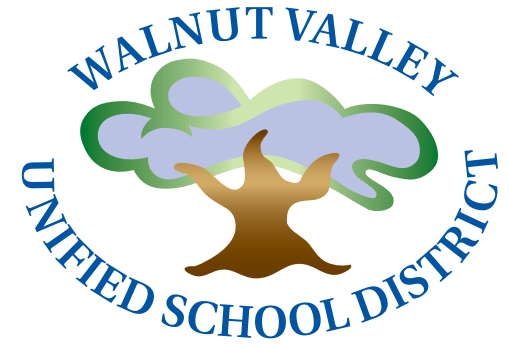


Outlook



Issue 52 Summer 2022

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley Educational Community,
Happy Summer!

A couple of weeks ago, as I do every year, I had the honor of attending several graduation, promotion, and commencement activities across our District as we concluded yet another fantastic school year. I was so incredibly proud of our students. Despite facing arguably the greatest adversity over the past couple of years that any students have ever faced in the history of public education, our students continued to attain high levels of achievement in a variety of areas, continued to be empathetic, and displayed a tremendous amount of appreciation and care for others and the world around them. Whether advancing to middle school or high school, or graduating off to college, our students are positioned to do great things. I want to thank our students, parents, teachers and staff, and the entire community for continuing to provide such tremendous support for our educational system.

As you will read in this publication, great things are happening in Walnut Valley. Thanks to the efforts and support of so many caring people, our District, once again, ranked in the top 2% of all school districts in America. Thanks to a caring and supportive community, we continue to utilize Measure WV funding to build and enhance state of the art facilities across the District (in fact, based on the state of our organization's finances, our District recently received the highest credit ranking that a school district of our size can achieve). And, as you will read once again, thanks to such caring students and staff members, our kids are helping to make the world a better place.

Please take time to enjoy the summer with family and friends. On behalf of our Board of Trustees and our entire District, thanks again for all that you do to make this school community so incredible.

Take care,
Robert P. Taylor, Ed.D.
Superintendent

STEM Champs Walnut High Robotics Team Earns Global Title

Walnut High's Wolf Corp. competitive robotics team was just days away from taking on their biggest challenge – the FIRST World Championship in Houston, Texas held April 19-23.

"We're so excited to finally take our robot to Worlds!" gushed senior Kawin Watkins.

The team proudly capped off the competition winning the Inspire Award Finalist title, the highest honor given to the team that best embodies the challenge of the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) program. No other team in L.A. County has earned the award in the last 12 years.

This was the third year in a row Wolf Corp. qualified for the mega global contest, that was paused the past two years due to the pandemic.

The team secured their coveted spot by winning the Inspire Award among 150 teams at the 2022 FTC So Cal Regional Tournament in March.

On April 6, members offered a preview presentation and demonstrated skills that their sturdy "Wolfinator" battle bot uses during engineering challenges.

"I try not to think of the pressure during the competitions,"



shared driver senior Kevin Yu who handles the left and right wheel motion.

"I'm pretty relaxed during the qualifying rounds, but when it gets to the finals that's when it gets intense," added senior Jason Wang, the outtake driver.

At one point, the robot moves to the wall and gets 10 points for spinning a yellow rubber duck, dropping a block off in the hub, and then parking in a blue square.

"We have two minutes to basically score as much as possible," senior Daniel Ji explained.

Seven members have been in robotics teams together throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

Senior Sarah Wang joined Wolf Corp. as a Collegewood Elementary fourth grader in 2014. She heads to UC Berkeley in the fall to major in Biology.

"I feel like robotics gave me a really good background to pursue a career in STEM," she said.

Wolf Corp. was featured on NBC4 and ABC7 news!

Be the helpers!

Students Send Refugee Children from Ukraine a Rainbow of Hope



With war raging in the Ukraine, C.J. Morris and Castle Rock Elementary Schools have stepped forward to offer packages of hope to refugee children.

The IB-PYP schools launched a

"Rainbow Kit" project with coloring books, notebooks, fidget toys, crayons, and pencils - all funded and shipped with donations from families.

C.J. Morris special education teacher Rochelle Mortensen spearheaded the global outreach effort with the goal of sending 300 kits to comfort and help ease the stress of the displaced children.

"At IB-PYP schools, we encourage children to be global citizens, to take action, to do something to help other people," shared IB Coordinator Kelly Howard.

