



## Welcome to our newsletter!

**Page 2** Health Forms Announcement for 2022-23 School Year

**Page 3** Health & Wellness Update from Ann McCabe

**Page 4** Lower School Counseling Update from Shaun Ditty

**Page 5** Middle School Counseling Update from Shekyra DeCree

**Page 6** Upper School Psychologist Update from Suzanne Ritter

### School Counselors

*Lower School Counselor*  
Shaun Ditty, M.A., LPC

*Middle School Counselor*  
Shekyra DeCree, Ph.D., M.A., LPCC-S

*Upper School Psychologist*  
Suzanne Ritter, Ph.D.

*Licensed School Counselor*  
Amy Brooks

### Health & Wellness Support

*School Nurse*  
Beckie Hoagland, L.S.N.

*School Nurse*  
Janet Fireman, L.S.N.

*Health & Wellness Educator*  
Ann McCabe, M.S./M.A.T

### Academic Support Specialists

*Early Childhood Director*  
Brelle Farrenkopf

*LS Reading Specialist*  
Cyndi Yakscoe

*Learning Styles Specialist*  
Heather Levingston (PreK-Grade 5)

*Learning Styles Specialist*  
Alyssa Thiele (PreK-Grade 5)

*Speech-Language Pathologist*  
Adrienne Moser (PreK-Grade 4)

*Speech-Language Pathologist*  
Alexis Marin (Grades 4-8)

*MS Reading Specialist*  
Tamarah Davis

*MS Learning Styles Specialist*  
Carolyn O'Brien

*US Reading Specialist*  
Jeff Arndt

*US Reading Specialist*  
Katy Frickel

## Health Forms Announcement for 2022-23 School Year

Beckie Hoagland, Janet Fireman and Teresa Bowman  
School Nurses

Columbus Academy collects health and athletic forms in several ways. We require all students to have their health and athletic forms submitted before the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

### **For students in ALL grades**

Final Forms is a secure platform for collecting health and athletic forms for students each school year. This enables you and your student(s) to complete and file MOST of your school forms electronically, including: Health History, Medication Authorization, Immunizations, Emergency Medical Authorization, and Transportation Information. We require ALL students to be registered in Final Forms before the start of the 2022-23 school year.

Registration for Final Forms is set to open on Friday, July 8, with more information to come over the summer as to how to go about completing this process.

[Beckie Hoagland](#), [Janet Fireman](#) and Teresa Bowman | School Nurses

# Organ Donation: Lessons from Eighth Grade Health Class

Ann McCabe  
Health & Wellness Educator



This year, our eighth grade health classes welcomed guest speaker Ellen Anderson from Lifeline Ohio. Ellen is a retired middle school teacher who works as a Donor Family Advocate and In-house Coordinator for Organ Donation with Lifeline Ohio through OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital.

The organ donation lesson focuses on the organ donation process and addresses misconceptions about organ donation. Topics include who is able to donate, which organs are able to be donated, why organs are donated, how someone decides to be or not be an organ donor and the importance of talking about organ donation requests with family. Ellen shared stories about her own experiences and work to help students understand what it is like to be a donor, recipient or family member of someone who experiences organ donation.

Organ donation is addressed in eighth grade health because (believe it or not) these students will soon find themselves at a BMV getting a driver's license and will need to answer the question, "Would you like to register to be an organ, eye and tissue donor?" Like every topic we cover in health class, the goal is for students to be able to make informed decisions based on their own values. In addition, by learning about organ donation, students better understand how common diseases such as diabetes affect the systems of the body, including individual organs.

This allied rotation's lesson on organ donation came at the perfect time, right after the seventh-graders' Organ Day on May 19, during which students were able to interact with preserved human organs. Luckily many eighth-graders were able to visit during Organ Day to see and learn from the visiting doctors, which was an excellent precursor to our organ donation lesson in class. Thank you to the volunteer doctors who came to assist during Organ Day, including Tim Lucas, Andy Neviasser, Laura Phieffer, Chance Spalding, Amy Whitson and Brian Whitson.

Have a great summer!

[Ann McCabe](#) | Health & Wellness Educator



# Lower School Counseling Update

Shaun Ditty  
Lower School Counselor

## Boredom Is A Skill: Let Them Figure It Out

We've all been there with kids, whether it's in the car, at home, or even at the park; no matter where you are, kids seem to find a way to use the phrase "I'm bored." Your first instinct may be to give them an endless supply of ideas because, after all, we are here to help, right? I'm here to encourage you to simply respond by acknowledging their statement and feelings but allow them to figure out what comes next. This might sound something like "I'm really sorry to hear that, I know I don't like feeling that way. You are so creative I know you'll figure something out!"

There are two parts to this answer that are important:

### 1.) Validate

By validating their feelings they will feel heard and seen. Sometimes we might feel frustrated at the very idea that they could be bored given all the things they have at their disposal for entertainment. We also may be having a time where things are busy in our adult lives and might even feel a slight bit of wishing our lives would slow down enough to feel bored. Try to recognize that feeling as your own and leave space for their feeling too. Remember, they are used to being in school with their friends all day where they do art, PE, swimming, reading, recess and more.

Summertime is a big shift for them as they are adjusting to a slower pace. If we respond negatively to their statement this immediately shuts down conversation as well as any bit of creativity they might have (and they'll need that later to fix the boredom). Having your feelings shut down never feels good, so try to remember to always start with a statement that validates what they are feeling and it will open a connection and make them feel as though you are listening to them.

