

# The Westword

*Student voice of the Westhill community*

*"The test of good journalism is the measure of its public service."*

**Coffee culture elevated with Donut Delight**

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# The Westword

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April 2019

## Note from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the sixth issue of the year, we are very excited to continue serving as the student voice of the Westhill community and bring you updates about the school.

Our Editorial this month touches on the Donut Delight craze at Westhill including the social and habitual elements of it.

News highlights how sports and clubs at Westhill use restaurant fundraisers to raise money and what happened at this year's science fair. In Viewpoint, we debate if assisted suicide should be legal and if it is important for individuals to know self-defense.

This issue, Special Report delves into LGBTQ+ rights in the U.S. and around the globe.

This Supplement insert shines a light on drugs in the school and why students use them in school.

Continuando con Las Noticias, resaltamos el impacto que un divorcio puede tener en los niños y hablamos sobre como alumnos estudian para exámenes de fin de año.

Feature this issue spotlights the Best Buddies club and Teacher Talk by Mr. Pinsince this month.

Limelight reviews the movie *Beautiful Boy* and the new Billie Eilish album *WHEN WE ALL FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?*

In Sports, we provide insight on the different options within Track and Field beyond just running. We also highlight our athlete's of the month, Eric Zagaja and Tessa Mannella.

For more, visit [thewestwordonline.com](http://thewestwordonline.com). Be sure to check out our Instagram account for updates @thewestword.

We encourage any and all readers with comments, questions, or concerns to contact us by either dropping a letter into Addison Magrath's mailbox in room 224 or emailing us at [westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com).

Sincerely,  
Addison Magrath & Rachel Plotzky  
Editor-in-Chief & Executive Editor

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### Editorial Policy

*The Westword* will be guided in the publication of material by a concern for truth, human decency, and human benefit. It is published during the school year by the late night staff, along with the Communications class. Letters to the Editor, advertising requests, comments, criticism, or suggestions are always welcome. The views expressed in Viewpoint and the Op-Ed page do not necessarily represent the opinions of *The Westword*.

The Editorial Board consists of Addison Magrath, Rachel Plotzky, Alexandra Watkinson, Bailee Esposito, Katie Gaia, Chloe Giulini, Tamar Bellele, Quinn McHale, Kate Williams, Alliyah Rivera, Camila Miranda, Jason Zarrilli, Kayla Mendiola, Mr. von Wahlde, and Mr. Wooley. The Editorial can be found on page 3.

### Announcements

Senior Will submissions for the 2019 June Issue is open. Check your student issued email for more information and examples.

### Corrections

*The Westword* has no corrections at this time.

If you have an announcement or an advertisement you would like published in the next issue, please e-mail us at [westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com).

Front cover photo by **Katie Gaia** / Managing Editor.  
Back cover photos by **Lexi Boccuzzi** (top), **Mrs. Schiro** (bottom left) & **@northstarplaymakers** on Instagram (bottom right) / Reporter & Contributors.

# EDITORIAL

## The Donut Delight bug

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Students at Westhill have quickly adapted to the coffee craze, iced coffee in particular. No matter how cold our New England climate becomes, students remain steady in their mission to get an iced medium drink.

People have caught on to the Donut Delight (DD) trend, and now they just do not feel right without their morning cup. After getting used to drinking it every day, students may be inclined to drink it for more reasons than just the enjoyable taste.

"Caffeine may become physically addictive because regular, sustained caffeine consumption can lead to changes in the chemistry of your brain," according to healthline.com.

Once a person gets into the habit of drinking coffee every morning, they will find it hard to stop due to dependence caffeine fosters within the brain and body.

"I get coffee three or four times a week. Donut Delight is my preference, but sometimes I go to other places. I need it [to wake me up] in the mornings," Catherine Caragine ('19) said.

To truly understand why the Westhill student body obsesses over DD, we must consider a psychological angle

as well, one that may tell more than the common answer, "it tastes good."

Possibly borrowed from European cultures, it is popular in the U.S. to get a coffee with someone, whether it be a friend or a business inquiry. Though, no matter who it is, coffee is being used to cultivate a relationship between those people. It becomes an excuse to sit down and speak to another person, a connection that is unique to this drink. That being said, it is not any different in high school. Students buy their friends coffee to be kind, to impress their crush, and for their teacher to overlook an unexcused tardy.

"I only like DD, and I catch the bus in the morning so my friends will usually bring me something if they are already going. I get coffee to wake me up in the mornings and have something to look forward to," Bintou Bane ('20) said.

However, it is not just any coffee we are talking about, it is always DD coffee, in its clear plastic cup with purple block lettering. Students drink coffee in plenty of different ways, but never is it anything but

their beloved DD.

While many students remain devoted to Starbucks or Dunkin', spotting these cups may be a bit more rare than one from DD.

In a generation where we are raised to stand out, this should not make any difference; after all, it is only a cup. Yet it does. DD cups, specifically medium-sized iced drink cups, have become a status symbol in Westhill, and one that we may not care to admit.

Hoads of juniors and seniors arrive late every day with their DD cup in hand. Sophomores and freshmen find rides with upperclassmen or buy it from the ice cart in Westhill's lobby, even with inflated prices, just to hold that cup in class and as they walk down the halls.

It is natural that teenagers are drawn to mimicking one another to fit in. After all, no one likes feeling like an outsider. Cue DD cups in hand.

"[It] is a comfort mechanism...this generation and the one right before are the ones taking the longest to grow out of adolescence into adulthood and we as adults need to realize we

have been part of the problem...they feel highly stressed from their lives on a level that [my generation] never did. We really need to get to the bottom of it," Mr. Weintraub,

math teacher, said.

Students will keep the cups even after the ice has melted and the drink is a slushy, watery mess of milk and what used to be coffee, all to have that symbol firm in their grip.

This symbol has many meanings, though. In one way it represents independence, demonstrating the student is able to go get their own coffee with their own money. In another way, it is a symbol of fitting in with the masses, being one with the group, being cool.

"[The students] are addicted. It is caffeine, it is coffee it affects the brain, and it helps [students] stay awake, and not only that, but everyone has it. I think a lot of kids do it because they need it, but it might be a little bit to do with going along with the group norm," Ms. Tintle, psychology teacher, said.

Within the last couple of decades, the American breakfast diet has been defined by the on-the-go option of coffee. This coffee shop culture has exploded and no matter where you go, you will never be too far to grab an espresso or a latte.

Coffee is not just a morning staple anymore, it has steadily become more integrated into people's daily lives. It offers the status of an affordable luxury to millions of people across America.

Coffee consumption is on the rise with American coffee consumption being at its highest percentage ever in the past six years, according to the U.S. National Coffee Association. Although, the amount of disposable cups and straws has increased along with it, with

each person contributing about "23 pounds of waste per year," according to plaineproducts.com.

According to cleanwateraction.org, "each day, Americans use half a billion plastic straws" a majority of which are not recyclable, ends up in the ocean, and become a harmful threat to mammals and other ocean life.

Coffee's "to-go" culture is a big factor when it comes to plastic waste. Starbucks for example, the biggest coffee company in the world, "uses more than 8,000 paper cups a minute, which adds up to more than four billion a year, 1.6 million trees are harvested every year for all of those single-use cups," according to cleanwateraction.org.

Most of these cups end up in the trash rather than being recycled, and subsequently into the oceans and landfills, taking centuries to fully decompose, where they may also harm marine wildlife, as seen across the internet in videos where turtles have plastic straws caught in their noses and sea gulls have stomachs full of plastic bottle caps and soda rings.

Now, people are trying to solve these pressing environmental woes by being aware of and limiting their plastic use. Such solutions include drinking their daily caffeine boost from reusable cups.

Bringing in a non-disposable cup from home when going to get coffee will help reduce the amount of plastic pollution by single-use cups. Also, many coffee shops are beginning to offer discounts on reusable cups, like Lorca on Bedford Street which offers ten percent off a purchase when a person brings their own cup.

"Not only [does Lorca] offer the ten percent reusable cup discounts, but if you buy a Keepcup (Lorca branded reusable cup) from us, your drink is free with your purchase," Sydney Steinberg ('19), a Lorca employee, said.

For all of these reasons and more, we need to take a serious look at ourselves and assess the true importance of this habit and decide whether it is worth the consequences.

**Bottom Line:** The Donut Delight trend has taken over Westhill, yet drinking coffee everyday may be harmful in more ways than one.

Graphic by **Angela Ramirez** / Graphic Designer

Please submit op-eds and letters to the editor in  
Addison Magrath's mailbox in Room 224  
or email them to [westwordwhs@gmail.com](mailto:westwordwhs@gmail.com).



# Westhill welcomes new security guard

**Olivia Berni**  
Staff Writer

This April, Principal Rinaldi officially announced that Gloria Whitaker, also known as Mrs. Tee, would be joining the Westhill Community as a security guard.

Previously working at Cloonan Middle School, Mrs. Tee is excited to now be working with the kids at Westhill. Currently, she is handling security in the Freshman Wing. She knows many of the freshmen that came from Cloonan, which she says makes her job even more enjoyable.

Many of the kids who knew her previously are happy to see a friendly face as well.

"Most of all of the students from Cloonan come to Westhill, so I want to be a part of their high school [experience] to maintain [the connection with the] kids coming in from the from the middle school," Mrs. Tee said.

She is focused on maintaining the

security for her previous students and new ones too.

"It is pretty cool to see an old friend from Cloonan. It brings back many memories from Cloonan, the good days," Michael Salantino ('22) said.

Although most of the freshmen have adjusted to high school, it does not hurt to have another adult they can count on, especially one that they may have already grown close to.

"It was fun [seeing her back]; she is great. I am excited I get to be with her for some more years," Kaylise Turner ('22) said.

As Mrs. Tee herself works on the transition, she has big plans for the future of Westhill.

"When I came to Westhill, I felt as if I could make a difference. I can save the kids from doing the wrong things and that will make me happy... technically I am here to make sure the kids are safe inside this building," Mrs. Tee said.

Not only does she want to make sure the students are safe at Westhill, she

wants to see them thrive and grow.

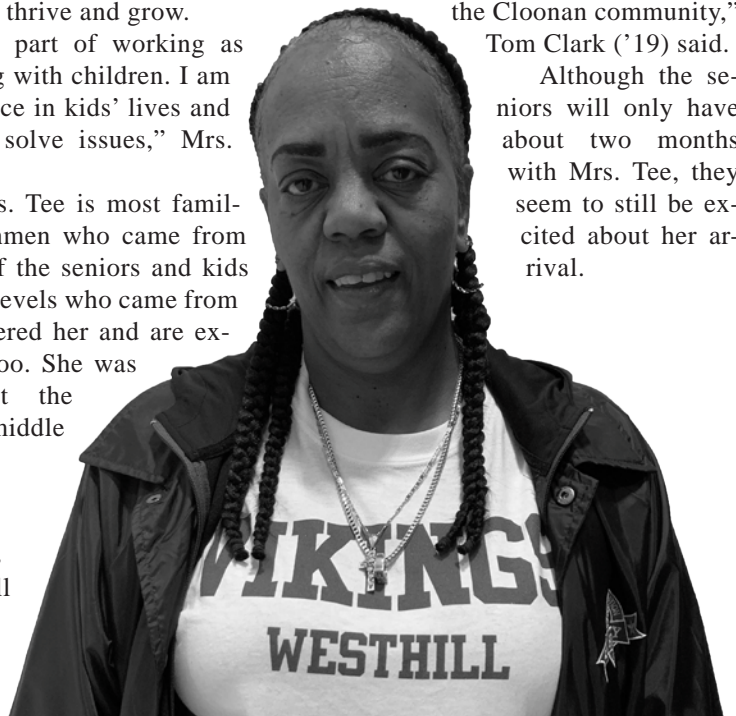
"My favorite part of working as security is dealing with children. I am making a difference in kids' lives and helping students solve issues," Mrs. Tee said.

Although Mrs. Tee is most familiar with the freshmen who came from Cloonan, many of the seniors and kids from other grade levels who came from Cloonan remembered her and are excited to see her too. She was popular amongst the kids back in middle school.

"I was very excited when I found out she was coming to Westhill because she was a fun and loving contribution to

the Cloonan community," Tom Clark ('19) said.

Although the seniors will only have about two months with Mrs. Tee, they seem to still be excited about her arrival.



**NEW SECURITY GUARD** Mrs. Tee has recently joined the Westhill community after previously working at Cloonan Middle School.

Photo by **Justin Gonzalez** / Photographer.

# The outcome of this year's Science Fair

**Lexi Boccuzzi**  
Reporter

The Westhill Science Fair is one of the school's well known competitions to show off the best and brightest the student have to offer. This year the school held the event on April 11 in the Finch Cafeteria.

Students in all grades were encouraged by their science teachers to participate in the fair. They worked in pairs or individually to research a variety of different topics and create an entire presentation.

Topics ranged from the impact cell phones and electronic devices have on plant growth, to the aftermath of a ketogenic diet.

The fair is run by Mrs. McNamara, the Head of the Science Department, who made it a point to bring back the fair when she took over.

"When I became the Head of the Science Department it was my dream to bring back the Science Fair. Westhill had a Science Fair back when I started working here in 2004. I do take the full responsibility for running it. There are high schools around that have students doing research at a deeper level and my hope is to encourage that here at Westhill," McNamara said.

There are 27 volunteer judges who help to pick the winners each year including Mrs. McNamara, Mr. Capriotti and Mr. Otterspoor. Each student is judged six different times by separate judges and given a point score.

The participants must present their project to each of the judges who then use the points to score them based on scientific content, literature study, experimental procedure and data

who received honorable mentions who were given 50 dollar prizes. All price amounts were split depending on whether participants worked alone or as a pair.

their project with the judges. I do feel like it was a valuable experience because I learned a lot about an interesting topic as well as a lot of skills regarding presentation and data analysis,"

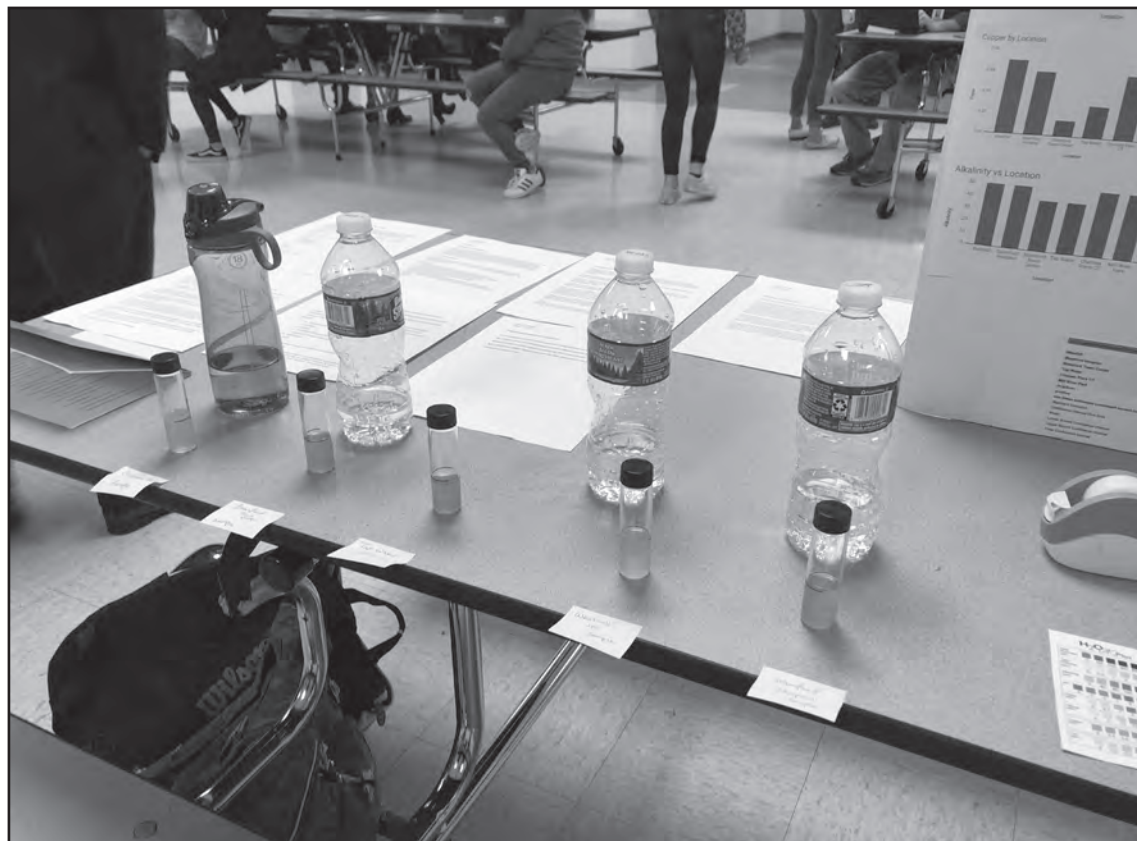
Drinking?" in which they did investigative research into various public water supplies in Stamford and what kind of contaminants were in the water.

