By Kelly Mayo
News Editor

Sooner or later, every person finds out that he or she is different from everyone else in some way. Reactions to this revelation vary, but they all involve a person’s relationship to mainstream society.

Some withdraw from it completely, either out of shame or anger that they will never belong. Others assimilate themselves into it, sacrificing their individuality in the name of conformity and the peace of mind that comes with it.

A brave few, however, shrug off the expectations of the mainstream and enjoy life as exactly the people they want to be.

One of these few is Ashley Cole.

At first glance, Cole, 19, is an average American girl. A native of Cary, N.C., she loves photography, soccer and dancing; her high school varsity team voted her “Most Likely to Dance Like Michael Jackson.” She also watches college football and basketball, especially UNC.

Take a closer look at her, however, and one finds out that she has a less-than-typical passion: she is a determined advocate for gay and individual rights, as well as to end bullying.

Cole wears her cause on her sleeve in the form of a “Born This Way” tattoo on her left arm, which is usually accompanied by a purple rubber “End Bullying” wristband.

Cole cited recent suicides of bullying victims to explain why she wore the wristband. As for the tattoo, Cole said that it was inspired by the singer from whom she borrowed the phrase. “‘It [‘Born This Way’] spoke a lot about life in general. I went to a Lady Gaga concert and was inspired. It’s a statement: I was born this way...and I want others to accept me, too,” she said.

Cole also displays her love for those who are different in her choice of activities at UNCP.

She is a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America, The Pine Needle staff, the vice president of the Sexuality and Gender Alliance and a co-editor of the newsletter for the Office of Multicultural and Minority Affairs.

In the end, Cole considers individuality a symbol of pride.

“Our differences make us who we are,” she said.

Ashley Cole sports a tattoo with the words ‘Born this way’ and an armband that promotes an end to bullying.

By Samantha Langley
Staff Writer

On Nov. 15 Rachel Brown and her band came to the UC Lounge, which was decorated with a Hawaiian theme in honor of the group.

Rachel Brown is a unique artist whose music follows a Caribbean tone, but also incorporates pop, country, hip-hop and world sounds into a mellow blend of music. While these different types of music are incorporated into Brown’s music, Caribbean is readily where Brown’s passions lie.

“I’m half Caribbean, so I guess it runs in my blood. Overall, though, Caribbean music just calls to me, and I love the sweet, airy tones it provides,” Brown said.

All of her songs are original, and many are inspired by events that happen in her life. One time Brown recalls finishing a song she was working on after a friend asked her to perform at her wedding.

A.C.E. chose to bring Brown to the school because of her unique sounds.

Rachel has such a melodic tone, and is very different from acts that we normally bring to the school. We wanted something different to reach a new audience and to keep our community diverse,” Tre Robinson, a member of A.C.E., said.

Attendee Kia Thomas thoroughly enjoyed the show and loved the different grooves that Rachel brought to the school. “Rachel Brown was extremely different, and I liked her music,” Thomas said.

The group featured lead singer Brown, who sang and played guitar or ukulele, and five other musicians backing her up.

“Since the Coral, a string instrument with a drum like bass to it,” the instrument played out a highly pitched sound when played. Also a Cal-base, which is a wooden drum that is played by hitting the top of the drum with a hard thrust of the hand creating a high resonating sound.

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