



Community Service: Selfless or Selfish?

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Editor In Chief

While AHS has branches of international service clubs such as Key, Leo and Interact, it is also home to clubs unique to the campus. A concern of some is that students join these clubs merely to present a constructed facade for college admissions.

“People join clubs to have something to put on their college applications, since everyone else is doing it too,” junior Red Cross member Edwin Cheung said.

Many service club members attribute their reasons for joining to other aspects, such as social reasons.

“College apps may have influenced me a little bit but I really tried out for the members in the club,” junior Leo member Mark Yue said. “I came into high school as a shy kid who didn’t really know many people so I tried for a service club as a way to break out of my shell.”

However, some believe

that social purposes detract from the true value of a service club.

“I think over the years that I’ve been at AHS the word ‘volunteer’ has been distorted and it’s become a label,” junior Las Moras member Macy Chung said. “Your level of popularity at this school solely depends on which service club you are in or what ‘connections’ you have and clubs are becoming more and more superficial.”

For admissions officers, the decision is beyond a student’s having just completed a quantity of community service hours.

“Community service shouldn’t be about ticking off a box,” Dean of Admission and Financial Aid at Wesleyan University Nancy Hargrave Meislahn said, according to the New York Times. “What we’re looking at is, what is the student doing with his or her time? And part of that, we’d hope, is that they show some form of engagement toward the community at large.”

To current high school teachers, the motivation to volunteer is not as selfless as it may seem.

“Students join service clubs because they believe it helps them get into college, and colleges do take those things into consideration, but not as much as students think they do,” Kaibigan adviser Ron Matossian said. “I don’t think students really enjoy helping the community; it’s not that big of a deal to them. They just like hanging out with their friends at services.”

Despite a more cynical view, service club members express their genuine love of volunteer work.

“College applications did affect my decision to join a service. However, I didn’t just join to have it on my college applications, but to give back to the community,” senior Campus member Audrey Chan said.

Additionally, with the 10 service clubs at AHS, students must decide which one best fits their interests and personalities. Some are

attracted by the general atmosphere and friendly feeling.

“I picked Leo Service Club for the fact that it is known to be a family, and after I made it, I wasn’t disappointed!” Yue said.

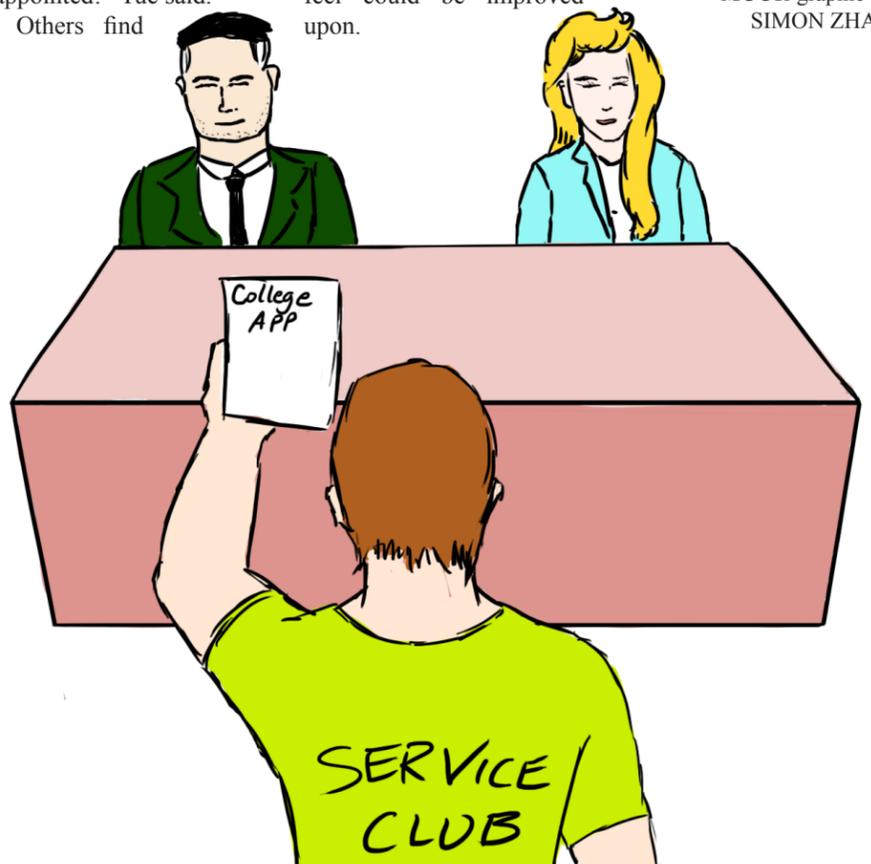
Others find

out about specific clubs by word of mouth from friends and peers.

Besides the positive elements of volunteer work, there are some aspects of service clubs that members feel could be improved upon.

“[We should have] fewer hours,” sophomore Interact member Sharleen Mock said. “The amount of hours one has to complete seems a little far-fetched.”

