

**Senior Spotlight: Kirsten Kracht** By Ellis Herner

Senior biochemistry major Kirsten Kracht has definitely made an impact within the Heidelberg community throughout the last four years.

After originally wanting to become a heart surgeon, Kracht discovered Heidelberg's science department and all the opportunities that it could provide her as a pre-med concentration.

"I saw they had a really great science program with undergraduates being able to get into a Cadaver lab, which really isn't a thing anywhere else," explained Kracht. "That's really what made me decide to come to Heidelberg."

When Kracht visited Heidelberg for a Scholars Day, she was introduced to the major of biochemistry, a field that she believed she would be successful in.

Last year, through a conversation with Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Justin Pruneski, Kracht learned of a summer internship with Heidelberg alum Dr. Mark E. Peeples at Nationwide Children's Hospital, which she took advantage of.

This past summer, as a part of the internship, Kracht learned about the respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, which is the number two killer of children under five, and about the vaccine that Dr. Peeples is working on.

Outside of her major, Kracht serves as the vice president of the Chem Club and as the president of the German Club.

Kracht joined the Chem Club her freshman year, when she had to join Zoom meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During her junior year, when the group was back to meeting in person, she took on the role of publicity officer and became a crucial member of the club.

"Since taking on the publicity officer and vice president roles, I've been able to dive in," she explained. "I've been able to create events and help out with everything the Chem club does on campus."

For the German Club, Professor Sieglinde Poelzer-Kamatali, assistant professor of German and Spanish, orig-

inally approached Kracht during the fall semester of 2022, in hopes that she would help reignite the German club.

"She told me that the German club existed prior to COVID, but it died out, and she was hoping to get it going again," explained Kracht. "I told her I would help build it up, and I helped restart the club."

Kirsten has also been busy outside of the classroom. During Spring Break, Kracht married her long-term boyfriend, Heidelberg alum Sigurd Ilestad.

"Because he's international, he stayed to get his master's degree and then stayed another year so we could be together," stated Kracht. "We got engaged back in February, and then married on March 2."

While being engaged and getting married while still in college might be difficult, Kracht claimed, "I wouldn't have changed a thing."

"When I first met Siggie, I knew that he was the one, so being married so quickly really didn't phase me at all," said Kracht. "It was so much fun."

After graduation, Kracht plans to attend the Case Western Molecular Medicine doctoral program at the Cleveland Clinic, where she will eventually study organ transplantation research.

"I will do everything at the Lerner Research Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, but I will get all the benefits of Case Western," said Kracht.

Throughout her four years, Kracht has proven that she works hard for the future that she wants. Heidelberg does not doubt that she will be successful as she begins her professional career.

"Heidelberg has provided me with several wonderful opportunities" claimed Kracht. "They've been great to me."



Image courtesy of Kristen Kracht.

**The Staff**

The Kil is interested in hearing from readers about what we should be covering. Information about upcoming events, story ideas and letters to the editor are encouraged. Accepted submissions will be published in the next available issue. Reach out today.

Co-editors-in-chief

**Ellis Herner**

eherner@heidelberg.edu

**Julia Schaefer**

jschaefer@heidelberg.edu

Managing Editor

**Isaiah Shiley**

ishiley@heidelberg.edu

Graphic Design

**Isaiah Shiley**

ishiley@heidelberg.edu

**Salvatore Rocco**

srocco@heidelberg.edu

Marketing Coordinator

**Kelsey Stanfield**

kstanfie@heidelberg.edu

Entertainment Editor

**Makenna Finnegan**

mfinnega@heidelberg.edu

Social Awareness Editor

**Cameron Spraggins**

cspraggi@heidelberg.edu

Sports Editor

**Conor Sukel**

csukel@heidelberg.edu

Campus Event Editor

**Serria Allen**

sallen2@heidelberg.edu

Campus People Editor

**Aaron McCoy**

amccoy1@heidelberg.edu

Website Editors

**Salvatore Rocco**

srocco@heidelberg.edu

Social Media

**Serria Allen**

sallen2@heidelberg.edu

**Josiah Brown**

jbrown8@heidelberg.edu

**Salvatore Rocco**

srocco@heidelberg.edu

Distribution Manager

**Josiah Brown**

jbrown8@heidelberg.edu

# The Kil!

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Image courtesy of Isaiah Shiley

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## “Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV” Review By Serria Allen

On March 17 and 18, MAX aired a four-part documentary called “Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV.” The docu-series follows the story of childhood actors from TV shows such as “Zoey 101,” “All That,” “The Amanda Show” and several others. All of the shows were run by Dan Schneider, the executive producer and showrunner for many of the early Nickelodeon shows.

