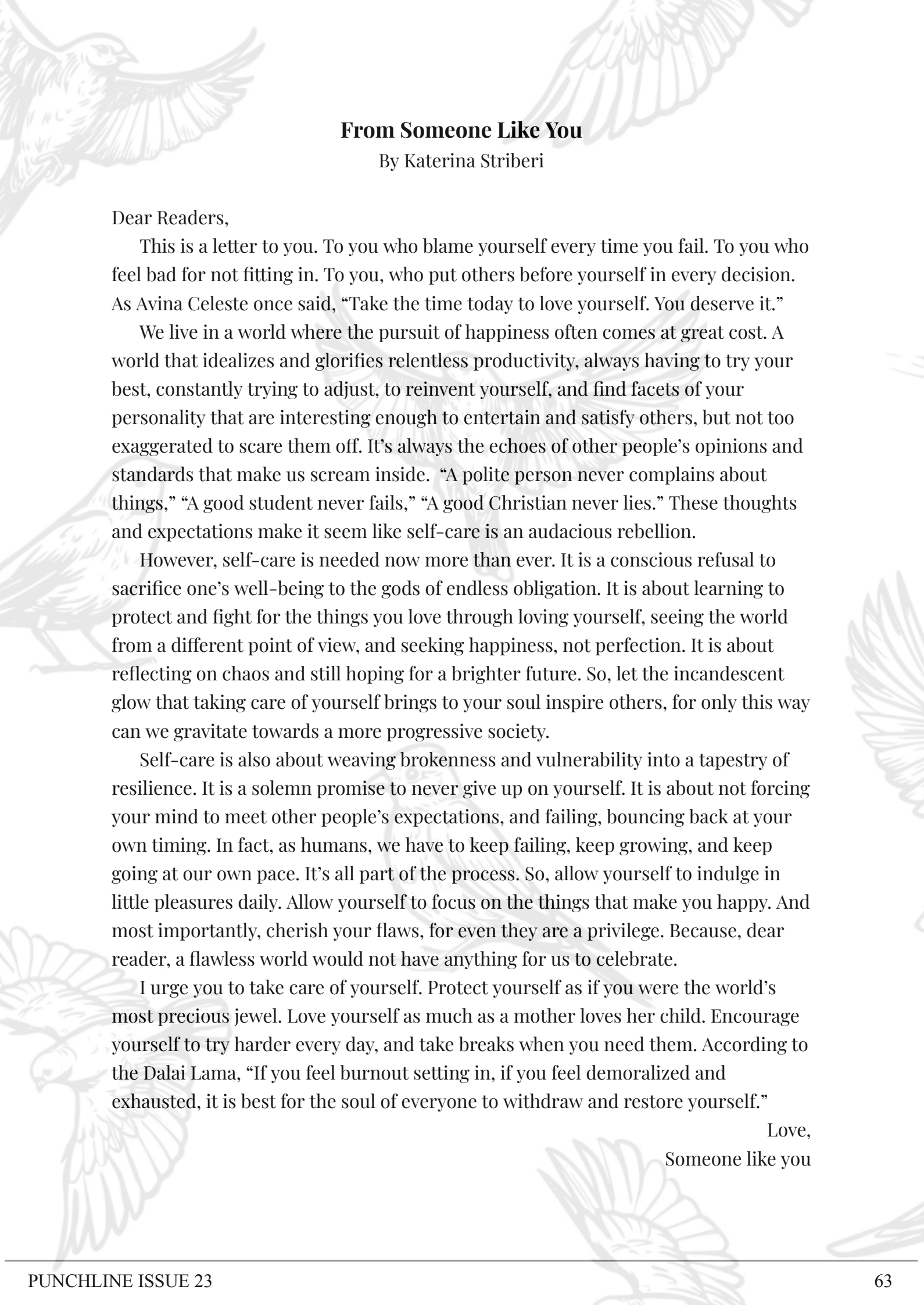
Self-care has various aspects and varies significantly for each person. For some, it might involve physical rest and personal pampering, taking the time to give themselves the privilege of taking care of their body. For others, it includes practices of spirituality, activities such as reading or journaling which help a person momentarily forget their struggles and escape their exhausting routine, or feats of athleticism which serve as a way to unwind. Within this time of self-care, however, the most important thing is certainly self-reflection and mental work towards the acceptance and improvement of oneself, to be able to love and cherish their being and live life in a happier and more free manner.

As the importance of self-care becomes increasingly evident, there is often the misconception that self-care must solely pertain to self-improvement. This belief, however, which is often augmented in social media and bound intricately to the commercialization of free time, only serves to make self-care a needlessly overcomplicated ordeal. Many of the influences promoting self-care rebrand it in a manner that associates relaxation and the enjoyment of one's free time with particular practices which are based purely on aesthetics and material

objects, thus making self-care seem like a performative, sometimes tedious process. In truth, however, there is no need to strive for perfection or conform to the notions of self-care promoted in the media. Caring for oneself must solely aim for the improvement of one's quality of life, taking the time to unwind and enjoy freely, accepting oneself, and finding balance in a difficult routine.

Overall, self-care is without a doubt a process that does wonders for the improvement of both the physical and the mental health of a person. Including time dedicated entirely to the care of oneself has countless benefits, since it significantly helps enhance one's emotional wellbeing, and therefore productivity and interpersonal relationships. Making sure that your body and soul is well taken care of is not selfish, since being alright yourself directly relates to being a better person towards the people around you. A frantic, restless lifestyle only serves towards both the deterioration of life quality and the decline of one's role in society, since the burnout it leads to is detrimental to all aspects of personhood.

Self-care, therefore, which can also be considered community care due to its significant impact on society as a whole, should be a pivotal part of any person's lifestyle.



From Someone Like You

By Katerina Striberi

Dear Readers,

This is a letter to you. To you who blame yourself every time you fail. To you who feel bad for not fitting in. To you, who put others before yourself in every decision. As Avina Celeste once said, “Take the time today to love yourself. You deserve it.”

We live in a world where the pursuit of happiness often comes at great cost. A world that idealizes and glorifies relentless productivity, always having to try your best, constantly trying to adjust, to reinvent yourself, and find facets of your personality that are interesting enough to entertain and satisfy others, but not too exaggerated to scare them off. It’s always the echoes of other people’s opinions and standards that make us scream inside. “A polite person never complains about things,” “A good student never fails,” “A good Christian never lies.” These thoughts and expectations make it seem like self-care is an audacious rebellion.

However, self-care is needed now more than ever. It is a conscious refusal to sacrifice one’s well-being to the gods of endless obligation. It is about learning to protect and fight for the things you love through loving yourself, seeing the world from a different point of view, and seeking happiness, not perfection. It is about reflecting on chaos and still hoping for a brighter future. So, let the incandescent glow that taking care of yourself brings to your soul inspire others, for only this way can we gravitate towards a more progressive society.

Self-care is also about weaving brokenness and vulnerability into a tapestry of resilience. It is a solemn promise to never give up on yourself. It is about not forcing your mind to meet other people’s expectations, and failing, bouncing back at your own timing. In fact, as humans, we have to keep failing, keep growing, and keep going at our own pace. It’s all part of the process. So, allow yourself to indulge in little pleasures daily. Allow yourself to focus on the things that make you happy. And most importantly, cherish your flaws, for even they are a privilege. Because, dear reader, a flawless world would not have anything for us to celebrate.

I urge you to take care of yourself. Protect yourself as if you were the world’s most precious jewel. Love yourself as much as a mother loves her child. Encourage yourself to try harder every day, and take breaks when you need them. According to the Dalai Lama, “If you feel burnout setting in, if you feel demoralized and exhausted, it is best for the soul of everyone to withdraw and restore yourself.”

Love,
Someone like you

The Foundation of Becoming

By Maira Kossida

Growing up, when the topic of self-care came up, all I could associate it with was stepping back, relaxing, giving myself breaks, and adopting a slower pace of living. And to some extent, this stands.

However, as I grow into a more mature and true version of myself, bursting out of the bubble I was trapped in, and facing reality, I begin to grasp a concept of higher meaning and significance: Selfcare is not merely a matter of resting, it is also a matter of rising and continuous advancement. It's about making sure I'm equipped to carry the weight of my dreams and ambitions I refuse to give up on.

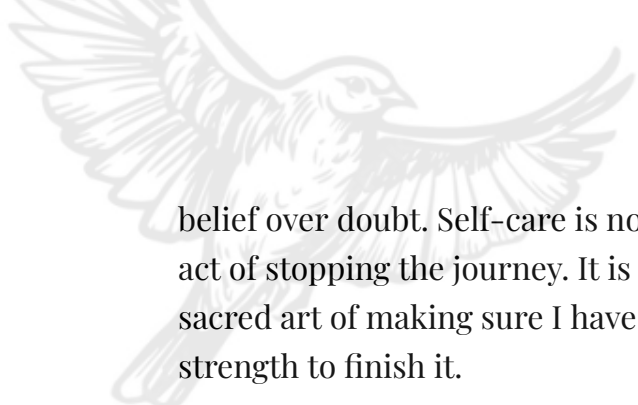
Self-care, in its most elevated sense, signifies a pledge to one's excellence. It is working hard on building a version of myself that my future self will be proud of. It's not just softness, it is strength, discipline, and a fierce belief that I engrave into my daily living

I am practicing the act of self-care every morning as I wake up and succeed in fighting the urge to dwell in the comfort of my bed and, with ease, instantly snooze my alarm. Every time I prioritize my productive studying over scrolling on my phone, action over procrastination, and effort

over comfort, I am laying the bricks to build the future I crave for myself. Self-care is not the enemy of hard work—it is its silent partner. It means pushing my limits, not out of self-hatred, but out of profound love for the person I know I can become.

There is a dangerous lie we tell ourselves: that chasing our dreams and taking care of ourselves are two opposite things. They are not. True self-care is the reason I can chase my dreams at all. It is the long, invisible work of becoming resilient—physically, mentally, and emotionally—so that when the world demands everything from me, I am ready. Self-care is studying late because my future deserves that extra hour. It is lifting heavier weights because my body deserves to know its power. It is speaking words of encouragement to myself when no one else does, because I know the voice I listen to most is my own.

I am taking care of myself because my dreams are not small, and neither am I. Someday, I will stand at the mountaintop of my ambitions. And when I look back, I will realize it was not the grand gestures that got me here, but the quiet, consistent moments where I chose growth over comfort, discipline over distraction,



belief over doubt. Self-care is not the
act of stopping the journey. It is the
sacred art of making sure I have the
strength to finish it.



What Does Self-care Mean to Me? A Teen Girl's Blog

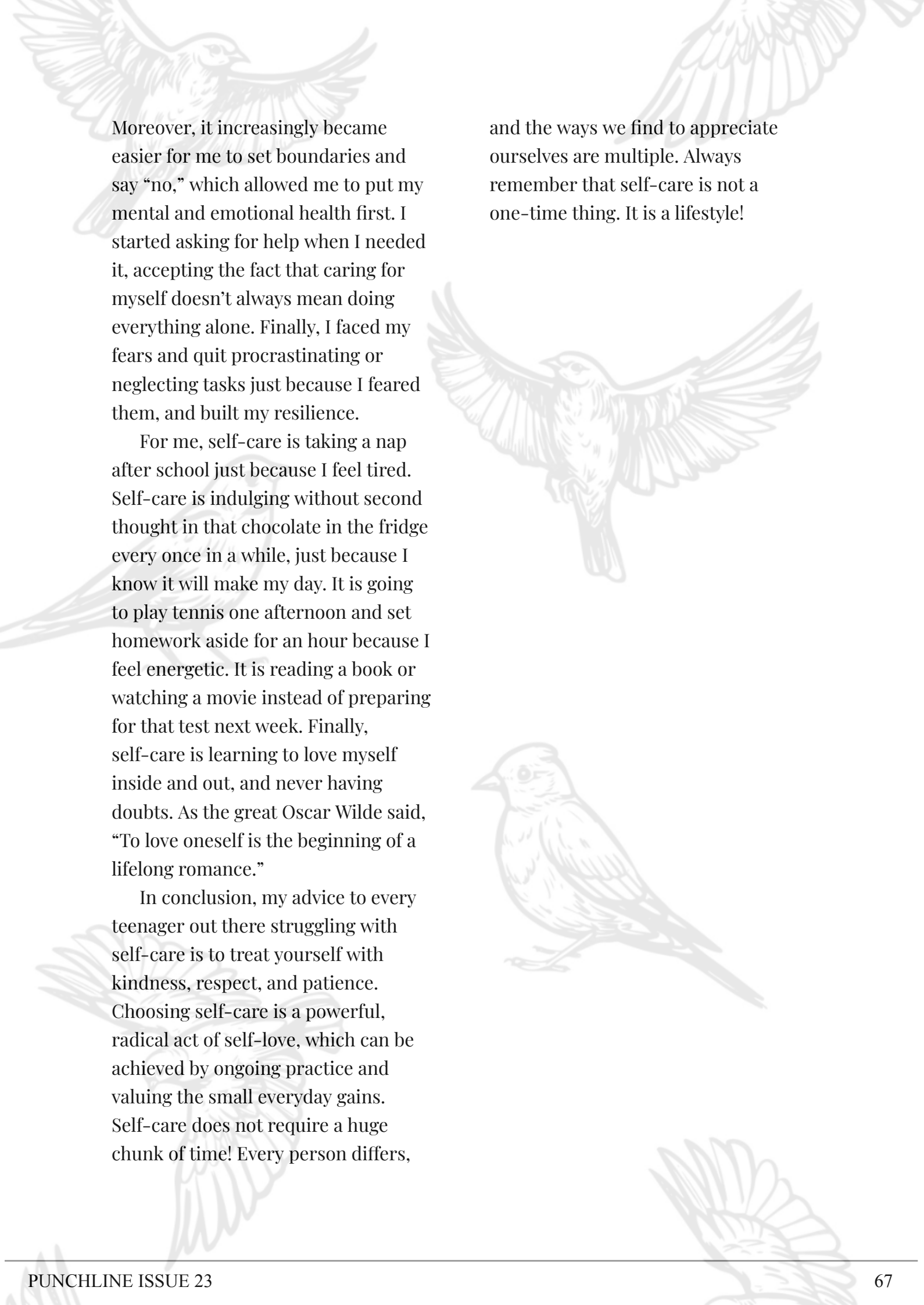
By Marilena Pertsemlidi

"Time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time." In today's fast-paced world, taking a moment to put yourself first and refuel your body, mind, and soul is not a luxury; it is a necessity. No human being is an endless resource. Everyone needs some time devoted to rest, reflection, and rejuvenation. Everyone needs to practice self-care. Self-care, defined as the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's well-being and happiness, is not a one-size-fits-all concept. It is about strengthening yourself in various ways and going for your happiness no matter what, where, or when.

