

TEENS
in
PRINT

BOSTON



BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT MAY/JUNE 2016™

HOPE

WITH CHALLENGES POSED BY ISIS, NORTH KOREAN NUKES, CLIMATE CHANGE, CRUSHING COLLEGE BILLS, DONALD TRUMP -- DO TEENS STILL HAVE FAITH IN THE FUTURE?

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HOPE

WITH CHALLENGES POSED BY ISIS, NORTH KOREAN NUKES, CLIMATE CHANGE, CRUSHING COLLEGE BILLS, DONALD TRUMP -- DO TEENS STILL HAVE FAITH IN THE FUTURE?

BY ELEBETEL ASSEFA // STAFF WRITER

Despite a rampage of foreign and domestic troubles, Mageney Omar, a sophomore at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, says she is confident about tomorrow -- and the days after.

"I'm still very hopeful about the world we live in because I know that we have built a strong foundation that cannot be torn down easily," she says. "The US has strong leaders who are not going to fail the people."

Barack Obama appealed to many young people in 2008 with his candidate's message of hope and change.

However, much has changed on the hope front since Obama became president: ISIS and their bombings and beheadings. Domsday displays of North Korean nukes. Unrelenting climate unrest. Crazier than ever, out-of-control college costs.

Donald J. Trump.

"I'm not hopeful because no

amount of hope will change the bad things happening," says Kiana Mclean, a sophomore at the O'Bryant.

Yet many teens and their peers say they remain fervent in their faith about the future.

A survey last year of young people born between 1996 and 2000 discovered that 65 percent of these so-called Generation Z members, from 46 countries, felt at ease going forward, according to the global research firm Universum.

Of course, other surveys say, these are not the wide-eyed, teenage optimists of yesterday but, rather, more of a group of eyes-wide-open realists.

Their gritty, tough-it-out attitudes can be seen in a 2014 Northeastern University report that found: Even as the financial burdens of future education weighed heavily on teens, 65 percent understood that the value of a degree was worth the monetary sacrifice.

Many in this generation say

they believe that positivity can go a long way in dealing with devastating current events, a position that, observers say, also manifests in the youth's maturity and insistence on equality for all.

"You can focus on the bad stuff but that isn't everything in your life," says Alejandro Melguizo, a sophomore at the O'Bryant. "If you can see the good, you can survive."

For many students, the realization that there's a big, bad ball of misery out there doesn't terrify them.

It just makes them want to change things up.

"I know there are people that are homeless, starving, or in a worse condition than I am," says Rayven Frierson, a sophomore at the O'Bryant. "Yet I live life with a positive mind-set. I have faith that the world will realize their mistakes and fix it."

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.



AFH ARTWORK // JOEL DIAZ

BSAC BUZZ

Below is an edited version of remarks presented by Boston Student Advisory Council members Fania Joseph and Kenny Feng at "A Dialogue on Race," a conference hosted by Teen Empowerment, in Boston, in March.

FJ: Race matters when it comes to education. We want to see more teachers of color in our schools. Eighty-six percent of Boston Public Schools students identify as black, Latino, or Asian, but only 37 percent of the teachers in the district are teachers of color. This is a problem across the whole country, and it impacts how and what we learn.

KF: Race also matters when it comes to school discipline. According to BPS data from 2014-2015, 7.6 percent of black students and 4.4 percent of Latino students received out-of-school suspensions, compared to 1.5 percent of their white peers.

FJ: This is a huge part of the school-to-prison pipeline that we want to put an end to.

KF: In October, BSAC did a Listening Project and talked to around 300 Boston students about their experiences with school discipline and zero-tolerance policies. Students who had been suspended said it made them feel "not human," "like they were getting bullied," and like they did not "want to try at all."

FJ: This is not OK. BSAC and others have worked hard to pass laws so that in most cases, out-of-school suspension is a last resort and that schools have to try alternatives first, like restorative justice. Circle practice is a form of a restorative justice that can be used to repair harms in a community. Individuals sit in a circle and develop solutions together through conversation.

KF: Come talk to us after for more information and to get one of our student rights cards.



AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH

THE CHALLENGE OF FINISHING COLLEGE

BY MINERVA VOLMAR // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If you go to graduation ceremonies at many colleges, the number of minority students you may see is low compared to others.

The statistics back this up.

According to a January article on washingtonpost.com: "Nearly one-third of students entering two- or four-year colleges in the United States each year are first-generation. These students are also more likely to be minorities, and they are far less likely to graduate: In six years, 40 percent of first-generation students will have earned a bachelor's or associate's degree or a certificate, vs. 55 percent of their peers

whose parents attended college."

Minorities often are the first in their family to go to college, and for many of them, English is not their first language.

When these students attend college, they are often exposed to a different culture than what they are used to.

At home, talking about college may not be a regular thing.

At school, the focus is many times on getting today's assignments done, not about tomorrow's plans.

Getting into college is a great accomplishment, but the work doesn't end there.

TUITION STICKER SHOCK

BY VANESSA MONTEIRO // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

While I was applying to colleges, I asked myself whether that should really be my next step. One of my worries included the price tag. Not being able to afford outrageously high tuitions is a major reason that many students don't attend or defer college.

"Up to 40 percent of low-income students who are accepted into college in the spring never make it to the first day of class in the fall," according to an August 2015 article in the *The Hechinger Report*. "They're stymied by tuition sticker shock, Kafkaesque paper requirements and a quiet, corrosive feeling that they don't belong."

Despite these obstacles, many parents and school officials continue to push students down the university path at all costs even when there are professional and trade alternatives to success.

THE POWER OF PROTEST

BY VICTORIA LIVINGSTON // STAFF WRITER

Isabella Carrasco, a sophomore at Boston Latin School, was one of more than 1,000 Boston Public Schools students who recently marched outside the State House to protest massive proposed budget cuts.

As a multitude of BPS students walked out of classes that March day, with many attending the rally, Carrasco says she knew she took a risk but felt the issue was too important to ignore.

"At first I was afraid to even go," says Carrasco, "but then I decided there needs to

be something done."

The action was followed by this opening paragraph of a Boston Globe story: "Days after thousands of students walked out to protest budget cuts, Mayor Martin J. Walsh said Thursday that he plans to announce that Boston high schools will be spared the controversial reductions that endangered popular programs and teacher jobs."

No matter how the details of the budget process shake out, students say they came to realize the power of protest.

"I feel very good because not only did I help myself and my school but I also helped other people and other schools," says Brianna Ducharme, a sophomore at Boston Latin Academy.

After all, teens say, it's not only adults who are invested in the future of BPS.

"I feel like the walkout was a chance for students to actually show how much they care for their education," says Nick Barbosa, a sophomore at BLA.



AFH PHOTO // KIARA MAHER

MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

BY ALI SATTAR // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I grew up in Jordan as an immigrant from Iraq. The first day I entered my high school classroom I was shocked -- food was everywhere on the floor, there were broken desks and tables, and kids were throwing papers at each other. The teacher just sat on his desk holding a cigar and drinking coffee and hitting anyone who was late or forgot homework.

I was often late because I couldn't afford the money for a bus, so I had to walk. That was when my suffering began.

In Amman, Jordan, education mostly happened on the streets. I needed to support my family. I continued to wake up at 6 am, but then skipped school to work illegally as a trash picker. It was a disgusting job, but it paid me good money.

I walked from corner to corner to collect what could be sold, like metal or furniture, and then I would throw it in a truck. After six hours of sweating under the sun, we arrived at the storage facility, where we emptied the truck and were paid the equivalent of \$15.

At the end of the day, I walked to the river so I could wash the smell off me.

Today, instead of running to gather garbage, I run from class to class to pursue my education. I wake up at 6 am excited for the opportunity to attend a school where teachers care about you and work hard because they want to see you succeed.

DEEP LEARNING: A CLASS STRUGGLE

P. VANESSA SYLVESTRE // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

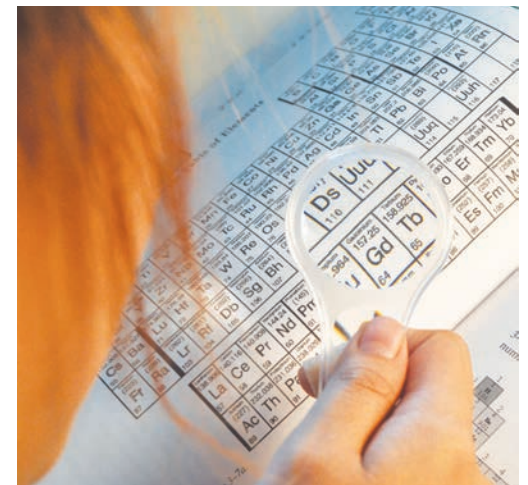
For many students like myself, being able to experience deep learning is the best way to acquire valuable knowledge.

Two years ago, for example, I took a chemistry class. I felt invested while studying about relevant issues like global warming. I remember how much excitement I had when I went to the teacher and talked about ways to stop the global warming onslaught. I even attempted to do recycling at my house.

However, this topic only lasted a few weeks and then we moved on. I was not sure what to do anymore with what I learned because it was no longer mentioned during class. I stopped recycling at home.

After noticing this pattern of teaching, many students do not want to invest too much mental energy knowing that certain subject matter will soon disappear.

In fact, a 2006 report commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, called "The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts," found that nearly half of those surveyed said a major reason they left school was because their classes were



AFH PHOTO // CUONG HUYNH

boring.

Teaching can be superficial if it is not brought into the real world. It is important to address the issue of providing a pertinent, student-centered curriculum to all students or achievement will be stunted.



