Warrior alumnus Brandon Kim furthers club Drones4Kids

Warrior club Drones4Kids provides students with the opportunity to learn about aviation and gain hands-on experience.

By Anastasia Efremova
STAFF WRITER

Drones4Kids, founded by alumnus Brandon Kim in 2022, aims to help students with a passion for aviation learn about drones and participate in competitions.

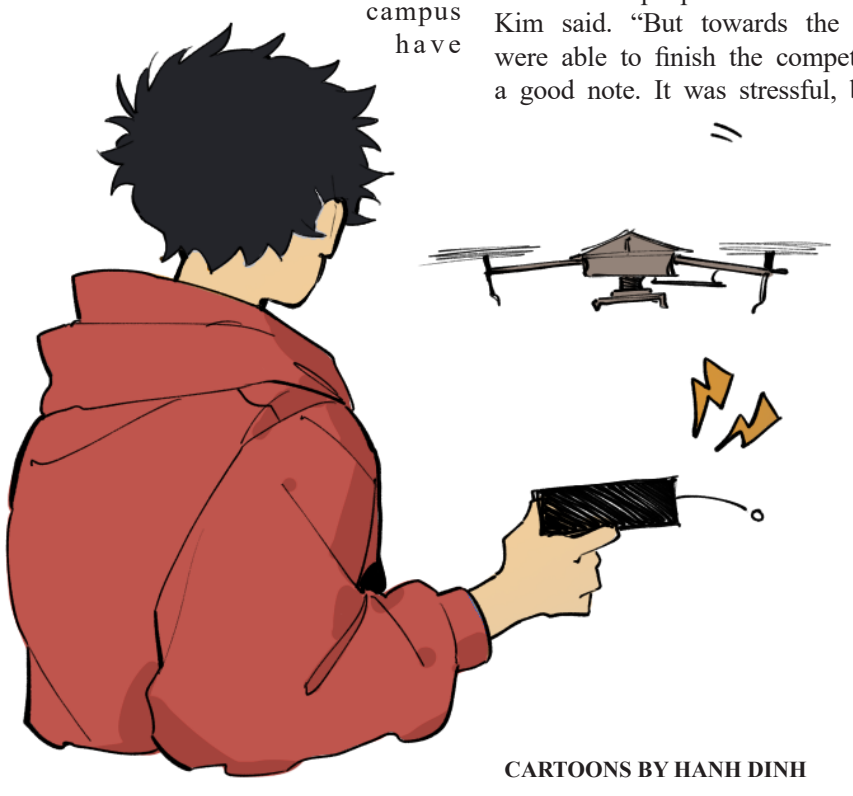
Brandon Kim established Drones4Kids as a Warrior club during his sophomore year. During the summer between his freshman and sophomore year, Kim got his commercial drone pilot license, which allowed him to use his skills for commercial education. Through his participation in the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps program, Kim was inspired by the drone sector available to cadets. He wanted to make these opportunities and experiences more accessible to students who are interested, which led to the creation of the club.

The club initially gained four members dedicated to expanding their knowledge of drones and aviation. Since then, it has grown into a non-profit organization dedicated to providing opportunities to students passionate about aviation, Kim said.

"We [now] offer services, sometimes programs, at libraries," Kim said. "We offer to teach kids how to fly drones, how to code with drones [and] everything related to drones."

Most instructors and volunteers are from Troy, but the organization accepts participants from different counties. Volunteers sign up to be a part of Drones4Kids on their website, and can apply for leadership positions in both the club and non-profit. These students train and help out during events and classes, gaining experience in not only aviation, but also in instruction and communication. No prior experience is necessary to participate. According to Vice President of Drones4Kids, Danika Mei, the club helps students step out of their comfort zones.

"A lot of kids are playing video games nowadays," Mei said. "We want to get them offline and with the controllers. Especially since a lot of people on this campus have never even flown a drone before."



