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Follow the Urban Education Program on social media!

Instagram: wsu_urbaned

Facebook: Westfield State Urban Education Program
Editor’s Note

Dear Readers,

I am to present to you the first edition of Prism since over a decade! This collection of creative expressions has not been active since the early 2000s. It is an honor to help revive this amazing piece of history into today’s time.

It has been a challenging and exciting journey into putting this edition of Prism together. The archived copies of Prism became my primary source to look to in the moments of developing a modern version of Prism. As I read them, I realized how relatable numerous expressions were. Many of them discussed issues and subjects that are still relevant today: race, gender, violence, language and much more. Every edition of past Prisms embedded appreciation and celebratory elements highlighting aspects of identity, scholars, events and commentary; some of them reprinted material from other journals to exhibit to Prism readers.

Prism contains material that is not intended to offend or distress anyone. These creative expressions respectfully communicate, project and bring awareness to multiple issues or subjects. We highly encourage our readers to read the “To Our Readers” section where it describes in depth what topics will be discussed.

The goal of Prism’s comeback is to incorporate appreciation for all people and raise awareness of issues in our society and a worldwide perspective. Students are to contribute to it respectively and responsibly. However, students should have fun with it, especially with our special page submissions: “Cheers & Jeers,” “Shout-outs!” “Contemplation” and others.

I would like to thank all those who submitted and those who helped spread the word to support Prism. This publication would not be in tact without all of you who contributed into the success of this edition of Prism. Also, I would like to thank all the students who reached out to submit their work.

I hope you enjoy this collection of wonderful work from these talented students!

Ashley Westry
Editor in Chief
Spring 2019
What is Prism?

In its historical impact, Prism was a voice for students of the Westfield State University campus community: the Third World Organization (now, Multi-Cultural Students Association), Latino Association for Empowerment (LAfE), the Urban Education Program and students of Westfield State University (WSU) contributed to Prism. These students formed into a club to work on Prism’s recognition to the collegiate community; the objective to bring awareness to students and staff of WSU the issues or positive situations affecting our day-to-day lives.

This collection demonstrates an array of subjects: culture, politics, religion, identity (race, gender, disabilities, etc.) since its development. Students interested in submitting are not limited to incorporating them into their creative work. These subjects serve as a model of what students have expressed.

The goal of this publication is to be inclusive to all students of the campus community, as well as give students the experience of the submission process. We aim for students to have a safe space to express themselves through their work.

Prism contains variety of creative works:

Drawings, sketches & photography (landscapes, your artwork, etc.)

Poetry & shorter creative works such as: sketches, micro-fiction, vignettes, etc.

Commentary, Quotes, entertainment columns, articles, opinion editorials

Recipes (beverages, desserts, food, etc.)

Club advertisements

If you are interested in submitting, please be aware that there are requirements for the digital format of your submissions. If you are submitting written work, please submit it as a word document or a PDF. If it is a drawing or sketch, please scan or take a picture of it and submit it as a JPEG image.

For more information, email: prismurbaneducation@gmail.com
To Our Readers…

Dear Readers,

We hope you take the time to read the following:

This edition of Prism has many themes, which strive to emphasis the exploration of the world, human nature, love, violence, chaos and more. This edition of prism has content that is not to distress or offend our readers. These creative expressions comment on the subjects at hand respectively: sexual violence, mental health such as depression and PTSD. Prisms intention is to promote diversity and inclusivity, as well as create a safe space for students to express themselves creatively.

We hope you enjoy reading through these amazing works by students here in Westfield State University. These students have worked hard to express their talents and interests. We encourage students to resubmit to future rounds of submissions for Prism.

If you are interested in submitting to Prism, look out for posters or emails! If you have any questions, send an email to prismurbaneducation@gmail.com

Thanks again to all those who contributed to making Prism successful!

Ashley Westry
Editor in Chief
Spring 2019
Prism Special Pages

Cheers & Jeers

Look out to submit anonymous statements or quotes about Cheers, good or positive comments/experiences, or Jeers, negative or positive experiences or comments you have about anything of your choice.

Cheers...

- To all the Professors that understand the college struggle!
- Bless the maintainers that have to put up with us!
- To the good vibes and positivity coming our way!

Jeers...

- To snow storms: If you are not going to cancel class, you're not wanted!
- The cold weather that doesn't want to go away....
- To all the exams and papers due on the same day...*internally screaming*

Shout-outs!

Look out to submit statements that go from funny quotes, ideas, inside jokes, or thanking anyone. Shout-outs can be anything you want to say in your shout-out! Unlike Cheers & Jeers, this will not be anonymous. Your name and year of graduation is listed below your quote.

