



# THE VOICE

November 2021

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# 5 Types of volunteer opportunities to get involved

Jennifer Yu

As the school year kicks off, things finally seem to be getting back to normal, or at least, as normal as it can get.

One of the things I've missed most about pre-pandemic life is getting involved with the community by volunteering! When the pandemic hit in early 2020, the world was taken by storm, and one major component of our lives that we lost is human connection.

Volunteering is a great way to build strong relationships with people outside of school, gain valuable experience, and help make a positive impact on your community.

But what opportunities are out there?

“Volunteering is a great way to build strong relationships”

## Remote/Hybrid opportunities:

Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many organizations had to halt their in-person events. However, this was also a time for remote opportunities to flourish. Throughout the pandemic, many volunteer organizations shifted their volunteers online, seeking to spread joy and comfort remotely amidst the global pandemic.

## **LINK**

Language Immersion Network  
Remote

LINK is a non-profit organization run by high school students across New England. Their group of dedicated volunteers provides free, weekly English lessons to underprivileged children in China through video call.

Their team runs off the core value that every child deserves the chance to develop confidence in their English skills in a kind & encouraging environment.

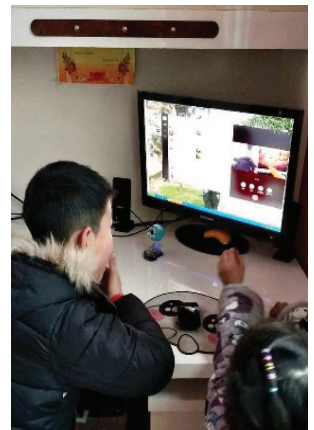
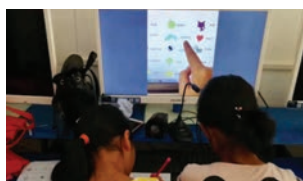
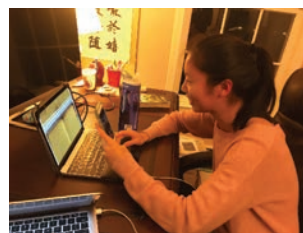
LINK is always welcoming new teachers ages 13+ to join their team of passionate volunteer teachers. They're looking for patient and committed students that are available Friday/Saturday nights. Basic/Intermediate Chinese skills are required.

Learn how to apply at:

<https://languageimmersionn.wixsite.com/link>

Or contact our friends over at LINK at:

[languageimmersionnetwork1@gmail.com](mailto:languageimmersionnetwork1@gmail.com)



## **Chelmsford Public Library**

25 Boston Rd, Chelmsford MA  
Hybrid Options

The Chelmsford Public Library isn't just home to a vast selection of books, it is also where dedicated teens across Chelmsford can get involved! Throughout different parts of the year, the library offers a mix of virtual and in-person volunteer opportunities.



### **Virtual Volunteer:**

As a virtual volunteer, you will be able to participate and help run online programs, associated with the Chelmsford Public Library. This is a great opportunity to connect with your peers, neighbors, and connect with new friends!

### **Shelf Reader:**

The Chelmsford Public Library is looking for detail-oriented students to help volunteer as shelf readers! Shelf readers help to organize books and read their labels. If you're someone who is organized and would like to help the library, make sure to apply ASAP!

Positions to volunteer at the library are limited, so be sure to fill out the application soon if you are interested. **\*Training sessions are required\***

For more information, email the Youth Services Librarian at:  
[mmason@chelmsfordlibrary.org](mailto:mmason@chelmsfordlibrary.org).

Or visit the Chelmsford Public Library events calendar for info on volunteering events!

## **In our school**

If you're looking for something a little closer to home, Chelmsford High School offers a variety of different service clubs for you to get involved in! The projects they get involved in range from organizing school-wide fundraisers, to reaching out within our community.

Some of the available volunteer opportunities at our school include:

### **GIVE Club**

Get Involved Volunteer Everywhere

### **LIME Club**

Leaders In Motion Everywhere

### **INTERACT Club**

For more information on service clubs, visit the Chelmsford high school official clubs and activities site!



**It's not  
just for  
the hours**

Volunteering can be a great way to contribute to your community and connect with others. Not only are you earning volunteer hours, but you're also gaining valuable experience working and connecting with people in the real world.

There are many volunteer opportunities in our community, so get out there, show your spirit, and volunteer!

# Lea's Reads

Lea McGuigan

## **We Are Okay** Nina LaCour

rating: ★★

**Summary:** Marin has been isolated from everyone since going to college to the point where she is just a mindless empty shell existing in the world. When her friend visits from California, Marin must open the doors to her previous life and remember the pain, sorrow and tragedy she was once confronted with.

**Review:** This book was a frustrating and extremely forgettable read. The book started off incredibly slow and nothing remotely interesting happened in the entire first half and barely anything interesting happened in the second half. The entire plot lacked action. I had to force myself to finish the book and when I did, I was relieved. We Are Okay had very few characters and none of the characters had any chemistry or character development.

