

## Mission

*Aletheia* (ah-LAY-thee-uh), which means “truth” in Greek, is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Inspired by Los Gatos High’s *Reality Check* and Monta Vista’s *Verdadera*, *Aletheia* was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and taboo issues within Lynbrook.

## About

At the beginning of each month, the *Aletheia* staff chooses a topic that pertains to the realities of high school. Each issue comprises of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, professional articles relating to that month’s theme, and resources compiled by the student staff. Finalized newsletters are uploaded online and emailed to Lynbrook families. Back issues can be found on [www.lhsaletheia.org](http://www.lhsaletheia.org), under Archives.

The content in *Aletheia* is composed by the students of Lynbrook High School. Ideas and opinions expressed within the publication are not necessarily reflected by members of the school administration or faculty.

This is the second issue of *Aletheia* for the 2015-16 school year.

## Submissions

All Lynbrook students and alumni are eligible to submit stories. We publish all submissions that adhere to our guidelines, which are posted on the website. The *Aletheia* staff is committed to preserving the integrity of your content and will not make any changes, with exception to certain profanity (which are asterisked-out). We do not edit stories for grammar or syntax.

Our next topic is Identity; submissions are due by December 6. If you are interested in contributing, a submission box and a suggestion form for future topics are both available online at [www.lhsaletheia.org](http://www.lhsaletheia.org).

*Expressing what  
remains unspoken.*

**Student Staff:** Alekhya Surepeddi,  
Aarushi Agrawal, Sanjana Gupta,  
Daphne Liu, Esther Kao, Harsh Jain,  
Renee Cai, Jimmy Zhi, Durga Ganesh,  
Prakashini Govindasany, Iris Zhao,  
Susan Zhou, Lois Chen, WeiTung Chen

**Advisers:**  
Kim Silverman & Laura Gloner

I dream...of falling, of being chased by whales. I dream of falling in love, and so I dream of love. I knew what I wanted a long time ago. Since the middle of middle school, I had my heart set on pursuing happiness. And I figured that what I wanted was love. It was what gave me a little boost of motivation to go to school every day. As my experiences accumulated, I realized that I was never going to get anything done without taking a step. Ah, how I wish predetermined fate was real. Reminding myself of love always helps restore my mental health. "I can't die now. I can't push my sadness onto everyone else around me." To be honest, I didn't have dreams of love until after I already lost it once. Technically I did fulfill my dream at that point, but I was too dumb to know how I was supposed to deal with my feelings. I've met other people, they were really awesome, we had our fair share of good times and bad times. And I must admit I have learned so much from my experiences with them. And I have successfully landed myself with an SO. I suppose what I get out of my dream most is happiness and enhanced people skills. When I was a child, I had many dream jobs. I wanted to be a novelist, teacher, shop owner, artist. I know I'm not cut out for those things. I do something, see how well I perform. Not good enough, I discard the idea, move onto something else. Even now, I'm in college, I'm not sure if I'll be good at my major. But there's a high major switch rate so oh well. They even say that a lot of the time your major has absolutely nothing to do with the job you get. But I don't really care about what kind of job I get anymore. I know that when I view something as work, I don't enjoy it anymore. I can't work on something I'm passionate about. Also...WHY WORRY ABOUT MY JOB WHEN I HAVE LOVE?!?! If you know who I am... Thank you for everything.

*"I'm a dreamer. I have to dream and reach for the stars, and if I miss a star."*  
- Mike Tyson

I'm not sure if this month's theme pertains to dreams in the sense of hopes for the future, or literal dreams at night. I'm going to write about the latter. I have dreams almost every night. Most are normal dreams, some are lucid, but all of them are terrifying. In them, I seem to do a lot of things that I wouldn't do in real life. I wake up from dreams where I've bitched out teachers

in the middle of class, covered this girl's car in graffiti and eggs, or flat out kissed that really cute transgender guy I know from art class. I guess my mind is trying to tell me that I don't express my opinions enough. I don't have much of an outlet other than my writing and my dreams, and so I guess they just go there. I wish I could tell the transgender guy that I like him, tell that girl that she's conceited, or tell my teachers that they give out way too much homework, but I can't. So my dreams are left in my dream journal to rot away until I die.

