

# Whyville

Dispatch

APRIL/MAY 2007  
HEALTH LIFESTYLE ENTERTAINMENT

## SMOKING CIGARETTES

Get the right answers

## RED VS GREEN APPLES

Which is better for you?

## IT'S THE FOOD YOU EAT

Ways to keep your heart happy

# VANESSA HUDGENS

High School Musical's Valedictorian

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## Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up a *Whyville Dispatch*! We hope you enjoy this first issue of our magazine. Inside, we've got interviews with Vanessa Hudgens, Yao Ming and Nick Cannon. Also, we've got tips on how to eat healthy and one of our readers shares her experience of finding out she has diabetes.

Every quarter, we'll bring you reports, interviews, tips, and more. They won't be about things that \*we\* want you to know; they will be on topics that middle schoolers have told us they care about: health, mind, body, social, academic issues that you encounter in your daily life. Many of them will even be written by middle schoolers just like you.

The *Whyville Dispatch* is brought to you in partnership with *Whyville* the virtual world, where two million citizens, mostly middle schoolers, from all over the world come to chat, play, and learn together in an environment that's fun, safe, and free. The goal of *Whyville*, both the virtual world and the magazine, is to promote awareness, critical thinking, engagement, and communication. We believe that when you care about something, you want to be aware of the surrounding issues. You'll think carefully and critically about it. You'll want to do something about it, and you'll probably tell your friends, your parents, your teachers about it. We want you to tell \*us\* as well.

Because that's how we will come full circle to bring you the next issue of the *Dispatch*. We will basing the articles on your feedback and suggestions. So, submit your thoughts, questions, comments, and interests by emailing [dispatch@whyville.net](mailto:dispatch@whyville.net). We might put your question or idea, anonymously of course, in *Whyville* to get opinion and feedback from our two million citizens. They'll be happy to weigh in.

Think of the *Dispatch* as your conduit to be seen, be heard, and be yourself to middle schoolers around the world.

Best regards,  
*The Whyville Dispatch*



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High School Musical's Vanessa Hudgens... and more!



## EATING THE RIGHT FOODS

A balanced diet is the way to go by RayLuv13



**O**KAY, WE'RE ALL GUILTY OF IT. WE'VE ALL GONE to our kitchens, and when having the choice of fresh orange juice or soda, without hesitation, we grab the soda. We all know that the decision is going to come back to haunt us, with either stomach aches or trouble going to sleep that night with all that caffeine. But who cares! It tastes good, and that's all that matters, right?

Well, it's not so right after all. As appealing as junk food seems, it's the worst thing to be ingesting, especially at our age. A young adult's life is the most important time to be eating healthy, because what we eat now effects us for the rest of our lives.

Also, watching TV is not so good on the diet. You do not burn too many calories from being glued to the TV. Realize how you may need to fix your diet and to be healthy for the rest of your years if you eat junk food.

So, during teen years, you should be reminded of the recommended servings of food to have a healthy diet. Here are some suggestions:

**Meats: 2 to 3 servings a day. A serving at lunch, and dinner,**

is usually enough.

**Fruits and Vegetables: 5 to 10 servings a day.**

**Milk Products: Ages 10 through 16 need about 3 to 4 servings a day.**

**Grain products: 5 to 12 servings per day.**

For serving sizes, they are usually between 2 and 4 ounces (50 to 100 grams). If you're not sure, ask an adult and they should be able to help you. For snacks, try to not head towards the chips or other fatty foods. One of the best choices is yogurt, or the non-chocolate glazed granola bars. Keep the portions small so you will be able to eat a normal size at your meals.

Instead of watching TV during the day, why not go outside with some friends for a couple hours a day. It will keep you fit and you can be having fun at the same time!

It's okay to eat junk food once and a while; a bag of chips and glass of coke isn't going to hurt you; just make sure that junk food doesn't get turned into your whole diet!

So, make sure you stay fit, eat right, and you'll be on the road to a very long healthy life.

This is RayLuv13, snacking on some carrot sticks.



# YOUR HEART

It's your job to keep it healthy  
By Ethel Sale

**S**CHOOL, HOMEWORK, HOUSE CHORES, PIANO lessons, and trying to have a social life are just some of the pressures middle school kids are facing today. Believe it or not, you would not be able to juggle all of these things if you don't have a healthy heart.

The heart is really just a strong muscle that beats around 70 times a minute, 4,200 times an hour, 100,800 times a day for 365 days of the year. Now that's a powerful muscle!

Have you ever thought about the things that you should do to take care of your heart muscle to avoid heart disease? Well, according to the American Heart Association, heart disease is not just happening to adults. Kids are also at risk for heart diseases that are caused by not taking care of your heart including strokes and other cardiovascular diseases.

Since it is so important for you to take good care of your heart, here are a few cardiovascular activities you can do by yourself or with some friends:

Walking is a great way to get your heart going and blood pumping. Try walking fast for a couple of minutes, then slowing down for a few more, then back to a fast-paced walk again for 15 minutes.

Jump roping is a good cardiovascular activity. All you really need is rope and maybe 15 minutes.

Bike riding is not only something you can do to get from the point A to point B, but also good ways to increase your heart rate...don't forget your helmet!

These are just a few ideas to get you started.

# An apple a day might keep the doctor away, but why not choose the best type of apple and other fruits for a healthier lifestyle?

By Michael Fong

Looking for a healthier snack? Try packing an apple to school! Containing only 80 calories and no fat or cholesterol for medium-sized fruit, apples make a delicious alternative to less wholesome foods. They're also a good source of fiber, vitamin C and potassium.

However, all apples are not created equal. While red and green apples are similar in vitamin and mineral content, different varieties vary significantly in phytochemical content. Phytochemicals are compounds found in plants that act as antioxidants, and antioxidants play a major role in protecting against cellular damage from free radicals. Free radicals rob electrons from cellular molecules, damaging them and eventually destroying the cell. Free radical damage may be one cause of chronic diseases like cancer and diseases that occur with age.

In May 2004, *Nutritional Journal* published a review of apple phytochemicals studies conducted at Cornell University. The study revealed that apples were found to reduce the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, diabetes and asthma. They were also found to lower cholesterol and promote weight loss. However, when individual phytochemicals were isolated and tested for effects on diseases, the similar results were not shown. The difference in results indicates a connection between the phytochemicals in whole apples and their high absorption rates.

