

Voices from the Hall Councils A & P

Student Council Workshop 2011

INVISIBLE / UNSEEN KIDS

(clears throat) Sorry. I don't do this very often...well, actually not at all. I don't even know why I'm here. I didn't even think you knew my name. I'm not very athletic or even very smart. I'm just here. It's not my fault I'm not involved. You just don't know my story. My home life is hard. I have three little brothers and I'm in charge of watching them. Things have been getting better but I'm not going to just put myself out there. I don't feel comfortable stepping out in front of a crowd and no one is reaching out to me. I'm not involved because I can't be: my home life prevents this. It's not my fault. If you ask me, I will probably turn you down, but keep trying. I still want to be included but it may take a while. But for now I feel like I'm just here, another nobody. I am the voice of the invisible kid.

THE NEW KID

I wish my dad hadn't needed to take this new job in this new town. But with times as hard as they are right now, I guess I understand. I mean, we couldn't hang around and pay the bills after he was laid off.

I tried to stay positive, but after my first day of school, it was nearly impossible. At my old school, I had a whole group of close friends, and still knew everyone that I wasn't as close with. I always had after school plans and never really felt alone. Here, it's the exact opposite. I'm just another face in the crowd, no friends, no plans, totally alone. There's not even an acquaintance to speak of yet. I can tell they're all holding out; they're all waiting for someone else to make a move towards getting to know me. I know I won't make any friends until someone deems me "cool enough."

I wish someone would step up and try to get to know me. I can be a great friend and I'm sure that we could have some things in common. But until then, I'll just have to keep waiting. I am the voice of the new kid.

ANXIETY KID

Most people think I have a normal life. I'm active in school activities like every other kid. But what nobody can see is a warfare waged every day in my head. I have an anxiety disorder.

I want you to "just know." But once people know, you'll judge. It's not your fault; you can't help it. But I know that you'll see everything I do as being because of my disorder. So I painfully force a smile. I want to make more friends, but it is hard. I'm not crazy. I have an all-too-common disorder. My symptoms aren't always there, but it's just that the littlest things can tear me apart for hours or days or forever. It's not your fault: you don't cause it always, but the more I keep it masked, the more I'm torn up inside. I didn't want this. I'm trapped. I want to think normally. I have an anxiety disorder.

TEEN PARENT

As I move in the hallways, people stop and stare at me. They begin to smile and I am so embarrassed. One mistake! One mistake is all I made and my life will never be the same. Now I have a child to look after. And to top it off, I am still involved in school. How am I supposed to provide for my child? I am only a kid. I hate the situation I am in. I am out of answers and all I want is someone to tell me it's going to be alright. But right now, I stand alone with no one to catch me when I fall. I am the voice of a teen parent.

EMO KID

Not a single day goes by where I don't fear being alone. Just because I'm emo and dress differently doesn't give anyone the right to look down upon me. I am just like everyone else. I dress the way I do because it's comfortable and makes me feel better about myself. I feel like I am the only person in my school who gets made fun of based on the way they look. I want out! Out of this town, or out of this school. I want to go to a place where I'm alone and no one can make fun of me! I am an emo kid.

GAY TEEN

I'm just a normal guy, living a normal life. I live in a farming community where different isn't necessarily accepted, and I'm much different from any other guy at my school. There's something no one really knows about me, a secret I'm sort of ashamed of. It's not that I want it that way; I'm just too afraid to be myself. If I were able to be myself, I'd face the name-calling and bullying. Guys are even harder on me because I'm different from all of them. I'm afraid they'll move when I sit down, afraid to be so close to me or even not let me go into the locker room. I don't want to be treated like an alien just because I'm different. I just want others to accept me. I am the voice of the homosexual teen. Accept me!

FOOTBALL TEAM'S WATERBOY

Sometimes the big hot shot players make fun of me because I'm small and I've never played before. They don't really understand all the work I put into this team, constantly refilling water bottles and keeping track of all the equipment. I've always had a dream to play but my size prevents it. I mean I tried out but that didn't go too well. Anyway I'm happy I still get to go to the games; I just wish the other guys would give me some credit for my hard work. I try to lift weights and run and stuff because I was planning on trying out for the team next year. Maybe if some of the other players would give me some pointers, I could make it. I'm the voice of the football team waterboy.

