

A Letter from the Editor

Claire Lawrence

Here at St. Edward's University, the student body takes pride in our abilites to involve others in the community and create tidal waves of campus involvement. From student-run events that engage over-looked groups to conversations that reinforce each individual's purpose on campus, our Hilltoppers are constantly trying to make St. Edward's a better place for one another.

Coming to college is an extremely daunting and stressful transition, but with the community outreach many student organizations utilize, the introduction to campus life can be a beautiful and effortless experience. As a freshman, this new world of responsibilites ---- professional and academic ---- can cause many to lose sight of the small things in life worth living for. The pressure to fit in and accomplish greatness often overpowers the enjoyable experience college is meant to be ---- one that stays with us beyond our time on the hilltop.

The student organizations featured in this issue are only a few of the outlets Hilltoppers have found to bring comfort and a sense of belonging to others. With their efforts, St. Edward's has transoformed into a place where opportunites and resources are available for anyone and everyone.

This issue stands as a reminder of the endless possibilites students have when they arrive on the hilltop. It is a reinteration of how Hilltoppers have continuously been there for other Hilltoppers through one of the most influential times in a young adult's life.

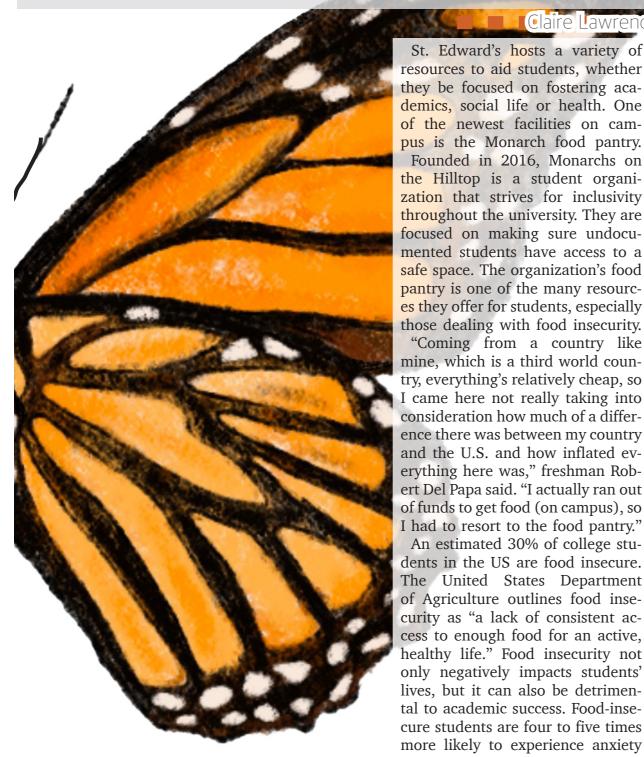
This one is for you all.

Enjoy,

Claire Lawrence



GIVING STUDENTS FOOD TO FIY: HELP THEM ORGANIZATION HOSTS FOOD PANTRY TO GIVE BACK TO **OTHERS**



they be focused on fostering academics, social life or health. One of the newest facilities on campus is the Monarch food pantry. Founded in 2016, Monarchs on the Hilltop is a student organization that strives for inclusivity throughout the university. They are focused on making sure undocumented students have access to a safe space. The organization's food pantry is one of the many resources they offer for students, especially those dealing with food insecurity. "Coming from a country like mine, which is a third world country, everything's relatively cheap, so I came here not really taking into consideration how much of a difference there was between my country and the U.S. and how inflated everything here was," freshman Robert Del Papa said. "I actually ran out of funds to get food (on campus), so I had to resort to the food pantry." An estimated 30% of college students in the US are food insecure. The United States Department of Agriculture outlines food insecurity as "a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life." Food insecurity not only negatively impacts students' lives, but it can also be detrimental to academic success. Food-insecure students are four to five times more likely to experience anxiety

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St. Edward's hosts a variety of and depression than their peers. "I kind of didn't want people to find out that I was going to the food pantry because I thought that they might look down upon me like, 'oh, he doesn't have any monev' or something like that," Del Papa said. "So I always laid low." A \$10,000 grant from Central Texas Food Bank to assist in keeping the pantry stocked was presented to the university earlier this vear. Outside of this resource offered by Monarchs on the Hilltop, students have to pay anywhere from \$10 to \$12 for meals from dining services, which equals to around \$30 to \$40 a day for food.

"Pricing is something that I believe that definitely has to be addressed," Del Papa said. "It is extremely expensive if you really do think about it. I had to resort to making sure that I didn't eat at Hunt Hall every day due to the prices."

