

Link for podcast: <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/jaime-aztatz>

[Jacob]

Hi, my name is Jacob Hicks. I am a junior, I'm a part of Speech & Debate and Student Council, I run for school during the fall and spring. I have a job, I work for my church - which is usually on Sundays but I also do stuff for it during the week. I take piano lessons once a week, I have youth group stuff that I do during the week, and I have a lot of plants that I take care of and it takes a lot of time.

[Giada]

I'm Giada, I'm a junior and I do not do any extracurricular activities outside of school but I do have a job - I'm a lifeguard, like year-round - and in the winter I do snowboarding and I'm in training for wilderness EMT.

[Alia]

Hi, my name is Alia VandenBrink and I run track for Collegiate but I also run on an indoor team during the winter. From time to time, I babysit - just one family.

[Shenyra]

Hi, I'm Shenyra and also a junior. In the fall I play volleyball and during spring I run track and I also do have a job. During the school time though, I normally only work on the weekends but yeah that's about it.

[Jaime]

These are a few people of the junior class and I also wanted to ask how do you think you manage all of these things at the same time and is there something that overwhelms you more than the others and do you think your grades reflect your management the best way?

[Jacob]

That's a lot of questions, I think that I do manage stuff pretty well. I think that after the shooting it became a lot easier for me to feel overwhelmed, for sure, which was hard because a lot of things we weren't doing as much. Which was weird that I felt more overwhelmed when we weren't doing as much cause it was kind of like the prospect of in the horizon things need to happen - cause we're losing so much time. That felt hard to manage, but I felt like - I mean honestly my [inaudible] of myself that I do pretty well managing. Like I'm very happy with my grades, I think that towards the end of the year though, I have felt a lot less motivated to really do anything and that has reflected my grades as they've all dropped just a little bit. But I feel like, time wise with all my activities, I manage it pretty well. The thing that probably really stresses me out the most is debate, but it's in a healthy way because next year I'm going to be senior captain and so I have a lot more responsibility. I have a lot of things that I will like be in charge of to plan and to see through, and like planning out practices and everything we do, and that's a lot of work.

So that's been more stressful, thinking about that coming in the horizon and a lot of stuff that's supposed to happen that you were prepared for didn't happen. But my other things aren't generally as much work and that's why i don't feel like they stress me out as much

[Giada]

I think I'm pretty good with time management. I usually get like all of my work done pretty fast but I do have a lot of stuff to do outside of school as well cause my mom works full time and so does my dad. So usually i have to drive my siblings around to like their activities and stuff. So I sometimes I don't like have time for myself, really. I just think like, after the shooting as well like what Jacob said I do get overwhelmed a lot and it's really difficult for me to like sit down and like you know, do everything all at once. Like it takes me like - I get it done quickly but it takes me a while to like to do it. It's just kind of like what he was saying, you know, you don't know what's coming up next. Like, I feel like being out of school for a month kind of stressed me out more than anything because, you know, us missing out on times we would like you know study for tests coming up or like finals or like just like missing a lot of important stuff. So i just feel like you know, our time was kinda cut short and otherwise i think time management wise - it's okay.

[Alia]

I feel like being out of school for a month, honestly felt like nice for the couple - like for the first couple of days but then after a while i felt like i was stuck because i had nothing to do and like track was the same. So it just felt really weird to me, but then like once I got back into school and stuff like, I felt like I got out of my normal cycle of doing things. Track is more stressful for me and school got more stressful, so yeah.

[Shenyra]

If I'm being honest, my time management skills used to be terrible so like I feel like over the year that it'd gotten better. Especially like me working and doing sports and just being in school will like the course load that we have. I feel like I'm kind of pretty proud of myself and I'm kind of like okay with the grades that I have right now, like they reflect that my time management skills have gotten better. And the incident, i don't feel like it really had any like, impact on the way that i like, on the way that i manage my time or the way that i did my school work or anything like that - so yeah.

[Jaime]

And, before and after the incident, can you describe how prepared you felt or like how motivated you were?

[Jacob]

Before the incident, I was honestly like so excited for this year and I was very motivated. I purposely took a very hard schedule this year - half my classes are APs, two of them being really hard ones that I struggle with honestly. And so I was like feeling very studious before and it was like I was very motivated. But after the shooting, i really went through - and it got better - but at least like; there's a period of two months where i was so unmotivated. And I think the ways that you could see that, from me personally, is like I talk about like - I take care of plants, I have a lot of them. Often my mental health is reflected in how well they're doing, cause whether or not I have the energy to water them all and prune them, and fertilize them and all this stuff - is depended on how I feel. And for like a month and a half after the shooting, I had no energy to take care of them, and like my room looks like a jungle and then over time they sort of just look like they were dying. At a certain point I was just like, "I don't want all these plants to die" that I love and I have to like - get my motivation back in check. I sort of did towards the end of first semester, but I honestly felt like, at least at the end of the first semester after the shooting it wasn't really back and it's slowly growing back the second semester.