AFH ARTWORK // BILLY NUNEZ

TECHNOLOGY GONE MAD SLY-FI: ENVISIONING A WARPED TOMORROW

REVENGE ON THE ROBOTS

BY ERIKEN CALDERON // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was the year 3040, the era of the robot. Emerson, a young teenager, was crying in the hallway of his mansion. His parents decided to buy a robot to take care of their son -- prepare breakfast for Emerson, drive him to school.

Emerson's father walked in the front door.

"What happened son? Why are you crying?"
"I'm crying because you and mom don't love me."

"We love you so much son, don't say that."
"Why did you and mom buy a robot to take care of me?"

"We don't have time to take care of you.

We thought the robot would be better for you. Now go to bed, son."

Emerson refused to go to school the next day and stayed in his room, crying.

His father came home early and looked for his wife.

"I'm going to delete the robot," he told her...

PENCIL GUNS: LOADED WITH LETHAL LEAD

BY ROSA MEJIA // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Everything was different in the year 2025. They passed a law saying that children had to take pencil guns to school.

The problem started when Royalty's mother handed her a pencil gun in the kitchen one morning.

"Here my love -- take this."

"Mom, but why?"

"Honey, you need this to protect yourself. I don't want anything to happen to you."

"But I don't like this idea. This makes me scared, mom."

"Royalty, please don't make this difficult."

"All this is ridiculous, mom. How can you feel safe with something material?"

"Take it and I don't want any calls from the principal that you left your pencil gun."

Royalty was extremely mad and called her best friend, Carlos.

"Hi Carlos."

"Long time that I don't talk to."

"I know. I just finished fighting with my mother."

"What happened?"

"She wants me to use this pencil gun -- supposedly to protect myself."

"I know. My mom was talking to me about it, too. But don't worry," Carlos assured her....

DONALD TRUMP IV: TOTAL POWER THROUGH MIND CONTROL

BY JOHANA SAINMA // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

By the year 2080, England had become a world of total technology. Donald Trump IV, a selfish and corrupt man, was the president. He would do anything to hold onto power in this society.

He met a man named Joshua, an inventor at Harvard University, and asked him to propose a new device that could control people's minds.

Patricia, a 30-year-old woman, worked for Trump at a company that made small diamond jewels that became known as magic cancer preventers. People wore them on their foreheads to block cancer from developing.

Everybody wore one except Donald Trump IV....

One day, after working late, Patricia was going through a batch of videotaped commercials that were made to promote the product when she discovered an important one that belonged to the president.

"This device is magnificent when it comes to controlling a human's mind," came the words. "With this device placed on someone's forehead, whomever has access to the system room is the only one that is able to control that person's mind. You can stop someone from rebelling against your orders by making the person do what you want and be satisfied."

"What? Please tell me this isn't true, that this whole idea of the device preventing cancer has been a lie," Patricia said to herself, shocked....

APOSTROPHE CATASTROPHE

BY MARZANA KHATUN // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Apostrophe kidnapped the security guard from the semicolon office, where the government locks its secret weapons.

He entered the security room where new data is held.

"I need to break locks to find the new technology that the government created to copy/paste weapons faster," Apostrophe thought.

He started busting-up everything.

"Where is the tiny little chip?" Apostrophe wondered.

He was looking everywhere, crazily, with his green eyes, and time was running out. This generation is killing each other for no reason -- all because the land has become one on earth, Apostrophe knew.

"Finally, you tiny little chip," he muttered. "It took me all this time to find you."

At that moment, he started to remember how he'd been bullied by a neighbor years ago.

"You stupid shape -- like an apostrophe," he was told, and felt heartbroken and angry.

Now, suddenly, he heard a sound from outside the security room. He winced and dropped the chip on the floor. He struggled to pick it up.

"Why God," he sighed, "did you have to make me in the shape of an apostrophe?"

Apostrophe spent many days trying to change his look, only to later learn an important life lesson....

THE PHONE ADDICT

BY ROSA RODRIGUEZ // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"Elena, but I want you to go with me, please."

"I would go but I don't want to leave the house."

"Why?"

The two of them -- Elena and her best friend Sarah -- were sitting on a bed in Elena's room.

"I seriously don't know. I just want to stay home."

"I understand but at least promise me you'll think about it."

"Fine. I will let you know tomorrow."

"Thanks. Call me. I need to go now. My mom is waiting for me to help her with dinner."

"OK, bye."

Elena went back to her room and stayed there for the rest of the day. Actually, she stayed there for two weeks.

Sarah was worried and talked to Elena's mother.

"At school, the teachers were asking for her," Sarah said.

"Do you know why she is like that?" Elena's mother asked.

"I have an idea."

"What?"

"I can guess it's her phone."

More days passed and Elena was still in her room.

"Elena, I need to talk to you," Sarah said.

"About what?"

"About what is happening with you."

"What do you mean? This is who I am, and now would you please leave me alone."

"No, because you are my best friend and I want what's best for you. And right now, your phone is dangerous. You spend too much time on it," said Sarah, filled with concern for Elena....



AFH ARTWORK // KHALEELA WILLINGHAM



AFH ARTWORK // SHAMARI SATCHELL

CLONES OR DRONES?

BY ANDREA TAYLOR // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

So many years have passed since 2016 -- almost 75. To move around, people now use fly cars, tele-transportation, and other options. As the world evolves, even communication can be done via virtual conversations.

"Today, ladies and gentlemen, I, Dr. Nate -- scientist from the River Forest Laboratory -- want to announce that I have made a new discovery. Tired of being late to your appointments? Now you will be on time thanks to the Clone Machine. This invention will replicate yourself...."

"Dr. Nate?" one journalist asked. "Can you assure us that the clones are safe?"

"I can assure you that this invention is totally safe. What I will need is a single drop of everyone's blood, and there it is," said Dr. Nate....

THE PERFECT WORLD

BY DAN HUYNH // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In the year 2501, L lived in The Perfect World -- a small city that was built secretly in the forest and was covered by an artificial sky. All around, the nature was fake. No animals existed. Civilians did not need to worry about food since in every house there was an NIM machine hanging on the wall that injected nutrients into their veins three times a day -- just like breakfast, lunch, and dinner. People had an ID code number on the backs of their necks.

In The Perfect World, there were no schools or books because there was a machine named KISA that transferred basic knowledge automatically to each human's brain. President Wydell told people that it improved their intelligence while they slept at night.

L was a 15-year-old boy with orange hair and a black tattoo of the number 301 on his neck. He had lived separately from his parents since he was 12. He slept in a pod and wore a white bandana through which knowledge was transmitted to him from the KISA machine.

Soon, L would be able to work.

"We're all geniuses since we don't need to put much effort into becoming intelligent."

That was what President Wydell always said to the people. He was the one who determined professions for them. When babies were born, he chose jobs for them -- ones that would serve the best interests of The Perfect World....

MARCH OF THE MACHINES

BY FRANLY GONZALEZ // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"Hey Papito! What are you doing here? I was looking for you at the farm," Panchito said.

"I'm here because I don't work there anymore," Papito said.

"What do you mean you don't work there anymore?"

"Yes. They fired me."

"Did they fire you because of the machine?"

"Yes. They told me that they were going to fire 10 more people because they got two new machines."

"Ohh! We should do something or we'll all lose our jobs."

"I think it is a great idea. We should talk to the other farmers."

"Yeah, let's do a meeting tomorrow."

Panchito walked into his boss's office.

"Hey boss," Panchito said.

"How are you doing, Panchito?" the boss said.

"Good, thanks. You know why I'm here, right?"

"No, I don't."

"I'm here because I want to talk to you about the machines. I think you should not use the machines."

"Why not?" the boss said.

"Because you are leaving a lot of people without jobs."

"I don't care. I only care that I'll be saving a lot of money with the machines."

"You should think how those people are going to survive without jobs and no money."

"I already told you I don't care."

"But, sir."

"Shut up. I don't wanna hear it. Why don't you get out of my office and go back to work before I fire you, too."

But Panchito had a plan....

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

BY YADILSA PAULINO // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Scientists in 2081 had just invented a surgery to make people perfect: eyes, nose, hair, belly, legs. Everything.

One late night at the hospital, Ana and Miriam were waiting for Dr. Fern to finish the contract for Miriam's operation.

"Mom, are you sure of what you're doing to your body?" Ana said, angrily.

"Yes, Ana, I'm sure. I will be the first perfect woman in the world. I will look like a beautiful flower."

"Mom, but you're already beautiful. You don't need to do that."

"But I told you I want to be perfect, daughter."

"You should think first about the surgery before confirming the contract with the doctor, mom."

"I did it already, Ana."

"I will talk with the doctor and tell him you need more time to think about the surgery."

"It is clear, daughter."

"But you don't know how dangerous that surgery can be."

"I do, daughter, but I want to try it, anyway. You only think about how dangerous this can be but not how beautiful and perfect I will look."

"You make me angry right now, mom. I told you not to do the surgery."

"I will do it, Ana," her mother insisted...

DEATH BY INTERNET

BY DANY RODRIGUES // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

After Freddy's parents died on a deserted island, he vowed to avenge their passing.

Freddy's parents died because of a government rule declaring that all newborns would have a chip planted inside them. The chip helped the government control the amount of times you could use the Internet.

"Born dead," the government called it.

People who were not part of the government could only use the Internet 10 times. Any more, you would feel a pain in your head and then you'd be dead.

Freddy's parents died because they defied this rule; they thought the government was just joking.

After his parent's death, Freddy went to live with a cousin named Carlos, who worked for the government on its computer system. Freddy decided to talk to him about this deadly government rule.

"I don't think it's fair only for people who are part of the government to use the Internet for an unlimited time," Freddy said.

Freddy asked Carlos if they could hack the government computer....

