

# The Drumbeat



“What’s in it for you?”

Feb./March 2021

Parsippany High School

Vol. 4

## Black Lives Have Always Mattered

By Sumaiya Rehman

In the light of Black History Month, we see our fellow social media followers, friends, and even family posting images with captions of African American role models from the past and present. Black History Month is significant for the world, specifically in February of each year. It is an annual celebration regarding the achievements of African American role models from the past and present, and their impact in various communities around us, whether it be race, religion, or regards of the common man. But why do we celebrate Black culture so much more in this month than any other? Why can't we celebrate it year long?

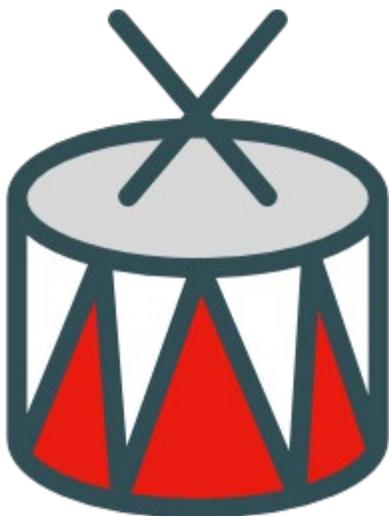
The real deal is that we can celebrate it all year long. But because it's so “trendy” during this one month, we show our gratitude to black culture in these short 28/29 days, when truly, we have the capability and should have the understanding to appreciate Black history all YEAR long. Once BHM ends, you'll see it all disappear from social media. Trust me, it's a reality, a harsh one, that your friends may not even post about Black culture after this month. But just because they don't, doesn't mean you shouldn't either. In the world we live in today, we need the youth like us to stand up and spread knowledge that in reality, is not so commonly compared to be discussed.



It goes beyond just Black history and culture. It's protecting and standing up for the community as well, which as a country, we've failed to do for all these years. But this failure of the world should be the waking of our generation, and earlier generations who can change the norms that once existed in their time while being our age. Black History Month ties back to Black lives mattering too. These are life-changing people, and the fact that we only recognize and hear their names once every year isn't enough. Just like some people see this month as just a once-a-year thing, they see the movement as a one time thing that existed after the events that occurred throughout May-July (and even today possibly). These see BHM page 2

## BHM from page 1

shouldn't be "trends" or one time "things". We should continuously preach change. There's no difference being made with one post, but there is a difference when we continuously fight for a change. Nothing will happen if we don't take action first. Let these 28 days where we honor African American influencers, teach us the importance of acknowledging them and the African American community ALL year long; that the world is diverse, and to honor these men and women who have done good for their community and the world in general. Black History Month's 2021 theme of "Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity" is the perfect theme to wrap everything that matches the unity we should want in our world. And this unity can only be achieved and reached for when we put the effort into emphasizing the importance of this month and the next. Let 2021's Black History Month and the events that we see almost every day regarding Black Americans be a lesson that Black Lives Matter, and that they always have. There are so many sources you can use to educate yourself on Black history and some of the most influential people who have formed the country and the world as a whole.



## News Round Up

By Katelin Chen

### Trump

Recently, members of Congress went through with multiple trials and votes regarding Donald Trump's actions. This was largely due to the storming of the Capitol building on January 6, and Trump was then accused of inciting this riot. A week later, the House of Representatives voted to go through with the impeachment process, and members of the Senate put him on trial, which started a few weeks ago.



By a vote of 57 guilty to 43 not guilty, Trump was acquitted on February 13, ten votes short of the 67 needed for a conviction. Out of the 57 senators that voted guilty, seven of them were Republicans. While Senator Mitch McConnell voted not guilty with claims that his hands were tied, he surprisingly criticized Trump's role in the assault on the Capitol after the trial was over. Because of this acquittal, Trump is still eligible to run for public office in the future.

### Biden

In the first two months of 2021, President Biden has already signed over 50 executive actions, while simultaneously reversing many of Trump's policies. Some of these include policies that were targeted against Muslim countries, transgender people, and abortion.

There is still a lot of controversy and apprehension over his presidency, but there is also

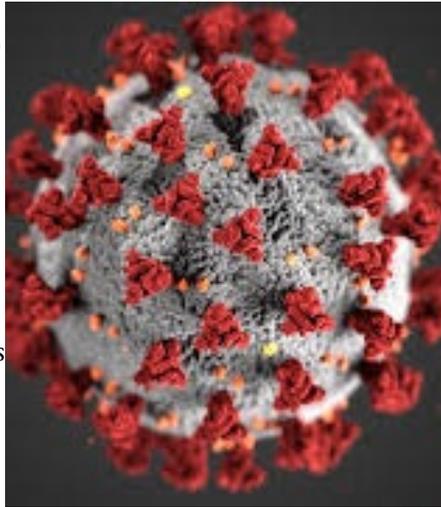


positive speculation over Biden's recent actions. Despite all of this, many people are still waiting for him to follow through with promises he made about issues such as criminal justice, immigration rights, and discrimination.

