

TEENS **in** PRINT **BOSTON**

BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT SEPT/OCT 2015™

THE **HIGH COST** -- FINANCIALLY AND ETHICALLY -- **OF BEING A** **TEENAGE** **FASHIONISTA** **PAGE 3**

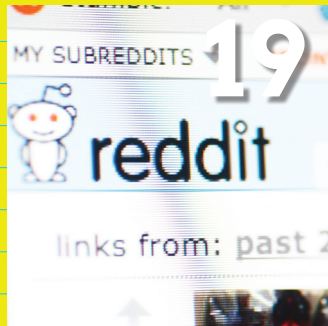


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THE HIGH COST -- FINANCIALLY AND ETHICALLY -- OF BEING A TEENAGE FASHIONISTA

BY DAISA SIMPSON // STAFF WRITER

AFH PHOTO //CHRIS ROGERS

As 17-year-old Aderonke Fadiya walked down Blue Hill Avenue on her way to work as a camp counselor at the Boys & Girls Club this summer, she was dressed to impress, sporting her \$15 floral H&M top and \$90 neon pink Nike Roshe Runs.

These days, teens need to pay a steep price -- money-wise and morally -- to stay in style.

Like many others, Fadiya, from Mattapan, says she was shocked to learn about some of the deep, dark goings-on that had allegedly taken place beyond the polished storefronts of brands like H&M and Nike, which have been criticized for engaging in oppressive labor practices.

H&M FACTORY FIRE IN BANGLADESH KILLS 21 a headline in The Independent newspaper blared in March of 2010.

Thirteen of the dead were women, according to The Independent, which said that workers were trapped while producing cute jumpers.

"Various reports from Bangladesh said that the factory had 'useless fire safety equipment,'" The Huffington Post said.

In response, H&M said it was only a small buyer from the factory, according to The Independent, and that a recent audit had deemed the building safe.

In 2012, concern about H&M's international work conditions shifted from Bangladesh to Uzbekistan.

H&M COMES UNDER PRESSURE TO ACT ON CHILD-LABOUR COTTON a headline in The Guardian newspaper proclaimed in December of that year. Human rights groups reported that children as young as nine were forced to pick cotton and that students were beaten for failing to meet their quotas.

H&M had already signed a pledge to "not knowingly" source cotton from Uzbekistan, The Guardian reported, but critics said there were loopholes in the supply chain that still had to be addressed. H&M has taken steps to do that,

though anti-forced-labor activists this year said there was still room to improve.

Meanwhile, the name Nike was once known as much for its alleged exploitive manufacturing record as its sneakers-with-a-swoosh.

Although even doubters say Nike has made great strides in cleaning up its production standards -- **HOW NIKE SHED ITS SWEATSHOP IMAGE TO DOMINATE THE SHOE INDUSTRY** a June headline in the Business Insider acknowledged in June -- others say total praise is premature.

In an April report entitled "A Race to the Bottom," the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights reported that "Nike's presence in Vietnam led to a continuation of wages as low as 27 cents an hour in 2012, with a slight increase to 48 to 69 cents an hour in January 2015, which is well below subsistence levels."

On its website, Nike says it strives to meet the highest standards: "We encourage innovation throughout

our entire supply chain and promote responsibility toward workers, the community and the planet."

Even after learning about such horrible working conditions, 17-year-old Kathiana Vilson, from Dorchester, says she would continue to do business at stores like H&M -- favoring style over substance.

"People can tell your status off of your clothes," she says. "Although it's sad that we stress over paying \$20 when workers in sweatshops get paid less than half, I will still shop there."

Sixteen-year-old Ian Harris, from the South End, says he believes that teens can make a difference in the often hidden global abuse of laborers young and old by switching to brands that are made in countries with well-regarded employment records.

"It is unfortunate," he says, "that people lack knowledge about the unethical behaviors that take place behind the scenes."



AFH PHOTO

PAYCHECK PAYBACK

BY EMMANUEL BAJJABAYIRA //
STAFF WRITER

Mario Williams, 17, from Hyde Park, believes that society should pay more attention to underpaid jobs as a way to improve the economy.

"These jobs are important to people's daily lives," says Williams, who worked at a community center this summer.

Some examples of jobs that don't earn sizable salaries, according to a piece last year in "Business Insider": fast-food employees (\$18,810 mean annual pay); childcare workers (\$21,310 mean annual pay); and building cleaners (\$23,970 mean annual pay).

Sophia Marcellus, a 16-year-old from Hyde Park who has worked at a hospital, believes that CEOs and celebrities are overpaid compared to others in the workforce.

"Custodians, teachers, fast-food workers, construction workers, and taxi drivers should get better salaries because they go through so much," she says.

Teens suggest everything from raising the minimum wage – which has become a national issue -- to distributing the wealth more fairly as possible solutions.

Andy Francois, 15, wonders why actors and athletes make more money than teachers, for example.

"Teaching requires a lot of schooling," says Francois, who goes to Boston Green Academy. "It seems unfair having someone who invested in his/her education and yet receives a lower salary than someone who didn't."

NOT GUILTY OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS? TEENS SAY: COSBY KIDS, RIGHT?

BY LISA VO // STAFF WRITER

Janeil Johnson, 17, who goes to Brighton High School, grew up watching reruns of "The Bill Cosby Show."

At first, Johnson thought Cosby was innocent of the growing number of rape allegations leveled against the 78-year-old comedian.

"Cosby does not seem like he would sexually assault women because he seems like a nice guy on a TV show that portrays him as honest, hardworking...and family-oriented," Johnson says.

However, after hearing that Cosby acknowledged using a sedative to pursue women for sex, Johnson says he believes Cosby is guilty, though he laments: "The women took a long time to speak up. It's been too long, due to the statute of limitations. This would prevent people from being convicted of crimes after a certain amount of time."

According to the National Institute of Justice: "A majority of rape victims still do not report their attacks to police."

Among the reasons cited by the Institute: shame, self-blame, fear of the perpetrator or of not being believed.

For months, this case had escalated in the

media. Then, in July, the Associated Press reported this bombshell story based on legal documents, which began: "Bill Cosby testified in 2005 that he got Quaaludes with the intent of giving them to young women he wanted to have sex with."

More than 40 women, according to New York magazine, have accused Cosby of sexual assault, some dating as far back as the '60s and '70s, with many saying they were drugged and then raped.

Cosby still maintains his innocence.

But Tiffany Duong, 18, who lives in Dorchester, does not feel as if that many women would waste their time over a false accusation.

"People would drop the case because he's older and it's too late for him to be convicted," says Duong. "It basically ended, but still with no charges."

Eighteen-year-old Tiorrie Harris, who goes to Madison Park High School, thought one way about Cosby when he watched his shows: "Chill, cool, and laid back."

Now he feels a whole different way: "It still matters," says Harris. "He's guilty."

NO OLYMPICS, NO PROBLEM FIVE-RING CIRCUS FEARED

BY THIerno BAH // STAFF WRITER

Jose Soto, 16, from Boston Latin Academy, says he knew the Olympic Games were a bad idea in the first place and is glad that Boston is not going to be the host.

"There are other things we could spend those billions of dollars on, such as education," says Soto.

In January, the United States Olympic Committee chose Boston as the United States representative to compete with other cities around the world for the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. But in July, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh essentially opted out. Organizers had offered a \$4.5 billion plan for the Olympics, but Walsh was worried that this price would go over budget and taxpayers would foot the bill. Walsh had good reason because history suggests that the Olympics can easily cost more than the original amount.

In a WBUR poll released in July, 53 percent of those surveyed in the greater Boston area opposed the Olympic bid. Besides the money, critics worried about construction messes, traffic pile-ups, and the idea that tourists and their economic stimulus might actually be scared-off by the chaos.



AFH PHOTO // DELIA FLEMING

Adil Fernandes, a senior at Boston Latin Academy, is disappointed the city lost the Olympics.

"Boston missed out on the opportunity of a lifetime," says Fernandes.

Jose Mendes, 16, from Boston Latin Academy, who was a proponent of the games, says he is not sorry now that Boston is sitting on the sidelines.

"It really does not matter," Mendes says.

LOWER THE DRINKING AGE? NOT ALL TEENS WANT TO TOAST TO THAT

BY ANA LAURA DELGADO // STAFF WRITER

The United States has one of the highest drinking ages in the world, at 21. Yet there always seems to be problems with underage drinking in the US.

Teens at school are warned to stay away from alcohol at parties, but there are the inevitable stories of suspensions and car crashes due to underage drinking. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this has led to deadly consequences, with more than 4,300 drinking-related deaths of underage youth a year.

That's one of the reasons there's been a national discussion about lowering the drinking age -- for safety reasons -- in voices ranging from youth activists to college professors.

The CDC says that about 90 percent of the alcohol imbibed by those under 21 occurs in the form of dangerous bingeing.

"I think they should lower [the drinking age] to 18," says Anna Kankkunen, a 15-year-old North End resident. "I feel like since they have such a high age limit, it encourages underage drinking."

Critics of lowering the age maintain that teens are just not mature enough to handle their liquor.

Rossy Santana, 17, from Dorchester, believes that the way to curb underage drinking lies in better enforcement.

"Liquor stores don't always ask for ID," she says. "If you change the [drinking age] people would easily do illegal stuff, like drinking and driving."

Devon Minor, 15, from Roxbury, shares that concern.

"I think we should keep [the drinking age] the same," says Minor. "We don't need kids drinking on the street and driving at the same time."



AFH PHOTO // TIM NGUYEN

THE CONFEDERATE FLAG: UNFURLING YEARS OF HATRED

BY TASHAYLA BORDEN // STAFF WRITER

An emblem for years of torture, hatred, and inequality on one side and regional audacity on the other, this battle flag from 150 years ago still represents either pride or prejudice depending on the eyes of the beholders.

In June, following the killing of nine black churchgoers in Charleston by a white suspect who figuratively wrapped himself in the Confederate flag from the Civil War, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley called for the flag to be removed from the Capitol grounds.

Flag supporters continued to defend their banner, adopting "Heritage, not hate" as their manifesto.

Yet many teens, schooled in years of history, know that enslaving black people was at the core of the Southern experience.

"What I have a problem with is how some claim race has nothing to do with it," says Marcos

Hernandez, a 17-year-old Latino living in Allston.

"They forget the Civil War and why the Confederacy fought in the first place."

Seventeen-year-old Alyeeca Knight, from Roslindale, can see the Southern side — though she doesn't agree with it.

"To them, it's kind of a symbol of their strength," says Knight, who is black. "It's a symbol of their 'struggle' — which is ironic since at that same point in time, slaves were still slaves and had been struggling."

