



# Monthly Mustang



Mrs. McLamb's Class made heart pillows for patients at M.D. Anderson Hospital.



Students raised \$500 for the PTO from pledges to the Houston Texans Triathlon.

## MENDING HEARTS

BY VALENTINA MAYHLE AND TOBY YIP

3rd grade teacher, Ms. McLamb, a breast cancer survivor, talks with us about a special project her class does every year.

Q. What started the idea of your class making the pillows for women being treated for breast cancer?

A. *When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010, my daughter's girl scout troop made them for me.*

Q. How many years have you been doing this?

A. *Since 2010, my first year of teaching, when I was still in chemotherapy.*

Q. How many pillows have you made since you have been doing this?

A. *We have made over 200 pillows.*

Q. How much time does it take to prepare the materials?

A. *It takes about two days to buy the fabric and cut it for each student.*

Q. What are some common mistakes kids make?

A. *They play with the fluff instead of stitching and they rush.*

Q. Do you make one yourself?

A. *Yes, I make pillows for people I know that are diagnosed with breast cancer.*

Q. What is your favorite thing about your students making pillows for breast cancer awareness month?

A. *You learn that it's important to help people in need.*

Q. What do you want the patients at MD Anderson to feel once they get a pillow?

A. *I want them to feel comfort and love when they use the pillow.*

Q. Do you think the pillows bring joy to the breast cancer patients?

A. *It helps them be more comfortable after treatment.*

## HOUSTON TEXANS KIDS TRIATHLON

BY PRISHA SHIVANI

The kid's triathlon is a perfect way to get exercise! In April every year the Texas Children's Hospital, the Houston Texans and the YMCA sponsor the Houston Texans Kid's Triathlon. It encourages kids to have a positive lifestyle, by exercising every day, having a healthy diet, and making good choices.

From my experience, participating in the triathlon isn't a piece of cake. Almost everyday from March to the day of the triathlon, I practiced running and biking at the Colonial Park. Seniors, ages 11-15, have to swim 200 yards, bike 6 miles, and run 1 mile. For juniors, ages 5-10, its half the distance. On the day of the triathlon, it was very cold. The morning temperature was 40°F. Even with the chilly weather and freezing pool, I completed the entire event in 50 minutes about average for my age group.

As an added bonus, the school raised the \$500 for the PTO. I highly recommend participating in the event. You can help yourself and the school.



## MAYOR OF WEST U AND 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE PARENT, SUSAN SAMPLE BY YUTIA LI



Q. How long have you served as the mayor of West University Place?

A. This is my second term as mayor. I served two terms on the city council before that.

Q. Why did you want to be mayor?

A. When I saw something that needed fixing, I thought I could be the one to do it.

Q. What is your job besides mayor?

A. I am a lawyer.

Q. What do you do every day as a mayor?

A. I make sure the city runs smoothly, the residents' questions are taken care of, and I think about what to do to make the city a better place.

Q. What is your favorite thing about being the mayor?

A. I like being able to solve problems.

Q. What do you think is your biggest achievement so far as mayor?

A. One of our biggest achievements so far is setting up security cameras around the city, so it is good for the community.

Q. What do you think needs improvement in West U?

A. We need to improve the drainage in the south part of West U. A lot of houses there flooded during Harvey.

Q. Do you have any children?

A. Yes, Caroline and Thomas, and they are both six.

Q. Where do your children go to school?

A. West University Elementary, of course!

Q. Since you are a West U parent, what is your favorite thing about the school?

A. I like the friends and teachers.

Q. What career did you want to have when you were a child?

A. I wanted to be a mommy.

Q. Who is your inspiration and why?

A. My mom, because I learned the most from her. She taught me to work hard and stand up for what I believed in.

Q. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

A. I like to read by myself and with my kids and keep up with current events.

Q. Where did you grow up?

A. I grew up in Houston.

Q. What is your favorite thing in the whole wide world?

A. It's got to be my family. I spend more time with them than anyone else.

## FORMER WEST U STUDENT TALKS ABOUT LANIER

BY AMELIA KUSINSKI & LULU FLORES

Q: What grade are you in?

A: I am in 7th grade.

