

Passion drives McDonald to create music

Sammie Thompson
Managing Editor

Sitting down in front of the small electric piano, she adjusts her microphone to a perfect height. She places her hands on the black and white keys, takes a deep breath, and begins to play.

During quarantine, senior Sadie McDonald self-produced and copyrighted four original songs: “Dark Child,” “All Alone,” “All We Need,” and “Better to Love.”

“I wrote [the songs] about my own experiences with people and I recorded them at home with an audio interface,” McDonald said. “Then I got to copyright them, and I just received them back. Now I’m working with my neighbor, who’s a producer, to mix them and then maybe put them on a [music streaming] platform.”

Creating and producing music is a process that most teenagers aren’t aware of. It requires tools such as an audio interface, which converts instrument and microphone signals into a format that can easily be recognized by a computer.

“[Producing music] is definitely a lot of research,” McDonald said. “First, you have to get an audio interface and then you have to work and learn about the different recording programs. I personally use Pro Tools for recording.”

Once the music is recorded, it’s ready to be copyrighted. Similarly to the process of producing music, copyrighting songs requires several steps to be done properly.

“For copy writing, you have to record it in a medium where people can understand the lyrics,” McDonald said. “Then you have to pay like \$85 and wait six months. It’s a whole process.”

McDonald’s dreams of producing and copyrighting her own, original music began long before she was stuck at home during quarantine. She has been expressing herself musically since she was four

years old.

“Beginning when she was little bitty, Sadie started singing nursery rhymes and lullabies with a microphone in hand,” McDonald’s mom Cindy Sebek said. “As Sadie grew, so did her creativity. She routinely created and performed musical shows for her family and friends.”

In her more recent years, McDonald has still found music to be something she is excited about.

“Music is my passion and the love of my life,” McDonald said. “It’s just become a creative outlet for me.”

The inspiration for McDonald’s musical creativity came from many sources throughout her childhood, including her parents.

“My dad introduced me to music; he was a musician,” McDonald said. “My entire life, I’ve been surrounded by it. I’ve

always sung my own songs since I could talk.”

Each individual song also has its own inspirations. In addition to the songs she copyrighted, McDonald also wrote and produced a song, called “Without Love,” about the widespread Black Lives Matter protests that occurred

last year.

“If I’m feeling fired up and passionate about an event, I just write wherever I am,” McDonald said. “So I saw George Floyd’s cries for help on the news, and I was crying about that. I immediately just went to my notebook and started writing.”

McDonald’s music, which falls under the acoustic pop genre, has a unique sound that listeners enjoy.

“Sadie’s music is very beneficial, full of emotion and power, and needs to be heard by more people,” senior Olivia Ray said. “[She] speaks, sings, and writes from the heart, and that is what makes her music unique.”

McDonald has also collaborated with other students, including Ray, in the past.

“Sadie and I have known each other for many years, and one of



PURSUEING HER PASSION: Senior Sadie McDonald practices one of her original, copyrighted songs. McDonald has been singing, as well as playing guitar and piano, since she was four years old. **PHOTO BY** Kate Davis

the first things we bonded over was music,” Ray said. “We have written songs and sung together many times.”

McDonald’s songs, which are all based on personal, life experiences, provide listeners with a look into who she is as a person.

“Sadie is a unique musician and person because she’s able to create something special out of an experience or something that’s personal to her for a multitude of reasons,” Sebek said. “She tells stories about life through her music.”

McDonald has a lot of plans for the future. While she intends to go to college and explore other careers, music is something that will always be a part of her life and a potential career path.

“I am planning on working with my neighbor who is a real producer soon as well to develop some of my songs,” McDonald said. “I am a self-taught producer, so I’m not the most experienced, but with my neighbor, I’m going to record and copyright a new set of songs by the end of the year.”

The encouragement of McDonald’s family and friends is what allows her to express herself and her feelings in a unique way. To support McDonald and her work, find her on Instagram at ‘sadesand-smiles’ or on YouTube at ‘S. Mac’s Melodies.’

