Globalization is a much-debated term, yet fairly new to our vocabulary. What is globalization? Globalization is a word meaning so many things. It affects all of us on a daily basis, without our knowledge. We can link almost anything to this term. As time goes on this will only become more, and more evident. Globalization, is it shrinking or expanding our world? How do we measure this? Is this a positive phenomenon or is it contributing only negative aspects to our everyday lives? How has this affected you, your family, your past, your future, or the way we must look at things from now on?

Globalization, a noun, is defined as follows: the process by which social institutions become adopted on a global scale. Internationally speaking it is defined as: the process by which a business or company becomes international or starts operating at an international level. This still sounds vague, thus it is impossible to construct a definition that would encapsulate all that is involved with the term and or occurrence - globalization. (www.webstersdictionary.com)

A past graduate of Upper Darby High School, Jim Croce, a great songwriter, wrote a song called “Time in Bottle”. This song has beautiful lyrics expressing his want to preserve time in a bottle. Croce wrote this song to express his yearning to preserve time to spend it with a certain cherished individual. We can easily parallel this to our own
human predictability. An excerpt of the song reads, “If I had a box just for wishes, and dreams that had never come true, the box would be empty, except for the memory...” This draws a vivid image of our emotional craving to build dreams only from that which we already know, and are comfortable with. This song was particularly fascinating because it directly related to the desire of so many, to save time and resist the changes time brings. The irony is that this song about the preservation of time was written by an author who grew up in this very area, experiencing the hardships associated with its changing times (www.lyrics.com).

It is human nature to surround yourself with that, which is most comfortable to you. Humans are often referred to as creatures of habit. We become accustom to certain norms and have a hard time adapting to anything new. This is one reason why globalization is such a hard experience to endure for most of us. We are taught, and accept a predisposed way of life and therefore most of the time, assume only certain expectations for ourselves. This would all be fine if the world was not constantly in a state of change, altering those demands on who we are, and what we will become as individuals. Currently globalization is largely responsible for these unsettling changes. Should we fight it? Does a fight against globalization offer a possible victory?

Globalization is inevitable. Globalization will happen, the best way to cope within its grasp is to break it down and understand it’s what drives it. Globalization could be compared to a machine and with the identification of all its working parts we can better understand how to operate it to our advantage. To best survive we must harness the beast that threatens all that is familiar to us, and capitalize on all it has to harvest.
One way to study the phenomenon of globalization is to study it within our own personal parameters. How it affected what is most familiar to us? Has it had a direct bearing in something we hold dear? This can only be answered on an individual basis and each answer will rear dramatically different results.

My hometown, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania is a selected area of observation. Upper Darby is by no means a small area. It is a part of, Delaware County, a suburb of located southwest of Philadelphia. Upper Darby is the largest borough in Pennsylvania (www.co.delaware.pa.us). The affects of globalization in Upper Darby can be measured in a number of ways when discussing this area. We will first talk about how the community was started and what was contained with it as a result of its founders. Then go into the changes that were brought on by the rise of industry, first the incline in life for the residents. Then the dramatic decline as a result of mass job loss and lost opportunities (interview with Robert Kelly).

As it is important to name the large companies that provided most of the jobs, it also seems tedious and redundant to discuss each company and it’s particular story in detail, telling where each job has been relocated to or why it was eliminated. While going into statistical detail would provide more background of who was employed where, it may be more interesting to instead tell the story of how the community come to be in it’s current situation. Then utilize a strong focus on its actions of moving in an upward direction. This particular community has made profound efforts toward rebuilding the area, and pulling itself out of a catastrophic situation. It has proved to be vastly efficient in it’s stretching and utilizing all limited resources that have been available to it (interview: Carolyn Shields).
This area started off serving as a suburb of the great “City of Brotherly Love”, hundreds of years ago. Many people, who came to live in this area, did so because of the vast opportunity to find employment. The city employed many people and those who could afford to move outside the city limits did so in a search for a better quality of life. This began the start of many smaller communities. The Pennsylvania railroad was also a huge influence connecting many cites small and large, and bridging the gap between all of these areas (interview: office of state representative Mario Cilvera’s office).

