

# THE COURIER

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*The longest running middle school newspaper in the United States!*

## CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

By: Alisha Ahmed and Eva Mandelbaum

Schools are closed and it is not summer, everyone is at home, hand sanitizer is running out, and the economy is going down. If you're wondering why hand sanitizer is suddenly so expensive and why everyone is stuck at home, it's because of the Corona virus pandemic that is spreading through the world. Suddenly everyone is obsessed with washing their hands and using hand sanitizer as if they didn't do that before the Coronavirus. Coronavirus has been making a show around the world, but it isn't exactly popular. Talk about Coronavirus is everywhere, and everyone is frightened by the subject. That leads us to the question how did the Coronavirus start?

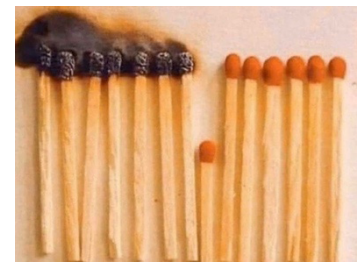
The Coronavirus according to sciencedaily.com is made up with a large family of viruses. The first appearance the virus made was in 2003 when the Respiratory Syndrome epidemic was happening in China. The second time was in 2012 in Saudi Arabia when the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome was happening. That all happened a long time ago but not so long ago the Coronavirus crept up on China. On December 31, 2019 right before the new year Chinese authorities alerted the World Health Organization of the Coronavirus causing severe illness in China. Right then people didn't really take it seriously. They thought it's only in China and that nothing bad is going to happen—right? Now it's a pandemic and hundreds of people are getting the disease and people are dying. No one really knows how the Corona Virus started but people have their assumptions. Some people are being ignorant and blaming it on China. Some imbecilic people say the Coronavirus started because Chinese people eat bats and that's how the virus spreads. There is no scientific proof saying that is how the virus started so there is no need need to make unneeded comments.

Ever since the virus has turned into a pandemic the world has been changing and not necessarily in a good way. The economy of all different places is going down. The economy is going

down because everything is shutting down. Movie theaters, malls, restaurants, bookstores, nail salons, furniture stores, and tons of other places. Since so many places are closing down that means reduced production and people getting laid off from their jobs. Some are even saying this could be a start to another Great Depression. Unlike what happened in 1929 the economy wouldn't be going down because of overproducing, and the stock market crash, it would be starting because of a virus. According to Vox.com this could be worse than 9/11. This pandemic wasn't anything anyone ever expected to happen. A fortune teller didn't see it in a crystal ball. It jumped up on us and we were not prepared.

### Social Distancing (Why are we staying home from school?)

While reading this article, right this second, you are probably at home, even if it's a weekday when you would normally be at school, because you are "social distancing." So, what is social distancing anyway? Why does it matter so much that they had to cancel school for a whole month? Essentially, the reason the virus spreads so rapidly is because it takes about two weeks for our bodies to get the symptoms telling us we have this Coronavirus, Covid19. So, we could be carrying it in our bodies and spreading it to others when we don't even realize we have it ourselves. By staying home, we are saving lives. This concept may be a little tricky to interpret and understand, which is completely understandable. Below is a helpful photo that had been shared by doctors in Greece, captioned, "The one who stayed away saved all the rest."



### Why should I be worried? Why shouldn't I be worried

This virus is just like any other virus—it enters your body which builds antibodies to fight it off, and you then recover. The thing about this virus is that it is new so we don't know much about it and have not developed a vaccine for it which may seem a little scary. Also, because it is spreading so quickly, people who are in the "at risk" groups (people who will be more effected by the virus than others) are more likely to get it. This also goes back to why we should be practicing social distancing. You may not be in the "at risk" group, but your friends, family, and many others may be. By staying home, you are keeping them safe too, and you have nothing to worry about. Next time one of those big, intimidating news headlines pop up on your screen, take a deep breath and think to yourself that everything will be okay because you are practicing social distancing.

To conclude, this is all a crazy, historic event taking place but as long as we are continuing to social distance and abide to what Governor Cuomo, Dr. Ricca and Mayor Roach have been telling us, we will get through these times! Yes, it feels like someone hit a pause button on the world, and yes, this feels like a surreal, weird dream, but all we can do is take one day at a time. As Dr. Ricca the superintendent and Mayor Roach have been saying, "We are standing together by staying apart."

## ARTWORK FROM HOME

Mrs. Thornton's 8th grade digital art class explored photography and the rule of thirds.



