

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- New wing open on campus for the Fall
- NEW service organizations on campus
- PSAT in October
- Parent volunteers needed
- 8 new teachers hired at New Tech High

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# New Tech News

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

OCTOBER 2008

## Second Year at Manor New Tech High

Wow! What an inspirational year it was for Manor New Technology High School in our opening year. Our State Assessment TAKs Scores reinforced our instructional model of Project Based Instruction with scores in ELA 90, Social Studies 95, Science 80, and Math 69. In addition to academic gains, MNTH is proud to highlight the highest attendance in the District of 97.3%.

As we move into our second year we will be bringing in another 100 freshman that will bring our grades levels to 9,10, and 11. With the addition of the incoming freshman class we have added several key personnel to complement our already recognized strong teachers. Manor New Technology High School is proud to announce that 100% of our teachers returned to teach for the 2008-2009 school

year. With the addition of our spectacular new staff, which includes UTeach graduates, experienced lead teachers in Math, Science, and English Language Arts, a Spanish/



**Students attended the ECS National forum on education policy—Bobby Gosey, Luis Flores, Paul Boecker, Amber Hutchinson, Jenna Holt**

French teacher, a Manager of the Texas High School Project Evaluation and graduate from the LBJ School of Public Policy, and an engineer of 7 years from National Instru-

ments we look forward to once again having one of the strongest academic staffs with half of the teaching staff at MNTH having advance degrees. This year MNTH will introduce Dual Credit classes for the junior class.

Our educational and business partnership has continued to grow and we look forward to formalizing many of our relationships to enhance MNTH and Manor Independent School District. Manor New Technology High School should be an exciting and dynamic school this year and we look forward to making significant strides in student achievement and District success in 2008-2009 as we share best practices in "OUR HOUSE" with all MISD campuses.

—Steven Zipkes, Principal

## Sophomore of the Year Competition

The Kiwanis Club of Manor is hosting the "Sophomore of the Year" competition with all three high schools in Manor ISD.

Applications are available from the school counselor or by contacting the Kiwanis Club Scholarship Chairman, Allen Ambuhl at: aambuhl@aol.com

Or, by calling 278-0441.

The competition is open to all students, not just those with a great GPA. The essay focuses on community involvement, leadership ability, and volunteer efforts.

One student from MISD will be selected to go on to compete with 17 other high schools (approximately 400

students) in the region. The winner will receive a plaque, letter and \$600 scholarship. The Kiwanis Club will also select the top 3 students from Manor and will present awards at a special ceremony on Thursday, December 11th.

**Good luck!**



If you would like to receive calls about upcoming Parent meetings, please contact Merry Rightmer, 272-8386

## Parent Volunteers Needed

Join the PIC (parent involvement committee) and you can share your expertise in:

- Fundraising
- PR/communication & newsletter
- Hospitality
- Special projects

If you would like to receive e-mails about upcoming parent meetings, please

contact Merry Rightmer at: [rightmer@austin.rr.com](mailto:rightmer@austin.rr.com) or call her at: 272-8386.

We always appreciate the help of bilingual parents at school events. Your time is a valuable resource and greatly appreciated by the staff as a donation. Of course, you can also donate items to the school at any time during the school year.

Mary Mobley and Claudia Acevedo **need parents** to help **get books cataloged**, marked with lexiles, and cards placed in them for student check out.

\*\*Join the PIC on **Facebook!** Just search for Les Simpson or Manor New Tech High School.

facebook

**Teen Dating Abuse Questions:** Does your boyfriend OR girlfriend:

- Look at you or act in ways that scare you?
- Act jealous or possessive?
- Put you down or criticize you?
- Try to control where you go, what you wear or what you do?
- Text or IM you excessively?
- Blame you for "making" them treat you badly?
- Threaten to kill or hurt you or themselves if you leave them?
- Try to stop you from seeing or talking to friends and family?
- Try to force or guilt you into sexual activity?