Sixteen-year-old Ruth Scott, from Dorchester, says blacks have to stand their ground when whites try to unfurl the flag.

"If you think the Confederate flag is ridiculous and all it's doing is representing slavery and you're around white people," says Scott, who is black, "you have to be proud enough to say that and be like, 'No, the confederate flag is bull.'"



AFH PHOTO // ABRAHAM ROSA

DISCIPLINE BY COMMITTEE

BY FARADIA JOLICOEUR // STAFF WRITER

News flash, July 2015:
**MAINE DINER OWNER FACES
BACKLASH FOR YELLING AT TODDLER TO
STOP CRYING**

Is it ever OK for a restaurant owner – or, more commonly in your case, another parent -- to discipline you?

Aiceya Blackwell, 15, from Community Academy of Science and Health: "No.... They shouldn't take over my mom's role to discipline me."

MacAlaire Demonsthene, 19, from Hyde Park: "No...I would feel angry, upset."

Miesha Tavares, 16, from Boston Community Leadership Academy: "I'm already disciplined enough. I don't need anybody to discipline me. My parents expect things and I usually don't let them down."

OUR STATE SLOGAN...STINKS

BY JERISIA SILVA // STAFF WRITER

So Teens in Print set out to ask teens for their suggestions on replacing the current, boring one: "It's All Here" -- which is what the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism wants to do.

Maybe something more along the lines of New Hampshire's "Live Free or Die" or New Mexico's "Land of Enchantment."

Melanie Almeida, 15, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, agrees that the Massachusetts motto has to go.

"It should be something more interesting that attracts people," Almeida says.

Her idea: "You're Either With Us Or Against Us."

Andy Francois, 15, from Boston Green Academy, thinks this would be a good saying: "The Beauty of America."

Francois says: "It sounds good and it fits Massachusetts."

Tiyanna Barros, 16, from Dorchester, thinks that the state catchphrase is unappealing.

Her replacement: "The Place to Be."



THE PEDAGOGICAL PAGE



ON THE RECORD WITH RAHN DORSEY

Teens in Print Staff Writers Tashayla Borden and Christian Tabb sat down with Rahn Dorsey, Mayor Martin J. Walsh's cabinet-level Chief of Education, to discuss city strategies to address one of the most pressing issues facing high-schoolers today: the ever-rising cost of college.

Teens in Print: You went to the University of Michigan, right? How did you pay?
Rahn Dorsey: It was loans and grants and family. By the time I got out of college, I did have student debt but not a ton. Certainly not the crippling debt that a lot of students face today.

TIP: How much was your student debt?
RD: Under \$10,000.

TIP: Do you think it's possible to significantly reduce the cost of college?
RD: We've got to make sure you graduate high school ready for college courses. Right now, young people are investing way too much in developmental credits. What that means is you graduated from high school, you got into college, but when you did initial assessments you had to take a remedial course in Math or English. When you're paying for that, you are not earning college credit. It's just making the time longer that it will take for you to get to a degree.

TIP: What else?
RD: We also need to do more coordination with industry to get them to invest in training and preparing young people. Can we get our big corporations to pay for [this student's] education for two to four years because we know [he or] she is coming to work for us when [he or] she is done?

TIP: Other ideas?
RD: We need direct outreach to families to start to seed the idea of making college-going a habit but then to give them the tools they need to make it affordable. Mayor Walsh this fall will announce a children's savings account pilot. Upon entry into kindergarten, the city and its financial partners will give families a certain amount of money just to start to stash away for college savings. There will some other milestones that you can reach to draw down additional money. You might imagine that if a child by eighth grade completes a financial literacy course, another \$100 goes in that account.

TIP: What will happen if colleges continue to raise tuition?
RD: If it becomes absolutely unaffordable and you lose that customer base, folks will find a different way to build similar credentials that are a lot less expensive. You'll have virtual universities. So I'm not sure we will see a cap on cost until the higher education industry figures out some more cost-effective models.

TIP: Will many teens have to rethink their future plans or dreams and forget about even going to college?
RD: Forgoing the dream assumes that the dream was alive and I think the dream is not alive for as many young people as should be the case. Figuring how we ignite the dream and get young people to own a vision for the future is one of the places we begin.

ON THE RECORD WITH TOMMY CHANG

Teens in Print Senior Editor Adamajan Bah and Staff Writer Sela Winder recently asked Dr. Tommy Chang, the new Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, to describe his vision of learning in BPS high schools.

Teens in Print: Given the bureaucracy in BPS, how can you enact real change?
Tommy Chang: We have to create a culture of "we" here in Boston Public Schools. I do believe that the reason there is a bureaucracy is that people don't work together. Everybody works in silos. It becomes very frustrating for parents or teachers who need help.

TIP: Recently, BPS announced that its annual dropout rate was 3.8 percent, a record low. What plans do you have to further increase graduation rates?
TC: When the dropout rate is zero percent, that's when we've done our job. We have to make sure that students who have kind of quit on school find a way to come back. There are amazing alternative programs throughout the city. There is a lot of promise to the competency-based model — that means that if you demonstrate that you know something, you get credit for it. You don't have to sit in a seat for 60 hours a semester to get credits. Making content relevant to your lives and the society around you — we have to find more ways to do that.

TIP: Teens are always complaining that there is too much testing in school. Do you agree, and how do you plan on solving that while still measuring academic improvement?
TC: Students want to know how well they are doing and parents want to know how well their children are doing. I am a big fan of what we call performance tests. These are when you measure what students can actually do. Can they write? Can they present and make a compelling argument for something? It's not as easy to put a number to that, but it doesn't matter. These are the types of assessments we should be giving youth. Not multiple choice tests.

TIP: You were quoted in the Boston Globe as saying: "If you don't change what's going on in the classroom, things aren't going to change." What exactly do you think needs to change in the classroom?
TC: One thing I believe is really critical is ensuring that students are engaged in cognitively demanding tasks -- they are doing things that require them to think at critical levels all the time. Is copying notes during a lecture cognitively demanding? No. Here's a math problem, this is how you solve it. I want you to repeat the same procedure. Is that cognitively demanding? No. If you're presented a challenge that requires math and you make and construct a potential solution to a problem applying math -- that's cognitively demanding.

TIP: What is the most off-the-wall idea you have to change BPS high schools?
TC: I don't know how off-the-wall it is, but I think it would be great if every graduate from BPS -- whether it's in the next five years or after that -- speaks multiple languages. Multicultural and multilingual. Boston is such a diverse city. If you're a product of BPS, you should be able to navigate different cultures and different languages.

This interview was condensed and edited.

DORSEY // PHOTO BY GWEN KIDERA, BRA
CHANG // TIP PHOTO BY BETTY SOUTHWICK

SLACKING AND LACKING

BY KATHERINE BERNARDEZ // STAFF WRITER

Fifteen-year-old Zalina Cuevas, from Mission Hill, says she didn't really focus enough on her schoolwork in eighth grade. "Slacking off affected me in a bad way by limiting my choices of high schools," says Cuevas. Being lackadaisical, especially in the eighth grade, can affect you immensely as a freshman because high schools won't accept the nonsense you did before. With high school looming before them, many teens say they realize it's time to get focused. Angelique McAuliffe, 14, from Dorchester, says she paid attention to distractions when the work got difficult in middle school. "This caused me to get bad grades on my report card," says McAuliffe. Kayin Walker, 14, from Mattapan, says he sometimes gave up too easily in middle school. "I focused on my schoolwork and grades most of the time," says Walker, "but when it came to certain math concepts I felt were too hard, I wouldn't ask the teacher for help. I would just go with my gut feeling."



AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH

MAKING THE GRADE

BUT SCRIMPING ON KNOWLEDGE
BY INA DODOVEC1 // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Sheldia Papa was walking faster than usual, as though followed by her apprehensive thoughts. Obfuscated by the BPL Central Library's archaic walls, she was vehemently seeking an escape from either her summer assignments or fear of the future. When one approaches junior year, such a scenario becomes plausible. Papa, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, has to reassure her qualifications for college admission. But what really gets you into college: grades or knowledge? Papa says that she and many of her classmates care more about grades. "That is how you pass and what colleges look at," she says. When it comes to Alexa Holloway, 17, the college admission process guides many of her moves. "The only reason I enroll in challenging classes is so my grade goes up," says Holloway, who goes to Boston Latin Academy. "I enroll in what I'm good at." Teens ask: If not getting out of their comfort zones and exploring subjects for the sake of broadening their perspectives is the cost students have to pay to be distinguished scholars, how efficient is the academic system in teaching the core values of education? Do teens really go to high school with the intention of excessively learning, or are they compelled by the current, trying to survive the crowd all headed in the same direction? For many students, it seems to be just about trying to stay afloat, maybe make it to the shore, while the learning is just part of the way and not their final destination. Reflecting on these questions, Ilma Golemi, 18, from Dorchester, says there has to be more to school than scoring good grades. "It is what you take in that really counts," she says, "once you're out in the real world."

CHEATING IN SCHOOL: EPIC FAIL

BY JOSELYN DAVEIGA // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Alycia Aronson, from South Boston, says she has no interest in cheating at school. "Cheating on a test is bad," she says. "You can copy someone's answers and it can be wrong and you're going to have to retake the test." Not to mention the penalties if you are caught, Aronson says. While a whole industry has arisen around academic double-dealing -- with ever more elaborate schemes popping up all the time -- many teens say they prefer to do things on their own. Brianna Blackmore, 15, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, thinks that if you cut corners on a test it means you don't know the material. "I haven't cheated on a test," Blackmore says. "Cheating is not a good solution to your problems." Although it can be quite tempting. AH, 13, from Fenway High School, says she once cheated on an ELA test because she was too lazy to study. Her grade: an A-. "I felt happy," she says. "It was unexpected." Initials are being used to protect the identity of a minor.

IMMIGRATION DISCRIMINATION: DIVIDED BY COUNTRY

BY HILLARIE PILIER // STAFF WRITER

Blanca Cruz, 19, says that on her first day at Boston International High School, there were many students who were very welcoming to her. But there was also a group of girls there who were rude, she says, because a lot of the students are Dominicans and she is from Honduras.

"Every time I walked in for lunch," Cruz says, [they] started to laugh at me and to give bad looks."

In Boston, 27.1% of the population is foreign-born, according to the Boston Redevelopment Authority's "New Bostonians" report from 2013-2014. While there is a tendency to view this group from the outside as one big foreign bloc, not everyone is alike and thus divisions arise, often based on what country teens are from.

