

TEENTIMES

FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH!

OCTOBER 2022



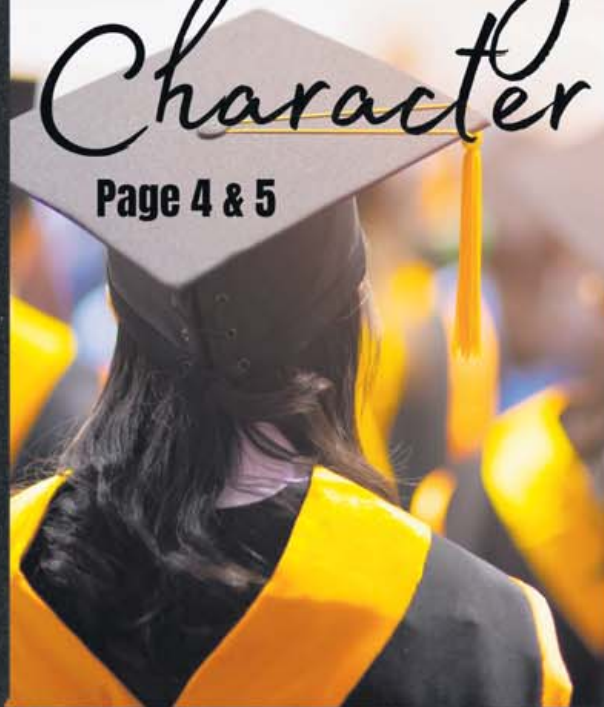
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Building Character

Page 4 & 5



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Cheyenne Gumbs:

St. Maarten's Newest Epidemiologist

BY ANASTASIA ADAMS

As you may know our island has welcomed a new Epidemiologist; Cheyenne Gumbs at CPS and we; the Teen Times Magazine had the honor of being able to get an exclusive interview with her. Gumbs has returned home from her studies abroad at York University, Toronto. Not only does she have an Honors Bachelor degree in Biomedical Science and a Master's in epidemiology but Gumbs also is an experienced digital archivist who is committed to making health accessible for everyone on the island.

1. You've recently started your career as an epidemiologist, do you mind telling us what plans you have for your new career?

Well, for my long term plans I'd like to change the perception of health in St. Maarten, where things such as going for a walk and eating healthy are seen as a normal part of their daily life. One of the short-term goals that I have is to establish clear databases so we can see where we were at historically, understand what the normal trends are and determine interventions for future improvements.

2. How does it feel to come back home and make a positive contribution to your country?

It's nice to be back home and spend time with my family and be able to explore the island with the freedom of an adult rather than a student.

3. We also learned that you studied at York university in Canada. Can you tell us what criteria you used when deciding on a university?

St. Maarten is a very small island, so you usually grow up with the same people all throughout kindergarten to high school and I wanted to explore the world outside of St. Maarten and meet new people and try new things. So, my first criteria was to find somewhere that would offer me those things along with being close to a city and providing the courses I wanted to take.

4. Is there any advice you have for students who want to study abroad?

Pursue the things you want to do but also take the time to have fun and experience life.

5. You also studied Biomedical Science, which is a very complex subject, was there ever a time where you struggled with school and what helped you during those difficult times?

One thing that helped was being able to lean on my support system, having friends that were also in the science field, making time for fun, changing my method of studying and learning, building a relationship with and learning the body language cues of professors, learning from your mistakes and knowing when to take a break to recuperate.

6. We also learned that you were a digital archivist, could you tell us a bit more about what it was like.



The summer before I went away to university, I took part in a program called government program, called Business Outreach Program (BOP), where I worked in DIV department (Ministry of General Affairs). That was my first taste of archiving. In the second year of my bachelor, there was a protest that lasted for six months. During this time I took the opportunity to apply for an internship. I was accepted by Dawn Bazely. At the time she (Bazely) wanted to revive a scientific communication and digital archiving initiative she had previously done. One of my roles was to take inventory of Kodachrome slides from the 80s, archive them and post them on the university's digital repository so that people can access them online.

7. I also noticed that during your time at York, you were not only a digital archivist but you also taught your underclassmen how to digitally archive, and worked as a porter while studying. How did you manage to juggle all those responsibilities?

One of the things that helped was me scheduling my classes in such a way it was easier for me to pay attention. For me that meant taking a one-hour class a few times a week rather than taking a three-hour course once a week. It also helped to not schedule my classes too late in the day and the fact that my job at the time was very flexible which allowed me to do schoolwork while on the job.

8. Lastly, there has been a phenomenon of the young people of St. Maarten going abroad to study and not returning, is there any advice or strategies you think the government should implement to attract young professionals to return and help develop the country?

I am generally of the perspective that whether somebody comes back is completely up to them, if it makes them happier or fits with their goals to come back to St. Maarten, then come back. If it makes you happier to go somewhere else, you should go somewhere else. Do whatever is best for your vision for yourself. But I can also recognize that my situation where I was able to get a job within my field relatively soon isn't the status quo for most people who study abroad. I am very blessed to be in a situation where my professional and personal goals align. Although, I believe there should be consistent and intentional attention given to the problem. This could be partnerships in private and public sector establishing that if x number of students will be graduating by year 2025, there needs to be x number of jobs that will be available by then.



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At least we have ALEEZE!

Well, how about that? It took a private individual to provide a facility (or at least something close to it) that the youth of St. Maarten has been asking the government of St. Maarten to provide for over 20 years, if not longer.

“We want a performing arts center” were the cries which have fallen on deaf ears. All sorts of fancy plans were published, various Ministers pledged to do it, but to date, nothing.

The venues we had to settle with were too small, too big, too expensive, or you had to do things outdoors which cancelled any chance of fundraising for various community groups. So many groups, Teen Times included, have so many ideas but cannot fulfill them – simply because of the lack of venue and amenities to go along. A mid-range event venue was sorely needed.

Enter Aleeze!

Businessman Bertaux “Mr. Rude” Fleming opened the Aleeze Convention Center and Event Hall on October 27 and finally gave the public a multi-use event space to accommodate conferences, seminars, trade shows, book fairs, weddings, graduations, parties and much more. Ironically, we suspect that the government will also be making use of the facility.

Located in Madame Estate across of Cost-Pro, Aleeze aims to not just be the go-to choice for events on the island, but management hopes to establish the facility as the premier venue for event and convention tourism as well.

