

Adviser Note: Due to the closure of school buildings, Knight Life will not be able to produce its traditional newspaper. Instead, the staff will be posting stories on a range of topics, including highlighting our athletes, seniors, and people in the school and the community who have made a difference during the COVID-19 pandemic. They plan to share ideas for things to do while confined to your home such as good books to read, videos to watch, and exercise workouts available online at no cost.

They also plan to write "Stay Positive" stories. For example, the waterways in Venice have cleared because no boats are clogging the waterways; the smog in New Jersey has eased because there are fewer cars on the roads polluting the air; the price of gas has plummeted; and people who are doing the right thing in Old Bridge.

President Joe Biden takes White House through big changes in first 100 days

BY LEXI SOLIMAN

Feature Editor

It has nearly been four months since President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris took control of the Oval Office and began their four-year journey.

Biden has signed 28 executive orders in his first two weeks, the second most in history behind Frankin D. Roosevelt and more than double the amount former President Donald Trump signed. Some of the orders included the US rejoining the World Health Organization, mandating masks on federal property, rejoining the Paris Climate Accord, and extending the freeze on student loan debt.



Courtesy of Politico.com

President Joe Biden signs executive orders oval office.

"I hope Biden is able to unify everyone so there isn't so much tension in our country. I hope he puts Americans first and continues the great work that has been done by previous presidents," said senior Gabby Cruz.

Most recently, a $1.9 trillion COVID stimulus bill was passed in efforts to reignite the economy to the position it was a little more than a year ago.

AP US History teacher Connie Mason said, "Biden has more challenges facing him than any other president since FDR became president in 1932. A global pandemic, an overburdened health care system, a faltering economy, social, economic and racial issues, a crisis of confidence in government institutions, a divided people, and an environmental crisis- just to name some of the biggest problems."

President Biden also signed executive orders on relieving bans and restrictions on immigration, just the beginning of his new proposed immigration policy. He ordered a halt on the wall being built on the US-Mexican border as well.

Several executive orders were signed protecting the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, such as allowing transgender Americans to join the military. Along with that, transgenders will be allowed to choose between playing on a girl's or boys' sports team in high school, something many are concerned people will take advantage of for athletic achievement.

He urged Americans to have a 100-day mask "challenge" asking for everyone to properly wear a mask while in public for at least his first 100 days. The total US coronavirus death count is expected to reach 400,000 by then end of Biden's first three months.

Handling the pandemic is perhaps the president's most pressing issue at hand domestically. He has the goal of reaching 100 million vaccinations in his first 100 days in office, a goal Anthony Fauci calls "absolutely doable."

The Biden Administration also announced plans to authorize the Defense Production Act to increase the vaccine availability and safely begin reopening more elementary and middle schools.

"We will have to wait to see if he is able to execute his plan successfully in a time of divided government, and if his plan is up to all of the challenges he faces," said Mason.

During his campaign Biden made several claims and promises to tighten gun laws on his first day in office but has not yet do so. More background checking and screening is expected to be parts of his new gun law policies when they do get implemented.

High school staff weighs in on proposed federal minimum wage increase

By LINDSEY WILKINSON
Staff Writer

President Joe Biden has recently pushed to raise the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour. And considering how much even concessions at a baseball game cost nowadays, one can understand why.

With the current federal minimum wage set at $7.25 an hour, it can be difficult for people to stay afloat. Although more than half of the US has brought its minimum wage above the federal amount, workers in 21 states are still paid $7.25 an hour or less.



Photo by Lindsey Wilkinson

On average, a New Jersey Starbucks barista makes $11.87 per hour, according to Indeed.

"We assume that someone working a minimum wage job is a teen-ager, a retiree, or someone who just wants to fill their day," said Karen Walstein, librarian at the Old Bridge High School. "But there are people in this country who are working at minimum wage or even a little above and trying to feed their families."

Because of how high New Jersey's taxes and overall cost of living are and with the state minimum wage set at $10 an hour, it can be one of the costliest places in the country to live.

