



I'm more than just a: security guard

Guards elaborate on their lives outside of protecting school

by Alyssa Pak

Every day, we walk through the doors to school, thinking ahead to that homework we need to get done in advisery or the friends we get to see. But who are the faces that look out for our safety at every entrance and check us into school when we're late?

Take Tina Lopiccio, who currently works as a Winnetka security guard. She has an associate's degree in baking and pastry and during her time off, she enjoys baking and decorating cakes. Lopiccio modestly admitted that she's been told on multiple occasions that she makes "phenomenal sugar and chocolate chip cookies."

"How I Met Your Mother" and "Downton Abbey" are her favorite shows, but she's also a self-professed

movie buff. A game she also enjoys playing with her boyfriend and family includes listening to a theme song and guessing which movie or TV show it comes from.

Growing up, she was an avid figure skater and continues this passion even today. "Winter's my favorite season because I love to figure skate, and I'm honestly happy doing it anywhere," said Lopiccio.

Johnyell Owens, another security guard, has been working at New Trier for 14 years and can often be seen enthusiastically greeting students in the hallway. He's a lover of sports, especially basketball and he enjoys sports shows like QB1 and The Chi.

Owens is also interested in fish and used to have a variety, ranging from cichlids to silver dollars to guppies to tiger bars to beta fish: all community fish, ones that enjoy being with other fish. Owens is a fan of rap artist Roddy Ricch, the new 2 Chainz album, "Rap or Go to the League," 21 Savage's hit "a lot," as

well as numerous Chicago locals, such as Lil Zay Osama and El Hitta.

"I used to write music," explained Owens. "But my main thing now is that I want to get into motivational speaking," he said. When he isn't at New Trier, Owens can be found at Oakton Community College, attending a speech class or taking an online class.

In the African-American community, many young kids look up to stars such as LeBron James and Kevin Durant. Owens hopes to convey through speeches that that isn't the only path in life, a target audience of mainly kids from as young as fifth grade up to even 25-year-olds.

"Don't count yourself short, you're valuable just like everybody else. We're supposed to be the bad guys who getting in trouble, but you're great and you can do amazing things. It's okay to be business-minded. You don't have to be Drake or Lil Wayne, you can just be a normal guy," he said.

Owens promotes this message even in everyday life as the coach of a middle school basketball team for the last five years. "I like to give back to the kids. I feel like I'm giving to the future of America, shining a positive light, being a positive black male influence," stated Owens.

Just after he finished college and before coming to NT, Owens worked in the Navy where he had the opportunity to travel to destinations ranging from Hong Kong to Hawaii.

"Honor, courage, and commitment are the Navy's core values, and I try to put that into my everyday life. As a father, it taught me how to have direction in my life. You're not just a follower, you're gonna turn into a leader one day. It taught me to be a real man and to take care of my family and provide and not only to care for them, but also to teach," said Owens.

Since Owens didn't have a father figure in his life growing up, he acknowledged that it's taken him a bit longer to catch up to others who

were able to experience that kind of support. He sees that black kids are the most scrutinized, so he desires to motivate the families as well as the kids who don't really get the motivation from anywhere else.

"They really have nothing and they came from the bottom. But I'm not just trying to motivate them, I'm also trying to motivate other races so they can help black youth as well. I'm just trying to make our community better with all the black stereotypes in the media, giving back to the comment. When people are like, 'why do you wanna be a motivational speaker?' I'm just trying to put people in a position to be able to do more," stated Owens.

Like Owens and Lopiccio, the security guards at our school have intriguing lives that go beyond checking our IDs when we walk into school late. The next time you see a security guard, don't hesitate to offer up a friendly greeting because just like us, they are more than what they seem.

Addams Family debut



Fester performs a solo while surrounded by ensemble | Stuart Rodgers

Cast applauded for a successful rendition of the musical

by Nadia Jaikaran

One normal night... Who wouldn't want that? "The Addams Family," a clan-like group of ghoulish individuals want to be far from it.

Wednesday Addams, played by Cammi Avery and Izzy Vratimos on Friday and Sunday, began the show by confessing her love for a boy named Lucas in front of her extended family.

She shared the big news with her father, Gomez Addams played by James Owen and Riley Oh, begging him not to bring it up to her mother, Morticia Addams, played by Emily Colitte and Jordyn Pritsker, in fear of her objection.

Gomez Addams' growing guilt for keeping this information from his wife created the majority of the central conflict. After all, what normal family keeps secrets? But beneath this recurring motif of secrets and their consequences lay a message about unconditional love.

Overall, each of the elements of the show complemented each other well. The musical demonstrated a balanced mix of compelling singing and dialogue accompanied by dramatic music.

