

the CLASSIC

Townsend Harris High School at Queens College

Assumptions about recycling leads to wasted efforts

by Genna Mastellone

At Townsend Harris, if you encourage students to recycle their garbage, it's not uncommon for them to look at you quizzically and ask, "Do they really recycle here or is it all just for show?" It turns out that Townsend Harris does recycle, but it's the tendency of students and staff to mix trash with recyclables that makes the process less successful than it could be.

According to the New York Department of Sanitation, New York City schools are required by law to recycle. Foreman Hector Benitez said, "We do recycle here at Townsend Harris. Every classroom and office has bins, as well as the cafeteria."

Some students claim that recycling efforts are a waste because it all goes to the same place. This, however, is only the case when students and staff ignore the distinctions between recycling bins and trash bins.

"There are times when students put conventional garbage in recycling bins, and if sanitation doesn't accept it, then we have to throw it out," continued Mr. Benitez. "We're not allowed to go through the garbage, says the Department of Sanitation. Once it's mixed, we have to throw it away."

Foreman Luis Perez said, "People should be

more informed about recycling."

Students expressed similar sentiments.

Melinda Harbhajan, junior, said, "I recycle here, and at home too. I think we could do a better job and not be lazy. We have enough bins, I'd think it would be easy."

Khalid Abdin, senior, said, "Kids don't respect it enough...I'd take the steps if my colleagues did too. I'm sure that everyone would."

Rohan Sukhdeo, freshman, said, "I see that during lunch people don't separate their milk cartons from trash. It might be laziness. It takes time and energy."

President of Students for the Preservation of the Earth (SPE) and junior Joshua Merai said, "If people say they are too lazy to recycle, then they better be doing something else to preserve the planet."

Katherine Yan, English teacher and advisor of SPE, said, "I think a deterrent is if they look into the bin and if the previous person put food in there, they feel like they don't have to. I try to recycle in the building, but it's easier in the offices than in the classroom because it's not second nature to some of these kids. We can put signs on the can, or have different types of receptacles."

Sam Schraeder, junior, said, "There's no reason not to if it's right next to the trash can."

Mario Vasquez, foreman, said, "I'd say about 75% [do recycle]. But some people just don't care. It's possible, but people have to be willing."

Students cited confusion about what bins to use as a reason for not recycling. To clear it up, Mr. Benitez said, "In the cafeteria we only have for bottles and cans, and in classrooms, only for paper."

Freshman Syeda Hassan said, "People don't understand what's supposed to be where. There should be signs on the cans. Everyone uses the ones in the halls that are easier."

Katie Wu, sophomore, said, "We should make it more paper specific, not just a trash can, but an appropriately sized box to encourage people to put only paper in it."

People also offered other suggestions to make recycling a more universal part of Townsend Harris life. Elina Niyazov, freshman, said, "We should have teachers enforce it."

"For the most part, I don't see too many signs, maybe we could put more posters up reminding people to recycle," said Josue Martinez, junior.

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Students join event to memorialize lives lost at Sandy Hook

by Vanesa Martinez

An assortment of Townsend Harris students, donning green and white colors, rallied together in the gym to take part in "Walk 27" and commemorate the lives lost at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Junior Noor Javid organized the walk, wanting the Townsend Harris community to come together and "honor them by walking in their memory." She explained that "Walk 27" was a global event started on Facebook by a man who inspired 81,000 people all over the world to walk on December 21 at exactly 9:30 A.M. for 27 minutes.

Every minute of the walk honored a victim. As students marched on in silence, brief but touching recollections were shared about each life lost. They learned of the children's dreams for the future, their hobbies, and even the last things they said to their families that morning.

The recollections brought tears to students and teachers alike as they learned more about the victims of Sandy Hook.

Benjamin Wheeler, 6, told his mother "I still want to be an architect, but I also want to be a paleontologist, because that's what Nate [his brother] is going to be and I want to do everything Nate does."

Jessica Rekos, 6, wanted a cowgirl hat and boots for Christmas because she loved everything about horses.

Chase Kowalski, 7, wanted his two front teeth back.

After the walk, Noor said, "It touched my heart how the Townsend Harris community was able to come together and remember the 27 people who died in the tragic event and that we could mourn together and remember their families."

A picture was taken of all the participants and sent to Sandy Hook Elementary School. It was also posted on the Facebook page dedicated to commemorating the victims.

Other schools and groups did the same, showing the families and friends of the victims that they have world-wide supporters.

Wendy Camio, freshman, said, "It was really heartwarming that we all got together for this great cause."

Mr. Adamkiewicz, Physical Education Teacher, said, "It was inspirational to see the students come together to walk in silence."

"I thought the walk was inspirational and thoughtful, and shows the caliber of students we have at Townsend Harris," said Principal Anthony Barbetta. "They always want to do something. I think of the Ephebic Oath; they always want to do something better, not only for our city, but also society."



Harrisites walk for lives lost at Sandy Hook.

photo by Jessica Mgeojirikwe

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While students cope without SPARK, Duke returns to THHS

by Michael Sanchez

The 1st floor hallways have become suspiciously quiet. The year before, there was always a group of students rushing towards the room next to the nurse's office. Now, that old SPARK office collects dust, and all the vibrant decorations honoring Mr. Marc Duke and the SPARK students have disappeared.

Like many schools, Townsend Harris has lost their SPARK program. SPARK stands for "School Prevention of Addiction through Rehabilitation and Knowledge." Though intended to deal with drug addiction, SPARK is more frequently used by students to cope with whatever problems they face.

The absence of the program has left a lot of the old SPARK goers at a loss for words and direction.

Senior Jonathan Kilom said, "There's really nothing to do without SPARK. It's not the same friendly environment. Everywhere else, even in the guidance office...we're kind of censored."

"I'm dying without SPARK," said Senior Alexis Martinez. "Part of me is missing! Duke literally saved my life, and without him in that room it just isn't the same."

Junior David Heifitz said, "This year has been incredibly stressful. I don't have that same comfort as the SPARK room. The guidance office is always busy, so we're kind of left to fend for ourselves."

