

Sir John A. Macdonald
 “We’ve Got You Covered.”

Positivity Corner

YiLin Luan

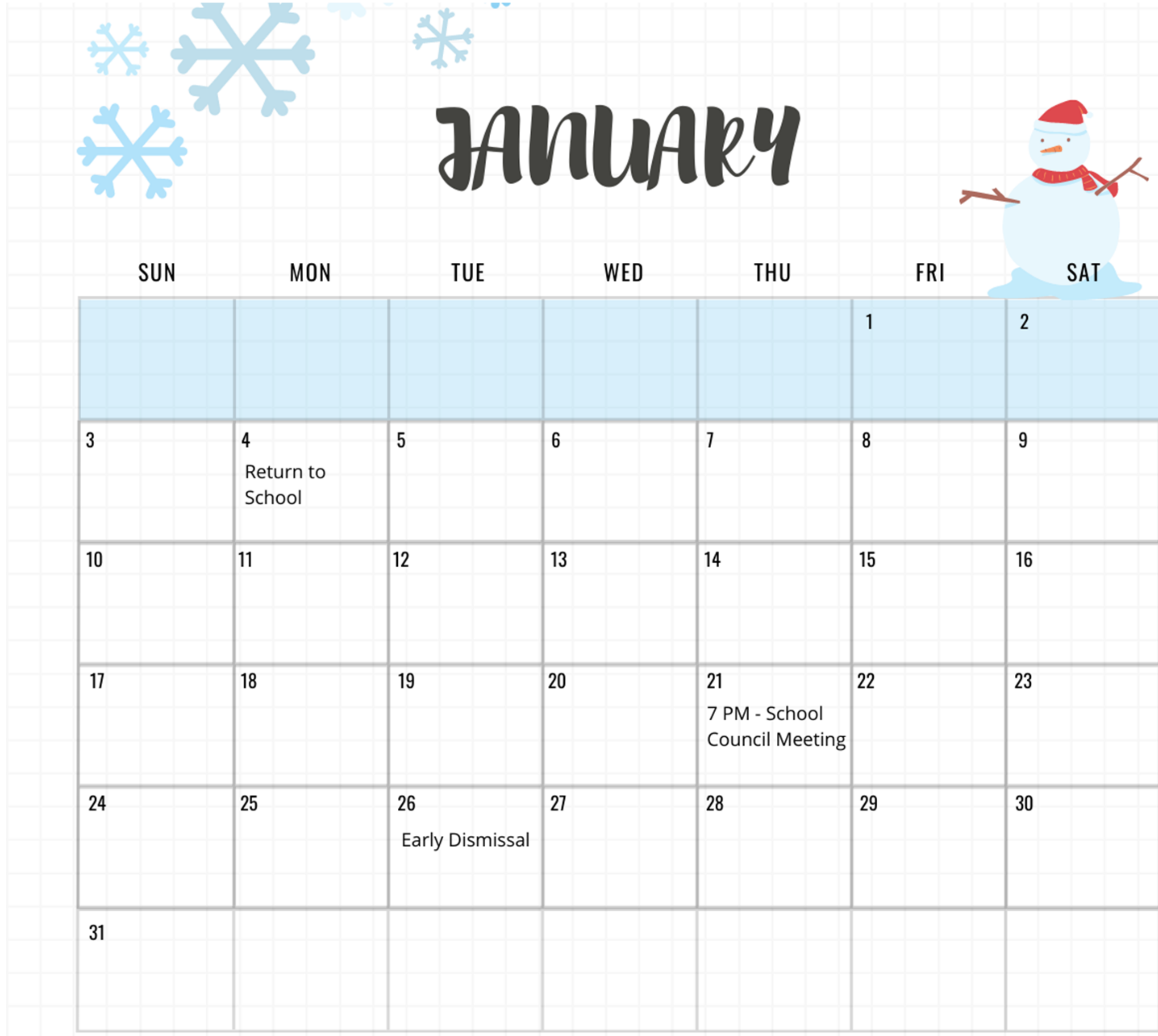
As we approach the end of December, the festive spirit only grows richer. However, unlike past years, this holiday season will be very different for people all around the world. Instead of the family get-togethers, gift-exchanges and delicious feasts with which many of us are familiar, this year we are met with gatherings being prohibited and ill-advised. You may feel unmotivated or gloomy as the festivities, for which you have waited all year, seem as though they have been cancelled. Regardless of the ‘less-than-ideal’ situation, it is always important to stay positive. Happiness is a choice that everyone can make and changing our attitudes will change our lives. Here are some ways to stay positive during this time of the year:

One way to stay positive is to keep a gratitude journal. People who practice gratitude regularly experience a calmer state of mind compared to those who do not. There are certainly a lot of things for which we should be grateful, so why not take a minute out of your day to recognize them?

Practicing forgiveness is another effective way to stay positive. When we talk about forgiveness, we usually think about forgiving others but forget to forgive someone equally as important: ourselves. Everyone makes mistakes and mistakes are okay. When you make a poor decision, do not look at it as a mistake, but, rather, as a lesson. Forgive yourself, learn from your experiences and give yourself another chance.

Last, but not least, we should focus on the present to prepare for the future. There are already a million things to worry about in life, so do not let uncertainties be obstacles to living. We should stop worrying about what is yet to come because what will likely impact our futures is not our worries but our current actions and decisions.

So, this holiday season, remember to focus on joy no matter the circumstances. As Amelia Barr said, “It is only in sorrow bad weather masters us; in joy we face the storm and defy it.” Therefore, cultivate a joyful frame of mind so that you will weather any storm. Stay positive and have an awesome winter break and holiday season.



Covenant House

Marian Farra

Hey Blackscots! The holidays are here and what better way to spend them than by giving back to the community? Despite the current circumstances, the Student Activity Council has nonetheless been able to involve both virtual and in-school students in our valued annual endeavour to support Covenant House. Through these donations, students were able to transform the lives of youth from ages 16 to 24 who are homeless, in need of food and other basic necessities, or who are dealing with personal issues that have affected their home lives.

From November 30th until December 14th, Covenant House donations were collected in Ms. Georgiou’s room. Despite attending school online, virtual students were also involved in this year’s Covenant House support initiative, dropping off donations by the main doors of the school between 3:15 PM - 3:45 PM on December 8th and 11th.

Blackscots showed their support by providing a variety of useful items, ranging from prepaid PRESTO cards to gift cards for fast-food restaurants, retail stores, and bookstores. Unused toothbrushes, mouthwashes, body wash/shampoo items, and feminine hygiene products were also among the donations made by Mac students.

Thank you to all the students who donated and helped make someone’s day. As we begin a new year, I hope we all continue to give back to our community. Stay safe Blackscots and I wish everyone a happy holiday season and a new year of continued giving!

Student Life

Vivian Guo



Photo Credits : Nikki Guo

Holiday Pun

Ivy Guo



PAGE 2 Activities

A Mentorship Program by Women, for Girls

Alisa Yan

Last winter, my friend gave me a flyer and a sign-up sheet for a program called 'Girls E-Mentorship'. I was completely new to the idea of having a mentor and did not see how it could benefit me at the time. However, having now completed a third of the nine-month mentorship program, I can confidently say that it is, indeed, worthwhile for any girl who is currently in high school.

To quote the organization, "Girls E-Mentorship (GEM) is a registered charitable organization that offers an innovative mentorship program for high school girls facing multiple barriers. Our vision is for girls to reach their full potential and emerge as empowered young women and future female leaders."

GEM achieves this goal through four components that make up the core program which runs concurrently with the school year:

Mentorship: GEM individually matches female mentors to high school girls (GEM-girls) based on their personalities, interests, and career aspirations. Mentors are professionals in their fields who are committed to connecting with and improving the lives of their GEM mentees. Mentors support GEMgirls as they navigate important issues in their lives, such as goal setting, time-management, confidence-building, career-choosing, knowledge-sharing for interviews, as well as university applications and more.

GEMinars: GEM hosts five experiential workshops throughout the year. These half-day sessions put new skills into practice and allow mentees to connect with peers. They are hosted by professional women in their corporate offices and give participants an opportunity to learn about various industries and to better understand the job market. Past GEMinar partners include Google, LinkedIn, and Deloitte.