The first episode talks about Dan Schneider, one of Nickelodeon’s most famous producers. In interviews, several people comment on the suggestive behaviors and tendencies during Schneider’s time with Nickelodeon. In the early years, he was referred to as a “Big Kid”. He was often seen joking around on set with the actors and other workers.

However, as Schneider’s fame rose, his power and control behind the scenes did as well. Throughout the documentary it’s mentioned that a lot of his jokes have double meanings; this means that one side is geared towards children and the other is geared for adults.

Leon Frierson, an actor in seasons four through six of “All That,” talks about a sketch where he plays a superhero called ‘Noseboy.’ Frierson is seen wearing skin-tight clothes, underwear, and, an enlarged nose on his face and either side of his shoulders.

When looking back Frierson said, “You can’t help but notice it looks like a penis and testicles on my shoulders”. Later in the sketch, Noseboy sneezes. The show then cuts to a close-up of the

snot landing on the other character in the sketch, a woman. “It’s a c\*msnot joke,” culture writer Scaachi Koul said.

In 2018, it was announced that Schneider and Nickelodeon had parted ways. In 2021, there was talk of Schneider writing two TV show pilots, but neither has been produced. On March 20, two days after the documentary aired, Schneider sat down with BooG!e (better known as ‘T-Bo’ from “iCarly”) and responded to what was said in the documentary. Schneider started by saying the documentary was “hard to watch,” and it forced him to look back on his “past behaviors”.

The most shocking part of the documentary was about a sexual assault that occurred between a dialect coach, Brian Peck, and actor Drake Bell. This was the first time Bell had ever publicly shared his story. When asked about what occurred during the assault Bell said, “Just imagine the worst thing that could be done to a child.” Peck was charged with eleven counts against the child actor in 2003.

The end of the documentary was a call to action from the former child stars and their parents. It called for stricter regulations



Image courtesy of Deadline.

## “Dune: Part Two” - Power in Prophecy By Aaron McCoy

After it was delayed from an initial release last November, “Dune: Part Two” finally hit theaters on March 1, taking the world by storm.

Nearly two-and-a-half years from the release of the first part, we arrived back on the desert planet Arrakis to continue the story of Paul Atreides. Picking up right where 2021’s “Dune” left off, director Denis Villeneuve’s adaptation of Frank Herbert’s influential 1965 sci-fi novel takes things to a whole new level in “Part Two.”

Due to the story and fictional world’s grand scale, Villeneuve always planned to split Herbert’s first book between two films. While the first brings to life the world of “Dune” and the fall of House Atreides, the second installment focuses on Paul’s rise as a messianic figure and his fulfillment of an ancient religious prophecy as he leads the oppressed Fremen people against the evil House Harkonnen.

Timothée Chalamet, Zendaya, Rebecca Ferguson, Javier Bardem, Josh Brolin and Stellan Skarsgård all return to their roles from the first film. New additions to the cast include Florence Pugh, Austin Butler and Christopher Walken. Each member of the cast turns in an outstanding performance and brings something different to the table.

Although Chalamet starts out as a young, naïve heir when Paul first arrives on Arrakis, “Part: Two” sees him morph into a powerful and threatening leader. Austin Butler transforms

into someone unrecognizable as Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen, the psychotic nephew of Baron Vladimir Harkonnen who is destined to face Paul in final combat.

The film deals with many themes regarding the dangers of religious fanaticism and how power can corrupt those with clear intentions. While Paul initially sets out to gain the trust of the Fremen in order to assimilate into their culture and help take down the Harkonnens, his goals quickly shift back to avenging the death of his father and regaining the power his family lost in the first film.

