

## One troop's mission to educate

By Mysee Chang  
Buffalo High School

It's a Monday evening and Kia Lor is on her way to the Girl Scout Council of the St. Croix Valley.

"Every time, before I go to the meetings, I feel like I have nothing to do, and then right after, I feel like I have so much to do," said Lor, 16.

Lor and the other six members of her Girl Scout troop are leaving on a trip to French Guiana July 11.

Last year, the seven girls guided ten Hmong girls from French Guiana around the Twin Cities. The Minnesotans took their visitors to Hmong stores along St. Paul's University Avenue, the State Capitol, University of Minnesota, Mall of America and their high schools.

While spending time together, the Minnesotans learned a lot of new things about the Hmong in French Guiana, a country north of Brazil.

"Even though they were born in French Guiana and French is their second language and English is ours, we're still the same. We're all Hmong people," said Mai Lee Yang, 18.

As a result, the girls decided to plan a trip to French Guiana.

In 1977, when many Hmong left Laos or Thailand for the U.S., others emigrated to French Guiana. The Hmong are only one percent of the population in French Guiana but grow half of the country's vegetables and fruits.

"One of the things I will gain is respect for the Hmong people living there because we both live in our own worlds. They farm and we don't," said Xy Xiong, 18.

The group will spend one week with Hmong families living in



Above, Kia Lor and Nina Lee went through a list of egg roll orders in mid-June. On July 11, they will be joined by other members of their girl scout troop on a trip to French Guiana where they will complete an educational project.

Below, Lee, Lor, Xy Xiong and Mai Yang Lee are members of the troop traveling this summer.

Cacao, one of the first Hmong villages created in French Guiana. Chaperone Choua Her said in the second week they will visit other Hmong villages, explore the Salvation Islands, and the space station in Kourou.

The Minnesotans are producing four service projects, which they plan to use to educate the Hmong community in Cacao.

The girls will share their anti-tobacco project to educate those in French Guiana about the dangers of smoking and to help prevent future smokers.

They will also teach people to

learn and care about themselves and help close cultural gaps between the Hmong-American and the Hmong-French people.

For most of the girls, their families are their motivation for the trip. For some, it's a different story.

"My mom wants to see me go but she's kind of doubtful 'cause no one has done this before,'" said Pa Houa Moua, 19. "Also, my oldest brother doesn't back me up

on this. He has this thing where you're a girl and you can't do anything, but that just motivates me to achieve more."

For the majority of the girls, their

families are excited as they are.

Chao Lee, mother of Mai Yang Lee, said her daughter will be a model of something big in their family. She also said the trip will help Mai Yang walk farther in life.

Traditionally in the Hmong culture, Hmong girls' duties include staying home to clean, cook and care for children. For these girls, the experience of preparing for this opportunity has taught them that the traditional role of Hmong women is now a thing of the past.

"The way people look at the girls in our culture, we can't really do anything. I've always pushed myself to work harder than my brothers just to prove to my parents that I can do it. Now that we're going to French Guiana, it's the first time I'm finally finishing the challenge I've been working so hard for," said 18-year-old Nina Lee.

The girls worked hard to raise \$2,050 to fund each girl trip. Fund-raising began last summer when the girls sold water balloon yo-yo's at the Lumberjack Days in Stillwater, presented Anti-Tobacco projects, worked at the Mall of America, sold Girl Scouts cookies, egg rolls and Hmong Women Circle bags.

Janet Gracia, Director of Membership for the Girl Scout Council of the St. Croix Valley, said she's very proud of the girls for being great leaders and role models. She also is happy that Girl Scouts has been able to extend the group's opportunities by helping them raise money.

After getting their passports, receiving their shots, malaria pills, raising money and preparing their projects, everyone is looking forward to the experience.

"It's all about fulfilling our dreams," Lor said.



## Teens: no talking while driving

By Kris Mitchell  
De La Salle High School

Sixteen-year-old Thomas Birai walks out of his house chomping on some toast. The chain around his neck jingles with each step. He gets into his car, buckles his seat belt and takes off down the street toward the corner. His cell phone rings. It's a friend. He slows down, picks up the phone and answers.

Birai, a Plymouth resident, just broke the law.

While cell phones have become a common accessory, a way to stay in touch with others and to get information on the go, the devices are increasingly being labeled as driving distractions. Eleven states, including Minnesota, and the District of Columbia, restrict cell phone use among young drivers.

Birai talks to his friend for a couple of minutes then finally hangs up and pulls up safely at his friend's house.

"I do it all the time. I drive safely and I see no problem with it," he said. "Adults do that all the time."

So far, there's no law banning Minnesota adults from driving and talking. Those under the age of 18, however, can be pulled over for talking while behind the wheel, according to the law, which took effect in 2006. The penalty for the misdemeanor offense is a fine and fees that vary by county.

The law's sponsor, state Rep. Steve Smith, R-Mound, could not be reached for comment.

Why does the law only cover teens? "Teens are inexperienced compared to adults who have been on the road longer," said Gail Weinholzer, spokeswoman for AAA Minnesota in

Burnsville. "Teens are 7.5 percent of all drivers but are involved in 15 percent of all crashes."

According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Minnesota drivers ages 16-18 are involved in one out of four injury crashes and one of six fatal crashes.

With cell phones, though, the differences are slight.

In 2005, cell phones caused three of every 1,000 crashes among teens, ages 15-19, compared with two of every 1,000 crashes among adults, ages 35 to 64, according to Department of Public Safety statistics. Cell phones are blamed in two of every 1,000 multi-vehicle crashes for both age groups.

The University of Central Oklahoma did a study based on reaction time to a computer program that simulated quick stops and road hazards. The teens and adults without cell phones had the quickest reaction times. Teens with cell phones reacted faster than adults with cell phones mainly due to age. This indicates teens are more likely to stop faster than an adult.

Gordy Pehrson of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety said he believes all drivers – regardless of age – should be prohibited from using cell phones while driving. "They need to minimize all distractions," he said.

Teens remain unfazed. "I will continue to drive and use my cell," Birai said. "I use a headset. That way my eyes are on the road and my hands are free."



This publication was produced during ThreeSixty's summer 2007 journalism workshop held June 17-29 at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

Articles were written by students selected for the workshop and were also printed in the July 5 editions of the Minneapolis Star Tribune and St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Students were mentored by staff and students from the University, Star Tribune, Pioneer Press, Minnesota Public Radio and other journalists.

ThreeSixty is a non-profit organization that provides interested students with real-world experience in journalism.

For more student work and information about ThreeSixty programs, visit: [www.ThreeSixtyJournalism.org](http://www.ThreeSixtyJournalism.org).

# What's so cool about Caribou?

By Belle Lin  
Mounds View High School

Jake Holden is the face of Caribou Coffee's teen market.

He plays baseball and tennis, works at the local carwash, plays the guitar, runs errands for his elderly neighbor, and takes classes during the day. The 17-year-old high school junior is dead asleep when his head hits the pillow every night. What keeps him functioning, Holden says, is a daily boost at Caribou Coffee in Edina.

"I have either a cappuccino or cooler every morning," he said. "It's basically impossible for me to wake up without one."

With coffee's popularity expanding exponentially, young people are willing to pay to keep caffeinated.

Among 18-to-24 year olds, the percentage of those who drink coffee rose from 16 percent in 2003 to 37 percent in 2007 according to Joseph F. DeRupo, director of communications for the National Coffee Association.

Neither Caribou nor Starbucks, the number one coffee company in the country, said they specifically target teens. But informal conversations with teens like Holden and others illustrate the inroads Caribou is making into teen life and suggest that they are becoming an important part of its consumer market.

Holden and other teens regularly come for the assortment of caffeinated and non-caffeinated drinks offered by the Minneapolis-based coffee chain. Holden, for

one, gushes about his favorite flavors (caramel or chocolate) and mix-ins (Oreo or Snickers candy bits).

Cindy Doyle, store manager at a Maple Grove Caribou, says Caribou's new flavors such as the Acai berry smoothie and the upcoming Heath-flavored drink are aimed at people from their

**Among 18-to-24 year olds, the percentage of those who drink coffee rose from 16 percent in 2003 to 37 percent in 2007**

"late-teens to early twenties" with "expendable cash." Though her store has a number of older customers, she says, teens are "a large part of our consumer base."

