

HEALTHY INVESTIGATOR

Introducing health newspaper

Welcome to the *Healthy Investigator*.

The *Healthy Investigator* is the new Philadelphia Hebrew Public Charter School newspaper—all about health topics that are important to our school and you. This year’s theme is “Caring for Our Community and Ourselves.”

The *Healthy Investigator* is written by fifth-grade students. They met weekly on Wednesdays during the fall to discuss and research such topics as asthma and healthy communities and schools. In December, they interviewed Tarik Khan who is a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. You can find articles on these topics in this issue.

This newspaper has been created to inform PHP students and their families about being healthy. Reporters worked with Healthy NewsWorks Program Manager Mia Blitstein to learn about researching, interviewing, and writing articles.

“I love how we’re talking about what we can do to help the community,” said one reporter.

Another reporter said: “I feel good about working on the newspaper because it feels fun and friendly to work with my peers.”

Other reporters agreed it is fun and interesting.



Illustration by Brooke Lark

We would like feedback. Please send any questions or suggestions to the newspaper’s faculty advisor, Liz Hollon.

—By Devi Jonson and Taryn Harrison

Nurse practitioner becomes lawmaker

Each state has lawmakers who travel to the state’s capital to represent them and help decide on laws for the state. Most of those lawmakers are not *also* health experts.

Dr. Tarik Khan was elected the Pennsylvania State Representative in 2022 for the area where Philadelphia Hebrew Public Charter School is located, and he is *also* a nurse practitioner with a Ph.D.

Healthy Investigator reporters in the Metulla classroom recently had a chance to interview Rep. Khan to ask him about his work helping the communities he represents. This interview has been lightly edited.

Healthy Investigator: Please describe your job.

Rep. Khan: I represent this community in Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. Every place in Pennsylvania has someone who represents them to go to Harrisburg. We decide on the laws for the state. I fight for funding for our city to make sure we have what we need so you all can grow and be happy. I fight to make sure our communities are safe.

Healthy Investigator: What inspired you to become a nurse and then a politician?

Rep. Khan: My mom was a nurse. After I graduated from college, I actually worked in the entertainment

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Making communities healthier

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industry on “The Tonight Show.” I decided it wasn’t for me, I missed Philly. My mom encouraged me to get into health care. Then, I was really happy as a nurse but I was interested in helping outside of the nurse environment. I wanted to do more for people. So I decided to run for office. The pandemic was a challenging time, and a lot of people did not get the help they needed. I felt like if I was in charge, I could have helped them better. I had a lot of ideas about health care. I decided that I would run.



Rep. Tarik Khan

Healthy Investigator: We read that you have focused some of your work on asthma. Can you tell us how asthma impacts Philadelphians and why you chose to focus on it?

Rep. Khan: There was a gas plant being built in Nicetown. The area doesn’t have a lot of trees and has a lot of pollution. They were putting in this thing that burned gas to provide electricity for the train line. I was upset because I knew this area already had bad air quality. There is a health center there, where I work, and we see lots of kids with asthma. If we can improve the air quality, we can make life better for people who have asthma, or keep people from getting asthma in the first place. We should stop doing things that are making it more difficult for people who have health conditions.

Healthy Investigator: Why did you make an effort to make parks accessible?

Rep. Khan: A friend of mine has a son who has autism and she posted a picture on social media of a fully accessible park. [That means that kids with all kinds of abilities can enjoy it. There is lots of equipment to play on, not just a swing set.] I was thinking that it’s a shame if you have a kid with autism and many playgrounds would not be fun for them. We know that when we make things fully accessible, it’s better for everybody. Why shouldn’t everyone have that? So now, if someone is trying to build a playground, you’re more likely to get funding for it if you include things on your playground that everyone can use.

Healthy Investigator: Please tell us about your work to get people vaccinated.

Did you know?

A Ph.D. is short for “doctor of philosophy.” It can take four or more years of schooling to earn this degree after someone completes college. Some jobs, such as becoming a college professor, may require it. The degree is sometimes called a doctorate.

