

THE COMET NEWS

Fall 2020

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HICKSVILLE RESPONDS TO EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Feature written by: Maeryam Nasari

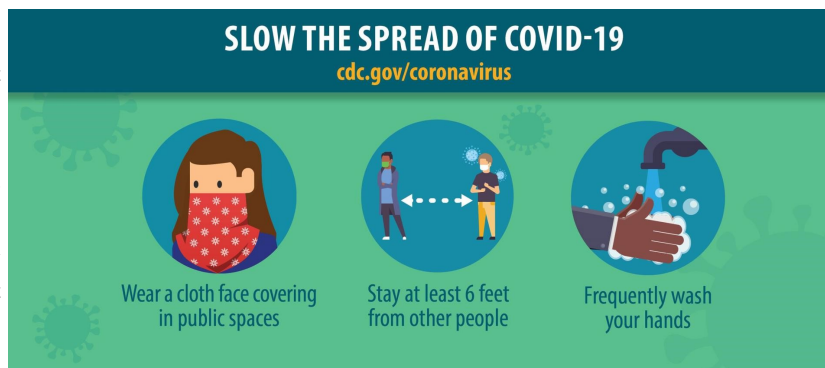
Within the past few months our country has experienced devastating and difficult days. The pandemic has raged havoc upon hundreds of thousands of people across the globe as this invisible enemy spread rapidly throughout the busiest cities. However, if all citizens are adherent to healthcare guidelines such as wearing masks or limiting social interactions, then the spread will be contained. We must come together in our communities and across the nation, mobilizing our resources to provide for the needy, protect the vulnerable, and ultimately prevent the spread of the disease.

Understandably, our education system has been heavily impacted by this virus. Our district has taken several precautionary measures to contain the spread of the virus and ensure the safety of students and staff. In order to enforce the necessary healthcare guidelines, students have been split into orange and grey cohorts based on last name. This determines when hybrid learners attend school in person. Furthermore, new cleaning and disinfecting protocols have been established for classrooms and other high touch surfaces. Hand sanitizer dispensers are readily availa-

ble and classrooms are cleaned thoroughly every night. In addition there are several preventative actions taken on the bus, such as allowing students from the same family to sit together, restricting one student per row, and permitting a maximum of 21 students on the bus. Students are required to wear face masks at all times of the day; a 5 minute mask break is allowed within every 40 minute instructional period when students are seated and socially distanced.

ers are willing to work to their maximum potential with both remote and hybrid students to assist students. They are willing to do home visits (meeting outside), Google Meet counseling sessions, phone counseling sessions, and parent/student meetings to connect with high school students.

Important Google Classroom Codes will be listed below and it is highly encouraged for students to join. During uncertain times, it is highly imperative that we prioritize our physical and mental health and reach out to adults who can help us. As a final note, we urge in-person students to remain cautious and wear their masks!



We encourage all students to take the health of others and themselves seriously during times like these. Our district is also providing as many resources as possible for students who are struggling. For instance, a Social Emotional Resources and Ideas Google Classroom is available for students which includes daily activities to cope with stress as well as online peer tutoring services from the National Honor Society. Our school's social work-

**Mrs. Bocchicchio,
School Social Worker's Classroom:
(Code: 9ph3jok)**

**Social Emotional Resources
Classroom:
(Code: fvzcywi)**

**Coping With My Loss:
(Code: io7sufv)**

GOING REMOTE

Written by: Gia Rangi

A new system of hybrid, and remote learning has taken over schools across Long Island thanks to Covid-19. You may have been debating between hybrid or remote schooling. You must think about what fits your mental, or physical needs. There are many pros and cons with each decision you might make.

The most common reason for choosing remote would be your safety. Although the school has made many changes to ensure your safety, attending school in person may be a risk you might not want to take. Another reason for choosing remote might coincide with the consistent schedule of doing school online

for 5 days a week rather than going two days and staying home for the remaining three, or if going to school might feel like a challenge to you, especially under these current circumstances, then remote might be the better option. Remote schooling might also provide more time to do other things in between classes or during your lunch break (if you have one).

There are some negative aspects to remote learning as well. For some, remote schooling might make it harder to focus. The temptation of going on phones during class or not paying attention, since the teachers wouldn't be aware, could result in jeopardizing your grades. This has been a common problem for most, but it may not be the same for everyone. For example, some may find it easier to focus in the comfort of their own home, while some may have a distracting environment. A major problem would be the technological problems. Slow WiFi, glitches, or getting kicked out of a Google Meet, is something most students have experienced at least once. Hybrid schooling might make this problem easier with the opportunity of not having to experience this everyday, and being able to learn better.