## Teen Dating Abuse: The Basics

Nationally, 1 in 3 teenagers report knowing a friend who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their boyfriend or girlfriend.

Whether you know them personally or not, teens at your own school are in unhealthy relationships involving control, physical abuse and other behaviors that can follow them into adulthood as perpetrators or victims of relationship abuse.

Teen dating abuse isn't an argument every once in a while, or a bad mood after a bad day. Dating or relationship abuse is a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior. It can cause injury and even death, and though these are often the stories that make the news, it doesn't have to be physical. It can be verbal and emotional abuse - constant in-

sults, isolation from family and friends, controlling what someone wears, and sexual assault.

Constant texting, phone calls, or embarrassing postings on MySpace or Facebook pages can also be a form of abuse. While communicating online or via text message is normal, it can be used as a way to monitor, control, or even blackmail a girlfriend or boyfriend. A 2007 survey from Teenage Research Unlimited found that 71% of teens regard boyfriends/girlfriends spreading rumors about them on cell phones and social networking sites as a serious problem. Another 68% of teens say boyfriends/girlfriends sharing private or embarrassing pictures/videos on cell phones and computers is also a serious concern.

In its first year of operation, loveisrespect, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline has already seen a steady stream of calls and chats from both teens and parents. Visitors to the [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) website continue to grow as word gets out about their special brand of advocacy, "peer advocacy". Peer advocates, between the ages of 16-24, offer support and referrals through the 24/7 telephone helpline and a live chat, between the hours of 4pm CST – 2 am.

Review the questions that can help you decide if your relationship is healthy or not. If you answer yes to even one of the questions, consider talking to a peer advocate by calling 1-866-331-9474 (1-866-331-8453 TTY) or chatting live at [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org).

# Funding Factory fund raiser for MNTH

The Parent Involvement Committee will be registering Manor New Tech High with Funding-Factory. This is no ordinary fund raiser where students/parents are required to go out and sell items to family and friends. Since 1997, Funding-Factory has provided non-profit groups and schools with the opportunity to earn rewards or cash for their school/organization through recycling. All the materials needed for the fund raiser are provided through Funding Factory includ-

ing promotional materials and support, UPS shipping labels, and online accounting for easy tracking of rewards. Funding Factory has a rewards points program with many items that can be order for the school, but it also allows for cash rewards. The school can be set up as a drop off point for ink cartridges, but we can also ask businesses in the community if they would like to be a sponsor. They can also register directly through Funding Factory and receive all the materi-

als for shipping. MNTH would then receive the rewards as those shipments are received, or we could simply ask a business if we can set up a box that would be checked by the MNTH parents. One easy place to start would be at your own work, if it is allowed. Think about it, a fundraiser where you would not be asking your co-workers to buy something from your child, but to drop off something that they were going to throw in the trash anyway.



**“Research shows that when we try to do more at once, performance suffers.”**

## Multitasking Teens May Be Muddling Their Brains

Doing several things at once can feel so productive. But scientists say switching rapidly between tasks can actually slow us down. Even though modern technology allows people to perform more tasks at the same time, juggling tasks can make our brains lose connections to important information. Which means, in the end, it takes longer because we have to remind our brains what we were working on.

Zach Weinberg, a junior at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, sits in front of his computer in his family home in suburban Maryland.

Within the span of seconds, Zach switches between e-mail, iTunes, Facebook, a computer word puzzle game and messaging his buddy online. Somewhere amid the flurry, Zach manages to squeeze in some homework, too.

While he is working on an algebra calculation, an instant message from his buddy Alex

Donesky pops up on the screen. They chat about a French assignment for a few minutes, exchanging quips about Robespierre and Napoleon. Then Zach shifts his attention back to math, but not before changing to his favorite band on iTunes.

For the record, Alex and Zach are good students. And obviously they're good multitaskers, too.