Mahyar Sorour, a 16-year-old high school sophomore, says her Shoreview Caribou is always filled with local teens getting their caffeine fix. She describes it as more laid-back than Starbucks, which she calls "more fancy."

"One of the things I like best about [Caribou] is that every time I go I can see someone I know," she said.

Doyle says during the school year, her store is filled with teenagers doing homework or "just hanging out."

"The number of teens that come depends on the time of day. In the early morning it's mostly the working class, 20-to-45 year olds. Later in the day or evening are when teens and young adults come," she said.

Caribou spokesman Ryan King said in an e-mail that while Caribou does not market directly to teens, it does welcome teens to call Caribou "their place." However, he stated that the "peak hours for teens are typically after school, around 3:30 until about 6 p.m."

Starbucks spokesperson Bridget Baker declined to comment on Caribou's marketing strategy, but said that Starbucks doesn't market specifically towards youth.

"We're always providing new and innovative beverages...for all of our customers, whether they're young or old," Baker said.

Caribou faces stiff competition from Starbucks and new rivals like McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts and Wendy's.

"Caribou is on a tougher playing field than they were on before because more people are going after the coffee business. People who have a lot more money than Caribou, people who have deeper pockets, and many more locations are going after their business," said Howard Davidowitz, chairman of Davidowitz & Associates, Inc., a national retail consulting and investment banking firm in New York.



Photograph by Belle Lin

Mark Gislason and his friend Jake Dahlstrom share cups of Caribou and a laugh outside this Maple Grove location.

At the same time, Davidowitz said, Caribou has found a niche in the quality of its coffee, its customer service and in the environment of their stores.

"Caribou looks like a cool place to go, and that's very important to teens," Davidowitz said.

On a recent weekday afternoon, Mark Gislason, a 23-year-old

Maple Grove resident, was sitting with a friend on the patio of his neighborhood Caribou.

Gislason said he prefers Caribou Coffee to Starbucks because Starbucks is "too corporate. Caribou is a lot smaller. Caribou is low-key and not loud, I can chill or smoke on the patio."



Photograph by Stephanie Edquist

From left to right: first row: Lilla Hassan, Nico McClellan, Mysee Chang, Tiana Daun, Sheta Lo. Second row: Kyla Riley, Belle Lin, Julia Wang, Aimee Cote, Edgar Ullaguari, Priya Kailash. Third row: Kris Mitchell, Maggie Clemensen, Michelle Berry, Levi Ismail. Fourth row: Ben Pearce, Matt Smith, Thomas Birai, Andrew Worrall.

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# MLK is a unique rec center for teens

By Ben Pearce  
St. Paul Central High School

Tucked away in the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul is the Martin Luther King Recreation Center. And in the hallway off the lobby are two trophy cases with evidence of the center's two top-notch basketball programs.

Lori Prioleau and Ronnie Smith, volunteers who coach the girls' and boys' teams respectively, select neighborhood kids in grade school and cultivate their talents through high school. The neighborhood focus, quality coaching and long-term commitment pay off.

One example is Angel Robinson, who played guard on the Central High School basketball team that won this year's girls' state championship. Angel played in the summer Sugaa (a play on "Sugar") program at King from fourth grade to ninth grade. Robinson's dad, John Robinson, said the experience was great for Angel and other girls in the neighborhood.

"[The Sugaa program] did a lot of nice things for girls in community. The positive feedback from parents and kids themselves keeps rejuvenating the program," he said.

Many of the players were close friends even before they started playing together in the MLK program.

"There's a lot of people that are my friends now that have been my friends back when I was four years old that I've played with," said team member Cameron Smith, a sophomore at St. Paul Central. He is also the son of Ronnie Smith, who coaches the Kings, the center's boys' team.

Coach Smith selected a roster of third graders seven years ago and has cultivated them into talented basketball players. Most of them are sophomores who have played on their high school basketball team. To develop them, Smith signs the team up for tournaments during the winter. "We'd play three to four games a weekend," he said. Next month the

team will travel to Milwaukee to play high-level teams.

Smith feels MLK is unique because "We're just a community team that has been together for years. With us it's family."

The teams sometimes as far as Oregon and Texas for tournaments. Considering that many players come from low-income families, raising \$250 to \$2,500 per player isn't easy.

Volunteer coaches spend a lot of their own time and money. Parents and players bag groceries, sell candy and wash cars. They also ask for donations.

Prioleau coaches the girls' winter team. During the summer she heads the Sugaa program, a community girls' basketball program that gives players a chance to compete in high-level tournaments.

Prioleau takes 11-year-olds and trains them until the middle of high school. During the winter, the teams play against other recreation centers and travel throughout the state to tournaments for tougher competition.

During the off-season, MLK offers other sports to players such as softball, which helps players work on catching a basketball. Sugaa has received national exposure by competing in AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) tournaments that were NCAA-certified.

Prioleau feels the perception that MLK draws good players is not exactly true. "We don't draw good players. We make good players, and we even take kids who can't dribble and make them superstars," she said.

While it took a lot of effort, MLK basketball benefited greatly from traveling. She said a "high percentage" of elite Sugaa girls go on to play in college.

D.J. Johnson, another Kings player, said he keeps coming back to the team because "I think [Smith] is a good coach and role model." Smith takes his role seriously: "They need someone like me to help them make it through certain situations, certain struggles."

Wilder Foundation estimates that 650 youth are homeless on any given night in Minnesota

# Never too young to be homeless

By Aimee Cote  
Buffalo High School

It's five a.m. in Minneapolis under the overhang of an abandoned building. It's cold and damp from the morning dew. Most teenagers still have a few hours left to sleep, but not Mack, a 19-year-old runaway from Portland, Oregon. His life is far from average.

His bedtime is when he feels safe enough to sleep.

His alarm clock is the sun.

His only transportation is his feet and freight trains.

"I'm homeless," he said. "I have been on and off since I was 14."

An estimated 550 to 650 Minnesota youth ages 17 and under are homeless on any given night, according to a 2006 Wilder Foundation report. In addition, the report estimates there are 1,300 young adults (18-21) who experience homelessness on an average night. Although the Wilder survey shows that the number of homeless young people in Minnesota has stayed consistent the past few years, other resources show fluctuation in the number.

"Particularly in the summer we see homeless teens, when they are homeless by choice, wandering and just being punk kids," said Rob Czernik, the ad-hoc organizer of Sisters of Camelot, which provides free food to homeless people in Minneapolis. "There are lots of kids who have been kicked out of their houses. A lot of kids because of being gay or lesbian find themselves being disowned by their families."

Factors leading to homelessness vary. According to the Wilder study, 63 percent of the homeless teen population said fighting frequently with parents or guardians is their main motivation to leave. Other



Photograph by Nico McClellan  
In uptown Minneapolis, these three teens live and travel across the country by freight train, scavenging and going to shelters for their next meal. When times get rough, some return home, others stay put, and the hardest hit face death. According to a 2006 Wilder Foundation report, about 550 to 650 Minnesota youth aged 17 and under are homeless on any given night.

reasons include: parental neglect, violence in the house, sexual abuse, pregnancy and sexual orientation.

The Bridge in south Minneapolis, which was started in 1970 by two nuns, was one of the first youth crisis centers nationwide.

"The main mission or philosophy of The Bridge is to help resolve family conflicts, provide shelter for youth and provide counseling services with no charge to anyone,"

said Nikki Beasley, emergency service program supervisor at The Bridge.

The Bridge's goal is to reunite youth with their families. But for reasons that aren't clear, their success rate (of reuniting families) dropped from 80 percent in 2005 to 74 percent in 2006. Also, The Bridge has been experiencing an increase in the number of youth coming in for help.

Homelessness isn't apparent by looking at someone. Young people ages 21 and under are some of the least visible and most vulnerable segments of persons who are homeless, according to the Wilder study.

"There would be no way to know anything was wrong with these kids unless they opened their mouth and told you," Beasley said. "They look like regular kids."

With demand for youth shelters, outreach centers and other youth programs increasing, the Minnesota Legislature this year appropriated \$1 million to fund the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. This provides \$500,000 annually for two years to improve and expand emergency shelters, supportive/transitional housing and street and community outreach.