Shout-out!

To Maryah for always being a sweetheart when everyone comes into the Urban Education Program office. You have such a bright personality and you're always making everyone laugh. You are amazing!

- Ashley Westry

OR

Massara, remember that one time at the roller-skating rink? That will forever be one of the best memories ever!

-Ashley Westry
Self Portrait

Make my eyes emeralds
Even when he tells you they are
Mudslides.

Sunshine hair, a golden aura,
A crown of stars falling
On a dim frame.

Supple, malleable, blushing lips
Waiting to be kissed,
Wanting to be loved.

You can’t miss the lines,
Overworked and stressed,
Crossing like roadwork.

Boney teeth hide behind flushed curtains,
Shining like children
But they should have the force of a great white.

Alyssa Mathieson
Class of 2020
Painting by Erin Coulter
WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME?

~Do you look at our difference in color of skin, but do we not bleed the same color?

~Am I different because of my religion, but do we not both praise and believe in something?

~Do we speak a different language, but do our tongues not both express what we want to say?

~Are we different because of our sexual preference, but do we not love & care for our partners?

~Do you look at me differently because of what I wear and how I talk, but are we not expressing ourselves in the same way?

~Do you look at our difference in music and entertainment, but do we not both enjoy and understand it in our own ways?

~Do we have a difference in the way our ancestors lived, but do we not both live life as it is now?

~Are we different of age, but are we not both people who go through similar stages?

~Do we not share the same gender, but do we not both go through similar love & pain, and want to understand the other?

~Is our amount of money different, but do we not both need our families for support.

Are we not humans who deserve the same respect and equality when we look at our differences that we give to someone who is the same?

-Cristina R. Gonzalez

2000

“Not only have we become blinded to the reality of other peoples and cultures, we have lost sight of our own. We measure someone’s worth in dollars. Seeing the world in “first/third” terms reinforces this bias.”

DEATH

YOU’RE DEAD

YOU’RE ALIVE

WHAT COULD IT BE

MAKE UP YOUR MIND

ARE YOU GOING TO LEAVE ME

OR WILL YOU BE HERE FOR

ETERNITY

ANONYMOUS
repurposing

she takes her fingers,
the ones she once covered in paint
smearing them all over a bright
white piece of paper
to create a colorful scene composed
entirely by her fingers,
now using them to pinch at her hips
locking eyes with herself
in the mirror she chews
on her bottom lip
taking her hands,
the ones she used to mold her sandcastles,
using them to claw at her stomach
using her lungs to shoot
out a stream of warm air
into the bubble wand
her giggle exploding
as she’s chases the soapy circles
around the yard
those lungs that she used to exhale
now suck in tirelessly
exposing every last rib
until she can play them like a xylophone
features that once provided her
with countless smiles
she now uses to pick apart
a beautiful body she can’t
stomach to live in

Samantha Rideout
Class of 2020
help wanted

My sister taught me to fight my own
Battles. I tried but often
Failed. I would always end up as purple as my birthstone.

Coming home coughing,
Bloodied and bruised, wishing
To just be forgotten.

Life with clouded vision
Was so incredibly
Dull and bleak, with tears that glisten.

So write me an elegy,
Say I was a broken amethyst gem,
Say I was just fucked up, mentally.

How to survive in society: an unwritten algorithm
I clearly never fucking learned, so go ahead,
Bury me in a broken, invisible diadem.

They tell me to come forward,
To confess my demons like it’s so fucking
Easy. But, they’ve mostly been suppressed.

Have you ever seen something so absolutely gutting?
Something you just can’t erase from your mind,
Like that time you could hear my bones crushing.

There had been days where the light outshined
The darkness, but it never lasted,
Probably because of all the meds I was prescribed.

Next time you see someone who has acted
Like they’re perfectly fine,
Be the person they needed to be placid.

Alyssa Mathieson

Class of 2020
A Sister's Thinking Soul
By Sekeena Rivers

I've heard other African and Latino-Americans speak,
I've been moved by the words and felt they were my own,
I've read books by African-American authors and thought, "I could do this too."
I've said to myself over and over again, "African woman there is something inside of you."
I think it's restless spirits and haunting cries of beating, rapes and lynchings left untold,
I think it's anger of undocumented slaves sold,
I think it's inner rage and peace fighting deep inside,
I think it's hate tearing through my eyes,
I think it's revenge wanting its due day, ripping through my soul,
I think it's Columbus, the KKK, Bush,