## The Virus and The Vaccine

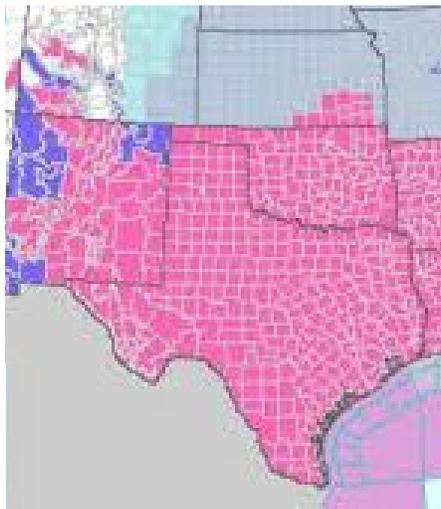
As of February 21, the United States is nearing 500,000 deaths from Covid-19. With so many lives lost, it seems like this nightmare will never end, but there is hope for normalcy come the beginning of next year.

Biden claims that he will 100 million vaccines will be administered by his 100th day in office, and around 75.2 million doses have been delivered to state agencies, although progress has been delayed due to the weather.



## What's Happening in Texas?

In the past week, it has been estimated that around 58 people have died due to the freezing conditions in Texas and surrounding states. These temperatures have caused devastating damage to housing in this state. Roofs caved in, pipes burst, and access to drinkable water has become a concerning issue.



## Murphy's Law

By Ritika Patel

Governor Murphy has signed Executive Order 214 on January 11, 2021 due to the continued disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. E.O. 214 provides an exemption for any 2021 graduating Senior that has not yet met their graduation assessment requirement. The exception that was announced is the same exemption that applied to the graduating seniors of the class of 2020.

Currently, Governor Murphy has implemented a waiver for any graduating senior of the class of 2021 meaning if they have not yet met the graduation requirement they will receive a waiver. There are multiple pathways that a graduate is offered in order for them to meet their graduation assessment requirements. Some of the pathways include: NJSLA (Math and ELA), PSAT, SAT, any additional standardized tests, or a portfolio assessment. New Jersey is currently the only state that has this waiver for the testing requirement for this year.

The freshman class (class of 2024) will be taking the NJSLA in both Math and English. The Federal Department of Education would have to offer states the ability to waive their testing requirement for us to not test the freshman this year.

Executive Order 117 and 214 waive the graduation assessment requirement for any 12th-grade student in the Class of 2020 and or who are expected to be in the Class of 2021. These students must meet all the other State and local graduation requirements, including but not limited to credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many important accomplishments and other important parts of our lives have been disrupted, however thanks to Governor Murphy for signing the Executive Order 214 to help out the state of New Jersey.

# FEATURE



By: Mya O'Brien

They've had thousands of trials for drugs in the world to help cancer. This new drug Kymriah is succeeding in just that. By definition, Kymriah is a cell based gene therapy, and approved in the United States for the treatment of patients up to 25 years old with B-cell precursor all that is refractory or in second or later relapse. Formally the drug is known as "Tisagenlecleucel."

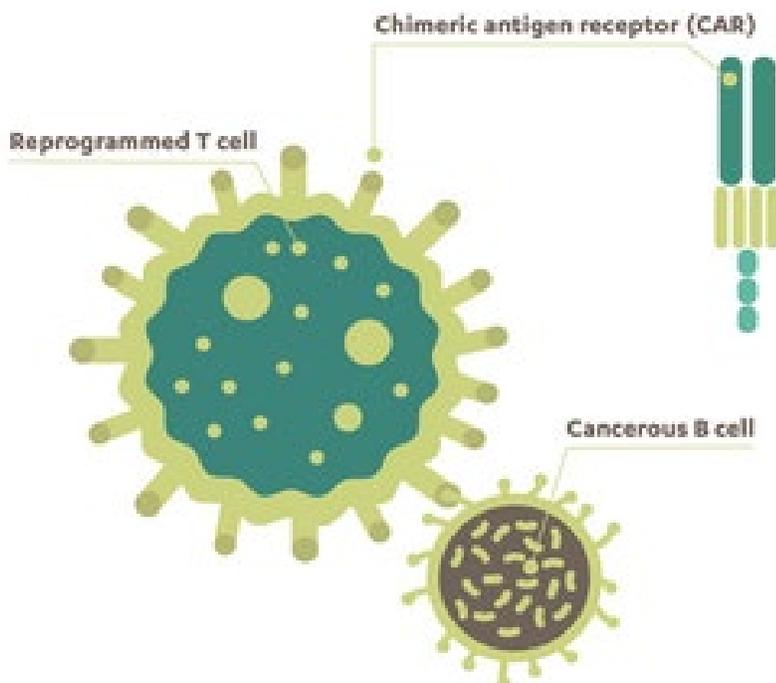
This drug is used to treat certain acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Acute lymphoblastic leukemia is a type of cancer where the lymphoid line of blood cells is characterized by the development of large numbers of immature lymphocytes. Some symptoms may include tiredness, pale skin color, fever, easy bleeding or bruising, enlarged lymph nodes, or bone pain. It's used for people who are 25 years old and under who have been unresponsive to other

