

TEENS **in** PRINT BOSTON

BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT JAN/FEB 2014™

The rise and fall of Enterteenment media... and the young writers left behind

A SPECIAL REPORT

PAGE 3



The debut of TEEN VOICES RISING, [pages 10-11](#)

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Clockwise from top: AFH art by Kiara Fuentes, Nathalie Myrthil, Carlos Duarte and AFH photo by Idalmis Cirino

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On the case: MassCOSH's Teens Lead @ Work peer leaders investigated Entertainment media's business practices.

Photo courtesy of MassCOSH

The rise and fall of Enterteenment media... and the young writers left behind

By **Mussuba Samati** // Senior Editor and **James Whitter, Adamajan Bah** // Staff Writers

A Newbury Street address. Proclamations of praise from the city and state. An extravagant launch party at a Back Bay venue where a group of teen writers signed magazine copies like rock stars. An over-the-top press release hailing the event's success as something unforgettable.

Between her glossy magazine, website, weeklong teen gala, and talent show production, Enterteenment President and CEO Wallis Amanda Mills seemed well on her way to building her own mini media empire.

However, something crucial was allegedly missing amid all the activity: money — specifically, a payout to Mills's group of high school writers who say they'd been enticed by the promise of career mentors and up to \$5,000 in scholarship money to offset college-related costs.

Now, those same writers say they are disappointed, angry,

and empty-handed, and some have threatened in a letter to sue Mills to recover what they consider their contractual compensation of payment for filling her publications with pages of teen-oriented articles.

"I was never paid a single penny," says Alex Bair, a freshman at Wheaton College, who estimates he is owed some \$3,600 for 27 articles he wrote. He covered sports.

All told, there are about 40 student writers — with claims totaling over \$100,000 and start times dating back to 2008 — who have also been left in the lurch and allegedly not paid, according to advocates

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at the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health.

With help from MassCOSH's Teens Lead @ Work peer leaders, at least nine of the impacted writers have filed unpaid wage complaints against Mills with the state Attorney General's office.

This is apparently not new territory for Mills. Online records show that Mills has found herself the target of criticism beyond the teen writers.

Reached by phone, Mills politely declined any comment.

Interviewed by Teens in Print, some of her young writers say they are still unsure of Mills's original intentions, though they wonder whether the woman behind the glossy *Enterteenment Magazine* that she eventually shut down was too slick for her own good.

Writer Tia Di Salvo, a junior at Saugus High School, says that the workings of the magazine seemed hard to fathom.

Di Salvo says that whenever teens questioned Mills about sudden shifts in scheduling, for example, they received the same sort of response.

"Yada yada ya," says Di Salvo.

Teens and parents say they got a similar runaround when they asked to be paid.

Di Salvo wrote about music and figures she is due at least \$3,500 for her pieces now that *Enterteenment Magazine*, as Mills has acknowledged, is no longer publishing.

"As a payment for my work, I was promised scholarship credits post graduation," Di Salvo wrote in her complaint to the AG dated October of 2013.

Di Salvo received a mentor through the program but others say that, for them, that was an empty promise, too.

* * * * *

In the beginning, Mills's roster of high school writers from across the country say they were attracted by promotions that were placed on Facebook, a Boston youth opportunity online newsletter, and other outlets. There was up to \$5,000 in scholarships to be won after high school graduation, as well as a chance to solidify their young journalism careers.

"I thought it was pretty legit," says Adaeze Nduaguba, a Dorchester resident who is now a freshman at Dartmouth College.

Nduaguba's beat was celebrity news. In her complaint to the AG dated October of 2013, Nduaguba said she is owed \$3,700 for her work. Asked in the complaint whether she requested payment from her employer, Nduaguba wrote: "She told me I was going to receive a check in the mail around September 6."

From the outside, *Enterteenment* media had all the requisite rules and regulations of a highly disciplined company.

According to documents supplied by *Enterteenment*'s former parent liaison and obtained from MassCOSH, tight deadlines were delineated – "I understand that due dates require my editorial to be submitted on the date listed on my editorial schedule by 11:59 PM PST that night" – along with a strict code of conduct: "I will express disagreements or concerns maturely

The kind of enticing ad designed to catch the eye of high school journalists.

and speak respectfully to fellow writers, mentors and *Enterteenment* staff, clients and guests."

The operation also had lots of hype. A 2012 press release trumpeted a premier publication's debut:

"*Enterteenment Magazine* successfully launched their highly anticipated, first-ever print issue on Monday November 19th. To celebrate this momentous occasion, Microsoft hosted a pre-release launch party on Sunday November 18th at their store in The Shops At The Prudential Center..."

There were performers, pizza, and photo-ops.

"This is definitely one event that will be talked about and remembered for years to come," the press release concluded.

Asked by Teens in Print to describe its relationship with *Enterteenment*, Microsoft issued a statement that said, in part, "Youth groups, adult education, non-profit organizations and Microsoft employee groups are all welcome to book the Microsoft Store's free theater space for meetings or activities."

"I feel tricked and cheated....She made all these promises about money. Nobody's been paid."

By the following month, *Enterteenment*'s celebratory cheer was being deflated by parental suspicions.

In a December 2012 email obtained from MassCOSH, Alex Bair's mother, Alma, asked Mills for documentation detailing the scholarship fund: "As parent liaison and a supporter of *Enterteenment*," she wrote, "I would like to put to rest the financial questions swirling around the solvency of *Enterteenment*..."

"The students will be paid upon providing proof of graduation as contracted and agreed upon," Mills

responded, according to the email chain obtained from MassCOSH. "That said, I am not going to accommodate this request."

In an interview with Teens in Print, Alex Bair now says: "I feel tricked and cheated....She made all these promises about money. Nobody's been paid."

* * * * *

Alex Bair's disenchantment with Mills echoes on the Internet.

A post at ripoffreport.com accused Mills of failing to pay staff that worked on her singing competition venture called Sound Off.

In her response, in December of 2012, Mills denied any fraud, saying: "It is simply a matter of debt and therefore delay....In seven years we have not fallen upon hard times such as these."

In March 2013, according to an email to her writers and their parents obtained from MassCOSH, Mills was acting upbeat and name-dropping Microsoft again.

"I had a great meeting with Microsoft and they are interested in partnering to make *Enterteenment* and Teen Week as part of their Youth Spark initiative," she wrote.

It's unclear what happened next. Asked about this would-be partnership, Microsoft issued a second statement to Teens in Print, saying in part: "Microsoft declined to be a sponsor of *Enterteenment Magazine* and is not involved as part of its YouthSpark initiative."

In an email obtained from MassCOSH and dated April of 2013, Mills was now pessimistic as she spoke to her writers and their parents about the financial difficulties she said her enterprise was facing: "As you know the spring issue of *Enterteenment Magazine* was not supported (no ads sold)."

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By June of 2013, it appears that Mills had reached the end of the line with Enterteenment.

In an email dated June 11, 2013 and obtained from the former parent liaison, Mills wrote: "After seven long years of ups and downs, it is with a heavy heart that I have decided to close Enterteenment.... Everyone will receive the first 50% of their scholar-

Nduaguba says she's worried about how to pay for next school year. "She did prey on teens like us."

ship within 60-90 days from receipt of your documents" – which included proof of high school graduation.

MassCOSH Executive Director Marcy Goldstein-Gelb says that as of press time, she does not know of any Enterteenment student writer who was paid any money – including one who has since gone on to graduate college.

This only caused some parents to further boil. In a September 2013 email to Mills regarding money allegedly owed to her son for his articles, Donna McCarthy wrote: "This is the third e mail I have left for you. You have not replied at all concerning payment to Sean. You have left me no choice to believe that you are a fraud and have taken advantage of a group of innocent kids. How do you live with yourself?"

* * * * *

It was that kind of festering frustration that led one former Enterteenment writer to seek help from MassCOSH after he said he found little interest from other groups he reached out to, including legal and government entities.

For the past several months, peer leaders from MassCOSH's Teens Lead @ Work program acting on this tip have researched Mills's business practices, coordinated efforts to track down former Enterteenment writers and keep them informed, put them in touch with the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, and encouraged them to file complaints with the AG.

"We want to make sure that teens know their rights so they're not taken advantage of in the workplace," says peer leader Justin Caballero, 16, from Boston Latin Academy.

As they wait for the legal process to play out, former Enterteenment writers who say they were not paid are trying to regroup.

