CENTURION SPOTLIGHT

VOLUME XXVII, ISSUE 1 // CYPRESS HIGH SCHOOL // October 2026 // 9801 VALLEY VIEW ST, CYPRESS, CA 90630

Top Gun-Themed HOCO Dance Takes Off At The Hangar

By Lauren Kimura, Layout Editor

On Saturday October 17th, 2026, Cypress High School kicked off its first dance of the school year with a Top Gun-themed Homecoming. Taking place at Hangar 21 in Fullerton, students enjoyed this music-filled evening with snack bars, a lively dance floor, photobooths, and arcade games.



On October 16, 2026, Cypress Football defeated Marina High School with a final score of 41-7. The homecoming court consisted of freshmen **Darwin Perez Fuentes** and **Pratishth Barman**, sophomores **Darrien Havican** and **Cameron Meyer**, juniors **Justin Hall** and **Olivia Twitty**, seniors **Derek Lebaron, Hailey Martinez, Pryce Chanthavy, and Jasslyn Kwong**. During the halftime show, **Peter Batsaras** and **Sophia Cueva** were crowned homcoming king and queen. See page 6 for more photos from the Homecoming football game! (Photo by Sofia Velasco)

According to ASB Adviser **Sarah Binford**, this Homecoming had a "huge turn out, over 900 students came to the dance [which is] the most we've ever had… I'm excited that it was a fun time and that lots of people felt they really enjoyed it." Senior **Anh Ngo** shared her experience, "My favorite part about Homecoming is the memories of me and my friends having fun and just having this general break from school. It was something to look forward to because we got to dress up and take pictures."

The successful turn out was the result of extensive planning and preparation from ASB, which started before the school year began. Senior and ASB President **Risha Rajkumar** explained, "We start in the summer, planning our theme and our venue, then we split up into committees where everyone gets a specific job whether it's Spirit Week, the rally, our actual dance, or our lunchtime activities. Then we all come together at our meetings to discuss." She added that ASB visited a few venue options, but eventually settled on the Hangar since they were familiar with the venue and knew they were reliable. The selection of the dance's location was also influenced by the opportunity to choose a theme around it. Being located next to Fullerton Municipal Airport made it "a venue where we knew we could pull a theme and match it," Rajkumar said, explaining how they landed on the Top Gun theme.

Overall, students shared mixed feelings about the dance's theme. For junior **Sankalp Patel**, it was his first homecoming dance and he "liked the theme because Top Gun is [his] favorite movie." The theme was also enjoyed by students who haven't seen the movie. Sophomore **Natalia Shields** said, "I liked it because although I haven't watched the movie, I had enough context to understand all the little Easter Eggs that were put in." However, some students reported that they would have preferred a lighter theme such as Ngo who shared, "I personally didn't like this theme because I feel like other schools had more pastel colors which fits better with the season."

Following Cypress' Homecoming football game victory and pep rally, the dance ended the week strong with students from all grades attending. Binford said that in addition to the dance, "We won the [football] game and the halftime show was really good [so] lots of stuff made it a fun week."



Seniors Suri Patel, Josephine Yun, and Victoria Beckel at their last Homecoming. (photo by Annie Paccione)

Cypress Celebrates Homecoming at Annual Pep Rally

By Grace Song, Entertainment Editor and Sonia Gupta, Entertainment Editor



Advanced Dance performed during Cypress High School's Homecoming pep rally. (photo by Grace Song)

Cypress High School's annual Homecoming pep rally took place on October 16, 2026, in the main gymnasium and featured student performances, interactive games, and the introduction of the Homecoming court. Students cheered on their peers and engaged with the performances, making the pep rally a memorable part of this year's Homecoming activities.

The Associated Student Body (ASB) presented several elements, including the Homecoming Court and opportunities for students to participate in games. ASB member **Kenna Gonzales** said she enjoyed "seeing all of the activities they planned come together and put on a great show for everybody."

Varsity Cheer and football kicked off the assembly with an energetic joint performance. Senior **Miabella Martinez** said, "I had a lot of fun engaging with the crowd. It was a nice, bonding experience with the other football players." **London McLaurin,** from Varsity Cheer, added, "I loved dancing with my partner and my best friends."

Advanced Dance and Varsity Song followed with choreographed routines that further energized the crowd. **Abigail Sasaki** from Varsity song said her favorite part was "getting to see everyone come, perform, and raise spirits." **Shyla Sobti**, a senior from Advanced Dance, added, "I loved getting to dance my last year with all my friends and connecting with them."

Beyond the performances, student participation contributed greatly to the rally's atmosphere. Senior **Jasmine Umayam** said, "I enjoyed the class games and performances. This year's freshman class is a lot more lively than last year's, which was great." Freshman **Emily Dinh** said, "I liked the advanced dance performance the best, but I would like to see more activities from the choir as well."

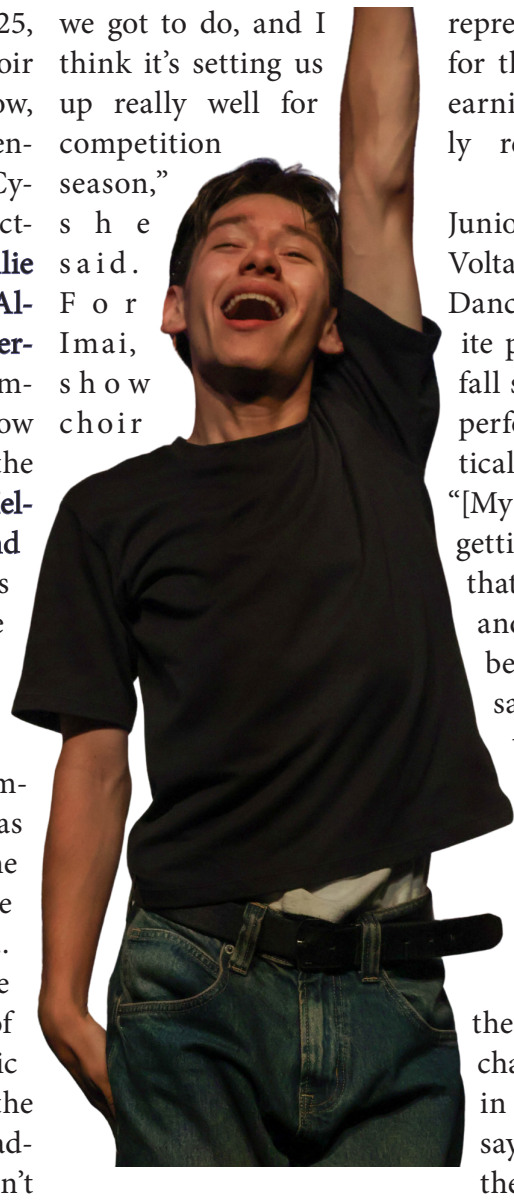
Through its performances, interactive games, and Homecoming Court introductions, this year's pep rally brought students together to celebrate school spirit and build excitement for Homecoming.

