

# Staff Editorial

Color of skin, sexual orientation, religion are not what defines a person as a whole. There is inequality, and racial profiling, going around the country, and the discrimination needs to come to an end.

At Jeff High, one will find people of every race and religion. Look into any JHS classroom and one will notice different types of students that come from various backgrounds.

But as students at JHS, this is all too of a familiar scene. We have grown up having friends of all shapes, colors and beliefs. It's the norm for us.

It might not be as easy for others.

The United States has enough power to make a change in the world. Equal rights for all people have been fought for many years, and change has yet to come. With the diversity at Jeff High, students, alone, could start a change throughout the community that could potentially impact our country.

At the Hyphen, we chose to do three separate covers, which all show the social unrest and injustices going on throughout the USA. These three topics, white supremacy, transgender inequality and racial equality, are all things that will affect the everyday lives of countless Americans.

photo by Sam Gatewood



# 'For the Culture'

By Emily Tully & Aaleiah Winford

@TheHyphenNews

At a time when the nation needs it the most, a new organization has formed within the confines of Jeffersonville High School: a club celebrating and embracing the diversity of our school.

Formerly known as the Black Student Union, now called 'For the Culture,' the club had their initial meeting on Aug. 15. The group's initial goal was to promote a better understanding of different cultures, and raise awareness of diversity.

'For the Culture' started as an idea from senior Jayla Bendermon and junior Tyra Malone, which gained support from foreign language teacher Suzanne Siebert, before finally becoming an established club at Jeff High.

"First and foremost, we strive to be a club that's very inclusive, and to get as many people as we can involved," Siebert said of the club. "We want to build a community of like-minded students with the goal of supporting one another and becoming future leaders."

For the first meeting, roughly 40 students, along with Siebert, gathered together in C104 to discuss issues that affect different races in their daily lives, based upon their surroundings in today's society. The club also brainstormed ideas towards getting involved in school and community projects.

"My goal (for the club) is to empower students to be future leaders, produce awareness for things that are happening in our society," said Malone, the club's vice president. "I feel that it's amazing on how many people came."

As the posters around the school state, 'For the Culture' is not just for black students. The club welcomes all races and genders, in addition to anyone who has an open mind or wants to learn about cultural differences.

However the young club has already faced struggles early in their tenure at JHS.

Some of the struggles included remaining inclusive, yet embracing diversity within cultures. For the Culture faced this issue after discussion regarding the club's former title, the Black Student Union.

Bendermon, president of For the Culture, explains that the name change was purely an act that supports the union's idea of inclusiveness.

"We simply decided, as a whole, to change the name, for the culture," Bendermon said. "'For the Culture' represents something that we all can relate to."

Jeffersonville High School is made up of more than 2,000 students, and is full of different orientations that make the school diverse. One of the club's main goals is to educate students about the varying cultures within the student body.

"We really want to bring all the cultures together and educate one another on the different humanities that we are surrounded by every day," Bendermon explains. "A big part of our union is providing a safe place for anyone to talk about their feelings and problems regarding themselves and their lifestyle, and express themselves without repercussions or judgement."

Anyone that attends Jeff High can join 'For the Culture,' as it's open to all colors and creeds. In fact, the club's officers encourage all students who are interested to join for a meeting.

For anyone that is weary of the idea, Siebert urges those who have dispositions to come as well.

"Come on in, we're going to have a good time," Siebert said. "We have a lot of events planned, such as guest speakers. Please join us for one or two meetings in order to educate yourself."

The club meets every Tuesday, with meeting locations currently varying from week to week.

*Left: Members of the 'For the Culture' group discuss and share their thoughts on social, and racial problems, in today's society during their second meeting.*

## Mission Statement

*"The Jeffersonville High School newspaper, the Hyphen, is an open student forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions. The Hyphen will strive to publish fair, balanced, and accurate news for the interest and importance to the student body."*

## 2017-18 Hyphen Staff

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**By Emily Tully**  
 @TheHyphenNews

**Q: With the varying social issues going on around the United States today, I find it difficult to educate myself objectively. I want to be active in my beliefs, while keeping an opinion without offending other people. What should I do?**

**By Chloe Treat**  
 @TheHyphenNews

**Emily :**  
 I think it's very important to be educated on what is going on around us today -- in many ways -- whether that be social, political, etc. The first step is to become fully aware and to see every side of a situation.

There is a lot of talk about "fake news" right now, which is a whole other topic in itself. But the point is, journalism from reliable sources is meant to give facts in an unbiased way. Though some sites are slightly biased, for example CNN in a liberal sense and Fox News in a conservative way, reading multiple outlets of the same story can get readers more of an understanding of events through both sets of views.

Afterwards, an opinion should be formed based on your moral values, and what you think is right -- even if other people do not agree with it.

When it comes to not offending other people, I think the most effective thing to do is to actively listen to those affected by the situation.

For example, as a white person, I cannot decide what is offensive to people of color. But what I can do is listen, and try to sympathize with what they are saying and feeling about the current situations we are facing as a society.

By doing so, I can learn how these situations are potentially harmful to those around me, even if I don't see it or experience myself. You have to keep an open mind and realize that just because it's not happening to you, doesn't mean it's not happening and that you shouldn't care.

Personally, I think that remaining idle and silent is just as bad as perpetuating what you are idly watching.

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." - Desmond Tutu

*For more about this question, visit [www.thehyphennews.com](http://www.thehyphennews.com) to read and discuss.*



***What are your overall thoughts on the events that took place in Charlottesville?***

"Equal rights have never stopped being fought for in this country, even today, and for certain white people to try and establish superiority is silly. White supremacists are losers and should be treated as such."

**- senior Jay Williams**

"Things were crazy, and the rally was unnecessary. In the future, there should be a better security presence to have less of an opportunity for things to escalate."

**- senior Gabe Gallahar**

"The events in Charlottesville were blown out of proportion. The deaths should not have happened, but you can't react with a greater reaction and expect positivity."

**- junior Harrison Paul**

"I think it's crazy how there are still KKK members in 2017. America went to war against Nazism, discrimination and racism in 1941, just for it to still exist today. Too much hatred (is) going on today. Love is needed."

**- senior Femi Kareem**

**Chloe :**  
 When you're younger, it seems like our beliefs come from our parents, or any other adult figure in our lives. Now that we're in high school, we can finally believe in what we want, and form our own opinions.

Recently there's been an increased amount of social injustices, and it's time for you, as a high schooler, or even an adult, to stand up for what is right. An example would be Charlottesville, Va. In the past few weeks, there have been violent protests, and three people killed from the unrest.

White supremacy is at its prime in our country, and sitting by watching it happen is just as bad as supporting it. As teenagers, we are the future leaders of this country, and no matter what you think, you can make a difference.

Whether it's attending peaceful protests, or even shutting down racism you hear or see, you are making a difference. Once you form your own opinion and beliefs, you'll soon realize that just thinking what everyone else thinks, isn't the way to go.

Despite what everyone is saying, racism matters. The pigment of your skin in today's world determines everything, when it shouldn't. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." - Martin Luther King Jr.

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