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Students unsatisfied with MLK Day commemoration

Community feels need to spread King’s message, not ignore it

by Layla Saqibuddin

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream for everyone to come together and be looked upon as equals. MLK’s dream is still important to members of the community who believe it’s up to them to take action.

On MLK Day, some students expected discussions in their classes. However, the day was barely recognized.

Senior member of Students voices in Equity Anahi Toolabian is one of the disappointed students.

“Each of our classes should integrate our learning for MLK Day to see how it affects each of us. NT needs to put more emphasis on this national holiday.”

Similarly, Security Guard and Sponsor of African American Club Johnyell M. Owens believes MLK and seminar day should always be encouraged because the world around us is diverse.

“Being African American, MLK Day to me means fighting for what’s right. MLK sacrificed his life to make the world a better place. He is the ultimate pioneer in my community. MLK is a day of reflection, and we are all one race. We are the human



July 25, 1965, thousands gathered at the Winnetka Village Green to hear MLK’s speech | Winnetka Historical Society

race,” said Owens.

Junior member of African American club, Xariah Chase, who read a speech during morning announcements, believes there’s no excuse for why NT couldn’t do a better job commemorating the day.

“It’s really sad that we couldn’t have a seminar day. We should try to aim for an annual seminar day even if we don’t have a guest speaker. If we don’t have these days, it allows people to live their life unaware of their surroundings. We need to realize that if we want a change, everyone plays a role, not just African Americans.”

Chase expressed the hardships of being a minority on the north shore

“It’s hard to be in a community when you are a minority. Not many people here are willing to make a

change with you because they are unaware. I want to take action, but it’s difficult to be on your own,” said Chase.

However, while it seemed like there wasn’t much emphasis on MLK Day, Student Alliance created a slideshow on TV screens throughout the school. Junior SA members Isabel Magnum and Laura Meltzer spearheaded this project. The slideshow consisted of thirty four slides which included a slide for activists that were inspired by MLK’s legacy.

SA President Bill Yen said, “SA is planning on ways to make up for the lack of awareness regarding MLK Day. But we have to remember, MLK Day was smack in the middle of final’s week, so it was difficult

for us to do anything that involves teachers and administration. That’s why we were limited to slideshows and announcements,” said Yen.

In addition, Yen emphasized that if any student feels alone they are encouraged to reach out to groups like SA, and Student Voices in Equity.

“Students can work with these groups to come up with ideas for events like MLK Day before the actual event. We can always use more student support since SA is only about twenty students. We will do our very best to help the students in our school,” said Yen.

Principal Denise Dubravec and the administration realize the importance of these days and encourage them.

“We want students to value

and have the opportunity to have discussions in classes, but in order for this to happen, there has to be a large amount of planning to happen, which takes one year. We plan the year in advance for the following year. Next year, we are still deciding what the theme is,” Dubravec said.

According to the administration, all ideas and opinions are welcome.

“Part of our job is to give parents the best information there is, so their children could attend these seminars. Our job is to make sure everyone is aware of the goal from the discussion,” said Dubravec.

There was controversy over the seminar day on Feb. 3, 2017 on Facebook. Parents didn’t feel comfortable having discussions with kids about politics and race and others didn’t think it was necessary because of where the school is located.

However, Toolabian believes no matter where we live, it’s important for us to recognize MLK Day with respect.

“We need to keep on reemphasizing Dr. King’s hard work on trying to spread kindness and justice for everyone whose voice deserves to be heard and taken action upon,” said Toolabian.

While Chase believes it’s easy to forget about these issues, we shouldn’t.

“In my speech, I hope everyone realized that it’s their job to fight for equality, not just people of color. It’s a community effort,” said Chase.

Glass art materials fully stocked despite tariffs on supplies

As costs fluctuate, administration funds materials necessary for glass art classes

by Cleo Pool & Molly George

Recent tariffs on Chinese glass had little effect on glass art classes because of a plentiful budget this year.

