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**“Ride for the Dream”**

**Fall Family Bike Ride**  
to benefit The Children's  
Dream Foundation!

Please join us

**Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**10 am to 1:30 pm**

on the Bronx River Parkway

For more information and to register in advance, please call 763-0409 or visit our website. There will be a raffle, free t-shirts for the kids and refreshments for all our participants. Minimum donation \$40 per family, \$15 per individual. Event sponsorships start at \$200. Come out, have fun and support our work for children's health care in our communities.



For more details, visit our website  
[www.childrensdreamfoundation.org](http://www.childrensdreamfoundation.org)

## Does Your Child Get Enough Sleep?

On any given school day trying to wake up your teenager for 7:30 AM class is a difficult task. Come Saturday, your teenager is exhausted from late nights and early mornings and so he or she may arise finally sometime around lunch, in an effort to make up for lost sleep from the week before. Yet even with two weekend days of luxurious sleep until midday, waking up with the sun on Monday still seems to be painful. This series of events is played out all across the nation, but some communities are trying to make a change.

We are just beginning to understand the mechanics and utility of sleep. There are estimates that over 60% of teens are sleepy during the day and that less than 1 in 6 teens are getting the recommended 9-¼ hours of sleep each night. Lack of sleep has been implicated in many health problems such as depression, mood disorders, and attention deficit disorder. Proper sleep is required for growth because many hormones are secreted in a circadian rhythm that can be disrupted by irregular or poor sleep cycles. Compounding the problem is that the natural sleep cycle shifts to falling asleep later in the evening and waking later in the morning during adolescence. Most teenagers try to combat this with caffeine, a very effective stimulant that can further aggravate sleep irregularity. Finally, the weekend sleep-ins further damage the sleep cycle by not allowing an earlier cycle to take effect. Drowsiness can be a serious problem at work and on the roads. Staying up all night has the equivalent motor effect of being drunk.

Some communities, recognizing that teens naturally sleep later and so will benefit from a later school start time are doing just that. Current start times for high schools were developed around the bus schedules of the entire school district. The baseline assumption is that the younger kids need



more sleep and more help in the morning, so the older kids need to be delivered to school first. While it is correct that younger children require more sleep, they also go to sleep earlier. School boards looking to acknowledge teen's natural tendencies have rearranged bus schedules so that high schools have the latest starting time. It is unclear what effects these later start times are having. Opponents claim it merely pushes back the whole day, or that activities need to be shortened in the afternoon. Limited studies have shown that teens go to bed at the same time, so they end up sleeping more. Ultimately, it would be expected to have a positive effect on school performance, but that has yet to be convincingly demonstrated.

As we continue to expand our knowledge of the benefits of sleep, it is clear that most adolescents do not get enough. We know that sleep deprivation has negative consequences in and out of the classroom. Current school schedules are based on logistic and economic reasons. The “school start” debate is just beginning as educators and community leaders start to appreciate the accumulating evidence on sleep and teens. More information can be found at the National Sleep Foundation website: [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org).

*Contributed by Daniel Rauch, MD, Director, Pediatric Hospitalist Program, NYU School of Medicine.*



## June Event Raises \$100,000 for Area Children

Many thanks to all who helped make our June 2<sup>nd</sup> benefit at Shenorock Shore Club in Rye a success. Despite less than perfect weather, everyone had a wonderful time! Your contributions are already at work through recent grants made to Hudson Valley Hospital Center, Northern Westchester Hospital, and Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center.

## Video Games: A Follow-Up to Our Spring Newsletter Article

Most parents would do anything in their power to make sure their child grows up happy, healthy, and successful. It is a mystery then why so many parents keep purchasing video games for their children. Here are some points to consider:

- **The Columbine shooters were addicted to the video game "Doom".** Many parents may not be aware of the negative effects that video games are having on children today, or even the amount of violence involved in many of these games. Studies show that when children and young adults play violent video games their aggressive behavior increases. For years it has been said that violence in movies and on TV can cause violence in children. Video game makers take it one step up as the player is immersed in the game and rewarded directly (points, advancement, visual stimulation) for committing violent acts.
- **Children can become addicted to video games just as they can become addicted to a substance or gambling.** Criteria for excessive computer and video game playing were developed in accordance with the criteria for dependency and pathological gambling - that's a scary thought.



- **Video games can trigger seizures.** Many video games actually have this warning right on the box.
- **The amount of time spent playing video games is positively correlated with getting into physical fights.**

With all this information, it almost seems crazy that these video games are even reaching children today. Many of these effects can possibly be prevented if parents would regulate playing time better and read and comply with the rating system found on games. For more information, please go to [www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org).

*Contributed by Susan Korte*



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