Seize the Day: A Closer Look at Cypress Show Choir

By Reina Takagi, Editor-in-Chief

On September 24 and 25, 2026, Cypress Show Choir performed their fall show, Seize the Day, in the Centurion Theater. The Cypress Show Choir is directed by CHS alumna **Hollie Lucas-Jones. Karina Alfajora and Salvador Cervantes,** who are also alumni of the Cypress Show Choir, choreographed the choir's performances. **Melody Sparks, Paige Ye, and Youngjin Kim** served as the vocal coaches for the Cypress Show Choir.

To Senior **Taryn Imai**, the Cypress Show Choir community can be described as "one really big family." She said, "Everyone is there to support each other... At the end of the day, we are sharing that goal of wanting to create music and dance together." As the season starts up, Imai advises underclassmen: "Don't be scared. Everyone is there to support you, and if you need help, you can always ask." Imai currently holds a leadership position in the Cypress Show Choir as the President of Media and Logistics. She has been a part of the High Voltage choir since her freshman year. This season, Imai is excited to make the most of her last year in show choir. "I'm sad that it's my last one, but I'm really excited to make it the best one," she said. Imai's favorite part of the fall show was High Voltage's group number, "Mad Hatter." "I love the choreo that we got to do, and I think it's setting us up really well for competition season," she said. For Imai, show choir

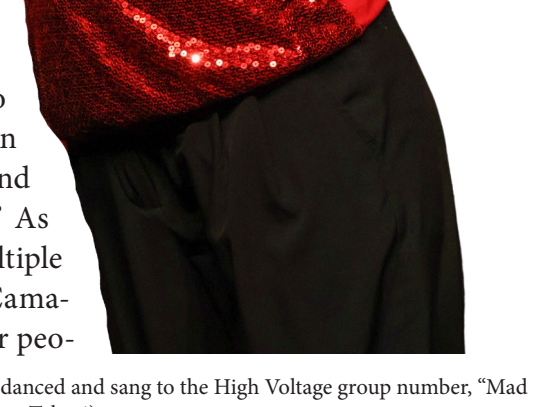


Senior Gabriel Camacho is the High Voltage Captain and president/Dance Captain of Voltage Unlimited. (photo by Reina

has been "a big journey."She explained that early on, it wasn't something that she thought she would come back to. "But time and time again, the family and the bond have been something that I love," she said. "I feel so privileged that I get to be someone all these people look to for leadership." Over the last few years, Imai has built skills in communication and advocacy through show choir. She explained that, as a Visual and Performing Arts program, sometimes they do not get representation. "Fighting for that representation and earning it has been really rewarding," she said.

Junior **Joyce Lee** is a High Voltage Stage Manager and Dance Captain. Lee's favorite part of performing the fall show was being able to perform on stage, "authentically and passionately." "[My favorite thing was] getting to show my passion that I have for dancing and singing. I get to just be myself up there," she said. Like Imai, Lee said that the Cypress Show Choir community is "one big family." "We can be vulnerable to each other," she explained. As a leader, Lee expressed the importance of taking chances. "There's a quote in the choir room that says you miss 100% of the shots you don't take. And I would say, take every opportunity, and every chance you get, because you never know what happens," she said. The Cypress Show Choir has shaped Lee's life in many ways. She explained that her skills in dancing and performing have grown, but it has also "helped [her] get out of [her] little bubble," as well. "It's really helped me allow myself to show who I really was and express myself," she said with a smile. As audience members, families, parents, supporters, students, and friends look to support the Cypress Show Choir, some ways to help are by donating on their Booster Hub website, coming to shows, buying merchandise, and participating in their popular "Minute to Win It" fundraisers.

Senior **Gabriel Camacho** is a High Voltage Dance Captain and the President and Dance Captain of Voltage Unlimited. Voltage Unlimited is Cypress Show Choir's all-boys, advanced bass group. Cypress Show Choir fosters growth, confidence, and community. Reflecting on his freshman year, Camacho said, "I was very isolated. I feel like being surrounded by upperclassmen from the start helped me grow maturity-wise. I would never expect [being a leader] to happen to me." He advises underclassmen to "put yourself out there, because you don't want to miss out on something and regret it later." As a leader in multiple choir groups, Camacho's advice for people looking for leadership roles is to "be open-minded, optimistic, and be ready for the unexpected to happen."



Junior Ariana Bernal danced and sang to the High Voltage group number, "Mad Hatter." (photo by Reina Takagi)

The Cypress Show Choir's competition season starts up in early February, with Show Choir Preview Night on February 5, 2027, at the Anaheim High School Cook Auditorium. About a week later, on February 13, 2027, Pink Thunder, Shockwaves, Sparkettes, and Voltage Unlimited will compete in the Brea Olinda California Classic at Brea Olinda High School. Competition and show information is available on Cypress Show Choir's Booster Hub website.

Evening of the Haunted Arts: Having a Spooky Good Time

By Lily Souvannasane, Copy Editor



Advanced Dance gave their all for a thrilling opening to the Evening of the Haunted Arts (photo by Lily Souvannasane)

On October 2, the Evening of the Haunted Arts was hosted at Cypress High School by the VAPA programs and Friday Night Live. At 6:00 p.m., Advanced Dance, Choir, and Theater opened the performance with "Thriller" by Michael Jackson. They were followed by more amazing performances, such as "Mad Hatter" from Choir, and a peek into Theater's upcoming production of Disney's "Descendants." Once the performances were over, FNL opened their haunted maze.

Sophomore **Natalia Shields** performed "Thriller," "Mad Hatter," and "Toxic" with Advanced Dance. She stated, "We started prepping for our performances pretty early on, at least a month ago." Their hard work paid off in the end, after they put on a wonderful show to set the mood for the evening.

The show was just one part of the night. While it was definitely a success, the maze was not to be ignored. Made entirely by FNL, they worked from the minute the dismissal bell rang, until it was time for the event to start. From setting up props, to organizing lines, the members of FNL had a lot to do in a short amount of time. Though they did have help from Theater, who put makeup on all of the actors. They managed to pull it off and gave everyone who went in a spooktacular time.

