THE PURSUIT OF COEXISTENCE

Copy by Sophia Marullo

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I want it to start a dialogue in classrooms and amongst other

people about this kind of stuff. Especially in the south,

these issues aren’t talked about as often compared to

other places. I want the people to discuss it,” Mattie Harris-

Lowe, 11, said.

Friendship, alliance and kindness. The focus of Patriot

Alliance is to foster these three key components amongst all

students.

These members openly discuss gender equality, race, LGBT

and other bullying issues.

By finding common ground through challenges whether it

be in school or at home, it gives students a voice.

“They felt like there were issues that they all had in common,

needed to be addressed and felt passionately about,” Haylee

Wilson, adviser of the club, said.

It all began when Harris-Lowe, president, shared these

topics with friends.

Harris-Lowe aimed to create an environment where members

could share their issues and learn from each other’s experiences.

“I know that personally, I don’t know about LGBT issues

because I’m not part of that community, while members of the

LGBT community may not know a lot about race issues. We

wanted to form a group where we could put that stuff together,”

Harris-Lowe said.

While the group started out as a feminist empowerment club,

it evolved into addressing other issues. Last year, Harris-Lowe

created a project at the Fine Arts Center and began to recognize

how race could be incorporated within it.

As she started to notice the correlations between race, feminism

and LGBT issues, the decision was made to make an alliance

focusing on these certain topics.

Wilson’s process involved trying to figure out a way to organize

the club in a way that encompassed all different types of issues,

not just LGBT ones.

“We don’t just want to be labeled as a gay-straight alliance,

because we deal with so many more issues with that,” Wilson said.

Ciarra Sylvia, 12, realized the impact of the club on the student

body immediately.

“Younger people coming into this school will have a safe place

to come no matter what they are dealing with. It’s a support group

for all different kinds of people and it can benefit anyone that comes,”

Sylvia said.

She also wants the club to achieve recognition through the school

and community.

“I want it to be as respected as any school sports team. I want

it to be known,” Sylvia said.