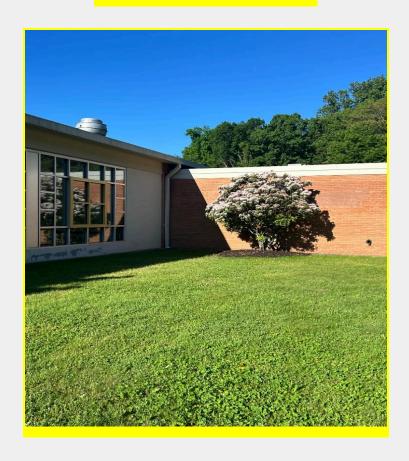
Expressions

An Arts and Literature Magazine Created by the Students of

Amity Middle School Orange

2023 - 2024



Student Contributors

(In Order of Appearance)

Isabela Metanaj

Sylvia McGovern

Sadie Mones

Brooke Dionis

Marcus Barbara

Saige McDonough

Jess Emmens

Alaa Almashi

Luca DiSorbo

Ana Cornier

Josie Yun

Daisy DeAngelis

Nilay Parmar

Helene Flynn

Kristen Barnes

■ Intering Lin-Manuel Miranda's Vault

Mrs. Marganski's student **Isabela Metanaj** was lucky enough to gain access to a few songs in Miranda's "vault" that he never released for a sequel to his famous musical. One of them is called "I Told You So" and was written about 1800. Another one Miranda never released is called "TJ Takes the Stage."

"I Told You So"

[Verse 1 - Thomas Jefferson]

I told you so, it's time to let it go,

The people spoke, and now it's time to show,

A change is coming, a revolution of the heart,

Step aside, Adams, it's time for a fresh start.

[Chorus - Ensemble]

I told you so, the ballot speaks the truth,

In the hands of the people, we find our proof,

A new era dawns, a chapter to unfold,

I told you so, let history be told.

[Verse 2 - Alexander Hamilton]

In the room where it happens, choices were made,

A tiebreaker vote, the foundations laid,

Burr and Jefferson, a political ballet,

The people decided, and here we stand today.

[Chorus - Ensemble]

I told you so, the voices will resound,

In the halls of democracy, where change is found,

A nation shaped by choices that we make,

I told you so, let freedom awake.

[Bridge - Aaron Burr]

In the election of 1800, history in the making,

A peaceful transfer, no violence in the waking,

The people's will prevailed, a lesson to learn,

In the face of uncertainty, let democracy burn.

[Verse 3 - Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton]

Jefferson: I told you so, a revolution's call,

Hamilton: A nation reborn, rising above it all,

Jefferson: The people spoke, in the language of the vote,

Hamilton: A new chapter begins, in this democratic boat.

[Chorus - Ensemble]

I told you so, the promise of a brand new day,

In the hands of the people, let freedom sway,

A song of progress, let the melody flow,

I told you so, in 1800, watch it grow.

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"TJ Takes the Stage"

[Verse 1 - Ensemble]

The stage is set, the crowd awaits,

A new leader emerges, breaking through the gates,

In the land of liberty, a revolution of the pen,

Thomas Jefferson steps forward, let the show begin.

[Chorus - Ensemble]

TJ takes the stage, a man of eloquence,

With words that dance, a political transcendence,

The spotlight's on him, as history turns the page,

A founding father rises, as TJ takes the stage.

[Verse 2 - Thomas Jefferson]

In the room where it happens, decisions are made,

A statesman's vision, in the plans laid,

The Declaration penned, with a quill and ink,

A revolution of thought, let the nation think.

[Chorus - Ensemble]

TJ takes the stage, with a democratic dream,

In the halls of power, where ideas gleam,

The pen is mightier, as he turns the page,

A voice for the people, as TJ takes the stage.

[Bridge - Alexander Hamilton]

Hamilton: In the duel of ideas, Jefferson takes his shot,

In the arena of politics, a battle to be fought,

A clash of ideologies, a nation in a cage,

Jefferson steps forward, as TJ takes the stage.

