

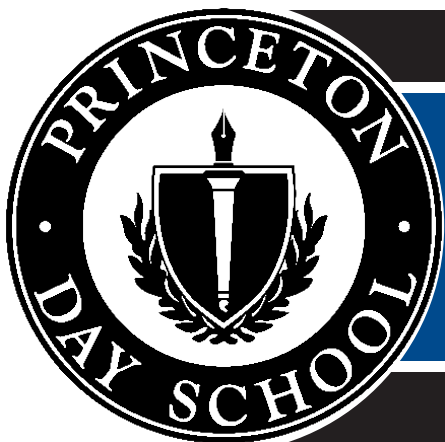
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# the Spokesman

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## PDS Seniors Shine at REx Night

SKYE HARRIS, XI  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Monday, November 11th, former Research Experience, or REx, seniors joined current REx juniors, faculty, and family to kick off PDS’s second annual REx night. Attendees gathered in McAneny Theater to hear about the work of the seven current seniors who enrolled in the program last year—Maddie Izzard, Fechi Inyama, Luigi Sorano, Sachin Patel, Alex DiNovi, Andrew Ciccarone, and Krista Caasi—and meet the 14 juniors currently taking the course. REx was created in 2017 by science faculty, including former Biology teacher Carrie Norin and Department Chair of Science Jason Park, and guides scientifically-inclined students into the world of research and lab work.

At the beginning of the academic year, REx students find professional labs that align with their interests and learn important scientific practices: annotating scientific journals, using online research databases such as PubMed, designing independent experiments, and using lab equipment. The course

concludes with a 6-8 week unpaid summer internship.

After attendees heard a short summary of the REx program, Inyama spoke of her personal experience this past summer at her internship with Dr. John Reinfelder at Rutgers University. Addressing an audience of over 100 PDS community members, Inyama shared a humorous outtake of her commute to Rutgers every day but also emphasized the importance of both her summer internship and the REx program.

The seniors then left the theater and prepared for the poster gallery walk in which they presented their summer work to the attendees while enjoying refreshments and banter. Guests then moved on to the Campus Center for dinner and a REx panel

**It was very impressive and inspiring to see the advanced research that high school students can contribute to. I’m very excited to see what this year’s group of REx students will accomplish”**

in which seniors answered questions from parents and students about their experiences in the program with humor and honesty.

Some of the highlighted internships from the summer of 2019 include the genomics of neuroblastoma at Harvard University, fatigue performance on steel highway bridges at Lehigh University, the effects of climate change on sea-ice at Princeton University, and the ecology of sharks at the University of Rhode Island. Izzard, who interned at the University of

Rhode Island, shares, “REx was a really great experience and it prepared me for my internship over the summer, and the hands-on experience was something that I wouldn’t have been able to do anywhere else.”

The current REx juniors also benefited from the presentations from past REx students. Current REx junior Jasmine Maggio shares, “It was interesting seeing last year’s projects, and it got me excited for my internship this summer.” Junior Ben Bigdelle agreed with this sentiment,

saying “It was very impressive and inspiring to see the advanced research that high school students can contribute to. I’m very excited to see what this year’s group of REx students will accomplish.”

Overall, REx night is a wonderful event that allows hardworking REx students to share the research they contributed to over the summer in a meaningful and inspiring manner. It’s clear that the newly founded program continues to be a success in the STEAM initiative at PDS.



Courtesy of Nancy Erikson

## London Hit by Tragic Terrorist Attack

WILL SEDGLEY, XI,  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On November 29, two people were killed in what police are calling a terrorist attack in London. Usman Khan murdered Cambridge University graduates Jack Merritt, 25, and Saskia Jones, 23, and wounded

three others using a large knife while wearing a hoax explosive vest. The attack happened around 2 pm near the iconic London Bridge and has raised many questions in the United Kingdom about their legal system.

Usman Khan was jailed in 2012 over his plan to bomb the London Stock Exchange.

Sentenced to 16 years in prison, he was released from jail in December 2018, less than halfway through his sentence. In response to the attack, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, criticized the decision for Khan to be released early, saying “I have long argued that it is a mistake to allow serious and

violent criminals to come out of prison early.” The Parole Board, designated with carrying out assessments on prisoners to determine if they are eligible for release, stated that they had never reviewed Khan’s case. Furthermore, on Sunday, the Ministry of Justice said it was starting an urgent

review on the conditions of releasing convicted terrorists from prison. A former head of the UK’s National Counter Terrorism Security Office said in a critical response to this attack, “We’re playing Russian roulette with people’s lives, letting convicted, known, radicalized jihadi,

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# Trump’s Impeachment Inquiry (cont.)

criminals walk about our streets.” Khan committed this horrific attack after attending an event for which he was invited to share his experiences as someone who was reformed by their time in prison. What will happen to terrorism laws in the UK as a result of this attack remains to be seen, but it is clear that the situation has prompted a larger debate over the sentencing of those convicted for committing or planning terrorist attacks.