"These kids understand what they're doing and they're understanding that they're making an impact!"

"It's not their fault that they're having to leave the country," said Castle Rock fifth grader Austin Le while schoolmates assembled packages on April 21.

"So I feel like we need to take action and maybe help them get back to normal, or as normal as possible."

"It helps them and it will make them feel better," added Caden Lakani.

One by one students began filling bags with the handpicked items during their lunch break.

"We have so many students that are definitely willing to give up their recess and want to help and participate," said Principal Jason Eldridge.

Before each shift, Mortensen shared the sage advice of the late Mr. (Fred) Rogers, who said to "look for the helpers" when they see scary things on the news.

"When you see the helpers, you'll know there is hope," Mortensen said. "And, what's more important is that we can be the helpers!"

Students topped each Rainbow Kit with a handwritten letter and colorful bag of Skittles candy.

"We want them to know that behind every storm is a rainbow and we're providing that rainbow!" she said.

In total, the schools sent over 700 care packages overseas.

"I love doing this!" exclaimed C.J. Morris fourth grader Kekoa Revell during an April 7 session.

"It just feels good doing something to help."



Best Schools in America

Walnut Valley USD has earned a top 2% ranking out of 10,772 public school districts in America in the 2022 Niche.com report.

"This is a great validation of the hard work of our teachers, classified staff, administrators, and students!" said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

Scoring an overall A+ grade, Walnut Valley USD secured an impressive report card in numerous categories at local, state, and national levels, including ranking in the top 5% of all school districts in California.

The leading research website also placed Diamond Bar and Walnut High Schools in the top 1% of 19,984 high schools in the nation, and top 2% of best high schools in California.

Niche's annual listing is based on an analysis of academic and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education along with test scores, college data, and ratings.

In addition, Diamond Bar and Walnut High are ranked among the best high schools in the state and nation in the latest U.S. News & World Report, unveiled on April 26. Full report at: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools>.



Super Star Seniors

Congratulations!

We're proud to spotlight eight of our stellar Class of 2022 seniors! These students represent the best in Walnut Valley with dedication and commitment to academic excellence and a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

Diamond Bar High



Akash George

University of Pennsylvania – Wharton School of Business, 4.0 GPA
Taken 11 AP Courses, National Merit Scholarship Winner, Class of 2022 President, United Student Body, Varsity Swim captain, Spanish and Key Club president, Wind Ensemble.

"In the waning hours of the pandemic, I saw an opportunity to bring a sense of "normalcy" for Class of 2021 seniors by planning a modified prom. While COVID kept us isolated, I felt that I made a difference in bringing us back together."



Eunice Lee

University of California, Santa Barbara, 3.8 GPA

Taken 8 AP Courses, Best Buddies president, Circle of Friends, Mission Initiative IOC representative, United Student Body, Highschool House of Prayer, St. Jude Hospital volunteer.

"I feel like I made a difference at DBHS through Mission Initiative where our team cultivated a safe place on campus to talk about Jesus."

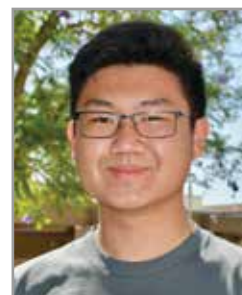


Shantell Luna

University of California, Santa Barbara, 3.83 GPA

Varsity Soccer Team all 4 years, DBHS American Cancer Society president and founder, Building New Hope president, Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.

"My favorite memory of DBHS was winning Second Round CIF during sophomore year and the bus ride back home with everyone cheering!"



Steven Tjandra

University of California, Los Angeles, 4.0 GPA

Taken 12 AP Courses, National Merit Scholarship Finalist, Model United Nations Outstanding Delegate, UNICEF Club president, Debate Club president, INMOOV Robotics, HOSA.

"I remember the hot Saturdays sanding robot pieces at the park with friends during the pandemic. It reminds me that it isn't the good grades and first places that fulfill me, it's the special moments with friends and loved ones."

Walnut High



Sabrina Bennani

University of California, San Diego, 4.0 GPA

Taken 5 AP Courses, Hacienda 5 Award, League MVP, Hands4Hope founder and president, French Club co-president, Varsity Swim Team for 4 years.

"We had just come out of distance learning and most of us weren't in our best shape, but we came together to cheer for every teammate in every race during League Finals. I treasure that time!"



