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OCTOBER 17, 2020

COVID & THE UNIVERSITY PROCESS

ARTICLE BY: SARA ROSELLÓ

The Covid pandemic has changed practically everything. Classes are being taken online and of course, people are left wondering what that will mean for their university process, especially those who are applying to universities this year. In this article we will explore how Covid impacted the college application process and policies for seniors and rising seniors. We'll discuss it from an international point of view (meaning, for those who want to apply outside of Guatemala), with a special focus on the US.

First and foremost however we would like to make a disclaimer: this information is as updated and accurate as we could find, but times have been very unpredictable now and this information might not apply further into the future. We will make our best to inform you of what's happening now, and hopefully if the situation changes you'll be able to read about it here soon too.

Let's start with one of the most important things: exams. We know many universities might not require you to turn in some exams but others will. In any case, it's good to be informed and prepared. In some cases you might have to do an exam, but it might be hard to do if you can't go out, or if the test is being cancelled due to the virus. Here's some information and possible solutions for exams.

SAT

Don't worry, we know you might feel stressed about this one, but there's good news. You can do several things:

- 1** If you're a senior who already took the SAT before the pandemic, you have a safety net. You can choose to submit your latest score, if you met your goal, and if you didn't, it's also okay, many colleges are aware that it's hard for students to take their SAT this year, so a ton of them have gone test-optional. This means that you can choose whether you want to submit your test score or not. This won't reduce your chances of acceptance in almost every case, since universities use a holistic approach for your application. It's always good to check with the university you're interested in though!

2 If you're a senior who DIDN'T take the SAT before the pandemic, you still have a chance. You can opt to apply to a university that's test-optional. However, if the university you want, requires you to take it, or if for whatever reason you still prefer to take it for precaution, then you still can. The SAT is available in Guatemala, and you can even register to take it at Inter. You can do this by creating a Collegeboard account or accessing your own and buying a test; they have all the dates available. Remember to check the deadlines, since you need to buy your test with time.

3 If you're a rising senior who took the SAT before the pandemic, you're set! Even if you didn't meet your score, you have plenty of time to register for an SAT before you need to apply for college. Of course, the best thing would be to wait for the pandemic to be over or have settled for you to take it again, since it prevents unnecessary exposure, but it all depends on your circumstances.

4 If you're a rising senior who DIDN'T take the SAT before the pandemic, don't worry. Even if you've never taken it once, you still have time to assess your situation and register for the test at your own pace.

Updates and information from College Board about Covid 19 and the SAT/PSAT:



Another exam similar to the SAT is the ACT. Fortunately, the circumstances shown above apply to this test too.

Here are some links that list all the test/optional universities in the US:



Remember! If you can't do the exams, it won't be the end of the world. Universities understand the circumstances and they're being very considerate in that aspect. We'll also discuss how you can boost your application if you don't have the SAT/ACT further in the article.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT EXAMS

If you're applying internationally, chances are you probably have to take some sort of language test, or prove your language proficiency in some way. Normally this would be done through exams like the TOEFL or IELTS if you're taking an English level test. These exams would normally be taken at a test center, but if you aren't able to do that, there are other options available:

- Some universities have started accepting the Duolingo test (which can easily be taken at home if you have internet access, <https://englishtest.duolingo.com/>).
- Both the TOEFL (https://www.ets.org/s/cv/toefl/at-home?WT.ac=TOEFL_special_home_edition_200320&utm_source=vanity&utm_medium=vanity&utm_campaign=TOEFLatHome&utm_content=toefl-special-edition) and the IELTS (<https://www.ieltsindicator.com/>) have released online versions for their tests which you can take at home, the price is more expensive than the Duolingo, but it depends on whatever your university requires.
- Again, it all depends on the university, but some have even started accepting the reading and writing section of the SAT as an acceptable requirement.

Remember to check with your universities first to see how they're handling the language proficiency tests, and then act from there.

