

The logo for 'teen ink' features the word 'teen' in white lowercase letters on a black rectangular background, and the word 'ink' in white lowercase letters on a bright green rectangular background.

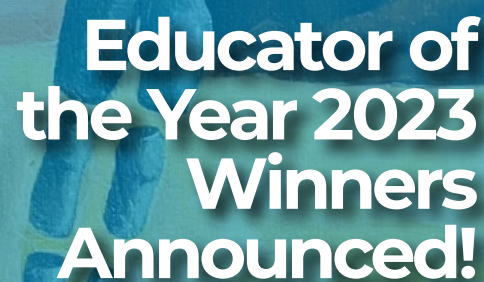
**teen ink**

By teens, for teens

May 2023

Special Edition

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A blue rectangular text box with white text, positioned in the lower right quadrant of the cover. The text is bold and reads: 'Educator of the Year 2023 Winners Announced!'.

**Educator of  
the Year 2023  
Winners  
Announced!**

The title 'the College Issue' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. 'the' is in white, 'College' is in bright blue, and 'Issue' is in white. The text is set against a background of a surreal painting featuring a snail, a funnel with dolphins, and silhouetted figures.

**the  
College Issue**

Gap years, the SATs, and student debt  
Teens' thoughts on all things college!

# MAY 2023 CONTESTS

Entry Deadline:  
June 1, 2023

Artwork Contest:  
**Only Colors!**  
Essay Contest:  
**Story Time!**

Contest winners receive a  
\$25 Amazon gift card and  
will have their winning entry  
published in Teen Ink magazine!

**Learn  
More!**



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# The ACT

ARTICLE BY CHASE WARCHOL, HARTLAND, WI

We had the ACT yesterday. The room felt really cold — almost too cold to be in, like Antarctica. Was it really that cold, or was I just nervous about the test? I settled down in my seat along with the other 25 test takers, and the ACT officially began.

There were three tests in particular that had me thinking deeply, even after I got home. These challenging sections were math, writing, and science. The strange part about the three was that the math

## THE STRANGE PART ABOUT THE THREE WAS THAT THE MATH PORTION WENT TOO FAST, BUT THEN THE WRITING AND SCIENCE PORTIONS WERE SUPER SLOW

portion went too fast, but then the writing and science portions were super slow.

I didn't like that at all. After all, this was my first ACT, and I thought I had prepared myself pretty well. Anything can happen when taking a test like this, right?

Out of the three tests that stuck to my brain like hard cement, math was first. I was confident about math for a couple of reasons. I am in an advanced math class. My strongest subject is math. The

ACT math portion is spread from geometry and up. All of these reasons made me think that I was going to be okay. There were 60 math questions. When I thought my pacing was good, I checked the time and had 20-25 minutes to answer 25 questions. My pace was a question every minute, but once you reached the long questions that you had to write out, that one question per minute pace kind of just went down the drain. So, within the last five minutes, I had to guess on eight questions. I was a little disappointed about that, but these were educated guesses, and this was my first ACT. I didn't really know what to expect.

Chemistry and writing were long tests. It felt like you were lying in bed all night trying to sleep, constantly checking the time, only to see it had moved four minutes, not two hours. I finished the last chemistry question with 30 seconds to spare. My eyes were slowly starting to shut. Even the coldness in the room wasn't enough to keep me awake. I also knew for a fact that this was one of the hardest subjects for me to understand.

Writing, however, took another step down the extremely long-time stairs. This was the final test on the ACT.

Everybody was eyeing the clock. The second the bell rang, Black Friday-like chaos was going to erupt, and everyone was going to sprint to their cars. It was really that bad.

