

TEENS in PRINT BOSTON

TEENS IN PRINT JANUARY 2017™

TEENS TALK TRUMP



AFH PHOTO // CLINTON NGUYEN

By: Djibril Conte // Staff Writer

Donald Trump is now the official president of the United States. Now, some of you may be thinking, "This can't be true. No, I'm moving out of the country." Others are probably saying, "Awesome! Now we can win at global affairs."

At this point, we all need to relax and accept the good and the bad Trump might bring to the country. Some positive developments may be a stronger military and better relationships with foreign countries. After all, he is a businessman and most likely a great negotiator considering his title of billionaire and owner of Trump Hotels.

Then, there is his bad side. He caused a lot of controversy during the presidential campaign by making racist remarks and anti-LGBTQ

statements. All of his distasteful claims have been heavily documented all over social media.

Despite his controversial campaign, Trump still won the presidency. Here is what several teens at Cristo Rey Boston High School have to say about the future with President Trump.

Chidinma Uchendu, 15, says she hopes to see an increase in minimum wage. She explains, "Not everybody has the same level of education and the jobs that some people can get don't allow them to support their families. So, the minimum wage should be raised enough so that someone can have a stable family."

Who could've said it better than that?

Brooklyn Crowe, 16, says Trump has no chance at success in the office. She says, "I think Donald Trump is going to destroy our

world. He will destroy the foundation of what America stands for and what we're founded on. There are some aspects of what he stands for that are good and that I do support, but there is a lot that is against what I believe in and is not good for society."

She is skeptical, but still allows for a small amount of hope.

Donnell Keyes, 15, says he expects more security measures against immigrants and terrorists. He says he expects "less illegal immigrants and less terrorists because the more immigrants, the less money for us."

At least one person seems happy about our new president!

All in all, we'll just have to wait and hope these next four years won't be as bad as we think they will be.

TEENS in PRINT

Volume XIII, No. 58

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**LETTER TO MY
YOUNGER SELF // 17-19**

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March/April 2017**

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Teens in Print reserves the right to edit for length and
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MEET THE STAFF



AL FOX

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Quebec or Tokyo
What's the last book or author you fell in love with?

Richard Dawkins
What is your hidden talent?
I play the guitar and piano



AISHA MOHAMED

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
South Korea
What's the last book or author you fell in love with? **Fangirl** by **Rainbow Rowell**



ANILDA RODRIGUES

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere? **Los Angeles**
What are you passionate about?
Helping others



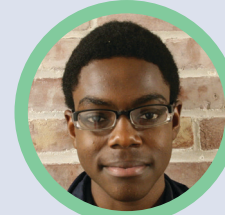
ASHLEY NGUYEN

What's the last book or author you fell in love with? **The Bell Jar** by **Sylvia Plath**
What's your hidden talent? **The ability to tell corny jokes**



CLINTON NGUYEN

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Japan
What are you passionate about?
Fighting against social issues



DJIBRIL CONTE

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Rome
What are you passionate about? **The benjamins**



ELEBETEL ASSEFA

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Moscow
What are you passionate about?
Everything debatable



IMANI CLARKE

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Dubai
What are you passionate about?
Writing



KELLY THAI

What's the last book or author you fell in love with? **Legend** by **Marie Lu**
What is your hidden talent? **I can play three instruments**



KIANA MCLEAN

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Tokyo
What's the last book or author you fell in love with? **Carry On** by **Rainbow Rowell**
What are you passionate about?
Writing



LYNN NGUYEN

What's the last book or author you fell in love with? **Milk and Honey** by **Rupi Kaur**
What are you passionate about?
Women's rights in third world countries



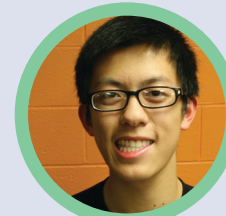
MASHA LEYFER

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere?
Atlanta
What are you passionate about? **Sex worker rights**



ROSE KOUMBASSA

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere? **Paris**
What's the last book or author you fell in love with? **The Giver** by **Lois Lowry**
What are you passionate about? **My Future**



SONNY MEI

What city would you go to if you could travel anywhere? **Paris**
What is your hidden talent? **I can breathe?**
What are you passionate about? **My first year with Teens in Print**

STUDENTS PROBLEM SOLVE HATE CRIMES IN POST-ELECTION AMERICA

By: A collection of BINcA students // Contributing Writers

Boston International Newcomers Academy (BINcA) serves the learning needs of Boston's growing immigrant and newcomer population. The following quotes are student suggestions on how schools can address and prevent the uprise of hate crimes in schools post-election.

KATHERINE GONZALEZ:

"ONE STRATEGY IS TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT HATE CRIMES AND SCHOOL RULES BY HAVING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND WHOLE SCHOOL MEETINGS."

CATIA MARQUES:

"IF WE WANT TO MAKE AMERICA BETTER AGAIN, WE NEED TO SPEAK UP FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IS RIGHT. WE NEED TO STOP HATE CRIMES AND WORK TOGETHER. TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE AMERICA MULTI-CULTURAL AGAIN. SCHOOLS NEED TO PROTECT IMMIGRANTS AND KEEP THEM SAFE, NO MATTER WHAT."

MARIDILSON DO SOUTO:

"Schools should have clear ways students can report a hate crime that they see in school. This will work because it can keep students safe, and when students are safe they don't have anything to worry about."

DANIELA OLIVEIRA:

"These hate crimes are affecting BPS students because some people are feeling afraid of them."

DANA FELIXON:

"THE BEST THREE WAYS TO PREVENT HATE CRIMES AT SCHOOL AFTER THE ELECTION ARE TO TRAIN ALL TEACHERS AND STAFF ON HOW TO REPORT HATE CRIMES, TEACH STUDENTS WHAT WORDS SHOULD NOT BE USED AT SCHOOL, AND EXPLAIN TO STUDENTS THE SCHOOL AND POLICE CONSEQUENCES FOR COMMITTING HATE CRIMES."

OLIVER AMPARO:

"SOME STUDENTS MAY BELIEVE THAT IMMIGRANTS ARE BAD PEOPLE, OR ANNOYING FOR COMING TO THIS COUNTRY, BUT THIS OVERLOOKS THE FACT THAT IMMIGRANTS HELP THE U.S. ECONOMY. SOME OF THEM ARE LOOKING FOR A DREAM THAT THEY COULDN'T GET IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY, LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES THAT HELP ALL OF US -- EVEN WHITE AMERICANS WHO COMPLAIN ABOUT THEM. A LOT OF IMMIGRANTS HAVE CAREERS AND HAVE OVERCOME CHALLENGES."

RADELQUIS BENOIT NUNEZ:

"YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED BECAUSE AT ANY MOMENT, ANYWHERE, YOU CAN BE A TARGET OF A HATE CRIME."

WHEN SCHOOL NURSES ARE UNDER RESOURCED, STUDENTS SUFFER

By: Lynn Nguyen // Staff Writer

Winter. Flu season. It's the time of year when everyone is getting sick. We are confined to this cage-like school building, packed like cows on an assembly line, waiting to be milked. This environment makes students so prone to sickness that sitting next to someone with the sniffles is an everyday event.

When students find themselves with a runny nose and a cough, we drag our lifeless bodies to the school nurse, but often find out she's going to send us back to class with a cup of water. Some students don't even go to the nurse to be treated. They would rather stay sick in class and deal with it, leading to the further incubation and spread of illnesses that plague the school.

Maureen Starck, Senior Director of School Health Services in Boston Public Schools, said, "Nurses need to foster relationships with their students so they are comfortable coming to the nurse with questions." According to several students at the John D. O'Bryant, this is not their current experience.

Reylina Pimentel, a junior, said she doesn't like going to the nurse because she feels "intimidated and scared that every time I ask a question they always give me an attitude." Pimentel recalls an incident from her middle school when she had a fever and the nurse sent her back to class without treating her.

Sasha Lugos, also a junior, found herself vomiting in the school bathroom one day. When she approached the nurse, the nurse told her it was too early to be sick and sent her back to class.

School nurses are intended to "reduce the health barriers to learning," said Starck. Yet, the students interviewed felt that nurses are not providing sufficient care.

Ya Juan Chen, also a junior at O'Bryant, believes interactions between the nurse and student should be similar to that of a doctor and patient. "It shouldn't feel like an interrogation room," she said.

Although a portion of the student population feel that they cannot rely on the school nurse, there are many factors that must also be considered. Starck said that the number of school nurses assigned to each high school depends on a formula based on numbers and needs of the students. "Most high schools have one nurse," she said. At O'Bryant, there are two nurses on staff for the more than 1,400 students. Nurses also have to ensure that students are truly sick, not just making up an excuse to skip class or catch up on extra sleep. Yet, these facts do not justify denying a student the medical attention they may in fact need.

According to Starck, while nurses need to balance competing interests in a challenging job, a school nurse can never deny a student medical attention. If you, or any student from your school, find yourself in this situation, Starck suggested contacting school health services immediately.

Both school nurses from the O'Bryant declined to be interviewed.

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THE UNTOLD HARM OF SNOW DAYS

AN AP STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

By: Kiana Mclean // Staff Writer

Watch out Boston Public School AP students, your academic future may be in danger! It is no secret that being a high school student is stressful, but this seems to intensify if you take advanced placement (AP) classes.

AP is a voluntary school program that allows students to take college-level courses while in high school. Not only do AP courses improve a student's chances of getting into college, but they also help students to be better prepared once they enter college. So why are BPS students in danger because of them?? Surprisingly, the answer lies with the weather and not the actual classes themselves.

Massachusetts has seen harsh winters with record snowfall. Because of this extreme weather, schools often close if the road conditions are too dangerous. Snow days put AP students behind schedule and takes away time for them to prepare for their AP test at the end of the year. Despite the weather, the school system should put more thought into the academic well being of the students before canceling classes.

"Studies have shown that students who take AP courses and exams are much more likely than their peers to complete a bachelor's degree in four years," said Marsha Inniss-Mitchell, the Postsecondary Readiness Director of Boston Public Schools (BPS).

After taking an AP course, students must take the corresponding AP exam which, depending on their score and the college they attend, could earn them college credit and save them (and their parents) time and money. "AP students also tend to have an edge earning scholarships," said Inniss-Mitchell.

