

hike on On Jan. 30, Tiffany Chen (12) and Shreyas Deshpande (12) hiked at Rancho San Antonio County Park to take a glimpse at the beautiful sunset. *Photo by Michelle Wang*

Man, what a school year. It started with our state literally on fire, with us in remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and trying our best to get through an incredibly divisive presidential election year. It was a year full of disappointment and confusion, however, through those emotions, we also found out more about who we are, so hear us out.

We are people who stand up for what we believe in whether that be the Black Lives Matter movement, supporting the mental health of students in isolation or smashing glass ceilings with the election of Vice President Kamala Harris. Our impressive results on our SATs, ACTs, APs and CAASPP/Smarter Balanced Assessments that used to define us in the past are no longer the only thing that does.

Even though we met over technology, we found the opportunities to host a fashion show, theatre performances and too many spirit events to count. El Estoque continued making magazines and we built this yearbook from our bedrooms. This shows our limitless ability to grow and accomplish beyond what we once thought possible.

This year, we had some found time to explore what makes us feel alive, from baking to writing music to playing countless hours of "Among Us." We've also reflected on the things we have lost and learned to speak out about the things that remain: moving forward as an antiracist school, continued discussion about our social-emotional wellbeing and hearing from our diverse community. That passion that pushed us through the hardships of virtual learning, social movements and political decisions will forever outweigh the single stereotype that exists against us as grade obsessed, STEM students who only care about getting into an ivy league college. It turns out, we care about a lot of other things too. Most importantly, each other.

We should be proud. We should all realize the characteristics that truly make us part of Monta Vista, so when the time comes again,

once more—

hear
us out