THE DATELINE

Student-run since Volume One

The University of Houston-Downtown

Volume 70
Issue 8
May 10, 2023

CAMPUS NEWS

Dateline's clothing drive collects nearly 500 donations to support women and divert wearable items away from landfills

BY THE DATELINE

In honor of Women's History Month and Earth Month, the newspaper editors Edward Saenz and Indira Zaldivar created a collaborative clothing drive that spanned from March 20 to April 22 to support a local nonprofit centered on helping women facing adversity.

As a green plus, the clothing drive also provided the UHD community an eco-friendly way to repurpose gently used clothing items to new owners, and those items no longer needed, to recycling centers in Houston, Texas.

The successful clothing drive collected nearly 500 clothing items in total. Every item was inspected by the Dateline editors to ensure that each item is sent to the appropriate place.

Nearly 400 items will be donated to the local consignment and thrift store, The Cottage Shop, which is owned by local nonprofit The Women's Home. All proceedings from donated items will go towards servingwomen who have experienced homelessness because of mental illness, abuse, and addiction.

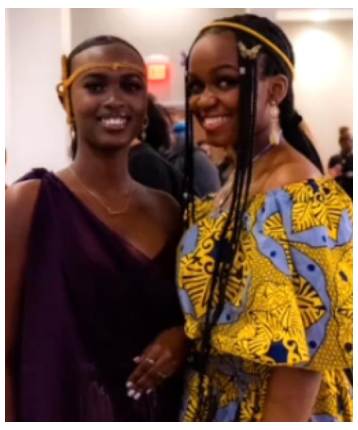
The clothing items donated to The Cottage Shop included clothes ranging in style, from casual to fancy occasions, from well-known brands including Michael Kors, and from any gender and different age groups.

Nearly 100 items did not meet resale standards and were set aside to be recycled at the City of Houston's textile recycling centers.

Dateline's Assistant Editor Edward Saenz, who came up with the idea of organizing a clothing drive, is thankful to the donors who exceeded the expected turnout of the clothing drive.

CLOTHING DRIVE continued on pg. 4

All donations were sorted, stored, and inspected in Dateline office S260. Credit: Edward Saenz



Sandrine Irankunda and Valary Musibega (left) participate in fashino show. The group (right) also performed a crowd-pleasing dance at the event. Courtesy: @uhd_asa on Instagram.

'Afronation' celebrates vibrant traditions and diversity of Africa

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR & EDWARD SAENZ

Titled "Afronation," the African Student Association's first cultural event of the year included African electrifying dance performances, delicious dishes, a fashion show, music, games and more fun in the Milam and Travis room in the Girard Street Building on April 27.

ASA Speaker Oluwabusola Okulaja showcased her talents at the event during a group dance performance to the rhythm of Afrobeats, Afro-fusion, AfroPop, and Hip hop and felt the support of her community.

"This event was meaningful to me because I got to see a community and teamwork," Okulaja said.

"I got to show people how proud I am of my culture and where I come from. This event also made me realize how loved I was by my fellow Gators, and it gave me an inspiration to keep going and doing what I do best."

For AfroNation attendee, Rhode Villareal, the dance performance was her favorite. Next time, she suggested a teaching portion as she wants to learn how to dance like the performers.

AFRONATION continued on pg. 3

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Academic coordinator Sheila Ortega-Calvillo establishes program for Gators to borrow graduation regalia

BY BRIJANET FIGUEROA

Graduation season can be expensive and stressful as seniors are trying to wrap up their last courses for graduation. Academic Success Coordinator Sheila Ortega explained the drive and purpose behind her new Gator Regalia Loaners program.

"I spoke to UHD alumni, university staff, and our current graduating seniors for information, advice, and support," Ortega said. "I received valuable feedback from them. After doing so, I was able to move forward with setting up a name for the program and logistics."

GRAD REGALIA continued on pg. 4

UHD senior Leslie Salmeron receiving her graduation regalia. Credit: Brijanet Figueroa

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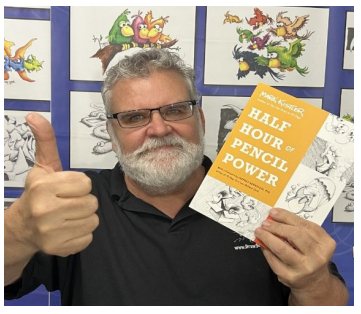
Credit: Edward Saenz



Award-winning Mark Kistler 6

FIND US ONLINE!

New donated bench honors Joshua Nadelbach and spreads awareness of suicide prevention, mental health on campus

BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR & EDWARD SAENZ

Overseeing the White Oak Bayou and the Sciences and Technology Building, the new Joshua Nadelbach's bench on campus adds a much-needed sight dedicated to raising awareness on suicide prevention and mental health resources.

