



THE MEDALLION

Faith Character Scholarship

Notre Dame Academy

1073 Main Street Hingham, MA 02043

March 2012

Surviving a Tornado

Mrs. Callahan

On May 21, 2011, a destructive tornado tore through Joplin, Missouri, causing damage and devastation that was unimaginable. There was millions of dollars in damage to homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and churches. There were one-hundred-and-sixty-one lives lost, leaving this community still struggling almost a year later.



The house just next door to the one we worked on.

Tornados are so common in the Midwestern region of our country, that it has become known as 'Tornado Alley' in the media. Joplin was a 'direct hit' of an EF5 grade tornado. Based on a rating system known as The Enhanced Fujita Scale (EF Scale), which rates the strength of tornadoes in the United States based on the damage they cause, an EF5 tornado is the most devastating. The one that struck Joplin was one-mile wide at its base, and spurred unrelenting winds of 250 miles per hour.

Many disaster assistance groups have travelled out to Joplin to help with the rebuilding and healing of their community. These groups aid in all types of disaster assistance around our country. I traveled to Joplin with a group

of eleven other adults from my church on behalf of one of these organizations called 'First Presbyterian Disaster Assistance' which was working in conjunction with several other organizations under the umbrella of 'Catholic Charities'.

Our group worked on one of the many homes that did not have insurance coverage to finance the reconstruction of their houses destroyed by the storm. Homes not insured were completely dependent on the resources of their owners and aid from groups such as ours. We were helping to rebuild a home for 'Jo', a delightful 71-year old woman who was healthy, agile, happy and *grateful*. Despite her situation, she counted her blessings

each day, especially that none of her four grown children and their families, also living in Joplin, were hurt in the tornado.

We did finishing carpentry on the outside of Jo's house, including putting up siding and building the rafters on an overhang. We then painted the entire outside of the house. On the inside, we put down all the floor molding and painted the walls. While we were doing our work, there were plumbers and electricians, all from volunteer groups, working on Jo's house.

Prior to the tornado, Jo lived in a lovely three-level home with three bathrooms and four bedrooms, where she and her husband had raised their four children. The home that was being rebuilt was a small, single story home. There were stories like this to be heard everywhere. Everyone was affected in some way.

The tornado destroyed Joplin's high school, shortly after the class of 2011 had just celebrated their graduation.

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NDA Scholars Visit the United Nations

Marissa Gildea '13

On Friday, March 2, NDA's junior and senior scholars embarked on their trip to the United Nations in New York City. There, students observed the many exhibits and toured the famous assembly rooms. My group was fortunate enough to be led by Jackie, a native Cambodian man who expressed his enthusiasm in both spreading his knowledge of the United Nations with the group, and creating global awareness with us. He explained how the Secretary-General Ban-ki-moon leads the Secretariat part of the United Nations. The Secretariat is one of six major parts, or, as he called it, "organs of the United Nations."

As Jackie explained how the United Nations works, he brought the group to the two rooms of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The general assembly was occupied by students discussing the affects of social media using the example of Kim Kardashian on Twitter. This event surprised the students who were not expecting to see the faces of both Ms. Kardashian and Demi Moore at the front of the General Assembly!

Continuing the tour to the other exhibits, Jackie went into greater detail about the suffering that happens all

around the world. One problem that the U.N. is trying to cease is the use of land mines. Millions of land mines, especially in Cyprus, that would have killed many innocent people have been removed, and still many more continue to be found. Although this is good progress, land mines continue to be planted. As a result, there are about 20,000 casualties per year from these explosives. In addition to the removal of the land mines, Jackie also told the group about the growing problem of



starvation around the world. Starvation in Africa is a concern that can be helped by anyone. Jackie told us about a website called freerice.com, where a little help on our part can go a long way. Overall, the United Nations trip was a great experience that opened our eyes to global issues and allowed us to see where the collaboration of the different nations takes place. 🐾

Election 2012: A Look at President Obama



Madeline Blackburn '14

Most of us can agree that 2012 is flying by! The academic year will be over in a few months, and some students will be walking out the student entrance for the last time. But while the end of our year at NDA is in sight, the presidential campaign is nearing its apotheosis. Candidates are frantically trying to garner support from corporations and various organizations, all in anticipation for the Republican convention. However, with the inescapable buzz surrounding Republican candidates, it's easy to forget that our current president, Barack Obama, has barely had enough time to discover the White House's bowling alley, and would like to stay in the Oval Office for another term. However, Barack Obama's term has not been stagnant. In fact, there are a few initiatives made by Obama that may have slipped under the general radar.

