



Sexual assault a growing fear for incoming college freshmen

by Megan Reimer

College is a time of excitement, adventure, and maturity in a young adult's life. A time where people from all over the world, of different backgrounds, and different genders can come together and build relationships and create memories that will last forever.

However, as is becoming more evident in the wake of the Me Too movement, certain college experiences that last forever can also be frightening and horrific.

The sexual assault cases that occur on college campuses have been adding a new level of nervousness in the minds of incoming college freshmen.

Many senior adviseries prepared

students for these types of situations on campus grounds with the viewing of the documentary-film, "The Hunting Ground."

Some seniors, however, feel that the film did not help prepare them for the upcoming four years.

Senior Maggie Graves said, "I feel like the discussion on 'The Hunting Ground' wasn't very great, it made me a little nervous about going off to school."

As women have a disproportionately higher rate of experiencing sexual assault/rape than men do on college campuses, this is not a problem male students have to think about as much.

Senior Chaney Laros said, "I'm excited for college but I think it's important that we don't become bystanders and take action if we see something wrong happening."

A report by RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) found that among undergraduate students, 23.1% of females and 5.4% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation during their college years.

Many students are left wondering how they can prepare themselves for these sorts of situations.

Seniors Jaime Sierens and Sylvia Miller said there is some fear and apprehension about going to college. "When I heard about all the cases I knew I was going to need to bring pepper spray with me, and we are going to have to consider staying together in groups, and creating ways to keep ourselves safe," said Sierens.

Another statistic from RAINN reported that every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted.

For those who do not live in the United States, these sorts of fears about going to college because of the risk of becoming a sexual assault victim are almost non-existent.

Senior and Exchange Student Isla Savola, who is returning to Finland next year instead of going to college said, "It's never been something that I've had to think about."

She added, "The amount of sexual assault cases in Finland is nothing compared to here in the U.S, and the culture around the whole college thing is completely different."

After viewing "The Hunting Ground," the very real revelation that sexual assault is not an uncommon occurrence on a college campus set in with a lot of seniors.

"It can happen at big name schools or little colleges, which can

make the overall prospect of going to college a bit scarier," said Graves.

Senior Julia Belian said, "I feel horrible knowing about all the sexual assault cases that happen on college campuses, too often the victim is blamed and not the school for how it is handled and I think that makes me feel a bit nervous about the whole college experience."

The viewing of the film has prompted some seniors to consider a college's safety statistics when evaluating if a school would be a good fit.

Senior Lauren Zabors said, "to be honest, [sexual assault] scares me. Some of the colleges I've visited have had high statistics for rape, which I have had to look at because of this problem."

"Hunting Ground" screened in senior adviseries for 2nd year straight

by Stephanie Kim

For the second year in a row and the fourth year overall, senior adviseries have watched "The Hunting Ground" for the senior class as a part of a scheduled extended advisery, which was received in a variety of ways by seniors and advisers.

The decision to play "The Hunting Ground" again as part of this year's senior programming factored in a myriad of opinions, most importantly the ones of the senior advisers themselves.

"Every year, Dr. Pearson and I are always wanting to engage our senior advisers in thinking of topics and themes for their seniors, and our senior advisers selected 'The Hunting Ground' again this year," said senior Girls' Adviser Chair Susan Paunan. "There was a push [from the advisers] for the school to show it again."

The screening of "The Hunting Ground" was integrated into seniors' school day through sanctioning multiple extended advisery periods for it, much like the viewing in 2018 and entirely changed from the way the viewing was handled in 2017, where it was made into an optional day.

"We had extra time in those advisery periods, and what we found last year was that the seniors felt really positively about using that time," explained Paunan.

For many students and advisers, the topics of rape, sexual harassment, and sexual assault on college campuses are considered to be extremely crucial to discuss as seniors approach the beginning of their college lives, a vital reason why "The Hunting Ground" has been expanded to all adviseries since its first screening in 2015 with a single girls' advisery.

"This is information that every person should be exposed to and learn. In order to start changing these issues, we need to first be educated on them, and sexual assault, especially on college campuses, is a huge and devastating problem," said senior Ella Schotz.

Senior Maggie Samson echoed Schotz's sentiments. "Everyone has a different perspective on the topic, and in advisery, it should be open for discussion to hear other people's opinions and discuss what tragic realistic events happen in college and after college that we're sometimes exposed to in high school."

Despite the benefits of having viewed "The Hunting Ground" for another year, some seniors expressed a desire for the circumstances surrounding the viewing as well as the advisery discussions to have been handled in a different manner.