Bystanders did intervene in an effort to stop the attacker, displaying the good in humanity in such a tragic time. Several bystanders, including a man holding a fire extinguisher, stormed Khan in an attempt to take him down. In fact, an off-duty transport police officer, dressed in a suit and tie, was the man to take Khan down. This heroic intervention from bystanders has prompted widespread praise from across the UK, including the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who stated, “What’s remarkable about the images we’ve seen, is the breathtaking heroism of members of the public who literally ran toward danger, not knowing what confronted them.” The courage of these bystanders was a sorely needed positive aspect of this horrific event. □

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Courtesy of Washington Post



Courtesy of the New Yorker



Courtesy of NBC News



LiUNA 77 Union Workers Strike at PDS (cont.)

parents of the REx students. It was also interesting to see what it would be like for us a year from now.”

Current REx junior Jasmine Maggio shares, “It was interesting seeing last year’s projects, and it got me excited for my internship this summer.”

Overall, REx night is a wonderful event that allows hardworking REx students to share the research they contributed to over the summer in a meaningful and inspiring manner. It’s clear that the newly founded program continues to be a success in the STEAM initiative at PDS.

told us we couldn’t strike the next morning because a workers’ union was protesting at that very spot. We didn’t want our student strike to be associated with the union strike against PDS,” she added. Furthermore, as a private school, PDS actively recruits students for admission. By receiving public shame, PDS may appear less desirable to prospective applicants, especially when compared to other local schools who may not have the same bad press. From a purely visual point of view, the protest also makes the school look unwelcoming; when driving by PDS for the first time, the rats and


“The right to protest and the right to free speech is something we cherish at PDS. I certainly do respect the right of the union to make itself heard.

large coffin are unlikely to leave the best impression on visitors.

Besides the hostile aesthetics, the protest also led to a sense of uneasiness among students. Since the union’s first protest, Mr. Stellato has sent out various emails and spoken to the Upper School about this issue, encouraging people to stay away from the protest site and urging parents to drop off young kids at the other entrances of the school. “One thing that concerned me was the coffin,” he said, “We have little kids here, and that may have been upsetting to some.” Indeed, many lower schoolers were both confused and amused by the sight. When asked for her thoughts on the protest, Kindergarten student Addison Mazzarisi said, “The rats and coffin were scary at first. Then I looked at them as Halloween decorations and thought they were funny.”



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Courtesy of Aaliyah Sayed

Celebrating PDS’ 11th Annual Harvest Festival

CHLOE KNERR, X  
STAFF WRITER

On October 19, PDS held the 11th annual Harvest Festival in the garden. A celebration of student artists, the festival took place on a Saturday afternoon. Upper School English Teacher and Sustainability Coordinator Liz Cutler, who was in charge of organizing the event, said that a huge amount of planning went into perfecting the “logistics, advertising, registering, menu making, food ordering, and cooking.” After all the hard work put into the Harvest Festival, everyone involved loved to see how many members of the PDS community attended.

Pitch Please (the all-girl a cappella group), Y-Chromotones (the all-boy a cappella group), and Madrigals (the mixed a cappella group) were all present at the festival. With solo performances by sophomore Sophie Zhang, freshman Joaquin Rodriguez, and freshman Laurel Masciantonio, the a

cappella groups were only one facet of PDS arts included in the Harvest Festival; Upper School art teacher Jerry Hirniak’s class designed and created banners for the event as well. Ms. Cutler claimed that she “especially loved” these two aspects of the festival.

The Upper School Environmental Action Club played a big role in organizing and helping with the event, and, along with the Upper School Garden Apprentices, helped prepare food straight from the PDS garden and other local farms. There was a crepe station and many homemade dishes that used PDS

“The PDS community puts its best foot forward in creating a community that celebrates sustainability and environmental benefits in our area.

vegetables and herbs as ingredients. Being able to use locally sourced food is important as it diminishes the need for excess energy used in transporting food from other states or even countries. This is just one part of the effort PDS puts into helping our environment.