"I think for many families, the minimum wage amount that we currently have isn't enough to survive and live comfortably, especially in the state of New Jersey," said Lynzi Leamy, business education teacher. "People have children they need to provide for."

On the other hand, small business owners have already been suffering at the hands of the pandemic. So, if the minimum wage increases, they could fall further in the red.



Photo by Lindsey Wilkinson

According to nj.com, an average person in New Jersey must make $13.72 an hour to support himself if he lives alone.

"Small business owners simply cannot compete against large conglomerates," said Angel Morales, English teacher. "Higher, enforced minimum wages mean lower profit margins and higher prices for consumers, resulting in even more sluggish economies."

In addition, the more money a business pays its workers, the more people it will be forced to lay off, increasing unemployment rates.

"Since most businesses across the board cannot afford a minimum wage that high and still stay in business, they will close their doors at an even faster rate than the pandemic provoked," said Morales.

Still, even some of the more successful companies in the world do not pay their employees much more than the required wage. For example, Walmart, a multi-billion-dollar company, pays the average New Jersey cashier around $10.86 per hour, according to Indeed.

"Every person's job is important, and no one is more important than another," said Walstein. "We all need to treat each other with dignity and respect. And for me, [a fair wage] is part of the equation."

Students, staff share tips, tricks for staying fit during pandemic

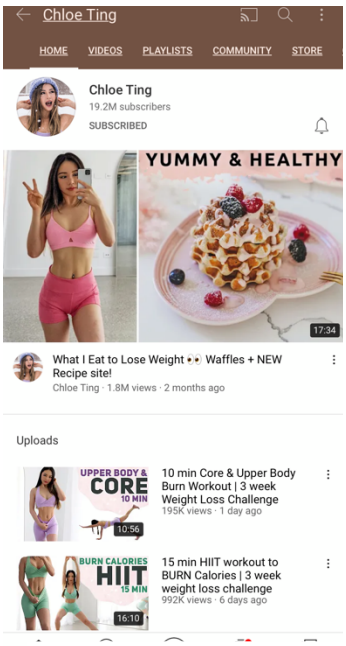
BY CASEE SANSEVERE

Editor-in-Chief

While enduring the COVID-19 quarantine for more than a year, many adults and teens have struggled to stay healthy and avoid harmful habits that they typically avoided prior to the pandemic.

It is so easy to fall into habits of binging food and watching TV, since there is not much else to do, students and staff agreed. However, with warmer weather, YouTube, and other applications like it, there are ways to unwind and feel good.

"I followed Chloe Ting on YouTube for a while," said senior Sathy Iyengar. "I was thinking of trying Pamela Reif too, since I've done a few other workouts over the summer that were like hers."



Courtesy of YouTube

Ting, an Australian fitness YouTuber, went viral during the start of the pandemic, offering free 30 minute and under workouts as a day-to-day challenge. On her page, under Chloe Ting, she offers a variety of different muscle group workouts, like abs, legs, and arms.

Reif, also found on YouTube, offers similar workouts to Ting, along with yoga and stretches, which make for great cool-downs, and overall exercise.

Senior Taylor Obdyke said going on walks around the neighborhood or safely at a park proved beneficial.

"Now more than ever, our society is focusing on mental health, and rightfully so. But too often, we forget how connected the human body is," said gym teacher Richard Torok. "So, to start, in order to keep our brains happy and healthy, we need to be feeding ourselves the right nutrients as well as taking the time needed each day to be physically challenged."

Torok, agreed with Obdyke, and said going for walks or jogs around Cheesequake State Park has helped a lot of people stay healthy all while social distancing.

State parks, like Cheesequake, as well as local ones like Geick Park by the high school and Thompson Park in Monroe, offer trails and open fields for ball games, picnics, and a nice daily dose of sun.

Online recipes from places like Food Network also offer healthier options with a variety of proteins, fruits, and vegetables.

Puppies adopted during 2020 pandemic may experience separation anxiety as world returns to new normal

BY DISHA DHINGRA

Staff Writer

While quarantine has caused anxiety for many people, for some it has brought new members into their families. Ever since last March when quarantine started, millions of people around the world opted to get a dog. Many pet store owners say there are at least 10 adoptions a day.