GEMenrichments: These are opportunities for mentees to enrich their personal and professional experiences. GEMenrichments are hosted by community and corporate partners. They organize panel discussions led by women leaders in their organizations, provide opportunities for GEMgirls to participate in special events, and arrange knowledge-sharing on topics relevant to their career aspirations. Past opportunities include a job shadow day at RBC, a day at Twitter, and a pitching workshop at Relay Ventures.

Scholarships: GEM offers annual scholarships to GEMgirls who have displayed exceptional initiative while participating in the GEM program.

My experience with GEM so far has been an extremely positive one. Even though this year's program is different from that of past years as it is fully online, I have still learned a lot about myself and the limitless careers out there. The GEMinars have been incredibly helpful in letting me explore different fields I would not have thought about otherwise and the GEMenrichments also helped me to build soft skills such as public speaking.

The most beneficial part of the program though, for me, is the mentorship. My mentor works in business and finance and though I have little interest in the field, I still receive a lot of guidance from her. She has given me insight into business careers and has explained a day in her life on the job; hearing about this gave me clarity on whether I would enjoy a career like hers. She has also given me so much advice about how to choose a university program and a future career as well as how to best complete scholarship applications!

For instance, to explore careers in science, my mentor connected me with a researcher in the field. By video-chatting with this researcher, I got to understand her line of work and ask any questions I had. As well, speaking with her broadened my view on science and jobs in the field that one would not commonly hear about, giving me more confidence in my choice to pursue science. This was a chance I would never have found otherwise, and I can only thank my mentor and GEM for this opportunity.

This program is perfect for girls who want to explore careers, to network and learn from people in their fields of interest, and to gain relevant skills and experience. Regardless of who your mentor is, this mentorship program leaves you with skills and connections that will benefit you for the rest of your life. If you are currently in grades 9-11, I highly encourage you to apply! Applications close at the end of January.

