



Welcome to our newsletter!

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School Counselors

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

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

Upper School Psychologist
Suzanne Ritter, Ph.D.

Counseling Intern
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
Alyssa Thiele (PreK-Grade 4)

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

Reminders From Our Nurses' Office

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Please make sure to update your child's immunization records and please include, if applicable, their COVID-19 vaccine dates. Keep in mind there should be a minimum of 14 days between receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccine. Graduating seniors, make sure to print off a copy of your vaccines for your college records. If you have any trouble logging in to Final Forms please email nurse@columbusacademy.org or call our office at 614-509-2234.

Returning parents, just a reminder to update your child's Final Forms for next school year 2021-2022 starting in June. The Ohio Department of Health has not yet updated the vaccine requirements for next school year. If you have any questions regarding vaccine requirements for school please email or call our office at your convenience.

[Beckie Hoagland](#) & [Janet Fireman](#) | School Nurses

Lessons from 7th Grade Health Class

Ann McCabe
Health & Wellness Educator

I think we may all have aged 10 years during the year of 2020. Fittingly, my 7th grade health class recently participated in an interactive lesson about aging and older adults. The lesson was developed by social worker Christa Spencer from the Gerlach Center, who also has visited middle school health classes in the past as a guest speaker. The John J. Gerlach Center for Senior Health is located here in Columbus and provides older adults with cognitive neurology care and support services.

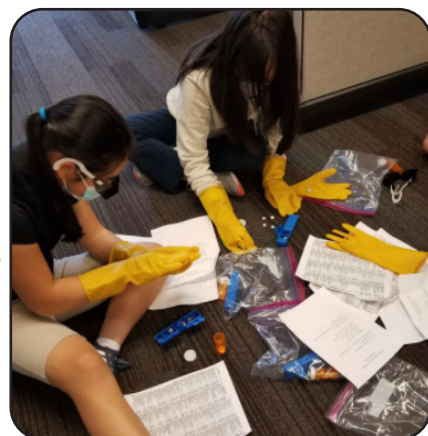
We began by discussing views about older adults and aging. Students share their experiences with grandparents (or people their grandparents' age) and some common things they experience. For example, students shared that sometimes their grandparents have trouble hearing them, remembering things, walking or seeing. They also shared stories about how their grandparents are wise, patient, kind and calm. These stories lead us into discussion about why people might be afraid to age, or hold negative views about older adults. Students analyzed how older adults are portrayed in movies and TVs, and discussed whether these portrayals are negative or positive. Students learned that although sometimes people might have negative views about aging, and although there are difficult physical changes happening to people as they age, aging is a normal part of life.

I asked students, "can only young people be healthy?" They recalled what they learned in 6th grade health, about what is health exactly? Health is more than just physical health, or the absence of disease, it is an interconnected web of emotional health, mental health, intellectual health, physical health and social health. So why are 7th-graders learning about aging? Even though being 80 years old is the last thing on a 7th-grader's mind, I tell them that the more we learn about aging, the more we can support older adults in our lives, use preventative services, manage health conditions, and adopt healthy habits and behaviors to help use age in a healthy way.

During the interactive portion of the lesson, students used tape on their fingers, wear gloves, special glasses and ear plugs to simulate hearing loss, arthritis, glaucoma, macular degeneration and other physical conditions that might interfere with daily tasks for older adults. They then tried to find a phone number in a phone book, open a pill container and sort "pills" (smartie candies) into a weekly pill box, button clothing and play a game of "go fish." Afterwards we discussed what was hard, and why, and how this might help us gain a better understanding of how life can be hard for older adults so that we can be more supportive, patient and empathetic. We also discussed common health conditions that come with aging, but also listed the benefits of aging. I ask students: What is good about getting older? Do you think your grandparents have the same worries or problems as you? Why or why not? How do older adults enrich our lives? What can we learn from this to stay healthy as we age?

Have a healthy, safe and peaceful summer!

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



Lower School Counseling Update

Shaun Ditty
Lower School Counselor

Perhaps one of the most important skills a person can learn is how to try again after facing defeat. Ironically, I also find this to be one of the most challenging skills we as adults caring for children have to allow them to learn. It is undeniably painful to watch a child work through challenging times and it is in our nature as care providers to fix things for our kids. While I certainly do not enjoy seeing a child work so hard at something only to see them not succeed, I do try to remind myself that I'm not witnessing failure but rather I'm fostering resilience and witnessing growth.

Unfortunately we all know that failing at things, or at the very least not getting the outcome we expected, is not something we can shield our children from as it is in fact a part of life. Therefore, it is important that we work to prepare our children for these moments. The funny thing is that despite resilience being something we all need to learn to excel at, we often don't do much in the way of building that skill except for when we find ourselves in the midst of needing the skill.

It's incredibly challenging, if not impossible to adequately learn this skill while needing to use it. See, the thing is the situations that require us to use resilience are often uncomfortable, challenging, and not typically something we enjoy talking about. But it is imperative that we discuss these things with our children. The questions now become, how do I bring it up? What do I say? Luckily the kind folks at understood.org have created a [list of books](#) that you can read with your child that cover this very topic.

Reading with your child is a wonderful way to bond, create opportunities for organic conversations, and gain insight into your child's thoughts and experiences. The list varies from picture books all the way to memoirs. I encourage you to check out the list of books linked above and consider reading through some with your child this summer.

