

## News-Register

Founded in 1977  
Produced by students – for students – for 46 years.

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# International student tackles obstacles

By Ishmita Shrestha | Contributing Writer

Being an international student is a remarkable and transformative experience. However, living in a foreign country comes with a bunch of challenges.

It is challenging to settle into a new environment, deal with homesickness, form relationships, do well in school, and adjust to a new educational system. But it's critical to keep in mind that these difficulties serve as a chance in disguise, opportunities for growth, and the creation of lifelong memories.

The saying "change comes from inside," is something that has helped me tackle problems. The first thing I suffered when I came to Michigan was homesickness. Everything around me was new and I felt all alone in that big city, but I took that as an opportunity to grow within myself. So, I started joining clubs and international student societies available in my school and community.

I started to come out of my

comfort zone by making new friends and keeping a journal to track my personal growth. Most of the time I tried to keep myself busy, and during my free time I would explore a new environment as a hobby.

When you are an international student, you will find a lot of students like yourself in your classes and student clubs. In such scenarios you can embrace that diversity and take it as an opportunity to learn new things. The thing is, everyone has something good to offer so keeping yourself engaged will help you grow and enjoy in the new environment you're in.

Another aspect will be the academic challenges. This is something every student should be aware of because different countries have different teaching styles. I have personally gone through that problem of losing grades due to my negligence.

So, everyone should be attentive about what is happening in their classes. You should make a study routine and try to follow up with the deadlines. Teachers are

helpful without hesitation, and they give you the best advice if you ask.

There are certain financial problems especially when someone lives alone. Most of the students I have seen living in Texas cities has been through this experience. A lot of parents pay for the rents of their sons and daughters living in the United States, but it is hard for us to find a place to live due to the absence of a social security number and a guardian to show their income.

In such scenario, Dallas College advisors might be able to help you through this. When I was in my previous school at Saginaw Valley State University, before coming to North Lake Campus, I talked with the advisor over there, and they helped me get a taxpayer identification number. SVSU had various programs within their school where I could volunteer to work, which then helped me acquire an ID.

Most of the students, who I have met that have transferred to a community college from a uni-



Illustration | Ranzan Sigdel

versity, have no idea what they are studying. They choose the classes for their associate degree, but they do not seem to look over the whole catalog of degrees or transferable credits.

I think as an international student you should be more connected with a college advisor who may help you make decisions for

what you really want to study. That way you will not be wasting time taking classes of unwanted subjects for your major.

Apart from that, international student enrollment is so high that there are not enough mentors around campus who can help you when you need it. The only way to tackle all those problems is by

trying to find a unique solution for yourself. Without hesitation, I have tried my best to ask for help when I needed it. The more you get involved in campus, the more you will be familiar with the solutions to the problems you have as an international student and built a support system to guide you to the right answers.

# Love should not hurt, love should heal

Trigger Warning: Content covered in this story may be disturbing or upsetting. Please use caution when reading the following story as it may cover sensitive topics like sexual and physical abuse.

October is an important month for me, because it gives me an opportunity to share my story for Domestic Violence Awareness month and it reminds me how far I have come.



By Heather Sherrill  
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In the state of Texas girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, according to the Texas Advocacy Project.

That puts these girls at the end of their high school education and into their first years of college.

High school relationships are supposed to be young puppy love that makes you feel like you know what love really is; they aren't supposed to traumatize you for the rest of your life.

Unfortunately, my high school sweetheart was my biggest nightmare come true. Let's call him Kyle. We were in an on and off relationship for three years and during that time, I was physically, mentally, sexually and emotionally abused.

### Business

It didn't start out that way though. I thought he was cute, and we enjoyed the same music. I wasn't very social, but he was and knew just about everyone in our NJROTC class and drill team. I was shocked

when Kyle started to come around me and when he asked me out. It was weird going from barely knowing anyone to knowing everyone.

However, my teachers were not so impressed and were shocked by my decision to go out with him. They tried to warn me that he was a troublemaker and that I could do better, but I was "in love."

At first, we just hung out at school and during drill practice. Eventually I started to go to Kyle's house after school and sometimes on the weekend, for a couple hours and hang out with him and his little brother. That is when things started to take a turn for the worse. It was like his personality switched when he wasn't around our school friends.

### The Reality

Kyle would be aggressive for no reason. If I interrupted his Call of Duty game, he would stand up grab my hair and bash my head into the wall repeatedly while screaming at me. My skull on the left side still has a dent where the last blow took a toll on me.

