



# THE SPRESS

## SOUTH PARK HIGH SCHOOL

### My favorite things about Christmas

DAISHA BRISCOE

My favorite food around the holiday is ham, and I like this holiday because I like decorating. I like sled riding and being outside in the snow. My least favorite thing about Christmas, or any holiday, is not having loved ones around anymore. My favorite holiday treats are sugar cookies, gingerbread cookies, and candy canes. My favorite holiday scent is cinnamon, peppermint, and gingerbread scented candles. One thing to make it feel like Christmas is putting up a Christmas tree and it snowing outside. I celebrate this holiday with family and friends.

### SPHS Favorite holiday movies

CALLIE HEYNES

Over the years, there has been lots of controversy about the best Christmas movie. A survey taken within South Park High school gives opinions on movies ranging from “Elf” to “The Nightmare Before Christmas.”

According to the survey results, students had a hard time choosing between the movie options. “Home Alone” won with 18% of the votes. However, “National Lampoon’s Christmas” and “The Polar Express” came in close second, nearly tying with each other. The lowest rated movie was “Gremlins,” which had 1.1% of the given responses.

Matthew Chekan, a 10th grade student, stated his connection to “The Polar Express” and why it was his favorite Christmas movie. “The connection between his reality and fantasy creates this fictional wonderland that allows a lot of people to dream and be creative, as well as be themselves. The movie is extremely powerful.”

Not only did we learn about student’s favorite Christmas movies, we also learned about some of their holiday memories and traditions. A 9th grade student, Sean Swartzwelder, was quoted, “It’s a movie my family watches every year when it’s Christmas. I really like it and I’ve actually been to the Christmas Story house in Cleveland.”

### Be an angel and help out

TESSA LETTIE

Whether it is struggling to put enough food on the table or providing gifts for their families, 84% of family households struggle during the holiday season, according to CNBC. Many readers are no strangers to struggle, no matter what it is. We should be eager to help these people, even if it’s in a little way or with the least of our efforts.

Salvation Army is a program that holds year-round charities and events to help the people that are not as fortunate. They are an international charitable organization. They have helped and provided for over 1.7 million people. Furthermore, during the Christmas season, they operate and organize the Angel Tree program.

The Angel Tree program is a project where people that wish to help out and donate toys, food, etc. It is voluntary and open to the public, and anyone that feels they need the support can sign up and seek a helping hand. They accept sign-ups and volunteers with no age requirement. The angels can be picked off trees you can find at stores like Walmart, local malls, companies, and churches. The angel you pick will have number tags with the first name, age, gender of a child, and with the child’s Christmas wish list. Before Christmas, they distribute the gifts to their families to place under their Christmas tree.

If you were able to make a child’s year and make them feel special, you would do it, right? To learn more about this organization and project, if interested, you can visit and seek more information at <https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/>.

### The recognition of Christmas traditions

AVA TURLEY & MEGAN BEAM

Whether you’re lighting a menorah or decorating a tree, we all have traditions we look forward to celebrating around the holidays.

We all have traditions that we celebrate, especially during the holiday season. Megan Beam, a student at South Park High School, has many traditions she looks forward to every year. “A Year Without a Santa Claus,’ ‘Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,’ and ‘How the Grinch Stole Christmas’ are my favorite movies,” said Megan. Like Megan, lots of people look forward to watching their favorite Christmas movies every year. “I go to my Aunt Mary Ann’s or my cousin Margaret’s house and later in the night my grandfather dresses up as Santa and gives us gifts,” Megan stated. For many, seeing Santa is always an important part of Christmas. Whether it be at a mall or simply a family member dressing up, seeing Santa is a special part of a lot of people’s holiday seasons.

Ava Turley, SPHS student, has holiday traditions just like everyone else. As Ava states, “Sitting around the tree on Christmas Eve and unwrapping my siblings’ gifts is the highlight of my Christmas.” She also enjoys traditional Christmas songs such as “Carol of the Bells,” and some of her favorite holiday foods are candy canes and ham. Like most, Ava likes to spend her holiday with her family, and she watches her favorite Christmas movies such as “Elf,” “Home Alone,” and “The Polar Express” with her family. “I love to go see Christmas lights on a snowy night!” said Ava. If you like to open your siblings’ presents, or look at Christmas lights, holidays are always fun with your own traditions.

# Brewing Success Café makes its debut

SAVANNAH BOOTH & EMBER CARMICHAEL

Have you ever gotten to school and realized you wanted nothing more than coffee? Luckily South Park High School opened its Brewing Success Cafe in the cafeteria.