AP'S

AP's for the most part are expected to work as in previous years in 2021; a physical exam for which you have to sit in a room for. However, depending on how the virus progresses, adjustments will be made to ensure the safety of the students. At least for Inter students, the school and the teachers have been doing their best to give us the best preparation possible within their reach for the AP exams. Collegeboard is also posting daily videos for every class and every topic so you can always go to them for extra guidance, or of course to Mrs. Mavi, the AP coordinator.

GRADES

These are hard times, and sometimes your grades might reflect that. Know that wherever you're at, it's okay. Universities understand that your grades might slip or you might be lacking in some areas this year, or even next year depending on how far this goes. A tip for that would be to write about it in your supplemental essays or wherever you can in your application. It will give universities a chance to know why your grades weren't at their best or why your transcript might have some flaws.

EXTRACURRICULARS

Something universities like more than anything is when an applicant shows leadership and initiative. You might feel like being stuck at home puts a wall on that aspect of your application, but it's quite the opposite. There are tons of online activities you can do to show that you were still engaged despite the difficulties. It's not mandatory however, and you shouldn't feel forced to do this if you don't have the time or if you feel like it would be too much, respect your needs during this time. Inter also has online ECAs, which are a really good option if you want to stay active and showcase your initiative and discipline. Here are some ideas: <https://thecollegespy.com/blog/extracurricular-curricular-activities-during-covid-19>

OVERALL TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR APPLICATION

These tips will always apply, but take special care of them if you find that your application is lacking in some areas, since you might be able to balance it out by improving others.

- Recommendation letters - make sure you get good recommendation letters. A good recommendation letter is one that's written by a teacher who knows you well and whom you feel you have a good relationship with. That relationship will be reflected in your letter and it will give universities a much more deeper understanding of you.
- Essays - Now more than ever, it's the time to showcase your character and personality. Colleges care about whether or not you fit the character requirements for their university, not just about your grades. A piece of advice, refrain from writing about covid unless you've really been affected by it or you feel like you have a really good story to tell about it. Keep in mind that admission officers read thousands of essays and Covid is definitely a topic many will be using, but if you just write about it because you have nothing better to write about maybe consider writing about something else. Try looking at different prompts or reading other accepted essays to get an idea of what to write.

Some last few things to consider are taking a gap year or deferring (delaying your university enrollment a year back, even when you have already been admitted). It might even be a good opportunity to do something that you've always wanted to do but never found the time to, or just help out your family by working. In any case, taking a gap year won't make you look bad to universities, especially this year. If you still want to do something that contributes to your application try taking some courses or creating projects that have to do with your area of interest.

I would like to add one more thing, don't feel bad about not being able to apply to your desired university due to financial, or other reasons. These are unpredictable times, and even though it might feel like it won't be any good to study someplace else, it's all about what we make of the opportunities we are provided with.

Also, if you feel like this is too much, or you don't know where to start, feel free to speak to your respective college counsellors Mavi Morales (9th and 10th grade) and Melvin Johnson (11th and 12th grade), they're here to support you in anything you need. Make sure you join the college and career counselling class in google classroom, the code is: n6eyheg. It's always being updated with new resources and information.

A TRADITION

for some

ARTICLE: ISABEL CHANG

“What are you dressing up as?” In a parallel universe, this would be the next few weeks’ most popular topic. That’s right, it’s that time of the year again, where everyone gets to be whoever they want to, and be a kid again. Whether it’s dressing up, watching movies, asking for candy or throwing a party, Halloween is yet another excuse for kids to stay up late. And, an escape from reality for adults. However, it wasn’t always like this... dun dun dun!

This year’s Halloween will occur Saturday, October 31st. In other circumstances, two out of every five students at Interamericano’s High School, would celebrate Halloween. Most likely, this involves dressing themselves with a costume and going out with friends to a party or to watch a movie (of course a scary one, duh!). According to the InterConnected Halloween survey, at least 4 out of 5 students have celebrated Halloween at least once in their lives. The last student in that probability, has never celebrated Halloween. Like every other holiday, Halloween is a personal preference. Many of the people who haven’t celebrated Halloween choose not to because of personal beliefs, according to the students who answered the survey. Many of the ones who do celebrate it, say they choose to because it’s an opportunity to do something with friends or family.