The AP exam is given on the exact same day nationwide at the end of the year for all AP students. This means that, even though

the BPS school year starts later than other districts and we miss a lot of days due to snow, students do not get to push off the exam to a later date to have equal class time to prepare.

Elebetel Assefa is a junior at John D. O'Bryant High School currently taking three AP classes. When asked if she feels she is at a disadvantage because of numerous snow days, she replied, "We are definitely put at a disadvantage when compared to other states because we start later and miss a lot of snow days. Even our AP teachers made it clear to us in the beginning of the year that time is of the essence, and that it's against us."

Clinton Nguyen, also a junior at O'Bryant who takes multiple AP classes, feels he is at a disadvantage compared to students in other states as well. "Compared to classmates in my school, no, I do not feel at a disadvantage, but yes when it comes to students in other states where they have the benefit of not having their classes canceled, which means more time to study for them."

Even though AP students feel they might be academically put at risk because of snow days, Inniss-Mitchell said that snow days are called primarily with the safety of students in mind. However, this does not stop students from worrying about their academics.

When asked if he had any ideas for rules that could be put in place to benefit AP students in his area, Nguyen proposed that BPS "offer an option for students to go to school if they want" on snow days.

Assefa also agrees. "Even though most teachers nowadays can just email us assignments, it never seems as good or informative as learning face to face," she said.

AFH PHOTO // KIM HAN

SCANDAL OR SEXISM?

THE HIGH SCHOOL DRESS CODE

By: Imani Clarke // Staff Writer

Throughout many of America's schools, students are burdened by a harsh and strictly enforced school rule: the infamous dress code. Whether you attend private school that requires a uniform, or a public school in which you have options for your clothing within certain limits, the dress code still exists. Many of the rules highly affect one gender over the other, and that gender happens to be (drum roll please)...girls. Young women have always borne the brunt of the school's dress code due to it being largely based upon policing female clothing. You name it and the dress code has a problem with it.

The dress code at the John D. O'Bryant High School states: Skirts and shorts must not be more than 3 inches above the knee. Tights/leggings must be covered by a skirt, shorts, or some other top falling no more than 3 inches above the knee. Cutoff shirts (shirts that bare midriffs, back, or excessive cleavage) spaghetti strap (less than 1 inch) tank tops, bustiers, and halter tops are not allowed.

The biggest debate around the dress code seems to be this: is the amount of skin girls show distracting the male population? Supposedly, showing a certain amount of skin is too distracting. If that is true, then why isn't there stricter

opposition to boys sagging their pants? Surely, that is just as distracting as a female wearing a shirt showing her shoulders. Imagine walking down the hallway and seeing a boy, but instead of looking at his face, you are blinded by his bright yellow Spongebob boxers! Although the O'Bryant dress code says "exposed undergarments/shorts are not permitted," the dress code is rarely enforced among males. This is clearly a double standard.

Briana Moody, the Girl's Health Coordinator at the YWCA, had insightful comments on the psychological impact of the unequal dress code. "Girls are being publically humiliated. They feel shame, anxiety, and self hate. Those emotions tie to depression, eating disorders, and vicious cycles." This suggests that dress codes are often implemented in such a way that girls begin to develop self esteem issues where they do not feel comfortable in their own bodies. Moody also says, "girls are not and should not be responsible for boys' behavior."

When asked if he finds what females wear to school distracting, Ibrahim Dahir, a junior at the O'Bryant said, "No, I don't. If you come to school for the right purposes, such as to learn and educate yourself, I don't think that what the

people around you are wearing or doing should affect you."

Madolia Domendos, also a junior at O'Bryant, finds that curvier girls are often the ones who students and staff scrutinize most. "It makes me feel uncomfortable because if I wear leggings to school, I receive negative attention. People will come up to me and ask, 'where are your clothes?'"

The fact that the school dress code is so frequently biased is very hard to comprehend. Yes, there are certain things that are and are not appropriate to wear to school. But, if it is ninety degrees outside you cannot expect someone to come to school in a turtleneck and sweatpants. All it comes down to is an appropriate level of comfort. If the people around you are not comfortable with what YOU are wearing, on YOUR BODY, then that is THEIR problem.

Although there have been major steps taken towards gender equality and women's rights, there is still a lot of work to be done. It is sad that girls cannot come to school without being scrutinized for their clothing. At the end of the day, we should all learn to treat each other with more respect and especially to treat females as human beings -- not objects.



AFH PHOTO // MARIANA MELARA



AN ADVOCATE FOR LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

By: Aisha Mohamed // Staff Writer

Myles McNamara teaches advanced placement literature at New Mission High School in Hyde Park. After eight years of teaching transformative wilderness education with Outward Bound, he began working in the classroom for the Boston Public School system. McNamara likes to surf in his free time, but when he is not hitting the waves, he likes to read and write.

McNamara is passionate about the value of literature. His reflections on literature, career-paths, and education are below. Content has been edited for length.

Q. WHAT MADE YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH LITERATURE?

A. What made me fall in love with literature is that I could explore something in an entirely personal way. I discovered books when I was really young. The reason why books were so powerful to me was because when I came into a book, it was entirely on my terms, and it was an unspoken kind of relationship between me and ghosts - and by ghosts I mean - the author was not present, other than what they left behind. When I picked up a book, it felt like I was being visited by ghosts and it was not a dialogue. I was exploring something that had been invented for me to discover. The visualization has not been done for you, all the clues are laid out, but unlike television and film, we have to create a picture in our minds. One of the great things about literature and books is that the reader has to add what's not there to complete it, so the reader becomes an active participant. I bring some of my world to the world of the book. I go on a personal journey that begins anytime I open that book and closes anytime I choose to close the book, until I'm ready again. To me, there is something intensely personal about that and very beautiful.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE BOOK?

A. There was a series as a kid called Dragonlance and it was developed for Dungeons and Dragons. It was a fantasy trilogy. Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman were a strong team of authors and I don't think I could ever write something with other people. I always do it alone. There was something about the characters and their plausibility that was really powerful. It was like 1987-88 when these books were being written. I fell in love with those books. At that time I was ready to be swept up by characters like those, so that was my first huge love for books.

Q. WHO WAS AN AUTHOR THAT DEEPLY INFLUENCED WHO ARE YOU NOW?

A. The author that influenced me most when I was younger was Ernest Hemingway. I loved him and his writing when I was young. The more I learned about him, the more I learned that there were things I liked about his writing and things I profoundly disliked about his character. I think he was a broken man. Toni Morrison is someone whose books I've read multiple times. I've read everything she has written in terms of nonfiction and expository writing. She is incredibly powerful, incredibly passionate, incredibly humble. Not only worthy as a writer, but as a person.

Q. HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BECOME A TEACHER?

A. When I was 17 or 18, I took the SAT exam. There was a form handed out before the exam and you had to bubble in what you wanted to do as your career and I had no idea what I wanted to do. The only thing that made sense to me was a business person because that's what my dad did. I was not satisfied with that response. I think - with respect and love for teachers - I only had a couple of teachers who were profound in being a mentor and a great teacher to me. I didn't have in mind to be a teacher until I began working with Outward Bound. I loved being out in the wilderness and never thought of the possibility of becoming a teacher. I spent eight years working with Outward Bound; working with young people, going crazy places, doing crazy team challenges and working together. I fell in love with what happens in groups with the fierce optimism of young people that fades as we age and I'd rather be around young people than old, and that was what drew me into teaching.

Q. WHY DO YOU THINK BPS STUDENTS SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO LITERATURE?

A. I think embodied with the word 'fiction' is the bias that fiction means false, fake, or made up. We think of fairytales and folktales as being unnecessary and unessential. I think we're a profit driven society and we're pressured to pursue profit in the interest of taking care of ourselves and our families. Nevertheless, we all love stories. We love them because they tease us and make us question the power of debate. We talk about these characters and we almost live through their mistakes, their tragedies and their victories, so we test life through them. To me, being able to test life's possibilities at no risk to self through imagination is so powerful.

Q. WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF LITERATURE?

A. Literature is underestimated because I don't think there is a consensus to its value and its impact. Literature's benefits are not quantifiable at all. What it does for us is entirely qualitative not quantitative. There's a highly individual experience, you can have entirely different experiences at different age spans. If you want to be a big money maker, you go for something that's guaranteed or a sure

bet. And there's nothing guaranteed or a sure bet about literature. There's a risk involved in asking people to consider a piece of literature at any given time in their experience and it can be a hit or a miss. Part of the reason why it's underestimated is because there's no guarantee that there will be a wanted result. What comes is invited, not guaranteed.

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME THE ADVANTAGES OF LITERATURE?

A. The greatest advantage of literature that I've thought about lately is the ability of a reader to consider possibilities on a rich level and consider characters and see things that he or she did not see before, without risk to self. I can put myself in situations and places where

I can indulge and not get burned or hurt. Most of us have dealt with pain and suffering, it's an inevitable part of our life. The more guarded we become, the more we close ourselves off. There's no such thing as a book that can take advantage of us unless we let it, so there is an incredible opportunity for us to learn in a beautiful and profound, sometimes chaotic - but ultimately safe - life affirming way through literature. The steps you take into literature are so individual and a book never asks something of you, all it does is offer. There's no provisional trade off or sacrifice. Life is all about sacrifice, but it allows us this extraordinary luxury and is generally so cheap and available and if we want to find our way to it we will.

Q. WHAT IS THE ONE THING ABOUT LITERATURE THAT STANDS OUT TO YOU

A. The aspect of time in literature becomes very strange and elastic. What happens with time, is that I could be reading a book and I wouldn't know how long I've been reading. I go somewhere else. I somehow step out of the constraint of time. It makes me feel very appreciative as we consider our short lives.

Q. IF THERE IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE ON LITERATURE YOU WOULD GIVE STUDENTS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

A. Find your passion. Find the books that call you. There are books we may study at school, there are books that we may have to read. Continue to test, audit, try and look around, until you find stories. You want to go out and open yourself to stories that almost magnetically want to attract to you.

'FIND YOUR
PASSION.
FIND THE
BOOKS
THAT
CALL YOU.'

THE EXPERIENCE OF DIVERSITY AT THE JOHN D. O'BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL

By: Ashley Nguyen // Staff Writer

I consider myself fortunate to attend a school where diversity exists among the students, staff and teachers. From an exterior view, the John D. O'Bryant High School looks like a school that accepts all individuals no matter their race. If you look around, most students are friends with a wide variety of people, rather than just maintaining relationships within their own race or ethnicity.

