

WOLF WATCH

— WEEKLY E-NEWS —

News for the Week of January 20

All School

Have Used Uniforms? Please Consider Donating Them to the Nurse's Office

Whether it's in the Dining Hall or on the playground, accidents happen and clothes can get soiled while at school. When this happens, students are sent to the Nurse's Office for a change of clothes. Oftentimes, the correct size is not available, and the parent has to be called to bring clean clothing to the school. This disruption to both the student's and parent's day could be avoided if more clothing options were available.

For this reason, please consider donating your gently used uniforms to the Nurse's Office. We are in great need of Lower School sizes of both girls' and boys' uniforms, including girls' skirts and tops and boys' pants, shorts, and button-down shirts. Middle School uniform items needed include girls' skirts and tops and boys' button-down shirts. Thank you!

Student Raffle Success (Thank You!)

Wow! The student raffle last week raised more than \$12,500! We were blown away by your response, and we know the kids all had a great time. Thank you to Trish Kyle and all of the raffle item donors. We think this new addition to Gala fundraising is a winner!

News From Explore and Extend

SUMMER ON THE POINT REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 4

Although the weather outside reminds us it's wintertime in Houston, summer is just around the corner! Summer on the Point registration opens on **Monday, February 4, at 10:00 a.m.** Summer sessions run June 3-28 and July 8-August 2 for students 3 years old through grade 10. Yearly favorites will return, and new camps are coming for summer 2019—including baseball, photography, fashion design, speed and agility sessions, field hockey, lacrosse, coding, LEGO design, self-defense, newly redesigned math sessions for Middle and Upper School grades, and many more.

NEW ART CLASS FOR PS STUDENTS

At the request of several parents, we have added an art class for students in Primary School who are at least 4 years old by February 1, 2019. Instructors from City Art Works will lead the class, which will be held on Wednesdays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Registration for this class will open on Tuesday, January 22, at 10:00 a.m. To register, log in to My BackPack and select "Program Registration" in the My Forms/Documents section.

For more information, please [e-mail the Explore & Extend Offices](#).

LEGO ROBOTICS CLASS RETURNS FOR MS STUDENTS

Steve Johnson will be teaching his popular LEGO Robotics League class again this spring for students in grades 5-8. This class will run Mondays and Wednesdays, from February 20 through early May. Instruction will focus on building with bricks, motors, and gears, and learning and using programming skills. It's a great introduction for those who wish to be on St. Francis's Lego Robotics teams.

LOWER SCHOOL BASKETBALL CLINICS START NEXT MONTH

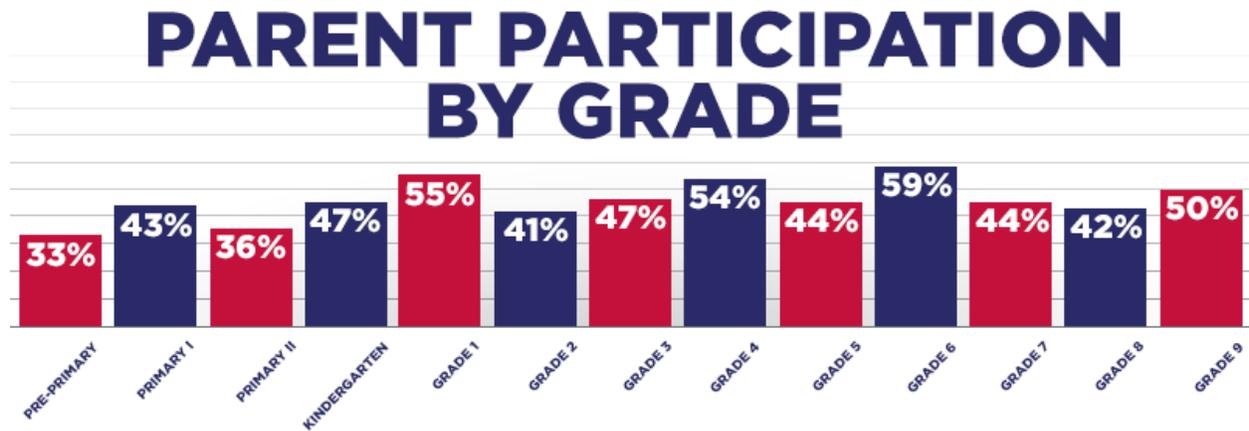
During the spring, Leveil Lander will be leading Lower School basketball clinics on Sundays starting in late February. Please see next week's *Wolf Watch* for details.