For nearly 30 years, Sisters of Camelot has been distributing pure organic food to needy people. Four times a week all the food, workers and volunteers load onto their bus, which was decorated as a community art project. They stop the bus, covered in orange, blue and green paintings, and allow anybody -- including homeless teens -- to shop. They travel to Chicago Avenue, Franklin Avenue, the North Side and other areas.

No questions asked. No strings attached.

"Our ultimate goal as a group would be to put ourselves out of business," Czernik said. "It would mean that there wouldn't be people in need of food anymore."

Life on the streets requires street smarts and a sense of protection. Forty-eight percent of homeless teens have been physically abused, according to Wilder.

"I've had guns and knives pulled on me. I've been stabbed a few times. My nose has been broken more than a dozen times. But I've also put people in the hospital myself," said Quill, a 22-year-old runaway from Oregon who travels with Pancake, a Collie/German Shepard mix.

On the streets, homeless teens know the fittest survive.

"I've been in a lot of fights," Mack said. "You have to fight to survive out here. If you don't fight to survive you'll die. Someone will kill you."

## Students gang together to fight murder

By Julia Wang  
Eden Prairie High School

For sixth graders at Northeast Middle School in Minneapolis, recurring reports about the climbing murder rate in their own city were a call to action. A group of young problem solvers are delving into the issue -- by interviewing convicted murders in jail.

Through an academic program called Future Problem Solving, 28 students have committed to tackling the city's homicide rates, which have been rising over the past six years.

Starting last fall, they interviewed a psychologist and a Minneapolis police officer, as well as convicted killers through a video conference.

But they're also bringing a unique perspective to the issue by relating it to their own school environment. As part of their project, they're seeking to prevent future violence in their generation by reducing school bullying.

On April 4, the team took first place in the junior division at the state's Future Problem Solving competition.

Despite those honors, the task wasn't easy, given the troubling subject matter.

"What they found most

distressing was that the youngest person in Minneapolis murdered last year was an infant," said Kimberlee Adams, one of two coaches for the team. "They had never looked at murder in that aspect before."

In a report they submitted for the competition, the students described how the murders were affecting them personally: "We have a friend who was threatened by a gang when he was walking home. Some kids bring threats of murder to school with them. Some of us think it's hard to pay attention in class because we're thinking of violence."

One of the students felt the topic was especially important because his own father was killed in a homicide.

The students chose to tackle the issue of murder after brainstorming about 40 possible subjects. In the past years, other schools across the country have addressed such issues as littering, energy conservation and domestic abuse.

But despite the suggestions of their coaches, the Northeast kids kept returning to the issue of homicides.

Even as general crime in Minneapolis is decreasing, murder rates have been steadily rising,

said Lt. Amelia Huffman, a spokeswoman with the Minneapolis Police Department. In 2006, there were 60 killings in Minneapolis. So far, there have been 25.

Those were daunting statistics to Adams, the problem-solving coach. "My initial feelings were that there was no way that they could solve this problem," said Adams, who suggested cleaning up the playground or recycling items in their building.

Her students' convictions eventually won her over. "I've seen the research that they've done," she said. "I'm in total support of helping them work with the community."

At Northeast Middle School, 76.4 percent of the student body is considered to be economically disadvantaged, compared to the statewide average of 29.9 percent, according to the school's Web site.

Starting in 1982, the Future Problem Solving Program in Minnesota has taught students about a systematic approach to solving problems. The program was founded in 1974 by E. Paul Torrance, a psychologist and a University of Minnesota alum. The program's main focus is to encourage students to improve their society by implementing

critical-thinking skills.

Cheryl Whitesitt, the state Future Problem Solving director, said she was pleased by the Northeast Middle School team's project.

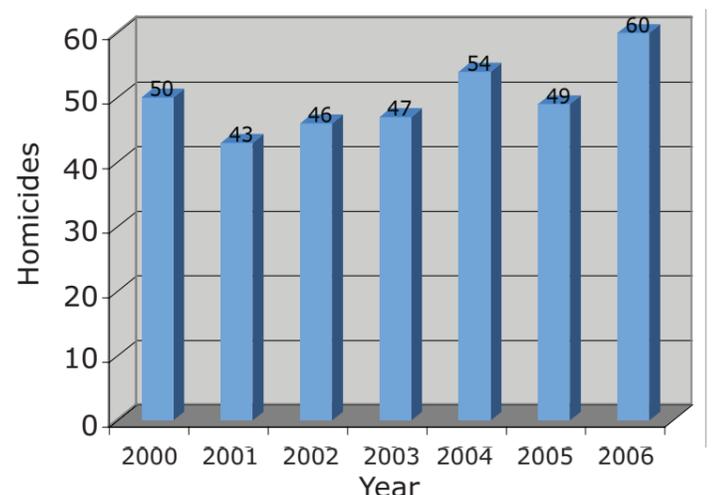
"I am proud, amazed, and impressed that such a young group of people would take on such a huge challenge," Whitesitt said.

Still, the students' work is far from over. Even though they took state honors for identifying problems associated with the city's

homicides, they still have to finish the hard part: coming up with probable solutions.

Starting this fall, the students will continue their work. Their last step would be to put their solutions into practice. The local police department would work with the students to look at their plan. At the state competition next April, they'll have a chance to qualify for nationals.

Homicide Rates 2000-2006



-Julia Wang  
Source: Mpls. P.D.

## Growth in gas prices makes teens mature

# Gas prices up, teen fun down

By Maggie Clemensen  
Northwestern High School,  
Mellette S.D.

As she pulled up to the pumps at a gas station near her home in Maple Grove, 16-year-old Ellie Patnode sighed. Gas had reached \$2.89 a gallon. She stepped out of her white Ford Taurus, opened her gas cap and put the nozzle in. Patnode carefully watched the total until it reached exactly \$10. Another sigh. This was the third time this week.

Patnode is one of many teenagers who commute long distances to their schools or jobs and are pinched by the higher gas prices.

Patnode sometimes travels the 24-mile, one-way commute to Buffalo High School twice a day.

Teenagers in rural areas or outer-ring suburbs spend much of their money filling up their tanks. "I have to fill up probably two to three times a week. It is a lot; I mean it really is, especially when I don't have a job," Patnode said.

According to Dawn Duffy, public relations manager for AAA Minneapolis, the amount of teenagers' disposable income affects their spending.

"A lot of teens have to pay for their own insurance or buy their own cars. Some teens have to buy their own clothes, and then when gas prices are going up to nearly \$3, that's a big added pressure,"

Duffy said.

As gas prices continue to rise, these teens have to make sacrifices and smart decisions in order to pay for their gas. "I used to get my nails done every week; I used to go shopping every weekend. I've changed a lot. Now all my money goes to gas; I don't go shopping ever. It's harder, but it's what you get for being 16, I guess," Patnode said.

Unlike some other teenagers, Patnode pays for all her gas. She says she has been using money she has saved up from babysitting and is looking for a job close to home.

Minnesota's average gas price lately has been \$2.88 per gallon, according to Duffy. A year ago, the average was \$2.79 per gallon. Five years ago, it was \$1.34 per gallon.

This increase affects everyone. Becky Waldof, a 19-year-old from Zimmerman, drives her Toyota Corolla about 30 miles daily to her job at the University of Minnesota's Extension Services in Wright County. She said she and her family talk about this issue all the time. "Generally, I think everybody is affected, and everybody gets pretty upset about it," Waldof said.

"Although these gas prices are increasing, no one seems to be using less gas," Duffy said. Haywood Siejko, 17, a worker at a Holiday gas station in Maple Grove, has not noticed fewer people buying gas. One thing he has noticed is that

people are only spending \$5 or \$10 instead of filling their tanks.

"One thing to keep in mind that I think is really interesting is that gas prices alone do not determine what the demand for fuel is; our demand

has continually gone up, regardless of what that price is," Duffy said.

The higher gas prices do make teens think about their futures, though. "I think I will live closer to the school so that my kids will

not have to do what I have to do, driving that far every day. It's hard because it is a lot of money and a lot of gas, so I think I will do it a little different when I am older," Patnode said.



Photograph by Maggie Clemensen

Ellie Patnode, a 16-year-old from Maple Grove, drives 48 miles roundtrip to school in Buffalo everyday. High gas prices are affecting teens like Patnode.

## Students pay high price to park at school

Some schools charge as much as \$300 for a yearly permit

By Priya Kailash  
Eden Prairie High School

Every year Louis Boney wrote the dreaded check so he could park his Hummer in the Eden Prairie High School parking lot. The payment line: \$300.