FOREVER YOUNG

BY FATIMA IBRAHIM // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Life was so different than 74 years ago. In 2090, people valued science more than anything. The United Scientists of America had all the power in the country. They represented the government, doctors, lawyers, and everything else.

One Monday, Professor Mike Brown went to the university. Before he started his class, he had a meeting with the United Scientists of America.

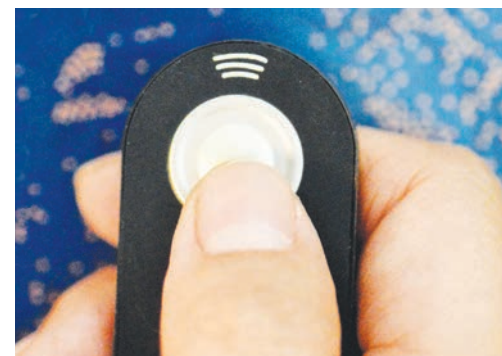
"Hello, I am here to introduce my idea about a new experiment I want to do," said Professor Brown.

"Well, we don't have any room for new scientists," replied JM, from The United Scientists of America. "We already have enough."

"But my experiment is a medicine to keep us younger and never get old. It will be injected into the arms of all ages. And everyone will stay young forever."

"We are sorry, but we cannot accept your ideas."

Professor Brown felt very aggravated. He decided to do the experiment, anyway -- without the approval of The United Scientists of America....



AFH PHOTO // VANESSA VO

GOLD IS COLD: THE DEMISE OF POOR PEOPLE

BY CAROLAINA RIBEIRO // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

While Carol was cleaning the floor at the computer factory, a news reporter appeared on the tele-screen.

"Today, in Paris, we have a lady from the wealthiest family wanting to make an announcement."

A woman full of gold appeared on the screen, all dressed up like someone who was designed by the best artist in the world.

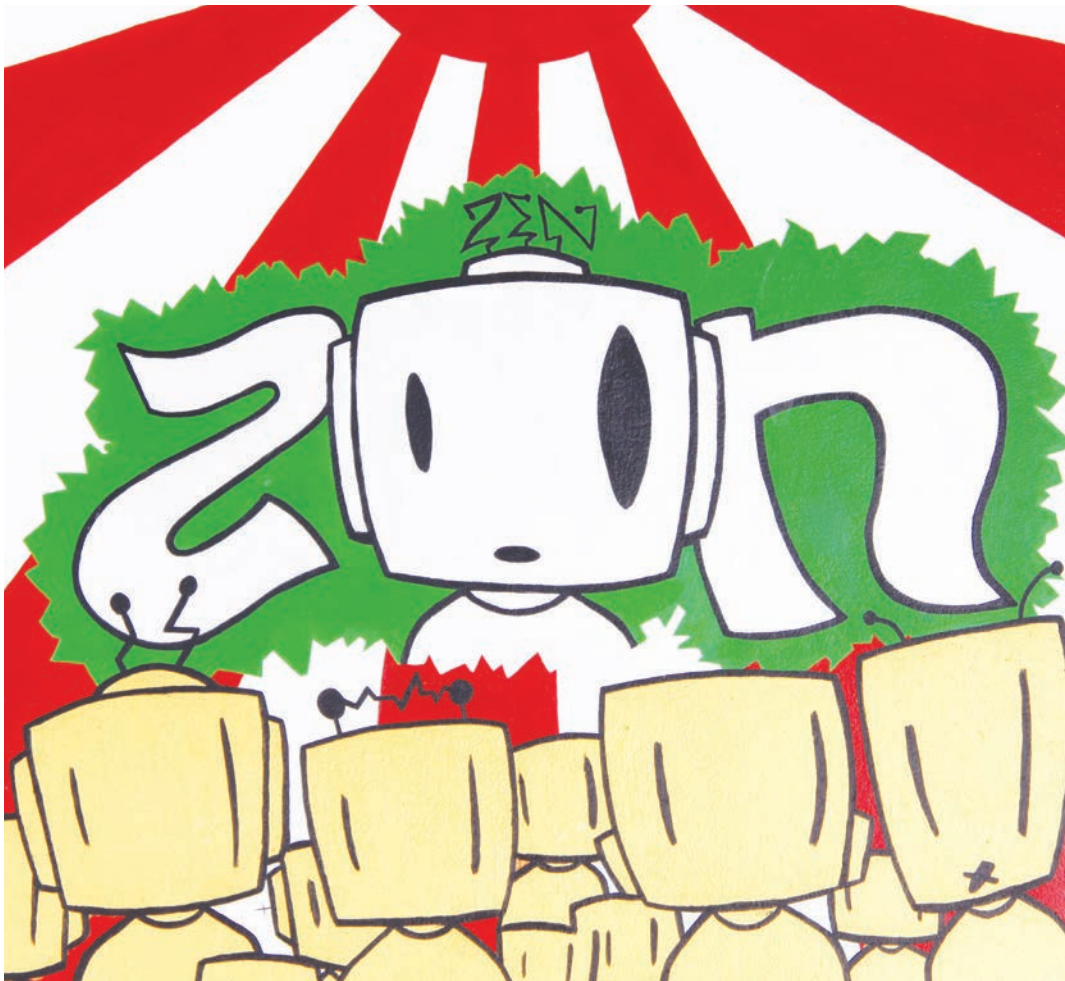
"Hello everyone. You all know that I'm not much of a talker so I'll make this very short," said the lady in gold. "Everyone is always coming to either me or my husband asking us to add more houses and buildings on our side of town."

"But we have a little bit of an issue. We're lacking spaces in our part of town. But do not worry. I have so much power that I can do anything I want. As you all know, with the universal controller my family owns, we can do pretty much anything we want. I only have to hold the button and mention what I want and it will appear."

"So, I've come up with a solution for this problem: We're going to destroy the poor people's side of town -- and destroy those people, too. That way we will have all their space and it will be enough to add as many places as you guys want. Poor people have nothing to live for, they have nothing at all, so my decision is made," said the lady in gold....



AFH ARTWORK // JACOB PARGO GARCIA



AFH ARTWORK // GARY CHEN

KC: THE COMPUTER IN CHARGE

BY IDA ALVES

In the year 2222, in a faraway place named Zootopia, the government was run by a computer named KC.

KC controlled who did what job, how many kids per family, and where you lived.

KC was selfish and manipulative.

Living in that society was hard, especially when you were not allowed to go out after 4:00 pm. The people of Zootopia had never seen the sun. They lived their whole lives under the light that KC had provided.

But KC had such a smooth voice that, upon hearing it, you would think you were in heaven on earth....

NUCLEAR CONFUSION

BY SHERLEY VALEUS // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Small towns in the Southern hemisphere were getting wiped out by the North, which was testing the number of people that one nuclear bomb could kill.

Donna Packer, governor of the North, in the year 2065, was giving a speech.

"Me and my team have been working on a device called the Wristband Protector. The purpose of this is to protect us from the aftermath," she said.

Later, her daughter would discover the true meaning of this apparatus....

EYE SPY

BY DANES BIEN AIME // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Robenson was 14. At school, he always wanted to be a leader. Everyone knew his name. In the neighborhood, he was kind of popular.

While on his porch one day, he found a letter in the mail. It was for his father and it was from the government.

"This is an appointment that you have to go to next month to insert the human eye camera," his father told him.

Here, in the year 2035, the human eye camera was a new technology from a government that wanted to watch people's every moves. They could use it to catch criminals or spy on anyone doing anything against the government.

"I am mad," Robenson said. "I don't want to do an operation. I will find a way to stop it."

"What are you going to do about it?" his father asked....

BARBIE DOLLED

BY JESSICA ANDRADE // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was 11:45 pm and she couldn't sleep. Everybody else was dozing -- including the personal robot.

She decided to leave her room and walk around the Pink Camp by herself in the darkness of the moonlight, surrounded by complete silence.

She had been going for about an hour before realizing she was heading into places she had never seen before in her 19 years of living in the Pink Camp.

What Barbie 003 didn't know was that she was being watched by Momma Barbie's surveillance cameras.

"Dangerous! All Barbies must stay out!" read a sign written in pink letters on a white door.

Barbie 003 ignored the sign and entered, anyway. There she saw walls full of pictures -- pictures of Barbies who were sent to the Outlaw Camp.

Among them was one of her mother, Barbie 03. She was sent to the Outlaw Camp because she wouldn't cook and clean for her husband -- violating one of the rules of Lusavillie....

GPS WATCH: A TIME BOMB

BY CARL Y. TOUSSAINT // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Alex felt very angry as he listened to the radio with his friend Jack.

It was 2:30 pm one day in the year 2020 and the government made everybody listen to the same radio station.

"Ladies and gentlemen," came the announcement. "We are going to introduce GPS watches and tell you what this technology can do. This will help us control society because it shares locations and we can hear what people say."

Alex became even more agitated.

"It's time me for me to have my privacy and do whatever I want and talk about anything."

"What are you going to do?" Jack asked.

"We have to find a way to stand up against what the government proposes," said Alex....

SPACESHIP TRIP TO MERCURY

BY HALIMA IBRAHAM // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One day, in the year 2050, Mark wanted to buy a spaceship and travel to Mercury.

"This is so ridiculous," said his older brother, Julien. "Do you know how many people were lost there? They can't even come back to Earth because they lose direction."

"Well, I'm strong and smart and I don't need someone to control me."

Mark went ahead and bought the spaceship, anyway. The trip to Mercury took less than an hour because the spacecraft was so fast.

When Mark arrived, he saw a different world, with creepy creatures that looked half animal, half human.

On the third day, Julien's phone alerted him that Mark was in trouble.

Julien called his brother, but no one replied.

"Mark, can you hear me?"

So he went to the spaceship company and was very angry at the owner.

