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The Enduring Legacy of Alternative Education

By Bella Nashad

My Aunt, Chelsea Luzader, was a 2008 graduate from Rutland High School's Alternative Education Program (AEP), which was located in the Howe Center at the time. Since then the program has moved to 77 Grove Street. Chelsea reflects on her time in AEP.

Chelsea grew up in Rutland with four brothers. At a young age, she faced many challenges but showed incredible strength and dedication. While still in high school, she stepped up to care for me, her newborn niece, as my parents faced difficult circumstances. This responsibility meant missing out on her graduation party and other high school experiences.

Despite these sacrifices, Chelsea remained committed to her family. She made the difficult decision to quit her job to care for me, even though she was still figuring out her own life. Her devotion went beyond what most would expect from a high school student, and she selflessly put her own needs aside to make sure I was cared for. Chelsea later had two children, Viktor and Victoria, with her high school sweetheart, Jesse Durfee, who also graduated from the AEP program. Throughout it all, her constant support and sacrifices made a huge impact on me, and I am forever grateful for everything she did for me.

Chelsea learned about AEP from her older brother, Thomas Luzader, who had attended the program. "I found out about it from my older brother, and felt like I had to go because I struggled in the traditional high school setting, and my relationships with teachers were strained," she reflected. Chelsea began AEP in her junior year, while her boyfriend Jesse started as a sophomore. A significant benefit of the program was its flexibility. "A big advantage was I got to have a job, and back then I could work more than part-time," she says.

Unfortunately, though, there were downsides. "The biggest disadvantage was that all my friends from the high school turned on me," she admitted. The smaller, more focused environment of AEP meant that some of her friendships with other students from the high school drifted away.

Despite the challenges, Chelsea felt well prepared for life after high school, especially with the added responsibility of caring for her niece. "Succeeding in school while taking care of my newborn niece felt like I was taking over the world," she said. The combination of work, school, and family responsibilities helped her feel empowered and ready for the future.

Chelsea gives credit of her success in AEP to the understanding and support from her teachers. "My favorite teacher was Jamie Holt. Because of her flexibility I was able to take care of my niece, and she understood what I was dealing with at home," she shared. Another memorable teacher was Bill Harrington. "He was a 'hippy' teacher," said Chelsea, "who was just awesome."

Chelsea believes Grove Street can be a great option for students struggling with the traditional high school environment because it offers them a more flexible option for their education. "I don't think they should make everyone go to the high school, especially kids with anxiety and social awkwardness. It will just make them not go to school or drop out," she explained. Reflecting on her own experiences, Chelsea emphasizes the importance of understanding and accommodating students' needs.

Chelsea's story highlights the value of alternative education options for students who need a more personalized approach to succeed.



Chelsea and Jesse at AEP

Brrrrr

By Lance Copp



A View of Icy Route 7

This winter's weather took a toll on school and other things. Conrad Tuerk, English teacher at Grove Street Campus, said there were more absences this winter. "I don't have the exact data, but I'm sure more students missed school due to the weather and related illnesses," he said.

According to Scott Whitter, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service at the Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, this winter was slightly colder than the 30-year average, marking the first below-average winter since 2021-2022. Though it may have felt snowy, actual snowfall in Burlington remained below average for the sixth consecutive year. Consistent snowfall accumulation, though, throughout the season contributed

to a more typical winter experience.

This weather affected driving and getting to school. Payton Tufts, a senior at Grove Street, had some insight on how this winter affected him personally. He said, "It's been gnarly. Snow and ice makes turns, hills, and driving in general difficult."

Along with vehicular transportation, winter also made walking harder. Conrad slipped on black ice behind his house and broke three ribs over Martin Luther King weekend. He said, "Not only was it incredibly painful, but getting ready for school took a lot longer. My wife had to help dress me, which wasn't fun. I cut it close a few days to make it to school on time."

He also mentioned how colder weather impacted his daily walking routine. He said, "The ice and cold made it unpleasant. Also, it's hard on my dog. The road salt gets in her paws. On frigid days, she didn't enjoy her walks like she usually does."

