
BROWN & WHITE

February 2020

Westtown School, West Chester, PA. 19382

Vol. 91, Issue 1

Welcome to the first issue of the revived Brown & White! Brown & White is Westtown's historical school newspaper that dates back to 1914. Between 1914 and 1999, B&W was published on a consistent basis, with multiple issues being written every school year. They consisted of topics that included on-campus news, student interviews, and news from around the globe. Fun fact: between 1980 and 1999, Jay Farrow's name showed up in the B&W 87 TIMES! After 1999, the publication still existed, but with an attempt to utilize the newly discovered internet, it was published on paper much more sparsely. This year, we are reviving B&W with the hope that it will become a consistent publication like it was back in the day. Your editors-in-chief are Arden Allman '21, Kavi Gandhi '21, Steph Hanchak '21, and Toby Zuckerberg '21. We are incredibly excited to be sharing this issue with you and look forward to sustaining this vital piece of Westtown history for the future.

The New Face of Westtown Upper School

by Kavi Gandhi '21

On January 21, incoming Upper School Principal T. Veda Robinson visited Westtown for the day. Kavi met with T. Veda to ask her some questions about herself and what she is bringing to Westtown. Note that this is an abridged version of the whole interview.

T. Veda grew up in Indiana and graduated from Colby College in Waterville, ME. After graduation, she worked in college admissions, did diversity, equity & inclusion work at various independent schools, and currently is the Dean of College Counseling at Edmund Burke School in Washington, D.C.

KG: As an administrator, how do you also plan to be a figure that is approachable to students?

VR: I think that kids have to see me. I can't just sit in an office. I need to be present at games, plays,



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTTOWN COMMUNICATIONS

Tori Jueds and Veda Robinson

and art exhibits, stopping in on classes just to see the great work that the teachers are doing and also seeing how kids are interacting with that. I think that any job that you care about is going to mean some sacrifice. It's going to mean some long hours. What I'd definitely like to do is to in-

vite kids into the space to come talk to me about what they're thinking.

KG: What do you plan to do first as Upper School Principal?

VR: To sit and listen. Now, there might be some things that need immediate attention and you definitely work with other individuals to figure out what that is. But I would not come in in the first three months and say that we're not doing certain things. I don't think that's good leadership to not listen and get a sense of the community. What works for one community may not work for another community.

KG: What attracted you to Westtown?

See **PRINCIPAL** page 9

Boys' XC Wins PAISAA State Championship

by Nick Hanchak '20

Without a doubt, 2018 was a breakout year for the Westtown Boys' cross country team. After coming in second at FSLs, we pushed through for a second place finish at States. Taking first place at both events was our rival Germantown Friends School (GFS), a perennial running powerhouse. With each graduating senior, GFS seemed to bring in a new runner who was faster than the guy before

him. Despite GFS's history of success, last fall, there was a distinct feeling throughout our team that 2019 was the year when the Westtown boy's varsity team could make a push for a championship. Most of our varsity runners were returning, and with the addition of Constantin Carls, we solidified our top five. Although we lost to GFS by just two points in our first dual meet of the year, we came back to edge them

out of first place at the 67th George School invitational. Heading into FSLs, we couldn't have asked for a better season. We had lost to only two teams and had beaten almost 80!

Unfortunately, FSLs did not turn out as expected—we lost to GFS by 12 points. With a bitter taste in our mouths and the knowledge that we were the better team, the team

See **CHAMPS** page 4

Alternative Sports: First Time Competitor, Full Time Champion.

by Arden Allman '21

If you've ever fantasized of facing a cliff of skin-piercing rock with just your bare hands, you may have dreamed of being a varsity level rock climber. I know this very thought has kept me from ever engaging in a Calculus class, so, when Westtown announced a rock climbing team, I was psyched.

Our first competition went down on Tuesday, January 14th, at Doylestown Rock Gym. We were competing against the toughest, dirtiest, Quaker rock climbing teams in the area. There were some seriously jacked 15-year-olds there.

Our own team is led by seniors, Gavin Murray and Caden McDonald. They climbed with the ferocity and dexterity of young panthers, and both finished the 1st advanced level climbing route. The second route was a seemingly impossible path with gravity-defying moves. Our boys really showed out. Freshman Julian Hernandez bested this grizzly wall and tied for first place in the competition. Fellow members, Melanie Flynn '23, Sebelah Sheriff '23, Spencer Gilbert '21, and I, also had fantastic climbs.