Obama has steadily been withdrawing troops from Iraq, and has started to withdraw troops from Afghanistan. Most notably, the United States' Navy Seals successfully assassinated Osama Bin Laden. Obama

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Top 5 Best Things About Spring

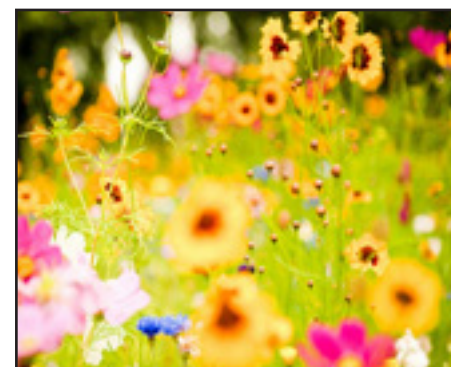
by Victoria Spurr '12



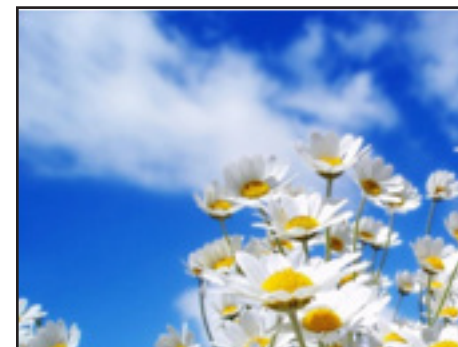
Warm Weather



Spring Sports



Flowers



Blue Skies



End of the School Year

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has also been repairing the United States' relationship with Russia. President Obama made several modifications to a treaty signed in 1991 called START with Russia. Under Obama's alterations to the treaty, the White House will reduce the number of nuclear weapons that will be created by Russia and the United States. It will also permit the United States to perform inspections of Russia's nuclear sites. Barack Obama also signed a student reform law that makes it easier for students to pay off their federal college loans more swiftly and effectively. In accordance to the law, those who wish to take out a student loan need not to pay more than ten percent of their disposable income, otherwise known as the money we would spend on movies, ice cream, text books, or whatever else tickles our fancy.

Easter in Different Cultures

Meredith Wade '14

As Easter approaches in April, students begin to look forward to going to church with their families, colored eggs, chocolate bunnies, and baskets full of treats. What we may not be expecting is a steaming plate of fish and a large bonfire to celebrate the resurrection of our Christ, as students would be in Germany. While the traditions vary from house to house in America, on a larger scale, all over the world Easter is celebrated in many ways.

In European countries, citizens enjoy hosting egg coloring parties, where family and friends gather around coloring eggs and enjoying one another's company. Another tradition that takes place in European countries is holding large bonfires on the weekend of Easter. These large fires represent the transition between winter and spring, and are said to chase the dark bitter winter away. People gather around these large bonfires to symbolize the coming together and unification people share in celebrating Easter. In England, Easter is celebrated for over a week. The English eat hot cross buns on Good Friday, which signifies the cross on which Jesus was crucified.

As children, we all went to sleep with the hopes that the Easter Bunny would leave us a gift for the morning. However, in Australia children go to bed hoping Bilby will leave them treats. The bilby is a native Australian animal that is an endangered species. To show concern for the endangered animal, chocolate manufacturers decided to make the bilby the official symbol of Easter.

In Mexico, jelly beans and Easter bunnies are not common. Mexicans have kept the holiday strictly religious and people attend many masses during the Easter time. The holiday is taken so seriously that schools close down for two weeks. Students receive both the week leading up to, and the week after Easter as vacation days. Even government buildings and offices are closed down for a two week period, so that they can observe the Easter holiday.

