SWEETWATER STAFF: A TESTAMENT TO SUHi’S INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

OCTAVIO HERNANDEZ, LAYOUT EDITOR

Our Red Devils have never been held back by any obstacle, no matter how small, or so it seemed. In this case, our obstacle is microscopic. COVID-19 has been an unprecedented obstacle set in front of us, yet no matter what, people find a way to get by. Food banks receive an influx of volunteers, people applaud and celebrate the work of the hundreds of essential workers in National City, and people respect the safety measures imposed by California Governor Newsom, for the most part. What does this mean for Sweetwater though? Well, our spirit is as unbreakable as ever.

Social distancing has become a reality (if not the law) in the time of pandemic. However, our Assistant Principal Dr. Salazar and front office staff have helped tremendously behind the scenes. He offers help to students in need through resources such as Jupiter Ed and e-mail. He gives help to both students and parents on how to navigate through the pandemic and how to continue through our pandemic limitations. As a current student, I find all of these resources tremendously helpful, as he gives guidelines for AP testing, updates on the general education of Sweetwater students, and resources for how to survive financial hardships for parents.

The wonderful teachers at Sweetwater are not to be overlooked. They may nag students with homework assignments, but only to keep us busy, well-educated, spontaneous, and creative. They keep us intellectually stimulated during these dull times of prolonged isolation. They hand us resources, practice tests and help with AP education, emotional counseling, and grade improvement through technological resources. With all the wonderful adults who care deeply for our education, it truly is remarkable how so much can be overcome during times of self-isolation.

Technology has improved the versatility of our society. The government has chosen to label certain professions as essential jobs. One could argue that there is no job that is more essential than the teaching profession, nurturing a future generation. Unfortunately, due to the circumstances, the Sweetwater facility is not currently in use and all must work from home, yet our resiliency persists. Students toil and work as hard as ever. Although interactions between students and teachers are limited, life still goes on. Academic life does not halt. If this current pandemic life is not a testament to human resilience, I don’t know what is. On behalf of all Sweetwater students, I would like to say thank you to all our wonderful staff who care so deeply for our well-being. Your job is not thankless, and we recognize all the work you put in. Thank you for being the backbone and testament to Sweetwater’s indomitable spirit.

LETTER FROM THE ASB PRESIDENT

Hi. Welcome.

I don’t know what I’m supposed to tell you. I guess I could lie and pretend as if I’m okay with the way this year ended, but I’m not in the habit of lying on matters such as this one. Feigning happiness would be reflecting the reality of our situation, and would make you feel as if your feelings aren’t valid. The truth is, it sucks. So many years, so many assignments, so many tears, and we can’t even walk across the stage alongside our friends or pass the tassel from one side of our cap to the other. Damn, we can’t even hug our friends and teachers, telling them those final words while our family takes the pictures we would have looked back on for years to come.

We were robbed of this experience by COVID-19. And although all these posts and praises from the district and community are nice and very thoughtful, they often just serve as a hollow reminder of what we didn’t get. All this is happening while the world watches us and expects us to hold our heads high, not allowed to mourn the loss of such an integral moment of our lives.

But, I wish to remind every senior that what we lost was just that – a moment. Not to take away from the importance of it, but also not to let this loss narrow our vision of every other moment we gained over the past four years. High school isn’t about one moment. It’s the times you played alongside your friends on the field, laughing and yelling at them with every practice and play. It’s the random stories you tell them as you climb the horror show that is the three flights of stairs in the new building. Being out of breath no matter how athletic you are. It’s every little game of speed, uno, and slap jack that had you questioning the integrity of your closest friends. It’s the times you made a staff member your own personal therapist, staying in their class and pretending like the bell didn’t just ring. It has and will always be the little moments that create the high school experience. Sometimes it’s difficult to remember that, but maybe we all just need a little reminder of those passing moments that have built the foundation of each and every person reading this right now.

So, let me prompt you to remember. Look through your memories and recall the times we did have; because although a graduation ceremony is important, Sweetwater has never been about those 3 seconds as we walk across a stage to receive that blank diploma holder. It’s the staff members who became our support system, the friends who became our family, and the school that became our home. I love SUHi just as many of you do; it gave me so much that had been missing in my life, and I am honored to be a Red Devil. But more than anything else, I am thankful for the times that I spent alongside my class – The Class of 2020.

So with that, I guess I can’t really welcome you anymore, but I can say Good-Bye and Thank You.

Your 2020 ASB President,
Ella Surposa
A reward is often a motivation for tireless students to continue to work diligently to achieve their goals. At Sweetwater, students continually work hard throughout the many school years in order to achieve the bliss of graduation. Among the great accomplishments that students may attain is the unforgettable title of Valedictorian. SUHi’s 2020 class valedictorian, Carlos Sanchez, has commented that this title “doesn’t really mean anything special.” He sees it as an external reward that he has received from enjoying the past four years of high school, doing what he enjoys most. Sanchez describes SUHi as “the place where I realized what I wanted to do with myself, and where I began to take my first steps towards my goals.”

During his time at Sweetwater, Sanchez truly enjoyed his journey as he was guided by remarkable teachers who continually supported him through his educational endeavors. One of Sanchez’s favorite memories from high school include the first time he used a CNC machine to make a business card stand with a devil engraving for Ms. Garcia. This was special to him because “that was the first time I actually made a decorative piece with a CNC machine which “turned out really good.” This piece of art was one of the last projects Sanchez crafted at SUHi due to the pandemic, and he actually delivered it to Mr. Garcia on the last day before the break began.

As a young dreamer, the Class Valedictorian longed to one day become a scientist. Today, his dream is to “make the world more scientifically advanced, safer and cleaner.” He hopes to achieve this because he believes that creating a cleaner world is essential to mankind and will ultimately increase humanity’s livelihood. Sanchez is extremely fascinated by science, calling it the “magic in our universe.” Furthermore, he also greatly enjoys the subject, stating that this area of expertise would be “fun to do.”

After graduation, Sanchez will be attending the post-secondary institute, Harvey Mudd College, where he hopes to learn more machining skills as he works towards obtaining a degree in either biochemistry or physics, ultimately increasing his knowledge of science overall.

Our Class of 2020 Salutatorian, Stephanie Mauricio, earning a gpa of 4.548, describes her entire experience at Sweetwater High to certainly be a roller coaster. First, arriving to Sweetwater, she was a shy person who was worried about barely making any friends. Once the first day of school began, it was “spine-chilling at first,” but got on a roll once she got the hang of it. Gaining new friends and excelling in coursework didn’t change the way she was still the same timorous person… until the impulse to burst that bubble arrived. Taking on the challenge, she grounded herself in responsibility and respect for her fellow peers. Yes, mistakes were made, but they pushed her to become a better person. With that being said, her experience at Sweetwater High School taught her many things.

Whether it was socially or academically, she is extremely grateful for all the trials and moments she encountered.

Although many great moments during senior year were experienced, one of Mauricio’s favorite highlights was Quiz Bowl. During the last Quiz Bowl season, she and her team had the opportunity to have one of their matches televised. As they patiently waited to start, they had some bonding time with Junior Varsity, making her proud to be part of the team as she was able to share a laugh and a smile with them. Playing against Montgomery High School, they cruised on to a blowout win! Stepping out of the bus after the ride back to school, Stephanie saw her coach, Ms. Garcia, grinning radiantly. Not only did they make Ms. Garcia proud as they represented SUHi, but they also had a blast, which is why she will never forget that once in a lifetime experience.

Growing up, Mauricio had always been smitten by the medical field. Even as a child, it has always been her ambition to become a doctor. Of course, she knew she would need to strive hard and work her way up. Keeping the goal in mind, she had to “exhibit unrelenting zeal and fervor.” Determined to strive for greatness, she dedicated herself to contributing to her community and concentrating on her studies. Because of her efforts and passions, she was able to earn acceptances to some of her dream schools as a first-generation college student.

As of now, Mauricio is still debating on what to major in; however, she is aiming to earn a bachelor’s degree and become a doctor of medicine. Mauricio will be heading on to UCLA, and she is more than eager to enter this passage into adulthood.

We are in unprecedented times. We as a nation wait in the dark for the dust to settle. Seniors are heading off into their futures and running into the mist knowing that their futures are shrouded by this darkness. And every other student is just waiting for further news about the upcoming school year. But, there is still light.

Despite our current situation, we have our teachers. You and I aren’t so different from teachers, but there is one thing that sets them apart from us – their devotion towards their students. In times of uncertainty, our teachers are the light which keeps us going forward. They adapt from home and change their lifestyle, doing anything in their power to bestow students with the knowledge they deserve. Even with students slowly giving up on school, teachers don’t give up on them. They continuously keep students engaged and driven, despite not being able to see them. This type of devotion shows how amazing teachers are. They sacrifice time from their families in order to do their job – to teach. These efforts by teachers extend beyond the classroom (in this case google meets/room). They also reach into our personal lives.

Staff members go out of their way to remind students that they truly care, and their actions show this. They are doing funny challenges on social media to keep us entertained. They’re sending heartfelt messages to students to remind them that they care. They’re making fun little montages in order to show that they’re not just teachers who provide lectures, but, instead, they’re human. So, next time you see your teacher, say these two words: thank you.
The Gifts of Sweetwater

Isabel Vega, Staffwriter

Class of 2020, Senior Memories

Sweetwater has provided me with many opportunities that I wouldn’t have had somewhere else. Having the opportunity to join clubs that support my interests is a feeling of fulfillment. Thanks to the SUHi Travel Club, I’ve been able to travel to nine countries, where I’ve learnt about their cultures. I also reinforced my dedication by working hard to fundraise in order to participate in these educational trips.