Mike Ellis, Chemistry teacher at Grove Street, talked about the weather's impact on his family's maple syrup operation. "Because of climate change," he said, "the winters have been inconsistent. It's difficult to know when to tap and when the season starts."

This uncertainty was especially true this past winter. "This was the latest we boiled sap for as long as I can remember. Usually we have our first boil in February, but this year it was yesterday (March 9). Usually colder, crisper weather results in clearer sap and lighter syrup but this can all be wiped out if we get several warm days in a row. Sap quality usually suffers when the weather is warmer."

Overall, this winter had a negative impact on the teachers and students of Grove Street Campus. My hope is the warmer weather helps decrease absences, makes transportation easier, and brightens people's moods.



Mike Ellis' Dad in his Family's Sugarbush

The Undeserved Violent Reputation of Video Games

By Alexzander Michaud

Video games can get a bad reputation for causing violence. When a video game player commits an act of violence, some people believe that the games made this person violent. Unfortunately, since many older people have stereotypes about video games, they automatically focus on the violence instead of what actually makes video games good, like the stories they create.

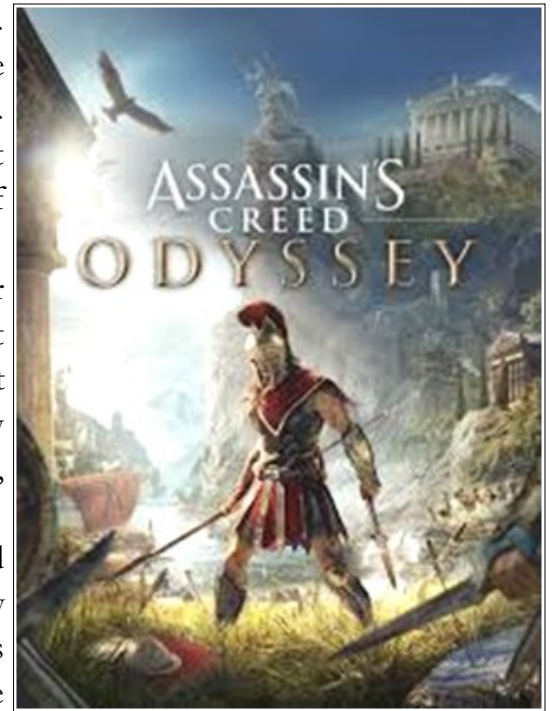
A game most people know and can easily be blamed for violence is Grand Theft Auto V. This is a violent game that involves bank robbing, killing, and other crimes. Grand Theft Auto, however, is not only about violence but also has a very fleshed out story about three main characters Michael, Franklin, and Trevor, and their connections to other characters.

There are many games that focus on story building instead of violence. Personally I would rather play through a cool story than rob a bank and kill people. Stories and the way that games tell them can teach people many new things like history, and give people different perspectives or ways of learning about the world, not just the world in the game but also the actual world.

One game I have played that teaches history is the Assassin's Creed Series. Different Assassin's Creed games have taken place in ancient Greece, Egyptian times, and the mid-1800s in London. My favorite is Assassin's Creed Odyssey, which takes place in Greek times. The story is a partially fictional take on the Peloponnesian War, where the main character is either the son or daughter of King Leonidas depending on the player's choice, and is trying to find their family after being abandoned.

Story games and games in general, can be compared to interactive movies. So if violent video games can get blamed for violent people, why do violent movies not get the same blame? If seeing violence in video games makes people violent, should not the same go for violent movies? Plenty of people have seen violent movies and not done anything bad or violent; the same goes for video games.

People tend to look at video games with a narrow mindset, when these games can actually be more complex than someone may initially think. Violence is a difficult issue and should not be so easily explained by merely saying video games caused it.



Understanding and Preventing Suicide

By Bella Nashad

Suicide is a serious issue that affects many people, and it is important to know the facts and how to help prevent it. Over the last few years, the numbers have shown some concerning patterns.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the suicide rate in the United States has increased by about 33% from 1999 to 2019. More recently, the numbers have continued to rise, especially among younger people and veterans. This means more and more people are struggling, and we need to be aware of how to help.