Q: What is your favorite thing about Lanier?

A: My favorite thing is being a member of the Lanier Dance Team.

Q: How old is Lanier?

A: It started in 1926.

Q: Why did you choose Lanier?

A: It has great academics and fun electives plus I had friends going there.

Q: Do you like Lanier?

A: Yes, I have a lot of friends there and there are good teachers.

Q: Does Lanier have a good arts program?

A: Yes, we have everything including theater, dance and art.

Q: Are there clubs at Lanier?

A: Yes, there are many after-school clubs such as Chess, Debate and Odyssey of the Mind.

Q: Do you do any sports at Lanier?



A: Yes. Most sports start at 7th grade. This year I did volleyball. We were undefeated and District Champs. I will play soccer in the spring.

Q: Is middle school easier or harder than you thought it would be?

A: I think West U prepared me well. I learned to have switch classes, use an agenda and keeping up with homework. The academics at Lanier can be challenging but I am ready for these challenges.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for our 5th Graders that may go to Lanier next year?

A: Don't be afraid to try new things and makes sure you have time management skills.

## ISABELLA CLARK, NEW TO WEST U

BY GRACE BADENHORST



Q. How do you like West U so far?

A. I really like the school. I love having ancillary classes! My favorite ancillary is Art.

Q. Which school did you go to before?

A. The Shlenker School.

Q. How is West U different than your old school?

A. My old school was a private school with only 2-3 classes per grade. I like that there are many kids to play with, not just a few.

Q. What is your favorite event at West U so far?

A. I loved Boo Bash! It was fun to volunteer. I liked dunking my teacher.

Q. Have you made a lot of new friends this year?

A. Yes! I have made a lot of friends. Everyone has been very kind to me.

Q. Who is your teacher?

A. Ms. Langston.

Q. Where were you born?

A. New York City.

Q. Do you have any siblings?

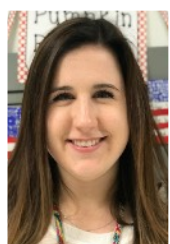
A. Yes, one sister. She is 4, so she does not attend West U yet.

Q. What is your favorite color?

A. Blue.

Q. What are some of your hobbies?

A. Gymnastics, dance, and volley-ball are my favorite things to do.



## GET TO KNOW MS. WESTERMAN BY LELA IZADDOOST AND DEVIKA KURUP

Q: How long have you been teaching at West U

A: 5 years.

Q: What is your favorite thing about teaching at West U?

A: All the students, families, and teachers.

Q: What is your favorite color

A: Turquoise.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: Broadmoor Elementary Lafayette, Louisiana .

Q: What are your favorite hobbies?

A: Dancing, teaching, and baking.

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## DEAR MIA BY MIA GOVERNALI

*Dear Mia,  
My little brother and sister keep bugging me whenever I try to do my homework. How can I get my homework done?  
Feeling Bugged!*

Dear Unhappy Scholar,

I suggest you work at the library, which is quiet, and you can check-out a cool book when you're done with your homework.

- Mia

*Dear Mia,*

*There is a math test coming-up and I'm really worried about it. I've been studying, but I just don't feel that I'm prepared enough. What can I do to become more confident?*

- Unprepared

Dear Unprepared,

You should try to study a bit more, and maybe do some XtraMath on your own. You could even ask your teacher for a worksheet, and then turn it in for extra credit. The more you practice, the more confident you'll be.

- Mia

*Dear Mia,*

*The spelling bee is coming-up and I get stage fright when I get up on stage. I'm worried that I'll get up on stage and embarrass myself. How can I help avoid that stage fright?*

- 'Fraidy-cat

Dear 'Fraidy-cat,

There's no way to avoid the sense of fear. Fear is natural and is something that all humans feel. You can find ways of weakening it however. You can practice spelling with your mother, father, sister or brother. You can practice with a friend. This will help to vanquish your stage fright.

- Mia

## SHAKE SHACK REVIEWED BY SAM FAULK

One great restaurant is the Shake Shack. It has a wide variety of burgers, fries, drinks and, of course, milkshakes. On the menu they have great burgers, such as the ShackBurger with Shack Sauce, and superior shakes, like the cookies and cream which I like the best. The shakes are spectacular! They have just the right amount of creaminess, although they are pretty expensive (\$5.29, to be exact), so save your allowance!

