



# HEALTHY TRAILBLAZER JOURNAL

## Enter superhero contest



**Protection Woman** enforces social distancing rules and gives everyone a mask. She speaks to everybody, no matter the language they speak.— Gabrielle Gaines



**Silver Chariot** is a casual working citizen who wears a blue T-shirt and straw hat. He rides a horse, spreading the news of Covid. He weakens the disease by spreading awareness.—Nevin Hollis

**The Covid-19 pandemic** has been difficult for everyone. Imagine if we had a pandemic superhero who could stop the disease in its tracks. What would your superhero look like and how would it free the world of Covid-19? Create your image of a superhero for the *Healthy Trailblazer Journal's* contest. See Page 4 for contest rules. See two examples on this page by members of the newspaper staff.

## DePaul puts limits on recess activities

Boom. Bang. Ouch.

Those menacing sounds of recess reached a point where The DePaul Catholic School had to limit the type of activities kids could play.

“We went from playing basketball to tag and hopscotch,” said Sahir, an eighth grader. “I was frustrated.”

School Vice Principal Ms. Welsh recently told the *Healthy Trailblazer Journal* that DePaul staff were concerned that someone could get hurt because balls were flying everywhere.

The playground is a former parking lot with games like hop-

*(Please see Recess on Page 2)*

## Finding joy hanging out by a river

“Nature is not a toy,” a river expert recently told the *Healthy Trailblazer Journal*. “The river is alive and is always moving.”

Joanne Douglas is the youth program manager at Bartram’s Garden in Philadelphia which is a public garden on the banks of the Schuylkill River.



Joanne Douglas

She teaches high school students about the river environment. They learn how to take care of it and how to be safe when boating or doing other activities.

“We live on this Earth,” she said. “We are part of an ecosystem, part of a team. To be a good team member, you need to learn about nature to understand it.”

Health experts also say spending time in nature can benefit peo-

*(Please see Slow down on Page 3)*

# Recess offers many health benefits

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scotch painted on the concrete. It's about a quarter the size of a football field. Recess activities that don't involve balls continue to be played.

"The football was going this way and the basketball going that way," she said. "We stopped doing [these sports] because there was confusion about the

**'Rules are not there to hold you back,' Ms. Welsh says, but 'to keep everybody safe.'**

best ways to engage in them without losing control."

Students need to learn how to "make better choices" in order to get football and basketball back, she said.

Ms. Welsh supports recess. In fact, she said,

she wished more time could be dedicated to recess. But the school day is already packed with other many lessons and activities.

Ms. Welsh said recess is good for kids for many reasons. It offers kids a change in scenery, allows them to socialize, and gives them a chance to exercise. "It is healthy for students to get fresh air," she said. "We all need fresh air because it helps us get our bodies right and our minds right."

In a perfect recess, students would have fun, play safely, and line up when they are told to, she said.

"Rules are not there to hold you back," she said, but "to keep everybody safe."

She said students should know their limits and not be too physical for a successful recess. Students should respect themselves and others, she said.

"Let's work together to get it [ball games] back."

—By DePaul 8B reporters

## Introducing Ms. Welsh

Ms. Welsh is DePaul's new vice principal. She started her new job over the summer.

In a recent interview with the *Healthy Trailblazer Journal*, she said she grew up in Philadelphia and attended Scranton University where she earned a degree in special education and Spanish.

She received her master's degree at the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City. She lived there for 13 years.

Ms. Welsh said she moved to Mexico City to help boys who were experiencing homelessness. While working there, she met her husband. She also worked at a school as a second-grade teacher and principal.

Fun facts about Ms. Welsh:

1. She has two daughters.
2. Her favorite subject as a kid was reading.
3. If she wasn't a teacher, she would have been a social worker, counselor, or doctor.

—By Gabrielle Gaines

## Dealing with change can be hard

Ms. Henry, fifth and sixth ELA teacher, said handling the pandemic was not hard for her, but she knows it was challenging for many people. She said she was used to spending time by herself because she was an only child.

She said the pandemic affected her to the point where she didn't want to go outside because she could do everything she needed to do from home. But, she said, at times she got bored. She would take breaks by walking her dog and going shopping.

People need coping skills to help them when they are in a challenging situation, she said.

If students are having trouble coping, she said, "be patient and ride the wave."

When she faces any change, she said she finds comfort in praying. "Change is hard but sometimes change happens for a reason," Ms. Henry said.

"Sometimes you can't get to the good stuff until you have an uncomfortable change in your life."

When someone doesn't want to accept change, they can go to God and ask for peace of mind, Ms. Henry said.

—By Gabrielle Gaines and Evangel Blue

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There are ways you can cope with stressful situations, according to kidshealth.org. The award-winning website posts medical information reviewed by doctors and other experts.

The *Healthy Trailblazer Journal* staff recently read the article "Coping with Stressful Situations" and learned that it is normal to face stress sometimes.