So many people decided to buy dogs because they were mostly bored and stuck inside the house. Dogs, whether we realize it or not, help us in ways we did not even know were possible.



Courtesy of Sally Fazio

Vice Principal Sally Fazio holds her new dog Max that she got during quarantine.

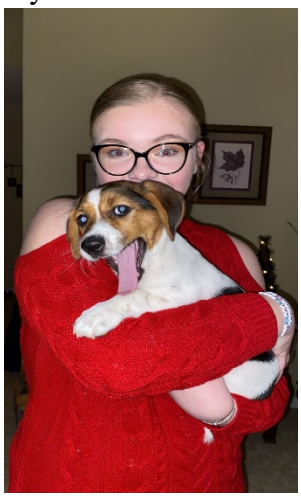
Vice Principal Sally Fazio got a Pitbull named Max, on Nov. 22, 2020.

"Getting a dog during quarantine has definitely kept me busy," she said.

Kiarra Clark, senior, got a dog in December. Harlee is a Beagle Mix Breed. The reason her family decided to get a dog was mostly to expand her family, and give her other dog Bailee, company.

Having a dog has helped many people including Clark during these times, by keeping people calm and happy.

"Whenever I am stressed, I play with her and I forget what is stressing me out," Clark said.



Courtesy of Kiarra Clark

Kiarra Clark, senior, cuddles her new dog that she got over quarantine.

Now that schools, places of work, and even some restaurants are slowly starting to reopen, that leaves us with the question, what will happen to the quarantine dogs?

Cassidy Jerzak, an owner of a German Pinscher Mix, said: "When quarantine is over, they will have to adjust to everyone else going back to school and work."

While many people will not have someone to look after their pets, the dogs will have to stay home alone, something many are not used to doing.

"I fear that when quarantine is over, she will have some separation anxiety. She is already clingy with me because I am home a lot. Whenever I go somewhere, she gets sad and waits for me to come back," said Clark.

These types of reactions are what makes quarantine dogs different from regular dogs. But sometimes they can benefit them.

"These differences can benefit the dogs because they feel safe in knowing they always have someone. While on the other hand it can hurt the dog because once we do go back to normal, she might not understand, and she might think we are leaving her," Clark said.

Students search for summer jobs amid COVID-19

BY CASEE SANSEVERE

Editor-in-Chief

As the school year draws to a close, and the pandemic lets up on its restrictions, teens everywhere are looking for summer jobs to get some extra cash.

Usual summer jobs like life guarding, working at amusement parks and at sport fields are a bit harder to find due to the pandemic. Places like public pools are smaller facilities, so they require less people to be in the area, and it also is difficult to find first aid classes, to become certified. However, they are still available.

"I don't think I would do it," said senior Dhara Patel. "It's still really close to people, and they're strangers so you don't know where they've been."



Courtesy of OBHSCareers twitter

Teacher Debra Hunter showcases a lifeguard and/or pool attendant job opening on her Twitter page, OBHS Careers.

Popular, year-round jobs at retail and fast food establishments are easier to find, and easier to get.

"Most places are hiring all the time, if not more now that the pandemic hit. And now, with more places opening, people need more workers," said senior Galina Zitani, who works at Wawa.

Summer break allows for more time and more chances for students to work. Places like Dunkin' Donuts, Mcdonalds, Wawa, Walmart, and some stores within malls are looking for new hires. They may not be glamourous summer jobs, but they work well to get hours in, and earn some good money.

"There will definitely be a lot of seniors making sure they can get as much money as they can before college starts, and the college kids are coming home for the summer. Maybe younger teens will have a harder time than the 17 and up ones, since they can work more without being overstaffed," said senior Xander Garron.

Although employees will still have access to the strangers in drive thru windows, and customers in general, most places work with young people's schedules, so they can choose their hours to help avoid some contact. The establishment is also required to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, which include wearing masks and social distancing.

Working during a pandemic, even with a vaccine and re-openings, may seem like a struggle, from finding employment to the restrictions stopping what could usually be done. However, finding open spots will be easier as summer approaches.