Students who are experiencing food insecurity have the option to fill out a Monarch Food Pantry request form, which offers care packages to individuals with non-perishable foods and basic hygiene products. There are no restrictions on how often a student can request a package, according to the university website.

"There were a lot of relatively useful items," Del Papa said. "I was kind of shocked that I found (toiletries). I took advantage and managed to restock some stuff."

VETERANS CLUB SUPPORTS EX-MILITARY STUDENTS TO HELP THEM ADJUST AFTER SERVICE

The Hilltop Student Veterans Association is a newly resurrected student orgatransitioning from life in the military to life as a civilian and student as easy and smooth as possible. The original HSVA organization started over a decade ago but died out in the last cob Acebo got into St. Ed's he asked was if there was a veteran's association. "The answer was 'no' across the board," he said. "So, I brought it up with Dustin Knoll, who's a Veterans Affairs coordinator here, and he was like, 'there used to be one, but we don't have anything



COURTESY OF JOHNSON

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currently," President and ex-Marine Acebo said. Acebo, along with Knoll nization that aims to make and faculty advisor Kath-Wilburn. leen decided to change this gap. "Dustin sent out an email (to) all the veterans at school: 'meet at this classroom at this time. We're going to start this thing four or five years. When Ja- up again," Acebo said. Once the HSVA got goin 2021, the first question ing again, they forged new goals for the organization: giving veterans a community on campus, keeping the organization alive and making an overall impact on one another.

For veterans, leaving the military and becoming a civilian again can be an extremely hard journey. According to Acebo, besides the identity crisis that many veterans face, there is this lack of a sense of security in what they're doing post-service.

"It's like jumping out of a plane and your parachute is going to open, but you don't know when," he said. "So I was in this perpetual freefall for a long time. I'm hoping to alleviate that for others."

The HSVA wants to create a community where it's

okay and encouraged to ask questions and to ask for help. They want to be a place where veterans can go ask about benefits and claims-related questions. "A lot of guys don't know that, or they don't know who to talk to for benefits, and it's so much easier having a network here and having people you can ask," Acebo said. The club's community

revolves around shared experiences and talking about those experiences. Though everyone is welcome to meetings, sitting in on one as a civilian with no connection to the military can get confusing. "I think St. Edward's, for all their students, tries really hard to make sure that evervone is included," HSVA Secretary and ex-soldier Strider Johnson said. "And I want to make sure that every veteran who goes to St. Edward's feels that, but there are some veterans that I have talked to that don't feel that way. So it's a question of asking, 'how do we make sure that that inclusive environment is felt amongst everybody, including veterans as well?"



COURTESY OF ACEBO

The organization hosts meetings everv other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in Trustee 113, and everyone is encouraged to stop by. Partnering with the Graduate Business Student Association, HSVA will have an upcoming seminar on April 28 in the Welcome Center, featuring ex-Marine and entrepreneur Wes Whitlock. He will be speaking on what it was like for him to transition out of the Marine Corps and how he started his successful businesses — Invader Coffee, Rogue American Apparel and Disciples of Iron — as well as a podcast, "Going Rogue." "I think veterans helping veterans is a damn good thing," Johnson said.

FLIPPING THE NARRATIVE OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP: REBRANDED STUDENT ORGANIZATION STAYS TRUE TO THEIR MISSION

Marlee @laes!& Brenda Hernandez

The Feminist Leadership in Politics women's week was highly anticipated this year, as it their first major event under a new title. FLIP was previously known as IGNITE, but due to non-inclusivity and discrimination within IGNITE national, St.Edward's students decided to disband from IGNITE and start an independent organization on campus.

"We've been trying to bring back the community," former IGNITE member and FLIP vice president, Olivia Prior, said. "We did our best to tell people that IGNITE has changed and we are now proudly FLIP." The activity-filled week, dedicated to Women's History month, took place from March 26-30. To kick off, they had a lunch-in where they offered free Cabo Bob's

to celebrate women of the Hilltop, followed by Sugar Mama's for some sweet dessert. March 27, they hosted a workshop session where they discussed legislation impacting women directly and ways in which they are able to advocate. March 28. Fleck was utilized for a movie night for the showing of "Real Women Have Curves," with treats for attendees. On March 29, they collaborated with another on-campus organization, Students For Sustainability, to host a teach-in to educate about climate justice. To wrap up their week of celebrations and events, FLIP arranged a picnic with food and crafts provided on March 30. On top of their eventful women's week, they also hosted the third annual menstruation product drive