Recognizing the warning signs of suicide can save lives. Some signs to watch for include: talking about wanting to die or hurt oneself, feeling hopeless or trapped, withdrawing from friends and family, showing extreme mood swings, and giving away prized possessions. It is important to take these signs seriously. If you notice someone displaying these behaviors, it is a signal that they might need help.

Suicide is a growing problem, but everyone can play a part in preventing suicide and helping others feel less alone in their struggles.

How to help prevent suicide:

1. Start the Conversation: If you notice someone showing warning signs, talk to them. Ask how they are feeling and listen without judging. Sometimes, just knowing someone cares can make a big difference. You might say something like, "I've noticed you've been down lately. Do you want to talk about it?"

2. Encourage Professional Help: Suggest they talk to a counselor, therapist, or doctor. Professionals can provide the support and treatment needed. You can say, "Talking to a therapist really helped me when I was going through a tough time. Maybe it could help you too."

3. Be There: Offer your support. Spend time with them and check in regularly. Knowing they have someone to turn to can help them feel less alone. Even sending a quick text to check in can make a big difference.

4. Remove Access to Means: If someone is in immediate danger, try to remove anything they could use to harm themselves, like medications or sharp objects. This can help keep them safe while they get the help they need,

5. Know the Resources: Share information about resources like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988) or the Crisis Text Line (text "HOME" to 741741). These services offer free confidential support. Let them know these resources are there to help them anytime they need it.

At Rutland High School, the U-Matter club is playing a crucial role in raising awareness about mental health and preventing suicide. The club, which has been running for over twelve years, aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health challenges and suicide, encouraging open discussions and support among students.

The club meets bi-weekly to brainstorm ways to educate their peers and offer a supportive space for those struggling. Currently, the club consists of six students and two advisors, and they work tirelessly to spread awareness about mental health issues.

Barrett Hughes, a club advisor, shared his insights on the importance of these conversations. "A lot of the time, people are afraid of talking about mental health challenges and the possibility of suicide," Hughes explained. "But talking about it doesn't increase the likelihood of anyone doing it; it gives people the chance to get the help they need. People don't need to be stuck in that hopelessness forever."

Hughes also noted the alarming trend in Vermont, where suicide rates among teens have been rising over the last five years. Contributing factors include the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of accessible mental health resources, such as long waitlists for therapists.

RHS also integrates suicide prevention education into their health curriculum, with freshmen learning about suicide as part of their health class. Hughes encourages students to be there for one another, advising that "if someone comes to you for help, be a partner in their recovery by listening and helping them find the support they need."

Through U-Matter, RHS students are actively working to ensure that mental health is no longer a taboo subject and that those struggling with suicidal thoughts know they are not alone.



School-to-Work

My Introduction to the World of Work

By Alexzander Michaud

I have been working at St Joseph's Kervick Residence in Rutland since late October of last year. After finding the job online, the interview was easy and simple. The lady mainly asked if I was sure I wanted to work. I also had to sign a bunch of papers and take a test about many different things, from how to treat residents to what chemicals are dangerous and should not be near one another.

Once I got the job they trained me for three or four days. I was shown what to do at what times and then did the work while being supervised. To learn how to serve, I shadowed the person supervising me and tried to learn the residents' names.

My main tasks at work are cleaning the kitchen, washing dishes, and serving the residents their food. I start my day by sweeping, mopping, putting down mats and taking out the compost. Then I wash my hands and wait until it is time to serve. Once I finish serving, I get a little break and can eat the meal we served. Some of my favorite meals are the tater tot casserole and the ham and cheese sliders.

After my break is over, my coworkers and I pick up all the plates, silverware, and napkins, and put them on a cart that is brought back into the kitchen to wash everything. We bring the cart next to the dishwasher and one person washes the dishes, while the other puts them away. To close out my shift, I clean the dishwasher and dishwasher area and make sure everything is how it should be (windows are closed, heaters are on, etc) then the day is done.

