

# COMMUNIQUE

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## NEWS



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## VISUALS



Chatham Activities Board spices up campus with Hot Ones. **Page 7**

## FORUM



Friendly faces across campus crossword puzzle. **Page 8**

## *New show explores queer stories*

By Alice Crow

Now two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, theater productions are coming back and, perhaps, in a new way.

“The Dance Floor, the Hospital Room and the Kitchen Table,” created and directed by Lyam

B. Gabel, was featured in Chatham University’s Eddy Theater on March 25-26. The production showcased work from the University’s immersive media program, in collaboration with the Kelly Strayhorn Theater in East Liberty.

SEE **THEATER**, PAGE 6



The set of “The Dance Floor” at Eddy Theater. Photo Credit: Alice Crow

## *Safety concerns by Graham Field*

By Haley Daugherty

Chatham University and Wilkinsburg police were called to Graham Field in Wilkinsburg multiple times in recent weeks to address distress calls from sports teams. A couple of these cases involved investigating reports of what sounded like gunshots.

Despite these reports, Chatham officials assure the University community that protocols are in

place to keep everyone safe.

“Whenever there is an issue at any of our facilities, I always tell our coaches to just call the police,” said Chatham University’s athletic director Leonard Trevino. “At Graham Field, the Wilkinsburg police are two minutes away from the field, and it is always better [to be] safe than sorry.”

On Feb. 18, the men’s lacrosse  
SEE **GRAHAM**, PAGE 2

## *Union Fitness gives Cougars a lift*

By Michaela DeLauter

Chatham Cougars have left their den to venture to a new territory, Union Fitness gym on the North Shore. Prior to 2020, athletes stayed on campus and trained at the Athletic and Fitness Center. This venture was led by Michael Gershon, men’s ice hockey head coach.

“When I first got the job, I talked  
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Emily Seamon '25 at Union Fitness.  
Photo Credit: Lauren Haak



## Chatham assures safety after gunshot reports near Graham Field

GRAHAM, FROM PAGE 1

team was practicing at Graham Field when student-athletes heard what sounded like gunshots nearby. The team was escorted to the locker room while the police were called and the situation was investigated. Both Chatham and Wilkinsburg police found nothing at the time, and the team was able to continue practicing.

On Feb. 20, officers responded to another call of gunshot reports near the field. When they arrived, the players were in the locker room and the gate was locked. Again, nothing was found, and the players continued with their practice.

“We have never found anything at Graham Field. When people have said that they have heard shots at the field, it’s turned out that they’ve heard shots in the distance,” Trevino said. “We have a safety protocol in place at all times for our athletic teams.”

Chatham’s safety protocol for athletic events includes a medley of actions to be taken by the staff. During practices at Graham Field, the gate is locked in order to ensure that nobody unaffiliated with Chatham is able to enter. This rule was enacted after an incident with the men’s soccer team when a person walked onto the field during practice and tried to interact with the players.

“Before we locked the gates at practice, people would just come on the field and try to talk to us,” said soccer player Marco Piccolo

‘23. “That’s really the only time I have felt unsafe at the field.”

Officers are present at every Chatham sporting event in case of emergencies. Wilkinsburg police are also present at games that take place at Graham Field, along with Chatham police. There are also safety protocols in place for fans and teams, particularly related to extreme weather.

“There are no immediate threats to Chatham staff or students at all. You never know what can happen. It’s good to have a protocol in place to keep our students and fans safe at all times,” Trevino said.

Despite the increase in police visits in the last month, the teams that utilize the field have remained largely unaffected by the occurrences and are continuing to focus on their competitive seasons.

“The events have not really affected me or my team too much,” Piccolo said. “We mostly just joke about it.”

In the event of an emergency, Chatham Public Safety can be reached at 412-365-1230. For a summary of Chatham police’s incident reports from the month of February, visit the Communiq   police blotter online at ChathamCommuniq  .com.

**Emergency:**  
412-365-1111  
**Non-emergency:**  
412-365-1230



The women’s lacrosse team practices at Graham Field. Photo Credit: Lilly Kubit

## POLICE BLOTTER

*All information is provided by Chatham University’s Public Safety*

**March 3** - A minor traffic accident, without injuries, occurred in the Athletic & Fitness Center parking lot.

**March 10** - An ambulance was dispatched to a medical assistance call at the Eastside campus.

**March 13** - The Pittsburgh fire department was dispatched due to a fire alarm activation in Falk Hall caused by steam buildup in the boiler room. The issue was addressed.

