

Peer Helping brings RAK Week back to New Trier

“Be Kind” and “Warm and Fuzzy Project” promote wellness at school

by Julia Nagel

Peer Helping brought Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Week, a nationwide event, to New Trier during the first week of March.

While this isn't the first year Peer Helping has encouraged New Trier to participate, each year Peer Helping comes up with new ideas to increase the impact that RAK week has on students.

This year, for example, was the first that the club customized coffee sleeves at the Bean Team with kindness stickers.

Co-sponsor of Peer Helping, Kathryn Kalnes, said that the intention of the week stays the same from year to year.

“The goal of RAK week [is] to promote kindness throughout the school community.”

In addition to the kindness sticker coffee sleeves, Peer Helping also handed out kindness stickers for students to wear, created boxes with mindfulness and kindness activities for advisers and their advisees, hung up posters, and made daily announcements introducing a “kindness challenge of the day.”

Erika's Lighthouse Club also



Peer Helping and Erika's Lighthouse Club co-sponsored the “Be Kind” campaign of kindness stickers | Towers

participated in the week: they co-sponsored the “Be Kind” sticker campaign. Erika's Lighthouse wanted to get involved with the week because it aligns with their goal of educating the community about good mental health and raising awareness on the topic of teen depression.

“Kindness is one of the best ways to help promote wellness and happiness in our school, community, and greater world. I think we need to be more kind to each other every day, as we never know what struggles someone may be going through,” said sponsor of Erika's Lighthouse Club Steven Rish.

Students and staff alike spoke positively of the week and its impact on the New Trier community.

“I think Random Acts of Kindness Week is really special, because a lot of the time we don't

realize how the little actions can actually have a really huge impact on people,” said junior Chloe Cohen.

Social Studies teacher Chris Van Den Berg said that conscious acts of kindness are important, and that the week helps facilitate such acts.

“I think it's good for people to think deliberately about it, and to be intentional about it. Because with anything, the more you do it the easier it becomes,” said Van Den Berg.

Although students and staff appreciate the efforts of Peer Helping and Erika's Lighthouse, some voiced the concern that the school should be doing more to promote kindness every week.

Junior Stella Kustra said, “Random Acts of Kindness Week is a little bit pointless. We don't need a week to specifically be nice to each

other. I feel like it should be more year-round.”

MCL faculty member, Kerri Simmons, responded to this issue by spearheading the “Warm and Fuzzy Project,” which was started a few weeks ago in an effort to spread love and compassion after the passing of a student. They hope to make the “Warm and Fuzzy Project” a permanent Trevian thing.

The project is based on pieces of yarn--its characteristics were actually what inspired the creation of the project's name.

“The yarn should be given out in twos. One piece is given with a non-appearance [based] compliment. Then, the other piece of yarn is given to them with the request to ‘say it forward.’ That is, to pay a non-appearance [based] compliment to someone else,” said Simmons.

Spring break season means sun and college for NT

Many students opt for exotic vacations or school visits

by Megan Reimer

Tan lines, beach waves, and sunshine are the three essential elements to the perfect spring break getaway, and for many students, spring break is a sweet release from the stress and worries of high school.

According to Travel Daily News, Orlando, Miami, and Cancun were named as the most popular destinations booked for spring break in 2019. Many seniors this year have planned trips to these destinations, going with friends instead of family which gives an added sense of independence on these getaways.

Sophomores have also decided to take independent trips. While the minimum age for a person traveling without parental consent is 17, students under this requirement still take trips to exotic locations with their friends.

“I'm going to Aruba with my friend Emily, it's going to be an independent sort of experience. I think it's one thing to go downtown to the city with your friends, and another to fly somewhere internationally with them, which I'm really excited to do,” said sophomore Olivia Picard.

Sophomore Ashley Erickson is going to Boca Grande, Florida. “I'm really excited because I'm going alone and meeting up with my cousin. I love flying by myself and I think it's a really liberating experience,” said Erickson.

While spring break vacations are typically filled with relaxation sessions by the beach and time away from all school-related things, some

student vacations have a different motive.

Junior Stella Lefkofsky said, “I'm going to visit USC and UC-Santa Barbara in California. It's going to be super duper fun.”

Some students took the opportunity to make a road trip out of their spring break.

Junior Anna Cuthbertson took advantage of the week off by heading out East for college visits.

