



U-HIGH MIDWAY

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Black Joy: Celebrating hope, spirit

MLK workshops prioritize student participation

by **ANATHEA CARRIGAN**
MANAGING EDITOR

The Black Students' Association annual Martin Luther King Jr. assembly on Jan. 13 used the theme of Black Joy to highlight the resilience and enduring spirit and hope of Black people and culture in the face of discrimination, racial violence, injustice and inequity.

In the opening speech which was screened to all workshops, BSA president Tech Nix introduced the theme.

"We chose this theme because we felt that black suffering and violence had been circulated and talked about all the time, especially for the past two years," Tech said. "Typically the MLK assembly is centered around the civil rights movement, but we felt this year needed something different. Our goal this year has been to try and celebrate black joy and culture as opposed to our suffering and oppression."

This year, coronavirus protocols tampered with BSA's ability to hold the traditional MLK assembly in Gordon Parks Assembly Hall. As a result, BSA restructured the assembly into small workshops led by members of U-High identity and affinity clubs.

These workshops encouraged participation and discussion between students, something that was challenging with the traditional assembly format.

"We also wanted to create smaller spaces for students to engage more with the discussions we and



MIDWAY PHOTO BY MATTHEW MCGEHEE

MUSIC AND MLK. Juniors Camille Bryant and Michael Ewing talk about Tupac Shakur during the Black Students' Association workshop on Jan. 13. During the workshop students also discussed other major Black influences in the music industry.

other affinity groups were trying to bring," Tech said in an interview. "We know a lot of students check out during assemblies so we really wanted to find ways to engage with students more meaningfully."

Each of these workshops focused on different elements of Black joy. The workshops had varying success, noted by workshop leaders

and attendees.

For their workshop, members of the Asian Students' Association hosted a Jubilee Spectrum, an activity where students engaged in discussion about Asian representation in media, sports and politics.

Despite trying to encourage participation, workshop leader Mahi Shah still felt student attendees we-

re reluctant to speak up.

"I know some of you guys don't necessarily want to be here, but the more participation we have the better it will be," she acknowledged during the workshop.

Mahi recognized the smaller workshop structure could have made people uncomfortable with participating.

"It was just really hard to get people to engage," Mahi said. "I think people were scared to participate. People are already reluctant to participate in classes of 10 people, so I could understand why it was intimidating to speak up in front of 100 people."

Senior Kai McManus attended the workshop hosted by Latinos Unidos, where students explored how spoken-word poetry and the media have been used to acknowledge the Afro-Latino identity.

"Our workshop was extended last minute, and our presenters really didn't know about that, so we just kinda stood around for awhile," Kai said. "But the workshop itself was nice — we analyzed a poem."

Junior Steven Sun attended the Black Students' Association workshop, which showcased major Black influences in music.

"I liked the interactiveness of the workshop because they went in depth with a lot of the music stuff," Steven said. "And then they had us choose and create playlists with people."

Students from Young Women of Color, Spectrum, Mixed Ethnicity Student Union and Students with Disabilities Association also presented workshops.

Tech said the workshop format is something BSA may consider continuing in future years, dependent on the impact of COVID-19.

"Overall, the workshops ran really well," Tech said. "I've heard good feedback from most of them, both from presenters and people attending. There were some hiccups, but generally it went well. If BSA were to continue this format, I think it would go better, because now we have a feel for it."

— OPINION —

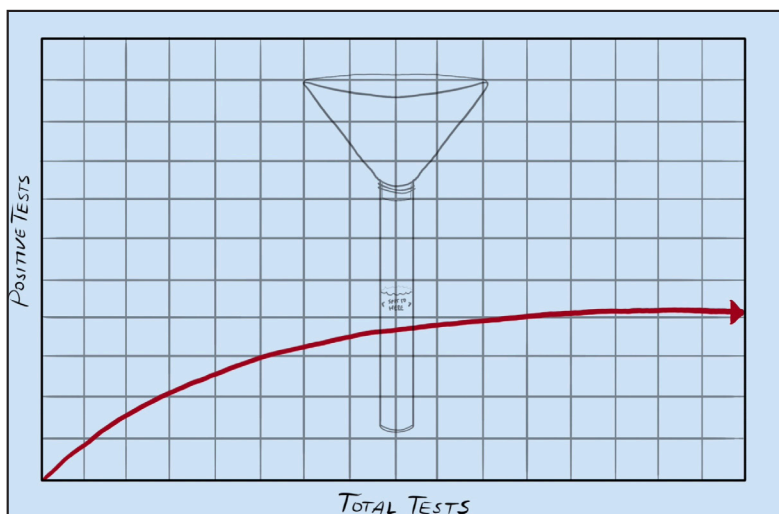
Stay vigilant to maintain low positivity rate

As the Midway sees it ...