[Shaun Ditty](#) | LS Counselor



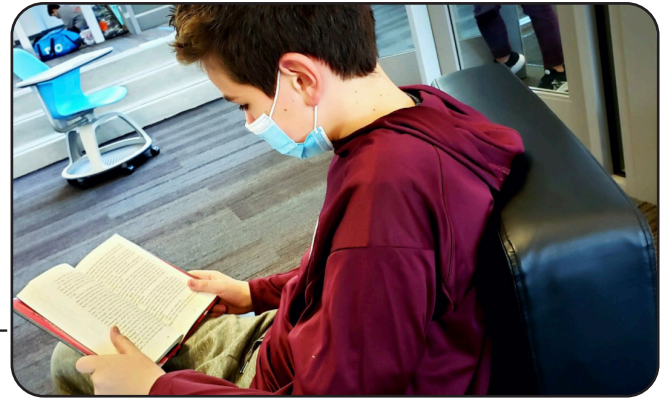
Middle School Counseling Update

Shekyra DeCree
Middle School Counselor

Now that the 2020-21 school year is coming to a close, there are ways you and your children can proactively plan for the upcoming year. Summer is an excellent time for your children to strengthen their organizational skills, leadership abilities, and social and emotional wellness while enjoying their break.

Here are some tips and ideas you and your children can use to plan for a successful school year:

1. Volunteering and community service – Look for local organizations that welcome preteens and adolescents to volunteer their time for a great cause. Volunteerism promotes the importance of service and leadership. It can also help your child learn the value of scheduling, organizing, and prioritizing weekly tasks and responsibilities while serving others in the community.
2. Prioritize wellness – Make healthy play dates with friends, go to parks, get exercise, and spend time with family or friends you have not seen during the school year – all of these things can help promote wellness and balance. Learning to integrate intentional wellness practices during the summer months can help establish a consistent routine during the school year.
3. Keep a consistent sleep schedule – Even though there is less of a need to wake up early for school, staying up beyond midnight to make Tik Tok videos, face timing with friends, and playing the latest video games can still be disruptive to a healthy sleep pattern. Try to encourage your child to maintain a healthy sleep schedule as much as possible. There will be less of a struggle adjusting to a new sleep pattern when next school year begins.
4. Read – Maintaining a summer reading schedule can help your children promote organization and structure while enjoying books they love.



These are just a few ideas that you and your children can use this summer to prepare for the school year ahead. For more helpful tips, check out this [link](#).

We hope you and your children enjoy a safe, restful summer with friends, family and loved ones.

[Shekyra DeCree](#) | MS Counselor

Upper School Counseling Update

Suzanne Ritter
Upper School Psychologist

Wow, we are almost there! As more students have returned to campus, a feeling of normalcy is creeping back in. It has been so wonderful to see our students outside playing frisbee, badminton, or just enjoying our beautiful grounds. Realistically though before our students can get on with their summers, they have a few more tasks to cross off their “to do” lists! With final projects to be completed and exams to take, their worrying is still going to be with them!

Suggestions for Working with Worry

I have been teaching some strategies for “working with worry” in Mr. Leet’s Ethics classes. We focused on future worries (“What ifs?”). Positive Psychology research tells us that understanding why we worry helps us to become “warriors” instead of “worriers”. This means we can work with our worries, putting them aside and letting the emotion go if we can’t do anything about them in the moment, or work through them when problem-solving is needed.

The most important first step is to learn to calm ourselves so that we can engage our thinking brain rather than our emotional brain. We can use breathing, exercise, meditation, music, pets, nature, or whatever works for us, so we can move from the “flight, fight, or freeze” reactions that anxiety brings, into evaluating the worry, or problem-solving. “Snowball” or catastrophic thinking is the tendency to ruminate about irrational, worst-case outcomes, which increases anxiety and prevents us from taking action when action is needed. Studies have shown that most of what we worry about does not happen, but we spend an enormous amount of time worrying!

Techniques for managing worry including finding times and ways to contain worry so that it doesn’t take over our lives. For example, therapists recommend tools such as dedicated “worry time” and even ancient techniques like using Mexican Worry Dolls as a means for helping them find a place to direct their anxious thoughts so they can either let them go or move into problem-solving mode. Another technique is to remember the times that we have handled difficult situations, and to say to ourselves, “I’ll handle it. I’ll handle it because I have handled everything that has come my way in the past, so I will handle this.” This reminds us of our resilience and of our strength!

Another technique is called the “Worst Case, Best Case, Most Likely” intervention, which is from the book [The Resilience Factor](#). This tool allows us to calm our minds and put things into perspective. This [link](#) can tell you more about how and why this works.

Summer Suggestions for your Teens

This summer will be like no other, as we navigate the post-pandemic world. Our teens have handled a lot in the past year, and we may be wondering if they are doing OK. Chances are, the effects of the pandemic has changed them in ways we will only begin to understand as we move forward. Without a doubt, their difficulties give them a chance to understand that they can be resilient in the face of adversity. In this article in the *New York Times*, [How Do I Know if My Teen is OK?](#), psychologists weigh in on how to evaluate your teen’s well-being, and help them to get back on track to meeting the developmental milestones of independence, building relationships, finding meaning and purpose in their everyday lives, as well as beginning to plan for their future.

This summer is an important time to reset, and re-evaluate what is important to your teens. While summers are filling up again this year with activities for your teens, help them remember that they also need time to play and have fun, to think, to be creative, to explore nature, and to build relationships. These are as necessary for development as reading, writing, and arithmetic!

I hope you all have a restful and fun summer! See you in August!

[Suzanne Ritter](#) | US Psychologist