Quayle and Reagan too,
I think it's sisters and brothers, African and Latino,
passing a blunt,
I think it's sisters and brothers, African and Latino,
tappin' a 40 oz.,
I think it's Ice Cube, Bobby Brown, Erik B and Rakim, the Ghetto Boys and more telling them it's okay, by endorsing the poison they're drinking today!
I think it's too much Coochie Poppin', Hoochie Knockin', Beatin' of "Punks", Shakin' of Rumps and not enough awareness for the need of a Revolution!
I think it's anger about Club 2000 and the disrespect they thrive on and promote,
I think it's words like hoes, bitches, hoochies, skins and honey dip constantly coming out of young brothers and sisters throats.
I think it's anger over AIDS, now a
"minority" disease,
I think it's condescending white
people, with patronizing empathy and
ignorant stereotypical stares,
I think it's the media constantly
waiting to depict those of us who are
ignorant (lacking knowledge and just
unaware),
I think it's anger because sisters and
brothers don't really know what the
other one needs,
I know the tears I cry,
I know the screams I scream,
I know the pain that hurts,
I know the police that I curse,
I know the fear of watching my
people die away,
I know no matter how much I talk
there is so much more to say.
change of season

the trees swaying in the wind
snow drifting onto the barren sidewalk
flowers sprouting up from the dirt
the sun glimmering over the sand married within the pointy rocks

are all reminders of them
for they have not been here
but when I am reminded of the beautiful things

ey are here

he is the snow on my front lawn
she is the flowers coming up from the dirt
they are the sun glimmering over the sand

i am no long angry

Courtney Smith
Class of 2019
Here Lies Our Young Mistakes

Only the warm sound of sunshine
cooking your freckled skin while
your cousins laugh, burying themselves
in sandcastles made from clay-ridden grains
and mud from the bottom of Long Lake
that was once home to sea critters and lily pad stems
comes from this sacred place, home to
childhood memories of talent shows and
games of shark where your cousin, Jimmy,
grabbed at ankles on the dock and snatched children
into the waters, making you a shark too,
and to teenage secrets of paddle boat excursions and
what was said in the fort with the cast iron bench
so deep in the woods that we can no longer find it;
if only our parents knew what we were so afraid they
might find out the day that Pat slapped Connor
across the face so hard, his fingerprints could be seen
in the skin of his adolescent cheek, his tears
disinfecting the cut below his eye when he didn’t fight back,
and it was then that we learned what real secrecy meant.

Meaghan Davis
Class of 2021
Painting by Lauren Rinaldi
me too.

He covered her mouth
So she couldn’t yell for help.
The weight of his body on hers
Was too much to handle.
She felt as though she’d
Die.

Me too.
Now he is praised.
He is being rewarded
For the smart and brave
Man he is.
They know what he did.
They know he hurt her.

Me too.
She stands before him
And reminds him of the night
He stripped her of her
Innocence.
The night he stripped her
Of her trust.

Me too.
The country knew his name.
They did not know hers.
Now that they do
They shame her.
They say it was her fault
She led him on.

Me fucking too.

Alyssa Mathieson

Class of 2020
Artwork by Lauren Rinaldi
When my Mom Dances

Crates of her old costumes crowd the attic, stacked
Under bunches of ribbons she would put in my hair,
they always looked better on her.
Her eyes that glow an acid blue, add a certain attraction
that compliments a room with her blonde hair that sways
down in questionable perfection and tan skin that resembles
the shade of a perfectly toasted golden marshmallow.
We used to dance at parties and weddings to music; when her
same 3 favorite songs came on, every time, she would take my hand and swing me
around the table to the dance floor with a smile so big
she looked, to me, like a movie star.
We haven’t seen those days in a while; not since her sight started resembling
the clarity of a dream one is trying to recall.
And blinking a few times no longer unstrained her focus.
She could no longer drive me to soccer practice
or go outside because the sun became too bright.
By now, she’s used to unsteady steps; swaying like a ship
through a night storm, lit only by moon.
Stunned by the uncertainty of her direction, denial is long past a choice;
instead, an alarm clock that doesn’t tell us when
it will go off, for her to wake up one day and see
that the lights will still be out.
My Dad reads her the menu at restaurants and I
take her for a walk every Sunday.
I tell her all the time how beautiful she is and because she can’t
see her own reflection; I’m afraid she’s stopped believing it
forced to live everyday as though walking after dusk
with a broken flashlight. Two broken flashlights.
I sometimes sneak to the kitchen to see her
in the one place she takes unguided steps; her Neverland.
She loses herself under the dozen lights on the ceiling that
wash out the room with white. Her socks slide on the new tile
swaying around the granite island as though sinking into a song on replay.
She pulls the boiled potatoes from the stove,
her head facing sideways to shield away the steam as
muscle memory takes her arm and leads her to the sink,
before she back steps to her cookbook and suddenly,
I see my Mom dancing again.
Cabinets clink shut, stuffed with prescription lenses
that she trades for her reading ones.
Silence is interrupted by the chime of pots and pans
when she fidgets with the utensils to find the one she needs.
She’s the only person I’ve met that uses sound to see.
But watching her cook is like a symphony with no sound at all;
she looks like Mom.