Out of 13 apple varieties, Fuji apples were found to have the top phytochemical content, followed by the Granny Smith and Red Delicious. In all apples, the peels were found to contain up to six times more antioxidant activity than the flesh. So don't peel your apples!

What about other fruits? According to a USDA report of the antioxidant activities of many fruits, blueberries topped the list, followed by blackberries, cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, plums, avocados, oranges, red grapes and cherries. We can learn a few things about nutrition from the list of the top fruits. Notice that the phytochemical activity decreases as the fruit colors move towards the

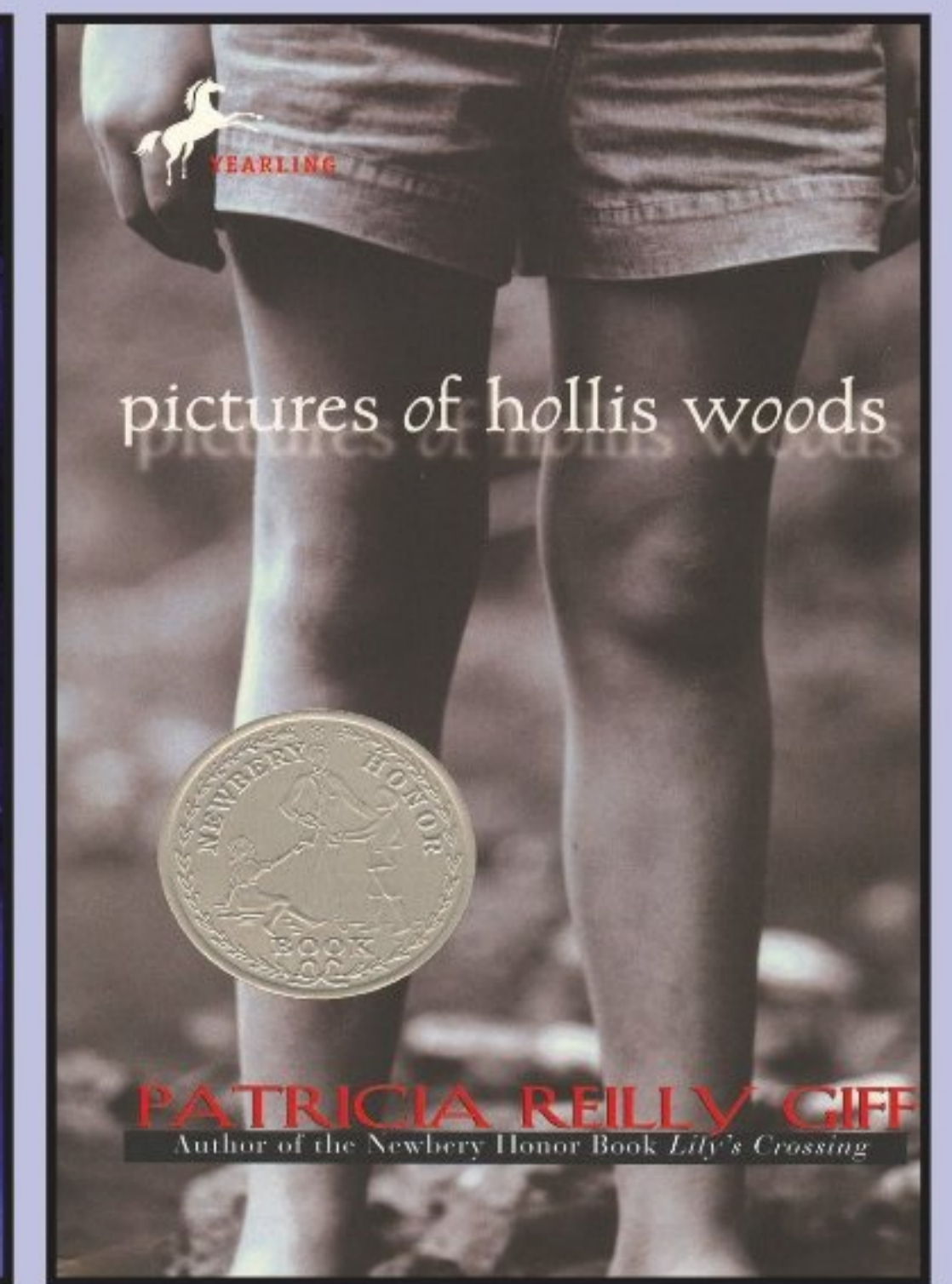
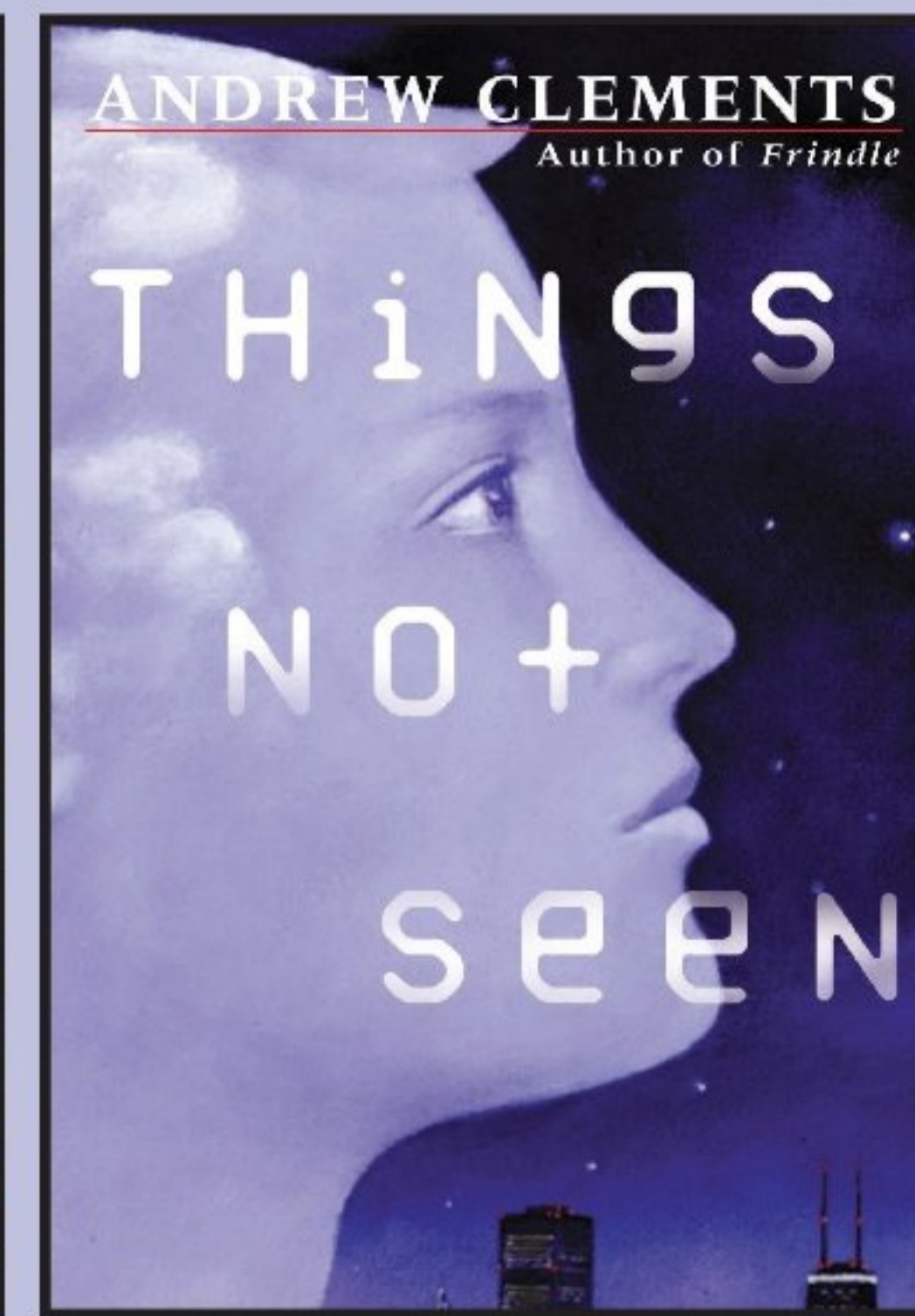
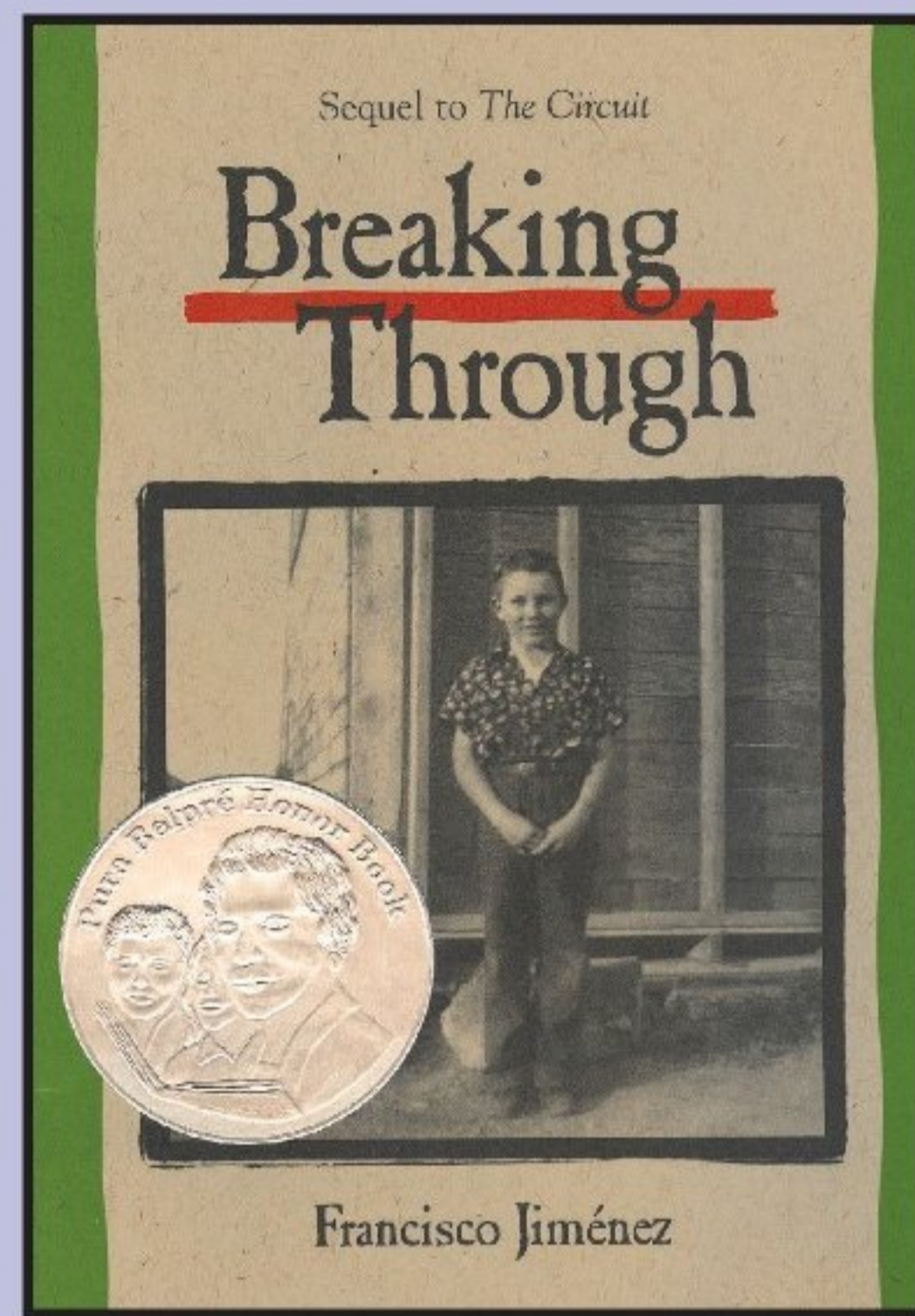
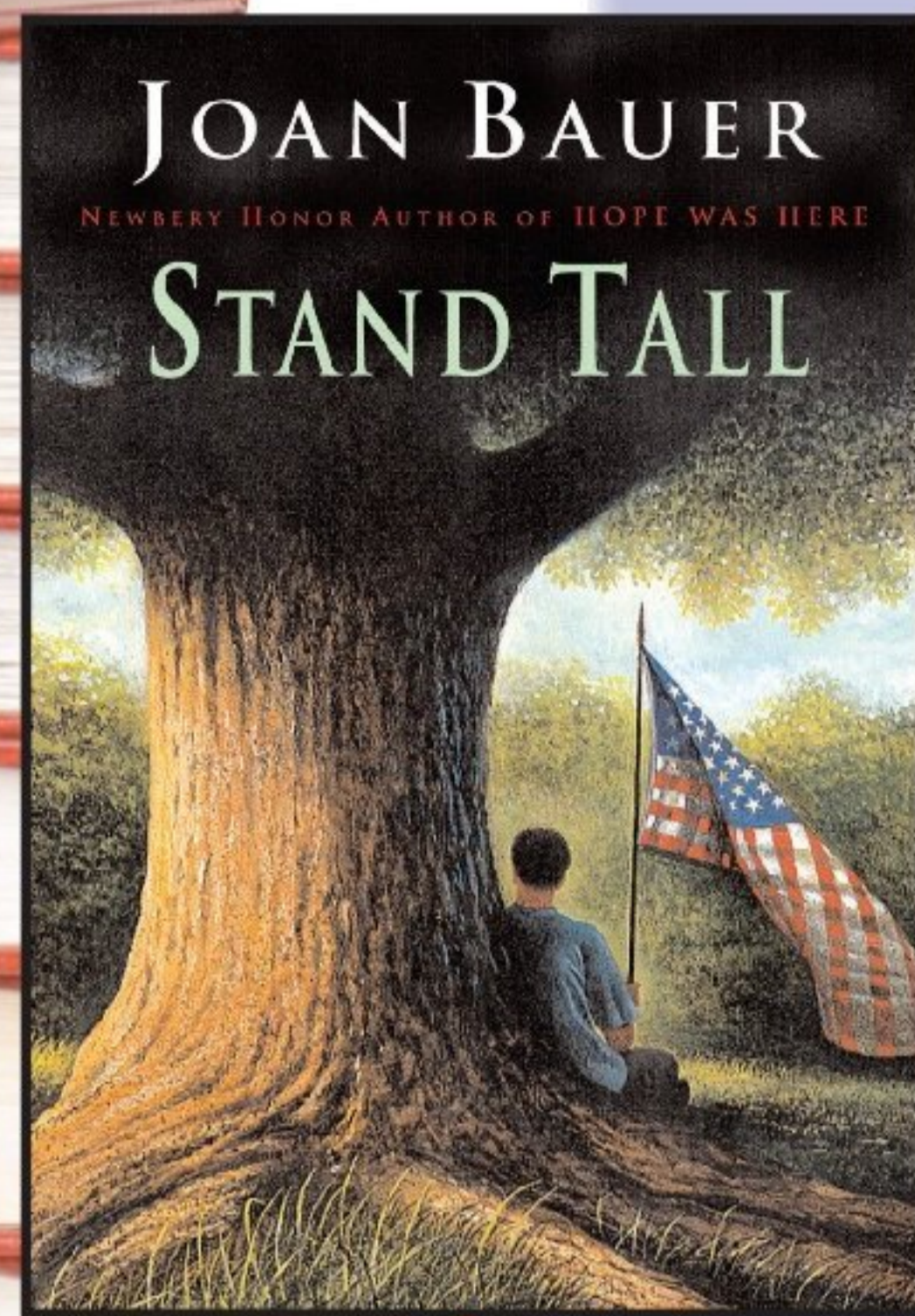