As the United States went through a huge industrial boom, this area grew with a vengeance. There were factories and companies sprung up all over to suffice the demands of the ever-growing world. With the close proximity to Philadelphia, containing both seaports and railways, this was a prime location for any growing industry. Companies like G. E. Electric, Baldwin Leema and Hamilton (built locomotives, in Ridley Park), Westing House (built small parts for many industrial purposes), Ford Motor Company, Scott paper, and what is now called Bowling Cooperation (along with other things built and still builds planes and helicopters), found a new home. (www.delco.lib.pa.us), (http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/), (interview: State representative Mario Cilvera’s office), (interview: Robert Kelly)

In addition to global pressures to become more cost efficient, many of the larger companies in the area had huge EPA pressures to cooperate or close. G. E. Electric and Westing House, and Scott Paper were located in Chester, a once prominent area now poverty ridden and “dirty”. With 95% of residents living in direct proximity of environmental waste, (proven extremely harmful to their health) harsh EPA standards made it financially more profitable to close down their factories then to instill up to date
nonpolluting and waste cutting technologies. We can see that companies concerns for their workers and surrounding residents health concerns were not top priority (www.penweb.org/chester/history.html).

Along with these companies were mass employers like the *Philadelphia Naval Shipyard* and *Sun Ship Company*. The *Philadelphia shipyard* was the first US shipyard began in 1801. The shipyard employed thousands of local residents in the Philadelphia area and Delaware County. To give an idea of the masses that depended on this shipyard for employment, during World War II the Philadelphia Shipyard employed 40,000 people. By the 1960’s it only employed 12,000 people, and most of its shipbuilding projects were being contracted out to private companies located elsewhere. After the cold war another 7,000 jobs were lost and by September of 1995, the shipyard with its diminutive existence was officially closed (http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/philadelphia%20naval%20shipyard). These two companies not only employed thousands in the area, but also provided for transportation on other goods that were produced locally (www.delco.lib.pa.us) (www.delcoh history.org). (Interview: Robert Kelly).

As these and many other companies flourished. The location was prime, and the availability of workers was great, the area continued to prosper. As found in many interviews of people in the area, you were guaranteed a good paying job in the area if you worked hard. It was assumed that upon graduation from high school, (or sometimes not even) one could still make a decent living to support him/herself and a family by being employed by one of these companies. People depended on these jobs. They organized unions and created standards and demanded benefits. This bettered their work standards
and raised the standard of living. At this time, Delaware County was a great place to live (interview: State Representative Mario Cilvera’s office)(interview: Robert Kelly)

As people worked and saved money, more and more people moved out the city and into Delaware County. The development of new homes created more revenue for schools and a retail district emerged. Three main areas of retail were formed. ‘The Avenue of the States’ in Chester, was vastly frequented by the numbers of people from other areas attending Widener University, in addition to the many residents of the area. ‘Long lane shops’, were also popular shopping areas for not only community members, but also college students of Swarthmore College and other smaller private college scattered throughout the region. ‘Sixty-Ninth Street’, in Upper Darby, became a small metropolitan area for those seeking shopping and entertainment. These areas all organized similarly were where everyone did all of their shopping, and enjoyed family outings. With small store, next to small store, all owned by families in the area, with the occasion addition of such larger stores such as “Gimbles”. All of this created much interaction, and further promoted communication throughout the community. Revenue was now being produced that the area did not have prior to this. These were all positive aspects of community growth. Considering all of this, Delaware County still maintained a “small town feel”, where everyone knew everyone (www.delcohistory.org), (interview: Carol Kelly Rodgers), (interview: Carolyn Shields).

As the effects of globalization set in, these small shopping districts were soon replaced by large indoor shopping malls. The three main malls of the area were built relatively one right after the other in the early 1970’s. The first mall constructed was the McDade Mall a one floor indoor mall, soon followed by two larger malls the Granite Run
Mall and the Springfield Mall. The Springfield Mall, (located five minutes up the road from Swarthmore College), was build on the sight of an old orphanage, torn down when builders from Boston, who offered a generous sum of money for the building site (interview: Carolyn Shields).