[Verse 3 - Thomas Jefferson]

The Louisiana Purchase, a bold acquisition,

Expanding the nation, with a strategic vision,

A statesman's legacy, in the history book,

With each measured step, a leader's look.

[Chorus - Ensemble]

TJ takes the stage, in the dance of liberty,

A legacy unfolding, for the world to see,

In the theater of democracy, on history's page,

A founding father shines, as TJ takes the stage.

[Outro - Ensemble]

The curtain falls, but the echoes remain,

A leader emerges, breaking every chain,

In the annals of time, on this democratic stage,

Thomas Jefferson stands tall, as history's sage.



Mrs. Rivera's students retold classic tales from different perspectives.

Sylvia McGovern

The Little Mermaid: A Perspective Change 1



I wake up at six in the morning with a bad feeling in my stomach. Being the oldest of seven girls gives me a good sense of intuition. Something must've happened to one of my sisters. "ARIEL!" I head into her room to check on her but she is nowhere to be found. Although Ariel is only 16, she has built guite a reputation for herself. She's been caught sneaking out countless times. I have no idea where she's going, but I'm determined to find out. I quickly swim out the door of our palace while still calling her name desperately. "Ariel, where are you!" I shout exhaustedly. Still nothing. Suddenly I realize where she could've gone. No, she wouldn't. My youngest sister would never attempt to swim to the surface, right?

All the merfolk are giving me odd stares as I exasperatedly swim through the streets and up to the surface. As soon as my head breaks the surface of the water, I'm taken aback by the beauty of the land. The glistening sand, the towering trees, the fluffy clouds, it's just breathtaking. I whisper to myself, "Wow, I finally understand why Ariel comes up here."

"Yes, it is quite amazing, but who might you be?" A mysterious voice asks behind me. I turn around and see the most gorgeous man I've ever laid eyes on. I open my mouth to speak when I see my sister laying next to him on the sand.

"Ariel, I've finally found you; I've been worried sick!" But something seems different; this isn't the sister I remember. My eyes travel across her face and down her body until I realize what changed. Ariel has grown legs! This reminds me of my own tail, still hidden beneath the water. "Ariel I need to speak with you..." my eyes dart to the mysterious man and then back to my sister, "Preferably in private." I pull my sister into the water with me and whisper in her ear through gritted teeth, "I have so many questions. Firstly, where is your tail, and secondly, who is this odd man you seemed to be laying on?" Ariel says nothing. She opens her mouth in an attempt to talk but no words come out. How has my seemingly perfect fairytale life turned into a thrilling mystery?

Sadie Mones

Harry Potter. Malfoy's Perspective



Staring into the mirror, I was pleased with what I saw. There was no way anyone would look at me and not know I was a Malfoy. Yes, the great Malfoyspure blooded Slytherins who know their place in the world of magic- at the top. Being the youngest Malfoy, I feel a lot of pressure to prove myself to my father. That's why I was sort of in a bad mood when I walked into Madam Malkin's shop for robes, alone and independent. I'm so used to my parents following me around-sometimes I forget that I'm my own person. Madam Malkin, dressed head to toe in sickly mauve greeted me with a smile. I scowled back. I hate shopping. "Martha will take care of you, dear," said Madam Malkin, still smiling. I nodded, walking to the back where Martha was waiting, measuring tapes levitating next to her. I'll be able to do that soon.

The shop smelled of fresh fabric, and had a faint scent of pumpkin spice.

Annoyance and impatience ticked in my head as the measuring tapes flew around, taking dozens of different measurements. Suddenly, the bell on the door jingled as a skinny boy about my age strode in. He had messy black hair and bright green eyes. Madam Malkin went to meet him.

"Hogwarts, dear?" she said, as soon as the boy opened his mouth to speak, shutting him up instantly.