lighter end of the spectrum. According to Dr. James A. Joseph and Dr. Daniel A. Nadeau, co-authors of *The Color Code*, blue-purple fruits, especially berries, are abundant in anthocyanin pigments. These are the most potent sources of antioxidants. Green fruits like avocados contain lutein and beta carotene pigments, which protect eyesight. Orange-yellow fruits are abundant in carotenes, lutein, and lycopene pigments and are also good sources of vitamins A, C and K. Red fruits are abundant in anthocyanin, carotene and lycopene pigments, as well as vitamin C, A and potassium. Dr. Joseph and Dr. Nadeau also suggest that between varieties of the same fruits, the more colorful variety is generally more potent in antioxidant activity.

If one apple has such valuable health benefits, imagine the effect of a variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet! The key to health and preventing disease is a balanced diet, rich in whole plant foods.



# RED APPLES VS. GREEN APPLES



# Read Any Good Books Lately?

Five books to tickle your brain by Kelly Moore, Ph.D.

**S**INCE YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY SPEND ALL YOUR TIME IN FRONT of your computer interacting with the avatars in *Whyville*, why not check out some of these new books for kids your age? As you read some (or all!) of these books, think about what good readers do to make sense of what they are reading.

As a reader, you comprehend (understand) better when you actively make connections between what you read about (the characters, setting, the problem, the solution) and your own lives. You also will understand more about what you read by making connections with a current piece of text and another book, magazine, comic book, or even the *Whyville Times*! (are we to assume our readers know about *Whyville*?) One last way you can understand what you are reading better is to make a connection with your book and the world we live in. You might be thinking some of the following as you are making connections while reading:

"This reminds me of a time when . . ." (text to self connection)

"This book reminds me of something else I have read . . ." (text to text connection)

"The problems in this book remind me of something that is going on in the world, like . . ." (text to world connection)

So, as you read the following great titles and all other books, make connections to your own lives, other books, and the world. You might be surprised at how much more you will understand about your book!

## **Twelve Again by Sue Corbett**

Can you imagine what it might be like to go to school with your mom? What if your mom was 12 years old again? This is a great book about a boy whose mom becomes 12 again and the humorous (and uncomfortable) situations a son and mother find themselves in.

## **Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff**

Twelve-year-old Hollis Woods is searching to find a family she feels connected to. This book tells the story of a preteen who has run away from several foster homes and is searching for the perfect family. If you enjoy reading about family relationships (the good, the bad, and the ugly) you will want to check out *Pictures of Hollis Woods*.