You should also take time to consider what is making you feel stressed. Consider how you might be able to reduce the stress you are feeling.

# Slow down and appreciate nature

(Continued from Page 1)

ple's health. It also can reduce stress and isolation and lower blood pressure. It can help memory, encourage you to move, and improve your mood, according to health experts.

"Children and teenagers need to be outside," Ms. Douglas said via Zoom. "We stay on technology and phones all the time. And we don't get enough nature."

When you are outside, "you are getting fresh air. Your brain and body need that fresh air. And you can learn a lot by looking at trees and nature," she continued.

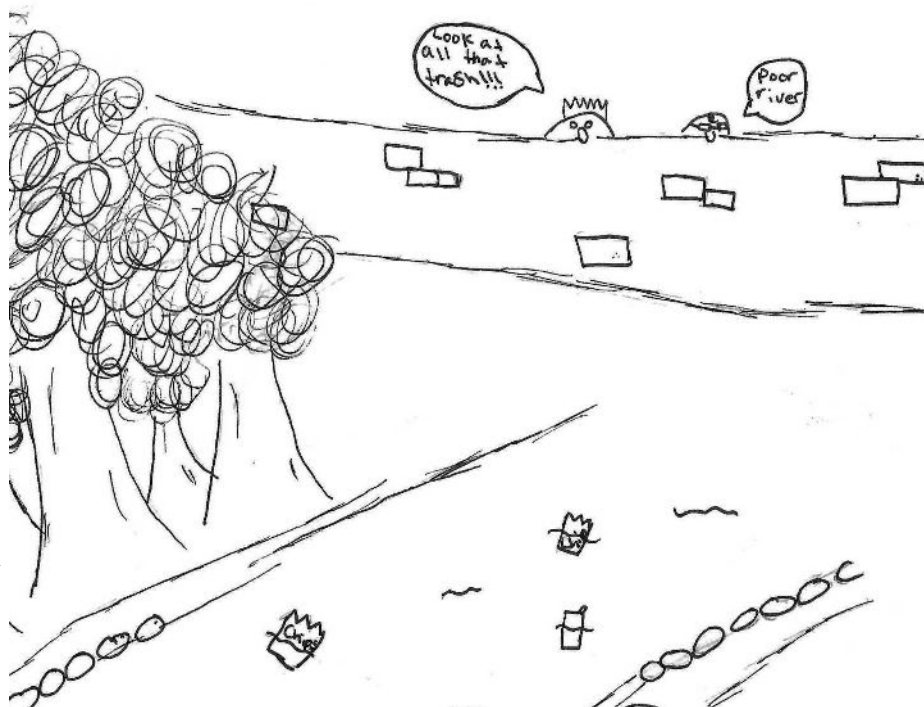
Ms. Douglas said she liked going outside when she was a kid. She lived near rivers in Detroit and Philadelphia. Her fifth grade teacher also inspired her love of nature, she said. She said her teacher turned straight lessons into fun activities.

She said she always wondered what was happening underneath the surface of the river. It piqued her curiosity. "I like to be outside a lot," she said. "Mostly I like to be near the water and watch it and think about what's underneath it."

She said the river also speaks to her, not in words, but in feelings.

"Even when the river is moving really fast, there are waves, or it is messy from a storm, it goes back to normal," she said.

"The river doesn't say 'hello, how are you doing,'" she added. "It is always there to teach a lesson" such as how to relax and slow down, she said.



By Healthy Trailblazer Journal reporter

Ms. Douglas said she observes nature to try to understand it. The outdoors has no limits, she said. When she goes outdoors, she said she always learns something new. She doesn't wear headphones, preferring to listen to nature's sounds and creating her own stories.

"When you are out [in nature], no walk is the same. It makes you think and use imagination," she said. You can identify plants. You can visit a park. "It's a shame to sit inside," she said. "There is so much to do."

—By DePaul 8A reporters

## Reporters offer 'green prescription' tips

Some doctors now give patients a "green prescription," which are instructions to spend time outdoors.

Below, DePaul reporters offer some ways that you can spend time in nature. Before you head outdoors, share your plan with a trusted adult to make sure it is safe. Depending on your age and your plan, an adult should join you on your nature adventure.

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A green prescription I would give DePaul would be: Walk for 30 minutes. Do 50 jumping jacks and 50 squats. Drink a lot of water. Hold a plank position for two minutes.