With the first competition down, the team is looking forward to hosting at the home gym in Downingtown on the 28th of January. If you have dreams of reaching new heights, be sure to sign up for Rock Climbing next year!



WESTTOWN ATHLETICS

Winter Rock Climbing team

3 FSL Titles This Year

So far this year, the Girls' Soccer team has brought home their 3rd consecutive FSL title, the Boys' Basketball team has won their 7th consecutive FSL title, and the Girls' Basketball team brought home the FSL chip for the first time since 1997. Congratulations to all of the players and their coaches, and good luck to all of our spring athletes!

LLF Team Leads Efforts to Help Puerto Rico

by Steph Hanchak '21

On the surface, the Super Bowl halftime show might seem like just another celebrity-filled event, but this year's performance contained an important social message. As Jennifer Lopez opened her feathered cape to reveal the Puerto Rican flag, she wordlessly gave voice to those who are suffering on the island. Her message was clear: Puerto Ricans are Americans deserving of the same respect and support as other U.S. citizens. Right now, Puerto Rico is dealing with the aftermath of earthquakes that began last December and continue to shake the island, leaving many without power and water, and displacing people from their homes. These earthquakes come during a time of political instability and just two years after Hurricane María devastated the island.

Disaster relief from the U.S. government has been slow and restricted, but groups such as Westtown's

Latin Leadership Forum (LLF) are stepping in to help. Headed by Profe Mónica Ruiz, Sevi Horton '20, Mia Melendez-Ruiz '21, and Daniela Uribe '20, LLF is leading earthquake relief efforts and raising awareness about the situation in Puerto Rico. LLF is partnering with Fundación CAF, a credible NGO known for its work in helping families directly. "We did not want this to be part of a political agenda or to take a political stand," said Profe Monica. "We wanted it to be something that would bring direct impact to families." Westtown's engagement in Puerto Rico is not new. Shortly after Hurricane María struck, LLF worked to help those on the southern part of the island, which Profe Mónica says is the most vulnerable region. Last spring, a group of Westtownians traveled to Puerto Rico as part of a linguistic and cultural immersion trip focused on com-

munity engagement and service.

LLF is wrapping up its first wave of collections for earthquake victims, but will initiate a second wave after it's had a chance to learn more about what people need. Profe Mónica is touched by how Westtown continues to support efforts to help our friends in Puerto Rico. "I think the most important thing is to understand how this sort of effort aligns with Westtown's Quaker philosophy and values," she explained. "Engaging with a particular community right after life-altering events is not something we do as a once-off. It's part of a consistent effort to really live those values that make us think about equity, peace, and social justice." She added that LLF's job is not only to keep the conversation going, but also to make it a "call to action."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MÓNICA RUIZ

Members of Westtown's Latino Leadership Forum

Why is Junior Year So Hard?

by Patrick O' Rourke '23

Junior year is often considered to be the busiest, most challenging, and stressful in high school. Why is this the case? The challenges of junior year of high school are wide ranging, including everything from leadership roles to college testing. Many juniors are working their way into leadership positions in clubs and on sports teams, as well as positions such as work program heads, prefects, and proctors. Team sports move into gear, with higher expectations from coaches becom-

ing the norm. Combine this adjustment with the inevitable school-work that comes at the beginning of every year, and any student will begin to feel more stressed and tired. Preparation and practice for standardized tests also becomes more prevalent, taking time from weekends and evenings and replacing it with stress. On top of the day-to-day stress of school, sports, leadership, and testing comes the biggest stressor of all: college. Junior seminar encourages students

to begin to think about the college admission process, and parents, advisors, and students are all feeling pressure to work hard. Juniors can manage their time, stress, and effort by making careful decisions about what leadership roles they take on, which classes they take, and how they manage their time. Choosing to spend time on personal interests will also put all students at an advantage. Junior year may be busy, challenging, stressful, and hard, but it doesn't have to be bad.

