

TEENS **in** PRINT BOSTON

BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT MAR/APR 2010™



Afterlife sentences

What does death look like to you?

[Afterlife Page 3]

▲ AFH image by Szu-Chieh Yun

■ BOO WHO? PAGE 5 ■ CAN'T DRINK TO THAT PAGE 8 ■ THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE PAGE 10 ■

In partnership with the
The Boston Globe

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▲ Top image by AFH Haidan Hodgson, middle image by AFH Rayshana Jenkins, bottom image courtesy of foxmovies.com.

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TEENS in PRINT

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Cover Story

In the recent popular movie, “The Lovely Bones,” the spirit of 14-year-old Susie Salmon comes to life as she watches over her family – and her fiendly killer – from a spot between heaven and earth. It is a limbo that alternates between euphorically psychedelic colors and depressingly dreadful grays. After watching the film, staff members of Teens in Print described their own visions of what death looks like to them. Here are some of their words and artwork.

Fearing the end: It’ll be the death of him

By Gabriel Ward // Staff Writer

Saying that I have a belief about death would be lying; to believe is to know. But I don’t know anything. I can run the possibilities in my head dozens of times, straining out hundreds of doubts, but to know what’s going to happen, for me, is impossible.

I can tell myself there’s a heaven, which, depending on my thoughts, has so many different faces -- one where I can sleep in the clouds, one where I can do whatever I want, or one from which I can look down on the earth. But there’s always the possibility that I don’t go to heaven, but become a ghost, dead among the living.

I can tell myself that when I die I will simply live another life; that reincarnation is what happens. But then, there is the stomach-turning possibility of nothingness; I just sit in a box decomposing.



Illustration by Gabriel Ward

None of these I believe, nor disbelieve, but the more I think about it, the more I hate the idea of death, and start to fear it. I don’t want to live this life, fearing death. So I can tell myself all these factors and possibilities. I can tell myself that I can die quickly, die painfully, or die easily in my own bed. I can tell myself that there is something after life; that death isn’t the end. Or I can just tell myself to live a long, happy life. ■

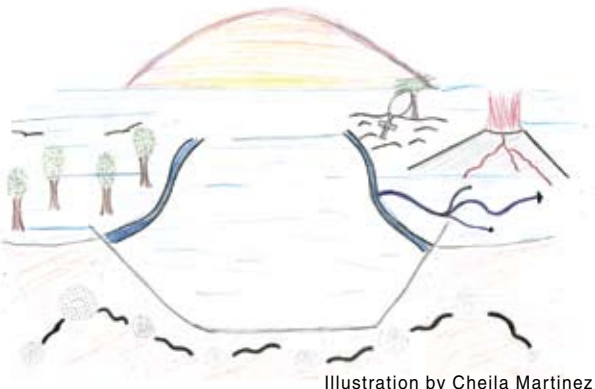


Illustration by Cheila Martinez

Death: the ultimate do-over

By Cheila Martinez // Staff Writer

Believing that after life you go to heaven is so cliché. It’s what everyone thinks. After death, I think that you go to a place where you live livelier, and you’re free. There are no boundaries, and you can do whatever, whenever.

In the film, “The Lovely Bones,” Susie feels like the place after death is somewhere where you can be anything you want to be -- from a model to an actress. But those are the superficial goals of an average person.

In the mind of a teenage girl, which I am, death is the new beginning. It is where everything starts and you can be your own person. All the mistakes that you made when you were living -- such as trusting the wrong people, and hanging with them -- are now erased and you can start over. Like the time when Bush became president and put us to war with all of our troops. His presidency led to an economic crisis that we are still living through.

On a real level, I don’t believe that people die. I believe that you leave the earth to become more living. Where we live now is a hell-hole. Once you leave the earth, you’re free from the misery that you have been living in. The afterlife comes with a do-over spell, where everyone accepts you for who you are, and you do not have to be anyone you’re not. ■

The moon is a cookie, the sun a kickball

By Melissa Rodriguez // Staff Writer

Death. Death is spiritually moving from earth to heaven. It’s the passage someone takes to a “new life.” No matter how you die, I think that the way you decide to live your life on earth determines where you end up afterward. There’s heaven, which is the “promised” land, and then there’s hell, where you pay for all

the sins you committed in your lifetime.

My image of the afterlife is my own perfect world like that of Susie Salmon. A world where there is only peace, and where you are reunited with the loved ones who had departed before you. A place where you are in control of what you are able to do, to fly at night with the stars, to swim with animals in the depths of the ocean, to be able to walk on the moon normally. A place where enjoyment is forever lasting and never dies, a place that is luminous with different scenes and colors, where the clouds are the ground, the moon is a cookie, the sun is a kickball, and there’s everything you ever wanted.

It’s living a life you wouldn’t be able to live while you were alive. Being with God and being able to still look over the people you love and never having to not know what they’re doing or feeling, never having to let the connection go. Unlike Susie, who had to release her family emotionally in order to move on, I believe you can always hold them in peacefully, forever.

In the movie and the novel, Susie isn’t able to move away from her in-between until she has let go of her family and her murderer from earth. I agree that we are not able to move on until we are emotionally set free, but not in an unknown place as the movie suggests. The movie portrays Susie not moving on due to her “unfinished business.” I believe the same thing. I just think that you aren’t in an in-between; your spirit stays on earth.

What happens after death varies between your own personal feelings. Everyone has opinions and theories -- some based on religion, others just off of imagination. In the end, everyone, even Susie, just wants to find peace. ■

Choosing God over the 23 bus

By Shanasia Bennett // Senior Editor

I was told that when you are dying, it is not as extreme as the movies make it out to be. Depending on the circumstance, the pain may feel intense. But your body dies slowly, and the pain goes away.

Learning this in Sunday School made me feel much better about dying. My religion, being a Christian, plays a major role in my afterlife. Earth is my test to get to higher ground in heaven.

I picture my soul rising into the gates of heaven, and meeting angels, and living happily and peacefully, drama free. There would be no struggling, no snitching, no gunshots at night, no gossiping. I would finally see my great-grandmother and grandfather, whom I never got to meet here on earth, as well as big celebrities, such as Aaliyah and Left Eye Lopes.

But the man I would want to meet the most is the

(continued next page)

one I believe is my creator, God. I would be nervous, but it would be the one true thing that I would do first, once I got to heaven.

I picture the clouds in the sky as my bed, and the stars as my pillow, and living in eternal peace, forever. Earth is not a permanent place; it is very corrupted and holds a lot of violence, struggles, and unhappiness. I surely would not mind living forever on earth. But if I was met with death, I'd rather be in heaven with angels that sing hymns of glory and beauty than to be stuck on a crowded number-23 bus every Tuesday. ■

Her post-life address: purgatory place

By LaDonya Buchanan // Senior Editor

Hmmm. Purgatory. That's where I'm going after death. Watching "The Lovely Bones" made me think about what's going to happen to me after I die. If I was a strong believer in The Man upstairs, then I would be going to heaven. But since I'm not, purgatory is the place for me. There are things that happen on this planet that make me think if He was up there, people wouldn't go through so many struggles – like getting raped or being murdered.

Purgatory is my destination because I haven't done enough to go to hell, but I haven't been good enough to



Illustration by LaDonya Buchanan

go to heaven. I haven't killed anyone or done something bad enough to go to prison, or hurt people enough to affect their lives. I am not a devoted Christian, nor do I follow enough steps to be on my way to a Christian's view of heaven. I don't follow a specific religion. I believe in a higher power, but I am not sure in which one I believe.

My idea of purgatory would be just like earth; it's just that I would be invisible and I would only be able to do things to either help or hurt my fate. For example, if I didn't help my enemy from when I was alive, I'd go to hell. If I forgave my enemy, and helped him if he got hit by a car or was getting robbed, I'd go to heaven. I would

also have access to all the food in the world, like the Whopper Jr, and I would also be able to teleport myself anywhere. I could read minds, too.

Purgatory is just the place for me. It's not paradise and it's not hell. I think I would love to stay stuck there just as long as I get to interact with people. Oh wait! That's called earth. Earth is my purgatory. LOL.■

"If heaven is so great, then why are people so afraid to die?"

By Tyler Cohen // Staff Writer

I think the afterlife is whatever you believe it is – although I'm not 100 percent sure what I believe in. I don't like the thought of being six feet under or being cremated. I'm not even sure if there is a heaven or a hell.

The movie, "The Lovely Bones," made the afterlife feel like something I wouldn't imagine. It also seemed like a Beatles music video. It reminded me of purgatory because it was the in-between. In the movie, Susie's little brother drew a picture of earth and heaven, but Susie was in the middle.

If heaven is so great, then why are people so afraid to die? That must mean most people do not believe in it that strongly. I personally don't know if there is a heaven because not everyone's version of heaven would have everyone in it.

If hell is so bad, then why do people do bad things? I think that it's because they don't care or don't believe strongly in hell or their religion.

The notion of the afterlife is different for other religions like Hinduism because reincarnation is really like never-ending life. In Judaism, it seems like everyone goes to heaven.

There are just too many conflicting ideas about the afterlife for me to make up my mind. Anyway, I focus on life, because it seems silly to waste it thinking about what happens after life.■

Life after death: a spirited debate

By Trev Ward // Staff Writer

Life after death is quite a confusing thing to think about, mainly due to the fact that it is an oxymoron. I wouldn't so much call it life as I would existence. I believe that everyone has his or her own personal existence, and that God is not so much a person, but a what and a where.

Life is too short for it to be the only "life" in the universe. I also believe that all people have the option to relive another life, and that all people are connected and forever linked to each other. I also believe that hell is a state of mind, and does not last an eternity – only a certain amount of time until that being is returned to fresh form and given another chance to right wrongs.

If a person could go to hell and live there forever, it would truly be wrong with any religious moral. A truly forgiving God would not let that happen to any soul. The reason I don't think life is that important is because it's so short when you compare it to other things. I feel it's safe to say, "Not to worry about things as small as one day dying."



