

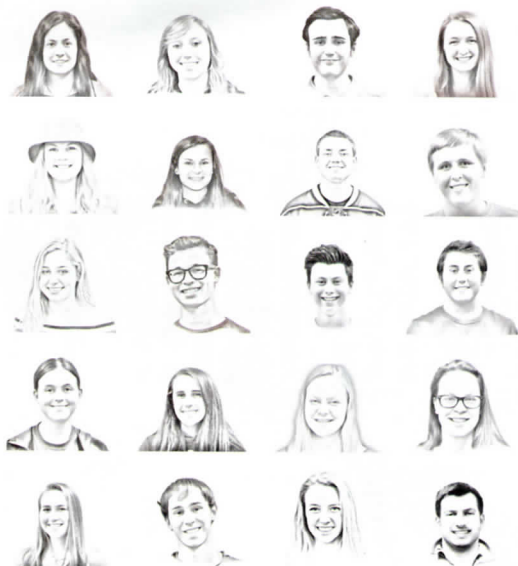


THE HOOFPRIINT

Buffalo High School Buffalo, MN Issue 4 May 2017

PEOPLE OF BHS

Who we are and who we
choose to be.



FROM THE EDITORS

Editors-in-Chief

TAYLOR MCNITT
LEIGHTON MCALPIN

Editors

KARIN BECK
NELS RAISANEN
ELLA SHUHERK
LILY HERSHLEY
CARSON REICHARDT
KYLEE NYHOLM
LAURYN MCALPIN
NOAH ZIMMERMAN

Graphic/Cover Designer

CARTER BARTON

Writers

JACK DISTAD
MASON SCHMIDT
EMMA JANZEN
NAOMI CURRAN
MIKA COLSON

Guest Columnist

ELIZABETH MARTINEN

Copy Editor

SOPHIE LEFEBVRE

Advisor

BRAD PALMER

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Buffalo High School,

Surrounding us all are individuals who are overcoming adversity each and every day. Whether it be small movements towards greatness, or large triumphs that will mold them into a new person, each individual has a story. Inside this issue, we responded to the trials that individuals at Buffalo High School face and the choices they make to reflect their identity. These are intimate, personal feats that individuals are working towards, or have already accomplished. Although many of these may not be familiar issues to the majority of students, they are a part of the identity of some students - and a part of their identity that others need to understand more completely.

Although we all have different backgrounds, experiences, and struggles, it is important to understand and support one another - and this is the purpose of this issue; to allow us, as students and a community, to understand the stories of individuals overcoming adversity in order to support each member of our school; to highlight the incredible things individuals and groups are doing; to tell the stories that need to be told. Although it's not immediately apparent, there's a wide variety of experiences in our high school, and hearing others' stories will encourage compassion in our community.

These stories are personal testaments of individuals who are facing and overcoming adversity in their own way. For our purposes, we will define adversity to be any struggle that is being fought or overcome by an individual, small or large, and it includes emotional struggles that can be both positive and negative.

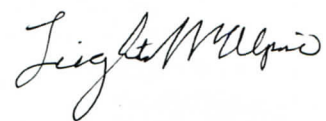
As you page through this issue, you may notice that there is a consistent theme to all of pages; a blob of color plastered to each page. These lightly colored pieces resemble the parts of our identity that constitute our whole. They also represent the importance of diversity to our community and to developing a school where unique experiences are cherished. Each piece signifies an individual's personal identity and the identity of our school.

Let us not forget that our personal interactions can be developed throughout our lifetime, our adolescent years included. This is a time to recognize the differences in our community and to accept and love them. Remember as you continue throughout your day, your time at Buffalo High School, and the rest of your life, that you make an impact on those around you, good or bad. Take the time to discover the battles that others face, along with others' choices to better our community, and allow what you read to inspire you to improve the morale of our school one conversation at a time.

