



Welcome to our newsletter!

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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
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

Update From Our Nurses' Office

What a great start to the school year! It is wonderful to see some sense of normalcy on campus with sports teams in full swing and now ready for their postseason play, watching the upper school students enjoying outside activities, as well as middle and lower school students playing at recess. It feels like a normal school year! We are proud of our community in regards to vaccination status and willingness to adhere to our safety and mitigation strategies while on campus. We realize the impact these protocols have on our students and families and we thank you again for keeping everyone safe at school.

Our annual flu shot clinic for faculty and staff was last week, and we are encouraging all students to receive their flu shots in the coming weeks. We have also partnered with Giant Eagle to host a Pfizer COVID Booster Clinic on October 22nd for faculty/staff. If you have any questions regarding vaccines please don't hesitate to reach out and discuss.

Franklin County Public Health has generously provided BINAX Now Rapid COVID tests for our students and faculty/staff members. Please reach out to our nurses' office if you are in need of a free test kit and we will arrange a pick-up time during the school day.

We continue to meet bi-weekly with Franklin County Public Health and collaborate with the health professional and other school nurses in our area. We discuss COVID trends, the latest developments from the Ohio Department of Health and the CDC to ensure the most up-to-date information for the Columbus Academy community. We continue to follow all recommendations from the above health departments and review any pending issues with our COVID Response Team. Our [COVID dashboard and information page](#) represents any active cases on campus and is updated as needed.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns regarding the health and safety of our community.

Warmly,

[Beckie Hoagland](#) and [Janet Fireman](#)
School Nurses

Lessons from 9th Grade Health Class

Ann McCabe
Health & Wellness Educator

Food Guidelines from Around the World

As I prepare to teach about nutrition in 9th grade health, you would think that it would be one of the more straightforward health topics to cover. It's simple: don't eat bad food. Eat good food. We've heard this before. Right?

With all topics we teach in health, there is much to consider to make sure the lesson is engaging, valuable, relevant, applicable, scientifically accurate, and addressing larger essential questions (What is health? What influences my health? How do I make healthy choices?). Each lesson helps students move away from a superficial definition of health as fitness and perfection and to a broader understanding of health as an active, evolving, individual, complex process through which we become aware of, and make choices towards, a more balanced and fulfilling life.

So although students may have learned basic nutrition in lower and middle school, an objective of the 9th grade nutrition unit is to help students develop a positive relationship with food and a more nuanced understanding of nutrition. We try to disentangle notions of nutrition as rigid and food as morality.

One interesting way to teach these concepts is to consider food guidelines from around the world. During 2nd quarter in 9th grade health we begin our nutrition unit by comparing US and Canadian food guidelines. You may recall the USDA Food Pyramid. Today the symbol of nutrition in the US is no longer a pyramid, but a plate. USDA's My Plate was introduced in 2011 and incorporates subtle changes to reflect updated nutrition science guidelines.



USDA's My Plate next to Canada's food guide recommendations image. There are minor differences, like dairy¹ as a separate category in USDA's guideline, and specifics in Canada's image like "choose whole grain foods."

For homework, students choose one or two countries from the [FAO Food-based Dietary Guidelines](#) and answer a series of questions about the food guidelines: When were the guidelines created? Who created them? Did any part of the guidelines surprise you? Do you have a personal connection to these regions/countries? What do you think explains the differences between this guideline and USDA's My Plate? What do these differences tell you about there being one right way to eat? What are the positives and negatives of creating food guidelines for an entire population of people?

In class, students get together in a "round robin" format to share about their country's guidelines with a peer for two minutes, and then switch. This allows students to learn about many different guidelines in a short period of time. At the end of class we extract common themes and takeaways in terms of what healthy food is across the board: major categories tend to always cover grains,

vegetables, fruits, and protein, and guidelines across countries encourage fresh food while limiting salt, sugar, and processed foods.

One major takeaway, however, is that there seems to be no specific, exact formula when it comes to eating healthy. Countries emphasize different food groups and amounts based on cultural traditions and geographically available foods (some incorporate culture into their food guideline image; for example, the Bahamas food guideline image is the shape of a traditional drum).



Food Guideline Images from the Bahamas, Ecuador, and Sweden.

Many countries emphasize fish and seafood, some meat and dairy. Some explicitly incorporate spices, tea, or specific cultural foods like tubers or fermented foods in their guidelines. Some mention guidelines surrounding breastfeeding, clean water, or alcohol. Many add guidelines that we usually don't associate with nutrition at all. For example, Japan's first nutrition guideline is "enjoy your meals." China encourages people to "eliminate food waste." A nutrition guideline from Honduras is "walk for at least half an hour a day to stay healthy and stress free," and Ecuador's guidelines declare, "healthy body, healthy mind! To improve our physical and mental wellbeing, let's practice at least half an hour of your favourite physical activity."

