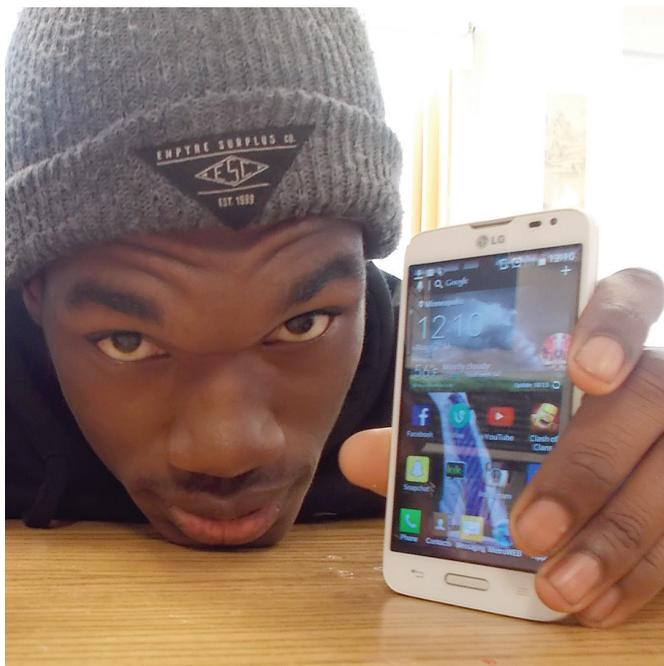


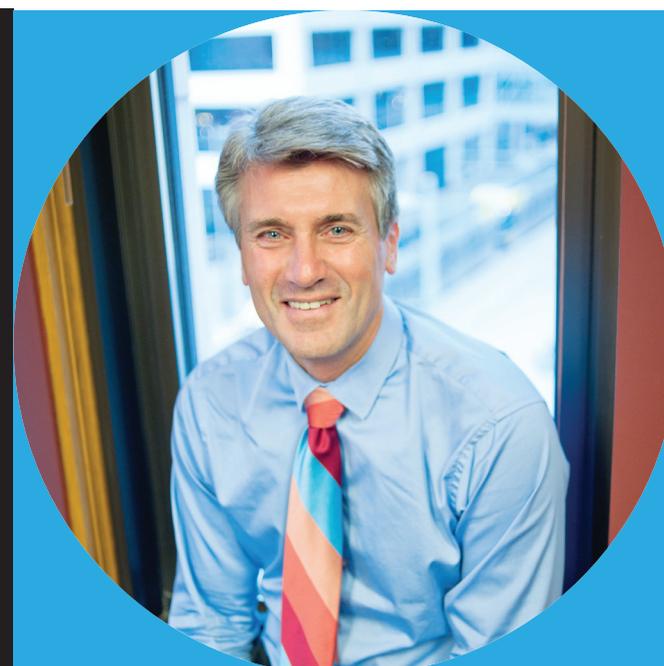
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# ThreeSixty

Minnesota Teens Report Stories & Issues That Matter

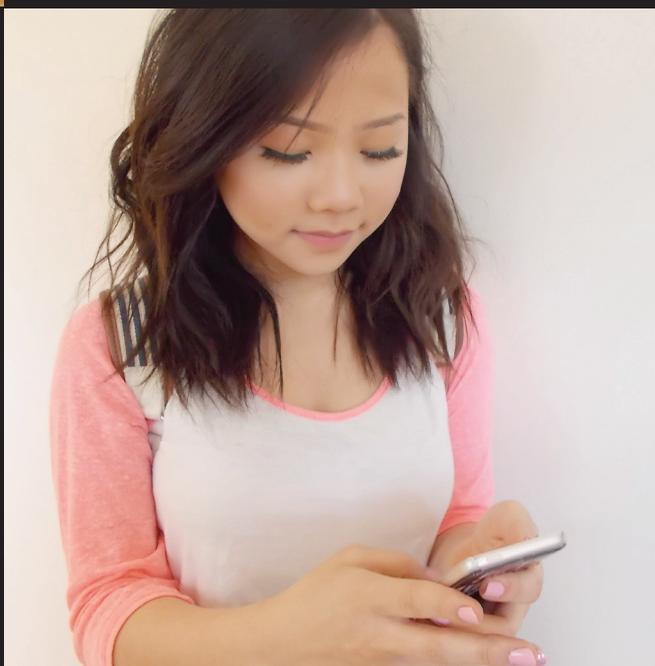


## WIRED INTO THE DIGITAL AGE



Whether texting a significant other or “unfriending” someone on Facebook, learning in a tech-savvy classroom or doing homework on a school-issued iPad, teens these days are figuring out how to navigate a technological world.

■ Pages 12-20



## @16 w/ R.T. RYBAK

The former mayor of Minneapolis talks life out of office and the achievement gap. ■ Page 10

## A BRIGHT FUTURE is on the horizon for 2015 **THREESIXTY SCHOLAR**

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM student Amira Warren-Yearby has been selected as the 2015 ThreeSixty Scholar. She receives a full-tuition, four-year scholarship to study communication and journalism at the University of St. Thomas.

“Being chosen to be a ThreeSixty Scholar means more than going to college with minimal debt, but fulfilling the goal I set for myself growing up, which is going to college,” said Warren-Yearby, a senior at St. Louis Park High School. “I will be attending my top choice of schools and have a shot at a brighter future.”

Each year, high school seniors who are graduates of ThreeSixty programming compete for the ThreeSixty Scholar award. There are four current ThreeSixty scholars at St. Thomas. Warren-Yearby is currently one of ThreeSixty’s senior reporters—the program’s highest designation—and a member of the 2014-15 Student Executive Board. She is a graduate of ThreeSixty’s 2013 Journalism Summer Camp and was one of 42 teenagers selected to attend the Asian American Journalist Association’s J-Camp in 2014 in Boston. Warren-Yearby also produces videos

for The Echo, the St. Louis Park High School newspaper, and is a St. Louis Parktacular ambassador.

“Amira embodies the spirit of ThreeSixty Journalism,” said ThreeSixty Executive Director Chad Caruthers. “She is committed and passionate, and she has all the tools to lead and succeed at St. Thomas and beyond.”

During her tenure at ThreeSixty, Warren-Yearby has reported on topics such as race, religion and technology. As a young journalist, she has developed an interest in poverty and homelessness in the United States, the achievement gap and the lack of African-American studies in schools.

Warren-Yearby also has a passion for videography and plans to minor in Film Studies to complement her Communication & Journalism major. She hopes to one day have her own production company and “help completely reshape the outlook of ethnic people in the media,” she said. “I hope to impact the world in a positive way. I’m looking forward to making many more friends, connections and memories at St. Thomas, and getting the full college experience.”



**Amira  
Warren-Yearby**

### About the ThreeSixty Scholar Award

Each year, high school seniors who are graduates of ThreeSixty programming compete for the ThreeSixty Scholar award—a full-tuition, four-year scholarship to study communication and journalism at the University of St. Thomas. Currently, there are four ThreeSixty scholars attending St. Thomas.



**Deborah Honore  
2014 Scholar**



**Simeon Lancaster  
2013 Scholar**



**Grace Pastoor  
2012 Scholar**



**Tyanna Dickerson  
2011 Scholar**

REAL STUDENTS. REAL STORIES.

# ThreeSixty

Volume 5 • Issue 5

JOURNALISM

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Email [threesixty@stthomas.edu](mailto:threesixty@stthomas.edu) with comments, letters and questions about participating in ThreeSixty.

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# A willingness to dive into journalism

FOUR YEARS AGO, I was a timid, naive intern reporter at the St. Paul Pioneer Press, surrounded by experienced journalists and seasoned editors.

As a 2011 graduate of the University of St. Thomas, I knew I had the training to succeed in a newsroom like this. I just didn't have the confidence yet.

I vividly remember sitting at my small newsroom desk near a window, nervously mashing on the keyboard for a story I was



**Miles Trump**  
Program  
Manager,  
ThreeSixty  
Journalism

writing on a free art class in a Twin Cities suburb.

Seriously. A story on a free art class had me sweating bullets.

However, during my time that summer, I dove in. Seizing every opportunity that came my way, I walked out of that internship with a

job at a small daily newspaper and a boatload of new skills.

And now I'm here, just more than a couple months into my role as program manager at ThreeSixty Journalism, and I'm watching high school students—I repeat, high school students—diving into journalism in many of the same ways.

This issue of ThreeSixty Magazine is a testament to our students' willingness to not only kick the tires of journalism, but also to get behind the wheel and hit the gas.

Take Maya, for example. While interviewing the director of the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota in April about extremist groups' recruitment of Somali youth,

she stumbled upon a gathering of people protesting Al-Shabab's attack on Kenya's Garissa University College, which had taken place the day before.

So, what did Maya do? She dove in, asking questions and snapping photos of those who gathered (page 6).

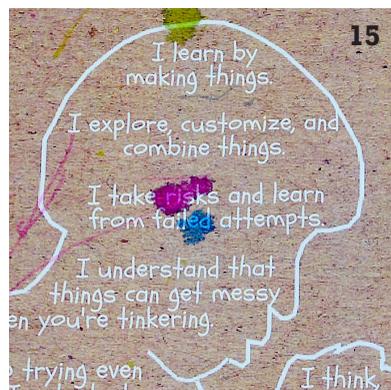
Or take Mina, who asked the difficult questions and crafted a well-written piece on the complex and controversial issue of schools filtering students' Internet access (page 13). Or Selam, who had no troubles navigating an interview with R.T. Rybak, the former mayor of Minneapolis and current executive director of Generation Next (pages 10–11). Or Sagal, who interviewed author Hamse Warfa in

front of a crowd of people during an event in May (page 4).

The list goes on. Throughout the pages of this magazine, you will find a series of stories under the umbrella theme, "Teens and Technology" (pages 12–20). You will find personal essays from ThreeSixty students (pages 21–23), as well as an essay project from juniors at St. Paul Johnson High School (pages 7–9). You will find an op-ed on internalized misogyny (page 24), a story on teen pregnancy (page 26) and a feature on a personal finance class required for teens (page 25).

Most of all, you will find that these students weren't afraid to dive in.

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**Your guide to cheap summer fun:** Looking for something fun this summer, but short on cash? A duo of ThreeSixty journalists compile a teen's guide to the best inexpensive—and mostly free—summer activities in the Twin Cities. ■ 5

**Ripple effect in Minnesota:** Islamist militant group Al-Shabab's recent actions—the attack on Garissa University College in Kenya, the threat of an attack on the Mall of America and the ongoing recruitment of Somali youth—have hit home for some locals. ■ 6

**Overcoming (more) odds:** Funded by the St. Paul Foundation, ThreeSixty's work on crafting college essays with local students continued this winter at Johnson High School. ■ 7

**@16 (part two) with R. T. Rybak:** The former mayor of Minneapolis is staying busy at Generation Next, where he's working to narrow the achievement gap—a huge undertaking. ■ 10

**Teens and Technology:** How does "instant communication" affect relationships? Do schools have the right to filter students' Internet access? What makes the Minneapolis Central Library's Teen Tech Center a draw for students? And how should teenagers handle cyberbullying? ThreeSixty journalists answer these questions, and many more, about living in the digital age. ■ 12–20

**Sojourn to France:** A year-long study abroad trip from Minnesota to France gave one ThreeSixty journalist a new-found sense of freedom. ■ 21

**Center stage:** Returning to the stage at Project SUCCESS, a program that helps local youth achieve their goals, after a years-long hiatus has become a gift that has kept on giving for one ThreeSixty journalist. ■ 22

**Learning about bias:** You don't have any biases toward others, right? That's what one ThreeSixty journalist thought, until a project between local Muslim and Jewish youth opened her eyes to her own preconceptions—and shifted her entire perspective. ■ 23

**Stop the comparison:** We've all fallen victim to the comparison trap. But, as one ThreeSixty journalist writes, girls especially need to stay away from this "imaginary competition" against members of their own gender. ■ 24

**Taking hold of your finances:** Teens may not be raking in the big bucks yet, but a financial literacy requirement at the Hopkins Public School District has students thinking about their financial future. ■ 25

**Pregnancy plummet:** Teen pregnancy and birth rates in Minnesota have been steadily decreasing. But why, exactly? ThreeSixty explores the answer to that question. ■ 26

# Spreading his story

## Author Hamse Warfa speaks about immigrating to U.S., leadership

EVERYONE HAS A STORY that makes them unique. Some are filled with more hardship than others.

For Hamse Warfa, the author of “America Here I Come: A Somali Refugee’s Quest for Hope,” which was published in 2014, his story starts in Somalia.

Warfa was an average young boy in Mogadishu when civil war broke out and forced him and his family to flee. After three years in refugee camps in Kenya, he came with his family to the U.S. in 1994 and enrolled in school despite speaking little to no English.

Now, Warfa is an author, as well as a program officer for Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, a consultant and a presenter. He also is working toward his doctorate in Public Administration at Hamline University in St. Paul.

In his book, Warfa writes about the obstacles he faced throughout his life and how he overcame them. He also writes about the importance of leadership, especially for youth.

On May 7, I interviewed Warfa at a book signing event in Minneapolis, hosted by Youthprise. More than 50 people attended to hear his story.

### What motivated you to write a memoir?

I was inspired to write this book when my story was included in a book in 2010, published by a former Wall Street journalist who became an author. His interest was



Sagal Abdirahman  
St. Louis Park High School

to combine stories from individuals who overcame adversities and have done what he calls “extraordinary things.” At the time when I was interviewed for the book, I had no idea how I was selected. I got an email asking if I could participate in a 10-minute interview to see if I could be a candidate for being in a book that would be published. Also, to my surprise, there was a genuine interest of money from diverse groups who were interested to learn about different immigrant experiences. That really gave me enough momentum to start writing, and that eventually resulted in the making of this book.

I felt a responsibility to represent not just Somalis, not just Africans, but those who fled from violent situations, well. Many people come to this country for different reasons, some come for economic reasons because they want to get employed, which is absolutely a great thing to do. Many others come here because they were destroyed by war.

### Tell us about your childhood memories in Somalia.

As many of you know, we often hear stories how Somalia had the first democratic government in Africa.



Photo courtesy of Madeleine Davidson

Author Hamse Warfa (left) speaks to the crowd while being interviewed by ThreeSixty journalist Sagal Abdirahman on May 7 at a book signing event in Minneapolis. The event was hosted by Youthprise.

The next country followed suit after thirty years. Somalia was the house of the African Union. For younger generations, and those who aren’t familiar with Somali stories, it is very difficult to believe in them because what they hear over the last twenty years is a different story. We have two generations of Somalis today. We have the few that are in the older generation who can relate to the country more. But many are second-generation Somalis, while I like to call myself “the 1.5 generation” – those who had experiences in the country before the civil war and then came to this country and had the opportunity to go to high school and spend their teenage years here in America.

So my memories are that, I loved soccer and it was my passion. We call it futbol in Africa and most of the world. To say soccer was my passion is an understatement. I dreamed about soccer. There were a few times I left from school to go play soccer, only to be reprimanded by parents and teachers. So I remember a peaceful Somalia where we walked to school. I remember we wore the yellow shirts and khaki pants in my second-, third-, fourth-grade in Somalia, where life really felt like a never-ending paradise. Somalia has 70-degree all-year-round weather and it feels like you are almost on vacation 365 days a year. That is the life I remember before the civil war. ...

### Coming to the U.S. as a young teenager, what were some challenges you faced and how did you overcome them?

Before my family and I were sponsored to come to the U.S., just before we flew to the U.S., my father passed away due to health reasons. That was a low moment in our life because it felt like the pillar of my family was no longer with us. So this uncertainty of what life would be without our father was the start of this new experience in life.

My family and I arrived in Denver, Colorado, on a freezing day. My mom and sister were asking each other ... whether it was salt outside. Of course we had a different understanding of what snow looked like. After a year of being there, my family and I decided to move. My mom asked, “Where is the closest place that does not snow?” So someone knew of this place called San Diego, where the weather is 70 degrees all year round. So we moved to San Diego, California.

One of the first challenges I of course encountered was the language barrier. It was extremely challenging. The only English words I knew were mostly picked up from the basketball courts and they were mostly trash (talk). It was (only) effective when I was trying to make a layup. So that really discouraged my passion to continue school. So I found myself playing more basketball and

spending more time on the court as a way of distracting myself from the real hard work of going to school. It wasn’t until an injury and motivation from my family that I got back to going to school. ...

### In your book, you wrote, “America is the land of opportunity, but only to those who seize such opportunity.”

What are some ways to seize opportunities and what are some opportunities that might go unseized?

The education system. I am extremely grateful that I had the opportunity to go through the education system. That allowed me today to really find more of my strengths and find an opportunity to make a difference and contribute my two cents. If it was not for the quality education, I do not think I would be in the position to manage close to \$180 million, to be able to be an advocate for my community ...

For the younger groups here, the value of outside classroom learning for yourself through community-sponsored trainings, workshops, internships during the summer. I had the fortune of getting an internship with a small nonprofit organization that works with East African refugees in San Diego. And at the time I had no clue what community nonprofit organizations are. There is no such thing as the nonprofit sector in Somalia. I had no clue that this was even a paid job. I thought this was kind of Mother Teresa-like, so you go and spend four or five hours just helping out your community and giving back, only to learn that this is a huge sector that really transforms communities. ...

(As for) opportunities that go unseized, I would say for the most part almost everyone is willing to sit down and speak with young people, but young people do not reach out to get help. But for young people to really reach out and ask for help, for **WARFA** continued on page 31

# A teen's guide to summer fun

## The Twin Cities boasts plenty of free and cheap summer options for teens

THE CLICHE VISION of a relaxing teenage summer, sleeping in until noon and spending long days at a pool, isn't the reality for many teens. Most of us fill our summers with jobs, internships, schoolwork, camps, sports and other obligations, leaving little to no free time. In addition, lack of money and access limits what some of us can do, which leads us to spend sunny days indoors, often watching Netflix. Below, we—Minneapolis Washburn seniors Ellie Colbert and Hannah Gordon—compiled a list of inexpensive, exciting and accessible summer activities to make sure none of your free time goes wasted.

### ■ Minneapolis Chain of Lakes

*Location:* Southwest Minneapolis

*Hours:* N/A

*Cost:* Free

There's nothing better than free, outdoor summer activities. The Chain of Lakes in Minneapolis is often bustling with people and offers tons of opportunities for recreation and relaxation. From Cedar Lake to Lake of the Isles to Calhoun to Harriet, there are opportunities for a wide variety of activities—from biking, swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, dining, rollerblading, beach volleyball and much more.