Illustration by Trev Ward

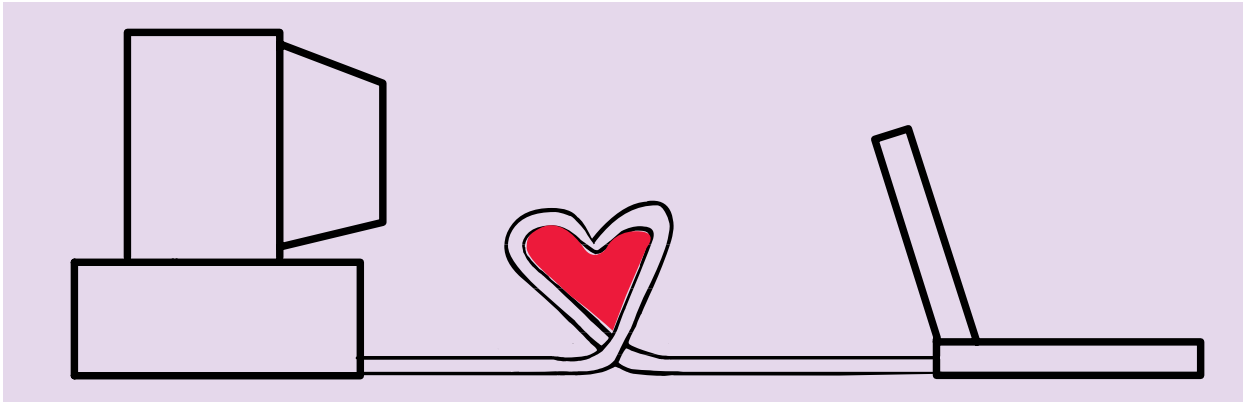
I'm not saying death does not scare me, because dying of unnatural causes is most often a painful process. The thing is that we don't know if there really is any afterlife, for the obvious reason that anyone who could tell us would be deceased.

I do strongly believe in ghosts and other unworldly beings on this earth, which means, if I'm correct, that there are a few places in the world you came from that you are tied to shortly after your death. They would turn into somewhat of a pathway to a new life, and the only reason spirits remain in their world is because they still feel like they weren't quite ready to leave.■

Feedback

The great beyond

What does death look like to you? A great big afterlife after-party? Or a whole lot of nothing? Send your thoughts to ric.kahn.jcs@cityofboston.gov. Please include your full name and neighborhood or school, along with your age as of our May 18 publication date, and we may include your writing in that issue.



▲ AFH image by Julia Morgan

Long-distance relationships: Are they worth it?

By Ashley Barker // Staff Writer

Trust. Loyalty. Respect. Love. Nowadays, it seems as if teenagers are in more serious relationships, and they are letting people know – whether it's by posting on their AIM status the date they started going out, or by PDA. Others just choose to be on the down-low and keep their relationships out of the public eye. Then there are those who have little choice – because they are in long-distance relationships and are not regularly able to see the people they are dating.

There are few teens in long-distance relationships because they are sometimes too hard to maintain when people are in different states.

"There is a lot of temptation because you're not with the person you're in the relationship with, so you feel like you're not in a relationship at all," says Kimberly Vega, 16, of Dorchester. She is in a relationship that is not long distance.

Kalyn Diaz, 17, of Roxbury, agrees; she's been in a long-distance relationship for over a year and five months. "The temptation is there because you're not there with the person physically when you want to be," she says.

While teens might not be able to be with their long-distance loves, they make up for it in other ways. They either AIM, text, call one another, or communicate through webcam.

But are teens in long-distance relationships able to mature faster when they are apart? Vega does not think so.

"They grow better in a regular relationship because they see their mate, and they wouldn't do anything that involved cheating, because their boyfriend/ girl-friend is there with them," she says. "But in a long-distance relationship, you're less responsible, and more likely to cheat."

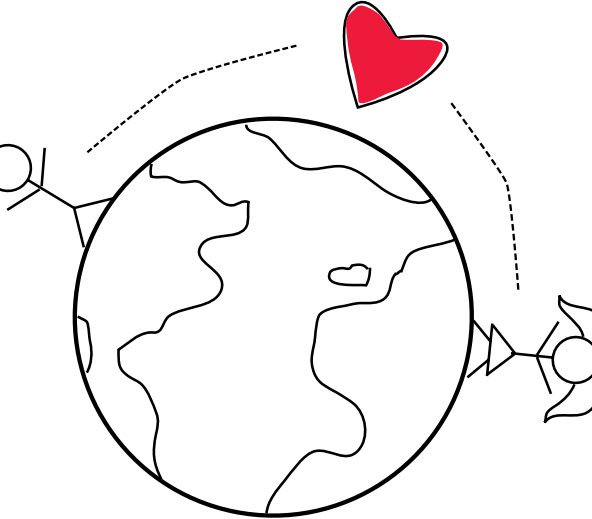
Diaz, though, believes that you develop better when in a long-distance relationship because you trust each other not to stray.

"When you're cheating, regardless of long distance or not, you're in a pathetic relationship, and that's sad," she says.

Samuola Vernet, 16, of Hyde Park, does not believe that long-distance relationships are worth it at all.

"They just won't work," she straight-out says, and, like most teenagers, she also believes that there are challenges in long-distance relationships. "Commitment, faithfulness, and meeting new people is just the beginning to troubles in a long-distance relationship."

So to all those teens thinking about being in a long-distance relationship, think twice, because you never know what's in store for you. Still, a long-distance relationship is serious, and, if you care about the one you're with, then it's worth it.■



▲ AFH image by Julia Morgan

I had fun but, yo, now I'm done

By Cheila Martinez // Staff Writer

Teenage boys act like they never want to be tied down in a relationship. The pressure of having one girl in their lives is way too hard to handle. Still, every guy is different; not all are dogs.

The way that many teenage boys are brought up to be players and heartbreakers means they now tend to cheat and lie and think it's okay. A lyric from the New Boyz hit song, "Tie Me Down," says it all: "No, I'm not going make a scene/But you can't tie me down like a pair of shoe strings."

On the other hand, girls are more serious in relationships. Amy Chen, 16, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, says "boys are lazy" when it comes to relationships, and that's why a lot never stick around with the girl for the long run.

"They only think about food, games -- most of them are selfish," Chen says.

When a guy is in a relationship, it can change based on who they are. Tien Nguyen, 16, from the O'Bryant, thinks: "Why should boys take a relationship seriously? It all depends on what kind of guy it is."

He stated that his longest relationship was his latest one -- more than a month -- and his shortest ever was the one prior: two weeks. The reason for his break-up was, to him, "It's called movin' on; you don't have the same feeling."

It seems that a guy can gain the props of being with the girl, but then she's left in the dust. A guy can be with so many girls, but if a girl goes with a lot of guys she is called promiscuous.

"If you look back in history/It's a common double standard of society/The guy gets all the glory the more he can score/While the girl can do the same and yet you call her a whore," Christina Aguilera sings in "Can't Hold Us Down."

To sum it all up, Alex Saponte, 15, from the O'Bryant, flat-out says: "Guys are perverts. If they are young, then they don't look into the future and don't want to get married and be tied down."

As the New Boyz sing in "Tie Me Down," "Like I mean... I'm only seventeen/And uhhh a perfect couple is only in a dream."■

Teens’ hearts and hands go out to Haiti

“People from all over the world can come together”

By Laurie Raphaël // Staff Writer

I did not know what to expect when I found out about the magnitude -7 earthquake that occurred west of Haiti’s capital. I am Haitian and Canadian but have never traveled to Haiti. I truly and really saw Haiti after watching Anderson Cooper’s news coverage of the disaster on CNN.

The images were both graphic and heart-breaking, but there was one in particular that brought tears to my eyes. This video showed a dump truck carrying a large number of deceased and unidentified bodies. The truck unloaded these dead bodies into a mass grave. Watching this made me wonder if I had a family member in that particular grave. The person I was most worried about was my uncle Pierre, who was in Port-au-Prince on vacation. He was thankfully alive -- although the wife and child of my father’s nephew were both found dead.

I then started to think about my Haitian friends and how Boston has a large population of Haitian people. It was sad to hear some say

that their family members were sleeping on the streets or in their backyards, because they were afraid to go back into a structure, fearing that it would collapse on them. Once some of the communication lines were restored, I quickly found out that this was also the case for some of my family.

Soon after the tragedy, what touched my heart in a positive way was seeing how people and other nations were quick to help. Many Americans were swift to adopt Haitian children and try to bring them into the United States, where they could obtain a better life. From Panama sharing their emergency aid supplies with Haiti, to people from the Dominican Republic searching the concrete rubble with their bare hands in hopes of finding



▲ AFH image by Cashman Ogaus

survivors, to the millions of dollars raised during the days of the tragedy – all this made me realize how people from all over the world can come together and help a country even if they do not have a personal connection to it.■

“Countless kids received bad news by the hour”

By Alexander Bezek // Contributing Writer



▲ AFH image by Richard Philippe

These last weeks and months have been extremely difficult for my peers, their families, and the United States government. On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, a massive level-7 earthquake hit the island of Haiti. Causing hundreds of thousands of deaths – including sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers -- it took the hearts and lives of many people across this small country.

The West Roxbury Education Complex, which is divided into four schools, has a huge Haitian population. Many of these students have family in need; countless kids received bad news by the hour. One student explained to me in tears how he'd just been informed that his mother had died. She was crushed by a collapsing building. This is not easy news for anyone to hear -- finding

out that your mother has just died, and you never even had a chance to say goodbye.

We've started a campaign, collecting anything that we think could even be mildly useful: cans, food, clothing, shoes, bathroom products. Already one of the poorest nations in the world, Haiti now has even less than before. So, every single item will surely make a significant difference for all of the tough survivors now in turmoil.

This is a horrific tragedy, of course, but it seems to have brought everyone together, including communities, countries, and people in general. From celebrities to random business owners, they are contributing in some way or another. Sometimes it takes a disaster like this to show how big of a support system our country can be.■

“I wish I could do something big”

By Rosanny Gonzalez // Contributing Writer

Haiti is still going through an enormous disaster. Much destruction and death happened in this country. It was so unexpected that nobody could’ve predicted this earthquake, and, if they did, it was too late to prevent it.

As I woke up from my nap on January 12, around 7 at night, my mom called and informed me about it. I immediately thought of my family members in the Dominican Republic, who are neighbors of Haiti.