While many countries have similar customs to the ones we celebrate in America, many countries partake in stranger more traditional Easter customs. In Russia, families spend Easter morning picking pussy willows. They then stack the willows on one another's shoulders and carry them throughout the rest of the day. The pussy willows can be comparable to the palms that Americans receive on Palm Sunday. In Hungary, young men visit different houses in their neighborhoods and recite love poems to the young women, in hopes of receiving a red egg. While doing this, they must sprinkle water or perfume on the girl. This custom is supposed to be a symbol of fertility, and the coming of age process. Another strange tradition in Hungary, is to devote the Easter day to mischief. Families play small harmless pranks on each other, as well as with the rest of their neighborhood. The day is still spent respecting Jesus' resurrection, but through fun and games Hungarians celebrate the holiday.

Whether we celebrate in America or in Australia, Easter is a time meant to spend with family and friends. No matter the tradition, people come together to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. Though the globe separates us physically, the spirit of Easter will always draw us culturally together. 🐾

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

Meg Ayers '13 and Mariel Teague '13

It may seem like July outside but don't worry, we didn't skip spring sports season! Spring sports teams began their vigorous tryouts this Monday, March 19, with hopes to build up the strongest teams for a killer 2012 spring season. Our competitive teams include **lacrosse, softball, tennis, track and field, golf, and sailing.**

Keep your eyes open for the updates on our teams! We have a BIG season ahead of us, so make sure you get to some games to see NDA spring athletes represent.

Perhaps the most momentous concept introduced in the bill is that after twenty years, debts from student loans are to be forgiven, and those who work in the public service sector and have made timely payments may have their debt dismissed after ten years.

While Barack Obama has had a busy few years, who is to say what our future candidates could accomplish in the White House. Remember, no one can tell you what to believe or which issues you align with. Patriots fought and died for our right to freely express and inform ourselves, and simply nodding in assent in order to please your friends and family members can never be an option. As I always stress, get involved, become informed, and vote! 🐾

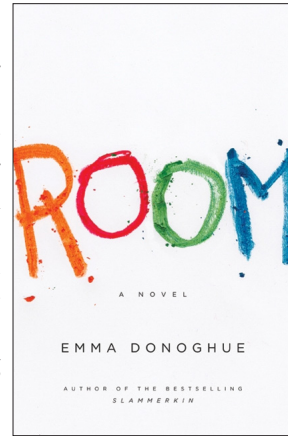
Book Review: Room by Emma Donoghue

Mollie O'Leary '13

Imagine being confined to an eleven by eleven foot space for seven years, or worse yet, for your whole life. In this New York Times bestselling novel, *Room*, the two main characters find themselves in that exact situation.

A mother, who was abducted seven years prior, and her five year old son, Jack, who was born in captivity, become the only companions for each other. Their small white room serves as the mother's prison but as Jack's whole world because he has never known anything different.

Room, as Jack calls it, has all the necessities for daily life, including a TV. His mother explains to Jack that everything he watches is simply "in TV" and the only three people in the world are Ma, Jack, and Old Nick, the man who comes and visits them at night. However, the time soon comes when Ma can no longer endure living in captivity and only with Jack's help can they hope to escape. She must tell Jack that there is a world outside of their little room, not



just in TV, and that Old Nick is forcing them to miss out on it.

Jack does not show the same eagerness to leave as Ma because Room has always been his home and he can't quite rap his head around the fact that there are billions more people in the world than he originally thought. If they actually manage to escape from Old Nick's vice-tight grasp, the challenge of assimilating with the outside world would prove to be an even bigger problem. Outside of Room they would be free from confinement, but the emotional and social debilitations from years in captivity would still hold them back.