"This bench represents resources and hope for the community surrounding suicide awareness and mental health," said Naomi Berger-Perez, the director of UHD Counseling Services.

The bench was donated by Cindy Nadelbach, the mother of Joshua Nadelbach, who lost his battle with depression. Nadelbach started the non-profit organization, Josh's Benches, in Josh's honor to help raise awareness for those dealing with mental health challenges.

UHD held a dedication ceremony for the new Joshua Nadelbach bench on April 6. The bench calls viewers to dial the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 "if you're in crisis and want to talk."

UHD Counseling Services staff alongside UHD President Loren J. Blanchard and community attended the dedication ceremony for the new Joshua Nadelbach bench on April 6. Courtesy: @uhdcounseling on Instagram.

"It's great to talk as talking helps spread awareness," said Tim Coulter, a licensed professional counselor at UHD Counseling Services. "My hope is that the bench can be a reminder to all of us that the lives of those around us are important."

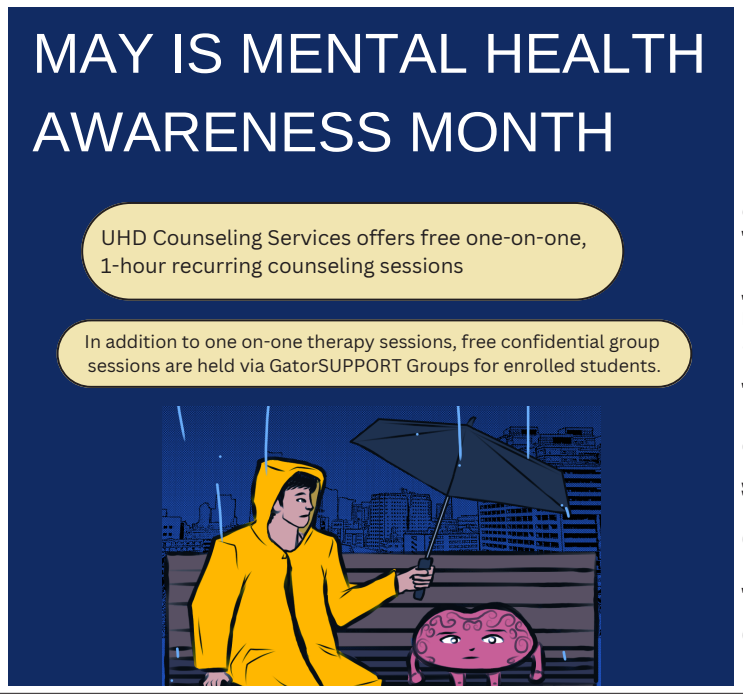
With mental health at the forefront during Mental Health Awareness Month, UHD Counseling Services invites Gators to take advantage of the free and confidential counseling sessions available. Crisis support via phone is also available even outside of business hours by dialing 713-221-8121.

"The counseling services team is here to support you," Berger-Perez said. "Our office is free from judgement and is a safe place."

In addition to the one-on-one therapy sessions, free confidential group sessions are held via GatorSUPPORT Groups for enrolled students.

"Normalize asking for help," Coulter added. "When I encourage students to use our services, I focus on building a connection, remain engaging, be accepting, meeting them where they are, and speak in a way that doesn't overcomplicate the process or make therapy seem like a different language."

Enrolled students interested in counseling services may schedule a recurring one-hour session conducted in-person, by phone or video conference, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., or fill out the intake form on UHD Counseling Services' webpage.



Credit: Giselle Oviedo & Edward Saenz

Bright biotechnology student Madiha Hussain stays engaged in studies through Dateline, moves on to pursue medical degree