Alex Bair says he was hoping to buy a car with his scholarship money. Now, he says, he's been looking for a job.

"I'm having a lot of trouble making money," he says.

Nduaguba says she's worried about how to pay for next school year.

"She did prey on teens like us," Nduaguba says about Mills.

Di Salvo says she loved being a student journalist and valued the experience. Now she's working retail and socking away money for college.

"I'm just hurt," she says.

Meanwhile, Mills can be found at an online site called WEI, where she calls herself a concept architect.

WEI boasts the same Newbury Street address and phone number as Mills's old operation, Enterteenment. ■

This article was produced as part of a collaboration between Teens in Print and the New England Center for Investigative Reporting based at Boston University and at the studios of WGBH News. The project is funded by the family of the late journalist and author Caroline Knapp.



MassCOSH

November 18, 2013

Ms. Amanda Mills (a.k.a Wallis Amanda Mills)
885 South St Apt 306
Roslindale, MA 02131-2458

Dear Ms. Mills:

We, the former student writers of Enterteenment and representatives of Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health Teens Lead at Work (MassCOSH TL@W) are writing to urge you to take immediate action to resolve unacceptable employment and payment practices at Enterteenment.

Specifically, we ask that you respect your former student workers' rights by ensuring that all student workers are paid the agreed upon wages, as outlined in their initial, individual contracts. If the impacted teens of Enterteenment file a lawsuit, and a court of law determines that you have violated wage laws, **you could be ordered to pay them triple the amount of unpaid wage, costs, and attorney's fees.**

We would be pleased to schedule a meeting, as soon as you inform us that you agree to meet our demands in good faith before **December 1, 2013**. Please contact Marcy Goldstein-Gelb at 617-825-7233 x15.

If we do not hear from you before **December 1, 2013** we will assume that you are not interested in resolving this matter amicably, and we will proceed to escalate this matter to the next level of legal authority.

Sincerely,

Alex Bair
Tia Di Salvo
Richmond James
Cassie Kite
Molly McGinnis
Adaeze Nduaguba
Alma Osario
Former Enterteenment writers

Justin Caballero
Manolo Diaz
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Photo courtesy of BSAC



BSAC BUZZ

By **Julissa Mendez** // Contributing Writer

Here at the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC), we believe the best way to better public education is through the power of youth voices.

As part of the December 9 National Day of Action to Reclaim the Promise of Public Education, BSAC students helped facilitate a Boston Truth Town Hall meeting at Madison Park High School to discuss the future of Boston Public Schools. This meeting, taking place alongside public actions in other cities across the country, was a first step in trying to unite Boston's educators, parents, students, activists, legislators, and community members in finding solutions for its public schools.

At this gathering, BSAC students and other young people shared their ideas with community members and led discussions on how to improve Boston Public Schools, including the need to ramp up mental health resources in the system. By helping facilitate this event, BSAC proved that youth themselves can generate powerful ideas to better their schools and inspire adults to do the same.

Although most students cannot vote, they still represent our city's future. As prospective voters and leaders, students have a voice politicians need to hear to have a sense of what's coming Boston's way.

BSAC runs entirely on the premise that student voices can make an impact on even the most powerful leaders who run their city. For more information on BSAC, email bsacofse@gmail.com or come to a steering committee meeting every Monday afternoon, 3:30-5:30, at Madison Park High School. ■

As prospective voters and leaders, students have a voice politicians need to hear to have a sense of what's coming Boston's way.

Teachers + students + social media = **no-no**

By **Alexa Lara** // Staff Writer

Monique Reyes, 15, says teachers shouldn't have social media contact with students because she feels it's inappropriate.

"Teachers are educators and should play the role that they get paid to do," says Reyes, who attends the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science.

Some teachers these days feel as though social media sites allow them to strengthen their professional connections to students.

Of course, others have taken it too far. In New York City, according to a press account, three teachers were fired over a six-month period in 2010 for having improper dealings with students on social media.

One teacher reportedly wrote, "This is sexy," under a student's photo on Facebook. Another allegedly sent a message to a student telling her that her boyfriend didn't deserve such a beautiful girl as her.

Jolie Medrano, 15, says it's weird when teachers reach out to students via social media.

"It shouldn't happen unless it's school based," says Medrano, from the O'Bryant. "Teachers and students have their own social lives."

Ernest Mejia, 17, agrees that teachers shouldn't interact with students on social networks.

"Students should have their own sense of privacy away from their academic life," says Mejia, who goes to the O'Bryant. "The purpose of social networks is so that you can choose who you want to communicate with." ■



AFH photo by Dominic Duong

AFH photo by Miguel Fitzpatrick





AFH photo by Timmy Nguyen

Problem-solving panic

Testing the patience of math students

By Katherine Urbacz // Contributing Writer

The study of mathematics fills the hearts and minds of many students with fear. Some withdraw and avoid doing homework. Others get lost in frustration.

There may be a reason for all this numerical nervousness.

One reason that students panic when answering a math test is that they are often unable to recognize the questions being asked, according to teens. This causes psychological confusion, with students thinking they know less than they actually do.

In some cases, teens say, a student may have been ridiculed in front of the class for not coming up with a right answer, leading to more lack of confidence.

In this way, students continue underestimating their ability to learn even if they have more knowledge than most.

For this reason, teachers need to explain things patiently and help students maintain a positive attitude. Also, support from friends and parents may motivate students to increase their interest in mathematical matters. ■



AFH art by Alice Tran

College bound: home or away?

By Lizandro Nogueira // Staff Writer

When it comes to choosing a college, location is a key element.

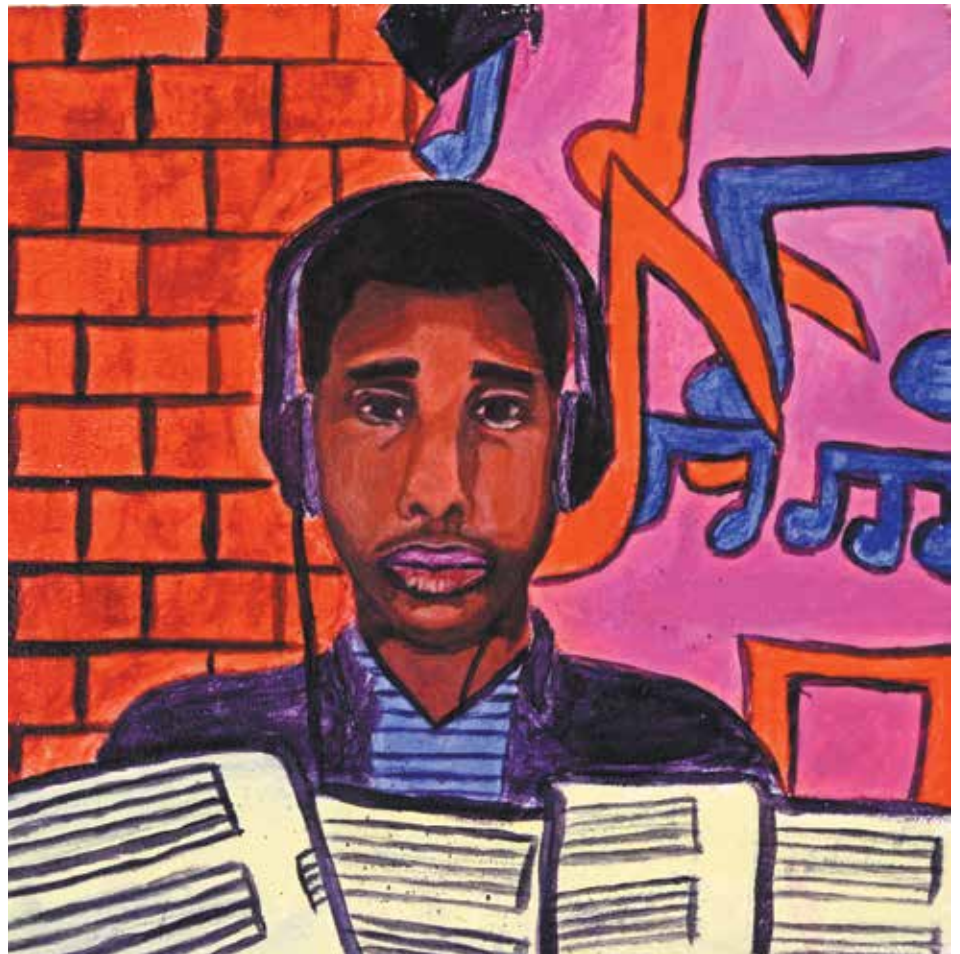
"Some students rather go to a college that is nearby because they don't want to leave their family but others want more independence," says Jordani Valenzuela, a senior at Brighton High School who would prefer to go away to school.

