

DECEMBER 2025

BECOMING AN INTERN FOR

HIGHLANDER

(AND WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN)



INTRODUCTION

- PRINT MAGAZINE (school/local focus)
- PUBLISHED SIX TIMES A YEAR STARTING IN DEC.
 - 6 issues per school year
 - 3 issues per period
- 6 sections
 - Spotlight, community, features, opinion, A&E, and sports
- Mixture of writing, photography, art, and design

INTRODUCTION

HOW IT WORKS

1. Brainstorm
2. Get into sections
3. Put together vision boards and mock-up designs
4. Edit content
5. Design!



Winner, winner, chicken keeper

JESSICA LI

Senior Olivier Ansel holds and pets one of his chickens. Over the past eight years, Ansel has rescued and adopted multiple chickens. "It's kind of like raising a baby," Ansel said. Photo by **Erick Cheng**



When you think of a household pet, dogs and cats usually come to mind first. But while wagging tails and soft purring are endearing, nothing quite matches the unique benefits and cheerful clucking of backyard chickens.

According to environmental news magazine Living on Earth, as many as 13% of American households now keep chickens as pets. But what's driving this feathered phenomenon? Beyond the clucking and scratching, these domesticated birds offer something traditional pets can't: an environmental impact.

The most obvious benefit is fresh egg production. Unlike the industrial farms where most grocery store eggs originate, backyard chickens live in ideal and ethical conditions.

"There is a humane component to it because a lot of the eggs from the grocery store will come from a factory farm where the chickens don't have a lot of room to move around," said Berg Danielson, owner of Saltbox Designs, a sustainable chicken coop manufacturing company.

The nutritional benefits are significant too. A 2010 Cambridge University study revealed that pasture-raised eggs contain twice as much vitamin E and long-chain omega-3 fatty acids as factory-farmed eggs.

Except during winter molting season, chicken owners can dramatically reduce their grocery store egg purchases, getting the most bang for their buck.

"During the spring, summer, and early fall, we have quite a lot of eggs," said Athena Chui, a Carlmont High School senior who owns two chickens.

Perhaps even more impressive than egg production is a chicken's role as a walking waste reduction system. These omnivore birds eagerly consume kitchen scraps that would otherwise end up in landfills.

"Anything that we don't feel like finishing, they eat," said Olivier Ansel, a Carlmont senior who has kept chickens for over eight years.

Their appetites are remarkably diverse, placing few limits on what they can't eat.

"With watermelons, we don't eat the rind, right? So we keep the red part and give them the white part, and they finish it really well," Chui said.

“THEY CAN BE MISCHIEVOUS SOMETIMES AND HAVE A LOT OF PERSONALITY.”

OLIVIER ANSEL, SENIOR

What goes in eventually comes out as nutrient-rich fertilizer.

"Chicken manure is really nutritious compost, and you'll get a lot more yield out of your home garden," Danielson said.

Chickens also serve as natural pest controllers, reducing the need for chemical pesticides.

Of course, reaping these environmental benefits requires proper setup. The chicken coop represents the biggest initial investment and most crucial decision for prospective chicken owners.

"Chickens have really fragile respiratory systems, so you don't want a lot of humidity in your coop. We have a lot of ventilation built in," Danielson said.

Even the coops themselves can be environmentally conscious. According to Danielson, once the coops have run their useful life, they can be recycled like a green waste product. After establishment, daily care proves surprisingly manageable compared to traditional pets.

"They know how to live on their own. They don't really need us to be watching them as often as dogs and cats," Chui said.

Don't assume chickens lack the charm of conventional pets. According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), each chicken develops a distinct personality often tied to their position in the flock's social hierarchy, known as the "pecking order."

Chui experiences this firsthand with her chickens, Cookie and Penny, who waddle behind her every time she comes outside, convinced she's carrying food. Meanwhile, Ansel's chickens have claimed him as their personal perch, happily plopping themselves on his head or shoulder whenever they need a rest.

"They can be mischievous sometimes and have a lot of personality," Ansel said.

Owning chickens offers a unique combination of environmental benefits and genuine companionship. So the next time you're considering adding

a pet to the family, maybe it's time to think outside the doghouse.



