

# IDEAS

## NORTH POINTE

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**CONTACT US**  
707 Vernier Road  
Grosse Pointe Woods MI, 48236  
Phone: 313.432.3248  
Email: northpointe@gpschools.org  
Twitter: @thenorthpointe  
Website: NorthPointeNow.org

**FACULTY ADVISER:** Shari Adwers, MJE



# Ask not what Challenge Day can do for you, but what you can do for Challenge Day



SARAH WIETCHA

A national initiative. A North tradition. Over the past four years, Challenge Day has become an annual tradition. Each December, 150 students have the opportunity to talk about their struggles in a safe environment, hoping to gain a new perspective and find support. But this year, budget constraints eliminated that opportunity.

Limited funds forced administration's hands and they had to make a tough decision about what programs would get funding. After serious deliberation, they chose to fund assistive programs like Freshman Assist and Link Crew over Challenge Day.

It shouldn't come to this. Having to get rid of a life-changing program should not fall on administration, who is as upset about Challenge Day's cancellation as students.

Challenge Day is a nationwide program that works with middle and high schoolers. The workshop lasts about six hours and includes team-building exercises, sharing stories and details with a group and crossing the line.

The program was created to build connection and empathy and to fulfill the organization's vision that every child lives in a world where they feel safe, loved and celebrated.

After the first Challenge Day, the difference was notable. Teachers, students and administration noticed the extra compassion and sensitivity students were showing towards one another. Students proudly donned their "Be the Change" t-shirts the next day in support of the program and the differences that it made in their lives.

This, too, has become an annual tradition, with the previous years' participants wearing their Challenge Day shirts as well. If asked, many students say Challenge Day was worth it and made a big impact on their lives.

Getting rid of Challenge Day is not in the student body's best interests. Challenge Day promotes a cohesive, peaceful school environment, and not having it takes away 150 student's opportunities to learn and

grow as students before them had. Challenge Day spans over two days. Each day accommodates 75 students. Over four years that equates to 600 students going. And without challenge day approximately 600 students cannot go, that equates to half of the school.

So why was the program cut? Before we point fingers, we have to understand that there are many assistive programs at North, and they all require funding.

Administration weighed the pros and cons of funding each and found that funding in-school programs would be more beneficial to the student body as a whole. Their decision was in the best interest of North and was the best they could do with their limited funds.

But that still doesn't make not having Challenge Day okay. It benefits the community as a whole. It helps create bond throughout the community, and it shows community support in addition to benefitting specific members of the community.

As such, Challenge Day could use some help from the community, too. Donations or School Board funding could help reinstate the tradition that swept through the halls of North. Though it does take a sizable sum, kids who go through the experience are more likely to give back to their school.

The kindness, compassion and sensitivity taught are more likely to be spread through the school and the community, and this is only multiplied year to year with more attendees.

Beyond the community, there is the idea of helping even one student realize they aren't alone. Too often we see the tragic story of a child who didn't feel safe in their school and took drastic measures, harming themselves or others. And when we hear about it, it's too late.

We have the opportunity to offer that to all the kids who go through North. To give over 1,000 students the opportunity to know they aren't alone. Getting community or school board funding for Challenge Day can help change the lives of thousands of students. We have to embrace Challenge Day's slogan and be the change. But to do that, we have to find a way to bring Challenge Day back.



## New Year, same you

Abbey Cadieux  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

For those of us who have yet to complete our resolutions from 2014, the idea of another 365 days passing—bringing with it a new set of cardinal rules—may seem a little daunting. After indulging our materialistic selves during the holidays, ringing in a new year invites us to reflect on the past year and indulge the idea of our best selves. Our dreams for the new year go active the second the ball drops, as if the changing of the date has the ability to alter our lives in an instant.

Unfortunately, these healthy hypotheticals have turned into yet another platform for big businesses to cash in on our insecurities. One of the most common (yet short-lived) resolutions is to "lose weight." So, predictably, who ends up sponsoring the New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square? Planet Fitness, a massive gym franchise, of course. With Planet Fitness's iron grip on this holiday, the tourists in Times Square donning their ridiculous Cat-in-the-Hat-esque Planet Fitness top hats probably didn't realize they were being walking billboards. Today, the wholesome idea of getting a new beginning with the new year is being taken advantage of, and is being used as just another advertising tactic.

Stay strong, you can't let these greedy corporations get the best of you. New Year's resolutions are opportunities to seek out a better life and be the happy, healthy people we all dream of being. A few small, realistic plans can end up being way more valuable than an entire list of overwhelming superficial resolutions. Instead of coming up with goals that would truly make you a better person mentally and physically, many resolutions are made to cater to whatever is the buzz at the moment. The commercialization of society has somewhat robbed people of the genuine benefits of this tradition.

A lot of these pitiful resolutions, such as "get in shape," or "make more money," stem from our own personal hang-ups and self-doubts. These overarching goals often seem unattainable, causing us to get immediately discouraged. I don't know about you, but listing everything you hate about yourself doesn't sound like a great way to start off the year. Rome wasn't built in a day, and jumping to negative conclusions on the very first day of the year is pretty counterproductive.

This idea of reaching a vague ultimate goal is bound to derail those who are impatient. Instead of setting your mind on losing 50 pounds and getting frustrated with your lack of progress, set baby steps for yourself and resolve to accomplish something small each month. Or, if you're trying to drink more water, make a daily goal and increase it as the year goes on. These things take time, and it's best to maintain steady effort instead of fizzling out and giving up halfway through January.

You're still you after Jan. 1, only now you're you with a Fitbit on. You were you before you had your exclusive, life-changing gym membership, and you're still you when you don't use it for three months. Plus, you have 366 chances to get it right this time, since 2016 is a leap year.

Make resolutions, but don't do it for the advertisers on TV and their ridiculous ideals. Do it for yourself.



**"My New Year's resolution is to become a better singer because I don't think I'm there yet."**

Kristin Martin-Turner  
FRESHMAN



**"Just to get straight A's because my grades aren't good right now, so if I get straight A's it will help for college."**

Abby Kanakry  
SOPHOMORE



**"To become a better person because I'm actually a terrible person. I feel like my attitude is a little over the top towards people and it could be better."**

Jasmine Daniel  
JUNIOR

## YOUR TURN: What's your New Year's resolution?

By Sydney Benson  
PHOTO EDITOR



**"My New Year's resolution is to get stronger, smarter, and faster because I think I can improve in those areas."**

Amirr Hunter  
SENIOR



**"My New Year's resolution is something that drives my husband crazy. I have this thing where I don't screw lids on jars or bottles tightly, not on purpose, but because I just don't. So, my New Year's resolution for him is to screw the lids on things tightly."**

Bridgette Cooley  
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER



**"My New Year's resolution is to spend more time with my son in the Boy Scouts because it's a very positive organization."**

Steven Kosmas  
SCIENCE TEACHER

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