

## Jessica's Speech

Hi everyone my name's Jessica Linares and I'm a sophomore at Northwood High School. I'd like to start off by saying thank you to the Board of education and Albert Einstein High School for giving me the opportunity to speak tonight. When people think high school, they think homecoming, athletics clubs, sweethearts and the list could keep going; And along with these things comes the bad, maybe your parents get divorced, your friends might change, you might not be as popular as you'd like to be, your acne's getting worse by the minute and you really wonder, how's this supposed to be the best time of my life?; I'm miserable! Normally you're told to speak to your parents, but are they much help? Nope, or maybe their opinions don't make sense because truth be told, we've all at one point said parents don't understand. And I'm sorry if I offend any parents but most of you have the excuse of "you'll understand when you have children", forgetting that you too at one point were a teenager. Maybe it's true, I wouldn't know yet. Maybe you have a situation where you wonder, "why me?", then pondering the next question, "am I the only one?" You know what, all the answers you need in life aren't going to be floating around, and you have to look for them yourself. I myself am grateful to have around a group of adults that are wonderful. I don't even have words to describe what these people do for the good.

The Northwood Wellness Center has helped me in the sense of finding those answers that I need and it might not be obvious that they have helped me but they've definitely helped me come to conclusions that are the right ones just by giving me the opportunity to talk to them. Sometimes I don't even need to talk, these answers come. Some conclusions are big; some are as minor as what color sweater I want to wear the next day. As much as I do love the deep conversations, I'm also up for the free physicals, doctor visits, Tylenol when my head hurts terribly because I'm one of those people that love freebies.

The Northwood Wellness Center supports students in many areas. I know some students enjoy playing soccer, but unfortunately not all students that enjoy soccer are able to play on the Northwood soccer team. So the Northwood Wellness Center teamed with Montgomery County Department of Recreation and made an intramural Northwood soccer team. This gives students the opportunity to play a sport that will connect them more to the school and other services that the Wellness Center offers.

I'm a tri-varsity athlete that holds a 3.75 GPA in addition to actively participating in two leadership programs at the Northwood Wellness Center.

I'm in SWAT, which stands for student wellness advocacy team and My Lead. Both groups are groups for leaders, which is perfect for me because yes, I am a leader, but I am also a tad too pushy or bossy, so both these groups have taught me that it's okay for me to be me, but there are others out there like me and we need to come to a compromise and also put my leadership skills to good, like advocating about the Wellness Center.

The wellness center has definitely connected me more to school in the sense of the medical benefits and how I stay in school to get physicals and stuff without having to leave. The only reason why I leave school is to go to the orthodontist, not something I'm too fond of personally.

So, I probably take the services at the Wellness Center too fond to the heart, but reality is that's how I feel. It's a place for answers, right answers. It's a place for unity. It's a place where you're safe. It's a place where you have fun. And it's a place for each and every individual, regardless of anything.