TEENS IN PRINT BOSTON

BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT NOV/DEC 2012 ™

Special Series:

IN SEARCH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Under the tree

By Carolin Bido Infante // Contributing Writer

GOAL: TO BECOME A CARDIOLOGIST.

America is not simple at all. Here you need to learn how to be strong even when you think you are the weakest person in the world.

Moving to the United States in 2009 meant forgetting the *tasa de chocolate caliente con pan en las mananas* — hot chocolate with bread on the side in the mornings — made by my grandma. It meant leaving those hot days when everyone gets desperate and goes to the river. It meant saying goodbye to those moments when my friends and I would sit under a tree in my backyard and one of us would unexpectedly get hit by a falling mango. We would laugh until our bellies hurt.

I was brought up by Kika, my grandmother, after my mother came to the U.S. to work and send money back to us. Kika never went to school, but that didn't stop her from teaching me manners and values which would open the door to a successful life.

I came here alone. Leaving my life and family behind in the Dominican Republic was hard, but being forced to create a new one here was even harder.

In the U.S., however, I found people at school who encouraged me to go to college and beyond. Back home, it felt like many around me were trying to take me down. Something my father always told me was that America could offer me more than what I could get back in the D.R. I've learned that life in America is a competition that you must win to accomplish your dreams. But how can you adapt quickly enough to succeed?

America gave me the chance to find myself, to find that life. Before I came to the U.S., I wouldn't share my thoughts

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COVER: AFH art by Carol Foster

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for fear of being wrong. Here, you'll fall behind if you don't show your full self. I worked hard and focused on my goals.

America brought out the real Carolin, the one I didn't know existed, the strong one, the one that does everything she can to thrive.

I want to be a doctor. My aunt, a cardiologist in the D.R., inspired me. It was nice to see her help others whether they had money or not.

America has given me so many good things — like friends whom I consider brothers and sisters from a different mother. Like lying down in Harambee Park in Dorchester and having so much fun with friends that we don't notice the time go by.

Even though I may not have a mango tree here to spend the afternoons under, I do have that special park where I can ignore the time and dream about where my sacrifices will take me. ■

Special Series:

IN SEARCH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

True colors

By Georgina Louis // Contributing Writer

GOAL: TO BECOME A MOVIE ACTRESS.

I sat on the living room floor with my whole family waiting for the Miss Universe pageant to start. Smelling the fresh popcorn that just came out of the stove. Hearing my friends from next door rushing to go to their homes, because the grand event was about to start.

This was a huge occasion for my country, Venezuela, but especially to me, since as a little kid I always wanted to be an actress.

I grew up watching on TV that the models who used to represent Venezuela in the pageant were so different from me. They had healthy white skin with a shade of pink, blond hair, and blue eyes. Meanwhile, I have skin the color of chocolate.

I also saw this in Venezuela's movies and novelas. That's when I started to get confused and questioned if my country was facing racism.

I remember going out in my neighborhood and looking at my father with his friends drinking beer in the parking lot. All those different faces — men's skin color as black as coffee, and others caramel, and still others like milk.

Why didn't they show this on TV? Why didn't they present all the beautiful true colors that our country had?

My sister, who had visited here, used to tell me: "In America, you can be an actress." "In America, skin color doesn't matter." "In America, you can be whatever you want."

I started to believe this could actually be true, that in America there is equality. I used to watch American movies and music videos and I noticed that there were many people of different colors who were successful. I started to feel hopeful that in America I could be an actress, that I would have more opportunities, which is why I came here in 2007.

But after that, I realized it was not like I thought it would be. I saw that you could also face racism here. When I went to middle school, I was surprised that all of my classmates didn't ask, "Where are you from?" Instead, they assumed: "You're from the D.R., right?"

On the weekends, I work at a local Subway shop with a woman from a different country. One day, while making sandwiches, I asked her if she thought the American Dream existed. She said she was still trying to achieve it.

She told me that she came to America to be a successful woman, since she said women are not allowed to do anything worthwhile back home. She wanted to prove them wrong.

I thought, "So do I." I also want to prove my people wrong. I want to show them that I can succeed. I can be an actress. I can be a superstar, regardless of my skin color. I want to show my country, and this one, too, that skin color is not an obstacle. ■

Special Series:

IN SEARCH OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

The big stress has gone

By Dejvi Kroi // Contributing Writer

GOAL: TO WORK IN THE BUSINESS WORLD.

My first thought was, "Finally, I arrived at the freedom place, the one with the most opportunities."

When I came here in 2010, the Chicago airport was very busy. While the people in Albania like to dress fancy so they can show off, the different Americans wore pajamas and sneakers.

While walking through the airport in Albania to get on my plane, I noticed the dust and dirt around me and the smell of sweat. Albanians throw their trash anywhere. Here, everybody uses recycling bins.

While driving here in my cousin's big van, I saw huge roads with five lanes on one side and five on the other.

In Albania, you see narrow, bumpy roads, where it's a challenge to drive without getting dizzy.

Finally arriving at my cousin's home, I saw a beautiful wooden house that was different than ones in Albania, where dwellings are made of rocks and are freezing because of the lack of heat. Going inside the warm house, I thought: "This is living."

Then school time came. Driving up to the school, I was overwhelmed with happiness. This place was different than the buildings in Albania, which are so small and old. This one was big and brand new and surrounded by fields, while in Albania the schools are bordered by trees that look like old men with their heads down because of the trash that collects at their roots.

Inside, the big hallways were like Albanian soccer fields. All the teachers were so friendly with the students, while in Albania the teachers think that they are on top of you and never show that much respect to students.

On the other side of things, weeks and months passed and none of my family members got any jobs. We were disappointed because we thought that the jobs would have been so easy to get here.

Every day my brother used to go out and make applications for my parents, but no one accepted them because of the language.

Then some of my father's friends promised us that they were going to help us in Boston, so we had to move. Now we are here and everything is better. Both my parents have found work. The big stress has gone.

I miss my grandparents, and my beautiful city, Berat, with a castle right in the center of town. But overall I am happy.

This is because for me, the American Dream is the American Reality. America has a lot of opportunities for my future: go to college, find a job in the business world, have a good life. ■

Blessed with citizenship

By Penda Seck // Staff Editor

GOAL: TO BECOME AN ACTRESS AND WRITER.

To become a U.S. citizen was not my ambition in life, but I learned that no destiny will fall to the ground if it is meant for you. In this case, it was better to think that you had no chance than to be disappointed.

Citizenship is a bundle of rights, primarily political participation in the life of the community, the right to vote, and the right to receive certain protections.

Living without citizenship is to be a slave to society's obligations. In my country, Guinea, I did not have the chance to fully exercise my rights, like freedom of speech.

I thought that life would not give me a second chance to learn a new culture and have the same rights as people in the U.S. I did not think they would welcome me with open arms and share their liberties with me as one of their children.

The first time my mother took us to apply for citizenship, my chest started beating like my heart would fall to the floor. Fear of the unknown. But when we entered the crowded Boston Garden on September 11 to be sworn in as citizens, I saw people with smiling faces who welcomed us.

Being a citizen of the U.S. is like giving me a breath of life when I didn't have any. Going forward, I should take advantage of greater opportunities, like education, as a resolution to struggles.

Because I'm now blessed with citizenship, I will hold onto it with my 10 fingers and make a difference, be the voice for those who don't have one. ■

Stairway to success

By Frantz Sousky Etienne // Staff Writer

GOAL: TO BECOME A DOCTOR.

From the ages of 13 to 16, I was moving back and forth from my parents' house to an uncle's house to another uncle's home. My family wanted to keep me away from the bad influences in the neighborhood.

Some things, however, I could not escape.

I still carry memories of the earthquake that occurred in my home country of Haiti on January 12, 2010, where some three million people were affected. This included my 13-year-old little friend Diana, who gave her last breath about 10 feet from me, squeezed in between two walls and looking straight at me with the saddest eyes I've never seen, and blood pumping out of her mouth.

That same year, I had a visa for the U.S. I came here overwhelmed, traumatized, with no English. However, by focusing and staying clear of trouble, I was able to carry a heavy workload of taking classes, helping to organize a Haitian student union at Boston International High School, being involved in making art, attending church activities, having a job, and volunteering at a homeless shelter.

My high school career in the U.S. has been the three best years of schooling I've had, with the highest grades in my life. Through them, I realized how smart, talented, and filled with conviction I am. Doing well has also increased my love for medicine, and my desire to become a physician.

I grew up watching a lot of people from my neighborhood suffering from diseases that could be easily cured, but instead get worse because of economic issues or lack of doctors.

Now, by being here in the U.S., where I found my worth, my potential, and lot of opportunities to move forward, I feel that it is my duty to go for what I always wanted to do. To help. I may not be the one who cures diseases 10 years from now, but I am certain that I will prevent thousands of kids and others from going through so much pain.

People don't want to agree that hardship and struggle are part of life. But let me tell you something: I know how to overcome them, not be led by them. I always use my failure as stairs to climb to my goals. So you all can do it, too, with discipline and determination. ■

Growing down to grow up

By Mayelin Brea Ortiz // Contributing Writer

GOAL: TO BECOME A NUTRITIONIST.

Everyone has aspirations. But is it fair for people to just have dreams and not follow them?

My family's hope for their children was to bring us to America to give us better opportunities. I grew up in the Dominican Republic. When I was four, I came to America for the first time to visit, with my father. When I saw how everything looked, I did not like it.

Back in the D.R., all my friends were asking me questions about the famous U.S. I tried to describe the place by saying that there was ice on the floors of the streets, and trees with no leaves, and kids playing in the snow who looked like robots because of all the clothes they had to wear.

When I was 11, I moved to the U.S. with my father and aunt. Two years later, my mother followed with my little sister.

