

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Junior Sean Harris discusses his feelings towards the BLM Movement and the hope he holds for the future of America

Racism is something that has been prevalent in the United States since it was founded and continues to be prevalent today. Students like junior Sean Harris experience racism and bias on a daily basis. Harris supports the Black Lives Matter movement because of the meaning behind it and the experiences he's had and heard about.

"You see all these incidents with Black students and Black people in general in the media and stuff and it's scary to walk into a store or be driving down the street or taking a walk and people are giving you sideways glances because of the color of your skin," Harris said. "I definitely support the message behind BLM. All Lives can't matter when Black Lives don't and it's been that way forever really. Back when the slave trade happened, it's been happening since then. It's surreal to be a person of color right now in the United States."

According to Harris, the BLM movement provides Black people with hope for the future.

"To me it means furthering the notion of equality in the US because every Black student right now is kind of on edge about their future. It's a strange kind of feeling you have because right now there's a lot of, I think, systemic racism going on," Harris said.

Harris believes there is the opportunity for racism to go away in America and that it will require citizens to see each other for who they are, not by the color of their skin.

"When people stop viewing people for their looks and stuff I feel like racism definitely can go away. We all have the power to change that, to change the way we see other people. But, it's the people who are stubborn and are still stuck in their views from the 60s that are keeping this country where it is racially," Harris said.

Although Harris believes racism can go away, he believes seeing someone for only their race is usually negative, no matter the reasoning behind it.

"Areas of higher level education, they give out scholarships for if you're Hispanic, Black, or Asian and what not. I feel like that's a positive thing, but you also could be giving a scholarship to a person that doesn't deserve it because of their skin color," Harris said. "I want to be seen as someone who values their education, someone who chooses your institution to go there and learn not just a tool to boost their demographic."

Although racism has been prevalent for so long in the United States, Harris thinks it could go away if people change their mindsets. He believes if people see each other for who they are instead of the color of their skin, a change can be made.



written by Samantha Sussman and photo courtesy of Sierra Carey

DEMANDING JUSTICE

As one of the only Black wrestlers in the state, senior Taheim Hill explains how his race has affected his high school experience

Like many sports, wrestling involves respect and discipline. For senior Taheim Hill, sometimes the respect isn't mutual. Having grown up in a county that is 89.5% white Americans (census.gov), Hill has spent much of his life adjusting to and dealing with racially biased comments.

"I experienced [racism] last year at regionals. A kid got in my face and I looked at him in his eyes and the ref only looked at me and said, 'Hey, if you don't chill out I'll kick you out of the tournament.' It's like they only care about the white kids in Colorado but not of color," Hill said.

With the wrestling season in full swing, Hill has experienced an increased amount of racial injustice.

"I have experienced racism in my wrestling career, actually recently this Friday. The ref kept hitting me with penalties that were petty because I kept pushing the kid out of bounds or if I slammed the kid hard, the ref kept hitting me with unnecessary roughness and it was unfair. He just didn't like me because of my color. I swear, everything I did was legal," Hill said.

Hill has been dealing with racism since childhood, but as of lately it has been more obvious that the world is nowhere close to safe for people of color.