At Sweetwater, I received the opportunity to expand my knowledge about future majors I was considering, such as computer science and business administration. Sweetwater has not only reinforced my desire to attend a four-year university, but to also major in business administration. Sweetwater gave me the opportunity to apply, to travel to the University of Colorado Boulder, and to be awarded a full cost of attendance scholarship to Leeds School of Business in University of Colorado Boulder through the SUHi Foundation.

Sweetwater is a place of learning – learning about oneself and becoming knowledgeable about various subjects. Learning about myself during my high school journey has been something that has been difficult, but I have learned that I have the potential to expand my knowledge, which is shown in the accomplishments that I have set for myself. I have met people who have had a positive influence on my life, including teachers and peers.

I’ve made memories throughout high school that will stay with me forever. While attending SUHi, I have had teachers who have supported me; they have found new ways to teach and explain to me in order for me to understand the subjects. Sweetwater teachers have always motivated me to continue working hard and continue learning. Each teacher is unique, but they all have something in common: they truly care for the well-being of each of their students. Attending Sweetwater has taught me to be appreciative of the opportunities that have been provided to me. The principle of being grateful is something that has deeply impacted my life, and it is something I will continue to practice.

Sweetwater has taught me to get involved with my community. I’ve been given the motivation to participate in two internships and have completed more than 300 hours of community service. I value and appreciate my community, and I hope to give back to my community in the near future.

The idea of high school often sounds like a perfect environment, but it also has negative aspects. Taking honors and AP classes, being dedicated to clubs and community service along with other obligations have led me to stress. I’d get overwhelmed with all the assignments I had to complete by the deadlines. But, I always turned in my work on time, and I obtained good grades. I’ve learned from my mistakes of procrastination and sleeping fewer than seven hours in a night.

Now, I can say that I am ready for the next chapter of my life – college life. Thank you, Sweetwater.

SuHi Has Made My Life Better

Kimberly Navarro, Staffwriter

My first day at SUHi was very nerve-racking as a freshman. But, my brother was a junior so automatically I already knew some people. That was very reassuring. My freshman year was very memorable. I made a lot of senior friends, and it was very sad when I saw them leave. I got invited to many parties and many events. I still remember trying out for the swim team. I was automatically put in varsity, and I made a lot of junior and senior friends there. My freshman year of swim was probably my most memorable year! We hung out every weekend. We’d go to the beach; we’d go hiking; we’d have bonfires!

Sophomore year was a bit more difficult for me. My best friend and I stopped being friends. She moved schools. I was left with no one to hang out with during lunch. I wasn’t worried about that though. Sophomore year was the year I found out my father was using drugs. It was a very hard year for me because he was MIA a lot, so I was always constantly distracted by worrying about my dad at school, at swim meets, etc. I was so angry at my dad for leaving for days and turning off his phone that I started hanging out with bad kids. I would go out every weekend, just to get out of the house, just to avoid seeing my dad. A few months later, I was invited to a club called Younglife. At first, I was just going to get out of the house. Then, I realize how much it was helping me; little by little, I was reconnecting with my dad. This club was held on Thursdays at 7 p.m. in the Mariachi room. They were so accepting of me. I even attended summer camp with them during my sophomore year.

Junior year, I am now connected with them so much more. I have made so many friends in Younglife who are amazing people with beautiful souls! Junior year, unfortunately, has been my hardest year emotionally for me. I was going through my parents’ divorce. I lost all motivation for anything really. I wasn’t depressed, but I definitely realized that going out and hanging out with negative people wasn’t going to help my situation. So, instead, I just stuck to myself and helped myself recover from my sadness about the divorce.

Don’t get me wrong. I was so sad almost my whole junior year. My family and I lost our house that my siblings and I grew up in. It still hurts talking about it. But, it made me stronger. I decided to get a job to help my mom and to distract me about everything that has happened.

Now, everything is so much better. I know this is supposed to be about what my school SUHi means to me. It means so much to me. I wouldn’t have picked any other school to help me through these situations. SUHi has so many great resources. They have so many amazing teachers and counselors to help you through these tough times. SUHi has made me grow into a better person. I wouldn’t have wanted to attend any other high school!
MY SUHi STORY
SERENA VANEGAS, STAFFWRITER
Class of 2020, Senior Memories

For as long as I can remember I wanted to go to Sweetwater High School. I’ve had generations of family members go Sweetwater, and I couldn’t wait to be a part of that experience my family has been a part of. I heard stories of their experiences they had with their friends and staff members that made their experiences memorable. I have been to a lot of schools, and Sweetwater has always felt like home to me because I knew this is where generations of my family came, and it is also where I had my closest friends. Once I stepped foot on campus, I knew this was where I wanted to be. This is where I wanted to call my second home for the next three years of my life.

Through the last three years, I've met so many people. And I’ve lost people. But losing those people didn't stop me from enjoying my high school experience because I knew that as we grew older, we would grow apart, and some we would grow closer to. Every day is another challenge to face, but having supportive staff members and friends is amazing. Throughout the years, I have met teachers and other staff who encouraged me, reminding me that I could make it to the end of my senior year. Being able to go to Homecoming and football games has been a great experience for me. Just being able to see my friends play for our school and enjoy what they do is amazing.

For my last year at Sweetwater, I was able to be on the field at every game and capture those moments for our seniors. I wouldn't trade that for anything. Having that opportunity made me and my friends so much closer. I couldn't wait until I was able to step foot on that field again.

Sweetwater has taught me so much, and I'm proud to be a Red Devil. Debo has been one of the most encouraging people at Sweetwater. I could be having a bad day, and just talking to him and him making jokes made my day 100x better. I can't thank Debo, Ms. Matthews, Mr. Rowland, Ms. Morales, Mr. Briney, and – last but not least – our new security staff member Juan enough. Those staff members made the Sweetwater experience the best it could be, so I thank everyone of them for the best three years of my life. I may not have been able to end the year like I wanted to, but I'm beyond grateful for you guys.

Thank you, Sweetwater, for the best high school experience. Once a RED DEVIL, ALWAYS A RED DEVIL!

SUHi IS MORE THAN A SCHOOL
ARIELLE SORIANO, STAFFWRITER
Class of 2020, Senior Memories

As a senior at SUHi, it has been an experience that I will not forget. When I walked through the doors on the first day of my sophomore year, I was greeted with smiles and a warm welcome. Link Crew leaders that I have become friends with helped me go through my first year in a high school environment. They helped me adapt well enough to survive all throughout high school. SUHi has been a great part of my life for the past three years. It has given me so many lessons in life. I’ve learned that friend groups don’t last like they say, that you will meet teachers who will be your close friends, and that only one or two friends will stay with you. I’ve learned that those who stay with you, you should keep them; they made you feel wanted, so don’t ever take them for granted. My senior year has been a roller coaster ride. There may have been a few downs, but there have been more ups. For example, the assemblies made us all laugh and happy, as did the new friends we all met. Maybe some will join us in their future, but we will all find our future here in Sweetwater High School.

It’s so hard to say goodbye to the people who you made unbreakable bonds with, to leave the teachers who have helped us with our struggles, to the place where we found a new set of family, to the classrooms where we made memories, and to the people who have made an impact in our high school life. It’s a struggle to have a normal life when you have people hovering over your shoulders; but with at least one person you can talk to, it has made my SUHi experience a better memory to keep and to cherish after high school.

OUR HELPING HANDS
SERENA VANEGAS, STAFFWRITER

Sweetwater High has been a huge support system for our students and community throughout this pandemic, from giving us someone to talk to or by supplying things that students need in these difficult times. The Class of 2020 took this pandemic hard. We weren’t able to fully experience our last year of high school. Senior year is supposed to be the best year. So, SUHi has made sure that we still have that opportunity by giving us the honor we deserve. We have worked hard for this moment in our lives, and SUHi has given us amazing support. Knowing that we could talk with our teachers, that they would listen and give us our best advice, has helped so many students. So, thank you Sweetwater Staff, for being an amazing support system for all of us.

REACHING HIGHER, TOGETHER
STEPHANIE ARMENTA, STAFFWRITER

Although it has been difficult times, SUHi has found ways to continue education. Online school has become the new norm. If students have questions on their assignments, teachers have office hours. This provides students a time when the student and teacher can create a virtual meeting. Any question the student has, the teacher answers and explains in further depth. Corona Virus is keeping everyone separated, but our Red Devils are still given the information and education they need. It also gives teachers time to check on students’ mental health.

Teachers are using a variety of apps to connect with their students, such as Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Jupiter Ed, Canvas, and email. Some teachers leave instructions; others create virtual meetings; and still others post videos of their instruction. This provides students with alternatives. It also teaches students how to properly use technology. Distance learning has forced upon us a new opportunity and way to learn. Although quarantine is only temporary, knowing how to use a computer will always come in handy for our futures.
What SUHi mean to me? Well, where do I begin? Here, I have found a place where I can develop my passions and expand my horizons. I have found friends and found love among peers. Most importantly, SUHi has provided me an opportunity to find my true potential hidden away from myself. I have worked hours on a school laptop slaving away at the yearbook, stood breathless on stage with my school’s resident Mariachi Nuevo Aguadulce, and I have learned how to love and care for others emotionally and physically in my CTE Health classes provided here. What is offered here was not offered anywhere else in San Diego or in the country, potentially.