GOTH KID

Why does every one judge me on the way I dress. I only dress how I feel. All those little preppy boys think they got something and they are just pretending. If anyone would take the time out of their day to talk to me, they would realize how cool I am. I could be fake like everyone else, but it wouldn't be me. The only kids that I can ever talk to are quote-unquote "goth"s, so I never make new friends. All those so called perfect kids just stare at me like I'm an animal in a zoo and make judgments about me before they even know me. I am the goth kid.

THE STUDENT LEADER

You know my name and my face and all my activities, but you don't know or can even imagine the challenges I face and how much I am like you. We have the same problems with school, friends and at home. We don't have it all figured out. It's troubling to me that you have the idea we think we're better than you. In reality, that's not it at all.

We find the pressures of hard classes, extracurricular activities, jobs and spending time with family difficult to balance. And the pressure of feeling like we have to keep it together all the time only adds more stress. I love who I am, but at times I just want to scream. I am the voice of the student leader and I only wish you could take a walk in my shoes.

THE JOCK

I'm your average football player from your high school. I started out just like everyone else, but now I'm huge and everyone is afraid of me. It isn't always easy being on top. People think I'm a show off, but all I do is play to the best of my ability. Other students don't realize how much pressure I'm put through every day trying to put 100% into my team as well as my school work. I want people to think of me as an equal. I just go through different challenges. I'm the voice of the jock.

THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT

You see me in the halls all the time. You know I'm different. The way I dress, the way I talk, but you have no idea of the challenges I have to overcome: a new family to adapt to, new culture. But the most challenging of all is going to a whole new school. Things are much different here, the customs *and* people, especially making friends. People don't accept me here because different is bad, but my life back home isn't really that different at all. Invite me to a movie sometime or to dinner because you might actually find my life to be interesting. I am the voice of the foreign exchange student.

Student Council Workshop 2012

THE CHURCH KID

I'm the kid that everyone argues with. My views are common but not accepted by many. I'm expected to be perfect, and when I make a mistake, I'm criticized for it. I'm not invited to parties because I'm expected to be a good girl. You ask for my opinion, but you really don't want it. Why am I ostracized for my opinion and what I believe? I get called names like "Bible Thumper" and "Jesus Freak" almost every day. The way I dress is my choice, and it can be hard sometimes, but I try my best to be modest and stick to my morals. When I make mistakes, I'm forgiven by some, but many others aren't so forgiving. I try to share my faith with others, but I can't make anyone do anything they don't want to. I'm not trying to shove it in anyone's face; I just want people to be happy. I give up time with my friends not because I have to, but because I want to. I'm the Church kid. I'm happy with my life, and I wish people wouldn't be so quick to judge me.

FOSTER KID

What's going on?! Where am I being taken? Where is my baby brother? My life was picture perfect. Why me? Is it my fault I'm here? These people they put me in a home with are strange. Their rules are hard to follow. They keep trying to help me, but I don't want their help! I want my Mom and my Dad! I want my bed and my clothes. I just want peace again.

I lay down at night, and my baby brother is crying in the room next to me. I want to cry with him. However I can't because I have to stay strong. So I wait and when the entire house is quiet, I sneak into his room and I sit on the floor and cry. I cry because I don't know what to expect day to day. I don't know if I'll be moved and lose my brother.

At the new school I attend, people stare and constantly question me. I don't want to tell them where I've come from or what happened to me. I have to wash my clothes every other day. I hate it. Wearing the same clothes every week sucks! I can't help the fact that I don't have anything. I just wish I had my own clothes again.

My court date is tomorrow and I'm afraid of what the judge may say. I hope I can go home but if not I want to stay in the home I've been placed in. These people actually love me. I'm grateful they took my baby brother and I into their home. The judge tells me to talk to the social worker but I'm hesitant because I don't want my parents in trouble. I don't want to be the reason why my brother and I can't go home. I don't know who to trust.