Gala Tickets Are Going Fast! Buy Yours Today

Get your Gala tickets soon—we are quickly running out of space! [Click here](#) to get your tickets now!

Want to go to the Gala, but don't know whom to sit with? No worries! The Reservations Committee is coordinating placing guests at tables, so please [contact Director of Events Abby Clark](#) for assistance.

St. Francis Fund Participation Challenge Extended Until Spring Break!



... And sixth grade has kept the lead this week in the St. Francis Fund Participation Challenge! Primary II, kindergarten, and seventh grade also saw increases in giving this week. **Mr. Lovejoy has extended the challenge through Friday, March 8.**

The grade with the highest participation in supporting the St. Francis Fund will be treated to a pizza party with Mr. Lovejoy the week after spring break!

[Please make your gift to the St. Francis Fund today!](#)

Every gift counts and helps bring us closer to our goal of \$800,000.

Important Information About Safeguarding God's Children

If you volunteer at St. Francis Episcopal School and will be in your child's classroom or another teaching area more than six times, the Episcopal Diocese requires certification in Safeguarding God's Children, a child protective program. Also, if you go into a classroom without your child present (such as through Art à la Carte or on People for Others Day), you are required to be certified before your first visit.

- Our next class will be taught by Father Bob Wismer on **Friday, February 8, from noon to 2:00 p.m.** on the Main Campus.
- You must **sign up for the class** with Rose Ann Gregory [via e-mail](#) or by calling 713.458.6101 **no later than Wednesday, February 6**, to allow time to complete the initial paperwork.
- If you want to take the class in order to volunteer for the St. Francis Sports Association, the Scouts, or other St. Francis Episcopal Church activities such as Sunday School, please contact [Cindy Huteson](#).

Parents Association General Meeting Is February 5

Mark your calendar! The Parents Association General Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, February 5, at 10:00 a.m. at the Andrews House on the South Campus**. A tour of the Upper School will follow the meeting.

The General Meeting is open to all parents and is an opportunity to hear reports from PA committee chairs and to participate in a discussion of matters as they pertain to PA business.

Cozy Up: Pajamarama Is January 25

On Friday, January 25, St. Francis will celebrate our annual Barker's Pajamarama Day Ingathering. On this day, **students are invited to wear their pajamas to school to celebrate the weeklong ingathering of pajamas, books, toiletries, and luggage**. Named after Dianne Barker, Head of Primary School from 1992-2008, Pajamarama continues the tradition she introduced of wearing pajamas to school one day a year in conjunction with collecting books for donation.

All donations will benefit [Arms Wide Adoption Services](#), an organization that supports foster children awaiting permanent homes. As in the past, the focus of the ingathering for Primary and Lower School is pajamas and books. However, Arms Wide has requested a variety of other items that will allow them to serve the children in their care more comprehensively. We are asking our Middle and Upper School families to donate these items.

As usual, Pajamarama Day promises to be a lot of fun, and your support in helping our children become *people for others* is truly appreciated. A few guidelines to remember:

- *What should you donate?*

- **Primary School and Lower School:** One pair of new pajamas and one new book in the zipper-lock bag sent home with your child
- **Middle School:** The following items in travel or regular sizes (where applicable)
 - Grade 5: Brushes and combs, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, and shower gel
 - Grade 6: Socks and underwear
 - Grade 7: Wipes, toothbrushes, and toothpaste
 - Grade 8: Pull-Ups and diapers
- **Upper School:** Backpacks, duffle bags, and small luggage
- *Where should you donate?*
 - **Primary School:** Boxes in the pods
 - **Lower School and Middle School:** Labeled boxes in the People Place
 - **Upper School:** Andrews House
- *When can you bring your donation?*
 - Tuesday, January 22-Friday, January 25

All Primary, Lower, Middle, and Upper School students who participate may wear appropriate pajamas to school on Pajamarama Day, which is Friday, January 25. If students choose not to wear pajamas, they may wear their regular uniform or their house T-shirt and jeans.

Hear Dr. Stixrud Speak on January 30

Don't miss this! 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 the Parents Association's upcoming Winter Parent Education Program.