"The science fair was a good opportunity to apply the lessons of chemistry learned inside of the classroom to outside the classroom by testing prevalent issues," Bansal said.

Danya Taub ('21) received second place at the fair for her work on comparing chemical and organic fertilizers. Third place went to Shayna Finkel ('21) and Talia Kunin ('21) for their project "Best Sunglass Lens for Blocking UV Rays" which concluded that all sunglasses, no matter how expensive they are, are protecting your eyes from the sun equally.

"I feel strongly that we need to take Science out of the classroom. We have to mentor our own students to be the great scientists of tomorrow and I want our students to see the importance of what they are learning in the classroom. My students will tell you that I want for them to see how science is truly a subject that gives them so much fundamental knowledge for what they will be facing in the world today," McNamara said.

The science fair proved to be a valuable experience for everyone involved: teachers, judges, and students alike. Participants gained knowledge about applied science, the fulfillment of a completed independent research project, and the reward of a job well done.



**FIRST PLACE PROJECT** Gaurov Bansal ('21) and Tejas Vermani's ('21) project on water quality throughout Stamford won first place.

Photo by **Lexi Boccuzzi** / Reporter.

recording, results, discussions and conclusions, as well as their overall presentation. The winners are then chosen by who has the highest average score.

Each placing team was also rewarded with cash prizes. The first place winners received 250 dollar, second place 200 dollars and third place 150 dollars. There were also a few teams

The fair also included a separate competition for non-English speaking students who did a research only project. The eight students who participated in this were organized and mentored by Mr. Capriotti.

"To win or do well, one would have had to not only follow the rubric given to us, but do an exemplary job discussing

Talia Kunin ('21) said.

McNamara, who also teaches Honors Chemistry, required that her students participate in the Science Fair. Some of her students took home a few of the top prizes at the fair this year.

Gaurov Bansal ('21) and Tejas Vermani ('21) won first place for their project "Dirty Water: What Are We Really



## Good Month Bad Month

Column by  
**Sanjana Nayak**  
& **Jessica Matloub**



### Good Month for...

**Neuroscience Research** In the past, it was thought that losing brain function meant death. However, scientists—most of whom were at the Yale School of Medicine—managed to contradict this popular theory with extensive research in New Haven, CT. Researchers have restored limited cellular activity to brains removed from dead pigs. While the brains did not regain anything resembling consciousness, blood vessels in the pigs’ brains began to function. The work is still in its beginning stages and has no immediate implications for treatment of brain injuries in humans.



**Virginia Cavaliers** On April 8, the Virginia Cavaliers dominated the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament championship against the Texas Tech Red Raiders with a 85-77 triumph. The previous year, the Cavaliers were discouraged after having lost to the University of Maryland Terrapins. During this last game, they went into overtime ending with Cavalier Jarrett Culver making a swift layup with 35 seconds remaining and Norense Odiase landing two free throws. After this intense overtime, the team finally earned their first national title.



**Tiger Woods** On April 14, Tiger Woods won his 5th Masters title and 15th major tournament after a decade of personal and professional adversity. At 43, Wood’s victory has brought him back to the top of the sports world. Not only does this victory entitle fame for Tiger Woods, it also marks a monumental personal triumph after his publicized divorce in 2009. This victory also made Woods the second oldest winner of the Masters Tournament. As he put on the winner’s green jacket for a 5th time, he said something everyone knew but might have forgotten: “It fits.”

### Bad Month for...

**Stop & Shop** The supermarket chain went on strike on April 11 after an unfulfilling contract was initiated. The contract revealed the company’s plan to reduce wage benefits and insurance rates the staff receives. Without sufficient compensation, employees began to rally across over 240 Stop & Shop locations in New England. These individuals believed they deserved better treatment. The strike ended on April 21 with a tentative agreement in place. Over the 11 days, the company lost around 100 million dollars in business, perishable products, and supply chain costs.



**Hot Air Balloon Festival** For the past 40 years, the University of Rhode Island has held a Hot Air Balloon Festival on their athletic fields. Organizers of this popular festival announced on Wednesday, April 24 that 2018’s festival would be the last. The cost of the event became too difficult to fund and the university lacked the ability to continue to host it. Without a site or proper funding, the festival has been shutdown. The festival consisted of balloons, concerts, and other attractions such as trapeze stunts and wildlife shows. This festival will be missed by many that have attended in the past.



**Opioid Epidemic** Doctors in eight states including Alabama and Ohio have been charged with schemes to illegally distribute millions of pain pills. Opioid prescriptions were exchanged for sexual activity in some cases, and for cash with an added “concierge fee” in others. One doctor was accused of prescribing opioids to Facebook friends. These cases involve approximately 350,000 opioid prescriptions and more than 32 million pills. This investigation was a part of more aggressive federal law enforcement on catching corrupt medical professionals as the opioid epidemic rages on.

Illustrations by **Michelle Chau** (top right & left) & **Neeka Baclayon** (bottom left & right) / Illustrators.

## Stamford businesses help Westhill clubs and sports

**Tamar Bellete**  
Assistant Managing Editor

Many Westhill sports teams and clubs host diner nights or activities in Stamford restaurants to raise money. It has become a different and effective way for families and friends to support their Vikings.

Table 104 on Long Ridge Road allows the coaches of Westhill sports to bartend and then keep the tips from that night for their sports.

On Sunday March 31, Table 104 hosted the Westhill Boys Varsity Lacrosse Team. The five coaches were bartenders that night, while the boys were able to enjoy a night out with their teammates.

“The coaches did well. They got a lot of tips, and really shared the Westhill experience with the alumni and parents,” Nick Donohue (’20) said.

On April 9, the Northstar Playmakers held a fundraiser at Westover Pizzeria. They called this Northstar/Westover Day, and it turned out to be very successful. All one had to do to donate was order lunch or dinner, and as long as Northstar Playmakers was mentioned in their order, 20 percent went to the program.

“It is really great to have support from everyone at Westhill even if they are not part of Northstar because the support and fundraisers help with sets as well as costumes and money for the program,” Brooke Boccuzzi (’20) said.

Northstar Playmakers and their Tech Crew have also made diner nights at Parkway Diner a common occurrence. On April 2, they sang while serving customers at the diner. They took all the tips, and used this money to not only go towards their Spring Musical, but to also raise money for their competition at the New England Drama Festival.

“We try to make an original fundraiser by mimicking The Stardust Diner in New York City. Broadway performers waitress there and it has been a tradition

in the club for a long time,” Divya Gada (’20) said.

The members of the Westhill Band also use restaurant fundraisers to support their program too. They are very committed and not only travel across the country for their competitions, but they work just as hard as the other clubs and athletic teams in terms of fundraising. Judy’s Bar and Grill has been more than willing to help the band. All tips went towards their numerous competitions, instruments, and uniforms. None of the money they raised went to waste, so fundraising as always was a great option to raise money for the program.

“The fundraiser was to support the band, specifically Winter Percussion for our trip to Dayton, Ohio for world championships. It was a lot of fun and it helped the band out a lot,” Veronica Misiak (’20) said.

Many students around Stamford enjoy Elm Street Diner for not only their cozy, family friendly environment, but also for their extravagant milkshakes and great quality food. This is why the Westhill class of 2020 chooses to hold fundraisers there.

The Junior Class has also hosted an annual fundraiser at Elm Street Diner, featuring a special Westhill-themed milkshake.

Also, Best Buddies has used Chipotle in Riverside, CT for their club fundraisers. All proceeds go to the Best Buddies Prom. The club received all the tips that came in that night.

“It was a fun way to raise money, since not many programs have fundraisers at Chipotle. The event was a success, and hopefully, we can do it again there soon,” Malina Lasicki (’20), Vice President, said.

Westhill sports and clubs do not plan on getting rid of these traditions because not only are they bringing in money, it is bringing the school closer together outside of school property.



**MAKING DOUGH** Northstar Playmaker participants waited on tables at the Parkway Diner to raise money for their Connecticut Drama Association show, “A Voice in the Dark: A Salem Story.” Members wore witch hats to add to the spooky feel.

Photos contributed by **Elizabeth Watkinson** / Feature Editor.

# The morality of assisted suicide

**Sara Gatz**  
Staff Writer

Euthanasia is the act of ending a terminally ill person's life in order to relieve them of their suffering with their consent. It is also known as Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS).

This is offered when a person is dying of a terminal illness, or diagnosed with a life threatening or altering disease, and they do not want to progress as they continue to suffer.

Different countries around the world have laws and stigmas surrounding the concept of PAS. Some countries classify it as murder or homicide, while others consider it to be humane.

According to [bbcnews.org](http://bbcnews.org), in the Netherlands and Belgium, euthanasia has been legalized. However, it is still considered homicide but as long as certain legal requires are met, it is not punishable.

For example in New Zealand, PAS is a crime punishable up to 14

years in prison.

"As long as the person is terminal, and proper protocols are followed, I think it is fine. It is better than allowing someone to suffer," Mrs. Taylor, social studies teacher, said.

In the United States, it is legal in only seven states; California, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, New Jersey, Washington, and Hawaii. Also, Montana is on the verge of legalizing it. There are multiple organizations pushing to make all 50 states offer legalized assisted suicide.

In the past, New York has had talk of passing a bill on PAS. This bill talks about creating an act that will aid terminally ill patients in a request for dying with the use of medication and medical assistance.

It would give patients who have almost no chance of living, the opportunity to die on their own terms.

The idea of accepting PAS as an option for patients

varies. For some people, they do not agree for religious reasons.

"I am against it. Suicide is not a natural way to die. There is no reason for a physician, a person who brings life, to assist in someone's choice to end theirs. God did not put us on earth in order for us to kill ourselves, no matter the circumstance," Noam Haron ('20) said.

It can also be a moral decision. People who have been through different life experiences can see it in different ways.

"It gives the wrong message to people. When you have

gone through the worst, like chemotherapy, radiation, and what feels like endless amounts of treatments, you are going to make a decision that impacts people around you. Your family will have to live with that decision. When you feel all hope is lost, you will make a choice that you did not have to make," Mrs. Cutolo, health teacher and former emergency room nurse, said.

Today, there are strict laws surrounding PAS. Even in states where PAS is legal, there is a strict list of requirements to be able to go through with the decision.

"Patients must meet stringent eligibility requirements, including being an adult, state resident, mentally competent, and having a terminal diagnosis with a six month prognosis as confirmed by two licensed physicians. Only the patient him or herself can make the oral requests for medication, in

person," according to [deathwithdignity.org](http://deathwithdignity.org).

The New York law would be no different. It would have multiple regulations and conditions, and the patient would be required to have a limited chance of survival.

The patient must fit those requirements before being granted their request.

Assisting a person in their wish to end their life would only bring the inevitable sooner. Forbidding the option will only prolong death for no reason.

"[PAS] is something that should be used carefully. I believe it is acceptable to use in situations such as terminal cancer, where the patient has the choice to avoid a painful death," Alexandra Gliga ('20) said.

It is more immoral to take away the option than give it. Although moral and religious reasons are factors as to why people believe PAS is inhumane, the option should eventually be open to all under dire circumstances.

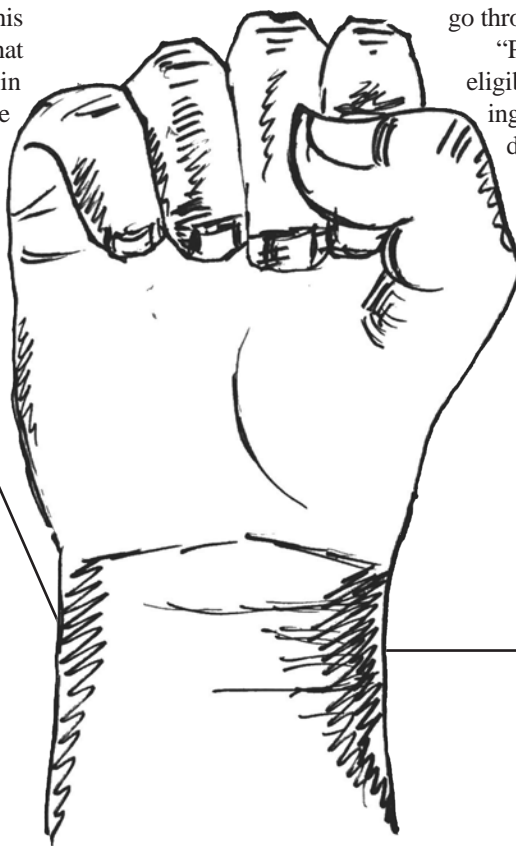


Illustration by **Tamar Frydman** / Head Illustrator.

# What makes a good presidential candidate

**Hannah Nekritz**  
Contributor

With just over a year until the 2020 Presidential Election, America's campaign season has begun.

Currently, there are over 22 Democratic and Republican candidates who have declared their intention to run in 2020.

Approaching a new presidential election in these politically polarized times, it is important to ask just what makes a good presidential candidate.

Being President of the United States is no small job. It is a role that comes with tremendous power over American military resources, the economy, and our ties to foreign nations.

Because of this, it is absolutely necessary that the individual, often regarded as the leader of the free world, is qualified to assume the title.

An educational background in government and economics, paired with practical experience in government is highly

beneficial for such a demanding job. This certainly would not bar someone without this experience from serving in the role, but it should be encouraged.

Other qualifications, such as military experience, can be helpful as well.

Regardless, on the most fun-

their past that they are not proud of, but being honest is better than covering it up for people to find later," Austin Tovar ('22) said.

Particularly with career politicians, finding records of past statements and actions can often prove politically damaging for a candidate. Yet, the more honest a

After all, voters are looking for a president that they can trust to defend their interests, and the nation as a whole.

Other key characteristics of a strong presidential candidate, regardless of party, include integrity, knowledge of the issues, and the capacity to stand by one's views.

('19) said.

Ultimately, political party should not matter as much when assessing the strength of a political candidate.

More important is viewpoint on the issue, as this will determine a president's actions while in office. The reason that a candidate's ability to stick by their view is so significant, is because their stance on the issues determines how we vote.

For a candidate to earn the favor of voters, and of the American people, we must be able to trust that they will do what they promise.

"A good presidential candidate would include someone that has good leadership qualities, an individual who exemplifies the ideals of the American people," James Grosso ('21) said.

Thus, in general, it seems that the best candidates for president are honest, have integrity, and adhere to the promises that they make. The potential for strong leadership is also dependent upon knowledge and experience.

**A good presidential candidate is someone who is honest and fair with the people. Everyone makes mistakes and has things in their past that they are not proud of, but being honest is better than covering it up for people to find later."**

**—Austin Tovar ('22)**

damental level, running for president is the process of applying for a job with the U.S. Just as with any job, relevant education and job experience is entirely necessary.

Beyond this, there are certain key traits that voters look for in a potential president.

"A good presidential candidate is someone who is honest and fair with the people. Everyone makes mistakes and has things in

candidate is with the public about their beliefs and their actions, the more we are able to trust a candidate.

Regarding the last presidential election, Secretary Hillary Clinton lost large amounts of supporters after an email scandal. Clinton used her private email server for official communications rather than using official State Department email accounts maintained on secure federal servers.

Surveys conducted by [gallup.com](http://gallup.com) and other parties indicate that voters look for a candidate who will stand by their position on the issue, and not waver back and forth. Such traits as these further support the concept that voters need to be able to trust a candidate.

"A presidential candidate should be literate, empathetic, honest, and able to see from another's perspective," Ethan Carr



# The cost of plastic surgery

**Marta Zach**  
Staff Writer

Just decades ago, surgically changing one's body would have been deemed unimaginable. Today, people can change virtually every feature. Plastic surgery is becoming increasingly popular according to The American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Plastic surgery, in the broad sense, is the reconstruction and change of the body, appearance and function-wise. These procedures are subjective. In the end, it is up to the discretion of the individual undergoing the procedure.

