

As a concerned student at Northwest, I am writing to inform our community about a new club. Junior Jaelen Clarke has created a club entitled United Youth of Excellence. He initially wanted it to be named “Black Youth of Excellence,” but he was told he could not have that name because it had the word black in it.

I have a problem with this suppression of Jaelen’s First Amendment right to name his new club. This new club’s intention is to provide a safe space for people of color at Northwest, while still welcoming anyone of all races who is interested in participating.

At Northwest, and in our country, I feel that minorities are pushed aside. Unfortunate recent events over Thanksgiving now prove how there is underlying racism among some students within our school.

The minority enrollment rate at Northwest is 21 percent, while at Penn-Griffin School of the Arts is 72 percent minority and Smith High School minority enrollment is 92 percent.

According to Jaelen, this club’s purpose is to provide unique opportunities for students, such as visiting HBCUs (historically black colleges) and working together to solve problems.

“We talk too much about the things we want to change, but now this group will allow us to make these changes,” Clarke said.

So while this club will not be given its originally intended name, I do hope students of all races will join in participating. Northwest needs it now more than ever.

Respectfully,
Cadon Pinon, 9th grade

Northwest reacts to viral video

STAFF EDITORIAL



Photo by Melanie Huynh-Duc

Staff members from Northwest Horizons wears black to protest racism within Northwest. A racist video made by two Northwest students surfaced over Thanksgiving break, students took immediate action to protest the two students’ actions.

A video purporting to show two Northwest students on a racist rant surfaced over Thanksgiving break. Although the things said in that video are too offensive to be afforded the dignity of print, one thing is clear--the video has brought to the surface the vile racism that threatens to overtake our school.

“The disease is ignorance,” social studies teacher Jim Thompson said of the video. This is true, though the ignorance is all shielded behind a veil of hate. The video singled out a specific group of students at our school on the basis of

their race and called for unspeakable violence against them. By any standards, these actions are unacceptable.

Focusing too much on a single video, however, misses the point--for too long, our school has chosen to ignore the small minority of students who hold racist views, hoping that ignoring their presence would make the problems of racism disappear. Clearly, this approach has failed. In this sense, the discovery of the video may have been a blessing in disguise--we are now forced to confront the racism behind its creation.

Northwest prides itself on

being a place of inclusion, where students from all walks of life can come together for learning. However, when such offensive speech from our fellow classmates surfaces, it can drown out our far more significant strides towards inclusion and acceptance.

Through all of this, we need to remember that our actions can have an enormous impact. The video was an example of that impact being leveraged for hate, but we can do better.

The actions of two individuals do not define who we are as a school--rather, we are defined by the actions of the majority of students who want to make a positive change in our community. We’ve seen examples of such positivity in the days since the video’s release.

On the first day back at school, students organized over social media to wear all black in a show of solidarity, and other students have stepped up since then.

A movement to “spread the sticky notes” sprung up to promote inclusivity, spearheaded by sophomore Trinity De Risio, and sophomore Nick Volinski started a social media campaign, under the hashtag #BiggerThanNW, to “show the world and show our peers that not all of Northwest, not all of the city and not all of the world is filled with hate and racism.”

The new year will be difficult as we will be forced to grapple with uncomfortable subjects, but we believe that our school will emerge from this ordeal stronger and more united.

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Statement of Policy

Serving as a primary printed and online forum for student opinion, Northwest Horizons publishes four times each year published by the staff at Northwest Guilford High School. The paper is supported through community advisers.

Staff Editorials are unsigned. The stance of each editorial is voted upon in staff meetings, but requires the approval of the majority of the editorial board.

All members of the school community are encouraged to express their views. Letters to the editor must be signed when submitted.