

# THE IB UPDATE

*The Official Newsletter of Samuel Clemens  
International Baccalaureate Program*



Left: Alumni Rebecca Miller (2013 cohort) Middle: Alex Avlonitis with golf (2024 cohort) Right: Braelyn Ramirez (2023 cohort)

## *Look Out*

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## WELCOME TO THE IB UPDATE!

*by Lauren Rollins - IB Coordinator*

Welcome to the March edition of the Samuel Clemens International Baccalaureate newsletter! Our goal is to keep all stakeholders (students, parents, SCUC community) apprised of the amazing opportunities that are going on within the IB program here at Samuel Clemens. We will publish this newsletter monthly and feature our current IB students as well as our IB alumni. If you have any questions about the program or suggestions for the newsletter, please email it to [LRollins@scuc.txed.net](mailto:LRollins@scuc.txed.net)  
Thank you for your time!

Lauren Rollins  
IB Coordinator





IB students sharing a laugh during the IB teambuilding event where they participated in two balloon games: one stomping each other's balloons until four winners were left and one where they worked as a team to keep the balloon in the air as long as possible while others came by and tried to knock the balloon down

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN IB CLASSROOMS IN THE MONTH OF MARCH?

**IB Literature HL for Juniors** - taught by Mrs. Rollins - Students finished up their unit on the poetry of Robert Frost. We are now transitioning to examining the effects of an authoritarian government on its people in a work in translation, *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa.

**IB Literature HL for Seniors** - taught by Mrs. Crawford - Students read and analyzed *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. They completed small group motif presentations and conducted student led discussions about authorial choices. Students began reading and analyzing a collection of poetry by Anna Akhmatova.

**IB History of the Americas HL for Juniors** - taught by Mrs. Baker - Students are beginning one of our selected areas of study: The Second World War and the Americas. Students will be introduced to growing role of the United States on the world stage.

**IB History of the Americas HL for Seniors** - taught by Mrs. Frink - Students finished studying our first paper 2 topic, authoritarian states. They have started a project based on causes & effects of 20th century wars.

**IB Anthropology** - taught by Mrs. Baker - Students will continue with our last ethnography and our area of inquiry: Production, Exchange and Consumption. We will also begin to prepare for our May exams.

**IB Math Applications** - taught by Mrs. Smith - Students have completed the IB level questions using derivatives. After Spring Break, we changed our focus from basic Calculus skills to the integrated IB level questions using derivatives. Students also finalized their Math IAs this month and submitted them.

**IB Biology HL for Juniors** - taught by Mrs. Armstrong - Students have been continuing their work on human physiology by moving into the immune system and the nervous system. They will be building their micro-ecosystems for their month-long sustainability project.

**IB Biology HL for Seniors** - taught by Mrs. Armstrong - Students learned their second set of human physiology lessons by going deeper into the content and learning about specific immune responses and muscles and movements. They will finish up with a kidney and a rat dissection.

**IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK) for Seniors** - taught by Mr. Seiler - Students finished their prescribed title essays, as well as a reflective piece on the process, and submitted to IB for assessment.

**IB Spanish** - taught by Señor Hecox - Students researched education in Hispanic countries using on-line articles & oral comments by native speakers. We also looked at some solutions to schooling during the pandemic in other countries.

**IB Visual Art** - taught by Mr. Lewis - students focused on preparing artworks for exhibition by documenting the creation of their works and taking notes on their successes and failures in their sketchbook to add to their portfolio.





Left: Rebecca Miller class of 2013 at her job working for a bridesmaid company. Right: Rebecca on a trip to Jordan.

## ALUMNI UPDATE

Sometimes the best thing to do in life is to be open to the new opportunities that life can bring you. Rebecca Miller isn't afraid to try new things and see where life takes her. A Samuel Clemens International Baccalaureate alumni (class of 2013), she then went to the University of North Texas and earned her Bachelors of Criminal Justice.

She says, "I found my criminal justice classes at Clemens very interesting and wanted to join the US Marshals. However, when I was almost done with my degree, I decided I wanted to use more of my creative artistic side. I have since been working at a bridesmaid dress company for the past several years in a variety of roles." She encourages students and adults of all ages to not be afraid of embracing change. "It is okay if you don't know what you want to do or change your mind after you have decided. It is very normal in college to change majors or to completely change the course of your life outside of school," she says.

One way to practice getting out of your comfort zone and learning more about yourself and the world is to travel abroad. Rebecca says, "I studied abroad in Italy when I was in college for a month, and it was amazing and opened my eyes to another culture. I wanted to continue my international journey and found that Spain has a program through their government called NALCAP for short. It is a teaching assistant program to promote culture exchange, allowing students to learn English from a native English speaker."

**"Learning how to analyze something really teaches your brain creative thinking which has been a useful tool a lot of times in my life."**

REBECCA MILLER C/O 2013



While teaching abroad, Rebecca was able to embrace the full culture of the region. In addition, being in close proximity to other countries allowed her to go on trips over the weekend; she even went to Jordan. Rebecca learned a lot during this time, "It was a challenge living in a country where you don't speak the language very well and most locals didn't speak much English. You have to navigate making a bank account, finding an apartment, and getting a visa. But it was really rewarding to see the kids I was teaching get excited about football, dance team, and getting confused about mums."

These experiences that at first seem daunting can become experiences where you find yourself accomplishing monumental things. "Doing something that was challenging and that I considered out of my reach helped me realize how capable I am of facing unexpected obstacles," she shares. While that is true when moving to a foreign country where you don't speak the language well, it is also a skill that is so beneficial for navigating the unknown obstacles in life.

