

New Trier website gets a facelift

by Adam Sheffield

On Feb. 17, New Trier launched a new website, its first update in eight years.

The website contains many new features, including mobile compatibility, a new home screen/menu bar, and individualized pages for each class. The project head was Nicole Dizon, Director of Communications.

“More than a year ago, we began talking to parents, students, staff members, and community members about what they would like to see in the New Trier website,” said Dizon.

“Our old website was developed more than eight years ago, and we know the way that people interact with the Internet on devices like tablets and smartphones has changed greatly in that time.”

The website was crafted with new features, to adapt to different devices.

“One of the most notable improvements is the responsive design. Now our website will change to best fit whatever device someone is using, be it a PC, tablet, or smartphone. We did not have this function with the old website,” said Scott Spyrison, New Trier’s Enterprise Applications Manager.

In addition, the website now features a link to Google Maps, which should help students figure out

ways to get to places from New Trier. “Someone on a phone trying to find a location can easily go right to a GPS app,” said Dizon.

Students around New Trier had critical, yet differing responses.

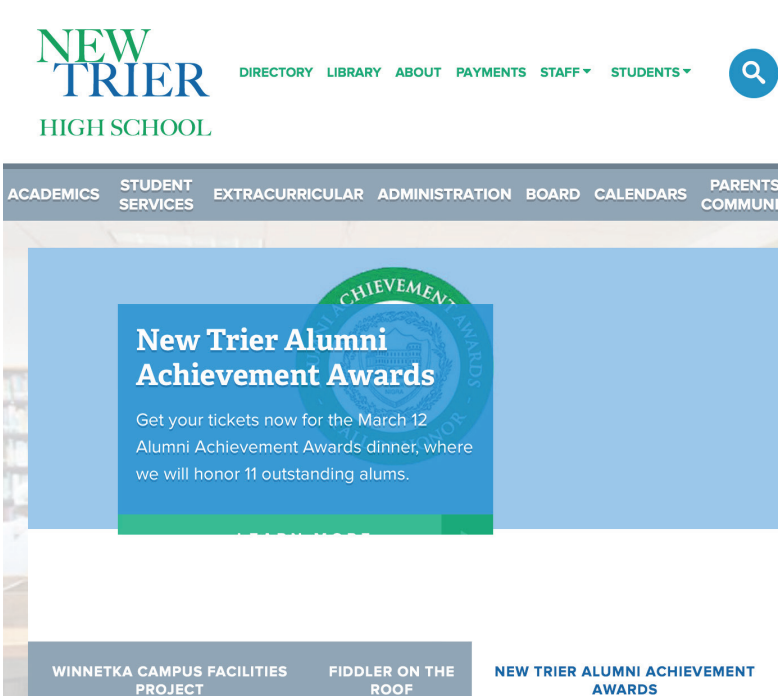
“I don’t like it,” said junior Michael Burds. “The old [website] was better and I don’t like the changes that they made. I was used to the old one.”

“It’s definitely an improvement and looks a lot more modern,” said junior Samuel Gagerman. “It’s neatly organized which helps. I think that it is a little bland on certain pages and could use some eye candy. But overall, I like the minimalistic design.”

While there was some buzz around New Trier that there was an official New Trier app coming, Dizon shot down such rumors.

“We do not have any plans for a New Trier app at this time,” she said. “While we considered that option, we instead decided to make the website with responsive design, meaning it has the look and feel of a mobile app without making users download an additional app on their smartphone or tablet.”

The new website is a welcomed sight for most New Trier students, but the Wi-Fi remains a hot issue. Students still have difficulties connecting to Wi-Fi, but Spyrison claims that New Trier is still working to fix it.



The new website’s most notable improvements are its mobile compatibility and modern design | Minturn

Spyrison said, “We have made many upgrades to New Trier’s Wi-Fi at both campuses over the last few years and will continue to make adjustments as needed, particularly as we construct our new addition at the Winnetka Campus.”

A nice addition to the site was class pages. This allows the ability to sift through key information and events based on each class. For instance, there are testing dates for

juniors, and Academic Life Night dates for 8th graders/incoming freshman.

Emergency notifications have also been upgraded from the previous website. Instead of the slow, dramatic reveal at the top of the website, the new website will make emergency notifications more prominent and quick to show up.

The site will display the notification as full-screen, so it has to

be acknowledged before continuing on to the normal website.

“The website was in development for about a year, beginning with focus groups involving many different users, through weekly design meetings and the migration of content to the new website,” said Spyrison.

Ensemble class enrollment drops



The McGee Theater houses the Advanced Acting and Directing course, one of the Theatre Department’s more advanced offerings | Minturn

by Grace Murphy

Due to low enrollment numbers, the Speech and Theater Department will not offer “Theater 4: Advanced Acting Ensemble” for the 2015-2016 school year.