"I haven't had the opportunity or place to go and discuss or solve my problems lately," said Junior Katherine Kulesza. "Being a junior, the stress from school has impacted my social life and this has caused me to be more angry and emotional. I have a very select group of people that I can go and talk to in replacement of SPARK but still I don't want to get their biased opinions sometimes or they are simply busy."

"SPARK was a safe haven," said Senior Shelley Mitchell. "It was a place of trust, respect and comfort, and no one was judged by anyone else. I've been handling my own problems just fine, but there's no place as comfortable as that office."

Principal Anthony Barbetta is aware of the situation of the students, and explains why a new SPARK program isn't in development.

"It's not a problem with the funding," said Mr. Barbetta. "There is no one to take the SPARK counselor position. After Mr. Duke retired, no one has stepped forward to take his place."

Mr. Barbetta sympathizes with the students' call for the SPARK office. "I believe every school should have a SPARK program. My old school had 2. Al-

though the guidance office has the same qualifications as a SPARK Counselors, I understand that they are stretched very thin. They have a big workload, and don't have much time to properly handle Student crises. Despite all this, we do need a SPARK Counselor."

Although the SPARK program itself may not exist, Mr. Duke still works around the building. He comes in only once a week on Thursdays to provide help to the students that seek the old SPARK comfort zone.

"Mr. Duke is no longer here as a SPARK counselor," explained Mr. Barbetta. "He's actually here as the Provider of Student Support, and solely works with the students. The PTA actually funds Mr. Duke. I'm very thankful to them for it."

Mr. Duke's new office is in the third floor guidance department. The small space, which some kids have named the new SPARK office, can still be seen filled with students, decorations, and Mr. Duke himself sharing experiences.

Mr. Duke shares his own opinions on the whole situation. "I know that when I left, there was barely anyone left to take up the SPARK program," said Mr. Duke. "They brought me back as a support service kind of person, to help the kids that need it. Townsend Harris isn't the only one with this problem however. Many schools have lost their SPARK programs. No one seems to have the proper training to replace them."

Despite Duke being back, the SPARK students still want the old room. In fact, with Duke back, they feel like they're even more entitled to it.

"I miss the SPARK office so much," said Katherine. "It wasn't even the fact that I got to talk to Duke. Because when Duke was busy, there was a room full of seniors or other kids who had problems and we could talk to each other and either resolve our problems like that or vent or even share a few laughs and jokes to lighten the mood."

"We need that office back," said David. "We need to feel the same comfort we had before."

Assistant Principal Ellen Fee explained the current situation of the old SPARK room. "Right now we don't have an official use for it," she said. "However, I do know that the guidance counselors use it for groups. They usually happen during lunch time and after school."

Guidance Counselor Sara Skoda described how the groups use the SPARK office. "This year, they've all happened after school," she said. "The groups vary from topic to topic. I know

Ms. Kramer had a 9th grade transition group to teach kids how to adjust to high school life. There was also a girls' group at one point, to discuss issues personal to girls. When Mr. Duke was a SPARK councilor, he would oversee the groups with us. That space has always been a more comfortable environment to the students, which makes it the perfect place for after school groups."

Despite the struggle for the old SPARK room, the students are very thankful to have Duke back. "I'm really glad he's here with us again," said Alexis. "Without him, I'd have no one to turn to."

"Having Duke back is like having family back," said Jonathan. "I don't go to see him as much, but it's comforting to know he's here."



photo by Hannah Morse

The "new" SPARK room sits in the guidance office.

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The lives of teachers: hidden talents, hobbies and pasts

by Ella Leviyeva

When you bump into your math teacher at the Midway movie theater concession stand the night before a test, you can't help but think, "Well, this is awkward."

As far as students know, or wish to believe, teachers are solely teachers; they leave school after ninth band to spend the whole night vigorously grading tests, preparing lessons, and creating homework assignments. But to many students' surprise, teachers are more than teachers; they are adults with families, hobbies, jobs, and obligations.

In addition to leading zero band spinning classes and distributing demerits, Physical Education teacher and Dean Robin Figelman is a personal trainer. "Aside from teaching at Townsend Harris and being Dean, I also teach a course to Physical Education majors at Queens College once a week. In my free time, I train clients in their own homes. My clients are mostly men and women in their fifties. I teach them lifetime fitness, how to diet and exercise; I basically put them through a workout just as I would with my high school students in boot camp, but at a level they can handle."

"I coach a baseball team, so for me baseball season runs almost all year round," said English Teacher Joseph Canzoneri. "We have 60 game seasons; we're a neighborhood team and 13 players have been with me since they were seven. It's something I enjoy doing, and although I teach I find time for it."

Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services Veronica York is an avid snowboarder. "I love snowboarding whenever I can. I've ridden Mountain Snow, Killington, Stratton, and others. I've ridden three mountains in Chile. I ride a 144 feel-good flying V. I haven't found a girl that's better than me yet. In addition to snowboarding, I also like rock climbing and tough mudding. I'm an adrenaline junkie; if there's an extreme sport, I often love it."

In addition to sports, teachers make time in their hectic schedules for their talents and hobbies.

Biology Teacher Katherine Cooper is a competitive Latin Ballroom dancer. "I started about a year and a half ago, and I've participated in 3 competitions and 3 shows. I dance Rumba, ChaCha, Salsa,

Paso Doble, and Jive, and I dance with a professional partner. I've taken ballet since I was 3, and I was part of a dance company, the Tina Thompson Dance and Fitness Theater."

Physics teacher and Technology Coordinator John Tsai revealed his hidden talent, saying, "I play guitar and sometimes sing in a church band. We play contemporary music, it's not like hard rock and roll, but stylistically it's like rock and pop. I started in the 90's, but not continuously. I'm usually somehow involved with music; it can be hectic at times."

"I love hula hooping," said Science teacher Sarah Oberlander. "What really got me into it is music; the type of music I listen to, a lot of girls do that, so I saw how great they were at it and realized, 'I want to be like them!' I started in August and ever since then I've been taking hula hooping classes in Brooklyn, making YouTube videos of me hula hooping, and even making my own hula hoops. I've become a really active member in that whole community. I try to find time, even if it's fifteen minutes in a day."

