

RUSSELL BYERS HEALTHY KNIGHT NEWS

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Introducing our health newspaper

Welcome to the first issue of the *Healthy Knight News*.

As you can tell by our name, we will present information related to health to the Russell Byers school community. Why health? Health is our focus because it is so important to everybody. But health is a very big topic.

In this issue, reporters in Ms. Dempsey's fourth-grade class will address the topics of school safety and kindness. You will read interviews from Mr. Boyd, school safety officer, and Mrs. Fromowitz, school psychologist.

We hope you will "learn about kindness," said Skylar Jordan, a *Healthy Knight News* reporter. "We want you to also learn about school safety during drills," said Xyla Burgess, another reporter.

"Make sure when you read our articles, you follow the rules at school that Mr. Boyd talked about," Isabella Grant said.

The purpose of this newspaper issue is to teach students about kindness, ways to prevent bullying, and how to remain safe during drills. We researched how to keep the school climate safe. "School climate is important to protect kids in school by checking security and outside," reporter Skylar Fair said.

Another topic we researched was the importance of

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Illustration by Skylar Fair

Swimming is fun and great exercise. But it's important to be safe in and near the water. Learn about water safety on Page 4.

Safety drills should be taken seriously

Safety drills are not a game, said Mr. Boyd, Russell Byers school safety officer. These drills are serious and rules should be followed.

They play an important role in a larger goal too: Building a positive school climate.

"Everyone can help create a school where students, teachers, and staff feel emotionally and physically safe in their environment," according to the

National School Climate Center, which focuses on providing support and ideas to keep a positive and safe school environment.

A school's environment "can affect the attendance, concentration, and performance of both students and educators," according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The

agency seeks to make sure the places where people live, work, and play are safe.

Students at Russell Byers regularly practice lockdown drills, fire drills, and shelter-in-place drills. The purpose of these drills is to keep students safe in case of an emergency.

Fourth graders recently experienced

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

Participate in the kindness challenge

This task is for you, Russell Byers students: "Say two nice things to someone every day," said Mrs. Fromowitz, school psychologist.

Kindness helps people by releasing their stress and making them feel calmer, according to the video "The Science of Kindness," created by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. When people show kindness, it also reduces anxiety and increases feelings of happiness and overall wellbeing, according to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. If people show kindness, it is passed to others and will help make the world a better place.

Healthy Knight News reporters interviewed Mrs. Fromowitz about kindness and bullying in the school. Questions and responses have been lightly edited.



Illustration by Quasiyon Cummings

Question: How do you define bullying? What does it look like and sound like?

Mrs. Fromowitz: Someone that is purposely mean or hurtful to someone else.

Question: Is bullying an issue at our school? Why or why not?

Mrs. Fromowitz: Yes, when I have asked teachers if bullying is happening in the classroom, sometimes they say

When people show kindness, it reduces anxiety and increases feelings of happiness and overall well-being. So show someone kindness today!

"yes." So it is somewhat of an issue.

Question: What can students do?

Mrs. Fromowitz: Look at the positive in other students. Work on nice language and being respectful to other students. Have a positive mindset. Practice saying two nice things to someone every day. It could make their day better.

Question: What are some ways our school is working to prevent bullying?

Mrs. Fromowitz: We have a week of Anti-Bullying Spirit Week. Every morning we have Crew and it works on building teamwork and community building. We work on building positive and kind behaviors.

—By *Healthy Knight News* reporters

Drills are serious, and rules are important

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a lockdown drill that made a number of students feel afraid and unsafe. Some students were talking, laughing, pushing, and acting like it was a joke, they said. Their teacher, Ms. Dempsey, explained that the drills are not a joke and students should be sure to stay quiet during them.

"I wanted to run downstairs and get my little sister because I felt scared," one student said.

"I was mad because I was getting hurt since people were playing

around," another student said.

"I felt unsafe because everyone was talking," added another.

The purpose of the drills is to be prepared in case there ever is a real emergency. "We use these drills to practice so when there is a real one, we can do better and no one can get hurt," Mr. Boyd said.

Mr. Boyd told the *Healthy Knight News* that students should take the following steps during any drill:

- Listen to your teacher.

- Stay quiet.
- Don't run out of the classroom unattended.
- Follow directions.

If you follow these instructions, you are helping to keep yourself and other students safe, Mr. Boyd said.

"Teachers work together to make sure that students are safe," he said. "But students need to listen to the teachers to make sure they're safe during these important drills."

—By *Healthy Knight News* reporters

Book teaches about caring for Earth, others

We are Better Together

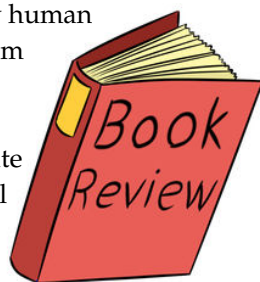
By Bill McKibben

This book is about how we can protect the Earth if we work together and all do our part to keep it safe and clean.

In this book, we learned that we all share the responsibility of fighting climate change and keeping our planet safe. Every human is on the same team when it comes to protecting our planet from climate change and global warming.

We really enjoyed this book and thought it was very informative. We learned that in order for us to work together, we need to understand each other as well as our humanness, and that being kind to one another helps us to work together.