The venue is fully adaptable and flexible for any of the aforementioned events. It can also accommodate dance recitals and dance classes. In the absence of a long-talked-about Performing Arts Center, the overall size of Aleeze perfectly fills a void for most event organizers on the island. It comes with numerous dressing rooms, a lounge area, food and beverage space, adjustable stage and lights, LED screens and other amenities.

Fleming doesn’t look at Aleeze as just a building, but as untapped potential to provide the community with a variety of benefits. These benefits include an increased awareness and appreciation of the arts, cultural education, family and children activities, as well as economic development. Management will also be hosting activities and programs that can be enjoyed by all ages.

Along with this, Aleeze will also provide a base that attracts many visitors and patrons, which can have a positive impact on the economic vitality of the island and of the surrounding district of Madame Estate.

“For years, we have heard the cries of the public, clamoring for a decent sized event hall. With hard work, a dedicated team and the guidance of the Almighty, we are able to make Aleeze happen and answer the calls of the population,” Fleming said. This is no small endeavor for Fleming who is no stranger to grand challenges, having established Quality Sweepers cleaning company and Genesis Music Group sound and lighting company. He believes in doing for oneself through hard-work. Aleeze is his latest and big-



gest endeavor thus far.

“The goal was to create a space that can be used for a variety of art forms and provide local, regional and international artists with a venue in which they can showcase their art in all forms. At the same time, we can estab-

lish a stronger connection with the community as a whole by offering events that can be enjoyed by all. If you have an event, we want you to think about Aleeze first,” Fleming said.

“This is just the start of a community contribution that will go a long way in realizing the ideas of so many people, and event organizers who were limited before in their option. Venues were either too small, too big or too something else. We listened, studied, and we believe, in fact, we know that we have a venue to cater to any event request. We are very proud to be able to establish such a venue on St. Maarten and hope the public gives us an opportunity to be its first choice for event hosting,” Fleming said.

So we don’t have a performing arts center as yet, but at least we have Aleeze. Take a wild guess where Prom Night and Talent Showdown will be held!



Feature

St. Maarten Academy - Building character one step at a time



BY SAGE WILLIAMS

If you follow the happenings at St. Maarten Academy, you would have immediately noticed that the school is up to some positive initiatives. So we thought we would speak with the school's Vice Principal Ms. Joanna Trim to get some more insight about what is happening, or will be happening, at the school this school year.

What is new about the St. Maarten Academy as it relates to students?

The academic year has brought about lots of new things and we're excited about that. Last year, we introduced the idea of "Entrep (Entrepreneurship) Friday" whereby students are encouraged to become entrepreneurs and create their own business. This came from the pandemic after parents lost their jobs and students were wanting to help their parents, so we thought it would be a good idea to encourage and develop entrepreneurial skills in our students.

We allow students, during one Friday of each month, to produce something whether or not it is their own creation, and display their talent and make money while doing that. Together with the business department, students learn entrepreneurial skills, how to do accounting for their businesses, and to really manage their little business. So we thought that with this they can become an independent earner and not just an independent learner – they'll be ready for whatever comes their way when they leave St. Maarten Academy and always have something they can fall back on.

In addition to Entrep Friday, we have also revived our school clubs and extracurricular activities that were missed out on for a few years due to the pandemic, such as Interact Club, The Key Club, The Builder's Club, Book



Club, and The Cooking Club. We even have a Netflix Club, and so many other clubs that students are able to sign up and become a part of to build their character and self-esteem and to encourage them to develop good leadership skills. Then we also have additions to our curriculums. We have added Digital Media 2, so our CAPE level students are able to pursue and continue their studies in Digital Media and take it to a whole new level.

With regard to our school sports, we haven't had inter-house competitions for a long time; we last attempted it just before the pandemic, and everything went awry when the pandemic hit. This year, we are back on track and we're excited about our inter-house competitions and it's taken on a different format, whereby we are having competitions every month. Last month, we had futsal and the results are out – and this month, we are onto dodgeball between our houses, headmasters and headmistresses. The

students are all excited for it, so we are looking forward to the final day and week of competition coming next year.

We have also extended our departments within our school. For example, our English Department is having a Spelling Bee as an inter-house competition and for the first time this year, we are having theatre arts introduced in our Expressive Arts Department, being done by our resident dramatist, Ms. Collette Jones-Chin – their first production under the theme "Cultural Explosion" will be on November 12. Its aim will show St. Maarten fashion through the years, as well as art, music, poetry by our students out of our Drama Club – so, lots of exciting things. One other thing, the Book Club is planning a reading event for National Family Literacy Day, which is usually on November 1. So there are a lot of exciting things happening at the Academy and we are excited for all of them.

How are new ideas brought up and initiated?

Ideas generally come from all stakeholders. We have our students and, through student government, they are able to communicate what ideas they have or what projects they'd like to see happening, and share their concerns that they have, and those are brought forward through the representatives of the student government and the student government facilitator. And then we review them, and we are able to incorporate and implement whatever we see feasible at the time, given our circumstances.

We also get ideas from our devoted faculty in their departments. They come up with initiatives that benefit our students and we run with it as far as we can. We also get input from our school board about the new policies and initiatives they would like to see us advance – and as management, we try to do our best to implement it so that our students can have a well-rounded experience.

Now parents – we cannot forget our parents – they're integral to this learning process and we often receive feedback from parents and we try as much as possible. We can't please everybody, but we do try to incorporate and initiate activities and ideas coming out of that. We have plans to revive our PTA as we scheduled last month to have meetings, and we are looking forward to reviving and electing a new PTA board.

What is the inspiration/rationale for making these projects?

At the Academy, we hope to not just mould academic learners, but to build character in our

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5





Ms. Leana Trim
Vice Principal of St. Maarten Academy

students – not to educate the next generation, but to educate people or citizens that can make a valuable contribution to society and become leaders that are able to bring positive change. So in creating that model student, we try to incorporate character-building skills, leadership skills and not just the academics. We are big on academics; it is our hallmark; however, we believe in moulding the entire individual and preparing them for life.

What values do you think the Academy can and should nurture in their students?

Our motto does say caring, learning, achieving, excelling; but I would like to start with attitude. Zig Ziglar once said, "It is your attitude, not your aptitude, that determines your altitude." At St. Maarten Academy, self-discipline is paramount. We encourage our students to become independent learners and for them to achieve that, they need to have self-discipline to be able to manage themselves well in order to manage other people.

