

Grad party peak of social scene

by Cammy Wray

Is the graduation party the high school party to end all high school parties?

Each year, the Parent Association puts on a lavish party for graduating seniors as a last way of saying goodbye.

This party is meant to be a celebration of all the hard work each student has done over the past four years, but does it live up to the expectations that are set for it?

The theme of the party changes every year and is one of the main features that makes or breaks the party.

Nate Friefeld, who graduated in 2015, had an elaborate theme when he graduated. “Walking into the circus theme, your first reaction was just ‘wow, this is nuts,’” he said.

With all of the talk of the party leading up to the night, it can be hard to deliver such an amazing party. “The party definitely lived up to all of the hype. It blew my mind,” Friefeld said.

According to recent graduates, the graduation party this past year was even more extravagant than the one for the class of 2015.

Audrey Gordon, graduating class of 2016, said it exceeded her expectations along with those of her

classmates.

“The grad party was lit, it was hyped up, but totally surpassed the level of hype that we thought it was going to have,” Gordon said.

Students have said this one was the most exciting and the most fun yet.

“I would definitely say that it was unlike any other party at high school, definitely going out with a bang,” Gordon said.

There were still some people who found it a little excessive. Jaclyn Brownstone, a 2016 graduate, didn’t think all of the expenses were necessary.

“I think they definitely spend way more money than they should,” she said.

Not all the money goes into the actual decorations, performances or food for the party. Some go into raffle prizes. “They did get some pretty hilarious and downright ridiculous prizes, so that part was worth it,” Brownstone said.

Most of the people who graduated in recent years thought it was worth it.

“All the money that was spent was so worth it, it was nice to be treated by the school after working our tails off for so long,” Gordon said.

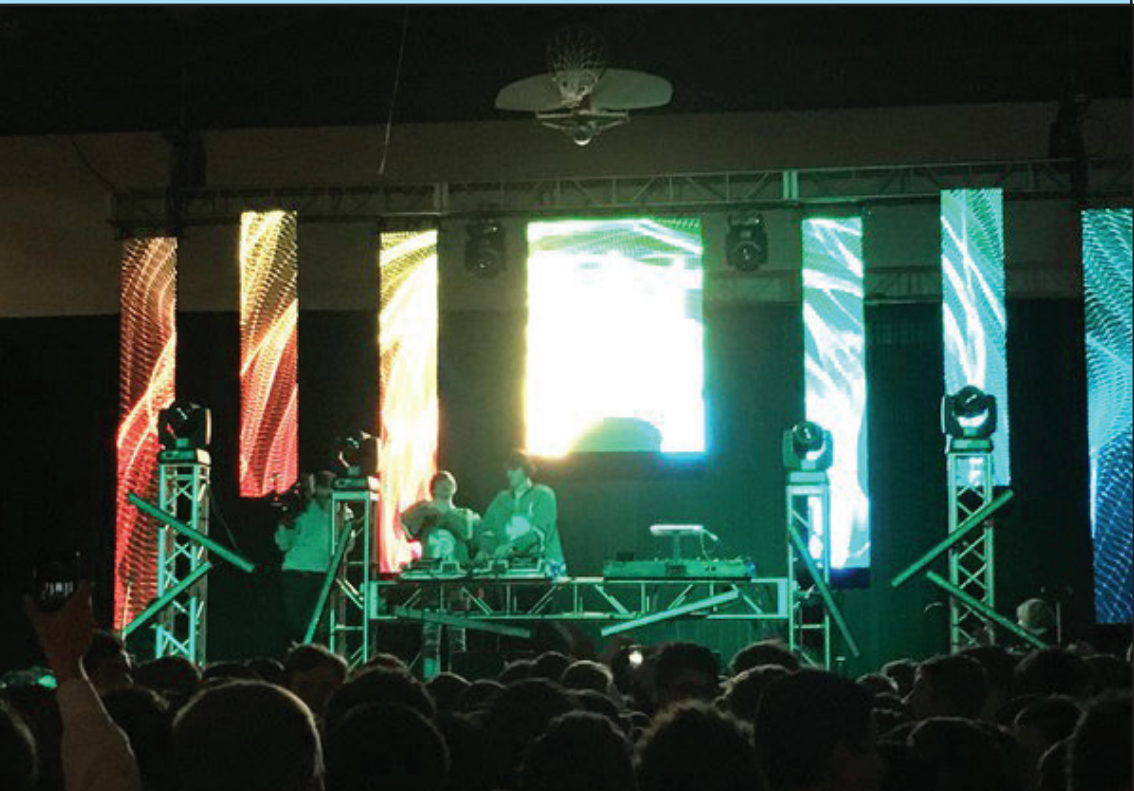
Not only were the graduates supportive from the entertainment side of things, the party also made sense from a logistical standpoint. “They killed it for our party as a whole, but still spent a lot of money. To keep more than a thousand kids occupied, they have to pay for food and buy the prizes that are given away, I can see why we spent a lot on it,” Friefeld said.

