

Physical activity benefits mind and body

BY JORDAN GREENERT
SPORTS EDITOR

Hello fellow unicorns, and welcome to a brand new year full of fun times, cafeteria food, and, unavoidably, stress. Stress is something that is a part of life at NCSSM, whether it comes from physics, chemistry, or both (yikes!).

However, there are many ways to combat this stress, and one of those ways is through exercise. NCSSM offers both varsity and intramural sports year round, and approximately 95% of students participate at some point throughout the year.

The varsity sports offered

include cross country, swimming, diving, wrestling, tennis, baseball, softball, cheerleading, soccer, basketball, golf, and track and field.

Intramurals are offered twice a trimester, and include volleyball, ultimate frisbee, flag football, ball, soccer, and basketball. Exercise can be a great way to boost mental health and energy, which is invaluable to a new unicorn! But how does it work?

Our brains react interestingly to stimuli from exercise. Simply taking a walk or throwing a frisbee causes your body to release chemicals that can greatly affect your mood.

When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins and norepinephrine, chemicals that reduce stress and raise your energy level. It also releases dopamine, the "happy" chemical in your brain that makes you feel a little bit better about everything you're juggling.

Because of this, exercise is often recommended for people suffering from anxiety or depression, and has been proven to help treat those conditions! It can also improve self-confidence, and add a sense of accomplishment.

Getting sweaty can benefit your memory, too. Research has found that there are links between children's brain

development and their physical fitness. When you work out, your body produces cells more rapidly in the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for emotion and memory.

This also helps to prevent cognitive degeneration of the brain, which can lead to Alzheimer's and other degenerative diseases. Cells in other parts of the brain also regenerate with exercise, improving overall bodily processes.

This may be why exercise also inspires people to be more productive. Research has found that workers who take breaks to go on short walks are more productive than their sedentary coworkers.

So while you're procrastinating on that biology project, go for a jog, and you may actually feel like doing it.

At the end of a long day, exercise can also help you get your much-needed sleep. A moderate workout has been proven to act somewhat like a sleeping pill, even for people with insomnia.

Jumping around raises your core temperature, and a few hours later, it drops, and signals to your body that you're ready to sleep.

Running a marathon the day before a big exam may not guarantee an A, but in the long run, regular exercise can improve the life of anyone, especially NCSSM students.

Incoming junior shares thoughts

BY SARAH PERKINS
STAFF WRITER

For any prospective student, the Unicorn seems like the perfect mascot for NCSSM; utopian, impressive, and unreal, it embodies the dreamlike vision of the school that I fostered before it became my concrete reality.

Now, however, months after clicking the 'yes' response on Uniapp, weeks after joining my first Facebook group, and days before moving onto the campus that I will call home for the next two years, the vision I have of NCSSM is in a constant state of flux, a Unicorn one moment and a vampire the next.

Do not misunderstand me: I am incredibly excited and honored to join one of the most vibrant and excellent academic communities for high-school students in the state and beyond.

Furthermore, the anxiety

I am harboring does not stem from the idea that the school itself may be lacking, but rather that I may be lacking, a tadpole poised to drown in a whirlpool of genius and success.

Like many other NCSSM students, my academic career thus far has found me resting comfortably on the top, rarely doubting my own ability to stand out and achieve my dreams.

Yet, even after finding success at my old school, I felt like little more than an inflated statistic, a vague name on a wall of honor that everyone would see, but no one would understand; and so I stepped off my pedestal in search of greater things.

Thus, here I am today, slowly watching the summer disappear and slipping into a manic state of simultaneous excitement, curiosity, and fear.

How will I fit in at NCSSM? Can I handle the classes? Did I join too many clubs? These are

only a few of the questions that haunt me these days.

Nevertheless, I recognize that my anxiety is a bit unnecessary and cumbersome, and therefore offer this solace to anyone experiencing similar emotions: we have, in fact, made it this far.

NCSSM believes that we are good fits for it; we think that we are good fits for it (or at least felt confident enough to accept offers of admission).

Countless formerly scared students like us have graduated from here and gone on to do wonderful things, so let us trust that we, too, can find a way to thrive and make the best of our time here.

Let's keep our minds open and remember that happiness and success are contingent upon our ability to learn from failures and embrace ourselves for who we are. Finally, friends, let us seize the unicorn by the horn and accept the greater challenge.

Let's get married

BY JESSICA YAO
STAFF WRITER

Marriage has been viewed in our society as the ultimate expression of love - a declaration of eternal commitment and oftentimes, an affirmation of cohabitation. Although it is a right that many people have been denied and have fought for, is it a practice that makes sense? What is the institution of marriage? Why does our society value it so much? Is there an economic story that explains the origin of this most-debated-of-all institutions?

