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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

Fall 2025, Issue 2 vanguard.blog.brooklyn.edu @thebcvanguard Thursday, September 18th

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FDA Approves New Bi-Annual PrEP Drug



A vial of Yaz./*Courtesy of Gilead Sciences*

By Giovanni Ravalli
Staff Writer

On June 18, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) regimen developed by Gilead Sciences.

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). Once infected, the virus invades the CD4 T-cells, which are responsible for fighting disease and pathogens. Without treatment, the virus weakens the body’s immune system, making it harder to fight off illness and opportunistic infections.

“Yeztugo could be the transformative PrEP option we’ve been waiting for—offering the potential to boost PrEP uptake and persistence and adding a powerful new tool in our mission to end the HIV epidemic,” said Carlos del Rio, MD, Distinguished Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Emory University School of Medicine and Co-Director of the Emory Center for AIDS Research in Atlanta. “A twice-yearly injection could greatly address key barriers like adherence.”

PrEP is a drug regimen aimed at

preventing HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection. First introduced and marketed to the LGBTQ+ community in 2012, Truvada, the first ever PrEP drug, made waves in the fight against HIV. With a 99.9% success rate, there was finally a drug that protects against HIV. PrEP evolved over the years from Truvada to Descovy, both once daily pills, to a bi-monthly injection named Yeztugo.

PrEP medications, including Yeztugo, prevent HIV transmission by blocking the virus’s ability to make copies of itself if exposure occurs. Until now, PrEP has traditionally been a once daily regimen in order to be effective. Skipped doses lessens its effectiveness. Yeztugo is a game-changer for those who have trouble remembering to take a daily pill.

“The opportunity for particularly LGBT people to have a tool that they can take and use twice a year vs every single day to help eliminate their chances of getting HIV is incredible,” said Joe Scarpetta, Programming Assistant at the BC LGBTQ+ Resource Center.

Recent data from the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that 36% of those eligible for PrEP are already on it. This data indicates lower uptake among women, people of color, and heterosexual populations compared to white gay/bisexual men. On campus, only two students have inquired about PrEP at the BC Health Clinic since Fall 2024.

“I have limited experience with patients on PrEP here,” said Le-Jeune Sealy-Horsford, DNP, Director and Nurse Practitioner in the BC Health Clinic. “When I did work in an urgent care center, I did prescribe it a lot more.”

According to Gilead Sciences, barriers including adherence challenges, stigma, and low awareness of existing PrEP options—by both healthcare providers and consumers—contribute to this low uptake of PrEP across multiple populations.

“Yeztugo is one of the most important scientific breakthroughs of our time and offers a very real opportunity to help end the HIV epidemic,” said Daniel O’Day, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Gilead Sciences.

The LGBTQ+ community would be the ones who

are inquiring the most; however, CDC data shows that all populations are not yet using PrEP at rates that could end transmission of the virus. Public health experts emphasize that awareness campaigns to reach heterosexual populations, rural communities, and women is crucial. Cost and access also play a role. While most insurance plans cover PrEP, patients without coverage may face barriers to affording it.

“This benefits everyone,” said Scarpetta. “Anyone who is sexually active I think should be on PrEP. HIV is not something that is isolated to one community.”

The BC Health Clinic offers a free one time STI screening to students 26 years old and younger. This includes screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia through the urine, syphilis through the blood, and rapid HIV testing. For PrEP, the process consists of a consultation, blood work to confirm HIV negative status, STI screening, and a comprehensive metabolic panel to check liver and kidney function. Results come back in a few days, at which point a prescription is forwarded to the patient’s preferred pharmacy. This includes ongoing treatment with refills.

“Any questions or concerns they’re more than welcome to schedule an appointment at the clinic. We’re open Monday through Thursday,” said Sealey-Horsford, DNP. “You could either walk in or schedule an appointment via Navigate360.”

Students interested in HIV testing, STI screening, and PrEP are encouraged to visit the BC Health Clinic located at 114 Roosevelt Hall.

Conservative Activist Charlie Kirk Dead at 31 After University Shooting

By Victoria Keraj
News Editor

Charlie Kirk, a conservative activist and media personality, was fatally shot while holding a debate event at Utah Valley University on Sept. 10.

Kirk founded Turning Point U.S.A., an organization that aims to educate and promote Conservative values and policy initiatives such as patriotism and limited government.

Kirk was well known for hosting a series of “Prove Me Wrong” debates at colleges where students were able to debate with Kirk on political talking points and attempt to refute his views.

Kirk was answering a question on the number of mass shootings that had occurred in the last 10 years right before he was shot.

In a press conference posted by The Associated Press, announcing the arrest of the suspect, Utah Governor Spencer Cox stated that Kirk’s being killed while expressing political stances “makes it more difficult for people to feel like they can share their

ideas.”

On the same day Kirk was shot, a separate shooting case took place at a high school in Colorado. Two injured students were taken to the hospital along with the shooter, who later died from self-inflicted gun wounds, according to The Denver Post. It was also reported that officials stated he’d been “radicalized by some extreme network.”

The day following Kirk’s death, multiple historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) received threat calls. Schools went into lockdown, and classes were cancelled according to The Associated Press. The article cites Don Beeler, a chief executive of TDR technology solutions, as saying “Swatting incidents typically increase after violent events, putting schools on edge.”

After Kirk’s death, politicians on both sides of the political aisle condemned the violence and offered condolences. Politico quoted NYC Mayoral Democratic candidate Zohran Mamdani as saying “It cannot be a question of political agreement or alignment that

allows us to mourn.”

Trump issued a directive that flags be held at half-mast and announced he would posthumously honor Kirk with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Trump has also expressed his sentiment that he hopes the culprit receives the death penalty.

People have experienced backlash over social media posts that asserted their lack of sympathy towards Kirk’s death.