Hybrid schooling has similar pros and cons. For example, one of the negatives might be the discomfort. The discomfort may come with many things like the masks, desk protectors, and with communicating. The masks could make communication difficult with others. Some of you may also find it challenging to hear through the masks or see the board through the desk protectors. These problems could be problems that you have had over the course of a normal year, that were made easier from remote schooling. Of course the major negative would be risking your safety and the fear of getting sick.

Some of the positives are similar to the negatives of remote learning. For example as previously mentioned, it may be harder to pay attention or learn while remote, but for hybrid it could make that easier. When you are in a classroom you might feel more obligated to pay attention and it might be easier to understand. Hybrid also provides you with opportunities to better know your teachers and classmates. For newcomers, it may be a good chance to get to know the school. There would also be increased social interaction among you and your peers.

This year has brought on an immense change for people of the school, but as we are learning to adjust to this new system of hybrid and remote schooling, you can use it to your advantage to create the proper learning environment for yourself.



Pictured: A classroom in Hicksville High School.

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WHERE DID CUOMO GO WRONG?

Written by: Cory Wright

As the amount of new cases begins to rise in the US, it's important to understand what went wrong the first time around. Here in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo has come under fire for his handling of Covid, but are these attacks justified? If so, what could he have done better?

The first thing necessary to measure New York's success is to understand how it compares to the other states. There's not much to brag about, and that might be the understatement of the year. As of Dec. 2, Worldometer has the Empire State in second place out of 56 US states and territories at 1,785 deaths per million. The CDC's count doesn't look any better, New York City alone takes the top spot in the US with 289 deaths per 100,000 people. These statistics don't come as much of a surprise considering that back in April, New York had over 10,000 new cases a day for three days straight. Since then, heavy lockdowns and strict masking policies pushed down the number of new cases. Or at least they did.

As we started moving back to normalcy, the numbers have begun to rise. The effects started to show in late September when, according to the Covid Tracking Project, New York started to see the number of new cases rise over 1,000 again. Skip a few months forward and we're seeing numbers getting dreadfully high, surpassing 8,000 on November 27th. The New York Times is now reporting a 48% increase in the amount of cases during the last 14 days and an 85% increase in the amount of deaths during the same time frame. It's safe to say that, despite Governor Cuomo's efforts, New York is in for a nasty, and perhaps even deadly, second wave.

If New York failed, what did Cuomo do wrong? The answer lies in protecting the most vulnerable; the elderly. According to the Covid Tracking Project, 39% of US Covid deaths come from nursing homes, a demographic of the population which makes up less than 1% of the population. The same source reports that long term care facilities (LTCs; meaning nursing homes and assisted living facilities) can account for 26% of all deaths in New York as of the 26th of November. This has led Governor Cuomo to boast NY's low ranking in terms of nursing home deaths. In September during a press call for the Finger Lakes Daily News, Cuomo was asked about his management of nursing homes and made the following statement: "You look at the nursing home deaths in this state, do you know what number we are by percentage before you made that statement? We're 46 out of 50 states, and we had the worst problem, and we're 46th in terms of percentage of deaths in nursing homes." Then that must not have been the problem, right?

Wrong. On the surface, this would suggest that New York was actually successful in protecting the elderly. Upon further investigation however, that is not the case. In a state with so many deaths, one would expect the number of deaths in LTCs to be much higher. Yet this assumption is incorrect when looking at New York's data because of the way that New York counts LTC deaths. Unlike other states, NY only counts Covid deaths as LTC deaths if the victim dies on the property. For example, if a nursing home resident is taken to a hospital and passes away in the hospital, it will not count as a nursing home death but as a hospital death, even if the victim became infected in their nursing home. This greatly skews the data in the state's favor, rendering comparisons with New York's raw nursing home death total or percentage an unfair way to measure the state's success in protecting the elderly when comparing it to

other states, which is exactly what Cuomo used to his advantage during the aforementioned interview. Data from the Covid Tracking Project shows that New York has the second most LTC deaths in the country at 6,945 deaths. The fairest possible data for analyzing nursing home deaths specifically actually comes from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, a government organization which accounts for this discrepancy. They currently rank NY at 30th out of the 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. The last data entry from September 15th has New York at 51.8 deaths for every thousand nursing home residents.