Librarian Jeffery Zahn has a secret passion for architecture. "During my free time, I participate in post and beam construction. It's an old fashioned, 18th century style of architecture. It's been an ongoing interest of mine, being surrounded by colonial structures as a kid. I attended Shelter Institute Building School, where I learned how to build things in this style. After Hurricane Katrina, I took my son down to New Orleans and we both worked to fix up the damage."

After spending his day mixing chemicals together and concocting various solutions, Chemistry teacher Philip Porzio goes home and joins together different ingredients. "I cook a lot, and I love to garden; I grow vegetables and herbs in the garden in front of my house. I grow chives, mint, red peppers, rosemary, tomatoes, basil, and I like to make my own sauces and seasonings."

Mr. Porzio is not the only food enthusiast roaming the halls of Townsend. "I love food. I try every cuisine, it's always been a passion of mine," said Social Studies teacher Franco Scardino.

"I ran a food and catering service before I became

a teacher. I still have good relationships with people in the business. I published 2 food calendars for the French Culinary Institute; I took photos of food from the top restaurants in the city. I attended the VENDY awards on Governors Island this year; it's a convention where the top food trucks in the city compete in different categories. It was a really perfect September day, and we went around sampling every food truck in the competition. It was a really fun and memorable experience," said Mr. Scardino.

The men of the math department have more in common than their derivation techniques. Stephen Mazza was in the Peace Corps for 4 years, and Timothy Connor was in the Army Reserve for 24 years.

Dr. Mazza said, "I taught math at a middle school in the Solomon Islands. There were no phones, no TVs, just a long dirt road up to the school and a tractor that never worked. When I joined the Peace Corps in 1988, it inspired me to teach. I joined a program where they paid for half of my masters. It was a completely different environment; teaching there was more challenging but the kids had to pass tests just to go to middle school, so they were more prepared."

Dr. Mazza later added, "I was barefoot for three years."

Mr. Connor said, "For quite a while, I was a track coach, teacher, and army man. I was an explosives expert; I jumped out of airplanes and drove heavy machinery. I just did these things because it was fun, and I was young. I joined when I was 20 years old. I went to college on a Track and Football scholarship, and when I got hurt I lost my scholarship and transferred schools in the middle of my junior year. At one point I realized I didn't have much money, and the Army Reserve was right there saying 'We'll pay for college!' and so I joined."

The teachers at Townsend Harris have so much more to offer than a rehearsed DOE lesson plan; they are each comprised of their personal lesson plans, which are the ones that truly stick.

So next time you wonder why your in-class essay isn't graded the next day or why you aren't getting an email response within three minutes, just remember, teachers have lives too.

Phoenix Silver Lining reading diversifies offerings

by Stephanie Geier

The Phoenix proved to be more than a literary magazine at their "silver lining" event on Friday, January 11, as students gathered in the library after school to watch and showcase literature, art, and music.

The "silver lining" theme, inspired by a writing prompt presented at a Phoenix meeting, represented the idea of finding good in hopeless situations. During the reading, students went up to a podium and presented their work, as others sat or stood around them and listened. Some works pertained to the theme, while many did not.

For the first time, original art and photography were presented to "diversify" the readings.

A symbolic drawing of a peacock and an ink sketch of a cat in a tree were presented. In addition, junior and Phoenix photography editor Sofia Milonas presented several of her original portrait photographs on a slideshow, projected onto the ceiling.

"That was the most amount of people I've shown my pictures to at once," she said. "It was pretty nerve wracking."

Music, a rare occurrence at past events, was also performed when Phoenix member Adrienne Cabral sang "Fix You" by Coldplay.

"I felt so nervous," she recalled. "But it was a great experience."

However, most students stuck to the traditional prose or poetry, both original and published. Original writing ranged from a reaction to a Parthian museum exhibit seen during a MALContents outing to a Harry Potter-inspired poem about the power of love. Others included a visual poem of a "silver lining," a prose piece inspired by Christina Perri's "Jar of Hearts," and a short poem expressing the pains of a Harrisite's freshman year, whose introductory lines were "Freshman year leaves me in tears."

Published writing included a Walt Whitman poem, a prose piece about a couple's meal at McDonald's, and an excerpt from the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

With about 90 people, nearly two-thirds more than the expected number of attendees, the reading was so successful that it had to be cut off at 4:15, despite several people not having the chance to present. After the reading, refreshment was served in the principal's cafeteria- many were encouraged to leave because it was so full.

"(The turnout) was fantastic," said Phoenix advisor and English teacher Rafal Olechowski. "I haven't seen this many students enjoy all kinds of creativity. It's really great to see this."

This was also the first time the event was titled a "literary event" instead of "poetry reading."

"...people would say, 'Well, I don't really like poetry, so I don't think I'm going to go to this,'" explained junior and Phoenix editor in chief Jillian Panagakos. "My point in changing what we called them is to show people that it doesn't matter if you just like poetry, or prose, or photography, or art-we have a little something for everyone. I'm excited we could start a new era of the Phoenix. I hope to make it a regular thing."

Mr. Olechowski compared the event to more of a "talent fair," where one can "come in and show things inside of you."

Many members and attendees agreed with this purpose.

"Singing is such a big part of me that I wanted to showcase it," said Adrienne.

The Phoenix is Townsend Harris's award-winning literary magazine that accepts poetry, prose, art, and photography from students.

Mr. Olechowski encourages students to join.

"It's a spectacular publication," he says. "And we have so many academic outlets, but the Phoenix is the creative spot. It lets you say 'yes I'm a great student,' but also a great writer or photographer. You exist in a new way all of a sudden...you exist beyond some average."

Preparing for intruders: new lockdown drills at THHS

By Christina Kim

Fire drills may be familiar to Townsend Harris students, but on November 8, all students were dumbfounded as they pushed their chairs to the other side of the room and crowded away from the door. Most of them had never heard of, let alone experienced, an intruder drill. The lockdown opened the eyes of many students to the possible dangers they could face from outside intruders. These mandatory drills, started by the DOE, are intended to prepare students and staff for a potential armed threat in their community.

Depending on the type of intruder, there are two different lockdowns. A soft lockdown implies that there is no imminent danger, and that the intruder is mostly likely in no position to harm students. For example, a stranger may have accidentally entered school and cannot find the exit.

In this situation, the assisant principals will search the school to identify the intruder.

