

EAST NORRITON BULLDOG BULLETIN

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Illustration by Zeyana Gurreonero

Spending time outdoors can affect your mood, experts say. Read a *Bulldog Bulletin* report on Page 4.

It's important to get enough sleep

Everyone needs sleep to stay healthy and happy, but how much sleep is enough sleep? According to kidshealth.org, kids between the ages of 6 and 13 should be getting between 9 and 12 hours of sleep per night.

What happens if you're not getting enough sleep? Kidshealth.org says that children who do not get enough sleep may be cranky, moody, or hyper, and they may have behavior problems. They may have trouble learning and paying attention in school.

East Norriton Middle School Nurse Mrs. Zangara said that students at ENMS should be going to bed between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. and waking up between 6:30 to 7 a.m. in order to get enough sleep.

So how do you get a good night's sleep? One way, according to kidshealth.org, is to have a set a time you go to bed at every night. This creates a routine.

*(Please see **Getting** on Page 3)*

Learning about science helps us feel connected

Jayatri Das teaches people about science at the Franklin Institute. The Franklin Institute is a well-known science museum and center for education and research in Philadelphia.

By learning about science, "we can shape the world to be more understandable," Dr. Das told us. She is the institute's chief bioscientist.

With a better knowledge of science, people can feel more connected to the natural world. "That's pretty empowering," she said. "We're not separate, but we are part of it."

*(Please see **Science** on Page 3)*

Her questions helped lead to coronavirus answers

Some consider Susan Weiss the mother of coronavirus research.

The title fits.

She has been researching coronaviruses for more than 40 years, longer than almost anybody else.

After the pandemic started, she was asked to give dozens of talks about coronaviruses to scientists and interviews to the media. "Everyone was using me as a resource, because suddenly everyone wanted to know about them," said Dr. Weiss, a microbiology professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

*(Please see **Lessons** on Page 2)*

Lessons in research, determination

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“I have been able to give out a lot of information. ... It makes me feel quite good, that I can do that.”



Dr. Susan Weiss

As a young scientist, she said, she became curious about coronaviruses after reading several articles about

them in scientific journals. “We didn’t know they could actually kill people,” she said. “They caused bad diseases in animals. They just seemed like a really interesting group of viruses that we didn’t know much about.”

Dr. Weiss wanted to find answers to basic questions about coronaviruses: What are they made of? How do they behave? Why do they make animals sick? “My research is long, long term,” she said.

The basic scientific research that Dr. Weiss and others conducted over decades has helped people understand the specific coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) that caused the Covid-19 pandemic. “We really needed all that kind of knowledge before we could start thinking about making vaccines,” she said.

Without that basic research, it would have been harder for other scientists to develop the vaccines, medicines, and tests that people hope will bring an end to the pandemic and allow communities to heal.

Forty years is a long time to be studying a virus. Some people tried to discourage her, Dr. Weiss said. They told her that researching coronaviruses was a waste of time and that it would be difficult to find



Illustration by Morgan Rutter

The basic scientific research that Dr. Susan Weiss and others conducted over decades has helped people understand the specific coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) that caused the Covid-19 pandemic.

funding for her studies.

“I don’t think I ever wanted to give up, because there were so many interesting questions to ask,” she said, adding, “I am pretty stubborn.”

She said her determination provided a good lesson for young researchers. “When you find something interesting, keep thinking about it and learning about it, even if you don’t know if it is important,” she said. “It may be

important at some later date.

“Here we are, 40 years later.”
– *By Sullivan Young, Angelyn Tamayo, and Charlene Beers*

Editor’s note: This article will also be published in the book *How We Heal: Leading Healthy Change In Our Communities 2022*. The book is written and illustrated by *Bulldog Bulletin* reporters and other student health journalists in the Healthy NewsWorks program.

Science is an ongoing process of discovery

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Dr. Das said the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated how science works as an ongoing process of discovery. Time and again, scientists have recognized that the coronavirus was changing and have had to figure out how to respond—from whether schools should stay open to what kind of mask people should wear and how many times a person should be vaccinated.

