

\$1

ThreeSixty

Minnesota Teens Report Stories & Issues That Matter

What's Next?



How high schoolers are saying goodbye, 2020, and looking ahead to the future.



Pandemic:
One year later



A racial awakening
centered in
Minnesota

Alum Dymanh
Chhoun joins
ThreeSixty team

Special-use photos: Melissa Boone • Dymanh Chhoun • Tiffany Johnson • Hlee Lee-Kron • Emil Liden • Minnesota Humanities Center • Timothy Pate • YLI Council

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Email ThreeSixty@StThomas.edu with comments, letters and questions about participating in ThreeSixty Journalism.

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Donations from individuals like you provide a significant amount of ThreeSixty's operating budget. To learn more, visit threesixty.stthomas.edu.

ON THE COVER
Main photo by Emil Liden



Cristo Rey Jesuit High School students joined ThreeSixty during spring break for College Essay Boot Camp. They worked with professional writing coaches and editors to complete their stories.

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Hlee Lee-Kron, 2004 ThreeSixty scholar, is running her own media group, highlighting underrepresented voices. *Pages 10 and 29*

ThreeSixty's Winter News Team asked the question, "What's Next?" Felicia Perry and Sarah Clyne are answering that question, working to fund North Minneapolis businesses. *Page 11*

Penumbra Theatre's new Center for Racial Healing is starting conversations about race and privilege in Minnesota. *Page 12*

Marian Hassan is the editor of the new anthology "Crossroads: An Anthology of Resilience and Hope," featuring stories of Somali youth in Minnesota. *Page 13*

Dr. Maykao Hang is the vice president of strategic initiatives and founding dean of the new Morrison College of Health at the University of St. Thomas. *Page 14*

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Emil Liden captures life for a high school senior during a pandemic in his photo essay. *Page 19*

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Contributors



Faaya Adem
The FAIR School,
Downtown Campus



Fran Aravena
Wayzata High School



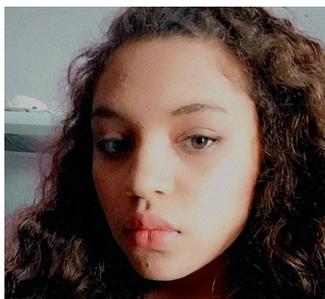
LaDafia Dehaney
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Ariana Yasmin
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JOURNALISM SUMMER CAMPS 2021

ThreeSixty Journalism
College of Arts and Sciences



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS,

Do you like writing? Are you interested in visual storytelling?
Give your community a voice and find yours!

Camps for new students include:

- College Essay Boot Camp: **FULL!**
 - June 14 - June 17, Girls Inc.

STILL OPENINGS

- News Reporter Academy:
 - Session 1: July 12 - 16
 - Session 2: July 19-23

Advanced camps for returning students:

- Radio Broadcast Camp: **FULL!**
 - Session 1: June 14 - 18
 - Session 2: June 21 - 25, MIGIZI and AIFC
- TV Broadcast Camp: July 26 - 30 **FULL!**

QUESTIONS?

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ThreeSixty
Minnesota Teens Report Stories & Issues That Matter



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Editor's Note



Theresa Malloy
Associate Director

AS WE PREPARE this magazine for publication, so much is changing every day. Students are returning to in-person school. Minnesota is distributing vaccines. The trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin is underway. Our community is reflecting on the one-year mark of living in a pandemic. And, George Floyd's legacy is remembered as a long overdue racial reckoning continues. The question that remains, which we examine in this issue of our magazine, is: What's next? How do we move forward? What does "normal" even mean?

This magazine features a collection of stories about people who are not only answering the question of what's next, they are doing the work to make our community kinder and more inclusive. You'll learn about how Penumbra Theatre is leading racial healing (page 12) and how the new Morrison College of Health at St. Thomas is centering itself around diverse health care (page 14). We share the stories of a dynamic North Minneapolis duo whose advocacy saved 117 local businesses in the pandemic and aftermath of Floyd's murder (page 11). We profile youth organizations advocating and securing a better future for those they serve (pages 14 and 15).

Community-based storytelling has the power to change mainstream narratives, and we highlight the work of our ThreeSixty alumni and others who are daring to tell stories differently and better. This includes an anthology of young Somali writers (page 13), the work of alumna Hlee Lee-Kron (page 10) and the Racial Reckoning: Arc of Justice

project powered by Ampers, employing four super talented alums (page 8), Lee-Kron included.

Again, we also continue to showcase the powerful voices of our young people. Through our #360YouthVoiceChallenge and fall workshop, our reporters wrote op-ed stories capturing what's happening in their world. You'll hear about the challenges of online school (page 17), a plea to wear masks (page 18), calls to amplify Black voices (page 21) and historical reminders about xenophobia (page 21), as well as examining why voting matters (page 23), among others.

As I think back to the last year at ThreeSixty, I feel immense gratitude that we could still reach our students and adapt quickly. Our classrooms continue to be safe spaces, and even in the hardest times, our conversations remain infused with hope. We collaborate creatively with our students thanks to our partners, alumni and volunteers. We're also emerging stronger.

What's next for ThreeSixty is great. We are optimistic we will return our programming to campus and looking ahead to summer camps (page 4). And, I can't wait for everyone to meet our new program manager, my dear

friend and a ThreeSixty alumnus, Dymanh Chhoun (page 7). He is the real deal. After attending ThreeSixty in 2005, he worked his way through college, doing small-market photography jobs until he landed at WCCO-TV, where he worked the last six years. He did it all with his trademark smile, joy and perseverance. He already inspires the next generation of storytellers and leaders. He will continue to do that and more in his new role. It's an honor to turn this magazine over to his capable hands.

Enjoy reading the magazine and be sure to share with others!



Maria Reeve, a presenter from TCBJ, answers student questions during Winter News Team.

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

ThreeSixty Scholar Updates

EACH YEAR, HIGH school students who are graduates of ThreeSixty programming compete for the ThreeSixty Scholarship — a full-tuition, four-year scholarship to study Emerging Media at the University of St. Thomas. Currently, there are three ThreeSixty Scholars attending St. Thomas.



Kai Sanchez Avila
2019 ThreeSixty Scholar

During the 2020 fall semester at St. Thomas, Kai Sanchez Avila partook in TommieMedia, an award-winning web-based news organization serving the St. Thomas community. In spring 2021, she began producing and hosting a podcast, “How WE View It,” that advocates for youth to voice their opinions regarding Minneapolis politics, current events and more. The podcast can be streamed on Spotify.



Zekriah Chaudhry
2018 ThreeSixty Scholar

As a junior at St. Thomas, Zekriah Chaudhry is continuing his education as a double major in journalism and political science. He has also accepted a summer internship at the Star Tribune. He continues to inspire ThreeSixty students by volunteering as a writing coach and editor.



Samantha HoangLong
2017 ThreeSixty Scholar

HoangLong graduated from the University of St. Thomas in December 2020. She is currently a reporter for Racial Reckoning: The Arc of Justice, powered by Ampers. She’s filing daily reports during the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. This summer HoangLong is interning at the Star Tribune.

Josie Morss
2020 ThreeSixty Scholar

Josie Morss, a freshman at St. Thomas, is majoring in emerging media and minoring in theology and the common good. During the 2020-21 school year, Morss worked as a reporter for TommieMedia, the campus newspaper. They are a graduate of Lakeville North High School.



Dymanh Chhoun Joins ThreeSixty

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM IS excited to announce program alumnus Dymanh Chhoun is joining its leadership team.

Since participating in camps as a high school senior in 2005, Chhoun has been an active alum, volunteer and mentor in ThreeSixty's programming.

"I always volunteer, give my time to the program. That's so important to me. What they did to me, what they've done to me is what I will always remember, and I always want to give back to them no matter what time it is, what time of year it is," Chhoun said.

When reflecting on how ThreeSixty has impacted his life, he remembers mentors he met during ThreeSixty programming. He hopes he can play the same impactful role for students now.

"Even if they aren't going into news, here's the biggest thing for me - I hope they think education is important," Chhoun said. "I hope after they're done with high school, they go to college. That's all I hope for because it was not easy for me to go to college. That four years was not easy."

Chhoun, who grew up in South



Samantha HoangLong
ThreeSixty Alumna

Minneapolis, was a first-generation high school and college graduate in his family.

"There is so much value (in) going to college," Chhoun said. "There's something that I want to get out of the ThreeSixty students who come through our program."

Chhoun comes to ThreeSixty from WCCO-TV CBS, where he had worked as a full-time photojournalist since 2014. Most known for his breaking news coverage, he has covered several protests relating to the police killings of Jamar Clark, Philando Castile and, most recently, George Floyd.

"It's unbelievable what I capture," Chhoun said. "I was the guy out there capturing moments for people to see on WCCO that some other people would not get to capture."

He began his career as a photojournalist at FOX 21 in Duluth after graduating from the University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communications in 2011. Shortly

after, he joined the NBC-affiliate KTTC-TV NewsCenter in Rochester, where he worked for almost 2 1/2 years before settling back in the Twin Cities.

"I'm happy that I got over nine years of TV business under my belt," Chhoun said. "I've been out there so I know how to put the right words, the right environment for the kids."

His work has been nominated for multiple Upper Midwest Emmys Awards over the years. He was awarded first place for Special Project/In-Depth Series at the Society of Professional Journalists Page One Awards in 2016.

"Dymanh is such a great example of what ThreeSixty Journalism is about," ThreeSixty Executive Director Chad Caruthers said. "We're so excited to have him as a big part of the ThreeSixty team. It will be a great experience for all of us, especially for our students."

Chhoun lives in Bloomington with his wife and three kids. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family, taking photos and exploring nature.

To learn more about Chhoun, read his [alumni profile piece](#), written in 2017 by then-ThreeSixty student Paqazi Xiong.



Dymanh Chhoun, Program Manager

Amazing Alumni Updates

YES, WE'RE ALL dealing with the pandemic in our own ways. Can you believe it's been over a full year of masks and social distancing? It hasn't been easy, but our ThreeSixty Journalism students and young alumni have continued to persevere and leave their mark wherever they go. Here's what some of them have going on:

- Aidan Berg, ThreeSixty alum and student at the University of Southern California, is the Spring Newsdesk Intern at NBC Sports Group.
- Amira Warren-Yearby, 2015 ThreeSixty Scholar, began a new position as a Volunteer Coordinator at Nonviolent Peaceforce.
- Asa Williams, ThreeSixty alumna and first-year student at St. Thomas, shared an audio diary on Minnesota Public Radio News about her experiences of living on



Samantha HoangLong
ThreeSixty Alumna

campus as an out-of-state first-year student during a pandemic.

- Danielle Wong, 2016 ThreeSixty Scholar, began a new position as a Multi-Media Strategic Communications Fellow at Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC in Washington, D.C.
- Evan Odegard, a junior at Nova Classical Academy, had his Op-Ed written in the ThreeSixty Youth Voice workshop printed in the Star Tribune.
- Erick Castellanos, ThreeSixty alum and junior at the University of St. Thomas, is the Capitol Pathways Intern at the Center for Economic Inclusion.
- Kai Sanchez Avila, 2019

ThreeSixty Scholar, will be interning at the Pioneer Press this summer.

- Katelyn Vue, ThreeSixty alumna and junior at the University of Minnesota, was featured on a national panel localizing the "Land Grab Universities" story, where she shared how she has covered the story as a community reporter at the Minnesota Daily.
- Kelly Ordoñez-Saybe, ThreeSixty alumna and student at the University of St. Thomas, started working as a Dougherty Family College reporter intern, a special position created in partnership with DFC and ThreeSixty on the university's Marketing, Insights and Communications team.
- Samantha HoangLong, 2017 ThreeSixty Scholar, graduated from the University of St. Thomas in December 2020, earning a B.A. in Communication



ThreeSixty Scholars attend the MPR Radio Camp celebration. From left to right: Samantha HoangLong, Kai Sanchez Avila, Danielle Wong and Zekriah Chaudhry.

and Journalism, minoring in Sustainability and the Renaissance Program. In summer 2021, HoangLong will be a digital audience producing intern at the Star Tribune.

- Simone Cazares, ThreeSixty alumna, is joining WUWM

Milwaukee's National Public Radio as an Eric Von Fellow.

- Zekriah Chaudhry, 2018 ThreeSixty Scholar, will intern at the Star Tribune on the general assignment reporting team this summer.

Racial Reckoning Project Features 4 ThreeSixty Alums

A RACIAL RECKONING: The Arc of Justice is a journalism initiative from Ampers in collaboration with KMOJ Radio and the Minnesota Humanities Center. This project is examining the criminal justice system and the community response surrounding the high-profile trials of former police officer Derek Chauvin and three other former police officers.

The Racial Reckoning: The Arc of Justice team includes four program alums led by managing news editor Marianne Combs, longtime ThreeSixty supporter and volunteer. This team will focus on Chauvin's trial and the trials of three former officers for their roles in George Floyd's murder. ThreeSixty alumni participating in this project are:

- 2017 ThreeSixty Scholar Samantha HoangLong (St. Thomas '21), News Reporter
- Chioma Uwagwu (St. Thomas '20), Associate Producer
- 2004 ThreeSixty Scholar Hlee Lee-Kron (St. Thomas '07), Producer
- Feven Gerezgihier (University of Minnesota '16), News Reporter



Allison DeMorett
Student Editor

"I really want your readers to know just how important ThreeSixty Journalism has been to the success of this initiative," said Combs. Speaking about the ThreeSixty alums, she said, "They are all fabulous to work with — passionate, curious and critical thinkers. Thank you, ThreeSixty Journalism!"

Listen to the "Racial Reckoning Daily Updates" and the weekly half-hour show. The project's stories air on 17 diverse community radio stations throughout Minnesota, plus an additional four stations elsewhere in the United States. They are also accessible through digital and social media platforms. Additionally, the project will translate weekly recaps in Hmong, Somali and Spanish.

OTHER UPDATES

Alumna Emma Carew Grovum was recently named a fellow at the



KMOJ Studio

Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute. The institute has awarded eight fellowships that address a range of topics, from building collaborations around new kinds of content to inventing newsroom

tools to exploring innovative ways to think about ongoing challenges.

Program alumna Skyler Kuczaboski (Dartmouth '21) is working with Leah Lemm on her weekly 30-minute show,

"MN Native News Special Report: COVID-19 Community Conversation," for the next 12 weeks with support from the Minnesota Department of Health. Check out the latest show [here](#).

