

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of December 9

All School

St. Francis Welcomes S.E.A.L. Security to South Campus

We are pleased to announce a new partnership with S.E.A.L. Security Texas to provide daily security at our South Campus. **A S.E.A.L. Security officer will now work at the South Campus from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. each school day.** The S.E.A.L. officer will be highly trained, armed, and professionally dressed in a uniform that looks very similar to that worn by the police. The officer will enter and leave the South Campus each day in a marked patrol car. We will continue to use off-duty police officers for South Campus street-traffic control. Please join us in welcoming S.E.A.L. Security Texas to St. Francis!

Save the Date: Winter Parent Education Program Is January 30

Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of the *New York Times* best-selling book *The Self-Driven Child* (also the recommended SFES parent summer reading book), will be the featured speaker at our upcoming Winter Parent Education Program.

- Dr. Stixrud will speak twice on **Wednesday, January 30, 2019—at 11:30 a.m. (the Lunch and Learn session) and again at 6:30 p.m.**
- Tickets will be available for sale via MySchoolAnywhere starting on Sunday, December 16.
- If you have not bought this book, now would be an excellent time to purchase and read it prior to January 30!

Register Now for Explore and Extend Classes

Registration for spring 2019 Explore and Extend enrichment classes, private music instruction through the School of Music, and winter break camps is now open.

- Explore and Extend class descriptions are available on our Explore and Extend page [here](#).
- Break the Wintry Blues Volleyball Camp (for students in grades 2-9) runs January 2-4, and the Wolves Baseball Identification Series (for students in kindergarten through grade 8) runs January 3-4.
- To register for Explore and Extend classes, private lessons through the School of Music, or winter break camps, log in to My BackPack and select “Program Registration” in the My Forms/Documents section.
- For more information, please e-mail [Margaret Newsom](#).

Wow! Gala Sign-up Parties Raised \$64,000

We were truly floored by your response to the sign-up parties last week! We raised a record-shattering \$64,000 thanks to the hard work of our sign-up party committee: Nadine Boutros, Kelly Cabbage, Laura Davenport, Lauren McCulloch, and Jennifer Rosser. We also want to thank the teachers and parents who volunteered to host all of the fun events we had to offer this year. And, of course, we want to thank YOU for signing up and helping us raise so much money for our school.

Tickets are still available for the Gala! Get them [here](#)—they are going fast!

A Note From the Library: Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Enchanted Forest Fall Book Fair a hit! Special thanks to our chairs, **Sharon Lesniak** and **Pam Schmidt**, and to all who volunteered. We could not have done it without you.

Happy holidays from the library staff!

Admissions Application Deadline for New K-10 Students Is Wednesday

The application deadline for new students in kindergarten through tenth grade is this **Wednesday, December 12**. This deadline is for the application only. All

other supporting documents (teacher recommendations, transcripts, etc.) are due Tuesday, January 15, 2019. Again, this is only for new students for 2019-20! [Click here](#) to apply now.

Help Us Celebrate Our Teachers!

Whether you are a baker or a buyer, we need your help! We need cookies—and lots of them—for our annual Teacher Appreciation Cookie Party on **Wednesday, December 12**. Homemade goodies are always appreciated, but store-bought goodies are loved, too. [Click here](#) to sign up to bring cookies on December 12. Thank you for helping our much-loved teachers have a sweet holiday!

Nominations for the 2019-20 PA Board Are Now Open

It's really hard to believe, but it's time to start thinking about the 2019-20 Parents Association executive officers!

- If you are interested—or know someone else who is interested—in serving the St. Francis community on the Parents Association Executive Board, please contact Past-President [Jennifer Stringer](#).
- Using the names you submit, the Nominating Committee will assemble the slate of officers.
- Nominations are currently underway for the following board positions: president-elect, treasurer, communications officer, parent education officer, curriculum support officer, and at-large officer.
- The deadline to submit names via [this nomination form](#) is **Friday, January 11, 2019**.

Primary School

From the Assistant Division Head

Editor's Note: Last week's Primary School head's letter was attributed to Head of Primary School Amy Whitley, but was actually written by Assistant Head of Primary School Clifton Walker. We apologize for the confusion!