Halloween was certainly a community activity 2000 years ago as well. But, it’s pretty far fetched that people went trick or treating for candy. Some historians believe that Halloween can be dated back to an ancient Celtic tradition that also had bonfires and costumes. On the other hand, this is just one of many theories. In Mexico for example, Halloween is “El dia de los muertos,” a day to celebrate the ones who came before them. Halloween means different things for different people all around the world, and it’s a different event in every place you go, each with its own background, history and culture to tell.



Halloween is what we call a tradition celebrated by only a fraction of the world. Interesting traditions out there are endless, it’s always good to expand our knowledge on some, be informed to make informed decisions and opinions. At Inter we encourage diversity, and pride ourselves on our culturally rich community. This October 31st, be safe and enjoy an afternoon with family, friends or with your own company. Even if circumstances are different this time, reconnect, watch a movie, bake something, build a puzzle, whatever makes your inner kid come out. At Inter, we celebrate being around friends and families in our own unique ways, according to our government’s COVID regulations, and that’s about having some real school spirit! ...pun intended.

REUSING FOR EDUCATION

ARTICLE BY: NATALIA MONTES

In Guatemala, many schools are forced to find alternatives to traditional teaching materials, as they might not get them or have them in a usable state. The same issue is with the infrastructure of the schools, for either the buildings are too small or worn out for the number of students that the school receives. Creativity plays a role in this, as searching for alternatives can be difficult when there are not many resources available. Although it is not impossible, there are Guatemalans that don't give up and find their ways. An example is an organization called Manos de Misericordia. It is a non-profit organization that collaborates to better the community and help others. Manos de Misericordia along with the neighbors of caserío El Trapichito Sanarate, El Progreso, built a community school for the children of the area.



They built the school with an ecological mindset and decided to make use of used materials that were trash. Some of these materials are used car tires, plastic bottles, and glass bottles. They fished out the tires from some nearby rivers and picked others from the streets and dumpsters, giving them a second life.

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How did they recollect all the materials? The organization arranged cleaning days with the help of volunteers to find and gather usable materials in public areas including rivers. Further, through their Facebook page, they posted materials that they needed and asked for them as donations. They asked for plastic reusable materials like bottles, bottle caps, and plastic egg cartons that could be found in any household, as building materials such as screws and silicon bars.

At least 200 kids from caserío El Trapichito Sanarate, El Progreso, will be benefiting from the building of the school from its first phase. It is expected to grow and help more kids from nearby areas. It will be possible with the help of neighbors and volunteers to give time and effort to the building of classrooms. These kids will get an education and learn for a better future as well as promises to better their health as they plan to have medical check-ups for all students as well as giving them nutritional meals. Many of them will receive this needed attention only through the school which is why it is so critical to the community to maintain and grow the school.

RE-EDUCATION CAMPS IN CHINA

For Uyghur Culture

ARTICLE: NICOLLE DARDÓN

Uyghurs are an ethnic minority, found in China, more specifically in Xinjiang, a northwest region in China. Their ethnic group include Han Chinese, Mongolian, Tocharian and Tiele. This last group, also known as Gouache, were a tribe located in the region of Lake Baikal and the Yenisei River. Their religion has changed through the years partially due to the influences that came with the changes of leadership and conquerors. They used to be Christians, Buddhists and Manicheans (a now extinct religion), but presently are Muslim/Islamic, because of the influence of the Turks. Their language is similar to Turkish in sound, but uses the Persian alphabet. As with any culture, Uyghurs have their customs and traditions. For example, married women are distinguished from single women by how they style their hair. For example married women can only use 2 braids, while single women can use as many braids as they wish. One of their unique traditional foods is the Nang, a type of flatbread. As part of their culture, they celebrate one of the most important days of the year with dancing music and food, called the Corban Festival. Every culture has their fascinating traditions and different yet beautiful customs, and the Uyghurs are no exception.

