Completing tasks and overcoming challenges can become easier when we are motivated. However, being motivated—and staying motivated—to do school work has become a challenge in itself, especially when unexpected situations pop up—such as, say, a global pandemic.

"Pandemic fatigue made it exceptionally difficult for many people (not just students) to stay engaged and on task," says Ms. Elizabeth Aiello, 11th and 12th grade counselor. "We all work towards goals and when we don’t have an idea of when that goal will be able to be achieved, it’s extremely hard to maintain one’s work ethic toward an intangible goal."

There are two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation comes from outside yourself and might include grades, awards, or a special dinner or gift. Some extrinsic motivators we have here at York are report cards and the academic awards given out at the end of the year. "When you get an award, you feel very special," says Jada McIntosh, a 9th grader. "You feel like you have worked to get to that place." Receiving awards gives off good feelings that students strive to feel repeatedly, serving as a great motivator to work hard in class.

York also has different tracks that can serve as an extrinsic motivator for students. Tenth grader Matthew Varela explains, "Not being dropped out of honors is motivation. As long as I’m in honors I want to stay in honors, so I’m motivated to do my work. If I get bumped out of honors, I’ll be even more motivated to get myself back up to honors."

But what if those rewards don’t last? "Sometimes if you go through school or life only for the reward, if it’s taken away, you won’t do [the work] because you are only looking for that reward," says middle school dean Mr. Barry Cleckley.

That’s when intrinsic motivation can become vitally important, Ms. Aiello says. Intrinsic motivation is when you want to do something because you just want to. Doing it is its own reward. For example, you could be doing chemistry homework because you are interested in the subject and you want to learn. "Motivation and accomplishment for your personal sense of achievement is yours to keep," says Ms. Aiello.

Although both kinds of motivation are equally helpful, some students may use one more than the other depending on the situation. As 10th grader Varela relates, "If it’s for academics, extrinsic motivation is more helpful. I skate, and if it’s for skating, it’s because I want to skate, not because I want to get something out of it."

Part of how motivated you are could also depend on the environment you are in. In an academic environment, you might find it hard to be motivated because of the workload and being burnt out, whereas in a nonacademic environment you might find it easier to stay motivated because you can set the pace. On the other hand, you might stay motivated in an academic environment because it sets deadlines whereas in a nonacademic setting it might be harder to make a schedule and stick to it.

Whenever you feel unmotivated, even if there are goals and awards far off in the future, it can be hard to start that motivation engine. But, there are many things you can do to get back on track, according to Ms. Aiello, Mr. Cleckley, and students. The first could be simply talking about how you feel, with a parent, teacher, or counselor. Another strategy could be seeking advice from a trusted friend and learning how to help motivate each other to do work.

Another step, says 9th grader McIntosh, could be using online resources such as the site habitica.com to help you set goals and complete your work in a fun way. Habitica is a site that allows you to gamify everyday tasks such as completing your homework. When you complete goals, your character can upgrade to new levels and use new features.

In general, McIntosh suggests, "set a goal. If you have to read a book, say, ‘If I read 20 pages I get to watch 20 minutes of TV.’ If you do a task, and complete the task and get a reward, you will keep doing tasks.”

Another way to tackle lack of motivation is by learning about others’ struggles. "Read biographies and autobiographies of successful individuals," advises Mr. Cleckley. "It can help kids see that they are not the only ones with a particular struggle and also help them see how someone had these struggles and still was successful. It could help kids learn how to deal with their own problems."

Motivation is something everyone can use. The key is to find what motivates you the most.

**Emily Singh, 10th Grade
The success of York Prep’s athletics over the course of the school’s 53-year history is obvious from the dozens of blue and gold banners draped over the rafters of the gymnasium. The banners display over 50 championship victories in sports ranging from soccer to basketball to tennis - and three more will be added for this year. However, they do not show the peculiar way sports began at York Prep.

Upon its founding in 1969, York was located on East 85th street between Lexington and Park Avenues, in a relatively small, nondescript building — which did not have a gym. York hired its first gym coach, named Arnie, later that year. According to Headmaster Mr. Ronald Stewart, Arnie applied for a teacher job primarily to be exempt from the Vietnam War draft. “He knew little about sports.” Since York had no gym, Arnie would rent out P.S. 6’s gym for his classes. When P.S. 6 was using its gym, Arnie resorted to taking his class on long, brisk walks, typically down to Bloomingdale’s, where he would often buy socks!

In 1980, the York Prep basketball team debuted, with Arnie as its first coach. For the next five years, York played in a small league of about six religious schools, and regularly lost. Mr. Stewart says he knew something had to change.

In 1985, York hired a new, highly experienced, basketball coach named Dominic Mitchell and officially entered the NYSAIS league, with P.S. 6 still serving as the home court. Seven years later, Mitchell led the Panthers Boys Varsity Basketball team to its first state championship against the highly favored Poly Prep Blue Devils. This was likely the first time that the NYSAIS state championship was won by a school without a gymnasium!

During the 1990’s, with the student body rapidly increasing, Mr. Stewart realized the old building was no longer suitable — which was good news for athletics. In 1997, York reached a deal with a Jewish Orthodox school known as the Ramaz School, in which Ramaz would swap its newly purchased property on West 68th Street near Central Park West in exchange for York Prep’s original location. Before York moved in, a major project was conducted, in which an auditorium, kitchen, and cafeteria were cleared out and the space was renovated to make way for its very first gymnasium.