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." -Ian Maclaren



Taylor McNitt
Editor-in-Chief



Leighton McAlpin
Editor-in-Chief

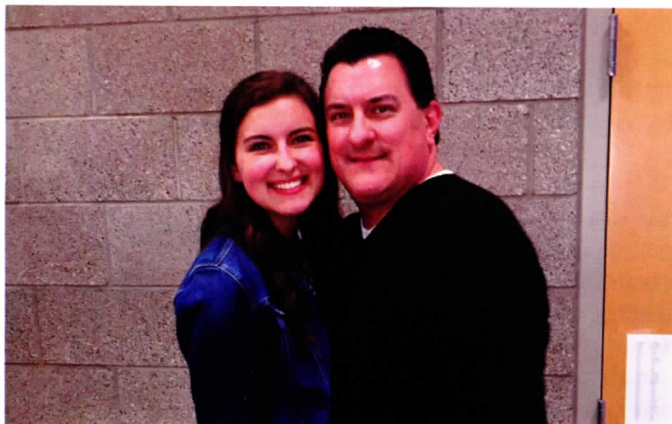


UNITED THROUGH SEPARATION

Students dealing with divorce

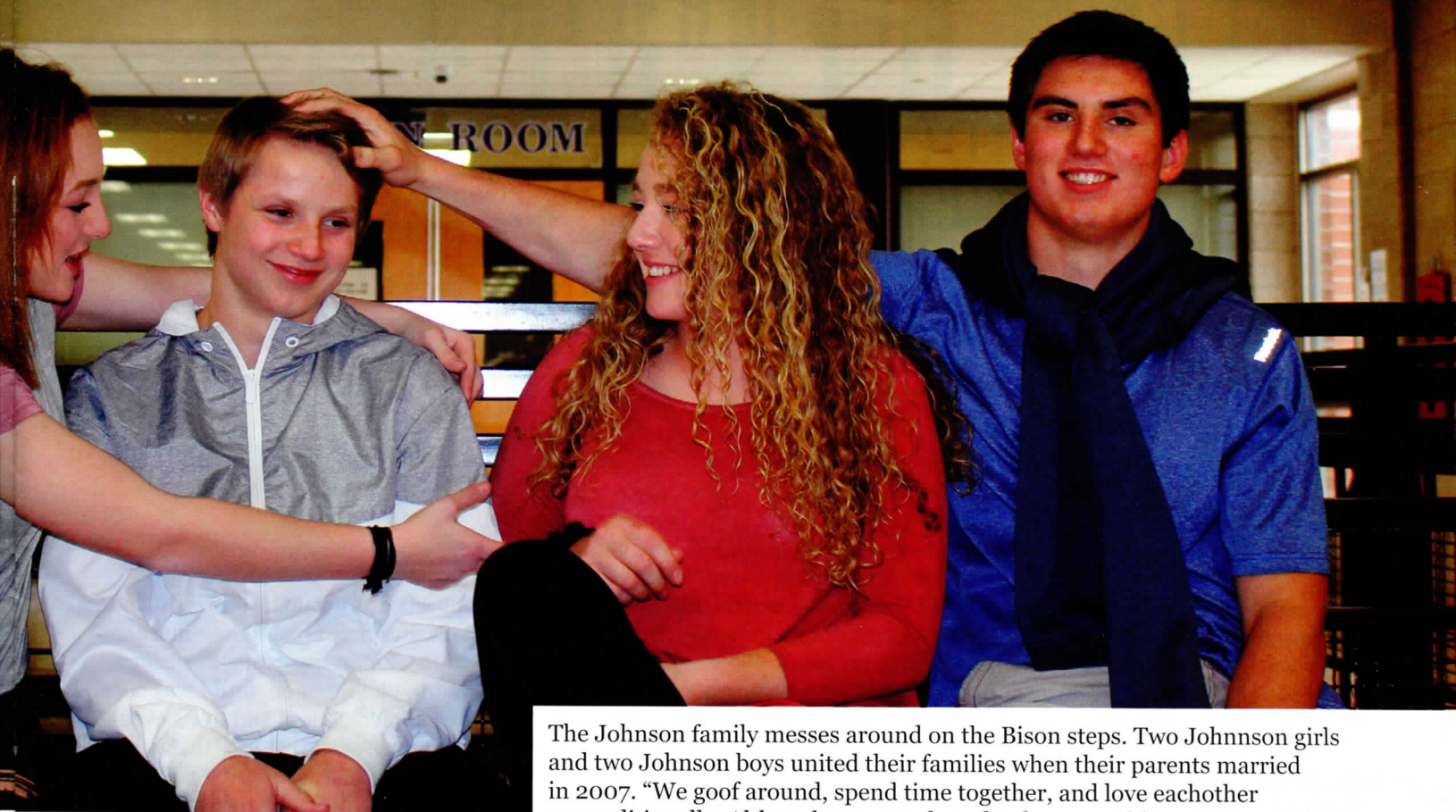
Leighton McAlpin
Editor-in-Chief

Divorce is a subject that touches home for many students at Buffalo High School, and in a dramatic way. Whether it's a rough ending to their parents' relationship, or simply the results of the divorce, students whose parents are divorced have individual stories that display their struggles as well as the community or family they have discovered as a result from it. Each divorce and each family have a different story to share. These are intimate, personal fights that have molded these kids into the people they are today. Divorce is part of their identity, but it isn't their defining characteristic - and according to the US Census Bureau, it isn't for the other 3.1% of Americans impacted by divorce either.



Lauren Farniok

I was in 5th grade when my parents decided to separate, and in 6th grade when their divorce was finalized. I was more upset when they told us about the separation than I was about the divorce, because that took the most adjusting. Shortly after they told us about the separation, my dad moved out, and we started the typical weekend rotation schedule. We began to go to my dad's house every Tuesday, and every other weekend. It took a long time to get used to, because moving between houses throughout the week is really different than coming home to the same place every night. I had to get used to packing a bag on certain days before school, and having to remember which parent to ask to hang out with my friends depending upon whose 'night' it was. It was a lot to adjust to, especially because I was just starting middle school. Not only was I having to adjust to a new school, but I was having to adjust to the divorce as well. At first, I was very upset with my parents because I thought they were being selfish. That didn't last long though because they handled it very well. Whether it be on purpose or not, many parents end up putting their kids in the middle during a divorce. That was not the case for us at all. My mom and dad made sure that my brother, sister, and I were never a part of the messy stuff. They taught me a lot about maturity and forgiveness because of the way they handled the situation. Going through your parents' divorce is never an easy thing to do, but I'm very grateful that my parents made it as easy as they could for us.



The Johnson family messes around on the Bison steps. Two Johnson girls and two Johnson boys united their families when their parents married in 2007. "We goof around, spend time together, and love each other unconditionally. Although we were forced to become siblings, I choose them as my best friends," Mackenzie Johnson said.

■Photos submitted by Mackenzie Johnson and Lauren Farniok

Mackenzie Johnson

My parents have been divorced for as long as I can remember. I only remember a few times with parents being together and all of us living in the same house. People typically think having divorced parents is really miserable, and that is definitely not the case. Don't get me wrong, it's definitely not ideal and it has its difficulties, but if you make the best of it it's not all bad. One thing that is really difficult is having things at different houses and having to keep track of what is at what house. I get jealous of people who have all of their clothes in one closet, all of their shoes in one bedroom, and all of their everyday items in one house. I always tell myself though, if that is the most difficult thing I'm doing pretty well because it is very manageable. If it weren't for my parents splitting up when I was younger I wouldn't have two of my brothers, two of my sisters, my step mom, or my step dad. So in the end I'm glad it has happened, because it worked out great and now I have more people to love.