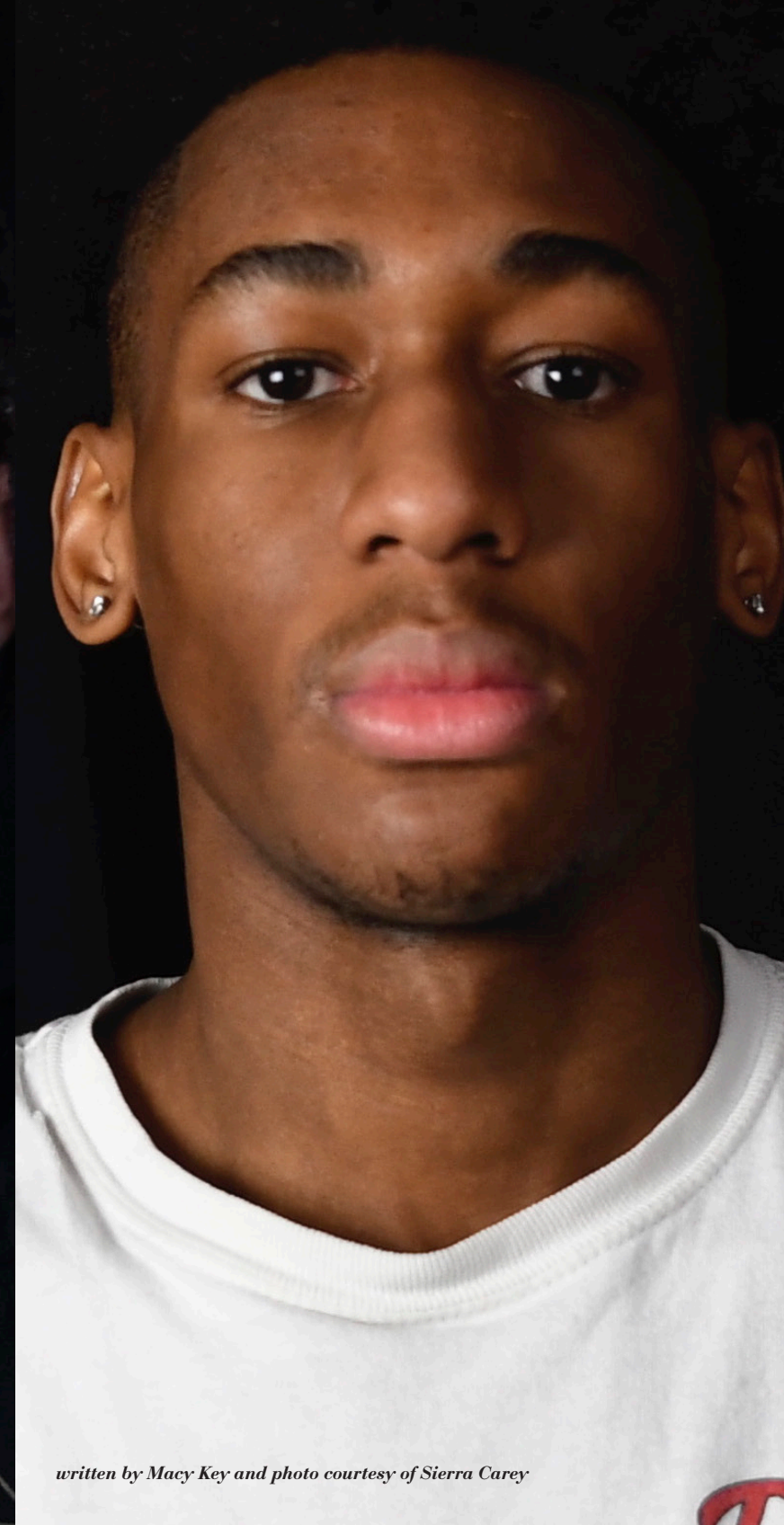
"I have experienced racism at Castle View High School. I was walking to the bathroom and it was racism all over the bathroom. It was during Trump running again for president. On the mirrors it said, 'F*** N*****, TRUMP 2020.' I was overwhelmed by what I saw; I went to the front of the office and yelled at them and said 'really, y'all let these kids write racist slurs all over the bathroom?' The security guards always patrol the bathroom and you guys telling me you guys didn't see that?" Hill said.

Even though anti-racism efforts have been on the rise since the worldwide protests in 2020, many would argue that there is still work left to do.

"I'm not racist, I swear, but with all disrespect I don't really like you white people; that's just where I'm at. Screaming 'All Lives Matter' is a protest to my protest. I'm tired of this systematic racism. The power in the N word is a different sin. We shouldn't say it but we do; when we use it, we know that's just how we greet each other. There's a double meaning under. Even if I wasn't picking cotton physically that doesn't mean I'm not affected by the history," Hill said.

With tensions high, empathy is more important now than ever.