Brighton High senior Jeffrey Phung believes that going away to school is a positive transition for students.

"It could be very exciting because they can only rely on themselves and realize that they can do certain things on their own," says Phung, who wants to experience that freedom.

Adrian Gomez, a senior at Brighton High, says he would rather go to a nearby college.

He says: "I don't want to leave my friends and family because they are important to me." ■



AFH art by Ahmed Abdullahi

Tuning in

Letting music calm the classroom

By Tina Tran // Contributing Writer

It's a Monday morning and you're in class – distracted by the noise and getting nothing done. After the teacher issues assignments, imagine if you could pull out your phone, call up your tunes, and listen to music while doing your work.

Class would be a lot quieter with everyone plugged in. You always hear a student say, "If you let me listen to my music, I promise I'll get my work done. It relaxes me."

When you're listening to music you are concentrating. This is what students do with homework. Sometimes class gets too noisy and students get distracted.

So, cue up the songs and let the learning begin. ■



AFH art by DaQuan Haines

RIP Paul Walker

More than just a pretty face

By Mussuba Samati // Senior Editor

He did not only have a beautiful face; he also had a beautiful heart.

On Nov. 30, Paul Walker and his friend Roger Rodas were leaving a charity event for victims of the typhoon in the Philippines when their deadly car crash occurred. Speed was a factor, investigators said.

Star of the Fast & Furious movie franchise, Walker, 40, was a talented actor who had an amazing humanitarian side.

In 2010, Walker dedicated his time and efforts by traveling to Haiti after the massive earthquake hit. That same year, he and his aid organization, REACH OUT Worldwide, tried to bring relief to the people of Chile who suffered their own earthquake. In 2011, Walker was in Alabama helping to clear the rubble after a tornado struck.

Beauty is the actions an individual takes to have a positive effect on society – not just what's on the exterior. Paul Walker proved that. ■

AFH photo by Abraham Rosa



RIP Nelson Mandela

International inspiration

By Penda Seck // Staff Writer

A great person is not just someone with lots of money but one who sacrificed his own life to make millions live their dreams, a person who loved his nation as much as he loved himself. And Nelson Mandela, who died on Dec. 5 at age 95, was one of these people.

In terms of transcending the ego, living in the world is indeed difficult but the secret is to identify with the ego and to use it as one uses a mask. Just as when a teacher is strict with a student, the ego expressed is for the benefit of the student, not for the benefit of the teacher. This was one lesson Mandela taught me as he fought for the rights of all South Africans.

Imprisoned for nearly three decades for his battle against white minority rule, he came out ready to use his personal power to end apartheid and foster democracy.

"The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come," Mandela said in his acceptance speech upon becoming South Africa's first black president, in 1994.

For me, as an African, Mandela was a great source of inspiration for all he accomplished, including winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

Because of his integrity and inspiration, I can only hope I may have the chance to change the world's views as much as he did.

Nelson Mandela, you were the kind of person we needed to make our world a peaceful place to live. May your soul rest in peace. ■

Just as when a teacher is strict with a student, the ego expressed is for the benefit of the student, not for the benefit of the teacher.

“12 Years a Slave”

A message to all about racism

By Trevaun Alexander // Contributing Writer

Imagine being taken from your family and beaten. Imagine that you know you are free but you are claimed as a slave, breaking your soul.

The horrifying racism played out in this movie will touch your hearts deeply and drag you into the film. You will actually feel what's going on.

In “12 Years a Slave,” a young black carpenter and musician named Solomon was living a successful life as a free man in the North when he was kidnapped from his family during the night. He was beaten and handed a slave name, Platt.

He spent 12 years enslaved. His life was harsh and brutal. Eventually, he was given back his liberty by those who realized he was a free man up North.

People should understand that this movie is more than a movie. It's a message to white, black, and all races that this was going on – and it really wasn't OK. ■



AFH art by Tashara Bailey

Why I don't like slave movies

By Anthony Battle // Contributing Writer

Watching movies like “12 Years a Slave” has an impact on my mind. It almost makes me look at white people a different way. I don't want to see them like descendants of slave owners. I want to see them as they are. But looking at a slave movie like this puts a different image in my head of whites that I don't want there.

Even though “12 Years a Slave” is a good movie, it still gives me pain in my heart to see what life was before my time.

When I was between the ages of seven and nine, I saw my first slave movie. I can't remember the name, but I know it changed the way I looked at whites. I despised them until my mom told me it's not all whites that are like that and that many whites like black people.

This is why I don't like to see slave movies. I love to keep myself focused on a place that's good between blacks and whites. If you look out in the world, you can see how racism still exists, especially in places like Florida, which is where I'm from. It would make the world a better place if people didn't hate each other because of their skin. ■

It almost makes me look at white people a different way. I don't want to see them like descendants of slave owners.



AFH photo by Briahna Omorogbe

teen voices rising

Giving girls a platform to be heard



To give rise to the voices of teenage girls. That's the mission of Teen Voices Rising, a new partnership that combines the local hand of WriteBoston with the international reach of Women's eNews. Teen Voices Rising — just like its late, lamented predecessor, Teen Voices — aims to give young women a place to express themselves on issues ranging from self-image to media manipulation to whatever smolders inside them. Teens in Print is proud to present the inaugural, soul-searing writings from TVR staff, which will regularly appear in TIP and at womensenews.org.

STAR STUCK: Why role models go bad

Teen Voices Rising staff members wrote letters to celebrities who may or may not fit the traditional Hollywood standards of beauty and power. They asked them burning questions that speak to the minds of their generation.

“People only see you as what’s on their screen”

By Janice He // TVR Staff Writer

Dear Rachel McAdams,

I noticed after your big-hit movies like “Mean Girls” and “The Notebook” that your popularity had grown dramatically. You have this incredible talent to capture a variety of people’s interest within the movie industry, presented in teen, romance, comedy, family, and thriller movies.

However, people only see you as what’s on their screen and they aren’t aware that you had to work hard to get where you are today.

They wouldn’t have known that you worked hours – in fact three years! – at McDonald’s behind an orange juice machine. But once your name grew big, things began to flip. And as your success grew along with your fans, so did jealousy and hatred.

How did you react to Eva Mendez’s uneasi-

ness toward you when she was dating your ex, Ryan Gosling? Or how about when those surgeons made confident claims that you underwent plastic surgery?

Despite all the chaos and these troublemakers, you continue to amaze me with your strength and your talent in addition to your charities and your environmental work. But does it hurt you when others try to bring you down? Or have you just become used to it? Do you feel pressured when millions of young females, including myself, aspire to grow up just like you? Or has it become natural?

You have had a huge impact on my life. You are heroic in the sense that your progress and growth have created footsteps for girls like me to follow and look up to. You are my role model because you play that role so perfectly.

Sincerely, Janice

“Help us stay strong”

By Cabricia Diaz // TVR Staff Writer

Dear Demi Lovato,

You’ve taught many to stay strong in hopes that it would save young lives that are overwhelmed by insecurities and judgment. I admire you because of your recovery from substance abuse and depression and the stability you show through your actions and music.

But let’s be honest. I’m sure you have those moments of weakness, days you don’t want to start, and moments of negative recollections. I know I do. How do you cope? There are so many people who have to deal with this daily, and to

them, there is no hope. Back when, how did you muster up the courage to step into school? Why must girls feel the need to be perfect? The standards of being acceptable and beautiful enough are breaking teens from the inside out.

I write to you for words of wisdom. You have lived this and you overcame it and you are growing stronger every day. I want to grow stronger and so do millions of people who see themselves as useless. How do you tackle your daily struggle? It would be nice to do what you do in a song and change lives on an unimaginable scale. Help us stay strong.

Sincerely, Cabricia

AFH photo by Idalmis Cirino



“You were the ‘perfect’ image”

By Diana Karamourtopoulos // TVR Staff Writer

Dear Miley Cyrus,

In your transformation over the last few years, did you realize what effect you would have on the young children who admired you?

Many children, including myself, idolized you when you were the character of Hannah Montana.