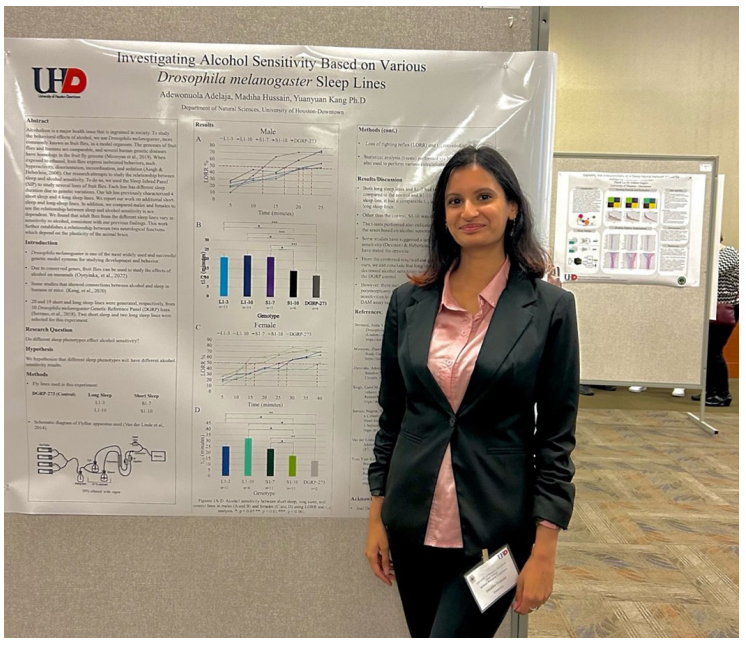
BY INDIRA ZALDIVAR & EDWARD SAENZ

As UHD's 74th commencement ceremony approaches, UHD student and Dateline writer Madiha Hussain is excited to chase her passion for medicine as she graduates from UHD to attend medical school and pursue research opportunities.

Hussain studied biotechnology at UHD and loved UHD's smaller classroom size and affordability.

"I also liked that it was geared towards non-traditional students," Hussain added.

After enjoying the articles in the Dateline issue that she picked up during the pandemic and inspired by the student newspaper experience from watching the TV show "Gilmore Girls," Hussain joined The Dateline in January 2021.



Madiha Hussain presents her reseach on flies at the Student Research Conference on April 14, 2023.

Hussain said Dateline improved her college experience by enhancing professional skills such as writing, communication organization, responsibility management.

Plus, contributing to Dateline for more than two years also helped her stay engaged with her studies and in meaningful extracurricular activities.

"The Dateline has helped me improve my writing skills tremendously, which is a lifelong skill," Hussain added. "Being a part of the Dateline means I can entertain and inform others in a format that helps me express my thoughts more clearly."

"Staying busy will help you with your studies as well!" Hussaind said. "You have less time for distracting activities like playing on your phone or computer. It also helps you learn how to prioritize your responsibilities."

In more than two years with the paper, Hussain published 23 articles across four newspaper volumes. Her favorite article was "UHD alumna Mouchaty discusses 'How To Talk to a Nudibranch' in art exhibition published in Issue 3 of The Dateline's Volume 69. Talking to Dr. Suzette Mouchaty about how she combined her love for art and science into one project inspired Hussain.

Hussain shines bright in the College of Sciences and Technology as research assistant in Dr. Yuan Kang's lab to investigate how sleep phenotypes in fruit flies affect their alcohol sensitivity.

Outside of the lab and school, Hussain loves to baby her cats and to cook, two leisure activities she attained during the COVID-19 lockdown. She adopted her first cat in the midst of the pandemic and has since adopted three more. Her dishes of pride are tacos and chicken pot pie.

"I really enjoyed my time at UHD and at The Dateline," Hussain added. "I want to give a special shout out to Indira for writing recommendation letters for me and letting me borrow her graduation outfit."

Dance Afrikana teaches moves to to the rhythm of samba-jazz for Arts & Communications Festival

BY KARLA CARRILLO

As part of this year's UHD's Arts & Communications Festival, the dancer and instructor of the Dance Afrikana diaspora event performed and taught students, faculty, and staff how to perform a traditional African dance in the Mural Area on April 5.

Lindsay Gary, PhD., founder and artistic and executive director of Dance Afrikana, showed much compassion for inviting people to learn the dance and perform in front of an audience.

Gary told the audience she had the wonderful opportunity to endure a diasporic learning experience from "Ghana, Brazil, and the Caribbean."

Gary started the workshop by doing light stretches, targeting specific parts of the body such as arms, neck, and legs, with the help of UHD student and drummer Adam Sterling.

The time signature for this was a 6/8 compound meter that was not only flexible for the movements but also fun to listen to. Think of the rhythm as something you would hear in a bossa nova or samba-jazz song.

After Gary and the participants stretched, she started the routine with Sterling drumming in a common

Lindsay Gary, PhD., founder and artistic and executive director of Dance Afrikana, interacted with the audience to teach traditional African dance. Credit: Karla Carrillo

4/4-time signature. Gary broke down the routine in three easy sections with multiple steps in each of them. After successfully learning the section, the participants showcased their moves to the instructor and the audience while moving down the hall of the Academic Building's third floor Mural Area.

After finishing their performance, an applause filled the atmosphere as the dancers sensed fulfillment.

Chair of the Arts and Communications Festival Committee and Drama Professor Dennis Sloan, PhD., was in awe of how interactive and exciting the performance was.

"Dance Afrikana's appearance didn't just give us a chance to see and learn about African dance—which would have been fantastic in and of itself," Sloan said. "Some of our students and faculty even got to learn a routine! It was both educational and entertaining for all of us."

The dance routine brought joy in how Gary asked for volunteers to perform the routine, and there were curious volunteers who participated.

The performance made it seem like a real dance from a professional dance company, but there was not enough appreciation for the student drummer. Sterling was able to match with the fluctuating tempos in near perfection.