When you manage yourself, then you can adjust your attitude so that there will be effective collaboration, because we live in a world where it is essential to collaborate using Zoom and all sorts of platforms to collaborate with other people. So being able to manage yourself is key, and self-discipline is needed as well as respect. Wherever you go, respect yourself, respect others,

respect those in authority. It is just that simple.

It is important to every facet in our students' lives so we try to instill that in them; and coming from our school motto the very first word – caring. We want our students to be caring human beings, to show compassion whenever possible, wherever they see the opportunity to seize it; to use caring language and to demonstrate practically that they care. So I think, in summary, our hallmarks would be self-discipline, respect and caring. Those are the values I think we try to instill the most.

What are the expectations of students for this year and years to come?

This year, we have chosen the theme "Educating leaders, building relationships", and in order to do so, we think it is important that all stakeholders work diligently, especially our students.

Whatever they put their mind to; they must work diligently at it. Diligence will be one of the expectations. In order for them to complete their journey successfully, they need to work hard because life is not easy. We do not try to paint a picture that it's all hunky-dory and a bed of roses out there. So you've got to really work hard in order to be successful and reach excellence. As I said, excellence is one of our hallmarks.



Everything that we do, we strive for excellence, and we encourage and push them so that they become excellent in what they do and strive to create relationships that are meaningful and they can reflect on in years to come. To think that they've actually worked at those relationships and established connections and unity within the faculty whereby students will come years later and say, "Oh you're still here!" and be excited and say, "You taught me this and you always said that. Thank you! Now, because of that, I am a better human being."

We look forward to them being excellent and achieving fantastic grades. We have not released them yet, but we are still proud of them and we continue to return the best passes on the island and we look forward to even greater – to become women, men, young boys and girls with

integrity. With everything that they do, we expect them to have integrity. It is part of being responsible; and as the future leaders of St. Maarten, we hope that integrity will also be one of their hallmarks; and as I started out saying, self-discipline, regulating yourself.

We don't usually have many infractions in our school and we are proud of that; and our students know what they are here for and they are focused and they strive as much as possible to stay and abide by our rules and to regulate their behaviour throughout their journey here. So altogether, our expectations are that students should be diligent, demonstrate excellence in everything that they do and even when they fall short to pick themselves back up and go at it.



Feature

Celebrating Teachers Day with Ms. Richardson

BY SHILOH WILLIAMS

On Wednesday, October 5, teachers around the world were applauded for their selfless service. They teach, guide and take care of kids as young as five or six up till they are 18 or 20 years old. For the hard work and dedication that teachers show, it is only right to express our gratitude towards them. They have helped mould and shape, educate and train generations of youngsters into the people they are today. To acknowledge their work, UNESCO in 1994 started this tradition of celebrating Teachers Day in October.

Some teachers sacrifice their personal lives to ensure that their students succeed, whether it is giving them extra afternoon lessons, giving them advice or simply being there emotionally. They go the extra mile and the extra hour for their students simply out of the goodness of their hearts. There is one particular teacher who I would like to mention as she is driven and passionate about her job and serves as a wonderful role model to children: Teacher Fabiana Richardson – a third grade teacher at the Methodist Agogic Centre, John A. Gumbs Campus.

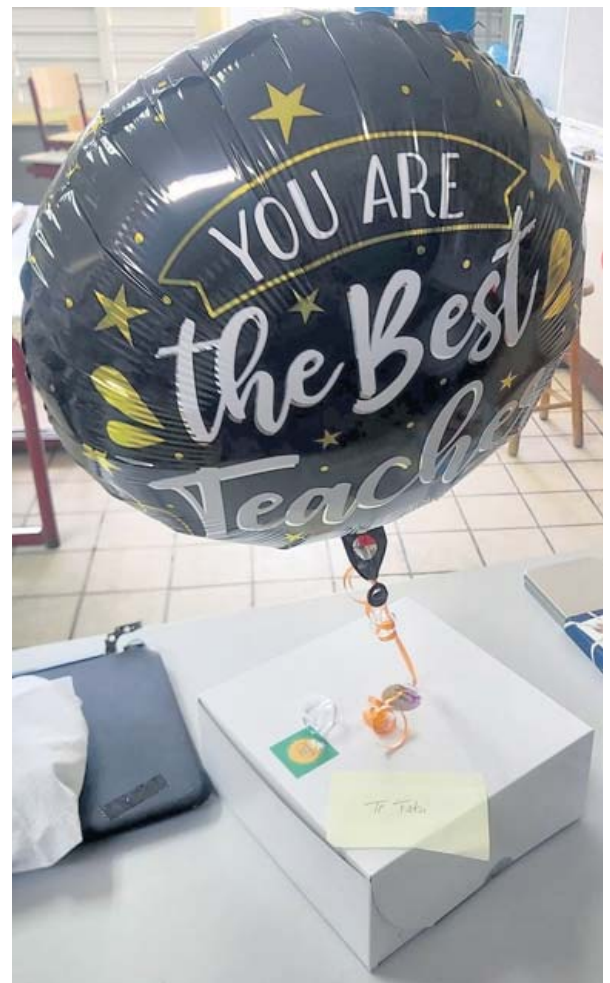
At a young age Teacher Richardson had the attitude of a leader and wanted to be the lady with the long ruler in her hand. One specific quote that made her want to pursue teaching as a career is "Education does not change the world. Education changes people, and people change the world." From then on, she knew that she wanted to be the reason for change for many.

Teacher Richardson enjoys being able to see her students' charisma and their drive when she is teaching. "The smile on their faces makes me feel like I am achieving not just their ability to learn, but their confidence while learning and executing their tasks" – is what she enjoys most about her job.

Putting her passion ahead of everything else is what keeps Teacher Richardson above the noise. She is a teacher who will go above and beyond for her students. Even though at times she feels like the challenging days may not come to an end, she is reminded of all the heartfelt and warm moments shared in her classroom.

One thing that Teacher Richardson would change in the educational system is teachers being appreciated. "There would be no education system without teachers." Teachers are the pillar and water of our seeds. Having a comfortable environment in the classroom allows the teacher to give an effective and comprehensive lesson that would reach 90% of the class.

Along with making sure that the right classroom tools are available and ensuring that teachers are financially stable to carry out their daily lessons also comes observing Teachers Appreciation Day. Teachers definitely deserve all of the recognition and praise because without them, there would be no one to impart any knowledge to our younger generations, all while shaping us into the best versions of ourselves.



HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT ST. MAARTEN?

