

## Concepts & Thought



**SHOWING SUPPORT...**At a recent Westfield Board of Education meeting, the Education Fund of Westfield presented a check to the board in the amount of \$16,571 for teacher grants. Simon Lack, left, Chairman of the Grants Committee and Education Fund President Darielle Walsh presented the check to Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Foley and Board President Arlene Gardner. Over 10 teachers will receive grant monies for classroom projects that would not normally be included in the district's annual budget. They range from interactive science demonstrations to equipment for a journalism class and support elementary, intermediate and high school classroom activities.

### Life Lessons Related, Learned At DECA's 'Day of Decision'

SCOTCH PLAINS - Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's DECA chapter recently held its "Day of Decision" program, which consists of a series of workshops for Park and Terrill Middle School eighth graders. The program will be held at Park School on Friday, February 8.

Organizing the "Day of Decision" were DECA pupils Andrew Pavoni and Daniel Zelikman.

"We never imagined that this would be as successful as it was," said Andrew. "We are confident that we reached many of the students."

The seminar included 10 workshops on a variety of topics, designed to aid the eighth grade middle school students in making the right decisions when faced with challenges and problems. Nearly 400 students will have attended five workshops on a rotating schedule planned by DECA.

The workshops included the dangers and consequences of substance use, including separate workshops on alcohol, marijuana, club drugs, and other substances. Other workshops pertained to dealing with peer pressure, the importance of honest communications with parents and other adults, how to cope with friend relationships and how to say "no."

Two of the workshops included guest speakers, while teams of DECA students ran the other eight forums.

In one workshop, a mother described how her son died as a result of a drug overdose, and what her son and family went through for a long time, prior to his death.

Another parent and guest speaker told the story of her daughter's tragic death, as a result of being hit by someone driving under the influence of alcohol.

In both presentations, tears from many of the students were evident, while others listened intently with a sense of sadness and shock.

Representatives from the Day Top Center, young people recovering from substance abuse, described how their lives have changed as a result of simple experimentation that led to large-scale drug abuse.

The workshops became more effective when the DECA students performed skits to dramatize their problems to get the eighth graders to think about making the right decisions. Many of the forums were held behind closed doors, so the students could "open up" about problems they were having. In each of the workshops, the major focus was on the consequences of making the wrong decisions.

### College Men's Club Grant Applications Now Available

WESTFIELD - Douglas Sheehan, President of the College Men's Club of Westfield, has announced that applications for the Men's Club Scholarship Program are now available at the Westfield High School (WHS) Guidance Office.

Awarding scholarships for over 75 years, the club will again conduct its scholarship program. Since its inception, the organization has awarded scholarships in excess of \$2 million. Last year, qualified graduating senior boys were awarded scholarships totaling in excess of \$50,000.

The club raises its funds through dues of sustaining members, proceeds from its annual dinner dance and Golden Gloves boxing event. The annual dinner dance will be conducted in May at Baltusrol Country Club in Springfield. The club's annual Golden Gloves boxing event is conducted on the Friday preceding Thanksgiving each year at the Marriott Hotel at Newark Airport.

The scholarships are based on scholastic performance, community service, and need of Westfield resident who are graduates of WHS.

The grants are awarded to assist with undergraduate college expenses and are allotted in two payments. The first payment is awarded in June, preceding the applicants first semester in college. The second payment is awarded in December, during the holiday recess, when the recipients are asked to give a short talk concerning their first semester experiences at college.

The organization also presents two awards honoring Keith Hertell, 3rd and Melvyn Coren. The Hertell Award is presented to the student application who exhibits excellence

during his high school career at visual, performing arts or fine arts. The Coren Award is presented to the applicant who best exemplifies the attributes of Mr. Coren, namely, service and unselfish devotion to his community.

Both awards are accompanied by a cash stipend. They may be granted independent of the other scholarships awarded.

Applications must be completed and returned to the WHS Guidance Office on or before Monday, April 15. The Scholarship Committee of the Men's Club will meet with and interview the applicants in the spring.

## THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

### The Truth About Juvenile Justice

By MIRIAM BAMBERGER

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

With juvenile crime dominating headlines in recent years, the topic of juvenile justice has become a controversial issue. In a recent study conducted by DecisionQuest, a jury and trial consulting firm, 48.9 percent of the one thousand adults surveyed by telephone reported that they believe children under the age of 14 should be tried in juvenile courts, even if charged with murder.

On the contrary, school violence trends in the past decade have influenced many politicians to support stringent laws against juvenile offenders. In fact, 47 states have passed laws making it easier for courts to try accused criminals under the age of 18 as adults.

With the split in public opinion, it is important to know the facts about the juvenile justice system before taking a side.

What happens to a teen accused of a crime? Depending on the charges and the state laws, he or she can be tried either by the juvenile or adult justice system. The main difference between the two systems is that juvenile justice focuses more on rehabilitation and treatment, while a conviction in a regular court usually results in a prison sentence.

Juvenile crime is no longer limited to pick-pocketing and vandalism. In recent decades, teens, and even children, have been convicted of murder, rape, assault and armed robbery.