Students, faculty, and staff can check out Dance Afrikana's social media page on Instagram and learn more about Gary in her website: lindsaygary.com .

AFRONATION

continued from page 1

"What inspired ASA in-creating this event was the focus in wanting to showcase our African culture and in making our mark in letting the student body know of the association," ASA President Maria Orie-Okpewho said.

Okpwewho re-established the student organization in February, representing her Nigerian roots.

She led the event alongside the event coordinators Janai Kamese and Hanifa Ali with support from the ASA members and Student Activities Director Tremaine Kwasikpui and Center for Diversity and Inclusion Program Coordinator Savasia Mangual.

The menu showcased African cuisine with dishes including jollof rice, fried plantain, meatpie, chapati, egusi, pounded yam, puff puff, plus drinks including Nigerian chapman and Rwandanese Agasha.

"We just wanted to showcase our culture as well as sow African representation at UHD," ASA secretary Priscilla Atani said.

"I hope the [student body] learnt more about the African culture and saw how diverse we are in terms of our food, clothes and languages."

Chat with ASA

Credit: Edward Saenz

THE DATELINE

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Submission Policy

The Dateline staff consists of students from UHD who complete all tasks required to produce the newspaper, which serves all UHD campuses. The opinions and commentaries expressed within reflect the views of the contributing writers. No opinions expressed in The Dateline reflect the viewpoints of UHD, its administration, or students.

The Dateline reserves the right to edit or modify submissions for the sake of clarity, content, grammar, AP syle, or space limitations. All submissions become property of The Dateline and may not be returned.

All paid writers must be currently enrolled students at UHD. All paid writers must also complete vendor registration with the University of Houston System prior to contributing. Press releases, story ideas, news tips and suggestions are always welcomed. We encourage all students to contribute.

@the_dateline

GRADUATION REGALIA

continued from page 1

Ortega explained how she started asking for donations and loaning out regalia last year in the summer and then created the program in March.

"I saw a need from senior students and a willingness to address the need from staff and alumni. I know it's possible to help since it has been happening since before I was in college. Students already loan and recycle each other regalia. I am simply trying to create a sustainable process that will allow long-term access."

The graduation regalia comes with a bachelor and master's cap and gown, plus a tassel and stole.

So far, 11 students have received graduation regalia since January from this program. The graduation regalia is returned once the graduation ceremony is finished.

UHD alumni Terry Graham donated his graduation regalia to help fellow Gators and repurpose the meaningful item.

"To stare at a gown that was worn one night, for a few hours, just hanging in my closet - was heartbreaking,"

UHD alumni Terry Graham donated his graduation regalia to Sheila Ortega-Calvillo. Credit: Brijanet Figueroa

Graham said.

"I asked my wife and the only thing we could think of was maybe to donate it to a Goodwill center near the UHD campus. That didn't seem like it would work, but we didn't know any other way to get it into the hands of someone that needed it. Then I saw Sheila's post on LinkedIn! I was thrilled and contacted her immediately to arrange a time to drop off the regalia."

Prospective donors may donate funds or drop off used or purchased regalia in the One Main Building, N1000B. Other options include mailing the regalia to Ortega or buying the regalia online from the UHD bookstore and adding "Sheila Ortega-Calvillo" as the person to pick up.

For any questions or more information, prospective donors may email Ortega at OrtegaCalvilloS@uhd.edu.

Dateline's Brijanet Figueroa borrowed graduation regalia through Ortega-Calvillo's program. Courtesy: Sheila Ortega-Calvillo

CLOTHING DRIVE

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"The outpouring of support that came from the student body was incredible," Saenz said. "I figured we'd get maybe 100 articles of clothing, not over 400. I know The Women's Home will be just as happy when they see all that we collected over the past month. I hope The Dateline can make this a yearly event or something similar."

When Dateline's editor Indira Zaldivar and her family moved houses, they wanted to repurpose clothing items in good conditions that were no longer needed. Zaldivar found The Cottage Shop and loved that they supported a great cause centered on helping women.

After Saenz and Zaldivar donated items together over the winter break to The Cottage Shop, Saenz voiced he wanted to extend the opportunity to the UHD community to make a good and eco-friendly impact.

The Garden and Compost Club, UHD Bike Club, Latinas Achieve, and UHD Academic Support Center helped spread awareness of the clothing drive around campus.

Dateline's Section Editor and Latinas Achieve Recording Secretary Sonia Sanchez said it was important to participate in the clothing drive by spreading awareness because her organization wanted to help give back to the community in a positive way, especially to women facing adversity.

"It was meaningful to help because I wanted to help make a difference in women's lives that were fleeing violence, a cause that is very important to me," Sanchez said.