“I'm driving to Washington, D.C. with my family to visit schools like American University, George Washington University, and University of Maryland,” said Cuthbertson.

The harsh and cold weather of Chicago is another deterring factor for students to stay in the Midwest over the break. Miami, Maui, Orlando, and Cancun, all popular spring break destinations listed for 2019, have forecasted sunny and warm weather for the upcoming break, while Chicago is forecasted to be in the upper 40s, with rain.

“I'm going to Maui, Hawaii for the break, hoping to catch a break from the dreadfully cold weather we've been experiencing these past few weeks,” said sophomore Emma Taylor.

Senior Maggie Graves gave similar reasons for leaving Chicago during this coming break.

“My family and I are going to Kiawah Island in South Carolina, I can't wait to get away from the gross weather and go somewhere nice and sunny, two things I haven't attributed to the weather we've been experiencing lately,” said Graves.

Jonas Brothers return in *Sucker*

Band's new single tops Billboard chart after six year hiatus

by Sofia Papakos

As the old Disney shows have been replaced with new ones, the Jonas Brothers faded away with them. Until now. The recent, monumental announcement of their reunion however, has answered the prayers of early 2000s fans.

The group was formed in 2005 and shot to fame during their time on Disney Channel and went on to release four albums, selling 17 million copies worldwide.

After almost six years apart, the three brothers, Nick, Joe, and Kevin, have reclaimed the hearts of their old fan base. Their new single, “Sucker,” has already made headway to No. 1 on Billboard Hot 100.

In the peak era of early 2000s Disney, the boy band's popularity skyrocketed after the release of “Camp Rock.” From there, their fan base grew exponentially. “I watched them in ‘Camp Rock.’ My favorite was Joe, because I thought he was the coolest and that his hair was cool,” junior Virginia Duda recalls.

Junior Sydney Gaines-Wheeler said she watched the Jonas Brothers growing up. “I had the biggest crush on Joe as a kid and I would watch all of the ‘Camp Rock’ movies on Disney channel.”

She remembered how her friends and her would fight over who could have which brother, and how she always chose Joe. “When I was really young I would play their self-titled album and ‘A Little Bit Longer’ all the time.”

Moments of nostalgia resonate with the majority of the audience who grew up watching them and are now experiencing their comeback.

“I remember waiting past my



Jonas Brothers in “Camp Rock 2 (2010)” and “Sucker” (2019) | Facebook

bedtime to watch ‘Camp Rock’ because I was so excited to see it and to see them in it,” said Gaines-Wheeler.

Others, like junior Alexander Dillon, had a different experience. “They were on Disney Channel, but I thought they were pretty stupid and never really got into their music.”

On the other hand, super-fans like Duda rejoiced after hearing about the reunion. “When I heard about the reunion I think I screamed. I had no idea it was happening.”

Senior Lauren Russell agreed, “Nick and Kevin were my faves.”

Dillon jokingly commented, “I don't think a lot of guys liked them. I'm surprised none of them got fat.”

Russell, like other fans, lost touch with the Jonas Brothers and their music after their breakup in October 2013.

“I didn't see it coming,” she said. “I haven't really paid attention to them for a couple of years so I had no idea that anything was going to happen. But I like their new song, and I put it on my Spotify playlist.”

When someone receives a piece of yarn, they are supposed to tie it someplace visible--a popular spot is on one's backpack--so that they are reminded of the complement often.

Currently, there are strings outside the cafeteria available for students to take.

Junior Taylor Jones, a student in the Simmons advisory, acknowledged that gifting a piece of string might seem trivial. However, she said that the little things can often make the greatest impact on someone's day.

“Sure, it's a piece of string, but you can give such a genuine heartfelt complement with it. Even if it's silly, or even if it's little, the whole environment that the ‘Warm and Fuzzy Project’ encourages and fosters, that's what we're going for,” said Jones.

Junior Joey Vircole, also a member of the Simmons advisory, at first predicted that the project would be unsuccessful.

“At first I was skeptical. I was like, ‘nobody's going to do this,’ because people are busy.”

After seeing the number of students that have become involved in the project though, Vircole now has realized its full potential.

“We have definitely made an impact, and I'm proud to be in the advisory that came up with it,” said Vircole.

Clearly, the Jonas Brothers are back and they're better than ever--still using their charming dynamic to send fans into nostalgic meltdowns.