on campus. The drive accepted donations of tampons, pads, menstrual cups and hygiene wipes. Multiple donation boxes were placed in areas which tend to get a lot of student foot traffic. Some of these areas included the Grab and Goat, Ragsdale and both dining halls. Items collected from the drive were donated to the St.Edward's Monarch pantry and othlocal organizations. er Prior shared that FLIP does menstrual drives because they "want people to get what they need and not have to worry about the lack of access." Not only does FLIP prioritize St. Edward's access to menstrual products, they also focus on educating students on campus. FLIP holds general meetings discussing advocacy around legislation and how to be an advocate, and they work towards destigmatizing the shame surrounding menstruation cycles and those they affect.

"A lot of people who aren't political science majors, they want to learn how to be an advocate and learn how to be involved," Prior said. FLIP dedicated this school

year to ensuring that it was able to establish a strong foundation for its upcoming members. FLIP excitedly welcomes any students interested in their organization and encourages students of all majors to join. For more information regarding FLIP or any of their upcoming events, you can check out their Instagram page: @flip.seu. "FLIP is meant to be accessi-

ble for everyone," Prior said.



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STUDENTS ENTREPRENEURSH VENTURE **INTO** HILLTOPPERS UNITE **COLLABORATE** BUSNISSES, START-UPS TO ON

encouraged to voice their ideas and skills to like-minded peers and make their dreams a reality in Venture Club, an organization meant to bring students together to create things they could not create on their own. According to Parker Hudson, current club president, members are aiming to combine their skills and interfor their fellow hilltoppers.

"Venture Club is a club on campus where we try to bring students' entrepreneurial passions, pursuits and ventures into fruition," Hudson said. "This doesn't have to be just for business students, it's for all students."

The club consists of a variety of SEU students from a range of majors who are all interested in bringing each other up. While the group is relaxed, they still remain ambitious in their effort to support and inspire one another. There are multiple businesses being started right now in the club.

"I think the most exciting one that we're thinking about working on is the trading bot," Hudson

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Student entrepreneurs are said. "We want to make a bot that trades the Forex market off of technical analysis and trends. The club is supposed to be all inclusive, we want someone to be able to capitalize on what they want to do." Sophomore Jacob Zivin helped to found Venture Club during his freshman year on campus. He and some of his friends workests to make things happen shopped the idea before quickly putting together a group and joining the Involvement Fair last minute. After that, they hit the ground running and the club has been active ever since.

"My friend sat us down and he pitched this idea about this interactive app on campus where people could essentially see a map of campus and see what events were going on, what clubs were hosting events, how many people were going because there was a lack of student involvement on campus," Zivin said. "The whole idea was to bring students together to collaborate on startups and get the interactive experience." For the club, the hope from the beginning was to bring people with different interests and

skill sets together to create

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"(St. Edward's) is a really good university and one of the things that it offers, especially because it's a small school, is that you can collaborate among disciplines really easily," Zivin said. "So when I started, I set out to achieve interdisciplinary collaboration among departments." different

Overall, Venture Club is looking for students to come to group events with open minds, plenty of ideas and a willingness to work together to make something that people are passionate about. Being on the team is about working together and turning out something that the group as a whole can be proud of. "You don't have to be fully committed," Hudson said. "You can come once \a month, once a semester, it doesn't matter. Come through, check it out. We're trying to have a good time while we do all this, we're not just trying to work ourselves to death. It's supposed to be fun and you're supposed to enjoy life, so we're just trying to enjoy it."

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BRIDGE THE GAP: POLITICAL AWARENESS CLUB ADVOCATES FOR DISCUSSION, COMPROMISE

■Shane1Edghill

BridgeHilltop is notable for hosting various events throughout the year in the name of political awareness. They are driven by their determination to in- Bridgeclude students and emphasize the importance of not to sway being informed. Bridge-Hilltop, formally known as Bridge on the Hilltop, has impacted life at St. Edward's by encouraging students to express and understand diverse perspectives in politics today.

"We do this in two ways:" Vice President Hailey Green said. "First, by creating conversation spaces where students can discuss their ideas and learn about their ideological opponents' experiences that inform their political beliefs. ... Secondly, we host larger events that bring leaders of clubs, professors or outside speakers to come and talk in a Bridge way. ... We use the name 'Bridge' because it represents our philosophy: We are not here to force people into the middle or to determine a winner but to learn about differing perspectives while still being able to hold your own beliefs."