For free opportunities, Calhoun offers public beaches, picnic areas, beach volleyball courts and grass



**Ellie Colbert**  
Washburn  
High School



**Hannah Gordon**  
Washburn  
High School

fields. A variety of watersports equipment is available to rent at both Calhoun and Harriet (for a price, however). Harriet is the perfect place for quieter beachside tanning and swimming, as well as nearby eats at the Harriet Bandshell. Lake of the Isles, although not great for swimming, is a great place for walks, runs, bike rides, water activities and picnics. For a more hipster beach experience, try Hidden Beach, located on the northeast side of Cedar Lake. Extensive bike paths and walking paths connect the chain of lakes.

Located in southwest Minneapolis, these lakes are a short distance from Uptown, Calhoun Commons, Linden Hills and more exciting neighborhoods. Get the free Minneapolis Lakes App, which provides maps to all the lakes and activities.

More information: <http://www.minneapolis.org/visitor/sports-parks-trails/lakes>



Photo by Ellie Colbert/ThreeSixty Journalism

The giant swing at the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden.

### ■ Walker Art Center

*Location:* 1750 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403

*Hours:* 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Closed Mondays, open until 9 p.m. on Thursdays

*Cost:* Free for teens

The Walker Art Center is a modern art museum in Minneapolis. It provides an eclectic art experience for teens, who get in free. "You can go for classes and be working on art there, or you can also just go in as viewer," said Thea Sutherland, an intern at the Walker Art Center. "There's also a lot of cool events and movies and stuff like that, that teens have access to for free." It's also perfect for rainy days.

More information: <http://www.walkerart.org/>

### ■ Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

*Location:* Across the street from the Walker Art Center

*Hours:* 6 a.m. to midnight. Free guided tours of the Garden offered Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 a.m. Meet by the steps at the Vineland Place entrance to the Garden.

*Cost:* Free

Across the street from the Walker Art Center is the Minneapolis

Sculpture Garden, which boasts interactive sculptures that include the famous "Spoonbridge and Cherry" (a giant cherry on a giant spoon) as well as a swing, a mirrored/optical illusion sculpture and a brass bunny. "There are a lot of different things you can do there because it's a really open space," Sutherland said. "You can bring in whatever you want."

Activities in this space could include a picnic or simply spending an afternoon surrounded by art. Also, Free First Saturdays throughout the summer offer outdoor opportunities to view and create art.

More information: <http://www.walkerart.org/>

### ■ Western Sculpture Park

*Location:* Marion Avenue between Interstate 94 & University Avenue

*Hours:* Daylight

*Cost:* Free

St. Paul has its own sculpture garden attraction, the Western Sculpture Park. This garden displays a large picture frame sculpture for people to pose in, a sculpture of a giant human being and many other interactive art pieces.

More information: <http://www.publicartstpaul.org/western.html>

### ■ Music and Movies in the Parks

*Location:* Various parks in Minneapolis

*Hours:* Dusk; dates TBD

*Cost:* Free

Throughout the summer, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board puts on weekly outdoor films and music concerts throughout city parks. Starting at dusk (movies start 15 minutes after sunset; this summer's schedule had yet to be released as of press time), these popular shows are projected onto large screens in a variety of parks and areas. The movies range from classics to animated family flicks. The concerts—more than 200 at six venues throughout the summer—are a variety of local and upcoming artists of all genres. Movies and Music in the Park offers a perfect opportunity to gather a group of friends and a picnic blanket and enjoy the warm Minnesota summer nights.

More information: [https://www.minneapolis-parks.org/activities\\_events/music\\_movies/](https://www.minneapolis-parks.org/activities_events/music_movies/)  
**SUMMER FUN** continued on page 27

# Al-Shabab's actions hit home

## Locals speak out against Somalia-based Islamist militant group's attack in Kenya

"STOP AL-SHABAB barbaric terror."

"We stand with Garissa University."

"Down (with) extremist Al-Shabab ideology."

These were some of the words written on signs being displayed by local adults and youth at a demonstration on the afternoon of April 3 outside of the Brian Coyle Center in Minneapolis.

Yussuf Haji, one of the organizers of the demonstration, said the group was uniting to speak out against Al-Shabab, an Islamist militant group based in Somalia and affiliated with Al-Qaeda, and its violent attack on Garissa University College in Kenya, which took place just the day before. About 150 people were killed and at least 79 were injured in the attack.

"Today is about the victims and the people who died in that attack," Haji said. "Today we only mean to present our sympathy."

The impact of recent actions from the extremist group Al-Shabab has been felt in Minnesota. Al-Shabab's recruitment of young Somali people in the state has been an ongoing issue and its threat of an attack to the Mall of America in Bloomington caused a scare in February.



**Maya Shelton-Davies**  
River Falls High School

For some, such as Haji and fellow organizer Kiman Ugas, the recent Al-Shabab attack on Garissa University College in Kenya strikes close to home. Both Ugas and Haji said they grew up in Garissa and have special connections to where the terrorist attack took place. On April 3, they spoke out against the violence that occurred in their hometown.

"The group that died were young men and women in college trying to get an education," Haji said. "They did not deserve what happened."

Considering issues of recruitment, Haji said, the local Muslim community must condemn the actions of terrorist groups such as Al-Shabab because "it's very important that they know that we do not support the violence."

"We are Muslims, and it's important that they know that not only are these acts condemned by the Muslim community, but by anyone who is human," Haji said. "It doesn't matter if



A group of adults and youth gathered on April 3 outside the Brian Coyle Center in Minneapolis to protest Al-Shabab's attack on a university in Kenya.

you're Muslim or Christian or Jewish, you must condemn such acts."

Some locals, such as Ugas, believe these Al-Shabab attacks and threats stem from the fact that "Al-Shabab is looking for attention."

"Since the United States is switching their view to ISIS, what they [Al-Shabab] want to do is come out making threats to get publicity like ISIS does," Ugas said.

ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, also known as ISIL, or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, is a terrorist group believed by the majority of Muslims to be using a distortion of Islam to justify its actions, such as the recent beheading of 21 Christian Egyptian men in Libya.

Groups such as Al-Shabab and ISIS are known to use social media to spread their messages of extremism and recruit youth.

Haji, too, believes that Al-Shabab wants the attention. Through the publicity and media coverage of these terrorist groups, their messages are able to reach a broad audience.

"This is what the extremist killers want, they want exactly what we're doing right now, which is giving them more attention," Haji said. "They want the publicity."

### Community efforts

Just ten minutes prior to the demonstration and about 100 feet



A mural hangs inside the Brian Coyle Center, near the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota office.

away, inside the Brian Coyle Center, Mohamud Noor, the director of the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota, also said Al-Shabab "is trying to remain relevant."

"It's up to us and the rest of the Somali community to condemn those actions," Noor said. "[Al-Shabab and ISIS] don't represent Islam. They don't represent what we value."

The primary goal of CSCM, which started in 1993, is to help Somali community members integrate into society in the Twin Cities.

As a strategy for counteracting the recruitment of Somali youth into groups such as Al-Shabab, CSCM provides opportunities to young people by trying to eliminate the

"lack of housing opportunity, lack of opportunity for young people and lack of employment opportunity," Noor said. The best way to combat recruitment is through the empowerment of youth, he said.

"If one person is recruited, it's a big problem because we're failing to do our work of helping the youth succeed," Noor said. "We want to find out the root causes of that recruitment, we need to engage the young people, and we need to provide preventative measures and intervention for those kids that are vulnerable. We need to be able to deter things before they even go to the airport, board the plane, and go to Syria or any other place, **AL-SHABAB** continued on page 24

think spot

Have you or someone you know been affected by the actions of Al-Shabab or other extremist groups?

# Overcoming (more) odds: A Johnson essay project

FOR SIX WEEKS during the winter of 2015, juniors in AP English classes at Johnson High School in St. Paul worked with instructor Cori Paulet and 18 volunteer writing mentors to write powerful personal narratives, many of which will be used as college application essays. The pilot project is a partnership between ThreeSixty Journalism and Harding and Johnson high schools. The St. Paul Foundation is funding the project during the 2014-2015 school year.

Thanks to mentors Nicole Norfleet, Grant Moos, Jim Wabinato, Amy LaFrance, Maria Reeve, Erin Heisler, Mila Koumpilova, Don Checots, Olivia Pelham, Libor Jany, Mary Turck, Karen Boros, Molly Guthrey, Lynda McDonnell, Kathy Berdan, Bob Franklin, Taya Sayama and Denny Lien. Also, special thanks to AP English teachers Melody Nelson and Sonja Montgomery; Dr. Lucia Pawlowski, assistant professor of English at the University of St. Thomas; and Dr. Karen Rogers, professor of Special Education and Gifted Education at St. Thomas.



Students in AP English classes at Johnson High School in St. Paul work with volunteer mentors this past winter on essays to be used as college applications.

Photos courtesy of Lynda McDonnell

## Lessons from an uncle's journey

**Nelson Jose Ramos Amaya** is a St. Paul Johnson junior who was born in San Salvador, El Salvador, Mexico, and moved to the U.S. in 2002. He speaks both English and Spanish, and

*hopes to one day do stand-up comedy or become a writer. A behind-the-desk job doesn't appeal to him.*

THE FIRST THING we noticed was his feet. They were big and dirty, the nails chipped and turning green or yellow in some parts.

"Dang, he has big, nasty feet!" I muttered to my sister. He turned around in the bed and let out a giant snore. Startled, my sister and I bolted

from the room. We dived under the covers. My dad came in not much later and found us still huddled together. "That's your uncle. There's no need to be afraid. He just came from a very long journey," my dad explained.

That journey was a long dangerous journey that many Latinos take in order to get to this country.



**Nelson Jose Ramos Amaya**

My uncle had just come from El Salvador, my country of origin. He had gotten shot at by gang members and police, had to crouch in the same position for more than 20 hours and had gone days with limited amounts of food and water. He did all that to get here and work a minimum wage job and be discriminated against.

People look at him differently. He's really smart, but here it doesn't matter because he doesn't know English. People try to step over him or take advantage of him. People make racist comments or treat him differently because of his appearance and his inability to speak English. But at least now he could send money back to El Salvador, to his family members whom he hasn't seen in 10 years.

**AMAYA** continued on page 8

## Living her family's dream

**Melanie Lee** is an outgoing St. Paul Johnson junior who loves playing sports. She's been to Disney World and a Demi Lovato concert, and is a huge fan of K-Pop. She has three siblings, and her favorite food is Pho.

THE SECRET WAR. The war that separated my father from his family.

He would describe it as revolting, frightening and damaging. Its repercussions have continued long after the Vietnam War: taking away my privilege to meet my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. As a child, I would listen to my father tell stories about his experiences and how he always felt incomplete. I, too, felt like part of me was missing. Now, I've started putting the pieces together, working to figure out why I'm so upset, why I feel incomplete and why the thought of my relatives makes me feel guilty.

As a kid, I was clueless. My family tree consisted of my immediate family only; I didn't understand that there were other branches. I didn't even know the difference between Laos and Thailand.

I vividly remember how my father was talking on the phone one day. I peeked out from a wall nearby and could see my mother sitting on the couch. The look on her face gave me a sense of fear. I started to notice that something was wrong because the tone of my father's voice changed:

"What!? You guys didn't pass the exam!? What happened?"

Suddenly, the atmosphere felt empty. After listening to the whole conversation, I realized that my grandparents didn't pass the immigration exam. My heart was shattered. Why didn't they pass? Why can't they come live with us? What did they ever do wrong? These questions became endless and I was hurt. I became absorbed in disappointment.

I've always felt sorry for those who were left behind in Laos, but mostly I've felt guilty. Guilty because I am in the U.S. living a good life and I have freedom, an education, friends and family. I feel safe. I know these things don't sound like reasons a person should feel guilty, but it's different. Even though I've never met my father's family, I'm still responsible for them. Whenever they're in trouble, I should be able to guide them and have a positive impact in their lives. But

I can't. The absence of my father's family leaves me with a deep sense of guilt.

It is this guilt that fuels my desire to succeed in life. As a child, all I ever did was listen to my father's conversations with his

family, but that's not enough. I've become determined to do well in school, study hard, keep getting straight A's, and live my life to the fullest. Why? Because I want to do it for my father's family, my family.

They never got the chance that I have now: the chance to live in a good environment, to get an education and to have freedom. So I've told myself, do not take this life for granted; make them proud. Because I am living their dream.



Melanie Lee

## Finding the right sign

**Laura Thao** is a St. Paul Johnson junior who is the middle child of five. In her free time, she enjoys reading and writing her own short stories. At school, her favorite subjects are social studies and English.

IT IS STILL difficult to describe the feeling I had that day. It was cold and windy, but I hardly felt anything because I was so embarrassed that I was sweating.

That's how it was on the first day working my new job. It wasn't a happy time and I was not enjoying anything about it.

I was sure everyone was watching and making fun of me. The large sign I held above my head acted like a sail, catching the wind and wrestling me all over the place. I tripped over and over again as I worked to control it. The embarrassment I felt only got worse when I recognized friends walking by. I was convinced they were laughing at this crazy girl dancing around the street with this unwieldy, stupid sign.

I wanted to crawl into a hole and disappear, but I knew that wasn't an option. I needed this job and had to

do well if I wanted to land the job I really wanted.

Quitting wasn't the answer. Quitting wasn't going to get me that better position. So, for three or so hours each day I went back. And each day, I fought with that sign and my emotions.

Some days were worse than others. Sometimes it was the weather, but mostly it was the feeling of failure. I would feel sorry for myself.

"What a dumb job I have," I would think. "I'll never get the job I want." I became very negative.

It was during these negative times, at my very lowest, when I

would hear this voice. "Laura, what are you thinking? If you can't master this simple job, how do you think you will ever get a more responsible job?"

Those thoughts kept me going. I knew if I quit, my friends and family

would see me as a "loser," and no one would hire a loser.

As the weather became colder, I became more emotional because sign holders only worked in the spring and fall. My job was coming to an end soon and I began to lose hope.

Until one day, about a month later, things changed. I was finally given an opportunity to train for an inside job. All that waiting and

fighting with that sign paid off. "Perseverance rules!" I thought.

Working in the store was no walk in the park, but it didn't matter. It was much better than fighting with that sign.

Weeks, months and finally a year had passed. That's when things changed again. The store was closing and once again I started to feel unsure about my future. I had worked so hard to get where I was and the idea of starting over didn't make me happy.

My boss called me aside and I thought, "This is it. He's going to tell me my job is over and let me go."

But, instead, he asked if I would be interested in working at another store. He said that he had seen me diligently fighting that sign and was impressed with my perseverance and work ethic. He felt that I would be a good fit for a position in another store. I was ecstatic and jumped at the opportunity.

Today, I am still working, doing well in school and looking forward to college and a career. I still think about holding that sign and the lesson I learned. Persistence and hard work have allowed me to stay out of that dark hole I wanted to crawl into.

In fact, thanks to that sign, I've become a person who is respected by my co-workers and can appreciate the effort of hard work. That sign ended up teaching me to be strong and to keep on keeping on.



Laura Thao

### AMAYA from page 7

Many Latinos go through all of this to make the lives of their families back home easier. Meanwhile, the Latino kids who are privileged to live here and receive a free education are throwing it all away. They ditch school, don't care about grades, gangbang, steal and drop out. I have even been guilty of some of these actions. Growing up here being different made us think differently than the rest.

I lived in El Salvador until I was 4 years old, when my mother and father decided to give my sister and me a better life. There was a lot of gang violence and poverty

in El Salvador. People worked sun up until sun down for \$5 a week. My parents had to sacrifice everything to get us here. They lost their house (which they had worked forever to be able to get), left their families and came to the U.S. not speaking the language and with little money. We came to the U.S. on December 24, 2002, and now that I'm getting close to graduating, I feel like I owe it to my parents and to all of the Latino community to be successful. To graduate and to go to college. To own a business and to help out others in need. And I will. I know I will.

## Playing through a disability

**Calvin Duong** is a junior at Johnson who has an affinity for music, writing and science alike. Having played the viola for nearly seven years, he plans on continuing, as well as being the first in his family to graduate from college.

A MUSICIAN WHO can't hear. It's definitely an oxymoron, right?

Yet like Beethoven himself, that's the reality that I live with and a part of who I am. I was born partially deaf due to a birth defect that left the ear canal in my right ear too small to hear out of.

Despite that, when I saw a stringed instrument demonstration early in fifth grade, I was immediately determined to play one. I was especially drawn to the viola and its

rich alto sound. I thought it looked like something fun and challenging to learn, even with my disability.

Getting ahold of an instrument was my first problem. My father, who worked long hours most of the week for a hearing aid company, was the only one in our family who could drive—meaning he had to take some time off work to bring me to the program signup and concerts later on. Because of this, I was scared to talk to him about it. But if I didn't, my road to becoming a viola player would end before it began.

Gathering up my courage, I talked with him the Sunday before the signup and explained to him how, apart from a few dates, everything I'd do would be in school or at home. Even payment wouldn't be an issue since we could waive a rental fee because of our free lunch status. Once I told him everything, he was glad to support me. I had my first

viola by the end of the month.

Once I actually got the instrument, practice was no issue. I loved learning all the notes up and down the strings. I rehearsed often, and by the time I was in seventh grade, I was the first chair and section leader of the violas. Being in charge of the section meant that I was expected to play articulately so that the others could follow my lead and to help out the newer

members of the orchestra.

Unfortunately, being a good player and being a good leader aren't necessarily the same thing, as I found out. When playing a viola, I place the instrument next to my left ear. This means that I can hear perfectly all the little nuances of tone and intonation from my own instrument. But my other ear, the "bad" one, can't hear the sounds of other players in my section or other sections to my right.



**Calvin Duong**

During a rehearsal just a few days before the spring concert that year, we were practicing a piece that we usually had down pat. I let my mind drift off to other things. Before long, I was a big chunk ahead of my classmates in the viola section. It took both my own stand partner sitting next to me and another player behind me poking me gently with her bow for me to realize what I was doing.

My body radiated heat from the embarrassment I felt. However, I wouldn't give up. Instead, I made it a point to pay more attention to my stand partner whenever I played. Although I could not hear the other players as well as an average person, I could keep a closer eye on them and trust them to tell me if I did something wrong. In this way, learning viola also helped me open up socially—I didn't talk nearly as much to my partners before this occasion.

Even now, at age 16, I'm still facing obstacles in my orchestral career. I have to come home from

school to care for my brother while my mom is working. Because of that, I can't participate in special concerts that are available to top players through after-school auditions, including one where students play at the Ordway, where the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra plays. It frustrates me whenever they take roll call for students who want to try out. Even though I can't participate now, I practice the two advanced scales that are mandatory for every Ordway audition. Why? Because I know that next year, I can stay after school for activities because my brother will be old enough to stay by himself. As long as I keep working hard, I'm sure I can achieve my goal eventually.

Playing the viola has come with its fair share of challenges and lessons. Along with learning to play the instrument, I've also become more confident and social. I've become a better leader from my experiences as a first chair. And most of all, I learned to do something that's come to be a major part of who I am.