Plastic surgery is often associated with celebrities and wealthy people wishing to alter their appearance through tummy tucks and nose jobs.

Some celebrities who have gone under the knife include Kylie Jenner with lip injections and Jennifer Aniston who had a nose job. Just as often, it is everyday people making essential or sometimes even crucial body modifications necessary for their survival or self-esteem.

Reconstructive surgery repairs imperfections or makes crucial alterations, such as birth defects or injuries from an accident.

"People have a right to look

however they want and retain the right to alter their.

For some people, plastic surgery corrects a change in appearance due to congenital birth defects or a traumatic incident, and for others a simple desire to control a certain aspect of their appearance," Bintou Bane ('20) said.

Cosmetic surgery is the procedure that enhances and shape body parts individuals are not satisfied with. These are optional procedures which include breast augmentations, liposuction, and forehead reductions.

There is a lot of stigma around the "cosmetic" part of plastic surgery. Botched and exaggerated surgeries have given these procedures a bad name. While plastic surgery among teenagers might not seem common, there are various procedures that teenagers and young adults undergo.

There are necessary reconstructive surgeries such as a cleft lip repair, but some consider these cosmetic surgeries as well because the individual can live without it.

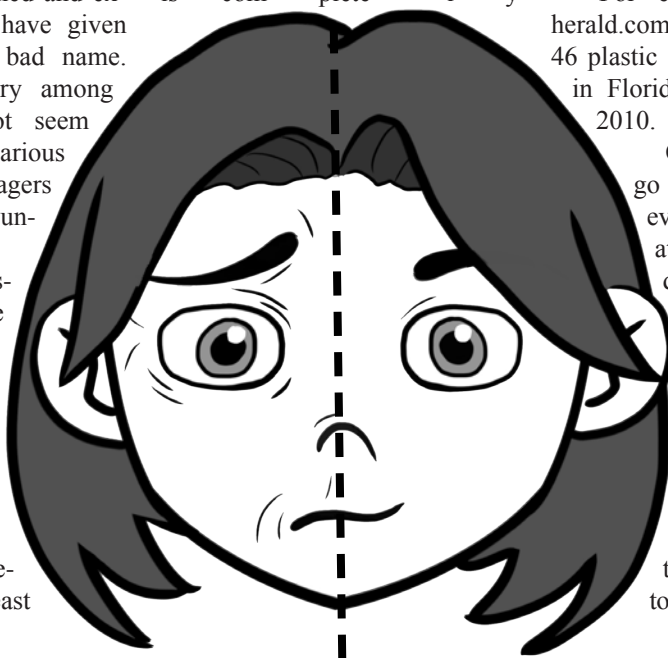
For example, a female might get a breast

reduction to ease back pain, or another might get a rhinoplasty—a nose job—due to breathing problems or a confidence issue.

Ryan Neinstein, M.D. a New York plastic surgeon, said to womenshealth.com, that "it does not make sense to perform elective surgery on a body that is still growing and changing."

Growth spurts and radical body changes often occur in teens, so any plastic surgery considerations ought to be made after the person stops growing.

"I would not...want to change myself. I do not think it is complete."



immoral. It is a decision based on what a person wants and if that makes them happy then they should do it," Lily Carroll ('20) said.

In addition, when considering plastic surgery, one should take into account what they hope to achieve. Plastic surgery, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, does not do as much as people think it does in regards to self-confidence.

Plastic surgery comes with multiple risks—just like any major procedure. There has been major damage and even deaths during or following cosmetic surgeries.

For example, the miamiherald.com reported there were 46 plastic surgery related deaths in Florida between 2000 and 2010.

One wishing to undergo a procedure needs to evaluate the risks associated with major procedures, especially non-critical ones such as cosmetic plastic surgery. Besides death, risks include scarring, infection, bleeding, and blood clots.

If someone has the money and means to safely undergo plastic

surgery, they are entitled to any procedure they wish—whether it be a necessary reconstruction or a desired body change.

"If it makes you happy then go for it. It is fine to a certain point," Jose Ramirez ('20) said.

People make changes all the time—gaining or losing weight, dying hair, and putting on makeup. Plastic surgery is certainly more extreme and permanent, yet it is a change that is consciously made, and entirely under the discretion of the maker.

Surgery always has risks, but so are many things humans do. While plastic surgery might not solve one's problems or completely dissipate any self-confidence issues, it can be a step towards being content.

According to plasticsurgery.org some types of plastic surgery have gone up more than 40 percent since 2000. With 327.2 million people in the U.S. only 7.23 million people have used botox. The world is not going to become overrun by lip fillers and breast augmentations.

Appearance is something that many people pay a great amount of attention to, since humans are visual creatures after all. Some might be content with their features, while others go about life feeling that they lost the genetic lottery.

Graphic by **Angela Ramirez** / Graphic Designer.

# The importance of self-defense

**Rachel Plotzky**  
Print Executive Editor

Self-defense is defined as an individual protecting themselves through the use of physical force. In a violent situation, people are expected to only use a sufficient level of violence in order to defend themselves.

According to criminal.findlaw.com, "as a general rule, self-defense only justifies the use of force when it is used in response

to an immediate [physical] threat."

Individuals having a mutual understanding of this rule is an important piece of self-defense. Self-defense is only for saving yourself in the face of danger, not to hurt others in an aggressive manner. A proportional response is the expected standard.

"Nowadays you never know if you will find yourself in a situation where you have to defend yourself. Just learning basic ways to protect yourself will al-

ways be worth the effort even though hopefully you will never have to use it," Ryan Kipp ('19) said.

According to pewresearch.org, violent crimes per 100,000 people have fallen from 747.1 to 382.9 from 1993 to 2017.

However, the fear of being attacked has not decreased. The same research states that people believe that violent crime rates have increased in the last 14 years.

It is important for people to feel safe when walking down the street at night or when confronted by a stranger. Learning self-defense would aid in decreasing the fear around being attacked.

This fear becomes more apparent for students as they get older and even go to college where they have the comfort of the blue light system, but knowing self-defense could provide more relief.

According to criminal.findlaw.org, "self-defense can also be used as a criminal defense. It is not an excuse but the "[defense] can lessen the charges and penalties involved."

Not all states are equal with how heavily they weigh this defense but the states look at if defendants just defused the

threat or began to retaliate which makes the self-defense tactic irrelevant.

Many believe that knowing karate or taekwondo would be enough to protect one on the street but believing this is a mistake. Real violence is unpredictable, chaotic, and fast. Knowing calculated moves to specific actions and waiting for the response of your opponent could be life threatening in a real violent situation.

Usually when an individual is attacked they are at some type of disadvantage. It may be the attackers size, strength, number of opponents, or them being armed. Due to this unknown factor, the self-defense one knows must be backed by training and functional strategies.

"It is always good to protect yourself in situations that you need to. Your life could be on the line, you could need to defend yourself," Joey Belmonte ('19) said.

Functionalsellddefense.org lays out five steps to know that your self-defense techniques will be effective. The first is individuals need to practice with fully resisting and an uncooperative opponent. The second is that the actions made will work without

protective gear, mats, and full power.

The third states that it should have the ability to be applied to a range of situations where the victim does not need to know the particular attack being used to be effective. The fourth technique should limit your opponents options to counter attack or simultaneously fight back. The final is to maximize physical damage no matter the size of your opponent so they are physically unable to keep fighting.

Within Stamford itself, there is Stamford Martial Arts, Maser Na's Taekwondo Center, and many other businesses teaching self defense to the public.

"You should [know self-defense] because you never know who is out there. You do not know if someone may want to hurt you," Kylee Kurtz ('22) said.

There are many different types of self-defense that can be employed. The most common and well known include Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, Muay Thai, and Krav Maga.

All in all, everyone should learn self-defense to protect themselves incase they are attacked and as a way to feel safer no matter the situation they are in.

Graphic by **Angela Ramirez** / Graphic Designer.



## Rights for LGBTQ+ in the U.S.

**Alexandra Watkinson**  
Online Executive Editor

On June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court ruled the groundbreaking decision that no state can ban same-sex marriage, making it legal throughout the country.

For many members of the LGBTQ+ community, this was a revolutionary new law that promised a better future.

However, discrimination against LGBTQ+ people still exists in the U.S. with new laws, such as a ban on transgender citizens serving in the military, and major corporations, such as The Salvation Army, donating funds to anti-LGBTQ+ charities.

On a smaller scale, many LGBTQ+ people are still not accepted in U.S. society today. For the members of this community, there exist preconceptions that hinder them from being treated equally.

A lack of federal laws in place that prevent discrimination against an individual based on their gender identity or sexual orientation can be detrimental to the LGBTQ+ community.

"I think that there is always room for change and growth to make our country and government more accepting. There's always going to be people who can't accept those who are different, but a great place to start

is making sure the government is able to acknowledge LGBTQ+ people as a part of our society, because they are," Jessie Velishka ('21) said.

Stereotypes are not the only obstacle that LGBTQ+ citizens face today in the U.S., as laws in place further substantiate this discrimination.

Recently, religious exemption laws were passed by different state legislatures, permitting discrimination against people, "based on their religious or moral objections to same-sex marriage, extramarital sex, and the recognition of transgender identity," according to hrw.org.

These laws have been instated in Mississippi, and other laws like it in states such as Tennessee and Michigan. They have also left many members of the LGBTQ+ community feeling as if these new laws, "carve out space to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people in adoption and foster care, health care, and access to some goods and services," according to hrw.org.

Currently, only 19 states and Washington D.C. have laws in place preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which may allow perpetrators of LGBTQ+ discrimination to avoid persecution.

The current federal administration has not yet attempted

to eliminate these issues, but instead worsened them, as seen in recently passed legislation that takes steps backward for the LGBTQ+ community.

With the passing of the transgender military ban on January 22, "individuals who have been diagnosed with a condition known as gender dysphoria [are blocked] from serving with limited exceptions and specifies that they can serve only according to the sex they were assigned at birth," according to CNN.

Students, whether part of the LGBTQ+ or not, hold strong opinions on the current administration's approach to rights for LGBTQ+ citizens.

"I do not doubt that the U.S. is much better off on its stance for pro-gay marriage than it used to be. However, it is still far from being tolerant," Austin Tovar ('22) said.

On top of this, there are prominent corporations, such as Chick-fil-A, that donate to different anti-LGBTQ+ charities.

In 2017, Chick-fil-A donated more than 1.8 million dollars to three corporations that are explicitly homophobic, such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, a religious organization that bans employees from "homosexual acts," according to vox.com.

The fast-food chain, which is on the way to becoming, "the

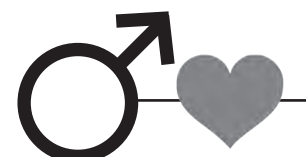
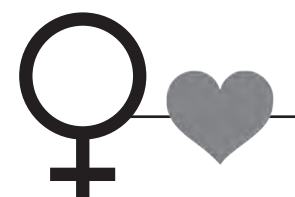
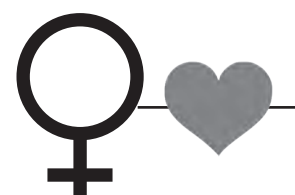
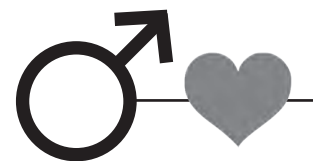
third-largest fast-food brand in the United States," according to vox.com, and their continued donations to anti-LGBTQ+ groups help spread negative actions against members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In spite of certain laws and limitations, progress continues to be made.

During the 2018 midterm elections, a number of LGBTQ+ politicians were elected, such as Jared Polis, the first openly gay man to be elected governor, Sharice Davids, the second openly lesbian member of Congress and the first openly LGBTQ+ person to represent Kansas, and Kyrsten Sinema, the first openly bisexual senator, according to elle.com.

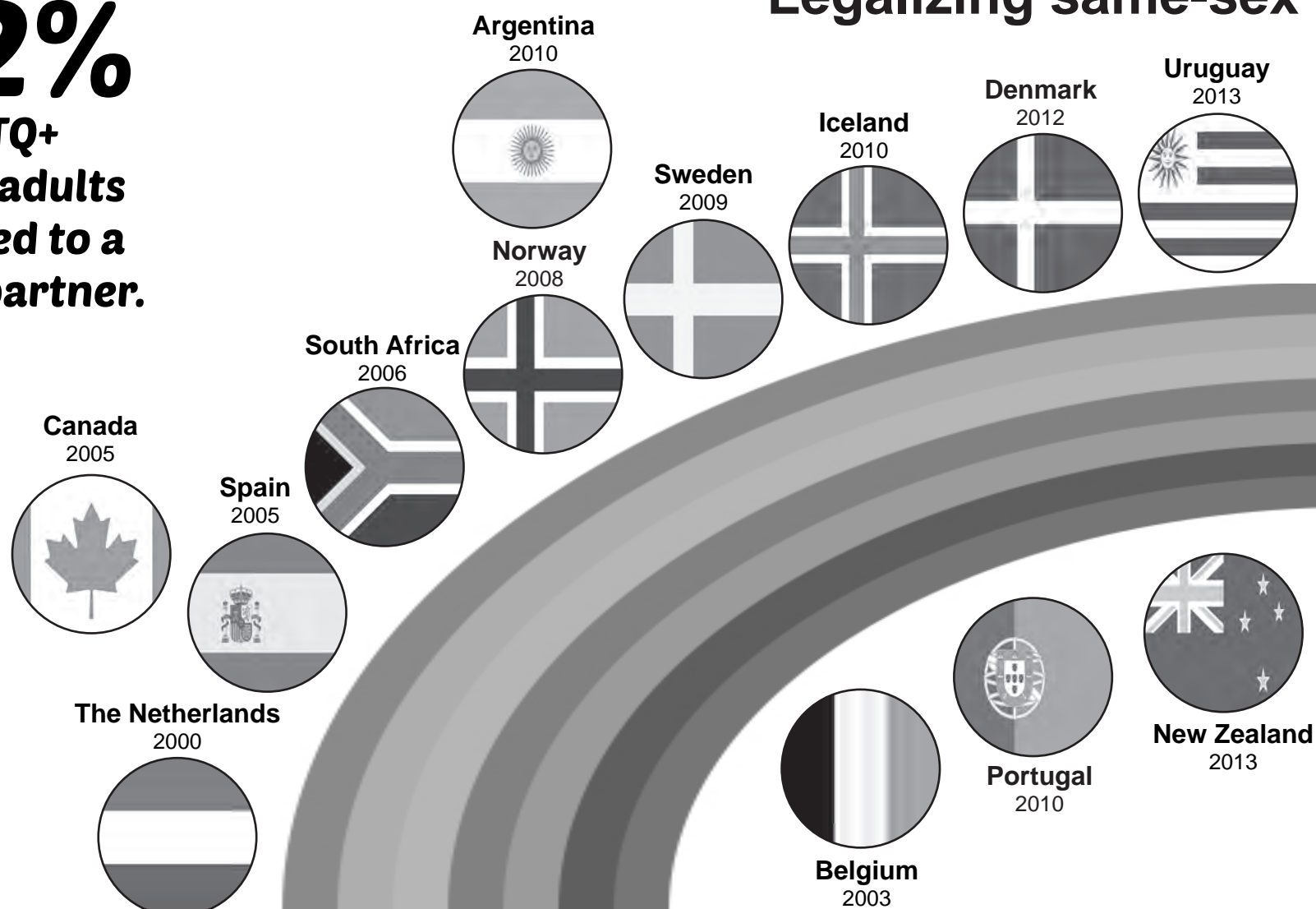
"Lately, there has been more progress than ever before in obtaining equality for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Yet, there is still so long to go until this group of people are fully integrated fairly into society and the government. I hope we can see these issues better solved in the near future," Lilah Steinberg ('21) said.

While LGBTQ+ rights may not be at the same level of equality as other global nations, the U.S. has made farther strides than many by legalizing same-sex marriage, though recently passed legislation may counteract the attainment of equality.



**10.2%**  
of LGBTQ+  
American adults  
are married to a  
same-sex partner.

## Legalizing same-sex





# LGBTQ+ laws in other countries

**Katie Gaia**  
Managing Editor

Today, LGBTQ+ rights have come the farthest in history in some nations, and the least in others. LGBTQ+ rights activists have made incredible strides in recent years worldwide, with 28 countries legalizing same-sex marriage since 2000, according to *The Washington Post*.