Editors dropping off first donation at The Cottage Shop over winter break. Credit: Edward Saenz

Academic Support Center's Assistant Director Jema Pantoja donated nearly 50 items because she wanted to clean out her space while supporting a good cause.

"I'm in support of fighting against climate change, and I truly believe in donating clothes to help the planet and help those in need," Pantoja said.

Every year, approximately 17 million tons of textile waste is generated but only 2.5 million tons, or 14.7%, are recycled or donated, according to a 2018 report by the Environmental Protection Agency. This means that the majority of clothing items, including wearable items, end up in landfills.

The Dateline thanks all donors for every donation and hopes to lead another successful and beneficial clothing drive next year.

Shoes donated ranged in style and brand. Credit: Edward Saenz

Dateline maintained a bin outside of the office for donors to drop off items. Credit: Edward Saenz

CLASS OF 2023

The Dateline Staff Graduates

ISIAH ARCHIE
writer/photographer
B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies

"I had a positive experience at [UHD]. I appreciated the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and I had the chance to join Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, which is the best fraternity in the world. Additionally, I participated in the Council of Finance and Dateline. "

BRIJANET FIGUEROA
writer/photographer
B.S. in Criminal Justice

"As a first-generation student, school was very hard, but it was all worth it at the end! Because of the Dateline newspaper, I had an amazing opportunity on interviewing and writing articles that interested me!"

MADIHA HUSSAIN
writer/photographer
B.S. in Biotechnology

"I love the smaller classroom sizes and affordability [at UHD]. I also liked that it was geared towards non-traditional students. The Dateline has helped me improve my writing skills tremendously, which is a lifelong skill. "

PATRICK PAGUIO
writer/photographer
B.B.A. in Finance

"I came in to UHD knowing they have the type of online degree program I was looking for (online Finance program). I have had a good experience overall and did learn a lot from the professors and about myself. The Dateline is something I wished I joined the sooner I entered UHD. "

Credit: Edward Saenz

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Commander Mark shares advice on turning hobby into career

BY PATRICK PAGUIO

Some may know him as Commander Mark on the PBS show called "The Secret City" and later "Imagination Station," Emmy award-winning host and artist Mark Kistler sat down with The Dateline through Zoom to talk about all things art.

He started at 15 years old in his first drawing class in high school. When asked why he picked 3D as his main focus, he said he wanted to give depth to his illustrations. "The whole goal of drawing is to communicate something." Kistler said.
As he showed pictures of a regular 2D drawing compared side by side with his 3D version of a drawing (one of them was a 3D donut), I was impressed with his attention to detail.

For starters, Kistler has been living in Tomball for 20 years, has been teaching drawing for over 40 years, and has written 20 books.

He started hosting "The Secret City" in 1985, which was aired around the world, and "The Imagination Station" around the mid-'90s. How did "Half Hour of Pencil Power" come about?

Credit: Edward Saenz

During the pandemic, he and his son with special needs named Mario did a livestream at noon to do the aforementioned title ("Half Hour of Pencil Power") Monday to Friday.

Now they are available in Draw3d.com, which is a monthly membership with 400 recorded lessons for all skill levels. An interesting fact is that growing up, Mark's mom allowed him to use a closet and set up a desk for his first studio. Also, Kistler was inspired by a Disney artist named Bruce McIntyre. Kistler's past students have animated in world famous movies like: "Big Hero 6," "Kung Fu Panda," "Wall-E," "LucasFilm," and some created the minions from "Despicable Me."

"Dreams do come true with hard work and determination and relentless pursuit that you can do it," said Kistler when asked to summarize his professional and personal story.

He calls his kids his proudest accomplishments, calling them amazing people and the reason for being able to do what he does for so long. Kistler enjoyed going to 4,000 schools.
According to Kistler, life itself was one of the challenges he overcame in his professional and personal life.

"It kicks dirt in your face sometimes and you just have to get back up and refocus and reassess and adjust and navigate," Kistler said.

"Being an artist has helped me have a creative mind to be able to navigate through the many levels and layers of problems that you come across every day and to be able to think of things and see things from different dimensions. I always say draw in 3D, think in 3D."

To UHD students, he encourages to take advantage of learning how to draw as a valuable outlet.
"Drawing in 3D is joyful, it's fun, its positive and builds eye-hand coordination, build tremendous problem-solving skills."

As far as UHD students considering learning about his techniques, he says as an encouragement—especially to the ones teaching, that drawing is like, "a vehicle to teach any subject better, any subject with more fun, more passion and visually get more understanding and comprehension and you can tie drawing to English, reading, writing, history, geography."

Kistler has a new book entitled "Half Hour of Pencil Power," which is available now in stores.

He goes live for his Draw3d.com members via Zoom, starting with "Turbo Tuesday Live!," "Wondrous Wednesday," and "Throwback Thursday." He will be appearing in "KadabraCon" in Portland, Texas from Sept. 29 through Oct. 1.