EATING DISORDERS

as described by
Isabella Searcy

Naomi Curran
Staff Writer



"My eating disorder screamed at me that I was a fat-ass, that I was worthless, and the only way that anyone could ever love me, would be if I starved myself. Some people might say, 'That's ridiculous, why didn't she see that that's just plain wrong?' Well, if you were told the same thing, every minute of every day, the same thing, for four years, you'd start to believe it too."

Eating disorders are the most deadly mental disorder, killing a person every 62 minutes (ANAD.org). They can manifest in many different ways including disorders like Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge Eating, and Avoidant Food Intake Disorders.

Senior **Isabella Searcy** was diagnosed with severe cases of Anorexia and Orthorexia. Anorexia is characterized by distorted body image and intense fear of weight gain, which leads to restriction of energy intake. Orthorexia is characterized by obsession with eating only foods that are perceived as healthy. (www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)

Searcy describes how these disorders extensively affected her day to day life.

"Luckily, I am recovered now. It took about four years but I am okay. My eating disorder took over absolutely every part of my day and all aspects of my life. Even places people never would think about. Not ten minutes would go by without me recalculating how many calories I had that day or that week. Numbers were always spiraling through my head; I'd write the numbers on my homework, my phone, my calculator, and even on my body just to double, triple, quadruple check that I wouldn't forget what I had already eaten. My eating disorder had one goal in mind for me: to kill me, to starve me to death. I was in the worst depression and my anxiety was off the charts. For almost three years I felt absolutely nothing but numbness. My eating disorder convinced me that if I listened to the deadly rules that it

gave me, I would be happy again, I would love myself, and everything would be alright. But first I had to lose more weight... and more... and more. But my eating disorder was never satisfied. It wouldn't be satisfied until I was dead.

"I never used lotion or took medication, and I was even scared to brush my teeth because of the calories that might enter my body. My eating disorder wouldn't let me sit down, so I'd stand at home for six hours everyday after school before I went to bed. At school I always sat up perfectly straight, hoping it would burn some calories while I was forced to sit. Lunch became a nightmare. The sight of the lunchroom would immediately make me bawl. I was forced to eat with a counselor: I had to be on watch 24/7 to make sure I was eating the food I was given by my doctors. I had lost a lot of weight, I was malnourished, and at any moment I could've died. Maybe of dehydration, of starvation, or my heart could've given out while I was sleeping. Somehow, I made it to the hospital in time and I was in intensive inpatient care for three weeks. After that came many relapses, so many tears, panic attacks, missing school, agony, fighting, and surviving to get my life back."

Belle comments on one of the most common mistakes people unfamiliar with the disease make.

"One of the biggest misconceptions is that 'eating disorders are a choice'. People who say that are just plain wrong. Saying something so ignorant like that can really hurt someone. Eating disorders are a mental disorder. It's a horrible virus and disease that takes over someone's life. Whether they be male or female."

For more information on eating disorders, go to www.nationaleatingdisorders.org. If anyone is experiencing symptoms such as obsession with weight or calories, feeling out of control while eating, constant weight fluctuation, or chronic dieting, they are encouraged to tell someone.

ADDICTION...

a touchy subject

Noah Zimmerman
Editor

Addiction carries a stigma that can make it difficult to talk about. And in an environment like a high school, where an addiction can mean very severe consequences- suspension, expulsion, getting kicked out of sports and activities, even criminal charges- oftentimes, addictions can go unnoticed and hidden, making it hard for those with them to get help.

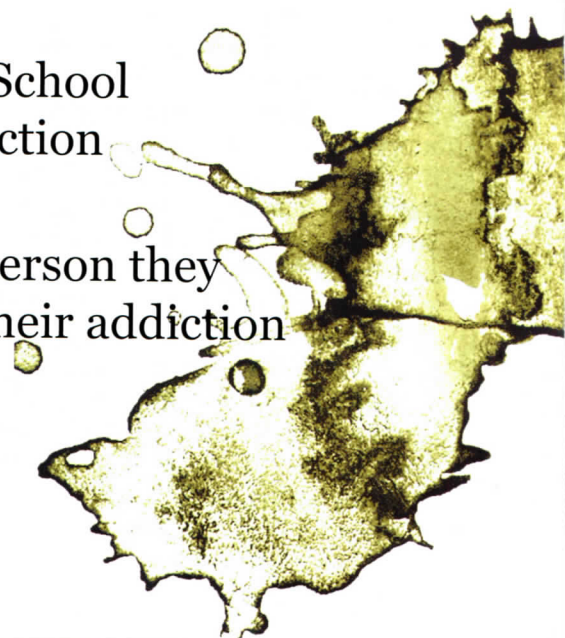
When surveyed, thirty-seven percent of students said they knew someone at BHS with an addiction, but only one in four said the one with the addiction got help. When asked what the addiction was, over half said the addiction was to drugs or alcohol. It's often nearly impossible for people with addictions to get help for themselves; they keep it a secret because of shame, or because they are afraid of being punished by their school, parents, and society. High school is an extremely difficult time to be involved in an addiction, and many refuse help all together.

However, teen substance abuse rates are at an all time low according to a study done in 2016 by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The problem is getting better, but it's still present. Addiction can be a touchy subject, but it is important for those who need help to find it.

