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FRONT & BACK COVERS
LANDSCAPE OF THE WORK-
DAY STUDENT CENTER AT
MONTE VISTA HIGH SCHOOL.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY NICOLA
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The Hoofprint is produced by the staff of *The Stampede*, the student newspaper at Monte Vista High School in Danville, California. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of the school district or administration. The adviser for the journalism class is Logan Spilker, acting in place of Paige Crawford. The staff will publish letters to the editor when submitted to mvhsstampede@gmail.com.

THE HOOFPRIINT

An unfinished, yet unbelievable journey

From the naive days of freshman year to the incomplete weeks of senior year, I find myself in a state of sadness, appreciation and uncertainty, all at once. These trying times have opened up a rare opportunity for me to reflect on the meaningful opportunities, lasting relationships and greater empathy that *The Stampede* has given me.

My role as a journalist began four years ago when I discovered one of Monte Vista's school newspapers sitting on my dinner table (it was my older sister's copy). The creativity, honesty and humor of the paper compelled me to join the journalism class, despite my lack of news awareness and absence of media knowledge. A clueless freshman on her first day of high school, I stepped in to a class of well-trained writers who were all at least a head taller than myself. With my first draft torn and invalidated with errors, I was convinced I'd step away from what seemed impossible for me to grasp. Tears and frustration later, I continued.

Eventually, the newbies (myself included) began taking our stride and understanding the nuanced ropes of journalism. Inconvenient commute, unresponsive subjects, broken equipment and contention presented setbacks — still, we adapted to unfold more, asking every last question as this became the forefront of our philosophy.

Throughout these four years, our publication has withstood obstacles at internal and external levels. With five adviser changes, dwindling funds and the infamous Twitter account that tracked our errors, our staff of eager student journalists revamped the program. Together, we grappled with the complexity of InDesign, the struggle to comprehend AP Style and the maturity to respond to backlash. The restless cycle of interviewing, fact-checking, writing, revising and distributing never went unnoticed by me and served the greater community — something remarkable that few students can say they accomplished.

We tackled hard-hitting news stories that struck our ever-changing school district. In 2016, we felt the intensity of the presidential election and the inspiration of civil rights icon Terrence Roberts who came to our school. Staph infection and the Access period now feel long-forgotten.

In 2017, we covered the excitement of Monte Vista alum and General Manager of the Golden State Warriors Bob Myers' visit and the thrilling musical, *In the Heights*. The Napa fires now feel distant.

In 2018, we mourned the loss of beloved Ben Curry and those affected by the Camp Fire. The return of our mascot, Musty, and talks of a "4 by 4" schedule now feel far away.

In 2019, we opened up deeper conversations about racial injustice and heard the courageous stories from victims. The 49ers' appearance in the most recent Super Bowl now feels like years ago.

Just as we began a new decade, three months into 2020 on that notorious Friday the 13th, the outside world interrupted our lives in a way none of us could have ever expected. Our homes became a replacement for our classroom, but the nonstop, caffeine-fueled days of storytelling carry on.

Journalism has remained a constant in my high school years and shaped me in the last of my childhood years. My encounters from the class have been nothing short of challenging; however, I have gained exceptional strength and perspective — products of the desire to offer insight, the curiosity to learn and the dedication to seek the truth — from which I cherish with ample passion.

I've been able to narrate the voiceless, discover my voice and lead my peers to find theirs. It's from these experiences that I dig deeper into my daily interactions, pursuing aspects that make us alike and differences that make us unique. My hope is that these takeaways will encourage the larger community to do the same.

As a proud student of the Class of 2020, I know our legacy is unfinished. A global pandemic stripped our most prominent celebrations. But we've demonstrated our capacity to stand strong in who we are as people of a new decade and as citizens of the rising generation. As we move forward, my belief is that we will hold on to the grit we've adopted and the stronger bonds we've formed during this unprecedented time.

Let's fearlessly approach the next adventure — long known to be uncertain, but now seems more unpredictable than ever. Together, as storytellers and world changers, we've established a hunger to innovate, the power to welcome failure and a deep commitment to lean on one another, no matter the conditions bound to arise. We've shown our tenacity and ability to confront any forthcoming challenge, and I'm ready to affirm the extraordinary efforts my classmates will achieve in the future.

The longing sense of closure we're craving is a teaching moment, revealing the possibilities we can explore and the constraints of what we can actually control. We may never have the special occasions that all preceding graduates experienced, but that's where we connect and our story stands out.

To my tireless advisers, mentors and editors, thank you for building my confidence and condensing my seven-page-long stories. To my determined staff writers, thank you for giving me (nearly) the year to teach you and to witness your potential — you're off to great heights and I'll always be cheering you on. To my fellow graduates, thank you for sharing the unforgettable memories with me. This is a special edition for you all — we're not done yet, even though our times together in high school may have ceased. To the loyal Monte Vista community, thank you for the extensive support to our pressing work. Finally, to *The Stampede*, thank you for allowing me to recognize, uncover and deliver my voice and introducing me to some of the most wonderful people along the way.

From that lone newspaper on my dinner table to the tall stack of published *Stampede* editions that'll follow me wherever I go, and every moment and person I've encountered in between, I'm forever grateful.

I'm unbelievably impressed by this team and edition. Read on.



CLAIRE CHU
Editor-in-Chief