Ever since 1997, York has competed against some of the top private school teams in the city. This past year was the first time that York Prep won a trifecta of basketball league championships, not to mention a state championship for the Boys Varsity Basketball team and an undefeated Boys Varsity Soccer team in the fall. As Mr. Stewart says, “We always punch above our weight in athletics.”
Mr. Carl Anthony, one of York Prep’s beloved security guards for more than 20 years, retired in December of 2021. His retirement was a sad surprise for teachers and students alike, and his absence has left a hole in the York Prep community.

Security guards ensure that students have a safe and secure school environment where they can grow academically and socially. “They make sure the only people coming into the building are the people that we want to have coming into the building,” explains Co-Head of School Jeremy Clarke. “If there was ever an emergency, they would be one of the really crucial people to help keep us safe in that moment.”

For students, the security guards are reassuring. As 8th grader, Jayden Sample says, “I perceive security as helpful. No matter what you need, they will always help you and protect you.”

Aside from keeping us safe, security guards are pivotal for setting the tone at school, something that Anthony was especially good at. “He was the first person you saw when you got to the school, and he was the last person you saw when you left,” Clarke states. “He brought the atmosphere and the attitude of warmth and welcoming to every student and teacher that walked in every day.”

Anthony was known for his cheerful disposition, and his presence was significant to students. “His retirement was very noticeable,” says Sample. “Every morning and after lunch you could walk into York and see his bright smile, and it’ll make everyone happy. He was a friend to everybody while he was here.”

Even students who are newer to the school appreciated Anthony. “I didn’t really know him, but I could tell that he had a kind heart,” comments 10th grader, Susanna Gruhn. “I could tell he cared about every student at York Prep.”

With Anthony gone, the school is currently looking for a replacement to take up the job — a task that is proving to be quite difficult. “Carl was such an amazing, perfect person that we just want to make sure that we replace him with someone who is as good as they possibly can be considering how large the shoes are to be filled,” says Clarke. “The search is well underway, but we will not put someone there until they’re going to be as great as Carl was.”

At the moment, Mr. Daryl Hill, York Prep’s other security guard and Anthony’s former co-worker, is doing the work of two guards, with some help from other staff. He puts in a long day.

“The hardest part of my day is in the morning. I get up at 5 o’clock to be here at 7, so that means I’m usually here at like 6:50,” he says. “I open up and I get everything ready for you guys and then I wait for you guys to come. After you guys start coming in, then my day starts.”

The job is challenging. “While you guys are in the classrooms learning, I have to be on constant watch out here so that nothing negative impacts the school,” explains Hill. “You hear about a lot of negative stuff going on in schools and the reason why it doesn’t go on here is because we are very vigilant and we take security seriously.” He usually leaves at 7pm.

Hill does feel Anthony’s absence on West 68th Street. “When Carl was here, it was easier for me to move around and do stuff,” Hill states. “I just have to be that much more vigilant as to everything that’s going on.”

According to Clarke, York Prep will have two guards once the search finds the best possible candidate. “This is just a transition period,” he says. “We do really want to find the next Carl.”

**Sophia Martinez, 9th Grade**
The Importance of Sleep

Sleep is a vital prerequisite for success in school, work, or just getting through the day. A study from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, shows that kids who get a healthy amount of sleep have improved attention, behavior, learning, memory, and overall mental and physical health. Additionally, children who don’t sleep enough may see a negative effect on the growth hormone and their weight.

A study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) concludes that teenagers (13-18 years old) should get 8-10 hours of sleep each night. However, nearly 75% of teenagers don’t get enough sleep, the Johns Hopkins study said.

Some factors that prevent children from getting the sleep they need are homework, playing video games, or lingering on social media. Ms. Evelyn Rowe-Cosentino, one of the wellness counselors that works with our student body, offers some advice: “Don’t use electronics before bed. Before sleeping, you should read or at least listen to some calm music.”

Students have a variety of sleep experiences to report. “I love to sleep!” says 6th grader Lexi Fiks. “And I try to get to sleep by 10:30 and I wake up at 6:45.”

For other students, it’s not so easy. Eleventh grader Smith Pingree says, “My phone helps me get a good night’s sleep by making me tired. However, it also doesn’t help me with the (phone’s) light flashing in my eye.” Meanwhile, Trina Dempsey, a 10th grader, says, “I try to go to sleep at 10:30, but thoughts on school and stress keep me up at night.”

Here at The Paw, we conducted our own survey to learn about students’ sleep habits. (See graph on next page.) Alarmingly, of the 173 students participating in the poll, 37.6%, or 65 people, said they get four hours or less of sleep at night. Only 28% reported sleeping the recommended 8 hours or more — with 13% sleeping at least 8 hours and 15% sleeping 7-8 hours.

Overall, sleep can really help you have a good day ahead. Follow these tips to get a better night’s sleep!

• Limit blue light (phones, iPads, computers) at night.
• If you have difficulty waking up in the mornings, stick to a sleep schedule and try to go to sleep around the same time each night.
• Do some physical activity during the day so your body feels tired.