Students interested in finding jobs can also reach out to the Cooperative Education & Career Services Coordinator, and Business teacher Debra Hunter. Her twitter, OBHSCareers, and Facebook, OBHS Career Services are always showcases new job opportunities. Students can reach her by email, where she can contact the businesses and help them apply.

Transfer students from foreign countries struggle during pandemic

BY ANGELICA VANEGAS

Staff Writer

Students who transfer to Old Bridge High School from foreign countries experience a range of obstacles while trying to adapt to their lives in the United States.

And now, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, they endure even more challenges, including learning customs, language, and school.

"When you are in a room (in school), you understand better than in your bedroom," said sophomore Juan Jose Roa Cerra, who moved to the US from Columbia.



Courtesy of Juan Jose Roa Cerra

Sophomore Juan Jose Roa Cerra poses with family in home country Columbia, prior to the US move.

Most students said that their hardest subject was US history. They agreed that subjects that require a lot of theory are difficult for them because of the vast number of words and vocabulary introduced at a fast pace that they must memorize.

The pandemic also has negatively impacted their social lives by being in quarantine. They said it is difficult to meet people when they are forced to social distance from others.

Another major difficulty the students said is finding someone to practice their English, and many said they are fearful they will begin to forget what they have already learned.

"I worry that it won't be possible to create strong relationships with students remotely," said Nicole Engebos, ESL teacher. "A strong relationship is really important, and I want the students to know that I am there for them and want them to come to me with questions. But there are some students who I have never met, who have never turned on their cameras, and who wouldn't know who I was if I passed them in the hall."

ESL teacher Brittany Fuentes said she is most concerned about her students learning remotely because "there are so many distractions at home."

Fuentes offered advice to students arriving at Old Bridge High School from other countries.

"My advice to my students is to put your best effort forward. All the teachers appreciate when you try your best," she said. "Ask questions when you don't understand, and don't be ashamed of asking...Never stop wondering."

She recommended finding a quiet place to learn when attending classes remotely and to stick to a schedule.

"Limit the distractions (put your phone on silent)," said Fuentes "Take a break for lunch and set time aside in the afternoon to continue your work."

CDC says all Americans can be vaccinated by summer

BY ERIN HELLHAKE

News Editor



Courtesy of BioNTech

More than a year into the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, the nationwide vaccine rollout may prove to be the light at the end of the tunnel that Americans have been waiting for.

The first, two-dose vaccine, created by pharmaceutical company Pfizer, proved to be 97 percent effective in fighting COVID-19 symptoms. The second, two-dose vaccine, created by Moderna, a biotechnology company, is estimated to be 94 percent effective. In early March, the FDA approved pharmaceutical corporation Janssen's single-dose Coronavirus vaccine, commonly referred to as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. It is the first of its type made in America.

The Pfizer vaccine has received the most positive feedback thus far; studies showing little complications and minute symptoms.

"I was genuinely surprised at how fast these vaccines were able to be produced. Pharmaceutical scientists and doctors worked very hard on the effort, and it seems they worked 24/7 on research and trials," said Angelo Vitale, sophomore.

People are not considered fully vaccinated until two weeks after receiving their second dose, so it is important to be mindful. Even fully vaccinated individuals should practice social-distancing, healthy sanitary habits, and wear a mask when in contact with multiple people.

More than 10 percent of the American population is fully vaccinated with many states reporting a drop in cases, attributing it to the vaccine rollout. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is aiming for what is referred to as "herd immunity," a form of protection from an infectious disease by a sufficient percentage of the population being immune to the virus, either by built-up immunity or vaccine.

Many Americans believe that herd immunity is the most realistic way to make the population as safe from the deadly effects of the pandemic as quickly as possible.

"I think the vaccine is safe to get. I got my first shot in late February and got my second one a few weeks ago, and I feel great," said Sal Acquaviva, junior. "If you're eligible to get it, I think everyone should so that we can finally start getting back to normalcy."

Low-risk individuals will have the opportunity to receive the shot during Phase 3 of the vaccine rollout. The Biden Administration said that any American who wishes to receive the vaccine will likely be able to do so by the end of May.