MOOR graphic by SIMON ZHAO



Accession West Nile Virus in San Gabriel Valley

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Each year, summer features the advent of the mosquito season, with the bug population peaking in August and September. Although they are a common annoyance, many people may not be aware that the U.S. encounters alarming annual outbreaks of the West Nile virus (WNV) that is transferred by mosquitoes. With the discovery of the virus’s presence in the San Gabriel Valley (SGV), officials are requesting that citizens do their best to avoid infection and prevent its spread.

The SGV Mosquito and Vector Control District confirmed WNV activity in the cities of Arcadia, Irwindale and Monterey Park on Aug. 27. Positive samples were found in both actual mosquitoes and “Sentinel Chicken Flocks,” groups of chickens carefully maintained to allow the tracing of virus activity. Dead birds containing the virus were later detected in neighboring cities like Azusa, Covina, Glendora, La Verne, Monrovia and West Covina.

As of Sept. 17, 150 human cases of WNV, including 6 deaths, have been reported in California

by the national Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Neither a vaccine nor a treatment method for WNV has been developed. One thing to keep in mind is that WNV is transmitted

SGV Mosquito & Vector Control District manager Kenn Fujioka said in a press release.

Bites can be avoided in several ways. The National Institute of Health (NIH) recommends stay-

the correct use of a simple insect repellent will drive them away.

According to CDC, about 80 percent of people infected with WNV will actually display few to no symptoms. The other 20 per-

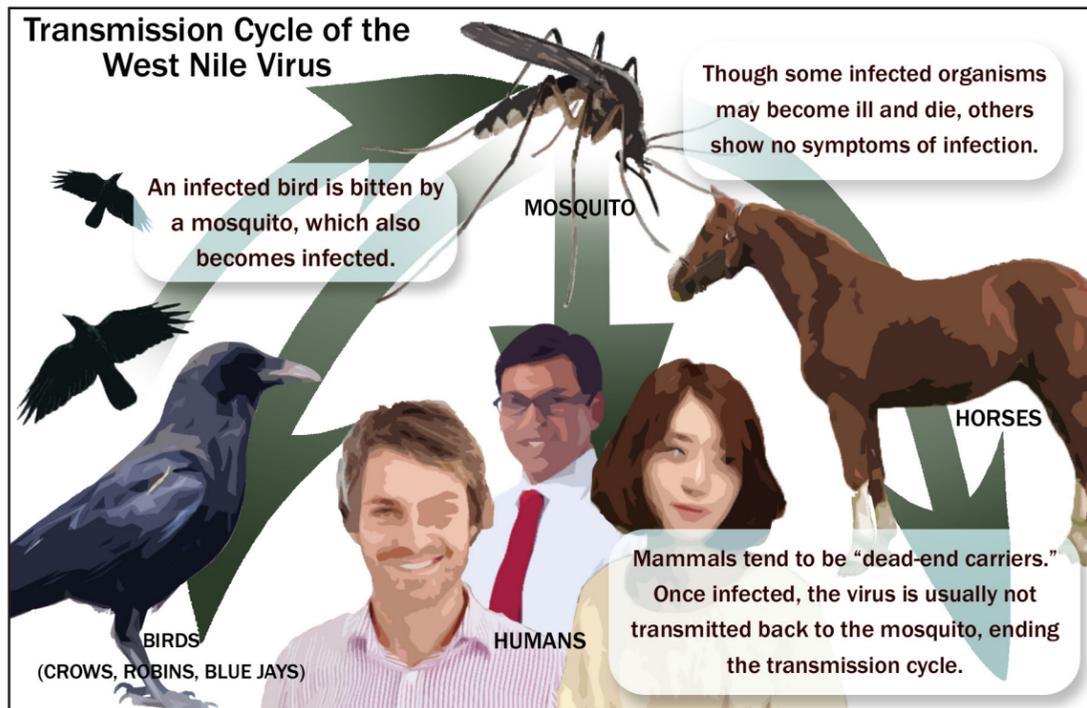
but fatigue and general weakness may persist for weeks or months. In very rare cases, the virus may cause a severe, even fatal, neurological disease. The elderly and those with weak immune systems or health conditions have a higher chance of being strongly affected.

According to NIH, WNV first appeared in the U.S. in 1999. The amount of reported cases in the country has fluctuated throughout the years, with 2012 having a particularly high number at 5,674.

“I never knew about West Nile [being present in the U.S.]. I wish there were some kind of warning sent out to the residents in the contaminated area. I am scared about the virus, even if it mostly consists of normal cold symptoms, [since it is incurable],” sophomore Samantha Lin said.

The community plays a part in preventing the spread of WNV. Bodies of standing water are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, so SGV’s Mosquito Control District asks that they be removed or regularly cleaned. In addition, unnaturally large amounts of dead birds may be a sign of virus circulation and should be reported to local authorities immediately.

MOOR graphic by SYDNEY LI



solely through bites from infected mosquitoes, except in rare cases.

“Preventing West Nile virus from making you sick is as simple as preventing mosquito bites,”

ing indoors from dusk to dawn, the time in which mosquitoes are most active. Also, screen covers on windows and doors keep insects outside of the house, and

cent will develop conditions such as fever, headaches, joint pains, rashes, vomiting and diarrhea 3 to 14 days after being bitten. Minor symptoms fade after 5 to 10 days,