- Dr. Stixrud will speak twice on **Wednesday, January 30—at 11:00 a.m. (this Lunch and Learn session is sold out) and again at 6:30 p.m. (open to the public) in the Fine Arts Center on the Main Campus.**
- Buy tickets for the 6:30 p.m. lecture at StFrancisHouston.org/tickets.
- Please contact [Paola Lehman](#) for more information.
- If you have not bought this book, now would be an excellent time to purchase and read it prior to January 30! You can find it on Amazon [here](#).

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.**

Save the Date: Woolrich Luncheon Is March 5

Please mark your calendars for this year's **Woolrich Luncheon on Tuesday, March 5**, when we will be honoring our 2017-18 award recipients:

- **Alison Salinas** traveled to Germany to study the collections of the Brothers Grimm.
- **Angela Flowers** traveled behind the former Iron Curtain to study the impact and lasting effects of the Holocaust and World War II.
- **Kimberly Dunn** received training in Krav Maga mixed martial arts and self-defense.
- **Amy Chandler** and **Julia Traber** traveled to Japan to study art and theater.
- **Melanie Wallace** and **Lydia Urbanek** traveled to France to study the cultural roots of fiction and fairy tales.
- **Carlo Minotti** received training in welding and fabrication.

We hope you can join us to hear about these educators' summertime adventures—which were made possible by the Sarah W. Woolrich Fund for Faculty—and how these unique opportunities are helping to bring classroom learning to life! Invitations will be mailed in late January.

Primary School

From the Division Head

Popular children's book author Mem Fox believes in the power of reading to children. Her "Ten Read-Aloud Commandments" clearly articulate the value of reading both at home and at school. Here are the first four:

1. Spend at least 10 wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud. From birth!
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read. Or the same story a thousand times!

3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.

[\(Read commandments 5-10 here.\)](#)

Each week, our Primary I and Primary II students visit the library and immerse themselves in the joy of books. They browse through the stacks, share favorite books with classmates, find cozy spaces for reading, and hear new stories read by our librarian, Desiree McConnell. Checking out books at the end of the library class is an opportunity for students to take a new book home to share with their families. They also learn about the responsibility of caring for books and returning them the next week.

As an extension of our literacy curriculum, the library expands the collections in our classrooms and makes it possible for Ms. McConnell to support our teachers by finding a wide range of resources for project work and other areas of interest. Our teachers also have access to the larger library on the Main Campus.

We are growing our library program. This year, Ms. McConnell has offered several after-school story times for children in PI and PII who are accompanied by a parent. There will be additional story times announced in the coming months.

Beginning next week on Tuesday, January 22, all parents of Primary School children will have the opportunity to bring their child to the library after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 2:45 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., for time together to enjoy and check out books. This is an unstructured time when Ms. McConnell will have the library open and when library staff will be available to help with book checkout. If you are interested in visiting during this time, please pick up your child according to your normal routine (carpool, Explore and Extend, or carpool following after-school special classes) and visit the library before it closes at 4:00 p.m.

While you are visiting the library with your child, we hope you will also enjoy looking through the collection of parenting books and reference materials to support your own growth and interests. We are ordering favorite titles recommended by our staff and faculty to help you in your parenting journey. These books will also be available to you to check out.

The literacy program in the Primary School is robust. In addition to the excellent work happening in our classrooms each day, we are fortunate to have a beautiful library facility with a large collection of quality children's literature. We hope you will enjoy using this space during these additional times with your child.

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all." ~Jacqueline Kennedy

All the best,

Amy Whitley, MA
Head of Primary School

Primary School Dining Hall Menu

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

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, January 21

- *Martin Luther King Jr. Day: School holiday*
-

Tuesday, January 22

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

Wednesday, January 23

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

Thursday, January 24

- *Barker's Pajamarama*: Mrs. Ferguson's T/Th Pre-Primary students
 - *Pajamarama Ingathering*
-

Friday, January 25

- *Barker's Pajamarama*: All 5-day and 3-day Pre-Primary, Primary I, and Primary II students
 - *Pajamarama Ingathering*
-

Tuesday, January 29

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

Wednesday, January 30

- *Chapel*: 9:30 a.m.
 - *Winter Parent Education Program*: Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus
-

Thursday, January 31

- *Pre-Primary Fathers and Friends Breakfast*: 8:15 a.m. for Mrs. Ferguson's T/Th, Mrs. Meriwether's, and Mrs. Oteiza's classes
-