"This is enough," Julien said. "People are dying. Others are in trouble and struggling for their lives there."

"What are you talk about? This is my company and I'm benefiting through this project. I'm not killing anybody. I don't know why people are dying. My job is to sell my spaceship to people to have fun," said the owner....

BRACELETS OR HANDCUFFS?

BY WITNEY CLERVIL // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"Honey, bring Alexssy with you tonight," he said.

"But..." she stammered.

"There is no but," Owen said. "We are leaving tonight."

The sky was gloomy, like black smoke. The streets were dirty, but quiet. The year was 2215.

Tansia was the most powerful country in the world. Nothing could compare. The government was ruthless and aggressive.

People were required to wear a bracelet from birth that had a specific number that contained all their information. Through this device, they were being controlled.

Any false move would unleash a series of electric shocks.

"Daddy, when will I be able to leave this country? I don't like this place," Alexssy had said sadly to her father one morning.

"I can't promise you, but I will try to do my best."

"Anything for my beautiful daughter," her father had whispered....

WHEN IN DROUGHT

KEVIN PREDESTIN // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For 70 years, there had been no rain. It was the year 2167 and there was a complete drought in the world. The government started getting worried about food and population growth.

"Honey, I'm home," said Patrick.

Patricia got off the couch to give him a hug.

"Honey, you stink like a skunk," she said.

"I haven't been able to take a shower for two days," Patrick said.

Patrick was a soldier. Since the United States was not at war, the government

used them to go to farms and seize the food. They put all the food that was left in the US at a military base to control how people ate.

Patrick has been doing that for two days, without sleep or shower.

Patrick listened to the news coming from the TV.

"The amount of food left in the country cannot feed the number of babies being born every day," said the newscaster....

GREEN SLIME

BY AMAL IBRAHIM // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"Candy!" the owner of the house yelled angrily. Candy rushed out of the kitchen with a tomato and knife in her hand.

"What's wrong?" Candy asked.

"How many times do I have to tell you that I need my money? I have been waiting for two whole years. Look at this farm you've got. Don't you make money from the crops? I need my money. I don't care how you get it."

"I will get it no matter what, but you know that nowadays no one wants to lend you money. Everyone is just greedy and they don't want you to get higher than them."

"I don't care," the owner said. "If I don't get my money, then say goodbye to these healthy looking crops and this house of yours."

Candy was all worried.

The next morning, she went to meet her friend, a crop-nutrition scientist.

"I really don't know what to do," Candy said. "Everyone is rich and I'm the odd one out. Please help me."

"I'll help you but you have to follow the instructions that I give you. Just a week ago, I made a new solution that will double the nutrition that the plants get from the sunlight. I didn't feed it to any plant yet so just try it only on one plant and only once per day, OK?"

"Thank you so much. I'll feed it to only one plant."

The following morning, Candy woke up all excited. She had an idea.

"If I spray the chemical on all the plants," she thought, "they will grow faster and that will help me pay off all of my debts. I'll get rich just like everyone else."

Weeks went by. When Candy checked the farm one day, what she saw was unbelievable. The apple, mango, banana and other trees were huge, like the Eiffel Tower, with green fluid coming out of the leaves and the branches moving like hands.

"Oh my God!" Candy screamed as the tomato tree began to rise and swallow her up....

TOY SOCIETY

BY JING CHEN // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In New York City, in the year 2400, the human population was just like that of ants.

The government didn't take care of people, so everyone was fighting for resources, like food and spaces to live.

In control was a Toy General named Alexander, a 41-year-old man with a large mustache and a voice like a noisy radio.

Toy General Alexander had thousands of soldiers that worked for him.

Toy General Alexander created a machine called "Be a Toy," which could turn people into play things. Another device, called "M-OUT," would cancel part of people's memory. These two machines were meant to cut the number of people in New York.

One day, Toy General Alexander announced a further idea to the people.

"Hey guys! Today we are going to reduce one third of the population of people in New York."

"Yes Sir!" the soldiers of Toy General Alexander replied loudly.

Then they all grabbed their energy weapons and....

ONE FACE

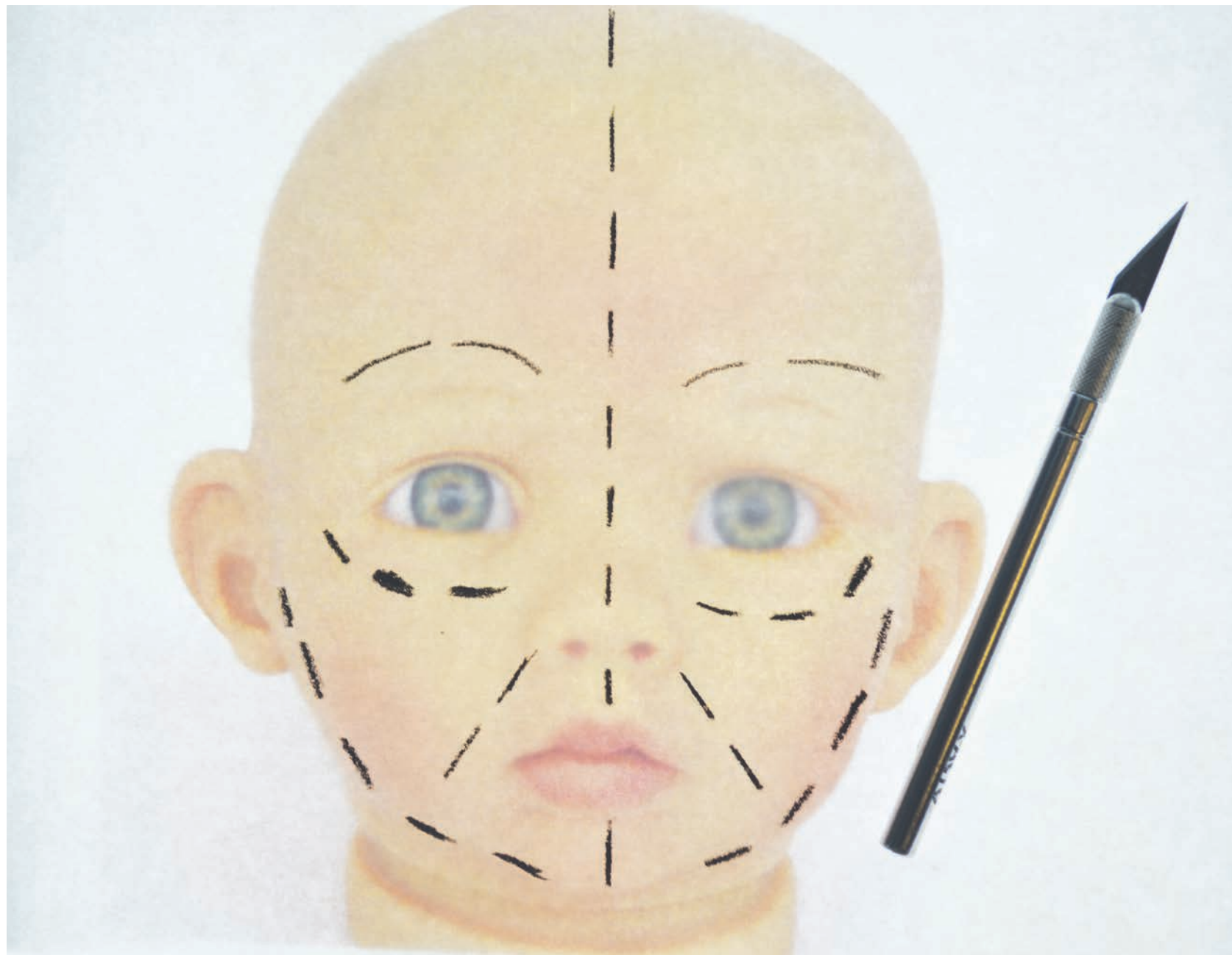
BY FELIZMINA CARDOSO

Finally, everyone was equal. The year was 2040. Everybody was white, with the same face. Easier for the government to control people.

At age 5, parents brought their children to get the plastic surgery. Taking the bus home from the hospital that day, Mike held the hand of a little girl he thought was his daughter, Miley.

"Daddy?" the other girl asked her father. "Why is this guy holding my hand?"

The girl was scared....



AFH ARTWORK // CUONG HUYNH

THE LIFEKEEPER

BY CLAUDIO RIBEIRO // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A robotic hand flipped through the huge cabinets and opened a file titled, "Newborn Name: C791197444."

Anna saw another robot hold a syringe and drop some DNA onto the Lifekeeper.

Anna then watched as a new baby was created.

Within five minutes, the baby was formed inside the Lifekeeper and it was already five years old.

The Lifekeeper was mother, father, as well as teacher, and it sped up the life process of an infant by transferring data into the baby.

It gave the baby a childhood it never actually lived: It taught about pain and suffering. It showed the dark times.

And it related the idea that interactions or attachments or love of any kind could lead to one's downfall, a command that some found hard to obey....

This section on "Technology gone mad" contained excerpts from the original teen stories, edited for the newspaper.

THROWING DARTS AT THE DONALD:

STUDENTS FROM THE JOHN D. O'BRYANT
SCHOOL OF MATH & SCIENCE TAKE AIM AT THE
REPUBLICAN FRONTRUNNER

BY ELEBETEL ASSEFA // STAFF WRITER

"I don't want Donald Trump to become president because he is a racist and his ideas on immigration are irrational."

-- Christopher Holloway

"Donald Trump is an ignorant bigot who does not have even the most basic grasp of economics or politics."

-- McCain Boonma

"He has absolutely no political experience. How can America's first African-American president be succeeded by a racist, sexist ignoramus?"

-- Agnes Ugoji

"Donald Trump is a racist bigot who should be banned from politics."