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I dream that I'll have time to really dream. Because right now, all I ever have time for is homework.

*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."*  
- Eleanor Roosevelt

My dreams were changed over time. I have dreamed to be a scientist, and I have told everyone I knew about that. At the moment, my uncle told me that everyone dreamed to be a scientist when they were young, but it will be changed as they grew older. I said, it will not happen to me. However, as I grew older, as I take more science classes, my uncle is right. I do not want to be a scientist anymore.

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I'd always dreamed of getting into a good college, until recently. I never really had a plan for what I wanted to be in life, and was hoping that somehow going to my dream college would help me find my path in the midst of the meandering course that is life. Now, looking back, I always had one underlying motive in life, and that was to inspire. My happiness never stemmed from my self-fulfillment, but rather from my ability to help others, and to be their rock when life caved in. I don't dream of being a part of any, specific field, but whatever I do end up pursuing, I want to be a positive influence in someone's life. Anyone's, really, friend or stranger.

Have you really ever been asked what you wanted to be when you grow up? I think everyone has. As a young child to today, everyone has been asking me- What would you really like to do? When I was younger, I would state the things that my mom and dad really encouraged me to do. The typical six-figure salary white collar job: a doctor, engineer, or designer. They weren't really my true dreams that I was working for, and still to this day, it isn't. As the days pass, I realize that I really don't want to do what people have been telling me. Silicon Valley is the tech giant of the nation, yet I don't think it's the thing for me. I sometimes ask my mom, "Is it okay for me to be a writer? How about an artist?" And I get a response of lips pressed together and the slight suggestion that it wouldn't be a stable job for me to fall into. A lot of things that fall into the arts categories are frowned upon by the parents of the Lynbrook area. They say to study math, science, computers. My dreams are still uncertainties, as they are not widely accepted around this area. I understand what they are coming from, and their good intentions behind it. It is definitely harder to obtain a stable job when your whole life is based on the ebb and flow of creativity. However, there are boundaries between the two. After wading around in the waters of computers and technology, I realize that HTML and webpages may be for me. However, if I didn't grow up in such a blessed area, maybe my dreams would be unchanged. Or maybe they wouldn't have been fostered at all. I just feel that dreams are twisted, not entirely yours at all. They sprout from lives that crowd around you. I sometimes wonder if people are holding me back or pushing me forward. Because no matter what, it could be either.

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I used to dream a lot about kissing. It wasn't my Main Goal in Life or anything, but it was definitely something that was on my mind a lot. As it turns out, I suck at kissing! So there goes that dream. In all seriousness though, I'm not doing too much dreaming right now. Any dreams that I do have at the moment just involve getting into college. If I were to define dreaming as "having ambitions", I'd say I've never been much for dreaming. It's so risky, you know? To say to yourself, I want to do this, and then set yourself up for the possibility of failure. But I will say that when I do have a dream (especially this one particular dream I've had

since sixth grade that involves getting a certain position in a certain organization at Lynbrook) I work pretty damn hard to attain it. It's just that even starting to dream is so scary for me that a lot of the time I end up being too much of a p\*ssy to have any dreams in the first place,

*"Reality is wrong. Dreams are for real."*

*-Tupac Shakur*

When I was young, I thought that of course my goal in life was to be a veterinarian, because animals are cute and somehow that equates to wanting to stick needles in them. I read books about this girl whose mother was a vet and thought to myself that if only I could be a vet, I would have the happiest life ever. But then I realized that I'm actually super scared of blood. Now that I'm older and am able to put more thought into what I want to do, I find that it's that much harder to make a decision, as if how indecisive you are increases exponentially as you grow older. There are so many options in the world but I don't know which one is MY option. I feel like having a dream should mean that it's something that you feel passionately about and belongs to you as an individual, and I have yet to find something like that. Instead, I lackadaisically brush off idea after idea as I move throughout life. I haven't found anything that excites me the way a dream should. This is doubly hard now that I've become a senior and the college application process has begun. The UC prompt makes it very clear: "What are your dreams and aspirations?" it asks. I have no idea how to respond. What does it mean to have a dream? I don't know. I wish I did know, because maybe then I'd actually be able to work towards a goal and try to accomplish something instead of wasting my time, sweat and tears trying to keep up with everything at Lynbrook.