Recently, reports and important figures in the world have been bringing to light a new development that the Chinese government has been working on. So far, it is estimated that there are a total of 380 facilities of the re-education camps built specifically for Uyghurs.



One of the earliest reports on this new development emerged in 2018, China's 'Political Re-Education' Camps of Xinjiang's Uyghur Muslims, written by Zainab Raza, where it was stated that Uyghur Muslims were being detained and subjected to what the Chinese government was calling "political re-education camps", but reports like the one mentioned and many more published later on have stated that human rights were being violated.

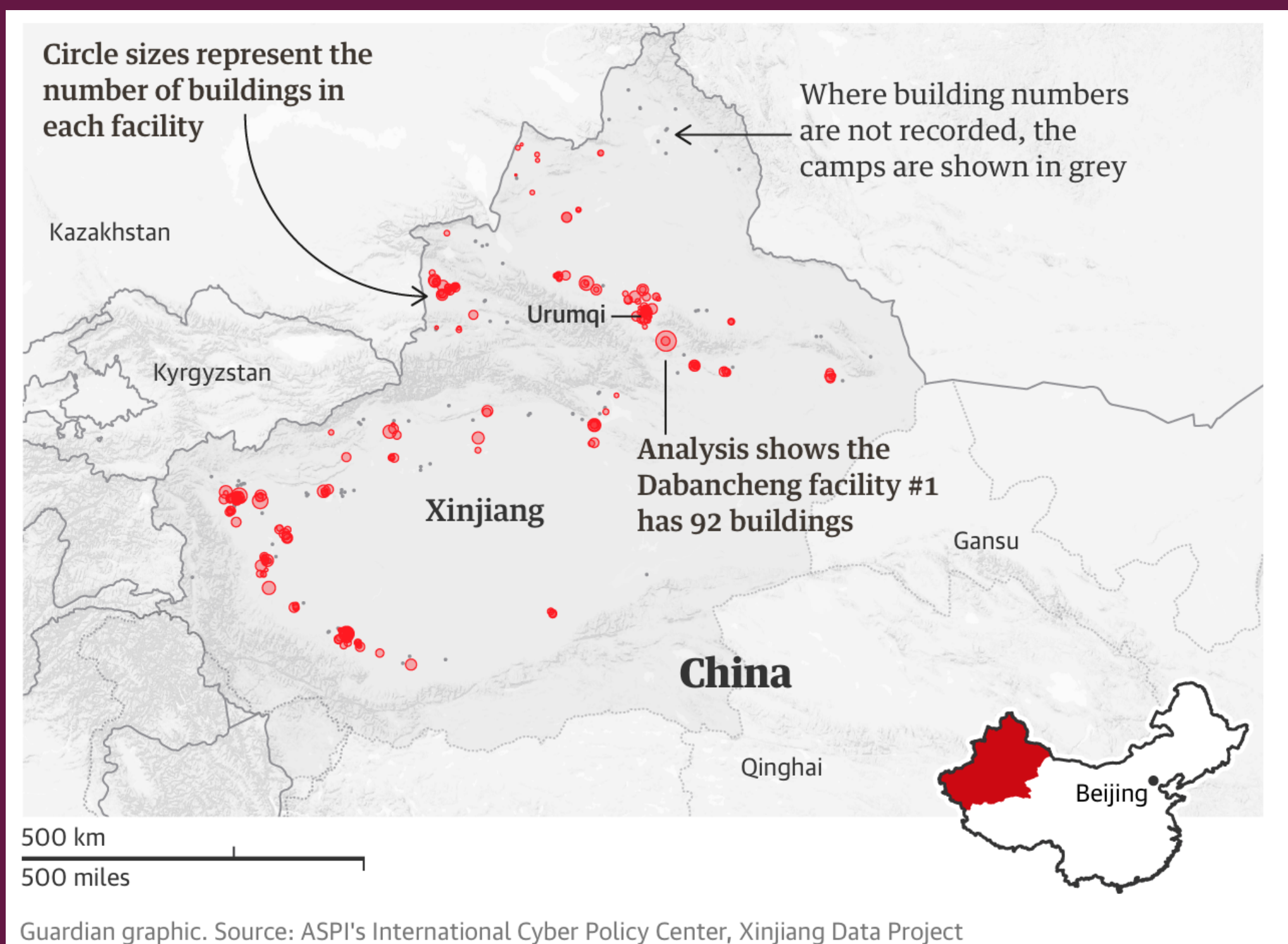
As of August 2020, there are an estimated 1.8 million Uyghur people detained in these camps. But there can very well be many more, since the Chinese government has chosen to not file the legal documents that come with imprisonment, making the number of people incarcerated uncertain. Recent reports have brought to light the acts that are being done to the incarcerated to minimize the Uighur population; these include forced labor, the compulsory use of contraceptives and/or abortions (which goes against the beliefs and rules of Uyghurs), and organ harvesting. Furthermore, in order to suppress Uyghurs, especially their religion and ethnic identities, cultural and religious sites have been destroyed. The damage of 31 Mosques and 2 shrines have been reported, with the justification that it has been done to improve access to resources such as electricity and radios.