## **Stand Tall by Joan Bauer**

Have you ever felt uncomfortable in your own skin? Twelve-year-old Tree has! He's the main character in *Stand Tall* and is continuing to grow at six feet, three and a half inches. This story tells the humorous and heartwarming life of a preteen who is forced to do things he doesn't want and act older than he is all because of his height. If you have ever felt out of

place, like the main character in *Stand Tall*, you will want to read this book!

## **Things Not Seen by Andrew Clements**

"It's my life! You can't leave me out of the decisions!" This may be something you have yelled or felt before. You may have also wanted to become invisible? This is the story of Bobby, a fifteen old boy, who does just that! While Bobby butts heads with his parents, he meets Alicia, a girl who is blind, who helps him deal with his feelings of frustration, loneliness, and invisibility.

## **Breaking Through by Francisco Jimenez**

Have your grandparents ever told you stories about the 1950s and 60s? If so, you may be wondering, "Yeah, but what was it like for teenagers over 40 years ago?" Francisco Jimenez tells this story about a 14 year old boy who has to face prejudice and the hardships of being an immigrant in California in addition to all the universal challenges of being a teenager!

# TYPE 1 DIABETES

Knowing the signs  
to save your life

By Lluvu



I am a type 1 diabetic and I was diagnosed July 8, 2004. I check my blood glucose level, also known as blood sugar, four times a day. I also take four shots of insulin a day. I went six months before I was diagnosed with diabetes and didn't even know!

It's kind of ironic how I found out. One day I was watching the news and they had a story on about symptoms of diabetes and my mom said I might have that. I just laughed and said, "Yeah right!" Sometimes I wonder why I didn't take the story seriously.

When I found out, my blood glucose level was over 600 mg/dl (milligrams to deciliter) Normal levels are between 70-150 mg/dl. It was so high that they couldn't get an exact number. I was only in the hospital for twenty-four hours because I wanted to get out of there fast.

I made sure I learned all of the details in one day.

Most people do not know a lot about diabetes unless they have it or have a family member who has it. When I got it, I learned so much, and I am still learning everyday. This disease is such a big part of my life that I am committing myself to going to four years of college and four years of medical school so I can be an endocrinologist. I want to be able to treat people who have it and educate others as well. It is very important to me. So enough with my story, I want to tell you about the disease and symptoms to watch for.

Type 1 diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs in people who are younger than 30. It can be hereditary or a virus that can attack your pancreas and stop it from producing the hormone called

insulin. Insulin pushes sugar in your body into cells so your body can use it. As a diabetic, you don't have any insulin so you need to inject it into your body

Here are the symptoms of type 1 diabetes: frequent urination, excessive thirst, irritability, drowsiness, nausea, fatigue, excessive weight-loss, and excessive eating.

If you have most or all of these symptoms, you might want to consider talking to your doctor about it. It is best to catch it as soon as possible. I hope you have a better understanding and please look at the website. You will learn a lot! . If you want to learn more visit <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>.

Until I write another article,

Lluvu



Each year over 13,000 children are diagnosed with diabetes in the U.S. That's 35 children each and every day.



# SMOKING



# CIGARETTES

These puffs of smoke are certainly no joke By Ethel Sale

\* Did you know that there are a lot of harmful chemicals in cigarettes?

\* According to the American Lung Association, there are over 4,800 chemicals in a cigarette and 69 of those chemicals are known to cause cancer. The National Youth Tobacco Survey (2004) in the US stated that over 8 percent of middle school students were current smokers.

\* Smoking related diseases kill about 438,000 Americans a year and responsible for close to 90% of lung cancer deaths. You don't want to immediately be a target for cancer, do you?

Nine million children live with at least one smoker and are exposed to secondhand smoke.





### SHOW ME YOUR TEETH!

Dental care is recognized each February since 1941 thanks to the formation of National Children's Dental Health Month that has grown from a two-city event into a nationwide program with dental supporters in a neighborhood near you. The scope of dental hygiene has widened thanks to Give Kids a Smile Day, a national event in its fifth year celebrated in '07 on Feb. 2nd. According to the American Dental Association (ADA), the event mission is two-pronged. First, it's to get kids the dental care they desperately need, and next to raise awareness that our children deserve a better health care system that addresses their dental health needs. This year's sponsor Colgate-Palmolive

# Whyville Dispatch HEALTH CENTER

Co. will supply toothbrushes and toothpaste for participants to distribute *en gratis* nationwide. To inquire about free education to all and free dental services to low-income children, any of the following social service agencies can be contacted: ADA ([www.ada.org/goto/gkas](http://www.ada.org/goto/gkas)), United Way (<http://national.unitedway.org/myuw>) and the Boys & Girls Clubs ([www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)). [Daryl Searle]

### DON'T MESS WITH METH

Methamphetamines are powerfully addictive central nervous system stimulants that can be made from common but dangerous household ingredients such as drain cleaner, battery acid, antifreeze and lantern fuel, coupled with over-the-counter cold medications. The Meth 360 program, sponsored by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, seeks to educate communities about the drug and how to recognize telltale signs of its use. Meth 360 is a grassroots educational approach utilizing the testimonies of law enforcement and treatment representatives as well as those who have battled with the drug themselves, such as Jimmy Garza, a former methamphetamine addict, who spoke at a recent Meth 360 demonstration. Garza explained to the crowd that meth cost him his job, his family and almost his life. Garza went through extensive rehabilitation and said he now takes pride in trying to keep others off the dangerous drug. For help, visit [www.drugfree.org/meth](http://www.drugfree.org/meth). [Courtney Lear]



## FACT OR FICTION?

Teens don't need to worry about heart attacks.