"I'm going to receive the vaccine when I can," said Vitale. "I believe it will be the best way to keep my family and my community safe.

Currently, most states across the United States are in the middle or close to wrapping up Phase 2, which includes individuals who are 65 years of age or older, individuals with two or more medical conditions, and residents or employees of low-income housing and senior-living housing. Americans over the age of 75 were eligible to get the vaccine in Phase 1.

Students weigh in on first year into pandemic

BY JOSH GATSON

Sports Editor

In March, it was officially one year since the pandemic began.

As it dawns on the student body that they've spent an entire year inside their homes, they've taken some time to reflect on their year.

"Overall, quarantine has been good and bad for me in many ways," said Owen Tom, junior. "Many health scares that could potentially affect me or my family heavily keep me on my feet about updates."



Courtesy of Jenna Haines

Jenna Haines, junior, counts the passing days on her calendar.

Junior Paige Rosi said she found the last year "pretty lonely and boring,"

"I mostly sat around and watched Netflix," she said. "I also got my license but it's not as cool as I thought I'd be because we can't really go anywhere, you know."

Mackey McGowan, a junior, said he spent "a lot of time to work on myself." He admitted the first few months made him crazy – not able to spend time with friends or socialize with family.

"It really changed me as a person," said McGowan, "and I feel like it changed a lot of people either for the better or for the worse."

In multiple ways, both good and bad, spending a year at home was an eventful time for OBHS students.

Even in the school aspect, students have felt both positive and negative effects from spending most of this school year at home. Old Bridge High School did not return to a hybrid model until mid-February, which helped some students and hurt others.

"I feel like the new school system made everyone, who usually tries in school, lose almost all motivation to try anymore and use the easy way now," said McGowan.

"Staying at home during school hours has helped with my work pace and consistency with assignments and grades," said Tom.

Teens look forward to socializing with stores, theaters, restaurants reopening

BY EMILY REKLAITIS

Staff Writer

As the world is reopening, more and more activities are available for people to enjoy. Now that they are free to leave the house, many teens are looking forward to more ways to spend their time.

"I'm definitely looking forward to seeing my friends again and being able to go to movie theatres," said Charlotte Hankenson, freshman.

On March 5, movie theaters reopened at 25 percent capacity or a maximum of 50 people if the percentage was too high. It is also possible to rent a theater, the cost of which can range from $150 to $400 depending on the location.



Courtesy of Gabriella Sebestven

With health concerns in mind, these friends find ways to get together and stay safe.

Indoor dining venues can operate at 50 percent capacity with a maximum of six people allowed per party. Areas with more relaxed regulations can have up to 10 people in a party and are allowed two households.

"Personally, I think it's too early for indoor dining to open, especially if you aren't quarantined together. But I can understand why people might want to go out to a café or restaurant with their friends." said Cinthia Uddin, a freshman.



Courtesy of Emma Parrish

The San Diego Zoo reopens to the public on January 30, 2021.

"I think restaurants opening at half capacity is too soon, and I feel like stores aren't really regulating how many people are coming in and out." said Nicholas Margiotto, a sophomore.

Many major theme parks in the US have either opened or have a planned to reopen to the public with health regulations in place. Universal Studios Hollywood and Disneyland California opened its doors at 15 percent capacity on April 1, and Six Flags parks require all guests to have been healthy for a minimum of 14 days prior to their visit.

Broadway has yet to reopen, but it is planned to return sometime in May, though dates may vary depending on how soon the vaccine will be available to more people.

With many schools now reopening, it has opened the doors to possibilities of some extracurricular activities being offered, which can provide students with a way to interact with some of their peers.

"Band has been scheduled, but it hasn't started yet. But I'm really looking forward to it." said AJ Silvestri, junior.

"I feel like people should still take this seriously. Although rules are not as strict as last month, a lot of people are still dying. I know everyone is excited to go places, but we still have to be safe, or they'll have to shut down again." said Hankenson.

