

June 2003

## New Expression: June 2003 (Volume 26, Issue 5)

Columbia College Chicago

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# Pink Power!

The triangle that once symbolized oppression  
now celebrates diversity.

Gay youth share the meanings  
behind their symbols.

Stories begin  
on page 7

**By Teens. For Teens. *About* Teens.**

## Newsbriefs

### Pregnant teens seek housing

The Center for Impact Research conducted a statewide assessment of housing needs for teen parents living in Illinois. The study found that emergency and transitional housing for teen parents is virtually non-existent. In order to help homeless or abused teens the Emancipation of Minors Act was passed. This piece of legislation allows for minors to get partial emancipation, which will allow them to live in transitional housing or shelters.



### Young Job Seekers

Finding a job this summer can be tougher than most teens expected. Unfortunately, the large number of lay offs has caused a ripple effect in the job market. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate was up to 6 percent in April 2003. This translates into 8.8 million unemployed people. Because of this, older employees have resorted to working part-time jobs at restaurants, or department stores. If you have been unsuccessful with your job hunt, turn to page 12 for ideas on alternative summer jobs.

### Mikva Challenge on TV

Interested in politics? The Mikva Challenge, an organization that helps keep high school students informed about politics, wishes to spread its message far and wide. The Mikva Challenge's Executive Director, Brian Brady, will be on the CAN-TV show "Illinois Issues in Review." Mr. Brady will be discussing ways in which teens can get more politically active. Be sure to check it out on CAN-TV at 7 p.m. on June 26 or July 3.

### Teen gets fame, loot from Prank

What started out as a joke against a 15-year-old Canadian boy is backfiring. According to Wired Magazine, the boy, identified only as Ghyslain, apparently was videotaped in his school's A/V lab acting out his own "Star Wars" battle scene. The video was never meant to be seen by anyone. After Ghyslain returned the borrowed videotape to his friend, the video sat in a basement for months. On April 19, Ghyslain's friend stumbled on the tape's secret contents and immediately shared it with friends. They thought it would be a funny prank to encode the video and upload it to Kazaa. The video has been downloaded by 1.1 million times from [www.waxy.org](http://www.waxy.org) alone.

Two adult bloggers, identified only as Baio and Mukerji, created a fund for Ghyslain, which at last reporting included more than 100 individual donations totaling over \$4,000. The bloggers plan to buy Ghyslain an Apple iPod and some accessories.

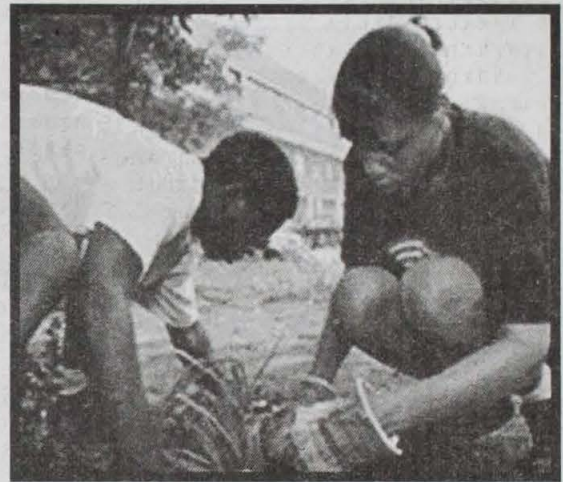
"He's given us a lot of amusement, so we thought we should do something for him," explained Mukerji. "There's been a lot of sympathy donations. A lot of people see a little bit of themselves in him. We've all done the same thing. Maybe it was the Saturday Night Fever thing. We've all done it."

Baio said he was angry at the hypocrisy he noted in the video's viewers who were "trashing one of their own" and hopes that Ghyslain "records a sequel." For an interview with Ghyslain, visit [www.waxy.org](http://www.waxy.org)

## From NE staff and wire reports

### Teens get tan

The American Academy of Dermatology has found that skin cancer is associated with UV ray exposure to people before they reach the age of 18. In a recent survey it was found that 10 percent of young people ages 12 to 18 used tanning beds in the previous year. However, the AAD stresses it is important to wear sunscreen in order to prevent future health problems.



### Chicago high schools help to improve their communities

Twenty-three Chicago high schools involved in Student Voices, a project developed by the Mikva Challenge, competed for the title of Best Community Improvement Project. The high school students created a wide range of projects. Chicago Vocational and Farragut High tied for first place. Chicago Vocational restored abandoned buildings, then sold them to low-income families. Farragut helped to build stronger ties between community members and the police. Austin came in at third place with a project that attempted to change standardized testing. We congratulate them on helping to make Chicago a great city!

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## Opinions

# Flack on rebuilding Iraq

By Haamid Xavier Johnson  
Hales Franciscan

Recently, President George W. Bush lamented — from the USS Naval Ship Abraham Lincoln on the coast of San Diego that military exercises in Operation Iraqi Freedom have culminated. He heralded American and British forces for removing Saddam Hussein from his long rule as dictator. But still, Americans need many questions about post-war Iraq answered.

First, how long will our men and women occupy the territory, and is our Commander-in-Chief committed to installing the fruits of democracy in a region that has been ruled by a tyrannical despot? Some would argue about the answer to those questions. I tend to gauge from President Bush's statements that reconstructing Iraq is a top foreign policy priority — that there is a necessity for the troops occupying the region, because they bring civility to cities, like Baghdad, where after the conflict stopped the land was flooded with pandemonium and anarchy.

Nevertheless, it would be tough for anyone in the U.S. Department of Defense or Pentagon to say exactly when all of our American troops will come home, so what they have done is ask the American people to support their efforts for the long run.

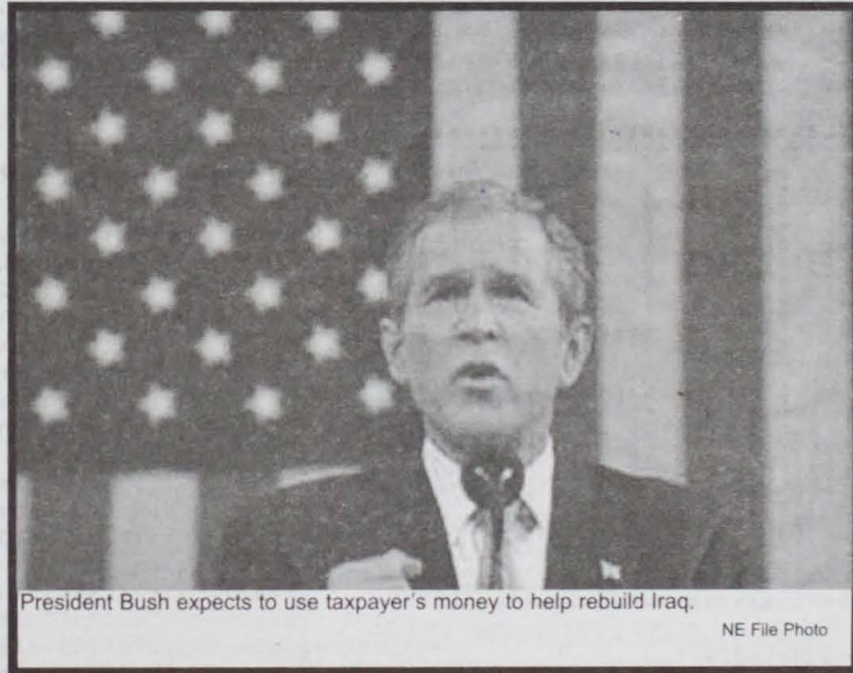
Americans have been asked to bear the cost of rebuilding Iraq and understand that the United States will not desert the region before the job of bringing peace among the different Muslim groups has been accorded. President Bush has pledged support to the region, and will certainly keep his promise.

Some foreign relation experts with the Washington Post espouse estimates which say U.S. taxpayers are more likely to be in favor of allowing some of Iraq's oil reserves to help offset the cost. But

what many optimistic taxpayers are not aware of is that in the beginning of rebuilding efforts, most of those oil reserves are earmarked toward supplying food, medicine and other necessities to the Iraqi people.

Then there are the never-ending questions about how much it will actually cost to rebuild Iraq and to keep troops in the region. Currently, CNN figures range from \$1.5 billion a month or around \$20 to \$40 billion a year to sustain an armed force between 75,000 and 200,000 troops. That is an enormous amount of money to allocate to rebuild a country, especially while there are so many ills here at home, such as: 40 million Americans without health care; Illinois colleges and universities streamlining scholarships and grants because of our budget deficit; city employees losing jobs left and right; rising unemployment among teens, and list goes on.

However, because we are a super power and guardians of peace, despite all the problems we face in our country, it is still just for us to stand up and fight for



President Bush expects to use taxpayer's money to help rebuild Iraq.

NE File Photo

the freedoms and rights of our people here at home and across the world.

Everyone knows that the war in Iraq was not a cake walk, and reconstructing the country will be extremely expensive and even a Herculean task. But 9-11 showed us that we are not immune from terrorist attacks on our home front. Therefore, our triumphs in liberating the Iraqi people must also show us that no crusade is insurmountable when we are united as one.

## What's in NE this month?



### Opinions

How a program changed one teen's life

Page 5



### Teens Mean Business

Inventive teen tells about her plan for success

Page 12

### Entertainment

Rapper stereotypes

Page 16



### Short Story

Blue Summer

Page 22



### Contents

Opinions	Page 3
Essay Contest	Page 6
Cover Story	Page 7
Young Entrepreneurs	Page 12
Humor	Page 16
Entertainment	Page 15
Calendar	Page 16
Poetry	Page 22
Sports	Page 24

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June 2003

**Page 3**

## Opinions

### YMCA teen government program plays a major role in teen's life

By Haamid Xavier Johnson  
Hales Franciscan

The YMCA City Youth & Government program's influential student activities have had a major impact on my life. The program really became my "home away from home on Tuesday" every week during the second semester of my entire high school career.

I can remember graduating from eighth grade, and I can also remember finally being adopted in the eighth grade by a church family close to my grandparents — with whom I've lived with for more than five years now — after moving in and out of at least four different foster homes.

As you can probably guess, the transition from grammar school to high school was certainly something I was not particularly ready for. In fact, now I am a more disciplined and focused student, but as a freshman I still needed guidance, friendship, and most of all support, especially when I felt my sometimes overwhelming home situation left me uneasy.

**"I have participated in several teen outreach programs across the city, and I can say that out of all the programs I have been a part of, there is no other initiative like the YMCA City Y&G Program."**

During some nights I would think about what my biological father might have looked like, and even prayed for my biological mother, who I recently reunited with for the first time since my grandmother's funeral when I was in the third grade.

But a lot of the support and direction in honing my interest came from the YMCA City Youth & Government (Y&G) program. When I joined the Y&G program as a freshman, it invigorated me. There were more than 100 high school teens from 25 different high schools across Chicago. These participants came to the program to listen to professionals in the public policy subject matter of the week, to dialogue about current events that affect teens, and one of my favorite things, which is to debate the pressing issues of the day. The other great thing was that CTA bus cards were provided for transportation home, and there were always great cookies for us to snack on.

But most of all, the city Y&G program inspired me to believe more in myself. The mantra from city Y&G program adult coordinators and advisors to each and every student participant is: "I can." Because of the four years I have been a member, I am more confident than ever "I can" make a difference in my community, that "I can" achieve all of my hopes and aspirations.



The YMCA Youth & Government program provides teens a chance to be politically active

Photo courtesy Haamid Johnson, Hales Franciscan

Through the city Y&G program, we have challenged the status quo — we have written many letters to the editor of Chicago newspapers, we have held clothing collections, given toys to homeless children, spearheaded a book drive, designed a T-shirt which lead a campaign to inform female teens about domestic violence, established a youth grant making board which gave away more than \$60,000 to other youth development programs, spearheaded a very successful book drive, and read stories to disabled kids at La Rabida Hospital.

The summer 2001 book drive was really a standout moment for me, when city Y&G participants came together to challenge the growing battle of illiteracy in Chicago among disabled children. Under the leadership of our Y&G administration, coupled with a new outreach initiative implemented through the summer service learning club, we were able to garner more than 300 books. I think this happened because it encompassed determined and committed individuals. As a Y&G service learning participant we wrote grants, called book publishing houses, and even went to local book stores for assistance.

