

The East Rock Record

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JUSTIN ELICKER IS NEW MAYOR OF NEW HAVEN



Mayor-Elect Justin Elicker holds his first post-election press conference with East Rock Record reporters on Nov. 7.

BY ISABEL FAUSTINO
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Mayor-elect Justin Elicker will soon settle in to lead our city. He won the election on Tuesday, Nov. 5 against Mayor Toni Harp. He will take office Jan. 1.

“Have you ever put in a lot of work, like a sports game or you are performing in a music concert, and you are not quite sure if you will perform really well? We did great,” Mr. Elicker said during a press conference with reporters at The East Rock Record on Nov. 7.

“I am excited about that. At the same time, it is a lot of responsibility.”

During the press conference, Mr. Elicker responded to questions on a wide range of topics, from school safety to the realism of video games, recycling at school, the use of Christopher Columbus’s name, dangers of vaping and homelessness in New Haven.

What should New Haven expect from the new Mayor? His goals include helping the environment, still continuing some things that Mayor Harp

worked on, and making sure students feel safe and comfortable in the New Haven Public School system.

Because of his concern about climate change, Mr. Elicker said that he is planning to take the bus or ride his bike to work. But, what might stop him from doing so?

Mr. Elicker said that it’s hard to ride a bike if it feels dangerous. Although the city has some bike lanes, he said that New Haven “can implement more policies that make it easier to ride the bus, to ride

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BLUE BINS, BUT DOES EAST ROCK REALLY RECYCLE?

BY DAVE JOHN CRUZ, OMAR DWECK,
NORAH MATZ, JAYDEN LIS JONES
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY MATT KRISTOFFERSEN

John Kennedy, who teaches 7th and 8th grade math at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School, showed reporters a box with discarded papers he collected during the school day. The blue school-issued recycling bin was curiously empty.

Across the hall, a large round gray garbage can on wheels sat three-quarters full of used copier paper. At day’s end, it would be tossed — into the dumpster.

That explains why Mr. Kennedy takes his box of used paper and cardboard home, to Hamden, to be recycled. “I feel responsible for the future of the world,” he said. “For me, it’s a little thing to take home recycling.”

Recycling is routine in households and businesses. There is more and more attention paid to environmental issues in schools. There are plenty of marked blue bins in classrooms at East Rock School.

But some worry: Recycling isn’t really happening. “I just don’t think they recycle here,” said Patricia Pendl, a special education teacher. “I’ve never seen a truck come with a recycling emblem on it.”



John Kennedy brings home paper from school to recycle

Ms. Pendl collects recyclable materials at school, including the lunch trays students use each day, to bring home or reuse at school. She showed East Rock Record reporters a large stack, explaining that, “I probably collect six times that,” she said.

SEE PAGE 11

Living in two languages

BY ANTHONY CONTRERAS, FARHAM RIAZ,
AND SANTIAGO XICOHTENCATL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY EMILIANO TAHUI GÓMEZ

The hallways and classrooms at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School mostly ring with sounds of English. It’s the language most teachers use in class.

But when third grader Santiago Xicohtencatl, reaches his home, Spanish greets him at the door. “Cómo te fue en la escuela mijo?” his mother asks. She wants to know how school went.

For Farham Raiz, in 3rd grade, learning words in Urdu is exciting because it introduces him to new sounds and brings him closer to family traditions from Pakistan. One of his goals, to reach a level

of Urdu where he can sing along with his family. “Only my parents know how to sing in Urdu,” he said. “In the future I want to sing in Urdu, too.”

School may happen in English, but when classes end, one in three East Rock School students returns to a household where a language other than English is spoken.

This switch — between school and home — shapes how students think about who they are and where they belong. The sounds of Spanish offer Mr. Xicohtencatl the welcome feeling of family and culture. English is the language he connects

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Health Threat Targeting Kids: Vaping

BY KARINA DE LA CRUZ, KEYLIN MONTOYA
SOTO, JARELIS CALDERON, JAYLANI SANCHEZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY DONYA FEGAN

You’ve seen it: People sucking on what looks like a metal straw, surrounded by a hazy cloud that smells like candy. This is vaping.

The names of popular “vape liquids” used in these electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, sound like fun treats — Meteor Milk Space Jam, Strawberry Watermelon POP! — but health experts say vaping is very dangerous, especially for kids.

“We know very little about

these products, but e-cigarettes contain chemicals like nicotine,” that are “addictive and unhealthy,” said Dr. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, a professor at the Yale School of Medicine who is an expert on addiction.

In no time at all, vaping has become popular, which has experts worried. Across the country, people have been hospitalized; some have even died.

What concerns experts most is that people are getting addicted.

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INSIDE THE NEWS

SCHOOL LOCKDOWN DRILLS SCARY BUT NECESSARY
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ER LGBTQ FRIENDLY? SEE PAGE 4
ARE VIDEO GAMES TOO REAL? SEE PAGE 8

THE KINDNESS PROJECT
SEE PAGE 15



FAB MUSICIAN MYLES CAMERON!
SEE PAGE 12



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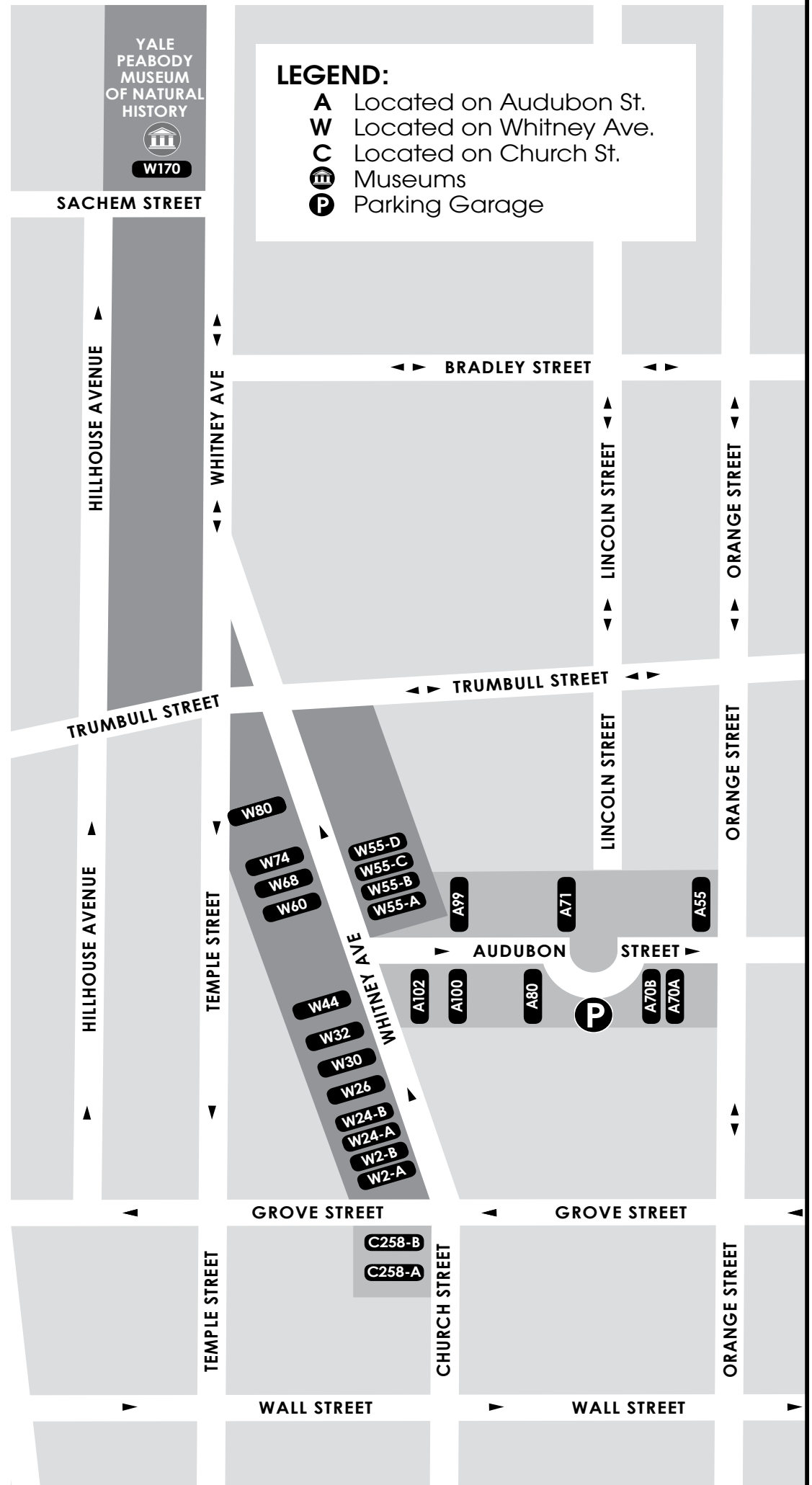
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SCHOOL NEWS

School Lockdown Drills: Necessary Safety Step

BY JADEN MARTINEZ,
MADISON POOLE, SAHIL LEMAR,
AMAYA BORREO
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY ETHAN TIMMINS-SCHIFFMAN



Sgt. Ronald Ferrante, Youth Services and School Resource Officer with NHPD meets with ERR reporters

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You walk into your classroom. You sit down. Class starts. Then you hear that screeching siren sound that always gives you shivers, and the loudspeaker announces, “Full lockdown!”