It's hard for students to get to sleep when there is homework and a variety of distractions.

Illustration credit: Owen Barbagallo
EMILY’S RANT ABOUT SLEEP

So, I had practice until 5, home at like 6. Right? That’s dinner time. Have dinner, take a shower. next thing you know it’s 8 and I haven’t done any of my homework and my 20 pages of annotations assigned last night. Yes I know, 20 pages doesn’t sound like that much...it’s Victorian English...it’s a little bit harder to understand, it takes a while ....next thing you know it’s 10:30 and I still have so much work to do....11:30 comes and I’m like... I tried to go to bed at 11 today but this isn’t working out! And this morning the struggle I had getting out of bed was real. 9 is the ideal time for me to go to bed because I wake up at 6 ...10 should be the latest for me to get enough sleep...We have way too much homework. OK, school always lectures us about how sleep is important ... if sleep’s so important, why don’t they do anything about the homework level? If you’re going to say stuff, but then if you go right against it, it’s a negative and a positive... it cancels out. Surprisingly, I have found a very good way of hiding that I’m tired, with extreme energy ... American breakfast is the most sugar packed thing ever. Sugar equals energy. So basically I just go on a sugar overload in the morning. Also, I can’t tell you how many kids from York go to Starbucks in the morning. They make their Starbucks run... that’s caffeine. Want to know why we need caffeine? Because there’s too much homework. Because we don’t get sleep. I need my sleep! Oooh! I’ve been drowning in this tiredness forever. It’s hard to break that habit because...if you go to sleep at 2am for an entire two years, and you say one day I’m going to try to break this, and you go to sleep at 10pm you’re going to find it hard to fall asleep at 10pm... there’s a difference between going to bed and going to sleep. There’s a VERY VERY VERY BIG difference... I went to bed at 10pm. I was trying to make better habits for myself, but instead I fell asleep at 2am. At York, me and my friends are always talking. It’s like 11pm and we’re like “Go to bed. It’s so late”... Everyone is like, ok, we’re going to bed. The thing is we do go to bed, but we just don’t fall asleep. Part of that is also blue light from phones and electronics. But I’m still going to blame homework for keeping me up at 12.

Rant specialist Emily Singh

How many hours do you sleep at night?
173 responses

**Emily Singh, 10th Grade**
On March 23, 82-year-old Sami Steigmann brought his mission to York Prep. Mr. Steigmann spoke to Mr. Ethan Pennington’s 9th grade English class about his experiences in the Holocaust. Born in 1939, Mr. Steigmann was forced into a labor camp and was part of Nazi medical experimentation as a young boy from 1941 to 1944. He told the students why it is important to remember so that the Holocaust cannot happen again.

Mr. Steigmann joined by Zoom to describe how he was born in a village called Czernowitz, Bukovina, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire belonging to Romania. He likes to say he was born in one village but in three countries because his village later belonged to the Soviet Union and now is in Ukraine.

His labor camp was in Mogilev-Podolsky, in an area of Ukraine called Transnistria. Although he said that he has no recollection of the years he was a subject of Nazi experiments, he added that he has felt the side effects every single day of his life. “I suffered all my life from neck, head, and back problems,” he said. “The severity was so great that I had days and weeks that I could not sit, lay down, or walk. My headaches were so severe that I was crying in pain.”

After the medical experiments, life was very difficult in the camp. He recalled how the starvation and the bitterly cold winter created survival problems. At one point, his father was struggling to take care of his family, and once he even gave away his winter coat for a loaf of bread. Another time, when young Sami was dying of starvation, his life was saved by a German woman who brought food to the guards at the camp but also secretly gave young Sami milk.

Some 9th grade English classes this year read “Night,” by Elie Wiesel, who also survived the Holocaust. The book described how he survived in his concentration camp. Having Mr. Steigmann speak made the Holocaust seem even more real — a scary time to be alive.

Today, Mr. Steigmann gives talks to schools and other organizations. I met him at my synagogue, Tamid, the Downtown Synagogue, where he speaks to the Hebrew school classes and also attends services regularly.

Despite the difficulties of his life, he still enjoys life. Sami recently attended the celebration of Purim, a Jewish holiday marking triumph over anti-semitism, at our synagogue. The theme was the Beatles, with songs rewritten to celebrate the Queen Esther story. Mr. Steigmann joined in, clapping to the Beatles’ tunes, showing that people should enjoy life even if it can be hard.

Minecraft, the building video game created by Mojang Studios in 2009, is hugely popular worldwide. According to Playercounter, between 2.8 million and 3.6 million people play Minecraft every day. In Minecraft, you can play with your friends or by yourself. You can build towers and fight mobs using a sword. And you can use Minecraft to learn.

Earlier this year, some students in Mr. Jonathan Rosado-Gonzalez’s 7th grade science class used Minecraft to make “cell cities” in which buildings and places represent organelles. An organelle is a specialized structure living in a cell.

“Minecraft is what some students enjoy playing. They don’t usually do it for educational purposes,” Mr. Rosado-Gonzalez says. But “instead of doing a drawing or building using a shoe box, [some students] used the game to build their cell cities. Whereas some students have difficulty motivating themselves to find a project, Minecraft helps students unlock their creativity.”

