

Vida Davarpanah
Elijah Henry

Humans Of Oak Park High

“Humans of Oak Park High” is an adaptation of the popular online blog known as “Humans of New York,” which explores the strange and oftentimes heartfelt stories of those who roam the streets of the Big Apple. Humans of Oak Park High brings the voices and unique stories of students and faculty members to life by giving them an opportunity to speak about what they believe makes the student body so unique. The answers received, whether they are personal or generalized, paint a larger picture of the Humans of Oak Park High, and allows their voices to take the spotlight.

Oak Park High School students took some time from their busy schedules to answer one powerful, yet simple question: “What makes you unique to the Oak Park student body?” Students of all ages and grade levels answered the question, some struggling more so than others. School faculty was also asked the same question to widen the scope of Oak Park High’s individualistic nature.

A group of four tenth graders was the first to step forward to answer the question. Casey McCauley was the first of the interviewees. The question did not confuse McCauley, as his black clothing and seemingly inherent swagger seemed to speak for itself. “I love playing classic rock on the guitar.” Casey emphasized his love for guitars and music, adding that he plays his own customized guitar, a “Dean Custom 450.” Casey also enjoys skateboarding on a regular basis. Jaron Flynn, the next of the group, enjoys graphic design and skateboards, as well. Flynn claims his energy is near uncontrollable, as he jumps of things quite regularly in the quest to satiate his hunger for danger. The 10th grader noted that he connects his graphic sense to his love for skateboarding by “drawing on [his] grip tape” and showing off his art skills while enjoying his hobby. Tom Kobain, the third member of the group, approached the question in a strange, yet entertaining manner. “I’m a Pokémon Trainer. When I’ve caught them I just stare at them.” Finally, Beau Ballas approached the question, highlighting his love for basketball. “Kobe Bryant is probably my favorite player.”

The next interviewee, Ian Johnson, an 11th grader, was asked the question and instantly retorted “I’m very weird.” Johnson swung the worn backpack from his shoulder to reveal the front pocket, filled with a number of odd objects. “I’ve got playdough, a cow horn, 3-D glasses, a dolphin pen...” Johnson held up the cow horn in particular to highlight its strangeness. “I’m very quirky.”

Next up was a group of three studious freshman girls. The first of the three was Samhitha Yadalla, eager to answer the question with just one simple statement: “I’m a weirdo.” Expanding on the thought, Yadalla claimed that she is “not afraid to show people” who she really is. Following was Vaishnavi Tipireddy, claiming that she likes to “talk to everyone,” yet at the same time “study a lot,” that of which she claims to be “a good thing in life.” The last of the group was Michelle Chen, an aspiring programmer and artist who engages in “college counseling” as a freshman.

The last of the student interviewees was Logan Beck, a ninth grader. “I play lacrosse, I do MMA, surfing, skiing, and go-carting.” Logan also stated that he enjoys “being outside instead of inside.” School administrators and teachers were also interviewed for their position on what makes the Oak Park Student Body unique. Mr. Meskis, Assistant Principal, stated that generally “the kids [at Oak Park High] are good kids.” In his time working at the school, he sees “how motivated students are.” He recalls seeing very little students on campus during class time, as they are all motivated to get to class and do well. Mr. Meskis also recalled how, in the beginning of his time at Oak Park High, he was “surprised at how genuinely nice the kids were.” Ms. Allison, an instructor working alongside Mrs. Fowler, added that the “students fit many different molds.” One student isn’t restricted to drama or mathematics, students can spread themselves over a number of hobbies and personalities.

Oak Park High School’s student body has a voice. And like its parent concept, “Humans of New York,” “Humans of Oak Park High” varies in all sorts of shapes and sizes. It appears that the student body is full of variety and uniqueness, and it will continue to be that way for the foreseeable future.