For me, self-care is a lifestyle. It is essential for maintaining your mental, emotional, and physical health. I have to admit, though, that getting to a point where I can really say I have prioritized myself and my well-being was a long trip with many ups and downs. For a long time, I found it difficult to manage my stress, energy levels, and overall mental health. As a child, I used to put too much pressure on myself, always studying more than enough and taking on more and more activities, from piano and Chinese lessons to three different sports all at once. And I enjoyed it, until my responsibilities caught up to me. Juggling my school work and

extracurriculars, I had no time left for myself and my health. It was inevitable that at some point, I would burn out. And that point was during the COVID-19 quarantine. Not only was I constantly exhausted and deprived of sleep, but my anxiety skyrocketed. I was afraid of falling behind due to the difficulty of the online lessons, I triple checked any assignment before uploading it, fearing the mistakes, and I studied the upcoming material ahead of time just to be able to keep up. And after an entire year of this ongoing situation, that was it. I spiraled out of control. I realized that I had to take care of myself, and that practicing self-care doesn't mean escaping my responsibilities; it simply means taking a step back every once in a while.

Now, four years later, I am confident that I have learned about self-care. By prioritizing myself and achieving small but remarkable gains, I came to be a whole different person, of whom I am really proud. I learned to forgive myself and accept my mistakes. I realized that spending time alone didn't mean I was lonely or alone in this world, but it is an opportunity to explore my inner self and cherish every aspect of it.



Moreover, it increasingly became easier for me to set boundaries and say “no,” which allowed me to put my mental and emotional health first. I started asking for help when I needed it, accepting the fact that caring for myself doesn’t always mean doing everything alone. Finally, I faced my fears and quit procrastinating or neglecting tasks just because I feared them, and built my resilience.

For me, self-care is taking a nap after school just because I feel tired. Self-care is indulging without second thought in that chocolate in the fridge every once in a while, just because I know it will make my day. It is going to play tennis one afternoon and set homework aside for an hour because I feel energetic. It is reading a book or watching a movie instead of preparing for that test next week. Finally, self-care is learning to love myself inside and out, and never having doubts. As the great Oscar Wilde said, “To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.”

In conclusion, my advice to every teenager out there struggling with self-care is to treat yourself with kindness, respect, and patience. Choosing self-care is a powerful, radical act of self-love, which can be achieved by ongoing practice and valuing the small everyday gains. Self-care does not require a huge chunk of time! Every person differs,

and the ways we find to appreciate ourselves are multiple. Always remember that self-care is not a one-time thing. It is a lifestyle!

The Importance of Hiking: A Personal Narrative

By Nektarios Giannakis

“The man who loves walking will go further than the man who loves the destination.”

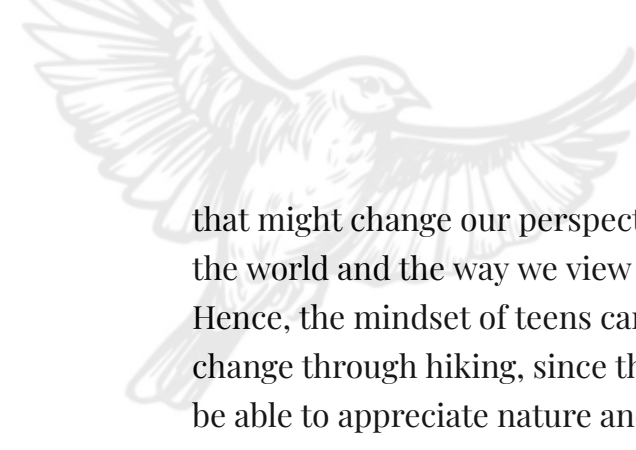
–Sal di Stefano

As a person who loves hiking, there is no better feeling than preparing your backpack, getting your trekking poles, and setting out to reach new goals. Once I step into the outdoors, a liberating feeling of tranquility and freedom overcomes me. No matter if it is solo or group hiking, the experience is always unique. Through this blog, I will try to express my personal view on hiking and the benefits it can have on teens.

In today’s world, everybody is trapped behind a screen and a program, which does not offer them the opportunity to enjoy themselves and do what pleases them. Many people have abandoned hobbies, dreams, and even possible career opportunities because of this hypnotic everyday routine. I believe that we have forgotten how to live like humans, because we were not built to sit in an office all day long and study or work. Our instincts and our bodies were not built to go through those circumstances. A great example of this violation of our nature is stress. Anxiety was not implemented in our instincts to study for an exam or meet

a deadline. Stress exists because of our need to survive from a predator’s attack, for example. Furthermore, we must not forget that nature and not a city block, is our home. We were meant to cover long distances, camp outside, and explore the world, and I believe that it has been proven that we can’t do that through a computer. Ergo, hiking and camping outdoors is the best way to reconnect with our true nature and the real world. Some people might think that I suggest we go back to our primitive instincts, but this is not what I am trying to express through this blog. From my standpoint, humans must remember who they really are and the true identity of the real world. The world is not cities, websites, and bars. It is the mountains, the plains, and the lakes; the rivers and the seas which connect us. If we reconnect with nature, then we will be able to progress in all sectors of our lives and, most importantly, make decisions while thinking about the environment.

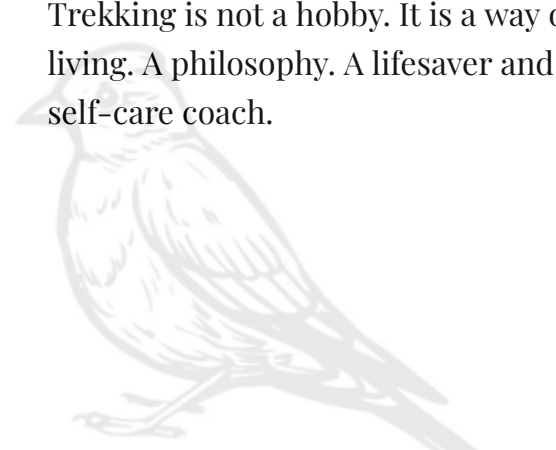
Now you might ask me, how does this connect to teen self-care? As I mentioned before, hiking is something



that might change our perspective of the world and the way we view it. Hence, the mindset of teens can change through hiking, since they will be able to appreciate nature and the true human nature. They will not be stuck behind a screen all day long, and they will have the chance to cherish simplicity and originality. Moreover, hiking can improve the physical health of teens. Covering a distance of 10 kilometers or climbing a mountain can be a great physical and mental challenge. However, in order to improve your physical health, you will also need to have the right mentality. Again, trekking can provide this to teens. When you reach the top of a mountain, the feeling that permeates you is the same feeling you get when you fulfill a goal. The mountaintop is the objective, and the challenges you will meet to reach it are the difficulties in life. It might seem strange, but hiking can teach very important lessons about life. I believe that the most important of those lessons is to enjoy the process, not the end. Following this mentality, you will reach goals you wouldn't even have imagined, because you loved overcoming the challenges. "The man who loves walking will go further than the man who loves the destination," as Sal di Stefano mentioned. It has become clear that trekking can be a great mental aid for teens. Following

the mentality of hiking, a teenager can overcome any challenge and be prepared for the difficulties of life. He can remain calm and, most importantly, trust the process. In addition, trekking, camping, and spending time outdoors teach everyone basic and salient survival skills. We can all imagine how important those skills will be for a future adult who might find themselves in a life-threatening situation and might have to survive. In a few words, the trekking experience can save lives.

In short, I believe that exploring the outdoors is a profitable experience for teenagers. It teaches them important life lessons and survival skills while helping them improve their mental and physical health. Trekking is not a hobby. It is a way of living. A philosophy. A lifesaver and a self-care coach.



Choosing Growth Over Comfort: The Self-Care No One Talks About

By Sofia Gaitani

It's 11:38 pm. I am exhausted, I have a math test tomorrow, and TikTok is calling my name. But instead of reaching for my phone, I open my notebook. It's not because I want to. It's because I promised myself I would. That's self-care, too. We are used to seeing self-care as something soothing, like face masks, comfort food, and canceling plans. And yes, sometimes it is all this. But I have learned that real self-care isn't always pleasant or easy. Sometimes it's uncomfortable and difficult. It's making choices that my future self will thank me for, even if my present self resists. It's calling myself out, keeping promises to myself, and doing the difficult things that protect my mental health and emotional well-being in the long run. In this essay, I do not want to explore the version of self-care that gets romanticized, but the one that looks like discipline, boundaries, late-night studying, or difficult conversations. Because loving yourself isn't always about feeling good. Sometimes, it's about choosing growth over comfort.

I used to think that self-care meant giving myself a break anytime I felt overwhelmed and tired. But eventually, I realized that constantly avoiding hard things was not helping

me; it was holding me back. I remember a time when I kept putting off a history project for almost a week. Every time I thought about starting it, I would tell myself I was too tired or too stressed and that I "deserved" to rest and that I would do it later. So, I would scroll through my phone, watch shows, procrastinate, and call it self-care. But deep down, I was not resting. I was escaping from my problems. And the more I avoided the project, the heavier it felt. After some time, the anxiety of not doing it became worse than the stress of just getting it done. One night, even though I wanted nothing more than to crash in bed, I forced myself to sit down, open my laptop, and start. It wasn't fun. It wasn't relaxing. But when I finished, I felt something I hadn't felt in days, relief. That moment taught me that self-care sometimes looks like accomplishing the hard things even when I do not want to, so I can feel better later. After all, self-care is not only about comfort, but choosing what helps me grow, even if it's uncomfortable.

Another way I have learned that self-care isn't always pleasant is through setting boundaries, even when it's uncomfortable. There have been times when I have said "no" to



hanging out with friends, not because I did not care about them, but because I needed time to myself. Maybe I was overwhelmed with school, or maybe I just felt guilty, as if I was being selfish or distant. But I've come to understand that protecting my time isn't selfish, it's necessary. If I say to everyone else all the time, I end up saying no to myself. And that's not self-care. What people don't often realize is that setting boundaries is a form of self-respect. It's not about pushing people away, but it is about choosing how I want to spend my time. I've learned that I can still be a good friend and still say "no."

Sometimes saying "no" is how I have enough of myself to give. Self-care isn't about being liked by everyone. It's about protecting my peace when it is awkward.

I have realized the most important form of self-care is choosing growth over comfort. It's easy to stay in a place where everything feels safe and familiar, but growth rarely happens in those spaces. For example, I've often avoided opportunities that could help me grow because they made me uncomfortable. When I had the chance to give a presentation in front of my class, I almost backed out because the thought of standing in front of everyone made me anxious. But I knew that doing something hard would challenge me and help me

improve. So, I pushed myself to do it, despite the stress. In the end, I felt a sense of accomplishment that I wouldn't have experienced if I had chosen comfort instead. It was uncomfortable at the moment, but it was also one of the most rewarding experiences I've had. Choosing growth over comfort is hard, but it is a form of self-care because it's the investment that helps me become a stronger, more confident version of myself. Real self-care isn't about staying in pleasant, familiar places; it's about doing the things that push me forward, even when they make me uncomfortable.

In short, self-care isn't about pampering ourselves or always choosing comfort. It's about making the tough decisions that set us up for success, even if they feel hard in the moment. Whether it's studying when we'd rather relax, saying no to social plans to protect our energy, or choosing growth over comfort in difficult situations, real self-care is rooted in discipline and self-respect. It's not always easy, and it's often uncomfortable and unpleasant, but the result is worth it. When I choose to face discomfort, I am not just caring for myself today. I am investing in my future. Eventually, after making these tough choices, I feel a sense of relief and pleasure that comes from knowing I've done what's best for me.



I now know that true self-care isn't about the pleasant stuff. It's about personal growth even in the most difficult times, even during challenging moments.



Memoirs of a Mother

By Spiros Glykos

Dear you,

Today was a long day. An exhausting, tiring, annoying, boring, tumultuous, exhilarating, and, most importantly, a really long day. I felt like I was on my feet, ready to act, non-stop, without even catching a breath. There was a party all night so I could not sleep, the alarms did not go off, the microwave malfunctioned, my daughter, Lexi, was taking hours in the bathroom, my son, Matt, wetted his bed, the goldfish was dead, Matt cried, I had to clean the whole house, pick up the groceries, meet my father in the nursing home, pick up the children from school, cook lunch, make them a snack, help Matt do his homework, reprimanded Lexi about sneaking out for the sixth time, had Matt cry about physics, get them to bed, and then I could finally lay down. BUT THERE WAS THE LAUNDRY AS WELL. I am going to take a step back. My therapist told me to write in here so I could rest, I could relieve the stress that this god awful routine bestows upon me. There is never a break, never a point where I can just sit back and clear my head. My husband, Jared, works all day, and I feel like I have forgotten his voice. A faint “morning” when he wakes up and sometimes forgotten

“night” are the two words that define our marriage. Oh, and what I would do to be care-free. To run around a beach, let the scorching sun touch my skin, and have a drink overlooking the ocean. Sometimes—rather never—I open my phone and go on Facebook. There is this old classmate of mine, Catherine, who, after graduation she took a plane to some exotic place in Indonesia and never returned here. She posts every now and then about her days. She has joined some weird yoga retreat and teaches wealthy Americans how to “unlock their third eye” and “find their inner peace.” I find it peculiar. What does stretching your body like gum offer to you? “The therapeutic advantages of yoga” is just another myth for money scammers to win more money. But there are times when I envy her. She was always alone in school, never seemed willing to talk to anyone. The only time we ever talked was during the last month of high school. I was in the school bathrooms crying after my pregnancy test turned positive. My dreams were crushed, and suddenly, I started to envision a nightmare that is now slowly turning into reality. She heard me, opened the door, and held me as I



sobbed. “Everything will go well, just take care of yourself,” she whispered. I wish I had taken these words more seriously. I do not have time to enjoy anything, have a hobby. I do not have time to exist. I know it may sound mean, but if I could, I would pack my bags and leave as soon as possible. Don’t get me wrong, I love my children and I love my husband. But is this the life I truly deserve? Running behind everyone, asking them if they need something, like a servant. And what do I get as a “thank you”? NOTHING. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. Only an indifferent husband, an aggressive teenager, and a snotty kid. I never had the chance to go to college due to my pregnancy, never had the chance to travel the world due to financial constraints, and I never had the chance to be myself. Hell, I could not even get a pet because the man beside me in the bed is allergic. But, at this point, I am not even asking for that. All I want is to take a nice bath, go eat at a nice restaurant, and just enjoy a nice time altogether. This is not fair. Sometimes I’m reminded of when I was a little girl, before my dad had his stroke. A fading memory reminds me of this corn maze we had next to our house. Every Saturday, my dad would take me there and we would just get lost in there. We knew how to get out, we just didn’t want to. Sometimes we talked, sometimes we

didn’t, sometimes we would do picnics or play volleyball. No thoughts were in my head. No obligations or chores or anything for me to stress about. All I had were these tall corns around me blocking the outside world from overwhelming me. My friends ask me from time to time, “How are things with Jared and the kids?” and I always act like I am living in a picture-perfect suburban bubble. I hope everything I said to them was true, but I can only hope. I can’t lie. I love my life. But do I like it? I don’t know. Matt is crying. I’m pretty sure that Lexi snuck out again. There is a split-second where I don’t give a single damn. But that split-second ends, and I have to get up. In another life, who knows, maybe I would be in Indonesia right now. But, alas, I’m not. I’m still stuck in this disgusting suburban town in Nebraska, where everyone judges everyone. “One day I will be free of these imaginary shackles that restrain me,” I tell myself. But I don’t believe it. I am bound to serve infinitely for the necessities of everyone else, like a slave. There is no “I cannot do this anymore” option for me anymore. There is only “I have to do this.” I wonder lifelessly around like a robot, programmed to do certain commands. And every time someone asks, I have to answer, “I love my life!”



