



Teen author returns to her roots

BY MAEVE CAREY AND TYLER JACKNOWITZ
Kidsday Reporters

Our class had an opportunity to meet the author of “Chip and Dip,” a children’s book written and illustrated by Sydney Schneider, who is now a 17-year-old high school student. Sydney’s book was inspired by an epiphany (an *aha!* moment) project in her eighth-grade English class at Jonas E. Salk Middle School in Levittown.

Sydney was so inspiring — she showed us the project she did for her teacher and compared it with the book that has been published. She read the book to us and even showed us plushies her mom sewed that match the characters in the book. The book is about two friends, a cookie and an onion, and how it is important to accept people for who they are.

We asked Sydney lots of things. She told us how important it was to be inspired by her teacher, Mrs. Nara Denson, who was the first person who told her that her project could be published as a book. Working on the book helped her become a better person because even though she is very shy, she wasn’t afraid to come back to Salk and share her experiences with us.

She also told us some funny facts. In one scene, the cookie puts the onion in a washing machine. She was worried that it might send a bad message to kids, but figured it would be all right. The part that



Kidsday reporters with Sydney Schneider, center, holding her book, “Chip and Dip.”

makes most people laugh is showing the friend smelled like underwear and having the picture of underwear on the floor.

Tyler loves to draw, so he was especially interested in Sydney’s illustrations. She used colored pencils and went to art classes to learn how to draw better.

We loved the book. Lots of us bought

copies, and Sydney signed each one for us. Sydney is appearing on radio programs, in schools, at camps and other places to share her book. We recommend the book for little kids who love to hear fun stories told over and over.

You can buy “Chip and Dip” by going to blurb.com/b/8262203-chip-and-dip.

Is it fair that only the best can play?

BY MAEVE CAREY, HAZIM KHAN
AND JULIANNA VASILE-COZZO
Kidsday Reporters

Both Julianna and Maeve wanted to play soccer on Salk Middle School’s teams. We found out that we would need to try out and that we would have to be really good. Hazim doesn’t really care about playing, but he cares about what is fair. But only the best are allowed to play on the school soccer team. Unfortunately, we are not the best.

We asked kids whether middle school sports teams should have tryouts and take only the best players or if everyone should be allowed on the team, regardless of skill. Here are the results:

Have tryouts95
Let everyone play98

As you can see by the close vote, kids are really torn. Kids in middle school can improve their skills quickly if they play on the school team. However, those kids who already have better skills might be held back because the players who need to up their game are slowing everyone’s progress. It is a tough decision for school teams.

Surprise toys for sick kids

BY ANTHONY GRIFFO
Kidsday Reporter

Do you know any sick kids in the hospital or kids having surgery? The John Theissen Children’s Foundation in Wantagh helps cheer up sick kids by surprising them with donated toys.

At 6 months old, I had open heart surgery. Last year, I wanted to help kids in the hospital. I went around the neighborhood, handing out notes, asking for donations. I collected more than 500 toys and \$600.

We took the toys to the John Theissen foundation, and then my awesome mom and I bought more toys with the money people donated. Later, the Levittown Community Council gave me the best volunteer award for the year.

All I wanted to do was help sick kids, but I received so much more. The best is the feeling of paying it forward. What I’m trying to say is, if you do something good, good will come to you.



KIDSDAY STAFF ARTIST /
NICHOLAS MAROTTA, RONKONKOMA

All terrain and all fun

BY MICHAEL MENNETTE
Kidsday Reporter

I love to ride my ATV (all-terrain vehicle) because it gets my adrenaline flowing. I started ATVing when I was 3 — my dad would take me out with him. When I go now, I always have friends or family with me. Every sport is better when you share it with someone.

Safety equipment is important. I wear a chest protector, a neck brace, helmet, gloves, boots and special riding clothing. ATVing makes me very happy. I do it every Sunday. The sport is very dangerous, and with riding comes wisdom, so you need to learn from someone with off-road experience. There are many tracks you can go to, so I advise you to use them and not trespass on private property. You can get a lower-powered ATV to learn the basics, then you can ride a bigger, more powerful vehicle.



Michael Mennette enjoys riding his ATV.

Bears help us pay it forward

BY DANIEL DELUCA AND ALEXIS LAURENCE
Kidsday Reporters

Tyler’s Teddies is a fundraiser at lunch every Friday. The fundraiser was inspired by a little boy named Tyler who died as a result of an unsafe child product. His story was all over the news. In honor of Tyler, his family created a foundation to support safe products for children.

The point of buying a teddy is to pay it forward to make people happy. Paying it forward means you do something nice for someone with no expectation of being paid back. You give the teddy to someone and tell them to pay it forward to someone else.

Our school was inspired to do this because we read the book “Pay It Forward.” The book was great and had ideas about how kids can make a difference in the lives of everyone around them.



Kidsday reporters Daniel DeLuca and Alexis Laurence with teddies.