The goal and intention of these camps is to replace religious affiliations and ethnic identities with a single one; one that is loyal and supports a political alliance. Also, regulations and policies have been imposed that force people to register to enter a Mosque and worship under security camera surveillance.



Although the main goal of the Chinese government does appear to be strictly with the Uyghur people, there have been speculations that the region where they live and farm has a hand in the game. Xinjian is one of the areas with a lot of economic potential in China where the government still has failed to have full control over. Since Uyghurs own most of the land and use it to cultivate their own foods like grapes, rice, corn, grains and cotton, the government cannot send their resources and manpower to exploit the land's natural resources. Even though the Uyghurs currently produce the largest amount of grapes for China, it appears to not be enough.

During this whole situation, actions have been taken by organizations and governments of the world. On September 15 of this year, groups such as the Uyghur Human Rights Project, Genocide Watch and the European Center for the Responsibility to Protect, have petitioned for the United Nations Human Rights Council to launch an official and in depth investigation in these camps. The European Union has already expressed its intention to visit Xinjiang, and while China has already accepted this visit, it will be monitored and controlled by the Chinese government. More specifically, China will be given the freedom to control where in the Xinjiang region the European Union observers can visit.



Throughout the release of reports about these camps, China has attempted to defend their position. The justification most used by the Chinese government is that these camps are intended to retrain terrorist Uyghurs to be productive workers, with the emphasized blame to extremists trying to corrupt their history. But this explanation doesn't explain why inmates in the camps are senior citizens, children, breastfeeding mothers and disabled/limited people. Also China has stated that Xinjiang and its community (Uyghurs) are vital to China. The Chinese Ambassador in Canada said to CBC News, "There are no concentration camps, only vocational training centers."

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

ARTICLE BY: CECI ZUÑIGA

With the month of October here, I wanted to talk about World Mental Health Day and why it's so important. As few may know, October 10th has been named World Mental Health Day by the World Health Organization. This day, just like many others, was created with the goal of raising awareness to the many mental health issues around the world as well as supporting those who are struggling with their mental health. It also gives an opportunity for those who are working for mental health issues to have a free space to talk about their work, and talk about the need of mental health care for people worldwide.

The first World Mental Health Day took place on October 10th, 1992. It began as an annual activity of the World Federation for Mental Health held by the Deputy Secretary General Richard Hunter who officiated October 10th as the World Mental Health Day. At first, the day didn't have any specific theme, generally aiming on promoting mental health advocacy and educating the public on relevant issues. In 1994, the day had its first official theme which was: "improving the quality of Mental Health Services throughout the World". After that, the day has had a variety of themes that change every year such as 'Women and Mental Health', 'Mental Health and Chronic Physical Illnesses', 'Dignity in Mental Health', 'Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World', and so many more.