If New York is almost in the middle of the pack, at least in nursing home deaths per every thousand, is there anything that Governor Cuomo could have done to get that number down? The answer is a resounding yes. For the past few months the governor has been peppered by the media with questions concerning an advisory released on March 25th. This advisory, which has since been taken back, has been heavily criticized. Once read, it's easy to see why. It was sent to "Nursing Home Administrators, Directors of Nursing, Directors of Social Work, and Hospital Discharge Planners", and says the following: "No resident shall be denied re-admission or admission to the [nursing home] solely based on a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of COVID-19. NHs are prohibited from requiring a hospitalized resident who is determined medically stable to be tested for COVID-19 prior to admission or readmission". The first sentence, which is underlined on the actual document, caused massive uproar among Governor Cuomo's detractors. The act of denying entry to a nursing home to someone with Covid would be a critical step in keeping the elderly safe and those two sentences alone cut against that

QUARANTINED FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Written by: Mallika Rangi

It is officially the holiday season and people are getting ready to spend some quality time with their loved ones, in a safe manner of course.

Everyone can agree that 2020 has been a challenging year, full of unexpected surprises. People have experienced drastic changes in their lives, which include learning from home this year along with refraining from visiting friends, or going to parties. Throughout all of the setbacks and disappointments students in Hicksville High School have had to face, they have still maintained a positive attitude, especially during this Thanksgiving.

Some of our students in the school were interviewed about what they were thankful for this year, who they will be celebrating Thanksgiving with this year, as well as what they will be doing for the holiday.

Alina Nodrat, a junior in the school, will be celebrating Thanksgiving at home with her family. She will also

be celebrating over Zoom with other family members. This year, Alina is thankful for life itself, and being somewhere she is happy.

Jesse Natarajan, who is a senior at the school, will also be having a fun Thanksgiving. This year, she will be celebrating with her parents, sister, and grandparents, at her home. Jesse will be making food with her family, and will also spend time playing board games with them. Jesse is thankful for everyone in her family being safe and healthy. She is also thankful that her senior year is going well.

Another student in the school, who wished to remain anonymous, will be staying in with their family as usual, but they will also be attending a Zoom call with their extended family and doing a mini celebration with them. This is new for the student because many of their extended family members live in different countries, and don't celebrate Thanksgiving, as it is primarily an American holiday. This student finds

it ironic that they are spending more time with their extended family during the pandemic than before it. This student is thankful for a number of things this year. They are grateful that they have good physical health and that people they care about are also in good health. In addition, the student is thankful for being able to get an education, being close to God, having access to food and water, and living in America.

Other students that were interviewed similarly stated that they are thankful for their family's health considering the current situation with Covid-19.

One stated that they are thankful for the school and the teachers for working hard to provide for the students as well as working hard to ensure their safety. The teachers this year have also had to shift their styles of teaching, and the student appreciates how willing they are to give their students the best education possible in these circumstances.

WHERE DID CUOMO GO WRONG? (CONT)

more than anything else anyone could have done. Although it's hard to be certain, it remains safe to say that this demand is at least in part responsible for New York having the second most LTC deaths. His supporters have defended Cuomo's actions by reminding the public that it was an advisory, not a law. The advisory, however, says in no uncertain terms that the infected patient

may not be denied, not to mention the strong and demanding language which suggests that the only reason it was released as an advisory was because it would be faster than passing a brand new law.

Governor Cuomo has fiercely defended himself from all attacks, at one point saying to reporters "I put my head on the pillow at night saying I saved lives,

that's how I sleep at night". If this really is the case, then considering the presented data, I'd say Governor Cuomo does not deserve much sleep at all.

QUARANTINED AND LGBTQ

Written by: James Colwell

The topic of COVID-19 and the quarantine that came with it is a highly broad topic with different opinions and unique experiences. Specifically, Generation Z is the generation that will grow up to tell their children about this pandemic. We will forever carry the experiences and global trauma of COVID-19 and the harsh conditions that came with it.

While everyone will carry these traumas of being ripped out of their lives and losing loved ones, Generation Z will be the generation that was coming of age during a pandemic. How has this affected specifically the LGBTQ youth? Have they been negatively affected by being stuck with non supporting family members and being ripped out of safe spaces? Or have they been positively affected by being able to escape stressful school social situations? At Hicksville High School, many LGBTQ youths volunteered to speak up about their experiences and answer these questions.