Aside from rehearsal the day before, they didn't have much preparation prior to the day of the event. As a member of FNL, Junior **Shreya Pandey** had little time to prepare for her job, which entailed running the queue for the maze, and manning the activities table. Once the event had concluded, she said, "My favorite part was probably looking at all of the makeup artists. They did such a good job on the scare actors, and I wish I could do that." The Evening of the Haunted Arts is only one of the many events held at Cypress High School this year. There will be many more to come, with food and festivities, just waiting for students to join the fun.

Meet Our New CHS Science Marianna Saade

By Reina Takagi, Editor-in-Chief

When the 2026-2027 Cypress High School school year began in August, it brought along some new faces. Meet **Marianna Saade**, a new Cypress High School teacher, who hopes students feel "genuinely heard and cared for" in her classroom. At CHS, Saade currently teaches in Room 212.

This is Saade's 12th year teaching. As an Education Specialist, she supports students who may need extra academic help in their classes, and meets with parents to make sure students' education plans are up to date and that they're being followed in all their classes. With this credential, she can generally teach any subject. For more than 10 years, Saade taught middle school language arts, social studies, and reading intervention. This is her first year at Cypress High School, where she teaches living earth exclusively. This marks her first year teaching science. "I'm also learning a lot alongside the students. I love that, with science, there is so much hands-on work that you can do. It's a lot easier to connect it to students' lives and make it more engaging," Saade said.

Saade's first impression of the Cypress High School community is that "the student body has been really positive." She explained, "Coming from middle school, there's definitely a different dynamic. The students here are a lot more self-sufficient. It seems like students are able to manage their time themselves, which I enjoy." Saade's teaching style focuses on clarity and comfortability. "I'm always trying to explain everything in multiple different ways, with examples, with visuals, giving students a lot of practice opportunities so that they feel comfortable and confident with the material," she explained. She emphasized that she "never wants students to feel like [she] is trying to trick them or surprise them," and she keeps that in mind when planning her lessons.

One of the things Saade hopes students take away from her classroom is that students feel listened to and can rely on her. "When I think back on being a young person, what I hated the most was not being taken seriously, or feeling like adults would brush off any concerns I had," she said. "I always want students to feel like I'm someone that's going to listen to them and seriously follow through on things." Because Saade teaches freshmen, she hopes that in the coming years, students will come back and connect with her. "My hope is that they seek me out to confide in me, update me on how their classes are going, and what their plans are for after high school," she said.

Saade's first teaching job was in Busan, South Korea. She taught English there for one year to students in third to sixth grade, and co-taught with Native Korean teachers in their English classes. "About halfway through the year there, I realized I really liked coming to work every day. [I realized] that I should probably pursue education in the long term because it seemed like a good fit for me," Saade said. In her free time, Saade enjoys gardening, cooking, baking, hiking, and traveling. With a smile, she added that she has a 12-year-old pit bull who she "walks very slowly every morning." She also said that during Thanksgiving Break, she will be traveling to Guadalajara, Mexico and that she is "always happy to talk about travel and checking out new places with students and other faculty members."



You can find Marianna Saade in room 212, where she teaches living earth. (photo by Reina Takagi)

New Office Aide Comes To Cypress

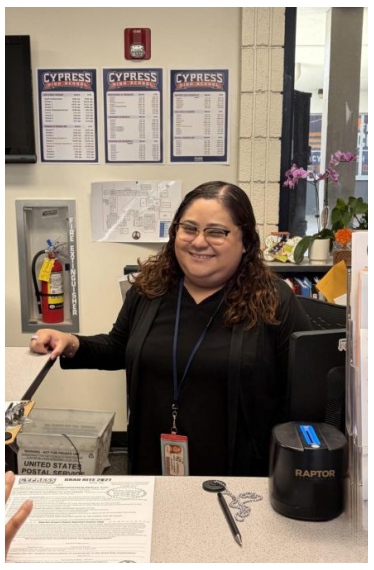
By Sofia Lopez Velasco, Video Editor and Social Media Editor

This year, Cypress High School has a new staff member, **Annette Herrera**, in the front office.

Starting this year, she was a substitute in the attendance office and now she is working officially in the main office. Before Cypress, she worked at several other schools, including Katella High School, her first assignment. "I chose to work at the office because I was a graduate of the Anaheim Union High School District…..I really like working in the office environment," Herrera said. She added, "In my previous career, I was an optical technician, so I always enjoyed working in these spaces."

Being in a new environment means meeting new people and Herrera is looking forward to it. "I've had good connections with other staff members and students. I enjoy working with my colleagues," she stated. "I'm looking forward to school events, since the holiday season is around the corner, so I'm excited to see how school spirit week is."

She is looking forward to all the new experiences at Cypress High School.



Annette Harrera has worked at other AUHSD schools, such as Katella High. (photo by Cypress Journalism)

Welcoming Ms. Katelyn Middleton

By Elise Arechiga, Sports Editor



New teacher Katelyn Middleton previously taught at Lexington Jr. High. (photo by Elise Arechiga)

Cypress High School welcomed many new staff and teachers this year, including **Katelyn Middleton.** She is located in room 106 and teaches LAS2, which is the extensive needs program at Cypress. But Middleton isn't new to teaching, she actually started off at Lexington Junior High, where she worked for 10 years as an instructional aide.

She always felt drawn to this line of work. "My family all worked in the district…that's what got me into being an aide," she said. But Middleton didn't want to stop at being an aide, and strove to pursue teaching her very own class. A fun fact about Middleton is that before arriving at Cypress she was nervous since she attended Cypress as a student and it is "a little weird to come back to my high school," she explained. Although Middleton had been at Lexington for so long, she is hopeful for this new school year. "Taking a new step was scary, but now I feel really happy and I like everyone I work with and all of my students here!" she exclaimed.

Middleton's words can be good advice: while taking risks may be scary, ultimately, they are worth it in the end. Other teachers on campus also agree that her addition has been nothing but positive, "She's coming with a lot of fresh ideas and is just on the same page with supporting the students…we are so excited to have her," LAS2 teacher **Katelyn Garton** said.

Welcoming New Spanish Teacher Ms. Schroeder

By Sophia Hernandez, Features Editor

As Cypress High School admits new teachers and staff this '26-27 year, it welcomes in **Katheryn Schroeder**. The new Spanish I and II teacher, with a half-day at Magnolia High School and Cypress each day. "I love Cypress," Schroeder says, "It's a nice school. The students are good." New to the teaching scene, she still finds teaching Cypress students and campus life enjoyable.