He's not alone in paying this much in parking permit cost. Even with parking costs and rising gas prices, students are still choosing to drive to school.

"I think kids are driving to school because of peer pressure and because they think it's the cool thing to do," said Jan Holmes of the support staff at Eden Prairie

Kids are driving to school because of peer pressure and because they think it's the cool thing to do.

High School.

Despite the high fees, juniors and seniors at Eden Prairie High School bought 629 permits. The number of permits sold this year was actually below average because one of the

lots was under construction.

Eden Prairie's parking permits are among the most expensive in the metro area, according to a random sampling of area high schools.

Eden Prairie's fees are \$300 for Lot A, \$200 for Lot B, Lot C. Arlington High School in St. Paul charges \$157, and Wayzata in Plymouth comes in at \$125. Edina students pay \$112.50 while Como Park High School students pay \$20.

"I think [driving to school] gives [students] a sense of independence and a sense of identity, and it also gives them freedom and lets them

leave at their own time," said Boney, a 2007 graduate of Eden Prairie. "They also don't have to depend on someone else and [it] gives them an opportunity to sleep in."

The school uses the money collected from the parking fees to pay for security personnel who drive around checking for permits and for the gas they use, Holmes said.

Parking costs aren't the only thing putting a dent in teenagers' wallets. Rising gas prices have deterred some students from driving.

"I think it [high gas prices] is

a double-edged sword. On one hand, I think they [students] will appreciate driving more; it'll give them better appreciation of driving and they won't take it for granted," said Alex Riordan, senior at Eden Prairie High School, "On the other hand, it's ridiculous how much it [gas price] is rising."

Riordan pays \$200 to park in Lot C. He uses his car in winter and bikes rest of the year. As for Boney, he's happy he doesn't have to write the dreaded \$300 check every year; now he's off to college.

## Lack of transportation difficult for Somalis

By Lilla Hassan  
Eden Prairie High School

On a hot Tuesday afternoon, Bahjo Mahamud packed her lunch and left her family's Eden Prairie apartment to begin her daily 30-minute walk to work at the local Target store.

Since neither she nor the family members she lives with own a car and there isn't a bus that runs from her building to the store, she must carefully navigate her own route to work, despite the lack of sidewalks and surrounding highways filled with speeding cars.

"[Transportation] is an issue for me because it's so hard for me to get around without a car in Eden Prairie," said Mahamud.

Mahamud is just one of the estimated 2,100 Eden Prairie

residents living below the poverty line. Like many others who don't have a car and have no bus available to get to work, school and run basic errands, she is directly affected by the city's lack of accessible public transportation.

Fellow Eden Prairie resident Mahad Abdi shares her frustration.

Abdi owns a car so he is not only the primary source of transportation for his family but also for his sister's family. Speaking in Somali, Abdi said, "I drive my nephew to summer school every day because there's not public transportation."

He said people who aren't near a bus route and don't own a car must resort to walking, a less-than-ideal

It's so hard for me to get around without a car in Eden Prairie.

option "It's just not safe because Eden Prairie has many highways that run through the city... like Highways 5 and 312."

In 2006, Money magazine named Eden Prairie the nation's 10th best place to live in its annual list highlighting the top 100 best places to live in the United States. Eden Prairie was lauded for its economic opportunities and quality of life.

"It's no wonder why families would be attracted to this area," said Martin Mohamed, executive director of the Immigrant Culture Center in Eden Prairie.

Mohamed has worked with immigrant families for almost 10

years and has been an Eden Prairie resident for six years. Based on his experience, he believes the city needs to do more to help people get around because without adequate transportation, it is hard for families to get and keep jobs.

"We try to meet our community's needs," said Bonnie Carlson, administrative service director of Southwest Transit, the public transit service for Chaska, Chanhassen and Eden Prairie.

Carlson said according to the transit service's information, about 200 families need bus service in the Eden Prairie area.

"We work very hard and right now we aren't seeing more demand for more service," said Carlson.

Mohamed disagrees. He said that he knows of approximately 1,000 Eden Prairie families in need

of more bus service. Carlson said that Southwest Metro Transit tries to focus on areas with high-density housing and works closely with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to locate the housing areas in need of public transportation.

She said that Southwest Metro Transit recently organized a Tuesday morning shopping bus to help families without transportation. The Tuesday morning shopping bus goes to Cub Foods as well as Wal-Mart for a \$1 fare.

Until Mahamud saves up money to buy her own vehicle or finds public transportation, she will continue her 30-minute walks to work - rain or shine.

# MAD DADS fight back in Northside

By Michelle Berry  
North High School, Minneapolis

Balloons are no longer only used to show where a birthday party is being held on the north side of Minneapolis, but are décor on memorial trees for innocent victims, including 14-year-old Charez Jones who was shot and killed June 9.

“What [memorials] represent is a life that is no longer here where there used to be a human body there is a tree or there’s a pole or there’s street sign or there is something there to hang those balloons on, those pictures or little notes... some way to release that message inside of them to say you know what, I hate this happened and maybe I can do something,” said V.J. Smith, the founder of the Minneapolis chapter of MAD DADS.

Minneapolis Police reports show that in 2006, 48 percent of Minneapolis’ 60 homicides oc-

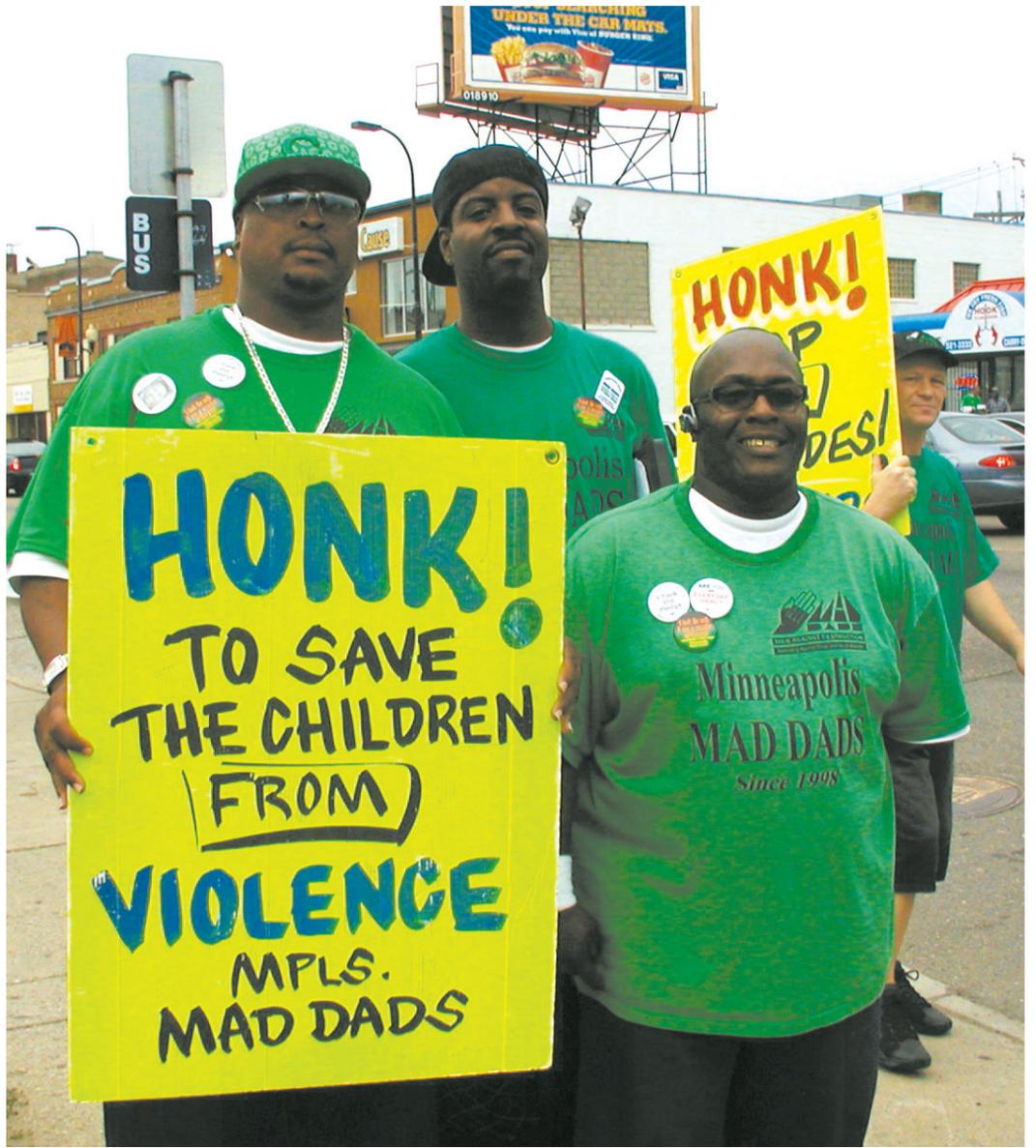
curred in the fourth precinct (the North Side). That’s almost half the city’s homicides for 2006. Reports also show that 47 of those 60 homicides (about 78 percent) were caused by gunshots.