The word “visceral” is often used to describe that out-of-body feeling you get when you see a certain film, and that’s exactly how I would describe my experience seeing the film for the first time in IMAX. The explosions, sandworm rides and desert battles look, feel and sound as if you’ve landed on Arrakis in the heat of battle with the Fremen.

After the first two films tackled book one, many are asking if Villeneuve will bring to life the second book in the series, “Dune Messiah.”

“‘Dune Messiah’ should be the last ‘Dune’ movie for me,” Villeneuve told Time Magazine. He also confirmed that he was finishing the screenplay for the third film, but that he has some other projects to work on before finishing his “Dune” trilogy.

“Dune: Part Two” is a spectacle of a film, and I encourage anyone to go see it on the biggest screen possible.

## Presenting Our Prehistoric Pals: A Case of Erroneous Identification By Isaiah Shiley

I want to begin by addressing an error I made in my previous article, “Presenting Our Prehistoric Pals: Denizens of the Deep.” In my conclusion I stated the subject of this article, synapsids, were “the first pal to tread the line betwixt mammal and reptile.” This is incorrect. Synapsids had reptilian qualities, but these protomammalian ancestors to you and me diverged from reptiles long ago, before the saurian greats ruled the planet.

So, what exactly are these sometimes scale covered, occasionally cold-blooded and entirely egg-laying mammalian ancestors? Thanks to an online article titled “Science Olympiad Synapsids,” found on Mike Viney’s “The Virtual Petrified Wood Museum,” we know synapsids were creatures belonging to the taxonomic clade amniota, a group descending from amphibian ancestors. The creatures identified as synapsids are the ancestors to modern mammals but all mammals also belong to the sub-clade synapsida. To avoid confusion, mammals will not be referred to as synapsids even though they technically are.

The other sub-clade belonging to amniota, sauropsids, is composed of reptiles, birds and the archosaurs mentioned previously in this mini-series. Synapsids are taxonomically distinct from the reptiles and dinosaurs they are often mistaken for. This erroneous identification is understandable though, as they looked similar and occupied the same prehistoric soil.

Briefly describing the appearance of synapsids is a challenge. They came to be in the early Carboniferous Period, which began about 360 million years ago, and went extinct or evolved into mammals in the Cretaceous Period, which began about 146 million years ago. Their prolonged existence gave them ample time to evolve and then lose a number of physical characteristics. To better understand these diverse beasts, experts put them into two groups: pelycosaur and therapsids.

Pelycosaur used to be known as “mammal-like reptiles” or simply reptiles, but these classifications are out-dated. This first wave of synapsids lived mostly in the early-to-mid Permian Period—299 to 251 million years ago. These synapsids were more reptilian in nature than the later therapsids as seen in a well-known pelycosaur, the dimetrodon.



Pictured on the left are skeletal recreations of two dimetrodons, a synapsid, and the image is courtesy of Willem van Valkenburg via Wikimedia Commons.

Pictured on the right is a skeletal recreation of a spinosaurus, a dinosaur, and the image is courtesy of Kabacchi via Wikimedia Commons.

The dimetrodon lived during the early Permian Period. Sporting coats of scaly scutes, mouths full of predatory teeth, “sprawling gate[s]” and sails along their backs, these cold-blooded creatures could get up to 10 feet long and were externally similar to a reptile.

Internally, though, their skulls’ single temporal fenestra, an opening in the skull behind the eye, and their amniotic fluids’ unique composition mark them as synapsids. Dimetrodons exemplify why pelycosaur and early synapsids were mislabeled as reptiles. However, not all synapsids were this reptilian, especially not the therapsids.

The therapsids were the dominant terrestrial life form during the mid-to-late Permian Period, but they were nearly wiped out by the Permian Extinction Event. Only a handful of therapsid species survived, but these small surviving synapsids would eventually become the mammals we are today.