MSNBC political analyst Matthew Dowd was fired after making statements saying that he believed Kirk was targeted because of his rightwing rhetoric, according to The Guardian. He was quoted as saying, “You can’t stop with these sort of awful thoughts you have and then saying these awful words and then not expect awful actions to take place.”

On Sept. 11, photos were released of a suspect who was taken into custody that evening at 10 p.m. in Utah, stated FBI director Kash Patel at the press conference held Friday.

Tyler Robinson, the suspect, turned himself in after being



Charlie Kirk presenting at rally./Courtesy of Businesswire

urged to by his father, who recognized him in the photos released, reported CNN.

The 22-year-old Robinson was registered as an independent voter and was a part of the electrical apprenticeship program at Dixie Technical College, according to BBC News.

He will be charged on Tuesday, virtually from Utah County jail, where he is currently being held.

In response to the shooting, Republicans argued that the left’s rhetoric of making allusions to Hitler and Nazis when referring to Trump and his supporters is to blame.

Trump posted a video on Truth Social blaming “the radical left” for likening Kirk to Nazis and stated, “This kind of rhetoric is directly responsible for the terrorism that we’re seeing in our country today.”

According to Axios, while some Democratic speakers mentioned gun reform during an argument that broke out at the House of Representatives, Democrats are cautious to use the situation as a time to argue for gun laws.

Sweet Salutations: The LGBTQ+ Resource Center Hosts Second Annual Fruity Waffle Event

By Emily Nixon
Staff Writer

The Student Center’s second-floor halls were bustling with the chatter of students and wafting the smells of freshly baked waffles and fruit. The LGBTQ+ Resource Center held its second annual waffle event to welcome back returning students and meet new students on Sept. 9.

The idea for the event came from Bee Friedman, a college assistant for the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.

“90% of the idea came from the pun, which is, you know, gay people – fruity – fruity waffles,” said Friedman. “Waffles are cheap to make. They’re easy to make, and everyone likes them.”

The event employed one of the most well-known tactics to attract college students – free food, according to Cvent, a popular event organization website.

“It [the event] also brings people in because they wanna get food,” said Friedman. “So they come into the Center, and they get to see the Center, and then they know it exists.”

Looking back on last year’s turnout, Friedman learned to widen their goals.

“Turnout last year was huge, like way bigger than we expected, which is why we’re doing it again this year,” said

Friedman. “Last year, we had, I believe, 60 people RSVP, and then 160 showed up.”

Friedman continued to share their excitement, “This year, we had 90

and this is my brainchild. So, we’ll see [if it happens again]. That’s up to Kelly.”

Not only did the event bring awareness to the Center, but it also inspired people to return

Friedman.

The work the Center put into the event was not in vain, as students like Tamia Sharpe, a freshman majoring in Biology, were motivated

which are 12-2 p.m.

“I liked that 12:30 rush. I thought that was great,” said Friedman. “The Center was literally full to the brim with people. Everyone was chatting. People were dancing, taking pictures, and stuff. I think that was the highlight for sure.”

Friedman and the other volunteers were steadfast in their efforts to make sure the event ran smoothly.

“There was no break for a good thirty minutes of just serving,” said Friedman about the height of the event.

One of the few complaints from students about the event was the limited room for seating and hanging out; however, the event was held in the Center because the main focus of the event is to familiarize students with the Center itself, according to Friedman.

“The bigger room, we’ve considered. We [the LGBTQ+ Resource Center staff] threw it back and forth, but the point is to get people to know the Center. It’s an open house,” said Friedman. “So we gotta do it in the Center.”

At the end of the event, Friedman said one of the only things they’d have done differently was to buy more waffle mix.

“We should have bought more waffle mix,” said Friedman. “We got four boxes, which you thought would be plenty, but truly was not.”

Students interested in future events by the LGBTQ+ Resource Center can check out their Instagram: @lgbtqcenter_bc.



Bee Friedman and Heaven DeJesus make waffles for guests at the event./Emily Nixon

people to RSVP,” said Friedman. “So, we expect 190 to 200 people to show up.”

At the end of the event, Friedman was happy with the event turnout, but was uncertain of the event’s future as they are to graduate this semester, leaving the event’s fate up to Kelly Spivey, the Director of the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.

“I think it went incredible,” said Friedman. “I probably won’t be

to the Center, according to Friedman.

“There was definitely a lot of people whose first experience at the Center was at this event,” said Friedman. “I mean, I can think of, right now, off the top of my head, like five people who I first met at the waffle event.”

The event takes a lot of pre-planning and work to pull off, especially for the number of students they expect to come, according to Friedman.

“The physical set-up is the last step, so the real set-up is flying, getting the word out, social media stuff, and planning [...] All that stuff [getting ingredients]

did happen yesterday, and that was our entire day was spent getting this stuff set up,” said

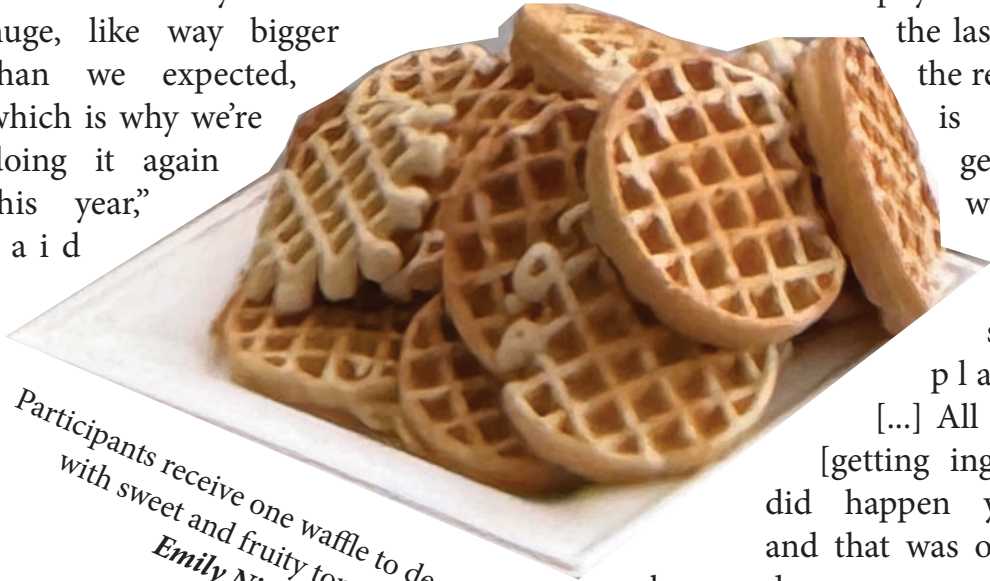
to come back to the Center for future events.