Podcasts: New way to listen, learn, live

BY LEXI SOLIMAN

Feature Editor

Podcasts can be a productive pastime that both entertain and educate. They can be listened to on the go, making them ideal for multitasking and passive listening. They are gaining popularity as Youtubers, Tiktok stars, and authors create their own podcasts to get more candid with their audiences.

There are several benefits to listening to podcasts, and it is overall better than other entertainment such as television or social media. They become especially valued to those who spend countless hours a day in front of blue light screens and provide entertainment without any more harm to the eyes.



Photo by Lexi Soliman

Podcasts are readily available for browsing and listening on Spotify.

"Podcasts are more relatable than TV shows because they give an insight on what other people's real lives and opinions are. They allow you to connect with people who are going through the same things, or hear ideas that are different than yours," said sophomore Sniyaa Slade.

Because they are only audio with no visual content, the listener is able to use their imagination. Podcasts are also proven to expand vocabulary, engage the listener to pay close attention, and inform on an incredibly wide range of topics.

For a daily lift, there are horoscope podcasts for each star sign. Updated every morning, these short messages are fun and light ways to bring positivity into everyday life. True crime podcasts are thrilling with a mixture of hard facts and conspiring commentary.

According to an iTunes report, religious and spirituality podcasts are the most popular category since 2015.

Self-help is a big podcast category with different professionals sharing insights on self-care and healthy life practices. Comedy is a relaxing way to wind down and enjoy spare time. Meditation podcasts consist of relaxing background music accompanied by soft-spoken prompts for restoring meditation.

Podcasts have been found to release hormones like endorphins and serotonin according to goodhousekeeping.com. This leaves listeners feeling happy, excited, or energized after listening.

Trending makeup looks for spring emphasize eyes since masks cover most faces

BY FATIMA SYED

Business Editor

Makeup is an art that many people use to express themselves. This year invites new looks for people to show off their talents.

“Skinimalism”, showing one’s innate beauty, is becoming more accepted. This look requires a minimal amount of makeup. It focuses more on showing the glow of the skin and skincare.

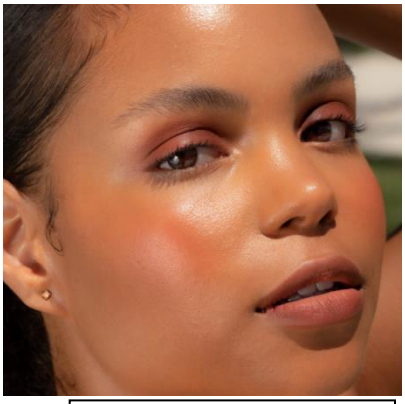


Courtesy of sephora.com

Keeping the skin dewy fresh has proven key during quarantine. Hyaluronic acid helps teens and adults achieve the glow. Many add this serum to their daily routines to enhance their skin especially in the heat.

“I like more natural looks because I think less is more when it comes to makeup,” said Charvi Totuka, senior.

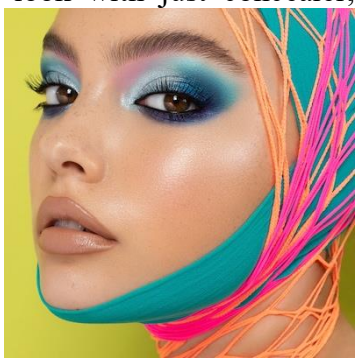
The feathered eyebrow is a popular look, which is created by using eyebrow gel to spread and set each strand of hair in place. Another eyebrow look that others opt to use is the bold brow, which is achieved by filling in brows or creating darkened and defined brows.



Courtesy of jasonwubeauty.com

With masks covering up most of the face, people are focusing more on their eyes. The use of different colored eyeliners and vibrant colored eyeshadows make the eyes pop.

“My favorite look is a simple look with just concealer, mascara, a bit of highlighter, blush and a thin winged liner,” said Wadia Azeem, sophomore.



Courtesy of sephora.com

While most people are going with natural looks, makeup artists are trying to amplify their art. They are focusing less on the day-to-day and more on extravagance. Artists use neon colors, and shiny and sparkly pigments when designing eyes and necks to show their creativity.

“Some people may use makeup to hide themselves while others use it to express how they feel; I think makeup enables different things to different people,” said Charvi.