I am grateful for every program I have participated in and every opportunity thrown my way. Whether it was expanding my journalism analysis, my musical talent, or my medical skills, every change in every class was for the better. My classes offered me a lot of knowledge and experience in things I never thought I would have an interest in. I have learned a lot about myself and exposed myself to an array of personalities across campus. Many of my fellow Red Devils have dreams, ambitions, and interests. They are passionate, and burning bright with SUHi Pride. I have talked with many people for hours on end, discussing school, personal troubles, achievements, and shared experiences. I am close enough to consider them brothers and sisters – family.

What united us was our love for Sweetwater, for the people who attend and for the mentors who teach us. I am glad I attended Sweetwater. My life is unimaginable without my Sweetwater experiences these past three years. Sweetwater means family. It means finding myself in a sea of experiences. It means enjoying my last few years of my youth before transitioning to adulthood. SUHi is a set of experiences that have changed me for the better, and it will be a cherished memory that will live on for years to come.

There is so much to be thankful for in life. Not everything works out exactly the way we want, but there is always hope for something greater.

In tough times like these, we cannot wait for a fairy godmother to show up and place everything back to what it was before; the world is simply asking us for a bit of optimism. Looking back at the last four years of my life, I realize that I could not have asked for anything more special. SUHi will forever hold a sacred spot in my heart, and it should too in YOURS. As seniors, it is understandable that we are disappointed and downhearted by this whole situation that has left us with no prom, grad nite, senior nights, and many other special events we were SO looking forward to. Trust me, I FEEL YOU.

So, has it all officially come to an end? No. Senior year is a gift full of amazing memories, experiences (both good & bad) and so much more! We need to be able to recognize how much teachers, counselors, AP’s, and others, are encouraging us to not let this quarantine get in the way of our education and goals that we have, because this just happens to be an awful episode that will be stopped at some point. One of our goals should be to be able to look back and say that Sweetwater gifted us with an awesome four years of fun and learning.

I was not much of an athlete during high school, but I sure know that all of the different educational resources were there for us when we most needed them. That should be greatly appreciated. I hope that at the end of the day, senior year ends with a marvelous note. This chapter of our lives has not ended yet. There is still much more to come. So, seniors, keep your heads up. Do not let this quarantine get the best of you! Be thankful, because you get to wake up and see another day. Don’t be discouraged. There is still more to come. So, don’t say Bye yet!
MEAL DISTRIBUTION DURING THE RONA

JEREMY DE VEGA, STAFFWRITER

A pandemic has risen. The coronavirus has caused California to go into lockdown. This unfortunate and scary time has caused schools to shut down, people to lose their jobs, and has left families to wonder what will happen in the future. While many will look at this pandemic and only see the dark side of it, we must band together and see the bright side. Communities are coming together and trying their best to slow down this virus and work hard to get through this tough time.

Our district has created a meal distribution schedule for families in need of food. Some students get most of their meals from school; and because schools have shut down, it is difficult for them to find ways to figure out what their next meal will be. So, our district created a schedule where families can pick up breakfast and lunch meals for their children every Tuesday at a participating school, including ours, SUHi. Each week, many of our SUHi staff go to school to serve breakfast and lunch meals to the tons of families in need. The meal distributions happen each Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. There are so many families in need of meals that the staff frequently run out of food to distribute around noon.

During a time like this, when many people are in need of groceries and food, our district and SUHi staff kindly provide and support our Red Devil families. During this crazy situation, our world needs kindness and support in every way possible. Our district and staff provide this support, and it is wonderful to see each week how many families show up to receive the meals. Each week that the meal distribution continues, it continues to grow as a success. It’s so amazing to see that the school cares about their students and families, showing up each week to give out these meals.

GROWTH THROUGH EXPERIENCE

MICHAEL MAYFIELD, STAFFWRITER  Class of 2020, Senior Memories

As the last of my four years of high school, and grade school in general, come to a close, I sit back and reminisce about all my experiences I’ve had. The laughs, the cries, the ups, the downs, the chaos, and the mundane; they all follow up with one thing – growth. The most growth I’ve had, however, was during my time at Sweetwater.

I came into Sweetwater as an immature, ignorant teenager who thought the world revolved around himself. Also, the fact that my mental state was deteriorating at the time didn’t help either. Although, coming straight into SUHi, it was comforting. Everyone was polite and helpful; you could ask any person any question, and they would answer it respectfully. The energy that SUHi gave off resonated within me and helped me see the bigger picture. It helped me gain the confidence to join sports and participate in school activities.

SUHi really opened my mind up and acted as my second home. I’d prefer to stay at SUHi than my actual house. I would be there early in the morning, until late in the afternoon, and sometimes I’d even go during Saturdays or breaks. This is what allowed me to create strong friendships that I have kept until this day, and hopefully will keep a long while after high school.

Sweetwater genuinely means a lot to me since it was full of important learning experiences that have shaped me into who I am today. My freshman and sophomore years were the best, as the upperclassmen at the time gave me so much advice. Even the teachers that I grew close to helped me along the way as well. Mr. Howard’s AP Environmental Science class was the best class; it taught me so much about the world and all of its intricacies, all while being with my closest friends and sharing our thoughts on how we would solve the world’s most difficult problems.

All in all, I’ve grown so much since my freshman year. SUHi has helped lay the foundation of becoming an adult, and I wouldn’t exchange it for anything. It will always hold a special place in my heart. I am sad that this year, my Class of 2020 will not be graduating in a traditional manner, but I think that this is what will make this graduation worth more than any graduation that came before.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

SINAI CANO, STAFFWRITER

At Sweetwater High School, our Peer Mediators decided to celebrate Random Acts of Kindness Day and honor kindness throughout the whole week. February 17 is a day meant to practice and spread kindness. There are many times when the power of small gestures is underestimated. In reality, these actions can truly have a strong impact on someone, no matter how big or small it is. Each small gesture “may start a ripple” that can eventually “turn into a tidal wave” that can turn many lives around. Although spreading positivity and bringing smiles to others should be something that occurs every day, Random Acts of Kindness Day is meant to encourage and motivate our peers to make someone’s day without expecting anything in return.

Throughout the week, SUHi Peer Counselors distributed white stickers to students and staff which included positive messages, such as “Kindness is the best way” and “No act of kindness, however small, is wasted.” Pictures of those wearing the stickers were taken and posted on social media to show how we were all about to get together for a good cause. Additionally, there was a video posted on the school news explaining what Random Acts of Kindness Day is about as well as mentioning the activities that would be done on campus for it.

It could be something as simple as writing a “thank you” letter to a friend, complimenting a stranger, letting someone know why he/she is appreciated, or even paying for someone lined up behind a shop. Something so simple could mean the world to someone else and change their whole day.

The goal is to be the light in the world and show how the smallest acts make the biggest impacts. While doing so, it will not only help to brighten up the day of others, but it will also make the person who’s doing the good deed be happier and healthier. Coming together for this day motivates everybody to keep being kind. Our Peer Mediators were very thankful for everyone who participated; it made the whole week extremely successful with their support.
MY FIRST AND LAST YEAR AT SUHi
BEABIANCA LIM, STAFFWRITER  Class of 2020, Senior Memories

Senior year was my first and last year at SUHi. I had recently moved into National City towards the end of my junior year at San Ysidro High School. I would travel 8 miles for my remaining days as a junior at Sidro. I knew that I couldn’t take the trolley much longer, travelling at 6 a.m. to attend San Ysidro High School at 9 a.m., so I easily decided to transfer to SUHi the following school year.

Knowing that I would be attending SUHi for senior year got me anxious, yet excited. I was anxious to fit in as a Red Devil and meet new people, but I was excited to reunite with my friends from back in middle school. My first year at SUHi was amazing, yet devastating. It was the best because it was easy to fit in due to the friendly environment SUHi has to offer, the crazy devil spirit the students have, the supportive teachers who have guided me, and friends who made me feel like I belong there. When I started school at SUHi, I began to pick up a lot of things - the places I could go to during lunch, the places I should never go to, the prettiest bathroom, the clubs I could attend, the best place to get the best lunch, the best teachers who don’t assign much homework, etc. My first year at SUHi was going to be the best year because it was my last year there as a senior who had plenty of plans ahead. However, our senior activities ended quickly with the sudden eruption of COVID-19, losing spring sports, our last assembly, grad nite, prom, and graduation. These are events that have made us seniors look forward to our last year as high schoolers. We were motivated to keep our grades up for these special reasons. We were ready to celebrate our years of hard work. We were excited to experience these once in a lifetime events.

Although COVID-19 has affected us seniors, I was able to grasp the things I took for granted – being able to go to school, learning, teachers, free lunch, interacting with friends in person, etc. We realized there are more important things in life than these senior activities. It was the simplest things that have truly become more important during this time: being safe, alive, and healthy. Looking on the bright side, I am grateful to experience my 3 years of high school normally, my last homecoming, crazy assemblies, and my big decision to accept my offer to college. Despite all the misfortune, as seniors, we are thankful. We are thankful to all the support SUHi offered us for our remaining days as seniors. Thank you for the online education, thank you for the support from teachers, thank you for trying to make senior activities happen in different ways, and thank you for being our home.

