

# Glass Slipper Project holds 20th annual dress drive

Doubling last year's total, the group collected 442 dresses

by Julia Nagel

This year, New Trier collected 442 dresses for the Glass Slipper Project, more than doubling last year's total.

Sixty-nine pairs of shoes, 70 accessories, and over 100 makeup products were also collected, along with approximately \$300 in cash donations.

This year, a group of seven junior girls—Grace Garrou, Torie Hardt, Cavan Pellegrino, Nina Pofcher, Anna Shah, Yael Shaw, and Olivia Sergot—worked together with Junior Girls' Adviser Chair Patricia Sheridan, Department Assistant Sue Buck, and Business Education teacher Melissa Duffy to make the project a success.

The Glass Slipper Project is a nonprofit organization with the goal of making prom more affordable to students in the Chicago area. They collect and give away new and gently used dresses and other items to low-income juniors and seniors who want to attend prom but have budgetary constraints.

All of these items are free of charge; students simply have to provide a valid student ID.

According to the Glass Slipper Project website, "Since 1999, the Glass Slipper Project has helped



The juniors who helped organize the project collected shoes, accessories, and makeup products as well as dresses | Kass more than 20,000 young women attend their Proms in style."

Donating to the Glass Slipper Project has been a junior class initiative for the past five years, although the school as a whole has been involved in the project for more than a decade.

Sheridan, one of the staff members involved in this project, said that participating in the Glass Slipper Project is particularly important to the school because it allows students and staff to give back to the community.

Sheridan credited this year's success to the hard work and dedication of the students involved.

"This is the first year that we had a student group that came forward and volunteered to help organize the collections," said Sheridan.

According to Shaw, the group worked to spread the message about the collection in as many ways as possible, in order to maximize the amount of donations.

"This included making an Instagram account, a Snapchat account, collages, working closely with the New Trier Instagram and Facebook, posting on NextDoor, making a QR code, putting up a dress display to keep track of donations, going on the morning announcements and the bulletin,

and ultimately all of our work culminated into one video," said Shaw.

The whole process—planning, raising awareness, and collecting the dresses/accessories—took approximately a month.

After the drive was completed, the dresses were handed off to Zengeler Cleaners to be repaired, cleaned, and delivered to the Glass Slipper pop-up "boutiques."

The boutiques were open from 6 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Saturday, Mar. 30, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Apr. 6.

Although New Trier fell just short of its goal to collect and donate 500 dresses, the students who spearheaded this year's drive feel proud of the impact they made.

"New Trier has so many great resources and people who are willing to help, so it's a perfect thing for New Trier to be involved in," said Hardt.

With our own prom coming up, Pellegrino said that the project is a perfect way to remind students that not everyone is able to afford the expenses that come with prom.

"While many students at New Trier have the luxury of being able to get a dress for their prom night, that is not always the case," said Pellegrino.

Pofcher agreed that students here don't always consider the monetary obstacles to the traditional high school experience.

"At New Trier, it is common for girls to spend up to \$150 on a dress and never wear it again. It is something we take for granted."

Shah said that the importance of this project goes beyond sequins and stitches.

"It may just seem [like] a dress, but it really represents a dream. Every girl dreams of going to prom and dressing up to be a star for a night. Especially in high school when girls sometimes suffer with low self-esteem and worry about their body image, helping these girls get all dressed up can help them feel beautiful and confident so they can make lasting memories on this special night," said Shah.

## Peer Jury provides judicial alternative for first-time offenders

Initiative strives to lower incarceration rates among teens

by Sofia Papakos

The implementation of Peer Jury in collaboration with the North Shore's police departments is a popular alternative among youth in conflict.

Many believe it offers a better option for teens who have committed first-time misdemeanors or violations, though adoption of this new court system has sparked concerns regarding the bias of Peer Jury and the administration behind it.

The structure of the system allows first time offense minors to be judged by their peers and avoid their crime being put on record.

To qualify as a volunteer for the jury, students must attend New Trier, Loyola, Regina Dominican, or North Shore Country Day high schools.

There are 40 jurors volunteering this year, according to the New Trier Township website. During spring of each year, the new group of jurors is trained by last year's.

All jurors and defendants must remain anonymous due to the confidential nature of the trial.

A student who has participated as a juror for a year, said, "after we deliberate and reach a verdict, [we conclude] how many community service hours they should receive or whether they should write a research paper about the crime they committed."

According to the juror, a pattern of more honesty and openness is prominent after the cases.

"It can also build trust between parents and their child because after the incident, kids tend to be more open and honest," said the juror.

However, some question whether or not a community can eliminate bias in a jury of peers.

Community Services Administrator Brian Leverenz said that the program has helped kids avoid being thrown in jail, and doesn't understand how anyone could see Peer Jury as biased.

"Anyone who recognizes the kid on trial is expected to say something and be excused. In fact, kids who face the Peer Jury are penalized a lot more than in an actual court. It holds kids just as accountable as in any other court and shows them how the legal system works," said Leverenz.

The student juror believes the system creates an unbiased environment: "If a juror knows the offender they are asked to leave."

According to the juror, it's a system that challenges students for the better.

"By giving first time offenders an opportunity to think about the choices they made allows those students to spread their knowledge and encourage others to not make illegal decisions. Also, by giving the offender community service hours they are impacting and giving back to our community."

A student who was brought before the Peer Jury argued that to them, the jury was biased.

"I knew some of the people on the board and they knew me, which I guess impacted the decision they made. None of us said anything. Still, no one double checked to make sure there wasn't any bias during the trial, which is unfair," they said.

Since 2017, Cook County

Juvenile Detention Center has reported a 65% increase in incarcerated youth.

The Peer Jury is supposed to help facilitate a restoration of self-esteem and accountability that prevents first time offenders in the North Shore from exposure to the reality of confinement.

"The Peer Jury isn't just for the North Shore. Before starting the program, I looked into communities, like Orland or Maine Township, even Chicago schools who had the same system. Everybody gets the same chance to redeem themselves in front of the jury, it's up to them to decide whether you're worthy of a second chance and serve community service. It has nothing to do with having more advantages or anything like that," said Leverenz.

Leverenz also expressed that the Peer Jury is a comfortable space for the community to come together.

"Peer Jury works for everybody. It works for the law, the community, offenders, and the police department. It's important we have a system where the kids know they can rely on and give them their best shot at a better future without having their mistakes follow them," said Leverenz.

According to Leverenz, the experience of Peer Jury aims to educate the defendants on making better choices, and overall strives to reduce the overall crime rate of the community.

Still, the student defendant said she believes that Peer Jury is above the law.

"A lot of kids who are undeserving of a second chance just get away with things that could put them in jail. There are kids in Chicago, kids involved with drugs and gangs that are more deserving based on their circumstances and environment," the student defendant said.

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