Despite the statistics, there are many north side residents that want to decrease the murders taking place in the community in various ways.

“We need to stop having that ghetto mentality,” Smith said. “The mentality that we have to have is the community mentality.”

Smith and his team of about 30 MAD DADS (Men Against Destruction, Defending Against Drugs and Social-disorder) know well what it means to have a “community mentality.” It’s not uncommon to see the MAD DADS in their green shirts and contagious smiles walking up and down local streets of Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center.

With their signs in hand that



Photographs by Michelle Berry

Above, a group of MAD DADS walk the streets for peace in mid-June. At left, a tree is wrapped with flowers and memorials on 24th Street and Fermont Avenue North in Minneapolis.



said “Honk to stop the killing!” and “Turn in your guns now: cease fire!” the MAD DAD team sets out on a Thursday afternoon to “mend the nest” one honking car at a time. But they don’t just stop at the roaring honks of the cars. They make it even more personal than that.

“We do this because we see there is a need, matter of fact most of us came from that dysfunction that we see in this community,” Smith said.

Life-long resident who said he was Charez’s cousin and a North Minneapolis musician known as Chaz Millionaire, agreed with Smith. He said he knows how it feels to lose a family member to

violence but he’s still motivated to make a difference in the lives of young people on the north side.

“Basically I love the north side and I won’t give up on it and I will be here until the bottom falls out,” he said.

Another north side resident, Karlinda Brown, also believes the young people need more opportunities to contribute positively to the community.

“People are not giving the youth a voice out here,” she said. “Us older folks are just coming in and taking over and we should stand back because it’s the younger folks who are doing the damage out here.”

Not only does she think the

youth need to be more involved, but she also feels that local religious organizations could do more to clean up the streets.

“I think we should go around to different churches and encourage them to come out here like the MAD DADS,” she said.

As the summer continues, the MAD DADS and other outspoken residents will keep encouraging their North Side neighbors to take a stand with them.

“You have to be the one to take advantage of your position in the community, Smith said. “You have to say I am one person and I can make a difference in the community.”

# Methodist church attracts more youth

By Matt Smith  
Como Park High School

On a recent bright and muggy Sunday at Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis, 12 teenage worshippers climbed the staircase bridging the old and new.

The old sanctuary consists of ornate woodwork and flowing banners adorning the altar, which holds a foot-high golden cross. The teens approached the more modern “Youth Center,” a room filled with plush, multi-colored couches surrounding a giant television set with a pool and Foosball table. A youth minister greeted them with hugs and handshakes as they walked through the doors.

They could be doing anything else on a Sunday morning, but they made a choice to attend.

In a world where school, parents and the media compete for a teenager’s attention, Twin Cities churches continue to seek new and inventive ways to lure young people.

As they talk about their faith, one sentiment is clear: they feel passionate about attending church.

“It doesn’t feel like my mom forces me because I force my mom to go,” said Levi Caffes, an eighth grader. “She’s the one who brought me to Christ and if she starts not going, then I’ll stop going.”

Other students share Caffes’ devotion to his faith. They keep busy throughout the year with lock-ins at the church, camping trips and the Iron Man and Woman bike trips, a highly anticipated week of bike riding and camping.

At Temple Israel, also in Minneapolis, there is a different

approach toward reaching youth. In preparation for Confirmation, a Reform Judaism ceremony similar to the bar and bat mitzvah, the temple took its students to Washington, D.C. They met 250 other Jewish teens.

In Washington, the teenage students did something unorthodox for the nation’s capital: instead of separating church and state, they integrated the two subjects to learn what it means to be Jewish American. This integration gave them a unique opportunity, where they not only learned the responsibility of being an adult from a religious viewpoint, but also what it’s like to be an adult in their country. The teens then were taken around the city where, for four days, they learned about what Rabbi Michael Namath, the director of the Religious Action Center

of Reform Judaism, calls “the connection between Judaism and social justice.”

Namath hoped that by the end of the four-day experience, all 250 teens, including those from Minneapolis, “understand the Jewish mandate to be a part of social and political change.”

Like Temple Israel, Grace Fellowship, a Baptist church in Brooklyn Park, is marrying another taboo: religion and public schools.

Champlin Park High School contacted Grace Fellowship about forming a program called “Something Else,” said Dave Mergens, the Baptist church’s youth pastor.

Grace Fellowship receives help from Champlin Women of Today to bus students between the high school and church twice a week. The program allows students

to hang out in a structured environment where they can also study the Bible, Mergen said.

The school and church relationship is unusual, Mergen said.

“Any time I tell other youth pastors about it their jaw drops,” Mergen said.

These churches have figured out ways to attract young people to their services and help them understand what their churches preach, religious leaders said.

For Mari Fitch, a 10th-grader who attends Park Avenue Methodist, church should be an integral part of every teenager’s life.

“Living in a secular society, it really is important, at least for me to know about all my options, so I can make decisions in my life,” Fitch said.

# Former crack user is a sister to “sisters”

By **Tiana Daun**  
Patrick Henry High School

It's a sunny day in June on the north side of Minneapolis and Linda Goynes is feeling blessed.

Goynes lives next door to four contemplative nuns, Sisters of the Visitation of Holy Mary. Years ago, their lives were as different as black and white. Today, their relationship couldn't be any closer.

A month ago, the sisters awarded Goynes, a former crack user who almost died from her habit, their Cross of Affiliation — one of only five they've given throughout their 18-year history in north Minneapolis.

“She has lived life,” said Sister Mary Virginia Schmidt. “She has fidelity to the mission and to us. ... She doesn't see it, but she is very helpful to us in so many ways.” Every Saturday, from 9 a.m. to noon, Goynes helps the sisters with household chores. “What a sweetheart,” Schmidt said.

Goynes' life of trial and triumph developed when she married her first husband in 1984. They had

three children and lived in south Minneapolis. Goynes believed everything was fine, until in 1986, she discovered her husband had abused her oldest daughter, who was 12 years old.

According to Goynes, he threatened to kill her and her children if they ever told anyone. Later that year, he was convicted of child abuse. Feeling she was at fault for her daughter's trauma, Goynes turned to crack cocaine; it eventually took control of her life.

After she had a heart attack, she realized her health was in great danger, so she quit. After about six to seven clean months, Goynes turned to the drug yet again because of threatening letters from her ex-husband while in prison, she said.

In 1990, Goynes suffered a second heart attack. The doctor told her that if she continued using, she would die. Later that same year, Goynes fell into a three-month coma. She said she prayed to God asking for her health and promised that if she regained it, she would devote her life to serving Him until the day she dies.

In 1996, Goynes met Robert White. They dated for four years, and they have been married for seven. They currently live together in north Minneapolis, next door to one of the two houses the sisters own.

Realizing that living next door to the sisters would help her serve God, Goynes started to form a very strong relationship with them. Each day their friendship grew stronger. “[The sisters] are my heroes,” Goynes said.

According to her, they are like best friends who do everything together. Goynes wanted to wear a cross, just like they do. She prayed to God for the cross and for the life of a “full-blooded” sister without having to drastically change the life she was already living.

On May 16th, 2007, Goynes' 55th birthday, her prayers were answered.

The sisters invited their friend to a birthday lunch, later surprising her with the Cross of Affiliation, a smaller version of the ones they wear.

Goynes calls the cross her “pride and joy.” She proudly



Photograph courtesy of Linda Goynes

Linda Goynes, right, standing next to one of the sisters, wearing her Cross.

wears it every day and, according to her husband, she never takes it off, except when she goes to bed at night.