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*"Yesterday is but today's memory, and tomorrow is today's dream."*

*- Khalil Gibran*

I'm scared of dreams. I used to use dreams as a way to escape from the hellish present (or not so bad, but not particularly good, either). If I had a color to describe life right now, it would be brown. Dull, lifeless, tired, stressed, a few mildly nice things throughout the day... but i can't remember the last time i laughed so much my cheeks hurt, something which i used to do all of the time. I was always the "smiley" person, but i feel like i've been wearing a constantly furrowed brow and an anxious expression lately. poor test scores, parental pressure, the competitive environment, these are the reasons that people often like to cite, which i can understand because they're so clear, easy, and tangible, but the real reason, i think, are dreams and expectations. i used to use dreams as a way to escape my present situation, and as a way to justify long nights of studying and especially, the morning after. however, this is poor motivation as it relies on so many, often uncontrollable factors. i had (have?) big dreams, titanic dreams, so big that i'd feel awkward sharing them with people since i'd feel their judgement. i've been called naive more times than i can count. i have this entire plan meticulously made out to let these dreams come to fruition, but in a recent turn of events, my dreams have become infinitely harder and much less likely to happen. now i can't breathe, and my eyes are constantly watery. i'm so, so scared for the future, but the waiting is more than i can bear. (sorry for the wavering between tenses, i can't decide if my dreams are still even realistic or not). it's like the light at the end of the tunnel that has been keeping you going for years has suddenly started flickering like it might go out, and you're tired from climbing for so long, and there's no end in sight. you're faltering and hopeless, but you've left yourself no alternative, nothing to fall back on. um, yea, so those are my thoughts on dreams.

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I am separated from the people in my previous religion. Physically, I am with them at all their rituals and events, but I am spiritually a universe away from them. I was born into a family that believed in a certain religion. It was a religious family. I dated a girl of a different religion, and saw that our religions were basically the same. The names of holy figures were different and some superficial rules were different, but the overall messages of the two religions are the same. That day, I stopped believing exclusively in my

religion. I do believe that there's a God, but I believe that as long as you act kindly, you'll be ok. Whenever I am at a religious function of any kind, everyone talks and acts as if people who don't believe specifically in their religion will go to hell. I think that's bullsh\*t, and it separates me from the entire community of my religion.

*"I've always said that one night, I'm going to find myself in some field somewhere, I'm standing on grass, and it's raining, and I'm with the person I love, and I know I'm at the very point I've been dreaming of getting to."*

*-Drew Barrymore*

The truth is, no one can ever really fulfill their dreams. It's a harsh reality, but if you look at it from a certain perspective, it's a really helpful way to grow as a person. The sooner you realize it, the more refined your dream becomes. As one that has wanted to become something ridiculous as an airplane, it's easy to see that dreams can change. Of course, my dream's evolved from point to point as my peer's dreams changed. Of course, I couldn't be the one different from everyone else. In this crazy ecosystem of an environment known as the Silicon Valley, it's easy to succumb to the pressures of being an engineer or doctor or lawyer (of course, there's nothing wrong with doing that), but the amount of people that pursue things they don't have a passion for is insane. It's sad to see people's dreams crushed because they decided to go after their parents dreams rather than their own. My dreams evolved through becoming a firetruck to wanting to become a product designer, and it most definitely wasn't sudden. I can lie and tell you that my dreams have been shaped by my friends and family, but they have always been shaped through the introduction of art. After a course I took the summer prior to junior year, I've never been able to see products the same way. There's always something to improve on, and there has to be someone to fix it. I honestly hope to be able to change the material world through my dreams and aspirations. I'll never be able to fulfill it because there'll always be bad design, I hope to be able to lessen the amount of poorly made user interface designs.