You were the “perfect” image. Your music was appropriate, as were your clothes, and parents approved of you. Everyone loved Miley Cyrus.

So, why did you change?

Did you feel pressured to be perfect all the time – and break? If you had this respect, why would you want to throw it away to be like stars who did not get as much respect? Did someone convince you that living this way was better, or were you just imitating what you saw others do?

You must have imagined that those who looked up to you might repeat your actions and transform themselves the way that you did.

I wonder about your objectives. If you had a quiet, well-led life, why did you change? We, your fans, feel sad – like we have lost someone we admired. We want the Miley we loved back. We don’t love this foreign Miley, the one who sends completely different messages to her fans. We also feel that you are putting a negative name out there for our generation by being so inappropriate.

Sincerely, Diana

Dear Diary: I'm not worthy

Teen Voices Rising staff members were asked to write about a time someone had made them feel unworthy — or when they had been on the other end of the spectrum as the aggressor.



“At least I didn’t get kept back”

By **Cabricia Diaz** // TVR Staff Writer

I thought I was the smartest kid, and that was my flaw. Any-one below my level of intellect was a weak link. I saw myself as superior to those who were amateur in something I excelled in. I was in the fourth grade and my sister got the brunt of it.

Camille was a great sister, my twin sister. She was two inches shorter than me and pretty funny. It was the summer between third and fourth grade when things shifted. “You didn’t pass the third grade?” I heard our older sister say to Camille. I gasped.

Camille had most likely responded, but with a shameful set-back like that, I didn’t expect an audible response. She had been kept back and I could tell she felt bad. I felt bad...we all did.

The subject died later that day. It wasn’t the end of the world. All she had to do was redo the grade and soldier on.

Everything went back to normal as the months passed. But, of course, that made me superior in more ways. I was taller, bigger, and smarter. What I hadn’t noticed was a habit I was developing.

A year later, each time we would argue, I’d always bring up the fact that she was kept back in the third grade. I thought it didn’t matter. I remember getting into trouble with my parents one day. Camille was rubbing her freedom in my face as she watched me in my room, grounded. It was an innocent tease since the punishment was minor.

All I remember was saying, “At least I didn’t get kept back.” I recall seeing her smile disappear. For the rest of the school year, I taunted her and made her feel at her absolute lowest.

I wouldn’t wish that type of degradation on anyone, but I was nine and oblivious and mean.

Recently, I’ve gotten to talk to my sister about the issue. Yes, we laughed. There were lots of “oh yeahs” and “I remembers.” I also apologized several times during our conversation.

I asked her how she felt even though I knew. “I felt bad. I felt kind of stupid.” I always hated when people emphasized my weaknesses. There was no reason for me to do that to my own blood.

She told me she understood, that we were kids then and I didn’t really know what I was doing. “But how you felt was real,” I said. “It happened. And it was my fault.”

I didn’t want the conversation to get too deep but I had to learn something. Something along the lines of confronting my mistakes and giving rest to past troubles.

The last thing she said to me was, “But hey, it’s over. Now my grades are way better than yours.”

I guess I did deserve that. ■

I taunted her and made her feel at her absolute lowest. I wouldn’t wish that type of degradation on anyone, but I was nine and oblivious and mean.

I am extra small

By **Janice He** // TVR Staff Writer

“Strawberry shortcake, blueberry pie, who will be your lu...”

Suzu and Bianca both ditched the jump rope. Jaws dropped but something else did, too – my pants.

A cool, chilly breeze blew my shaky legs as I immediately picked my pants back up. I felt a flush of red across my face and a sudden horrifying twist in my stomach as I prayed that my crush Marquis wasn’t looking in this direction. A really long pause followed until one of the girls broke out in laughter and chuckles from the rest of the group echoed. A stiffness started from my toes and reached my mind, making it numb.

The loud, thunderous ring of the school bell came to my rescue. I never truly appreciated it until that day as it saved me from any possible further pain. Lowering my head among the rest of the students, I was well aware the news would trickle itself across the school.

This feeling was nothing new.

During swim class, my bottom piece dropped after I took a dive. Luckily, before I reached the surface, both pieces were back in place. I was relieved. I promised myself to never wear a two-piece swimsuit and to never risk a jump again.

As if these embarrassing situations weren’t bad enough, I was always reminded who I was by other people. Nicknames were just a start. Toothpick. Anorexic. Twig. Chicken-legged. Skeleton. If you can think of anything awfully gross or substantially thin, I’ve already been called that.

These little things began to shape me. I have cried myself to sleep hoping that I would someday wake up in another body. I hated my body. Baggy clothes didn’t disguise my small body and neither did the multiple layers I packed inside. “Disgusting and sickly” – that’s what they called it – and it didn’t take long for me to start believing it, either.

Remarks about my body were everywhere, from my relatives to my friends. If you’re big, that’s OK because you’ve got everyone’s sympathy. But critics can’t say the same thing for the rest of us. Why? Because it’s our fault that our bodies are the way they are?

“You’re not a real woman.” “You chose to be that way.” “Go eat a hamburger.” “You are a disgrace.” “Do your parents not love you?” “Nothing but skin and bones.”

This is the norm for someone like me and I am baffled why so many people assume that cruel words are a motivator when instead they have hurt me far more. These sayings have sunk into my mind and have been stamped onto other girls.

It started as a hole that kept me believing I was never going to be like the others and this hole continued to grow every day, building from all the features I lacked, just like the 20 pounds of meat my body lacked. It is the hypocrites who make loud claims that everyone is beautiful but shame down on those they view as different.

As I am growing, I have become more confident with my body and who I am, not with therapy or reminders, but with being able to simply allow myself to take the criticism in, let it go, and be OK about it.

But even now I am still not fully whole, because I have a small folder in my head collecting all the childhood nightmares, including the jump rope incident. ■



TVR art by Janice He





Building a better future in Bangladesh

By Proma Kazi // Contributing Writer

One day almost a year ago, April 24, 2013, started out like any other for so many who worked in a factory building called Rana Plaza. Suddenly, the structure collapsed. People in all of Bangladesh and around the world were very sad. In the accident, more than 1,100 died.

Bangladesh is a small country in Asia with a huge amount of people. The population is 154.7 million. A large number of people are poor in this country – 26 percent live below the poverty level.

Many are forced to find cheap jobs and don't worry about their own security. There are a lot of garment factories in Bangladesh that hire people for low pay at high safety risk – including teens.

In Bangladesh, many of the Rana Plaza survivors are having a tough time adjusting to lost limbs and shattered lives. And the country worries about more tragedies to come.

That is why many are now saying that the government needs to pay more attention to old buildings and their owners. ■



AFH photo by Miguel Fitzpatrick



AFH art by Carlos Duarte

A Cape Verde catalogue

By Lidiane Barreto // Contributing Writer

Imagine a beautiful place that has good beaches, lots of sun, and natural food that people cook all day.

With more than 6,000 people from Cape Verde living in Boston, many people want to know more about the spot made up of many islands off the coast of West Africa.

It is considered a small world, with a rich culture, that is filled with people who are hospitable and humble. Much of the lifestyle is rural.

Soccer and church-going make up a lot of the social interaction.

Music is a major export.

Many young people and their parents have left Cape Verde and settled in places like Brockton, New Bedford, and Boston in search of a more plentiful life.

They are following the path of ancestors who arrived on these shores in the early 19th century as crew members aboard whaling ships. ■

Imagine a beautiful place that has good beaches, lots of sun, and natural food that people cook all day.



Welcome to Albania

New culture club shows the way

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

Xhorxhia Papa, 17, says she decided to start an Albanian culture club in the fall at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science because she wanted to share with others the traditions of the place she comes from.

"It is important to unite with people from the same background and talk to them about your experience," she says.

The club meets once a week and at any given time there are up to 15 students in attendance – not all Albanian.

"As an Albanian, I want people to know more of Albania than the fact that it's just a third-world country," says Klea Hima, 17, who attends the O'Bryant. "Even though it's behind on the economy and it's a small place, it has such a fantastic history, many tourist places to visit, and we have such a different yet amusing culture."

Club members discuss the things that set Albania apart from other countries.

"I want to teach others about our interesting traditional clothes, dances, and beliefs that make us unique from the rest of the world," says Ina Dodoveci, 16, who goes to the O'Bryant. ■

The author is a co-founder of the club.