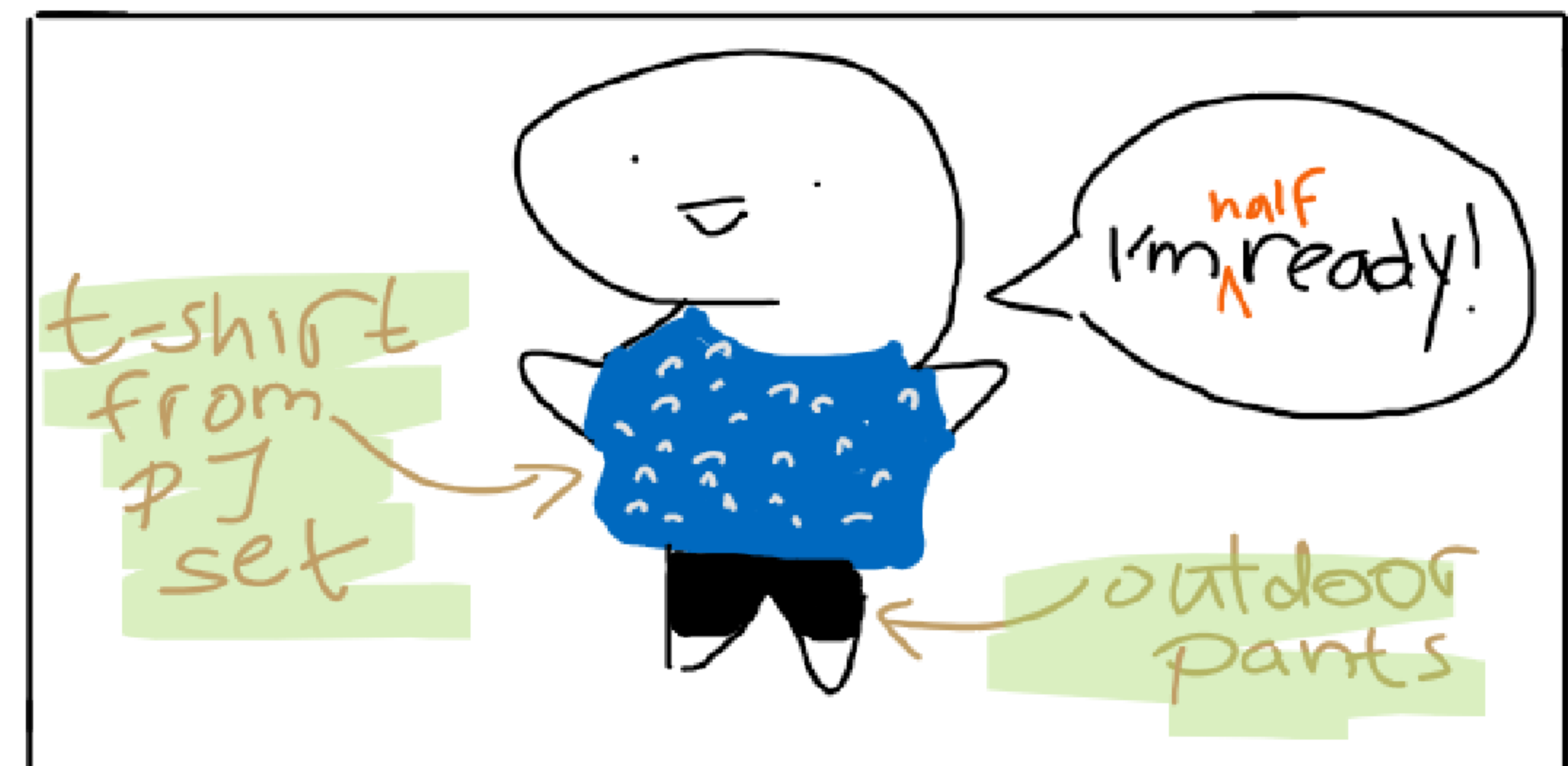
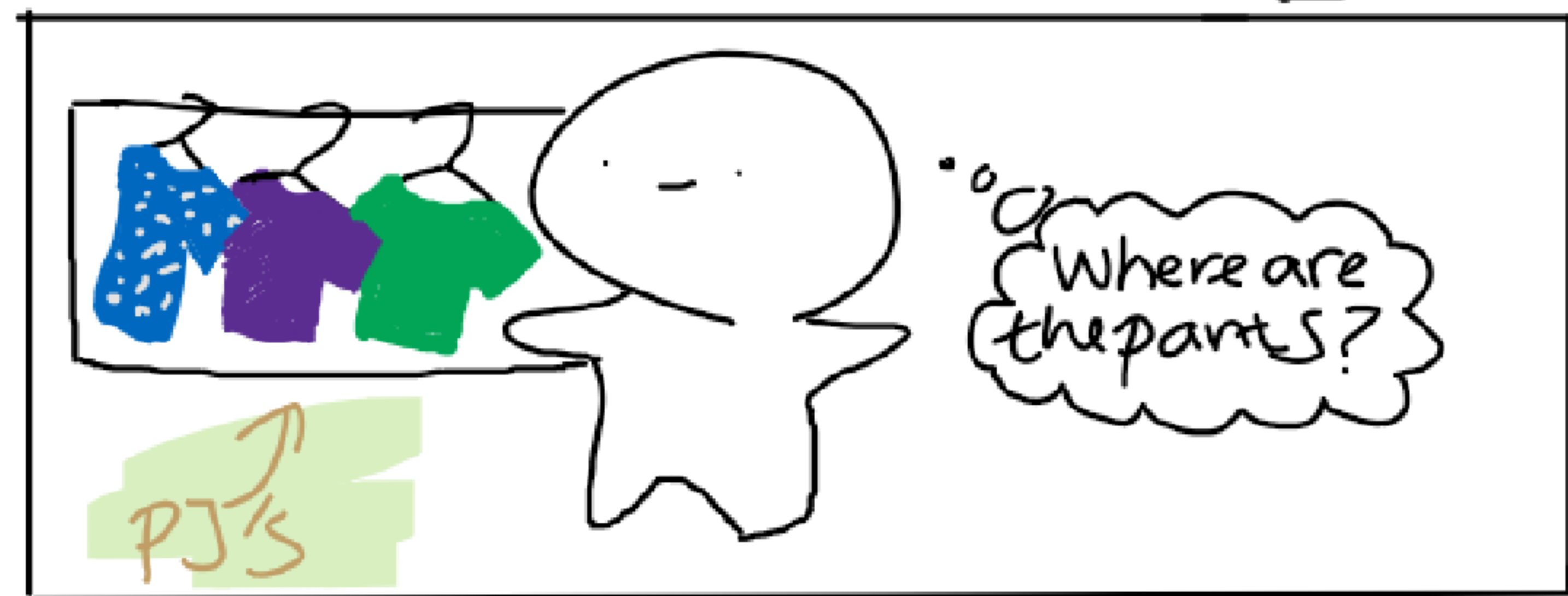
I am recording the number of students who apply through me. If you are interested in GEM, please email me at alisayan106@gmail.com for more details, or fill out this Google Form: <http://bit.ly/3nmbM79>