37% of students at Buffalo High School know someone with an addiction

25% of students report that the person they know has gotten help with their addiction

Numbers collected in an email survey



BABY BLUES

“The hardest thing about being a teen parent is knowing you’re still a kid, raising a kid.”

Mika Colson
Staff Writer

When the final bell rings to signal the end of a school day, most high schoolers hustle out of the building to get their homework finished, meet up with friends at a coffee shop, or go to after-school activities. However, certain students have other matters to attend to. There are teen parents all across the country who spend their time out of school a bit differently than the typical high school student.

After school is let out, teen parents pick up their children from daycare or go to work to afford all the necessities for their babies. While other teenagers are off buying clothes and accessories, teen parents spend most of their time shopping for diapers and bottles. Then after all of this caring and providing, they might have time to do their trigonometry and English homework, if their baby sleeps well. Teen parenthood not only faces the challenge of balancing school and children, but it also receives a great deal of assumptions.

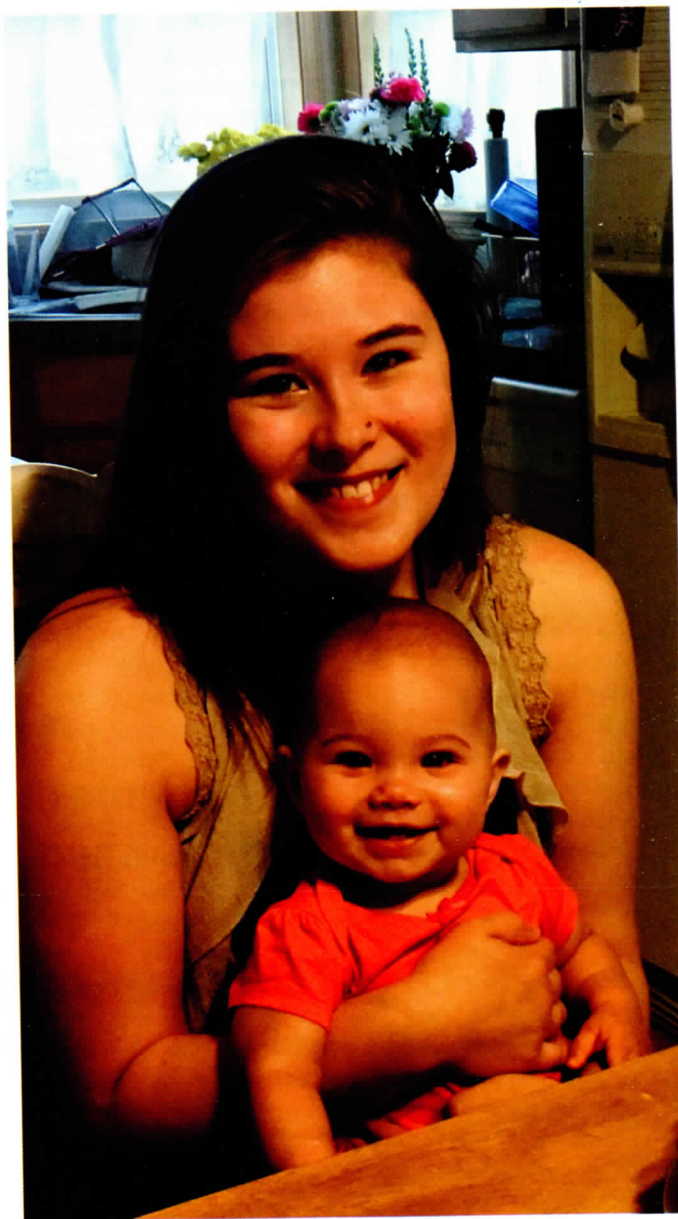
“It is hard fighting the stereotype that comes with being a teen mom,” said **Lily DeMarais**, BHS senior and mother. “The way our role is portrayed in society is that we go out and party while our parents raise our child. It couldn’t be further from the truth for me. My idea of a good time is going to Target without dealing with a temper tantrum.”

For most parents, their lives are centered around their children, and for teenagers who are still trying to figure out their own life, this can be especially tricky. DeMarais said, “The hardest thing about being a teen parent is knowing you’re still a kid, raising a kid.”

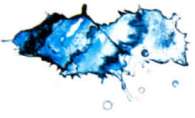
About 250,000 children are born each year from 15-19 year old girls, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 5 percent of these babies are given up for adoption, but many teens choose to raise their children while still going to school and even onto post-secondary education. “My plans after high school are to attend college at St. Cloud State University and earn my bachelor’s degree in nursing,” said DeMarais. “This would provide a steady income for me and my daughter.”

For all parents there are hard times when raising a child, but there are also rewarding moments that make up for it. “My favorite part about being a parent is watching my daughter become independent,” DeMarais said. “It is bittersweet, but also a joy, and it’s the little moments that reassure me that I am doing a good job.”