## Finding empathy in a sister's story

**Grace Yang** is a junior at Johnson. An interesting fact about her: She started singing at seven years old.

I SCREAMED, baffled by the words of my sister. Sam threw her head back and laughed at my reaction. She shoveled a spoonful of strawberry Jell-O into my mouth to silence me, and I couldn't help but start to laugh with her. I pushed her shoulder and reached for the spoon to slather some Jell-O onto her and repay the favor as we continued to sit at the bottom of the stairs and hear our voices echo.

My sister had just confessed

to me that she has accepted herself as gay/lesbian.

I have always been able to sympathize with others. I'd see others hurt and cry in movies, and would cry along with them. Pity was the main thing I felt for them, but I never was able to connect their sad thoughts to myself as if they were my own, until my sister caused me to change the way I thought.

I was completely shocked. I never thought about sexuality or labels in the sixth grade. In a society of labeling everyone as heterosexual from the start, and then seeing someone I knew and having them tell me they weren't, it

made me reconsider how I started to see others. In public, I would stop and think about how a random person truly felt about themselves and their hardships, and would always tell myself to never judge by the way someone looked.

Even though I was shocked, I **YANG** continued on page 31



**Grace Yang**

## Being pushed

**Hussein Sheikh Abukar** likes reading and writing in his spare time, as well as playing football and swimming. And he enjoys doing most of those things within the proximity of at least one of our 10,000 lakes here in Minnesota.

THE CRISP GRASS crunched beneath me as I collapsed, falling in and out of consciousness. As the grass clawed at my legs, I felt a trickle of blood flowing from my kneecap. My bike lay entangled with the fence as if they were wrestling.

I then realized I was hardly breathing: I had to consciously force myself to do so. I was in a state of shock, so much so that I hadn't even realized I had a gaping wound that needed attention.



**Hussein Sheikh Abukar**

Then I began to comprehend what happened: She had pushed me off my bike. Perhaps this sparked my immense distrust of adults and all those claiming they meant me no harm. I tilted my head and saw a blurry image of her rushing toward me.

"Whyyy? I was doing good. Why did you push me off?" I groaned.

"Calm down, Hussein, you're hurt. Don't move," she soothed me.

"Shut up, shut up, shut up! You were supposed to teach me, you hurt me ... you did this, why do you care?" I uttered.

I felt myself drifting in and out of consciousness. My 7-year-old self tried to comprehend why my teacher would push me, putting me in harm's way.

I don't understand why this memory kept replaying: it was over six years ago. I pedaled on. It was my third time around the lake. My **ABUKAR** continued on page 31

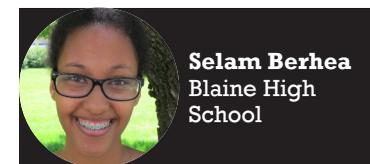


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## The former Minneapolis mayor talks life out of office and the achievement gap

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DURING HIS 12-YEAR tenure as mayor of Minneapolis, Raymond Thomas Rybak Jr.—named after his father, but nicknamed “R.T.” due to his parents’ mutual dislike of the name, he said—accomplished many things in the city, including helping put 18,000 youth into STEP-UP jobs since 2004 and creating affordable housing.



However, Rybak, who was in office from 2002 to 2014, cited the achievement gap as one of the biggest issues during his time in office—and says it’s an issue that still needs to be fixed.

“I came in as the mayor of a city with the largest achievement gap in the country, and 12 years later, I left as the mayor of a city with the largest achievement gap in the country,” Rybak said in an interview in early April. “So my life after being mayor has been focused around fixing the one thing we haven’t fixed yet.”

In fact, I had come to Minneapolis to ask Rybak, now the executive director of Generation Next, a coalition of organizations and leaders aimed at narrowing the achievement and opportunity gap, about this effort and his post-mayoral life.

Within a few minutes of meeting the former mayor and Minneapolis native, I got the impression he still leads a busy life. I entered the Generation Next conference room in downtown Minneapolis just as his team was finishing a meeting. Before we could start the interview, he had to ask Generation Next’s director of operations, Janna Hottinger, where he was heading next and how much time he had.

Obviously, being out of office has not slowed Rybak down.

*Editor’s note: More than two years ago, ThreeSixty Journalism interviewed R.T. Rybak for “@16”—a series in which ThreeSixty journalists interview Minnesota newsmakers and differencemakers about life as a 16-year-old high school student—when he was mayor of Minneapolis, a tenure that ended in 2014. In April, ThreeSixty circled back around to Rybak to ask him about his new role with Generation Next, and more.*

### What is Generation Next?

#### How does it work, and why did you get involved?

When you can predict the likelihood of a child’s success by looking at the color of their skin, you have a huge problem. When you are in a community where that is more likely than any other place in the country, you have a massive problem. We are

a coalition of mostly major foundations, business and civic groups, and political leaders and nonprofits and citizens. Our goal is to do whatever it takes to close the achievement gap and opportunity gap for young students. We are a big coalition that represents 500 organizations and works very closely with people in schools and out of schools with kids.

Photo courtesy of Generation Next



ThreeSixty staff

**R.T. Rybak, executive director of Generation Next, speaks with ThreeSixty journalist Selam Berhea during an April interview at the Generation Next office in downtown Minneapolis.**

We see this as a tremendous crisis but also a tremendous opportunity in being the most diverse generation we've ever raised and moving them into the economy. If we can fix this huge problem, we will be in tremendous shape because we'll have a much more diverse population living in cities. That also means we have students with tremendous language and cultural capacity, and it also means that young people who grow up in a minority and develop skills in crossing boundaries and code-shifting, that gives them an advantage. ...

**Why is closing the achievement gap so important to you? And how far has Generation Next come with this goal?**

The first thing we did was identify five very clear, simple goals. And then we said, "Let's do something about each of them." So what we really did was bring 500 groups together and we looked at a lot of data and info, and we determined there's a lot going on for our young people. Our job is to figure out what is not being done that can do the most. So, in our first goal of getting every child ready for kindergarten, there are tremendous programs in early childhood development and childcare, but our teams identified

the biggest gap was screening kids to identify issues, and we found where that was done the least was screening 3-year-olds. Solving this big, huge problem with the achievement gap starts with us taking this narrow approach and screening 3-year-olds. So there are 10,000 3-year-olds in Minneapolis and St. Paul, 7,000 are not screened by a doctor or the school district. If we can close that gap, we can impact the school readiness of thousands of kids.

When we look at our second-grade reading, we realize there is tremendous work in schools and with tutors and volunteers, but their work is not connected. So we brought together the largest literacy organizations and their daring strategies, who are trying to coordinate better how we train volunteers ... We are trying to connect all that better so our young people will benefit not just from one smart teacher or one great school program, but from all of us sharing all our knowledge so all our kids will benefit. We're now beginning to look at what we can do with eighth-grade math, in high school we're looking to have all of the out-of-school mentoring programs connected much more with the like plans in school. We're also

**The Rybak file**

**Profession:** Executive Director, Generation Next

**Age:** 59

**Hometown:** Minneapolis

**High school:** Breck School

**College:** Boston College

**Find 'em:** On Twitter @R\_T\_Rybak

developing strategies to better identify which kids are short of credits or off-track earlier.

And now we're in our fifth goal and looking at doing work after high school and post-secondary, and some of that will be in four-year colleges or two-year colleges or apprentice programs, so we're doing initiatives all across the board. We've also just begun a new body of work in social and emotional (learning) ... Along with the academic goals of third-grade reading and eighth-grade math, factors like this about growth mindset and the social-emotional factors are also what we are looking at. It will be a sixth goal, but that's to say every one of our young people are socially and emotionally ready to learn.

**How can community organizations, such as ThreeSixty, or even students like myself, help with this problem?**

The most important contribution a student can make right now is to help this whole community understand the value that we all have because of our diversity—not in spite of it. We're building a picture of a new Minneapolis-St. Paul, where there is tremendous value in looking across a lunchroom, a classroom or street and seeing someone who is different.

But before we ask people to do any of the huge systems change or anything else, we really need this

generation to demonstrate better than my generation has that we see value in reaching out and crossing boundaries. This is not about helping this part of the population or that part of the population; it's about the entire population being something very different and that is one that is stronger because of our diversity. And so I think the most important thing for this generation to demonstrate what I already see, because I'm in schools and I've been with young people a lot for many years, that there's just a dramatically better value in elevating diversity for people your age and for middle-aged people like me.

The second thing that is important to do is to help other young people to understand that every single child can learn. Too many young people give up too early or lower their expectations or limit what they believe they can know, like saying I'm not a quote-unquote math student or science student. Raising each other's expectations is hugely important. There are a lot of people who can help young people succeed, but the one thing we do know is you're not going to achieve if you don't think you can achieve, and so we need to help peers convince each other that everybody can succeed and, by the way, this community needs everyone to succeed.

Then there is some pretty serious systems change that have to take place. There are issues of racial values and poverty, and homelessness, and many core issues behind all of this that need to be worked on.

Finally, there is work that I think young people can do in mentoring and tutoring. A lot of young people who weren't necessarily rock stars in school think they don't have much to offer. But it's interesting that the research shows that sometimes the very best tutors for younger students are those who were maybe average students more than the brilliant one.

Sometimes the student who maybe struggled more with math can relate better to the younger student who is just trying to learn math. And I think for those students who are just starting to get nearer to the end of high school, finding a peer who is younger and reaching out to them, especially working for an established tutoring organization, can really be powerful. ...

**You had to deal with a lot of tough issues in your tenure as mayor, such as the I-35W bridge collapse in 2007, the tornado in North Minneapolis in 2012, and more. How did you handle those tough issues without folding under pressure?**

That's a really good question (laughs). I had the strategy that there are many things I didn't know, but I was always going to show up. And I was new to politics, I hadn't been a mayor, and was remarkably over my head in some areas, but I felt the one thing I could always do was show up. So I was there at murder scenes, when tornadoes hit, bridges collapsed, and frankly, at a lot of very horrible moments. I think people appreciated the fact that I was there. One of the things that happens over time when you happen to be around as much violence and death as I was around is, it does take a toll. It's hard, frankly. But it's also strangely a privilege to be in a position where you can help.

I remember when the bridge collapsed, so many people would be walking up to me after watching this on TV and seeing it on the news with horrified looks in their eyes, asking, "What can I do to help?" And the answer was, "Frankly, not much." I happened to be in a position where I could with my wife go to the funerals, to meet the families, to give somebody a hug, just any of those expressions of individual support. As horrible as those moments were, **RYBAK continued on page 28**

# A digital connection

## Instant communication can be helpful or harmful when used in relationships

LIZ FESENMAIER AND her boyfriend may live nearly 1,200 miles apart, but communication is only a few taps away.

Video chats, text messages and phone calls have enabled their relationship to become a reality instead of a summertime fling when Fesenmaier, a junior at FAIR Downtown in Minneapolis, and her mother stay in Whitefish, Montana, where her boyfriend lives, she said.

"I need to talk to him all the time or I miss him too much," Fesenmaier said. "It's hard enough to live without human contact with the man you love, let alone not even being able to talk. You'd have to write a letter and send it to Whitefish and wait for a response, which could take weeks.

"Weeks between talking? No thank you."

In relationships, "instant communication" such as social media, video chatting, texting, emails and other forms of conversations through technology can be an asset or a detriment, depending on how it's used, according to Dr. Carol Bruess, the director of the Family Studies program at the University of St. Thomas and the co-author of "Contemporary Issues in Interpersonal Communication," "What Happy Couples Do," "What Happy Parents Do," and "What Happy Women Do."

"Technology by itself isn't bad, it's how we as humans use it," Bruess



said. "It's kind of like any tool. If you use a hammer it can be used for good. It's hard to construct something without a hammer. That same hammer can be used to kill someone ... We as humans have to figure out how to use it well, where it serves us well, where it serves our relationships well, and realize where it could be harmful!"

When Bruess was a teenager, she said, the people you could potentially be in a relationship with were the people who lived near you, worked with you and were in your social network. She believes that instant communication has allowed people to be in a relationship with anyone around the world.

Hannah Mertz, a junior at FAIR Downtown, uses text messaging to stay in constant touch with her boyfriend, who attends a high school southwest of the metro area. Despite the couple attending high schools located 25 miles apart, this form of instant communication has allowed their relationship to

continue, Mertz said.

"I like texting with my boyfriend because it's so much easier for me to talk to him," Mertz said. "I can't imagine not being able to talk to him for days."

However, Mertz also feels that much can be lost in translation. A well-meaning text can easily be misconstrued and cause friction, she said.

"Things over text can get misinterpreted and read the wrong way because you aren't physically there to see and hear the way people are saying something," Mertz said. "If we don't respond quick enough we can get irritated because we think we are being ignored."

Ninety-two percent of teenagers go online daily, including 24 percent who go online "almost constantly," according to an April report from the Pew Research Center. While technology can be a near constant presence in teenagers' lives, learning to navigate relationships while using it can be tricky, according to Bruess.

Two years ago, when Fesenmaier was staying with her mother in Whitefish, her future boyfriend caught her attention after he returned her escaped dog. Fesenmaier stays in Montana during summer and school breaks, which

forces most of her and boyfriend's conversations to be through Skypeing, texting and calling.

While Fesenmaier believes that without instant communication her relationship would be nonexistent, conversing digitally can still cause a

lot of friction between them. Because they were still learning how to incorporate digital communication into their relationship, they had missteps, which led to fights, she said.

"You misunderstand what people are trying to say," Fesenmaier said. "There are no tones, there's no way



Illustration by Daniela Garcia/ThreeSixty Journalism

to use sarcasm without starting a fight. Now that we aren't on a break anymore, we communicate so much better, but like any relationship there are arguments and fights ... but ours are over text or call, and you can't just hug it out afterwards and reconnect."

Bruess said instant communication can give people a wall to hide behind when conflict arises. Sending a text when you're angry at your significant other is easier than talking about it in person, but it's a dangerous pattern to fall into, she said. Bruess suggests couples talk about the role technology should play in their relationship before conflict from instant communication surfaces.

"Humans are complex, emotions are complex, so our conflicts deserve to be voice-to-voice and face-to-face, if possible," Bruess said. "... It's a very powerful tool, but like anything we have to be willing to make positive choices. We have to examine our own use."

Bruess used the nickname her husband gave her as an example of a positive choice. Due to Bruess's love of sleep, her husband calls her "Mama Bear."

"If in our little text exchange my husband of 24 years will send a bear emoji, it has an entire history," Bruess said. "If couples can do that, we know that they are more likely to be satisfied and happy because it's the sharing and building of that relationship culture."

As difficult as instant communication can be to navigate, when used correctly it can be extremely powerful, according to Bruess.

"I always thought I couldn't [be in a long-distance relationship] until I met the man of my dreams who just happened to live 1,200 miles away from me," Fesenmaier said. "... It's hard, it's frustrating, it's confusing, there are many tears, but is it worth it? Yes."

think spot

How do you use technology to communicate in your own relationships? Is it beneficial, or a burden?

# Online safety, or overprotection?

## Exploring schools' rights to filter Internet access vs. students' rights to information

CHICKEN BREAST. Sex education.

Neither of these phrases are inherently harmful or offensive, yet both of these Internet search terms are blocked on school-issued iPads in the Wayzata Public Schools district.

The reason? Both of those phrases contain the fragments “breast” and “sex,” terms deemed inappropriate by the school district’s filtering software.

Some students argue that the filter causing these blocks on school technology violates their constitutional rights to receive and express information and limits their education. On the other hand, school administrators say the filter protects students from offensive material and emphasize the district’s right to control its own technology.

“The iPads are the property of the school district. Having the very limited scope of educational purpose ... the district has the ability to set the parameters of use,” said Wade Phillips, director of technology at Wayzata. “If there’s a violation of these rules ... there could be consequences.”

### Controversy goes viral at Wayzata

In December, Wayzata junior Nathan Ringo posted an account of his protests of the district’s iPad regulations, as well as the response of school administrators, on BoingBoing, a popular online magazine. The



Mina Yuan  
Wayzata High School

conflict began, according to Ringo, when he found a way to evade the school’s censorware his sophomore year, and it continued into his junior year when he read aloud the iPad contract to his classmates, concerned about the clause stating that students should have “no expectation of privacy.”

Ringo wrote that, in response, administrators accused him of cracking the firewall and revoked his Internet access, forcing him to rely on his personal laptop and Internet hotspot in class ever since.

“I can see how a ‘better-safe-than-sorry’ approach could seem attractive to school administration,” Ringo said. “However, I disagree with the logic in this approach—free speech and freedom of the press are essential to education.”

Yet, according to Phillips, who couldn’t speak directly about Ringo’s situation due to data privacy laws, even an administrator’s suspicion of a student hacking the district’s network, which is potentially harmful to the entire school, provides reason enough for administrators to examine an iPad’s contents or to take

away Internet access.

“That’s our obligation as stewards of the school, to protect the privacy of the organization,” Phillips said. “Hacking and attacking on the network where they’re using it to try to infiltrate or access confidential, secure information ... We’d have to go investigate that to the full measure of our ability.”

Comments on Ringo’s article, which went viral internationally, ranged from agreeing with Ringo and comparing school limitations to prison regulations, to reminding him that the district’s filters are meant to protect rather than suffocate. Others approved of Ringo’s message, but not his method.

“He’s doing the right thing, but he’s going about it the wrong way,” said Pranav Maddula, a Wayzata sophomore who interns at Google. “He’s antagonizing the school, (and) he’s antagonizing the principal and the tech department. He’s getting the word out there, and he’s trying to cause change, but ... the way he’s doing it, he’s not getting parents or other students to work with him.”

Ringo said his article, while unexpectedly widely discussed, did not achieve his original goal, which was a repeal or rewrite of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Under the CIPA, schools are allowed E-rate federal funding if they filter all potentially offensive images from student access. As a recipient of E-rate funding, Wayzata follows these requirements.

“There is no mention of blocking entire web pages in the CIPA,” Ringo said. “The current censorship at Wayzata blocks a lot more material than the ruling provides for.”

However, administrators say that even without E-rate funding, the district is morally obligated to filter any objectionable material, including web pages, to protect its students.

### Safety vs. overprotection



Nathan Ringo on his computer at school in Wayzata.

*“(The filter is) very progressive, but it blocks way too much to be counted as useful.”*

—Pranav Maddula,  
Wayzata sophomore

Administrators in no way purposefully keep useful material from students, according to Mike Dronen, director of technology at Minnetonka Public Schools. Instead, they strive to shelter students from content such as hate speech, pornography and gambling.

“I don’t think there’s really any stepping on constitutional rights by providing a web filter, but I think there could be an argument made that not providing a web filter could be some form of disservice to students,” Dronen said. “If a student could click on anything at anytime and have any form of content in a school environment where there

could be a web filter, that definitely would not be good either.”