With the current COVID-19 situation, the Mental Health Foundation has decided that this year's theme will be 'Mental Health for all'. This year's goal is to increase the investment in mental health to give full support to those who need it during this pandemic. The Mental Health Foundation expects that the need for mental health and psychosocial support will increase dramatically in the coming months and even years. That is why investments in mental health programmes at national and international levels are more important now than ever before. For this very reason, the WHO, United for Global Mental Health and the World Foundation for Mental Health organizations are asking for a massive investment in mental health and to encourage public action they created a campaign that began in September called, Move for Mental Health: Let's Invest.

This year, the World Health Organization, for the very first time will host a global online advocacy event on the topic of mental health. In 'The Big Event for Mental Health', the WHO will show the work that is being done by their staff around the world to reduce mental illness and harmful use of substances. They will be joined by world leaders and mental health experts who will talk about how committed they are to the cause and what more has to be done. Artists who are very vocal about mental health will perform and talk about their motivation and why they are so passionate about the topic. They will be accompanied by sportsmen and women who have been affected by mental ill health and will share their personal experiences with certain conditions. Finally, the WHO created a new category on their inaugural Health for All Film Festival, in which a Special Prize will be given for a film surrounding mental health.



Mental health is part of one of the most neglected areas of public health, yet very few people have access to good quality mental health services. The lack of affordable, quality mental health care in the world, even before the pandemic, and now more than ever, has diminished since the current situation has closed down health services around the world. But for this very reason is why the World Federation for Mental Health has been working on preparations for this day since last year, and hopefully they get enough investments to further get affordable and good quality mental healthcare around the world.

With this said, World Mental Health Day doesn't have to be celebrated one day. We can all celebrate this day every day if we are down to it and there's several ways to do it. You can start by making a pledge to yourself, prioritizing your mental health and promise to remove any negative distractions that may affect your mental health. This is just one of many way to celebrate the occasion, you can find more ways to celebrate in this link:

<http://www.counselingpc.com/blog/2017/10/7/7-simple-ways-to-celebrate-world-mental-health-day-everyday>



NBA & NFL

UPDATES

Article by: Daniela Lombardi

This past couple of weeks the sports world has gone crazy. We have the NBA finals and we are headed to the fifth week of the NFL.

Even though NBA fans are going crazy about the finals right now, it is sad to say that the NBA will end very soon. It has been a crazy ride for all the teams, but as we know, only one can reach the top and win the trophy. The two teams that have fought and defeated the rest are the Los Angeles Lakers and the Miami Heat. These two teams have had a rough and crazy ride, but are now the top two teams in the NBA. On the last day of September, the Lakers defeated Miami in a battle that finished with a score of 116 - 98. I think we can all agree that after the first half, the Lakers completely took over the game. On October 2nd, the Lakers got the win leaving the score at 124 - 114, this makes the Lakers get a 2 - 0 advantage. For Heat fans, hopefully Miami wakes up and makes the finals interesting by winning the next few games to get the victory. Today, the third game of the NBA finals will be played, so who do you cheer for, the LA Lakers or the Miami Heat?

Today, as well as last Sunday, we had amazing football games that really got the fans shaking for their teams. Unfortunately, last week there were many injuries by important players who truly shifted the games perspective: Saquon Barkley, Jamal Adams, Chris Carson, Jabrill Peppers, Jordan Fuller, Chase Young, and many others. The games were super intense, but we hope your team won. This week's stats are getting crazier by the second; Giants, Falcons, Jets, and the Texans are the teams that haven't had the chance to win any of the games they have played. Contrastingly, the Seahawks, Steelers and the Chiefs are the top winning teams right now. The rest of the teams are improving week to week and let's hope they can keep going that way. There were intense games like the Browns vs. Cowboys, Buccaneers vs. Chargers, Bengals vs. Jaguars, and many others. As we all know, anything can happen when we talk about football, so let's hope that your team can overcome any games in the future and be the ones that go to the SuperBowl.