I smirked. "Got the lot here - another young man being fitted up just now, in fact." I blinked surprisedly at the mention of me. As the other boy got nearer and nearer to me, I noticed a curious lightning shaped scar on his forehead. *Wait*. I thought, a lightbulb going off in my head, *is that Harry Potter?* Everyone knew him as the boy who lived. He had survived the killing curse. He's basically invincible. If it was him, I needed to get that boy on my side immediately.

"Hello," I asked, pretending I didn't hear the conversation earlier, "Hogwarts too?"

"Yeah," the boy said nervously. If it was Harry Potter, I knew he couldn't possibly have parents. I decided to jab at him a little bit.

"My father's next door buying my books and Mother's up the street looking at wands," I said smugly. "Then I'm going to drag them off to look at racing brooms. I don't see why first-years can't have their own. Then I'll bully Father into getting me one and I'll smuggle it somehow." I added. I wasn't really going to do that; I just really wanted to prove myself as a Malfoy and make myself sound good. The boy had a bewildered look on his face. "Have *you* got your own broom?" I asked, doubting he would.

"No," he said, sounding kind of disappointed. Another bright idea came to me. He would have no idea what Quidditch was.

"Play Quidditch at all?" I asked, trying to sound curious, "I do - Father says it's a crime if I'm not picked to play for my house, and I must say, I agree. Know what house you'll be in yet?" I bragged. Bragging made me feel good. My bad mood was being cured by every word that came out of my mouth.

"No." He said, looking down slightly. He knew nothing! The poor bloke. I tried to keep my emotions in check as I informed him about the Hogwarts houses.

"Well no one really knows until they get there, do they, but I know *I'll* be in Slytherin, all our family have been - imagine being in Hufflepuff, I think I'd leave, wouldn't you?" If I was going to be a real Malfoy, I would have to be in Slytherin or else I would be shunned and cast out. Also, my family raised me to believe that Slytherin was superior and Hufflepuff was at the bottom. They're just extra witches and wizards the sorting hat didn't find brave, cunning, or smart.

"Mmm," the boy said. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I spied quite an odd sight. A huge man with a beard stood outside, holding two giant ice cream cones.

"I say, look at that man!" I exclaimed, barely able to contain my laughter.

"That's Hagrid." said the boy, seeming pleased with himself. *Not for long*.

"Oh, I've heard of him. He's a sort of servant, isn't he?" I said, realizing that the man was the freaky Hogwarts gatekeeper.

"He's the gatekeeper," the boy said, repeating what I already knew.

"Yes, exactly," I said, exasperated, "I heard he's sort of *savage* - lives in a hut in the school grounds and every now and then he gets drunk, tries to do magic and ends up setting fire to his bed." My father taught me to fear Hagrid- as he's not a proper wizard.

"I think he's brilliant," the boy said, disagreeing openly. *Ew.* I didn't like this boy anymore. I decided to give him a piece of my mind.

"Do you? Why is he with you? Where are your parents?" Oooh, I really had him now! If he was in fact Harry Potter, he would have to admit they were dead.

"They're dead," the boy said shortly.

"Oh, sorry," I said, not sorry at all, "But they were *our* kind, weren't they?" I had to make sure.

"They were a witch and wizard if that's what you mean," he said, shrugging.

I wanted him to know what the Malfoys thought about Mudbloods (wizards born from muggles).

I said, "I really don't think they should let the other sort in, do you? They're just not the same; they've never been brought up to know our ways. Some of them have never even heard of Hogwarts until they get the letter, imagine. I think they should keep it in the old wizarding families. What's your surname anyway?"