Our 2018 Primary School People For Others Day was a big success! Through this People for Others project, our students learned the power of teamwork and the intrinsic rewards gained from helping others. As it is written in

Hebrews 13:16 (NKJV), “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Primary School students eagerly began bringing items for veterans on October 22. Each cottage was assigned specific items that are needed at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center here in Houston. This hospital serves more than 151,000 veterans in the Southeast Texas region. Pre-Primary students brought shampoo, soap, and combs. Primary I students brought toothpaste, toothbrushes, and shaving cream. Primary II students brought socks. The collection boxes in each cottage filled quickly, requiring second boxes to be placed next to the original boxes. In chapel on November 6, Father Wismer blessed the donated items, and we prayed over the items as a Primary School. Then the work began!

On November 12, Primary II students worked side by side with our Upper School students to assemble “care bags” for veterans. Students took great pride in filling the bags with the many toiletry items that were donated. Our Primary II and Upper School students learned, through a real-life experience, the importance of helping others. Pre-Primary and Primary I students contributed to this project by coloring a picture with an American flag on it to be included with the donated items for veterans. Primary II students also made cards for the veterans.

Here are some photos from the event: [photo #1](#), [photo #2](#), [photo #3](#), and [photo #4](#).

A big thank-you to Lindsey Little, Anna Gumbel, and Jacqui Mackel, who planned this project and worked hard to make this day meaningful for our students and our veterans. On November 16, Anna and Lindsey delivered the 200+ student-created care bags to the DeBakey Medical Center.

Please talk with your child about this experience and the importance of being people for others.

Warmly,

Clifton Walker, MEd
Assistant Head of Primary School

St. Francis Welcomes S.E.A.L. Security to South Campus

We are pleased to announce a new partnership with S.E.A.L. Security Texas to provide daily security at our South Campus. **A S.E.A.L. Security officer will now work at the South Campus from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. each school day.** The S.E.A.L. officer will be highly trained, armed, and professionally dressed in a uniform that looks very similar to that worn by the police. The officer will enter and leave the South Campus each day in a marked patrol car. We will continue to use off-duty police officers for South Campus street-traffic control. Please join us in welcoming S.E.A.L. Security Texas to St. Francis!

Help Us Spread the Word About St. Francis

Do you know any friends or neighbors who could be future St. Francis Wolves? St. Francis's scheduled Primary School group tours have concluded, but anyone interested in setting up a tour may e-mail [Margaret Yerkovich](mailto:Margaret.Yerkovich@stfrancis.org).

Primary School Dining Hall Menu

To view the Primary School Dining Hall menu, please click [here](#).

Mark Your Calendar

Tuesday, December 11

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, December 12

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Monday, December 17

- *PI Christmas Parties*
-

Tuesday, December 18

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
 - *Ferguson's T/Th Pre-Primary Christmas Party: 1:30 p.m.*
-

Wednesday, December 19

- *Lessons and Carols Chapel for PS and US: 9:30 a.m.*
 - *Pre-Primary Christmas Parties: 1:30 p.m.*
-

Thursday, December 20

- *PII Pageants and Parties*
 - *Staller: Pageant at 9:00 a.m. and party at 9:30 a.m.*
 - *Owens: Pageant at 9:40 a.m. and party at 10:10 a.m.*
 - *Blades: Pageant at 10:20 a.m. and party at 10:50 a.m.*
 - *Wiener: Pageant at 11:00 a.m. and party at 11:30 a.m.*
 - *Hughes: Pageant at 11:40 a.m. and party at 12:10 p.m.*
-

Friday, December 21-Monday, January 7

- *School Holiday*
-

Tuesday, January 8

- *School Resumes*
 - *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, January 9

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*

Thursday, January 10

- *Epiphany Celebration (Mrs. Ferguson's Class)*
-

Friday, January 11

- *PS Epiphany Celebration*
 - *Wolf Wear Sale*
-

Monday, January 14

- *Spring Explore and Extend Classes Begin*
-

Tuesday, January 15

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, January 16

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
-

Thursday, January 17

- *Parent Step-Up Visit: Parents of Mrs. Ferguson's students visit Primary I*
-

Friday, January 18

- *Parent Step-Up Visits*

Lower School

From the Division Head

I hope you are enjoying your weekend!

