

TEENSCOPE

Solihull
Sixth Form
College
SUMMIT LEARNING TRUST
www.solihullsf.ac.uk

written by students for students

autumn 2022

DECRAE SIMMS interview



College Style

LGBTQ+ Society

Student Fiction

+ What you are wearing, watching and reading

Decrae Simms is a basketball player here at Solihull Sixth Form college. Not only does he play as team captain for Solihull Sixth Form's basketball team, but Decrae also plays for the Birmingham rockets basketball team. In this interview, we talk about his passion for basketball, his success and how he balances basketball and college life.

1. What do you like about playing basketball?

I love everything about basketball: the physicality, the passion, the competitiveness. One great thing about basketball is making friends with the teammates and creating a brotherhood type of bond with one another.

2. When did you start playing basketball and what motivated you to get into it?

I started playing basketball when I was around 10 years old. At first, I just played about in the playground at primary school, then I started attending training sessions for City of Birmingham basketball (now known as City of Birmingham Rockets). I started playing basketball as I just wanted to be different. I never had the experience of my dad taking me to football (just because he never had the time), so instead I found a passion in basketball and asked my mom to take me to sessions every Saturday.

3. What success have you had and what have you accomplished in playing your sport?



will always

"HARD WORK
BEAT
TALENT"

interview
Ruby Jones



DECGRAE
SIMMS

I won the MVP award for my under 14 regional team.

- I represented the west midlands in an under 15 tournament against other countries.

- I have had many high scoring games over the years.

- This year, I have been given the responsibility of being captain for my under 18 national league team and Solihull sixth form.

4. What are your aspirations for the future, and do you plan on continuing to pursue basketball?

I hope to continue playing basketball until I can't anymore. If given the opportunity, I would definitely go pro. However, basketball is not my main priority. I own two businesses at the moment and hope to open up more ventures in the future.

5. How do you handle dealing with college work and pursuing your passion of basketball at the same time?

Studying maths, physics and economics is already a lot on plus having to play for two teams, but I just try to space out my time as much as I can. I ensure I put my college work first and my coach encourages me to let him know if I need time off from training.

6. Do you think that the sixth form helps you with handling the pressure of juggling work and sport?

College allows a lot of free time in the day to be able to use the library/ LRC to study

and revise, so that helps a lot as all of my training sessions are in the afternoon till late.

7. Is there any athlete in your sport that inspires you and why?

Lebron James. For me, he can just do everything. He can get to the basket and finish. He can shoot. He can pass. Dribble. He can do anything you want him to do. He is also physically gifted and very fast for his size. In addition, he's pushing 40 and he's still in great shape and yet to retire.

8. Do you have any advice for people who are interested in starting to play this sport?

Go for it and be the very best you can be. When it comes to sport, any sport, you can't be half hearted. If you're not gonna put your all in then there is no point, in my opinion. talent can only go so far, hard work will always beat talent when the time comes.



Due to the privilege of not having a uniform at sixth form, many students take this opportunity to express themselves and to make themselves comfortable in doing so. I interviewed Ben, a year 12 student who has his own clothing brand (Cold Night Sky) that has been featured on the social media influencer Madeline Argy.

How comfortable do you feel expressing yourself through what you wear to college?

Quite comfortable as there is more freedom at college to wear what you like. There are lots of unique styles that you see on other people that allows you to feel more comfortable as you learn that everyone has their own unique style.

At the time of the interview, Ben was wearing an iets Frans puffer jacket, baggy BDG light washed jeans, Gucci screener trainers and a Gucci Disney Donald Duck polo shirt.

How comfortable do you think other people feel expressing themselves through fashion?

Pretty comfortable as people can express themselves however they want. Some people have very distinctive styles whereas others have more subtle individual styles. Comfort is a priority in general, so people often lean

PUNK

GRUNGE

BRIT
POP

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?

By Lily Watson



towards that as opposed to how they look. People tend to express themselves through smaller pieces like jewellery and shoes rather than the entire outfit and style. I notice people's shoes more than their outfit sometimes.

What is your opinion on second hand, sustainable fashion?

I am a fan of sustainable fashion due to the rise of fast fashion and so that individual vintage pieces stand out more as opposed to mass produced pieces.

What style do you see most common in college?

Street wear orientated. The culture of 80s and 90s fashion is prominent. The baggy style is suitable for both the looks and comfort of college everyday life.

What inspired you to make your own brand?