Externally, most therapsids were less reptilian than the earlier pelycosaur, especially those of the Cretaceous Period. For example, the late Permian dicynodonts were squat, toothless herbivores similar to pigs and hippos and the gorgonopsians of the same time were “wolf and bear-sized predators” reminiscent of saber tooth tigers yet to come. The synapsids that survived into the Cretaceous Period and later became mammals were small and shrew-like. These traits may have saved them from the K-T Extinction Event that ended the Cretaceous Period and most of the planet’s biodiversity.

To conclude this exploration of synapsids and our prehistoric pals, I would like to emphasize that the identification errors and social misconceptions presented throughout the mini-series were not identified to downplay the work of paleontologists and prehistoric media creators. Without frequently-erroneous prehistoric media, my interest in this niche topic may never have hatched, and prehistoric researchers had to make mistakes when identifying and categorizing the first fossils.

Imagine you were a pioneer paleontologist presented with the petrified pieces of the two prehistoric pals pictured below; could you have correctly classified them or would you have also erroneously identified them?



## Heidelberg Grant Finds Medication in Ohio Waters By Julia Schaefer

A new Ohio Sea Grant project from Heidelberg's National Center for Water Quality Research (NCWQR) measured veterinary antibiotics in Ohio's water. Some medications were found in Lake Erie tributaries near Tiffin and in regional watersheds at low concentrations.

About 1.2 million kilograms of antibiotics are produced for U.S. agriculture each year, and up to 90% of those veterinary antibiotics can be excreted by livestock unmetabolized. Once in the environment, antibiotics can contribute to the phenomenon known as antibiotic resistance, in which bacteria adapt to overcome the drugs designed to eliminate them.

"If we have antibiotic resistance for bacteria that would also affect humans, that would be a problem," said Dr. Laura Johnson, director of the NCWQR. "And if you think about it from an ecological standpoint, having more antibiotics means that you're changing the microbial community structure of an aquatic ecosystem. That can just change how it's functioning in general."

To find out whether this is a concern in the western basin of Lake Erie, Johnson's team measured pharmaceuticals at trace levels in the Sandusky and Maumee River watersheds.

The team found that some antibiotics, both veterinary and human, were frequently detected in rivers and streams in the Western Basin. They also confirmed that the antibiotic levels were associated with the density of livestock nearby.

According to the study, the levels of these antibiotics are

low enough to not cause antibiotic resistance in the microbial environment of streams and rivers. However, their widespread detection could suggest that antibiotics are being applied to land at high concentrations, heightening antibiotic resistance risks.

Johnson recently received an award from the Ohio Sea Grant to fund further research. Her project, titled, "Show Me the Data: Visualizing Water Quality Trends in the Lake Erie Watershed" is one of 17 projects from seven Ohio schools to receive funding. The Heidelberg team received \$417,000 dollars to continue their research.

Results from the study will inform livestock practices in the state and regulatory bodies such as the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

"Knowing the potential for exposure to antibiotics in the environment is useful, even if the levels weren't incredibly high," Johnson said. "Hopefully results like this would encourage farmers and producers to not use antibiotics as often. I think anybody would agree that if there's a sick animal or other issues, yes, use antibiotics, but use them smartly."

Heidelberg is one of 15 universities to participate in the Harmful Algal Bloom Research Initiative, or HABRI. The research will be used by Ohioan agencies, including its EPA, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Natural Resources, as well as by the ODH and the Lake Erie Commission.

Pictured on the right is Rock Creek nearly reaching Parking Lot G.



### April 2024: A Month of Rain and Flowers

The month may have just begun, but the torrential rains, rapid floods and blooming buds characteristic of April have already arrived, and they are making their marks around campus.

All images courtesy of Isaiah Shiley.

Pictured below is a hellebore, found in front of the Green House.



Pictured above is a daffodil, found in front of Adams Hall.



Pictured on the left is Rock Creek coming close to the Rebecca Street Bridge.

## Heidelberg to Celebrate New Diversity Week By Aiden Sullivan

Community and acceptance are some of the greatest values held today. From April 9 to 12, these values will be front and center in the activities of Heidelberg's first ever Diversity Week.