Our Christmas concerts are this week. Your children have been preparing a wonderful concert for you. Please click [here](#) for more detailed information about the shows.

We are all working hard these last two weeks before we break for the holidays. It is SO important that our students continue to read and discuss their reading with you over the break. If a child does not read (and therefore practice important reading and thinking skills) for just two to three weeks, progress can be stalled! Reading “just-right books” is also crucial for reading development at any time of the year.

How can you promote reading over the holidays?

- Have them earn screen time by reading and writing in a journal.
- Have a holiday read-aloud for the family or have a routine of reading with your child before bedtime. If you are reading aloud to your child, the book does not necessarily need to be on their level. Reading a book above their level promotes higher-level thinking skills and enhances vocabulary development since you are reading words they cannot decode. Stop and have discussions about new words.
- When partner reading with your child, always choose a book on their level. Practicing reading skills on books that they can decode promotes critical thinking. If they are busy decoding every word, no thinking can happen.

As always, feel free to reach out to your teachers or our specialists or administrators if you have any questions!

Have a wonderful week!

Carol Christ, MEd
Head of Lower School

'Tis the Season for Music! Join Us for Our Christmas Concerts

We are excited to bring you songs of the season in our upcoming Christmas Concert Series, *The Joy of Christmas!* There will be three Lower School concerts taking place in the FAC:

- **Grades 1 and 2:** Monday, December 10, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- **Grades 3 and 4, Joyful Sounds Choir:** Tuesday, December 11, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
- **Kindergarten:** Wednesday, December 12, from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m.

For the evening concerts, students should report to their homeroom classrooms at 5:30 p.m. Teachers will be supervising, so once students arrive, they will remain in their designated areas.

ATTIRE

Students will be asked to perform in festive Christmas outfits. *Girls* may wear dresses or blouses and skirts with dress shoes. *Boys* may wear dress shirts, sweaters, and/or vests with dress pants and dress shoes. (Please, no jeans, shorts, or hats). Outfits may be one color or may include a festive color combined with neutral colors (white, black, or khaki). Suggested colors are as follows:

- **Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2:** Red and/or green (Kindergarten students will wear their Christmas outfits to school on December 12.)
- **Grades 3 and 4:** White, black, silver (gray), and/or gold (beige or khaki)

We look forward to seeing you at the concerts!

Help Us Spread the Word About St. Francis

Do you know any friends or neighbors who could be future St. Francis Wolves? St. Francis's scheduled Lower School group tours have concluded, but anyone interested in setting up a tour may e-mail Kathryn Spinelli.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 10

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between December 9-15 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
- *Christmas Concert for Grades 1 and 2:* 6:00 p.m. in the FAC

Tuesday, December 11

- *Christmas Concert for Grades 3-4 and Joyful Sounds Choir:* 6:00 p.m. in the FAC
-

Wednesday, December 12

- *Chapel:* 8:05 a.m.
 - *Christmas Concert for Kindergarten:* 9:00 a.m. in the FAC; kindergarten students will wear their Christmas outfits to school
-

Monday, December 17

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between December 16-31 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
-

Wednesday, December 19

- *NO Chapel*
 - *Christmas Parties*
-

Thursday, December 20

- *Dress Uniform Day*
 - *Polar Express Day:* Students may bring a robe and slippers to wear at school
 - *Lessons and Carols:* 9:00 a.m.; students only
 - *Sing-along:* 2:00 p.m.; students only
-

Friday, December 21-Monday, January 7

- *School Holiday*
-

Tuesday, January 8

- *School Resumes*
-

Wednesday, January 9

- *Dress Uniform Day*
- *Epiphany Eucharist: 8:05 a.m.*

Middle School

From the Division Head

Happy Sunday, Middle School families! I hope this finds you well.

Last week, we hosted Dr. Crystal Collier and her Pathways program in two sessions: a parent discussion about creating behavior contracts that work and a grade-level student assembly about preventing and coping with drug abuse. Both sessions were heavily research-informed in best practices and shed a ton of light on both subjects. We are thankful for Dr. Collier's services to our community.