Room explores the strong relationship between mother and child through the simple and unsentimental perspective of a five year old boy. The story has a perfect balance between dark moments that explicate the pain of life in captivity and light moments that are provided by Jack's quirky narration. *Room* touches on topics in an honest but inventive way that leaves you with a different view of the world that will not easily be forgotten. 🐾

Everyday Hero

Sally Stover '15

Often we read about super heroes lifting cars off of damsels in distress, we never think this could happen in real life. That is until we learn about Austin Smith, a fifteen year old who successfully lifted a car to save his grandpa's life. It was a routine February day in Ida Township; Austin was visiting his grandfather Ernie Monhollen on a Saturday morning. Ernie made the decision to bring life back to his old 1991 Buick Century for one of his grandchildren to use. Austin was assisting him pumping the brake pedal as Ernie was on the outside bleeding the breaks. Monhollen peered under the concrete blocks where the car stood when Ernie noticed a leak. Ernie says he had no intention of getting under the car, but he decided because of the leak he had to take a look.

This normal action for any car enthusiast soon turned life threatening when Austin's grandfather pulled

himself under the car; the 2,500 pound vehicle fell on top of the 74-year-old man. Austin, standing on the outside of the car, jumped into action. He did not waste a second as he used a rush of adrenaline to pull the car up from the ground and pushed it back freeing his grandfather. Ernie did not escape unscathed; he had a 6-inch gash across his face, a broken eye socket, paired with four missing teeth, and three broken ribs. The ambulance arrived quickly, Ernie is expected to make a full recovery.

"The Lord was right there with him" says Nancy, Ernie's wife. Austin is truly a hero for staying calm and collected. His quick actions and equally sharp thinking saved his grandfather's life. Running on adrenaline this young man has impacted his family forever. We should all try to be more like Austin; we should take risks for the better of other people. At only 15 Austin is truly an everyday hero. 🐾

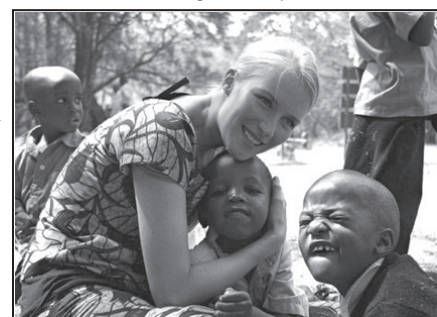
Where is She Now?

Katie Carey '05

Caroline Kenneally '13

At NDA, we learn that the mission of our foundress, St. Julie, was to make God's goodness known throughout the world, especially among the poor and lonely. St. Julie believed that "educating for life" was the foundation for achieving her mission.

Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with Katie Carey ('05) who in her own way is following the NDA tradition of helping those in need. After spending her childhood living all over the country, Katie moved to Hingham and started high school at NDA. She later attended



Boston College, and since graduating, she has spent extensive time in third world countries, where she began working with two organizations—Glorious Orphanage and The Giving Project. At Glorious Orphanage, Katie

spent 6 months developing a school and community center in Arusha, Tanzania. The Giving Project is a non-profit organization in Central America where Katie is working to build schools and help communities. She also works as a model and actress in New York and Boston.

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New to NDA: Teacher Spotlight

Ms. Himmelberger

Gabrielle Corner '13 and Anna Ratto '13

Moments after meeting with Ms. Himmelberger, one can tell she is a fun and vibrant person who really loves what she does. With a bachelor's degree in history and politics and a master's degree in teaching, Ms. Himmelberger is well-qualified in teaching both freshman and senior history courses, World History and World Affairs.

Unlike some of the teachers at NDA, Ms. Himmelberger did not always know she wanted to teach. She first decided she wanted to be a teacher when interviewing prospective students for Mount Holyoke as a senior; she really loved hearing about their schools and their interests. Combining her love of history with the newfound desire to work in an academic setting brought Ms. Himmelberger into the career path of teaching. Before working at NDA, Ms. Himmelberger worked in a stationary shop then completed her student teaching at Arlington High School. When comparing her previous teaching experience to NDA, she says, "I really like NDA a lot. I think the smaller size is much nicer because you see more familiar faces often and I feel like all the students are really eager to learn." After attending



the all woman's college Mount Holyoke, the all-girls environment was a familiar and welcome setting as well.