CARTOONS BY HANH DINH



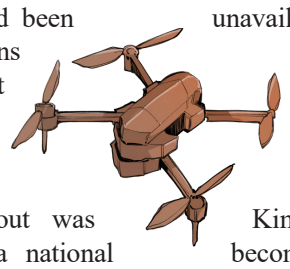
PHOTO COURTESY OF DRONES4KIDS

TERRIFIC TUTORS: *Drones4Kids members show children how to operate and fly drones with controllers.*

Kim faced challenges in getting adults to trust an organization run by someone with less familiarity in the business field. According to Kim, he was able to demonstrate the impact that Drones4Kids brings to the community by educating students and was able to support himself, his club and establish a client base.

"It is … hard for people to respect a kid who just recently graduated high school [who is] running a nonprofit," Kim said. "[People] look at [my non-profit] and they see … this guy is really inexperienced, but I try to let my people [know] that I know how to play the game."

Recently, Drones4Kids had its first-ever competition at Troy High School, and 47 middle and high school teams attended. While there had been NJROTC competitions before, this was the first one where anyone could participate, regardless of their involvement in NJROTC. The turnout was comparable to that of a national competition and was the biggest one that occurred so far in California, which resulted in some challenges regarding coordination, Kim said.



"We were kind of blindsided by the amount of people that showed up," Kim said. "But towards the end we were able to finish the competition on a good note. It was stressful, but [we] had a lot of fun running the program."

The competition provided an opportunity for students to socialize and express their creativity and skills through flying different types of drones. They developed their own strategies to improve teamwork and communication in order to help them succeed in such a large scale event. For club volunteers, it provided a learning experience in helping organize and running a competition of that size.

Before Kim graduated from Troy, he spent his senior year deciding that he would stay near his non-profit in order to help it expand and grow beyond just LA county. In the future, Drones4Kids aims to partner with libraries in the Fullerton school district, so that local students can participate in events that were previously unavailable to them, Kim said.

"I think Drones4Kids has the potential and it already [has been] shown through the fruits of our labor that we have the ability to become a lot bigger," Kim said. "We [are looking] to become similar to an after school program. We are starting to apply to Fullerton areas, local [zones] around here."

Throughout the years, the club has attained numerous achievements and awards for their contribution to education, including the Certificate of Congressional Recognition on Jan. 30. The award is awarded to outstanding organizations for numerous services, including supporting innovation, civic celebrations and others. Drones4Kids also expanded to three different counties, enabling it to provide STEM education and resources to more students.

Since Kim's graduation in 2024, club co-founder Brian Kim has taken over the organization and club. He recruits volunteers, organizes all events and classes and assists with minor details. Upperclassmen who have been part of the club since its founding also help run and organize it.

"When I am not available, [they] help with minor events that I might not be able to go to," Kim said. "They have been sticking through thick and thin. Right now, I am surrounded by a great group of volunteers, [and] I am extremely thankful for all their help."

TROY TODAY

Troy PTSA SLG hosts new Kindness Campaign

Troy PTSA Student Leadership Group hosted their 2025 Kindness Campaign March 12 and March 14. The event was held in room 411 during lunch-time hours. Students made friendship bracelets and wrote notes of appreciation in an effort to spread kindness around campus. Compared to previous years, the format of the campaign changed. Students previously wrote kind notes in class, and the class with the most amount of notes recieved a donut party. Troy PTSA SLG and their Chair of Kindness Campaign Samantha Luo began planning for a new approach to the event towards the end of January. Student volunteers created flyers advertising for the event and hung fliers around campus. Students received hours for volunteering with the organization. The campaign had a budget of $100 which was used to buy beads, string, cards, snacks and other supplies for the event.



Troy Theatre presents the play "Rumors"

Troy Theatre performed its second play of the school year, Rumors, in late February, putting on four shows in total over the span of two weeks. The plot of the play revolves around an anniversary party gone wrong as the guests arrive and promptly realize the host has apparently shot himself, and rush to conceal it in an effort to preserve his reputation. Rumors is a farcical comedy, meaning it involves improbable situations that are heavily exaggerated to make the audience laugh, and takes place in only one location throughout both acts, with a small cast of characters.



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