Renee Chang

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 3.96 GPA

Taken 11 AP Courses, IB Diploma Program Candidate, Top 30 Usabo High Honors, Tennis CIF Individual Runner Up, Science Olympiad and Science Bowl president, Varsity Tennis Team for 3 years.

"Especially through the IB program, I have learned so much about the importance of being open-minded, absorbing, and understanding of perspectives different from those around you. I am eternally grateful for that."



Joseph Shen

University of California, Berkeley, 3.96 GPA

Taken 10 AP Courses, FBLA Business Calculations – National 1st Place, National Merit Scholarship Finalist, 3D Modeling Club co-president, Tennis Team, NYSE Trading Club co-president, FBLA, Key Club.

"From the late night In-n-Out runs, to the mutual motivation during hectic weeks, we have accompanied each other through the past four years. I'm thankful to everyone who helped make my four years so unforgettable."



Max Yen

University of California, Berkeley, 4.0 GPA

Taken 9 AP Courses, Taekwondo Black Belt Dan 3, CETA Outstanding Theatrical Work Award, Improv Club president, Cybersecurity Club, WHacapella, Swing Club, Martial Arts, Performing Arts.

"It has been a real joy to know such talented and passionate people and share in our collective creativity and artistic expression. If something ever went wrong, we always had a warm and supportive crowd to cheer us on."



Diamond Bar High Senior Named 2022 Edison Scholar

Chiara Harsojo hopes to break down gender barriers in STEM fields

When Diamond Bar High senior Chiara Harsojo stepped into her computer science class on the first day of school there were 25 pairs of eyes looking back at her. She quickly noticed that only three of the classmates were girls. Harsojo, 17, was "baffled" and eventually decided to pursue the concept of breaking down gender barriers that exist in STEM fields. She plans to address the stigma

by transforming data to prove that "just because I'm a girl doesn't lessen my abilities and potential."

On May 6, Harsojo was recognized as a 2022 Edison Scholar for the innovative idea and will receive a \$40,000 scholarship from Edison International. She plans to attend UC Berkeley next fall and study Data Science.

While interning at Boeing aerospace company last summer, she created a web browser that can simplify thousands of data entries and show trends in safety information.

"By making data usable and easily understandable, I can help improve daily routines, find flaws in certain systems, and help businesses improve their products," she said.

And most importantly, Harsojo hopes her work will give other girls the confidence to pursue a career in STEM.

Class of 2022 Marks Milestone Day

Diamond Bar High School celebrated a purple parade of 605 seniors during the 39th commencement held May 28 in Holmes Memorial Stadium.

At Walnut High School, 541 beaming grads walked across the stage in a proud display of hard work and dedication during the ceremony in the Ken Gunn Stadium.

"Without a doubt, so much has changed with ourselves and the world since we first stepped through these gates," said DBHS Class President Akash George describing how students adapted and thrived during the pandemic.

Seniors moved their Friday night hangouts from Boba Time to Discord, pivoted service events from soup kitchens to Zoom, and most importantly gained a deeper appreciation of the importance of human connection and mental health, he said.

"But one thing has remained constant – the fact that we did it all together!" "I think about how we made it through the world's most challenging time," shared Allen Wang during the valedictorian address with Andrew Shi.

"As we move on in the next stage of our lives, let's remember all that we've learned, the resilience that we've developed, and the memories we've created."

"And above all, let's cherish the bonds we formed here at Diamond Bar." George delivered the closing message directing classmates to stand and turn their tassels, cueing a spectacular fireworks finale.

"Congratulations Brahmas, it's time to go out there and make a difference!"



Construction Update

Projects Funded by Measure WV

Diamond Bar High

500 (Science) Building Modernization:

The two-story science building featuring 21 state-of-the-art biology, chemistry, and physics classrooms with adjoining learning collaboration spaces, conference rooms and offices is in progress.

Recent construction includes installation of cabinet counter tops, flooring, carpet, and painting. Project slated for completion Summer 2022.

New Instrumental Music Center Building:

Exciting progress to report on the three-story band/color guard building with instrument practice rooms, recording studios, orchestra/recital spaces, and offices. Recent construction includes drywall, electrical, plumbing, insulation, outdoor plaster, sitework. Project scheduled to open for the 2022-2023 school year.