My first and last year at SUHi will always be memorable. I have met new people and have even gotten close to people I thought I never would. I will miss my teachers and friends. SUHi gave me the greatest gift of meeting these new people. I am happy to say that I will never regret moving to Sweetwater Union High School.

BEING A RED DEVIL
ESTEBAN LEYVA, STAFFWRITER

“Being a Red Devil means to me is being respectful, helping your community and spreading kindness.” – Febe Dircio Cruz

“A Red Devil, to me, is being persistent, you work hard to reach your goals.” – Isabel Vega

“Sweetwater is like a second home, and being a Red Devil means being a part of a family.” – Nicole Cockburn

“To be a Red Devil means helping everyone in the school. For me, I feel that it is necessary to help my classmates, but also my teachers, especially when they are the people who care the most about us. Being a Red Devil means getting up every morning, going with enthusiasm to class, and learning from excellent teachers who help us day by day and give their lives for teaching us.” – Daisy Landeros

THANK YOU!
BREANNA GEKE, STAFFWRITER

Thank you to those who put their lives at risk every day. The pandemic has caused us to walk in the streets fearful of being infected, but some still have to go to work. We honor and appreciate the sacrifice of these brave individuals - healthcare workers, truck drivers, supermarket employees, etc.

With death rates continuing to rise, there have been more cases than we imagined. In San Diego county, there has been a dramatic change in our economy; the number of layoffs & cut hours have increased dramatically. Statewide, there have been more than 22 million applications for unemployment and 27% of that number belongs to San Diego workers, many in National City.

Governors are trying to find the correct balance as they reopen our lifestyle. Protestors are looking out for their personal economic interests & liberties, but they are also promoting selfishness in a way, an inconsideration towards society, because if small businesses and public sites reopened for the sake of personal pleasure, the number of Covid-19 infected people could very rapidly increase.

Health restrictions have also been released across the nation regarding the use of face masks and social distancing norms; these are intended to prevent the spread of the virus, but essential workers are still a high risk. We are eternally grateful for the sacrifice that is being shown as these hard-working people risk their lives every single day in order for us to have what we have. Thank you!
SUNSET
ENIGO PALANCA, STAFFWRITER
Class of 2020, Senior Memories

4th Quarter, it’s finally here. The sun is setting.

Sweetwater has given me its heart, and I gave back nothing less.

From sports, clubs, and classes, there were no moments when I didn’t give it my all. Sure, I did cut some corners here and there, but there is no doubt in my mind that I gave it my all. Yes, there are times when I wish I did things differently, repair some friendships, study a little harder, and just do that extra that one best friend will stick by you for years, get to know you for years, and love you for years, and that certainly has been true for me. Especially during this pandemic. This is my time to really test the strength of relationships. Some friends will message you, others will not. Some friends will want to talk to you every day. Some will not. The true friends will keep in touch, even without physical contact. They make sure they are socially and actively interacting with you despite difficult times.

But we should thank all the friends we have made. Without their company, we wouldn’t have had the same memories, the same experiences, and the new lessons we have gained. We wouldn’t have met the new friends we are with today. So, thank you to the friends who have led us to know better. Thank you to the friends who have guided us from kinder through senior year. Thank you to the friends who will always love.

I always found it redundant hearing alumni say “cherish every moment your senior year,” but the most redundant things can be the most genuine words. I wish I could go run on the track and just live the days I will never have back.

I gave SUHi my all, and there weren’t many days when I would come home right after school. I always had something going on in my life – ASB, sports, tutoring for my classes, or just going to hang out with my friends. But, the sun starts to fade.

I’m so thankful for what Sweetwater has given me and also for what it didn’t give me. I’m a firm believer that we all will be where we belong, and Sweetwater has set me up for my future. Sweetwater wasn’t all good. There was struggle. Some of the worst years of my life have happened while I was at Sweetwater. But this struggle is what makes this departure from Sweetwater so bittersweet. As kids complain and show their dislike towards school, I couldn’t be more polar opposite. Yes, Sweetwater hasn’t given me rainbows and sunshine all the time, but some of the proudest moments of my life have happened at this campus.

Now, Sweetwater doesn’t feel like a school to me anymore – I feel like it’s something that grew up with me. It saw me when I was at some of my lowest points in life, but also at my highest points. It saw me as a boy transitioning into a young adult. The sun is barely visible.

My time here is almost up, and soon I can call myself an alumni. Until then, I will cherish the people who have built this high school experience. This school has given me many values that I will carry throughout life, and it has given me the ability to make me think, reflect, and most importantly, to grow. This school means nothing but memories to me because that is what it is to me now – memories. It has given me people and moments which I will remember throughout my life, and I can’t wish for anything more than that.

The sun has finally set.

MEMORABLE FRIENDS
BEABIANCA LIM, STAFFWRITER

As we grow older, we mature and acknowledge new aspects in life, including our relationships. From elementary to high school, we continue to build friendships. Although we have lost friends, we have also made new ones. It takes time. Time to choose our friends wisely. Time to realize our true friends. Time to heal from past friendships that have helped us through a certain point in our lives. Time to move on and find ourselves in a better group of people. So, from kinder to senior year, we never really had the same friends. Yes, there are some occasions when we have the same best friends. However, we meet new people and expand our interaction with others.

Sometimes you don’t have to be in a large group of friends to be happy. Sometimes you only need that one best friend or couple friends to be overwhelmingly happy. You don’t need a lot of pennies; one quarter is more valuable.

Time really tests the value of your relationship. If that one best friend will stick by you for years, get to know you for years, and love you for years, that certainly has been true for me. Especially during this pandemic. This is my time to really test the strength of relationships. Some friends will message you, others will not. Some friends will want to talk to you every day. Some will not. The true friends will keep in touch, even without physical contact. They make sure they are socially and actively interacting with you despite difficult times.

But we should thank all the friends we have made. Without their company, we wouldn’t have had the same memories, the same experiences, and the new lessons we have gained. We wouldn’t have met the new friends we are with today. So, thank you to the friends who have led us to know better. Thank you to the friends who have guided us from kinder through senior year. Thank you to the friends who will always love.

THE MEMORIES
BRIZETH BARAJAS, STAFFWRITER
Class of 2020, Senior Memories

Sweetwater hasn’t only given me opportunities; it has also given me memories.

I know it’s sad the way seniors ended their year, but to be honest, senior year has been the best year yet. I was the type of person that didn’t really care or wasn’t social at all, but SUHi changed that for me. I was able to accomplish a lot with the help of my family and friends. Also, my teachers – obviously – because there are specifically two teachers who really helped me get back on my feet so I’d keep going. I didn’t expect so much love from our staff at Sweetwater, but they really do care. It’s funny to think that just a couple of years ago I wasn’t social at all; I wouldn’t even try to meet new people. I never expected to accomplish all that I did, from sports to academics to clubs all around our campus. It was so heart-warming knowing I gave it my all and was able to accomplish it as a Red Devil. Literally, SUHi made me break out of my shell.

Sweetwater is a school full of fun and friendliness. I wish I could have ended my season and my school year there. SUHi is full of opportunities because of all our facilities, from the top of the New Building to the Softball Dugout on the lower field. Everyone tries to keep Sweetwater at its best because it is one of the most well-known schools in all of San Diego. I should add that SUHi is like my second home, and I’m sure a lot of students would agree. Our school is so full of spirit and history. It has a lot to show behind its walls, even if it was built in the 1920’s. I know, technically, we aren’t the 100th class of SUHi, but it doesn’t feel that way because a lot of alumni praise the Class of 2020 for being part of a huge anniversary. Alumni are a big part of Sweetwater. They care for us the way our staff does, even if they don’t know us. Probably because SUHi’s reputation is gold, and we live up to it.

I never expected I would be here right now writing an article for yearbook class. I never expected to be on the Yearbook Staff. It was such an unforgettable experience, just as everything else I accomplished with academics, sports, and clubs. It’s very cool to think that I helped make my class yearbook. SUHi has helped me in so many ways, starting with getting my letterman’s jacket. I know how much that jacket means to a lot of students in our district, and that’s why I appreciate Sweetwater so much. They built up a club that supports those who can’t really afford a jacket but are so eager to get one. Not a lot of schools do that. Actually, I believe no other school does that. I appreciate it so much.

I personally miss Sweetwater because it kept me entertained and busy. I loved being busy at school because it was just a way to be free from reality. I’m going to miss Sweetwater because it gave me everything I wanted and more. I can’t wait to come back home one day, because in our hearts, SUHi lives.
**A Second Home**  
DAIESIA LORENZO, STAFFWRITER

Three years of school and one left to go. As the year begins to come to an end, it makes me think just how much I’ve grown on the educated spectrum and the mature spectrum because of high school. Of course, any school can teach kids, but SUHi makes it to where it’s not just about learning. Each teacher takes into consideration everyone in their class individually and offers help for the smallest problems. The school is full of kind students who aren’t afraid to randomly smile at you in the hallways, despite not knowing you, and the staff are kind-hearted and outgoing. Although it’s not every teacher, I’ve managed to have at least one teacher who made it easy for me to talk to and to learn from. They’ve provided great advice that I couldn’t find anywhere else. They go into depth on what they expect from you as a student, but they are very understanding if you don’t constantly meet their standards.

The school also provides a handful of helpful counselors who are there to help the students get to where they want to be. Whether it be for a class or college, they are willing to look into every possibility that is available for each individual student. I’ve also created friendships with people who were by my side when I needed them.