Everyday will introduce a variety of fun, extracurricular activities in which everyone is welcome to participate. These events were the idea of Aaron Nelson, director of diversity, inclusion and belonging, and he explained, "Our goal is to come together, bring all underrepresented groups together to showcase different cultures, ethnicities, traditions and to acknowledge differences and lived experiences."

The event will include nine activities, such as entertainment and informational sessions.

On Tuesday, April 9, Paint and R&B will take place in University Commons from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Enjoy SZA, Frank Ocean, Tyler, The Creator and many more as the guest artist helps participants channel their inner Bob Ross. Students must register prior to this activity.

Just 30 minutes later, guest speaker Amy Kinney, the executive director of Fostoria's First Step Domestic Violence Shelter, will speak on female empowerment at the Legacy Patio. Then, the Take Back the Night event will run from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., as participants march through the night to reclaim women's empowerment.

The next day, April 10, will include two events, the Round Tables and Culinary Class. The Round Tables will take place in Wickham Great Hall from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. There, attendees will discuss and learn an eclectic array of identity-based

topics, such as race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, culture and privilege, discrimination and marginalization and more. It is certain to be both informative and engaging.

In Herbstler Chapel, join a special guest chef for Culinary Class to learn new ways to enhance some traditional college meals. Class will be from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and students must register to attend.

On Thursday, April 11, the Diversity Organization Fair will be open in Wickham Great Hall from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Learn more about resources for personal intersectionalities, along with tips for how to be a greater ally in diverse communities.

For people more interested in hands-on learning, Diversity Dodgeball, scheduled from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Campus Center, may be of interest. Players will take part in a special variation of dodgeball in which teams start off with different advantages and/or limitations. In combination with luck and skill, one must be vigilant in this exciting event that teaches us about privilege.

Finally, the crown jewel of Diversity Week will be the Campus Center Fashion Show and Block Party on Friday, April 12. Featuring amazing drag performers from across Ohio, good food, great music, tons of games and even a guest DJ, this is the send-off celebration to attend. Festivities begin at 6 p.m. and conclude at 9 p.m.

Heidelberg's 2024 Diversity Week is fast approaching and it is looking to be an entertaining and educating week the community will not soon forget.

## Sports

### 2024 MLB Season: A Year of Growth By Salvatore Rocco

The 2024 MLB season has a lot of exciting events in store for fans. The league's agenda this year is to expand the game of baseball to everyone and everywhere, as a part of their "World Tour."

For the Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres, the 2024 MLB season began on March 20. The NL West rivals competed against each other in a two game series held in Seoul, South Korea.

This was the first time that MLB teams competed in South Korea, and both teams departed the trip with a 1-1 record.

For the rest of the league, Opening Day was Thursday, March 28. Fans were gifted with some high-level matchups to kick off the season, such as the Yankees vs Astros, Brewers vs Mets and Braves vs Phillies.

A month after Opening Day, the attention will shift south of the border to Mexico City. Last year's Mexico City Series featured the Padres facing off against the Giants. This year, the series will be a battle between the Houston Astros and Colorado Rockies on April 27 and 28.

Six weeks later we will get to see an NL East matchup between the New York Mets and Philadelphia Phillies in London, England. The London Series was memorable last season as we got to see the St. Louis Cardinals and Chicago Cubs compete against each other. The London Series will be held

on June 8 and 9.

June 20 brings us back to a historical period of baseball in the United States. MLB will pay tribute to the Negro Leagues with a matchup between the Cardinals and Giants at the historic Rickwood Field.

Rickwood Field in Birmingham, AL, is the oldest professional ballpark in the United States and was home to the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro Leagues. MLBPA Executive Director Tony Clark reinforced the importance of the Negro Leagues in a 2023 article from Spectrum News, saying "Preserving the legacy of the Negro Leagues is vital to growing baseball's diversity and popularity."

The 94 MLB All-Star week takes place July 12-16 in Arlington, TX. Main events such as the Homerun Derby and All-Star Game will be held at Globe Life Field—the \$1 billion retractable stadium that is home to last year's World Series Champions, the Texas Rangers.