One of Ansel's chickens, Carmen, freely grazes an open area, pecking at any food she spots on the ground. Photo by **Erick Cheng**

A DOZEN BENEFITS OF RAISING CHICKENS

- 1 Natural, nutritious eggs
- 2 Budget-friendly breakfasts
- 3 Waste creates fertilizer
- 4 Food scrap chompers
- 5 Social and sweet
- 6 Low-maintenance pets
- 7 Garden gnomes, pest controllers
- 8 Big personalities
- 9 Encourages exercise
- 10 Teaches responsibility
- 11 Relieves stress
- 12 Eco-friendly & sustainable

Behind the violence: The youth gang epidemic

JACKSON SNEERINGER



A student poses behind a shooting target. Violence isn't contained within shooting ranges, as many adolescents participate in dangerous crimes and reckless actions without facing any punishment. "Juveniles know they will not face serious consequences for serious crimes. They openly brag about it and share their actions on social media," said San Jose Police Chief Paul Joseph. Photo by **Erick Cheng**

A 15-year-old boy was stabbed to death by a 13-year-old while on a Valentine's Day date. The 13-year-old, along with four other teenagers — only one of whom is over 18 years old — are affiliated with a San Jose street gang, while the victim was not affiliated with a gang or any criminal activity, according to testimonies by family and friends.

"Fifteen years old is entirely too young. Santana Row and District One are historically very safe areas with low incidents of violence. As a result, this crime is truly shocking and underscores that we must do more for violence prevention," said District One Councilmember Rosemary Kamei.

According to San Jose Police Chief Paul Joseph, the five suspects were arrested within one week of the homicide. The 18-year-old was placed in county jail, and the three 16-year-olds were placed in juvenile hall, but under new California law, the 13-year-old will never spend a day in jail or juvenile hall. If found guilty on charges of murder, he will likely spend eight months in an unlocked ranch facility and will never be named publicly.

"I believe California was right to reform the juvenile justice system," Joseph said. "However, while we sought to protect our youth from the long-term harms of incarceration for lesser crimes, we've unintentionally created a system that, in certain severe cases like this, provides virtually no meaningful consequences for the most violent and brutal cases. As a result, young offenders who commit murder or other atrocities face only a few months or maybe a handful of years in custody before they're released back into our neighborhoods."

While an adult may face 25 years or more for murder, someone between the ages of 14 and 17 will spend no more than a few years in juvenile detention, and children under the age of 14 will spend no more than eight months in custody for the same charges. This system was built to ensure minors are not incarcerated for long periods of time for minor offenses; however, it is now being exploited.

"We also must address the grim reality that under our current system, for some hardened criminals, the killing tool

of choice is now a juvenile. Adults and gangs are exploiting the leniency of our juvenile justice system, recruiting underage members to commit horrific acts of violence on their behalf," Joseph said. "The lack of consequences and the devaluation of innocent life are encouraging juveniles to commit violent offenses more frequently."

According to the Department of Justice, there are around 175,000 to 200,000 active gang members in California, a drastic increase from the 52,400 estimated in 1981. An estimated 35% of that number are youths.

According to San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, 30% of gang-related incidents, including aggravated assault, weapon charges, robbery, and murder, over the past few months were committed by juveniles. The most violent gangs in San Jose have increasingly handed guns over to children because they know they will face fewer consequences than if the adults did it themselves.

"Kids should not be locked up for tagging a building or stealing a candy bar, but they should understand the ramifications of taking a life, and just as importantly, the older people who are using kids as murder weapons should be held responsible for ending one life and ruining others," Mahan said.

"If gangs believe that initiating kids as members is a way to commit violence without consequences, we've created a dangerous loophole that makes our children even greater targets."

The San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance has been working to reduce youth recruitment prior to this incident, including implementing a tattoo removal program and connecting at-risk juveniles with employment options. Such programs have reduced violent gang-related altercations in schools by 17.5% and placed San Jose youths in over 140 jobs.

"The state laws have gone to a one-size-fits-all approach, and it doesn't take into account some of the individualized factors in a particular crime," Joseph said. "So while we agree in rehabilitation

and trying to turn a young person's life around, there are some offenses that are just so serious, there needs to be a focus with a little bit more balance towards protecting public safety and providing some justice for a victim and their family."

“THE LACK OF CONSEQUENCES AND THE DEVALUATION OF INNOCENT LIFE ARE ENCOURAGING JUVENILES TO COMMIT VIOLENT OFFENSES MORE FREQUENTLY.”

PAUL JOSEPH, SAN JOSE POLICE CHIEF

175,000 to 200,000 active gang members in California

35% of active gang members in California are youths

Department of Justice

Blind box boom

From the joy of collecting to the excitement of unboxing, blind boxes are more than toys

| MAYA GODINA

Hidden in plain sight, they are everywhere: concealed behind a plant, watching atop a phone, even in armies perched on shelves. These creatures take many forms, some dressed in unusual hats while others glow green when darkness falls.