“I really liked it. The waffles are really cute. The decorations are really cute,” said Sharpe. “I want to get to know the group more. It seems friendly.”

While the event brought students into the Center, the atmosphere kept them there and drew their interest, according to Skye Schultz, a freshman majoring in film.

“The environment is very nice. The people are super nice,” said Schultz. “I wish I had been here earlier when all the people were here to get to know everybody, but [...] it’s just very inviting and warm [...] Everyone seems to be on the same wavelength.”

Friedman’s favorite moment of the event was the rush of students coming to the event during common hours,



Participants receive one waffle to decorate with sweet and fruity toppings./Emily Nixon

here next year,

BCPHAM Presents: A Day of Meal Prep

By T’Neil Gooden
Features Editor

Ingersoll 5129 was filled with student volunteers assembling to meal prep a variety of dishes for Brooklyn College (BC) students with BC’s Public Health and Medicine (PHAM) club on Sept. 9th. Students were greeted with hair nets, aprons, and gloves to begin their cooking journey for the community fridge located right beside the room.

“This event is important for BC students to know about because the NourishBC community fridge falls under a category of free resources that not many people know about,” said Natalie Wu, President of the BCPHAM. “It is important that individuals, whether students or BC

community members, come together for a good cause – feeding the campus.”

The room’s setup provided tables for students, with space to prepare and preserve different foods.

“I personally love to cook. I was able to cut the chicken that was being used for the recipe,

and at home, I have been practicing my knife skills, so it was a cool experience to put them into use outside of my kitchen at home,” said Karina Fernandez-Saito, a senior at BC.

Students not only helped to chop and clean produce, but they also had the chance to cook the food they had prepared for the fridge, which all students at BC can get food from.

“My favorite part of the event was getting to see the process of cooking during the meal prep, which I was not expecting,” said Proma Bhattacharjee, a senior at BC. “I was expecting to help with packaging snacks, but not actually getting to help in making food. So I thought this was very cool because it also helps you learn how to make recipes.”



Students prepping produce with Brooklyn College’s Public Health and Medicine (PHAM) club./T’Neil Gooden

The ingredients used were all sourced and used from within the BC community.

“Our ingredients for produce come from a variety of sources. This includes the campus’s very own food pantry located in the Student Center. We also receive generous donations brought by volunteers or ourselves,” Wu told The Vanguard.

Students used this event for both volunteer hours and a learning experience. Many students were hesitant but open to this meal prepping event because it exposed a new level of understanding cuisines.

“I think every student would have a great time volunteering at the kitchen. Even if they don’t like to cook, it’s a great time to learn how to operate in a kitchen alongside helpful people, while also positively contributing to the community at Brooklyn College,” Fernandez-Saito told The Vanguard.

The community fridge will

be stocked weekly with meals created for students and by students.

“Running an initiative that includes feeding the campus is one thing, but ultimately, the community fridge allows individuals to connect with one another on what we all love — food. I enjoy having newcomers and friends join us in the food lab. Everyone is always meeting someone new, and it’s a guaranteed good time,” said Wu.

The meal prep event built community and connection between students and the faculty at BC.

“Students should be interested in these events because you can gain experience that you may find valuable. Whether that’s trying to expand your involvement in the school or simply trying to learn about meal prepping, which is also helpful since you can practice being in the kitchen,” Bhattacharjee told The Vanguard.

Student volunteers had the entire cooking experience, from washing and cutting to cooking and cleaning in the food lab. The students not only gained new experiences, but they also learned about the ups and downs of food