I flashback to the other day when she went out for a walk, my chest sunk deep into my stomach at the sight of her guide stick hanging helplessly on the wall; as her way of refusing reality. Her voice echoes in my head, “It’s like looking through a cloud.” She is a glow in the dark who lives as a candle but walks like the flame, so sure, that no one notices she sees as if her open eyes are closed. Yet I’m the one lost at the sight of her living in a day dream. The aroma of chicken, basil and other spices warm the air and she starts to set the table because Dad will be home soon. Stunned at her glorious routine I wonder: What is it like to have dying eyes? I would never ask. I picture it as a fading flicker, teasing like tinker bells light just before she goes out. I’ve never seen darkness walk before; and when it dances, there’s an untouchable beauty to the natural grace of every motion.

Her voice picks my cheek up from my knuckles when she shouts for me and I jump; dinner is ready. But I’m standing right next to her.

Samantha Sturtevant
Class of 2019
More Than Just Down in the Dumps

Like a child at the beach for the first time, 
the waves seem rough, but you can handle them 
with your strong bones from the milk you drink 
every night at dinner, doctor's orders, 
approaching the loud crashes of sea salt on sand, 
determined, getting toes wet, then ankles, then knees 
when it strikes you, pulling you under 
and spitting you back out with all of the black weeds, 
you cough up the ocean, spitting it out on the sand, 
you stood no chance, and you want to give up, 
go eat your picnic lunch with the seagulls, but 
they will laugh at you if you do that - 
what's the fun of driving to the beach 
if you're not there to swim? - so you hesitate 
as you dip your toes, then ankle deep, in 
up to your waist, watching the waves 
charging toward you, brace yourself, as it swallows you 
whole, tossing you around before you can come up for air, 
choking on it, it's difficult to swim in the black waters, 
but you want to make it out alive - 
or do you?

Meaghan Davis

Class of 2021
What is it in a name?
When said aloud it almost
Brings us to another place?
How we have the tendency
To associate
Sound with artifacts
Feeling the history
trail off your lips before
The reverberations in the air
Trigger a sequence
Without even being aware
If all we ever had
Was sound to rely on
Names would be not just
A manifestation of pathos
But symbols
That represent
A hundred years
In a lifetime

Joe D'Agostino
Class of 2019
My Pride

The artist sits beside me on a rolling stool, with the photograph in his hand, and I lie back onto the cool table. He sets it down beside me and begins to clean my arm with what smells like iodine.

I stare at the ceiling as he glances at the photograph again.

“Why a male lion?” he asks.

I knew it was only a matter of time before he questioned the choice. Men would never understand.

“Did you know that lionesses actually do all the hunting?” I pause, and he says nothing. “It’s to remind me of my own strength.”

He nods his head, and I chuckle. Men could never understand.

By Aimee Funk

Class of 2019
Artwork by Lauren Rinaldi
Navigating PTSD

Expulsion is mere warning
to you, with your optimistic bias
that shines in conversations
of murder you think you get away with.

The thought ricochets inside me,
shudders me to know you’d come back,
your ego your leader, controller
of a criminal mind.

Constantly gnawing my brain
when I feel falsely at peace
in the life I try so hard to own again.
Your presence, here or gone,
a burden still.

Feign a look out the window,
my eyes wind further behind me,
chin finds a perch on my shoulder
momentarily, seeking what I hope
isn’t there - you.

Double-takes of orange work boots,
especially those falling off, two sizes
too large, since you think girls
judge performance by feet.

The men carry chocolate locks
unkempt, wire beards with grime -
took you forever to grow that? -
but none with you clown nose,
a gift from your toxic mother,
perhaps to all those who wish to avoid you,
an indication that results in a deep breath.