Despite this, some countries are headed in the opposite direction, constricting gay rights in their laws.

One country that came under fire in the news recently was Brunei, a small Southeast Asian country that passed a law on April 3 punishing homosexual sex with death by stoning, according to *CNN*.

"It is unacceptable because, especially during this [day and age], there should be equality for all people, regardless of sexual orientation. It is incredibly wrong for Brunei to impose that law that considers it a sin," Shira Cohen ('20) said.

According to *The New York Times*, the act was justified by its government by reminding the public that the nation, "like all other independent countries, enforces its own rule of laws."

This recent legislation has sparked a wave of activism outside of Brunei.

According to *theguardian.com*, dozens of protesters stood outside the Dorchester Hotel, a Brunei-owned London hotel, on April 6 to send a message to the Brunei government.

"I am surprised by this [new legislation] because even if some countries do not approve of homosexual relations, it is not right for it to be punishable to death for engaging in them," Alyssa Fish ('19) said.

Activism could also be found in the United States, when the Los Angeles City Council joined a call to boycott the Hotel Bel-Air and the Beverly Hills hotel, both owned by Brunei's government.

Though this law was shocking to many who lived in countries where same-sex marriage had been legalized, it is not uncommon in numerous nations across the world today.

Extreme legislation such as this that persecutes the LGBTQ+ community can be found in other Asian, African, and Middle Eastern countries, including Yemen, Iran, Qatar, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia.

Some countries only apply these laws to men, but a rising number have expanded their laws to include bisexual and lesbian women in recent years, according to *weforum.org*.

For instance, in Yemen, the 1994 penal code allows married

men to be sentenced to death by stoning for homosexual sex, while unmarried men can face a year in prison or whipping. While women punished by this act can face up to seven years in prison, according to *The Washington Post*.

Nigeria implemented a similar federal law that classified homosexual behavior as a felony, punishable by prison, while several states have imposed a death penalty for men. A law signed in January of 2016 made it illegal for gay people to hold a meeting or form clubs.

Many of these countries use Sharia law, Islamic law based on the Quran, the holy book of Islam. However, interpretations of Sharia can vary vastly, prompting more progressive interpreters to call the laws archaic and unnecessary.

Despite the extreme laws enacted by some nations against the LGBTQ+ community, other countries have loosened these laws and some have even eliminated them.

"The legalization of same-sex marriage in multiple countries is definitely a step in the right direction and it is improving the rights [of many people]," Abby Sottile ('19) said.

For instance, according to *The Washington Post*, "though voters in Taiwan rejected same-sex marriage in a referendum in 2018, the vote was non-binding

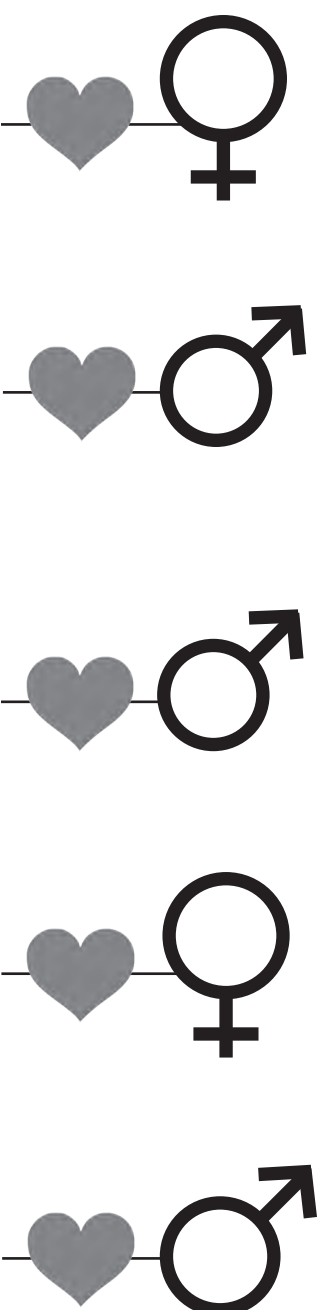
and the country is on course to become the first Asian country to legalize gay unions, in accordance with a court ruling in 2017."

Taiwan's growing acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community provides a stark contrast with its surrounding Asian countries, whose views are much less tolerant.

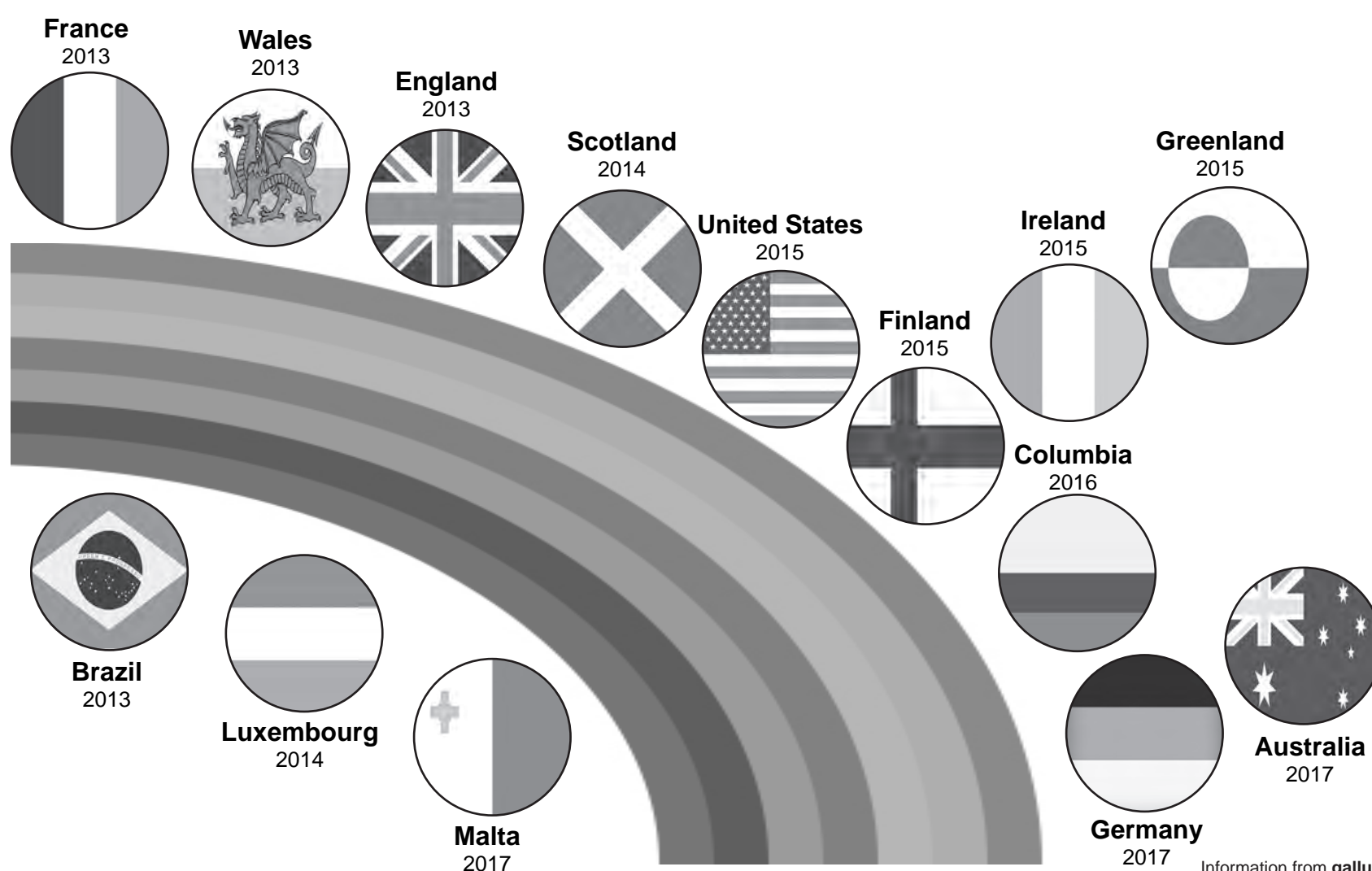
Additionally, countries around the world have made massive strides by electing openly gay politicians. It is often difficult for gay politicians to win elections due to the underlying homophobia many people retained. It has been seen in various countries, from Member of Parliament Mike Waters in South Africa in 1999 to Jóhanna Sigurdardóttir in 2009, Iceland's first female Prime Minister and the first openly gay head of government in the world, according to *usnews.com*.

Serbia, a traditionally highly conservative Eastern European country, elected Ana Brnabic in 2016 to serve as the nation's Prime Minister, making her the country's first female and openly lesbian Prime Minister of Serbia.

Though many countries are farther from granting equality to the LGBTQ+ community than others and are only continuing to constrict their laws surrounding it, strides can be seen in other nations around the world in numerous forms, from legislation to election of homosexual politicians.



## marriage around the world



Images courtesy of [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org), [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com), [wikipedia.org](https://wikipedia.org), & [publicdomainpictures.net](https://publicdomainpictures.net). Information from [gallup.com](https://gallup.com) & [pewforum.org](https://pewforum.org).





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Off-site Testing at the School	Possibly.	Always available in Stamford multiple times a month since 2005 - <b>And always will be!</b>	
Customer Service	Questions, phone calls, and DMV paperwork usually handled by a corporate office or a branch office in another town, generally only by phone. Some schools do not generate DMV CS-1 certificates in Stamford. VERY limited office hours in Stamford, if at all.	We're almost <b>ALWAYS</b> open – in person or by phone. All phone calls, certificates, and paperwork handled in Stamford. No phone queues or customer service reps, we deliver <b>REAL</b> customer care with our dedicated Stamford staff. We invite parents into our facility, and offer training and support to ensure the time spent driving with your teen is productive.	
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# **The Westword** Supplement

## **ADULTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS P. 12-13**



## **SUBSTANCES AND STUDENTS**

### **THE EFFECT ON STUDENT LIVES P. 14**





# LET'S TALK ABOUT DRUGS

## TEACHERS ON SUBSTANCE USE

## STUDENTS WEIGH IN ON DRUG USE

**Yulia Lozynska**  
Staff Writer

As teenagers enter high school, they become exposed to a variety of drugs. This is when many try drugs for the first time if they have not already. Parents, teachers, and students can see drug addictions forming every day.

Today, companies are selling vape disposables, such as Juuls or wax pens (a vaporizer pen specifically designed to vaporize THC concentrates).

According to therecoveryvillage.com, high school seniors are about as likely to smoke weed as they are to drink. In the past year, 35.1 percent of 12th grade students have smoked pot, and six percent say they use marijuana every day.

Center4research.org reports that a 2017 study found that non-smoking adults were four times more likely to start smoking traditional cigarettes after only 18 months of vaping.

Also, nearly 3,300 teens try marijuana for the first time every day, it is an undeniable problem that is impacting high schoolers everywhere.

These statistics can be appalling to many incoming high school freshmen or parents that are thinking about their children getting older. Drugs have become a larger part of the high school experience and vaping and smoking is becoming increasingly popular.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports a similar decline, with 4.3 percent fewer middle schoolers and 15.8 percent fewer high schoolers admitting to smoking cigarettes between 2011 and 2017.

This decline is seen in a positive light by most because it means that fewer people are getting addicted to cigarettes at a young age or at all. However, vaping or smoking marijuana seems to have replaced cigarette use.

All the different flavors that Juul pods come in are a big part of the reason why teenagers are latching onto these products. Some flavors include mango, mint, and creme.

"[Smoking at school] is ridiculous. I do not understand why you need a drug at seven in the morning to get your day started. I live in a whole different generation and my generation would not do that. I personally have not caught anyone but my co-workers have," Ms. Birch, security guard, said.

Drugs can be found anywhere, high schoolers can find drugs through a friend or through word of mouth.

"Bathrooms in the 200s are always crowded with students Juuling, smoking, etc. Sometimes students that want to enter the bathroom cannot because it is too crowded," Mr. Temelini, business teacher, said.

Many adults, especially teachers and parents, become worried when they notice a change in a student or their child.

"Parents should make sure their kids understand what Juuling really is and have an honest discussion about why it is dangerous in an effort to counteract the messages delivered by attractive advertising, social media posts, and peer pressure," Dr. Shwetha Gurram, a family medicine physician with Penn State Health, said.

Though some parents have no idea, or have trouble believing that their child is doing drugs, others believe that parents have a big impact on their children's drug use.

Problems at home and poor relationships with parents and teachers can cause teenagers to become extremely stressed, prompting them to rely on drugs to help them escape from reality. As this use continues, students can become

dependent on drugs when they are feeling down.

Though students have found their way around being caught, faculty and parents still catch students using drugs.

There have been kids at Westhill getting suspended for drug use, as security guards are constantly running in and out of the bathroom attempting to catch students.

"I see kids come in as freshmen, and I see a drastic change by their senior year especially in their behavior and personality. We, as teachers, can notice when their students are on something, they seem to be a little off. Usually, their heads are down, you can smell it, and their eyes are bloodshot red. We are not here to be watchdogs, we are here to educate students and help them be successful," Mrs. Cutolo, health teacher, said.

Many students feel like they need to use drugs in order to have fun, or in order to fit in with everyone rather than as a risk. Though many teachers and professionals make efforts to educate students, many do not understand the consequences smoking has on their health and their mental status down the road.

**Ruby Streett Apicella**  
Staff Writer

When entering the bathroom in the 400s during the six minutes of passing time, students will find a world of Juuls, wax pens, and many students attempting to escape the high school mindset and get high in any way they can.

Juuls, electronic cigarettes containing nicotine, and wax pens, small vaporizers the size of pens that can contain cannabis concentrate, are not the only drugs. In the past month, people were even found drinking hard alcohol in the stalls. Drugs are an unfortunate part of the Westhill Community, and the student body has a lot to say about it.

When first asked about their experience with drugs at school, most people were hesitant and unsure of how to answer. Due to the nature of the topic, *The Westword* granted anonymity in the effort to get to a clearer student perspective, skewed or not.

"I have done a lot of drugs on campus, but I do not regret any of it. The trick is being slick enough to not get caught," John said.

Students who use drugs in school know how to go around the rules of the school system by getting high in bathrooms and in hiding spots and keeping it under wraps.

When asked if they see drugs every day, one student responded saying that drugs are so common, they can be spotted every period.

"Drugs are all around. Anytime you walk into a bathroom, there is at least one person who has some type of device to give them a buzz. Previously, the majority of drugs at school came from the senior class, but now, it has spread around the whole school. Even freshmen are stoned in class," Bill said.

Although a wide variety of substances are used among the many different groups at Westhill, the most common one was unanimously agreed upon: nicotine.

"I would say about 70 percent of people in this school Juul. Although you can find a lot of kids high in class, more Juul at school because it keeps their highs consistent and present," Joe said.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, there has been a 78 percent increase in Juul usage for high school students since 2017, as now 20.8 percent of students use a Juul in school.

Within the group of individuals that were interviewed, a small few mentioned that they had never encountered drugs at school at all, and were embarrassed to talk about the subject.

"I have never seen drugs at school, but that is probably because I choose not to associate with those type of people," Mike said.

Not only are people under the influence at school, but some students said that there is a surprisingly large number of "plugs," or drug dealers, located at Westhill.

"This school is crazy. There are potheads everywhere. People hotbox their cars in the parking lot and I know of more drugs dealers than I can count," Dan said.

A hotbox is smoking marijuana in an airtight area to maximize the effects of the drug.

One student mentioned that there are certain low-key locations where drug transactions occur, and there are so many different people who are able to supply that everyone knows their name and their business.

Security is often forced to kick everyone out of the bathrooms regardless of whether they are smoking or not. It even results in the bathrooms being shut down completely if the issue becomes bad enough. This is distressing to the entire school, as people have been forced to take time out of their day to find a different bathroom.

This upsets the student body because even if students are not involved in drug usage, something as simple as bathroom usage is compromised.