-- Omarlyn Martinez

"I don't believe that his views to make America great again are beneficial to everyone, especially minority groups. Only certain groups will benefit from his presidency."

-- Mageney Omar

"Donald Trump is a joke. The more time you put in to acknowledge him, the more important you make him, so it's better not to waste your time."

-- Joshua Curtis



AFH PHOTO //
KIARA MAHER

*This article was prepared in
collaboration with 826 Boston.*

TUSK, TUSK: HANDS OFF MY ELEPHANTS!

BY SARSKIYYA WALLACE // STAFF WRITER

I adore elephants. They are just big (around 13,000 pounds), beautiful animals -- harmless and chill.

They've been around for millions of years.

And yet heartless hunters want to do them in -- 35,000 are killed every year, according to an August 2014 article on nationalgeographic.com.

"Entire families of elephants are being slaughtered for their ivory," says the piece. "The global appetite to own trinkets carved from elephant tusks has dealt a crushing blow to these plant-eating pachyderms that roam the forests and savannahs of

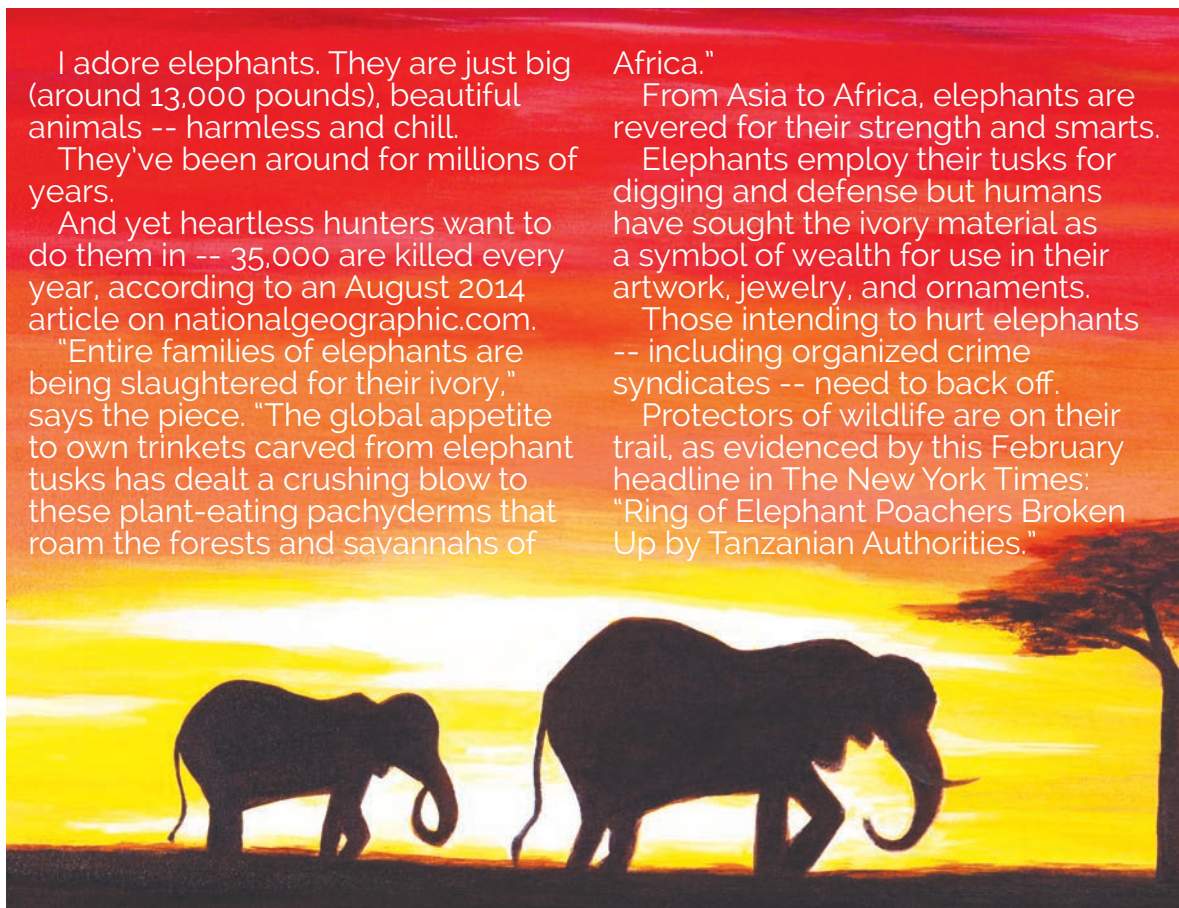
Africa."

From Asia to Africa, elephants are revered for their strength and smarts.

Elephants employ their tusks for digging and defense but humans have sought the ivory material as a symbol of wealth for use in their artwork, jewelry, and ornaments.

Those intending to hurt elephants -- including organized crime syndicates -- need to back off.

Protectors of wildlife are on their trail, as evidenced by this February headline in The New York Times: "Ring of Elephant Poachers Broken Up by Tanzanian Authorities."



AFH ARTWORK // MAI RU SHU AND HAIYAN WANG

ANTI-MUSLIM BACKLASH: NOTHING NEW

BY MOHAMMAD UMAIR //
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I remember when I had to deal with racism. I think I was in the 7th grade and I barely talked to people. Whenever people heard my name they thought of negative things, like I was someone bad. I usually ignored it but one time it just got to me.

When someone got into an argument with me, he said stuff because I was Muslim. My friends stood up for me and that made me feel better. Now I am more accepted as just a human being.

But not so for everyone. Many Muslims are getting made fun of. There are a lot of stereotypes, such as all of us being terrorists and stuff. I don't get offended as much now because I know it's not true.

I also remember when I was watching a video on Facebook when Donald Trump had a rally. There was a Muslim woman wearing a Holocaust symbol. She had that on because she was comparing him to Hitler.

She was escorted out of the place and then Trump's supporters started hooting and hollering at her.



AFH ARTWORK // DAJA TAYLOR

CHILDREN: THE SILENT SUFFERERS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

BY MELANIE MORA // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Domestic violence not only affects men and women but children, too.

"More than 3 million children witness domestic violence in their homes every year," according to safehorizon.org.

This can impact children physically and emotionally, health experts say.

"Children are more likely to intervene when they witness severe violence against a parent – which can place a child at great risk for injury or even death," says safehorizon.org.

Children can get depressed and blame themselves for the abuse. They might get into trouble at school. They even may become abusers themselves when they grow up.

Domestic violence is an important issue that needs to be addressed for adults. But let's not overlook the children -- the forgotten victims and silent sufferers.

FOR TEENS, THE WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

BY ESTEFANY RAMOS // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Mental health issues continue to hit teenagers every year.

"Rates of depression and anxiety among young people in America have been increasing steadily for the past 50 to 70 years," according to psychologytoday.com.

Today, one in five teens and young adults live with a mental health condition, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

"Teenage depression isn't just bad moods and the occasional melancholy," says helpguide.org. "It's a serious problem... that can lead to drug and alcohol abuse, self-loathing and self-mutilation, pregnancy, violence..."

Mental health experts say parents should supportively talk to their children, and seek professional help if these warning signs do occur: feelings of hopelessness and hostility; frequent crying; withdrawal from friends and family; and lack of motivation.

Another factor to deal with is social media. While many teens view social media as a creative and fun outlet, others find that it only adds pressure to an already-stressful period in adolescence of having to always measure up.

FOOD FICTION

BY JOSEPH PIARD // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Access to healthy food is a global issue. That means both overseas and here in America.

According to feedingamerica.org, 48.1 million Americans – including 15.3 million children – live in households that lack access to sufficient amounts of nutritious food.

This food insecurity can be especially damaging to the physical and psychological development of young students and can stunt their academic performance.

And while the junk food outlet down the street may be affordable and accessible, it is surely not the answer.

According to health experts, those calorie-dense edibles can lead to a number of teen health issues, including obesity, diabetes, and even depression.



AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH



AFH PHOTO // SEIJAH DRAKE

ROOTS RUN DEEP IN TEEN VIOLENCE

BY ROOBY DENAUD // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Not so long ago, a teen got shot in front of my house because of some gang issue. In fact, according to state data collected in 2013, 20 percent of students said they'd been in a physical beef in the past year and 7 percent reported gang involvement. The roots of teen violence extend deeply. As I see it, people can commit violence because they are angry or lonely or desperate or feel inferior. Their family upbringing and neighborhood environment also play a part. In addition, some teens can't distinguish between harsh scenarios portrayed in movies or video games and what goes down in real life.

THE LINK BETWEEN LOW INCOME AND LOW ACHIEVEMENT

BY RONALD FRANCOIS // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The issue of how being poor can affect your education is a serious one because these kids often receive a less than stellar early education, can have trouble in high school, and may never make it out of college if they even go -- and thus are at risk for getting stuck in the cycle of poverty.

In 2013, for example, 77 percent of adults from very wealthy families had earned at least bachelor's degrees by the time they turned 24 compared to only 9 percent of people from the lowest income backgrounds, according to a Wall Street Journal report on a study released last year.

In obvious ways, experts say, richer kids have the advantages of access to better technology and afterschool programs and influential connections. Yet, they say, there are also a host of hidden obstacles that can lead to school-based problems, from higher absenteeism often having to do with watching after younger siblings so both parents can work, to concentration on schoolwork being clouded by relentless stress.

And yet, many teens have overcome these difficulties by learning to be resilient while fighting to achieve what they are passionate about.

EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE CAN LINGER INTO ADULTHOOD

BY OLECIA REIS // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If victims of child abuse are not healed, they can be scarred for life.

"Nationally," according to a January article in the Boston Globe, "702,208 children were reported to have been abused and neglected during fiscal 2014."