**FICTION:** Staggering statistics from the American Heart Association (AHA) show that obesity is a growing problem among American teens and young children from preschool on up. Despite a common belief that the young aren't prone to heart disease and diabetes, a recent survey from 2002 revealed that nearly four million children ages 6-11 and 5.3 million young people ages 12-19 are overweight. Dr. Christopher O'Donnell of the Framingham Heart Study says that risk factors like abnormal blood lipids and high blood pressure can exist long before middle adulthood. While teens are not safe from potential heart attacks, measures can be taken to prevent them, including proper diet and exercise. For more information, visit <http://health.dailynewscentral.com/content/view/257/63>. [Andy Wang]

### LIVING UNDER THE RUM

The people hurt most by drugs and alcohol aren't always the ones that use them... they are often the children of addicted parents. Feb. 11-17 is National Children of Alcoholics Week, dedicated to raising awareness of the shocking statistics of the effects of substance dependence on the youngest and most helpless in the family. One in four children lives in a family environment where alcohol abuse or alcoholism negatively affects their world and their healthy development, according to the National Association for Children of Alcoholics. Countless others are also hurt by parents with drug problems. Living in such families during crucial developmental years can create a lifetime of mental and physical health issues, as well as confusion and fear in the present. The important thing to remember is, if you or someone you know is living in a situation like this, you are not alone. Go to <http://www.nacoa.org/kidspage.htm> for information, advice and support. [Courtney Lear]



### EAT YOUR GREENS, FIT INTO YOUR JEANS

Your teen and early adult years are a vulnerable life stage for eating disorders, from anorexia to bulimia. Anorexia kills more than any other mental illness. As many as 10 million females and a million males in our nation are afflicted with food-centered illness. That's why the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) promotes its annual National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (Feb. 25 - Mar. 3) with its campaign slogan, "Be comfortable in your genes. Wear jeans that fit the REAL you." They're encouraging schools, hospitals, churches, fitness and community centers to support jeans giveaways for those disease-inflicted to proudly toss those trendy "skinny" jeans in favor of a pair that fits your natural genes. Stay tuned to NEDA partner Clear Channel Radio for messages featuring celebrity voices like Paula Abdul from *American Idol* alerting you to seek out neighborhood events. Learn more at [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org) about living in your genes without getting the blues from your jeans. [Daryl Searle]

## BY THE NUMBERS Women In Sports

**18.8** Percent by which high school girls trail boys (53.5% vs. 72.3%) in meeting physical activity standards

**49.9** Percent of girls who played on a sport team, compared to 60.9 percent for boys

**23** Percent of girls whose physical activity declines between 9th and 12th grades

**10** Percent of girls participating in a sport at age 25 who first started playing sports after age ten

**75** Percent of girls who think they get enough exercise

**7** February date designated National Girls and Women in Sports Day  
(Source: [www.womenssportsfoundation.org](http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org))



# HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL'S Valedictorian

As the breakout star of the Disney Channel's biggest movie ever, Vanessa Hudgens releases a solo pop album and gears up for the *High School Musical* sequel

By Melissa Bobbitt

It seemed like just another commonplace audition for actress-singer Vanessa Hudgens. The 18-year-old hadn't worked for about a year, and she was accustomed to walk-on roles for short-lived sitcoms (*The Brothers Garcia*, *Quintuplets*). Little did she know she was about to become part of a phenomenon.

What Broadway's *Rent* was to Generation X, *High School Musical* has become for those coming of age during the aughts. The subject matter is considerably lighter than *Rent* but it's just as pertinent to youths: sticking to the status quo in order to "fit in" and taking risks to find out who you really are. The message has spoken to millions, making the Disney Channel movie's soundtrack the best-selling album of 2006.

Hudgens, who plays shy intellectual Gabriella Montez in the film, giggles at the notion of the soundtrack breaking so many records. "It's been crazy," she says during the first week out on the *High School Musical* live tour. "I've gotten to travel all over the world — Australia, London, Paris — a whole lot of amazing places I'd never thought I'd get to. All the opportunities I've had from *High School Musical* — I've gotten my record deal, going to the awards shows and meeting lots of people — it's all very cool and crazy and unrealistic."

The story follows star athlete Troy (*Summerland*'s Zac Efron) and mousy brainiac Gabriella (Hudgens) as they meet by chance at a karaoke event and (secretly) take their talents and blossoming friendship back to East High School. They defy the time-honored social rules of adolescence and try out for the upcoming winter musical, sending the campus into a tizzy. Andrew Lloyd Webber, it isn't, but songs like the hip-hop leaning "Get'cha Head in the Game" and the inspirational duet "Start of Something New" have captivated the kiddies and aided in launching a multitude of merchandise and the *HSM* national tour.

"It's cool," Hudgens says of the traveling extravaganza, which features all of the original cast members except for Efron, who's busy shooting *Hairspray* with John Travolta and Queen Latifah. "It's such a rush. It's very fulfilling when you get that roar of applause, kids screaming."

The young songstress ought to be accustomed to such adulation. She released her first solo album, *V*, in September, and took those songs on tour with The Cheetah Girls earlier this fall. A sharp divergence from the sunny tracks of *High School Musical*, *V* exemplifies an artist who's "not a girl, not yet a woman."

"Baby V," her sleeky R&B alias, shines on the Destiny's Child-like "Come Back to Me" and grooves on "Let's Dance." Hudgens also exhibits confidence on "Never Underestimate a Girl," the best feminist pop anthem since the Spice Girls were omnipresent. With lyrics like

(continued on page 18)



(continued from page 17)

"Your secretary might end up your boss," this performer isn't depending merely on the cutesy shtick of *HSM* to succeed.

"I told myself in the beginning that I wanted to make a dance album. People were like, 'You've got to figure out what you want to do. Do you want to make an album for the fans you have or start new?' And I said, 'I want to do it for both my audiences,'" she says of trying to find a happy medium on the album.

As another example that she's growing up, Hudgens says she's in the market for meatier film roles. "I'd like to do something edgier, something more compelling for me as an actress. It's fun to do family movies and make people happy but it's nice to sink my teeth into a character as well."

At the same time, Baby V isn't in a hurry to grow up. "I'm a big kid and I just like having fun. Going to college would be great but I'm having fun doing what I'm doing now," she says.

In the meantime, Hudgens and her *High School Musical*

mates will keep the hits coming. The entire crew recently reunited (with Efron in tow) to film a sequel.

The once and future Gabriella fills us in: "It takes place during the summer school vacation. It takes place out at Ryan and Sharpay's — the drama king and queen of the school — country club. We all happen to be there and I'm hired as a lifeguard."

The performer adheres to the motto "Whatever Will Be" (also the name of a song on *V*) to keep afloat in her busy, blessed life. "I'm a girl who's very grateful. I tell myself everything happens for a reason. That's what's kept me grounded and able to take rejection," she says. "In the business growing up, I was a 10-year-old kid who was told that I didn't get a role and I was like, 'Why?' But I told myself that for each role I didn't get, the next one would come along."