Friday, February 1

- *Pre-Primary Fathers and Friends Breakfast*: 8:15 a.m. in Mrs. Britton's and Mrs. Ferguson's M/W/F classes

Monday, February 4

- *Online Registration Opens for Summer on the Point*
-

Tuesday, February 5

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

Wednesday, February 6

- *Chapel: 9:30 a.m.*
- *Primary School Coffee and Fellowship With the Head of School: 10:00 a.m.*

Lower School

From the Assistant Division Head

As everyone is settling in to the second half of the school year, it is important to highlight a topic that involves our children in Lower School. While visiting students in the classroom, at recess, and in the Dining Hall over the last couple of weeks, we have observed some student interactions that exhibit overly physical activity, inappropriate language and gestures, and disrespectful behavior. In talks with students, they often mention that their experiences playing video games are influencing their actions.

Video games are a common leisure activity, can provide an outlet for relaxation, and can offer some fine-motor-skill development and problem-solving exercises. However, it is important to recognize how gaming can present challenges to children's perceptions of appropriate behaviors.

While playing video games can be a fun and acceptable activity in moderation, it is important that the game is providing age-appropriate experiences. When children spend extended time with video games that are beyond their developmental understanding, it can become difficult for them to

separate the real world from the fantasy worlds of the video games. Behaviors and responses allowed on the screen are different from the type of responses we expect them to display while playing actively with friends.

Because many of our students are exposed to video games, we wanted to share with you some suggestions and tips for monitoring their gaming choices and interactions. The articles below offer some important tips to offer guidance as you monitor your child in this activity:

- [“Video Games and Children: Playing With Violence”](#) (From the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry)
- [“Safe Gaming—5 Tips”](#) (From the office of Australia’s eSafety Commissioner)

Best regards,

Ryan Kochel, MEd
Assistant Head of Lower School—Student Life

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, January 21

- *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*: School holiday
-

Wednesday, January 23

- *Birthday Chapel*: Students with a birthday between January 20-26 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
-

Friday, January 25

- *Pajamarama Day*: Students may wear appropriate pajamas to school; please see the letter that was sent home and e-mailed
-

Monday, January 28

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between January 27-February 2 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
-

Wednesday, January 30

- *Chapel:* 8:05 a.m.
 - *Winter Parent Education Program:* Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus
-

Monday, February 4

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between February 3-9 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today
 - *Online Registration Opens for Summer on the Point*
-

Wednesday, February 6

- *Chapel:* 8:05 a.m.
 - *Primary II Parent Tour of Lower School:* 8:30 a.m. in the HBR
-

Thursday, February 7

- *Online Gala Auction Begins:* Through February 14
-

Monday, February 11

- *Birthday Chapel:* Students with a birthday between February 10-16 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today

Wednesday, February 13

- *FAC Chapel: 8:05 a.m.*

Thursday, February 14

- *Valentine's Day Parties*

Monday, February 18

- *Presidents' Day: School holiday*

Wednesday, February 20

- *Birthday Chapel: Students with a birthday between February 17-23 will receive a birthday pencil in Chapel today*

Middle School

From the Division Head

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

We have Monday off because of a very special person: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This past Thursday, the Middle School honored Dr. King in our class meeting, as we focused not only on his ["I Have a Dream"](#) speech, but also on the many wise words he spoke and wrote throughout his life.

More importantly, we discussed how we can keep Dr. King's words alive by living his quotes and applying his thoughts to our lives. For instance, if a student has the thought that picking up a piece of trash on campus may not make a difference, then I would counter that thought with the quote, "If I cannot do great things, then I will do small things in a great way." If a student

thinks that cheering up a friend who is sad won't work because the time isn't right, then I would counter that with the quote, "The time is always right to do what is right." You all get the idea.

This class meeting centered around our lives at school and how we can live our mission here not only through doing the right thing all the time, but also through performing acts of kindness regularly. As I write this, we have logged more than 386 acts of kindness in just under a week, which is 64% of our goal of 600 acts for the month of January. It is my sincere hope that this number will be laughably small by May. Thanks to the spirit of Dr. King, and we will continue to live his wise words.