In a hard lockdown, the intruder is armed and intends to harm the school community. In this case, staff members remain in their offices and wait for the police to arrive.

During both situations, an announcement will be made twice: "Attention. We are now in Soft/Hard Lockdown. Take proper action," and students will be expected to push their desks out of the way and move out of sight. Teachers will check the hallway for any stray students, turn off the lights and lock the door. Everyone remains silent until another announcement is made lifting the lockdown.

Every room has been provided a paper with a green side and a red side. During a soft lockdown, teachers will slide the paper under the door to indicate the state of the classroom. The green side will indicate that all students in the classroom are present and are in good condition. The red side will indicate that a student is missing, wounded, or any other emergency situation. The APs and deans walking the hallways will see which classrooms are in need.

"It's best to stay away from the doors, windows... Basically out of sight from the intruder," said Ms. Fee, discussing the drills.

The worst case scenario is either a student getting shot through the window of the door or glass shattering and injuring another. But ever wondered what those criss-crossing lines in the door window are? "The lines in the window basically separates the glass," Ms. Assante explained, "So that if someone tries to shoot the window, instead of the glass shattering everywhere, it'll only shoot one hole through."

Most teachers during the drill gathered the students against the wall and tried to fit in as many as



Image courtesy of schools.nyc.gov

Logos for the new drills. The top logo indicates a lockdown and the bottom indicates an evacuation.

possible.

Some even formed them into a triangular shape. "It makes it harder for the intruder to shoot directly at the students," said Ms. Liu. The ultimate goal isn't necessarily to hide, but to make sure that students are out of an assailant's line of fire.

As students in a slack-free atmosphere, most would expect that THHS students to take a lockdown as seriously as anything. However, most students stated otherwise. "I thought it was really funny," said Jennie Lynn, sophomore. "No one was taking it seriously. We already knew it was a drill."

Other students shared similar recollections of their intruder drill experiences. "My teacher made fun of it completely. But at the end of the drill, she took it seriously and pointed out good places to hide," said Yelena Dzhanova, sophomore.

Many students also doubted the effectiveness of the intruder drill. "We can't fit all of the students behind the blackboard. The idea of having to hide all of us is impossible," said Stanley Li, sophomore.

Jennifer Jacob, a sophomore, however, disagreed strongly. "Honestly, what else do you want the teachers to do? It's the students' faults for making the stupid choice of hiding under a desk or something. There's a wall right next to you! Even though teachers should protect us, we also need to use common sense. We're not defenseless babies."

It's important for the students to prepare for potential mayhem, but whose hands are they in? In the recent tragedies we have heard about, were teachers prepared for their heroic acts, or were they merely acting on instinct?

In fact, the principal of THHS is well-prepared to react to such a situation. Mr. Barbetta revealed that he used to be a principal at a pilot school for drills such as these. "The previous school I was at did really realistic drills. There was a bomb threat where they actually planted a fake device, and another time we had someone pose as an actual intruder."

But fake lockdowns aren't all that he's been through. "In my previous school, I experienced two lockdowns. During one, there was a disgruntled parent that went after a bully that was bothering his son, and he just went into the classroom. In a minute, the police caught him. It wasn't a pretty scene...and eventually he wound up being arrested."

When questioned on the precautions needed for the drill, Mr. Barbetta replied, "The lockdown prepares the entire school community and requires total cooperation. I expect students to take it seriously in order to maintain safety."

Mr. Barbetta adds, "You must be prepared because you never know... a crime can happen at any school or neighborhood, rich or poor. Crime doesn't care about money. It doesn't discriminate."

The heart-breaking shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School should be enough of a sign to indicate that even in a peaceful community like Newtown, such a tragedy can happen. "Everyone thinks, 'Oh, that's never going to happen to me' until it actually does," said Hilary Lee, sophomore.

Townsend Harris appears to be a safe haven of learning and cooperation, but you never know when an armed intruder may disturb that peace. In the words of Confucius, "Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure."

CLUB *spotlight*

Project Spirit offers helping hand to those in need

By Magdalena Grabos

Project Spirit hopes to unite the school, the community, and anyone in need of a helping hand. Club members live out the Ephebic Oath by taking on two new projects this year: offering solace to families in Newtown Connecticut, and making healing bracelets for patients suffering from chronic diseases.

Beginning its first project only last year, the club has already successfully delivered fifty gifts and a number of blankets and scarves to the Veterans at the VA hospital. This year, with a fresh set of sophomores making up the majority of the club, a new project was launched as well.

The club's initial purpose this year focused on reaching out to those suffering with Cancer, Lupus, Crohn's disease, and Alzheimer's by making healing bracelets. Helen Rizzuto, Club Advisor, said, "The patients could use these bracelets to meditate, keep track of the number of treatments they have been through, or whatever else they need to use it for."

The students who partake in the club chose blue as their unifying color, and decided to add a single, different colored bead to represent each separate disease the bracelets symbolize. Ena Rasic, sophomore, said, "I can't really relate to it because I don't know anyone with any of these diseases, but it's a great cause.

I volunteer at a hospital and I think it would be nice for those patients to get a bracelet like this."

This project, however, was put on hold when the shooting occurred in Newtown, Connecticut, leaving the club members wanting to help. They decided this to be a more pressing issue due to the timeliness of the event.

With a desire to remember and help the aching families impacted by the event, they created green bracelets displaying their motto, 'We are holding your hand,' in order to unify the community and offer a hand during this time of need. Gabrielle Gozdyra, sophomore, said, "It feels nice to give back to people who are hurting."

These green bracelets are available for students to buy in school, and with each purchase, a bracelet will also be sent over to Newtown, along with an uplifting message to comfort the grieving families and friends. With the purchase of a bracelet, a member of the THHS community will be given the opportunity to write a few consoling words of support and encouragement.

Sumayya Vawda concluded, "It would be nice for someone to do that for you if the situations were reversed."

From the Editors

The coming debate

The past few months were the hardest of 2012, bringing destruction and grief to the country. After a lackluster election that ended with a victory for our incumbent, it was hard to get excited about the future of our country. Surprisingly, after hearing Barack Obama's inaugural address, the feeling wasn't disappointment or resignation, but



hope. The candidate who ran on hope and change finally brought it to the podium, five years later. He laid out, if not a concrete plan, a vision for his final term – one that will be completed without the weight of a campaign and the threat of losing re-election.