Those two countries are located on the same island of Hispaniola, and if something happened in Haiti, I thought it could have happened in the Dominican Republic. When I called my grandmother, she was very worried because they also felt the shake in the DR. The newscasters were saying something about a tsunami on the island, and it scared everyone even more.

I feel really bad because all of those people in Haiti are homeless. Haiti is a very poor country, so they don’t have the resources to respond to such a tragedy. If there wasn’t any international help, Haiti would have been in bigger trouble.

Seeing the whole country like this made me think about all those children in need of their mothers, and all of those hungry people without any food. People were sleeping in the streets with no protection. I don’t know what I would do if I was in a situation like this. Thousands of people died, and more thousands are lonely and sad, without anywhere to go.

I feel so terrible. I wish I could do something big and help them out because this is too much. I am happy that they are getting so much help from other countries. We need to show that we are one race, one world, and that we all need to be there for each other.■



▲ AFH image by Massiel Grullon

“L’UNION FAIT LA FORCE”

By Gladymir Joseph // Contributing Writer



▲ AFH image by Cashman Ogaus

A man watches attentively as rescue workers search for what seems impossible to find. Despite the fact that the 72-hour mark had passed and any last survivor would have been presumed dead, this man is hopeful of finding his wife under a collapsed building. After many attempts, he tries looking again, praying that she is somehow alive. This man remains faithful that somehow God will perform a miracle. Faith at its best is how anyone can describe this tragic situation. As he approaches the rubble again, the man hears a voice that is faint, but oddly familiar. He looks down between large pieces of rubble, and in the midst of darkness, he hears his wife. Suddenly, he screams at the top of his lungs, as tears roll down his face: “SHE IS ALIVE....SHE IS ALIVE... MY WIFE IS ALIVE.”

As the workers begin to pull her out, the husband grips his hands firmly together. Three hours later, the woman is removed from the rubble. Not only is she alive, not only is she without critical injury, but strangely she happens to be singing a song, praising God for allowing her to live. When reporters ask if she was scared, she responds: “No, I am not afraid of death.” Clapping and cheering occur as the couple gets in their car and rides away. The whole story is seen by millions of people watching on TV.

This story stands out as a clear outline of the people of Haiti. Long before the earthquake, Haitians had endured adversity in its many forms -- hurricanes, AIDS/HIV, political corruption, child trafficking, and more. However, one quality seems to stand out. Though the people of Haiti struggle, they seem to find a way to persevere. No matter how tragic the situation gets, Haitians always find a coping mechanism -- whether it be singing, praying, dancing, grieving -- that resonates in the circumstances, allowing them to continue life.

News reporters were amazed how the Haitians could improvise after the earthquake by building tents out of trash bags, bed sheets, and sticks, in less than 24 hours. More shocking was

their ability to make food out of mud in a desperate situation. Though the people of Haiti endure harsh realities, resiliency is what allows them to move forward.

Thus, Haiti does not need our sympathy as much as the people need our help. It is common for us to ask: “Why help? Why help a helpless situation? Why bother donating to a country that has been corrupted by violence and bloodshed?” These questions may be difficult to answer when we are on the outside looking in, but when you take into account the history Haiti has overcome (slavery, dictatorship, natural disasters), this tragedy seems to be history in the making.

A wise man once told me: “To whom much is given, much is required.” I am Haitian, and, fortunately, have not lost anybody in the earthquake. As privileged as we are to be Americans, we have the obligation to extend our hands to others in need. Though the country is far from recovery, together we can build a better Haiti.

I have worked with a local Haitian coalition to collect medical supplies at my school. Donations will go directly to a base established in Haiti. This future goal is not impossible. It only requires unity, because, as stated in the Haitian flag, “L’UNION FAIT LA FORCE” -- Unity is Power.■

Underage and under the influence

I can handle an M-16, but not a margarita?

By Paige Carruthers // Peer Editor



▲ AFH image by Daniel Iltire

Flip on your TV to the latest teeny-bopper series, and sometime within the half-hour segment you'll see a classic high school party scene. Undoubtedly, this event is set in someone's basement. Teens are dancing, music is blasting, and nearly everyone is nursing one of those infamous plastic red cups. Eventually, the police crash the party for "disturbing the peace" and "underage drinking," and while these claims are certainly legally supported, are they really justified? Upon turning 18 you are legally considered an adult by the state. All rights and responsibilities of a citizen fall upon you -- all except for one: the right to enjoy a beer or any sort of alcoholic beverage. At 18, you can drive, exercise your right to vote, and, most importantly, go to war. Why is it that the state recognizes an 18-year-old as mature enough to know the rules of the road, elect a leader of a nation, and witness the gory atrocities of the battleground -- yet not able to know his or her limit of alcohol consumption?

Is it the ominous fact that, according to a 2002 report, 25% of alcohol in the United States

is downed by underage drinkers? In actuality, the primary reason for this is the drinking age restriction, or the MLDA (minimum legal drinking age), which is set at a painful 21. It is a time-tested theory since Adam and Eve that you only want what you can't have. In "Why the drinking age should be lowered," Indiana University professor Ruth C. Engs appropriately calls alcohol the "forbidden fruit" for college students. Alcohol is only that much more attractive because it's illegal. Engs cites a survey showing that 22% of students under 21 admitted to being heavy drinkers, compared to 18% of those over 21.

With the drinking age at 21, alcohol consumption seems taboo, and encourages furtive guzzling in frat houses and basements instead of out in the open at restaurants and bars, where undoubtedly imbibers are much more responsible. In such public arenas, drinking is not just allowed, but more importantly, monitored. In clubs, there are bouncers, whose intimidating presence is enough to keep drinkers in line. In Jack Hitt's 1999 New York Times Magazine article, "The Battle of the Binge," he states that, "If you're 18 to 21, it's 1920's again and a mini-Prohibition is in full swing. As a result, moderate drinking has almost vanished among students, and more tellingly, from school-sponsored events."

Many teenagers today cannot fathom a time when drinking was actually tolerated and even encouraged by schools and universities; however this was the exact case at many colleges. This was to teach students how to drink socially and responsibly, rather than recklessly. Hitt goes on to say that, "By denying the obvious pleasure of drinking and not teaching it by example, is anyone really surprised that we've loosed upon the world a generation of feral drunks?" While I wouldn't go as far as characterizing teenagers as "a generation of feral drunks," it's true that many youth these days have almost turned binge drinking into an official sport.

The United States, along with several other countries, has the highest drinking age in the world. Many nations have set the age at 18, realizing that with age comes responsibility, and that this responsibility should include alcohol consumption. After all, responsibility is only achieved when it is given.■

Is fat the new phat?

By Gena White // Staff Writer



▲ AFH image by Vicki Chin

The media are part of our lives every day, whether or not we want them to be. From billboards to magazines, we see the images: skinny models, baring it all. For generations, thin has been in.

But in the 21st century, things seem to be on a different route. Are large-size models the new norm? From V magazine's plus-size issue, to Dove, the soap company known far and wide for the half-naked curvier models used to advertise the company -- it seems as though bigger is better.

But is this truly a new movement, or just a trend in the media?

"I think it's just the time being," said Garrecia Powell, age 15, from Dorchester. "The modeling agencies never stay the same."

While many modeling organizations are projecting this new concept, they have a tendency to mix up the truth. The models who are considered "plus-size" seem pretty average in life, not what society conceives as "fat" -- yet they make them seem so.

Portraying regular, healthy woman as "plus-size" to the nation may not be as good as it seems. The modeling agencies that make many young women self-conscious about themselves by depicting anorexic models as the "perfect" picture of beauty now characterize typically-dimensioned models as "plus-size." Many girls feel the pain of insecurities due to images making them feel inadequate because they do not look like that.

This new fad: Is it really positive and empowering for women, or is it just another scam to make them feel out of place and ugly? Personally, I feel as though the companies are just taking advantage of this situation -- using a new fashion fad to get attention and profits. These businesses want the money, and if plus-size models are the new thing, than they will take advantage of it.

I know that these bigger women being used as models make me want to buy things. I feel these organizations are reaching out to me because they understand how hard it is to be a little bigger than average in a skinny person's world. Once again, it is the corporations taking advantage of its consumers. But you be the judge: Is "fat" really the new "phat?"■

Ubuntu:

(everyone is human)

Sparkling the truth

Group ignites youth activism

By Shanasia Bennett // Senior Editor

He started out with nothing to do after classes, a teen surrounded by people who were going to jail or dropping out of school. He decided almost instantly that he did not want that to end up being him. He wanted to do something positive, not just for himself, but for others, too.

Finally, Phillip Simon, a senior at Boston Latin Academy, came across a youth-led organization known as Spark the Truth. The group fosters youth leadership by adopting the vision of "Ubuntu," a philosophy also followed by the Boston Celtics. According to Simon, Ubuntu means that he acknowledges that everyone is human.

Spark also encourages youth responsibility though events such as a leadership summit,

a peace conference, and the Audacity to Dream Basketball Tournament, this year scheduled for April 2 at the Madison Park Community Center. For the first time, girls will be able to share the spotlight on the court with the boys.

The tournament first started in 2007. "The homicide rate in Boston was very high, everyone was walking around with pins and ribbons like it was cool," said Tisha Guerrier, one of the founders of Spark the Truth and a sophomore at Emmanuel College. "I had lost a cousin to violence and refused to wear a pin because, to me, what does wearing a pin prove?"

During that first year, the gym where the hoop tournament was held was filled to its 500 capacity.

Guerrier said she asked people there to close their eyes, and to stand up if they had lost one person that year. Most had. Then she asked: How many had been to a funeral more than once that year? Most of the crowd was still standing, she said.

Bianca Dunbar, 17, is a student at Boston Latin Academy and a part of the Spark the Truth leadership team. Like many other Spark members, she joined for a very powerful reason. For her, it was the killing of her cousin, an artist. "Knowing that he did something gave me more ambition," she said, "It motivated me to make a change. I wanted to finish something that he would never be able to finish." ■

Shanasia Bennett is a member of Spark the Truth's leadership team.

BSAC BUZZ

By Raychel Wingert // Contributing Writer

Throughout the many projects we are working on at the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC), the phrase "peer culture" has been brought to our attention. What is peer culture? This two-word phrase can be expressed in many ways. For example, peer culture can either be something good or something bad, depending on how you look at it. Some words that come to mind are friendships, responsibility, and the environments at home and in school that make you who you are. Maybe the words stereotypes, attitudes, and discrimination also take a role in this, too.