Many know them as Sonny Angels and Smiskis, but they are a ripple effect of a much bigger trend: blind boxes. Some may believe they are just toys, but these tiny plastic creatures mean much more.

Blind boxes can be traced back to the 1980s in Japan. According to the China-Britain Business Council, lucky bags called fukubukuro, mystery bags containing surprise items, and capsule toys sold from coin-operated vending machines, called gashapon, first became popular around this time.

In March 2004, Toru Soeya, a Japanese toy manufacturer and the CEO of Dreams Inc., launched Sonny Angel. After the success of the mini figures across Japan, Dreams Inc. released Smiski in 2009.



“AT FIRST, I JUST WANTED TO GET ONE, BUT THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERNT DESIGNS AND YOU FIND YOURSELF ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MORE.”

XIAO BAE, CANADIAN CONTENT CREATOR

as like when you pet a really cute puppy and feel warm and fuzzy.”

Because of social media platforms like TikTok, blind boxes have taken the internet by storm. On TikTok, “#blindboxes” has accumulated 693,000 posts as of January 2025.

Like many others, Canadian content creator Xiao Bae discovered Sonny's Angels after constantly seeing them on TikTok. Since buying her first Sonny Angel in January 2024, her collection has grown to more than 300 mini figures.

“At first, I just wanted to get one, but there are so many different designs and you find yourself always looking for more,” said Xiao Bae.

Her collection almost feels like an art piece as it includes designs from the past 20 years.

“Their appeal to me is that they look extremely cute, especially when displayed together,” Xiao Bae said. “They make me feel happy when I look at them. I would describe the feeling



“THEY MAKE ME FEEL HAPPY WHEN I LOOK AT THEM. I WOULD DESCRIBE THE FEELING AS LIKE WHEN YOU PET A REALLY CUTE PUPPY AND FEEL WARM AND FUZZY.”

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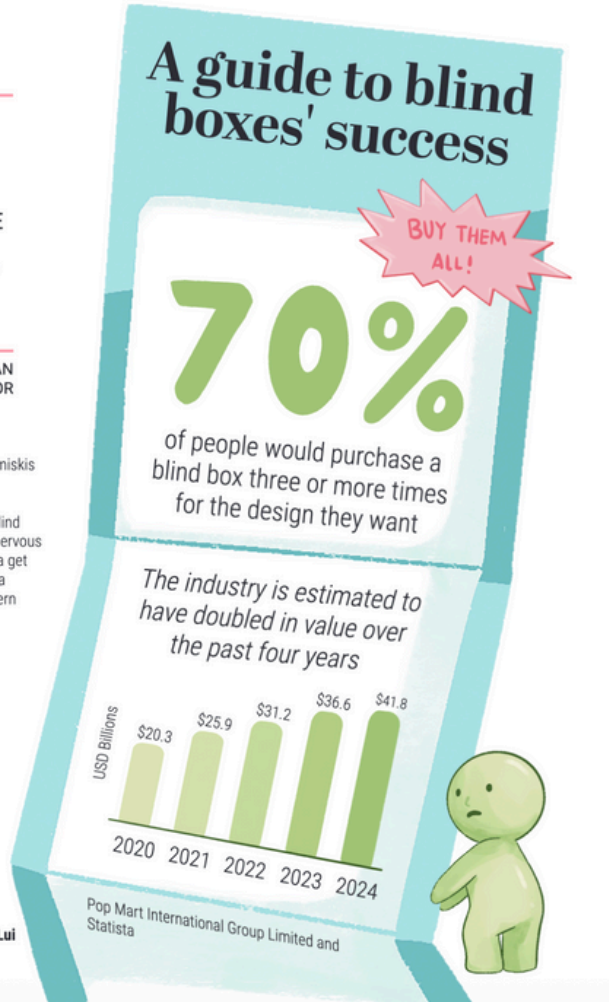
On the other hand, many enjoy Smiskis and Sonny Angels because of the anticipation of opening them.

“When I opened my first Smiski blind box I was really excited, but a little nervous because I was scared I wasn't gonna get the one I wanted,” said Miyu Ikeda, a freshman at the University of Southern California.

In total, Ikeda bought 12 boxes, believing the more she got, the more likely she was to get her desired Smiski. However, due to the randomness of each box, her chances were the same each time. Ikeda's thought process is better known as the gambler's fallacy.

