

# MARSHALL STREET HEALTHY BULLETIN

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## Carve out time to read this summer

Read this summer.

That's advice from Mrs. Demnisky, the literacy supervisor for the Norristown Area School District. She recently met with the *Healthy Bulletin* staff to encourage students to read this summer.

Students who don't read may experience the "summer slide," she said. They can lose valuable skills that they have learned during the school year. The National Summer Learning Association reported that students could lose up to two months of educational skills over the summer.

Mrs. Demnisky suggested that children carve out time this summer to read. They can even wake up early, she said.

The Norristown Area School District sends home a recommended reading list for the summer. The list suggests books children can read over the summer.

Mrs. Demnisky said her job involves gathering a lot of information about the best ways to teach reading and writing. She also helps choose books for students. She receives ideas from teachers and other educators.

She said she became a supervisor so she would be able to help teachers. By helping teachers, she can reach more students.

—By Mady Grebe, Rheese Fife, and Maiya Williams



Illustration by Maiya Cannon

Get away from the screen and keep your body active. See story on Page 2.

## Game helps you think

Minecraft can exercise your brain in a number of ways.

It is a popular video game that allows players to build three-dimensional houses and communities on their computers.

Players can use different types of building materials from dirt and rock to wood and iron. They also can create weapons to fight off monsters.

Minecraft is a good tool to pull students into science, according to Mrs. Culbreath, curriculum supervisor of science, technology, and engineering for the Norristown Area School District.

The game can help students understand different natural environments such as jungles and plains. It connects to technology because children set up their own private servers to connect to other

players. Players also can learn about engineering because the game requires them to build houses and other structures, Mrs. Culbreath said.

Ty Morrow, a third grader, plays Minecraft and said it is "fun and awesome."

He likes the game because he can craft potions and armor and hunt for food. Players are challenged. For instance, they must build shelters to survive, Ty said.

Minecraft is "like a visual version of Lego" toys, said Eric Klopfer, the director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Scheller Teacher Education Program, last fall.

"Minecraft extends kids' spatial reasoning skills, construction

(Please see **Game** Page 3)

# Students learn to relax with yoga

Miss Brown, a PE and health teacher, exposes Marshall Street students to a variety of exercises—including yoga.

"Yoga is good emotionally for students," said Miss Brown.

Yoga is a form of exercise that can be good for the mind as well as the body, according to Miss Brown. Like other exercises, it helps develop a person's flexibility and strength. Yoga can also rest your mind and help you relax.

Watching TV and practicing yoga can be relaxing. However, TV requires you to focus on a screen and think about what you are watching. In yoga, your mind should be blank.

"It is difficult to let your mind be at ease when you are a beginner," Miss Brown said.

Yoga is one type of exercise that involves meditation, "which means thinking calm thoughts," according to KidsHealth.org.

Meditation can help a person feel peaceful and can reduce stress, according to the Mayo Clinic. It can help a person's overall health and well-being.

"If you meditate for just 5 minutes a day, it will help you feel good even when you're not meditating," according to KidsHealth.org.

Several students at Marshall street say they feel calm and less tense when they practice yoga. It also puts them in a positive mood.

Marshall Baker, a fourth grader, said he enjoys yoga and meditation. He tried it for the first time in third grade. He likes listening to music while practicing yoga.

"The music I listen to is what makes me feel stress-free the most," Marshall said.

Rachel Wodarski, a fourth grader, feels relaxed and focused while meditating. Like Marshall, she also finds the music soothing. —*By Alexa Eaton and Madison Galczyk*

## Teacher practices yoga

Miss Brown practices yoga.

It's an activity that the Marshall Street PE teacher discovered when she was an adult. After trying it, she realized that she liked it.

Yoga is an activity that works out a lot of parts of the body, from the neck to the legs and the heart, according to Bam.gov. It also allows your brain to recharge.

"Yoga teaches that the energy center (chakra) of your brain takes a time out when it is under a lot of pressure," the website says. "This means you could forget things like what math problems you have to do for homework. ... So before you panic—close your eyes, take a deep breath, and relax. It does your body (and mind) a lot of good."

When Miss Brown practices yoga, she said she feels relaxed. At the same time, she feels she is getting a good workout.

"If someone wants to do yoga, it's an exercise they can do and it's good for everyone," Miss Brown said.