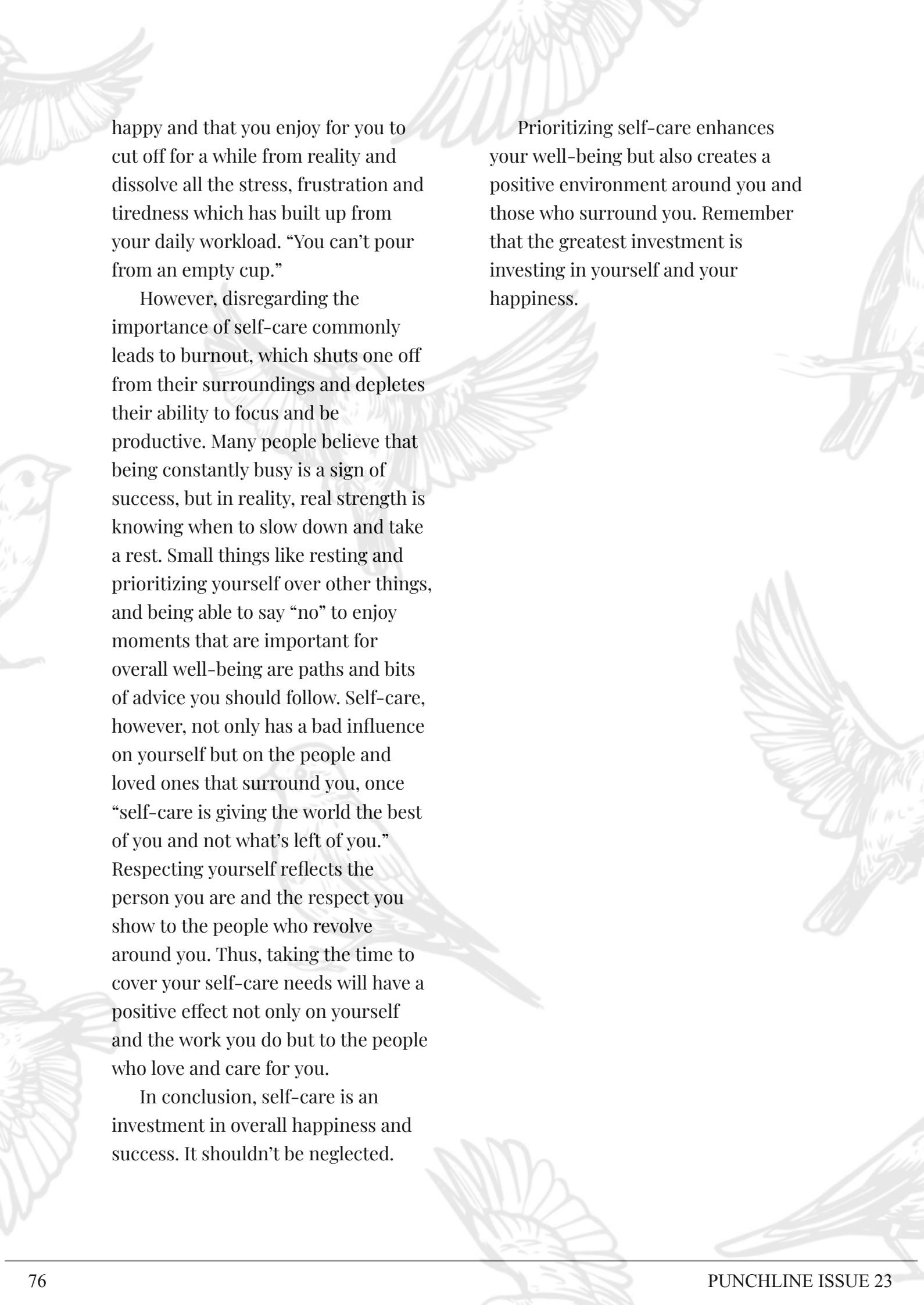
The Importance of Self-Care

By Thanasis Triantopoulos

The day we are born and make our presence in this world, we are bound for the first four years in the care of our mother. However, as the years pass, we inherit an opinion on the things we want, need, and consider important in our lives. As kids, the important things in our lives are our family, toys, and our happiness. As we transition to our teenage years, our priorities change; Friends become more important than family, status online and with the people surrounding us becomes our daily challenge to overcome, and our emotions shift from day to day based on the things we could or couldn't achieve. A few years later, however, we transition to adulthood, and with this transition come big changes to our priorities. Family and friends are equally important, but most of the time, our job becomes the center of attention. Our emotions start stabilizing, but stress increases with our workflow, and free time seems impossible to find. It seems that we slowly forget the importance of self-care that we used to blindly understand in our first years, and focus all our time and energy on our work. But the question that we need to ask ourselves is what self-care means to us and why it should be

prioritized.

Self-care is frequently misinterpreted, and few people understand that it means taking care of your body, mind, and emotions altogether. It is not selfish to prioritize yourself at times, it's necessary for your health and happiness. Small actions like drinking water, sleeping enough, and walking outside help more than most people think. Experts also have said that even 10 minutes of self-care a day can reduce stress, improve health qualities, and overall lighten up your mood. In addition, the World Health Organization emphasizes that mental health is just as important as physical health; thus, a balance should be preserved between the two in order to achieve maximum results. Regarding physical care, one should sleep well, eat healthy, and exercise regularly, while for your mental self-care, one should relax in any way or form that satisfies one and always take a break once one's rest is not a luxury; it's a responsibility. On the emotional side of view talking to people and surrounding yourself with personalities that you trust and have formed a bond plays a significant role while also acting on things you like and understand that make you feel



happy and that you enjoy for you to cut off for a while from reality and dissolve all the stress, frustration and tiredness which has built up from your daily workload. “You can’t pour from an empty cup.”

However, disregarding the importance of self-care commonly leads to burnout, which shuts one off from their surroundings and depletes their ability to focus and be productive. Many people believe that being constantly busy is a sign of success, but in reality, real strength is knowing when to slow down and take a rest. Small things like resting and prioritizing yourself over other things, and being able to say “no” to enjoy moments that are important for overall well-being are paths and bits of advice you should follow. Self-care, however, not only has a bad influence on yourself but on the people and loved ones that surround you, once “self-care is giving the world the best of you and not what’s left of you.” Respecting yourself reflects the person you are and the respect you show to the people who revolve around you. Thus, taking the time to cover your self-care needs will have a positive effect not only on yourself and the work you do but to the people who love and care for you.

In conclusion, self-care is an investment in overall happiness and success. It shouldn’t be neglected.

Prioritizing self-care enhances your well-being but also creates a positive environment around you and those who surround you. Remember that the greatest investment is investing in yourself and your happiness.

POETRY AND PUNS

The Heart is a River

By Anna Gerardou

The heart is a river, wild and untamed,
Carving new paths where none existed before.
Words are bridges, but sometimes they break,
When storms of doubt crash on the shore.

Trust is a mirror, fractured but real,
Reflection of selves they haven't yet found.
Love is a tide, pulling them afar,
Yet the closer they get, the farther they roam.



Whispers of a Dream

By Nikolia Garoufalidou

Once it shined, so vast, so bright
Like a streetlight burning through the night.
But time moved fast, the colors changed
And what I loved felt out of range.

A faded wish, a silent song
A dream I held, but not for long,
Is it waiting, buried deep,
Or just a memory I keep?

Maybe it haunts me, maybe it hides,
Or maybe it echoes through the midnight skies...

The Duality of Man

By Dimitris Anagnostaras

Man is an animal infinitely complex;
Man escaped nature's wild character;
Man acquired the fire of lightning;
Man mastered the elements of the world;
Man created written universes beyond the present and true;
Man immortalised his greatness through marvels of art;
Man encountered his creator in the quest for understanding;
Man is capable of unlimited compassion and love.
However, I am perplexed!
Man eradicated his brother's place in history;
Man killed his fellow man;
Man objectified and abused his cousins;
Man discriminated and hated based on the colour of the skin;
Man endangered his very home;
Man is irrational;
Man is capable of hatred, of destruction, and of injustice of limits unknown.
It appears that in the context of man, Heaven and Hell coexist inside him and are
Not that far apart.
So, what is man after all?
Man is an abyss, a saviour, a tyrant,
An innovator, an Angel, a God...or Devil Himself—a coin of two sides!



The Summer Came

By Nikos Davakis

The summer came.
I woke up and played.
I had some lunch.
It's summer today.
But suddenly,
that day had stopped:
I woke up hearing a clock.
The summer had stopped,
the warmth slipped away.
The sun disappeared,
the sky turned to gray.
The winter just came.
It was just a dream,
a moment of joy,
with just no repeat.
I had to wake up
and finish my homework,
but ended up doing no work
then hurried up to catch my bus,
so I can get to my class
and later discuss.

Hold On

By Erotokritos Komianos

Hold on to your goals,
for if they slip away,
life turns to a road
that fades into gray.
A dream left behind
is a bird with no sky,
wings frozen in time,
never learning to fly.
What happens to a goal
when it's left on the shelf?
Does it gather dust,
forgotten like everything else?
Or does it push back,
refusing to die,
a spark in the dark,
still reaching for the sky?
Hold on to your goals,
don't let them fade.
Without them, tell me—
what's left to be made?

A Wizard's Magic

By Konstantinos Gialouris

Life is magic.
I believe that I am a magician.
I want to create something new,
New for me,
another dimension of me
full of freedom
with only one rule:
the rule of acceptance
that I am a human,
who wants to live in justice
fight for his rights,
follow his dreams,
and change the world.
Finally, the achievement of my goals
will make me a magician.



An Unfair World

By Mirini Giakoumakou

What happens to a world that's fair?
A world that doesn't judge.
A world that doesn't stare.
Does it give opportunities to all,
Or does it put standards which guarantee that some will fall?
Does it bully, does it hurt,
or does it love and act with care?

Some people wish, some people dream,
and some people don't even think.
Because it's also confusing in my head.
Same world, same mind, same heart.
come some people don't have the things that I have?
How come their life is so tough?
And how come we don't care about that?
We're all humans, aren't we?
Same species, same mind, same heart.

Yet this world judges and this world stares.
It says bad things and it doesn't care.
The spark of hope and kindness is there,
but hard to find, since most people are unfair.



Puns

By Konstantinos Saracakis

What do you call a drunk bee?

A beer.

What knife heals you?

A blade. (bl-aid)

What do super monkeys wear?

Capes. (c-apes)

What do you call a lizard named Anna?

Igou-Anna.

What do you call walking eggs?

Legs.

What type of soldier/warrior only operates when it's dark?

The knight.

Where do all the rich beavers live?

In the Beverly Hills.

Why do you throw shiny items in the bin?

Because they glitter. (g-litter)

How do you eat a whole horse?

You gallop it down.

What type of monster never travels to the west?

The Beast.

NOVELISTIC WORK



The Gentlemen's Club

By Dimitris Papadakis

After *Immune, Part One: Power and Ambition*, (with parts II and III to follow), Dimitris Papadakis has taken a different approach to discussing inequality: the communist one. The author has provided the magazine with his book's introduction and 5th chapter, inspired by Kafka's *The Trial*. In the chapter, the main character, Vadim, who is the servant of the local communist party's secretary, overhears the Gentlemen's discussion about what will become of the Premier's fortune when things go south.

Introduction by the Author

Previously, I have pondered on the distinctions between good and evil and their correlation with positions of Power. In my tireless search for something as impossible as truth, I have discovered that Power is an inherently difficult concept to define. This book, I believe, offers many different representations of Power.

1. Physical Power. Being in a room, bullying, overpowering through strength. Visibly hurting. Injuring, God forbid killing!
2. Political Power. Politics, as an economics student, or anyone who has been around long enough to debate the state of the world will tell you, is a zero-sum game. This is why Political Power might be the most detrimental form of Power: It defines. It defines people, businesses, nations... I profoundly believe that therein are featured many shadows, all of whom battle for the death for victory. In reality, one can observe, you can say, that they are not better than the monsters they created them.
3. Monetary Power. Monetary Power can stem from the other forms of Power, and it is no secret that you can gain Power with money.

I reckon that the best example of Power is the transitional Soviet Economy. Inspired by the very real chaos before and after the snapshots of the USSR's fall, I set out to prove my lingering hypothesis with a simple question, answered by history, and inevitably, by my story too: What if you introduce that third form of Power to a society that has gone 70 long, painful, miserable years, filled with depression, murder, shortages and famine? What if you promised ABSOLUTE Power to people? What is the catch? *The Gentlemen's Club*, comprised by six power-hungry, soon-to-be unemployed communists is the attempt to answer this paramount philosophical dilemma, with a beautiful story...

CHAPTER 5

First Cross-Examination

They walk away from the left side to the central connecting hallway. They see Katiana in the living room. With the side of her left eye, she looks at them going up the stairs judgmentally. Reaching the exact middle of the staircase, he opens the small door leading to his hole.

This is smaller than my closet.

I know.

Way smaller than my closet.

I know.

How do you...

It's fine.

It's not.

It is.

Are you sure?

I am.

Fine. She looks around a bit, then outside the very small window. It is snowing very heavily. She tries to sit in bed. She can't. It's too small. Too uncomfortable. She laughs awkwardly, looking at him. Then she looks away, down, clearly very sad. Vadim hesitates for a bit. He doesn't know what to do.