This quarantine has allowed me to see just how important school was for me. It was almost an escape from everything happening at home, like fresh air. Whenever I would go to school, I had people I could talk to about anything and everything. I had people I could relate to, people I could go to if I needed a break. As a person who enjoys being around many people, school really allowed me to enjoy myself and be more outgoing.

One of the things I love the most about Sweetwater is that it provides classes that are fun and it helps us venture out into the real world. Classes like Social Issues and Film are fun electives that students can take; it lets students express their opinions on topics that are happening today. Even in regular classes, some teachers take the time to acknowledge history in the making rather than just in the past. Being in Journalism/Yearbook has provided me with a different insight on everyday people I see and meet. People went from a random student to a track star in the making or an activist. These aspects have made SUHi more personal and more of a home to me.

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**WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL?**  
ESTEBAN LEYVA, STAFFWRITER

Sweetwater High School (SUHi) represents many things to me. My enrollment has been filled with nothing but positive experiences. School, in general, can be difficult with all of the academic and social aspects of it, so any school that offers a friendly and resourceful environment for students to succeed is doing a lot for them. To me, SUHi isn’t the school, it’s the students, teachers, and staff who carry the “Red Devil” spirit with them, a lot of school pride and community to uplift individuals.

The school year 2019-2020 was my first year in Sweetwater High School, as a junior. Since my arrival at the school, I was welcomed with nothing more than kindness and support. Both students and teachers were welcoming and helped me get adjusted with the new work I needed to complete, a new schedule I had to get used to, and simply getting to know the school better.

After spending my junior year of high school at Sweetwater, I was able to see the abundant love and desire for students to be the most successful as possible, while also making their experience as high schoolers enjoyable and exciting as can be. Something that makes SUHi students unique is their persistent and active participation in school events and organizations. Many students are active participants in things like clubs, school arts, and sports, or in other organizations that contribute to the development of Sweetwater High School. Students demonstrate their “Red Devil” spirit by participating in the many spirit events, like the spirit weeks throughout the school year, meant to bring a little more fun to education.

Although Sweetwater has been shut down because of the coronavirus outbreak, preventing students from being on campus has not stopped members of the SUHi community from continuing to carry the “Red Devil” spirit with them as they continue to pursue high-quality education during these difficult times through social distancing with the help of all staff members. There’s something known as the “Red Devil Way” which I believe greatly represents what the school means to all those whose lives had led them to the community prospering here. It stands for respect, empowerment, driven, diversity, ethics, volunteers, integrity, and long-life learners. All these are very important attributes that characterize Sweetwater High School. I’m so happy to be able to call myself a Red Devil and be a representative of SUHi values for the rest of my life.
I went into high school with the belief that it would be like *High School Musical*, but without all the singing. One hundred percent, my mind has changed and I couldn’t be happier with how high school really is. Not just high school, but Sweetwater. I see myself as a pretty open-minded guy and try to befriend everyone. Sweetwater has made that even easier to do because everyone is so nice and gets along with each other. Sweetwater has taught me that everyone is different, but we can all come together even with those differences. I never thought I would have the friends I have today. All the different opportunities have given me several chances to create new bonds and new experiences. Sweetwater isn’t just a school to me; it was a second home, and I loved it.

I always tried to experience something new, which is why I joined ASB. ASB had its ups and downs, which is what made the experience real. Everything in life changes, and ASB was an example of a time I had to go through change. The change in environment there gave me a different view on ASB, and that wasn’t necessarily a bad thing. I am glad to have been a part of that group, that family. I feel that it was a part of growth for me, and that is just one club out of the many at Sweetwater. I made bonds and broke bonds during my time in ASB; and just because of that, I believe I grew as a person. To me, Sweetwater’s ASB is a place for growth and responsibility, and I thank Sweetwater for that and will always hold the memories I gained from there.

Sweetwater has more to offer than just clubs. Students create bonds with each other, staff, teachers, and almost everyone on campus. I see SUHi as a second home for many, but not for everyone. There are times when students and teachers do not get along; but at the end of our time as high schoolers, we realize that every relationship with someone has a purpose. Sweetwater to me is a place for bonds, a place for growth, and a place for everlasting memories. I’m thankful to have attended SUHi. I know that all the friendships I made here won’t last forever, but I’m just glad to have experienced it with all the right people. It is sad to be leaving SUHi, but it is also exciting to finally be more independent and experience even more during college. Thank you, Sweetwater, for everything you’ve offered me. My time during this game of high school is now coming to an end.
WHAT WE HOLD CLOSE
ALETHIA MORENO, STAFFWRITER
Class of 2020, Senior Memories

In the last few months of my time at Sweetwater, the academic filled days were riddled with some of my best memories. There were times I didn’t think I would miss it at all, that I was glad it would finally be over. It’s now that I realize even in those dreaded moments, I would miss all of the little details that I now think fondly of. Sure, we seniors were cramming to finish college apps, but the community that was truly felt throughout the turmoil made the stresses all that much more worth it. Teachers taking time from class to reassure seniors. “You are where you are meant to be,” and “You are becoming exactly who you are meant to be.” Students proofreading each other's work. “It’s so you; it’s perfect. They would be stupid not to accept you.” We understand that, yes, this process is difficult and nerve-wracking, but we have Red Devil blood running in our veins.

From day one, Sweetwater has established that it is more than an academic institution. It is more than test scores and AP classes. It is more than your overdue library fines. (We know you have ‘em.) It is the spirit days you share with your friends. Stop moving we need more pictures for points! It is the beloved Food Faire, trying to beat Pelletier to the salt and pepper wing stand. Losing every time. Every time. The assemblies, hot and stuffy, as always, roaring with energy. These are our memories.

Although we are connected, my senior year and your senior year contain multitudes of differences. The hallways we walked together hold a different air for you and me. We have different destinations, different conversations. Though I’m sure we shared a few, I can’t wait until I can go home. As well as the curses shared when lumbering up to the third floor. That is the beauty in life, in high school. Our memories are our own; and yet, we have built a family around them.

This is what Sweetwater means to me. It is the guidance from our teachers, the extra bit of help they give us and their quirks that make us feel special. It is the solidarity of our students, the hangouts on the senior lawn, the kickbacks and the sports events.

It is in you and me. Our home.

APPRECIATE THE SILVER LINING
BRIZETH BARAJAS, STAFFWRITER

It’s really tragic that 2020 started off so bad. It’s been difficult for families, essential workers, and kids. Especially around this time, for seniors, it was supposed to be an unforgettable senior year. We were supposed to enjoy our last three months in school and go off to the next step in our lives. Sadly, this quarantine has ruined our chances of having a prom, going out, going to grad nite, and having a graduation ceremony. It seems that with all these negatives, it’s impossible to find a positive. Little do we realize, there is some good from all of this.

I know we might not realize it at first, but when we do, we enjoy it and cherish it. It’s hanging out with our families that really matters during these times. It’s important to appreciate the smallest thing you do with your family. It could be going on a walk, having family game night, or even having a dinner together that matters. Everyone misses the outside and eating in restaurants, but this quarantine is making us closer to our families. Yes, it might get a bit rocky, but it’s worth it.

A lot of student athletes have had a very busy schedule while in school, but now, they have more family time. Kim Nava says, “I’m able to spend more time with them now because before I was always busy with practices and school.” Reyna Roman reinforces, “I can help my parents with stuff around the house now that I’m home all the time.” Even if it’s something small, your parents appreciate any help. Also, Gabby Martin shares, “We’ve gotten closer to our families because we stay in together, but it’s also fun to go out on walks and runs with them.” It can get tiring inside, but as long as you’re safe, you can go on walks and enjoy being outside – even during quarantine. Staying in is a huge reason why we are closer with each other because we don’t have a million other things distracting us from our family time. So, even in these bad times, we are getting more family time. Certainly, that’s the silver lining shining through from this whole mess, and I appreciate it.
YOU WIN SOME, YOU LOSE SOME
DAIESIA LORENZO, STAFFWRITER

Covid-19 has affected students from all over the world, preventing them from having a normal senior year experience with such anticipated activities as prom and graduation. However, in spite of this, seniors have gained many things in return. Some seniors have reported that this time away from school has given them more acne and weight (the bad things); meanwhile, many others have gained more patience and time with their families. It's made students realize how much time flies by, and that they should really live in the moment because life isn't forever. Students have benefited in learning how to motivate themselves and practice working independently, without having a teacher over their shoulder teaching them everything and reminding them to do their work.

Also, with this extra time, people have been able to pick up some new hobbies or brush up on some they haven't done in a while. Learning how to drive, learning how to bake and bettering their art skills have been popular amongst our Red Devils when asked what they’ve been up to. Some students have even gotten into the hobby of gardening! The most beneficial thing they’ve gained, however, has been time with family. A lot of our seniors will be traveling far away to go to college, and this has given them the opportunity to spend some extra time with those they love. Some say that being under quarantine has allowed them to become closer to their families because they’re who they have the most contact with throughout this break. Regardless, we can all agree that this has given us a new perspective on life and has allowed us to become more grateful for the things and opportunities we have received throughout the years. In a way, quarantine has helped students recognize and appreciate the little things.

In order to help students manage, teachers haven’t been giving as much work and have been more lenient, allowing students to take advantage of the time and focus on themselves. Some students have even started their own businesses. Another consequence of Covid-19 is that colleges have gotten rid of SAT scores and ACT scores for this year’s seniors, and our schools have adjusted their expectations for students to graduate. This has given students a mental break, as they aren’t feeling as pressured to do all their work by a certain time. Also, teachers understand some students are having a difficult time and are trying to get used to the changes in our world right now.

