

Tragedy: Guns in a Colorado school

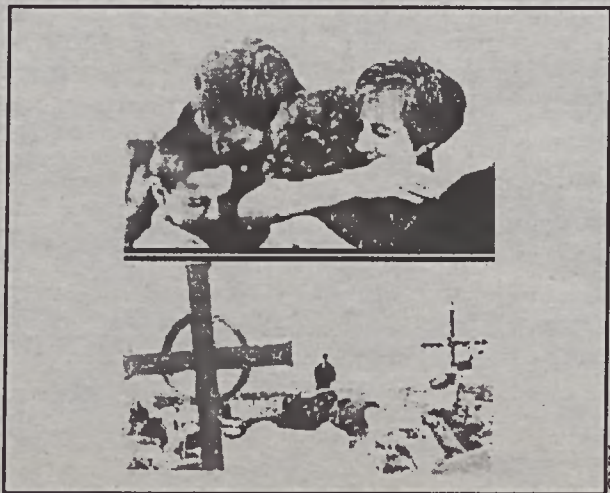
THOMAS ROBBINS

The Colorado shootings were a horrible tragedy. These murders shocked the nation and immediately sparked legislation to be passed that would permit greater restrictions on guns. However, the solutions to the problem should be educating students on the value of life, parent accountability for their child's actions, peer mediation, and more severe punishments for these acts committed by children.

Educating students on the value of a life is essential to reforming the current situation of school shootings. This could be accomplished through classes that discussed such horrific actions. The classes could be similar to the Student Life 101 and 102 classes that NCSSM currently conducts. Like the "break-out" sessions previously held at NCSSM, the students could talk about issues concerning the shootings. Break-out sessions would give students the chance to speak out about what they think, while

also, in a prolific manner, discouraging such an atrocious event to happen again.

Parents should be responsible for their own children. A parent is to look after a child until that child is an adult. The shooters at Columbine High School were not of adult age. If parents took more responsibility for their children's actions, then violence and killings involving children would not occur as frequently. However, parent's responsibility for their children's actions does not mean that parents take full responsibility for all of their child's actions. The parent



The entire nation was shocked by the shootings in Denver, Colorado. Flowers and cards began to arrive by the hundreds.

The Colorado shootings could have possibly been prevented with a successful peer mediation program. A NCSSM junior, Jonelle Stovall, said, "We should invest time in prevention such as peer mediation and simple acts of kindness." I agree, peer mediation would allow a student who had problem to speak with a peer that would help him resolve situations such as teasing. By killing the students at Columbine High School, the killers have shown their immature nature and cowardice. If peer mediation had been an option, there is a possibility that the acts would not have occurred or that the situation could have been spotted before the act.

More severe punishments for children who murder others could also be a solution to the teen violence problem. One junior, Daniel Brezina, agreed saying, "I agree with stricter punishments for those who murder, even for kids if they know what they are doing." Children are capable of making conscientious decisions.

Those who make decisions that harm others should be punished severely for making such a choice. Children would be dissuaded to kill others if they could know the con-

sequence. Punishments for children who kill others are not as harsh as they should be. "Stricter" punishments would help to prevent further horrible

in preventing shootings. Mediation allows for one to talk about problems with a peer, thus "letting off steam." Peer mediation and education of students are proactive approaches to the problem. However, parents' accountability would help to prevent the killing of others by children. If parent intervention was combined with "break-out" sessions at schools, then the problem of killing others would be drastically reduced.



The Columbine High School massacre was the worst such tragedy in recent U.S. history.

killings from occurring.

America needs to take their feelings of remorse and put it into action by preventing the situation from occurring in the future. School shootings could be prevented if all schools educated their students about situations like in Colorado. Peer mediation is also a valuable aid

Conversely, children who kill others knowingly should be punished for their unacceptable acts. Punishment of children would make children think before they acted on an impulse to take another's life. School violence has gotten out of control and should be stopped immediately.

Teachers from page 1

exciting than it normally is. These days can be good for the students, but the students are not benefiting much when such days occur twice out of the year.

Evaluation forms handed out by the teacher for completion by students are also ineffective.

Often these evaluations are only seen and considered by the teacher as a means to improve the class. The failure of this method is obvious when a teacher who probably hands them out every year is still a bad teacher when I get to her class.

Furthermore, students will be much more prone to softening the judgment of a teacher when the student is filling it out under the teacher's nose and handing it directly to him/her afterward.

One possible solution is forms that could be placed in mailboxes that would ask students to name certain teachers they dislike and give substantial reasons. I do not believe

that this would turn into an all-out teacher-bashing fest because most students at NCSSM can distinguish between a strict or hard teacher and an incompetent one, and they generally respect those difficult teachers, despite the amount of complain-

ing that involves them.

Additionally, more random, unannounced evaluations by faculty could occur. I would also like to see cross evaluations by students, as in students would go into other classes and evaluate teachers that are not their own. Perhaps a panel of selected students like those selected for the hearing board could undertake such a task. The teacher in question would


then be evaluated based on how effective he is as a teacher rather than have his teaching style compared to the one that another teacher evaluating him might prefer. It would also allow students to see differences in teaching and be more fair or informed when evaluating their own teachers. Also, the panel would not make hire or fire decisions except in extreme cases, but instead offer suggestions to

make the class more enjoyable and more rewarding for students.

The administration needs to actively seek student opinion on a regular basis so that teacher quality will remain high. This would benefit not only the students in their pursuit of a good education, but also the administration, which is ever trying to maintain a good reputation.



Do some of your teachers want to make you sleep? Audra Neunkirchner zozoozes in the ETC.

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