My dislikes for the job are that the residents can be challenging when they are not clear about what they want or if they are just being rude. Also it can be difficult to see the elderly age and require more services than our home can provide. Sometimes they need to move to another facility that can provide more care, like a nursing home, where unfortunately beds are limited.

Overall there are more positives than negatives. I especially appreciate my coworkers because they are all nice and great people. I also like that it is a fairly easy and simple job. Also people sometimes donate food, but not enough to include in the meals or unsuitable for the residents, so they give it to the staff. Recently someone donated a bunch of Takis that the staff could take home.

The job has taught me basic skills, like how to sweep and mop, and how to do dishes. It has also helped me be more social. Socializing with my coworkers has helped me build more communication skills and has allowed me to be more interactive with them.



St. Joseph's Kervick Residence



Dining Hall

The Windy City

By Nox Hagar

On April 24, as part of my job with Come Alive Outside, I went with two co-workers and a friend to Chicago for a Storytelling Retreat called The Get-Together III. We spent our first night in Boston at a hotel near the airport. After checking into the hotel, we took a train to the Sugar Factory for dinner. The food and atmosphere were great.

The next morning we met in the lobby at 5 a.m. to catch a bus to the airport. Since this was my first flight, I was nervous and excited. The two-hour flight was so quiet that I slept the entire time. As we approached Chicago, I noticed the flat landscape and the mazes of houses closer to the city. One of my first impressions was the impressive graffiti and murals on public buildings.

On our first night in Chicago we checked in at the storytelling retreat. We met some fun people and heard such cool stories. One man spoke about the troubles of choosing his partners based on his own insecurities. Everybody was so talkative and happy to be there.

Our next day started at 9:00 a.m. when we went to several stores for souvenirs. When we arrived at the get-together, we did a couple of warm-up activities to get our brains moving. Then we split off into groups of two. My co-worker Heather and I went into the quiet cave and wrote a story from the point of view of one of the children in "The Night Before Christmas." I rewrote it over three times, but for some reason did not like it and left it unfinished.

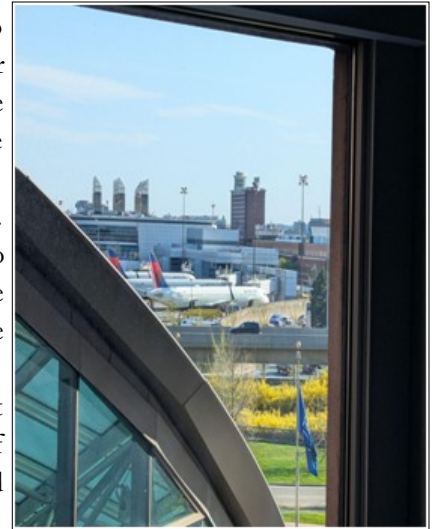
The other two people in our group attended a workshop on ways to improve speaking by learning to control our voices. Afterwards three of us went to an open mic to hear a couple of stories. That evening we went to Chinatown for dinner. The food was excellent. We had dumplings, rolled ice cream, and some boba tea. After dinner, we walked around a little bit, took the train back to the hotel and called it a day.

On our last full day in Chicago we had more free time. We went to the storytelling retreat at the Bughouse Theater. There was an open mic that people had to sign up for. I signed up to tell a story about the night before but sadly did not get picked. I still had a good time listening to stories about people's lives or old jobs they held. Some were funny and some more serious. It was fun and we all had a blast.

After saying our goodbyes to people we met at the retreat, we ate some Korean corn dogs and then went to the Lincoln Park Zoo. We saw all types of animals. My favorites were the lions and polar bears. Although I felt bad for the polar bears because the ice had melted, and it was hot.

On the final day of the adventure, we flew back to Boston and then visited Salem, Massachusetts, where we had lunch. We finally made it back to Rutland around 8:45 p.m.

