



Healthy Habits Vital for Teens

by Julie Kranseler
International School

The number of children who are overweight in the U.S. has reached epidemic levels, with more than 12.5 million overweight children and adolescents. Environmental factors, lifestyle preferences, and cultural environment play pivotal roles in the rising prevalence of obesity. Over-consumption of calories and reduced physical activity contribute to childhood obesity, leading to significant impacts on physical and psychological health.

Child obesity can be serious because of its long-term effects. Prior to age ten, as children gain weight, their number of fat cells increases; but by the age of ten the number of fat cells plateaus and becomes permanent. As a person stores more fat, the cells enlarge to accommodate. Children who are overweight, are more likely to remain overweight or have



substantial weight gain following attempts at weight loss.

A surprising result of America's overconsumption of highly processed foods is malnourishment. A diet high in energy (calories), saturated fat, and cholesterol, but low in fiber is related to a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease, obesity, cancer, type 2

diabetes, osteoporosis, and obesity as an adult.

As kids continue to have poor eating habits, they receive insufficient amounts of key vitamins and minerals that are required for healthy growth.

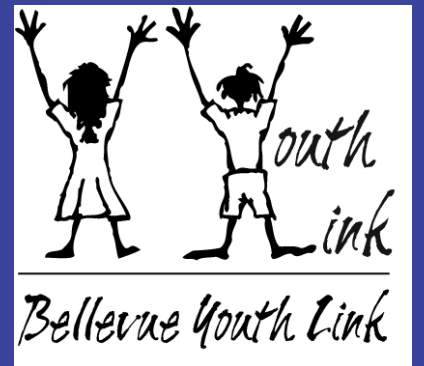
In order to obtain sufficient amounts of micro (vitamins and minerals) and macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, and lipids) while maintaining their weight, they should "consume low-fat milk and dairy products for calcium, lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, iron-fortified cereals, and dried fruits for iron, high-

fiber whole grain cereals, bread products, and crackers as well as fresh fruits and vegetables for fiber, and fish for omega-3. Whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein-rich foods provide the foundation for a healthy and nutrient-rich diet," says Keeley Drotz RD for TGBG Nutrition Counseling Services.

The most promising solution continues to be prevention at an early age, which requires adequately educating children and families about the risks of being overweight. But in the end it all must start with small lifestyle changes. Adolescents need to "become more physically active, eat fast food and out at restaurants less often, sit down for family dinners, eat a healthy, wholesome breakfast, and decrease intake of high-sugar beverages," says Drotz, "this is not something we can think of as 'benign' or think that our children will outgrow."

For information visit www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/childhood

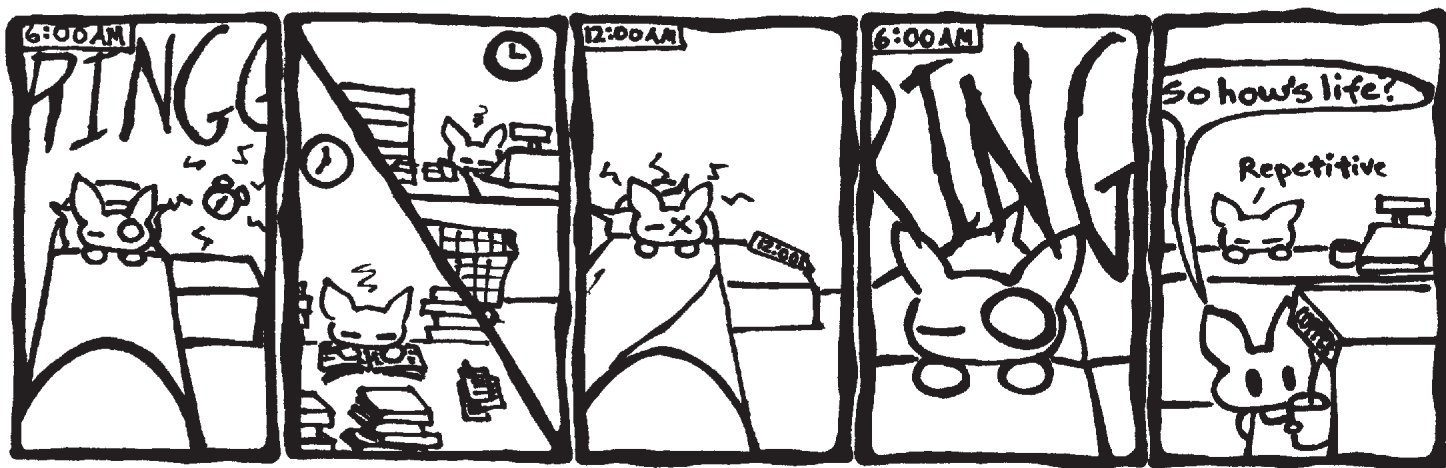
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Comics: I = Bunny

