



Cafe Holiday- Community, Carols, and Chainsaws

This Wednesday marked the 2020 cafe holiday. The organizers of the event created an impassioned and cheerful community event that not only brought people together but also gave Parker students another chance to showcase their talents. One of the most striking things about Cafe Holiday is the way that every single person involved, from the audience to the organizers, seem excited and willing to participate. In a time full of black screens and muted microphones, the cafe holiday organizers created an environment where everyone was encouraged to voice their joy. Right at the start of the program, organizers encouraged people to leave their microphones on, they wanted to hear the claps and laughs of their audience even when they couldn't be in the same room. This policy was one of many decisions that shaped the event. With microphones on, the audience was able to properly express their emotions, encouraging performers and brightening spirits. The set up was tremendous and the acts that premiered gave voice to the wonderfully talented and spirited students of the Parker Charter Essential School.



A Beautiful Start

The night started off with festive stop motion animation video created by Ashley Wood. Ashley's adorable and cheery video set the mood for the rest of the night beautifully, capturing the true spirit of cafe holiday.

Winter Stories

Ashley was followed by Theo Puterbaugh with a delightful reading of "The Snowbelly Family of Chillyville" complete with props, actions and motions! The story was certainly a highlight of the night. But Theo wasn't the only story teller of the night. The audience was graced with Parker alumni Sophie Bonazoli's reading of a part of "The Festival" by H.P Lovecraft. With a haunting plot and beautiful language, Lovecraft's story was a perfect choice. Ella Hanyaloglu treated watchers to a riveting retelling of a classic greek novel. Her iteration of the story would have made an Arts and Humanities assessor proud! Sarah White read a beautiful poem about the holiday experience while in quarantine. Her words perfectly encompassed the season and were a remarkable reminder of what's important this holiday season.



Musical Masterpieces

Perhaps the most holiday oriented acts of the night were the musicians of the Parker Community. First, Heather and Patrick Falk gave a stunning presentation of "Into the Unknown" from Disney's Frozen 2. Heather's voice is absolutely incredible and Patrick's background vocals and lovely blue cape accompanied the song and the spirit of the night beautifully. Yarrow Bercovic Biotti gave a jaw dropping violin performance. With everything from Silent Night to Jingle Bells, Yarrow's violin talent is certainly unmatched.



Faculty Falsetto

Students weren't the only ones who performed music throughout the night. Several teachers got in on the action with their own songs. The audience got a sneak peek into the life of Alec Hudson through a submitted video of Alec's musical high school undertakings. The video proves if nothing else, that Alec Hudson's talent is timeless. Jim Desmond gave a fun and festive performance of "Winterllamland" encompassing the true spirit of Parker during the holidays. Jim not only provided the lyrics to the song but also a phenomenal accordion accompaniment. Still, the night would not have been complete without a little bit of *Burrito Sabanero*. While the Parker community is devastated to not be in the classroom to hear the musical stylings of their peers during Spanish Christmas Carol season. Claudia Licata and Kerry LaRose provided a brilliant and heart warming performance of the classic Latin Christmas Carol. It certainly brought a little bit of the Parker spirit right into the Parker community's homes.



Comedy Central

To break up the night the Cafe Wednesday student organizers told fun holiday jokes. So if you were wondering what Santa's elves learn in school (the elfabet) or what the snail said to its enemy (I'll get you next slime) Cafe Holiday is the place for you (joke credits to Natalie Rabinowitz, Lila Hamilton, and Emily Hayner). Even without the jokes told in between acts, the Parker community got their fair share of laughs. Alex Vacca performed a comedy sketch that was well thought out and hilarious. A performance worthy of Jim Carrey himself. Four members of the Cafe Holiday organization team also presented a

lively and amusing skit. The premise was about a new crew attempting to tell basic Parker Charter news while battling everything from raccoons, to stormy weather. Presented by Simone Tricca, Lila Hamilton, Ella Hanyaloglu, and Heather Falk the sketch was an awesome feature to the night.



Chainsaws and Christmas Trees

Perhaps the most unexpected act of the night came from Diane Kruse. Diane walked the audience through the steps of obtaining her Christmas tree, complete with safety goggles, a helmet and chainsaw. Diane's video provided valuable insight into the daily doings of everyone's favorite Calculus teacher. Her knowledge of derivatives is topped only by her ability with a chainsaw.



The night ended with a reading of the story "Snow Day" a short story by Billy Collins. Presented by Parker's very own, Todd Sumner, the story was an ideal embodiment of the night. Todd's book choice couldn't have been more perfect, as the night of Cafe Holiday a snow day was announced for the entire community. Todd's story telling was captivating and engaging, filling the screen with images of hot chocolate and snowball fights as he ushered in the first snow day of the year.



Cafe Holiday brought some much needed joy to the holiday season. With many activities canceled, little to no access to our friends and teachers at Parker, and a worldwide pandemic many were feeling less than cheery this winter. The Cafe Holiday organizers did a terrific job of bringing a little bit of cheer into the Parker Community, their hard work and passion is certainly a bright light in the community.