For example, seventh grader Ariela Levine used Minecraft to build “a city hall which symbolized the nucleus,” the brain of the cell that holds all the information. Levine also enjoys playing Minecraft outside of school. “It’s something I find passion [in],” she says. “So why not incorporate something I enjoy into a school project?”

Video games and technology can really help some people in opening up their creativity in school. When students are given the option to gamify their school projects, they are able to review the material while enjoying the game they like. Stay tuned for more projects that connect video games to school!
We are living through history. The Coronavirus pandemic has rocked the globe. Russia has invaded Ukraine in the biggest European conflict since World War II. A Black Lives Matter movement is surging in the U.S. Climate change threatens the world.

Given these historic events, The Paw is highlighting York’s two new history teachers — Mr. Jared Lippman and Ms. Aida Bardissi — about what excites them about teaching this subject.

“I wanted to be a history teacher because it is both difficult but important to understand what is happening in the world,” says Mr. Lippman, who teaches 9th, 10th, and 12th grade.

Mr. Lippman attended Hamilton College and earned his master’s degree in History at the University of Rochester. Before coming to York, he was a teacher and a coach at a boarding school in New Jersey.

Since his high school did not have many opportunities for active learning, Mr. Lippman likes the students to be researching different topics and sharing their findings rather than just listening to his ideas. Also, he guides students to look at events from different perspectives.

In his teaching practice, Mr. Lippman draws connections between historical events and today. For instance, he enjoys teaching about the late 1800s because, at that time, countries all around the world were sharing ideas that led to modernization that has shaped today’s world.

Of the historic events happening around us today, Mr. Lippman says, “While these contemporary events are not yet part of the curriculum, I have found there are a lot of great connections and analogies between our current experience and historical patterns. For instance, quarantining at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic has helped students better understand the social disruption resulting from the Bubonic Plague in the mid-1300s. When learning about America’s delayed entry into World War II, similarly, it is helpful to consider the complicated decisions that the US faces today over how to deal with the Russia-Ukraine conflict.”

Ms. Bardissi’s teaching style is similar in some ways to Mr. Lippman’s. After graduating from Boston University with a degree in International Relations, Ms. Bardissi was the Program and Staff Assistant at the Middle East Initiative at Harvard, where she created and organized events for professors and PhD students, and managed their communications classes. Afterward, she earned a master’s in sociology at the London School of Economics.

Like Mr. Lippman, Ms. Bardissi engages students in their own learning. For example, her 12th grade Modern Arab World class did a simulation of a conference called the Bandung Conference that took place in Indonesia in the 1960s. Students had to research a particular country and act as a delegate who created pacts and alliances with other countries.

Also similar to Mr. Lippman, she draws connections between the past and present. “I feel that current events are important and teachers should be encouraged to educate their students on them,” she says. “Even though they take place in more recent history, their roots have started as far back as the things we cover in class. I try my best to teach about the past while still talking about the present.”

“For example, when we think about the Black Lives Matter movement, we talked about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the depopulation of Africa. Also, the Enlightenment Era gave us ideas about what it means to ask your government for human rights, and the Haitian Revolution is a great example of a successful revolution against the poor treatment of Black people. We even just covered the Scramble for Africa in the colonial period. Politics and history always happen to people: they affect us in many ways. The same can be said for the Russia-Ukraine conflict and how borders are made up by people in power for particular purposes as we saw in our current unit about Global Imperialism!”

According to Ms. Bardissi and Mr. Lipmann, the world is always changing, but looking back at history, we see how much it can inform us about today.

Ms. Bardissi and Mr. Lippman make connections between the past and current events.
Throughout the 2021-22 school year, there have been many controversial debates about pop culture. From the best soda to the best sport, these debates flow into the hallowed halls of York Prep. The Paw decided to give students a platform to voice their opinions. These are the results of the “2021-22 Hot Takes of the Year.”

Which sport is better?
175 responses

Out of 175 responses, the top result in the best sport is basketball. To be specific, 68 people (38.9%) said just that. It’s understandable because the Junior Varsity team won the league championship, the Girls Varsity team won the league championship, and the Boys Varsity team won both the league and state championships. Who wouldn’t want to be a basketball fan?! Coming in second was football with 31 votes (17.7%). The third place finisher was baseball with 19 votes (10.9%).

Which is the better music album?
162 responses

By a wide margin, the top result for the best album was Donda by Kanye West. In fact, more than 45% of people voted for it. The runner up was Certified Lover Boy by Drake with 23 votes (14.2%). The third best album went to Happier than Ever by Billie Eilish with 18 votes (11.1%).

Which is the best pop star of 2021-22?
157 responses

For the first time in this poll, we have a tie for first place for best pop star. It was between Dua Lipa and the collaboration of Bruno Mars, Anderson .Paak and Silk Sonic with 32 votes each (20.4%). In second was Olivia Rodrigo with 28 votes (17.8%). After that, it was Taylor Swift with 27 votes (17.2%).

Which sneaker brand is better?
174 responses

This debate was a tightly contested one, as the top two answers were separated by 1 vote. Nike just barely beat out Vans for the top spot, 43-42. Just 8 votes behind Vans was Jordan with 34 votes (19.5%).