I've been in this home for a year. Now I smile and talk to people. My new family loves me a lot and I love them. It just took me a while to get adjust to a new environment. My foster parents opened up their doors for me and I'm finally happy. One day I'll get to go home hopefully, but for now you can just call me a foster kid. I wish I could go home!

INVISIBLE NERD

Oh, I get it. You only see me when you need me. Sure, I'll help you, even though I have other obligations. I get that I am the smart one, a pushover, and always around. I wish that people would see me for me. I want to play sports, be in a play, be asked out on dates, or even go out on weekends, but there is never anyone there for me. So, I am stuck at home with my books and homework. Besides the occasional family events, I am alone. I have dreams, I have needs, but I am always stressing over the high expectations from everyone! My future is coming close, but how am I supposed to go into it alone!?! I am the invisible nerd. I wish that people would see me for me, not for their own personal use.

LIFE OF THE PARTY

Me? I'm known for a lot of things. I won't waste your time by telling you about them all because I'm sure that you've heard. Every one of you knows my name and has seen my face. My life is the kind that is plastered up on every wall which gets hard to juggle when you're living more than one life and that wall could be in a party house or an AP classroom. I get good grades and respect my teachers but those same teachers that give me A's and B's would never guess that I was "that girl" that was black out drunk at some pool party that I don't even remember. I want a future. I do, and I have goals but

sometimes this all just becomes too much to handle. Parental expectations? Having a perfect reputation? And trying to hold on to my own future? But everything is fine again when I take that first drink of the night. I mean, there are no rules of the weekend and zero expectations from these sloppy drunks. Some nights I wonder if I look as bad as they do. I'm not trying to ruin my life. I'm just trying to live it... But I can't help to wonder if I'm living it wrong. How can I live healthy AND stress free? How do I keep my school friends from learning the truth and judging me while also trying to survive? I am the life of the party and I just wish I knew all the answers.

EATING DISORDER KID

I was told that this is anonymous, so I'm going to come clean. You all know me. I'm the girl that's always involved and I have a great group of friends. I have an amazing boyfriend and a wonderful family. Everyone expects so much from me. I feel I've lost control of everything. I'm so tired of being told how to live my life. My parents tell me to get good grades, my school tells me I have to take the team to State, so I don't need anyone telling me how to eat. I know what I'm doing. If you knew the truth, I know exactly what you'd say: "Go eat a hamburger!" "You shouldn't be doing this to yourself." But I need you to understand that doesn't help. Can't you see that this is MY body and MY choice! This isn't about being skinny, and it's not about being perfect. All this is about is me choosing something for myself. I don't need your help and I sure don't need your input. I get enough of that already. I have an eating disorder and I just wish I had control.

TEACHER'S KID

When I walk down the hall, I always see a familiar face. I've known all my life. He raised me and made me the person I am today. You all know him too, but to you he is just a teacher. To me he is Dad. I am a teacher's kid.

On the first day of school, I was relieved to know he wasn't far away. I also knew most of the other teachers already because they were his friends. It was comforting to know there was always someone I could rely on to help me through a rough day.

Even though I felt him being there was beneficial, my peers sometimes made me feel otherwise. I'm right here when you are trashing him. I can hear you. It hurts my feelings but I don't have the courage to stand up to you.

I'm not getting special treatment when I have a higher grade than you. I work twice as hard to live up to every teacher's expectations which are set higher because I am a teacher's kid. I wish you could see him through my eyes. He is here to help you too.

THE STAFF

I never hear a thank you.

I'm here till 11:30 at night cleaning and I never see my family.

I hate when I'm blamed for the "bad" food when I really have no control.

I hate when there's a huge mess that no one takes the time to pick up. It can keep me here a few more hours.

When students complain about learning the math problems on the wall, I feel my job has no purpose.

I genuinely care for you and want to make an impact in your life, but I'm just another face in the cafeteria.