Are you sure you are safe?

Yes, it is practice. East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School has been doing lockdown drills for a long time. According to Principal Sabrina Breland, the District Security Office “ramped up” the drill system in 2008.

East Rock School had to change the word it uses for a lockdown from “code red” to “this is a full lockdown.” Now, the school has to sign paperwork for lockdowns and send it to the District Security Office to look at. The District Security Office says East Rock School has to do a lockdown at least once a month. Before, in 2008, the school had to do it two times per year for the children’s and the school’s safety.

At the start of the year the teachers tell students what is to be done in a lockdown and when it is to be done. The teacher shows the students information so they have a good shot at surviving an emergency.

When a lockdown starts the alarm sounds. Then, the students go to the corner of the classroom and shut off the lights. Next, the students have to be quiet and make no movements. If students happen to be in the lunch room, they have to go in the teachers’ lounge and if a student is in the bathroom they have to stand on the toilet so an intruder would not be able to see their feet. No matter what, students always have to be prepared.

Principal Breland said there is “great” safety at East Rock School.

Most students agree that East Rock is safe. The East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey of 193 students found

that 85 percent answered “yes” to the question, “Do you feel safe at school?” Thirteen percent said “no” and two percent did not respond.

The drills can be upsetting, but the survey also found that 90 percent of students said the school needs to have them. During a lockdown it can be really serious. Sometimes it could be real. Students will be able to tell if it is several hours that they are locked in the area they were in when the lockdown started. It could happen because someone has a weapon or even something has happened around the school’s area.

Gionna Smith, in 6th grade, said that she feels safe when she knows it is a drill. “I believe the school lockdown drills are necessary and keep us students prepared,” she said.

Some students think that the lockdown drills should be upgraded. East Rock Record reporters talked to 6th grader Kamiyah Marsh about lockdown drills and she said that “we need more hiding spaces and students need to stop talking” during the drills.

When 8th grader Dave Cruz was asked about school safety and lockdowns, he said each classroom should have a bunker. “Students should learn to hide, run, and fight,” he said.

East Rock Record reporters also interviewed kids who said other kids at school do not take lockdown practices seriously. This could be a problem because if it is a real lockdown they could be in grave danger.

Sgt. Ronald Ferrante, the Youth Services and School Resource Officer for the New Haven Police Department told East Rock Record reporters that it is important to take drills seriously. Mr. Ferrante seemed interested and serious about school safety. He said a lot about being ready for anything and always be prepared.

“It’s never a bad thing to be prepared,” he said. Students can benefit from this by being ready for things like fire drills or lockdowns.

Students think a lot about school safety. One group of students was so ramped up about lockdown drills, they were still talking about it after East Rock Record reporters finished their interview. The reporters had to leave the interview because the students were so intrigued about the topic of school safety.

Sgt. Ferrante said that students should feel confident about procedures. “If you feel nervous during a lockdown, you should feel happy that schools are protecting you and your friends,” he said. A few students interviewed said the school needs more security. Many said their classmates do not follow procedures, and one of the students said that the lockdown drills are necessary and everything about them is perfect. The school prepares students for lockdowns by doing drills. Therefore, students and faculty should feel safe.

East Rock Wordsearch

U	S	T	A	H	O	D	S	C	H	O	O	L	N
A	I	O	K	S	C	E	O	T	W	A	O	A	O
G	E	P	D	T	O	K	S	R	G	S	C	H	E
N	P	R	I	U	O	A	C	O	A	S	D	O	E
I	D	R	K	D	K	C	D	S	A	T	U	A	A
D	N	M	K	I	E	A	S	P	W	P	U	M	W
A	O	R	C	E	M	E	R	D	P	K	S	O	O
E	K	N	O	S	A	C	O	K	O	K	U	P	R
R	O	A	R	R	T	O	E	L	T	B	R	H	K
A	O	E	T	O	H	K	G	P	I	O	E	O	C
A	K	N	S	R	A	K	A	E	A	O	P	R	A

- SCHOOL
- MATH
- READING
- STUDIES
- EASTROCK
- BOOK
- PENCIL
- MOP
- WORK
- PAPER

By Jayden Lis Jones



East Rock Record reporters discuss the proper way to conduct an interview.

SCHOOL NEWS

Is East Rock Accepting of LGBTQ Students?

BY SHEKINAH JONES, VICTOR RODRIGUEZ,
NAYLEEN RODRIGUEZ, AYLEEN RODRIGUEZ,
GIONNA SMITH, CHRISTIAN JENKINS JR.
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY BRYANNA MOORE

Did anyone notice the word “community” in the middle of our school name: East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School?

“Community” describes people who share something in common. It is very important to East Rock School’s character.

How welcoming a community is East Rock School — for LGBTQ students? Is the school accepting of people from all different backgrounds? That is a conversation that is going on.

LGBTQ is an acronym that describes people attracted to those of their same gender or multiple genders. “L” stands for lesbian, “G” for gay, “B” for bisexual, “T” for transgender and the “Q” for queer or questioning. Just as someone attracted to the same sex or gender may identify as “heterosexual” or “straight,” people under the LGBTQ umbrella may identify with the label “gay” or “lesbian,” or “queer,” and the list goes on.

Everyone has a story to tell, and many believe that it’s important to be respectful and kind to all people. Accepting that others are different and being open to learning more about those differences can help make a community a community.

We interviewed seven East Rock School teachers and faculty about their knowledge of LGBTQ and all but one knew what it stood for. When each was asked if they knew anyone or had family members that identified as LGBTQ, all seven responded that they did.

Teachers and staff said they did not see LGBTQ bullying or name-calling happening in class-



ERR reporters speak with former ERR reporter and Yale First Year Marc Gonzalez

rooms. “With little kids, it’s not an issue,” said Dawn DeNuzzo, who teaches 2nd grade. “I can’t imagine anyone not feeling at home.”

But some recognize that it may be a problem that they just don’t see. “They do it all behind my back,” said Angela Maiocco, who teaches 4th grade. “Just because I haven’t seen it, doesn’t mean it doesn’t happen.”

Does the school offer a welcoming and safe environment for all? That’s more complicated.

“I would say East Rock Community is an accepting environment in general,” said Leslie DePriest, assistant principal at East Rock School. “I haven’t witnessed anyone being bullied. I have heard people using slurs to hit below the belt and not being cautious of how they may hurt people, like calling someone ‘gay’ or the f-word.”

“I think it’s all relative,” said Sabrina Breland, principal at East Rock School. “I don’t think any place is totally safe to be who you are. In general, some places in this world aren’t safe. Relatively, it’s a safe place.”

Although students using words like “gay” as slurs may not happen often in classrooms, it may happen elsewhere during the school day, or on the bus.

According to the East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey, 26 percent of students admitted calling someone or something “gay” as an insult. The survey also found that 79 percent of students said they heard others use “gay” as an insult at East Rock School. Michelle Canon, an after-school helper at East Rock School whose sister identifies as LGBTQ, said the school community is generally accepting. But she has seen intolerance.

“I’ve seen kids being picked at and being name-called because of who they are,” she said, but has not witnessed bullying at East Rock School.

Marc Gonzalez, an East Rock School alum, former East Rock Record reporter and a first year at Yale who identifies as “gay” said he was not bullied while at East Rock School. But he did have a friend who was bullied. At Yale, he has made a lot of friends who identify as LGBTQ.

When asked if he felt that East Rock provided a welcoming environment, Gonzalez responded “yes.” When did he know he was gay? “I was probably in the 6th or 7th grade; I knew I was different,” he said. Was East Rock School welcoming? “When I was here it was good,” he said. “But a lot of younger people weren’t out yet.”

When asked for advice he would give East Rock students that identify LGBTQ, he said: “It’s going to take time to process. It’s okay, you’re special. Make more people accepting of who you are.” Although many students and faculty members view East Rock School as safe and welcoming for LGBTQ students, name-calling and using words like “gay” as slurs are a problem. Students may not understand what they are saying, or thinking about how it may affect their friends.

Maybe it’s time for this “community” to take that word seriously. In a community love is love.

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COMMUNITY NEWS



MISS THE BUS? OR DID IT MISS YOU?