Mrs. Youseff states, "All proceeds from cafe sales go directly back to our special education/transition program here at SPHS." The cafe helps the workers get ready for real world situations. "They are trained in customer service, using a digital cash register, reading drink recipes, and serving drinks," states Mrs. Youseff. The cafe offers a variety of drinks, including dairy alternative milks, gluten free syrups, and are always open to accommodate customers with dietary restrictions. Mrs. Youseff started this program in our high school to provide students with real life situations at school. "I began a cafe out of a classroom when I taught at the middle school, then collaborated with our prior food service director when I started teaching at the high school. The cafe has grown with the help of administrative collaboration and a forward thinking-vision from our excellent team," states Mrs. Youseff.

Customers who order at the Brewing Success Cafe are not only able to purchase delicious hand crafted drinks, but they are supporting a good cause. They are giving back to a program that benefits our students with special needs.

# South Park High School preschool program back in person

EMBER CARMICHAEL

Snack time, play time, and crafts oh my! High school students in Ms. Stull's Understanding Children class get to go back to the best part of Preschool to help give kids the best experience possible.

The high school students learn how to teach the preschoolers in a fun, new, and exciting way, along with creating lesson plans for each preschooler to complete. They have a buddy system that allows the preschoolers to get closer with the high school students. Ms. Stull says, "Before preschool starts in mid-October, we work on handling behaviors, what preschool should teach, areas of growth needed, and kindergarten readiness skills."

Many of the high school students have stated this is the best class they've ever taken, and they had nothing bad to say. Even the preschoolers said how much they love their buddy. Ms. Stull and her students arrange fun activities for the younger buddies to take home and show their important people at home how much they have learned in the time they have spent with Ms. Stull and her students. "Once the little ones begin, the three classes operate each day through a buddy system with their preschooler for that week," states Ms. Stull. They give these younger children a chance to get ahead of their classes and get a head start on each course they will be taking. One student, Brandon Clifford, says, "My buddy loves to run around and play. He's very energetic." When asked about if he wishes he had taken another class, he says he wouldn't change it for the world.

The Understanding Children class has so many new and exciting things for the preschoolers and even the older students to learn. We all encourage you to sign up in your junior or senior year.

# Mock Trial Club: A new opportunity for students

CALLIE HEYNES

In Mock Trial, students can learn analytical, rationalization, and cogent skills throughout their time at the club. These skills will help a student whether they decide to choose a law related career or not. Mr. Correll, supervisor of the club, stated, "They will analyze case information and develop claims using evidence, all very important skills for students within papers or conducting research." Mock Trial club has been a catalyst for students who seek an influential job in their lifetime.

Along with this, Mock Trial Club is one of the more unique clubs that South Park High School has to offer. Not only are the students taught how to analyze evidence and collect data, they are also put into a law enforcement like setting. Students are brought down to the city of Pittsburgh and to the City County Building. This way those who are in Mock Trial Club can properly argue with teams from other Pittsburgh area schools.



## REVIEW-VIDEO GAME

## What is Apex Legends?

PAIGE KELLY

Apex Legends is a Battle Royale, first-person-shooter video game featured on PC, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, Xbox and now on mobile. It is produced by Respawn and EA. Apex is a unique battle royale game because of its lore and characters with specific abilities.

The characters in the game are called legends. There are currently 19 to choose from, with a new legend joining the roster every season, and there can't be two of the same legend on one team. There can be up to three players per squad, but there are other team size and game-mode options.

Each legend has special perks that can help them in a fight. They have a passive, tactical, and ultimate ability. Their passive ability does not require a special cool down, as it does not damage other players. For example, Valkyrie's passive is her VTOL jets and fuel limit that help her fly, and Lifeline's passive is a useful combat revive which helps her stay in the fight while her drone revives a knocked teammate. The tactical ability of some legends can tether, stun, or damage enemy players, such as the newest legend Ash's Arc Snare. Other tactical abilities, such as Loba's Jump Drive bracelet which teleports her to the location that it was thrown, provide escape or a route to hard-to-reach places. Ultimate abilities can be a sense enhancer, such as Bloodhound's Beast of the wild, which highlights enemies and increases speed. Other ultimates can be more aggressive, such as Bangalore's Creeping Barrage which drops several missiles in an airstrike, damaging and stunning players that get hit.

The various legends' abilities are not all they use to fight. The game features different types of firearms. Shotguns, assault Rifles, marksman weapons, pistols, light machine guns, sniper rifles, and sub machine guns help the future champion to win the game. They take either energy, light, heavy, sniper, or shotgun ammo. There are also "care package" guns. These guns come from a random care package drop and change almost every season. The care package weapons are typically more powerful than the standard guns, giving the carrier an advantage.

There are five total game modes. Three of which are casual; non-ranked modes: Trios, Duos, and Arenas. The ranked modes are Trios and Arenas. Trios and Duos are self-explanatory, but Arenas requires deliberation. Arenas is a trio versus a trio on a small map with weapons of choice pertaining to the round. Winning three rounds back to back wins the game. The Arenas game mode has only been in the game since season nine. The game is currently in season eleven.