However, other schools are not as diverse as the O'Bryant. In these schools, students who are not part of the majority often feel left out both socially and academically, and are not treated as equals by their peers and teachers. This was a major issue at Boston Latin School where headmaster Lynne Mooney Teta eventually resigned following allegations that student complaints of racism were not taken seriously enough.

Do teachers hold bias and preconceived ideas about a student because of their race? How does this affect the way students learn? These are questions that unfortunately are relevant to today's educational society. Below are the opinions of Sara Valencia, Maria Nova and Love Victor, three juniors at the O'Bryant on their experiences:

Q: FROM THE STUDENTS TO THE STAFF, OUR SCHOOL IS VERY DIVERSE. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SUCH DIVERSITY?

SV: Over the course of three years at this school, I've met many different and new people from different cultural backgrounds. I think it's good to be able to expose yourself to new things.

MN: I like the fact that there is diversity among teachers and students. I feel like that gives students a feeling of comfort and a chance to connect with their teachers.

LV: I do not think there are not enough white students at our school. However, we are diverse and have a great community.

Q: DO YOU ENJOY LEARNING IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SO MUCH CULTURE EXISTS? HOW HAVE YOU LEARNED TO ADAPT TO THAT, OR WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR PEERS?

SV: I personally enjoy surrounding myself with different cultural backgrounds because I get a sense of how their culture influences them. Students also learn a lot from one another and that sometimes contributes to the vibes in the classroom. I have always respected cultural differences, and at the OB, I have associated myself and made friends with different people. I think it's a good and important skill to have, to be able to accept, respect and make friends with all people, without race or culture being a barrier.

MN: I enjoy learning in an environment with such diversity because I learn more and more from my peers around me. They have different experiences and backgrounds, and that enriches the learning that occurs in school. In my opinion, it's easy to adapt to diversity because it's so interesting to learn and form relationships with students different in cultures.

LV: I enjoy it because I am able to learn new things. I have been able to understand different cultures and how they shaped that person.

Q: DO YOU BELIEVE TEACHERS HOLD ANY PREJUDICED IDEAS? DO YOU THINK THEY TREAT STUDENTS DIFFERENTLY BASED ON THEIR RACE BECAUSE IT MAY BE DIFFERENT THAN THEIR OWN? HAVE YOU PERSONALLY ENCOUNTERED THIS FROM YOUR TEACHERS?

SV: I feel as though some teachers may hold these thoughts because of racial backgrounds. I've noticed how some students are treated differently by both their teachers and their peers because of their accent. In all the schools that I have attended, including this one, I have not personally encountered this because the teachers that I've had focus more on the student's behavior than their race.

MN: Honestly, I do think that some teachers treat students differently based on their race or ethnicity. Some teachers prefer students of their race and treat students that aren't [their race] negatively. From personal experience, I haven't been treated differently by teachers. However, I have heard of instances where students experience different behaviors from teachers, such as one student being favored and being expected to do more than the other students.

LV: Teachers do not hold any prejudice thoughts. Maybe sometimes, when it comes to gender. Some teachers tend to be nicer to girls than boys.

Q: WHAT CHANGES DO YOU THINK THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO MAKE TO CREATE A MORE TOLERANT ENVIRONMENT BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS?

SV: Students and teachers need to always maintain an open mind. This sounds simple, but this is sometimes forgotten. This would ensure that students receive the same education.

MN: I don't think there is much that schools could do to create a more tolerant environment between students and teachers. It is very difficult to try to improve the problem because we can't take actions that may lead back to segregated schools. And even if rules are placed on schools, they may not always be enforced; teachers and students may not always follow through with rules.

LV: To create a more tolerant environment between teachers and the students, schools must ensure that everyone has a fair say.

One thing is clear from these conversations: schools should encourage environments where students and teachers are tolerant of one another. The value of diversity in schools is extremely important because it introduces students to other cultures that are not their own and helps them understand their surroundings. School is the beginning of a student's career and if students feel excluded because of their race and culture, imagine how this would affect them in the long term once they enter the real world.

THE COST OF SOCIETY'S CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

By: Sonny Mei // Staff Writer

As a member of the Engaging Men Committee, I teach youth how masculinity plays out in our society and why masculinity is important to understand if we want to change ourselves and the social rules. As it is, many of the youth I teach too often ask, "Why can't we just let everyone be who they want to be?"

It's more complicated than that. Society can seek to destroy you if you do not follow the rules of your gender. Being different can cause people to belittle your existence, wanting to change you as if something is naturally wrong with you.

First of all, let's talk about masculinity. According to Ayana Murakami-Freeberg, a gender, sexuality and women's studies major at University of California, Davis, masculinity is a societal understanding of characteristics that are usually associated to men. It is socially constructed and portrays what traits every male should have.

Let's take the saying "to be a man," as an example. Society says you have to act tough, strong, and emotionless in order to be considered a man. Boston Latin Academy junior, Tyler Vantha, notes that men are generally characterized as "Strong, large, and violent. They usually take action [rather than] speak words and are biologically stronger."

But, not all of us can act "like a man." Not everyone who identifies as a man has these traits or characteristics. On the other hand, others take this idea of masculinity to a toxic level.

What is toxic masculinity? Murakami-Freeberg describes toxic masculinity as when "masculine traits are used to control and gain power over others." Women can be mistreated due to toxic masculinity. Often, the media portrays women as "sex objects," lesser, or even submissive, while men are portrayed as superior and dominant. Both women and men are affected by toxic masculinity, as men are taught to stick with society's rules of what it means "to be a man." Men have to show no emotion whatsoever, wearing a form of "mask." As a result, men are less able to seek and receive emotional support.

While gender in general is a very complicated idea, we should not let society control us. Decide what you want to be, rather than be shaped by what others think. Jonathan Duque, a junior at the John D. O'Bryant said, "We should treat everyone the same and incorporate everyone by who they are, instead of their gender roles."

It is okay to follow the path of masculinity, but not to take on traits that are toxic and oppressive to others. If males do not act as they are expected, we should accept them for who they choose to be - not make assumptions based on the way they act. This is a new generation and we need to change the way that society views gender roles. We can make the change if we are willing and educated.

IN PURSUIT OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL PAY

By: Kelly Thai // Staff Writer



AFH PHOTO // MARIANA MELARA

Today, women all around the world are fighting for equal pay, promotion, and professional opportunities. The problem stems from a long history of women being perceived as being inferior to men. In the past, women were not allowed to vote, go to school in some areas, and their roles in society were limited.

In 2015, women in the United States were earning 80 cents for every dollar a man earned. Many acts and amendments have been proposed to ensure that men and women get equal pay for equal work. Due to limited enforcements and opposition to the idea, the acts and amendments were either never enforced or never passed.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963, which stated that it would be "illegal to pay women and men working in the same place different salaries for similar work," didn't achieve its goal due to limitations on enforcement.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), passed by Congress in 1972, was never ratified by enough states to become part of the Constitution. The amendment would have given women the right to equal pay for doing the same amount of work as men.

The pay gap among women and men is due to many different reasons. In the Atlantic article "Why Are Women Paid Less?" Jordan Weissman cites a Cornell economist who argues that "Discrimination, the careers women choose, and the burdens of motherhood could all play a role [in creating the pay gap]." Historically, and even today, women often have to leave their jobs to take care of their children. This affects women when they return to work because they may get fewer work hours or even face demotion.

BOSTON VOICES AND EXPERIENCES ON PAY INEQUALITY

Many people have distinct opinions on pay inequality. Jessie Gerson, Deputy Director of

WriteBoston, says, "Our executive director takes feminism and gender equality seriously. But I know that is not always the case. I have friends who work in situations where their race, sexuality, or gender impacts the treatment they receive professionally."

Gerson reflected that discrimination can come in many different forms. "I have a dear friend who is an African-American woman," Gerson says. "She received a work evaluation stating that she was too 'aggressive' in the workplace and it made people uncomfortable. I firmly believe that had she been a white man she would not have received this feedback. Instead, she would have been perceived as a 'go-getter.' This kind of thing keeps minorities and women from rising to positions of power professionally and so the discrimination becomes self-perpetuating."

Gerson gives her opinion on why females get paid unequally and says, "I find it extremely distressing that in 2016 we still need to fight for equal pay for equal work. I also believe that we need to stop undervaluing traditionally female-dominated fields like nursing and education. Basically, I think that sexism and lack of respect for emotional labor create and perpetuate pay inequities."

Motherhood can also be more burdensome on the female than the male. Gerson says from experience, "I have a two-year old daughter. When she was born, I was working for the Boston Public Schools. I only got 3 months, unpaid maternity leave. That's not acceptable."

Her solution to the problem would be to "organize society so that everyone, men and women, the affluent and the non-affluent, all have the ability to make choices around their family life that work for them."

Mageney Omar, a junior from the John D.

O'Bryant, says that she started working at the age of 15 and now works at "Turn It Around." She comments, "My boss treats me equally like everyone else that I work with." Omar believes "it's unfair that women get paid less and unequally compared to men." She thinks the reason for the problem is that "bosses and employers feel that men perform better in certain professions than women."

Rayven Frierson, also a junior at the O'Bryant, says that she started working at 14 and is currently working at Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Pathology department. Of her workplace, she says, "My boss does treat everyone equally. Everyone is considered a person in the workplace. We are not looked at based on our ethnicity or gender since my department is pretty diverse."

Frierson states that she has no idea why women get paid less than men. "I was raised in a female dominant environment," she said. "My mother raised me on her own without my father. The world has

changed from women being inferior to men, to women standing on their own two feet."

Disclosure: WriteBoston is the parent organization of Teens in Print

'I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT HAD SHE BEEN A WHITE MAN SHE WOULD NOT HAVE RECEIVED THIS FEEDBACK. INSTEAD, SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN PERCEIVED AS A 'GO-GETTER.'

"WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL..." SO WHY #BLACKLIVESMATTER?

By: Anilda Rodrigues // Staff Writer

It's easy for us to pick our favorite sports team, our favorite color, but when it comes to picking sides on the #BlackLivesMatter vs. #AllLivesMatter debate, things can get tricky.

The #BlackLivesMatter online social justice movement began due to the social injustices, specifically police brutality, endured by the Black community. This movement, intended to create peace among police officers and members of the Black community, has caused some controversy. As a counter argument, #AllLivesMatter emerged.