The orchestra provided an emotional foundation to the show, blending the creepy vibe of the set with the uplifting messages of the plot. The set design perfectly

captured the dark, morose style of the family, nicely juxtaposing the sweet and sentimental messages around which the play revolved around.

The ensemble ancestors' performances were classy and elegant, clad in white, worn, old-fashioned outfits that contributed a timeless addition. They served as a stark contrast to the mood of the Addams family.

Despite Gomez's repeated attempts to tip toe the line between betraying his wife and divulging the secrets of his daughter, Morticia ultimately found out the truth when Wednesday invited Lucas's family for dinner.

The two vastly different families played a game where each person drinks truth serum and the truth about the engagement is revealed.

Meanwhile, Pugsley Addams, played by Rebecca Smith and Lucy McDowell, stole a potion that would make Wednesday fall out of love, fearing he would never see his sister after she gets married.

Instead, the potion found its way into Lucas' mother's, Alice Beineke, played by Abby Merrill and Kylie Boyd, who fell out of love with her husband, then fell back in love at the end of the performance after they discussed the problems with their marriage.

The musical's resounding message, no secrets and family first, was relatable. Fortunately, all of the conflicts were resolved by the curtain call and the audience was left with a satisfying sense of closure.

Anna Shah president of IL DECA

Junior helps oversee entire Illinois DECA organization

by Connor Caserio

Like many New Trier students, Junior Anna Shah has a busy extracurricular schedule. Every week, she spends a lot of time and effort on the school's branch of DECA, an international organization that arranges high school business competitions.

While many students are immersed in their extracurriculars, Shah's involvement with DECA takes it to the next level. Since the fall of 2018, she has held the influential and demanding position of Illinois DECA President.

As President, Shah oversees the entire Illinois DECA organization. "My job is to make sure that everything is running smoothly, preparing for state, and delegating tasks where they need to be accomplished," said Shah.

Shah works with a board and four Vice Presidents from other schools. Once a month, she meets with the Vice Presidents to discuss their current objectives.

Recently, their discussions have focused around the Illinois State DECA Competition, which was held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont on Mar. 6-8. New Trier DECA Sponsor Bob Bollweg said that they put, "different entertainment options and donations together, and [decided] on shirts that [were] given to every student."

At state, Shah was the point person for the 1500 students that competed. Among other responsibilities, she handed out donations and went up on stage to give speeches for the student competitors.

Since Shah became President, she has had to get used to speaking in front of large groups. A few weeks before state, she had to auction off premium tickets at a Bulls Career Conference on the United Center court. "It was kind of nerve wracking



Shah speaks at the state DECA conference in the Hyatt Regency Hotel | Shah

because there were so many people there, but I think it was good preparation because I had to speak to 1500 people at state," explained Shah.

Shah has also had to find ways of making better use of her time. "I had to realize that I couldn't do everything at once," said Shah. "Sometimes I get a hundred texts from the state officer teams at once and it feels like they want a hundred things from me. But, I have to filter through and see what I have to do specifically."

All in all, Shah's sponsors and teammates from DECA feel she has done a tremendous job in all aspects of her position. DECA Sponsor Melissa Duffy said that "She's a natural leader and has thrived in this role. She's already brought in a lot of fresh ideas."

While Shah has gotten certainly better at being President with experience, her teammates and sponsors all said that her excellent personal character lends itself to the position.

"Anna Shah is the most professional, hard-working, driven person at this age that I have ever met. Her willingness to do any number of tasks at any level of difficulty is frankly unbelievable, and yet her humility in doing so is potentially more captivating," said Junior DECA member Solomon Podorovsky.

Bollweg agreed with

Podorovsky that Shah became President in part because of this excellent personal character. "It's very difficult to achieve DECA President, especially as a Junior," said Bollweg. "She just has the poise and the natural leadership ability."

The process of becoming Illinois DECA President is a lengthy one. Prospective candidates first submit a resume and short application. They then take a short answer exam about DECA. Finally, they attend a fall leadership conference, where they are interviewed and give two speeches.

Delegates from each Illinois high school, with a DECA club, attend the leadership conference and vote for President. In 2018, Shah was elected.

When asked if she would like to be President next year, Shah offered a mixed-bag answer, "I think I'm going to run again next year, but it really depends on if state's the most stressful experience of my life," said Shah.

Shah did add, however, that "I feel that I would be better prepared for next year now that I know exactly what the responsibilities are."

Regardless of whether Shah is President again next year, it is clear that she has a bright future ahead of her. Bollweg said that "she has a lot going for her. I think that she could really do whatever she wants because she'll have a lot of success in it."