

# Voice of the Highlander

May 2020 – No. 12

## Goodbye Edition

The student newspaper of Robert T. Hill Middle School in Dallas, TX.

### Before it all started

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Ian Marchand



School before the pandemic was going on as normal. Then I heard that all future field trips were canceled which caused my robotics team and I to retire.

Some of my favorite memories about this school year are going to the Reilly Carnival and the field trips. This school year, some of my goals were to improve from last year. Honestly, the prior year

was not my best and I definitely improved keeping my grades above 80 the entire year. The club I participated in was the competitive robotics team, specifically team 505C.

I think it is safe to say that the STEM Robotics Team was the most successful club considering we won 10 trophies with our team alone and qualified for national and world championship.

My favorite part about journalism is keeping with the world and its problems. It gives me sense in the world we live in. My favorite teachers this year have been Mrs. Zajicek and Mr. Smajlovic.

Life during quarantine has been the same as I wrote in my previous article. Just to sum it up every day is really repetitive and on rare occasions some other events would take place. By being home, I miss going out with friends and family and visiting people and the party's my family used to have. I really did predict that stay at home order would take place so I wouldn't have really done anything different.

I want life to go back to normal, but I am

not sure when life will go back to normal. People are opening stores back up, but the cases are still rising and there's no vaccine so to me this makes this move ignoramus. I think that school will start later than the usual time.

To the people I couldn't say bye to, I'll be taller than you when I see you again. Since I'm going to high school next year, I have to say Hill taught me a lot, not just about academics, but life and the people you should be with.

# Nothing can stop me

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Demarion Wreh



Before school was so boring, I didn't even want to go. I didn't want to learn anything. I was just so tired of school.

The only reason I felt I needed to go is because of my best friends.

Now I regret feeling like that and I wish I appreciated school more before. I miss always making my class laugh and making everyone smile because that's what I do. I also miss my favorite teacher Mrs. Sweeney. She was the best. She really taught us a lot, not only about school, but life. It's really going to help me later on.

I enjoyed getting to write in the newspaper about how I felt on things in school and being able to be a voice for the children at my school.

This pandemic life has been so crazy and confusing. At first, I literally didn't know what to say because I thought it was going to go away overnight, but I didn't think I was going to get to this point where they literally shut everything down. I miss going to McDonald's and sitting down to eat. But looking on the bright side, the quarantine helps me learn more about my family and spend more time with them than before. I was surprised on how much I missed out. If all of this does go away, I would appreciate school more and not walk past hand sanitizers all the time.

Hopefully in the future, we are way more prepared for something like this. We were not ready at all. It can happen so fast.

Other than that, I'm starting to change my self-image and how I think of myself. I'm not changing any of my goals because of some virus because nothing can stop me and that's something, I had to learn my whole life just not during this time period. I'm so thankful for my teachers, who were unpaid therapist to me while I was going through a tough time, and as for my

classmates I thank you guys for being an impact on my life, good or bad, you helped me become a stronger and better person than I already am.

# My last year

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Angela Tapia



Before this whole quarantine happened, I was actually enjoying school. I mean I wasn't in any clubs or anything, so I didn't really get to experience much.

Journalism was pretty fun. I love writing stories, so I kind of looked forward to this class. Even though it could get overwhelming at times. I also really liked my reading and math class. Ms. Madrid and Ms. Zidan always found ways to make class fun and easier.

When I found out we weren't going back to school I was pretty bummed. I didn't get to enjoy my last year of middle school as much as I wanted to. Yet, being at

home most of the time is pretty fun too. I mean I get to be comfortable all day, I can do what I want, and I get to do new things that I would've never had time for before. Although, if I could go back I would've made more friends, made more memories, and taken photos of all the good times.

Being a part of Robert T Hill Middle School means a lot to me because all my siblings went, plus it also feels nice to say I have made some of my own memories there too. Even though this year didn't go as planned, I at least now know to not take my school years for granted because soon it will all just be a memory. Not only did I not get to experience my full three years of middle school, I also didn't really get a chance to say bye to some of the people I've become close with or thank my teachers for everything they've done to educate me. I hope they know they mean a lot to me. I mean I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for their help. Some people may not like school, maybe because of the classes or rules, but I think it's an advantage to get that help and education that we need. You won't always get the chance, so you might not want to take it for granted.