The book drive succeeded not only because we had an outstanding adult coordinator, but also because we as a group never lost focus. Now don't get me wrong — there were times we questioned if we would even receive one book donated. But we stayed the course and things panned out the way we intended.

The young children who received books at La Rabida Hospital did not only get reading material in great condition — they received reading time with many of our Y&G participants who took time during the summer to make sure these children feel needed and cared for. This is a quintessential example of what a steadfast group of teens focused on a goal can accomplish. And I think, as leaders of today, not just the future, teens must continue to learn to commit ourselves, and work together. When we do, great things can happen, as they have through the city Y&G program.

I was also taught an invaluable lesson through the great experiences and friendships shared with me by my fellow youth and government friends, which is: the real challenge for our generation is not solely how we dedicate ourselves to paving the path for the role we will have in the future, but rather our determination to impact the society in which we live in now. These are the kinds of lessons I will take with me to college and beyond.

I have participated in several teen outreach programs across the city, and I can say that out of all the programs I have been a part of, there is no other initiative like the YMCA City Y&G Program, whose commitment to the empowerment of teens is so strong, and where the teen commitment to fully participating is just as strong.

## Residents' Journal

# Living in Poverty

By Mia Dunlap  
Gwendolyn Brooks



*Note: This article was originally written for The Residents Journal, a publication for and by Chicago public housing residents. Mia wrote this article as part of the Urban Youth International Journalism program.*

Living in poverty is a waste. People lose their sanity. They don't have any fun. They

don't get much of anything. They go day after day hoping they get lucky by playing the lottery, prostituting or selling drugs without getting caught. They get looked down on, accused and even lied on. Not only do some live in poverty, but in addition to that they live in the projects.

Living in the projects in the eyes of many people is like living in the alley on 47th and Wabash. From experience, when you live in the projects you don't get recognized for your talent. The children that live there could be either artists, singers, poets, writers, dancers, business managers and best of all they could be a president. But the problem is, no one notices them. Needless to say, roaches get more recognition than them. It's a shame. People think the only thing they know how to do is fight and cuss. But that's the consequences that come with being poor.

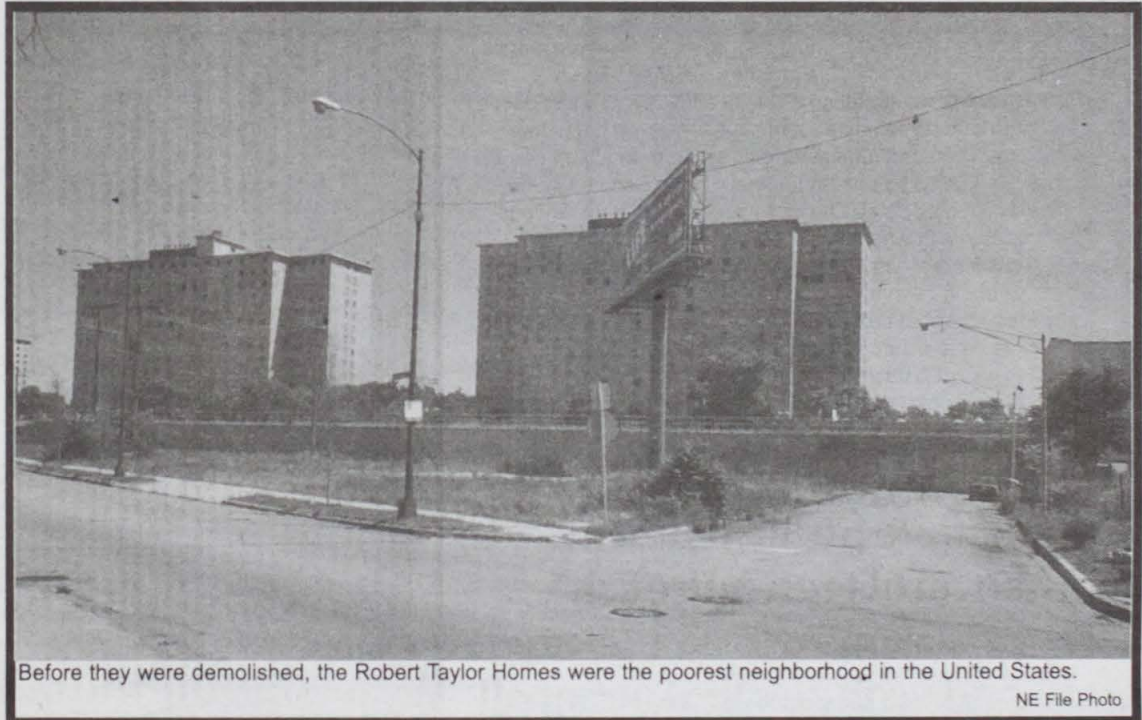
Poverty is something that many people don't like to admit to. It isn't fun being poor. You don't dress

**If you live in poverty, you get cheated out of your education. Children don't have real extra-curricular activities in poor neighborhoods, activities like drama, music and art. Nor do they have all of the resources that kids in richer areas have, like access to the internet.**

like the average kid, you don't wear the shoes that are in style, you are teased. It isn't easy to be poor.

"It feels bad being poor, because you can't get what you want," said Michael Dunlap, 15. "It doesn't feel good being teased because you don't have anything."

[www.newexpression.org](http://www.newexpression.org)



Before they were demolished, the Robert Taylor Homes were the poorest neighborhood in the United States.

NE File Photo

"I don't like being poor because I don't have enough money and I don't get new wrestling men like my friends do," said Jemal Hancock, 8.

As you can see, children from all ages understand poverty. It is rather embarrassing to lose friends because you don't have money to go shopping. The worst part is children almost never hear the word allowance. In fact, the only time some children have heard it is when their friends discuss it. Many people turn to Jesus as a friend. They say he will wipe all your tears away.

Some people in poverty succeed, but others give up. They just can't stand the sight of being poor. But the ones that succeed, never let poverty overtake them. It's just another obstacle that needs to be overcome to some people. Others need more attention, and nurturing, things some people never get. Many people feel that if you are poor, you don't have good friends to depend on. They say friends will talk about you, back bite, lie and laugh at you. Many people feel the only one they can depend on is Jesus.

If you live in poverty, you get cheated out of your education. Children don't have real extra-curricular activities in poor neighborhoods, activities like drama, music and art. Nor do they have all of the resources that kids in richer areas have, like access to the internet.

"Poverty has pushed me to work harder to succeed," said LaToya Wolfe, 22. "Since I know that there are forces out there that expect me to fail, I'm not going

to fall into it like others have. Instead of repeating that cycle, like so many people do, I chose to work hard so that I'd become someone. I know that there are people out there who expect me to fail because I'm black. I expect to prove them wrong. And by working as a mentor at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, I will help others to succeed and show people that despite the hardships, we should continue to take risks to succeed." Arnold Monroe, 27, said poverty has taught him to appreciate things more.

"I work harder for more than I did as a child," he said. He said that in the past, poverty caused him to look down on himself, but now he is not poor. He defines "poor" as "being without materialistic things, like shoes, and emotional things, like nurturing."

Several students were asked how poverty has affected their lives. They all said they were not poor either mentally or literally, though some might consider them poor.

Even if they're poor, people should make the most out of life. They should try to be as bold and determined as possible. They also need to be taught by their parents and teachers to be as intellectual and independent as possible. To get by in life, people not only have to be street smart but smart academically.

Most times, children have the opportunity to make money but are afraid their parents will take it, so they ignore that chance. Parents often threaten to take the money, so again children choose not to do what they could do to make money.

## Essay Contest

### First Place

By Yasmeen Nanlawala  
Lane Tech

It is a typical, sunny day. Due to the pleasing weather you decide to take a nice stroll in the park. As you do so, you notice something on the bench aside from you.

What is it, you may ask? Well, in your view of sight is seen a couple, two men holding hands and engaging in a conversation, not bothered by being seen in public.

How would you react to this scene? Would you (a) accept this as ordinary and normal and continue walking or (b) would you stare a bit in disgust and think that this was a sickening and repulsive scene? Yet, do we not accept "normal couples," of a man and a woman, holding hands or showing their affection in the park as "charming" or "appealing"? Nevertheless, would it not be hypocritical of us if we view a homosexual couple in a negative way? Consequently, when the gender of the couple changes, why is this scene acknowledged as a repulsive, sickening act? What is seen wrong of it? Nonetheless, I believe that it is okay for homosexual teens to be open about their sexuality.

For many years, homosexual couples have faced hardships with being open about the way they feel. These helpless and defenseless beings must live in denial and hide their true selves in order to be "accepted" by society. To whom must we impress in the world? Shall we not please ourselves, satisfy our needs and desires, and assure our happiness and tranquility? The U.S. Constitution is the foundation of our country, the laws and regulations on which our country has been built upon.

Does our Preamble in the U.S. Constitution not state "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity....and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our prosperity"? Our forefathers wrote and signed confirming that we the people of this great land must demonstrate acts of fairness, which would create tranquillity for its people and assure liberty to ourselves and our country's prosperity.

Why should homosexual couples be outcasts, not only from society, but also from many opportunities in life? Why has homosexuality become so repulsive that these people have become subject to stereotypes and prejudice, gay men being viewed as feminine, lesbians being portrayed as mannish, and both frequently claimed as child molesters (Sexual Behavior in Humans 1948). If many of us have been raised to believe that the color, ethnicity, or race of a person shouldn't matter, that what the inside holds is what truly counts, then why must the sexual orientation of a person be any different?

In today's society teens already face many life pressures early in age. I believe that if he teen themselves are able to accept who they are, whether being homosexual teens or not, then others should as well. Should we not raise our children to be less narrow-minded and preach and advocate fairness and acceptance of people, of different backgrounds?

This month's question: "Is it OK for homosexual teens to be open about their sexuality?"

### Second Place

By Roy Welch  
Gwendolyn Brooks

Do I believe that it is OK for homosexuals to express themselves in school? Yes, I believe that homosexuals should be able to express themselves in school, because homosexuals are able to express themselves in public. As for myself, I am not a homosexual, and I really don't like homosexuals, but I respect their sexual preference. If they are allowed to express themselves in public, I believe that they should be able to show how they feel in school because schools are also public.

Homosexuality is not a mental illness and should not be treated as one. Homosexual people are no more different than heterosexual people. They are cognitive and are able to function in the same ways as anyone else, so long as discrimination is not present.

Many people don't understand the actual idea of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction to another person. In this case, the attraction is to the same gender. Homosexuality is thought or told to be genetic, or an

**"Homosexuality is thought to be genetic, or an inherited hormonal factor expressed in a person's sexuality."**

inherited hormonal factor expressed in a person's sexuality.

Homosexuality is usually not a human choice. They don't wake up one morning and choose to be gay or straight. We must understand that humans who are heterosexuals didn't make the choice to be straight — their genetic make up did, just like they are given the choice to express their preference of being straight. I don't believe that God created Adam and Eve, and not Adam and Michael. I believe that it was made for people on earth to be straight. I will never support the idea of being gay, but I will never hold a grudge against a gay person. In conclusion, I believe that homosexuals should be able to express their sexuality in school, because they are allowed to do it anywhere else.

### Third Place

By Jennifer Steffensen  
Lane Tech

If it is OK for heterosexual teens to display their affection toward each other in public, then why wouldn't it be OK for homosexual teens to do the same?

People may think it is disgusting to see two men or two women kissing, but those two men or woman think it is disgusting to see a man and a woman kissing. We live in the United States and it is currently 2003, we have our freedom and we use it. We are all different and there isn't a reason good enough explaining why one can't show who they really are. If he/she "swings the other way," let it be.

Omar had been "gay" since 7th grade, but no one had known until he was in his later teen years. Why? Because he was scared 'to come out of the closet,' scared people would make fun him, scared people would treat him differently — he was just scared. It's funny how the ignorant things people do cause certain people to mask their faces. How could one be happy if they held such a deep secret in their souls? Once Omar was a junior in high school, he matured and realized what he was missing out on. After long nights of laying in bed thinking, he found that he was finally secure with himself and as long as he accepted himself, he had nothing to lose. One day, Omar let go and told his friends he was gay. The ones who accepted him were his true friends, and those who didn't weren't even worth the long face.