“[Goynes] has a beautiful

heart that has been searching for something,” Schmidt said.

Her search has certainly ended.

## Soldier-father adjusts after third Iraq tour



By **Levi Ismail**  
Anoka High School

The car door slams, and he hears the footsteps of toddlers making their way to daddy's outstretched arms. Day in and day out, he hugs his children before and after work, trying to make up for all those lost memories.

“It's awesome,” said Doug, a security guard in Anoka who didn't want his last name used.

As a member of the armed forces since he turned 18, Doug's life has revolved around the military, with tours from 1984 to the latest to 2007. He began as a full-time Army National Guardsman and later became a reservist. As an infantry squad leader, his responsibility has been to train and strengthen the men and women activated for duty.

As the war on terrorism proceeds, thousands of men and women like Doug are being activated for duty. More than 3,245 Minnesota National Guardsmen are currently deployed. Of the more than 13,000 total Guard personnel, nearly all have returned for their second or third tours. These citizen soldiers, like Doug, have been back and forth to Iraq. The effects on their lives and families are telling.

This short, solid, 41-year-old

man uses his hard-nosed persona and in-your-face attitude to keep his soldiers in check. He would be the first to say how difficult it is to separate the two personalities when it comes to readjusting back into society.

Doug, who is white, and his wife, who is African, have dealt with the difficulties of adjusting to civilian life not once but three times.

“It's hard back in civilian life where things take a lot more effort to complete compared to the Guard, where if you ask for something to be done, it's going to get done now,” Doug said.

Prior to getting engaged, Doug had been activated for duty, which he and his wife as a very difficult time in their relationship. After their first child was born in 2005, Doug returned and spent time with his family. In 2006, his wife was pregnant again when they got

news that Doug would be called to active duty again.

“I was crying all the way (home) from his deployment, and I couldn't sleep for two months,” said Doug's wife, who worried about the hardships of being a single parent.

“To be honest, I think the families go through much more than the actual soldier,” Doug said.

As she struggled to provide for the family, Doug's wife also struggled to explain why their father was missing.

“Always the oldest one, if he sees a white man outside the door, he runs and says, ‘Daddy, Daddy, Daddy.’ And I always say ‘Daddy will be back soon.’”

Despite her frustration, she supported Doug by sending photos and small mementos, such as the children's pillows and even bars of soap to remind him of their scent.

“I remember when I came back, my oldest son avoided me because he couldn't recognize me as his father. He was so young that it took almost six weeks to recognize me,” Doug said.

After returning home from activity duty, Doug works as a security guard. He shares a story with thousands of Minnesota soldiers, each wanting to return to family life and cope with the loss of time.

Doug said he has no regrets about his National Guard service. As for having to leave his family, he quoted the writer George Orwell: “The only way for evil to lurk is for a man to do nothing.”

“My family is the most important part of my life, and if I can do anything to make their future just a little better and safer, then that's what I'm going to do,” he said.

## The right school for different kids: Loring Nicollet Alternative High School excels by leaps and bounds

By **Nico McClellan**  
De La Salle High School

Loring Nicollet Alternative High School in Minneapolis lives up to its name: Alternative. Marin Peplinski, the long-time principal who retired this year, wears an Old Testament beard and International Workers of the World tattoos. The students' styles range from hip-hop to hippie, jazz to punk — and they're all friends.

Like the 17 other alternative schools in the Twin Cities, the school at 1925 Nicollet Ave. S. can only accept students who've had trouble in conventional schools. Loring Nicollet's students are mostly white, smart and non-poor.

“They're generally kids that are bright. They're kids that

are anti-establishment. They're progressive thinkers politically. They get in trouble with their home schools because they're antagonistic toward establishment and authority,” said Brad Englund, executive director of the Metropolitan Federation of Alternative Schools.

Loring Nicollet has been around for more than 30 years and started in the living room of a house.

Will Gibney-Jones, who graduated from Loring Nicollet this spring, went to two other high schools he didn't like. When he came to Loring Nicollet, he fell in love.

“In order to really flourish there, you need a lot of respect for others and the things that the school teaches. You need an open mind,” he said. “Loring Nicollet is

about achieving personal growth and discovering the most about the world and yourself.”

For students like Gibney-Jones, the tiny school — with fewer than 50 students total and no more than 10 to 15 per class — excels where other schools have failed. In addition to science, math, and history, the curriculum includes classes of a different beat, such as women's and minority studies, self-knowledge, activism, and Tai boxing. Loring Nicollet students are making waves with such bands as The First Communion After Party, EZ Bleeders, and Dizzy Obstetrics.

But the academics are rigorous. There may not be worksheets, but students must write “evals” — short essays — for every topic covered in class.

According to the Englund, Peplinski has been described as a “fascist hippie” — giving students great freedom of expression but demanding high standards of civility and academics. Students who don't perform are put on strict contracts. If they fail to meet the terms, they can be suspended or expelled.

Paplinski had only this to say: “I've been doing this for 30 years, and followed one motto: Fly under the radar.”

According to a 2005-2006 report by the Minnesota Department of Education, Loring Nicollet has an attendance rate of 91 percent, a graduation rate of about 80 percent, and students' reading and mathematics proficiency meet the required targets.

Thomas “Rat Boy” Dunn, a punk closing in on 40, was one of Loring Nicollet's first students.

He knows more about music than most, is covered in metal studs and spews his opinions with urgency. He said that Loring Nicollet is a great place for kids who are “too different for other schools. They are more open to alternative lifestyles.” The classes, Dunn recalled, were in depth and open to all ideas.

Gibney-Jones said Loring Nicollet made him feel accepted for who he is. “The community is based off of the classroom and the discussions that we have. Anyone can state their opinion and it's encouraged. It helps the kids to get a better grasp on the topics.”

# Teens compete for jobs with adults

By Kyla Riley  
Humbolt High School

Jevita Baheriy had been searching for a job with no luck. “Oh my God! It seems like I completed a thousand applications and there would be no calls back,” said the 17-year-old St. Paul resident.

Not only is there competition among teens for jobs, but also inexperienced teens find themselves competing with experienced adults. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, each year at least two million people between the ages of 16 and 24 swell the work force between April and July, making it even tougher for teens to secure a job.

## Employers look for:

- Personable people
- Reliability
- Confidence
- Appropriate dress
- People with goals

“A lot of places don’t hire 15-year-olds, so that made my search limited, but not hard,” said Lulete Mola, an employee at McDonald’s. Lulete, the daughter of a single parent, wants to be able to buy her own clothing and help her mother with bills.

Porsche Stewart, 17, said she found herself repeatedly turned

down for jobs, including one at McDonald’s. “I was a little frustrated because I’ve been filling out applications for weeks and I really didn’t know what I was doing wrong.”

Some employers say teens fail to answer all questions on job applications. Deron Carrington, who screens job applications at the YMCA on Arcade Street in St. Paul, said the applicants are being too brief. He said that if they have to leave a space blank, they should at least put not applicable (NA). If applicants lack actual work experience they could cite volunteer work or babysit. Stewart said there were places on the applications that Stewart left completely blank.

“Attitude plays a key role, too. I want someone to be confident, but not to the point where they are starting to believe I need them,” said Eric Turner of the Martin Luther King recreational center.

Angie Galvan, who manages a St. Paul McDonald’s, agreed. “I am looking for someone who is enthusiastic and confident, but not overconfident,” she said.

Appearance is also important, Galvan said. Galvan understands that most teens may not have clothing that is business casual. As long as they are “neat,” it is fine, she said.

Arriving at an interview with a resume ready to hand to the



15-year-old Lulete Mola on her third day of work at her first job in McDonalds.

Photograph by Kyla Riley

employer “could only help,” said Carrington, even though fast-food restaurants and retail stores don’t usually require applicants to have a resume.

If teens don’t know how to put together a resume or complete an application, Work Force Centers

all across Minnesota will help.

It pays to be persistent. “I knew a couple of people who work at Cossetta’s so I asked if they were hiring,” Jevita said. “Just to make sure, I called and asked the manager if they were hiring and he said yes. After I completed

the application, the manager interviewed me. I finally got the job after a long frustrating search.” Jevita said. She has been working for Cossetta’s, a restaurant in St. Paul, for a year and a half.