**March 16** - An unescorted male was reported in Laughlin Hall. Officer found him to be a guest of a resident.

**March 17** - The Pittsburgh fire department was dispatched to a fire alarm activation in Buhl Hall caused by a communication error. The issue was addressed.

**March 19** - The Pittsburgh fire department dispatched a fire alarm activation in Berry Hall caused by a communication error. The issue was addressed.

**March 22** - Disorderly juveniles were reported interfering with practice at the Shadyside campus practice field. Officers escorted the juveniles off campus.

**March 23** - A water leak was reported at Hicks Estate due to a ruptured water heater. The issue was addressed.



Students attend the 2021 RISE welcome lunch. Photo Credit: Phil Pavely

## Changes to the RISE program arrive this fall

By Jade Lombardo

Chatham University student Shamin Mason '13 created in 2012 RISE (Retain. Involve. Strengthen. Excel.), a program that focuses on the success of students of color at Chatham. With the help of the Office of Student Affairs, this program will be expanding next academic year to offer more students of color a support network and a sense of community.

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) announced earlier this semester the changes that will be implemented for fall 2022. Beginning next semester, RISE will shift from being a year-long mentoring program to an immersive weekend retreat.

"We've gotten so big as a pro-

gram that we actually can't sustain the current model, so that's always a good reason to have to change the current format of something. I never want to have to turn down a student of color just because we don't have enough mentors," said Juan Mendizabal, associate director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The goal of these changes is to incorporate the idea that mentor-

*"I never want to have to turn down a student of color just because we don't have enough mentors."*

*- Juan Mendizabal*

ship is not just a series of one-on-one meetings and, instead, create an all-inclusive, community-based experience spanning beyond the RISE retreat itself.

The retreat will take place

retreat as an experience that will be "authentic, joyful and community oriented." It will consist of group sessions where mentees and mentors can build connections. There also will be self-care sessions –

*"I would definitely say that joining the RISE program helped me build a network on campus."*

*- Ana Harouse '25*

Sept. 9-11, 2022 on Chatham's Shadyside campus. Participants can include any students of color who will be in their first or second year at Chatham, and any students of color in their third year or beyond can work as a mentor.

Registration will open on April 1, 2022. RISE retreat registrations will close on Sept. 2, 2022, leaving enough time for new students to hear about it after they arrive on campus in August. Students can register at the link under the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion tab on Chatham's website.

RISE mentor Ashanti Lopez '24 said being a RISE mentee has been a positive experience.

"RISE was very helpful and communicative. They were the ones that taught me how to use the transportation in Pittsburgh and the different areas of the city. They suggested several hair salons that work for my hair texture and places I should not go in regard to my safety and comfort," Lopez said. "It was really easy to meet people who I felt like understood my worries and troubles."

Mendizabal describes the RISE

including yoga, mindfulness and meditation – and real-talk sessions to help students who are new to the Pittsburgh area.

"I would definitely say that joining the RISE program helped me build a network on campus," Ana Harouse '25, a 2021 RISE participant, said. "Through RISE, I had the opportunity to meet Kundhavaidevi [Balamurugan], the co-president of the Asian Student Association. Without the RISE orientation, I do not think I would have restarted the ASA with her."

While there is no mentoring commitment beyond the retreat, ODEI will provide monthly opportunities for mentors and mentees to reconnect through BIPOC family dinners and other events.

"To know you're not alone, that to me is the most important outcome of this retreat, and I think that will really change the game for students of color at the University," Mendizabal said.

Any future questions regarding the RISE program can be directed to Mendizabal at [j.mendizabal@chatham.edu](mailto:j.mendizabal@chatham.edu).



## GUEST VOICES

*Asian and Asian-American students share their stories*

By Kundhavaidevi Balamurugan of the Asian Student Association

“Diversity” appears to be the latest buzzword of some well-meaning white liberals who wish to keep up with the updated politically correct terminology, without making enough effort to enforce meaningful systemic changes. We hear the word “diversity” everywhere at Chatham University – it’s almost inescapable – but often don’t see it enough, despite Chatham’s mission statement being to “recognize and respect diversity of culture, identity and opinion.” Many people don’t truly grasp the concept of diversity; they just perceive it as “otherness.”

To best understand diversity, we must take the time and effort to listen to the stories of those who have different backgrounds and experiences than us. Three Asian and Asian-American students at Chatham share their stories.