Auto Teatro

Delirio

ARTICLE BY: MATIAS VICO



The entertainment industry in Guatemala has been harshly affected by this pandemic due to the immediate suspension of these different activities. Fortunately, Guatemala is slowly opening up again and allowing the success of this industry. Teatro Delirio Drive-in, is basically a drive-in show. You drive there and enjoy the shows without getting out of the car. Obviously, Teatro Delirio has met the necessary protocols to make sure that everybody has a great time and stays COVID free.

Right when you enter, a staff member measures the temperature of each individual in the car, and leads the car where they will be situated for the show. They will make sure to give you antibacterial gel and a disposable menu for you to choose the snacks that are offered. The staff will be using masks, gloves, and a protective visor. The food will be delivered with a sterilized tray so that the waiter and the customer have the least amount of contact.

Due to the government taking off the time restrictions, Teatro Delirio has a more open schedule in which the different shows will start. Usually, they open the drive-in theatre from Thursday to Sunday and the price is 60 quetzales per person. The time in which the shows will start can vary depending on what they will present that week. So, if you have more questions about this amazing activity, you can go check out their facebook, where you will find the scheduled shows.

MOVIE OF THE WEEK



Review by: John Naser

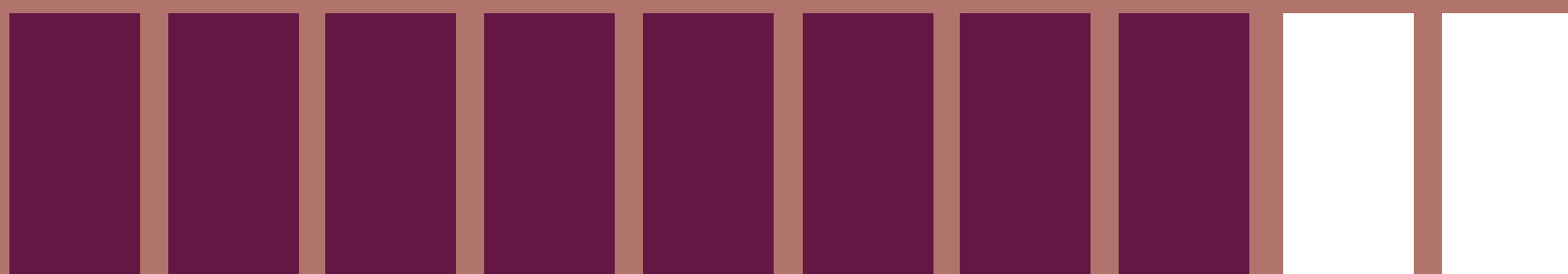
BEETLEJUICE

2015 – Action/Science Fiction – 2h 15min

Directed by: J.J. Abrams

This week you can indulge in great activities; for example, watch a movie and I recommend Beetlejuice. Beetlejuice is a great film to watch with your entire family. It is a 1988 American fantasy comedy film directed by Tim Burton, produced by the Geffen Company, and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures. It won the Academy Award for Best Makeup and three Saturn Awards: Best Horror Film, Best Makeup, and Best Supporting Actress for Sylvia Sidney. The plot of the movie is amazing, it starts by introducing the characters, Adam (Alec Baldwin), Barbara (Geena Davis) who have recently passed away. They become ghosts trying to get rid of the new family living in their home. Beetlejuice came to help Adam and Barbara kick out the new family, but Beetlejuice has more in mind than just helping.

The actor who stood out more than the other is Michael Keaton who portrays Beetlejuice. He gets an 8.4 out of 10.



Movie rating: 8/10

Overall the movie is really interesting and fun to watch.

Spooky season is approaching and there are other great films you can watch including **The Nightmare Before Christmas**, **The Addams Family**, **Coraline**, **Monster House**, and many others.



THANK YOU!

WHO ARE WE

Hard times like these require more efforts to maintain communication with everyone at school. We are really excited to introduce Inter-Connected, the new official student-managed Interamericano magazine, created with the hope of keeping you entertained while at home. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did!

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