

"OPERATION BEAUTIFUL" INSPIRES TACOMA TEENS

(ARTICLE COURTESY OF TACOMA KOMO)

Tacoma KOMO has a new cast of youth correspondents - the enterprising staff of Bellarmine Preparatory School's newspaper, *The Lion*. These 15 high school students and their advisor, teacher Jeanne Hanigan, will be covering a variety of topics for Tacoma KOMO through our Community Blogger program.



Every girl, especially during high school years, deals with many insecurities she has. Operation Beautiful is a national movement that aims to boost high school girls' self-esteem one sticky note at a time. Recently, Operation Beautiful touched the lives of the girls at Bellarmine Preparatory School - here is what they had to say, as compiled by fellow students Veena Iyengar and Meghan Hilger.

Senior Adaeze Medani said, "I was befuddled, as in I can't believe that girls would take the time to create something beautiful like that and to make other girls feel loved. A lot of girls come in to the bathroom and take out their make-up and try to fix everything. But, when they see that frame and see those words of encouragement, it makes you not want to change a thing about yourself."

Junior Jen Jesse said, "When our society is so focused on appearance and at such an easily influenced time in our lives, it's really great for the girls at Bellarmine to have something so positive as part of their everyday routine. Not only does it brighten our days now, but it helps to shape us as more confident individuals ready to take on the future!"

Junior Carolyn Heaney said, "The sticky notes are inspirational. They remind me of Encounter and they give a little boost of confidence for all the little chicas to see."

Senior Katie Heussman said, "It makes me feel great, but it's embarrassing when I'm gone to the bathroom for 20 minutes looking at the notes."

Senior Amanda Lane: "I know it was written by girls my age. No one had to do it; it wasn't required. Each girl wanted to give the rest of us a boost. That is why I love Bellarmine."

Junior Adriana Levandowski said, "I feel like it united the girls in our school! I loved that we could all add our own comments to brighten someone else's day as well as our own!"

Freshman Alicia Sessler said, "It's just nice to see when you walk into the bathroom. If you're having a bad day, it makes your day better."

Junior Claire Brown, "Every time I go in there, it brightens my day and reminds me of how many reasons I have to be happy."

Senior Alaina George said, "It makes me smile."

Senior Anna Boulanger said, "It is something really special that makes everyone smile. And it makes me happy that I go to a place like Bellarmine where people do random acts of kindness like that."

Junior NK Medani, "It made a big impact on our school! Seeing them every day lifts me up when I feel down. And the fact that they are spreading the love around the whole school is nice because people are taking those positive comments and helping other girls feel good about themselves. It's a great thing."

Senior Jane Manley said, "The sticky notes are contagious. The messages conveyed in these notes brighten the days of every stressed, overwhelmed and I woke up late today girl. They replace the bathroom gossip with uplifting lyrics and quotes."

Junior Britta Walen said, "I think they should keep it going. It's so great to see some encouragement in your day."

Senior Ali Kingery, "I love how every time I go in, there are more and more little inspiring quotes. It's a good way to start off my day."

Junior Becca Sawatzki says, "Even when I'm wearing jeans, an old sweatshirt, no makeup and a messy bun, it still makes me feel beautiful. I think that says it all."

Junior Meesha Sundarum said, "For me, it's not only the notes that are encouraging, but also the fact that people took the time out of their day to make me feel special. I have so much respect for the kind anonymous do-gooders."

Freshman Rebecca Sorensen said, "I think that the sticky notes in the bathroom are inspirational and make every girl feel special regardless of what they look like."

Junior Joy McVicker adds some levity to the topic, noting, "How am I supposed to appreciate my body when I can't even see it?"