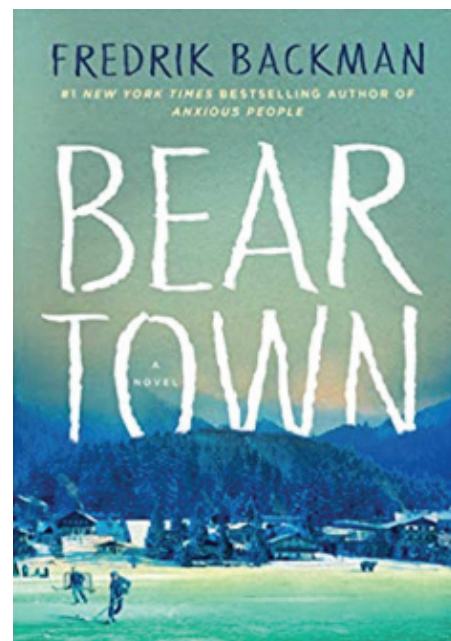


## **Beartown** Fredrik Backman

rating: ★★★★★

**Summary:** Beartown is the ultimate hockey town where hockey dominates everyday life to the point where a loss for the team is a loss for the town. When an act of violence divides the town, residents must question the importance of winning, courage, and unity in a way that no hockey game can bring.

**Review:** The complex characters are what gave this book so much depth and really transformed the book into the masterpiece it is. Even people who are not fans of hockey can connect to the characters as they struggle with immense pressure from parents, the town and pressure within themselves. It was a beautiful story that has a profound impact on the reader long after they close the book. This is definitely a book for the ages.



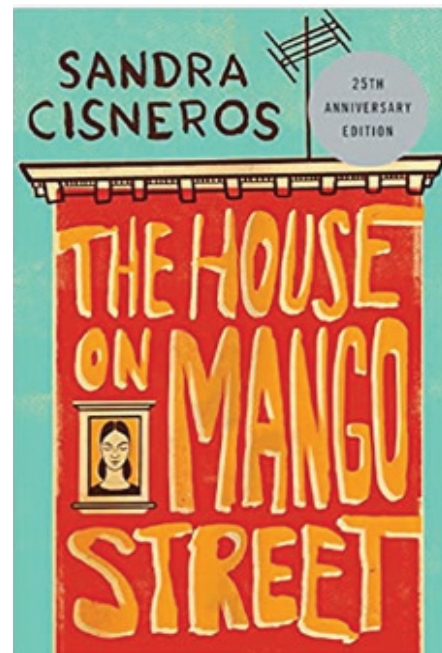


## The House on Mango Street Sandra Cisneros

**Summary:** The House on Mango Street is told in a series of emotional vignettes that follow Esperanza as she grows up in Chicago while discovering herself and the world around her in a way that has touched millions to the core.

**Review:** This book is considered a modern classic and it is easy to see why. It has a unique writing style that makes it very easy to read and it is possible to finish this book in a day. The struggles Esperanza goes through, both internal conflicts and external conflicts, are relatable to many teenagers. The short, occasionally confusing, chapters made the book sometimes difficult to read but all in all, The House on Mango Street is a powerful, fascinating book. It is definitely one worth reading.

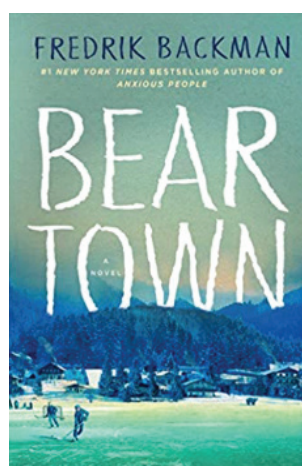
rating: ★★★★★



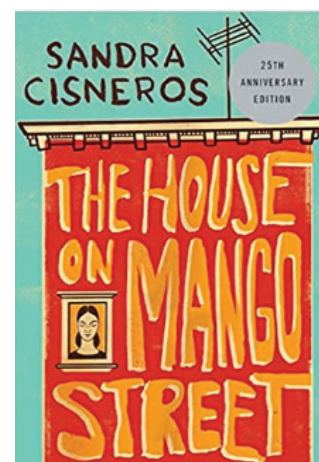
## The Book Shelf



rating: ★★



rating: ★★★★★



rating: ★★★★★

# Chelmsford High School and COVID-19

Danielle Mello

A new year, a new set of COVID-19 regulations. Only a year ago we were merely pixels on a Google Meet, interacting in three-word strings and then pressing mute.

We longed for a world we had taken for granted, a world in which human contact did not prompt paranoia and illness. We had imagined that maybe this year, next year at the latest, everything would go back to normal.

Unfortunately, we are still plagued by COVID-19—perhaps for the unforeseeable future—but safe practices throughout Chelmsford High School can allow us to slide back into normalcy. Here are your updates on all things COVID-19 in our school community.

## **Chelmsford High Protocol**

At this moment, our school requires that students and staff wear masks at all times excluding lunch and designated mask breaks.

This, of course, is not impossible to slip past, but there are a handful of staff members who regularly monitor mask-wearing in the hallways. Some other precautions being taken include pooled COVID-19 testing and the Test and Stay protocol.

The pooled testing occurs every Tuesday morning at the Career Center and is highly encouraged if you have remained COVID-free for at least 90 days.

Combining all of these tests into one swarm to keep the school safer is quick and efficient, so why not make your own contribution?

The other system currently in place, the Test and Stay protocol, uses a rapid antigen test (BinaxNOW) to allow asymptomatic close contacts to remain in school. In summary, the COVID-19 statuses at Chelmsford High School appear to be well-regulated and tested.

So, how effective exactly are these approaches to the issue of COVID-19 at the high school? This can be determined by viewing the weekly reports of positive cases posted on the Chelmsford High School website.

Throughout the first full week of school, 6 student cases were reported and posted. This number only increased in the following two weeks—12 student cases, then 21. The final weeks of September reported 6 more cases to the school.