People should stand up for whatever they believe in and think is right. It is very silly to say someone shouldn't be open about their sexuality if he is homosexual, just as it would be silly to say such an ignorant comment toward heterosexuals. People should be proud of their individuality! It only makes one more of a person, no less; to be open with their sexuality no matter if they are homosexual, heterosexual, transsexual, or bisexual! If someone is bothered by it, then they can mind their own business.

People shouldn't feel as though their homosexuality should be in closure. It isn't fair to them or their freedom. Who ever made a rule saying men and women should only unite? Maybe we Americans think in the wrong sense. Maybe women and women were meant for each other, and men and men as well. The problem is that most people are just close-minded and need to take some pliers to see what they could do to fix that issue. In conclusion, homosexual teens should display their sexuality as freely as they'd like.

## Cover Story

# CURIE PRIDE

By Enal Hindi  
Curie High School

Being different yet concealing that difference can be challenging.

Curie Pride strives to conquer that.

Curie Pride is a Gay Straight Alliance club at Curie High School. It started three years ago, when Mr. Blasch, a teacher at Curie, and five other teachers mentioned the idea of the club to the principal. Students interested in forming the club met with these teachers and organized the Curie Pride.

Forty-five curious students all had high hopes. Not all were homosexual or bisexual. Some came for the information, to meet new people, or simply to support a friend who is homosexual or bisexual.

The strength of their opinions and souls depends on how they feel and represent themselves; with only 13 club members, in a rally, they shout with the voices of 100. Being in high school where all the drama and popularity takes place can be quite difficult when character is actually judged by appearance, feelings and opinions, yet these mature teenagers aim to lead the misled, inform the misunderstood, and express the unexpressed with their powerful point of view on

**"There is no dress code for being homosexual or bisexual. Don't judge people when you look at them — accept them and learn to listen to their point of view,"**

**Alejandro Ortiz**

homosexuality and bisexuality.

Mr. Blasch said he wanted to start the club because everybody has the right to feel what ever they desire to and express it regardless of the population, or discrimination. "They need to feel safe at school. They need to feel free to articulate their individuality among others," he said.

It is hard to remain proud in the face of ignorance and popular opinion; however, the students of Curie Pride have found that, hard as it is, pride is always stronger than ignorance, even if nobody agrees with you, not even your friends. Alejandro Ortiz, a member of Curie Pride said, "A lot of students try to offend me in some manners, but I always remember the reason why I am in this club; and that is simply to build a better support system. All the other members were strangers to me. Now we are friends, we are here to support teach other when we feel we need such support."

And many students who are homosexual or bisexual need that support. Yajaira Leal, a junior and vice president of Curie Pride says that, "When you discover your individuality, and your sexual feelings, it is hard to tell people, even your friends.

It is a certain stage everyone goes through. It is OK to wait a while until you are fully confident to reveal an important fact about yourself. But if you choose not to tell anyone, you have to know that anyone should be able to accept you for anything, just as you accept him or her the way they are. You just have to be true to yourself, as well as to others. They deserve to know who you really are. And if they aren't OK with it at first, they soon have to realize people differ, but the way they treat you will never change."

Yunuen Rodriguez, a sophomore at Curie High School and the secretary of the Curie Pride, believes that a lot of people are confused and judge too quickly. "It's just feelings, there are no wrong feelings. Therefore, judgment against those feelings will lead to being uninformed. And being uninformed will take away amazing people from your life that you chose not to meet because of judgment," she said.

"There is no dress code for being homosexual or bisexual. Don't judge people when you look at them — accept them and learn to listen to their point of view," says Ortiz.

"This is a very cool club that gives an opportunity to make a change, an understanding of what's happening, and to get people out of the dark. We had a lot of things going on; recently we had the day of silence, in which students are silent all day in school, regarding all homosexuals and bisexuals that keep their secret in silence. They represent the thousands that are too afraid and embarrassed to reveal to their friends. Their teachers had to sign a paper informing them why they can't participate in talking in class today. Surprisingly, some teachers refused to sign some papers because they didn't believe in that. Some students broke the silence by the harassment of the students; others kept silent through out the whole entire day."

When Leal was silent, two boys who made a chance bet on who would make her talk first harassed



Members of Curie Pride gather for a photo.

Photos courtesy Enal Hindi, Curie High School

chance bet on who would make her talk first harassed her. "I couldn't believe them, especially since I know them, but I showed them how strong I was and kept my silence and dignity inside. Even though I was still silent and really wanted to tell them to shut up, deep down I said more than that just by keeping silent," Leal said.

The Curie Pride is also working on a quilt. Anyone that wants to add anything on it to express them is more than welcome to do so. The quilt consists of 7 by 7 inches of cloth that have creative designs on them that display the unspoken faith of homosexual and bisexual teens.

Scott Hardin, a sophomore Curie student also a member of the Curie Pride, joined for fun and to have the chance to meet new people. "The people here are extremely friendly, and that makes you feel more comfortable to talk to them about anything. They show a lot of support, and that is what I call a friend," he said. In reality, Homosexuality and bisexuality are against most religions including Christianity, Catholic, and Islam to name a few. Religion strikes against that for the main and logic reason that God created man for woman and woman for man. On the other hand, Ortiz says that if God loves all of us and accepts us as anyone, then he should accept us as homosexual or bisexual. Also saying, he created us and happiness is part of life, God should accept whatever makes us happy; even homosexuality and bisexuality. Ortiz doesn't regret or deny the fact that he is homosexual. Proudly accepting his difference, he feels that religion shouldn't be able to stop you from representing yourself, and feelings.



## Cover Story

# Life outside the closet

by Ervin Malakaj  
Amundsen High School

Have you ever wondered what homosexual teens go through before and after they come out? This month we are giving an insight into two gay teen's life in today's society, revealing what they went through and how they handled being "different." The following stories, as told to reporter Ervin Malakaj of Amundsen High School, illustrate what it means to grapple with being gay

### Anonymous

I want to stay anonymous because my dad still can't get over me being gay, which you will find out later why. Right now I am 19 years old, originally from Croatia, and right now I am attending a North Side school. I knew that I was gay ever since I can think and have never felt different about it. I knew that I was different from all my other friends and at the beginning I thought that I was weird and crazy. But that did not stop me from questioning myself and why I am different from everyone else.

When we moved from Croatia to Serbia, which happened when I was around 12 or 13 years old, I started to push it away. I wanted to push the thought of me being gay somewhere deep inside me where nobody would ever be able to know about my true identity. I did not want to accept myself for what I was and started to ignore my homosexuality. At that point I wanted to prove to myself that I was not gay and wanted to get together with a girl, which never happened.

Everything was fine for a while, and I could control my feelings without any problems until I reached the age of 16. At that point we moved to the United States and it was here where I was first exposed to homosexuality. I realized that there were more people than me and a lot of them were going through the same things that I was going through. For the first time in my life I could say that I was not alone. I started meeting new people and become more and more comfortable with what I am — a homosexual.

**"Right now I am trying to live my life the way that I think is the best."**

I could not stand lying to my parents all the time and decided to tell them thinking that it was something that I really need to do. I didn't just want my parents to know but also the whole world. I wanted the whole world to see me for what I am and not the fake mask that I was

putting on to hide my true identity.

I did eventually tell my parents about it and hoped that they would accept it like some everyday thing but that did not happen. They started blaming each other for what has happened and believed it was the other's fault. Eventually they wanted to talk me out of it. They threatened me that they would kick me out of the house if I didn't change, thinking that such a suggestion would work. So one day when I was alone at home, I packed my stuff and ran away to another town.

At first I didn't tell my parents where I went. Finally, I gathered all my courage to call them and tell them that I was alive and that I found a job. After that happened, I stated calling my mom on a weekly basis, only to find out that there was nothing that I wanted to tell her besides that I was fine.

Eight months later I decided that I wanted to meet them. While we were talking, they suggested that I should come back to live with them and forget about all the problems that were present in the past. They wanted me to finish school and I wanted the same thing. I eventually moved in with them making them think that I was no longer gay.

At first, everything went fine. I hated lying to them but that was the only way that I could have stayed with them. I started meeting this guy and things turned out to be just fine again until my sister caught me with him. She was mad at me for disrespecting my parents. In the meantime, my father was so proud of me being straight that he bought me all kinds of stuff. I got a new car, a computer and money for going out everyday. He thought that he could buy me with the money so I would never turn gay again. I told him that I have a girlfriend to satisfy him. To this day, he still believes that I am going out with the same girl which I am using as cover.

Once I even wanted to kill myself because I could not stand the constant lying.

I hate lying to them. I started getting depressed



Mya Escalona

because they would not accept me for what I am and my father still doesn't know that I am gay. My plans are certain: I want to finish school, go on to college and get a nursing degree. When I get a job I want to move away and live my own life without telling my family the truth about myself. There is no other way that I could survive.

Right now I am trying to live my life the way that I think is best.

### Myda Escalona

I am 16 years old and am attending Senn High School, which is located on the north side of Chicago. I consider myself bi-sexual. Ever since 13 years of age I know that I was attracted to women. At the beginning I thought that I was a pure lesbian but later on I found out that I was attracted to men as well as women.

I did not have any problems with my mother when I told her about it. She is a very open-minded woman and I still love her to death for accepting me for what I am. She did not try to talk me out of it or anything like that and I am very thankful for having her.

On the other hand, my father did not accept it. He thought that I was mentally challenged and that I was too young. He thought I was confused and that I was just making a big deal out of it. My parents divorced and I am glad that he doesn't live with us any more.

Right now I am very comfortable with my sexuality because that is what I am; a bi-sexual teen.

## Cover Story

# For one high school group, tolerance is more than a motto

By Kendra Fortenberry  
Jones College Prep

Thursday morning I attended a meeting of the Gay/Straight Alliance Club of Jones College Prep to get a better understanding of what the club was about. I had to admit, I felt uncomfortable being there. It wasn't the fact that there were homosexual students in the club, but there was such a strong sense of family. Everyone seemed comfortable and accepting. The students socialized like close friends while reaching for cookies, coffee cake, and other treats brought by their sponsor Mr. Dubois. The club spoke about planned trips such as plays, bowling parties, and pizza parties. Their meeting wasn't much different than any other school meeting. There were, however, differences between some club members and me. The students had a diverse background, and a distinct song to their lives, some of which will be read in this article.

When I first presented my questions to the club, most of the papers were returned. The questions didn't pertain to most of the present members at that time. But there was one girl, she had a pleasant and polite persona. She answered the questions, and I soon found out she was a 16-year-old bisexual female. Although she hadn't told her parents about her sexual orientation, she seemed very much at home in the club. I knew then there was an honored confidentiality between members. When asked how she felt about her sexuality around friends, the student responded by saying, "They are OK with me. I can be myself around them, and they can be themselves around me." Like all

felt more comfortable telling her friends about versus her parents.

Kelsey Kleidon, age 15, is a bisexual female as well. In the first grade, Kelsey had a crush on a girl. When asked if it was difficult accepting her feelings, she said, "Not at all. My family taught me to be proud of who I am."

Kelsey's parents are aware of her feelings. Her father is accepting, but her mother chooses to ignore it. Dealing with her parents' reaction was the most complicated part. One of your questions may be "Is it hard to find a date?" According to her, "Sort of. A lot of people who are bi or lesbian are afraid to come out. It seems kind of like a deep-seeded secret..."

Rogelio Zumudio, a bisexual male, feels it all depends on where you look. He also confesses it is easier to meet girls than guys. Rogelio thinks it's easier to be a homosexual female than male. Liz Oller agreed with his opinion. "Guys think it's hot, and we live in a typically male-driven society." Another common bond between the teens was that no one considered himself religious.

On April 9, the weather was warm, pleasant and breezy. The students of Jones College Prep had a half a day, but even that fact couldn't get some students to laugh and converse with friends. With baby-blue bands wrapped around their arms, on their legs, or even in their hair, these students were focusing on a commitment. April 9 was not just a half a day for these

high school students. It was the Day of Silence, where students paid homage to those who have been beaten and even killed because of their sexual orientation. By the end of the day, the few blue bandanas had grown to a number flooding the sidewalks of the downtown area where the school sat.

It was odd, not hearing from the usual opinionated and noticeable students of the class. My friend Brandiss and I teased Ayesha Shariff, a senior at Jones, because we knew she always had something to say. But that day, all her gossip and news had to be contained.