POST Houston expo promotes small businesses, local artists

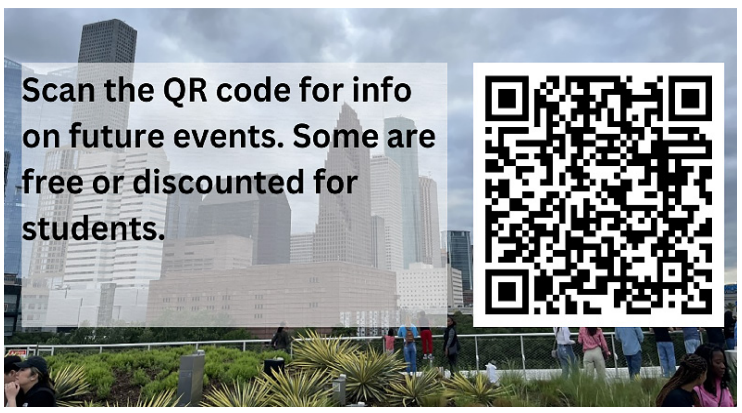
BY KARLA CARRILLO

On April 8, POST Houston hosted an expo event opened to the public with invited vendors to sell their merchandise as well as food from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. POST Houston announced the event on their Instagram page.

The event was vibrant and filled with an illuminating ambiance, accompanied by music from various artists and eager buyers.

POST have changed their usual scenery of an empty hallway of paintings on walls into a ravishing gathering of small businesses and locals lined up all over the first floor.

Vendors were selling a variety of things such as novelty Crocs charms, stickers, handmade earrings, bracelets, rings, action figures, Y2K fashion (also known as the Year 2000), CBD oils and supplements, toys, and anything else you could think of.



Credit: Edward Saenz

Vendors from as far as The Woodlands, and Austin came to downtown Houston to showcase their art and promote their businesses.

A junior from UHD named Paola Guerrero attended the event and expressed her gratitude for the variety and inclusivity of the event.

"I think it was definitely worth going because there were so many different vendors from all types of backgrounds and so many different types of products," Guerrero said.

The endless options of items for sale fascinated many other Houstonians that attended the event, leading to many businesses rising in prominence. Prices were reasonable for a lot of handmade items, and many vendors showed dedication to providing the best service for their customers.

Vendors selling merchandise to their customers from the front entrance of POST Houston. Credit: Karla Carrillo

The POST also continued their normal business hours for those who wished to enjoy a regular day there. When they did not feel like shopping anymore, they could grab a bite at the food court on the first level and enjoy the view of downtown Houston from the top floor.

This was the perfect day to support small businesses and help them experience economic growth. From the unique, handmade items to the low prices, the only complaint one would have would be that they spent too much money during this event.

‘Super Mario Bros Movie’ misses mark despite financial success

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Mario (Chris Pratt) and Luigi (Charlie Day) are two Brooklyn plumbers attempting to make a name for themselves in New York City, after stumbling across a portal to a magical world plagued by the tyrant Bowser (Jack Black), the brothers are the only hope for Princess Peach (Ana Taylor Joy) and her Mushroom Kingdom.

For a film that had so much promise, “Super Mario” features little to no character development and a boring story. There was some good here, although the Nintendo video game characters do not have the chutzpa to make an entertaining ensemble.

Donkey Kong is the best part of “Super Mario”, due to the voice work of Seth Rogen. The actor has extensive voice-acting work, starting with “Shrek the Third” (2007) he has appeared in 16 voice projects and counting.

Bowser is the leader of the turtle kingdom and a ruthless king. As opposed to simply commanding the turtles, Bowser himself likes to be part of the action. The tyrant often takes matters into his own hands. The villain is one of the few bright spots of the film and much of this is due to Black’s vocal performance as the turtle tyrant.