Maddula agreed with the need for a filter at Wayzata, but argued that some systems can be overprotective.

“It’s very progressive, but it blocks way too much to be counted as useful,” he said. “It’s almost like (administrators) are imposing guidelines on what they think we should be doing with our time and with our technology instead of letting us do what’s actually useful.”

Maddula’s personal connection to the filter has only reinforced his opinions of the system. After spending the last two years reviewing code as an intern for Google at its headquarters in California, Maddula used his programming experience and strong opinions to help Wayzata administrators review the filter system as iPads first arrived at the high school during the 2013-2014 school year.

“We talked a lot about how we could improve the experience,” Maddula said. “I did the initial block list, and I checked over the blocks to make sure nothing accidentally **INTERNET** continued on page 28

# Feminism in the digital age

## Social media has played a big role in the modern-day feminist movement

KRISTINE HOLMGREN HAS seen feminism evolve throughout the decades.

A veteran feminist, Holmgren says these days, social media is playing an integral role in the women's movement.

"It's the best thing that's happened to the women's movement in this country, is the opportunity for young women to find their voices and use them, especially in social media," said Holmgren, a Presbyterian minister, a playwright and the founder of the Dead Feminists Society of Minnesota.

History contains the foundations of feminism, but today, it's apparent how feminism has changed since its beginnings in the mid-1800s. In the digital age, feminists have taken to social media platforms to give their voices a larger audience.

Kayla Barry, a senior at Maple Grove Senior High School, has tapped into social media outlets to speak out as a feminist herself.

"I've used my Tumblr account either to talk about [feminism] or to find more information about it," Barry said. "... I think that my sole purpose should be to help people understand and to try and work toward gender equality. It's a good platform for showing your ideas and being able to get feedback from people."

Feminism has moved from the streets to the Internet as



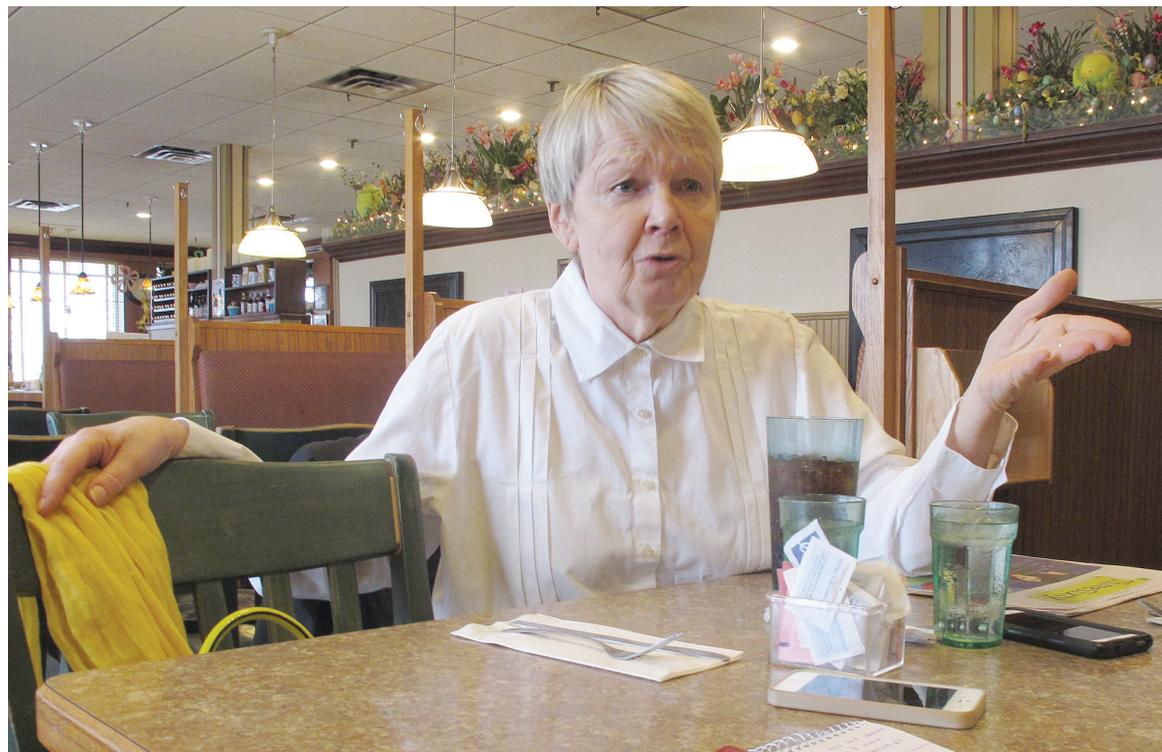
**Kayla Song**  
Maple Grove High School

"cyberfeminism" has gained momentum. In 2013, 74 percent of women on the Internet used social media outlets, according to the Pew Research Center, giving online feminists an audience for their cause.

For example, in September, a UN Women campaign known as "HeForShe," which expressed the belief that men and boys can also help remove social and cultural barriers that limit women, was backed by actress Emma Watson, who played "Hermione Granger" in the "Harry Potter" film series. To get more participation, Watson used social media such as Twitter and Facebook to spread the message. Using the hashtag "#heforshe" on Twitter, the organization was able to reach people around the world.

Barry said "hashtag feminism," or using the pound sign—"#"—and a phrase that concerns women's rights, on social media sites "shows examples of feminism in action and shows why we need feminism."

"They definitely spread awareness," Barry said about the relevance of the hashtags in feminism. "It really helps illuminate some of the ideas behind feminism and why we really do still need it today."



▲ Kristine Holmgren, a Presbyterian minister, a playwright and the founder of the Dead Feminists Society of Minnesota, speaks with ThreeSixty journalist Kayla Song during an interview in April in Roseville.



Kayla Song/ThreeSixty Journalism

◀ A screenshot of a post from the "HeForShe" campaign, which expresses the belief that men and boys can help remove social and cultural barriers that limit women. Social media played a major role in the campaign.

to 'build the brotherhood of man,'" Holmgren said. "This just kind of struck me as the heart of the problem."

Holmgren joined the Women's Advocates, a shelter for battered women on Grand Avenue, in 1975 after her time in the seminary, and it gave her a chance to discover more about women's predicaments at the time. The shelter needed women of faith, such as Holmgren, to console and encourage the wounded women of the community, she said.

Through her experiences, Holmgren has had the time and experience to witness the trends in the feminist movement through the years. Feminism has had three waves so far, according to Holmgren.

The first wave began with the fight for women's suffrage in 1848. The second wave came with more modern ways of expressing women's power in the community around the 1960s. Television shows started to reflect that change, with women such as Marlo Thomas in "That

Girl" and actresses on programs such as "Maude," "Murphy Brown" and others turning into role models for feminists around the country, Holmgren said.

Today's feminists have been called the third wave, and they're "coming to the table with a completely different world view on male-female relationships than the second wave," Holmgren said.

"The second wave is binary," she said. "We're very male-female. The third wave sees gender in a completely different way than we were trained and raised to see it."

On top of making feminists heard, social media has connected different waves of feminists, Holmgren said. The Internet provides a nearly limitless number of social media sites, including Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, that feminists from any generation can use.

The Internet also is a powerful outlet and a convenient way of reaching out to feminists across **FEMINISM** continued on page 31

# More than a home for library books

## Minneapolis Central Library's Best Buy Teen Tech Center gives teens place to dive into technology

3D PRINTERS. Design stations. Recording studios.

Imagination is harnessed through technology at the Minneapolis Central Library's Best Buy Teen Tech Center, a technological hub where teenagers create and tinker with a wide range of gadgetry.

"The thing that I like about this place is that it's free expression," said Trejuan Miller, a teenager and frequent user of the Teen Tech Center. "If you want to do something, they help you do it."

The Tech Center provides a technologically savvy and unique offering for teenagers at the Hennepin County Library's Minneapolis Central Library, teenagers say. Due to its success, the Tech Center will soon be expanding to other libraries, including North Regional Library in North Minneapolis.

### What Is The Teen Tech Center?

Donated computer hard drives hang on a nearby wall. The space is lined with computers. Drawers are brimming with garage robotics. Music equipment is spread throughout the room, and a green screen is located in the back. Broken computer circuits that were donated are organized on a nearby table next to a soldering machine and some thread.

These are just some of the technological options for teens at the

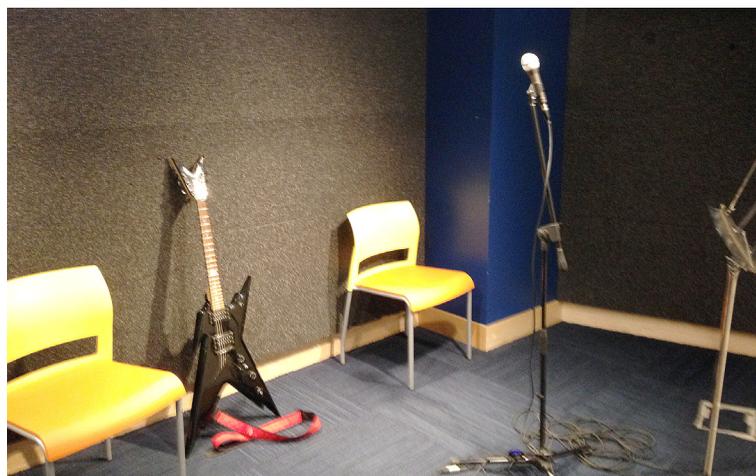


**Zekriah Chaudhry**  
Home school

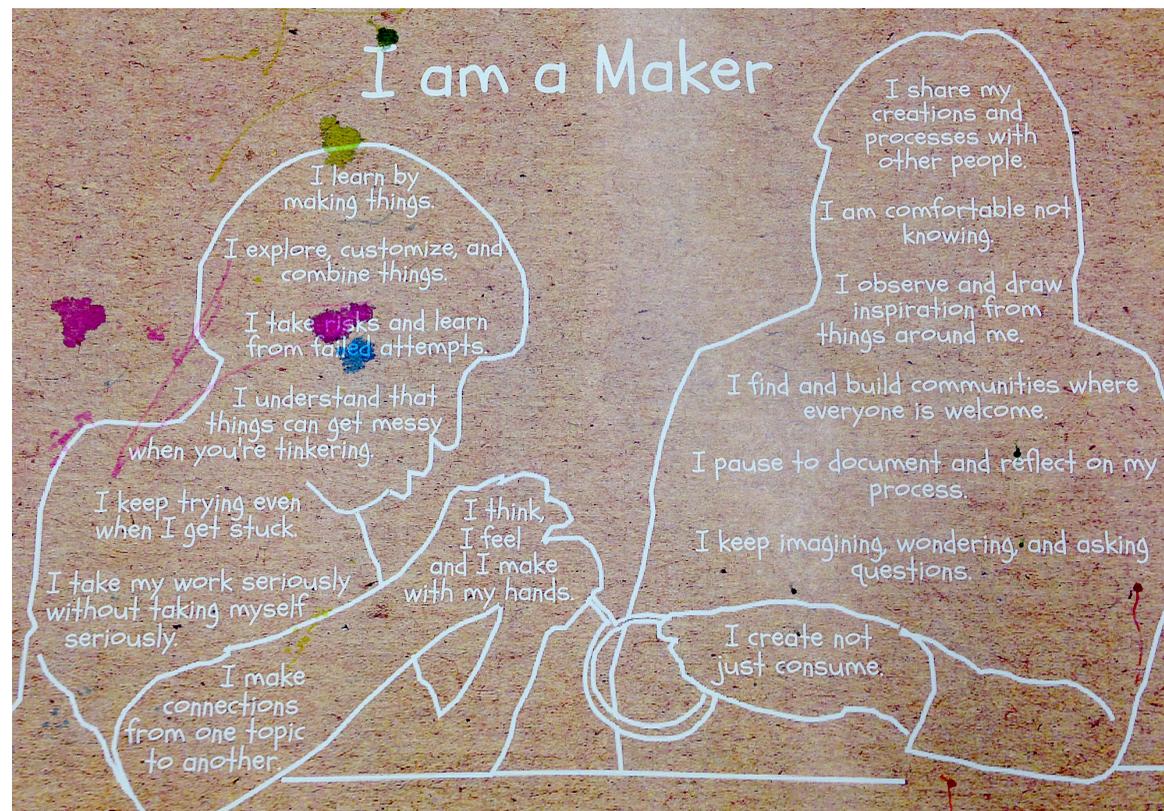
Tech Center.

"Graphic design, audio production, 3D design and illustration," listed off Dylan Sprick, a Teen Tech Squad member since last summer. "We have a wide variety of things to do here."

The Teen Tech Center is a spot where teens—and teens alone—dig into experimenting and collaborating with technology without the burden of school or the vexations of house chores. Unlike traditional schooling,



Music equipment sits inside a recording studio at the Best Buy Teen Tech Center at the Minneapolis Central Library.



Photos by Zekriah Chaudhry/ThreeSixty Journalism

A sign near the Best Buy Teen Tech Center at the Hennepin County Library's Minneapolis Central Library.

there are no grades at the Teen Tech Center, but members are still encouraged to learn what they want.

"They are not usually looking for something too much like school after school, but learning happens everywhere and the Tech Center is no exception to that," said Tech Center Coordinator Aaron Lundholm, who helps teens at the Tech Center. "Rather than just playing video games, we challenge them to learn to make their own games."

"This is completely driven by

teens and not by somebody else's idea of what they should be interested in," said Adele Murray, a youth services librarian at North Regional Library who was a former librarian involved in the Tech Center at Central.

Central Library's Tech Center is a product of the Teen Tech Squad, a program that employs teens at the library. Before the program hit its stride, the Tech Squad used to meet and workshop technology around the library.

However, a "dedicated space" needed to be given to the teens so they could have a home base, according to Lundholm. Lundholm and his colleague, Tech Center Coordinator Jason Quaynor, were among those who recognized this issue. With the help of Lundholm, Quaynor, other library staff and Friends of the Hennepin County Library, the library received a grant from Best Buy to help finance the Tech Center. The grant and in-kind support totaled approximately \$450,000.

The center, which opened in 2013, now opens after school for all students—the ones who have been itching to finish their projects and

the ones who are inspired to start new ones.

"I spend the mornings doing meetings and planning and stuff like that, and that work is necessary," Lundholm said, "but my favorite part of the day is after school, seeing what people can do when they are given opportunities and some tools and a little encouragement."

Lundholm spoke of a Teen Tech Center student who went on to North Dakota State to study computer science; another who went to the University of Minnesota, Duluth to study graphic design; and a music-driven teen who has been accepted to Berklee College of Music. He and the rest of the library "encourage the teens to think of this place as their own design studio," he said, an opportunity that he believes instills a sense of belonging in the teens.

### Changing libraries

Lundholm and Murray believe this is a revolution for a new age in libraries.

When most people think about libraries, a specific idea comes to mind: books. Despite that, the **TEEN TECH** continued on page 30



# In Focus: Teens and their technology

Gaochee Pha, 17, a senior at Edison, poses with her iPod during school on April 21. Pha says she feels “panicked and paranoid” without her iPod. So what would she do without it? “I don’t know,” she said. “Even when my iPod was dead, I still had it on me.”

Photos by Isabelle Loisel/ThreeSixty Journalism

IT'S NO QUESTION that electronics and teenagers often go hand in hand in this digital age and culture of instant accessibility. Twenty-four percent of teenagers go online “almost constantly,” thanks in part to the prevalent use of smartphones, and 92 percent of teens are online daily, according to statistics from a 2015 Pew Research Center report. We live in an age where checking social media sites can give us a “dopamine-induced



**Isabelle  
Loisel**  
Edison High  
School

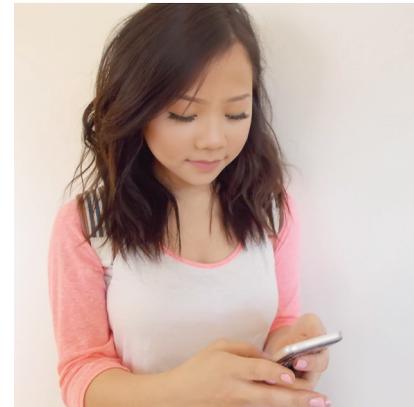
loop” that can make us feel addicted to seeking more information, according to a Psychology Today report. Is it the shiny exteriors, or the opportunities that lie behind the password-protected lock screens that draw people in?

Sometimes, you can't help but wonder if there is a situation where people choose to not use electronic devices to communicate or find instant answers. Why do we reach for our electronic devices? And what would we do without them?

I asked five students at Minneapolis Edison High School from different backgrounds those two questions. Most students admitted they would be more productive without their electronics,

but they also say their devices make communication more convenient. These results are not necessarily surprising, considering how much time personal electronics can take from our daily lives—for both good and bad reasons—but you can't blame teens for wanting to stay connected in this fast-paced world.

