

Enjoy water activities safely

As summer draws closer, water activities pick up. Whether you're at the beach or a neighborhood pool, you can have fun in the sun *and* stay safe.

Stopdrowningnow.org says there are 3,400 drowning deaths per year in this country. Drowning is the No. 1 cause of death for children ages 1 to 4. Following rules and safety precautions around water can prevent these tragic accidents.

Healthy Panther Post reporters spoke with health and physical education teacher Mr. Sweeney, who identified some safety rules that should be followed when swimming or going into open water. His answers have been lightly edited.

Question: What do you suggest young swimmers do to stay safe while swimming?

Mr. Sweeney: Always swim with another person. Know limitations. Of you are a good swimmer, you may go out farther, but if you are not a strong swimmer, you need to stay close. You obviously always need to follow all rules and instructions while swimming as well.



Illustration by Iuliia Avilova

Question: How can adults keep their kids safe?

Mr. Sweeney: Adults can make sure to pay attention to their children, help kids understand expectations, and check their surroundings.

(Please see *Enjoy* on Page 2)

Lower the volume on your earbuds

Noise is a hidden danger that surrounds us every day. Among its many negative effects is damage to one's hearing. Heather Szychulski, MaST school counselor, is concerned that students are putting themselves in danger of harming their hearing by using everyday technology, like earbuds.

Noise pollution is a harmful level of noise, according to NationalGeographic.org. Some causes include are fire trucks, concerts, talking too loudly, or listening to loud music in earphones. Frequently being around loud noise of any type can cause ear damage, loss of hearing, high blood pressure, and sleep disruption, says the National Geographic article, "Noise Pollution." It advises people to stay away from loud

noises as much as possible to avoid having any of these symptoms.

Healthy Panther Post reporters spoke with Ms. Szychulski to discuss the harmful effects of loud noise can on your eardrums and how to prevent it from happening. Her comments have been lightly edited.

Question: What does noise pollution mean to you? How would you define it?

Ms. Szychulski: I would define noise pollution as constant noise, no matter if it's loud or quiet.

Question: What are some effects of noise pollution on people?

(Please see *Take* on Page 2)

Enjoy the water, but follow rules

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Question: How can MaST help teach swim safety to our school?

Mr. Sweeney: MaST currently does not offer a class to teach swim safety to our students.

Question: How does someone ensure that it is safe to swim in a pool and/or in open water?

Mr. Sweeney: Someone can ensure that it is safe to swim in a pool and/or in open water by checking with the lifeguards, checking your surroundings, and making sure you have proper equipment.

Question: Why is it important to learn about swim safety? What should you do if you don't feel like you are a strong swimmer?

Mr. Sweeney: It is important because it helps prevent problems while around water. If you feel like you're not a strong swimmer, avoid situations where you have to swim and avoid going out of your comfort zone.

Question: If you could give some rules to follow to stay safe in the water, what would they be?

Mr. Sweeney: Listen to lifeguards, swim with a buddy, know your skillset, and stay inside your comfort zone.

Question: How can the weather affect swimming?



Illustration by Amelia Matthew

Mr. Sweeney: The weather can affect open areas because if it is lightning, it can put you in danger and electrocute you in the water. Different weather can also attract different sea life in various situations. In general, weather sometimes can lead to more dangers or more strong currents.

Question: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Mr. Sweeney: When around water, always follow rules in order to be safe. This will lead to more fun.

Take steps to protect your hearing

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Ms. Szychulski: I feel like the effects of noise pollution will be more noticeable over the years. I can guarantee that people may form some sort of ear damage or hearing loss.

Question: How can students help protect themselves from noise pollution? What do you see that kids do that can harm their hearing?

Ms. Szychulski: I often see children wearing their earbuds on full volume for excessive amounts of time, which can heavily damage their hearing.

Question: How can people help reduce noise pollution? How can people avoid creating noise pollution?

Ms. Szychulski: They can also keep their music on lower volumes to keep their ears safe.

Question: Why should people be concerned about noise pollution?

Ms. Szychulski: People should be concerned about noise pollution because it damages your eardrums and the environment, which we depend on. If our environment is hurt, we will also be affected by it.

Question: Are there any programs at MaST that can educate students about noise pollution? If not, what groups could we create so students know more about it?

Ms. Szychulski: No, there are no programs at MaST that can educate students about it currently. I think the reporters who interviewed me could start one since they are already knowledgeable about the topic.

