

JAMES LOGAN

# HEALTHY EAGLE

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Illustration by Maleah Dixon

## Music can help relieve stress

Even a top musician sometimes feels stressed, relieved, calm, overwhelmed, and nervous, a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra recently told the *Healthy Eagle*.

“It takes me out of my own feelings for a little while, gives me a vacation from my own problems,” said Ms. Kerri Ryan, who is the orchestra’s assistant principal violist. The viola is a string instrument that is bigger than a violin and has a lower sound.

“Stress is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something,” according to kidshealth.org, an award-winning website for kids and families.

Kidshealth.org also says stress may make you easily frustrated, put you in a bad mood, or make it hard for you to focus.

Researchers at Harvard Medical School found that being creative in activities like art or music or seeing a play can help make you feel happy.

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## Finding ways to connect during social distancing

A musician with The Philadelphia Orchestra said living through a pandemic has taught her to focus more on people and given her time to improve her technology skills.

Kerri Ryan, a violist in the orchestra, recently spoke with the *Healthy Eagle* about what it’s been like to be a musician during the pandemic.

Ms. Ryan mentioned that she has been able to reconnect with people she’s lost touch with over the

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# Be sure to get enough sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is important because your body needs to rest for the next day, a doctor at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children recently told the *Healthy Eagle* staff.

"When you're sleeping is when you're doing most of your growing and [when] your cells recharge," said Dr. Priya Vyas, a pediatric resident. A pediatric resident is training to work as a children's doctor.

The pandemic changed many students' sleeping habits, she said. Many are getting up later in the morning. They are not going to the bus stop or walking to school in the morning. They are possibly going to sleep later at night, according to Dr. Vyas.

Kids ages 5 to 12 should be getting between 9 and 12 hours of sleep each night, says kidshealth.org, an award-winning website about health.

Getting enough sleep helps you to be in a good mood and can help you to think more clearly, according to the website.

"Researchers believe too little sleep can affect growth and your immune system" according to kidshealth.org. The immune system fights off sickness and keeps you healthy.

"If you don't get enough sleep and you're tired, you can't do all the things you want to do during the day....[you] can't participate or play games," said Dr. Vyas.



Illustration by Healthy NewsWorks student reporter

In order to get good sleep, kidshealth.org says, don't watch scary movies or exercise right before bed. Try to go to bed at the same time each night because it helps your body get into a routine. Avoid drinking sodas and other beverages with caffeine because it can keep you up at night.

Dr. Vyas suggested sleeping in a comfortable bed in a dark room for good sleep. "The goal is to sleep the same every night because going to sleep at the same time and waking up at the same time helps you to fall asleep faster," she said. "Sometimes if you don't have that routine, it can take you a long time to fall asleep at night."  
—By Healthy Eagle reporters

## More information about sleep

The *Healthy Eagle* reporters recently interviewed Dr. Priya Vyas, pediatric resident at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children about sleep. Here is some information she shared:

**Q: Does the room temperature help you sleep?**

A: In my personal experience, a dark and cold room helps me sleep better, but I'm not sure about the science.

**Q: Why do parents want us to take naps but then wake us up?**

A: For children under 5 years old, we recommend naps because kids who are under 5 years old need even more sleep. Once you're over 5, you don't need those naps anymore.

**Q: When you're sleepy, does your brain send a signal?**

A: There are sleep centers in your brain that tell you how sleepy or how awake you are. Those lights tell you that you're awake before bed even if you're feeling sleepy. In the winter, it's dark and you feel more sleepy. Your brain is telling you it's dark outside and it's time to go to sleep.

**Q: When you don't get enough sleep, does your brain go wild?**

A: You can go a little bit of time with running on less sleep than usual. If you keep missing an hour or two every night, that will have a fatigue or tiring effect on you. You might start taking naps, or falling asleep in class.

# How music can relieve stress

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Ms. Ryan said she is focused and feels centered when she plays the viola.

“I like to feel all the emotions the composer felt when they wrote the piece,” she said.

Ms. Ryan said the viola is a stress reliever for her. When she plays with the orchestra, she’ll sometimes feel stressed so she uses the viola to help calm down.

Ms. Ryan said there’s no need to be perfect. She tells her students everyone makes mistakes. She encourages them to do their best while communicating and connecting with their audience through music.



**A viola** is similar to a violin but larger.  
Illustration source: Clipart Library

Ms. Ryan said she started playing the violin when she was four years old. When she was in fourth grade she practiced two hours a day. Before that, she practiced only 30 minutes to an hour. When it got hard or things went wrong, she said she learned from the experiences. She reassessed what she needed to do. She used this time to reconnect with her instrument in a healthy way, she said.

Ms. Ryan said she switched from the violin to the viola because she thought it was closer to her own singing voice. The top string on a viola is five notes below the top

string on a violin.