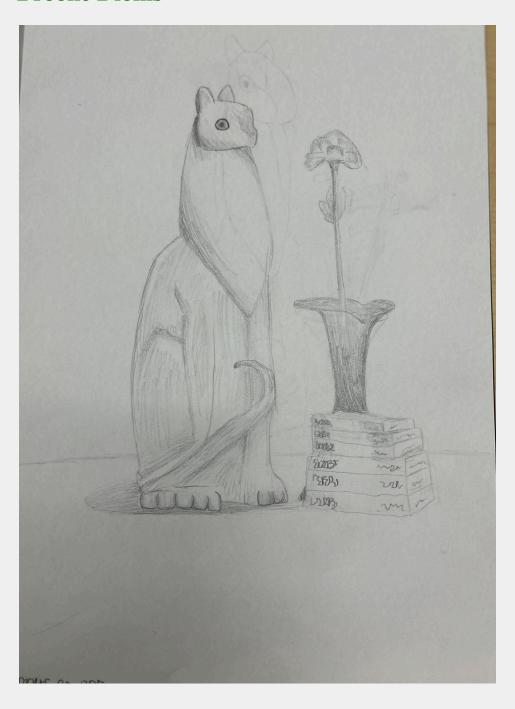
Before he could answer, Madam Malkin came over to him and said, "That's you done, my dear." I bit my lip, disappointed that I wasn't able to get more information out of him.

"Well I'll see you at Hogwarts, I suppose." I said, not really looking forward to the moment. Soon after, I was allowed to leave. When I was out on the street, I tried to look for the boy, but I couldn't see him. After accepting I wouldn't be able to bother him until I got to Hogwarts, I went off in search of my parents.

Grade 8 Students in Ms. Casey's Art classes created these beautiful cat portraits.