BY MELVIN RAMOS, HECTOR CRUZ,
JANYLA GASKINS, NATALIA PEÑA
JEANELIS EYSSAUTIER, JAYLEEN BAEZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY CARLOS CARRILLO-GALLEGOS

It's one thing to miss the bus. But what if the bus misses you? Or never comes? Or stops somewhere strange, far away or dangerous to get to?

That is what happened this fall when the New Haven Public Schools decided to change the bus stops for thousands of students. The number of busses in use for East Rock Community & Cultural Studies School decreased from 12 last year to just seven this year.

The new busses now have different stops, but these stops can be far away from students' homes and not safe to walk to. That made some parents decide to pick up and drop off their kids. Some students who use wheelchairs were not able to attend school for weeks because of the bus complications.

"A lot of parents and kids were very stressed," said Lauren Roche, a special education teacher. "One of my students had to ride the bus for over an hour!"

As of November, the issue had not been completely resolved. Members of the East Rock School community had to deal with bus problems for many weeks in the fall.

Seventh grader Jayleen Baez said that she thought her new bus stop was more dangerous and a further walk. "I have to walk across the street and it's very dangerous to get to my bus,

and I don't like that," she said.

Ms. Baez was not the only who thought busing had become worse. The East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey showed 44 percent of students said the bus stop changes had affected them. Twenty percent said their new bus stop is more dangerous to get than their old one.

Many adults were also upset at how the bus stop change was carried out.

"A big number of parents were very, very upset. They were livid," said Nijija-Ife Waters, president of the NPHS Citywide Parent Team. She said the parent group "is trying very hard to make changes. It was an easy process to change but a hard process to fix."

East Rock School Principal Sabrina Breland believes that leadership "changed and condensed the bus system to save money." She added that, "New Haven has a huge deficit. To save money, they combined the stops. Some people have to walk

several blocks as a result." While Ms. Breland understood the District's reasoning, she thought the change could have been carried out in a better way.

"It was frustrating!" she said about the changes. "We do need to save money, but we also need those stops because some stops weren't safe, and some have to cross big streets. I'm for saving money, but not for putting people at risk."

Daryl Brackeen, Jr. Alder for Ward 26, said he

understands why parents are upset. "I would be very concerned, especially if they went to school across town," he said. "If the system wasn't broken, why are we trying to fix it?"

Some teachers were also concerned about the safety of students. Kimberly Doheny, a 7th grade teacher, said that changes need to have the best interest of students in mind. "I know that students and parents are upset that children have to walk far," she said.

Ms. Breland said bus stops are being fixed, with the priority on helping students with dangerous stops. "The buses are being fixed on a case by case basis," she said. She added that students

may have to walk further. Those addressing the problem, she said, "are not worried about walks being too long unless it's not a safe area to walk."

Mayor-elect Justin Elicker also said that the bus change was made in order to save money.

"Our schools have a lot of budget problems," Mr. Elicker

said. "The school leadership is trying to find ways to find money; they were trying to make the bus pick up system a little more efficient." However, Mr. Elicker also said that people should have been alerted of the change sooner.

"If there was more planning early on that would have been a much better solution. We do need to find ways to save money and have less pollution."

He plans to work with the Board of Education to help fix the bus stop system.

44%
of students
said they
were
affected
by bus stop
changes



Alder Brackeen sees why parents are upset

MAYOR ELICKER: WHAT TO EXPECT

MAYOR FROM PAGE 1

bikes, to walk to school."

Even though, Mr. Elicker had more votes than Mayor Harp, he brought attention to some things she had done. Among other things, he said she made sure that the Q-house, a center for young people to have fun and learn, will get built.

"Often times in politics, just because there is one candidate that wins doesn't mean the other candidates did not do a lot of amazing things," he said.

What do others want from the new Mayor?

Fourth grade teacher Angela Maiocco would like to see more support staff, and special education teachers in schools. Mr. Elicker said he believes that "New Haven kids need a lot of help, not just in reading and math, but also help in language and emotional support."

Darryl Brackeen Jr., Representative of the ward 26 on the New Haven Board of Alders, says he believes that it is definitely time for a change in New Haven.

Some issues he is talking about are the education system and climate change. He said the educational system should be closing the Opportunity Gap for students.

Students at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School also would like the food at the school to be changed. That includes hav-

ing more nutritious food, bigger variety or just to have the food be better cooked.

Mr. Elicker does understand that education is important focus of a child's life, especially since he has two children of his own. Reporters also asked Mr. Elicker about the problem this fall with the bus stops changing at the last minute. A lot of people now have a bus stop that is far from their household. It created a lot of confusion and anger among parents and students.

Mr. Elicker said school leaders were trying to cut down bus stops to save money "and make the bus pick up systems a little more efficient." He said "it was in a good spirit" but because it was announced late, "suddenly, everyone was surprised" by the changes.

"If there was more planning early on that would have been a much better solution. We do need to find ways to save money and have less pollution."

He was asked about the use of Christopher Columbus' name on the school where his daughter attends and on a holiday.

"I think we should have a community conversation about changing that name," he said. "Like many places that have honored people in the South that were part of the Civil War and supported slavery and things that are not good at all. Those people have had conversations and

removed statues."

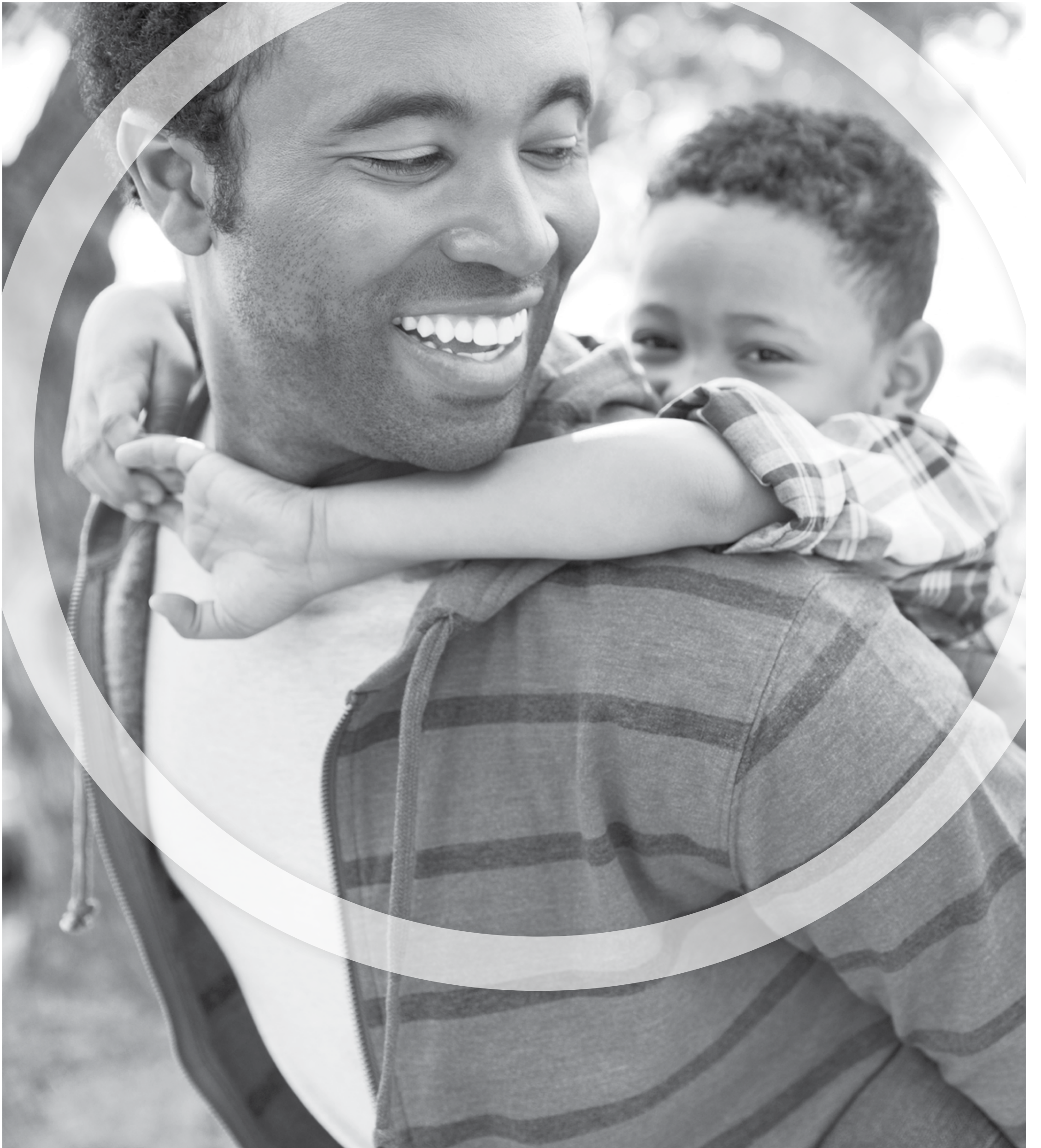
As he gets ready to take over, he also said it is important to recognize that Mayor Harp has dedicated years to serving the people of New Haven.