New Projects

Walnut Elementary New MPR and Kindergarten Buildings

- Concrete footings, reinforced steel for footings, and concrete slab

South Pointe Middle School Music Building

- Rough plumbing and electrical, exterior wall, roof framing

Suzanne Middle School Gym Building

- Grading and building pad complete, slab to be poured in June

Suzanne Middle School Two-Story Classroom Building

- Underground electrical utilities, building footings, structural columns and beams

Upcoming Projects:

Diamond Bar High School 400 (Library) Building Modernization:

Construction scheduled to begin Winter 2022.

New Walnut High School Gym:

Construction scheduled to begin Fall 2022.

Rock On! Chaparral Receives \$15K Instrument Donation

As Chaparral Middle School music students arrived in class on April 22, they were greeted by a gregarious visitor and handed a pair of drumsticks. It was quickly evident the sixth period band practice would be taking a new direction.

Without missing a beat, Dave Wish, the Founder and CEO of the national non-profit Little Kids Rock, began improvising a drum lesson with students tapping beats of the snare, kick, and hi-hat on chairs. Then the music maker signaled the 40 assembled students to begin a rock star drum roll as an impressive cache of instruments was unveiled.

Little Kids Rock and partner Niagara Bottling presented the gift of ukuleles, guitars, keyboards, and professional development valued at \$15,000. The instruments will support the school's new Modern Band program and teach students to play the music they listen to at home, Rock, Pop, Hip Hop, and R&B, in the music classroom.

"This is a great opportunity to make our music program even more diverse," said teacher Leslie Schroerlucke who applied for the donation.

"We're so thankful to Little Kids Rock and Niagara Bottling for providing this wonderful program and we're looking forward to it!"

Volunteers from Niagara Cares, the philanthropic arm of family-owned and operated business located in Diamond Bar, were on hand for the presentation featured on ABC7 News.

Diamond Bar High Debuts 'Open Letter Project'

Over 1,100 Diamond Bar High students recently experienced The Open Letter Project, a live reading of Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail.

"You are going to hear one of the most important documents in our national history read aloud to you," shared drama teacher Jared Kaitz introducing the inaugural performance.

"This is meant to give you new eyes to see the world!"

Fifty volunteers seamlessly presented the voice of King, a Baptist minister and civil rights activist killed in 1968, during two March 4 assemblies held in the gymnasium.

"Coming out of the pandemic, it felt as if there was a disconnect in the community due to being isolated for so long," shared junior Ryan Chung.

"The Open Letter Project helped reclaim some of that, and it was an amazing experience to be a part of."

International Baccalaureate (IB) and Black Student Union (BSU) members organized the impressive event, recruiting dozens of student and staff readers.

Each reader was assigned a paragraph to deliver from inside a mock jail cell borrowed from the drama department. "I had been thinking about presenting the letter in a live reading for a few years," said teacher Dena Lordi who incorporates the essay in the IB Theory of Knowledge course curriculum.

"When it finally went off and I heard the students start reading, I got goosebumps!"

Reader Isaac Miao, a senior and BSU member, shared that the experience was "an immense and touching moment."

"The atmosphere in the gym when we were listening to voices present such a heartfelt speech was incomparable."

Assemblies featured a student speech by junior Olivia James, winner of the Council of African American Parent's Stand and Deliver Oratorical contest and performance of the song Stand Up from the film *Harriet* by sophomore Sophia Morookian.

Senior Gabriel Nunag wrote an orchestral piece, but COVID restrictions prohibited the performance when the event was moved indoors due to an inclement weather forecast.

"The letter itself is an impressive work, but it also relates nicely to what we study," Lordi said.

"Most important, the letter speaks about how the need for social justice is immediate. That need was true during the civil rights movement, but our students recognize that it is also true in our current society."

Student organizers also presented interactive activities, including a tile art project, during lunch.

"Dr. King's legacy was championed through this project that accomplished many profound lessons for our students and staff," shared Principal Dr. Reuben Jones.

"It embodies the essence of collaboration, social justice, historical relevancy, and social emotional learning, to name a few!"



California Democracy School Walnut High Students Demonstrate Outstanding Civic Engagement



Walnut High School social science teachers are delivering high-quality civic learning lessons through curriculum and projects that encourage students at all grade levels become engaged.

On May 7, as recognition for these outstanding efforts, the school was lauded as a 2022 California Democracy School by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) during a ceremony at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library.