# Quarantine

By 7<sup>th</sup> grader Azalia Gonzales

School was going well before we went into quarantine because I could get classwork done more quickly. My favorite classes were 4th and 5th period. Most of my favorite memories with my friends were at lunch because those were most of the times we could hang out at school. My

goal for this school year was to pass the STAAR test. My favorite teacher was Mr. Ault because both the classes he taught I was in, and they were really easy, and I could communicate more with him than my other teachers.

It's been boring considering all the stores and movie theaters are closed. Some days are fun because we just drive around downtown and blast music loud. My first reaction when I heard school was closed, I was like "WHHHAAAATTT". The most thing I miss about school is switching classes and Mr. Ault's class. The pros and cons about being home is that you don't have anything to do, but that's the thing you'll have nothing to do and it gets so boring.

What I hope to see in the future is a cure to the virus and everything goes back to normal. The thing I think everyone needs and wants to see is people washing their hands more often and covering their mouth when they cough or sneeze. Life is different because you see less people out, the newscasts are going live in their own home, everyone wearing masks, stuff is selling out, everything's

different now, but soon I hope things will go back to normal.

## What I miss

By 7th grader Moo Paw



I used to hate school, but now I really want to go back to school. My favorite class this year was band. Even though it is hard sometimes there, it's still my favorite class.

My favorite part about journalism was that I get to learn more about people or other things. I used to have a favorite teacher, but not anymore because I changed my mind about the teacher that used to be my favorite. My favorite memories this year was when probably Ben Russell came to visit.

Life has been pretty hard since spring break. When I found out that we are not going back to school this year, I had a mixed emotion. I don't know if I should be happy or sad. The thing I miss the most about school is seeing all my friends. I also miss going to band practice and playing with all my friends.

I hope next school year we don't have to do online school anymore. I hope everything gets better next school year. I am very worried that things will not change, and we will have to continue doing the things we do today. I miss all

the teachers and all my friends. I hope I see them next school year.

# Last days of 8th grade

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Savannah David



School was going great for me. We were officially about to start softball season and it was going to be great. My favorite memories from the 2020-2021 school year were maybe football, soccer, and softball season.

My goals for this year are to make it on the varsity soccer team at Bryan Adams. Some of my favorite teachers are Ms. Zajicek, for sure, and Mr. Smajlovic.

My life has had some pros and cons because of the COVID-19 since the break.

Some cons from it are not being able to see my friends especially on the last days of school and not being able to see my favorite teachers. Some pros are sleeping in late and being able to eat what I want for the whole day.

I am worried that things won't change because like another year because I could not picture another year like this. I would like to give a big thank you to my teachers because without them I wouldn't be where I am today. My life definitely had an impact because I can't do the normal stuff I would do, like go to soccer practice or shopping or to the mall.

# Schools almost over

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Victoria Kenny

School before quarantine was fine, it was better and easier than online school.

Some of my favorite memories are mainly the one with Karen because we've known each other for a while now and she's fun to be around. When we just have fun in class and laugh until our stomachs hurt you know.

Mr. Smajlovic's classes aren't that bad, like I don't get anything in that class, but he's funny sometimes. Also Mr. Ault's class because Emely.

My goal was to keep my grades up and I was actually doing pretty good until now. Also, I didn't join any clubs because I'm lazy, but I stayed for tutoring sometime with friends and stayed for a news club, but it was boring. Journalism class was

ok, I looked forward to it because I have Emely in that class.

Life is boring in quarantine, but I actually made a friend from a group chat that was made. She's super fun to talk to and glad me and her are friends. We text a lot, so she keeps me entertained.

I'm actually excited to go back to school. My first reaction to there being no school, I was kind of glad because I thought we were going to get two extra weeks, but when I heard no more school for the rest of the year. I was like oh this sucks. I miss going out the most and seeing my friends every day. I wouldn't do something different if I knew this was going to happen.