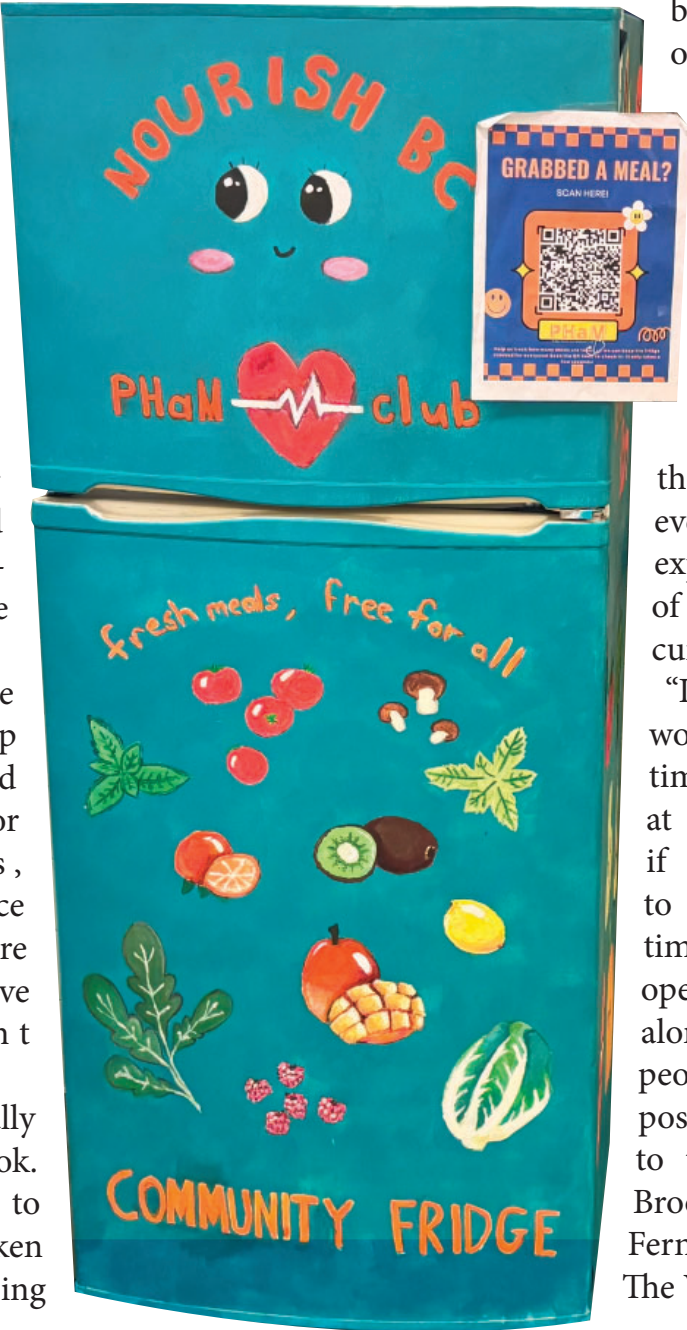
and communication at BC.

“I would say if you’re a student who’s nervous about joining the event, give it a chance because you may find yourself enjoying it and having fun,” Bhattacharjee told The Vanguard. “You would be doing something good for others and making a positive impact, and may make new friends too. Even if you’re not able to join every time, I think it’s a cool way to spend your time if you have the free time.”

BCPHAM Club has more opportunities for students to either volunteer or begin a new craft that they have never tried before.

Wu told the Vanguard, “Outside of the NourishBC Community Fridge, we are a pre-health-oriented club, so expect more kinds of events this semester. We encourage everyone to get involved, whether that be volunteering or giving us feedback on what you want to see from us this semester! All majors are welcome in PHaM.”

Students interested in BCPHAM can visit their Instagram @bc.phamclub.



The NourishBC’s Community Fridge for the meal prepped dishes./T’Neil Gooden

Recaps (09/08-09/13)

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor
Terrance Bobb
Staff Writer
& Jaida Dent
Managing Editor

The second week of the fall semester and Brooklyn College (BC) Bulldogs have been busy! With a full week of matches, the Vanguard is tuning in.

Women's Volleyball:
The Women's Volleyball team went against Farmingdale State College on Tuesday, Sept. 9.

"We feel our team is great so far, as we are adjusting to every new member of the team, which takes getting used to. Though we are getting used to each other, we are progressing each and every game, and we're only going to get better with time." said by Rhianna Marrero, a sophomore setter.

The first three sets had the Bulldogs off to a great start, but unfortunately, Farmingdale got the win over BC.

On Thursday, Sept. 11, the team came out on fire in their game against Purchase University, jumping out in the first set to a 6-0 lead that included four aces served up by senior Amra Mulic. With six service aces, Mulic was able to finish in the first set, giving the Bulldogs a 18-18 tie against their opponent heading into the second round. Looking even stronger in the second set, an 8-0 rally capped by back-to-back kills put away by Olivia Fan gave a glorious ending for BC to end the game



BC women's soccer team on the field against Manhattanville./*Courtesy of BC Athletics*

3-0 against the Purchase Panthers.

To end off the week, BC tackled a tri-match against Elizabethtown College and Alvernia University on Sept. 13. The Bulldogs' first match would not go their way, as they would fall to Elizabethtown by a score of 3-1. Freshman Ella Snobar would help secure BC's first set by scoring back-to-back aces. In their second match against Alvernia, they would fight hard to the end, but ultimately lose by a 3-0 score.

Women's Soccer:
While the women's soccer team were victorious in their two prior games, they would face defeats from Manhattanville University and Bard College on their home turf. The match up against Manhattanville University on Sept. 10 would be the first loss of the week by a score of 5-1. BC's only goal of the game would occur in the second period by sophomore Audrey Jane

Young. In their game against Bard College on Sept. 13, BC was unable to make any goals. However, goalie April Hartje would make a great effort for the team with a total of five saves. The final score would be 2-0 for Bard College.

Women's Tennis:
The women's tennis team had a great start this week, winning their first game on Sept. 10 against William Patterson University, in a final score of 6-1. Freshman Alexis Goodman and junior Medina Kuc were able to secure doubles points for BC. Goodman would win the No. 2 flight with scores of 6-2 and 7-5, while Kuc would win the No. 3 with 6-1 and 6-0.

BC would travel to Long Island to face St. Joseph's University, but unfortunately suffered a loss in a score of 6-1. Though BC took the doubles point by winning all three matches played, unfortunately, the team would be outlasted in

their second set by 3-6, 0-6. in the second set at No. 3 singles, being outlasted (3-6, 0-6) at No. 6 singles.

Men's Soccer:
Men's Soccer is having a great start to their season, with multiple wins under their cleats. However, grabbing a win against St. Joseph's University on Sept. 10 was no easy feat.

Striking very early on, with a pass to a goal in the 8th minute, the momentum was firing as two more shots in the second half came around. George Koufos, junior and Midfielder, would take the responsibility of the penalty shot, which he satisfyingly scored in the coldest way possible, putting out of reach into the bottom corner for the 3-0 score in 71'.

A very rewarding win for the BC Bulldogs, and a sight to see on the field. Their next game was on Saturday Sept. 13 against Old Westbury.