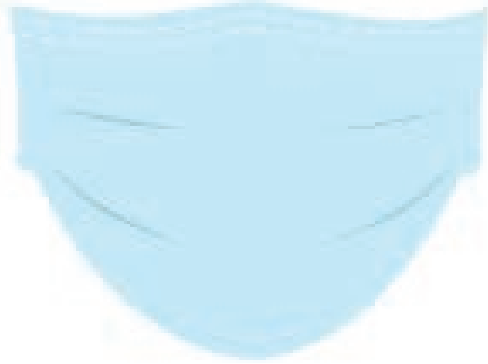
However, the spread in October has proven to be much more fortunate; by Halloween, only 3 confirmed cases were reported to the school.

## **State-Level Reports**

The Massachusetts Department of Health reports thousands of COVID-19 cases each day.

An individual is reported as a confirmed COVID-19 case when they receive their first positive on a molecular test. Throughout the months of September and October, these cases peaked on September 13 with 2,297 confirmed cases of the virus. Luckily, the amount of cases since then have been on a declining trend, even sinking below 1,000 cases in the last week of October.

## Protect Yourself. Protect Others.



Although the mask mandate has been long since lifted, the Department of Public Health has recommended that immunocompromised (having weakened immune systems due to health or age) individuals who are fully vaccinated should wear masks indoors in public spaces. They also advise that you follow the same guidelines if someone in your household is immunocompromised or unvaccinated. Masks are still required to be worn within transportation systems and healthcare facilities, where vulnerable groups are at risk.

### Practicing Pandemic Hygiene

We are all too familiar with the sight of masks resting below the nose, sometimes even below the chin. We see too often students stifling their own symptoms

for the sake of going to school, getting their work done, and seeing their friends. Although they have lessened some, with the resurgences of COVID-19 cases, I urge you to regularly practice the necessary precautions to keep yourself and others safe.

You may be vaccinated, but there could be others around you who cannot vaccinate for health reasons—be thoughtful! Small adjustments like lifting your mask a couple inches and keeping distance when sick may seem frivolous, but you would be playing a huge part in preventing the spread of disease. Here are some tips for keeping yourself and others safe:

1. Keep your mask secured over your nose as you make your way through the hallway. There are so many other students packed in there that could be passing around the virus.
2. When eating lunch, wash or sanitize your hands before you eat your meal. You've touched so much in the school that other people have touched, and it's better to be safe than sorry.
3. After finishing your lunch, put your mask back up if you're in the cafeteria. There are a lot of people being crunched together there, so do your best to only leave your face uncovered when absolutely necessary.



4. Keep your belongings to yourself. It may be hard to turn down a pencil request, but reducing the amount of others' touch on your stuff is a safer approach. If this is needed, be sure to sanitize belongings accordingly!

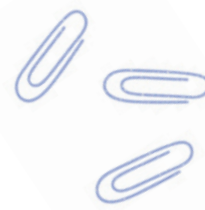
5. Bring extra masks with you. You never know what kind of emergency or spill could happen, and it's best to be prepared.

6. Stay home if you're feeling any kind of symptom, even if it seems minor. Although this seems inconvenient if you're COVID-free, you could be protecting hundreds of other students that you interact with on a daily basis if you do have it. Would you want to get one of your friends sick, or vice versa?

7. Encourage others to practice safe COVID-19 hygiene! Remind that friend that their mask belongs above their nose. Keep your distance from large groups of friends and instead opt for a video call. Maybe it wouldn't mean anything to hear this from some teacher, but your voice could have a positive impact.

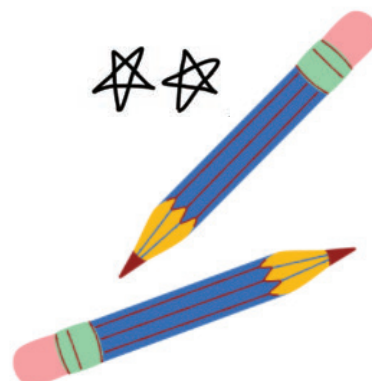
As much as we'd love to live freely and normally, turning against the tide could result in another huge spike in cases at Chelmsford High School. If we want to make the most of this year and the activities planned out for us, we must take the necessary precautions in order to keep all of us virus-free.

These tiny individual steps we take consist of one whole community; let's do what we can to keep on living safely.



### Tips to keep safe in the COVID era:

1. Wear a mask (above your nose!)
2. Clean your hands before meals
3. Wear your mask after you finish eating
4. Keep belongings to yourself
5. Keep extra masks on hand!
6. Feel sick? Stay home!
7. Encourage safe COVID practices with friends.





# Autumn Playlist

Jennifer Yu

## Comethru - Jeremy Zucker

If the word “chill” were to be a song, this would be it, and put simply, this song is very likeable. Not only are the lyrics extremely relatable, but mixed with a light instrumental and Jeremy’s calm voice, this song is perfect for any fall day-in.

## Blue & Grey - BTS

No one is able to blend vocals with rap like BTS can. The transitions between the vocal line’s soft voice and the rap line’s subtle verses are perfect to unwind to.