WITH ST. MAARTEN DAY ON THE HORIZON

As we get ready to observe yet another St. Maarten Day, Teen Times could have chosen to do the usual; you know, interview the elderly, publish poems, write about St. Maarten history and stuff like that. All of that is important to be sure, but let's just say we weren't in the mood this year. Not being in the mood also prompted us to ask ourselves how exactly we feel about our country, our little island in the Caribbean Sea. So we asked a few young people and their responses were as expected.

You see, we understand that "love for country" probably grows over time as we get older. That is the best explanation we could come up with because, as of now, we couldn't describe what most young people feel about St. Maarten as "love". In fact, many struggle to verbalize how they feel about St. Maarten. Most young people are just going through their daily motions, eager to get out into the world if they can. St. Maarten to them is a conduit, not something to feel any "love" for.

Student1: "I honestly don't know how to answer that question. How do I feel about St. Maarten? I guess I don't feel anything. I eat, I get up, I go to school and I come back home. That's my existence."

Student2: "What is there to feel seriously? Everybody looks like they are just existing to me. My mother works three jobs, my father is gone. So all I feel is for my mother."

Student3: "You know what I feel? Boredom! That's what I feel. There is nothing here to keep you busy or to get you excited about. The government doesn't seem to care about young people and putting the



right facilities in place for us. Sometimes, I feel more hate for this place than anything else."

Student4: "St. Maarten is so boring. Are there no creative adult thinkers that can do more stuff for young people? We only have one or two things a year and that's it. The schools only want to focus on debates and stuff like that, but not all of us are into that. We want fun stuff to do. St. Maarten in general is just dull and boring."

Student5: "I like my island, but I can't say I love it. I love Carnival. I love seeing my friends in school and I love hanging out with them at the limited places we have."

Student6: "How do I feel about St. Maarten? I would like to know how our politicians feel about St. Maarten because that can't be love for sure."

Student7: "St. Maarten has so much potential. We watch TV and see so many cool things being done for teens all over the world, especially when it comes to technology. It feels like we

are third world when it comes to tech, because everything is slow or never works. The world can download stuff in less than a minute. We take days to download a simple movie."

Student8: "SXM looks like it's cut up in different pieces for different people. Nobody is together. Indians over here; Chinese over there; and St. Maarteners over here. People don't mix, or even date each other. You think I as a black boy can date an Indian girl even if I think she damn cute? Nope. So if that's SXM, I think we have bigger issues."

Student9: "That question implies that I should feel some kind of patriotism or love for country. I am in my final year of high school. I feel that St. Maarten was a good stepping stone for me to move into the wider world and never come back. I don't feel any love or patriotic link to St. Maarten to say I would come back here. I see my parents struggle and they both work. Living on an island where by the time my parents done pay GEBE, the rest of the

month is a struggle for the five of us. No thanks. St. Maarten is a nice little island, but it is limited in every way and people here struggle too much and too long. I can't wait to leave and never come back."

Student 10: "I feel like we should love the privileges we have like free speech and stuff like that. But how do I really feel about St. Maarten? I don't know. I just don't. It's just there. Maybe when I go further my studies, I might appreciate home more. I've heard people say that a lot. But right now, there isn't much I appreciate. Things rough!"

Ten opinions and all are about the same, right? There are more who gave their views, but those 10 basically summarized how the majority of students feel. Look, we get it. Being young also means being jaded about a lot of things; but being young, doesn't mean being blind.

Young people are not blind to the fact that their parents are struggling with cost of living. They are not blind to the fact that there are minimal extra-curricular activities for teens. They are not blind to the fact that many of the schools now are heavily focused on academic activities not sports, performing arts, and stuff like that. Not everyone fits in the academic box.

Young people see and feel what is happening on St. Maarten or, more accurately, what is not happening on St. Maarten. And so what it triggers in them is this feeling of "must get away", rather than "must love" my country. Sure as they get older, that might change; but we asked them how they felt about their island now. We can conclude, based on their answers, that they feel a lot – just not what you would have hoped.



SXM students talk about University life

BY JONATHAN SANG

Rohan Goswani is a former Teen Times member who has now stepped into a new chapter of life studying abroad. We interviewed him to get his perspective on being a student and living alone for the first time. To balance out the spectrum, interviews with Emily Sang, a final year student, and David Simon, a second-year university student, have been included. Through this, we hope to bring comfort and motivation for any teen reader wondering what studying abroad looks like as time goes by.

ROHAN GOSWANI INTERVIEW

1. Which university do you attend?

I go to Toronto Metropolitan University, formerly known as Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada.

2. What are you currently studying?

I'm currently studying Biomedical Sciences.



3. What challenges did you face when you first started attending university?

Being an IB student, the challenges that I faced surrounded social aspects like minor culture shock, weather, and even slight challenges making friends rather than challenges in school. The courses I took were pretty good and I enjoyed them a lot. Making friends was also not as bad as I had thought.

4. How did you overcome these challenges?

Majority of my problems were gone once I met people who shared my same homesick feelings. As most of my friend-groups consisted of international students, we all felt the same and went through the same things, which not only helped us bond, but just gave us comfort individually.

5. Before you started your first year, what were your expectations?

I don't think I have an answer for this. There were so many things I was unsure of and some that I still am. I moved my entire life from one country to another and so it definitely was a struggle. Living away from home, finding another dance company, looking to get a job, university extra-curricular activities and, on top of that, school-work; it was (and still is) all very difficult to balance.

6. What advice would you give

to students who are preparing to start university soon?

Don't think! Quite literally, don't think too much, it will make the transition easier and will help a lot with getting over the initial fear of everything.

EMILY SANG INTERVIEW

1. Which university do you attend?

I am currently enrolled at Hotel-school The Hague, The Hague Campus.

2. What are you currently studying?

The study itself is Hospitality Management and by the end of my studies, I would have graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a minor in the Future of Guest Experience.

3. What was the transition from high school to your first year in college like?

It was extremely difficult. Anyone who says that moving away for university is easy is lying. However, I would like to think that in my situation, I had it easier than most – due to how my curriculum was set up. In my first year, I had to live on campus in a house with 16 students; this had its pros and cons, but was an overall memorable experience that I will cherish for a lifetime. Being surrounded by people constantly allowed for a smoother transition and helped in not feeling as homesick.