Overall, the Coronavirus has been an eye-opening experience for all of us; and while we can look at all the negatives, it's nice to know that people can see past the negatives and look at all the things that have benefited us as well.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES
ISABEL VEGA, STAFFWRITER

When one first starts high school as a freshman, one is constantly thinking about their senior year. How will it be? What memories will I have created over the years of high school? What memories will I create as a senior? Senior year is a year of celebration, but also a year of challenges. Seniors have to finish their high school journey strong; they must compete the requirements to graduate. Senior year is crucial as seniors decide what to do with their lives. Some will apply to universities or community colleges; others will decide to start working; others might still be figuring it out. But all of these decisions are made senior year. At the end of our high school journeys, the only thing that will remain for the rest of our lives will be the memories that we made during this self-growing journey.

Many students create memories during football season when they attend games to support Sweetwater, and afterwards they celebrate by spending time with friends. Carolina Alcantar shares that her favorite high school memories were football seasons’ Fridays. She says, “I’d hang out with my friends before the game, we’d go eat, and just catch up. After the games, we’d play loud music and just sing along. I love how much closer we became.” Being involved in extracurricular activities is a great way to create memories.

Riqui Mascardo is part of SUHi’s ASB and Advanced Choir, among other clubs. She recalls her favorite memory: “One of my favorite SUHi memories is when I was able to sing the solo for ‘Amazing Grace’ at the back to school night! I was deeply humbled to sing part of an important song, and it was a great way to showcase the many talents of our SUHi’s choir, the amazing work of our teacher Mr. Larocca, and the wonderful piano skills of Mr. Jasmine!”

ASB President Ella Surposa recalls the CIF quartifinal game that she was part of during her sophomore year and the welcome back assembly she hosted during her junior year. “In both cases, I felt like I was on center stage, showing everyone the best of me and the understanding that I deserved to be there.”

Our favorite SUHi memories are truly cultivated on our campus; and even though this journey will shortly come to an end and we soon will begin a new journey, seniors will be able to recall the amazing memories they created at Sweetwater for the rest of their lives.
BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE
MARIANA CASILLAS, STAFFWRITER
Class of 2020, Senior Memories

You know, I’ve heard that high school was the best years of your life, and now that it is finally coming to an end for me, I can reflect on my experience and confirm it to be true.

I have been walking around the halls of SUHi since I was a baby, in the arms of my mom who graduated with the Class of 2003. In the last four years of going to Sweetwater, I have made the most memorable experiences and have met amazing people who have made a lasting impact on me. School is about learning, but Sweetwater was the place where I learned who I was and all that I could be.

I found my groups and made lasting friendships through soccer, yearbook, and classes. I was able to shine on the field for three years and score goals. It is a feeling so overwhelmingly joyful to know that I did well by my school and represented us as the strong Devils we are.

Yearbook was a class I took a chance on, not really knowing what I was getting into; but it opened up so many opportunities. It allowed me to travel to Pepperdine University and have a taste of college life, which was such a remarkable experience. I slept in a dorm and had amazing food, and I bonded with people from all over the world over making a yearbook.

Sweetwater genuinely made me happy. There were times I’d show up, wanting to be mad all day, but the truth is that someone or something would make me laugh by first period. Sweetwater is a place of friendly faces and students who are compassionate. In my freshman year, I was crying near the weight room after school, and another girl who was a senior sat with me until I stopped crying. She talked to me and she even hugged me. This girl had no idea who I was, but that didn’t stop her from helping me. She is someone I remember to this day. So, to my mystery girl, if you’re somehow reading this, thank you. I really needed that talk, and you set the bar so high for others at Sweetwater.

Another meaningful thing about SUHi is how much it felt like home. Showing up every new year to find teachers that taught my parents was always fun. I wanted to see if they could see my parents’ faces in mine. Some of them did recognize me; apparently, my dad was a social butterfly. It was comforting knowing that each year, some of my teachers had experience with my family already, and they made me feel right at home in their classrooms.

What also contributes to its homey feeling is that I was at SUHi from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. because of sports. Even when my practice was over, I couldn’t make myself go home, knowing there were basketball games going on in the gym or that the boys were playing a game of soccer amongst themselves. Watching my fellow Red Devils take charge in their own element was so satisfying, seeing all the talent that pools at Sweetwater.

In my heart, I have loved SUHi. Before starting as a freshman, I moved out of the city and had the choice to go to Sweetwater or San Diego High. It was no competition. I had my eyes set on Sweetwater since before I was enrolled.

Sweetwater, you’ve been so good to me, but never in a million years did I think anything would stop me from walking the graduation stage or going to prom. I am heartbroken that my class will not have what every other class before us had and that you couldn’t give us a proper send-off. But, I whole-heartedly understand. This isn’t how I imagined ending my senior year, but now it is all I have. So, I’ll end it with a bang.

Thank you, Sweetwater, for all the memories and the bonds I’ve made with teachers and students. Thank you for the best years of my life.
Through my high school years, I watched my friends grow up. I saw the same little boys I knew in middle school develop into young men. The girls I used to play dolls with in elementary school were now mature young women. And I was still me – the same person I was years prior. I felt inferior compared to those around me. I wasn’t magically turning into the greatest volleyball player. I didn’t become a great basketball shooter overnight. I couldn’t manage to ace all of my tests. Discouraged, and envious of those around me, I began to drift away. I isolated myself in a classroom during lunch. I quit playing the sports I once loved. And I never spoke about my grades, knowing someone, somewhere, earned a grade point average higher than mine. But through all the negativity surrounding my life in high school, I can’t help but smile.

Going to Sweetwater, I realized that no matter what path I choose to take, I will be successful because there are people who will continually support me. Upon losing touch with my old friends, I began to eat lunch in a classroom. The conversations I had with Mrs. Rose, and occasionally, my best friend, Angelica were some of the greatest moments of my life. Despite the topic of our discussions, I always walked away knowing more than I had before. I lived for the little moments like this – moments where I truly enjoyed being at school.

After quitting both basketball and volleyball, the coaches continued to greet me in the halls with a smile; my former teammates still checked up on me, knowing we had created unbreakable bonds. Through the difficult times we had endurred and through weary seasons, they still welcomed me into their arms. Regardless of our troublesome past, these people remained good to me, supporting me through my journey.

When my teachers found out that I was struggling with multiple concepts taught in class, they offered extra help; they tutored me during breaks and gave me additional resources to use for more practice. They were there when I needed support concerning events outside of school, when I was stressed beyond my capacities. And when I was on the verge of giving up, they reassured me that I was capable of doing great things.

And with that, I have never felt luckier to be attending a school. Sweetwater’s staff continually exceeds my expectations. They know that every student is different, but they also know that none of the students are incompetent. Despite the negative start of my high school years, SUHi has molded my experience into a memorable one. This school – the community within – recognizes that every student needs support and gives it to them. I didn’t have many friends, I was never the captain of a sports team, and I never thought I could amount to anything in life. Yet, the people at SUHi took a chance and gave me their full support. Because whether you’re the MVP or benchwarmer, valedictorian or underachiever, you will always find a home – a family – here at Sweetwater.

**THE MASKS THAT WE WEAR**

**ALETHIA MORENO, STAFFWRITER**

Despite all of the uncertainty and tragedy of our current reality, it is comforting to see that humanity does not shy away from expressing their creativity. As it is now required for those who leave self-isolation to wear masks, our Red Devils have done so, in style. Whether to Walmart on a toilet paper or grocery run, you know, essentials, Senior Rafael Amaya ensures that he is protected by wearing his fashionable mask. Students are not only purchasing brand names to show their individuality, but some are also buying their masks from local community members in order to support them during these unfortunate times.

Mya Alvarado, a junior, dawns a cutesy cherry designed mask made for her by her mother. Although such a simple thing, a unique mask such as this one accentuates an outfit, all while protecting her. Danielle May Cruz, a senior, shows her support for her city by wearing a mask made by her grandmother’s friend. The solidarity shown across generations shows just how much a fighting spirit National City has. The color of her mask is perfect, just in time for spring, a reminder of the flower fields we will hopefully get to all visit soon! Although our students have some very lighthearted and aesthetic masks, some of our Devils have taken this opportunity to show their fighting spirit through scarier, full face masks.

I, a senior, have also decided to show my support for small business by purchasing handmade masks by an instagram account run by a teenager, @thriftyyclowns. Sadly, the post office is a bit slow with the high demand for mailing necessary medical supplies. Fortunately, my dad was crafty enough to make his own handmade mask out of a sarape. Look at the Sweetwater alumni go!