Who is the best rapper of 2021-22?
166 responses

Overwhelmingly, York Prep students think that Megan Thee Stallion is the best rapper of 2021-2022 with 73 votes (44%). Finishing in second place was Tyler, the Creator with 20 votes (12%). Coming in third was Drake with 15 votes (9%).

Which is the better soda?
172 responses

For the second time in this poll, we have a tie for first. It was between Sprite and Coke/Coca-Cola at 53 votes (30.8%). Dr. Pepper finished in third place with 33 votes (19.2%).
The debate over remote learning versus in-person learning has been prominent over the age of the COVID-19 pandemic. Every student had a different experience of the pandemic, which shows in this poll. It was a close margin, as the vote was separated by just 13 votes. All in all, remote learning prevailed with 94 votes (53.7%), while in-person had 81 votes (46.3%).

By a landslide, York Prep students think that Apple makes the best phones with 108 votes (62.4%). Snagging second place was Android with 52 votes (30.1%). In third place: Google with a measly 7 votes (4%).

Social media has been a focal part of daily life for over a decade, and it has clearly made its impact on York Prep’s student body. The current favorite is TikTok with 68 votes (38.9%). The second most popular social media platform was Discord with 27 votes (15.4%). Coming in third place was Snapchat with 24 votes (13.7%).

By a pretty decent margin, York Prep students name Netflix as their favorite streaming platform with 69 votes (40.1%). Following that is Apple TV with 32 votes (18.6%) and Hulu with 27 votes (15.7%).

Microsoft Windows came out on top with 78 votes (45.3%). Apple did not do as well in the poll, as they finished in second place with 65 votes (37.4%). A distant third was Google Chromebooks with 22 votes (12.8%).

**Rome Kadi, 11th Grade**
WAYS TO SPRUCE UP YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION

When it comes to applying to college, it’s never too early to think about how you are going to distinguish yourself from the crowd.

Colleges are looking for passion and leadership, as demonstrated by dedication to one extracurricular activity or club over the course of your high school years. Director of College Guidance, Ms. Janet Rooney, advises that freshmen and sophomores do not wait until junior year to join a club – whether in or outside school – and also encourages them to try to take on a leadership position in the later years.

One example of an extracurricular activity outside of school is the Eagle Scouts. “Eagle Scouts is incredible,” Ms. Rooney says. “It provides skill-building and leadership. We had three Eagle Scouts in one class this year.”

Another great idea is to take a college-level class during your summer vacation. “By taking college-level classes [students] show that they can do college-level work, which is important to colleges,” says Mr. David Leventhal, Associate in the College Guidance Office and Dean of the 11th Grade. Parents and students are provided with a list of colleges that offer classes to high school students. Depending on their track, certain colleges may be a better fit.

If you aren’t interested in taking a pre-college class, but still want to be productive and enrich your summer, you can consider trying to secure an internship or job. A simple Google search can yield many opportunities. Once you find a company of interest, you can cross-reference it on the career website Glassdoor to read ratings and reviews about the employee experience.

On CareerKarma, which helps people find job training programs, you can find information from companies like Google, Bank of America, Microsoft, Meta, and NASA that offer internships. Some benefits of an internship include learning about career goals, gaining hands-on experience, finding networking opportunities, and gaining self-confidence, according to careerkarma.com.

For those who are more entrepreneurial, landing an internship at a start-up may be of interest, and you can find out about those opportunities on AngelList or Dice. Lastly, check with your teachers for the names of other students at York who may have done an internship and can make an introduction.

Mr. Leventhal encourages kids to consider internships. “It shows that students know how to take responsibility with a job,” he says.

If you are reluctant to do an internship but still want work experience, you can partake in a workshop. The Detroit/New York Writers Room for journalism is one example of an excellent workshop for students interested in journalism.

Maybe you don’t have the time to commit to an internship or a job but still want to engage in a fulfilling activity. In that case, you should consider getting involved in your neighborhood as a volunteer. Ms. Rooney recommends looking at The 92nd Street Y or the Central Park Conservancy. “They are great resources for volunteer opportunities. If you like animals, ask if you can clean cages or hold cats at a vet’s office,” she says.

Lastly, Ms. Rooney shares what she would like freshman and sophomores to know: “For competitive colleges, it’s not enough to have perfect SAT scores and grades. Colleges are looking for kids who have followed a passion all throughout high school and demonstrated leadership in an area of top interest.”

**Emily Zaretsky, 11th Grade**
Graduation is the event that high school students look forward to when they think of escaping high school and the work that comes with it. The graduation ceremony is the culmination of all the hard work and dedication they put into school every single day. It is a special day for seniors and is supposed to be passionate and touching. But can students still feel the same amount of emotion when everyone from family to teachers is not there with them in person?

For the last two years, York Prep has held graduation ceremonies that were heavily affected by COVID-19. The class of 2020 graduated during May, the height of the pandemic. The ceremony was fully remote. Graduating students wore their graduation gowns; spectators were all watching on a Zoom webinar. Even though viewing graduation by Zoom might be less exciting than an in-person event, there were still positive sides to the seemingly negative situation.