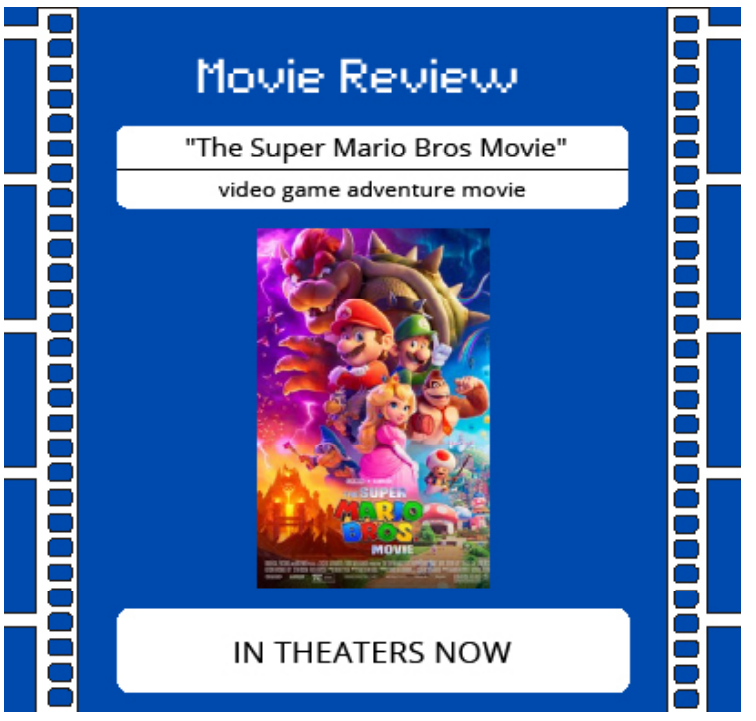
Although this is called “The Super Mario Bros. Movie,” one would assume that the brothers would be together for the film’s duration. This is not the case as the brothers are quickly separated, leaving Mario to discover the fantastical world by himself.

Luigi stays locked in a prison for most of the movie, which is just a waste of a character. By choosing this for the plot, interesting dialogue was lost between the brothers, although Pratt’s performance seemed uninspired.

“Super Mario” was crafted with the fans in mind. Everything has a name and function related to the Nintendo world.

What is done well is the mixing of elements directly from multiple Nintendo games into the culture and lore of the film. Mushrooms are shown to allot different powers for anyone who consumes them. Strength, speed, and size-altering fungi are some examples, just like in the Mario games.

The Rainbow Road from the game, Mario Kart, appears in the film making for a fun and nostalgic chase scene. Vibrant colors on the raceway and dangerous obstacles offer a throwback to the late 90s.



Credit: Edward Saenz

The CGI would have looked more at home in a video game than a film. It is hard to compete with Disney when it comes to computer animation. Universal desperately needed a punch-up on both the script and storyline.

The film is already a financial success having earned almost four times the original $100 million budget pulling in $377.6 million in just the opening weekend.

Just wait for streaming, however the film could be summed up as bland, just like Pratt’s voice work. The film is now playing in cinemas and should hit streaming for rental and purchases soon.

Local dessert bar opens ‘My Hero Academia’ themed popup café

BY AMY NGUYEN

From April 7 to 30, the Popfancy Dessert Bar on Bellaire Food Street presents another anime pop up café from 1 to 10 p.m. daily with this month’s theme being “My Hero Academia.”

Previous pop-up cafe themes Popfancy has had in the past include film “Quantumania” anime “Demon Slayer,” Netflix show “Stranger Things,” various K-pop bands such as BTS or NCT 127, and role-playing game Genshin Impact.

They have two lines before entering the building: FASTPASS reservations for attendees with online tickets from Friday to Sunday, and the free virtual line with text alerts or walk-ins starting at noon. Reservations are $2 per person, while the virtual line has a one-hour grace period.

Attendees can view various decorations and merchandise related to the theme while in line. The merchandise includes: clothing, figurines, plush toys, acrylic stands, keychains, pins, and posters as well as products from a local artist.

Popfancy tables are designed to look like traditional Japanese food stalls. Credit: Amy Nguyen

The pop-up cafe was themed after My Hero Academia. Credit: Amy Nguyen

“I liked it because I’m a ‘My Hero Academia’ fan, plus the merch they have,” attendee Jordy Vazquez commented. “Didn’t like the limited seats but makes sense because the place isn’t that big.”

The menu contained various drinks, confectioneries, baked goods, sundaes, and street snacks referencing the characters and café theme. The wait for the order can take long as being in line, and attendees may eat outside due to high demand.

For entertainment, attendees can listen to various anime openings and mashups of other music genres, played by DJ Hydeheart, play on two arcade machines with a plethora of games, and view “My Hero Academia” related trivia and videos on the flatscreens at the back of the building. Employees and attendees can be seen cosplaying and taking pictures around the café.

The pop-up cafe employees were dressed in uniforms from the anime and had standees of characters. Credit: Amy Nguyen

Otaku Food Festival hosts Cherry Blossom Festival at UH Main

BY CRISTINA AMBROSIO & DIANA AMBROSIO

On March 18 and 19, the Otaku Food Festival held a Cherry Blossom Festival at University of Houston Lynn Eusan Park. Artists, vendors, a maid café, voice actors, live entertainment, and street food stands made the festival memorable.

There were about ten food stands available. There was a stand selling an assortment of drinks containing boba pearls. Another stand was selling Japanese souffle pancakes with assorted flavors of syrup. There was another stand selling Shin ramen with crawfish.

The maid café was themed after an anime, "Ouran High School Host Club." The café was run by university students who were wearing the school uniform from the anime.

"It was interesting seeing people cosplaying as Ouran High School Host Club characters," stated Jennifer, a Houstonian who enjoys anime.

