

EXTRA! EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

The New York Times

For Kids

EDITORS' NOTE: THIS SECTION SHOULD NOT BE READ BY GROWN-UPS

THE VACCINE IS READY FOR YOU!

IT'S THE BIGGEST NEWS OF ALL. PAGE 3

SNOW DAYS ARE DONE FOR

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METEORITE LANDS IN WOMAN'S BEDROOM

SHE FOUND THE 2.8-POUND ROCK NEAR
HER PILLOW. PAGE 5

National

FINALLY!

KIDS BETWEEN 5 AND 11 CAN GET THE COVID VACCINE.

BY CHELSEA LEU



Heaven Gower, 10, getting her first dose of the Covid vaccine in Raleigh, N.C., on Nov. 4.

TUESDAY, NOV. 2, WAS A HUGE DAY

FOR KIDS across the country: That day, the C.D.C. announced that 5-to-11-year-olds could finally be vaccinated against Covid-19. For some kids, it couldn't have come soon enough. "I was actually excited," says Caleb Moore, 11, who got his first dose at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, as did his brother, Bryan, 8. "I haven't gone to a birthday party in a while." Michael Simmonds, 11, who ran into his friends at his vaccination site in Delaware, felt the same way. "We were all very, very pumped up about the shot," he says.

The news means that another roughly 28 million kids throughout the country can get the shot, and as of Nov. 17, 2.6 million had already received their first dose.

The vaccine, which is made by the

company Pfizer, was tested in more than 2,000 kids for several months to make sure it was safe and effective. The company also had to figure out the right dosage — this shot is a smaller dose than the 12-and-older vaccine. "So far, the vaccine has been 90.7 percent effective in preventing Covid infections in kids ages 5 to 11, which is excellent," says Kari Simonsen, pediatrician in chief at Children's Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha. Still, about two-thirds of parents have said they either are not planning on giving their kids the shot or are waiting to see how other kids react first.

Not every kid who has been vaccinated was excited. "I was ready to scream, because I'm very scared of anything related to medicine," says Onan Nygaard, 10, who got his first dose at a health center in Morgan Hill, Calif. Many kids get nervous around needles, so the

government has been shipping doses to pediatricians' offices, where kids are already used to getting shots. And many sites have tried to make the experience less scary. Texas Children's Hospital, for example, played Disney movies and brought in therapy dogs. Onan, for one, says that it turned out the shot "wasn't really a big deal." Bryan Moore says it did hurt a little. "But it was worth it," says Bryan, whose grandfather died of Covid.

One thing that can help with nerves: remembering that getting vaccinated is the best way to help end the pandemic — it protects you, older folks and those who might not be able to get the vaccine. Another thing: thinking up plans for what to do when you're fully vaccinated. "We're going to see more family and friends," says Avery, 9, from Denver. "And we're going to go to Legoland."

GETTING THE SHOT? HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT.

1. When you get to the vaccination site, your parents will fill out a consent form and possibly answer some health questions.

2. Get the first dose. You'll sit and pick an arm for the shot — usually it's the arm you use less. Then a nurse will swab the upper arm with an alcohol pad to clean it and inject the vaccine. Afterward, you'll get a small white card that says which vaccine you got, where you got it and the date. After the shot, you'll sit in a waiting area for 15 or 30 minutes. Your upper arm may start to feel sore during this time. This is normal! Moving that arm around and using it will help the pain go away, but it usually fades after a few days.

3. After three weeks, you'll go get the second dose. Make sure to bring the card from the previous appointment with you. The process this time is the same as the first time. In the next few days, you may feel totally fine, or you may experience a mild fever, chills or headaches or just feel really tired. This is common and should go away after a few days.

4. Two weeks after your second dose, you're considered fully vaccinated! In about six months, you may need to get a booster shot. But for now, you should feel a lot safer going out and about — you can even hang out with vaccinated friends mask-free indoors. ♦

'EVERYTHING IS NEW TO ME' AFGHAN KIDS ADJUST TO LIFE IN THE U.S.

