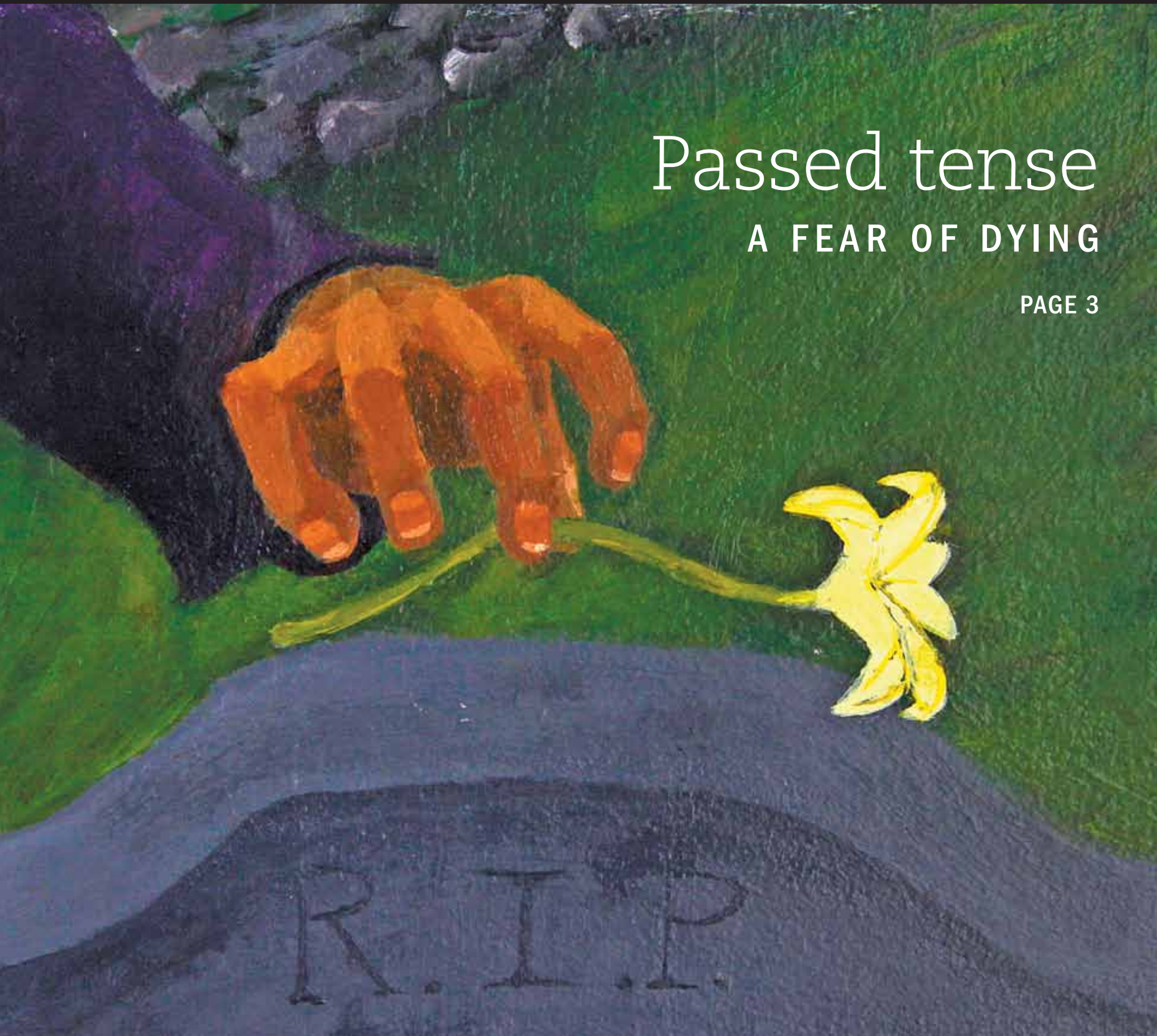


Passed tense

A FEAR OF DYING

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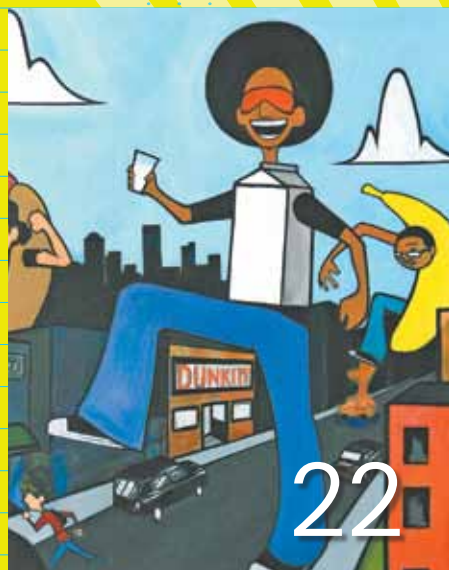


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AFH art by George Gonzalez

Passed tense: A fear of dying

By Dennis Membah // Staff Editor

Clear your mind and focus on these words. Have you ever thought of the end of all this? School, work, children, love, you name it. At the end of the day, many people never imagine their last thoughts, their last words, their last sights, their last heartbeats, their last breaths.

Think about the point when all you see is nothing, all you dream is nothing; being in a place where all that's left of you are the remembrances of you in other people's hearts and minds.

This is how my greatest fear appears in my head most nights, when I take the time to mentally wander beyond friends, family, sports, and television; the time when I forget every little thing and think way too deeply.

Some nights, my greatest fear doesn't interfere with what I have going for the moment, because I choose to accept this fate that will happen to every mortal some day. Instead, I focus on my life and my future and what

I need to do for a better tomorrow, and not dwell on the afterlife.

But most nights, what troubles me are the questions of when, where, and how I'm going to be sent to this afterlife. The fact that it could be any time and any situation worries me. I was exposed to voodoo and its visions of death at an early age, so I can say that all this gloom started years ago in my country of Ghana.

The truth is that I'm not afraid of having a wonderful life with the Man upstairs. But the issue that haunts me is this: When will I have this glorious time with Him? Will it be tomorrow or many years from now? No one knows when Judgment Day is going to come.

Death is something that cannot be changed, which gives me the most horrifying feeling. But if you are going to take me, please take me softly.

Goodnight. ■

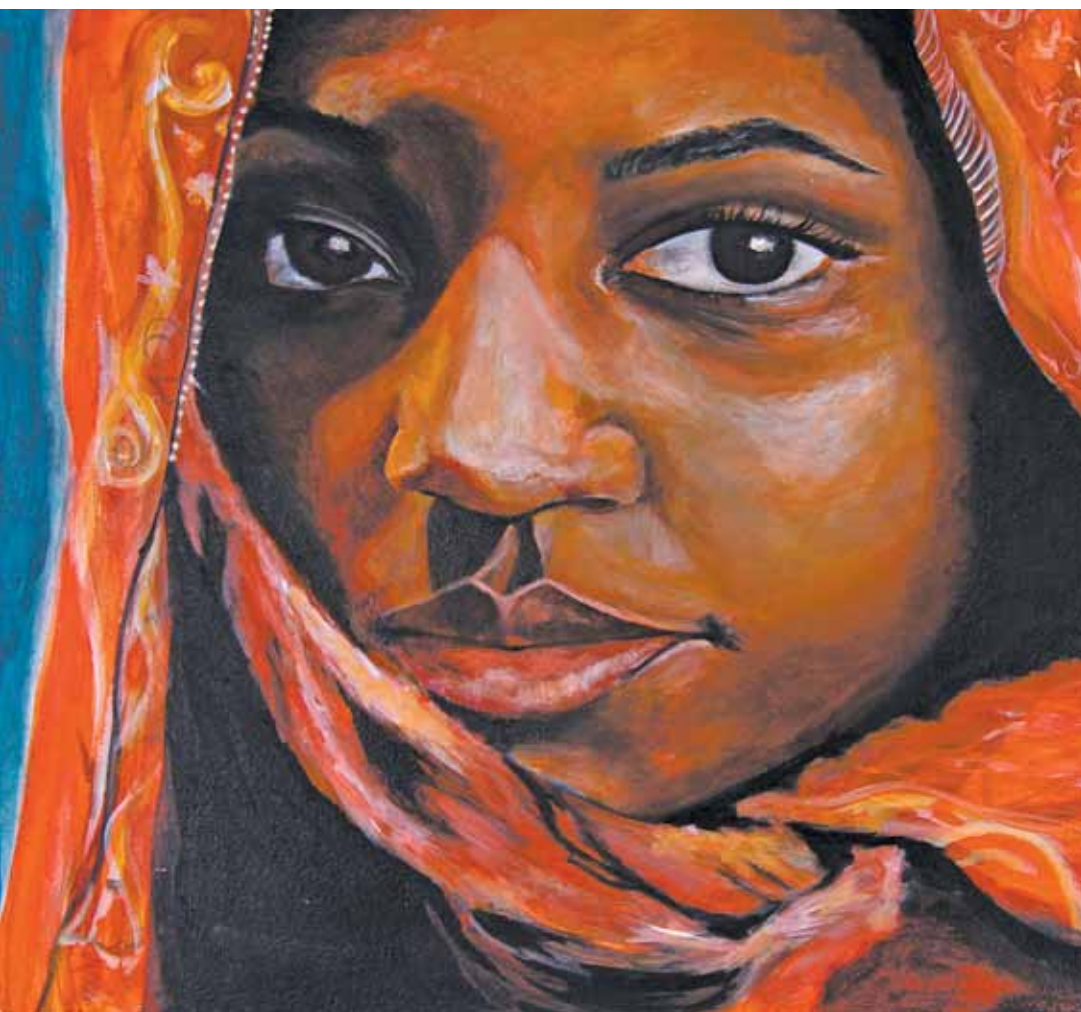
Scared to death of dying?

Here are some remedies from the experts:

- Lean on your religious beliefs;
- Use the idea of death to motivate you into achieving your dreams;
- Become less focused on dying by doing good deeds for others;
- Imagine the peacefulness of death as part of the natural cycle of life;
- Embrace life;
- Adjust to the idea of ultimate death;
- Seek professional counseling.

— Dennis Membah

Source: lifescript.com



AFH art by Shayan Rogers

Calling out India's culture of rape

By Mussuba Samati // Staff Editor

India is the fourth most dangerous country in the world for women, according to a 2011 survey.

In December, authorities say, a 23-year-old student was brutally gang-raped by six male imbeciles on a moving bus in New Delhi, India. Then the assailants threw her and a male friend to the side of the road. The woman suffered organ damage due to the violation of an iron rod during the sexual assault.

She later died.

Critics say that rapists in India often go unpunished; the crime gets forgotten because it was not recorded, therefore it was unimportant.

When are these barbaric men going to learn that enough is enough? Violating one's rights and dignity should have a bigger consequence. This is not the first rape in India and I can assure that it will not be the last if a stand against it is not taken immediately.

As all these distressing crimes are occurring, what I am wondering is: Where are India's governmental officials? They should be making citizens' safety the number one priority, because if there are no people then there's no community.

I feel as though Indian police are not taking the rape crimes seriously. They don't realize that gender violence is a global misfortune that needs an immediate stop.