—*By Alexa Eaton*

# Put limits on your screen time

Some Marshall Street students and teachers say too much screen time may be harmful to people's lives, according to a random survey conducted by the *Healthy Bulletin* staff.

Screen time is shorthand to describe the use of computers, cell phones, TVs, and other electronics.

In a *Healthy Bulletin* survey of 23 students and teachers at Marshall Street, 13 said that the amount of time people spend in front of screens is having a negative impact on their lives. Meanwhile, 10 people said screens are making people's lives better.

Children spend about 7 hours a day on electronic devices, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. While children can learn a lot through technology, too much screen time can cause problems such as

obesity, attention problems, and sleep disorders, according to the pediatrics group.

The pediatrics group recommends that children spend no more than 2 hours a day in front of screens.

Ms. Reily, a Big Sister in Marshall Street's Big Brother Big Sister program, said screens are part of life today. However, too much screen time can lead to an unhealthy lifestyle. Use technology, but don't depend on it, she said.

Ms. Reily said she spends a lot of time in front of a screen because of her job. To get away from it, she goes to the gym, takes walks around her neighborhood, and cleans her house. She tries to do any activity that gets her moving, she said.

—*By Cioni Flynn-Cook and Maiya Cannon*

# Trip to Philadelphia offers heart insights

PHILADELPHIA—Walking through the giant heart was a highlight of a recent trip to The Franklin Institute for *Healthy Bulletin* reporters.

"It felt amazing and so realistic with the looks and sounds," said Madison.

Cioni said the giant heart was "dark and tight," but laid out important facts.

Besides the heart, students learned about how the heart works by visiting several exhibits. For instance, the Bucket of Blood exhibit measures how many cups of blood are in your body. The amount of blood in the body depends on a person's weight.

"I realized that I had more cups of blood in my body than most of my friends," said Cioni.

The Chemistry of Color exhibit shows that animals can have different colors of blood. For example, sea cucumbers have yellow blood because of the chemical called vanadium. Copper gives octopi and crabs blue blood.

"The Blood Fountain was interesting because I did not know that the original color of human veins is milky white but the blood rushing through it makes them look red and blue," Madison said.

Another display gave healthy and unhealthy choices of snacks. "What surprised me was that it said that salad was unhealthy because of the fat that is added," said Cioni. Fat on salad could include croutons and some salad dressings. A snack that was a healthy choice is yogurt.

## Game can educate

*(Continued from Page 1)*

skills, and understanding of planning," Education Program, told the *New York Times*.

While it did not specifically refer to Minecraft, KidsHealth.org said playing some video games can "improve hand-eye coordination, problem-solving skills, and the mind's ability to process information." But too much time can harm health.

Minecraft has become such a popular game that many teachers and schools use it. The Danish government even has made a model of the country with it.

"In the future, Danish school children and others will be able to record in the game plants and animals that they have seen or found in nature," according to the *Daily Mail*, a British publication, this spring.

—By Jeffrey McQuillen and Alex Rosas



Illustration by Anlycia Smith

Jeffrey found it interesting that elephants have very slow heart rates and mice have fast-beating hearts. Watching a video of open heart surgery was a highlight for Jeffrey who said "it was disgusting and cool at the same time."

"We all should remember to take good care of our hearts after you see the things in this exhibit," Madison said. —By *Healthy Bulletin staff*

### *Marshall Street Healthy Bulletin*

A publication of the Marshall Street Elementary School in the Norristown Area School District in Norristown, Pa.

Student staff members for this issue include Jose Andrade, Maiya Cannon, Alexa Eaton, Rheese Fife, Cioni Flynn-Cook, Madison Galczyk, Jerry Galvez, Mady Grebe, Mia Laquidara, Jew'lea Martin, Jeffrey McQuillen, Jaden Menard, Alex Rosas, Anlycia Smith, Alexis Tellez-Chavez, and Mya Williams. Ms. Freeman is the faculty advisor.