The BLM movement gained momentum after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot by George Zimmerman in the summer of 2013 and was later acquitted of second-degree murder. While the origin of BLM is somewhat debated, with many people claiming credit, the widely acknowledged three major initiators were community organizers Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. As people discussed the tension between police officers and the Black community on social media, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was born.

There has been much debate over the naming of the BLM movement. While some believe the name is too exclusive and offensive, others feel that the exclusivity of the name is important and focuses on their concerns.

"The name is as inclusive as it get. Those who intend to impede the organization are racist and intend to prevent the long-awaited ascendancy

THE REPORTER'S POINT OF VIEW

I believe everyone should support BLM. The movement is not dismissing other racial groups as unimportant; they are simply zooming in on the issues faced by Black people in this country for over 200 years. They've been living in a country that has enslaved their entire race, put them through segregation laws, and denied them basic human rights. The BLM movement is similar to the Civil Rights Movement, and highlights how much our society has yet to improve, especially after the election of Donald Trump.

of Black men and women alike," says Va'Shawn Hutcherson, 17, from Boston Community Leadership Academy.

Asi-Yahola Somburu, writer and member of the Student National Medical Association - a minority medical student organization

- describes BLM as "a battle for authentic representation. Perception will always be a part of the fight for justice and equality." Somburu also said, "BLM is simply asking for the same rights and equality afforded to everyone else."

16-year-old Sary Godinez, from the John D. O'Bryant High School, says that "Black Lives Matter is inclusive because [Black people] are already not included in many places in society and this recognizes that they are people too, they have feelings too, and they are just like you and me."

Quyen Nguyen, 16, also from the O'Bryant High School, is a supporter of BLM as a movement but also understands others when they say the name is too exclusive. He believes that people who say "All Lives Matter", are not disagreeing with the goals of BLM, rather the language they are using to get their point across.

"Not everyone's points of view are the same because no one is in the others' shoes," said Nguyen. He believes that most people who disagree with BLM do so because they feel that BLM is purposely excluding themselves in order to gain social justice. "All races should be mentioned, which I think makes the most sense," said Nguyen. He also believes that those who don't support the movement don't have to endure the struggles these people face routinely. "And thus, they don't understand the real struggles those people face," he commented.

AFH PHOTO // JOHN GLASCOCK



THE CHOICES WE MAKE PROVE WHO WE ARE

By: Sherlandy Pardieu // Contributing Writer

Since the 1700's, immigrants have been the heart of America. They have enhanced our society. Today, women and children refugee want to settle into a place where they can thrive and call home. But the United States isn't doing its part.

Some believe refugees to be unknown and that they should not be trusted. I believe this perspective is discriminatory. For example, Donald Trump argues, "We don't know who they are. They have no documentation and we don't know what they're planning."

Arguments like this from Trump use innocent families running away from war as a way to say they can't be trusted, just because they are from somewhere else. Trump uses the word "immigrant" in a way to make us think he cares about the citizens of America.

We know that a vast majority of refugees are women and children. President Obama stated, "Refugees, most of whom are women and children, are often fleeing war and terrorism. They are victims. They are families who want to be safe and work."

Obama's plan to bring 10,000 refugees to Massachusetts needs to be reformed and expanded. Only about 2,800 came in 2015. It is up to Governor Baker and Mayor Walsh to make sure that Massachusetts accepts the rest of the refugees. We need ensure that the U.S. gives them a healthy life.

The refugee crisis is a crucial issue that needs to be ironed out because the more time we waste, the harder it will be to curtail the problem. I believe Massachusetts should accept more refugees as a way to reduce the fear and pain in those families hearts and bring hope into their lives.

STUDENTS RESPOND TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Here, BINcA students reflect on how they believe Massachusetts and the United States should respond to Syrian refugee crisis.

THE URGENT PLIGHT OF REFUGEES

By: Carolyn de Jesus Martinez // Contributing Writer

The United States should accept 65,000 refugees from Syria to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis created by the war there. People in Syria have a high risk of dying. Unaccompanied children have nowhere to go and no one to protect them.

Some people maintain that the United States does not have any moral responsibility, thus Massachusetts should not accept more refugees.

For example, Donald Trump argues that "We don't know who they are, they have no documentation, and we don't know what they are planning." The Heritage Foundation, a

conservative research think tank based out of Washington, D.C., similarly argues that security is a major concern.

However, this perspective is simply discriminatory. They are not considering the lives of women and children that are dying and living on the streets. Additionally, in order for refugees to come to the United States, they have to fill out many applications and the U.S. investigates their background. In my opinion there is no risk of vulnerability or to security.

We know the value that refugees can add to American society. In a speech to the United Nations, President Barack Obama stated, "We've seen in America, hardworking, patriotic refugees serve in our military, and start new businesses, and help revitalize communities." Refugees help build America's infrastructure

and economy. They contribute to America with hard work and business innovations. America is a powerful country today because of refugees.

We know that millions of people are dying and need help. In the same speech to the U.N., President Obama claimed, "More than 65 million people have been driven from their homes... which is more than any time since World War II." It is clear that people in Syria

need our help.

They are dying because of the war. The conditions in refugee camps are abysmal. They face diseases, starvation, lack of protection and insufficient

housing. If no one steps in and tries to curtail the problem, people will keep dying. Boys and girls will die without knowing what it is to be in school, get a diploma or play sports. We cannot continue to watch this crisis unfold.

Even though some people don't want to accept more refugees in the U.S., I still believe that it would be both heartless and discriminatory if we do not accept them. We are talking about safety and basic human rights. There is nothing more important in this world than life.

The United States as a democratic and sovereign country should help ensure the lives of refugees and reform the discriminatory way in which we see immigrants. America was built by immigrants. Now is not the time to turn our back on the people who need us most.



THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

By: Mohammed al-Bidari // Contributing Writer

Imagine you are a 15-year-old Syrian boy. No parents. On your own. What do you do?

That is the life of an unaccompanied young refugee. There are millions of poor people who are abused, people who live in critical conditions and are trying to improve their lives.

Some maintain that refugees bring danger to America, but that's just discriminatory. Donald Trump claims, "We don't know who they are, they have no documentation, and we don't know what they're planning." This view is misconstrued because refugees are people who are looking for asylum. They left their homes and countries because of war. Why would they start a new war?

Also, how can kids be terrorists? Paperwork to become a U.S. citizen costs \$680. Do you think these displaced people have that amount of money?

President Obama stated, "More than 65 million people have been driven out from their homes." 65 MILLION people have left their homes because of a war in their country. This includes poor people and kids who don't even know how to read or write. It includes parents who are looking to help their families. Obama stated in a speech to the U.N., "There are fathers who simply want to build a new life and provide for their families." These are fathers who have lost everything, who are trying to start a new page in life and erase the harsh past so they can help their families.

This is about being a good, thoughtful human. For Massachusetts to not accept refugees who have suffered would be both heartless and discriminatory. We should accept them because these are people who migrate, who are poor, who have lost everything. Families, memories, homes, money -- EVERYTHING!

Don't we have to do something? Can't we do something? Let's be the state that respectfully accepts refugees and treats them like this is their second home. Let's not be the state that says NO to kids who are trying to have a brighter future."

AN EVENING OF LAUGHTER - BOSTON UNSCRIPTED MUSICAL PROJECT

By: Masha Leyfer // Staff Writer

The sound of the cast's final rehearsal before the show stops. It is replaced with laughter and then silence as Pablo Rojas, the founder and Executive Director of Boston Unscripted Musical Project, announces that the box office is open. Visitors either show their \$10 prepaid ticket or present \$15 at the door as they move from a small waiting room in Somerville's Rockwell Theater into a thrust stage surrounded on three sides by the audience. The space is dimly lit by purple light and filled with music playing from hidden speakers in the walls. The relaxed and playful ambience that viewers can expect from the show is clear even before the performance starts.

Audiences are searching for a place to unwind on a Friday night. They are brought to B.U.M.P. by its unconventionality and uniqueness in the theater world. Friends mutter among themselves as the rest of the audience files in.

Many people don't know what to expect. Some have never seen improv at all.

The cast runs onto the stage greeted by strobe lights. Their energy is immediately palpable as they jump right in, explaining briefly what improv is and what their project is. Improv is a type of theater where the entire show is unscripted and made up on the spot, and B.U.M.P. is an entire improvised musical. With the formalities out of the way, the cast asks

for suggestions for a title of their musical. Two suggestions are consolidated into "Pregnant Robot Invasion."

"Welcome to the opening—"

"—and closing—"

"—night of 'Pregnant Robot Invasion!'"

The theater goes dark. The show begins.

B.U.M.P. is one of the first groups of its kind in Boston. The musical improv scene in Boston has been shifting recently, driven both by the arrival of Mike Descoteaux, one of the most influential musical improvisers of modern day, and by the increasing success of B.U.M.P. and its members. Musical improv has become more competitive and, as a result, more sophisticated.

Cohesiveness is critical in improv. Misch Whitaker, the director and a founding member of B.U.M.P., says that for warmups, she'll have the cast sit around and talk. People need to connect in real life as well as on stage to be successful improvisers.

This cohesiveness comes through in the show. All B.U.M.P. shows begin with a large group number to establish the tone and to unite the audience and actors, but after that, the cast lets the show develop on its own.

Misch says, "Because we want to create

a narrative, I ask that the cast looks for a protagonist in the first few scenes. Then I ask that everyone figures out how to best push or pull the protagonist. And that's really the only structure we have...But the goal is for there to be

some sort of wish or want for the main character and for everyone else in the show to have some sort of part in either propelling the character towards their goal or keeping them from it."

More so than in other theatre, the audience is paramount in improv. As the cast members develop the primary story lines and combine the scenes into a cohesive narrative, they feed as

much off of the audience's energy as that of their fellow improvisers.

"There's always a different and fun energy," says cast member Ruth Green. "You have to stay open-minded and let the laughter be your barometer."

Misch, too, believes in the importance of laughter. "It opens your lungs. It has been shown to burn calories and boost your immune system. But, most importantly, psychologically and socially, laughter is where people connect."