I give props to some of the people of India who have been demanding, in signs, to "Stop the Terror of Rape." They are India's future.

India's prime minister, Manmohan Singh, was quoted as saying: "We will make all possible efforts to ensure security and safety to all women in this country. I appeal to all concerned citizens to maintain peace and calm."

These comments came after the thousands of protesters gathered in New Delhi. But they should have been made before the outrage, not after. ■

Newtown revisited

Mass murder in black and white

By Ralph T. Karnuah // Staff Writer and Mussuba Samati // Staff Editor

Does race play a role in the classification of mass murderers? These individuals are often categorized as either mentally disabled or just plain cruel.

A recent high-profile case involved Adam Lanza, a 20-year-old white man who shot and killed 20 first-graders and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in December. Lanza also shot his mother to death and later himself.

Over the past 30 years, according to Mother Jones magazine, white males were responsible for 44 of the estimated 62 mass shootings committed in public places.

In today's society, whites are usually given the benefit of the doubt for such vicious violence. In America, when a white man kills, it's because he had a certain illness — for that's just not what white people do. On the other hand, when a black man murders, he is automatically described as being a poor, uneducated, drug-addicted criminal.

One published theory is that white men feel so entitled that when things don't go their way they take it out on society in a big and indiscriminate way. With blacks, the premise goes, violence tends to unfold more during the settling of personal grudges.

Although mental illnesses such as those attributed to Lanza can sometimes be the cause of unpredictable crimes, he should not be defended because not everyone with such a sickness is going around murdering others.

The appearance of the criminal should have very little to do with his actions. Why should some killers be given a much harsher judgment than others simply due to their skin color and not because of the content of their crimes? ■



Somalia and the U.S.

The differences blow hot and cold

By Hibo Abdullahi // Staff Writer

Somalia and America have more differences than similarities. For example, Somalia's climate is mostly hot and humid and has irregular rain-falls. There is a lot of sand like a desert.

In America, the weather changes according to the seasons; it's cold sometimes and hot others.

Another difference is the diversity. Somalia isn't as diverse as America; the only people in Somalia are mostly Somali. That is one of the reasons Somalia is strict about its religion, because everyone there is Muslim.

In America, there are all types of people and they have all kinds of religions.

In Somalia, there is barely any transportation; it is hard to get around — unlike America. But since everything where I lived was close to each other, there was no need for transportation.

Back when I lived there, I used to like the hot weather because I never experienced the cold. But now I prefer cold over hot because I've lived here longer. Hot makes your head hurt.

When I came here in 2004 there were things I couldn't do, like reading fully in English. English was so different from what I was used to. But eventually I caught on and forgot the Ethiopian language I spoke. ■

Identity crisis

By Asha Hirsi // Contributing Writer

Birthplace: Kenya. Heart: Somalia.

I don't look Kenyan. I don't know their culture. The question is: Are you what your parents are, or are you where you come from? How can I be Somali if I was born in Kenya? I was faced with the reality of being put in one country when my heart and identity lie in another.

My favorite place for sitting was beneath a nearby tree. One day, when the gunshots grew louder, I went to that tree. I watched as a couple began to speak. I looked at them with great interest, like a scientist would with a new discovery. I realized I was not part of their Kenyan world. I belonged in my Somali homeland. Had there not been a war there, I would've been able to truly feel at peace.

Leaving: Kenya. Arriving: America

Date of birth: March 3, 1995. My family's

life changed that year. My whole country's life changed that year. We were at war. With ourselves. Tribes had divided us, a nation that was once one.

As we were leaving Kenya in 2000, a large white man grabbed my father's arm and asked for the "card." This was the card that we needed to escape an area engulfed by fighting.

My father showed him the card, but the man was hesitating.

I fell asleep under a tree. The tree bark scratching against my neck was holding me in place — not just physically, but mentally, too.

When I woke up, I heard my mom whispering, her hands cupped and raised to the sky. "Oh God, may you make this world beneficial for me." Her soothing words caressed my ears.

We finally did reach America.

My mother has a way with words, I guess. ■



AFH art by Khari Polk

By Kristiana Mbrice // Staff Writer

This is how Eneda Golemi, a college freshman from Dorchester, describes her homeland of Albania. "Country where I was born, raised, and lived for 16 years. Full of memories."

As Albania celebrates its 100th birthday, Golemi says that she is 100 percent proud to be Albanian and that she will never deny the country where she is from.

For her, 100 years of independence means 100 years of freedom, progress, and unity.

Albania is a small country located in South-eastern Europe. Even though it is small, it is big on culture and history.

Everything started 100 years ago. It seemed like a normal November day, but things were going to be different after that. It was when

Ismail Qemali, a brave old man, raised the first Albanian flag, declaring independence from the Ottoman Empire that had ruled Albania for nearly 500 years. Albania became its own country.

Venera Seiti, a senior at Boston Community Leadership Academy, says that Albania for her means family, friends, and the special place where she is from. Seiti says she loves her country's traditions, such as folk music, sweet food, and dressy clothing.

Xhorxhia Papa, 16, says Albania is the country that raised her and taught her the values of life. ■

She says that she is 100 percent proud to be Albanian and that she will never deny the country where she is from.



100 years old

Happy birthday, Albania!

AFH photo by Christina Vivada



AFH art by Sydney Steeves

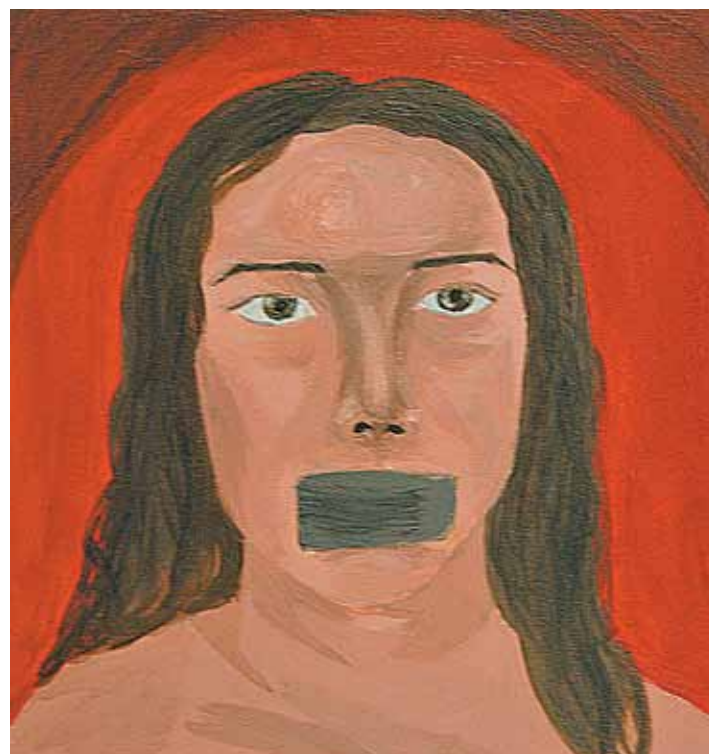


Stay calm

By Harriane Errie //
Contributing Writer

Here are a few steps to help you keep your cool:

- **Be smart** – If you feel as though the person around you is making you uncomfortable, then call a friend or a parent or even a sibling. This will let the person know not to mess with you.
- **Be safe** – If you're on the streets, be aware of your surroundings.
- **Be careful** – If you feel that the neighborhood or person you are near is dangerous, be careful not to be obvious about it.
- **Think** – Try not to get involved in something that isn't your business.
- **Have company** – Walk with someone – don't be alone.



AFH art by Natasha Mock



AFH art by George Gonzalez

Control your anger

By Jorge Franjul // **Contributing Writer**

Ok, relax. I'm going show you how to not get so mad anymore.

- That count-to-10 thing doesn't always help. Instead, think about what would happen if you mess up the person badly. Now think about the amount of trouble you'll get into after the fight.

- The cops won't care if someone said something about your mother. Just chill and try to be the bigger person. Because we all know that everything this person is saying about your family isn't true.
- You've heard about Tae Kwon Do? Those classes helped me a lot to control my anger.
- Go play Call of Duty.

Stop yourself from talking back

By Kayla Allen // **Contributing Writer**

Do you have that one teacher you don't like? Do you always talk back? You need to remember that being rude to a teacher will get you nowhere. So:

- **Think** – Before saying anything, think about the consequences that come with talking back to your teacher.
- **Breathe** – Cool down and breathe in and out slowly to calm yourself.
- **Tone** – Watch your tone of voice. Just because you think you don't have an attitude doesn't mean the teacher thinks the same.
- **Take a break** – Ask to go for a walk.
- **Talk to a friend** – Find someone to discuss how your teacher made you feel.
- **Distractions** – Do the work given or read a book. Don't even make eye contact with your teacher.
- **Keep your distance** – Stay away from the teacher.



Make friends

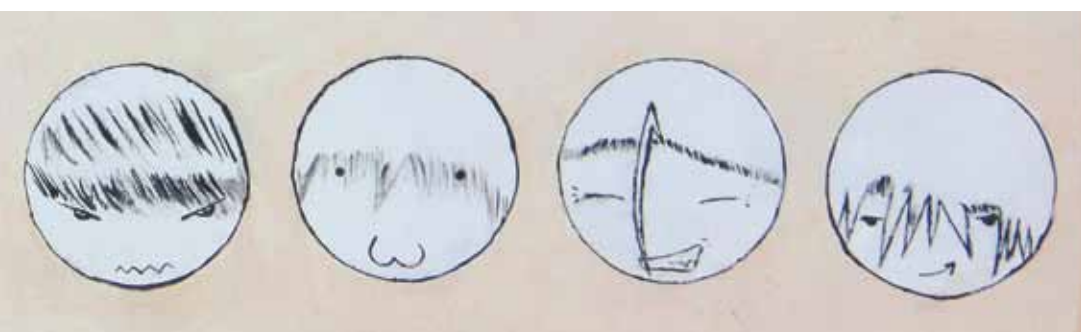
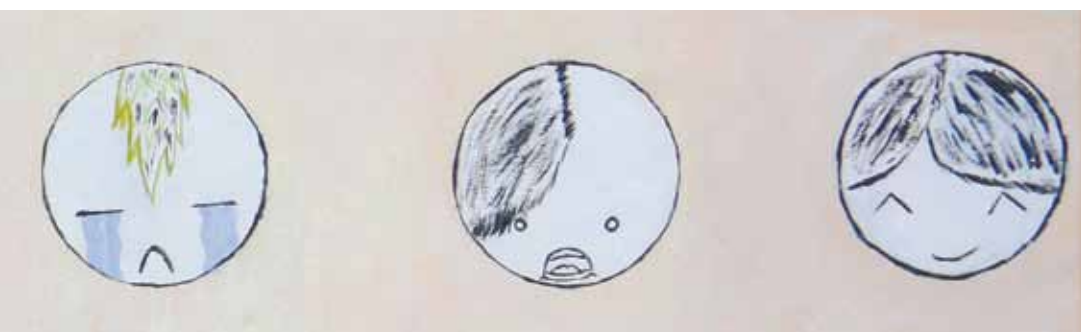
By **Sabrina Nunez-Diaz** // **Contributing Writer**