Ms. Himmelberger tells us she enjoys her World Affairs class because it is more modern world history, which is often a topic that a student is not exposed to until college. She elaborates, "A lot of what we see in the news and current events stems back to some of the history we don't always learn about in class." On another end of the spectrum, Ms. Himmelberger's favorite topic of history that she is does not cover currently is the time period involving the Revolutionary War. "I think if I had to live in a time period of history, it'd be really cool to live during that time period."

In addition to her love of history, Ms. Himmelberger says that she has had a passion for horseback riding. She explains that she is also a twin. Her horseback riding, among other things, was something that she had as her own interest separate from her sister's interests. Some students may have seen Ms. Himmelberger's sister around NDA when she came to visit!

We are so glad that Ms. Himmelberger has joined the Notre Dame community and hope she continues to encourage girls in their love of history. 🐾

"Tornado", continued from page 1

And the hospital where everyone began to walk, dazed and injured, immediately following the tornado, was also destroyed. The hospital and high school had become a haunting mountain of rubble and broken windows, exposing the scattered insides of these once bustling buildings. Everything was surrounded by bear trees where leaves, branches and bark had been sucked off by the powerful force.

Jeff, Jo's youngest son whom we also had the pleasure of meeting, shared how he went to his mother's and told her they need to go to the basement... NOW. As he said those words and herded her down the basement stairs, he saw the roof ripped off his neighbor's house across the street and hurled onto his truck parked in his mom's driveway.

They told us that in the basement, it seemed as if the tornado had passed, when a few minutes after it began, there was calmness and light rain swirling around eerily. However, it was just the 'center' of this mile-wide monster that was passing over them. Within a few moments, the back wall of the tornado hit and ripped off the roof and most of the walls from their house above them. Jeff gave us an idea of the strength and power of this tornado when he described the neighbors garden hose forced neatly through one of the walls still left standing on their house. The hose was speared through the wall with such force, it had created a small, precise hole in the wall and pushed the couch several feet across the floor.

As a child, growing up in Nebraska, I feared tornados more than anything. Each summer we heard the sirens warning us that a tornado had touched down in our vicinity and we headed to our basement for cover. We grabbed the dog, grabbed something of value and huddled in the corner of the basement, waiting to see if this would be the time the tornado would actually rip our house from right over top of us. Luckily, this did not happen in my community. The closest I came was in Grand Island, NE in 1985. While cowering in a basement with my friend and her family, five tornados ripped through the town, destroying businesses and homes only a few miles from where we were. That was close enough.



Jo standing in her 'almost finished' new house with her son Jeff.

I shared this story with Jo and her son, Jeff. We related to one another about how anyone who had lived in 'Tornado Alley' has done this and thought these same thoughts. But this was the time it was real for them; this was the time the tornado really hit.

Keep the residents of Joplin, and all those in our country and around the world who are victims of natural disasters, in your prayers. That is something we can all do to help.

A very poignant video of the Joplin tornado, out of all of the ones that I have seen, [click here to view it](#).

Please take a look and you'll gain an understanding of what Joplin went and is still going through. 🐾

Maggie Says...

Maggie Romero '12

Invisible Children

Take a minute or even a second and think about your day. Did you have a good or bad day? Can you pick out some positives or are you too preoccupied with what went wrong?

KONY 2012 is a campaign to raise awareness on human trafficking-abduction, coercion, and manipulation of innocent young boys whose option is to either shut their mouths and join the rest of the child soldiers that Kony has recruited or refuse and be killed the moment they say "no." Not much of an option?

There is quite a bit of controversy regarding the purpose of Invisible Children and questioning of the integrity of the man who made the trip to Uganda and originally had the idea to launch the campaign. Recently, this same man was arrested for various reasons...But I am not exploring nor am I writing about this man's personal life nor am I minimizing or maximizing the mistakes he has made in direct relation to the reputation of Invisible Children. About 5 years ago, Ugandan officials reported to the United States in effort to receive some type of support or facilitation in the country since Joseph Kony escaped. The children are not simply trained to be killers overnight, however, any hope for our future generations are merely being tainted by a man who wants power.