As generation after generation found employment in this area, it was a hard-felt hit when industrial demands changed and plants were either forced to close down or relocate. This proved devastating to the people in the surrounding areas. Many plants simply did not have the demand that they once did and were forced to close, while others downsized dramatically. Some companies turning to skeleton crews while others relying on other locations to carry out business. Each company claims their own “unique” set of reasons: such as cheaper labor, tax breaks and the efficient modernization of their company. No matter how disguised all seemed similar in nature. Globalization once again seems to be the culprit. The wants and needs of consumers changed, and with that, the market had to adapt. From a big business point of view, it was just a way of life, but for the people in the area it was a lot harder a concept to swallow (www.delcohistory.org)(interview: Robert Kelly).

Philadelphia was a huge production place for many things needed in a time of war. With the closing of the war in Vietnam, a great shift began in this area. Ships, planes, helicopters, transportation of steel from northern manufacturers, were no longer on high priority. Seaports and railways are no longer first choice for transportation of goods. Many companies were forced to find other ways of doing things cheaper. With the downsizing of the Naval shipyard and then finally its closing; companies had to find other avenues of transportation for goods. When these demands changed, the people
employed by these industries directly felt it (interview: State Representative Mario Cilvera’s office)(interview: Robert Kelly).

Why would most companies keep the same work force they have had with organized unions demanding a minimum pay and benefits, when they can get the same work accomplished overseas with no such requirements and at less then half the cost? With an influx of immigration to this area, less qualified foreigners desperate for work were willing to work for a fraction of the normal pay, and were ignorant to the utilization of unions. This gave companies yet another choice, to still employ new workers at lower rates without the costs of relocating entirely. From a business point of view it only made sense to hire those willing to work for less, move production elsewhere or close down entirely. It is a sad harsh story told all across America, squeezing hope from communities and breathing despair into individuals forced to look elsewhere for income and survival (interview: State Representative Mario Cilvera’s office)(interview: Robert Kelly).

With companies feeling no other choice but to move away or close entirely, people too felt confined and option-less. The change swept through the area leaving long lasting effects. The small town feel was lost. Many of the beautiful homes of the area were being sold off and / or converted to multi-unit apartments housing many families at one time. This was a tactic used by individuals to try to bring in more income while utilizing their same available resources. This proves tragic economically. With the same number of homes being taxed, and a more then triple the occupants, revenue for schools was dramatically cut back (interview: Carolyn Shields).

After the “Baby Boom”, was over and there were fewer students to provide for, many properties were sold off by school districts as an attempt to become more efficient.
This was not seen as a problem for many years because the number of children attending schools had declined. Conversely, now with an unpredicted rapid swelling of the population, school districts found themselves with a facility / space shortage. This led to huge problems of over crowding. Directly leading to lower quality of education being able to be provided, to a once great community (interview: State Representative Mario Cilvera’s office)(interview: Carolyn Shields).

Socially, the community staples were plucked one by one. Things like community centers, bowling alleys, small restaurants, delis, and so on, were forced to close. An overabundance of unfriendly landmarks such as CVS and Walgreen’s sprung up all over. The small hometown shopping districts fell victim to competition, created by the larger shopping malls built in the 1970’s. The first mall in the area a one-story mall named McDade Mall was soon followed by even larger constructions such as the Springfield Mall and the Granite Run Mall. The Springfield Mall was built where the area orphanage once stood (interview: Carolyn Shields).

Along with the development of these larger, indoor and more convenient malls were the introductions of stores like K-mart, Target and Wal-Mart. People no longer felt the need to visit these smaller shopping communities when the convenience of anything they needed could be found only five minutes up the street from there homes and usually at a cheaper price.