"She has spent over 30 years of her life working hard as an alder, a state legislator and the Mayor to improve people's lives in New Haven."



East Rock Record Reporters working on this issue





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COMMUNITY NEWS

HOMELESS IN NEW HAVEN: HOW TO HELP?

BY TALA CRUDUP, T'KORIE CRUDUP,
KEYERIAH MAE WILLIAMS, MEGHAN SERRANO-PEREZ,
MORGHAN PRESCOD, INA SMITH
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY MACKENZIE HAWKINS

When Denise Roman was seven years old, her house burned down a week before Christmas and she had to stay with a family member for a month. You might not think this is homelessness. But, actually, it is considered “hidden homelessness,” which is when people live with others without knowing if they can stay — and don’t have a plan for permanent housing.

Ms. Roman, a Pre-K Head Teacher at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School, is one of many who have experienced homelessness in the U.S. It is also happening here in New Haven. In 2019, the city government counted 421 homeless people, according to Velma George, coordinator for homelessness for the City of New Haven. She said that number is down from 625 in 2016.

Homelessness also touches families in our school. According to the East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey, 22 percent of students have experienced homelessness or know someone who has. The survey also found that 72 percent said they or their parents have helped the homeless.

“If someone needs help, you’re supposed to help them,” said Joseph Lewis, Magnet Resource Teacher at East Rock School. He said we should “make sure they have what we have — a home.”

Ms. George said there are many causes of homelessness. She said that rent in New Haven is very high and sometimes people can’t afford it. Also, people lose their jobs or suffer from addiction and this can cause homelessness, too. Finally, she said that if people face long-term sickness it can leave them without a way to pay for a home.

The city government does try to help. Ms. George shared a pamphlet given to people to help them find services. It had information about seven shelters, six places to get a free meal and five places to get more long-term help. She called these resources a “safety net.” The city, she said, tries “to anticipate all the needs that homeless people may have.”

But there is a problem, she said: “The needs are greater than our resources.” There are 421 people in shelters and temporary housing, but Ms. George said that the city does not have enough beds. Some people who

are homeless do not want beds and choose to sleep outside, she said.

We also spoke with Ms. George about panhandling, which is when people hold up signs on the street and ask for money. She said that not everyone holding a sign is actually homeless, and that some people use panhandling as their job.

“They make these signs that make you feel sorry for them,” she said. Instead of giving them money, she said people who want to help should donate to shelters or volunteer at food banks.

Some teachers said that they don’t like giving money to people on the street because they don’t know what people will do with the money. They shared other ways to help. Ms. Roman, the teacher who had experienced homelessness herself, volunteers as Columbus House, one of seven shelters in the city.

Danielle Cannon, a Kids Craze supervisor, hands out sandwiches, water, and blankets. She told us a specific story when she saw a young boy with a broken arm. She went home and got him food, toiletries, a yoga mat to

sleep on, a blanket, and socks. Some East Rock School teachers, including ESL teacher Norine Polio and Ms. Roman, carry \$5 Dunkin’ Donuts gift cards to give away. Kimberly Doheny, who teaches 7th grade science, has not personally helped the homeless but said that when she was in Nashville she saw homeless people selling newspapers to get back on their feet.

Students at East Rock School are concerned about helping the homeless. Taína Morales, a 5th grader, helps the homeless and does not think there are enough homeless shelters. Taniya Meade, in 4th grade, has helped the homeless with her mom. Jarelis Calderon and Jaylani Sanchez have both given food to the homeless.

Mayor-Elect Justin Elicker said in a press conference with East Rock Record reporters that he helped the homeless but not as much as he would like to. Mr. Elicker said the city spends \$1 million a year on homeless shelters, he learned while campaigning for mayor that some don’t think the shelters are safe or clean.

“What’s important is that the homeless shelters feel safe for people,” Mr. Elicker said. People need a safe, stable place to live, he continued, so that they can address other challenges in their lives such as drug addiction and mental health issues. Homelessness is a big problem in New Haven and around the country, but lots of people — from the Mayor to teachers and students — are ready to help.



Velma George coordinates homeless services in New Haven



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TECHNOLOGY & HEALTH

Video Games are Getting Real: Is that a problem?

BY GARRETT GROVER, AMIR MICHAEL GLENN,
YOUSIF KUWA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY RIANNA TURNER

Video games have changed a lot over time. The first were like playing ping pong on a computer.

Now, kids become human-like characters in the middle of big adventures with personalities and goals. Some characters even commit violent acts — and graphics depict blood and gore.

Have video games become too realistic?

There are many different ways for a game to seem real. Katherine Rosell, a game developer and student at Quinnipiac University, said high-quality graphics can make games more realistic. But, she said, “It’s also what adventure you’re giving to the player.”

She said that, God of War “tells a realistic story about parenthood” but that Fortnite is so fun because it’s “just a little bit realistic. The colors aren’t realistic, but it uses a competitive spirit.”

Ms. Rosell likes more realistic games because she being connected to the adventures and feelings of a character. Many students at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School agree. According to the East Rock Record Fall

2019 Survey, 55 percent want their video games to look like real life.

And while most students — 71 percent — say they don’t get confused about what is real life and what is video, more than one-fourth who responded said that they do get confused.

“I know this kid in my classroom who plays Fortnite all the time,” said Amadie Towe, in 4th grade. “He can’t focus.” Mr. Towe said the kid does the dances from the video game during class. Jennifer Ryall, a special education teacher at East Rock School, likes to “live in the moment. With realistic games, you can do something you do in real life, but you can be better at it,” she said.

Linda Charmaraman, the Director of the Youth, Media and Wellbeing Research Lab at The Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College, said research suggests that video games can help boys learn to socialize. “Games should be interactive,” Dr. Charmaraman said. “On platforms like Discord, kids can make appointments to see their friends and discuss game strategy.”

However, because kids get to play with their friends online, she said that some find it hard to stop playing. Playing with real people makes video games feel even more realistic, compound-

ing the confusion kids feel and threatening to replace real life.

Some teachers at East Rock School don’t play video games but have kids who do. New games with realistic graphics showing violence makes some worry. Because these games can replace reality or time outside, teachers want their children to play games with less violence. Kimberly Doheny, a 7th grade science teacher, doesn’t like the realistic games her kids play. “My sons play very gory, bloody games,” she said. “The characters look like real people. They do things they would never enjoy in real life, but somehow they’re enjoying it in this video game.” Even some kids are concerned about the violence in realistic video games.

“The video games are getting too realistic because in a lot of video games they have guns and you shoot players,” said Garrett Grover, in 3rd grade. “It looks gory. The games are getting too violent, and you’re hurting people.”

Luckily, researchers are looking for ways to lessen the fears of kids and their parents. “There’s a middle ground where you’re attracting people with artistry without exposing kids to the reality of war,” Dr. Charmaraman said.

Vaping companies target kids with candy flavors

VAPING FROM PAGE 1

So far, Sabrina Breland, principal at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School, said there have been no vaping-related cases at the school, to which she adds, “thank goodness. That would be tragic. I would probably still be crying.”

But according to the East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey, one-third of students do know a kid who vapes. Fortunately, most also know that vaping is bad for them. According to the Fall Survey, 88 percent of students said they realize that vaping is unhealthy. That is a lot, but is not 100 percent.

Isabel Faustino, in 7th grade at Engineering and Science University Magnet School and a former East Rock School student, would not “try vaping at this age because there is a lot I want to do in life.” Nayleen Rodriguez, a 6th grader at East Rock, agrees, and would never try vaping because, she said, “I would not want to get sick.”

What, exactly, is vaping? Vaping refers to the use of e-cigarettes, which are devices that must be charged. They combine chemicals into a vapor, which is inhaled. These vapors are not water. They are combination of chemicals, aerosols, nicotine, and flavors — which can damage the lungs.

Nicotine is one of the best-known ingredients in e-cigarette vapor. It is extremely addictive. It slows brain development in young people, affects their memory, concentration and mood.

Other chemicals in e-cigarettes are also unhealthy. People are getting sick with vaping-related damage to their lungs, called EVALI. (It stands for e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury). There have been three cases in New Haven. Dr. Pnina Weiss, professor of pediatric pulmonology at the Yale School of Medicine, was one of the doctors who has treated patients with EVALI. When they are brought to the hospital, she said, they can be placed on a machine,

called a respirator, that helps the lungs do their job, exchanging oxygen and carbon dioxide.

“It’s very difficult to see children sick like that,” Dr. Weiss told East Rock Record reporters. She is especially concerned about vaping among young people. Many experts say e-cigarette companies, many of which also sell tobacco products like regular cigarettes, try to get kids to vape to get them addicted to nicotine — and get lifelong customers.