Everyone claims to be a loner, but let's be real: Who's the true solo dolo? If you want to land some real friends, here's a step-by-step plan:

- **Be approachable and friendly** – Don't always have a mean grill on — that makes people want to stay away.
- **Be open-minded** – Don't judge.
- **Respect** – Don't put people in situations that would make them feel disrespected.
- **Trust** – Prove to people that you can be depended on.
- **Open up** – Let people in.
- **Loyalty** – Know when to be selfless.
- **Share** – Sharing is caring.
- **Introduce them to the family** – Whether you have the craziest, weirdest, or best family, once they meet them it strengthens the friendship. ■



AFH art by Massiel Grullon



AFH art by Daniel Pham

Hide your feelings

By **Samantha Olivencia** // **Contributing Writer**

Dear teenage girls,
I want to congratulate all of you for being brave by following these simple steps:

- **Try to be your normal self** – Don't act as if you are angry; act just like you do every day so that no one can tell that something is wrong.
- **Keep a happy face on** – Always wear a smile. If you have a frown, people will keep asking you questions and eventually you will be annoyed.
- **Hang out with friends who are hilarious** – Be with a group of people who make you laugh 24/7.
- **Think of something that makes you happy** – ice cream, sports, family.
- **Do something that will remove all the negative things from your head** – Go out to the movies, take a walk, hit the gym.
- **Be in your own little world** – Just space out and don't think about anything.
- **Talk to someone** – When you are feeling a certain way, talk about what's bothering you with someone you trust. ■

Today's lesson:

Keeping quiet in the classroom

By **Jamal Young** // **Staff Writer**

School: a place to learn and see friends.

But which comes first?

Arkema Jordan, 17, feels that socializing is the key thing for many teens.

"I am a social person," says Jordan, who goes to Community Academy of Science and Health. "I think that school is more social than academic, because people pay attention to their friends more than the teachers."

Indeed, an entry at proteacher.net indicates that teachers have had it when all the social buzzing continues in the classroom.

"I am at my wit's end with students who constantly interrupt me during instruction. During language arts and social studies lessons, my kids are constantly talking. It's to the point where I can't get in a word edge-wise because everyone wants to blurt out something."

Still, Adina Romain, 14, from CASH, believes that learning is the priority.

"I think school is more academic than social because teachers are starting to punish kids more than they used to," says Romain.

Daniel Ortega, 15, from CASH, admits that ongoing chit-chat can overtake classroom lessons.

"I guess you can call me popular in school," says Ortega. "I have tons of friends and this sometimes can affect my learning. Sometimes I can't focus because either someone is talking to me or I am talking to someone else." ■

BSAC BUZZ

By **Audrey Ngankam and Bill Zhou** // **Contributing Writers**

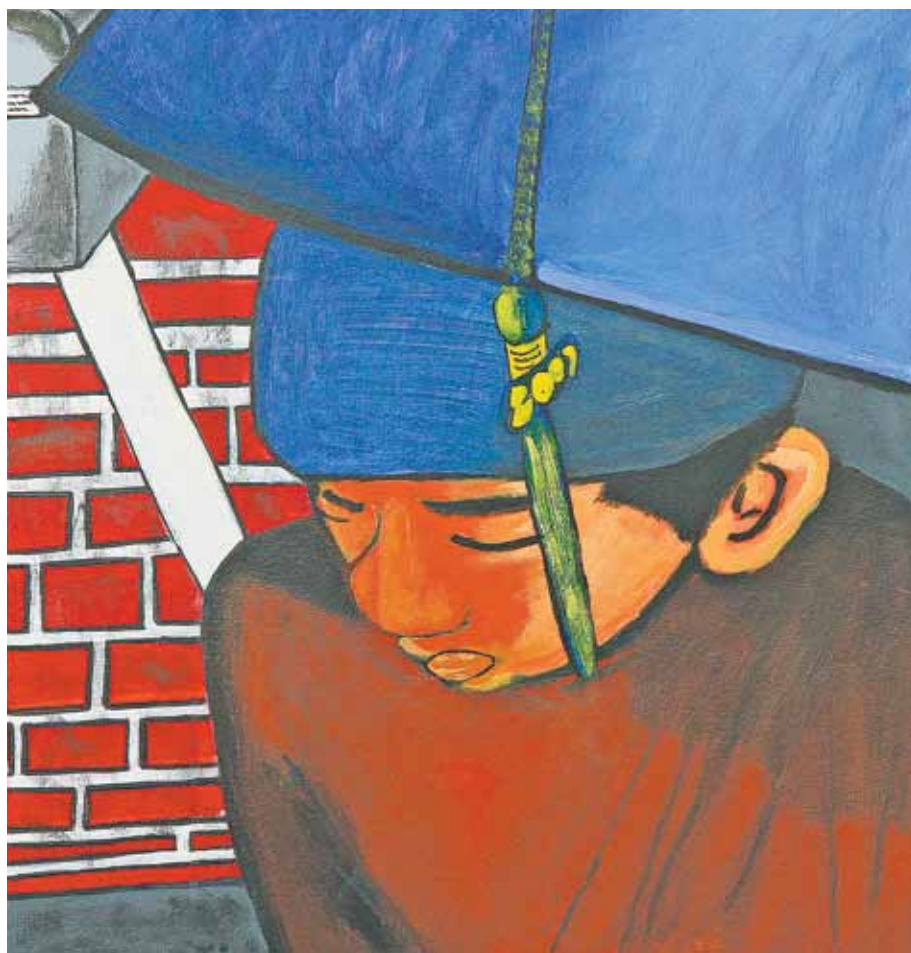
Since 2007, the Boston Student Advisory Council has worked on the development of policies that give students the opportunity to provide feedback to their teachers.

BSAC believes that to enhance classroom learning it is critical that students can share their perspectives and experiences with their teachers. Through the constructive feedback tool, teachers will gain a better sense of which methods of instruction are effective and which need improvement. In other words, constructive feedback is what teachers need to teach their students better.

What does constructive feedback look like? It is a paper form with multiple choice questions. Students' names should not appear on the forms and administrators need to ensure that all students remain anonymous.

Boston is a role model for many cities that are also interested in having more student input in their education systems.

Constructive feedback and teacher evaluations are vitally important because they provide students with the power to voice their opinions and improve their educations. If students take these assessments seriously, then we can show adults that we know how we want to be taught and that we want good teachers. ■



AFH art by Tom Tran

The top five hits

A high school to-do list

By **Ilma Golemi** // **Staff Writer**

Before you leave high school, you should make a lot of friends, says Xhorxhia Papa, 16, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science.

Papa thinks that you should enjoy life when you are a teenager because you are never going to be as free as you are right now.

It is the time of your life when you do not have too many responsibilities and you can build great memories from your adolescence.

Querby Janvier, 15, has participated in volleyball and squash, which made the

high school experience more notable.

"I wanted to make new friends and also it is a good way of staying healthy," says Janvier, who attends the O'Bryant.

Carla Rodrigues, 16, believes that you should have a great time with friends before you leave high school — including going to prom — but that you also need to remember those at home.

"You should definitely...spend a lot of time with your family," says Rodrigues who attends the O'Bryant, "because you may leave them in the future to go to college." ■



AFH photo by Briahna Omorogbe

Dramarama

When high school teens start trouble

By **Mussuba Samati** // Staff Editor

High school drama — for fun or attention — puts teens in bad moods and contains no benefits at all. Many of the troublemakers, teens say, are unsure of their status and of themselves and have reached a stage in life where they think they can do and say as they please.

Taddy Jallo Fofanah, 18, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, says that high school drama is a total waste of time.

“I strongly believe that it is unacceptable that all these students worry about is each other — but not their work,” says Fofanah.

Fofanah believes that much of the drama occurs due to “he said/she said” or “I heard” gossip. Those students who are always saying “I heard” are extreme instigators, Fofanah says.

“I act crazy and funny, but my intentions are not to be involved in drama,” says Fofanah.

Angelica Ortiz, 17, from BCLA, says that mean girls and guys are often the main reasons for drama.

“They think they are better than everyone else,” says Ortiz.

Ortiz advises teens to watch whom they tell their problems to and also to remember that the way they are treated by others is based on the way they treat them.

“As someone who is more quiet than loud,” says Ortiz, “I don’t try and start anything. Sometimes I’ll just let the negative things flow right out of my mind as if it never occurred. This way, they’ll learn that I never take things to heart.”

Fourteen-year-old Sabrina Abanoor says that for some teens, drama can be a way to release stress and anger. But nothing good comes out of it, she says, when teens take things to the extreme.

“I think people need to talk through their problems before they decide to lay everything out in public,” says Abanoor, who attends the John D. O’Bryant School of Math & Science. “That argument in public causes nothing but humiliation to all the people involved. What happened to solving conflicts like mature people?” ■

Mean girls and guys are often the main reasons for drama.

It’s hard work finding a job

By **Jalene Sanchez** // Staff Writer

Daniela Ramirez, 14, who attends Boston Community Leadership Academy, says it’s hard to get a job.

Ramirez says she has applied for two positions already but was rejected because of her age.

“It would feel so good having your own money instead of always asking your parents for it,” says Ramirez.

“It would feel so good having your own money instead of always asking your parents for it.”

Teens want to be able to go to the movies, to stores, and out to eat, but the struggle to find a job in these hard times is real. The Boston Globe reported in late February on a survey that says teen

employment statewide is the lowest it’s been in 45 years as older people crowd youth out of the job market.



AFH photo by Michelle Nguyen

Roshely Lara, 16, says she’s also had no luck finding work.