In my opinion, we live in society that struggles to distinguish the difference between power-over and power-with situations. I support U.S. troops facilitating in Uganda, I believe there is hope for humanity. 🐾



All Irelands 2012: The Experience of a Lifetime

Samantha Mastrogiacomo '13

Back stage I took a deep breath, this was the moment I had been working my whole dancing career for. Looking out at the five judges in front of the stage I tried to calm my nerves. I turned around to the two girls who would be dancing with me and wished them luck; I knew they were just as nervous as me, but through all of the nerves I managed to say, "We got this guys"; at that moment I realized that I was here in Dublin doing what I loved to do. I only had one job; to dance my heart out.

This past Christmas I was surprised with the gift of a plane ticket to Dublin, Ireland to dance in the All Ireland Dancing Championships. The first thing that came to my mind: I have to start training, now! For two short months I rigorously trained along with other girls every day, sometimes for six hours at a time in hopes of improving my dancing to reach the high levels set by girls over in Ireland. Girls would be coming from all over to compete; Australia, England, and even South Africa! However, with all of this hard work comes the preparation of the glitz and glamor so that on the day of competition, you walk on that stage sparkling. First comes the tanning; spray tan, tanning with lotion or however you are able to get your legs as dark as possible, it may sound silly for a pale Irish girl to tan her legs, but hey that's the Irish dancing world. From putting rhinestones on your dancing socks to adding extra crystals to your dress, it is absolutely necessary that you shine on that stage.

Boarding the plane to Dublin from Boston, the nerves started kicking in; after so much stress and preparation I was finally on my way. After a six hour red eye flight, we arrived at the City West Hotel in Dublin along with hundreds of other dancers. Jet lagged and exhausted, my friend and I found a couch in the lobby to fall asleep on while our mothers got our room situated. By

hanging up good luck signs in our rooms from friends back home, we got into the spirit. Praying every night leading up to competition day and stretching every chance we had, it was finally time.

The morning of competition is a morning like no other. Waking up at what seems like the crack of dawn and having your mother attack your head with a curled wig and bobbi pins is not the most enjoyable situation. Once the wig is on, along with a crown, it is makeup time. Putting on bronzer to match the tan shade of your legs along with dark eye shadow that will pop on stage, it is finally time to polish up your dancing shoes.

Running out of the hotel room to go to the convention center where competitions would be held, I tried to give myself a last minute pep talk to calm myself down. When my teacher found me, she ran through my dances and one last time, gave me a hug, and whispered into my ear, "You got this girlfriend, I have always believed in you." This gave me the confidence I needed to march on that stage and perform my dances like I never had before. My friends caught me at the last minute before I went backstage to wish me luck as well. My mom came up to me and told me how proud she was of me and how hard I had worked to get to this point, she gave me a hug and sent me on my way backstage. It was very important to me that I danced my best for my mom. She had brought me all this way and had supported me through all the sweat and tears after long days of practice and school work. With all this support behind me, my nerves disappeared and I was more ready than ever to dance on that stage.

When my rotation was called I took another deep breath. I was here in Ireland living my dream and I was here doing what I live, breath, and love to do; dance. 🐾

"Where is She Now" continued from page 2

Katie, you've done so much since graduating from NDA. How did you enjoy spending your time while at NDA?

I played soccer, field hockey and track, as well as participated in a lot of community service. I enjoyed going to Father Bill's and Carolina Hill and being involved in Key Club. I also volunteered at Friendship Home, a center for mentally disabled adults.

How did you become involved in Glorious Orphanage?

I became involved after connecting with a friend from BC who had spent time in Tanzania. She helped me get in touch with Alice, a local Tanzanian and my best friend, who at the time was feeding orphaned children out of her unfinished home.

What is Tanzania like? How does the orphanage serve the people?