According to the government website kid-sheath.gov, vaping products are advertised so often that kids can barely turn on a screen without seeing an ad for them. Some teachers at East Rock School believe e-cigarette companies are targeting kids. Jennifer Ryalls, a special education teacher, said vaping “is a new way to get young people to smoke.” She said that, “it’s a tricky way for tobacco companies to get money from kids.”

Vaping companies also target kids by creating sweet flavors to put into the e-cigarette vapor. One website we looked at that sells vaping products, included gummy bear and watermelon flavors. Reviewers on the site say products taste just like the candies and treats kids love. One said about the banana-nut-bread flavor that it

is, “Just like mom used to make! Or maybe even better.” Other reviewers said flavors “remind me of watermelon Jolly Ranchers” or taste “almost exactly like a Red Sour Patch Kid.”

Dr. Weiss told reporters that, if she were President, “fruit flavors in e-cigarettes would be off the market.” Some states have banned vaping products. Others have banned flavored vaping liquids. The federal government is considering action. What can kids and teachers do? Would a ban work? Dr. Krishnan-Sarin said it may not. “People make their own decisions, and we need to help kids understand why it can harm them and get them to make their own healthiest decision,” she said. The key may be better information about the dangers of vaping.

“You have to talk about the health factors,” said Jennifer Caso, a 3rd grade teacher at East Rock School. Principal Breland said that, “It’s difficult to change someone’s behavior. We need to help them change their mindset.” Dr. Weiss said this is where students can make a difference. “Each of you has the power to inject facts into the discussion,” she said. “You have the power to change the culture and make the world healthier.”

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BOOKS & LANGUAGE

Reading is forever, but libraries are changing

BY OLI JAKOBSSON, RYAN MARTINEZ,
TUSKER PICKETT, ERIEON WILLIAMS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY REBECCA SOULEN



School librarian Paula Daitzman

Do you remember Captain Underpants?

That was so last year! You might try *Holes* by Louis Sachar or *Dog Man* by Dav Pilkey. Jaden Martine, in 5th grade, said that people are reading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *The Wings of Fire*, and *Tunes*. Meanwhile, Dave Cruz says *Wonder* is popular with his fellow 8th graders.

Kids love to talk about what they are reading, and the library is a beloved place. But at East Rock Community & Cultural Magnet School, as elsewhere, libraries are changing to be about more than the books. In a press conference with East Rock Record reporters, New Haven Mayor-elect, Justin Elicker said how people use libraries is changing. “A lot of libraries don’t have as many people going for books,” he said. Fourth grader Sahil Lemar goes to the New Haven Public Library “all the time.” Although he does check out books, he said, “sometimes I play chess there.”

East Rock School Librarian Paula Daitzman sees a new way to use the library. “I’ll tell you what I’d love to see changed — the structure. It’s the 21st Century!” she said. She imagines the library as “a learning commons for group or individual work” with separate areas for “group work, maker spaces, printing.”

That may soon happen. Joseph Lewis, East Rock School Magnet School Resource Teacher said there are plans to change the library into a more collaborative space with areas for individual, group, and class work — plus a tech space with tablets and Chromebooks.

“I would love that!” said Mr. Cruz. “I’ve always wanted the library to be a more social space.” Not everyone is excited. Anthony Contreras, in 3rd grade, said it could make it harder to read if the library were more social.

Even though the way people use the library might change, it would remain a home for books — and students who love to read.

The East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey showed that two-thirds of students at East Rock like to read. But different kids like different books. What students like is constantly changing. That’s where Ms. Daitzman comes in. She must pick the books. It’s not an easy job! But she does it well considering that 68 percent of students like the books in the library.

“They say between 600,000 and one million books come on the market each year,” she told East Rock Record reporters. “That’s an awful lot of books.”

That makes it hard to decide which books to pick. A good library must respond to changing tastes and also have books that fit what students study in school. “I do a lot of reading to decide what to buy,” said Ms. Daitzman, who also looks at what experts say. “I use Booklist, *The New York Times*. I have to read every review.”

It is such a hard job that she waits for the summer to have enough time to do it. But before the end of the school year, she said, “I talk to teachers about what their needs are.”

Ms. Daitzman has a budget of \$3,500, which she said buys about 150 books. “But I can’t only buy books,” she said. Because non-fiction books become outdated quickly, she spends some of her budget on subscriptions to online databases that students can use for research, such as PebbleGo.

Teachers rely on the East Rock School library for books and materials for class. Third grade teacher Jennifer Caso tries “to share books that are relatable. I like to teach about life lessons.” Jean Lawrence, the music teacher, gets books for scheduled reading interventions. She uses her own music library for class. Ms. Lawrence would be more likely to use the library “if they had records of a symphony or something” that she could play in class.

Mr. Lemar would also like to see some changes.

“There could be more books about animals,” he said. Taste in books changes. The use of the library shifts, too. But the fun of reading remains. Looking for a good book? Third grader Garrett Grover has one to recommend: “*Dog Man!*”

Working to keep family languages in an English world

LANGUAGES FROM PAGE 1

to teachers and friends.

New Haven has long attracted immigrants to live in the city. Families have brought many languages here — and to the New Haven Public Schools, said Pedro Media, Director of New Haven Public Schools English Language Learner Program.

Across the district, Mr. Mendia said 32 percent of families report that English is not their first language. They speak 75 different languages. The schools, he said, “must continue to acknowledge and celebrate the multicultural diversity” these speakers bring. At East Rock School, he said Spanish is the most popular second language spoken at home, with 18.8 percent in 2019, followed by Arabic (6.4 percent of students) and Mandarin (2.4 percent). Those numbers have remained about the same in recent years, he said.

Knowing more than one language is extremely useful. Students at East Rock School also study Spanish as a subject. According to the East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey, 64 percent of students said they know a language other than English. Some students have learned the language from their families and some have learned a second language in school.

For heritage speakers, student understanding of their languages varies a lot, as do their attitudes towards it. Three East Rock Record reporters shared their thoughts about their relationship with English and Spanish, the two languages they hear at home. Jaden Martinez, a 5th grader said he likes English and Spanish “the same.” He feels more confident speaking English because he uses it in more different places than Spanish. His younger brother, Ryan Martinez, in 3rd grade, agreed that he felt more confident in English than Spanish. Both said want to keep studying Spanish, which they learn from their mother.

“I think it’s more important to learn two languages or more because the more languages you know the more jobs you can get,” Jaden said. Ryan


sometimes feels nervous when he speaks in Spanish because he is still improving. “I feel as if I have someone watching over me,” he said.

Fifth grader Anthony Martinez Ramirez, who moved from Puerto Rico to New Haven, also gets nervous speaking Spanish in public. “I actually like English more than Spanish. In Spanish I sound weird, I don’t like the tone, how I sound, it’s different,” he said.



Pedro Mendia, director of NHPS English Language Learner program

Norine Polio leads the ELL program at East Rock School, which serves heritage speakers of 10 different languages, including Arabic, Polish, Spanish, Dutch, Mandarin Chinese, Pashto, Urdu, Dari, and Farsi. She said it is best if students who come knowing a language other than English, keep using that language while learning English. Ms. Polio said that knowing more languages helps students communicate better with others, which helps them learn more quickly. “I have many children who speak English as their third or fourth language,” she said. Many East Rock School students, she said, arrive speaking several languages. And many continue to use these, in the hallways, the playground, and in class.