by Lucinda Li
Odele Middle School



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The Power of a Single Vote

by Andrew Kranseler
Newport High School

In the United States, the Constitution provides all those who are eighteen or older with the opportunity to convey their patriotism through voting. But many teens hold the unfortunate assumption that their vote will not make a substantial difference. Additionally, some teens lack an understanding of the voting process. Without a clear view of the importance of voting, teens often do not realize that even a local elected official directly impacts their futures.

A single vote can make a difference in determining who prevails in an election. For example, the 2004 election between George W. Bush and John Kerry had no clear winner

until almost all of the votes were counted. A similar incident occurred in 2004's gubernatorial election between Christine Gregoire and Dino Rossi.

Yet it is not only the sheer number of voters that matters, but the demographics they represent. In order to have an effective democracy, people from all ages, races, and parts of the country need to take the time to cast a ballot. But teens are still lagging in the polls. According to information on Rockthevote.com, in recent elections only 22% of teens actually voted. In fact, Rockthevote.com also listed that not even half of all young adults register to vote.

Many of the decisions that will be made by the winning

candidate are more impactful than they may appear. For example, a key issue in this year's election is health care. Regardless of the eventual outcome, the lives of teens and their families will be directly influenced.

Terry Smith, the Assistant Director of Bellevue Parks, believes that, "you just need to pay attention to what is around you, all the information is out there." In terms of education, young voters who do not know much about voting can prepare themselves by reading newspapers, studying world affairs, paying attention to politics, and joining organizations



or online groups that discuss political matters.

Smith also notes, "Kids just need to be able to understand democracy and what it is all about, [but] they first need to sign up." To register to vote in Washington State one must be a legal citizen of the United States, a legal resident of Washington, and 18 years of age or older on Election Day (November 4th, 2008). The next step is to register, which can now be done online at www.vote.wa.gov. New voters may register fifteen days prior to Election Day, but all others must do so at least 30 days ahead of time. All that remains is taking the time to pick a candidate and allowing the opinions of youth to be heard.

Inspired to Care About Teens in Chile

by Catherine Michael
Sacred Heart School

The Refuge of Mercy is a home for teenage mothers in Santiago, Chile. It began in 1927 when two exceptional women got together to help young mothers who were victims of rape or incest. The objective was to get the mothers and children off the streets and out of harm's way. The foundation helps girls ages 11-18 receive counseling, spiritual guidance, support to finish school, assistance with the skills of being a mother, and career training.

In 2005, The Merciful Love Connection was founded by Sister Yvette Mallow, a Benedictine nun from the Pacific Northwest.

"My goal is to make the surroundings where the girls live beautiful and functional. I want opportunities for each young mother that will allow her to develop the self-esteem and skills that she needs to be a good mom. I want each one to have the opportunity to learn mothering skills so that her child will have a better life, computer skills to get a good job, and life skills so that she

can break the cycle of violence in her life," Mallow said.

This year, Sister Yvette Mallow's goal is to purchase uniforms and school supplies, as well as to provide living quarters for four girls who do not have a family.

Teens at Sacred Heart School in Bellevue have been inspired by Sister Yvette Mallow and her efforts to make a difference. Some of the students are making friendship bracelets for the twenty-three girls who live at the Merciful Love Connection.



This May, one student from Sacred Heart School will travel to Santiago to help distribute the friendship bracelets and some donated knitted scarves and hats, and work in the nursery while the young mothers go to school during the day.

This is just one of many examples of how Bellevue teens care about the social problems in the world, and the proactive approach they are taking to help resolve them.

For more information visit www.mercifulloveconnection.org

Traffic Laws Directly Impact Teens

by Xuan Yang
Bellevue High School

In a society filled with automobiles, we are constantly striving to improve our traffic flow in the state of Washington. To aid in these efforts, the 2007 session of the Washington State Legislature resulted in the passage of several key bills. Some of the legislation will directly impact teens.

Text messaging while driving (EHB 1214)

The use of an electronic wireless

communication device to send, read, or write text messages while driving is now a traffic infraction. Exceptions include entering a phone number or name into a cell phone, and texting to report illegal activity or an emergency. Those who are operating an emergency vehicle are also exempt. This law took effect January 1, 2008.

