



Celebrating What Makes Us Different



Regan Zook
—Section Editor—

Heritage plays a significant role in who a person is and who they chose to become. Heritage helps us examine our history and traditions, which signifies the importance of our cultures and the journeys of those who came before us.

Not one person at Alamosa High School is the same as another. This is what makes us unique. We all have different backgrounds that make us who we are. It is salient for AHS to come together and celebrate the different cultures and traditions that accumulate in our school.

Senior Navyha Gonzales learned more about her heritage through her grandparents, who came to the mainland from Puerto Rico.

In her interview she stated, "My great grandma and grandpa lived in a little village on the southern side of Puerto Rico called Villalba. They grew up in poverty. My grandma only had a 3rd grade education and my grandpa had a 9th grade education. My grandma left Puerto Rico in 1951 and went to New York to be with her brother; this is where she learned English."

She continued, "When my great grandma went to New York, she was

waiting for the bus. When the bus came she saw a familiar face from her town in Puerto Rico. That familiar face ended up turning into my grandpa; they will now have been together for 71 years."

Although Navyha's grandparents moved to the mainland to create a better life for themselves and future generations, they experienced challenges. Navyha added, "One of the challenges they faced was the language barrier; they did not speak English, this made communication difficult. Another challenge was bias. Puerto Ricans were looked down upon by the general population. That posed many challenges for them."

If her grandparents had let those difficult challenges stop her from creating a life in the US, her life would be vastly different. She explained, "My ancestors and family are the reason I am the person who I am today. They have given me a perspective on family, culture, and traditions that I would have never learned without them. My grandpa would not have met my grandma and I probably would not have the family I am so proud to have today."

Danielle Aquino, junior at AHS, and her parents were the first in her family to move to the US and her little brother was the first in their family to be born in the US. When they first arrived they lived in North Dakota, where her mother had already accepted a job as

a Med Tech. After that, they moved to Colorado.

Just like most, Danielle's family had challenges that they had to face. She stated, "It was a struggle when we first moved here, we weren't rich; we had just enough to live with some comfort. Since we moved to America for my mom's job, my dad stayed at home and took care of me. He didn't have a working visa at the time. My dad did decide to go back to school to find better job opportunities later on.

She continued, "Since my family is the first generation to arrive, we kind of had to learn about everything on our own. Moving to another country was basically a restart. My parents were fluent in English, but it was still difficult adapting to another language. One challenge we faced was waiting for our American Citizenship; it took many years before we were able to become citizens. We had a few relatives living in Saudi with us, which made leaving even more difficult."

Danielle's life changed when she was one and moved to the US with her parents. She explained, "If we hadn't moved to the United States, I would either still be living in Saudi Arabia or the Philippines. Moving to America has "white-washed" me, because I have an American accent and I can only understand my language. I can not really

speaking or communicate in my language."

Senior Jude Chikh Ali, stated in her interview, "All of my ancestors were born and raised in Syria. My family and I were the first ones to move to the U.S. We moved to the U.S. in 2011 where I started 1st grade. We first lived in Moscow, Idaho for the next 11 years. The reason we moved to the U.S. was because my dad got a job opportunity at the University of Idaho, which also allowed us to escape from the civil war that was beginning in Syria."

She continued, "I was not born in Syria. My parents and brother got the opportunity to move to Japan where my dad got his PHD and I was born. I lived in Japan for the first 4 years of my life where I was fluent in Japanese and I went to preschool there as well. I only lived in Syria for 10 months of my life. After those 10 months, I moved to the U.S. where I started a new life.

Jude stated, "My life would have been extremely different if I had continued living in Syria because the school system, language and culture is so different there. I would have also been in danger due to the war that has been taking place. I still have family living in Syria who are alive and well, but I do also have family that passed away due to the bombings."

Jude added, "The biggest challenges of moving to the U.S. were the

cultural and language barriers that we often experienced. Although I was able to learn English early on, my parents still have an accent when speaking English and some cultural differences still surprise us no matter how long we have been living in the U.S. Moving to a new country required relearning everything we had previously known, although my parents were able to do it well because they were used to it from having to move to Japan."

In his interview, senior Adrian Martinez stated, "My ancestors are from Mexico and they come from Aztec blood. My parents were the first of them to move to the US, crossing through the El Paso Border. I am the first generation to be born in the U.S."

He continued, "When moving to the United States it was very simple for my parents. Back then, crossing the border was fairly easy compared to now. My dad had an upholstery shop waiting for him as soon as he crossed. Money was not an issue, but living with no close family was very difficult."

He added, "My life would be different if they did not cross the border. I would be living in Mexico. I would have an entire different life, wealth, health, and education. I feel I wouldn't have achieved as much being born in Mexico."

It is important for us to celebrate the differences that make AHS unique.

