

Immediate counseling available through Text-A-Tip

New texting hotline provides access to professional help at any hour

by Emily Wong

On March 14, New Trier joined the Text-A-Tip program, a 24/7 hotline that students can text anonymously if in a situation that requires immediate attention.

Text-A-Tip was started in January 2014 by the LEAD organization, or Leading Efforts Against Drugs.

The foundation works primarily in the Lake Bluff area. The creation of the program was triggered by the suicides of three Lake Forest students over the span of a few months in 2012.

Since its inception, it has grown to cover a total of 3.85 million community members. LEAD estimates that it will reach 10 million by the end of 2016.

According to Tim Hayes, assistant superintendent of student services, "Text-A-Tip is a resource where students can find immediate help for themselves or friends who



Text-A-Tip connects teens with mental health professionals | Blickstein

are struggling with drug or alcohol abuse, depression, difficult family situations, bullying, or any of the many challenges teens face today."

Although this service is very new to the township, the idea is not.

"New Trier has its own hotline," pointed out Social Work department chair Tiffany Myers, "but for after-school hours and weekends, there [wasn't] a resource." She said this might be especially necessary if a situation arose at 2 AM when nothing else was open.

This resource is also available to the rest of the community. All residents, from middle-schoolers to

adults, are welcome to use the hotline if they have any problems or serious concerns.

There's no solid criteria for what qualifies as acceptable to text about. Some of Myers's examples of subjects that may or may not require this immediate hotline were a fight with a friend or even an unusually upsetting test grade.

Though these texts will be considered and addressed, Hayes said, "it is primarily intended for community members to use when they need immediate mental health assistance or have a drug/alcohol abuse concern for themselves or a friend."

The responders on the other line are qualified to answer almost any question. According to the New Trier website, "Texts are responded to by professional counselors at Child, Adolescent & Family Recovery Center (CAFRC), and 93% of the time that response is delivered within 1-3 minutes."

The school paid \$18,000 to set up the hotline and will pay an annual fee of \$11,000 for the service to be available 24/7.

Despite the money and efforts that went into this plan, Myers admitted that its existence probably isn't known by everyone that might use it.

"A few newspapers have written about it, but it's getting to be known more by word of mouth," she said.

Junior Yesol An hadn't heard of Text-A-Tip before, but she saw the value in having the service available.

"I'd probably use it," she said, "it's anonymous, and you don't have to go meet someone. Especially if you're in a situation where you can't drive, and you don't want your parents to know."

Loyola's Counseling Department Chairman Bill San Hamel also sees this benefit. "I've seen more kids coming to adults directly, but they

have comfort and familiarity using social media. They see (texting) as a way to anonymously share concerns for themselves or friends," he told the Chicago Tribune.

Other students were a little more reluctant. "I don't know when I would be in a situation [where I'd have to use it]," Jansen said, "but I have friends who might."

The leaders of the organization realize that the hotline will not be used by everyone. "Not all students will need to use Text-A-Tip, but they will all be informed about the number to text in case a situation ever arises in which they feel they need clinical support," said the New Trier website.

LEAD, the organization that created the program, has been running since 1986. It hosts events to help address issues surrounding teenagers, such as marijuana use and drinking.

It's hosting a post-prom event at Six Flags Great America for Lake Forest High School students.

From its informational events to Text-A-Tip, LEAD's purpose is "to significantly reduce drinking, drug use, and other risky behavior by youth while working simultaneously to eliminate the root causes of these issues in the future."



The Durkin Advisery spent a day working on construction at the Habitat for Humanity home in Waukegan | McMahon

Habitat for Humanity house appears to be behind schedule

With the start of construction, seniors hopeful house will be finished on time

by Alex Levine

After months of fundraising and construction, the class of 2016 Habitat for Humanity is nearing completion, but the project may be veering off schedule.

"Depending on the weather, we hope that it will be completed by the end of the school year and the family can move in over the summer," Senior Adviser Chair Chris Pearson said.

"There's a key ceremony with representatives of the school and Habitat for Humanity where they turn over the keys of the house to the family."

According to some students' beliefs, that key ceremony might be delayed, though the building managers have expressed no concern about the schedule's timeliness.

Since the start of second semester, senior boys and girls advisories have gone to Waukegan to work on the house. Some advisories went to the Habitat warehouse, while others went to the building.

Though several work days have already been completed, some students believe the project is far from finished.

Senior Jacob Price, who went on his advisery's work day March 29, said, "We broke down a cinder block wall and then ripped down a wooden garage. If that was for the New Trier project, the house was nowhere close to completion."