My mom had the chicken sandwich, and said it's not to be overlooked. They also have delicious, salty French fries.

One convenient thing about Shake Shack is that they have three locations in Houston. One at the Galleria, one at Minute Maid Park and one at Rice Village. The Rice location is the most convenient to West U. On a nice day, you could bike there and sit outside to eat. The Shake Shack has fantastic burgers, drinks, fries, and shakes. Go there and enjoy a great meal!



## ESCALANTE'S TEX MEX REVIEWED BY WILL DUDLEY

Are you a fan of Tex Mex? Then Escalante's is the place for you! On a recent visit with my family, I received attentive service and enjoyed delicious food in a fun atmosphere.

There are six locations in the Houston area and I have been to nearly all of them. This kid friendly restaurant offers many of your Tex Mex favorites; from tacos to enchiladas, every bite is amazing!

Houston is lucky to have so many Tex Mex restaurants to choose from, but, in my opinion, Escalante's is the best in town!



## FRESCO CAFE ITALIANO REVIEWED BY PENELOPE TSAO

Last night I ate at Fresco Cafe Italiano with my family. It is a small restaurant in a strip mall. The restaurant has two large beautiful paintings on the wall and a big dessert case by the cash register! The restaurant makes its own pasta, and you can choose which type of pasta you want to eat. I chose the tagliatelle noodles with marinara sauce. It was absolutely delicious.

The restaurant menu is full of classic Italian foods like lasagna, spaghetti and pizzas. They have a wonderful selection of desserts. I recommend the giant brownie! Fresco Cafe Italiano is open Sunday -Thursday 11am - 9pm; Fridays and Saturdays 11am - 10pm. The chef spent 40 years as a chef in Italy so I can guarantee that the food is wonderful. I highly recommend Fresco Cafe Italiano for everyone!

### Westerman continued from page 2

Q: What was your favorite subject as a kid?

A: Science.

Q: Why did you want to become a teacher?

A: I love working with kids.

Q: What is your favorite series?

A: The series of Unfortunate Events.

Q: Did you have any jobs before this?

A: I did two internships. One at HCB Health Advertising, and Kathy Caraway Elementary.

Q: Do you have any pets? If so, what kind and what are their names?

A: When I was a kid I had two cats named Kitty and Stevie.



## HOW TO MAKE FAKE SNOW BY MEGAN BERRY

Fake snow is one of my favorite things to make after school in my free time. It is fun to create your own snow since we don't usually get to have snow in Houston!

To make fake snow, you need a bowl, a spatula, baking soda, and conditioner. Mix 2½

cups of baking soda with a ½ cup of white hair conditioner. Once it has formed, you can start playing with it. I recommend you do this outside, because it is really messy. I hope you enjoy making this as much as I do!

## MAKE CHOICES GOOD FOR THE EARTH BY MADELINE TEJTEL

Everybody loves to have the best birthday ever right? Well next time it is your birthday don't have balloons. When released, they are harm animals and add to litter. For party favors you might give out homemade sweets or coupons instead of plastic wrapped games or goodies. Have you ever thought about how much plastic you and your family use a day?

How much plastic do you usually use a day? The U.S. uses a lot of plastic and we need to help the U.S. stop using so much plastic. The planet gets very polluted when a lot of people use plastic and dump it in the trash.

You and your family or friends might go to a restaurant where they only have plastic straws. Ask for no straw and recommend that they use metal, paper, or cardboard straws. People use about five hundred million straws a day. Think

about the difference it would make if you took away four or five straws! Your favorite ice cream shop might use plastic spoons. You could recommend they use metal, compostable, or even edible spoons!

Next time you go shopping for clothes, you could try to find clothes made without pesticides. Pesticides are things that can kill animals like bees that are eco-friendly.

Do you like tuna fish? If so, next time you get tuna fish make sure it is labeled "Dolphin Safe."

The Earth needs everyone everywhere to help and that includes you! Don't forget to recycle!