Ayesha, a 19-year-old straight female, has been a member of the Gay Straight Alliance for two years. In her first year, she served as the treasurer and this year she is the vice-president. When asked why she joined the club, Ayesha said, "...everybody deserves to feel safe and accepted despite sexual orientation. They should not be subjected to abuse physically, verbally, or emotionally..."

Ayesha also has many homosexual friends. To her, their preference does not define them as people. It's safe to say her fellow club members will agree greatly with the declaration summing up what I saw in that club meeting Thursday. "The club is not just about being homosexual but about teaching acceptance and tolerance," Ayesha said. "And justice for those who've been killed, abused and other things because of their orientation."

## For More Information...

A lot of fiction and nonfiction books have been written for gay teens, bisexual teens and those who just want to better understand what being gay means. Here are a few diverse choices.

All are available through Amazon.com.:

"A Different Sin" by Rochelle Schwab – A fictional look at what it means to be gay – more than 100 years ago!

"Am I Blue? Coming out from the Silence," Edited by Marion Dane Bauer. Sixteen short stories about grappling with the gay issue from popular young adult authors.

"Annie on My Mind," by Nancy Garden – A coming-of-age fictional tale about two teenaged girls finding their first love.

"Mom, Dad, I'm Gay – How Families Negotiate Coming Out," By Ritch C. Savin-Williams — Savin-Williams, a psychologist, interviewed more than 150 teens to write about the differences in coming out to families, friends, and how different relationships (mother-daughter, father-son, etc.) are impacted.

## "Geography Club" entertains and informs

by Ervin Malakaj  
Amundsen High School

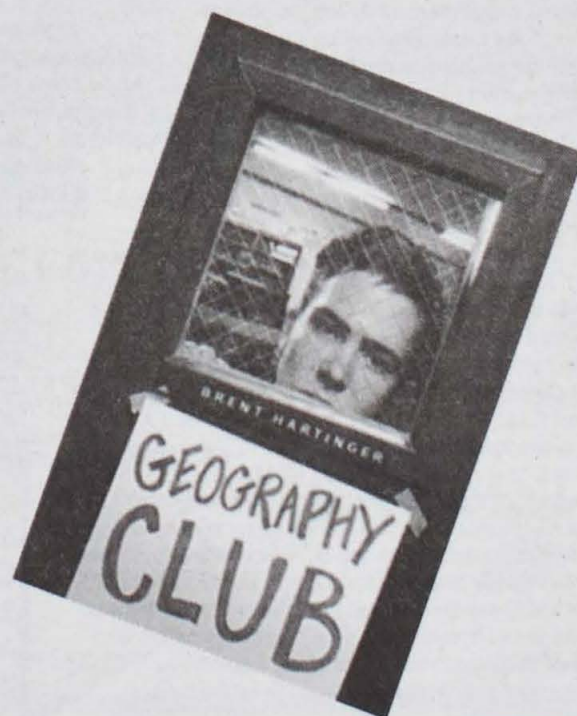


By Brent Hartinger 226 pages \$15.99

"Geography Club" is a very entertaining book about a gay teen who feels very lonely because he thought that he was the only gay kid on his high school. Later on he finds out that his chat buddy on the internet is none other but the most popular guy in school. On top of that he finds out that his best friend is bi-sexual and has a girlfriend as well.

All of them go to the same school but they can't find a way to get together and talk without being exposed to the school with would not take their "coming-out-of-the-closet" thing cool. They eventually come up with the idea of forming a boring club, to which no one would come, and which would enable them to talk without fearing to be exposed to the whole school.

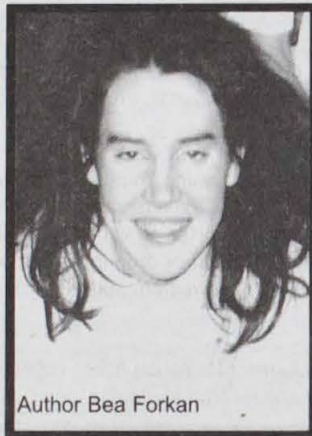
The book is a very interesting piece of art that gives one insight into one gay teen's life.



## Cover Story

# About Face gives gay teens their own space

By Bea Forkan  
Rosary High School



Author Bea Forkan

As my senior year draws to an end, nostalgia naturally kicks in. Though the majority of my high school career has been filled with the typical teenage memories, another portion is full of unique tales of a young queer coming to terms with her identity and finding her place in this world.

As the high school chapter of my life closes, I am left with saying goodbye to old friends and suddenly carrying the role of "adult." But before I can start busying myself with the responsibilities of being an adult, I first need to grow up. On the exterior I may be an "adult" to some, but at least at About Face Youth Theatre, an environment where I can reclaim myself as a youth, I have time to grow into who I am and will soon come to be.

Though the snow has melted and tulips are exploding across the fields of America, the distant memories of the winter still linger in my mind. Feb. 8 was just an ordinary bleak, winter day, but it marked the first day of the internal empowerment and experimental endeavor with About Face Youth Theatre. About Face Youth Theatre is, in the words of the creators, "a six-month performance workshop for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and their allies (LGBTQA) between the ages of 14 and 20." It is run in conjunction with Horizons Community Services.

When I walked into the church basement where the workshops were being held, I was timid and skeptical at first. Common questions began to surface. Will I fit in? Will I like these strangers? What will I gain from this? As quickly as the doubts flourished, they just as soon dissipated. The friendly faces and gestures assured me I was in a safe and welcoming environment.

For three hours every Saturday, a workshop is held. Each workshop has a different theme, and various artists or activists come share their knowledge on the subject but to inspire us as artists. With each workshop I attended, I gained more self-knowledge, but more importantly, more knowledge from my peers of different cultures. I noticed after the workshop I would be full of empowerment because I knew I was not alone in being a queer youth. I was left with the strength to be able to fight the discrimination I was experiencing at private high school. Because of the guest speakers, I was given the opportunity to see queer-identified "out" people living their lives and having successful careers. I was finally exposed to real queer role-models, instead of the queer "role-models" depicted in the media who further perpetuate the entrenching stereotypes booming throughout mainstream society. My family always



About Face Youth Theatre Ensemble members perform in a scene from *Inside Out* (2002)

Photo courtesy About Face Youth Theatre Ensemble

are issues I would never be able to talk about within my "community." My experience also showed me what a true community looks like; an honest support structure built on the foundation of trust, security, and familiar experiences. For me, About Face did this and more.

About Face Youth Theater is going into its fifth year, which may seem insignificant to most. But to the staff who developed the program, it is monumental. When the co-founders of the Youth Theater jump-started the program, they never imagined it would make it into the fifth year.

This year is also particularly special because it is the first time the youth will perform at the Goodman Theatre. Though this is only my first time participating with About Face Youth Theater, I feel especially privileged to be a part of this phenomenal year. The upcoming show this summer not only culminates the long months we have spent together, but it also simultaneously sparks the beginning of what the next generation of queer youth will look like. And as the ensemble for this summer's show begins to feverishly work on memorizing lines, it signifies more than us coming together as a team; it establishes that we are a family bound together with a common thread.

**The fifth mainstage production of the About Face Youth Theatre will be held at the Goodman Theatre in downtown Chicago. Performances begin July 31, 2003 and the show runs through August 17, 2003. For ticket information visit the website at [www.about-face.org](http://www.about-face.org)**

## "Keeping You a Secret" keeps it real

by Jessica Xu  
Northside College Prep



"Keeping You A Secret" is a contemporary, moving, and compelling love story between two teenage girls. The book begins with a girl named Holland Jaeger, a senior in high school. Holland is very successful in school. She is student body president, is on the swim team and has a handsome boyfriend. She is perfectly satisfied with her life until a transfer student, Cece, comes into her life. As Holland gets to know Cece more and more, she starts to feel an awkward attraction toward Cece. Her newfound feelings turn her world upside down. Holland finally admits she is gay and accepts the love between her and Cece.

There are very few young adult novels that express the love between the same sexes. However, "Keeping You A Secret" is an outstanding teen lesbian love story. It clearly presents the transition stage that Holland must go through as she realizes she is not what she expected. With its dark humor, the book strongly expresses a message: be proud of who you are. "Keeping You A Secret" is definitely a book worth reading.

## Cover Story

# Gay teen resources

If you're looking for advice, try these places

Affinity -- African-American Les/Bi/Gay & Trans  
P O Box 496002  
Chicago, IL 60649  
(773) 324-0377

Café Pride is open from 8 pm to midnight on Friday nights at 716 W. Addison St. Located in the Parish House of Lake View Presbyterian Church, there is no "preaching" and visitors do not have to be Christian. There is no cover fee or cost for refreshments, either.

Gerber/Hart Library is the Midwest's largest LGBT circulating library with over 14,000 volumes, 800 periodical titles, and 100 archival collections. 1126 W. Granville Ave. (773) 381-8030

GLSEN - The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network -- is a national organization uniting those who actively care about ending homophobia in the schools. The Chicago chapter, which became active during the 1994-1995 school year, works with like-minded individuals and groups throughout the Midwest—such as youth support groups, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) chapters, union caucuses, gay-straight student alliances, and educator's groups. In addition to sponsoring meetings, workshops, conferences, an annual Back-to-School campaign and a contingent in the Chicago Pride Parade each June, GLSEN Chicago presents annual scholarships to young people (regardless of their sexual orientation) who have demonstrated a commitment to ending homophobia in Illinois schools. Projects include youth leadership summits, It's Elementary video project, and a speakers' bureau. For more information, e-mail Richard Rykhus at rrykhus@attbi.com, or go [www.glsenchicagoland.org](http://www.glsenchicagoland.org).

Horizons Community Services, 961 W. Montana  
To learn more about the youth services, call (312) 472-6469.

Lesbian & Gay Helpline  
(312) 929-HELP  
(312) 327-HELP (TDD)

The Office of GLBT Concerns at UIC hosts a monthly Lunch 'n' Learn. Presentations and discussions are free and open to the public. For more information, go to [www.uic.edu/depts/quic/oglbtc](http://www.uic.edu/depts/quic/oglbtc).

PFLAG/Chicago: PO Box 11023 Ontario Station-  
Chicago, IL 60611-0023 (773) 472-3079  
PFLAG/North Suburban- Glenview/B'nai JBE (847) 729-7575

With programs devoted to reach parents and youth at home, school and work, for 26 years PRIDE has programs that include the PRIDE Survey (student drug use and violence questionnaires), the Annual PRIDE World Drug Conference and the PRIDE Youth training programs (America's PRIDE, Club PRIDE and PRIDE Pals). Go to [www.prideyouthprogram.org](http://www.prideyouthprogram.org) for more information on the annual drug conference and other youth programs.

The PRIDE Youth Program is a part of LINKS - North Shore Youth Health Service. LINKS is a private, non-profit organization that has provided confidential adolescent health services and education related to sexuality since 1973. The Pride Youth Program was established in 1993 to provide direct services to sexual minority youth and adults of the north and northwest suburbs and educate the larger communities about issues related to sexual minority youth. On Wednesdays from 6-9 pm, teens, 13-18, can meet at the Northfield Youth Center at 1779 Maple St. in Northfield, or on Thursdays 6-9 pm at Palatine Youth Center, Countryside Unitarian Church, 1025 N. Smith Road. The Pride Youth Program offers community education, consultation, and professional training. In all of our programming, we create a supportive, non-judgmental environment that facilitates self-exploration at a pace that is determined by the participants themselves.