Old Westbury would get the best of BC, as

the Bulldogs lost this game 3-0. The Panthers would score 2 goals in the first quarter and then another in the second. This game was all Westbury as they dominated each quarter and played good defense against BC.

The men's next game will be on Tuesday Sep. 16 at home against Purchase college.

Men's Cross Country:
The men's cross country team had their third meet of the season on Sep 12 and placed fifth in the meet. Junior Yasin Gordon placed 15th and his run time was 21:56.30, for the 6000m course. His teammate, sophomore Dexter Weiner, would end the meet 26th and his run time was 24:04.00. Lastly, junior Omar Ahmed finished 40th with a run time of 29:47.50. Their next meet will be on, Saturday Sep 20.



UPCOMING BC GAMES



THU, SEPT. 18

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
@ SUNY OLD WESTBURY



FRI, SEPT. 19

WOMEN'S TENNIS
@ ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY
LONG ISLAND



WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY
@ THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



SAT, SEPT. 20

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
VS. ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE



WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
VS. ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY,
BROOKLYN



MON, SEPT. 22

MEN'S SOCCER
VS. PRATT INSTITUTE



WOMEN'S SOCCER
@ WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE



TUE, SEPT. 23

MEN'S SOCCER
@ SUNY OLD WESTBURY



WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
VS. ST JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY LONG
ISLAND



BROOKLYN COLLEGE
BULLDOGS

The Cafeteria Muralist: Lauren Liz, the Mural Wiz

By Khalailah Bynoe
Arts Editor

The artist behind the colorful murals that have brightened up Brooklyn College's (BC) cafeteria is Lauren Liz. She has come all the way from Iowa to share her artistry in New York City. Liz has been working on murals for the last five years. Her talent doesn't just stop in murals but also in abstract paintings. Liz had been hired by the cafeteria's new management to bring color to the space.

"I tend to work with brighter colors, and my color palettes are something that are really unique to my work. I spend a lot of time intentionally choosing colors that will work well together. But, also

for this project, [I] was working with some of the branding colors for Brooklyn College," Liz told The Vanguard.

"Creating the sense of place for the cafeteria obviously [involved] all of the different food offerings that the business had. We wanted those to be represented and for it to look appetizing and to just get people excited about eating lunch."

She uses Pinterest to collect different fonts and images of work that she incorporates into her projects. Her murals are first designed digitally, then she uses a projector to get the design on the wall, and then from there, everything is done by freehand.

A time-lapse on BC's TikTok

gives us a glimpse into the painting process. Liz painted 11 murals within the span of 10 days! "Originally, I think the scope was eight or nine murals, but we ended up adding two additional walls. It kind of sped up the process, so I was working some pretty long days, like 12-hour days for most of the week that I was there."

Time was one of the challenges she faced, but as an artist, coming up with designs was another. "Having enough creative energy to come up with different designs for each wall, I would say that pushed me a little bit to do things that I wouldn't normally try."

Liz continued, "And there's also these pieces of trim that kind of stick



Lauren Liz working on a mural./Courtesy of Lauren Liz

out and protrude on the wall [...] so it was like trying to figure out ways to creatively use the existing structure of the wall with the trim pieces, such that it could be an asset to the design instead of taking away from the design."

When asked to share some words of advice for young artists, Liz shared the following sentiments.

"Advice that I love to give is to just make as much as you can and not worry too much about what people are going to think about it [...] the more things that you can finish and then move on from, so that you can work on more and more projects. You'll be able to look back in the future and see how your work has evolved."

Third spaces are important, and the

murals have made BC's cafeteria an inviting place for students to gather with their peers.

"I interacted with a lot of people who were passing by as I was working on the project, and they were just excited to see something happening. I think it could be a good lesson moving forward for BC in their other buildings that if they have the opportunity to put funding towards custom artwork in the space, I think it will always have a positive impact."

For more information regarding Lauren's work, please visit her website www.letterwithlaurenliz.com.



Lauren Liz working in front of the mural./Courtesy of Lauren Liz

Filling My Cup: The Importance of Putting Yourself First

By Serena Edwards
Opinions Editor

Think of yourself as a flower; before a flower blooms, it needs consistent care and attention. Without it, they take longer to bloom or even die before reaching their full potential. This is the same with people; you need self-care in order to care for other things. A lack of self-care eventually causes burnout.

I recently saw this trend on TikTok where people post how they've been "filling their cup" lately. It consists of hobbies that they've been getting back

Managing school, work, and relationships can become overwhelming, and you can end up putting hobbies you once appreciated aside.

Hobbies are crucial to self-identity and expression. Find activities you've strayed away from and dive back into them, whether it's for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Devoting time to things you love that make you feel energized or comfortable. It doesn't have to be perfect; they just have to bring you peace.