Hilltop is the political opinions and beliefs of its members, but rather to inform, collaborate and just simply understand the different political viewpoints and beliefs of everyone in the room during their meetings. Whether you have more conservative or more liberal beliefs than others, BridgeHilltop encourages its members to debate and converse with each other in a logical and objective manner, using statistics and critical thinking skills in order to communicate a specific viewpoint.

essors or outside speakers o come and talk in a Bridge vay. ... We use the name Bridge' because it repessents our philosophy: We are not here to force people nto the middle or to deternine a winner but to learn bout differing perspecives while still being able o hold your own beliefs." Green says that the goal of stead of their humanity, being as honest as possible and treating others with respect. Third, we believe in 'solu-

tion-oriented politics.' Though we as (a club) cannot propose solutions, we encourage all participants, members and officers to pursue solutions in all discussions instead of looking for fights, as many of our leaders currently do."

BridgeHilltop has collaborated with other organizations when planning socials and other events, such as the Young Conservative Federation, the Feminist Leadership In Politics, the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, the International Students Association and the Civics Lab. BridgeHilltop has also collaborated with other universities like the University of Texas at Austin, Jacksonville University, San Jose State University, Wayne State University and the University of Michigan.

Green encourages the members of BridgeHilltop to have well-informed discussions and to get information regarding politics and other subjects from more unbiased sources, such as PBS and NPR. She also recommends that members of BridgeHilltop and other organizations attend social events, debates or one of the biweekly discussions. The group is hosting their last event in collaboration with FLIP on April 27 at 5 p.m. to discuss education legislation. In the Fall 2023 semester, Green will be the official president of the chapter on campus. "Keep an open mind," Green said. "You don't have to be into politics to come. You don't have to participate. Building the skill of a leader that can communicate across differences is essential in any career. We teach you how to do that and so much more. Just come and visit one of our events or feel free to check out our Instagram @bridge-

hilltop or the national or-

ganization @bridgeUSA."

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ST. Edward's cheerleaders are the athletes on CAMPUS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING OTHER ATHLETES

Melissa' Gunning

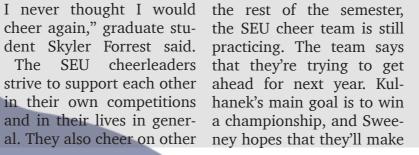
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Most St. Edward's University students recognize the girls, and sometimes guys, cheering on our sports teams from the sidelines with their pom poms. But what does it really mean to be a cheerleader? "Cheer is a sport that unless you know about it you don't know about it," cheer team captain Sierra Sweeney said. The St. Edward's cheer team has seen some ups and downs in the past four years. As part of the cutbacks made during the pandemic, the team was reclassified as a club sport. Only this year did the team return to the athletics department as a varsity sport after making their case to the university's Board of Trustees. By rejoining athletics, the team gained new head coach, Javaria Neumon, and the ability to compete again. They spent the entire fall semester practicing choreography and various skills for the Universal Cheerleading Association's College Nationals. "It's probably the most addicting sport I've ever taken part of," rugby play-

er turned cheerleader Bri-

an Kulhanek Jr. said. "The sports adrenaline you get when you make a tackle in rugby, I'd say, is 25% as satisfying as when you finally hit that stunt (in cheer)." In January, the team traveled to Florida for the UCA for every bas-Nationals. They placed ninth – the same ranking they received the last time they competed in 2020. "To me, the most rewarding thing was seeing cheerleaders get back handsprings or get a new stunt skill that they've been working on for months," Sweeney said. "That was more rewarding to me than seeing my own personal growth at that point." Like sophomore Martha Ceja, a number of the current members already have on the team." a background in cheerleading but didn't expect are no more to still be cheerleading. Most had never competed at the collegiate level. "It's really fun because I never thought I would cheer again," graduate student Skyler Forrest said. The SEU cheerleaders strive to support each other in their own competitions and in their lives in gener-

teams during their games. Junior flyer Maia Raoux says that they're on the sidelines ketball and vollevball game. "I think we try to give the best motivation we can (by) cheering at games," cheerleader Lizzie Guzman said. "We're always cheering for our school. and sometimes we even have friends While there basketball or vollevball games to cheer at for





MELISSA GUNNING / HILLTOP VIEWS The St. Edward's cheer team lifts flyer Skyler Forrest during practice.

> the top five in their division. The SEU cheer team currently has thirteen members but will hold tryouts on April 28 and 29 to look for more members to add to the roster.

BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES AND ALLIES COMMITTEE PROMOTES TEAMWORK, SERVICE, SELF-REFLECTION

One of the main values that drives St. Edward's University is establishing a community for its students. For just over a year, By intensifying community the Black Student-Athletes and Allies Committee has been promoting and encouraging that value. community as soon as you get into campus," Mikah ronment and the people Chapman, a freshman on the women's basketball team and soon-to-be secretary for the committee, said. "You by the commithave your team, you have tee, was held on your friends and now you have another group of African Americans that you can just become a family with." Created in November of themselves for the 2021, BSAAC is separate future. A guest from the Black Student Alliance, another student ed to talk to the organization on campus. "We try to focus mainly on the athletes so that way we as a group have a whole after graduation. community," Chapman said. Founded by alumni Chid- was the last big era Aririguzo, seniors Ajani Hodges, Helaina Floyd, Saida Wiltz and Sierra Sweeney, along with junior Danica Morningstar, BSAAC it, BSAAC gives gathers Black student-athletes from across all sports

allows them to strengthen bonds within their specific sports as well as build a unified team amongst them. values, BSAAC also encourages another main value of this university: service. "You are not just having "It gives you a sense of this community, but you are also helping the enviaround us," Chapman said. Hill by Hilltop, a recent

> event hosted campus on April 15 and gave student-athletes а chance to prepare speaker was invitathletes about other options beyond college courts for Hill by Hilltop

event of the semester for the organization. Bv doing events like a space for Black student-athletes on campus. The committee at the Hilltop to

AnnaiPratts

better understand themselves, their sport and their community, as well as improve teamwork and bonding. Besides projects and events on campus, BSAAC encourages its members to give back to the Austin community as a whole. "One of our biggest service

projects is with a nearby preschool and daycare," Chapman said. "We also made cards for an elderly home."

Since most of its founding members will graduate this semester, BSAAC is in a transition process. Chapman will hold an office position next year, and the committee is hoping to gather more students from the incoming freshmen from the class. BSAAC is very active on so-

cial media and strives to host events every month. You can find more about them on their instagram @seubsaac.



COURTESY OF BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES AND ALLIES COMMITTEE Members of the committee pose for a picture during Candy Day.



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Big Event, St. Edward's largest annual volunteer project, was hosted on March 25. Students signed up for different projects and worked together in teams both on and off campus. "Big Event has been on campus for 19 years, and this was the largest Big Event we've seen," Big Event director Ethan Tobias said. "It was also one of the first times we went off campus and were able to bring students to local nonprofits since 2019." to stay at school and participate in projects that direct-

ly benefit the St. Edward's campus. Campus Beautification, SFS Garden Workday and Trash Pick-up all focused on cleaning the school grounds, planting new trees and working in the vegetable garden. The goal of these projects is to grow our outdoor spaces and continue to make them more welcoming. Meanwhile, the volunteer sites for Any Baby Can and Austin Creative Reuse involved making crafts for children and organized donations for sustain-Students had the option ability and conservation. "I think it's important for students to recognize how



KATE NEUSCHWANGER / HILLTOP VIEWS Students serving for Big Event work on planting new grennery and flowers in the stone pots placed throughout campus.

Breze Reyes

beneficial it is to give back to not only our campus but to the Austin community," Tobias said. "Ultimately, it helps us go beyond our own thoughts and perspectives. It helps us understand the big picture and realize our impact on society."

The four off-campus volunteer opportunities took place all over the city. Students could choose to work with Sammy's House, Austin Parks and Recreation. Austin Creative Reuse or Wild Basin preserve. Each site provided a unique opportunity to build the Austin community, whether that be to provide services for children, beautify Austin parks or contribute to the conservation and sustainability of the city.

According to Isabella Grimm. Chief of Staff for the Student Government Association and Big Event site leader, the event is not only an opportunity to give back to the Austin and local St. Edward's community, but also a chance to get to know each other through service.

"You can sit here all day and get your education, and you can learn about what it

the end of the day, if you're not connecting to what's outside the classroom, I mean, what's the point of it all?" Grimm said. "So despite your major or minor, I think there can always be a place for you to try and go out and connect with the people that need the help."

The week leading up to Big Event consisted of many on-campus events to build the hilltopper community. The week started with a Big Event Kickoff with lawn games, free Kona Ice and pizza to celebrate. The Big Blood Drive was also hosted on campus. On the Sunday after the event, Big Mass took place in the chapel for reflection and prayer.

According to Katy Van Zandt, the Big Registration Executive, students that didn't have the chance to participate will still benefit from the work done at Big Event.