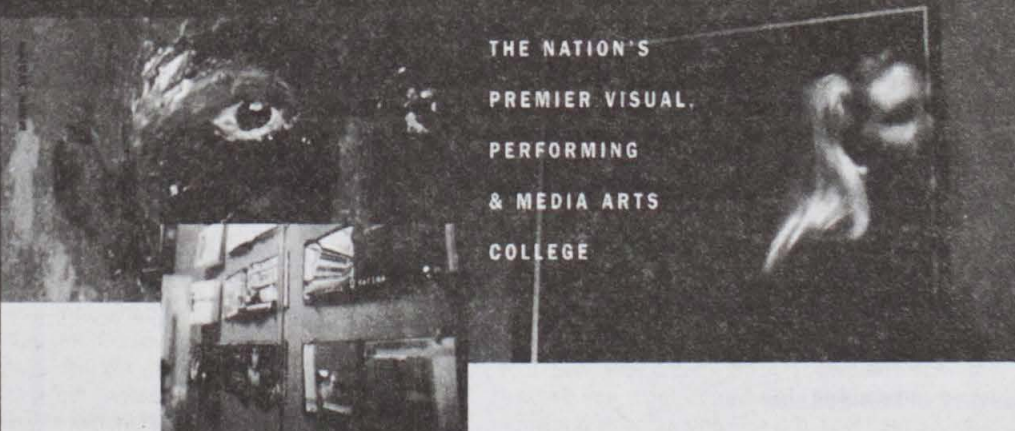
participants themselves. This is true for not only the teens that attend our Youth Centers but also the individual adults and community organizations who request assistance as they struggle to understand their feelings, organize their thoughts, and adjust their perspectives to include the lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and gay adolescents in their own back yards. For more information, call (847) 441-6191.

Questioning Youth Centers are for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning Youth, and allies in the Chicagoland area. Social, educational, and recreational programming includes HIV prevention, speakers, discussions, and game nights. For drop-in center locations, which are mostly in the western suburbs, call (630) 415-2053.

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) -- includes information about college financial aid for gay and lesbian students.

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# Humor

## What makes me mad...

By Vanessa Tillman  
Jones College Prep



After everything that has happened to you and made you mad, you get to read my column and feel relieved. You aren't the only one who wants to snap and have to keep calming yourself down. You feel like no one really cares when you are mad. Well, I don't care if anyone cares about

So here's what makes me mad:

When your best friends treat you worse than your enemies.

When you're on the internet and all these things keep popping up. Every time you go to a new site, like 30 other boxes pop up.

When someone is on the phone and when they hang up, they start talking about the person they were just talking to.

When some adults act like they have a problem with teenagers, when they had to have been one before.

When you ask somebody a simple question and they answer by telling like an hour-long story that has nothing to do with what you asked.

me being mad, but I have an opportunity to put it out now and I hope that someone reads it. What makes you mad? You can email your problems to me at [nessa13\\_2001@yahoo.com](mailto:nessa13_2001@yahoo.com) and I will get back to you ASAP.

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## Survey

## STUDENTS SPEAK OUT!

This month's survey winner on music is Karen Lyke, a senior at Hirsch High School.



Karen says the kind of music she listens to that is unpopular is "old school, which is out of style but popular to me." On being an aspiring rock band musician, Lyke had this to say:

"Our group is called Unique; our band names are Lady 03 and Queen K. I aspire to be a great singer of R&B."

Through the year, students have responded to NE survey and essay questions, have e-mailed us their thoughts, have spoken out at our office forums, and have shared articles written for other publications.

Oshana Johnson, a Wentworth Gardens resident, wrote on whether or not she thought people living in the housing developments should have their homes rebuilt, or should be given section 8 vouchers.

"In my opinion there are advantages and disadvantages to rebuilding housing in the same areas as well as to giving the residents section 8," she wrote. "I think that if they rebuild houses in the same area, the advantage would be that the residents get to stay around family and the children won't have to transfer schools. I think the disadvantage is that lots of police harassment happens in these areas, and most people believe that if you live in the projects that automatically means you are a menace to society or going to grow up that way.

"It is also segregated in the projects. If residents are given section 8, the advantage is that the children will be exposed to a wider range of social contacts, it is less violent and you can get away from the police harassment. I think the disadvantage to section 8 is that the children have to transfer to different schools and you also have to worry about discrimination from neighbors."

Desaray Moore, who lives in what remains of the Robert Taylor Homes, wrote this about how adults need to take responsibility for the problems in her neighborhood:

"Adults should be our role models, but instead they are roughriders. If they're big in gangs and shooting guns, selling drugs and smoking blunts, they're a bad example. The children that are looking up to them think they should do the same thing. So instead of making the world better, they're making it even worse.

"My role model is my granny. She's nice and she helps my little brother, my cousins and me. She can't help all the time because she had brain surgery. When she can't help them, I try to be the other side of her brain and teach them all I know. My granny encourages me to be what I want to be, and not what other people want me to be. She tries her best to push me to a higher level, and I love her for that.

"So all the children who truly feel like me, get up and tell your family to stop it. I'm just trying to let you know that you're not the only ones out there who feel this way. Now you know there is one more person who is on your side, a little girl who lives in the Robert Taylor development who is just dying to meet you."

As we sign off for the end of the school year, we'd also like to share some of the comments from the contributors you don't see so much from: the essayists and survey respondents who don't win our contests.

On how safe students feel in the city in our post 9-11 era, this is what Genille Tillman of Carver Military Academy had to say:

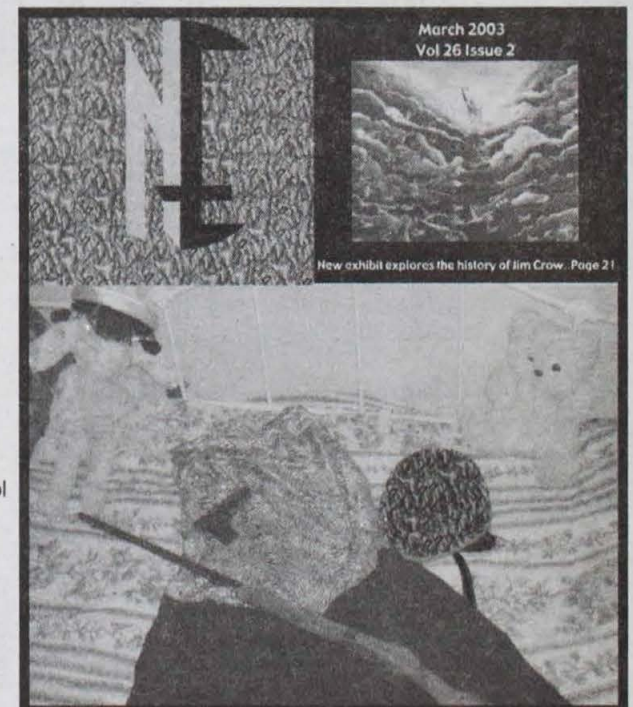
"If I'm going to River Oaks with my grandma, she'll want to leave because she said 'That's the first thing they (gunmen) do, go after the malls.'"

Juan Merlos, of Prosser Vocational, wrote that he was unnerved by the E-2 nightclub tragedy (NE March 2003) because "People are not very responsible."

Of being a first-generation American (NE April 2003) Rodrigo Haro of Carver Military Academy, wrote, "I feel proud because I'm Hispanic and I have to stick up for my race."

On how homosexuals should be treated by others (NE, this issue) Nicole Pradun of Lane Technical High School said, "It's bad enough when people are being made fun of, but it's even worse when what they are being made fun of is something they cannot control, such as being a homosexual."

Still, Stephan Hui, also of Lane Technical High School, says that homosexuals should not show affection publicly. "One reason I believe that homosexual teens should keep their sexuality private is because it can affect other people more than it may seem. I, for one, feel awkward when I see this (public display)."



## Entertainment

### Rappers get a bad rap, bad rep

By Lenora Carroll  
Curie High School

People often stereotype rappers as drug dealers and killers.

Other stereotypes are that they are only in it for the money, or that they only care about getting females and having sex.

Rappers are either putting out what they think will sell or what they love or want to do. If they think showing off their cars and their houses, or saying they are going to pop a cap in somebody will sell a record, then the group of people they are aiming for must like it. If they did not, could they put rims on all six of their cars or buy a mansion to show off in their videos?

Zaid Estrada, 16, said some of the stereotypes people have of rappers are that they only worry about getting famous, or getting their money and cars and putting 20s on them, and just talking about girls and sex.

But Curly Hudson, age 15, says there's more to rap — that it tells a story.

Many people would agree with this, like Tonette Palmer, age 15, who says that rap is also telling stories of that person's life and explaining why they do the things they do.

Palmer also said that while a stereotype of rappers is that they are only doing it because of the money and fame, some of the things they say are real and people like us should take heed to what they say.

In a recent NE interview, rappers Boo and Gotti echoed Palmer's thoughts when they were asked why they decided to rap. They said it was an opportunity for them to stay away from death, jail, and the hood, so they could do something positive with their lives.

Movies sometimes stereotype rappers as killers and drug dealers. Are these rappers being true to themselves or are they just playing the part for the money or the publicity? Gotti said that the rappers in the movies were just trying to keep it real. When asked if he would do a movie, he said yes because it would be more money for the people he was helping to support. Not all the money that rappers have goes straight to their pockets — some may even take out money for funds or charities.

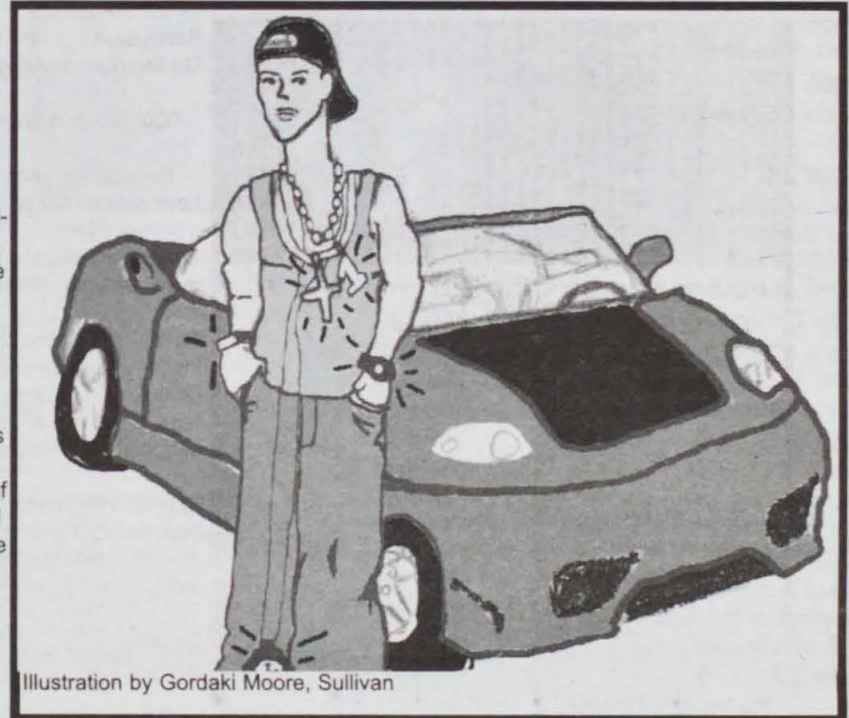


Illustration by Gordaki Moore, Sullivan

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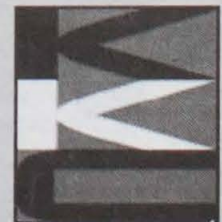
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## Entertainment

### Summer DVD Releases

#### June 3

The Animatrix  
Die Another Day

#### June 10

Grease 2  
Tears of the Sun

#### June 17

Deliver Us From Eva  
Narc

#### June 24

Cowboy BeBop - The Movie  
Just Married  
Kangaroo Jack  
Punch Drunk Love

#### July 1

Gangs of New York  
Guilty As Sin  
How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days

#### July 8

Basic  
Curly Sue  
Fear of a Black Hat

#### July 15

Eve of Destruction  
Revenge of the Ninja  
Shanghai Knights

#### July 22

Batman - The Animated Series - Out of the Shadows  
City Hunter  
Final Destination 2 (Infinifilm Edition)



Cowboy BeBop the Movie, based on the hit Cartoon Network show, comes to DVD June 24.

#### July 29

Piglet's Big Movie  
The Quiet American  
Solaris  
XX/Xy

#### August 5

Bringing Down The House (Widescreen Edition)  
The Omega Man  
Valley Girl

#### August 19

Bowling for Columbine  
Chicago

#### August 26

The Lord of the Rings - The Two Towers (Widescreen Edition)

### June Concerts

O-TOWN House of Blues, 6/12, all-ages  
LL COOL J, DRU HILL Star Plaza, 6/14  
NAS House of Blues, 6/14, all-ages  
MUSIQ, VIVIAN GREEN House of Blues, 6/15(HED) PE House of Blues, 6/18, 18 & over  
PEARL JAM United Center, 6/18 with Idlewild;  
EARTH, WIND & FIRE Star Plaza, 6/20  
ROLLINS BAND Vic, 6/21, all-ages  
WARPED TOUR with SUM 41, DROPKICK MURPHYS, RANCID, GLASSJAW, USED, LESS THAN JAKE Tweeter Center, 6/29



R&B crooner Musiq Soulchild stops by the House of Blues on June 15th.

