

Putting the paws on puppy mills

by Lydia Wuorinen

The Humane Society of the United States reports that euthanasias of shelter animals has decreased from 12-20 million to 3-4 million in 2013. Still, according to the Humane Society “[a]n estimated 2.7 million healthy shelter pets are not adopted each year, and only about 30 percent of pets in homes come from shelters or rescues.” With 6-8 million animals entering shelters each year there is no demand for animal breeding. Yet, animal mill owners remain in business. Pet overpopulation continues due in part to approximately 10,000 puppy mills, which produce more than 2,400,000 puppies a year. Then there are the cat and rabbit mills to consider. It is not only overpopulation that we should be worried about, but also the quality of life given to animals bred in mills. Unfortunately, awareness of these issues isn’t where it should be.

The “hassle” of looking through a shelter for a new pet is done away with by a quick trip to the local pet store. By purchasing pets from shops, oftentimes consumers unknowingly are supporting the puppy mill, kitten mill, or rabbit mill industry. On the contrary, possible owners, especially those new to the shelter business, are often turned off by the conditions of the building. The loud barking of dogs in neighboring kennels is enough to encourage many to simply turn around and leave the unkempt Labrador they were peeking at. If not the shelter conditions, often the realization of just how extensive the overpopulation problem is, is enough to turn away prospective families. People see an animal’s nervousness or shyness as a personality trait when usually it’s the shelter’s environment that is to blame for that behavior. Kept in quarters closer than ideal, shelter animals often exhibit

signs of stress and anxiety. Foster parents of shelter animals would vouch that most animals calm down upon being temporarily cared for at a home, and as an owner of shelter dogs and cats myself, I can confirm this is true. It’s important to remember that even if shelters aren’t happy places, they are responsible for creating happy people and animals upon adoption. I don’t want to shame those who have gone to a breeder to bring home their furry, four-legged friends, I only mean to encourage those currently looking to adopt to consider browsing their local shelters. The love that you receive from a shelter dog is no different than that you would find in a pure-breed Maltese brought in from out-of-state. The process of finding a new pet through a shelter will be different, maybe even less pleasant than if you went to a pet store, but the result will be the same. A happy pet in a new home.



Say no to lakefront referendum

by Abby Burton

In our world today, everyone forgets how easily and quickly our actions negatively impact the environment. Humans are degrading some of the Earth’s most precious resources and at the rate we are going, this world will get to a point where it won’t be able to satisfy every individual with the supplies necessary for life. My biggest concern is that humans are making the decision to destruct habitats for their own purposes too quickly without thinking of the consequences. The problem is that people on the North Shore live in a bubble that is so isolated from the real world that sometimes we forget about the world’s environmental issues. Think about it. There are humans in other countries and even other parts of the United States who struggle each day just to find clean water because of all different forms of pollution. There are even people who live in complete fear each day because the air that they breathe is contaminated. Yet, on the North shore, we take

for granted how privileged we are to live in the location that we do. Most of us here overlook the smaller scale environmental issues in our own backyard. One specific issue is the Lakefront referendum, which refers to the proposal for the building of recreational facilities on some of the North Shore’s most popular communal beach fronts. Many who support this proposition are solely looking at how it could benefit them with more recreational activities rather than understanding the true negative impacts of this project. Even with little education about ecosystems, I think most could realize that this is a clear form of habitat destruction. The project itself is expected to cost the Wilmette Park District 14.5 million dollars. Honestly, I think it’s a harmful and useless way for the district to spend their money. There are so many species such as the native dune grasses, the swamp milkweed plant, and many more that rely on this environment to live. By destroying this habitat, the project is essentially leaving these species in an unstable

environment. The larger issue is that if some species in the lakefront environment are completely removed, the food chain is disrupted. The lakefronts are not only used by humans. People have to remember that the beaches are home to many plant and animal species as well. Another problem is that the beachfronts would have to go through primary succession because the construction will have completely disturbed the soil quality and its ability to develop easily back to its normal state. The organisms that previously occupied the area will also have to slowly, but surely adapt to the new environment. Many people are pushing for this project, leaving the negative environmental issues out of their minds. I think it’s crucial for people on the North Shore to do their part in preserving the natural beauty and stable environment of the Wilmette lakefront. Yes, compared to places around the world, this issue pales in comparison, but it’s still necessary to take it just as seriously.