Immigrant students

The need to succeed

By Vanessa Sylvestre // Contributing Writer

Chevaun Richards is 17 years old with lots of dreams.

He left his country, Jamaica, when he was three years old. When he came to the US, he had a goal of attending college and becoming a teacher.

"I am one of the few people in my family who actually has the opportunity to make it to college," says Richards, who goes to Brighton High School. "I want to be that person that can change life not only for myself but for my parents, as well."

"I am one of the few people in my family who actually has the opportunity to make it to college. I want to be that person that can change life not only for myself but for my parents, as well."

For many immigrants, there is not only pressure to attend college but also to get a good job and support their families. That's why many of them came to the US.

"Some boys think I'm weird because I tell them that I don't need a boyfriend in my life," says Lordya Saint-Jean, a ninth grader at Boston International/Newcomers Academy who is originally from Haiti. "They all are wrong. They don't know the truth of my life. Let me tell you, I'm the only child my mother has, and not only her but I have a lot of cousins who put their hope in me, and can't afford for me to fail. It's an option I can't allow in my life."

It's an option I can't allow in my life."

Caciana Alves, 15, is from Cape Verde. She acknowledges that it can be a real fight to keep going in school.

"Through all that," says Alves, who attends Boston International/Newcomers Academy, "I always remember a promise I made to my grandmother: to do everything to help her." ■

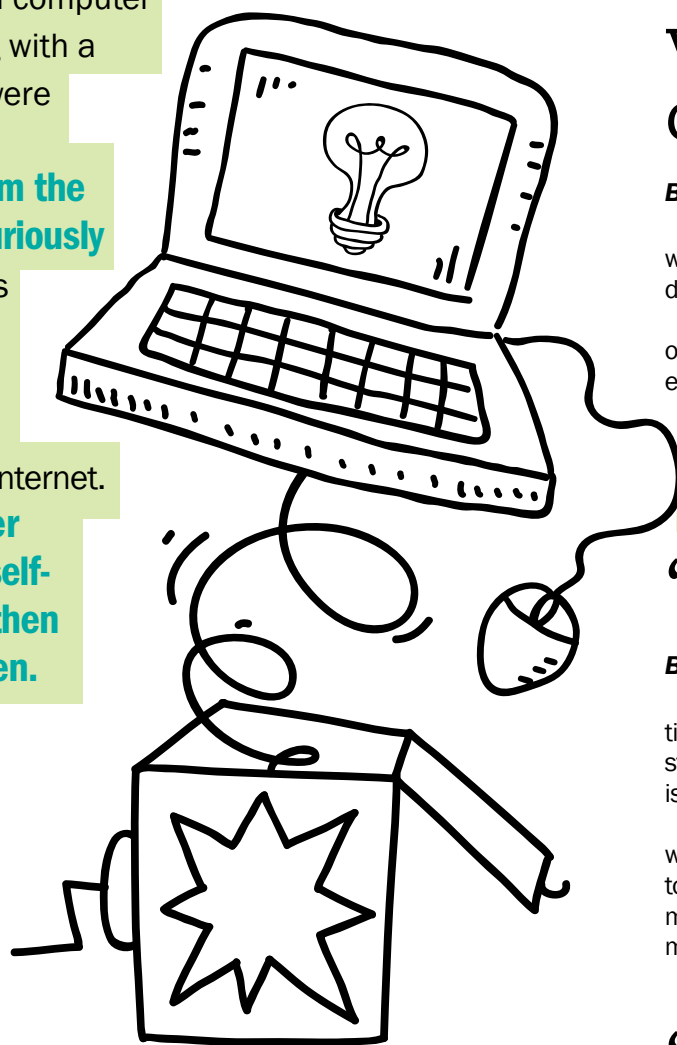
THE LEARNING LAB

A dispatch last year in the Herald Journal of Minnesota noted this **hole-in-the-wall experiment**: While working in New Delhi, in 1999, educational researcher Sugata Mitra cut a hole in the wall that divided his office from the urban slum next door where the poorer children lived. A personal computer connected to the Internet, along with a screen, keyboard, and mouse, were placed on a shelf.

Mitra observed children from the shantytown walking up and curiously looking at the computer. It was probably the first time they had seen one in person. Over time, the children taught themselves how to go online and access the Internet.

Without any prior computer knowledge, the children were self-learning basic skill sets, and then teaching them to other children.

HOW ABOUT YOU?
Are you a self-directed learner? Would this kind of education work for you?



“If you are motivated, you will figure out a way to learn on your own”

By Sonia Rugwiza // Contributing Writer

I taught myself how to make a PowerPoint. I was in 10th grade when I created one for a program about health care. We had to design a clinic treating major health issues in my community.

If you are motivated, you will figure out a way to learn on your own. You will have a better idea of what is going on around you. The elements you taught yourself are often the ones that stick in your mind because you valued the energy and time to learn them.

It's tremendous to have knowledge that you learned on your own even if it isn't graded for points. ■

“I love to help others”

By Dorivaldo Barbosa // Contributing Writer

When I was 13, I sat in front of a computer. It took me a long time to understand by myself how it worked. But once I did, I started to change operating systems and replace hardware. That is self-learning.

I also identify myself as a strong leader. I noticed that others would respect me and do what I told them. This is where I decided to mentor young students. Internet cloud learning like the experiment in New Delhi would get really wonderful benefits, yet I'd take more pleasure working with others. I love to help others. ■

“It cannot replace a human brain”

By Kendell Solis // Contributing Writer

I don't think this kind of education would work for me. If I saw a computer outside, I wouldn't merely start using it randomly.

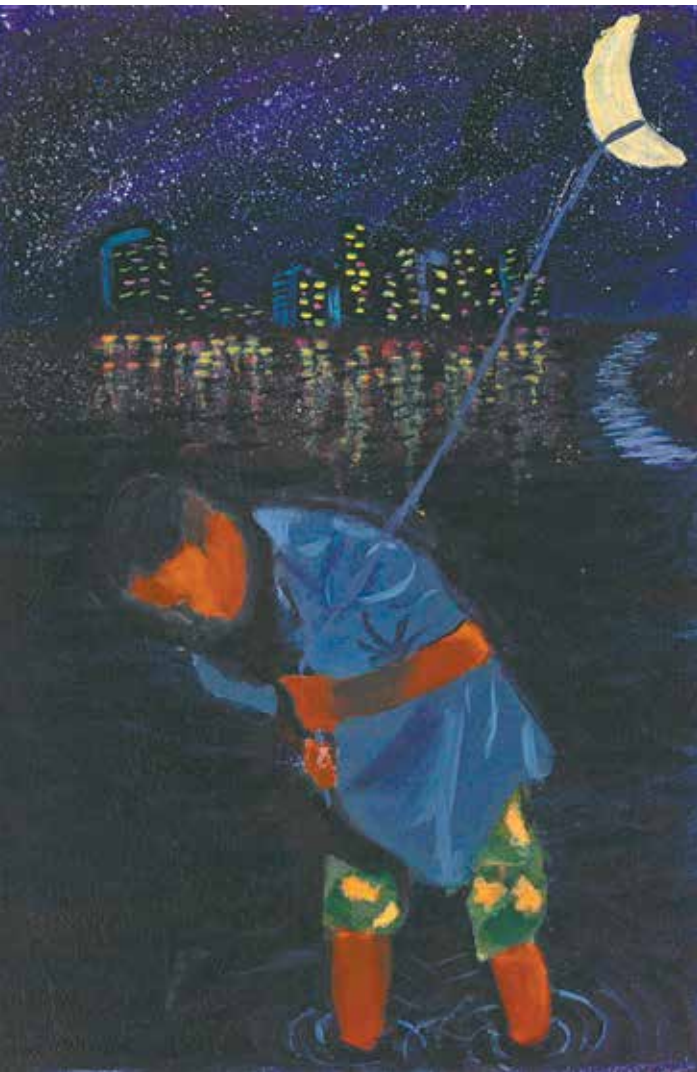
I think an inside education like school is better because the students meet new people and work together. By knowing a lot of people, it makes you fit into your environment.

A computer can probably give you all the answers to the questions you have. But it cannot drive a car for you, or walk for you, or even go to the movies with you. It cannot replace a human brain. ■

“Immigrants like me are self-learners”

By Ivany Gomes // Contributing Writer

Immigrants like me are self-learners. Getting to know English can happen in school but also everywhere you go. If you do not learn this language, your life is going to be hard since you are not going to be able to communicate with others. Every time I do not understand a word, I look it up and attach it to my brain so it can stay there. ■



AFH art by Michael Bobodilla

“When things seem difficult, I know I will overcome them and get things done”

By Fabio Goncalves // Contributing Writer

When I want something, I will go for it until I get it – no matter what.