Originally, Schroeder did not intend to become a teacher, working in accounting. However, she had received a job offer to substitute at Long Beach Unified and decided to give it a try. This led to her discovering her love of teaching, and continued this for three years. "I found I do like being in the classroom," she says. "Right now I do enjoy what I do." She also enjoys the fact that she is able to bring diversity and teach her own language to students, "I'm from Colombia, my first language is Spanish– so I decided to teach [it]," which makes her continually passionate about teaching. "I love teaching Spanish, it lets me share my culture and my language with others," she says. "Most of the Spanish teachers and speakers here are from Mexico, and I'm from Colombia. For me to be able to bring that little [difference] to classrooms, [that keeps me teaching]."

Her placement at Cypress was entirely by chance. "It was not [a] choice, it was just the job offer. So I took it," she says. Her Spanish levels also happened to be in the job offer, however, is grateful regardless and genuinely enjoys what she does. "I didn't get to pick what Spanish, but I do love teaching Spanish I." More than anything, she is passionate about what she does and has discovered something she loves, contributing her passion to the Cypress community, providing a suitable environment for both students and staff.



Katheryn Schroeder is the new Spanish level one and two teacher at Cypress High School. (photo by Sophia Hernandez)

Behind the Frights: Knotts Brings New Nightmares to Life

By Emily Mundala, Student Activities Editor



Knott's Scary Farm focuses heavily on original worlds and characters.(photo by Emily Mundala)

As Halloween approaches, Southern California theme parks are getting ready for another season of haunted mazes, scare zones and live entertainment. Knott's Scary Farm and Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios Hollywood are bringing back familiar attractions while adding new experiences for 2026.

For Knott's Scary Farm creative designer Gus Krueger, his journey with the event began more than 20 years ago, when he started on the other side of the scares as a monster in one of the mazes.

Krueger first joined Scary Farm in 2000 as a monster before moving into production. He worked as a carpenter building mazes, later moved to the props department and eventually got the opportunity to design mazes. "I always had a knack for making stuff," Krueger said. "I just loved creating and the art of telling stories."

Krueger did not originally plan on working in haunted attractions. He studied television and video and originally wanted to become an editor. His experience at Knott's, however, gave him opportunities to work his way into maze design. When one of the maze designers left for Disney, Krueger offered to oversee one of the designer's projects. He was given that opportunity along with the chance to design a couple of other projects. After that first year went well, he continued designing for Scary Farm. "I did a good job, and I just have been doing it ever since," Krueger said.

For Krueger, the best part of designing a maze comes after all the planning and construction are finished. "The most fun I have is really just seeing people enjoy what I created," he said. That reaction is what makes the months of designing, building and decorating worth it. Whether guests are walking through one of Scary Farm's new mazes or returning to an attraction they already know, Krueger enjoys knowing that his work is helping people have fun.

While Knott's Scary Farm focuses heavily on original worlds and characters, Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios Hollywood takes a different approach, combining recognizable horror franchises with original experiences. The 2026 event runs on select nights from Sept. 3 through Nov. 1 and features eight haunted houses, scare zones, live entertainment and the return of the Terror Tram.

The return of the Terror Tram calls for a new scare, this year featuring Art the Clown from "Terrifier". Instead of staying inside the main theme park, guests are taken onto Universal's backlot for another part of the Halloween Horror Nights experience.

Although Knott's Scary Farm and Halloween Horror Nights take different approaches to creating their scares, both events give guests the chance to step into a world beyond their everyday lives.

Easiest Fall Recipes Of 2026

By Emma Sanes, Features Editor



Fall Recipes of this year are going strong, and many beginners can do them all. (photo by Life Love Good Food)

With fall approaching, new recipes do as well. As of last year, the most popular fall recipes were the Old Fashioned Apple Cake and Pumpkin Cookies. Though those were the recipes of last year, this year's recipes are very different; more people are trying to make face pies and spooky treats for Halloween, rather than fall itself.

Some of those treats are very easy to make, such as Rice Krispies Halloween treats. The only things you need are one half cup salted butter, one half teaspoon vanilla extract, 10 ounces mini marshmallows, Six cups of Rice Krispies cereal, one half cup Halloween M&Ms (plus more for topping), and one third cup Halloween sprinkles. As the instructions state, you must first line a 13×9-inch pan with foil or parchment paper and grease with butter or nonstick cooking spray. Bring a large pot or stockpot to medium heat. Add butter and melt. Reduce the heat to low and add mini marshmallows. Stir until melted, then add vanilla extract. Remove the pot from heat and stir in the cereal until the marshmallow mixture completely coats the cereal. Mix in two cups of mini marshmallows, M&Ms, and sprinkles. Be sure not to stir too much or too long; otherwise, the colors will start to melt. Add the mixture to the prepared pan and gently press the mixture into the pan. Don't press too hard; otherwise, your treats will be too dense and hard. Top with more M&Ms and sprinkles (optional). And lastly, let them cool for 20 to 30 minutes.

Another easy recipe anybody can do solo or with a friend is brownie spiderwebs; these brownie spiderwebs melt in your mouth and only take 30 minutes to make. First, you brown butter until it smells like cookies in your home. Next, you wait until the butter cools (it cannot be too hot) and add it to one half cup of brown sugar and one half cup of granulated sugar. Then mix with a mixing spoon until light and fluffy; once it's lighter in color, you add two eggs and one teaspoon of vanilla. Mix again until fluffy. This is key to making a nice hard top for your brownies. Once that's done, you add in one half of the flour, one teaspoon of baking soda, and three pinches of salt. Last but not least, you add the mixture to a buttered surface or parchment paper to bake it at 350 Fahrenheit degrees for 30 to 35 minutes. Once you start making your spiderwebs, you first put as many marshmallows as you please into the microwave, heating them until they slowly melt so you can spread them on top of the brownies, usually for about 30 seconds. And that's how you make spooky brownies.

There are so many other easy recipes out there too, but these are some of the easiest if you are just starting as a beginner baker or simply want a treat to share with your friends.

What Are YOU Afraid of?: Cypress' Worst Fears

By Antonio Sandoval, Comic Illustrator

Fear is a primitive survival mechanism designed to protect our bodies from harm and danger, but ultimately shaped by our environment and personal experiences. Fears include "the dark," "spiders," and "clowns," the list of fears is nearly endless! Some are absurd, and some are understandable, but that begs the question: what are YOU afraid of?