The Bahamas tells people to "choose foods for their nutritional value not for the name brand or cost." France incorporates a guideline to, whenever possible, "prepare meals at home." More than a couple emphasize the importance of eating with others: one of Venezuela's major guidelines is "try and eat with your family," and Peru encourages citizens to "enjoy meals in company."

What do these varied food guidelines tell us? Of course there are essential amounts of macro and micronutrients required for our bodies to function optimally. But there are varied ways we can get these nutrients (check out the [Inuit Paradox](#)), and considering various cultural, social, physical, economic, environmental, mental, and emotional influences is important when it comes to understanding nutrition and making healthy nutritional choices.

Sage, the dining service that serves Columbus Academy, has a great program called "[The Sage Spotlight Program](#)" with the motto "Variety. Balance. Moderation." Guidelines for incorporating different foods onto a plate use colors associated with nutrient density, and the program embraces the idea that there are no good or bad foods, instead, all foods fit when we practice variety, balance, and moderation. When I ask students what they've learned at the end of our international food guideline nutrition lesson, that is basically what they tell me. That, and, "is it time for lunch yet?"

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

Information About The Stand Project

Ann McCabe
Health & Wellness Educator

The information below was provided by The Stand Project, a great local resource based out of Upper Arlington.

The Stand Project is a community coalition committed to impacting youth substance misuse and standing by families in finding help. Learn more by visiting TheStandProject.org. Stay informed by following The Stand Project on facebook | twitter | instagram or subscribing to the monthly newsletter.

OPERATION STREET SMART

November 1st | 6:00-8:00 PM | Municipal Building - City Chambers
3600 Tremont Rd. Upper Arlington, OH 43221

Parents will be given a wealth of drug information, see several packaging and paraphernalia examples as well as learn tips for recognizing use and abuse in adolescents. The program includes information about alcohol, vaping, marijuana, huffing, heroin, prescription medications, cocaine, mushrooms, methamphetamines, and LSD just to name a few. Street Smart is a collaborative effort between D.A.R.E. and narcotics officers with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. NOTE - This is not a program for students.

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

Lower School Counseling Update

Shaun Ditty
Lower School Counselor

Tools or Toys?

Fidget Spinner, Pop It!, Rubix Cube and more! These are just a tiny sliver of items being marketed towards children today. I was recently reading an article about the evolution and craze of the Pop It! toys that have seemingly taken over desks, lockers, and backpacks. For those that are not familiar with a Pop It! they are silicone toys that are similar to bubble wrap. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are meant to push the silicone from one side to the other over and over again. I'll admit they can provide a really satisfying and soothing experience however, let's have a discussion about tools versus toys.

I want to be clear in saying that items can be helpful in the learning environment for some children. But it is important to recognize that they can also be a distraction. In my opinion it is all about how an item is used and how much of their attention it takes away. It can essentially be boiled down to one question, can I use this item and still keep my eyes and attention on what is happening in the classroom? If the answer is yes, then it's a tool. Anything else and it's being used as a toy.

Our children already have a lot going on in their lives and at times it seems as though their attention is at a premium. I believe that we, as adults, need to help guide them through times of challenge and at times help them understand that the thing, whatever it may be, they want so badly may not be what they need. Are they tools for some? Sure! Are they toys for others? Absolutely.

I want to be clear in saying that there is absolutely a time and place for toys and fun. Fun is a necessary part of life and we need to embrace that idea. But there is also a time for learning and work. I encourage you to talk to your child about the idea of tools vs toys and listen to their view-point. Dialogue is always helpful and it's also a great way to talk to them about something they are interested in. In the end though we have to work together to help them delineate between the two.

[Shaun Ditty](#) | LS Counselor

Middle School Counseling Update

Shekyra DeCree
Middle School Counselor

Recently, I had the opportunity to present to the eighth grade students during their class meeting on September 29th. I asked the students to reflect on and celebrate some of their most awesome attributes. Their responses ranged from believing they were a great friend, having pride in their athletic skills and abilities, to highlighting their hobbies and interests. Interestingly, not one student mentioned their grades as something that made them awesome. They focused on other aspects of their personal identities and celebrated the uniqueness of their skills, gifts, and talents. I was so impressed with their transparency and sense of pride in sharing about themselves.