Sophomore Damien Martinez is full of life, and wears his mask to scare the life out of others. The government was not too specific on what exactly the masks had to look like, as long as they cover the mouth and nose! Martinez has used this loophole to his advantage and now ensures that others keep their 6 feet from him. Perfectly following self-isolation regulations! There are a multitude of designs available for our eccentric students to show their individuality, from sports teams, to hand drawn, and even masks with support for our 2020 Senior Class. No matter how you choose to protect yourself, it is greatly appreciated that our Devils are not only taking care of themselves, but their community as well.
ADVICE TO UNDERCLASSMEN
The Devils’ Advocate Staff

✓ Make the most out of every day.
✓ High school can be fun; it is what you make it, and you can make it enjoyable if you try.
✓ Participate in spirit weeks & attend assemblies.
✓ Respect your teachers.
✓ Always do extra credit, even if you don’t need it, because you never know when it’ll come in handy.
✓ Be kind to everyone. You never know if someone is bound to mature and change in time, and in time you may learn to appreciate the people you know.
✓ Clean up after yourselves.
✓ Don’t let fake rumors get to you. It’s just high school; afterwards, you’ll never see those people again. You are not the opinion of someone who doesn’t even know you.
✓ Work. It may be difficult now, but it will pay off later.
✓ Community service hours, get them done!
✓ Don’t think about doing something, just do it. You’ll only connect with a small group of people after high school, and you’ll never know until you try!
✓ Learn from your mistakes.
✓ Don’t go out and try looking for friends the first day; it’s okay to have a small group of friends you truly trust instead of having a crowd of people you hardly know.
✓ Kindness goes a long way.
✓ You don’t need a lot of friends to be happy.
✓ Go to the cafeteria instead of a lunch stand so you have more variety to choose from.
✓ Pay attention to deadlines.
✓ Join a variety of things. There’s no shame in quitting if you find out something just isn’t for you.
✓ Friends will come & go.
✓ Be open to change and be willing to learn new perspectives, especially for a school with such a diverse and rich culture.
✓ If you need time by yourself, go to the library.
✓ Finish your work & you’ll get good grades.
✓ Try to stay out of drama.
✓ Getting along with your teachers really helps.
✓ Realize that everyone is growing & changing.
✓ Leave any toxic relationships.
✓ Don’t ditch classes.
✓ Apply for CSF every semester you qualify.

✓ Find an amazing group of friends to better enjoy your time at school.
✓ Appreciate every moment, because time really does fly by fast.
✓ Don’t stop doing what you love doing just because your friends don’t want to do it.
✓ Clear tardies & absences; they’ll haunt you senior year.
✓ Understand others have a different way of thinking.
✓ Don’t try to be someone you’re not in order to fit in.
✓ Get out of your comfort zone. Try new things.
✓ Care about your grades, but don’t stress out.
✓ If you will be late with an assignment because of a circumstance you can’t control, email your teachers and let them know. SUHi staff really care about your well-being and they will prioritize that over your homework.
✓ If you have a boring class, bring a book.
✓ Your mental health comes first; take time for yourself.
✓ Participate as much as you can to be able to enjoy your high school life.
✓ Have fun with positive vibes & leave those negative and toxic vibes.
✓ Understand that this “journey” isn’t forever.
✓ Always do more than what’s necessary.
✓ Take Health in summer school, if possible.
✓ Eat your lunch in 303. Mrs. Rose always has great conversation and you’ll learn something every day from her. Also, the coffee scent and the music are bomb.
✓ Take advantage of opportunities.
✓ Take more pictures!
✓ Never doubt yourself.
✓ Join as many clubs & sports as you can.
✓ Don’t wait until your senior year to get involved.
✓ It’s okay to feel overwhelmed; you’ll get over it.
✓ Don’t forget to have fun.
✓ Only take on as many extra-curricular activities as you can handle with your workload for school.
✓ Always do what you feel is best for you.
✓ Join clubs! Be spirited! SUHi has much to offer, but only to those who give back to SUHi.
✓ Try out for a sport you like. Even if you’re not great at it, the experience will be priceless.
✓ Get your driver’s license early.
✓ Never compare yourself to others. Ever. Not in sports, not in grades, not in anything.
THE LITTLE THINGS WE’VE LEARNED TO APPRECIATE IN LIFE

ENIGO PÁLANÇA, STAFFWRITER

Life is a journey that all of us are presented with. It’s something sacred, precious, and something we humans must protect at all cost. We the people are presented with something which has been unprecedented for nearly a century, a catastrophe which has led us to shelter in our homes – Covid-19. Yet, amongst the devastation, we have learned things in life which we never would have noticed without Covid. In a way, Covid has really brought us together, not apart.

Prior to the quarantine, we spent so very little time appreciating what we have and what we can do. Every day it was either school or work which took up our time, but now we are in our homes realizing things we could have never seen without Covid. We’ve start to appreciate the weather, which we take advantage of; the places we like to go to; and the people who risk their lives trying to save others – the nurses, doctors, first responders, police, truck drivers, anyone who is out there doing their part to ensure that we will all get through this together.

It truly is a beautiful sight to see people around the world unite and support each other in times of need. To talk and interact with one another, ensuring one another’s health really shows the altruism which we as a society have. The world has been learning to be more accepting and altruistic. It’s a value which we are all learning in these times of dire times, and it just goes to show what we really are as a society. Many have lost their jobs, experiences in school, and even loved ones, but Covid has taught us to appreciate what we have and to really look past our differences and look instead at our similarities. In a time of disaster and uncertainty, it shows what we as a society truly are.

Covid has stripped us of many things, but it also has helped us to see the best in one another. It has taught us to really make the best out of nothing, and every day we as a society grow more and more as we learn to be more loving, to be more accepting, to appreciate the little things in life.

WHAT DOES SUHi MEAN TO ME?

CAROLINA ALCÂNTAR, STAFFWRITER  Class of 2020, Senior Memories

Although I did not attend SUHi my freshman year, I was there mostly every day. For the past years, SUHi hasn’t just been a school, it has also been my second home. It’s where I spent the most time during my day, from early in the morning to late at night. My freshman year, I decided to be involved and joined SUHi’s Cheer Team as well as Track and Field. I managed to go to every single practice, competition, and meet. So, even before actually attending classes there, I was a Red Devil. When I had the chance to experience being a complete Red Devil my sophomore year, it was incredible. I couldn’t believe how much spirit every class had. I knew I was meant for this school. Throughout the four years, I joined sports and clubs. Not only did I have the opportunity to meet so many new friends and create amazing friendships, but we became family. There were many friendships that were lost on the way. It taught me that friends come and go, to enjoy the time we have, and to live in the present. I have learned under great teachers. I absolutely thank them for everything they do. They take time to not only teach us, but also to listen. I had the opportunity to be close to a couple teachers; I won’t ever forget them. SUHi’s teachers and staff are full of love and joy. SUHi has made me who I am today.

Throughout my years at SUHi, I have made so many mistakes, but I’ve learned so many more lessons. I have failed much of the time, but I still managed to achieve greater things. I will never forget all the memories I have made. I never knew March 13 would have been the last day I’d go to class with my friends, and say “bye” on the way. I never knew I wouldn’t be able to say “hi” to teachers again. I never knew it’d be the last day I’d sit and talk to my classmates about the most random things. SUHi is my safe place. There were some days when I’d be out of it, but the majority of the time it was a good. I have gone from crying, to smiling, to laughing all in one day. I’ve got to say, assemblies were my favorite; the spirit of students and most staff is amazing. During assemblies when juniors shout “Go home, Seniors!” it really hits me now. Senior year was cut way too short for Class of 2020.

Although we can’t do anything about it but keep looking forward, SUHi will always tie us together. I do thank each and every one I met throughout high school. I thank the staff, teachers, coaches, peers, friends. Even if we had the shortest conversation, it still means a lot to me. I learned something very valuable from each one of you. Although we didn’t get to say goodbye, this is not the end for us. We have so much more coming our way. Always stay safe, and go after and do what you believe in. Seniors, no matter what path we decide to take, the best is yet to come. Once a Red Devil, Always a Red Devil and always remember… In Our Hearts, SUHi Lives.

A FOOT AHEAD

MARIANA CASILLAS, STAFFWRITER

This year’s men’s varsity soccer team truly showed us what we Red Devils are all about. Throughout the season the team trained long and hard, and sometimes even on the weekends! Before school, at 6 am, they would show up to school for practice and then continue on through school during the day. It is no wonder that they fought their way up to Division 2.

At the beginning of the season, the team started out as random pieces of a puzzle, each piece with different personal goals for what the season would be for them. As they trained for weeks before their first game against Morse High School, they became less and less like pieces and more of a whole puzzle. That is where their legend begins. They racked up a win against Morse (4-1), and then another (Kearny 2-1), and another (Patrick Henry 2-0). You could say these Devils were on fire. Winning your first few games of a season truly gives you insight on what the rest of the season will be like. It also gives players the confidence they need to be even better players. This confidence surely carried the team for a while because they did not lose a game until about a whole month after the season started (Patrick Henry 0-2).

SUHi utilized its young fresh talent while refining its previous players to make a well-rounded team. This year’s varsity team was made up of multiple grade levels, not just seniors; and every grade level took pride in being a Red Devil, all contributing to the glory of athletic success.

However, this year didn’t end as gloriously as we all had hoped. The Red Devils were dealt the unfortunate card of not having our main field accessible to them and had to share the lower grass field with all the other winter sports. This was challenging in regards to the mobility of practice, especially for the senior players who wanted to end their last year under the lights. But the circumstance led to the need for creativity when and where to practice, hence the 6 a.m. and weekend practices. These Red Devils were adamant about getting their time in to hone in on their skills. They put in all the work despite having a lot against them and, because of it, it resulted in the end of their stagnation in Division three.