BY ELISE CRAIG

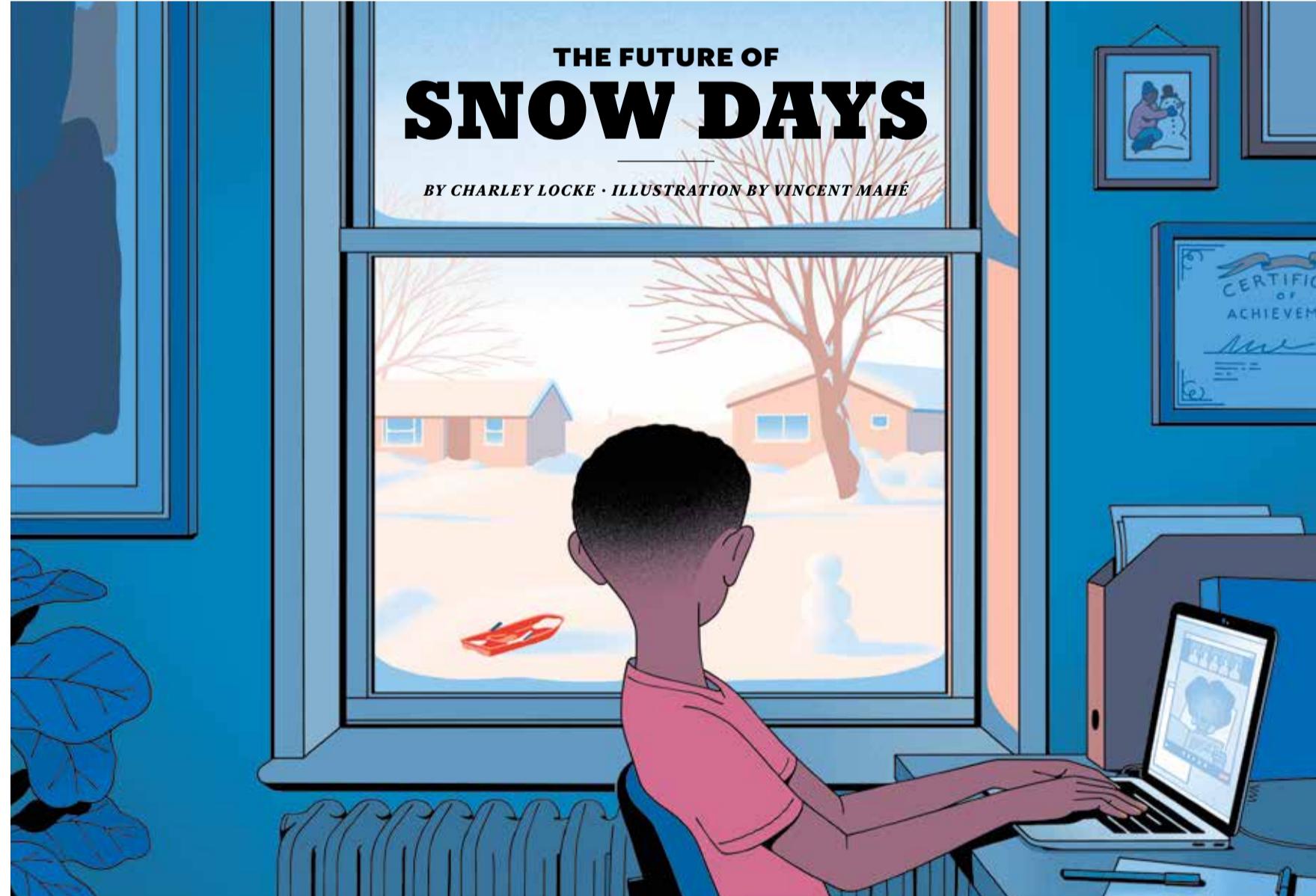
SIXTH GRADE HAS been a year of firsts for one 13-year-old girl whose family recently arrived in New Jersey from Afghanistan. It's her first time in a classroom with both girls and boys, and her first time having school break in the summer instead of the winter. Last month, she celebrated her first Halloween, dressing up as an angel and attending a party at school. "Everything is new to me," says the girl (whose family requested that her name not be used for the safety of her relatives in Afghanistan).

