

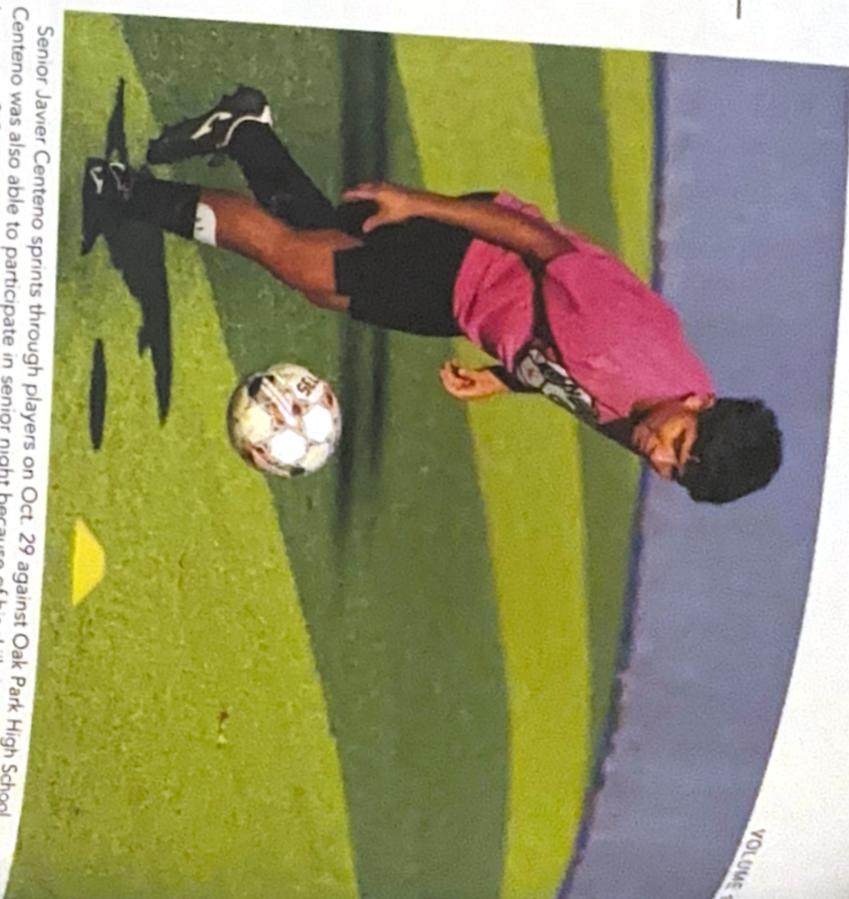
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News & Opinion Section Editor

The unfamiliar sight of a new country to senior Javier Centeno was overwhelming and exciting. He stepped off the plane, arriving in New York at the LaGuardia airport. The smell of the Pacific ocean and fresh Peruvian fruits like chirimoya and granadilla he left behind on July 29, 2022.

Centeno came to the United States two years ago, leaving his home country of Peru for new opportunities and to join his sister in the States.

“Moving to another country can be difficult and a tough adjustment, but he is such a positive person that he is trying to see the best out of his move,” Spanish teacher Crystal Kelly said.

Today, Peru faces threats of violent crimes and currently there is an advisory to proceed with caution. Today, when traveling there, according to Travel State Gov, “Crime, including petty theft, carjackings, muggings,



Senior Javier Centeno sprints through players on Oct. 29 against Oak Park High School team won 2-0. “In Peru, we don’t get an experience to honor our last year playing, so it made me happy to feel honored,” Centeno said. Photo by Cely Tiemann.

assaults, and other violent crime, is common in Peru and can occur during daylight hours despite the presence of many witnesses.”

“Peru is bad. With the safety of the country and the job scarcity and other factors like

that,” Centeno said.

Today, Centeno works as a kicker for the Varsity football team while also playing on varsity soccer. His favorite part about living in the US has been the school environment and making new friends. “Although the language can be

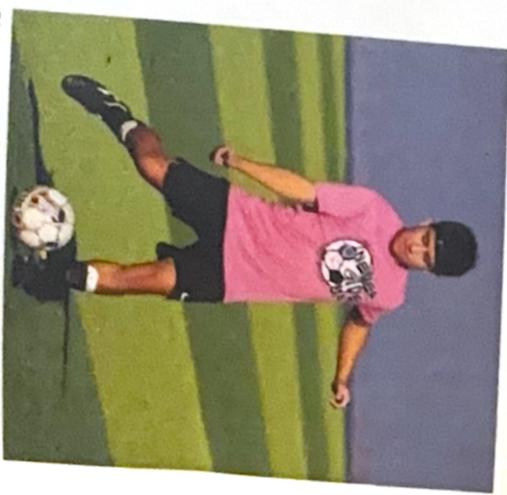


Photo by Cely Tiemann

Adobe illustration by Kora Smith

a barrier, the fact that he plays soccer and the school sets him apart from others and shows that nothing is too big or too small to achieve,” Kelly said. According to Mc Law Group, “For many migrants coming to the United States, cultural norms can be incredibly difficult to overcome, making integration into their new society difficult and lengthy.”

Centeno has made friends through playing sports and attending school. They have had the opportunity of learning about the immigrant experience through him. Our school has over 3 languages available to learn, including Spanish, Chinese, French, and German.

According to Newsdle.com, “Foreign language enrollment accounts for 20% of the school age population in the US. K-12 Spanish has over 8,000 language programs across 51 states. Over 93% of high schools with language programs offer Spanish and overall high school foreign language enrollment in the US is over 10 million.”

School has been an outlet for Centeno to connect

“He is very optimistic, nothing is too difficult to accomplish.”

Spanish Teacher Crystal Kelly said.

with his peers and share his experiences. “It was fun and nice being able to talk to someone who knows how it is to live in another country, having to establish himself in this new environment, and seeing him come out of his shell so easily,” junior Blanca Castillo said. Although Centeno said he misses many things about his home country, he has been able to remain positive throughout this journey.

“Javier has always tried to keep his optimism in and out of school. He is super social even without knowing fluent English yet,” Castillo said.

Centeno is now a senior and is excited for his future with school and sports.

According to Usa facts, “School is the second most common reason new immigrants come to the US. In 2022, 701,945 people came to the US as students. This is comparable to 2019, when 728,739 students arrived.”

Centeno’s friends and teachers have commended him on his ability to step out of his comfort zone and uphold good spirits. While he parted with much of his family in Peru, Centeno is grateful to have reunited with some of them here.

“I have some of my cousins as well as my sister here in America,” Centeno said.

SPANISH HERITAGE

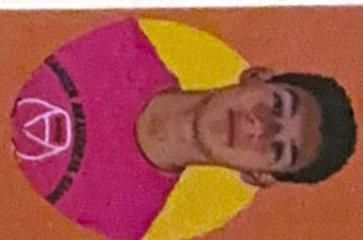
Students from spanish-speaking countries



JUNIOR LIBNI YANEZ - MEXICO



FRESHMAN ERICK COLON - PUERTO RICO



JUNIOR QORIANKA HYDE - PERU



Photos by Yarn Hyde, Ethan Chase and Maddox Calvin