4 MNA Awards for ThreeSixty



Samantha HoangLong
ThreeSixty Alumna

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM STUDENTS were honored in the Minnesota Newspaper Association's 2019-2020 Better Newspaper Contest.

Their stories were up against college and professional newspapers for separate categories. ThreeSixty high school students' work is eligible to compete with college students.

Evan Odegard, who is currently a junior at Nova Classical Academy, won second place for his sports

story "Lee Leaps Toward Historic Moment." The judges commented, "Nice flow to this article and good use of quotes."

Ayo Olagbaju, ThreeSixty alumna and student at Howard University, won second place for her sports feature "Swimmers Synchronize Social Justice." The judges wrote, "A well-written feature about an interesting topic."

Aaliyah Demry, ThreeSixty alumna and student at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, won second place for her column "My Hair, My History." Judges commented, "Strong and personal piece revealing what it is like for

someone who does not look like others in the class."

The Minnesota News Association also awarded ThreeSixty Journalism second place in general excellence for its September 2019 and Spring 2020 issues. The judges especially liked the Contributors page and felt it established a more personal connection between reader and story.

"The easy-to-read layout really draws the reader in, page after page," judges wrote. "ThreeSixty delivers an exceptional product time and again!"



ThreeSixty MNA Awards 2020

Fall Workshop Emphasizes Youth Voice

THIS FALL, THREESIXTY Journalism continued to provide virtual programming for engaged and aspiring high school journalists through the Virtual Youth Voice Workshop.

Over the course of five Saturdays, 15 high school students from across the metro area learned how to write opinion articles and op-eds with the help of 22 volunteers from organizations like the Star Tribune, WCCO and the Pioneer Press. An op-ed written by Evan Odegard, a junior from Nova Classical Academy, was published in the Star Tribune. Check it out [here!](#)

They also received instruction from former journalist and long-time ThreeSixty volunteer Terry Wolkerstorfer, as well as Patricia Lopez, who is part of the Star Tribune's editorial board.

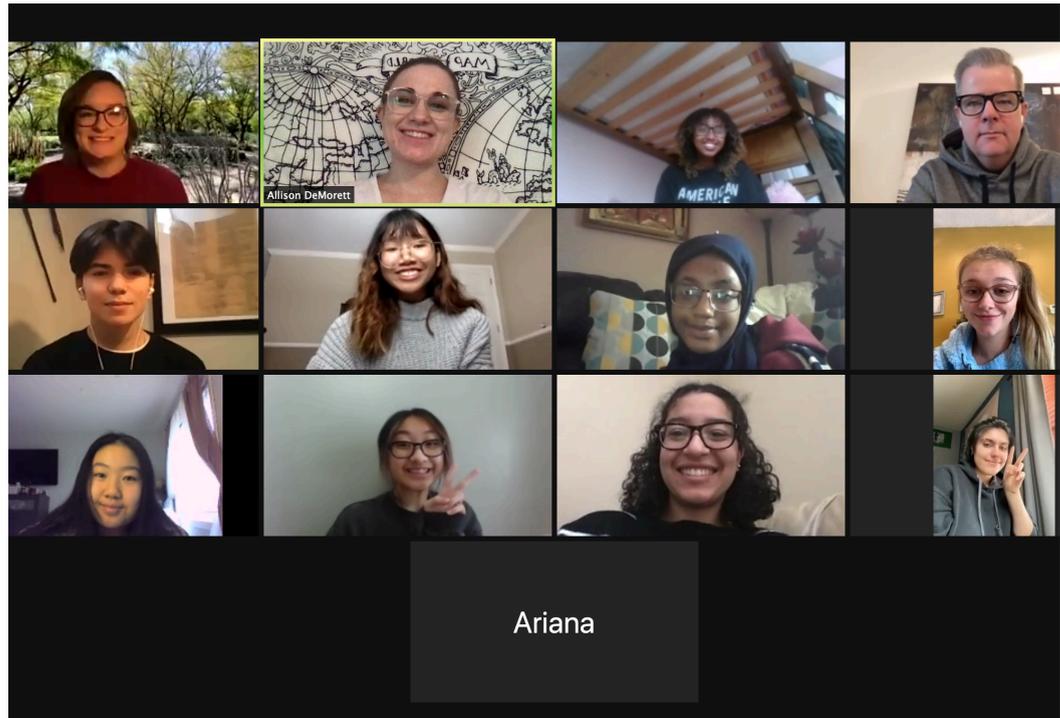
Students were inspired by ThreeSixty's #360YouthVoiceChallenge, which asks students to consider such



Allison DeMorett
Student Editor

topics as self-care and community building. They shared some of the highlights of the session:

- “My favorite part of the workshop was being able to work with a professional journalist to write a piece I’m proud of.” (Faaya Adem, FAIR Downtown)
- “Definitely one-on-one interaction I got with others, like the students and coaches.” (Maneeya Leung, Eden Prairie High School)
- “My favorite part was that I was able to experience a new form of writing I have never done before, and I was able to honestly express how I feel about my topic, which isn’t something I always get to do.” (Olivia Sorenson, Concordia Academy)



ThreeSixty students participate in the Virtual Youth Voice Workshop.

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Winter News Team — What’s Next?

THE THEME OF ThreeSixty's Winter News Team this year was “What’s Next?” After experiencing a global pandemic, social unrest and a tense election, ThreeSixty wanted to document people and organizations that are answering the question “What’s next?” and tackling the problems facing our communities.

Fifteen students were helped by 18 volunteers from organizations including the St. Paul Pioneer Press, the Star Tribune and American Public Media. Over the course of four Saturdays, students interviewed and wrote stories about people and organizations in the Twin Cities that are looking to the future of their communities and tackling problems that have arisen due to the recent crises.

Special additions to this winter’s News Team were guest speakers from Twin Cities Black Journalists.

Students heard from Star Tribune social issues reporter Marissa Evans, Houston Chronicle managing editor Maria Reeve, MPR News President Duchesne Drew and Star Tribune public safety reporter Labor Jany. These special guests spoke about their experiences as journalists of color and offered advice to the next generation of newsroom leaders.



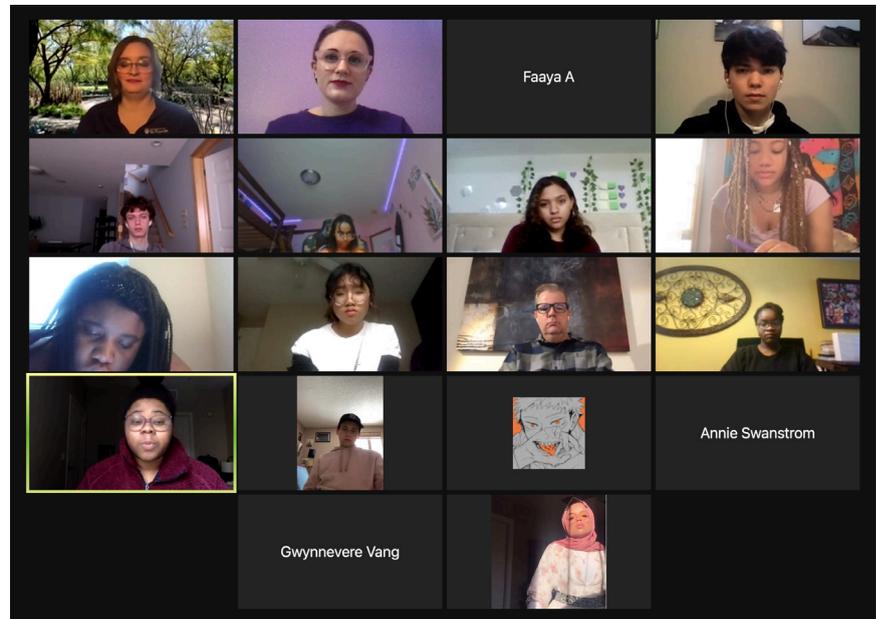
Allison DeMorett
Student Editor

Here’s what students had to say about Winter News Team:

- “My favorite part was being able to meet amazing journalists, and hear their stories and experiences; plus, being able to work with an incredible team of staff who helped me and guided me through the whole process.” (Sara Gaines, homeschool)
- “It was a good experience. My editor was very helpful in giving me tips on how to use good quotes.” (Gwynnevere Vang, Tartan Senior High School)
- “(The TCBJ journalists) were amazing! They each gave unique and engaging presentations, and I loved hearing about their experiences.” (Evan Odegard, Nova Classical Academy)

Volunteers also had comments about their ThreeSixty experience:

- “It’s a fantastic program that makes a positive impact on the lives of young people, and I’m proud to have been able to



ThreeSixty students listen to TCBJ speaker Marissa Evans.

- participate again.” (Jake Anderson, Target)
- “It was great! I love getting to know the new students at ThreeSixty.” (Zekriah Chaudhry, 2018 ThreeSixty Scholar)
- “I enjoyed it, I found it meaningful, I believe

the students benefited, and the students and staff seemed sharp, eager to learn and appreciative.” (Bob Shaw, St. Paul Pioneer Press)

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Alumni Update: Lee-Kron Celebrates Different Viewpoints in Storytelling

AS A YOUNG girl, Hlee Lee-Kron struggled with being confident and outgoing in her Hmong community, going against the grain of her culture's customs, which expected women to be more reserved and introverted. And yet she was able to find her voice and calling, building a successful career in journalism and storytelling. She's now the founder and owner of the other media group (omg), a business focused on telling the stories of people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds from their viewpoint.

"I want to be able to show that we want to be the ones to share our stories with folks from a perspective of people living it," Lee-Kron said.

The initial idea for creating the other media group came when Lee-Kron was the only young female producer of color at Twin Cities Public Television when she started at the station after college.

"I got a lot of the projects that were youth-related, people of color-related or female oriented," Lee-Kron said. But she quickly realized the power of people of color being able to report on matters related to their communities, instead of what had traditionally been white reporters, who had typically made up the majority of newsrooms.

"A white producer comes in to talk to us for a while, gets our stories, does their project and we never hear from them again," Lee-Kron said. "But there are enough people within each of our communities that do storytelling who are ready to talk about that perspective from a firsthand perspective."

After four years at TPT, Lee-Kron started to branch out and freelance, focusing on smaller groups that were not able to tell their own stories. Lee-Kron worked



Gwynnevere Vang
Tartan Senior
High School



Hlee Lee-Kron

with numerous companies to hire community storytellers of different cultures to write stories for those firms. And that's where the work really got underway to create the other media group.

"I've been kind of on my own for a while, and I love it," Lee-Kron said. "I don't know if I can go back to a regular job in an office."

Lee-Kron's first experience writing and storytelling began when she was a junior in high school. She got involved in a program called Don't Believe The Hype, which sparked her interest in journalism. She got both on- and off-camera experience through this program, and it introduced her to the Urban Journalism Workshop, now known as the ThreeSixty Journalism program at the University of St. Thomas.

ALUMNI continued on page 29



Hlee Lee-Kron works with a community member on a story.

Building Community, One Story at a Time

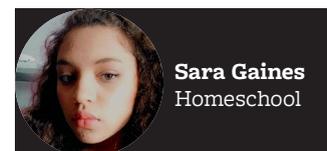
AS A YOUNG girl, Hlee Lee-Kron was labeled the "loud Hmong girl."

Lee-Kron grew up in a socially conservative community, where most women were expected to remain silent and subtle; this made things hard for Lee-Kron. But that label would later inspire Lee-Kron, a University of St. Thomas graduate and multimedia journalist, to create the other media group, a media production and consulting firm.

Lee-Kron grew up on the west side of St. Paul with her seven siblings. From an early age, Lee-Kron had a strong interest in journalism. Through this interest, Lee-Kron would later join ThreeSixty Journalism, a program that introduces high school students to journalism.

After graduating from St. Thomas, Lee-Kron worked as a producer for Twin Cities Public Television. It was there that she realized how few people of color there were in newsrooms and how they were unable to share their stories. That became the inspiration for Lee-Kron when she launched her media group in 2018.

Lee-Kron helps smaller organizations in her community share their stories. She enjoys being able



Sara Gaines
Homeschool

to assist them through the production and process phases.

"Continuing to be active in the community is an important part of doing community storytelling," Lee-Kron said.

Lee-Kron was later part of Minnesota Public Radio's "Counter Stories," an award-winning podcast covering serious topics, such as race, politics and diversity through the lens of people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds -- different people from the BIPOC community, hence its tagline, "A podcast by people of color, for people of color...and everyone else." Episode titles reveal complex conversation topics, like "Being Authentic in White Spaces," "Race in Public Media" and "Compounding Effects on Community of Color."

Recently, "Counter Stories" severed ties with MPR because of the lack of promotion, resources and support, Lee-Kron shared.

"Counter Stories" now independently produces its podcast and

has partnered with Ampers radio group to get "Counter Stories" back on air and to distribute it to community radio stations across the state.

During the pandemic, Lee-Kron's the other media group subcontracted with community artists and storytellers. She also hopes to be able to bring different artists into the work she does with the community and to be able to provide fair pay for them.

When not working, which she says is rare, Lee-Kron enjoys being outdoors with her dogs, Lily and Carley, and her husband, Jim.

In reflecting about what she would tell young storytellers, Lee-Kron said it feels like "everything is so different for you guys now than it was for us," with new technologies and social media.

"But, just understanding that you know you're able to make your reputation what you want even if your parents and those in your community don't support you," she said. "You can build your own community."

Rebuilding North Minneapolis

How a dynamic duo pushed to restore their community, demanding investment in businesses

IN THE AFTERMATH of George Floyd's death, Felicia Perry and Sarah Clyne found themselves standing on West Broadway Avenue, clearing rubble with brooms and latex gloves in the summer heat. Perry and Clyne were willing to do whatever they could to help businesses impacted by the destruction, but they never expected to raise millions of dollars for their community in a matter of weeks.

Perry, the executive director of West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, and Clyne, the former executive director of Northside Funders Group, have been strong advocates for their North Minneapolis neighborhood for a long time.

The West Broadway Business & Area Coalition (WBC) was



Evan Odegard
Nova Classical Academy

formed in the spring of 2007, as a result of the joining of the West Broadway Business Association (WBBA) and the West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC). The West Broadway Business Association was established in 1942 and served as a non-profit organization drawing membership from local businesses along the West Broadway Corridor. Its primary focus was to serve as a "chamber of commerce," to support local business growth.