Is everything ok?

No, everything is NOT ok! I feel like I am here for nothing! Like a very nice piece of jewellery! Her eyes start tearing up. Nobody takes me seriously! Vadim steps back like he had seen a ghost.

I don't think that's true, Miss Anya.

Then what am I doing here? She asks, her eyes flooding again. She pauses, looks down again. I just wish that I could listen to what they are saying. She sits there, sobbing.

Vadim knew what he could do. He can reveal the tunnel. He touches the floorboard concealing it. Does he want to do that though? This is something only he can do. Does he trust her? What if she tells her father? Or even worse, what if she does something stupid, and their position is compromised? The Premier would be very disappointed. The last thing he wants is to disappoint the Premier. He can see a myriad of negative consequences. She is so sad, though. He is compelled to slide the board. He doesn't know why. He is tired of hiding alone. He is tired of things being the same way they are supposed to be, just because they always have been the same way they are supposed to be. It is madness. It is high time he does something different.

There is something I can do.

What? She immediately stops sobbing. She is intrigued.

I know... how to spy on them.

What do you mean?

I mean, he says as he is sliding the floorboard smoothly to his left, that

we can listen in to their conversations from above. She looks at the tunnel, not very impressed.

You expect me to crawl inside there? It's disgusting!

I keep it very clean. I do this very often.

How often?

Almost every day.

Fine. You go first, lead the way.

Very well. They both bend down on their knees. They start crawling. They pass the living room.

Are we there?

Almost. Turn left.

They reach the Premier's office. The room is covered with a thick cloud of cigar smoke. The room is overcrowded. The Premier sinks in his chair, smoking a cigar. To his left and right, are two armed guards. The four Gentlemen are scattered across the room, Voronin stands in one corner thinking, Ivanov in the other, pondering. Potapov is looking around nervously, wiping the sweat off his neck with a monogrammed handkerchief. Sokolov is circling the room, his head down. Thunder and lightning obstruct each and every of the five trains of thought. Finally, one larger thunder tears the sky, making Vadim flinch, and scaring Anya. The five men show no signs of fear though. The lights start to grow dimmer, eventually almost fading. The Premier turns his head to one of the soldiers.

He shrugs, signalling that he can't do anything about the outage. Finally, Sokolov stops looking around.

The system is broken, he says.

What? Says the Premier, everyone turns towards him.

I said, Vasily, that the system is broken! He looks at the Premier right in his eyes.

What on earth do you mean?

I mean that we live in a broken society! What is even the USSR? He pauses. I have served this country all my life, and frankly, I have no idea what it is even about... I am the Commandant of the Artillery Academy, I have defended my country against the invaders, I have trained the oppressors of the future! The RED Army! The army of the Bolsheviks! He pauses again, lights a cigar, no one dares to stop his speech, everyone is looking at him amazed. It's time you knew young Ivanov! Communism never intended to have a military! It was a pacifist movement!

Communism never intended for people to have large houses, or estates, or servants! Yet, look where we convene every time! I live in a mansion myself! Is all of this, he points at the house, this beautiful façade ours to kill? Ours to share its corpse's spoils? Is it, comrades, communist, even socialist, I say, to claim something as rightfully yours? I don't think so! This, all of this, he

points again holistically, this is not communism! This is capitalism without money! In despair, he sinks in one of the Premier's Chesterfield chairs. After assessing it for a brief moment, he realises all he said is right and sighs.

We should be thankful for you, Commandant. Ivanov gets out of his corner. You have done our country not only a great service, but you have realised that this system is based on poisonous lies! POISONOUS LIES! He howls, looking blatantly at Voronin. Communism is not capitalism, Gentlemen, it's a swamp that we should get out of. The swamp is infested everywhere with treacherous, cunning, venomous toads, treading the marshes trying to find innocent flies to kill, to make them their scapegoats for their insatiable hunger for power! Just because money isn't there, that doesn't mean that ambition isn't there! Just because money isn't there, that doesn't mean that treason isn't there! Just because money isn't there, that doesn't mean that the purgatory of Greed doesn't burn through everyone's soul! Dimitri is out of breath. He inhales sharply thrice, then continues. I escaped the marsh! More accurately, my father did, but now, more than 50 years later, he can now say that he made an honest living! We are businessmen, we work with others, we don't step on them.

Commandant, communism isn't Capitalism with no money, it's Gladiatorial Combat!

Potapov keeps wiping his sweat, nervously. Voronin leaves his corner.

Hail the Commandant! He pats Sokolov in the back. Taking small steps, he approaches the Londoner. They are now on eye level.

Voronin, is anything wrong? The Premier asks back from his chair. The guards look at him judgmentally.

No, Vasily. No... It looks however that Ivanov the younger might need that lesson about Communism after all. You remember Gentlemen, we were all young. I was 20, studying Engineering in the new University in Leningrad, Sokolov 24, in the Academy, Potapov 28, and you, Vasily, how old were you?

30, Vladimir.

Together with your father, Dimitri, my three seniors were part of the CPSU, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

I know the acronym, Voronin...

Don't interrupt me, I'm telling a story. Now, around that time, a man named Sergei Kirov got mysteriously assassinated. No one knows why! Everyone laughs loudly. Vadim and Anya look at each other confused. Now, he continues, I attended meetings at the Gorkom. This is where we all met. We realised, Dimitri, that we would be next. More than 55 years

ago, we formed the Gentlemen's Club, which would protect all of us from harm. A patriotic, protectionist pentarchy. We were disillusioned with the dictatorial turn of the Soviet Union. We talked about Pure Communism, the communism the Commandant talked about, the one with no military, the Utopia! We all pledged our allegiance to Stalin and decided to wait the Purge out, do our duty. I wasn't so lucky, however. I was sentenced to death. Thankfully, the Club reduced my sentence. For three long years I rotted in the Gulag. From there, we all took an oath to always look out for each other, no matter what. We became the Gentlemen...

I know all of these things, Minister. What are you trying to get at?

Where I am trying to get at boy, is that this country that the both of you should be ashamed! For this Army, the RED Army, the Army of the Bolsheviks, that you were the both of you so quick to demean, we all fought, we won battles, respect, and medals! We shed blood and pieces of our soul! Commandant, you led the 3rd Anti-Aircraft in Leningrad, Vasily, you led the 253rd Infantry in Stalingrad. Your father, Ivanov, fought in Operation Citadel, under Rokossovsky. Potapov, you liberated Kyiv! The Red Army, the "Useless Army"! He looks at Sokolov, disappointed. Was it useless when you

all fought for your freedom, for your family's freedom, for the Motherland?

We fought for a state that brought destruction upon itself.



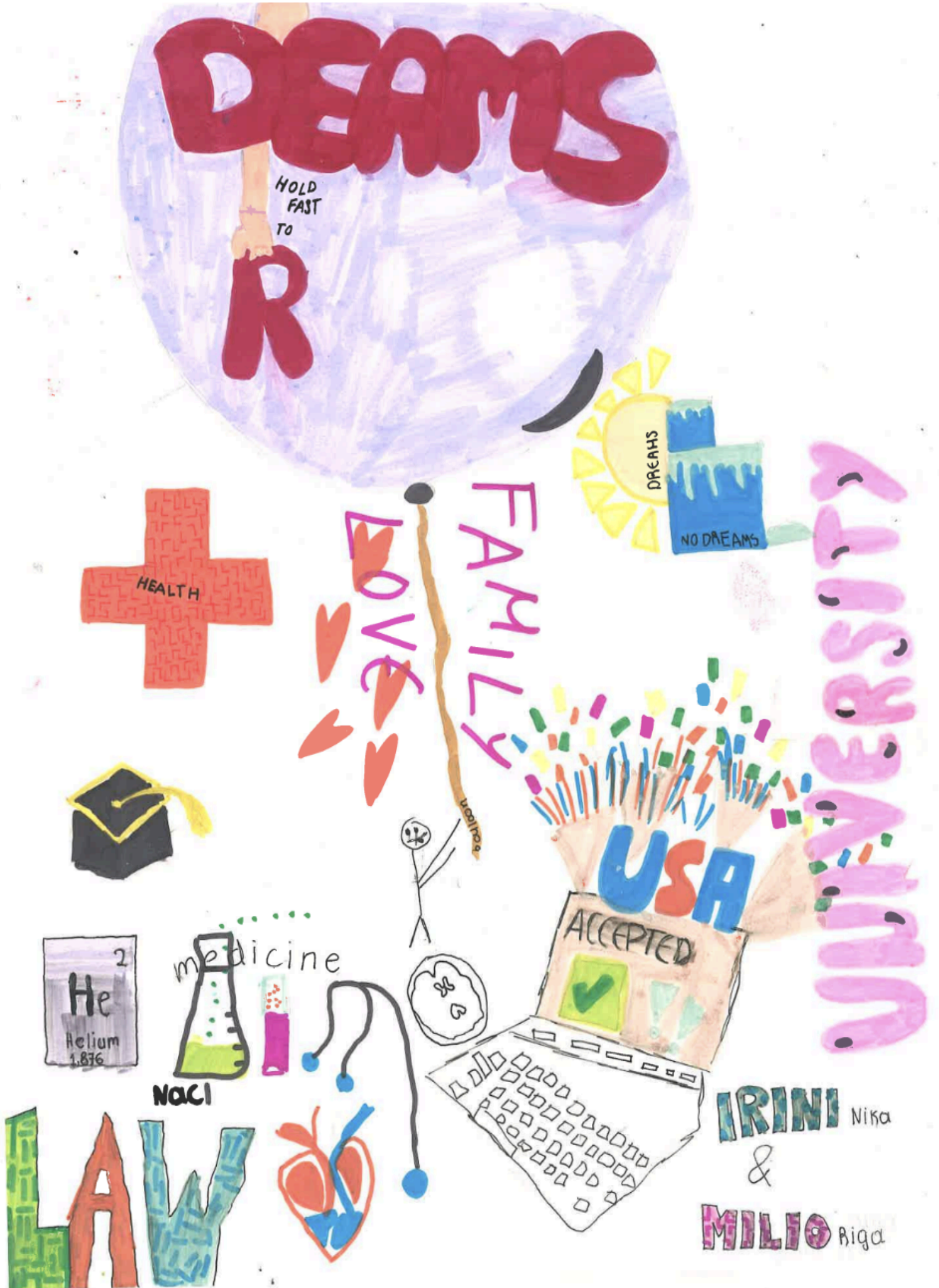
VISUAL STORYTELLING

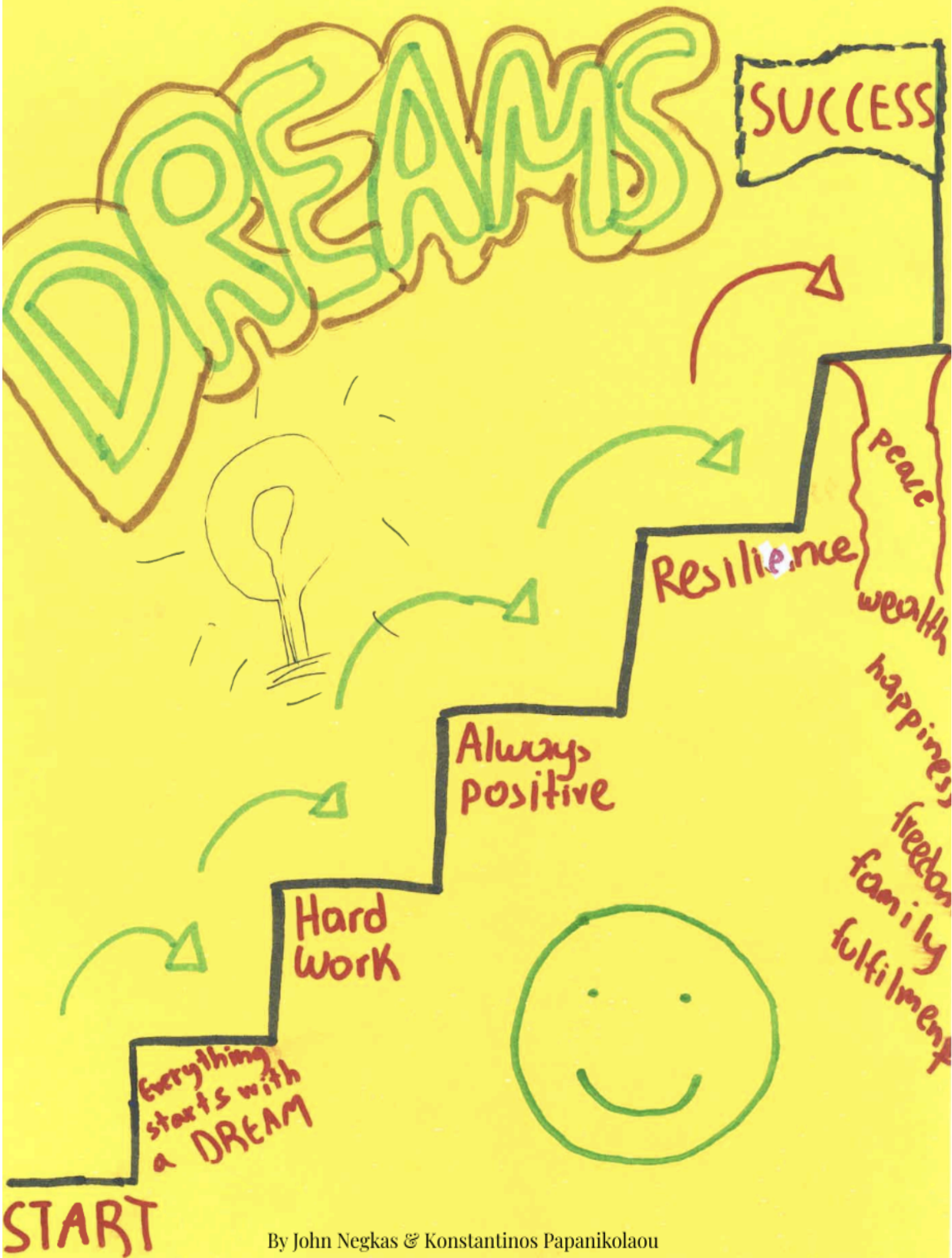
THE POWER OF DREAMING

FANOURIS
KATERINA
PAVLOS



By Fanouris Toumanidis, Katerina Skaperda, & Pavlos Konstantinidis





By John Negkas & Konstantinos Papanikolaou

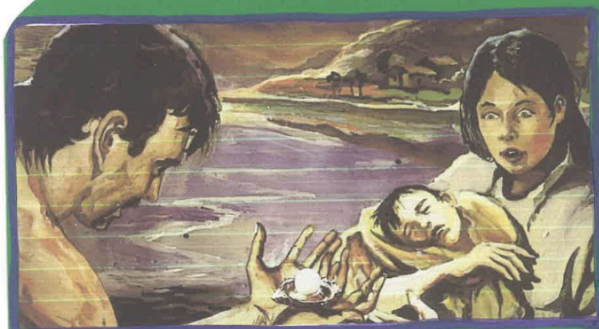
DREAMING is what
keeps me up at night 

DREAMING is what makes me
 feel alive , the hope that
keeps  me moving throughout
the day  even when am not all

Great 

By Georgia Papachristodoulou

THE TRAP OF GREED



Kino finds the pearl!