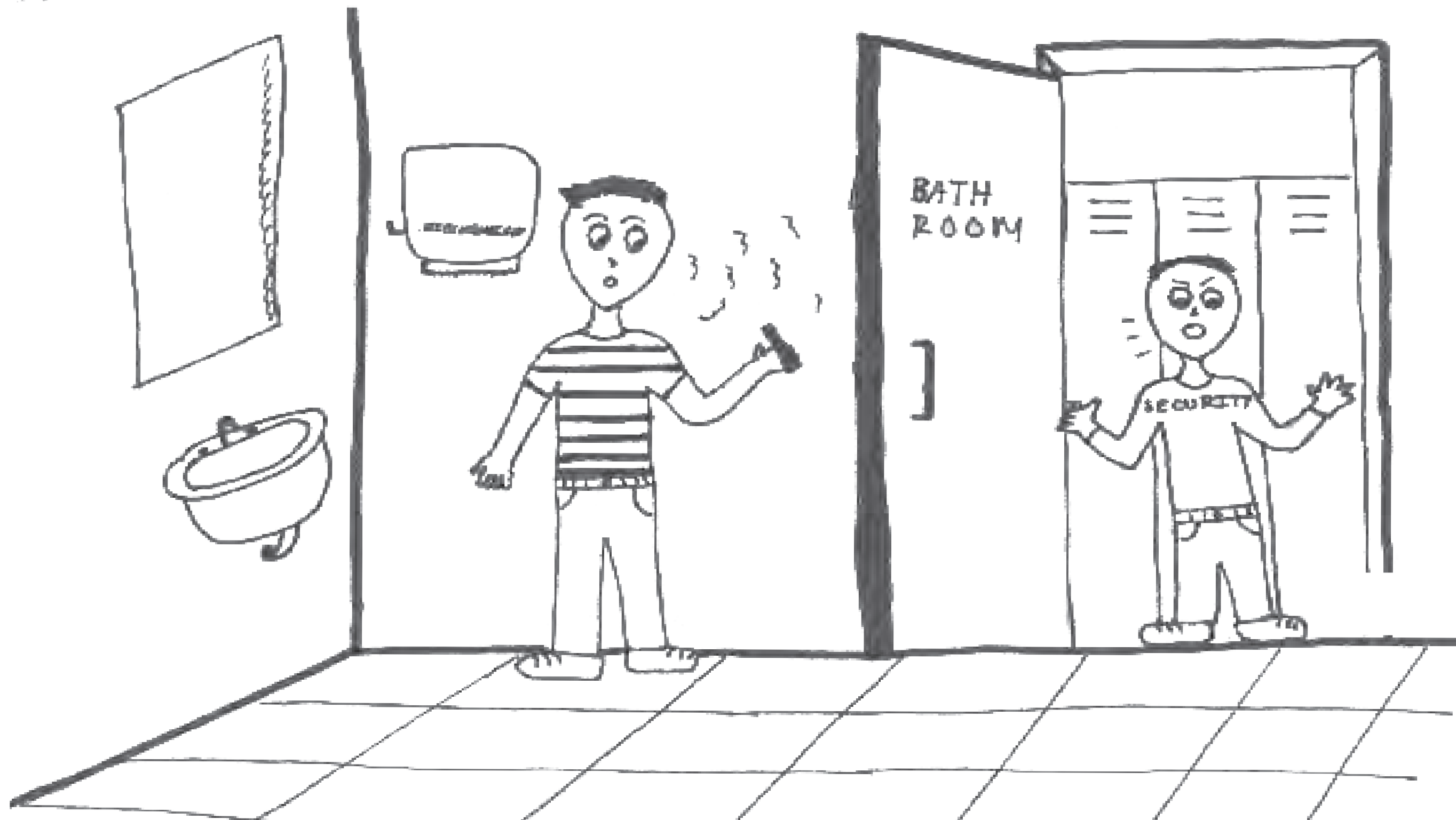
"It is kind of annoying when I have to use the bathroom but I cannot because there are girls blowing smoke right into my face. All I want to do is pee but there are security guards yelling in saying that everyone has to leave. I should not have to go without using the bathrooms because of the people trying to get high," David said.

One of the most questionable things about students and their desire to feel a buzz was why they choose to do it in school and not at least wait until they got home. When asked why people do this, most said it was because it is difficult to get through the torments of teachers and workloads without it.

"You need a little bit to get through the school day. High school is too stressful, so I get high to relieve the stress," Jim said.

Trying to escape the realities of life, high schoolers often resort to drug usage, even in their classes, and Westhill is not immune to this craze.

*The names of students have been changed for their anonymity.*





# VAPING BECOMES A NEW NORM IN SCHOOL

**Sabrina Boyd**  
Staff Writer

Smoking, whether through Juuls or vape pens, appears to have become more common at Westhill than in previous years.

The reason for smoking, however, varies widely among the student population. Some students are not able to go a day or even a class period without ingesting some sort of drug. Some smoke because it may seem like a popular thing to do, while others use it as an escape from the demons they face, while some do not even do any drugs at all.

Rules implemented by Westhill that prohibit smoking on school grounds are broken blatantly by an abundance of students to fulfill some sort of personal satisfaction.

"I smoke on school grounds to chill out, be relaxed, and have a fun time," Mary said.

The reasons for taking drugs and regulated substances

"I Juul in school because it gives me a buzz, it is a break from class, and it feels good."  
—Tina

es vary from person to person.

"I Juul in school because it gives me a buzz, it is a break from class, and it feels good," Tina said.

Juuls and vapes have become very popular in the last couple of years, in part due to how easy it is to hide them in plain sight, as Juuls are small and can be mistaken for flash drives and vapes can be mistaken for pens.

"I do not Juul because it is bad, it is very cancerous," Ashley said.

Though some people are not willing to take the risk on their health by smoking, others have become so fixated on it that they cannot even go a day without it.

Juuling, however, is not consequence-free. Juuls contain nicotine, an addictive stimulant known for its presence in cigarettes.

Some students justify their addiction to Juuls by claiming that there is only a small percentage of nicotine in Juul pods, though this does not discount the fact that they are developing a nicotine ad-

diction.

The popularity of Juuls is on the rise. The sales of Juuls across the country has risen to 16.2 million dollars in 2017, according to the Center for Disease Control.

Additionally, Juul's dollar share of such sales soared to 53 percent from 16 percent at the end of 2017, according to iriworldwide.com.

There are different ways to ingest marijuana; wax pens, which are vape pens that contain herbal (THC) wax concentrates, edibles, which are anything that has been cooked with marijuana, and the traditional way of rolling a blunt. Wax pens are the most commonly used in Westhill.

"I smoke because it makes me not worry about people judging me about my body," Sarah said.

People smoke in school for various reasons, such as peer pressure, trying to fit in with a certain crowd, or to escape inner conflicts.

"I smoke because it makes me not worry about people judging me about my body," Sarah said.

"I smoke because my friends do it once a week and I do it with them," Jane said.

According to Westhill's student handbook and state law, smoking is not permitted in the building or on school grounds. Students who offer a controlled substance for sale or distribution on or off of school grounds must be brought before the Stamford Board of Education or Hearing Officer for an expulsion hearing.

"Juuls are taking over. I have seen people who I personally know, who stay in the bathroom to smoke. You can barely breathe in the bathrooms. It is not good for them or the people inhaling

it," Pam said.

Purchasing these drugs can cost a lot of money, depending on how much someone abuses them. Juul starter kits cost 50 dollars, while packs of four liquid-flavored cartridges, called "pods," cost 15 dollars.

Juuls and pods must be purchased by someone 18 or older, meaning that many students use fake IDs or pay someone to buy it for them.

"I do not know why I smoke at school. It is always there, like when you go into a bathroom, people are bound to have it. And as long as you are not messing up in school, you have your work done, and you are not falling behind then, you should be fine," Zoe said.

However, many students have realized the drawbacks of smoking and have committed themselves to quitting.

"I stopped smoking because of my mental health, my mind was not in a good place," Olivia said.

"I quit because I did not want to feel like I needed to rely on a drug to be happy in my life and also for my future," Kate said.

Drugs such as Juuls and wax pens are the most prevalent in Westhill, and play a role in the daily life of many students at Westhill.

Though doing drugs is against the school rules, many students continue to disregard them to satisfy their own needs, whether for personal reasons or peer pressure.

The Westword has

**56%** OF 15 TO 17 YEAR OLDS IN THE PAST 30 DAYS REPORTED

**USING A VAPING DEVICE AT LEAST 3 TIMES.**



"I quit because I did not want to feel like I needed to rely on a drug to be happy in my life and also for my future."  
—Kate

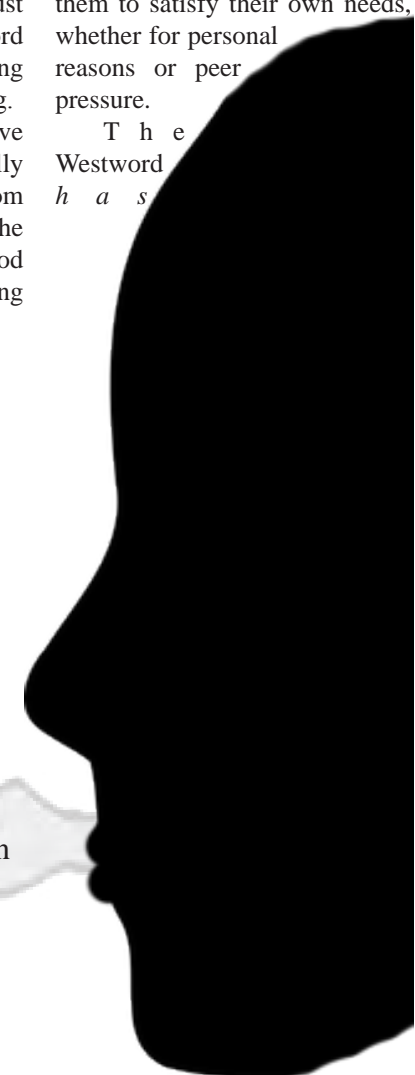


Image courtesy of pixabay.com.  
Information from [truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org).  
Illustration by Neeka Baclayon / Illustrator.  
Front cover photo illustration by Rachel Plotzky / Print Executive Editor.



## Diferente maneras de estudiar

Hay muchas maneras de estudiar para los exámenes finales. Es muy importante que coman un buen desayuno y que duerman a lo menos ocho a nueve horas. Durmiendo y comiendo bien es muy importante porque tienes que tener energía para tomar los exámenes. En Westhill High School tomas dos exámenes finales al día. Es muy importante que los estudiantes empiezan a estudiar con tiempo.

- La primera manera de estudiar es usando quizlet o haciendo tarjetas. Quizlet es una aplicación donde pueden hacer tarjetas digitales para estudiar en línea. Esta aplicación es gratis. En Quizlet puedes encontrar unas actividades que otras personas han hecho. Haciendo tarjetas es como quizlet pero son portables. Muchas personas hacen tarjetas y usan quizlet para vocabulario. Las tarjetas ayudan porque puedes escribir lo que quieras. Haciendo tarjetas dejan a los estudiantes llevárselas donde ellos quieran.

- La segunda manera de estudiar que usan los estudiantes es haciendo notas. Haciendo notas les permite escribir lo que aprendió durante el semestre. Esta manera de estudiar es conveniente para unas personas porque pueden escoger que piensan que necesitan estudiar más. Haciendo notas les dejan llevar donde ellos quieran. Con, notas pueden preguntarle a un familiar que les pregunten unas preguntas conforme las notas que han hecho.

- Otros tienen tutores y se quedan después de la escuela con los maestros para repasar el material. Esta manera de estudiar es buena porque le puedes preguntar a la maestra o el tutor de algo que no comprendan. La escuela ofrece un periodo "ocho" donde dan tutorías todos los martes. Allí puedes hacer la tarea con otros estudiantes y te ayudan. Este programa es gratis para todos. El precio de un tutor es 30 a 40 dólares por la hora pero un tutor personal que es certificado cuesta 85 dólares por hora.

- Hay muchas personas que no estudian, para muchos esta manera no es muy conveniente porque no se le quedan nada, pero hay personas que no estudian y pasan los exámenes. Estudiando es muy importante para que puedan repasar el material.

- Hay personas que hacen mapas mentales. Mapas mentales es algo que puedes hacer que quiera conforme una idea central. Con la idea central puedes encontrar temas y ideas sobre la idea central. Esta manera de estudiar es buena porque se permite ampliar tus conocimientos con lo que ya sabes.

- Antes de los exámenes finales los maestros les dan a los estudiantes guías de estudio. Es importante que lo hagan porque las guías te dicen que estudiar. Conforme lo que sepan hacen las preguntas pero los que no saben usan las notas para contestarlas. Con lo que no sepan pueden usar las diferentes maneras de estudiar.

- Unas de las últimas maneras de estudiar es dibujando las notas. Hay muchas personas que se le quedan más imágenes y esta manera de estudiar les deja hacer eso. Esta manera es buena pero tienes que saber cómo dibujar las cosas que estás estudiando, sino no lo van a poder entender.

Artículo de **Fatima Santos** / Las Noticias Editor.  
Imágenes cortesía de **pixabay.com**.

## Recetas de Postres Hispanos

### Flan

#### Ingredientes del Flan:

4 huevos  
2 onz. de queso crema  
1 lata de leche condensada  
1 lata de leche evaporada  
1 cucharadita de vainilla

#### Ingredientes del Caramelo:

6 cucharadas de azúcar  
2 cucharadas de agua

#### Procedimiento del Caramelo:

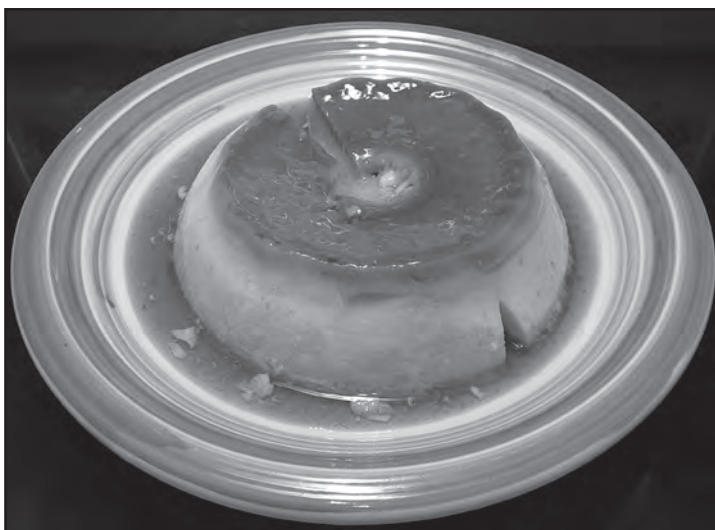
Primero mezcla el azúcar con el agua y ponlo a fuego lento hasta que se vuelva caramelo. Luego pon el caramelo en el pyrex donde se va hornear el flan. Después deja enfriar para luego verter la mezcla del flan.

#### Procedimiento del Flan:

Poner todos los ingredientes en la licuadora y vaciar esta mezcla en el pyrex con caramelo. Tapar el pyrex con papel aluminio y hacer dos agujeros en el centro del papel para que ventile. Calentar el horno a 350 grados y hornear en baño de maría por hora y media. Finalmente dejar enfriar y desmoldar y disfrutarlo.

#### Opcional:

puedes poner encima fruta fresca (a tu gusto).



### Arroz con leche

#### Ingredientes:

2 tazas de arroz  
Azúcar al gusto  
Canela en raja  
Un galón de leche  
Tres tazas de agua

#### Procedimiento:

Poner a hervir el arroz con agua, el azúcar y la canela. Cuando este hirviendo, agregar la leche y cocinar a fuego lento por media hora. Al final servir y disfrutar caliente o frío.



Recetas de **Camila Miranda** / Las Noticias Editor.  
Imágenes cortesía de **commons.wikimedia.org** & **@wvestenigel** en flickr.com.

# Cómo un divorcio afecta a los estudiantes

**Alessandra Pinto**  
Las Noticias Editor

Solo en los Estados Unidos, hay un divorcio cada 37 segundos. Los investigadores estiman que un, “48 por ciento de los niños estadounidenses y británicos viven en hogares de padres solteros divorciados a los 16 años.”

Aunque hay mucho debate sobre cómo se afecta a los niños durante o después de un divorcio, su educación puede verse influenciada como resultado de una familia monoparental.

Durante un divorcio, la principal preocupación de los padres es el bienestar del niño. Los resultados pueden variar según la edad, ya que un estudio mostró que los niños más pequeños se adaptan mejor a las nuevas situaciones de la vida.

Específicamente, aquellos que han desarrollado habilidades sociales y pueden hacer amigos fácilmente tienen menos probabilidades de tener dificultades durante un divorcio de sus padres.

Sin embargo, hay niños que aún no han desarrollado estas habilidades, y el divorcio no mejora la situación. Sentimientos como la soledad, la confusión y la inseguridad son experimentados por el niño, y esto puede llevarlos a tener dificultades académicas.