### 2.) Encourage, but don't suggest

Encouraging without suggesting is where things get tricky. As adults who care for children we often want to see them happy, healthy and thriving. The desire to see them happy can place us in the role of fixer of problems. Stepping in to help guide a child and assist them in fixing a problem has a time and place, but I am here to tell you this is not one of them.

When we start suggesting solutions to their boredom problem we are unintentionally reinforcing the idea that they cannot fix the problem themselves. We are taking away their power as intelligent, creative, capable humanbeings that can navigate their way through this feeling. By reminding them of some of their strengths, and encouraging them to use them to solve the problem on their own, you are telling them "You got this, I believe in you."

Summer is an amazingly fun time for many children. Remember, bored is not a dirty word it's just a skill that needs to be intentionally developed and cultivated. By encouraging them to use the skills they already possess we are helping them to trust themselves to solve their own problems. Feeling bored can increase a child's creativity, problem solving skills and much more.

I sincerely hope your summer is filled with many fun activities and enjoyable experiences, along with a little boredom, too.

[Shaun Ditty](#) | LS Counselor

# Middle School Counseling Update

Shekya DeCree  
Middle School Counselor

Exciting things are happening in the middle school counseling space. We are pleased to announce that Amy Brooks will be the new middle school counselor at the start of the 2022-23 school year. Although new to the counseling office, Mrs. Brooks is no stranger to Academy, having served as our choir director since 2005. After receiving her school counseling degree from the University of Dayton, she has played an integral dual role on campus by helping to provide mental health and wellness support to students and families.



In Mrs. Brooks's own words, "I am both honored and excited to assume the role of Middle School Counselor. After years of experience teaching middle and upper school, I am overjoyed to transition to counseling middle school students. I have always felt passionate about the mental health and wellbeing of students. I believe middle school is a unique and powerful time to develop positive mental health habits that can last a lifetime. Supporting our incredible middle school students during such an important time in their lives is truly a gift." Mrs. Brooks has developed an incredibly positive rapport with students throughout the CA community and looks forward to promoting their social and emotional wellness in the years ahead. Please join us in congratulating Mrs. Brooks as she transitions into her new role!

That being said, serving as a middle and upper school counselor during my time at CA has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I began my journey in 2015 as upper school counselor, left to complete my Ph.D., and then returned in 2019 to serve as middle school counselor. Columbus Academy is a special place that I will always cherish. The community has been a second home to me and my family.

My next endeavors include working for the ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences) organization as director of the ROX Institute for Research and Training. ROX is an incredibly empowering program that promotes confidence, leadership and healthy relationships for girls. One of the highlights of my time at CA has been advising the inaugural program for ROX for sixth-grade girls and I hope to continue the partnership that we have developed with the organization in the months ahead. In addition to my new role at ROX, I will also be starting a private counseling practice - Queenspace, LLC - specializing in the mental health treatment of BIPOC women and girls.

Please continue to promote mental and emotional health within your families and throughout the CA community. I'm excited to watch your children grow and succeed in the years ahead. Thank you for entrusting me with the role of supporting your children's social and emotional development. It has truly been an honor.

[Growing Forward: Promoting Child Wellness Amid COVID and Beyond](#)

Be well!

[Shekya DeCree](#) | MS Counselor

# Upper School Counseling Update

Suzanne Ritter  
Upper School Psychologist

Well, we finally made it to exam week! I know this accomplishment is a collective effort (including parents), so well done to all of you for helping to support your children through the last month of AP's, projects and exams. I know we are all ready for a much-needed break and change of pace.

I want to make sure that you have some resources when you have questions over the summer about how to help your teen to flourish, and handle any mental health concerns that may arise.

The following websites linked below offer research-based education, resources and advice for parents:

## [Action for Happiness](#)

This website offers evidence-based skills for creating a sense of belonging, and ways to commit to personal action to create more happiness for ourselves and others.

## [Child Mind Institute](#)

I regularly turn to this website as an up-to-date and accessible source of information for mental health and learning disorder research.

## [On Our Sleeves](#)

This is Nationwide Children's sponsored website designed to provide up-to-date resources and education about supporting your child's mental health.

## [Flusterclux Podcast](#)

This is an excellent podcast with the goal of helping families manage their children's anxiety. It is hosted by nationally-recognized psychotherapist and trainer, Lynn Lyons, LICSW. You can also check out [her website](#) which has more information about her books, articles and parent education training.

## [The Stand Project UA](#)

This is an excellent local resource for information about teen drug and alcohol use, prevention and treatment.

We were horrified to once again hear of the tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. It can be a helpless feeling to try to not only explain this to your children, but also to comfort and help them regain a sense of safety and security. Age appropriate recommendations from the [National Association of School Psychologists](#) may be helpful for you as you try to find the words and actions to help your child to process this horrific and senseless tragedy.

Finally, in the event of a crisis with your teen or child, below are emergency contact numbers that you can call to support you and walk you through the process of linking your child with a mental health provider:

### **Children's Hospital Crisis Line**

614-722-1800 (ages 17 and under)

1-888-276-2273 (over 18)

Non Crisis Appointments: (614) 355-8080

### **Syntero**

Intake: 614-889-5722, ext 133

<https://www.syntero.org/programs/programs-for-youth/>

### **OSU Harding Behavioral Health**

(Ages 17 +) 614-293-9600

Most of all, I am hoping that you don't need any of this information this summer, and that you all take the time to relax, enjoy the weather, savor the moment and have some fun with your families!

See you in August,

[Suzanne Ritter](#) | US Psychologist