### July Concerts

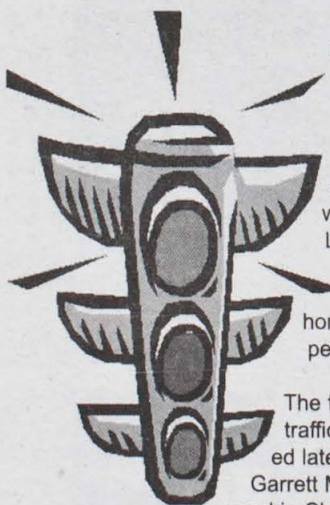
B2K UIC Pavilion, 7/11  
LES CLAYPOOL FROG BRIGADE Vic, 7/11  
LAPALOOZA with JANE'S ADDICTION, INCUBUS, AUDIOSLAVE, QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, DONNAS, JURASSIC 5 Tweeter Center, 7/12  
BLUES TRAVELER Ravinia, 7/16  
JAY-Z, 50 CENT, SNOOP DOGG, FABOLOUS, SEAN PAUL Tweeter Center, 7/16  
OZZFEST with OZZY OSBOURNE, KORN, MARILYN MANSON, DISTURBED & OTHERS Tweeter Center, 7/20  
METALLICA, LIMP BIZKIT, LINKIN PARK & OTHERS Hawthorne Race Course, 7/26  
WEIRD AL YANKOVIC Skyline Stage, 7/26  
MARIAH CAREY United Center, 7/29



"Weird Al" Yankovic, the clown prince of pop, visits the Navy Pier Skyline Stage July 26 for two shows.

## Things to do around Chicago this summer

### Did you know...



Traffic lights were used before cars were invented. In 1868, a lantern with red and green signals was used at a London intersection to control the flow of horse buggies and pedestrians.

The first automatic traffic light was invented later in 1920 by Garrett Morgan and first used in Cleveland, Ohio.

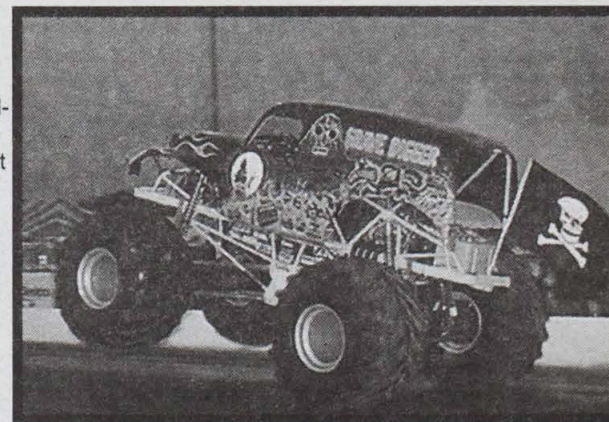
source: <http://www.didyouknow.cd>

Monster Truck exhibit at the Museum of Science & Industry, 57<sup>th</sup> Street and Lake Shore Drive, now through Sept. 1. The 15,000-square-foot, nine-section exhibit includes videos of truck stunts and crashes, stories of real-life drivers, and actual monster trucks. General admission is \$9 for adults (children over 12), though city residents get a museum discount. An additional exhibit fee is \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for children under 12. For more information, go to [www.msichicago.org](http://www.msichicago.org).

"Aqui Estoy - I Am Here," the latest youth-written and performed play from the Albany Park Theatre Project, will run May 22-June 8 at the Eugene Field Cultural Center, 5100 N. Ridgeway Ave. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students. Reservations are strongly recommended. For more information, go to [www.apthicago.org](http://www.apthicago.org) or call (773) 866-0875.

For the first time in their history, the African-American ALYO Children's Dance Theatre will perform their unique mix of high-energy drumming and dancing downtown when they arrive for two shows at the Merle Reskin Theatre of DePaul University, 60 E. Balbo Drive, 7 p.m. June 7 and 3 p.m. 8. General admission tickets are \$15. For more information, call (773) 298-6304, or go to the company website, [www.alyochildrensdance.com](http://www.alyochildrensdance.com).

The first of the major music fests is this month - the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Gospel Music Festival will take place in Grant Park June 6-8. Call (312) 744-3315 for more information. Or go to [www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents](http://www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents).



## Summer Movie Guide

### Opening June 6

#### 2 Fast 2 Furious

Paul Walker returns in this sequel as a (former) undercover cop who specializes in infiltrating illegal street racing gangs, with the action shifting this time around to Miami



### Opening June 13

#### Dumb and Dumberer: When Harry Met Lloyd

Set back when the characters played by Jeff Daniels and Jim Carrey from "Dumb and Dumber" were in high school (now played by newcomers Derek Richardson and Eric Christian Olsen), this comedy shows how they met and their first attempts to be normal.

**Wanna know what's coming out this summer? Check out NE's Summer movie preview.**

#### The Eye

From Hong Kong comes this international horror movie hit about a young blind girl who receives a cornea transplant that returns her sight, but brings along some unexpected surprises... visions of ghosts and the face of the cornea's former owner.

### Opening June 20,

#### The Hulk

In this adaptation of the long-running Marvel comic "The Incredible Hulk," research scientist Dr. Bruce Banner's (Eric Bana) failed experiments cause him to mutate into a monstrously powerful and savage green-skinned behemoth whenever he loses control of his emotions. Jennifer Connelly plays his love interest Betty Ross, Nick Nolte plays Bruce's dangerous father, and Sam Elliott plays Betty's father, the tough-as-nails General Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross.



### Opening June 27

#### Charlie's Angels 2: Full Throttle

"Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle" is a sequel to the blockbuster action-adventure-comedy hit released by Columbia Pictures and inspired by the popular television series. The sequel reunites Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore and Lucy Liu as the indomitable crime-fighting heroines. In the Angels' new adventure, the captivating trio once again demonstrates their expertise as espionage and martial arts, and disguise.



*Continued on next page*

### NEW EXPRESSION READERSHIP SURVEY

Please fill in and send to Youth Communication by June 30. All entrants will be placed in a drawing for two prizes of \$50. Please print answers, and respond in complete sentences. Include your name, address, phone number and email. Mail your response to: Youth Communication, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605.

What do you like about *New Expression*? What don't you like?

If you were going to be involved in New Expression, what area would you like to work in? Circle all that apply.

NE on TV  
 Writing articles for *New Expression*    Writing fiction/poetry for *New Expression*    Taking photos for *New Expression*    Drawing illustrations for *New Expression*

Would you be interested in attending a meeting to work at New Expression or NE on TV? Would you be willing to travel downtown to do so?

What kind of articles would you like to see in next year's NE?

What kind of special columns/sections would you like to see in NE?

What kind of special events could NE sponsor that would entice you to attend?

What do you think makes NE different from adult media?

What special features would you like to see on an NE website?

What issues do you think would make for a good teen discussion? Would you be interested in organizing such events?

## Summer Movie Guide (con't)

### Opening July 2

#### Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines

Arnold Schwarzenegger returns in this third installment of the popular sci-fi action saga as a cyborg from the future once again becoming involved in the affairs of twentysomething John Connor and his first battles with the SkyNet machine network.

#### Legally Blonde 2: Red, White, & Blonde



Pink-loving, blonde-haired Harvard Law School graduate Elle Woods (Reese Witherspoon) returns in this sequel, as she turns her legal and fashion-savvy know-how towards getting a bill passed

through Congress.

### Opening July 18

#### Bad Boys II

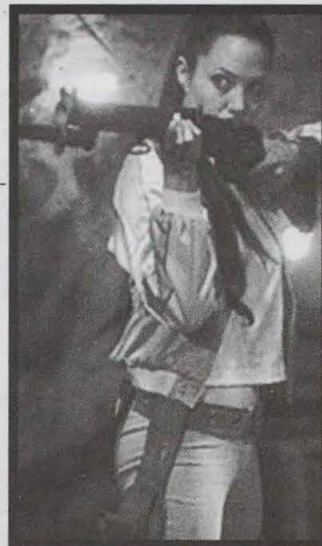
Narcotics detectives Mike Lowrey (Will Smith) and Marcus Burnett (Martin Lawrence) have been assigned to a high-tech task force investigating the flow of designer ecstasy into Miami. This leads them to a conspiracy involving a vicious Kingpin whose ambitions have ignited a bloody turf war.



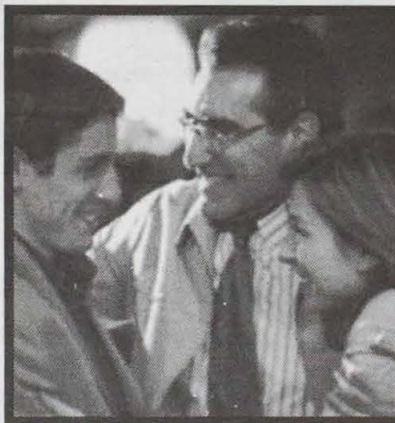
### Opening July 25

#### Laura Croft: Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life

This time around, archaeologist and explorer Lara Croft journeys to a temple, sunken underwater, that leads to a sphere that contains the mythical Pandora's Box, only to have it stolen from her by Chen Lo, the leader of a Chinese crime syndicate, who's in league with a bad guy named Reiss who wants to use the Box as a doomsday weapon.



### Opening August 1.



#### American Wedding

With East Great Falls High now just a memory, the kids have grown into young adults ready to wreak havoc with a new rite of passage - Jim and Michelle are getting

married - in a hurry. Jim's grandmother is sick and wants to see Jim walk down the aisle, so they're going for it in two frantic weeks.

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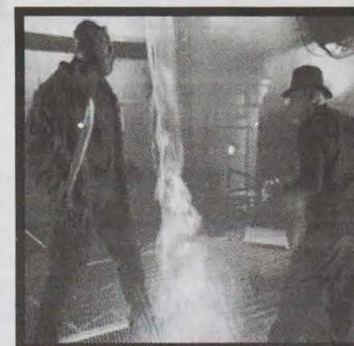
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### Opening August 15th,



#### Freddie V. Jason

A group of teenagers finds themselves stuck in the middle of a battle between two forces of evil: silent stalker Jason Voorhees (Hodder) and gabby dream master Freddy Krueger

(Englund), as the battle wages from Elm Street to a climactic finale fought at Camp Crystal Lake.

### Youth Communication would like to thank the following organizations for their continued support:

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Women in Communication

## Short Story

# Blue Summer

By Kendra Fortenberry  
Jones College Prep

### Scene One

The streets were paved with the pale blue glow of the moon. The windows of homes were illuminated with the flickering lights of televisions. Every few homes, there would be a bright golden bulb casting a yellow sheet over the many brown, talking faces. Faintly and far away, howls of watchdogs would shatter the peaceful night, sometimes causing a gasp, jump, or grasping of the person closest to you.

The night was warm and steamy, sticking to your skin. I was walking warily; the feeling of someone pursuing me was evident. The soft crackle of twigs and branches sounded deafening in the silent, dark night. I broke into a sprint, my legs stretched from beneath me. I began to separate myself from civilization; my hunter was calm and swift, keeping with my strides effortlessly. I was surrounded by trees and enclosed by darkness. A large bodied figure had me trapped. I was pinned against the rough bark of a tree, unable to move. Helpless, vulnerable, and weaponless.

I cringed as I saw my enemy's finger began to apply pressure on the colorfully curved trigger. I let out a pleading yelp.

### Scene Two

I screamed as the ice cold frigid water hit my body. I had lost the water war.

"I hate you Jordan!" I shook myself as if I was a dog; droplets of water detached themselves from my frame. He punched me hard in the arm as if I was a boy and not his play sister.

"Hey! Don't be mad at me because I won!" After this, other black figures began to pour from the forest. All were wide-eyed and shivering. Their plastic guns dropped onto the grass.

"Y-yyyy you g-ggot c-ccaught b-bby h-hhim too?" asked Daniel, chilled and incoherent-like.