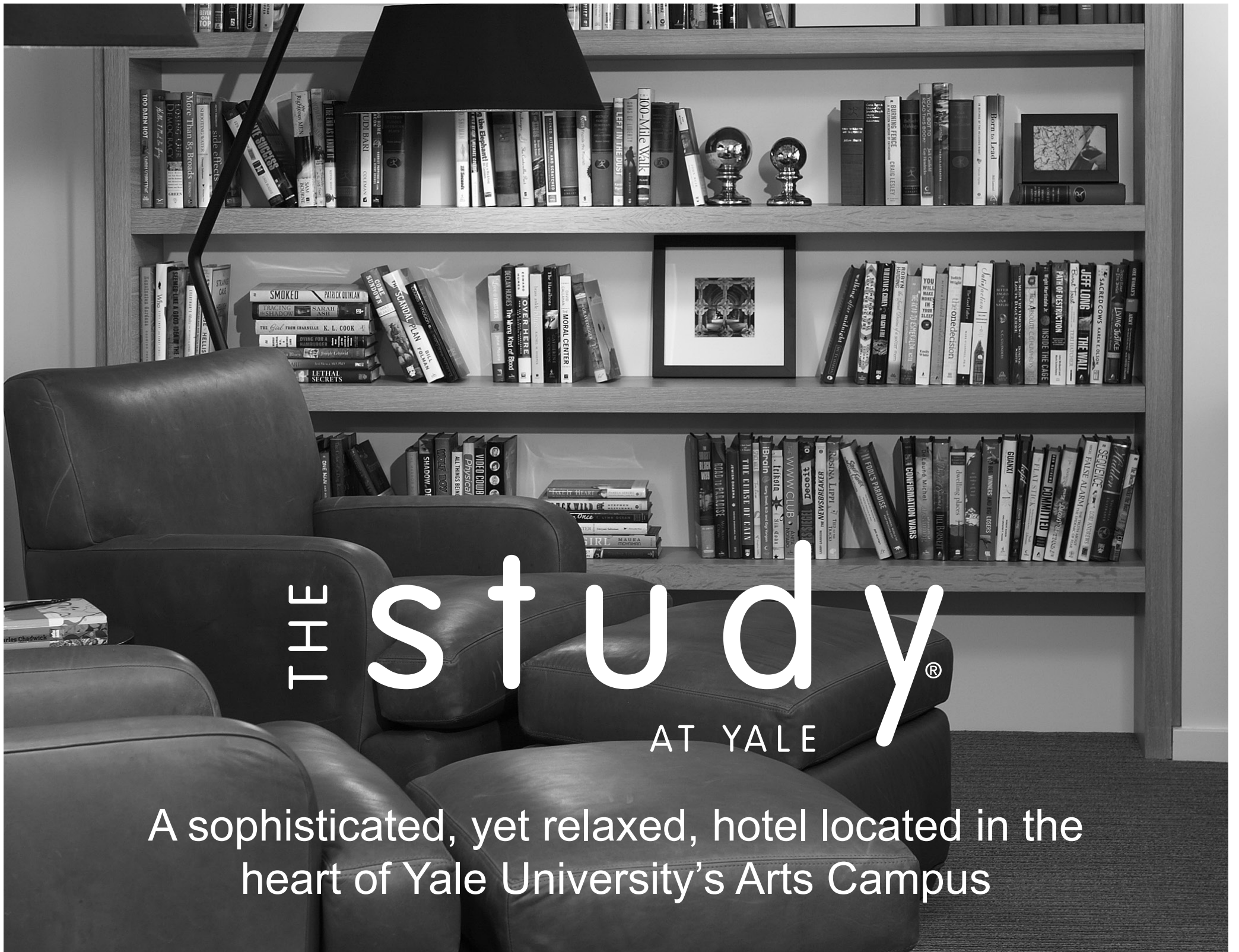
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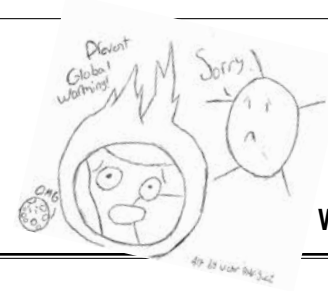


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THE ENVIRONMENT



Victor Rodriguez

It's a Worry, So How to Message Climate Change?

BY MARIANA DE LA CRUZ, JOMAR LAMBOY, AYAAN RIAZ, ADHAM DWECK, ISAIAH HOWELL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

EDITED BY ISABEL ROOPER, JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS

All the time now, we hear about forest fires, hurricanes, floods and harsh storms. People are worried that climate change is destroying our culture and our communities.

This is a new problem — and it's affecting our future.

"I worry about climate change," said Sahil Lemar, in 4th grade. "I feel especially worried because we live right next to the water in New Haven. If the seas rise, we could get a flood."

Karina De La Cruz, in 5th grade, agreed: "I worry about climate change because there will be a shortage of animals and humans and it will be hard to survive."

The East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey found that students are thinking a lot about climate change. Sixty-two percent said they worry about it and 63 percent said it is impacting the world right now. Animals are threatened. So far more than nine million species have gone extinct!

"It affects the world a lot. The world could be destroyed because we weren't taking care of the environment," said Omar Dweck, in 7th Grade. Fourth grader Nora Matz said that "polar bears, penguins, and animals in the outdoors are dying

because their habitats are melting."

Emiliano Gómez, a mentor at the East Rock Record and sophomore at Yale, said, "thinking about climate change makes me feel stressed out and somber, because it's a huge problem and I don't know how we can make a change."

Thinking and talking about climate change can be upsetting, said Dave Cruz, in 8th grade. "Instead of kids being kids, they have to worry about the climate crisis," he said. Ms. Matz said that, "climate change makes some kids worry — and some brush it off."

How should we talk about climate change?

Some adults don't want to tell their kids about climate change because they don't want their kids to worry that the Earth could be destroyed. Mr. Dweck said that "we can't tell adults to care — they have to know they need to do it for our future." Mr. Lemar said that if he were a parent, "I wouldn't talk about climate change in front of my kids because it would scare them and they wouldn't be able to sleep."

In September, the New Haven Board of Alders passed a Climate Emergency Resolution affirming the need for action. Justin Elicker, the incoming Mayor of New Haven, said that he worries about the future if climate change continues.

"Do I think my daughters worry about climate change? Not when they are 1-year-old and

4-years-old," he said. "But they will care about it in the future."

Many adults worry about climate change, too.

"Climate change is going to affect how we breathe, how we develop, how plants grow and animals develop," said Sabrina Breland, principal at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School. "I am concerned, not just for me but for my kids and maybe one day grandkids."

Nicole Marcus, a Pre-K Head Teacher at East Rock Schools cares "very deeply because I want us to have a better planet with all the resources for other generations." And Ishar Nieves, a custodian at East Rock, said, "Adults need to take care of stuff so when you get older you have less to care about when it comes to the environment."

Adults might be in charge, but kids can be an important force in addressing climate change.

Kids can be good at recycling and finding trash when they are walking around "whereas adults get busy," said Lauren Roche, a special education resource teacher.

Kids are getting better at recycling, using metal straws instead of plastic ones, and reducing plastic use altogether! They can convince parents, family and friends to take action. We can lead protests or rallies to get attention and convince people to care about climate change. We only have one world, and we need to take care of it.

ERR Investigation: Recycling Needs Attention

RECYCLE FROM PAGE 1

Eighth grade teacher Kayla Iannuccilli is "not confident" in the school's recycling efforts either. "It's sad and it's disgusting. I don't even know where it goes," she said.

When asked about some teachers' concerns, East Rock Principal Sabrina Breland said she thinks "they're absolutely right." "If I had to put a number on it, I'd say I'm 50 percent confident" that the school recycles properly.

Is there a problem with recycling at East Rock School?

Ishar Nieves, the night building manager at East Rock School who handles trash and cleans the school, sees problems. When plastic is dirty, he said, recycling gets difficult. When people do not sort items into the proper place, it is time-consuming to fix. For example, he said, dirty potato chip bags can't go into the recycling and must be fished out.

Mr. Nieves also sometimes sees trash bags put over recycling bins in classrooms — so they are used for trash. He finds plastic in the wrong receptacles. When he faces a time crunch, things end up being thrown away when they shouldn't be, he said.

As a result, the school's two trash dumpsters fill up almost every day. But the sole recycling dumpster takes almost a full week to reach capacity. "That's a very big difference. Night and day almost," he said.

East Rock Record reporters traveled to the trash site outside and saw three identical, green, metal receptacles. One was full of collapsed cardboard boxes. The other two were packed with clear trash bags; one contained paper. None was labeled for recycling.

Mr. Nieves wants to help the environment and supports recycling efforts. "We as custodians would love to do all that," he said, but, "we can't hand-pick all the trash," he said. According to the East Rock Record Fall 2019 Survey, 36 percent of students said the school does not handle the recycling properly. Students may be part of the problem.

Mr. Nieves advised East Rock Record reporters to pay attention to what is — and isn't —recyclable. Plastic should go in the recycling, but only if it's clean. Blank sheets of paper should not end up in the trash, he said.



Dumpsters at East Rock School

Amadi Towe, in 4th grade, said students need to learn to recycle properly. "People are lazy," he said, adding that "people put the wrong stuff" into the recycling bins. While some teachers make an effort to make sure trash is discarded properly, others do not. A tour of the school showed recyclable items in trash bins. Two trash bins at one classroom contained paper that was mostly clean. In a second floor classroom there

was garbage in the recycling bin, a situation repeated in several classrooms.

Do we actually care about recycling?

"I hear students talk about it, but their words don't match their actions," said Ms. Iannuccilli. Even after being told that the school's recycling dumpster is emptied once a week, Ms. Pendl said she is "still not convinced," the school recycles.

Principal Breland, said that Ms. Pendl's hunch — that recycling trucks don't come — is probably true. "For some reason, we don't have them here," she said. She and the former custodian worked together last year to address the recycling issue. But now that there's a new custodian. "We might have to jumpstart that again," she said. That means getting the student government involved. She said students play an important role in recycling.