Un estudiante de Westhill dijo que un divorcio puede, “distraer su atención de tareas

o exámenes importantes ya que están enfocados en lo que está pasando en casa.” Esto es un ejemplo de cómo les puede afectar académicamente los estudiantes después de un divorcio.

Existe cierta controversia con respecto a cuándo el divorcio debe o no debe hacerse. Hay padres que han optado por

sario un divorcio, como cuando ocurre un abuso emocional o físico. Aunque esto puede afectar negativamente al niño, un divorcio de un matrimonio de bajo conflicto también puede ser perjudicial. La razón es que el niño no comprende por qué vino el divorcio o se pregunta qué se podría haber

embargo, los consejeros escolares pueden ayudar al ser oyentes activos sin prejuicios.

Un estudio mostró que el primer año después de un divorcio es el más difícil, debido al proceso de tener que acostumbrarse a las nuevas rutinas y, en algunos casos, a los arreglos de vivienda. Tener que

sentir que su familia se está desmoronando y que no tienen a nadie en quien confiar,” afirma Ananya Jonnakuti (’22).

No es un trabajo fácil para el padre con custodia vigilar al niño, pero el estrés que lo acompaña lo hace aparentemente imposible. En esta situación, la mayoría de los niños prefieren no tener que preocupar a sus padres más de lo necesario, lo que puede hacer que sus emociones permanezcan dentro de ellos, algo que no es saludable, especialmente a una edad temprana.

El padre que no tiene la custodia del niño puede encontrar un desafío para mantenerse involucrado en la vida del niño, pero este problema puede ser controlado.

Los padres que se mantienen al día con los estudios académicos de sus hijos pueden hacer que sea más fácil ayudarlos y obtener buenas calificaciones, a pesar del hogar unifamiliar.

Los padres que se mantienen activos en la vida de sus hijos pueden tener un efecto positivo en ellos, ayudándolos a sentirse menos solos y más contentos.

Un error común es aplicar una disciplina menos constante y más severa, pero permanecer con una actitud de cariño puede ayudar a facilitar la experiencia. Incluso después de un divorcio, los padres deben hacer todo lo posible para alcanzar el mejor resultado para sus hijos.

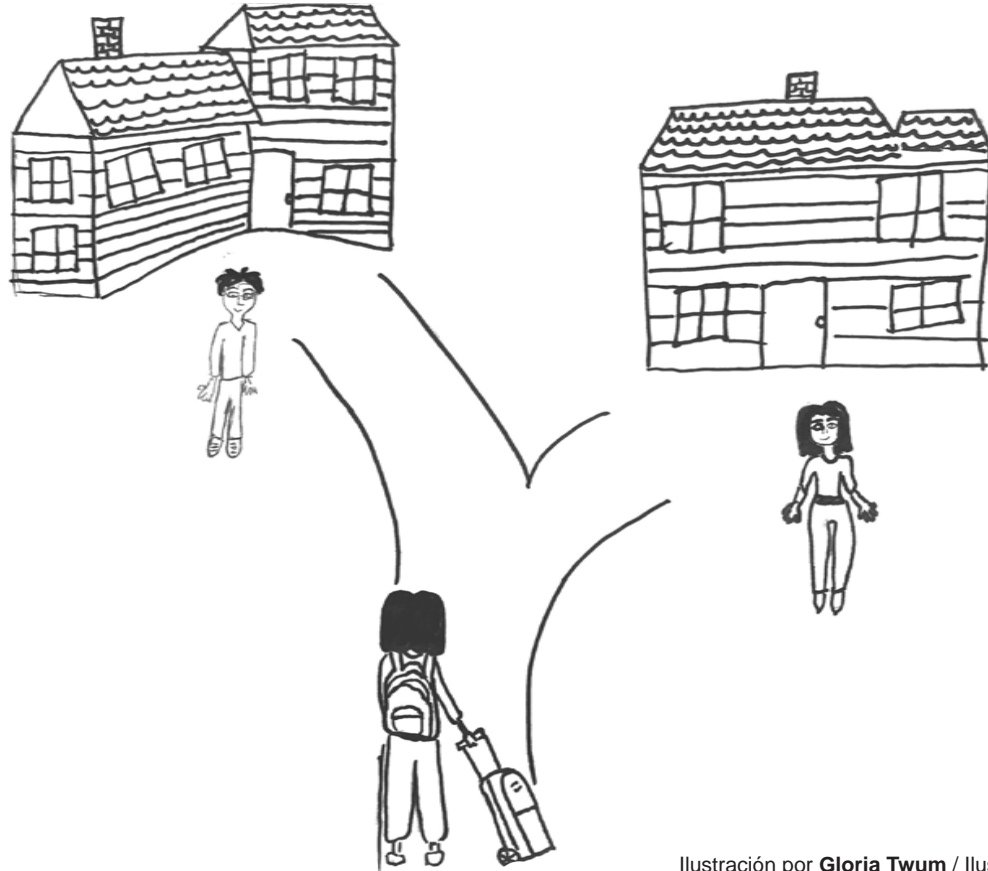


Ilustración por **Gloria Twum** / Ilustrador.

permanecer juntos por la crianza de sus hijos en una familia “normal.” Sin embargo, la gente se pregunta si vivir con un padre soltero es mejor que ser criado por dos padres que no se aman.

En ciertos casos, es nece-

hecho para evitarlo.

Durante un divorcio, es normal que los niños se culpen a sí mismos por el divorcio de sus padres. Como resultado, pueden tener dificultades para concentrarse en su trabajo escolar u otras actividades. Sin

equilibrar esto y el trabajo escolar no es una tarea sencilla, por lo que los padres deben estar atentos a sus hijos.

Los sentimientos que un niño puede experimentar después de un divorcio incluyen, “la depresión, ya que pueden

## Atención a todos los seniors: ¡SOMETAN SUS VOLUNTADES DE SENIORS!

Yo,           nombre           DE           adjetivo           MENTE Y           adjetivo           CUERPO LES DEJO:

**Tu mejor amigo(a):** bromas interiores. **Tu maestro favorito(a):** un examen que sacaste un 100. **Tu grupo de amigos:** tus memorias favoritas, etc.

Los Voluntades de los Seniors ofrece una oportunidad para mandar un mensaje a la comunidad de Westhill, ya sea para ser amigos, familiares o maestros.

Los Voluntades de los Seniors van estar publicados en junio en el periódico

**REVISE EL CORREO ELECTRÓNICO DE SU ESCUELA PARA EL ENLACE DEL SITIO WEB PARA EL FORMULARIO DE GOOGLE O ENVÍENOS UN CORREO ELECTRÓNICO A EN [WESTWORDWHS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WESTWORDWHS@GMAIL.COM) CON PREGUNTAS.**

PARA VER EJEMPLOS VISITIEN

**[OURSCHOOLNEWSPAPER.COM/WESTWORD/JUNE2017.PDF](http://OURSCHOOLNEWSPAPER.COM/WESTWORD/JUNE2017.PDF)**

Y VISITEN PÁGINAS 14 A 27.

TU FOTO  
AQUÍ





## Celebrating Autism Awareness Month

**Madison Thibodeau**  
Staff Writer

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication, according to autismspeaks.org.

World Autism Awareness Day is recognized on April 2, originally designated by the United Nations (U.N.) in 2007 in an effort to end stigmatization and discrimination against those with autism.

April 2 fits in with the U.N.'s Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promises to leave no one behind, according to wincalendar.com.

Additionally, the month of April is recognized as National Autism Awareness Month, which began in 2007, originally held by the Autism Soci-

ety. People all over the globe showed their support by wearing the color blue and lighting blue lights outside their homes or even around their town.

According to the Center for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated one in 59 children in the United States today.

"In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association merged four distinct autism diagnoses into one umbrella diagnosis of ASD. They included autistic disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS) and Asperger's syndrome," according to autismspeaks.org.

At Westhill, students have taken further strides to end stigmatization and created a chapter of Best Buddies, a non-profit national organization that emphasizes relationships with students with an intellectual developmental disability (IDD)

and mentally disabilities.

In the club, there are approximately ten students with an IDD, and about 20 to 30 non-IDD students, including President Nikki Newcomer ('19), Vice President Malina Lasicki ('20), Secretary Talia Kunin ('21), and their advisors Ms. Winne, a special education teacher, and Ms. Rivera, a paraprofessional at Westhill.

"They are some of the happiest people you can ever meet and it really gives you just a better perspective on life because if they are this happy and enjoying their lives so much, why can't everyone else? Especially if they are struggling a lot more than I am," Newcomer said.

At the end of the school year, the club hosts a Best Buddies Ball, where alumni join current Best Buddies members, and the buddies, of course, to connect and have a great time.

"[The non-IDD students] interact with the autistic students so they do not feel left out... They interact so well with the autistic students, it is really unbelievable," Ms. Rivera said.

The group used to meet every Tuesday after school. However, they moved their meetings to take place during Connection Time.

Club members participate in numerous events throughout the year, such as holiday parties, after-school meetups, cookie painting, and card decorating.

"[Best Buddies] had so many people come [to the end of the year celebration], even kids who have graduated because Best Buddies had such a big impact on them. We danced, sung, ate, and hung out together. It was such a great time for everyone," Lasicki said.

This year, the Best Buddies

Friendship Walk will be taking place at Quinnipiac University on October 29.

"Being a student, everything seems all about you, people are very self-centered, and when you join a group like Best Buddies, you really learn to step away from yourself and try and analyze things from a different perspective. A lot of people do not go out of their way to see what it is like to live with a disability as they do, and when you are in Best Buddies, you really have that first-hand experience to see what it is like," Newcomer said.

Students who wish to get involved with the club can talk to one of the Best Buddies members in school to join the group, participate in the upcoming Friendship Walk in October, or even make a small donation to the cause, as it can go a long way.



**BUILDING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS** Members of Best Buddies using fun holiday-themed props while taking pictures during one of their meetings during the winter.

Photos contributed by **Mary Schiro**.



# Teacher Talk: Mr. Pinsince

*"Teacher Talk" is a monthly column in which The Westword asks teachers to write about themselves so that students have a chance to get to know the staff. Mr. Pinsince, English teacher, was chosen for the April issue.*

I teach English 10, 11, and Creative Writing, but teaching was a second career for me. My first career was in healthcare management.

Ever since high school, I wanted to be an English teacher. My mother was an English teacher. In college, my best friend became an English teacher.

But back in the '70s, teachers earned pathetic salaries. I wanted to afford a family, a house, tuition for my kids' colleges, etc., so I pursued a management career, but it was not just for the money. I enjoyed my 30 years at Yale-New Haven and Saint Raphael's hospitals.

Now that my two kids are through college and on their own, teaching feels like a return home to my original passion.

As corny as it sounds, I find teaching truly rewarding. It is one of the most fulfilling things I can do for others, as well as for myself.

My teaching style can be,

quite simply, described as trying to follow the best role models around me in the English Department. As in, the excellent teachers every student wants. I try to be like them, and like my favorite English teachers in high school and at Penn State University.

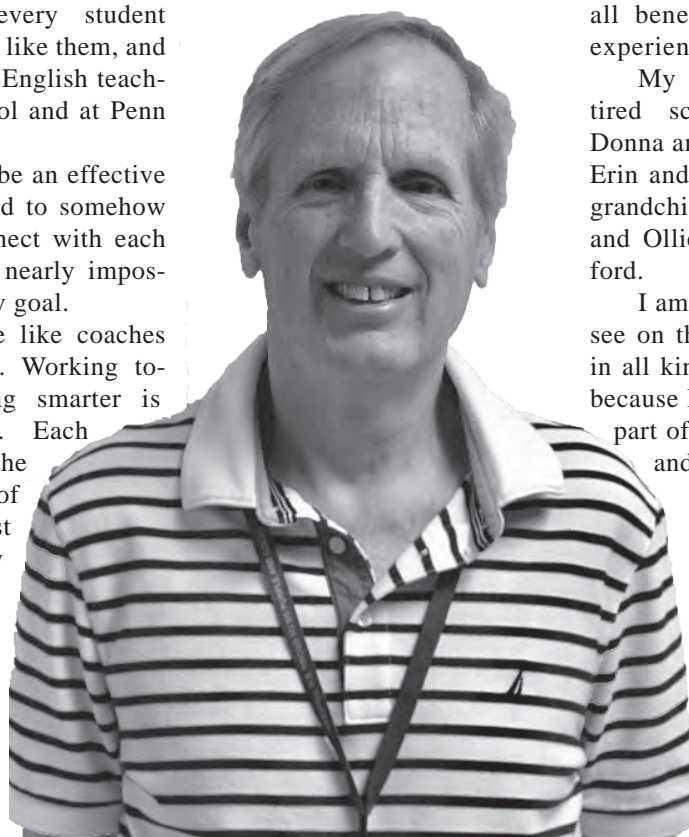
I believe to be an effective teacher, you need to somehow engage and connect with each student. This is nearly impossible, but it is my goal.

Teachers are like coaches in a brain gym. Working together, becoming smarter is very attainable. Each year I watch the vast majority of my students' test scores steadily improve.

In addition to teaching English and Creative Writing, I occasionally play music with other teachers,

staff, and students. I play the keyboard and drums.

"The Super Sloppy Student-Teacher Band" is a pop-



up jam session of students across grades and staff across departments. I love learning new music, and I believe we all benefit from the bonding experience.

My wife, Donna, is a retired school social worker. Donna and I have two children, Erin and Greg, as well as four grandchildren, Jack, Eva, Max, and Ollie. We all live in Milford.

I am that crazy teacher you see on the circus bike all year in all kinds of weather. This is because I believe in exercise as part of a healthy mind, body, and spirit.

My home town of

Milford is quite a distance from Westhill. I use that opportunity to turn my commute into a workout similar to a daily gym session.

No, I do not cycle from Milford to Stamford. I bike from my house to the Milford train station, then the bike folds in half. Bike and I take the train to Stamford Station, then I ride to school.

Round-trip, it is 16 miles of pedaling, which is not much for a cyclist, but over a school year, it exceeds 2,000 miles.

By the way, thanks to the seniors who voted my bicycle among the "hottest wheels" at Westhill!

Photo by Anika Tandon / Photographer.

If you wish to nominate a teacher or wish to write for Teacher Talk, email us at:  
**westwordwhs@gmail.com**



## The Hungry Vikings

Column by Maura Johnston, Mary Leydon & Alexandra Lazo

**Chopt Creative Salad Co.**

Service: ★★★★★  
Taste: ★★★★★  
Ambiance: ★★★

The three Vikings have done a lot of sailing lately and not much physical activity. With Viking prom just around the corner, they looked in the mirror and realized their Viking bodies were not yet close to being ready.

On their way to their next destination, they saw a salad place on the corner and thought it was time to go back on their health craze.

This restaurant called Chopt Creative Salad Company, or simply "Chopt," is located near a few other key places in a nearby town called Greenwich.

When the Vikings entered the restaurant, there was a long line of female Vikings in yoga pants.

While they waited in line for about ten minutes, the Vikings had plenty of time to decide what they were going to order.

On the menu displayed in front of them, there were many pre-designed salads, along with bowls, wraps, and kids menu items.

There was also a section where you can design your own salad or wrap. The calories were listed next to each item, helping the Vikings choose a healthy meal.

Each item was fresh, as Chopt is a farm-to-table restaurant. However, this feature causes the meals to be very pricey.

THE Viking ordered a salad with romaine lettuce. She was scared she was going to get E. coli because of the recent outbreak but she fortunately did not.

She ordered a chopped salad with corn, chicken, tortilla chips, and creamy balsamic dressing.

Overall, THE Viking's salad and the service were good, though there was nothing special about either of them. Her salad was a huge portion and she was only able to finish half.

The Picky Viking decided to order a wrap on a whole wheat tortilla instead of a salad.

She created her own and put romaine lettuce, avocado, chipotle chicken, tomatoes, cucumber, pepper jack cheese, and chipotle ranch dressing in it.

After just one bite, the Picky Viking was pleased and wanted more. It was very different from all the other Viking food she had eaten before.

The wrap was spicy with a good kick, and the romaine gave it a good crunch. Since it was a wrap, it was easy to eat and the

tortilla gave it a delicious, sweet factor.

After making the salad into a wrap, the Picky Viking does not know if she will ever be able to have a plain salad again (there goes her diet!).