Photo Credits : Kelly Nguyen

Pajama Day!

Pajama Day
Drawn by: Leilani Xue



Comic Credits : Leilani Xue



Photo Credits : Vivian Guo

Word Search

Jenny Phung

December Word Search

C	A	N	D	Y	C	A	N	E	S	K	Y	R	V	D	M	G	J
I	V	V	A	Q	S	N	O	W	F	L	A	K	E	A	I	H	R
K	X	E	H	A	P	P	Y	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	S	K	U
A	H	A	N	U	K	K	A	H	L	R	U	P	M	Y	L	K	D
R	C	O	V	E	N	A	N	T	H	O	U	S	E	S	K	W	O
W	I	N	T	E	R	B	R	E	A	K	S	X	J	A	M	A	L
T	Q	W	I	N	T	E	R	B	S	N	O	W	U	N	W	N	P
F	S	Y	F	Z	J	C	S	N	O	W	M	A	N	T	E	Z	H
O	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	K	U	P	W	A	K	A	P
S	W	R	L	U	G	L	Y	S	W	E	A	T	E	R	A	A	D
X	A	W	J	M	I	A	F	O	O	D	D	R	I	V	E	D	N
B	Y	A	P	F	J	D	P	F	K	W	H	A	U	H	X	J	A

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

CANDY CANES	MIA FOOD DRIVE	UGLY SWEATER
CHRISTMAS	RUDOLPH	WINTER
COVENANT HOUSE	SANTA	WINTER BREAK
HANUKKAH	SNOW	
HAPPY HOLIDAYS	SNOWFLAKE	
KWANZAA	SNOWMAN	

Holiday Spirit

The Origin of Santa Claus

Sachi Taploo

Every year, on December 25th, many celebrate the joys of Christmas by drinking hot chocolate, licking candy canes, spending time with family, and, most notably, unwrapping presents from the one and only Santa Claus. But, have you ever wondered where this iconic figure of Christmas originated? Who is Santa Claus and why is he so popular? Stick around and you'll discover the true story of the patron saint of Christmas.

St. Nicholas was born in Patara, a city in Turkey now known as Arsinoe, in 280 A.D. He was a kind and respected monk who devoted his life to helping the poor and sick. Because of his generous acts, he became the centre of many legends and stories that inspired the image of modern-day Santa Claus. One such story involves St. Nicholas saving three sisters from being sold into slavery by gifting the sisters' father with a dowry, allowing the sisters to each be married.

Throughout the years, his popularity grew. He was given the title of the protector of sailors and children. The day of St. Nicholas' death, December 6th, was considered auspicious. For this reason, people celebrated this day by feasting, spending money, or getting married. St. Nicholas was widely popular throughout Europe; however, he held the most positive reputation in the Netherlands, where the name Santa Claus originated. In Dutch, St. Nicholas translates to Sint Nikolaas, however the Dutch commonly refer to him as Sinter Klaas, from which the name Santa Claus is derived.

Gift-giving became popular in the 1820s when stores started to advertise Christmas shopping. In the 1840s, newspapers had a separate column dedicated to Santa Claus and holiday advertisements. Fifty years later, the Salvation Army, a charitable organization, provided free Christmas meals to families through donations collected by unemployed men dressed as Santa Claus.

