

STUDENTS STEP UP

LASA Students get involved in the community to take action in prominent issues

ELLA LILLY
ZIA RAY | photo editors

After meeting with Senator John Cornyn last year, Austin Climate Coalition started this year strong with an introductory meeting and climate action days planned. The organization, started outside of LASA, invites high schoolers from all over Austin to protest, write letters to policy makers, and mitigate the impact of climate change in their communities. LASA senior Hana Hussaini, an active member of Austin Climate Coalition since 2020 strongly believes the club can make a difference in the climate change issue.

“Austin Climate Coalition’s goal is to really engage you with climate action,” Hussaini said. “A lot of times it might feel like you can’t make a difference, but our goal is to just make sure that you have an opportunity to get out there and change the world and also give them a space to do projects that matter and connect with policymakers and legislatures.”

Austin Climate Coalition invites schools from all over Austin to take action through their numerous events. Hussaini appreciates that unique ability for anyone to make a difference immediately.

“What I like about Austin Climate Coalition is that you can do whatever you want,” Hussaini said. “We don’t have official titles or leadership positions, which means that any student can join and immediately start creating projects and leading meetings.”

Going forward, Hussaini says the organization looks to continue to get high schoolers involved. She wants to provide the opportunity for students to feel empowered enough to take part in local protests along with climate action days dedicated to picking up trash.

“This year, I really want to see the protests and kind of getting students out and talking to people and specifically, like legislatures and people who can make change,” Hussaini said. “And one of the main goals that I have for Austin Coalition is convincing and showing people that we can make change even though we’re young.”



SPEAK UP ACC members meet with a representative of Senator John Cornyn last March. They discussed taking climate change action and bipartisan solutions. photo courtesy of Hana Hussaini



SIGNS UP. Group of ACC members protest at the Texas Capitol. They join another climate change student group to emphasize the importance of the crisis. photo courtesy of Hana Hussaini

COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE



SHOW UP Senior Hana Hussaini and the rest of ACC has their first meeting of the year. They discuss their goals and plan future projects. photo courtesy of Hana Hussaini



A TEMPORARY HOME Junior Lucia O'Driscoll volunteers with her friend, junior Robin Little at Austin Animal Shelter. They love on the pets until they can find a new home. photo courtesy of Lucia O'Driscoll



FILLING UP Junior Javi Glanghai fills up water bowls up for dogs being taken out for play time. He also spends his time fill up Kongs, peanut butter filled toys, and taking dogs on walks. photo by Ella Lilly



GENTLE LOVE Junior Lucia O'Driscoll holds and plays with a stray taken in as part of socializing. Cat socialization is meant to help kittens become used to humans so they can be adopted eventually. photo courtesy of Lucia O'Driscoll

HELPING HANDS

As the school year starts up again for students, and clubs and extracurriculars start to take up more of a high school student's day, it can be hard for students to find time to volunteer. However, some students like junior Lucia O'Driscoll who says she spent her summer volunteering at various organizations and events such as animal shelters that help neglected animals find a comfortable, temporary home.

“It’s the Austin Animal Center off of Levander Loop, and I’ve been trained in everything so I do anything from walking dogs to cleaning their living spaces,” O'Driscoll said. “I also get to work with the kittens and socialize them, so they’re familiar with humans and all

being around the cats in general and playing with them to prepare them for adoptions. And I [also] got trained in small animals so working with bunnies, guinea pigs and other small animals and cleaning their cages.”

O'Driscoll appreciates having the opportunity to give back to her community and the community surrounding LASA. Seeing the impact of donating her time is rewarding for her.

“Volunteering, spending time, and getting to know those animals also makes an impact on their lives and the likelihood of being adopted,” O'Driscoll said. “I also really enjoy being able to see the result of my volunteering when dogs I walk get adopted or start coming out of their shells.”

Similarly, Junior Javi Glanghai began volunteering at Austin Pets Alive multiple years ago and has recently picked it back up this year. At Austin Pets Alive, Glanghai walks dogs and fills Kongs— toys filled with peanut butter for dogs to chew on.

“The overall mission of Austin Pets Alive is to give animals, dogs and cats specifically, just the opportunity to have love because these are our pets that were left on the streets or mistreated so now they’re here,” Glanghai said. “Eventually, they’ll have try and see if anybody wants these pets. But in the meantime, while they’re at Austin Pets Alive, it’s just making sure that they get the love that they did not have before.”

NHS, MORE THAN A CORD



FRESH START Seniors Samatha Mason and Maddie Meyer help host the first NHS meeting for juniors. They cover how to track, log, and find volunteer opportunities. Members of NHS must complete 10 unsponsored and 5 sponsored hours or 30 unsponsored hours a semester. photo by Ella Lilly

National Honor Society (NHS) had its first introductory meetings in September for juniors and seniors to talk about expectations and volunteer opportunities for members this year. Senior service chairs Samantha Mason and Maddie Meyer look forward to their aspirations and plans for NHS this school year.

“We had our first officer meeting a couple of weeks ago,” Mason said. “We’re just trying to plan introductory meetings and let everybody know the guidelines, expectations for this year, and just how various NHS functions work.”

One of the two officers’ goals is to provide members with plentiful opportunities to fulfill volunteer hour requirements. Hour opportunities range from setting up for the homecoming dance to Stitch Service, a club that knits or crochets various items to be donated.

“A lot of people in our class last year didn’t get their hours for NHS last year, so one of our goals is to help at least these juniors and seniors, who

need hours to this year,” Meyer said. “So we want to provide ample opportunities and resources to make volunteering an interesting thing.”

Aside from logging hours and planning events, Mason said she is passionate about NHS and its goal. She believes for LASA students, it can be more than a check on a resume to do list.

“I think it’s a well rounded part of any kind of high school education,” Mason said. “With LASA specifically, it works to allow people to kind of take time and focus on something other than school and focus on something larger than themselves. While they may be kind of trapped, feeling like the world is kind of caving in around them in high school.”

NHS has multiple upcoming volunteer opportunities for members to count hours promoted on their Instagram page. LASA students can volunteer for Mobile Loaves and Fishes tending gardens at a homeless shelter on October 15th, 2022, and cheer on participants in the Austin More than Pink Walk on October 30th, 2022 to raise money and awareness for breast cancer.