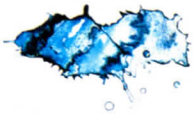
■ Photo courtesy of
Lily DeMarais



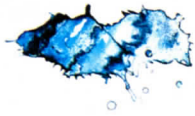
Stats on Teen Parenthood



Approximately **three in ten** girls in America will become pregnant before they turn 20. (Guttmacher Institute)



25 percent of teenage mothers will have another child **within 24 months** of their first. (healthresearchfunding.org)



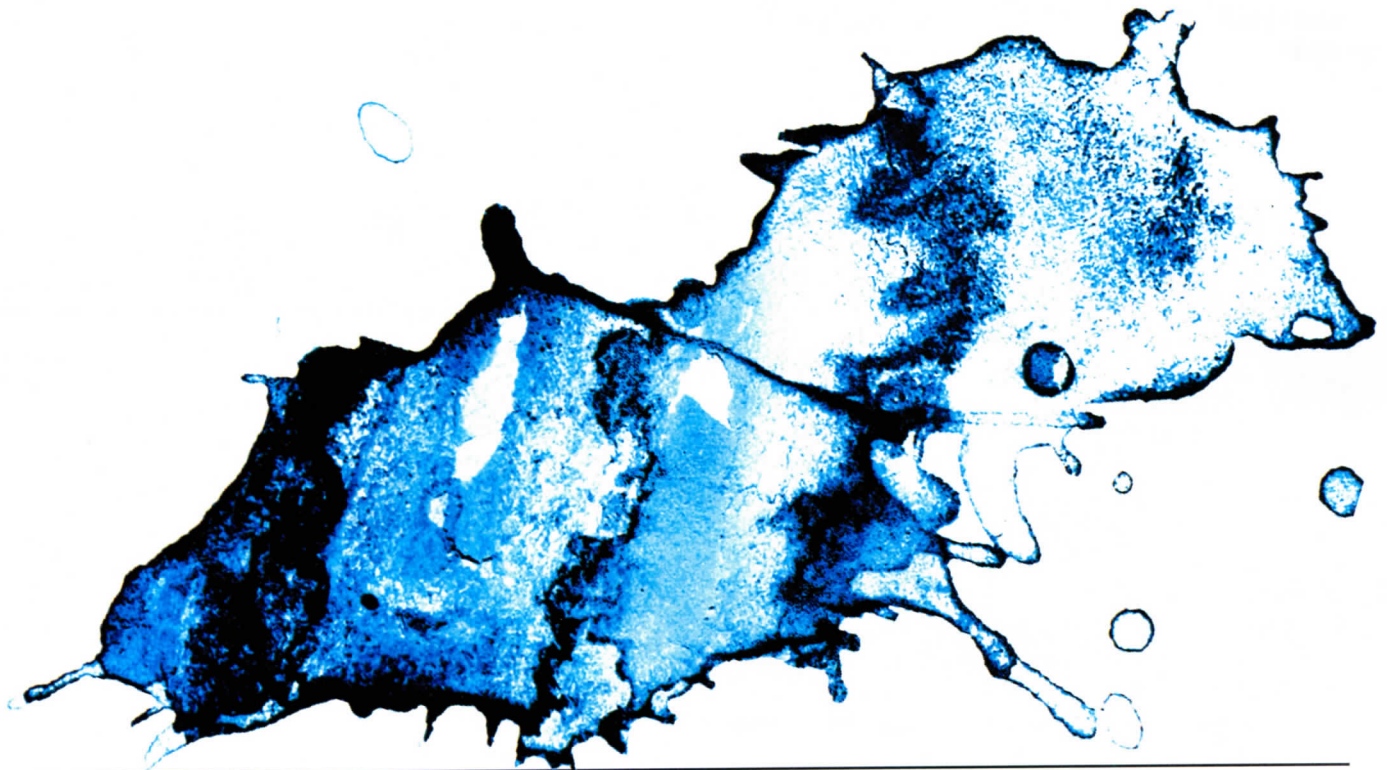
Less than two percent of teenage mothers earn a college degree by age 30. (StayTeen)



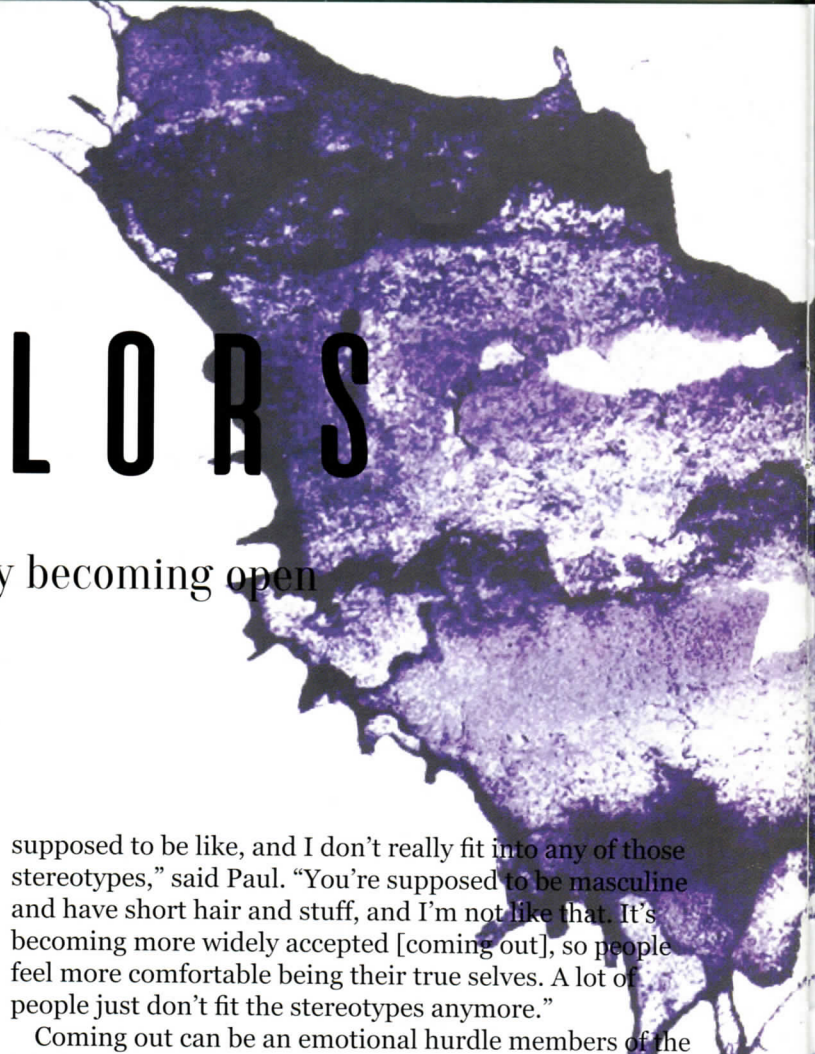
Eight out of ten teen fathers don't marry the mother of the child. (StayTeen)