Only two L.A. County high schools received the award for demonstrating an extraordinary dedication to civics – whether providing forums for healthy debate, campaigning on community issues, or partnering with local groups to effect changes.

"We presented opportunities for our students to choose from a wide variety of topics that they already had an interest in," shared teacher Aaron Cornell, adding that faculty served as a guide and sounding board on the projects.

The civic-minded teens tackled topics such as forgiving student debt, mandatory COVID vaccines for children, legalizing recreational marijuana, and reforming the electoral college.

"The best part about this project is that it is student driven," echoed division colleague Drew Johansson.

"Our role is really to keep them on course and allow them to hopefully pursue change in something they are passionate about."

Class of 2022 seniors completed capstone projects using these skills to research, engage in civil discourse, and reach out to local politicians. Students discussed pro and con arguments which ultimately helped formulate proposals they sent to legislative officials with the hopes of making a difference in an area that matters to them, Cornell added.

This spring, the seniors met with LACOE representatives to present their findings and learning experiences from the capstone projects.

"Most of the learning we do in school is about things that interest someone else," offered senior Madison Hsieh.

"It was nice to be able to choose a topic that matters to us and then try to do something about it to make the world a better place, even if it is only in a small way."

Tap n' Go! Students Fight Drought One Drop at a Time



Diamond Bar High AP Environmental Science (APES) students are hoping to create a ripple of change across campus during May's Water Awareness Month. Due to the increase in climate change and ongoing drought, water conservation efforts are more important than ever. With that in mind, Tap n' Go, a collaborative class effort, has successfully replaced four inefficient faucets on campus with water-wise, touchless faucets. Each new faucet comes with a 32% water savings.

"APES does a second semester Your World Project where each class tackles an environmental challenge," explained Tap n' Go president senior Arashdeep Ghotra.

"I was thinking of ideas for our project and installing these faucets

seemed to be the best and most sustainable option," shared senior Joyce Chung, the team's advertising, art, and technology manager.

"They will last a long time on campus by just replacing the AA batteries when needed."

The students in Kylance Malveaux's first-period class pitched the plan to the Walnut Valley Water District (WVWD) who agreed to fund the \$1,700 project. Tap n' Go and WVWD are now working together on Phase Two of a nearly \$25,000 plan to retrofit an additional 71 motion-detected faucets.

"We hope to leave a lasting impact on campus and spread our message about the importance of conserving water," said Chung, 17, who will oversee the project this summer.

"As we head into the summer months, please keep in mind the importance of conserving water as every drop counts!"

Spreading Paws-itivity

Therapy dogs bring comfort, smiles to South Pointe students

"We have therapy dogs on campus and the kids are having a blast!" exclaimed South Pointe Middle School Counselor Chris Sandoval during the March 29 lunchtime event. It's been two years since the therapy dogs visited the school due to the pandemic.

"South Pointe is so thankful to the Pet Prescription Team for providing furry friends and warm hugs to our students when they need it most," said Principal Dr. Susan Arzola.



Wild About Writing! Quail Summit Hosts Young Author's Day



Quail Summit Elementary students entered a jungle filled with stories written by schoolmates during the Young Author's Day held March 24. The library and multipurpose room were transformed into a literary rainforest with miles of lush paper plants, grasses, and adorable wild animals. Throughout the day, classes on safari rotated through the experience to read each other's books. Friendly paper monkeys, alligators, frogs, snakes, and sloths dangled from vines above the youngsters. The children found cozy areas to enjoy the stories together while listening to the gentle sounds of chirping birds and rain showers.

"This is my book!" exclaimed first grader Cece Chen proudly pointing to her narrative about dogs on display.

In the morning, children's authors Suzanne and Max Lang virtually presented their bestselling "Grumpy Monkey" books that support Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

"I liked reading other people's stories," commented third grader Chloe Choi who had authored a book about dolphins.

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the annual event with cross-age reading groups returned in the reimagined format.

"The energy on campus reminded us how excited students are that we were able to bring back Quail Summit traditions!" said Principal Frances Weissenberger.

Parent volunteers chose the safari theme to coordinate with the "Grumpy Monkey" books and spent weeks cutting out animals, leaves, and vines.

"Our Community Club came up with all the decorations and brought this event to life," gushed kindergarten teacher Sally Kim.

"We could not have done it without them!"