When I was 17 years old, I used to be a really good soccer player. One day, I didn't show up for practice, so the coach decided to put me on the bench. After the game was over, I got really mad at him because my girlfriend went to watch me play and he did not put me in. I started saying aggressive words to him and that “I'm out of the team.”

Days after, I recognized that I was wrong and I went to apologize. I told him I wanted to be back. He told me that if I wanted to come back, I would be suspended for three games and I had to do 100 push-ups in practice.

It was hard for me, but I made it and rejoined the team. We won the championship and I was the most valuable player.

That is why I don't give up. When things seem difficult, I know I will overcome them and get things done. ■

Grit = determination, fortitude, courage

“Grit does seem to be innate in some people, but fortunately, it can also be developed.”

– Sports psychologist Tara Jones as quoted in an article on womenshealthmag.com

By Casania Gilson // Contributing Writer

Grit is another way of getting what you want. Being gritty requires a lot of perseverance and being passionate about your goal. Even though you fail or encounter hard paths, you need to keep trying.

In my life, I've experienced a lot of things confirming that determination is one of the keys to achieving my goals. Last year, I had a lot of personal issues going on. My home life was hectic. My grandmother was terribly ill. My world just kept spinning 'round and 'round. All of those issues kept me from working really hard in school.

But one day, I realized that being angry wasn't getting me anywhere. So I took a notebook, and made a plan. I decided to stay after school every day to get my homework done before going on. To keep having good grades, I had to keep this route, and I was truly determined.

Determination, and motivation from my best friend, helped me with my school year. ■

“Guess what? I didn't give up!”

By Dieny Sainval // Contributing Writer

I want to be a professional who braids people's hair. And I also want to have my own beauty salon after I get my certificate.

I went to school to learn it. My mother paid that class for me. I had a big, serious test to take before they gave me the certificate. Every time I took the test I never passed it. I took it at least three times. I failed. Guess what? I didn't give up!

I kept studying and practicing for the next time. I had confidence that one day I would pass that test.

Some told me to give up, that it was a waste of time. I didn't listen because I know I'm responsible for my future. Nobody can tell me when to start and when to stop.

The fourth time I took the test, I passed! Now I have my certificate. ■



AFH art by Cassandra Latimore

“I decided to stay”

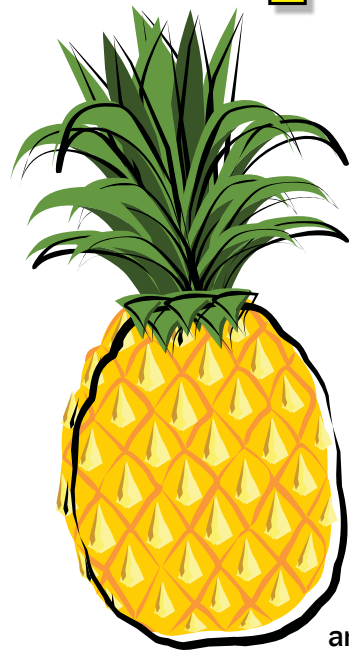
By Melina Cabral // Contributing Writer

When I first came to the US, even though I came with my mom and siblings, I was not feeling happy because I was missing my country and my friends. I had the choice to stay or leave. I decided to stay because I knew that here I had the opportunity that I wouldn't have back home.

Today, I feel so proud of myself. Even though I'm not the best student, I am a young girl who already knows two languages. I am a young girl who, even though she still misses her friends and country, feels good because she is getting the chances that a lot of people would love to have to be successful in life. ■

"SpongeBob SquarePants":

a reality check or
menace to society?



It seems that "SpongeBob SquarePants" is too fast and furious for four-year-olds, according to a study cited on psychcentral.com, which claims the cartoon compromises the young ones' able to pay attention, solve problems, and control their behavior.

Who knew?

Lead investigator Angeline Lillard explains why: "It is possible that the fast pacing, where characters are constantly in motion from one thing to the next, and extreme fantasy, where the characters do things that make no sense in the real world, may disrupt the child's ability to concentrate immediately afterward," she said. "Another possibility is that children identify with unfocused and frenetic characters, and then adopt their characteristics."

Uh-oh.

What do teens have to say about all this regarding one of the most popular cartoon ever, and a TV show many grew up on? TV, after all, is such a huge part of American life.

"SpongeBob" is stupid

By Genesis Duran // Contributing Writer

I don't watch "SpongeBob SquarePants" because I find it stupid. I don't let my son watch it, either. I use creative learning activities with my son, like drawing and building blocks and using words to help his communication.

I don't think it is helpful for kids at a young age to spend too much time watching TV.

It is very different in the Dominican Republic. Kids prefer to go outside and play many different types of games than to be inside. ■

Slow down

By Seila Cardoso // Contributing Writer

In America, there are numerous TV channels that young children can spend time watching. Sometimes, TV can be beneficial for learning English.

But TV can also decrease verbal communication between children and parents. Many parents think TV is the best solution for children because while they are watching TV parents can do many things without being interrupted. In that case, parents should choose slow-paced shows for their children to watch. ■

A plan from parents

By Ritza Joseph // Contributing Writer

As much as TV is strongly a part of American culture, as much as kids have some good or bad shows to watch, it depends on the parents to help their children.

Nothing can stop new shows from coming. However, parents can stop the kids from watching them.

Four-year-old kids don't really have the ability to understand everything. So, they think everything they see is real when it's not.

Parents have to take responsibility, even when they are busy, to create a plan for their kids, something they know the kids will learn from. ■

Taking control

By Arquely Burgos // Contributing Writer

Watching a lot of TV is part of the American culture. When I came to America, I noticed that my mom didn't like me to go outside much, so she always told me to watch TV. Some neighborhoods are dangerous so TV becomes the world for you.

We love TV for the entertainment value, not education. This is why kids are not learning as much as they could because we use TV to entertain them. That is why we should control what kids watch. ■



AFH photo by Kachina Valley

“SpongeBob”: not so fantastic

By Carlos Ribeiro // Contributing Writer

I used to think that fantastical TV shows helped children learn new vocabulary because my parents used to tell me to watch it when I came to America so I could learn English fast.

But now I am sure that letting children watch shows like “SpongeBob SquarePants” is not a smart idea. I live with children every day and I see their reaction after watching the show. When kids watch these entertainment shows, they focus on the furious characters, and when they play with a friend they are going to act the same way as the characters in the show.

[Kids] focus on the furious characters, and when they play with a friend they are going to act the same way as the characters in the show.

In America, many parents work often and may not have time to use creative activities to help their children develop. So they let children watch TV. ■

Go read a book

By Nishan Okubazghi // Contributing Writer

Much of the time, TV serves as a babysitter because parents are busy. Sometimes, a child can get addicted.

Many children don’t go outside; the only thing that keeps them busy is watching TV. My little sister can’t stay a day without watching TV. Sometimes, she refuses to eat food so she can watch TV. She ends up acting like some TV characters, talking like them. I tell her she shouldn’t be like that. I tell her to go read a book. ■

TV or not TV

By Ali Diakite // Contributing Writer

TV plays a big role in American culture. Back in the day, TV was used to see news and watch movies. Nowadays, it is used for different purposes and has a big impact on daily life.

The fact that many TV stars like wearing sunglasses and skinny jeans and all these chains around their necks make people want to do the same. Thus, some people walk around wearing dark glasses even at night time.

People tend to be persuaded by things they see on TV, and many times they get a wrong impression of reality. ■

Meanwhile, a recent episode of “SpongeBob SquarePants” – entitled “SpongeBob, You’re Fired!” – gained lots of buzz for highlighting the rough truths of the harsh economy as fantasy met reality on the small screen.

“Like all really great cartoons, part of SpongeBob’s long-running success has been its ability to tap into the zeitgeist while still being really funny for our audience,” Nickelodeon’s Russell Hicks was quoted as saying in the New York Post.

Working class hero

By Shanique Lewis // Senior Editor

I’ve been a huge fan of “SpongeBob” for as long as time can tell. Trust me, I’ve seen all the episodes repeatedly.