Worldwide, teens had fewer children in 2010 than in any year **since the 1940's**. (Center for Disease Control)



TRUE COLORS



Students embrace their true colors by becoming open about their sexuality

Jack Oistad & Mason Schmidt
Staff Writers

Every spring, students across the school participate in a full day of silence. They do this in order to recreate the silence the LGBTQ students experience each day that they remain “in the closet” due to fear of judgement and persecution. Coming out as being a part of the LGBTQ community is a long and intimidating process unique to each individual.

For many individuals in the LGBTQ community, they started to realize they were different at a younger age. This is the start of the coming out journey, which continues later in life.

“I think I knew from a very young age that I was different in some aspects,” said sophomore **Chloe Paul**. “In fifth/sixth grade, when everyone was super interested in boys and I wasn’t, it’s kind of when I started figuring it out. I came out to my mom in eighth grade. She was super accepting and super cool about it, and shortly after so was my dad. Ninth grade is when I started telling my friends and family, and it’s really been this school year that I have been open about it and telling people. I have accepted it; it’s a part of me.”

Coming out, for some, is a process that is long and takes time to accept. People who have went through this often feel like they can truly be themselves.

“I feel more like myself, I am more open to people. Before I came out, I felt like I was hiding something, and obviously no one could tell but, nobody knew,” said Paul. “There is a lot of steps with coming out. It’s kind of like you take a step out and you take a step back, couple steps forward, one step back type of thing. I’m still working on my coping mechanisms and especially with some people being rude about it. I want people to come to me if they have questions. I want to be a role model for people struggling with it.”

One challenge to overcome is battling stereotypes and inaccurate perceptions.

“I think there is a lot of stereotypes of what a lesbian’s

supposed to be like, and I don’t really fit into any of those stereotypes,” said Paul. “You’re supposed to be masculine and have short hair and stuff, and I’m not like that. It’s becoming more widely accepted [coming out], so people feel more comfortable being their true selves. A lot of people just don’t fit the stereotypes anymore.”

Coming out can be an emotional hurdle members of the LGBTQ must jump over.

“I probably knew I was gay in second grade. I knew I was different because I never talked about girls the way that other boys would,” stated senior **Brandon Bednarek**. Bednarek revealed that it was an accident when he first came out to his friends. “I was at a dress rehearsal and I only meant to tell my friend Erica, but I was accidentally speaking too loud.” The news of Brandon being homosexual began to spread faster than he would’ve liked. A couple weeks later Brandon felt that he needed to tell his family. “I told my mom [that I was gay] on the ride home from school in 9th grade. I immediately started crying and she asked, ‘Why are you crying? Are you sad about it?’ and I said, ‘No!’ and she said, ‘Then stop crying about it.’”

Peers of LGBTQ students can react in a variety of ways, negatively and positively.

“Everyday, since I came out, is a bit uncomfortable at school,” said Bednarek. “The theatre kids were the most accepting of it. They didn’t treat me any differently. However I was bullied when I first came out in 9th grade. Kids would throw baby carrots at me at lunch. You need to have thick skin. Whenever you make a statement, you are asking for a rebuttal.”

Sadly, not every coming out story is full of support.

“There is a difference between tolerance and acceptance, and this school needs to realize that,” said Bednarek. “Some people treated me like an object because they thought I was unique, but I am just a person. I was forced to come out of the closet and I was afraid to come out.”

On the brighter side, some coming out stories are more smooth than others. Especially the case when you have the support of your family and friends.

"My sister was talking to me about GSA [Gay Straight Alliance]," said junior **Samantha Twardy**. "She said that they were picking a new executive, and they were considering me, but I wasn't gay. [My family and I] were all in the car on our way to a restaurant, and I turned to my sister and was like, 'Oh yeah, uh, I like girls and boys.'" Twardy also told her immediate friends about being bisexual shortly after. "[I would say] 'Hey, you know all those jokes that I made about being bisexual, those weren't jokes, those were real.'"

Being bisexual can create complications with both straight and gay relationships. Partners in both relationships might lose trust or commitment to a bisexual,

so a supportive partner stands out.

"On our third or fourth date [with Twardy's current boyfriend] we were in the car and I felt like he should know [about my sexuality] because no one else really knew yet. I turned to him and said 'Can I tell you something? I'm gay, I like girls and boys'... He was okay with it," said Twardy.

After showing your colors, many people assume that you change yourself after coming out. However, coming out isn't a change, it's a revelation of your inner self. In the end, your sexuality doesn't dictate your personality.

"You are who you are as a person and that isn't going to change because you finally admit to yourself and to everyone else who you are attracted to. You are the same person; you will grow and you will change, but that's not dependant on how much of yourself you are willing to admit," said Twardy.