4. What challenges did you face when you first started attending university?

I think it speaks for itself when you have lived on a beautiful sunny island your entire life and move away to a country where it is cold and rains 80% of the year. This took a lot of getting used to, along with learning how to properly dress for the winter and being away from family. Not having your family around is never easy and knowing you will not see them for a while does not help either. This is what I would classify as one of the most difficult parts of moving so far away to pursue your dreams. No matter how ready you think you are to move away and start adulthood, it is never easy to leave home and your family.

5. How did you overcome these challenges?

I was able to make friends quite easily – thanks to the housing situation. I also joined one of the schools' student associations called La Confrérie, and became

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9

one of the head council members in my second year. This allowed me to broaden my network, meet people, and make friends. Now I have an established close group of friends – still from my first year – who have been there through thick and thin up to this day. I guess the way I overcame these challenges was by putting myself out there and making an effort to socialize in order to distract myself from feeling down. My Dutch friends especially helped as well, by sometimes taking me to their childhood home and city where they grew up so I could explore a bit of the Netherlands, which definitely made me feel more at ease.

6. Before you started your first year, what were your expectations?

I really had no idea what to expect coming to the Netherlands as I had never before been here or in any other part of Europe. This was also part of the challenge I faced, but the country is so well organized that it was not difficult to do any administrative tasks. Nonetheless, I had always dreamt of my college experience being like what you see in movies or hear about, with the partying and leaving your parents' home – and to some extent, it was. I did not expect to join the student association, but it was probably one of the best decisions I made, because it made my time at Hottelschool unforgettable.

7. What advice would you give to students who are preparing to start university soon?

As advice, I would remember to keep a balance between university, your social life and personal life. Of course, you want to make friends and fit in, but you also want to develop yourself personally, work, and pass your exams. Same goes the other way – study! But also try and attend some events, festivals or other



things to connect, expand your network and learn more about a foreign culture. Finally, if you move abroad, another big piece of advice is to keep going. Moving to another country can be hard as it is not like home. There will be a lot of changes and you will have to adjust and learn to like things. It takes time to integrate, but don't lose faith, there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!

DAVID SIMMONS INTERVIEW

1. Which university do you attend?

I go to Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly known as Ryerson University).

2. What are you currently studying?

I'm currently studying Biomedical Sciences.

3. What was the transition from high school to your first year in college like?

I would say the transition was smoother than expected. Most of the topics I learnt in 12th grade carried over into the first year of university, so I wouldn't say I was under- nor over-prepared.

4. What challenges did you face when you first started attending

university?

The only challenge I would say I faced was money management. I wasn't used to spending a certain amount, so when I came here and had an allowance for the first time, it was hard to adjust how much to spend and when to spend.

5. How did you overcome these challenges?

I'm still overcoming these challenges. One thing I would say is that buying groceries and then cooking is way better for your buck than buying food from outside all the time.

6. Before you started your first year, what were your expectations?

I was expecting the typical "Uni" experience – partying, socializing, balancing personal life and school) and I did experience that my first year; so I would say my expectations were met.

7. What advice would you give to students who are preparing to start university soon?

I would advise future students to develop time management skills and learn how to meal prep.



Feature

Adapting to University Life

BY PAVITRA SACHDEV

The following is a short interview with first-year university student and former Teen Times member, Diya Sachdev, on her current mindset about life abroad as a student in a new city.

What school do you go to?

I am a student at Toronto Metropolitan University.

What are you currently studying?

I am studying biomedical sciences.

What was going through your mind when you first moved abroad to study?

Since my parents weren't with me, it was a bit nerve wracking; but those feelings quickly subsided.

Did university life live up to your expectations?

Definitely! Moving in was a very memorable experience, which I will definitely hold onto for the rest of my life. My roommates played a massive role in making my day so memorable.

What advice would you give students that will be going to university soon?

Start researching about your university option(s) as early as possible!



Things in your everyday life that cause breast cancer

BY AVANELL PINK

Nathaniel Branden once said, "The first step toward change is awareness." October is not only the month of Halloween, but it is more importantly Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is a condition during which the breast cells proliferate uncontrollably. Depending on which breast cells develop into cancer, there are various types of breast cancer and different areas of the breast might give rise to breast cancer. Every year, we learn about the symptoms of and how to prevent breast cancer, but we barely hear about certain day-to-day activities that may lead to this form of cancer.

The first habit that encourages breast cancer is probably the most common action among adults today – excessive consumption of alcohol. There is no doubt that drinking alcohol increases the chance of developing breast cancer. According to the amount of alcohol consumed, the danger rises. Women who consume one alcoholic drink per day face a little higher risk (about 7% to 10%) than those who abstain from alcohol, while those who consume two to three drinks per day face roughly a 20% increased risk. Other cancers are also associated with an increased risk of drinking alcohol,

thus it is recommended to avoid alcohol consumption. If a woman drinks, she shouldn't consume more than one per day.

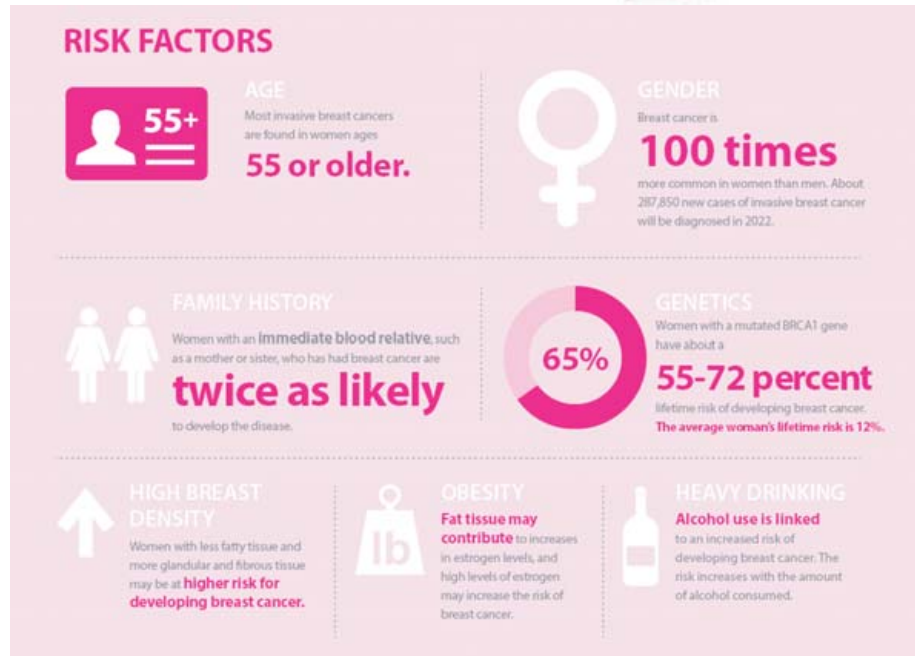
The second point is lack of physical activity. There is mounting evidence that regular exercise lowers the risk of breast cancer,

particularly in postmenopausal women. Due to its impact on hormone levels, inflammation, and body weight, exercise lowers the risk of developing breast cancer. "How much activity is required?" tends to be a major concern. Adults should engage in 150 to 300 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 to 150 minutes of strenuous intensity exercise per week, according to the American Cancer Society (or a combination of these). It is excellent to reach or exceed the upper limit of 300 minutes.