For me, I love journaling, doing makeup looks, painting,

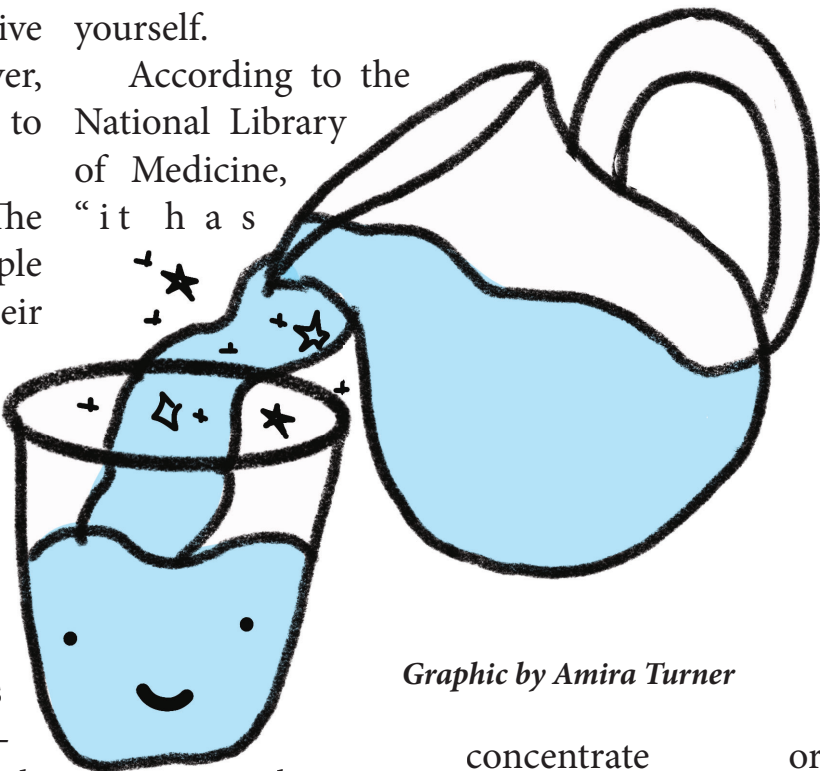
comes with a negative connotation; however, there are benefits to isolation.

According to The Conversation, "People who perceive their time alone as 'full' rather than 'empty' are more likely to experience their alone time as meaningful, using it for growth-oriented purposes such as self-reflection or spiritual connection."

Find comfort in solitude and dive deeper into who you are. When you don't listen to your body, you end up taking it out on other things, such as friendships. Little

yourself.

According to the National Library of Medicine, "it has



Graphic by Amira Turner

been proposed that regular physical activity facilitates psychological detachment from work, and in this way reduces the risk of prolonged stress responses such as burnout."

One of the most underrated things we don't think about when pouring back into ourselves is rest. Sleep is a huge element that affects your health and behavior. Without sleep, it's like a long walk on a tightrope, one wrong move and you fall off the edge. Your body needs rest after using energy over a certain amount of time. This is particularly important when you're mentally and physically exhausted. Sleep recharges your body and allows your body to relax to its full capacity.

According to Cornell Health, "most college-aged students need 7–9 hours of sleep in order to avoid daytime drowsiness (inability to

concentrate or remember and slowed reaction time), altered mood states (anxiety, irritability, and depression), weight gain, poor health, and low energy."

There are times when you don't feel like pushing forward; however, that's when it's crucial to take a step back and replenish. Choosing yourself should always be the first priority because without that, you end up pouring into others with an empty cup. Take the first signs of burnout the same way you do when you get a notification about your phone dying. Find a charger and take steps to replenish yourself.

As we enter this semester, remember to pour into yourself so you can remain your best self!

into, socializing with their friends/family, and doing things that overall make them happy. People (including myself) put other things first and forget to pour back into themselves. Consistently burning out because we forget to take care of the most important thing: ourselves.

scrapbooking, and editing, just to name a few. These are things that teach me new skills, but also take my mind off multiple other tasks going on.

Isolation, at times, is important. Being social is also a way of exerting energy that you may not be able to give at the moment. Isolating normally

things will trigger you without you being able to take notice of them.

Exercise is another method of pouring back into yourself, whether you're a pilates princess or a daydreaming walker. Finding ways to keep your blood pumping and mind occupied keeps you moving without overworking

BE YOUR SAFE PLACE

Graphic Courtesy of KIS on Pinterest

The Angel of Our Dreams: Rami’s Reviews Takes on Jade’s “THAT’S SHOWBIZ, BABY”

By Rami Mansi
Editor-in-Chief

Since the 1960s, the United Kingdom has solidified its role in pop culture as the home for many legendary stars and musical acts. The Beatles, Spice Girls, Girls Aloud, The Saturdays, and more have all sprung from humble British and Irish beginnings.

Continuing the legacy of British excellence as a member of “Little Mix,” a legendary four-member turned three-member pop music dynamo, 32-year-old Jade Thirlwall released her solo debut album, “THAT’S SHOWBIZ, BABY.”

This is Rami’s Reviews, a series where I, Rami Mansi, review anything pop culture related. Today, I’ll be reviewing Thirlwall’s album: A luxurious 14-track project that aims to please and does so with sequins, disco balls, and the secret ingredient of love.

Known mononymously as “JADE,” Thirlwall released “THAT’S SHOWBIZ BABY” on Sept. 12. The debut album details Thirlwall’s life as a teen musician turned global superstar, her love with English musician Jordan Stephans, and her relationship with her inner child.

Track one is the lead single off the album. “Angel Of My Dreams” sent shockwaves across social media and laid the groundwork for a high-class pop album. The experimental electroclash pop song details Thirlwall’s relationship to the music industry. With lyrics that hold the toxic industry accountable for both opening the door to success, yet never truly caring about her well-being.

In a continuing lyrical fashion, with her love-hate courtship with music labels. Track two, appropriately named “IT girl,”

was teased months before its official release, yet was one of the most anticipated songs off the album. With a thumping bass-line and well-deserved Rihanna-level-cocky lyrics such as “I am the it girl//I am the sh*t, girl// I run the whole world,” Thirlwall knows her worth and refuses to submit to the executives before her.

In a maximalist pop wonder, track three, “FUFN (F**k You For Now),” has Thirlwall tired of arguing with her partner and chooses to leave the night off with a lingering resentment. With a bridge so handcrafted it makes you ascend and lyrics that make you question who Thirlwall is, honestly speaking to, a partner or the music industry that has overworked her since her teenagehood, “FUFN” is an underrated gem on the album.

With the next three tracks taking a romantic turn, track four is a true synth pop bliss that shares the synths of Swedish pop royalty Robyn. “Plastic Box” details how Thirlwall wishes she could hold her lover’s heart in a plastic box so it could never get hurt.