## THE SECOND THE BELL RANG, BLACK FRIDAY-LIKE CHAOS WAS GOING TO ERUPT, AND EVERYONE WAS GOING TO SPRINT TO THEIR CARS

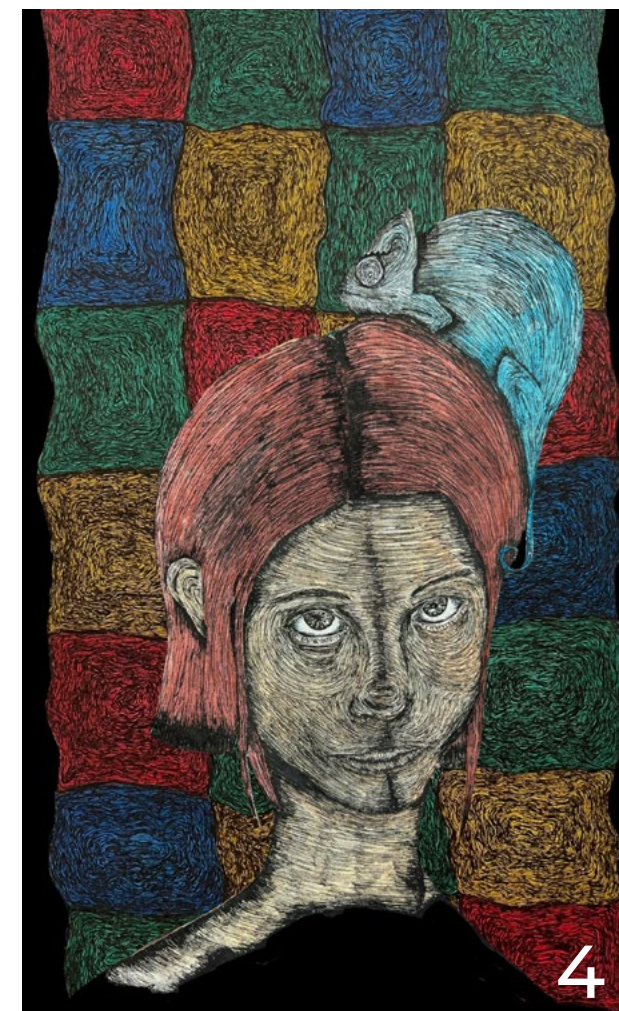
I ended up writing a little over two pages in around 25 minutes. I reread my paper a few times over and made some simple mistake fixes. Once I finished, the rest of the time stretched on for eternity. Closing my eyes didn't work. Playing with my calculator didn't help. I just had to hopelessly sit there and not look around too much or else the teacher would think I'm cheating. I was just endlessly sitting there.

I expected the ACT to be long the first time, but I personally thought that this was one of the longest tests of my life. I will be taking this test a couple more times. I will need to prepare a little more and make sure I get even more sleep, because I thought seven hours was enough. Who knows, though — I could take this test again and do so much better than what I originally thought, but with the same, or even less preparation. That is what I hope. 'Til next time. ♦

# ART GALLERY

## CREDITS

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4. ARTWORK BY MELE BARTON, RANCHO SANTA FE, CA





# opinion on: Affirmative Action

ARTICLE BY SEAN PRY, CASCADE, IA

ARTWORK BY ANTIGONE STANLEY, ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Access to an adequate education is one of the most basic rights possessed by humans. Without it, people lack the enlightenment and inspiration that has led to everything from immense technological advancements to simple interactions. Despite the incredible importance of a strong education, there is still poor access to schooling for a large part of the population. In the United States, that proportion is unfairly skewed in the direction of minorities. Most minority groups have faced centuries of scorn and abuse, and education has been no exception. Now more than ever, all people should be provided equal chances to obtain an education, which is why affirmative action should be allowed as one aspect of the college admission process. When used responsibly and in conjunction with other criteria, affirmative action can be used to diversify the student body of a college while not infringing on the constitutional rights of citizens.

The addition of racial diversity in a student body can be an invaluable asset to a school. With diversity, new perspectives and knowledge flows into the classroom. For some schools though, obtaining diversity can be a difficult task. Factors such as lack of access to educational facilities and underrepresentation can hold back prospective minority students, thus leading to an unvaried group of applicants. To remedy this issue,

some institutions employ the use of affirmative action in their admissions process. Affirmative action can be extremely beneficial when used with proper restraint.