NFG has organized funders and supporters to invest in efforts to advance social, educational and



A North Minneapolis building was burned down during the riots in May 2020.

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM/DYMANH CHHOUN

economic opportunities in North Minneapolis. The two organizations were uniquely equipped to support the Northside after the unrest of late May and early June, which took a heavy toll on that part of the city.

"The last year stretched us in some different ways," Clyne said, regarding the economic development work she and Perry were focused on building. The challenges of 2020 brought the two together, she added.

Perry and Clyne had already **REBUILD** continued on page 29



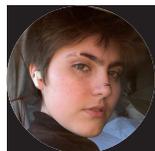
Business windows are boarded up near Broadway and Bryant avenues.

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM/DYMANH CHHOUN

Through a pandemic, Floyd aftermath, the focus remains centered on community.

AT THE START of March 2020, two nonprofit organizations had a combined \$500,000 to help 117 North Minneapolis businesses struggling to stay open during the beginning of the pandemic. Then in May, after George Floyd's murder, in just over two days, their pool of funds grew to over \$1 million and led to a change in their mission.

For Felicia Perry and Sarah Clyne, leaders of two North Minneapolis economic development organizations, 2020 can be divided into two chapters. The first chapter is marked by coming



Fran Aravena
Wayzata High School

together to meet the challenges of supporting neighborhood small businesses that were crushed by state stay-at-home orders but did not qualify for government aid. The second started after the death of George Floyd and the social unrest that followed, leading to an incredible fundraising effort.

Perry and Clyne saw the change

on May 27, two days after Floyd's death, when they met on West Broadway Avenue, both helping clean up businesses destroyed during protests.

"I was out there the next day cleaning up, very much upset about the condition of my neighborhood, the lack of response from the Fourth Precinct and feeling like our city had let us down in so many ways," said Perry, the executive director of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition.

"People started asking me personally, 'How can we donate? How can we contribute?' And so, I was like, 'Well, how can I help?' And I said (to Clyne), 'Give me a link, tell me,'" she recalled.

Clyne, the former executive director of Northside Funders Group, reached out to a member of her team to create a link to a

donation page. It later blew up on social media after gaining the attention of Lizzo, who retweeted the link. Within 24 hours they had raised over \$1 million to help their community.

Perry and Clyne agreed they needed more help and to get more organizations involved. One of those organizations was UnitedHealth Group.

A friend of Clyne's who works for the company reached out. "She's like, 'I sense that North Minneapolis isn't getting the kind of attention that it needs and deserves, so, help me understand that so I can go back and advocate for more money,'" Clyne said.

In the end, they received an additional \$1 million from UnitedHealth Group, as well as pro bono support for both organizations, something Clyne said she highly valued

because it proved they were committed to the cause. However, they also had to turn down funding from groups that she believed were there simply to fund the moment and had unreasonable strings attached that were not aligned with their values, according to Perry.

Clyne said she would ask organizations, "Are you really interested in this work that we're doing around supporting and sustaining these businesses so that we can create a vibrant, thriving neighborhood?"

Since last summer, WBC has hired more people to help support and advocate for businesses.

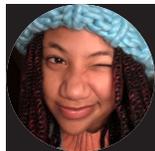
Clyne and Perry hope something that was spurred on in the moment will continue to be more than just a moment.

Penumbra's Center for Racial Healing Work Intensifies

Center leads dialogue about daily struggles and generational healing.

SHORTLY AFTER BEING hired as Penumbra Theatre's marketing manager, Tiffany Johnson went to see "For Colored Girls" by Ntozake Shange at the theater. As she settled into her seat, she had a realization. "There were no Black people ... Where am I working?" Johnson was one of few Black people in the theater. "It made me think about exactly why we need more brown people in these rooms," she said.

In 1976, Penumbra was founded by Artistic Director Emeritus Lou Bellamy and other founding company members as a space for Black voices and artistry. It has hosted some of the most famous names in Black theater across decades, including two-time Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson. The theater space is meant to promote Black artistry through professionally performed plays, focusing on the Black



Zaraia Fabunmi
South High School

experience and racial equity.

Penumbra is steadily working toward spreading awareness and diversifying theater spaces across the board. Due to redlining and gentrification in St. Paul over the years, fewer Black people came to the theater's building. In 2015, the vision for the Center for Racial Healing was starting to be developed, bringing more Black people across the diaspora. The murder of George Floyd accelerated its launch in 2020.

When Johnson joined the Penumbra staff in 2017, she became highly focused on making the theater a place where people of

color would want to be. She'd been developing relationships with theatergoers and businesses, not only bringing more diverse groups into the space, but building relationships with other Black theater spaces.

The Center for Racial Healing focuses on the dialogue among community members, navigating daily life as well as generational trauma. People at the Center have facilitated tough conversations about race and equity within the community, Johnson said.

"You're with audiences that are there because they don't know what's going on. These are difficult conversations, and they're very vulnerable. So, working with those trained artists is a powerful way that we do that."

The Center offers racial healing workshops that are led by trained artists and history dialogue workers.

Early in Johnson's career, she was meeting with major Black media outlets to bring more of a sense of community to the space.

"I spoke to them about their relationship to each other and then with



PHOTO COURTESY TIFFANY JOHNSON

Tiffany Johnson is a ThreeSixty alum.

Penumbra, and how we can support each other. And not just in a 'press' and 'marketing' relationship, but as these Black organizations that had been in Minnesota for a long time building these powerful relationships," Johnson said.

She said her role in these

relationships is to lead through service.

"Feet washing. They talk about that biblically ... It's time to wash feet, basically. And when you need to be the servant ... you make this kind of unsaid decision that we're

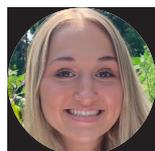
PENUMBRA continued on page 30

Penumbra Educates Through Racial Healing

GEORGE FLOYD'S DEATH in May 2020 set off a national racial reckoning. The heartbreak of Floyd's death brought about public displays of heartbreak and anger among communities of color. It forced white communities to confront the racism and unfairness still embedded in our country.

For Tiffany Johnson and Penumbra Theatre it was clear they had to evolve to reach new communities in a new way. That meant an increased focus on their Center for Racial Healing.

The Center for Racial Healing focuses on addressing centuries of racism, while mending the current trauma people of color face. Johnson, who is Penumbra Theatre's



Annie Swanstrom
Maple Grove Senior High School

marketing manager, realized the Center's mission was more crucial than ever. Although the vision for the Center began in 2015, Floyd's death amplified the importance of its work.

Having a theater focused on racial healing introduces a new way to help and educate people. When Johnson joined the theater in 2017, the first play she attended was not what she expected. Surprised to see that the theater was filled with primarily white people,

Johnson worked to develop relationships with local Black media platforms and artistic partners to intentionally engage Black listeners, readers and community members. Although she's still working to cultivate a more diverse audience, Johnson now describes the Center for Racial Healing as "a common ground in the middle to do this work together."

Given Penumbra Theatre's history of civic engagement, employees felt they had a duty to help lower voter suppression in the 2020 election.

Although the theater cannot be partisan in its communications and engagement as a nonprofit organization, it still managed to reach out to organizations and request Black communities get time off work to vote. In addition, the theater also educated Minnesotans on how harmful voter suppression has been on communities of color through a Let's Talk conversation dedicated to voting rights and roll backs to the Voting Rights Act.

Penumbra has also started race workshops,

during which trained monologue artists help guide conversations of racial healing. It is reaching out to corporations, nonprofits, schools, universities and government agencies that are interested in bringing these conversations into their workplace.

As Johnson put it, the workshops are "difficult, very vulnerable conversations, so working with trained artists is a powerful way the theater does it." The theater's willingness to engage in these hard conversations in a new way and bring them to new places is what makes the Center stand out.

Our community is in need of challenging discussions so we can move forward with understanding of the world and people around us. The Center can inspire us all to have these conversations in our day-to-day life, even if they make us uncomfortable. Although these conversations may make us uneasy, we must all do our part so we can move forward into a better and more equal world.



Marian Hassan

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Joined Hands Are Stronger

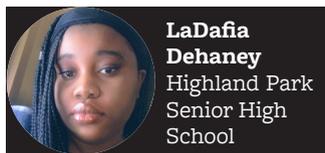
Making 'Crossroads: An Anthology of Resilience and Hope'

"CROSSROADS: AN ANTHOLOGY OF Resilience and Hope by Young Somali Writers" is a book edited by Marian Hassan, featuring stories from young Somali Minnesotans. The anthology contains rich Somali oral heritage, with poems and stories that showcase the modern struggles and resistance of the Somali community.

This book is a resource for educators who want to hear the experiences of Somali youth.

The 37 stories and poems feature trauma and loss, specifically loss of homeland.

Hassan was born in Somalia. Growing up in Somalia, there was no voice to share what people were experiencing except through newspapers. Her father was someone who was often interrogated and detained because he was a human rights lawyer and had been



LaDafia Dehaney
Highland Park Senior High School

an opposition to the Siad Barre regime. She knew that "individual stories were timeless and our path to freedom."

The book started to take shape when she submitted a concept paper to a publisher to collect stories of young people who were dealing with issues of identity, like being Muslim and being Somali, that might be difficult for others to understand. From the experiences she heard, she "thought their experiences were important to capture," Hassan said. The book was published three years later.

There were challenges in the process of making the book,

Hassan said. "Getting the support of getting the book out initially, because I was a Somali woman. And sometimes there was a resistance to having the book gain the attention that it needed; it kind of dragged on for a while. And I remember saying, 'What's going on here? Why is it that this book is taking so long?' Even though it was supportive ... the movement took a long time."

Each of the stories in the book has importance. While reading, pay attention to every part of the story.

"Every one of the stories is significant and has to have a space to be heard. ... Some were incredibly sad, and some were joyful and happy. So many good things happen. But ultimately those stories are valid in their own merits, that they're all worth attention and space," Hassan said.

The book will be a great way to bring Minnesotans together and will also help build understanding and empathy. It is available to purchase online at Itasca Bookstore and the Minnesota Humanities Center.

Somali Writer Helps Youth Share Their Experiences

'Crossroads' anthology features stories, poems by young writers about growing up in Minnesota

When was the last time you read a book about the Somali experience in the U.S.? Due to the lack of books written about this topic, most people probably never have. That is why writer Marian Hassan wanted to create a new anthology.

Hassan, the author of "Bright Star, Blue Sky" and "Dhegdeer: A Scary Somali Folktale," recently worked with young Somali American writers and poets to create "Crossroads: An Anthology of Resilience and Hope by Young Somali Writers."

The anthology, which was published by the Minnesota Humanities Center, explores common themes, such as struggling with identities and a lack of belonging. The young writers live in Minnesota, both in small towns and large cities.

Through poems and stories, the book reflects on the past, present and future for Somali youth. It was published at the end of 2019 at a critical moment, right before the pandemic and during a presidential administration that was consistently spreading messages harmful to immigrants, according to Hassan.

"The last four years was unacceptably, outrageously disruptive and negative," Hassan said.

This book offers a counterpoint to the mainstream narrative and opens discussions about cultural differences young Somali people face growing up in America, like language barriers and racism.

Hassan, who was born and raised in Somalia, describes growing up in a more homogeneous culture than Somali youth living in the U.S.

"Everybody I knew was someone



Faaya Adem
FAIR School
Downtown

who looked like me and accepted me," Hassan said, adding that this was very different for the young writers in "Crossroads." "I couldn't understand their experience and how painful it has been for them."

While living in Somalia, Hassan only had access to one main newspaper and the national television, which usually played military propaganda every night. Her father, a human rights lawyer, was often interrogated and detained by the government. Before and during the first few days of the Somali Civil War, the educated class was specifically targeted by the militaristic regime.

Hassan realized in those moments that telling both the individual and collective stories of her community led to the path to freedom.

Hassan admires writers who told the stories of that time, such as Somali poet and songwriter Mohamed Warsame, known by many as Hadrawi. His work ranges from love lyrics to criticism of the then-military regime in Somalia, which led to his imprisonment at one point.

His political commentary of the regime and stories of his imprisonment describe experiences much of the older generation can relate to and discuss with each other.

However, often the Somali youth **HASSAN** continued on page 29

Bold Dreams for Advocacy, Systemic Change



Dr. MayKao Hang, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Founding Dean of Morrison Family College of Health

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

New School of Nursing prioritizes diversity, aims for 30% BIPOC students

A RECENT ADDITION to the University of St. Thomas, the Morrison Family College of Health aims to educate health providers to address the wellness of the whole person.

Opened in 2019, the Morrison Family College of Health consists of the Graduate School of Professional Psychology and School of Social Work programs plus undergraduate programs in the Department of Health and Exercise Science. There is also the upcoming School of Nursing, with proposed graduate and undergraduate nursing programs.

Dr. MayKao Hang, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Founding Dean, said the College of Health is set apart by prioritizing diverse enrollment while also taking a unique approach to health care, emphasizing mental and spiritual well-being in addition to traditionally emphasized physical health for individuals, families and



David Xu
Wayzata High School

community members.

According to St. Thomas President Julie Sullivan, the college has the potential to address systemic community health care problems.

“I’d like to transform how we think about health, particularly through the education process that we’re delivering in the Morrison College, to look at those other dimensions of health,” Hang said. “The students who we educate through the Morrison College will have some guiding principles that they learn, and one of them is this piece that is about advocacy and systemic change.”

A landmark \$25 million gift from John M. Morrison and Susan Schmid Morrison jump-started the

college, according to the university. It has since grown, and Hang said the college has an enrollment of 853 undergraduate and graduate students, making it one of St. Thomas’ largest colleges.

The university plans to expand by establishing a new School of Nursing, in addition to the psychology, social work and exercise science programs. The School of Nursing, which is projected to open up in fall 2022, is a focal point of the university’s efforts toward diversification.

According to Hang, the College of Health wants to have the most diverse class of students ever coming to St. Thomas for nursing.

To reach her goal of at least 30% diversity, Hang said the College of Health is working on funding scholarships that will help bring in more first-generation, low-income and racially diverse students.

Hang said much of what she focuses on in her job relates to engagement with local, underrepresented communities, true to the Catholic social teachings touted at St. Thomas.

Hang has a background in **HANG** continued on page 30

Dr. MayKao Hang’s mission is personal

FOR DR. MAYKAO Hang, the founding dean of St. Thomas’ new Morrison Family College of Health, creating bold programs to end disparities in healthcare isn’t simply a professional matter; it’s also a personal one.

