

Raise the Stage is raising the standards of NT theatre

The campaign honors two talented New Trier alumni

by Beth Wall

The Hayes-McCausland Raise the Stage campaign has achieved nearly half of its million dollar goal as of January 2016. The campaign will fund the furnishing of the black box theatre, an upcoming installment in the revamped theatre wing.

The theatre is named in honor of two alumni who were heavily involved in the performing arts while at New Trier, Mary Catherine Hayes ('10) and Sarah McCausland ('13). Hayes passed away in 2013, after a battle with cancer. McCausland was killed in 2014 by a drunk driver while attending Bard College in New York.

"Together they represent more than individuals, they represent excellence at New Trier," said Katie Seigenthaler, mother of Hayes.

The two families joined forces to finance what will now be the first privately funded project at New Trier as a way of saluting their daughters. Contributions to their cause have almost entirely come from supporters

of the Media, Speech and Theatre department, as well as members of the community who knew the two girls.

"It's been great to see their friends work so hard in order to give back to their alma mater and also their friends," said Seigenthaler.

On Aug. 17, friends of McCausland and Hayes launched the campaign with a kickoff event hosted by Nick's Bar and Grill in Wilmette. The event featured live music from local musicians, including senior Jordan Xidas, a series of silent auctions with items donated by local businesses, and a crowd of supporters. The event raised over \$20,000.

If contributors donate more than \$5,000, they secure a spot for their name etched into the glass wall of the theatre. "If your whole family has gone here, this is an opportunity to have a permanent place at New Trier," said campaign manager, Dale West Wyant.

The fundraising has spread from Wilmette all the way to Syracuse, New York. In December 2015, students at Syracuse University started a GoFundMe campaign to



The rendering of the glass donor wall in the new theatre | Raise the Stage

raise over \$5,000 in order to have their name etched on a glass wall of donors. Though Hayes attended the university for only a short period of time, she left a positive impression on the university's drama community.

The goal was reached by the end of December, and the GoFundMe page thanked its donors "for being a part of that wave of love that we all felt so deeply while M.C. was with us, and now we've been able to bring that back in some small way."

Other key contributions to the campaign included a celebration after the Fight Night Showcase in December, proceeds from sales of "Winnetka 60093" by local author Holly Maihugh, and a Post-Thanksgiving spin class at Spynergy in Winnetka.

The next fundraiser for Raise the Stage will be on March 12 at the Winnetka Community House. An all-girls acapella group, Whim N' Rhythm, from Yale University will be performing a benefit concert for the Raise the Stage campaign.

Nina Lynn, the Media, Speech and Theatre department head and theatre teacher said her current students are interested in contributing to the Raise the Stage campaign in any way possible.

"The parents of our current students working with the New Trier Fine Arts Association are also looking to take some ownership of the project and contribute," said Lynn.

Lynn described a black box theater as a space with endless possibilities.

"You can put the stage and the audience wherever you want, and therefore you can do whichever play you want," Lynn said. "It just opens up so many possibilities for our designers as well as our actors and directors."

Griffin Weller, a junior enrolled in theatre, said that the response from his peers have been positive. Weller said the only complaint is from juniors and seniors, who aren't going to be around to take advantage of it.

Sally Kozminski, a sophomore who has previously worked in a black box theatre, described the experience as more intimate than a performance in a typical proscenium theater, like the Gaffney Theatre of New Trier East's campus.

"With a black box, it's a lot more realistic," Kozminski said. "You feel like you're 'in' the production, instead of just watching it."

The Hayes-McCausland black box is expected to be up and running by fall of 2017.

For more information on how to get involved, or to donate to the Raise the Stage campaign, visit raisethestage.org

Breitbart's attack rebutted by New Trier's Buckman

The conservative news source bashed MLK Seminar day

by Connor Josellis

A few days before the Martin Luther King Seminar day, the conservative news outlet, Breitbart, attacked the day, causing a parade of controversy to ensue.

The first article published on Breitbart's website was authored by Joel B. Pollak and titled "High School Forces Kids To Attend 'Racial Identity' Classes on MLK Jr. Day." The article quickly blew up and had 1,401 comments as of Jan. 21. Comments on the article enthusiastically agreed with Pollak, but some New Trier students commented on the post in support of the day.

Two freshman identified only as "The Hawk" and "jessie" commented in support of the day, "THIS DAY IS LITERALLY TEACHING US HOW NOT TO BE RACIST!" The Hawk said. "In today's day and age you see a few outward racists and more who are quietly racist. This day is trying to help eliminate any racism at all at New Trier," jessie said.

Another student, identified by the username, "The Truth," commented, "I also go to New Trier and I think this is a huge waste of time...The entire point of this day is a power move. It's black lives matter coming to a wealthy white area and making it a mandatory day of school."

In response to this initial article, junior Celia Buckman took it upon herself to write a public response. She wrote a rebuttal to the article and published it to The Huffington Post education blog.

Buckman felt she needed to write the article because she wanted to start a discussion within the community about it: "As more and more people started reading it and mentioning it, and some people were in support of it, I decided that someone needed to argue against it, in order to have a discussion about

it," Buckman said.

Buckman cited three reasons why Breitbart was wrong and why white people should talk about race. Her post received positive feedback from New Trier students, but not from the news source she directed her article at.

Breitbart furiously responded with an article titled: "Check Your Privilege, Rich White Leftist Girl." Pollak attacked Buckman's ideas and repeatedly told her to "check your privilege."

Commenters on the post were also quick to attack Buckman calling her brainwashed and other names.

Buckman didn't think much of the comments. "I realized that these people are idiots and that their comments didn't make sense. They said, 'Check your privilege, rich white leftist girl.' The whole point of the day is to check privilege," Buckman said.

