

# Does the bubble really need to be popped?

**PRO**

by Logan Etheredge

Some days it feels like all Northshore teenagers do is complain about living here. Whether it's bemoaning over "entitled white kids and their Jeeps" or lamenting over the unnecessary construction project.

A New Trier student's favorite pastime isn't using Daddy's plastic or tailgating at lacrosse games; it's complaining about the overabundance of wealth in their lives.

It's painfully ironic, and wholly uncalled for, to wail over our success as though it is the bane of our existences.

Because the truth is, no matter how much we want to deny it, our wealth contributes to our success. I know, I sound entitled, too, right now, but maybe this injecting of entitlement into Northshore kids isn't the double-edged sword we've made it out to be.

Think about it, has college ever been in question? Or is it simply assumed you'll go on to higher learning some day? This assumption of success, of education, of wealth, of placing first in state championships or class rankings comes from our

overabundant expenditures.

Maybe this sounds exaggerated, but bear with me for a minute.

Why is it that, usually, the poorer the community, the higher the dropout rate? Is it because low-income students don't participate in as many sports as we do? Do they not study as much? Do they not care as much? Perhaps those questions have some fact to them.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 20% of low-income students qualify for college. To put that into perspective, 98% of New Trier students attend college.

Financially, this actually makes sense. Students growing up in low-income families don't have the opportunities wealthier students do. They don't have Grade A facilities or access to the newest, \$150 textbooks that also happen to be online and, did I mention, come with a workbook and a CD?

But it's not just about the physical presence of money or even the academic accessories that come with it. Sometimes, it's just about the mindset.

Often, we forget how our financial cushioning operates as a safe zone for studying.

Think about it, without the privilege of having a house spouse, access to a car, or even the ability to safely bike around town, many of us would

no longer be able to attend extracurricular clubs, sports practices, study sessions, or even get to school on time.

On top of all the luxuries money brings, people tend to only focus on the negative personality traits that money often associates itself with.

Of course too much cash and too much entitlement can leave a person shallow and ultimately lacking in character.

But if you can find that balance of wealth and an honest upbringing, then you'll finally arrive in the prestigious "bubble," where the expectation of greatness of attending college, of holding a job, of living a debt free life- is infused into the students not as entitlement, but as determination.

A parent that tells them it is their destiny to be great and so they will work to make it so. Not because their money is binding, but because that's just what they watched their parents do, and their friends do, and their teachers do, and ultimately, that's what the culture of wealth instills.

It teaches us how to maintain our affluent lifestyle as we become adults; it teaches us the moneyed, physical value of a college degree.

And really, without our financial safety net, there isn't much separating us and the poorer communities trying to teach their children the same thing.

**CON**

by Joe Borushek

The concept of the "North Shore Bubble" has always puzzled me. Whenever I hear someone talking about it, it's almost always followed with: "I can't believe a thing like that exists" or "I'm so appalled that people who live on the North Shore don't know about the bubble."

I always think to myself, first, people on the North Shore do know it "exists" because we hear about it every 20 minutes. And second, people aren't totally blind to the whole rest of the world, or so I hope.

Every now and again I hear a story that confirms the typical North Shore stereotype of a white Jeep owning, starbucks drinking, lacrosse playing, world traveling kid on the North Shore.

But more often than not, people live on the North Shore understand that we are very lucky individuals and that the opportunities we have are not available to everyone. So when I first heard someone say that people don't ever leave the so called "North Shore Bubble," I was genuinely perplexed. Most of my friends are very eager to leave the North Shore, many considering colleges on different sides of the country. The way my peers talk about the North Shore

makes me think that they are not very fond of staying here, either. As a matter of fact, I asked my whole Lit Film class whether or not they wanted to stay on the North Shore for the rest of their lives; an overwhelming majority wanted to leave and never look back.

While some might refute this argument and counter it by saying angsty New Trier teenagers might give a skewed view, I don't buy that either.

Most families I know are first generation North Shore residents, and they, too are still aware of the stigma associated with it.

I can't speak for my family however, as everyone but my mom lived in Wilmette when they were growing up.

That said, not all of them have lived here for their entire lives. My dad has lived everywhere from New York to Los Angeles. He even spent a good portion of his life living in Kingston, Jamaica.

One of my cousins is currently in Madrid teaching English and my other cousin is leaving for Los Angeles later this year.

So even though most of my family is here now, they still have experiences and have lived places that have made their lives substantial.

While most people are going to read this and brush it off and keep on complaining about how awful the "bubble" is, just keep in mind that not everyone living here is the stereotype. We all have different experiences and backgrounds that you may not necessarily think about.