Tanzania is astoundingly beautiful. The beauty of the landscape and the kindness of its people are starkly contrasted by the extreme poverty and suffering that is evident in the country. There are still millions of orphans and millions affected by starvation. I hope to help make these numbers change. The orphanage not only provides food and a shelter to those children who need it most but it also serves an entire community. Alice, who runs it, has truly transformed her community and the orphanage gives a sense of hope and empowerment to those who did not otherwise have a voice.

How did you become involved at the Giving Project, where you are working now?

I connected with the founder of the Giving Project after I returned from Tanzania, as I was eager to help others in the U.S. engage in meaningful experiences much like the ones I had experienced. I have since founded the Schools for Schools Program in which local schools in the U.S. fund the building of a school in Central America and in doing so create a permanent relation to the developing world.

Do you have any advice for NDA students?

Find your passions and follow them. I always wanted to make a difference in third-world countries, yet there were other pressures to get into the business world. I think it is so important to do what makes you happy! My choice to stray from the 'norm' has ultimately changed my course of life and created a greater sense of purpose that I would not have otherwise found. You all have so much to give and truly make such impact in the world. 🐾

Academy Survival 101

Avoid the Motions

Kayla Valente '13

Each day when we wake up, we are given a choice. We can either do the bare minimum to just get by or we can put in 100% and live our lives to their fullest potential. The choice seems simple. Who doesn't want to make the most of everyday? In the beginning of September, the goal does not only sound great, but it is also not too difficult to achieve. The fresh start of a new school year often makes us strive to be better. Today I am here to tell you that fourth term is your fresh start. You cannot simply let life pass you by. We should be making a conscience effort to be a better person every day when we wake up.

Whether we like it or not, we have to go to school every morning. You might as well make the most of it. Pay attention in class and participate without second guessing yourself. As the spring sports seasons continue, try as hard as you did on the first day of tryouts when you're at your last practice. This goes for clubs too. You may have gotten distracted as the work load picked up and started to slack on attending meetings. It's not too late to start going to them again. Try to avoid just keeping to yourself, and be open to sharing your ideas with the group when you're at the meetings.

This idea of avoiding the motions is important in our social lives too. Tell one of your friends how much it means

to you that you're friends with her. Better yet, show her by listening when she needs someone to talk to or just hanging out when she needs someone to be with. Be the best friend you can be. Be trustworthy, be understanding, be reliable. We are pulled in so many different directions as high school students, and so at times it is easy to just go from one role we play to the next without putting much thought or effort into it. We must be aware of this so we can avoid that trap.

I want to leave you with a phrase that has been overused beyond belief by every high school student in the US. I think it is something that can be quite relevant to each day here at NDA when it's meaning goes beyond making a wish at 11:12 instead of 11:11 or writing a novel with alphabet soup. Y.O.L.O. (you only live once) can remind you that you only get one high school experience. For a short four years, you're given the opportunity to be a student, an athlete, a club member, and a friend at this school. Make the most of it. Hopefully at the end of each day, we can realize that we didn't fall into the trap of going through the motions. We can think about how we challenged ourselves and tried our hardest. We can be free of regrets. Y.O.L.O. so make sure you don't waste a single moment of it! 🐾

Movie Review: The Hunger Games

Amanda Miller '13

What adjectives would you use to describe *The Hunger Games*? "Awesome?" "Cool?" "Amazing?" If you answered any of the above, you should be psychologically evaluated, as soon as possible. *The Hunger Games* is engaging and powerful, but it is also disturbing and upsetting. None of the latter two words are better expressed than in the movie adaptation, which, in my humble opinion, far exceeds the book in terms of thematic awareness and emotional impact.

The Hunger Games is set in the near-future, in a North America devastated by warfare. Seventy-four years ago, the outlying districts of the all-powerful Capitol rose up in rebellion and were defeated. As a reminder of their victory, the Capitol instituted the yearly "Hunger Games," a televised competition in which two "tributes," one boy and one girl, are selected from each district and forced to fight to the death against the twenty-three other tributes. Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence), a girl from the impoverished District 12, volunteers to become a tribute when her sister is chosen by lottery. She journeys to the Capitol to take part in the Games, along with Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson), the male tribute from her district, encountering many colorful characters who help and hurt her in the arena.