"Students can benefit by talking to the participants of Big Event because they can see there is a way to get involved that's meaningful," Van Zandt said. "It's not just going to an event and having fun, it's going to an event, having fun, while is you're studying, but at also making an impact."



The Black Student Association is a united body of ed, the organization has Black students that creates a safe space for the Black nity events, including accommunity on campus. Students started the organization for students; BSA holds two events monthly for prospective students, to check in with students and and allow them to network and collaborate with other members of BSA. Senior Alexis Reed, President of the Black Student Association, and Amari Singleton, Secretary of BSA, shared plans for the organization and how BSA is helping the ings to assist its members Black community thrive. Reed wanted to attend a school with a developed Black community, because her high school was not as diverse. She is an out-ofstate student, so she needed to find a school with a familiar culture. She found a safe space with BSA. The goal of BSA is to allow students' voices to be heard and to raise any issue on campus and in other spaces surrounding the Black community. Students can collaborate with other organizations to bring awareness to issues happening

Since the pandemic endadded more open commutivism workshops, cookouts and networking events. BSA hosts welcome events does several community outreach events during the semester to give away welcome bags and goodie bags for students. BSA also hosts events outside of school with other schools and organizations. In the future, BSA plans to have one-on-one meetwith plans or ideas. BSA plans to focus on individual members to allow them to take over projects, outreaches, and awareness issues. Allowing individuals to take over their event ideas will enable students to contribute to the Black community by bringing their ideas to the table. The benefits of joining BSA are that students get to form long-lasting friendships, involvement in leadership roles, and connect students to other resources outside of St. Edward's. Reed believes the best part of getting inin the Black community. volved with BSA is the

personal leadership skills

you develop as a member. BSA's primary mission is to build outreach in the community and help others engage with people around the Austin community. "It helps you build your voice in not just your community but outside and develop leadership skills around Austin," Singleton said. Reed's advice for incoming students is that incoming students should feel confident to join any organization. Ask friends and family before attending a school to get insights on what it's like to be part of a community first. No student needs a minimum requirement to join BSA, and students come from different backgrounds. Singleton believes stu-

dents should get involved one step at a time to find who they want to be a part of.

"Doing one little thing at a time will build over time; it's like one great aspect of your life," Singleton said.



ROGELIO ADAME GOVEA / HILLTOP VIEWS BSA's President, Alexis Reed, and Secretary, Amari Singleton, give advice and insight into what it's like to be a member of BSA.

CULTIVATING A SPACE FOR MUSICIANS ALIKE: HOW JAM CENTRAL **SPARKS** STUDENT **INVOLVEMENT MUSICALLY**

Kaitlynn Devitt

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Jam Central is a musical organization on campus that focuses on creating a space for musicians to come together and showcase their helps and plans several talents. Not only does Jam Central work with students, alumni and musicians within the community, but they also work closely with other clubs and organizations on music related. campus, like Topper Radio.

This organization is fairly new to the university, only having been active for two years. Jam Central is also one of the few organizations that campus has to offer for musically talented people. Like many other organizations and clubs here on campus, Jam Central is trying to get back in the swing of things after the pandemic. Each semester, more and more people are getting involved with Jam Central.

Maury Brown is a current senior and president of Jam Central. His main goal with the organization is to provide a stress-free environment for people to come together and play their instruments. He himself plays the bass guitar for a band that is also involved with Jam Central. "It is nice to have a space

to just come hang out and play your instrument," Brown said.

Jam Central hosts, events that take place on campus throughout the year, like Goatfest, Sunflower Festival, Complex Fest and anything

"If someone wants to have live music at an event on campus, Jam Central is usually involved one way or another," Brown said. "There is always someone involved on campus who is looking for musicians and live music for an event." Jam Central allows more than students to get involved; alumni or Austin locals can join regardless of skill level. "We have had people who have never touched an instrument in their lives come in and

play with us," Brown said. "It is always about promoting music, learning together, seeing where people are at with their experiences whether they have none or have been playing for 10 years."

Occasional jam sessions are held by the organiza tion in one of the audito

riums on campus. To anyone who is think ing about getting in volved with Jam Central as a musician, Brown encourages people to join. "Do not be afraid to get your name out there, especially to anyone on campus," Brown said. "Let student inv olvement know that you are avail able to play at events; let your friends know as well. There are so many opportunities for musicians here in Aus tin, on and off campus." Since Brown is a current se-

nior and will be graduating soon, he will be looking for anyone with interest in becoming president for the next semesters to come. To anyone who is interested in joining Jam Central, knows someone who might be interested, or has any questions at all, feel free to reach out to Jam Central's Instagram page or through email at jam central@stedwards.edu.