Reporters say how they will make life better for other people

One thing I can do is to help the elderly. If they ever need gardening or if they need help walking about the neighborhood, I'm there. Helping them with daily activities is very good for the community.

I could do this because the elderly are very important in my community. So many of my neighbors have elderly family members who need help. If I am free, why not help the people who have helped my community in the past? They deserve respect and appreciation.

—Amelia Mathew

My community can be very violent and dangerous sometimes. So it can use a lot of help.

In our
words...

One way I can help my school community is by cleaning up the school and helping other students.

One other way I can help my community is by being more kind to students who might be upset.

One way I can help my neighborhood is by helping the older citizens in my community with crossing the street or bringing stuff into their houses. Finally, I can help the younger kids in my neighborhood and tell them what to do and what not to do. I feel like these projects are important because they could save people's lives and benefit them along with the fact that it can bring me happiness.

—Daniel Watson

One thing I am going to do is get my hockey goalie a new goalie stick. My teammates and I are going to mow lawns, and if it snows, shovel driveways and walkways. Then we are going to put all of our money together and buy him a new hockey stick because his hockey stick is breaking. We will try to get him a new mask as well because his broke. We are



Comic strip by Emily Miller

going to get his customized. We are going to get his number on it, a picture he wants, a quote we said, and a picture of his mom. —Alexander Dougherty

Every little thing you do to help your community matters. There are many things I can do to help my community upgrade. For example, I will be involved with clubs in school. There are two clubs that I know are great for my school community. Recycling club helps reduce plastic waste. Student council allows students to help make school a better place.

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Reporters seek to help community

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Personally, I want to help keep my planet clean. I will do this by having some classmates help me pick up trash outside. I will do this because it's sad to see the amount of trash outside. I can't step outside without seeing at least one piece of garbage or waste. This will help the community a lot because the more people that help, the cleaner the Earth will be.

Something else that my family and I can do to help our community is donate to children who aren't as fortunate as others. I have donated many things like clothes, shoes, and even toys from when I was younger. We did this because it is a helpful and kind thing to do.

—Claire Herkert

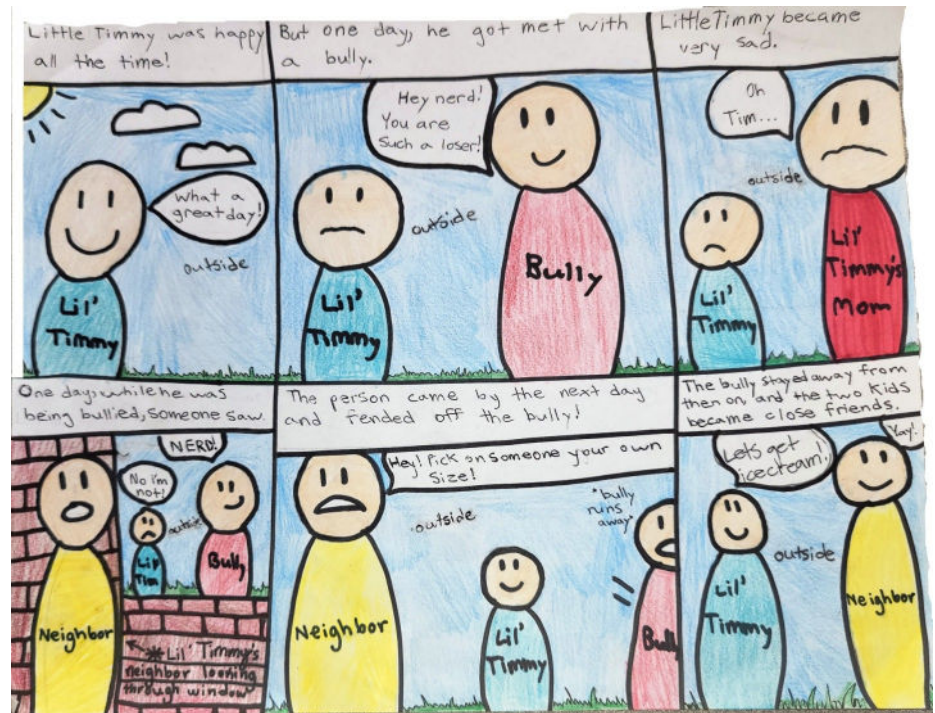
I choose to help my community by lending a hand to the people around me, listening and comforting them about their problems. Nowadays, depression and anxiety come easily. Even if this action means very little, it's still a step to better my community and others. I want to listen to what others say, allowing them to be open with their feelings. I want to help the ones who need it, to make them remember that accepting help from others is okay, to make them remember that being human is okay.