Third, use of birth control is another factor. Hormone use in some birth control methods raises the risk of breast cancer. According to the majority of research, women who use oral contraceptives (birth control pills) have a somewhat increased risk of breast cancer than those who do not. Within 10 years of stopping the tablet, this risk appears to return to normal. Additionally, some studies have found that receiving long-acting progesterone

injections for birth control every three months (like Depo-Provera) raises the risk of breast cancer. In principle, contraceptives like IUDs and dermal patches might also accelerate the spread of breast cancer. Studies have linked the use of hormone-releasing IUDs to an increased risk of breast cancer, which is especially bad for women.

Finding out you have breast cancer can be frightening, frustrating, and even demotivating. It's crucial to utilize the many services available to you whether you or a loved one is dealing with this sickness or just keeping up with your regular breast examinations. It is encouraged to discuss your treatment options with your healthcare practitioner(s) before making any decisions. Your treatment strategy should make you happy and upbeat. Additionally, talking with others, who are experiencing the same thing, might help with feelings of loneliness, so consider attending a local support group.



National Youth Pitch Competition – A great opportunity for SXM youth

BY SAHELI KIRPALANI AND IVAN WU

The National Youth Pitch Competition (NYPC) is an event created and established by the Honourable Minister of Finance, Ardwell M.R. Irion; Islandpreneur; TelEm Group of Companies; and Global Entrepreneurship Week Sint Maarten.

This is the first National Youth Pitch Competition on our island with the goal of encouraging young people on St. Maarten to think innovatively and entrepreneurially. The organizers of this event are working assiduously with the aim of making this competition the top platform for young people to grow their entrepreneurial abilities and, more significantly, introduce innovative concepts. This event will comprise three phases: (1) invite & application, (2) a six-week accelerator program and (3) the finals.

In the first phase, the applicants from all of the secondary schools on St. Maarten will create their business ideas followed by filling out applications that require the forming of four-person groups. Each group is required to create a name for their business team and their product. Groups also have to think about why their product is innovative and unique. Subsequently, groups will have to state who their target audience will be and come up with solutions on how they will engage with new customers or retain existing customers. Then the groups will have to plan out their start-up budget and costs. Moreover, the teams will also have to think of what they will do with the grand prize money of NAf. 10,000 if they were to win the competition. The application form requires the consent of each applicant as well as the consent of the applicant's guardians.

During the second phase of the pitch competition, the top eight groups will move onto a six-week accelerator program in

which leading experts and professionals in the various fields of business will prepare the teams for the finals. Additionally, these experts in the accelerator will train them on the different aspects of innovation, finance, and entrepreneurship. The sessions will take place on Thursdays at the Government Building. The first session, which kicked off the accelerator for the next few weeks, took place on October 13. All of the 16 teams from 10 different schools on the island, which participated in the application process, were invited to the first session, and it was announced that eight teams will progress to the finals instead of just five teams, as they were greatly impressed and blown away by the incredible number and quality of the applications received. Each team that participated is welcome to be present for the sessions, especially since the main goal of this event is to educate the youth and give them the opportunity to have access to education in entrepreneurship.

The first session introduced the Lean Model Canvas, which is similar to a Business Model, but used mainly with start-ups. It was quite an impressive and enlightening session as each one of the team members in the room walked away with valuable knowledge. Each of the various aspects of the canvas will be focused on more in-depth throughout each of the following sessions, such as customer segments, marketing and finance.

The third phase of the competition is the finals, which will occur on November 20, during Global Entrepreneurship Week. The contestants will perform and introduce their pitch to a jury panel consisting of five entrepreneurs and leaders and will be headed by the Minister of Finance. The judges will score the pitches and the one with the highest score will obtain the grand prize of NAf. 10,000 as well as an entrepreneurial exchange trip abroad



in 2023. The finals will be live-streamed on the Islandpreneur's website, and the winning team will also participate in a media tour. Furthermore, the crowd's favourite pitch will receive a prize of NAf. 2,500.

Below are the comments of two NYPC participants from St. Dominic Highs School who are members of Teen Times:

Saheli Kirpalani: My name is Saheli Kirpalani, and I am in IB Year 1 at St. Dominic High School. Our team from the school, called SmartHax, has been selected to participate in the finals. I am really excited and extremely grateful for such an amazing opportunity to be a part of something so grand and inspiring. I am greatly looking forward to all of the ses-

sions in the accelerator program and to gain knowledge from the experts in this field. Even though the journey takes a lot of hard work, dedication, passion, and perseverance, I can tell it will be a very rewarding experience.

Ivan Wu: My name is Ivan Wu, and I am a first-year IB student at St. Dominic High School. I am extremely grateful for this fantastic opportunity to learn more about the ever-changing business world. Many adults have told me that they did not have an event like this when they were younger, which has inspired me to do my best and make the most of this opportunity. I'm looking forward to the various lessons that will be taught as a result of this event.



Feature

EVOLUTION OF CANCEL CULTURE

BY SAHELI KIRPALANI

The term "cancel culture" is a phrase we have grown all too familiar with in recent years. However, cancel culture has been around in our society for decades. It originated with the intention of enabling marginalized groups of people in our society to use their voice to seek change and accountability, especially from those who have vastly disproportionate levels of wealth, power, and privilege.

Cancel culture refers to a type of ostracism in which a person is banished from their social or professional networks, whether this occurs offline, online, or through social media platforms. Those individuals are shunned and referred to as having been "cancelled", usually due to the fact that they have committed a socially unacceptable act or participated in racism or sexism. In conflicts regarding free speech



and censorship, the expression "cancel culture" is regularly used and has predominantly negative connotations.