"LAUGHTER
IS WHERE
PEOPLE
CONNECT"

HONOR ROLL STUDENTS REWARDED WITH EXCLUSIVE KICKS

By: Djibril Conte // Staff Writer

We all know Kanye West is a college dropout, but does he know that being an honor roll student can get you free Yeezys? Joamil Rodriguez, owner of Laced Quality Garment Co., runs a unique academic incentive program for Boston public high school students that rewards honor roll students with a free pair of any high-end sneaker in his store.

"We wanted to give back to the community, especially to those who needed it most, like Boston Public School students," Rodriguez says.

Each year, beginning in the summer, students can fill out an online application to join the program. From the many that apply, five students are randomly chosen from a lottery. Those who are chosen must pledge to earn the honor roll all four terms. At the end of the school year, each student can pick out their favorite kicks – for free. No matter the price tag.

Born and raised in Boston, Rodriguez has been the owner of Laced for the last five years. His store is filled with rare sneakers, from Jordan 5's to all black Yeezys. He began his business career as a snowboard store owner but quickly realized it is hard to sell winter gear in the summer.

"Actually, it wasn't my plan to open a sneaker



AFH PHOTO // TRISTIN HEAP

store at all. It all kind of just fell into my lap," said Rodriguez. "We had the opportunity to buy Laced because it was going to be for sale, and we kind of got the inside scoop." It was an opportunity he couldn't pass up, and one that has proven to be even more profitable than his former snowboard business.

Rodriguez, who attended English High School, felt it was important for him to give

back to BPS students. The five who are selected for his program also participate in different workshops such as resume writing and interview skills.

If you are a sneaker head motivated to get good grades and free kicks, visit www.lacedboston.com to learn more about the program and prepare to apply this summer.

BOSTON TEENS GET REAL WITH WRITING

By: Masha Leyfer // Staff Writer

Boston boasts a bustling cultural life. From the numerous museums to the multiple opportunities for developing artists, there is a part of the Boston cultural scene for everyone. At the center of the city is one of the primary drivers of the arts and culture scene — Emerson College. Some of the most creative thinkers in Massachusetts are based at Emerson and they are giving back to high school students through the program EmersonWRITES.

Every Saturday morning for 15 weeks, students from Greater Boston come to Emerson for three hours worth of writing, editing, college preparation and pizza — all at no cost.

EmersonWRITES is taught by Emerson graduate students with degrees in creative writing. "We're extending ourselves out to the community," says Christopher Grant, who founded the program seven years ago. "We're teaching something we do well. We offer what we have—a couple of teachers, a couple of boxes of pizza, and we see where we can take it from there."

The program offers four genres to choose from: fiction, nonfiction, poetry and mixed genre. In the classes, students discuss published works in their genre, explore different sub-genres and styles of writing, and write and workshop their own pieces. Some classes take a more abstract approach to writing. Students of the poetry class, for example, were given a piece of blue tissue paper and golden wire and challenged to create a visual representation of a word.

The teachers in the program want to challenge perceptions of their genre and its boundaries, help students improve their writing and learn from their students as much as they teach them.

"The whole idea of reading, writing, and stretching your creativity is what makes our curriculum... I like thinking about what fiction is and what it could be... and expanding all of our minds to the possibilities," says Cathryn Title, one of the fiction teachers this year.

Many previous students have returned to the program. "The community brought me back," says Karen Cheng, who is taking nonfiction this year.

"The great thing about writing," says Alena Ramos, also a nonfiction student, "is that nobody can tell you that your story is bad. Because it's your story."

EmersonWRITES culminates in an anthology, Spine, comprised of students' work. Students have the chance to work on the publishing process in a subdivision of EmersonWRITES called EmersonPUBLISHES. Grant emphasizes the need to leave something behind that you can be proud of. "We believe that your expression really has the power to change the world, to change society. That's why having the opportunity to practice expression is so important," he says.

Ultimately, the goal of the program is to teach students how to change the world through their writing. "Every sentence is a new opportunity," says Anthony Martinez, a fiction teacher.

EmersonWRITES is helping students change the world, one sentence at a time.



BCLA STUDENT // FLORKENTHIA JOLIBOIS

OUTWARD BOUND LEADS TO INNER GROWTH

By: Elebetel Assefa // Staff Writer

I learned how to swim in one of the oldest rivers in the world, the French Broad. I floated down it too, basking in the sweet sunshine. I saw the rock that Native Americans once attested to their coming of age by free-climbing it. I even crossed state lines via canoe from North Carolina into Tennessee. These are bits and pieces of three days out of my 22-day Outward Bound trip.

This adventure was made possible by Summer Search - a non-profit organization that helps students strengthen the skills needed to succeed in life and education. They provide weekly mentoring and support for the college application process, while also preparing students for summer trips.

Pedro Suncar, a Program Associate for Outward Bound explained that, "On trips, students learn new skills and gain confidence by living outside of their comfort zone and pushing their physical and emotional boundaries. These experiences mimic the challenge of navigating a college campus and/or other new environments."

Summer Search is a brilliant program that helps disadvantaged students gain perspective and gain personal growth. It was with this idea that I ventured out into the Blue Ridge Mountains with an incredible crew.

Last summer, I did things I never thought I was capable of. Most were a first, and a little scary, but incredibly fun. I was pushed physically and mentally by my Outward Bound instructors and crew. We backpacked for 12 out of the 22 days, hiking for hours and singing along to hit songs. Without our constant signing of "Just the Way You Are," "Stacy's Mom," "Fireworks," and "Big Green Tractor," the hikes would have been close to impossible.

We also made up fictional horror stories and gazed at marvelous creations of nature. No phones were allowed -- no Instagramming, Facebooking or Snapchatting -- but we did manage to snap some digital photos as evidence of our once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Without even noticing, our arduous hikes would end. Then, we would settle into beautifully constructed campsites to share and reflect on our day.

Emely Mateo, a Summer Search student also on my summer trip, reflected on her positive experience by saying, "I learned how to flinch forward." One of the biggest lessons students learn from the Outward Bound trip is the idea of "flinching forward." Our instructors challenged us to slowly move out of our comfort zones and into the horizons of panic zones. They encouraged us to do new things on our own and discover our capabilities in order to build our confidence, and help us discover ourselves. By facing physical and mental challenges, students become extensively prepared for life and the challenges they will face on their journeys.

My Outward Bound instructor, Kristen Kean, elaborated by saying, "I think the program can have different impacts on different students, but the hope is that they can go home with a better idea of their capabilities and be more prepared to take on challenges they may have shied away from before their course."

Outward Bound was a transformative experience for me and for many others. These trips are life changing. They help students hone the skills needed to propel them through life and school. I hope other students can have the same opportunity I did.

For more information, visit www.summersearch.org or www.outwardbound.org.

**'STUDENTS
LEARN NEW
SKILLS
AND GAIN
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BY LIVING
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OF THEIR
COMFORT
ZONE...'**

MAKING A HOUSE A HOME, FROM BANGLADESH TO BOSTON

By: Sabrina Kalam // Staff Writer

When I moved to the United States from Bangladesh, I was shocked to see how different the houses are here than in my country. Often times, the architecture of houses in Bangladesh represents the type of people that live in them. In Bangladesh, the houses are made of brick, rock, stone, and other similar materials.

Homes in Bangladesh have four or five floors in just one house. Houses have a lot of space in the front and back yard. Usually, we have a lot of furniture like couches, beds, and decorative mirrors throughout the house. The kitchens are built with tin roofs and the stoves are made of sand. The stoves are underground with holes in them. They are used by putting wood and oil in the hole and lighting it on fire. Also, there are many windows in every room so the sunlight comes directly into our houses. Temperatures get really hot because the brick walls never let air come in. Fans rarely work because most of the time electricity goes away.

Before I moved to America, I thought houses here would be made by rock and brick like the houses in my country. I also thought they would be big and strong because the United States is a rich country so I thought the houses would be nicer. But when I came here I was shocked seeing the houses. The architecture, the shape of the houses, the floors and the rooms are all the complete opposite of my country.

In the U.S. houses are mostly made of wood and are insulated. Even the stairs inside the house are made of wood. When I walk on the stairs, the wood creaks and makes so much noise. The weirdest thing to me is that most houses generally do not have more than three floors. Also, the kitchens are really modern with stoves. It is strange to me that most houses only have one kitchen. Sometimes I try to imagine what it would be like if more than 10 people lived in a house here, like in Bangladesh.

My house in Bangladesh had three floors, 13 bedrooms and four bathrooms. I loved it because in that house, wherever you go, there is a lot of light because of the many windows. Twenty-six people in my family -- aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents -- all lived together in my house. It was fun because it was always loud. Most of the time we all went outside and had fun playing in the rain.

So when I visited my aunt's house in the United States for the first time I was really surprised to see the stories, rooms and even furniture. The furniture seems like it is built-in and connected to the walls, like the closets and some shelves. In my country, furniture is separated from the wall.

I prefer my country's houses because that is what I was born and raised in. I experienced many birthdays and holidays in that house, and it's what I am used to.

In my country, most of the houses are designed the same so you don't really have to tell the architect what you want; he already knows what to build. I prefer to live in the style of Bangladesh because the things I care about, I got from my house. I was loved by family and all my cousins and even friends in that house. In our houses we experience much of our lives and our houses help to shape those lives and experiences.

The following 3 essays are from BINcA students.

EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN ITALY AND THE U.S.

By: Vittoria Volpi // Staff Writer

When I first moved to Boston, I was surprised by a lot of things that looked very different from Italy in my eyes. I imagined the U.S. to be like a movie, with people behaving like they do in movies. I thought everything they did was exciting. The streets were so big, the smoke went out from manholes like I saw in the movies, there were very tall buildings and I thought the city had magic in the air. Actually, the atmosphere here in the U.S. is different from Italy but now I am accustomed to this country and this city.

One thing that is totally different is the school system: the place, the organization, the teachers, the classes, the hours, the approach of teachers with students and, conversely, of students with teachers.

In Italy, school starts at 8:00 a.m. and finishes at 2:00 p.m. There isn't a lunch period so students don't eat at

school, they can only eat snacks from vending machines. I think that the lunch period here is the best because you can eat something after three hours of work, talk with your friends and relax for 30 minutes.

In Italy, there are two intervals of 10 minutes where students can go out of class to go in the courtyard, but the substantial difference is that the students stay in the same class for all seven hours of school. Every hour the bell rings but the students stay sitting and wait for another teacher. This organization is very, very boring. Sometimes when I would return home I would be very frustrated because I had to cook my lunch and study a lot, so I didn't have much time to relax and then I would always be tired.