"I love you, but I hate you at the same time. I wish we could trade shoes or change lives so we could understand each other more, but that will take time," Hill said.



written by Macy Key and photo courtesy of Sierra Carey

OPEN DOORS

DaTaezha Ali warns against losing momentum in the Black Lives Matter movement

Slavery. Jim Crow. Marches and protests. Police brutality. All of this has led up to the point our society is in now. The international upheavals from the past year, such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, leave many wondering what the future looks like. However, DaTaezha Ali, a junior, thinks it's more important to remember how we got here.

"[Black history] is very important. We're living in a new generation and we need to update our status. Growing up, in elementary school, it's good to learn about Rosa Parks and others. But once you get to high school, I think it should expand. Everyone will be sitting there, listening, and then everyone will be more aware," Ali said.

The discussion of Black history and American racism during the BLM movement developed her sense of pride as a Black woman.

"Before we had the protests, I would care about being Black, how my hair looks, how much skin I showed, because I was scared that people would judge me. The little things. Then we had the protests and that opened up my eyes as a Black person," Ali said.

However, she thinks what has already happened is not enough. She wants to see more done.

"It's one thing to post on social media, but it's another thing to actually go out there. I think we've been making a good impact with the new stuff that's happened, but nothing happened after the [BLM] protests," Ali said.

Ali is worried that the movement will lose steam and its progress will be lost.

"I do believe, personally, that there might be a change this time. We have a Black lady for vice president. But there's no telling what happens after these four years. If you hear us out, that's only one piece. It's 2021. Let action show," Ali said.

Ali is concerned for the future of the movement, but she is also grateful for the positive impact it has made on many, especially her.

"When we opened up a door for Black people, we also opened up another door for LGBTQ people. Now people can be more open. I'm bisexual. It opened up a door for people like me who want to talk about it out loud. It helped me go to protests, but also prides. Now I get to do both sides. I got to be more self-accepting," Ali said.

Ali will graduate this year and plans to become a criminal profiler so she can help those who are struggling. She's determined to study hard to achieve this, but she thinks we all need to work together to make a better society. The door is open.

written by Satori McCormick and photos courtesy of Maeve Gorman



RACIAL RELEVANCE

Being one of the few Black students at Castle View, senior Cameron Jackson believes racism is important to talk about

With the Black Lives Matter protests becoming less frequent recently, Black students, like senior Cameron Jackson, still believe it is an important topic to discuss and bring awareness to. After the events that took place at the US Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, the topic of racism was reintroduced in reflection of the force used by police officers in regards to the Capitol events versus the Black Lives Matter protests.

"This topic is important to be educated and talked about because change is needed. We need to change as a country and as people, we need to educate ourselves on others problems and really get the facts straight, so we can understand each other and be peaceful," Jackson said.

Jackson believes that even being one of the few Black students at Castle View, he doesn't experience racism on a large scale. Many times it is just a derogatory slur being said as a joke, but it's not a joke to Jackson.

"Being one of the few Black kids at Castle View, I understood there would be some racial moments at some point. There has never been an instance of severe racism that I have experienced but there definitely has been some times where people have called me the N-word or even said it acting like it was a joke when it's really not," Jackson said.

As the Black Lives Matter protests had arisen on March 2020, it may have shed light on a problem that didn't get much attention. The protests began after the death of George Floyd, who was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis, Minn. Jackson believes the current state of the country and the Black Lives Matter protests made him realize the effect this may have on his future.

"The BLM protests have affected my life because it's opened my eyes. I realized that discrimination is everywhere in this country and that unarmed Black people like me are getting shot for doing absolutely nothing. It makes me have to wonder if I'm next or if something will happen to one of my siblings or my dad," Jackson said.

As the protests and riots dissipate, many have tried to come up with a solution to the problem of hate and racism in the country. According to Jackson, there isn't an answer to the problem because some people are always going to have hate.

"I don't think personally there is a way to solve this problem. You can't change people, only hope to adapt and I hope someday our country can be free of racism but I doubt it," Jackson said.

As 2021 begins, racism is still present in the country, and students like Jackson believe it is crucial to be talked about.

written and photos by Sierra Carey