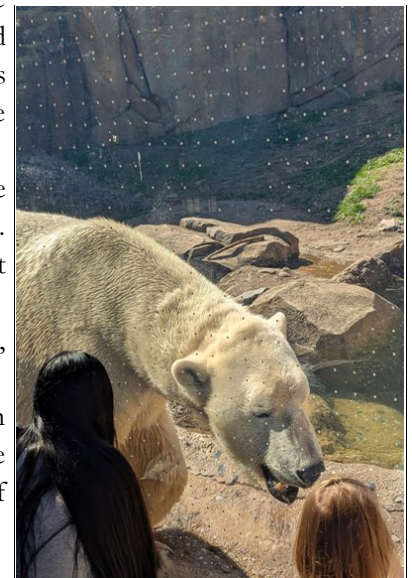
This trip made me realize that I need to get out of Rutland because I have been cramped in one place for too long and want to see other parts of the country. There are more opportunities in places like Chicago and Boston. The cities are more alive and full of energy.



View from Hotel in Boston



Duck at the Sugar Factory in Boston



Polar Bear at Lincoln Park Zoo

Social Media and Teens

By Bella Nashad



Social media has become a huge part of teenagers' lives. Almost every teen has at least one social media account, whether it is Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, or something else. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, surveys show that 90% of teens aged 13-17 have used social media. Seventy-five percent have at least one social media account, and 51% use social media daily.

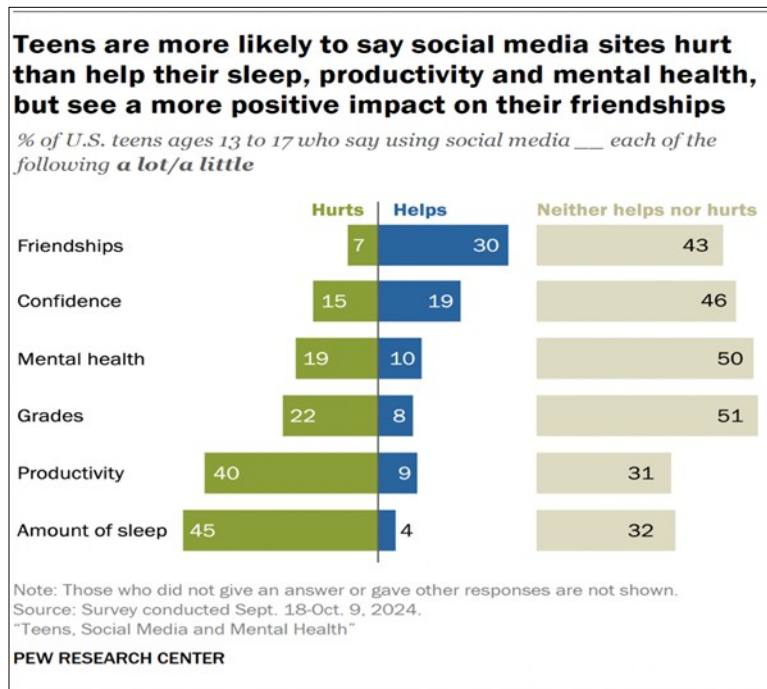
While social media can help people stay connected and express themselves, it also has many negative effects on teenagers that people should pay attention to.

One of the main impacts of social media is on mental health. Many teenagers compare themselves to others online, especially when they see pictures of people who seem to have perfect lives. This can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, and even depression. Some teens also feel left out when they see posts of friends hanging out without them, which can hurt their feelings and make them feel isolated.

Another effect of social media is how it changes the way teens communicate. Instead of talking face-to-face, many teens now talk through apps and messages. While this can be convenient, it can also make it harder for them to develop good social skills in real life. Some people even find it hard to have real conversations because they are so used to typing instead of talking.

Social media can also be distracting. Most teens spend hours scrolling through their feeds when they should be doing homework or getting enough sleep. This can affect their grades and their health. It is easy to lose track of time when people are on social media, and before they know it, hours have gone by.