## ARE VIDEO GAMES GOOD FOR YOU? BY SHIV KHERA

Video games are fun, but how good are they for you? I took a survey of my fellow students from Ms. Brady's homeroom class. Here is what I found:

Out of a total of 31 students surveyed, I found that the majority of students do play video games. Less than half of the students feel that they spend too much time playing video games. Less than half play video games during the week, and the majority believe that video games do take time away from sleeping, studying and other activities.

After doing research on-line, I've learned that there are both positive and negative effects to playing video games. According to *Kidsworldfun.com*:

### Positive effects:

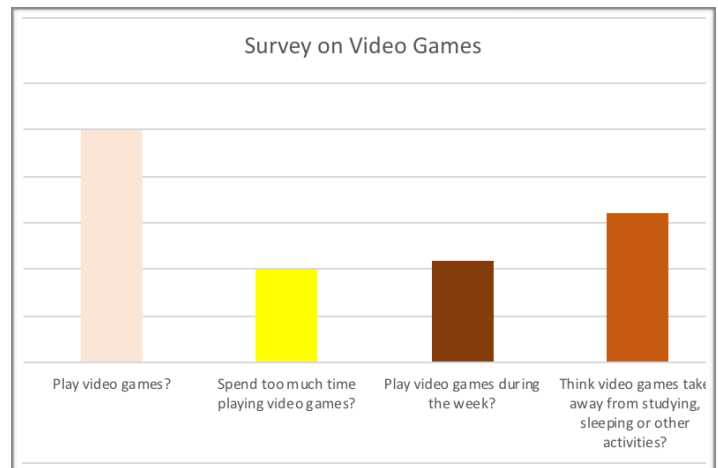
- Improve problem solving and logic.
- Develop skills such as typing, building, survival skills, and teamwork. One example of a video game that develops these skills is Fortnite.
- Improve motor skills and hand eye coordination. In fact, some video games have been created for surgeons in training to improve their surgical skills.

### Negative effects:

- The greatest risk is addiction which can lead to neglecting homework and a lack of eating, sleeping, and exercising properly.

- May lead to violent behavior if playing certain video games too much.
- Can lead to isolation and lack of social interactions. This can happen when choosing to play video games over other social activities with family and friends.

Based on a survey of my homeroom, it seems that most kids in my class play video games, but most seem to know their limits. Playing video games can become a problem if they



## SPIRIT HUNTERS BY ELLEN OH REVIEWED BY EVELYN PARK



Are you interested in spooky stories? If you are, you should read this Spirit Hunters by Ellen Oh! A girl named Harper just moved to Washington State. When she first saw her new home, she was surprised and freaked out! The home was all crooked and rigid, and looked like nobody had lived there for years. Can you imagine?

The next day Harper met a girl who looked about her age in the neighborhood. They became friends. Her friend

said that Harper's house is haunted and ghosts may have lived there. When Harper went back to her home after the play date, her brother Michael was acting weird. He was usually a good-mannered, sweet boy, but that day...

This book is a very ghostly, frightening, and terrifying story. Do you think Harper will be able to find the ghost? Read Spirit Hunters to find out!

## THE SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL REVIEWED BY AMELIA NUCKLES

When best friends Sophie and Agatha Fall into the School for Good and Evil, literally, they must try to find a way to escape. But when one prince comes between them they must battle through their fairy tale to escape without one of them dying. Sophie wants her prince and happily

ever after and Agatha just wants to go home. Will the two girls escape or fall into the jaws of a dangerous beast that cannot be escaped? To find out read The School for Good and Evil.



## SPIRIT ANIMALS WILD BORN BY BRANDON MULL REVIEWED BY SACHIN



Four children named Connor, Rollan, Meilin and Abeke go on an adventure to get a talisman from a great beast. They summon great beasts to stop a dark side and to save Erdas, a magical land. The animals they summon are a wolf, panda, falcon, and a jaguar.

This book is a great, action-packed, adventurous series and there is a different series related to it called Spirit Animals Tales of the Fallen Beasts. If you enjoy fantasy books, I'm sure you will love this book and the others in the series.