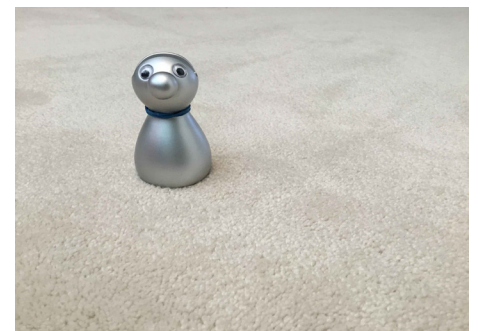
By: Allison P.



By: Ava G.



By: Ella G.



By: Jack M.



By: Kimberly O.



By: Leah M.



By: Luciana Y.



By: Mia C.



# DREAMING OF SLEEP

By: Eva Mandelbaum

What if your life depended on sleep? The truth is—it does. If reading this freaks you out, don't worry! It is *extremely* rare to die directly of sleep deprivation. Despite the rarity of this, it is still very possible for lack of sleep to lead to serious health issues in a non-direct way. Lack of sleep is one of the most underrated causes of depression, anxiety, and overall mental and physical distress. Also, although under acknowledged, not getting enough sleep makes you much more prone to long term and short term physical health issues. For example, if you are consistently not getting enough sleep, there is just as much of a chance of you falling asleep in your 1st period class as you having serious mental and physical health issues in your future. Although thinking about how your lack of sleep will effect you may just mean you picturing yourself dozing off in school the next day, the truth is much harsher than this. Not getting enough sleep over time can even lead to increased risk of obesity and Cardiovascular Disease and heart attacks. Despite this terrifying reality, don't worry. Although it may feel like it, sleep deprivation doesn't have to be inevitable. Now, let's take a look at what it truly means to be sleep deprived.

If keeping your eyes open is a never ending battle, surprisingly, you are alike to over half of middle school students and 72.7% of high school students, according to data from the 2015 national and state Youth Risk Behavior Surveys. So, why does this trend of exhaustion even happen in the first place? Procrastinator or not, you will most likely have to stay up later than advisable. Between stacks of homework, clubs, sports, and other extracurricular activities along with down time-how *can* you get to bed early? Procrastination seems to be a rabbit hole-once you fall into the habit, it seems almost impossible to climb out, and get back on track. Whether it be the bright glow of promise (of addiction and no sleep) from your phone, or your little sibling distracting you from what you *should* be doing, getting all your work done by a reasonable time can be a challenge.

One way to manage everything (especially with all of this recent time spent at home) is to set realistic goals or a schedule for yourself everyday. This doesn't mean you have to practice your sport for two hours, followed by hours of practicing your instrument—all followed by drowning yourself in homework and unnecessary studying. It is all about balance and prioritizing what is most important. Another tip is to make a list of everything you need to do in order from most to least important. This way, you prioritize and manipulate the time you have pre-sleeping!

If you still manage to get to bed at a relatively reasonable time, but just can't quite catch those Z's you've been needing oh so much, the problem could be much more simple than it appears. When you sleep, your body completes a full sleep cycle—or at least it is supposed to. Sometimes, if you can't seem to get into the sleeping rhythm your body has been yearning for, you are struggling with Insomnia. Insomnia is extremely common, especially amongst teens. All it means is trouble falling or staying asleep. The most common cause of insomnia is stress, although many other factors such as physical discomfort, emotional troubles, and even an uncomfortable sleeping environment can cause insomnia. Also, going on your phone right before bed can lead to trouble falling and staying asleep, which is very common among teens as well. Although almost everyone has struggled with Insomnia at some point or another, adolescents (mostly middle schoolers) struggle the most. During adolescence, the body's circadian rhythm (essentially an internal clock) is reset, commanding the adolescent to fall asleep later at night and wake up later in the morning. This change in the circadian rhythm happens as a result of a specific hormone (melatonin) being produced later at night than in the brains of kids and adults. As a result, sleep is even more of a battle for teens and adolescents. Shut off your phone before bed and try to make a night time routine to wind down, relax, and set up your REM cycle for success. For better physical health, mental health, and just overall wellbeing, start getting into better sleeping habits—the results will be astounding.

## INTERVIEW WITH JARETT J. KROSOCKZA

By: Alisha Ahmed

Jarett J. Krossockza is an amazing author and has written many books in his writing career. His latest book Hey Kiddo is an inspiring graphic novel which tells the story of Krossockza as a young boy. The book illustrates the hard experiences he had to deal with as a young child and how he dealt with them. Therefore Hey Kiddo is an exhilarating book for all types of people.