Meaghan Davis
Class of 2021
Puerto Rico

By Evelyn Rodrigues, Class of 1997

Mi Puerto Rico llora por su gente, cries for its people
The sky, it cries for mi Puerto Rico
Puerto Rico with severed leaves from palm trees
Lloran they cry on the streets and houses
Mi Puerto Rico, where the home of its people
was carried by the cries of torrent winds
Its people in stretched lines in mi Puerto Rico
hours of the clock tick by
Lloran su gente of mi Puerto Rico
their cars let out cries
Its people finally grasp the fuel to feed them
Su gente, its people of mi Puerto Rico
Darkness now the everlasting company of its people
su gente have no control over daylight
The artificial light for millions of su gente
its people absent of its radiance in mi Puerto Rico
The coquis lloran with its people
Coquí coquí look at your home in mi Puerto Rico
Su gente lloran like your melody coquí coquí
You sing cries of your home in Puerto Rico like su gente,
its people lloran that su Puerto Rico
flourished with palmas the palm trees
luscious leaves of the palmas stripped from its trees
It's a winter in the tropics of Puerto Rico
Mi Puerto Rico cries like its people
Alguna de su gente some of its people,
floating boats botes flotando en mi Puerto Rico
Lloran familias
lloran su gente en mi Puerto Rico
Its people cry, coquí coquí
Donde estás coquí?
Where are you among las aguas
the waters that form oceans
que forman en la tierra
of the soil en mi Puerto Rico
coquí coquí su gente lloran
they cry coquí coquí
la isla debajo de las aguas
the island under the waters
coquí coquí coquí donde está la salida
where is the exit coquí?
El boletín de salida the exit sign
points to the ocean washed streets de mi Puerto Rico
El techo, the ceiling of some houses
De algunos de las casas en pedazos
in pieces scattered throughout Puerto Rico
Algunas casas some houses en pedazos
completamente completely
Mi Puerto Rico en pedazos
Coquí do you see?
Do you see the child’s peluche
Their stuffed animal en el fango
drenched in mud coquí?
Do you see las photos de una abuelita
alive but soaked in las aguas
Now muerta, dead flotando en las aguas
Coquí coquí do you hear the cries of la gente
the people of mi Puerto Rico
Su gente their people cry, lloran coquí
Lloran por comida por agua
for food and water they don’t have
Comida y agua running scarce
Coquí coquí sweat trickles down their bodies
like the calling of their tears coquí coquí
Hay días days for la agua to arrive
para lavar ropa y bañarse to wash clothes and bathe
Donde está la ayuda coquí?
Where is the help for mi Puerto Rico?
Mi Puerto Rico y su gente lloran coquí
Coquí coquí coquí coquí
Los arboles coquí
The trees de tamarindo, aguacate y mangó
Expelled from the ground with
Its roots alacranes,
legs extended a el cielo
las rootas contorted alacranes coquí
Contorted corazones
Hearts de su gente of mi Puerto Rico
Mi gente mi gente de mi Puerto Rico coquí
Lloran lágrimas tears de fango
tears of tilted poles and
tears of wires stretched
de los ojos de su gente Puertorriqueña
Yet la bandera de mi Puerto Rico
Still sways en el cielo
Mi coquí mi Puerto Rico
La Isla del Encanto now La Isla de Los Llantos
Mi Puerto Rico is the island of cries coquí
Coquí Coquí Coquí

By Ashley Westry
MUSIC REVIEW
By La-Toya K. Wilson

What’s up music lovers, here it is, a new section geared for the thing that makes us wind & grind, bump & stomp, move & groove—Music.

In this section, I’ll be giving you the latest on Reggae, R & B, and Rap artists and releases. Since this is the department debut, and my first time writing a entertainment section, please bear with me. Each Prism issue will try to showcase certain artists and give you a list of new artists and albums.

I’ll start off with the music I know and love the most—Reggae.

Does anyone know about the new artist Sizzla, who’s sizzlin up the air waves? He’s the artist that sings that new single “Black woman and child.” The title alone tells you that he’s not coming from the standpoint of many new Reggae artists who want to “Tear down yuh wall!” or “Stab out yuh meat.” Sizzla’s songs are rich in lyrics, and often address what the African Diaspora, as a collective people, need to be about. Go out in full support and pick up a couple of his 45s, or his new album, Praise Ye Jah; it’s worth it.

Now, if you’re in that naughty mood, and want to wind & grind, check out Lady Saw—her new album Passion speaks for itself.

Lady Saw holds nothing back when she sings, especially about what she wants and doesn’t want when it comes to being with a man. She comes at you with lyrics like “Long til me bend” or “A bwoy wan me bow and me tell him fe flee.” In other words, size & length make a difference, she’s not putting anything where it doesn’t belong, and she doesn’t need to be with you. Lady Saw is the Jamaican Lil Kim, but with more class and style in expressing her independence and dominance.