He spoke of a progressive future for America that was refreshing to hear, and forced citizens to recognize the truth: that a changing America is the

only constant. He said, "We have always understood that when times

change, so must we; that fidelity to our founding principles requires new responses to new challenges; that preserving our individual freedoms ultimately requires collective action."

Even if you disagree with the President, it's time for Americans to engage in a debate about the issues he mentioned: immigration reform, inequality, climate change, and gun control. These are worthy issues for a vibrant democracy to tackle in the coming years.

President Obama challenged us to realize what being a citizen means - "You and I, as citizens, have the obligation to shape the debates of our time - not only with the votes we cast, but with the voices we lift in defense of our most ancient values and enduring ideals." The next four years will not fix our problems or end bipartisan roadblocks, but with this speech, the President nudged us in the direction of progress.

photo by Brian Sweeney

Obama at the Inauguration.

Where did you get in?

College acceptances and Facebook

By Juliet Monclova and Catherine Moskos

College acceptances have come pouring in for the class of 2013. Students have gotten accepted into Cornell, Northeastern, Columbia, School of Visual Arts, Wesleyan, University of Pennsylvania, Colby, and Vanderbilt, just to name a few. It's no surprise that our primary and most immediate source for finding out where students get accepted into college is Facebook.

Most Ivy League and top tier schools will set an exact time and date in which you can check your admissions decision. It seems like everyone in the senior class knows these details. The newsfeed is refreshed minutes after admissions are released and a status has already confirmed an acceptance.

If you get into a college, you post a status about it so that a) a million people don't ask you, "Did you get in?" the next day at school and b) to flaunt your success, because you've worked hard and earned your bragging rights. If you did Early Decision or Early Action, let's say, people look for your status and if they don't see one, it's an indication that a) you're being humble (although that's unlikely) or b) you were rejected or deferred; if you don't post a status, most people won't ask you the next day about where you'll be in 2017 and you might save yourself some mental anguish.

For those who were accepted, you have every right to make a status. Every note you took, all-nighter you pulled, and homework you finished culminated into working successfully for your dream. Yes, once you make that status, people will speculate about your SAT scores, GPA, extracurriculars, and college essay. Whether it is a long status of gratitude, thanking each individual who helped you secure your future or it is a simple declaration of

your acceptance, you deserve it. This is followed by a flood of congratulations, high fives, and hugs in school.

However, some may think that it is unacceptable to continue posting statuses updating your friends on each college acceptance; that it is not only unnecessary, but on the verge of distasteful behavior. These statuses are reserved to announce a rewarding moment, and the excess updates recounting all your acceptances undermine the purpose of this status. Every person deserves his or her moment, but it is pitiful to see one of us constantly milking praise from our peers.

Our graduating class this year consists of 269 students, but it feels even smaller sometimes. Posting about college acceptances on Facebook stems from something greater than our curiosity. A part of it has to do with our Townsend competitiveness, that natural inclination to see where you place in comparison to your peers. Maybe it's just to let the world (or your 600 'friends') know that you attended the hardest high school ever – the one that made you suffer through collaterals, early morning science labs, and even the Humanities Colloquium – and after taking the SAT three times, sweating over your weighted average, cranking out what seemed like thousands of college supplements and financial aid documents, you still succeeded.

So post on, Harrisites. Make your next status "_____ (fill in the blank), CLASS OF 2017!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" because, whether we like the status or not, we're dying to know.

Recycling procedures defy preconceived notions

continued from Page 1

"Having more bins where there's more students... like on each floor the bins are only in the middle but not anywhere else," said Anna Parashchak, senior.

Mareena George, senior, said, "I think they only way you could get them to recycle is extra credit."

"Recycling in our school is confusing because the bins are not labeled clearly. Most people here have intentions of recycling, but because they are not sure what is really recyclable, most don't," said senior Merin Varghese.

Mr. Benitez said, "We used to label them...the sanitation department provides labels."

Organizations like Recycle Across America are introducing standardized labels for recycling bins across the country to reduce confusion. The Environmental Advancement Foundation makes the case for recycling in schools, saying, "Eliminate the confu-



Recycling bins in the hallways.

sion, redundancy and 're-inventing of the wheel' that is currently happening at schools across the country which is causing unnecessary financial, material, water and energy waste (one solution we are introducing is society-wide standardized labels for recycling bins)."

In an article from the New York Times, titled "The Recycling Reflex," by David Bornstein, it states, "Standardized labels alone aren't sufficient; they have to be incorporated in education and training. But they are a necessary linchpin to establish consistent communications across all media. If the images on the e-mails, fliers, posters, banner ads, TV commercials, billboards and news shows match the labels on the bins, the message gets reinforced. Over time, it becomes ingrained."

Recycling is a group effort, and it will take more than just one person to make its effects noticeable. But Elizabeth Yakubova, junior, said, "If everyone else were to recycle, I would too."

photo by Ella Levivaya

Battle for the Best “Fresh Mex”: Qdoba versus Chipotle

by Andrew Mitchel

From the onset, Qdoba and Chipotle are incredibly similar restaurants, serving “fast casual” Mexican food and stressing fresh and healthy ingredients. In an attempt to ensure maximum comparability, I ordered a steak burrito with the same makeup: a flour tortilla, steak, rice, black beans, salsa, and cheese. Let’s see how these two restaurants measure up.

Chipotle. Location patronized: 9 W 42nd St, New York, NY, 10036
Nearest locations: 90-15 Queens Blvd, Elmhurst, NY, 11373 (Queens Center Mall) and coming soon to 70-30 Austin Street, Forest Hills, NY, 11375

Upon entry, Chipotle showed itself to be very distinctive. The location I went to was extremely busy, but the service counter looked like an assembly line and the staff made it function like one. All of the possible options for food were clearly outlined to avoid confusion and speed up the ordering process. Only a glass panel separates the service counter from you, the ordering customer, so if you see something that looks good, just point right at it and ask for it. I personally felt that the displayed menu stressed the healthiness and freshness of the food, listing the calories clearly. I also enjoyed their slogan, “Food with Integrity.”

