

CALVERT CITY'S YOUTH VOICE MONTHLY WRITING CONTEST



FEBRUARY WINNER ADDLEY LEIDECKER

Addley is 14 years old and is an 8th grader at Reidland Middle School. She plays softball and is a huddle leader for Future Christians of America. Her favorite class is Language Arts and Writing with Mrs. Ford.

The Impact of Modern Technology on Teens By Addley Leidecker

"Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master." -Christian Lous Lange. This quote is relevant in today's society as many people, especially teens, have been impacted by modern technology. As powerful and useful as technology can be, it can also have a significant negative effect on teenagers. In fact, one of the pieces of technology that we can't seem to live without is the one that often causes the most harm. Yes, the beloved cell phone can lead to poor health, cyberbullying, and false prestige.

First and foremost, teens' continuous access to cell phones can cause health problems such as anxiety, stress, depression, and obesity. A study by Melissa Riddle Chalos states, "Recent results could not be clearer: Teens who spend more time than average on non-screen activities are more likely to be happy. Those who spend more time than average on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy, lonely and suffer anxiety and depression." This evidence is important because it shows the direct correlation between cell phone use and mental health. It is rare to see a teenager who is not glued to his or her phone, and even though the facts are clear, it does not seem to make a difference in the amount of time that teens spend on social media apps that often distract them from healthy goals. Instead of spending hours on TikTok, Snapchat, or Instagram, teens can go outside with friends and interact with each other, practice a sport or hobby, or even read and study. When cell phones are constantly available for distraction, it is often difficult for a teenager to focus on what is important and beneficial in the long run, which eventually leads to unaccomplished goals and a healthy sense of purpose.

Also, cyberbullying is a real issue with so many teens having access to cell phones and social media. It is very easy to hide behind a screen and say mean things that a person would never say in person. The impact of these hurtful messages and comments can last a lifetime. An article by AmericanSpcc states that people who get cyberbullied can have reduced feelings of self worth, increased suicide attempts, and increased instances of eating disorders. This evidence is important because it shows how real and detrimental cyberbullying can be on teens today. These effects can even cause kids to miss school to avoid conflict, embarrassment, and shame, which causes them to miss out on their education. Therefore, not only does cyberbullying affect mental health, but it affects learning as well, both of which are extremely important because teens are growing into young adults and contributing members of society. Just one cyberbullying incident can cause trauma for a person that could possibly last a lifetime which could hurt the well-being of our future.

Last but not least, cell phones and social media can present false prestige for those who overuse it, especially teens because their brains are still developing. "A person with false prestige considers his prestige to be bigger than life," (Divakar, 2015). The false prestige on social media can cause teens to take false information into a different context. An article on MomJunction states, "Most of the things projected on social media and the Internet may not be accurate, but teenagers who are naive (at their age) might take them seriously and get influenced. This might lead them to live in a fantasy world and develop false prestige." This evidence is important to take into consideration because it shows that people seek validation from the number of followers they have or how many "likes" they receive, even though in reality this does not define their worth. Oftentimes what is displayed on social media accounts is not a true representation of that person anyway. It is only a snapshot of the lifestyle that they want others to believe they constantly live. Most people do not post the struggles and insecurities that they have on social media because they are afraid that others will judge them in a negative way. Therefore, with false prestige, teens are likely to feel a sense of failure if they don't meet the unattainable lifestyle of others that they may see on the Internet that could have been fake all along while the ones who are creating these unrealistic posts receive a false sense of superiority.

As you can see, modern technology, like the cell phone, can be useful at times, but it can be very dangerous to young teens if they are not aware of the impact that social media can have on them. Like Christian Lous Lange stated, "Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master." Be careful not to let it be your master!

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