We came away with these lessons because author Bill McKibben wrote about global warming, climate change, protest, and how they are all connected. He described the various



ways humans support humans. We learned about the importance of standing up for what we believe in, being kind to one another, volunteering for each other, and supporting each other in causes that mean something to them.

Here are some of our comments:

"When we're together, things work better." —Quaysion

"If humans can work together, the planet will be a better place." —Emmanuel

"Do your part to keep us safe. It is the right thing to do." —Chase

"Do our part to make our world great." —King

We recommend this book for children ages 4 and older because we think it is important for students to start learning about these issues at an early age.

We believe the book is written to teach children about global warming, climate change, kindness, and supporting one another in a very age-appropriate way. We hope you check out this book and love it as much as we did!

—By Healthy Knight News reporters

Ways that we show we care

When I see my friend crying, my friends and I try to cheer her up. We can all change the world by being kind. You have to be kind to others and believe in yourself. You have to just be kind and they will be kind to someone else. This will help change the world.

—Suhlayah Aaliyah Tisdale

The way I'm going to help my community is to pick up trash from the ground so the community is clean for people to play on. Why I am doing this is because if there is a bunch of trash on the ground, kids can't play at the playground.

—Khalil McCleary

I will help the community by serving those in need of food, shelter, and hope in every business of my city, Philadelphia. We can help and be there for the homeless people.

—Chase Grant

Introducing our newspaper

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acts of kindness and preventing bullying. "It is not respectful to bully students. If you see someone that is bullied, try to give them a high five or compliment. You should add kindness to your daily life," reporter Khalil McCleary said.

We want to hear what you think about the *Healthy Knight News*. Please send your comments to Ms. Dempsey, who is the faculty advisor for the newspaper.

Enjoy reading our hard work.

—By Healthy Knight News reporters

Russell Byers Healthy Knight News

A publication of Russell Byers Charter School in Philadelphia. Reporters include Aasim Brunson, Xyla Burgess, Romello Cornish, Nia Marie Cotton, Quasiyon Cummings, Skylar Fair, Azuri Fair, Dawi Girma, Isabella Grant, Chase Grant, Najee Jackson, Xavier Johnson, Skylar Jordan, Iziem Linton, Nehemiah Lyons, Khalil McCleary, Royal McPhaul, Ava Percy, King Pettway, Suhlayah Aaliyah Tisdale, and Emmanuel Sivilis.

Ms. Dempsey is the faculty advisor. Ms. Ramos is the chief executive officer.

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Illustration by Suhlayah Aaliyah Tisdale

It takes countless hours of training in the pool to be a competitive swimmer.

What it takes to be an elite swimmer

Akida Neely became a champion competitive swimmer and has accomplishments to prove it.

She learned to swim when she was 4 years old at the Marcus Foster pool in the Nicetown section of Philadelphia. The lessons were free.

When she was 6, she joined the highly regarded Philadelphia Department of Recreation swim team, known as PDR. Her coach was Jim Ellis, who founded the team in the early 1970s. It was the first Black swim team in the United States, according to USA Swimming. Mr. Ellis has received many honors, including being inducted into the International Swim Coaches Hall of Fame in 2019.

"Swimming was my first love," said Mrs. Neely, who has one child attending Russell Byers and also serves on the school's board of trustees. "I loved being in the water and found immense joy in competing. I always wanted to win."

Mr. Ellis taught her that "you gotta believe," she said. "There is nothing in life that you can't achieve, but it all starts with having the confidence to believe it can be done."

As a child, Mrs. Neely spent countless hours training. She practiced six days a week. When she was in fifth grade, she practiced twice a day on three days: at 5 a.m. and again later in the day at 4:30 p.m.

"I trained like an Olympian," she said.

Mrs. Neely said her favorite event was the 100-yard freestyle. The event involves swimming four laps of a 25-yard pool.

She includes among her greatest accomplishments qualifying for the USA Swimming Junior Nationals and earning a full four-year swimming scholarship to the University of Connecticut. She was the first Black swimmer on the team, she said.

Today, Mrs. Neely volunteers as a coach with PDR's youth swimmers, ages 6 to 13. "I coach to give back to the program that developed me," she said.

—By Healthy Knight News reporters

Around water, safety always comes first

Swimming is a great activity for exercise and fun. But it's important to learn to swim so you can be safe in and around the water, said Akida Neely, a coach with the legendary Philadelphia Department of Recreation (PDR) swim team.

Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental injury death in the children ages 5 to 14, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is important to know that "water accidents can happen quickly and quietly," the CDC says.

Mrs. Neely urges people to follow several rules to stay safe:

- Never swim alone.

- Obey the rules and regulations at the pool, beach, or lake.
- Make sure a lifeguard is on duty.
- Listen to the lifeguard.

"You can protect yourself and others by practicing proper water safety any time you are around a body of water," Mrs. Neely said.

She said there are many learn-to-swim programs across Philadelphia and its suburbs, from the YMCA to the Salvation Army Philadelphia Kroc Center. You can find classes through the Red Cross or the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation.

—By Healthy Knight News reporters

Did you know?

The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you stay out of the water if you are sick or have an open cut or injury.

You should take a quick shower to rinse off germs before getting in a public pool.

And you should be mindful of those around you, particularly younger kids who might not be strong swimmers.