Regulating cell phone use while driving (ESSB 5037)

Using a cell phone while driving is now illegal. Exceptions include driving in an emergency vehicle/

tow truck, using a hands-free device, operating an amateur radio with a valid

license, or reporting illegal activity or emergencies. This law is effective July 1, 2008.

Use of horn (RCW 46.37.380)

This law has been in existence, but merits mentioning. It states that the driver will only use the horn when



the situation necessitates it, such as giving a warning to someone who is not driving safely, but at no other times may it be used on the highway. This may seem obvious, but many have been pulled over for honking at the vehicle ahead of them for delaying when the light turns green. This is actually illegal as the horn is not being used to protect the safety of other drivers.

For the full version of these bills, please look up the bill number in parentheses at www.wtsc.wa.gov

Future Problem Solving - in Bellevue and Abroad

by Bonnie Pan
Odle Middle School

Future Problem Solving Program International (FPS) is an academic competition hosted by elementary, middle, and high schools from all over the world with the purpose to help students think creatively and effectively about significant issues of the world. The three levels of the competition are Regional, State/Affiliate, and the International Conference.

Participants of FPS can compete in teams of four or individually in a Junior, Intermediate, or Senior division. Every year, there is a specific theme on which the Future Scenario is based. This year's subject for the state competition was Debt in Developing Countries. For the International Conference in June it will be Child Labor.

The students are given situations based on these topics in which they must identify problems

and solutions in a six-step process, drawing upon their problem-solving skills. Debbie Benzinger, a teacher at Odle Middle School, enjoys watching her students analyze the different issues.

"The subjects they pick throughout the year are intriguing and interesting. I love the nanotech and the debt in developing countries ideas for this year." Benzinger said.

The Six Step Process for Competitors:

1. Identify 16 problems of a given "Future Scenario"
2. Choose an Underlying Problem (UP) of the situation and write a short summary.
3. Find 16 solutions to their UP.
4. Write 5 criteria to judge 8 of the 16 solutions.
5. Judge the 8 solutions to find the best one.
6. Develop an action plan.

This is the test portion of the whole competition and is done within 2 hours. At the Regional level, this is the only graded part of the competition. However, at the State Competition and International Conference, group members must act out a 2 to 4 minute skit to illustrate how their action plan may be applied.

Benzinger says her favorite part is "watching [students] accomplish that test in two hours and watching them develop their problem-solving skills...It's fun to go to the competitions when [teams] make state or international." She encourages any aspiring FPS-ers to take their friends and join. "If you come with a team, you get to compete together. It's fun," she states with a nod.

For more information, visit www.fpspi.org

Facts and Motivations of Teen Crime

by Shanglun Wang
Newport High School

Everyone makes mistakes, but not all mistakes are created equal. Some, unfortunately, lead to brushes with the law. Despite its peaceful image, Bellevue also struggles with crime, including youth violations.

"Bellevue is a new city, and it faces the same problems that face other cities and counties," says Honorable Juvenile Court Judge Carol Schapira.

Although arrests have been declining, according to Washington Juvenile Crime Resources, the prevalence and seriousness of the crimes have motivated the creation of programs to address the issue.

"Youth Court has been proven ... to be effective in preventing second-time offenses," says Melissa Galvez of YES. Galvez continues, "Youth courts have an amazing track record

compared to juvenile courts – the average rate of second-time offense is about 2%. Juvenile courts have a 15-20% chance of re-offense."

Youth Courts do not handle all crimes, they only adjudicate first- and second-time offenders of petty crimes. Galvez states, "There are numerous programs, such as the drug-and-alcohol counseling for teens with those problems, parent-teen mediation for crimes rooted in family issues, and consumer awareness for shoplifters."

The most common crimes over which a juvenile court judge presides are serious cases of theft, especially those involving automobiles. Honorable Judge Schapira explains, "Some of the offenders are 14-years olds, which means that they aren't even supposed to be driving. Part of the motives for those kids is the freedom we associate with driving."

The Washington Juvenile Crime Resources states that youths' increased access

to computers and the Internet has resulted in increased levels of

high-tech crime. According to their records, "The enormous computing power of today's PCs makes it possible for minors to commit offenses which are disproportionately serious for their age...the advent of computer technology has made it possible for minors in the 'point and click' world to engage in highly complex fraud schemes." These fraud schemes include credit card identity thefts and copyright violations through pirating.

A surprising commonality among these crimes is the source of their motivation. Honorable Judge Schapira comments, "What is behind these crimes, I think, is really the rampant consumerism that America has promoted. Youths today, more than before, get the urge that says 'I need that car now,' or 'I need that pair of shoes now,' and those, more than anything, motivate crimes in youths."