## This City - Sam Fisher

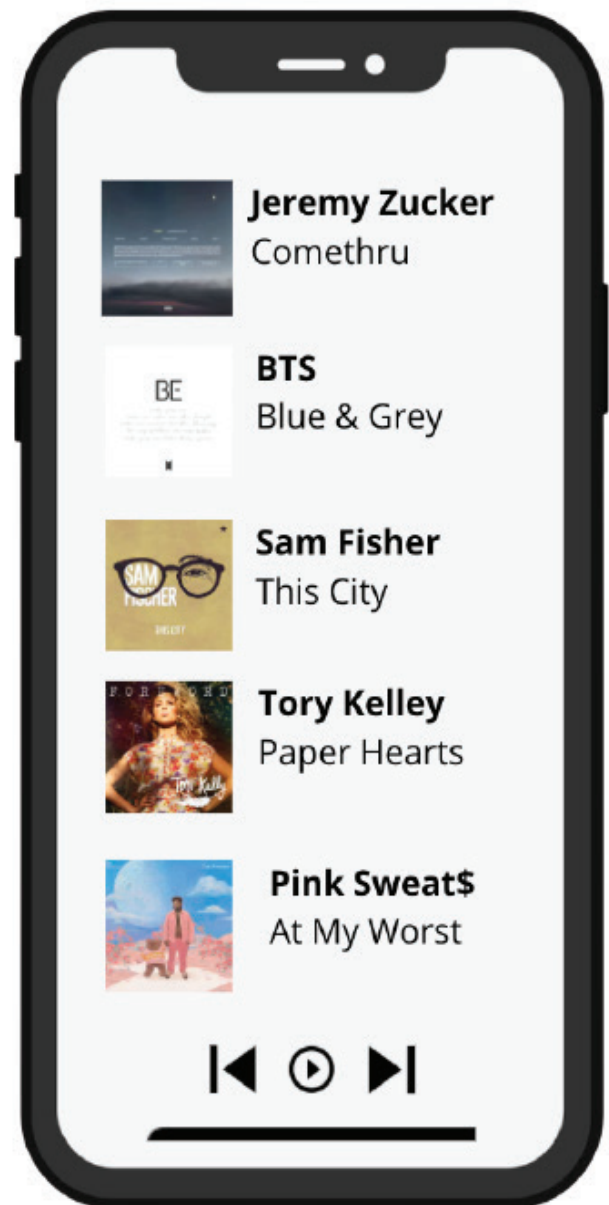
Sam Fisher is able to invoke such deep emotion through his voice, and it puts me in awe every time I listen to this song. If you want a cozy, ambient song, this is definitely the way to go.

## Paper Hearts - Tory Kelley

At this point, it’s probably quite obvious that I have a soft spot for guitars. Tory’s soft voice perfectly matches with the light strums of acoustic guitars, bringing a sense of peace to listeners.

## At My Worst - Pink Sweat\$

Similar to Comethru, At My Worst is what I consider a ‘neutral’ song. It doesn’t take your energy up, but nor does it drag you all the way down. Perfect for when you just need an easy-listen song.

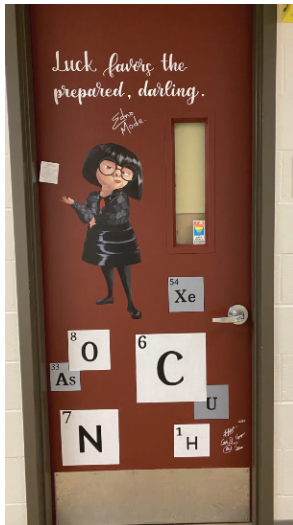


# Inside CHS' Door Painting Initiative

Ellora Smith

Chelmsford High School is a building filled with mostly maroon and white decor as well as the murals from over many years' graduating class' scattered around different walls.

These murals vary in design and in theme, but now there are not only murals on walls that will be present in CHS but also paintings on doors. When thinking of classroom doors in schools, they aren't usually bright and colorful, but quite dull and mundane.



Other schools across the country have also noticed that school doors aren't the most attractive thing, and have started to paint them or add uplifting positive messages to them. This helps break the maroon and white up, as well as having positive paintings on them that can help reflect a teacher's classroom.

It is important for a school to have a good appearance on the inside to make it feel more welcoming for the students new and returning.



**student creativity  
and involvement**

This year at Chelmsford High School, students are being given the opportunity to paint teachers' doors in the school. This project is similar to how students are able to paint murals for their class every year, except more people are able to get involved with this.

Many teacher's doors have already been painted, and more of them are in the works as well.

Students can get involved in this through clubs like art club or other art classes, and of course permission would be needed from the said teacher to be able to paint their door.

They can be designed by the teacher of the classroom, or the student, and students can take time during pride block or after school to paint the doors.

Now this isn't an opportunity for students to vandalize school doors, but allow themselves to be creative and spruce up the monotony of the maroon and white color scheme.

As said before, some of these doors have already been painted by some of the students, and these hallways are starting to get filled with the colorful paintings.

Some of these include a painting of Edna Mode from TheIncredibles and a painting of Superman. There are also other doors that are in the works and are being sketched out to be ready to be painted.

Some of these designs can have themes that relate to the teacher or the subject that they teach.

For example, on a Spanish teacher's classroom door, there is a painting in process of something that is a Spanish inspired theme.

This creativity really is up to the student and the teacher because what is on their door can help represent the learning environment they are projecting.

Chelmsford High School is not the first school to start painting the doors in fun creative ways.

Most schools have been painting positive messages on bathroom doors because it is a convenient spot, but CHS has decided to paint teachers' doors instead.

Westfield High School has also done this as well, and took it as an opportunity to spread positivity throughout the school.

A club sponsor from their school stated, "...the art club worked in groups to come up with designs to promote kindness and positivity and motivation." (Lindsay Frey, Art club sponsor).

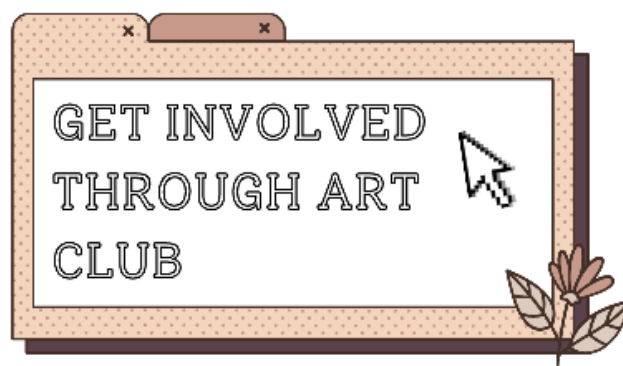
Westfield High School painted the stall doors in bathrooms, but with students at CHS painting the doors to teachers' classrooms it allows everyone to be able to view it.