Do you feel as though the peer culture in your school acts in a positive way? If not, how do you think you can improve this? Some students feel

as though choosing to always do the "right" thing plays a part in their attitudes. But how do we always know what the right thing is? When BSAC asked some high school students why they act the way they do, some said that it had to do with self-consciousness, being scared their friends will think less of them, and also low self-esteem.

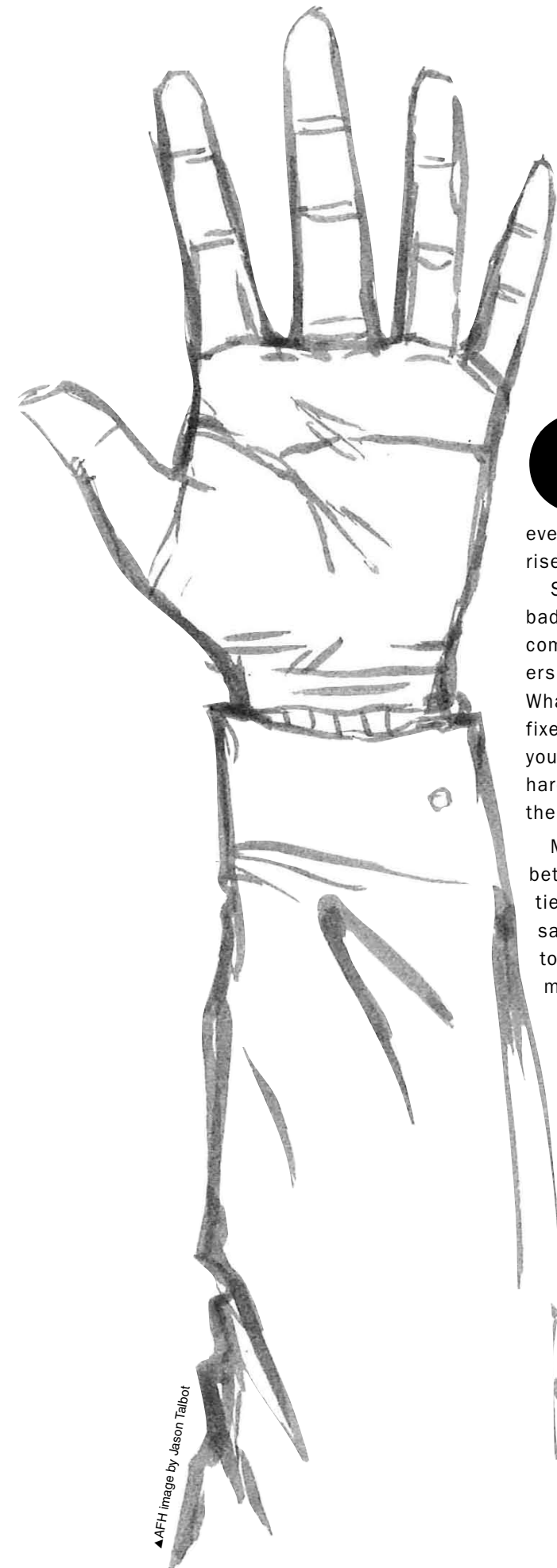
It is easier to change something with a group of people rather than on your own. This brings me to leadership. How can you influence your peers to take on leadership roles? Start out by trying these strategies yourself, and see how they work. It is always easy to see things from how you look at it, but try taking other peoples' perspectives into account. Everyone should have those one or two people they can ask for advice. For example,

some teens may not feel comfortable asking their parents about relationships, but when it comes to their friends, they are open to any suggestions.

We as individuals can do all this, but what about the schools themselves? Teachers are sometimes very derogatory to us, and do not treat us with the respect we deserve. Have you ever heard the phrase "look to your right, look to your left, the people on either side of you may not be there when you graduate?"

Instead of trying to scare us, don't you think they should be trying to motivate us? ■

If you are interested in joining BSAC or getting more information about our work, please contact Maria I. Ortiz at mortiz@boston.k12.ma.us or at 617-635-8079 ext 104.



Free government money

Why the census counts

By Roxanne Taylor // Senior Editor

Okay, so we know that the United States is in a recession, schools have cut back on the budget, the MBTA has increased fares, and even items on the McDonald's dollar menu have risen in price.

So, with all of these things affected by the bad economy, wouldn't you want some money coming in from somewhere? What if your teachers could actually get the supplies they need? What if the parks in your neighborhoods were fixed up? What if the libraries, hospitals, and youth groups had more money to go around? Too hard to believe? Through the US census, though, the government is helping teens out.

Many youth don't realize the connection between the census count and their communities. Shayla White, 17, of Odyssey High School, said: "The only thing I know is basically you get to go door to door to talk to people to see how many people live in your household."

Yes, according to census.gov, it is the system that the federal government uses to count the people of America, and it is required to take place every 10 years. But, also, the government is giving money to help your community – a share of billions distributed nationally based on head counts – but, first, officials need to know exactly how many people live there.

For example, to receive funds for extra-curricular activities, it may depend on the numbers. Necolette Pratt, 15, a student at Urban Science Academy, believes that the government should have "more community

places like after-school programs."

She supports the tally. "The census is a good thing because it helps the government keep track of all of the people in the country, so they can have enough money to support them," Pratt said.

Officials say teens should take notice and get their families to fill out the census form. According to Michael Williams, a partnership specialist for the 2010 census, "It directly impacts the amount of resources they can be given."

Teens not here legally may be scared to have their families fill out the census for fear of getting caught. Pratt said that if she was not a legal resident, she wouldn't reveal herself on the form.

"I wouldn't feel safe because I am not supposed to be here," she said.

But census officials say not to worry. Williams said the information cannot be used to arrest or deport someone, and that there are penalties for those who breach that confidentiality.

In Boston, Williams indicated that the groups most difficult to tally are "usually minorities and immigrant groups." That's one reason why census officials want teens to tell their families to participate. Officials are so intent on enlisting young people's assistance that some have been visiting schools to get the youth on board. To further hammer home the point, April 1 has been declared National Census Day.

White said teens should take the time to help. "You never know," she said, "when you will be in need of money." ■



ASHLEY BARKER
Your own catch phrase: You 'lil person
A fad you fell for: Skinny jeans
Country you'd like to visit: Any country in the West Indies
Favorite style of music: Soca



SHANASIA BENNETT
Something you'd like to do before you die: Write my life story
Oprah or Tyra? Tyra — she's more fun and has more interesting topics. Sorry Oprah!!
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Better bus scheduling
Favorite style of music: R&B. Love it, love it



LADONYA BUCHANAN
Something you'd like to do before you die: Speak at least five languages fluently
Oprah or Tyra? Neither. I hate girly talk shows
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Stuart Spina (Insider) LOL
A word you created: Boobaloo- Expression said when someone speaks with forked tongue (lies)



PAIGE CARRUTHERS
Oprah or Tyra? Ellen!
A fad you fell for: Skinny jeans
Country you'd like to visit: India!
Favorite style of music: Motown =]



TYLER COHEN
Something you'd like to do before you die: Run the Boston Marathon
Your own catch phrase: "Damn straight"
A word you created: Frickshist
Favorite style of music: Old school



JOSE GUILARTE
Something you'd like to do before you die: Visit my native land (Cuba)
Your own catch phrase: Strive to be the best, never settle for less.
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Route 16
Country you'd like to visit: China



XHERSI LAKA
Something you'd like to do before you die: Visit the Rock 'n' Roll Museum
Your own catch phrase: "Just like every cop is a criminal, every sinner's a saint."
Country you'd like to visit: England
Favorite style of music: Classic rock/metal

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 both MS Word attachments and as an email message.

➤ 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—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.

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c/o WriteBoston
7 Palmer Street,
Roxbury, MA 02119

Contact us:

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TOM LEU

Something you'd like to do before you die: Write a book
Oprah or Tyra? Tyra
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Add more buses
Country you'd like to visit: Japan



KATRYNA MAHONEY

Something you'd like to do before you die: Pursue happiness
Oprah or Tyra? Oprah
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Make it sanitary
Country you'd like to visit: China



CHEILA MARTINEZ

Something you'd like to do before you die: Sing the National Anthem at Fenway Park
Oprah or Tyra?: Tyra lol
"You wanna be on top."
Your own catch phrase: "Ok, uhhh, bye."
A fad you fell for: Big scrunchies



KAMEISHA MOBRAY

Something you'd like to do before you die: Make a difference
A fad you fell for: MySpace
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: The fact that they forgot how to tell time
Favorite style of music: I don't discriminate.



LAURIE RAPHAËL

Something you'd like to do before you die: Work for the United Nations
A fad you fell for: Baby Phat coat with elastic around the waist
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: The 30 bus schedule
Country you'd like to visit: Brazil



MELISSA RODRIGUEZ

Something you'd like to do before you die: Learn to fly
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Everything!
Country you'd like to visit: Ireland
Favorite style of music: Rock



DAJA TAYLOR

A fad you fell for: Converse
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: The hours of certain buses
A word you created: Thutt
Country you'd like to visit: Japan



ROXANNE TAYLOR

Something you'd like to do before you die: Make the world a better place somehow...
Your own catch phrase: Tomato sauce and chicken !!!
A word you created: Futuraprima (Future Prime Minister)
Favorite style of music: Reggae and Dancehall



PATRICIA VANRIEL

Something you'd like to do before you die: Sky dive or bungee jump
Your own catch phrase: It is what it is!
A fad you fell for: Bright-colored tube socks
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: Spacing between the seats. Too close.



GABRIEL WARD

Oprah or Tyra? Conan
Your own catch phrase: Razzmatazz!
A fad you fell for: Wearing banana peels on your head
Favorite style of music: Japanese Pop Techno



TREV WARD

Something you'd like to do before you die: Live
Your own catch phrase: In the end, the Tektites always win
Country you'd like to visit: Cloud City
Favorite style of music: Japanese Pop Techno



GENA WHITE

Your own catch phrase: "RAWR!"
A fad you fell for: Skinny jeans, sadly
One thing you want to change about the MBTA: The rude people riding it
A word you created: Sheer-epic-awesomeness



Bully pulpit

To help combat bullying in Boston, Mayor Tom Menino has set up a hotline where you can anonymously report incidents that occur online or in person. The hotline is staffed by trained public-health professionals. So, call it if you need help: 617-534-5050.