In conclusion, social media has both good and bad sides. It helps people connect and have fun, but it can also hurt teenagers' mental health, social skills, and focus. Teens should try to use social media in a healthy way and take breaks from it when needed. Adults and schools can also help by teaching teens how to balance online and offline life.



The Importance of Grove Street Campus

By Alexzander Michaud

As a Rutland High School junior and second-year student at Grove Street Campus, this program has really helped me. At the main high school I struggled with staying on track. I often skipped school and when I did not understand an assignment I usually ignored it.

This is not the case at Grove Street. Its smaller size makes it easier to build relationships with teachers and approach them for help. Grove Street's teachers also recognize this benefit. Conrad Tuerk, an English teacher at Grove Street, said, "Grove has allowed me to really get to know students and build strong relationships with them. I'm able to work with them closely because of the program's smaller size."

This is also one of Ellada Siliski's favorite aspects of working at Grove Street. She said, "Because I'm not teaching six classes where I close the door and kids move on, my door is always open. Even if I'm not teaching, I'm seeing the students, I'm talking with them, and I'm working with them. I'm more able to get to know the kids and for them to get to know me. It's a more continuous relationship and I really like that part of it."

Fewer students also makes for a quiet and less chaotic environment. Jalessa Ballard, a senior at Grove Street, enjoys this part of the program. She said, "I knew I was going to like it because it's a smaller school and I had trouble staying in class at the high school. Staying in one spot and not being able to wander has been good for me."

Students also appreciate the contract system at Grove Street because it helps them stay on track and holds them accountable. If a student does not complete an assignment they have to stay longer on Friday until they complete all their assignments. Since all assignments are non-negotiable, students do not have the option of taking a zero. Teachers also review students' assignments and may not accept their work until it meets their standards. This holds students to a higher standard.

Students also appreciate the contract system. Aryanna Cofrancesco, a junior at Grove Street, said, "The contracts help me be successful because I know what I need to do for the week. They motivate me to get everything done so I don't have to stay long on Fridays."

Students at Grove Street must also learn to manage their time. Even though they are only scheduled for two hours a day, they have to use their scheduled time wisely to complete all their work. Jalessa said, "I get all my work done. I'm not behind on anything. Rushing my work here causes me to mess up, so it teaches me not to rush into things and take my time."

Grove Street Campus benefits students and teachers in many ways. This program is important because it provides students with a different way to learn, and helps struggling students graduate from high school.



Doug Working with Seth



Katie Teaching a Math Lesson

Campus Chatter

What are your summer plans?

By Alexzander Michaud



"That's a really good question. We'll see how it goes, and take it day by day."

Auggie Zellars

"Get rich and act like I don't know nobody. Get car sales experience and visit Vegas."

Payton Tufts



"Work and camping at KOA and Lake St. Catherine State Park and possibly going to Vegas."

Ciara Chamberland

"Work and travel to concerts in Citi Field, Queens, New York."

Kianna Reed



Class of 1957 Scholarship

In 2007, the Rutland High School Class of 1957 Alumni established scholarship awards for deserving Rutland High School - Grove Street Campus seniors. Any Grove Street Campus senior planning to pursue a post-secondary education is eligible to apply for this scholarship. The intention is to help a student who needs financial assistance in pursuing a post-secondary education. Selection for this award is based on academic progress, financial need, and potential for success in a post-secondary education setting.



Mya Barber



Andrew Bryant

This year, the RHS - Grove Street Campus staff is proud to announce the three recipients of the Class of 1957 Scholarship Awards for the Rutland High School Class of 2025 are Mya Barber, Andrew Bryant, and Ciara Chamberland.

Upon graduation, Mya, Andrew, and Ciara plan to pursue their Associate Degrees at the Community College of Vermont.

The scholarship awards will be formally presented to these Rutland High School graduates at

Senior Awards Night on June 11, 2025.

Congratulations, Mya, Andrew, and Ciara!