The most one-of-a-kind feature in Apex Legends is that every season at the halfway point, one of the legends gets a handheld item called an heirloom. The heirloom is entirely cosmetic and does not assist in melee damage rates. The only way to acquire an heirloom is to open Apex packs and get the rare 1 in 500 heirloom shards. Apex Legends currently has over 100 million players. New events are hosted monthly, which introduce new skins and weapon cosmetics. Overall, Apex Legends is an amazing and well-rounded game.

## The importance of mental health in sports

MEGAN BEAM

Over the past 9 years of swimming competitively, I've had my fair share of bad meets and practices, but right now it is worse than ever. A lot of changes have happened in my life in the past 2 years, mostly revolving around swimming. My South Park Aquatic Club coach had to quit and we couldn't use the high school pool anymore due to COVID-19, so some south park swimmers, including me, went to Bethel to swim. Bethel was helping me a lot, and I was doing great up until recently. Meaning, I was doing great mentally. Whenever I would swim a meet and wouldn't go a best time, I would get extremely upset and angry. My mind doesn't understand that going a best time isn't easy and swimming is hard. I beat myself up about how I performed, if I don't go to practice, or if I can't make it. I think to myself, "You're such a loser, only losers skip practice. You suck so bad why do you even try? If you can't swim well in practice, how will you do at meets, and you'll never make it to the Olympics." I am so hard on myself and expect to do well no matter what, even if I haven't made it to practice in a few days.

The fact that I'm not in the right mental space is dragging me down and hurting my performance. I struggle a lot when I finish an event and my team and my coaches say I did good, because my brain can't comprehend that not going a best time is ok, and sometimes you don't swim your event how you wanted to. I am just so competitive, and I want to win all of the time. It just doesn't always work out in your favor. It's impossible for you to win every time you compete in whatever sport or activity you do. There are a few times I thought, "What if I'm just not cut out for this?" That upset me as I've been swimming for so long and it is my passion. What would I do if I just gave up? Nothing. I would do nothing. I'm not really good at any other sports, and I definitely wouldn't like any other sport as much as I like swimming, so I didn't give up. I wouldn't have given up either way because I have such negative thoughts.

After the meet, I swam November 6 and 7, 2021. I took a two week break from swimming, and it helped me a lot. I had time to rest after being extremely burnt out and sore. My body felt great, however this didn't sit well with me mentally. I was constantly thinking that I sucked for not going to practice. After the two week break, I started high school swim season. When I jumped in and started my warm up I felt great. The break helped me so much. Soon I will be seeing a sports psychologist to help my mental space since I still think that I suck if I don't do well in meets or practice even though my body feels fine. I am also going to a personal trainer, Temple Haynes, twice a week to build up my strength and get better for the upcoming meets for high school season. I just want to be better than everyone else and be the best I can be.

If you feel alone with your mental health in sports, you're not. A lot of people are in the same boat and struggling. Do not be afraid to ask for help.

## Travis Scott's Astroworld Festival

SAVANNAH BOOTH

On November 5 Travis Scott hosted his Astroworld concert in Houston Texas. Hundreds of people were injured and ten were killed.

Hundreds of people were hospitalized, and the youngest patient was only ten years old. Travis Scott encouraged fans to sneak into the concert, doubling the amount of people there should've been. The crowd began to push and surge towards the front of the stage, which caused the people in the front to be compressed. They were unable to escape and began to suffocate. As Travis started to perform, the crowd got worse, limiting air. Fans started to scream for help, but nobody helped or stopped the show. Some fans even jumped on stage to get those injured help, but they were ignored. Fans in the back were getting pulled out by security guards, but the guards were so understaffed that they could not help the ones who needed it the most.

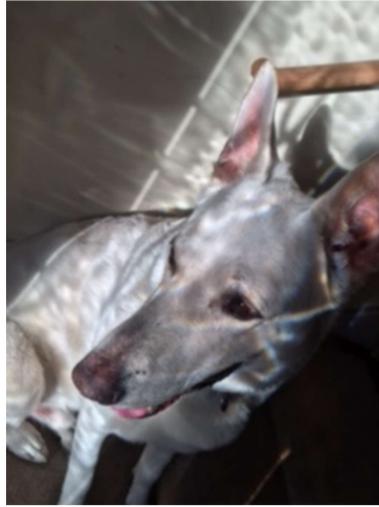
Travis is now facing many lawsuits and is not allowed to perform at his upcoming concert. For fan safety Travis will not be performing for a while and will be taking a break to get all of these financial issues situated. In the days after the tragedy, much has been learned about the sequence of events. All fans will be refunded, and funerals for those needed were offered to be paid for.