**Umi Sanada ‘23, Japan**

When I came to America, there were some people who were annoyed with me. One time Downtown, I was called slurs by a woman because I am Asian.

I’m currently studying English, and my English became better than before, and accordingly, other people’s attitudes toward me became better than before.

I still don’t know if the reason they treated me badly before was because I am Asian or because I

was not fluent in English. It is very hard for us [international students] to adjust to a new culture and speak a new language. I can understand how it may be annoying, but we are in a vulnerable position, and I would like everyone to be kind to foreigners.

**Julian Kroger ‘24**

My experience as an Asian-American student is a bit unique. Born to a Japanese mother and a French-German father, I often came off as white-passing. Anyone who is familiar with the Pittsburgh area, where I’ve lived for nearly my entire life, will know that these groups comprise an extremely small portion of the population.

As I grew up, I often struggled to find other people who were like me, who felt like they weren’t quite at home here in Western Pennsylvania. This feeling didn’t go far enough to make me feel unwanted or outcasted, but I definitely understood from a young age that there was a layer of separation between

myself and the people around me.

Things have changed for me since I’ve come to Chatham. Although the University still has a long way to go in terms of diversifying campus, it has been meaningful meeting others who share similar roots like me, have felt the same things I have or just look like me. These little things mean a lot for someone who grew up feeling like a rarity.

As I continue my time here at Chatham, I hope to see more diversity in the student body, staff, faculty and institution. Representation is important – not just for broadening horizons but also for

fostering a more welcoming community. If it can make a child who feels homesick in his own city feel understood, then it certainly will be worth any effort.

**Anastasia ‘Ana’ Harouse ‘25**

Growing up Chinese in a small town with a 0.62% Asian population and being adopted into a white family, I’ve always felt out of place. Microaggressions

(small acts of unintentional racism) plague every aspect of my life — from part-time jobs to casual conversations with friends and to, of course, Chatham University. It feels like something that I will never escape, no matter where I go or who I am with. I’ve been made even more aware of my identity as an Asian-American woman with the recent rise of anti-Asian hate crimes.

It would be easier for me to brush off these things that hurt me. At least, I could spare myself difficult conversations. Would I be happier if I accepted this is how the world is and always will be? I know that if I do, nothing will ever change here at Chatham or elsewhere.

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Despite everyone’s vastly different experiences, we all seem to agree on the importance of a sense of community — and that there’s a lack of such a community amongst Asian, Asian-American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) at Chatham. Together, we have reestablished the Asian Student Association (ASA) to address this issue and provide a safe and inclusive environment that’s previously been missing at the University. We hope the broader Chatham community continues to listen to AAPI stories and deconstructs the perception of “otherness” to achieve diversity in the truest sense of the word.



# Athletics switch to new gym; teams set several records

UNION, FROM PAGE 1

to every returning player to introduce myself, get to know them and ask them different things about the program as well as what they would like to see improved,” said Gershon. “We kind of zeroed in on the workouts as something they were doing on their own.”

Gershon found Union Fitness from CJ Jasper, who worked with him at Robert Morris University (RMU). Prior to Gershon’s departure from RMU, Jasper left to help start up Union Fitness with Todd

Last year, the men’s ice hockey team traveled alone to Union Fitness for team workouts as COVID-19 protocols limited the team in group workouts. This year, other Chatham athletic teams have joined the switch.

“Our guys started talking about what they were doing at Union Fitness, and you start talking to other coaches on campus about different things, as it just comes up. They were intrigued, so we started talking, scheduled different meetings and things for Union

strength and conditioning skills.

For other teams, the coach may not have the certain skills to teach their athletes proper strength and conditioning.

The switch to Union Fitness is offered to all sports teams at Chatham, but not all sports teams take the offer.

“If you have someone on your coaching staff that you feel has the expertise in strength and conditioning, some of the teams can do it here,” said Leonard Trevino, director of athletics and recreational sports. “Say you have an assistant basketball coach who is good at basketball but doesn’t have the strength and conditioning background, then they would utilize [the opportunity].”

Currently, there are nine Chatham teams working out at Union Fitness.

While the travel to Union Fitness can be an inconvenience to some athletes who have classes right after workouts, there are more positives to the switch.

For starters, it allows athletes to work with people outside of their athletic team. Many teams work out with Jasper, who pushes them out of their comfort zones.

“We want to push them past their comfort zone to show them with a positive attitude and support from their teammates that they can have success, more confidence and accomplish way more than they think with a positive push,” said Jasper.

