

Freshmen bring After School into the classroom

New anonymous app raises concerns of cyberbullying

by Maya Kowitz

In the age of social media, teenagers are swamped with new devices and platforms to express themselves. Too often the anonymity that social media provides creates an outlet for students to share things online they wouldn't say in person.

The most recent social media craze among students is the app "After School".

This app has blown up on the New Trier freshman campus, with nearly every student in Jennifer Karakosta's freshmen advisory claiming they knew about the app.

Freshman Yael Shaw described this new app as "not good," stating, "People post stuff about other students on After School. You can vote on posts and comment on pictures, but everything is anonymous so you don't know who's saying these things."

The luxury that After School provides is the ability to post while staying masked behind their own phone screen.

Freshman Sammi Stoeber said students use it as a place to express their feelings towards other people,

"Sometimes it's people saying who they have a crush on and other times it's people just being mean." Stoeber added that mean comments come predominantly from the anonymous responses to posts written on the app. She said, "People use a lot of sarcasm and dishonest opinions."

Freshman Millie James said that the app sends out texts to people, since it's connected through Facebook, in an attempt to gain more followers.

"My friend found out people were talking about her on the app and she had no clue who they were," James said.

"It's funny to see people say things about you and your friends, but sometimes people don't know where the line is and make really inappropriate posts," said freshman Caroline Bennett.

"It was very rare that people chose to stand up for others on apps like this."

Many puzzled upperclassmen wonder why this app is appealing to freshmen. "I've never even heard of that app," said senior Molly O'Donoghue.

While students at the East



After School logo shows one of the anonymous characters | TheSouthern.com

campus may not be aware of After School, many can recall past apps that put their classes in a frenzy.

Senior Rachel Cohan said she remembers the apps "Ask.fm" and "Yik-Yak", that caused a lot of issues for her grade when they first came out.

"On Ask.fm there was definitely cyberbullying. People would write mean comments on each other's pages and then they would either try to defend themselves or other commenters would defend them. It was rare that people chose to stand up for others on apps like this," Cohan said.

Cohan stated that the greatest culprit of cyberbullying was Yik-Yak, which was blocked by New Trier after the mean comments posted on the app became popular.

"On Yik-Yak it was just

a constant feed of uncensored, anonymous posts. You could also like and dislike posts, which made it even worse when someone had a mean comment and people liked it, which meant they agreed," Cohan said. "These apps are just a way for people to bully and shame others. It's sad."

Junior Will Hurley said that he saw a lot of girls being bullied and mean comments mainly aimed towards girls on Yik-Yak and Ask.fm.

Whereas on After School, Stoeber said that it's used by both boys and girls and both genders are posted about.

Freshmen believe that After School does not have the impact on students that apps such as Yik-Yak and Ask.fm had when they were popular.

Stoeber stated that After School is more relationship focused and

meant to be funny, versus the other apps that upperclassmen recall as platforms solely meant to cyberbully.

Senior Hannah Pettersen acknowledged that a common factor between this new app and the old ones is the curiosity students had in high school relationships.

"On Ask.fm people got asked relatively sexual questions and you always saw the question, 'Who do you like?'"

Junior Peter Murry recalled that students used Ask.fm as a way to find out people's "Top fives." "I felt bad if I found out I wasn't in my crush's top five list," Murry said.

Junior Charlie Thompson recalled that these apps were used to say mean things they wouldn't say in person, "My friend would get bullied on it a lot. People called him Stanky, and that bothered him."

Though social media will continue to grow and more platforms to express thoughts anonymously will be created, Senior Paris Silverman wants students to acknowledge the negative impacts of these apps, "Anonymous apps like After School lead to feelings being hurt and poor judgement of those writing behind their phone screens. It's better to just stay away from these apps and don't fall into the trends."

Habitat kicks off this fall

Habitat for humanity starts its 17th year of service

by Hannah Young

New Habitat for Humanity project leaders started off the project's 17th year with the goal of bringing together the senior class to raise money to build two houses, one in Waukegan for the Brown family and another in the Philippines.

Project leaders Chloe Jacobs, Sophia Holt, Georgia Caras, Cole Maizel, and Annabel Weyherich work with 22 student board members and advisory representatives to fundraise for Habitat for Humanity.

Jacobs said that "everyone should have a decent place to live and the partnership gives NT students the opportunity to make a lasting local and global difference." Senior girls adviser chair Susan Pauman said, "Habitat for Humanity's vision is to tackle this societal issue."

Holt described how her own volunteer experiences resulted in an interest in being apart of the Habitat for Humanity project. "I have had an amazing experience working with community service organizations and Habitat allows me to share and give my senior class these same experiences," she said.

Board member Bridget Knudson said, "It's a way for us as a senior class to contribute to the community in a positive way. It's a bridge between New Trier and the community."

According to boys adviser chair Chris Pearson, "It allows the members of the class to work together as an entire class to try to accomplish something with a unifying goal. It offers them an opportunity to make a significant impact on something and leave a significant legacy behind."

