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news | homelessness



With every bed and mattress donated New Life Furniture Bank also gives a set of linens.



At the churches that partner with Family Promise, each family is given their own room with beds and linens to stay in for the week.

homelessness | news



When families stay at the churches that partner with Family Promise they are given toiletries and sometimes hand-written letters or gifts like blankets.



NOWHERE TO TURN

As student homelessness is on the rise, government and nonprofit organizations have taken steps to help families with children to get back on their feet.

story and photography **anna mullins** | infographic **mary barone**

* denotes name change

Evicted from their apartment, they had nowhere to go and no form of transportation. With no family members to take them in and no one to turn to, a single mom and her two young daughters found themselves homeless.

Homelessness can be an extremely traumatic experience. Grace*, a Lakota student, found herself in this scary situation. She and her sister represent two of the 1,354 students in Butler County that were identified as homeless during the 2018-2019 school year, according to the Department of Education.

"[The scariest part about not having a home was] worrying about having a safe place to sleep and having enough food," Grace said. "I also worried that my friends would find out and not be friends with me anymore."

Homelessness doesn't always look like the person on the side of the street with a cardboard sign. It can be a family living out of their car, doubling up in another family's home, living in a hotel, or possibly a single mom hoping to find room for herself and her children in a local shelter. With all of these possibilities, it can be difficult for school officials to recognize student homelessness.

"There is significant under-identification of homeless students, for a number of reasons,"

Barbara Duffield, Executive Director of SchoolHouse Connection, told Spark. "One reason is because children and youth who are homeless [with] their families are afraid to tell people about their situation. They don't necessarily look homeless, so there aren't obvious signs. You have to have school staff that are trained, know what to look for, and know how to ask the right questions. Part of it is just the invisibility of homelessness."

The US Department of Education's ED Facts Initiative Data indicates most states are seeing the number of homeless students rise every year. This phenomenon is true nationally as well, with the number of identified students rising to 1,504,544 during the 2017-2018 school year. According to Jan Moore, the Assistant Director of the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), this increase is due to better identification by the school district, but some students are still going undetected.

"More people understand what the law provides and requires, and school districts are better at identifying homeless students," Moore told Spark. "Parents and students are now more aware of [their] rights and may be more likely to self-identify. Although we know even though the numbers are rising, we're not identifying every student who's experiencing homelessness."

"There's still a lot of stigma, particularly with youth, around homelessness."

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, a federal law which ensures that homeless children have equal access to the same high-quality educational opportunities as non-homeless children and youth, school districts are responsible for appointing a local liaison. The liaison is responsible for ensuring district families are aware of who it covers and that it provides nutritional programs, educational services, and ensures district-provided transportation services to the students' school of origin. Local liaisons are tasked with the responsibility of identifying homeless students and providing both academic and non-academic support. This requires them to be knowledgeable of both state and local social service agencies and community resources that provide aid to homeless students and their families.

"There is a liaison in every school district and a state coordinator at every State Department of Education, that's required in the law," Moore said. "We work really closely with those folks to ensure that they understand what the school district and the state department needs to be doing, and provide best practices for them."

There is a misunderstanding by the general

population around what causes homelessness. According to Moore, many people associate McKinney-Vento eligibility and homelessness with someone who is mentally ill, has substance abuse problems, or just doesn't want to work. This stigma leads some who need the help McKinney-Vento provides to not take advantage of the programs available.

"Families and a lot of youth living on their own just don't want to be stereotyped," Moore said. "They feel like other people will know about the designation as McKinney-Vento eligible, and they don't want to let anyone know about their living situation."

When a student is identified as being homeless, the family is assigned to a School Success Liaison who helps them to get the benefits they receive through the McKinney-Vento Act. According to State Homeless Education Coordinator Susannah Wayland, the McKinney-Vento Act exists not to stigmatize students, but to promote stability in aspects that affect education.