Overall, our men’s varsity team had a record of 16 wins, 6 ties and 6 losses. In regards to the league, the record is 6-3-1. I am proud to say our Red Devils made it all the way to the quarterfinals of the CIF Playoffs and played against Escondido. Unfortunately, it was their last game of the season with a score of (0-2). Despite that loss, the team knew just how much effort they all contributed to making it that far and that they truly gave it their all. Their performance this year was beyond compare; and I’m glad to say congratulations, they made it to Division two.
Sweetwater has changed me so much. I still remember when I promoted from 9th grade. I was terrified of being with the big kids in a high school. But, all the fear went away when I saw how welcoming SUHi was to me on my first day. I did not change much for my sophomore year. I was still the teacher’s pet, and I would only focus on my education. Something that surprised me was how fun the assemblies were. The assemblies were a lot different from the ones I had ever experienced. They were fun, and I loved them. I loved the way the students would paint their faces and write on the year they would graduate. I loved the way everyone was excited for the assembly and how they tried to get others as excited as they were. I loved the way everyone gathered and cheered each other up. Each performance was amazing and amusing.

My junior year took a turn. Sweetwater taught me to become part of the school. I did not want to be a girl who was an unknown face in the yearbook. I tried to join as many clubs as I could. I joined Book Club, Fashion Club, Immigration Club, SUHi Media, SUHi HipHop, CSF, Travel Club, Coding Club, Make-Up Club. It made me more social, and I was not as shy as I once was. I was happier. I made lots of friends. Not everyone was real, but I learned which ones were real and which ones were fake. Just like every school has fake friends, I bumped into many of those. Although it hurt, I still managed to get back on my feet. I learned a lot, and this made me stronger. If I had the chance to go back and change everything, I wouldn’t. I had reliable staff that helped me through. This made me love Sweetwater more. I learned that I always had someone that I could depend on. It’s hard to think that I’m coming towards the end of my senior year. I don’t have as many friends as I did my junior year, because I learned who were the real ones. My first assembly this year was amazing. I was stoked and had the SUHi spirit. SUHi helped me love who I am. This is the place where it feels like I belong. I was longing for something like this; I never thought I would ever be able to show who I truly was. I was able to be loud, crazy, and myself. I didn’t think I would ever want to show who I am to anyone until now. I know that high school is hard, but it is still something that I love, and I’m glad I was given the chance to experience something like this. Although the end of this year is different, it is still special and unique. I know I’m going to miss everything – except the stress. I’ll miss bothering my younger sibling in the halls. I’m going to miss bumping into my friends and catching up with them. I am going to miss seeing a boy I like and getting wonderstruck. I’ll miss walking in everyday and seeing the devil statue and my friends waiting for me every morning. I’ll miss the staff who did so much for me and everyone else. I’ll miss laughing at the things my friends and I would come up with. High school has been such a great experience. In my heart, SUHi LIVES!
School has always been about learning things. How to write an essay, why an empire fell, or the solution to a math problem. But what are the lessons one truly learns about the world? About themselves? Personally, in my four years here at Sweetwater, I learned to be present in every moment. To be present in class, at the football or soccer games, in an assembly. To bask in the moment and remember it through your eyes, not your cell phone. Don’t make it some snapshot memory; make it a memory in your own brain. As a 2020 senior, I fully understand what seniors before me told me about the years being fleeting. As a freshman, I took it all for granted. I would have my mind trailing off in a place that’s supposed to give me the best memories of my life, and they did. My biggest lesson at SUHi is definitely to live in every moment. Even the difficult ones when you’re struggling in class, you get a bad progress report, or we’re down by a lot in a game. Cherish them, bask in them, because by the end of the four years, you will miss them all. Here are what some of my fellow classmates declared as their biggest lessons:

“Anything can happen and change within seconds.” - Stephanie Corona

“I learned to achieve things you want in life, regardless of what people say.” - Rueben Bueno

“To stay on task better and to focus more because in middle school I didn’t care about my grades, but once I reached SUHi, I knew I had to stay on top of it.” - Rafael Amaya

“When to let go, to not keep trying to make something work, and to never date a girl who has weird spelling for a common name.” - Jose Olivares

“Never take what is offered to you for granted. There were many times when I was offered tutoring, fee waivers, and many clubs/sports, but I didn’t take advantage of them early on and I regret it now that I’m going to graduate. SUHi has many programs and teachers that are always at the students’ disposal that could really help you for your future.” - Julissa Fierro

“If you’re going to be late to school, might as well not show up.” - Lizbeth Cuevas

“It’s okay to stress out and get overwhelmed, but it’s important to understand that your health is your top priority; therefore, you must understand that you will be okay at the end of the day. Take it day by day.” - Isabel Vega

“Enjoy every moment because you won’t ever live the same experience again.” - Dana Aguirre

“Don’t take anything for granted, even the little things like going out to eat after a football game. These four years went by so fast, so make sure to cherish every moment.” - Reyna Roman

“Always be yourself; never be afraid to step out of your comfort zone to do what you love to do. Also, I learned to be involved in sports and clubs because that’s what will make your high school experience even better. Finally, I learned to never procrastinate on any school work because it will all eventually catch up to you.” - Jeffrey Becerril

“None of this is permanent. It’s high school. Do what you got to do, enjoy it and never regret it.” - Julie Cain

“SUHi taught me that no difference sets us apart from each other; we all come together as one and have each other’s back. Everyone is different in their own ways, but we’re all allowed to be whoever we desire.” - Monica Lona

“It didn’t matter if you attended this school all four years or just a few months, you were always considered a Red Devil. Inclusion was very much promoted, and this is an example of that.” - Ricqui Mascarro

“I learned not to put high expectations on anyone but myself. Set the bar high for you and only you; no one else is going to put in the work for you, and they have no reason to.” - Isaiah Soltero

“I learned that you’re never going to be able to please everyone. Someone will always be upset, so you might as well do what makes you happy. What other people think about you or the things you do does not matter. Take risks, step outside of your comfort zone, and leave no regrets.” - Cyrille Morales

“Continue to strive even through your troubles. Persevere. Life doesn’t wait for anybody, so you handle it along with its many hits.” - Alyssa Crook

“Don’t listen to your brain; follow your dreams.” - Cesar Gonzalez

“The memories one makes within what you do with your friends or what you are involved in essentially bring you closer to SUHi. I learned the importance of making the most of what one has before it’s all gone.” - Andrew Garcia

“Don’t base your own opinions and beliefs off what other people think. Do as you like and cherish every moment.” - Marlenee Mena

“Always have a positive mindset! There will always be people who doubt you and obstacles that try to stop you from achieving greatness, but with the right mindset, you can accomplish anything.” - Jose Pina

“Everybody’s different in their own way, so why copy another when you’re amazing by being just you? Self-acceptance is difficult, but once you discover who you truly are, it’s one of the best things you’ll ever get.” - Saili Taanuu

“The most important lesson I learned at SUHi was probably understanding the matters of time and patience through letting time do its thing. As one eagerly tries to rush every moment, it’s all too often overlooked that, with time, things will always fall into place.” - Alexandra Guerrero

“The most important lessons I learned at SUHi would be to not let yourself get pushed around and to be yourself. Being yourself will probably be the best thing you can be because somewhere out there you will be appreciated. Obviously, there’s always going to be people who dislike you, but you should just ignore it. Sweetwater was a very supportive, uplifting school – not just speaking for myself, but also for others. I felt like I was at home every day I stepped on campus because every day was a lesson learned.” - Carolina Negrete

“I learned that the education system doesn’t test intelligence; it tests your memory.” – Miguelangel Bay

“I learned that a lot of people think winning is not important, but that’s just because they are not me.” - Hector Alva

“Change is always a good thing; it’s never too late to discover who you really are.” - Giancarlo Calderon

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES
CLASS OF 2020
It seems just yesterday I was a freshman being welcomed into the Sweetwater family. I’ve always been told by alumni to appreciate these 4 years of high school and I was like, yeah whatever. But now that the rest of our year is cancelled, I realize I shouldn’t have taken anything for granted. It makes me regret not paying attention in AP Econ (Sorry, Pelletier).

Reflecting on these past years has shown me how much I have actually grown as a person and how much I still am growing. I’ve made many mistakes in the past, from lost friendships to not diving for that flyball in centerfield. If I could go back, I’d fix all the friendships that were lost, and I would for sure try harder in baseball. But there’s so much I’m glad I didn’t do differently.

The friends I’ve made during my time at SUHi are the closest people to me, and I see some of them as lifelong friends. Thanks to Corona, I was never able to achieve my senior year goal of finally becoming softball player of the year, and I honestly believe I was on the road to be that player and represent Sweetwater in a positive way. I’m also sad about losing prom because I never got to do a cute promposal, but whatever, I guess. Senior year really went downhill.

I’m forever thankful for the opportunities Sweetwater has given me in many aspects of my life, from education to athletics. The staff has been nothing but an amazing support system to me (except some teachers who ruined my grade, you know who you are), and I will always remember Coach Huckaby for introducing me to Sweetwater at a young age in my kids’ basketball league. Without that exposure, I wouldn’t be in this SUHi family today. Special shoutout to Mr. Garcia too because I was able to bond with him about RuPaul’s Drag Race (<3). Another thank you to Mr. Hermosillo for being my bestie and putting up with my drama for the past 2 years; you’re the best.

Just yesterday, I was creating all these memories at SUHi, and to have it all snatched from the senior class really sucks. But we will carry on and live our best lives. A setback is just a setup for a comeback.

Just yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away. As the sun sets on an old chapter in my life, the sun will rise again and shine on a new chapter that is yet to come. But when it gets here, I will cherish every moment.

Thank you, Sweetwater, for everything.