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Environmental club floods New Trier with Nalgene

Students and staff receive free water bottles in effort to reduce waste

by Nora Crumley

On Jan. 20, Environmental club distributed free water bottles to staff and students in an effort to reach their goal of eliminating the sale of single-use plastic water bottles from campus.

After months of planning and meetings, Environmental Club distributed free NT inscribed Nalgene to the over 4,000 staff, faculty, and students.

Environmental Club co-leader, senior Jacob Weinstein described the purpose of this initiative as the first step "towards our end goal of eliminating the sale of single-use plastic waste. We needed to provide people with an alternative to using single-use water bottles."

Maxwell Kanter, senior and club co-leader, described the water bottles as a concrete reminder of the duty we all have towards the environment.

"We provided people with a tangible means to better the environment, instead of giving people mental and moral tools that don't resonate with peers our age."

The initiative is part of a large push to eliminate the sale of single-use plastic water bottles and was first pitched by Greg Vasilion, a New Trier graduate from 2013, according to club sponsor Raquelle Brennan.

But some say the idea of distributing free water bottles has been circulating New Trier for 20 years.

"We were the first people to actually do this after the 20 years of people trying this," Kanter said.

According to the club leaders, the recent push to eliminate the use of single-use plastic water bottles began with a meeting with Quest to see if stopping the sale of plastic water bottles was possible.

"Quest does give us access to their sales. The only reason we could not get rid of single-use plastic water bottles was because people buy them and the food providers don't want to get rid of a product that sells," Kanter said.

"We would have to give them a product that equivocates the same revenue of single-use plastic water bottles, but we didn't want to have to think about that, so we decided the next best idea was to provide every student and staff with a free alternative to plastic waste and that was the Nalgene."

Environmental Club then approached the administration about acquiring the funds needed for the initiative.

When approached with the initiative, the district was impressed according to Winnetka Principal Denise Dubravec.

Dubravec added, via email, "The message that the district is sending is that we both encourage students to make healthy eating choices at school by promoting water, and that the choice can be made in a manner that reduces the environmental impact."



Barraza advisery with their new water bottles on Jan. 20 | Instagram

Students were similarly pleased by the initiative.

Senior Hannah Miller agreed with the environmental benefits of the free water bottles.

"It is a really good way for New Trier students to show their willingness to help and appreciation for the environment."

Students are also seeing beyond the environmental benefits of these water bottles.

Senior Irqa Merchant said the water bottles will remind people to stay hydrated and fight dehydration.

Despite the initiative's positive feedback, many students are concerned about the cost of supplying water bottles to over 4000 people.

"Its counteractive to have plastic water bottles still available to buy but spend thousands of dollars to provide water bottles for all the students when I feel like a lot of people don't even use them," Senior Isaac Yon said.

And Sophomore Olivia Luna said, "it shows the amount of privilege we have as a school."

Junior Julia Yang commented on the cost, "I heard how much money we spent on them and I just think its a

bit extra to give water bottles because some people already have them.

The water bottle initiative cost the district \$25,000 and was funded "By surplus student activity funds that are not tied to a specific club or activity," according to Dubravec.

In response to some student's claim that the purchase was futile, Weinstein said, "We are an environmental club and we are going to do what is most environmentally impactful for New Trier."

"We thought a great majority of students at school already have reusable water bottles, so why not just only buy them for the student that don't have reusable water bottles," Kanter said.

"But then we realized we don't want to give anybody at this school an excuse to buy a plastic bottle."

Environmental club will be monitoring the bottle filling stations to measure the success of their initiative.

In the few days since the distribution of free water bottles, the club leaders have already seen an increase in numbers.

"Since the start of this year, once a week, we have been going around to all the filling stations and recording the numbers. We can show the progression of how many water bottles will be filled if we seen an increase. The rate should shoot up incredibly. We have already seen that on Friday there were long lines at each station so we know at least this project has been somewhat successful," Luu said.

Legions of women globally march for equal rights

Millions of people from all walks of life come together to march for equal rights

by Sophia Holt

On Saturday, Jan. 21, the Women's March on Chicago was one of more than 250 peaceful protests that took place globally in reaction to President Donald Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20.

The goal of the march was to bring women's rights issues, and many others, to the attention of the new administration.

50,000 people were expected to attend the rally held in downtown Chicago, followed by a march from Grant Park down Jackson Blvd towards Federal Plaza.

With a turnout of an estimated 250,000 people, there were too many people to march on the scheduled route. However, the marchers proceeded in order to send a message.

Many New Trier students and faculty attended the march. Senior Vince Park, who campaigned for Hillary and Illinois Democrats during the election, attended the Women's March on Chicago. Park said, "I was exposed to lots of issues that deeply concerned me, particularly women's



250,000 marched in Chicago for equal rights and protesting Trump's nationalistic agenda | Blickstein Photography

and disability rights. By participating in the Women's March, I could express my beliefs and spend time with other people who are passionate about these issues."

Being surrounded by like-minded people motivated many students, like Park, to attend the march.

Senior Lisa Vetyuhova said, "It was important for me to voice my beliefs amongst people equally as passionate as I was, especially after so many were quiet or silenced during the past year. I marched not only for women's rights, but also for everyone who is marginalized and oppressed."

Senior Annabel Weyhrich agreed, "I couldn't justify sitting around my home if in the future I'd say, 'It's ridiculous our government

is restricting my right to choose.' If there was anytime at all to take action, this is the time."

The march's goal of bringing people together to peacefully protest a wide range of issues, Weyhrich said, "Was super effective in showing that all across the world, people, specifically women, are banding together to show that if anything, angry people get stuff done."

Park agreed, "The march was successful in bringing to national attention many different issues. It allowed diverse groups to express themselves in ways that might not have been possible in politics."

However, many feel that not all women were represented. Many signs used at protests around the world used imagery of the female

reproductive system. This caused controversy within the transgender community. Junior Arielle Imber commented, "Using the female anatomy to symbolize feminism is sloppy and exclusive. Feminism needs to combat more than just shaming, equal pay, and reproductive rights. Feminism needs to address homophobia, transophobia, racism, classism, ableism, every type of divisive 'ism.'"

Others point out the stigma of "white feminism" that was present in many demonstrations globally. Weyhrich said, "White feminism happens when white women fight for equal pay, abortion rights and they fight against rape culture-which is important- but they turn a blind eye to the fact that women of color also

have to fight against racial injustice. I hope in the next four years, within our gender's fight for equality, we can eliminate the racist gap and really include all women."

A record breaking 101 women have been elected to the 114th congress beginning this year, including Illinois' own Tammy Duckworth. Among them is the first black Republican woman to be elected to Congress, Mia Love.

However, the glass ceiling has not been shattered yet. While women make up nearly 64% of the electorate, they make up only 19.4% of Congress.

Park said, "Congress is not reflective of American society and results in an underrepresentation of women and women's interests. It's very important to get more women involved in the political process to break the glass ceiling, whether it be lobbying policymakers or even running for office."

While the Women's March didn't result in any immediate political action, the march successfully brought multiple issues to the attention of people around the world. As Vetyuhova explained, "The march showed the power of peaceful protest and displayed the strength of community and unity. Most of all, it showed me that you don't have to be a certain age to stand behind something and fight for it."