Alex's mom, Barbara Donesky, says she's dazzled by the skill her son has developed, and how quickly he can click around on the computer and make things happen. But she's afraid Alex is losing out on other skills. "I want him to be able to concentrate. I want him to be able to focus," she says. "I mean, it's my personal belief that all these things just fragment your ability to concentrate. And I see it in myself, you know, since I've started e-mailing and using the computer very regularly."

### Multitasking: 'A Brownout In The Brain'

Scientists say she has reason to be worried — although there's not much data yet on teens. David Meyer at the University of Michigan has spent the past few decades studying multitasking — mostly in adults. "For tasks that are at all complicated, no matter how good you have become at multitasking, you're still going to suffer hits against your performance. You will be worse compared to if you were actually concentrating from start to finish on the task," Meyer says.

Multitasking causes a kind of brownout in the brain. Meyer says all the lights go dim because there just isn't enough power to go around. So, the brain starts shutting things down — things like neural connections to important information.

When Alex clicks on a message, his brain starts losing the connections it was using for his French assignment. The pathway to

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Robespierre — fading fast. The path to Napoleon, not so clear anymore. To restore those connections, Meyer says, Alex will have to repeat much of the thought process that created them in the first place.

The technical name for creating, or recreating, these neural pathways is "spreading activation." It involves building connections step by step. Meyer says it's similar to what we do when we free associate. "I say to you, 'What do you think of when I say the word apple to you?' And you start vibing on apple. 'Oh, apple's a fruit, it fell on Newton's head. Newton was a physicist. He invented the first theory of gravity.' And on and on," Meyer says.

When we're interrupted, re-establishing those connections can take seconds or hours. "It goes on subconsciously and eventually, if I'm lucky, I get back up to speed with what I was thinking about before," Meyer says.

### Good In Small Doses

Zach concedes that multitasking might make him less efficient. But his friend Alex maintains that, in small doses, multitasking can help him stay alert — like when he listens to music and does a math problem at the same time.

"If I have only one thing, I drift off a little bit," Alex says. "But if there's something else going on in the background that I can just sort of block out, I feel like I can concentrate on something more — whereas if I'm only doing one thing, it's harder for me to concentrate."

Scientists say Zach has a point. Studies show it's pretty easy for us to keep music in the background when we focus on something else. But when something in the background forces itself into your consciousness, you do get distracted. Such as when your computer announces: "You've got mail."

"Everybody does get distracted by it. But most people learn to get used to that distraction and when to say 'no, I've got to work, and I'm not going to give into this,'" Zach says.

### Fighting Distractions

Saying no to distractions depends, in part, on being able to control your impulses — something that's not fully developed in a teenager's brain.

And Alex says it's not easy for him. He says it's hard to give your full attention to any one thing when you're used to monitoring a screen full of options. "You're teaching yourself to give 10 percent to each little icon. And then click away when there's a moment's pause," Alex says.

In fact, Meyer says, our brains can get hooked to where "they literally need a fix of multitasking."

### Addicted To Juggling Tasks?

There's not much research on the addictive nature of multitasking. But Meyer likens it to playing video games or skydiving: We all get a buzz from novelty and variety. Of course, when the stakes get higher, multitasking can stress you out.

"The brain areas that you would see light up and the biochemicals, the neurotransmitters that would be getting released would be quite different if I was an air traffic controller trying to land a whole bunch of planes at La Guardia Airport or wherever. I wouldn't be having pleasure then," Meyers says.

For teenagers like Zach and Alex, the experience of multitasking falls somewhere between the rush of skydiving and the anxiety of landing planes. Regardless, Alex says, it's all they know.

"Even for me right now — and I haven't been exposed to it that long — it's already natural to multitask in these ways," he says. "Like your will is, your heart is in that place where you are just wanting to multitask, and you're conditioned to it. That's how you're going to keep going."

Even, he says, when you don't want to.

Article by **Jon Hamilton**

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