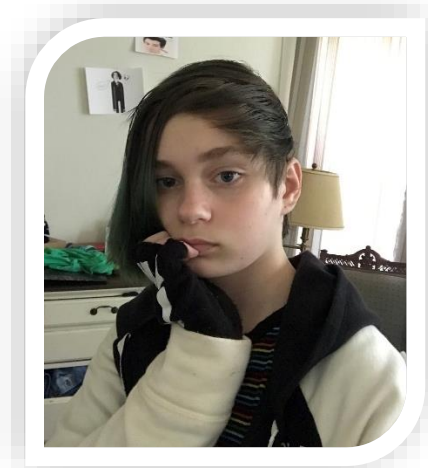
I hope that all of this goes away soon because I want to be able to go in public without being at risk. What I hope to see next year, when school starts again, I'm not sure, but I hope the school year goes well. I'm not really worried that things will stay this way. Worry doesn't seem like the right word. It annoys me because the only reason this is still happening is because we didn't have an actual lock down. I'm only starting to do more self-care because I actually have the time, so I don't know once we get back to school. I said bye to all my friends on the last day and I still text them, so I don't need to write a letter.

Hill was ok, doesn't really mean anything to me, but it could've been better. 8th

grade was better than out of all of the years at Hill to me.

## **Before and after quarantine with Frank**

**By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Frankie Cochran**



Before we went into quarantine, school was normal. We were all speculating if we were going to stay home for an extra week, or two, after spring break due to the several letters sent out to us from the district. Although our distance learning has outlasted the time that we thought it would, I still have some great memories of the 2019-2020 school year.

One of my favorite memories was Jean randomly diving at random people. It was a bit terrifying. My favorite class was probably my first period, Literature Genres/ Creative Writing with Ms. Madrid.

# An Unusual Year

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Cody Fulenwider

Since spring break, life has been kind of weird. It is like how summer is for me, but with schoolwork and not seeing friends. My first reaction when I heard the news that we were not going back to school was excited. I could do everything from home and avoid any and all social contact?! Sounds great! One of the things that I miss is not getting to go see friends on weekends. Nothing has really surprised me about quarantine. Life is just pretty normal for the most part. If I had known that I was not coming back to school for sure, I would have said goodbye to more people. If I could say anything to my teachers right now, I would say thanks. They are all working very hard to get us the things that we need to learn online.

After the pandemic is over, I hope that people will actually have good hygiene. Since I am going to high school next year, I hope that the transition will be easy. I am really scared because I might not know where to go, and I do not want to bother a stranger. I am a bit worried about how things will be when we come out of quarantine. Everybody's going to be everywhere. Music shows will definitely all be sold out. The economy is going to be crazy. I also think that a lot of jobs are going to continue to be going online.

If there is anything that I could say to my classmates and teachers, it would be bye. I won't be seeing a lot of them next year. Also, to that girl who checked on me when I was crying in the hallway on the first day of school, thanks.



This school year has definitely been one of the best and one that I will surely remember. From school dances and new favorite teachers, to a deadly pandemic attempting to cripple our society; one thing is for sure, this year will definitely be treasured in the minds of many Hill students.

There's no doubt that everybody has enjoyed this school year for one of many reasons. Many students as well as teachers probably had a list of their favorite classes, I personally cannot decide which one was my favorite because all of my teachers tried their best to be there for us and teach their classes to the best of their abilities.

**My favorite club that I participated in was definitely the Robotics Club with Mrs. Tseng.**

**Since the dreadful day that everybody found out that there was no school, my life has definitely been changed drastically. Instead of waking up at six every morning I now wake up at around ten. Instead of waiting for that final bell to ring, I now long for the day when I can hear it again along with the sound of my friends flooding the halls. Finding out that school had been canceled was pretty awesome at first, but as the days went by my whole outlook on the situation began to change. I began to see my sudden freedom as isolation from the things I enjoy most. Not being able to see my friends and being stuck at home have definitely made these past few weeks seem more like a punishment for something I didn't do.**

**Not being able to say bye to my friends has definitely been hard, especially for those that will be going to other schools. I really appreciate all of the teachers that have put so much effort into trying to keep the end of the school year as normal as possible. Learning from all of my teachers with different teaching techniques and personalities has made learning as fun as it could be. I also appreciate all of the coaches that have dedicated time that they could have spent with their families and given it to us so that we can grow as a team. I look forward to seeing everybody in their freshmen year and catching up with everyone after this is all over!**

# **Pre-COVID19**

**By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Corlynda Malvern**



**School before everyone was talking about the virus for me was alright, like it wasn't horrible unless I thought of it and put negative energy in my mind.**

**My favorite memories of the school year were the experience and connecting with people I did not know that I could or would last year.**

**My favorite classes were reading, writing, and LCC because I was associated with most of the students and those teachers. My main goal from this school year was**



to pass and that stuck with me on a good and bad days. My favorite teacher was Ms. Sweeney because she was cool and most of the time her work was easy.

