



The New Trier News

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The Learning Center helps students stay on track

The Center serves as a safe haven for alternative students

by Nora Crumley

Students walking out of the frosted doors into the upper floor of the C building feel the eyes of the freshmen staring at them.

Often these stares convey the common misconceptions and prejudices that label the students in the Learning Center, commonly known as “the Cage” to many students.

Contrary to those misconceptions, the Learning Center does not harbor pregnant or violent students. Nor is it an in-school rehab facility.

The Learning Center is a therapeutic classroom setting for students battling emotional issues such as anxiety and depression.

“The Learning Center is for the kids who just need a place to pull themselves together for a little bit,” Learning Center department chair Deborah Kind said. “We tend to get students who are high achievers, who are concerned that they are not living up to their personal expectations.”



Behind the white frosted doors, The Learning Center gives students a positive, therapeutic environment | Crumley

Jessica Reimer, one of the four teachers at the Learning Center, described some of the struggles her students face. “We have students whose anxiety trickles into their other classes making it difficult for them to be successful,” Reimer said.

The Center offers many accommodations to help students who struggle with anxiety and other issues while still keeping up with their school work.

Two social workers are always available to help the students,

and teachers work together “to help students learn better coping mechanisms,” according to Kind.

The Learning Center offers a small classroom setting with 4-8 students typically in each class. The hallways of the Center are plastered with artwork by current and former students, and a recreation room complete with a ping pong table and a couch adds to the relaxed setting of the Center.

“The Learning Center is a small community,” Reimer said, “the

small environment gives everyone the chance to develop more of a relationship with other students and teachers.”

An anonymous junior attending the Center said about entering the program, “My grades immediately went up, and living life got a lot easier. Anxiety kept me from going to school for a whole semester of sophomore year, but once I got to the Learning Center, the welcoming atmosphere helped me a lot.”

The goal of the Center is either to

help kids return to the mainstream, or to prepare them for post-high school plans. To ensure that their students are able to return to regular classes, the curriculum of the Center is very similar to that of the main campus.

“We get the curriculum from the main academic departments because the idea is for students to return to the mainstream,” Kind said.

The positive effect of the Learning Center on struggling kids’ lives is visible in those who exit the program.

Kind described a college student who was in the program during her high school years, and credited the program and anatomy class in changing the course of her life.

She is now studying to be a veterinarian. “We have students who come back that say our program changed their lives,” Kind said.

Despite the opportunity the Learning Center gives to struggling students, misconceptions about the program are common.

“A quandary that we face is how can we help people understand who we are without jeopardizing the privacy of our students,” Kind said.

Many of the students have misconceptions about the purpose of this “third campus.” “I’ve just heard

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The fight for LGBT+ rights rages on

North Carolina’s anti-gay laws draw national attention

by Sam Blanc

With gay marriage legalized, we’ve essentially plunged our rainbow flags into the ground and can move to other issues, right? Maybe not.

Even after the Supreme Court’s ruling on Obergefell v. Hodges, the case that legalized gay marriage, the LGBT+ community’s struggle for equality is not quite finished.

This issue rose to prominence most recently when North Carolina enacted a measure that prevents cities from banning the discrimination of LGBT+ people. At the same time, a bill which gave religious groups the ability to deny service to LGBT+ individuals was proposed (and recently vetoed) in Georgia.

These laws have not gone without recognition. Many companies spoke out against them. Big corporate names like PayPal and Bank of America denounced such laws, as have other major tech and entertainment companies.

Most students didn’t know too much about these new laws. They knew the laws existed, and they knew they were anti-gay, but when it came down to the laws themselves, the understanding was general.

“America stinks a lot of the time,” junior Matt Shapiro said. “It’s hard to keep track of the latest incident.”

This kind of pessimism isn’t uncommon. “Anti-gay and trans laws coming from the ‘Bible Belt’ don’t exactly surprise me,” junior Allison Thabit said.

Despite this, Thabit was disappointed that more progress on LGBT+ issues hasn’t been made.