Today, Mr. Jeremy Clarke, Co-Head of School, speaks positively about that graduation, even when everything was improvised and going with the flow. “At the time it was a kind of cool and novel way to deal with a big problem and there were some advantages to it,” he says. “There were far more spectators at that graduation than we will ever have at a regular graduation.” Traditionally, seniors are only allowed to bring a maximum of six relatives to their graduation ceremonies. “We had celebrities send in well wishes. Instead of having one speaker, we had a dozen really famous people give a message.” Among these celebrities were musicians like Eddie Vedder and the American actor John Stamos.

The most recent 2021 graduation ceremony occurred in the Christian Science Church’s chapel and happened as an in-person event. Students were only allowed to invite two guests while others who wanted to spectate watched the broadcast on Zoom. Although many important people to the students watched the event online, college counselor Janet Rooney says that having it in person was worth it. “I think we were all so happy to be back in person, and to have parents actually be in the audience was nice and to see the kids in their caps and gowns,” she says. “I think it was a good graduation.” Still, though things were coming back somewhere near the level of normal, the graduation did not reach its greatest potential.

Students, families, and staff are hopeful. Barring any last-minute setbacks, there should be a conventional graduation this year on May 19th in the church sanctuary. Perhaps by then, everyone will not be required to watch online or wear masks, and there won’t be an extra limit on the number of guests. “We hope that as long as there is not another variant or another thing that changes things, that does seem to be where we’re heading,” Mr. Clarke said in early May. “If we could have a successful prom and then the next week we all come together with parents and friends, it really is quite a moving experience.”

**Cameron Chinquee, 9th Grade**
COVID QUARANTINE DIARY

It all started with a sore throat and because it was winter, I thought it was a common cold. The next day after the sore throat, the symptoms got worse, and I suddenly had a fever with a sore throat. I refused to get out of bed because of how bad it got. At this point, I thought it was a flu, that was until I got a text from my friend, in a different school, who I wasn’t in contact with for the past month or so. He tested positive and told me about his symptoms, which were exactly like mine. This was the point when I had gotten tested and found out I had COVID.

Unfortunately, by this time, I had already spent 2 full days in close contact with my family which resulted in my entire family also testing positive. This being said, we all had COVID, so I didn’t have to go through any changes in routines other than being unable to go outside of the house.

Day 1: Today was the first day I stayed home. It’s a Monday, and because of that I’m a little disappointed. I cannot participate in my gym class, and I heard that there was basketball today which was discouraging, but hey, I’m glad that sports is back. I didn’t really know what to do today or how to participate in classes and keep up on the work. I’m stressed about figuring out all of my assignments, and the fact that I’m supposed to have three quizzes this week. Other than that, we played a math Kahoot like game that I was able to join and a Blokkit in French which honestly made my day so much better.

Day 2: It’s the second day, and each day it’s getting closer to the end of quarantine and I’m getting better. Zoom is still not an option in some classes and it still makes me worried. I was able to Zoom with my English teacher for extra help on an assignment. I set up a Zoom with my Chemistry teacher for tomorrow to catch up on what I missed from today. Today went smoothly, and I’m planning on looking for online practice problems for math and science just to make sure I’m understanding what I’m trying to teach myself.

Day 3: Day 3! I used Zoom today and took my first at-home quiz which I already got the grade back for. I Zoomed in the morning for chemistry to catch up on material that I missed out on and Zoomed into English for a one-on-one chat about an assignment. In the science room, another student in my class, who was also out, was in the Zoom with me. Remote life is getting easier to manage, although I am glad for email and how it’s helped me so far. Being on Zoom, even if it was just to see the board and I couldn’t speak, has helped me a lot. Zoom has helped me stay on top of schoolwork and put my mind at ease as well.

Day 4: Not all days can go smoothly. This, I’ve learned the hard way. I struggled with chemistry because I felt that I was behind. Little did I know, I spent three hours worrying and breaking down over nothing, because the class didn’t learn it either. I miss Zoom on days like this—days where I’m not sure how much was covered—and how much I am responsible for knowing. However, today is one more day down and only three more days until I test again to get back to school. It will end up being Four days in total, because we have Monday off, but I am able to deal with that. I can’t wait for school; it’s been too long locked up in this house. TOO LONG.

Day 5: Today was a MUCH slower day. The chemistry worksheet—I struggled with that. Yeah I woke up this morning and talked it out with my brother, reread the lesson, and suddenly, it made complete sense. I didn’t really do too much. I logged into Zoom for English for peer editing today which was fun. I didn’t feel very productive, I think that’s just what Fridays are like. Anyways, it’s the last day (hopefully) of quarantine during a school week! I come back on Tuesday!

Day 6: It’s Saturday and I’m not quite sure how, but I slept until 1pm today. Um yea, I can’t really justify this… I guess I was just tired? Regardless, I decided to do my French and English homework. I did a few other things: started an application for a summer course, finished some club work, and looked through (and cleared out) my email. It’s not much, but it’s something. I’m hoping to get back some motivation tomorrow to do a little more.

Day 7: WOOO! The end of the 7-day quarantine, but tomorrow will be 8 just for good measure. I can’t wait until this is over. On a different note, today was my father’s birthday, and we spent it inside just hanging out with dad. We couldn’t go to the movies or anything so we got Disney+ and watched Eternals! Had fun today, and also got prepared for school by finishing my homework.

