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Miramonte holds "Senior Day" for class of 2024

By Emma Wong



From left: Jessica Youn (University of Michigan), Grace Bell (Wesleyan University), Addison Byrne (Savannah College of Art and Design), Addison Braitberg (University of Colorado Boulder), Casey Scheiner (Davidson College), Matthew Chan (University of California, Berkeley), Asher Patel (Cornell University), and Jason Wagner (University of Waterloo, Ontario) Photo Emma Wong

On the morning of May 21, aromas of burritos, bacon, and muffins wafted from the Miramonte High School cafeteria as graduating seniors shared a breakfast. Donning college merchandise, students participated in Senior Day -- part of the Senior Spirit Week -- to send off the Class of 2024.

Heading Senior Day planning efforts was parent Joy Braitberg. "Prior to this year, I chaired Grad Night for one of my kids who graduated in 2019," Braitberg said. "In the fall, the Parent's Club was looking for someone to chair Senior Week, and I volunteered."

Braitberg worked closely with the Parent's Club, Leadership, and Miramonte's administration. The Class of 2024 parent advisors -- Mia Dennis, Lani MacKenzie, Ellie Attwood, Heather Leal, and Lisa Ballantyne -- also played key roles, planning and raising funds to host not only Senior Week, but also all other events for this cohort of students.

"We hosted a myriad of fundraisers, including mom and parent parties, raffles and auctions, Casa Orinda chicken dinners, finals care packages, lei sales, and Halloween Boo Bags," Dennis said. "Parents have also donated to the class activity fund every year."

After breakfast, students viewed a reflective slideshow, then meandered over to the theater for a practical life advice session given by Wellness Center Coordinator Salvador Avila. Avila reminded seniors of the importance of mental health after high school, sharing tips on how to manage stress in the tumult of college life -- including getting enough sleep and practicing positive thinking.

"As a member of the Miramonte community, I've had the privilege of observing and interacting with our students, seeing firsthand their potential and the unique challenges they face," Avila said. "My decision to speak to the senior class stems from a deep understanding of their experiences -- from my own journey through high school."

An alumni panel of Miramonte graduates answered questions about life after graduation -- such as what college freshman year would be like, or their biggest regrets about high school. Additionally, students engaged in a Kahoot! trivia about the history of Miramonte.

Capping off Senior Day, students took a panoramic photo in the big gym. They returned to the theater for the afternoon's biggest highlight: a magic show.

The lead magician, Cosmo, guided student volunteers through card games, visual stunts, and other activities. "The tricks were really cool -- but Cosmo was also able to relate them to some broader advice he gave us, which I thought gave the show a deeper meaning," senior Jason Wagner said.

"Cosmo's performance had a great message that resonated with me," senior Asher Patel said. "He told everyone to believe they are enough, that they are never alone, no matter how stressful life gets, and that we are blessed to be where we are."

Senior Spirit Week is not the only time Miramonte celebrates its graduating class. In August, Leadership and the Parent's Club hosted a Senior Barbeque and car painting event. Students attended Senior Sunrise and Sunset on the football field; Ball at San Francisco's City Hall; and, most recently, a Time of Reflection ceremony.

"My favorite celebratory memory was undoubtedly Senior Sunset," student Selma Ahmed said. "I loved decorating graduation caps, signing yearbooks, reminiscing about our high school years, and enjoying the delicious treats generously provided by parents."

Dressed in college sweatshirts last Tuesday, seniors buzzed with anticipation of a bright future. Ahmed is committed to Stanford University -- but first, as a recipient of the National Security Language Initiative for

Youth scholarship, she'll be immersing herself in a gap year in Morocco to study Arabic. "I'm incredibly excited to live in Rabat, Morocco for eight months," Ahmed said. "I imagine this experience will greatly enrich my worldview."

The atmosphere was also one of heartfelt goodbyes. Wagner is headed on an international path, studying civil engineering at Canada's University of Waterloo. "I will miss being in a tight-knit community," Wagner said. "While I look forward to college, there's something special about attending a small school and knowing every face around you."

Ultimately, smiles and laughter championed this Spirit Week as friends celebrated one another's achievements. "Playing games on Senior Day, listening to music at Senior Sunset, and jumping in the pool after the rally brought the class together," student and future Wesleyan University first-year Grace Bell said. "Everyone's so excited for their future and each other, which makes for a bittersweet ending to high school."

"I hope these seniors walk away [from Senior Spirit Week] with a sense of accomplishment," Braitberg said. "This class's freshman year was half-online due to COVID, which points to their resiliency. No matter what the future holds - whether it's getting a job, going to college, or taking a gap year - I hope students know that graduation is huge and something to be truly proud of."

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