## Hmong professionals offer secrets to success

*Second-generation Hmong Americans have come a long way from traditional farming to professional careers.*

By Sheta Lo  
St. Francis High School

The Twin Cities—currently home to the largest concentration of Hmong Americans in the United States—is among the leaders and has spawned some of the first Hmong American doctors, lawyers and politicians.

Many give merit to their supportive community and families that have helped them succeed. And the larger the community, the stronger the support.

They have some advice for the next generation: Honor your tradition by not forgetting it. Honor your dreams by doing what you want. Take advantage of the time you’re in and the time you have.

“The Hmong have really embraced the fact that you can get an education here in America if you want to, and when you do you can pursue your dreams,” said Pakou Hang, who is running for St. Paul city council. Hang’s parents, like many first-generation Hmong, were farmers.

They’ve supported and encouraged her to go to college to create more options. “My parents would work hours a day in the fields to make enough to send all of their kids to college. I owe where I am today to them.”

In Hang’s case she received her Bachelor’s degree in economics from Yale University and is in the process of getting her PhD in political science at the University of Minnesota.

Hang gives this piece of advice to the aspiring student, “Get involved with your school and community. Read the newspaper and volunteer any chance you get. You will do better in life when you find your perspective on life.”

Xoua Thao, a St. Paul doctor for the past 12 years, credits his success to the Hmong community. As a child, community members would constantly remind him to stay in school and work hard.

Thao went to school at several different

schools from Brown University to the University of Minnesota to Harvard for his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in biology and health care and his medical degree.

“I became a doctor so that I can make a bridge (in the language gap) available for the Hmong community,” Thao said. “The Hmong community supports me by supporting my business and I do my best by giving back what I can by providing them with my services. We all feel a sort of mutual obligation to help one another.”

Thao advises students to stay in school and discipline themselves in order to be successful.

“Education is a must, stick to it because it is the key to success. Be flexible, absorb all you can and stay focused, give it your all. There’s a whole new world of opportunity for you young people, you just need to work hard and want it enough.”

The way to great achievement may not always be paved but it does exist.

“I’ve always gotten encouragement to go to school from friends and family,” said Tsua Xiong, a junior at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. “The only problems I really encountered with college were financial issues which most college kids have to deal with and figure out. You can always find a way.”

Xiong is currently studying for a social work degree. “It really is something I care about. I want to help the Hmong community and I think social work is good way to go about it,” said Xiong.

It’s not always easy to want to pursue goals when your family doesn’t particularly encourage you. But many more Hmong families, particularly those with first-generation parents, have stopped holding onto old traditions and are now encouraging all their children to college regardless of gender. Hmong traditions have greatly evolved and taken a Hmong American form.

## Diabetes: my struggle and what you should know

By Thomas Birai  
Osseo Senior High School

Emma Weber is one teenager who’s not likely to “pig out” on junk food—at least not more than once in awhile. She pays too big a price.

The 16-year-old junior at Osseo Senior High School has Type 1 diabetes and there’s nothing she could have done to prevent it. Her pancreas doesn’t produce insulin, the hormone needed to process sugar.

All she can do is watch her diet carefully, inject insulin and exercise. That’s exactly what she’s doing. She gives herself an insulin shot right through the fabric of her shirt or blouse. She’s open about telling anyone of her diabetes. And she gets the necessary exercise, some of it from her intramural soccer games.

She knows when she’s not been careful enough.

“I went to the doctor and got my A1C number (the three-month blood sugar average). It was really high,” she said. “Then I knew I’ve got to watch what I eat.”

Weber could not have prevented getting diabetes. Unlike her, thousands of teenagers may be able to keep themselves from turning into diabetics, getting Type 2 diabetes, also known as adult onset diabetes.

According to the Web site *Kids Health*, studies indicate that between eight and 45 percent of children who’ve been recently diagnosed with diabetes have Type 2.

The main reason, according to the National Dairy Council, is obesity. One study showed that 92 percent of all adolescents and teens with Type 2 diabetes were significantly overweight. A recent study published in the *Journal of the*

American Medical Association, however, shows obesity linked childhood diabetes to be rare.

Whatever the findings, too many teenagers eat too much of processed foods, said Darlene Kvist, a licensed nutritionist at the Nutritional Weight and Wellness Center in St. Paul.

She recommends drinking water instead of soda, eating fresh fruit instead of candy or chips.

I know something about eating right because I was obese once, my diet was abysmal and my exercise habits nonexistent. Although I have Type 1 diabetes, I do all I can to control my blood sugar level.

I must eat right and give myself insulin shots. If I had a choice of taking care of myself or developing diabetes, it would be a no-brainer. The complications from Type 2 diabetes include hypertension, kidney disease, loss of sight and nerve disorders. These complications can cause a premature death.

The recommended exercise for teenagers, according to nutritionist Kvist, is, 20 minutes after each meal. I doubt this is being done in this age of video games, Web site hookups and flat-screen television sets.

I’m doing my best to follow the rules to keep my diabetes in check. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Minnesota, according to cdc.gov.

I already have the disease. My desire is to help others avoid getting it. I manage diabetes, but sometimes it’s a hassle. Other teenagers won’t have to worry about this if they watch what they eat, stay on the move and be aware of the problem.

Don’t let a preventable disease get control of your life and your lifestyle.

The ThreeSixty programs are made possible by generous sponsorship and individual donations. Thank you.

# Roseville group fighting for Darfur

By Andrew Worrall  
Roseville Area High School

Roseville Area High School's Darfur Awareness Now Group (DANG) has a story behind it that begins in a high school classroom.

"In (World Geography) we teach about the genocide that took place in Rwanda in the 1990s," said co-adviser and social studies teacher Filiz Yargici. "Usually, students are deeply moved and say they can't believe this took place in their lifetime, which makes a good transition to teaching about the current situation in Darfur."

The freshmen in many of those geography classes are now juniors. They were shocked to learn of the massive genocide in Darfur, and the lessons sparked numerous discussions. Several students in Yargici's class were moved to take action. This was the beginning of DANG.

The group spent last school year publicizing the crisis in Darfur, a western region of Sudan. Through events including fundraisers, silent auctions and bracelet and T-shirt sales, the group raised more than \$20,000 that was donated to the American Refugee Committee.