"Yeah," I hesitantly admitted, "but that's only because I ran out of water."

"Hey, y'all were the ones to let y'all guards down," reasoned Jordan.

"So you didn't have to shoot me all up in my head. I had just gotten it done!" With this protest, Daniel punched him in his chest. He retaliated by poking out his tongue.

"Aaaaagh!" A large goofy frightening figure leaped at us. Daniel and I screamed in unison while Jordan and Lewis slapped each other's hand in their successful attempt to frighten us. Lewis had a large branch in his hand.

"Y'all stupid!" I yelled.



A lodge at summer camp can be a home away from home.

NE File Photo

"Eh-eh, watch this," Lewis quietly whispered as if he were going to commit some sort of inexcusable mischief. Unsurprisingly, he did. With a large wind of his arm, Lewis hurled a big egg towards Mrs. Doreen's bedroom window. The egg smacked the window with a hard, sickening whack! My stomach began to turn, but not because of the sound but because of Lewis's senseless, crazy, asking-for-punishment deed. The yellow sticky goop began to ooze down the old hag's window.

"Everybody break!" Daniel loudly whispered. We all seceded in different directions. Each one of knowing our meeting place. I ran full speed to the park, somewhat smiling. You may be wondering why we'd hit an old woman's window. Here's the answer: It's fun. No, seriously, Mrs. Doreen is mean, lazy and nosey. Last week a bunch of kids were playing in the water of a fire hydrant. She called the police and we all received a long droning speech about safety and preserving our water supply. She also called us slothful, no-good bums yet she's the one who has Christmas decorations in mid August.

"Who! That was close!" Jordan stooped down like an old man and began to pant like a dog.

"Lewis you stupid!" Daniel puffed out, also panting.

"Well...I...took...a...risk," Lewis weakly defended.

"Eh, y'all, look, it's getting late now so I think I should be getting home," I broke in.

"Yeah, me too," Jordan agreed. Lewis and Daniel also approved.

We departed and began our dark journey home. I crossed my bare sticky arms. I couldn't wait to take a bath. The light of my porch popped on as I neared. I slid the key in the door and was greeted with my mother's smile. Her mahogany hands were on her large hips, a letter clamped in one.

"Hey Clariss. What you been up to tonight?"

"Oh, nothing much. Me and the guys just hung around."

"Mmm huh." Momma had a look on her face like, that figures. She handed me the letter.

I read who sent it and let out a babyish moan. "The Educational Camp of Fun and Learning. Yuck! I don't want this. I hate that place," I stated, quite immaturity.

"It's better than staying here and doing nothing. A little bit of learning over the summer won't hurt." She said

**Blue Summer**  
(Continued on next page)

## Short Story

### Blue Summer

(Continued from previous page)

this sternly and a bit agitatedly. I knew to be careful so I put on my sweetest voice.

"But mommy, I spent all year learning. My grades were good. Can I please do nothing summer? All the other kids are doing it." I pouted and gave Momma a small hug, but this doesn't work when you're a 14-year-old.

"Look, girl, you'll be going to high school next year and you need to be prepared."

"But Momma," I said, "I should relax 'cause I ain't gonna be able to have as much free time when I start school."

"You keep on talking like that and you're definitely going." She pointed a manicured finger at me. "It's not like you have anything to do anyway. All you do is watch TV. And eat my food."

"Nuh, uhn, I do stuff," I weakly protested.

"Oh yeah?" Well, what did you do tonight?" I cringed at this question.

"Nothing," I piped up quickly.

"Then why you so wet?"

"Nothing," I answered nervously.

"Well, look, if you do a little reading and say out of trouble you won't have to go, OK, sugar?"

I kissed my momma gently on her smooth cheek. "OK," I happily agreed. I kissed her again good night. I took a hot, cleansing bath and rested my heavy head on my pillow, falling peacefully asleep.

#### Scene Three

The golden sun streamed through my blinds, causing thin butterscotch ribbons to flow inward with many tiny rays. The room was cast in a soft, gentle, blond glow.

**"You keep on talking like that and you're definitely going." She pointed a manicured finger at me. "It's not like you have anything to do anyway. All you do is watch TV. And eat my food."**



Bonfires are great for roasting marshmallows... and mischief.

NE File Photo

The birds were tenderly and soft-heartedly singing and

"CLARISS SIMONE GIVENS! MARCH YOUR BEHIND HERE NOW!!!!!" My momma abruptly interrupted this appreciation for nature and its pleasant beauty. I quickly — out of reflex — threw my legs from my once-comfortable spot and literally jumped from the bed. I flew down the stairs knowing I was in trouble.

"Morning, Momma," I tried to sleepily and childishly rub my eyes.

"Don't be cute, girl," my mom said sharply, seeing through my act. "What is this I hear about you egging people's houses?" I once again got that sickening-nauseated feeling. "Well?"

"Um...um... I don't know what happened." My voice uncontrollably became cracking and loud.

"Quit your lying, girl. I'm a give you one chance to tell the truth," Momma said sternly. I nervously bit my lower lip and debated in my mind whether or not I should confess. I then decided to blame it on Mrs. Doreen's cataracts, even though she didn't have any. I began to wring my pajama shorts in my hand.

"Oh Momma," I said shakily, "You know that old woman can't see nothing and she got all them birds and they probably..."

I shut up when I saw Momma whip out a large water gun with a big, fat, brightly shimmering colored sticker that said "Daniel." That proved I was there. I smacked myself on the forehead. I told that girl about being so

doggoned vain.

"You'll be going to the camp," my mom said definitely and quickly. She wore that "case closed" look.

"But Mommmmmaaaaa," I dragged out her name, genuinely whining.

"But nothing. You're going!" Momma marched up the stairs. I then saw a smirk on Mrs. Doreen's face, as she and one of the birds passed our house.

#### Scene Four

My head wobbled from side to side on the rocky uneven bus, and Jordan slobbering on my shirt sleeve didn't help. "Ewww! Get up, man!" I moved my arm up, moving him off my shoulder. He got up with a nasty slurp.

"Sorry," he apologized drowsily and raspy. I looked over as Daniel was killing Lewis with chatter. I knew I wouldn't stand this place. It was a lot of goofy big-headed kids with helmet-type braces talking about how many Pokemon cards they had. One guy just ramshackles us with an array of cards in mint-perfect-wonderful condition. He had a bunch of weird characters, which to me were Stupidmon and Morestupidmon.

All I wanted was Picachu and he ain't even had that. I was relieved when he departed from us, especially since he had food in his braces. That boy could talk, too. He told us his whole life story.

**Blue Summer**  
(Continued on next page)

## Short Story

### Blue Summer

(Continued from previous page)

As you can tell, I am not happy. I couldn't stand this camp last year. These stupid cheap cotton shirts itched and we sang stupid songs like, "Geographical County Ballad," or "Mathematical Matinee" about some girl in a mall with a bunch of equations and...it was just stupid.

Once again, my stomach began to turn when we passed under a stupid sign that said, 'You come a stranger and leave an educated stranger, Everyone's friends'

These bright colors were killing me and he fat that they

**I could see the veins in his head and neck twitch. His eyes bulged, and Beth came turning me around with the same look.**

unfashionably infested my shirt didn't revive me. I almost broke into ruined tears when I saw a goofy boy fall. He was so round and fat he almost rolled away. I busted up laughing. Then I saw some cute boys and figured everything was OK. I mostly hated this place because usually most kids are younger. There were some older ones but they tended to be snobs.

We hopped off the bus and stomped onto a bunch of woodchips. I'm from Chicago, and walked on concrete all my life! So what makes them think I wanna walk on some bumpy, dirty, wobbly ricochet pieces of old wood? And they got all in my shoes, too and these cost a lot. Shoot! I guess one of those happy people that follow us around and tell us what not to do and won't allow us to get a sip of water in 90-degree weather at the water fountain two yards away saw me frowning, because she came up to me with a stupid smiley face and said, "Turn that frown upside down, Miss." I gave her an awful sneer that my mother would have popped me hard for. "Well, Miss, I see you need some happy therapy. We'll be best buds!" I groaned as she patted me on the shoulder.

We all went into a big clearing where this guy Jim told

us all the "fun" things we'll do, like hunt for bugs and identify snakes and their venom.

We then headed for a sappy lunch with a soggy sandwich and some stupid graham crackers. Where's the chocolates? Where's the Frootie Teeth Stickers and Death by Chocolate Club? These people certainly did not know how to eat. I saw the cute boy and tried to sit by him, but Beth's chubby arm held me back. That was the counselor from before.

"Hi, would you like to sit with the other counselors and me?"

"Naw!" I shoved her heavy arm off me. I once again tried to sit with the boy. I scanned the room and spotted him, but the kid that fell beat me with a sack, a sack of Pokemon cards. I felt so bad for him. They spoke like they were best friends, but the other boy looked 11 and the other was my age.

I ate lunch with my usual comrades.

#### Scene Five

I hate night camping with all those mosquitoes and itty-bitty burnt marshmallows. I gazed into the fire, bored to my soon-to-come death.

"All right, kids, let's sing 'Spelling Spananza!'" Everyone groaned. Out of boredom I began to throw lint from my pocket into the fire. I forgot Lewis gave me some fire-crackers earlier and...well...KABOOM! Jim grabbed me at the neck.

"What did you do, you little twit?" I could see the veins in his head and neck twitch. His eyes bulged, and Beth came turning me around with the same look. She

shouldn't look like that, cause she was ugly.

"You ruined a happy, fun, happy evening!" There were smacks of lips of rejection that made her more angry. "Every one of you brats, go to bed!!! You are coming with me." She stabbed me with her dagger of a finger.

I was placed in an office. While going, Lewis gave me a thumbs-up and mouthed, 'Good one.' I felt proud of myself. They called my momma and all pride drained from my body.

"Your devil child is being sent now!"

#### Scene Six

I began to happily pack. All I had to do was tell Momma the truth and I'd be fine. Plus, I'd be out of this place. The cute boy walked by my cabin. He had wisps of hair above his lips. "Wanna trade Pokemon cards?" Stricken by this immaturity, I asked his age.

"Twelve."

I pushed past him and stomped onto "The Bad Kids' Bus." It was really called this. I placed on my headphones and tried to avoid spitballs and sling shots. I began my wonderful, bumpy ride home.

#### Scene Seven

My mom didn't believe me after all. She said I'd have to do a bunch of chores and receive a tutor. I couldn't complain because she didn't threaten me with a whooping. My tutor was to come in five minutes. I felt it wouldn't be bad. I'd learn some over the summer. But I cringed and got a nauseated feeling when Mrs. Doreen popped into the door. I wished I was at camp.

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**Youth Communication  
Urban Journalism Workshop program  
600 S. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60605**

## Poetry

# Another Short Disaster

By Jacob Hogan  
Brother Rice

Every time I stray  
I need to prove myself to you  
And yet when I ask for the same  
I'm insensitive  
I'm unintelligent  
Be for me  
Not be there but just be  
If only you knew how much I need you  
Then maybe you would see why  
I'm so blind  
Offer me some kind of justification  
I'm too skeptical and cynically pretentious  
Save me  
Save me with that smile you always wore before  
Or at least complain to me for not noticing it  
I have risen above  
And fallen behind  
I want to progress but you won't follow  
Maybe you don't need me  
But I would bleed for you  
Save me

# I Am a Poem

By Cara Mack  
Homewood-Flossmoor High School\*

I am a poem  
flying through the air and landing  
SMACK on your front doorstep.

You rubbed me from your eyes  
when you woke up  
and I'll be the last thing  
you think about  
before you start to dream.

I am skin on skin—  
eyelashes on cheeks  
and grass through toes.

I am the song you  
can't get out of your head  
and the laugh that splits  
into a thousand pieces  
before it stops echoing.

I am lipstick on your wine glass  
and stains on white shirts.

I'm the poem you thought of  
while vacuuming or  
using a typewriter  
or watching the bubbles  
refuse to go down the drain.

I'm the reason  
you shouldn't be in a hurry.

I'm mashed potatoes  
on your fingers and squishing  
peas before you eat them.

I'm the one who's  
staring at you through  
the cracks in the walls—  
the one you  
feel following you.

I'm the smell of your grandma  
and her silverware  
and soap.