Track five takes romance to experimental lengths, both sonically and lyrically speaking, in the bedroom. “Midnight Cowboy” features a sonic landscape of experimental electronica with influences of club pop pushed through the mainstream music machine, accompanied by a spoken-word introduction from Rwandan-Scottish actor Ncuti Gatwa. Lyrically, Thirlwall owns up to her sexuality in beautiful displays of love hidden in the moonlight.

Track six is an ode to Thirlwall’s love of disco and her favorite artist, Donna Summer, whose influence can be seen over the entire album. “Fantasy” is



Promotional Photos from Album Photoshoot./*Courtesy of RCA Records*

a disco-pop song with funk influences that details Thirlwall’s sex-positive attitude towards her lover. “Fantasy” was released as the second out of four singles and two pre-release tracks, much to the dismay of fans who wanted to keep more songs as a surprise. An ask that I have always been perplexed by: why would you want more songs hidden on an album when an artist could be promoting the songs and delivering more content with said songs? But I digress, time for track seven!

“Unconditional” is a song dedicated to Thirlwall’s mother, who suffers from chronic illness. Thirlwall sings “Unconditional//I will hold your hand forever//even if my heart explodes,” over a disco-synth pop song with heavy drums and versatile vocals.

One of my personal favorite lines from the entire album is from this song, where Thirlwall lovingly states, “If only my love could be your medication // I could fix you so much better than your own prescription.”

Track eight, “Self Saboteur,” sees Thirlwall taking a therapeutic ride through lyrics as she sings about her own anxiety, causing her to mess up and run away from love, thereby being a self-saboteur. A synth-led song with inspirations of dream pop and pure pop, the track begins the second half of the album, which was kept hidden until release day.

Track nine is a tropical house-inspired and contemporary

R&B song that details Thirlwall’s want for intimacy with her partner. “Lip Service” has proven to be a fan favorite amongst first-time listeners. The shortest song on the album, at 2 minutes and 27 seconds, comes to a stop, and the siren on track 10 begins to play.

“Headache” begins with a siren and funky bass that you can’t help but raise the volume on. Thirlwall is playful with her vocals; Studio 54 would’ve had this on repeat, and my favorite track on the album proves to be the reason why Thirlwall is not going anywhere: Her experimentation with pop music is as evident as her vocals are powerful.

The last four tracks on the album detail the stories that Thirlwall has not always been keen to share as a public figure.

Track 11, “Natural at Disaster,” is an electro-ballad with blasting echoes of Thirlwall’s vocals. Rumored to be about ex-Little Mix member Jesy Nelson, the lyrics depict Thirlwall’s toxic relationship with the subject as her suffering at the cost of their happiness.

The 12th track on this full-length project, “Glitch,” features an electronic R&B sound reminiscent of R&B star Tinashe. Detailing Thirlwall’s insecurities as glitches, she sings about going against her anxieties and owning up to her own individuality.

With a chorus that interpolates a recording of young Thirlwall singing “Stop! In The Name Of Love,” track 13, “Before You Break My Heart,” is a pop song with influences of 80s disco. Unlocking her inner child, Thirlwall sings to herself in this melancholic track. She sings lines that connect to anyone who has ever thought of their childhood, “On the main stage of your mind, so we can both

shine? // Wish you could see me as your star.”

The last song ends like any major fashion show, with love. A ballad dedicated to her lover, “Silent Disco” is the atmosphere created whenever Thirlwall and her boyfriend are together: peaceful, loving, and safe. Shutting out the world and feeling the intimacy of one another, they celebrate each other’s hearts in this silent disco where the floor is empty and the disco ball shines its light on them and them alone. An instrumental ballad with pop influences, Thirlwall’s voice springs out as the standalone instrument in this enchantment of a song. Oh, to be so in love that you create a silent disco on every dance floor you enter with your partner.

Thirlwall encapsulated love on the dancefloor, getting revenge through expose-worthy lyrics, and journeys of self-healing all within a 46-minute and 25-second debut album. To create this album, paired with a visual album available on YouTube, and opening for pop star Chappel Roan, you might think that Thirlwall is just about done with her journey in solo pop stardom.

But with a confirmed deluxe on the way, tour coming this October, and a sophomore album, Thirlwall has already begun to create, this solo artist is just getting started.

With reinventions afoot, critics waking up to the pop genius that is Thirlwall, and pop culture welcoming her with open arms and likes galore, Thirlwall is living the popstar dream on her terms.

Because when you’re Thirlwall and you’ve had almost 15 years in the music industry, and people are still finding new things to say about you, all you can honestly say is that’s showbiz, baby.



Standard Cover of “THAT’S SHOWBIZ, BABY”./
Courtesy of RCA Records

The Denim Wars: Fashion for All or Just One?

By Anastasia Gigauri
Staff Writer

Fashion ads don't sell jeans, they sell vibes. In 2025, two denim giants showed just how different that vibe can be. By comparing American Eagle and GAP's 2025 campaigns, we see how fashion ads either spotlight one idealized person or celebrate the whole group, sending different messages about who gets to wear the jeans.

On July 23, American Eagle launched a new campaign with famous American actor Sydney Sweeney to advertise their denim brand, with the tagline being "Sydney Sweeney Has Great Jeans". The ad was heavily focused on Sydney Sweeney herself, with close-up shots highlighting her body more than the jeans.

Critics of the ad called out the campaign that featured Sweeney discussing her "genes". "Genes are passed down from parents to offspring, often determining traits like hair color, personality, and even eye color. My jeans are blue". The word "jeans" is homophonic to "genes," confusing first-time watchers. People thought that the ad was actually about

Sweeney's genetics, her blonde hair, pale skin, and blue eyes, which made the ad racially problematic.

This ad also sparked a conversation about how society sexualizes young actresses and women with comparisons of Sweeney's American Eagle ad to actress Brook Shields's hypersexualized 1980s Calvin Klein ad that she shot when she was only 15 years old.