## HELLO, UNIVERSE REVIEWED BY VALENTINA MAYHLE

*This book is about me, Virgil, a boy who everyone thought was super weak and shy. Then one day I got stuck in some terrible trouble, but I pulled myself out of it by my own strength, and people started to view me in a whole new light.*

*Hey "Turtle," nobody wants to hear what sad little thing happened to you. This book is about me, Chet, chasing a snake to try and catch it with my bare hands. You got in the way, so I just did what I had to do, to get you out of my face.*

*Sorry, but the book is really about me, Kaori. Trust me, I know. I am a psychic. One day, a client of mine didn't show up to his appointment (I knew he wouldn't!), so I led a search party for him and of course saved him.*

*Actually, if I really had to say, I think this book is about me, Valencia, a kind but clever girl who tricked her way out of the house one day and just so happened to see some clues that no one else did, making a great rescue of a great friend.*

Now that you've heard all the main characters' side of the story, it is time for mine, Valentina Mayhle's. HELLO, UNIVERSE by Erin Entrada Kelly is an awesome book that, yes, has a well, a psychic, a snake, and a friendly heroine. But there are as many ways to interpret it as there are characters and readers. I hope you take my suggestion, pick it up, and give it your own meaning!



## THE STORY OF SANTA CLAUS BY RAQUEL ECHEVARRIA



Have you ever wondered about Santa Claus? Most people think that Santa Claus is a magical creature that gives out gifts on Christmas, but the real story begins with St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was born in the third century in a village called Patara. (Patara was a Greek place back then and now is on the Southern coast of Turkey.) He was from a very wealthy Christian family. When Nicholas was very young, his parents died. Following Jesus's words that he had been taught, he sold what he owned and gave the money to the poor. Nicholas used his entire inheritance to help the sick, needy, and suffering. He decided to dedicate his life to serving God and became the Bishop of Myra. He became known throughout the land for his generosity and kindness.

The wicked Roman Emperor, Diocletian, killed many Christians. Bishop Nicholas was tormented because of his faith and was soon exiled and later in-prisoned. Bishop Nicholas died on December 6, 343 in Myra. "His relics in Bari are said to exude a miraculous watery substance known as "manna" or "myrrh", which some members of the faithful regard as possessing supernatural powers." - Wikipedia

A story tells of a poor man with three daughters. Back then, the daughter's father would have to offer a dowry, or money for them to be married. The bigger the dowry, the better chance of the daughter getting a good husband. Since the father had no money to give, his daughters were destined to be sold off into slavery. Secretly, on three occasions, a bag of gold appeared in front of the house. Those gifts were from St. Nicholas. He is now well known as Santa Claus because of his kindness of giving!



# MY GRANDPA, RETIRED LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM ASSELIN BY ZOE VALEGA

Q: Grandpa, why did you join the military?

A: When I was 18 years old, I enlisted in the Air Force because I wanted to fly jets. However, the Air Force did not let me fly jets. When my time was up with the Air Force I enlisted in the Army and became a helicopter pilot.

Q: How long were you in the military?

A: I was in the military for twenty nine years. Four years in the Air Force and twenty five years in the Army.

Q: Did you travel a lot?

A: I did some traveling, from Hawaii to France.

Q: What are some of the things you learned when you were in the army?

A: I learned how to fly an air ambulance so that I could help injured soldiers, self-defense and hand-to-hand combat.

Q: What is a proud moment for you?

A: When I was in Vietnam, I was able to rescue two air men that would have burned to death in their plane.

Q: What was one very scary moment for you?