—By Healthy Eagle staff

## What the pandemic taught a musician

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years. That’s been a positive aspect of her life during the pandemic, she said.

She said she also has learned how important it is to set small goals for yourself, so you don’t get overwhelmed with big goals.

“Like the pandemic itself, if you think about the big picture it can be overwhelming,” she said.

A small goal for her was learning to feel comfortable playing the viola in a small-group setting instead of in front of a large audience. Since the pandemic began, you can’t have large crowds of people gathered in one place. And that’s what she was used to.

“It’s been a really unusual experience,” she said. “In mid-March, we had a concert and found out right before that we weren’t going to be able to have an audience. Loss of the audience changed my experience.

“I can practice and practice and rehearse with the orchestra,” she said. “Then the final thing is when we go out and share it with the audience. So when the audience wasn’t there, it was hard to feel that connection.

“Now we are doing recordings which are then released online,” she continued. “We are doing a lot more online work, just like you are.”

For Ms. Ryan, the pandemic taught her to “be more flexible, learn to accept things for the way they are and make the most of it.”

Here are some other questions and answers from the *Healthy Eagle’s* interview with Ms. Ryan.

### Q. How did your life change since COVID?

A. I feel fortunate that I’ve been able to connect with people I’ve lost touch with over the years. There’s been an emphasis on people. Before COVID I was more focused on work and playing and job responsibilities.

### Q. What did you learn this past year that will benefit you or others in the future?

A. I’ve certainly gotten better with my computer skills and Zoom settings so music can sound its best online. I learned a lot about fancy microphones and speakers—things I didn’t care about before now.

### Q. Does the pandemic have a silver lining? If so, what is it?

A. When we got back together as an orchestra at the end of June ... I was almost crying. It reminded me how much I love playing music with other people.

### A few facts about Ms. Ryan

1. Her husband plays the violin for The Philadelphia Orchestra. His name is William Polk.
2. She joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2007.
3. She also has played with the Minnesota Orchestra.

Source: *The Philadelphia Orchestra*

# Reflecting about a year like no other

*Editor's note: Healthy Eagle reporters submitted essays to compare how life is different from a year ago before the pandemic. These are several contributions.*

I think since a year ago what has changed is that we're all wearing masks and some stores are boarded up because of looters and you have to wear a mask everywhere. That's no fun because I just want to play with my friends like I used to but I can't.

Memorial Day was memorable. I went to the city. There were buildings and stores that were all boarded up because of looters. George Floyd was killed in the beginning of the pandemic.

—By Josiah Reid

Last year I was in third grade and there was no COVID-19. We went to normal school and we did not have to wear a mask. I was in dance class and I lived in my old house but now I have a new house. I like it but I miss my old friends on my block. Everything was open and no cities were shut down. We could go to parties and we could go to our friend's house. Also, nobody was getting really sick and everyone was allowed to be together.

One day during the pandemic I got a little puppy dog. She is a pit bull. At first she was very shy and was sniffing everything. She didn't even want to touch the floor. She was just staying on the couch. I was the first one to meet her and pet her. During the pandemic we took her to get her shots. We didn't have a cage so we put her in a cart. She was about to fall out. I made sure to watch her the whole time. We got her a cage and leash then we walked to the park and then we went home.

—By Maleah Dixon

It all started when I was in Miss Lewis' third grade class. I think it was a Thursday when I found out about the pandemic and the coronavirus. I was mad because I wanted to see my friends and my teacher but I could not go to school and see them. I only had a chance to spend a few months with my third grade teacher and my friends. Then we started virtual school.

Now I am in fourth grade with some of my friends from third grade who are still in my class. I have had a new teacher. Her name is Miss Washington. She is the best teacher. A year ago everything was different.



Illustration by Healthy NewsWorks student reporter

We were in school. We did not have to wear masks. I am not in third grade anymore. I am in fourth grade now.

The things that are the same are that I still see my friends, I still do work, we still go on trips—only virtually.

—By Waliyah Bush

## The Healthy Eagle wants to hear from you!

We'd love to consider publishing your articles or illustrations in the *Healthy Eagle* and in a new book created by children in the *Healthy NewsWorks* network of schools. James Logan belongs to the network!

Here are two ideas to write about!

1. Describe something you have learned or been able to do that you might not have discovered without the pandemic.

2. What have you missed the most during the pandemic? Have you found something to replace it?

But something else may be on your mind. Please write or draw about it. Submit your work to Ms. Washington-Leslie, a Logan fourth grade teacher and faculty advisor of the *Healthy Eagle*.

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*James Logan Healthy Eagle*

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The *Healthy Eagles'* faculty advisor is Ms. Washington-Leslie. James Logan's School Principal is Ms. Sanders-Thomas.

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