When asked if quarantine has had a negative or positive effect on their mental health, most answered negatively. One student gave specific detail of why this pandemic has negatively impacted his mental health, saying, "Quarantine has caused my mental health to decrease because I have less opportunities to meet people like me."

LGBTQ people often thrive and benefit from being around people also a part of their community. Taking those interactions away from LGBTQ youth is detrimental and harmful to the person. In safe spaces, LGBTQ individuals meet people like them and learn more

about their community. With COVID-19 restrictions, many are left without these safe spaces. It is also extremely difficult for LGBTQ youth to find a partner as there are fewer gay people than straight. Nearly half of the LGBTQ population are single and a whopping 80% of these people are seeking a serious relationship. Add on top of that a pandemic and it is nearly impossible to find love.

On the contrary, some students answered saying that the pandemic attributed positively to their mental health. One student answered, "Quarantine and the time alone has allowed me to genuinely accept myself." Sometimes in the busy world of day to day life, there isn't a lot of time to put in the work to accept ourselves. This time alone has caused some to do some self-discovering and learn to love themselves. On the topic of self-discovery, many students answered that the time alone caused them to question their sexuality and gender.

Many also were able to confirm their sexuality and gender. One student answered, "Before quarantine, I was super straight, but after I discovered I was bisexual." This is a mostly positive effect of quarantine. Being able to discover yourself is a crucial part of being a human.

However, for some, it could cross the line and become stressful. Questioning one's sexuality and gender could lead to a distraction from other important tasks, and could cause stress and confusion. Studies show that 57% of people first started questioning

their sexuality or gender between the ages of 11 and 15. This continues throughout the person's life until they discover themselves truly. This can be both positive and negative on a person's mental health.

Quarantine has also caused some to come out to their family and friends. One student came out to their family and had a negative experience, "It was really difficult to not have my family accept me. I kind of knew they wouldn't deep down, but hearing them say it directly was completely different." A negative coming out experience can be extremely harmful to one's self-esteem and confidence. The same student said the following, "Being closeted felt so painful, and being fully out is something I've dreamed of for years." While this person's experience was negative, they were able to draw positives from it. Coming out is a huge weight off of the shoulders of so many LGBTQ individuals. It can carry so heavily on one's back and coming out can be such a relief.

Whether the effect of COVID-19 is positive or negative on a young LGBTQ person's mental health, the students at Hicksville High School all want LGBTQ youth to know one thing, that they are supported. One student stated, "It's okay to not know what you are sexually, and it's okay not to know how you are mentally. As long as you have a way to get everything out of your system, then eventually everything should smooth out." As much as quarantine has caused people to question themselves, it is perfectly acceptable for these individuals to not know themselves completely yet. It is

LACED INTO AN HOURGLASS

Feature written by: Kaitlyn Verdugo Ortiz

The 16th century marked the beginning of the hourglass female silhouette, all shaped, quite literally, by the corset. Various female celebrities have endorsed the corset, including Paul Poiret and Madeleine Vionnet in the corset's revival of the 20th century. Celebrities all around the world have displayed their style through corset wearing, including Madonna during her *Blond Ambition* tour in 1991. The corset is a garment with a tough, steel structured bodice that is laced together in order to shape the waist. What concerns many, is the recent 2020 comeback of the corset because of its appeal to the adolescent audience. Many doctors have blamed waist training and corset wearing for rib deformity, respiratory issues, damage to internal organs, and miscarriages. Lined with lace and steel, these trendy pieces of clothing could be altering more than just a few inches on adolescent bodies without need.

These body modifying bodices have become very popular on Instagram feeds and fashion edits through ideally "beautiful" women such as the Kardashians. Many women, as a result, have tried waist training and have experimented with its effects. Krista Minard on *Sacramento Magazine* purchased a 43\$ corset after being advised to follow this trend. She stated, "First impressions: Can't breathe. Too hot. Way too confined." She quickly left the training after realizing its fit was not worth the discomfort. It deeply outlines the pain for a body alterations and the length at which one will go for an "hourglass"

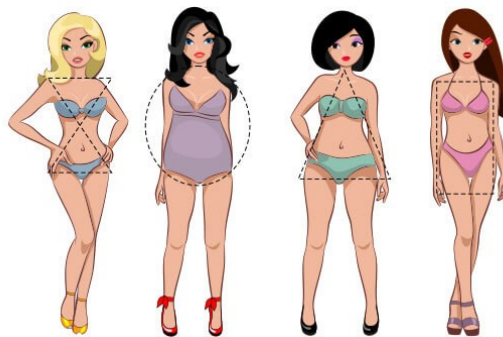
figure. Anthropologist Rebecca Gibson of American University specifically studied this type of waist training by referring to the 19th-20th century. By studying Musée de l'Homme's skeleton and three others in the Museum of London, she observed how they all exhibited an 'S' shape rib deformity and misaligned vertebral spines. Women wore these everyday and trained their waists to about twenty-two inches, about ten inches less than London women today.