[Giada]

I totally just forgot what I was going to say. Oh so, I went into the school year kind of like, I was really prepared and I figured out finally like what I want to go into and college and what I want to major in and what jobs I'm going to pursue in the next upcoming year. And you know, I was thinking about that way before the shooting happened and I was just so excited. I have definitely lost motivation and there are like a few like spots I guess where I'm not that - I don't know how to describe it but like - like it's just, I'm just missing something I guess. I don't know how else to put it, but I think the shooting has definitely, you know, affected the way that I want to continue with the school year or like what's left. And you know, I've put a lot of work into where I am to be like where I'm at right now and I hope that you know I can be even better after you know after some more time.

[Alia]

I think before the shooting, I felt pretty motivated - not the most I could have been, but like decently motivated. But then like, after shooting, with track, that's when track like picked up for me. I feel like I actually got more motivated. So, I don't know like doing something - an extracurricular with school I feel like I need - I'm like forced to do my school work. Which actually helps me cause it's like more structure for me. So, in the long run, I feel like it didn't affect me as much as it could have - so yeah.

[Shenyra]

I feel like before the incident I most definitely was motivated. Like I feel like junior year was going to be my best year of highschool to be honest. And as right now, it is, but after the incident I don't really feel like I was less motivated but I feel more motivated to be honest because we lost that month off so it's like now I really have to be on my a game to make sure that I keep up my good grades and because I don't have that time to slack or have that time to, like just fall behind anymore so yeah.

[Jaime]

This is like more of a personal level question, but have you ever considered transferring due to like the rigor or after the shooting? Like was it ever a thought of transferring simply because of the school environment or factors of it?

[Jacob]

No, honestly never. I mean a factor for me, and that is that I was home school before high school, and so like this school is really like the only public school experience I've ever had. And so, I feel so connected to the people here and I really like all my friends like my family. [And like even like with like] even like in moments where i have been the most stresses like it's like sometime like during the beginning midway through this semester or some of the times where I was just like so stressed that I just like felt done like to the point of like even just like feeling like dumb school. You're saying like want like like the feeling of like maybe wanting to be done with school but like the thought of leaving this school never crosses my mind, just I love the people here and I love my teacher so much and I love the atmosphere. So, even in the times where I have felt the most stressed and just like completely done with school and like I can't do anymore, I've never considered leaving.

[Giada]

I don't think I've ever considered leaving. Definitely sophomore year, like wait this was like a way before, I did consider transferring because of like how difficult it was and I didn't really care about school at the time though. But you know I'm glad I stayed and I've you know turned it around I guess, and I didn't consider it after the shooting because I knew eventually it would like to go back to normal I guess but yeah.

[Alia]

So, funny fact, I did transfer. I did leave Collegiate, sophomore year - I think it was after Christmas break. So, that was not a good experience for me just because like I was used to everybody here and I knew everybody here and going to a new school, especially like in the middle of the school year, was very challenging. Especially when no one was like me, looked like me, so it was hard. I went there for two days and I came back cause I just could not do it anymore. But coming back just made me realize like, I actually like Collegiate, I don't like science but - or math - but you know that doesn't really matter as long as I'm with people I like. It like balances everything out so yes, I would not transfer if are you - but you need to go ahead.

[Shenyra]

I wouldn't say I have like, specifically thought about actually leaving, but the the thought of like what if I was at another school that didn't have like the course load would I be less stressed. Like the stress level that I have at Collegiate is like out of this world to be honest, like I have never been this stressed in my life. But I wouldn't transfer and I don't think, and yeah I wouldn't transfer. Like I enjoy the students here, I enjoyed the teachers, like I built relationships with everyone at this school. So transferring wouldn't have - wouldn't even be a thought in my mind to be honest so yeah.

[Jaime]

Do you think the stress of the rigor is what causes you to push forward through the classes or it's what stops you to continue and like lose your motivation?

[Jacob]

I think for me it's been 50-50 sometimes. Well actually no, I would say the times when I've lost motivation are times when I have felt like so overwhelmed. I think the times when I've been able to actually like push through my courses, is kind of like thinking ahead of like my future and my career and like why I love the courses I take. Like two of my hardest is really, yeah like, my hardest courses here has been AP Biology - that causes so tough and sometimes just like "I'm just so done" like "I can't do this test" like "it's so scary". But i just like think of like how the future, like I love biology, like i love life science, and i want to go - i'm like very stuck between like being a botanical scientist or like going to the medical field. but either way biology is so involved in that and like the things that have caused me to push forward and like really put in so much effort to succeed in that class is just like looking forward to what I want to do in the future.

