For the first time in DMEA history, Diversity Day was a virtual event held online on June 19, 2020, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Diversity Day Club advisor Judy Aronson and approximately 75 members of the Club adapted the activities to a virtual platform to provide a fun event in response to the hardships from quarantine and virtual learning and to maintain a long-held tradition that students look forward to every year on the last day of classes.

However, the event drew controversy from some Englewood residents because it was held on Juneteenth, the holiday commemorating the end of slavery and Black pride. They voiced concerns that the celebration of diversity on that day diminished the celebration of African American freedom and expressed their point of view to the Englewood Board of Education. Students of the Club and Ms. Aronson acknowledged these concerns and will respond at an upcoming Board meeting.

And so this year’s Diversity Day was not how anyone expected it to be, before, during or after it took place. Yet, organizers overcame the many obstacles. Five “channels” students could join via Zoom were created to celebrate culture and heritage. The biggest challenge was planning what it would look like. How could they take something so physical and performance-driven and turn it virtual? The problem-solving became part of the enjoyment.

It was a great way to interact with my peers and it was interesting hearing everyone’s ideas,” junior Sebastian Salazar said.

The two hours were split into “Eat,” “See It Live!” “Wanna Play?”, “Let’s Talk,” and “DIY Art.” Each channel had a chaperone to help with whatever was needed and to support student efforts: John Cash, Jackie Gooisaram, Eric Lax, Kelyn Powell, and Maurice R. Rodriguez pitched in.

Website creators Rebecca Tzekanova and Lauren Browne posted the schedule of events on dmaediversityday.com. By clicking on an icon, participants were instantly linked to Zoom channels where student hosts put on events some in real time and some pre-recorded on apps like TikTok.

Diversity Day this year was not how we usually do it but we made the most out of our situation! We had a variety of games, food, conversations, performances, arts and crafts, discussions, and more! I did a makeup tutorial, and everyone on the Art channel had so much fun,” junior Kushal Panchali said.

“See It Live” channel had singer performers, such as soprano Kimberly Ferrera’s song “Fico Assim Sem Você” with guitar accompaniment by her father, jurer Angelica Munoz’s and Tiffany Moon’s song “Love,” and there was a Michael Jackson “Michael!,” sings “I Can Still Do It” with various photos of him and events, such as the Black Lives Matter Protest. There were performances from DMAE’s a cappella group Vocal Synergy, the K-Pop Dance, and dance tutorials. The “DIY Art” channel had activities to paint jeans, embroidery, and collages. On “Let’s Talk,” Christopher Butcher and the Lewis sisters spoke on race, while others presented on the topics of race-money-education, LGBTQIA+ relationships, and immigration. “Eat” had cooking from butterflies to “brookeys,” and “Play” offered sports techniques including how to spike a volleyball or spin ping pong balls.

Although we were unable to hold an in-person Diversity Day event this year, the virtual one was a success and I am glad I was able to participate one last time,” senior Caleb Kim said.

This year’s logo was another creative contribution. Designed by sophomore Grace Yang, it shows seven fans of different races, genders and identities to stand in solidarity with the BLM Movement and to honor Juneteenth and the commemoration of African American freedom.

Though Diversity Day was held on Juneteenth, the day wasn’t chosen for that reason, however, students saw this as a timely coincidence, a way to celebrate Black history all the more. Later, when Ms. Aronson explained concerns, students understood how it could be insensitive.

“We are at a watershed moment in history right now, and it’s important that all of us recognize our limitations and biases and hear other people’s pain,” Ms. Aronson said.

Christopher Butcher, head of the High School’s Black Student Union, plans to lead Black History Month activities and the Juneteenth celebration for the 20-21 school year and create meaningful events.

With the work of 70-80 students, the 2020 Diversity Day was saved and lessons were learned.
Englewood Joins BLM Protest
By Tenzin Dhasel

The brutal murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, MN, has reverberated throughout the nation, igniting protests and rallies across numerous towns, including several in Englewood, New Jersey. On June 6, 2020, around 300 people, all marching in solidarity and waving picket signs, spilled out on the streets of Englewood. Made up of local residents, students, and people from neighboring towns, the crowd was very diverse. “The crowd was bigger than I expected. I would say that at least 50 people came from neighboring towns. From Englewood, people of all ethnicities came and showed their support to the cause,” commented junior Syonco Fiedzda, who attended the rally that Saturday.