## With diversity, new perspectives and knowledge flows into the classroom

In 1978, the Supreme Court allowed the University of California to continue to consider race in admissions decisions, but said racial quotas went too far. Then, in 1995, their affirmative action policy was removed, and a drastic decline in diversity ensued. Edward Lempinen at UC Berkeley shows how this change adversely affected minority students when it was enacted three years later. "The measure deterred more than 1,000 underrepresented minority students per year from applying to any UC campus..."

A decline of this magnitude was disastrous for trying to maintain a diverse student body and its intrinsic benefits. This example highlights how an affirmative action policy can be beneficial because before the revocation, the University of California system had students from many backgrounds. After the change,

the number of students who fostered diversity declined and left the university with less minority representation. The loss of so many students from different backgrounds undoubtedly, and unfortunately, reduced the variety of viewpoints in many classrooms. As the example shows, using affirmative action can be a positive decision unless it is exploited through the implementation of factors like exact quotas.

When schools use affirmative action improperly, such as a quota system, it can lead to the very conflict that is trying to be solved. Some schools have implemented a strict quota in their admissions review, but a quota is not an adequate solution. By using

quotas, the school is inadvertently shunning and discriminating against some applicants from majority groups. The very issue of exact quotas was addressed and disapproved in a Supreme Court case many years ago. "... Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, ruling in which, on June 28, 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court declared affirmative action constitutional but invalidated the use of racial quotas..."[2] The decision mentioned in the Bakke case underscores that the use of quotas is not an ethical decision. It would incidentally cause further discrimination and a never-ending cycle of biased decisions. Even though affirmative action raises concerns about potential misuse, the Supreme Court has shown that the program passes strict scrutiny and is therefore necessary.

The Supreme Court is often faced with divisive decisions that must be carefully analyzed; affirmative action has been in numerous cases that fit that description. In order to deal with such tremendous decisions, the Court uses the strict scrutiny standard. The strict scrutiny standard involves rigorous assessment of a proposed law or rule to determine if it is truly necessary for improving the lives of

## BECAUSE EDUCATION CAN BE IMPROVED BY ADDING DIVERSITY TO A STUDENT BODY, A WELL-ROUNDED AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN SHOULD BE USED IN ADMISSION DECISIONS

people. In the University of California case, the Supreme Court, with the use of strict scrutiny, ascertained that a balanced affirmative action plan was constitutional. The justices stated that there was no violation of the 14th Amendment or Civil Rights Act because minority status was not the only factor being used to admit students. The program also passed strict scrutiny because it was benefiting minority groups that were underrepresented, and there was not another viable way to do so, according

to the court case. Based on multiple Supreme Court decisions allotting for racial criteria in admissions, it is evident that affirmative action is constitutionally sound. Including minority status in admission decisions does not go against the law, meaning schools can continue to use

those criteria. Having programs like affirmative action increases the welfare of many citizens in ways that other programs cannot, which is why they should remain in place.

Because education can be improved by adding diversity to a student body, a well-rounded affirmative action plan should be used in admission decisions. There have always been certain minority groups that face difficulty when trying to attain a higher education, so they should receive equal representation and better chances to attend post-secondary school. While affirmative action does accomplish this task, it can be abused when schools go too far and require exact quotas for some minorities. Despite the problems posed by quotas, there is compelling evidence that affirmative action can be effective when used properly. By using affirmative action, educational facilities can create a diverse group of students with a variety of views and knowledge. The next world-changing invention, event, book, or anything else could come from a person of any background, so everyone needs to have equal access to a higher education that helps them reach their goals. ♦

OPINION:

# FREE COLLEGE: solving the student debt crisis

ARTICLE BY JASON SKOOG, MANCHESTER, CT

ARTWORK BY LUCY LIU, CLEARWATER, FL

Education is essential to society as we know it. It is what propels our civilization toward the future and grants people the skills they need to contribute to the world through their careers. If education is so important, then why is it so unaffordable to most Americans? According to Student Loan Hero, Americans owe nearly \$1.75 trillion in student loan debt, spread out among about 46 million borrowers. Over \$1 trillion is an amount that I can not even fathom, and it is growing exponentially everyday. The trend that surrounds this startling statistic can be stopped, though. It would be beneficial to American society to make college free and put an end to the student debt crisis.