What was most impressive was their immediate connection to the idea that their identity was not directly correlated with their grades or school performance. In view of that, they learned the definition of gradent-ity, which is a term I define as a mindset where students associate their self-worth solely on their grades and school performance and leave little to no room to learn from their mistakes. Students were encouraged to do their best in their academic efforts, but not lose themselves in the process. They were also reminded of the value of learning, growing, and building from their mistakes.

According to [this article](#), research indicates that academic stress can be emotionally harmful and may result in symptoms of anxiety and depression among students. The article also points out that students suffering from academic stress may struggle more in school. Hence, it is important to promote academic balance for our children.

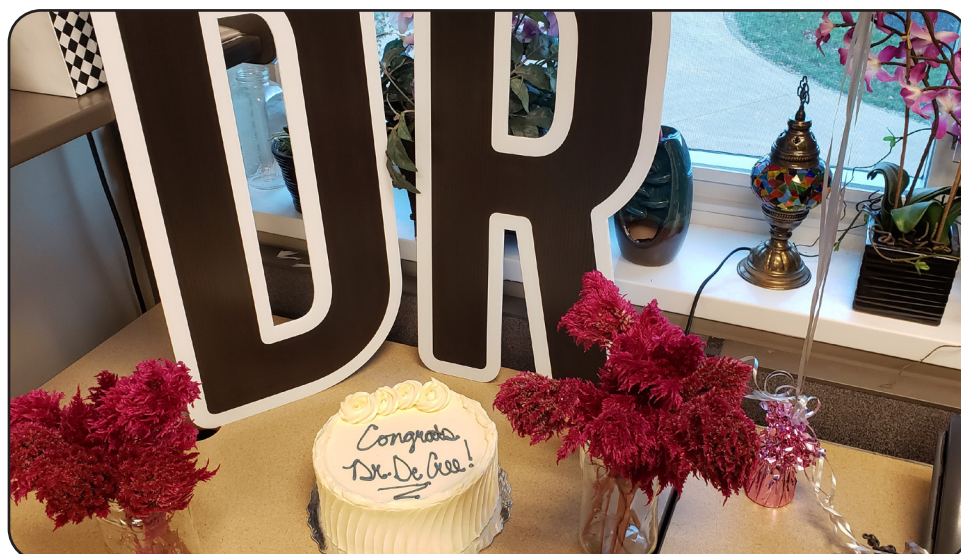
Reminding your child to do the best they can while growing and learning from their mistakes can help them maintain a well-balanced sense of self-worth and identity beyond their academic achievements. If you sense they are suffering from academic stress and gradent-ity:

1. Remind them that middle school is a place where it's safe to make mistakes, learn from mistakes, ask questions and grow forward.
2. Empower them to raise their hands and ask questions in class, and use their flex-time to self-advocate, meet with teachers and gain a greater understanding of their coursework.
3. Flex is a great time for students to go over mistakes made on tests and quizzes with their teachers and faculty. Encourage your child to use that time wisely.
4. Celebrate the whole child. Remind your child of their strengths, gifts, and talents in addition to their academic strengths. Hearing this message from you as their parent may alleviate some of the academic stress they feel. Remember, they want to make you proud. How you see them means a lot to them.

If you would like to explore more ways to celebrate your child's identity and avoid the pitfalls of gradent-ity, contact Shekyra DeCree in the middle school counseling office (decrees@columbusacademy.org or 614-509-2677) at any time. We are committed to partnering with you and your child in promoting holistic wellness and academic success.

Congratulations!
Shekyra DeCreee, Ph.D.

Congratulations to middle school counselor Shekyra DeCreee on completing her Ph.D. this past Monday. Our middle school faculty and staff celebrated this great accomplishment on Tuesday with cake and cupcakes!



Upper School Counseling Update

Suzanne Ritter
Upper School Psychologist

Welcome to the 2021-22 school year!

While we are no doubt still dealing with the effects of the Pandemic, school is feeling a lot more “normal,” with lots of noise, busy hallways and dining areas, and calendars that are more than full. Most students I’ve talked to are very happy to be back. However, there is some discomfort due to the adjustments to “back to normal.” Students are telling me that while it’s great to see friends and be in the actual classroom, they do miss their more laid back schedule of coming every other day, and going to class in their sweats from their bedrooms! Despite the worries about returning to school, many have remained optimistic, and have adjusted very well to being back.

