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## Fostering news literacy

By Trib Nation

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This school year, hundreds of Chicago students in junior high and high school participated in classroom training for the News Literacy Project.

To wrap up the school year, the program held its News Literacy Project Showcase last week at the Chicago Tribune. A mix of students, teachers, funders and journalists came together to hear from organizers and see for themselves some of the work produced by students. The NLP program, in its third year, taps journalists to help students learn what constitutes credible information, no matter whether the news is in print, broadcast or online formats. A dozen Chicago Tribune journalists are among the volunteers here.

WGN-TV anchor Micah Materre led three groups of students in discussing their participation and what they learned.

And for each group, the challenge was much the same: Learning to sort fact from fiction, especially in the digital age when social media provides tempting links and videos that may or may not be true.

Look no further than national campaign news for “daily doses” of why a discerning mind is important, said Alan Miller, a former Los Angeles Times reporter who founded the News Literacy Project and is its executive director.

Don Wycliff, a former Tribune journalist who is on the project’s board, described it as “a gallant effort” to teach young people to question the sources of news but not become cynical. “This is urgent work,” he said. “It’s important work.”

In his welcome, Tribune Editor Gerry Kern told the group that the concept of news literacy is critical. And, he said, “we view ourselves as part of the community,” seeking more information on behalf of readers, particularly through an emphasis on investigative journalism that holds government accountable.

The high school panelists were Donal Abram, a senior from the Chicago Military Academy at Bronzeville; Zobia Chunara, a senior from Northside College Preparatory High School; Jessenia Martinez, a senior from Benito Juarez Community Academy in Pilsen who has participated in Tribune’s MASH publication for teens; and Andre Veasley, a junior from Perspectives/IIT Math and Science High School.

Students from Mount Vernon Elementary School in Washington Heights spoke about their collaborative video report on youth violence and a report they are now working on that examines the CPS recycling policy. The students on that panel were Dehvyn Hackworth, Earl Garrett, Latrisha Howard and Jada Alphonse.

And representing Reavis Middle School: Rashad Thomas-Bland, Rahsul Katumbusi, Mykayla Jenkins and

Camille Wiggins. They presented a clip about the impact of video games on youth and a report on CPS's new extended school day.

There's more on the [News Literacy Project](#) here.

-- *Trib Nation*

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