A March 30 trip provoked similar student reactions. Senior Josh Handelman said, "It looks like it won't be done until maybe July."

"I went close to the beginning of the process," senior Grace Joyce said. "But it seemed like there would be a lot of work to be done in a short amount of time. I'm not sure if it will be done by the end of the year."

Despite students' perception of a delayed completion date, this year's project has still made a positive impact on those who have been and will continue to be part of the tradition.

"It was hard work but still fun and a good experience to have," Handelman said. "The husband of the family who is moving in was there helping. That was pretty cool to see since he can watch the progress of his house being built."

Senior Youna Byun said, "My advisery's service date isn't for a few weeks, but I'm very excited. I've heard it's a lot of fun and a great way to give back."

Fundraising has been one of the biggest successes of this year's project.

"We raised over \$22,000 at Winter Carnival alone. Feast Week

was over \$2,000, and the GoPro raffle was about \$1,000," Pearson said.

Senior Natalie Pecora appreciated all the new fundraising ideas.

"My friends and I went to Shake Shack during Feast Week and ordered Sarkis when we could. We like to go there anyway so having part of the proceeds go towards our class project made it a win-win."

Students thought Winter Carnival was a great way to interact with younger kids as well as raise money and awareness for the project.

Byun said, "My advisery only sold concessions at the carnival, but it was so fun to meet all the little kids and we raised lots of money. I also saw a lot of the other booths and I could tell the kids were having a blast."

"The Class of 2016 has done a great job thinking of new, creative fundraiser ideas and executed them very well," Senior Girls Adviser Chair Susie Paunan said.

Paunan explained that the fundraising isn't over. There is an online auction where New Trier students and their families can bid on items such as Cubs tickets, a weekend at someone's vacation home, and other donated items.

"The auction is the week of April 11-15 and all proceeds go towards the project," Paunan said. The link for this auction can be found on the New Trier website.

Stress rides on finding a date for Prom 2016

Despite anticipation, stigmas facing those riding solo can cause planning difficulties

by Anastasia Maragos

In the movies, prom is depicted as a magical night where couples have fun together, yet for some students, the expectation of having a date causes controversy.

However, what the movies do get right is that, for seniors, prom can be one of the most memorable nights of high school.

"Prom this year is going to be memorable because it's my last dance at New Trier and it's the last opportunity to have fun with my friends," senior Negin Niazadeh said.

Senior Ella Brown added, "It's going to be more meaningful, because it's the last time where a bunch of people from my graduating class will be together, in one room."

For juniors who have never been to the dance, expectations are just as high. Junior Griffin Weller said, "I'm expecting it to be different than the other dances, because it's at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, so it's more formal."

Weller added that the dance will be more fun as mainly upperclassmen attend.

Junior Caroline Cobb had more of an emotional reaction to the dance, because she will be graduating early. "For me, this will be my first and last prom. I'm excited to have a good time with my friends, even if it means looking like an idiot on the dance floor."

Despite the positive anticipation, one issue, both in movies and in real life, is whether a person has a date. Every year, there seems to be stress for boys and girls alike in the attempt to find someone to go with.

On Youtube, you can find thousands of videos showing students presenting a "promposal" to their dates. Many of these promposals take hours of work to plan, just so a

person can avoid the stigma of "flying solo" to the dance.

This issue of having a date causes drama for some students because their ability to have fun depends on it.

"There is an unspoken expectation that you will have a date to the dance," Weller said. "I feel like if you take a date, they are your person to go back to even when the group is spread out. If you don't have a date, you don't really have anyone to fall back on."

Emma Shragel, a senior who attended prom last year as a junior, said, "It's easier to get into a group if you have a date already."

Brown, however, disagreed with this underlying need to bring a date. "I feel that it is totally fine to go without a date, because you can have just as much fun. It's annoying how hyped up the whole thing is about going with a date."

The struggle and conflict about dates even at times extends to the nature of the group one goes in. Some groups only allow people "in" if they have a date and turn away singles.

Niazadeh offered a possible explanation and said, "It might be awkward for someone who is in a group without a date, because they are surrounded by other people who have one and they are alone."

Brown said, "This issue of the group you are in becomes stressful because sometimes people are excluded as a result of these 'date' policies, which I think are kind of unnecessary."

Senior Gabe Shapiro attributes the expectation of dates partially to the media. "In movies and television, it's often portrayed as the guy and girl going together to the dance and that's what the emphasis is on."

Despite these issues surrounding the date and group situations, students expect to have fun at the dance and enjoy the atmosphere of the ballroom.

"It will be especially bittersweet, because it's the last high school dance I'll ever go to," Brown said. "It feels like the end of my time in high school."