Once the crowd reached city hall, guest speakers came forth and further stirred the crowd with their impassioned speeches. The fervent cries of racial injustice and the equally passionate responses from the crowd could be heard throughout the town. For many, this rally sparked hope and reassured people that change was possible. Despite preaching freedom and opportunity for all, the United States, at its onset, has been steeped in racism and antago-
nism towards minority groups. With this rally, and those in towns all across the nation, thousands of people in America have gained hope and a sense of comfort.

“I was very comforting to know that so many people care about the equality of all. So many people recognize that systemic racism negatively impacts the lives of many minorities and that black lives are disproportionately targeted by the police and the entire criminal justice system. I was reassured that change is possible, despite 400 years of racism, oppression, and inequality,” junior Christopher Batchek expressed.

Despite the sweltering heat and the lurking threat of COVID-19, the Englewood protest revealed that, in the event of a pressing national issue, people will passionately come together to fight for what is right. The lively and burning energy of the rally remained, even when it came to a successful, peaceful end.

“I would just like to say that the Black Lives Matter movement is one that will go down in history and that I am proud to have been on the right side of it. Everyone should be treated equally and given the same respect no matter who they are,” Syonco stated.

I was reassured that change is possible, despite 400 years of racism, oppression, and inequality.

Scholars Induced on Zoom
By Ariel Garcia

NHS Inducts on Zoom
By Ariel Garcia

I want to show everyone what it means to be a leader, and celebrated.

“IT IS MY PLEASURE TO BE THE NEW PRESIDENT OF SUCH A PROSPEROUS ORGANIZATION AND LEAD A GROUP OF SUCH INTELLECTUAL INDIVIDUALS. I WANT TO SHOW EVERYONE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LEADER, AND IT IS MY DUTY TO ADVANCE THE NEXT GENERATION.” — NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT JEFF HONG

Though the 2019-2020 year was cut short, Ms. McClelland was proud of the work that the NHS was able to get done.

This year’s chapter was the best that I’ve had the pleasure to advise so far. I hope we will continue to build on the momentum we have going with this wonderful group of students,” Ms. McClelland concluded.

Seniors Awarded Virtually
By Katie Sudol

Seniors, parents, and faculty of DMAE assembled for the Senior Awards Ceremony honoring and awarding selected seniors for their hard work and excellence throughout high school.

The COVID-19 pandemic prohibited the ceremony from occurring in person.

Nevertheless, the event took place as a presentation via Zoom hosted by guidance counselor Rachel Cohen on Thursday, June 11, 2020, at 7:30 p.m.

“I appreciate that the pandemic didn’t stop the school from putting together the ceremony for all seniors to join,” senior Timothy Jung said.

The event was an opportunity for the Class of 2020 to see each other before graduation day. It was a night to remember, uniting seniors again.

“I would say that the awards ceremony was an amazing yet incredibly bittersweet night. It was comforting to gather with my peers in celebration one last time before graduation, but there was no denying that much of what makes these events so special was lost,” senior Mousa Myril explained.

Instead of the awardees walking up to the stage and physically receiving their awards, each winner was announced on Zoom, some by teacher “presenters.” Regardless, many scholarships were awarded to deserving seniors. The Michael E. Nelson Scholarship was awarded to Timothy Jung and Raysha Richardson, the Lynda Williams Outstanding Outreach Award went to Aashiyaa Montgomery, and the Dr. John Griceo Scholarship Awards were given to Shana Cox, DeAndre Vaught, Sasha Cheek, and Donghyun Brian Lee.

Academic achievement as well as athletic awards and many others were given to diligent, persevering seniors of DMAE. Isaiah Dohle won the

I would say that the awards ceremony was an amazing yet incredibly bittersweet night.”

Raider Pride Award and Donghyun Brian Lee received the Academy Way Award—both for their commitment to the school community.

“I thought it was an interesting experience and it was nice to get recognized for our achievements throughout our high school years,” senior Chantal Pena Martinez said.
Friends, I am filled with both great joy and disappointment to speak before you today. I am excited and enthralled for the diverse and enchanting future ahead of us, but I am disappointed that we close this chapter of our lives called High School on our phones and computers. This, I know, is not what we expected our graduation to be like.

But my fellow graduates of the Class of 2020, we are very special in that way. All of our lives have not been as we expected. Many of us were born in the aftermath of the 9/11 Terrorist attack, no one expected that. When we entered High School, our district swept local newspaper headlines under the rug and misleadingly explained how administrators and guidance counselors had been charged with fraud, and when we walked into sophomore year there was a totally different schedule than what we were told it would be.