The food was a big hit for the class of 2016. “I had so much fun, the food was really good too,” Gordon said.

Even with lower expectations, the graduation party still blew students minds away. “I did have fun, I didn’t really go into it with expectations so I wasn’t disappointed,” Brownstone said.

The party was also the perfect way to say goodbye to classmates who were going all over the country for college. “It was nice speaking to a lot of people for the last time,” Brownstone said.

The graduation party has lived up to its hype in the past, and the class of 2017 is already looking forward to celebrating their four years at New Trier.



Graduation party lives up to students’ expectations with its extravagance and lavish appearance | Twitter

No more Pump It Up as birthday parties disappear

by Emily Wong

As students get older and their schedules start to change, their approach to birthdays does as well.

When students were younger, birthday parties were often big social events, with many people inviting their entire class. Some were active, allowing children to let out their pent-up energy.

“The parties that kids would always have when I was little were at Pump It Up,” junior Eliza Tilson said. “We would all run around and tire ourselves out and then eat tons of cake.”

There were many other parties like that as well. sophomore Jack Hoholik said he played laser tag and paintball, as well as attended parties at Chuck E. Cheese’s as a kid.

On the other hand, there were also some less frantic parties. “I had a tea party birthday at my grandma’s house when I was 8,” senior Courtney Ketchum said.

Senior Nora Cahill also had more relaxed celebrations. “It’d always be people coming to my house and making crafts,” she said.

Now that students are older, the kind of parties they have has changed. “I think birthday parties now are either very relaxed or you’re always doing something,” senior Jackie Manchester said. “When you’re younger, you do more casual things, like play games.”

Tilson shared the same idea and said, “I think birthday parties have gotten more casual and less expensive for parents to host as we get older.”

Another change in birthday celebrations is their frequency. Most students attend less of these parties than they did as kids, if at all. “I haven’t been to a birthday party since I was twelve,” senior Allen Lee said.

Cahill had a similar experience. “I have a summer birthday, so the older I get, the more my friends are on vacation during my birthday.”

Senior Cameron Cohen also discussed the difficulty of working around busy schedules. “I don’t have birthday parties anymore,” she said. “It was too much time to plan and to get everyone to come. Now, everyone’s so busy.”

Cohen also talked about the stress around making a guest list. “I never know how far into my rings of

friendship I should go,” she said. “If I invite someone from the second tier, I would have to invite everyone in that tier.”

Instead of hosting formal celebrations, many of these students use the day to unwind and spend time at home. “Now, I go out to dinner with my family,” Ketchum said. “It’s an assumption that I won’t have a party.”

Tilson celebrates in a similar manner. “We usually have a nice dinner at home or go out to dinner,” she said. “We have a homemade cake when it’s a night we aren’t busy and we can all be together.”

Yet, there are still students who continue to organize parties with friends.

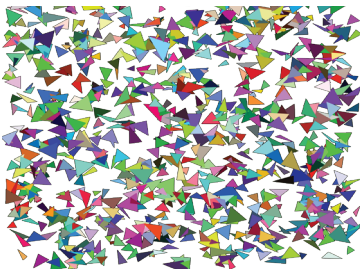
“The best birthday party I’ve been to was a surprise party for my friend last year,” Tilson said. “There was a photo booth and a lot of people were there.”

Manchester has also recently attended more extravagant parties. “For one person’s birthday [two years ago], into the city and we went ice skating, and we went to a really cool Japanese steakhouse. For another, we went to the Ritz Carlton. They rented out the pool, so we watched a movie in it.”