Although Westfield High School may have not gotten a lot of recognition for it, other schools that have also painted murals on doors have such as Mary Moore Elementary School in Arlington, Texas.

After word got around when this school painted positive messages on the bathroom doors on Facebook, the principal Tyson Jones was on the Today show to talk about how important it is to spread positivity in schools now.

Principal Tyson believes, "School is different now, the demands we have to put on kids have changed so much. I really wanted to use this year to reframe their purpose at school. School should be a joyous place."

That is why it is resourceful and creative idea to spread positive ideas and messages through doors. Chelmsford High School has now also taken the opportunity to use art on doors, instead of walls like they usually do, to create an even more uplifting environment.



So, if this school year you are interested in getting involved with a creative art project that will benefit our school, this is a great opportunity. As shown through other schools, painting positive or fun designs on normally boring doors can help create a positive environment.

This is setting a good tone for what the classrooms in this school are like, and it is something that the students can enjoy while doing. Once again, you can get involved with this through being involved with different art classes or being involved in a club like art club.

# The pain of school's early start times

Cynthia Lu

Starting every school day by forcing yourself out of the comfort of your bed before the sun even rises is a chore, especially when you stayed up late studying and your struggle to arrive at school on time is rewarded with piles of work that you're too tired to put your best effort into. It's a bad habit to not get a lot of sleep, yet we can't help it because school necessitates that we have to wake up early every single day.

School is supposed to support our learning, health, and happiness, yet its early start time significantly harms them instead, making school more grueling than it needs to be for everyone.

Is it even possible to do your best in school when the school itself doesn't try to support the core to success? School's early start time hinders sleep, which is dangerously detrimental to us.

## The Importance of Sleep

Although some people may view sleep as a boring task that you can spend less time on if you want to finish more "important" things first, sleeping is much more important than what you want to replace it with, as it keeps you healthy and able to perform all of your tasks happily.

Maybe you think that you can still function and can learn to do activities when not getting enough sleep, but doing so is extremely damaging to wellbeing, as there can be long-term physical and mental health consequences.

For example, sleep deprivation results in a higher risk of health concerns such as injuries, stroke, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure. This is because sleep helps maintain the balance of the hormones that make you feel hungry and full and keeps your heart, blood vessels, and immune system healthy.

Sleep also keeps your brain healthy, as while you're sleeping, your brain is creating pathways that help you retain information.

“Sleeping also keeps your brain healthy...”

A lack of sleep causes your brain to not work properly during the day, affecting your ability to make decisions, solve problems, focus, and control emotions and behavior. It can therefore also cause sleep-deprived people to take longer to finish tasks, have a slower reaction time, make more mistakes, and lack motivation.

Sleep deficiency can even increase the chance of depression, suicide, and risk-taking and unhealthy behavior like bullying, fighting, drug use, and smoking.

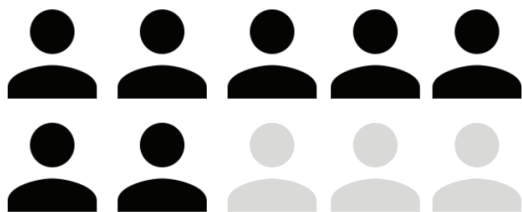


Due to all of these negative consequences, not enough sleep can make students do worse in school. For example, if you're sleep deprived, you might have difficulty paying attention in class or might even fall asleep, meaning you'd need to do a lot of studying on your own to understand the information you missed.

However, because you're tired, it takes you longer to study than if you weren't tired. This would make you go to bed late, and the cycle of being unable to take in information from class and having to self-study would repeat without any time to catch up on lost sleep, meaning you'd get bad grades that would make you sad and stressed. Therefore, you need sleep to be happy, healthy, and do well in life.

### **How does School Affect How Much Sleep You Should Get?**

Despite the countless detriments of sleep-deprivation, school's early start time encourages the unhealthy practice of waking up earlier than you want to, making it difficult to get enough sleep.



7 out of 10 teens sleep less than 8 hours

According to data from the 2015 national Youth Risk Behavior Surveys where students were asked how much sleep they usually got on school nights, about 7 out of 10 teenagers slept less than 8 hours.

However, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, teenagers in the age group of 13–18 years old should aim to get 8–10 hours of sleep per day. This means that most teenagers don't get enough sleep when they have school.



What's more, schools that began later in the day than our school were in the survey, yet so many students from those schools didn't get enough sleep. Assuming that students at our school have to wake up around 6:00 a.m. to get ready for school, this means that students would need to go to bed at 8:00-10:00 p.m. to get enough sleep.

Yet, most teens naturally can't fall asleep until 11:00 p.m. due to a shift of the body's internal clock resulting from puberty that makes them go to bed later and wake up later than younger children and adults.

Even if going to bed early, it's common for teens to just lay awake in bed, unable to sleep. However, our high school's early start time discourages the normal bedtime for teens, preventing most teens from getting enough sleep even if they're trying to sleep more.

This makes it plausible that an even higher percentage of students don't get enough sleep at our school than at other schools.

