



Teens celebrate anniversary, launch new literary magazine

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This month, Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative celebrated both an anniversary and a new beginning under their "Apple" line of youth literary magazines.

The new magazine, ApplePi, a collection of poems, short fiction, and artwork from six area high schools, officially launched June 10. A launch event hosted at Lawrence High School that evening let the newly published authors read excerpts and describe their thoughts behind their pieces.

Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative Multicultural Enrichment Director Jim McConaughy, who oversees the entire "Apple" line of publications, said he originally had doubts about seeing the publication come to fruition.

He said that ApplePi's team of student editors, many of whom had overseen previous Appleseed and Applesauce magazines in the past, inspired him to push forward with the project.

"They lobbied pretty hard for their own magazine," said McConaughy.

As the project progressed, collecting works throughout each Merrimack Valley high school, he said ApplePi took on a life of its own. The final product culminated in 24 pages of pieces drawn from a pool of 100 selections.

"What makes this work is the variety and diversity of the authors," he said. "It really opens up lots of worlds people were aware of before."

One such individual whose horizons were broadened was editor Wentai Xaio, 15, a sophomore at Andover High School.

As one of the individuals who lobbied for the magazine's creation, Wentai said she's been thoroughly impressed with the final product.

"Right now in this time of our lives, we should have something to express ourselves," she said. "It's a gathering place for minds."

Wentai said she was originally doubtful of the initial product but took it as an experiment.

"Our generation is defined as very shallow," she said. "I wanted to see, as an experiment, if this was true or not."

She said that among the pieces she had to edit, the ones from Lawrence High School were among her favorites.

"They don't contemplate the sentimental or cliché," she said.

In addition to the launch of ApplePi, the middle-school literary magazine Appleseed marked the 10th anniversary of the publication with the release of its 20th issue in May.

Since its inception, nearly 1,500 middle-school students have been published.

"I just let those figures speak for themselves," said McConaughy.

He said that the continued success of Appleseed through the support of students, families, and school staff denotes the continued benefits of the publication.

"Getting that kind of public affirmation from someone in their formative years can have a huge impact," said McConaughy.

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