

# PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL’S JTASA ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY

Isabel Lee  
Editor

At least a hundred colorful hand-knitted dolls adorned the towering Christmas tree in the Torrance Memorial Hospital, which seemed to stand out among the other trees. Onlookers gleamed at the unique decorations and reveled in its meaningful origin.

These colorful Izzy Dolls were originally made by Canadian Carol Isfeld, who gave them to her son United Nation peacemaker Mark Isfeld, so that he could distribute them to orphans around the world. When he died stepping on a land mine, Isfeld continued knitting the dolls, as a way to commemorate her son and the work he dedicated his life to. The tradition continued, and the Peninsula high school Junior Taiwanese American Student Association (JTASA) chapter decided to use these dolls as a way to raise awareness of this cause.

The Peninsula JTASA club, located in Palos Verdes, spent at least four hours decorating the tree for the hospital’s Holiday Festival, which took place from November 29-December 4. Co-Presi-

dents Monica Chen and John Wang started planning for this event at least one month in advance. The club raised \$1000 to be able to have their tree be a part of the event, and then auctioned it, selling it for \$960. The money was donated to the hospital.

“We were really lucky to have received three bids for the tree, since it was our first time,” Wang said. “All the members came out and helped not only to decorate the tree, but raise awareness of our cause as well.”

JTASA members meet on campus twice a month, where they plan for their next volunteer outing and participate in some sort of cultural activity.

“I wanted to be able to combine my interests in my heritage with a desire to give fellow high school students an opportunity to give back to the community,” Chen said. “It is really rewarding to see kids establish relationships while doing something good for the community.”

Past activities include watching videos, such as self-made Taiwanese speaking videos, music videos, and movies like “Auvoir Taipei,” having a Taiwanese potluck,

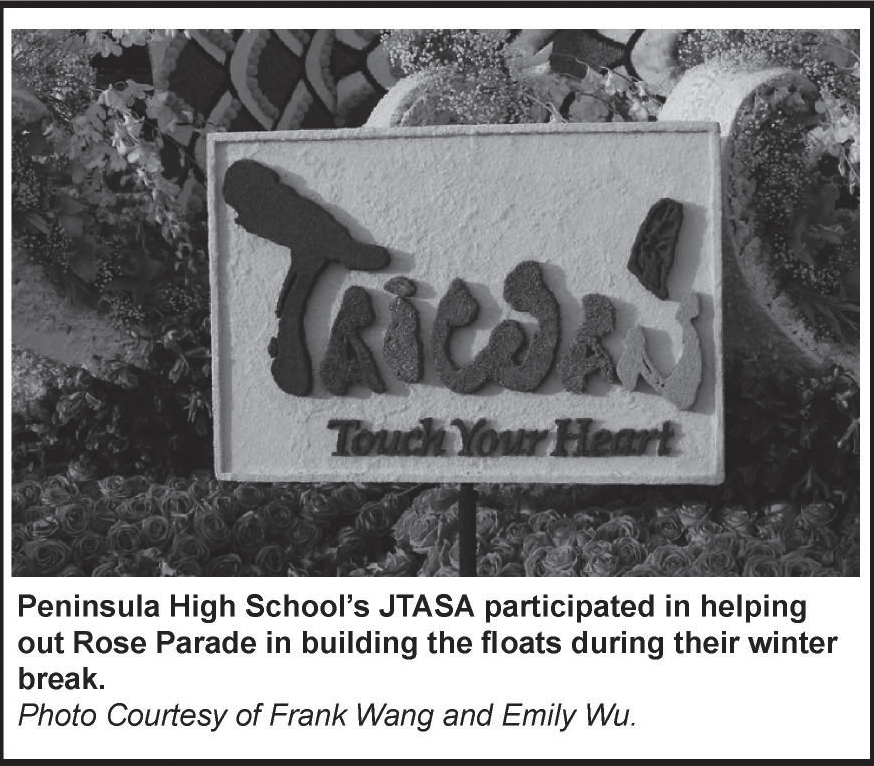
and competing with each other in a Ghost Festival face painting race.

“We created JTASA partially to raise awareness of the Taiwanese culture among not only Taiwanese Americans, but other races as well, in order to promote a national identity. The Taiwanese language is a dying one, and I really hope to revive it,” Wang said.

Outings have included a movie screening of “Formosa Betrayed,” starring James Van Der Beek, and Will Tiao, a JTASA mixer with other high schools at Six Flags Magic Mountain, a TACL/LID exchange holiday party, and a Rose float decoration event for China airlines.

“I’ve met so many new people and made a lot of friends through our events,” Chen said. “It’s made me feel all warm and fuzzy inside—I didn’t know how dedicated I would be to it.”

Upcoming events for the club include a movie screening of the “Green Hornet,” starring Seth Rogan and Taiwanese pop star Jay Chou, and volunteering at the Lunar New Year Festival at Wilson Park in Torrance, which will take place on January 30.