This year's MLB Little League Classic game will be held on August 18 and features the Yankees taking on the Detroit Tigers in Williamsport, PA, home of the Little League World Series.

America's pastime is growing. Baseball is taking on new fans in new places while preserving the old. It is an exciting time to be a fan and an even better time to become one.

## The Impact of Cochlear Implants on a Student's Life By Luke Driskell

Humans are usually born with five senses: sight, touch, taste, smell and hear. But they could lose any of these senses at any moment in their lives, and that is what happened to Heidelberg senior baseball player Macray Metz.

Metz was born with the ability to hear. At six months old, Metz developed moderate hearing loss. A year later, Metz was diagnosed with profound, or severe, hearing loss, and soon after that, he failed his second hearing test.

At age two, doctors diagnosed Metz with profound sensorineural hearing loss, or severe hearing loss in the inner ear. To combat that, Metz was signed up to receive cochlear implants.

According to an article published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, cochlear implants are “a surgically implanted device used for hearing rehabilitation of adults and children with advanced sensorineural hearing loss.”

Cochlear implants work similarly to hearing aids but with more complexity.

The cochlear implants consist of two types of components: external and internal. The external component consists of a microphone, battery, speech processor, external magnet and transmitter antenna. The internal component is made up of an internal magnet, antenna, receiver-stimulator and electrode array.

Metz received his first cochlear implant at the age of two and a half, and the second at the age of three. From ages three to six, Metz attended a special school for people with hearing loss. Metz also completed fifteen years of intensive speech therapy to work out his stutter and word pronunciations.

When asked about his biggest challenge with cochlear implants, Metz responded, “My biggest challenge is not being able to hear everything that I want to, and being told to do things multiple times because I couldn't hear the first time.”

Metz added that school life was difficult for him: “Teachers weren't very accommodating for me, and I constantly was bullied and harassed.”

Metz persevered through the difficulties of school and became a top student in his class. In addition, he also found a way to excel on the baseball field.

Even with cochlear implants, Metz has trouble hearing sometimes. That can be a problem when playing baseball because the sport involves communication.

To communicate on and off the field, Metz learned how to read lips and pick up on hand gestures. During his senior year of high school, Metz committed to play baseball at Heidelberg.

Metz attributed his success to his support system through his family, especially his mother: “My mother was always my biggest supporter and advocate. I would not be where I am today without her and how active she has been in my life.”

On campus, Metz has made many friends. One of those being senior pitcher and housemate Vincent Marimpietri.

In an interview, Marimpietri was asked if there are times when communication with Metz is difficult. He answered, “Yes, one of the most difficult situations is when we are in a noisy environment like a crowd of people talking or with loud music playing.”

However, Marimpietri has learned that Metz is a great lip reader and explained, “The ability is very useful when communicating.”

Metz continues to persevere through his disability and is determined to obtain a doctorate to become a food scientist.

Metz has accepted the fact that he is deaf and embraces it. He is always willing to educate others on being deaf and the struggles that come with it.

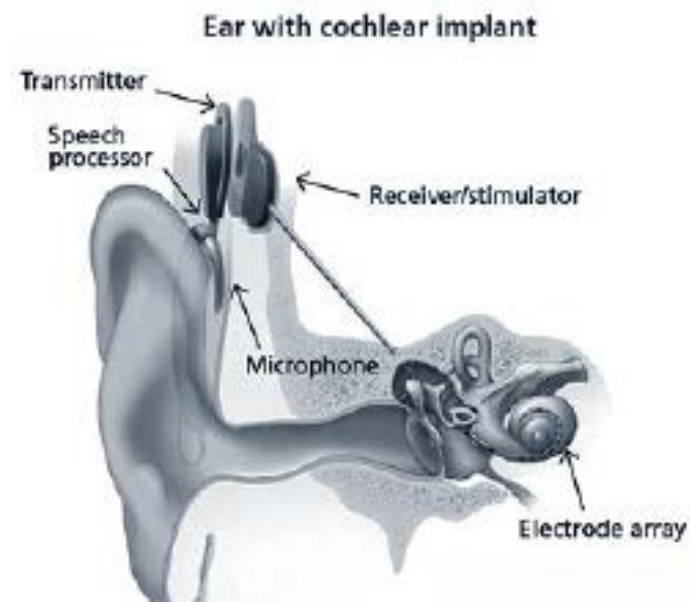


Image courtesy of NIH/NIDCD.