Contributing to the trend is social media, which many adolescents use to stay in touch with new forms of expression. A female adolescent from Hicksville High School, remaining anonymous, stated "I think they're really beautiful...I'm always looking for new corsets worn by the Hadid's...". However, after asking about a corset's affect on ones body, she responded with, "I feel like if you wear them for an extended period of time they'll move your organs or so I've heard, but like if it's for a small amount I think it's fine." This adolescent, just like many others, was inspired by a trend that could easily alter their autonomy.

Although there is no clear guarantee of safety, some corsets may be safer

than others. According to Dr. O'Followell from the New York Academy of Medicine, corsets are not identical to each other, some are tightly laced and others simply for appearance. Those who were tightly laced for waist training resulted in the change of rib change circumference. Additionally, some fashion historians have claimed that the media's extreme depiction of waist training may be a dramatized depiction. After measuring 19th century corsets they concluded that 19th century women didn't train their waist to be below 20 inches. This is definitely above the 13 inches seen in magazines.

In the majority, Tightly laced corsets are not endorsed by many medical experts like Dr. O'Followell. He instead, recommends a looser fit for the appearance rather than the shapeshifting portion. Corsets that are less rigid have actually been used to help provide structure to the body in cases like injuries and posture changes. Even some fashion historians like, Valerie Steele and Colleen Gau, have claimed that reduced lung volume in women may not have led to the respiratory diseases seen in many women during the 19th-20th century, but did cause fainting and lowered vitality. Steele sides with Dr. O'Followell by arguing that tight lacing seen in magazines may have just been based off of fantasies instead of real-life depictions and experiences. Regardless, this year's corset trend may not always waist-training, but it is vital to prioritize ones long-life health and not an expensive, short-term fad. Otherwise, you may pay with more than just your wallet.



A BIDEN/HARRIS VICTORY

Written by: Zahel Nasari

On the morning of November seventh, President Joe Biden's and Vice President Kamala Harris's victory was announced. After several days of counting, Biden won a greater number of votes than any Presidential candidate in American history. As mail-in ballots were tallied, Democrats grew increasingly hopeful. On the 2020 campaign trail, Biden stated that he aimed to fix various components of President Trump's policies in areas from health care to immigration. He promised to administer with empathy and to restore the spirit of the nation, which is precisely what the people need during Covid-19.

President Biden proposes the federal government play a more dynamic and centralized role in responding to the crisis. Therefore, he would urge all Americans to wear masks and would work with state leaders on mask mandates. Biden said he would quicken the development of treatment and vaccines in his process to combat the coronavirus. Moreover, Biden states that he would push the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration to establish an emergency standard to address worker safety during a pandemic. He would also expand eligibility requirements for Medicare and back a public option plan that would let people buy into a government-run insurance plan. He intends to improve the Affordable Care Act by granting Americans more alternatives, lowering health care costs, and building our healthcare system to be less complicated to navigate.

During his campaign, Biden has sig-



naled he would take steps within his authority to ease legal immigration to the U.S. He wants to provide a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants in the country who lack permanent legal status. He also wants to increase the number of employment-based visas awarded each year. Biden has devoted to accepting 125,000 refugees a year and altering the asylum procedure. He would hire more immigration judges to process an accumulation of more than 1.1 million cases and provide immigrants with lawyers in immigration court.

One of Biden's main concerns is climate change. He believes that it is an urgent crisis and has offered the most aggressive climate plan. He has promised to move the U.S. toward eliminating greenhouse-gas emissions. Biden also has proposed projects to help reduce those emissions, to harden infrastructure for extreme weather, and to help improve the economy. Biden has called for upgrading more

than four million buildings to improve performance and increase research and development on clean-energy technology, including commercial battery storage and advanced nuclear power.