"The smallest feline is a masterpiece." ~ Leonardo da Vinci

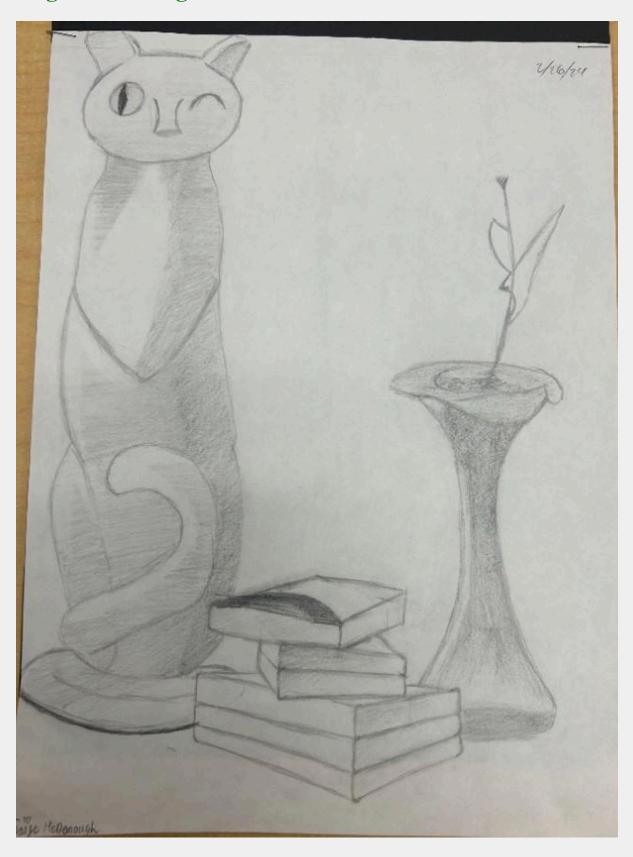
Brooke Dionis



Marcus Barbara

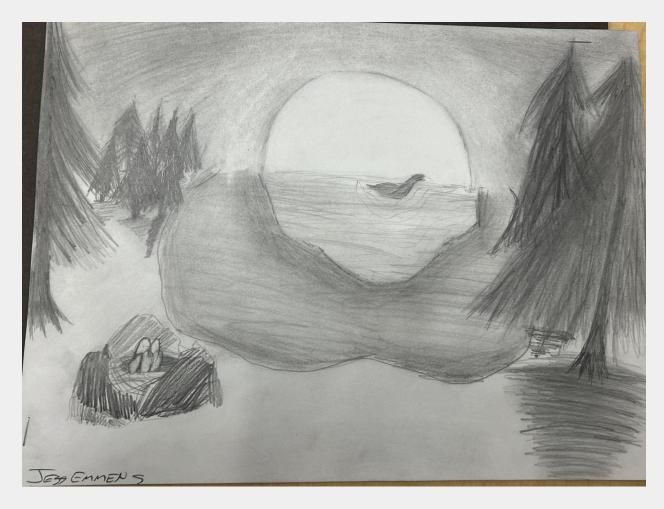


Saige McDonough

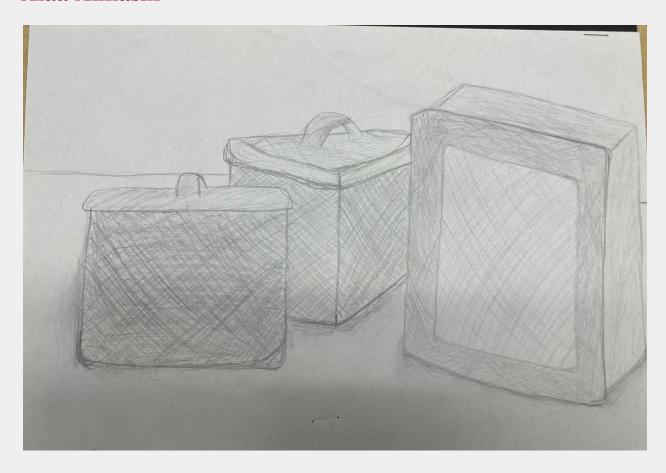


Here are some other masterpieces by Grade 8 students:

Jess Emmens



Alaa Almashi



Luca DiSorbo



Ana Cornier



Students in Mrs. Kantor's classes wrote editorials and arguments, advocating for their peers and community.

**The views and opinions expressed within the content of these pieces and this publication are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of Amity Middle School and/or its staff and students.

Hockey player Josie Yun proposes measures to make hockey safer for all.

Increasing Youth Hockey Safety

Did you know that, according to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP), ice hockey is the second leading cause of winter sports injuries (1)? People are constantly getting injured playing ice hockey, and these risks can increase if players aren't educated on hockey safety and how to protect themselves. Youth hockey teams should spend more time focusing on hockey safety.

One reason why youth hockey teams should focus more on hockey safety is to prevent many future injuries in young players. "One study of 9- to 15-year old hockey players found that body checking caused 86 percent of all injuries during games" (CHP 1). From personal experience, body checking is something that isn't taught thoroughly until Bantams, under the age of 14 (U14) hockey, when players are allowed to fully body check each other. Although body checking is illegal under those ages, many kids like the physicality of the sport, and still do it. Therefore, they should still be taught how to properly absorb and give safe body checks to prevent harmful collisions. There are many things that can be done to prevent hockey injuries. More of a focus on body contact and control skills can help avoid players crashing into other players in a vulnerable position, and strength training and stretching can also help players be able to better defend themselves (Howland 2). These actions can easily be done, and could prevent a countless number of injuries in youth hockey players.

Along with preventing injuries, increased safety in youth hockey might allow players to enjoy playing the game more and become more confident if they know how to properly protect themselves. Doyle states that, "Injuries in hockey happen from time to time, but it is necessary for coaches to prepare their players so that they aren't afraid of contact, thus putting themselves in dangerous positions" (3). From personal experience, I have always been taught to never be scared of getting hit. When scared, players often tend to tense up, making them slower and more vulnerable to getting hurt. Players will become less scared to play if they are confident in themselves, and they feel like they can protect themselves. Small ice games are an easy way to get players more used to contact and can help them develop more puck possession skills (Doyle 4). Anxiety about contact is normal, and having coaches teach their players confidence can help young kids become more confident, comfortable, and safe on the ice, and they might enjoy the game more too.