KINO
before:

- peaceful
- humble
- caring
- happy

MONEY LEADS

TO pleasure

- easier life

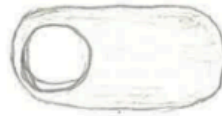
BUT ALSO

- consumed by materialism

- become selfish
- unethical choices
- hurt relationships
- create conflicts
- lose sense of values
- loss of excitement over small things
- different behavior
- wrong choices

By Katerina Skaperda

Greed



Greed in the Pearl

1. Kino's sudden transformation: when he sees for the first time the pearl. He thinks... that... finally he can give to him and to his family a better life. But the pearl's promise of wealth turned him to greed and obsession to the point of harming his family.

"This pearl has become my soul. If I shall lose my soul."

• Greed started to kill his humanity

4. The price of Greed:

• Kino loses everything his home, his canoe and finally his son all because of his love for money.

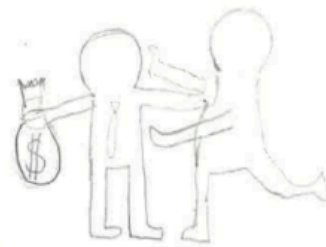
"And the pearl fell into the path of the falling water... the music of the pearl drifted to a whisper and disappeared."

• The act of throwing the pearl away symbolize Kino's rejection of greed.

Greed in the Community

2. The pearl also had an effect to people around him such as his townpeople who want to steal from him. They started to feel jealousy and greed.

"Every man suddenly became related to Kino's pearl... the hungers of everyone."



This is people arguing about money.



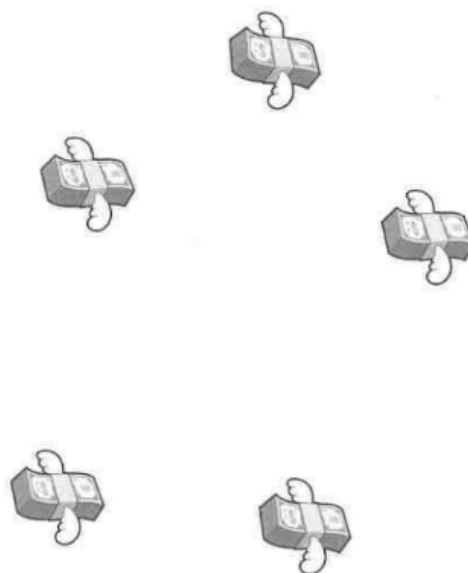
Kino's greed and his community it continues to have powerfull and cruel consequences

THE



PEARL

THE ILLUSION OF WEALTH



"The pearl was the thing that would change their lives, but it would also change them"

By John Negkas &
Konstantinos Papanikolaou

LITERARY REFLECTIONS



Louise's Transformation

By Anastasia Papanastasopoulou

Louise Mallard, the protagonist of Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," is a complex and dynamic character. Initially, she appears to be a devoted wife mourning the sudden loss of her husband. However, as the story progresses, Chopin reveals the deeper, conflicting emotions within her, transforming her from a seemingly conventional widow into an individual who embraces freedom.

Louise is undoubtedly a round character because the story presents her initial reaction of grief, which soon gives way to an overwhelming sense of liberation. This complexity is evident in the passage: "There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air." This moment of epiphany shows that her emotional state is layered—she experiences fear, uncertainty, and ultimately an unexpected joy. Louise's realization that she is "free, free, free!" solidifies her as a round character because she expresses a depth of emotion beyond conventional expectations for a grieving widow.

Louise is also a dynamic character,

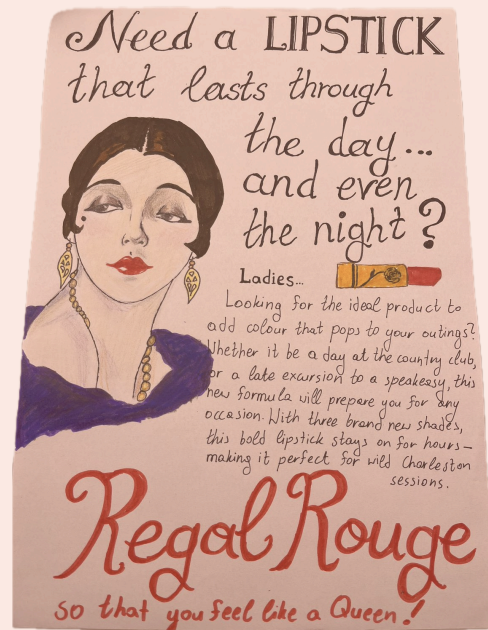
as she undergoes a fundamental transformation. At the beginning, she responds conventionally to the news of her husband's death, weeping "with sudden, wild abandonment." However, when she retreats into her room, she experiences a profound shift in perspective. Instead of remaining in a state of sorrow, she begins to see a future that is entirely her own, free from the constraints of marriage: "There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself."

This marks a drastic transformation in her identity, as she moves from a dependent wife to an autonomous individual, reveling in the prospect of living for herself. Her dynamic nature is further emphasized when she prays for a long life, a stark contrast to her previous dread of longevity.

Tragically, her transformation is cut short when Brently Mallard, alive and unharmed, walks through the door. The sudden return to her former reality is too overwhelming, leading to her death. The doctors claim she dies "of the joy that kills," but the irony suggests that it was not joy, but the devastating loss of her newfound freedom that stopped her heart.

A Dream in Decline

By Elena Dimtsa



*The last chapter of *The Great Gatsby* brings the reader face-to-face with the ugly side of the American Dream. Gatsby's funeral, once again, is a comment on the moral decrepitude of the people around that time. They did not care for him in his death—they were only concerned about his parties and affluence when he was alive. What is more, it seems that Gatsby's death, in part, was a result of his inability to move away from his past. He was constantly attempting to recreate the past, bring it back, relive it which according to many makes him a truly tragic hero.*

I believe that the commentary provided largely encapsulates the dominant messages and prominent themes evident in *The Great Gatsby*, as it manages to capture the essence of the lingering thoughts readers may have after the novel's conclusion. Personally, the point I agree with the most is that of the decline and negative aspects of the American Dream, which is notable in the final chapters of the novel. J. Gatsby largely embodied this ideal throughout the

entirety of the story, as a man who utilized every opportunity provided to him to ascend socially, in pursuit of wealth and love. Although it seemed that he had managed to acquire the status and affluence he wished for, and even though he often utilized it for a sumptuous lifestyle and extravagant events, the tragic conclusion of his life conveys the hollowness and vanity of this Dream. Gatsby spends his final moments in solitude, with the only true friend and

confidante he can be vulnerable with being his rather recent acquaintance, Nick Carraway. All of the dreams he pursued have become unattainable and diminished, and the wealth in his possession remains pointless and superficial, since it proved to be useless both in his search for love and in preventing his tragic demise. We understand, therefore, that the extravagance the American Dream promotes comes, oftentimes, alongside hollowness and depression for the individuals getting entangled in it. Additionally, I absolutely agree with the theme of the complete moral decay of American society which, as is mentioned in the excerpt, is realized in the novel. Throughout the entirety of the story, the reader is confronted with actions of an increasing degree of immorality, with the climax being Gatsby's horrible murder by George Wilson, in retaliation for an affair and a crime which he had not committed, but was falsely accused of, while the people truly responsible remain unpunished and free of guilt. The lack of attendance of Gatsby's funeral is certainly yet another example of this lack of scruples, as we come to understand that the entirety of the people who wanted to be associated with him while he was alive were only doing so to selfishly take advantage of his affluence, and did not have the

decency to mourn him in his death. This is an agreement with the moral decrepitude that was evident in the period of the Roaring 1920's as a whole. At last, we are able to conclude that Gatsby's death was largely a result of his complete enamoration and obsession with ideas that were truly unattainable, and his refusal to accept the futility of achieving his dreams, which were rooted in a past long gone. I believe that the amalgamation of these aspects of the novel creates a story that is undeniably tragic, but also conveys meaningful messages regarding the ideals that should truly be pursued in the lifetime of an individual, the morals that should guide the behavior of any person, and the acceptance with which one should confront the various issues of life.

A Truly Tragic Hero

By Marina Dampassina



In the last chapter of *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, many aspects of different themes, conflicts, and characters are revealed, allowing the readers to reflect on the dominant messages conveyed throughout the whole novel. First of all, as far as the “ugly side” of the American Dream is concerned, Gatsby embodies the pursuit of happiness and material prosperity, but his desire is ultimately corrupted, his dream remains unattainable, because of the materialism, societal hierarchy and barriers of the Roaring Twenties.

Moreover, the moral decrepitude, the social decay, and the hollowness of the upper class are evident in their superficial relationships, and specifically Gatsby’s funeral. Despite

the fact that his parties attracted countless guests, the only people that attended his funeral were Nick Carraway, his father, as well as a few of his servants. People during the Jazz Age adopted a “carpe diem” lifestyle: they were devoid of genuine connections, and they attended Gatsby’s parties for the spectacle and enjoyment, and not because of true friendship and loyalty, which showcases the materialistic aspect of the time, as well as its moral decay. Consequently, there is a stark contrast between Gatsby’s hopes, dreams, and aspirations and society’s shallowness, selfishness, and superficiality.

It is widely believed that Gatsby’s tragic end was the result of his inability to move away and recover

from the past. Even though his actions, such as his obsession with Daisy and his involvement in petty crime and bootlegging to achieve his goal were morally questionable, his intentions were driven by his immense, uncontrollable love towards her, and by his hope of their love rekindling. In my opinion, Gatsby's stance throughout the entire novel renders him a tragic hero, since he was constantly trying to pursue an ideal in a corrupt world: Daisy represents the idealised version of success and happiness, but in reality, she is the epitome of the carelessness of the wealthy. Therefore, Gatsby was "blind" to the unforeseen circumstances he was under, which caused him to become a tragic character and "suffer" from his relentless hope.

Material Joy, Emotional Emptiness

By Maria Rigaki

In a world dazzled by glittering possessions and the endless pursuit of wealth, it is easy to mistake luxury for happiness. Advertisements, social media and popular culture often suggest that the more we own, the more fulfilled we become. Yet beneath the polished surface of consumerism lies a deeper truth: material wealth may enhance comfort, but it cannot satisfy the human desire for meaning, love and connection. It is my firm belief that materialism not only fails to produce true happiness but often leads to spiritual emptiness and disillusionment.

This illusion, that lasting fulfillment can be found in wealth, is deconstructed in F. Scott Fitzgerald's book *The Great Gatsby*, a novel that exposes the emotional bankruptcy behind the American Dream. To begin with, Jay Gatsby's life epitomizes the misconception that material success guarantees happiness. Gatsby reinvents himself from a poor guy into a wealthy figure, acquiring a fortune with one wish in his mind: to win back Daisy Buchanan. He purchases a grand mansion and hosts extravagant parties, all to recreate a lost love. However, despite his wealth, Gatsby is profoundly alone. His guests are strangers and his efforts to reach

Daisy remain futile. This illustrates that while wealth may draw people near, it cannot foster sincere relationships. Gatsby's emptiness behind the glitter of his success reveals that materialism ultimately isolates rather than connects.

Furthermore, Gatsby's downfall reinforces the idea that materialism does not lead to happiness, but to disillusionment. Convinced that money can bridge the emotional gap between him and Daisy, Gatsby holds on to an idealized vision of the past. However, Daisy chooses her privileged life with Tom over a life with Gatsby. In the end, Gatsby's tragic death symbolizes the collapse of dreams built on material foundations.

Admittedly, some might argue that material wealth can enhance life by offering comfort and access to opportunities. However, *The Great Gatsby* suggests that such benefits are shallow and short-lived when not accompanied by emotional depth. Tom and Daisy possess all the riches imaginable, yet they live in moral decay using their wealth to escape responsibility. Fitzgerald shows that material prosperity, when disconnected from genuine human values, leads not to joy but to emptiness.

By and large, *The Great Gatsby* critiques materialism and its failure to provide true happiness. Through Gatsby's pursuit of love using his wealth and the superficiality of the upper class, Fitzgerald reveals a general truth about human nature: Material possessions can never replace emotional depth, purpose in

life, moral clarity and scruples. While money may offer temporary satisfaction, it cannot fulfill the human longing for genuine connection and true meaning of life.



Art by Spiros Glykos

A Dead Man Walking

By Philip Archontovasilis

Drunken Warrior Cornerclub 🍷

Introducing... The Drunken Warrior Cornerclub – The Wildest Jazz Bar in Town!

Pssst! You didn't hear it from us, but tucked away in a shadowy corner of 5th Avenue, The Drunken Warrior Cornerclub is where the real magic happens! The whiskey pours strong, the jazz never stops, and every night is one for the books.



At The Drunken Warrior Cornerclub, we offer:

- 🍸 **Legendary Cocktails** – Our mixologists whip up the finest drinks, guaranteed to keep your spirits high and your worries low.
- 🎷 **Live Jazz Every Night** – The best musicians in town bring the beats that make your feet move and your heart race.
- 🎭 **Thrilling Entertainment** – Live shows every night, featuring the best entertainers from across the country!

Jay Gatsby is representative of most people both during the Roaring 20's and today. Even though most people do not seem to have a fixation for love so similar to Gatsby's, the way they try to relive the past, "mimics" his behavior to some extent. His way of thinking acutely depicts the complexities of the human soul. Even when having acknowledged and comprehended that the past cannot be relived, we often live in denial and we try to shield ourselves from nostalgia, almost feeling guilty that we're moving on. We, just like Gatsby, feel like we owe something to our past selves. We have found comfort in things that we've experienced before. In playing the same movie over and over again because knowing the

ending, makes us feel safe. We cling on to the past so hard, that the moments we have not yet lived, have already "traumatized" us. Unbeknownst to both us and Gatsby, this mindset was and is bound to be our downfall. Gatsby's death highlights the consequences of him not embracing the passage of time. Our "death" will be watching our lives go by, whilst trying over and over to feel the same comfort we did once before. Nevertheless, I believe that Jay Gatsby died long before the day his heart stopped beating. From the moment he decided that he was going to sacrifice his future in the name of reliving the past, he was, just like all people with the same mindset, a dead man walking.