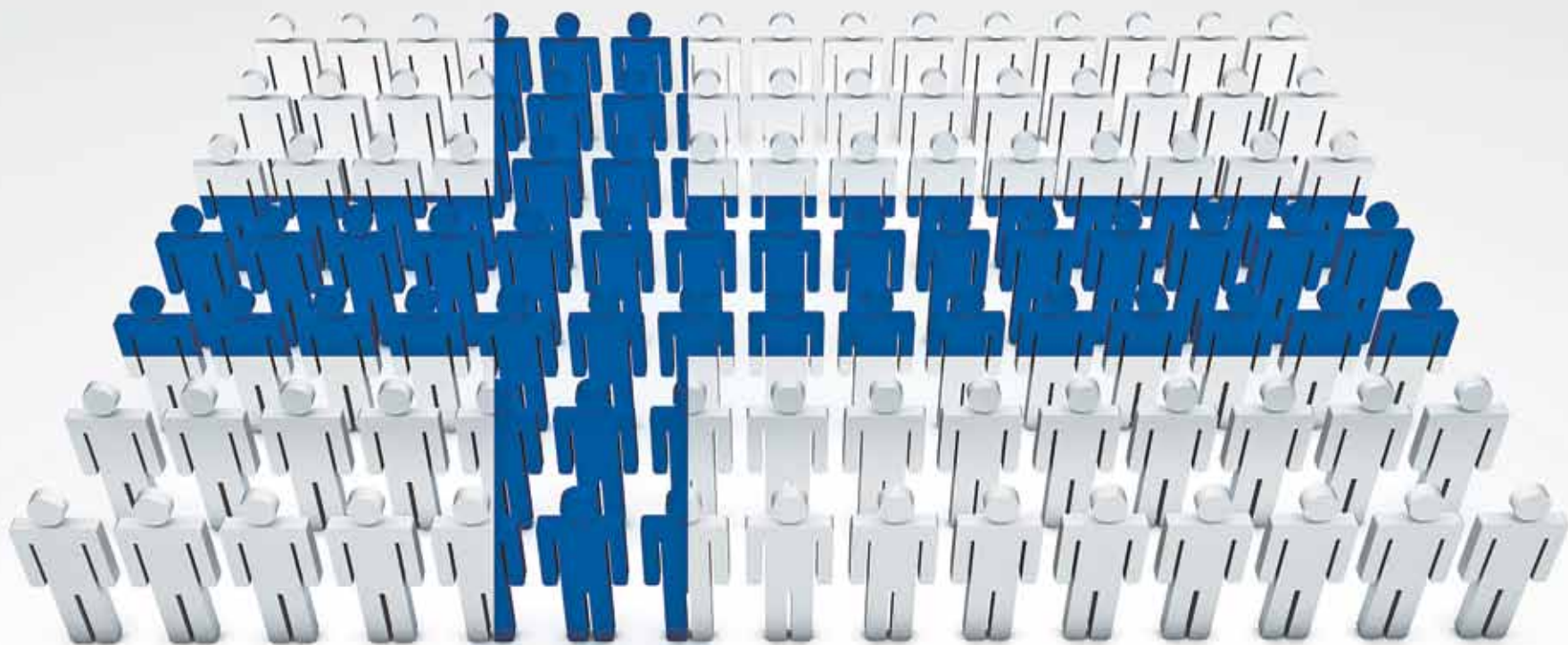
“It is hard to find a job in this economy because everybody needs one,” says Lara, from the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers. “I have applied for three jobs and nothing.”

Alexes Vazquez, 17, from West Roxbury Academy, says he really wants a job but has not been able to find a steady one. He says asking parents for money gets annoying.

“I know my parents have other things to pay,” he says. “I’m thankful for them giving me what they can but depending on them gets aggravating. Just being able to have your own money — you don’t have to depend on anyone but yourself.” ■

FINLAND'S SCHOOL SYSTEM has received high grades from education experts based on several factors: schools share a common goal; there are more qualified teachers and less reliance on homework and standardized tests than in many other countries; and a premium is placed on students finding out what in the world excites them.

Below, two students weigh in on whether Finland's way would work here.



“In Finland, they want to give everyone the opportunity for equal education”

By Patricio Barros // Contributing Writer

I believe that Finland's school reform would not work in the United States.

The U.S. is a very powerful country, and it really likes to compete against other nations. In the U.S., there is this idea of standardized tests, which keeps one group on top of the others.

In Finland, they want to give everyone the opportunity for equal education. The government also invests a lot in teachers and gives them high value. For the Finland school reform to be used in the United States would mean that people would be willing to pay more taxes for other families' children to succeed.

People in the U.S. today are already depressed about how their taxes are going up; imagine how it would be if half of their paychecks were taken out for educational purposes. ■

“The less pressure, the higher the performance”

By Trinh Huynh // Contributing Writer

I'm now a senior in high school. I think I can see very clearly the differences in educational systems in other countries — maybe because I'm an immigrant from Vietnam.

Some like Finland's think it is better to teach students to follow their passions than to get stuck in competition and standardization. They believe that helping students find out what they want to do in the future is a true education — not test-based accountability.

Adopting Finland's school reform model wouldn't work in the U.S. because the way they educate kids is quite different. The U.S. focuses on competition, students' scores, and standardized tests.

For me, the less pressure, the higher the performance. I can feel more free to achieve what I think I like or I need for my future. Pressure can hurt people's spirits. ■

School duel:

Boston Community Leadership Academy vs. Boston Latin School

By Sabrina Nunez-Diaz // Contributing Writer

When I think of school, I think of a place where I learn and grow mentally and in all other aspects. School is where I spend most of the day to become a well-rounded citizen.

For the past four years, I attended Boston Latin School. This year I transferred to Boston Community Leadership Academy.

Boston Latin School is considered one the best public schools in Boston. It offers a rigorous education and preparation for college.

Although academically BLS is a parent's dream, it is as though in reality we students don't learn anything; instead, we just memorize notes to pass tests and forget the info the next week.

At BCLA thus far, I have noticed the school tends to find a way to relate the curriculum to everyday life. School is pretty stressful on top of everything else, so it's helpful to have support from teachers, students, and counselors.

BLS was a very traditional, strict, and overwhelming environment.

At BCLA, it seems as though the teachers are involved and available. The school has a friendly environment. The little time I've spent at BCLA I've felt more comfortable in classes than I ever did in my years at BLS. It's been a place to share ideas and hear others' perspectives; a place where it wasn't just a lecture by a teacher but a place where the students also got to learn from each other.

I chose BCLA over BLS because it was a school where I felt I would accomplish much more. ■



AFH artwork by Kyleen Hill

My future high school farewell

By Alexandra Zuluaga // Staff Writer

When I was eight years old, I almost drowned while on vacation. After what seemed like an eternity, my father pulled me out. Boston Latin School was a lot like that experience, except we weren't on vacation and no one pulled us out.

I guess what I'm getting at is this was a struggle. We've been battered and bruised, thrown sleepless into exam-ridden Mondays, and all the while we asked ourselves why. Why is BLS so hard? Why do I have seven tests tomorrow if I only take six classes?

Classmates, here is your answer (gesture to audience). Our friends and family have come to this pavilion to congratulate, commend, and salute us for enduring our first great challenge: High school.

We've seen each other blossom, and that's a beautiful thing. Growing up is scary because we've never done it before. And maybe it's just me, but I don't know what's next. I don't know where I'll be in 20 years or if anyone will remember my name. But that's okay. If you're sitting in those plastic chairs sweating through your cap and gown because you're 18 and you still don't know what you want to be when you grow up...calm down. We haven't grown up.

Don't lose your curiosity or your innocence, and keep your thirst for adventure. These will take you further than you ever thought you could go.

Guys, we were absolutely right: No one is ever going to ask us to explain the downfall of the Roman Empire, or what the cosine of 17 degrees is.

But you know what we will be asked to do? To face our futures head-on, to embrace possibility and solve real-world problems despite every force working against us.



AFH photo by Dominique Cave

You know what? We can do that. We've felt more stress these past few years than most people experience in a lifetime. We've been right and wrong. We've had "Aha!" moments where our minds open up and we see the world through different lenses. And that is life.

We've experienced so much these few years at Boston Latin School. Imagine what we can do out in the world. The possibilities are endless. Greatness happens now.

Alexandra Zuluaga is a junior at Boston Latin School. This is a projection of what her graduation speech might sound like. ■



AFH art by Junia Ryan

A sneak peek

By Samantha Olivencia // Contributing Writer

I have an obsession with sneakers. I judge every pair I see. But I have three main brand names that I buy: Nike, Jordan, and Air Max.

The Nike comes in many colors but the main ones that I buy are black or white to match my outfits. They come in all sizes and can run around \$90.

However, the performance can be bad. They get very uncomfortable after a while with no real ankle protection.

Whenever I wear Jordan, everyone's eyes are always looking at them.

These shoes are very cute. They are also very good for playing sports, especially basketball. They have good ankle strength. They can, however, be costly at \$109.99.

With the Nike Air Max, if the shoe gets dirty, they are easy to clean. They always look brand new. These shoes are also very good for playing sports because they have a tight grip around your ankle. They cost \$109.99, too.

Overall, I would really recommend the Jordan and the Air Max. They are expensive, but it will be worth it. ■

Whenever I wear Jordan, everyone's eyes are always looking at them.

New nails for sale

By Genesis Coplin Marti // Contributing Writer

If you want your nails to be trendy with colors that pop, Sally Hansen nail polish is the best fit. Sally Hansen has a variety of colors and quality.

For example: the instant dry. Many times you're in a rush; a quick party comes up or you're going to an event but you didn't have time to do your nails and you really want them to match your wardrobe and a normal nail polish would take days to dry. Take out your Insta-Dri from Sally Hansen, which can be had for as low as \$1.89.

Now, with essie, you'll get smooth colors that won't chip right away. At \$8, the price may be a little steep, but you can really pamper your nails with essie.

If you like the glitter and the glam, Sinful Colors is the best brand. Sinful has outgoing, shimmery shades.

Not only will they fit your personality but they will also fit your budget, at \$1.99. ■

AFH photo by Mary Nguyen



AFH art by Dishawn Webster



A career correcting injustice

By Grecia Cartagena // Staff Writer

When I was 10 years old, I used to watch TV and read newspapers and I always looked at all the injustices. So I wondered: What can I do to change all the unfairness?

I decided to become a lawyer.

My friends said that this is a very hard career. That's when I started to admire Gustavo. He is a family friend from Guatemala.

When he was in high school, he worked and studied at the same time. He was from a poor family, but when he went to the University of San Carlos of Guatemala, his efforts helped him get a scholarship to law school at Harvard University.

Now he is older, and he is a very famous lawyer in Guatemala. He works with the president.

I understand something: If you have a goal, you have to try to reach it because everything in this life is possible. You just have to believe in yourself, and think that you can do it, and never give up. Fight for what you want.

That's why I can do it, too. ■



The million-dollar question

How would you spend it in a week?

By Kelvin Freire // Staff Writer

Many adults think teens aren't responsible with money and can't think of anything worthy to do with it. The answers to this question — How would teens really use one million dollars if they only had a week to spend it? — might change their minds.

Jalen Apperwhite, 17, from Brighton High School, says the first thing he'd do would be to help his parents.

"I would pay my parents' mortgage so they don't have to work so hard," says Apperwhite. "I feel like it's my duty to relieve them of the stress it brings them."

Apperwhite says he would also buy himself a nice Audi, donate \$100,000 to Pop Warner youth football, and invest \$500,000 in vitamin-water (50 Cent's favorite beverage).

Jenny Andrade, 17, from Brighton High, says she thinks giving to others is something everyone should do.

"Give some to my family, have them sitting well," she says.

Mitchka Herard, 16, from Brighton High, says she would give to charity plus buy a house for her parents.

"I feel like they have done so much for me," she says, "and I have to repay them." ■



HIBO ABDULLAHI
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Work hard, Hibo, you didn't go through four years of high school for nothing.
Long or short hair? Long hair all day.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Bungee jumping.
Favorite book? "The Hunger Games."



ADAMA JAN BAH
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Work hard, never give up.
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Medical school.
Favorite book? "The Lying Game No. 3: Two Truths and a Lie."



MARIAM BAH
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Be yourself.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Become a surgeon.
Favorite book? "Mockingjay."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.



LA'NEECE BYRD
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Stay true to yourself.
Long or short hair? Long.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Bungee.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.



