

Homework or Health? *Students Should Not Have to Choose One Over the Other*

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Three pages of math, an essay for English, a sketch for art, a chapter to read in history, a lab summary for science. All of this for homework tonight. The work just piles up.

However, have you ever wondered: “Does it even help and when is it too much?”

For years, the battle between students and teachers over the amount of homework assigned each night has droned on, yet students still return home from nearly seven hours of school with more work to complete. Students struggle through sleepless nights to complete homework assignments that only account for ten percent of their grade.

As a student, I can say I have struggled with the stress of homework. I have spent hours doing homework just to sit there asking myself, “Why am I hurting myself for an assignment that I should be working on and learning in class?” There have been multiple nights where I have only gotten a few hours of sleep because of homework and the stress it causes.

As a result of these sleepless nights, I was exhausted the following day at school, and it seemed useless to have drained myself over extra practice when it prevented me from learning new topics the next day. Students are expected to be a part of other activities outside of classes in order to make themselves appear more well-rounded to prospective colleges.

These activities can take up a lot of a student’s time, leaving even less time to complete homework. As a student athlete, I leave for school at around seven in the morning and don’t usually get home until almost six at night. That leaves only a few hours at night to do homework in order to get the proper amount of sleep that teenagers need.

According to pediatrician Micheal Crocetti, M.D., M.P.H, from John Hopkins University in an article from John Hopkins Medicine, teens need on average 9 to 9.5 hours of sleep each night. This means that students waking up at six in the morning for school should be going to bed by nine every night, which is rarely the case. I wake up at six every morning, but I consider myself lucky if I am in bed by ten the night before.

Additionally, according to the National Education Association, the amount of homework a student should have is dependent on their grade level, and by multiplying the grade level by ten, you receive the time in minutes that a student should spend doing homework per night. This means that at most, a senior should have about two hours of homework each night, but that doesn’t seem to be the case for many students.

In a poll by StatisticBrain Research Institute, which gathers information to create accurate statistics on different topics, teenagers were reported to be spending on average up to three hours on homework every night. Balancing ten hours of school work between actual classroom time and homework, with sports, jobs, family time, and other extracurriculars, while getting enough sleep is nearly impossible in a twenty-four hour day.

Overall, by limiting homework to what is absolutely necessary to review we can improve the health of high school students. If each teacher only requires ten to twenty minutes of homework each night for students, then they should have more time to participate in other activities, and to take care of their mental and physical health properly by reducing stress and getting the proper amount of sleep.

College Fair (continued from p. 1)

Additionally, students were able to speak to representatives and gain a better understanding of what each school could offer them. Some of the schools that drew a lot of students included Albright College, Baldwin Wallace University, Coppin State University, Elon University, Frostburg State University, Harvard Club of Washington D.C. Hampton University, Montgomery College, Northeastern University, York College of Pennsylvania, Trinity Washington University, Spelman College, McDaniel College, Virginia State University, Southern University & A&M College, Seton Hall, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and many more.

Senior Peter Totangi expressed what qualities would persuade him to apply to a certain college and what would be his dealbreakers. “The college has to have my preferred major and the best boarding system, he said. “But if I feel out of place then that would be a dealbreaker.”

Junior Nissan Kaassa has a good idea of what she is looking forward to once she is in college even though it is a couple of years away. “I’m excited about the freedom that comes along with being in college and searching for what I want in life independently,” Kaassa said.

The college fair gives students an opportunity to learn more about their dream college or learn about places that they haven’t considered. Students were able to partake closely by looking at the various booths and speaking to representatives who really know the school. Fortunately, many students took advantage of the opportunity to miss a class period of work to attend the important event.

Overall, the college fair benefitted those who attended and gave them a glimpse of what is to come after high school. Students took the opportunity to learn and inquire about the wide array of higher education opportunities available, including many from out of state.



Over sixty schools took part in the Thursday, October 17th college fair. Some of the schools included those pictured here - Seton Hill University, George Washington, and Virginia State.

photos by: Trinity Guppy



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Book Corner:

ISRAEL WHITE
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Dark Places, written by Gillian Flynn, revolves around the massacre that took Libby Day’s family when she was only seven years old. Her older brother, Ben Day, who was fifteen at the time, was charged with the crime and subsequently sentenced to life in prison for the murders of their mother and two sisters.

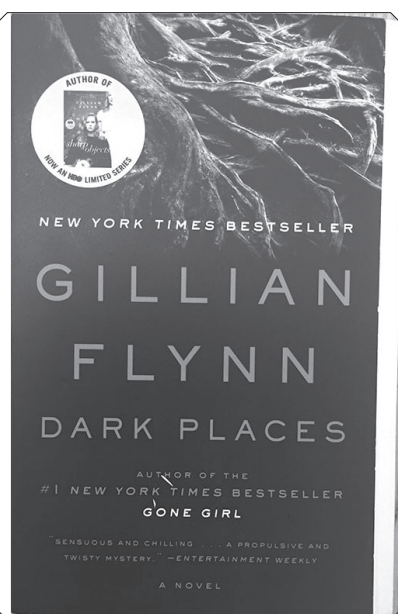
But did he do it?

As the only survivor, aside from Ben, Libby testified against her brother fourteen years earlier in 1985, and he has been serving his sentence ever since. In current day 2009 however, doubt begins to trickle into Libby’s mind about her family’s past and about what actually happened that hellish night. Was Ben

a devil-worshiping, teenage predator that strangled his sister, hacked up the other, then shot and stabbed his mother like so many came to believe? Or, was Ben just an innocent child who fell prey to the justice system and is, essentially, a victim of circumstance who took the blame for the true killer?

The story is set in a fictional, broken-down town in the state of Kansas. This desolate setting makes it easy to connect with the characters, whether you relate directly to them or not, because it is easy to understand where they are coming from and how they live. Throughout the book, they become people. In the beginning, you, the reader, are like the public in the story, you have a shallow sense of

who these characters are as you only associate them with the massacre. However, while the story progresses, so too does your



involvement; you begin to gain a feel for these characters and to care about them as people. This effect is heavily brought on by the multi-perspective format of the story.

Dark Places is told with a cycle of three characters as a focus for each chapter; a chapter is told from Libby’s perspective, a chapter is told about her mother, Patty Day, another from Libby, then one about Ben. While it sounds complex, they all weave

together to form one well-told story. Patty and Ben’s chapters take us through what happened that day leading up to that night from their unique perspectives. While this structure may seem like it could become convoluted, Flynn steers clear of this issue by zeroing in on each person in every chapter like a vignette. It does not become overbearing; you simply pick up where you left off.

While the book is 345 pages long, I eagerly read it in under a week. The pacing and story kept my attention and no page felt wasted as the story unraveled. While the content of the book is dark and may not fit the taste of some readers, the story is without a doubt worth the read.

“The truly frightening flaw in humanity is our capacity for cruelty - we all have it.”

- Gillian Flynn,
from *Dark Places*

Gillian Flynn Takes Readers to Some “Dark Places”



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