

the NEW TRIER NEWS



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Safe Rides suspended as Boy Scouts stops insuring

Students can no longer depend on Safe Rides

by Hannah Young

Safe Rides Crew 102, a student-run service catering to teenagers in the North Shore area by providing them with a safe method of transportation, stopped running as of this year.

Ali Malehorn, a New Trier senior and former leader of the group, described the program as a way to ensure that teenagers in the area "would not have to resort to dangerous transportation methods home."

"I think that students will adjust just fine but with less options comes more room to make a life-altering decision."

The group would meet at the Kenilworth Union Church and it consisted of multiple adult leaders as well as three student leaders, who each led members in coordinating and scheduling their driving nights and hours.

Crew 102 was sponsored and insured by Boy Scouts of America. In reassessing their partnership with the organization and their yearly insurance review, Boy Scouts of America deemed Safe Rides too high risk. This marked the end of their sponsorship of the program.

However, this isn't the first time the group has faced challenges to its continuation. In January of 2008, an Illinois teen driving law on curfew was revised, pushing the weekend curfew time to 11pm from the original hour of 12am.

The group's demand was the greatest at 11pm, which is what led to its temporary halt. That following summer, legislation was passed to exempt Crew 102 and other non-profit organizations from the curfew, allowing them to start up again.

While the group's main reason for discontinuing the program originated in the termination of its partnership with Boy Scouts of America, there were other contributing factors.

Companies such as Uber provided easy transportation at a cheap price, creating competition for Safe Rides.

Malehorn said, "This caused a cycle: A decrease in calls discouraged volunteers; volunteers began not showing up on their assigned nights; when people did call in, we



Safe Rides banner used on social media sites to promote it's service | Twitter

didn't have a sufficient amount of volunteers; unreliability of Safe Rides encouraged more use of Uber."

Kris Fishman, an adult leader who also worked as a liaison with Boy Scouts of America, also saw this decrease in rider activity with Uber, but provided a different reason for its depreciation other than its lack of dependability.

"Safe Rides was used by students a lot," Fishman said, "Then, as Uber became more prevalent, we found that kids wanted to go from one party to another party and Safe Rides doesn't allow that. You get a safe ride home

and that's the beauty of Safe Rides."

According to Fishman, ridership went down from 60 calls at its height a night to around 30.

While Crew 102's program is at a halt, most would assume the student population is impacted.

However, Cameron Zwick, a senior and another former student leader, doesn't believe so: "It's not like I think we lost a good cause. Obviously, with Uber, people are being conscious about when they should drive. There really is no negative impact because the numbers [calls] were so low."

The effect that the group's discontinuation will have on students, according to Fishman will be significant.

"There were some kids that really relied on Safe Rides. I think it will be hard on them."

"I think that students will adjust just fine but with less options comes more room to make a life-altering decision," Malehorn said.

The loss of the program may affect some students, while others will use of alternate services, the community built in the long, late night hours of driving will be missed.

"The bond that developed between students from 10pm-2am was also unique," Malehorn said. "You met new people both in your group and in your car. There was a sense of tradition and community that is no longer there."

In agreement with Malehorn, Fishman said, "The kids who were providing the ride actually had a wonderful community in it of themselves to be able to be together and to help their peers."

Malehorn, sad to see this community go, described the work that they did with pride.

"We prevented tragedy. In the history of Safe Rides, we had never had a death caused by drunk driving. Not all townships can say that, unfortunately."

College reps request change in duration of meetings

Pressure to attend meetings leads to stress over students missing class

by Nora Crumley

Until this year, many universities that visited New Trier stayed 60 minutes, spanning two periods to allow more scheduling flexibility for students. This year the visits have been shortened to 40 minutes, causing a disruption to the status quo.

"We were lucky to have them stretch over two periods because every other high school in the area only had 45 minutes," Post-High School Counseling Department Chair James Conroy said.

According to Conroy, it was universities who decided to only stay 45 minutes. "We finally got put in our place that we are no different than everyone else," Conroy said. "We had a honeymoon there and the honeymoon is over. We didn't have a choice."

Economics Teacher Jennifer Niemi, who teaches seniors, has noticed a new trend surrounding these meetings though cannot conclude that they are due to the shortened time.

"This year I haven't had anyone ask to go to any," Niemi said. "I don't know if it's a fluke or if it's related but I haven't had kids asking to go and there have already been a few schools in."

Though the shortened period is new this year, the paranoia and rumors surrounding these meetings continues to thrive with a new senior class.

"I feel it's important to get your



Students attend college visit days to gain info and show interest about the colleges they wish to attend | Coladarci

name recognized by these schools, and for the representative from that school to know who you are just in case they read your application and can put a face to a name," senior Alex Vlahandreas said.

Senior Ally Freemond shared the same concern of using these meetings to get your name out there and show interest. "I heard for some schools that it really impacts your chance of getting in, and that worries me."

Senior Liza Boscow mirrored Freemond's remarks, "If it's a smaller school or medium size school, they will notice if you came. But if it's a huge school, they are not going to really notice. I was the only kid to show up to the St. Thomas meeting so I am sure the representative remembers me."

Showing interest is not a rumor circling the upperclassmen

but is recommended by the Post-High School Counseling department.

"Get your name recognized by these schools, and for the representative from that school to know who you are just in case they read your application and can put a face to a name."

"To demonstrate interest has become much more important at some schools, not all, mostly your midsize and smaller schools," Conroy said. "The University of California at

Berkeley could care less if you came to their meeting or not."

Conroy also said how class time is often more important than the meetings. Conroy recommended that if you cannot miss a class to attend a college meeting, to email the representative.

"Emailing is the same as if you showed up as far as demonstrated interest. Colleges would also be the first to say to you that physics or any other class is more important than the meeting."

Conroy also added that these meetings have a bigger purpose than a platform to demonstrate interest.

"Clearly, they are supposed to be for questions," Conroy said.

He recommended students go to the meetings if they are not clear on something or if it's a school a student is thinking about but has not been able to visit.

For Freemond, going to the

meeting allowed her to "network with the admission representative and talk to them afterward."

"Missing a meeting would be missing out on valuable information they provide," Vlahandreas said. "The representatives tell you how to interpret the information and give a better grasp on what the school is like and how to apply."

Although the meetings provide a platform for students to ask questions, many students though fail to see the benefit of the informational meetings.

Senior Kasia Kolanko said, "The meetings were not worth it because there's nothing that I learned that I can't learn online or I didn't already know by looking at the website."

English Teacher Ariell Bachman echoed some Kolanko's concern. "If it is just informational then why is it a policy for seniors that they can be excused from class?"

Whether students are going to demonstrate interest or to get information, Conroy advises that the student body should be aware of them, but should not stress over them.

"Kids have been told by independent counselors that they have to stand in line and shake hands with the representative, but please, they visit five high schools a day and have several evening meetings. What planet are you on if you think they are going to remember you," Conroy said.

"[Students] exaggerate the importance of some of these things. It's far more important to get better grades on your exam than stand in line and shake hands with the representative. They know you can't be there for everything."