Other times he would sexually assault me or blind fold me so that he could smoke what I thought was just marijuana, but years later found out was meth. If I disobeyed any of his rules I was slapped, kicked or punched. Kyle had full control of my email, my AOL and Myspace. He would use them to cheat on me with other girls and prove that he could have anyone he wanted.

Eventually, my entire personality changed and the girl I once was disappeared. I followed him everywhere and did my best not to step out of "line." I convinced myself that this was love and I deserved every bit of what he did to me, including the loss of our child.

It was not easy when Kyle

left me for my best friend and my world came crashing down when they told me they were expecting a baby girl.

After high school I suffered from extreme depression. I attempted to take my life my first year of college and was then diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Relationships after Kyle weren't easy. I always found the guys that would treat me close to how Kyle did, because it had been so ingrained into my brain that love was supposed to be abusive.

After three breakups and a failed marriage I got tired of hearing "just get over it already," "it's in the past, why is it still affecting you?," and "I can't date someone who has been raped it's too much."

I didn't understand what I was doing wrong. I didn't think I could help that I woke up from night terrors screaming and covered in sweat or that I would have random panic attacks that got so bad I would black out.

My psychiatrist was helping me work through these issues, but my significant other was either impatient or could only bite his tongue for so long before he got irritated with me. My ex-husband tried to understand but didn't really try to help me outside of telling me to get back on my medication.

Medication does help when you find the right one for you but at the time I hadn't. Nothing I was doing was helping me to move on with my life. I felt Kyle had won and I would remain on this roller coaster ride.

### The Love Story

It wasn't until last Decem-

ber that I found someone who not only listened to my story but did his own research on PTSD and the effects of being in an abusive relationship.

Mike and our friends watched as my personality began to decline when my marriage was falling apart.

They watched all the fights and screaming matches. My PTSD was triggered every single day. I could barely breathe and I didn't want to live anymore. Mike offered up his home to me for a week to get away and get rest.

I passed out as soon as I got there for over 19 hours straight. My body had enough of the roller coaster and needed rest. Mike just let me talk and cry and encouraged me to do what I wanted and not what everyone else wanted me to do.

As the months went on, I woke up to good morning videos of Mike saying good morning, reminding me how beautiful I am and wishing me a good day.

It was weird at first because no one had ever taken the time to do anything like that for me before. He also paid one of our friends to make a three-sided pillow. Each side has a different texture on it, it is blue and grey with elephants and says Hunny Bunny. The nickname he gave me.

Mike told me to keep the pillow nearby when I sleep and when the flashbacks or night terrors start, I can rub the pillow and it will help bring me out of it.

I had no idea that textures were such a huge part of my PTSD, and it has helped so much with breaking the habit

of clawing at my scalp during my sleep.

Mike also made audio files for me to listen to when I needed to take a minute and breathe. He has the ocean in the background, and he walks me through breathing exercises, and it has helped center me during bad moments at work and events that otherwise would have had a full episode.

### Support Is Available

I say all this to show others who have been in a domestic relationship like me that what we went through was in no way shape or form a good healthy relationship.

Find your Mike. Don't settle for less and remember that you deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. No man or woman has any control over you.

Like Mariska Hargitay's character, Olivia Benson in Law & Order: SVU says "You survived the abuse. You're going to survive the recovery."

It will be a long and difficult road, but you will gain so much and feel so empowered at the end of the day.

Mike has helped me become more independent. I pay all my own bills, I cleared my credit, I work two jobs, I help survivors, I do more of what I enjoy and less of what other people want or expect me to do like play the piano and read more books.

I am not by any means saying I am cured, but I am on the road to recovery thanks to my significant other, Mike.

If you or someone you know needs help, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233.

Dallas College also has free counseling Mon. through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in room A311 or call the Student Success. Help is available, you are not alone.

# LAKE TAKES



The N-R's opinion on recent campus & world happenings.

**THUMBS up to Dallas College** having the third highest fundraising team in Cycle around the Globe.

Dallas College raised over a thousand dollars for National Suicide Awareness month by logging their miles for walking, running or cycling.

**THUMBS Down to missing H Building** room numbers.

Students find it hard to find rooms in H Building because numbers are missing.

**THUMBS Down to low student engagement.**

Lack of participation may be because students are not aware or general lack of interest.