Happy meals

Jeremiah E. Burke High School teacher Maria Depina asked the juniors and seniors in her Intro to Media class to create their own special recipes for success. Here’s what some of them cooked up:



▲AFH image by Rayshana Jenkins

Passion pie

By Adrienne Martin // Contributing Writer

- Ingredients:
- 13-21 years of education
 - 1 heart full of passion
 - 1-2 pounds of lifetime supporters
 - 1 career-span of devotion
 - 1 lifetime of determination
 - *1-3 pounds of failed attempts
 - *1-3 pounds of resilience

*Note: The failed attempts can be added to the mixture at any time -- as long as you add the resilience right after.

1. Pour the education mixture into a large bowl, and then add in the passion, stirring real slow.
 2. Gradually add the lifetime supporters; beat the blend at a medium pace until it is consistent throughout.
 3. Put in the devotion, and continue churning until the mixture is soft and smooth.
 4. Marinate the mixture in the determination, then refrigerate for 10 minutes before serving.
 5. When ready, the success should taste sweet and should leave a satisfied and content feeling.
- Serving Size: 1 person

Warning: This recipe is not recommended for social events and parties, for it may not be right for everyone.

Barbecued bliss

By Arnaldo Pires // Contributing Writer

In order to have a successful life dish,
Be prepared to cook more than twice.
Add your family into the mix,
You need them to survive, 'cause they're everyday-life's bliss.
Add two cups of encouragement, and two cups of motivation,
Mix them together with a teaspoon of determination.
Make sure you have just enough friends,
The more the better, 'cause the fun will never end.
Knowledge is power, and power is respect,
Without these ingredients, what hope do you have left?
Remove the selfishness, and the anger,
Change the attitude,
And you'll have something spectacular.
Add some creativeness with a batch of imagination,
Heat this up as high as you can,
Add some practice and maybe a helping hand.
Add all of these ingredients together,
And take a couple of bites.
Enjoy it forever, 'till the end of your life.
Serve to your friends and family, if you've got enough,
A successful life dish, that's all you need -- pretty much.

Peace of cake

By Ademir Mendes // Contributing Writer

To be successful in life, you need ¼ cup of dreams, ¼ cup of hard work, ¼ cup of determination, and ¼ cup of dedication. After all of that, you will need a sprinkle of positive attitude combined with school, and marinated with peace. You could also add some negatives -- drugs and violence -- but that will make it taste bitter and unpleasant.
By leaving those out, and blending the first couple of tasty ingredients with some milk and eggs, you will have a sweet batter. Then you will need to put it in the oven for about 30 minutes and then let it cool down for about 15 minutes. Watch out -- don't burn yourself now.
When it cools down, you can mix in some kindness and respect. After all that hard work, you can enjoy this tasty dessert. You shouldn't be afraid to share this recipe with the world.



▲AFH image by Mattaya Fitts

Lovin’ loaf

By Tonya Jeffers // Contributing Writer

I'll need 1 cup of love from my family and friends,
2 tablespoons of encouragement, from beginning to end.
3 cups of studying, blended with after-school activities,
4 pounds of rest and sleep mixed with no stress or worries.
¼ cup of failure and disappointment will be added on the way,
I won't worry because I'll have my water with me every day.
Okay, now it's time to stir up the reading and the listening,
But don't forget to add the laughing and the praying.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees, and then pour all the ingredients into a pan.
Take a break, relax my body, and say, “Yes I can!”
Finally, my success meal is finished and it's time to be served,
And I'll get all the victory that I've deserved.



▲AFH image by Mattaya Fitts

Sautéed swag

By Joao Cabral // Contributing Writer

I have the keys to a recipe for success. It starts with a cup of willpower. You have to have the will to do the right thing for yourself. Add a half a cup of endurance to stick though all your failures. Add a cup of heart and devotion for pulling through problems. There's also an element of being criticized, and accepting those thoughts as help.
One ingredient you can add at any time is swag. Your swag is what makes you successful in your own unique way.

Hugs-and-kisses casserole

By Chrismaldy Morgado // Contributing Writer

1 whole heart of love
300 kisses
600 hugs
Mix in some challenges and
Spice up the colleges.
Throw in passion and
Heat up the action.
2 gallons of dedication
And a lot of concentration.
Add many stressful nights
Many arguments and many fights.
Determination and confrontations.
And, finally, take out of the oven,
What is called success...
In the end, you can finally impress.

Instructions: Preheat your education at 4 years of high school, and check the grades every semester. If the education does not seem to be cooking well, add some heat to the process. Mix in family and friends to spice up the motivation. In a bowl, place all of your concerns, and put them aside. Grind the excuses and add in stress. Let it marinate for another 4 years, and when it's done, you are ready for life.



▲AFH image by Alice Tran

Fame fondue

By Lenford Coote // Contributing Writer

It is harder to stay successful than to become it. It takes a lot to remain on top. To do that, follow the ingredients below:

- ½ cup of diligence
- 1 tsp of skill
- 1 tsp of pain
- 1 ½ cups of luck
- ½ cup of fame
- ½ cup of dedication, power, and will
- ¼ cup of determination
- 3 cups of confidence
- ½ tsp of heart

In a medium pot, combine determination, confidence, heart, and diligence. Cover and cook for about 20 minutes. Gradually add in your secret ingredient – God. Sprinkle in skill and pain. When finished, use luck and fame as flavoring. There you have your recipe to stay on top of your game.

Support soufflé

By Patricia Vanriel // Staff Writer

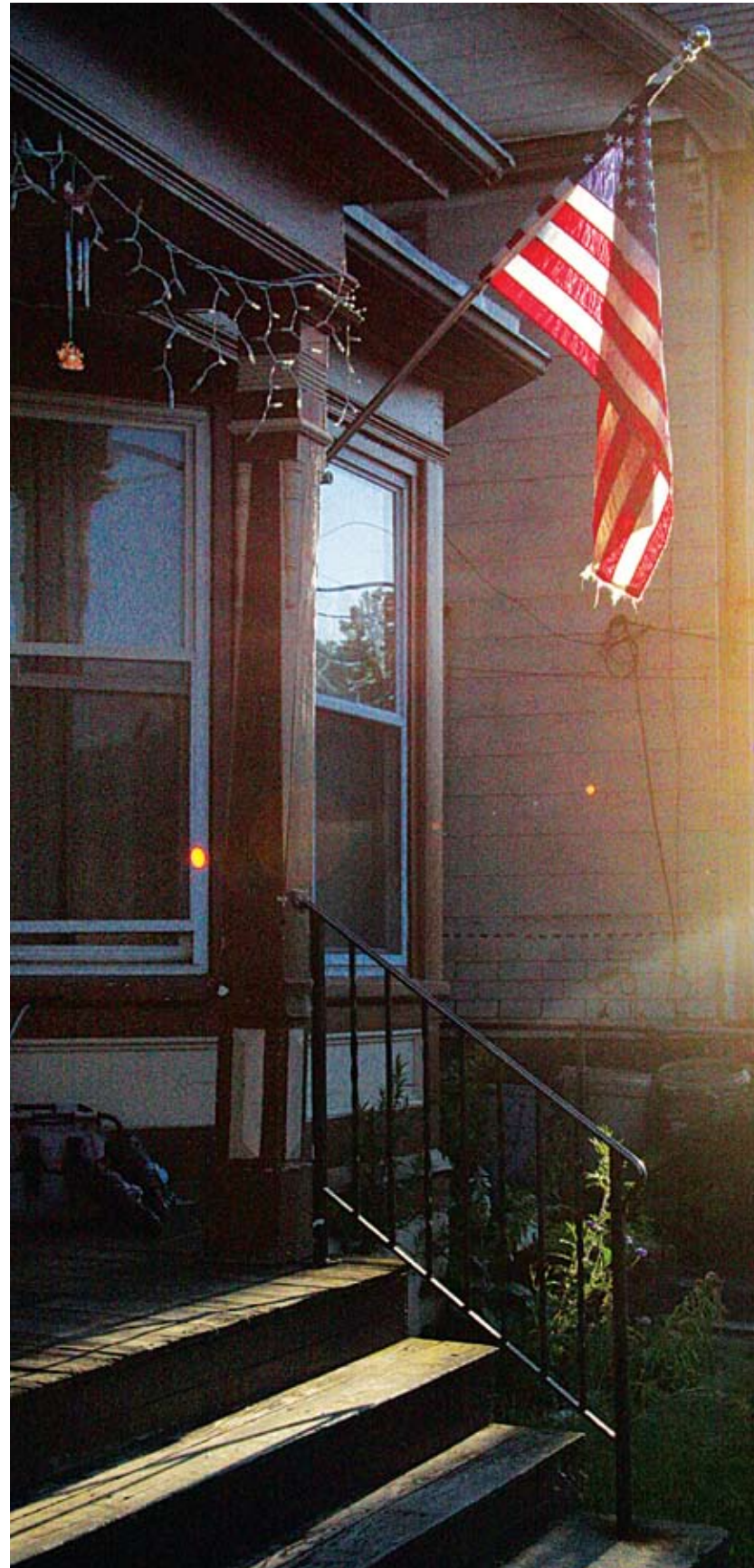
- Ingredients
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 cups of failure | 4 cups of confidence |
| 3 cups of passion | ½ cup of disappointment |
| 2 cups of commitment | 6 cups of support |
| 2 cups of dedication | 2 cups of determination |
| 3 cups of motivation | 8 cups of love |
| 6 cups of ambition | |

Preheat life to 400 degrees.
In a large bowl, mix failure, disappointment, half love, and half support.
Add motivation, ambition, and dedication.
Blend until smooth.

Topping
In a small bowl, mix passion, commitment, and confidence. Add determination. Slowly stir in remaining love.
Grease baking pan with remaining support.
Pour mix into baking pan.
Sprinkle in topping.
Put the baking pan into life.
Bake for 30 minutes.
Let cool, then enjoy!!!!
Serving size: 1 person

Assimilation: the American way or a wrong root?