“Even if a look isn't extravagant, it might allow people to feel better about themselves and be more authentic without having to worry about their appearance,” said Anh Nguyen, freshman.

Yes Day gets number one on Netflix in first week

BY FATIMA SYED

Business Editor

Every child wants to get his or her way but often hear the answer no. This time, in *Yes Day*, the children have all the control.

"I watched this movie because I'm a fan of Jennifer Garner and the description of the movie seemed interesting," said Natalie Torchia, junior.

In a family of five, Allison, who is portrayed by Jennifer Garner, is always playing the bad cop. She is always the one to put her foot down, while her husband Carlos, played by Edgar Ramirez, supports her decisions but never initiates them.



Courtesy of netflix.com

One day, when Allison is at parent-teacher conferences, she finds out that her children view her as a monster from her kids' teachers; she justifies her actions by calling it parenting. While she is there the school counselor suggests that the family have a "Yes Day", a day when the kids can have fun and do whatever they want without being told "no".

"I felt that I could relate to this movie as feel like my parents say no to everything," said Ebosereme Odion, sophomore.

Allison thinks this is a ludicrous idea until her oldest daughter Katie, played by Jenna Ortega, starts arguing with her about how she is not fun enough to do Yes Day. Allison then remembers how she used to say "yes" to everything before having children and feels it is only fair to give them a chance to do something fun. Before Katie agrees to "Yes Day", she makes a bet that if Allison says no to something then she gets to go to a concert with her friends without her mother.



Courtesy of netflix.com

"This was a nice lighthearted movie, but I think it's definitely for a younger audience," said Romari Ebuen, sophomore.

Everything is going well on "Yes Day" until Katie sneaks off to a concert with her friends and drops off her siblings at their house. She gets overwhelmed by the crowd and realizes she should have come with her mother. Allison goes to the concert and finds Katie while Carlos goes to the house to check on Evan and Ellie. Evan finds himself not being able to control his friends and gives up when his father comes home and finally learns how to say "no". Fun is important but rules keep everything in order.

"After watching "Yes Day" for the kids not working out in the end, it gave me reassurance that maybe it isn't such a good idea as I previously thought," said Ebosereme.

"It's important to have structure and rules but having fun once in a while never hurts," said Torchia.

Baseball, softball set to begin season after year-long hiatus

BY MATTHEW MANGAM

Sports Editor

Spring sports, like baseball and softball, are set to begin after last season's suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Baseball will begin its season on April 19 against East Brunswick, and softball will also start on April 19 with a game against South Plainfield.

Parents and spectators will be allowed at the games but must wear face coverings and always follow social distancing guidelines.

The Knights won the GMC Championship in 2019 against South Brunswick but lost to Manalapan in the NJSIAA State Tournament Central Jersey Group IV final.



Courtesy of Kristin Benes Tomasso

Senior Derek Wong prepares to pitch in a 2020 summer league game.



Courtesy of Kristin Benes Tomasso

Junior Nicholas Covolous throws a pitch in a 2020 summer league game against Brick.

"My goals for this upcoming season are to compete in every game," said Matthew Donaghue, head baseball coach. "We have one of the toughest schedules in the state with six top 10 teams in the state. Varsity baseball is about competing and playing as one. We have a lot of seniors this year, but also a very good group of underclassmen. I feel we have the talent to make a serious run in the GMCs and State tournament. I am looking forward to being able to practice with this group."

Senior John DeNardo, an outfielder, said he wants to be able to play every game safely.

"I would also like to help the team achieve winning a state title in any way possible," he said. "I believe that our coaches have put together a tremendous plan to have keep everyone on the team safe for the entire season. They have put hours' worth of time and money just so we players can play our favorite game every day."

The softball team has several returning seniors, including Brooke Bachonski, Mariah Carrasco, Eliza Cashman, Molly Colligan, Angelina Casey, and Samantha Wares.

The Knights made it to the GMC Tournament Quarterfinals in 2019 but were defeated by St. Thomas Aquinas.

