

West Linn oblivious to racism; it's time to acknowledge discrimination

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GUEST EDITORIAL

In such a privileged town as West Linn, it seems unheard of that any students would be discriminated against in any way. With the limited amount of diversity in this school it's very obvious that the average student doesn't comprehend that there is real racism going on in such a fortunate environment.

Attending this school for just a year, I've been through numerous incidences of discrimination, whether it was in sports or just rude jokes referring to the color of my skin. In class, we watched a video called "A Class Divided" and one of

the people stated that there were very few times in his life he was ever discriminated against. This really stuck with me because I wish I could make that statement. But, sadly at my school that's not the truth. Over time I've found that the students of West Linn High seem to be pretty oblivious when it comes to the truth of racism in our school.

Our school is without a doubt beautiful. It has new gyms, weight rooms, and tennis courts, an auditorium that any performer would envy, new baseball and softball fields and, of course, new classrooms with all new equipment. Everyone here is beyond privileged.

Besides the actual school,

the majority of people living in West Linn have abundant wealth. Their value and self worth comes from their jobs, cars and the area where they live. Morals and integrity aren't a big priority in this town. I believe that the environment seems so "perfect," that the residents act as if something as harsh as racism couldn't and wouldn't occur here.

When you enter the buildings of West Linn High School, you look around in amazement at how beautiful everything is. As you start to walk past the students and hear a few of the conversations about going to go smoke weed after school and party this weekend. They don't seem to match up to

"standards" of our school. This kind of talk and behavior does not seem like "Lion Pride." But you ignore it and move along to your classes.

This is where you will start to notice the students' true feelings and their views towards people of a different race. Being half black and half white, I never really felt "black," as people here would call it, until I came to the high school. Nobody in middle school seemed to comment on the color of my skin, but in high school for some reason, it seems to be all they see. I've never felt so discriminated against as I do at such a "privileged" school.

My name is Kiandra, but people call me Kiki, and because it starts with a K, I get called "KKK" every day by a boy in my class. People have started conversations with me by saying "what's up nig or hey, blacky." The comments some of these kids say are so offensive to me, like when they say "damn you got some ghetto booty" or "damn she can jump....obviously, she's BLACK."

I have friends who have a personal joke in which they say "negro please!" One of my friends said to me, "you only like him because he's the only other black person in this school." I don't even understand how they can say these things to me when I myself barely see myself as "black."

This is like in the documentary called "Prom Night In Mississippi," where the students at a school in Mississippi had separate proms all

because of a certain "belief" about the black people. It's like being black comes with an automatic judgment. The sad part is that they think it's not hurtful. Although West Linn seems to ignore it, discrimination occurs here on a daily basis and in more ways than one.

The weird part to me is that people are being taught that racism is wrong, and yet, still do things that are so racist and offensive. The insensitivity of these people is so frustrating to me. There's no reason they need to talk this way, even to be funny, when they have no idea what it feels like to be discriminated against.

We watched a video called "A Class Divided" where the students were separated because of eye color to show them what discrimination feels like. I was so angry when my classmates said there's no point in teaching about racism in schools because if you don't show kids discrimination, then they won't practice it and it won't exist. Though the kids in my school have been taught that racism and discrimination are wrong, they obviously don't believe it because their actions say that it's okay to make someone feel different and like an outsider because of their skin color.

The naiveté that racism doesn't exist in West Linn hurts us all. We need to realize that racism is happening in our classrooms, in our hallways and in our community. First, we need to acknowledge that it exists—here. Second, we need to talk about it honestly. Third, we need to educate ourselves.

And, finally, we need to stop it.

Twitter "tweets" waste time, naive way to communicate

EMILY McDONALD

The internet seems to be one of the only ways that kids communicate via technology these days — it is extremely

Many students spend their breaks and lunch periods at school on their Facebook accounts, constantly updating their status, adding friends and playing games.

happening in your world, make friends with people you don't even know, or keep people posted on useless information about what you may be doing at that exact moment.

If you have a Facebook account, chances are that you have quite a few friends. Go on, check how many you have. Right, 312. Maybe more? Now, how many of those people do you hang out with on a regular basis? How many of them do you hang out with at all? How many do you even know personally?

Twitter is very similar to a site like Facebook or Myspace, people make lots of "friends" whether they are friends with them in real life or not. Don't get me wrong, having lots and lots of friends is great, but I think talking to them personally is much more effective.

Twitter

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Photo courtesy Twitter

Twitter, a blogging site, is among some of the most popular places to chat with friends. Eighty percent of students at WLHS do not use Twitter at all; instead they spend time on the ever-growing Facebook.

fast and effective. Facebook is one of the most popular methods, along with others like Myspace and texting.

Another form of communication, Twitter is a blog site on which you can "tweet" about what is

STUDENTS speak out

How green is our school?



"Compared to other schools we are doing pretty well, but we can do better."

—Megan Wakefield, freshman

"I think our school is doing a lot better than it was before. I think we are making progress."

—Bryan Steele, sophomore

"We are trying our best but a lot of kids would rather throw away rather than recycle. We are one of the only schools in Oregon with solar panels."

—Benjamin Martin, junior

"I think we are doing the best we can and eventually I hope the 700 building will be turned green."

—Britney Parker, senior