GRECIA CARTAGENA
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? To be a better person.
Favorite book? "A Tiny Step Away From Deepest Faith."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.



MU XIAN CHEN
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Take my education seriously.
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? A good future and travel the world.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.



SHENG CHEN
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Keep your focus on school.
Long or short hair? Short.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Bungee jumping.
Favorite book? "The Hunger Games."



MOUCTAR DIAKITE
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Have fun while staying on track in school.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? All my past and future goals.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall. I'm 5'7" and I don't like short boys.



MOUCTAR DIAKITE
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Don't follow your dream—chase it!
Long or short hair? Short.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.



BENSLEY S. DORNEVAL
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Stay focused on my studies.
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Build a time machine.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Short.



KELVIN FREIRE
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Enjoy yourself.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Finding the recipe for peace.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.
Favorite book? "Cirque du Freak."



ILMA GOLEMI
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Never give up.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Find a cure for all those people with cancer.
Favorite book? "The Story of My Life: Helen Keller."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.



PARIS GREEN
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Live life to the fullest, but remember that you are a work in progress.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Become a psychologist.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.



RALPH T. KARNUAH
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Stay focused.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? When you know you can't fail, you have no motivation.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? I'm scared of heights.
Favorite book? "The Giver."

TEENS in PRINT

MEET THE STAFF

Write for Teens in Print!

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

FEEDBACK!

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 secondary schools.

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.

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.

Next issue: May/June 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

bostontip.com writeboston.org

PERLA LARA
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Don't procrastinate.
Long or short hair? Long.
Favorite book? "The Odyssey."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.

JALAYAH LAWRENCE
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Never give up.
Long or short hair? Long.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Bungee jumping.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? In the middle.

SHANIQUE LEWIS
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Hard work pays off so keep working hard.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Finding cures for diseases like cancer.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving – that's what I want to do on my birthday.
Favorite book? "Fifty Shades of Grey."

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KRISTINA MBRICE
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? To be myself – never change.
Long or short hair? Medium.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Be someone who everyone will see as a role model.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.

DENNIS MEMBAH
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Do not regret any decision you never made.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? To become the wealthiest.
Favorite book? "Search for Safety."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Short.

CEDRIC MENDES
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Don't be shy. When you meet new people, look them in the eye.
Long or short hair? Short.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Neither – both would break my heart, literally.
Favorite book? "My Little Dashie."

MORELIA MORALES
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? I would like people to have real love in their heart.
Favorite book? The Holy Bible.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.

MARMARIN NASIRAHMAD
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Make sure my kids don't make the same mistakes as me.
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? To stop war.
Favorite book? "A Thousand Splendid Suns."

LIZANDRO NOGUEIRA
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Become a professional soccer player.
Favorite book? "Brothers in Arms."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Short.

SHANAE SADDLER
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Keep your dreams alive.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Being successful.
Favorite book? "The Outsider."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.

MUSSUBA SAMATI
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Be a positive influence and follow my dreams to the extreme.
Long or short hair? Short: West African braids.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Everything I had failed to accomplish.
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Ne-Yo.

JALENE SANCHEZ
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Don't stress the little things.
Long or short hair? Long hair, don't care.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Anything I want.
Favorite book? "Bronx Masquerade."

TENNEH SESAY
Long or short hair? Short.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.
Favorite book? "The Bluest Eye."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.

JAMES WHITTER
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Strive to be the best.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? To be the best lawyer.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving.
Favorite book? "The Poet."

JIAQIAN WU
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? College degree and a good job.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Bungee jumping.
Favorite book? "The Hunger Games."

JAMAL YOUNG
Long or short hair? Long.
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Own the universe.
Favorite book? "Concrete Underground."
Your ideal boo: tall or short? Tall.

ALEXANDRA ZULUAGA
What advice would you give yourself five years from now? Enjoy the moment!
If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to accomplish? Rescue abused animals.
Skydiving or bungee jumping? Skydiving – no strings attached.
Favorite book? "Born Confused."

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In Boston, the online version of credit recovery courses was praised in a UMass study last year as a flexible but challenging way to reach BPS students teetering between graduation and dropping out. In some other venues – not so much. For example, an article in the Wall Street Journal last year criticized Washington, D.C.’s program with a sub-headline that read: **“Kids who fail their courses**

go to phony Credit Recovery classes.” Using that piece as their

jumping-off point, most of these **Boston students took a**

particularly hard line on the question:



AFH photo by Dominique Cave



AFH art by Sarah Martin

“No motivation, no passion”

By Marina Boskovic // Contributing Writer

Having poor education does not improve our skills and make us educated people; on the contrary, it pulls us back to stay in the same place and not learn anything. That is the case with credit recovery classes like the ones in D.C. that students attend if they are failing.

How do these students improve their knowledge? These kids learn nothing. They are not progressing. That’s why many of them decide to drop out of school, anyway. They do not see any future — no motivation, no passion.

Knowing that you can pass all classes without putting much effort in does not really inspire. Those credit recovery classes are in some way teaching students that they can avoid working hard but still finish school. However, students unconsciously are ruining their lives and futures, and going to college becomes only a mirage, an illusion.

CREDIT RECOVERY: Last chance or easy pass?

“Is this how public schools are preparing students for college?”

By Gerna Luis // Contributing Writer

I believe that credit recovery like the one in D.C. is a total waste of time. Sitting in front of a computer and trying to learn the content is not the same as being in the classroom with your teacher. You wouldn't have the opportunity to develop your communication, collaboration, and critical-thinking skills. Furthermore, there is no control while you take the class — meaning you can just chill there using your phone, listening to music, or taking pictures.

On the other hand, if your objective is just to graduate, credit recovery is the easiest way to go. The class won't expect too much from the student. Is this how public schools are preparing students for college? Or are they just consoling students and helping them to make fools of themselves in college?

“A high school diploma should mean something”

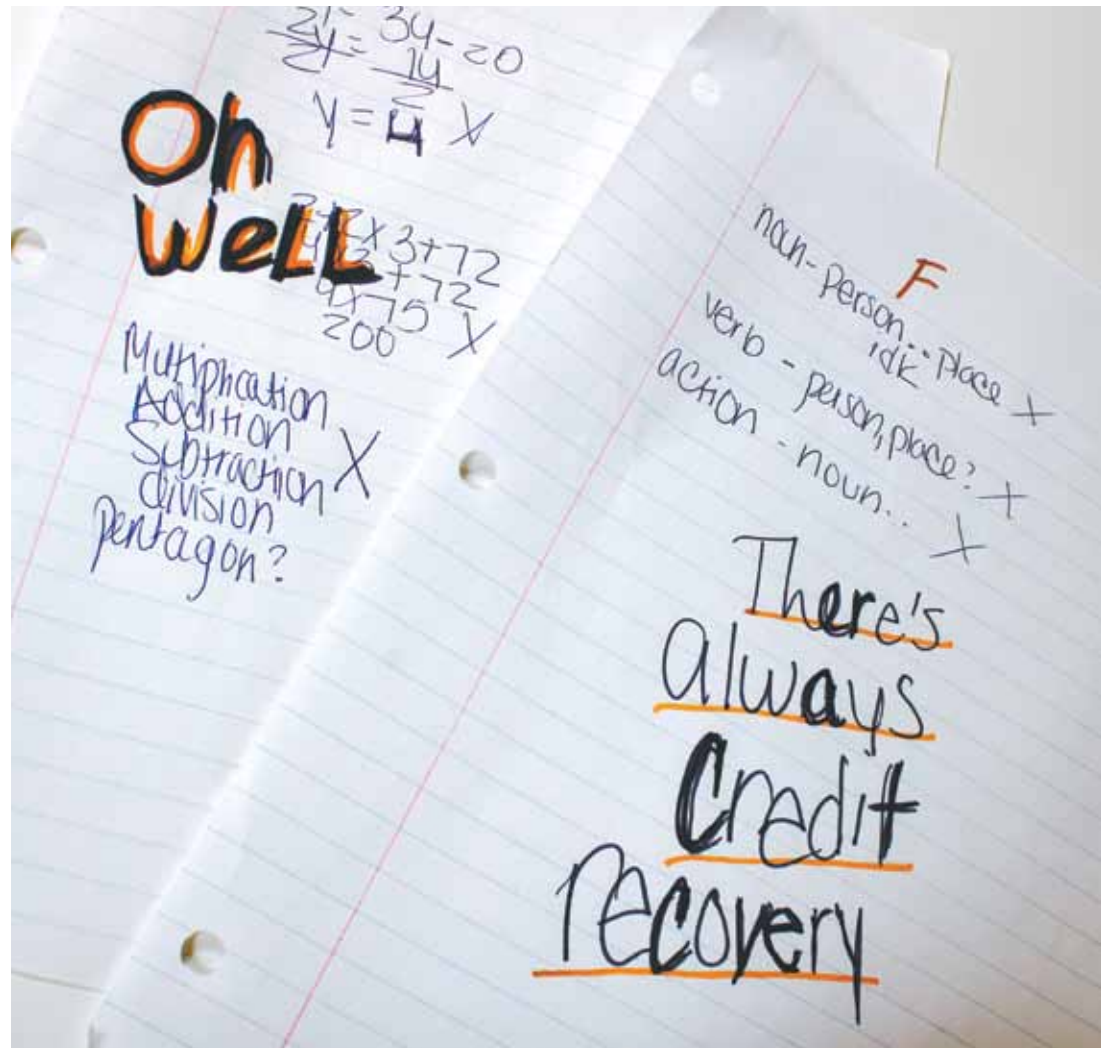
By Jose M. Occelin // Contributing Writer

My opinion is that credit recovery, as described about the D.C. system, is not helpful at all. I would prefer to retake the classes that I failed instead of wasting time to recover the credit without understanding anything. They do not prepare you; they just care about graduation rates.

A high school diploma should mean something. A lot of kids care about the diploma but not about acquiring knowledge and mastering essential concepts and skills to be ready for college.

This is fake learning. There's not much discussion. In that case, how will they be able to face challenges? Students should be learning how to be independent, critical thinkers.

Credit recovery classes can really affect students' futures because if they are not prepared in school, they could totally fail in the future. I think these students are encouraged to be mediocre in their lives.



AFH photo by Christina Vivada

“A fake education”

By Edwin Soto // Contributing Writer

It is impossible to recover all the knowledge, opinions, and skills gained in the classroom all year long and then sit in front of a computer for a couple of weeks and earn credit for it. This is unfair to the student taking part in the credit recovery program such as the one in D.C. The student is being offered a fake education. The schools will look really nice when 85 percent to 90 percent of students do graduate. But looking closely at the students, instead of a real high school graduation I call it a “HERE'S-YOUR-DIPLOMA-GET-OUT-OF-HERE” type of graduation.

A person once told me that a high school diploma is just a paper and that the paper itself is worth less than two dollars. What it is really worth is the grit behind it — the things you learned, the skills you developed. Did you become a better person during those four years?

This type of credit recovery offers something that is not even worth saying: that you've become a high school graduate.

“Positive and negative sides”

By Eden Gebregzabier // Contributing Writer

The purpose of credit recovery is to give a second chance to students who failed any subject. It has positive and negative sides.