I saw other people my age do it and I wanted to make comfortable clothes that I want to wear myself, so I thought I would be able to do that. Also, the comfort of the mainstream fashion industry, such as Urban Outfitters, Crowd London and Corteiz. I wanted to take inspiration from all these various places and incorporate several aspects from each brand.

How long has it been running?

The idea was 2 years ago, and I released a collection in March 2022.

Where do you want the brand going in the future?

Keep it affordable and accessible and I would like to appeal to a younger audience by making it comfortable but also stand out with unique designs. ■



It is coming up to the end of the term and students are beginning to settle into life as a year 12 college student. After weeks of being in lessons and starting off the new subjects, students have learnt new ways of revising, adapting to the new subjects that they would not have been able to do previously and discovering new activities and enrichments that they enjoy being a part of. I'm sure that most of the students are happy to call it a day, as it's finally come to the end of the first term as year 12s. There are some students that have had things to say about their new lessons, their timetables, their enrichments, and clubs that they are a part of. Some students have explained how their first few weeks have been at the sixth form and what they like about the adjustment to sixth form from secondary school, along with subjects they like so far and how they use their free periods. These are what those students have to say about college life:

GT : "the first few weeks have definitely been different from previous school level, but it has been a nice change. I like that we do not have to go in at the same time every day it has all been spaced out; I also really like the café. What interests me is that every day is really different, so it does not get repetitive or boring. I do not do any clubs or enrichments, but I plan to join road map to employment when it is advertised. My favourite subject so far is psychology because it is interesting to know why we act the way we do. In my free periods, depending on how long of a gap I have between my lessons, I'll either go to the library and finish off some work or walk to Solihull if I have a longer break" ▶

A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Georgina Wing



TH: “I am really enjoying college so far, obviously the work is harder, and people were not joking about the step up to A levels from GCSEs but so far, it has all been manageable, and I really like the new people I have met. I love having much more freedom and free time, and no assemblies or useless mandatory lessons. I like only having to do the subjects I have picked and the trust that I am capable of doing work of my own accord from teachers. I do history, English lit and religious studies and it really interests me to learn about people and their lives I love learning about other cultures. I am in a volunteering society which is really helpful to put on your CV and is rewarding doing something useful for communities. The enrichment I am doing is epq on the French revolution. My favourite subject so far is religious studies. I use my free periods to do homework, so I do not have to do it when I get home and I also see my friends.”

ID : “my first few weeks of sixth form have been challenging but rewarding. I love how close it is to town and love all the new people I have met. Because all my subjects are humanities, I think I'm drawn to them because they're any about the way humans behave and why they do so. I do not do any clubs or enrichments. My favourite subject so far is sociology because it is so new to me, and I find it so interesting. I usually use my free periods to either walk across into town and get lunch or I will spend them in the library doing homework while listening to music”



At college, there are a variety of clubs and societies that are available to join, such as the Islamic Society, Anime Society, and the Craft Society. However, there is one society in particular that I wanted to talk about, which is the LGBTQ Society.

There is an emphasis on diversity at college, which is fantastic- students should be treated equally no matter what their race, religion or gender is. This also applies to anyone who is a part of the LGBTQ+ community. It's important to show our allyship and support; it helps make everyone feel safe and equal in a learning environment. As someone who is part of the community myself, I can personally say that even a small comment validating someone or telling someone that you're there for them and have their back, is appreciated more than you may believe. But why should there be such an emphasis on acceptance and tolerance, especially at college? Despite how much our society has progressed, there are still individuals out there who think it's okay to discriminate against people for something that is out of their control.

Half of LGBTQ+ students will face bullying at some point in their lives, which is why societies (such as the LGBTQ Society) are beneficial for a lot of people. Gen Z is the most openly gay generation in history (with 1/6 people being gay or transgender), with many more not publicly 'out'. LGBTQ+ teens are typically subject to more bullying than heterosexual and cisgendered students and homophobic language remains high in British schools, which has spiked a rise in poor mental health within LGBTQ+ youth. ▶

SOMEWHERE to be YOURSELF

by Lily Beddows



The LGBTQ+ Society takes place in H318, every Wednesday at 10:30 and every Friday at 12:15. I managed to interview two students who are a part of the society, to get an insight into what it's like.

What do you do in the society?

The society is a place to be yourself, in a world where you may feel uncomfortable doing so. Students can play games, hang out with friends, help out on open days, and bond over experiences with those who understand them. Everything is confidential, with a “don't ask, don't tell” policy, in order to create a safe and accepting environment.