Nina Lynn, the Speech and Theater Department Chair, explained that enrollment for senior theater classes varies year to year.

Lynn said, “When I started here, there was only one senior theater class and kids actually had to apply and interview to get in. That was about 20 years ago.”

Interest was sometimes so high that students were turned away.

“At one point, we were talking to our students about why they were taking a class or not, and students said they were not able to commit to a three or four-level major in addition to the other classes. They knew that the class demanded a certain amount of commitment that they could not

live up to, or fit into their schedule,” explained Lynn.

After these discussions, Lynn said that students came up with the idea of offering an eight-level senior theater class. This is now the department’s fourth time offering that class and it has always had lower enrollment than other classes.

More theater students would rather take the level three/four class than the level eight class. Junior Dana Munro registered for the “Advanced Acting and Directing” (AAD) course, which has a rigorous reputation.

“I’ve heard that it’s ridiculously hard. People rehearse their scenes outside of school, which is a big deal for us because theater has never been that big of a commitment in the past three years. I’ve heard that it is really intense, but I am totally excited for that because I know it will pay off,” said Munro.

Sophie Baumruck, a junior, said, “I’m taking ‘Advanced Acting

and Directing.’ I’m super excited because for the first semester it’s all about improving as an actor, and in the second semester we direct in what’s called a Directing Project. Even though I hear it’s a lot of work, I love theater and plan to pursue it in and after college, so it seemed like the right choice for me.”

Lynn explained that the theater department is trying to raise enrollment numbers for next year.

“We are meeting with kids to find out, if they were to run into the scheduling problem again, what would make it possible for them to take the class,” said Lynn.

“Or what makes them choose the four-level over the eight-level. And we’re getting some really interesting information from that. Next, I’ll look at the data and at the information that kids have given us and see if there is a way to refine the minor version of the course in a way that will be more appealing to more students.”

The department and Lynn found that there are a lot of competing factors occupying students’ interests. When it comes to how students fit their whole day together, it’s becoming more and more challenging. Lynn stated that it’s up to her department to find the ways to be more flexible and meet the needs of students.

Lynn also said that the reason for the low enrollment may just be that students want to take the level four course (and do not have the need for a level eight).

Many theater students are very excited for their next year in the theater department, however. Junior Alyson Weber said, “I am taking AAD next year. I chose this class because ever since I was a freshman I had heard so many great things about the class and to be able to direct your very own portion of a play and take on that responsibility seemed like such a great opportunity.”

Angles aids the North Shore

by Mike Blickstein

Angles, which, according to its website, has a mission “to inform and empower young people by providing health care, education, and support relating to their sexuality,” has changed its name from Links to better fit the multitude of services it offers to teens and young adults in the area.

Angles constantly reminds the New Trier Township that it is there to help. Its volunteers are all highly trained physicians who are state certified and provide a particularly safe environment to any teen who needs its services.

One major problem is that its services aren’t as well known as they could be. Despite the fact that representatives from the facility come to schools multiple times each year, students seem to zone out and not pay attention when they speak.

Back in 1973, Links was created as a reproductive healthcare clinic exclusively for youth on the North Shore. Before it was founded, the only way for students to learn about reproductive health was through a phone helpline in the area.

“The original name was ‘Links North Shore Youth Help Service.’ [It] made a lot of sense when we were just serving the New Trier area, but since then we’ve expanded to clients beyond the North Shore, patients between 13 and 25-years old, and expanded our services to include education and counseling beyond just being a sexual health clinic”, explained facility director Amy Skalinder.

Angles provides many important services for teens in the area. It provides education about sex, more than a few methods of contraception, and confidential counseling about any concerns or inquiries regarding patients’ sexual lives. Perhaps its most important and

influential service is its lesser-known counseling service.

“I carry a small load of clients at any given time. Some come in about depression and anxiety and others come in about things like pregnancy and their sexuality. I’m only the counselor for the girls clinic, but I find that all of the patients who go into counseling come out of it with a much better outlook,” explained Janice Litten, director of counseling at Angles.

There are very few facilities like this in the area. Angles’s mission statement and slogan is, fittingly, “Find What’s Right for You.” Brick and mortar services that can provide an exploratory setting to truly and honestly help the patient decide what’s right for them are few and far between.

The Angles facility takes New Trier from a generally well educated community to a community that has all of the resources it needs to remain healthy. It helps students feel comfortable with anything that is particularly daunting to them. This facility provides a safety net for teens.

Angles provides inexpensive contraception to teens who need it and also provides education on how to use it effectively.

“I believe that there are really no other facilities in the area that can provide the same services as Angles can,” said Litten.

“We provide all of these important services all under one roof. I think generally speaking that since Links opened the area has shifted to a much more sex positive mentality. Parents are already taking their children to doctors in the field and their first visit about this topic isn’t necessarily at Angles.”