"Our goals are to work very hard every day and have a successful season by winning the Red Division as well as the GMC Tournament," said Angela D'Amico, head softball coach. "We want to improve each day and continue to get better as a team."

Boys' Varsity Volleyball team looks to win GMC Championship

BY MATTHEW MANGAM

Sports Editor

The Boys' Volleyball team is returning after last season's cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team will open its season on April 19 with a home game against J.P. Stevens.



Courtesy of Lors Photography

Senior Zach Cuisiner spikes the ball during a 2019 practice in the OBHS gym.

As of right now, two people per athlete can attend games. Face coverings are required, and social distancing guidelines must be followed.

The Knights had a very successful 2018-19 season, capturing the GMC Championship, NJSIAA Tournament, and becoming state champions. The team took down big opponents like Fair Lawn, Ridge, and Hunterdon Central to achieve success.

"We always want to be the last team standing, but we prefer to take it a day at a time," said head coach Andrew Hopman. We hope more people will be allowed at our games because the student section gets the team fired up for games."



Courtesy of Lors Photography

Junior Rob Obdyke sets the ball up during a 2019 practice in the OBHS gym.

According to Nicholas Schon, senior and captain, the team's goals for this season are to continue the Old Bridge legacy and win the GMC Championship, Sectionals Championship, and overall State Championship.

"Our plan to action is simple; have a great first practice and build on that, win our first game and then build on top of that," said Schon. "If we keep the momentum going all season long, we win do great things this year as we have the players and coaching staff to do so.

The Knights have several seniors to lead the team this season, including Brian Snook, Matthew Manfredi, Aaron LaPlaca, Zach Cuisiner, and Schon.

Cusinier said his most important goal for the season is to inspire the younger players and to set an example of Old Bridge Volleyball and what it means to be a team player.

"I have a couple of other goals in my mind that I'd like to accomplish this year," he said. "It will take a lot of hard work and focus to achieve them. I am very excited for the season so I am not going to worry about what I cannot control. The team and I have our eyes on the prize this season."

LaPlaca said his goal for this season is to lead the state in blocks.

"I have been practicing my footwork and different drills and techniques to improve my game to the fullest," he said. "With my sophomore season getting cut short due to an ankle injury and my junior season cancelled, I haven't been able to make a huge impact for my name in the state. I believe that it is possible for me to accomplish but will not be handed to me. Our shortened season is unfortunate, and one COVID case could have a huge turn on our season, but we will work hard and continue to give our 100% with whatever we can control."

Old Bridge High School Boys' Varsity Track team off to strong start with many hitting personal bests

BY JOSH GATSON

Sports Editor



Courtesy of Nikolai James

Nikolai James, junior, runs 200 meters in 23.2 seconds in a meet against Monroe Township High School.

The Boys' Varsity Track team participated in the Ridge Day of Middle Distance at Ridge High School. This meet involved several teams from schools including Watchung Hills and Bridgewater.

Some highlights from the Ridge Day meet include Samar Raju and Nikolai James getting third and fourth place respectively in the 400-meter race, Nicholas Medeiros getting fifth in the 1600-meter race, and personal bests being hit from these athletes.

"I am extremely confident in my team's skills," said James, a junior. "We have been working hard for the past few months to improve and we've only scratched the surface of what we can achieve."

"We always have confidence in our team's ability because of the hard work we put in at practice on the track and in the weight room," said Raju, a junior.

When it comes to preparation, the Old Bridge athletes have their own ways of getting ready for their meets.

"I prepare by getting a good dinner, having a good sleep, and getting hydrated," said Thomas Blach, junior.

James also completes his own rituals like warming up well and staying focused on the days of his meets.

During meets, the team prepares physically for their races, in groups or all together.

"We do strides, race pace accelerations, mobility exercises, and stretching to prepare ourselves," said Raju.

The team has done well this winter season. Many members have improved in a major way and it has put them in a good position to be competitive in this upcoming spring season.

"I think our team did really well during this winter season," said Blach. "The season was pretty short, and it was hard to stay motivated, but everyone did what he needed to, and we ended up having most of the runners get a PR (personal record). It's a good way to start off the spring season."