Over Thanksgiving break, I began reading the book *UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World* by Dr. Michele Borba. This is an outstanding resource for better understanding empathy and for structuring a plan to better educate our kids about one of the most important life skills. Please check out [Dr. Borba's web page](#) and navigate around her steps to helping families with empathy. I'll report more when I finish her book, but I couldn't pass up the chance to mention it.

On the Mind, Brain, and Education science front, I read this recent [article](#) from one of my favorite educational journalists, Anya Kamenetz. It discusses many of the educational terms that we regularly use and hear, but it also clarifies their evolving definitions, as schools like ours change the landscape from which they emerged.

I wish you all a wonderful week! It's a beautiful day, and we are Wolves!

Sincerely,

Connor Cook, EdD
Head of Middle School

Help Us Spread the Word About St. Francis

Do you know any friends or neighbors who could be future St. Francis Wolves? St. Francis's scheduled Middle School group tours have concluded, but anyone interested in setting up a tour may e-mail [Kathryn Spinelli](#).

Parents and Business Owners, Buy Your Yearbook Ads Today!

Each year, **eighth-grade parents are invited to place a full- or half-page ad** in *The Howler* yearbook to congratulate their student on eighth-grade graduation and to celebrate and reflect on the special times their child has shared with friends and teachers at St. Francis.

All parents are also invited to place ads for their local businesses. *The Howler* yearbook is an excellent resource for building professional relationships within the St. Francis community while supporting the entrepreneurial efforts of our yearbook staff. *The Howler* is also an excellent way to advertise a community business.

The deadline to create and purchase yearbook ads is Sunday, February 3, at 8:00 p.m.

Please e-mail Yearbook Instructor [Steve Johnson](#) for further details.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 10

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Tuesday, December 11

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Locker Cleanout During Advisory*
-

Wednesday, December 12

- *Wednesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Seventh Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Lessons and Carols Rehearsal: 11:20-11:50 a.m. in the FAC*
-

Thursday, December 13

- *Thursday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Fifth and Sixth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *MS/US Christmas Concert: 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the FAC*
 - *Lessons and Carols Rehearsal: 9:15-10:00 a.m. in the FAC*
-

Friday, December 14

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *NJHS Celebration: 7:00-7:50 a.m. in Dr. Bedard's classroom*
 - *WEB Activity (Grade 5): 10:45-11:15 a.m. in classrooms*
-

Monday, December 17

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
- *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*

Tuesday, December 18

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Lessons and Carols Rehearsal: 10:45-11:15 a.m. in the FAC*
-

Wednesday, December 19

- *Wednesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Seventh Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Lessons and Carols Rehearsal: 11:20-11:55 a.m. in the FAC*
-

Thursday, December 20

- *Special Thursday Block Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *Bible Study for Fifth and Sixth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *LS/MS Lessons and Carols: 9:15-10:00 a.m. in the FAC*
 - *MS Christmas Sing-along: 2:50-3:30 p.m. in the FAC*
-

Friday, December 21–Monday, January 7

- *School Holiday*

Upper School

From the Division Head

Thank you all for joining us last Thursday evening for student presentations related to the learning process and experiences during our two-week

Immersion and Explorations adventure. I would also like to thank my colleagues for their creative thinking, collaborative efforts, patience, and flexibility.

I hope you have had the opportunity to purchase a copy of *The Self-Driven Child*, and I look forward to using *Wolf Watch* messages during December and January as an opportunity to explore some of the ideas covered in the book. This week is just about the introduction (“Why a Sense of Control Is Such a Big Deal”), so it’s not too late to order a copy!

I enjoyed learning that the two authors (William Stixrud and Ned Johnson) met at a speaking event and decided to collaborate on this writing project, exploring ways that they could “help children gain a sense of control over” their lives and support their development of an intrinsic motivation to “make the most of their potential.” The authors note that, “without a healthy sense of control, kids feel powerless and overwhelmed and will often become passive or resigned. When they are denied the ability to make meaningful choices, they are at high risk of becoming anxious, struggling to manage anger, becoming self-destructive, or self-medicating. Despite the many resources and opportunities their parents offer them, they will often fail to thrive.”