Some people might argue that getting injured is just part of the game of hockey, and that kids heal quickly, and they will just learn from their mistakes. However, many people don't realize that many hockey related injuries (even from a young age) can have long term effects and be very serious, and all kids should be taught hockey safety. It's no secret that repeating injuries can become much worse over time, but 52 year old Chris Simon's recent death by suicide on March 18, 2024, caused a lot of people to pay closer attention to sports safety (Burgess 2). His death was linked to Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, or CTE (Burgess 3). According to Melissa Burgess, his family believes he struggled greatly from the condition (3), and that, "CTE is a progressive and fatal brain disease associated with repeated traumatic brain injuries, including concussions, and repeated blows to the head" (4). A few studies have been done on the link between CTE and suicide (Burgess 5), showing that it's possible Chris Simon's death by suicide was related to his many head injuries from playing hockey. Also, body checks aren't the only way of getting seriously hurt. A little over two years ago, Teddy Balkind tragically died during a high school hockey game, and was cut badly on his neck by a skate blade (Reilly 3).

This is not the first time this has happened. Adam Johnson, one of the Nottingham Panthers in the U.K, was also killed during a game in England taking a skate to his neck (Burgess 2). According to Burgess, "USA Hockey recommends neck laceration protectors, but each association, league, and team makes its own decision" (4). More education on safety and increased safety rules might have been able to prevent these injuries, and that is why it is so important to teach young players about safety, it can save lives, and help adults as well.

Safety while playing sports is too big of an issue to just ignore. Focus more on youth hockey safety and lives will be saved, thousands of people will benefit, and the game of hockey will change for the better.

Student athlete Daisy DeAngelis advocates for Physical Education class every day.

Gym Class Should Be On the School Schedule Every Day

In 2017 only 26.1% of high schoolers participated in the recommended amount of physical activity on all seven days of the week (CDC 1). Children and teenagers do not get enough exercise and schools are partially to blame. All students should be required to take a PE class everyday.

One reason why students should be participating in gym class daily is because they do not get enough exercise outside of school. Experts recommend at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day (Blackwell 2). Only 24% of 6 to 17 year olds exercise for the recommended 60 minutes enough to support a healthy body.... Physical inactivity can lead to the risk of

cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and obesity (CDC 1). Exercise is so important to our health especially at young ages when not every child enjoys or even will eat healthy foods.

Cassandra Lowe, a teacher at Western University who has studied kids' brains and nutrition states that "We don't find high-calorie food as rewarding" (Oosthoek 2). So when we exercise our brain gets a sense of accomplishment way stronger than if we consumed high-calorie foods. Exercising daily will make you physically fit but it will also decrease the cravings for unhealthy foods. Having PE class every day will give children and teens the amount of exercise they need to maintain a healthy body.

Another great reason why gym class should be every day is because physical breaks improve learning. When you exercise your body makes a protein called BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor); this protein helps brain cells grow (Oosthoek 2). Exercise will also boost connections with your prefrontal cortex and other parts of your brain. This will help you weigh risks, make decisions and curb impulsive behavior better (Oosthoek 2). Cassandra Lowe says that if you have strong connections with the prefrontal cortex you "can exert control better" (Oosthoek 2). These benefits will improve children's performance in the classroom. Exercising for even just 20 minutes before studying or working will improve concentration and creativity (UCL 1). This means that being able to participate in physical activity before you dive right into work or exams may increase your chance of getting a better grade. Improved learning is most definitely a reason to hold gym classes daily.

You may think that the children who do not play sports or exercise outside of school may be self conscious, unhappy, or uncomfortable in gym class, so why have them suffer daily? However it is proven that physical activity can distract you from negative thoughts and lift your mood (Health Direct 2). With that being said, all of those unpleasant thoughts and feelings will most likely be exterminated with the help of exercise. Additionally, introducing gym class as a

daily routine at a young age will get children used to exercising and them being unhappy or uncomfortable in that environment will no longer be an issue. PE class every school day will get children and teens the exercise they need along with improving academic performance. Schools, help your students out physically and academically by holding gym class daily.



Grade 7 student Nilay Parmar wants our school day to begin later.