I try so hard, but I feel like I never get across to you.

I thrive when YOU thrive.

I *want* your school to be clean.

I *want* you to be healthy.

I *want* you to succeed.

I am the voice of a teacher. I am the voice of a lunch lady. I am the voice of a janitor.

We are the voices of the staff. We wish you would appreciate us more.

AUTISTIC KID / SPECIAL NEEDS KID

It's not my fault! Don't you get it?! It's not my fault! Here in my mind, it all makes sense, and it all seems so easy. But actually doing it, trying to learn, to control my body...it's so hard. My body goes against what I say. Why don't I make friends as easily as everyone else? It's bad enough I can't stop these things when they happen, but do you really have to share? I have to have someone with me, but that's just because I need a little help. You treat me like my autism makes me a different species, but it's just a defect. I am the kid with autism and I represent the kids with all special needs, those of us that are mentally challenged. We just wish you'd treat us like we were normal.

THE HOMOSEXUAL KID

It gets harder and harder every day. When I hear the words faggot, dyke, fairy, queer, that's what scares me.

I came out last year to everyone and sometimes I regret that decision. Even though my family and friends support me, I still feel different. At school, I am ridiculed. People think it's funny to pick on me. From some, it comes from a legitimate fear or hatred of homosexuality and others just do it to fit in.

That's really what I want to do—fit in. It's all I've ever wanted. I try so hard to be like them, but I'm just not. Every day I struggle between two lives. I want to be honest, but I have a reputation to uphold. Everyone knows who I am, what would they say if they really knew?

It only takes one word to ruin my whole day. Why is it that so many prejudices are unacceptable, but if it's against me, it's somehow justified?

This is who I am, no matter how many times I try to change it.

We are the voices of young homosexuals, and we wish that we could just be treated equally.

THE MEAN GIRL

Most people see me in the hall and hope I don't lash out at them when I walk by. I tell myself that if I tell that girl that she's fat, I'll have a better day. Or, if I tell that girl her shoes are ugly, it will distract me from the real reason why my shoes are "prettier." I know that girl with the ugly shoes, yeah, her father comes to all of her volleyball games and sits down every Sunday night with her family for dinner.

And then there's me with the expensive shoes, with the father who works a 70 hour week and rarely comes home to sleep.

When I lash out and blast these other people, I try to make them feel as worthless inside as I do. I must not be very important if my dad can't even return my phone call from 3 days ago.

No one ever says anything back to me. No one. I wish they understood how useless I feel and that I feel sick because their pain fills the empty void my father can't fill. I am the mean girl.

ABUSED KID

Hi! I'll try to keep my voice down. My dad is in the other room. He's not in the best mood. I love him, let me make that clear. He just gets out of hand sometimes. Well, it's more than sometimes. But I don't want to go live somewhere else. I'm a normal kid. I have plenty of friends. They just never come over. You've always known me. Since day one of Kindergarten, I've been by your side and you've been by mine. But you went home to an after school snack. I went home to something else.

I don't talk about my home life much. You understand why. But I can tell you this. I'm not necessarily poor. There are bruises on both sides of the poverty line. I'm not awkward either, or that shy kid in the back of the class. I act fine. I act like nothing's wrong, which is why you've never known, and probably won't ever know that I'm the abused child. I wish I could be safe.

THE JOCK

I play three sports a year. I'm always practicing and have never gone home right after school. I have excelled at my sports, breaking record after record, but my coaches and parents keep pushing me. They seem to never be content. My school expects me to do sports and sports only. I've been excluded from other groups that I want to join, just because they don't take me seriously off the field, and on the field people are quick to criticize me and put the blame on me for a loss. And even when I meet their expectations, I'm accused of taking steroids. Then once the season is over, I'm quickly forgotten and become a nobody. Even my girlfriend only pays attention to me during the season while I'm one of the popular kids. I worry about my future in school and sports, just like everyone else. But in the end, everyone forgets my hard work and dedication. People only see me for what they already think I am, the jock. I wish they would just give me a chance.