As for the food itself, the burrito I got was great. It contained the perfect ratio of filling inside to tortilla outside, so that the burrito didn’t fall apart halfway through. The quality of the food was as good as the chain continuously claims it to be. All of the ingredients worked together in the burrito, not just as different components jumbled together, but as one cohesive product. Though the food was a little pricey because I was in Manhattan, it was a meal well worth the line, wait, and cost.

Food: A+
Décor: A-
Service: A
Overall: A



Qdoba. Location patronized: 61-40 188th Street, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365 (this is the only one in Queens)

Some may consider Qdoba a “Chipotle clone,” looking to benefit from the “fast casual” wave of restaurants, but I would argue that it is a bit different from its biggest rival. The service counter was, however, almost identical. It was just as effective, and was run at the same level of speed and precision by a staff of similar quality. The menu was a little bit different. There were specific burritos that had preset ingredients, such as the Ancho Chile BBQ burrito, which boasted a special pre-made sauce. The menu didn’t go as overboard on the calorie counting, and as a fan of spicy food, I felt the choices of salsa were much better. The décor was boring, but they did have televisions playing ESPN, winning them more than a few points in my book. As for the food, the burrito was almost on par with the one I had at Chipotle, but not quite there. The quality of the sustenance within the burrito was almost exactly the same, but the flavor was not as authentic or “organic,” meaning that Chipotle’s tasted more homemade, at least to me. The tortilla used for the burrito was a little too large for the amount of stuffing I received, and there is no worse moment in a Mexican restaurant than when you take a large bite and taste only tortilla. Overall, though Qdoba is a really good restaurant and has its strengths, Chipotle would win my vote if I were forced to choose between them.

Food: A-
Décor: A-
Service: A
Overall: A-



Logo by Jenner Chen

For many students at THHS, watching shows and movies online is a favored pastime. We are the Netflix generation, and for those of us who come into school and talk at length about the great shows we’ve spent our online time watching, we are very much a part of a growing ‘Net Clique’ of instant video watchers. Sometimes, however, it’s not easy to dig through the endless programs available online to find something really worth your time. “Net Cliques” is a column devoted to guiding you to the shows and movies that you might not find on your recommended list.

Overseas shows worth streaming here in the

by Amy Hao & Joanna Wong

Just like the creepy child in the *Poltergeist* movies, “we’re baaaaaack” and we’re here to advise you with even more movies for your instant queue!

When was the last time you ventured outside of American-born shows and dipped your toe into foreign waters? It’s a new year, the perfect time to try some new things; what better way to start 2013 than to take a trip to a place full of alluring accents and exotic cultures?

The folks across the pond in the United Kingdom have truly captured American television audiences with a slew of recent, award-winning hits: *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock*, and *Downton Abbey*, to name a few. But with those programs becoming household names here in the states, we realize that there are quite a few titles still out there that might not be as well known but are just as likely to be enjoyed here.

Doctor Who is so popular that multiple spin-off shows have been crafted around supporting characters. The most notable, *Torchwood* (available

on Netflix, Amazon, and other sites), revolves around the out-of-this-world escapades of Captain Jack Harkness (a former companion of the Doctor’s) and his team of scientists working with the titular secret government agency to protect the UK, as well as the rest of the planet, from alien threats ranging from harmless encounters to full-blown invasions. The intriguing plot lines, witty dialogue and alien content draw science fiction geeks from all over.

Period dramas have also become quite popular, as some viewers crave an escape from the present by learning about life in a different time. Luckily, the BBC answers the call. *Upstairs, Downstairs* (available on Netflix, Amazon, etc.) can be seen as the original *Downton Abbey*.

Although not as well known, the original series (first premiered in 1971) and its continuation (a “remake” aired from 2010 to 2012), revolve around the fictional 165 Eaton Place in London and the relationships between the “upstairs” family and their “downstairs”

servants residing there during and after the Great Depression. The show’s more modern city setting and later time period provide a refreshing contrast to the close-knit small town community and its people at Downton.

Following this different-time motif is *The Hour* (Amazon Instant Video). This series transports viewers straight into the heart of the Cold War- June 1956, during the time of the Suez Crisis. The story follows unhappy reporter Freddie Lyon who has been relegated to producing newsreels for the BBC. However, with a news magazine set out to cover the conflict in the Middle East, an intricate web of lies, murders, and espionage is uncovered. The great suspense mixed with history is sure to please both mystery and history buffs alike.

We acknowledge that some of you aren’t exactly as glued to your television sets as we are; for that, we recommend beginning this year on the right foot by taking the plunge into foreign films. The romantic comedy *Notting*

Hill (available on Amazon, iTunes and by other means) details the ups and downs of a British bookkeeper’s tumultuous relationship with a Hollywood starlet and even gives a quiet glimpse into the lives of a typical - albeit incredibly fortunate - Brit in modern times.

For those who aren’t too fond of lighthearted films and prefer movies with dark fantastical elements, *Pan’s Labyrinth* (available on Amazon, iTunes and by other means) is an excellent choice. The critically acclaimed work by Guillermo del Toro is entirely in Spanish and seamlessly weaves together the tragic story of a girl living in post-Civil War Spain with the fantasy world she imagines.

It’s not too late to make a New Year’s resolution; catch the outsider influence and make a promise that you’ll definitely want to keep. Of course, there are plenty of other foreign films worthy of your attention, and with Netflix’s closed captions, you need not stick to English-only movies.

Les Misérables leaves viewers clinging to Kleenex

by Catherine Moskos

I walked into the 12 o'clock showing of *Les Misérables* at my local movie theatre with high expectations. I'm a big fan of the Broadway production as well as Victor Hugo's novel and, admittedly, every muscle in Hugh Jackman's body. I was delightfully surprised to see that the director, Tom Hooper, turned the work of Hugo into silver screen, Oscar deserving magic. *Les Misérables* stole my heart and helped me gain a newfound appreciation for Kleenex tissues.

Taking place in revolutionary 19th century France, *Les Misérables* is the story of Jean Valjean (Hugh Jackman), an ex-convict who is hunted for years by the callous Javert (Russell Crowe) after breaking his parole. Jean Valjean, after recreating his identity, promises to care for factory worker turned prostitute Fantine's (Anne Hathaway) daughter, Cosette. His life thereafter is never the same.