Sophomore **Yuna Fotinakes** fears that her old creepy teacher would look up her address on Aeries, break into her house at night, hide under her bed, and wait until she sleeps so he can ambush her and get away with it. Her reason for this absurd fear is that her teacher had "beef with her" because, according to her, he was just not a very nice person and she didn't do his exact bidding. "It's just lingering in the back of my mind. I don't consciously think about it, but sometimes when I fall asleep I worry about it," says Fotinakes. She hopes to never see that teacher ever again and face her fear. Sophomore **Jayden Lee** fears balloons randomly popping in his face. He states, "I remember long ago, I had this psychological trauma where I dealt with a balloon, and it popped in my face, and I remember having a mini heart attack. From that moment, I get a little tense whenever I see a balloon." He states that he's not alone in this fear. His sister also had a similar experience, she's scared too. "Everyone in my family pretty much shares the same phobia," Lee commented. Even with his frightening experience, he notes that he is currently trying to face his fears head-on, recently buying a pack of balloons and realizing they aren't all scary. "Be careful with balloons, you never know what they might do," he warned.

It seems that at every corner there is something to fear. In a world that is ever-changing, it's easy to be afraid, especially with Halloween just around the corner, but always stand strong and face them. Only then can you be free of your fear.



Students share their worst fears. (photo by Thinkstock)

The Gift of the Season

By Annie Paccione, Layout Editor and Photo Assistant

Halloween is right around the corner, Boo Baskets are becoming a popular way for students to celebrate the season. A Boo Basket is basically like a mini Christmas gift. Instead of receiving just one small gift, you get several that are picked out only for you. Students have different ideas about what makes the perfect Boo Basket, but many agree that the best baskets are more thoughtful and personalized than a regular gift.

Madeline Chance, a ninth grader, said her ideal basket would be filled with a cozy blanket, yummy candy, a candle, a cute ghost plushie and iced coffee. She would also add to her wooden box fairy lights, and other small decorations to make her basket look special. Her favorite item would be the cozy blanket, because she loves the warmth and comfort that it provides. Chance said she would spend $20-$30 on a Boo Basket. She thinks couples may enjoy making these baskets because a boyfriend and girlfriend can give these as a cute surprise or a date idea for them. She also likes making baskets because it feels like going on a hunt around the store to find the perfect items instead of just picking one gift.

Audrey Velvez, a 10th grader, would fill her basket with candy, cookies, brownies, sweets, a candle and soda. The item she would be most excited to receive is a stuffed animal, but only if it is shaped like a pumpkin or a ghost. Velez believes these Boo Baskets are popular with couples because they can be a sweet and thoughtful gift. She said making a basket is better than buying a regular gift because the person making it puts more thought into choosing the items. She also prefers a basket based on someone's favorite thing instead of only Halloween decoration. Velez said people should learn what the person likes before making a basket so they do not choose the wrong items. She would spend $30 or more and would not want candy corn in her basket.

Saida Dahier, an 11th grader, has a different opinion about Boo Baskets. Her ideal basket would include hot chocolate, snacks, perfume, jewelry, makeup, cash and iced coffee. She would rather receive a basket than buy one for herself because receiving a gift makes her feel special. However, Daher said she would sometimes choose a regular gift instead of making a basket, especially if the regular gift was something useful. She believes that social media has helped make Boo Basket popular because people see the trend online and want to try it themselves. Daher would rather receive a basket filled with her favorite thing instead of a Halloween gift. She also said she would not want to see licorice in her basket.

Aisha Abdual Hakeem, a 12th grader, said her perfect Boo Basket would have lots of candy, chocolate, makeup and hot chocolate. She would be more excited to receive a key chain. Hakeem thinks Boo Baskets are popular with friends because students often give them to each other just for fun or for birthdays. She also likes the idea of matching the basket to the Halloween season because October is almost here. Instead of giving someone one item, a Boo basket lets people choose several smaller gifts. Her advice for someone making their first baskets is to focus on quality instead of quantity. She also said she would not want sugar cookies in her basket.

With Halloween coming soon, Boo Baskets are giving students a fun new way to have fun with friends, family and couples. The trend on Instagram and TikTok lets people be creative, videos showing ways to build your perfect Boo Basket and how much they cost.



Boo-baskets gained its popularity around 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic as it was a creative way to suprise friends and family. (photo by Annie Pacchione)

What Halloween Candies Do Students Prefer?

By Lauren Kan, Layout Assistant



Students are anticipating tons of candy during the Halloween season. (photo by Lauren Kan)

As fall approaches, the air fills with talk of sweet treats as students anticipate the spooky season. What is the best Halloween candy of all time? From classic brands to niche favorites, students shared their candy preferences, revealing Cypress High School's most-favored Halloween candy of October 2026.

Senior **Kailasnath Prasad** considers Twix and Hershey's Chocolate to be his favorite Halloween candy combo. The nostalgic Twix candy bar features a crunchy shortbread biscuit base that is topped with caramel and coated in milk chocolate. Also in the chocolate family, the classic Hershey's brand is popular for its distinct, slightly tangy flavor and its wide variety of chocolate-focused candies, such as Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bars and Hershey's Kisses. Prasad enjoys Twix for its caramel filling, saying, "It's a nice addition to the chocolate." He likes Hershey's because of the chocolate's refinement and consistency, noting its elevated chocolate taste.

This year, Prasad intends to celebrate the spooky holiday by hanging out with his friends. Although trick-or-treating is taking a back seat in this year's Halloween agenda, Prasad plans to squeeze in a little bit of room for the nostalgic activity. When he can, he'll be sure to grab some Twix and Hershey's. Above all, Prasad hopes to explore other experiences Halloween has to offer.

Freshman **Soloman Abdelbaset** is a fan of Snickers, which is a milk-chocolate candy bar filled with nougat, caramel, and roasted peanuts. He enjoys the candy's taste in general, including its rich and decadent flavor combination. Abdelbaset associates the classic candy bar with fond memories of trick-or-treating. Usually, after a night of celebrating Halloween, most of his candy consists of Snickers.

Junior **Arnav Talluri** favors the beloved Reese's Peanut Butter Cups—an iconic American candy featuring creamy peanut butter encased in a rich milk-chocolate shell. An avid lover of all things chocolate, Talluri notes that Reese's peanut butter center sets the brand apart from other chocolate candies. Talluri is also a passionate advocate for Reese's brownie variant, which triumphs over the original as his all-time favorite. "...I know that I was saying how good it is to have soft chocolate, but the brownie just adds a little bit of texture." He explains that it is like cookies-and-cream ice cream, which similarly offers a satisfying variation in texture. Talluri's most memorable experience with Reese's Peanut Butter Cups was when he ate an extreme amount of the candy on one Halloween night. Most Halloweens, after long nights of trick-or-treating, Talluri trades his candy with his sister for her Reese's. However, one night, he ended up with way too many, so he took it upon himself to devour them all. "...I downed, like, thirty of them. I mean, I didn't even want to eat thirty; it was more that I had thirty and I wanted to see how many I could eat."