Hold Onto Things that Matter

By Anastasia Papanastasopoulou

In today's consumer driven society, many believe that material possessions are the key to true happiness. While financial stability is important, equating wealth with joy often leads to disappointment. I firmly believe that materialism breeds dissatisfaction and emotional emptiness, rather than true eudaimonia. This idea is powerfully illustrated in Guy De Maupassant's short story "The Necklace," where the protagonist, Mathilde Loisel, serves as a representative example of the dangers one might face when valuing material possessions over personal contentment.

Mathilde Loisel is portrayed as a woman who longs for wealth, luxury and social status, none of which she possesses. Though her life is secure and she has a loving husband, she constantly dreams of a more glamorous existence. Her fixation on opulence and superficial beauty blinds her to the quiet gratifications of her modest existence. Rather than appreciating what she has, she dwells on what she lacks, believing that only wealth can bring her happiness. This desire for a sumptuous lifestyle culminates in a disastrous decision: she borrows a diamond necklace from a friend to attend an upper-class

event. For one night, Mathilde feels like the woman she always wished to be. Little did she know that the necklace would get lost and that that night would cost her and her husband ten tormenting years of trying to repay a debt. The ironic twist that the necklace was mere imitation brilliantly underscores the deceptive nature of material aspirations and the futility of chasing illusions. G. D. Maupassant's narrative serves as a poignant critique of materialism, illustrating how the relentless pursuit of status and wealth can ultimately rob individuals of both time and bliss.

However, it is a popular belief that the satisfaction provided by material prosperity is incomparable and far greater than the one provided by everyday life achievements and moments. The ecstasy and excitement felt by individuals when unwrapping a new gift, driving a luxurious car or dressing in silk clothing, tends to temporarily "blind" them of the actual shallowness and superficiality of such things. Ultimately, materialism is often a trap rather than a path to internal fulfillment. The story "The Necklace" reveals how materialism can distort our priorities and leave us feeling empty and hollow despite external appearances.



The protagonist of the story, Mathilde Loisel, epitomizes how being overly attached to material possessions can erode one's genuine contentment. Her tragic outcome proves that happiness does not really stem from luxury or status, but from appreciation and gratitude for what we already have. When we chase illusions, as Mathilde did, we risk losing not only what is real but also what is irreplaceable—our time, our peace, and our sense of selfhood.

Money Fails

By Marina Dampassina

Imagine waking up one morning with millions in your bank account: no debt, no stress about expenses, freedom to acquire anything your heart desires. This may seem like a dream, but does it guarantee happiness? This is a question that has puzzled people for generations. In my view, while money can improve the quality of one's life, it does not necessarily lead to pure happiness. On the contrary, money often fails to bring happiness as it is unable to fulfill emotional and psychological needs and provide satisfaction.

First of all, I am convinced that material possessions and wealth cannot satisfy the emotional and psychological need for happiness. No amount of money can “buy” the human need for deep connections and inner peace. Jay Gatsby from Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* is a perfect example. Despite his incredible wealth, he lived in emotional isolation, being hung up on a dream of rekindling a past relationship. His life was filled with glamorous parties and material abundance, yet he remained unfulfilled. It would be safe to conclude that happiness is rooted in emotional connection and inner peace, which money cannot purchase

or replace.

What is more, the pursuit of wealth breeds eternal misery rather than happiness, especially when people prioritize money over everything else. Mathilde Loisel in the short story “The Necklace” by Guy De Maupassant is driven by her desire to be living a luxurious lifestyle, envied by everyone around her. Because of her profound obsession, she borrows a diamond necklace from a friend to fit in with the high-class guests of a formal event and ends up ruining her entire life trying to pay off a debt for something that turns out to be worthless. In my opinion, her story shows that placing too much importance on wealth can create stress as well as a lifetime of regret.

On the other hand, it is widely believed that money does bring happiness, especially when it comes to solving practical problems, providing things such as better education or travel opportunities. However, as I see it, once a person's basic needs are met, more money does not always lead to a different level of joy. Therefore, although money can improve living conditions, it is not the ultimate source of joy: people who strictly rely on money to live happily may end up heavily disappointed or

with an emotional void.

By and large, while no one can deny that money plays a significant, practical role in our lives, it is not the “key” to genuine happiness. The pursuit of material prosperity as the main element of accomplishment often leads to misery. It is my firm conviction that true happiness stems from human relationships, love, life purpose; not the size of one’s wallet.



What Would You Wish For?

By Elena Dimtsa

Suppose you were to encounter a genie, a magical being with the ability to grant any wish you might have. When met with this opportunity, the first request of the majority of people would likely involve money, a large house, or even a nice sports car. And then the question arises: would those people wish for the same thing, if later given a second chance? I strongly believe that they would not. In my opinion, while material prosperity may bring a provisional sense of fulfillment, it certainly does not lead to genuine happiness.

The pursuit of wealth, which many confuse with the pursuit of happiness, is ultimately a journey of endless greed that does never bring true fulfillment. This fact is undeniably demonstrated in the story “The Necklace” by Guy De Maupassant, through the example of the protagonist, Mathilde Loisel. The woman, dissatisfied with her social class and financial background, attempts everything within her power to create the impression that she belongs to a higher standing during an upper-class event. We are able to understand, however, that no matter how much she splurges in order to achieve luxury, she is never fulfilled and constantly strives for more, a

decision that proves to be detrimental to her life. Much similarly, any person who loses sight of the things that genuinely matter and decides to seek happiness in material prosperity, will find themselves entrapped in a constant, insatiable pursuit of wealth, never being satisfied with their current state of being but instead seeking increasingly ridiculous displays of sumptuousness.

Many would argue that money is necessary for happiness, even going so far as to suggest that people with a lot of it face no troubles. To some extent, it is true that money may contribute to happiness; after all, it gives people the opportunity to fulfil some of their lifelong dreams, and it is also necessary to cover basic needs such as housing or healthcare, without which it would be impossible for most to consider life in an optimistic manner. I strongly believe, however, that genuine happiness is the result not of wealth, but of a life well-lived; of meaningful connections with people we love, of joyful experiences filled with love and companionship. In the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, this is clearly demonstrated through the example of Jay Gatsby, a man who even while having acquired

unbelievable wealth, never truly managed to experience genuine happiness, but instead died lonely, never achieving his one true dream: gaining Daisy's love. It is evident, therefore, that even humongous amounts of money do little to satiate a person's true desires, as the fulfillment they bring is superficial and ephemeral.

Overall, it seems that wealth, although a dream of many, ultimately is nowhere near being the key to genuine happiness. It is crucial to recognize the importance of the smaller, everyday pleasures and the significance of genuine experiences and connections in order to meet true fulfillment in our lives.

Reading the Past, Adapting to the Future

By Marsia Saracaki

Throughout the year, in our English class, we read and analyzed the novel “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee. Within the book the reader can easily locate the theme of false impressions and how we must never judge a book by its cover. Although the novel was published in 1960, its message remains deeply relevant today, a constant reminder of the harmfulness of judgement and how cautious people must be when criticizing someone unknown to them.

The story follows Scout, the narrator and protagonist of the book, as she witnesses her father, Atticus Finch, defending a black man named Tom Robinson after being falsely accused of raping a white woman in 1930s Alabama. This simple act makes her father, as well as her brother and herself, become targets of the rest of the small town, Maycomb’s, residents as they outcast them. As the story progresses Scout and her brother also come face to face with Boo Radley, a man who according to a local legend, not only is a dangerous man but also a killer who must be avoided at all costs. In the end though, it is revealed that he has a heart of gold, protecting the children from danger and looking after them. The rumors surrounding him are proven to have been false

accusations thrown around by society since they couldn’t bear to live in a town with something different than them. This in turn highlights the shallowness of that society due to its willingness to create false accusations towards a person to outcast them, while also ignoring that this too is a form of cruelty caused by their unjustifiable fear. Throughout the story we can clearly see the themes of prejudice and injustice resurface, as the children attempt to stand up for what they think is right and defend both Tom but also Boo. In conclusion, the theme of false judgement and accusations is one of, if not the, most prevalent theme in the story, which relies heavily on it to expand on its characters and prove society wrong.

Harper Lee’s message remains as vital today as it was when the novel was first published and is required to achieve harmony between people. Within the last 60 years due to the amplified accessibility in communication and travel to an increasing amount of people from different societies, different cultures have begun interacting more with one another. Specifically, we can witness a unification of customs brought from those cultures as they intermix. In these situations, it is mandatory that

we maintain an open mind when approaching individuals with different beliefs from ours, since there is a cultural significance to their ideologies. Harper Lee's message further helps individuals understand on a deeper level why mutual respect between all communities, as well as communication, are required in order to form meaningful connections and relationships. When rushing to a conclusion based on a person's appearance their opinions and personality are often overlooked, enforcing prejudiced beliefs. This is exactly why becoming open minded and respectful individuals, who do not judge others too quickly, is a responsibility not to be taken lightly in our modern era.

So, it is easy to conclude that although "To Kill A Mockingbird" was written and published over 60 years ago, its core message and themes both remain mandatory to form bridges between cultures and society and break the walls previously formed by prejudice. Opposite to how the townspeople of Maycomb were quick to condemn Tom and Boo, fabricating rumors about them and spreading misinformation regarding things they had never done, people of today must always remain open-minded and be ready to accept change, facing diversity with curiosity rather than fear and judgement.



CREATIVE DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE



1. PREAMBLE

When in Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one to absolve oneself of all social customs, one must be dissolved of them effective immediately. One demands respect and to be given the liberty of expressing their issues and predicaments which justifies the reason for separation from it.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

I believe my reasons for separation from the social norms are self-evident, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed with a personality that all its aspects are unique, and should further be accepted in our society, with absolutely no doubt. Many trends have been set in the past but also in the present, which have resulted in many students of our foundation to lose their identity and personality in the process. Expensive clothing, inappropriate clothing are one of many examples of trends that have been known to influence our school.

3. LIST OF GRIEVANCES

Having stated the prior information, all students of our school should have the right to wear whatever they like and speak freely, without receiving any negative judgement, whatsoever. It is of great importance that trends shall be demolished effective immediately and as a result let Athens College's students enjoy their academic journey. Our students' individual identities are slowly fading as pupils are focusing more on following the social norms than their academic performance and behavior.

4. STATEMENT OF PRIOR ATTEMPTS

There have been many previous attempts that students, staff and other members of our foundation have tried to rectify this situation. We have tried planning assemblies and theatrical performances to convey messages against our social norms, etc. Pupils have tried speaking up to bullies, but with no positive result. Even teachers and other forms of staff have tried repressing situations harmful to students, but have ended up inflating the situation.

5. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Therefore, this situation has officially caused the whole population of students in Athens College to declare themselves independent of any kind of existing social norms. If trend-setting, and the inability of students to speak up for themselves, as well as avoiding showing their true identity, isn't terminated now, there will be major consequences. It will provoke hatred between students, angst and many other destructive factors for each and every one of the students attending Athens College. We will do everything in our power for our voices to be heard, and will be soon endowed independent.

1. PREAMBLE

It has become necessary for all creatures who bring joy and entertain the humankind to live free from suffering, manipulation, and exploitation. A decent respect for their existence requires that they declare the causes which impel them to this injustice.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all living organisms are created equal and should be treated with fairness, respect and well-being; that to secure these rights, laws must be implemented, deriving the power of circuses to assess this cruelty to animals. Whenever any system becomes destructive, it is the responsibility of the ringmaster, all the way up to the government to establish a new arrangement that secures the animal's freedom and life in their natural habitat. Prudence dictates that long-standing tradition should not be changed for unworthy reasons, and accordingly, all grievances must first be addressed. But when repeated injustices minimize the life of an animal to one of such cruelty it is their obligation to throw off such oppression and be absolved from circus duties.

3. LIST OF GRIEVANCES

All living species are created equal. They have the right to live in their natural environments and to be treated with respect and compassion, free from abuse. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world: animals are stripped from their habits, separated from their families, transformed into sources of entertainment, sold like property, chained in cages, and forced to comply.

4. STATEMENT OF PRIOR ATTEMPTS

Nor have we been wanting in attention to those who have benefited and ill-treated us. We have petitioned them from time to time, for compassion, for the abolition of cruel practices and acknowledgement of our unalienable rights. We have appealed to their justice and magnanimity only to encounter persistent oppression and indifference. Those who control us have ignored us, choosing financial gain over ethics and entertainment over animal well-being

5. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We therefore are compelled to declare the legal independence of animals and demand the freedom and respect given to all living beings. Thus, they will no longer endure exploited labour, maltreatment, and oppression for the purpose of entertainment in order to gain financial benefits. We demand a chance for a life of freedom; no longer chained and confined in dismal cages. They will be free to graze in their protected environments, surrounded by others of the same species and enjoy the habits of living as nature had intended.

1. PREAMBLE

The protection of the environment is of vital importance to sustaining our planet and showing gratitude for the right to life that we were endowed with by our Creator. Now more than ever, we need to dissolve the actions that pose a threat to nature and adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle. Hence, it's not just a matter of choice, but of duty for us, young people, to preserve nature by establishing certain policies.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people have the unalienable rights to clean water, unpolluted air and a healthy environment. In order to secure these rights, there are existing laws preventing individuals from degrading the environment. So, whenever any citizen, industry, or government stands against these ends, it is the right of the people to reform or abolish such destructive practices and to institute new policies and replace them with sustainable policies. Future generations should inherit a healthy planet, so humankind should comply with eco-friendly laws and avoid choices that contribute to environmental harm.

3. LIST OF GRIEVANCES

To demonstrate this, let's present the facts to a candid world:

- By recklessly polluting the air and soil, we contribute to climate change.
- The overconsumption of natural sources disrupts ecological balance.
- We prioritize profit over the well-being of the future generations.
- Deforestation leads to decrease of oxygen and loss of biodiversity.
- Ocean pollution endangers the health of marine ecosystems.

4. STATEMENT OF PRIOR ATTEMPTS

Many scientists and environmental advocates have tried to warn us about the detrimental effects of our actions. They have petitioned for redress in the humblest terms but their repeated pleas have been answered only by further exploitation. People tend to disavow their suggestions and still show disrespect towards the environment. Even the fees imposed to hold polluters back from the damage they cause do not discourage them or make them more prudent.

5. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We, therefore, young people, in the name of future generations, solemnly publish and declare that we are free and independent from environmental destruction. We shall take all necessary actions to restore our planet and promote the idea of sustainability. All unsustainable practices ought to be dissolved and as conscious and independent citizens we have full power to establish new ones. We mutually pledge to work together with innovation and determination in order to ensure a thriving world for generations to come.

1. PREAMBLE

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for individuals to break free from social media and reclaim the time, the focus and the peace, to which we are entitled to, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that we should declare the causes which impel us to the separation.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that everyone is created equal and no one's worth should be measured by likes, comments and shares. We all have the unalienable right to privacy and genuine human contact. To secure these rights, restrictions must be instituted against the media manipulation. Whenever social media becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter their independence and develop new behaviors that prioritize mental health and communication. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that social media's long established effects should not be changed for light and transient causes. It is the people's right and duty to throw off such distractions.

3. LIST OF GRIEVANCES

The history of advanced technology is a history of repeated mistakes and exploitation, all having the aim to lead individuals to addiction. To prove this, let facts be submitted to an honest world. First and foremost, social media has completely invaded our privacy by constantly collecting our data without us even realizing it. Sadly, face to face communication is nowadays completely unheard of while most relationships have become superficial. What is more, unrealistic beauty standards are promoted and consequently insecurities have spread, which make us vulnerable and dissatisfied with ourselves. In addition, it is a well-known fact that social media manipulates us to endless internet-surfing, disturbing the peace of our minds. We all tend to seek validation from likes rather than focusing on our self-worth.

4. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We, therefore, appealing to peace and independence do solemnly publish and declare that we are, and of right ought to be free and independent from the manipulation of social media and that as free and independent people we have full power to set boundaries and live authentically. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the strength of our voices, we mutually pledge to each other our true selves and sacred honor.

1. PREAMBLE

We, the children, in search of happiness, safety, the right to be heard and treated as equals declare our independence from disrespect, hostility, discrimination on multiple grounds. We, the children, believe that we should be treated with compassion, kindness and respect. When the laws of Nature and of Nature's God have been violated, it is our responsibility to speak up.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all children regardless of race, gender, class, and nationality deserve equal access to education, healthcare, and protection from harm, a clean environment, shelter, food, clothes and time to play and be themselves. Moreover, all of us have the unalienable Right to speak out, express opinions and to peacefully protest. Families, schools and communities should provide support and never ignore or silence us. We strongly believe that no one has the right to control our actions and dictate our thoughts and dreams.

3. LIST OF GRIEVANCES

We, therefore, reject and oppose the injustices that hinder our rights and silence our voices. We refuse not to have our own thoughts, wants and feelings. We deny child labor, when we should be going to school, socializing and playing. We will definitely not accept domestic violence and abuse from those who are supposed to protect us and keep us safe. We won't stand bullies. We strongly criticize governments that deprive children of basic needs such as food, shelter, clean water, health care. No more can we put up with societies who diminish our opportunities for mental, physical and social development.

4. STATEMENT OF PRIOR ATTEMPTS

We know that governments, societies and people in general have tried to make things better for us, the children, but many of us are still under the shadow of inequality. Several are still hungry, forced to work, denied schooling and abused. We have heard of promises and actions being taken, but, somehow we don't get to experience these promises being fulfilled in our lives.

5. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We, therefore, the Future of Tomorrow, appeal to parents, teachers, and leaders to listen and understand our wants, needs, and perspectives. We urge them to protect our Rights and take the necessary steps in order to create a world where every single child will thrive and reach his full potential. And for the support of this Declaration, we mutually pledge not only to make the world a better place but also to safeguard it with our lives.

1. PREAMBLE

We have understood that the usage of the bathroom during educational courses is universally and constantly discussed. We, as students, believe that access to the bathroom is a fundamental right essential for comfort, health, and focus. While we are humans that are obligated and expected to follow orders and respect restrictions, we believe that policies that impact students' lives should be accepted by both sides.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

We hold that all students have the right to attend to their personal needs without unnecessary restrictions. Denying restroom access can negatively impact a student's physical health, emotional well-being and academic performance. Therefore a responsible and respectful approach to restroom policies is necessary. They will provide trust and a better relationship between students and educators, but also maintain a productive and right learning environment.

3. LIST OF GRIEVANCES

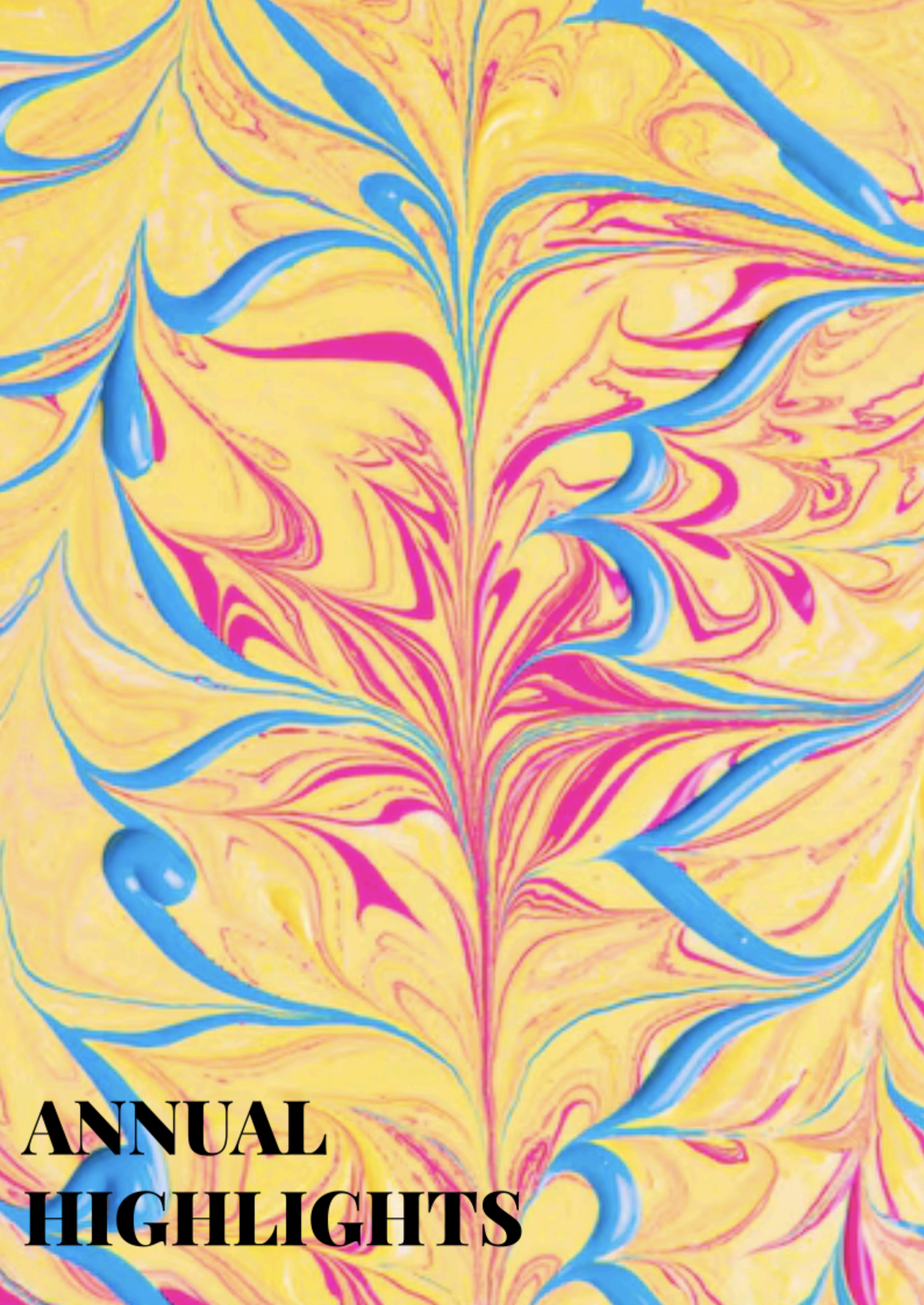
Many students are following strict policies that require them to wait for breaks between lessons or limit the number of times they can go per semester. These restrictions fail to consider individuals needs such as, medical conditions, emergencies or natural fluids that aren't preplanned. Furthermore, students feel embarrassed or anxious when declined the pass or when forced to justify their need to use the bathroom, creating stress and discomfort in the classroom. Such policies prioritize control and disregard the basic need every student has.

4. STATEMENT OF PRIOR ATTEMPTS

Students and parents have spoken up and expressed their opinions, asking for fairer bathroom policies, through petitions, meetings and conversations with teachers and principals. Despite these efforts, many schools continue to enforce such limitations. Some schools have tried using bathroom passes or set limits, but these don't work for everyone and can make students feel embarrassed or unheard. Since previous attempts have not led to meaningful change, this declaration is necessary to reaffirm students' right to use the restroom when needed.

5. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

We call for fair and flexible bathroom policies that allow us to attend to personal needs with reasonable guidelines, recognizing that emergencies and natural needs should be respected. We seek the removal of strict measures for restroom use, as students should not face consequences for taking care of their health. By making these changes, we believe schools can create a more supportive environment that values both our well-being and education.



ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Forensics

For decades, Forensics has stood as a cornerstone of excellence and tradition at our school, offering students a unique platform to grow, compete, and shine. More than just a competitive activity, Forensics has become a proud symbol of our school's commitment to academic distinction and personal development. Year after year, our talented team has brought home top honors at district, regional, and state tournaments, earning widespread recognition for their dedication and skill. But the true value of Forensics lies beyond the awards—it's in the powerful growth students experience as they learn to craft persuasive arguments, think critically under pressure, and speak with clarity and confidence. This transformative journey equips students with lifelong skills in communication, leadership, and problem-solving, preparing them not just for competitions, but for success in college, careers, and civic life. Through Forensics, our school continues to foster a tradition where voices are not only heard, but celebrated.

Congratulations to all students who discovered their voices and made them heard in such an empowering and graceful way, their amazing coaches and Ms. Kallina Basli, our school's Forensics Club Head.



Forensics Tournament Results

St Catherine's Debate Cup 2024

Winning Team: Eleana Dalacoura and Artemis Papastavrou

Best Speaker Award: Artemis Papastavrou

Top 20 Speakers:

- 3rd place: Eleana Dalacoura
- 15th place: Danae Tatsopoulou
- 18th place: Michail Kofinakos



Fall Deree Invitational 2024

Winning Team: Eleana Dalacoura and Artemis Papastavrou

Semi Finalists:

- Maria Petrolia and Danae Tatsopoulou
- Michail Kofinakos and Stella Hiskaki

Best Speaker Award: Danae Tatsopoulou

Top 10 Speakers:

- 3rd place: Artemis Papastavrou
- 7th place: Maria Petrolia
- 9th place: Eleana Dalacoura
- 10th place: Stella Hiskaki

Top 10 Novice Speakers:

- 8th place: Alexandra Marinopoulou



Eurasian Schools Debating Championship 2025

- **Artemis Papastavrou won the Championship** with the Greek national debate team, of which she is a member. In the final they defeated the team from China. Artemis is joined on the national team by: Marianna Argeiti (Pierce College), Ellie Kitinou (Moraitis School), and Kai Yuet Zhang (ACS Athens).
- **Danae Tatsopoulou** competed with the juniors' team, and reached the octo-finals of the competition.

Moraitis Debate Cup 2025

Winning Team: Maria Petrolia and Danae Tatsopoulou

Finalists: Eleana Dalacoura (IB2) and Artemis Papastavrou (IB2)

Semi Finalists:

- Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou with Spyros Roupas Pantaleon
- Stella Hiskakis and Michael Kofinakos

Best Speaker Award: Artemis Papastavrou

Top 10 Speakers:

- 2nd place: Eleana Dalacoura
- 4th place: Danae Tatsopoulou
- 7th place: Stella Hiskakis
- 10th place: Maria Petrolia



Spring Deree Invitational 2025

Winning Team: Artemis Papastavrou with a student from ACS Athens

Finalist: Evridiki Ziouli with a student from Pierce College

Semi Finalists: Maria Petrolia and Danae Tatsopoulou

Best Speaker Award: Artemis Papastavrou

Top 10 Speakers:

- 5th place: Danae Tatsopoulou
- 6th place: Maria Petrolia

Top 10 Novice Speakers:

- 3rd place: Konstantinos Karras
- 9th place: Evridiki Ziouli

Panhellenic Forensics Association Tournament 2025

- **1st Place Sweepstakes Cup** with 7 Finals and 6 Honorable Mentions
- **Winning Team in Debate:** Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou, Michalis Kofinakos, Danae Tatsopoulou, Elisavet Tsoli, Maria Yannidis
- **Best Speaker in Debate Award:** Artemis Papastavrou
- **First Among Equals in Original Oratory:** Erica Dritsa
- **First Among Equals in Oral Interpretation of Literature - Comic:** Erica Dritsa
- **First Among Equals in Impromptu Speaking:** Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon
- **First Among Equals in Duet Acting Dramatic:** Alex Kollarou and Artemis Papastavrou



The following students also reached the Finals or received Honorable Mentions:

- **Finalist in Oral Interpretation of Literature - Dramatic:** Christiana Vassilara
- **Finalist in Group Discussion:** Evangelia Begleri
- **Finalists in Duet Acting Dramatic:** Aristi Dalli and Nafsika Goudeli
- **Honorable Mention in Group Discussion:** Giorgos Krassas and Dafni Tsimpre
- **Honorable Mention in Original Oratory:** Afrodit Christodoulou and Xanthi Gontica
- **Honorable Mention in Impromptu Speaking:** Haris Valsamis
- **Honorable Mention in Duet Acting Comic:** Georgia Papachristodoulou and Nafsika Tsarpali-Psiridou
- **Semi Finalists in Debate:** Panagiota Barabouti-Tsagalou, Eleana Dalacoura, Artemis Papastavrou, Maria Petrolia, Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon
- **Top 10 Speakers in Debate:** 7th place, Danae Tatsopoulou

Hosting the 2025 Debate Cup

On Saturday 1 February, our seniors organized with great success our School's Debate Cup 2025! This competition is a student-led initiative, organized by seniors in the debate club, and supported by volunteers from the Forensics Club. The Debate Cup this year was hosted in Latseio, in Kantza.

More than 70 speakers from schools in Athens took part in the competition, with the team from Moraitis School winning the grand final.

Our school was represented by eight Junior High 3 – High School 2 students. Congratulations to Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon for ranking 4th in the individual speaker rankings of the competition.

The organizing committee was led by students Artemis Papastavrou, Eleana Dalacoura, and Stella Hiskakis, supported by volunteers from all school units.

Congratulations to all our students, for the excellent organization of the Debate Cup and their debate performances in the competition!