As they build knowledge through the process of discovery, scientists can develop new technologies such as medicines and vaccines. Such tools can help tame a disease like Covid, she said, and therefore “can help us heal” as a community.

“We are all struggling with it,” she told us in January during the Omicron surge. “Everybody is tired. The challenge of an infectious disease is that our safety depends on each other.”

For Dr. Das, healing is also about connections with others. Covid has taken a toll on people, physically and emotionally. She’s seen friends laid off from their jobs. She’s looked after sick relatives. And she’s tried to provide accurate information to

help friends, family, and the public understand the disease and how to stay safe.



Dr. Jayatri Das

To help recover from the pandemic, Dr. Das suggested finding a way to contribute something positive to your community. For yourself, she said, look for an activity that helps you relax.

“What is something you enjoy doing?” She and her family realized how much they enjoyed going outdoors. They walked a lot. One of her children enjoys reading. That is where she finds “her happy place,” Dr. Das said.

“Try to find ways to ground yourself,” she said. “Anchor yourself around others.”

—By Teagan Farrell, Daniel Fuller, Cameron Ferraro, Sara Chaaraoui, and Emma Mulligan

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Getting enough sleep is important to good health

(Continued from Page 1)

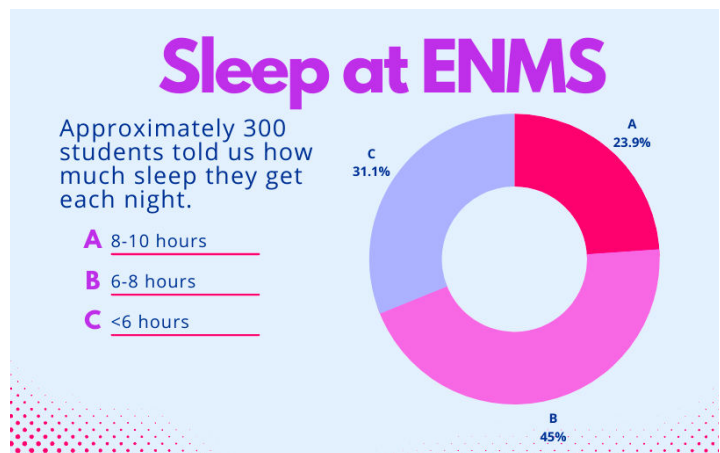
Mrs. Zangara said that you should stop using electronics at least one hour before bedtime. She said the blue light inside electronics affects your brain and disturbs your sleep cycle. She suggests listening to calming music or reading a book to prepare for sleep.

Preparing your bedroom for sleeping can also help. Kidshealth.org recommends making sure your room is dark at night. The chemical melatonin is produced in your brain when it is dark, and melatonin helps you sleep. Exposure to light can stop the production of melatonin. The site also recommends keeping your room cool and quiet.

You can do things during the day to help you sleep better at night, too. Kidshealth.org says to get plenty of exercise during the day to tire yourself out.

The website also recommends not drinking any caffeinated beverages near bedtime.

ENMS students were polled about the amount of sleep they get each night. Of the approximately 900 students at the school, about a third of them responded to our survey. On average, 45% of the students say they got six to eight hours of sleep per night. Then 24% of the students get eight to 10 hours of sleep per night. Some 31% of the students at ENMS say they sleep six hours or less per night. The students were also asked if they felt rested after



a night’s sleep. No, said 60% of the students, they do not feel well rested, while 40% said that they are well rested.

Forty-seven teachers at ENMS also responded to the poll. The Mayo Clinic says adults need seven or more hours of sleep a night. 59.6% of the teachers said that they sleep approximately six to seven hours a night.

Then 26% of the teachers claimed that they get eight or more hours of sleep per night. Finally, 15% of the teachers said that they get anywhere in between four and five hours of sleep.

Good sleep is important for your health, so make sure you are getting the right amount of shut-eye!

