

## Sleep Deprivation Nation: The Consequences of Sacrificing Rest

By Jade Polay



It is 1:30 in the morning and the likelihood of sleeping seems inconceivable. Unimaginable; considering the fact that you have a major English essay, Pre-calculus and United States history homework due in less than seven hours. Your parents may accuse you of poor time management skills. Your teachers may accuse you of failing to plan ahead for the future. The truth of the matter is you were not able to start any of your homework assignments until well into the evening, considering the vicissitude of activities, volunteer projects, and sports meetings you had to attend after school. Why are students subjecting themselves to such demanding and time consuming schedules? Easy answer: for the sake of building their resumes, increasing their chances of being admitted at highly selective colleges, and as a method to proving their ability to multitask. Sleep scientists and pediatricians alike recommend that adolescents get a minimum of eight to nine hours of sleep.

Sleep scientists emphasize how important sleep is in relation to an adolescent's development, health, and overall well being. How is a student who is completing homework until well after three o'clock in the morning supposed to function throughout the day on such a little amount of sleep? A student most certainly cannot perform at their potential if they are sleep deprived, and this is one of the problems facing America's youth. At the present time, students are so incredibly driven to succeed, and swamped with so many responsibilities and pressures, that they often find it too difficult to make time for sleep, and not enough time to accomplish tasks throughout the day.

Students are not adhering to pediatricians' and health professionals' guidelines, because they are lacking time management skills. Many students also suffer from procrastination. Studies by the National Sleep Foundation have shown that less than twenty percent of teenagers receive the recommended eight to nine hours of sleep during the school week. That is an incredibly shocking statistic considering how many teenagers live in the United States. It is hard to imagine that well over three quarters of America's youth is suffering from sleep deprivation. The National Sleep Foundation has also declared that students are not receiving enough sleep for genetic purposes. The Foundation and health care experts alike emphasized in a recent December 2007 report how teenagers are genetically predisposed to fall asleep at a later time than other age groups. This is one of the contributing factors as to why teenagers are unable to sleep, and why they are developing sleeping disorders.

I am sure that many students at ElRo have pulled an "all-nighter" here or there. Although it may not seem detrimental to your health if you stay up until three o'clock finishing homework, the truth of the matter is that it is very consequential. According to Jodi Mindell, an associate director of the Sleep Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, "sleep serves not only a restorative function for adolescents' bodies and brains, but it is also a key time when they process what they've learned during the day." By constantly depriving ourselves of our precious sleeping time, we are not only damaging our bodies, but we are allowing ourselves to function at a lower level, and decreasing our ability to pay attention the following day. We are decreasing our ability to focus and pay attention by only sleeping for a mere four or six hours per night, and studies have shown that such behavior can contribute to depression and other illnesses.

*The Posse Scholarship was awarded to two senior from our school this year!*

## The Posse Scholarship

By Ariel Henriquez

*"Posse is a place where your guard can be dropped, no matter how long your back has been turned."*  
-Colin O'Malley, student at Vanderbilt University

The Posse Program is a well renowned program throughout the United States. For more than 18 years, The Posse Foundation has discovered exceptional students who are more than thankful for their nomination into the program. Seniors are granted this miraculous opportunity to win a scholarship for one of the many prestigious colleges that coincide with this program. The scholarship grants a four-year, fully paid tuition covering up to \$100,000.

Babson College, Brandeis University, Vanderbilt University, Trinity College are just a few of the top-ranked colleges that each scholar is able to attend. Two students in Eleanor Roosevelt High School, May Aung and Maya Benayoun, were nominated, and are now enrolled to the college of their dreams. The Posse Foundation wishes to "expand the pool from which top colleges and universities can recruit outstanding young leaders from diverse backgrounds", help make campuses more welcoming for "people from all backgrounds", and to help the young scholars become leaders in their future workforce.

May Aung, a senior who was nominated and approved by the Posse Foundation, allowing her the opportunity to attend Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Thanks to May and Maya, ElRo students are now able to see what it takes to be nominated. "Be yourself," says May. She actually put quite an emphasis on this. When asked what the Posse Foundation is looking for, May replied, "leaders, teamwork and people who are socially skilled." When

## The Threat of School Shootings

By Rowena Wu

Over the past year, a few public shooting incidents have occurred. No one will ever know for sure what was going through these individuals' heads when committing the selfish crimes that they did, but while many of them kill themselves in their rampages against society, the public is left to determine an unanswerable question: How can we prevent these terrible events from occurring?

Americans have the right to gun ownership, yet some individuals take advantage of that right, and they use it for unnecessary reasons. They don't take it seriously, and use it to kill the innocent people that they deem responsible for their social issues and unbalances. Americans have a lot of freedom compared to other countries, in which gun ownership is extremely difficult to come by, or citizens aren't allowed to own guns or weapons at all. Owning a gun can have positive and negative sides. On one hand, we see some people and their use of firearms to cause many deaths of innocent . . .

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asked about the interview, it was learned that there are not one, but three interviews in the process.

The first interview contains about 300 people, and they are each assigned to look people in the eye, act as if they are in love, have group discussions and perform a skit. It may sound a bit irrelevant to the college admissions process, but in fact, the students who are able to fully complete the tasks are the ones who show the most potential in being a leader. The second interview is completely individual. It is thirty minutes, and at this point is binding. Like early decision, once at this stage, the scholar has signed a contract stating they will attend the school.

The third, and final stage of the process is the interview with the school of your choice. "It's a quick process," said May Aung. "From about October to December." May's maturity was clear during the interview, and when asked if she had any regrets, she replied, "I'm glad I signed it." It seems that the Posse Foundation not only serves as a catalyst in financial payment, but as well as a guide to young prominent students ready to embrace an independent lifestyle.