"We just want the kids to be happy and feel normal again!" shared Community Club President Angie Yung.

"It's the best feeling!"

Outlook

Issue 52 Summer 2022



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2022-23
SCHOOL YEAR

First Day of School
Monday, August 8

Let's Talk! – We want to be responsive to your needs and invite you to send questions, comments, and suggestions to www.wvusd.org.

Peep, Peep! Evergreen Kindergartners Welcome Baby Chicks

"Our favorite word every single day is 'awww!'" shared teacher Susan Chang describing the seven baby chicks that hatched in her class.

The life-cycle project began on March 8 by placing fertilized eggs in an incubator and then counting down until their arrival. During the three hatching days, the teacher kept her Zoom camera on the entire time so that students and their families could watch at home.

"It was an amazing experience!" Chang added.

The first black and white chick pecked his way out of the shell on March 28 and the class decided to name him Bob.

Walnut Valley USD Superintendent Dr. Robert (Bob) Taylor was amazed when student Eziel Dagnino announced the name during his visit.

"That's a good name – you guys are smart!" the schools chief commented to the unaware children.

The youngsters have been keeping a chick investigation

journal, conducting peep marshmallow science experiments, and measuring with cubes, scales, and rulers.



"She's looking at me!" exclaimed Alais Matheny as the teacher placed a chirping chick named Kelly on the scale to get weighed.

"I think she likes you!" the teacher replied.

When the students take turns holding the fragile chicks, they know to say "cup a chick" as a reminder to gently cradle them in their hands.

"Throughout this experience, the children have been so motivated to learn and show

kindness and respect," Chang said.

On April 5, the class wrote their final journal entries as the chicks would be 'flying the coop' to live on a farm that afternoon.

"We will miss you, chickies - it was fun having you in our class!" they exclaimed.

Chaparral 7th Grader Competes in National Spelling Bee



As a seven-year-old, Justin Tran found that he had a natural talent for spelling. He routinely aced his first-grade spelling tests at Maple Hill Elementary and even won a spot in the school-wide bee in January 13, 2017. Justin was the youngest to compete that day among the best wordsmiths on campus. And even though he didn't take home the top prize, he wasn't done with his spelling adventures.

Five years later, Justin, now 12 and a Chaparral Middle School seventh grader, won a spot in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. He earned the school's 2022 Spelling Bee Champion title and went on to compete among 77 other school finalists in the Los Angeles County Scripps Regional Spelling Bee held March 13 at East Valley High School in North Hollywood. This was the first in-person regional spelling bee since the onset of the pandemic. And after six long hours of competing, Justin was crowned the champion!

He represented the Los Angeles Spelling Bee Collaborative at the Scripps National Spelling Bee held June 2 in Washington, D.C.

"In the spelling bee, there are no losers," says Justin who maintains a positive attitude about the competitions.

"Even if the trophy slips out of your grasp, you've gained valuable knowledge to last you a lifetime!"

Mustang Varsity Wrestler Wins State Title

With a last-minute burst of energy during a pivotal match, Walnut High sophomore Anaya Falcon shot for her opponent one final time becoming the school's first-ever state wrestling champion.



Falcon claimed a 5-2 decision to win the 106-pound championship among thousands of wrestlers in her weight class.

"Winning state shows that my hard work and dedication paid off, and without having my coaches in my corner I don't know where I would be today," said Falcon after proudly winning the February 28 competition at Mechanics Bank Arena in Bakersfield.

"It was the best feeling in the world!"

She finished her second year on the varsity team ranking in the top five wrestlers in the nation in her weight class,

and took first place CIF before advancing to the state championship.

"Anaya is a true student of the sport," lauded coach Cecil Sebastian.

"Her discipline, commitment and work ethic towards her training is amazing to witness."

The 16-year-old, who began wrestling in middle school, began pursuing the sport competitively after learning about college and scholarship opportunities. She finished fourth place at the USMC Women's World Team trials last year.

She credits her current success to rigorous practices with friends during quarantine, when most wrestlers across the country believed the sport wouldn't resume for years.

"I think I just had more focus than other wrestlers," she said.

She now has her sights set on taking a national title, making the 2022 World Team, and pursuing wrestling in college while integrating her field of interest, sports medicine.

Falcon credits her team's rousing support training for tournaments and cheering during bouts as being integral to her success on the mat.

"They motivated me to do better than I thought I could!"