

# HEALTHY NEWS

## Use technology responsibly

We all use social media, send text messages, and send emails to connect with others.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says there are many benefits to these social communications such as connecting with family and friends, finding kids who share similar interests and hobbies, and interacting with people from different backgrounds.

However, these same experts also caution kids that there can be a downside to too much online communication, leading to problems such as obesity, poor posture, and building strong relationships.

Catto's fourth-grade *Healthy News* reporters recently interviewed Mr. Jordan Harris, school counselor, about the

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Illustration by Benjamin Valer



Illustration by Jaden Boyd

## Born to be a chef

"I was born to be a chef. I have been cooking since I was eight years old," said Omega Ellis, chef and owner of Omega's restaurant in Merchantville, N.J.

Ms. Ellis is no stranger to the staff at Catto Elementary School. The staff had their holiday party last year at her restaurant, and the word around the building is that her food is delicious.

Catto's *Healthy News* fourth-grade reporters had the opportunity to interview Ms. Ellis and discuss how her food connects people.

"As a chef I always wanted to have my own space. I worked under a lot of other chefs, but now I get to

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# Pros and cons of using technology

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advantages and disadvantages of technology and online communication. This interview has been slightly edited.

**Q: What's your role at the school?**

**Mr. Harris:** I work with students and make sure they have all the tools they need to be successful. You guys are my customers.

**Q: How have you observed kids using technology to socialize online?**

**Mr. Harris:** Technology is here to stay. There are a lot of positives and negatives. I have observed that students need to find a balance with technology. Although we use technology every day, kids need to find a balance and spend more time outside.

**Q. What is the impact of technology on kids?**

**Mr. Harris:** Technology keeps you connected with others. It can be used for personal and educational growth. It is important that kids use it not only just for fun, but also to be productive.

**Q. What are the benefits of technology?**

**Mr. Harris:** The positives are that you get to communicate with people you don't know. And we use technology almost daily for education. Technology also makes connecting easier and faster.



**Q. What are the risks of kids using technology?**

**Mr. Harris:** Kids must always be aware when they are using technology. Kids should be aware of whom they are sharing their information with. Kids should never give out your personal information online, like your address or phone number. Kids should also be very careful of the types of websites they visit. Most importantly, kids should have a healthy balance of being online and actually socializing in person.

**Q. What is important for people to know about using technology to communicate?**

**Mr. Harris:** If you come across something or some-



Illustration by Genesis Aguilar

one online that you know isn't right, you should talk to your parents or a trusted adult immediately. If it doesn't seem right, it is most likely not right.

**Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?**

**Mr. Harris:** I would say that the most important thing that I want kids to remember is that when it comes to technology, we all need to find a "balance." There are plenty of ways that technology can improve your life. But you also need to beware that technology can have a downside. Inappropriate websites, cyber bullying, and child predators are just a few of the things kids should be very aware of. And I cannot stress enough that if something doesn't seem right, always tell your parents or a trusted adult.

*Octavius V. Catto Family School Healthy News*

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# Sharing food is a way to connect

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run my very own restaurant. Some people would call my food soul food, but I like to call my food comfort food with a southern flare,” she said.

Sharing food is a way to connect and create lasting bonds, say researchers at Duke Health & Well Being, which offers programs that promote physical, social, and mental wellness. Cooking or preparing a meal together encourages teamwork, communication, and creativity.

Whether it’s families having brunch or dinner, people hosting special events, or listening to live music, Ms. Ellis loves to see people connecting with each other while enjoying a great meal at her restaurant.

Ms. Ellis says one of the benefits of seeing people connecting through food is meeting and getting to know people from different ethnic backgrounds.

“Kids make connections through food by having special memories,” said Ms. Ellis. “I will always love pizza because I will never forget when my second-grade teacher gave us a pizza party while we watched the premiere of Michael Jackson’s *Remember the Time* video.

“Whenever I have pizza, I connect with that memory.”



Ms. Ellis gets special satisfaction from watching her diners.

“My favorite way to connect with others through food is watching people’s reactions after they have tasted my food,” she said. “I love seeing the smiles and expressions on their faces.”

Ms. Ellis says it’s not just the connections people make through food that’s important to her. She wants her food to benefit her customers’ health. “I remember growing up

where family members didn’t always use healthy ingredients when preparing food such as a lot of pork. Today we can substitute with healthier no-meat options. You can eat healthy food and really enjoy it.”

Some of her favorite meals to prepare are Hoppin’ John rice, seafood macaroni and cheese, and chicken wings.

“Being a chef was my calling and cooking is my passion. My grandmother encouraged me to follow my dream of becoming a chef,” she said. “I strive to make food that brings people together and gives them a feeling of comfort. I love connecting and getting to know my customers. I always seek feedback from my customers whether it is positive or negative to make the experience at Omega’s a great one.”

—Story and illustration by *Healthy News* staff

## Sixth graders reflect on technology

Mr. Waddington III and Ms. Johnson’s sixth graders recently had a special lesson about technology with Mr. Steven Riggs, a Healthy NewsWorks faculty member. The students were asked to describe their experiences with technology. Here are some of the students’ thoughts.

\* Technology makes me feel tired and makes my eyes hurt. I spend so much time on TikTok, YouTube, or even on Instagram. All that screen time just makes me feel tired. I enjoy technology, but I really don’t know what I would do without it.

\* Technology can affect how I feel sometimes. Social media affects my mood based on some of the videos that I see. I could be having a good day, and then

when I go on social media, I see a video that makes me feel sad and my mood is ruined. Technology can also make you feel unsafe. People can dox you. And when you post something on the internet, it is out there forever.

\* Technology has advantages and disadvantages. I don’t really like using technology because I don’t like sharing my personal information. People can use their devices to hack into your device and get into your personal information.

\* Technology makes me feel unsure. On one hand, technology can help me. On the other hand, it makes me feel insecure. If someone gets my password, my personal information can be open to everyone.

# Cub Corner

## Tips to lower stress

You may feel worried or uncomfortable about something when you are stressed. You could also feel angry, frustrated, sad, scared, or afraid.

Stress can also give you a stomach-ache or a headache, say the medical experts at KidsHealth.org, a website of health information for kids and teens.

Mrs. Scicchitano's second-grade class discussed and listed activities that help them relax when they're feeling stressed.

The reporters also practiced different breathing techniques to use during the school day. Here are some ways *Healthy News* reporters say they relax.

- \* Draw
- \* Listen to music
- \* Play video games
- \* Look at clouds
- \* Play with pets
- \* Garden
- \* Cook with parents
- \* Count money
- \* Look out the window

—By Mrs. Scicchitano's Cub reporters



Illustration by Jimena Perez

## Check out ways to take care of your heart

Your heart is the most important muscle in your body, according to KidsHealth.org

The heart is located a little to the left of your chest and is the size of your fist.

Ms. Alvarez's second-grade Cub reporters researched and discussed how the heart works.

KidHealth.org, a health website, says the heart is a pump. It pumps blood around your body. Blood provides your body with oxygen and nutrients it needs. It also carries away waste.

After discussing and learning some important facts about the heart, the Cub reporters made a list of tips to keep your heart healthy:

- Exercise daily.
- Eat plenty of vegetables.
- Eat plenty of fruit.
- Play basketball.
- Dance.
- Never smoke.
- Try not to eat foods with a lot of sugar.

—By Mrs. Alvarez's Cub reporters