

CAT-ASTROPHIC

Books Aid AIDS Decay

For many parents, the general consensus is that their children don't need to know about the birds and the bees until the kids are having kids of their own—forty years in the future. However, sexual education is a required course in public schools, with the idea being that educating kids is better than letting them run around ignorant.

In Uganda, the government is taking a unique approach to Sex Ed. Uganda used to have the highest Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) rate in the world, with 20% of the population infected. Now the infection rate is 6.7%. One has to wonder if Uganda's success can be attributed to its novel form of education—graphic books about unsafe sex resulting in HIV and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). These books don't seem too shocking at first, until you consider that their target audience is children.

While more conservative citizens are not quite comfortable with allowing children access to these books, some parents in Uganda have embraced them. They know that this kind of material has to be discussed to educate their children.

The concept of these books is not so different from U.S. Sex Ed classes. I doubt that having us watch a video of a woman giving birth is merely intended to enlighten young girls—it's intended to scare us into not having sex. So why not educate your children with tales of the consequences of unsafe sex? After all, even an adult would be scarred after reading about a twelve-year-old girl being raped and getting AIDS and then dying—you might as well scare them when they're young.

Despite the reservations there may be about these books, one has to admit that they've proven to be effective. Uganda has prevented countless infections, and this type of educational material has helped.

Though it may seem wrong to expose children to this kind of information, it may save their lives. After all, society exposes children to sex and risky conduct in the media everyday—we might as well expose them to the consequences of such behavior instead of treating teenage promiscuity as just part of American culture.

Catherine Chiang,
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Trick-or-Treating for All

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Imagine that the only thing keeping you from precious candy on Halloween is a law. That is exactly what has happened to teens in Illinois.

Residents had complained that trick-or-treating teenagers look very intimidating and threatening. However, the teens only intend to relieve their pent-up stress. And of course, they want to get as much free candy as they can on Halloween.

Teenage students receive an enormous amount of unwanted stress from their preparation for exams, day-to-day, week-to-week. Even without exams breathing down on their necks, they need to deal with the emotional drama they receive from their peers. The Halloween celebration gives teens a night to momentarily forget about what's causing them so much stress, enabling them to spend some time of relaxation with friends and family.

When teenagers are constantly preparing for the future, it's wrong to take away the one night that allows them to act like a kid again. Let's hope that next year, paranoid residents won't keep teens from enjoying their Halloween experience.

Youth in Revolt: Global Proportions

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Copy Editor

Think back to October 20. It was a Wednesday and chances are you were weighing options about what to be for Halloween or maybe you were struggling to stay awake during class. Whatever obstacle or dilemma you were facing at that moment probably didn't quite compare to what Marisol Valles Garcia was going through.

In the small border town of Praxedis Guadalupe Guerrero, located in Chihuahua, Mexico, this day marked the swearing in of a new police chief.

This town, rampant with organized crime and constant violence due to the opposing Sinaloa and Juarez drug cartels, is the victim of terror. Drug lords are currently fighting over a stretch of highway that could prove to be very lucrative in their drug trafficking endeavours.

The people of this town suffer from living in a land with virtually no law and most disheartening of all, the town's government officials have either succumbed to threats and quit their jobs or were killed.

In the midst of all of this, 20-year-old Valles Garcia stands, ready to employ her methods and bring order to the place she calls home. She is married, has a baby son and has not yet earned her criminology degree, but when the mayor of the town was looking for proposals to fill the police chief position, hers was chosen.



Now, let the above information sink in. This seems like the gripping plot to a foreign drama, but in Mexico it becomes more and more real each day.

When I first read this article, as I was browsing the Yahoo! News page, I couldn't believe what I had just read. You have to understand, I'm 17 years old. And I tend to put myself in other people's shoes—creating ridiculous hypotheticals in my mind.

The only thing I kept thinking was, "Imagine, if in three years I became

the police chief in a town full of criminals and drug lords."

At first I was skeptical and immediately after I felt extremely lethargic.

What had I done on that day? I got through another day of grueling, high-stress level school, took the bus home, did my homework, other miscellaneous activities (i.e. scrolling through pages of Tumblr posts) and then went to sleep. With so little resting on my shoulders, the amount of work and responsibilities paled in

comparison.

I commend Valles Garcia for her courage, initiative and most of all, her spirit. As most of us know, it's not easy to be the one to step up and create change in a relatively hopeless situation.

As high school students it seems almost impossible to have any real-life impact, but remember, young people have a history of starting revolutions.

All over the world they are showing ambition and proving they aren't just brainless beings with no purpose in life other than to eat and complain.

Students in France have been protesting education reform and pension policies this month. Iranian youth have shown dissent for their government and have remained politically involved. People in the Democratic Youth Federation of India rallied for better safety measures after a train derailed in Calcutta.

These efforts, coupled with determination and the desire to enact positive change are just a few examples of the power we hold as young people. We may not all become police chiefs, like Valles Garcia, but we can emulate her example and choose to act with passion and valor.

I hope, along with the people of that small town, that she is able to achieve the prospects she has set for herself, not only to bring a sense of peace, but to take a step in the right direction for the war-torn country just south of our border.

Advanced Placement or Advanced Guessing?

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The room is quiet and all you hear is the ticking of the clock. Your palm gets sweaty as you grip your No. 2 pencil. Anxiety fills your mind and your breathing speeds up. One will never forget the feeling right before an Advanced Placement (AP) exam.

However, beginning in May 2011, the stress on students will be lessened because the College Board has decided to make a change in the way these tests are scored.

Taking effect this spring, the total scores on the multiple choice portion will be calculated based on the number of questions answered correctly; instead of taking a quarter of a point off for every incorrect answer, the wrong answer simply earns no points.

However, it is not right to just guess if students do not know the

answer just to create less pressure. The way they are making the exams is too simple compared to the previous years.

This is basically saying that there will no longer be consequences for simply guessing an answer. The new change is like lowering the test-taking standards to help the students that score poorly to perform better while bringing other pupils in the

school down as well. The grading system is curved and since the test is easier, there will be higher expectations for the students to score well. Making the AP exams less difficult is unnecessary because there will not be a huge dif-

ference in the end. The individuals who score a one will most likely still score in that range even under the "improved" grading system. It is true that some scores might be raised to a small degree, but the average will stay about the same.

AP classes are designed to be at a college level. The students taking it should be mentally prepared for a challenging year. These tests are supposed to prove what the pupil has learned throughout the school year and it should not be acceptable if they do not know the information. By doing this, it is like giving credit to an individual who just gives the answer with no work to

prove it. The College Board might be making these tests for their own benefit. Since it costs a large sum of money to make these tests, perhaps more students will take the test thinking that it is easier.

The future is actually closer than it seems. It may seem like college is a billion years away but in reality, it is only months. If students can get by in high school and on their AP tests by resorting to guessing, they will not be prepared for college. Students need to learn strong study habits now to prepare.

Decades from now, a doctor could be "guessing" that you have cancer and only have a few weeks to live. A greater amount of people would prefer one who is experienced and knows what he or she is doing. Only time can determine the consequences of this scoring change.

