



# I'm more than just an: Asian stereotype

Junior Kaden Lee debates legitimacy of Asian stereotype

by Sofia Papakos

The role of stereotypes is prevalent in the high school scene. Aside from the typical nerds, jocks, popular girls who are portrayed in movies, NT's culture exists on the more realistic spectrum.

Junior Kaden Lee touched on whether or not stereotypes held true to him and the Asian community as a whole.

He commented, "I don't think anyone wants to fail in academics, or not be very successful. To some extent the stereotypes are accurate, at least, [for me], an Asian male."

But Lee also explained the parts of him that aren't so typical: he's a two-sport athlete, participating in both tennis and club soccer. He plays the

violin in orchestra, but also the guitar. He's interested in programming, but also enjoys cooking and baking.

"I fit the stereotype in terms of academics. I think I push myself and I end up spending a lot of time in school and out of school on my work. Because of that I don't really hangout with my friends as often as most people do. So the image most people have of me is school," Lee added.

He emphasized that many already have a perceived image of him, as the stereotypical Asian male. "But outside that, where people don't see me, I have a social life," he said.

"I kind of embrace that stereotype a little bit and say, 'you know what, I want to do well in my academics.' I want to be this Asian person since, it's associated with success. But I think as I went through high school, I stopped competing with my friends and started shifting over towards just having fun. I'm co head of Model UN and president in training for Binary Heart. In both I

hope to help solve the disparities of the socioeconomic spectrum across the nation," Lee explained.

Despite devoting his time to extracurriculars, including sports that take up around 10-12 hours a week, to clubs Binary Heart and Model UN taking around six to eight hours, all is balanced.

*'Not everything revolves around academics, or how well you do compared to the person next to you.'*

He looks after his family and two younger sisters, adding that "Overall, I'm pretty satisfied where I'm at. I have five to six friends I would trust my life with. I talk to

people in my classes. I'm involved enough, I go to prom, Trevapalooza, etc., but to contrast that, I'm taking the SAT the same day. It's all about the balance between academics and your social life," said Lee.

Whether or not New Trier encouraged the stereotypes was a topic debated in Lee's perspective. Marginalizing one another with presumed expectations is basic human instinct.

Though as Lee states, "It all stems from a feeling of uncertainty, which results in insecurity and a sense of uncomfortableness among people in the majority who don't understand the minority."

He argues there isn't mal intent, but the issue of labels on Asians, blacks, and Hispanics, causes a misinterpretations of one another and a lack of understanding, that the majority assume to be true.

Lee acknowledged in more ways than one, the majority of Asians, including himself, to relate to

the Asian stereotype.

"I hung out with a lot of Asians whose parents are tiger parents. Therefore, making the stereotype at New Trier even more prominent. And I can think of several cases where anxiety consumed people burning out because of the stress of academics. But I mean even those people even have personal interests outside of school. Not everything revolves around academics, or how well you do compared to the person next to you," said Lee.

Regardless, as Lee stated, it's a lot more than academics, or having the right social communication skills.

"There's always a spot for someone and hard work will always carry you somewhere. It may not be where exactly you want to be, but it won't deny you happiness. And I think that if you can be happy, or relatively successful, you'll have a satisfying life. Which is in my mind, the most important thing."

## Expanding the study-abroad experience to high school

Junior Hayden Ryan spends first semester in Argentina

by Julia Nagel

First semester of junior year has a notoriously challenging reputation. Difficult classes, preparing for the ACT/SAT, and starting discussions about the college process all contribute to a very hectic schedule.

However, junior Hayden Ryan had a very different first semester than the average junior. He spent it abroad in Argentina.

Ryan believes his semester abroad was just as challenging as the first semester of his NT peers, but in a different way.

"[The semester abroad] was difficult because I thought it was going to be an extended vacation, but I didn't realize how hard it would be adapting to a school in Spanish," said Ryan.

Another difficulty Ryan experienced was navigating social situations and meeting new people.

"[The Argentinians] were so open and welcoming to me. They weren't like, 'who's this Yankee,' 'who is this guy from the other side of the world?' They were like, 'awesome, let's invite him over,'" said Ryan.

He also had to adjust to a different schedule. For example, in Argentina, Ryan and his host family usually ate dinner at 10 P.M., quite a bit later than the 6 or 7 P.M. he was used to.

After overcoming the initial culture shock, Ryan was able to fully enjoy his time in Argentina. He spent the first part of his time abroad in school, and the second part was summer break.

Summer provided Ryan with time to explore his surroundings. He went around the town with new friends, and he tried local fare such as maté, a traditional South American caffeinated drink.

By the end of his time abroad,

Ryan said that he was so used to living in Argentina that coming home to the US was an adjustment.

"It was so weird. I had changed so much, but New Trier [stayed] the same," said Ryan.

His time in Argentina helped him grow more confident in himself and his social skills and taught him the importance of family and friends, he said.