Feelings of lost isolation set in like a black cloud. Many tried to stay afloat by scrounging for any legitimate job that could be found, all offering lower pay, while most applicants were overqualified for any available position.
Others coped differently, crime surged to a new high and new problems emerged, contaminating every small facet of the community. People reached new means of compromise to support themselves and their families. Drugs became a huge issue in the area. The number of high school dropouts increased as families were forced to call upon everyone’s financial help. This led to larger long-term problems for this area. Youth were left unattended, gangs formed and added to issues of crime. With integration of neighborhoods, and increased crime, displacement of blame became a frequent problem.

One interview, with a resident of the area told a shocking story of life choices and compromise. He told of how coming from a large family with many children, college was not an option. Neither he nor anyone in his family considered higher education as a personal option or escape. Instead he was expected to leave home and start a life for himself, because his parents could longer support him due to their economic situation.

Finding at a young age that the legitimate way of life was not always the most rewarding. He found that he did not have to complete high school to earn as much money or more than his peers or those he had known who did attend a college or trade school. Instead, he found that there is always a market for the illegal, and therefore if he were smart enough to work the system, then he would always have a job.

He explained his not-so-glamorous travels all across the United States. He justified his actions by directly relating them to the need to support himself and his family. He did this by means of selling illegal narcotics. This seemed to be the only way of life. Every so often the law would catch up with him and he would spend time in jail. He would be released upon promises of an honest lifestyle. This would last only so long until he found that there were not many opportunities for a middle-aged man with no education and
little knowledge of a trade. With the pressure of bills and a family depending on him to survive, he found himself always returning to his old ways, granting him short-term yet instant gratification with attached high risk. This was the only way he knew to survive (interview: William Barr).

It is with stories like these that we can see how this lifestyle may become a start to a self-spun web of disaster, viciously capturing and feeding upon the ignorant and/or self-defeated. This web pulls us deeper into a pit of despair, making the climb toward legitimate success more difficult for each following generation. This is a vicious cycle that once set into motion is very difficult to break. When people are constantly struggling to stay afloat, instant gratification is what they seek most. When you are starving you think only of how will receive your next meal, not spend time strategizing crop planting techniques that would in turn feed you for life. People caught in this blinding obsis are left angry and tired from swimming against the current. They form feelings that they were cheated or denied opportunities. In many ways they were, and we can see, sadly why so many are constantly search for a simple scapegoat.

With these ideas and mentalities running rapid, racial tensions increased and desperation seemed to take hold of the communities. In Chester, a once very affluent white dominated area, the African-American population increased from a small 20% to an overpowering 65%. It was much easier for people to point the finger at their neighbor (creating their scapegoat) than to sit back and understand the situation as a whole. People knew that the reasons behind the decay of their way of life well multi-faceted and anything but simple, yet no one offered a sensible solution. People chose to notice some change and not others, example being racial integration, and not radical job loss due to a
decline in American Industry. This dismantled any existing structure of unity within the area. People grew to be sure about only one thing; when it came to survival - it was everyone man for himself (www.penweb.org/chster/history.html) (interview: State Representative Mario Cilvra’s office), (interview: Carolyn Shields).

There are many theories out there to explain such phenomena. A popular criminal justice theory called “broken windows” could be easily applied. This theory is simple. The theory argues that once a building in an area acquires a broken window, a negative chain of events is set in motion. With no action or concern from the owner of the building or the surrounding community, the window goes unprepared. This is a signal to others that no one cares. As more windows are broken, the space then becomes an open invitation for crime. With this one small broken window, a downward spiral within the community has begun. The theory argues this a common phenomenon that takes place all across the country, and therefore cripples our ability to rebuild ourselves. When we cannot rebuild our communities to ensure positive outcomes, people get discouraged. Furthermore, the mentality of people had changed greatly, and that above all else may be the hardest thing to restore to a community. New jobs may be introduced and racial gaps tightened but these individuals or their future generations may, never again share a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Some new initiatives have been taken to rebuild and better the area as a whole. There is a big problem with recognition and participation of the state. Governor Rendell has visited the area and agreed on numerous occasions that more funding is need to address problems yet where is the state going to get the money from? Higher taxes? Politically this is a nightmare. How do we properly address problems? Who is going to
make the commitment to help those who need help the most, when politicians are getting little back from these communities? Polls have shown that voting participation in poorer areas is much lower than those of the more affluent areas. This is an ongoing political problem, where the little guy is always hurt most and the areas of more wealth never want to participate. As much as this issue is debated, and in theory easy to solve, reality shows us otherwise.

