EPA TIMES

halloween

2025.10

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOLS

Dear EPA Community,

College application season is in full swing for our seniors. I wish each of you the very best—may your years of hard work come to fruition. Keep communicating with your teachers, meet your deadlines, and take pride in the growth you've earned day by day.

Congratulations to our students who performed well on the AMC—your preparation and perseverance shine. A special acknowledgment to Weihong (Dylan) Sun, Zongxin Liu, and Yijing (Eason) Rao for their success in the CMWMC competition. We're proud of you!

Thank you to our Community Service Club for hosting meaningful outreach events that strengthen our school's connection with the wider community. I'm also glad to see momentum across campus—Robotics, Cooking Club, and many other clubs and personal projects are thriving. Keep building, creating, and leading.

As Thanksgiving approaches, let's practice gratitude—for our teachers, for staff, and for one another. A heartfelt thank-you to the Sebian family for generously inviting the entire school to an authentic Thanksgiving dinner. I encourage all students to attend if you can; it's a wonderful chance to share a meal and I know the food is going to be fantastic!

Happy Thanksgiving!

With pride and gratitude,

Yi Qian

HALLOWEEN

How to Submit

Want to see your writing, photos, or art in **EPA TIMES**?
Send your work to:

Email: boge.xiao@eliteprepacademy.org
Formats: Opinion · News · Creative · Art · Club Updates

We welcome all voices from our community!

Our Publication Policy

EPA TIMES supports student expression and the spirit of the **First Amendment**.
We value honest ideas and diverse perspectives.
However, we **cannot publish** content that includes:

Defamation or personal attacks
Hate speech or harassment
Obscene or inappropriate material

We aim to publish work that is respectful, truthful, and uplifting to our community.

Message from Student Council President, 2025-2026

-- Victor Qiao

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the students for believing in me. I would not be standing here without your trust. I promise that I will not let you down. I will do my best as your Student Council President to fulfill my duty and hear your voices.

I would also like to invite everyone to reach out - whether about academics, student relationships, or new ideas to enhance our school life. The Student Council is not merely a team; it's an arena for every student to be heard and respected.

I do understand that I cannot get everything right, but I shall do my utmost to see that every student's opinions and needs are met. Together, we can build an EPA where every voice matters and every day is significant.







HALLOWEEN

smile of Hopatcong

Community Service that Built Connection

October opened with our Community Ambassador Club's first-ever visit to The SMILE Organization - a home that blends independence, healing, and hope. Students met residents, explored their living spaces, and listened to personal stories told not through polished speeches, but through rooms filled with medals, art, photos, and memories.

What students carried back was not an event recap, but a new awareness: **service is not only performance, but presence.**

A week later, students returned to SMILE for **Pumpkin Night**, a nearly fifty-person gathering filled with pumpkin picking, carving, candy, and group photos glowing beneath the October sun.

Warmth replaced awkwardness; shared laughter replaced distance.





Journalism of the Community

Mid-month, EPA welcomed Ms. Karen Fucito, editor of Lake Hopatcong News, who offered a rare look into the craft of reporting, the discipline of photography, and the role of local media in preserving community memory.

Students examined real magazines, asked about cover design, and learned how empathy grounds good journalism. Her visit reminded students that stories do not exist "out there"- they begin when someone listens well.





HALLOWEEN

Learning History by Walking Into It

Later in October, students traveled to Fonthill Castle, stepping into a world where architecture, mythology and personal philosophy merge. Beneath the motto PLVS VLTRA - “go further beyond” - students encountered Henry Mercer’s vision of art and humanity.
From Indigenous compassion murals to Rollo the dog’s preserved pawprints, the castle offered a quiet lesson:

go beyond pride, beyond borders, beyond the self - toward understanding.





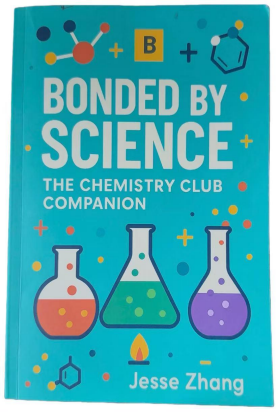
The New Book from EPA: Bonded by Science

EPA’s Chemistry Club has just gained a new milestone: student Jesse Zhang published a full-length companion book titled *Bonded by Science: The Chemistry Club Companion.*

In the prologue, Jesse begins to explain the inspiration for this book. From fireworks lighting up the night sky to the colors of flame tests, he shows how chemistry transforms ordinary wonders into puzzles we can understand. What looks like magic is really science at work, weaving a tapestry of chemistry that attracts readers to step into the world of chemistry.

The introduction sets the tone for the entire book: chemistry is not just formulas and equations, but a way of seeing the world differently. Designed for high school learners, the book guides students through concepts, problem-solving skills, real-world applications, and even competition preparation.

Whether students are beginners or advanced chemists, Jesse encourages them to ask “why?” Because that’s where real discovery begins. Bonded by Science is more than a club handbook; it’s a reminder that curiosity is the spark that lights up every scientific journey.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Yishan Lu (Lisa) part 1

"A Conversation Through the Sound of the Marimba"

Q1: Do you still remember the moment you first touched percussion or the marimba? What was that scene like?