Day 8: Today, I finished work that I had outside of school and spent today just working on myself and texting some friends. I hope I test negative tomorrow morning so that I’ll make it to school. After all, I have no symptoms, and I feel like I’m a lot better! Hoping to be at school tomorrow, I suppose I will update this in the morning.

UPDATE - 1/18/2022 : Tested Negative!! I’m Back!!

**Emily Singh, 10th Grade**
**WHY ARE THERE DOORS HANGING ON THE WALL?**

**ARCHITECTURAL QUIRKS MAKE YORK PREP UNIQUE**

Though our school building appears totally normal at first glance, there are a few oddities here and there that one does not typically see in a school. We interviewed Beycan Akbulut, Director of Maintenance, and Mr. Ronald Stewart, Headmaster, so they could shed some light on a few of the peculiar features.

**Chapel—**
Built in 1920, the York Prep building was originally a rabbinical seminary, which is why there is a chapel (room 405). Unlike the other floors, there is a round bend in the 4th floor hallway because the chapel takes up so much space.

**Fireplaces —**
Four classrooms have fireplaces, which are non-working but were used in seminary times, creating a welcoming and scholarly atmosphere. If you look closely over the fireplace in room 324, you can see Hebrew lettering that was painted over.

**Doors hanging on the walls of the 4th floor—**
These three doors were originally the doors going into an auditorium on the first floor. (The fourth door has been lost.) Now they are just wall decor — doors to nowhere.

**Panther Dome Ceiling (the gymnasium)—**
The ceiling of the gym is round instead of flat. This is because there was no gym before York Prep. Where the gym is now, there was a basement and a first floor. To create a gym with a high ceiling, York removed most of the first floor.

**Pitched Ceiling in Room 409 and 403—**
Rooms 409 and 403 have a pitched ceiling unlike that of other classrooms. This is because of the shape of the roof. When you go up to the roof, Room 409 is on the left front corner and Room 403 is on the right front corner.

**Sophia Martinez, 9th Grade**

**Photo credit: William van der Rhoer**
**Astrology: A Window into the Deans’ Souls**

The Astrology club, which has been learning how to interpret astrological signs, made astrological charts about our deans. They used these “big three” signs in the study:

**Sun:** Represents outward shining creative energy and sense of individuality.

**Moon:** Represents self-image, emotional response, and unconscious predestination.

**Rising:** The image of the personality as seen by others, and the attitude that one has towards life.

Janet Rooney, 12th grade Dean and Director of College Guidance

Ms. Rooney has a Sun in Aries. These people are natural athletes and pioneers in whatever they do, and they possess a basic quality of bravery. With her Moon in Scorpio, she theoretically can see beyond facades and cut right to the core of a person. This ability to “see” what isn’t obvious to others can be intimidating but is important when determining the right college fit for our seniors. Lastly, Ms. Rooney’s Ascendant is in Leo radiates a special energy and magnetism. No matter their age in real-world terms, Leo rising people are kids at heart, fun-loving, warm, generous, and spirited.

Ms. Rooney responds: “I am a lot of those descriptions. Honestly the entire thing is spot on and I’m not ashamed to say it.”

David Leventhal, 11th Grade Dean, Associate Head of College Guidance

How can you be a triple threat in Astrology? With his big 3 in Scorpio, Mr. Leventhal’s personality illustrates a true Scorpio. The Sun sign of Scorpios indicates direct self-starters who are brave, important traits in his current work with high school students. Meanwhile, the Moon sign of Scorpio showcases the person’s observant, intuitive, and emotional sides. You need to work to earn his trust. Ascendants in Scorpio aren’t pushed around and demand respect and a voice. Some may find Ascendant Scorpios intimidating at first until one gets to know them. They are extremely protective of their family.

Mr. Leventhal responds: “I may have a gruff exterior, but once you earn my trust, I’m loyal to the end.”

Brian Shure, 9th and 10th grade Dean

Mr. Shure has a Sun in Capricorn. These individuals are hard-working, serious, and dependable. Additionally, they have the attitude and skills necessary to accomplish big goals — demonstrated in the Varsity Basketball team’s State Championship. Someone with a Moon in Taurus has strong and stable emotions. He values security, enjoys being outdoors, and loves to be comfortable, often not taking risks unless they are calculated. Scorpio rising individuals can see right through you. Their manner commands respect, and something about them tells the world they are not to be messed with. They are very protective of their loved ones.

Mr. Shure responds: “For the most part I agree with the description, but I disagree with not taking risks.”

Barry Cleckley, Middle School Dean

We have a double-threat Cancer energy for Mr. Cleckley! Sun in Cancer individuals are protective of those they care about and of themselves. This person weighs words carefully and has a calm and discreet manner. Additionally, with a Moon in Cancer, his emotions and will are at peace with one another, suggesting a balanced personality. These individuals have the ability to get in touch with the feelings and moods of others (fitting as our Middle School Dean). Ascendant in Capricorn individuals ooze confidence, dressing the part to show they care about their appearance and manner.

Mr. Cleckley responds: “I mostly agree with this description. I think this is why I do my job so well.”