—By Teagan Farrell, Zeyana Gurreonero, and Melanie Merchant-Rojas

Time outside is good for mental health

Studies show that being outside not only has a positive effect on your physical well-being, but also on your mental health. According to the University of Washington EarthLab, being in nature can help you inside and out. It can help with symptoms of anxiety, depression, insomnia, headaches, and more.

Several teachers we spoke with at East Norriton Middle School agreed. Mrs. Goff, a sixth-grade science and social studies teacher, said that she thinks outside breaks would have a positive effect for everyone.

Mr. Fonash, a seventh-grade science teacher, says that he finds time outside advantageous for everyone, including adults. "The break from routine to touch base with nature can definitely refresh our minds and feelings."

Because being outside can change your mood, does the weather also affect your mood? According to psychiatry.org, the answer is yes. Studies show events such as extreme storms or extreme heat can lead to depression, anger, and even violence.

However, even smaller weather changes can affect moods, according to ENMS teachers. Mrs. Young, a fifth grade reading teacher, said: "My spirits are lifted when it is sunny outside—everything is better! I feel like I am motivated and full of energy. However, when it is dark/cloudy/rainy, I am less motivated to work."

"There is nothing better than the feel of the warm sun on your face and the stillness of the dark starry night sky. While I don't love cloudy, rainy days, they are a necessary part of life," said Mrs. Kile, a fifth-grade math teacher. "Having some of these ups and downs are what continues to give motivation."

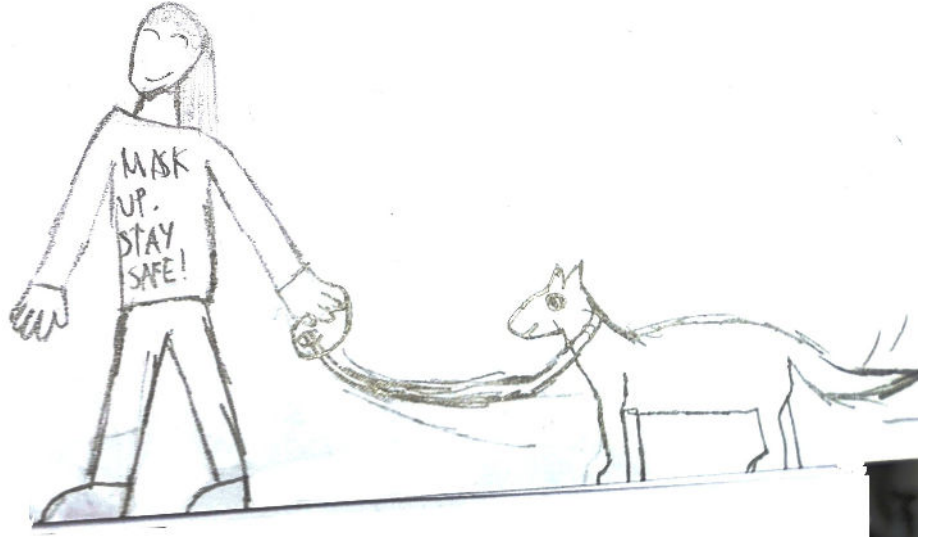


Illustration by Daniel Fuller

Spending time outside can help with symptoms of anxiety, depression, insomnia, headaches, and more.

So do teachers think students should get outside breaks? When teachers were asked if they found a difference in student behavior when they are outside, many stated that kids become more awake and energetic when outside.

Ms. Devlin, an eighth-grade reading teacher, said: "I feel outside breaks are needed no matter what age. It certainly generates momentum to do things with purpose." She said she often takes breaks outside with her students so they can read and write.

Some people may avoid going outside because it can be boring. But there are actually many activities you can do outside! Try biking, playing a sport or game, or going on a walk. Not all outside activities have to include exercise—you can also read, go on a picnic, or just relax!

Spending time outdoors has many benefits to impact mood. So if you are feeling down and the sun is out, try going outside. You might feel better!

— By Sara Chaaoui, Nora Haldis, and Emma Mulligan

East Norriton Bulldog Bulletin

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The *Bulldog Bulletin's* faculty advisor is Mrs. Strickland. The school principal is Mr. Hutchinson.

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