What can get lost in the friction, teens say, is that no matter their country of origin, most of them came to Boston with the same purpose -- to have a better life.

Settled in a strange land and often feeling

alone, many new immigrant teens tend to make friends with others from the same country for fear of being bullied -- only later venturing out into relationships with other new Bostonians.

"People feel more secure with people who speak the same language or have the same culture," says Jesuina Fernandes, 18, who came to the United States a year and a half ago from Cape Verde and now attends Boston International.

Her best friend is also Cape Verdean, she says, and was the first person she met at school.

Despite the discord among immigrants, there are teens who have learned to use these difficult situations to make themselves stronger.

"When people put you down that way, you get full of anger and it's up to you if you want to use that anger for the bad or for the good," says Esau Valladares, 19, who was born in El Salvador and goes to Boston International. "In my case, it was for good because that led me to learn English and work hard."

THE DOUBLE STANDARD OF STEREOTYPES

BY LILA HERNANDEZ // STAFF WRITER

Anna Chan, 16, a Chinese-American from Charlestown, recalls being harassed.

"Sometimes kids pulled their eyes back or they'll say we eat dogs," she says.

And yet, she says, in another breath they will be glorying in her culture.

"These same people still love to eat Chinese takeout," she says.

That's how it goes when stereotypes are dished out with doses of hypocrisy that run so deep that those with negative misconceptions don't even realize their double standard.

ANOTHER BLACK DEATH, ANOTHER LESSON IN MULTICULTURISM

BY SOFIA MEADOWS-MURIEL // STAFF WRITER

On the afternoon of July 10, a 28-year-old black woman named Sandra Bland was driving in Texas when was pulled over by a white State Trooper for failing to signal a change of lanes.

The routine episode escalated into harsh words, demands she put out her cigarette, a Taser threat, a physical confrontation, and handcuffs.

Three days later, Bland was found dead in her jail cell. Authorities ruled it a suicide. But many teens feel it's just another case of Black Lives Don't Matter -- from Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, to Sandra Bland, in Waller County, Texas.

The idea of police brutality has become more frequent as my childhood years progress.

As the school year goes on, English teachers in Boston are trying to get their students to read more black authors and poets on topics touching on slavery and racism. Black History Month and other multicultural initiatives are incorporated into the curriculum.

And yet, as they say: The more things change, the more they seem to stay the same.

As a woman of color, it is scary to me that people who are responsible for keeping me safe are also the ones that could stab me in the back one day.

US VS. US: THE LACK OF UNITY IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

BY CAESAR LOVING-MANLEY // STAFF WRITER

Even in the current conversations of police brutality and segregation practices that impact the lives of black people, there is one topic that often gets brushed over: the lack of unity in communities of color.

For once, the discussion would not be about whites versus blacks but Latinos, Asians, and others versus African-Americans.

"Non-black people of color look down on black people," says Kimberly Kirlaw, 18, from Dorchester, wearing a fedora, studded shoes, and a vibrant blouse that reminds you of Aunt Vivian from "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air."

This dynamic, Kirlaw says, occurs against a backdrop of many whites tending to view all people of color one way.

"Black in someone's eyes," says Dawntayia Hines, 19, from Roxbury.

Due to the long history of people of color being oppressed, teens say, many tend to compete against one another instead of fighting the power structure.

"Because we're up against so much," says Alexis Williams, 17, from Hyde Park, "we don't know how to manipulate the system."

INJUSTICE DEFINED

BY KATY ZHEN // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Sophia Marcellus knows it when she sees it.

"Injustice to me means unequal treatment of a certain group," says Marcellus, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science. "It is ignorant, disrespectful, and meaningless."

It also can be hard to pin down.

After all, one person's perception of justice might be another person's sense of injustice.

One example is the many police/public showdowns that have dominated the news.

"There are times when police abuse their powers to punish people for what they didn't actually do," says Sheldia Papa, 16, who attends the O'Bryant.

Although many improvements have been made in the judicial system, for example, teens say episodes of inequality still linger.

"I would like to believe that things will get better," says Joanne Charles, 17, from Hyde Park, "but there will always be this mentality that is not going away."

THE ACCENT IS ON ACCEPTANCE

BY ANA LAURA DELGADO // STAFF WRITER

Actress Sofia Vergara has become known for her thick Colombian accent in the TV show "Modern Family."

It transcends her role as Gloria Delgado-Pritchett, the energetic wife and smothering mother with expensive tastes, and has helped to create her celebrity persona.

In a well-known CoverGirl commercial, for example, co-star Ellen DeGeneres teases a smiling Vergara, saying, "Well, no one can understand you."

While Vergara's inflection has helped her establish her identity in the industry, many people outside of Hollywood find it difficult to see a place for their accent.

Diana La Paz, 15, from Roxbury, says that people often make assumptions and discriminate based on the way people speak.

"Accents hint at ethnicities," she says.

Francilliana Barbosa, 13, from Dorchester, has found that to be true for

her family, which is from Cape Verde.

"Just because [my parents] couldn't speak English correctly," she says, "others tend to give attitude and not care what they have to say."

For some, the solution is to get rid of that accent and avoid the ridicule that their speech might cause.

However, others say that this can make people feel as though they've lost a part of their culture that they can never regain.

"I know many people who regret changing their accent," says La Paz.

Ardiana Pimentel, a 15-year-old student at Boston Arts Academy, says it can be easy to develop preconceived ideas about someone's intelligence based on their accent, whether it be British, Bostonian, or whatever.

"My friend has a really deep Spanish accent and sometimes people pretend not to know what [she's] saying," says Pimentel. "People are, like, prejudiced sometimes and they don't realize they are."



AFH ART // MASSIEL GRULLON

INTERNAL CULTURE CONFLICT

BY RACHELLE BROWN-MITCHELL // STAFF WRITER

Fourteen-year-old Jovana Michel, from Hyde Park, is both Haitian and Puerto-Rican, but she only embraces one of her ethnicities: her Haitian side. "I discovered some Puerto-Ricans are dramatic," says Michel.

Every culture has its boosters and critics -- both from the inside and the outside.

Levar Springer, 17, from West Roxbury, is one of many African-Americans who credits his people for making sure the black experience -- from music to literature, art to oration -- flourishes even in the face of white oppression. But he also laments the painful black-on-black violence in his community.

"The constant killing -- I think it's unnecessary and dumb," he says. "It's already enough having the cops out to get us; we shouldn't constantly have to look

over our shoulders while walking down the street."

Bilal Lafta, 17, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, says he appreciates being an Arab from the Middle East.

"What I value the most about my culture is my religion: Islam," he says. "My religion taught me values that I uphold on a daily basis. I love that my culture values family."

Just because you take pride in your culture doesn't mean everyone else does.

"I don't believe [people] criticize my religion because of the ideology," Lafta says. "They have not been exposed to Islam and it's a beautiful culture. Therefore, it's not their fault."

Though Michel disdains the drama she says she finds on her Hispanic side, she also favors its lively flavor.

"I mostly like the Reggaeton and Bachata music," she says, "and how there's a wide variety of songs and dances."



AFH ART // JAYLEN SOSA



AFH PHOTO // CHRIS GLOVER

RISING ABOVE THE VIOLENCE

BY SHANYKA CHARLES // STAFF WRITER

Eighteen-year-old Marquis Knight-Jacks lives in a troubled part of Dorchester. Knight-Jacks believes that with the support of his family -- and God -- that the violence in his neighborhood will not stop him from fulfilling his promise.

"My goal is to go to Framingham State and become a successful journalist," says Knight-Jacks, who says he is an usher at his church.

The area where Knight-Jacks resides was recently hit by the death of 16-year-old Jonathan "Jo Jo" Dos Santos, who was ambushed and shot while riding his bike there in June.

These days, teens say they cannot simply avoid the nearby violence by turning a blind eye. There is a certain mindset involved, and even then there are no guarantees.

"Teens have access to weapons that they

shouldn't have access to," says Ulany Wagnac, 15, who goes to Boston Latin Academy.

Wagnac says she tries to stay productive by being involved in school activities, from basketball to dance. She also takes health classes to further her goal of becoming a doctor.

"Although the violence in my neighborhood has a major negative impact on me," she says, "it drives me to work hard and achieve my goals so that one day I can make my community better."

Sixteen-year-old Arday Shavers, from Community Academy of Science and Health, says she tries to stay busy and keep out of danger by getting involved in her school's JROTC military program, for example.

Shavers also says she relies on the eyes and ears of family and friends to try to keep her out of harm's way.



MY AUDITION: HITTING ALL THE HIGH NOTES

BY HILLARIE PILIER // STAFF WRITER

Music to me is life. When I perform, I feel some kind of relief deep inside, and I love that sensation. Sometimes, when I'm angry, all I want to do is hit my highest note and set free all the emotions.

I heard about a local classical choir and thought it was a great opportunity. I clicked the application and started to type. Just a few words. As much as I could write, it wouldn't be good enough to convince these amazing people why I deserved a spot in their group.

Two weeks later, though, I received the date of my audition. As the butterflies in my stomach woke up, I felt how it was the beginning of something I had been waiting for since I was eight years old.

On August 1, my alarm rang at 7:00 a.m. I wore a blue shirt and black jeans. I arrived to the place and instantly got lost. It may have been because I was nervous after realizing I had forgotten to prepare a song. Suddenly, I saw a short, older woman coming to greet me. The woman was very friendly and she highlighted the fact that I was 10 minutes early.

The moment to sing arrived and I took a deep breathe to calm my anxiety. I confessed I didn't have any song, but the woman tried to cheer me up. I still have the sound of her saying "You can sing me Happy Birthday if you wish" in my ears.

So I did. Following my routine of taking deep breaths while I was freaking out inside, I opened my mouth and hit the highest note I could.

Thirty minutes later, I took the bus back home and called my best friend. I seemed very neutral on the outside, but on the inside my blood and heartbeat were colliding like the clothes and water in a washer. I didn't know exactly how to feel, so I felt every way at once.

My friend answered, and just as I awoke from my shock, only a few words escaped from my mouth. "I got it," I said, "I got accepted!"

THE SPORTING STRIFE KICKING SOCCER STEREOTYPES TO THE CURB

BY JANELLE RODRIGUES // STAFF WRITER



AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH

Cesar Alves, an 18-year-old Cape Verdean from Dorchester, recently picked up a basketball at his neighborhood court.

For a time, he made every shot.

A kid walked by him with a bright yellow soccer ball.

"Let's go play soccer since you're good at it," the kid said to Alves.

"No," said Alves, who continued to shoot hoops as the kid walked away angry and confused.

I, too, am Cape Verdean. So everyone thinks

that, like Alves, the only sport I play is soccer.