“I feel pride and joy when I hear Sadie singing her original songs, knowing that her songs are a way to express herself,” Sebek said. “I think to myself, what a gifted, creative, and talented daughter I have.” ■

Pandemic increases focus on anti-Asian hate crimes

Seniors form new club to combat the impact on local students and promote diversity

Sophia Sanchez
Dispatch Reporter

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the incidence of anti-Asian hate crimes has increased. According to a study from the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, this type of crime rose by 149% from 2019 to 2020. These acts of violence have spread awareness about racial injustices faced by the Asian American population in the local community.

Presidents of the Asian American and Allies club, seniors Vanessa Nguyen, Rick Mao, and Kelly Matthews have formed the club with the intention of making it a safe place for others.

“I’ve actually been wanting to start this club since my freshman year, but I had put it off and then COVID-19 happened,” Matthews said. “Growing up, many kids used to make fun of my culture and it was difficult for me to handle, so to have a place where I could’ve gone for support would have been nice. Along with that, I wanted to start the club to teach our fellow students about our culture, diversity, the Asian narrative, and to bring awareness to global issues.”

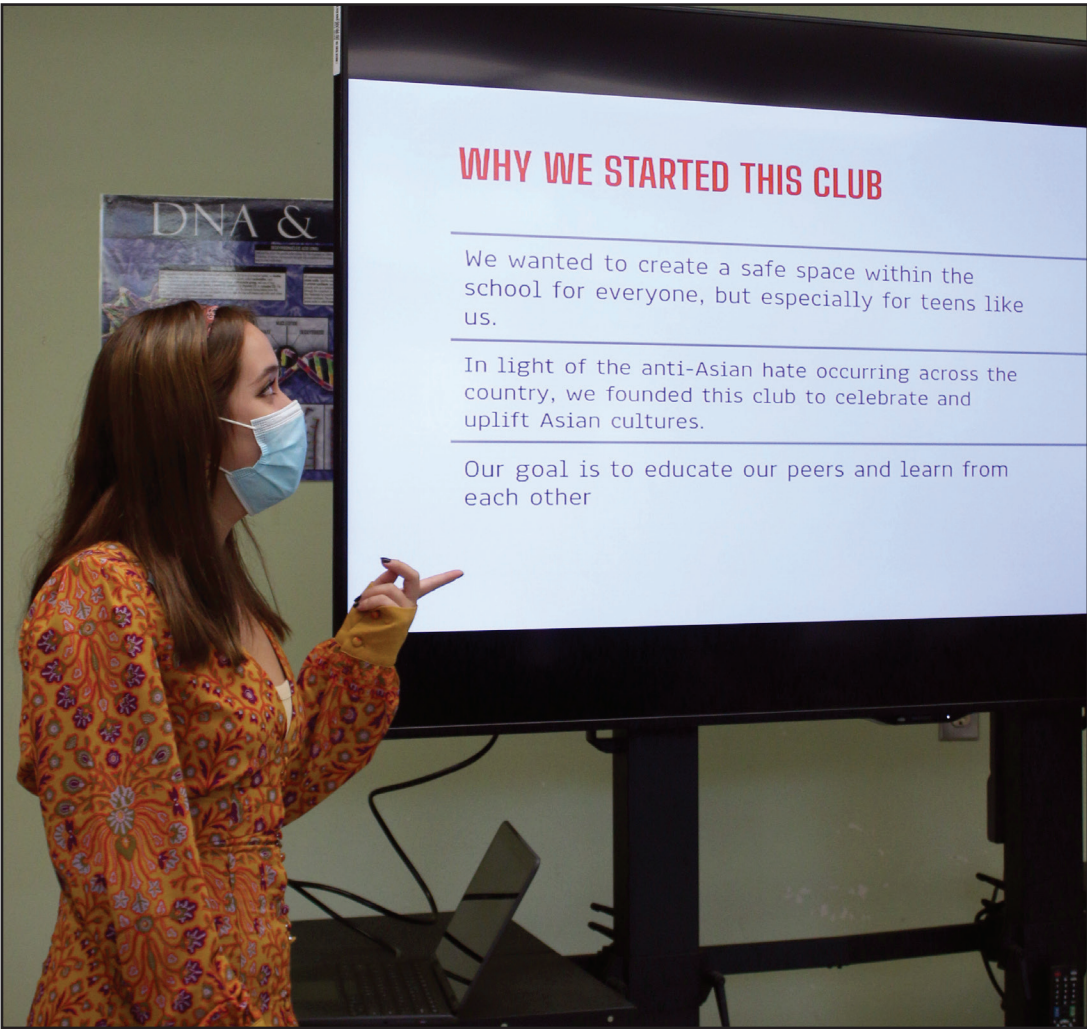
At the beginning of the school year, the three seniors came together and got right to work with the sponsorship and help of counselor April Giuffre.