With such a brilliant and decorated cast, consisting of big Hollywood names like Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway, Amanda Seyfried, Sacha Baron Cohen, Helena Bonham Carter, one might think that the movie wouldn't really have to have the theatrical merit to draw an audience and make millions of dollars. It could make money on star power alone.

On the contrary, this production stuck closely to its theatrical roots and strived to meet even the biggest *Les Misérables* fan's expectations. It was produced on a grand scale and had virtually no spoken dialogue. Every song in the movie



Marius clutches Eponine in a scene from *Les Misérables*.

was not recorded beforehand but sung on set instead. Yes, maybe a few notes were missed but every second of unadulterated, in the moment, raw emotion made up for the minor flaws. We're so used to hearing "perfect" voices in musicals, but if you went through what the destitute martyr figure Fantine went through or felt the despondent failure of Javert in his lowest moments, then I'm sure you wouldn't be able to hit every note perfectly either.

The success of this movie lies in the gutsy and grand risks that Tom Hooper was so eager to take and the timeless characters that were so elegantly portrayed. Jean Valjean is by far the most heroic and virtuous man in literature. Marius is so hopelessly romantic and adorable even when he's covered in feces on Jean Valjean's shoulder. The lovelorn Eponine breaks your heart while she's walking along the cobblestone streets of Paris, drenched in rain and unrequited love, telling a story even sadder than that of the ASPCA commercials.

I believe that *Les Misérables* was perfect because it gave audiences hope. Even if you're prisoner 24601 on the run, a prostitute who is forced to live in humiliation to provide for her daughter, or a little girl who sings of a castle on a cloud amid the darkness in her life, you can dream and exceed every expectation you have of yourself.

photo courtesy of imdb.com

Download the best free iPhone and Android apps of 2012

by Chris Artun

In a day and age where most of our lives revolve around our phones and our ability to stay connected with one another, "smartphones" are becoming quite commonplace. While many of us are well versed with mainstream applications such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media tools, why not explore the limitless other apps that exist to supplement the main ones and take your phone's capabilities to an entirely different level? There are so many apps out there, for both platforms (Apple iOS and Android) that enhance our phones. The best part... these are all free!

Tunein Radio by Tunein Inc. (Available on: iOS and Android; free!)

This app does exactly what it says it does. It enables its users to listen in on any frequency their hearts desire. What separates this app from others I've used is its ability to listen in on AM and FM frequencies. It even allows you to search for specific play-by-play sports radio stations for all professional sports teams.

Subway Surfers by Kiloo Games (Available on: OS and Android; free!)

One of my favorite games to play, Subway Surfers is essentially a modernized Temple Run. It features a customizable avatar that hops around and tries to elude getting caught by a police officer. The graphics are well done, crisp and vibrant. It also updates during the holiday season, and contains vast amounts of options to customize the theme, avatar, speed, and much more. I highly recommend it for anyone who occasionally needs something to pass the time. Believe me, it goes by fast!

Speed Test by Ookla (Available on: iOS and Android; free!)

Ever wondered if you're truly getting the download speeds that your service provider says you are? Well, Speedtest is here to help you verify that. With this app, you can check the download, upload, and ping speeds of your network. What makes this app is its ability to operate on both Wi-Fi and wireless data connections from a service provider. It also retains

records of all your previous tests to see how consistent your service is at different locations.

Google Maps by Google Inc. (Available on: iOS and Android; free!)

When Apple released their new mobile operating system, iOS 6, it finally came with its own form of GPS navigation. However, to the dismay of Apple users, it was a dismal failure. To provide some gratification for its users, Apple decided to succumb to their rival, Google, and made Google Maps available to their users. In mobile navigation, Maps seems to be leading the pack. While apps like MapQuest and Waze try to compete, they fall short of the user-friendly software of Google's app. It provides comprehensive turn-by-turn navigation, along with real-time traffic. It even allows you to see what the next exit that you must use will look like to prevent mistakes. Google Maps has reached the pinnacle of mobile navigation, and with features like these, it seems as though it will remain there for quite a while.

Ski resorts give chance to relax without breaking the bank

by Parina Kaewkrajang

Snowboarding and skiing may seem daunting to the timid, perilous to penny-pinchers, and time consuming to the average person. One of the most common reasons that students in NYC choose to abstain from this particular sport, however, lies within the misconception that ski resorts are located in Canada, Massachusetts, Vermont, and other places that break your (or your parents') gas bill.

This is not the case. Many ski resorts are accessible to any student within an hour and a half or less. Students should take the chance to cool off from school and relieve some stress, simultaneously learning a new skill. Even if you're not brave enough to risk your neck to go cruising down a black diamond*, there's quite a lot to do in the ski resorts around New York.

For instance, Mountain Creek (200 Route 94 Vernon, New Jersey 07462) does not only offer trails for beginners, intermediate, and advanced skiers/riders; this particular resort also offers a snow tubing drop zone, and dedicates an entire mountain to "terrain parks" (This is where all the skiers/snowboarders show off their tricks). Snowtubing tickets are set to \$20, Monday through Friday, and \$25, Sundays and Saturdays. Snowboard and ski rental (includes helmet) is \$44.95, and with a \$40.99 lift ticket (price varies by day and age), the total cost amounts to \$85.94.

If this seems a little too pricey for you, check out Mountain Creek's Learn To Packages, which include rental, lessons, and lift tickets. As January happens to be Learn to Ski or Snowboard Month, Mountain Creek offers a Buy One Get One Free Learn-To Ski or Snowboard Package Coupon. For further information check out the resort's website: www.mountaincreek.com.

Ski Campgaw, in Campgaw Mountain (200 Campgaw Rd. Mahwah, NJ 07430), has shorter and fewer trails and lifts than Mountain Creek. However, it has a snow tubing area (\$18-\$24, depending on day, time, and occasion) and a little terrain park. To compensate for its size, Campgaw's prices are much cheap-

er than those of other resorts. Depending on the day, occasion, and time, prices can range from \$18 to \$36 dollars. Snowboard rentals cost \$39.55 total (helmet, boots, and board), while ski rentals (skis, boots, poles, helmet) cost \$34.55 total. Ski Campgaw is a great mountain for beginner skiers and snowboarders- not only is it cheap, but the level of difficulty of its trails is not high. If you are interested in skiing or snowboarding at this mountain, go to: www.skicampgaw.com.