I was afraid that when I started school, kids would laugh at me because I did not know the language. But I was wrong.

My vision of America has changed. I have found more support in people than I ever had, from teachers, counselors, my friends, and others. I feel they have my back.

Now, I can smell the iced coffee from Dunkin' Donuts in the summer. I can feel the cold December burning my face while I am on my way to school. All those things from the U.S. feel like home to me.

One evening in the winter of 2011, I was at Bible study. When my pastor said, "You need to grow down to grow up," it really caught my attention. That sentence is really deep. It means that to get what you want, you have to pass through a lot of struggles.

Now, I am planning to go to college to study nutrition and psychology. One thing that I know is that everyone has different experiences, and nobody can take them away. We can use them to make us stronger and stronger.

When we think the goal is far away, when we think that we have no one to support us, when we think that we are not going to make it, that's when we can become more powerful.

As Malcolm X said, "The future belongs to those who prepare for it today." I'm preparing now, so it belongs to me. ■

Go figure...

Some of these teens actually enjoy math!?!

By Dennis Membah // Staff Editor

José Mata, a 16-year-old from Brighton High School, likes math.

"Well, I like numbers," he said, "and since there's numbers mostly everywhere you look, I find them interesting."

Math is a subject you either love or hate. Either way, it is a vital topic.

In a 2010 survey commissioned by the Intel Corporation, 99 percent of teens said they believe it is important to excel in math and science. Nearly 60 percent of the teens said they hope to pursue a career related to science or math.

Mata believes that math is easier to learn than other subjects because numbers are always the same no matter what language you learn them from.

Sixteen-year-old Bensley Dorneval thinks math is the best subject in school.

"The work is easy," said Dorneval, who attends Brighton High. "It feels like I was born to do math."

Dorneval said he'd be confident if he found a job that involved math.

"I'll know what I'm doing," he said, "and wouldn't face any problems."

Picking up new school subjects can be difficult, but Dorneval said he felt at ease.

"I didn't have any problem learning math," he said, "because every member of my family is a genius at math."

Meanwhile, Kelvin Freire, a junior at Brighton High, brushes off the numbers game, saying it is irrelevant to a future career he is planning in computer graphics. ■

AFH art by Ammany Ty

An A in arithmetic

By Mouctar Diakite // Staff Writer

In February 2006, I had a math test in my home country of Ivory Coast. It was about how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. I was eight years old and in third grade. Two days later, I received my score. I remember it well because I got an A. It was one of the most important days of my life.

This story is key to my personal history because it was the first time I received an A in math. I used to get Ds.

My dad was very proud of me that day. He gave me special thanks by taking me to my favorite restaurant, a place that served French food. He also bought me a toy that I wanted since I was in first grade: a Batman Lego. He did all those things for me because I was very poor in math and I made a difference that day.

My dad always told me: "Nobody was born smart, but you have to work hard for it." I practiced and practiced, for hours and hours, and stayed at school for extra help. I became one of the best mathematicians in my class.

Every time I thought of my dad's words, it gave me the motivation to put more effort into my work. I participated in the classroom, did all my homework. I also helped other students. I passed on to them the wisdom my dad told me.

It should be that you never think something negative about yourself. All people ought to say that they are smart because they can be. ■

BSAC Buzz

By Kalise Osula // Contributing Writer

Did you know that you have 12 basic rights as a Boston Public Schools student?

The Boston Student Advisory Council wants to make sure that all students know their rights. Most of us can't vote in the presidential election, but being a responsible citizen is not just about voting. You also need to know what your rights are and be able to advocate for yourself. That's why BSAC is working with several high schools this year on a Week of Action, coming in January.

The Week of Action will be different at each school, but the goal is to get the word out about student rights.

For instance, did you know that you can't be locked out of the school just because you're late? Or that your school is supposed to have a functioning student government? And that you can give classroom input through the Student-to-Teacher Constructive Feedback form?

You should speak up and defend yourself if you believe your rights are being violated.

Over the past decade, BSAC has worked with students, teachers, and administrators to help get BPS to pass the policies that now make up your student rights. If you already know them, we encourage you to share them. Knowledge is power.

If you want to make a change, get involved. Join student government, make a public comment at School Committee meetings, apply to BSAC.

Contact Maria Ortiz at mortiz@boston.k12.ma.us if you want to join BSAC or find out more about student rights at your school. ■

Growing up:

THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

AFH art by Toni Jonas-Silver

Gloria Nwaoha, 17, from Urban Science Academy, says that high school has really helped her grow up.

"I learned how to manage my time, and I took a lot of challenge classes," says Nwaoha. "High school prepares students who want to do something good in life for college."

The high school years can be filled with parties and proms. But there is also a serious side. When teenagers go to high school, they have more responsibilities. Many teens get their first jobs while in high school, forcing them to juggle work, studies, and extracurriculars.

Audrey Browning Banks, 15, agrees that high school is the time when your life changes, including all the effort that goes into applying to colleges.

"At that time you become more mature," says Banks, who goes to Madison Park High School.

Kristiana Mbrice, 16, says that without high school you can't do anything in life.

"High school is only about how teens take it," says Mbrice, from Boston Community Leadership Academy. "If they want to be successful in the future, they are going to study hard. If they don't take it too seriously, then they are going to drop out." ■

Homework hideaways

THE BEST PLACES TO STUDY

By Marmarin Nasirahmad // Staff Editor

Under the kitchen table? In the bedroom closet? What's your favorite place to do homework?

"My room," says 15-year-old Jakara Small, from East Boston High School, "because it's the only place where I don't get distracted, and it's quiet."

Studying at home can be a problem for some students because there are too many people in their house and nowhere to find a peaceful place. Some teens stay after school to do their work while others seek silent spots elsewhere.

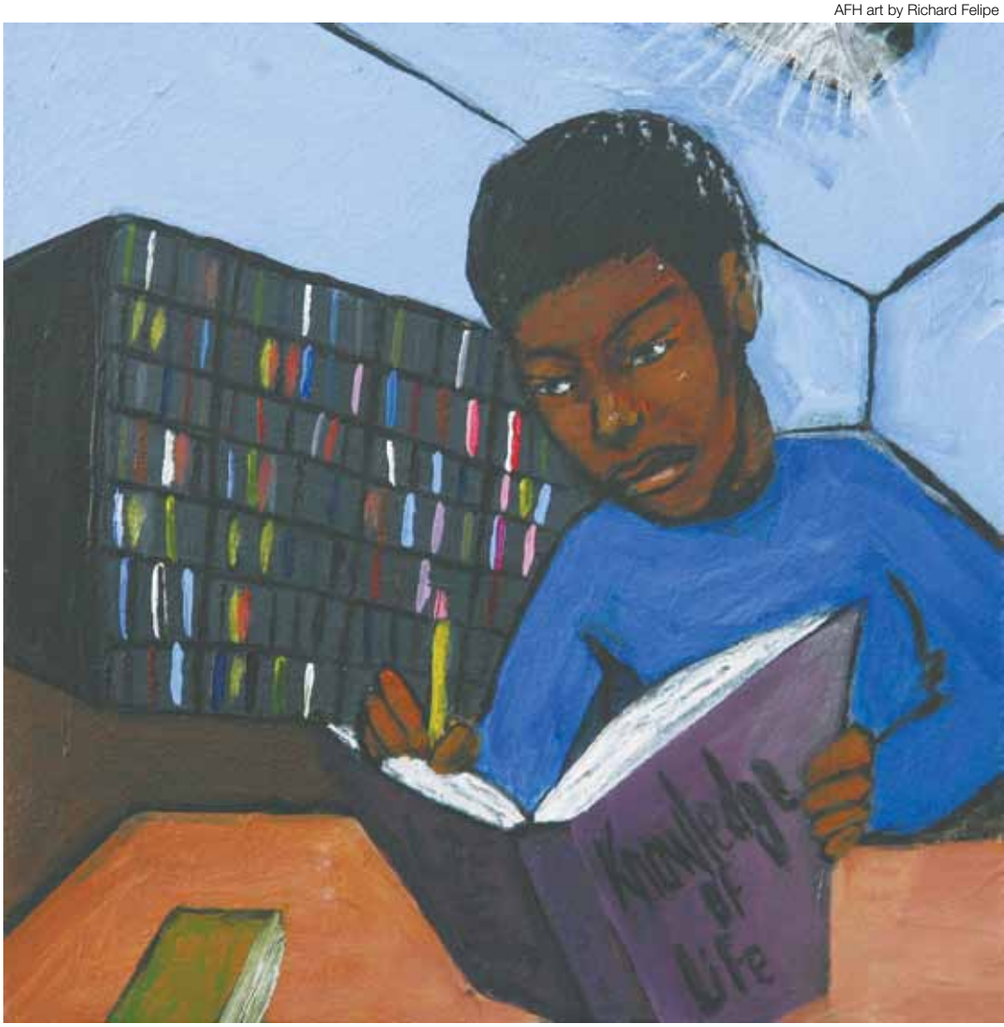
Fifteen-year-old Jasmin Cedeno, from East Boston High, does her work in the library.

"It's quiet," she says, "and they have tutors that can help me finish my homework."

While some students fear getting too comfortable and falling asleep in their rooms, others find them to be good study spaces.

Like Samantha Lopez, a freshman at East Boston High. In there, she says, "It's me time." ■

AFH art by Richard Felipe



AFH photo by Shawn McLaughlin

Doctor who?

By Amadou Barry // Staff Writer

A good life for the future is what everybody is looking for. Some kids decide to be like their parents, while others choose to be something else. However, when they grow up, many change their plans because they realize that they cannot succeed on that track.

My story is different.

When I was nine, I was walking and got in a terrible accident. I got hit by a car and fell on my head. I was losing blood and was so scared to die.

