

MONEY PRESSURES IN THE MODERN AGE

BY NINA LAVEZZO-STECOPOULOS

TEENAGERS TODAY ARE LEANING MORE AND MORE TOWARDS CAREERS BASED ON MONEY, RATHER THAN PASSION. THE LITTLE HAWK INSPECTS WHY THAT IS.



In the 21st century, trends with teenagers are constantly changing — everything from Pokemon Go to slime, you never quite now what's going on. But when it comes down to a career, what are these social media fanatics' future plans?

There are two generations that make up the population of young adults: Generation Z and millennials. Millennials are generally identified by whether or not they were born early enough to understand or be frightened by 9/11 when it happened — which typically means they were born between 1980 to 2000. On social media and in the news, it's not uncommon to see stories about how millennials are lazy and just like to be on their phones, something that has turned into something of a joke for the generation. One Telegraph article described a millennial at work as “a casually-dressed slacker, strolling into work late on his phone, only to complain there's no room on the office bean bag.”

Members of Generation Z, who were born after 2000, don't quite have the stereotypes against them that millennials have. They are, however marked by the technology of the time and are sometimes referred to as “iGen.” Will these teens follow the Millennial's footsteps or will they find their own path?

“Everytime someone talks about a job people ask ‘how much money does it make,’” said Carly Weigel '20.

According to a blog by Mansoor Ayub, a 19-year-old politician, “57% of Generation Z prefers to save money instead of spending it.” This is a sharp contrast to millennials, who prefer the experience of spending to the value of the money they're spending, according to Business Insider.

“I thought about being a teacher,” said se-

nior Claire Stolley '18. “But then I realized it doesn't really pay that much so I kinda was like ‘eh.’”

Stolley is planning to study Animal Sciences in college, but she's not sure what she would like to do after that. Stolley and her friends look at their future through a practical lens, rather than an idealistic one.

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Stephanie Verdinez '18 agrees with Stolley. When considering her career, she looks at how she'll be able to live on the salary she'll make.

“Maybe nursing,” she said. “You've sort of got to think about how you're going to live.”

Why are these students so aware of their financial future in correlation to their vocational future? A popular theory is that, due to that fact that Generation Z grew up in a time of economic instability, this might have lead them to be more aware and careful of the money they spend, whereas the millennials grew up in a time of economic stability in the United States.

Ryan Jenkins, a generational expert, said, “Millennials became optimistic thanks to their encouraging Baby Boomer parents and growing up in a time of prosperity and opportunity.”

Although Generation Z is expected to be a little different.

“Generation Z will be realistic thanks to their skeptical and straight-shooting Generation X parents and growing up in a recession,” he said. “According to Pew Charitable Trusts, during the Great Recession, the median net worth of Generation Z's parents fell by nearly 45 percent.”

However, this does not apply to all Millennials and Generation Z teenagers — many still have no idea what they want to do, or have passions that have nothing to do with money.

“I want to major in film, television, and production,” said Noah Mueller '18. He didn't choose this path for money, but for a vocational purpose. “It's just something I'm passionate about and [something] I think I'd enjoy doing.”

Mueller is similar to Ariana Mendoza '20, a sophomore who knows that she wants to help people in her career. Mendoza is frustrated by the amount her her peers who want to go into medicine for the money, she thinks it's stupid.

“When I grow up I want to work with children in the medical field, but as of right now I'm not sure the exact specific job,” said Mendoza '20. “The amount of money the job offers has not affected my decision because I love child-





ren and I want to help sick children recover and enjoy the life they are meant to have.”

The infamous question, “What do you want to do when you grow up” often pushes students to think about their futures is most often college or their major. The repetition and stress often associated with this topic makes students worry about their futures. Aubrey Pisarik ‘20, is one of the students who feels this way.

“[I get] kind of frustrated,” she said. “Just because I feel pressured, and I have no idea what I want to do.”

Marin Irvine ‘19 agrees with Pisarik.

“I would prefer [adults] to ask me what I’m interested in because I have lots of things I’m interested in but I don’t have a career to name,” said Irvine.

There are many surveys and exercises implemented into the Iowa City’ school district curriculum to help identify possible careers, but Irvine has not found them useful.

“They didn’t offer enough variety in the career caravan,” she said. “I wasn’t interested in anything that I decided to take.”

Students begin the I Have a Plan or Career Caravan at the eighth grade. Mr. Peterson, a guidance counselor at City High, works closely with these career-building initiatives.

“[Students] certainly go to salary, it is one of the first things they look at,” said Peterson. “Occasionally you’ll hear conversations like ‘Oh my god they don’t make any money!’ It’s hard to tell if those [careers] are things they’re interested in or not.”

But Peterson doesn’t see this desire of money necessarily reflected in the student body.

“I can’t say we necessarily see a trend. I mean, every student is different when they come in,” said Peterson. “Salary does not come up a ton. Every now and then it does and it

comes in varying forms.”

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Peterson, however, sees the focus on salaries as a larger issue.

“I think a lot of the time, students have a look at where the higher incomes are within a career,” he said. “To be honest, a lot of the time when students think about money they’re looking at their current situation within their family and think about if they want more or would be willing to not have that much [income].”

Peterson’s theory has nothing to do with generations, but more an overall observation that could be applicable to any time period. That being said, Peterson has noticed a pattern in the career choices of Generation Z.

“A lot of the time, students will come in and say they are interested in either medicine or being a doctor,” he said.

He speculated the population of this field may have to do with how students are aware of that specific career and interact with people in that profession throughout their lives. In fact, the majority of the careers that interested students in a survey by The Little Hawk were in the medical field; just like Ana Van Beek ‘21.

“I know that it will be a nice stable job but I also enjoy doing medical work and stuff like that,” said Van Beek. “I think I have an overall general liking for medical things.”

When asked if she would still be interested in the medical field if it wasn’t as stable of a career as it is and didn’t have such a high salary she was certain she would be. Though those are aspects of her interest, she likes the career generally.

“I’m lucky because a lot of the professions that I’m interested in make a decent amount of money; but money definitely doesn’t determine happiness,” said Liza Whaylen ‘18. “I’d like to make enough money to be comfortable and to be able to travel like maybe once a year, but it’s not a huge factor.”

PHOTOS BY MAYA DURHAM





GENERATION Z

spending & careers



According to a 2015 research report from Robert Half, Inc., 30% of Generation Z would take a pay cut in order to pursue a career they're passionate about.

Generation Z Spending habits

According to Forbes Magazine, Generation Z spends most of its money on Car (including gas, insurance and taxes), Groceries, Entertainment and Hobbies, Education, Mobile Phone, Bills, Appearance, Savings, Restaurants, Fast-Food, Debt Payments, and Public Transportation.

