

NO 'HO'LDING BACK

Everyday Acts of Kindness



ELTON HO
Copy Editor

I really do appreciate the Alhambra High School community; it's not perfect, but it tends to be pretty friendly. There's something about the casual acts of disrespect I witness every day that really just drives me crazy. Whether it's incessantly chatting over a teacher's instruction or indifferently cutting in the lunch line, being unkind can't exactly give you much but a dirty look—so why do it?

While I hate to see such rudeness, I haven't lost any faith in humanity or anything. Everyone has their grumpy days and as they say, a few drops of oil won't darken the whole sea. However, it's still important to remember once in a while the simplicity and value of being kind.

It's nice that Random Acts of Kindness Week encourages kind deeds, but random acts of kindness don't need to be a big enough deal that one should be told to share them with #RAKweek2015. Kindness can be as simple as smiling at strangers, apologizing and accepting apologies or saying "thank you" and "you're welcome." To be kind is to play one's part in creating a more understanding and accepting environment for everyone.

Kindness is not something to practice superficially for one week and then forget. That may be the first step, but long-term everyday kindness comes by developing the mindset that people are worth being kind to and that kind gestures are just the right thing to do—and really, both are true.

Staff Editorial: Will community college bachelor's degrees benefit California?

On Sept. 18, Governor Jerry Brown approved Senate Bill 850 (SB 850), which will allow the implementation of baccalaureate degree pilot programs at community colleges. By the 2017-2018 school year, 15 community colleges will offer bachelor's degrees in majors that are not available at Universities of California (UCs) or California State Universities (CSUs) in a pilot program to determine the viability of SB 850. Some of these majors include biomanufacturing, health information management, respiratory therapy and airframe manufacturing. The primary objective of the legislation is to ensure that there will be enough qualified employees to fill upcoming job openings.

Since community college tuition is significantly cheaper than that of a state university, SB 850 pro-

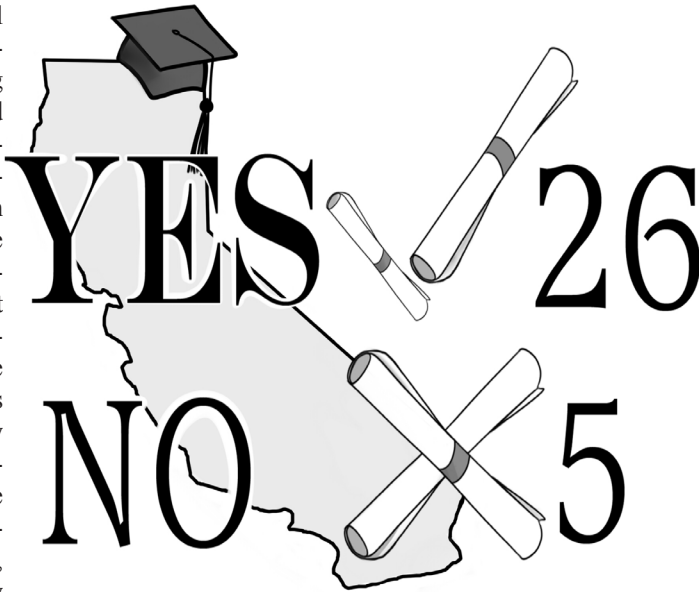
vides a significant benefit in providing more opportunities at an affordable cost to low-income students, as well as increasing upward mobility. Although some may argue that low-income students already have adequate opportunities, they would have a more difficult time paying for a four-year university if they have to take out loans with interest, resulting in substantial debt. According to KQED News, UC students leave school with

an average of \$20,500 in debt, compared to \$18,460 for CSU students. This would also benefit

easier to fill job openings. Since many of the majors are Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)-oriented, they will suit a rapidly expanding sector. Additionally, because these majors are unique, they help students pursue interests they might not be able to at a four-year university. Critics of SB 850 question the quality of bachelor's degrees obtained at community colleges and say that this legislation might even lower the value of holding one; however, each college still ensures that its professors are qualified. Despite the

possibility that employers will become more picky, California will still need one million more workers with four-year degrees by 2025, according to the Senate District 39 website.

One significant concern about SB 850 relates to funding, since the program might not be sustainable in the long term and would likely lead to an increase in taxes. However, the state economy would still improve overall because more of the college graduates holding bachelor's degrees would have less debt and would thereby be more financially stable. Ultimately, providing bachelor's degrees at community colleges is a step in the right direction toward improving California's economy and encouraging more opportunities for everyone, especially those who have difficulty affording post-secondary education.



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Same Sex, Same Blood: Unfair Ban on Homosexuals

DEREK WU
Staff Writer
KAYIU WONG
Opinions Editor

In 1983, a ban that prohibited homosexuals and bisexuals from donating blood was enacted. Since very little was known about HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) at this time, a nationwide hysteria over the diseases resulted in this prejudiced legislation.

Over time, however, more research has led to the discovery of information on HIV and AIDS. It has been proven that these sexually contracted viruses can be spread and given to by any human being, not just those who are gay or bisexual.

According to the New York Times, the ban was then lightened in December 2014. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) agreed to permit homosexuals and bisexuals to donate blood as long as they were not sexually active for 12 months. Though the FDA has removed the ban to a certain extent, this still leaves most of the homosexual community unable to donate blood.

Ultimately, this ban is unethical as it is clearly discriminatory against homosexuals. By continuing such an unfair prohibition, we are still embracing the societal assumption that only homosexuals have HIV and AIDS.

We should embrace that the FDA has lessened this blood ban; it was a big stride for equality that was long overdue. However, in this day and age, we need to question why the entire ban has still yet to be lifted. This policy stigmatizes homosexuality, as if being gay is a risk altogether. It is unjust and shameful to maintain such a biased stereotype, especially on such a national and federal level.

MOOR graphics by SAMMIE CHEN

Debate to Vaccinate Escalates

JOSEPH NEY-JUN
Staff Writer

The recent measles outbreak in the United States has once again sparked the debate over whether or not vaccinations should be mandatory. The debate itself stems from misinformation on the benefits of vaccines. According to Huffington Post, vaccines are likened to safety belts: they are mandatory to protect lives, not to take away personal freedoms. Vaccinations too should be mandatory for the overall well being of the population and to stop the spread of sickness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most states offer exemptions from vaccination based on religious grounds, personal beliefs and medical reasons. However, having any number of the population unvaccinated against something like measles can have harmful effects on herd immunity, which is necessary for the safety of citizens.

Herd immunity refers to the amount of a population that is immunized against harmful illnesses. According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, one of the benefits of herd immunity is that those who are unable to be vaccinated or those with weak immune systems, such as children and pregnant women, have some protection against illness.

Measles can be brought over by unvaccinated immigrants and spread through the unvaccinated population. Herd immunity makes it harder for such a thing to spread and can keep cases isolated to a certain area.

Despite possible complications, the benefits of vaccination, for both the individual and the entire group, far outweigh any potential effects. People are not only responsible for their personal safety. Excluding people who are medically unable to receive them, vaccinations should be mandatory in all fifty states of the U.S.



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