Yes, soccer is a common game that Cape Verdeans play. But that's not the only sport we're involved in.

I've participated in volleyball, track, basketball.

I also like to swim.

Because it's a foreign game, people always assume that soccer is the only sport that Cape Verdeans play. It's just another way of stereotyping us.

DOUBLE VISION YOU SEE THE GOOD, THEY SEE THE BAD

BY LISA VO // STAFF WRITER

The perception of an individual can be deceiving.

Dressed in all black and considered a failure by her family, TN walks with me one day past homeless people in frayed clothing near a string of restaurants in Fields Corner and asks if they are hungry. TN will often take them into a store and buy them food.

Good and bad can run along the same line. Many people are capable of doing both negative and positive things. For me, good means putting others first and being less self-absorbed. Bad means being self-centered and selfish.

TN -- who didn't want her full name used -- has been my best friend for years. I've watched myself grow up with her. In elementary school, she was focused on her homework and got good grades. She was full of life, always wearing colorful clothing. She was known as the perfect kid.

Now her family looks at her like a pariah. TN was 13 when her parents got divorced. When she entered high school, everything changed. She stopped caring about her life. Her grades plummeted. Her dad married another woman, which created a gap between him and TN.

She felt that she'd lost her father's support in every way.

Then, TN had to move into another house with her father and his new wife. Meanwhile, her mother remarried and moved to another neighborhood. TN felt like she had lost the sense of home.

One day, when I visited her house in Dorchester, I could barely get into her room -- almost every inch was cluttered with clothing and moving boxes. While lying on her bed, TN told me, "I really have no point in this world."

She dropped out of school during her sophomore year, and didn't think anybody cared about her. She was looked at as a bad seed by her family and other adults because she didn't listen to her father about her education. She also put very little effort into her well-being.

Yet, she tells me that being good is giving back to the ones who need it the most. She has taught me that hate can't get you anywhere. As long as you know you did good in your heart, she says, everything on your path will be positive.

TN is now 18 and working in a restaurant. Tensions between her and her family have lessened.

It's nice to see somebody who has often felt that she has so little yet is willing to give so much. It offers me an inspiring outlook on life -- knowing that somebody can transform her bad times and look like she's still holding it together while bringing hope unto others.

SKETCH PAD:

HOMELESS VETS

They are the soldiers of misfortune that many teens pass by on the streets of Boston all the time without really noticing -- as if these veterans were dressed in camouflage.

In fact, their uniforms often include a cardboard sign that says "homeless and hungry."

According to one snapshot in time taken in the

past year, their ranks had been reduced from over 400 to under 100, according to the city, which said it aims to end homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015.

Putting pencil to paper, Teens in Print Staff Writer Devon Spears brought some of these invisible warriors to life with her drawings.



TIP ARTWORK // DEVON SPEARS





MELANIE BAEZ
Kim or Kanye? Kimye.
Favorite number? 25.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Tired.



ADAMAJAN BAH
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 24.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Nonchalant.



THIERNO BAH
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 45.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Depressed.



EMMANUEL BAJABAYIRA
Kim or Kanye? Yeezus.
Favorite number? 22.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Why am I here?



KATHERINE BERNARDEZ
Kim or Kanye? Beyoncé.
Favorite number? 7.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Excited.



TASHAYLA BORDEN
Kim or Kanye? Caitlyn.
Favorite number? 7.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Hype for the first hour or two then reality kicks in.



RACHELLE BROWN-MITCHELL
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 26.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Whatever.



JANAYA J. BURKE-SMITH
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 3.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Excited to see friends, excited to meet new teachers.



SHANYKA CHARLES
Kim or Kanye? Yeezus.
Favorite number? 5.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Ready.



MICHAEL CRUSE
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 28.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Bored.



TYSCELLE DANIELS
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 7.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: I am just over it.



JOSELYN DAVEIGA
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 3.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Exhausted!



ANA LAURA DELGADO
Kim or Kanye? Luna Lovegood.
Favorite number? 10.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Really excited, nervous, but also kind of resigned.



INA DODOVECI
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 9.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Really nervous and excited.



JAMILLAT DOUMBIA
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 2.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Expectant.



PRINCELL FELIZ FRANCO
Kim or Kanye? Jennifer Lawrence.
Favorite number? 8.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Anxious.



OSMAN FOFANAH
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 21.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Sleepy.



KIMANI GRANDY
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 19.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Bored.

TEENS in PRINT

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

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FEEDBACK!

Was it something we said? Or didn't say? Something with which you agree—or disagree?

Let Teens in Print know what's on your mind by sending an email to TiP coordinator Ric Kahn at ric.kahn@boston.gov. Please include your full name, school, and grade and we may run your letter in an upcoming edition. Thank you.

To join the Teens in Print staff, please express your interest in an email to the TiP coordinator at ric.kahn@boston.gov

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

LILA HERNANDEZ
Kim or Kanye? Kanye, definitely.
Favorite number? 2017.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Very excited.

FARADIA JOLICOEUR
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 12.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Nervous.

ROSE KOUMBASSA
Kim or Kanye? J. Cole.
Favorite number? 2014.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Happy.

O'NEISHA LOUIS-CHARLES
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 7.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Anxious.

CAESAR LOVING-MANLEY
Kim or Kanye? Caesar.
Favorite number? 0.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Ew.

SOFIA MEADOWS-MURIEL
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 21.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Excited, cooling it.

JASEIA MONTEIRO
Kim or Kanye? Drake.
Favorite number? 6.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Excited.

BARBARA OHEMENG
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 519.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Anxious.

WIDENTZA PACOMBE
Kim or Kanye? Nicki Minaj.
Favorite number? 031615.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Eager to make new friends and excited to have a new fun school year with new people.

HILLARIE PILIER
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 16.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Anxious.

ALBERTO POLANCO
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 4.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Happy.

JANELLE RODRIGUES
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 16.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Happy.

MELINDA ROSA
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 7.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Nervous.

JALENE SANCHEZ
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 2.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Here I am, once again...

JERISIA SILVA
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 13.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Frustrated.

DAISA SIMPSON
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 7.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Eager.

XAVIA SIMPSON
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 3.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Nervous and cranky.

DEVON SPEARS
Kim or Kanye? Corey Taylor.
Favorite number? 13.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Eh.

CHRISTIAN TABB
Kim or Kanye? North.
Favorite number? 18.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Hyped, then they give us the work.

ANTIAH THORNTON
Kim or Kanye? Kanye (sadly).
Favorite number? 0.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: I'm a perturbed, emotional wreck.

LISA VO
Kim or Kanye? Kim.
Favorite number? 16.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Neutral.

SELA WINDER
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 0.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: A little bit excited, but mostly annoyed that I have to go back to school.

MARK ZHANG
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 8.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: Excited and then disappointed.

KATY ZHEN
Kim or Kanye? Kanye.
Favorite number? 4.
Describe your mood on the first day of school: 179 days to go...

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IN PRAISE OF BEST FRIENDS

BY MELINDA ROSA // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Heidis Castillo, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, wouldn't trade the relationship she has with her best friend for anything in the world.

"My definition of a best friend is someone who is there for you through thick and thin and doesn't judge who you are," says Castillo

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a best friend. Most best friend connections have the elements of trust, loyalty, and fun to make them work.

Sixteen-year-old Marquis Roderique, from BCLA, doesn't think having a best friend is necessary.

"I would not like a best friend because I feel like it's the same thing as having a regular friend but with a little more meaning, and I love all my friends the same as if they were my family," says Roderique

However, 15-year-old Anna Centeio, from Dorchester, adores having a best friend

"Some qualities my best friend have is that she's a good listener and she's always there for me when I need her," says Centeio. "She cheers me up when I'm upset."

UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS

BY TYSHELLE DANIELS // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Nakita Evora, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, believes that your friends can somewhat represent who you are.

"Your friends have an influence on you, but you are who you are," says Evora. "Even if you hang out with good people, that doesn't make you a good person and if you surround yourself with negativity, you can't turn out 100 percent good."

"Show me your friends and I'll tell you who you are" is a popular saying. The question is: Are you able to separate your morals from your friends' effect on you?

Joel Diaz, 16, from the South End, says he has at times twisted his own beliefs to fit in with his friends.

"I would stay there and watch them," Diaz says. "I wouldn't do anything. I would not engage them -- but I would not walk away."

Sixteen-year-old Ana Maria Hernandez, from Dorchester, acknowledged participating in things she knew were bad to keep certain friendships.

"I'm not going to lie," Hernandez says. "In the past, I have done wrong things to stay friends with someone. But it was a stupid mistake and I would never do it again."

Evora says a real friend wouldn't require you to change.

"For me to consider someone my friend, they have to accept me for who I am," Evora says. "If I have to bend my morals, why are we even friends?"

DO YOU WAIT FOR THE FRIEND WHO'S LATE?

BY JOSELYN DAVEIGA // STAFF WRITER

Kiara Batista, 15, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, says she would wait for a friend who is late — to a point.

"I'd try to contact them if they are really, really late or if it's dark outside," she says.

If she couldn't reach them, she says, she would have to be on her way.

"I would leave because that could be dangerous for me," she says.

They say time waits for no one, and people who are never on time can put a strain on patience – and friendships.

Jennifer Lopes, 15, from Fenway High School, says she doesn't like putting people on hold until she arrives so she makes it a habit to be the on-time friend.

Leah Tran, 15, from Boston Latin Academy, says she stays calm when friends are not punctual.

"It gives me time," she says, "to think about life."

DODOVECI

BY INA DODOVECI // STAFF WRITER

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

-- Shakespeare

What's in my last name? Those whom I call Dodoveci by any other name would be the same.

A last name does not manifest much about a person. It is passed on through generations. It bumps down a stream, always hoping to never encounter a waterfall and let that be the end of it.

My last name has not witnessed its hamartia yet because I am still a Dodoveci. Just as with a stream, I cannot track my last name's origins as much as I can its traces.

A small, simple village, Dodoveci is located in an aloof part of Berat, Albania. It has no feasible roads to reach central areas of nearby towns. Yet, it has been praised by the current Albanian Prime Minister himself because of a semi-mythical event.

According to the online Albanian publication Gazeta 55, before the elections of 2009, the son of a fanatic, communist inhabitant of Dodoveci set out for Berat city to meet in person the leader of the Socialist Party and current Prime Minister, Edi Rama,

and to promise the votes of all the Dodoveci inhabitants to his campaign.

At a stop on the way there, he watched Edi Rama on television exclaiming his determination to urbanize every part of the country. Eager, our voyager returned to his village, went door to door, and shared this belief with the 50 voters of the countryside, exclaiming Rama's intention to cement every road, connect every village, and unite the nation!