Amity Middle School Should Push Back Starting Times

Have you ever woken up early in the morning to your alarm and can barely open your eyes? You click snooze once, and again, and when you see the time, you have five minutes to prepare for your day at school. Early start times at school are the reason for this. I propose that Amity Middle School should push back their start time to help their students feel ready for school. It may give them a chance to perform better academically and it can provide health benefits for students getting less sleep than they should. If you didn't know, around 75% of adolescents get seven or fewer hours of sleep where they should be getting around nine to ten hours of sleep (1). By pushing start times later Amity Middle School will help students get the sleep they need.

A reason why Amity Middle School should push back their times is because it helps kids' productivity. Before you even start school, we need time to get ready, and early school times make waking up and getting ready harder, making for a chaotic morning. If we look at Andi, a mother of her son Andrew, they do not have a good relationship with early mornings. In these early school days Andi and Andew are often in a panic. There's yelling, running, and sometimes

Andrew can't even find his shoes! They then talk about delayed days where there's none of that and Andrew feels excited and ready for school (4-5). Now in school if you've ever dozed off in class or had a hard time paying attention getting more sleep helps with that. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) the sleep you need betters your memory, attention, and learning (5). This probably leads to how students in later starting schools have higher GPAs, state assessment scores, and college admission grades (3).

If you thought benefits for learning were a good reason for why schools should be pushed back, a bigger concern is children's health. Early school times are responsible for most adolescents' lack of sleep. Mentioned before, 75% of students are getting less than seven or less hours of sleep making their health a huge reason to push back school times (1). Many adolescents that don't get enough sleep are more likely to have signs of depression, be overweight, drink alcohol, smoke, and use drugs (1). Not only this but when schools start later there are less cases of accidents involving teens drowsy driving because of their lack of sleep (1). Schools should consider pushing back times not only for an improvement in academics but also just for adolescents' well being. Sommer, a sleep researcher, agrees with this quoting, "I would love to see districts really put the public health and learning needs of all children at the forefront because teenagers who aren't getting enough sleep cannot learn how they are supposed to in school." (2). This is how pushing back school times can affect young adolescents' health.

You may think that maybe electronics are the reason why teens are staying up late, going through social media or watching shows, but this has nothing to do with why they are staying up late. The American Psychological Association (APA) refers to adolescents as 'notorious night owls.' They often go to bed later at night and wake up later when given the chance. The APA has two processes for why kids generally do this called process S and C. Process S builds while you're awake, and it's what makes you feel tired, and during students' teen years this process is

weakened. Process C determines what time your body should go to sleep which shifts later during adolescence (4-5). Also during puberty a hormone called melatonin prepares our bodies for sleep, and the release of it is delayed by one to two hours (1). So if you were planning to say "Take away kids' electronics," it's not the electronics; it's the natural change in adolescents that causes them to sleep late.

Although you may have thought teens are too busy on their phones rather than sleeping, adolescents can't do anything about the change of their sleep process. Amity Middle School can easily prevent this by making school start an hour or so later. Like I mentioned many times before, 75% of kids getting seven or less hours of sleep is a substantial amount of students not getting enough sleep (1). Adolescents need at least eight hours of sleep so pushing it back about an hour will help many teens get the sleep they need (1). The entire state of California recognized this problem back in 2019 and it took effect last year in 2023, even leading Florida to join in and will start in 2026 (1). Like these two states, Amity Middle School should also join in on this. Stop watching your tired students work if you can change this, and you'll improve their productivity and their general wellbeing.

Grade 7 student and Amity community member Helene Flynn encourages us to help our neighbors.

Put Food Pantries in Every Community

Did you know that almost half of the deaths in children under the age of five were linked to undernutrition? (World Health Organization 1). Malnutrition can be caused by hunger, or a

lack of food. The malnutrition caused by this lack of food can have life lasting effects. On top of that, lack of food affects learning negatively. Food shelters can provide food to those in need and help to stop hunger. It is without a doubt that all communities should have food pantries to eliminate hunger in children.