**Katherine Carr, 9th grade, Ruth La Tona, 10th grade, Ava Parker, 10th grade, Ms. Christya Boucher, Club advisor, Ms. Isabel Boyce**
**VULNERABLE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES CLUB SEMINAR**

Wednesday, March 16, 2022, was York Prep’s first seminar on endangered and vulnerable species. The Vulnerable and Endangered Species club wanted to educate the York Prep community on what is happening to our beloved animals and plants and how we can all help. The members of the clubs are Mr. Mick Ward, Coach Jordan Valentzas, Coach Jessica Fazio, Cameron Chiquee, Joseph Cruz, Vishnu Ayyalasomayajula, and Katherine Carr.

According to a recent analysis identified by scientists, the world contains roughly 8.7 million species. There are 1,300 endangered and vulnerable species.

Cameron and Katherine gave a presentation about how people can help protect the environment by avoiding exploiting animals for their features. Poachers use rhinoceros and elephant tusks, which contain ivory, to produce soap and other products. Also poachers should stop killing animals and trading them in illegal trade markets to make a profit. A rhinoceros gets killed every 22 hours by a poacher. We can contribute by refraining from visiting zoos to assist them in making a profit by capturing animals from their natural habitats.

Next, Mr. Ward gave a presentation about endangered plants and what happens when people ruin their ecosystem. Plants are used to create medicine, and there are many plants that scientists have yet to identify. Finally, Joseph drew a comic strip showing the progression of what happens when humans ruin animals’ homes.

The club will be spreading the word about endangered species in other ways. For example, it is going to have a bake sale next year and donate the money to the World Wildlife Fund and maybe write a letter to the government.

**Katherine Carr, 9th Grade**

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**FUN AND GAMES**

**PANTHER PUNS — PART 2**

Need a laugh to brighten your day? You’ve come to the right place!

Science jokes:

- What are the primary elements of a sense of humor?
  A: Sulfur, Argon, Calcium, and Samarium. Otherwise known as SArCaSm
- A neutron walks into a bar and asks how much for a beer. Bartender replies, “For you, no charge.”
- Once I told a chemistry joke. There was no reaction.
- Q: What does nitrogen become during the day time? A: daytrogen
- In prison they called me the mitochondria because I was the powerhouse of the cell.
- Why can’t you trust atoms? Because they make up everything.

History jokes:

- How was the Roman Empire cut in half? With a pair of Caesars.
- Did you hear the one about the Liberty Bell? Yeah, it cracked me up too!
- Who invented fractions? Henry the 1/4th!
- Why is the Medieval period often called the Dark Ages? Because there were so many knights!
- What kind of tea did the American colonists want at the Boston Tea Party? Liberty!

**Olivia Brown, 9th Grade**

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Trivia Quiz Answer Key: 1C, 2A, 3A, 4B, 5C, 6C, 7A, 8B, 9D, 10C
**Owen Barbagallo, 10th Grade**

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The York Preparatory School newspaper strives to reflect the ideals of the school through accurate reports and thoughtful opinion pieces. The editing staff maintains professional standards as its basis. Bylined opinions reflect the views of the individual writers. All other articles attempt to provide the school community an impartial account of the facts.

Letters to the editor may be submitted to any staff member or mailed to The Paw, Attn: Hilary Hersh, 40 W. 68th St., New York, NY 10023. The Paw reserves the right to edit letters containing libelous or obscene material and to omit certain sections for space limitations as long as the original meaning remains unchanged.

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**New York City Trivia Quiz - Part 2**

1. What building was Ghostbusters filmed in?
   a. Firehouse 1
   b. Firehouse 6
   c. Firehouse 8
   d. Firehouse 13

2. What is the highest point in New York City?
   a. Todt Hill, Staten Island
   b. Great Hill, Manhattan
   c. Sunset Park, Brooklyn
   d. Fort Washington, Manhattan

3. What is the oldest airport in the New York Area?
   a. Teterboro Airport
   b. Newark Airport
   c. LaGuardia Airport
   d. JFK Airport

4. When was the original Pennsylvania Station demolished?
   a. Tuesday, September 13th, 1961
   b. Friday, October 13th, 1963
   c. Never. It was always this bad
   d. Wednesday, May 4th, 1971

5. What are the Subway Lines?
   a. 
      1234567_ABCDEF_H_J_LM_QRS_W_Z
   b. 
      123456789_ABCDE_GH__LMN_RST_VW_Z
   c. 
      1234567_ABCDEFG_J_LMN_QRS_W_Z
   d. 
      1234567_9ABCDEFGHJKLM_PQRSTUVWXYZ

6. What’s the northernmost subway station opened on the original line?
   a. 125th St
   b. 137th St
   c. 145th St
   d. 157th St

7. What was the theater center of New York before Broadway?
   a. Bowery
   b. Washington Square
   c. Five Points
   d. City Hall

8. How many movies have been filmed in New York?
   a. 401
   b. 517
   c. 627
   d. 789

9. How many pizzerias are in New York?
   a. Up to 1,000
   b. Up to 12,000
   c. Up to 24,000
   d. Up to 32,000

10. Where was the 1 train’s southern end rerouted right after 9/11?
    a. To New Lots Ave
    b. To Flatbush Ave
    c. To 14th St
    d. To Chambers St.

Find answers on page 15.