Students have noticed improvements in not only themselves but their teammates since starting out at Union Fitness.

The Chatham volleyball team began its workouts the first full week back into the spring 2022 semester.

“At the beginning, we were almost timid at the thought of using more weight and doing new exercises,” said volleyball player Bailiegh Horan ‘24. “Now, I see more confidence throughout whether it be adding more weight to our exercises or going after an exercise with a better mindset. We are more confident in our capabilities.”

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OF THIS STORY  
ON OUR  
WEBSITE**

*Visit [chathamcommunique.com](http://chathamcommunique.com) or scan the QR code to read the full story.*



Men’s ice hockey team with trainer CJ Jasper. Photo Credit: Carson Gates

Hammer, the general manager.

“He’s worked with Division I, [also with the New York] Mets, so his resume kind of speaks for itself, same with all those guys that work over at Union Fitness,” Gershon said about asking Jasper to coach his team in strength and conditioning.

Fitness just went from there,” said Gershon.

Chatham University does not have its own full-time strength and conditioning coach. Before the switch to Union Fitness, many teams were finding themselves working out at their coaches’ discretion. For some, the coach may have



# Students work with professionals at Eddy Theater

**THEATER, FROM PAGE 1**

The play tells the story of three queer researchers who find themselves immersed in the archives of queer history, specifically stories from the queer liberation movement sparked by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The past and the present meld together as these characters interact and become part of a history that many don't truly understand.

Joseph Amodei, a professor in the immersive media program and a media designer, researcher and producer for the project, had been working on this play for a while and realized it had been brought to new context by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was commissioned to make a new version between Chatham and the Center for Contemporary Arts in New Orleans, and that was about a year, year and a half ago," they said. "Since then, I've traveled to a bunch of archives in San Francisco and New Orleans, and done a bunch more oral history with people in Pittsburgh and across the country, and I've formulated the script. I've been preparing for this production for the past year."

Chatham students also had the opportunity to help with the production.

Liam Lyons '24 is a media arts major and the master technician for the production.

"The play is an amazing thing. I am so happy that all of these

professionals have come together to do all this great work, and I have gotten this opportunity to work with such professionals," he said.

The show featured recordings of real people talking about their experiences of being queer during the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The show used these recorded stories to touch on themes of love, death, grief and identity.

"It is nice to connect with a lot of queer elders on this project and to think about the disconnects that the AIDS crisis caused across generations," Amodei said. "There's this narrative that everybody died, and a lot of people died, but a lot of people are still here, you can still talk to them."

The set for the show was an archive room full of boxes, with a table, a TV and projection screen. The show opened with a dozen recorded stories, and as each played, a bright pink light illuminated an archive box. This was just one of many examples of how the immersive media team was able to weave projections, lighting and sound together to create an all-encompassing experience for the audience.

Throughout the rest of the show, the actors interacted with the set in unique ways to tell their story. They put tapes in tape recorders, holding microphones to the speakers. There were also multiple cameras on the stage, which their feeds projected onto the screen, TV and back wall of the theater. This allowed the audience to see the

production from various perspectives, creating a visual feast.

As for the three actors in the show, Hannah Cornish, Jen Davis and Owen Ever, their performances allowed the stories and the immersive media elements to come to life.

While the play began with them only listening to the recordings, it eventually shifted to them embodying the voices, mouthing the words and acting the stories of the people

the production continued, eventually singing, crying and stripping down to their underwear on stage.

At the conclusion of the show, the message seemed to be that queerness is deeply bittersweet. While it is something to celebrate, it is also something that is surrounded by hardship, as depicted in the real story recordings.

An additional virtual resource created by Amodei – "An Archive of Queer Care" – can be accessed



Scenes from "The Dance Floor." Photo Credit: Kelly Strayhorn Theater

speaking from the tapes, as they attempted to answer a question posed at the beginning of the play: "Do you think queer ghosts are different from regular ghosts?"

The characters pondered this question throughout the show. For one, queerness was about survival. For another, being queer was sometimes about the feeling of having lost the time in one's life before they came out. The actors became increasingly vulnerable as

by QR code or more information can be found on the Kelly Strayhorn Theater website, [kelly-strayhorn.org](http://kelly-strayhorn.org).

The additional program is a browser-based virtual reality platform, like a video game. With a VR headset, students can walk around and hear extended clips of the research or use the program purely on their cellphones.