> It is nice to have a space to just come hang out and play your instrument.

> > - Maury Brown

TOPPER RADIO BRINGS STUDENTS TOGETHER TO BASK IN THEIR LOVE OF MUSIC ACROSS THE HILLTOP

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Nina Martinez

A cruise down University Circle features a mix of the campus' gothic architecture on the hilltop and its vibrant foliage. But keep heading north and you'll run into a three-story, 1960's, beige building at the bottom of the hilltop. This is where the magic happens and hosts go live in the Topper Radio recording studio.

The studio is hidden and tucked away in the corner of the second floor; its walls adorned with diverse album covers, team photos from over the years and coloring pages from club meetings. The student organization was founded in 2012, giving students the opportunity to try their hands at all-things broadcasting or just share their thoughts and music with listeners. The club currently has 40 members, each playing different roles. Rising junior Uma Ditzel is one of those members. She joined St. Edward's as a freshmanEdward's a freshman in Fall 2021, when the university was requiring masks and COVID-19 tests to return to class. That same fall, she attended an involvement fair, where she learned about the station. Aside from producing her own live-radio session and serving as the club's live sessions director, Ditzel brings her photography background to the studio, too. "I describe my photography

as in the moment. I felt photographing live music would be a great way to start," Ditzel said. Topper Radio does more than broadcast playlists; they also host and broadcast live-music shows and Goatfest, the show's music festival, often captured through Ditzel's lens. President Bella Harris has been a member since her first year in 2019, perfecting her leadership concert photography skills. She was a part of the organization during the height of the pandemic, when the station had a dip in listeners and participation. Her efforts in reviving the club during the pandemic helped the organization flourish, bringing back the community they once had.

"It gave me a lot of leadership skills to be the person who restarts everything...It's (Topper Radio) still reinventing itself and growing back into what we want it to be," Harris said. Now, with a hands-on team, Harris and the organization's officers have spent the past school year putting their hearts and souls into planning Goatfest. As the live sessions director, Ditzel booked and confirmed the shows for the festival. This year, the annual event is a collaboration with Jam Central, a student organization for musicians.

DSO CONTINUES TO **INCREASE** ON CAMPUS, ENCOURAGE STUDENT

campus aimed at providing community and support for disabled students. Esther Heymans, a junior communications major, felt motivated to start this organization a few years ago. "I started DSO back in 2021 because I didn't hear anyone talking about disability and accessibility in the mainstream community," Heymans said. "I wanted to bring conversations forefront of campus conversations and show how much better of a place the university can be if access discussed. Accessiwas bility benefits everyone, and access is a human right that everyone should know how to advocate for."

DSO's goal is to create intentional spaces that prioritize disabled experiences.

"We want to center the disabled experience in conversations about diversity, equity and justice issues on campus, because equity cannot exist without disability justice," Heymans said. Marc Taylor, a sophomore communications major, explained some events

Hailey Womack

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The Disabled Students the club hosted this past Organization is a club on semester for students, the first of which was History of Resistance, an event last semester that focused on presenting other diversity, equity and inclusion organizations. Their presentations touched on "moments of resistance" each group experienced in the history of their communities. "We held a couple of flower sales and book sales throughout the year to raise money for DSO, and in my of disability justice to the super unbiased opinion, all of these events went phenomenally," Taylor said. "The immense sense of community and inspiration from these events are some of the most meaningful moments of this past school year, and I hope DSO will continue to create memories like that for both myself and others." DSO plans on continuing support on campus and making St. Edward's a more accessible university. The organization plans to hold another Disability Pride Week next spring as well as other fundraising events.

"We hope to continue to grow DSO and the community, and to run impactful events for St. Edward's." Taylor said. "We'll be running different events throughout both semesters, so you'll just have to stay tuned." Heymans emphasizes that DSO is not just for disabled students at St. Edward's, and the organizations want to work toward reaching all sides of campus.

ACCESSIBILITY **INVOLVEMENT**

"In my opinion, the biggest hurdle to DSO's engagement is the idea that only disabled students can participate in the club," Heymans said. "DSO is trying to reshape the conversation around and disability." access To get involved with the club, you can reach out through CollegiateLink, their instagram (@disabledstudentsseu) or directly contacting Marc Taylor or Esther Heymans.

Equity cannot exist without disability justice.