There are also many other factors that make high school teens go to bed later than people of other ages. Many high school students have extracurricular activities that can end late, giving them less time to do homework. What's more, high schoolers get more homework than elementary and middle school students even

though those younger students start school later. This can force them to stay up and can cause them to use technology more at night, and since light tells your brain that it is daytime and you should be awake, this also makes it challenging to fall asleep. However, high school students still have to wake up early no matter when they fall asleep because of school's early start time.

Additionally, the sleep lost from school days is difficult to make up for. Maybe you take naps after school, which can provide a short-term boost in alertness and performance, but taking naps late in the afternoon can make it harder to fall asleep at night.

Of course, taking naps earlier in the afternoon is okay, but naps don't provide the benefits of sleeping when you're supposed to. So, naps don't completely make up for lost sleep.

Also, maybe you sleep in later on weekends than on weekdays to catch up on sleep, but this can disrupt your body clock's sleep-wake rhythm.

This means that it's better to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, but because school starts so early, you wouldn't get enough sleep if you did that. Therefore, school's early start time makes it extremely difficult to get enough healthy sleep.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that high schools should begin later than 8:30 a.m., as doing so caused students to get more sleep, improved attendance at school, decreased tardiness, and caused student grades to improve. To be able to have a healthy learning environment and help students be successful, our school should at least give students the opportunity to sleep more.

## **Solutions to Disadvantages of Later School Start Times**

Like most things, there can be disadvantages to later school start times. For example, if high school started later in the day, it could cause problems with transportation, as it would conflict with the starting time of middle school.

This would mean there wouldn't be enough buses. Also, starting school later could cause it to end later, causing scheduling conflicts along with difficulties for older students who have to care for younger siblings after school. However, the benefits of starting school later exceed these disadvantages, and it's also possible to solve these problems.



During school, a lot of time is allotted to breaks and extra help, but not everyone needs these things. To those not needing it, they end up doing homework, which can be done at home and defeats the purpose of a break, or they end up wasting time being bored.

For example, I try to do homework during Plus and Pride Block, but I sometimes end up being bored because I'd rather do homework at home when I want to do it.

Therefore, by taking the time that we currently use for Pride Block and dividing it to the beginning of each day,

every school day can be shorter while still being in class for the same amount of time as we currently do. In other words, some of the time used for breaks and extra help could be moved to the beginning of every school day so that those not needing it don't have to be in school for it, and school can start later while still ending before middle school does.

## **school & transportation issues**



If it's not possible to get rid of the time for Plus Block since having all students eat lunch at the same time could be a problem, we could have Pride Block during that time instead.

With Plus Block, we can't even choose where to go if we need help with work or just want to take a break, so treating it as Pride Block instead is much more efficient.

No matter what the solution is, the disadvantages to having school start later are far outweighed by the benefits.

So, why can't school start later when all that the early start time does for us is make us suffer? Why can't we have the right to get up when we are ready to do so?

Meanwhile, those needing to ride the bus or still wanting to go to school early can be brought to school like how things currently are, but they'd be doing something like Pride Block until school actually begins.

Adding to the benefits of this solution, if high school started 10-20 minutes earlier than middle school, it would actually be easier for families with children in middle and high school, as they can send them to school around the same time.

Doing this is better than forcing all students to go to school early when there's no reason to, and it could also cause less traffic.

### Sources

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/features/students-sleep.htm>

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/school-and-sleep/late-school-start-times>

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/sleep-deprivation-and-deficiency#:~:text=Sleep%20plays%20an%20important%20role%20in%20health,well-being>

# Simple Thanksgiving Recipes

Josie Lee

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, here are some of my family's favorite recipes that can go with any Thanksgiving meal!

## Cranberry Sauce



Cranberry sauce is a classic side dish for Thanksgiving. This recipe is very easy to cook and should take about 20 minutes altogether.

### Ingredients:

1 bag (12-ounce) cranberries  
1 cup cranberry juice (Other juice combinations also work)  
1 cup pure maple syrup (not pancake syrup!)  
3 tbsp. orange juice (Any kind of citrus juice works)

### Directions:

1. Wash the bag of cranberries under cool water, then dump into a medium saucepan.
2. Pour 1 cup of cranberry juice (or whatever juice you choose).
3. Pour 1 cup maple syrup.
4. Add 3 tbsp orange/ citrus juice
5. Stir together and turn heat on high until it reaches a boil.
6. Once it comes to a boil, turn the heat down to medium low and continue cooking over lower heat for about 10 minutes, or until the juice is thick. Turn off the heat when you're done.



# Baked Pumpkin Pie Oatmeal



This pumpkin flavored oatmeal is perfect for this fall season! Prep time is about 10 minutes and this recipe should take a little less than an hour long.

## Ingredients:

- 1 15 oz. can pumpkin purée
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 Tbsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 2 1/2 cups dry old-fashioned oats

## Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, mix the pumpkin purée, brown sugar, eggs, vanilla, pumpkin pie spice, salt, and baking powder until smooth. After that, whisk in the milk, then the dry oats.
2. Coat an 8×8 (or similar sized) baking dish with non-stick spray. Pour in the pumpkin oat mixture. Bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes, or until the center no longer looks wet and the edges are lightly golden brown.
3. Serve hot right out of the oven or refrigerate until ready to serve. Can be eaten cold or reheated. Top with milk, maple syrup, whipped cream, or nuts.

## Sources:

<https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a9614/homemade-cranberry-sauce/>  
<https://www.budgetbytes.com/baked-pumpkin-pie-oatmeal/>

# GMOs: Yes or No?

Sara Perkins

Since the completion of the Human Genome Project in April of 2003, genetics have been the topic of much controversy around the globe. Chimeras, designer babies, and immortal cells all get thrown around from time to time but there is one issue of genetics that seems to have frequented conversation most of all in the past 20 years.