Reflecting back, she adds, "I went for about a year without working before *High School Musical*. I just believe that whatever will happen, will happen."

# HELPLINE

## DRUG HELPLINES

Drug/Alcohol Abuse Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP  
Cocaine Help Line: 1-800-262-2463  
Ecstasy Addiction: 1-800-468-6933  
Marijuana Anonymous: 1-800-766-6779  
National Drug Abuse Hotline: 1-800-662-4357  
National Inhalant Prevention Coalition: 1-800-269-4327

## DRINKING HELPLINES

Al-Anon/Alateen: 1-800-344-2666  
Be Sober: 1-800-BE-SOBER  
Natl Assoc. for Children of Alcoholics: 1-888-554-2627

## SMOKING HELPLINES

Call It Quits!: 1-800-662-9337  
National Cancer Institute: 1-800-422-6237

## SUICIDE HELPLINES

1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2438  
Suicide & Rape 24-Hour Emergency Services:  
1-800-863-4244  
Suicide & Crisis: 1-800-999-9999  
Suicide Hotline: 1-800-621-4000  
Trevor Helpline (specializing in gay and lesbian youth):  
1-800-850-8078

## ABUSE HELPLINES

Childhelp USA (Child Abuse Hotline): 1-800-4-A-CHILD  
Family Violence Prevention Center: 1-800-619-1110  
Incest Awareness Foundation: 1-888-647-6222  
Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network: 1-800-638-HOPE  
Self-Injury Helpline: 1-800-BONFICUT  
Stop It Now! (Sexual Abuse): 1-888-PREVENT

## WEB-HELP

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# HOUSTON, We Solved The Problem

Joining a team that finished last the season before his arrival, NBA basketball star Yao Ming got the Rockets firing again on his way to becoming the league's hottest international import

By David Jenison

**W**hen Yao Ming entered the NBA as the first overall pick for the 2002-2003 season, basketball finally had a center talented enough to go up against Shaquille O'Neal. This, of course, was a tall order for the young player, even if he does stand at a league-high 7'6". In the years since, Ming took the last place Houston Rockets into the playoffs, set several new NBA records, and became the highest vote getter in the 2005 NBA All-Star Game balloting. During the current season, Ming was slowed by injury, but not before putting up career numbers. *Whyville* spoke with the superstar center about his western role.

**There were such high expectations for you when you joined the NBA. How did you keep yourself from being overwhelmed?**  
"I just always do what I really enjoy the most outside of basketball, like spend time with my friends and family and play video games on the computer."

**In 2002, you posted the highest field goal percentage in NBA history over a six game stretch (31-of-35 for a near 90% field goal average). Did you feel anything special during this streak?**

"I felt a real connection with the team. I feel any of my successes happen when the team is flowing. They are passing me the ball accurately and at the right moments. If it wasn't for the team, I wouldn't be able to do what I do."

**What do you usually think about during a game?**

"When I'm playing, I'm just aiming on the goal to win. I never think about whether we're going to win or lose while the game is going on."

**You rarely miss any games. Are there any special precautions you take to make sure you remain healthy?**

"I always try to eat as healthy as I can and get as much rest as I can. I always remember to drink a lot of water and take my vitamins. I know these are things that our parents always remind us to do as kids, but they really work to keep us healthy!"

**What are the most important aspects to your diet when it comes to eating and staying healthy?**

"I usually eat Chinese food, and I always remember to eat a well-rounded meal with a balanced combination and variety of meats and vegetables. I also get a lot of rest whenever I can."

**Your entrance into the NBA was a big deal for your native country. In what ways do you think it's important to represent China in the NBA?**

"I am very proud of my homeland so it's exciting for me to

represent China. I felt especially honored when I first came to the U.S. and during the summer Olympics. I got to carry the flag during the ceremony, and it was an incredible feeling to represent my country on the world's platform."

**At what age did you first start playing basketball in China, and was it a popular sport in the country at the time?**

"When I started playing ball, it wasn't quite as popular as the sport is now. There were many people interested in the game, but I think the interest has grown quite a lot since then."

**What made you want to play basketball?**

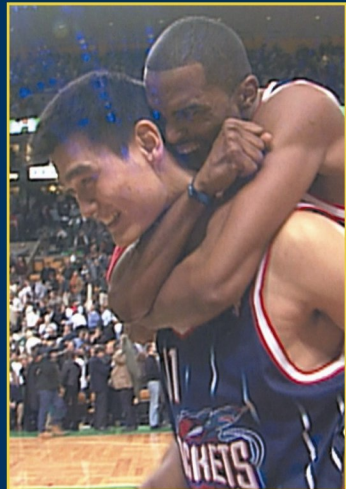
"Both of my parents played basketball so I was introduced to the game early on. When I first picked up the ball, I just loved to play. I used to go to the nearby court and shoot with my dad. I think I became a fan as soon as I picked up the ball."

**At what age did you join the national team?**

"I had my first formal basketball training when I joined the Youth Sports School at age nine. I joined the Shanghai Youth Team at age 14 and played on the Chinese National Team at age 18."

**As a role model, what is the most important quality you hope to convey?**

"I hope that kids never give up on their dreams. There were many roadblocks in my way to come to the NBA, but I never gave up and I finally made it."



# CANNONBALL RUN

Actor-singer Nick Cannon gets down with his new Motown sound on *Stages* by Mar Yvette

**N**ick Cannon has been on the entertainment map for nearly 10 years now. At the ripe old age of 16, Cannon began performing at famous comedy venues like The Improv, The Laugh Factory and the Comedy Store in Los Angeles. Before he knew it, he was no longer just some dreamy-eyed kid from San Diego – he was a bona fide entertainer.

"Really, it's about being at the right place at the right time," says Cannon. "I was in San Diego rapping and doing comedy at different talent shows. I even opened for OutKast once, and Guy Torrey, the comedian who hosted that show, had a room at the Comedy Store on Tuesday nights. He put me up on the stage for two minutes at a time just to get my feet wet. Ever since then, it just took off."

And taken off it has. Now 25, Cannon is a successful rapper, writer, comedian, film star and producer. In late 2001, he made his foray into music with a remake of Will Smith's "Parents Just Don't Understand" – a move he now laughingly remembers. "Man, I wish I never did that! Actually, it was just something I did because I wanted to get into the music industry any way I could and that was my first chance."