“Opening them is kind of like gambling to me,” said Carlmont sophomore Justin Ji. “That's not the best way to describe it, but I like the surprise and anticipation.”

Art by Skylin Lui



Stir, steep, and serve: a history of matcha from Japan

| AYANA GANJOO

It's green, tart, and beloved by many – matcha powder has taken to great popularity in recent years, and is included in a variety of drinks served by local cafes and coffee store chains alike. But, the history of matcha tea goes back hundreds of years to ancient China and Japan, where it was, and still is, carefully cultivated for production.

“Matcha technology is older than teapot technology,” said Austin Soei Babcock, a teacher of the traditional Urasenke practice for over 30 years. “Tea was only matcha; looseleaf tea didn't come into Japan after the Chinese Ming Dynasty. Matcha is from the Sung Dynasty.”

It wasn't until a Buddhist monk brought the practice to Japan that matcha became an international commodity. To this day, matcha is involved in Japanese tea preparation ceremonies, where the beverage is carefully prepared as a way to honor the harmony of nature.

“There is a whole angle of peace that is a part of the idea of tea ceremonies,” Babcock said. “Before we actually make tea, we purify symbolically, the things that touch the tea – the bowl and the whisk. That is sort of the ceremonial part.”

Today in America, matcha is one of the most popular beverages around. Chains such as Starbucks and Peet's Coffee offer hot and iced matcha lattes. Local cafes like Boba Guys, Mints & Honey, and Ya-Ua Boba Tea have flavored matcha items as well.

“All of our matcha drinks have milk in them, and usually it's just a variant of milk, matcha, and one other substance, like mangoes, strawberry, chocolate, or caramel,” said Boba Guys barista Claudia Williams.

American establishments that serve matcha, like Boba Guys, have their own methods of preparation that stray from the traditional ceremonial practices.

“Our recipe is one teaspoon per 15 milliliters of hot water,

then we use the special matcha whisk, which is supposed to froth it correctly,” Williams said.

Matcha powder originates from Camellia Sinensis, a common tea plant that is used for a variety of other teas. More specifically, it comes from special shade-grown tea plants that have higher levels of chlorophyll, which is what gives matcha its bright green color. From there, the leaves are harvested and steamed to halt the oxidation process, then deveined and sent to stone mills to ground.

“We get our matcha powder from Tea People, which is where most of our products come from,” Williams said. “Their goal is mostly to bridge cultures between America and Asia.”

The populous Asian community in the Bay Area also contributes to the consumption of matcha drinks. Boba Guys itself was founded by an Asian American duo. However, there are many other factors that go into why people love the drink.

“I think part of it is the aesthetic, the vibrant green color of the drink,” said senior and matcha fanatic Jenni Luo. “The Bay Area is very obsessed with wellness and that sort of thing, so if they want a drink in the morning but they don't want coffee, they turn to matcha as an alternative.”

Part of matcha's appeal is its health benefits. It is considered an adaptogen, which is a medicine that adapts well to a certain individual's needs.

“Matcha purifies the blood, helps with digestion, it has many vitamins in it, and it is great for the heart and blood pressure,” Babcock said.

Overall, matcha's message throughout its hundreds of years in society remains the same, from tea rooms to cafe counters.

“Part of what we want to do with tea is create a relaxing, comfortable place so that people can feel safe, happy, and the beauty of their day,” Babcock said.



Art by Skylin Lui

Uji, Kyoto

The birthplace of matcha

Traditionally, matcha is prepared and served in a Japanese tea ceremony. This involves a special bamboo whisk called a chasen, and a measuring stick called a chashaku. It is typically served hot and can be modified to be a tea thicker or thinner in consistency. There are also two kinds of matcha powders you can find: ceremonial and culinary.



Bay Area, California

Home of matcha lovers

Modern preparations can range from a variety of syrups and add-ins, to different milks, and even the use of an electric frother to whisk the matcha. Many stores and cafes offer hot or iced options and customizations to the popular tea. The Bay Area has embraced new ways to enjoy matcha, which has allowed more people to discover this beloved beverage.



HOW IT WORKS



1. Adobe skills
2. Builds a versatile portfolio
3. Developing leadership and organizational skills
4. More creativity involved than typical editing!
5. Collaborative, community-oriented environment

BENEFITS

INTERESTED?

Great for people interested in:

- Graphic design, journalism, comms., marketing
- Working with a tight-knit team
- General art
- Contributing to an award-winning magazine!

Thank
you!