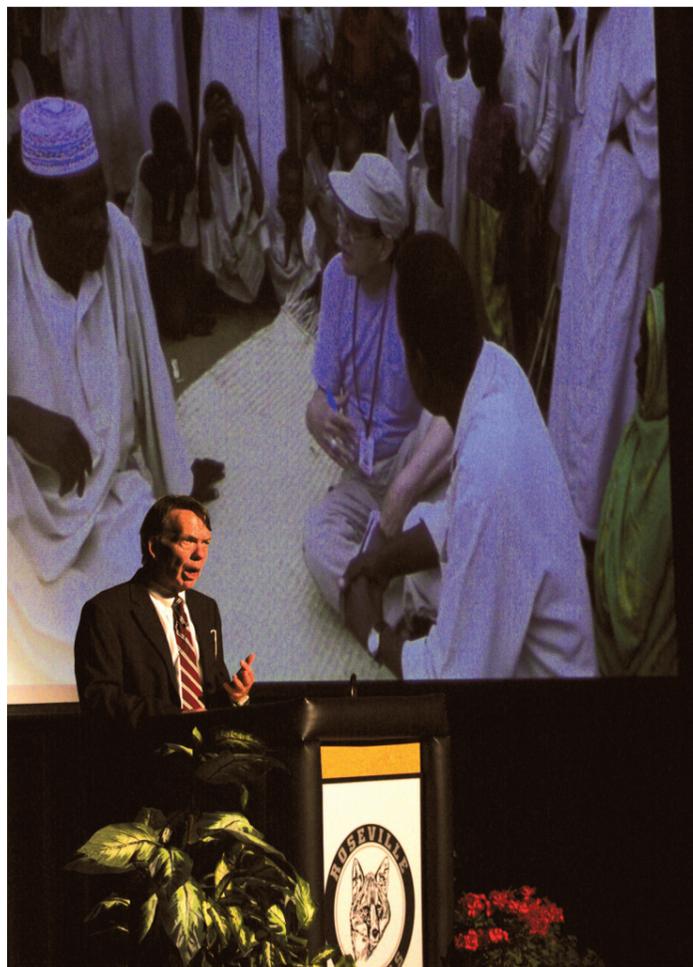
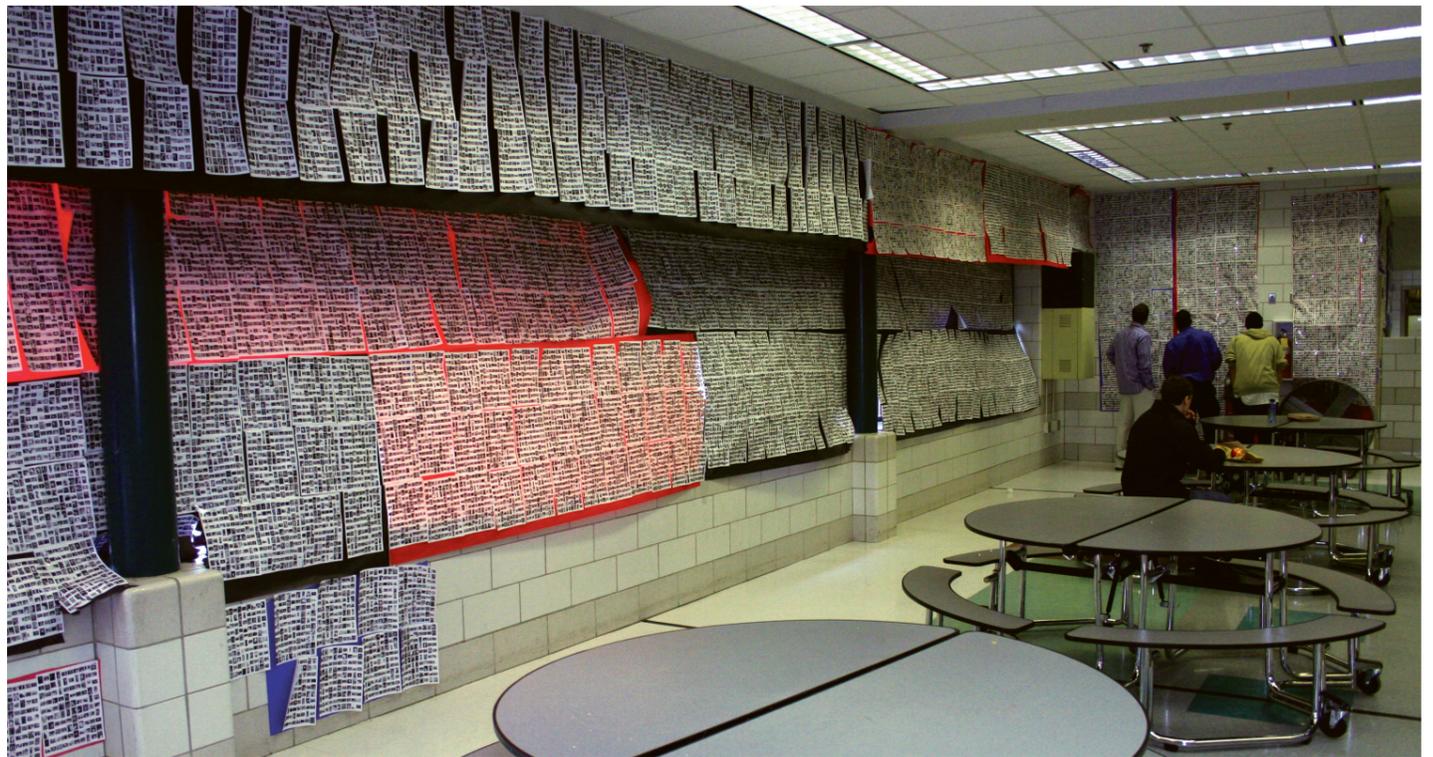
Journalist Nick Clooney was featured at the culminating event the group hosted at the high school in March. Clooney spoke of his April 2006 visit to Darfur with his son, actor George Clooney, and described the spirit and hope of the Sudanese refugees. He shared riveting first-hand accounts of a people struggling to survive and asked the community to help.

Also speaking that day were U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum and Hugh Parmer, president of the American Refugee Committee.

Minnesota's two U.S. senators have recognized the efforts made by the Roseville students.

"It is extremely uplifting to see young people in Minnesota doing such tremendous work on behalf of the refugees created by the violence in Darfur," Sen. Norm Coleman said. "Despite the long distance between Minnesota and Darfur, the students of Roseville care about the innocent victims of the Darfur conflict and have taken it upon themselves to help these victims."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar added that "grassroots activism, including from schools and campuses across the county, has been vital in focusing public attention on the genocide in Darfur and putting pressure on the Sudanese government to end the



Photographs by Andrew Worrall

At left, Hugh Parmer shares words on the situation in Darfur. In the top photograph, students look at just some of 400,000 photos displayed on 4,000 pages in Roseville's lunch room. The display, which was posted for two days, spanned floor-to-ceiling around all the walls and windows of the room. Each photo represented one life lost in Darfur, and was taken from the Facebook group "400,000 Faces," which initiated the entire project nationwide. Above, students found a Roseville peer on one of the thousands of pages.

helping other people, it will definitely make a difference [in the way adults view youth]," said another DANG member, 15-year-old Maria Starr.

The money raised by the Roseville students already is making a difference.

"When the news came to us that they had raised the money, so significant an amount, \$20,000, we all jumped in our office in excitement," said Emmanuel Tom-Rad Kailie, a former refugee who is now an American Refugee Committee official in Sudan.

Donations like the money raised by DANG members help the ARC

provide refugees with basic living needs, including water, food and shelter. The refugees do not receive handouts indefinitely; they receive help to grow their own crops and to be as independent as possible. However, it isn't easy, Kailie said.

"Oh my God, how do we intervene without support, without resources?" he said. "In one location we have over 30,000 internationally displaced people. Contributions, no matter how small, help us a long way. We are really saving lives, it is no joke here. Let [DANG] grow, involve more people. The more the better. And then the voice will be louder."

violence and allow the entry of peacekeepers."

DANG members feel they are helping the situation in Darfur.

"We have a lot more power than people think we do," said sophomore Emily Carlson,

who joined because her friend encouraged her to do so and she "thought it would be cool just to go against stereotypes and actually do something about [Darfur]."

"If they see all these teenagers trying to make a difference and

## Education costly for illegal immigrants

By Edgar Ullaguari  
Lincoln International High School

*Editor's Note: To protect the identity of an undocumented immigrant, the name of the girl has been changed.*

On a cold snowy day of January 2003, 14-year-old Sonia and her younger brother traveled more than eight hours from Ecuador to Minnesota.

They settled into a new life in a country of opportunities. After six months of hard work, Sonia moved from middle school to high school. Like many teens, she enjoyed reading books, listening to music and playing sports. But what set

her apart was making the grade while staying involved in school activities.

Sonia was a straight-A student who tutored those who needed help. Her classmates voted her to represent them in student government all four years.

Things changed when she graduated from high school and wanted to attend college. Sonia realized the cost of living in a country of immigrants without having legal documents. She was an undocumented student.

Sonia is one of more than 1.7 million undocumented students in the United States, according to Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Of those students, only one

out of every 20 attends college.

Most states prohibit undocumented immigrants from paying in-state tuition. Undocumented students can't qualify for state and federal financial aid. Nine states have passed the Dream Act that allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at state universities. Minnesota is not one of them.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty has said that it would be unfair to offer undocumented students who graduate from Minnesota high schools a benefit that isn't available to student from other states who are U.S. citizens.

However, not everything seems to be against Sonia. Last month,

Pawlenty signed a bill that allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at two-year state colleges.

Sonia isn't satisfied. "I will never understand why undocumented students have to be limited from the opportunities other students have. People don't realize that we are not accountable for our situation and that the only thing we aspire is a chance to make ourselves better," she said.

Nonetheless, she will start at a Minnesota community college in August. She plans to transfer to another school after getting her basics done in two years. Sonia wants to pursue a degree in business administration.

"There is always an option," she said. "You just have to look for it. I know that many good people are working hard to change these laws so the doors open for us, and I hope that happens soon."

According to the National Immigration Law Center, undocumented young immigrants are essential for solving the labor shortage caused by the aging U.S. population.

Pablo Tapia, chair of civil rights for the pro-immigrant group ISIAAH, said that the current system prevents young people, perhaps, from becoming the person to find the cure for cancer, the next entrepreneur or a potential scientist.