

SHARE YOUR VOICE

STORY BY ADITI DESAI AND SANJANA MURTHY

Looking back at the past four years, Facebook profile pictures have taken a major role in the student body's voice and community involvement. From the MV Cares graphic to the Pray for Paris filters, MVHS students changed their pictures to demonstrate their opinions on various issues and show support.

In October of 2014, members of MVHS and the local community gathered together in a candle-lit vigil together to share their memories of Ethan Wong, who passed away in a bike accident. Regardless of whether they knew him personally or not, students showed their support by changing their profile picture over the course of the couple weeks after the incident. Following the incident, a memorial with a white bicycle and flowers was placed on McClellan Rd. and the city improved bike safety by painting the bike lanes green.

MV CARES



SENIOR MIHIR GOKHALE

For senior Mihir Gokhale, the thought of changing his profile picture is an ineffective way of educating himself or actually making a difference in comparison to other techniques. "People are going to want to feel like they did something even if they didn't do anything," Gokhale said. Social media has a huge platform to allow people to voice their opinions, but if everyone is voicing the same opinion, it doesn't say anything profound. Specific to the Paris filter, instead of changing his profile picture, he decided to support various organizations that aid refugees or those displaced by the violence. "Preventing terrorism abroad is going to take more than changing your profile picture," Gokhale said. "It's going to need political action on the international level."

On Nov. 13th of 2015, those present in Paris's northern suburb suffered death or injury due to a series of planned terrorists attacks. The attack served as a shock to communities around the world and had massive media coverage. Facebook created a Paris filter in which a translucent Paris flag overlapped the user's original profile picture, and MVHS students changed their profile filters to bring awareness to the tragic situation and support those affected. Out of all the ISIS attacks around that time period, the one in Paris received the most news and social media attention, causing concerns of the filter being eurocentric.

PRAY FOR PARIS



MV LOVES MR. BRASHEARS

On Dec. 14, 2012, former MVHS literature teacher Matt Brashears was subject to a bomb threat that was found spray painted onto a wall at Kennedy Middle School. The event both shocked and united students and teachers alike, as they banded together in support of Brashears and his family during the difficult and frightening time. To physically represent the community's support and solidarity, a graphic was created that found its way all over Facebook throughout the profile pictures of all grade levels by the end of the day.

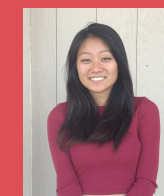


SENIOR AJAY MERCHIA

Senior Ajay Merchia created the Facebook profile picture called "MV Cares" to show his support in an effective and efficient way. "[The profile picture] does serve as a voice for students online," Merchia said. "The simple notion of changing a profile picture to the affected individuals shows that we as an entire school, as a community, and as a city can come together." The purple and gold background represented the school, the heart shows the community's love and support for Wong's family and the phrase "once a matador, always a matador" was used to signify that he would always be a part of our community.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY

After decades of effort on the part of LGBTQ+ community and its allies fighting for the legalization of same-sex marriage, the US Supreme Court ruled same-sex marriage legal nation-wide on June 27, 2015. Despite the event occurring over the summer, several students shared lengthy posts showing their approval of the ruling, and even more decided to apply the rainbow flag (a symbol of gay pride) filter, made available by Facebook, to their profile picture.



SENIOR MAY CUI

"If I change my profile picture, it's because I think I know enough about the issue to actually understand it," senior May Cui said. While most MVHS students changed their picture to the Pray for Paris filter, she used one that included the flags of all countries directly attacked by ISIS. In the caption of her picture, she explained the reasoning behind the multiple flags, stating that it conveyed eurocentric beliefs, and included links to further information about ISIS and ignorance surrounding religion. "I didn't want to use the Paris filter, but I also wanted to show my opinion, so this felt like the perfect solution," Cui said.