My dad brought me to the hospital. Everybody was looking at me. We were in the waiting room because there were not enough doctors. The few who were there were all busy. I was crying for help like crazy and I could see how my father felt bad for me. We waited 30 minutes before the doctor came to me.

"Tell me doctor, am I going to survive?" I asked with my weak voice. She promised me that everything would be fine, and she was right.

This incident is the reason I decided to become a doctor.

I told my dad, "I want be a doctor so I can help sick people and help our country to get more doctors."

He said, "Keep your dream in your mind and fight for it. Never give up, my dear."

Time has gone by so fast. I live in Boston now, not Guinea. I believe the education here is better than in my own country.

However, things will not be easy. It will take a long time and a lot of money.

As long as I get to college, I will be fine. My hope is to be helpful to my family and to society. I will fight for it. ■

Laying down the law

By Audrey Ngankam // Staff Writer

In seven years from now, I want to see myself as a lawyer, maybe one of the first Cameroonian lawyers in America.

I always like advocating for those who cannot fight for themselves.

My plan is to attend a four-year college right after high school and major in English. Before I present myself to people and tell them that I want to defend them, I need to know English. Even though it is not my first language, I can get better at it if I try hard.

Hopefully, I can attend Northeastern Law School. I know it will take a long time and require much work.

This year is my last one in high school, and I know what my expectations are: to be a good example for my peers at school, and also for my brother.

I know it will require a lot of patience to get where I want. But I will stick with it, and keep moving forward.

As they say, "I am the author of my own life story." ■

AFH art by Kituana Parker

A trip to the motherland

By Mussuba Samati // Staff Editor

Africa is the world's second largest continent. It covers one-fifth of the planet's land area. It contains more than 50 countries, and my beloved motherland, Guinea-Bissau, in the west of Africa, is one of them.

Ever since I can remember, I have always wanted to witness the sight of my glorious continent, Africa. After migrating from Guinea-Bissau to the United States at a young age, my visions of Africa have little by little vanished and become blurry memories.

In June, my amazing summer journey to Africa was confirmed. I was head-over-heels happy and terrified at the same time.

I hopped onto the plane with my little sister and mother. We clasped on our seat belts. After the safety instructions were given, the plane pulled back and went slowly down the runway, stopped, then lifted off. I nervously grabbed my iPod, blasting music and writing in my journal.

At the first glimpse of my long-lost country, I burst out in tears. I was excited and curious to see what the country had in store for me.

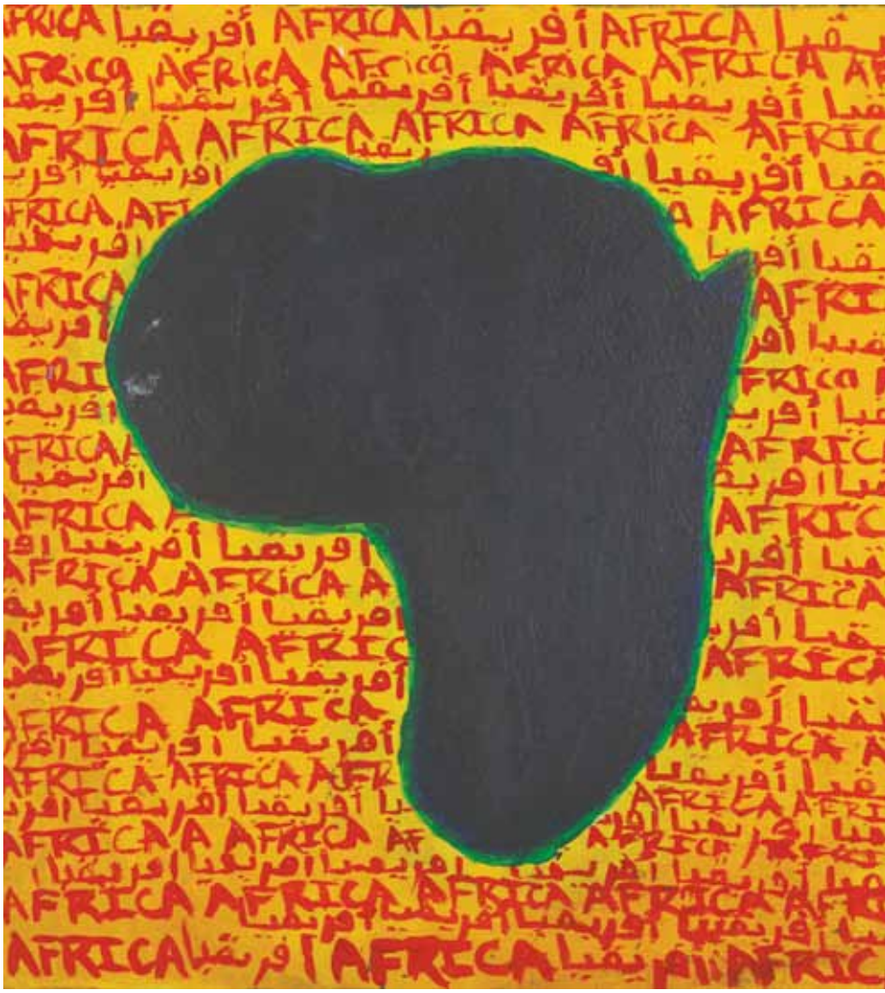
Africa isn't what people portray it to be. Africa is full of love and excitement, such as me: taking tours to different parts of my country, meeting new and old family members, shopping in local markets, volunteering to help others learn English, being showered with gifts and affection.

I was in a different world. I was exposed to a place that was all green. I went to a mall that was covered in my country's colors — red, green, and yellow — and had clothes from Brazil, Portugal, and America. At the entrance to my old house, chickens and pigs were in a row, making chaotic and annoying sounds.

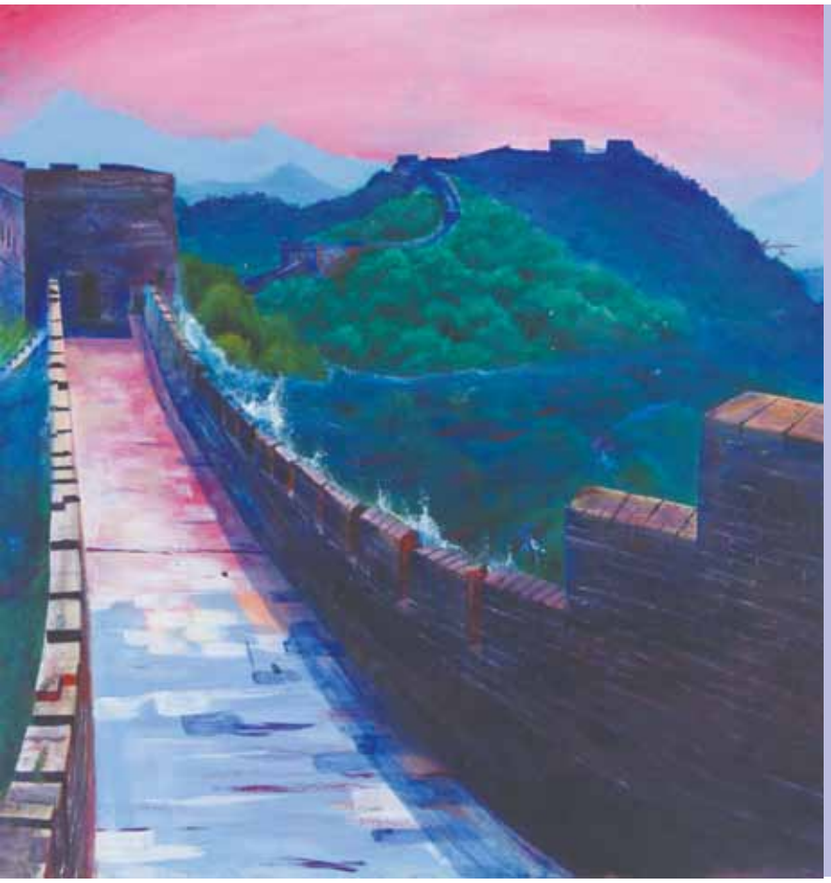
It was really difficult for me to come back to America. It was hard saying my goodbyes to Africa, especially to my beautiful grandmother.

I snapped a photo as I was about to get on the plane. I turned around and took one last look at Guinea-Bissau: my country, my life, my heart, my everything.

I cried for two days, missing my hometown. But I can finally smile now. After all, I have fulfilled my dreams. ■



AFH art by Gaida Alzabier



AFH art by David Johnson

Made in China:

SOME BAD EDUCATION

By Jalayah Lawrence // Staff Writer

Not everyone has access to something as basic as education. Take China, for example.

According to a July article from Caixin.com, a business website, many students in rural China are dropping out of school to take jobs in the cities. Those out of school but left behind may face a future without basic skills to even operate computers.

The site quotes some school officials in Gansu Province as saying the dropout rate in junior high runs 30 to 40 percent.

This is a global problem that I'd like to help fix.

Of course, I would need to get others involved, because no one is going to pay attention to just one voice.

Together, we could contact local officials with federal ties, such as U.S. Senator John Kerry or U.S. Senator Scott Brown.

What might get in our way is that people just don't care because their kids are being taught well.

Countries that are not educating their children should be ashamed. I think that some of the people in those countries don't even know they are not all getting proper schooling.

There needs to be consequences. We take a lot of imports from China, and maybe we should stop until they start giving all their kids good educations. ■

Tips from TiP

Mussuba Samati Penda Seck

If you have a problem and are seeking answers, please write to Tips from TiP c/o ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov. Please make sure your topics are appropriate for a teen newspaper, and indicate whether you want your name withheld.

Dear TiP:

Beauty? She has that. Confidence? She has that. Talent? She has that. Curves? She has that. Flawless skin? She has that. But do I? No.