"The minimum requirement of implementation, when a family is determined to be eligible, [is that] they automatically get nutrition services, which means they don't have to fill out an income form in order to get free breakfast and free lunch," Wayland said. "They automatically are eligible for any kind of educational support through the title one program, and that is regardless of whether they're academically in need."

According to Cari Wynne, supervisor of the Success Program at the Butler County Educational Services, success liaisons help families to find stable housing, but also make sure that they are getting food and clothing. They look at all kinds of needs, not just the obvious housing issue.

"The liaisons reach out to these families, and we try to meet with them wherever they are, so if they're in a hotel or in the shelter or wherever they might be, we sit down with them," Wynne said. "We talk to them about their situation, about their individual needs, because all families are different. Then we set off on a plan to try and help them to get the things that they need."

The McKinney-Vento Act helps to ensure that during the turbulence caused by homelessness, students can continue to go to school and in most cases, the same school that

else is turned upside down, and a part of their identity that doesn't change."

In May 2019, Lakota had 182 students who were homeless, a 13% increase from the previous school year. According to Kimberly McGowan, the Director of Federal Programs for the Lakota School District, Lakota realizes the number of homeless students continues to rise and in response has increased the number of success liaisons who play a crucial role in helping students and their families. Currently, Lakota is supported by six full-time and two part-time success liaisons.

"Once we are made aware of a concern, one of the Butler County Educational Service Center Success Liaisons contacts the family to find out more information about their situation," McGowan said. "Then, based on the responses, the success liaison contacts me to discuss. If the student and/or family is eligible under the McKinney-Vento law, we complete a form to identify them and indicate some of the support they need."

Butler County families that have children ages 18 or under who qualify as homeless can find shelter with the 3-year-old Butler Family Promise. This shelter is one of three resources that liaisons can suggest to families and according to Wynne, the need often surpasses the openings.

Family Promise operates seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and has a day center where the families can spend their time. Grace and her family were referred to Family Promise by their success liaison, who personally drove them to the day center so they could receive services. According to Family Promise Executive

"Homeless students need stability in their lives. They need to have a constant source of support that doesn't change," -Director of SchoolHouse Connection Barbara Duffield

they have been going to. According to Duffield, these students need to be able to have some consistency, and schools are a place that can fill that void.

"Homeless students need stability in their lives. They need to have a constant source of support that doesn't change," Duffield said. "Our scholarship students tell us that school is a home, it's a family, it's a safe haven. To be able to have some sense of normalcy and have something to hold on to, when everything

educating students on mental health and putting in the resources to deal with people who are truly struggling. And always know that I'm here for you, whether you see me in the halls or have never talked to me before.

Sports & Editorial



U-High Midway • March 9, 2020 •
<https://uhighmidway.com/6772/showcase/identity-clubs-need-our-help-to-thrive/>

the Southerner Online • March 24, 2020 • <https://thesoutherneronline.com/75734/sports/crossfit-helps-teen-girls-gain-confidence/>

CrossFit helps teen girls gain confidence

Kamryn Harty

Feet shoulder-width apart. Hips back, head up. Remember to breathe. Bend knees. Gritted teeth. Trembling legs. A 16 year-old-girl squatting 185 pounds. The gym goes wild.

Flash-forward two years and senior Amelia Kushner says that four years ago, she never would have imagined she could be where she is now – both physically and mentally.

"A lot of my role models in eighth grade were models on the Internet and people who were really skinny," Kushner said. "I lowkey had an eating disorder, and I really wanted to be skinny."

After quitting soccer when she was 13, Kushner struggled with depression and her body image. A 2015 study published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information by Dr. Dana Voekler of West Virginia University found that, "Adolescent girls face considerable risk for the development of clinical eating disorders due to intense body dissatisfaction and pressure from peers to 'look' a particular way." Like many girls her age, Kushner was not immune to these societal pressures.

To help exert her energy in a positive outlet, Kushner's father, Steven Kushner, signed her up for CrossFit, a gym that integrates strength training with cardio and elements of gymnastics.

"My dad was like, 'You need to exercise. You can either be sad or you can come to a CrossFit class with me at 5:30 a.m.," Kushner said.