Walking through Lab's hallways on Jan. 10, you would never be able to tell that the country, the state and the county were experiencing an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases. Students walked through school with their masks under their noses, talked in the hallways with their masks down and ignored social distancing guidelines.

However, the administration's stricter enforcement of mitigation efforts and the temporary closing of many lounge areas have led to a drop in positivity rate at U-High to about 1% (five U-High students tested positive on Friday, two others self-reported positive tests and two more were infected earlier this week). This is good news, but it's not time to celebrate yet. To limit exposure to the virus, students must remain vigilant against the spread of omicron by continuing to wear tight-fitting masks and follow social distancing guidelines, especially while eating.

Although students expressed uncertainty about their safety returning to school, the stable positivity rate demonstrates that Lab's mitigation efforts are working — at



least for now. The science has been in for months: tight-fitting masks curb the spread of COVID-19. At the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year, numerous studies confirmed this fact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention claiming that mask mandates cut outbreaks in schools by 3.5 times.

Unfortunately for many of our peers, "half-masking," or the practice of wearing masks below the nose, does not have anywhere near the dramatic benefits of a tight-fitting mask. This defeats the entire

purpose of wearing masks as the nose is the area of the body that is most quickly and significantly infected by the coronavirus. As air passes through the nasal passages, it carries virus particles with it, potentially infecting others.

Additionally, new evidence shows cloth masks are much less effective than surgical or N95 masks at preventing the spread of the virus. Thus, students should avoid cloth masks entirely and opt for masks like the KN95s distributed this week (or masks with equi-

"Unfortunately for many of our peers, half-masking, or the practice of wearing masks below the nose, do not have anywhere near the dramatic benefits of a tight-fitting mask."

valent protection like N95 or KN94 masks).

All of this seems common sense by now, and most people will agree — at least in principle. Still, many students choose to ignore the benefits citing pandemic fatigue or carelessness due to their age. The former is completely understandable. We've all gone through a once-in-a-century pandemic that has resulted in a decline in mental health and a feeling that we're losing the opportunity to enjoy our youth and maybe even the death of someone close to us. While recognizing everything we've lost, it's also necessary to recognize the unprecedented magnitude of this surge, which has overwhelmed our healthcare system with a shortage of hospital beds, ventilators and staff. Even if students themselves aren't direct-

ly affected, reckless behavior could indirectly result in the hospitalization or death of others in our community. At the same time, it's not fair to students and faculty who are immunocompromised, have other comorbidities or are allergic to the vaccine.

It's no secret that COVID-19 generally affects young people much less than older folks, with serious illness exceedingly rare among fully vaccinated and otherwise healthy teenagers. However, the long-term effects of COVID-19 on teens remain largely unknown. Known symptoms include total loss of smell and taste, difficulty in concentrating, memory problems, sleep problems, extreme fatigue, dizziness, decline in mental health, joint and muscle pain. All of these are terrifying, and anyone who contracts COVID-19, regardless of age, is vulnerable to them.

So, when you see a half-masking person in the hallway, or a group of people ignoring social distancing guidelines, tell them to stop. It's not uncool or naggy: You're doing the right thing by making Lab a healthier, better place for all of us.

This is the opinion of the U-High Midway Editorial Board.

City council renames iconic drive

Lake Shore Drive now honors early Chicago settler

by **PETER COX**
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In a ceremony that took place on Oct. 28, 2021, Mayor Lori Lightfoot took down a Lake Shore Drive sign and replaced it with signs with the new name of the roadway: Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable Lake Shore Drive. The change came after extensive campaigning from aldermen David Moore (17th) and Sophia King (4th) that culminated in a June 25 vote. The change gives recognition to the founder of the city, who has been frequently looked over in people's understanding of its history and also represents the prominence of Chicago's Black community, for whom DuSable is representative of their importance in the city.

Historians don't know much about DuSable's life, explained Charles Branham, a retired teacher of African American history at the Laboratory Schools and current board member of the DuSable Museum of African American History.