- Esther Heymans

New Message

To: Hilltop Views

Subject: A Final Farewell

To the beloved corner office and the sharp-witted humans who filled the room,

During my summer orientation in 2019, my parents and I took a stroll around St. Edward's to help acclimate me to campus and to say our goodbyes. I began my work-study job one month before the other freshmen moved in. Nervous about living on an empty, unfamiliar campus, my parents and I made our way into Holy Cross Hall. My mom thought it would be a calming spot to escape the nerves and the dry Austin heat. I found myself peering into the most beautiful room I'd ever seen, stacked high with newspapers: the corner office on the second floor.

This was the newsroom.

"Hi! Can I help you?" a friendly voice called from an office behind me.

It belonged to Professor Heath, the same professor who would go on to push my reporting and editing during the next four years. I timidly told her I was interested in joining the newspaper, and how I dreamed of being a journalist one day.

Around two months later, classes were in full-swing, and Hilltop Views was kicking off its weekly budget meetings. I and my suitemate, friend and current co-copy editor, Audrey Cahak, stepped foot into Moody 209, where we attended our first budget meeting. I had a feeling, just a hunch, that this was where I was meant to be.

Christine Sanchez was the first editor I worked closely with at HV. I was giddy about writing news, and she happily taught me the basics of reporting. She and Gianni Zorilla became the two women who welcomed me, guided me as a writer and an editor and, most importantly, became two of my good friends. To this Latina entering journalism, the sea of majority white men was intimidating. Christine and Gianni taught me how to amplify my voice in meetings and in my writing and were some of my first role models — the first I'd ever met who looked like me.

To our dedicated advisor, Dr. Yowell: You always knew how to reel me back in after falling down research rabbit holes and panicking during the "pandemic paper." Keeping the newspaper alive during COVID-19 and the following half-normal months felt nearly impossible, but your guidance and redirection always reassured me. When I was overwhelmed by the state of journalism and feeling disheartened, you introduced me to Solutions Journalism and changed my outlook for the better. Bench meetings outside of Holy Cross with you and Elle Bent sparked hope in me for the revival of our paper.

To our beloved corner office: I've watched you change layouts time after time. You're a haven for many of us, and sometimes you feel like the only possible place to get work done. Other times, you're the last place I want to be. You're the home of a lot of tears, much frustration and angrily-pounding keyboards; you're the home of high-pitched excitement, celebration and growth.

Hilltop Views has challenged me like no other, allowing me the opportunity to report in Guatemala, listen to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein live in Washington D.C. with some of my best friends, and learn from the ingenious minds at Texas Monthly. My hope is that the many bright, creative students who roam this hilltop join your collaborative, welcoming space. But overall, I hope that you do for them what you did for me: invite the curious student with all of her questions into a room of thinkers ready to help her solve them.

If I only get to have one corner office in this lifetime, and I love that it was you. You're where it all began; it's only right that you're where it comes to a close.

Signing off but always reading,

Nina Martinez



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Cc Bcc 🔒

Behooved. Pablo Garcia-Matthews

As Editor-in-Chief of the distinguished publication that is Behooved, I
think it's important for me to give back to the St. Edward's community,
 which has been so very kind to me. One of my many chosen methods of giv-
ing back is the admittedly minor help which I bring to some of the (if you'll
forgive the expression) "little fish" of the St. Edward's on-campus publish-
 ing game. This work is a source of great refreshment to me. It reminds me
that I'm not doing what I'm doing for my own personal glory, but to bring
some color and no small amount of culture to the mentally impoverished
 "little man."
It always brightens my day when the representatives of Hilltop Views,
bashfully and with their caps in their hands, invite me down from my
mountain of learning to pitch in to one of these charming, little weekly
things. Yes, it may be a small distraction from my larger endeavors, but it's
worth it just to see the awed smiles on their little faces when I accept the
 offer.
Of course, my philanthropy as a hilltopper-for-other-hilltoppers doesn't
end there. I've hosted several fundraising wiener luncheons to help finan-
 cially disadvantaged students purchase high-quality Civil War uniforms.
This is part of a charitable collaboration with Bon Appétit and the Knights
of Columbus, and we will be staging the Battle of Gettysburg in the Meadows
 Coffeehouse on April 30. This is a required event for many VGAM, HIST and
COMM courses, so don't forget to ask your professors about that!
I also give Male Confidence seminars, in which I teach the underconfident
 boys of this generation how to verbally prey upon the underconfident girls,
and thereby become men. This is not currently a hilltoppers-for-hilltop-
pers affair, but it would be if a few people from campus started showing up.