I'll allow people to vent, to reach out to them if they seem to be struggling. If they need help, I'll try my best to check up on them and give them words of comfort and talk about all the amazing things they're capable of. I feel that simply being there for others not only better the world, but also better me in a way.

—Hannah Zhang

I will pick up trash in the school building, side-walks, and bus. I will attempt to clean up for others if they forget after eating or left something behind on the floor. This way there is less trash in the world. By doing this, I can help the community and take a step forward to a better world.

I could also try to recycle more while picking up trash. This is why there will be a little less methane



Comic strip by Julia Toth and Sarina Rimeris

in the atmosphere. I could try to convince my neighbor and family to help my cause.

—Austin Zhen

I am going to help out my community by cleaning the trash on my street and at my park. I'll take a broom, a pair of gloves, and a trash bag, and I'll collect trash. I will do this because cleaning the streets can help the environment and improve people's mood. With this effort, I hope other people will see and start to clear their streets as well. If the whole community helps, we can make our town cleaner and more environmentally healthy.

—Jherek Wiseman

I am going to donate money in the basket at my church so they have money to enhance their school supplies and increase the kids' education. They could use the money for a bigger campus and to give the staff a raise. Donating money to the church can help them have fun events and decorations for when the holidays like Christmas, Halloween, Easter, and Fourth of July come around. The money that I am going to donate can be used for increasing kids' morale like going on a field trip or a run activity. The money could be used to have better school lunches and food, drinks, places to sleep, and entertainment for the nuns who live and help at my church.

—Jaxon Wolf

I will help clean up my surroundings like picking up trash and recycling items. Around my neighborhood, it is very unclean with litter all over the side-

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Reporters seek to help community

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walks and front lawns. This makes me feel unhappy that people don't want to keep our community clean so I feel the need to fix this issue.

I plan to go on a walk through my neighborhood and collect litter while walking. Since I find myself busy most of the week with recreational activities, I will try my best to keep my community clean at least once a week. I can give out reusable things like straws and water bottles.

This will help keep the area clean while bringing awareness to this pressing matter.

—Ganna Depa

To help my community, I am going to try to ride my bike more and drive less with adults. Any type of motorized vehicle can pollute our Earth and hurt the ecosystem. I got a bike when I was about 3 and my brother and parents taught me how to ride. With a bike, you can also get exercise and fresh air, so it can be beneficial. This can affect any community that I am in because I can do it anywhere and pretty much everywhere.

When people turn 16, they strive to get their driver's permit and license. Doing this can hurt our ecosystem and also cause violence. Car crashes occur pretty often, but if not a lot of people are on the road, fewer people will get hurt. Bike crashes are less harmful. With our ecosystem, when people drive motorized vehicles, the air from them goes into our sky and can hurt our oxygen level. We need our ozone level to protect us from the sun's rays, but if we have too much pollution, it causes major problems. I will do this to try to help keep our communities safe and clean.

—Lyla Santulli

I plan to do many things to contribute to my community, such as joining the choir at my church. You might not think that it's a big deal, but it is an important role. We have to come to rehearsals after church and come to church a little early. I have to learn all of the songs on my own time.



Comic strip by Maria Rehman and Briana Thomas

Now, the reason why I want to join. My church has a few people in the choir. My sister joined last year and she talks about how fun it is and how many fun trips they go on. It really interested me. Also, there's not that many people in the choir and they could definitely use another person. I am also pretty good at singing and I want to put my singing voice to good use.

—Julia Toth

There are many things I can do to help my community. One thing that will benefit my community is a dog-walking business. Knowing that my friends, family, and neighbors have many dogs, this will help them. A lot of people have busy lives and can't walk their dogs. Each dog will cost money. The money earned will go to charities.

This will help even more people. I think people will be grateful for this and they can get more everyday tasks done. I will spend my own money on leashes, treats, bags, portable water, and much more. This will also benefit the dogs' health and well-being. Not only that, but I could get outside more and I would get a lot of exercise.