Growing up a Hmong refugee in Minnesota, Hang was already noticing inequities embedded into the lived experience of her community. “I grew up interpreting in health clinics because nobody could speak my language,” she said. “I could see that there were a lot of disparities in how immigrants and refugees were being treated.”

At the same time, she gained a strong “service mentality” toward her community.

“There was always a new refugee immigrant family that was living with my family, and I always had cousins I was taking care of, or feeding or getting to the welfare office,” recalls Hang.

Her dedication to good never wavered. After finishing her undergraduate degree in psychology at Brown University, her master’s degree in public affairs from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, and a doctorate in public administration, she said she “decided to dedicate my life to improving the lives of others.”

One of Hang’s early jobs was to create a violence prevention initiative within the Hmong community. She was a community organizer, managed volunteers and created new programs to address violence in Ramsey County through the Initiative for Violence Free Families and Communities housed at the Wilder Foundation.

“It was because I have a passion for young people,” Hang explains. “And also, because I knew that there were a lot of bad things happening in the community and I knew that some of the Hmong



Maneeya Leung
Eden Prairie High School

organizations were afraid to tackle domestic abuse and gang violence, and they were afraid to actually talk about some of the root causes of the violence that was happening in the community, including a lack of intercultural understandings between the generations, and healthcare systems not knowing how to support refugee kids and families.”

Hang didn’t know that so much of her job would intertwine with healthcare, but as she soon found out, “80% of healthcare actually occurs outside of a hospital room and facility setting.”

She was quick to learn: “I wasn’t trained on that in school, but I learned it on the job.”

“My specialty area is looking at health through the lens of the community, and also, where we have gaps and needs,” said Hang. “A lot of what puts people in poverty is actually a lack of good physical, mental health and just really no social connections,” said Hang. Consequently, her work of promoting wellbeing only advanced as she went on to be the Resident Services Director of the St. Paul Public Housing Agency, and then the Director of Adult Services in Ramsey County before getting the call back to work at the Wilder Foundation. This time she served as the Children and Family Services Director and became CEO for 10 years. All the while, she was working on her doctorate degree in public administration and raising four children.

Creating ground-up initiatives is a familiar task, and she’s well-prepared to do it as dean. “I’ve spent **ADVOCACY** continued on page 30

Thanks to Youthprise, Students Can Get Unemployment Benefits

KUMON OF BLAINE, the tutoring center where I worked, switched to an online model in March 2020. The result? My layoff, which I had feared but expected when I first heard of the pandemic the month before.

The loss of income meant I no longer had a sense of freedom to shop for whatever I liked. This made me upset, because I had felt a sense of independence from the grasp of my strict parents, and now it was unfairly taken away from me. But I know I wasn't the only student who was affected.

Up until December, students who lost their jobs due to the pandemic saw no financial relief. It's hard to conceive how many of those students were left in a distressing situation, especially if their parents were also laid off. But that was before Youthprise filed a lawsuit that, eventually, successfully won high school students unemployment benefits.

Youthprise is an organization that seeks equity for Minnesota students, especially for Indigenous, low-income and racially diverse youth. Youthprise President Wokie Weah



Ariana Yasmin
Spring Lake Park High School

is a firm believer in success that is closely tied with aiding the young. She centered the organization around the belief that bringing together youth leadership and engagement with the pursuit of equity will always yield quality results.

Weah joined the cause when the issue was brought to her attention by students who were struggling during this strenuous time.

"A lot of the young people we were talking to, this money was important to them because they were helping to support their families, so if they did not receive unemployment benefits, then it had repercussions," Weah said.

Youthprise did everything it could to bring awareness to the issue in hopes of pressuring legislators. They put up billboards around the state, circulated articles and posted on social



PHOTO COURTESY MELISSA BOONE

Wokie Weah, president of Youthprise

media.

"Frankly, I think it would have been a little embarrassing if Minnesota had not come through," Weah said, laughing.

What prompted Weah and Youthprise to fight with such resolve? She saw this case as "an opportunity to make some noise" — to force the state's legislators to consider young people's needs.

"I think legislators were not taking young people very seriously," Weah said.

Filing a lawsuit is a large task. Fortunately, over the years Youthprise has received financial support from several organizations, such as the McKnight Foundation, Philanthropy

Partners and the Minneapolis Foundation. Attorney General Keith Ellison was also an avid supporter; Weah called him "tremendously helpful."

In December 2020, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that all high school students in Minnesota who have lost their job due to the pandemic can now access unemployment benefits.

Weah was pleased with the result. She noted how much awareness Youthprise's campaign raised on the issue.

"I think that provided some incentive for the ruling to go in our favor," Weah said.

Local Professor Fights Uncivil Wars Through Racial Justice Initiative

Insurrection, inauguration and the murder of George Floyd

ON JANUARY 6, the American people gathered around their televisions and witnessed an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Some watched in horror while others rejoiced as domestic terrorists entered the building, proudly displaying Confederate flags, MAGA paraphernalia and firearms.

Demonstrations and protests are generally known to promote a message or cause, like women's rights and free health care. However, the



Kennedy Rance
Patrick Henry High School

events of Jan. 6 were an insurrection, a broadcast of violence with an undemocratic agenda.

Two weeks later, on Jan. 20, President Joe Biden was sworn into office. Although Biden was surrounded by diverse people of

various ethnicities and creeds, the country was divided.

"We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts," Biden said during his inaugural speech.

While there is no official definition for "uncivil war," it might be thought of as a raging conflict of opposing parties or ideologies fueled by malice and ignorance.

"When people marched into the Capitol carrying Confederate flags, that is a symbol of their support for white supremacy," said Yohuru Williams, professor of history at

the University of St. Thomas. "I think our democracy is in mortal danger, in this moment, when there is a fundamental lack of trust in the political process."

Williams, a university chair and founding director of the Racial Justice Initiative at the University of St. Thomas, strives to end uncivil wars by trying to free the Twin Cities of racial disparities.

The Racial Justice Initiative focuses on supporting racial justice education, exploring community partnerships and engaging in conversations addressing race within the Twin Cities.

Williams founded the Racial Justice Initiative in response to the

murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

"In that moment, there was an immediacy here in the Twin Cities that I didn't feel before," he said.

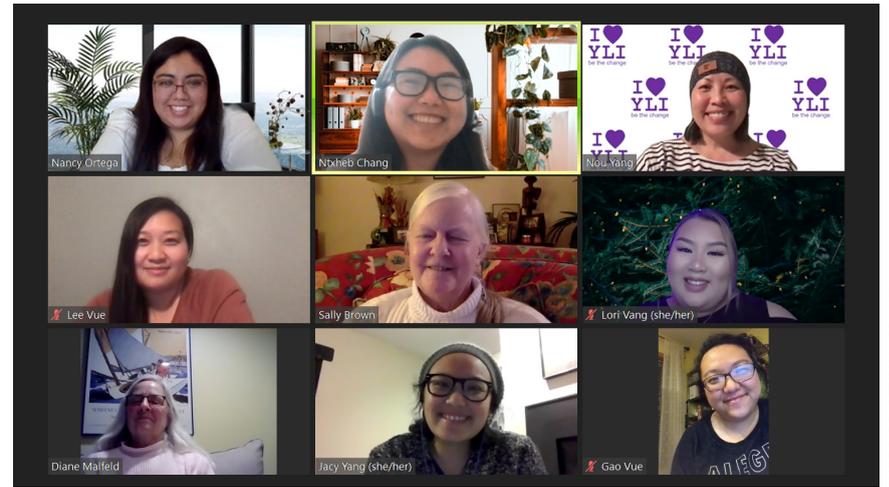
The sense of urgency has faded as the months have gone by, Williams said. "We're going to be coming up on a pretty grim anniversary here in a couple months, and it'll be the one-year anniversary of George Floyd's killing. And the question for all of us at that point will be how far we have come," he said.

I think ending an uncivil war isn't about leading a nation or holding conversations around racial injustice. Hatred led to Minneapolis burning and the insurrection at the Capitol. Ending an uncivil war starts by recognizing the hatred people hold within themselves and wanting better for yourself and your community. How will you choose to end this uncivil war?

What's Next?



An activity examining YLI's core values.



YLI Council Zoom meeting

Alumni, Community Keep YLI Strong

After Wilder cuts, Youth Leadership Initiative lives on

In 2020, DOZENS of nonprofit agencies were forced to shut their doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its financial consequences. As of February, many remain shuttered.

But one nonprofit, the Youth Leadership Initiative, is rising again because of the community's demand, and the determination



Adam Gips
St. Louis Park High School

of some alumni and former staff members.

Based in St. Paul, YLI is a

nonprofit focused on teaching leadership skills to high school students, especially those from ethnic and cultural minorities. For 14 years, it was a program of the Wilder Foundation. But in May 2020, facing the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Wilder abruptly cut funding for all leadership programs, including YLI.

However, YLI was too important to the communities it served to let it end, said Lori Vang, an alumna of the program.

"From my YLI experience," Vang

said, "I learned about communication styles, resolving conflicts, knowing when to lead and when to follow, public speaking skills, interviewing, cultural awareness and serving the community."

She also learned important things about herself, including self-love, self-confidence and standing up for her beliefs.

The skills Vang learned, said Nou Yang, former YLI executive director, are important in raising a new generation of leaders within minority communities, and in the larger

effort for diversity and inclusion.

Everybody knew there would be program cutbacks in 2020 because of the pandemic, but the abrupt decision to terminate YLI caught staff and volunteers by surprise, Yang said.

"We were informed that we had a month left to close out. And then our jobs were being eliminated (along with the program). We were on our own."

Because they believed in YLI's value to the community, a group **YLI continued on page 30**

YLI Community Forges Its Own Future

At the peak of the pandemic, an innovative youth leadership program was dropped by its sponsor. Now the former executive director and alumni are fighting to keep the program going. The Youth Leadership Initiative teaches leadership skills to young adults in the east metro area. The former director of YLI, Nou Yang, was aided by alumni Lori Vang on a Zoom call with a reporter on Jan. 30.

Last spring, the program was terminated by the Wilder Foundation. Yang lost her job and Vang was outraged. In response, they both



Amina Jama
Columbia Heights High School

called out to the community for support in order to revive the program. Without the resources that the Wilder Foundation had set for them, they had to find new funding sources.

At the peak of the program, 60 to 80 students were reached. Due to loss of funding, only 40 students are in the program today. Fifteen

people have now joined the battle for the program to be resurrected.

As a former participant, Vang has the utmost respect for YLI.

"YLI invests their time in youth and rather than telling us what to do, they give us the space to explore ourselves," Vang said.

During her first year of high school, Vang said she had a rough time and didn't understand what community meant. But with the skills she learned at YLI, Vang was able to facilitate a workshop for 30 statewide 4-H ambassadors.

Due to the loss of funding during

the pandemic, the YLI budget has been cut more than a half. Now Yang is working to raise the rest of the funds.

Yang said during the years she worked at YLI, she never wrote grants -- but now she is. Yang feels excited to be in charge of YLI now and to be able to determine what they want from the program.

"YLI has taught me to see the world as it could be -- what it means to truly be in community, to lead with our hearts and minds, and to let young people lead," Yang said.

YLI serves the community as a

way to help the next generation.

Diversity plays a big part in the program. Every year the program serves about 50 youth of diverse backgrounds. YLI is a place where people of color can explore themselves and expand their knowledge of other cultures.

YLI is still breathing and refuses to be demolished. It helps young adults with skills that they will need in the long run. Without the help of their former parent organization, YLI staff and supporters will extend their hands to the community and strive to be better.

Youth Voice Challenge

We're experiencing a charged election season in the midst of profound public health, social and racial equity crises. With that in mind, share your thoughts on one of these specific prompts:

See a collection of stories we received and engage with more on our website. Stay tuned, the next **#360YouthVoiceChallenge** launches in summer 2021!

- *Self-care*: What methods of self-care help you navigate these traumatic times?
- *Community building*: What does healing and/or rebuilding look like as a community?
- *Reflection*: How has social media helped you endure and/or heal?
- *Looking forward*: Describe two or three ways your peers can be involved to create a more just and equal future.

Voices: Virtual School is Hard

Amina Jama
Columbia Heights High School

I REMEMBER WHEN it began. I was sitting with my mom explaining why I wanted to quit the school musical. Suddenly her phone rang. She picked it up and put it on speaker. We listened to my principal's automated voice, saying that school would be canceled for at least the next two weeks because of COVID-19.

At first, I was so excited. No school. No homework. All my friends were texting me,

asking to hang out. If only we knew what the next 10 months would be like.

The next day I arrived at Costco with my dad, surprised to see that everyone was wearing masks and gloves. Until then I never thought twice about standing next to people or fully realized how the outbreak was spreading. Not just across the world, but in Minnesota, as well.

Little did I realize how much the pandemic would change the lives of young adults like myself over the months that followed.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL continued on page 29

Voices: We're All Struggling with School

Nalani Vang
Math and Science Academy

PEOPLE SAID HIGH school was going to go by in a flash, but I didn't think they meant in a Zoom class. Online school has shown me that even overachievers like me can slip through the cracks.

At first, I didn't want to believe that. I had always set high expectations for myself because I was scared of letting the people closest to me down. Everybody kept telling me that my four years of high school were going to go fast, so I shouldn't waste my time on things that make me happy. Instead, I should be focusing on SAT/ACT prep, applying to colleges and for scholarships, writing essays and becoming a straight-A student.

This year, as the COVID-19 pandemic forced my school to close and move to online learning, I struggled to be the best student that everybody expected me to be. I felt unmotivated and unhappy with where I was emotionally. Tasks that were once easy, like completing homework, participating in clubs and being organized, are now the hardest for me. With a lack of motivation to log on to online school, I didn't feel like I was learning anything new, and I procrastinated on my assignments until just before they were due.