Ciara Chamberland

Exploring Music Genres with Ethan

Part One - Expanding Musical Tastes

By Ethan McCarroll

Since there are many genres of music, people should always try to expand their musical tastes. The most popular genres right now are rap, pop, and country. A genre I recommend is grunge, which originated in Washington State in the mid-1980s. Grunge is a mix of rebellious punk rock and heavy metal chords and overall sound.

One of the first bands in the grunge rock scene is Green River and they really set the tone with grunge in Seattle. Then bands like Melvins, Soundgarden, and Nirvana came around and this is where the grunge scene really took off and became what it is today, except now less popular.

I was introduced to grunge and rock music in general through my mom. She grew up listening to rock because it was popular when she was young. So when I was growing up she played it in the car or around the house and I also took a liking to it.

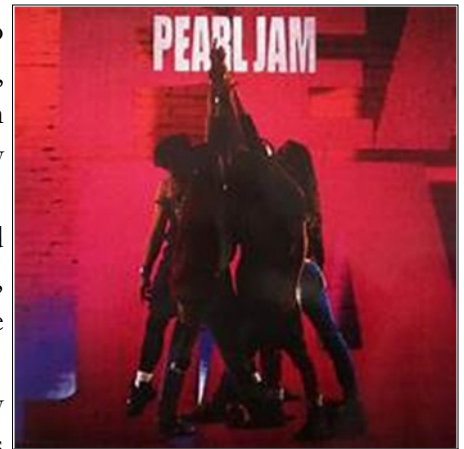
I started listening to NU-metal, another genre of rock/metal, and bands like Linkin Park, Chevelle, Three Days Grace, and Limp Bizkit, but then settled on grunge.

A grunge band I really like and recommend is Pearl Jam. I also recommend that people listen to their debut album "Ten" (1991) because it has the most eye-opening songs about personal battles. I believe "Black," "Alive," and "Jeremy," are songs that people should listen to. "Black" is about a really tough breakup and how hard it is to adjust to a normal life without that person.

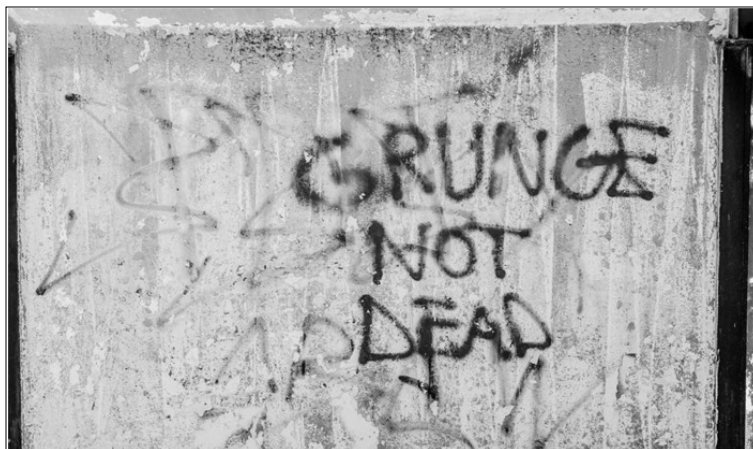
"Alive" is about the lead singer Eddie Vedder finding out from his mom that the person whom he thought was his father had died and was not his biological father. In an interview with VH1 Storytellers, Vedder talked about how adolescence was already hard enough and the shocking news about his father made it harder.

"Black" is an emotional song about the loss of someone not through death but through a breakup from a romantic relationship. Vedder sings about how life has become mundane and depressing after splitting up. Vedder also mentions that his life more or less revolved around his significant other and how life has become hard to accept as it is now.

Overall people should always try to expand their music tastes. Pearl Jam is a great band because of their rich and thought-provoking lyrics. The band allows listeners to think about the songs and how they relate to their own lives.