Cancel culture is merely an abstract concept that has suddenly taken on a life of its own as it has

become an inevitable part of all casual social media conversations. Nowadays, anyone has the power to log into a social media platform on their device and "cancel" another human being for a variety of different reasons. The bullying and condemnation that have resulted due to cancel culture have not been created by the invention of social media or the quickness and anonymity of the internet; but rather social media has just further accelerated and exacerbated this old, medieval concept, turning it into something much more dangerous.

Social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter have simply become tools that lead to the weaponization of cancel culture. It has resulted in widening the ideological divide of right and wrong, leading to the possibility of it being used

by harmful people in positions of power, which can have irrevocable effects on the general public.

Alternatively, cancel culture, also referred to as "accountability" or "call-out culture" – created with the main purpose of calling people out to hold them accountable for their actions – is used in some cases to impose punishments instead. Hence, this can contribute to a destructive process in which there is no room for the ostracized individual to grow and change, and there is no possibility of true forgiveness or redemption. In many ways, it can lead to the dehumanization of people online.

On the other hand, it can provide a space for honest conversations where voices of those that have been oppressed or marginalized have the opportunity to call out a person or institution in power, educate them, and hold them responsible for their actions; while also contributing to changing the course of the conversation for the better and ensuring that people in positions of power can no longer abuse their authority at the cost of the lives and rights others.

Therefore, it is important that we ask ourselves how we are contributing to a culture that weaponizes our right to freedom of speech and remind ourselves that the only way to prevent the radicalization of cancel culture hysteria is to refuse to let individuals, who hold positions of power, control the direction of the discourse.



The Coding Corner

BY CHIRAG RAMCHANDANI

Did you know that computer programming was critical in bringing World War II to a close?

Alan Turing, a very famous mathematician, was born on June 23, 1912, in England. He is widely regarded as the father of contemporary computer science in the software development community.

Along with this exalted designation, he was also accredited with assisting the Allies in bringing World War II to an end. During the height of the war, he would use his abilities to decipher the Enigma machine, a cipher used by the Nazis to safeguard their military communications.



NETFLIX CANCELLING 'GOOD SHOWS'

BY JAHZARA PAYNE

Why is Netflix cancelling shows that happen to be "the good ones"? Lately, Netflix has been removing popular series with no specific reason known to the audience and has even announced that some shows, that were supposed to be signed for a new season, will not be returning on screen again.

Netflix subscribers are quite upset and are accusing Netflix of being homophobic due to the removal of certain LGBTQ+ shows. Netflix users have also complained of the streaming platform keeping shows with lower ratings while cancelling ones that were seemingly popular in almost every region, claiming that they didn't have that many views. This can be viewed as a ploy to get higher ratings and watch time for the underrated shows.

A few years ago, Netflix was on top of its game, being the best streaming platform that everyone wanted to have, but it took a turn after it began its streak of cancelling shows. The platform's reasons for this include "the loss of subscribers" or shows being copyrighted. Some shows were even said to have been taken out of Netflix because of Covid-19.

Netflix recently uploaded a show named "Dahmer Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story", which re-traumatized the families of the victims. The show is about a serial killer and sex offender that committed horrific acts which are traumatizing to highlight. The series itself includes graphic moments which could definitely trigger and resurface any trauma associated with those actions. Therefore, the question of why one of the leading streaming platforms in the world would make such a gruesome show available to their 223.9 million users is raised. To make matters worse, Netflix is said to not have even been granted permission to stream this show.

An easy conclusion that can be deducted from Netflix's actions is the simple driving force of money. It seems as though the company

does not care about the users' positive responses to certain shows but rather pays attention to the audience that dislikes specific shows. This in turn has caused a decrease in their subscriber count and in the long term may result in bankruptcy.



ENTERTAINMENT

NEWS

SHAKIRA IS FACING 8 YEARS IN PRISON

Music artist Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll, born on February 2, 1977, and known for her songs "Waka Waka" and "Hips don't lie" has recently been accused of tax fraud. The 45-year-old Colombian singer has been accused of not paying taxes in Spain between 2012 and 2014, and six prosecutors have convinced a Spanish court to bring her to trial. She is alleged to have evaded a total of €14.5m in tax charges.

In her own defence, Shakira has called all allegations against her "false", adding that she has paid everything that she owed to the government. She claims that between 2012 and 2014, her residence



at the time was in the Bahamas so she was exempt from having to pay any tax charges to Spain. She claimed that she was in Spain "occasionally" during that time; but prosecutors argue that she was actually living in Barcelona (Spain) for more than six months.

With all of these accusations and claims being made, if she is found guilty, Shakira could potentially face up to eight years in prison. According to her public relations firm; she has already paid the outstanding €14.5 million as well as interest to Spain's tax office although she continues to repeatedly deny all of the accusations. Presently, Shakira is about to go on trial in Spain, which could make or break the future of her career.

FANS AND ARTISTS FOUND THEIR OWN SILVER LINING

When organizers at South Korean entertainment company KAMP Global announced in August that they were bringing a star-studded K-pop festival stateside, it almost seemed too good to be true. However, upon revealing KAMP LA's line-up, confirming a diverse array of A-level talent such as Taeyeon, Monsta X, Kai, Momoland, BamBam and more, the mega-concert that looked like a K-pop fan's fantasy became real. With fans around the country flocking to the Golden State, KAMP LA 2022 took over Pasadena's Rose Bowl stadium from October 15 to 16, for two days of energetic performances, comeback teasers, and community building. However, an update from organizers ahead of any of the performers even taking the stage threatened to upend the excitement before it even began.

On the morning of October 14, soloists BamBam and Jeon Somi had posted cryptic messages to social media implying that they had been unable to fly, and fan accounts circulated reports of other artists running into similar issues at the airport. After nearly 24 hours of uncertainty, it was revealed through an official statement that due to "unforeseen U.S. work visa issues and circumstances outside of the artists' and promoters' control," artists BamBam, Jeon Somi, Kai, Lollipop, Taeyeon, and Zion.T would no longer be performing at KAMP LA. A separate statement published the following evening confirmed Monsta X would also not attend.

As a result, nearly half of the 15 scheduled acts were unable to perform, and full or partial refunds were offered to ticket holders. The stadium would no longer be filled to capacity as previously expected. However, despite the unexpected alterations, the show went on and eventually found its silver lining – the artists themselves. The previously gloomy atmosphere swiftly turned electric as soon as the music started on Saturday, with the fans in attendance hyping up as the nights went on. Each performer, ranging from newcomers like T1419 and Aespa to seasoned idols like Super Junior and Epik High, brought a level of energy, charisma, and professionalism that can only be attributed to K-pop artists who were trained, against all odds, to always shine. And under the unusually grey skies of L.A., shine they did.