**M**y current dreams? It's pretty pitiful, but I have no idea. What even are my priorities in life? In a sense, I wish for fame, riches, recognition, beauty, love. But at the same time, I don't. I don't really need any of that. Then what do I need, what do I want? I have no idea. When I was young, I had a lot of dreams. I wanted to travel back into the past, I wanted to have superpowers, I wanted to open a flower shop and just spend my entire day cultivating flowers. I love dreaming though. I'm not a very creative person, so I love seeing what my dreams create. It's like living in a different world that's so much more colorful. I was a lot more imaginative when I was young. Not quite anymore. I almost feel like the reality has forced me to give up some of that simplicity. I don't like this change, to be honest. But is there really a choice. My childhood dreams have never been that practical, but they were beautiful.

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**I**used to dream a lot more than I do now. These days, I have no idea about what I want to do when I grow up because I think I've lost a sense of myself. There's just so much that has been repressed under the constant work and duties from classes and everything in between. In pursuit of becoming a well-rounded individual, which if you think about it, is sort of what the GPA system gears you towards, I have become lost. I feel that there are so many great and practical things I've learned in high school--from learning to articulate my thoughts to thinking analytically, Lynbrook is definitely the place to be. However, I have become a jack-of-all-trades, master of none, losing my pointy edges from devoting an extensive amount of time to correcting other aspects of myself. This is why I am devoid of dreams. The question that must be answered before I can dream is who am I, and I don't know. Although all of this sounds cynical (along the lines of something like Lynbrook has repressed my creativity and such), it hasn't really affected me in day-to-day life that much. I think I've adapted quite well, and I think I'll adapt to however my future shapes out to be. I do believe that I'll be able to visualize who I am in a more cohesive manner when I'm older, but for now, I need not dream, other than to answer that pesky UC prompt.

## A Teacher's Perspective

Ms. Kraemer shares her experiences with dreams

### **Q: How did you discover what you wanted to do?**

**A:** "It wasn't until senior year [in high school] that I decided I wanted to be a math teacher. Before then, I knew I wanted to be a teacher but I didn't know which kind. When I took Calculus I realized, 'Oh, I really like this,' and that I wanted to explain it to other people."

### **Q: Did you struggle with achieving your dream? How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** "I got a little confused when I was in college because my mom was trying to push me to become a doctor. So I took all the pre-med classes necessary until I was sitting in class one day and looked around. I was in one of those huge lectures with about 250 people, and I realized that all of these people wanted to be doctors. But I didn't really enjoy it. I didn't want to put myself in that kind of competition, so I decided then that I was not going to continue to pursue medicine."

"But after I graduated I felt torn, because even though I'd always wanted to be a teacher, I felt like I hadn't explored as many of my options. There's so many other cool things you can do with math that I didn't even really have a chance to pursue because my mom had been pushing me to be a doctor."

"So I tried finding internships when I got out of college, I found that it was really difficult because I wasn't a college student anymore. These internships would only take you if you were in college. As I kept looking I became very frustrated, but about a month later, I got a call because someone found the resume I had posted on Monster. They asked me to come interview for Sylvan Learning Center, and so I became a full time tutor. After I worked there for a year, I realized that I really did want to pursue teaching. So, I then applied for school, went back and got my Masters, and became a teacher."

### **Q: What are your current dreams?**

**A:** "Soon, hopefully I'll have babies and work here for the rest of my life. I'm also hoping that in the very distant future I'll get to retire happily and go on trips with my husband."

### **Q: Just for fun, what are some dreams you've had?**

**A:** "I often have those dreams where you fall, where you're just starting to fall and asleep and you jump off a cliff. I get them almost every night, which must be something crazy. Sometimes I'll go to bed, and then I'll wake up with that jolt. That happens a lot to me, which is probably funny and scary."