Senior Sarah Africk thought Breitbart's article was distasteful. "I thought that was really inappropriate," Africk said. "They [Breitbart] were being super immature about trying to force their opinions on somebody who was just trying to defend a good idea."

Instead of the seminar day, Pollak suggested New Trier do something more beneficial. "I have a suggestion for next year: partner with a school in inner-city Chicago and do some kind of public service together. That would do more to build new relationships and address inequality than the elitist, racist farce New Trier is staging this year," Pollak wrote.

New Trier has already been partnering with a city school through a non-profit called Embarc. Last year, sophomores partnered with students from Uplift Community High School and built relationships through different outings.

Buckman does not regret her article, but mentioned her intentions were never to start a fight: "I didn't think that my initial intent was to engage in anything with Breitbart because Breitbart is not worth my time, but as a way for the community to have a discussion about it."

Tech issues surround extensive iPad usage

iPads weren't designed for large-scale implementation

by Carina Brendl

The increased use of Apple products in the classroom has led to various IT problems, raising the question of where they stem from.

"There was some communication issue going on between Apple and the school. It was all kind of disorganized," senior Kate Rosean said about the school handling her iPad's problem.

During the third quarter of her junior year, the backlight of Rosean's iPad inexplicably broke. She sent her iPad to Apple three times for a total of eight months before the device was finally fixed. When Rosean finally got her iPad back in mid-October of this school year, she realized that there was one tiny problem: it now only had half of its original storage capacity left.

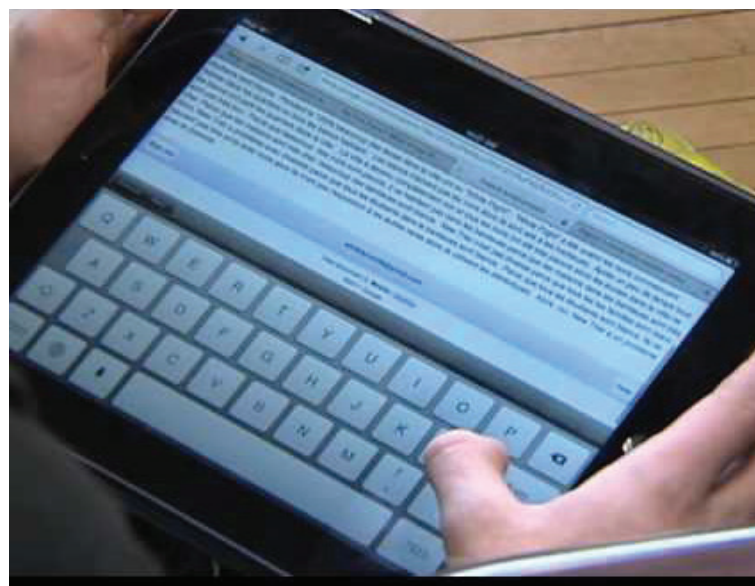
French teacher Liette Brisebois, who has integrated iPads and Apple TV into her curriculum, agreed with Rosean about New Trier's approach to using technology. "I was eager to learn, I threw myself in. But I was not prepared," Brisebois said.

She explained that she learned by doing and often felt like she was doing improv, at which point she resorted to one-on-one help. For example, she often struggled getting the Apple TV to work and had to send for a support team member to help her.

Brisebois said that the school has been "fantastic" and "amazing" in providing this one-on-one support. Yet she also explained that the school lacks a systemic approach, a clear vision of how technology can be implemented so that teachers and students are all on the same page.

"There is something to be said about people sharing the tool and knowing how to use the tool in common," Brisebois said.

Brisebois thought that the school's approach to technology was culturally influenced by America's strong value on individuality. She explained that the support of



The iPad program began in the 2011-12 school year for certain students | Archives

individuals, as opposed to whole groups, is a very American thing. But she added that, "At the same time, there is a lot of power and support in commonality."

According to New Trier computer technician, Moira Gitau, a part of the problem is that when the school first started integrating iPads, Apple didn't intend them to be used on such a large scale. iPads were only intended as personal and individualistic devices, which was why managing them for the school was "ridiculous," she said.

For example, at the time, the IT Department still used carts to set iPads up for students. Each cart could hold only thirty iPads and had a USB cord attached. This cord could be connected to a computer to set up the iPads. Every single one of the hundreds of iPads had to be set up in this manual way.

"It was very cumbersome. It didn't always work. I could spend hours and hours trying to get them the way that I wanted," Gitau said. She also said that Apple has since implemented a feature allowing iPads to be set up and managed more wirelessly.

The same applies to the Apple TV. Like iPads, an Apple TV was only intended as a personal device, which was why units crashed so often in past years. Gitau explained that the school's network manager only recently discovered some tricks on

his own to improve the connection. That's why this year it has been crashing considerably less.

Gitau said that there are still a lot of issues she'd wish Apple would listen to more. She explained that the school talks to Apple representatives about these problems, but that the school's complaints usually aren't heard.

Furthermore, Gitau explained that the IT Department could actually do more to prevent iPad problems. It could, for example, make all iPads "Managed." If an iPad is "Managed," it means that the school has more control over it. For example, it allows the school to prevent students from changing their iPads' names, which can often create issues downloading apps from Self Service.

This year freshmen iPads are "Managed," yet Gitau said that the school doesn't do this to upperclassmen. "We think of them as your personal devices and we're not here to babysit you," she said.

ESL Coordinator and English teacher Kurt Weiler, who uses iPads and Apple TV during class, is untouched by all of this. He doesn't have any problems with technology.

The secret? "You can't just walk into class cold and hope that it's all going to work. You have to have done a trial run, you have to have planned out far enough in advance so you can test what it will look like," he said.