[Giada]

What was the question

[Jaime]

If like the stress from the rigor causes you to lose motivation or -

[Giada]

Oh, Oh yeah, Oh yeah. I mean it's really both. Like what Jacob said, sometimes like I just can't - I'm just so tired sometimes I'm drained from like literally just being in the physical school building. Like sometimes I just don't have like the motivation to do anything. And you know I don't really care if the assignment's late like it's going to get done eventually. But like in that moment, I just need to focus on myself. So like, I think prioritizing yourself over like school is very important and having that balance you know is like the key to having a successful school year.

[Alia]

I think the rigor for me, it's just it's kind of discouraging at times because like sure like I'd be as bad and it'll pick up and I don't - it's like a hard, um what's it called, step up. So, I think it's helpful to realize that my mom keeps telling me like the path I want to go on will probably be easier than I am, than what I'm doing right now. So that's like encouraging to know like I'm doing hard stuff right now, but later on it won't be as bad.

[Shenyra]

For me I feel like it's more of a 6040 with being, with being less motivated being 60. And I say this because, I - it used to be where I would be stressed and I would just continue try to work but like giada was saying sometimes you have to put yourself first first and just take that that mental health day or just take that extra break that you need. So yeah, I would say that it caused me to be less motivated at times.

[Jaime]

Last question is: do you believe that the extracurricular activities, or things that you do outside of school, that's what impacts your performance in school or like in a positive or negative way?

[Jacob]

I think it depends on the season - like time of year. Cause like for Stuco, like around times we have events, sometimes I'm doing I'm doing stuff for that and it's like this really needs to get done so something can happen for the entire school that needs to happen. And so like an assignment gets pushed out of the way, but that doesn't honestly doesn't happen pretty regularly. For debate, in the past, it has it's been like it has a negative affected but honestly this year it's been different honestly this year even though next year I'll have a lot more commitment than I did this year honestly a lot of times I prioritize my school over my commitment to debate sometimes. And I put in like less work I I do policy debate which is like a lot of work to research outside and I put in a lot less work to do that this year and focused on school. I feel like running has a positive effect on a level to get stuff done because running is really therapeutic for me and it helps me to clear my mind and have an out[inaudible] to something physical that helps me to focus. So I feel like during the seasons when I'm running for school, it's really helpful.

[Giada]

So like he said it's like usually just like the seasons that affect it. So like during the winter, like when I can go snowboarding. Like that's like my thing and it's always been my thing and like I'm not to be like that person but like I'm literally like depressed without it, like I need to go snowboarding as much as I can. Just like to get me through like those like those months especially during like finals and stuff like that's just like like my outlet. And then like during like the warmer days like I I'm not constantly at the gym like if I don't if I miss like a day or two I'm I just always feel like sluggish and horrible and that's what keeps me motivated. So just like constantly staying active and finding things to do other than like chores and homework, that really helps me like get through those times when I don't feel like doing any work.

[Alia]

Yeah I agree with Jacob. Running for me is honestly calming, if I can't run I probably the next day I probably won't do it go in school just because like my mind is racing and stuff. So I think extracurriculars should - extracurriculars for me has been a positive experience.

[Shenyra]

For me, I think it's both to be honest but there are times like, during volleyball season I feel like I had to make sure that my grades were doing so that I could continue to play the sport that I love. But like during track it was more like "oh I still have this to do; I still need to do this but track is in the way; I have a meet this day so I can't study for this exam and yadda yadda" so yeah I was both to be honest.

[Jaime / Conclusion]

Overall, students have spent majority of their time studying or doing extracurriculars throughout the school year. And due to data collected beforehand, around 20 responses have shown that their stress level before the incident was between a 4 and a 5 and after the incident they demonstrated a score of 6 (meant to say 8) 9, and 10. So that could demonstrate the the stress level increasing as time changes in the preparedness of the students and is also reflected on a scale of one to five where one is the least and five is the most prepared. Majority said three were were some believe that they weren't mentally prepared or didn't feel like they were reviewing enough work. Before the incident a lot of people demonstrated that the the administration of Collegiate slightly cared about the students mental health whereas after the incident they cared a little bit more than usual a student said that uh the "the care for mental health felt performative so it was like they wanted to show the world that they cared while putting in effort in a short amount of time". They also, another student also said that "the teachers that cared continue to care while the admin was putting much more influence on mental health and how we were doing in some ways it was helpful but in a weird way where there was always counselors slash psychologist here and I don't know and Ms. Boskamp was gone". So this this demonstrated a difference and acknowledging how students - at least the ones that were interviewed - showed how they were reflected, how they were impacted, and the difference between after and before the incident, and those that handle a lot of things outside of school. Some kids in our atmosphere or in our surroundings do not really participate in extracurriculars due to outside activities or outside circumstances but, either way we can see a similarity between all and like acknowledge that the school itself isn't what's hard but more so the environment that the students are around in. This doesn't necessarily mean that the school is bad but it just demonstrates how different and how common and the conformity of the students rely in and try to develop into in order to be a part of Collegiate.