President of Human Rights Campaign, Chad Griffin, speaks at a press conference opposing the anti-gay laws in Raleigh, NC on April 25 | AP Images

“Even in 2016, in the most accepting America yet, we still have setbacks on basic human rights.”

Senior Claire Zimmerman agreed, “It’s clearly not a good idea to pass these laws, both on a basic human rights level and a financial one.”

Zimmerman referenced a similar law passed in Indiana about a year ago. After passing the law, Indiana lost \$60,000,000 dollars in revenue and these newest laws promise to be even more costly. Disney has refused to film in Georgia if their anti-gay bill is passed, and the NFL said that they will not hold a Superbowl in any state with this kind of legislation.

Of course, dealing with religion is always difficult. “I think that if certain people don’t want to work with people in the LGBT+ community, those in that community probably don’t want to work with them. Especially when it comes to religion, it’s hard to find a balance,” a student who wished to remain nameless said.

Georgia’s state government believed they had found their balance with this law and claimed they would

continue to fight for it.

According to Georgia State Senator Joshua McKoon, in an article in the Atlanta Journal Constitution, the law had no anti-gay motivations, and if someone felt discriminated against, McKoon offered to contribute \$100 dollars to a charity of that person’s choice.

While North Carolina and Georgia aren’t alone in their efforts to create policies on gender identity and transgender bathroom use, many states have taken the opposite viewpoint. Tennessee and Arkansas passed laws that prevent local governments from creating their own measures, ensuring bills like those in Georgia and North Carolina can’t get passed.

New York City’s mayor issued an executive order allowing people to use public restrooms based on their gender identity, and Philadelphia stated that private companies must display gender neutral signs on single occupancy bathrooms.

New Trier students tend to feel more sympathy for these liberal developments. Although she

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Day of Silence lacks participation this year

Winnetka campus students say the day is no longer effective

by Tia Rotolo and Cammy Wray

According to students, Day Of Silence had less of an effect on New Trier than it used to.

Every year, New Trier has a day dedicated to showing the struggles of silence that the LGBT+ community faces daily, called Day Of Silence. On this day, students may opt to buy a t-shirt and remain silent all day to show their support.

Over the years, Day Of Silence has had an impact on students, with a lot of student participation.

This year was different than past years, with less participation. For most students, it wasn’t a lack of support for the LGBT+ community, but a lack of knowing when Day Of Silence was or how to show support.

Sophomores found it surprising that the day lacked the hype that they experienced the previous year at the Northfield campus.

Sophomore Nell Martin said, “At the freshman campus, it was advertised a lot more. I knew about it almost two months in advance, but here I didn’t know they were selling t-shirts until they were done selling.”

English teacher and director of Day of Silence, Rachel Hess, believed that the Winnetka campus lacked participation compared to the freshman due to the lessened hype.

“I think it’s a newer phenomenon for the freshman, so they’re great participants,” Hess said.

Society has changed, and some

believe that silence is no longer an acceptable way of showing support for the community.

“I definitely believe that people want to speak out after the legalization of gay marriage, it’s a lot easier and a lot more socialized to talk more than to stay quiet about it,” an senior who wished to remain anonymous said.

Some students believed that being silent backfired against the purpose of the day.

Administrators and the sponsors of Day Of Silence believe that silence is a conversation starter, but ironically, the students who are participating can’t say anything about it.

Sophomore Cate Murdoch thought the day should be altered so people can talk about issues plaguing the LGBT+ community, instead of being quiet to raise awareness.

“I think there is definitely a better way to get the point across, especially in some classes when you discuss it, if you’re being silent for the day then you can’t talk about it,” Murdoch said.

For Hess, the goal was for teachers to facilitate discussions to accompany the day. “The day has to be accompanied by dialogue. It would be best to talk about the issue as a way for the students who are silent to allow their voices to be heard, because I think they have the biggest emotional connection to the day,” Hess said.

For some, the reason for the decreased participation wasn’t a lack of compassion, but simply not knowing.

An anonymous senior noticed that the school lacked signs and information ahead of time. “I saw a few signs in random places, but

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