ON GETTING IN...

"I tried to be calm and as level-headed as possible."

ON GOING...

"I'm really excited about going."

The Posse Scholarship is evidently life changing, and May Aung and Maya Benayoun are both congratulated from us here at the ElRo Pawprint! "The title of the program reflects the scholarships purpose," said May, and we as students should look up to these role models here at our school. Congratulations to both and we wish you the best of luck!

## Interview With A Teacher: Mr. G

By Kyra Gembka

*Gustavo B. Goncalves was born in Brazil, where he attended primary and secondary school. His diverse academic background in Economics, Mathematics and International Studies has enabled him to share with the class his passion for Math from a wordly perspective. Mr. Goncalves, also known as "Mr. G.," has a B.S. in Mathematics and a M.A. in Mathematics Education from Brooklyn College.* (Taken from school website)

**Q. Where did you grow up and what type of activities were you involved in?**

A. I grew up in a very small town within Brazil named Governador Valadores, I'm a small town boy. I lived there until I was about fifteen years old. At fifteen, I moved into a larger city named Belo Horizonte where I wanted to pursue basketball. That was my dream, it didn't work out (he chuckles). After the basketball plan didn't work out, my parents wanted me to go to college. I went to a college in Brazil for about 3 ½ years where I studied economics, once I realized I didn't like economics, I quit. In 2001 I moved to the United States where I returned to college and began to study mathematics.

**Q. What was your high school experience in Brazil like? Is it much different than high school in the U.S.?**

In Brazil, high school lasts for a much shorter amount of time than in the U.S., but it is a wonderful experience. First of all, high school lasts for only three years and during these years, the school day does not last as long it does here. Usually a student would only have to stay in school until about one o'clock, but they will take many classes within that time frame. This large amount of classes offered and taken caused the curriculum to be more rigorous than it is here. This rigor has decreased in Brazil now, especially because they have converted to the American ways of education.

**Q. When you were younger, did you expect to become a math teacher?**

No, never. In 2002 I had gotten a job to teach and SAT course because I needed the money. When I walked into the classroom that first day, I had absolutely no idea of what to do. Standing in front of that class. . . was scary, but I *Continued on page 8...*

### The Chess Club Champions

By Isabel Stern

Every Tuesday after school, a few students go to Mr. Goncalves' classroom in 306. They play chess with one another, and learn new techniques of the game. Ranging from the beginner level to advanced, the Chess Club has already been subject to great victories in a local tournament.

Once a month, the students travel to Mary Bergtraum High School in New York City's Chinatown. The high school holds a monthly tournament for the youth. At the tournament, the EIRo students compete with other local high school. Many of our school's chess representatives have already shown promise with their myriad successes.

On the second attended competition, occurring on Friday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, six students attended, three of them winning medals for their skill. The victors were: Ying Kang Duan, of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade won silver in advanced; Feng Chen, a senior, received gold in the beginner's class; and Philip Myers, a sophomore, who received a bronze medal in the beginner's level.

The previous month, sophomore Andrew Feely received a silver medal in the beginner's class. He had started playing only three weeks prior to the competition. Mr. Gustavo Goncalves, one of the school's math teachers, had stated that since Feely's win, the player's performance in geometry had also significantly improved.

Mr. Goncalves himself has never played chess competitively, but he has a great amount of excitement for the game and for the triumphs of the young competitors. The club itself was the idea of Duan, who organized and helps coach the group. Chess is known for teaching tactics and logic, and it is a great addition to one's extracurricular activities.



### City Nights

A Short Story

By Matthew S. Hays

A boy sits on a crossroad. Alone atop a lonely curb on a lonely street in a lonely world. His face lies deep in a book, feet—even miles— of story as a boundary between him and reality.

He sits under a streetlight, a speck of bright glow on the edge of darkness. Infinite black swirls and mixes all around him, stretching out endlessly upward into the night sky. This dark is different than most, it does not harbor fear and uncertainty. It is the dark of a sleepy bedroom deep in the night, the clear deep blackness of a warm summer memory, it is a cloudy velvet, surrounding and comforting.

A dull ache burns in the boy's legs as he stands off the curb instinctively. A bright white pierces the darkness and ensnares him as the monolithic bus pulls up. Surprised at his own luck he whispers a solitary comment under his breath to the darkness. "If only...it were so easy."

He stumbles to a seat as the luminous vessel bounces and bustles through the empty night with its new cargo. The boy watches as light dances around the bus. Fluorescent oranges, cool azure, prominent reds and all shades of green play a tango of familiarity behind the cool pane of glass.

It comes to a screeching halt, throwing everything inside forward a step. The boy steps out into his home, a small island of peace in a sea of calamity, an edge-world thriving on a threshold. If one were to look to the east, all one would see is passionate insanity, a sound so loud and persistent it touches all. Conversely, if one were to look west, one would see empty mediocrity, a life so common and predictable it is known in the minds of all.

Layers of satisfaction place themselves on the boy as he walks through his familiar home, a traveler in a world of light, dark, fear, and love. All around people can be seen, chatting away in the onyx air, satellites with no focus, waiting for satisfaction to shine on them.

Rest is finally within reach. Keys jingle, doorknobs turn and feet are wiped. The boy slows to a curious, motionless stance and takes one look back before ending his seemingly astral journey. He saw an infinite darkness, a place where shadows cross on the cold ground, a world where demons scream and angels sleep.

He saw something new, not only new to him but also new to everything. He saw that in all this madness and separation, for while a boy rode home alone on a bus, everything was right and still. For one breath, happiness hung ripe, awaiting any who wished to pick it off.

"If only..." whispered the boy,  
"If only it were so easy..."