### **Q: Do you have any advice for students?**

**A:** "You have to keep persevering. Don't just give up if the first opportunity you try doesn't work. Try something else. Try again. There are different ways to tackle something. For example, people will try for internships and they might not get them, but there are other ways you can get into the fields that you're interested. Just keep shooting for it."

# Kanchan Sachdev, LMFT

Kanchan Sachdev, LMFT

Kanchan Sachdev is a licensed psychotherapist with a private practice in west San Jose where she provides counseling for adults, teens, children and their families.

She is culturally sensitive and LGBTQ friendly. Kanchan also facilitates groups for various ages that incorporate Expressive Arts and Mindfulness practices to address issues including anxiety, depression, relationship challenges, gender and sexuality, life transitions and job stressors.

For more information, go to [kanchansachdev.com](http://kanchansachdev.com).

## Dream a little dream of... you!

The word “dreams” conjures up for me vivid imagery of openness, and expansiveness and invokes a sense of floating and soaring. It summons ideas about the future, feelings of hope, and infinite possibilities while tapping into the creative spirit.

A dream usually reaches for something big that arises from an internal identity, a deeper knowing of ourselves that connects to our values and perspectives of the world. To differentiate between dreams and ambitions or goals, I think of the former as the North Star in the sky that guides one in a specific direction and the latter as more concrete and tangible facets rooted in the practical how-tos and paths one takes.

While listening to the submissions and student discussion at the Aletheia read through, it was apparent to me that there were recurrent themes as well as variations in content and attitudes towards dreams. Most students were understandably focused on getting through high school and into a college of their choice. Developmentally, this is a time of life to surge forward but it's not easy to imagine a dream because attention is on more immediate tasks. A common opinion was that public education, resources at school and this geographical area honed in on STEM subjects, leaving little room for the students to *explore various other interests and evaluate if these could be feasible career choices*. High demands on students' time and energy for school work, limits their ability to pursue this exploration elsewhere. Therefore, many students described feeling either locked in to the sciences or needing to delay making a choice of major until after taking college courses. On the other hand, there were some students who were drawn to the STEM subjects and were very appreciative of the school's physical resources and teachers' attention to help them develop further on this track.

I was impressed that the students were keenly aware that their dreams would most likely change. Through sharing stories they revealed how several of their dreams have already evolved since their younger years. Additionally, they showed compassion for the challenge of choosing a path at this stage of life as well as for those who are unable to choose now. Imagining a future in a vivid and detailed manner requires a plenitude of psychic energy and creativity – commodities that are stretched by being distributed amongst other current and demanding activities. Moreover, teens are sometimes expected to have a well thought through and well-researched path set out for them to embark upon right out of high school, if not sooner. This is a rather large task on the shoulders of teenagers and a myriad of factors - but not exclusively personal ability - determines whether one completes it at this time. As we know, *dreams transform as we live through more experiences and our perspectives grow*. It behooves us to heed these alterations in our ambitions. Introspection and self-reflection can help us differentiate if we are shifting courses because of an adjustment in life views or due to obstacles and difficulties on our chosen path.

Although in some cases, one may not know what their ambition around a certain aspect of life is at a given point, articulating a general dream in and of itself is an indicator of relatively good mental health. It signifies that the person has optimism about the future and is aiming for positive outcomes. At times, *people with severe post-traumatic stress or depression are unable to perceive things getting better and to conceive of a future for themselves*. If this is the case, parents and students should be proactive in seeking professional mental health services for the teen.

A pitfall of having a dream that we are tied to inextricably is that we may become so entrenched in its pursuit that we only look towards the time in the future when we would fulfill it. This makes us disconnected from ourselves and the present moment. An alternate attitude would be to know that the dream gives us a meaningful picture of what we would like our life to look like and direct ourselves towards that. And, in the meantime, *if we are able to accept what is true in the now, no matter how close or far we are from the dream, we can bring more aliveness to our experience*. Additionally, this way of associating with our dreams allows us to benefit from the positivity and direction it provides without it having a negative impact on our mental health expressed as excessive stress, depression and anxiety.