Kushner opted for the latter of this ultimatum, and it changed her life.

Steven Kushner, who had been doing CrossFit for more than five years, says it's been "fun" watching Amelia grow and learn from the sport.

"She would wake up at 4:50 or 4:45 a.m. and come with me to the 5:30 a.m. class, including on days she had no school," he said. "But she



Courtesy of Amelia Kushner

Amelia Kushner pulls herself over the bar during a "WOD," or workout of the day at her CrossFit box.

Identity clubs need our help to thrive

Editorial Board

As the Midway sees it... With declining student participation in some identity clubs and increased recognition that hateful events are not isolated, U-High is forced to confront that the "diversity" promised in its mission statement is not a reality for everyone.

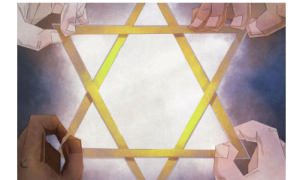
With the future of the Jewish Students' Association in doubt, it is important, now more than ever, to support identity clubs at U-High and to create as welcoming of an environment as possible. The U-High community cannot afford for identity clubs to disappear, especially after the recent discussions regarding diversity, equity and inclusion issues.

For students in marginalized groups, identity clubs provide environments to find community. If any community is to be productive, whether a school, workplace or athletic team, all members of that community must feel they belong. At U-High, where a white majority exists, it is not uncommon for there to be only a single person from a marginalized group in a classroom, leaving students potentially isolated. Identity clubs allow for each student to join a community that is more welcoming and inclusive than most classrooms can be.

If we allow identity clubs to fade, we will not only lose inclusive spaces for students but also crucial representation by and for voices of marginalized communities. The collective community that identity clubs create do not just contribute on an individual, student-centered level, but also on a larger, almost administrative level. In January, the Black Students' Association-Collegiate School letter received attention from faculty, staff, administration and the greater Chicago community, with coverage from numerous local media outlets. This letter, which represented an experience shared among many black students at U-High, sparked genuine conversations and actions that would not have been possible without the action of this identity club. Moreover, the JSA-led biannual Holocaust assembly has been so powerful that students have advocated for it to occur on a yearly basis.

It is also important to recognize that it is not a necessary requirement to identify with a club to support it. Catholic students can support the Muslim Students' Association in the same ways that white students can support the BSA. Allyship is as important as participation in these clubs. For identity clubs to function, there must be a surrounding environment that endorses the clubs and listens to their perspectives on how to improve the surrounding community.

Because of the unique and important perspectives identity clubs bring to our community, we cannot sit by and allow these clubs to simply disappear. If you identify with the values of these clubs, perhaps it is time to learn about them or consider joining. Students can also support identity clubs by interacting with the day-to-day events these clubs hold, from bake sales, to assemblies, to free potlucks. With identity-related incidents becoming a greater issue, it is crucial for each student to do what is in their power to help identity clubs thrive.



Artwork by Risa Cohen



Art by Risa Cohen

Alternative Storytelling



Playing to the crowd, David Gurney (12) and Alexis Burnett (12) took up their win as homecoming king and queen. The winners were announced during halftime of the varsity game. "I was super excited," Gurney said. "I didn't know I was gonna win, so it was great." PHOTO BY CHRISTIE BERGERON

Carrying the rainbow flag, Anna Mercer (12) marches with the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) during the homecoming parade. The crowd in the bleachers cheered for each club. "I became vice president of the club so it was cool to come out and have so many people watching us," Mercer said. PHOTO BY CHRISTIE BERGERON

Reaching toward the ball, Dylan Fregues (12) catches the football that ECK Step-Team at the homecoming pep rally. "I saw an opportunity to just jump in and grab the ball," Fregues said. PHOTO BY CHRISTIE BERGERON