Lisa: I first encountered percussion six years ago in my school' s percussion club in Shanghai. I still remember the sound of mallets hitting the wooden bars - bright, warm, and a little mysterious. I didn't know it then, but the marimba would become my main instrument. It allows me to express emotions that I can't put into words.

Q2: You said every melody tells a story. What is your favorite marimba piece, and what story does it tell for you?

Lisa: My favorite piece is Ballad of Yadai, a Chinese work inspired by Jiangnan folk music. When I play it, I imagine misty rivers, bridges, and quiet mornings. It feels peaceful - like I'm telling a gentle story from home.

Q3: You divide your musical journey into three stages. Can you describe the turning points?

Lisa: Enlightenment came when I joined the percussion club. I realized how naturally I connected with rhythm. Improvement happened through years of structured practice - scales, techniques, and spending almost two years learning Niflheim. The challenge taught me discipline and patience. Deep Development began when I moved to the U.S. Adapting to a new environment was emotionally difficult, but music grounded me. It gave me stability and a sense of identity when everything else felt unfamiliar.

Q4: What does your daily practice look like? How do you deal with difficult days?

Lisa: I practice around two and a half hours every day, dividing time among multiple percussion instruments. Some days my hands get tired or my concentration slips, but I try to maintain a healthy routine. With pieces like Niflheim, progress was incredibly slow, but repeating small sections helped me grow steadily. On days when I'm emotionally drained, I stop forcing myself. Instead, I rest, listen to recordings, or adjust my mindset. I've learned that good practice requires both persistence and kindness toward myself.





STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Yishan Lu (Lisa) part 2

"Carving Out a World Through Marimba"

Q5: You won the grand prize at the Hudson International Music Competition. Can you walk us through your preparation process?

Lisa: For the competition, I chose Bach's Suite No.995 and the modern marimba piece Niflheim. I practiced two hours daily and focused on clarity, phrasing, and natural expression. Before this competition, I actually faced many failures - competitions where I practiced extremely hard but still didn't place well. Those experiences taught me that obsessing over rankings only limited my performance. What changed this time was my mindset: I played to express something genuine, not to win. And ironically, that helped me win the judges' favor.

Q6: Your mother seems incredibly important to your musical journey. Could you share a few moments that meant the most to you?

Lisa: My mom is my greatest support. She accompanied me to early competitions, waited outside practice rooms late at night, and encouraged me whenever I doubted myself. One moment I will never forget was before a difficult audition—she didn't give advice or pressure me; she simply said, "Play the way you feel." Another moment was when she helped me pack for the U.S. She reminded me that music would always be my anchor no matter where I went. Her quiet support has shaped every step of my journey.

Q7: What's next for you? And how do you define a "musician"?

Lisa: I think a musician is someone who can bring comfort, joy, or imagination to others through music - not necessarily someone with perfect technique, but someone who plays with sincerity. I don't think I'm fully there yet, but I'm working toward it. My dream is to hold my own concert someday, sharing pieces that have shaped me. I hope my music can help people feel something - peace, warmth, or even courage. And in the next few years, I want to keep improving, exploring new styles, and becoming more confident as a performer.





Halloween Spirit Week Lights up EPA (Oct 27 – 31)

Costumes, games, laughter, and a Friday to remember.

From October 27 to 31, EPA celebrated its Halloween Spirit Week with five days of themed outfits and a school-wide party that brought students together in the most creative ways.

Monday: Mismatched & Crazy Socks Day; Tuesday: Spooky or Crazy Hair Day

Wednesday: Candy Share Day; Thursday: Pajama Day; Friday: Halloween Party

The week ended with a school-wide Halloween Party in the gym, where everyone brought their best costumes and even better energy.

Students arrived dressed as: Angels, bees, gothic queens, fried eggs, bacon strips, Greek gods, cowboy characters, headless figures

The costumes turned the gym into a colorful festival of imagination.





Games & Activities

The party featured several crowd-favorite games:

Musical Chairs

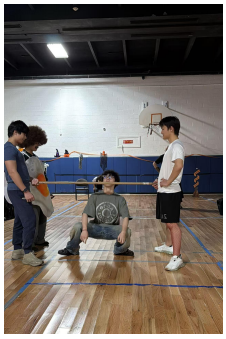
A loud, hilarious, high-energy match that had everyone cheering.

Rainbow Game

Students ran across the gym trying to find the right color spot before the music stopped - chaotic, competitive, and very fun.

Fencing Challenge

One of the highlights: students competed in a playful fencing showdown, drawing cheers from the entire room.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF NOTE

As October closed, I am reminded that a school is not defined only by classes or schedules, but by the moments we share, such as the laughter at the Halloween party, the quiet warmth of community service, the excitement of learning beyond the classroom, and the stories we choose to carry forward.

This issue of EPA TIMES is more than a recap. It is a record of how we showed up through creativity, kindness, or courage. From Spirit Week costumes to volunteer events, from club projects to student achievements, every page reflects a community that is growing, trying, and finding its voice.

Thank you to every student who contributed, volunteered, or simply brought good energy into the room. Thank you to our teachers and staff for supporting us with patience and heart. And thank you, the reader, for turning these pages and becoming part of EPA's shared memory.

May the coming months continue to challenge us, inspire us, and bring us closer - not only as classmates, but as a community learning how to shine together.

See you in the next issue.

— Boge