Kids who are abused can face many issues going forward, experts say. They may experience trauma because of bad memories and from being afraid that it will happen again. They can behave aggressively, not only with family members but also within their communities. They might be fearful of physical touch and be unable to form normal relationships.

Children are our future. Aren't we supposed to love and protect them? Why are they being mistreated?



AFH PHOTO // KIARA MAHER



AFH ARTWORK // CASSANDRA LATTIMORE

BABY TALK: EDUCATION STARTS AT HOME

BY CRISMEIRY MEJIA // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Different cultures have different beliefs about when, why, and how to communicate with children. Some, for example, will wait until they feel a child will fully understand before opening a book and reading to them.

I know a woman who never talks to or reads to her son. He is now three years old and already in therapy -- because he cannot speak.

This story from kidshealth.org tells a different tale:

"Jacob loves books. His mom knows this because when she sits down to read to him every night, he waves his arms excitedly.

"His favorite page of 'Goodnight Moon' shows a cow jumping over the moon. He squeals and reaches for the book every time he sees it. When she is done reading, his mom usually lets him hold the sturdy board book, which he promptly sticks into his mouth.

"Jacob is only six months old, but he is already well on his way to becoming a reader."

According to kidshealth.org, reading aloud to young ones is a critical form of stimulation that:

"Teaches a baby about communication; introduces concepts such as numbers, letters, colors, and shapes in a fun way; builds listening, memory, and vocabulary skills; and gives babies information about the world around them."

Many parents believe that school is the place for learning when, in reality, education starts at home.

GOOD PARENTING IS HARD WORK

BY KATHERINE URBAEZ // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Good parents are ones who provide children with love and strong principles and morals. They set limits and raise their kids in ways that will make them be successful.

It's hard, but crucial, work.

"To parents, we can't tell our kids to do well in school and then fail to support them when they get home," President Barack Obama said in 2009 remarks. "You can't just contract out parenting. For our kids to excel, we have to accept our responsibility to help them learn. That means putting away the Xbox and putting our kids to bed at a reasonable hour. It means attending those parent-teacher conferences and reading to our children and helping them with their homework."

A parent's economic status, culture, traditions, neighborhood, and how long they've lived in this country are all factors that can affect the bringing-up of a child and, ultimately, the child's future.

LONG DIVISION

BY DAINA SMITH // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

"When we identify one thing as unlike the others, we are dividing the world; we use our language to exclude, to distinguish -- to discriminate."

-- Legal scholar Martha Minow

Indeed, we use what society and the media put out to determine who we like and don't like. We put people in boxes. We get so carried away with what is dividing us that we create conflict and jealousy and hate.

Many still believe, for example, that there are certain things only boys can do and certain things only girls can do. If one gender does something not considered "normal," then they are despised.

People in the LGBTQ community struggle with this despite gaining the freedom to marry one another.

No one is born hating each other. From birth, we are brainwashed by all these rules we are expected to follow, racial and sexual stereotypes we must conform to, class divisions we must uphold -- generation after generation.

I think that accepting someone's differences is great. After all, that's how we learn, grow, and better ourselves.

But it'll take a long time for things to change.



AFH ARTWORK



AFH PHOTO // AIJANAH SANFORD

OUT OF BOUNDS:

WHEN TRASH-TALKING TURNS INTO TAUNTING

BY SOFIA MEADOWS-MURIEL // STAFF WRITER

A competitive drive can blind people to logical reasoning.

Growing up playing soccer, comments to opposing players criticizing their play were as normal to me as tying up the laces of my cleats.

They were meant to get into an opponent's head. As a varsity athlete now, teasing a rival has become part of the high school experience.

But when individual trash-talking becomes group taunting, things have gone too far.

As they did during a March basketball face-off between Newton North High School -- home to many Jewish students -- and Catholic Memorial School, which is all boys.

That's when fans on each side sent anti-gay and anti-Semitic slurs back and forth -- for

everyone in the stands to hear.

Apologies were later offered, teaching moments discussed, and disciplinary action taken.

Players and supporters alike need to know that, even in the heat of the moment, sportsmanship is a big part of the game.

CHANGE IS GOOD

BY YVONNE A. DUNKLEY // STAFF WRITER

If you could change one thing in your life....?

Sixteen-year-old Kimberlyn Jones, who attends the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, says that she would like to modify her friends.

Jones says that she wants them to be setting the same goals for themselves as she does.

"I need more friends in my life that say 'You can do it,'" she says.

For Sharon Nguyen, 16, from Boston Latin Academy, it would be an end to discrimination.

Nguyen says she's faced it for being Asian.

Nguyen says that if people would stop judging each other, then everyone would have more pride.

"When someone talks bad about someone," Nguyen says, "it makes them not want to share who they are. Too many people are hiding their true identity and potential."

Fourteen-year-old Robert Isles, from New Mission High School, says he wants to alter his height.

He is five-feet-and-two-inches, he says, and is treated differently than taller teens.

"Being short," he says, "you have to work harder to show people that you can do it."

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.



AFH ARTWORK // ANTHONY GARCIA

MOVING ON UP?

BY ANILDA RODRIGUES // STAFF WRITER

Michael Harkess, 16, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, considers himself to be part of the proletariat.

"Although it is extremely difficult in today's society," he says, "social mobility is achievable for the lower class."

He believes that as long as he works hard in school and graduates from college, he might be in a better position in the future. However, there is a huge obstacle facing him. That is, the exorbitant cost of college.

The solution: Government has to tax wealthier people more, he says, so that young people like him have a better chance to leap the social ladder.

Moving up from a socioeconomic class is a lofty goal but a harsh reality can be found on the ground.

Jonathan Duque, 16, from the O'Bryant, believes that many jobs don't pay well enough for the working class to have a significant financial improvement.

The challenge to maintain a family, a job, and a good education at the same time, he says, may deprive him of accessing a higher social rank.

McCain Boonma, a sophomore from the O'Bryant, says that institutional racism and its effect on one's environment can still be a barrier to social mobility, even for the middle class.

"Some people grow up with certain values," says Boonma, "that hinder or boost their chances."

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.

THE VOICE

PUBLIC SPEAKING CAN HELP CREATE CHANGE

BY KELLY THAI // STAFF WRITER

Mageney Omar, a sophomore at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, thinks that public speaking is important because it's something that everyone needs to master at one time or another.

"No matter what profession you want to pursue, there is going to be some form of talking," she says.

Whether it's to inform students during class presentations, or create buzz at political gatherings, or spur-on teammates at sporting events, public speaking is an important asset for teens because it can help rally support and create change. People's voices are very powerful.

Still, standing in front of others can be nerve-wracking.

"One way is to practice public speaking with one person as an audience member, and continue adding people so that you'll become more confident when it's time for you to actually present," says Legacy Thornton, a sophomore at the O'Bryant.

Once you become comfortable, says Thornton, the activity can feel riveting.

"I like public speaking because I'm in the spotlight, and my voice is being heard," she says. "What I have to say actually matters."

Nardos Gosaye, a sophomore at the O'Bryant, says there's no good reason to



AFH ARTWORK // DWAYNE COREY ROSS

feel shy about it.

"Once I realize that I'm human and that everyone makes mistakes," she says, "I forget my fear and go with the flow."

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD

THE VIRTUE OF ROUTINES

BY ROSA SANCHEZ // STAFF WRITER

How many of you have considered making a change in your life? Well, some changes may be impossible. You might not think about them or even wish to continue doing them but they just seem to happen naturally.

These are part of your routines.

Megan Mclean, 17, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, says that these things we do again and again help us manage our time.

They can increase proficiency and decrease procrastination.

"You can only get better if you repeat it until it's efficient," she says.

Amanda Haynes, 16, from the O'Bryant, is a stylish girl who thinks that choosing your clothes is an important part of the day. Therefore, she wakes up early -- sometimes at 4 am or 5 am -- with an image in her mind of what she wants to wear.

She may have to try on several things before she finds the perfect outfit, but in the end she feels she'll look great.

Darlene Franco, 16, from the O'Bryant, says that it is instinctive to replay tasks -- they assist us in reaching our goals.

"Go with your routines," she says. "Never change them because they are meant to help you with your life."

WHEN THE SUPERNATURAL FEELS NATURAL

BY CLINTON NGUYEN // STAFF WRITER

Karen Situ says she used to believe in mystical things due to all the movies that depicted them

"But as I grow up," says Situ, a sophomore at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, "I don't."

Children will believe in practically anything, from ghosts and spirits to demons and bogeymen. These paranormal characters have haunted teens' pasts in forms of nightmares that left them waking up in cold sweats.

Going along with the supernatural seems to lessen as kids get older.

But some still hold onto faith in unearthly beings.

"I'm not too much of a religious person," says Natalie Nguyen, a sophomore at the O'Bryant, "but I have a belief in God and spirits."

Imani Clarke, a sophomore at the O'Bryant, says that as a Christian she, too, does not discount the existence of spirits, although she allows: "I have never had experience with them."

Even teens who are skeptical of the unknown can still feel a little fright under the right circumstances.

"Though I no longer believe in it," says Situ, "if you tell me scary ghost stories at night, then I would still get spooked."

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.



AFH PHOTO // AIJANAH SANFORD



A GIRL'S LIFE

BY PRINCELL FELIZ FRANCO // STAFF WRITER

Mascara and menstrual cycles. Being objectified and harassed. "I get catcalled and...grabbed," says Irlene Perrin, 17, from the John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science.

Being a female teen presents stressful challenges every day. Since the beginning of time, a woman's role has been differentiated from that of a man.

Today, they are the ones who are expected to look good all the time while balanced on heels, pursue athletics only at their own peril, work hard in school but not expect the same future wages as a man.