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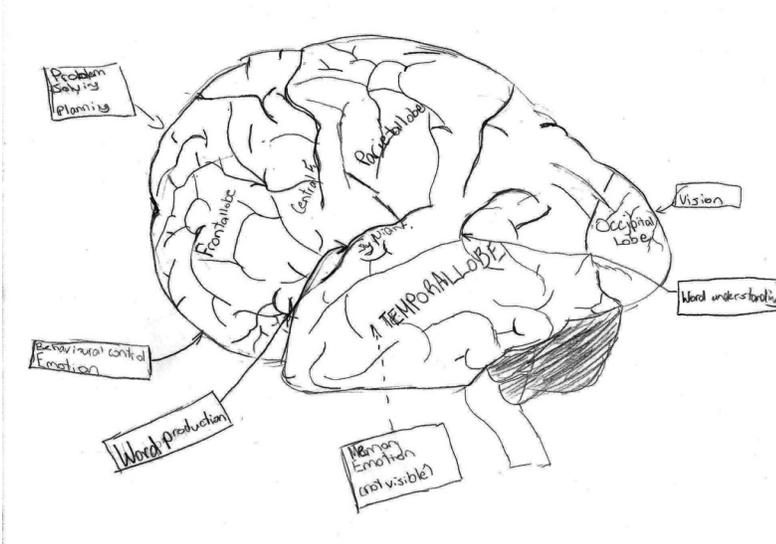
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# A quiz for your brain

Which part of the brain is used for the activity described in each story in this issue?



Quiz developed by Jerry Galvez; illustration by Mady Grebe based on information on a Google image.

## Helmets keep heads safe

Don't take your head for granted. Wear a helmet whenever you go bike riding.

That's an important message from Marshall Street Nurse Mrs. Rodgers and Norristown Police Officer Sowell who works as a Stewart Middle School Resource Officer.

Mrs. Rodgers said the helmet protects your brain if you fall off your bike and hit your head. The risk of head injuries increases when not wearing a helmet, according to Officer Sowell. A bad head injury could cause you to stop moving, affect your speech or ability to grow, said Officer Sowell.

NASCAR drivers wear helmets too. You can get a brain injury while playing contact sports, the officer said.

Each year about 300,000 children need medical care in emergency departments because of bike injuries, according to KidsHealth.org. More than 10,000 children spend several days in the hospital. In some cases, the inju-

ries are so severe that children, die according to the website.

Officer Sowell said people should use a bike helmet that "fits you the best." "Don't go by price, go by size," the officer said.

Here are some tips for fitting a helmet from the government website, bam.gov:

1. It should sit flat on your head and it shouldn't wobble.
2. The front of the helmet should be about two finger widths above your eyebrows.
3. The side straps should form a "Y" over your ear lobes.

No matter how old or young you are, you should wear a helmet when riding a bike, experts say.

—By Jaden Menard,  
Mia Laquidara, and  
Alexis Tellez-Chavez

## Books focus on reflexes, food

*Why I Sneeze, Shiver, Hiccup, and Yawn*  
By Melvin Berger; Illustrated by Paul Meisel

This 33-page book is mainly about what hiccups, sneezes, and yawns are and why they happen.

We read the book to students in Mrs. Truskowski's class. It was easy for them to understand. All of the students loved this book and wanted to read it again.

The book is all about reflexes which happen. "I found it really cool," one listener said. An example of a reflex is when you pull your hand away from a hot stove automatically. You don't have to think about it.

Students learned that their toes will bend if the bottom of their feet are tickled. "It is hilarious," said Jetta, a second grader.

This is a good book for second graders and third graders to read. It has some great words to learn.  
—By Analycia Smith, Rheese Fife, and Mya Cannon

*Pedro's Hungry Ride*; By Gloria Barone Rosario; Illustrated by Jim Rosario

Quinn Wright, a second grader, listened to this story. Quinn summarized the story saying that Pedro rides his bike to find yummy fruit and vegetables but couldn't find any. So he gets an idea from his teacher, mayor, and grocer, to grow a garden.

Quinn thinks that younger children between the ages of 4 and 6 would enjoy the book. He believes this because it includes a lot of pictures with few words.

—By Madison Galczyk

### Congratulations reporters!

Five *Healthy Bulletin* reporters have contributed to the new book *Leading Healthy Change In Our Communities 2014*. The reporters are Alexa Eaton, Cioni Flynn-Cook, Madison Galczyk, Mady Grebe, and Jew'lea Martin. The book features profiles of 14 leaders in the Philadelphia area who are making communities healthier. The *Healthy Bulletin* reporters interviewed Darren Sudman who is a cofounder of Simon's Fund. To learn more about the book, visit: [www.HealthyNewsWorks.org](http://www.HealthyNewsWorks.org)