► **Pha checks her messages on her phone between classes.**





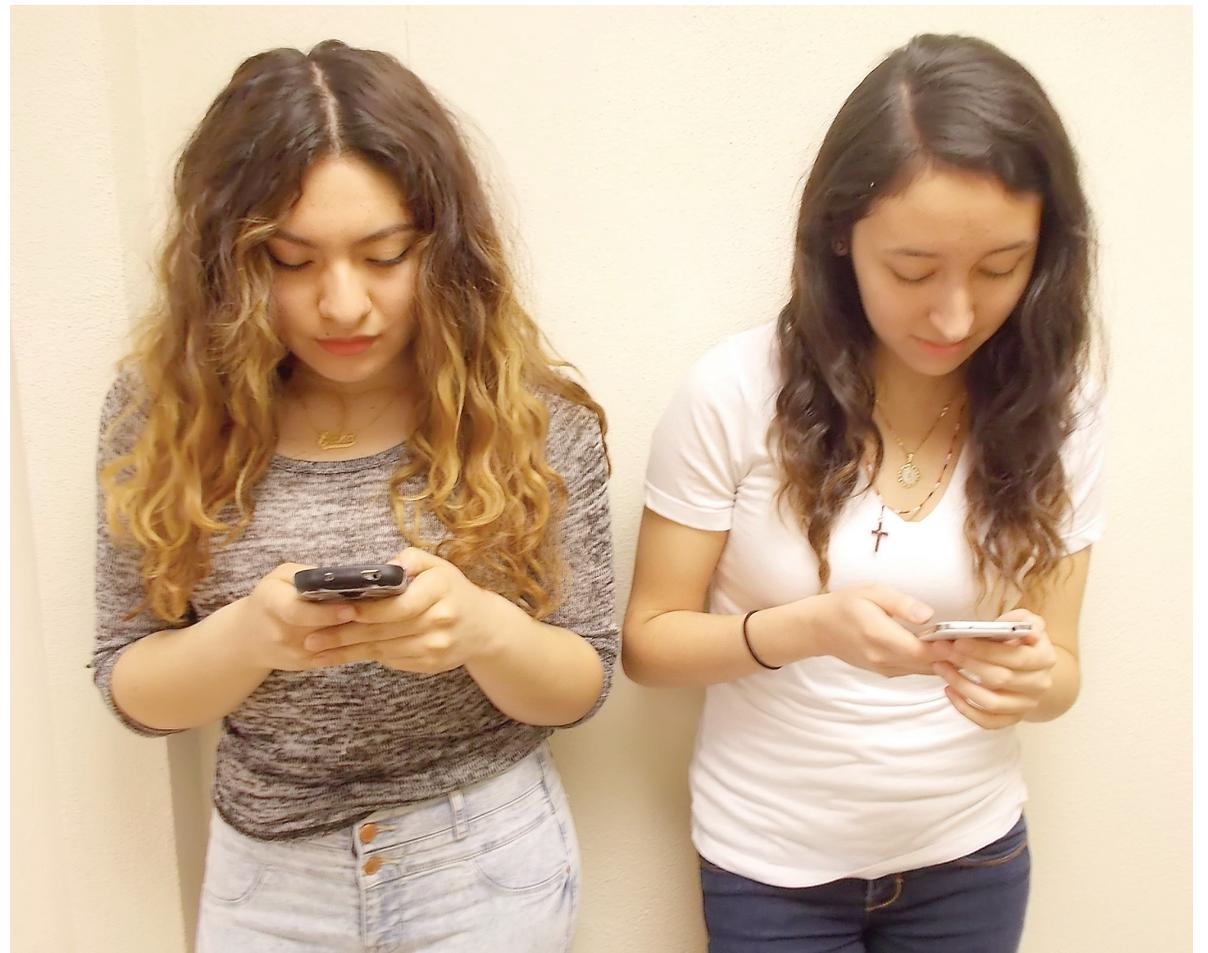
▲ Marcus Lynn, 18, a senior at Minneapolis Edison High School, poses with both of his phones during class on April 21. Lynn says “temptation” is a main reason for reaching for his electronic devices. “I like talking to people. It’s an easy way to communicate with others,” he said. What would he do without these devices? “Be outside a lot more,” he said.

▼ Erika Sacta, 17, a junior at Edison, says she reaches for her phone often “to talk to friends or my boyfriend, or check what’s going on, catching moments through pictures.” And without her phone? “Probably be more productive, get more stuff done,” she said.



▲ Jonathan Cabrera, 17, a senior at Edison, smiles as he takes a selfie during school on April 21. “From my experience, I usually want to check my messages rather than social media,” Cabrera said when asked why he reaches for his electronic devices. “It’s faster and more reliable.”

► Sacta (left) and Jeny Chavez, 17, a junior at Edison who said that if she lost her phone, she would “probably go do something else, like go outside,” share a moment together with their technology.



# How to stop cyberbullying

## Certain steps can be taken to try to prevent, halt abuse via technology

WHAT STARTED AS an innocent group message on Facebook grew into a mean-spirited attack that left Lana Rubinstein feeling scared and isolated.

A senior at River Falls High School in Wisconsin, Rubinstein experienced cyberbullying by two fellow students via the social media network during her sophomore year. Messages were posted that disparaged her religion and threatened her safety.

"It is the whole idea of hiding behind a keyboard," Rubinstein said. "If it was in person, they would not have said that. But the fact that they wrote things on Facebook, they thought it was okay."

Knowing the bullying would not stop until she took action, Rubinstein, with the support of a couple friends, worked up the courage to tell her parents what was happening. They recommended she report the incident to a school counselor and a police liaison. Within a short period of time, the bullying stopped.

By taking appropriate measures—like Rubinstein did—teenagers can address the issue of cyberbullying and reduce the likelihood of being a



**Katie Braman**  
St. Paul Academy  
and Summit  
School

victim, experts say.

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, hurt, embarrass, humiliate or intimidate another person, according to a guide created by the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights' (PACER) National Bullying Prevention Center, located in Bloomington. It can happen on social media, email, text messaging and website message boards, among other platforms.

With many teenagers using multiple platforms of social media—80 percent of teens who go online use social media networking websites, according to a 2013 National Bullying Prevention Center brochure—cyberbullying is becoming more common. Forty-three percent of teens have reported that they have experienced cyberbullying in recent years and 20 percent of students have admitted to cyberbullying others, according to the brochure from the

National Bullying Prevention Center.

"We sometimes call cyberbullying the new bathroom wall," said Bailey Lindgren, an associate at PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. "Back in the day before technology, people who wanted to write hurtful messages would do it on the bathroom wall. Whereas now with cyberbullying, they do it on various social media platforms."

Lindgren also said the number of cyberbullying incidents is growing for several reasons: cyberbullies can post on the Internet 24 hours per day, they can post anonymously, and they do not have to engage face-to-face, which makes it easier to do.

### Preventing cyberbullying

The National Bullying Prevention Center recommends steps that teens can take to prevent cyberbullying, including keeping their social media accounts private, having a secure password and not accepting or "friending" people they do not know.

"Teens should think about what they post, who will see it and where it might be seen," Lindgren said. "Just because the Internet gives people the access to post whatever they want, it does not mean they should post it in a hurtful or harmful way."

Lindgren also encourages teens to keep record of the post by printing it or taking a screenshot. If cyberbullying persists, she said, teens should talk

to a parent, teacher or trusted adult.

Rubinstein reinforced this advice. "Tell parents, tell adults, tell trusted people that care about you," she said. "Don't keep it to yourself."

The National Bullying Prevention Center indicates that online safety is a shared responsibility, and that teens who see others being cyberbullied should take action.

"An essential step is to not 'like,' share or comment on the post," Lindgren said. "Reach out to the person who is being bullied, let them know they are not alone and that you are there for them. Showing support is both important and valuable."

In April 2014, Governor Mark Dayton signed into legislation the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Law, which protects students who are bullied or cyberbullied. The legislation encourages schools to train students to intervene in and report incidents of prohibited conduct. Lindgren emphasized that teens need to be aware that this law protects them and that bullying is not acceptable in or out of school.

Nancy Riestenberg, the school climate specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education, studies and promotes restorative practices that help school communities and students mend the harm done by bullying. She believes that this approach helps students be responsible and accountable for their actions, and also helps them

with problem solving.

"Restorative practices give us ways to help [an individual] who has done something really mean to repair the harm that he or she has done," Riestenberg said. "These practices give us the opportunity to hold [the bully] accountable in a way that builds empathy."

A 2014 pamphlet titled "Restorative Approaches to Conflict in Schools," written by Richard Hendry, Belinda Hopkins, and Brian Steele, states that students can learn to handle differences and conflicts without resorting to bullying by creating respectful school environments. Repairing, maintaining and building relationships are important elements in restorative approaches.

"Each individual human being has a responsibility to try to support someone else in being kind," Riestenberg said.

### Being a victim

While being cyberbullied, Rubinstein had low self-esteem and doubted her self-worth. She did not feel comfortable around people.

When death threats were made against her, she realized the cyberbullying was escalating to an alarming level. With the help of a police liaison officer at her school, she printed off all the Facebook messages to provide a record of what was written and posted about her.

"During school, when it was first brought to the attention of the administration and police was awkward," Rubinstein said. "[The school] talked with the students' parents about it, but personally I didn't see there being much punishment in the long run."

After the incident, she did "unfriend" the two cyberbullies on Facebook and did her best to move on.

"I have friends who helped me get through it and that was very nice to have," Rubinstein said. "I just tried my best to ignore them and go on with my life."

### National Bullying Prevention Center recommendations

The National Bully Prevention Center has recommendations for teens who are cyberbullied on social media platforms:

1. Untag yourself from the offending post or photo
2. Unfriend the person
3. Block the person
4. Report the content to Facebook (if it violates Facebook's Community Standards)
5. Investigate Social Reporting Procedures (different social media websites have a safety hub that informs teens how to report the bullying or ways they can take action)



**Bailey Lindgren,**  
associate  
at PACER's  
National Bullying  
Prevention  
Center



**Nancy Riestenberg,**  
school climate  
specialist at  
the Minnesota  
Department of  
Education

# Learning in a digital classroom

## Telepresence rooms at Anoka-Hennepin save classes, bring students together

WHEN HE BEGAN talking during the interview, Jeffrey McGonigal's voice was as clear as a bell and he appeared to be just across the room.

I almost forgot he was speaking to me from more than 10 miles away.

Talking to him from Blaine, I interviewed McGonigal, the Anoka-Hennepin School District assistant superintendent, while he was in Anoka using Blaine High School's Cisco Telepresence classroom, a videoconferencing room that allows students to interact with others across the state. He was using a similar Telepresence classroom in the Educational Services Center in Anoka, where Anoka-Hennepin staff oversee the six different Cisco System units in the district's high schools.

This new technology was installed in the district to bring students from different schools to a single classroom, keeping afloat classes that did not draw many students at individual schools, school officials say.

"It was an opportunity to provide courses across our high school that may have been cut at individual high schools due to low enrollment," said Tom Skoglund, Anoka-Hennepin's instructional technology facilitator. "We also saw the potential for other kinds of collaborations within our district and with external locations."

For many students, the Cisco Telepresence classroom is a new experience that they seem to be enjoying.

"I really like being connected to



**Lujain Al-Khawi**  
Blaine High School

all of the other classes and getting to meet kids from other schools," said Anoka High School junior Courtney Dawson.

Other students, such as Blaine senior Haseeb Zahid, are pleased with their school's nontraditional approach to education.

"I think it's good to have experienced a new way of learning," Zahid said. "Some people may learn better with computers and others learn a different way."

Rather than deny an entire course to a few individuals, schools have used the Cisco Telepresence technology to partner with other schools to offer low-demand courses to increase class sizes. The Anoka-Hennepin district connects with its several high schools.

Due to a budget surplus, the district expanded technologically, spending \$1.35 million, according to Skoglund, to install the new computer-active meeting rooms that connect students from different schools through videoconferencing, audio recognition and mirrored computer screens.

This school year is Anoka-Hennepin's third using the technology. During its first year, district staff were unfamiliar with the system.



Jeffrey McGonigal, the Anoka-Hennepin School District assistant superintendent, talks with ThreeSixty journalist Lujain Al-Khawi through the Cisco Telepresence technology during an interview in March at Blaine High School. McGonigal was in Anoka at the time.

However, they were excited to use the same technology as large companies across the globe.

"We bring to high school students what major corporations use on a regular basis," said Kevin Moorhead, a business teacher at Champlin Park High School. "Students are being presented with the latest in curriculum presentation capabilities."

When students enter one of the Telepresence classrooms in the Anoka-Hennepin district, they walk into a brightly-lit room filled with laptops, long tables and about a dozen chairs. While this might seem like a normal classroom setting, three giant screens are hung in the front of the room. Small cameras also are positioned at different angles in the front of the room, allowing for better eye contact when other students' faces are on the screens.

However, students can never see themselves on-screen, only faces from other schools. When more than two schools join a single classroom, the cameras switch screens when somebody from another school speaks, thanks to audio-recognition microphones.

"The Telepresence classrooms

have been well-designed," said McGonigal, who was one of the biggest proponents of the installation of the rooms in his district. "... My first reaction was that I was very pleased."

While this new technology might spell good news to students who otherwise would not have been able to take a certain course, some mixed emotions still exist around the district due to the technology's limitations in providing the same experience as a traditional classroom.

"There are certainly challenges with being in this room," Skoglund said. "...You certainly are not going to feel the same connection through that screen as you would face-to-face."

However, Anoka-Hennepin's school officials are doing all they can to make sure students do not miss out on learning when they are placed in the Cisco classrooms, according to Skoglund. In fact, he is always monitoring the Telepresence units throughout the district and is there to assist teachers when minor glitches in the technology occur—a problem that has improved throughout the years.

While some teachers would prefer to teach in their regular classrooms, such as Anoka High School's Robert

Boero, who's in his second year using the new technology, they are beginning to enjoy the video-conferencing experience.

"My initial reaction was being overwhelmed to the new technology, especially since I had not previously taught this class," said Boero, a business teacher. "The technology is fairly user-friendly, though. Just like with anything, it got easier the second time around."

Community members have benefitted from the technology, as well. The Anoka-Hennepin district has begun to open its Telepresence classroom in the Educational Services Center to community education classes. Last year, community members watched rehabilitated sea mammals all the way from Florida and asked questions using the technology.

The district is also looking into other opportunities for other external uses; however, this is a work in progress, according to Skoglund.

"I would expect that [difficulty of finding outside collaboration] is going to change," said Skoglund, "as more facilities have this kind of technology and it opens up the chance to communicate."

# Smartphone app for teen drivers

## U of M developing Teen Driver Support System to keep teens safe on the road

TEN PERCENT OF teenage drivers—ages 15-19—involved in fatal crashes in 2013 were distracted at the time of the crashes, according to April data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

At least 3,154 people were killed in crashes involving distracted drivers, including those who were texting and driving, during the same year, according to the administration.

With technology being a potential distraction for teenagers both on and off the road, researchers at the University of Minnesota have been working for years to fight fire with fire.

The HumanFIRST Laboratory in the Department of Mechanical Engineering is developing the Teen Driver Support System (TDSS), a mobile app and system intended to serve as a surrogate for parents when they can't be with their teen on the road.

"It's a tool—it's not meant to replace parents," said Nichole Morris, a research associate at the HumanFIRST lab. "It's a surrogate to help facilitate communication between parents and teens when the parents can't be in the car."

### How it works

The system is pre-installed in the vehicle and a smartphone is placed in a mount on the dashboard.



**Danielle Wong**  
Eastview High School

The moment a teen steps into the vehicle, a small box located under the driver's seat syncs to the smartphone via Bluetooth. When the vehicle turns on, the app automatically launches—and once it does, the teen can't turn it off.

"They can try, but it will come back," Morris said. "They can try to open something else, and it's just going to pop up in front of it. I call it a 'zombie app,' because you can't kill it."

That means no Snapchatting, no texting, no phone calls.

A sensor on the teen's seat belt checks if they are buckled and sensors under the floorboards ensure there isn't more than one non-family member passenger—parents can monitor this through the system database—as are the rules for the first six months of driving in Minnesota. If the feedback the phone receives shows the teen is buckled, it will move on. But if the teen isn't, an icon appears on the screen of the phone that asks the teen to buckle up.

While driving, the app uses the GPS locator of the phone to not only display the correct speed limit of that road, but also to pick up



The Teen Driver Support System mobile app, which is being developed at the University of Minnesota, can tell teenage drivers how fast they're going—and to slow down if they start speeding.

how fast the teen is driving. If the teen begins to exceed the speed limit by about 10 miles per hour, the background of the speed limit sign on the phone will turn yellow. If the speed continues to increase, the background will turn red and—depending on what group the teen is in—the phone will say, "Exceeding speed limit, reduce speed now."

"It's not [a] distracting warning, but annoying enough," Morris said. "It's like when your car's chiming at you to buckle your seatbelt—it's better to buckle than to listen to the chiming. Same thing with the warning. It's better to slow down than to listen to the phone tell you to slow down."

In some cases, parents would receive a text from the app if the teen still didn't slow down.

"That way, parents get [detailed information] in real time, whereas in other systems that use video, you don't find out until a week later in a video that your teen was doing this thing," Morris said. "This is really immediate. The hope is maybe when they're around the dinner table that evening the parents can immediately

address that issue."

You know those mobile games where you tip or shake the phone to generate a reaction, such as rolling a ball or jumping? Those games use what's called the accelerometer of the phone, which is what the driving app uses to measure the g-force of a car while it's moving.

By using the accelerometer, the app can detect a spike in g-force from braking suddenly or taking a curve too fast. Do any of these things, and the app will tell you to drive more carefully.

All of these notifications—and the threat of parents being texted—can seem like someone's trying to catch teenagers in the act of doing something bad. But Morris says "it's really about trying to give [teens] the tools to drive safely."

### Developing the app

The idea for the app came about when Max Donath, a professor and director of the Roadway Safety Institute at the University of Minnesota, had a vision about 10 years ago that smartphones were going to become the next big thing

everyone could have access to, according to Morris.

Work on the TDSS app began nearly 10 years ago. Janet Creaser, a former research fellow at the HumanFIRST Lab, directed the research.

Morris' main role was finding 300 teens from specific communities in Minnesota to participate in a 2014 study on the system. But, they couldn't just be any teen—researchers needed 300 teenagers that were turning 16 and getting their licenses within a three-month window.

The teens were divided up into three main groups. One hundred teens drove with the mounted phone, and while data was being collected, the app didn't intervene in any case. In another group, the app prevented teens from using their phones and gave in-vehicle warnings on their driving. The final 100 received in-vehicle coaching from the mobile app, in addition to parent feedback if warnings were not met.

The results of the study weren't necessarily shocking, but they were definitely eye-opening.

**DRIVING** continued on page 30

# Finding freedom in France

YOU REALLY HAD TO look at it to divine that it was a guitar.

The strings were misplaced and its form was decomposed, an imitation of an object rather than the object itself. I'm standing in the Picasso Museum in Paris, France, staring at this painting that resonates with my time in this country. Much in the way Picasso deconstructed life, at times rendering it impossible to perceive, my year in France pulled apart my existence and the way I viewed it.

Before starting my sojourn in Rennes, France, as part of a study abroad program for high school juniors, I was weary of the claim that travel changed you. In retrospect, I see that my immaturity had led me to this false conclusion. My host mother regularly comments on my transformation, relying on the hackneyed comparison of the cocoon and the butterfly that lies within. Initially, I shrugged off this remark, but with each passing day I discover the truth it holds.

My first night in Rennes still burns brightly in my memory. I remember lying in my newly adopted bed, feeling as though I would sink into the mattress and never come out. I remember staring out of the window, aware that the night sky I was staring into was not my own. I remember the moment of realization that I'd be here the entire year. It was the thud of reality that remains after

*"I felt a change take place within me. I realized that I did not want to spend the rest of my life running away."*



**Alexis Reaves**  
Blake Upper  
School

the haze of fantasy dissipates.

A feeling of alienation and confusion lingered for several months. I struggled to articulate myself in French, helpless to communicate my thoughts and actions. At times I felt my tongue had been severed, and I was at the mercy of whoever was speaking on my behalf.

Apart from language, there also remained the barrier of culture. Despite the fact that both the United States and France are westernized nations, the latter is still at times steeped in customs that I struggled to understand.

I'd listlessly wander around cocktail parties or linger on the sands near the beach house of my host mother's friend. Once again, I felt the familiar sting of being an interloper that first struck me after I began prep school last year. In a horrible twist of irony, I ran right back into what I'd been trying to escape, that sinking feeling of isolation.