CHAMPS

Continued from Page 2

pushed hard for the next two weeks to prepare for States. We knew it would be a battle as we faced our toughest competition of the season on Belmont's notorious course and killer hills, but felt confident that we could make something great happen. When the race was over, we knew the score would be close. Anxiously waiting for the official results to be published, we made our way to the starting line of the girls' varsity race, which was about

to begin. Just before the gun went off, Constantin ran across the field towards us shouting, "We did it! We won!" Each of us went running off in different directions, not knowing how to handle the news. Westtown had just taken the title from four-time defender GFS by one point! We were all in disbelief and couldn't have felt more happy and satisfied. This is definitely a moment I know the entire team will never forget.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SONAL GANDHI

Boys' Varsity XC team poses with their trophy at PAISAA XC Championship

Waste Not, Want Not

by Deion Hammond '21

As our Earth continues to decay and the people living there continue to pour onto it the sulfuric acid of ignorance to make it die all the more faster, it is more important than ever that we ensure that our school doesn't contribute to this condemnable, callous crime. I truly appreciate the school's efforts to not only inform, but enforce this stance for the betterment of our planet. And as fun as it may be for us to joke about work jobs as a loophole through which unpaid child labor might continue beyond the 19th century textile industry, I honestly believe that 25ish minutes of work each day for five or even one day out of our week is well-worth the end result of our school working for the most part as a well-oiled machine. With both of those disclaimers out of the way, the recently introduced work job of waste monitor is, in my polite, timid opinion, utterly ineffectual at achieving its intended goals and should be revised or removed before our next cycle.

For those who are unaware of why that person sitting outside the trash zone A.) are there and B.) look as though they are going through a Nam flashback everytime you

walk by, the waste monitor's job is to facilitate the throwing away of foods, trashes, and recyclables in their appropriate place. As one such monitor, I was told that we are to take out the trash when it gets too full, although in my experience this rarely happens and if it does the kitchen doesn't trust me to do it, which is understandable. However, there are three main faults in the logic of the remaining job of serving as arbiter of the trash.

1. By the time a trash monitor begins their shift, someone has already thrown 13 meatballs in the compost, 7.34 napkins in the recycling, and 20 salads in the trash. Unless you're willing to pick through mix of chocolate milk and red sauce while, might I remind you, people are still trying to squeeze by you to put up their plates or throw away their apple cores, waste monitoring is dead upon arrival.

2. People who aren't going to spend two seconds reading a sign with pictures telling them what to do and what not to do aren't going to give you enough time to help them choose the right disposal method. So the most you can do by the time they've thrown their

hamburger in the recycling is tell them not to do that next time. The most common reply I hear? "Oh." Not even a gosh diggity darn sorry.

3. For the people who read the signs or who have renounced their old, foolhardy ways following your divine intervention, you are literally just an obstruction in an already much too small inlet.

Personally, what annoys me most about this work job is my feeling that I could be doing something substantial with my time such as helping to keep the dining hall in good condition or setting out food for my fellow half-starved Lunch 7ers out there, but instead I'm standing and listening to people jest that I'm "doing God's work out here." And I can't help but agree with their sarcasm because waste monitor is a well-meaning but ultimately empty attempt to fulfill our promise of stewardship of the wider world.

Plus, I really like sarcasm.

Editor's note: Since the time at which this article was written, the Waste Monitor work job has been terminated.

Opinion Board Update

The opinion board has been relatively dormant this year. Following one Meeting for Worship, there was a spur of posts about students feeling like Westtown's schedule is contributing to extreme tiredness and that they are being shamed for that tiredness. Other posts have included a protest of hand-written in-class essays and a piece regarding the Coronavirus and racist remarks towards Asian students.

Are changes to the MFW requirement detrimental to the Quaker community?

Over the past 2 and a half years, the requirement of Sunday Meeting for Worship attendance has been inconsistent. For many of the upperclassmen, their freshman and sophomore years saw Sunday Meeting for Worship required every weekend that you were on campus. However, last year we experimented with new systems on which to base the Meeting for Worship requirement, and we have since settled into the current system—presence only required at Sunday Meeting for Worship on your team weekend. This drastically reduced the number of required Meeting for Worship presences of each individual student, and has created a noticeable decrease in the

population at each Meeting. Over the past few weeks, I have been interviewing, asking around, and gauging the feelings of random Westtown students about this new requirement. Does this new, decreased amount of attendances take away from the immersive Quaker experience Westtown hopes to provide? Is it detrimental to the Westtown Monthly Meeting to have such little student participation? Or is this change ultimately positive?

