

the NEW TRIER NEWS



Third incident of racist graffiti: what now?

Students and staff debate how to address hate speech at school

by Jasmine Gonzalez

Amid a third reported incident of graffiti containing a racial slur, students and staff are calling for an increase in the conversation around hate speech among the student body.

The first reported incident of racist graffiti this school year occurred the week of Nov. 27 on the Northfield campus. The student responsible was quickly identified and disciplined.

Superintendent Paul Sally addressed the incident over the intercom during morning announcements a few weeks after, only for a second incident to follow, this time on the Winnetka campus.

A third reported incident begs the question of whether hate speech, including offensive graffiti, is on the rise this school year.

According to Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Timothy Hayes while the school documents every reported incident in the student management system, they are not specifically organized based on the nature of the incident.

Racially charged, or otherwise discriminatory, graffiti, harassment, and bullying are filed under their respective categories. Therefore administrators cannot use the system to determine a specific trend.

Both Sally and Hayes said they have not seen a dramatic increase in comparison to prior years.

"I haven't seen any evidence that would indicate that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of incidents. I think what's changed is conversation around what constitutes hate speech versus free speech," said Hayes.

The vast majority of documented incidents regarding hate speech, filed under harassment and bullying, often take the more subtle form of microaggressions.

According to Sally, all incidents of public hate speech have been publicly addressed this year. Those involving individual students, such as harassment and microaggression, are handled privately between the

students involved.

Senior Remi Schreder, co-head of African-American Club, shared her experience with such microaggressions in the classroom. She cited an experience in which a teacher read the word "n—" while reading a passage from a book, only for a student to follow suit.

"While the word was not necessarily being directed toward me, it still feels like an attack when I'm the only black person in the room. It also makes me feel inferior and uncomfortable, especially when I can feel everyone in the class staring at me after the word has been said," she said.

Along with all other students interviewed, Schreder said that while she had not personally seen any racially charged or otherwise offensive graffiti, she is unsettled hearing that fellow members of African-American Club have.

"When I hear of these incidents it makes me feel scared for my safety at school, especially since I have no idea who could have written the word or how many other students are thinking the same thing—that I am nothing more than an 'n-word,'" she

said.

With the discontinuation of Seminar Day, students who already felt frustrated with the administration's response to the underlying problems of intolerance at school are concerned that the school is only taking a step back.

Given that seminar day was essentially the one day out of the school year dedicated to vital discussions around racism and discrimination, many students feel that the administration is not actively encouraging change.

"Before, we only had one day to talk about these very important and real-life topics, but now we don't even have that," said member of Student Voices in Equity, senior Jose Chavez.

Administrators agree that, although it may result in unwanted reactions such as the subsequent graffiti incidents that occurred after the issue was addressed, conversation is essential.

"I would much rather talk about the issue and work towards-improving

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"Damn" takes home Pulitzer

Kendrick Lamar's rap album redefines the meaning of the prestigious award

by Eleanor Kaplan

On Apr. 16, Kendrick Lamar became the first artist of a music genre other than jazz or classical to win the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for his recent album, "DAMN."

The 14-song internationally-acclaimed album was released in 2017 by producer Top Dawg Entertainment and included chart-topping hits such as "HUMBLE" and "LOYALTY" (feat. Rihanna).

Earlier this year, Lamar won five Grammy Awards, including one for Best Rap Album, and was also nominated for Album of the Year.

Farah Griffin, a professor of African-American literature and music at Columbia University, was one of the five jurors who chose the album for the prize. In an interview with National Public Radio, she considered Lamar's win to be a momentous step not just for the Pulitzer, but for all of society.

"All forms [of music] produce genius and excellence — and certainly black music forms have always produced that. But it's not always been recognized by the arbiters of our culture writ large," said Griffin.

Junior Alisha Yoo echoed Griffin's statement on the importance of considering various types of music in the Pulitzer music award category: "Rap should be considered because it is a type of writing. Lyrics are basically like poems."

"Art that invokes emotion is successful and deserving of praise," added junior Asher Noel.