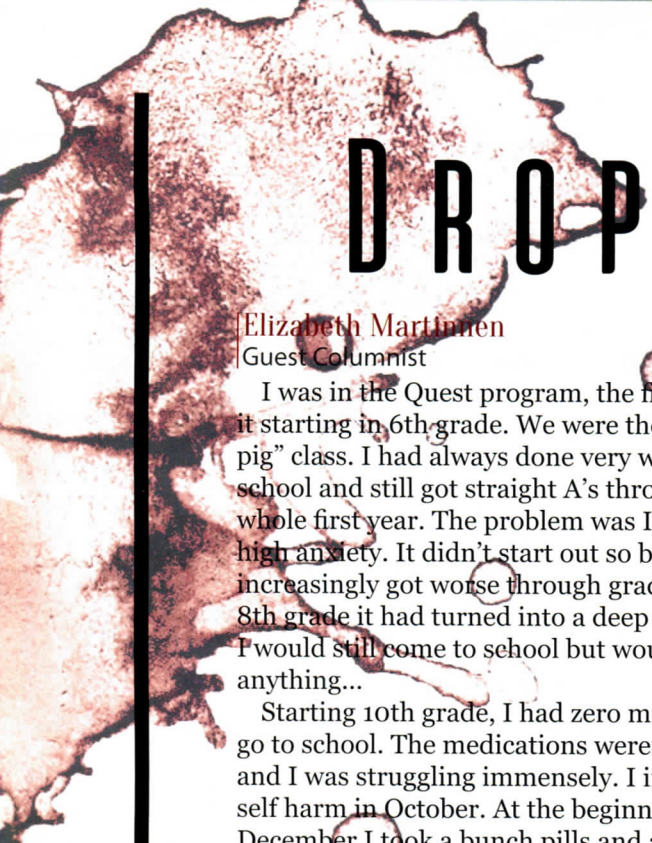


"It's kind of like you take a step out and you take a step back. Couple steps forward, one step back type of thing."

-Chloe Paul

■Photo by Ella Shuherk





DROPPING OUT

Elizabeth Martinen
Guest Columnist

I was in the Quest program, the first year of it starting in 6th grade. We were the “guinea pig” class. I had always done very well in school and still got straight A’s throughout that whole first year. The problem was I got very high anxiety. It didn’t start out so bad, but it increasingly got worse through grades 7-8. By 8th grade it had turned into a deep depression. I would still come to school but wouldn’t do anything...

Starting 10th grade, I had zero motivation to go to school. The medications weren’t helping and I was struggling immensely. I inflicted self harm in October. At the beginning of December I took a bunch pills and attempted suicide. Luckily, Dad came home and had me throw everything up. We went into the ER and I was physically fine. The pills hadn’t had time to get into my system. They signed me up for a program at a rehab facility called Prairie Care. It was like therapy and school with other kids my age in a mental hospital...

I got through the summer okay, but as the time for school to start again neared, my anxiety rose higher and higher. The first month of 11th grade was a mess. I missed the first day of school due to having strep throat, and then not even a week later was admitted into Children’s Hospital for meningitis...My anxiety was increasingly worse with this rough start to the year, already behind in all my classes. By October I hardly could make it to school. My anxiety was so high and would get worse and worse as I drove to school. I would get to the parking lot and could hardly even open the door of my car to go into school. I would have anxiety attacks every day. I started thinking about dropping out, and brought it up to my mom. By November, I wasn’t even going to school anymore. Maybe two days a week total...By December I was officially truant and had to go to court.

My mom and I talked a lot with Mr. Jones and we tried to work out what to try. I had

tried online school, but that failed. And also a school from home program. But I was done. Physically and mentally so exhausted.

A lot of people would encourage me not to give up. They would say, “You have so much potential!” I got so sick of hearing it, I would just go silent if anyone said that to me. I have always been so critical of myself and everything I do, so everyone, including myself, was very concerned about what would happen if I dropped out.

But I did it. I dropped out. And it was the best decision I ever made. I was so done struggling and knew I needed help, so I found a counselor and started therapy every week. The day I was officially done with school was the most relieving feeling ever. The thousands of pounds that I’d been carrying for so long were suddenly lifted right off of me. I started eating and sleeping a bit more regularly, and overall felt so much better. I still struggled with my depression but my anxiety was lessened significantly.

Since then I’ve just been working and making plans for the future. My goals are to get my GED this summer and then get certified as an assistant teacher starting in the fall. I’ve continued to do therapy which helps me a lot. I made the choice at the beginning of this year to go off all medications and I have been doing great!

I feel like it was the right choice for me. Because I don’t know if I would have ever gotten mentally better, if I hadn’t taken out the prominent cause of stress in my life. I most likely wouldn’t be here anymore, and now I’m thankful for every single day.

I do really need to say thank you to all of BHS though. So many of the staff encouraged and helped me immensely. They have all definitely impacted me and if they read this, I hope they realize who they are. Thank you for believing in me.

*“The day I was officially done with school was the most relieving feeling ever.
The thousands of pounds that I’d been carrying for so long were suddenly
lifted right off of me”*



Jake Braccini (77)
and Tyler Braccini
(87) during a game.

■ Photo submitted by Teresa Braccini

BUFFED UP BANTAM

Bison boys hockey player named “Bantam of the Year”

Jack Oistad
Staff Writer

This last season was eventful for the Boys Bison Bantam hockey team. A bantam is a boy that is either thirteen or fourteen years old and plays hockey on a organized team. In addition with going to the state competition, a player on the Bison team has been selected as one out of five nominees for the Bantam of the Year Award. Freshman **Jake Braccini** has been awarded this honor, along with also being drafted into the United States Hockey League after high school. Because of this season, both Jake and **Tyler Braccini** will be playing for the Bloomington Thunder.