Shortly after the drop of Sweeney's ad, pop clothing brand GAP had a video that would go on to break the internet.

On Aug. 19, the multicultural girl group performed an amazing choreography to Kelis's "Milkshake", mixing a Y2K fashion style with K-pop energy. If "Milkshake" is playing in your head 24/7, we all know that it's because of the KATSEYE x GAP ad. KATSEYE's "Better in Denim" campaign with GAP became a cultural phenomenon; the campaign reached 400 million views and 8 billion impressions within days. According to the brand itself it may be "one of the most iconic brand campaigns that we've ever done". The most

important part of this commercial was featuring the Asian, Black, Indian, and Latina members, which emphasized cultural diversity, and clearly showed that the jeans are made for everyone! GAP is known for having people of different races, body types, genders, and ages in its campaigns. For GAP, it is important to sell a feeling, not just clothing. In 2024, Troye Sivan and Tyla also collaborated with GAP, showcasing not only diversity at its forefront but also creating ads with memorable choreography.

The main goal of the KATSEYE x GAP campaign was to allow viewers from different backgrounds to relate and feel included.

Lara Raj, a member of Katseye and an Indian-American, was featured in a jean ad with her face shown in stores, with many people expressing how proud they felt to see her representation. The ad gained massive attention on social media,

with the now-iconic "Milkshake dance" becoming a global trend. People all over the world are learning the dance to take fun and creative videos.

American Eagle's campaign focused entirely on one person. Sweeney is often seen as a "sex symbol," and is heavily favored by men, even though the ad was marketed for women. "Sydney Sweeney has great jeans", has viewers observing that the ad isn't just talking about the jeans but more about her overall appearance obtained through actual genes. The confusion caused a shift in what viewers should actually be focusing on: jeans or her looks. GAP's ad feels more relatable for most people, especially people of color, because viewers see themselves represented and feel that their identity matters. By making everyone feel included and recognized, the campaign creates a positive vibe across the cultures.

This marketing battle

proved that fashion ads are never just about denim; they are about the story and meaning behind it.

American Eagle's ad showed us how important it is to be mindful of any statement, cause you'll never know who might be affected by it. Creating a campaign that is only focused on one individual with such a confusing message leaves people unable to relate. On the other hand, GAP's approach with Katseye embraced cultural diversity, creating a campaign that people around the world wanted to be part of.

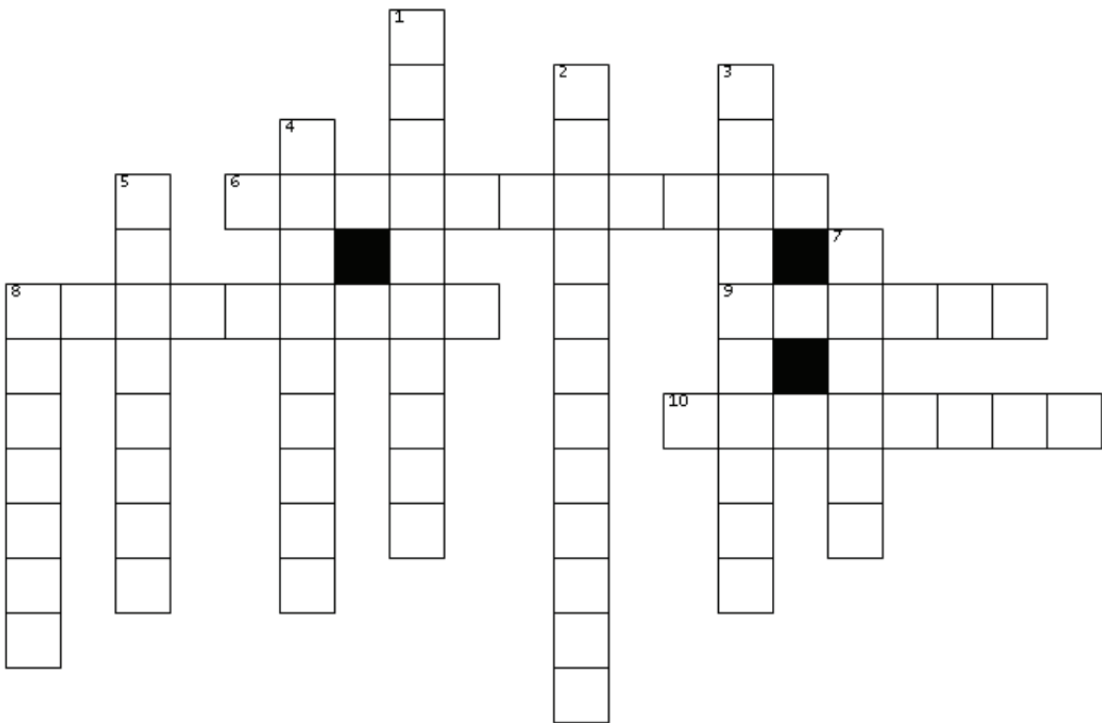
The denim war showed us that cultural representation will win over stereotypes and confusion. Fashion is freedom; it's not about copying one idealized image, it's about letting people show who they are. Freedom in fashion doesn't come from one star; it comes from everyone shining together.



Graphic by Amira Turner, photos
courtesy of American Eagle and Gap

Hispanic Heritage Month Crossword!

By Key Jones-Ford
Content Creator



Across

6. Livin' la vida loca
8. The surname of the first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice
9. A dish primarily from Colimbia and Venezuela
10. A genre of music born out of western Mexico

Down

1. Ladies often wear wide skirts and tap shoes in this dance style
2. The national bird of Honduras
3. A famous Mexican painter
4. The geographically largest country in Central America
5. Another word for street food; translates literally to "little cravings"
7. This is the home to the largest number of native Spanish speakers
8. One of the most well known perfomers to come from Columbia

Solution

