Elizabeth Allsopp had been intrigued by the possibility of a fifty-first state since she visited Puerto Rico during the summer of 2016. She was surprised to see the effect that territory status had on the Puerto Rican people. Curious, she decided that she wanted to learn more by completing her senior Ulysses research project, *Puerto Rico: State, Commonwealth, or Independent Nation*. She hopes to spread awareness about Puerto Rico and the problems and challenges it faces. Next year, Elizabeth hopes to attend either the University of Maryland College Park or the Naval Academy.

Nina Bendt grew up seeing her mother bake beautiful cakes and frost intricate designs on them. From watching her mom create her own cake business, Nina knew that she too wanted to pursue baking. To fulfill her dream, Nina created a cupcake business during sophomore year. As she posted her news online, she received shocked reactions that she was starting a business at such a young age. This inspired Nina to look into the benefits of becoming a youth entrepreneur. Through her project, *Youths in Business: A Study of Youth Entrepreneurship*, Nina confirmed her belief that there are many benefits to creating a business at a young age. Nina will pursue her love of business and baking by majoring in business in college and hopefully opening a bakery of her own in the future.

Liana Bowles has always been surrounded by English that is spoken with an accent. After an incident when her grandmother apologized for her English not being “good” enough, Liana became interested in the perception of accents. She saw how frustrated her grandmother was that her English was sometimes difficult to understand. This led Liana to think about how her grandmother’s accent can affect others’ perception of her, and if it had a profound impact on her self-perception. This interest became Liana’s Ulysses project, *The Study of the Perception of Accents*. In the future, Liana plans to go to college and major in sociology or social work.
**Jasleen Broca** grew up wondering why the world was filled with hate; specifically, why people hate others because of their differences. For her project, *Preventing Hate Crimes Through the Power of Education*, Jasleen focuses on what educational methods work best to prevent hate and hate crimes. Through her research, she hopes to reduce hate crimes, and to encourage people to act with more effective methods to prevent hate so that everyone can live in a safer world. In the future, Jasleen plans to continue her research at the university level while majoring in psychology.

**Julia Brock** began taking American Sign Language during her junior year of high school and fell in love with the language. Her interest led to her developing her project, *Talk to the Hands: The Benefits of Hearing Children Learning Sign Language*. In her final project, Julia explores the different ways children who are hearing can benefit from learning sign language. In addition to taking American Sign Language here at Northwest, Julia has also taken Spanish for all four years of high school. She plans to use her passion for and knowledge of different languages in the future through her intended career path of nursing.

**Leanna Choo** has been playing soccer since she was very young. From playing competitive sports year round, she has had to learn to quickly recover in order to make herself a stronger player and prevent injuries. After recently being diagnosed with exertional compartment syndrome, she wanted to discover if there was a non-surgical way to help alleviate the pain. Her project, *The Effectiveness of Alternative Therapies for Athletes*, analyzes the effectiveness of alternative therapies in helping with pain management and injuries of athletes, as well as its effectiveness for treating more specific conditions like the one she has. Leanna plans to continue her soccer career in college while studying to become a physical therapist.

**Kayla Cumbo** thought of her project topic while watching the Netflix hit series, *13 Reasons Why*. She has long had an interest in social interaction, and the show combined two of her interests. When she realized that the show was prompting controversy, she decided to explore the relationship between the effects of the show and how teens interacted. Kayla explores the effects of the show, specifically how teens were being affected by the show’s representation of teen depression, in her project, *The Press on Depression*. In the future, Kayla plans to attend college and double major in Business and Fashion Merchandising.
**Mia Fennell** has wanted to be a doctor for as long as she can remember. She loves watching TV shows about doctors and their work. She has also volunteered at hospitals every summer for the past four years. Last year, people she knew were dealing with the issue of opioid addiction. With all of this in mind, she chose to do a study on *Addiction to Opioids*, an issue that affects millions of people everyday. By conducting her research, she hopes to educate others about the dangers of opioid abuse, while gaining her own better understanding. In the future, Mia plans to attend college and study neurobiology.

**Amy Hoang** has been in love with art ever since she began elementary school. Through participating in art classes such as music and visual arts in school, art quickly became her passion. Though she often did not have enough space in her schedule to participate in art as much as she wanted to, she took a few classes and practiced in her spare time. Finding that art had the power to lift her spirits during difficult times, she researched the impact that art education has on the mindset of students in her project, *A Mind Full of Art*. She plans to major in computer science and minor in business at the University of Maryland. Sometime in the future, she would also like to open a bakery/cafe utilizing computer science.

**Jennifer Hoang** has played the piano since she was five years old, and ever since she has had a passion for music. After making a mistake during a performance during her sophomore year, her stage fright became more prominent. From this experience, her idea for her Ulysses project was created. *Behind the Scenes of Stage Fright* explores the different aspects that contribute to stage fright for performers, from self esteem to age and gender. Jennifer will study public or global health and/or neuroscience in college next year.

**Peter Josevski** has always liked exploring the universe around him in whatever form it takes: from computers to physics to the worlds that only exist in stories. There have been many constants in his life; one is his love of animals. This love has come from his family and was a contributing factor in helping him develop his project, *How Do Animals Affect the Physical and Psychological Health of Humans?* His research explores how people are influenced in their health and empathy for others based on whether or not they have pets. Next year, Peter plans to attend the college of his choice and major in computer science.
Anjali Kubli has been fascinated by the relationship between dogs and humans from a young age. When she got a puppy four years ago, her interest was ignited even further, as she pondered the possible benefits that owning a dog can have on one’s mental health. Anjali’s project, *The Role of Service Dogs for Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, explores how trained service dogs can assist veterans in overcoming mental trauma. She hopes that her project will help prove service dog therapy to be a valid and effective form of treatment for patients with post traumatic stress disorder. She plans to study biology in the future.