The village had never been overwhelmingly affiliated with politics, but the 2009 campaign stimulated them. Consequentially, 50 townspeople voted unanimously for the Socialist Party as never before. Those 50 votes were not enough to acclaim a win for Edi Rama, but they were enough, however, to become epitomized by the leader himself.

Alas, those 50 votes were not enough to acclaim a victory for my scavenge of origins. They were, nonetheless, adornments of my story.

Many years ago, my ancestors migrated but not dispassionately. They changed their last names to Dodoveci to preserve their beginnings, to start our last name's stream, and to be able to reconnect with whimsical stories like that of our intrepid traveler.

THE ART OF MAKING FRIENDS

BY PRINCELL FELIZ FRANCO // STAFF WRITER

Evens Louis-Jean, 16, says that to make friends you must summon the confidence to get out of your way to meet people.

"If they talked to me, I talked to them," says Louis-Jean, who attends the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science. "Random people that were seated next to me at class, I was attentive. I went to talk to them."

Friendships are the meaningful bonds that get people through life. It could be a hard break up -- where you're left in tears in a lonely school staircase -- or just a day out shopping at Forever 21, friends are there whenever you need them.

There are many ways to form friendships that help overcome struggles in the high school years.

Fifteen-year-old Esther Saint-Fort, from the O'Bryant, says that in her freshmen year of high school, making friends was more complicated than people would think. There was a strategy as to how her crowd formed and expanded.

Basically, she says, she started by sticking with familiar friends from her middle school years.

"It was hard," she says. "At first I had some friends from my old school -- they were my starting friends -- and there were some new people I got to know and we became friends."

Sixteen-year-old Ruth Rincon, from the O'Bryant, says she preferred for friendships to naturally develop, so she let people befriend her.

"I mostly waited for others to approach me," she says. "I'm pretty shy."

FROM POPE TO PEEPS, THE VIRTUES OF WORK

BY JALENE SANCHEZ // STAFF WRITER

"Through work, the family is cared for and children are provided with a dignified life. So, too, the common good is served, as witnessed by the example of so many fathers and mothers who teach their children the value of work for family life and society."

-- Pope Francis, in August, via the Catholic News Agency

Jacky Hang, 18, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, says he loves to work. He gets money and learns the aspects of being an adult, says Hang, who's done retail.

Back in the day, parents couldn't wait for their kids to find jobs — to get them out of the house and to help ease the burden on the family budget.

But in a boomeranging trend, many parents today feel that their sons and daughters will be corrupted by the cash and lose focus in school – or quit altogether. They don't want them working.

Jazmine Lopez, 18, from Boston Day and Evening Academy, says she has always had the help of her father for anything she wanted but realizes that it's now time to do it on her own.

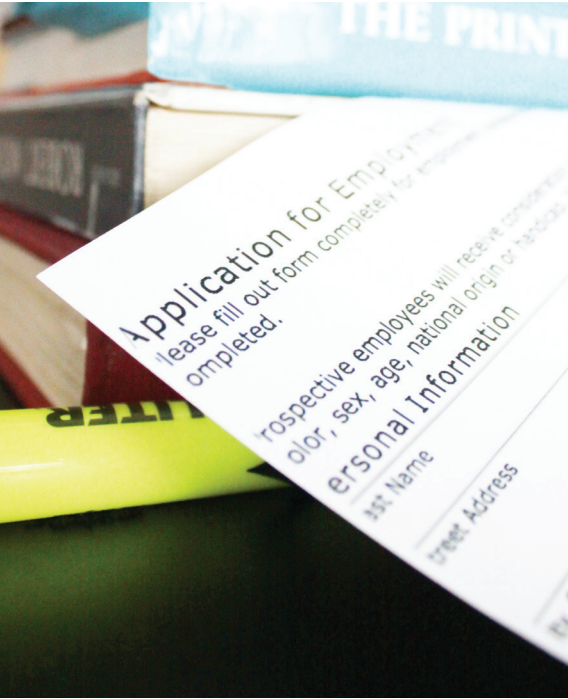
"As soon as I turned 18, I knew I needed to learn independence," says Lopez, who works in a pizza shop. "It isn't easy but I do my best to stay engaged in school and be a good worker."

Adam Torres, 18, from English High School, says he is thankful for everything his family has given him.

"I choose not to work -- my education is way more important to me," he says. "My education would drive me to a career where I can make millions. I don't expect to make \$9 an hour! my whole life."



AFH PHOTO // KASSANDRA FLORES



AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH

"CONVERSION THERAPY CANNOT CHANGE MY LIFESTYLE"

BY JAMILLAT DOUMBIA // STAFF WRITER

PB, a 17-year-old Roxbury resident, says she knew at least by the age of 10 that she was bisexual.

"I can tell you now that being attracted to the same sex is not a choice," Barros says.

And yet, from parents to conservative pastors, many have tried to get a young person to undergo controversial conversion therapy – a method undertaken to try to turn LGBTQ teens straight.

The American Psychological Association, among many other groups, has repudiated the practice, declaring: "Homosexuality is not a mental disorder and thus is not something that needs to or can be 'cured.'"

Many teens agree.

"If I was ever to participate in a conversion therapy session, I don't think that it would change me because if I was to convert to being straight, it would be by pressure and I wouldn't be true to myself," says Jacky Hang, 18, from Boston Community Leadership Academy.

SM, a junior from BCLA, says she knew she was gay by the seventh grade.

"Conversion therapy cannot change my lifestyle," she says, "because I am who I am."

Initials are being used to protect the identity of minors.

ABOVE ALL, LOVE THY SELF

BY ROSE KOUMBASSA // STAFF WRITER

Kayin Walker, 14, from Mattapan, feels it's important to have self-love.

"You're setting a tone, giving people a kind of hint on how you should be treated," says Walker.

Self-love is the belief that you are valuable and worthy. Many teens don't appreciate who they are because of the expectations put on them by society and the media. For example, if you don't have a certain feature on your body, or you don't wear statusy clothes, they make you feel as if you're irrelevant.

Djibril Conte, 14, from Mattapan, says it's essential to be your own best backer.

"If you don't have confidence," Conte says, "you won't be able to take challenges in life."

Eighteen-year-old Christine Chung, who lives in Dorchester, remembers the time she was on Twitter and saw a post with a caption that said "Girls with huge moles are disgusting."

Many commenters agreed.

"Reading all this made me really sad because, ever since childhood, I was very insecure about a really huge mole that stood out," says Chung. "All I could remember is how I always used wear long sleeve shirts hoping no one would see my mole."

Chung says she wondered why someone would even take time out of their day to try to make another person feel bad.

"I've come to the conclusion," says Chung, "that it doesn't matter what others have to say because only my opinion matters."



AFH ART // ALYSON SILAS

BI THE WAY: WHERE DO WE FIT IN?

BY KIMANI GRANDY // STAFF WRITER

Seventeen-year-old JB, from Dorchester, doesn't know where he fits on the spectrum of sexuality.

"Many people don't believe bisexuality exists -- especially in males," he says.

There's straights on one end and gays and lesbians on the other. But many bisexuals wonder: What about those who go both ways?

Throughout the summer of 2015, headlines and hashtags praised the Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage in all 50 states. Then, the transgender community received a new heroine in Caitlyn.

Bisexuals? They feel they've been left behind and labeled as simply mixed-up.

"Bisexuals are confused and don't know what they want," says TreVaughn Hogan-Taylor, an 18-year-old lesbian, from Mattapan.

The rupture of pain that escaped her mouth in a deep sigh gave obvious signs that she had been previously let down in a relationship with a bisexual female.

"I don't hate bisexuals," she says. "I just wouldn't date [another] one."

EF, 16, from Dorchester, believes that bisexuality is often seen as just a phase.

"People are always [going to] be against it," she says. "It's just like racism -- the controversy is never [going to] go away."

But JB is not so sure.

"Being gay has become normal," he says, "so bisexuality can, too."

Initials are being used to protect the identity of minors.

WHERE DOES YOUR CREATIVITY SPRING FROM?

BY O'NEISHA LOUIS-CHARLES // STAFF WRITER

"Passion is one great force that unleashes creativity, because if you're passionate about something, then you're more willing to take risks."

-- Acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma

As a writer, Alyeecia Knight, a junior at Boston Latin Academy, says she is on the same page as Yo -Yo Ma.

"The more you think or do something, the more you fall in love with it," she says. "Your passion is the intensity that makes you pay attention."

Tayo Stuppard, a junior at BLA, says that to be creative, you need to be able to think outside the box.

"All that is left to do is figure out how to make yourself stand out in this competitive world," he says.

Rahina Andre, a Boston Latin School junior, thinks creativity springs from looking at life.

"It's how you see the world with your eyes," Andre says, "and the way you imagine things."

MARQUEE MONIKERS NOT JUST ANOTHER NAME

BY BARBARA OHMENG // STAFF WRITER

Born a miracle baby, two months early, Bless Amad, 19, from the South End, says that his name always stood out -- just like his personality.

"I wouldn't change my name even if I had the choice to," he says.

Growing ever more exotic all the time, unique names are what help make teens stand out from the rest of the crowd. Although they may seem plucked out of nowhere, often there is an interesting reason behind the tag.

"People always make jokes about my name and they never believe me when I say my name is Sparkyl," says Sparkyl Thomas, 17, from Roxbury.

She says she got her moniker because her mom wanted her to be distinctive -- and she fully owns it.

"I love the attention I get because of my name," she says.

Lovely Clairsainvil, 16, from Mattapan, was initially not so smitten with her name, which she says originated after a holy person in Haiti told her mother to give it to her child.

"I didn't want colleges to deny me because of my name," she says.

However, now she says she fully embraces it.

THE RISE OF NERD NATION

BY CHRISTIAN TABB // STAFF WRITER

Andrew McCall, a 19-year-old from Jamaica Plain, says he's a nerd.

"The smart people who chose to study instead of hang out with the boys are in charge now," he says.

Nerds have gone from outcast status to one of the faces of today's pop culture.

One sure sign is that the large-framed glasses reminiscent of those worn by Steve Urkel -- the patron saint of nerds -- are now favored by everyone from hipsters to hoopsters.

Another: the national obsession with the steady output of new gadgets -- such as the Apple Watch.

Joshua Moore, 16, from Mattapan, says he's a nerd, too.

"The stuff I like isn't considered cool by

some people," says Moore.

Those include video games, superheroes, and "Dragon Ball Z" movies.