For Saul Canales, in 7th grade, bottles he finds on the floor and in the trash show that recycling isn't a priority. Does he see students recycle? "Not that much," he said. Sixth grade teacher Garrett Griffin began to take recycling more seriously after he was "busted" last year, but can't tell if the school is doing a good job. "I don't think that our students care about recycling," he said. "I don't think everybody's on the same page."

New Haven Alder Darryl Brackeen, Jr. was not aware of the doubts about recycling at the school, but said the uncertainty is telling: "If it was happening, why would it be a secret? Recycling should be plain as day."

In his six years in city government, Mr. Brackeen said that the topic has never come up. He told East Rock Record reporters that their investigation has made him eager to find out: He wants to hold a public hearing on the issue. "Clearly you all did the research," he said. "I am very curious to know what comes up."

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MUSIC & IDEAS

RISING MUSIC STAR MYLES CAMERON: “Talent” Takes Hard Work

BY THE EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Have you ever heard of a musician named Myles Cameron? If you haven't, you will.

One of Mr. Cameron's songs, “Caged Bird,” has been listened to millions of times online. Mr. Cameron, who is graduating from Yale this month, recently stopped by to talk with East Rock Record reporters. He played some of his recorded music, talked about his inspiration and his story and what he has learned along the way.

One of the big lessons he shared was that “failure is part of success.” He said that one of the cool things about the Internet is that you can see the very first songs that famous musicians put out. “Kendrick Lamar, Travis Scott, their first projects, they're not that good,” he said. Anyone who is really good, said Mr. Cameron, got that way after a lot of effort and practice. “You're not born being amazing at this thing,” he said. “You have to work at it.”

The two songs that Mr. Cameron played, “Caged Bird” and “Nothing Gold,” were both inspired by poems, the first by Maya Angelou and the second

by Robert Frost. To make “Caged Bird,” he found a video on YouTube with someone playing a guitar and a kid screaming in the background in the same key as the guitar. He and his producer used part of that sound, which is called “sampling.” Mr. Cameron said he wrote the first part of that song in 30 minutes, but the rest took many hours over several weeks.

The second song, “Nothing Gold” came from a line in Robert Frost poem called “Nothing Gold Can Stay.” It is also the last line of the poem. “I like that line a lot,” he said.

Reporters found Mr. Cameron's R&B-style music “smooth, romantic, calm, beautiful, inspiring.” “It is relaxing, and makes you feel good and gets you in your feelings,” one team of reporters decided. Another said Mr. Cameron's voice was “like silk.” Mr. Cameron even sang a little bit for reporters. “He sounded so good live with his voice going up and down,” said Mariana de la Cruz.

Isabel Faustino found that listening to “‘Caged Bird’ can create a visual in your mind.” Mr. Cam-



East Rock Record reporters talk with musician Myles Cameron

eron said the artists who inspire him include Frank Ocean, John Mayer, James Black and Travis Scott.

Mr. Cameron has planned for a long time to have a career in music. If he didn't become a musician, he said, “I'd probably be a teacher.” He started writing songs when he was 14. During college he has continued working on his music. He will release a collection of songs in February and then play some live shows in New York and Los Angeles.

Our thoughts on...lots of different things!

BY JADEN MARTINEZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Why Did J.K. Rowling stop writing Harry Potter books? I think J.K. stopped writing Harry Potter because there was nothing left to add. Many people agree and disagree with me. The Harry Potter series was one of the best-selling series ever published. It was a favorite book to millions of people. Lots of libraries have the series. I have seen many people reading Harry Potter. Why did J.K. stop writing these books? My opinion is that the main characters are too old to write about because most kids don't like to hear stories of adults. Most kids I ask about this agree with me. What would happen if J.K. did write another book? There would be many more kids who would enjoy the books. Who enjoys Harry Potter? I do! I read the whole series. The first time, I heard/read the book my dad read it as a bedtime story. Every day I would be so excited to go to bed and hear my dad read it to my little brother and me. It was a great experience for me and it helped me start to read. The thing that really got me reading was the boringness of Moby Dick but that's another story.

BY SAHIL LEMAR
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Prodigy is a math game on the computer. East Rock School and other schools use it. It is for K-8 students. I think that prodigy is a good source if you are looking for your class to learn math. It puts your math level depending how you are doing and what grade you are in. Because kids are into it so it helps kids learn. It is great for math teachers to help their students' education and get better grades. Also, teachers can look at their students' progress on the computer. Kids can get smarter and could do very well on tests.

BY YOUSIF KUWA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Fortnite is the best game. Everybody wants to play it. There's also a new game called Apex. Everybody wants to play it. But Fortnite is competing too, because Fortnite Chapter 2, Season 1 was released when Apex was released. People want to play Apex because it's newer. Fortnite is famous, but now there's another game that's almost as famous. I like how, in Fortnite, you get to fly in the game. If you die, you re-spawn, but all of your stuff is gone. If you want your stuff back, you need to go to the same spot you were at. Your stuff will be there, unless somebody takes it. Fortnite is the most popular game in the whole wide world. I have never played Apex, I want to see if it's better than Fortnite.

BY OMAR DWECK
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

School uniforms are way more expensive than just having your own thing to wear. It's too expensive to buy all the time because people grow out of their clothes. The school uniform at East Rock School is khaki blue pants, a white shirt, and a sweater if you want. The sweater used to have to be solid navy blue, but now they made it so that you can wear black, grey, and white. What if there was this identical person in your class and you were wearing the same thing and then you won't know the difference between one person and another? This is how school uniforms are not good for society. The uniforms are also honestly not really comfy. I'd rather be wearing a hoodie every day. On gym days, you have to wear sweatpants. If there were no school uniforms, I would wear a hoodie and comfortable sweatpants every day.

BY NORAH MATZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

What is Percy Jackson? Percy Jackson is a book series about a boy named Percy Jackson. He is a “Half-Blood” and is paranoid about it. He is at a camp called “Camp Half-Blood” where there are other kids, like Grover Underwood, Annabeth Chase, and Nico di Angelo. Not much is known about Nico di Angelo since he just got there, but I read a spoiler about him that his father is Hades, the god of the underworld.

Now, I should probably clear this up: What a Half-Blood is. A Half-Blood is a human that has a god or goddess as a mom or dad. Percy's father is Poseidon, the god of the sea. Annabeth's mother is Athena, goddess of wisdom. Grover is a satyr, which is not really a half-blood, but his “father” is Pan, the god of the wild. There is also a musical called “The Lightning Thief: A Percy Jackson Musical.” The music is really good, and my favorite song is “Another Terrible Day.” The singer is George Salazar, and he played Dionysus.

Now the opinion: So, I really like the Percy Jackson series. I'm on the fourth book, “The Battle of the Labyrinth.” The main character is, of course, Percy Jackson! He has a few friends, named: Annabeth, Grover, Thalia. Right now, Percy and Annabeth are trying to find Daedalus.

BY JOMAR LAMBOY
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

East Rock is one of the best schools in New Haven today. East Rock is not the full school name. The real name is East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School. This name means that you can learn a lot from the school if you join it. East Rock is a great school and people that aren't in it should really join in.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Letter from Principal Breland



Hello East Rock Record Readers,

Wow! This is the third issue of The East Rock Record during my tenure as principal of THE East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School and it feels like this issue is the charm. Record reporters appeared more curious and more astute than ever when gathering information for the pieces included in this issue.

During interviews, Record reporters were inquisitive and they came with many well thought out questions that sparked dialogue which made me reflect on many of my beliefs and practices. I am definitely in favor of saving our planet and recycling, but after meeting with Record reporters and doing some serious reflection, I realized that I can do more and I must do more.

As each group trickled into the main office, my smile became wider and wider and I reflected more and more. How blessed am I to be working at THE East Rock Community and Cultural Studies Magnet School amongst so many caring, warm, wonderful and civic-minded human beings? I would like to thank Laura Pappano and Yale University for their unwavering commitment to our students and The East Rock Record. It takes a village and I am definitely grateful to be part of this ONE.

Respectfully,

Sabrina Breland, Principal



Reporters following press conference with Mayor-elect Justin Elicker

Thank you!