Discover Summer Music and Sound

by Emily Stafford
International School

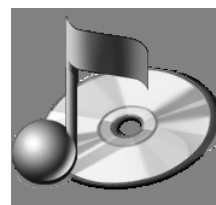
For those who play instruments at school all year long, summer can seem like a long stretch of time spent without practice. There is a simple and fun solution: summer music programs. There are a variety of music programs available for teens with musical talent – or for those who want to develop some musical talent.

A musician can find classes and camps at **Music Works Northwest**. The staff offers private lessons and workshops. Summer Group lessons for middle and high school students include a

vocalist's workshop, guitar orchestra, jazz ensembles, and African marimba. For more information visit www.musicworksnw.org

For those who want to be a rock star, Bellevue's **DayJams** is the place to be. Beginners and experienced players alike are welcome. At **DayJams**, professional musicians and teachers provide guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and horn lessons for youth ages 8-15. Camp members play in a band, write their own songs, perform in a concert and record an album. For more information visit www.dayjams.com

Located on the University of Washington campus, **Power Chord Academy** is a summer camp for teens who aspire to be in a band. It is



designed for musicians ages 12-18 who are looking for a way to receive hands-on technical experience in digital-audio recording, song-writing, and performing. The academy provides a professional recording studio, equipment to create music video, meetings with professional musicians, and eight-hour daily practice sessions. Every week there is a famous "Mystery Guest" that performs exclusively for the academy campers. For more information visit www.powerchordacademy.com

The City of Bellevue provides a variety of music classes. For more information visit www.bellevuewa.gov

Activities for Summer Fun



by Amulya Uppala
Newport High School

The moment the sun comes out, the last few weeks of school fly by. Start planning your summer now, whether you want to focus on sports, classes, work or just plain old fun. In Bellevue, teens have plenty of activities for filling the days:

For the water lover:

Organize a group of friends together at the local pool or picnic at the lake. If you're looking for a way to earn money while spending time in the place you love, sign up for Lifeguard training. The Red Cross states that participants need to be at "least 15 years old by the last scheduled class date to take the lifeguard course. If you're 11- to 14-years old, you can take GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow". The summer is also an ideal time to go to Lake Washington and try some new activities like sailing, crew, water-tubing or wakeboarding.

For the business-minded:

Lots of teens take classes or get a job over the summer. Less time-consuming options may include baby-sitting, yard work or gardening. For those with the entrepreneurial spirit, starting a business with friends and/or siblings may be the perfect choice. With parent permission, hang flyers in your neighborhood or send out an email to your neighbors asking if anyone has extra work they want done. If you're looking for a job at a local business, request an application; make sure to double-check the age, experience and commitment specifications.

For the bookworm:

Tutoring businesses and local community colleges offer classes for getting started on college applications, brushing up on next year's courses, reviewing what you've learned in school and preparing for the SAT. If you're interested in learning something new, look up the camps and classes offered at universities and colleges all across the country. Many colleges encourage middle and high school students to participate.

For everyone:

Bellevue itself has a lot of exciting events during the summer. Check out www.bellevuewa.gov for a list of options. Regardless of the myriad of ways to spend the summer days, make certain to find the time to relax and spend time with family and friends. Remember that summer is about taking a deep breath, leaning back, and letting the days go by.

Honoring Bellevue Leaders

by Rachel Jiang
Newport High School

Every community has its outspoken leaders and its gentle, impassioned souls. And every May, the City of Bellevue organizes the Community Leadership Awards (CLA) to honor these youth who have committed their talents and dedicated their time to brightening their corner of the world.

"With all the hard work that youth have put in to make a difference in our local community—differences that transpire to affect even the global community—they have become our future leaders and need to be recognized for their efforts," event coordinator Nik Reikalas explains.

Patrick Alina, Youth Link Coordinator, notes that the event has grown over the years, "It has continued to grow exponentially with community members attending in excess of 450!"

This year, the tradition will continue with the 18th Annual CLA Night at Meydenbauer Center on Thursday, May 29. Individuals will be selected for acknowledgment based upon nominations from the Bellevue community at large. Final recipients will be notified and presented with plaques honoring their achievements in certain fields at the ceremony and accompanying complimentary banquet.

For more information or to attend, please contact Bellevue Youth Link at 425-452-2846.

**Get Relay Team Registration Packets at an Orientation Meeting
at Bellevue City Hall - Council Chambers
(weeknights 6:30-8PM. weekends 11-12:30 PM)**

April 29, May 21, May 28, May 31, June 3, June 7

City of Bellevue -- Youth Link, PO Box 90012, Bellevue WA 90012 -- Tel: 425-452-5245



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