I think that schools are better here. When the bell rings you stand up and change class-

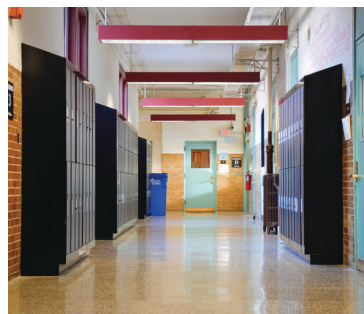
es. Because you have a few minutes to walk, greet friends that you meet in the hallway, and get ready for the next class, the time goes faster and it's fun to go to school.

Another difference from Italian school is the relationship between the teachers and the students. In Italy, the students always have to shut up and follow the lesson that the teacher explains. Here in the U.S., the students always participate during the lesson. In Italy the stu-

dents have to create a mask to appear as good girls and good boys in front of the teachers' eyes so that the teacher can give them a good grade. Here, this kind of thing doesn't happen because all teachers care about their students and they want better for us. For example, some teachers here care about student life outside of school, like family and sports.

Another thing that is different in Italian schools, and is better here in the U.S., is the possibility to play sports like soccer, volleyball, basketball, or softball after school and with a school team. In Italy it's different, the school does not organize these activities, so the guys that want to play sports have to go to a different place such as near their house or the specific team.

In my opinion, American schools are better about organization, place, people and some other things. I think the atmosphere here is fantastic. People are very nice and when you have a problem they listen to you and try to help you feel better. I like seeing people, saying hi and joking with them because in Italy I had only my group of friends. There, it is not as common to say hello and be friendly with people that maybe you don't know, but that you have seen before in your school.



AFH PHOTO // AIJANAH. SANFORD

THE FIRST DAY I SAW SNOW

By: Taina Joseph

The first day I saw snow, I was very nervous because I was really cold. My hands, ears, and nose were freezing. I am from Haiti, a country where it is never cold. Haiti is either warm or hot, except for one day, the day before Hurricane Matthew. Everyone was wondering, "Why is it so cold?" No one had the answer. Though it was really cold that day, there was no snow.

I remember the day I saw snow for the first time. I could barely walk. I was afraid to fall down and hurt myself. Naturally, I am a slow walker; snow makes me an even slower walker. I do not want to slip and fall. As I walk, I want to take my time to enjoy nature's beauty, the dance of the blowing snowflakes coming down from the sky to announce Christmas is coming. It seems though that this year we are not having a White Christmas. Mother Nature has other plans for us!

In the meantime, I look forward to facing my fear of snow. A fear that happily diminished with time as my friend, Frosty the Snowman, taught me how to walk in the snow. So, let us sing together, "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow!"



AFH PHOTO
// ABRAHAM
ROSA

LEARNING TO BLOSSOM WITHOUT A MOTHER'S LOVE

By: Anonymous // Contributing Writer

As a child, my favorite thing to do was to help my mom plant flowers in front of our house. I loved the way the mulch submerged our feet because I accidentally flooded the flowers in our yard. My mother would laugh and say, "it's okay. You just have to follow me and you will learn the right way." I would do so and then we would clean the mulch off of our feet with lukewarm water and put our flip flops back on. Then she would walk up the stairs and go into the house for popsicles. I would sit on the stairs and watch how aligned the water and the flowers were, completed by the work of my hands but with the mind of my mother.

As I got older, my mother started to distance herself from me. She would leave the house before my brothers and I had a chance to see her. She would never spend any time with me because she had to focus all of her attention on my misbehaving older brother who was involved in mischief at every opportunity he had.

In the beginning, the subtle neglect did not affect me as much as it should have because I knew there was always someone going through worse than I was, and needed her attention more than I did. My mother would only acknowledge me when I had money to pay her

bills, spend on her, or whenever I decided to do exactly what she wanted from me. Initially, I didn't care. If my mother took two thirds of my checks, I would be okay. Whatever I had to lose to maintain a relationship with my mother was okay. As long as I had someone that I could call "mother" I would be okay.

The No Child Left Behind protocol never applied to me because I was always second or third to my mom. I was never her top priority. Being my mother's only daughter, my mom was supposed to defend me from my brothers or whatever danger came my way. Instead, I had to battle my brothers off with the wrath of my words to earn their respect.

My mother was supposed to teach me how to act like a woman, dress like a woman and earn respect as a woman. Instead, I grew up wearing pants and hating dresses, earning respect on my own. My mom was supposed to be my person to go to when I did not feel "pretty", worthy, or respected. Instead, I had to love and accept my own worth despite the busted Converse and Nikes I had, and I had to become respected and worthy as a young woman on my own.

If one does not go through an experience, then one will never learn how to deal with

it. I painfully had to go through my adolescence with limited assistance and support from my mother, doing everything on my own. It crippled and ruined me in the sense of me growing an emotional shield, not opening up to people that actually cared for me. Although this horrible experience deteriorated what ever relationship I had left with my mother, it made me the strong young woman I am today.

Not only did I become a self-made woman, I became a mother for myself. As a little girl, I would sit on my porch, engulfed with spritz flowers that my mother and I were always enamored of, literally planning out my high school personality. I was going to be very pretty with beautiful nubian hair, complemented by an exquisite dark complexion, with eyes that would glisten at any opportunity that they could. I also thought that I was going to be popular, the "it" girl, who was friends with everyone. I thought I was going to have the coolest clothes, all of the boys would be obsessed with me, and most importantly, I would be happy because I knew I had everything I wanted and I would grow to become a spitting image of my mother.

My hair coils in a complex different direction from my mother's. My underlit melanin

contrasts from my mother's and is blessed with kisses of the sun. My eyes, full of wonder for the world's enigma, view the bigger picture that my narrow-minded mother always evades. I became a young woman equipped with the unadulterated honesty and independent elegance that most young adults my age desire. Most of my preferred clothing comes from thrift stores and not only am I my own mother for my emotions, my older brothers look to me for guidance and common sense.

My mother and I haven't watered the flowers in our yard together in a very long time. They have not died, but have been tended to on my own account, without my mother's assistance. Looking back at what I have been through, I never understood why I desired to become my mother so badly. My mother was once a wonderful woman who produced enough love for everyone but let her flaws ruin her soul, her ambition, and made her resentful and jejune. This was a life I used to dreadfully live but no longer consider mine because I have learned from the mistakes not only she made, but I made. This life that was given to me is no longer a sadness I choose. I am better than that. It just took me finding my worth to figure that out.



CLOSE UP ON A BOSTON FILMMAKER: SHAMIR WILLIAMS Q&A

By: Rose Koumbassa // Staff Writer

Shamir Williams, 18, from Dorchester is a rising filmmaker. With his unique, energetic personality, Williams is hard to miss. The junior at Day and Evening Academy participates in Fast Forward, a program of the Institute of Contemporary Art. Fast Forward is an accelerated program where students conceive, produce and edit original work in various film genres. Apart from this program, he's also involved with a local clothing line called PSYCHO. Williams is not your ordinary teen. His deep roots in creativity distinguish him from other teens and will take him far.

Q. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START MAKING FILMS?

A. I saw people around me making films. I remember helping out my brother with one of his films, and a little while after that, I thought maybe I could do something productive to take my mind off of a lot of the things I was going through. I was always good at creating stories so I thought maybe I can make these awesome stories that I had into films. Also, with a lot of the major films I was seeing on television, I felt like I could do it better or change them up a bit.

Q. WHAT SPECIFIC GENRES DO YOU TYPICALLY WRITE ABOUT?

A. As far as genres for my films, it really depends on how I feel. My films are just reactions to my feelings. With my film Groovie Blu, I was going through a lot during the time the movie was coming out. I was frustrated and trying to get the film out for the screening at Fast Forward. I put together this short film that was a reflection of myself and how I was feeling at the

time. That is how a majority of my films are conducted.

Q. WHAT ARE SOME HOLLYWOOD FILMS YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN REMAKE?

A. Dear White People. Back to the Future. And, She's Gotta Have It.

Q. WHAT STRUGGLES DO YOU FACE AS A FILMMAKER?

A. A lot of the struggles I face all correlate to having patience. You have to realize this stuff doesn't come overnight and a lot of times your films won't turn out exactly how you envisioned them and that's okay. You also have to be your biggest critic, but at the same time, don't be afraid to receive criticism from other people.

Q. HOW DOES FAST FORWARD HELP YOU WITH WHAT YOU ARE DOING?

A. They allow me to borrow the equipment for my films and if it wasn't for them I would probably just be making videos on my phone. They're also a great support team. Whenever I'm willing

to talk about my scripts, the teachers are always honest and provide me with suggestions that will help make my films better. Before I arrived to the program I wasn't really familiar with a lot of the aspects that came with filmmaking, like vocabulary words and certain techniques, but they were very understanding to the fact that I was a beginner and were still willing to help me. Another big help is being in that environment where the people around you have the same passion as you and that's a very big help because you're able to exchange ideas with other filmmakers.

Q. WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF/ YOUR FILMS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

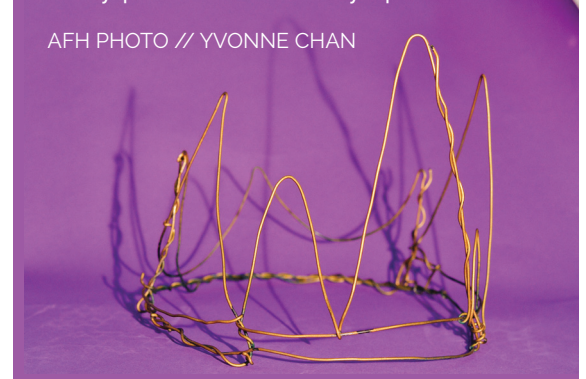
A. In five years years I want to branch out and try different things with my films. I would reach out to other upcoming filmmakers and help them get up to the level of confidence they want to reach. As for myself, I'll probably get into music production which is something I do now for my films, but maybe I'll start producing music for others.