How is the society helpful for the community?

The society is absolutely accepting for all members of the community. There is an emphasis on encouragement for being who you are – you shouldn't hold anything back or hide away. Through this encouragement, your perception of yourself can be changed for the better.

Why do you enjoy being part of the society?

The society is an accepting environment, where you can be surrounded by friends and your own people. The members are likeminded individuals, who “don't make you feel like an outsider.” Students can educate each other (and themselves) on topics related to the community, such as the definitions of certain sexualities and gender identities.

In summary, the society is a relaxed environment, where you can hang out with those similar to you and be the person you want to be. ◼



If you are part of the LGBTQ+ community and are interested in joining the LGBTQ+ Society, you can contact Tina Champion at SDO or Satveer Kaur.

They say mastering one's Loneliness means you are ready for the company of others: easier said than done. Loneliness is a cold vice around the heart, squeezing with just enough pressure for pain to be constant. It kills people, everyday, just a little more. Taking what was once inner, bright, vibrant sky light and replacing it with a darkness that overshadows each moment.

It isn't possible to escape the suffocating grasp of Loneliness as it fuels nightmares, places false fantasy in dreams and makes daylight thoughts spiritless black, until the Villains of the mind win out. Where is this limit to Loneliness? Does it have a limit? Nobody knows. And the lone man, sitting on a blue-faded bench, needs to.

There is a kind of blue that is a celebration of soft confidence, of a deep resolve to show truth. And this blue wasn't it. It can be inspiration, but that was not the right shade. Surprisingly, the blue shades displayed serenity, calmness. But above all it showed plain, old sadness. It's hard to justify when the sky began and the ground ended as everything blurred into a majestic, blue blob.

Before, the man was invested in the sky above him: always glittering and glowing, an ombre over his head. Before, it invited wonder, lighting a majestic light within his sunken eyes. Even the illuminating street lamps, showing off what the man assumed to be puddles in a radiating way. However, it became mundane. All of it did. How he wished for any colour other than blue. Is it too much to ask? ▶

Leah Berry

Grief & Loneliness

Dressed in so many layers, brilliant scarlet cloth beneath the smudges of exhaust-fume pollution, his body silhouette bulged. Unfortunately, the truth of his scant flesh was only told in the way his cheek bones stood proudly on top of such weathered skin. His skin was hidden behind layers of grunge and his hair hung as a tangled mop of brown and grey. Regrettably, the man couldn't blame Loneliness for his hair gradient.

A rose petal may be temporary in each warm weather season, yet eternal in the memory of love, enough to span the ages. They were the bright confetti of the summer months, grown from the sweetest of buds to open with such confidence. Under the warm sun the sky cried tears of joy to make them shoot up faster. Fourteen petals. It was fourteen, until the man snapped out of his beautiful trance by the cackling freeze.

"No..." He panicked, watching as it glazed over by every micrometre, "Spare me this one thing, please!" He wailed to the heavens. Easily, the man widened his eyes, frantically pleading, making the brown in his iris jump around, "Don't take this away!"

Too distracted by his begging, the man failed to notice the rose break off, falling and falling to the ground to join its rotted brethren- Loneliness snatched it away too. Hunched, curled and seething with red, his body glowered auburn. A sharp pain curled its way through his quaking spine to his nervous neck.

Numbness. Eyes closed, he blearily opened them, finding himself sitting in the same position. Groggily, he went to

move his heavy hand to his foul face. Yet, it didn't move. A chain clunked in place of the small swish of wind he would have heard if his hand could move. "Let me out!" Exclaimed the man, fighting against the chains. He sobbed, broken and accepting his impending doom. Like losing a loved one, it came in waves, little ones, at first they were so strong he felt so swept away.

Grief took his soul biting chunk after chunk from within. Wailing, he tried clutching his stomach- hands still chained with the icy shackles to the deep, sea blue bench. Next, came Loneliness to his heart. It toyed with it. It rolled it around at first, getting a feel for its prey. Finally, it swallowed and closed its eyes: satisfied. Like a robot, the man straightened (shackles somehow vanished), and turned black. Arms in the air, his body changed until it was unrecognisable.

A street light. Another poor soul to add to Grief and Loneliness' collection. ■



If you would like
to write a story
for **TEENSCOPE**



contact us on
roy.preston@solihullsf.ac.uk

Next issue Spring term 2023