Homecoming still plays out after a reschedule due to the Saddleridge Fire

As fireworks went off in the night sky, David Gurney (12) and Alexis Burnett (12) were crowned homecoming king and queen Oct. 18. But had the game not been rescheduled, the sky would have been filled with a different kind of smoke. Charring over 7,500 acres, the Saddleridge fire blazed through Sylmar, Granada Hills and Porter Ranch Oct. 11, resulting in school closures. At first, homecoming coordinator Jenika Tobon (12) was unsure what that meant for the events planned that day, that evening and Saturday night. "We were all really confused," Tobon said. Then [student council adviser] Holly Kananen[12] sent us a [message via] Remind

that everything has been canceled and we had to reschedule the game and dance." Both events had required significant planning with outside vendors, which all had to be changed last minute. From balloons and fireworks for the game to food and entertainment for the dance, Tobon had to figure out a solution. "We just had to do everything we originally planned for that day," Tobon said. "That meant also calling the catering and replanning every part."

The dance was postponed over a month to Nov. 16. The game was rescheduled to the following Friday, Oct. 18, which aligned with Senior Night, in which seniors in all participating groups are honored. It also happened to be the rivalry game against Taft Charter High School. Furthermore, the change guaranteed better air quality for everyone involved. "It didn't bother me that much," Daphne Huley (12) said, "because it was really smoky that day which wouldn't have been that much fun for the players or the students."

Despite the changes, Burnett said the event had its desired effect. "It was really sad because for the seniors it was our last game," Burnett said. "I enjoyed it and it went pretty well for rescheduling it."

STORY BY CHRISTIE BERGERON

Performing at halftime, Leanne Doremy (12) dances to "Crazy" by Britney Spears. The hip-hop team participated in their first halftime performance at homecoming. "I felt my senior stage come out," Doremy said. "I was a little sad that it was our last homecoming as seniors, but we gave it our all." PHOTO BY DAVID CARLO



No filters needed, homecoming queen nominates Rose Vasquez (12) and Allie Tate (12) once for a selfie during halftime after the final senior court announcement. Though Vasquez and Tate did not win the title, which went to Alexis Burnett (12), they still celebrated the moment in their teens and selfies with each other. "The friends were going off, so I thought it would be really nice to have a picture together with them," Tate said. PHOTO BY DAVID CARLO

JUST FOR THE SENIORS

As homecoming kicked off in the senior night, seniors from dance guard, band, cheer and football are greeted for their excitement.



Taking a selfie with his mother, Leanne Doremy (12) captures his first senior night. Despite a game injury, Doremy didn't miss the night. "Senior night was really fun," Doremy said. "I didn't miss the game, but I was cool to experience with my senior night." PHOTO BY DAVID CARLO



Jumping high to avoid his helmet, senior receiver Andrew Johnson (12) catches a 13-yard pass from Matthew Alvarado (11).

Dragging a Taft player behind him, senior receiver Tyrese Conner (12) runs the ball down the field. Conner said he will lead the 56-3 win to the energy on the 56-3 win in the game.

to step in," Johnson said. "When it was the right time, I made a touchdown." PHOTO BY DAVID CARLO

Conner's victory and over the 56-3 win, but homecoming isn't over yet. PHOTO BY DAVID CARLO

ONE WEEK LATE, BUT RIGHT ON TIME

12:13 p.m.	7:03 p.m.	7:27 p.m.	7:31 p.m.	8:50 p.m.	9:37 p.m.
PEP-RALLY: Football team enters. Step and cheer performs and court is revealed.	PARADE: Clubs, class steerings, and homecoming court circle the track.	VARSETY GAME BEGINS: Camerata sings the National Anthem and Taft kicks off the game.	FIRST TOUCHDOWN: Scored by Tyrese Conner (12).	HALFTIME: Dance guard, step, hip-hop and marching band perform. Senior court winners are announced.	BIG WIN: Game ends with a 56-3 win, but homecoming isn't over yet.

ONE WEEK LATE, BUT RIGHT ON TIME

A day full of events came together Oct. 18 to celebrate homecoming

12:43 p.m.

PEP-RALLY: Football team enters. Step and cheer performs and court is revealed

7:03 p.m.