GMOs--or genetically modified organisms (specifically plants)--sound like something out of a comic book. Without digging too deep one can easily be misled to believe falsehoods surrounding the risk of consuming GMOs.

Some think the genes of the GMOs will cause their own genes to mutate. Others speculate that we don't know enough about GMOs to make any substantial conclusions about them. And some are scared off by the name alone.

The process of creating a GMO is fairly simple. The gene(s) that cause a desired trait, such as bruising in apples, are identified and isolated.

That gene is then copied thousands of times over, inserted into the type of plant from which it came, and then grown in labs to monitor growth and the appearance of the desired trait. The inserted genes do not stay in the plant for long and are not carried onto the succeeding generation.

What many don't understand is not only the innocence of GMOs but how widely they are used today. In 1994, the first genetically-modified plant was put on the market, dubbed the "FLAVR-SAVR tomato".

The bananas we consume in America are mostly lab-grown, our corn is super-sized, and our apples are resistant to bruising. We have seen these changes rise steadily over time but the consumer is occupied and such things go unnoticed.

“

**The bananas we consume in America are mostly lab-grown, our corn is super-sized, and our apples are resistant to bruising.**

”



Ignorance of what GMOs hurts our economy. If GMOs' purpose is to create produce that stays fresh longer, carries fewer diseases, can reproduce at a faster rate, etc., the abandonment of their sale would ignore all the benefits that GMOs can hold for the agricultural sector.



So if GMOs are just as safe and regulated as any other produce, why is there still so much fear?

Just like any other modern misconception, it is likely the case that fact is hard to find in the age of the internet. It is important as a consumer that one realizes what they are being sold and fed.



GMOs are just like any other crop and should be treated as such to promote the agritech field and cheaper, stronger food on the market.



# What's a GMO?

## A Genetically Modified Organism

"The gene(s) that cause a desired trait, such as bruising in apples, are identified and isolated. That gene is then copied thousands of times over, inserted into the type of plant from which it came, and then grown in labs to monitor growth and the appearance of the desired trait"

# So, are they safe to eat?



"GMOs are just like any other crop and should be treated as such to promote the agritech field and cheaper, stronger food on the market."



# Pet Spotlights

## Abraham Marsach

Most people have pets, some people don't. The kind of pet can vary. It could be a fish, a snake or a dog. I'm going to talk about one of my friends' pets and my own. I have a husky named tuna. He is energetic and lazy after a walk. He is 1 year old and loves the snow. He likes being under the cabinets under my tv since we got him. He likes people and the safe space in my house would be the kitchen since he's not allowed in there.

**Tuna**  
A Husky



My friend has a dog and a cat! Their dog is very nice and kinda big and is near the cat, and the cat is small and likes to be inside in a blanket. Her cat is 4 years old and their cat is about 5 months old. If you would like to see your pets here please email me and I will be more than happy to talk about your pet!

**Cat**



**Tuna**

**Breed:** Husky  
**Age:** 1 year old

**About him:**  
Energetic  
Likes people!

**Cat**

**Breed:** unknown  
**Age:** 5 months

**About her:**  
Small  
Likes to cuddle in blankets



# Stock market update as of 11.04.2021

Michael Stagnone

DISCLAIMER: None of the following article is financial advice or the opinions of a financial advisor. This article is for informational and educational purposes only. All investments involve risk and past performance does not guarantee future results. I am invested in many of the mentioned securities.

## May-October Recap

Since last May, markets have been strong but relatively volatile. There was a mid-size correction in September following panic raised from a Chinese real-estate titan Evergrande's growing debt issues and the US's debate on whether or not to raise the debt ceiling. Markets recovered shortly after throughout October and have returned to all-time highs, following a debt ceiling agreement in the US and investor relief from the Evergrande issue.

The recent correction and rapid recovery show strong signs for a continued bull run from markets, as mid-size corrections (like the one seen in September) are healthy for markets.

The US will continue the debt ceiling debate this December, if it causes markets to dip again that may signal another buying opportunity, as it is incredibly unlikely for the US to default on its debt, though the fear of it can still affect markets.

Earnings season has now begun, and companies continue to impress. While the share prices have not all dramatically

increased, the earnings have generally been solid. These days, most companies like Facebook (\$FB), Tesla (\$TSLA) and Apple (\$AAPL) are all priced for perfection, and even above average earnings will not always cause share prices to rise.

The cryptocurrency markets also declined and recovered following a breakdown in Bitcoin's technical trading structure. However, that was only a part of the issue for cryptos; the Chinese government added regulations against Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

Furthermore, Elon Musk announced that Tesla would halt accepting Bitcoin payments. Overall, the crypto markets were due for a correction, and a "perfect storm" of bad news came all near the same time, causing Bitcoin's technical breakdown and price plummet. The crypto rebound came following Bitcoin's breakthrough at the \$42,000 mark, a key point of support and resistance<sup>1</sup>.

Now, most large-cap, quality cryptocurrencies are back near all-time highs. Unfortunately, many low quality, small-cap crypto currencies (such as safemoon or dogecoin) still trade well below their April/May highs, emphasizing the importance of long-term investing in assets with actual merit instead of buying whatever seems popular on Twitter.

Fidelity investments also issued a new youth account, for teens aged 13-17, providing those under 18 the opportunity to invest in financial markets held and controlled in their own name for the first time.

The Fidelity Youth Account offers debit cards and restricted trading. Restrictions include penny stocks, margin, derivatives trading, and investing in foreign companies, but youth investors still have a variety of investment products to choose from. These accounts, like all other Fidelity accounts, cannot trade crypto currencies.

