

Obesity, a growing concern in America

By Daniel Sardinha

American scales keep going up up up. Why? America has a serious obesity problem on its hands. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH) being overweight means someone's body weight is at least 10 percent over his or her recommended weight. Obesity is more than ever being associated with health complications. Individuals who are obese have a 50-100% increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals at a "healthy" weight. Both adults and children are at serious risk for health complications if they are obese. Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80% if one or more parent is overweight or obese.

Unfortunately obesity can be a perpetuating cycle. As shown above adolescents are more likely to become obese if their parents are, most likely due to their parent's lifestyle including eating habits. The incidence of heart disease (heart attack, congestive heart failure, sudden cardiac death, angina or chest pain, and abnormal heart rhythm) is increased in persons who are overweight or obese.

"Obesity in America has reached epidemic proportions. As we continue to raise awareness about this urgent health issue, it is important to remember that combating

obesity will require a coordinated effort- together, we can take small steps to beat the condition with a balance combination of behavior changes." E. Chester Ridgeway, M.D.

Beyond the obvious health effects, obesity can have even crueler social effects, especially on kids. Serious self esteem issues as well as being subjected to malicious jokes are both products of being obese.

Sophomore Sohil Khurana said this. "Although I've only been in this school for two years it is apparent that those that are overweight are the butt of too many jokes. By making fun of obesity it only makes it worse. It can do damage to a person's psyche." Obesity can have serious ramifications on a person's psychological state. Obese individuals can become depressed because of their physical state, leading to other significant health problems.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that obesity doesn't affect everyone here at PHS. Schools are clamping down on what they sell, especially soda. It is not inconceivable to think that one day, and possibly very soon, the selling of soda and all product containing excessive fat will be prohibited in schools.

In today's world it is so hard to meet society's expectations. The pressure to be attractive can sometimes be overwhelming. Too often kids turn to food for comfort its time they turn to each other.

Robotics *cont' from page 1*

in Atlanta, Georgia. The team not only won regionals, but the General Motors Industrial Design Award, which recognizes the form and function of machines that effectively meet the event's robotic challenges.

The event was to acknowledge not only robotic machinery, but design excellence, competitive play, sportsmanship, and embodying the spirit of the competition.

The Robot the team created was a five-foot, one-hundred- thirty pound Road Warrior 9 that came in a kit. The team had six weeks to complete the robot. The robot took part in a game called "Aim High," which is like basketball; the robot must throw balls into three different goals.

The team qualified for the April 27 through 29 national competition held at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

The competition will not be easy considering they will be competing against 44 of the best teams in the country. Teno later added, "We did well at regionals, so I think we'll do just as well at nationals, but either way it should be a great experience."

Over 1,000 teams from seven different countries competed in 33 regional competitions for a chance to win some of the over \$7 million in scholarships.

Donation *cont' from page 1*

Portsmouth businessman.

This \$55,000 was raised in variety of ways. Firstly, Salve donated the location, as well as provided a reduced rate on the food. In addition, the catering price was reduced because Fitzgerald organized a group of PHS teachers to volunteer as the wait staff. "In the spirit of the evening, all of the teachers wore sports ties to show their devotion to the Gym cause," remarked Fitzgerald.

All those who attended the gala purchased a \$100 entrance ticket and \$90 of the \$100 ticket fee went directly to the gym funds. In addition, attendees could purchase pins and flashing stars at the doors for about \$5. The bulk of the money raised at the Gala, however, came from two events: a silent auction and a fund & item table.

For the silent auction, all of the items were donated. These items ranged from Red Sox tickets, to vacations, and local artwork. Shelia Pedrotty, the Gala chairwoman, explained that "people came up [to the silent auction] during the period to bid, and [the items] went to the highest bidder."

Although the silent auction was very successful, the Fund & Item table was even more successful. This table consisted of a list of needs for the new gym complied by athletic director Mike Lunney. On this list were lockers, scoreboards, time

clocks, basketball hoops and backboards. People were asked to literally fund these items. If a person paid in full for any particular item, their name will be placed on the item when it is put to use in the gym.

Pedrotty commented that this table was "very successful and [raised] a good portion of the [night's] proceeds ... was where we made the most money." However, the School Department and the Gymnasium Committee will decide how the fundraised money will be spent on the gym.

The Gala marked the "beginning of other fundraisings events," assured Pedrotty. "For our next project, [we want] to get the high school kids involved." Although she would not confirm any future fundraising events, as they are still in the works, Pedrotty did hint at the possibility of a summer golf tournament.

The Gymnasium Fundraising Committee intends to continue their fundraising efforts even after the gym opens in September. They plan on raising enough money to at least finish the mezzanine, which will be a fitness center on the second level of the gym, overlooking the basketball courts. Pedrotty confidently remarked that they will "continue fundraising until Portsmouth High has everything it needs for the gymnasium ... [the Gala] is only the end of Phase one."

The Patriot Ledger Staff

Editors-in-chief

Daniel Sardinha
Brad Updegrave

News Editor

Daniel Sardinha

Features Editor

Brad Updegrave

Sports Editor

Ben Bowman

Opinion Editor

Natalie Pike

Community Editor

Helena Touhey

Gym Editor

Chad DeSisto

Contributing Writers

Chelsea Amaral
Slader Lyell
Sohil Khurana
Mike Lynch

Contributing Artists

Sarah Handren
Grace Han
Christopher Andrews

Sleep *cont' from page 1*

drive drowsy at least once a week, while 5% of these students have actually fallen asleep at the wheel during the past year.

Most people would just recommend that teens go to bed earlier. However, recent research has proven that it is physically harder for teens to go to bed earlier and wake up early. Due to research led by Mary Carskadon, director of the Bradley Hospital Sleep Laboratory in Providence, researchers have found that "as children mature, the chemically driven pressure to sleep builds up more slowly, as a result, teen just don't get sleepy until later ... the older teens are, the later their production of the sleep regulating hormone melatonin kicks in during the evening, and the later in the morning production shuts down." So, essentially, teenagers biologically need to go to bed later and wake up later.

So how should students here ensure themselves a decent night's sleep when they have to be up early the next morning? For starters, going to bed at the same time, and then waking up at the same time, every day will enable their body to create and regulate a specific sleep cycle. In addition, it is recommend that teenagers not sleep in too late on weekends, because this will disturb their body cycle, making it harder to wake up for school on Monday morning.

However, if they have trouble falling asleep at night, there are several things they can do to make it easier to fall asleep. These include taking bath, reading, listening to soft music, or meditating. In addition, making a to-do list will also help to clear the mind before sleeping.

Doing these things before sleeping each night, even though they may not be getting nine hours of sleep a night, will at least ensure a decent night's sleep.

FRANK'S AUTO REPAIR



FOREIGN AND
DOMESTIC REPAIRS FACTORY
TRAINED SPECIALIST

ROCKY

595 PARK AVE.

401-683-3064

PORTSMOUTH, RI 02871

WEST MAIN PIZZA

Voted "Best Specialty Pizza"

2001•2002•2003

Newport Winter Festival

Winner - Best Calzones

RI Monthly

Specialty Pizzas & Calzones

Beer and Wine



Gift Certificates

1620 West Main Rd., Portsmouth

683-1492