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"I think that it was terrible that we were forced to go to class directly after watching, with no time to decompress or discuss the video. I personally found it deeply upsetting, and it was hard to focus during classes," said Schotz.

On top of some seniors believing that the screening felt a bit cramped into the advisery period, some also would have preferred the advisery discussions to have occurred more individually.

For Schotz, her advisery experienced discomfort during the discussion phase of "The Hunting Ground" viewing, when they had to pair up with a male advisery, including feeling targeted herself when she and her fellow advisees were asked if they feared being sexually assaulted.

Schotz explained, "Although on the actual day it was fine, I don't see much value in girls pairing with boys' adviseries. I think they can get something from talking with us, but not vice versa."

Samson offered her take on how the discussions could have been planned in hindsight. "I don't think adviseries should meet before and discuss the topic. Each advisery should watch it separately, and then pair up with a boys' or girls' advisery, and discuss their opinions and what they thought about the movie," said Samson. "Then next should be the presentation."

As for whether the film will be screened again next year, Paunan notes that while the topics covered in "The Hunting Ground" regarding sexual assault and rape will continue to be central to senior adviseries' programming, the viewing of the film itself may not be guaranteed.

"The topics of the film are important to discuss, but I can't say for sure if we'll show it again. We recognize that the film was made at a certain time, and it might not be 100% relevant to current statistics," said Paunan.

Clothesline Project puts survivor's stories on tees

by Julia Nagel

The Clothesline Project, an art project run by the Northwest Center Against Sexual Assault and supported by Peer Helping, is on display every other year at both the East and West campuses.

This project utilizes a unique medium, T-Shirts, to share the stories of survivors and promote an end to sexual violence. The shirts are written or drawn on either by someone who is a survivor of sexual abuse or by a friend/family member of a survivor.

The mission statement on The Clothesline Project website states that "The Clothesline Project provides evidence that incest, domestic violence, and sexual violence exists in our communities. It is a visual reminder of statistics that we often ignore. It gives a voice to those who have been forcibly silenced."

Although The Clothesline Project is a far-reaching project, the shirts displayed at the East and West campuses are limited to those that have been created by students at New Trier or other surrounding schools.

"The T-shirts that are displayed, we really keep them local. So, they're all from schools on the North Shore," said faculty co-sponsor of Peer Helping Sarah Fergus.

Junior Madeline Jednorowicz, a co-head of Peer Helping, believes the project is important because it raises awareness about the prevalence of this issue to the New Trier community.

"[We] don't realize how close all of these situations are. [We] think it's more distant

from us; it's something [we] read about in the news."

Jessica Caccavallo, the Northwest CASA Prevention Education Coordinator, agreed that The Clothesline Project can help raise awareness. She also noted that raising awareness is often very important in an affluent community like New Trier, where many students may not believe such issues are taking place.

"It shows that it happens at this school, and it happens at other schools. Violence has no bounds as far as economic status goes," said Caccavallo.

Health teacher Andy Horne said the project is a positive influence because students who view the project are less likely to joke about sexual violence to their friends and are also more knowledgeable about how to help a friend/family member who is a survivor of sexual violence.

In addition to raising awareness, Horne said the project also provides survivors with a chance to feel less alone and a method to voice their experiences.

"If anyone has been the target of sexual assault or experienced it and maybe has never come forth with dealing with that incident, this can be an outlet for them potentially, or at least another moment to create a door to go seek help."

When the exhibit is displayed at New Trier, advisers or other teachers can sign up to bring their students.

After visiting the exhibit, students who are survivors of abuse or know people who are have the opportunity to make a shirt in whatever color reflects their or their loved one's experience with sexual assault. For example, purple shirts represent survivors of sexual assault due to perceived sexual orientation, and red or pink represents survivors of rape or sexual assault.

Fergus said that viewing the project can be a very impactful experience to students.

"It's certainly a very strong platform. It's in your face. You can't ignore it," said Fergus.

Another faculty co-sponsor of Peer Helping, Kathryn Kalnes, believes that the conversations facilitated by this exhibit are arguably just as, if not more, important and impactful than the viewing of the exhibit itself.

She said, for this reason, that Peer Helping works to make sure that students and teachers discuss the issues that the project sheds light on even after students are done looking at the shirts.

"That's why we always send out the packet of resources to teachers, because we don't want it to be a [situation where] the student just walks in, sees these shirts, and leaves and there's no follow up," said Kalnes.

Although the exhibit was not displayed at New Trier this school year, it will be back fall of 2019. In the meantime, Caccavallo encourages students to reach out if they want to help.

"If people want to volunteer, or if there is a group that wants to rally around this project, contact me, because we need more advocates in schools."