The students' opinions ranged from complete engagement and passion for the topic of Meeting for Worship to complete apathy. Multiple students claimed that they would not care either way, as it is only one hour they would not

spend doing much else. However, the vast majority of students are pleased with the change. I will not name individuals, but 3 such students claim that the two hours on Sunday morning allow them to finish the copious amounts of homework they feel that they have, and relax in the evening. Multiple others simply value that time for the sake of sleep. Very, very few students expressed any concern about the possible detriment to the Quaker environment of Westtown. The common belief is that Thursday Meeting for Worship is a sufficient example of Quaker life and practice. Overall, the student body is seemingly content with this year's Meeting for Worship requirement.

by Drey Betley '21

Baby Driver is Poetry in Motion

January movies have tended to be the worst on the calendar, and 2020 has been no different. So far, we have suffered through a boring remake of *The Grudge*, the horribly offense *Murder of Nicole Brown Simpson*, and *Dolittle*, which stars a post *Avengers: Endgame* Robert Downey Jr. pulling armor out of a dragon's behind in its unsatisfying climax.

So, for January's review, I decided to revisit an old favorite from June 2017: Edgar Wright's *Baby Driver*.

This is the story of Baby, a talented young getaway driver with a ringing in his ears. His tinnitus causes him to constantly listen to music, framing more than a few action set-pieces to occur perfectly synchronized with the beat.

If you are looking for a movie with style, *Baby Driver* has it in spades. From a diegetic soundtrack (that means all the music occurs from inside the movie itself through radios, iPods, etc.), to artful directing, to clever twists on a familiar story, *Baby Driver* is the perfect throwback

streaming movie that will leave you feeling fulfilled.

This is by no means a perfect movie. Certain characters have much too fast ex-machina ideal flips, the women in the movie have little agency besides what's needed of them by their male counterparts, and there is a lot of mumbling. However, the sequences that are put to music (every swerve, word, chew, motion, car alarm, holler, and reaction on beat) are so impressive, it makes *Baby Driver* a must watch.

While the performances are totally captivating, the credit for this one really falls on the writer/director: Mr. Edgar Wright. I am very excited to see what he comes up with in his next movie dropping this autumn: *Last Night in Soho*.

Rating: A good time at the movies.

by Camden Chin '22



T. TOM GILBERT / WESTTOWN SCHOOL

The 2020 cast of *Into the Woods* poses at the Act I finale

Would You Like To Go *Into the Woods*?

by Bini Lee '21

A new production straight out of the baker's oven, James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* was greatly commended by its viewers for its wonderful performance as the musical production for the winter season. It is entertaining to note that 2020 is not the first time Westtown students have performed *Into the Woods*, as it was also done in 2001. Regardless of the 19-year gap, the recent re-enactment of the production was applauded by many members of the audience as one of the best productions ever at Westtown.

Talented actors sang catchy, captivating tunes accompanied by live music from the pit orchestra.

The audience gasped and jumped from their seats when they saw the bookshelves falling and columns falling apart in the sky, wonderfully executed by those behind the scenes (yes, the tech crew). The smoke covering the stage created an eerie mood, and the sound effects of the giant stomping were in sync with the actors' movements. Another element that was special in the production was somewhat unexpectedly dark happenings that occurred in Act II that were drastically different from the movie version and answered many of our curious questions about what happened to all the fairy tale characters after "happily ever after."

Regardless of the confusion the dark implications may have had for the audience, the production was undoubtedly well received by the Westtown community the past week. One viewer said that it was a very interesting production, since it allows the audience to see a glimpse of what may have happened to the characters after they found their happy ending. Another person stated that she liked seeing characters from different fairy tale stories interacting with one another.

Special thanks to all the actors, teachers, and students who have made the musical a success!

How to be More Productive

by Sierra Brewer '22

Many people these days want to be more productive, but some of them don't know how to do so. Here are some helpful tips on how to be productive:

1. **Put your phone in another room.** By putting your phone in another room, you won't get that urge to use it whenever you hear a notification. It also helps you avoid using your phone while you are doing important work that you have not yet finished.
2. **Create a to-do list.** A to-do-list allows you to focus only on what you have written down and not get sidetracked with other tasks that are in your mind. Make sure you put your to-do-list in a place where you will see it every time you open your notebook, binder, or journal.
3. **Play classical music to help you focus.** If while studying you listen to the music you regularly listen to, you are more likely to get distracted by the lyrics of the song. A study conducted by the University of London Institute of Education shows that listening to classical music helps improve concentration.
4. **If you are working at a desk, have only what you**

need. For some, their instinct might be to empty all of the contents of their bag on their desk. This could hinder productivity because the clutter can impose a distraction.