treatment(s). In simplified terms this is their last hope. Not only does it treat acute lymphoblastic leukemia, but it also treats a certain type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. A type of cancer that begins in white blood cells that normally fights infection.

This is only for adults that have returned or is unresponsive after treatment with at least two other medications. Tisagenlecleucel is a type of medication called autologous cellular immunotherapy. This is a type of medication that works by using cells from the patient's blood. As this may seem simple, they're many steps to getting this drug.

Before receiving the injection, the patient has many discussions they must go through with their doctor and rules to follow, the patient must be aware of all they must do before the procedure. The patient should not drive any motor

vehicle for a minimum of 8 weeks after the dosage. Another activity the patient cannot partake in prior to getting their shot is they cannot donate blood, organs, tissues, or cells for transplantation after and before they receive the medication. In addition, the patient cannot take any vaccines without consulting their doctor for a minimum of 2 weeks before starting chemotherapy, the injection, and lastly until your immune system has recovered. Besides physical procedures the patient must follow, there are many procedures through technology the patient/patients family must be aware of. A very obvious conversation would be allergies that could possibly be incorporated in the drug. A tip is to ask their pharmacist for the "Medication Guide" for the list of ingredients. In addition to allergies, the patient and doctor must discuss what addition-



al medication the patient has been taking. Vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products the patient is currently on or planning to take. The doctor must also need to know any other reactions the patient may have had caused by chemotherapy in the past. Possible reactions being irregular heartbeat or breathing issues. The doctor must also know if the patient has had any lung, kidney, heart, or liver disease(s). A con of the injection may be that if you are looking to get pregnant in the near future, are pregnant, or are breastfeeding it may have to be put on hold. Prior to the injection, the patient will receive a pregnancy test anyways, but the doctor must know before as well. The reason being due to the drug may happen to cause the fetus harm.

The medication first comes as liquid. It is given by a doctor or a nurse placing into one of your veins and then injecting slowly and carefully, as a mess up could be fatal. It is in fact so

slow the injection process takes around an hour, just for the medication to enter the patient's bloodstream. It must be given 2 to 14 days (for ALL) or 2 to 11 days (for DLBCL) after finishing treatment with other cancer medicines (fludarabine, cyclophosphamide, bendamustine). Prior to the infusion, doctors must prepare the patient by giving them other chemotherapy medications. In about a month before your session, a sample of your white blood cells must be taken at a cell collection center and then go through a process called leukapheresis. Leukapheresis is a procedure used to treat chronic lymphocytic leukemia or patients with very high white blood cell counts. This process will take 3 to 6 hours with a chance of needing to be repeated if not fully completed. Experts say it is important not to miss your appointment calls for your cell collection or miss your treatment dose. It is recommended that patients stay within 2 hours of the location where you plan on or have

received your injection for at the very least, 4 weeks after your injection. The patient will constantly be checked on for any possible negative side effects and a constant check to make sure the treatment is working fine.

After the procedure there are side effects, as there is for any serious procedure. There are many common, not dangerous side effects for after the process like constipation when using the bathroom and diarrhea. Body pain/issues (joint pain, muscle pain or stiffness, pain in the patient's arms or legs and difficulty moving in general, nasal congestion.) Furthermore, there are also added bodily function symptoms like possible blue lips, fingernails or skin and blurred vision, chills, coughs, dilated neck veins, fever, headaches, increased sweating, muscle twitching, decreased urine output, seizures, weight gain, vomiting, and stiff neck. There are some mental side effects as well like Anxiety, agitation, confusion in the brain with time and people, depression, fatigue, hallucinations, hoarseness, hostility, irritability, nervousness, slowness, unusual excitement, and decreased appetite are also a very common side effect as well but recommended to tell your doctor as to some could be signs that something is wrong, or the injection is not working and/or performing its job correctly.

The before, during, and after process of a Tisagenlecleucel injection seems simple, but is a long process. The children and young adults who receive it are going through the most troubling times, yet this drug is the last string of hope they have, this itself makes the entire process worth it.

## PHOTO ESSAY





## Threads

By Nimeesha Huq

What  
makes  
us  
family?