Though he also likes some of those same elements, 18-year-old Cameron Singletary, from Dorchester, doesn't see himself as a full-on nerd.

"I do my work right away," he says, "but I have a social life, as well."



AFH ART // JIA HAO



AFH PHOTO // KIM HUYNH

THE CRACKLING OF KOREAN CULTURE

BY LILA HERNANDEZ // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Leslie Garcia, who is Hispanic, has become a huge fan of Korean culture.

"My friend who was really into K-Pop suggested a group, so I went on YouTube and I was hooked," says Garcia, who lives in East Boston. "I did even more research and discovered K-Dramas."

South Korean pop music and dramatic miniseries are part of a surge of cultural exports that's been seriously going universal since the '90s. Aided by online viewing and English subtitles, the Korean wave continues to pick up in popularity.

A milestone was reached in November of 2012 when South Korean music sensation PSY received a Guinness World Records certificate after his hit "Gangnam Style" became the most "liked" video in YouTube history -- with 4,911,081

of them as of that month.

This summer, in New Jersey, thousands of fans attended the debut of the massive Korean cultural convention -- KCON -- on the East Coast.

Meanwhile, Korean cuisine has also been catching on, with new eateries joining the international row of restaurants along Harvard and Brighton avenues, in Allston.

Sophia Marcellus, 16, is of Haitian descent. She says she started becoming a fan of K-Pop through YouTube but then her interest spread.

"Since then," says Marcellus, who goes to the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, "I've tried new foods like spicy Korean rice cakes."

Joanne Charles, 17, from Hyde Park, is Haitian and also discovered K-Pop via YouTube.

Liking the language led her to a wider world view.

"It's cool to compare Asian cultures," she says. "I've realized how different they all are."

ABSTINENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER

BY MELINDA ROSA // STAFF WRITER

Fifteen-year-old Anna Centeio, from Dorchester, believes that there is a moment in everyone's life when you feel comfortable enough to lose your virginity.

"My definition [of abstinence] is not having sex until you feel ready," says Centeio, "because there's no point in doing it if you're not ready."

Though many adults believe that all teens are having sex all the time, abstinence remains a viable option for young people.

In fact, sexual activity by teens is on the decline. A report issued in July by the US Department of Health and Human Services found that 44 percent of female teens and 47 percent of male teens had experienced sexual intercourse -- representing a significant decrease over the past 25 years.

Locally, the percentage of Boston public high school students who had sex decreased

between 2005 and 2013, from 54.4% to 46.6%, according to the Boston Public Health Commission.

Although it's often a private matter, Seattle Seahawks star quarterback Russell Wilson and his girlfriend, singer Ciara, recently went public with their pronouncement that they are practicing abstinence.

Fifteen-year-old Nitza Castillo, from Dorchester, is convinced that sex before marriage is a sin.

"I think that teens who are abstinent shouldn't be ashamed of it," says Castillo.

Nor should teens who do engage in sex be judged, says 15-year-old Pamela Saco, from Roslindale.

"I feel like if a teenager is being careful and isn't doing it to try to impress other people and they think they are mature enough for it," Saco says, "then they should have sex if they want to."

TEENAGE MID-LIFE CRISIS: ANGST ALL AROUND

BY OSMAN FOFANAH // STAFF WRITER

Adults aren't the only ones who can feel stressed-out all the time. Many teens experience it, too. "I lash out and second guess myself a lot because of anxiety," says Olivier Paris, 16, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science. He worries about his GPA and making a good impression so he has good recommendations for college. There are many other teenagers like him. This is a very complicated but crucial time in their lives when they have to find out who they are. Seventeen-year-old Alberto Butts-Lee, from Jamaica Plain, says he struggles with making decisions that might determine his future. Butts-Lee says he has a hard time figuring out where his focus should be. "Showing more dedication to school or soccer?" he says. Like adults, teens have a lot going on in their lives. But, unlike older folks, they have less experience in dealing with the many issues that arise.



AFH PHOTO // KIM HAN

BURNED BY SUMMER

BY PRINCELL FELIZ FRANCO // STAFF WRITER

This is how Julio Garcia, 16, from Hyde Park, envisioned his summer: "Loud music, parties, free time." Yet for many students, the summertime blues soon replaced the solstice stereotype: jobs, summer homework drudgery, mandatory preparation for the next school year. To Keena Nicholas, 17, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, summer was a let-down. Working in the billing department at Children's Hospital from 8 am to 4:30 pm was rewarding but exhausting. Then there was SAT prep twice a week, plus soccer practices. "Summer is supposed to be fun," she says. Sophia Marcellus, 16, from the O'Bryant, had to wake up at 5 am to get to work at a hospital, where she was an intern making copies and running errands. At the end of it all, she was starting to dislike summer. "Summer is a lie okay, no matter what people say," she says. "You have work and you're so busy thinking about school for the next year you don't get to have a good time."



AFH ART // SAMANTHA DAVERN

MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION

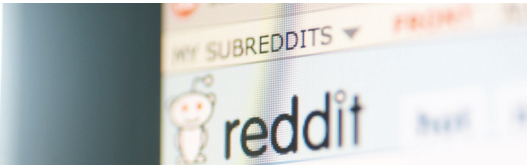
BY JAMILLAT DOUMBIA // STAFF WRITER

Amid all the clutter accumulated over the years, everyone has a special something that is most dear to him or her. For Edgar Alcantara, 18, it's his rosary beads. "It is so close to my heart," says Alcantara, who lives in Hyde Park, "because it's blessed." A person's sentimental object could be meaningless to an outsider but represent a whole lifetime to an owner. Nineteen-year-old Paola Guzman, from Mission Hill, says her black Canon is her prized possession. "I've had my camera since the eighth grade," says Guzman. "I need it in order to capture moments." Patricia Barros, 17, says she's attached to her iPhone 5. "It is my life," says Barros, from Roxbury. "It has everything I need."

THE ROLE OF RESPONSIBILITY

BY KATY ZHEN // STAFF WRITER

Noah Lee, 18, learned about responsibility when he had his first job, as a youth worker, when he was 15. "Being responsible means being accountable for your own actions," says Lee, who lives in Roslindale. Responsibility can be developed in many ways. Sian Caribe, 16, from Roslindale, acquired it when her family expanded in 2004 -- and so did her role. "My baby sister was born," says Caribe, who had to pitch in as an older sibling. Leo Mai, 18, from Charlestown High School, recalls the first time he felt responsible. "When my mother was sick," says Mai.



AFH PHOTO // JOHN GLASCOCK

REDDIT: A SITE FOR THE AGES

BY MARK ZHANG // STAFF WRITER

Through her multiple encounters with the Internet giant Reddit, Dara Lin, 16, from West Roxbury, finds the site suited for its time. "It seems a bit unorganized and there's relatively little moderation from the owners," says Lin. "Maybe that's a good thing, because there are all sorts of interesting [content] you might not find in other places." When she's bored, Lin says she will continue to go back on Reddit for 20 minutes every so often throughout the day, attesting to the booming media magnet's attraction for teens. Unlike other social media sites such as Tumblr and Twitter that are based on blogging and status updates, Reddit operates as a forum with many smaller branches. Started a decade ago, Reddit now says it attracts users from over 200 countries. Sixteen-year-old Boston Latin School student Wen Hao Guan says the Reddit community can be unforgiving and needs getting used to. "Those new to the site may find it rather eccentric to their tastes," says Guan, who visits several times a day. Abdukadir Ibrahim, a 15-year-old at Boston International High School, finds the Reddit hype appealing. "I am not a Reddit user as of now," says Ibrahim, "but I would probably check it out."

REINCARNATION REVISITED

BY JAMILLAT DOUMBIA // STAFF WRITER

As a Buddhist, Jacky Hang, 18, says he believes in reincarnation. "Everyone has a second chance to get their life right," says Hang, who goes to Boston Community Leadership Academy. Hang says he would want to be reincarnated as a semi-rich man. "I want to help people but still understand the struggle everyday persons go through," he says. Reincarnation is the rebirth of a soul in a new body, whether it be animal or human. Seventeen-year-old Adam Barriga, from BCLA, is aware of the belief in reincarnation in places like India. "I would want to be reincarnated as a panda," he says, "because I would be one of the most rare animals in the wild life." Elvynn Castro, 15, from BCLA, says he developed an acceptance of reincarnation after he saw it depicted in the animated movie, "Brother Bear." Castro says: "I want to be reincarnated as a rich man so I won't have to struggle."



AFH ART // SAMANTHA LI



AFH PHOTO // MARLENA PIRES

#DON'TJUDGECHALLENGE FALLS FLAT ON ITS FACE

BY JANELLE RODRIGUES // STAFF WRITER

It started out with good intentions: young people putting on fake acne, unibrows, and blackened teeth -- and then taking them off -- to make the point that beauty has no boundaries.

But many teens now say the social media video campaign #Don'tJudgeChallenge, aka #Don'tJudgeMeChallenge, ended up having the opposite effect -- making youth feel bad because, unlike the amateur models, they could not remove their so-called imperfections just like that.

To make matters worse, teens say that many who donned the defects just happened to be very attractive people.

"It's always the good looking ones that do it," says Jacky Hang, 18, who goes to Boston Community Leadership Academy.

Amber Commock, 17, from West Roxbury Academy, believes that the young people behind the movement had a different motive than to prevent bullying.

"Most of the people that do the videos are Facebook famous people," says Commock. "They do it to get 'likes.'"

Samantha Henderson, 18, from BCLA, says you don't need to use stage props to deliver the right message: "Everyone is beautiful in their own way."

LOOK HERE MEAN MUGS AREN'T ALWAYS MEAN

BY TYSHELLE DANIELS // STAFF WRITER

Fifteen-year-old Anna Centeio, from Dorchester, says she is surprised when people say she has a mean mug.

"I think I have a smile on my face when I walk past people," she says, "but I guess I don't."

On the street, a mean mug can get you in trouble with someone who thinks you're giving him a dirty look. Although in many cases it's just an involuntary structure of the face causing someone to seem unkind, some people do judge another's personality by his or her appearance.

"I do believe it's fair to think this way because if someone looks a certain way that's probably the way they act," says Marquis Roderique, 16, from Boston Community Leadership Academy. "So if they look mean, they are going to act mean. If they look stingy, they are going to act stingy."

However, 16-year-old Heidis Castillo, from BCLA, is not happy when someone sums her up purely on an unfriendly facial expression.

"I feel upset because it's my face," Castillo says. "I can't really control how my face is. You have to get to know me."

IT'S A ZOO IN THERE

BY XAVIA SIMPSON // STAFF WRITER

Adriana Salas, 16, from Roslindale, says she doesn't have a favorite zoo because she believes animals should not be kept in captivity.