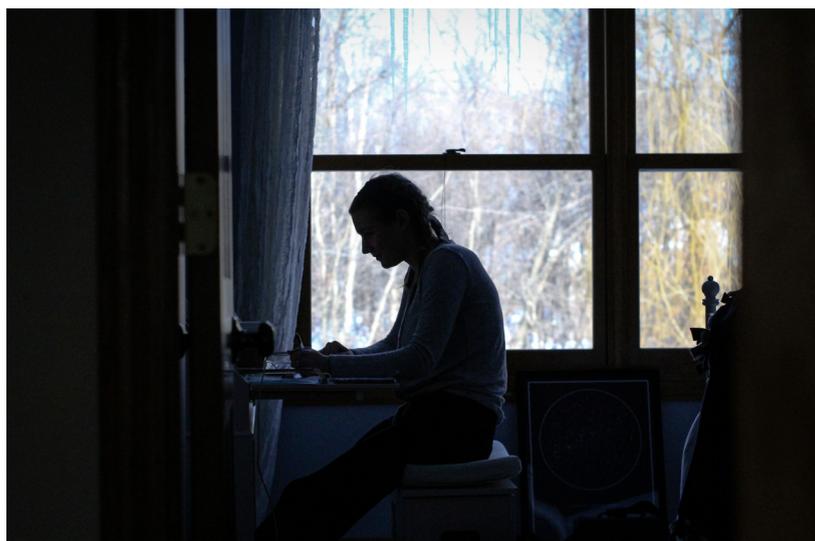
Instead of being in a classroom with teachers and students, I was lying in my bed, sleeping through Zoom classes. I hid behind the screen because I didn't want the teachers to call on me. I didn't want to show other students that I

could slip through the cracks, too.

Does online school change the expectations of your learning? The environment of your bedroom is very different from the environment of your classroom. Sleeping in your bed and waking up to Zoom classes a minute before they start is different than getting up and walking into your school. Eating food during Zoom classes and hiding behind the screen contrasts from talking with your friends at lunch and interacting with other students in person. Staring at the screen for eight or more hours a day, in addition to the hours of finishing your homework after school, can make you feel Zoom fatigue.

The lack of communication between teachers, students and staff can make students scared to ask for the teachers' support. The transition to online schooling has changed students' lifestyles and how we approach our learning.

Times are different now. The expectations you and others hold for yourself may not be achieved during distance learning — and that's OK. Showing up on screen in a place that's comfortable for you is a way that you can adapt to your environment. Communicating with your support network — your family, teachers, friends, coaches and others who are close to you — can help reset your expectations and realize your full potential. During these difficult times, talking with the people closest to you about what you need can help you become more comfortable and content in approaching online school and other challenges in life.



THREESIXTY JOURNAL/SEMIL LIDEN

Online school has become the new normal for many students around the world, bringing challenges and, at times, loneliness.

Voices: Accept What You Can't Change

TODAY, IT SEEMS like everything is out of our control: The COVID-19 pandemic is getting worse, the American political scene is in chaos and our economy is struggling. Nothing is going right and we feel powerless to do anything about it. But maybe that's OK.

In these difficult circumstances, we are learning to accept the things we cannot change and to focus our energy on changing the things we can.

In March 2020, my school, like thousands across the nation, shut down. I went from seeing my friends every day to staring at a computer screen 24/7. I realized that I could not control whether or when we would again be able to attend school in person.

What I was able to control was how I handled the situation. I could either sit around and mope or use the time to improve my life. I started to work out more often. I cleaned my room – something that

Emil Liden
Minnetonka High School

was long overdue. And I even had some fun cutting my own hair.

By May, two months into the pandemic, I felt I had some control over my life.

As the summer arrived, the status of my fall soccer season was completely up in the air. I knew that I couldn't control whether or not we would play. What I could control was whether I was ready to play.

I trained multiple days a week and, luckily, our abbreviated season happened. For the first time, I made varsity. Once again, I stopped worrying about whether we were going to play. I focused my time and energy on something I could control: my soccer skills.

The Dalai Lama has said, "If a problem is fixable, if a situation is such that you can do something about it, then there is no need to



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worry. If it's not fixable, then there is no help in worrying. There is no benefit in worrying whatsoever."

What he meant, I believe, is that if we can do something to change a situation, then we need to get off our butts and do it. If there is nothing we can do, then we need to stop worrying and use that time and energy to do something positive.

Throughout our lives there will be things that are beyond our control. No matter how hard we try, there will be things we cannot change. We need to focus our time and energy on making a difference where we can, not on the things over which we have no control.

We cannot determine when this pandemic will end, but we can

control whether we do our part to make it go away — by wearing a mask. We cannot fix Washington, but we can be peacemakers in our own bitterly divided communities.

And most importantly, we can learn from this experience to make our lives, and the lives of others, better in the coming years.

Voices: Please, Wear Your Mask

Fran Aravena
Wayzata High School

DEAR CUSTOMER, WHY aren't you wearing a mask?

This is the question I ask in my head while continuing to smile and greet people in the coffee shop where I work. The usual calm atmosphere has been replaced since the pandemic began. Baristas have been updated to the fancy title of "essential" and earned the position of mediators when a customer refuses to wear a mask.

For the past couple of months, I've compiled a list of the most common answers I receive when asking a customer to put on a mask.

First, defensively stating they have a medical exemption. I have to shrug off this response since

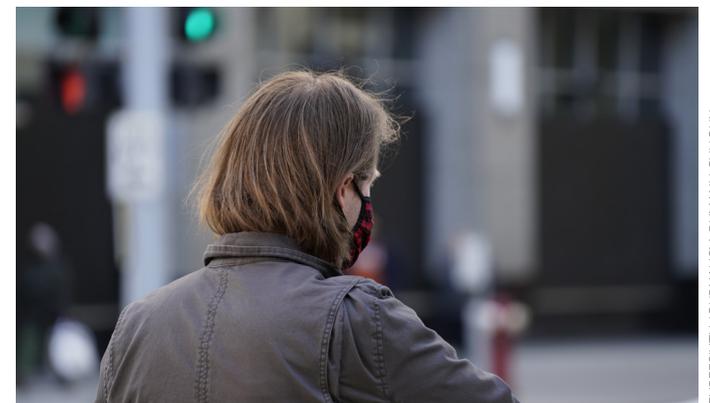
I'm on the clock, so it's not like I can start a full-blown argument. However, I debunked this theory for my own sake and have come to the conclusion, no. Currently, all stores are following the Minnesota Department of Health's regulations requiring masks to be worn in all public places. On the website, they also address any exceptions to wearing a mask: "There is no defined list of recognized medical, mental health conditions or disabilities that would prevent someone from wearing a face covering." And before anyone asks, no, I am not allowed to ask customers further what exact condition keeps them from wearing a mask, which would benefit the health of all around them.

Second, contrary to popular belief, wearing a mask is not a political statement. I've worked

as a barista well over a year now, so I've had my fair share of rude customers. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a new breed of ruder customers have arisen. Because the "customer is always right," I can't argue against their beliefs against masks, so instead I have to #smilethroughthepain. Just as I did for medical exemptions, I did further research about COVID-19 on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website to understand how effective masks are.

The last (and of course most useful all-around excuse) is forgetfulness. Wearing a mask is currently a state mandate, so lying about not having one, and then going a step further and simply refusing to wear one when it is offered is kinda dumb (I'm not sure how else to put it).

My list could continue, but it



THREESIXTY JOURNALISM, DYMANH CHHOUN

really should not be necessary for me to explain how wearing a mask is necessary for everyone's safety. By not wearing one, customers are not only putting themselves at risk, but everyone else in that store, including other customers and the workers.

The mantra will continue because action is not taken collectively as a group, and I can't say anything other than, "Thank you for choosing us, what can I get started for you today."

Photo Essay: What Senior Year Looks Like During a Pandemic

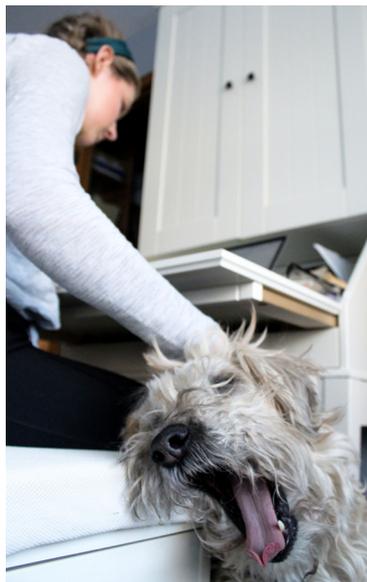
For students across the U.S., senior year is often the highlight of high school. One last year to study hard. One last year to put on that jersey and make a name for yourself on the field. One last year with friends to make memories before leaving for college. However, for students across the country this year, senior year has looked different: no prom, no football games and no time to spend with friends in the halls.

At Minnetonka High School, students' lives have changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. With new schedules, COVID regulations and challenges, this is certainly a year like no other — and one they will never forget.



Above: Surrounded by his prized collection of “Star Wars” and Marvel memorabilia, this student is in his perfect environment.

Right: Online school at home has brought new challenges for students, but also new study buddies.



Top: The annual festivities of Heart Week at Minnetonka High School include singing telegrams, games and a sweethearts' dance. Modified to meet COVID guidelines, this game of flag football left some seniors disappointed at not taking home the trophy.

Above: Despite the freezing temperatures, students have found creative ways to spend time together.

Left: Senior year is marked by the dread of college applications. But when an acceptance letter arrives in the mail, it's pure joy.

PHOTO ESSAY
continued on page 25

Voices: Rethink Your News Sources

Annie Swanstrom
Maple Grove Senior High School

NO MATTER WHERE you stand on politics; whether or not you cheer for the Vikings; or whether you say soda or pop, one similarity we all can agree on in 2020 is that social media has changed how we live.

It's easier than ever to get information on social media; but the information we are getting is coming from our feed, which is curated to our beliefs. While hearing our own beliefs is validating, it is also important to look at things from a different viewpoint and fact

check what we see. This is especially crucial for young adults as we shape our political beliefs.

Most people know how deceiving their Instagram feed may be. But according to a recent study by the Pew Research Center, 48% of adults aged 18-29 say it is their main source of political news. The same study showed that people who relied most on social media for their political news were less likely to be knowledgeable about current events and politics.

Many of us also follow celebrities who support our beliefs. When Harry Styles reposted a tweet from Joe Biden, my feed — and I'm sure

many others' feeds — was filled with people reposting this news. This is an example of when young teens come across their favorite celebrities' political opinions, regardless of what they are. With our feeds flooded with others' opinions, it can be challenging to create our own. Many of us share posts that we think we agree with, without taking the time to make sure the content is true.

According to a 2020 PBS/NPR survey, 59% of Americans say it is difficult to identify the difference between true and false information. An example: when President Donald Trump was impeached, many people my age thought he was removed from office. This is

a time when one must do research to get a clearer understanding of what's happening in politics.

The disregard for fact-checking what we see on social media can make our judgment unreliable and biased. People who use reliable news sources are more likely to become more educated voters and citizens. We can do better than these statistics.

Although social media can connect us to different points of view, we have to step out of our bubble and seek them out. I think we can all agree that we want to change the world. Our first step can be changing the way we inform ourselves.

Voices: Let's Not Lose the Earth

Gwynnevere Vang
Tartan Senior High School

HERE'S WHY YOU should generate electricity in ways that don't warm the Earth.

Coal and oil create greenhouse gases that change our atmosphere. Greenhouse gases become mixed into the atmosphere and contribute to global warming. In Australia, the rising temperatures in the ocean cause the coral to turn white and die in the Great Barrier Reef. Much aquatic life depends on coral as a place for food and shelter. In California, there are wildfires that are spreading rapidly due to the rising temperatures. The ice caps are melting in Antarctica, creating floods around the world.

Those fossil fuels are nonrenewable, which means that we will eventually run out - unlike the sun, wind, water and nuclear power. We can convert to solar panels, hydroelectric machines, wind turbines and nuclear power plants.

I will admit that fossil fuels are more reliable. These options are more efficient when it comes to the environment, unlike the fossil fuels we use.

If one person contributes to changing how we make our electricity, it may inspire others to do the same.

I remember when I was 10 years old going on a family trip and seeing a bear for the first time. It looked like a very large dog from afar. It looked hungry, like it could eat a 10-year-old girl. I was in shock. "Is this really real?" I thought to myself.



Some people are enjoying this warm winter day at Lake Nokomis, in South Minneapolis Minnesota

Today, global warming worries a lot of people as much as the bear worried me. Bears are my favorite animals and to hear that their homes could be stripped away by pollution makes me upset. It worries me a lot. Once it's gone, we cannot go back to how it was before. Let's not lose Earth.

If global warming increases, the food chain

will be disrupted. Imagine a large population of insects disappearing. The animal feeding on those insects will starve. That sets off a chain reaction for predator and prey. It might not be instant, but eventually every living organism will be gone.

In summary, you should decrease electricity usage and change how you generate it.

Global warming directly affects nature and the communities we live in.

There are things about nature that we all care about, like camping in the forest every summer or taking a breath of fresh air each morning.

I want you to think about that the next time you leave your lights on at home.

Voices: Xenophobia Isn't New

The way we fight against it should be

WHAT CAN WE learn from the discrimination my ancestors faced 100 years ago?

Small-town Wisconsin was not a good place to have the last name “Deutscher” in 1918. With World War I drawing to a close and U.S. involvement intensifying, my great-great grandparents, John and Augusta Deutscher, found themselves facing a growing challenge: xenophobia against German Americans.

When we celebrate Veterans Day each Nov. 11, we often don't remember that this holiday,

Evan Odegard
Nova Classical Academy

originally known as Armistice Day, commemorates the end of World War I. At the time it was first celebrated, many German Americans were feeling the effects of some of the war's unintended consequences: rampant nativist attitudes, accusations of disloyalty, and even imprisonment and violence.

Not only were my ancestors insulted and seen as outsiders by their community, they were

forced by law to carry enemy alien identification cards anytime they left the house. Across the country, German Americans were met with fear, hostility and a system working against them. Some states banned German-language schools and jailed German newspaper editors; mobs conducted burnings of German books. In Southern Minnesota, a German American farmer named John Meints was kidnapped, tarred and feathered, then thrown across the border into South Dakota. His neighbors threatened him with death if he ever returned. My ancestors, who had been living in the U.S. for nearly 40 years before the war, found themselves the targets of a culture of fear that singled them out and persecuted them solely for their

country of birth.

Unfortunately, I see many of the experiences of my great-great grandparents being repeated today. Immigrants like my mother, a Costa Rican American, are targeted by people who have a growing fear and resentment of people from other countries and cultures. While immigrants today are not labeled “enemy aliens” and forced to carry identification cards, they face the same nativism and distrust German Americans faced 100 years ago. It isn't uncommon to see these attitudes coming from the descendants of those same German immigrants who overcame the anti-German sentiment of World War I. As the great-great grandson of German American farmers who lived during

World War I and the son of a recent Central American immigrant, this saddens and disappoints me.