Belleayre Mountain is a state-owned and operated ski resort located off of State Route 28 in Highmount, NY. (Other resorts like Campgaw and Mountain Creek are privately owned.)

The resort consists mostly of intermediate trails, and the prices, therefore, are not hospitable to beginners. The price for a lift ticket can range from \$42-\$53, depending on the time and occasion, and rentals cost \$77-\$87 for ages 8-17. Belleayre also offers a Learn-to-Ski or Ride 1-2-3 Package, which includes 3 days worth of rentals, lessons, and lift tickets for \$131.

Of the many beginner package deals that I have encountered, the Learn-to-Ski or Ride package is probably the most worthwhile, in both time and money. Buyers are not obligated to take the lessons in consecutive days, and may return during the 2013 season, when convenient, to take the remaining sessions. To learn more about Belleayre Mountain, visit www.belleayre.com.

*The name for steep, hilly, and/or icy trails suitable for more advanced skiers/snowboarders

**Also, all of the above prices are for 1-day lift tickets for an individual. 2-day lift tickets are cheaper, and group tickets are usually even more so. So go with friends!

mountain creek



Campgaw
MOUNTAIN

BELLEAYRE

Argentinean soccer star Lionel Messi breaks record

by Dimitri Theofanis

Soccer superstar Lionel Messi has scored a record-breaking 91 goals in the 2012 calendar year, breaking the German Gerd Mueller's 40-year-old record of 85 goals in a calendar year.

Messi scored 79 goals for the world famous team FC Barcelona, and 12 for his national team, Argentina. He scored his 91st goal against Valladolid while playing for Barcelona on December 22 in a 3-1 victory. Messi scored 78 goals from within the penalty area, and 14 goals from penalty kicks. He scored all ten penalty kicks taken for Barcelona in La Liga, and made two out of three penalty kicks taken for Barcelona in the Champions League. However, the miss was an important one, because it would have given Barcelona the lead against Chelsea in the semifinals, who went on to win the championship.

"Messi is living in a generation where more goals are being scored than not. Not taking anything away from this remarkable feat, I must say that the Brazilian Ronaldo would have scored twice as much had he been playing this season during his prime," said senior Khalid Abdin.

Messi scored twice in 22 games and did not score at all in the same amount of matches. He had nine hat tricks, scored four times in a match twice, and had a

Champions League-record of five goals against Bayer Leverkusen.

"It's just one of the many things he will accomplish in his career. I think he will be able to accomplish the feat of best forward ever to live," said junior Daniel Yacar. He continued, "However, to a certain extent, Messi wouldn't be able to accomplish everything he has without the help of the greatest team in the world."

Lionel Messi is often considered the best player in the world, rivaled only by the Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.

"Cristiano Ronaldo is the best player in the world because even though he's a winger he can score 60 goals and lead his team to titles. That is something Messi can't do because he can't bring his team to any titles," said senior Wilmer Montesdeoca.

"Well I won't say that Cristiano Ronaldo has more worth to his team than Messi, but he has a greater skill set than Messi does," said Khalid.

Senior Muhammad Altaf said, "There's not much you can say about Messi. He's just amazing."

"I don't know anything about soccer, but I do know that Messi is an extraordinary soccer player," said senior Christopher Jordan.



Messi (second left) celebrating his 91st goal.

photo courtesy of the China Post

Senior basketball captain Sharief Enany shoots, scores

by Andrew Eichenholz

Lying in a deep deficit during the fourth quarter of the finals, the Hawks Boys Basketball Team saw its hopes of winning the Jim Dilg Christmas Tournament begin to fade. In a dramatic upset, the team, led by senior captain Sharief Enany, came back to win the tournament, ending the year with a bang. Sharief took home the honor of being named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, marking a terrific start to both his and the Hawks' seasons.

Averaging over twenty points a game, Sharief has become the breakout star of the Hawks, improving on a solid junior season in which he helped lead the team to the playoffs. Sharief said, "Being the leader of this team is a tough job. You need to go out and pour your entire heart out onto the court; not just for yourself, but because the team looks at the captain for direction and motivation."

Sharief scored 35 points against Robert F. Kennedy on Thursday, November 29, his personal high for points scored in a league game this season. The Hawks lost by two points in double-overtime in one of their closest games.

When discussing how he prepares for games, the captain displayed his intense focus. "Before games I don't really listen to music like other people do. I actually just spend that entire day thinking about what we need to do to win. I don't need music to get me pumped up, this is my last year of high school basketball and that's motivation enough."

He added, "What we need to improve in is knowing how to turn on our level of heart at ends of games. Sometimes it's been there and sometimes it hasn't. If we learn to end games with complete passion, then we'll go very far."

Senior Antonino Scaturro's has been grateful for the leadership of the senior captain. He said of Sharief, "[He] is a valuable piece to our team. He shows great leadership, and helps us win close games in the final minutes."

Senior co-captain Alex Boychuk said, "Sharief is a great captain who understands responsibility. He makes sure everyone is always on the same page, on and off the court. As a good friend and co-captain of his I get to see the emotion that is presented by him on a closer level. His passion for basketball is remarkable, he understands the mistakes that he makes and attempts to fix them. I remember one game he missed a shot terribly and the first words out of his mouth were 'I am so sorry guys!' Not every player, let alone captain, would do such a thing. He knows how to be captain of our team and I'm proud to be leading it with him."

For his value as a player and a leader, senior Sharief Enany is male Student Athlete of the Month.



Senior Sharief Enany at basketball practice.

GAMES TO WATCH

1/30 4:30PM Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Grover Cleveland @ Townsend Harris

1/31 4:30PM Boys Varsity Basketball vs. August Martin High School @ Townsend Harris

2/06 4:30PM Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Flushing High School @ Townsend Harris

2/07 4:30PM Boys Varsity Basketball vs. The Scholars Academy @ Townsend Harris

2/11 4:30PM Girls Junior Varsity Basketball vs. Queens HS of Teaching @ Townsend Harris