"I love seeing people cosplay as their favorite characters and I get to enjoy some delicious food while walking around shopping."

There was sumo wrestling available for viewing all day. There was a random dance recital being held that welcomed all dancers. There was a group of female student dancers that took the stage at one point.

A cosplay contest was held. People came dressed as popular anime and game characters such as Isabel from Animal Crossing and Albedo and Clee from Genshin Impact.

"I like being able to take pictures with cosplayers because the work they put in is amazing," stated Eduardo, a Houstonian attending his fourth festival.

Much of the festival was made up of stands housing vendors and artists. Some of the stands were student run.

There were resin trays with Pokémon cards sealed in being sold. As well as 3D-printed models of characters such as Pokémon character Gengar and Pikachu. There were all kinds of plushies being sold. There was art such as paintings, keychains, and stickers being sold by small businesses and artists.

All the tents at Houston Lynn Eusan Park. Credit: Diana Ambrosio

A group of girls performing at the events dance recital Credit: Diana Ambrosio

Comedian Orny Adams roasts family, Houstonians, in riveting show

BY JAMES JUREWICZ

Comedian and Actor Orny Adams visited Rudyard's in Houston with multiple shows from March 31 through April 1. Adams is also known for his role on the MTV show "Teen Wolf" as Coach Bobby Finstock. Adams started the show with questions about the city's employment quotient.

"Thanks for coming out, does anybody here work? I went to Home Depot, and this is how bad it is: people are asking me for home building advice. I pretended that I worked there and sent them as far away from me as possible."

Commenting on current events and societal norms, Adams addressed his relationship with his family.

"I got a problem with both my nephews; they are 12 and they talk back to me. 'You can't tell me what to do you're not my parent, in fact, you do not even know how to talk to kids because you don't have kids. You will never have kids because no woman would ever marry you.' That was not wrong, but he is out of the will."

Not all of Adams' nephews are as rude or bold. One nephew is dealing with the horrors of bullying.

Orny Adams on stage in front of Houstonian crowd. Credit: James Jurewicz

"Now Jack, my other nephew, got picked on in school, they now have something on the playground for the kids called the buddy bench. If you are a kid, and you don't feel like you have any friends you sit on the buddy bench. The other kids are supposed to notice and go, 'Everybody come here, there is a loser! I wish we had this one I was a kid.'"

While Adams admitted to some scholastic struggles with his peers, he now seems to be doing just fine.

"In high school I wasn't the coolest, I wasn't invited to all the parties, but now that I'm famous everybody wants me there. You probably want me to go to your party, right? I don't want to go."

Adams has even gone as far as to coin a phrase that voices his displeasure at attending anything. Hats and shirts with his FOBI catchphrase were available for purchase at the venue as well as on ornyadams.com

"A lot of people have Fear Of Missing Out this FOMO, but I have Fear Of Being Included. I have FOBI, I don't want to be there."

The comedian also took some time to address regular automobile maintenance. He used the story to extoll the negative aspects of global fame.

"I have never changed my own oil; I go to Valvoline. It is so expensive they send me a coupon for forty dollars every year. I am so excited to use my coupon and this year, I go to use it and the girl behind the counter got the look that she recognized me from the 'Teen Wolf" shows. I thought, [Shoot], I can't use this coupon now, that show just cost me $40. Then she sold me on the most expensive package, the one they had to dust off. For $185, I want to see somebody sucking the oil out of the ground and spitting it into my engine."

The comedian did not hesitate to make unwitting audience members part of the show. He also made sure to show his concern for Houstonians' health and well-being.

"Yeah, I did not come to Houston to watch everybody get up and go to the bathroom, okay? You people got a real bladder problem here, I will tell you when you can get up!"

Adams mentioned that he was at home, and a woman stopped by to ask to spread her mother's ashes in the backyard of the house in which her mother was raised.

"I felt bad, so I watched her throw the ashes all over my rose bushes. I don't know if you know anything about ashes, but they are not all ashes, there's chunks. Chunks of Mom's knuckles were in my rosebush; the minute she left I got the leaf blower and blew Mom right into the middle of the street. I was kicking the femur right down the street, hope Mom had memories there too!"

Human remains remained a relevant topic of discussion for the night's entertainment. Maybe his yard is haunted now.

"When you buy a house in this country the seller has to disclose to you anything that can bring the value of the house down," Adams continued. "If somebody died in the house, in the last seven years, they have to tell you. Our government has determined the average ghost will linger for seven years. Why am I telling you this? Because if you're old, and you think you're dying, get out of the house!"

After the show, Adams stuck around to personally sell merchandise, greet welcoming fans, and pose for pictures. Truly a classy comedian, Adams' show was entertaining and hilarious, and the comedian was mindful and appreciative to his fans.