Our society is fragile right now, and there is no place for xenophobia in it. It's a lesson we should have learned 100 years ago. It isn't right that people like my mother have to face the same kind of prejudice that my great-great grandparents overcame. In a country like the United States, where immigration is at the foundation of nearly every family's story, the fight against xenophobia should feel as personal to everyone as it does for me.

This Armistice Day, let's learn from the past and affirm that the fight against xenophobia is everyone's fight.

Voices: Step Aside, Amplify Black Voices

NON-BLACK CELEBRITIES ON social media are unintentionally causing harm to Black communities. Instead of elevating and supporting Black voices, they have been consistently speaking over them. This drowns out their message and shifts the focus.

These celebrities think they're doing good by sharing videos of violence toward Black people, not realizing how it dehumanizes Black bodies. For example, writer and activist Shaun King, who has over 1 million followers on Twitter, posted the video of George Floyd's murder with no censoring or warnings. Many non-Black people assumed they were allowed to do the same. It

Faaya Adem
FAIR School Downtown

seems like everyone always wants to see the latest viral video, but instead of it being a dance or some funny challenge, it's an uncensored video of a Black person being murdered. Besides causing unneeded trauma, it normalized spreading violent videos across social media.

When non-Black celebrities speak about Black Lives Matter, they should also be exposing and dealing with racism within their communities — and within themselves. Yet, many of them turn a blind eye to their community's discriminatory

actions toward Black people. The same celebrities who are preaching about BLM haven't even apologized for their own cultural appropriation or anti-Black behavior from just weeks before. The Kardashian-Jenner family, for example, is known for wearing cornrows and box braids. While they are comfortable appropriating Black culture, they haven't faced the struggle of being Black. Speaking up about BLM is useless when your actions are still hurting the Black community. Even now, people shouldn't be waiting for celebrities to speak up. A celebrity sharing content can help spread it online faster, however, it's not going to help educate everyone.

Yes, we shouldn't be allowing non-Black celebrities to stay silent, but our lives don't revolve around them. They should share appropriate content that they have thoroughly understood and give credit where credit is due.

There are other ways to support BLM without speaking over Black people. Signing petitions and sharing infographics is a start, but non-Black people, especially celebrities, need to start putting their money where their mouth is. Even then, they need to think about where they're donating their money. Causes like BLM and bail funds have pointed out multiple times that they're getting more money than they need at the moment. Instead, look for GoFundMe campaigns of Black people who have

been displaced due to civil unrest. Of course, there will be concerns about where the money will go. It's also not our job to police those in need on what they should do with money donated to them. If you're uncomfortable donating individually, find radical organizations and abolitionist movements to donate to instead. These are places that can be held accountable if there is proof that donations are being misused.

Ultimately, non-Black celebrities think they're doing the right thing. That's admirable, but it's not enough. What we really need is for them to share content thoughtfully and carefully and encourage others to make positive changes by leading without overstepping their boundaries as a non-Black person.

Voices: Stop Hating on Muslims

Ariana Yasmin
Spring Lake Park High School

ON INSTAGRAM RECENTLY, a stranger direct-messaged me with a series of emojis that included airplanes, bombs and schools.

On TikTok, someone commented on my post, “Show your waves, or show me what’s in the backpack.”

This past year, I have been bombarded with hateful messages and comments from strangers. They circle around misconceptions and false statements – or just plain disrespect – about my hijab and my religion, Islam.

The most common hate I have received is around Islamic extremist terrorism. But the reality is many Muslims – including myself – disassociate from those horrible people and

detest their inhumane actions.

I believe misconceptions portrayed in some media articles have greatly affected the public’s perspective, especially those who are unfamiliar with my religion. Fifty-three percent of U.S. adults “think coverage of Islam and Muslims by American news organizations is generally unfair,” according to the Pew Research Center.

My biggest apprehension about being a Muslim in the U.S. is not necessarily the negative stereotypes, but how these detrimental perceptions can so easily turn into violence. Anti-Muslim hate crimes were at an all-time high in 2016, the same year former President Donald Trump was elected, according to FBI hate crime statistics from 2004 to 2018. Hate crimes against religions in total were at an all-time high in 2017 (1,564 total crimes),

which was when the “Muslim ban” on travel was first introduced.

I think people who don’t know me have lashed out because they are afraid of Muslims in general. While some Americans’ views of Muslims have become more positive in recent years, 41% of Americans believe Islam is more likely to encourage violence to its followers, according to the Pew Research Center. Half of the adults in the U.S. say Islam is “not part of mainstream American society,” Pew says.

I don’t want my fellow Americans to be afraid of me. I’m just a 16-year-old college student trying to figure out what I want to major in and how to learn American Sign Language to communicate with my baby sister, who has Down syndrome. I’m trying to face the pandemic like every other person while desperately wanting to visit my friends

safely. I’m at the point in my life where I’m trying to shape my future and it’s not fair to me to deal with hateful comments and messages on top of that.

In her influential TED Talks video, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the dangers of a single story: “The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.” Be skeptical of the Islamic stereotypes you hear in the news, on social media and even from the former president of the United States. Look at me as not only a Muslim, but also as an American teenager, a college student and a journalist.

My story will not be defined by hateful social media comments, the media or anyone other than me.

Voices: Help the Homeless

Jijee Ligdi
Edina High School

GROWING UP IN South Minneapolis near the Little Earth area, I have witnessed the increase in homelessness and the struggle that people have been going through. I have seen the uncomfortably large numbers of tents, sleeping bags and blankets with people trying to survive in both the warm and cold Minnesota days. Although many people find it easier to ignore this issue and believe that the state will take care of it, there will be no long-lasting or permanent change unless we stand up for people who are homeless and bring awareness to their plight. And of course, this pandemic has only worsened and will continue to worsen the homelessness crisis. The economic downfall is leaving many without the support or resources they desperately need.

The level of homelessness among Native Americans alone is outrageous. In Minneapolis, Native Americans represent 27% of the homeless population, according to a recent count, yet only make up 2% of the city’s population, according to the 2010 census. This disparity is extremely alarming and saddening. The homelessness crisis overall only continues to worsen, with numbers on the rise. In June, city officials estimated

more than 550 tents in Powderhorn Park, marking the largest known homeless encampment in Minneapolis history. Both the supply of resources and the safety of people who are homeless are under attack due to this pandemic. Many fear getting sick due to the lack of sanitation in the encampments; their concerns are only amplified by the uncertainty stemming from the pandemic.

The reality is that things don’t look like they are getting better anytime soon; the pandemic is still rampant and the weather is getting worse. However, there are ways that you can help. People Serving People is an emergency shelter that works to prevent homelessness in Minnesota. You can help them support those in need by donating clothing, providing financial contributions or volunteering your time. The American Indian Community Development Corporation is an organization that works to strengthen American Indian communities by providing culturally unique initiatives, housing and entrepreneurial programs. They would greatly appreciate and benefit from financial donations. We as a city and community need to stop neglecting people who are homeless. Although we are all struggling and are scared, we must stand up for those who are more vulnerable and need the most support.



“Wall of Forgotten Natives” homeless encampment in South Minneapolis in 2018



PHOTOS BY THREESIXTY JOURNALISM, DYMANH CHHOUN

Voices: Why Can't I Vote for School Board?

Maneeya Leung
Eden Prairie High School

WHO WAS GOING to represent me these next few years?

That was the question on my mind as I interviewed the school board candidates for my school newspaper before Election Day. It was in their job description to do so, since I'm a student. I figured students ought to know the policies they rolled out, which would have at least some impact on our education, and consequently, our life. So, before and after interviews and as the vote tallied up on Election Day, I wanted to know: Who was going to

be the one to represent me?

Then I realized my answer: no one.

And that was decided long before the vote came in. Long before I even went to school, actually, because the school board never has and never will fully represent me.

As a 16-year-old, a junior in high school, for some reason I can't vote.

I want to be able to vote in school board elections. If the school board was adequately representing us, I wouldn't care about voting. I wouldn't need to ask for change. But they're not.

The most obvious example of their failure is not listening to us. Many of the candidates I spoke

to referred to the input of other community members or their own judgement when it came to where they stood on issues, but very rarely, if at all, did I hear mention of a student who informed their viewpoints.

There shouldn't be a lack of student voices when we're the ones who are most affected by their actions. It's not that the candidates don't care about listening. I know they value hearing from students, that they're open to feedback. But caring isn't the same as doing.

This problem extends to current school board members, as well. Maybe in the past school board members traveled to the school to

meet us and I just didn't get the email. Or maybe they have secret methods of gathering my feedback that are so discrete I'm not aware I'm sharing it. But I've never heard of any outreach toward students or any genuine desire to do so.

I understand we have forms of input, but it's not enough. They can do better, and a vote is part of that solution. It's not the solution, but I'd bet school board members looking for a rerun would be rushing talk to students if we could. Or at least, doing more than they are now, which is close to nothing. And if they still fail to communicate and hear what we want represented, there's no better way of

accountability than a vote.

I can't guarantee voting will change all this. I can't guarantee true representation, the only thing I can guarantee is that it's a step.

When I look at the students around me every day, I believe we are qualified to vote. We know what school is, we see its promises and shortcomings from where we are, as students. I see students who care and want the best for others.

Let's remove unnecessary qualifications, because when it comes to that, there is no one more qualified, more deserving than a student to be represented. To vote.

Voices: Voting Matters

Carmen De Souza Bronshteyn
Wayzata High School

"CADA VOTO CONTA." In English, this means "every vote counts."

One night a couple years ago, I overheard my mother saying this on the phone to my grandma, who lives in Brazil, along with half of my family.

In 2018, Brazil had a presidential election during a time of recession, political scandals and high crime rates. Citizens over the age of 18 are required by law to vote, but because of this, many Brazilians "voto nulo," or cast a void ballot. My grandma was considering it, too.

"None of the candidates are going to solve the problems in Brazil," she said in defeat.

The other half of my family lives in the United States. That means in the last two years I've lived through two divisive presidential elections. There are parallels between the two elections: Jair Bolsonaro, who was elected president in Brazil's 2018 election, is known as a far-right dictator who has been given the nickname "Trump of the Tropics."

Fast forward to today. Most of my friends are two years shy of being able to vote, but I already hear their dissatisfaction with the candidates and election process. "They are both old, and they both suck," said one of my friends. "They are the same," said another friend.

These are students who are informed – they keep up with the news and participate in things like debate yet are feeling uninterested with the election. Their reluctance reminded me of what my grandma felt in Brazil.

Voting is one of the most important ways citizens can directly impact what happens in government. "How can you complain about issues if you didn't do your part to try to fix them?" my mom often asks me.

No one candidate on any ballot is likely going to perfectly align with your political beliefs. But whether you're an adult or a teenager who can't yet vote, you must find a way to engage in the political process. It's as important as ever. By not voting, you are choosing not to exercise a right that many around the world do not get.



Coffman Memorial Union, at the University of Minnesota

"How can you complain about issues if you didn't do your part to try to fix them?"

Voices: Comparing Pandemic Responses

Dedeepya Guthikonda
Edina High School

AS THE COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in March 2020, from my living room in Edina, I watched on TV as India went into a complete lockdown, including restrictions on rail and bus services and a declared imprisonment for anyone who did not abide by the strict lockdown rules.

For nine months, my grandparents who live in Hyderabad have not left their apartment. With a population of 1.3 billion—the second largest in the world—the Indian government cannot afford to take any risks. A majority of the population that live in rural cities lack access to basic health care infrastructure and simply cannot take the precautions needed to protect themselves from the pandemic.

Meanwhile, in my city, I've seen students and adults alike refuse to wear a mask out of

simple apathy, if not to flaunt the ideals of their political party. When I see people in my comparably wealthy community disregarding basic health precautions, I can't help but think of the communities in India that lack access to the resources they are refusing.

In conversations with my family members in India, there seems to be a resonating tone of doing what it takes to keep themselves and the country safe. India has not had a perfect handle on the pandemic—it is far from it. But what is even more apparent is the blatant disregard of science and emphasis on politics that has drawn its way into the pandemic here in the United States.

At the beginning of the pandemic, my family was more worried for the safety of family members in India—taking into account the high population and lack of resources. Months later, as we slip into the third wave of the pandemic, we wonder how the U.S. has found itself in a worse situation; although

India has a population three times the size of the U.S., the U.S. has seen double the cases of COVID-19.

According to NPR News, the number of people in the U.S. dying of COVID-19 since May 10, 2020, is on average 50% higher than every other country in a study including 18 other high-income countries. When I see the blatant refusal to wear a mask from people in my own community, I think of my grandparents who cannot afford to make the slightest mistake for their health. I think of the millions of people living in India's slums that do not have a choice to make about their safety. I think about how our number of cases has surpassed those of a developing country with three times the population of ours, and I think about how an issue of public safety has become everything but that.

COVID-19 is a matter of life or death and choosing to have a sense of responsibility for yourself and your community is a matter

of humanity. We have spent these last six months in the U.S. choosing sides and disregarding science. How we choose to handle the virus has become a political issue and wearing masks and social distancing—both basic health precautions—have somehow become associated with political beliefs. We've polarized this issue and divided ourselves during a time that should have been characterized by solidarity.

When will we see science take the priority? When will we see our own political leaders and communities have a sense of responsibility? I hope that if there is anything we have learned from this pandemic, it's that we learn to take a sense of responsibility for ourselves and our community, and we recognize that we are all part of something bigger—that each and every one of our actions makes an impact.

Voices: Social Media is Balancing Act

Olivia Sorenson
Concordia Academy

MAY 25, 2020, is one day I won't forget. I was sitting at my kitchen table when the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd showed up on my newsfeed. While it was hard to watch, I felt it was important to confront the realities of police brutality and racial injustice in my community.

I wasn't alone: the video, posted by a young bystander, was viewed over 1.4 billion times. Protests erupted across the country. Though I couldn't attend, I kept up on social media by signing petitions and reposting images. Through conversations both on and offline, I gained a deeper understanding of racial injustice and ways to be an ally. While social media can sometimes contribute to toxic divisiveness, it can also be a powerful tool for conversations that lead to real change.

While social media is often seen as a passive activity, it can prompt important conversations offline. As I sifted through all of the reactions and news stories on social media, I noticed my cousin had joined the conversation. I had a conversation with her and came away from it having gained a deeper understanding of oppression that people of

color face in America.