The *East Rock Record* would like to thank the following for their help and support:

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The East Rock Record

East Rock Community & Cultural Studies
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VAPE COMPANIES PREY ON KIDS

The fact that vaping markets have come out with flavors that attract kids such as gummy bear, is disgusting. It is almost as if they are trying to attract kids with sweet tooth to buying terrible E-cigarette products, which, I'm pretty sure they are trying to do. There are also other flavors like watermelon wave, banana nut bread, cotton candy, and so many others. All of these flavors can be found on a popular vape store online called Pink Spot. It may sound innocent, but it is very terrible for many reasons. Such as, how it doesn't ask for age verification. The little effort this website puts into safety is just awful. These vaping devices are perfect for the smartphone generation because they can plug into all sorts of modern-day devices to charge. Some even look like USB sticks. The most popular type of vape is JUUL. The reason I think JUUL is so popular is that they produce little vapor so teens and kids can sneak them into school and hide them in everyday objects such as water bottles, sharpies, and other things. A lot of kids are vaping in the bathrooms, and, because they can have different flavors they have scents that may smell good. East Rock School and New Haven as a community can stop vaping by forcing online vaping stores to ask for age verification and banning vaping all together just like when we banned plastic bags because we knew it was destroying the planet. If we don't stop vaping, it could destroy us. —**Karina De La Cruz**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

KIDS SHOULD NOT GET ALLOWANCES

You may have heard that some of your friends have an allowance, but you don't. That may bug you, and make you want to have an allowance. Some adults think that kids shouldn't have an allowance. Other parents say that kids can do work in the house for money. But since kids want money, they will keep on asking parents for chores so they can get money, which is greedy. The side that I would pick is no, kids shouldn't have an allowance. One of my reasons is that if you give kids money, they might waste it away for nothing. Some kids might see a \$3 toy, which is poor because it won't help kids to make good money choices and learn to save it. When they are older, they will make poor choices about how to spend money. If a parent has a big family and made bad money choices when he/she was a kid, he/she could still make bad money choices in their jobs. Another reason why you shouldn't give kids an allowance is that they will take advantage of it. If some kids want to buy expensive toys such as a Nintendo Switch which costs \$300. They might bug parent about giving them more money. Parents shouldn't give kids an allowance. —**Victor Rodriguez**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

THE DANGERS OF VAPING

If you want to know more about vaping you have come to the right place! Vaping is a type of cigarette but electric and with metal. Some you have to charge. They also have others that instead of a rectangle it's like a toothpick but bigger that could fit your mouth that has a bunch of flavors. How do teens get into this? Teens try it just because the flavor of it or the air that comes out your nose and mouth or just to try it. What kinds of diseases can vaping cause? (You could find this information in "www.hopkinsmedicine.org) Nicotine is the primary agent in both regular cigarettes, and it is highly addictive. It causes you to crave a smoke, suffer withdrawal symptoms if you ignore the craving. Nicotine is also toxic substance. It raises your blood pressure and spikes your adrenaline, which increases your chance of having a heart attack. There are unknowns about vaping, including what chemicals make up the vapor and how they affect physical health over the long term. When you vape you are exposing yourself to all kinds of chemicals that we don't yet understand and it is not safe. —**Keylin Montoya**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

THE KINDNESS PROJECT



CAN KINDNESS BE A FORCE IN OUR WORLD AND OUR LIVES?

East Rock Record reporters studied newsphotos depicting acts and expressions of kindness. In reporting teams, they grappled with the question: How does kindness show up in the world? Can it be a force as powerful as the harsh divisions we see in the world today?

One day in kindergarten I was sitting alone and Jeanelis came up to me and asked if I was alone, and I said “yes” so she said “want to be my friend?” I said “sure.” We have been friends ever since. One day we sat next to each other in 3rd grade and I asked her if she wanted to play at recess with me and she said “sure.” We started talking and then we came to this moment sitting next to each other in newspaper club still being friends.

— **Natalia Penna, Jeanelis Eyssautier**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Ever since my friend and I met, we liked racing each other. One time, my friend Josiah and I were racing on our bikes. I fell on my bike and Josiah helped me up. Then, Josiah fell and I helped him up. I think, since he helped me, he chose me over winning. I helped him because he helped me, so I wanted to help him back. I also chose Josiah over winning. I do like when I win, but I like friendship more. Friendship makes me feel happy. That is why me and Josiah have been best friends ever since we met.

— **Jayden Lis Jones**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

I liked the dog picture because a man risks his life to save a woman’s mom and a cute dog from a hurricane Dorian. I see kindness in my life in my parents and brother. They treat me well and are nice to me, every day. I play with my brother, which is nice and kind. People are not always nice to each other at school because they say mean stuff about each other. People could treat each other better by being kind and treating each other the same way they want to be treated.

— **Adham Dweck**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

I thought the pictures were beautiful. The sun and clouds were showing from the perspective of the person taking the photo. The picture related to kindness because it let the person take a beautiful perfect picture with no blurriness. I like the dog picture because a man was saving a woman’s life from a hurricane, risking his life for a woman he didn’t know. I try to be kind every day and I do succeed sometimes. I’ve been kind when I help people with understanding words and spelling and math, so they can understand and get questions right. I think we can advance kindness by helping other people and risking a bit more for other people and saving people from being homeless. —**Ayaan Riaz**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Kindness is a good influence for younger kids. If you show a bad attitude near a child, they will grow off of the bad seed. They will have bad influence near others as well. Kindness is a key to a door that you might never open or might get shut with every bad influence. But you can give someone a compliment, and you can open one door every day. Compliments and positive attitudes can lead a long way. You can sing, talk, help and do many more things to keep kind attitudes around you and it won’t cost a fortune.

—**Amaya Borrero**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

In my opinion, I believe my friends, the support, and the kindness they show me, bounces off like rays of sunlight on a mirror.

—**Madison Poole**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

It’s kind that he’s risking his life to save the kid that was in the car. He’s in danger and he’s helping him. The photographer wants to show people what it’s like to be kind. The officer stopped to help the man shave because he wants to be kind to him. —**Ayleen Rodriguez**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

I thought the photographs were good. I liked the sunset picture because it felt nice. The one with the dog showed kindness. The guy saved the woman’s mom. I help people in school by putting up their chairs and I help them with math. When people put up my chair for me it makes me feel good. Being mean keeps people from being kind to each other. Sometimes they don’t like the other person. People should be nice to each other. People are nice to each other in 5th grade. Sometimes people are mean and throw pencils. Going to therapy can make people nicer to each other.

—**Isaiah Howell**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Earlier this month, during a flood in Mexico, there was a drowning man. Rescue workers risked their lives to save this man. One worker had to step into the rushing water, despite the possibility that the current could pull him in. It was a team effort. Another rescuer helped secure him and his teammate’s footing by holding onto a tree. This life-saving effort shows the importance of stepping in when someone else is in danger. Helping others in their time of need recognizes that everyone has family and friends who care about them. When we help our friends from danger, such as a bee sting or a fall into water, we feel relieved. We would feel thankful if someone did the same for us. — **Amir Glenn, Garrett Grover, Santiago Xicotehncatl**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

I think kindness means that to be nice to one another. If someone’s backpack is on the floor and its open and they go to pick it on the right side it ends up being the wrong side and they spill everything. You go to help them pick it up. I think the panda picture represents kindness. Because the bear did not care that the bird was taking it’s fur to make it’s nest.

— **Jaylani Sanchez**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

This photo shows a grown man protecting his mother and dog through Hurricane Dorian. This article is about kindness and this is one of the best acts of kindness on the planet. Hurricane Dorian was about as wide as 23 miles in diameter. This is a very kind act and I hope more of this happens around the world. — **Jomar Lamboy**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

One thing that I did that was kind was help my friend on a game called Roblox. My friend wanted a certain room, and this random person started arguing with her. She told me and I came and tried to reason it out with the girl that was arguing, but it started more drama! But at the end we became friends and left the game. — **Morghan Prescod**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

An act of kindness I did was to help my step-brother to take out the trash. I have to clean up with my sister and go to the store with my mom.

— **Meghan Serrano**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Kindness: It makes people feel nice! Honestly, I like being kind, and I hope people like being kind as well! I think that kindness showing up in the world is like somebody helping a girl’s mother from Hurricane Dorian, and the girl is holding a dog. I like this picture because it has key details to show why it has KINDNESS! This picture is just touching, and I love it.

— **Norah Matz**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

I show kindness by helping my parents out with the groceries. When I go to the store, I help my parents shop. Every time my dad comes back from the grocery store, I go downstairs and help him out. It’s important to help with groceries because they have done most of the work. Also they are really tired from walking in the store so I help bring the groceries in the house.

— **Melvin Ramos, Hector Cruz**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

The bus photo was cool and looks fun. Why? Because being in water is fun because you can swim, jump in, play games like throwing a ball up and someone catches the ball pretty much like hot potato.

— **Nayleen Rodriguez**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Kindness is very important because if there is no kindness the world will fall apart. Everybody will be bad to each other there will be no respect. If there is no kindness people won’t stick together. Something that people could do to help kindness is to respect each other more. Some types of kindness are giving people food helping people save people. For example, Harry Potter helps people respect them. Snape is one of the most kind people because even though he did not know Harry that much, he still protected him for seven years. Harry in that time was not the greatest to him. — **Omar Dweck**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Kindness to me is something very important. One type is how you act to other people. Another type is that people respect the rules and not break them Like a person helping a homeless man to shave or help them in general. Like a person getting in a car crash then another person stopping, and saving them and calling 911. — **Anthony Martinez**, *East Rock Record Opinion*

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