## Chatham Hot Ones

*Students braved trivia and hot wings at Chatham's first "Hot Ones" competition based on the popular YouTube series where celebrities answer questions and eat hot wings.*

By Lilly Kubit



*Sophia Boyle '24 and Lucas Tavares Naief '24 try the mid-level heat sauce.*



*Riley Hurst-Brubaker '24 wins first place and receives a \$30 Buffalo Wild Wings gift card.*



*Ryan Tahbaz '22 and Carson Gates '25 try to stay calm after eating the hottest sauce at the event.*



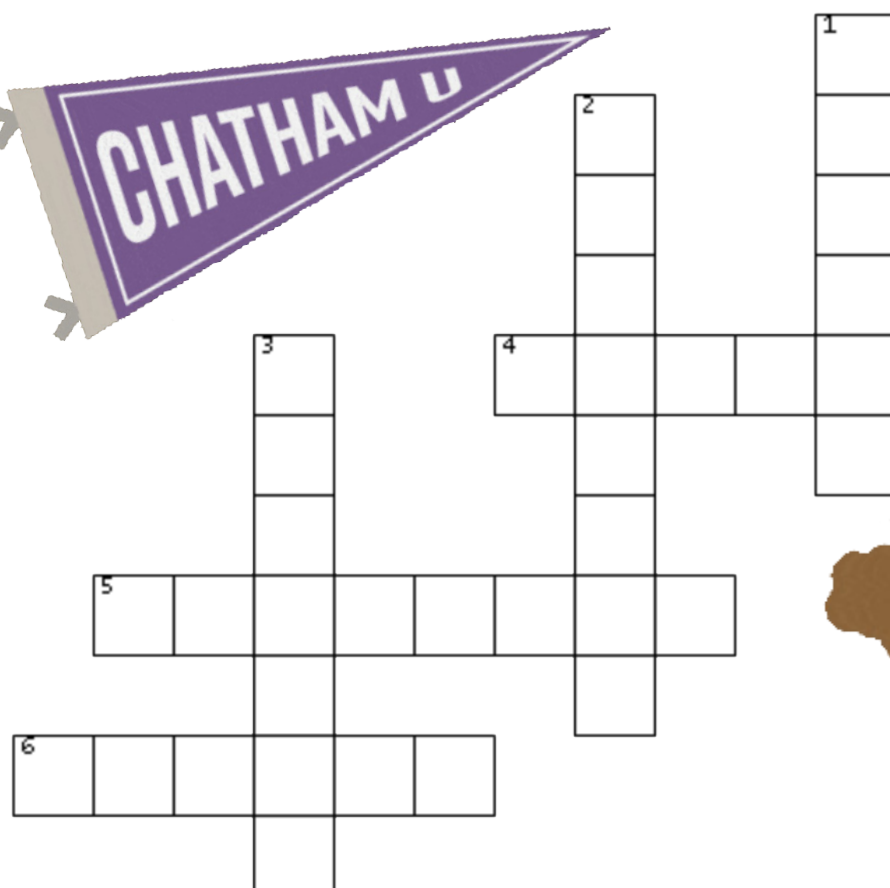
*The crowd cheers on the second round of competitors.*



*Kayla Taylor '22 pours hot sauce on Carson Gates' '25 wing after he answers a trivia question wrong.*



## Friendly faces at Chatham



### Down:

1. Queen of the Art and Design Center
2. President \_\_\_\_, pickleball enthusiast
3. Dean \_\_\_\_, father of Otis

### Across:

4. Anderson employee and excellent conversationalist
5. Miss \_\_\_\_, makes the best coffee for all of her “babies” at Anderson
6. “yay, showers for all”



Answers from Issue 4:

1. Rachel Carson 2. Kamala Harris 3. Michelle Obama 4. Harriet Tubman 5. Marsha P. Johnson 6. Jane Goodall 7. Frida Kahlo 8. Maya Angelou

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### Letters to the editor

The Communique welcomes readers to submit letters to be considered for publication. Send your reactions to stories, thoughts on Chatham University and whatever else is on your mind to opinion editor Abbey Sullivan ([abbey.sullivan@chatham.edu](mailto:abbey.sullivan@chatham.edu)).

### Corrections

The Communique strives to report the news accurately and fairly. If we’ve made a mistake, please let us know so we can correct it and learn from it. Email ([alice.crow@chatham.edu](mailto:alice.crow@chatham.edu)) or ([communique@chatham.edu](mailto:communique@chatham.edu)).

## Staff List

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