According to the Pulitzer Prize website, the annual award is given to an American artist, "For distinguished musical composition that has had its first performance or recording in the United States during the year." The prize comes with international recognition, prestige, and a \$15,000 check.

The other two finalists were Michael Gilbertson for his orchestral piece, "Quartet," and Ted Hearne for his piece "Sound From the Bench" written for a combination of performers, including a chamber choir, an electric guitarist, and a percussionist.

Last year, the prize was taken home by Du Yun, composer of the contemporary opera "Angel's Bone."

Critics are saying that the prize was long overdue for Lamar and that he should have won with his 2015 album, "To Pimp a Butterfly," instead.

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IGSS works to reduce violence at Peace Summit

IGSS' focus on social activism enhances education outside the classroom

by Alyssa Pak

On Wednesday, Apr. 18, IGSS attended a Peace Summit in the South side of Chicago with their partner schools, the Perspectives Charter Schools, and several other Chicago area high schools. At the summit, they discussed potential ways of bringing peace to the area.

The Perspectives Charter Schools consists of five different schools that run from elementary to high school. Junior Allison Elli noted that Perspectives usually plans this summit themselves, but this year they invited IGSS to help them.

Junior Abbi Baran believes that as a program, "IGSS pushes us to care more about our own learning and forces us to think about ourselves not only as students, but as people."

This certainly proved to be true at the Peace Summit as participants expanded their awareness of the world around them.

Students have been focusing their efforts into planning this day, as the schools have been planning for it since the fall when IGSS met with Perspectives students to plan for the summit as well as the Peace March that will be taking place in June.

According to senior Andrey Nash, at this previous meeting, students broke off into groups and



Chicago students gather for Peace Summit discussing violence | Pearlman

designed T-shirts, stickers, a logo, while he and his group created an invitation and a flyer.

They also learned more about pressing issues such as gun violence.

"I think partnering with the school served as a catalyst for both discussing race related issues, such as gun violence, segregation, school funding, and developing friendships across geographic and socioeconomic gaps," said Baran.

Elli noted how being able to develop relationships with people that she might not ordinarily be able to meet has been fascinating.

"It was interesting because although we were all the same ages and in high school, we have had some pretty different life experiences and it was cool to get to know them in that way," she said.

At the Peace Summit, students had the opportunity to listen to

several different speakers.

"They talked about the importance of not contributing to the violence, and doing all you can to promote positive change in Chicago," stated Nash.

Following the speakers, students separated into smaller workshops before coming back together to watch a documentary made by some of the Perspectives students several years ago. To conclude the day, a panel of students from each school at the summit talked about different solutions to gun violence as well as their perspectives on the issue.

The documentary made by Perspectives students was called "We Are The Peace," and was centered on the peace march that they plan every year, as well as how they hope to bring peace to the South side.

Elli explained that she had signed up for two workshops, Girls

to Women and Pathfinders: Pursuing and Choosing Peace. "Both of them had groups of students from a lot of the schools there so it was fun to interact in smaller groups and come up with ideas on how we can create peace in our lives and on a larger scale," she said.

Even when students weren't in guided discussions, they were still learning from those around them. Baran recounted one of her favorite moments of the day, which was eating lunch with a group of Chicago Police officers and being able to discuss a wide range of topics.

"Not all of the conversations were 'successful,' and they were not expected to be. This is a good sign that we are concerning ourselves with something meaningful. If it can't be resolved in one sitting, it's likely worth talking about. To be clear, I am referring to police brutality," said Baran.

For many students, this Peace Summit was an eye-opening experience that allowed them to connect with others from different backgrounds outside of their normal community.

One of those students was Elli, who realized that even though violence doesn't always impact students.

"It is prevalent in places so close to us, affecting kids just like us. It can be hard to wrap your head around, but I think the peace summit helped us to think of some ways that we can help find a solution [to violence] as teenagers here at New Trier."

Cook County deaths linked to synthetic cannabinoid use

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When will the state of Illinois legalize marijuana?

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Fentanyl-laced marijuana not as widespread as previously thought

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