Even with the excitement of full time school, it’s important to recognize that there is more anxiety and fatigue regarding the return to a faster pace. Many of you may have seen this [60 minutes segment](#) that aired in August about mental health risks for children from high achieving schools. Dr. Suniya Luthar, in her research on mental health with this segment of the student population, found that these students are significantly at-risk for depression and anxiety disorders, similar to those adolescents who have been exposed to poverty, trauma, and discrimination. She characterizes the reason for that risk as the increased “unrelenting, insidious pressure to succeed.”

In an [interview with the American Psychological Association](#) discussing these results, she mentions the mentality of “I can, therefore I must,” which is seen within our own student population. She continues to emphasize that this is NOT meant to point the finger of blame on the parents, teachers, adolescents or universities, but it is instead a result of a larger cultural shift of these factors coming together. The students’ self-worth becomes tied completely to their achievements, discounting other personal strengths such as compassion, kindness, decency, and engagement in their personal interests. The decrease in self-care and the real struggle of trying to do too many things at once at increasingly high standards, left unchecked, can lead to burn out and ultimately to mental health issues.

The good news is, recent studies have shown our teens are thinking and talking about wellness and mental health more these days. They may be more open to strategies to help them manage these stressors. While we adults may have hours of sage advice and experience that we are really excited to share, what they really want is for us to ACTIVELY LISTEN. This article from *Psychology Today*, entitled “[Seven Things Teenagers Desperately Need Adults to Understand](#)” may give you some insight about what they may want to say. Even those of us at CA who watch our students all day forget how much is going on in the life of a teen. Even as they push you away, they still need your voiced love, guidance, approval and support.

Here are more suggestions to help your teens manage their daily stressors. Better yet, since our teens notice what we do rather than listen to what we say, try these for yourselves as well!

- Make a weekly schedule – scheduling not only “to do’s” but sleep, family/friend time, exercise, or other self-care activities. This will help when thinking about how to prioritize commitments and may help our teens see when they are over-committed.
- Make a list of activities that elicit positive emotions – to counteract human’s natural negativity emotions. Researcher [Barbara Frederickson](#) has found that It takes three positive emotions to counteract the negative emotions we feel.
- If your teen’s schedule is consistently overloaded, have a conversation with them about what they can prioritize, and what they can leave behind. An important skill for our children to learn at a young age is how to make healthy choices for themselves. Right now life is a big buffet for them, but they can’t eat it all at once!



- If they are not already involved in daily exercise or movement, help them come up with ways they can be active every day. Including nature into that activity can help boost their well-being even more.
- When they are upset or worried about a test or assignment grade, help them see how that fits into the big picture. A student's final grade is made up of many different measures of their knowledge. A single grade rarely if ever affects the trajectory of their adult lives. Instead, help them focus on what they learned, and how to move on to the next test, assignment, etc.
- Lastly, and most important, remind them that they are not their grade, their score, their sport, or their transcript. These do not capture the complex and wonderful young adults they are becoming. Many of their personal character strengths such as their kindness to others, work ethic, enthusiasm, curiosity, and social intelligence is what will set them apart and help them live a flourishing life! Try to name and celebrate these strengths outloud to your teen when you see them.

Give me a call or send an email if you have any questions or concerns about your teen. Enjoy the rest of 2021!

[Suzanne Ritter](#) | US Psychologist

PACA to Host ISACS Watch Party for Parent Education Event



Dr. Janet Taylor, M.D., MPH
Psychiatrist
Mental Health & Wellness, Self-Care Expert

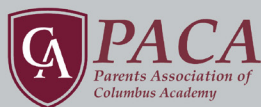
ISACS Watch Party: “Why Your Child’s Social, Emotional & Academic Well-being Begins at Home”

Tuesday, November 9th • 7:00–8:30 p.m.
CA Dining Hall – Fireside Room

Join PACA for a webinar featuring psychiatrist Janet Taylor, M.D., MPH, as she illuminates the importance of a child’s social and emotional well-being. Parents and caregivers will learn about the impact of fear and trauma on learning and how to maximize your child’s health and emotional well-being by bringing awareness to your own. Hear the importance of accountability and emotional regulation, and learn how to identify mental health red flags and when additional help is required. Food will be provided.

RSVP by Thursday, November 4th at
columbusacademy.org/isacswatchparty

Hosted by:



Livestream provided by:



Also, there will be a virtual-only event from the ISACS Parent Series – The Family Firm: Data & Decisions (Grades K–8) on Tuesday, October 26th from 7:30–8:30 p.m. This program (not hosted by PACA) is available to any parent/guardian to pre-register.

[Click here to pre-register](#)

Registrants will then be emailed a Zoom link prior to the event.