A: While in Vietnam, one of the enemy soldiers shot a rocket propelled grenade through the tail of the helicopter that I was flying. I had to struggle to fly the

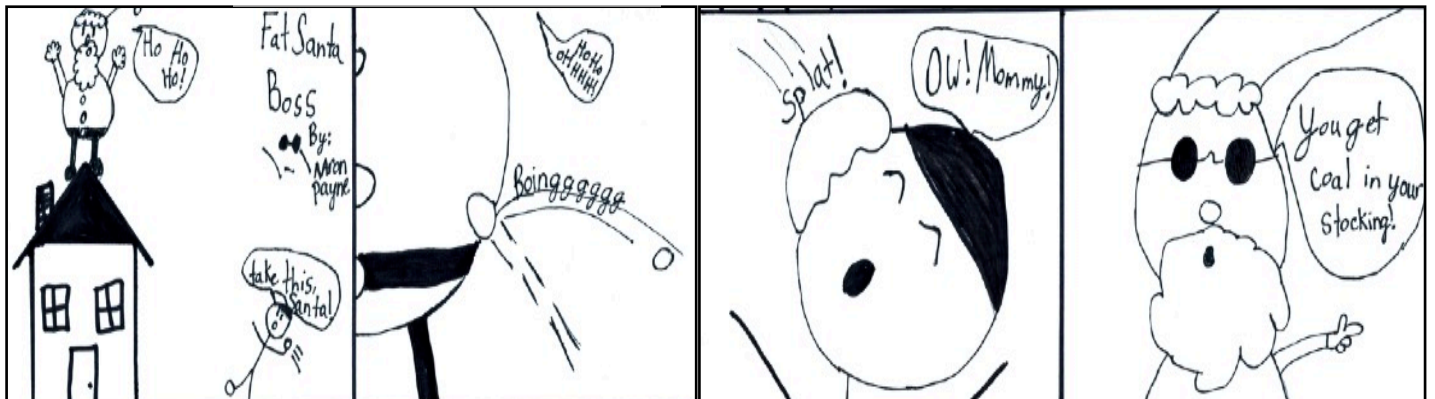
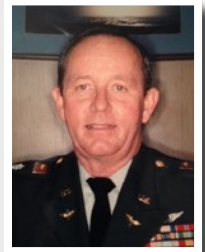
injured soldiers to the MASH hospital even though my helicopter was a badly damaged and the enemy soldiers continued to shoot at us from the ground. Thankfully, we made it.

Q: What did you do in tough situations?