There are many new R&B and Rap artists popping up, adding to those who are already on the scene. There is a lot of collaborating going on, and many artists are being featured on different albums. Since there are so many artists that I enjoy listening to and can only name but a few, here is a list of new albums that I believe need to be mentioned.

New Artists
Rome- Don’t underestimate, good album
Uncle Sam- He worked with Boyz II Men, need I say more
Davina- Very talented, self taught.
Chico DeBarge- Six years in jail does something to a man. Pick it up!!

Collaborating Artists
L.S.G. - Gerald Levert, Keith Sweat, Johnny
Gill- Sensual.
The Firm- Nas, Foxy Brown, AZ, Nature-
Undecided.
K-Ci & JoJo - These brothers can sing.

New Albums

Boyz II Men - Beau-ti-ful
Joe- Sings what every woman wants in a
good man- Real Love.
Busta Rhymes- Crazy Man, album is all
that.
Bobby Brown- Time to Retire & help
Whitney.
Wyclef Jean- His solo album is definitely
carnival time.

That’s it for this time—hope you enjoyed
the first section on music. Look for the next
issue of Prism where I will showcase new
R&B artists. If you enjoyed the section and
have comments on what to put in the next
issue, you can Email me at:
latoyawilson@hotmail.com

I’m looking forward to hearing from you
La-Toya Wilson
Haiku #3
The storm weeps slanting, translucent drops sighing gutturally for the fallen trees.

_Ihsan Muhammad
Class of 1997_

Ignorance
An ignorant person is a puny, shaggy dog all confidence within the home fence Whether I harry it, or leave it be— behold—it still barks at me

_Ihsan Muhammad_

Epiphany
When mine eyes alight upon your dark, virile flesh my thoughts turn to moist, fertile soil and I dream of rushing, like poor, non-unionized farmers to harvest your crop

_Ihsan Muhammad
Class of 1997_

The Ants Go Marching Tongue
By Tongue
A passionate, lingering kiss is a pack of hungry ants trooping through freshly trimmed blades, in search of a carelessly dropped morsel— instead, stumbling upon an unattended family picnic.

_Solana Bailey_

There, still lay the coals no longer smoldering in that ruby-red heat radiating the radiant remembrance of their beloved

Save for absence, they would have burned until aye careless separation surely dealt them die For those brief, searing flashes of the guilty arsonist were not enough to keep the fire ablaze.

But those same coals lay waiting in all posthumous anxiousness for the Friend with that familiar spark to set them alight once more to suffer again the pleasure of burning for love

_Ihsan Muhammad
Class of 1997_
VOTER APATHY
*By Jaime Visocchi, 2000
-Editorial Assistant-

Voting is an important responsibility in a nation. Everyone’s vote makes a difference no matter what you think. The twenty-sixth amendment, which was ratified on the first of July, 1971, granted the right to vote to all citizens 18 years of age and older. This amendment was brought into being with the intent that people of eighteen years and older would vote and help to decide who would lead our nation.

Which brings me to my point: that non-voters have more impact on and responsibility for bad government than they realize. Apathy has taken away the power of the people. By not voting, you not only silence yourself, but silence the nation from trying to work together as one. We are in a society where we can make the difference. The right to vote is given to the people so that they can form a government that exercises their will.

Voter silence leads to potential death. When people do not communicate there is no understanding of people’s views which leads to chaos and confusion. If we as a nation do not learn to communicate, people will suffer because of the ignorance of others when their needs are not met.

People who have the attitude, “Oh, my vote is just one vote, it won’t make a difference,” are responsible for the current immoral government. If every individual adopted this position then the community would never get better and move forward.

People over time have demanded the right to vote because they were denied the privilege before. Now that there are amendments like the fourteenth, the fifteenth, the nineteenth, the twenty-fourth, and the twenty-sixth, there should be no reason for the non-participation of people in an election. It is foolish to abuse what you have received out of hardship. The right to vote is abused by many people through ignorance. I hope you all have learned why it is important to vote and speak your mind for a system working for the citizens instead of against them.

"He who hesitates is lost"
-A person who spends too much time thinking about what to do misses the chance to act at all.

