

# Wholly Healthy



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*Happy St. Patrick's Day*

## Health Office

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## Wellness Council

In February, grades 7&8 participated in IMPACT: Model Mugging, an interactive program that teaches practical skills to enhance your sense of safety and well-being.

Other skills taught:

- \*To assess and respond to your environment.
- \*To de-escalate conflict through successful communication.
- \*To be prepared to physically protect yourself.
- \*To remain calm in the face of threat or intimidation.

**MARCH** is  
EATING DISORDER  
AWARENESS  
MONTH

## TANNING IS OUT...YOUR SKIN IS IN

This month, grades 11&12 participated in a "No-Tanning Pledge Contest" sponsored by the Melanoma Foundation of N.E. Each day, the Wellness Club presented the students with a new fact about skin cancer and the direct correlation of melanoma with indoor tanning, via the flat screen monitors. On Fridays during lunch, the girls were quizzed on these facts and correct answers were rewarded with a \$2.00 lunch pass and a mini hand sanitizer. It is very encouraging because 87% of the girls planning to go to the prom were willing to sign the pledge not to tan before the prom.

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**We are so excited to announce that MAHS was one of two schools in Massachusetts to win \$500 toward their prom!!!** The Wellness Club and Prom Committee are brainstorming on ideas to make their prom more memorable with this extra windfall!

## Did you know...

- The World Health Organization has concluded that tanning beds belong in the highest cancer risk category w/ tobacco!
- Tanning beds put out 3-6 times the amount of radiation given off by the sun.
- Using a tanning bed for 20 min. is equal to 1-3 hrs at the beach without sunscreen.
- People who use tanning beds once a month before age 35 increase their melanoma risk by 75%.
- Melanoma is easy to stop if caught early: all it takes is yearly skin exams!
- Melanoma is the most common cancer in women 25-32yrs.
- Melanoma rates are increasing faster than any other cancer.  
**PLEASE do NOT permit your daughters to go tanning!**  
**Spray tanning is the way to go!**

## Bullying

All grades were presented the class on bullying before the February break. Based on feedback from many of the girls, the message was received loud and clear. We discussed the issue of excluding girls from lunch tables and the possibility of assigned seating. We talked about the Antibullying Bill which will go to the Senate for a vote next month which will crack down on cyberbullying and the reality that the MAHS Handbook will have more specific rules relating to cyberbullying.

I closed the class by asking the girls to look around and recognize that they are all beautiful young women who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. To stop and think before you speak, that words can hurt. And to believe me when I tell you that it will be the women in your lives that will walk with you, carry you, cry with you, cheer you on, and pray for you when life is just life.

## Teens, texting and the sleep connection

Teens have always been somewhat sleep-deprived, now technology is making it worse. Teens are not just texting, IM'ing and surfing Facebook all day; they're sleeping with their cellphones. ..or *not* sleeping. The texting continues long after Mom and Dad are sound asleep. Some teachers have overheard your daughter's discuss texting or talking until 3 or 4 in the morning. Some girls are coming to school exhausted and inattentive.

A 2009 Nielsen study found a 566% jump in teen texting rates in the last 2 yrs. The average teen sent 435 texts/ month in 2007. Now it's 2,899/ month, about 97 per day, many in the wee hours. Experts worry that the stakes are higher than most parents realize. Sleep deprivation is linked to memory and concentration problems, anxiety and depression, moodiness and hyperactivity. As long as parents allow teens to have cellphones in their bedrooms, they'll be tempted to use them.

As parents, what can we do? **Set limits** which is more difficult in the age of unlimited texting plans. Many parents have kids charge their cellphones in the hall outside their rooms at night to confirm a curfew. Others have resorted to sleeping with their kid's cellphones under their pillow. As parents, we want our kids to be happy, healthy and responsible. The most essential prerequisite for this is to first take care of ourselves physically ...by eating well, exercising and **getting enough sleep**.

## TEENS AND ASTHMA

Asthma is a major public health problem of increasing concern in the United States. Asthma accounts for 14 million lost days of school missed annually. Nationally, 1 in 10 teens have asthma but here at Mount Alvernia it is 1 in 6 girls.

Every teen needs to know how she can control her asthma instead of letting it control her. Things like cold or dry air, dust, pollen, pollution, cigarette smoke, exercise or stress can "trigger" asthma. This makes your body pump out chemicals that close off the airways making it hard to get air into your lungs. Physical activity can trigger attacks too although experts don't know why for sure. Please share the following tips with your daughter and help her understand that asthma can be controlled.

### **Here are some tips to help you live with your asthma:**

- Take your medicine regularly.
- Take the right amount of medicine.
- Keep your inhaler with you and use it if needed.
- Figure out what triggers your attacks.
- Learn how you feel when an attack is coming on, and get help.
- Tell your friends, teachers and people you work with that you have asthma.
- Get fit but ease into it.
- Respect your body and stay away from triggers.

All MAHS students with asthma should have an inhaler with them at school. These may be kept in their locker or on their person if necessary. **All athletes MUST bring their inhalers with them to all games and practices.**