In addition, social media has helped me learn about other human rights movements. I go to a Christian school, which promotes religious viewpoints without acknowledging others. However, through social media, I've expanded my viewpoints, learning about and discussing different cultures and religions. Even when I don't agree with a new viewpoint, it's fascinating just to see how people believe different things because of what they have experienced in their life.

Likewise, social media can offer a safe outlet — with privacy controls — for expressing one's opinions. This can also have mental health benefits as people find like-minded friends. No matter what you believe or how you believe it, someone on social media is going to agree with you. There is a place for you. I have never felt more accepted or understood than I have from people I've gotten to know through social media. If it wasn't for social media, I would not have the knowledge I have on so many different topics.

This opportunity to connect with others has only grown more important during the pandemic. I learned about the election results via a notification from Apple News. I was able to watch those close to me post about the victory. Without social media, we wouldn't



George Floyd mural at 38th St. and Chicago Ave. in Minneapolis.

have had the communal aspect of virtually celebrating President-elect Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump.

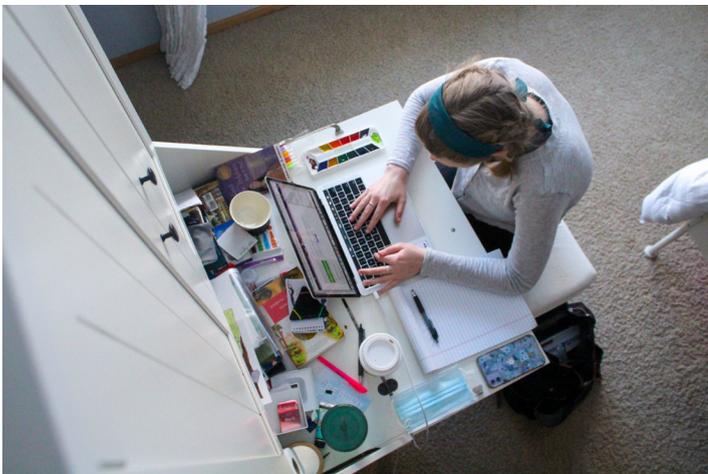
Still, social media shouldn't take over your whole life. At times social media can be overwhelming because you are learning so much about so many things that are happening around the world. It is important to know when to take a break and that it is OK to step away to process what's happening.

Social media has so many stories to read and listen to, and it allows you to have conversations with people about them. Such conversations even led me to explore journalism

and join the ThreeSixty Journalism program. While social media sometimes mirrors the division in our country, it also allows us to see past the barriers, giving us an opportunity to take action and giving us a path to community.

Social media flows into real life; it has real benefits and can lead to real change. At a time when we are debating the pros and cons of social media, there are some real benefits to be examined.

Photo Essay: What Senior Year Looks Like During a Pandemic continued from page 19



Clockwise from top left:

A mask quickly pulled down to enjoy a cupcake at a birthday party. With many restaurants closed, these friends had to move their party outside.

Online school has its perks. A Heart Week tradition, PJ Day has not been forgotten by some students.

Four Minnetonka seniors line up for an attempt at a long touchdown throw at the Heart Week flag football game.

As school transitioned online, many home desks became school desks, decorated with all the clutter of school supplies.

COLLEGE ESSAY BOOT CAMP

Kicking students' college essays into shape!

College Essay: Adapting to Change

I AM WRAPPED warmly in my thin, soft, rainbow blanket looking up at my mother and father in a blurry haze. For the next 15 years, that rainbow blanket would be an object of comfort, home and family. When I was young, I never wanted to grow up and become an adult because reality was endless and full of possibilities. I was too afraid to leave the warmth of my home and step into the real world with aspirations of my own. But the year 2019-20 has shifted my entire view, and I had to adapt to the changes that occurred when growing up.

The elders always ask me, “Thaum koj loj los koj yuav dhaun los ua kws kho mob, puas yog?” This translates to, “When you are older



Nalani Vang
Math and
Science
Academy

you’re going to become a doctor, right?”

“Yes,” I quickly reply without thinking, because it is such a common question. For 15 years, I’ve set strict rules to achieve my goals. I had my whole life planned out—until I went to high school.

Transitioning to high school was a steep, icy hill. There were many obstacles I had to face that reflected my determination. For nine years, I had spent my entire life with the same adults, peers and school, but it

was time to step out of my comfort zone.

“YOU GOT INTO THE MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY!” my mom screamed joyfully, as if she was the one who had been accepted. However, I was nervous about attending the No. 1 public charter school in Minnesota.

Regardless, I wanted to play for the volleyball team. I had practiced for weeks to improve my serve. It was toward the end of August and humid outside. My knees were shaking, and my stomach was quivering with fear. My head was dizzy and my throat was dry. As I walked into the building, I felt a rush of cool air overwhelm me. It smelled like new wood; everything was polished. I peeked into the gym and saw girls that were more than 5 feet tall. After half of the tryout, I made new friends. I was excited to play volleyball with them, and I

soon got over the feeling of being an outsider. Since the student body population was small, I connected with teachers and students. I even joined clubs. I finally belonged.

Then March 13, 2020, hit and altered my sense of belonging at school. I was finally happy and comfortable with the high standards of Math and Science Academy, but COVID-19 drastically impacted everyone; it was time to adapt.

I learn online, practice social distancing and participate in extracurricular activities online. As the oldest of six, I am responsible for myself and the care of the family. I tend to my 1-year-old sister, Scarlett, and help watch my siblings. I give my rainbow blanket to Scarlett when she’s fussy. Now, my rainbow blanket is part of my family’s memories. I learn to appreciate and grow as a learner and daughter. I understand my

parents, grandparents and siblings better than ever before. I know that my passion for helping people and seeing families united and joyful is my vocation. I want to become a cardiothoracic surgeon to help families through hard times and give them the hope to continue on. We can only adapt to change.

“Even if the desert becomes cracked, no matter who shakes this world, don’t let go of the hand you’re holding.” This quote is from someone who reminds me to continue making new memories while holding the past, much like my rainbow blanket. This blanket reminds me that when I pursue higher education and start a family, I will always have the strength of my memories that tie me back to who I am.

College Essay: Appreciating New Viewpoints

A CLASSMATE WARNING me I will go to hell. A boy giving me a 20-minute lesson on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ while we run around on the playground. The rewarding taste of sweet doughnuts after reluctantly agreeing to attend Mass with my cousins.

To this day it surprises me what a strong presence religion has had in my early life considering I don’t identify with one. In elementary school, I really enjoyed being an atheist. It set me apart from the crowd. I thought I was enlightened in the truth that God isn’t real. Though it pains me now to say it,



Rowan Benz
Girls Inc.
Eureka!

I believed I was better than other people for it.

The homeschool community in the suburbs of Colorado, where I grew up, is a quite Christian one. It seemed almost every day that kids in my homeschool community program would try to educate me on Catholicism, telling me things like, “Jesus sacrificed himself to save us from sin.” I saw it as an attack. It

felt as though they were saying I was a bad person simply because I didn’t believe.

The spark that started my better understanding and appreciation for other perspectives was in third grade. I was sitting at a table, having arrived early for class, when a dear friend of mine shyly approached and asked, cautiously, if I would like to join a worship club. I gave my usual reply of, “No, thank you. I don’t believe in God. Thank you for the offer, though.” And she looked me right in the eye and said, “I know. That is why I asked. Rowan, I don’t want you to go to hell.” Her eyes swelled as she held back tears.

Her words sparked something in me like nothing had before. Though the strong words of my other classmates still felt incriminating I realized they were merely doing what they thought was right because

they cared. I had thought I was better than these believers, who in the end turned out to have so much heart and compassion that I hadn’t realized before.

One of the aspects of faith I had never understood was prayer. Isn’t it selfish to ask for personal things when so much of the world is in turmoil? Reflecting on it, I now realize the reason for my lack of understanding was that I didn’t have a necessity to pray. What a privilege that is to say. It wasn’t until I felt some hardships that I realized the healing power of asking for help.

My mother, a caregiver for people with disabilities, was wrongly accused of assault and maltreatment. Both of my parents then lost their jobs, leading us to move to Minneapolis almost overnight. It was then that I prayed. While I’m not a believer, the vulnerability of

asking for help brought me acceptance and the gift of gratitude for all the simple joys that my life had to offer even in the midst of upheaval in my family.

The most prominent part of my journey with religion has not been the faith aspect, but more so the journey. These changes in perspective, which I have experienced and will continue to experience, help shape who I am and how I interact with the world. I now identify as agnostic and I long to always be discovering new ideas and ways of thinking and feeling. As I continue my education through college and in life, I hope to pursue a career in theatre or teaching. In those careers, I will be able to experience different points of view to share with others, spreading empathy and exploring the world, one perspective at a time.

COLLEGE ESSAY BOOT CAMP

Kicking students' college essays into shape!

College Essay: Retracing My Roots

WILL THEY STILL like me? The question resounds in my head when I am 14 years old. Over and over as I wait in the airport with my mom and my younger sister, then as I sit in the airplane seat, and again as I am right outside the door of my grandmother's house. It's been so long since I've seen my family, three years since I said a tearful goodbye to my grandparents and a plane took them 5,000 miles away from me.

While both of my parents studied medicine in Cuba, my younger sister and I lived with my grandparents in Petropolis, Brazil. It was where I was born and raised; I was 5 years old when I learned I was moving to America. I counted



**Carmen
De Souza
Bronshteyn**
Wayzata High
School

down the days in excitement. I didn't know much about America; I knew my dad's family lived there and there would be snow where we were going to live. I knew I would go to a new school. On my last day of preschool, I skipped as I held my grandma's hand. I rolled a small purple suitcase by my side, one that back then held my school supplies but would later hold keepsakes I took with me to my new home.

Coming to the United States,

I learned English very quickly because I was so young. My mom and my sister were the only two people who could speak Portuguese, and as time progressed, we would speak English more and more with each other. I was lucky to come back to Brazil as a 9-year-old when I still could speak to my family. I didn't realize that the next time I would be back I would almost be in high school and would barely be able to speak Portuguese at all.

I didn't realize then what an important piece of myself I was losing, and, as I grew older, memories began to slip away from me. I forgot how green the mountains were in my hometown because of how often it would rain. I forgot about how my family would celebrate birthdays late into the night. I forgot about the Palacio De Cristal (Crystal Palace) that would glow

during Christmastime and about the barraquinha de cachorro quente (hot dog stands) that lined the streets where I lived, where I could add corn and potato chips as toppings on my hot dogs.

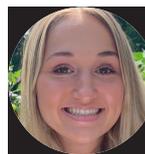
The first time I came back to Brazil, I spoke Portuguese in my thick American accent, and I would struggle to express complex thoughts. I was old enough to realize how much everything had changed around me. Everyone seemed so comfortable with each other. Where did I fit in? Despite this, my cousins and I soon became inseparable. Years of not speaking to each other did not change that, and we spent every moment together. I tried to write down every detail, photograph every moment I could. This was my community, and everyone around me contributed to who I am today. Despite all the

years away, we were still connected to each other.

Coming back to the United States, I realized how unique my identity is. Before, it was something I struggled a lot with. When I lived in the United States, I was Brazilian, and when I was in Brazil, I was American. I spent most of my life trying to choose one identity to define me, but I have grown to a point where both of my identities merge together. After much practice communicating with my family and meeting other Brazilian friends nearby, I am now able to speak Portuguese fluently. I was able to grow up in an American culture that values independence and another in Brazil that values community. And, I've been able to mold both of my identities into something of my own.

College Essay: Books as Refuge

WALKING INTO THE hospital at 9 years old and going to see my father, who got in an accident due to his alcoholism, I winced at the sick feeling creeping into the pit of my stomach. I was just in class 30 minutes ago, and now I'm sitting in a cold and dispiriting room. My family members walk back and forth in the room in distress, as my thoughts are overcome with worry. Feeling bewildered and astray, I look for anything to distract me. Desperation made me grab the book I saw on the



**Annie
Swanstrom**
Maple Grove
Senior High
School

waiting room table. My eyes like a statue on the page as I was trying to ignore the static sound of the people around me.

Enjoyment is not the word I would use to describe my desire to read at the time, rather an escape. When reading, the world around

me and all the problems became invisible to me. When family issues would arise, I would merely open my book and ignore them. This habit became a norm throughout those difficult years.

My father's alcoholism affected my family's financial and emotional well-being long after this incident. Due to my family's situation at the time, stability was not an ordinary occurrence in my life, and I often felt as if I wasn't in control. Years later, over the course of my parents' difficult divorce, my siblings and I all deployed different tools to overcome our challenges. Mine continued to be reading and academics. I used these two things to help

understand my emotions, while also benefiting myself with the motivation of creating a better future.

At the beginning of sophomore year, I moved to a new city where I didn't know anyone. I walked into the new school with the same worry I had felt at 9 years old in the hospital. I thought of all the stories I had read that helped me get through that challenging time in my life, and how my passion for academics helped me feel in control and gave me power. As I entered my first class, a quote from my favorite novel, *The Fellowship and the Ring*, replayed in my head: "All we have to decide is what to do with the time we have been given."

Many events have been thrown at me throughout my life that at times feel overwhelming and uncontrollable. Yet, I have found hope throughout all of them and I find the best in every situation. I am grateful I haven't had an easy life, because it has given me the opportunity to become independent and has given me strength.

I use this same motivation in my day-to-day life, and while I am still learning, I know I can make it through anything. Now, I don't only live through stories and use them as an escape, rather I live my own story; I am fully confident I am able and determined to do great things in my life.

COLLEGE ESSAY BOOT CAMP

Kicking students' college essays into shape!

College Essay: My Little Sister, My Teacher

I PEEKED OVER the incubator at the tiny bundle of cloth and stared at your peaceful, angelic face lying peacefully in it. Beautiful lashes fluttered in your sleep. Your rosy cheeks were a lovely contrast to your pale skin. Your head was full of gorgeous, dark, fluffy hair –a great deal for a preemie. I couldn't peel my eyes away from the heavenly being before me. From the moment I looked at you, I knew only one thing.

"I'll be the best big sister ever," I whispered.

I wanted to pair my words with a gentle kiss, but you looked so fragile and serene in your sleep, I didn't want to disturb you.



Ariana Yasmin
Spring Lake Park
High School

I always wanted a sister. My whole life I had been stuck with two obnoxious brothers. I used to cry and beg our parents, even to the point where I asked them to opt for adoption. One summer night, I was given the news of a special, blessed gift entering my life: a baby sister! Finally, after 15 years! I couldn't wait to meet you. For the first time in forever, I stopped being lazy and cleaned the house and decorated it as a "welcome back" surprise for

Mama and you. Baba came back first to check on us. Our conversation went something like this:

"Where's Mama?" I asked.