However, I could not use my old method of simply turning inward. This time, I was forced to endure this constant sense of detachment and upheaval, as though my eyes were fixed upon a burning sun. I stopped eating, never left my room and

ruptured any relationships I had formed.

By late December, I was heading home for winter break.

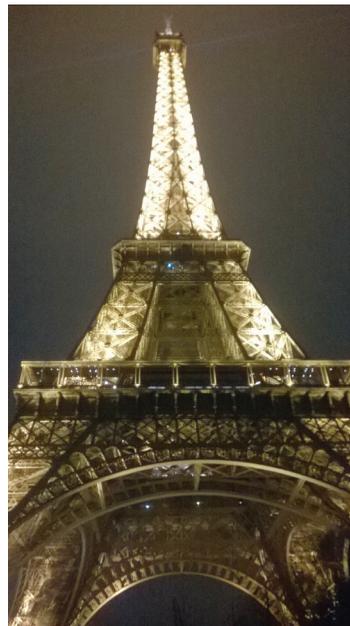
§

In "The Art of Travel," a book capturing the various phases of traveling abroad, I was particularly fascinated by one passage. Author Alain de Botton writes about how one cold winter night he sees a brochure with lush palm trees, a shining sun and, consequently, a chance at happiness.

My attraction to France could be described along the same lines. I've always held a certain fondness for escapism, and when the opportunity to flee across the Atlantic arose last year, I gladly took it.

A bad habit of mine is the tendency to romanticize things. I mentally replaced any bitterness that could've met me in France with fantastic images. However, the threat of reality remained firmly planted at the back of my mind. Burdens such as schoolwork, the language barrier and being separated from my family were only passing thoughts in a sea of pipe dreams.

It is only when I went back to



The Eiffel Tower, lit up at night.



ThreeSixty journalist Alexis Reaves poses for a photo in February near The Louvre Museum.

Minnesota for winter break that I had a realization. I was finally able to place my expectations and the actualities of my voyage side by side, and I saw that when my hopes did not conform to what I had wanted, I simply shut down. Or rather, I retreated.

If the same thing happened back home, I'd shut myself into a book or some other form of reality that I found more agreeable. In fact, I'd become so wound up in the world of my own creation that the real one ceased to matter. Looking back, I feel a twinge of regret, realizing the experiences I have shut myself out of. Before me lies missed friendships, adventures and time that I will never have back.

After returning to France from winter vacation, I felt a change take place within me. I realized that I did not want to spend the rest of my life running away. Yes, I had found a method of shirking painful experiences, but also joyful ones. No longer

did I lock myself into the prison of my own making, and I felt a sense of liberation.

This freedom coursed throughout me during my stay in Paris. In the freezing February air, the only source of warmth came from a friend who had her arm locked around mine. We were having a discussion about our purpose being here, for we, as juniors in high school, should've been doing anything but leisurely strolling toward the Eiffel Tower.

Finally, she said it didn't matter whatever motivations or chances had led us here. The only thing of any importance was that we were here, and we had to enjoy it while it lasted. These words infused me with energy that shook off any lethargy that had been instilled within me.

I challenged her to a race under the tower and onto the Champ de Mars, and before she could respond, I ran off. She chased after me, and together we sped into the pitch-black night.

Photo courtesy of Alexis Reaves/ThreeSixty Journalism

# Finding SUCCESS on stage, beyond

BEFORE I WALK ON STAGE, behind the curtain I softly recite the lines in my head.

In hopes of somehow removing the butterflies that have just entered my stomach, I count

“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight,” while doing a small shake.

As the two video screens beside me say the last words, I begin to walk on, center stage. The lights come up, and the mood changes.

High school seniors, freshmen, teachers and Project SUCCESS staff sit in the audience. I can see everyone’s facial expression. Each face tells its own story, waiting for me to speak.

I am terrified, and for a second, I forget the words. I have about two milliseconds to get myself together.

I take a deep breath and begin:

*“This is the year, where I began a lot of my last. Sometimes the joy of starting something new is that you can keep doing it over again.”*

§

Project SUCCESS, a local program that helps young people take steps toward their future goals, serves Minneapolis and St. Paul youth. By attending a high school in St. Louis Park, I opted out of being a part of Project SUCCESS my freshman year. I no longer had the luxury of enjoying some of the program’s perks: free tickets to shows at the Guthrie Theater or a facilitator coming into my English class to teach goal-oriented lectures and activities. The many things the program provided to its students I could no longer benefit from, due to my new location.

Many people around me had no



**Amira Warren-Yearby**  
St. Louis Park

idea what Project SUCCESS was, which was strange, but over time I got used to it. However, I never truly realized the great impact the program had on my life, until I came back three years later. The cliché saying, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” is an understatement. However, we often don’t know how much we’ve grown until we’ve compared ourselves to who we used to be. For example, when I compare myself to my old self, I often think of my middle-school years.

I was no ordinary middle-schooler. I lived in an almost suburban area of south Minneapolis near Lake Harriet. Perfect on the outside, but inside the walls of my home, I was a confused girl. I felt alone despite the people around me, and I worried about the court cases that determined which parent I would live with, or the constant anxiety of not feeling safe, which caused various panic attacks.

In eighth grade, I left Battle Creek Middle School in St. Paul and started school at Anwatin Middle School in north Minneapolis. On top of my depression, I felt like an outsider to the culture around me. It wasn’t until the spring when I finally felt I belonged.

I always knew I loved theater and wanted to act. I simply did not know if I had what it took, until Project SUCCESS gave me that chance in the spring with the musical, “A Year with Frog and Toad.” This show became



Amira Warren-Yearby (second from left) and others from Project SUCCESS perform “And So I Did” this school year.

my “thing” when I was cast the role of “Frog.” I was ecstatic.

I learned all the songs and knew all the lines and choreography to parts that weren’t even my own, according to the musical director, Jeffrey Lucik. I remember this vaguely, but I certainly recall feeling excited about theater and the show, and most importantly, I felt that I belonged. When I walked through the doors of the auditorium, I no longer felt like an outsider. I was now part of a space where I could be my whole self and not worry about all of the issues waiting at home.

When I was on stage I felt at peace because, for a moment, I could be someone else. However, this new, profound confidence wasn’t a given—it took a while, with the help of a few mentors.

One day, I was rehearsing my lines with one of the facilitators, Alex. I was having trouble getting in tune with my character. So, he asked me to go on the other side of

*“When I was on stage I felt at peace because, for a moment, I could be someone else.”*

the room from him and yell, “I love being a frog!”

This was weird for me. As a young child, I was raised to be the adult and take care of others. I wasn’t fully given the chance to be a kid. I thought this task was funny because it reminded me of a scene from “Akeelah and the Bee,” but I didn’t want to look silly.

After a little hesitation, I did it, and it helped. This wasn’t just a line from a song in the show, but an opportunity to give me more confidence in my role. This is just one example out of many ways I believe the program shows students they matter. Not only who they are, but how they feel.

§

*“In each year of high school, there was always next year or the next show, and that moment seemed like forever away. Or the drama three years ago at the time seemed like the biggest news. Until suddenly, now, it means nothing.”*

Before leaving Project SUCCESS in eighth grade, the program asked me to join its touring show, “Here’s Where I Stand,” with seven other transitioning middle-schoolers. After “A Year with Frog and Toad,” and this show came high school, and I felt I was ready to take on

high school theater.

In August 2014, I came back to Project SUCCESS for another show called, “And So I Did.” This time, I was the eldest of 10—two middle schoolers and the rest high school freshmen. However, their creative use of language and their understanding of the world around them would have you think otherwise.

We began to dive deep into our inner thoughts, pasts, hopes and fears of the years to come. For them, it was looking ahead to this four-year roller coaster of high school, and for me, it was looking back. I enjoyed this moment to reflect, sharing my experiences with these eager minds. I laughed as I remember once being in their shoes. It has been amazing watching them grow.

*“There’s a point in the senior year where you turn to your friend and say: This is our last something. And there’s this bittersweet moment or this bittersweet exchange of smiles and you’re like: ‘Remember when I used to hate you?’ And they’re like ‘Me too!’ And the two of you just laugh because you realized how stupid it was.”*

Every word written for the performance that summer was true for the actors. The group also chose the songs to best fit the story we **SUCCESS continued on page 29**

Photo courtesy of Project SUCCESS

# Discrimination opponent learns to overcome biases

GROWING UP in the Midwest, I never really met many people of Jewish background. The fact that I am Muslim and Arab only added to my alienation of the Jewish community.

For hundreds of years, Arabs and Jews got along greatly with minor setbacks, not because of their religious differences, but because of tribal ones.

The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict has only intensified the animosity between Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East, and the hatred has carried over into Europe and the United States.

Although I come from a very open-minded family that never spoke ill of Jewish people, I still had my own biases about them, biases that mostly stemmed from the media. In fact, the only picture in my mind that I had of a Jewish person was of a radical Zionist with anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiment. It is not an excuse to say that my mindset was a result of me not knowing a single Jewish person, but unfortunately, that was the reality. It is almost embarrassing to say that the only Jewish person I could name at the time was Jon Stewart, the host of “The Daily Show” on Comedy Central.

Even with my admiration for Jon Stewart, I still saw the Jewish community in a negative light, and that was the fault of my ignorance and bias. Looking back, I did not view that bias as negatively as I see it today, because I knew that deep down, I was a good person and one



**Lujain  
Al-Khawi**  
Blaine High  
School

of the last people in the world to be prejudiced against anybody. I felt as though my identity as a colored person in a predominantly white society was an immunity to any personal racist sentiment.

That feeling changed when I attended a Jewish-Muslim youth lobby day at the Minnesota State Capitol last spring. That was the day I figured out I was no different from the racist people I always complained of to my family.

The Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations and Jewish Community Action are both nonprofits in Minnesota focused on helping solve civil rights and social justice issues regarding members of their respective communities. They organized this event at the State Capitol to encourage Muslim and Jewish youth to work together to lobby for legislation they both cared about.

Going to the event, I was nervous at first because I did not know what to expect. This would be the first time I would meet a Jewish person. At the start of the program, we were divided into groups, where we had to approach someone we never knew before. This was a very positive experience for me because I had the opportunity to converse with a Jewish person around my own age.

I was surprised to see how



illustration credit here

much we had in common. We were both passionate about politics and peacemaking, and we were both your average American teenagers. My nerves settled as I talked to more people. I even felt excited to see what the rest of the program would offer.

A great epiphany occurred to me when a young Jewish activist approached a podium and began speaking fiercely about the importance of the Safe Schools Bill, which basically called for more prevention of bullying and discrimination of any sort. She talked about the different problems many minorities feel in today's schools. It was a remarkable surprise for me to learn that some Jewish students are marginalized for their differing religious practices and some feel as outsiders in this predominantly Christian country.

I knew this bill we were lobbying for was especially important to non-Christian, non-white students in American schools, who may have been bullied solely because of their religious practices or ethnic backgrounds. I never thought Muslims and Jews struggled with similar problems, let alone had anything in common.

I was so happy by the outcome of the event that I decided to come again the following year, in February, so I could be part of a young team that fosters relationships between the two religious groups. So, for the last couple of months, I have had more experience working with Jewish youth in political and interfaith events.

This event has impacted me tremendously because it has forced me to come out of my comfort zone and experience new insights. I believe that all young people need to leave their comfort zones and work together with other ethnic or religious groups to improve their communities together.

These last couple of months that I have been working with Jewish youth have been so meaningful, as I have befriended people of the Jewish faith for the first time and relieved myself of some of the stereotypes. I truly felt the need to share this message, because for my whole life, I thought I was one of the most cultured, open-minded people in the world, but little did I realize that I had my very own flaws—my own biases.

I hope my story will influence

others to not have themselves believing they are blind to color, other ethnicities and religions. We may be past the Civil Rights era, but we are now entering a new one. Now more than ever, the problems between the Jewish and Muslim people are worsening. I want to show a new side of what it means to be a Muslim-Arab—one who gets along with the Jewish community, which is very unheard of today, unfortunately. We still have to tell ourselves that we can do more to create a more accepting world.

Many groups around the world benefit from the political animosities between Jews and Muslims—organizations like the American Freedom Defense Initiative, which recently posted an ad on public transportation of a Muslim sheikh sitting next to Adolf Hitler, suggesting Islam has an innate hatred toward Jews.

I know my religion does not support anti-Semitism or intolerance of any kind, and it is my responsibility, along with others, to try to stop such groups' malicious acts to divide the two faith groups. Only these hate groups are winning this battle of Muslims vs. Jews. The real victims are the innocent lives killed in the Palestinian territories and in Israel.

I know that this problem can change with the work of active youth. With the effects of globalization, I feel strongly that today's youth are more accepting of others. However, things will remain the same if we do not take deliberate actions to stop the hatred between Muslims and Jews, or any groups, for that matter.

I hope my work with other Jewish youth in the Twin Cities will carry over to the Middle East and lessen the animosities between the two ethnic and religious groups. And I especially hope that we examine ourselves for our own biases, lest we allow them to take control over us.

# Putting an end to comparison

## Girls need to build each other up, not tear each other down

“I’M NOT LIKE those other girls.”  
“You’re not like those other girls.”

Two variations on the same concept. A concept used so frequently within modern media and literature that we have to label it a trope—an overused plot device. And it’s not just a fictional creation, it’s perpetuated in the real world, too.

This idea is so common in everyday conversation that it can’t be called “kids trying to elevate their status among the billions of others.” It is girls pitting themselves against each other in an imaginary competition. It is,



**Shay Radhakishnan**  
Math and Science Academy

essentially, internalized misogyny—when girls are being sexist toward others of their own gender.

This fictional competition and bizarre belief leads to bullying via social exclusion and malicious rumors. This fictional competition makes girls feel like it’s okay to say they like being friends with guys

### think spot

Have you seen or been a part of this “imaginary competition”? If so, how did it make you feel?

**AL-SHABAB** from page 6  
thinking about joining an extremist group?”

However, Noor spoke of the importance of not blowing the recruitment statistics out of proportion.

“There is a misconception that there is ongoing recruitment and really there’s only a handful who have left compared to 28,000 community members who live in Minnesota,” Noor said. “Even though we don’t directly counteract those efforts, we

provide opportunity for youth in the Somali community.”

Finding quality educational programming, helping children through different developmental stages and engaging youth are just a few of the organization’s goals of advocacy. With about 63 percent of the Minnesota Somali community living in poverty, according to media reports that cite a report from the Center for Popular Democracy, the work of organizations such as CSCM help contribute to a decrease in the

because boys are all so chill but girls are crazy and dramatic. People of all genders tend to compare themselves to others, but in the case of girls, it’s more rampant due to the sheer amount of expectations we are given.

There are 3.5 billion women on this planet. And like all other people, women differ from one another greatly. Saying that women are hard to make friends with is ridiculous. At that point, they’re not the problem—you are.

The rivalry is only exacerbated by the media that we consume. A TVtropes.org post titled “Not Like Other Girls”—which explores this same idea in television—aptly states that “by saying that your intelligence, sense of humor, or independence make you ‘different from other guys/girls,’ it’s implied that the rest of your gender sucks.” For example, the character “Robin” from “How I Met Your Mother” has no female friends, barring Lily, for the purpose that she cannot stand the company of other women.

Ge. What a compliment.

It seems that the “special snowflake syndrome” is not limited to fictional characters on television or in books, but imbued within girls in real life.

lack of opportunity in the Somali community.

However, as much as CSCM advocates for local Somali youth, a goal for the organization is that parents be their child’s primary advocate.

“Let [the parents] take the opportunity to know who their kid is interacting with, where they go, what they’re doing online, and become their advocate,” Noor said.

At the demonstration outside of the Brian Coyle Center, those who

*... Slowly ease yourself off of comparing yourself to other girls. Not only will you be doing her a favor, but you’ll be helping yourself.”*

Why are so many people under the impression that all girls are interested in the same things? That all of them, all 3.5 billion of them—barring the special few—love makeup, shopping and talking about boys? The special few get to be their own people, interested in sports, books and Doctor Who. And if you are caught doing any of the typically “feminine” activities, that cancels out the rest of your personality.

We are exposed to this competition at a young age. Take Cinderella, a classic children’s story. Cinderella suffers under the hands of her step-family, but when she goes to the ball, she’s the prettiest one there and is swept away by the prince. The prettiest one. This is basically what is ingrained into young girls’ minds: the best girl gets the guy.

When you’re constantly fed a diet of what the ideal person is like, and tips on how you can join the ranks of perfect goddesses (which are completely ridiculous requests), it’s hard not to hate people you perceive

as being perfect.

When you’re tearing other women down in this imaginary competition, you are helping the media by buying into their “perfect woman” lie and giving men the right to take stock in these stereotypes. This is why it’s important for us to hold each other up instead of trying to push one another over. If a girl doesn’t like sports—or if she does—that’s her business. She’s not playing to a stereotype, she is just following her own interests.

It’s hard not wanting to throw yourself out of the rankings entirely and say you’re on a different level than everyone else. That yeah, you don’t like makeup and you’re not a big fan of dressing up. But hey, you love reading and sports and you can rock baggy sweaters like nobody’s business.

Instead of doing that, slowly ease yourself off of comparing yourself to other girls. Not only will you be doing her a favor, but you’ll be helping yourself.

*“We have to educate our youth; they’re still in a learning process.”*

—Yussuf Haji

gathered were not only adults, but also children who may represent the future voices of their communities.

“We have to educate our youth; they’re still in a learning process,” Haji said. “It’s important to talk to them so that they see that we

condemn these acts, and so that they can stay away from influences that may entice them.

“When the community speaks, they speak to everybody. So we are collectively speaking out against violence, terror and extremism.”

# Learning to manage money

## Hopkins requires students to take financial courses to graduate

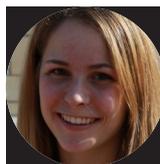
TAKE A MOMENT and think about how much money you've spent in the last two weeks.

Do you even remember how much you've used in a month? Was it less than \$50? Maybe you didn't even think about that one time when you whipped out your credit card and paid for your friend's meal along with yours.

Credit cards, loans, credit scores, banking, budgeting, taxes, insurance and identity theft—these are some of the topics that David Braaten, a secondary master teacher for the Hopkins Public School District, covers in his personal finance class, which is part of a financial literacy requirement for Hopkins students.

In 2011, Hopkins became the first school district in the state to make financial literacy a requirement for graduation, according to the school website. Now, students who complete the program also receive three college credits from North Hennepin Community College in Brooklyn Park, which has partnered with the Hopkins business education department.

"The thing I pride myself on is it's a class that absolutely everyone in that classroom will use," Braaten said. "And it's more than just to be a functioning member of society. You still have money implications. You can sit here and pretend that this doesn't relate to you, but then you just really don't get it."



**Lana Rubinstein**  
River Falls High School

Hannah Nelson, a senior at Hopkins High School, said the class helped her begin thinking about the future.