One of the largest benefits that would come from free college is more enrollment. The reason that many people who want to go to college, but choose not to do so, is because they fear paying a high tuition. This prevents so many qualified individuals from getting a higher education and pursuing the career that they want. In an interview with *The Balance*,

Morley Winograd, president of the Campaign for Free College Tuition, said free college programs are successful in persuading students who felt as if they would not have been able to afford continuing their education otherwise. The initiative of free college would help the underprivileged people in our country achieve success and prosperity. Since more people would be able to get the education and jobs they desire, American society will improve.

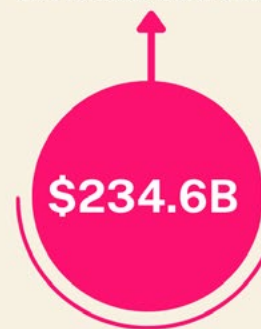
One aspect of our society that will be greatly affected is the economy. Free college will cause our nation's economy to improve by leaps and bounds. Since the cost of living is already so expensive without student debt, leaving college with tens of thousands of dollars in loans makes the financial lives of graduates incredibly difficult. They are reluctant to participate in the economy because their student loans are hanging above their heads, always reminding them that they are not free from the financial burden of college tuition. This would not be the case if college was free.

In a Best-Universities.net article on the merits of free college, the writer says, "Yet, if people were to graduate without debt, they would immediately be able to begin earning, saving, and spending, thus stimulating the economy... there becomes a need for more workers, creating more jobs." Because the economy will vastly improve with free college, the extra taxes that will need to be paid for free college will pay themselves off with the increased economic activity. This is a situation that will benefit everyone in America for years to come.

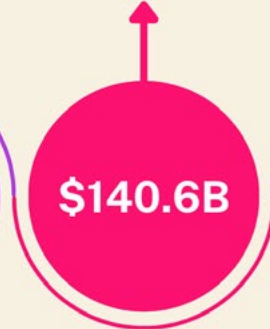
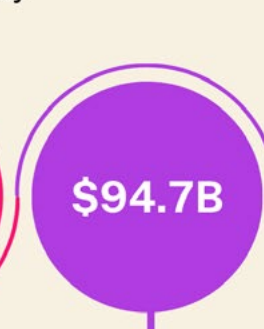
Free college is a policy that could only offer positive outcomes for American society. Several countries in Europe already have free college and are reaping the benefits. Once America decides to join these European countries, the improvements will change the nation for the better. In a society with more educated people pursuing the careers they want and a better economy, America would only have one way to go — up. ♦

## FINANCIAL AID, BY THE NUMBERS

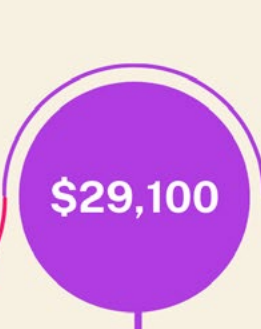
The total amount of aid that undergrad and grad students received in 2021-22 from all grants, federal loans, tax credits, and federal work-study



The total amount of grant aid received by undergraduate and graduate students in 2021-22



The total amount borrowed in federal and nonfederal loans for postsecondary education in 2021-22



The average loan amount borrowed by 2020-21 bachelor's degree recipients

Source: CollegeBoard, Trends in Student Aid 2022 report

## TUITION, BY THE NUMBERS

The average published price of a public, four-year, in-state

\$10,950

The average published price of a public, two-year, in-district

\$3,860

\$28,240

The average published price of a public, four-year, out-of-state

\$39,400

The average published price of a private, nonprofit, four-year

Source: CollegeBoard, Trends in College Pricing 2022 report

PHOTO BY  
DYNALI FORGE,  
HARTLAND, WI

# and we drive

“This piece is written from the perspective of the car I will be leaving behind when I go college.”