5. **Break up your tasks by priority, from small to big.** Breaking up your tasks allows you to figure out what things you need to focus on first. After you have prioritized your tasks, tackle the little tasks that you have on your list first, then tackle the biggest task(s) you have to do.
6. **Use the Pomodoro Technique to help you complete of the tasks you have to do.** This involves working for 25 minutes, then taking a break for 5 minutes. Once you do 4-5 cycles of work, you take a 15 minute break.
7. **Drink water—Not coffee or tea.** I know a lot of people like to drink coffee and tea when they work rather than water. By drinking water you are able to improve your clarity and keep a clear head on what you're working on and not get frustrated on the task. Plus, it's a good thing to stay hydrated during the day.

Faculty Profile: T. Vivian Wenzler

Sage Larsen '20

Vivan Wenzler joined Westtown this school year as part of the Arts' Department faculty. Sage met with T. Vivian to learn more about this vibrant addition to Westtown!

SL: What attracted you to Westtown?

VW: It looked like Hogwarts! Also that everyone was so nice/genuine made me really excited about working with this student body.

SL: What's your favorite body part to put in during the hokey pokey?

VW: None, turn yourself around is my favorite part.

SL: Favorite Westtown meal so far?

VW: Apple pie.

SL: Funnest word to say?

VW: Axolotl or cookie

Fun Facts:

- T. Vivian made it to the second round of auditions for Hermione when she was 9.
- She played Starcraft professionally.
- T. Vivian has lots of pets and plants



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIVIAN WENZLER

PRINCIPAL

Continued from Page 1

VR: When I first came here, there was a uniqueness in the way that I was treated. When people asked me questions, it wasn't about trying to trick me. It was really about what [I] could bring to the community. There was so much warmth here, and I think it's the right size for me. Something that was really exciting to me was that I could actually get to know all the kids and faculty members.

KG: Our student body is incredibly dynamic and engaged. People definitely aren't afraid to voice their opinions. What are your thoughts on a student popping into your office to vent or give suggestions?

VR: I think that's going to be important. Because I've done equity and inclusion work, I've always had to have an open door, because it can be really difficult work that not everybody necessarily agrees on. You can't say that you have diversity and that you care about different opinions when you just want all of the opinions to be the same. I don't think it helps you grow as a leader, I don't think it helps you grow as an institution. I think that students and individuals need to learn how to have difficult conversations and how to have discourse and at the same time be respectful.

KG: What do you personally think the role of the Upper School Principal is or should be?

VR: A lot depends on who is in the role, but there are also key things that must be done. I see myself as being someone who would be supportive and nurturing of the faculty so that they feel as though my space is [one] where they can come and and talk about different challenges. I also think the role that I play with parents [is important]. I want to make sure that they see [my office] as a place where they can come with particular concerns, make sure that there is some guidance, make sure that we're being innovative, and that we are thinking about where we are now and where we need to be [in the future].

KG: How would you, in your role, try to address the concerns of over scheduling, overall student burn-out, and attention mental health that have been arising from various students recently?

VR: I deal with kids all the time where I tell them that if [they] are tired and know [they] have balanced ev-

everything and truly have worked, [they] have to go to bed. You just have to go to bed. Sometimes as adults, we need to understand that. I know a lot of schools have been looking at the maximum amount of homework that can be expected from a student at the end of the night. I know that we are in the process of building a new schedule, and I'm assuming part of that is around how building a little more time so students can perhaps do some more work during the day time. But you have to deal with the mental health part of it.

KG: And here, people try to do everything. You're the captain of a varsity sport, you're the head of a club, you're in a student leadership position, you have a lead role in the play. It's definitely about finding the right balance between academics, social life, extra-curriculars, and personal life.

VR: I also think we need to talk to kids about disappointment and failure. Students don't want to fail anymore. I remember the way I learned was through failure. I know that some schools have begun to look at different positions to put them into different categories and to say that you can't have 3 positions in these A-level categories. So you can't be Student Body President and then also captain of a team and then run a major club on campus, because we have to also help you manage things.