An interview with a school board member, gave much insight into new avenues being explored by the school district. The Upper Darby school district is currently on the watch list for the Pennsylvania school system. This means if certain requirements are not met within an allotted timeframe, the state has the right to come in and completely take over how the schools are run. This voids all contracts and previous conduct of the entire school district.

When asked what problems caused the crisis within the school district, many things pointed to a tangled answer. Reasons being; over crowding, a large influx of foreign students or students transferring from urban school with even lower standards, less and less funding from the state, with more and more students each year. Along with issues of out of date text books, technologies, and frankly not enough anything to properly instruct students. Upper Darby high school currently has more students than Temple University. That is a shocking fact when we think of the costs of a college education and how much we spend per student. Upper Darby is currently spending less per student than the Philadelphia school district, (which has been in a state of educational crisis for some time now). Issues of non-interested, non-involved parents, and non-motivated students with no ambition to finish high school are a big concern. These
students cannot look past their lives in high school. They have no hopes, or goals. They know they are not happy, but see no way out. They do not see a direct correlation between education and better quality of life. If they are so lucky to mentally bridge that concept they are discourages by the reality of financial ability. Most of these children come from relatively poor households. Parents are making just enough to stay afloat, but not enough to pay for higher education. This proves to problematic, when we explore avenues of federal financial aid. If a family is not starving or on forms of welfare then a suitable amount of aid is not extended to children. If the children are fortunate enough to make it to college and receive some funding, they are not able to be an example student due to the amount of time they much spend on a job to support living needs.

The school board is working diligently to make changes that will alleviate many of the problems. Main issues are being addressed in a profound plan called the “Small Learning Community” program. This is a program that works in conjunction with Delaware county community college. This program will both help to get numbers of students out the school building during the day, and place them at the community college while it helps the students to earn college credit and promote interest and participation in higher education (interview: Carolyn Shields).

The program will be open to high school juniors and seniors alike. You must be in the college prep courses to be eligible. The students would have their core classes such as English and math for half of the school day, then the other half of a day would be bused to the community college where they would be able to take up to nine credits a year toward their associates degree. These college credits would be offered to students at a discounted rate. With this program in place, upon graduation from high school, students would then
only have one year at community college left to finish their associate’s degree. This would allow someone in this program to be able to complete his or her bachelor degree at an institution of his or her choice within a three-year time span. Both Drexel University and Penn State University have agreements with Delaware County Community College to accept all transfer credits from this program of study. It is the goal of administrations to overtime, lengthen the list of participating colleges, and universities (interview: Carolyn Shields).

This is a great opportunity for anyone who is truly serious about a college education, to get a jump-start in the right direction. As great as this program sounds in theory, many questions have been raised as to how such a thing could be funded. Why would a community college want to extend a discounted education to so many students? Concerns were raised about an additional financial burden being placed on parents. This would be at a cost to the student or the parent, comparatively to a free public education at the high school level. However, students are not required to participate and issues of financial aid assisting families should be explored, being as this is in the direction of a college degree.

There are many concerns about a program so unique and there are still admittedly numerous kinks to be worked out. However, the state has agreed to extend a small amount of funding, along with a large grant being given to the school district by the Gates Foundation. Bill Gates is known to be a strong advocate for the promotion of better education of our nations’ youth. With this, the school board had designed a committee with a task of alleviating some of the crisis problems facing their schools. They spent much time and energy researching many other school districts and with similar goals and
concerns. The committee looked at how others addressed similar problems. Once an idea had been constructed, it was then the goal to find outside funding to get the plan in motion. The planning committee researched and targeted many organizations and foundations with concerns of our nation’s educational future. The Gates Foundation and possibly Intel may be large supporters for such educational promotional programs (interview: Carolyn Shields).