A handful of student activists presented on the current status of our environment to raise awareness for relevant issues we are facing in the world today. While there is still room for improvement in many places, PDS puts its best foot forward in creating a community that celebrates sustainability and environmental benefits in our area. Senior Audrey Liang, a member of EnAct, weighed in on the importance of the Harvest Festival, stating that it “educates people about environmental issues and shows what we as a school are doing to solve them.” Events like the Harvest Festival raise awareness for the importance of sustainability and environmental-stewardship, and set a model for the eco-friendly future of both the school and our planet. □



Courtesy of PDS



## Ukraine Investigates Joe Biden

DEVAN SAKARIA IX, AND KARAN SHAH, IX  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

In 2014, Hunter Biden, the son of former Vice President Joseph Biden, joined the board of a Ukraine based natural gas company by the name of Burisma Holdings. At the time when Hunter Biden joined the board, Burisma Holdings was under investigation by the Ukrainian government for corporate corruption. Suspicions in the U.S. arose when a video was published by an anonymous source showing Joseph Biden, who was Vice President at the time, meeting with the president of Ukraine about firing a major prosecutor on the Burisma case. Gossip spread throughout Washington, D.C.: Vice President Biden was trying to protect his son from the investigation. President Donald Trump and Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York and now Trump's personal lawyer, accused Biden of using his Vice-Presidential powers and relations to help Burisma and his son avoid a criminal investigation. That case ended inconclusively within that same year. And in Q1 of 2019, Hunter Biden stepped down from the board of Burisma Holdings.

In the past few months, the Burisma incident resurfaced when it was mentioned by Trump, according to an anonymous whistleblower in Washington, D.C. This whistleblower complaint claims that Trump, while on a call with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, asked for the Ukrainian government to open an investigation against the Bidens in exchange for a favor. The CNN transcript of the call shows that there was

talk from Ukraine about buying American-made weapons, however, there is no direct link between the investigation and the arms sale. Trump, at a White House press conference, made it very clear that there was absolutely no discussion of a "quid pro quo," a favor from one country in exchange for a favor from the other. This past June, Trump withheld almost 400 million in aid to Ukraine, contingent on the Ukrainian government's promise to investigate the corruption allegations against the Bidens. On the phone call, Trump asked Zelensky to publicly state Ukraine was going to investigate the Bidens. There are multiple pieces of evidence that can be tied to Trump using this investigation for political gain by creating a scandal surrounding Joseph Biden, who is the top-polling Democratic candidate for the 2020 presidential election. According to a CNN transcript of the phone call, Trump said, "I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time. Much more than the European countries are doing and they should be helping you more than they are." Later, on September 22, Trump told reporters about his conversation with Zelensky, "It was largely the fact that we don't want our people, like Vice President Biden and his son, creating corruption already in Ukraine. And Ukraine – Ukraine has got a lot of problems." Over the next couple days, Trump shifted his description of why he withheld funding to Ukraine in the first place. At first, he explained that not enough was being done to fight corruption, but later he said that it was because the European nations should contribute more.

This information can be interpreted in

**"I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time. Much more than the European countries are doing and they should be helping you more than they are."**

several different ways, but many people believe Trump is doing this for political benefit. Biden has already dropped in the polls and Elizabeth Warren, the second-place Democratic candidate, has gained significant polling points. As more information comes out, public opinion may change, but for now, things seem to be going south for the Bidens. □



Courtesy of ABC News

## Launching Out of Gender Barriers: NASA's First All-Female Spacewalk

TIMOTHY FONG, X  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On Friday, October 18, NASA launched the first all-female spacewalk, lasting a total of seven hours and seventeen minutes. The two astronauts, Christina Koch and Jessica Meir, were tasked with going outside the International Space Station to replace a power controller, making them the 14th and 15th woman to do a space walk. Koch had one of the rarest opportunities in space, which was to ride the robotic arm in order to transport the battery to the correct location, and she regards the experience as "an incredible privilege." Meir insists that it really wasn't that big of a deal, that "this is really just us doing our jobs." Nevertheless, this space-walk made history, and is a great inspiration for aspiring young astronauts.

The space walk was originally planned for

**"[Koch] regards the experience as 'an incredible privilege.' Meir insists that it really wasn't that big of a deal, that 'this is really just us doing our jobs.'"**

March, but was postponed due to a shortage of spacesuits at NASA. Spacesuits are incredibly intricate; they must be tailor-made to the body of the wearer in order for the suit to be functional and safe. In this case, NASA did not have two medium sized torso parts, so the space suits were deemed unsafe to wear. The lack of female spacesuits in the NASA program was controversial, emphasizing the challenges women often face when participating in jobs that are traditionally centered around men.

President Donald Trump managed to talk to the two astronauts live at the time of the space walk, saying that it was a great first step in going to the moon, Mars, and beyond. Trump was accompanied by Vice President Mike Pence, NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine, and the President's daughter Ivanka Trump. During the five minute call, Trump said that Koch and Meir were the first women to go on a space walk outside the International Space Station, a statement which Dr. Meir corrected.

The controversy surrounding the spacesuits that preceded this space walk is an important reminder to NASA about the quality and legacy of the suits, which were designed 40 years ago. NASA is currently redesigning their space suits for the Artemis program, and some of the new features include a better communication system and greater flexibility. The goal of the Artemis Program is to send a man and woman to the moon by 2024 as a training ground for the ultimate goal: going to Mars. □



Courtesy of EarthSky



Courtesy of NASA