JACQUEES TAPS SUMMER WALKER, CHRIS BROWN, FOR NEW ALBUM

Jacquees is readying his third studio album and he promises it will be his best work yet. The R&B crooner stopped by Rap-Up to discuss the as-yet-untitled project, which will be executive produced by Future.

According to Jacquees, fate brought them together after they met up in the studio one day and Pluto offered to EP the album. "That was just God. God just put Future in the building," he said.



In addition to Future ("Not Jus Anybody"), the star-studded guest list includes Chris Brown, who appears on the previously-released "Put in Work". Summer Walker and 6LACK also team up on what Jacquees describes as a "breakup record".

"I sent her the song. She was like, 'Oh, this hard. This sounds like some of your old music.' This one of the ones," he said of Summer, who he previously worked with on "Superstar".

Other collaborators include 21 Savage. "I done knew 21 since I was like 14, so that's my dawg," he said. "I always feel like it's crazy when we ain't got songs with people from where we from."

The album, which follows 2019's King of R&B, is due later this summer. "This gon' be one of the ones... 4275, if that was my last album, I would be satisfied with that," he said of his 2018 debut. "But this one, this the one. 4275 went gold, this one going platinum."



Know your WORLD

PROTEST IN IRAN

BY DIYA RAJPAL

The wearing of hijabs by Muslim women has a variety of motivations, all of which stem from women taking pride in their ethnic identity. While this method of honouring religion is admirable, women should be given the choice of whether they would like to show their honour in this manner or not. While, this is the case for most Muslim women around the world, the same cannot be said about Iran where the current law in place denies women their rights and freedom.

In Iran, wearing a hijab is compulsory, and those who refuse are subjected to harsh, legal penalties. On September 13, Mahsa Amini, a 22-year old woman, was arrested by a morality officer while traveling from Kurdistan to Tehran with her family for allegedly wearing her hijab incorrectly. Witnesses alleged that Mahsa Amini was later found beaten in an officer's van and had to be admitted to the hospital. Hours later, police reported her dead due to heart attack and stroke – a narrative that her family doesn't believe.

Protests against the government are currently taking place in Iran as protestors seek justice for the inhumane killing of Mahsa Amini. Violently controlling women's clothing is not something new to Iran; but after fighting this injustice for several years, this is the first time the women of Iran have received global support in trying to bring about a change. People all over the globe have cut their hair to show that they stand with these women in Iran. The protest is not only about the abolition of mandatory hijab legislation, but about reducing the violent control morality police exert over women's lives. Protestors aim to hold police accountable by punishing those responsible.

It is unfortunate, however, that those responsible for unjustified violence and death against Iranian women are unlikely to be held accountable. In trying to silence the people of Iran, the



Iranian government has taken extreme measures, such as killing protestors and restricting internet use. Mahsa Amini has become the symbol for resilience – and through her unjust experience, the women of Iran are hopefully able to initiate the cycle of change that they deserve.

The hijab debate

Zan, Zendegi, Azadi means Woman, Life, Freedom. What is a hijab? According to Google, the hijab is a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women. The headscarf is tied to religion, but the hijab is not simply about religion. Various passages in the Quran, the Muslim holy book, and the Hadiths statements, accredited to the Prophet Mohammad, make references to veiling by the prophet's wives. Many women talk about it as a way to demonstrate their submission to God and a constant reminder to hold onto Islamic beliefs, such as being honest and generous to those in need, and the veil has also been used to restrain male desire. Today, some women wear the hijab to signal pride in their ethnic identity.

Mahsa Amini's death has created

a movement of women demanding freedom and equal rights. Iranian women are not protesting the hijab, but the morality police who are detested by both religious women, who wear the hijab voluntarily, and the more progressive women who do not wish to live according to the government authorized lifestyle. Sanam Vakil, a senior research fellow at the Middle East and North Africa Program at Chatham House, states that "decline in religiosity has been an outcome of the forced Islamization of Iranian society, and statistics point to a rise

in atheism in society."

In conclusion, women all around the world should be allowed to have their freedom of expression. The usage of laws and morality to police or enforce a religion or set of beliefs on persons will encourage violence and war in our society. I believe that it is also disrespectful to the hijab and women who voluntarily wear the hijab, when these beliefs are enforced on others who do not believe or understand the religious background of the hijab.



Feature



Did NASA's DART Mission really hit the bullseye?

BY CHIRAG RAMCHANDANI

NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART), the world's first planetary defence technology demonstration, has successfully smashed its asteroid target, marking the agency's first attempt to reposition an asteroid after a 10-month space voyage. The one-way mission demonstrated that NASA can successfully steer a spacecraft to purposefully crash with an asteroid in order to divert it, a method known as kinetic impact.

DART's target was the asteroid moonlet, Dimorphos, a small body measuring just 160 meters in diameter and orbiting Didymos, a bigger, 780-meter asteroid for which neither asteroid seemed to pose any form of threat to Earth. DART's collision with the asteroid Dimorphos, as part of NASA's wider planetary defence strategy, indicates a plausible mitigation mechanism for safeguarding the globe from an Earth-bound comet or asteroid, if one were detected or as so that is "claimed".

Although many individuals are confident of the fact that NASA has the capability of protecting the Earth in case of a threat by an asteroid, others believe something else. There are many conspiracy theories – some of which have been debunked while others seem to be evidently accurate. Many individuals saw this mission as an opportunity for the United States of America to flex its global dominance in terms of strength and capabilities as well as its economic power. Some individuals believe this mission is only a fraction of something much more gargantuan to expect in the future in terms of defence and astrophysics.

After the success of the mission, the director of NASA's Planetary Science Division, Lori Glaze, said, "We're embarking on a new era of humankind, an era in which we potentially have the capability to protect ourselves from something like a dangerous, hazardous asteroid impact." There is a significant difference between divert-

ing a 560-foot asteroid and one large enough to harm humanity.

Furthermore, "We should not be too eager to say that one test on one asteroid tells us exactly how every other asteroid would behave in a similar situation," said Dr. Thomas Statler, the mission's program scientist at NASA. "But what we can do is use this test as an anchor point for our physics calculations in our simulations that tell us how different kinds of impacts in different situations should behave."

Humanity is facing an increasing number of existential risks, and tragically, colliding two objects with each other cannot overcome all of them.