There are other programs that this school district is trying to institute to both prepare their students for the world ahead of them, and alleviate some of the overcrowding issues as well. One similar in nature would allow students to again do a half day of studies, while allowing them to leave for the other half of the day to participate in an internship program of sorts. The company in which they would be working, would first need to be approved by the school, along with the work the student is performing while there. This would not, (like the college program), be for college credit, but would instead suffice the elective requirements of the high school. The idea behind this is, that students are acquiring on the job experience. They get the opportunity to see what a certain profession may be like, before making a lifelong commitment to the education of a trade or vocational school. This too removes some of the student body from the crowded halls and classrooms while transitioning them into the reality of the work world. It has been seen by school administrators that the best way we can prepare our youth for the world a head of them is to try to integrate as much raw experience as we can at a young age. So much of high school curriculum is looked at as wasted time, when we cannot connect with children and get them involved. Some are apprehensions about such programs because of issues of maturity. This is something that should be seriously
considered. The way this school district proposes these programs, they would only be available to high school juniors and seniors. They are looking at instilling additional requirements such as an interview process, and possible a grade minimum, along with the obvious parental consent (interview: Carolyn Shields).

With these programs available to upper classmen, what initiatives are being taken to address the younger students in the ninth and tenth grades? There is what will be called an academy for these students designed to concentrate on basic skills in their major subjects. Main focuses will be put on math and writing, science and government, along with a large stress on language requirements. This academy will be set up similarly to the first two years of a college education. Trying to implement a firm foundation to any student no matter which direction they choose to pursue. It is the belief that once these programs are up and running the school district will have greatly addressed some of the serious issues at hand, while producing very well rounded students that are better prepared for the world in front of them (interview: Carolyn Shields).

Taking a few steps back, one can easily break down the process by which this area and many others have deteriorated. Considering history, politics, industrialization, big business, competition, and people’s quick social and economic responses, motivated by the struggle to survive, we can see a recipe for disaster. This is one story of how an area (maybe much like your own), rode the roller-coaster ride of life, and suffered the consequences of globalization. On that note, with every up there is down and the law of continuous motion states there must be a soon approaching accent to better things. That established, in combination with a concerned, and motivated community blessed with insight and ingenuity, a successful rescue will be made. This community and its
inhabitants will emerge from its gallows of a depressing past. Dissecting the crumblings of industry and the redirection of employment, it is easy to argue that this community had no other choice but to attack the problem at the root.

Education is at best, our ground zero. Without a well-educated stock, what do we have? How do we compete globally? What else could we offer? This is the day and age of intellectual insight and technology, not unexplored lands and industry. We must accept this and build up from a strong, well-nurtured base. With weak roots we have no foundation to grow and prosper. When politicians stand before us arguing their political platforms, they should embrace what is most important, and promote our futures through a proper and sound educational system.

Let us all know and accept and learn from where we came from. Embrace all of its /our negatives as easily as it has /our positives and grow from them. Our surroundings along with our experiences mold us into the individuals that we are today. Our society can be directly paralleled to this concept. We need to be eager enough to learn from our trends in history, and wise enough to orchestrate a working solution to current problems plaguing us today.

To grow an olive tree healthy enough withstand the elements, we must understand all that has fed its roots, this in addition to a nurturing hand, will produce a magnificent Lexus. We must breathe life, motivation and most of all encouragement into our youth. We are obligated to not only instill ideas of success, but also facilitate a means of reaching it. Our schools, our educators, and most importantly our children are our future. What they can accomplish, and who they become, are direct representations of who we are and the jobs that we have completed or possibly failed. It is a sound argument that the
education of our youth is our base, our own olive tree, and without its healthy existence there may be no Lexus.
Works Cited Page

Web pages:

Interviews:
State Representative Mario Cilvera’s office

Carolyn Shields, teacher in Upper Darby High School, Upper Darby School District, member of school board committee

Robert Kelly, lifelong resident of Delaware County, PA

Carol Rodgers, resident, small business owner, Delaware County, PA

William Barr, resident of Upper Darby, PA