By Tom Leu // Staff Writer



▲AFH image by Mary Nguyen

If you're a teen of color and are first generation, then you've probably heard the term "assimilation." As we all know, assimilation in the US is the process of learning and adapting to American culture. It sounds good on paper, considering your life is now in the US. But assimilation is not entirely accepted by parents who wish for their children to follow in their footsteps.

Some kids pursue their cultural roots to honor their parents' desires and carry on customs. Others are open to bask in American culture and explore a new lifestyle. In this debate, there is no right or wrong answer with how people want to live their lives, according to teens interviewed, who say that whatever is most comfortable is the top priority and should be fully embraced.

The decision not to assimilate can be a noble one. Many young people choose to keep their parents proud by carrying on their traditions, although life in a new country calls for changes. Argenis De Los Santos, 16, of the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, is a strong believer in keeping to roots, because "roots are identity," he says. De Los Santos is a Dominican teen who is supported by his parents. They give him pride in his culture. For De Los Santos, there is no pressure to assimilate; he chooses to make friends with others like himself. If you don't believe he genuinely likes his roots, just ask him about his love for Dominican music and his position as treasurer of the Talented and Gifted club, which primarily targets Hispanic teens at his school, though all are welcome to join.

Some say that assimilated teens are stuck-up because they are perceived as shameful of their traditional practices and are too weak to resist peer pressure. But this stereotype may not always be the case; sometimes it is against their will because they were raised in an Americanized environment. Edward Quintanilla, a 17-year-old who

is also Dominican, considers himself to be more American, although he is very much involved in Hispanic culture. Quintanilla and his family were immersed in rap and hip-hop music when he was a child, and he still listens today. He finds American culture to be advanced when it comes to technology and he appreciates the industrialized system. "I was born here to embrace American culture," he says firmly, and he finds nothing wrong with a slight sway from his background. Although he is set on sticking to American culture, his decision does not prevent him from retaining some Spanish flavor -- for example, being fluent in that language.

There also exists another option -- simply embracing both an American lifestyle and old-world cultural practices. Take O'Bryant AP English teacher Nora Tsoutsis. She enjoys the "inclusive" and friendly Greek community and shows her love through teaching the Greek language. In America, Tsoutsis adores the opportunities that present themselves. She is able to incorporate both elements of her Greek traits and her American identity. Tsoutsis can keep her parents happy by retaining her Greek heritage, while still taking part in American culture. Although she prefers living in America, Tsoutsis is not opposed to the occasional visits to Greece.

All the interviewees seem happy with the way things turned out. Santos' decision to reject change allowed him to avoid conflict with his parents, and let his comfortableness with his Hispanic background prevail. At the same time, Quintanilla refused to let his ethnicity dictate his personality, and manages to live a chipper life. As for the hybrid, Tsoutsis' balancing act of both Greek and American culture led her to a career as a teacher. What they all have in common is that they did what made them happy, and looked back with no regrets -- even as everyone took a different route but ended up in the same joyous state. ■

Shipping out

Rise in deportations divides families

By Melissa Rodriguez // Staff Writer

Teresa McPheter is a single mother of three children. The oldest is a boy of four and her twin girls are three. Five days after the birth of McPheter's son, his father was deported back to Jamaica. The dad was born in Jamaica, but came here at the age of one. The father grew up in America, lived in America, got his education in America. Still, according to McPheter, he was deported at the age of 26 due to a brush with the law.

"An extra hand could have helped," said McPheter, who lives in West Roxbury. "That's the reason why it takes two people to have a child."

McPheter is one of many parents who, because of deportation, have to go through the struggle of not having their partners there to help raise their kids. And hers are only a small percentage of kids who have to grow up missing a parent figure who had to leave -- not by choice -- but by force. In fact, between fiscal years 1998 and 2007, because of immigration violations, the government removed from the country 108,434 parents who have US citizen children, according to a January 2009 report from the Department of Homeland Security.

Overall, local statistics were not readily available. But nationally, according to the US Immigration Customs Enforcement agency, the number of those ordered deported or returned to their countries of origin rose during a ninth-month period last fiscal year over the same time in fiscal 2008, to 271,200 from 229,800.

"[There is] a lot more enforcement now, jails are full," says Boston lawyer Jeffrey B. Rubin. "More and more people are getting deported."

Rubin says his firm is currently handling 30 to 35 deportation cases compared to less than 20 in years past.

Rubin said that in cases where teens and children are involved, the situation is more delicate.

"Devastating, for a teen in particular, to be separated from a parent," said Rubin. "When you're a teen, you have already developed that relationship. It's terrible. It's one thing for a parent to go to jail and another to not have a parent around at all."

McPheter said that being a single mother is a difficult job. "It's a never ending race," she said. "It's tough. You work hard and the only time you see them is when you get them dressed and to bed."

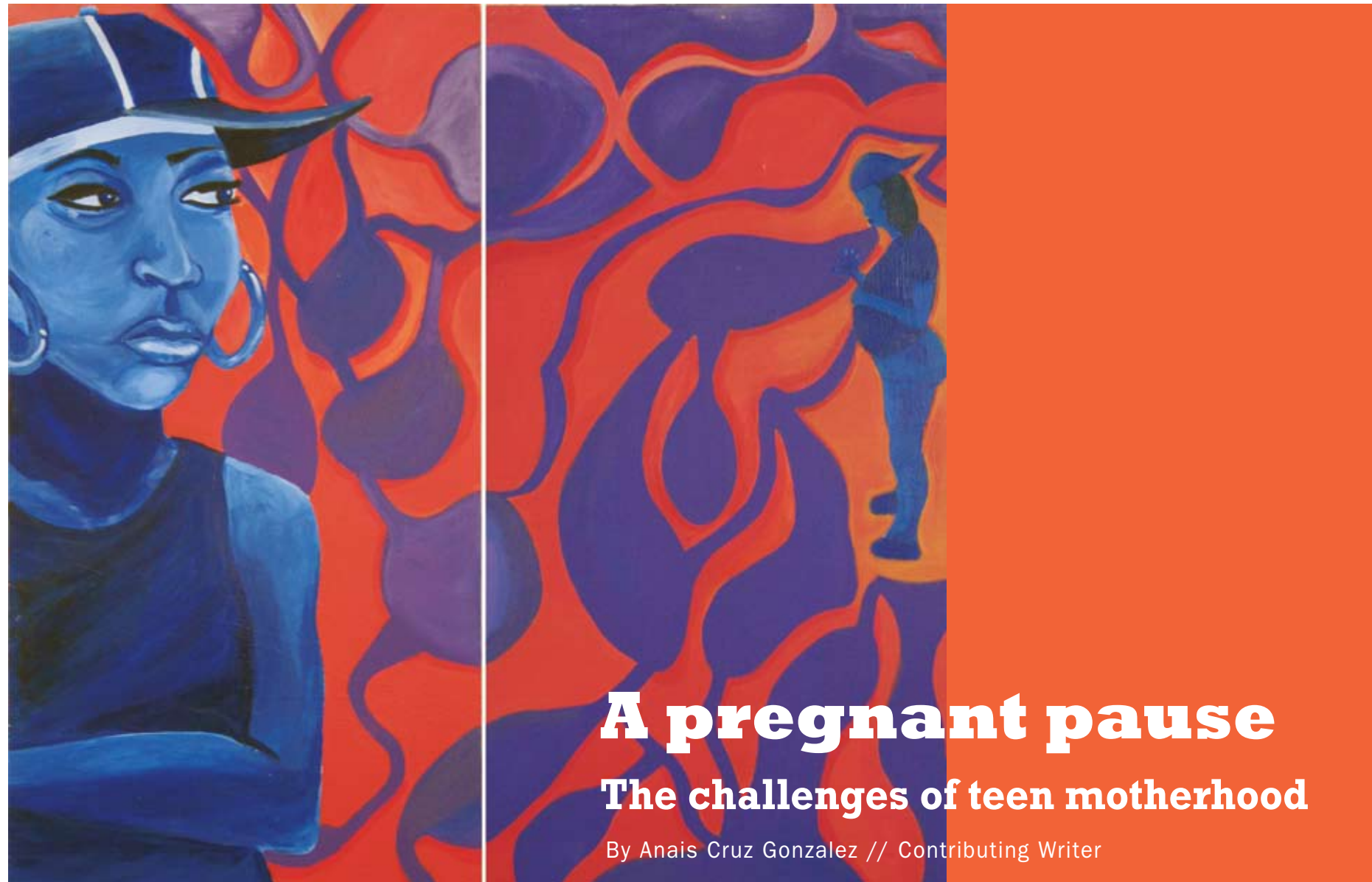
For her son, McPheter just wishes that the boy's father was near so he could have someone to hang out and play with, instead of being surrounded by all females.

However, McPheter's main concern about not having the father of her children around is for her twin girls. She's a little fearful, she said, for when they become teens, and wonders whether not having their dad there will affect how they act with other men.

"Not being able to have a male figure makes me nervous," said McPheter. "Maybe not having a father that knows how to love them hopefully won't drive them to go crazy." ■



▲AFH image by Mary Nguyen



▲AFH image by Tuki Babumba

Are you confused about teen pregnancy? Well, who isn't? Teen pregnancy is a topic that everyone has questions about, but not all are brave enough to speak up. The highest rate of teen pregnancy in the industrialized world is in the United States. This can be a big problem. According to Planned Parenthood, about 31 percent of young women become pregnant at least once before they reach 20 years of age – that's almost a million teen pregnancies a year. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy says that 8 of 10 of those pregnancies are unexpected and that some 80 percent of them happen to unmarried teens.

This problem can put these young girls' futures at risk. Only about one out of three teen mothers receives a high school diploma, according to the National Campaign. Of those who do make it to college, according to stayteen.org, less than two percent get a degree by age 30.

Another problem is that many of the fathers don't put enough effort in, and don't marry the mothers. Nearly 80 percent of unmarried teen mothers end up on welfare because they don't make enough money to support their children, the National Campaign says. Meanwhile, statistics show that the daughters of teenage mothers are 22 percent more likely than others to become teen moms themselves, while 13 percent of the sons are more likely to end up in prison.