*Don’t just think about the right that you have to vote. Go out and exercise that right whenever an opportunity arises.
the start of my grandparents fifty year marriage

the hallways flooded
with smiling faces
like a shoal of salmon flopping together up stream.
six hours of mandatory hard labor
spent tirelessly scribing notes
jerking up heads
and yanking apart eyelids
came to a close
as they wriggled their way towards the double doors.
amidst the sea of hurried bodies, he stood.
standing a head above the rest
at a handsome six foot something
he stood with his gaze fixated on a particular sight
eyes pacified behind his thick square lenses
that rested upon his nose
the focus of his gaze was tight
as he chewed at the inside of his cheek
whilst neurotically picking at his thumb skin.
he was standing at the start of her locker row
standing there
admiring the girl
that could make his stomach flip
as though it were a golden pancake
being flung from the base of a smooth black skillet.
her warm smile glowing
naturally aligned pearly whites beaming
she piled her books to leave.
he felt his stomach creeping upwards in his body
a slow slither through his core
settling in his throat.
adjusting his books
that fumbled in his warm wet palms
he took a step towards her.
“hello.” he said.
a quick up down and a squinting of the eyes was her reply.
“i got this for you,”
reaching down into the pocket of his
worn brown slacks
he revealed a tiny plastic bag.
“i won it in my cracker jacks box.”
extending the ring her way.
quizzically eyeing the silver circle
her gaze floating back up to his.
clearing his throat he continued on
“i was thinkin’
that maybe you’d like to accompany me
to the homecoming dance?” he said
placing the ring in her hand.
twisting the plastic circle around in her fingers
a low chuckle emerged from within her
without so much as a word
she flicked the ring right at his nose
quickly twirled on her heel
and made her exit towards the double doors.
he watched as she grew smaller
and smaller
until she was gone.
his heartbeat echoed off the lockers
kneeling down, he picked up the ring
pausing on one knee
examining it in his fingers
the same way she had
unbeknownst to him
he would do the same once again
and that time
she wouldn’t throw it.

Samantha Rideout
Class of 2020
La Isla Del Encanto

Where the gray paved streets
Invite you a un mundo, a world
Of vibrant pigments.

The street lights of el Moro,
Naranja como una puesta del sol
Orange like the sunsets of la isla.

And the sound of bronze coqui’s singing
Their wonderous melody
Debajo de las estrellas
Y brillan como perlas en la oscuridad.
Under the gleaming, pearl-like stars in the night.

I miss the way la bandera Puertorriqueña
Waves in the air as if it was a crimson striped beacon
Permanente para recordarnos quien somos.
Y donde nosotros somos,
Permanently reminding us who we are
And where we come from,
With the indigo triangle that holds the star
Que nos dicen que somos unidos como gente, una familia.
That says we are united as a people, a family.

Then, I think, even if I wasn’t born en la isla
Con las frutas de parcha dorada alrededor mío,
With the golden fruits of passion fruit surrounding me,
My home is there, in my grandmother’s backyard
Ahí con los gallos con sus plumas pintadas de color negro y marrón
Where the roster’s feathers are painted in black and brown,

Y en las melodías de la guitara que toca la canción del Borinquén
And the Melody of the guitar that play the song Borinquén.

En mi corazón rojo vive mi descendencia Puertorriqueña,
Y en mis venas el orgullo de ella.
In my red heart lives my Puerto Rican descendance
And in my veins the pride I have of it.

By Ashley Westry
It Just Had To Be You

In 2004, shortly after winning America's Next Top Model, although Eva Marcelle was elated, yet perplexed. Thus, she asked Tyra Banks, "Tyra you could've chose the other girls in the competition. Tell me. Why me?" Banks simply replied, "Why not you?" Years later, Marcelle recalled, "After this, I stopped asking myself why me?"

Just like Marcelle, we all have asked ourselves why us. Whatever the circumstance, we may ask ourselves, "Why am I diagnosed with cancer?", "Why am I bullied?", and so forth. However, in spite of us asking ourselves why it had to be us, just know that it just had to be us. According to God, it just had to be us because God chose us. Thus, God set us apart for a greater purpose. For instance, 1 Peter 2:9 declares: "For you are a royal priesthood, a holy nation. You were called out of darkness into His (God's) marvelous light.

Besides using scripture, I would like to highlight a few women in the bible who probably asked themselves why us. These women are Mary the mother of Jesus, Rahab, Miriam, Deborah, Esther, and Abagail. These women exemplify that when God chooses you, He chooses you for a purpose on purpose. Sometimes the purposes may be to feed the hungry or clothe the naked.

The next time you ask yourself "why me?" first ask yourself "why not me?" Then declare the scriptures that state it just had to me because "I am firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Romans 8:29), "I am more than a conqueror through God who loves me"(Romans 8:37), "I am the head and not the tail"(Deuteronomy 28:13), and "I am first and not last"(Matthew 20:16).