When I first saw this one, I didn’t think there was a greater meaning until I watched it a few more times.

In this episode, hard-working SpongeBob was fired from his job so that his boss, Mr. Krabs, could save a bit of money. In fact, Squidward should have been fired because he doesn’t do much but sit around. But Squidward had seniority.

In society, some employees lose their jobs no matter how much work they do, while ones who don’t contribute to the company can last longer.

Wouldn’t it make sense to get rid of the ones who are costing you money instead of those bringing in the profit?

SpongeBob is encouraged by his best friend, Patrick, to just hang out, be unemployed, and collect free stuff. Instead, SpongeBob is determined to find more work. ■

SpongeBob is encouraged by Patrick to just hang out, be unemployed, and collect free stuff. Instead, SpongeBob is determined to find more work.

AFH art by Kitauna Parker



The benefits of belly laughs

By Jeffrey Alcantara // Contributing Writer

"The most wasted of all days is one without laughter."
— e.e. cummings

Haha. There are many good benefits you can obtain from laughing. For example, laughing is a good workout.

"The effects of laughter and exercise are very similar," Steve Wilson, a psychologist and laugh therapist, was quoted as saying on WebMD.

William Fry, a laugh researcher, says in that same article that after one minute of howling, his heart reaches the same level that it would after 10 minutes on a rowing machine.

Chuckling burns calories, too. Also at WebMD, Vanderbilt University researcher Maciej Buchowski reported that 10 to 15 minutes of guffawing can burn 50 calories.

Laughing is just good medicine for the soul. So watch a hilarious TV show, find a funny friend, or read an amusing book.

Just don't be a mope. It's not healthy. ■

After one minute of howling, his heart reaches the same level that it would after 10 minutes on a rowing machine.



AFH art by Dominique Cave

A day with nature

By Ilma Golemi // Staff Writer

Never had I thought before that spending a day in a peaceful place with trees surrounding me and the beautiful sun touching my face could affect me so strongly.

Having a field trip with my school away from the city made me look at things in a different way. It taught me that the moment when we get tired of life, tired of the same thing every single day, is the exact moment when we should actually do something different.

So there we were out in the woods near Forest Hills. No cellphones, no chit-chat. Just you, nature, and your journal.

Writing all your problems down without anyone around you can help. No one can judge you.

I was surprised that the first thing I wrote was, "What is life?"

I learned that life is a beautiful thing but we people make it so complicated. It was amazing to look around and realize that there are so many things going on in nature.

It was so nice just listening to the birds and feeling the wind blowing like I never had before. ■

Relationship rules

What to do when you have feelings for another?

By Tenneh Sesay // Staff Writer

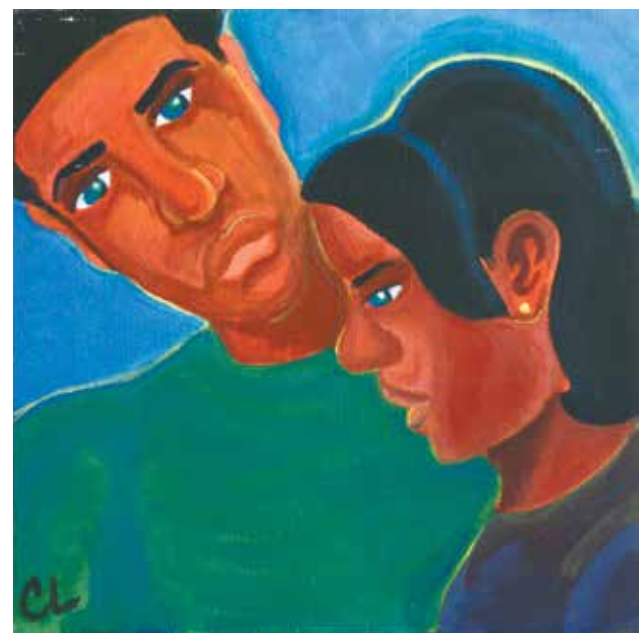
Stephany Vasquez, 15, says there's only one thing to do when you're in a relationship but also have feelings for someone else: end it.

"I wouldn't feel right about it," says Vasquez, who goes to Boston Community Leadership Academy.

Corina Herasme, 16, from BCLA, says she would call it quits with a current boyfriend and then do some investigating. If the person she also was attracted to didn't have the same mind-set as her, she would forget about him.

If he did like her, too, she would try to be in a relationship – but only after making sure of one thing.

"He doesn't like someone else, too," she says. ■



AFH art by Cassandra Lattimore

Food fight

Picking off a friend's plate is so gross

By Jamal Young // Staff Writer

Alize Roderick, 18, from Community Academy of Science and Health, says she can't have food in front of some friends.

"It's like they can't control themselves when I bring it out," she says.

Friends have special bonds that only they share. They share lockers, clothes, and even money, but some teens feel a line is crossed when friends pick food off their plate.

Tatyana Gavin, 18, from CASH, says she doesn't mind if friends ask for food because she does it, too.

However, she says, "There is a difference



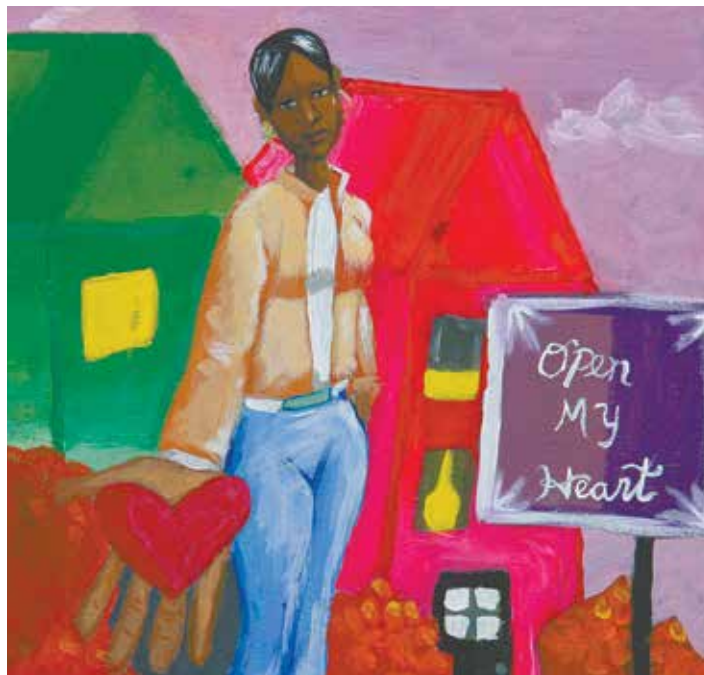
AFH photo by Dominic Duong

when they just grab some while I'm eating."

Nadja Harrell, 17, says it's extremely rude to eat off another plate without first seeking an OK.

"It is complete disrespect, and it shows a lack of morals on the person doing the stealing," says Harrell, who attends CASH. "Because that's what it is... stealing." ■

AFH art by Kiara Fuentes



Fear of love

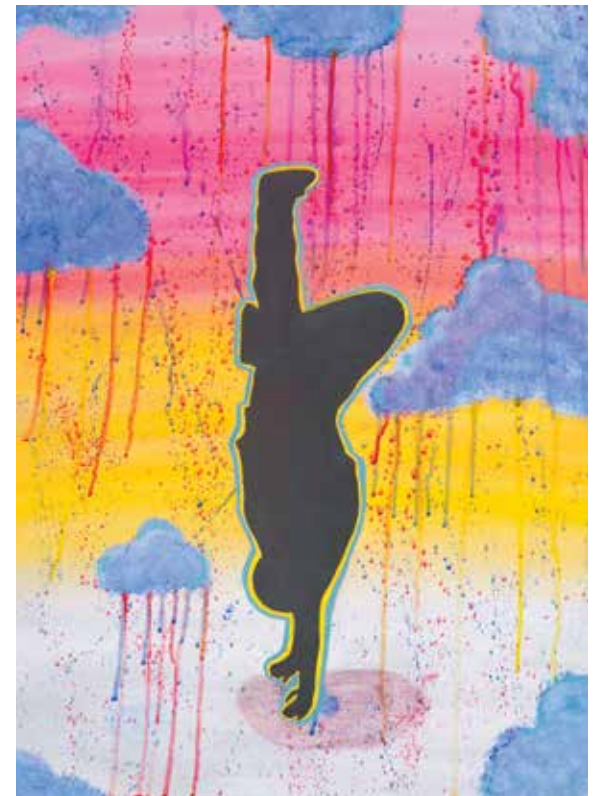
By Penda Seck // Staff Writer

Many people are afraid of being loved, or to show their love, because life is filled with deception and they don't want to have their hearts broken. Love is a tender thing; when heartbreak comes, it's like something is killing your soul in slow motion.