Some teens say: "We get it, we know the best way to protect ourselves is abstinence." Every teen knows this, but only a few actually follow that advice. They are being pressured by their peers and get very confused about what to do. Three out of four girls, and more than half of boys, report that a girl who has sex does it because her boyfriend wants her to, according to the National Campaign.

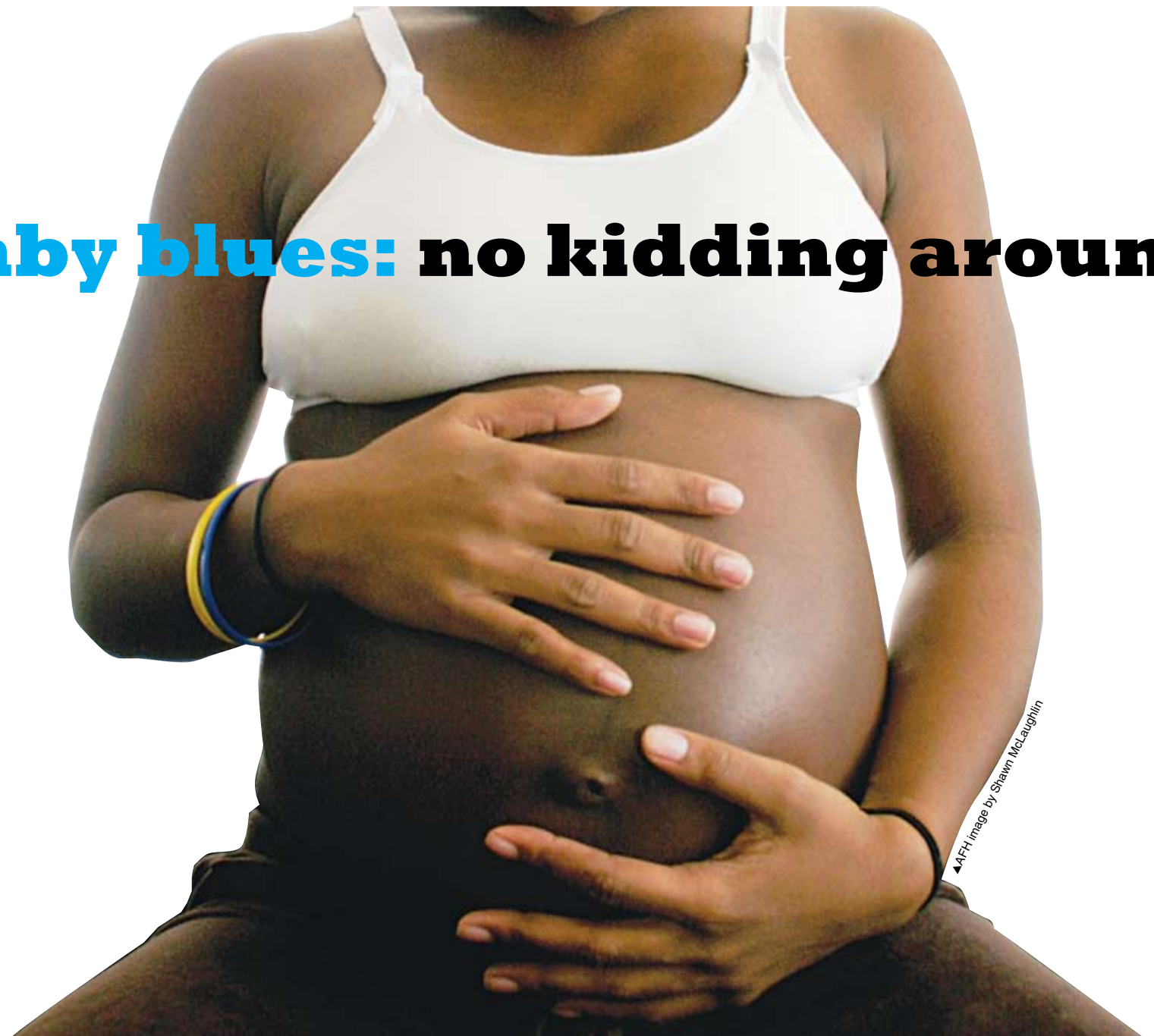
Some believe teen pregnancy isn't bad – as long as the young parents stay in school. Others feel babies

bring too much stress to already pressure-packed teen lives. Numbers from the National Campaign show that 8 in 10 teen girls and 6 in 10 boys say they should have waited until they were older to have sex.

To stop the problem of teen pregnancy, we need to work together. There are a lot of ways to prevent it. The two most common solutions are staying abstinent, which means you don't have sex at all, and the other is to have access to contraception, like condoms or birth control pills. A sexually-active teen who doesn't use contraception has a 90 percent chance of becoming pregnant within 12 months, according to the National Campaign.

Parents should develop healthy relationships with their kids to lower the risk. The National Campaign reports that 95 percent of adults and 85 percent of teens think it's important that students be given a strong message that they should stay away from sex until they are out of high school. And who better than a parent to make that point? ■

Baby blues: no kidding around



▲AFH image by Shawn McLaughlin

By Victoria Ramirez // Contributing Writer

I have come across a huge problem in my teenage life. I have noticed that more young girls are beginning to have children at a young age. Why is this? I feel there should be more sex-ed in schools now. Do young girls believe this is cool? The new thing to do?

I personally find that bringing children into this world is a beautiful thing. But is it right for a young teenage girl who hasn't even finished high school, or begun to live her life, and is still growing up, to take care of a baby?

I became so fascinated by this, and had so many questions about it, that I took matters into my own hands. I questioned two young mothers,

who wanted to remain anonymous.

The first girl is 16 and lives in Hyde Park. I asked her: "Did you decide to get pregnant?" She said: "No! But I find it to be perfectly fine. It was a mistake, but I don't regret it. I actually love being a mother. It keeps me off the street and keeps me busy."

I then asked the second girl the same question. She is 18 and is from Jamaica Plain. She did not choose to become pregnant, and said: "I really don't enjoy being a mother. It's hard work and I have no time for myself. I really don't think I was mature enough for a child, but it was my mistake and I have to deal with the consequences that come with it."

The 18-year-old doesn't really seem to be too happy. She complained a lot as I interviewed her, and wanted me to tell other young women not to have sex until they are really ready for a baby.

I still felt as if my question wasn't answered, but I then began to think about it all: Is it that young girls are easily influenced by the guys who say they "love" them? And why are these young girls giving up their bodies at such a young age? Shouldn't they be focused on their futures?

I feel a girl in this situation either wants attention, or fears that if the guy she is with doesn't get what he wants, he'll just move on to the next girl. What has happened to our society....? ■



▲Image courtesy of foxmovies.com

“Avatar” leaves some viewers, not box-office, depressed

By Luisa Caridad // Contributing Writer

Most of the times after watching a film, you leave thinking, “The movie was good, the movie was bad, it would’ve been better if...” and things like that. What if when you left the theaters you had this sense of emptiness? Well, this is what a lot of people are feeling after watching “Avatar.” CNN reports that some viewers are experiencing depression, and others suicidal thoughts. The rea-

son, experts are quoted as saying, is that the utopia shown in the movie does not exist in real life. After watching the movie, some have said they feel like their world had turned gray, and that everything they had worked for seemed meaningless. This may seem a bit eccentric, but it is understandable that the movie may have left a huge impact on people -- even if it wasn't something as extreme as depression or suicide. After all, the

movie was not only nominated as one of the best films of 2009, but it is also a box-office smash. It contains environmental and political statements, as well as messages about terrorism and government corruption. Online forums have been created to help those individuals who, after watching the movie, have been afflicted with an illness now dubbed the “Avatar blues” -- and they’ve been packed. ■

Prepare your heart and soul

By Trev Ward // Staff Writer

Ten years ago, a follow-up to three of the most popular games of their time was released. In this case, the three aforementioned games would be Pokémon Red, Blue, and Yellow. The sequels, Pokémon Gold and Silver, were a hit. Then, back in 2004, Nintendo remade the first games in the series in Pokémon LeafGreen and FireRed. This started what seemed to be a new line of Pokémon games in their own form of remakes. And now, this month, Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver were released for the Nintendo DS/DSi. These are very new, because not only are there added areas and changes in the main story itself, but it is very involved with the three “Sinnoh” games, for there were three different



events (the Arceus, “Shiny” Pichu, and Jirachi) for Diamond, Pearl, and Platinum versions to be traded to HeartGold and SoulSilver. But that’s just the first new innovation. The next feature introduced in these games is the “Pokéathlon,” which is the Johto equivalent of the contests in Hoenn and Sinnoh. They involve a series of mini-games such as hurdles, ring fights, and even capture-the-flag. Any Pokémon competing in the Pokéathlon’s performance is based on its species’ own stats. The safari zone also returns, and is now customizable. The more items you-

have in your safari zone, the more likely different Pokémon will show up there. This brings us to the final large difference, the Pokéwalker! This is basically a “Tamagotchi” for your Pokémon. You simply transmit your Pokémon from HeartGold or SoulSilver, and bam! You can carry your favorite Pokémon around with you wherever you go. This is also an effective way to raise your Pokémon’s happiness. You can also catch wild Pokémon and find items as you walk with your Pokémon. (You can only hold three of each at a time.) All in all, I’d say you should dust off your Nintendo DS, because this is the first title really worth buying for it in the last couple of years. ■



▲Images courtesy of Nintendo.com

“Black Boy”

Richard Wright finds a world of hurt in South and North

By Jonathan Nelson // Contributing Writer

Moving to Chicago from the South didn’t make any difference in Richard Wright’s life. He writes in his classic autobiography, “Black Boy,” that he went from one problem to another. In the South, people beat him because of his color, but at least he knew that prejudice was the cause. He understood what was happening to him. But in Chicago, people acted like he didn’t exist. He felt loneliness. People minded their business and no one basically cared what the other was doing. He faced more discrimination in the South, but the North was a dirty and poor place. In the South, he experienced segregation, which caused inner hurt. It was against the law to sit next to a white person. When he got to Chicago, he was looking for signs that said “For white” or “For colored.” But he discovered that in the morning, he didn’t have to wait until a white man got his newspaper first so he could get his. “There was no racial fear,” Wright wrote. But Chicago gave him another kind of anxiety. The people there were not kind at all. “I caught an abiding sense of insecurity in the personalities of the people around me,” he wrote. Though they were places apart, Wright felt pain in both regions, the South and the North. He fled one troubled area, only to be snared by another. ■