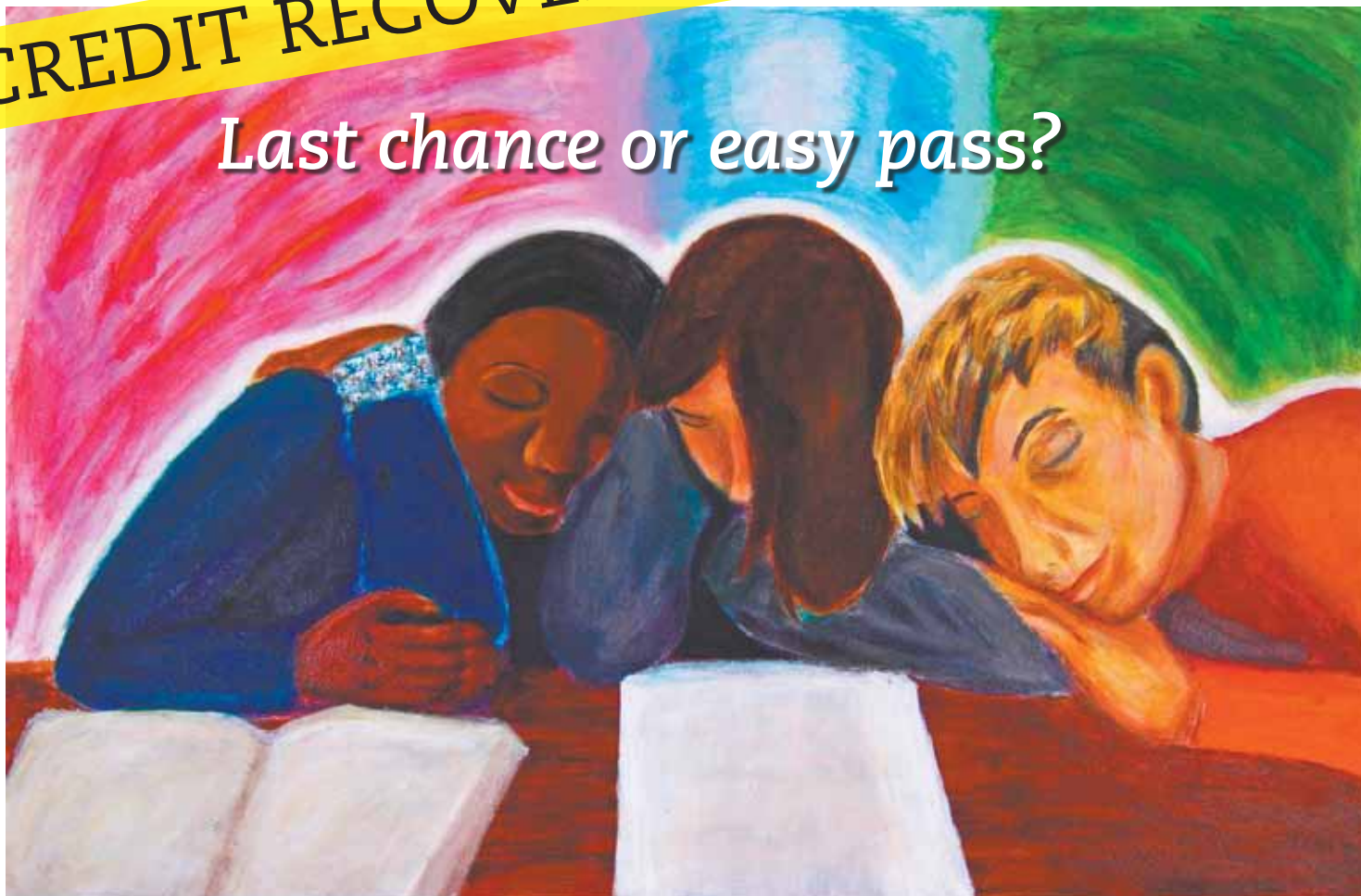
First, it increases the graduation rate, which is important for the schools' evaluations. Schools get money based on how well they worked. The students learn the same content, but in different ways.

But credit recovery programs such as D.C.'s have negative effects on students' futures. The courses are online, so students lose many skills that are important in the 21st century. They get easy credit and they graduate, but they know nothing. Their learning life will be tough because they don't have the base of knowledge — so they could give up.

CREDIT RECOVERY continued on next page

CREDIT RECOVERY:

Last chance or easy pass?



AFH art by Hannah Lindsay



AFH art by Angelique Murphy

“We all mess up sometimes”

By Rummah Himat // Contributing Writer

I'm not really against credit recovery classes; I actually support them. We all mess up sometimes and life is a crazy ride — so we never know what might happen. For example, if a family emergency happens to you, school will not be your thing anymore. There will be a high possibility of failing classes. Then credit recovery will be a second chance. Credit recovery is the only way to keep kids from dropping out. It could work as a “life chance” for kids who had been messing up the whole school year. All they care about is probably getting a high school diploma and then a job.

I admit that credit recovery will have a major negative effect on kids' futures. They will have less knowledge about things. But let's not forget about the positive — at least they will have a high school diploma. That's the difference between making \$8-\$12 per hour and \$15-\$25 per hour. Life is not about what you learn in the classroom, anyway.

“It's that thing of being lazy”

By Juliette Nzaramba // Contributing Writer

Students will not learn anything or work hard if they know that at the end of the year they will have one class that will make up for all the others they had failed. Students who go to credit recovery like the D.C. one don't really learn anything because it's not in school.

Most students go to those credit recovery classes because they just want to pass, not because they care about learning. It's that thing of being lazy. They don't want to work, or sometimes it can be because of parents who are not educated.

That's when students graduate high school without knowing anything. When they get to college they drop out because they are not prepared for it. I think students should retake the classes that they failed.

“I don’t think this is the best way to teach students”

By Patricio Barros // Contributing Writer

Credit recovery gives students a second chance to pass the classes they had failed. I don’t think this is the best way to teach students things they hadn’t learned in their normal classes. The only thing programs like the one in D.C. do is give participants an easy way to jump to the next level. Many students come out of this without any skills or without learning anything new. It does not give them the ability to show what they know.

I think there are many students out there who won’t try their best in school or who will skip class or not do homework because the credit recovery program will back them up.

This will impact the students’ futures because when they reach college they will be far behind.

“How are they going to deal with college?”

By Trinh Huynh // Contributing Writer

At first, I thought credit recovery was a very good project to help students to improve their futures. However, the program as characterized in D.C. didn’t make kids take an exam to see how far they had improved — but they still gained credits. Was it possible? Are they geniuses? If they really are, why do they need the credit recovery program?

How are they going to deal with college when they have nothing in their brains except some basic knowledge that they got from elementary school?

This is why my friend dropped out of college. She told me that she couldn’t handle it. She had problems with Math and English. She didn’t know how to do fractions even though she took pre-calculus in high school.

She has been in the U.S. for only two years and doesn’t know that much English. She left college and is washing dishes in a restaurant in Fields Corner. Many students can be in the same situation as her.

“Bogus placements”

By Julian Bastidas // Contributing Writer

Credit recovery classes are illusions. They are bogus placements for children. You are not actively sharing in a real class with students and teachers. Some only attend these programs to earn credits but are not interested in the classes at all.

If students who failed were put back into the same grade, they would learn much more. They would be able to participate and do great in class.

Students who use the credit recovery like the one in D.C. do not have the experiences that their fellow classmates had. This program is creating individuals who think that they can do only what they like. It should be teaching them that in life you have to be open to people and tasks.

Not every job has things that you like; you have to adapt and do what you are told. If you don’t, you are welcome to become one more number in the unemployment rate of the country.

CREDIT RECOVERY:
Last chance or easy pass?

“These programs help both students and schools”

By Itsubdenq Lewute // Contributing Writer

I believe that getting knowledge without results is meaningless. To pass everything in our life we need to work hard, and we don’t have to wait for the perfect moment because we can make the moment perfect.

I feel credit recovery programs like the one in D.C. are helpful. The point is to help schools graduate more students by giving those who have fallen behind the chance to recover credit through a multitude of different strategies. These programs help both students and schools. Once the dropout rate can decrease, the graduating rate can increase.

Many who come to the United States struggle with a lot of things like language, culture, and the way education is given. To learn this entire thing takes a long time. So this program can help high school students finish so you can get a better job and a better life than people who didn’t go to school. ■



AFH art by Mike Guadarrama

Do English Language Learners have a right to be challenged academically?

Students say:
"Bring it on!"

"This means we have unequal education"

By Marc Eddy // Contributing Writer

English Language Learners have the right to rigor; otherwise, this means we have unequal education. Rigorous tests will prepare us to go to college. ELL students need to do complex and challenging work to do well in college.

ELL students will pay in the future if they keep getting watered-down tests. We need to have difficult work to get us to think deeply.

ELL students can handle demanding work.

"Challenges should be given to ELLs"

By Shannon Llorenty // Contributing Writer

I agree that challenges should be given to ELL students. Students can't learn English by just being taught the definition of words and how to pronounce them. Things like reading books and writing essays really help. When students read books they learn a story but also new vocabulary. They are able to see different writing strategies, as well. They grow step by step.

If challenges are given to students, they'll feel like they are improving after completing them. In this way, they will feel like they can achieve more and grow their own self-esteem.

When I was in ninth grade, I understood everything that was said in English but I always felt afraid of speaking it. I thought my words were going to come out the wrong way. After reading books with my class, I felt more confident to talk out loud.

We cannot expect ELL students to magically learn how to read a book and analyze text without any practice or process. I learned that there is a way to take challenges little by little.

"It should not always be easy"

By Nelida Teixeira // Contributing Writer

ELL students are like any other students. They have the capacity to do any kind of work. Of course, they won't be able to do it if they don't understand what they are looking at. As an ESL student, I know that it does take a while to learn a language and even longer for the older students. That is why I believe that at the beginning, schools should keep materials simple because there is a lot to learn besides the language. Later, there has to be the stepping up of complexity, and it has to happen consistently. It should not always be easy.

If a teacher believes that a student is not able to complete a complex assignment and gives him just easy work, that student will never catch up with the others. He will not be challenged enough to learn new things and build his knowledge. Teachers need to know all of their students and their needs.

For a new student in a classroom where everybody speaks English, it is not going to be easy to interact with people or participate. Others might think that the student does not have what it takes to be there. And if the student sees no point of being there, he will lose interest in going to school and might drop out.

"We are all capable of learning"

By Marina Boskovic // Contributing Writer

In life, we will always have some tough situations we have to face, but we have to be strong enough and deal with those situations — not give up. Although we immigrated to a country where our native language is not spoken, we should not be handicapped by having our standards of learning lowered. I agree that being in class and not understanding a word of what the teacher is saying can be frustrating, but we are all capable of learning English even if at the beginning we struggle.

So, I think ELL students have a right to rigor. We should be taught more complex texts if we want to be on the same level as others.

Teachers should be trained how to teach ELL students.

We have to work hard in achieving our goals and becoming somebody in our lives. We should have high standards for ourselves and show that, although we are ELLs, we can be on the same level or even better than native English speakers.