This week, Trimester 2 progress reports go online. We also have the National Geographic Geography Bee, hosted by our very own National Junior Honor Society, on Thursday. It's always fun to see both how little I know about the world and how smart our kids are. Get ready for Pajamarama Day this Friday—students have to donate items in order to wear their pajamas!

Rather than Mind, Brain, Education science materials this week, I wanted to share two film recommendations, especially for MS parents: [*Eighth Grade*](#) and [*Won't You Be My Neighbor*](#). In very different ways, both films explore so many of the topics we see every day with our kids, families, and schools; and both films are incredibly insightful into the lives of children and adults.

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

Sincerely,

Connor Cook, EdD
Head of Middle School

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, January 21

- *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*: School holiday
-

Tuesday, January 22

- *Tuesday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Trimester 2 Progress Reports Go Online: 12:00 p.m.*
 - *Pajamarama Ingathering: Through January 25*
 - *Bible Study for Eighth Graders: 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Christian Education rooms at the end of the Middle School hallway*
 - *Trimester 3 Elective Sign-ups for Grades 6-8*
 - *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Wednesday, January 23

- *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*
 - *Trimester 3 Elective Sign-ups for Grades 6-8*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Thursday, January 24

- *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*
 - *Last Day! Trimester 3 Elective Sign-ups for Grades 6-8*
 - *Class Meeting (Geo Bee Competition): 9:15-10:00 a.m. in the FAC*
-

Friday, January 25

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress or PJs*
 - *MS Pajamarama Day: Must donate PJs to participate*
 - *NJHS Meeting (Reading Aloud Preparation): 7:15-7:50 a.m. in Dr. Bedard's classroom*
 - *WEB Activity (Grade 5): 10:45-11:15 a.m. in classrooms*
 - *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Monday, January 28

- *Monday Schedule/Dress Uniform*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Speaker for Seventh Graders Attending the Summer Costa Rica Trip: 1:10-1:40 p.m. in the HBR*
-

Tuesday, January 29

- *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*
 - *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
 - *Howlers Practice (Grade 8 Only): 10:45-11:15 a.m. in the Wheatcroft Parish Hall*
-

Wednesday, January 30

- *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.*
 - *Howlers Practice (Grade 8 Only): 11:20-11:55 a.m. in the Dance Room*
 - *Winter Parent Education Program: Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus*
 - *Fifth-Grade Colonial Day Parent Meeting: 12:50-1:40 p.m. in the HBR*
-

Thursday, January 31

- *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 Class Meeting: 9:15-10:00 a.m. in the FAC*
- *Winter Pep Rally: 2:35-3:05 p.m. in the gym*

Friday, February 1

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
- *NJHS Meeting: 7:15-7:50 a.m. in Dr. Bedard's classroom*
- *Wolf Wear Sale: 7:45-9:00 a.m. in the concessions area near the gym*
- *Advisory: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
- *Faculty vs. Eighth-Grade Boys Basketball Team: 2:40-3:30 p.m. in the gym*

Saturday, February 2

- *Spring Musical Rehearsal: 1:00-5:00 p.m in the FAC*

Monday, February 4

- *MS Super Bowl Construction Ingathering: Through February 8; in the FAC*
- *NJHS Read Aloud (Various): Through February 8*
- *Online Registration Opens for Summer on the Point*
- *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
- *End of Winter Athletics Season Honor the Wolves: 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the FAC, gym, and classrooms*

Tuesday, February 5

- *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*
 - *Eighth-Grade Field Trip to Holocaust Museum: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.*
 - *Spring Athletics Season Begins: 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the gym and on the fields*
-

Wednesday, February 6

- *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*
 - *Spring Musical Rehearsal: 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in the FAC*
 - *Chapel: 10:45-11:15 a.m.*
-

Thursday, February 7

- *Thursday Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Online Gala Auction Begins: Through February 14*
 - *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*
 - *Seventh-Grade Field Trip to See Newsies: 8:30-11:30 a.m. at Stratford High School*
 - *MS Councils Meeting: 9:15-10:00 a.m. in classrooms*
 - *Seventh-Grade WEB Applications Due: Turn in to Mr. Duran by 3:00 p.m.*
-

Friday, February 8

- *Friday Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
 - *NJHS Meeting: 7:15-7:50 a.m. in Dr. Bedard's classroom*
 - *Eighth-Grade Field Trip to Top Golf: 12:15-2:30 p.m.*
 - *Fifth-Grade Game Night: 5:00-7:30 p.m. in the FAC*
 - *MS Winter Dance for Grades 6-8: 7:30-10:00 p.m. in the gym; theme is "Winter Wonderland: Dance Under the Lights"; students only*
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Sunday, February 10

- *Spring Musical (Sunday Rehearsal): 1:00-5:00 p.m. in the FAC*

Upper School

From the Division Head

Thank you for joining us last week for our second round of student-led parent-teacher conferences. We appreciate your time, and hope you found the experience to be a valuable one.

