



THE HILLTOPPER

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WELCOME FRESHMEN!

The former Middle Schoolers are now High School Freshmen! Despite having to socially distance and wear masks due to COVID, there was much excitement as the new 9th grade class started their first year of high school.

In order to ensure student happiness and success, the high school conducted their annual Freshman Orientation. The freshmen (9th graders) were welcomed by Doug Jolly, the Director of Residence Life, and the team of 9th grade Advisory teachers for some essential information on what it will take to have a successful high school experience. During the large group session, students were seated at appropriate distances in the PAC before breaking out into their advisory groups for some tower building, a favorite team building activity at SJA Jeju.

The team building didn't stop after Freshmen Orientation, however. The connections that started at orientation have continued, and just before Chuseok, advisories were seen outside, working together in a friendly competition led by Mr. Disting.

Hyun Yuk Bang (James) was perhaps the first to be visibly comfortable in his new role as a high school student.





VIRTUAL LEARNING ADVENTURES

The rise in Covid cases on Jeju at the end of the summer led to SJA taking precautions to protect staff and students by switching to virtual learning for one week. This quick transition required students and teachers to speedily find new ways to display their creativity in teaching and learning. Among those moments, student, Ethan Choi's favorite was doing a "virtual play during Korean Language class" and Sung Woo Yoo enjoyed making a rap in Advanced Korean Language. Many students also reported that they were better rested and less stressed than usual, due to the later start time.

The week was not without complications, however. The two typhoons that occurred during the week created more obstacles, such as internet and power issues that spread across the island. However, as usual, SJA students and teachers worked together to overcome these challenges. Tenth grader, Won Seop Lee, stated that "every teacher helped" clear up any confusion he had with his classes. When one method of communication, such as Zoom, would not work properly, students and teachers immediately continued class by communicating through Google Hangouts to continue the learning process.

There were some bright spots as well! Like the teachers, ninth grader, Ye Jin Yang (Rachel), loved finally being able to see everyone's whole face since students and teachers who worked from home could attend class unmasked! Additionally, students and teachers enjoyed the unique opportunity to share small pieces of their personal lives with their classes. One activity allowed students to share something in their personal space that brought them joy, and 9th grader, Haeri Hwang gleefully brought her dog on camera, making her teacher smile. Ms. Emerson also brought joy to her virtual classroom by sharing her newly rescued dog, named Pickle.

**"My special virtual learning moment was when I saw
Ms. Emerson's new little cute puppy!" - Sally Shin**



NEASC COMMUNITY BUILDING

by Michael Fisher,
Director of Teaching & Learning

On Saturday, October 10, the PAC building was abuzz with energy as members from all SJA Jeju stakeholder groups gathered to participate in our NEASC Accreditation Workshop. Student council members from each division were in attendance along with parent representatives, board members, JEINS representation, SJA faculty, staff and administration. The purpose of the day was for SJA to share the five Major Learning Plans with everyone in attendance and gather their feedback and suggestions. The Major Learning Plans, which have been developed over the past two years, will be the foundation of our SJA Jeju Action Plan for the next 5 years. It was critical to have the perspective of all stakeholder groups from our community in order to ensure our plans meet the needs of the entire SJA Jeju family.



We knew the conversations would be meaningful, but no one could have predicted just how powerful the dialogue would be. If you walked into the Mini-PAC that morning you would have seen ten large tables spread out, each filled with three faculty members sitting with 3-4 parents, students, staff members, board members, or JEINS representatives. The passion and enthusiasm in the room was palpable as faculty members literally “leaned in” while writing down the ideas and feedback that animated stakeholders were sharing.

When the 20-minute timer went off to signal it was time to rotate, the room filled with shouts of, “Just one more minute!” and “Wait! We want to keep talking!” Parents, staff, JEINS, and board members commented with great emotion that they treasured this opportunity to gather representatives from all portions of our community to share in the work of planning for our future. Students were grateful to represent the voices of their peers and did an amazing job of helping faculty to see the school from a student’s perspective.

We walked away from the day with really solid plans, which we will use to design our 5-year action plan. More than that, we walked away with an appreciation of how great our community really is. While this may have been the first event of this kind for SJA Jeju, it certainly will not be the last.



ACADEMIC SPOTLIGHT: MR. G'S PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS

interview by Ji Wan Park (Danny)

Film and Photography Teacher, Mr. Gonzalez, regularly inspires his students by helping them explore the art of filmmaking, photography, and acting. He hopes to inspire students to learn all the tools of the trade so they can step into the studio and be free to create, but what are his expectations and what makes him so effective at inspiring SJA High School students? You might be surprised to find out that it's NOT a stellar final product that impresses him the most.

What do you expect from students?

To take risks, like creative risks. I understand that a lot of students are making films for the first time and part of filmmaking, and part of any art, is making mistakes and failing. It's okay to make a bad movie in my class, but if you have a meaningful process where you learned something from that process, I think that's the most important thing for me.



**What impresses Mr. G?**

Students impress me all the time; they are very motivated to learn something on their own. They are very driven to do impressive work and to do something that we didn't talk about in class or to explore an editing technique or a lighting technique or something with cameras that is just really risky and not easy to do, and I am impressed all the time with student work.

Some students want to take this class but they don't have any skills or are afraid, do you have any advice?

Filmmaking Foundations is the beginning film class, and it's really an exploration class. It's a class for everybody and anybody that is asking if they might be interested in filmmaking, or maybe they're not sure. It's a class for that student because you get to explore a lot of aspects of filmmaking. You may not be good with cameras, but you might be good at editing, or you may be good in acting, or you may even be good at doing makeup work for zombies or monsters. The cool thing about filmmaking is that you don't have to be good at all of it. You can be good in different fields, and I think that is the cool thing about that class, Filmmaking Foundations. I think almost everybody can find something appealing and interesting in it.

STUDENT ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

CHE WON HAN: OIL PAINTER



Che Won Han (grade 12)

Che Wan is only the second student in SJA Jeju history to take all three AP art classes. In his words: "As an artist I try to stay as diverse and flexible as possible, but if I had to choose one medium I'd choose oil paints. The freedom, the uniqueness of each stroke, the wide spectrum that it provides; it embodies everything that I aim to achieve as an artist. Art isn't something that I really set goals for myself for, but more so something that I do for myself and for my own enjoyment; however, if I had to set one goal I'd say: to draw and paint for the remainder of my life."