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## Looking Back to Move Ahead: The History of Sexual Assault Awareness Month By Kelsey Stanfield

Twenty-three years ago in April 2001, the first Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) was federally recognized. Now, the movement continues to advocate to end sexual violence by highlighting contributing causes and how to mitigate them.

The theme for this year's SAAM is “building connected communities.” As the organizing National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) states on the webpage announcing the theme, the organization is emphasizing that close-knit communities are safe, inclusive and equitable, resulting in a decrease in sexual violence.

Heidelberg junior and It's On Us President Erin Miller added to the meaning of the theme, noting that community is also important for a survivor's healing.

“Having the support and the sense of community gives you the feeling that you can openly share your experiences and feelings with the additive of coping strategies,” noted Miller. “Making sure everyone has their community to share these feelings with gives me a little hope that things can be okay after something traumatic happens.”

The NSVRC writes in its 2024 preview for its annual recognition month that its movement began with NSVRC's founding in 2000. The group initially solicited opinions from other organizations centered around ending sexual violence, resulting in the iconic teal ribbon symbol.

As the primary coordinator, the NSVRC continues to select a common theme for every year's awareness month and curate materials. The organization has focused on promoting awareness in common public spaces such as college campuses and workplace environments and centers on topics such as consent

or bystander intervention.

The origins of the month are credited by NSVRC to begin long before 2001, tracing back to the civil rights movement. Black women highlighted how their gender and race intersected to increase the unfortunate likelihood they may be assaulted.

Now, the NSVRC has its eyes set on addressing contributing factors such as education, income, employment, community safety and social support to end sexual violence at its roots.

“Sexual Assault Awareness Month is important as it is a time for the community, from survivors to advocates, to come together to support survivors and share knowledge and awareness of a thing that's widespread and happens in many communities,” said Miller. “One of the best things students here at Heidelberg University can do is attend Take Back The Night on April 9. It would be an amazing experience to have a large student body attend this event and show support.”



Image courtesy of Library of Congress.

## Harmony in Peril: Safeguarding Music Education By Nicholas Chambers

In a crucial period for education, music education programs across the country face an alarming threat of budget cuts and program eliminations.

These programs, however, have been shown to improve students' academic skills and self-expression. Music can merge one's emotions to the notes they play, honing social-emotional skills.

Music education is often one of the first programs cut by schools and universities due to budget constraints. While an emphasis on STEM subjects is crucial for students, the arts should still hold value in higher education.

Jami Jeres of California State University argued, “Districts and schools have many different programs and clubs they have to fund... With many subjects [needing] funding, music programs can find themselves at a lower priority.”

Rather than making cuts proportional across subjects, music programs are often cut using economic strain as justification.

Furthermore, the National Association of Schools of Music found a decline of 14% in music education undergraduates, with the most severe examples in economically disadvantaged urban and rural communities.

For many students, music education serves as both an academic and emotional benefit.

In a 2020 *Journal of Educational Psychology* study by Martin Guhn and others, researchers found that “highly engaged instrumental music students were, on average, academically over 1 year ahead of their peers,” and “multi-year engagement in music may benefit high school academic achievement.”

Music programs also provide students with opportunities to express themselves and build self-confidence.

In 2023, Beatriz Ilari of the University of Southern California and Eun Cho of Yale University found students who participated in music education had increased development in competence, more hopeful future expectations and a better sense of school connectedness.

It is important to encourage more active participation in music programs whether it is in a band, choir or a stage group. Music is an element of human culture that is almost universal; anyone can find their place within it.

Often relegated to the sidelines when budgets get tight, music education is a vital subject that must be taught. Preserving music education ensures the enrichment of young minds and creates a society that values creativity and the power of art.