My beloved, just thank God that it had to be you because now you can turn your tests into testimonies, and your clouds into rainbows. Along with Marcelle, since it had to be you, now you can stop doubting yourself. Now see God's purpose.

Radiance Flowers

Class of 2019
Artwork by Lauren Rinaldi
Paris

Crowded halls, what look like tourist fleets,
Push and stumble to sneak a peek.
There resides Mona, in all her glory,
The most famous woman in the world,
Noticeably lonely.
The City of Love shows its heartbeat,
If one desperately searches within the streets.
Past the cameras and poses – the vendors and tourists,
In the dark of the night,
Upon a cobblestone sidewalk,
The accordion’s pulse wafts throughout the twilight.

By Kaylee Bayersdorfer
Class of 2020
Artwork by Lauren Rinaldi
Shout-Outs!

- Shout out to Réo for always being there when I cry.
- Shout out to hot oven cookies!
- Shout out to the Urban Education Program for allowing me the opportunity to further my education!

Tatyana
Class of 2018

- Shout out to God for always giving me another day to live to see the world in a different way. He has always been there in my darkest of days.
- Shout out to all my friends, family and faculty who have helped me through my failures and achievements. I send you all the love!

Ashley Westry
Editor in Chief

- Shout out to everyone who has helped with the success in my education!

Liza
Class of 2020
### Cheers to...

- All the good friendships....
- To the semester ending soon!
- To the beautiful spring weather....
- To the class of 2019, congratulations you’re almost there!
- To my crush for saying hi to me and smiling at me when I did not have the guts to....

### Jeers to...

- The struggle of this semester!
- To the $#*%@ weather....
- To the summer classes....
- To puffy eyes and runny noses...thank you colds and allergies!
- All the negative vibes and failures....
Honorary Alumni of Prism

George Ramirez

Class of 1998

George Ramirez has worked on multiple publications of Prism between 1994 to 1997 as the cover designer. He also served as an editorial assistant in one edition of Prism. He is currently a Professor in Westfield State University's Art Department. He is an alum of the Urban Education Program. Thank you for being a part of Prism and paving the way for future Prisms!

Michelle Pescetta

Class of 2004

Michelle Pescetta is an Alum of the Urban Education Program. She has helped in contributing to Prism. Thank you for helping Prism excel!
George Ramirez is a Professor of Graphic Design and Animation for the Art Department at Westfield State University. He has also taught Computer Graphics for the Urban Education Summer Program. Though he has been trained in the Fine Arts (Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Ceramics), he chose Graphic Design as a course of study because it integrated creativity and technology. George works with spiritual concepts in his digital 3D renderings, which is a series he is revamping for a 2019–2020 series.

Past Prisms George worked on

Here are some of George’s amazing work

Ganesha Yantra, 3D Model and Render, 2016
Obatala Altar, 3D Model and Render, 2016
Michelle Pescetta is an alum of Westfield State University’s Art Department, as well as, the Urban Education Program and currently works at WSU as the Administrative Assistant for the Art and Theatre Departments. Being an artist and working in the art department has been a great opportunity to mesh her life’s passion with her full time job. For Michelle, being able to give back to students and the WSU community on a daily basis, is a special thing. The Urban Education Program was a huge part of Michelle’s success at WSU because it was her support system and her family away from home. Even now as a working professional, UEP is near and dear to her heart, as she serves on the Joan E. Fuller and Urban Education Scholarship committee making sure that exceptional students are recognized and rewarded for their scholarship and stellar leadership.

When Michelle is not at WSU, she creates art with her 11 year old daughter Gabriella in her studio at the Indian Orchard Mills, as well as holds creative workshops that are designed to encourage others to open up their creative side and develop their own unique artistic style. For Michelle, art is an individual journey that is influenced by so many things, each unique to the artist. When the art is shared with others it becomes a connector, a way of communicating the many intricacies in life that words may not be able to touch upon. To see more art by Michelle you can follow her on Facebook @meeshkafineartstudio and Instagram @meeshka.fine.art.

Here are more of Michelle’s beautiful work

*Noise,* “8x10” painting

*Connections,* 8” X 10”

*Untitled,* 48” X 36” painting
Acknowledgments

Michael Filas                     English Department Internship Coordinator, English Instructor
Maureen Halloran                 Administrative Assistant of the Ely Campus Center
Paige Hermansen                  English Instructor
George Layng                     English Department Internship Coordinator, English Instructor
Leah Nielson                     English Instructor
Aaliyah Mercer                   Urban Education Staff Assistant, Admission Counselor
Catherine Savini                 Director of the Reading and Writing Center, English Instructor
Regina Smialek                   English Department Administrative Assistant
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