—Evangel Blue

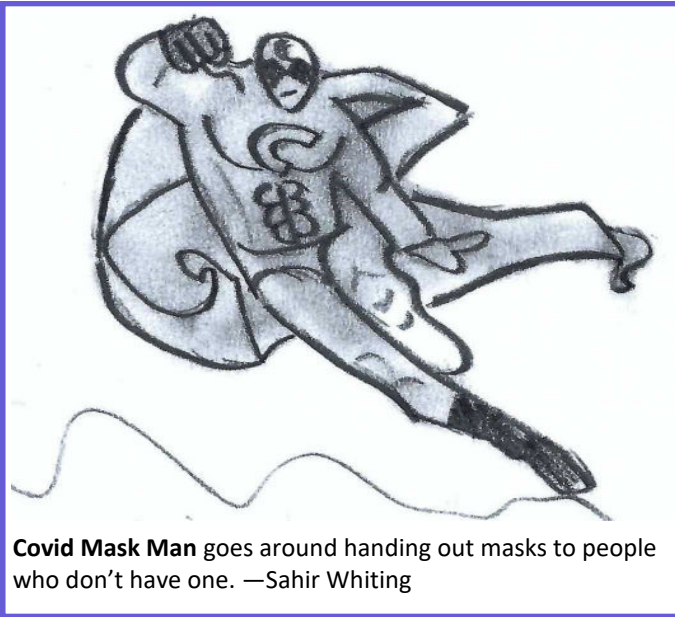
You should go outside for at least one hour. First you should take a walk for 30 minutes. Then go to a playground. Get on the swings and listen to music for 15 minutes. Then you should lay down and look at the sky and think about life for 15 minutes.

—Khalil McDaniel

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Walk around for an hour. Or just look at nature. Thank God for what he created. You can also go to the park and sit down and close your eyes and relax.

—Rasheed Wilkens



**Covid Mask Man** goes around handing out masks to people who don't have one. —Sahir Whiting

# Superhero contest

We are all tired of Covid-19. Here's your chance to create a superhero who could wipe it out.

Enter the *Healthy Trailblazer Journal's* superhero contest. Draw an original picture of your superhero and write a short explanation of your character's superpower.

The deadline for submitting entries is **Friday, December 17**. Please give them to Mr. Leonard, who teaches religion and social studies to the seventh and eighth grades. The newspaper staff will judge the entries. Here are the rules for the contest:

1. Illustrations should be neatly presented on blank paper—not lined.
2. Illustrations can be in color or black and white.
3. Illustrations need to be the artist's original drawing—not a copy.
4. A short description of the superpower should be included. Spelling must be accurate!

The school will give out a \$25 prize for first place. Certificates for first, second, and third place will be awarded for each of DePaul's three academies.

Good luck!

*DePaul Healthy Trailblazer Journal*

A publication of The DePaul Catholic School, an Independence Mission School in Philadelphia. Eighth grade reporters include Evangel Blue, Nakiyah Brookins, Xavier Brown, Sydney Butler, Kyle Chester, Amari Faust, Gabrielle Gaines, Malachi Gilbert, Caleb Guarrant, Jared Higginbotham, Kameron, Hill, Neven Hollis, Jayden Keno, Kareem Jefferson, Khalil McDaniel, Sanai Scott, Kiandra Thorpe, David Singleton, Tysir Wells, Samya Waltower, Sahir Whiting, Robert Whitmore and Rasheed Wilkins. The newspaper's faculty advisor is Mr. Leonard. DePaul's school principal is Ms. McKenzie.

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# How to heal in challenging times

*Editor's note: DePaul reporters are exploring the topic "How We Heal" this year. Below are a few of their recent reflections on healing. Maybe you will read a tip that can help you if you are having a tough time.*

I heal by going outside for at least 15 minutes. I also have a thing that I do with my dad where we open up to each other and talk about our problems. I also remember to breathe. —*Nakiyah Brookins*

I like to meditate. First you make sure you are in a nice calm room where there is no noise so you won't get distracted. Then you focus on breathing. Breathe at a steady pace and relax your body. Then close your eyes and let your mind just take you to the zone where you can enjoy the peace and quiet. —*Khalil McDaniel*

I listen to music in my room by myself. I also go to the gym with my dad for an hour or longer. I can get things off my mind and not worry about them. Those things help me heal. —*Rasheed Wilkins*

Some ways you can heal are listening to calm sounds such as rivers flowing and wind blowing. You can also go outside and play a sport, jog around, or take a short walk around the neighborhood. You can also meditate by sitting and relaxing your mind. You can listen to slow, calm music as well. It helps you meditate better and it keeps your mind in a relaxed state. —*Sahir Whiting*

When it comes down to healing, we all do it differently. The way I heal normally depends on what I heal from. The majority of the time, when I heal, I think about the positives. Sometimes if I feel sad or angry, I bake something, most likely brownies. Sometimes I will talk to my parents about how I am feeling. —*By Gabrielle Gaines*

The way I heal is by drawing/coloring while listening to music in my room. If I don't have music, I watch TV just to relax. Or I will call my friends and talk to them. Another way I heal is by dancing/singing my feelings away. This helps me because I focus on something else than sitting with my thoughts. —*Evangel Blue*