Glass art is not offered at many high schools, but is one of the most popular electives at NT. The state-of-the-art studio on the fourth floor of the new building is equipped with kilns, torches, and other tools.

According to glass art teacher and club supervisor Monique Roberts Boyd, the school orders its glass from Ed Hoy’s International. The company has both a wholesale and retail shop in Warrenville, IL. Like the rest of the US economy, Ed Hoy’s has felt the impact of the trade war.

The trade war between the United States and China means both countries have placed tariffs on each other’s imported goods. By doing this, goods imported from China to the US have been taxed, making them more expensive.

President Trump implemented this 10 percent increase on \$200 billion worth of goods, including glass, over the summer. With no end in sight, the tariffs will continue, and in March, Trump plans to increase

them to 25 percent, according to Business Insider.

The school orders the glass supply in bulk at the beginning of the year, so the tariffs have yet to affect the class. As for next year, it is unclear whether the tariffs will continue, but the art department is prepared.

If come August the tariffs are still in place, Alicia Landes, the Art Department Chair, will reach out to the administration and business offices which will help balance the budget for the class.

“When we have increases like that, generally they [the business office] will support it if there is a need,” said Landes.

Generally, the business office is cooperative, according to Landes, who explained, “They will understand why we are requesting more money.” As for how much of an increase is expected, Landes continued, “Some of it could be up to 25 percent.”

The same issues have affected the glass blowing program at Punahou School in Honolulu, HI. Punahou glass art instructor Mark Mitsuda said their program, like New Trier’s, is “at the mercy of global demand for materials.”

However, Punahou orders their glass in batch form from the west coast. “In addition to melting from batch, we also have an active recycling program,” Mitsuda explained. Scrap glass is melted and reused, and the entire process involves students in every aspect of shaping glass.

At New Trier, the glass art program is divided into three year-

long classes that teach students to use the properties of glass for artistic expression, according to the course description.

Boyd said that she discovered her appreciation for glass art while working here. Glass art was first offered in 2000 as a club, and when participation “ballooned,” she proposed a class in 2005.

Its popularity comes from “the exoticness of it,” said Boyd, who is aware of the tariffs and knows that the school will do what it can to keep the program as available as it is now.

Boyd added, “a lot of the students have not taken art classes before, so they may be afraid of their own creativity, but working with a material so foreign to them lets them discover something about themselves.”

As of this year, there are nine glass art classes and an after-school club that runs Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Assuming there are 25 students per period, that’s 225 students in total. It’s hard to estimate how much glass is used per month, but Boyd said, it’s a lot.

Senior Max Jung, a Glass Art 1 student, said that when classes get low on materials, “it’s hard to get good combinations of colors to make good pieces.”

Sophomore Reilly Burton used glass art club to see if it sparked her interest: “The club was a lot of fun and it allowed me to try something new,” said Burton.

Burton is thinking about taking the class next year and hopes that the tariffs have no impact on the class.



Glass art students continue to have access to any materials needed | Towers

She would take the class even if it meant a higher fee or fewer materials to choose from. Burton is grateful that the school has a such a flexible budget when it comes to the arts.

Landes reiterated, “We really watch that [the fee] closely so that the fee doesn’t affect students wanting to sign up for the class.”

Despite the business office’s support, the class hasn’t gone completely untouched. Glass art requires special eyeglasses for torching that filter out the dangerous wave lengths of light.

Boyd said, “One company that I usually order from no longer is

going to get that glass because they can’t afford it. So I went to a different company to get my glasses.”

The chain reaction of material demand has affected the supply at Punahou as well. According to Mitsuda, costs in batches of glass have increased along with the use of lithium batteries, a key ingredient in the glass they buy. The program was strained by a similar price increase on cork wheels used to polish glass when demand for natural cork increased.

Burton elaborated, “I think it’s great that the school puts an emphasis on [the arts]. It isn’t cheap, I’m just glad I can take advantage of it.”