"This class gave me a lot of information that gave me an understanding of what I will need to do in my financial future, like pay taxes and create a budget," Nelson said.

An upperclassmen personal finance class that Braaten teaches and a ninth-grade finance class are the only required finance courses at Hopkins High School. However, other finance classes are offered as electives. These courses can be a desirable choice for students who might not have a way to get to a college to take classes in programs such as Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO).

"The course is similar to personal finance classes offered in college so there is a provided, convenient option to apply for that college credit," Hopkins senior Ritzcel Miguel said.

The program has two parts: a class for freshmen that is based on finance concepts and a class for juniors and seniors that is centered on application. The two go hand-in-hand and are part of the graduation requirement.



Students in David Braaten's financial class listen as Mike Rothman (second from left), the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, pays a visit to the class in April to record a podcast.

*"The thing I pride myself on is it's a class that absolutely everyone in that classroom will use."*  
—David Braaten,  
teacher at Hopkins

The students who take the upperclassmen course that sign up for college credit usually put more effort into their daily work, according to Braaten. The grade they receive in the high school class goes on their college transcript.

"I hold it over their heads," Braaten said. "I'm like, 'Hey, you're getting a D. You're getting college credit. Get (it) together.' I mean, it steps up the ante for them a bit."

After completing the two required classes, students receive college credit from North Hennepin Community College that can be transferred to any higher education institution that accepts credits from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, according to an article on the school website. For the credits to be transferrable, the student also has to have a 2.0 grade point average.



A pair of students listen in class in April.

"North Hennepin Community College recognizes the excellence in our personal finance curriculum and felt there was a strong alignment to what they were already offering," Tim Amlie, the career and technical education coordinator, said in an article on the school's website.

The number of high school students who choose to sign up for college credit is high, according to Braaten. An estimated 600 students per year will be able to receive college credit through the program, according to the article on the school website.

"The majority of them sign up for it," Braaten said. "Statistically

speaking, out of my sections of 36 (students) in class, about 27 of them sign up for the college credit."

Christopher Gregoire is a junior currently taking the class, and he has specific things he hopes to learn during his time in the course.

"I want to know more about how to set some specific life goals, and how to achieve them," Gregoire said.

Nelson took the class last term. And if it wasn't mandatory, would she still have enrolled in it?

"I believe I would have still taken the class had it not been required," Nelson said, "because it is information crucial to my future and that I knew I would apply to my life."

# Exploring teen pregnancy rates

## Pregnancy, birth rates in Minnesota have decreased through the years—but why?

TEENAGE PREGNANCY and birth rates in Minnesota have plummeted throughout the last two decades and reached historic lows, according to recent data.

The pregnancy rate for adolescents ages 15-19 in Minnesota has declined 63 percent from 1990 to 2013, according to a May report from TeenWise Minnesota, a local organization that promotes adolescent sexual health and development. The state's teen birth rate has fallen 54 percent during the same period.

The factors behind the declining rates may be several, according to Jill Farris, the director of training and education at TeenWise, but experts also have pointed to teenagers making safer, healthier decisions as an important aspect.

"It's a complicated picture to paint," Farris said. "It's not one single thing that is probably leading to it. I think it is a combination of factors."

### By the numbers

The number of pregnancies for 15- to 19-year-olds in Minnesota has dropped to 3,878 in 2013 from 8,636 in 1990, according to the TeenWise report. In 2012, there were 4,392 pregnancies, more than 500 more than the 3,878 in 2013, according to the report.

Births have dropped in similar fashion. In 2013, there were 2,950 births among 15- to 19-year-olds, which is significantly lower than the



**Daniela Garcia**  
Edina HS

5,336 in 1990. In 2000, there were still 5,396 births among the same age group, but in 2011 the rate dropped to 3,467 births and has continued to decrease.

Across the U.S., birth rates for teenagers ages 15 to 19 reached a record low of 26.5 per 1,000 in 2013 and dropped nearly 36 percent from 2007 to 2013, according to the report. The report also states that the overall decline in the country's adolescent birth rate over the last two decades can be attributed to "delayed initiation of sexual activity and increased use of the most effective contraceptive methods."

Minnesota, which ranks sixth in the nation for lowest teen births, according to the Minnesota Department of Health, tends to follow the national trends in pregnancy and birth rates, Farris said.

However, Julie Neitzel Carr, the healthy youth development coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Health, said the low rates also can be deceiving "because Minnesota as a whole has seen (a) decline in teen pregnancy and birth rates, but the data holds striking disparities in birth rates based on race and ethnicity," she said.

For example, Asian American teen birth rates in Minnesota are 2.7 times higher than the national teen birth rate and Minnesota American Indian teen birth rates are 1.6 times the national teen birth rate, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. Also, rates for African-Americans and Hispanics in Minnesota are about the same as national rates for those two groups, according to the department.

However, Minnesota's declines likely have been driven by decreases in rates among the state's adolescent populations of color, according to the TeenWise report.

### Why the decrease?

Some experts say teenagers in general are making smarter decisions when it comes to sexual health.

"I think the primary reason we have seen such a significant decline in unintended pregnancies among teens in the last decade is because young people are making very good decisions about their health and behaviors," said Brian Russ, the executive director of the Annex Teen Clinic in Robbinsdale. "Ultimately, success with reducing unintended teen pregnancies comes down to that."

Farris said one of the main reasons the rates are dropping is that teens are putting off having sex longer than in past years.

"I think the data is actually showing that young people are waiting a little longer to have sex than they were about twenty years ago, which is sometimes surprising to people but is something we know from looking at the Minnesota teen survey, for example," Farris said.

Another major factor that has contributed to the decrease is the use of birth control, according to Farris.

"The other thing that is going in the right direction is the number of teenagers who tell us they are using a birth control method and that they are using a really effective birth



Jill Farris, the director of training and education at TeenWise Minnesota, talks with ThreeSixty reporter Daniela Garcia during an interview in March.

*"It's a complicated picture to paint. It's not one single thing that is probably leading to it. I think it is a combination of factors."*

– Jill Farris of

*TeenWise Minnesota*

control method," Farris said. "That number is going up."

Also, teen pregnancy rates can tend to correlate with economic downturns, Farris said.

"I think we have also seen, too, some connections in some ways with the economy, to be honest," Farris said. "... When young people see opportunity and when they see a future for themselves, whether it's an educational future or career path, they tend to make some different decisions and maybe put off having sex, or using birth control."

However, for some teens, there is also what Farris calls "ambivalence" about getting pregnant.

"So if you ask young people that do end up having a baby, 'Did you want to get pregnant?' they'll say, 'Well I didn't want to, but I didn't really care one way or the other. Like I was kind of in the middle, I was ambivalent,'" Farris said. "And so

the ambivalence is a lot higher for teenagers than it is for other groups of people."

Sex education in schools is also a factor, however, Farris says it's unclear as to how big of a role it plays because the state of Minnesota does not impose state mandates for sex education. Each school district decides how to teach sex education to students.

Also, funding for programs such as the Minnesota Family Planning Program, a Medicaid waiver program that helps provide services to prevent unintended pregnancies, has also played a role in the decrease in teen pregnancies and birth rates, according to Russ. The program allows the Teen Annex Clinic to enroll teens in the program independently and confidentially to cover their costs at the clinic, he said.

"I also think adults have been doing a better job of making sure young people have access to fact-based sexuality education, accessible clinical services and meaningful youth development programming," Russ said.

Looking ahead, Farris is hopeful that rates could continue to decrease in the future.

"By continuing to invest in the future of our young people through programs and services, we should continue to see major strides in the reduction of teen birth and teen pregnancy," she said.

## SUMMER FUN from page 5

### ■ Outdoor Yoga

#### Locations and hours:

- Yoga at Lake Calhoun, 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays
- Yoga at Lake of the Isles, 7 p.m. Wednesdays in June and July, 6:30 p.m. in August
- Yoga at Lake Harriet Bandshell, 6:30 a.m. every morning

#### Cost: Free

There's no better way to do yoga than for free and out in the sun. Yoga combines exercise, relaxation and connection through its variety of postures and variations. These outdoor yoga opportunities are free to the public, led by a variety of experienced and qualified yoga instructors. Any level of experience is welcome.

As a busy teen, it's important to take time to relax, appreciate the outdoors and get exercise. Most yoga studios don't offer outdoor yoga—let alone for free. The combination of outdoor yoga with the close proximity to beautiful lakes and scenery makes these classes phenomenal. Skylar Tupper, a junior at Minneapolis Washburn Senior High School, attended sunrise yoga at Lake Harriet last summer and is planning on participating again this summer. She likes it because she enjoys “watching the sunrise and starting my day with my mind and body feeling refreshed,” she said.

More information: <http://minneapolis.happeningmag.com/outdoor-yoga-minneapolis/>

### ■ Open Streets Minneapolis

#### Location and dates:

- Lyndale Ave South, June 7
- Downtown, Aug. 23
- Northeast, July 12
- University, Sept. 12
- East Lake Street, Aug. 2
- Nicollet, Sept. 22
- Franklin Avenue, Aug. 16
- Lowry Avenue N, Sept. 26

#### Hours: all day

#### Cost: Free

Open Streets Minneapolis festivals occur throughout the city, shutting down streets to vehicle traffic and opening them to bikers, walkers, skateboarders and anything in between. The streets are lined with food trucks, store pop-ups and activity booths. The bright, lively energy of these days lets patrons explore

the city in a whole new way while celebrating the community on wheels in Minneapolis.

More information: <http://www.open-streetsmpls.org/>

### ■ Farmers Markets

#### Location: Various locations across Twin Cities

#### Hours: Mornings

Cost: Free to look around, \$5-\$10 dollars for food

A trip to the farmers market is the perfect way to spend a summer morning filled with fresh food and fun. The metro area has dozens of farmers markets, ranging from huge meccas of farmers with more than 80 booths to small neighborhood markets with local products. One of the largest is the Minneapolis Farmers Market, located at 312 E. Lyndale Ave., and open every day in the summer. One farmer and seller from Untiedt's Vegetable Farm, located in Waverly, Minn., at the farmers market in April said he enjoys the market because of the “very different community of people. You get to know so (many) more local people, local businesses.” If you are into smaller, quainter markets, the Kingfield Farmers Market, located in south Minneapolis, is open every Sunday starting May 17. It's complete with produce as well as food trucks, music and good conversations.

Twin Cities farmers markets aren't just a place to get cheap, delicious food and produce for the week. They also sell a plethora of art, jewelry, clothing and gifts from a variety of cultures and areas from across the world.

More information: <http://twincitiesfarmersmarkets.com/>

### Other can't-miss activities for teens

#### ■ Ordway's Summer Dance Series

Thursday nights, Rice Park, St. Paul

Every Thursday, the Ordway offers free dance lessons from professionals and live music for when you're ready to try out your new moves. More information: <http://www.ordway.org/tickets-events/summer-dance-series/>

#### ■ Northern Spark

9 p.m. to 5:26 a.m., June 13, Minneapolis

Northern Spark is an all-night art festival celebrating community, art and the night. More information: <http://northernspark.org>



Photo by Ellie Colbert/ThreeSixty Journalism

People shop the array of produce at the Minneapolis Farmers Market in April.

#### ■ Greenway Glow

8 p.m. to midnight, June 20, starts at 2837 Emerson Ave. So., Minneapolis

The Greenway Glow is a festival combining art, biking and glow sticks. More information: <http://midtowngreenway.org/projects-and-programs/greenway-glow/>

#### ■ Twin Cities Pride

June 27-28, Loring Park, Minneapolis

Twin Cities Pride is a weekend of events including a parade, food trucks and a plethora of booths celebrating the GLBTQA community in Minneapolis. More information: <http://www.tcpride.org/pride/pride2015/>

#### ■ Uptown Art Fair

- August 7-9, Uptown, Minneapolis
- Loring Park Art Fair, August 8-9, Loring Park, Minneapolis
- Powderhorn Art Fair, August 8-9, Powderhorn Park, Minneapolis

Between the Uptown, Loring Park and Powderhorn art fairs, you could see as much art over the weekend of August 7-9 to last you the entire school year. Each fair offers a large collection of artist's booths, both local and from across the U.S., as well as food and opportunities to make your own art.

More information: <http://uptownartfair.com>; <http://loringparkartfestival.com>; <http://powderhornartfair.com>

[www.powderhornartfair.com](http://www.powderhornartfair.com)

#### ■ Music in Mears Park

Thursdays, Mears Park, St. Paul

Mears Park is beautiful on its own, but every Thursday it is enhanced by live music. More information: <http://mearspark.com/>

#### ■ Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Free every third Thursday of the month after 4:30 p.m. from April through October, Chaska

The Arboretum is a collection of wonderful looking and smelling flowers and plants, put together by the University of Minnesota. More information: <http://www.arboretum.umn.edu>

#### ■ MN Food Truck Fair

- June 20, Blaine; June 28, Original Uptown
- July 25, St. Paul.

The Minnesota Food Truck Fair is a gathering of some of the best and most unique vendors that the local food truck scene has to offer. More information: <http://www.mnfoodtruckfair.com/>

#### ■ Art Car Parade

July 25, Lake Harriet, Minneapolis

The Art Car Parade is exactly what it sounds like: a parade consisting of cars that have been turned into art pieces. More information: <http://www.artcarparade.com/>

**RYBAK** *from page 11*

sometimes it was really a privilege on behalf of all the people I represented to say, “I’m sorry,” and try to find some ways from one human being to another to relate. If you walk into situations like that all the time as “the mayor,” it’s not that successful. You’re in that situation because you are the mayor and because you represent people and you’re there to say on behalf of everyone, collectively, “We’re sorry.” ...

**As a former journalist (for the Minneapolis Tribune and other publications), how has journalism affected your life and career?**

It had a huge impact. ... I loved being a journalist because it gave me tremendous access, and as a pretty nosy person I got to ask people some questions, so you get into some remarkable places, meet some really amazing people you never would have met. I ultimately decided I wanted to be the person who was out there doing it rather than asking questions about it, but my journalism was hugely important to me in my other jobs. I was a better mayor because I had been a journalist, because even though I have a pretty big mouth I was trained to stop and ask questions. That was very, very helpful because if all you’re trained to do is to walk into a room and give a speech or have some brilliant idea and shove it down people’s throats, you aren’t going to get very far. ...

So I highly recommend it as great training. Being a lawyer is perfectly good training, but it teaches you to argue one side of the case. Being a journalist is really great training because it forces you to listen and understand many

points of view and then tell the story. That’s great training for almost anything I know, and it was great training to be a mayor, because don’t you think more politicians should learn to shut up and ask questions? (laughs)

**You’ve been in several different careers. Do you think teens need to have it all figured out in high school?**

No, I think it’s important to recognize people your age are increasingly not going to have careers but a body of work. I’ve had seven careers and I won’t have another for a few years, but who knows what happens next, I’ll probably have a few more. You will probably have multiple careers and things will happen that will be very different.

We were just talking, about a couple hours ago, in the middle of my career this thing called the Internet came around and I got offered a job as vice president of an Internet company and I hadn’t been on the Internet because it had just been invented. Now how would I have prepared for that in college? I would have prepared for that by having a broader knowledge, by being really interested in technology and multiple other issues that were not on the radar of somebody who was going to be this journalist and mayor. So what was helpful is that at that point I had cross-trained my brain to do lots of different things.

So the encouragement I would most give to a young person is to broaden their brain, but I do think, however, too many students just kind of expect something to happen without you beginning to map out careers and success. You

don’t have to do the same thing your whole life. You probably won’t. In fact, for someone your age it is highly unlikely you’ll do one thing your whole life, but I do believe in living intentionally, not floating through life, but trying to grab as many brass rings as you can.

Fail. It’s great to fail as long as you tried something. Take risks, be OK saying, “That wasn’t a perfect thing, but I learned this.” Just don’t be frozen by looking for that perfect thing that it doesn’t allow you to do anything.

And I think, probably more than anything, (that) they have very, very high aspirations. You’re lucky, you’re living in the most blessed period of time with huge issues like the achievement gap and climate change, huge inequity issues and huge opportunities where the world is literally being reinvented in front of our eyes. The times where people don’t have opportunity are the times where everything stayed totally the same. The times when people had opportunities is when there is a reshuffling. There’s maybe never been as much of a reshuffling as there is right now in our climate, in our politics, in our economics, in our racial makeup. Everything is shifting and if you just think about it, when things move, that is when there is opportunity. So embracing the seeming chaos that is around you as a time to try something new, to invent something, to propose a whole different way of doing things. That’s pretty exciting.

**In a previous interview with ThreeSixty more than two years ago, you said, “The best is yet to come,” in reference to your life after being**

**mayor. Is Generation Next and all the things you’re involved in right now part of that, or is there still more to come?**

This is absolutely the most important work that I have ever done and I feel that much more strongly now than even a year ago. Also, I feel that we can win, which is a really big deal. I don’t have my eye on anything other than fixing the achievement gap because it is so big and so critical and potentially so exciting. It’s just that if we can figure this out, we can soar as a community. I’m starting to see ways that that can happen. I’m seeing huge challenges in getting there, but I’m starting to see what is over the hill.

... A lot of our work is like crossing the mountains and not knowing exactly what’s on the other side because no one’s ever really solved this achievement gap, so we have to take risks, but we have to keep climbing the mountain. I think some days I leave here thinking this is harder than heck, and most days I leave thinking this is hard, but we’re going to make it. And that possibility of raising a generation that is this diverse is the most exciting thing I could possibly think of.

**Are you planning to run for governor? Is your life in politics over?**

I have no idea what I’m going to do, but I don’t have to think about that right now.

*This is an edited transcript of this interview.*

**INTERNET** *from page 13*

got blocked ... The old (system) used to be just a list of websites that the school deemed not beneficial for learning, or not proper for school ... Now they’re blocking a lot based on keywords in the URL or in the website. I suggest toning it down a bit.”

Phillips said problems such as excessive blocking arise because the filter works as a database with different categories, such as “obscene” or “harmful to minors.” Depending on its category, a website is either blocked or allowed on school technology.

“Filtering the Internet is a very complicated

and difficult situation,” he said. “You can’t just categorize everything, and I think that’s one of the limitations of having a filter. It just doesn’t fall into a black-and-white scenario.”

While keywords may trigger the filter to categorize certain websites incorrectly, Phillips emphasized that it was not administrators’ goal or intent to do so, and that speaking to teachers and administrators to get such sites unblocked would be the best response for students.

At Blaine High School, where school computers are available to all students, the filtering system consists of little but blocking YouTube, said Kenna Gatzmer, a senior at Blaine. Even

social media sites, such as Twitter, Vimeo and Tumblr are allowed.

Also, most Blaine students treat school computers respectfully, Gatzmer said, and she has never heard of any conflicts between students and administrators regarding the computers, aside from students’ dislike of the blocking of YouTube.