▲AFH image by Mary Nguyen

▲AFH image by Chris Rogers

“Acceleration” is a great ride

By Ariela Parrilla // Contributing Writer

I found the book, “Acceleration,” by Graham McNamee, to be one of the best I’ve read. We are introduced to a teenage boy named Duncan who lives in Toronto, Canada. Duncan works in the lost-and-found unit of a train station, and he often comes across strange items. One day, while he’s working, Duncan stumbles upon a diary, and soon he discovers that it isn’t any average one. After reading the first few pages, Duncan realizes that he has, in fact, come across a serial killer’s journal of plans, plots, and sick ideas. In this book, we follow Duncan through a crazy path of trouble as he takes it upon himself to find the killer, whom he gives the name “Roach.” Although Duncan is scared, he does not hesitate to continue his search. He feels as though he would be to blame if something happened and he had chosen to do nothing. This book takes us through an accelerating ride of twists and turns and definitely shows the true meaning of determination. I enjoyed reading this book for many reasons, the first being that it earns its title. McNamee writes with such imagery and description that it made me feel like I was actually there with Duncan on his hunt. He makes the characters seem like people that we know, and, in doing so, he helps us relate to the story. Things that Duncan goes through in the story can happen to anyone, and even though it is just a book, I feel it taught me a lesson: One should never be a bystander to any type of trouble because things can go completely wrong in the blink of an eye. I would definitely recommend “Acceleration” as a great read because it is truly intriguing. ■



▲AFH image by Mary Nguyen

“I am from life”

By Gabriela Camargo // Contributing Writer

I am from mamones, mangos
And exotic fruits
I am from conflicting but clean hoodz
I am from culecos and men dressed in polleros
Playing the drums right outside my house
“Escucha al Viejo y Ilegaras a Viejo” and “Cono”
I am from Panama City to Dominican Rep
The United States, too
Celebration to celebration, fights to fights
I am from a family tree
That begins with royalty and ends with me
In the back of my mind there lies a dream
Of good homemade food and photos click “Click”
In this dream I see myself on a Gucci
pageant making
History, money, and a three-floored house
I am from a family of do’s and don’ts
Oh, I forgot to mention trust
I am from child abuse, stumps, and fronts
The jail and a room surrounded by mud
I am from the empty me
That couldn’t be filled with the “Arroz Con Leche”
Or the “Carne Azada” instead with the almost-done diary
I am from the great grandmother
Who not long ago considered me dead
For a few nickel coins
I am from the priceless mother
Who forgives and offers the best to her ungrateful daughter
I am from that bedroom
The only witness of my real soul
That not even I know
I am from West Roxbury
Where I want to touch the cloud
And see the interesting view
From drunk college students
To the homeless man on the corner, gone
To the dead leaves going back and forth
To the little baby’s gravestone under the tree
To the old perverted owner of the corner store
I am from many places



▲ AFH image by David King



▲ AFH image by Jeremy Becker



▲ AFH image by Amy Tsui

“Tiny voices”

By Vicky Nikollo // Contributing Writer

Complicated as you make it
Take it as you wish to see
A tiny voice is never silent
Finds its quiet still believed
A trust in something coming
And your cunning finds more faith
A fear is here and sears the hunger
Lost in such a desperate place
Of and for a favorite fashion
Put your passion on a plaque
My wants and needs are barely noticed
Now I want the fever back
Chase down this bitter promise
And just be honest with yourself
The fondness for your grander wants
Still haunt the strongest lack of help
Relying over an epiphany
Pity it’s happened much too late
It’s stunted and it’s shunted
An edge gone blunt from too much wait
Now my voice is not so tiny
Rhyming echoes thunder on the walls
Though I’ve been gone now for so many years
Still your tears...
Sting...
Sear...
Yearn...
Forever fall

Good hair, bad hair: the sequel

One teen addresses the state of her own tresses

By Penisha Hill // Contributing Writer

In our last issue, we asked readers to respond to the follicle chronicles of TiP staffers by writing about their own heady experiences. Here is one hair-raising tale.

For as long as I can I remember, my hair has been chaos on my head. It all started when I was an 11-year-old fifth grader, and was constantly made fun of because of my big, thick, kinky hair. The teasing brought my self-esteem down. I tried to fit in with the rest of the girls, and I decided to perm my hair.
Enduring the horrible smell -- like rotten eggs -- I sat through expensive, burning, stinging perms, just to feel better about myself. My grandmother believed in keeping her hair natural, and she never approved of my hair perming. She was a Southern woman who embraced her hair, and who she was. She always told me, “The more nappy you are, the more beautiful you are.” But I didn’t listen, and, eventually, the perming caused my hair to fall out. It made me feel terrible. It fell out in big patches, and I had to cut it all off.
I then went to hot combs, flat irons, blow dryers, and braids. My grandmother would take two days to braid my hair because it was so kinky. But her words stuck with me, and I started to believe her. “Natural hair is beautiful hair,” she would say as she braided, and I started to accept my hair for what it was.
Then, right before my first day of high school, I decided to start wearing my hair in natural-looking dreads. I was nervous because it was a drastically different look for me. I started twisting them by myself, and I felt strange, bald, and very weird. Gradually, they grew longer and fuller.
I was worried about whether or not my family would accept this look, and to

this day they don’t totally understand why I wear my hair this way. But I think back to the days of my grandmother telling me to stop ruining my hair with chemicals and hot combs, and embrace my natural beauty. If she were still living today, she would be so proud of me because I turned back to my natural roots. Dreading my hair is easy, natural, and unique. I never really understood what my grandmother meant -- until now.■



▲ AFH image by C Rochalski

From
Homer
to Dante

By Tyler Cohen // Staff Writer

ACROSS

1 “Spider pig! Spider pig!”
5 Wrote “Inferno”
7 “Party in the USA”
9 First draft pick of the 2004 NBA draft
12 The biggest country in the world
13 Monte Carlo casinos
14 Pennies are mostly made of this
17 "The King"
18 How many cups of coffee have enough caffeine to kill you
20 State with a population of 6.4 million
25 Animal that eats its prey alive
26 President during the Boston Tea Party
28 Largest marine animal on earth
30 Ruler who took over France after the revolution (first and last name)
33 The language Latin comes from
34 Biggest land animal in the world
35 Batman actor

DOWN

2 Person who went on the “midnight ride”
3 Hermione Granger's real name
4 Smallest bird in the world
6 First to do “Twist and Shout”
8 #34 on the Celtics
10 What TiP stands for
11 Capital of Afghanistan
15 The only US president to resign
16 Capital of Haiti

19 Animal that has killed the most people
21 Leader of the British who died in the Battle of Trafalgar
22 Who sings “Bad Romance”
23 When the moon is only sometimes out
24 Star of “Sherlock Holmes”

27 One of Mark Wahlberg's latest movies
29 A funny name of a tree
31 The first team to win the Super Bowl
32 Former host of “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?”
33 They sacked ancient Rome

For answers, please turn to next page.

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THE WALL



Image by Trev Ward

"I was in heaven"

Patricia Vanriel
When I was in his arms, I was in heaven. I smiled for no reason, because he was near. I wasn't as serious, didn't need to have as much control. He made it easy to release control. His touch made me soar on cloud nine. He's caring, sweet, and perfect for me. I don't go too far away because a mountain might sprout up in my footsteps. I know I can stay in his arms forever because there's only 24 hours in a day. I was in heaven when I smelled his unforgettable cologne, mixed with detergent. I felt at peace. In his arms I felt bliss, joy, and the constant need to smile. I was in heaven. If this is what heaven feels like, I don't want to go to hell for a while.

AFH image by Yessenia Valentin



Image by Ashley Barker

From Homer to Dante

answers to the crossword puzzle

Across

1 "Simpsons"

5 Dante

7 Miley Cyrus

9 Dwight Howard

12 Russia

13 Monaco

14 zinc

17 Elvis

18 one hundred

20 Massachusetts

25 hyena

26 nobody

28 blue whale

30 Napoleon Bonaparte

33 Greek

34 elephant

35 Christian Bale

Down

2 Paul Revere

3 Emma Watson

4 hummingbird

6 Top Notes

8 Paul Pierce

10 Teens in Print

11 Kabul

15 Richard Nixon

16 Port au Prince

19 hippo

21 Horatio Nelson

22 Lady Gaga

23 day

24 Robert Downey Jr

27 "The Lovely Bones"

29 sassafras

31 Packers

32 Regis

33 Gauls

Image by Trev Ward



Laurie Raphaël

A lot of pins were yelling Obama's name
While many others were yelling for McCain

A century and a half after the Constitution abolished slavery
And guaranteed blacks the right to vote
Obama was the one who made history
He was the president America chose

Some look at Obama and see a god
While others look at him and see a fraud
Some think he's going sky high
While others want him to die

Obama is the man of the moment
So pay a little respect and show it

He's the man leading this nation
And hopefully in the right direction

He has said himself that our healthcare is too costly
And our schools fail too many

And the economy is a catastrophe
Now that Obama is in office
People want him to stop this

The exposure
Of foreclosure
People living out on the streets
And have nothing to eat

The economy is a catastrophe
Now that Obama is in office
People want him to stop this

"Beauty unforeseen"

Jose Guillarte

Could such beauty go unforeseen?

The world has been blinded by love's malicious deeds,
Broken hearts, weakening knees, could this be all there is to see?
Forget not love's benevolent deeds, open your eyes; see as I see,
Let not your hope fade away as quickly as the nightly breeze.
For in this world exists beauty that could make one's heart weep,
Beauty at its fullest that has reached its ultimate peak,
Truth be told Heaven's own gasp in disbelief,
They quarrel amongst each other and shroud their jealousy,
Love is unpredictable as one's own destiny,
Give destiny time to unfold, give it time to do its deeds,
Your heart will serve as a guide, just you wait and see.
Soon you will awaken: You will see as I see.
For such inexplicable beauty cannot go unforeseen.



Gabriel Ward