Stixrud and Johnson write that “we really can’t control our kids—and doing so shouldn’t be our goal. Our role is to teach them to think and act independently, so that they will have the judgment to succeed in school and, most importantly, in *life*. Rather than pushing them to do things they resist, we should seek to help them find things they love and develop their inner motivation. Our aim is to move away from a model that depends on parental pressure to one that nurtures a child’s own drive.”

Next week, I’ll recap Chapter 1 (“The Most Stressful Thing in the Universe”) and Chapter 2 (“I Love You Too Much to Fight With You About Your Homework’: The Parent as Consultant”). Please consider joining me for this virtual book discussion/reflection!

Looking ahead to January, we’ll cover three chapters per week. That will put us on schedule to finish the book in time to join one of the authors, William Stixrud, who will be speaking to interested parents from all divisions on **Wednesday, January 30**. Mark your calendars!

Happy reading!

Cara Henderson
Head of Upper School

St. Francis Welcomes S.E.A.L. Security to South Campus

We are pleased to announce a new partnership with S.E.A.L. Security Texas to provide daily security at our South Campus. **A S.E.A.L. Security officer will now work at the South Campus from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. each school day.** The S.E.A.L. officer will be highly trained, armed, and professionally dressed in a uniform that looks very similar to that worn by the police. The officer will enter and leave the South Campus each day in a marked patrol car. We will continue to use off-duty police officers for South Campus street-traffic control. Please join us in welcoming S.E.A.L. Security Texas to St. Francis!

Please Share the Word! Upcoming US Admissions Tours

Our best advertising is word-of-mouth, so please tell your friends and neighbors to come learn more about St. Francis at one of our Upper School Admissions Tours, which are held most Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 10

- *Day 1 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *WOW Assembly: 9:50 a.m. in the Crum Gym*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Tuesday, December 11

- *Day 2 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Joint Chapel Between US and PS: 9:30 a.m. in the Crum Gym*
 - *Boys Basketball: 4:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
 - *Girls Basketball: 6:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
-

Wednesday, December 12

- *Day 3 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
 - *Boys Basketball: 6:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
-

Thursday, December 13

- *Day 4 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
 - *Boys Basketball: 6:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
-

Friday, December 14

- *Day 5 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Monday, December 17

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Tuesday, December 18

- *Day 1 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Chapel: 9:30 a.m. in the Crum Gym*
 - *Boys Basketball: 4:30 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
 - *Girls Basketball: 6:00 p.m. in the Crum Gym*
-

Wednesday, December 19

- *Day 2 Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *Lessons and Carols With Primary School: 9:30 a.m. in the Crum Gym*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Thursday, December 20

- *Special Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Friday, December 21–Monday, January 7

- *School Holiday*

Church

Children Invited to Participate in the Christmas Pageants

Toddlers through fifth graders are invited to participate in our Christmas Eve Nativity Pageants! We will have **two pageants on Monday, December 24— one at the 2:00 p.m. service and one at the 5:00 p.m. service.** The church will provide costumes, which will be fitted at the rehearsals.

[Please fill out the online registration form to participate.](#)

Christmas Worship Schedule Is Available Online

St. Francis Episcopal Church's Christmas worship schedule is available online. [Click here to view it.](#)

Spring First Communion Classes Begin January 13

First Communion classes begin **Sunday, January 13.** This eight-week course is designed to prepare second-grade students to receive the Holy Eucharist. If you would like to sign up or request further information, please contact [Nichole Hilgert.](#)

Discovering Christian Meditation

An opportunity for silent prayer at the church is now available:

- Tuesdays, 5:00-5:30 p.m.
- Thursdays, 7:30-8:00 a.m.

These sessions are in the St. Clare Chapel and are led by Father David Price.

We find the roots of Christian meditation in the practice of Jesus recorded in the Gospels and in the content of the Epistles. We see it developed further in the writings of the desert tradition of the early church. Come learn a bit about it, gain a few hints about the practice and, mostly, come and pray.