—Emily Miller

To make a difference in our community, my friend and I will join and start clubs. We plan to join the recycling club and maybe start a club to make change and call it "Change the Earth." We will focus on cleaning the Earth and stopping pollution.

—Michaela Kaplan

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Reporters seek to help community

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To help my community, if I see someone getting bullied, I will tell a trusted adult. I will tell an adult when someone is getting bullied because I wouldn't want it to get worse. If it does, the person getting bullied could get very sad and even become depressed.

When everyone is leaving from lunch, and I see trash, I will pick it up and throw it out. If I do this, it could help the staff and let them focus on other things besides throwing out trash.

—Sarina Rimeris

I plan to help my father plant trees in our garden. My father spends a lot of his time tending to his garden and planting a variety of different, vibrant plants, ranging from beautiful florals to vegetation. By helping out, I am able to spend quality time with my dad while helping out the community, as growing plants helps regular air quality. The plants will take in the carbon dioxide and let out clean oxygen that will help reduce pollution within my neighborhood.

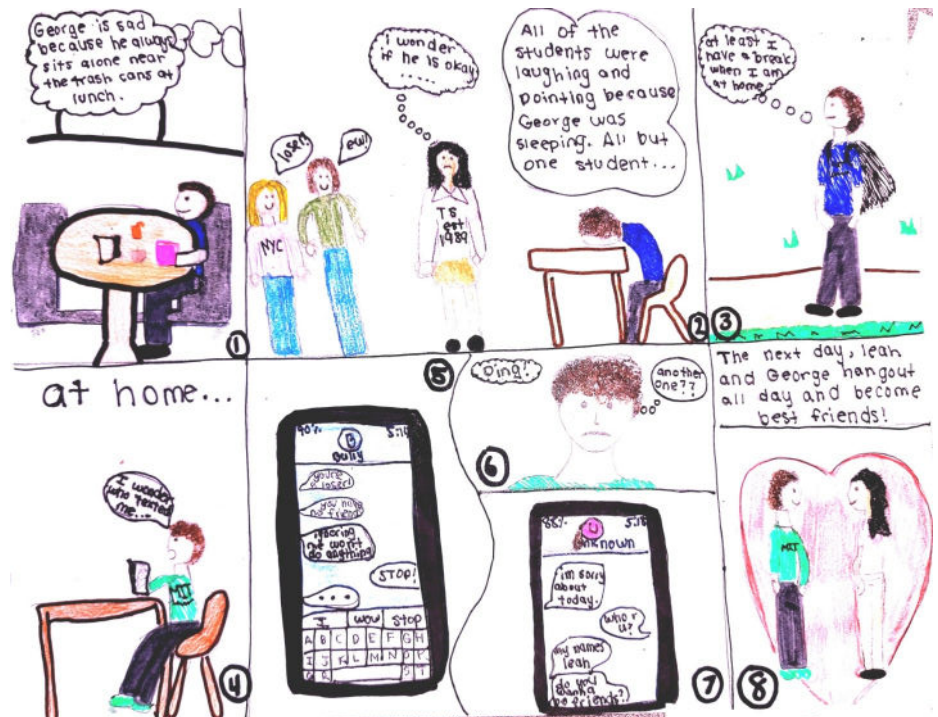
Since birth, I've lived in a city area where cars, buses, and motorbikes drive past my house, and a place where my neighbors have barbecues while blasting music on their speakers weekly. So I can play my part in my community by helping to manage the pollution problem by planting vegetation that will assist in filtering the air which will benefit everyone.

—Maria Rehman

MaST Community Charter School

The *Healthy Panther Post* is a publication of MaST Community Charter School in Philadelphia. Contributing seventh-grade reporters include Iuliia Avilova, Damien Ball, Ivan Chen, Gianna Depa, Alexander Dougherty, Matthew Gable, Claire Herkert, Michaela Kaplan, Colin Loftus, Amelia Mathew, Emily Miller, Brianna Nkrumah, Lily Quirk, Maria Rehman, Sarina Rimeris, Lyla Santulli, Ameilia Skala, Briana Thomas, Julia Toth, Daniel Watson, Jherek Wiseman, Jaxon Wolf, Hannah Zhang, and Austin Zhen. The *Healthy Panther Post*'s faculty advisor is Ms. Caldwell. The middle school leader is Mr. Giampolo.

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Comic strip by Michaela Kaplan and Lily Quirk



Comic strip by Amelia Skala and Iuliia Avilova