Preparing For The PSAT and SAT

Brock Benton
—Staff Writer—

As the second semester is upon us at Alamosa High School, students' lives become immensely busy. Among all the sports and studying, one important date to keep in mind is April 12th.

On April 12th, students will be taking the SAT and PSAT. Freshmen will take the 8th/9th grade PSAT, Sophomores will take the 10th grade PSAT, and Juniors will take the SAT.

The SAT was developed as a measure to test a person's readiness for college. Early supporters of the SAT claimed that it increased the meritocracy of higher education.

The test was intended to uncover exceptional applicants from less academically rigorous high schools and hasten their transitions into college.

Originally, the SAT catered to the wealthy and white students. Questions that black students typically scored high on were thrown out, making sure the white students excelled in college admissions.

Since the original creation, the College Board has taken strong measures to remove the systematic racism within the test.

Critics of the SAT still fight for more measures as the test is objectively easier with expensive test prep. Compared to the ACT, another standardized

test that's main goal is to measure an individual's readiness for college, has had less scandals and criticism.

Despite the controversial past, the domination of the SAT within college admissions is still prevalent. Colleges still depend on the score as an "accurate" measure of intelligence.

The 8th/9th grade PSAT is structured as follows, the PSAT 8/9 takes 2 hours and 25 minutes and includes 3 tests: (1) the Reading Test, (2) the Writing and Language Test, and (3) the Math Test.

The majority of the questions are multiple choice, but a few of the math questions require the test taker to write an answer.

The 10th grade PSAT is structured as follows, the PSAT 10 takes 2 hours and 45 minutes and consists of 3 tests: (1) the Reading Test, (2) the Writing and Language Test, and (3) the Math Test.

The majority of the questions are multiple choice, but a few of the math questions require the test taker to write an answer.

The SAT is structured as follows: the SAT takes three hours and consists of three tests, (1) the Reading Test, (2) the Writing and Language Test, and (3) the Math Test.

The majority of the questions are multiple choice, but a few of the math questions require the test taker to write an answer. On all the tests, there

is no penalty for guessing. If a test taker does not know the answer to a question, typically two of the options are blatantly wrong.

Once the two wrong answers are eliminated, the individual has a 50/50 chance. Many high scores use this tactic to secure a high score.

Even though the tests can be intimidating, preparation is key to obtaining a high score. Developing a consistent study routine is incredibly important.

For example, studying math twice a week, writing (grammar) twice a week, and reading twice a week is an effective routine.

With consistency, a student will learn their strengths and weaknesses. Finding out where an individual needs to improve will further boost the effectiveness of studying.

However, consistently studying is difficult. Outside activities and other extracurriculars may stop the individual from studying.

Nonetheless, constant discipline will transform the act of studying into a natural habit, similar to brushing teeth or taking the trash out.

Websites, such as Khan Academy, are perfect for students as the practice questions are free and easy to access. Many students use Khan Academy as a reliable resource.

The website also tracks the user's progress and necessary material needing to be studied. Some websites,

such as UWorld, are paid but offer additional support.

UWorld allows the user to have access to thousands of practice problems. If an individual selects the wrong answer, UWorld explains why the individual is incorrect and presents the steps in achieving the correct answer.

Additionally, the College Board has released multiple practice tests that students can take prior to taking the actual test.

Dedicating a Saturday to taking a full-length SAT practice test will make the actual test less foreign.

Although studying for a test that is a couple months away may sound ludicrous, the effort pays off.

The SAT is a crucial aspect of applying to colleges. Many colleges find the SAT to be a critical indication of whether or not they should accept a student.

Some colleges still do not require the SAT; therefore, a student should research the colleges they want to apply to and whether or not the SAT is an important aspect of the application.

Fast forward to the day before the test, eating a healthy dinner and getting a good night's rest can be helpful.

Eating enough food to sustain the person but not eating too much and risk being sick is important.

Furthermore, a person should aim for at least 8 hours of quality sleep. On the day of the test, packing a cou-

ple snacks will boost a person's energy. After the test, scores will be released as quickly as possible.

The SAT test takers will receive their scores approximately on the 3rd of May.

However, PSAT scores do not have a set date. Usually, the release date for the PSAT varies depending on location.

One must never perceive their score as a measure of skill or worth, though. All that matters is that the individual worked hard and tested to their best ability.

Whether an individual believes they performed well or not is completely subjective. On the SAT, there is no definite "good score".

If one is not happy with their score, College Board offers multiple other SAT test days. A student may take the SAT several times to achieve an adequate score.

Typically, most students will take the SAT a few times. Although there are multiple time-consuming steps to preparing for the SAT/PSAT, the hard work pays off.

Remember to develop a study plan, mark April 12th on the calendar, and think positive thoughts when preparing for the SAT/PSAT this upcoming spring.

Although preparing for these tests can be stressful, creating a plan ahead of time can help reduce the stress.