MY DESTINY

By: Lele Dallas // Contributing Writer

What my destiny is not
It's not to run and hide
What my destiny is
It's to show my black pride
My pride of success
And my pride that I can easily
confess
Yes confess
Confess my love for my skin
Something that parents should
pass down to their kin
A way for me to just be me
Mentally, emotionally, as well as
physically
My destiny as a black writer
My words simply bold and fierce
My destiny with black fashion
I slay just to pierce
Pierce the skin of my enemies
Let them watch my success
As I rise to the top to show that all
shades of black are best
Don't take this the wrong way
I'm simply stating an opinion
Show the world where I stand
My permanent position
It's simple but strong
As a black teen, don't take this
wrong
Because my destiny is not being
someone that I'm not
My destiny is being black and
proud
My personal and only spot

AFH PHOTO // YVONNE CHAN



WHY BULLY?

By: Onasis Soto // Contributing Writer

Why bully?
Does it let the anger out that you have trouble breaking free from?
Or do you act that way because you feel unloved?
What's the point?
What's the prize?
Is it worth hurting someone else's feelings because yours aren't
touched by someone that you feel is missing?
What lesson are you getting from this?
How much ambition are you gaining from this?
Bullying is the way people let out their anger because of something
they can't receive

But you do it to someone else and make them feel the same as you,
unworthy to live in this cold world
Why bully?
What's the point?
What's the prize?
How does it make you feel?
Good, strong, superior?
Do you not think, or even see what you are doing to that person?
How about him or her?
How do they feel?
Lonely, useless, unloved
Does it not cross your mind that victims of bullying feel they don't
belong in this world?
Why bully?
What's the point?
What's the prize?

LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF...

Student's from Urban Science academy reflect on what they've learned in high school thus far and share that wisdom in the form of letters to their younger self.

Dear 9th grade Madashley,

Remember when you stepped into Urban Science Academy with your hopes and promises? The promises you've made to yourself that you will bring your GPA up, or that you'll challenge yourself to be more optimistic? The promises you've made to not be reactive, but instead to be proactive and stay after school to make yourself better? The promise you've made to challenge yourself, to participate in activities instead of taking short cuts? The ultimate promise that you'll try your best to get to Yale University, because you'll do anything to become an anesthesiologist?

But what happened? Well, you got lazy, that's what.

Instead of seeking more, you settled for whatever life threw in your face. One thing I want you to know is that it is okay to feel confused, but it is not okay to not ask for help. Another thing you will notice is that everything changes in high school, and sooner or later, you have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. For me, when everything seemed to move too fast, I was afraid. I was scared and lost, and what's worse, I felt alone as if there was no one to help me. Now, the advice I would give myself is that it is alright to

lose some friends, what matters is for you to be successful at finding your own path.

Freshmen year was terrible, although you managed to pull yourself out of it. You slacked off because you got comfortable. You wanted to challenge yourself, but were worried that people would think that you were trying too hard. Instead of making your own decisions you preoccupied yourself with the opinions of others. By the first term, you knew you could have handled some AP classes, but you settled for advanced algebra instead! You knew you could replace your A's and B's with A pluses. Deep down, you knew what you were capable and you had the confidence, but you didn't take action. Despite what it may feel like right now, high school is an opportunity to get to know your inner self.

In hindsight, I was petrified when it came to challenges, but in time I had to learn to overcome those fears. Young freshman! Learn from my experience and face your fears now. Overcome your obstacles because there is always a way out. Begin with the end in mind; always set goals; visualize your future and the steps you have to take to get there. Make things happen!

Freshman year is always stressful. Not only do you have to worry about yourself academically, but you have to make sure that your emotions are in check. The funny thing about being a freshman is that you don't always get it right; this is why you have your peers and teachers to guide you. I learned the hard way, I wanted to do everything by myself, but sometimes you have to learn to collaborate and see others' points of view. Sometimes being independent is not enough, you need to learn to synergize, to cooperate with diverse groups and different opinions. Two heads are always better than one. If people looked at me they would have said that I knew what I was doing when in reality I

had little to no idea of what I was doing. Do not be scared to ask for help because you think that if you ask for help then you are not equally as smart as the other students who seem to catch up fast. All brains are different and have unique structures, you just have to find your own way of learning.

When you leave junior high you bring your previous identity with you, but at the same time, you leave your past behind, maybe even some of your friends. When I started high school, my friends and I started as a united group, but then everyone ended up going their own way. Everyday I found my social circle shrinking. I had to accept it. I did not want to lose them or leave them behind but for my own sake, I had to. Sometimes the things you want in life happen, but they don't always happen the way you wanted them to.

Time is precious and every time I look back to see what I have accomplished, it always leaves me a little disappointed. You don't have unlimited time. Challenge yourself. Don't waste your freshman year because later you're going to regret it. Ask for help when needed, including helping out others. Work hard all the time, not only when report cards are coming out. Remember to pick your friends wisely. I always thought being independent was being able to do everything by yourself without help, and that if you got help it was not the definition of being independent. That's where I was wrong. This year is not going to be easy. Keep your head up. There are a lot of distractions and sometimes you will feel like crying and that's okay. Don't get too comfortable. There are some things that you cannot control in life but accept it. That's what I did and I am going to be fine. So take my advice and you will be, too.

Sincerely,
Madashley Cajuste

To 14-year-old Jeisabela:

Bruh. Stop playing right now! You were the slacker in middle school and I know you're telling yourself that you're not going to do it again... but you are. You're going to start off strong but once you get comfortable, you're going to fail. You're going to skip class, talk back to your teachers and hang out with your friends instead of getting your work done. I know you think you'll be able to handle your friends and your work (and you can), but you won't, and you know it.

Let me explain a few things you should do to make it through the school year. You should do your work, stay out of trouble, and manage your time because, if not, you'll be stuck with the slacker grades.

First off, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASEEEEE, do your work!

LITERALLY. Do. It.

Don't go out after school. Don't do sleepovers. Sit in a quiet space alone and not with friends. You don't have to completely isolate yourself, just know your limits. Sit next to someone you know won't distract you in class, or friends that won't distract you. You may think just because it's your freshman

year you can chill and do whatever, but you're just making it harder on yourself in the long run. Start off strong and finish strong. You don't want a low GPA or to have yours be lower than your friends. They may be able to get their work done and hang, but you can't. Having a low GPA will make sophomore year harder for you.

Second, stay out of trouble. Skipping class is all fun and games until you're caught and you've landed yourself in detention. Your friends will hang out after school and you'll be alone in detention with other people who didn't make great choices and are probably not doing well at school because of their behavior and mindset. Why would you do that to yourself so early in the game? Talking back to teachers will get you nowhere. They'll stop respecting you and they won't be recommending you for anything because they can't trust or see potential in you. Show you're a bright student through your actions. Don't hang out with people who don't act smart and do things like talk back to teachers, because that's how you'll pick up on it and develop a really bad habit and character. There's a book called The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. READ ITTTT!

Third, manage your time and don't procrastinate! Don't get into the habit of making unimportant things a priority. Don't think things like "I will just do my homework after I go to the mall." NO! Instead, think "maybe I should get my work done before I go to the mall." Thinking like that is more mature and is a better plan that is more in touch with your goals. Always be proactive and don't blame your friends for your failings. It's no one's fault but your own. You could've said no to the mall and went another time because the mall will always be around, but that work has a deadline. Besides, if they are your friends they will understand. If they don't, then you don't need them because the types of friends you need are the ones who want you to be successful. Friends that don't are only gonna hold you back.

I know that I am only one year older than you are now, but trust me, if you follow these three pieces of advice, you'll get through your freshman year with good grades and straight priorities. Good luck!

Sincerely,
Jeisabela Teixeira

LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF...

Dear 9th grade Brian,

Ignorance was truly bliss for you, but now that you are starting high school, a lot of information is being blasted in your direction. High school is way too much to process on your first day. From class to class, your bookbag is filled with consent waivers, syllabi, and just three more binders more than recommended in the list of school supplies. It took you three hours to get home from school because learning the T was hard (don't worry, we got that down to an hour and a half!). High school is intimidating. It is such a large building, everyone stuck with their friends from middle school. It took you a while to find your niche in the jungle.

Like always, you maintained high expectations for yourself in order to succeed, but were unaware of the unhealthy repercussions of focusing on your flaws. Your mom would tell you that God does everything for a reason. At the time, you saw being at Urban Science Academy and moving to Boston as more of a curse than a blessing. Trust me, that ideology will change by the time freshman year ends.

Accepting how unfair the world can be is hard. Just like how it's hard to find out that you didn't get accepted into the technical trade school of your dreams and that you are moving to Boston, a city hundreds of miles away from all of your family.

Once you made your peace with your situation, you ended up being presented with an astounding amount of options at USA. Available was an array of sports - especially with the school having built a new sports field. There were after school clubs and programs from every corner of Boston also available. It was quite overwhelming at first.

One day, in computer science class, you met someone who you felt a peculiar familiarity with, and agreed that we had met somewhere before, but could not recall where. This strange familiarity instilled a quick friendship. This new friend invited you to her robotics team at Northeastern University. The invitation spiked your interest as you always loved technology. You ended up joining the the team. Then, your humanities teacher would call your mom at least once a week asking if you could join the debate team as well. Ultimately, you said

yes. But, you had barely any time for yourself with prior obligations and other school commitments. Your week was always jam-packed, and during the weekends, you were either at your father's house or catching up on work/studying. This led to the last thing you need in high school: stres. Stress can normal, but it ended up getting to a point where you couldn't manage time well.

You were stressed about being ready for robotics, having time to study debate notes, getting work done, and having time to be with friends and family. Despite the stress, you felt you were in too deep into activities to stop, so you continued on without trying anything different, or finding a solution. This was seriously the worst thing you could do to yourself. It lead to you being a disorganized person. You suffered from a lot of headaches and never felt good at all. It's always important to set time aside for yourself to get organized and to relax, which is the one thing you never did, and suffered immensely because of it. It's okay sometimes to miss a meeting in order to recuperate and get back together. It's important to be organized and to prioritize yourself. If you always put yourself last, nothing good will come of that.

Think of failure like a spider. Spiders are mostly harmless unless it's poisonous. Failure, in most cases, is blown out of proportion. If you fail, you should be fine, as long as you make an attempt to improve yourself.

Every time you made a mistake your mind would flood with pessimism: "Why can't I ever do anything right?" or "I'm honestly not normal, what is wrong with me?" You couldn't live with yourself because your obsession with success was creating unrealistically high expectations, which led to more stress. You ended up being constantly angry. With time, you learned to control your thoughts and become satisfied with yourself.