The Hangry Viking busted down the door and was appalled to see that they got rid of her favorite warm bowl, Chicken Santorini.

To settle her hungry and disappointed stomach, she ordered the Chicken Tinga Bowl.

This bowl was filled with warm grains like rice and quinoa and was topped with braised chicken tinga, avocado, black beans, tortilla chips, cotija cheese, marinated kale, and green goddess dressing.

The Hangry Viking was extremely excited to devour a bowl that seemed so flavorful but was frustrated when they handed her the bowl that was not even chopped up.

As an avid Chopt eater, the Hangry Viking knew that they normally chop up the warm bowls, but was confused and sad to find out that they stopped chopping them.

The Hangry Viking still enjoyed her meal, but just could not

get over the fact that it was not chopped.

In addition, the Vikings found the ice machine and drinks at Chopt to be amazing. They had the perfect, small, crunchy "nugget" ice that the Picky Viking was obsessed with, and a variety of fresh, homemade drinks to choose from.

Overall, the Vikings were pretty satisfied with their meals despite the few flaws. It was pretty expensive, but it made sense because their products are grown locally and fresh, making

many people willing to pay the price.

Other than the line to order, the service was relatively quick and the restaurant offered a lot of options to please any taste palate.

The Vikings will return to try the other flavor combinations and ask for their salads to be more chopped next time.

Hopefully, the price will decrease a bit for these young Vikings with little money because then they would be more likely to return more often.



**QUICK AND HEALTHY** Chopt offers a variety of salads and sandwiches that can be ordered at the counter.

Photo by Maura Johnston.



# Former Westhill art teacher publishes book

**Addison Magrath**  
Editor-in-Chief

*Michael De Feo, a NYC based artist, was an art teacher at Westhill from 1998 until 2013, when he left to pursue art as a full-time career. Since leaving, he has been traveling around the world, painting, and creating. He recently published a book, Flowers, a collection of pictures of his flower paintings. De Feo is currently on a book tour for Flowers and was at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich on May 2 from six to eight p.m. for a presentation and book signing. The Westword asked De Feo a few questions on his progress and experience with art as a career thus far.*

**The Westword (TW): When did you leave Westhill?**

**Michael De Feo (MD):** I first started teaching at Westhill in November 1998 and left in June 2013 after 15 years.

**TW: How did you find the courage to leave and pursue art full-time?**

**MD:** Leaving teaching was a difficult decision. Sharing my passion for the arts and working towards opening young people's hearts and minds to new things was incredibly rewarding. During my off hours, I would paint and go on street art missions and would schedule my exhibitions to fall within school calendar breaks. For example, one year I went to Hong Kong during spring recess for a solo exhibition. Another year, I did the same thing but in Amsterdam. Working at both professions at the same time became harder to do as the years went by. At the very start of 2013, my father died, and I considered my own mortality in an entirely new way. It was time to dedicate myself to solely pursuing my art full-time.

**TW: Were you ever worried that being an artist would not work out as a career?**

**MD:** I have never worried about or second-guessed my decision to make a life

in the arts. Way back in the third grade or so, I knew that art and creativity would be my life's pursuit. My dream was to be a cartoonist of newspaper comics or perhaps become an animator for Walt Disney. As I got older, my interests leaned towards the freedoms of the Fine Arts. The economics of a profession in any of the fields of art is always a concern. However, I did not let it distract me from my goals. That said, transitioning from a regular paycheck as a teacher to irregular art sales initially took some getting used to.

**TW: What is your fondest memory of Westhill?**

**MD:** I have so many fond memories of my time at Westhill. I have had countless amazing students, some of whom I am still in contact with. Westhill's diversity is one of its strong suits and having the opportunity and responsibility to be with so many different types of children was incredible. From teaching art classes for students with special needs to rolling up my sleeves in ceramics to photography to graphic design, the memories and experiences are great and varied. I was also lucky to be surrounded by a talented and passionate Fine Arts Department, many of the teachers with whom I developed strong bonds and friendships. That was especially the case with Mr. Sacatos, who mostly taught the black and white photography classes. He and I quickly became very close friends and his photographic eye continues to inform my own to this day.

**TW: Did being a high school art teacher teach you anything about being an artist?**

**MD:** Being a high school art teacher instructs you in a lot of things and it most certainly gives you insights into yourself. You have to be comfortable with who you are as a person and very open-minded. Having the necessity to regularly verbalize to students so much of what art making is about, forces you to continually analyze, rework, rethink



**ALL AROUND TOWN** De Feo's artwork can be found on the side of a building in Greenwich.

and question just about everything. And just like being an artist, one has to always educate themselves about new things to get better. There is no end destination—it takes daily work and dedication. Teaching is a two-way street. I learned a lot from my students.

**TW: What was your inspiration for Flowers?**

**MD:** I first created the original flower back in 1993 and, as the 25th anniversary of the project was approaching, I felt it would be worthwhile to document it in book form. I spent about two years digging through my vast photo archive, writing essays, speaking with other artists, my editors, and designers to orchestrate the book. *Flowers* is a celebration of the project and its various facets and iterations over the years, from the streets to the studio.

**TW: Which artist do you look up to the most?**

**MD:** There are so many artists that I

experience in museums, galleries and the streets, both here in New York City as well as in my travels. Who I am looking at is always changing and as thus, it is tough to select just one or a few that I am inspired by the most.

**TW: Does where you are in the world have an impact on the way you create?**

**MD:** Yes, the location has a large impact on the works I create. For restful vacations, I am a big fan of going to the Caribbean and scuba diving. When I am on those beach-focused holidays, I paint small watercolor and acrylic pieces that are influenced by the warmth of the climate as well as tropical colors and vegetation of where I am. Likewise, when I was in Palm Springs, the hot and arid environment had an effect on my paintings, but in a different way, as did spending time in Provence, France. Travel has a big influence on the works I make.

**TW: Is there a message you wish to convey with Flowers?**

**MD:** Much of my work is rooted in my interest in sharing playful, whimsical, magical moments of beauty in urban spaces. It is also about the recognition of the ephemeral nature of all things. I find that there is beauty in that, as well. The cycle of life, rebirth, and regrowth are all concepts that I am interested in. The disappearance or decay of street art is an integral part of the work.

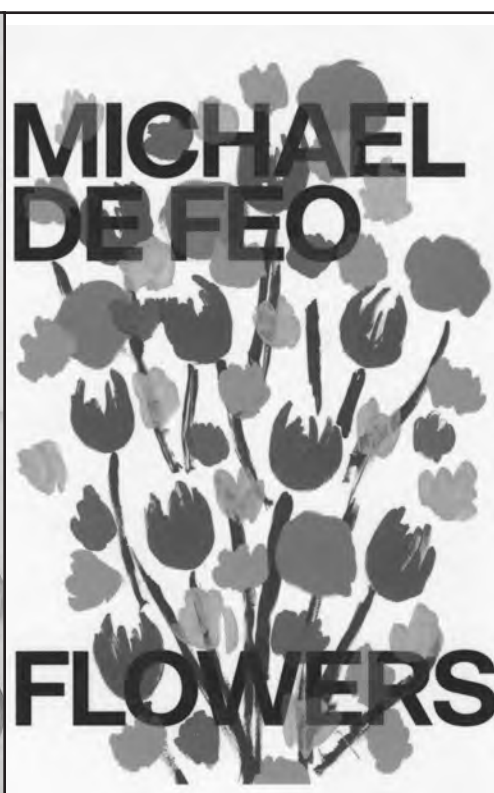
**TW: Artistically, what is your goal?**

**MD:** I strive to continue learning about myself and connecting to the world around me. It is a lifelong commitment that requires a lot of faith, paying attention, and sharing.

**TW: What motivates you?**

**MD:** Living in New York City is a big motivator for me. It is the perfect playground.

View more art by Michael De Feo at [mdefeo.com](http://mdefeo.com) or [@theflowerguy](https://www.instagram.com/theflowerguy) on Ins-

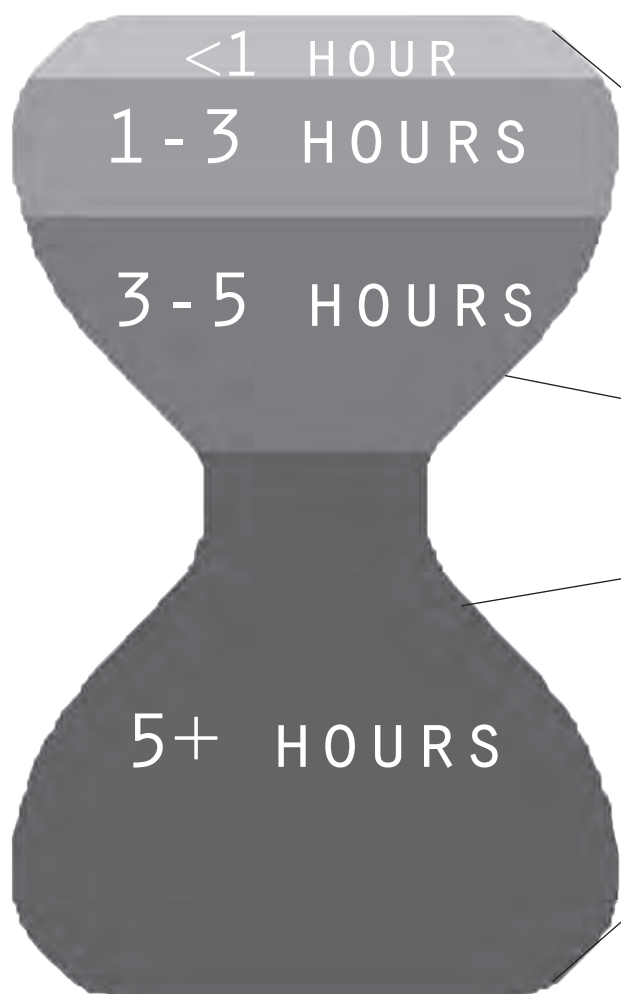


**FAME AND FLOWERS** De Feo published his book *Flowers* this year after collecting photographs of his work for 25 years.



## Average Screen Time at Westhill

DAILY AVERAGE  
SCREEN TIME



STUDENTS MOST  
USED APPS

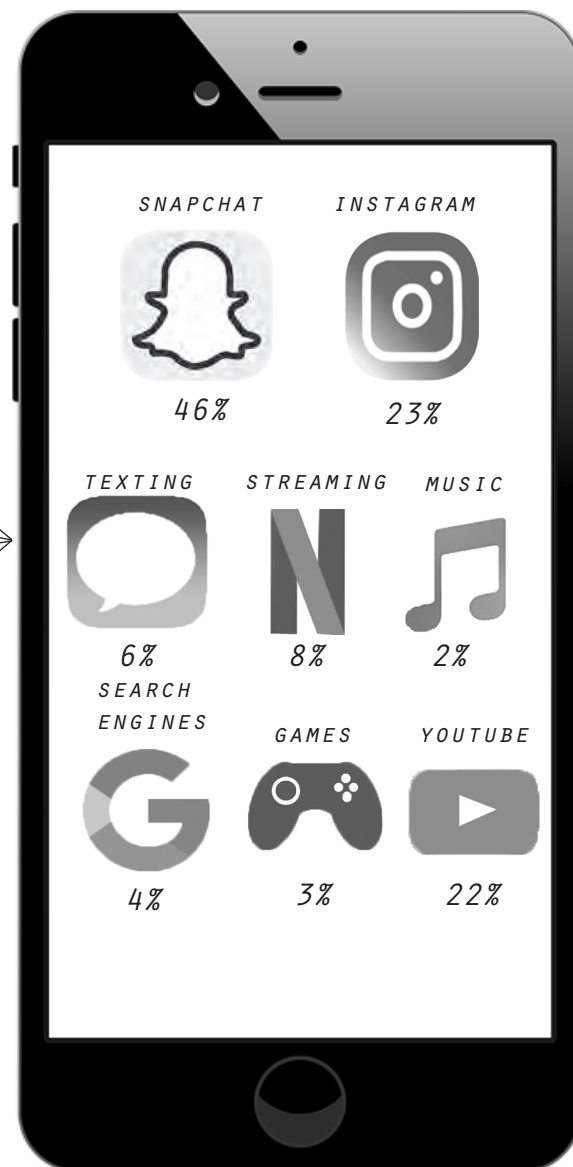


Image courtesy of [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com).  
Graphics by Addison Magrath / Editor-in-Chief.

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR TEACHERS? MUSIC EDITION

WHOSE FAVORITE ARTIST IS DAVE MATTHEWS?

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WHOSE FAVORITE ALBUM IS ABBEY ROAD BY THE BEATLES?

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WHOSE FAVORITE ARTIST IS ELLA FITZGERALD?

---

WHOSE FAVORITE ALBUM IS THE FOUR SEASONS BY VIVALDI?

---

WHO FAVORITE SONG IS TUESDAY AFTERNOON BY MOODY BLUES?

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TEACHER BANK

MRS. KELLEY - YOUNG

MR. FORCELLI

MRS. COHEN

MR. LUKAS

MR. WHITE

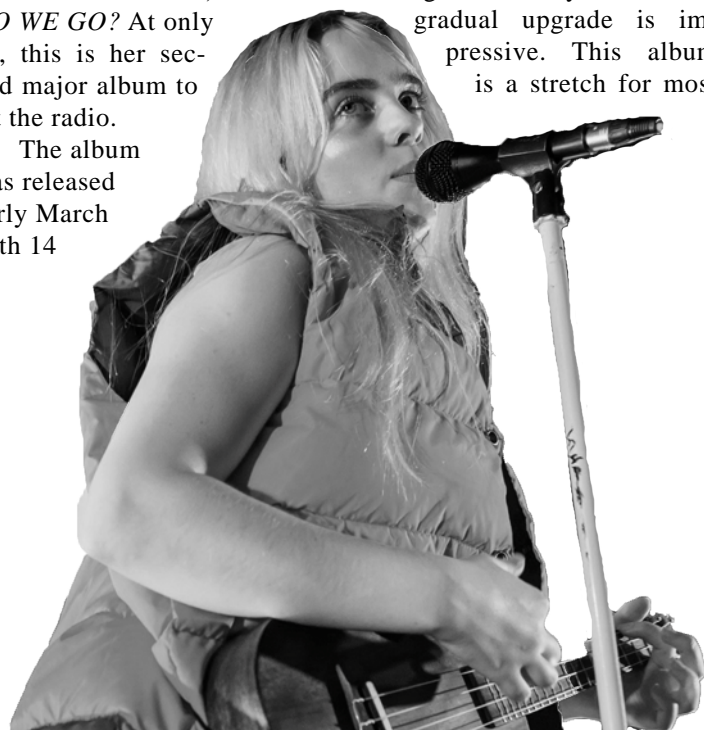
Image courtesy of [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com).  
Answers: Mrs. Cohen, Mr. Lukas, Mrs. Kelley-Young, Mr. Forcelli, Mr. White

# Album Review: Eilish appeals to teens

**Olivia Butler**  
Staff Writer

The young aspiring artist Billie Eilish has just released her new abstract album, *WHEN WE FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?* At only 17, this is her second major album to hit the radio.

The album was released early March with 14



**RIISING STAR** Eilish has schedule a tour over the summer for her this new album *WHEN WE FALL ASLEEP, WHERE DO WE GO?*

Image courtesy of [wiki.common.org](#).

new alternative pop and electronic songs. Her music can be both very soothing, suitable to teens, upbeat, and exciting.

"I have been listening to her ever since she released her song 'Ocean Eyes' and her gradual upgrade is impressive. This album is a stretch for most

people because you have to understand who she is to understand her music. The darkness behind her voice only portrays the constant pain she claims to be in," Maddie Bautista ('21) said.

The album cover shows a possessed Eilish with a terrifying smile trying to establish her scary aesthetic. She is on the edge of the bed in all white, and the surrounding background is complete black.

Her fascination with sleep paralysis and night terrors stood as the inspiration for her album, as viewers can see by her cover. The struggle Eilish faces with herself, inspired her to express these feelings through sounds and exotic word play.

"I knew the album was different when I heard the first song," Gabby Lovishuk ('19) said.

Prior to this record, her music was definitely more positive and showed more pop and upbeat songs. Over the past few years, she has astoundingly changed from a young

fresh artist trying to please the public to someone putting her thoughts and emotions into music.

Additionally, the album sheds light on vulnerable situations high schoolers face.