In 1809, Washington Irving popularized St. Nicholas by referring to him as the "patron saint of New York," in his book *The History of New York*. In 1822, an Episcopal minister by the name of Clement Clarke Moore wrote the iconic Christmas poem, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, originally intended for his three daughters. The modern image of Santa Claus is greatly influenced by this poem. The poem popularized the notion that Santa Claus climbed chimneys with just the nod of his head and flew from house to house in his sled.

Although the modern Santa Claus is inspired mainly by St. Nicholas, many variations of the patron saint still exist around the world. In Switzerland and Germany, gifts are delivered by Christkind, an entity resembling an angel who accompanies St. Nicholas on his holiday travels. In Scandinavia, children believe that Jultomten delivers presents in a sleigh drawn by goats. In France, Père Noël is responsible for filling the stockings of French children with holiday goods.

As you can see, Santa Claus is a magical Christmas figure, putting smiles on children's faces and bringing joy to families all over the world. So, when you unwrap your gifts this Christmas, perhaps you may better understand the origins of the mysterious yet wonderful figure who brings to many of you your presents every year.

History.com Editors. "Santa Claus." History.com, A&E Television Networks, 16 Feb. 2010, www.history.com/topics/christmas/santa-claus.

Blackscot Holiday Plans

Marian Farra

'Tis the season to be jolly, especially with 2021 right around the corner! We asked you, fellow Blackscots, to share your upcoming holiday plans through a questionnaire from Mac News on Instagram. Here were your responses:

Devon Markham, a grade 12 student, shared her family's cautious plans for this holiday season: "For the holidays, I'll be seeing a very small amount of family, and everyone is going to quarantine for two weeks before the get-together so we know we're being safe! It's really important we be careful because my grandma is 90, and likely won't survive COVID, so we're trying to be as safe as possible." While we celebrate the holidays, we must not forget about the ongoing pandemic. Like Devon Markham's family, be sure to abide by COVID-19 guidelines and safety precautions. Wishing you and your family all the best!

Angela, a grade 11 student, told us how her traditions have changed from previous years: "We usually spend time with close family friends, with a large dinner and the usual Christmas rendezvous. This year, it's just my parents and me - which is great too! Just different. We plan on having a nice Christmas dinner, opening some gifts together, and attending online church service. Although it's different, this is a Christmas to remember." It's enlightening that even with so many limitations, people are still making the most out of the holidays this year!

Another grade 12 student, Geetha Ahimsadasan, revealed that her plans are divided between school and family: "I'm going to enjoy time to relax from my hectic schedule. At the same time, [I will] apply for universities to ensure an even more hectic schedule for next year. But, most importantly, [I will] spend the holidays with my family and friends virtually." All of you deserve a break, and this is a perfect opportunity to treat yourselves and catch up with friends and family. Have fun and enjoy the last couple of days of the year with the people you love!

Matthew, another grade 11 student, said, "Unfortunately because of COVID, I am staying home instead of going skiing like I usually do every year with my family. I'll be playing *Cyberpunk 2077* over the break." Games are a great way to spend your time while staying home. Hopefully, next year, you and your family can enjoy your ski trip!

While we had many answers, we couldn't fit all of them in, so here are some more quick responses from both current Mac students and Mac alumni:

Ciara Cyopick in grade 12, said, "For the most part, I'm staying home because you know, COVID, but for Christmas I'm going to spend the day with my girlfriend and her family." Fellow grade 12 student, Chloe Limbag, said he will stay home and chill with his family. Kushi Sunnasy, also in grade 12, shared her plans to bake and watch Christmas films with family.

Ryan VanDerToorn, a recent graduate who's currently studying Biomedical Science at York University, said, "Unfortunately, with COVID, I can't see my family so I'm taking the time to catch up on my courses and prep for next semester." Another Mac alumna, Sidra in UoF Science, plans on seeing her sister during the holidays. Wishing you all the most fun!

Thank you to all who replied and shared their holiday plans! It was a pleasure interviewing everyone. If you wish to be interviewed for any future Mac News articles, be sure to follow @macnews__ on Instagram to be in the know. Whether you're seeing family or doing nothing, keep COVID restrictions in mind! Wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday season and we'll see you in 2021!

Christmas Cooking

Aaron Prince



Access recipe for picture two at macnewsnow.weebly.com/features.