Peninsula High School’s JTASA participated in helping out Rose Parade in building the floats during their winter break.  
Photo Courtesy of Frank Wang and Emily Wu.

# WE MUST GO ON!

Kathleen Chen  
Editor

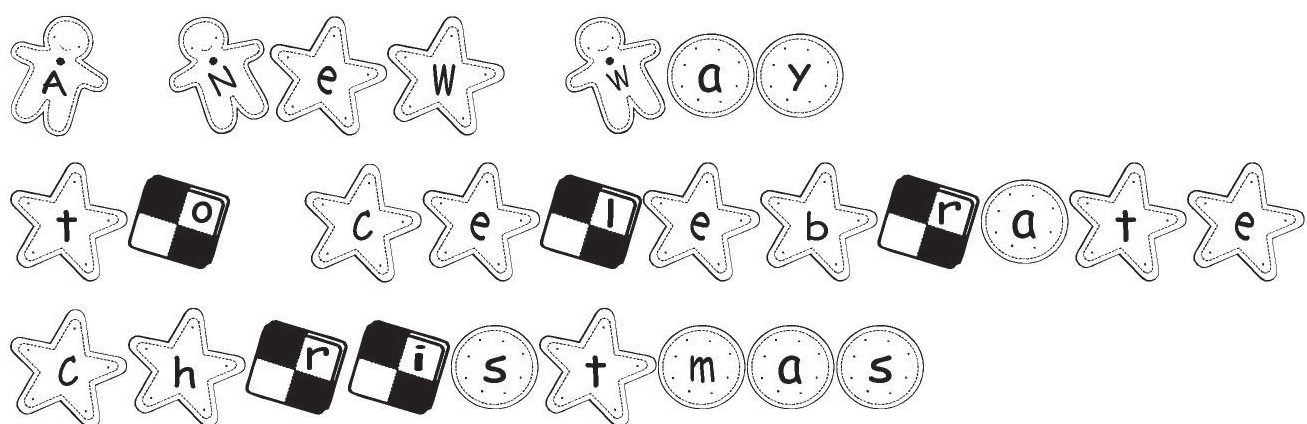
Being a high school student, I am addicted to volunteering and helping out the community. That means spending every single weekend somewhere, helping out; it could be at Long Beach, where I’m timing runners for a 5K or 10K race, at Downtown LA, where I’m cheering walkers and runners on as they’re walking or running several miles to raise money to find a cure to AIDS, or at Arcadia Park, where I’m working at booths during the Harvest Moon Festival.

Well, when it comes to the holiday season, it is all about giving more than receiving. Alhambra High School’s Christmas Committee is a one-semester club that holds fundraisers that donates approximately 90% of its earnings

to charities in the San Gabriel Valley area.

Christmas Committee holds a neighborhood canned-food drive every year, usually before Thanksgiving break. Service clubs and ASB help out Christmas Committee in this annual event. However, the canned-food drive was rained out twice -- both before Thanksgiving and Christmas -- due to the insane weather during those two months. But did this crazy weather stop them from still having this canned-food drive? After two rain-outs, Christmas Committee tried one last time in having the canned food drive on January 8, which turned out to be a huge success.

Within three hours, Christmas Committee, along with several service clubs and ASB, was able to collect 3,409 cans! The club surely has a big ball of holiday spirit even after the holidays.



Adeney Zo  
Editor

Every year, Christmas has simply meant presents and feasting for me. However, this year I decided to sacrifice my Christmas afternoon to volunteer at the Union Station Christmas Dinner-in-the-Park, an event that serves a free Christmas meal and toys from Santa for families in the Pasadena area. I worked in Santa’s Village, and my job was to choose a set of gifts from the tables to hand to Santa, who then gave it to the children. Upon arriving, I was surprised to see tables piled with donated presents, and later on, a truck from Toys R Us brought a seemingly endless supply of toys that didn’t sell in stores. With a constant stream of children coming to see Santa, the volunteers were kept busy picking presents.

Though the work was long and tiring, I felt happy for the children whenever I saw them walk by with smiles on their faces as they inspected their new presents. Their joy made me feel like I had done something to make their Christmas special, and I was glad that at least some of the children still embodied the spirit of Christmas. I also received much satisfaction when the runners (who took gifts from the tables to Santa) would compliment me or my fellow volunteers for our gift choices, and all the volunteers at my table had a little competition to see who would get the most praise for our gift sets. The friendliness of the other volunteers made the experience fun and interesting, instead of all work. Both the reward of seeing children happy with Santa’s gift to them and the wonderful attitudes of the other volunteers made me look forward to volunteer-

ing again next Christmas for Union Station’s Dinners-in-the-Park.



JIP intern Adeney Zo helps out at the Union Station’s Diners-in-the-Park service.  
Photo courtesy of Adeney Zo.  
Christmas graphics courtesy of Google.