No response.

"Look, I decorated the house!"

Nothing.

"Baba?"

He looked up from tying his shoe, and for the first time in my life, I watched a tear run down his cheek.

"Pray for your baby sister, Ariana," is all he left me with, along with a ton of questions.

I knew then that my parents were hiding something from me. I didn't know how much worry I should allow myself, or about what, for that matter. With what scant information I possessed, I considered the optimistic standpoint, but I was still curious. I had overheard one thing when listening to our parents talk in the hospital: Down syndrome. I Googled it. I clicked on "symptoms," and my heart shattered.

There was a huge list, some of the conditions listed I couldn't even read. I anxiously skimmed through the chunk of mushy words. I stopped. It was there, in the midst of black and white. Heart disease. I didn't need to be a doctor to know anything with the word "heart" is life-threatening. I stared at this word, watching as it became blurry.

Although I still didn't know much, I could understand a little now why our parents were so quiet. They were scared, too. It was a difficult truth to accept, and what made them even more nerve-wracked was the scale of conditions was immense, and no one knew where you were on that scale. But to me it didn't matter. I would still love you and care for you no matter what.

You weren't the only one going through a journey to a new life. Before, I was used to sitting around and leaving chores to our parents. I was a typical girl entering my

teenage years, wasting time on electronics and staying in my messy room all day. I can't say I was the most respectful daughter. But you prompted me to change.

At first, it was just the little things, such as helping around the house to adjust to the new changes you brought. Then I started cooking meals. My relationship with Mama and Baba grew friendlier. I cared about my studies more.

Later when your speech was heavily delayed, I started learning American Sign Language to better communicate with you.

You brought out the best in me, and I am eternally grateful to you for that. Now, I want to be that change in your life. I love myself more because of you, and with that, I can love you more. Thank you, Amina.

College Essay: Basketball Bonds

HAVING A DAUGHTER at the age of 19 wasn't in Nate Lockett's life plan. My dad's plan was to go to college, get a degree and then become a professional basketball player.

Growing up with my dad wasn't my idea of a normal childhood. The idea of a normal childhood for me was having a financially stable mom and dad, maybe even another sibling, having a big house and having home-cooked meals every night. But my childhood was nothing like that. My childhood consisted of having a young mom and dad, living in a house with my grandparents and eating fast food for dinner. But



Kiani Lockett
DeLaSalle High
School

that's the way life is for me, a lot of unexpected situations I have to go through and learn from.

Growing up with my dad made me gain independence and patience at a younger age than most. This was because I had to figure out how to do a lot of things on my own, from learning how to do the dishes to being patient with my dad when he was teaching me how to read

because he had never taught anyone before. But, I understand learning all these things at a younger age helped me become the person I am today.

My dad attended Creighton University in Nebraska his freshman year of college, but when he found out he was having a kid, he transferred to St. Cloud State University. I would visit my dad in his campus apartment in St. Cloud with my grandma Sudie Lockett. I would be in the back seat of the car eating fruit snacks, waiting to jump into my dad's arms, while my grandma was driving over the speed limit listening to '80s R&B. When we got there, I usually stayed with my dad over the weekend. The weekend would consist of him doing his homework and me eating the fast

food we bought. The two-hour road trips to visit my dad were sometimes hard and tiring because of the long distance. But all of it helped me build a stronger relationship with my dad, because I always knew I could count on him for anything, under any circumstances.

The main thing that helped us build a stronger bond is basketball. My dad never had to teach anyone anything before, especially a sport. He played basketball for almost his entire life and his love of the game was passed down to me. I'll never forget the first time we went to the Minnetonka YMCA when I was in second grade. My dad would position the ball in my hands and with all of my strength I would shoot the ball into the 10-foot hoop. We did that over and over for at least an

hour.

Basketball was definitely a big learning curve for both of us, but it has helped us get to where we are today. Today, my dad is an entrepreneur. He is a data analyst for large companies all across the country. He teaches and helps people every day, just like he taught me how to play basketball. Today, I am a basketball state champion. I am a starting varsity point guard for DeLaSalle High School and have multiple Division I basketball scholarships.

One thing my dad used to tell me every day is, "If you need to know how to do something, learn it yourself and become great at it." I will forever remember that, and our relationship will continue to get stronger. To this day, my dad and I are still growing up together.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HLEE LEE-KRON

Hlee Lee-Kron is reading between interviews on a shoot.

ALUMNI from page 10

She went on to receive the coveted ThreeSixty full-tuition scholarship, helping open the doors to a BA in broadcast journalism with a minor in Urban Studies from St. Thomas. Because Lee-Kron was the fifth of eight children, she knew her parents couldn't afford her college tuition.

"Without the scholarship, I don't

know if I would have finished college," Lee-Kron said.

Lee-Kron shared how her relationships with St. Thomas professors and campus leaders, such as Dave Nimmer and Lynda MacDonald, helped her stick to her career.

"Just by having that support system, there was always something that helped me keep going and feel inspired by," Lee-Kron said.

REBUILD from page 11

worked together on COVID relief for small businesses in their community. While clearing damaged streets following Floyd's death, they saw an opportunity to make a bigger impact by working together.

The two created a fund to bring financial relief to the small businesses of North Minneapolis; information about the fund circulated widely across social media. In a matter of days, their initiative received overwhelming support, both from individual donors and corporate sponsors. One sponsor, UnitedHealth Group, donated \$1 million, as well as pro bono support for both organizations. Soon, Perry and Clyne had raised \$4.5 million.

"For a couple hours we just kept texting each other screenshots," Perry said. "I would refresh it, and two seconds later another \$24,000 was in."

However, such a large influx of money did not come without challenges for Perry and Clyne, who managed their organizations mostly on their own.

"We [were] both the only

employees at our organizations, doing the work we were already doing and now taking this on. We have Lizzo retweeting this, and it's just, like, me and my marketing background," Perry said, referring to an unexpected celebrity shoutout.

Another concern was whether donors, especially corporations, were making a lasting investment into the community, and not just these organizations. For Perry, a commitment to cooperation would mean much more than a one-time performative contribution.

"What I had asked of them was, what is your real commitment to this? Are you funding this moment or are you really interested in this work that we're doing?" she said.

Throughout the process, Perry and Clyne created a valuable partnership. Part of what helped them work together so well was their shared focus on helping North Minneapolis thrive.

"We always came through for each other," Clyne said. "We didn't stray from our commitment to the community."

VIRTUAL SCHOOL from page 17

While I am very blessed to have an education, this period of time has been especially rough for many of us. It feels like the media has forgotten students.

When remote classes resumed in the spring, it seemed like my school had thought of everything. On our homepage, they had links to counselors and other resources. When school started up after a long summer, much of that had changed. Many of those resources were no longer available. It was like lessons of last year were forgotten. Among the things that were missing were the emphasis on mental health and coping with stress. It feels like we're just a piece of data, a box to check off

every single day.

One of the biggest adjustments was to learn how to do classwork at home, a place that had always been a place to relax. The workload assigned to us is unrealistic with the distractions and other demands.

A typical day begins with me sitting down at my Chromebook at 8 a.m. staring at a screen, fighting to focus my attention at the task at hand. At the same time I'm checking on my little sister every five seconds, making sure she's in her classes and doing her work.

Sitting through classes while there is so much more going on in my head only adds to the stress.

By the time the sun has gone down, I'm still staring at

my screen, contemplating the assignment that's in front of me. Knowing my classes are important for my future and my dream of someday becoming a pediatrician only adds to the stress.

These past 10 months have made me a different person. Now I feel drained; I have a lot more responsibility riding on my shoulders. It's not just my education that I'm responsible for, it's also that of my younger sister.

I am hopeful that as the pandemic goes on, educators will find a way to help students better address the stress and other mental challenges that come with distance learning.



THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Marian Hassan

HASSAN from page 13

are not included in that conversation, either because they did not go through those experiences or because they were too young to remember. "Crossroads" was created so this younger generation could tell its own stories.

"Good writing comes from strong emotions and where people are in their lives," Hassan said.

The authors in this collection grew up in America and offer different perspectives that Hassan

believes were important to capture. Hassan hopes that "Crossroads" readers will learn how resilient Somali people are.

"I think the book will change perceptions about the resilience of this community and the experiences of this community," she said. "Also, it's not only for the Somali community. But by having this text used in our schools, it will change what is deemed important, what stories are told and what stories are not told."



PHOTO COURTESY MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER

Some of the young adult Somali writers who help Hassan with the anthology in the book.

YLI from page 16

including alumni, staff members and volunteers started thinking about how to keep the program alive, Yang said.

The group first formed a transition committee and aimed to find another parent organization, for legal and financial purposes. It didn't find a new institutional home, but instead found a financial sponsor and began applying for funds. First came a \$40,000 transition grant from the St. Paul Foundation and its partner, the Bigelow Foundation, with an additional major grant from the Office of Justice Programs.

YLI, which is now being legally incorporated as a separate 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, has



A YLI Council Meeting agenda.

raised \$137,000 – compared to its \$350,000 budget in its last year at Wilder. The group continues to search for additional funding while figuring out how to minimize operating expenses.

The core team is training new staff and volunteers and hopes to enroll new youth groups by fall

2021.

The important thing is YLI didn't give up. It's still alive.

"Young people are the future," Yang said. "We're about continuing a program that will be empowering for our youth, and healthy and nourishing for our community."

HANG from page 14

-serving the community, serving as the president and CEO of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. She said she has spent 24 years promoting health and wellbeing in the community.

Hang came to the United States from Laos when she was 4 years old after living in a refugee camp in Thailand for a year. She knows the importance of helping those in need.

"I really want to have better engagement with partnerships in the community and placements for students that look really different than what we have now," Hang said.

The increased diversity Hang envisions would be groundbreaking for St. Thomas; first time first year students at St. Thomas in 2020 consisted of 19% students of color, according to the university's



Dr. MayKao Hang, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Founding Dean of Morrison Family College of Health

website.

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

ADVOCACY from page 14

24 years promoting health and wellbeing in the community and working on broad policy reforms and actually delivering services. And I thought it was time to pay it forward to the next generation."

"We need to shift the status quo. We need to think more holistically about health," Hang says to describe her goal. As dean, she advocates for equitable treatment towards underserved communities and treating the person with a multidimensional approach for mind, body, spirit and community.

"We need to change how we think about and how we design systems."

Hang's plan with the Morrison Family College of Health isn't only to produce physicians and nurses— she aims to equip the next generation of leaders to transform the way health services are run, through the "guiding principles" of "advocacy and systems change." Hang doesn't consider creating a

PENUMBRA from page 12

going to move forward in this work."

Feet-washing is a biblical reference to humility and selfless love and care; whose job is it to "wash feet" and offer Black people services in their time of need, their time of anger and distress over generational trauma and pain?

Penumbra's Center for Racial Healing facilitates learning Black American history and serves as a place of support -- a place where you're able to learn to lean on someone without needing to be the strongest person in the room.

"The work that we're doing at Penumbra is addressing over 400 years of disparities towards the Black community in this country. And what we are seeing is the most recent iteration of that very same conversation," Johnson said.

Working to see a reflection of herself in her work, Johnson is seeking outreach. Bringing more Black people into the theater space, making it so the work of the theater and the Black community addresses pre-written narratives, disparities and hardships to continue work towards liberation and declaration of self.

college with this ambitious vision as a daunting task. "I'm a disrupter, I've always been one. I like transformation and that's really what we're doing in the Morrison College of Health."

Fulfilling her other responsibility as a dean, she also has a personal duty to support the students. "I tell people all the time, which is why I'm in higher ed right now, that the journey to complete college was the hardest journey I'll ever have in my whole lifetime."

"I was completely outclassed in every single way," says Hang. Although she earned a full scholarship to Brown University, the university couldn't support her in the ways that counted. She was still using a typewriter and had to work three jobs to afford a meal plan and board.

As a first-generation college student, she faced the pressure from the expectations she was up against.

"I had to be strong enough to go

against the traditions, culturally of my own community to make it out of poverty and through school, and then I also had to do that at school, because I went to such an elite university."

Her experience is nothing new, and nothing old either. "It's what a lot of students at St. Thomas deal with as well. It's not a new experience, which is why when we graduate a first-gen college student at St. Thomas," or any disadvantaged background, she adds, "it's a really big deal."

Hang has no plans to stop breaking barriers, both in her personal journey and in health care.

"Part of leadership is just about continuing to do what's in front of you and not believing what the world has told you that you can't do. And so, I always tell people how I got here is overcoming people telling me that I can't do something."

"I'd like to transform how we think about health, particularly through the education process that we're delivering in the Morrison College, to look at those other dimensions of health."

—Dr. MayKao Hang



ThreeSixty Journalism

PROGRAM YEAR REPORT

June 1, 2019-May 31, 2020

Student Demographics

African.....6%	Hispanic.....11%
African-American.....40%	Caucasian.....13%
American Indian.....2%	Middle Eastern.....2%
Asian American.....18%	Multiracial.....8%

Young Alumni Job and Internship Highlights

- Pioneer Press
- MPR News
- FOX 9
- The Current
- MPR News
- Bellmont Partners
- Gopher Sports
- University of St. Thomas
- ThreeSixty Journalism
- American Public Media Group
- Center for Prevention at Blue Cross Blue Shield MN
- Mpls. St. Paul Business Journal
- Undertold-Stories Project
- Mpls. Youth Coordinating Board
- Minnesota Timberwolves/Lynx

"I will never forget the way the Three-Sixty Journalism program helped me find and refine my voice as a young Black woman and a developing writer." - ThreeSixty alumna Ayo Olagbaju, Howard University Cathy Hughes School of Communications

Program Mission

ThreeSixty Journalism, a nonprofit program of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of St. Thomas since 2001, uses the principles of strong writing and reporting to help diverse Minnesota youth tell the stories of their lives and communities.

Program Description

Through inclusive multimedia and college success programming, ThreeSixty Journalism develops the next generation of critical thinkers, leaders and storytellers.

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The Great ThreeSixty Listen Together!



The Great ThreeSixty
listen
TOGETHER

Hosted by Brandi Powell **KSTP-TV**

Featuring **ThreeSixty alums** Aaliyah Demry,
Chioma Uwagwu and Erianna Jiles.