I don't want you to think that you shouldn't set high expectations for yourself. But, don't ever let anyone tell you that you aren't good enough, nor tell yourself that. As a freshman, all the work may seem overwhelming. Seek improvement within yourself but also think realistically.

Like animals, we either adapt to situations, or we don't. In the case of this analogy, your experiences were near-death but at least you're alive! Coming soon will be the end of freshman year. You have hopefully made friends that you can confide in for the rest of high school.

Ponder on how not only you adapted, but how you thrived within your freshman experience and what opportunities have come to fruition because of it. Keep in mind to take advantage of opportunities presented to you, manage your time well, stay organized, and keep realistic goals for yourself. In short, never be afraid to make mistakes despite your ambitious attempts at success.

Sincerely,
Brian Estevez

Dear 9th grade Jada,

Can you believe you made it? Freshman year is essential in deciding whether a student drops out or stays in school. At this point, you have developed lots of integrity and grit. Why? Because, you've made it to high school! How do you feel? I bet you thought you were the stuff when you walked into high school, trying to act all tough because you heard people were going to try and punk you, but don't worry about them.

You probably have realized that things are different now. Thez work is harder, teachers are strict, and the deadlines for assignments are short. Because of this, you are often stressed about your grades. Freshmen year is not an easy game to play. You need to prepare yourself for challenges in life and learn to always have a growth mindset.

You and your peers might think freshmen year is a joke. You think you have time to play around with your friends and that your work does not really count. It does! I bet you have heard your teachers say, "Freshman year is very important, like the rest of your journey in high school, so make sure you're up to date because you can fall behind." Colleges look at your ninth grade year because they want to see how you start off. You have to put all those bad habits from middle school behind you and make your actions speak louder than your words. Be a leader because it makes you a very powerful and strong young woman. Show your teachers you got this.

My first piece of advice to you is always stay positive! Being positive can get you a long way. Trust me! If you come to school every day and say "I don't want to be here," or "why do we have to do this?" then you are not going to enjoy the journey of freshman year. Don't be a Negative Nancy. It will get you nowhere. If you're negative most likely you're going to hate your classes which is not beneficial for you or your teacher. On the other hand, if you go into class with a positive attitude, you actually might end up enjoying it.

My second piece of advice is to set goals. This is the process of identifying something that you want to accomplish and establishing measurable outcomes and timeframes. This can help you get good grades. For example if you have to do an essay due a certain day, try to finish it a day early and then maybe show your teacher so he or she can offer you feedback. On the day it is due it will be even better. You might just ace that essay.

My last piece of advice is to always be respectful. Treat people the way you like to be treated. When you want to be respectful, try to put yourself in someone else's shoes and behave

WHEN DOGMA AND SCIENCE COLLIDE

By: Al Fox // Staff Writer

in a way that shows you care. At its heart, being respectful means showing that you value other people's perspectives, time and space. Show kindness and courtesy because it is good manners. Being respectful starts with a basic consideration of other people's feelings. Ask yourself how you'd want to be treated in a given situation and make an effort to treat other people that way. Treat everyone you encounter this way: strangers on the street, coworkers, classmates and family members. Being polite is a good way to make friends. It is also a matter of etiquette; it's about being considerate of people's feelings, culture, and values. It does not seem difficult, but for many people it remains a challenge. If you're reading this you're probably wondering how you can improve your etiquette. At the very least, you might want to know how to avoid being rude, which can put off the people around you. Try not to discriminate or be judgemental. Be respectful to everyone and not just people you know or those you perceive as having a higher status than you. Many people save their respect for people upon whom they want to make a good impression, and they're less respectful to everyone else. But there is truth in the saying, "You can judge the character of others by how they treat those who can do nothing for them or to them." In other words, be a nice human.

Let's review: the three most important actions you can take in surviving your freshman year of high school is stay positive, set attainable goals, and be respectful to others! It's really as simple as that. People make high school look all big and bad, but it really isn't. I was scared and nervous entering my first year of high school. I had no idea what to expect, but once I made a couple friends and started to get to know my school, I got comfortable, and I actually enjoyed the experience. So don't let high school get you down, be proud, because the next place you go to is college! If you've made it this far... you've got this! Just work on these small improvements and you will see the results!

Have fun and be yourself.

Sincerely,
Jada Robinson

Humanity is living in a period where we are pushing the limits of understanding, to the point of possibly discovering that there are in fact no limits. Through modern day science, we have developed a process of testing and analyzing vast sources of evidence which aim to explain the world that we live in and how it came to be. However, around three billion people believe in creationism as their primary source of information on the world and universe's history and physical functionality, as opposed to evolution.

To critically analyze the two concepts, let's define creationism and evolution. Creationism is the belief that life originated from acts of divine creation. It is a literal belief in the biblical accounts from its stories to statements of the universe. Evolution is defined as the process by which different living organisms are thought to have developed and diversified from earlier forms during the history of the earth.

The theory of evolution - the best reasonable explanation for the diversity of life - is contested by people who reject its process and put their faith in an intelligent being, but many of their arguments are based on misconceptions. Understanding the basic tenets of evolutionary theory is the first step in critically evaluating its validity.

Misconception: "The study of evolution seeks to explain the origin of life." Evolution doesn't study the topic of life's origins. Evolution is the science that studies "the descent with modifications" of life after it came into being. This still leaves open the question of what caused life, but it does conflict with a portion of the Bible's history.

Misconception: "Humans evolved from monkeys or apes." A surprising number of people are under the misconception that the evolutionary tree is a binomial line that connects small species to larger species. Humans did not evolve from monkeys and apes. Humans,

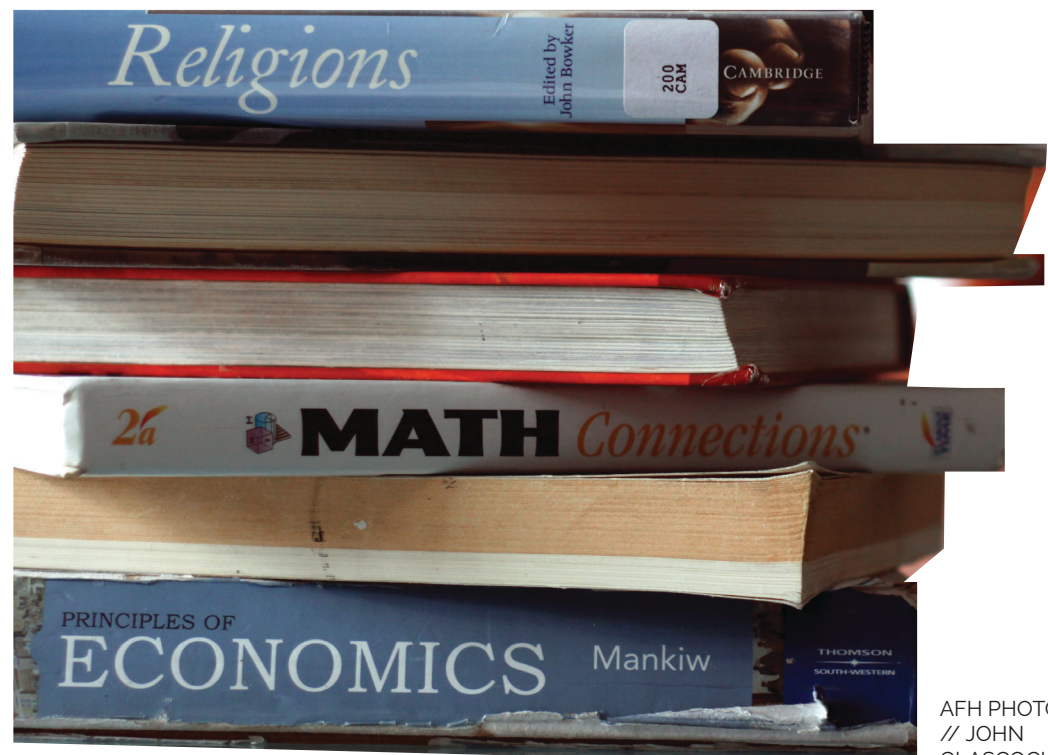
monkeys, and apes share a common ancestor, who lived 5 to 8 million years ago, but each group followed different evolutionary paths to their current forms.

Misconception: "Evolution is just a theory and it is prone to changes." The claim that evolution is 'just a theory' reveals a misunderstanding of the concept of a scientific theory. A theory represents our most well-accepted and well-substantiated explanation in science. To attain the status of theory, an explanation requires substantial evidence based on a body of facts that have been repeatedly confirmed through observation and experiments from multiple lines of evidence. Science is a humble process that is open to new evidences that may change such theory, but for such a revelation, it would need to again be substantiated. It is open to corrections while ancient scriptures are fixed to their era's access to knowledge.

Some people argue that there shouldn't be any critique or any movement of discrediting religion, for it makes people happy. The idea that ignorance brings people happiness isn't the best course to benefiting one another. When you are given complete and accurate information on a topic, you become more aware and have more power than someone who doesn't.

An important thing to know is that religion by itself is not the problem, but rather dogmatic thoughts. One doesn't need to be religious to be dogmatic. However, religion goes hand in hand with dogma. There is no bliss in ignorance. Knowledge grants people power and prosperity in our society.

It's not that people who believes in creationism are not entitled to their own ideas, but exceptional claims need exceptional evidence. We need people to stay educated on matters like this as it affects us in society. We need more scientist, engineers, doctors and politicians to continue building upon our modern world.



AFH PHOTO
// JOHN
GLASCOCK

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TEENS in PRINT

Teens in Print is the only citywide newspaper written by and for Boston high school students. Launched by WriteBoston and the Boston Globe in 2004, TiP is a platform for student journalists, essayists, poets and artists.

TiP is a free after school program and summer institute that gives a voice to Boston youth, a voice that bellows from one end of the city to the other. **For more information, contact Carla at carla.gualdron@boston.gov.**

A huge thank you to the 41 generous donors who supported our campaign for laptops for teen journalists.

A special shout out to our *Editors Circle* donors:

Rebecca Andrews, Sebastian Barreveld, Miryam Gerson, Lenny Glynn, Toni Jackson, Craig Melzer, Frannie Moyer, Monica Reid, Sambo Sorm, and Joan Wood.



Teens in Print is possible thanks to the generous support of:

Linda Walsh & the Walsh family

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