I'm your overdue fines  
and the lady in the minivan  
who steals your parking spot.

I'm the poem you repeat  
over and over in your head  
so you won't forget.

I'm the poem you can't remember  
as soon as you  
have a chance to write it down.

\*Cara Mack was one of two Chicago area high school students to win an award in the Scholastic, Inc. competition. She will be attending a ceremony in June at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, to accept her award. For more information on how you can enter or have your work published, go to [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).

# Extinguish the Fire

By Jacob Hogan  
Brother Rice

I have evolved into transparency  
And I obviously go unnoticed  
Despite this obvious fact, I still long  
The desire may be unseen, but it remains  
And the helplessness is ever increasing  
I wish a fairy tale dream could rescue me

And yet I build myself up, up, up  
Only to  
Be  
Toppled  
Over.

Spare me.  
At least have the decency to acknowledge  
My  
Residual  
Existence.

I have seen the light  
And it burns to touch  
The truth, dark and unreal  
I have finally given up hope  
And that is all that I have left of meaning...



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## College Days

# Choosing the not-so-obvious Chicago colleges

By Audrey Galo, Northside College Prep and Brandi Walker, Robert Morris College

College could be the best and challenging time in a young adult's life. It can also be the turning point in a young adult's life, offering issues like what major to study or what careers to enter after college.

It's all a matter of planning it out carefully and not doing it at the last minute. You have to know all the mechanics of setting your future right. Besides, this is college! This is the time to map out what you'll be as an adult. Some of the Chicago colleges that aren't talked about so readily should be considered; some are less expensive and offer more personal attention than their larger counterparts.

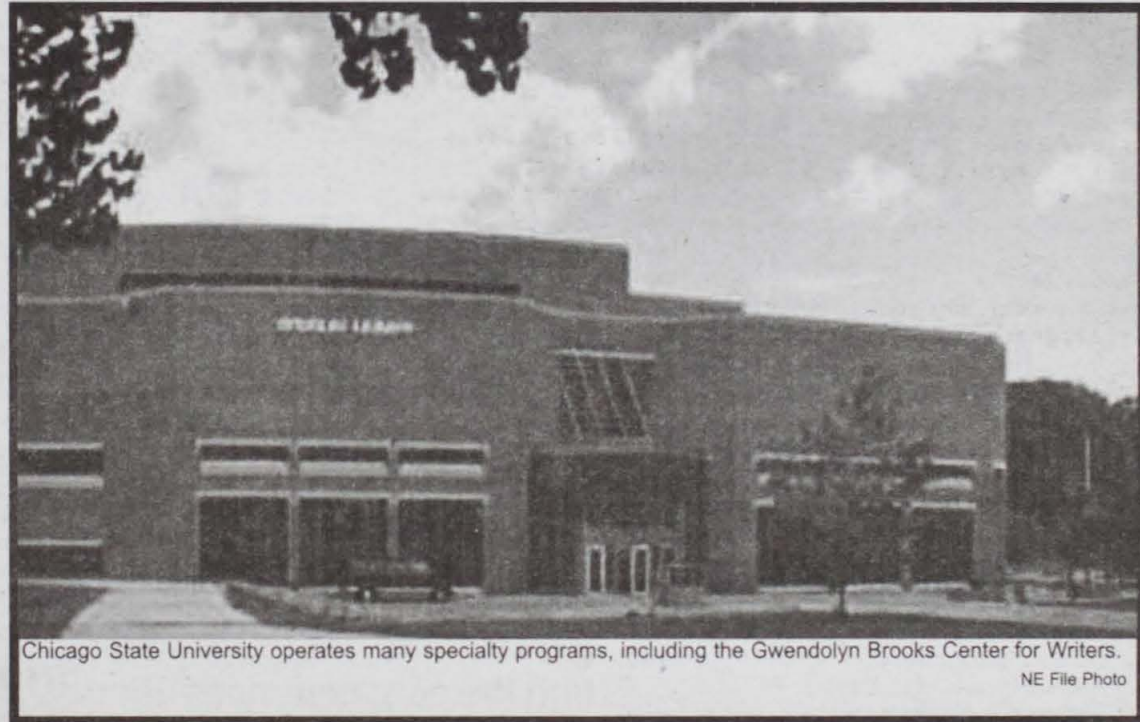
Robert Morris College is a good example. It offers accelerated courses in majors such as Computer Studies, Health and Graphic Arts. They provide useful information on planning for your future. Hey, their motto does state "Where Dreams Find Directions." One of the advisors, Sheila Johnson, says the key is to start planning early. She also says that what makes Robert Morris unique is that it works with the students throughout their college training with professional development. She also says that quite a few transfer students have come to Robert Morris because they made the wrong decision on a prior institute.

Here, then, are some others to consider as well.

### Chicago State University

9501 South King Drive  
(773)995-2000  
[www.csu.edu/](http://www.csu.edu/)

Chicago State is the oldest public university in the Chicago metropolitan area and is a great academic asset to Chicago. The school has four main colleges — Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Health



Chicago State University operates many specialty programs, including the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Writers.

NE File Photo

Sciences. However, their extensive program doesn't end there. They operate several community programs and in January of this year began to collaborate in South Africa in order to control HIV/AIDS.

### St. Xavier University

3700 W. 103rd St.  
(773) 298-3000  
[www.sxu.edu/](http://www.sxu.edu/)

St. Xavier University is one of Chicago's three Roman Catholic universities. The university has four main colleges, Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Education and the Graham School of Management. Its academic strengths are education, nursing, religious studies, and criminal justice. Mayor Daley and his family are big supporters.

### East-West University

816 S. Michigan Ave.  
(312) 939-0111  
<http://www.eastwest.edu>  
East-West University opened its doors in 1980, making it a very young institution. They offer degrees in Liberal Arts

and Sciences, Computer and Information Science, Electronics Engineering Technology, Business Administration, and Office Administration. In addition, the University offers short-term training, refresher courses and certificate programs. A distinctive feature of the University is its courses on other cultures and special programs for foreign students.

### Trinity Christian College

6601 W. College Drive  
Palos Heights  
1-800-TRIN-4-ME  
[www.trnty.edu/](http://www.trnty.edu/)

Trinity Christian College is located in Palos Heights and offers everything from pre-professional programs to double majors and dual degrees programs. The majors with the highest enrollment are elementary education, nursing, and business administration. And if that isn't enough, students can study abroad in the Netherlands or Spain.

### Kendall College

2408 Orrington Ave.  
Evanston  
847.448.2000  
[www.kendall.edu/](http://www.kendall.edu/)

Kendall College was founded in 1934 as a Methodist college. Now it has become the home of one of the nation's best culinary arts programs. Kendall also offers degrees in, Business and Technology, Hospitality Management, Human Services, and Liberal Studies. Students at Kendall have access to significant internships and relevant work experience.



Culinary students at Kendall College run The Dining Room, a full service restaurant

NE File Photo



## Peer Pressure

# Think before you act!

By Dana Rettig  
Dunbar High School

Have you ever been pressured into doing something that you did not want to do or was not sure about doing, such as drinking, smoking, having sex, robbing, stealing, lying, cheating, etc.?

Some people have. According to teachers, social workers and the high school students who experience it, negative peer pressure is an ongoing problem that needs to be understood to be eliminated, just as positive peer pressure needs to be recognized in order to grow.

"I have never been pressured into something that I did not want to do, because I always hung around people with good heads on their shoulders," says Joshua Johnson, a student at Simeon.

"And my advice to those who are going through peer pressure is: Be yourself. Never compromise your individuality, because if you were to do something like that, then the people you hang around with will take advantage of you," he said.

"I can honestly say that I have never been pressured into drinking, smoking, stealing, robbing, etc., because first of all, I know how to stand up for myself and secondly, I am very cautious about the people I hang around with," said Joshua Maddox, a student at Dunbar Vocational Academy.

"When I was in high school, some of my friends were drinking," says Dunbar social worker Janus Thomas. "I had a cup of cheap wine and it only happened once. My advice to the kids who are going through tough times with their peers (peer pressure) is: Never do anything with your friends that you would not

Never do anything with your friends that you would not do yourself or in front of your parents.

"Still," Thomas continued, "I think that the difference between peer pressure now and back in my days are not different. They're still the same, just the names and faces are different."

"I had never been pressured into something that I did not want to do such as drinking, smoking, etc., because the people I hung out with in high school were interested in the same things that I were into like school, sports, music, and everything else that were positive," says Melissa Fry, a teacher for Jobs for Illinois Graduates. "Now, my advice to the ones who are going through peer pressure is: Always stand your ground. Never follow those who are full of negativity, because if you follow negative people then there's a 50/50 chance that you're going to become negative, as well."

**"In order for us to stop peer pressure, we do workshops on peer pressure. We talk to youth about gangs, drugs, and the consequences of peer pressure."**

**Freddie Calixto, a social worker for Project BUILD**

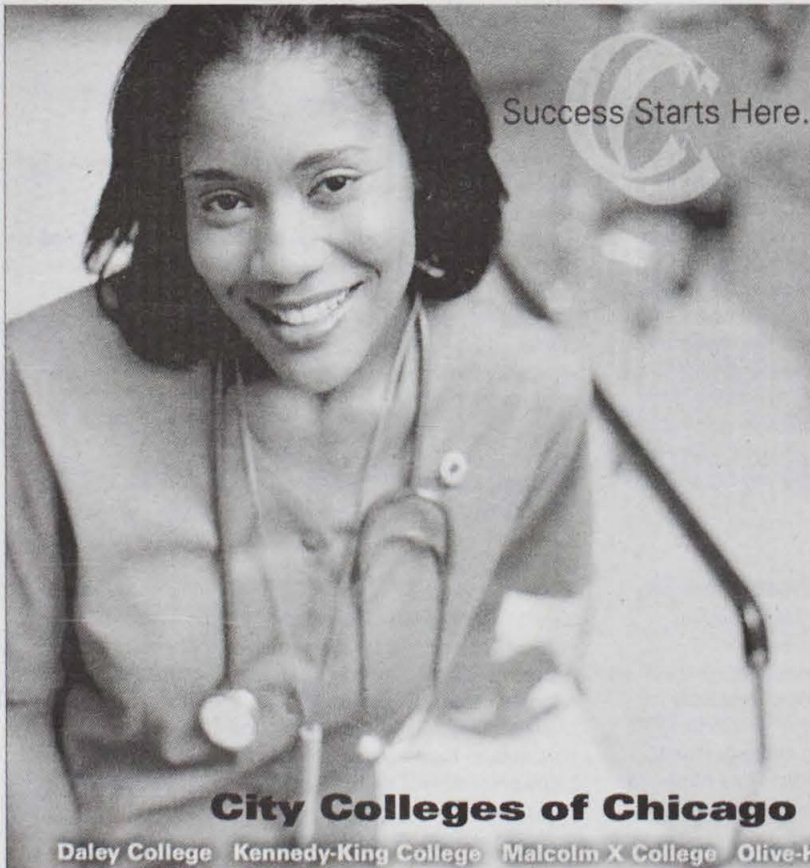
"I think peer pressure is about the same as always. It has been going on for a while now," says Freddie Calixto, a social worker for Project BUILD, a program in the Wicker Park Neighborhood. "Still, in order for us to stop peer pressure, we do workshops on peer pressure. We talk to youth about gangs, drugs, and the consequences of peer pressure. I think children succumb to peer pressure because they don't want to feel left out. They want to feel accepted, because they think that being a part of a gang or drinking, smoking, and/or doing heavy drugs such as crack, PCP, etc. is cool, but in reality, it ruins a lot of people's lives."

"On weekdays," Calixto continued, "we have workshops on peer pressure. We talk to youth about drugs, gangs, and the consequences of peer pressure. And not only do we have workshops, but also we do one-on-one group and we also do teen marches."

"My advice to today's youth," Calixto said, "is to think about the consequences before you do anything bad, because it's easy to get in trouble, but it's hard to get out of it."

"Now, the bad results that I have seen teens get into was (using) drugs. For example, a young lady (who remains anonymous) was pressured into taking a drug called PCP and she died from it."

While Calixto can observe what peer pressure does, Maddox, as a teen, is trying to get through it. "My advice to those who are going through peer pressure is: Be careful of the people you hang out with," he said, "because some people are not what they appear to be."



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