From there, Cannon executive-produced Nickelodeon's *The Nick Cannon Show* (2002-2003) and landed his first feature film lead in *Drumline*. With his list of film credits growing every year – *Love Don't Cost A Thing*, *Shall We Dance?* and *Roll Bounce*, to name a few – he's managed to find time to produce the MTV improv comedy show *Wild 'N Out* and record his second full-length album, *Stages*. The first single "Dime Piece" samples Bell Biv DeVoe's '80s hip-hop hit "Poison" and features Izzy, an 18-year-old rapper whom Nick discovered in Washington, D.C.

"I'm very proud of this album," says Cannon. "It was great because it was just me in the studio, producing beats and putting stuff together."

With so many accomplishments already in the bag, Cannon is one star that will keep shining for a long time. Even so, the young entertainer says he doesn't take anything for granted.

"I appreciate my fan base so much. I'm excited that they're allowing me to grow. I just want to make sure that I can continue to gain new fans while keeping my other fans happy."

As for being a role model for his younger fans, Cannon has clear ideas on the subject. "When I got into the game, I was already 19, so I always felt able to do my thing and be my age. Now that I'm 25, I'm talking more about 25-year-old things," he reveals. "But I'm conscious of my fan base. For me, it's not about being a role model, it's about being a *real* model – somebody who's really who they are. I think people respect that more than somebody who's playing a role and trying to front."

(continued on page 24)

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That said, the roles keep pouring in for Cannon. He just finished wrapping up *Goal! 2* – a movie with international soccer star David Beckham – as well *Bobby*, the recent star-studded drama about the assassination of Robert Kennedy.

"I had the opportunity to meet Harry Belafonte and work with him during the filming of *Bobby*," Cannon offers. "It was probably the most memorable moment I've had. He's amazing. Just the fact that he's the first person to ever go platinum with an album, he bailed Martin Luther King Jr. out of jail, he's had an incredible film career... he's Nat King Cole, Sydney Poitier and Martin Luther King all rolled into one."

After meeting someone he's admired for so long, what would Cannon's words of advice would be for his own fans?

"You've got to be a self-motivator and self-generator," he proclaims. "As a motivator, you've got to believe in yourself and be your own No. 1 fan and keep building yourself up. And as a self-generator, you've got to make things happen. Nobody's going to sit around and just give you opportunities – you've got to create opportunities for yourself." Cannon also encourages young people not to fear rejection. He says it's a necessary part of achieving success.

"I dealt with rejection all the time," concludes Cannon. "When I started as a stand-up comedian, rejection was probably 50 percent of the game. But it makes you that much stronger and helps you to think outside the box. Sure you get discouraged, but that's the thing about being a self-motivator – you have to tell yourself that you're destined for greatness."

My friends influence me, that all I need to succeed is to take a puff of this weed, but I know better. I have dreams of being a model, actress, a novelist. You may laugh and say my dreams are unrealistic, but I refuse to be another drug-abuser teen statistic.

Shacoya

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# ALL WRAPPED UP!

## Lupe's Tamales you can make with the Family By Cricket Arima



Tamales—small packages of ground cornmeal that are stuffed with assorted fillings, wrapped in corn husks and then steamed—are a traditional food in Mexico. Although usually filled with pork, tamales can be stuffed with chicken, beef, cheese, vegetables or even sweet ingredients. Savory versions are topped with either red (roja) or green (verde) salsa. Sweet tamales, or tamales de dulce, are filled with fruit. One popular variation includes pineapple, raisins and dried coconut.

The tamale wrapping is called masa—ground cornmeal mixed with water and lard. Healthier versions exchange the lard for vegetable shortening, butter or stock. Mexicans usually make their own cornmeal, but to save time, you can purchase some from the supermarket.

The best way to make tamales is as a group. Have a few friends over to your house for a Mexican party. Assembly lines can be formed, with one person removing corn husks from the water, the next person spreading masa, the third adding the filling and the last one in the line doing the folding.

You can even make tamales in advance and store them in the freezer for a month. Just steam them prior to serving. They can be served for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack.

Lupe's Tamales (makes 40)

- Fillings**
- 3 dried ancho chiles
  - 3 dried pasilla chiles
  - 3 dried ponds chiles
  - 6 cups water
  - 1 tsp. salt

Place chiles in saucepan with 4 cups water until boiling. Remove softened

- chiles and carefully (use utensils) remove stems and seeds. Place chiles, 2 cups water and salt in blender. Mix until smooth.
- 1 pound pork\*, cubed
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. salt

Heat oil and garlic over medium heat in pan. Add pork and salt. Cook meat until browned. Pour chile mixture over pork and braise on low heat for an hour or until shreds with fork. Shred pork.

\*Beef, chicken, shrimp or vegetables can replace pork.

### Wrappers

Rehydrate corn husks by soaking in bowl of warm water for 20 minutes.

### Masa

- 5 cups instant corn masa
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1 cup trans-fat free shortening or butter, softened
- 1 cup stock

In large bowl, combine ingredients and mix until dough is formed.

### Assembly

1. Take softened corn husk and lay on flat surface.
2. Using spatula, spread 2 tablespoons dough into thin layer that covers the husk—except at narrow tip.
3. Add a heaping tablespoon of filling in a vertical line down the center of dough.
4. Holding the husk, fold sides to center and fold the bottom tip of the husk inward—making a package sealed on three sides.
5. After all tamales are folded, stand them upright on steaming basket and steam in large pot for an hour, or until masa is firm.

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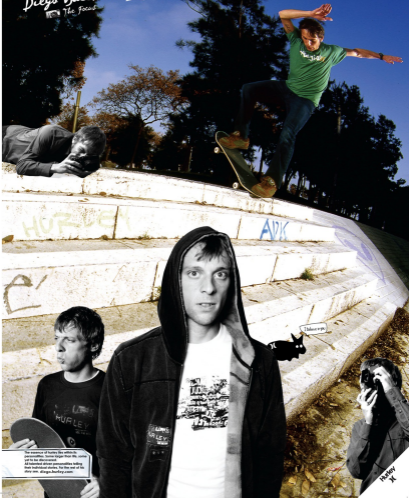
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Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusive. Write your entries in the squares.

Diego Bucchieri) (

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