"People think that girls are weak, they are not strong, they can't enjoy certain sports because they are only for men," says Ruth Rincon, 17, from the O'Bryant.

Sheldia Papa, 17, from the O'Bryant, says she constantly feels that it's a man's world in which women are held to a higher standard.

"The daily sense of the day," she says, "is that girls have to be nicer and happier and quieter, not make too many jokes, stand up straight."

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.

GROWING UP TOO FAST -- OR NOT AT ALL?

BY XAVIA SIMPSON // STAFF WRITER

Eighteen-year-old Celenia Emanuel Soler, from Margarita Muñiz Academy, feels that kids should enjoy their childhood and not be forced to grow up so quickly.

"Children are exposed to the ways of society," she says.

Toddlers with tablets, 10-year-old boys with iPhones, 11-year-old girls wearing makeup -- all this can result in a loss of innocence, teens say.

Manuel Santana, 16, from Muñiz Academy, thinks that adults are at fault for feeding their kids these electronics at such an early age.

"Kids nowadays," Santana says, "they don't know any better than to follow what they see people do."

Cynthia Rodriguez, 17, from Muñiz Academy, says that some kids might believe they are not good enough for their parents so they will try to act more mature and mimic older people.

"I think that kids should take their time and enjoy the good things in life and not think that growing up is everything," she says, "because it's not."

THE HOVERBOARD: A BUMPY RIDE

BY KATHERINE BERNARDEZ // STAFF WRITER

Joab Ramirez, 15, who lives in Dorchester, believes that the controversial hoverboard should be available for sale.

"It is cool for teenagers," he says "and they are actually safe, in my opinion."

These battery-powered, sideways skateboards have been trending topics since 2015 and range in price from hundreds of dollars to more than \$1,000.

But just as quickly as they appeared, many entities have moved to ban them, from cities like New York to schools like Boston College, citing dangers including hard falls, sidewalk collisions, and batteries that can burst into flames.

In fact, Boston officials say they have targeted a hoverboard as the source of a fire that damaged an apartment house in the North End earlier this month.

Phillip Wilkerson, 15, from Dorchester, thinks that hoverboards are, indeed, potentially perilous.

"You are risking life when they blow up in flames," says Wilkerson, adding: "They're too fast, and sometimes too fast for individuals, who end up falling and getting really hurt."

But 15-year-old Amarii Steward, from Dorchester, feels that a teen has the right to purchase a hoverboard.

"If you paid for it, then there should not be a problem," Steward says. "You know what you are doing, so if you want to buy one, then it should not be taken away."

AFH PHOTO // JANNA MACH

CATHARTIC ART

BY ISABELLA CISNEROS // STAFF WRITER

When I was nine, I moved away from my mom in New Mexico to live with my aunt in New York City.

At the time, I was dealing with the changes and fears that a young girl going through puberty 1,971 miles away from her mom can undergo: I began developing breasts, I got my first period, I had night terrors during which I relived a traumatic episode I'd experienced as a child.

I was vehemently grinding my teeth at night, much to the chagrin of my dentist. That's when it became evident that I needed guidance. But I was utterly lost as to where to find it.

Coming from a family of artists, I was brought to museums from the moment I could walk. Yet despite art being a constant through my life, I had never truly understood it.

Regarding Warhol, for example, what was all the commotion over a Campbell's Soup can?

Then, during the year that followed the move to New York, I spent a week-long trip with my mom visiting Florida. While there, she felt it was important to take me to the Dali Museum.

I approached the museum no differently than any other I had encountered before. Yet what I gained that day left me with much more.

Salvador Dali's intricate paintings were strange, whimsical, and slightly off-kilter, and I was able to find myself in all of it.

Surrealism, Dali's style, was an avant-garde movement that was influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud, whose writings on the importance of dreams and imagination, for example, persuaded the art world to pursue the subliminal pieces of us -- fear and other emotions -- that society had cast away.

Looking at the works of art, I felt my burdens slowly being lifted. The desires I was taught to regard as shameful were replicated on canvas and being praised from people everywhere.

The parts of me that I had suppressed were now understood. The anger I felt no longer isolated me.

For many, the power of art is constrained by the notion that it is no more than an aesthetic pleasure.

It's not that art gives us a set of instructions to behave by. Instead, it can slow us down, allowing a space for reflection and for confronting our thoughts head-on.

Now, whenever I feel conflicted and in need of resolution, I can find what I need within that precious place.

This article was prepared in collaboration with 826 Boston.

MY (FORMER) NEED FOR WEED

BY ANONYMOUS // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

My redemption from weed is something deep for me to share. I used to smoke it but I stopped not long ago.

Although it was hard to quit, I had help from someone special: my girlfriend. She was there every time I wanted to start smoking again to tell me that my life would be better if I didn't do weed.

I was 14 when I first experienced smoking marijuana. I felt like I was on the moon and that I could just stop time and forget about everything.

The first week I spent without smoking was a struggle not to go back. I got headaches and felt like I was going to faint in the middle of my classes or on the street. I was most of the time in a bad mood and just wanted to be left alone.

But my girlfriend put up with all the attitude and told me that she only wanted the best for me.

The reason I stopped smoking weed was because I realized that I wasn't doing any good to the people around me -- especially to my girlfriend. I never paid attention to her because I needed to be high most of the time. That wasn't what I really wanted; I just wanted to be a good person. Marijuana wasn't letting me do that and I felt like I had to change.

My biggest regret in smoking weed was the time I lost while I was high because I was always sleeping and eating. People used to tell me I looked so happy because I was always laughing and smiling. But I was actually not because I used to smoke just to escape my feelings, including wanting a father figure -- someone to call dad -- and knowing that the only person who could've made that happen was never there.

But now that I've stopped, I'm better than before because at least I can manage to spend time on things that are beneficial to me. I want teens to know that weed may not seem bad at the beginning but it can really mess up your life.

The author's name is being withheld for privacy reasons.

THE DOUBLE LIVES OF TWINS

BY DALIYAH MIDDLETON // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Growing up, my mother dressed my fraternal twin and me in similar attire to emphasize that we were twins.

But I've come to realize that we don't have to wear the same clothes to be labeled as twins. Society already perceives us as one person.

Twins have to encounter constant misconceptions about our lives.

People still refer to my brother and me as "the twins," as if we are one entity.

An algebra teacher once asked how my brother and I had received such different grades on an exam.

After I signed up for volleyball, people wondered what my brother was doing for sports.

Although twins share a strong bond, the questions never stop: "Are you going to get sick because he's sick?" and "Do you feel what he feels?"

Not everyone realizes the absurd stereotypes placed on twins, but I hope they come to see us as separate rather than one.

HEY, BUDDY.... (IN OTHER WORDS, I'VE FORGOTTEN YOUR NAME)

BY ROSA SANCHEZ // STAFF WRITER

As someone who can't remember names all that well, my life has been pretty nice.

I can't, however, say the same for my friends.

It must have been hard having a friend like me who couldn't recall your name throughout three years of middle school -- only to finally summon it in the second year of high school.

I guess I just don't like to characterize people by their names. I tend to remember them by small details, such as their faces and how they dress.

However, many aren't that lucky.

Since these people call out to me saying, "Hello, Rosa," they must know me.

But how do I respond?

Often, I just invoke substitutes, such as "Hey, girl," or "Hey, homie," or "Hey, cutie," or "Hey, sunshine."

Alternatively, I might go with simple greetings, like "Buenas," or "Long time no see," or even, "How's life treating you?"

Finally, there's the tried and true catch-all "Helloooooo," stretched out forever so it sounds familiar but also distracts friends from noticing that I can't for the life of me extract their names from my brain.

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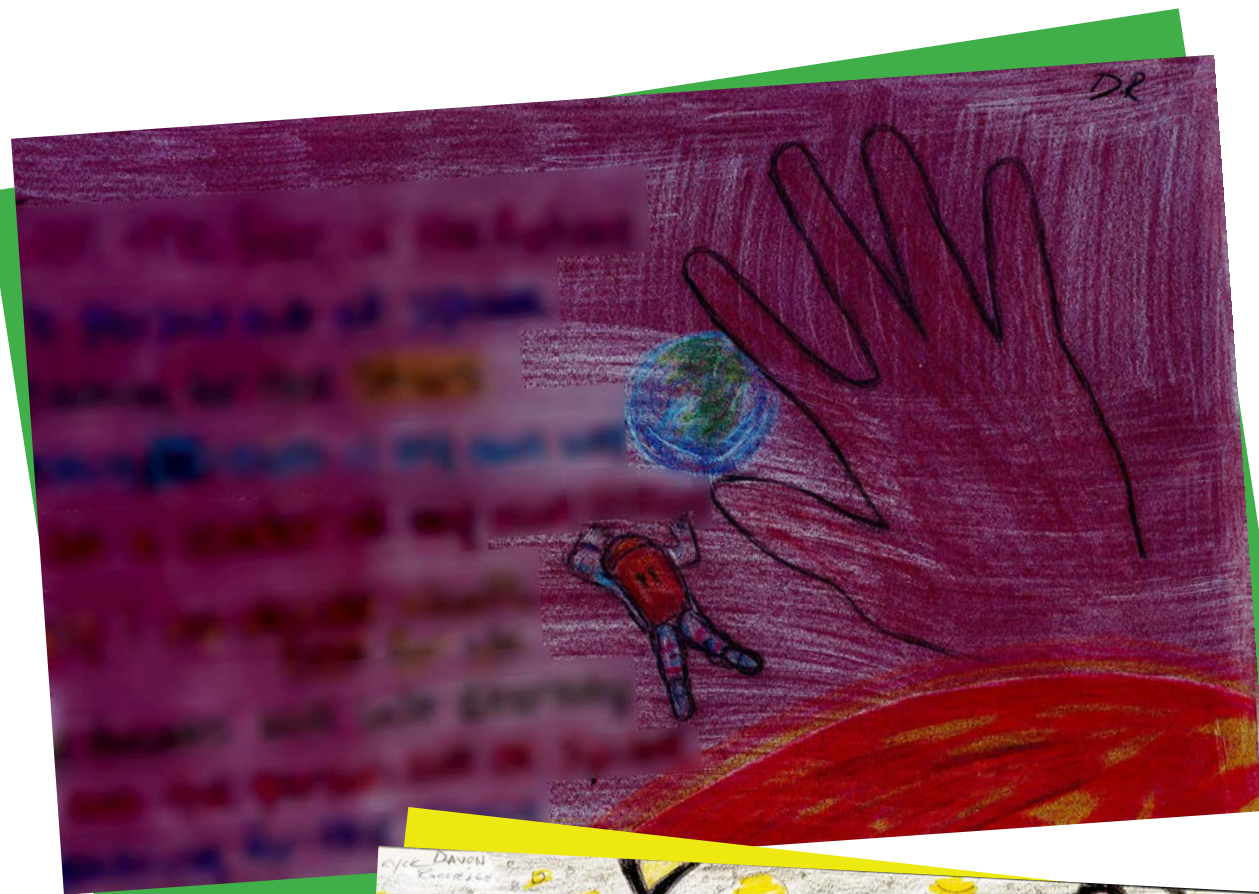
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"ME, MYSELF & I"