During multiple interviews, Eilish has addressed her struggle with depression and being in the spotlight. Being so young, Eilish struggles with her fame and new-found attention. Mental health has always been a struggle for her and she is not afraid to express her emotions in her music.

All Eilish wants to do is be able to make the music, but not for people to give her unwanted attention.

On top of all of her personal struggles, Eilish has to handle the pressure of changing mindsets with her lyrics.

"I do not listen to her personally, but I know a lot of people who do. She seems to target the younger generations," Adrian Chung-Wilks ('19) said.

After listening to the new album, it is completely differ-

ent than anything out in the music industry today.

When this album plays on the radio, listeners are quickly able to pinpoint who the artist is and what they represent.

For those who listen to more mainstream music, listening to her music will make them think outside the box. Eilish's music allows listeners to recognize feelings they did not realize they had.

Teenagers should not be afraid to give her a listen and step outside their norm.

Her career will only grow bigger as time passes, as she is already outshining current stars that have been on the charts for months including Ariana Grande's album *thank u, next*.

Her unexpected career moves will keep her fans waiting because no one can expect when she decides the fame is too much for her to handle.

Eilish has been one of the youngest artists to make such an impact on society and her album executes these messages clearly.

# Movie Review: *Beautiful Boy* tugs at heartstrings

**Alyssa Goldberg**  
Reporter

*Beautiful Boy*, released in October 2018, tells the story of Nicolas "Nic" Sheff, a young man plagued by addiction. The film is based off the two books *Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Addiction*, written by Nic's father David, and *Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines* by Nic.

It shares the perspective of both men, conveying the impact of drug addiction on individuals and their family.

Steve Carell plays the role of David Sheff, a concerned father searching desperately for the cause of his son's addiction. The father cannot understand how his charming son, who loved writing, surfing, and his siblings, could be dragged into the mess of addiction.

His persistent attempts to save Nic prove to be ineffective, yet he continues to offer him support throughout the majority of his struggles.

As he watches his son make progress and then regress back into his all-consuming addiction, the father is aware of his own powerlessness, making his teary-eyed scenes at the diner that once held joyous childhood memories even more moving to the audience.

Timothée Chalamet stars as Nic Sheff. At just 23, Chalamet has been featured in a

wide array of popular movies, including the films *Lady Bird* and *Call Me By Your Name*. His role in *Beautiful Boy* is his most jarring and personal performance.

"[Chalamet] did a really good job with taking on a role that dark; It was a heavy subject matter, and to portray it so honestly at that age is such a skill that he has," Morgana Knopoff ('20) said.

Though Chalamet was not awarded an Oscar, his performance still earned him multiple nominations, including the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor—Motion Picture and the Critics' Choice Movie Award for Best Supporting Actor.

In the movie, Nic constantly lies to his family, and emotionally manipulates them into giving him second, third, and fourth chances. It is clear that he truly is a loving son, but his altered state of mind only focuses on chasing the high, not on the stability of his loved ones.

The slight glimmers of Nic's admired charm and intelligence, such as the year that he attends college, shine through at times, causing his father to fall deeper into his pull. The father falters between denial, to optimism, to vexation. Eventually, he seems to give up on his son, claiming that he cannot help him anymore.

The addiction has also tak-

en a toll on Nic's stepmother, Karen, played by Maura Tierney, who gives a breathtaking performance in the climax of the film, where she breaks down after chasing Nic and his girlfriend, who later that night overdoses on heroin.

Nic's biological mother, Vicki, played by Amy Ryan, tries to help, but often disagrees with the father on the proper approach, causing her as well to fall into emotional despair. What hits the hardest is the confusion of Nic's siblings, who are about ten years younger than him, and

how they long for the company of the brother they once knew.

"The movie was very heartwarming and really made me think about the impact drug addiction has on families in America," Daniel Brennan ('19) said.

The movie delved deeper into the father's experience with his son, a side less highlighted in films addressing addiction. It showcases an important aspect of addiction, and of course, is powerful enough to bring its audience to tears, making it a highly recommended film.

While sharing the story, the

movie also incorporates a great soundtrack, including songs by John Lennon and Perry Como, and captures the beauty of California vistas, allowing the film to feel personal, as well as dark.

"I liked the actors a lot. I thought it was a really realistic portrayal of what it is like to be young and go through drug addiction and the effects it has on the family. I would recommend the movie to others," Maya Rai ('19) said.

If you have yet to see *Beautiful Boy*, it is time to put it on your watch list.



**PICTURE PERFECT** The cast of *Beautiful Boy* posing for a picture during one of their movie-release press tour interviews.

Image courtesy of [Jake Chesum on flickr.com](#).



# Inclusivity on the track and field team

**Ashley Shapiro**  
Staff Writer

Track and field is an option for any individual, and with over 40 Westhill students participating, there is an event for any skill set, strength, or speed.

The track team is a group of students working hard to improve with the support of their multiple coaches. There are five main track categories: jumping, throwing, sprinting, pole vaulting, and long distance.

"Track is for everyone, from running to jumping and throwing. Our overall goal is not necessary just to have champions, our goal is to foster a community that wants to develop and become better people. The most important quality is consistent effort and a desire to improve," Mr. Page, track coach, said.

All events are open to both boys and girls. Coaches encourage students to get involved in the variety of events offered.

"Track is very strange because it is a team sport and an individual sport, you do your best for your team and yourself," Ms. Birch, gym teacher, said.

Coaches also encourage students to join because of all the benefits it entails.

"Humans are born to run. Running increases neural activity in the brain and has countless psychological and physiological benefits. You feel more alive and more awake," Mr. Kubick, track coach, said.

Westhill's javelin, discus, and shot put students are led by Ms. Birch along with Mr. Lane. Ms. Birch is substituting in for Mr. DeAngelo who is out of school for an extended period of time.

The javelin throw is an event where while sprinting, the athlete throws a metal spike as far as possible. Having both speed and strength are necessary for this.

Discus is when athletes throw a heavy disc as far as possible after building up momentum. Discus requires strength, speed, coordination, and most importantly, balance.

Shot put is when the athlete throws a metal ball as far as possible while staying in a designated circle. It requires athletes to be strong, quick, and balanced since they are not allowed to step out of the circle.

The high school girl's shot put is 8.8 pounds while the boy's shot put is 12 pounds.

The sprints, jumps and hurdles group is lead by Mr. Page, along with new coach, Mr. Pierre-Louise. The sprinting group practices running short distances and maintaining overall endurance.

They often run 15 sets of 100 meter runs around the track. They also practice by running "flying thirties" which is an incremental increase and decrease sprint. Their practices end the soonest of all groups.

Page also coaches students running

hurdles. These athletes have to be able to run fast and jump high simultaneously.

Many track and field members participate in the jumping events. The events are high jump, long jump, and triple jump.

High jump is focused on height, while long jump requires students to sprint and jump as far as possible into a sand pit. Triple jump is a hop, a skip, and a jump, and allows for more momentum to build up.

Kubick coaches the boys and girls

distance runners for the team.

Distance runners are expected to run on their own and at practice. They can run up to ten miles and at least four in a single practice. Girls and boys compete on different days but still train all together. Distance runners should run 30 miles a week minimum. Top runners are running over 50 miles.

Westhill track offers something for everyone, so students should look into what even they would be good at.



**RUNNING AROUND** Sprinters and distance runners going through warm-ups together at practice.

Photo by Rachel Plotzky / Print Executive Editor.



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***Westhill students with their ID  
will get \$3 milkshakes  
with the purchase of a meal  
every Monday through  
Friday from 2 p.m.- 5 p.m.***



# Zagaja clears the court



**GAME TIME** Zagaja making a powerful serve during a home game against Fairfield Ludlowe.

Photo by Isabella Nuzzo / Photographer.

**Madison Thibodeau**  
Staff Writer

*Eric Zagaja ('19) joined the Westhill boys volleyball team this season and has already made a big impact on the court. He grew up playing soccer, and decided to try out a new sport. After high school, Zagaja plans on moving to Poland to continue his education, and hopefully play soccer and volleyball as well. He enjoys spending time with his friends outside of school and playing sports with family. Zagaja sat down with The Westword to talk about his goals and plans.*

**The Westword (TW): What made you join the boys volleyball team this year?**

**Eric Zagaja (EZ):** What made me join the team is to be with my friends and volleyball is a big sport in my country.

**TW: What is your biggest goal for this season?**

**EZ:** My goal is to win at least a couple games this season.

**TW: As it is your first year on the team, how do you like it?**

**EZ:** I think that it is a really good experience. Since the

first day of tryouts and up to today, they treat me like family, they always cheer and encourage the team and I could not ask for better people around me in this sport.

**TW: How do you like volleyball compared to other sports?**

**EZ:** Volleyball involves a lot of thinking unlike other sports, you have to be smart with blocking and hitting the ball over the net. You have to see if your opponents will hit it to the right or the left, and make the right choices. In soccer there is not much room for messing up, but you can get the ball back. In volleyball if you mess up, it is a point against you.

**TW: What other sports do you play?**

**EZ:** I play soccer, and my position is midfield. Other than that, I only play volleyball.

**TW: Did you play any other sports when you were younger?**

**EZ:** I only played soccer when I was younger.

**TW: Overall, what is your favorite sport?**

**EZ:** My favorite sport is soccer, I just love it.

**TW: What is your best ad-**

**vice to give anyone that wishes to join the team?**

**EZ:** Definitely listen to the coaches, make sure to practice to the best of your ability and do not give up.

**TW: Do you plan on continuing playing volleyball?**

**EZ:** I might play for fun, but nothing too serious.

**TW: Do you or your team have any pre-game rituals or traditions?**

**EZ:** We do not really have any pre-game rituals, we just warm up.

**TW: What is your favorite thing to do outside of sports?**

**EZ:** When I am not playing volleyball or soccer I like to just hang out with friends and have a good time.

**TW: If you had to pick your biggest role model, who would it be?**

**EZ:** If I were to pick a role model it most likely would be my dad. He always puts 100 percent into his work which I try to inherit for sports, so maybe one day I can even become a professional athlete. He taught me the difference between right and wrong, and is a person I can always look up to.

# Mannella shows passion on the mount



**IN THE FIELD** Mannella at practice working hard and showing what it takes to be a captain of the softball team.

**Rachel Plotzky**  
Print Executive Editor

*Tessa Mannella ('20) has been playing softball at Westhill since her freshman year. She has been on Varsity all three years and was named captain her sophomore year. Mannella loves working with her teammates and playing the game. The Westword sat down with her to talk about her experience playing at Westhill and her future plans.*

**The Westword (TW): How long have you been playing softball?**

**Tessa Mannella (TM):** Since second grade. That is about nine years.

**TW: What made you start playing?**

**TM:** I think my dad wanted me to play and I also had friends that were playing so I decided to play.

**TW: Does anyone else in your family play?**

**TM:** No.

**TW: What position do you play?**

**TM:** Center field. Nothing else.

**TW: Do you plan to play**

**softball in college?**

**TM:** No, I feel like there would be too much stress. I probably would not play intramural or club either.

**TW: Do you have any pre-game rituals or traditions?**

**TM:** No, I do not really have superstitions.

**TW: What is your proudest athletic achievement?**

**TM:** Probably being captain sophomore year and again this year.

**TW: How often do you practice?**

**TM:** The Westhill team practices almost everyday.

**TW: Do you ever practice outside of school?**

**TM:** I used to play over the summer but I do not anymore. Last year I did though.

**TW: Before playing at Westhill where did you play?**

**TM:** Babe Ruth softball, which is in Cove. I also played for travel teams over the summer.

**TW: Who is your role model?**

**TM:** Probably, my parents. They push me to play softball even when I wanted to quit in the past.

**TW: Are you glad you are**

**still playing softball now?**

**TM:** I am glad I am still playing and did not decide to quit.

**TW: What is your favorite thing about playing?**

**TM:** Being with the team and working together to win. I like that it is a team sport.

**TW: What is your best memory of playing?**

**TM:** Making it to the FCIAC finals my freshman year.

**TW: What has softball taught you in life?**

**TM:** To never give up, we have always been down by a lot in some situations and we always come back to win.

**TW: Do you play or take interest in any other sports?**

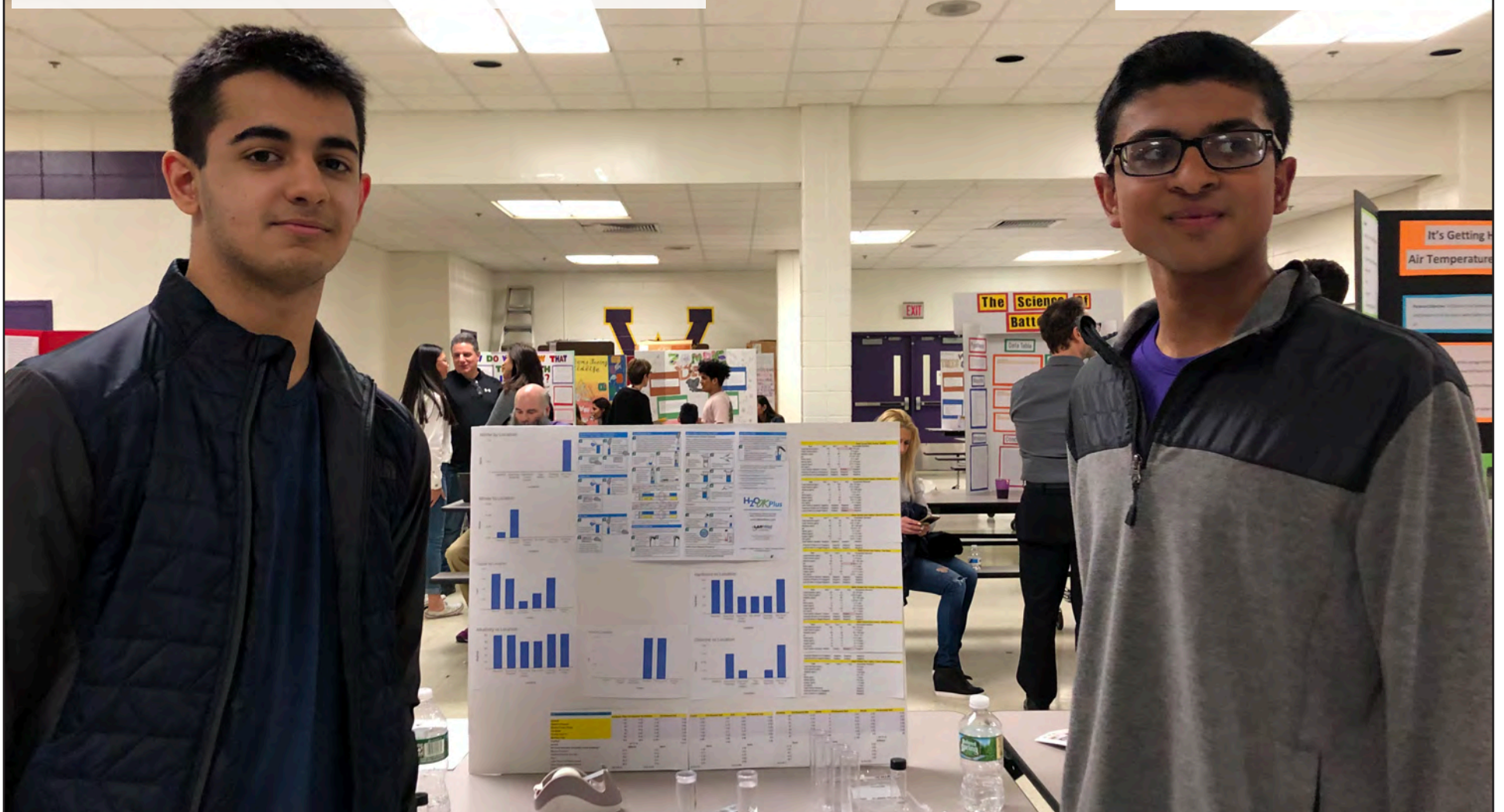
**TM:** Yes, I love field hockey. It is fun. I only play those two sports.

**TW: Do you ever feel overwhelmed by school and sports expectations? If so, how do you cope with them?**

**TM:** Yes, going to practice everyday and then having the energy to come home and do homework has been hard. I do most of my school work over the weekend so I have more time to focus on sports during the week.

Graphics by Ryka ChandraRaj / Graphic Director.





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**A look into the Best Buddies club [p. 17](#) / Highlighting how local businesses help students [p. 5](#)**



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