## Low income students among the 1%

by Georgia Caras

Given the socio-economic connotation of our school, it is often easy to reduce New Trier to being a school where money, or lack thereof, is never among any of our top concerns.

With that in mind, what is swept under the rug is that in this community full of trust funds and successful entrepreneurs, there still rests a portion of students who need financial assistance.

According to New Trier's 2014-2015 Illinois Report Card, roughly four percent of the student body consists of low-income students.

According to the report card, "students meet the low-income criteria if they receive or live in households that receive public aid from SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or TANF (Targeted Assistance for Needy Families); are classified as homeless, migrant, runaway, Head Start, or foster children; or live in a household where the household income meets (USDA) guidelines to receive free or reduced-price meals."

Although 4% is a relatively small figure, considering our school has over 4,000 students, this means that over 160 kids you see walking in the halls are provided with financial assistance.

Athena Arvanitis, the Director of Student Life, leads the

department that helps these students receive the aid they need.

In terms of how to qualify for financial assistance, Arvanitis said, "The federal government puts forth income guidelines. You qualify for assistance based on your household income and your family size."

For a family to receive aid, Arvanitis said, "The parents decide whether or not to apply or go through the process to receive financial assistance."

The four main types of assistance available are the free lunch program, fee waivers, textbook loan program, and transportation to school.

Assistance for the iPad loan

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program is also offered. Arvanitis said, "That's kind of an add-on, because in our community, we have the ability to offer more help."

"We want every student in our

school to have access to our educational and extracurricular programs during their four years. We don't want finances to limit someone's participation. So what we do is work with families to assure that students have access to all of these things that other students have," Arvanitis said.

Although the school does an excellent job helping students succeed, the challenge for such students often rests in fitting in with a community that rarely ever worries about the amount in their bank accounts.

Jaine Archambeau, a junior who receives financial assistance, said, "It definitely feels like I'm left out. I mean I am better with it now, and the quality of the school definitely outweighs the fact I'm an outlier, but in middle school and early high school I would get self-conscious about not being able to do the same things as other students."

This seems to be an opinion echoed by many recipients of freshman aid. In a community where common topics of conversation include which tropical island to visit for senior spring break or what college has the best campus, regardless of financial aid offered, worrying about whether or not the cost of a certain textbook is too high is out of the ordinary.

As one student who wishes to remain anonymous said, "One of the hardest parts of going here is that although I'm associated with all of the

## Mean Girls stigma rebuked?

by Max Minogue and Beth Wall

For eighth graders from within the district, coming into New Trier can already be an intense transition (especially with defining events like the freshman mixer).

This transition is even more daunting when it's a move from a different city, state, or even country.

Yet, despite the initial stereotypes expected from New Trier, most new students also agreed they were exaggerated.

Ryan Escaso is a senior who moved to the district this past June, and had previously attended Whitney Young. "There's these stereotypes of suburban schools- stuck up, and with general snootiness," said Escaso.

But since he has started New Trier, he has not noticed any of the typical suburban stereotypes.

Gabe Kudirka, a junior who moved from Evanston this past April, said, "I was expecting New Trier to just be a lot more preppy. I was expecting it to be a lot different in just how people interact, but everybody has been really friendly."

For Kudirka, the most noticeable difference was the west wing, a new addition for all New Trier students, not only recent transfers.

"The new wing and the cafeteria are the biggest changes that I've noticed. The cafeteria is really great. I've never had real, edible food at a school cafeteria like what there is

now."

Aleks Carter moved from Arizona in early July. Although the junior had heard rumors (via Loyola connections) of cliquishness and coldness, she came to find that "everyone's super nice, and super friendly and welcoming. You can see it just walking down the hallway. Everyone seeing anyone they know and saying, 'hey, what's up?'"

The school's unique advisory program also seems to be especially apt in welcoming students new to New Trier.

Carter said, "That's where I've met a lot of girls that will ask me to hang out. That's where I've felt the most welcomed, it's just like a group of friends."

Kudirka mirrored Carter's views marking advisory as one of his favorite changes.

Although many transfer students felt that they could easily integrate into the school's environment, one sentiment that many kids shared was that there is a clear diversity issue at New Trier.

Escaso said, "Whitney Young was more diverse, a lot more diverse. I think that diversity within a school is important, because different perspectives and cultures matter a lot more."

Kudirka agreed, stating that "When I was at ETHS, the diversity within the school was never something that I had noticed. Now that I'm at New Trier, I notice that diversity is