"I show people that [I'm] glad to see them, in whatever kind of way that might be, whether that's doing the dishes, so [my] mom doesn't have to do them, or something else," said Ryan.

Ryan first realized he wanted to study abroad when he attended a film camp. There, he met kids from all over the world: Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Brazil, and more.

"That opened my eyes to the potential and all the opportunities to see the world. There's so much cool stuff outside of America," said Ryan.

He looked for a study abroad program that seemed like a good fit, and he found AFS-USA. Ryan said that the application process was surprisingly straightforward.

There were a few steps such as writing a short essay, submitting a picture of himself, filling out paperwork, and an interview with an AFS employee. Later, he was matched with a host family.

Ryan encourages other students to study abroad, but he does warn that spending time abroad is not always easy. Some kids don't get along well with their host families, or sometimes the cultural transition can be too drastic.

Therefore, he cautions against students deciding to study abroad on a whim. Learning the language and other preparation is key.

However, when all of these aspects are considered, Ryan does believe that interested students should make the leap.

"No one ever accomplished anything worthwhile by being cozy and comfortable. You've got to get out of your comfort zone if you're ever going to grow," said Ryan.

## Four students named YoungArts winners

New Trier students place in top 4% of arts competition

by Darcie Kim

Four current and former New Trier Performing Arts students were recognized as winners in the prestigious annual YoungArts competition, joining the nation's most accomplished emerging artists in the visual, literary, design, and performing arts.

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established to identify and nurture the most talented artists through various annual programs, performances, and partnerships with a few of the nation's prominent cultural institutions.

Its most renowned program is its competition, a blind-adjudication, application-based award that receives over 11,000 applicants from artists ages 15-18 or grades 10-12 from all over the country.

163 artists were named Finalists (the competition's highest honor), 268 were awarded Honorable Mentions, and 294 were Merit winners.

Of the 725 winners, senior James Baik was named a Finalist in the Classical Music category and junior Elias Wachtel was named a Finalist in the theater category. Senior Rachel Hsu and Jack Nadler '18 were awarded Honorable Mention in the Classical Music category and the Voice category respectively.

Hsu recalled her surprise after she received Honorable Mention.

"It wasn't until one of my friends texted me 'congrats,' that I realized that I had actually gotten the second highest prize. Looking at everyone who got honorable mentions and all those who were awarded in the past, it was pretty surprising and gratifying to me that I was being honored alongside so many incredible musicians."

As Finalists, Baik and Wachtel received cash prizes up to \$10,000 and the opportunity to participate in the 38th annual National Young Arts Week in Miami from Jan. 6 - 13.

The intensive week-long



Baik performs with his flute quartet during YoungArts Week | YoungArts

program is an interdisciplinary effort amongst 10 disciplines with master classes and workshops with esteemed professional artists.

During YoungArts week, Baik performed in a chamber group with three other Finalist musicians. "I played Light Screens by Andrew Norman, a contemporary piece, in a flute quartet with a flutist, a violinist, and a violist," said Baik.

The week ultimately culminates in the Backyard Ball performance and gala, a black-tie fundraiser event filled with performances that honor the 2019 YoungArts winners.

Receiving an award of any level at the YoungArts competition is a tremendously impressive accomplishment that's only possible after hours of practice and dedication.

As a violinist, Hsu was required to prepare four distinct pieces from varying eras of composition. Hsu was taken aback when her teacher suggested she enter such a distinguished competition but was determined to polish her pieces for the final recording.

Ultimately, she performed the first movements of the Walton violin concerto, the Bach violin sonata No. 2, the Beethoven violin sonata No. 8, and the Fisherman's Song by Chen Yi.

"I had to practice every day, which I don't always do, and I had extra rehearsals with my accompanist because I had never played half my pieces with the piano before. I ended up finally recording my repertoire last minute and uploading my videos

the week of," said Hsu.

Baik expressed a similar determination to prepare for the competition and practiced one to two hours daily for the weeks leading up to his recordings. He prepared the first movement of the Schumann Cello Concerto in A Minor, the Allemande of the Bach Cello Suite No. 5, the Beethoven Cello Sonata No. 5, and Johansen by Joel Phillip Friedman.

The discipline needed to dedicate hours to practicing has been fostered over many years for Baik, who has been involved in music since he was a child.

"My brother plays the cello and I grew up hearing the cello throughout my childhood and I felt inclined to take it up myself. I'm really happy when I play cello and I feel like it's the one thing I can excel in," said Baik.

Despite the relentless hours of meticulously practicing, the honor of receiving an award at the competition is well worth the hard work, as all winners become members of the YoungArts alumni network which spans over 20,000 artists and includes internationally recognized leaders in their field, such as Doug Blush, Viola Davis, and Kerry Washington among many others.

"YoungArts Week was a once in a lifetime, special experience that I can't get anywhere else. I really enjoyed making new friends, good music, and discovering other disciplines within the fine arts department," said Baik