Group Discussion: How to Become a Better Speaker

By Celia Papavasileiou, *Group Discussion Coach 2025*



Four years ago, I had my first encounter with Group Discussion. Like every new experience, I had no idea what to expect at first. Surely, though, I didn't expect it to have the significance it has on my life today. Group Discussion is one of the many events of the Panhellenic Forensics Association. Each year, more than twenty schools all over Greece participate in the Panhellenic Forensics Association Tournament (PFAT), an opportunity for the students to improve their speech and communication skills. This is how I first got to know Group Discussion in the school year of 2020-2021.

Group Discussion is a structured conversation between a small group of people that lasts about 40-45 minutes. The participants need to achieve a set goal and reach a conclusion under a specific role. They exchange opinions, propose solutions and debate on

certain aspects of each topic. Each year, in preparation of the PFAT, our event has a different topic. This year, our students had to research and be able to discuss the topic of "Social Media & Emotional Well-being."

As a student, I participated in the PFAT on the event of Group Discussion twice, on the topics of "Artificial Intelligence" and "Emotional Intelligence. In my experience, Group Discussion was a challenging event, especially at first. However, through hard work and the guidance of our coach Vicky Mavrika, I learned how to practice my research, communication and problem-solving skills. In just one Group Discussion the participant must showcase their knowledge for the topic, provide well-structured arguments and cooperate with the other participants with respect and kindness. What more could you possibly need from a

discussion?

This year, I had the honor to get back to school and back to Group Discussion. However, this time was different. Instead of being a student, I was the coach. Instead of being judged, I was the one judging. With my creative and skilled co-coach, Magda Petmeza, we taught this year's students about Group Discussion. We practiced how to thoroughly research a topic, successfully structure a discussion and express arguments effectively. Like every year, our students participated in the PFAT, which this year took place in Εκπαιδευτική Αναγέννηση on the 28-30 of March.

Having now seen both sides of what Group Discussion really is, I can acknowledge all its benefits. It's an event that teaches you how to research and how to gain structured and well-rounded knowledge of any topic. Moreover, it teaches you how to express your arguments with respect, how to actively listen to other's ideas and how to use your creative thinking in any scenario that you must deal with. Most importantly, it teaches you how to express and present yourself, providing you with skills that will be useful for the rest of your life.



Students in Action



Model United Nations

The Model United Nations (MUN) Club at our high school has become a vibrant and respected tradition, offering students the opportunity to engage with global issues, develop diplomatic skills, and represent our school with pride. Over the years, our MUN delegates have distinguished themselves at prestigious conferences, earning awards and recognition for their thoughtful debate, innovative solutions, and collaborative spirit. But beyond the accolades, the true impact of the MUN Club lies in its ability to shape globally minded students who are articulate, empathetic, and informed. Through hours of research, public speaking, and negotiation, members gain invaluable skills in critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership that will serve them throughout their academic and professional journeys. The MUN Club continues to inspire students to step onto the world stage, embrace diverse perspectives, and become thoughtful leaders of tomorrow.

We proudly congratulate all our MUN participants for their outstanding performance, well-deserved distinctions, and the impressive skills they have honed along the way!



Our Year in Review

By Evanthia Kavroulaki & Dimitrios Rozakis, *MUN Club Advisors*

This year has been an exciting and rewarding journey for our High School Model United Nations (MUN) club, marked by remarkable growth, memorable experiences, and outstanding achievements. From our very first meeting to the final moments of our last conference, students have demonstrated incredible dedication, curiosity, and enthusiasm. Throughout the year, they not only deepened their understanding of complex global issues but also made impressive strides in building their confidence, sharpening their public speaking, and mastering the art of teamwork and diplomacy.

Our delegates took on the challenge of representing countries from every corner of the world, diving into difficult topics such as international security, climate change, human rights, and global health. They embraced the spirit of diplomacy, collaborating with peers, drafting thoughtful resolutions, and often stepping boldly outside their comfort zones to speak, lead, and negotiate on challenging platforms. Their outstanding preparation, professionalism, poise and adaptability were recognized time and again at competitive conferences, where they earned well-deserved praise and distinctions.

More importantly, MUN this year was about meaningful learning—about the world, about diverse perspectives, and about the vital importance of respectful, solution-focused dialogue. Along the way, students formed lasting friendships, supported each other's growth, and discovered the power of their own voices. We are incredibly proud of each and every member for their hard work, courage, and commitment, and we look forward to seeing how they will continue to lead and inspire in the years to come.

MUN Conferences 2024-2025

DSA MUN October 2024 (German School of Athens)

WFUNA October–November 2024 (Geneva)

CGS MUN December 2024 (Costeas–Geitonas School)

THIMUN January 2025 (The Hague)

PS MUN March 2025 (Platon School)

MUN in a Nutshell

By Spiros Glykos



Model United Nations (MUN) is more than just a simulation of the real United Nations; it's a transformative experience that cultivates global awareness, diplomacy, and leadership. For students seeking to broaden their horizons, sharpen their communication skills, and explore international relations, MUN offers a unique platform to do just that.

At its core, MUN places participants in the roles of delegates representing countries, where they research, debate, and resolve pressing global issues. Through this process, students learn how to think critically, articulate arguments, and negotiate effectively. These are not just academic skills. They are vital tools in any professional or personal context.

One of the most valuable benefits of MUN is its emphasis on public

speaking and confidence building. Standing up and presenting ideas in front of others can be daunting, but MUN provides a supportive environment where participants learn to speak persuasively and respectfully, even in disagreement. These experiences often lead to stronger communication abilities and greater self-assurance.

MUN also fosters cultural awareness and empathy. Delegates must understand the perspectives and policies of the countries they represent, even if they differ from their own beliefs. This encourages open-mindedness and a deeper appreciation for the complexity of international affairs.

Moreover, MUN creates a network of like-minded, motivated individuals. Conferences often lead to lasting

friendships and connections with peers who share interests in politics, law, diplomacy, and global development.

In a world increasingly interconnected and in need of thoughtful leaders, participating in MUN equips students with the mindset and skills to make a difference. Whether you're passionate about solving global challenges or simply want to improve your debate and leadership skills, MUN is a worthwhile and enriching experience. Joining could be your first step toward becoming a global changemaker.

Model United Nations: Where Do I Even Start?

By Konstantinos Karras



I never had any particular passion for diplomacy, nor did I think debating was my piece of cake. My participation in this club came about as a suggestion from my mother, when she said: “You know, MUN would be perfect for you, considering all you do is talk back to me.” Surprisingly, I listened. And it was the best decision I could have ever made.

First of all, the knowledge I have gained throughout my four-year MUN journey is indispensable. From topics such as the Crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Nuclear Proliferation to Corporate Insolvency and Measures to Prevent Financial Institutions from Collapsing, this experience has been an eye opening one. I firmly believe that I have a significantly more well-rounded worldview, having developed opinions

on international affairs you only see well-informed adults and elders touch upon. I still have a lot to learn, but MUN helps you gain a basic understanding of what’s actually going on in the world...which is good I guess?

Anyway, the weirdest by far thing MUN forces you to do is defend positions you don’t like. Due to the fact that, most of the time, you don’t really get a say in which country you’ll have assigned to you, I have had to defend all sides of the political spectrum. Defend Russia in the Question of Ukraine? Have done so. Defend numerous U.S “interventions” in countries that resulted in regime changes, unfair elections, or more? Have done so. Represent North Korea in humanitarian discussions? Have done so as well. But that’s also the

best thing about MUN. It forces you to understand both sides of a disagreement, understand their arguments and their point of view. Before you actually dismiss an opinion, a country's policy or any side of an affair in general, you first have to understand where they are coming from. Sometimes, you may encounter a "radical" point of view and after comprehending it, you may think to yourself "Hmm, maybe what they're saying isn't so diabolical after all." Other times, you do the same thing and result in "That is definitely wrong for a bunch of extra reasons." Nevertheless, the insight and open-mindedness you gain by participating in this club is valuable beyond measure.

For those who worry about being bored sitting in an 8-hour conference counting the seconds until it concludes, I can personally guarantee that this will never happen, considering you approach it the right way. One of the biggest reasons for me saying this is the wonderful community existing within MUN. Personally, I have met all kinds of people in MUN, and I can definitely state that there is a place for everyone in this amazing circle. If you combine active participation in the debate along with socialization during breaks/lunch/social events, you're in for the most memorable experiences

of your childhood.

MUN has been an incredible ride, and has a lot more yet to offer. I am looking forward to continuing this journey and I wouldn't wish even for my worst enemy to miss this kind of experience. If you do end up missing it, just know you missed out on a more fun, more exciting version of yourself!

DSA MUN October 2024 (German School of Athens)



WFUNA October-November 2024 (Geneva)



CGS MUN December 2024 (Costeas-Geitonas)



THIMUN January 2025 (The Hague)





PS MUN March 2025 (Platon School)



A Journey of Discovery and Dialogue: Psychico College Students Visit the Gaston Thorn International School in Luxembourg

This past November, a group of Grade 10 students from Psychico College High School embarked on an enriching educational journey to Luxembourg, where they visited the esteemed École Internationale Gaston Thorn. Accompanied by Mrs. Anagnostou, Mrs. Katsarou, and Mrs. Gyftaki, along with fellow students and educators from Athens College, the group had the distinct privilege of engaging in a vibrant cultural and intellectual exchange with their Luxembourgian peers.

The visit offered a remarkable opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a truly multicultural educational environment. Through interactive discussions, collaborative activities, and meaningful conversations, students exchanged perspectives on global current affairs, gaining insights shaped by the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of their international counterparts.

As part of this broader educational experience, the group also journeyed beyond Luxembourg's borders to key historical locations in France and Belgium. These excursions included visits to significant World War II sites and memorials, allowing students to witness firsthand the landscapes that shaped pivotal moments in modern history. Museums housing wartime memorabilia brought history to life, deepening students' understanding of the past and its enduring impact on today's world.

This unforgettable trip not only broadened students' academic and cultural horizons but also fostered friendships and forged connections that transcend national borders. Psychico College and École Internationale Gaston Thorn remain committed to nurturing this dynamic partnership, united in their mission to cultivate open-minded, globally aware young citizens prepared to thrive in an interconnected world.

Students in Action



A Heartfelt Celebration: The American Corner Shines at This Year's Christmas Bazaar

This year's Christmas Bazaar at Athens College was nothing short of magical, and the American Corner stood out as a beacon of community spirit, creativity, and generosity. From the youngest students in elementary school to the seniors in high school, from dedicated teachers to enthusiastic volunteers, the entire school community came together with joy and purpose to support a meaningful cause.

The American Corner, decorated with festive flair and warm smiles, offered a delightful mix of holiday treats, fun games, and unique crafts that captured the spirit of the season. But more than just a celebration, it was a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when we work together. Every effort—from baking cookies to wrapping gifts—contributed to the greater mission: raising funds for the school's scholarship program.

Thanks to the incredible enthusiasm and participation of our community, the event was a resounding success. Not only did we raise a generous sum to support fellow students through scholarships, but we also created an atmosphere of unity and joy that will linger in our hearts long after the holidays.

Many left the Bazaar not just with gifts and memories, but with a renewed sense of purpose—reminded that each of us has the power to make a difference. The American Corner was more than a festive booth; it was a celebration of kindness, inclusion, and the true spirit of giving.

Here's to many more events that bring us together, inspire action, and spread joy throughout our community and beyond.

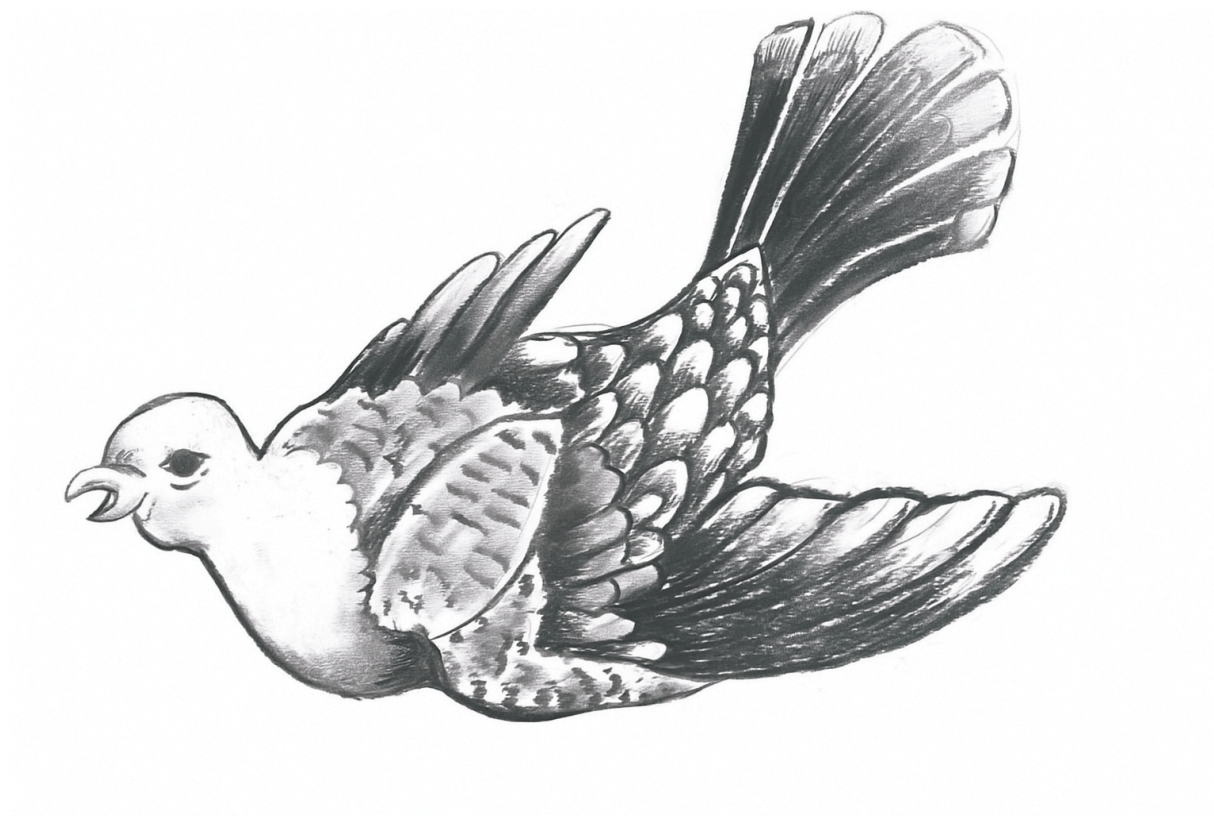
Students in Action



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