ARTICLE BY CARLY HYTINEN, DELAFIELD, WI

Dear Carly,

I know you are leaving me soon. It will not be easy watching you, with your life packed up into a few Tupperware bins, placing them in the back of a van, and driving away. I will still be sitting, parked, in the driveway. My rust-speckled doors and newly straightened tires. I'll see through the rearview mirror as you turn right around the cul-de-sac. Freedom — only a few hundred miles away.

I can't wait to hear all about your adventures in the city. All the concerts you've experienced, what new person you've started sharing pillows with, and all the new secrets that just can't be held over summer. There will be more for you there than you could ever find in the black, two-laned asphalt of this town.

I will miss it. I will miss you. The winter night slushie runs, the drive-through whispers, and the music that could not be any louder.

However, what I will miss the most is the summer breeze, an easy 35 miles per hour, and the orange and purple sky tempting us to chase it all night. So we comply, and we just go.

We pass churches where children have cried and barns where first kisses have been exchanged. We pass houses where parties and memories are stored in basement closets; forests where smoke and good laughs have been thrown into the breeze like leaves floating on autumn winds. We pass swingsets where hearts have been broken and a treehouse that hushed giggles have been haunting for years.

And we drive.

And we push.

And we stretch our fender for any brush of freedom.

And we find it. On a big hill, in the middle of a farm. Stars and house lights dancing in the moonlight.

I know that my four doors and sunroof are not enough to keep you here. I know there's a world outside of this county that you need to see. But the crack on my mirror, the funny smell that lingers, the bump on my fender, and the dent in my side... they will always hold you here, to me.

Go. Chase the sunset.

Always yours,

Delilah ♦

## ART GALLERY

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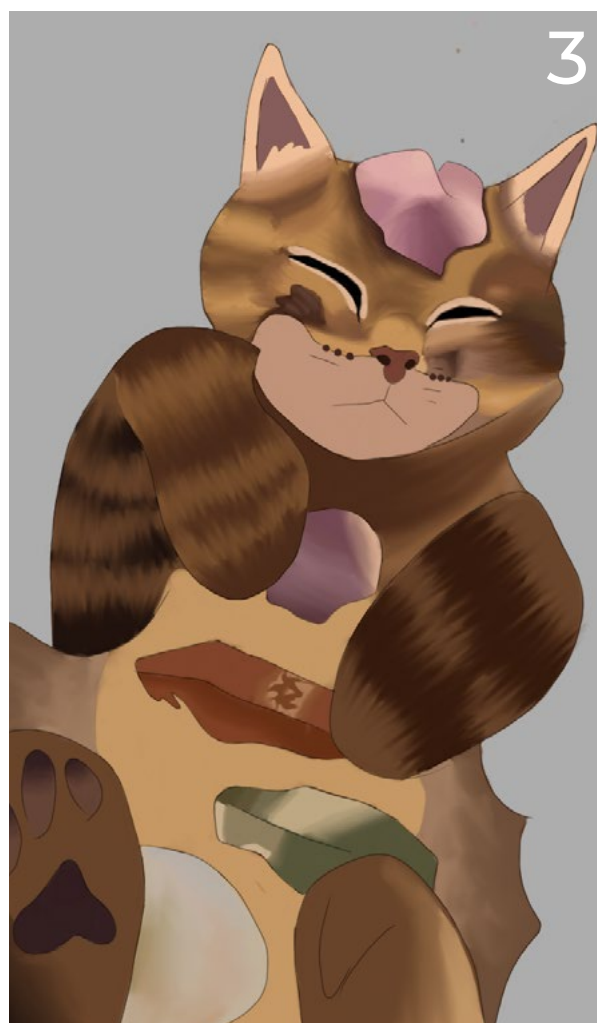
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