“I am new to Bowie this year and really wanted to be a part of the student life,” Giuffre said. “One of the club members approached me during the inception of the club, and since I am new, I wanted to make sure I had a co-sponsor as well. Also, as an Asian American staff member, I believe I can bring an authentic perspective to the club as well as serve as a role model for Asian American students and allies.”

Co-sponsor and biology teacher Irene Lee was recommended by Giuffre to become a sponsor of the club.

“I think that it’s important that students have a safe space to celebrate their cultures,” Lee said. “I definitely think that Bowie needs a safe space for Asian Americans. So when they came up to me about the club, I was really excited to be the sponsor of that.”

Senior club member Katherine Crosley



LEADING THE TEAM: Senior Livia Power explains why the Asian American Allies club was created. The club is open to both Asian American students and allies who are looking to learn more about each other’s cultures. **PHOTO BY** Reagan Zuniga

joined the Asian American and Allies club to support her friends and other members of the Asian community as an ally.

“As a member I hope to learn as much as I can and take a lot of opportunities to volunteer for my community,” Crosley said. “As a club I really hope that we can become a unified front and learn about each other and where we come from.”

According to Matthews, the idea of the Asian American and Allies club was discussed regularly between the presidents of

the club during the pandemic, especially when the rise of anti-Asian hate crimes became more publicized in the news and social media platforms.

“In the Asian Americans and Allies club, we plan to address the recent escalations in Asian hate crimes, and social issues happening in our world now,” Matthews said. “We hope to break down the Asian American stereotypes in our community.”

The club is also planning for future activities and projects outside of school to achieve

goals revolving around their purpose.

“We plan to have something like one main project for Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) month which is in May, but hopefully we have some sort of big thing across the campus,” Nguyen said. “Then we want to volunteer at Asian-based community services, and just eat out with friends and have fun.”

Because of the pandemic, the recognition and discussion of anti-Asian hate crimes became more politicized, which changed the public’s understanding of Asian American demographics.

“Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in America,” Matthews said. “However, their concerns are neglected because of the ‘model minority’ myth. “There are assumptions of the Asian American class privilege, which leads to many discriminatory issues to be overlooked.”

The main hope of the Asian American and Allies club is to spread awareness on issues that Asian American members of the local community face and how to help solve those issues. The club is open to anyone who wants to be part of a learning and understanding community.

“I think it’s important that everyone is able to be aware of [other peoples’] situations since we are growing up in America, which is a very diverse country,” Nguyen said. “So to be open-minded about your Asian American friends and what they are going through, you are able to be just more sympathetic and understanding of the society around you.”

Although the club is still new, the Asian American and Allies club is already planning for the future. Members talk about controversial subjects like racism and discrimination, but also balance this with trips to restaurants to experience different cultures first-hand as a group.

“I know that the club wants to create a safe place for Asian American students and allies to gather and learn from one another’s cultures, discuss sociocultural issues, and raise awareness,” Giuffre said. “My hope is that the students are inspired by each other and learn how to advocate for themselves and be proud of their backgrounds.” ■