Last year, 14-year-old Lionel Tate was brought to trial for brutally killing a six-year-old girl. Tried as an adult, Tate was sentenced to life in prison without parole by a Florida judge. Many Americans were outraged by the sentencing of Tate, who committed the crime when he was only 12.

But what was the alternative? What kind of rehabilitation can "treat" a boy who deliberately killed a little girl by smashing in her head and abdomen with his foot?

In situations like this, "juvenile justice" can't offer any justice at all. Certainly not to the family of Tiffany Eunick, the murdered girl.

### Project Graduation Starts At Governor Livingston HS

BERKELEY HEIGHTS - February marks the fundraising kick-off for Governor Livingston High School's 14th Annual Project Graduation.

Each year, the communities of Berkeley Heights and Mountainside join efforts to raise over \$15,000 to provide an all-night drug and alcohol free event for the entire senior class on the evening of graduation.

The purpose of the event is two-fold: to provide a safe environment for the class to celebrate and to demonstrate it is possible to have a great time without the use of drugs and alcohol.

This year's Project Graduation will be held at Rutgers' University in Piscataway.

### Lisa Goodman Named To Brandeis Dean's List

WESTFIELD -- Lisa Goodman, a member of the Class of 2004 at Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., has been named to the Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2001-2002 academic year.

Lisa is the daughter of Dr. Jonathan and Jane Goodman. She is a Westfield High School graduate.

This is not a demand that jail sentences be thrown at every "bad kid" in America who has had a brush with the law. It has been proven that in certain situations, children who have suffered abuse or neglect may try to release their pent-up anger through violence.

Often, detention and treatment in a juvenile center proves effective in rehabilitating a teen who has exhibited violent behavior in the past. If a juvenile detention center can treat an underage offender and transform them into a responsible adult who is not a threat to society, then clearly that is a positive alternative to slapping a teen with a jail sentence.

The justice system is not a black and white issue. Youth is a critical time for character development, and while some young people appear to be mature and responsible by their teen years, others will demonstrate anger and violence through crime.

Many liberal Americans maintain that "kids will be kids," and that all young offenders should be tried as juveniles, receiving more lenient punishments for their crimes. Other Americans, with fierce conviction, demand "adult punishments for adult crimes," citing that regardless of age, people must be held accountable for their actions and receive their sentencing in adult courts just as any defendant would.

As in most cases, public opinion is split on the subject of juvenile justice. Both sides of the argument have justifiable points. However, wouldn't it be more logical to look at each juvenile case individually? In minor crimes, it seems more reasonable to say that juveniles can possibly be rehabilitated without serving an actual jail sentence.

But in crimes of extreme violence, what really is the difference between a young murdered and an older one? To try an accused juvenile in the correct justice system, their crime, motive, past history, and other contributing factors must be taken into consideration. To generalize all crime committed by youths as either "juvenile" or "adult" would hardly be just at all.

## University News

### Kassakian Qualifies For Dean's Listing

WESTFIELD - The University of Washington in Seattle, Wash. has reported that Steven Kassakian of Westfield has been named to the Dean's List for the College of Arts and Sciences and College of Ocean and Fisheries Sciences for the autumn quarter 2001.

### College of William & Mary Reveals Fall Dean's List

WESTFIELD - Katie Marie Behr, Laura Elisabeth MacNeil and Maura Woolston McMahon, all Westfield residents, were recently named to the Dean's List at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. for the fall 2001 semester.

### Joanna Koepfel Earns Dean's List Recognition

WESTFIELD - Joanna Koepfel has been placed on the Dean's List for the fall 2001 semester at the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

### Nicole E. Seib Qualifies For Quinnipiac Dean's List

WESTFIELD - Nicole E. Seib, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Scott Seib of Westfield, has been placed on the Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement for the fall 2001 semester at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Ct. A graduate of Westfield High School, Nicole is a member of Quinnipiac's Class of 2004. She is majoring in athletic training/sports medicine.

### Preliminary Applications Now Accepted for Pre-K Program

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Title I Program is now accepting preliminary applications for admission to the Title I Pre-Kindergarten Program.

Availability of the program for district students will be based on revised federal regulations and federal funding. The program is without cost to families of participating students.

Preschoolers selected for the program will be instructed by certified early childhood educators. Classes meet for half-day sessions, five days per week.

To be considered for the program, children must have reached their fourth birthday on or before Tuesday, October 1. A specially-trained staff will evaluate such areas as language abilities and large and small muscle development.

Title I is an individualized program varying through school districts, designed to make all children entering the public school system able to realize their full

academic potential.

Those youngsters selected, who could most benefit from the program. The Title I Pre-K has a preventative program, reducing the need for remedial help.

During the 1996-1997 school year, the Title I classes at Brunner Elementary School were integrated with some of the Preschool Handicapped classes at the school. This program has become known as the TIP-TOP Program (Toddlers in Preschool Together in One Program).

Increasingly, students with disabilities are being educated with their non-disabled peers in a least restrictive, more natural environment. One of the goals of TIP-TOP is to encourage an awareness of differences and increase sensitivity for all preschoolers.

Preliminary applications are available at every elementary school or by calling the Title I office at (908) 889-0559. The deadline for applications is Tuesday, April 30.

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