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For Immediate Release:



**Garden City Middle School Science Team Named National Finalist
By The National Sleep Foundation**

Emma Nagler, Ryann Henry, Julia Brancaccio and Molly Dougherty along with their science teacher Dr. Paris Zaferiou of Garden City Middle School in Garden City, NY have been named national finalists for the team's "Got Sleep?" submission in the 2nd annual Bright Schools Competition™. The competition is a collaborative effort of the [National Sleep Foundation](#) and the [National Science Teachers Association](#) that encourages students in grades 6-8 to explore the correlation between light and sleep and how it influences student health and performance.

The "Got Sleep?" team and coach are pictured here (left to right): Dr. Zaferiou, Molly Dougherty, Julia Brancaccio, Ryann Henry, and Emma Nagler. "Got sleep?" is one of 50 national finalist teams, chosen among 150 teams, made up of nearly 500 students from 53 schools. The complete list of the national finalists can be found at <http://brightschoolscompetition.org/>.

“‘Got Sleep?’ was based on the students’ curiosity about the astonishing fact that 80% of teens do not get enough sleep!” explained teacher Dr. Zaferiou. “They decided to research different wavelengths of light and its effect on melatonin production which induces a deeper level of sleep. Blue light has a shorter wavelength and can upset the body’s circadian rhythm and melatonin levels. Blue light is emitted from electronic devices such as phones, computers, and television screens. The team members used their FitBits to record sleep data under three different wavelengths of light: red, white, and blue (as well as a control that had no exposure to light) to determine which wavelength contributed to a more restful sleep. Upon discovering how detrimental blue light is for sleeping, they have decided to create an awareness campaign which will be presented to the middle school students.”

“The National Sleep Foundation would like to congratulate the finalists on their innovative projects. The Bright Schools Competition™ has shined a light on the importance of sleep and overall health, and we’re encouraged to see so many students interested in how light directly affects their sleep and academic performance” said David Cloud, CEO of the National Sleep Foundation.

“The Bright Schools Competition is a celebration of the talent and ingenuity of our youth, providing students with a unique opportunity to think critically while exploring the connection between light and sleep,” said NSTA Executive Director Dr. David Evans. “Congratulations to all of the national finalists for their hard work, enthusiasm, and imaginative ideas.”

Under the mentorship of an adult coach/teacher, teams of two to four students identify, investigate, and research an issue related to light and sleep as it pertains to their community and/or young adolescents. Using scientific inquiry or engineering design concepts teams develop a prototype, create an awareness campaign, or write a research proposal for the competition. Each team then submits a written report detailing their project along with a three-minute video showcasing their investigation. Projects are evaluated on the basis of several criteria, including scientific accuracy, innovativeness, and potential impact.

More information about the competition is available at <http://brightschoolscompetition.org/>.