Malnutrition has life long effects on children's development. Studies have shown poor language, social, and behavior skills in malnourished children (Scientific Reports 3). All of these skills are necessary for children to grow and flourish. You can start to think about how having poor social skills would affect a child's ability to have friends and enjoy themself. On top of that, malnutrition has been linked to suboptimal brain development, which can hurt cognitive development and productivity (World Health Organization 4). Having poor productivity skills can also have harming effects when children grow up and get jobs. If you cannot be productive at work, that may affect a person's ability to keep a job and make enough money. Food pantries will help provide food to hungry children and families, so they don't face any of these lifelong effects.

Hunger and malnutrition can affect learning negatively. 60% of kids who live in low-income households are hungry when they go to school (No Kid Hungry 2). This hunger has been shown to hurt the child's learning and education. For example, in a study, 76% of teachers saw lowered academic performance in kids who were hungry, 80% saw less concentration, and 62% saw more issues with behavior (No Kid Hungry 2). This further proves that hunger has negative effects on learning. Laurie C. Miller, who is a child nutrition expert and a pediatrics professor at Tufts University, says that, "The long-term effects [of undernutrition] include problems with learning and school can be quite significant, and even short episodes of malnutrition or undernutrition can cause very long lasting effects" (Heifer International 5). This explains to us how malnutrition and/or undernutrition can have very long lasting effects on

education. Miller explains how "even short episodes of malnutrition or undernutrition can cause very long lasting effects," which helps us to understand that even being malnourished or undernourished for a short period of time can hurt a child's education and learning experience (Heifer International 5). Food pantries will help provide food to children who are hungry, therefore improving their education and changing their life for the better now and in the future.

Many will argue that the costs of food pantries are too large, outweighing the benefits. However, this is not the case. Some food that has minor defects, take food with packaging errors for example, is donated from the manufacturer to food pantries (Madhura and de Boer 3). This is one example of how food pantries can be economical if everyone contributes a small part. If everyone can donate just a bit of food or money to food pantries, we can help those in our communities who are starving. When children are starving, they become malnourished, which results in them having higher mortality rates (Scientific Reports 3). However, if we can provide these children with food, we can improve and even save many children's lives. Saving these kid's lives is much more important than having a little bit of extra money in your pocket. Food pantries will help to improve children's development, education, and quality of life. Put food pantries in every community, and you will save and improve the lives of many children.

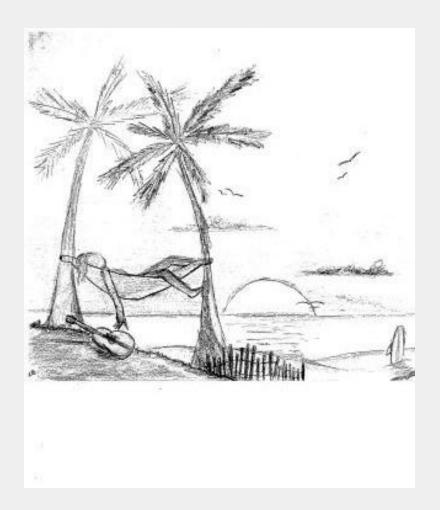
As we head into break, let's conclude with a summer poem and illustration by Kristen Barnes.

"Sunrise"

funrise by Kritten Bames

Swinging hammooks
Sinking low
Warm summer breezes
Come and go
The dipping sun
warms my face
sillouhettessaguils
On, sweet summer's embrace
I swing my hammook
rocking gently
Like the towering paintrees
Keeping time
With the lapping waves
crashing and rythmic
with my guitar
and new-coming day.

Sunrise on the water
Reflecting bright and keen
My surfboard lays waiting
Tall, colorful and tean
I swing and watch the sun
so majestic as it rises
I close my eyes
Put on my shades
And pander in thought as seaguis cry



Appendix

"Increasing Youth Hockey Safety" Josie Yun

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