"Animals are being used for human entertainment," says Salas, "and shouldn't be taken out of the wild because they are being taken out of their homes."

When you're young, a trip to the zoo can be a fun place to ooh-and-aah. However, as youth grow into teens, many consider zoos as nothing more than prisons for animals.

"They are being taken out of their natural habitats," says Tiana McNeil, 16, from Boston Arts Academy.

Zookeepers say they treat animals humanely and try to replicate their regular environments.

In fact, 16-year-old Melvin Rivera, from Margarita Muñoz Academy, believes animals are well fed in zoos and have a better chance of survival there than roaming around in dangerous surroundings with the possibility of not finding anything to eat.

"Animals," he says, "are being treated good in zoos."



AFH PHOTO // MARLENA PIRES

EIGHTEEN, SHMAYTEEN

BY JALENE SANCHEZ // STAFF WRITER

As soon as I turned 18, in May, I believed the "little girl" stage had ended. I was going to be treated differently by my parents; they wouldn't try to control the decisions I made or where I went. I always thought that since the government saw you as a young adult, parents would, too.

I was wrong.

The mistake that many parents make is that they don't understand that youth have to go through their own challenges and have their own understanding of life so they can grow as people.

Many parents are attached to their kids. They don't know how to let go and start to accept the fact that they're not dealing with babies anymore.

Every time I want to attend an event, I'm required to ask permission from my parents. If I get an opportunity, they don't really think about my desires or dreams -- it's always something they want. When I meet someone I'm interested in, they try to choose someone else for me.

Parents always mention how we shouldn't wish to grow up so fast because there's more to being an adult than just having fun and going out. But when you continuously treat a young adult as a child, they will never gain their own experience.

I can't hide the fact that who I am today has to do with the way my parents raised me. I've become better at making positive decisions and being wise about what I do. Still, I do wish things would change now because I know that when I actually do leave home to live my life, it will hurt my parents dearly because they never got used to letting go in the first place.

THE THICK CLIQUE

BY CAESAR LOVING-MANLEY // STAFF WRITER

To paraphrase Big Sean: "Ain't nobody messin' with the thick clique."

Now is the time when the broad backsides and curvy hips of stars like Nicki Minaj, J.Lo, and K. Michelle are in vogue.

Zaneya Michel, 18, from Dorchester, agrees that there is less favoritism for thin women today than there used to be.

Still, many teens feel that despite the greater acceptance of bigger-is-better images projected by plus-size models and others, there is still a ways to go.

That feeling was hammered home when O, The Oprah Magazine, of all places, published a style piece in July advising women that not everyone should wear a crop top: "If (and only if!) you have a flat stomach, feel free to try one."

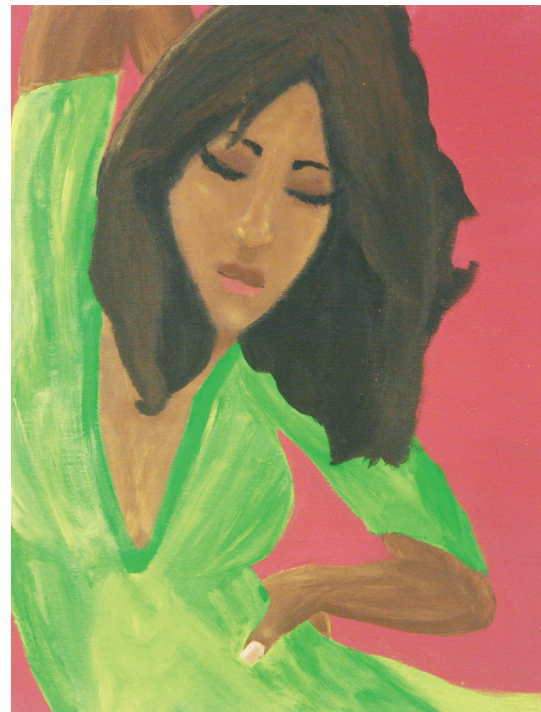
Thousands of angry readers took to Twitter to blast the body-shaming -- which led to a back-tracking statement from the magazine to ABC News: "We support, encourage and empower all women to look great, feel confident and live their best lives. In this case, we could have expressed it better. We appreciate the feedback and will be more mindful going forward."

Shante Kerr, 17, from West Roxbury, says the fashion industry still seems infatuated with low numbers.

"It represents women that are 2's, 4's, and 6's," she says.

Chantel Osborne, 19, from Hyde Park, feels that society needs to stop making larger ladies feel like outcasts.

"Body types," she says, "shouldn't matter."



AFH ART // GEORGETTE ARIMAH



AFH PHOTO // KIARA MAHER

NIFTY, THRIFTY

BY JANAYA J. BURKE-SMITH // STAFF WRITER

Eighteen-year-old Kimberly Kirlaw, from Dorchester, is very interested in thrifting. She finds herself in her local Goodwill purchasing many crop tops in different colors for only three dollars a piece; retail, they could run at least double that.

"I thrift because I like diversity when it comes to clothes," she says. "I find a lot of brand name items for a cheaper price."

Many teens are reluctant to deviate from the pricey pieces on the rack. Yet today, some young people can be found shopping for second-hand clothes at vintage stores, where they say it's easier on their wallets and the

outfits span many eras and thus never go out of style.

"Thrifting is very versatile because you get to keep your clothes forever," says 19-year-old Dawntayia Hines, from Roxbury. She frequents her local Savers, buying the cutest high-waisted jeans for only \$10 a pair.

Eighteen-year-old Tyshawn Sanders, from Dorchester, has a unique style. He can be found at The Garment District purchasing the best '80s and '90s polo sweaters for only \$15 each.

"I hate to see people follow suit when it comes to outfits," he says. "I don't like looking like everybody else, so I find myself thrifting a lot."

DRESSED FOR DISTRESS SARTORIAL STEREOTYPES IN BLACK AND WHITE

BY SOFIA MEADOWS-MURIEL // STAFF WRITER

Brandon Samuel, a 15-year-old Jamaican native now living in Dorchester, says he takes his fashion cues from Kanye West.

"A mixture of fancy but I can still dress black," he says.

What exactly is dressing black? Is it shopping at one of the urban emporiums Downtown? Is it running to buy the newest Jordan's from Foot Locker?

At a time when the country is showing great divisions between black and white, fashion is yet another area where a kind of racial profiling can exist.

A 2011 study called "Looking the Part: Social Status Cues Shape Perception" found that you can be categorized by your wardrobe.

In experiments, the researchers from Tufts University, Stanford University, and the University of California, Irvine, determined that those seen dressed in stereotypically high-

status attire like business suits increased the likelihood of them being classified as white while those witnessed wearing stereotypically low-status garb like janitorial uniforms upped the chances of them being deemed black.

Not that there aren't many crossovers in the teen world today: blacks in Carhartt coats donned by many white construction workers and whites in rapper-inspired saggy jeans.

Destayne Auguste, 15, from Roslindale, says people often ask her "Why do you dress like a white girl?" when she wears her yoga pants and Converse.

Walking down the hallways of Boston Latin School, 16-year-old Leo Gearin knows that his American Apparel shirt and Urban Outfitters jeans can clash with the sweats that many other white male students stride around in.

"My style has no particular race category," says Gearin. "I just wear whatever I want. People of every race wear it."



AFH PHOTO //LENA YEE AND CASHMAN OGAUS

BY SELA WINDER // STAFF WRITER

"Her weave is so ratchet!" "Her lace-front is all wrong!" "Pat that weave, girl!"

No doubt, many teens have heard these phrases -- accompanied by hysterical laughs, whether it be in parodies on YouTube, clips on Snapchat and Vine, or memes on Instagram.

Teens say all these buzzwords have something in common: They are used to make fun of girls who wear weaves -- more specifically, black girls who wear weaves.

Indeed, there's now a new way of embarrassing those who wear weaves called "Yaga," which is when you go up to a black girl and yank on her hair to try and pull it out.

Why the continuing saga over weaves and extensions -- related styles that can add length and volume -- and good hair vs bad hair?

COSMETIC
CONSCIOUSNESS
THE MANY REASONS
BEHIND WEARING
MAKEUP – OR NOT

BY JASEIA MONTEIRO // STAFF WRITER

Fifteen-year-old Gianni Rosa, from Dorchester, says she understands why some girls feel the need to wear makeup.

"Some girls are insecure because they have stories behind some scars or blemishes on their face they may feel bad about and they feel more comfortable around people when they are hidden," she says.

Meanwhile, others wear makeup because they are very secure.

"When girls wear makeup," says Leah Penn, 13, from Dorchester, "some wear it for the simple fact that they look cute but mostly because it makes girls feel powerful. The more makeup they wear, the more powerful they feel."

Then there are girls who wear makeup for a time only to go back to the natural look.

"Some hate the way it looks on them," says Jayda Alves, 16, from Dorchester, "because they get this 'fake' vibe from themselves."

Aliyah Jackson, 17, from Boston Community Leadership Academy, says there are a host of reasons.

"To be honest, I think that it's just another way to put down black women," says Jackson, who frequently wears extensions. "I hear people say that, if a black girl wears hair, that she...hates...her heritage."

Ciara Brown, 16, from Hyde Park, says one of the biggest stereotypes about weaves is that only black girls wear them.

"White women wear weaves, Asian women wear weaves, Hispanic women wear weaves," says Brown, who often wears extensions.

"The only difference is that they don't get made fun of. Look at the Kardashians -- they wear weaves all the time."

Tanejah Williams, a senior at BCLA, puts to rest the notion that wearing weave is a form of self-hatred and a way to assimilate into white culture.

"When I wear weave and extensions," says Williams, "I wear them as a protective style to help my natural hair to rest, grow, and retain moisture."

THE RETURN OF THE DASHIKI

BY ADAMAJAN BAH // SENIOR EDITOR

Habibatou Diallo, 19, of Dorchester, believes that the dashiki's comeback is a great thing beyond its fashion sense.

"People have all these negative misconceptions about Africa from what we wear to what we eat," says Diallo, whose family comes from West Africa, "so for them to see all these colorful pieces of clothing and find it cool makes a differences in their perception of African culture."

Originating in Africa, dashikis are multi-colored tops that traditionally feature embroidery around the sleeves and neck. In the '60s, they became part of the American black power movement's unofficial uniform.



AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH



AFH ARTWORK // MARLENA PIRES

PICKING THROUGH
PIXAR'S FEMINIST
CREDENTIALS

BY MELANIE BAEZ // STAFF WRITER

Sixteen-year-old Mason Osorio, from Dorchester, has his own take on the two animation giants.