Getting recognized for these achievements took a lot of hard work and practice. Jake had to strengthen his skills both on and off the ice.

“Well, my dad was the coach, so he always pushed us hard ‘cause he didn’t want me or [my brother] Tyler to get left behind, and he made everyone better,” said Jake. “We did a lot of skating and a lot of skills practice, and every now and then we would scrimmage just for fun, but for the most part it was business. I shot pucks a lot in my garage, there’s a good space for it in there. Sometimes Tyler and I played pig,

like basketball, except with corners in the net.”

Regardless of being recognized as the Bantam of the Year, this year was an obvious success for Jake’s hockey career.

“Even if I didn’t get nominated, I would still be happy with the year I had,” said Jake. “Every time I was out there, I just made sure I was the impact player. Playing with my brother helped a lot because Tyler and I work really well together, and every time we went out there, we had an advantage over everyone else.”

Although the nomination did strengthen Braccini’s confidence, he knew that is was important not to become cocky or too comfortable.

“I never like to think I am too good because that always puts me down,” said Jake. “I have seen it happen to other guys: they get overconfident and they get left behind by the other players.”

With his effort and commitment, there is no doubt that the recognition and awards he is currently getting will continue into his future hockey career.

VOLUNTARY LEARNING

Staff members spend Friday mornings sharing ideas and perspectives through discussion

Taylor McNitt & Carson J.S. Reichardt
Editor-in-Chief and Voices Editor

It can be easily forgotten when they're only seen at the head of the classroom, but teachers have their own lives outside of the classes they instruct. For a group of approximately fourteen teachers, their interests come together every Friday morning when they meet to discuss one of a wide variety of podcasts, videos, or whatever strikes inspiration.

The most prominent example, which spread throughout the school, was Simon Sinek's talk about millennials in the workplace at the start of the semester. A conversation between English teachers **Ryan McCallum** and **Vicki Cary** served as the origin of the group.

"There's not a regular thing. We always talk about the podcasts we listen to, and we always share with each other, and then we decided to make a group and see if we could get other teachers to come and we could do a weekly podcast thing," McCallum said. "By the end of the day she already had that email out and people signing up for it."

With teachers from different departments bringing their own interests, thoughts, and ideas, the conversations are anything but predictable.

"Peter Sommers, with his experience with Chicago and the Czech Republic, will tell us things from his experience that I can't even conceptualize," McCallum said. "Amy Sparks with her really diverse background outside of school – she has things to talk about. So it's not really about what we're listening to, but who we're talking with."

That focus on the "who" rather than the "what" has been a core tenant of the group.

"I've been reminded that I work with really

smart, funny people who like to continue learning about the world – for their own reward and growth even when they aren't getting 'paid' to do so," Cary said. "That's not really surprising to me."

The knowledge gained covers a large number of topics, ranging from the aforementioned Sinek's discussion about millennials to the methodology of incrementalism, as well as what Cary simply described as "some really bizarre stories."

"I've gotten something out of every conversation," Cary explained. "I value the opportunity to share ideas and learn (and laugh) together. It's an energizing way to start the day, and a good way for teachers to get together without being assigned a task."

Due to hectic year-end schedules, the members have taken a brief break from their meetings. However, that is by no means the end of the discussions.

"I'd like to see the group continue to grow organically because we enjoy it – not because anything is mandated," Cary said. "After all, the best learning is usually voluntary."

But is the learning worth filling yet another space in their already-cramped schedules? McCallum thinks so.

"The best thing about the group, for me, is that the teacher group is so intelligent and they have such a background of experiences, that they have a completely different interpretation of everything," he said. "We always think that we won't like it – like it's one more thing in the week – [...]but it's always the best feeling when you're there, it's a great thing to look forward to at the end of each week."

Kate West • Jason Karn • Stacy Eggers • Tim Murray

CREATING A|BOOK|HUB

Taylor McNitt
Editor-in-Chief

Black paper slashed with orange paint. Or popcorn bags illuminated by string lights. Or ribbons waving messages of gratitude. Or hundreds of self-confident eyes staring down from the wall. Whatever the theme, three ladies in particular are behind it.

Enter **Amy Sparks** with her funky leggings, **Tammy Otten** with her loud greetings, and **Erika Clifton** with her trendy scarves. The three of them, over the course of the year, have led the BHS Library through a metamorphosis. Maybe you've noticed the disappearance of the ugly book detectors. Or the addition of the communal smartboard. Or that two more student workrooms exist. Or how the books have been rearranged, how new furniture alters the atmosphere, how the walls sport new decorations, how posters line the walls outside...

"How can we make the media center more of a learning commons, where it brings together students and staff in many different ways to a place that becomes a hub, a heartbeat?" Sparks often asks herself. "For me this year, it's been about dreams, ideas, conversations, [...]thinking about how to do something with what we have [...]because we can't spend a lot of money. In a nutshell, I would say that my biggest role is just constant creative problem-solving."

The BHS Library Transitions From Media Center to Learning Commons

Their concern reaches even as far as the temperature of the space. "It's a package deal," Otten explains. "If people are too hot or cold, or don't feel welcome, they're going to walk out the door and they won't want to come back."

They approach their job as business women, so when the Learning Commons empties at the end of the school day, they deflate a little. "Yeah, I really wish more students would come after school," Clifton says. Their idea of the Learning Commons is along the lines of a cute coffee shop with all the necessities of a media center, but it's hard to get that feel when the room becomes a ghost town. Regardless, the ladies work toward that goal of their space becoming a hub, and when they succeed, it will certainly become BHS's heartbeat.

■Photo courtesy of Erika Clifton