Pearl Jam's Album "Ten"



Part Two - “Illmatic” Nas

By Ethan McCarroll

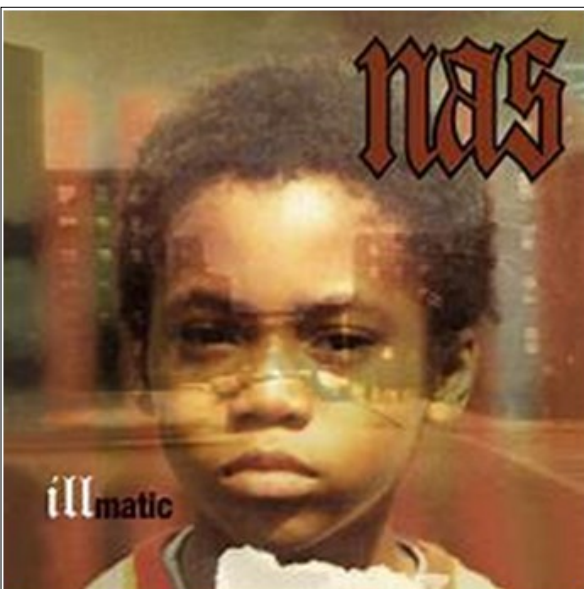


Nas's Neighborhood in Brooklyn

Another musical genre I enjoy is rap, particularly the artist Nas and his album “Illmatic.” This album is often considered one of the all-time top albums in the rap genre.

Nas’ full name is Nasir Bin Olu Dara Jones and he's from Brooklyn, New York. Born in 1973, he released his first song in 1991 at just 18 years old. Three years later he released “Illmatic.” This album has such a presence on the rap scene because it discusses the life of someone struggling in America as an African American. Many songs on the album depict gang violence around him or the NYPD harassing young black teenagers. I believe this album is so good because it does not glorify the life of a gangster and does not speak ill of people who have fallen to the life of gangs.

One of the songs that sticks out to me is “N.Y State of Mind.” It describes a certain mindset of living in New York, especially as a young teen of lower income in the city. Nas mentions how widely the gangster lifestyle is accepted. He raps about how this is just life, young teens killing each other for fame and a name on the street, or how people sell drugs and the ongoing drug problem in NYC. Nas also talks out against people, or snitches, who become informants for the police force.



A song that also interests me is “Life’s a B*tch,” which describes how bad life is for Nas and the people of his community. The main chorus in the song is “Life’s a b*tch and then you die, that's why we get high cuz you never know when you're gonna go.” I think this means that Life is hard no matter what, so find the things that make it easy to accept life.

Overall I recommend his album because it wakes people up to the reality of life for others who are less fortunate. While Nas holds some different views, this album helps us understand the world he grew with all its ups and downs.

Grove Street Campus Class of 2025



Congratulations Graduates!

*Davonte**Ciara**Allukah**Jaleesa**Sophia**Emma**Mya**Liz**Alexi**Kim**Nox**Ricardo**Sadie**Ethan**Karina**Andrew**Jared**Payton**Kade**Rico**Abby**Issac*

Farewell, Grove Street

By Lance Copp



School is a hard thing for many people, including me, but Grove Street Campus changed this. I started attending Grove Street my sophomore year when Mr. Barrett Hughes, Rutland High School counselor, suggested it.

I was drawn to the idea of fewer students at Grove Street than the main high school. At first, I was nervous that I would not be able to complete my weekly contracts on time. Looking back, there was no need for me to be nervous. The contracts are straight-forward and simple, and kept me on track.

Since coming to Grove Street, I have maintained my grades and good attendance. I have also made some friends as well. All of this will not be forgotten when I move.

I am moving to Hudson, New Hampshire, and starting an online school program. I am very excited, but will definitely miss Grove Street's staff and students. I have learned so much, not just educationally, but more about myself as well.

Growing up, I always had poor communication skills and severe anxiety. Since starting at Grove Street, I have gained more courage to ask for what I need, as well as controlling my anxiety around asking questions. I have also built up self-esteem toward making friends.

Leaving Grove Street and Rutland will be very difficult for me, since I have settled down here and gotten comfortable with my new atmosphere. I am proud to say I have new qualities and skills I can take with me when I move.

(A huge thank you to the Grove Street staff, and everyone who has helped me from RHS)