

Building bridges

Black Alumni Association empowers students

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WHAT DOES GPBAA DO TO CONNECT TO THE COMMUNITY?



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS EVERY TUESDAY

Highlight alumni who have gone through the district and post what they have been up to since graduating from their respective schools.



GP SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Works with students at North and South.



MIXERS AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB

Mixers are open to everyone within Grosse Pointe community. At the mixers, they talk about the organization and its mission.



GP TALKS

Alumni and community members have an opportunity to share their experiences navigating Grosse Pointe, and also share some of the work they are doing now.



PHOTO | Courtesy of Tim Herd

Follow the Grosse Pointe Black Alumni Association on Instagram to learn more about what they do.



CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY | The Black Alumni Association works each day to preserve and appreciate Black history, especially at a local level according to the founder Tim Herd. “I started the Black Alumni Association, and I really did it to create a support system, a larger support system for Black Alumni who went through the Grosse Pointe System and then also to also support students who are currently in the system,” Tim Herd said.

Growing up in the Grosse Pointe Public School system and being one of the only Black students in the classroom was a norm for North alumni Tim Herd that he wanted to break. By starting the Grosse Pointe Black Alumni Association, Herd has aimed to foster connections between Black alumni and students in the community.

Wanting to ensure his association establishes a healthy support system for Black students each day is what Tim Herd strives for as the founder.

“We’re just planning to have some GP talks and have some alumni come and speak, and also have some community members come speak,” Tim Herd said. “Black history for us is everyday, and there are folks who are accomplishing things every single day within the organization, so we’re just going to continue to highlight that. So we have our events, but they’re more so our standard events that we continue to have.”

Tim Herd’s younger sister, junior Tori Herd, has been strongly influenced by the GPBAA. Additionally, she believes there has been more recognition of North minority students because of the organization.

“The GPBAA has made it where anyone, but especially Black students, sees that a lot of excellence within the education system, for example like Advanced Placement classes and honors and things of that nature aren’t as common and most definitely aren’t as recognized,” Tori Herd said. “Coming from

personal experience I have always been one of the few Black people in my AP and honors classes, so just seeing all the alumni who went on to do big things is really encouraging and hopefully breaks through these systematic barriers that have been instilled in today’s time within the education system.”

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TORI HERD
JUNIOR

However, GPBAA board member Erin Czerwiec joined not solely for her experience but to help bridge the gap between Black alumni and students in the district.

“I wouldn’t say I had a bad experience, but

I just thought it was a good way to kind of stay connected with everyone and and like I said, that safe space for people who maybe didn’t have the best experience and didn’t really have a desire to come back to the community,” Czerwiec said. “But creating our own sense of community amongst each other kind of pushed me.”

By highlighting alumni who have gone through the district and hosting mixers, Tim Herd hopes to enhance the experience in the school system for Black graduates.

“I would say the organization supports and celebrates Black history at a local level by highlighting Black students who’ve gone through the district and who are currently just engaging and working,” Tim Herd said.

Along with that, Tori Herd, as a student, believes this association has the potential to receive more participation as it has been incredibly beneficial to her.

“I would like the GPBAA to get more recognition and just for more people, but especially students to attend the mixers that are thrown at the neighborhood club because they really are insightful and that is where most of the relationships between the alumni and students are curated and everything else that comes along with it,” Tori Herd said. “In short, become more mainstream.”