Melanie Leung has often been prone to stuttering and shaking when giving presentations in school. She began wondering why students hated public speaking when she witnessed a peer having a meltdown before a presentation in class. Since technology has evolved and become more integrated within society, Melanie wonders if public speaking is still an important skill for students to have. This led to her project, *Speaking Toward Your Future*, where she researches the main causes for glossophobia and the continued importance of public speaking. She hopes to use what she learned about public speaking to help herself and others in future presentations.

Sydney Lipsman has loved animals since she was a little girl, especially her dog Jack. Through the experience of how having a pet helped her deal with her own challenges, she became interested in the benefits that being around animals can have on mental health. Her project, *More Than Just A Pet: The Benefits of Animal-Assisted Therapy*, details what animal therapy is and the positive impact it has, as well as its role in the world of mental health. In the future, Sydney plans to attend college in Maryland with a possible major in international languages and cultures or women, gender, and sexuality studies.

Melanie Maslansky has always loved to laugh, even in times when others might cry. She became interested in the effects of laughter on health because her mother is always happy and laughing despite various health issues. If “laughter is the best medicine,” then Melanie’s mother should be the healthiest woman alive. Through her research project, *Laugh It Off: A Study of Laughter’s Effect on Health*, Melanie uncovers the psychological, physiological, and immunological effects of laughter on the human body. Melanie is looking forward to attending college next year and hopes to bring laughter wherever she goes.
**Natalie Morgan** has loved baking ever since she was little. She has spent countless hours in front of the Bosch mixer and the stove creating delicious baked goods and meals. For every project she has completed in high school, she included some type of dessert in her presentation. She has baked everything from cheesecake to gingerbread and sugar cookies to butterhorns. All of these experiences in the baking world have led her to her Ulysses project, *The Art of Taste Preferences*. She hopes to explore the secrets behind why we prefer certain flavors and how our taste buds determine our food choices. In the future she hopes to study food science in college, while still baking wonderful desserts to share.

**Stephanie Neville** has always had a deep interest in science and the environment. Stephanie was able to further explore her interests during AP Environmental Science. While watching a documentary in this class, she discovered the concept of direct potable reuse and instantly became interested. This is why she wanted to look further into the possible implementations of direct potable reuse. In her project, *From Toilet to Tap: The Possibilities of Direct Potable Reuse*, she analyzes the differences between direct and indirect potable reuse. Stephanie plans on studying biological engineering in college.

**Jamie Pincus** values treating everyone equally and with kindness. She became interested in quality health care when her grandfather got sick and had to go to rehab, multiple hospitals, and receive in-home care. In her Ulysses project, *The Study of the Quality of Care for the Elderly*, Jamie examines the different types of mistreatment many of the elderly face on a daily basis. She also explores the different ways society can help and hopes to bring awareness to this issue. Jamie plans on possibly attending University of Maryland and majoring in sociology with plans to become a social worker.

**Jordan Qassis** is a fun-loving, athletic, and competitive person who has been a two-sport athlete at Northwest since freshman year. Having many relatives and close friends with colorblindness as well as being color blind himself, Jordan thought it would be interesting to research and learn about the impairment he possessed. Through his project, *Challenges and Hope for the Colorblind*, Jordans wants people to gain a better understanding of what it’s like to have colorblindness and the struggles that people endure. In college, Jordan will be studying Criminology/Criminal Justice and looks forward to the future.
Mairead Whitford Jones was procrastinating on her homework sophomore year when she came across an article on why American health classes were not as effective as those in other countries. She continued to research this issue for an essay during sophomore year and decided to make it her Ulysses Project junior year. Mairead focused more on the issues with American health classes rather than a comparison between America and other countries for her senior year. Her study is called, *A Closer Look At Our Health Classes*. Mairead is excited to go to college next year and is planning on studying some type of physical science.

Astrid Widjaja as an Asian American has faced many hardships due to stereotypes. After experiencing and witnessing stereotypes such as “nerd,” “whiz kid,” and “calculator,” she wondered how these stereotypes came to be. Inspired by her participation in the Asian American Leadership Program at the University of Maryland, she was excited to learn more about how stereotypes impact Asian Americans, as well as non-Asian Americans. This resulted in her final project, *The Model Minority Myth*. In the future, Astrid plans to attend a nearby college and study biology, while furthering her research on The Model Minority Myth and how age plays a factor in people’s tendency to stereotype others.

Lesly Zouantcha came to the United States from Cameroon when she was four years old. She still remembers the difficulty of adapting to a new culture and learning a new language. After hearing about her cousin getting bullied in school for being from a different country and her brother’s friend getting deported, she took a stronger interest in immigration. She did not have a difficult time starting a new life in America because she was so young, but she knows it wasn't the same for other people. She is curious to find out everyone’s experience and that's why she is doing her project, *Diaries of the Dreamer: A Study of Immigration*. Lesly plans to study public health in college next year.

Dr. Borenzweig is a senior of a different kind! Over her 29-year teaching career, Dr. Borenzweig has been an English teacher, research teacher, and the coordinator of the Ulysses Program. In 2009, Dr. Borenzweig completed her own Ulysses project, *Passions and Possibilities: The Lived Experience of Teaching AP English*, when she earned her doctorate from the University of Maryland. She is very proud of the students in the Ulysses Signature Program, and grateful to Northwest and MCPS for supporting the passions and possibilities of all students. Next year, Dr. Borenzweig plans on watching in awe as the Class of 2018 pursues post-secondary degrees and saves her a front-row seat for their future projects.