“It was too much time to plan and to get everyone to come. Now, everyone’s so busy.”

However, Manchester still enjoys more casual celebrations. “For my birthday, I just hang out with friends at my house. I have a pool, so we usually go swimming,” she said.

No matter what types of parties students end up having, most agree that the idea of birthdays has changed since elementary school. “Birthday parties have gotten to be more fun and less tiring than the Pump It Up or Chuck E. Cheese parties I would go to when I was little,” Tilson said.



Family dinner parties vanish from students’ social lives

by Jessi Zook

Though dinner parties are the social engagement of choice for many adults, they have been deemed a thing of the past by many students who choose to socialize in other ways.

According to many students, dinner parties are not a relevant part of their lives. Senior Carlotta Smalla has worked as a server at a number of dinner parties in the area and has also attended a few. “They’re just a fun way for adults to connect and socialize,” she said.

Senior Cameron Cohen also works dinner parties for her parents and family friends. “It’s just a time for adults to talk and really form connections with each other.” It’s a time when they can focus on their friendships, since they may usually be distracted by their children or other activities.

“Usually adults start off with drinks, and then move on to appe-

tizers and a nice dinner with a few courses. It’s usually a pretty fancy occasion,” Smalla said.

Cohen agreed that the occasions are usually fancier than a normal dinner. “People at the parties usually dress up in fancy clothes. It’s like when we go to school dances. It’s something fun and out of the ordinary.”

Senior Allen Lee defined the parties in a similar light. “It’s just friends or family who go to someone’s house and have dinner.”

Furthermore, it’s a way for people to socialize and get to know each other. “It’s a way to meet up with people that you may not usually be in contact with. You get to see what they’re up to,” said Junior Carter Slivka. He thought it was a way to stay connected to friends.

One major portion of any good dinner party is, of course, the dinner. “It’s nice that adults get a break from cooking for the night,” Smalla said.

“They can just go over to a

friend’s house and eat good food that they didn’t have to make.” The events offer a break in the busy schedules of adults.

Yet, the host or hostess doesn’t receive that same relaxing night out. “It’s a lot of pressure to host a dinner party, much more than just going out to dinner, or going to someone else’s house,” Cohen said.

They have to either make the food themselves or order it from somewhere, the first of which would take time, and the second, money.

Overall, managing the food is difficult for the host. “It’s hard to know how much food to get for the party guests. You don’t know how much people eat or how many people are going to show up,” Lee said.

Furthermore, the host is held responsible for the well-being of their guests. “They have to make sure everything goes smoothly and no fights break out,” Smalla said.

Cohen agreed. “They have to make sure everyone’s having fun and

feeling included.” However, she cautioned that there has to be a balance. The host should still have a good time and get to talk with friends. “They shouldn’t be worrying the whole time,” Cohen said.

It’s much easier to go out to dinner, Smalla said. “You just have to order and split the bill if you go out. You’re not held responsible if things don’t go well. There’s a lot less pressure.”

According to Slivka, they’re boring. “It’s something that adults really enjoy: socializing and catching up. But I think it can get pretty boring, and it’s not the type of thing I want to spend my time doing.”

Many students agreed that the dinner parties were not for their generation. “I’ve been to a couple of dinner parties,” Smalla said, “but they’re with adults mostly. No kids go to them.”

“It’s the type of thing that a lot of parents and grandparents would do,” Cohen said. “I don’t know any-

one our age who’s hosted or attended.” One reason for that may be that teens don’t have their own houses to host at, she said. The lack of interest is also an important factor.

“Kids our age really aren’t interested in that type of thing,” Slivka said. “If they’re going to hang out, they might just meet up and hang out at someone’s house.” As teenagers, getting together doesn’t seem to be such a big ordeal, and therefore, no planned event is needed.

“I just have people over to my house,” Smalla said. They may eat dinner, but she wouldn’t categorize it as a dinner party.

While dinner parties are a useful way for adults to socialize, it seems like teens aren’t as motivated by the benefits. “They’re a really great way for adults to get together, but I just don’t think it’s the type of thing that teenagers are as interested in doing,” Cohen said.