**District’s constitutional rights vs. students’ rights**

According to attorney and University of St. Thomas media law professor Mark Anfinson, schools have the right to filter, but “it’s a pretty dicey proposition for school administrations

to censor or block students (from) accessing certain websites,” he said.

“It’s much less justifiable for them to do that than to prohibit a bad message that the student is expressing,” Anfinson said. “... How do you know as a school administrator (that) simply visiting a particular website, how can you know that’s going to have some terrible adverse effect on people? You can’t.”

The First Amendment rights of public high school students, while weaker than those of public college students, still hold considerable weight, Anfinson said. He noted that the Supreme Court has defined the First **INTERNET** *continued on next page*

**SUCCESS** from page 22

wanted to convey. Besides myself, a few other seniors gave their perspectives looking back during video clips intertwined in the show. You could see the similarities and differences in both groups and how they'd grown.

*"The point I'm trying to make is that nothing lasts forever. Everything changes. You change, feelings change, people change, people leave! Life happens and sometimes due to something really small."*

"And So I Did" was unique from each of the previous Project SUCCESS summer shows, typically performed in front of Minnesota educators. Instead, we met the eyes of almost every high school freshman in the St. Paul Public Schools district. I believe this was a surreal moment for everyone involved, because this was the audience that mattered, for which the show could have a bigger impact. These were our



**Members of Project SUCCESS.**

peers who connected more to our messages.

*"Looking back I'm most proud of not holding too tight to just one thing and being open to change; taking risks, forgiving, laughing, crying. Really living. Those moments when*

*I look back with friends, all we do is laugh and smile, even at the bad memories. Because we got through them. We have made it through those four years, together"*

Intertwined in italics in this personal essay is the ambiguous

graduation speech I read at the end of the show. The speech is also used as a conversation starter for the small-group sessions after the show where the ninth-graders wrote their own speeches and got to wear a cap and gown, preparing for graduation.

I am so grateful that I could be a part of someone envisioning graduating because I know how hard that can be.

Project SUCCESS is not only about goal-setting, but also about achieving those goals and opportunities. That process starts with a visual aid. I believe the program is getting teens to visualize that any situation they set their mind to, big or small, is possible.

I know Project SUCCESS has been my visual aid since the seventh grade and continues to help me on my journey.

*"Not gliding, of course, there were a few bumps in the road, we took a giant detour. But we got back up, we kept moving, and I'm a different person because of it. The things that happen in life make you, you. So in these next few years when you look back, will you smile and will it all be worth it?"*

Photo courtesy of Project SUCCESS

**INTERNET** from previous page

Amendment to include the right to receive information as well as to speak it, even for public high school students.

He also likened the iPad conflict at Wayzata to the debate over the censorship of books in school libraries in the late 1900s, in which school boards would ban literature for containing sexual references or curse words. According to Anfinson, nearly every time a book was banned, the school would get sued for violating the First Amendment—and it would lose.

As for schools' argument that iPads are their own property, Anfinson pointed out that the book censorship debate serves as precedent.

"I don't think the fact that it's the school's iPad allows them to curtail your First Amendment rights in any way, shape or form," Anfinson said. "... To my knowledge, no court ever

said that because they're the school's books, that gave them the stronger right to censor. That would never fly. ... They can't censor (iPads) without very strong justification, so I'd be skeptical about these blocks."

However, the legal opinion on censorship and surveillance can depend hugely on varying circumstances in schools.

"First Amendment communication law is very much like a kaleidoscope," said Anfinson. "A slight change in the facts you have to deal with changes the legal analysis."

#### **Opening up the conversation**

In some cases, certain sites are requested to be blocked by students. When Dronen worked at Stillwater Area Public Schools, Facebook was blocked on school technology because the student council was concerned students would be distracted by social media, he said.

"I think there's always going

to be some conversation back and forth, and I think as long as students can be having conversations with teachers or building or district leaders ... everyone gets to move forward," Dronen said. "There may be things that students don't understand, and there are definitely things teachers and administrators don't understand. To hear that student voice and listen to it can be really helpful."

To encourage that conversation, Dronen suggested schools establish a student technology group, such as the Tech Mates, which are Minnetonka student groups that meet regularly with administrators at both the middle school and high school to discuss issues with school-issued iPads. Another opportunity for student-administrator communication lies in broadcasts such as "Beyond 140," a video that airs at Minnetonka High School every month to



**Mark Anfinson, an attorney and media law professor at the University of St. Thomas, talks with ThreeSixty journalist Mina Yuan in March in St. Paul.**

address the characteristics of proper technology use and digital citizenship, Dronen said.

At Wayzata, there is no technological student group like Tech

Mates, according to Phillips.

"That may be something we can improve on in the future," Phillips said. "If there is further opportunity for dialogue, whether it's organized or unorganized, from a student perspective, on what we can do to help you get what you need to succeed in your life, that would be our goal."

While debate exists surrounding school filters and surveillance, both administrators and students agree that improved communication is the most likely solution.

"This is going to continue to percolate," Anfinson said.

"Nathan Ringo is not the only Nathan Ringo out there. What sounds to me like is needed and would be most valuable is a little better of an opportunity for students and administration to communicate."

ThreeSixty staff

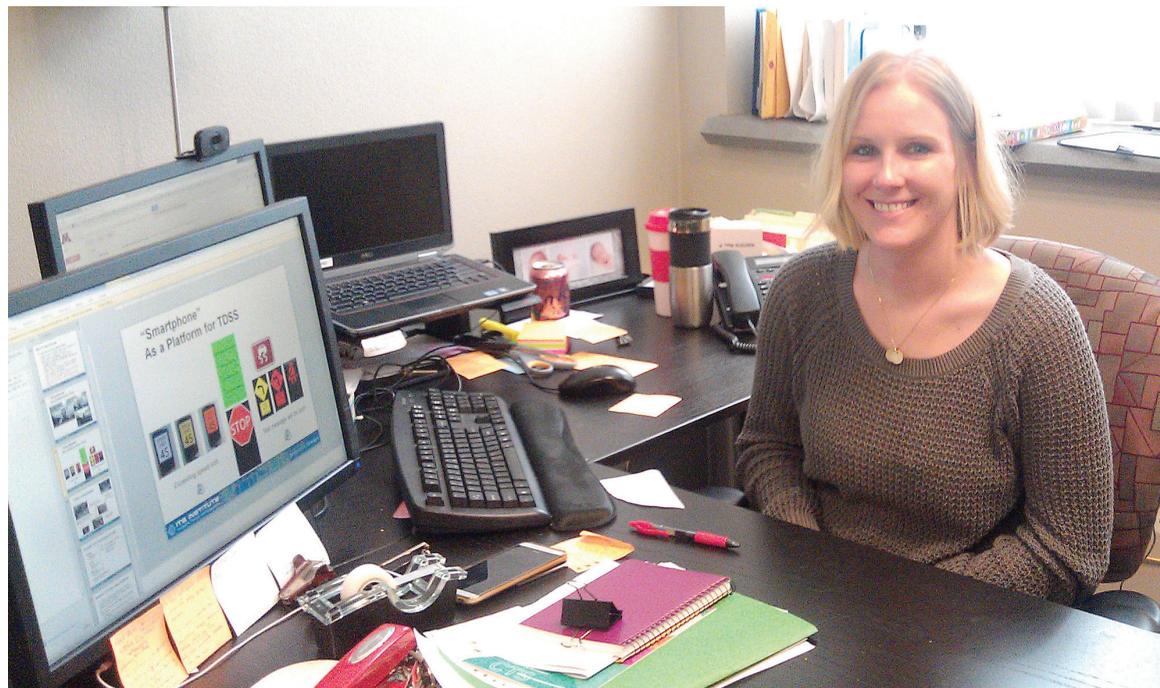
## DRIVING from page 20

“Teen drivers in the control group used their phone a lot. We didn’t prevent them from using it, and we monitored how often they used it,” Morris said. “Most teens could not get through a single trip without sending a text message of some kind.”

Teens who were not prevented from using their phones also were found to have a tendency to speed and perform excessive driving maneuvers, such as braking sharply or peeling out of a driveway. But in the in-vehicle only group, and even more so in the in-vehicle and feedback group, teens were found to have less speeding and excessive maneuvering.

Motor-vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In Minnesota, one out of four crashes are caused by distracted driving, according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Each year, at least 70 deaths and 350 serious injuries occur in Minnesota because of distracted driving.



Nichole Morris, research associate of the HumanFIRST Lab, has hopes that the TDSS app will be ready for the market in the next couple of years.

*“Most teens could not get through a single trip without sending a text message of some kind.”*

*—Nichole Morris, researcher for TDSS app.*

### Students, parents weigh in

While the app is being developed, 16-year-old Alyssa Dunn, a junior at Eastview High School, will be just fine having her driving monitored by the age-old method of parental trust.

“My parents trust me to not do things I shouldn’t be doing,” Dunn said. “But some of my friends’

parents have downloaded tracking apps so they can see where their children are at all times.”

Dunn adds that if her parents implemented the app, she would probably feel more “paranoid” while driving.

“I believe it all comes down to the parents who set a punishment,”

she said. “If my parents set a stricter punishment I would make it a priority to monitor my speed at all times.”

Kate Dullard, a 20-year-old junior at the University of Minnesota Duluth, feels the notifications from the app could be more of a distraction than originally intended.

“[If] you change the driver ... then you may get a better result,” she said.

Karen Underhill, a 43-year-old Burnsville mother of an incoming freshman and a current junior, thinks that the TDSS app has

potential.

“I don’t know if getting parents so involved is really the answer, since most teens hate it when their parents are involved,” she said. “It’s really up to how long the parent wants to incorporate it in the teen’s life, and how they discipline their kid when they do step out of line.”

Morris, however, added another perspective.

“If you’re a smart teen, you figure out the more you build up trust with your parents, the more privileges you’re going to get,” she said. “[The app is] really a tool to make both sides happy.”

Morris isn’t quite sure when the app will be ready for the market, but she has hopes that the app will be a low-cost way to facilitate teens to drive safely in the next couple of years. There are still kinks to be worked out, such as the fact that not every road’s speed limit is in the database, she said.

At the end of the day, all a parent wants is for their teens to be safe when behind the wheel.

“Knowing that my daughters are driving safely would definitely help me sleep better at night,” Underhill said.

## TEEN TECH from page 15

Teen Tech Center provides a place where transforming an imagined concept into a photo or a video is at the fingertips of teens at their public library.

“Libraries in general are changing,” Murray said. “There is much more emphasis now on technology. Everybody’s got Internet. Everybody’s going to Google things before they come in to ask a reference question at the library.”

Both Lundholm and Murray’s thoughts of the Tech Center are that libraries need to find a way to evolve with the times. They say the Tech Center is a step in that direction by

taking something usually unavailable to the average person and making it available.

### Making music

Popularity-wise, it appears designing pictures and videos falls second only to creating music with computer programs and in-studio among teens.

“I love music. I’m actually working on a sample beat,” Miller said, while admitting that he is still new to producing.

Lundholm and Quaynor are music enthusiasts themselves.

“Music kind of speaks to identity,” Lundholm said. “I love music, I can

totally understand the passion that comes from that.”

There are two recording studios near the Teen Tech Center’s front entrance. Guitars and microphones are scattered neatly throughout the room. Teens are busied with more than GarageBand—they are playing instruments, recording their own voices and putting those components into music videos on YouTube.

And teens not interested in music? No big deal.

“We also have people that are making things with craft materials, batteries, circuits (and) putting LEDs in wearable bracelets or hoodies,” Lundholm said.

### The expansion and the future

Lundholm says other libraries, and even nonprofit groups, have reached out to him, showing enthusiasm in creating a similar tech center. The North Regional Library in North Minneapolis is one of the latest places to model a Tech Center off of Central’s, using current space in its library and turning it into a zone for its Tech Center, according to Murray. The expansion will take place this year.

There is also soon to be a new library in Brooklyn Park that will consist of some Teen Tech Center elements, though, according to Lundholm, at this point there is no

telling how much. Lundholm also said the Teen Tech Squad will move to three other libraries this year: Hosmer, Brookdale and Eden Prairie.

The accomplishments of the Teen Tech Center to this point have given optimism to Lundholm and Murray that the expansion to North Regional should have plenty of success, they said.

“We can no longer think of ourselves as a warehouse for books,” Lundholm said. “For libraries to stay relevant and meaningful to the community in the future we need more places where people can come to learn and make things, and this is one part of it.”

**FEMINISM** *from page 14*

the Twin Cities, according to Holmgren. In March 2009, she developed the Dead Feminist Society of Minnesota - Salon for Uppity Women online. The Dead Feminist Society “exists to honor the vision of American Feminism and to support Minnesota feminists in our commitment to stand for gender equality, dignity and fairness,” according to the site. Within four months, the group received 100 members, and since its beginnings, awareness of the Dead Feminist Society has spread.

“Social media is bridging a gap,” said Holmgren, a second-wave feminist. “I think that my access to more narrative from [the] third wave through the media is very good for me.”

**Looking ahead**

The future of feminism seems hopeful to many young women such as Phoebe Ester, a junior at River Falls High School, and Neda Pourhassan, a sophomore at Maple Grove. Ester said she hopes the immediate future of feminism will be about the education of others on what is happening not only in the U.S., but also in other countries around the world.

With social media as a worldwide source for information and more women speaking out, it appears feminism is not fading away anytime soon.

“The media is already an attention grabber and influences future generations,” Pourhassan said. “... People start to understand more about feminist causes.”

The feminist movement has developed new ideas and aspects through the dawn of the social media age, but it’s main concept remains the same, according to Holmgren: “Women are people.”

**YANG** *from page 9*

knew that as a sister I was to completely accept her and support her. I realized that although she had changed, she still hadn’t changed. She was still the older sister who made fun of me, shared a room with me and watched Disney movies with me; she had just finally found herself. I was happy to know that she trusted and loved me enough to say.

Entering the sixth grade, I had decided to go to a different school. We were often given chances to write papers about things that seemed important to us and even give short presentations. I always wrote about how same-sex marriages should be legalized. Even at a young age I realized that I shouldn’t only support my sister but everyone else who deserved their rights.

Later on, my aunts and I continued to support her. She would confide to my aunts and me about how her progression was with finding herself, but then I realized that she hadn’t told my parents yet. She hid this from them for her entire childhood, until she finally got a girlfriend.

She was happy to finally be in a relationship and have someone who understood her. But as she already struggled hiding it from my parents, she struggled more with her new relationship.

One day, I walked in to see her crying. She sat by her bed on the floor. I was completely confused. She was one of the strongest people I knew, but here she sat, tears

streaming down her face.

I kneeled down next to her and placed one arm over her shoulder and the other in my lap. Tears started to roll down my cheeks.

“It’s okay, Sam, don’t cry.”

I could barely get those words out of my mouth since my voice shook with every breath I took. I pulled her closer and sniffled to cut through the quiet in our room.

Although she hurt in the relationship, she continued to affiliate with her girlfriend. Through the year, she became more comfortable with herself. The more comfortable she became, she started to love herself more. She decided to end the relationship and finally talk with our parents.

Although they were a bit uncomfortable, they said that they loved her and would accept her. She became more outgoing and gained self-confidence within months.

This was the first time I thought about seeing myself in her shoes. Seeing her cry and struggle changed me completely. As I kneeled alongside her, I felt the need to help others who felt the same. I spoke up about the way I felt and how things should be changed for equal rights.

I learned empathy and knowledge through Sam and her struggles. I gained friends fast with the help of not judging others and showing that I cared for their well-being. Having her in my life helped me for the better, and I hope empathy has reached you also.

**ABUKAR** *from page 9*

legs were burning and aching. My parents’ words rang louder than my aching legs.

“I do learn from my mistakes, I don’t understand why you’re always pushing me,” I whispered to myself.

I swung my leg off my bike and stopped myself. I then proceeded to stretch myself out on the cool, wet bench. It was just the support I needed at the moment. My chest was heaving and my mind was swirling with thoughts. More of that memory flooded into my mind.

“Why is she here?” I murmured, my eyes scraping the ground and my arms folded tightly.

“Hussein, hear me out, okay, darling?” she whispered softly. I held up two fingers indicating she had two minutes to explain herself.

“Have I taught you how to pull the brakes yet?” she asked, knowing the answer.

“No,” I sharply responded.

“You know you haven’t. Are you just here to tease me?” I asked, slightly tilting my head.

“No, I’m trying to explain to you why I pushed you off your bike. Down the hill you were riding was a street of traffic and you had no control over your bike. If I didn’t push you, you might have gotten hit by a car.”

“Liar, leave me alone, you only

pushed me because you were jealous that I’m finally learning,” I spat. I felt the stitches in my leg pulling at my skin painfully.

I burst into laughter at the remembrance of what level of attitude I had back then. The cool droplets of rain tickling my forehead snapped me out of my daydream.

Thinking back to that memory made me realize she pushed me to possibly save my life. She pushed me for a good reason, even though it hurt at the time. If it wasn’t for her I probably would have gotten seriously hurt. She pushed me for my own good. I tried to recall why those words were so familiar.

It suddenly snapped in my head. I hopped on my bike and started pedaling harder than I was before. Feeling the rain pouring, I could hardly see a foot in front of my face. That didn’t matter, as I only lived two blocks away from the lake. Without even realizing it, as if by habit, I arrived and was knocking on the door. My mother opened the door looking sullen and surprised to be greeted by a huge grin and warm hug from me. She may not have understood why I suddenly had a change of mood and acceptance. After a long and strenuous argument about my recent grades, I had come to a realization. It only took six years, a bad memory and a few stitches.

Not all those who push you mean you harm.

**WARFA** *from page 4*

most people whether it’s asking for guidance in what you want to major on in school, whether it’s your friend who has a problem and you’re looking for some help for him or her – sometimes it’s an unseized opportunity when you do not reach out to professionals who really take the time from their busy schedule to help. ...

**What have your experiences taught you about leadership and why is leadership so important to you?**

When you Google the word “leadership,” you will get so many different definitions of leadership, so I want to be clear that I’m defining leadership broadly here. The mother who’s busy taking her children to school, and giving the time she would have spent

on herself to either uplift herself through education, employment, sacrificing so much for her children. Those who are sacrificing for their community. Those who are spending countless hours are all in a leadership role. Leadership sometimes is transactional. For example, elected officials ... it’s mostly transactional because we will vote for somebody

to become an elected leader, but we expect something from them later, so it’s transactional. ... Young people who take on initiative to clean the streets, to help their friends, those are to me leadership opportunities.

*This is an edited transcript of the interview.*

# Save the Date

ThreeSixty Journalism's annual fundraiser and gala is on Friday, Oct. 23, at the James B. Woulfe Alumni Hall at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul!



REAL STUDENTS. REAL STORIES.

# ThreeSixty

JOURNALISM

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