Aside from President Biden's policies, Vice President Kamala Harris has made an extraordinary mark in history. She was the first female district attorney of San Francisco, the first female attorney general of California, the first Indian American in the US Senate, and the first female vice-president. Kamala has spent her life battling injustice. She has a profound record on criminal justice reform, along with her knowledge of how it impacts Black communities. Furthermore, she has a personal grasp of immigration dynamics. Our nation will soon enter a new start with the policies of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. These laws and regulations will lift our people to safety and prosperity.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND WILDFIRES

Written by: Kaitlyn Corbett

On August 1st, 2019 there was a drastic climate change in Southern Australia which caused a wildfire to start. Increasingly warm conditions spread across the country due to global warming. It began with a drought. Australia was being razed by this horrible fire. It has become known as the longest, and worst fire in decades.

More than 3,000 homes have been destroyed, and even more would be damaged due to strong residual winds. Strong winds have also made the fires and smoke spread more rapidly. Entire towns have been engulfed in flames, and residents across several cities and towns have lost their homes. In total, more than 45 million acres have been burned across Australia. About half a billion animals have been affected by the fires across Australia. Their habitats have been destroyed, and all of their food sources have been used up.

State and federal authorities worked to combat the fire crisis for months. That summer was colloquially known as the Black Summer. Unfortunately the blaze continued on through the rest of the year. People

were losing hope. Several organizations were initiated to help the people and animals of Australia. These organizations were shared internationally by way of social media networks such as Instagram, Tiktok, and Facebook.

In May 2020, the Australian brushfires came to an end...for now but the lasting effects and the threat of their return looms. The Australian brushfires are likely to happen again; and they could be even worse.

Climate change clearly played a great role in starting these fires, but our climate continues to change. Humans have caused major climate changes to happen already, and we have set in motion more changes still. Some big questions are-- could we stop climate change to avoid more world wide issues such as wildfires? could we find a way to stop wildfires as a whole? What is the root to the starting of wildfire?

Even if we stopped some of these bad behaviors, global warming would continue to happen for at least several more decades, if not centuries. Where possible, we could

switch to renewable sources of energy, we could stop burning fossil fuels thus emitting far less heat-trapping gases into our atmosphere. It could stop the curve warm conditions that started up the fires.

The Australian wildfire is a great example of showing how much climate change affects our atmosphere. It is also misplaced to think this only affects areas of the world not near us; just this past summer California faced similar fires, if not worse, in the middle of the pandemic. We lose homes, land, lives, and furthermore high temperature extremes and heavy precipitation events are increasing, glaciers and snow cover are shrinking. Seas are warming, rising, and becoming more acidic, and flooding is becoming more frequent. Increased heat, drought and insect outbreaks, all linked to climate change, have increased wildfires. Declining water supplies, reduced agricultural yields, health impacts in cities due to heat, and flooding and erosion in coastal areas are additional concerns.

It is time that the world took notice and began to take climate change seriously.

LGBTQ CHALLENGES IN QUARANTINE

a long and treacherous journey to find one's self. Another student said, "People who don't accept you don't love you. It's harsh, but wasting your time on people who will just never be accepting of you is harsher." These pieces of advice are extremely important for LGBTQ youth to hear in these challenging times. While these times will never

be forgotten, people will heal from them. With time, the clouds will unveil themselves and the sun will shine down, until then, LGBTQ youth must continue to survive and thrive.

If you are facing challenges and need to talk to someone, you can always reach out to our social workers and support staff here at the High School or call the following organizations for support:

Pride for Youth (516-679-9000)

LI Gay & Lesbian Youth (631-665-2300)

TIK TOK AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD

Feature written by: Sarah Quadi

TikTok, originally referred to as Musical.ly, is a social networking site that is operated by Byte Dance, a Beijing company founded by Zhang Yiming in 2012. It is used to make short videos about humor, talent, social and political issues and more. TikTok, the app that has over 1.5 billion downloads, is an international sensation that has helped many people to rise to stardom. People can be viewers who just watch the content others make, or they can engage in the fun and make their own videos. Teenagers are especially interested in it. There's no doubt TikTok has had an impact on the world today.

TikTok is the most downloaded app in the app store. There are around 500 million active users posting things and using the app on a regular basis.

It's crazy to think how much impact this app has had so far on the planet. The app alone makes a song conquer the charts, like "Old Town Road" by Lil Nas X. If anything becomes big on TikTok, everybody can know about it. "Old Town Road" topped the charts at #1 due to the help of TikTok.