I'm not a very confident person who feels beautiful, smart, or sexy every day. I think my looks are average. I mean, there are some days where I feel beautiful, pretty, or cute, but I don't feel it every day like some do. Wait, am I supposed to feel like that every day, anyway?

I'm not intelligent, either. I think my knowledge is quite enough to live in this world, but I'm still willing to learn more.

Am I just viewing all my flaws? Maybe. I guess I have so many of them that I forget about my good side.

I let what people say ruin me, because I care what others think. I try not to, but I can't help it. And it's weird because no matter how much a person compliments me, it still doesn't change the way I see myself. I even tried loving myself, but, hey, it's pretty hard. So I guess it's not pretty surprising for someone to find it hard to love me.

It's also weird because whenever I do feel confident, people think I'm cocky. I mean, it's rare that I actually feel beautiful. Why do you have to take that away from me?

Sincerely,
Lack of Confidence, a BPS junior

Dear LOC:

Confidence? To us, it's being yourself — be introspective and figure out who you are. You can't accomplish anything in life if you lack confidence.

Life is not easy for anyone, but we cannot make anything of it if we are extremely negative. Everyone is outstanding and beautiful in his or her own way. Talent, flawless skin, and curves don't make up the true definition of beauty. Beauty is not just based on looks; it's about dignity, personality, and elegance.

Teens can be cruel, but sometimes you have to take those negative words and turn them into positives.

Just remember: You're living your life, not theirs. Do what pleases you, and feel good about it.

Love,
Mussuba and Penda

"Therapy changed my life"

By Penda Seck // Staff Editor

"I am alone in this world in the way that everyone stops noticing me."

These were the thoughts welling inside me, because the people that were supposed to comfort me didn't see how hard I was trying to be the perfect one for them.

Hopeless. Even when I prayed it was like God was not available. I was looking for answers everywhere, but I couldn't find any, and that was knocking me down.

Options. I didn't have any, but what about therapy? Many cultures have the notion that being seen by a therapist is bad. Before I got involved with emotions and problems that I couldn't handle on my own, I thought seeing a therapist was not only a waste of time, but unnecessary.

I was depressed, thinking nobody cared what happened to me. I felt like I was losing control. To me, what was right was wrong and what was wrong was right. But as I began to see my therapist, I learned that no matter what you go through, there will always be a person who is there for you. I realized that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

A therapist is not just a doctor, but also a friend who you can tell anything to, things that you can't even confide to family or best friends. It is a person who can help you overcome your fears and feelings and see things the way they appear, not the illusions we have in our minds.

Many teens don't want to talk about whether they go to therapy or not. But this is not a shameful act because we are seeking answers as we grow up, and we need a person who understands us without judging us.

Therapy changed my life, not only letting me know that I could talk to a person who could accept me without judgment, but also giving me hope of putting together the million pieces that I was torn into. I learned that people cared about me — even if they didn't show it.

Therapy helped me reconcile with my family. And the best part of all is that it helps you discover who you are and how to make our world a better place for ourselves and for the people we love. ■

AFH art by Jennifer Thai

AFH art by Julie Echeverri

Nervous yet excited:

MY FIRST DAY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Jamila Jalloh // Contributing Writer

My first day of middle school last year, I was excited yet a bit nervous. The night before, I imagined both good and bad deeds appearing from the same direction. That night, I promised myself that I wouldn't be too much of a nerd or geek so my classmates wouldn't hate me. I went to sleep thinking that it was a pretty good idea.

"Good morning to me," I said when I woke up ready to experience that first day. I know some might be thinking: "What is so special about going to middle school?" But to me, it was like graduating from being a newborn to being a college student, like going from being single to being in a relationship, like coming from hell and going to heaven, like being in prison to having freedom.

After I waited hesitatingly, the bus finally came. My heart was beating faster by the second of every second. Unexpectedly, it felt like two huge bubbles of good and bad trying to burst out of my small, little, innocent, nervous mouth.

I went to homeroom expecting everyone to look at me like I was some kind of human monster. Instead, they just minded their own business.

Then we lined up to go to our first block, which was social studies. The teacher was pretty nice. She just introduced herself, told us which supplies we needed, and asked us for things like our contact info.

That was pretty much what we did in every class until the end of the day. I had expected something bad to happen, but actually I had a very good first day of middle school.

Jamila Jalloh is a BPS seventh grader. ■

Sweet as honey

WHY "MATILDA" IS MY FAVORITE BOOK

By Fanta Diakite // Staff Writer

My favorite book is "Matilda," by Roald Dahl. It is important to me because it shows how children should not be treated. They should be handled with love and respect. And they should definitely be allowed to go to school.

Matilda was dealt with badly — like she wasn't even a human being. Her parents didn't care about her, so she took care of herself.

She loved to read. She taught herself by going to the library. But her father didn't want her to read. He didn't even want her to go to school, because he thought that Matilda was dumb. All he wanted was for her to sit and watch TV.

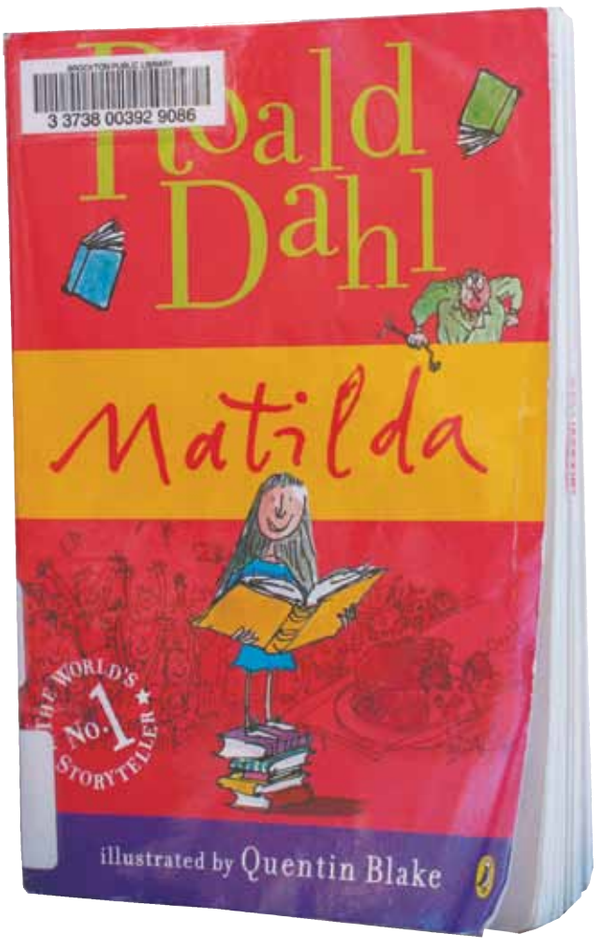
Then, finally, he let her go to school. Matilda was very happy and nervous for her first day. She thought her teacher was going to be mean to her like her parents, but it turns out that she was nice. Her name was Miss Honey, and she admired Matilda.

Matilda was magical, and had special powers that she used on disrespecting adults.

At the end of the book, Matilda's family fled to Spain, because her dad was on the run from police for some shady dealings. Matilda got to stay and live with Miss Honey.

All parents should treat their kids with love, admiration, and respect like Miss Honey treated Matilda.

Fanta Diakite is a BPS seventh grader. ■



AFH photo by Christina Vivada

BRIANNA BANNISTER
Funny or smart? Smart.
Touchscreen or keyboard? Keyboard.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.

AMADOU BARRY
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Curly or straight hair? Curly.
First thing you notice on a person? Smile.

SHERLEY BELIZAIRE
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Face.

LA`NEECE BYRD
Funny or smart? Smart.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
Curly or straight hair? Curly.
First thing you notice on a person? Eyes.

FANTA DIAKITE
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Eyes.

MOUCTAR DIAKITE
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Curly or straight hair? Curly.
First thing you notice on a person? Personality.

GIVONA J. DIETZ
Funny or smart? Half and half.
Favorite politician? JFK.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Everything from head to toe.

FRANTZ SOUSKY ETIENNE
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Behavior.

TEENS IN PRINT

MEET THE STAFF

Boston **Teens in Print** unites the city's teens to create an outlet to inform, communicate, and provide positive change through written expression.

Write for Teens in Print!

- **SEND your essays, letters, articles, commentaries, poems, pen-and-ink drawings or cartoons, and photos.**
- EMAIL submissions to ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov
- Send them as either MS Word attachments or email messages.
- Provide your name, age, grade, and school. You must attend one of the Boston Public high schools.

FORMAT your writing

- Double-spaced.
- Times New Roman, 12-point font.
- In the upper left corner, put your name, Contributing Writer, and a title or headline.

Whatever you submit has to be

- **YOUR OWN CREATION.** We only print original work. Please write "this is my own creation" next to your name. You will not get your work back. **KEEP A COPY** for yourself.
- Teens in Print reserves the **right to EDIT your work for length, content, or appropriateness.**

Next issue: Jan/Feb 2013

Send submissions by mail to:
Boston Teens in Print
c/o WriteBoston
7 Palmer Street,
Roxbury, MA 02119

Contact us:
WriteBoston 617-541-2651

FEEDBACK!

- **Was it something we said? Or didn't say? Something with which you agree – or disagree?**
- Let Teens in Print know what's on your mind by sending us an email to ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov Please include your full name, neighborhood, and your date of birth (this won't be printed but is just to verify your age at the time of publication) and we may run your letter in an upcoming edition. **Thank you.**
- **To join the Teens in Print staff, please visit our websites and download the necessary paperwork.**

bostontip.com
writeboston.org

ILMA GOLEMI
Funny or smart? Smart.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
Curly or straight hair? Straight.
First thing you notice on a person? Smile.