More than 50 students voted for their favorites among 12 iconic Halloween candy brands on the questionnaire, "What is Your Favorite Halloween Candy?" Although every Halloween-candy brand listed in the chart below has at least one trick-or-treating bag to call home, Sour Patch Kids is the ultimate winner among Cypress High School Students.

The same sample shared their favorite taste of candy, with a whopping plurality of 37.7% placing Chocolatey in the lead..

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2026-2027

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Boo! Prepare To Be Scared By These Horror Movies!

By Noah Cornejo, Equipment Manager

Friday the 13th (1980)



Directed by Sean S. Cunningham
(photo by IMDB)

An angry mom blames and kills negligent camp counselors for the death of her ugly disgusting monster of a son and dies.

Franchise? - Yes
Cinematography - 3/5
Story - 3/5
Characters - 2/5
Scary Meter - 2/5
Final Score - 6/10

This movie is a cult classic. The story might be basic, but that's because this movie started the cliche of "teenagers at a camp getting killed". The cinematography is what really gives this movie its charm; having angles from the killer's point-of-view, as well as close-ups on the victims' expressions. Although it's not the scariest, and the characters don't have very much depth to them, it's still a great film.

The Thing (1982)

The world's most dangerous game of Among Us starts after scientists let in a stray dog, that's actually an undercover shapeshifting alien. Also it's snowy.

Franchise? - No
Cinematography - 4/5
Story - 4/5
Characters - 4.5/5
Scary Meter - 3/5
Final score - 7.5/10

John Carpenter's The Thing is a great example of how to build tension without relying on constant jumpscares. The setting of the film makes it feel hopeless, detached from reality. The story and acting also do a great job of showing the paranoia of the characters. The movie can definitely be confusing at times, but it's still one of the best sci-fi horror movies out there.



Directed by John Carpenter
(photo by IMDB)

It (2017)



Directed André Muschietti
(photo by IMDB)

Middle schoolers beat up a dancing clown instead of facing their childhood trauma

Franchise? - Yes
Cinematography - 4/5
Story - 4/5
Characters - 5/5
Scary Meter - 3.5/5
Final score - 8.5/10

While this film has its scary aspects, the main element could be the exceptional CGI used within a variety of scenes. The realistic humor of a group of middle school boys definitely plays a part in the tone of the film, giving it a switch between said group of kids being terrorized by a killer clown, who brought their nightmares to life & light, and having a close-bond moment with one another.

Backrooms (2026)

Architect learns about hypergamy and dies.

Franchise? - No
Cinematography - 4/5
Story - 5/5
Characters - 3.5/5
Scary Meter - 4/5
Final score - 9.5/10

The fact director Kane Parsons got his start on youtube is partly why this movie did so well. With amazing cinematography and a story that makes you feel invested you can tell the passion put into this film. Movies like Backrooms and Obsession are proof that anyone can make an amazing film. With phenomenal CGI and an incredible cast, this movie holds its place as one of my personal favorite movies of all time.



Directed by Kane Parsons
(photo by IMDB)

Evil Dead Burn (2026)



Directed by Sébastien Vaniček
(photo by IMDB)

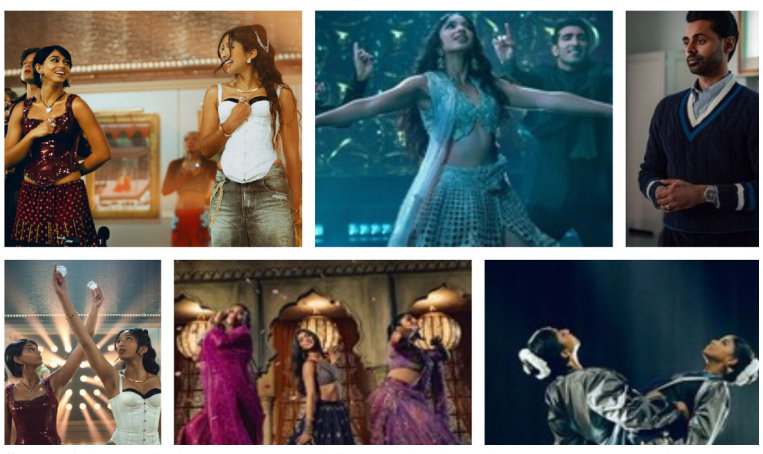
A family thinks staying inside a rusty old falling apart house is better than calling the cops and running away.

Franchise? - Yes
Cinematography - 3.5/5
Story - 4/5
Characters - 3/5
Scary Meter - 4.5/5
Final score - 7.5/10

Other directors have tried to take the Evil Dead IP and make good movies out of it, but audiences and critics did not enjoy them. For this reason audiences were skeptical of the movie at first, thinking it would be a repeat. To everyone's surprise, Sébastien Vaniček's Evil Dead Burn is a phenomenal movie, with an amazing score, cinematography, and atmosphere. I strongly recommend it.

"Best of the Best" Resonates in Peoples' Hearts

By Minnel Vega, Editor-in-Chief



"Best of the Best" Showcases Friendships and Cultural Representation. (photo by Minnel Vega)

Best of the Best premiered on Netflix on September 18, 2026. This movie is about two childhood best friends as they learn how to adapt to UCLA's competitive Bollywood-fusion dance team. This movie shows viewers that maintaining relationships in a competitive environment can get challenging from time to time.

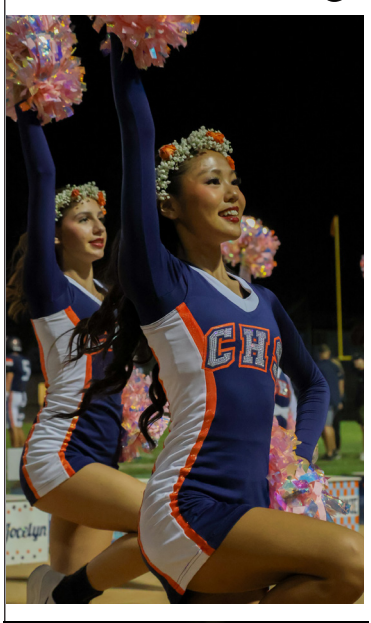
In Best of the Best, the two best friends, Maya and Anjali, try out for UCLA's competitive Bollywood-fusion dance team, hoping to gain a new experience and try something new. After getting selected for the team, they find out that competing for a U.S. championship can sometimes bring unexpected challenges that can get in the way of their friendship. While trying to figure out their busy schedules with their schoolwork and practices, Maya and Anjali have to figure out that it's not always about winning, but also trying to prioritize their friendships through the process.