If there is a TikTok dance associated with it, TikTok seems to help songs rise in popularity. People take the time to learn, and the only way to do that is to play the song over and over to get better at the dance that is associated with the song. Those who are considered TikTok famous profit off the app alongside many brands teaming up influencers that are active with their accounts.

TikTok has done so much in such a limited period of time. It took over the social media industry in just two years and has become a symbol of 21st century pop culture. It's interesting to think about what this app might mean for the future, with so much success in a little amount of time. For so many people, this app has opened so many doors and it seems like there's no stopping anytime.

The app so far has a good and bad impact on the growth and development of teenagers and college students. In addition, the app often has creators talk about their political views and things going on in the world, along with ways viewers could help. Many people argue in the comments with what ideas and choices they think are right and what ideas they think are wrong.

For example, the Black Lives Matter protests became a huge thing in part because of people spreading it on TikTok. This movement helped educate people on the racism and police brutality that Black people have to face every single day. The app continued to feature people use their platforms to educate others more about the BLM movement.

There are other humanitarian efforts featured on the platform as well, such as the Uyghur Muslims that are being held at concentration camps in China. This has a positive impact on people because not only do the users on the app donate to the people in need, but it helps to create a better society, a better future for the world and equality for everyone. More and more people use their voices to help those who

are silenced.

Tik Tok has its downsides too. The app has created a lower attention span for teenagers and college students in today's society. Since they are constantly watching 10-60 second videos on repeat for half the day, their minds are used to only having to pay attention for a short amount of time.

It has also created more teenagers to procrastinate and shirk their responsibilities. Many have posted videos saying how they have wanted to stop going on TikTok so much but no matter what they do, they keep running back. Others have commented on ways to stop and have come to the conclusion that they will have to try to remove this "addiction" that they have with TikTok. Multiple users have said that the main reason that they are slacking in school, work and other things is because they spend too much time using this app.

Overall, the app has its ups and downs. It creates a safe and positive environment for everyone and helps people feel more comfortable with the things they thought that no else did. But it also creates a negative effect on influencers on the app when people start to hate or when people become hateful towards a specific person because of who they are, what they look like, what their religious beliefs are, what their gender/sexuality is and what the color of the skin is.

At the end of the day, teenagers and everyone who uses the app always tend to have some sort of fun without anything else getting in the way.

WHO IS ACTING 'SUS?'

Written by: Albert Feinstein

Among Us was released on June 15th of 2018. This game was based upon the live action game Mafia, which is perfect for when you are in person, but, Among Us does not require you to be right next to other players. The game is free to download, with ads, on iOS (Apple) or Android. The game can also be purchased for \$5 on PC, without ads through Steam, a video game digital distribution service. There is a reason why this game only started to get popular in 2020. The popularity of this game spread, like wildfire, but more on that later.

10 players are split into two teams, Impostors or Crewmates. Depending on the game, you can have one, two, or three impostors among 10 people, which means that the rest of the players are crewmates.

The game can be played on a choice of 3 maps, The Skeld, Mira HQ, or Polus. The impostors' task is to quietly kill off crewmates and sabotage the map's system in order to do so, whilst acting like a crewmate. The impostors can only win by killing off or voting off all the crewmates before all the impostors are voted off.

As bodies are discovered, the players chat and try to prove themselves a crewmate, whenever an emergency meeting is called or when a dead body is found. The crewmates can win one of two ways: by either completing all of their tasks assigned to them, or vote off the impostors.

Additionally, you can buy a multitude of skins, hats and pets for a low cost within the application. Without in-app purchases, you can choose your color, out of 12 choices, one color to a person. There are also about 45 hats that you can choose from to play with, for free.

According to a 9th grader who wishes to stay anonymous, "The game is very addicting and very easy to play and learn. I learned how to play after my

due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this game became popular as a result of people's schedules changing. Instead of playing the live action game of Mafia, you are playing a more interesting and captivating game which can be played at whichever distance from the other players as you want, 6 feet with your friends, or miles if you are playing with strangers.

"The game forces people to suspect each other, and no-one prefers to argue with some random people online," according to essentially-sports.com.

This game is better played with friends and family where you can talk over Discord, which is a talking and interacting community for gamers.



first game. The appeal of the game and the design is perfect for teenagers like me. This is a good way to socialize and connect with friends, as well as having serious fun in the process."