AFH art by Peggy Lei

“As an immigrant, I understand how difficult it is”

By Jaider Varela // Contributing Writer

We, the students who are the English Language Learners, should decide whether we have the right to rigor — and not the people who have been making the decisions for us.

As an immigrant, I understand how difficult it is when you come to this country and struggle with learning the new language. I know how it feels to come to school and learn a different type of tradition. The same day, you go home and face the latest culture conflicting with the culture of the place you came here from.

Still, I think we do have the right to rigor, if only we could get a chance to show it and explain it. Language is not the only problem. Learning the history about the country is difficult because it is all new. We, the immigrants who are the ones being tested, don't get a chance to talk so we could let them know how the teaching methods are affecting us.



AFH art by Ramon Baez

“Everyone should be able to be creative at school”

By Georgina Louis // Contributing Writer

“When I came to America, I felt like a newborn.”

This is a line spoken by many English Language Learners. As an immigrant, feeling like a “newborn” in this country means that we need to start our lives all over again. That includes learning how to speak English and walking through this new life taking baby steps. We all know that newborns don't just start walking on their own, right? They had someone to lean on.

These ideas drag me to the conclusion that ELLs should be given enough support in school so they can start easy and then learn to take on more challenges. Eventually, they'll have the right to rigor.

If ELLs are not given the chance for challenges, they'll always stay in the bottom. However, there should be a procedure to know when it's the right time to throw further tests at them.

Everyone should be able to be creative at school, to evaluate, analyze, and think critically. These are things that will help us survive in the 21st century, so why should ELLs be denied these opportunities? I believe that an ELL has the right and capability to think rigorously. ■



AFH art by Kitauna Parker

Shelter from the norm:

Helping homeless people

By Shanique Lewis // Staff Editor

We are a group of students who are interested in seeing a change in Greater Boston. As teenage activists in our school, Boston Community Leadership Academy, we have been trying to strengthen our nation's democracy by engaging in problems that face our community today.

The issue we choose to focus on is homelessness. One solution to improve the situation is the idea of Housing First. Housing First is a recent innovation that focuses on quickly finding families and individuals permanent housing and then giving them services — from job searches to health care — that will sustain them there. The hope is that this approach can help break the cycle of chronic homelessness.

Homeless people have become a permanent part of the landscape in Boston and elsewhere. With job cuts and a rough economy, things may only get worse.

We need to get involved. We are meeting with government officials about housing. We also had a jeans drive at our school.

When people have nowhere to live, and don't have proper clothing, they lose hope. ■

The hope is that this approach can help break the cycle of chronic homelessness.



AFH art by Mushen Kieta

Hungry for change

By Morelia Morales // Staff Writer

Sara Mendez is part of the teen fight against hunger. On the street, she's seen homeless people who go without food for too long.

"Everyone has the right to have something to eat," says Mendez, a junior who goes to Boston Community Leadership Academy.

Mendez says she pitched in by joining members of her church who cook food and then give it to homeless people.

The Greater Boston Food Bank reported that 394,300 people were served by that organization in 2009, a 23 percent rise from four years earlier. Of those surveyed, according to the food bank, many had to make hard life decisions: 44 percent had to choose between food and heat; 34 percent had to choose between food and rent; and 37 percent had to choose between food and medical care.

Kenddy Margarita Diaz, 15, from Madison Park High School, says she wanted to help because she knows there are poor people who are in danger of dying of hunger.

"I Walked for Hunger," she says, "and I gave cans of food away."

Jose Ibarra, 16, from BCLA, knows that real change takes time.

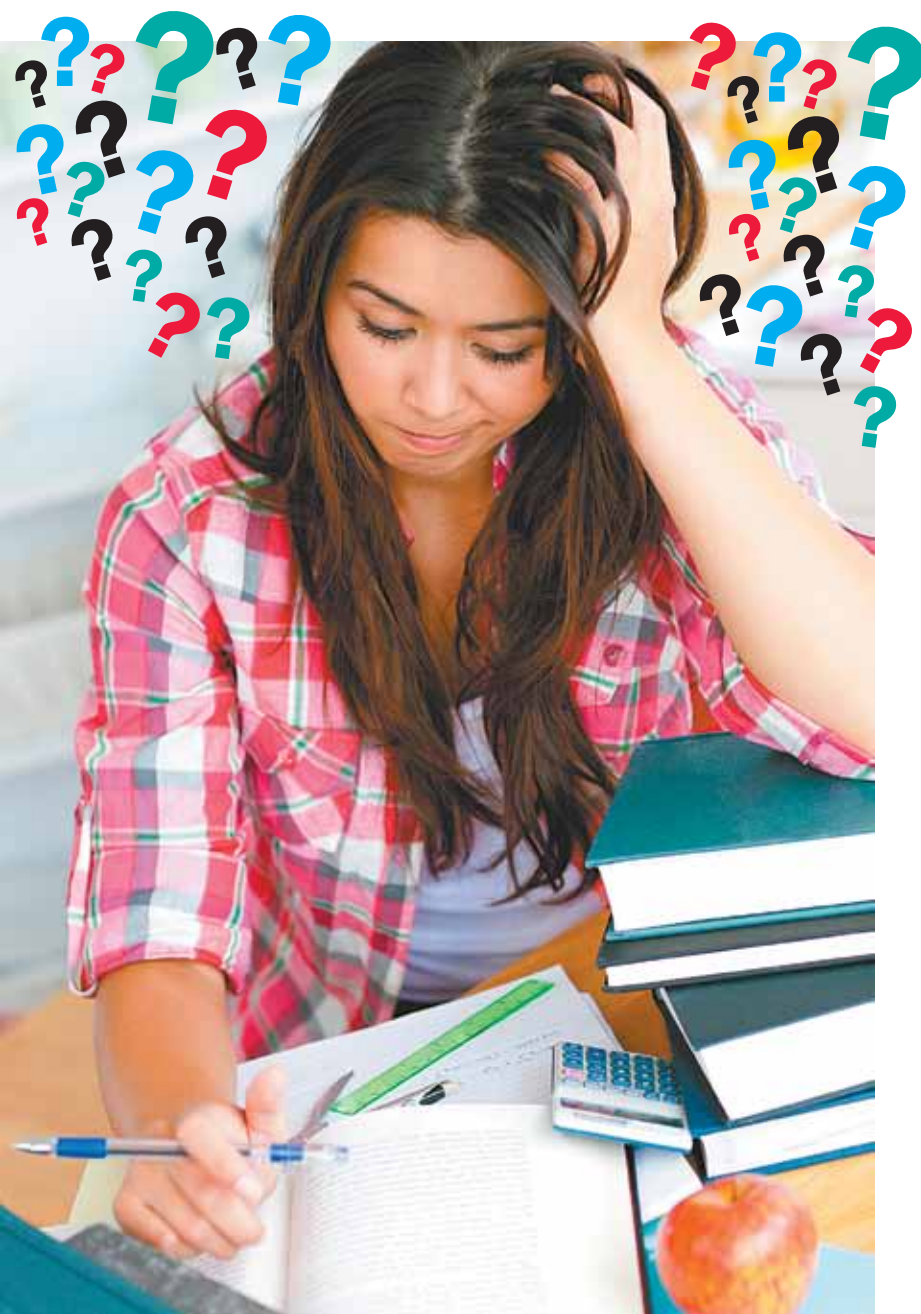
"Starting little by little is very essential," he says.

The food bank says people can help by donating money, food, or their time, or by pushing politicians to make sure nobody goes hungry.

Teens say that it is nice to help others. But, they say, do it with your heart — not because you need community service hours. ■



AFH art by Jesse Racusen



AFH photo by Michelle Nguyen



Gossip girls (and guys)

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

“Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt

Gossip: a word that many people are afraid of.

Raynell Searcy, 15, says she does not gossip because she thinks that it hurts people. “It makes them depressed and sometimes it also makes them worry about themselves,” says Searcy, who attends the John D. O’Bryant School of Math & Science.

She thinks there is no way to prevent gossip because people will always say something about you.

Gossiping is a much deeper problem than many people realize. Sociology specialists say that people who gossip about the lives of others may be avoiding their own problems. Sometimes the main reason to gossip is jealousy — to look better than others.

Shantal Uwimana, 16, says she doesn’t care if people gossip about her.

“It doesn’t really affect me,” says Uwimana, who attends Boston Community Leadership Academy.

Farmata Samati, 16, from BCLA, believes that gossip can be cruel.

“You wouldn’t like it if the same thing would happen to you,” says Samati. “When someone talks gossip, you should tell them to stop and walk away.” ■

“I got this”=“I’m clueless”

By Adamajan Bah // Staff Writer

In high school, a lot of students say: “Oh yeah, I got this” to their teachers when the heat is on. However, the reality of the situation is that they have no clue what they are doing — or they will never follow through.

Lucy Bui, 16, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, says she is a perfect example of this day and night.

“I do it all the time in physics class,” she says. “Thinking I know what I’m doing — but I don’t.”

Bui thinks the reason she does this is because her friends are around and she doesn’t want to feel stupid.

Aliyah Jackson, 15, from BCLA, agrees that teens are afraid of being seen as dumb by their peers.

“I feel people are scared of being misjudged or something,” says Jackson. “Everyone wants to be cool, and if saying ‘I got this’ makes them cool, well so be it. I don’t think I do it, because I kind of understand most of what I’m learning.”

Bruna Dos Santos, 15, from BCLA, thinks that the reason kids say they “got this” is because there is some kind of stress on them.

“There is pressure... to be something they’re not,” Dos Santos says.

She says that she does not do this.

“I actually value my time at school and don’t care if my friends think that I may be stupid,” she says. “It’s going to help me out at the end, not them.” ■

Teens are afraid of being seen as dumb by their peers.

Behaving badly

Who's to blame?

By Mariam Bah // Staff Writer

Adam Barriga, 14, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, thinks the media is responsible for the decline in teenage behavior.

He says teens see their role models on television and elsewhere and instantly follow those wrong footsteps.



AFH art by Jack Quinn

"When Kanye West smokes in a video song, his fans will most likely start smoking as well," says Barriga.

The same thing with swearing, he says.

These days, the question of who is responsible for teens' acting out often comes down to three culprits: the media, teens' parents, or themselves.

"The media publicizes fight sequences," says 14-year-old Laura Zapata, from BCLA. "Shows such as 'Jersey Shore' display drinking scenes. The media says money is the meaning of life, and it isn't. They don't show kids the proper way of getting money in movies, where teenagers sell drugs, gamble."

Meanwhile, other teens feel that some parents too often misbehave in front of their kids, or don't give them enough positive feedback.

Marina Brea, 16, from BCLA, believes that all three factors are to blame.

"Parents don't give enough attention," says Brea, "the media makes it look ok, and everyone wants respect. To get that, [teens] behave badly." ■

AFH photo by Michelle Nguyen



Addicted to shopping

By Tenneh Sesay // Staff Writer

Do teens like to shop?

Um, is Forever 21 a hangout for young people?

"Shopping is addictive because it's always taking things off your mind," says Kimberly Huertas, 15, from Boston Community Leadership Academy.

