

the vaccination ROLLERCOASTER

With the emergence of the omicron variant, some COVID protocols return. Story by Sienna Burford



A SHOT IN THE ARM. Eighth grader Elia Harmens-Ross receives her vaccination. "I'm being vaccinated for my family, so my mom and dad don't get sick," Harmens-Ross said.

The hot topic this summer was vaccines. They were highly recommended and in high demand. By early May, the hope was to go "back to normal," and by the end of May, 12 to 15 year olds were approved for vaccination. As of August 16, 2021, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 168.7 million people had been fully vaccinated in the US, which represented 50.8% of the population and 59.4% of the vaccine-eligible population.

For many, vaccines were the way to confront Covid-19. "We know that

the FDA-approved vaccines are extremely safe and have remained highly effective, even against new variants like the delta variant," stated authors Gypsyamber D'Souza and David Dowdy of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Then, omicron developed, and we were right back to checking vaccination cards and wearing masks again.

As reported in the New York Times on August 14th by Alyson Krueger, "Months after people thought they had left the pandemic behind, they are masking up in indoor clubs...and

partying like it's 2020 again. Clubs and party hosts are being cautious, checking for vaccine cards at the door even before many local governments are requiring them to do so."

Students here at Drake were also impacted. "Over the summer I went to Mexico and I had to show proof of a negative test to come back. I also went to Las Vegas, and my whole family got COVID except me," Ellie Martinez (6) said. The summer really didn't go as expected with going back to masks and vaccines, but at least it didn't go completely back to living like it was 2020 again.

BEST PARTS OF summer

The ins and outs of what happened in the community over the summer.

UNDER SIXTEEN

After being open for 131 years, Elitch Gardens enforces a new rule. Story by Sadie Weborg

"ELITCH GARDENS, WE LOVE YOU!" goes the slogan for one of the oldest consecutively operating amusement parks in the United States. Elitch's has long been a memory maker for kids growing up in the Denver area. "I remember that Elitch's was only about a 10 minute drive away," said ELA teacher Kimberly Perko. "My favorite ride was the Rainbow. I miss that!"

But, when changes were made to the 131 year old institution in July of 2021, many in our school were not happy.

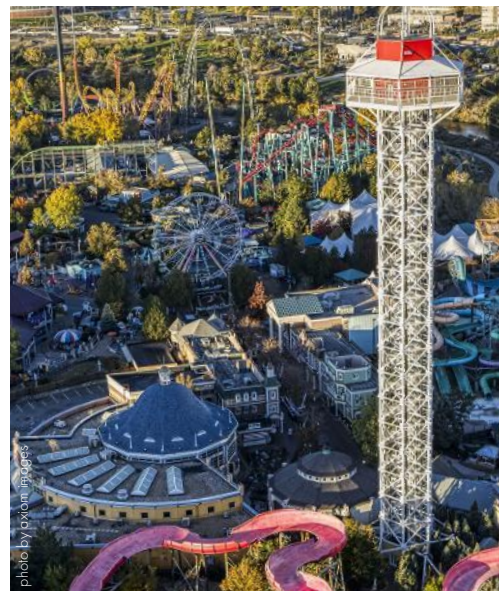
Denver's Elitch Gardens, known by the public as Elitch's, decided that people 16 and under would be required to have a guardian (21 or older) by their side the whole time.

"Elitch's is supposed to be fun for [kids] to have a little freedom," said Megan Martin (6). "Since

the rules have changed that kids have to have a parent on every ride, Elitch's is going to lose a lot of customers." 87% of our students agreed with her.

"This summer, my 17 year old son took a date to Elitch's, and they had to leave at 7:00 PM because of the new regulations," said drama teacher Laurel Wicke. "It was a lot of money to pay for such a short day."

In our survey, 13% agreed with the new rules. Zoe Atkins (6) said, "Who knows what teenagers can get into these days. Having these rules force them to act the correct way." 7th grade social studies teacher Michelle Johnson, disagreed with these changes. "I think that Elitch's should find another way than having parents with older kids all the time." Clearly it was a controversial decision.



ELITCH GARDENS BY THE DATES. 1890: John and Mary Elitch open Elitch Gardens as a zoological park. 1892: The Elitch Theatre opens. 1916: Denver businessman John Mulvihill purchases Elitch Gardens. The Mulvihill family runs the park for four generations. 1928: The hand-carved carousel, which still operates today, is installed. 1965: The famous "Mister Twister" roller coaster is built. 1995: The New Elitch Gardens opens at its new location in central downtown Denver.