Yes, this game is a good way to socialize with friends, and provides good entertainment. You can learn how they act when they lie, how they act under pressure, and so on.

Among Us got extremely popular after Twitch Star "Sodapoppin" streamed this game on his channel. With millions of viewers, it was only a matter of time before it would reach the whole country, and eventually, the world. Also,

According to sportskeeda.com, "Among us is a game that feels fun to play even just in both short and long bursts, and it doesn't demand such a large time commitment from you that you can't leave if you should decide to do something else."

This game is perfect for gamers who just want something to do for 15 minutes of their time, or less. This game is really simple to pick up, and there is always a sudden urge to keep on playing till you get the beloved impostor role. Sure, things might start to die down, but that happens eventually to big games, or maybe not, who knows?

HARRY STYLES: BRINGING BACK MANLY MEN

Written by: Roxy Dias

On November 13, 2020, Harry Styles made history as the first solo man on the cover of *Vogue* in the 127 years that the magazine has run. Not only is this a notable accomplishment, but his outfit has sparked a global conversation. The pop singer wore a Gucci dress on the cover, as well as kilts and other feminine clothing on the inside. Although Harry Styles, who has become a fashion icon, has been wearing dresses for quite some time now, this magazine cover brought his new fashion choices to the attention of more people.

The vocal conservative extremist, Candace Owens, who has no connection to Harry Styles, voiced her complaints on this with several posts and comments on Twitter and Instagram. She complained that men wearing feminine clothing was a threat to society, and that it was time to “Bring Back Manly Men.”

Although there has been a decent amount of support to Owens’ claims, it mainly sparked outrage and defense, not only from fans, but from any individual interested in creating a comfortable environment for men to express their femininity. People went to many platforms to defend the singer and support men’s clothing decisions. This includes common people posting images and videos of them wearing dresses on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, using the caption or hashtag “Bring Back Manly Men” to troll the post by Candace Owens.

Several TikToks of a school in Canada went viral on TikTok for the massive amount of males that showed up in feminine clothing, and there has been global support for men wearing dresses regardless of their sexuality.

Harry Styles himself, who no longer

has a strong presence on social media and has never dissed anyone in his ten year career, posted a picture of himself in a ruffled light blue suit almost three weeks after the discussion started, on December 1st. He captioned it, “Bring back manly man,” referencing the Candace Owens’ comments and showing that he does not care what she thinks. Based on Harry’s character this is probably the last time he will bring it up on his own, and he won’t dwell on it in interviews. He clearly doesn’t care about what Candace Owens thinks of his fashion choices, though she is continuing to make her comments on “masculine” men.

This statement that Harry made when he chose to wear the dress, along with the massive amount of support he has received from the world following the backlash, is powerful and encouraging for other men and women who would like to embrace a clothing style that is not always associated with their gender. People should be free to wear what they believe fits them, regardless of stereotypes and criticism.

In fact, Harry’s shift in clothing marks a huge growth in his confidence. From the time that he entered fame at 16 years old and a large part of his career, Harry Styles often wore simple clothes. From 2013-2015, the singer was known for wearing plain white shirts and black skinny jeans, once joking that he “only owned, like, two pairs of pants.”

Although Harry has never shown signs of toxic masculinity and has great respect for women, he didn’t take his femininity seriously in front of the world. He wasn’t as comfortable wearing feminine clothing or doing things that men were not always associated with doing, probably with a fear of

being judged. He joked in an interview on the Johnathon Ross show that he preferred yoga over ballet to take care of his back pain because it was more manly.

After all, he did grow up in the spotlight, and his decisions would affect the image of One Direction (the band he was in). However, in more recent years, Harry has embraced his feminine side and been more comfortable breaking gender barriers in the public eye. It has been a beautiful journey for fans to watch him become more confident and honest with his music and style over the years, and to support him with these choices.

No one should be confined to gender stereotypes, whether it’s for clothing, profession, language, or any other aspect of life. Although people may argue against your choices and discourage you from breaking these boundaries, you should continue to feel free being honest in what you believe suits you the best, because it doesn’t matter what they think. In the end, no matter what people like Candace Owens say or do, Harry Styles will continue to wear what he believes makes him happy. This is an important message to take out of the conversation sparked. Although it is hard to strive above backlash, you must continue to be free and honest in your choices, because it doesn’t matter what the standard is.

You can redefine the standard.



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