The boundaries between people are rigid, especially when it comes to families. Little gets shared with families and almost nothing is shared with others from the outside. Some people find it very difficult to let anyone get close to them.

In the early phase of a relationship, they do feel close to another person. But that feeling can quickly change to fear of being rejected, abandoned, or being controlled.

In the end, some people are filled with love; others are victims of emptiness. It can heal your spirits when you live in a world of joy, happiness, and love. ■



AFH art by Stephany Natal-Vega

One step at a time

Expressing themselves through dance

By Farmata Samati // Staff Writer

James Ransom, 17, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, dances when he is happy, which means he is dancing all the time.

"Dance is an art to express your feelings," says Ransom, who likes to krump.

Some teens express themselves through music. Others do it through writing. And then there are those like 18-year-old Kata Nyei, from West Roxbury Academy.

"I love dancing," says Nyei, who enjoys hip-hop and other urban styles.

Nadia Issa, 17, from Boston Arts Academy, says she's been dancing since she was eight.

"It is not always about being good, but it is a story you're telling through body movement," says Issa, who does everything from modern dance to African dance.

Issa dances in private. She dances for hours and hours with purpose.

"I want to get better and better," says Issa. "I want to be a professional dancer." ■

Hats off

Symbolizing nothing

By **Bensley S. Dorneval** // Staff Writer

Johnny Villilo, a 17-year-old student at Brighton High School, says he doesn't care what the logos say on his baseball caps – as long as the hats look good.

"It doesn't matter what the symbols represent," he says.

Many teens wouldn't be seen wearing a lid that doesn't support their city or team, and feel that hats are part of their identity.

"If I don't know the meaning of the hat, I wouldn't wear it," says Robert Phung, 18, of Brighton High. "When people see you, they should see what kind of person you are based on what you are wearing, and hats are a good example of that."

Torry Johnson, 17, of Brighton High, thinks that plain, old school caps have their advantages.

"The old fashion hats barely have symbols, and it's better that way," says Johnson, "because you don't have to worry about representing anything." ■



AFH photo by Dominic Duong

Tatt can do

What it scrawl means

By **Jennifer Le** // Staff Writer

Sandy Nguyen, 18, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, speaks freely by symbolizing her feelings through art on her body. She has a total of six tattoos. One of them, about an ex-boyfriend, reads: "We're always together but never apart, maybe in distance but never in heart."

Another tatt says: "Hope."

Nguyen says: "It is a part of me. It tells who I am."

Many teens these days like to tell their stories by branding words on their skin.

For some, it's an act of rebellion because the ink is mostly permanent.

Danaysia Gomes, 17, from BCLA, has two tattoos. One says: "Aries."

Says Gomes: "It's saying who I am. I am an Aries and will always be."

Maxwell Spinola, 18, from Charlestown High School, has two tattoos: "A mother's love is forever instinctual," says one, and the other reads: "Family."

"They are meaningful," he says.

Brendaly Santos, 18, from East Boston High School, has one tattoo. It is her mother's name, "Marisa."

"She's special to me," says Santos.

Tattoos are a form of expression and art from the mind and the heart.

"Don't get it because everyone else has it. Your artwork will be on your body forever," says Nguyen. "At the end of the day, it says I am who I am." ■

**"Don't get it
because every-
one else has it.
Your artwork
will be on your
body forever."**



AFH art by Nathalie Myrthill



AFH photo by Taeia Downie

Religious icon as fashion statement

By **Dennis Membah** // Senior Editor

Seventeen-year-old Mitchka Herard of Brighton High School thinks that teens should only wear the crucifix necklace for religious reasons.

"I feel as though it's disrespectful," says Herard. "Half the people wearing those necklaces don't even know what it means."

Many teens are now wearing the rosary-beads-with-cross necklaces – traditionally used in prayer – for fun and fashion, saying they like the way they look.

Some Catholic groups, as well as other teens, have condemned the practice as a mockery.

Iyanuoluwa Adebajo, 17, believes that the necklace has too much significance for it to be used as a style statement.

"It is meant for godly purposes, not for fashion," says Adebajo, from Brighton High.

Meanwhile, Jose Mata, 17, from Brighton High, says he doesn't care if people put on the crucifix necklace for unholy purposes.

"It doesn't matter to me that people wear it," says Mata, "because I'm not religious." ■



Boston by night

Text and photographs by
Marmarin Nasirahmad // Senior Editor

You like when it's dark, when it's black. You feel more alive. There's nobody outside. You get more space.

Everything is black and then the lights appear out of nowhere. In the day, the lights seem to get lost. They don't stand out like they do at night, white contrasting with black.

All the buildings are lit up like stars. It's beautiful. Why are the lights still on when most people are done working?

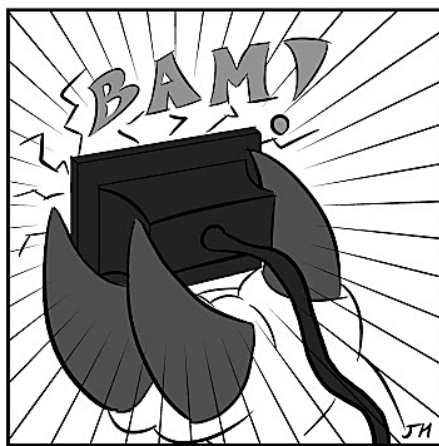
There's no traffic at night. The cars just speed along with their headlights leading the way.

You love the height at night. You can look down and see the world from a better view. It's just you and the city.

Down below, the bridges come alive. It's always windy. It gives you a good feeling. The air brushes by your face and takes away all your problems. You forget about everyone and everything for a minute.

Under the bridge, the lights shimmer on the surface of the water. The water looks shiny. It looks blue.

Then you hear the police cars moving down the roadway. Don't be alarmed. The darkness is pierced by their blue lights, which beam like a shield protecting the city. ■



Illustrated by: Joseph Hangis



AFH photo by Abraham Rosa

The return of Super Smash Bros.

By Greivin Saucedo // Contributing Writer

The fourth installment of the Super Smash Bros. series is coming sometime in 2014 – exactly when remains a mystery – and longtime fans can't wait to get their hands on it.

The series began on the Nintendo 64 console in 1999 with the name Super Smash Bros. The second was called Super Smash Bros. Melee for the Nintendo GameCube in 2001, and to this day many consider it the best of the bunch. The third one was Super Smash Bros. Brawl for the Nintendo Wii in 2008. And now this one for the Nintendo 3DS and Wii U.

Each installment adds new things to the series, whether it is characters, stages, story, Wi-Fi connectivity, or more.

The idea of Nintendo characters fighting in one arena didn't sound like a good idea to some, but thanks to Masahiro Sakurai (developer of the Kirby series and director of Kid Icarus: Uprising) the games were a complete success.

The fourth game is drawing lots of buzz for reported special appearances by Sonic the Hedgehog and Mega Man. For more information, go to www.smashbros.com. ■

THE SPORTING LIFE

Uniform approach

Baggy jerseys don't fit the bill

By Haywood Vo // Contributing Writer

On a recent Tuesday, a group of soccer players ran around Moakley Field wearing old uniforms that were too big.

Players say that this can affect their game, that they feel dragged down by the baggy jerseys.

They're too heavy.

Players say they wouldn't mind chipping in for jerseys that really fit so that there would be nothing bugging them during the game.

If your sports teams aren't the best, maybe this might be one of the reasons.

Who knows? ■

Baseball: the DR dream

By Juan Manuel Urena // Contributing Writer

Baseball is important for people in the Dominican Republic because they love this sport and many are poor. So, a major way out of poverty is to become a professional baseball player because they think they can help their families make a better life.

A March article on forbes.com found that over 500 players from DR have made it to Major League Baseball since 1956, including current stars like David Ortiz and Robinson Cano.

These days, according to the web article, about one quarter of all players on minor league teams are from DR.

Come spring, you will find lots of Dominican teens in Boston practicing their baseball skills after school in hopes of becoming the next Big Papi. ■



AFH art by Isaiah Cruz