

Get involved in extracurriculars ASAP

As school starts up, students' primary and sole concern is their classes. Everyone sets a goal GPA, rushes to complete summer assignments, and sets up a neat binder for their core classes.

What most freshmen are forgetting is the importance of participating in extracurricular activities. These include sports, clubs, organizations, and honor societies.

You can discover and learn more about clubs on Sept. 7 during Pride Time in the downstairs and upstairs gym.

Although it may not seem like it, extracurriculars have a big impact on academics. It is a bit early to start thinking about college applications for underclassmen, but it is important to know early on that grades are not the only thing colleges are looking for.

While one's GPA and test scores are very important, colleges are also interesting in knowing who an applicant is as a person. This means that they are also looking for what you do outside of attending classes.

Someone who participates in a sport, club, or volunteers is more likely to win a slot at a school than someone who does not. Having a leadership role in a club looks even better on college applications.

Participating in a club or sport will also help you improve your skills for classes. When someone joins an extracurricular, they have to talk with others, make commitments, and do a lot of work. This will help in picking up important skills such as how to be a leader, working with others, and time management. The extra responsibility will help build character.

"Playing sports has helped me build upon my communication skills," junior Emily Shawish said. "It has also helped me become a better leader, not only on the field, but also in the

classroom.”

Extracurriculars also have an impact on your social life, too. Joining a club or trying out for a sport is the perfect way to meet new people who have the same interests as you.

“When I was a freshman, I played lacrosse and I did marching band. Last year, I did marching band, winter track, and track and field. My fall sport this year is cross country,” junior Cynthia Nguyen said. “I have made a lot of friends through sports, and we still talk even in the off season.”

Another benefit of doing extracurricular activities is that meeting so many people will result in a widening of your support system. Whenever you are having trouble with something or you need someone to talk to, you have gained more peers and an adult through each extracurricular.

Joining extracurriculars is also good for the mind. While grades are very important, you should also be balanced and focus on your hobbies as well.

Having a game or a club meeting is an excellent way to take a break and relax. It is also a great stress reliever.

“Doing an extracurricular is a good way to build self confidence and a nice way to have fun,” Shawish said. But while it is a good idea to join extracurriculars, it is even more important to make sure that you do not overwhelm yourself. Do not make commitments that you can not fulfill because that will just bring more stress into your life.

At Annandale, there are many extracurriculars that students can join. These include:

The A Blast and Yearbook: Both of these extracurriculars are joined by signing up for the associated classes, Journalism and Photojournalism. The A Blast is the school newspaper and entails writing on any news topic. Articles are put in the print edition, which comes out every month, and online. For The A Blast, you can also join as a freelance writer.

The yearbook entails taking pictures of school events and activities throughout the year. The yearbook can be bought at the end of the school year.

There are many sports student’s can try out for. In the

winter, there is, wrestling, gymnastics, indoor track, boys basketball, girls basketball, and swim and dive.

Spring sports include boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, track and field, boys soccer, girls soccer, boys tennis, girls tennis, baseball, and softball.

While it is too late to join a fall sport this year, sports that are available to join next year include volleyball, field hockey, football, golf, dance, cross country, and cheer leading.

To join a sport, you must complete a physical and concussion testing. Applications due dates, tryout dates, and green days will be posted on the Annandale Atoms website.

There are two main writing clubs: the Annandale Writing Center and the Filament. The Annandale Writing Center is a peer editing club. All students are welcome to come into the Center and get help with writing assignments. Tutoring happens during all lunches on red days and after school on Wednesdays. Applications will be available in the winter and include a teacher recommendation.

The Filament is a magazine that contains students' written works. Writers can write any creative piece to be put in the Filament, which is sold along with the yearbook at the end of the year. To join Filament, talk to English teacher Soo Jin Lee in room 270B.

There are an abundance of Honors Societies available at Annandale. These include: National, DECA, Latin, Math, Art, Business, English, Science, Social Studies, Spanish, and Quill and Scroll.

Each Honor Society has its own requirements, including GPAs. There will be interest meetings later in the year regarding joining one.

Students can join band, orchestra, chorus, and theater by taking the associated class. All four extracurriculars do many shows during the year, along with fun things like field trips. Leadership is a class taken by upperclassmen. Students in the class are in charge of being leaders in multiple school activities such as freshman orientation, pep rallies, summer

fest. Applications are available towards the end of the school year, and it includes a teacher recommendation and interview.

Volunteering: Clubs that do volunteering include Atoms Red Cross, Green Atoms, and Key Club. Atoms Red Cross works with the Red Cross organization and does things like collect donated food to give to the needy.

Green Atoms is an environmental club. Members do things like clean up the school garden and collect recycled items from classrooms.

Key Club is a group that offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities. Information about joining will become available soon.

Identity: There are many clubs that people can join to celebrate and learn more about their own and different identities. These include Annandale Bible Study, Black Cultural Awareness Association, Gay Straight Alliance, and Muslim Student Association.

A full list of extracurriculars, along with the sponsors and coaches names, can be found on the school website