Staff editorial:

SILC program teaches what other classes do not

As third quarter comes to a close, many teachers have begun selecting juniors to be their SILC (Student Instructional Leadership Cores) students for next year. Although some students view SILCing as another way to build their resumé, the SILC program is arguably one of the most constructive and beneficial leadership opportunities offered at New Trier. Senior year provides countless leadership opportunities for students in all forms of extracurricular activities. Whether it’s being the captain of a varsity sports team or an executive member of a social service board, these roles require student leaders to possess the skills necessary to lead a group towards the achievement of a goal. While some students are natural born leaders, not everyone is as confident with their abilities. For example, speaking in front of a large group or giving criticism to peers can be challenging. Through New Trier’s unique SILC program, students have the ability to improve on these skills and gain experience, making them a better leader in their extracurricular activities. Regardless of what subject a student SILCs, all participants work with their teacher mentor to identify ways to improve their leadership. Access to this teacher mentor is a unique opportunity because it gives the students someone to observe them daily and provide feedback on their in-class techniques. In most other leadership positions, faculty sponsors serve more like supervisors than mentors thus students do not receive the same critiquing. For a SILC who sees leading a class discussion as a challenge, their mentor may push them out of their comfort zone, encouraging them to lead the class until this is no longer a fear, but a strength.

Students also write off the SILC program because they don’t see teaching as their intended career path. While SILCing provides a valuable experience for those interested in pursuing teaching, the lessons learned in the program are applicable to any professional field. Teaching a skill, leading a meeting, and giving constructive criticism are all skills that apply to any field from business to communications. What deters many from entering the program is the extra time commitment and stress that an extra course may cause. Admittedly, SILCing does take away a free period; however, the skills learned are helpful in a wide array of courses. Most classes incorporate presentations and collaborative projects throughout the year. For example, Literature and Composition and Great Books expect students to lead a class discussion multiple times a semester. During the SILC seminars, students learn useful tips for these situations, such as how to build a better relationship with peers and how to ask good leading questions during discussions. This is also the first experience many students have in which they actually learn the fundamentals of how to best give a presentation. SILCs are required to attend three of these seminars and complete assignments before each. While finding the time to attend these workshops and complete an extra assignment is stressful (for the majority of the semester), SILCing is a very manageable and flexible commitment. Learning and physically practicing quality leadership skills is a more productive use of a class period than working on a few assignments or chatting in the hallway with friends.

NEW TRIER NEWS

Founded in 1919

Published Fridays during the school year by the students of New Trier Township High School, 385 Winnetka Avenue, Illinois 60093.

Correspondence may be directed to the New Trier News office, room 011, or by calling (847) 784-2278.

All letters to the editors are welcome, though we will not print anonymous letters. Direct these and other inquiries to our email at ntnews@newtrier.k12.il.us.

The Staff Editorial is written by the editors-in-chief, not adult faculty.

Editors-in-Chief	Lynley Evans, Ben Portnoy, Joey Schuman
News Editors	Julia Patton, Katherine Rhea
Opinion Editors	Abby Burton, Leah Pearlman, Lydia Wuorinen
Features Editors	Max Borushek, Maddy McVey
Sports Editors	Nick Krauskopf, Danni LeServe, Martin Oppegard
Examiner Editors	Jeremy Lee, McKenna Patterson
Online Editors	Sam Braganca, Sarah Wong
Photo Editor	Emmy Minturn
Diversions	Nick Merrill
Editorial Adviser	Carlo Trovato
Assistant Editorial Adviser	Sarah Gompers