The institution of marriage, as we know it today, is essentially a mutual agreement to stay together forever for economic, social and sexual benefits. Marriage in America is historically derivative from the Church, originally used as a baby-making practice.

However, the first humans who lived between 5 and 1.8 million years ago had very little use for marriage. As time progressed, the creation of marriage as a legal contract between men and women came into being as communities settled on what was a "normal" way for them to organize a family then codify that normalcy into law.

For example, it was the norm within society that men and women were responsible for feeding and caring for their own children. Then laws were created that gave men some assurance that the children they were raising were their own and women some assurance that their husband would not leave them destitute.

Ancient marriage in Egypt was a means of preserving lineage - the most infamous cases of incest came from Egypt because its people believed that bloodline must

be preserved within a family. If men wanted to have casual sex, they would hire prostitutes. In Rome, there was virtually no distinction between marriage and cohabitation.

As Christianity became pervasive within Europe through Constantine's establishment of the Edict of Milan, celibacy was the new virtuous standard. Feudalism established the importance of land over love, and thus marriage became the last resort for many (males - married women were not allowed to own property) to acquire land.

Now post Enlightenment and several centuries of reform later, marriage has evolved to be a show of love and commitment, the legality behind it isn't entirely different than it was during the age of feudalism.

This is not to say that recent victories in equality regarding marriage (such as the Supreme Court's ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015 to grant enfranchisement of same-sex marriage) should be dismissed.

The right to marry, whether or not the practice in itself has a philosophical purpose, should be accessible to everybody, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, class or whatever other categories exist. Nor should one be discouraged from getting married.

Nevertheless, it is important to examine the historical roots of the institution of marriage in order to gain a sense of understanding as to why it is so seemingly fundamental (and whether or not it is as necessary or meaningful a practice as we like to think it is) to many societies across the globe.

What does tying the knot really encompass, weddings and rings aside?

Jim Obergefell, lead plaintiff in Obergefell v. Hodges. The Supreme Court's June 26th ruling mandated that all 50 U.S. states issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

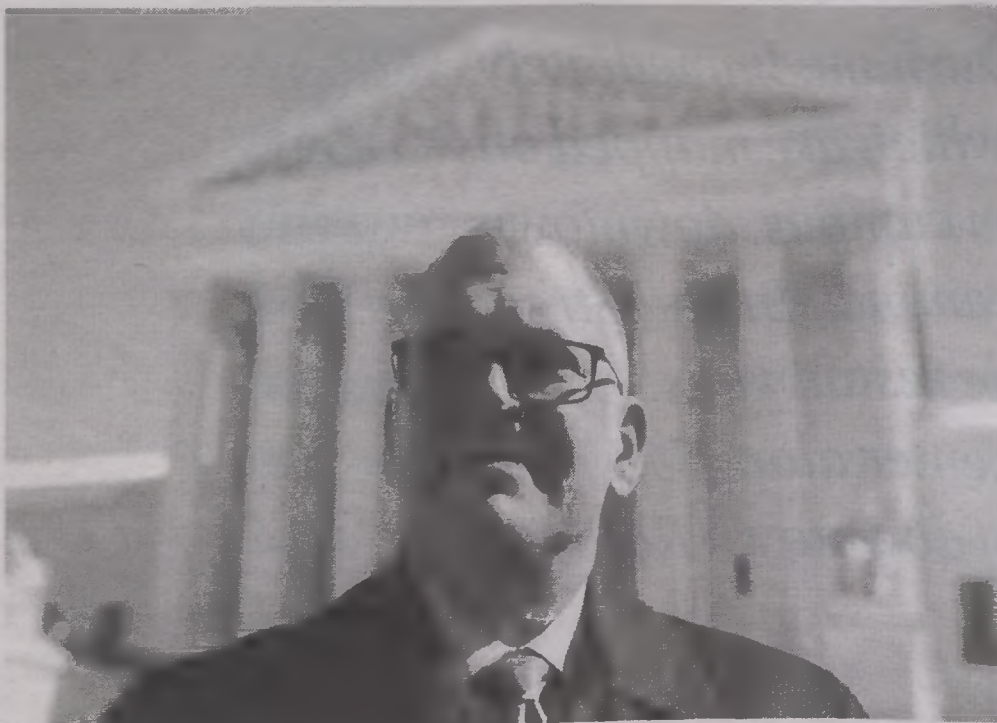


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