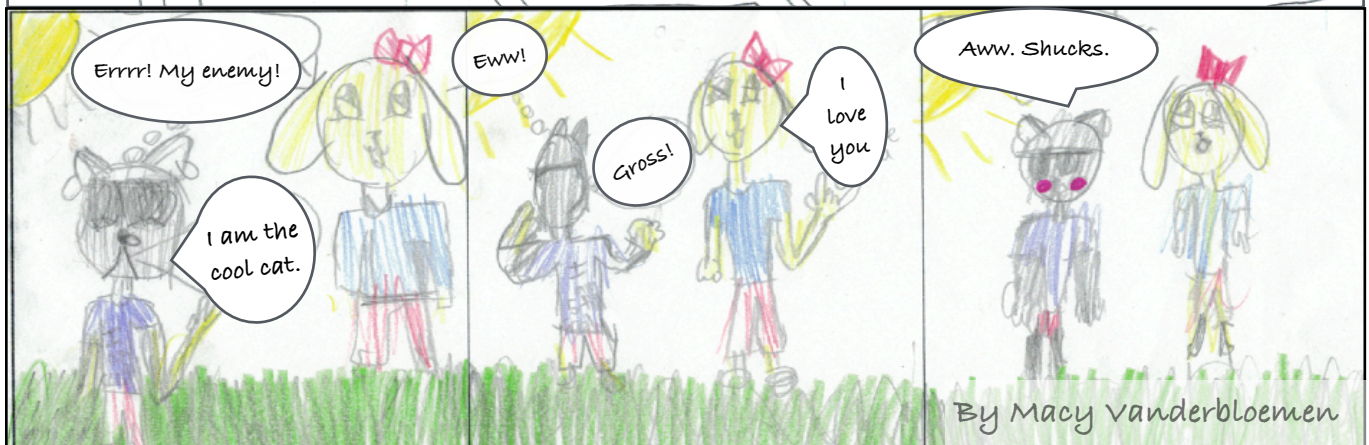
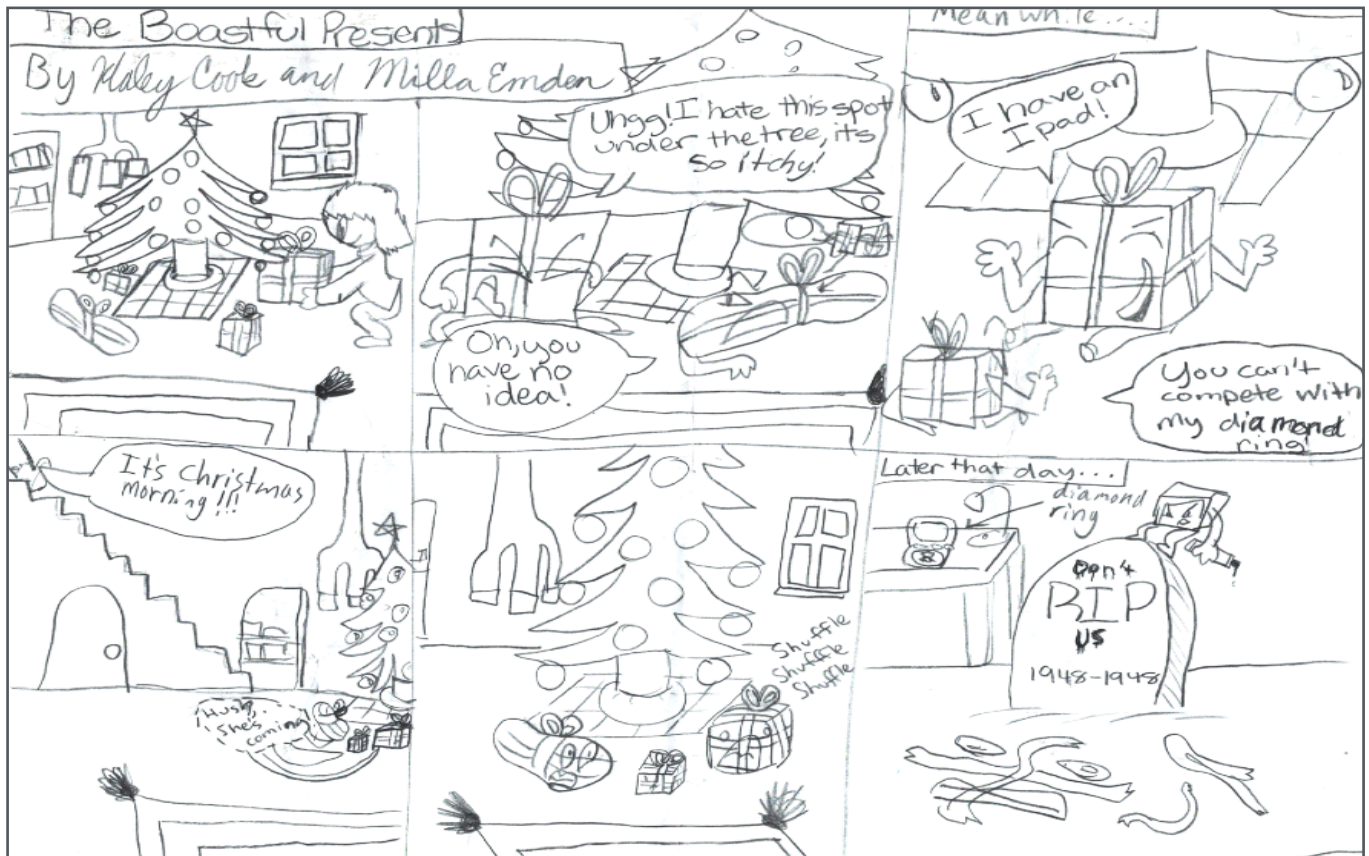
A: Prayed.

Q: What did you love most about your time in the military?

A: Flying.