Students might feel like IB is a Herculean task that is insurmountable. However, others all around the world have tackled the program, and it has brought them so many benefits. Of the IB program, Rebecca says, "Know that it will be challenging. Take into consideration how much you think you can handle in terms of workload." One mantra that applies to the IB program is the well know phrase - they didn't say it would be easy; they said it would be worth it.

# LEARNER OF THE MONTH

*Trait: Communicator*

The International Baccalaureate Program is known for having 10 Learner Profile Traits that make its program distinct from other higher education programs. IB Students are Inquirers, Knowers, Thinkers, Communicators, and Risk-Takers, who are Principled, Open-Minded, Caring, Balanced, and Reflective. For more information about the learner profiles, click [here](#).

March's trait is "Principled". According to IB, students who are principled "act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. He/She takes responsibility for their own actions and their consequences."

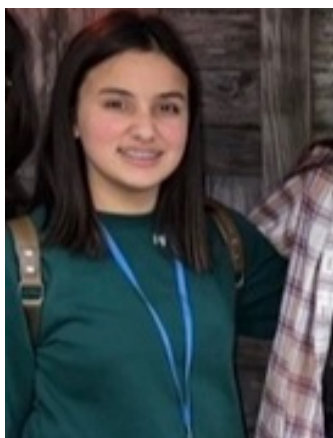
Each month, the IB students and teachers vote on the student who consistently displays this trait - not just in March but year round. The student who has been awarded with the Learner Profile trait of Principled is Braelyn Ramirez (2023 cohort).

Her peer said, "Braelyn has an immense amount of respect for all of her classmates and teachers, and you can tell that through any interactions with her."

Another peer stated, "She always respects her own morals in addition to those of the people around her."

One teacher said of Braelyn, "She strikes me as an individual who has the capacity to stand up for others and to do what it right."

April's learner profile trait of the month is "Knowledgeable".



Braelyn Ramirez c/o 2023



Alex Avlonitis playing Golf for Clemens (2024 cohort)

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR EXTRAS!

### Golf

For Alex Avlonitis (2024 cohort), playing golf is a result of the pandemic. "The week before spring break in 2020, I was watching a Tiger Woods highlight. I knew who Tiger Woods was but I didn't know how good he was until I watched him swing a golf club and the amount of Majors trophies he has. During the pandemic all gyms were closed, so I picked up the game of golf (as an outlet)."

Alex prefers golf to a team sport because it allows him to focus on what he can control - himself. He says, "The best thing about golfing is that it is a sport between me and myself. When someone wins, they can tell themselves that they have done it all by themselves. I did it all by myself. This game can also teach you so many things about yourself that you didn't know before."

One thing Alex has learned from playing golf is that the days are always different. "Some days you have it all and you think you're unstoppable and some days you can just hit rock bottom." he shared, but he encourages other players who want to play golf to practice and try to make things as consistent as they can.

Juggling IB and practicing for a sport isn't always easy. Time management skills become necessary. To help him accomplish this, Alex plans out his weekends. "I spend all day Saturday playing golf and practicing, and then on Sunday, I do all my homework," he said. Great work, Alex!



Photo on left: Jaylene Guadarrama - volunteering at the New Braunfels Food Bank

## What does CAS stand for?

### CREATIVITY

Experiences that encompass original thinking, including artistic activities and other learning and teaching experiences.

### ACTIVITY

Experiences that contribute to a healthy lifestyle through participation in individual/team sports, as well as any other activity which focuses on physical exertion.

### SERVICE

Experiences that involve interactions with individuals or groups, which provide benefits to the community. These experiences should not only involve contributions to others, but also with others, while developing a deep commitment.

## CAS CORNER

### Creativity - Activity - Service

Creativity-Activity-Service (CAS) is one of the three essential elements that every student must complete as part of the IB Diploma Program. The goal of CAS is to show students the benefits of Creativity, Activity and Service in their life as well as for their community.

For Jaylene Guadarrama, she chose to spend her afternoon volunteering at the New Braunfels Food Bank. "During my time at the food bank, I collected food to go in a shopping cart. Then, whenever a car arrived, I went up to the car and started putting the food inside the trunk." This non-profit organization is always looking for volunteers. All you have to do is find their online calendar, found [here](#), and select a time spot you want to volunteer for. Then just show up and see how you are positively impacting your community! When asked what she learned about the experience, Jaylene said, "I learned that volunteering is fun! Not all people have the same opportunities to provide for themselves, so we should help them out." For more information about CAS, please click [here](#).

## EXTENDED ESSAY (EE) EXHIBIT

Victory Flynt, who titled his Extended Essay "Jesus Goes Viral", researched and answered the research question, What features differentiated Christianity from other religions in the Roman Empire and made it so attractive to all the people who converted?

When asked what drew him to this topic, he replied, "The Catholic faith is central to my identity. However, if the Edict of Milan hadn't been made, that might not have been the case. Or at the very least, I wouldn't have as much support from my community for it."

Writing a 4,000 word essay is challenging even when it is over something that is so important to your daily life. IB students start their research in May of their junior year. They are tasked with finishing the bulk of it over the summer. "It was hard finding decent sources on the time and place specifically. It was also hard writing enough words," he said. Despite the obstacles, Victor was able to finish a research paper over a topic that plays such a big role in his life. Way to persevere, Victor! For more information about EE, please click [here](#).



Victory Flynt (2023 cohort)