**What inspired you to write this book?**

*I was trying to write a memoir for a long time but I didn't have courage and it wasn't until I had a ted talk and I realized how many people were going through the same dilemma I went through as a young kid. Then I realized I should give this to my readers.*

**What would you say to kids and teenagers who are going through the same dilemma you went through as a young kid?**

*I would say to find what your spacial intelligence is and to use it. Find what it is and use it to escape. For example being athletic, writing, reading anything.*

**What inspired you to become a writer?**

*I always loved to draw.*

**What is some advice you would tell someone who wants to become a writer?**

*My advice is to make your art and to learn from your experiences so you get better and keep on trying any every time you'll get better and better.*

**If you could tell your younger writing self-anything, what would it be?**

*Not to think and to live his young life.*

**If you didn't write, what would you do for work?**

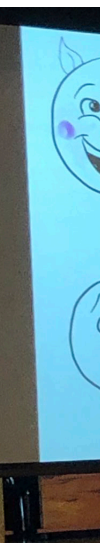
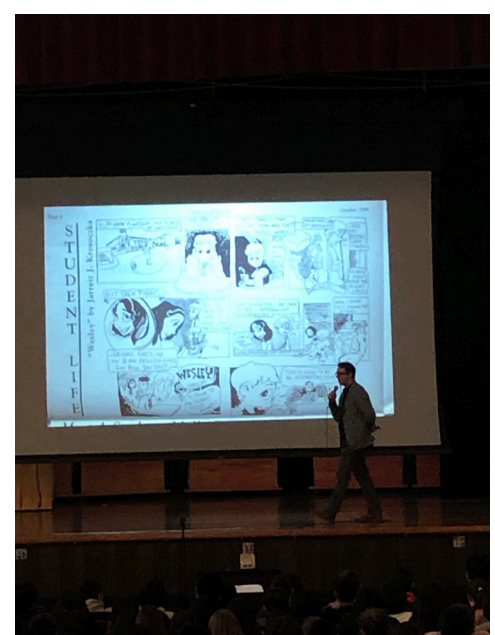
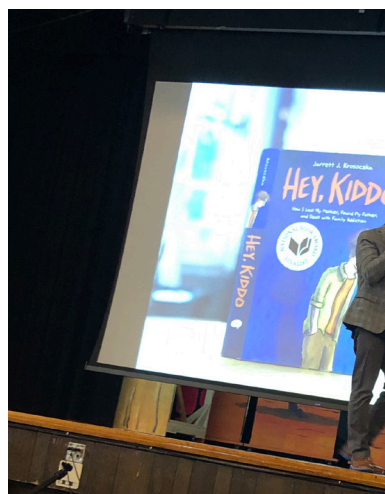
*Teacher I always liked teaching*

**How do you deal with emotional impact of a book as you are writing the story?**

*It can be hard when I'm on a book tour it helps me understand better*

**Did you like writing when you were in eighth grade?**

*No, I thought writing of as a chore. I loved making comics though.*





# THE FITNESS CLUB- AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. HARRISON

By: Nadiya Jones and Eva Mandelbaum

The fitness clubs uses multitudinous exercises to develop strength and speed. Mr. Harrison emphasizes the point that he wants the club members to use their own body weight to gain this speed and strength. Mr. Harrison always guides the activities to make sure everyone is staying safe and doing the activities correctly. He motivates the students to not give up and guides them to success. This club is a great way to end your day and let your energy out. Everyone can join to get in shape and stay healthy. New members are always invited and wanted!

Mr. Harrison interview:

**Q: Tell us about the club.**

*A: This is a club to get stronger and faster and to get your heart rate up.*

**Q: What is the importance of this club?**

*A: To get students moving and getting some physical activity.*

**Q: What is your favorite exercise in this club?**

*A: I like the work out of the day which is the work out I post on the board for students to complete each day. Example: 100 burpees.*

**Q: What exercises improve your strength?**

*A: We like to use your own body weight to create explosive strength.*

**Q: What exercises improve your speed?**

*A: Air squats, lunges, leap frogs, jumping rope, push ups*

**Q: Is this club only important for people doing sports?**

*A: This club is even more important for people who don't do sports.*

**Q: What is the importance of a healthy body?**

*A: Living longer/ longevity.*

**Q: What gave you the inspiration to start this club?**

*A: I am big into health and fitness myself and I wanted to share my passion for health and fitness.*