She's not the only teen who loves to shop.

In 2011, more than \$200 billion was spent on teen merchandise in the U.S., according to marketingcharts.com.

Jazmine Lopez, 15, says shopping lets her explore different wardrobes.

"I love new things," says Lopez, who goes to BCLA. "Girls are more crazy when it comes to shopping. They expect something perfect, something that'll fit just right."

Fatima Sillah, 13, says she is not hooked on shopping.

"I like shopping," says Sillah, who attends the Boston Teachers Union School, "but I'm not obsessed with shopping." ■

AFH art by Jhashawn Burrell



Does the Internet make you brighter or dumber?

By Lizandro Nogueira // Staff Writer

The Internet contains all the answers you can possibly think of. Therefore, many teens think that the Internet makes you dumber.

"Teens focus too much on the Internet and not on the work they do," says Luisa Reis, 16, from Brighton High School. "The Internet is very distractive."

Annacia Gray, 17, believes that because of the Internet, teenagers are reading less and less.

"Teenagers are too dependent on the Internet," says Gray, from Brighton High. "It's easy and accessible."

The Internet contains all the answers you can possibly think of. Therefore, many teens think that the Internet makes you brighter.

"If teenagers use the Internet wisely," says Niroskis Guerrero, a senior at Brighton High, "it could actually help them become smarter." ■

Loyalty test:

Friends or boo?

By **Marmarin Nasirahmad** // Staff Editor

Many teenagers come across the question about who is more important to them: your friends or your boo?

"I would pick my boyfriend because if you have true friends, they will understand that you have to spend more time with your boyfriend," says 17-year-old Maria Galdamez, who goes to East Boston High School.

Sometimes it comes down to the choice of who is really there for you.

"Friends — because my friends are not just somebody who I just met," says Juan Patino, a junior from East Boston High. "But it all depends on how long I have been going out with someone and how long I've been friends with someone."

Here's another test: If your close friend had an emergency and your boyfriend or girlfriend also had an emergency at the same time, and both asked you to meet them, who would you choose?

"I would pick my girlfriend because if she needs me I will be there — that's how you would earn her trust," says Brandon Johnson, 19, from Hyde Park. "And after that I would help my friends." ■

Voicing respect for respect

By **Ilma Golemi** // Staff Writer

The girl knows about respect. She was raised to respect everyone.

"There is no difference between showing respect for adults and showing respect for the children, because regardless if they are kids or adults, the definition of respect still stays the same," says Nedjie K. Thompson, 16, who attends the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science.

Fifteen-year-old Amal Egal, from the O'Bryant, thinks of respect as being able to understand other people's opinions and be nice to them.

"Without respect there is not true friendship, and without respect there is no trust either," says Egal.

Respect includes not talking about people behind their backs, and also not gossiping or telling lies about them.

Judy Zhao, 15, says the idea of respect is vital to many teens.

"Respect is important to me because it helps me feel better," says Zhao, from the O'Bryant. "If someone disrespects me, then I will tell them to stop." ■

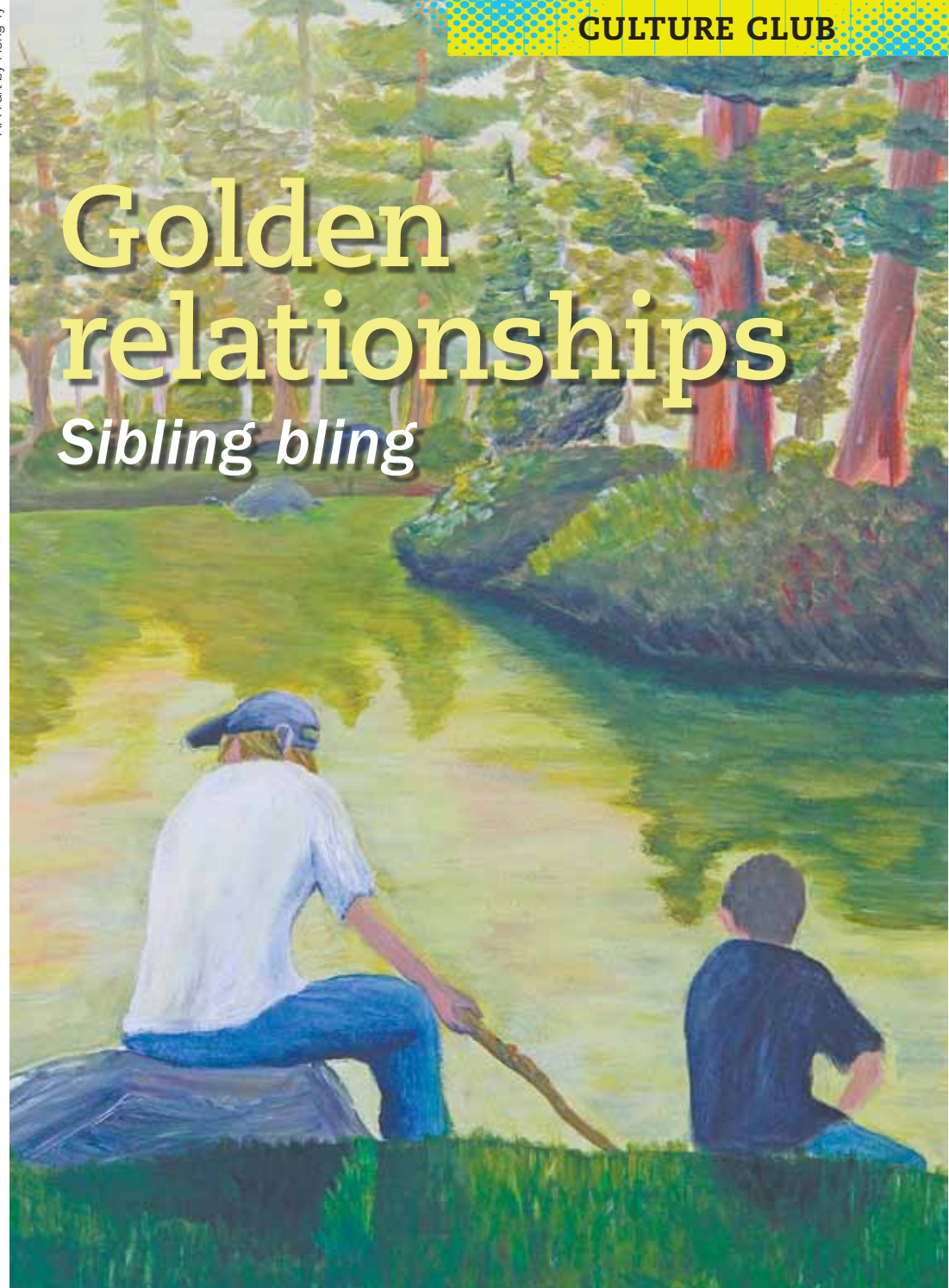


AFH photo by Jennifer Casseus

AFH art by Hong Ty

Golden relationships

Sibling bling



By **Mussuba Samati** // Staff Editor

Your sisters or brothers may be some of the most annoying people on earth to you because you have had so much exposure to them. But having siblings is one of the most beautiful things, teens say; even if you cannot stand that person, you guys shape each other's lives.

You might bicker, but once someone messes with your sister or brother, you instantly step in — and they'd do the same for you.

Most teens believe that siblings are both a curse and a blessing. But can you imagine life without your siblings there to bother you?

According to Esther Nkwah, 17, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, one of the most significant things about having siblings is that you always have someone dependable there for you through thick and thin, and someone to hang with. Nkwah has two sisters and one brother.

"I think there's more pressure on me being the oldest sibling because my younger siblings have to look up to me and I have to leave good footsteps behind," she says. "Me and my little brother, the one closer to my age, we have a very nice relationship. We cuss each other out, but at the end of the day we always have each other's back."

Trizia Mallari, 16, from BCLA, also has three siblings. "I love having siblings," she says, "because I have someone to worry and think about, other than myself."

Mallari says that her siblings are good examples of what brothers and sisters should be: always there when no one else is.

Noted human rights activist Desmond Tutu once said: "You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."

During disagreements, teens say, always keep in mind that your siblings are just a different version of you. ■

Who is the best soccer player in the world?

Andres Iniesta Lujan!

By Ralph T. Karnuah // Staff Writer

Andres Iniesta Lujan is the best footballer in the world. Although some might argue in favor of the likes of Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, or even Wayne Rooney, Iniesta has, in fact, surpassed them as the world's greatest.

To achieve the status of the best player in the world, one must master every aspect of his profession, have the ability to raise his performance in vital situations, and consistently show his worth. Iniesta, a central attacking midfielder from Spain who also plays for Barcelona at the club level, has been able to dominate all of soccer in this very manner with his vision, touch, and the presence he brings to the game.

Iniesta showed a glimpse of stepping up his game when it mattered in the finals of the FIFA world cup 2010 when he scored the winning goal of the game in the final minutes to crown Spain its first-ever world championship.

Iniesta then put together a string of stunning feats in Spain's title run in the 2012 European championships and was named player of the tournament for his brilliant playmaking. This was a competition that also had Ronaldo, Rooney, and others, and they all failed to outshine Iniesta.

Though Ronaldo, Rooney, and Messi are great players who have done well both at the club and international levels, when it comes down to the world's best, they all fall short of Iniesta. ■

Cristiano Ronaldo!

By Marmarin Nasirahmad // Staff Editor

I believe that Cristiano Ronaldo is a much better soccer player than all the others. Ronaldo is a forward for Spanish La Liga club Real Madrid as well as being the captain of the Portuguese national team. He is smooth yet powerful.

Ronaldo has the most skills and he knows how to work on a team, passing the ball around to his mates.

Soccer is not all about scoring goals; just because you score the most goals, that doesn't make you the greatest soccer player in the world.

While Ronaldo has won many individual honors — such as FIFA World Player of the Year in 2008 — it's all about teamwork and skills. Ronaldo is a player who is most famous for his great tricks — dekes and fakes.

It's really hard for another player to take a ball away from him, which also shows how good he is. Ronaldo could be scoring way more goals than he does, but he takes joy in passing the ball.

He doesn't always take all the credit for himself but also works within his team. ■



AFH art by Pablo Chao

Lionel Messi!

By Kristiana Mbrice // Staff Writer

We all grow up loving a celebrity, and mine was — and still is — Lionel “Leo” Messi, better known as just Messi. For those who don't know him, Messi is the best soccer player in the world. He plays forward for Spanish La Liga club FC Barcelona and the Argentina national team.

Messi was born on June 24, 1987, in Rosario, Argentina. He started playing soccer at the age of five. But Messi wasn't like the other boys. He was shorter than the rest and was later diagnosed with growth hormone deficiency.

But he's sure developed since then.

The fast and strategic Messi has accumulated a series of awards, including FIFA World Player of the Year in 2009; UEFA Champions League leading scorer in 2008/09, 2009/10, and 2010/11; and UEFA's Best Player in Europe, 2010/11.

Even legendary Argentine footballer Diego Maradona declared Messi as his worthy successor.

Can he be any better? ■



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