Paige Kelly – Lark



Ms. McCaig – Luna



Callie Heynes – Max



Mrs. Brace – Buddy and Bubba



Mr. Baker – Goose



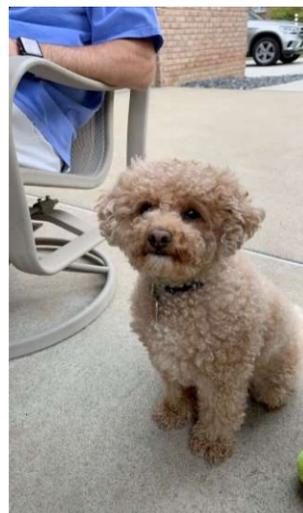
Mrs. Barbone – Lucy



Megan Beam – Worm



Mrs. Hecht – Bella



Mrs. Massari – Winnie



Mr. Huffman – Izabella and Calypso



Paige Kelly – Snickers, Coffee, Storm, Raven, Caramel

## *How does owning a pet affect us?*

PAIGE KELLY

Having a pet can be like having a best friend, child, and therapist all in one. Losing them, however, can be the most life-changing experience.

Pets can mean a lot to the everyday human. Coming home to cuddles from your fluffy dog or chirps from your chipper birds can turn your whole day around. Often, we consider them our best friends. A South Park High School Junior said their pet was their best friend, “because he was always there when I needed him.” He held his dog very close to his heart for 13 years as well as all the years since his puppy passed.

Statistically, pets can genuinely improve your life, based on CDC findings. The CDC says “They can increase opportunities to exercise, get outside, and socialize. Regular walking or playing with pets can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglyceride levels. Pets can help manage loneliness and depression by giving us companionship.” Even science proves that getting a pet is a good decision!

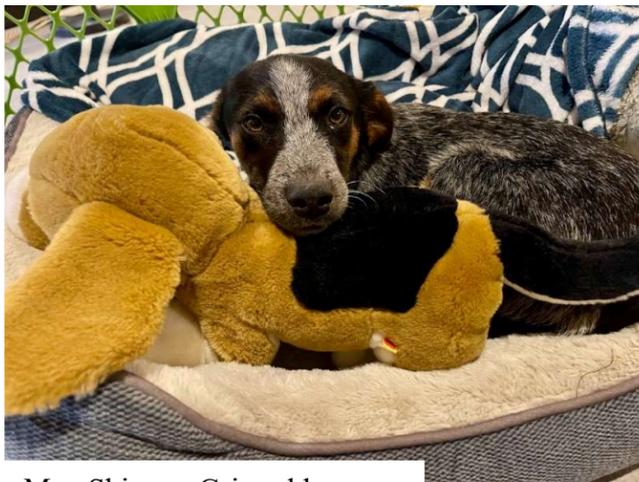
Pets are generally considered a good life addition, but losing them can be the hardest part. They can even make someone more selfless or compassionate. It's human nature to grow attached to these walking mood-lifters, and it's tragic that they have to go so soon. Yet, after they are gone they still typically hold a place in their owners' hearts. Pets are considered a family member and should be treated as such, given how hopelessly loyal they are.

## **THE SPRESS STAFF**

Megan Beam  
Savannah Booth  
Ember Carmichael  
Callie Heynes  
Paige Kelly  
Tessa Lettie  
Ava Turley  
Mrs. Finberg – Advisor



Mrs. Schemm – Mole



Mrs. Shirey – Griswald



Mrs. Barbone – Blue and Miles



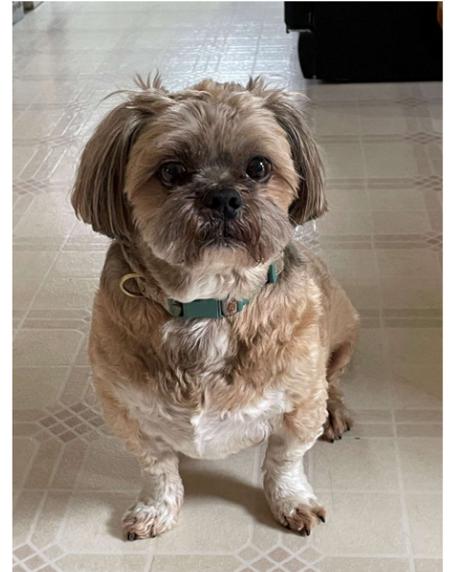
Mrs. Yousef – Gracie



Savannah Booth – Aries



Ms. Stull – Kobe



Mrs. Grainer – Barley



Savannah Booth – Butch



Savannah Booth – Elmo and Mia



Mrs. & Mr. Surovchak – Maggee



Mrs. Miller – Hershey and Kisses



Mrs. Finberg – Prince, Willow, Riff-Raff



Mrs. Russman – Pippi

**THANK YOU!**  
The staff of The SPRESS would like to thank everyone for sharing photos of your beloved pets.