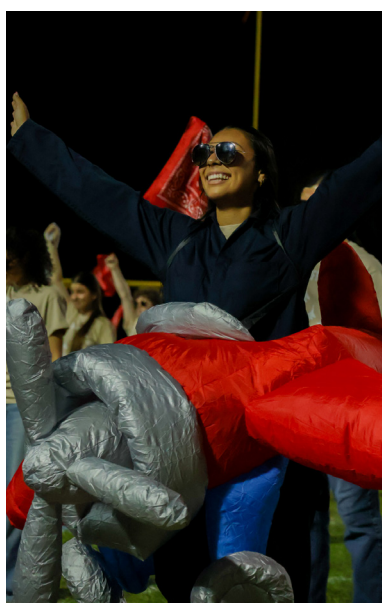
Apart from all the competition, there are also many lessons that this movie teaches like how to communicate with your friends about how you feel and to try not to prioritize drama. When asked what lesson the movie taught, **Haya Elennan** said, "I think the lesson was don't let drama get in the way of your friendship. Things are always going to happen and you shouldn't let it affect you."

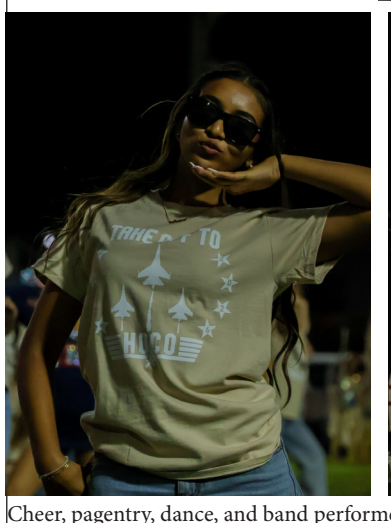
After getting released, the movie soon reached #2 on Netflix and #5 globally with many good ratings. Elannan remarked, "I would rate this movie an 11/10 because it was actually that good."

This movie mixes humor with competition while representing Indian culture. Best of the Best shows viewers that even though competitions could get stressful and life could get hard at times, it's important to try not to let it get in the way of your friendships.

Homecoming Halftime Pics:









Cheer, pagentry, dance, and band performed during the halftime show (photos by Reina Takagi)

Resident Evil Returns

By Vianna Vo, Business Manager

A popular video game franchise is making its way back to the theaters. "Resident Evil" brings the horror series to the theaters with a new story, new characters, and a connection to the games that made the franchise popular.

Directed by Zach Cregger, the movie follows Bryan, a medical courier who becomes involved in a dangerous situation while delivering a package. The story takes place in Raccoon City, a location that is well known to the fans of the "Resident Evil" games.



"Resident Evil" brings the horror series to theaters.
(photo by Sony Pictures Releasing)

The new movie takes a different approach from the previous "Resident Evil" movies. Instead of continuing the story from the older movies, Cregger created a new story while keeping some of the ideas that made the video games popular.

The characters explore places, face dangerous situations, and try to figure out what is happening around them. This gives the movie a similar feeling to the games, where players have to explore and make choices while trying to stay alive.

For students who already know the franchise, the connection to the game is one of the most interesting parts of the movie.

"I liked the special effects," said junior **Eesa Saleem**, a student who watched the movie.

The movie also tries to appeal to people who have never played the games. Instead of requiring viewers to know the entire lore of the Resident Evil universe, the film introduces its characters and story on its own.

The cast includes Austin Abrams, Zach Cherry, Kali Reis, and Paul Walter Hauser. Cregger, who directed "Barbarian" and "Weapons," also co-wrote the movie with Shay Hatten.

The movie focuses on suspense and horror rather than relying only on action. This is similar to the games, which often build tension by making players explore areas without knowing what they will find.

For some viewers, this style makes the movie more interesting. For others, certain parts may feel less exciting, especially when the story ends before all the questions are answered.

"I didn't like how short it was and how it ended off in a cliffhanger," said junior **Elijah Campbell**, a student who watched the movie.

These reactions show that students have different opinions about the movie. While Saleem enjoyed the special effects, Campbell felt that the movie was too short and ended without enough closure. Their opinions show how the movie's visuals and ending can affect the audience's overall experience. "Resident Evil" shows that the franchise continues to find new ways to reach its audience.

Endgame Encore: The Universes Collide

By Emma Sanes, Features Editor



Endgame Encore released to everyone on September 25th, came with new posters and popcorn buckets. (photo by The Direct)

"Endgame Encore" is an extended re-release of the 2019 film, brought back on September 25, 2026. The Marvel movie was re-released as a refresher to gear up for "Doomsday" after Marvel canceled "Kang Dynasty."

"Kang Dynasty" was the original MCU plan before "Avengers: Doomsday," and when it was announced in 2022 at San Diego Comic-Con, it was set to be directed by Destin Daniel Cretton and written by Jeff Loveness. However, the project faced serious backlash after lead actor Jonathan Majors was fired by Disney in December 2023, following his guilty verdict for assault and harassment.

Once that happened, they scrapped it and moved directly to "Doomsday", intertwining colliding realities and moving from "Endgame", where the Avengers fight to save their single universe, to" Doomsday", which escalates the stakes to an interdimensional war. This leads us to "Endgame Encore", which introduces new end-credit scenes to make the movies collide.

Quoc Nguyen, assistant principal at Cypress High School, believes that the re-release was unnecessary and should have simply been uploaded to Disney Plus. He feels it was more of a cash grab and felt rushed after Marvel canceled "Kang Dynasty" to pivot straight to "Doomsday."As a lifelong fan who started with comic books and trading cards, Nguyen finds the course "Doomsday" thrilling. Reflecting on the "Loki" series, he expects the character to play a major role in upcoming films given his connection to the Tree of Time, noting, "I'm a big fan of time travel and the multiverse, so I think it was just amazing to see them find their different selves."

Emma Niebres, a 10th-grade student at Cypress High School, shares a similar sentiment, suspecting the re-release was largely a money grab, especially since Marvel restricted viewing access to Infinity Vision, which was made by The Walt Disney Company to promote high-diversity screenings, such as Dolby Cinema and ScreenX. She stated, "I do hope they do more with these new scenes, and make the extra minutes important to "Doomsday." Although she only recently got into Marvel, she hopes the franchise takes a turn for the better starting with this movie.