The film benefits from the high-caliber actors involved, especially Lawrence as Katniss. Already with a Best Actress nomination under her belt, Lawrence brings the necessary strength and emotion to the role, leaving viewers with goosebumps on more than a few occasions. Although she is certainly the highlight of *The Hunger Games*, Hutcherson's Peeta is striking in a subtle, understated way, quite like the character. Woody Harrelson as Haymitch grants the film some needed comic relief, while Lenny Kravitz is exceedingly lovable as Cinna, a fan favorite. Amandla Stenberg (Rue) is not given nearly enough screen time, but her most pivotal scene (fans of the book know what I mean) is incredibly moving. The scenes with "Gamemaker" Seneca Crane (Wes Bentley) are a welcome addition, highlighting how disturbing the concept of *The Hunger Games* really is, but Donald Sutherland's portrayal of President Snow lacks menace.

From a production standpoint, *The Hunger Games* is marvelous. The use

of cool, natural tones creates a gritty, realistic feeling that truly draws the viewer into the arena. At first, the shaky camera and heavy use of close-range shots is distracting, but as the film progresses, it becomes clear why those choices were made. Not only does the shakiness prevent the film from crossing the R rating line for violence, it mimics the anxiety and confusion of the arena in an extremely effective way.

The film is largely true to the book, but in many ways it improves upon the original source. The book is good but not great; it hints at incredible potential while granting a stimulating few hours. The film, however, possesses a better understanding of the questions raised by the story, and tells it in a way that is far more vivid and unsettling. The high quality of *The Hunger Games* makes it all the more difficult to watch. If the film had been mediocre, the violence would not have been so troubling, and the events of the story would not have been so emotionally charged. *The Hunger Games* is being advertised as an entertaining action-adventure movie; this is horribly wrong. If anything, it is an allegorical film with a strong message about the horrors of war and the danger of an overly materialistic culture.

The Hunger Games is, ultimately, a warning. A warning to our society not to become so desensitized to violence that we find it entertaining. Ironically, this is exactly how audiences have reacted to this incredible yet disturbing film. The girls in front of me giggled their way through all of Josh Hutcherson's appearances, even when his character was, well, dying. A group of young boys after the film proclaimed it to be "the coolest thing ever!" Does this deeply disturb no one else? These kinds of reactions are completely inappropriate. *The Hunger Games* approaches many Holocaust films in terms of graphic violence and emotional impact, and yet it is being marketed as an action movie for teenagers. That it is not. A masterpiece film, yes. A display of Jennifer Lawrence's unbelievable talent, yes. A movie to be contemplated and discussed, yes. But a franchise? No. Board games mimicking the Games should not be sold. T-shirts with the word "Tribute" splashed across the chest should not be worn. It is time for the general public to realize that the "Games" are no fun and games. 🐾

THE GIRL IN THE GREEN KILT

Emily Smith '13

Dear Girl in the Green Kilt,

I am getting really terrible grades in math, and working harder and getting extra help from the teacher just is not helping enough. Do you know where I can find a tutor outside of school? I do not know where to look.

Sincerely,
Trying Not to Get a D

[SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION - log on to your Portal & click the 'Publications' Tab](#)

Dear Trying,

Math is hard; take it from someone who knows. I researched a few different options for you. Summit Tutoring may be a good place to start. Summit teaches a SAT prep class here at NDA, and they also have math tutoring available. Your guidance counselor can provide you with more information on Summit. Visit their website at <http://www.mytutor.com>. Another option you may want to consider is Sylvan. The Sylvan Learning Center closest to NDA is located in Hanover, and has a math program with tutoring available for Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-calculus and integrated/senior math tutoring. Another resource you can always utilize at NDA is SHINE or the Academic Learning Center (ALC). You can work with your favorite NDA math teacher at the Academic Learning Center during a free period! Good luck! I hope you find the right tutor for you!

-The Girl in the Green Kilt



Artwork by Mr. Tamura