Source: U.S. News and World Report

Rep. Khan: A friend of mine worked with me to help people with a disability who couldn’t leave the house to get a Covid vaccine. We know how important it is because so many people got sick. You had to stay home for a year before the vaccine was developed. Then we had a vaccine, but some people couldn’t get access to the shot. Meanwhile, at the end of a vaccine clinic, where people could come to us to get the shot, we had extra shots and we would throw them away. So we identified people who needed the shots, and we took the extra shots and drove them in my car to their homes to give them the shot. We gave over 900 shots.

Healthy Investigator: How does diabetes affect Philadelphians and why did you choose to focus on it?

Rep. Khan: Recent reports show that diabetes in kids and adults is rising. In Harrisburg, we passed a resolution that November will be Diabetes Awareness Month to let people know they should get tested for diabetes. For people who already have diabetes, they should go to their doctor once every three months to get checked. One in 2 adults has either pre-diabetes or diabetes. A lot of adults and kids are having it.

Helping people with asthma

Rep. Tarik Khan has worked to help people with asthma. People with asthma may cough, wheeze, or feel like they can’t get enough air, according to the award-winning website kidshealth.org.

Rep. Khan says there are some ways that kids can help people with asthma.

“One way you can help is that if you see someone having an asthma attack, advocate for them, assist them by getting an adult. If the person has an inhaler, you could make sure they have their inhaler. Get the school nurse or an adult to make someone aware that a person is having trouble breathing.”

Creating a safe and healthy school

Several Philadelphia Hebrew Public Charter School (PHP) staff members said in recent interviews that they help make the school community a healthy place by making sure students have what they need to learn and feel safe.

How well the students and staff members feel and how much they achieve in school depend on a healthy school environment, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA is a government agency whose goal is to protect the world around us.

Healthy food in the cafeteria, water fountains, and clean spaces can create a healthy environment, says kidshealth.org and the National School Climate Center, an organization that helps schools become positive environments.

At PHP, the cafeteria serves a variety of food such as quesadillas, steamed vegetables, apple sauce, and bagels. The school also has water fountains and water bottle refilling stations. Teachers and students try to keep their classrooms and hallways clean.

Everyone in the building can work together to make their school and community places that feel safe and respectful, according to the National School Climate Center.

Elyssa Yuen, head of PHP said she likes helping the school community by “shouting out” kids’ positive accomplishments during 8:30 morning announcements. “For kids to be celebrated makes me feel a part of a community,” she said. “My favorite thing is making a difference.”

Philadelphia Hebrew Public Charter School

A publication of Philadelphia Hebrew Public Charter School in Philadelphia. Participating students are in fifth grade. The reporters include Naviid Kharee Anderson-Moss, Madeline Elizabeth Rose Bailey, Romeesa Burman, Samir Burman, Josiah Cantey, Rayyan Amari, Dennis-Thomas, Mason Fisher, Taryn Harrison, Alana Humphrey, Devi Johnson, Tyler Blue Judd, Rashidat Kanmodi, Jaron Knox, Brooke Lark, Ayden Monroe-Griffin, Amir Dashyne Poole, Anisha Baina Renard, Krishantheydi Shandrea Rosado, Caiden Jrue Simpson, Emily Skyler Sun, David Diamond Swint, Camryn Torrence, Azuree Walker, Messiah Ware-Parsons, Ceia Waters, Angel Mireya Williams, and Makayla Imani Willis-Garrett.

The *Healthy Investigator*’s faculty advisor is Liz Hollon. The head of school is Elyssa Yuen and Emily Hurst is the executive director.

Healthy NewsWorks is a nonprofit program that partners with elementary and middle schools in the Philadelphia area to empower students to become researchers, writers, critical thinkers, and confident communicators.

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Illustration by fifth-grade *Healthy Investigator* reporter

Sarah Hanrahan, dean of academics, said she believes “we built a school that brings joy and support to the students of Philadelphia and I’m proud of all the students of PHP,” she said. She helped start PHP in 2019.

What she said she likes most about supporting the school community is working with the students. “The work that we’ve done together is so important and I hope to continue it,” she said.

Sam Agoos, PHP lead social worker, said he worked with Claire Kelley, the family and community coordinate, and Kyerstyn O’Hara, school social worker to organize a care closet with extra clothing for students in need. He said he wants to help give access to resources to people who need them in the school community.

Stephanie Jordan, a fourth-grade teacher, said a good thing she does for the school community is shape young children’s minds every day. “I get to help students from Philadelphia,” she said. As a Black woman, she said, being a teacher is really important to her. Helping her students helps her to build relationships with them.