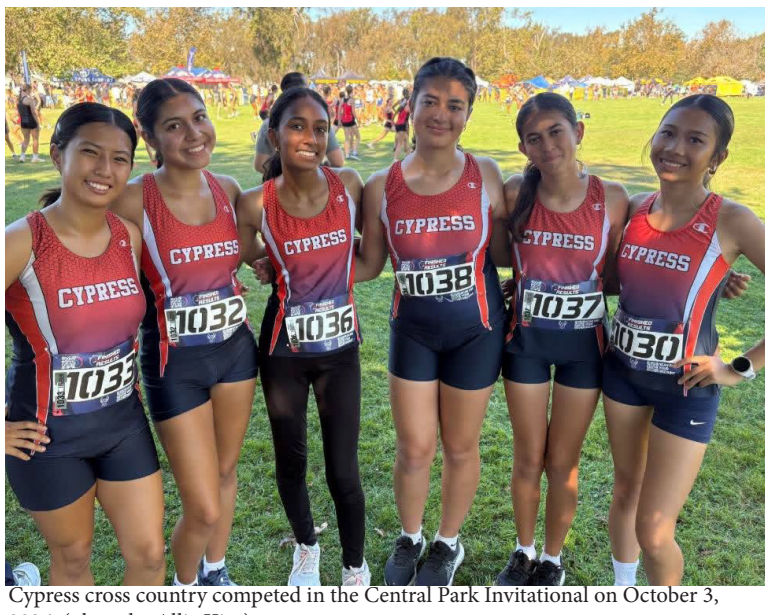


Comic by Ryan Alsop, Comic Illustrator

Cross Country Leaves Their Competition In The Dust

By Leslie Choi, Front Page Editor

Cross country's season started off strong, with a strong chance of winning league. Last year, the girls and some of the boys qualified for CIF after winning league. The team hopes to continue their strong streak.



Cypress cross country competed in the Central Park Invitational on October 3, 2026. (photo by Allie Kim)

Boys captain **Elijah Stempke** ran a personal record of three miles in 14 minutes and 57 seconds at the Woodbridge Invitational on September 19, 2026. "We've had a really strong performance. We should be looking to winning league and CIF after that," he said. "The team works hard every day; they're super consistent… It's a really good team this year and they're going to be even better next year."

Head Coach **Matthew Tweed** has been coaching cross country at Cypress since 2018. "We have a really good group of young athletes who are passionate about running and being good teammates," he boasted. Beyond the successes and victories, Tweed also focuses on teamwork and sportsmanship. "We try to encourage a team atmosphere where all the runners encourage each other during good times and bad," he said, "I am extremely proud of all the runners for all of the hard work they have put into this season so far."

Junior **Meiling Castillo's** greatest achievement in cross country was "breaking eighteen," or running three miles in less than eighteen minutes at the Woodbridge Invitational. "My whole team surrounded me at the finish line… They were all yelling that I broke eighteen. It was so memorable," Castillo said, "I think I'm surrounded by a great group of people. The thing with runners is that you're all going through the exact same thing… they're just super supportive and have always been there for me."

Despite the strong performance, cross country isn't without challenges. One of these issues was the rise in injuries. "We had a few people getting a little injured, but it seems like everyone's coming back and coming together at the right time," said Stempke. This season, the fluctuating and aggressive heat wave has also posed a problem. To avoid the heat, Tweed altered the practice schedules while keeping the team consistent and resilient.

Senior girls captain **Allie Kim** helps unify the team to work hard and grow together. "Everyone's been working so hard and motivating each other. I'm looking forward to seeing even more growth of the team," she said, "I hope that we can get closer and keep motivating each other, right now and in the future after I graduate." Cross country is working hard to continue their impressive performance and improve even more. As the season wraps up, they keep relying on each other and grow as a team.

Boys Water Polo Dives into the Season

By Minnel Vega, Editor-in-Chief and Lauren Kimura, Layout Editor

This year, Cypress' boys water polo team has had a rough season with an overall score of 3-18. Since a lot of the seniors graduated last year, the team is fairly new and is focused on players gaining experience with the sport and working together.

Senior **Kayden Steed**, one of the captains on the water polo team, shared that El Toro and Villa Park served as strong opponents this year. Last season, Villa Park was a league above Cypress and recently moved down, so now "they're a league opponent and are pretty good," Steed said. Although the season has been tough, Steed shared that he came into this year "looking forward to building a good relationship with the younger guys" and as it is his senior year, "will miss the memories made with a lot of teammates over the years. Getting food after games, winning important games, and all that."

With the season season counting down for the seniors, captain and senior **Christian Iniguez** advises the team and future players to "listen to the coach and always be urgent. Don't slack on everything or take every little thing as a break." He also shared that the hardest part of water polo "is the mental state because half the time you feel like giving up on swimming and want to get out, but you have to just keep going." Similarly, Steed emphasized how important coachability is and said that "when a coach is telling you what to do, you have to listen and apply it to your game in order to get way better."

Battling on, the team and coaches remain focused on teamwork and building a stronger foundation for the future. Assistant Coach **Jim Armstrong** said, "We're pretty young, so we're taking our lumps, but things are getting better and we're proud of them."



Cypress Boys Waterpolo lost to El Modena 18-9.(photo by Reina Takagi)

Cypress Football Meeting Goals

By Chioma Ibe, Social Media Editor

This week after defeating Marina High School 41-7, Cypress Football now has a record of 7-1. Coach **Rick Feldman** said his biggest goals for the team were to win against our biggest rivals, Kennedy and Pacifica High Schools, and to win the CIF championship.

On October 2, 2026, Cypress Football defeated Pacifica High School with a score of 14-11 and On October 6, 2026, they beat Kennedy High School with a score of 38-0. The loss to Foothill High School was only the setting for a major comeback, Coach Feldman said, "The game we lost, six starters were injured and didn't play. Foothill also played a really good game." He continued, "Getting our injured guys back really helped in those rivalry games."



Cypress Football currently has a record of 7-1 (photo by Reina Takagi)

Their biggest weapon on the field has been their defense. Feldman said, "They are allowing 11 points per game and have wreaked havoc on offenses all season long." Defensive Back **Austin Limbacher** said they are working a lot on "not getting fooled by double moves."

He also emphasized catch technique, and said he is really proud of the team and how far they have come.