*Sometimes, no matter how dedicated or determined you are, your plans and*

*goals may not come to fruition.* It may feel devastating not to have succeeded at accomplishing the goal. You most definitely will not be the only one to experience this. This falling apart is difficult to be with and may feel like a failure. We may feel like we are letting ourselves or our loved ones down. Even at this time, what's important is to stay with the experience of the sense of failing and build our tolerance for such highly unpleasant feelings: this is showing up for life. This may be a time when you learn to be okay with yourself, and keep company with yourself even if others are unable to be by your side. Who can really know, but perhaps, from these shattered dreams could arise a deeper knowing and the beginnings of more meaningful and befitting life choices, built upon the basis of courage and radical self-acceptance – the birth of another dream. *Let not the fear of failure deter you from beginning to dream.* Remember, there is no failure except in not trying.

Dreams are a positive light when we are surrounded by negative events in the world. It's an impetus towards well-being and inspires a can-do attitude for growth, and a more pleasant future. It is the birthing of something larger than ourselves; a coming out of the realm of the known and familiar into a world of the unknown through one's creativity.

#### **For Students to Contemplate**

- Frequently, an overarching dream is comprised of multiple manageable ambitions; while pursuing the latter keep checking in if it is in line with the bigger dream.

- In an era of a multitude of options and humungous amounts of information readily available to sift through, it can be confusing to formulate a comprehensible dream. How can one gain clarity? I find my compass is in answering these questions - "Who do I want to be in this world?" and "How do I want to show up for this life?"

- Life dreams can be evoked by unconscious dreams (while asleep) as well as by our innate human tendency for happiness of self and fellow beings. Keep a dream journal to record your dreams immediately upon awakening. These dreams can give you major insights to yourself that your conscious mind can't access yet.

- In situations where parental and peer pressure can muddy our thoughts and obliterate our previously clear paths, pause and ask, "Whose dream is this, anyway?" To quote Mike Dooley, an inspirational and spiritual writer, "The only way to get what you really want, is to know what you really want. And the only way to know what you really want, is to know yourself. And the only way to know yourself, is to be yourself. And the only way to be yourself, is to listen to your heart."

- Even though we dream on our own, it often takes a village to help us achieve them. Engage with people around you who you admire and talk to them about the paths they've taken to create the life they have; seek out mentors in your careers or interests of choice and ask for professional guidance; pay attention to your role-models – what exactly do you like about what you see in them? Even incredible minds such as Martin Luther King Jr., and Gandhi did not do it on their own.

#### **For Parents to Keep in Mind**

- Stay in conversation with your teens; help them decipher where their true interests and passions lie. Ask questions such as "if you could do anything you wanted to do, what would that be?", "when are you most content?", "what makes you feel more energy?" Listen for what they are consistently saying.

- Just like your children, as parents you have your own dreams. Almost always, this includes a desire for the next generation to have a better life. Attempt to step back, focus on your child's dream for themselves, and separate it from your dreams for your child. This is a highly challenging and yet, very important task!

- Allow your child to fail so they can learn, whilst under your genuine care, to pick themselves up and keep going towards their vision.

- As much as you can, enable your teen to explore interests other than those available at school.

- Introduce your teens to your colleagues who perform different work responsibilities and encourage them to have a conversation.

## **Additional Resources**

**Roadmap: The Get It Together Guide for Figuring Out What To Do With Your Life**  
*by Roadtrip Nation*

**Wishcraft: How to Get What You Really Want**  
*by Barbara Sher*

**What Color Is Your Parachute? For Teens**  
*by Carol Christen*

**Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type**  
*by Paul D. Tieger*

**Infinite Possibilities: The Art of Living Your Dreams**  
*by Mike Dooley*