How Emily Hurst helps her community

Emily Hurst, PHP executive director, said she lives on a very special block. “Our neighbors got together at the beginning of September to do a block cleanup.” She said there were about five other neighbors involved.

“It had an impact on us living together on a cleaner block and knowing we can support each other,” she said, added that she would definitely do it again. “You feel great when you help others. It makes your heart fuller.”

Film review

Focus on healing

Ashdod reporters recently watched the Healthy NewsWorks film “How We Heal.” In the film, student reporters meet and interview a variety of experts who discuss healing. *Healthy Investigator* reporters watched the film to learn more about the many ways people get through and recover from challenging times.

In response to the film, the reporters generated a list of ways that they themselves take time to heal. If you’re interested in a viewing of the film, contact:

editor@HealthyNewsWorks.org

1. Make bracelets
2. Do TikTok dances
3. Play football
4. Read a book
5. Drawing
6. Take deep breaths
7. Get some fresh air
8. Spend time with your friends
9. Talk to people who you trust or someone you love
10. Playing video games with a sibling or friend
11. Play music
12. Dance or play sports
13. Give to others
14. Become friends with someone
15. Be supportive, comfort others
16. Bake or cook for your friends

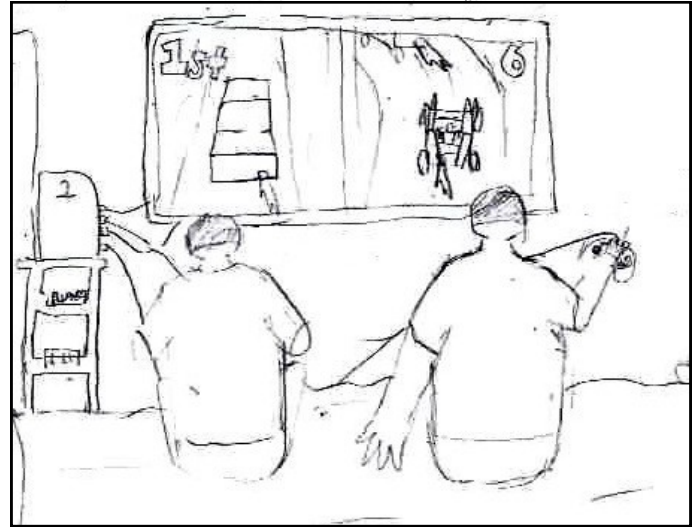


Illustration by Amir Poole

The artist playing a video game with his brother.

How I healed ...

One time I was crying about something and my mom, dad, and teachers all told me to take some deep breaths. After I did, I felt happier. —Emily Sun

What helps me heal is drawing, sketching, talking to my friends, and playing Roblox. Sometimes even crying lets out my emotions. Doing TikTok dances or getting my hair and nails done to get pampered helps me heal. I take time for myself to calm down, not surrounded by anyone. —Ceia Waters

Book review: Learning about teamwork

Marvelous Cornelius

Written by Phil Bildner

Illustrated by John Parra

This book is about Cornelius Washington, who was a sanitation worker in the French Quarter of New Orleans, Louisiana. Cornelius is very helpful to the community and says hello to all the people he sees there. Then Hurricane Katrina came and flooded New Orleans. Cornelius could not clean the mess himself, but people from New Orleans and many other United States cities came to help clean up.

Most students in the Metulla classroom said they enjoyed the book.

“I really liked how he was all cheerful, but became sad. Then he got back up and became happy again because people from other cities came to help. It shows teamwork makes the dream work,” said Brooke.

“I liked the book because people from all over the country helped to clean the mess from Hurricane Katrina because they *wanted* to, not because they *needed* to,” said Taryn.

“Cornelius is helpful, creative, agile, loud, positive and marvelous. I think [this book was chosen] because reporters are supposed to be helpful to their communities, and Cornelius was helpful to his community,” said Maddie.

We recommend this book for children to help with reading skills or to learn about kindness. We also recommend the artwork in the book, and think that people who lived through Hurricane Katrina would enjoy the book as well.

“I feel like this book would be good for children and adults going through tough times or hurricanes because it could show them how to be brave during a tough time like a hurricane,” said a student.