## BEFOREI GRADUATE

One wall with dozens of responses; Paly students reflect on their hopes and dreams before these four years are over

e a princess." "Skydive." "Pass calc." All answers to the same question: what is one thing you want to do before you graduate?

Between Sept. 19 and 22, C Magazine installed a black chalkboard on campus inviting students to respond to the prompt, "BEFORE I GRAD-UATE..." By the end of the day, the board was covered with dozens of rain-bow-colored, handwritten phrases that revealed the varying hopes and dreams of Paly students.

The inspiration for the wall came from "Before I Die," a public art project started in 2011 by artist Candy Chang to encourage candid discussions about mortality. Since then, Chang's project has expanded to 5,000+ walls worldwide, many of which were created by volunteers and each taking the form of a black chalkboard with the stenciled prompt, "Before I die...".

When Chang created her very first wall, she wasn't planning a global phenomenon. Rather, Chang was grieving the loss of someone "like a mother to [her] for fifteen years" and painted "Before I die..." on the side of an aban-

doned building in New Orleans both as a sort of memorial and out of curiosity for how people would respond. On her website, Chang wrote, "It was all an experiment and I didn't know what to expect."

Since then, the "experiment" has exploded, with walls still popping up in 78 countries and 36 different languages.

"It has been one of the greatest experiences of my life to see this little experiment grow into a global project," Chang wrote. "I am continuously inspired by everyone's walls, which have revealed

"Win a CLIMBING comp!"

"Be in a food fight"

"Grow an extra 2 inches"

"Derive DeMoivre's thm"



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have less, therral breakdowns



"Get into CSSSA summer program:)"

"Do a backflip"

"ASK ALICE TO HOCO!!"

"Run a marathon"

just how much we are the same."

We created our own wall with the same objective—to inspire connection within the Paly community. However, after consulting the Wellness Center and school administration, C Magazine changed the wording to "BEFORE I GRADUATE..." in order to put the focus back on our time at Paly.

Nonetheless, student responses to "BEFORE I GRADUATE..." also managed to "offer profound moments

of communion and kinship," one of the goals listed on the "Before I Die" website. From the mass of responses on the wall emerged the common themes of personal ambition and the desire for happiness and close connection. These similarities unite Paly's student body, if just for four days before our four years draw to an end.