### **A Rise from Automakers**

Recently, those in the automobile industry have seen a rapid move to the upside by multiple large names. Most noticeably, Tesla (\$TSLA) shares rose over the \$1,000 mark and now are over \$1,200 a piece<sup>2</sup>, bringing the company's valuation over 1 trillion.



The technology and automaker company has benefited from a massive order from car rental company Hertz (\$HTZZ) and favorable analyst ratings. Shares had been flat since February prior to the massive October run. Ford Motors (\$F) has also risen noticeably, with shares reaching their highest post-2000 level ever closing at \$19.42 Thursday, up nearly 50% since September.

The most impressive run comes from Lucid Group (\$LCID), the former SPAC Churchill Capital IV (\$CCIV). Following a selloff from previously restricted insiders, shares have doubled from its September lows. Lucid recently received praise from the EPA, opened a production facility, and confirmed the distribution of its model the "Dream Edition".

### **Market Forecast and What to Watch For**

With consistent markets and relatively low volatility, market strength will likely remain relatively high. Of course, certain major events could quickly tank markets, but with cases of covid becoming a more minor issue, the likelihood of another rapid crash occurring is fairly low. Still, investors should remain weary of increasing covid related restrictions and mandates, especially regarding hospitality-based companies.

Investors should also pay close attention to the Fed's plan regarding quantitative easing<sup>3</sup>, as the government will likely begin to role back some of the covid-era stimulus plans for markets. However, seen on Wednesday, Fed chairman Jerome Powell remains incredibly friendly towards markets and has maintained his stance against raising interest rates<sup>4</sup>.

Most importantly, investors should watch for inflation. The effect of inflation is often debated most investors, many find inflation of ~2% a year healthy.

Unfortunately, the recent inflation rates are over double that, and historically, high inflation has hurt the stock market. However, there are more factors in the market than inflation and with the incredible performances by large companies and market-friendly fed policies, there are plenty of reasons to be bullish on the market.



Overall, while inflation concerns are valid, the issue should not affect markets too severely unless the rate does not decline in coming years. It is also important to note that corrections due to recent inflation concerns already happened this month.

“  
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### **My Analysis**

I am highly bullish on the market overall. While there will be corrections along the way, I do not see enough evidence to support a major market crash. I don't fear inflation because most of the effects of inflation should be factored into the market by now, and I believe the inflation rate will drop in coming years.

With the economy recovering from the pandemic, demand has increased, so naturally the price of goods will increase with it. As the economy gradually returns to normal, I see inflation rates also returning to a more normal level as well. That said, I don't see right now as an incredible buying opportunity either, that came in September.

Even if you didn't profit financially from it, the September pullback serves as a lesson about when to buy: on fear. Fear in the market is followed by crashes, seen in the covid crash, Evergrande/debt ceiling correction, and many more. While not all crashes are worth buying, and sometimes the fear is warranted, overall buying fear has great rewards.

Investors may get this opportunity again in December depending on the US government's decision and effectiveness regarding the debt ceiling and the markets' reaction to it.

While the effect of stalled debt payments would hurt markets short term, the likelihood of the US defaulting on its debt is incredibly low, so for long term investors, a market dip resulting from those fears would be an ideal time to buy. For now, I am not actively buying.

### **My Picks**

While I am not actively buying, I have added to positions and purchased new ones. And its important to consider that I already have a developed portfolio, so I'm not sitting on much cash. New investors should not try to time the market on the companies they may be interested in, and while not necessarily a perfect time to buy, they should not be worried about buying right now.

Investing great Peter Lynch noted that because major pullbacks are rare investors should not attempt to time them and perfectly buy the dip: "more people have lost money waiting for corrections and anticipating corrections than in actual corrections".

### **Disney (\$DIS)**

Disney (\$DIS), value Disney is a "forever hold" company due to its ability to consistently identify and enter new markets and its already massive holdings. Disney has expanded their real-estate holdings (through parks, hotels, etc.) consistently and acquired more entertainment networks in recent years and shows no sign of stopping.

The new Disney+ streaming service also strengthens the company as they may be able to compete in a new market with large names like Netflix or Hulu. While the Dow Jones Industrial Average has increased over 6% in the last 6 months, Disney is down around 5%, for investors with little-to-no exposure to Disney, now is a time to gain exposure.

### Procure Space ETF (\$UFO)

This ETF invests at least 80% of its net assets in companies of the underlying index that receive at least 50% of their revenues or profits from space-related businesses. Over the last few years, the US government has shown an increased interest in space.

Defense spending has continued to rise with more money being spent on space exploration and with the growing threats from Russia and China, will not likely slow down. By purchasing an ETF following the space sector, investors can benefit from the trend without needing to manage individual space companies, as it is a complex sector.

### Visa Inc. (\$V)

Visa is a financial services company and the world's largest payment processor, with a massive operating and customer base. Visa also benefits from the network effect, meaning the more buyers use Visa the more likely sellers are to use it as well out of convenience.

The consistent decrease in cash use benefits Visa, as third world countries are now following the switch to electronic payments seen in wealthy countries. Visa's financials are outstanding, with great profitability, but its share price has not reflected that yet in the past 2 years, so it may be ready for a move to the upside.

## Michael's Stock Picks



<sup>1</sup>Technical trading terms; they refer to levels where assets have either found support and bounced back after hitting a certain level (support), or where the asset has reached and struggled to break through (resistance)

<sup>2</sup>At time of writing

<sup>3</sup>A pro-stock market policy where the Federal Reserve bank decreases interest rates, encouraging borrowing and making bonds grow less in value