RALPH T. KARNUAH
Funny or smart? Smart — not arrogant.
Touchscreen or keyboard? iPhones — I touch that.
Favorite politician? Elizabeth Warren.
First thing you notice on a person? Shoes.

NENSER KRUA
Funny or smart? Smart.
Touchscreen or keyboard? Keyboard.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood!
First thing you notice on a person? Smile.

about us

Boston Teens in Print is the only citywide youth newspaper written by and for Boston public high school and middle school students. Launched by WriteBoston and The Boston Globe in 2004, and published five times a year, TiP is a platform for student journalists, essayists, poets, and artists. It is delivered to Boston high schools, libraries, and community centers. But it is not just a newspaper — it is also, for urban teens, an afterschool program and summer journalism institute, both free. TiP gives a voice to Boston's youth, a voice that bellows from one end of the city to the other, across the boundaries of neighborhood, class, and ethnicity.

bostontip.com

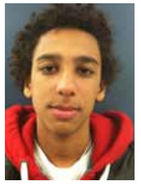
JALAYAH LAWRENCE
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? I dislike politicians.
Childhood or adulthood? Adulthood.
First thing you notice on a person? Hair.

SHANIQUE LEWIS
Funny or smart? Smart and funny.
Childhood or adulthood? Adulthood.
Curly or straight hair? Curly.
First thing you notice on a person? Everything — my eyes wander a lot.

DENNIS MEMBAH
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Adulthood.
Curly or straight hair? Straight.

MARMARIN NASIRAHMAD
Funny or smart? Funny people who are smart.
Touchscreen or keyboard ? Touchscreen.
Childhood or adulthood ? Adulthood because you're more responsible for yourself.
First thing you notice on a person? Smile.

AUDREY NGANKAM
Funny or smart? Funny.
Favorite politician? Elizabeth Warren.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Smile.

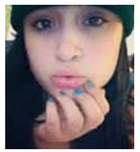


LIZANDRO NOGUEIRA
Favorite politician? Barack Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
Curly or straight hair? Curly.
First thing you notice on a person? Personality.

SHANAE SADDLER
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Malcolm X.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Clothing.

MUSSUBA SAMATI
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Who else but Obama?
Childhood or adulthood? Teenagehood.
First thing you notice on a person? Stability of teeth.

IEISHA SAMPSON
Favorite politician? Obama Llama.
Childhood or adulthood? Adulthood.
Curly or straight hair? I love my curls.
First thing you notice on a person? Style.



JALENE SANCHEZ
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Curly or straight hair? Straight.
First thing you notice on a person? Lips.

PENDA SECK
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood — because you don't have to think so much.
First thing you notice on a person? Personality.

TENNEH SESAY
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Obama.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Fake personality.

ANNA XIE
Funny or smart? Smart.
Favorite politician? Al Gore.
Childhood or adulthood? Teenhood.
First thing you notice on a person? Smile.

JAMAL YOUNG
Funny or smart? Funny 'cause I like hanging around people who make me laugh.
Favorite politician? Sarah Palin.
Childhood or adulthood? Childhood 'cause I miss the carefreeness.
First thing you notice on a person? Eyes.

ALEXANDRA ZULUAGA
Funny or smart? Funny.
Touchscreen or keyboard? Keyboard, old school.
Childhood or adulthood? Adolescence.
First thing you notice on a person? Eye contact.

Knapp time

After she died in 2002, the family of journalist and memoirist Caroline Knapp established in her name a summer internship program — administered by WriteBoston, one of TiP's partners — so that Boston public high school students could feel for themselves the frenzied flow of ink and Internet coming out of the city's newsrooms. Below, this year's four Caroline Knapp Journalism Interns recount their times working the beat at The Boston Globe (also a TiP partner), the Boston Herald, and the New England Center for Investigative Reporting at Boston University.

"Exploring new things gives you a lot of knowledge"

By Julian Bastidas // Contributing Writer

I was nervous on my first day at the New England Center for Investigative Reporting at Boston University because I did not know what to expect. The only thing I was sure of was that I wanted to get the most out of this experience. Exploring new things gives you a lot of knowledge, and it helps you to choose what you might want to be in the future.

During my initial time there, I took classes with other kids. I feel like I may have been the only person who did not have any experience with journalism. Many of the others were involved in school or neighborhood newspapers. But I did not get disappointed because I went there to learn.

I learned that it is possible to find someone online and that you can discover a lot of facts about people on certain websites. That also taught me that I have to be careful about my own personal information that I use on social networks. I also found out how to interview people.

After taking classes, I worked with another intern on an article that has to still remain top secret because it has not been published. I can say that I discovered the different points of view of students, organizations, and teachers. This was the highlight of the program, since I had to interview people like a reporter.

I might not end up choosing journalism as a career, but it was a privilege having taken this internship. It opened doors for me and let my knowledge grow. ■

"This is what I want to spend the rest of my life doing"

By Heaven Reda // Contributing Writer

In March, I submitted an application to WriteBoston for the Caroline Knapp summer internship. With little background information about the program, I knew I would want to be a part of it because it was for teens like me who love to write.

In April, I was called in for an interview. It wasn't until then that I had a sense of what I had signed up for, and I found that it was perhaps the greatest blind decision I had ever made.

As I helped prepare articles for the newspaper, my experience at the Boston Herald not only exposed me to useful techniques in the field of journalism, but has reassured me that this is what I want to spend the rest of my life doing. The unpredictable nature of the profession made the entire duration of the internship exciting and eventful.

The idea of routine scares me because it makes me feel confined and suppressed. I found that I would never actually have to overcome that fear as a journalist because days are rarely planned. The spontaneity and sense of liberty I felt is what made waking up each morning that much more pleasant.

My gratitude for being awarded this opportunity is immense, and the knowledge this experience has equipped me with is unique. The generosity of my sponsors' contributions mirrors their faith in the future of media, but also the futures of young, aspiring writers. ■

AFH photo by Jennifer Thai

"I found out a lot about writing newspaper stories and about myself"

By David Levy // Contributing Writer

Upon my arrival at The Boston Globe, I was unsure what to expect. A wide range of thoughts went through my head: How could I possibly contribute to such a lengthy and difficult process? Would I fit in this field of work? Would I have fun doing it? Despite the continued anxiety, I went in open-minded and, surprisingly, loved the result.

At the Globe, there is a wonderful atmosphere. It's a plethora of extremely intelligent and well-read individuals who all help make it one of the most popular newspapers around.

I learned many things. I learned that there is no "I" in team. It takes a team of writers, editors, and analysts to meet the expectations of such an extensive newspaper.

I also discovered that, as in school, being punctual is imperative. Be it on your timesheets or when writing a story, honoring deadlines is a large factor in how successful the paper can be.

From some of the reporters and editors, I found out that sometimes, if you want to get to the bottom of a story, you have to hunt for it. In the world of reporting, not everyone is forthcoming with information. Also, when attempting to acquire new information, ordinary Boston residents can sometimes be the best sources.

A big portion of my experience at the Globe was learning how technology plays a huge role in the new age of reporting. Twitter and Facebook — some of the social networking sites our parents would scold us for using while our homework piles up — are the same sites that are used at the paper on a daily basis.

During my stay at the Globe, I found out a lot about writing newspaper stories and about myself, and what it takes to be successful. ■

"My first day, I learned to never judge a book by its cover"

By Paola Florencio // Contributing Writer

Perspective is a funny thing.

At first I thought that The Boston Globe was just what was delivered to me — a product providing me with the news. As the weeks working there went by, though, my perspective changed from reading the paper to acknowledging its hard work and creativity.

A day at the Globe is carefully planned to succeed from early in the morning, with editors attending a meeting where they talk about what is happening and what is going to go into the paper.

At times, all I ever heard was the sound of a keyboard, but that is part of the way the office worked. People did their own thing, but they treated each other like friends instead of co-workers.

The people I met made the summer even more fun, and I found that I learned something from each one of them.

My first day, I learned to never judge a book by its cover. Everyone there seemed to be wearing fancy clothing. And then I saw one reporter wearing jeans and a baseball cap. I watched the way he loved what he did and he was my role model for the summer.

I explored different departments all over the Globe. I experienced a sports talk show, met people who review the books we read, learned how to write obituaries, and passed along news tips from people calling in.

When the mass killings happened at the movies in Colorado, I got to help interview local people and understand their thoughts and concerns.

I also went to places I had never been before, like City Hall, the federal courthouse, and the State House.

Overall, The Boston Globe was a fascinating place to work. I knew that being there would be an experience. I just never thought I would learn so much from it. ■

How a relationship can crush a friendship

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

Kristiana Mbrice, 16, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, knows that you can stop being friends with someone because that person gets into a relationship — and then drops you.

"It is possible that you can be friends with someone for all your life," says Mbrice. "I do believe in friendship, but I don't believe in eternity. Life is better when you are in a relationship and have a lot of friends at the same time. If you want to have both of them, you need to spend time with your partner, but also with your friends."

Friendship is a big part of a teenager's life. Good friends will help you in good and bad times, and accept you just the way you are. Friends give you priceless moments and treasured memories.