"Disney is for girls and princesses," says Osorio, "And Pixar is for, well, boys."

Many agree that Pixar is one of the most successful and creative animation studios ever. They tell original, interesting stories with creative and lovable characters to match. They never fail to bring viewers into brand new worlds and maybe even question if their toys actually did come to life when they weren't looking.

Yet, 10 out of Pixar's 14 films analyzed fail the Bechdel Test, according to the AV Club, an entertainment website. The test is a way of measuring female representation in movies.

To pass, the work must include two female characters who have a conversation with each other about something other than a man. Sometimes, the requirement is added that these characters have names.

Only "The Incredibles," "Brave," "Toy Story 3," and "A Bug's Life" from Pixar's catalogue pass that test, critics say.

Still, some teens question whether the feminist litmus test is too narrow, believing that Pixar puts out female characters who are independent and free-spirited -- like Merida from "Brave."

"Having just some female characters is not enough to count as female representation," says Dawniqua Galloway, 17, from Dorchester. "Women are powerful. They should be able to have more than just names and a little conversation -- they should be leads, or at least sidekicks."

Her 16-year-old sister, Ashley Galloway, has a similar vision.

"Most people don't think a woman can be the one who rescues people in trouble," she says. "I want an actual female character saving the day."

LEARNING JAPANESE THE ANIME WAY

BY ANTIAH THORNTON // STAFF WRITER

I learned how to speak Japanese, but not through the typical methods such as Rosetta Stone or living in Tokyo for a year. I learned Japanese through watching amounts galore of Japanese cartoons, commonly known as anime.

I never imagined learning a complex language like Japanese, especially without an official program. But in the summer of 2009, I found out that a foreign exchange student from Japan would be living with us for a while and this helped me gain some of the basics.

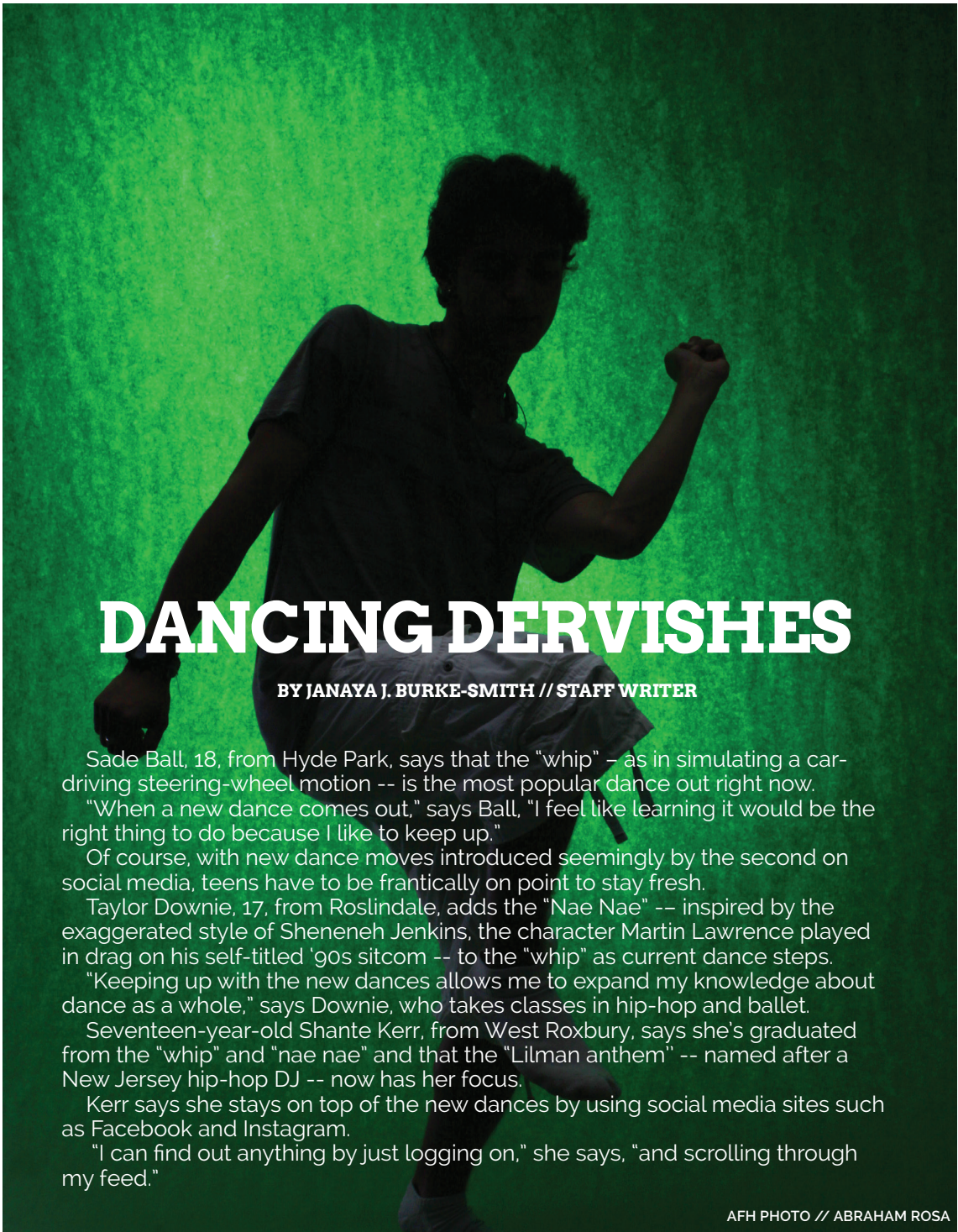
After this, I was on my own. By this time, I had been introduced to a lot of anime titles such

as "Naruto," "Madoka Magica," "Sailor Moon," "Tokyo Mew Mew," and many others.

I started off small. I would listen to one sentence, pause the video, write down the English subtitles, and then the actual Japanese words. Then later on in the show, I would find a sentence that contained the same words as the first one.

For example, I wrote down "Where is the cat?" and then the Japanese translation. I discovered that "neko" means cat and, word by word, took it from there.

This is an unorthodox but fun method -- call it anime immersion -- that I still use today.



DANCING DERVISHES

BY IANAYA J. BURKE-SMITH // STAFF WRITER

Sade Ball, 18, from Hyde Park, says that the "whip" -- as in simulating a car-driving steering-wheel motion -- is the most popular dance out right now.

"When a new dance comes out," says Ball, "I feel like learning it would be the right thing to do because I like to keep up."

Of course, with new dance moves introduced seemingly by the second on social media, teens have to be frantically on point to stay fresh.

Taylor Downie, 17, from Roslindale, adds the "Nae Nae" -- inspired by the exaggerated style of Sheneneh Jenkins, the character Martin Lawrence played in drag on his self-titled '90s sitcom -- to the "whip" as current dance steps.

"Keeping up with the new dances allows me to expand my knowledge about dance as a whole," says Downie, who takes classes in hip-hop and ballet.

Seventeen-year-old Shante Kerr, from West Roxbury, says she's graduated from the "whip" and "nae nae" and that the "Lilman anthem" -- named after a New Jersey hip-hop DJ -- now has her focus.

Kerr says she stays on top of the new dances by using social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram.

"I can find out anything by just logging on," she says, "and scrolling through my feed."

AFH PHOTO // ABRAHAM ROSA

BALL IS LIFE, RIGHT? NOPE

BY DAISA SIMPSON // STAFF WRITER

After a long, tough workout, 18-year-old Malik Pouncy -- dressed in black Nike basketball shorts -- explained how he interprets the current teen phrase making the rounds: "Ball is life."

"[It] means you do what it takes to be the best that you can be," says Pouncy, from Mattapan. "I plan to go Division 1, and if ball doesn't take me past college, I hope that I will be able to seek a job with my forensic science degree I plan on obtaining."

Pouncy not only has hoop skills, he says, but a high GPA and a love of learning.

For a long time, many young black men have been taught by society that the only thing they can be amazing at is sports.

When someone sees a tall, in-shape, young black man, they often ask: Do you play basketball? Despite the presence of a black president, ball is life, right?

But now, many young black men are looking beyond the athletic arena and are using sports as an initial way to escape the chaos of some of their communities and go to college. From there, they say they are ready to transition to other lucrative

professions beyond pro sports -- if need be.

After all, according to the NCAA, only 1.2 percent of college basketball players get drafted by the NBA, for example.

Young black men are realizing they have much more to offer than just sports.

Kevin Govan, 19, says he grew up thinking that he always had to have a basketball in his hands to make it in life. No more.

"I plan to be an electrical engineer," says Govan, from Roxbury. "I hope to not fall into the trap that would lead to my failure that society has set in place."

As of 2001, according to the NAACP, one in six black men had been incarcerated. If the trend of racial and economic injustice continues, the group says, one in three black males born today will spend time behind bars during his lifetime.

Eighteen-year-old Elijah Moore, from Dorchester, says he has a solid plan in place beyond playing with the pigskin.

"Although football is a way for me to not get into trouble, and stay off the streets, that's definitely not the only thing I'm good at in life," says Moore. "I plan to go to Wentworth after high school to study construction management."



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ON THE BALL FIELD: TRASH TALK OR BULLYING?

BY SOFIA MEADOWS-MURIEL // STAFF WRITER

Every afternoon, as the sun begins to set, the cleats of 14-year-old Camille Oliver are laced tightly as the soccer ball at Pagel field, in Roslindale, begins to fly around.

And so, too, do the nasty words, disparaging his game in Haitian Creole.

"I don't get offended because it makes me work harder," says Oliver, who lives in Roslindale.

But for other players, Oliver says, there's a fine line on the field between trash talk and bullying.

And some of the verbiage -- about one's mother, for example -- can go over the border.

"Trash talking is said to be funny but the other person might think they're getting targeted," Oliver says.

In the big leagues, such was the case several years ago with Jonathan Martin, who believed he was bullied by teammate Richie Incognito when both were on the Miami Dolphins, while others called it just locker-room antics. Now retired, Martin said last month that he contemplated suicide during the ordeal.

With a baseball bat in his hand, 14-year-old Fernando Gonzalez, from Dorchester, says he knows where the boundaries are drawn.

"Trash talking is done with words, bullying is done with actions," he says.

Yet there are times, he says, when the chatter can devolve into bullying -- like when someone classifies you as worthless rather than saying you ought to be benched.

Marvin Widemayer Luc, 15, from Roslindale, says he tries to convert his opponents' heckling about his throwing arm on the football field into flat-out motivation.



AFH PHOTO // DELIA FLEMING