"We don't really know what we think we know," Dr. Branham said. "How he even arrived in the Chicago area is still a subject of dispute. We do know that he was the first non-Native American settler of Chicago."

As the first non-Indigenous settler of Chicago, DuSable is considered to be the founding father of the city. According to the Chicago History Museum, DuSable settled in Chicago between the late 1770s and early 1790. He built a home and successful trading post where present-day Michigan Avenue intersects with the Chicago River. During his time there, he interacted with Indigenous people and colonists passing through the area, selling them supplies and creating positive relationships with both groups.

DuSable is also important because of his unique position as a prominent Black figure in the early history of Chicago. This has made him a symbol for the Black community of the city.

Dr. Branham said that begin-



MIDWAY PHOTO BY ELLIOTT TAYLOR

NEW NAME, SAME ROAD. Lake Shore Drive now bears the name of Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, Chicago's first non-Indigenous settler. Along with a museum, bridge and statue, the roadway memorializing DuSable represents the growing influence of the Black community in Chicago. Pictured above is the view of DuSable Lake Shore Drive from the pedestrian crossing at 51st Street.

ning in the 1930s, various African American advocacy groups pushed for the memorializing of the figure who had been largely ignored in the city's history until that point as a way to give recognition to both DuSable himself and the Black community of the city.

The first major milestone came in 1936 when a high school in Bronzeville was renamed DuSable High School, now known as DuSable Leadership Academy. Today, in addition to the DuSable museum, a park, a bridge and a statue all memorialize him. And as of last October, a major roadway. This rise in profile can be attributed to the successes of African American groups.

Dr. Branham said, "It's a representation of the growing size and influence of the African American community."

The decision to rename the most iconic road in Chicago was

caused in part by the national racial reckoning of 2020, when political conditions were ideal for memorializing historical figures who had been sidelined in the popular understanding of Chicago history.

At the October 2021 ceremony, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said, "By telling the story of our founder on this highway, we are further unifying our city and residents in a moment of historical and racial reckoning."

The political angle of this decision demonstrates a core component of the memorialization of DuSable, the founder of one of the most important cities in the country was a Black man. Acknowledgment of that is an acknowledgment of the role Black people have played in the creation of the city.

Dr. Branham said, "It's a recognition, of actually the political power and prominence of the African American community in Chicago."

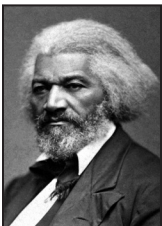


PHOTO BY JOHN W. IWANSKI UNDER CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE BY-NC 2.0

HONORING OUR FOUNDERS. The Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable statue now stands on Michigan Avenue just north of the Chicago River.

QUICK Q:

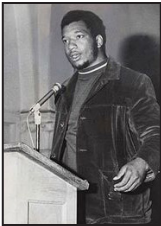
What figure would you memorialize in Chicago?



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

"Frederick Douglass would be cool. Just because recently, I've been learning a lot about him and... I knew him as like sort of his name on the peripheral, but I didn't fully understand his contributions to sort of abolishing slavery and sort of how much he established for, like, resistance of minority groups. And so, I would like to see him be, like, more prominent in the cultural consciousness, and that might be a way to do it."

Suggested by Aasha Atluri



FRED HAMPTON

"He was one of the Black Panthers, and he was unjustly killed in his home, and I think it would resonate with a lot of the recent upticks in police violence that African Americans have faced. So I think Fred Hampton would be good."

Suggested by Mariah Bender



LORRAINE HANSBERRY

"She's a great playwright and she died way too young. She's a brilliant, inspirational human being, and we need to remember her. And then there needs to be a building on the University of Chicago, named after her 'cause she lived right across the Midway."

Suggested by Paul Horton



TAMMY DUCKWORTH

"I really like Tammy Duckworth because she's a Thai Chinese politician, and she's done a lot for Asian American rights. And I think specifically during this time period with COVID-19 and the Stop Asian Hate Movement she's been very influential, so I really admire all the work she's done for the Asian American community."

Suggested by Amelie Liu



CHIEF KEEF

"Well, I feel actually though he was kind of like revolutionary for the rap game and I think, like, in that time, his music became really popular when, like, police brutalization and racial, like, problems kind of started up, and I think his music really gave, like, a lot of people motivation to be like, 'F*** the police, you know, even though you know, respectfully... Yeah, I think he was a voice for a lot of minorities, actually.'"

Suggested by Kennedi Bickham

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