PARADE: Clubs, class steerings, and homecoming court circle the track

7:27 p.m.

VARSETY GAME BEGINS: Camerata sings the National Anthem and Taft kicks off the game

7:31 p.m.

FIRST TOUCHDOWN: Scored by Tyrese Conner (12)

8:50 p.m.

HALFTIME: Dance guard, step, hip-hop and marching band perform. Senior court winners are announced

9:37 p.m.

BIG WIN: Game ends with a 56-3 win, but homecoming isn't over yet

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The Writing Process

- brainstorming
 - assignment selection
 - developing questions
 - Interviewing
 - drafting and self-revision
 - editing & fact checking
 - story pitching
 - researching
 - information gathering
 - selecting an angle
 - getting input on revision
 - evaluating a final product
- Show what you know about each of these process steps.
 - Give examples of how you do or would do...



The Writing Process

- Writing multiple drafts
 - methods for self & peer revision
 - policies & procedures for story submission in various states of completion
- Editing & fact checking
 - sources – primary, secondary
 - procedures & policies for fact/quote checking
- Evaluation methods → quality of writing & accuracy of information reported
 - self, editor, adviser, audience, other (contests, etc.)
 - show what you know about these procedures & standard news policies regarding them.
- Give examples of how you do or would do...



Editing

- Providing appropriate feedback using a designated process
- Having writers & editors use existing (and developing their own) tools, tips & techniques to create better writers
- Having writers read & revise their own work with a critical eye
- Having editors understand & value the difference between editing & rewriting
- Show what you know about (a) writing and editing yourself or (b) coaching writers and editors in given situations
- Give examples of how you do or would do...

Design



- Determining how content will be displayed / portrayed
- Having staffers and editors coordinate to create the most effective design for the material
- Having staffers and editors develop a process for selecting content treatments
- Having staffers and editors develop a process for working out differences of opinion in content treatments
- Show what you know about (a) designing coverage and story packages yourself or (b) coaching staffers and designers in given situations
- Give examples of how you do or would do...

SWITCHING

things up

NEW COACH JOINS THE
WATER POLO PROGRAM
STORY BY | ALEXIS VIGIL

"THE GOAL WAS TO WIN LEAGUE. IT DIDN'T HAPPEN, BUT IT WAS STILL FUN TO CHEER FOR OUR TEAM AND MAKE THE EFFORT TOGETHER."

LUKE LEACH, JR.

With change comes growth. Both the JV and Varsity polo teams adapted to that change with new coach Brian Sharar as they faced a variety of challenges along the way.

"We were an aggressive team and having a new coach taught us how to use that aggression in a positive way to win games," senior Jared Fairchild said. "The difference I noticed from last year was the way he trained us. The biggest challenge for the team was not having enough people motivated to become better and our overall lack of communication in the pool."

Through tough and focused practices, the team rose to the challenge in competition.

"Coach was there to explain what was going on and why things happened the way they did. We would practice and condition for hours with adults to practice being aggressive. The adults allowed us to play the game at the pace it's supposed to be played," Fairchild said.

"We did fine, but we could have improved our shots towards the goal and communication could have been better," senior Keanu Velasco said. "We improved by just practicing more and playing scrimmages and doing rotating, and passing drills. At first we didn't see the results translate in the game, but eventually we saw improvement as a team."

Although the team trained hard to reach their goals, it was not without struggle.

"We expected to improve quickly and as a result see the outcome in winning more games," senior Justin Bailey said. "We tried to go out as hard as possible in practice to make ourselves better than the other teams, but we underestimated the competition and did not get the outcome we wanted."

But the boys remained optimistic through it all.

"We tried to build team morale playing games like 'sharks and minnows' to help with motivation. We also played spicy songs at tournaments and games on the pool speakers. Through games and jokes we stayed motivated, allowing us to believe we could win the next game," junior Anthony Presto said.

The boys season wasn't as successful as they hoped it to be. However, the team camaraderie made it an unforgettable season.