**Q: Why do you recommend this club to middle school students/ why should students join this club?**

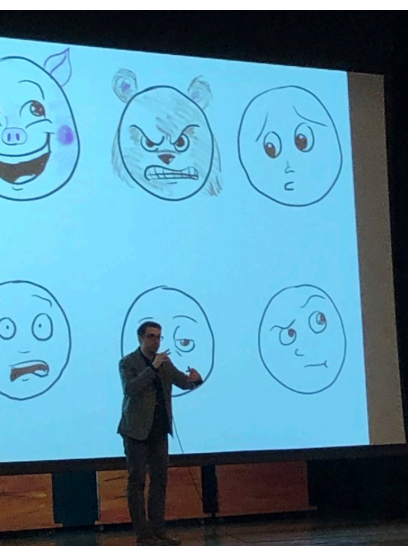
*A: Students should join because it will help them with their health and fitness and help them understand the foundations so they can improve their fitness as they get older.*

**Q: What days do the club meet?**

*A: Monday and Friday 2:45-4:15*

*"We will be inside as well as outside especially with the weather getting nicer. I am hoping to implement more games like dodgeball," He explains as a final note.*

As evident from Mr. Harrison and this club, fitness is exceedingly important to the overall health, wellness, and even the longevity of our lives. If you want to become faster, stronger, and overall healthier – then the Fitness Club is for you. This club is a great way to get your daily dose of exercise in a fun way that is easily accessible to all students at Highlands. So don't hesitate, jump right in and join the fitness club to create a healthier lifestyle for yourself!



## THE COURIER

White Plains Middle School

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# SOCIAL COMMENTARY BY 7TH GRADERS



"This is showing how we all are always on our phone like we are "trapped" in a virtual world and can never get out."  
-Abigail A., 7<sup>th</sup> grade

**Who I am**

By: Karen Gallegos

My skin color shouldn't define who I am.

No, I will not hurt you.

No, I'm not lazy.

No, I'm not a criminal.

I hate that you think this is who I am

Solely based on how I look.

But I won't be sorry for who I am.

This is me.

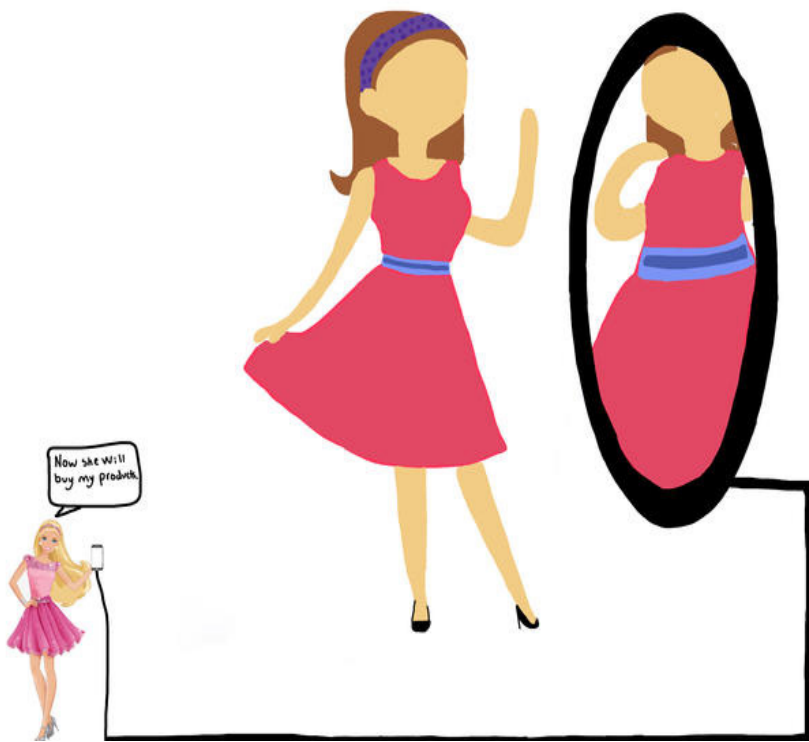
And it's time for you to accept it.

I won't care about your hideous remarks.

I will keep rising.

And I will never stop.

"My poem is about racism and how our skin color shouldn't define who we are. It's also about how stereotypes can make people think something about a person even though they haven't gotten to know them."  
-Karen Gallegos, 7th grade



"This social commentary is showing that the media is making people think that they need makeup and beauty products to seem normal and pretty. In reality everyone is unique in their own way."  
-Claire W., 7th grade



"This shows that our earth is dying because of global warming, air pollution, and us throwing trash."  
-Yentsen S., 7th grade



"This shows how people don't see the full damage to things and how severe it is, in this case the state of the ocean and having too much trash in it."  
-Aleksa B., 7th grade

**The voyage of the noodle volume: 2**

By: Sam Battistini, Brooke Halperin, and Arin Dean