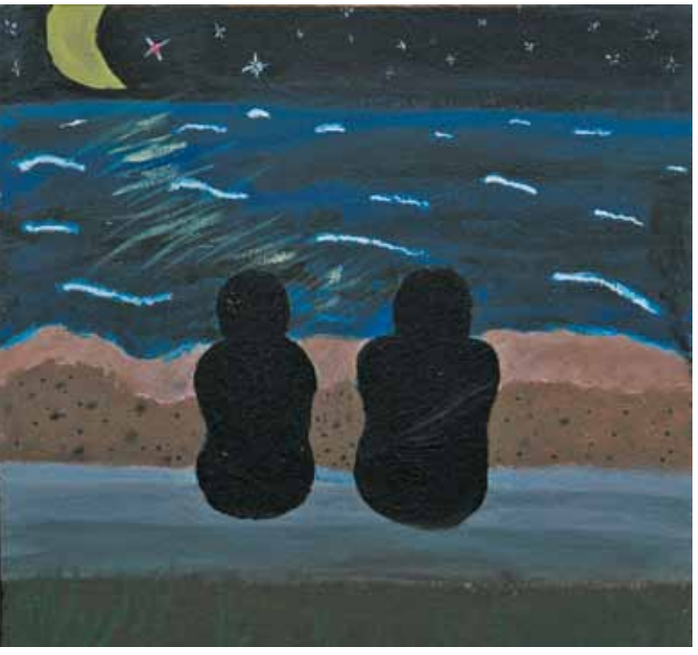
But relationships are also a big part of the teen years. Teens start to have feelings for others. Sometimes, they spend a lot of time with their partners and forget their friends.

George McDermott, 17, says he stopped being friends with a person because of a relationship that left little time for him and others.

"I think you can be in a relationship, but still have a lot of friends at the same time," says McDermott, who goes to Madison Park High School. "If I was in a relationship, I would stay with my girlfriend and I would present it to my friends."

Shantal Uwimana, 16, says that sometimes you can't have a lot of friends and be in a relationship at the same time.

"Relationship and friendship are both important, but sometimes friendship is more important because if you break up with your partner, you are not going to have any friends," says Uwimana, who attends BCLA. "I would hang out with my friends and my partner, and hope that they get along." ■



AFH art by Shisha King

Mom and dad:

BUDDIES OR BAD GUYS?

By Jamal Young // Staff Writer

Friends? Foes? Who knows? Parents in this generation are up and down on this subject. Some are laid-back and some are always on top of you.

Alethea Cannady, 18, who attends the Community Academy of Science and Health, says she feels constrained by her parents' rules, like an 8 p.m. curfew on school nights.

"When I want to do things myself like chill with my friends," she says, "I can't."

Discussions on the site philosophyforums.com present both sides of this longtime teen-parent struggle.

"[Strict-parented children] may grow up feeling under the thumb all the time, unhappy at being controlled and desiring an explosive rebellion."

On the other hand: "[Children with permissive parents] will grow up disrespectful, always fighting with everyone and feeling no love for their parents, family or friends."

Victoria Depina, a junior at CASH, says her parents are more like friends.

"My curfew is late on weekdays and I don't have one on weekends," she says.

Sometimes, Depina says, she prefers more structure in her life.

"It's cool that they give me so much freedom," she says, "but I wish that they would be a little more strict."

Marqis Moody, 17, from CASH, says he appreciates that his parents are demanding.

"They push me to do my best," says Moody, "and they make sure that I keep up with my school work. This is good for me because it gives me good skills I will need in life." ■

AFH art by Cassandra Lattimore

Rushing into relationships

By Tenneh Sesay // Staff Writer

Tyesha Morales, 15, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, says she is single because she hasn't found the right guy who will treat her like a princess.

She describes the perfect partner — someone who will help make the relationship last: "Nice, sweet, someone who will protect me, respect me, and love me. Someone who isn't going to call another girl cute. Someone who would text me good morning/good night, let me be myself, wants to finish school and get a good job."

Unlike Morales, many teens rush into relationships before they get to know the other person well, ignoring the advice: "The faster it happens, the faster it ends."

Jamilez Guerrero, 16, from BCLA, says she dated a guy for two years and found out from texts on his phone that he was cheating on her.

Now, she says, she is focusing on her studies.

Fatima Sillah, a seventh-grader at the Boston Teachers Union School, says she's single and she loves it.

"I won't have to worry about boys and heartbreak, crying, cheating," Sillah says.

Like others, she knows that relationships can become as complicated as advanced math. ■

AFH photo by Cashman Ogaus and Lena Yee

Tracking the weave

By Givona J. Dietz // Staff Writer

Many young girls in Boston are all about long hair, and if they don't already have it, it's not anything weave can't fix.

Weave has gone from famous females like Beyoncé, who have money for it, into high schools and even middle schools.

For some females, it is a long-hair addiction, while others do it for the look.

"The people on TV inspire me to do my hair this way," says 18-year-old Sacha Guity, of English High School.

Guity practiced on her hair until she could master a replica of the latest styles.

"I pay $95 plus tax every two weeks to do my hair," she says. "Since I know how to do it myself, I only have to pay for the tracks."

Samantha Strode, a senior at Boston Latin School, likes the look of extensions in her hair.

"I don't put extensions in that often because they can be heavy," she says, "but they look amazing once they're in."

Khalilah Jones, a senior at BLS, started wearing weave after junior prom and decided to continue getting her hair done that way.

Thirteen-year-old Shanika Charles, of Mattapan, is young but likes her tracks — used with a type of weave — because she always wanted long hair. ■

AFH art by Gabriela Cartagena

AFH photo by Seijah Nguyen

Early winter fashion show

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

Even before the cold weather strikes, sixteen-year-old Carla Rodrigues is on the lookout for warm clothing.

"If I see something nice, and I like it, then I am going to buy it and save it for winter," says Rodrigues, who attends the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science and is known to wear outfits that include a North Face jacket and UGGs.

Looking classy and classic are two features you want to look for when you go shopping for winter wear, teens say. That can mean a North Face jacket, UGGs, and colorful jeans.

"Nice boots and a fluffy jacket is the best way to look fashionable in winter," says Rosana Cardoso, 16, who goes to the O'Bryant.

Shontelle Trotman, 15, from the O'Bryant, is also an early buyer.

"October," says Trotman "is the time when I start shopping for winter." ■

AFH photo by Dominic Duong

Playing it safe in cyberspace

By Sheridan Cooper // Contributing Writer

Jack Connolly, 14, knows the rules of Facebook security.

"Cyber safety is protecting your information online and not friending people who you don't know," says Connolly, who attends Boston Latin School.

Youth are using social media at younger and younger ages. Because parents take their children's Internet safety very seriously, so do many teens.

"I just change my password once a month," says Trevor Price, 14, from BLS.

Clio Shaw, 14, from BLS, says she doesn't have more personal information like her address and phone number online.

"I have my name, school, and photographs on Facebook," says Shaw, "so my friends can find me." ■

AFH art by Khari Polk

Social media:

THE GREAT CONNECTOR, OR ISOLATOR?

By Jocelyn Perez // Contributing Writer

Teens can relate to this story: A mother told her daughter that back in her younger days, she would meet people by going out to new places and exploring her surroundings.

Imagine that!

Nowadays, many teenagers use the Internet to do all the work for them. Today, they get introduced to people through Twitter or Facebook — rather than through face-to-face encounters.

In her book "Alone Together," Sherry Turkle writes: "Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other. We'd rather text than talk."

The question now arises: Are social networks making teens anti-social?

Jihane Bouhennana, a 16-year-old from East Boston High School, thinks so.

"Social networks are taking away teens' ability to get out in the real world and make friends the old-fashioned way," says Bouhennana.

Others, like Carolina Forty, 17, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, disagree.

Forty believes that social networks are just the routes to helping you get to know a person.

"When I meet someone for the first time, it's fine, I'll talk to them," she says. "But sometimes they talk more through social networks than in person."

William Bonilla, a sophomore from East Boston High, says he likes meeting people through social networks; once he gets to know them in person, he says, it tends to get uncomfortable.

For many teens, communicating through Twitter or Facebook can be easier than actual verbal interaction.

"No one wants those awkward pauses when you run out of things to say," says Bouhennana.

Still, many teens know that it's hard to spark a conversation with someone in person if you've read their tweets or Facebook statuses.

After all, the dialogue ends when you already know where someone went, and with whom. ■

AFH photo by Dominic Duong

Staying friends with Facebook

Facebook offers tips for keeping out of danger online to teens, beginning with its youngest users, ages 13 to 17:

- **Make sure your password stays with you.**
- **Don't accept friend requests from strangers.**
- **If you don't want your parents, teachers or employers to see something, don't post it.**
- **Don't hide behind fake identities. It is against Facebook policy to lie about your name or age.**

Get smart

BOOK VS. STREET

By Anna Xie // Staff Writer

Ashley Liriano, a senior at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, lays out the argument that being book smart and street smart are both crucial qualities.

"Being book smart is important because without education, you can't really do much," says Liriano. "It allows you to be at the top of your class and get into the best colleges."

However, she then counters: "But what good will that do if you would be incapable of being able to interview for important job positions, or to even interact with those that are around you?"

She finally concludes: "I would rather be street smart than book smart, because by being street smart, I would be able to move forward in life, whereas being book smart can only get you as far as finishing your education."

With the price of a college education increasing each year, many teenagers are hitting the books and studying fervently in hopes of furthering their academic journeys. However, with the occurrences of violence manifesting at an alarming rate, it is no wonder many teenagers acquire survival street smart skills, as well.

Aleah Bobb, a senior at the O'Bryant, believes that being street smart is more essential.

"As people, we need some hint of common sense," she says. "Yes, we need to be book smart, too, but school does not really teach you how to be safe when you're walking home. School does not teach you how to survive in the real world. It just educates you on the information you need for your career path."

Jessica Tavares, a senior at the O'Bryant, believes otherwise. She says being book smart is more critical in today's society.

"It's important because the more you know," she says, "the higher you can be on the 'social pyramid,' in terms of your job and status." ■

AFH photo by Kachina Vallely

AFH art by Xin Liu

Cats vs. canines

SURVEY SAYS: DOGS RULE!

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

Fifteen-year-old Claudia Gomes Barros favors dogs over cats. "Most people in America prefer to have a dog than a cat because dogs are a man's best friend," says Barros, who attends the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science. "Also, cats are boring."