She is one of the tens of thousands of Afghan children whose families fled to the United States after a group called the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August. The Taliban have a history of violence against people who disobey its strict rules, and against Afghans who have worked with Americans. When the group took over, many Afghans feared for their lives under the new government. Many also worried that the Taliban would impose harsh rules on women and girls, as it has in the past. Over 100,000 people fled the country to start new lives elsewhere, as refugees.

But making a new home is a long process, something Faisal, 9, knows all about. He didn't know his family would be leaving Afghanistan forever; his parents didn't tell him because they were afraid others might find out. Now they live in Houston, in an apartment provided to them by Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, an organization helping refugees there. Faisal likes that his new school has playground equipment and more toys than his Afghan school. But it has been hard. "I have a problem understanding the language," he says. "And I don't have many friends here."

Because she arrived speaking some English, the 13-year-old girl has had an easier time. Every Monday, she plays games and practices her English at a club run by a group called Welcome Home Jersey City, which helps refugee families, including hers, with basics like finding and paying for apartments, providing food and helping parents and kids with English. And thanks to a scholarship, she is now enrolled at a private school where her teachers have been helping her catch up. "I am learning every day," she says. She's even learning yet another language: Spanish.

Even so, part of her mind is still back in Afghanistan. "Nobody is happy to leave their country," she says. She and her family think a lot about the family members they left behind. And she worries for all the Afghan girls who remain there — shortly after taking over, the Taliban began restricting girls' access to school and telling women to stay home from work. "I don't have a good feeling about what is going on in Afghanistan," she says. ♦



KEEP SNOW DAYS AS IS

Sure, snow days have practical benefits, like keeping cars off dangerous roads. But to J.D. Thiel, a 14-year-old from Shorewood, Wis., they're important for other reasons too. "It's a good thing psychologically to have a surprise day off," he says, adding that it helps prevent student burnout. That's why J.D. is glad that his district is sticking with the traditional snow days kids know and love. Plenty of other districts, like those in Slate Valley, Vt., and Rolla, Mo., are doing the same thing. Rolla's superintendent, Craig Hounsom, agrees that breaks are important, and he says that that's especially true right now. Given all the stress everyone has been under during the pandemic, Hounsom says, "families would prefer that when we have a snow day, we really have a snow day."

GET RID OF SNOW DAYS

This winter, the million-plus kids in the New York City school system won't suddenly find themselves making snow angels at 2 p.m. on a Wednesday. That's because the country's biggest district has chosen to get rid of snow days entirely, replacing them with virtual learning from home. Nathaniel Styer, the deputy press secretary for the city's department of education, says the policy is meant to maximize classroom hours, which is extra-important this year because school started later than usual. But students like Grace Tooman, 9, aren't happy. "When I first heard about it, I basically had a breakdown," Grace says. "I don't think I was prepared that Covid-19 could take snow days away too." Other students and parents have called and written to the department in protest, and many teachers aren't happy about it, either.

A LITTLE OF BOTH

Some districts are keeping snow days in some form, but sneaking in learning hours, too. For example, in Omaha, students will attend morning classes but will get the afternoons free. Other districts are allowing for a certain number of snow days each year. Last year, when Academy District 20 in Colorado Springs experimented with replacing snow days with virtual learning, plenty of community members weren't happy. "You can't get a break," says Valerie Angelo, 14. The district formed a special committee to discuss the issue, with Valerie as the student representative. "My input was that we at least need to have some snow days," she says. She got them: The new policy keeps unlimited snow days for elementary schools and allows middle and high school students two snow days before virtual learning kicks in. ♦



OF ALL LIFE'S magical moments, few can compare to waking up to white flurries and discovering you have a surprise day off from school. Snow days may feel like a gift from the universe, but they exist for a practical reason: If students can't get to school, class has to be canceled, right? Well, not anymore. Now that schools have figured out how to hold online classes during the Covid pandemic, they could do away with the snow day altogether. But will they? And should they? Here are three different approaches some districts are taking as they figure it all out.

TINY STORY

\$1 TRILLION

The amount of spending in the big infrastructure bill signed into law by President Joe Biden earlier this month. "Infrastructure" means all the things that make a place physically function, and funding in the bill will go toward things like replacing roads, increasing broadband internet access and improving electrical grids.