We are familiar with uncertainty. And now, at the closing of this turbulent chapter, our world is on pause with COVID-19. No one expected this to happen. Senior year is the climax, the highlight of the chapter in our lives called High School, yet the pages have stopped. Many of us are confused, upset, frustrated and anxious.

But friends, I am not worried. I believe in each of us to remain strong and fight with resilience. Cliché, I know, but I say that genuinely because we know uncertainty. We lived through it and made it out!

As I look forward to the chapter ahead of us, I am reminded of our freshmen year. Back then, many of us were confused, upset, frustrated and anxious, just as we are now.

While uncertainty and blank pages in a book are baffling and scary, they give us room to be leaders...authors of our story.

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While uncertainty and blank pages are baffling and scary, they give us room to be leaders, to be the authors of our own story.

As many of us head out to become future leaders, I want to share a lesson I learned because a lesson learned is a lesson worth sharing.

Over the last four years, the Student Council has seen immense growth. Not only did we break fundraising records and hold the first Winter Formal in the gym with out-of-district guests, but we made tremendous strides to become the voice of the student body. We now have a well-established relationship with the administration, and we proposed to have two Student Representatives sit on the Englewood Board of Education, something the Board finally approved last month.

In this process of growth and on-campus activism, I realized true leadership and activism are only made possible by empathy and understanding.

During 10th grade, I was angry and frustrated that adults in power in our district did not care about us, the students. I remember going to my first Board meeting to just yell and complain at their lack of communication and care. I thought I was a hero. Looking back, that achieved little to nothing, and frankly I was wrong. I was wrong to assume that the Board members didn’t care, I was wrong to think that my yelling would help them understand the students’ frustration and pain.

Later, I learned that the natural human instinct when under attack or stress, is to put up our guard, to argue back, and to deflect criticism. Our brain naturally initiates a fight-or-flight response. This, in the world of leadership and activism, is counterproductive and self-defeating. I saw this firsthand, the Board became defensive and unwilling to listen to me or the student voice. We could not make progress until our guards were down and we were willing to listen to one another.

For our community and nation to move forward, we need to have productive conversations with empathy and an open-mind.

Friends, after this day, we move on to fill out the blank pages of our lives. Despite the uncertainty, I have full confidence that our class, the Class of 2020, will remain strong and resilient as the authors of our own lives and leaders of tomorrow. As we march on in the world, I ask that each of us remember to listen more than we speak.

Atticus Finch, my favorite fictional character from To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee, said, “You never really understand a person until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” I ask that we strive for a world of understanding and empathy. If we witness ignorance, let us not shun and ignore the people for their ignorance, but help them understand and see what they had failed to see before. Growth takes pain, it’s uncomfortable. Let’s “be comfortable being uncomfortable” and grow so that we don’t tear each other down, but build each other up. Let’s not antagonize and divide, but empathize and unify.

Thank you all for your time, and congratulations to Class of 2020!!
Love Letter to the Class of 2020 & DMAE

“I wholeheartedly encourage you to boldly and freely live in all your colors...”

Sarah Yang, Co-Editor, The Maroon Tribune

Time is nothing if not receding. It pulls back, abruptly and remarkably, before we can even recognize its silent departure, leaving us to frantically grapple with what still remains long after it loses us. Time abandons us too easily, but time also stattles us into acknowledging what doesn't abandon us—what ultimately stays loyal. Rather than wandering aimlessly, for now, let’s stay where we are. Let’s recognize what it is that we have chosen to swaddle close to our hearts until the future eventually finds us, as it always unfailingly does.

Picture this as you would a flashback in a movie scene. The walls of the present crumble and we’re freshmen once again. We are immediately overwhelmed with a massive grade scandal, leaving us to relearn what we knew. As a result, though, we have become especially skilled in this self-reliance from undoubtedly being challenged more than the average student. There was an uneasiness that permeated every beginning—this lingering awareness that a club, faculty member, or principal could swiftly be transformed into a footnote. Permanence was a very temporary word at DMAE, and we became accustomed to this perpetual state of uncertainty! We had to repeatedly muster the spirit to begin again—establishing our own ending to relearn what we knew. As a result, though, we emerged employing a sort of kaleidoscopic thinking, continuously searching for vibrancy in the ever-evolving and shifting DMAE community.

Throughout my four years at A@E, I have been continuously inspired by this DMAE-specific strength. I am immensely grateful to have been surrounded by individuals who were never ready to settle. I have observed my peers as they strive to determine each hue of the world for the past four years, I choose this life—my one and only life—every day for what it could be.