Indeed, canines beat cats nationwide, according to the early results of a pet-ownership survey done by the American Veterinary Medical Association and released this summer. The study shows that 36.5 percent of all households in the U.S. own dogs, while 30.4 percent own cats.

Dog people say that when they get home, their pets are the ones who start playing and are happy to see them, while cats don't do anything. Some other people think that cats are better because you don't have to take them for walks, and they are not as noisy as dogs.

Julyn F. Ryan, 16, from the O'Bryant, has reasons for choosing cats over dogs.

"I like both cats and dogs, but I am most used to cats," says Ryan. "I like cats better because they are calm, they are independent, and they are not as excited as dogs."

Nataly Garcia, 15, is in the canine camp.

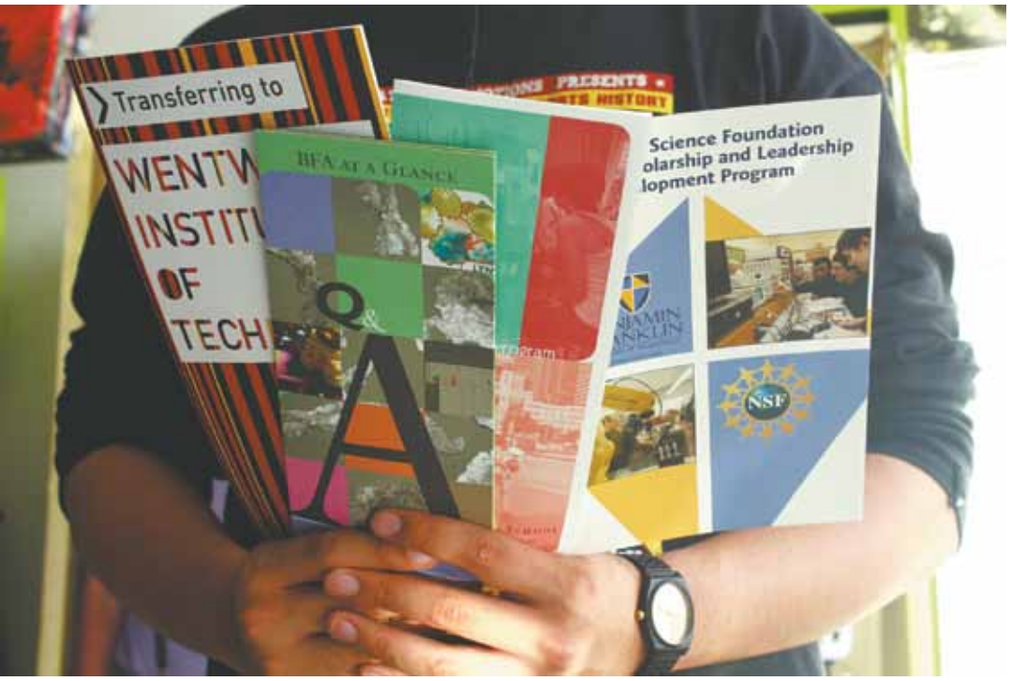
"Dogs are better than cats because they are friendlier," says Garcia, who goes to the O'Bryant.

She thinks the reason that more homes in America have dogs than cats is because dogs are loyal and can protect you, but cats cannot. ■

AFH art by Savanna McKay

AFH art by Sandra Chen

AFH art by Homar Wilson



AFH photo by Christina Vivada

Decisions, decisions

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

Julia Teixeira, 14, says that taking the test to go to the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science was one of the most important decisions of her life.

"Now O'Bryant is preparing me to go to a good college," she says.

Beyond the daily evaluations teens are forced to make — like what to wear to school — many also have to make decisions in their high school years that will affect their futures. The pressure is on. Many people later say that they regret some of those early judgment calls.

Kalsie King, 14, says that when she has to pick a path, she will ask her family for help — often her father.

"It is hard for me to decide between two things," says King, who attends the O'Bryant.

Carla Rodrigues, 16, from the O'Bryant, may ask for input from others but in the end she wants the choices to come from her.

"I ask for advice from other people," says Rodrigues, "but I like making my own decisions." ■

Liar, liar, skinny jeans on fire!

By Xhorxhia Papa // Contributing Writer

For 19-year-old Jason Huang, of West Roxbury, the top lies teens tell include topics like their pasts, their feelings, and putting blame on others for things they did.

"Lying has to do with when you are uncomfortable," says Huang. "Little white lies are what teenagers say."

Still, Huang says he believes that given the chance, most teens would tell the truth rather than make things up. For many teens, there is a sense of guilt if they fib and disappointment when the truth is revealed.

Gloria Nwaoha, 17, from Urban Science Academy, says lying for her is no use, since people can tell because she breaks into laughter or looks away.

Kristiana Mbrice, 16, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, counts these among the top teen lies: "I'm not single," "I love you, I love you," "I don't have a phone," "I don't have gum," "Nothing is wrong, I'm fine."

Teens say there are ways to help make sure that young people don't deal in falsehoods: treat them with respect, listen to their points of view, and confirm that you care about them. ■

AFH photo by Andy Guan

Great expectations

THEY CAN PULL YOU UP OR BRING YOU DOWN

By Penda Seck // Staff Editor

Many parents, and society itself, practice the belief in expectations like it's a religion. It is a way for people to punish or reward others over what they think is right and wrong, including teens and their futures.

Some treat expectations like a precious garden, cherishing them with sunlight and water so things can grow organically. With others, however, failing to live up to expectations can brand you as rebellious and disobedient and a threat to the natural order of things.

The delivery of external expectations can be a realistic way to help us reach our goals in life, but it can also limit our choices and thoughts about who we are. In the worst cases, these expectations can go beyond our imaginations, change our identities, and control our minds, expecting us to act a certain way even if it is contrary to our personalities.

We shouldn't fulfill others' hopes just to make them happy while we are crying inside. We should be answering to our own inner voices about our own beliefs. ■

You will fulfill my dreams

By Penda Seck // Staff Editor

Be polite
Be brave
Be the light we need
Every expectation nails you down
Be the one, the example of the world
Every desire punches you in the face
Be the need, the help, and the achievements
Every desire rips a piece of your humanity
Expectations and unexpected screams in your head like a wild dog
"Bring me to the light of the world"
It judges the known and unknown of your humanity
Expect my expectations or I will hunt you like a restless soul
Expect me in your dreams, nightmares, and happy days
Expect me in your desires and mine
Because
My anticipation is that you will fulfill my dreams

AFH art by George Gonzalez

Grieving for a grandmother

By Penda Seck // Staff Editor

Yesterday's smile and happiness became an ache of hopelessness and devastation when death took away my grandmother. Tears were left to comfort the pain that was moving within my heart like a sea of frustration. Even though I was six years old then, I felt a bullet was shot inside me that left a wound that would never heal.

Despite other people being there to give me love and support, I still felt deeply the loss of my grandmother. There was a side of me questioning why she had to go so soon and leave me alone. And still to this day this question haunts me whenever I see people walking on the street with their grandmothers.

I had lost interest in life, and let the pain consume me. But then I learned to let it go because my grandmother would have liked to see the happy face that I had yesterday, and would want me to make her proud with my achievements.

Grief is not an emotion that you can just conquer over a small time; it is a natural response to loss. No words can heal us completely because when we lose a person significant to us, it feels like one side that means so much is torn to pieces. And no amount of sympathy manifestation will make it right.

Still, to become overwhelmed by these emotions is a risk to our health. Sometimes it is understandable to disregard parts of life because of our hurt, but at some point we should be grateful that not everything was taken from us. And the people that we lost will eventually want to see us happy for ourselves and for them now that they are in a better place. ■

AFH art by Matthew Shea

'Tooning in

"Phineas and Ferb"

JUST CALL IT THE NEW "SPONGEBOB"

By La`Neece Byrd // Staff Writer

"Phineas and Ferb" is a cartoon show that debuted in 2008 and is cast on the Disney Channel. It may be targeted for kids from six to 11, but many more people watch it than that.

It has some of the same all-ages appeal as "SpongeBob SquarePants," which came on the scene in 1999. In fact, a 2010 article in The New York Times proclaimed "Phineas and Ferb" to be "the new 'SpongeBob.' " One reviewer compared P&F's cool wit to "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle," one of the most iconic cartoons of all time.

I like "Phineas and Ferb" because it makes me laugh. I love how these two little stepbrothers can build roller coasters, humongous ice sculptures, you name it.

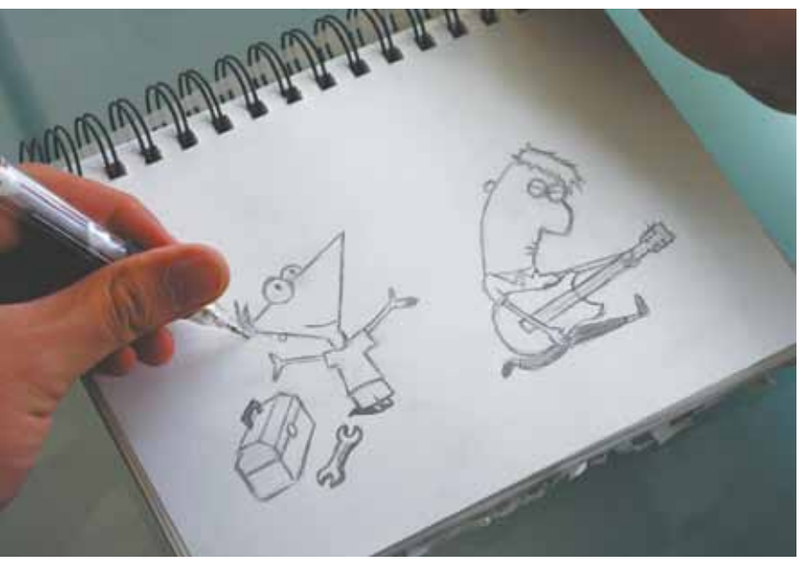
I enjoy all the characters. I feel as though they play an important role in the show – especially the boys' sister, Candace. She tends to spend her whole day trying to bust her brothers for every invention they make, but she never succeeds.