KG: Now for the easy questions. Can you describe yourself in 5 words or less?

VR: Book fanatic, foodie, empathetic, creative, and caring.

KG: What is your favorite song/band/musical artist?

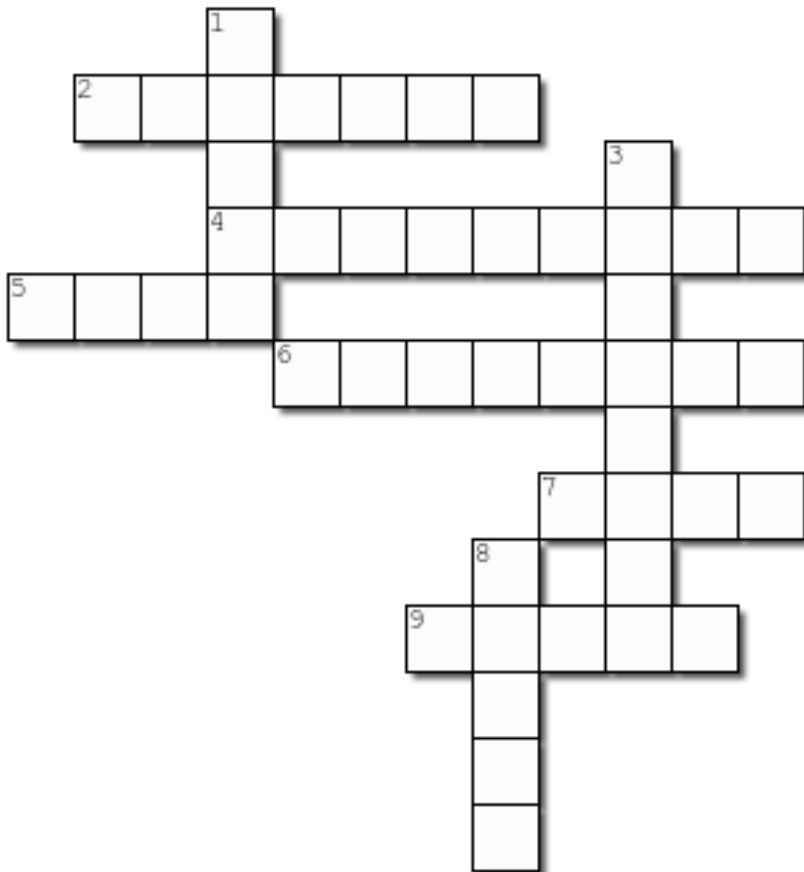
VR: The song that stays with me, even though it's old is Boyz 2 Men and their song Mama. My mother is deceased and it's just this beautiful tribute to a mother.

KG: In your free time outside of working, what do you enjoy doing?

VR: Cooking. I specialize in "soul food", but I cook anything. I follow several people on Instagram and sometimes they'll have things that I'll cook. In an ideal world, I would be cooking, photographing, and Instagramming.

Crossword

The first person to submit a correctly completed crossword to the editors will win a Wawa gift card! Answers and their explanations will be released in the next issue of B&W.



ACROSS

2. Something almost everyone does daily and complains about hourly
4. OG Stone House
5. New color in the dining hall in the 2018-2019 school year
6. The most famous beach at Westtown
7. This teacher was interviewed in the Brown & White about a senior walkout
9. The most powerful animal known to Westtown

DOWN

1. Has a green thumb but doesn't dye the food
3. Always full and never hungry?
8. What fills up this issue

February 2020 B&W Staff

Editors-in-Chief: Arden Allman, Kavi Gandhi, Steph Hanchak, Toby Zuckerberg

Faculty Advisor: T. Jaime Morefield

Brown & White welcomes responses to material printed herein, in addition to letters on other topics. Letters should be addressed to the Editors-in-Chief whereupon they become property of the paper. We reserve the right to print any submitted material in whole or edited form.

Ready to Recycle? Read Here!

Do Recycle:

Plastic bottles and containers
Food and beverage cans/cartons (without residues)
Paper
Flattened cardboard and poster board

Don't Recycle

Food waste (that's for the compost)
Plastic bags or plastic film
Foam cups or containers
Needles