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The Jet Jotter is a publication of:
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Students Join Organization to Affect Positive Social Change



Students from LHS including seniors, PJ Nassar and Stefan Sjoberg, juniors, Aaron Neiman and Margo Chanin, sophomores, Allie Santiago and David Kearing, freshman, Efrat Earmon and Rachel Moore were selected to be part of Change in Action, a non-profit organization started by Jackie Neiman and Suzanne Choquette. The organization is dedicated to affecting positive social change in the Longmeadow community. Change in Action's first event is called "Instrumental Change." It will be held on Sunday September 26 from 2-6 PM, at the Community House. To find out more, visit www.jointhechange.org.

Peace and Blessings

a philosophical discussion with Ryan Gallo and associates
Today's Topic: American Meritocracy

Ryan Gallo

vs.

PJ Nassar

Many people believe that America is the land of infinite opportunity in which anyone can go as far as their hard work and merit take them. This ideology, otherwise known as the American Dream, stems from the idea that "all men are created equal" and that everyone is blessed with "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." According to this idea, anyone can become the next major CEO or make it to the Forbes 400 list. However, there are far too many instances witnessed where not everyone who made it to the top got there by sheer talent alone.

It is widely believed that Ameritocracy—a people have advance and their ability wealth, fam-class privi-to this belief, the system



Al-though we pride our country as the land of opportunity, the opportunities are not divided equally. Furthermore, merit is not rewarded equally. There are forces that suppress merit such as nepotism, discrimination, inheritance, and affirmative action. Only an ideal world would run on merit and ability alone. But, the world is not perfect.

The notion of a meritocracy must also be questioned. A meritocracy is an illusion that has permeated idealist minds. It is inevitable that one is shaped and influenced by their surroundings and upbringing. In other words, one's surroundings affect one's opportunity to succeed or not. So then, how can we discern merit?

We can never truly have a fair playing field, unless all differences are erased so that there is true equality of opportunity. As we all know, there will always be distinctions in economic, cultural, and social upbringings that will, without a doubt, prevent equality of opportunity from ever existing. With limited opportunity, people will not achieve equally.

Remember, the Declaration did not state that "all men are equal."

In America, everyone is created equally. Everyone starts the same, and everyone ends up the same. Our country is the land of opportunity, where EVERYONE has a chance to become rich or famous. Meritocracy is the principle in which the talented and the wise move ahead. This principle is what our country was founded on.

One of the original founders of our country believed in this principle. Thomas Jefferson was a major proponent of this system. He was a major supporter of meritocratic government. Jefferson believed that they were superior to all other known forms of government. In more general terms, he believed a "natural aristocracy" would come out of this to look after the common good.

Everyone in this country has the same opportunity as the next person does. As long as the hard work is put into what is trying to be achieved, then that is what matters. It is ludicrous saying that discrimination and other factors effects people's hard work.

The real issue was missed by my constituent. Pure meritocracy as a whole really means a society that basically tells their brightest learners what they will do with their lives. For example, in the Republic of Singapore, the brightest of the children are chosen to be the leaders of the nation. In a sense, we are talking about different subjects. American meritocracy is totally different from pure meritocracy as we see in the Republic of Singapore.

In other words, life is not fair. We find this out when we are young. Other children have toys, we don't. Your friend gets an easier teacher than you do for the same subject. In the end, it all evens out. Social Darwinism speaks directly to this. In America, there are unlimited expectations for future generations, and some dreams will be smashed. But others will rise to the top, like Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg. But we cannot possibly blame these shortcomings on race or discrimination. The constitution of the United States was created to protect the rights of ALL American citizens, not just the successful ones.