Fundraisers that have been previously run by the project, such as Winter Carnival, Feast Week, and the Tom de Luca show, will continue this year due to the Class of 2016's success.

However, the new leaders plan to make their own mark.

"Although last year's Habitat was extremely successful, we plan to keep the main frame of events and add our own stamp to the project by creating new ones," Jacobs said.

While planning and starting new fundraisers is crucial, large student involvement in the project is most essential "in order to make the house a reality," Jacobs said. "We are hoping to make this year the most involved year yet. We really want Habitat to be something that brings the senior advisories together, all while making such a significant impact locally and internationally," Holt said.

On October 22nd, the leaders met the Brown family, who will live in the house built by the seniors. They "broke ground on the designated lot for the 2017 house, and we commenced the start of the project," Jacobs said.

According to Holt, the senior classes typically raise around \$100,000 every year. However, the money will not be used solely to build the Brown family's home. "Not only will these funds go to the Brown's home in Waukegan, but part of the proceeds will also go towards building a home in the Philippines. New Trier has built 32 houses, 16 locally and 16 internationally," Holt said.

While the purpose of this project is mainly to create a home for those who need one, its other intention is to bring the senior class together in rewarding community service. The project leaders, therefore, are trying to spread the word and "work with the other leaders, as well as the board and advisory reps, to keep the senior class informed about what Habitat does and how they can get involved," Jacobs said.

On November 9th, in an all-class assembly, the project leaders will present their goals and new ideas as well as introduce Joy Brown, the mother of the family, to the senior class.

Jacobs said, "We hope to make this the biggest year yet and have the largest turnout we've ever seen at the Tom de Luca show. We believe if anyone can do it, it's our seniors."

Homeless theater department stays positive

McGee construction causes department to relocate temporarily

by Sophia Holt

With the McGee theater being torn down at the end of last year as part of the construction plan, the New Trier theater department has become homeless.

Theater classes that were previously held in the McGee are now being held in "temporary drama" rooms on the fourth floor that were built to be art studios. The rooms do not include many theatrical necessities including a theater's most fundamental aspect, a stage. According to the department chair of Media, Speech, and Theater, as well as the Theater 4 teacher, Nina Lynn, the lack of these necessities have not been a major road block, "Obviously our new room is not a theater space, but it does have enough elements of a theater space that the core of our work can happen. We'll figure out how to accept the things that aren't perfect."

Although the spaces are non-traditional for the theater curriculum, students and teachers alike agree that the challenges that come along with studying theater without a stage foster creativity. The more restrictions theater students are faced with, the more creative they have to be. Lynn agrees, "If we move into these new spaces and do everything the way that we've always done it, then we've missed the boat."

Every year, each Theater 4 student chooses their own short play to direct and cast. Teachers and students before the end of the 2015-2016 school year expressed concerns that presenting Directing Projects in classrooms rather than on the McGee stage will negatively affect the experience. However, now that they have been in the space for several weeks, many are seeing the advantages of these new rooms. New Trier Senior and Theater 4 student



Temporary drama rooms house theater classes in place of McGee Coladarsi

Katherine Melulis elaborated on this point, "theater is more about the people than it is about the actual space. We are so used to seeing Directing Projects in the McGee and now with these new spaces, it's our job to find all the ways we can use it."

With the limited space, the theater program had to cut out one of their performances. But, to make up for offering fewer productions, the department of Media, Speech, and Theater is offering students Master Classes in which students learn things such as playwriting and on camera acting from professionals in the field.

Theater 3 student Meghan Morris feels the rooms haven't made a big difference in her experience in class: "We just finished the lie exercise; however, other than it being a little bit brighter, I didn't notice much of a difference. I think we are making do with the classrooms we have very nicely." She feels the only difference there will be is when they have to perform a scene towards the end of the year it will be different in a classroom than on a stage.

Although there are challenges, the temporary rooms are just that, temporary. Gerry Munley, the Assistant Principal for Administrative Services, confirms, "Even though the theater is a better space, the temporary rooms are a good solution."

Next year, two new theaters, including a black box theater (a theater in which the director can

choose where the audience sits) will be finished. The new black box theater will be named in memory of Mary Catherine Hayes ('10) and Sarah McCausland ('13). Both of these women were New Trier alumni and veterans of the theater department who lost their lives very young.

Along with the new black box theater, a new McGee theater will also be built. Complete with updated features, the new theater space is a vast improvement over the old McGee. "The old McGee was just two classrooms that they demolished and poured concrete over," said Hilerre Kirsch, a theater teacher at the Winnetka campus, "this new McGee is going to be purely a theater. In addition, we are going to have a drama classroom with the same footprint as the McGee, so we can do blocking in the class and use it as a rehearsal room and transfer that to the stage."

The Media, Speech, and Theater department hopes that these new spaces will raise the number of students participating in theater, especially because the entrance to the black box theater will be located just outside the Trevian Commons. "I think that because we've been so isolated from the rest of the school, it takes a lot of courage to walk into a part of the school you've never been to," said Lynn, "And now it's going to be, 'oh, right there, I can see it. I just have to open the door.'"