

# OLHS Speech and Debate Team Announces Next Years Captains

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Before spring break, OLHS Speech and Debate held a banquet to close out the season and honor the members graduating this year.

With this graduation came the opportunity for younger members to rise as new captains for their respective events alongside the upperclassmen. Sophomores Tony Li, Lauren Childs, and Anushka Chaba along with Junior Vaishnavi Eranki were given a leadership position starting this coming fall by Speech coach Rebecca Granata and Debate coach Sarah McCarty. Two of the rising Juniors, Lauren Childs and Anushka Chaba mentioned what they do, their reaction to the position, and what their team members should expect next season.

Anushka Chaba has been a part of the Speech and Debate team since her freshman year at Liberty and was an alternate for the 2023 Speech and Debate National competition for her work in Congressional Debate. Chaba has done Congress both of her years and has succeeded greatly with this type of debate.

“Basically, a few weeks before a competition we get a few pieces of legislation and we either write a speech for or against it,” Chaba says. “Then during the competition we debate on the pieces of legislation as a group.”

Amongst the large number of students competing in Congress, Chaba stuck out and showed both great leadership and motivation to help others thrive as well as herself in Speech and Debate.

“I didn’t really expect this role because there are already three Juniors that are captains now,” Chaba says. “But Mrs. Granata wanted some new Junior captains for next year



Captians Lauren Childs (Left) and Anushka Chaba (Right) posing for a picture at Speech and Debate summer camp. The two attended the camp in 2022 as another way to try out new things without the pressure. “Summer camp is a fun way to start the season early,” Chaba says. “And it also was some time to hang out with your team members too.”

Photo Courtesy of Anushka Chaba

along with the Senior captains, especially since Congress is growing more and more every year.”

Lauren Childs, another rising Junior, was also given a leadership position. In her case, she will be captain of all speech events and remain a competitor in Original Oratory for her third season this fall.

“My event is Original Oratory, which is a speech event that requires you to write a ten minute long speech of any topic you want that conveys your opinion,” Childs says. “Ideally, you work on the same speech the whole season and the goal is to memorize it within the first two or three tournaments.”



OLHS hosts a competition for neighboring schools to come compete. At the competition, team members gathered to celebrate the wins and take a photo as a team. “We’ve grown so much as a team,” Childs says. “I’m excited to see what the future holds for us.”

Photo Courtesy of Rebecca Granata

While debate competitors outnumber speech, Childs has found a community where she can show leadership and help out the underclassmen.

“Speech and debate has already been such an important part of my high school career, and taking risks or trying an event that seemed daunting helped me grow and even prepare to be a leader,” Childs says. “Even if your goal isn’t to be a team captain or end up at nationals, I want everyone to be able to feel valued and know that they contribute to the fun environment we have.”

Childs is also very adamant about being there for the team. In the 2022-23 season Childs made it her mission to help out the freshman that asked for help as one of the only returning team members, and next year she is even more motivated to help others grow.

“We went from three overall speech competitors to several in each individual event,” Childs says. “I want my teammates to be able to come to me for any kind of help they may need.”

With the fall season months away, the anticipation is building and the community is awaiting the new faces and opportunities of this coming school year.

“My focus is always on the needs of the team and improving and adapting my leadership to help the people I lead,” Childs says. “I want to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable, a community where each person can reach their full potential. Speech and Debate is something I’m proud to be a part of and I want every member to feel the same way.”