POEMS AND ARTWORK BY DERRYCK ROCHELLE // CONTRIBUTING WRITER

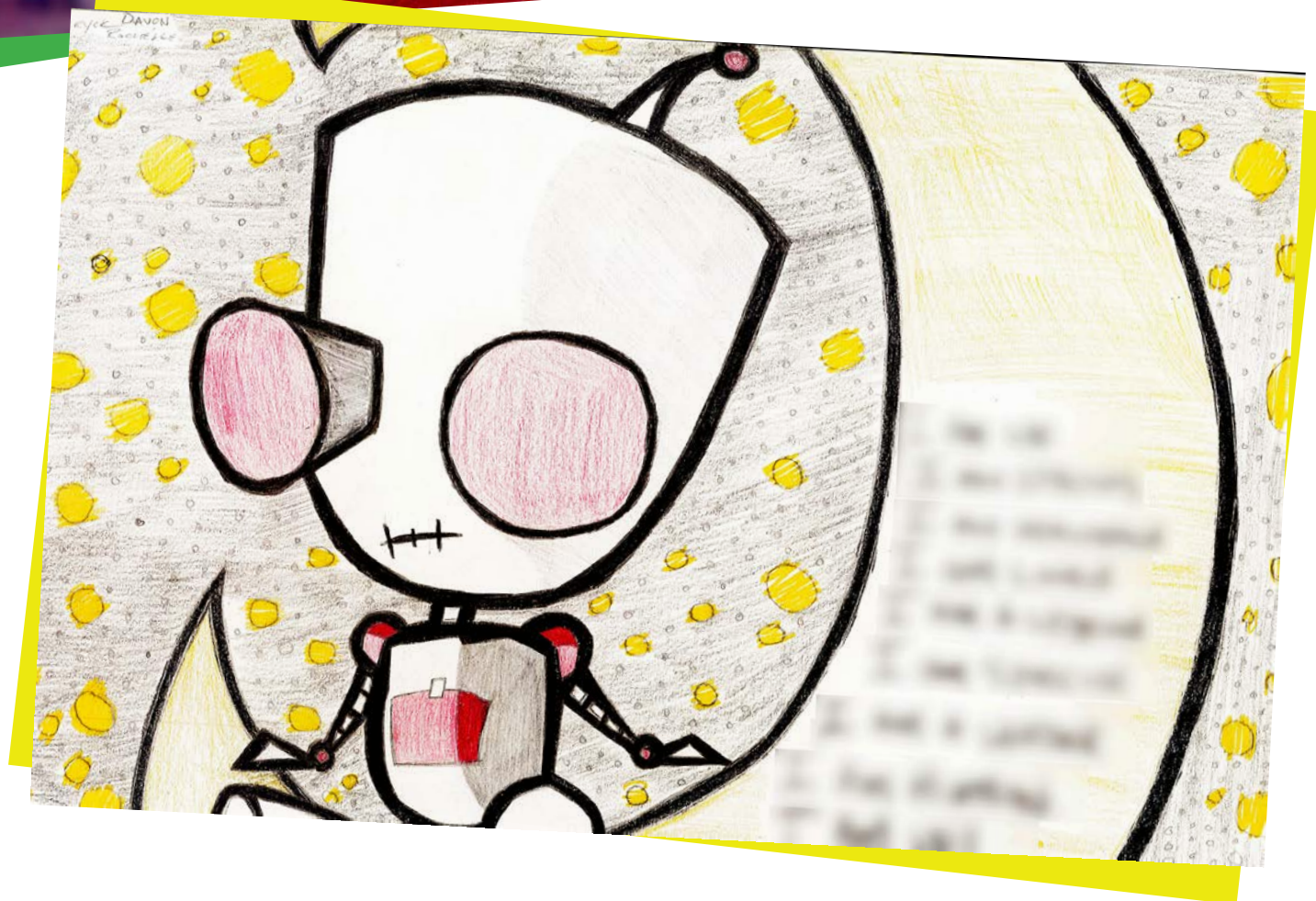


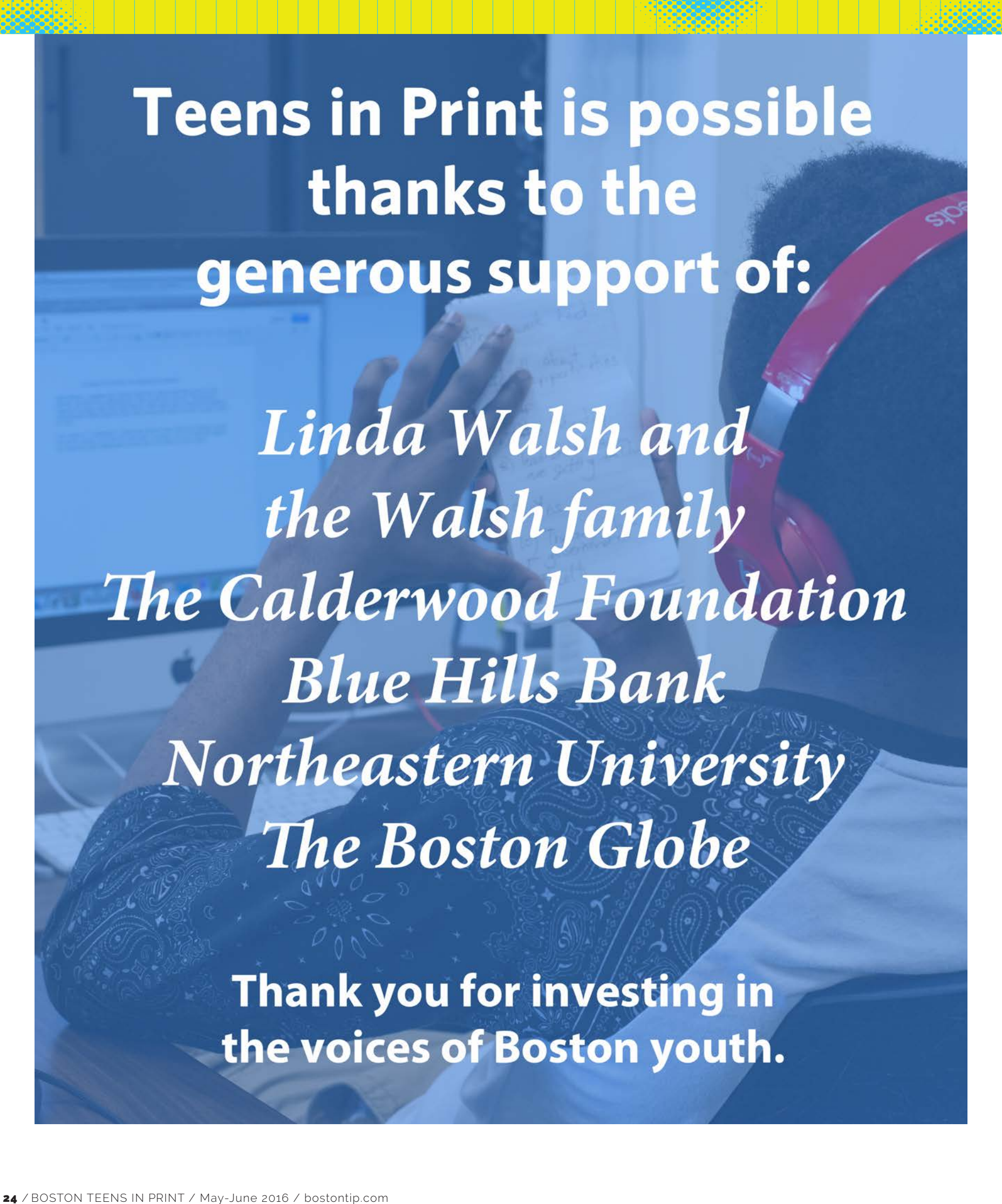
"MY DREAMS"

I am the face of the future
The person out of space
Reaching for the stars
Creating dreams in my own way
I am a leader of my own destiny
Only I can decide what's best for me
My dreams will last for eternity
I am the person out of space
Reaching for the stars
Creating dreams in my own way

"I AM"

I am me
I am strong
I am motivated
I am loved
I am a legend
I am special
I am a leader
I am human
I am me!





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