Every episode of this cartoon happens during summer vacation, and Phineas and Ferb build something new every time. Phineas' famous quote is, "Ferb, I know what we're gonna do today!" Ferb does not talk much.

What's also interesting about this show is that the brothers have a pet platypus named Perry, who is a secret agent. Perry will leave the house to go fight his arch-nemesis, Dr. Doofenshmirtz, and save the planet.

When the boys are building something, Phineas will notice Perry is gone and say, "Hey, where's Perry?"

By the end of the day, Perry is back but the invention has magically disappeared. Candace, of course, is left in shock because, without evidence, she has failed, once again, to let her mother know what the boys are up to. ■



AFH art by Cynthia Ginnetti

AFH photo by Kachina Vallely

"SpongeBob" soaks up teens' attention

By Shanique Lewis // Staff Editor

"SpongeBob SquarePants" is the type of TV cartoon that doesn't have an age limit.

This addictive Nickelodeon animation that premiered in 1999 captures the eyes of both kids and adults. At one point, according to an article in The New York Times, almost five million grown-ups were tuning in every week.

"I love 'SpongeBob' because when I was younger that's the only show I really enjoyed watching," says Marina Brea, 16, from Boston Community Leadership Academy. "And it's like when I got older, I gained a deeper understanding of the show – and it's hilarious."

Kids watch this show because of the creative under-the-sea creatures and the life lesson of friendship. On the other hand, adults enjoy this show because it is flat-out funny.

Reviewers say that one appeal of ''SpongeBob" to all ages is that it offers simple goofiness in a complex world filled with gloom.

One deeper meaning involves the interaction between SpongeBob, the sea sponge, and his best pal Patrick, the starfish, and how to build a lifelong friendship with someone that you care about.

"It is a very close relationship," says Taika Lamy, 16, from BCLA.

Despite its loyal fandom, some teens believe the show is pointless.

"I rather not watch it," says Janisel Hernandez, a junior at BCLA, "for the purpose behind it is nothing." ■

Basketball diary

By Telisha Rutledge // Contributing Writer

When I was younger, I used to be mad because girls can't play in the National Basketball Association. I want to play in the Women's National Basketball Association, but I think that the NBA is so much more aggressive and fast-paced than the WNBA. The NBA is more interesting because everyone's always doing fancy shots and passes, while the WNBA focuses on fundamentals. I understand that girls can't play in the NBA because the guy players are stronger.

I wish that the WNBA was better so that I would be more motivated to get into the league. My favorite WNBA player is Candace Parker.

Parker's 2009 season inspired me to one day become a WNBA player. Even though she missed eight games because she gave birth to her daughter, Parker still managed to lead the WNBA in double-doubles and in rebounds per game.

My favorite NBA player is Kobe Bryant. Bryant is one of the most valuable players in the NBA. Bryant didn't go to college; he went straight to the NBA from high school.

A lot of other people might disagree, but I think Candace Parker would beat Kobe Bryant in a game of one-on-one. ■

Training day

OFF-SEASON ATHLETES PREP FOR GAME TIME

By Alexandra Zuluaga // Staff Writer

Playing a sport in high school takes rigorous dedication. You have to be mentally, emotionally, and — most importantly — physically fit. While regular gym visits and healthy food envelope your athletic season, just how do your habits keep up during the off-season?

Lorenz Graham, 16, of Boston Latin School, admits his physical tendencies aren't always spot-on during the off-season,

"A few days after the end of the season, I try to keep up with push-ups and sit-ups, but just end up being lazy," says Graham.

Graham's daily in-season squash regime consists of running 10 sprints, doing 25 push-ups and 25 sit-ups, and then another six sprints, along with 45 minutes of playing squash. He does this sport three days a week, 9 months a year, from October to June.

Some athletes take a few weeks to relax and lay back, but soon take precautions to make sure they're in shape for the upcoming season.

Nya Gavin, 16, who is a cheerleader for the BLS football team, says: "For about a month, I eat what I want and don't worry about working out. But after that, I start going to the gym to prepare for the next season."

This means running on the treadmill for 45 minutes, three days a week.

Sports teams range in criteria, but every team requires stamina and devotion. Even when athletes let their spoons get the better of them, it's important to give their bodies a few weeks head start before kicking-off their athletic preparation.

Keeping that in mind, getting back into the swing of things is never easy.

"I dance for nine months, and during my vacation I run every other morning for 30 minutes," says Minas Zahopoulos, 16, of BLS.

Zahopoulos travels the world for national competitions, and his Monday-Saturday practices consist of 40 minutes of cardio (squats, spinning, jumping) and one hour and 20 minutes of Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble, and jazz dancing.

"It's twice as hard to get my body used to dancing after vacation," he says, "because my muscles relax and forget how much work competitive dance really is." ■

AFH photo by Dominic Duong

AFH photo by Karolyn Diaz

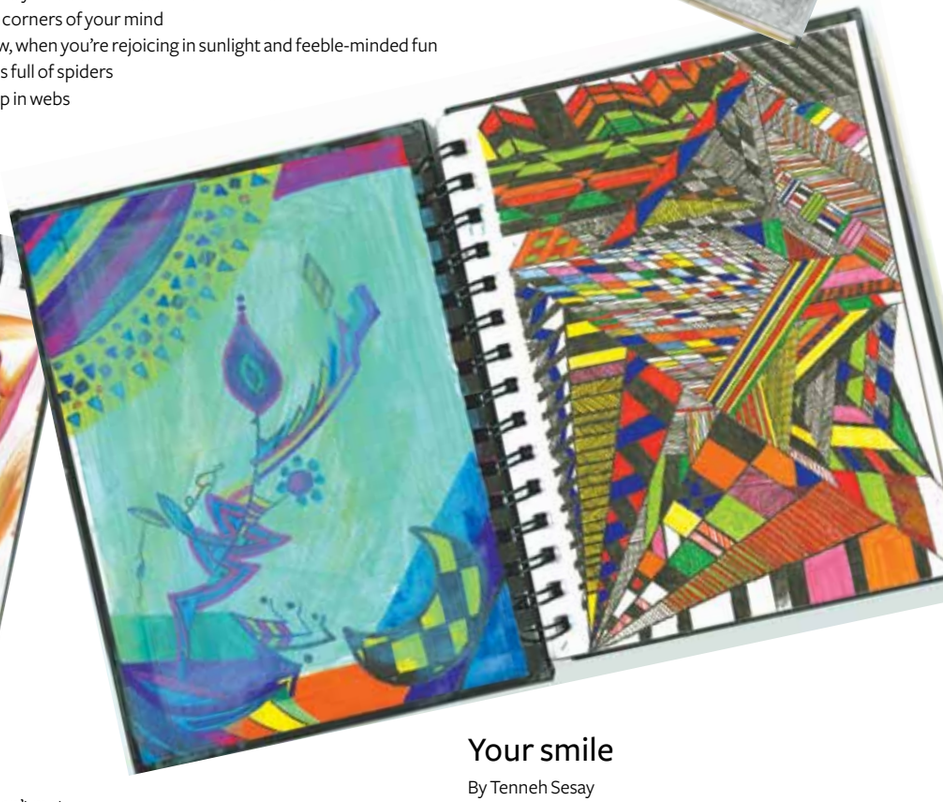
THE WALL

TiP art by Jamal Young

Webs of anger

By Alexandra Zuluaga

There's an enticing sort of thrill
About anger
It creeps its way up your skin like a long-limbed spider
Stealthy
Full of elegance and poise
But spiders don't just crawl, they strut
And anger struts
Self-assured, beautiful
And if anger could see, it would have black beads for eyes
And eight arms because there is nothing
Anger can't reach
And if anger could talk, it wouldn't say a word
Because its tales of misery and deceit lie in the crevices of intricate webs
And anger hides in the corners of your mind
So a few days from now, when you're rejoicing in sunlight and feeble-minded fun
Remember the world is full of spiders
And we're all tangled up in webs



Your future

By Ieisha Sampson

You can see that girl
Since she hides behind broken glass
She's a clever girl
She knows you cannot approach her
The glass is painful
Pain that she has learned to endure

You can speak to her
Since she will be able to hear
She's not sociable
So she'd rather ignore your call
She's been hurt before
The hurt that only she's been through

You can learn from her
She knows of things that are untold
But she won't teach you
You have to learn them on your own
She has faith in you
But you have to go the distance

My angel

By Mussuba Samati

If you don't believe in angels, you haven't met
My affectionate aunt, Tia Terezinha
You are the greatest person to me on this earth
You have the biggest heart
With you in my life, I am blessed
You are God's gift to me
The good you do for me will never be forgotten
Even though our distance is apart
You're in Guinea-Bissau, I am in America
I realize that love is missing you because we are apart
But somehow I feel warm inside, I know you're much closer
In my heart
With you in my life, I am blessed
You have always spoken up
You taught me that our silence will not protect us
You have become my savior and my angel
With you in my life, I am blessed
All that I am today or hope to be, I give you the credit for
Thank you for being my angel

Your smile

By Tenneh Sesay

Wow, your smile
The best smile
The most wonderful smile
When you smile
You let the sun shine
Smile, baby, smile
Smile so the bad thoughts will leave
Smile for the sake of life
Smile because of the hope left in life
A smile is something that brings a way to have a lucky day
Your smile gives me joy, and brightens my day
So smile, baby, smile
Smile those sweet smiles
Yup, love the beauty of your smile
'Cause your smile is so innocent and pure