"I'll never forget that smile on Cottrell's face when he scored seven goals in one game," senior Aidan Bishop said. "We always horsed around at practice but the most memorable moment has to be when we all went swimming at Sundance and fought on kayaks. We had great chemistry because we all treated each other like brothers and we had no shame."

FOR THE GOAL OF THE GAME In an effort to win the game, senior Jared Fairchild aims for the goal. Fairchild has played polo for seven years and plays every position except goalie. "My ultimate goal during a match is to become better as a team and have a stronger team dynamic. With each game, the team created a stronger bond by having each others back. In the game against Downey we had the best communication," Fairchild said. PHOTO BY JUSTICE CHAMBERS

YEAH IT'S LIKE THAT

"It's like a game, sometimes success, sometimes failure."

JOSE CARDENAS, 9

"It's like working as hard as I can with no typical satisfaction."

JUSTICE CHAMBERS, 8

"It's like the Karate Kid, crazy."

ADRIANA CASTELLO, 12

"It's like a roller coaster, up, down, and then that make you sick but still an amazing experience."

ADRIANA CASTELLO, 12

"It's like a game of tag, constantly pursuing your true self."

JUSTICE CHAMBERS, 8

"It's like being stuck in a hospital, no escape from the lies of humanity."

ADRIANA CASTELLO, 12

"It's like Tobias Carter, a football coach you need to admire."

SEANASTIAN CASTELLO, 12

"It's like a boxing match, when I'm knocked down, I'm gonna get whatever it takes to get back up."

ADRIANA CASTELLO, 12

"It's like a video game, if you encounter resistance, you're usually going the right way."

JUSTICE CHAMBERS, 8

"It's like a boxing match, when I'm knocked down, I'm gonna get whatever it takes to get back up."

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ADRIANA CASTELLO, 12

it's about LEADERSHIP

VETERAN PLAYERS BUILD A CULTURE OF MENTORSHIP

"We look up to the older polo players because we respect their level of skill and how much harder they practice. But personally, I see some of them as older brothers. We hang together outside of practice and sometimes they join us during practice to show us certain moves and positions and their benefit to help improve our game. The upperclassmen are also friendly and offer great advice about school in general if we ask."

JOAQUIN MIGUEL GARCIA, 10

1. IN THE ZONE Ready to score, junior Izzak Cardenas takes aim. "Cardenas played polo for three years and typically played the wings." My ultimate goal is to work so hard as I can with my team. Water polo is a team sport, so working together is key." Cardenas said. PHOTO BY JUSTICE CHAMBERS



2. BATTLE ON In the middle of the game, senior Cameron Coates fights for possession of the ball to compete against Turlock. Coates began playing his freshman year and is the left wing of the team. "During a game I'm constantly thinking about where the ball is and predicting where it will go so I can get it and score," Coates said. PHOTO BY JUSTICE CHAMBERS



3. ARM AND DANGEROUS In an effort to score for the win, senior Connor Bukhart aims for the goal. Bukhart started polo as a freshman. "During a match I try to support my team so we can win. I help by working with them and listening."



4. STEADY HAND Head in the game, freshman Donovan Holmes practices his shot in pregame warm-ups. Holmes joined the team this year for fun. "I really enjoyed it. We didn't win a lot, but the guys on the team were like brothers to me. Win or lose, we still had a great time, kept our heads up and just looked forward to the next game," Holmes said. PHOTO BY BRIAN STEELE



Coaching Writers & Editors

- Developing publication's voice
- Developing lead writing for various types of journalistic writing
- Developing personal style within publication's style
- Decreasing use of jargon, slang, clichés
- Show what you know about (a) writing and editing yourself or (b) coaching writers and editors in given situations
- Give examples of how you do or would do...



Getting answers

- <https://www.schooljournalism.org>
- <http://www.poynter.org/>
- <https://curriculum.jea.org/wp/writing/>
- visit the JEA Bookstore (www.jea.org)
- Best of the High School Press (NSPA)
- and, of course, the JEA listserv



Getting answers (continued)

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