My life since spring break has been almost the same. My first reaction to school being closed for the rest of the year was a little shock because I didn't expect it to be all year, and then a little sad because at school I was almost never bored and at home there were not many people to talk to because I am an only child. I don't think I would have done many different things if we went back to school. The one thing that I miss about school is probably the interaction I had with the two groups I hung out with every day and at lunch.

One thing that surprised me about quarantine is that they were opening things back this early. I understand that we all need most of these places back open, and the companies do too, but I expected for this to happen in late May or early June.

In the future I hope a cure is found because all the innocent people are dying. Next school year, I hope for a much more in depth experience. The message I want to leave to my classmates is that they were cool and made my middle school experience one that I really liked all throughout the three or two years we were there. To my teachers, I'm just glad that I passed your classes, whether they were hard or easy. The way life is different is that things have gotten easy, but things have also gotten

harder, not too hard, but you really just have to believe in yourself and you can do anything when you believe in yourself.

## COVID afterlife

By 8<sup>th</sup> grader Emely Rodriguez



This school year had a great start, I really was enjoying school and my friends until all of this happened. My favorite class was orchestra, journalism, and math. I got to see many friends. My goals were to pass math STAAR, and now I don't have to worry about it, which is good.

My life since spring break has been very boring. I miss school surprisingly.

There's pros and cons to quarantine. When we stay home, we like to work on ourselves. That's a pro and cons are that well we can't go out sadly. If I would've known I wasn't going back to school I would have cleaned out my locker.

I hope that eventually everything returns to how it was normally. I'm slightly worried we'll end up still having online school. Hill was a nice experience. I met many cool people. I'll always love that

they made me laugh and stuff. I will miss Hill and being in middle school. Hopefully, I'll see many at Bryan Adams.

# The future generation of journalists

By Hill journalism teacher Josh Ault

It has been a crazy year at Robert T. Hill Middle School, but I am so proud of the journalism students this year.

We got published in the Dallas Morning News two times this year! The students wrote letters to the editor about police violence in our community and their reaction to the Coronavirus pandemic.

We had some amazing guests come and speak to use this year. NBC 5 reporter Ben Russell was able to visit our classroom before the quarantine and was able to visit us via Zoom during the quarantine. The students were able to listen to his experience covering this major news story and to hear about his experience of recovering from COVID19.

We also got to have a visit from Debbie Fleck, an employee of the Dallas Morning News, who oversees all the letters to the editor. It was great to get her insight of how the newspaper industry works.

8<sup>th</sup> grader Demarion Wreh was the first student at Hill to be published in the White Rock Lake Weekly, our community newspaper. He did an amazing story about 8<sup>th</sup> grader Savannah David playing football this year.

The journalism students were also in charge of the school yearbook. They worked hard on picking out the right photos and graphics to make it look amazing. We are really excited for everyone who bought one to receive their copy!

This is our 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Voice of the Highlander. I cannot be prouder of the stories that my students have written this year. 8<sup>th</sup> grader Jaimie Batista had a story about the Coronavirus before it made national headlines.

I know these journalists have a few more years before they decide on what they want to do with their lives, but I really hope a few of them will make a career of telling stories and changing people's lives in journalism.

Journalism is so important in our society. Without out it, a lot of things can go wrong, and with it, the truth will be told.

If you missed reading any of the Voice of the Highlanders or seeing their letters in the Dallas Morning News, please visit our Hill Journalism website at [www.hilljournalism.weebly.com](http://www.hilljournalism.weebly.com).

Thank you for your support this year!

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# Hill Journalism 2019-2020