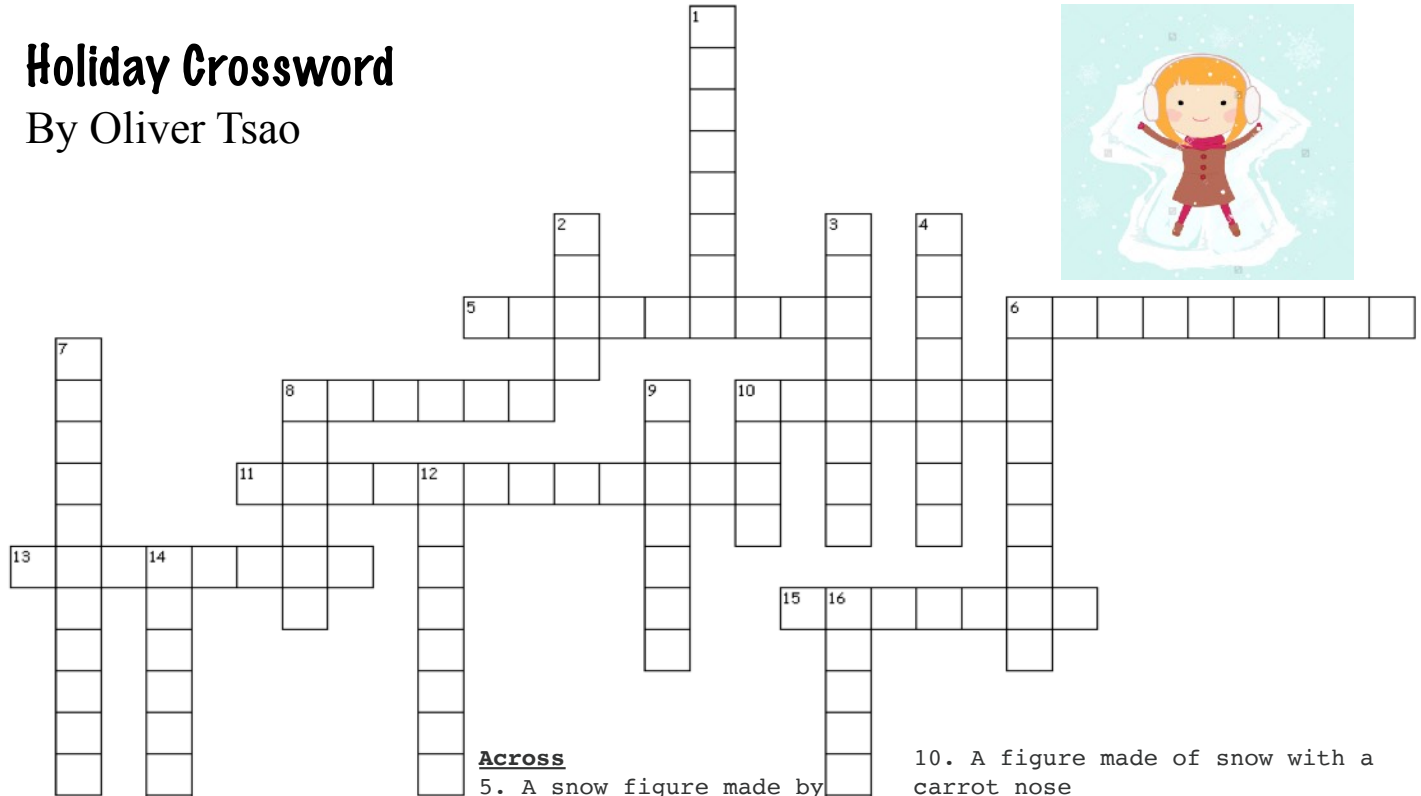
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# Holiday Crossword

By Oliver Tsao



## Across

5. A snow figure made by flapping arms and legs  
6. A December holiday celebrated by Christians  
8. A group of your relatives living together

10. A figure made of snow with a carrot nose  
11. A warm cocoa drink  
13. Wrapped gifts given on a special occasion  
15. Fuzzy items that keep your hands warm  
17. A downhill winter sport

## Down

1. A break from school to go somewhere fun  
2. Frozen precipitation that is fun to play in  
3. The red nosed reindeer  
4. The last month of the year  
6. A minty red and white striped treat  
7. A ginger and molasses treat shaped as a boy

8. A famous snowman that comes to life  
9. A 7-day celebration of the harvest of first fruits  
10. Used to ride down hills of snow  
12. An eight-day Jewish holiday  
14. A battle where snow spheres are thrown  
16. A thin rod of ice hanging down from the eaves