This week, we have another leadership opportunity for our students who are not already scheduled to play in a basketball game. On the evening of **Wednesday, January 23**, one of St. Francis's lead donors will be hosting a fundraising event in the Andrews House, during which guests will have the opportunity to tour our campus. We would love for them to also have the chance to speak directly with our fabulous students about the St. Francis Upper School experience.

If you think your child might be interested in serving as a student ambassador for the event, please contact Cathleen Flaniken at 713.458.6130. We will gladly provide students with a quiet homework/study space after school and an early dinner before the event begins at 5:30 p.m. We anticipate the event ending at about 7:00 p.m.

Next week, we are excited to welcome members of The Fontaine Center at The University of Georgia to our campus on January 28 and 29 to meet with Upper School students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and board members about a pilot prevention program at St. Francis. The Fontaine Center provides comprehensive alcohol and drug prevention programming for middle and high school students. With a successful track record at The University of Georgia, they would like to expand their reach and help students make better decisions ahead of the transition into college settings. We have a unique opportunity to be the only school in Texas piloting this program.

Fontaine Center members would like to visit with available ninth-grade parents on Tuesday, January 29, from 12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. on the South Campus.

The Fontaine family has ties to St. Francis. Celia and George Fontaine's three adult children are St. Francis alums. Partnering on this critical issue is a wonderful opportunity for our St. Francis community. Once again, **please let Cathleen Flaniken know if you are able to attend the ninth-grade parent session on Tuesday, January 29.** She can be reached at 713.458.6130. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

Finally, as promised, this week's message includes some excerpts from the next three chapters of *The Self-Driven Child* that resonated with me as both an educator and a parent.

CHAPTER 9 ("WIRED 24/7: TAMING THE BEAST OF TECHNOLOGY")

Technology Overview

- Technology addiction is the new norm for young adults, many of whom will actually panic if they are unable to use social media for as little as a few hours.
- Technology is an incredible tool with great power to enrich lives, but the things it displaces—family time, face-to-face interaction with friends, study time, physical activity, and sleep—are invaluable, and the way technology trains the brain to expect constant stimulation is deeply troubling.
- Game designer, speaker, and writer Jane McGonigal, an unabashed gaming advocate, argues that people who game extensively develop four useful characteristics:
 - Urgent optimism—The desire to act immediately to tackle an obstacle, accompanied by the conviction that they can be successful
 - Enhanced sociability—Research suggests that we like people better after we play a game with them, even if they've won, because playing a game together builds trust.
 - Blissful productivity—We're happier working hard to win than we are relaxing or goofing around.
 - Epic meaning—Gamers love to be attached to awe-inspiring missions.
- These four superpowers, says McGonigal, result in "super-empowered hopeful individuals." Just imagine what we could accomplish if we could channel this energy for the good of the planet.

Technology's Downsides

- We do more of something if it's easier, whether it's e-mailing rather than sending a letter, or texting rather than trying to reach someone on the phone. Technological breakthroughs—almost by definition—must make life more stressful, because they quicken the pace and raise the bar of what can be accomplished.
- The authors have five main areas of concern about technology and kids:

- Screen time is an independent risk factor for many of the things we don't want for our kids—or for ourselves. The research of Larry Rosen and his colleagues has shown that time in front of a screen is positively correlated with increases in 1) physical health problems, 2) mental health problems, 3) attention problems, and 4) behavior problems.
- Social media takes control away from you and gives it to your peers. Social media turns our attention from our own experience to what other people think of our experience. Adolescents are already inclined to care deeply about what their peers think of them. By making more of their lives public, they give up the few parts that belong solely to them.
- Technology sucks time away from activities the brain needs to develop a healthy sense of control. Technology keeps kids from getting the things that we know they need for healthy development: sleep (at least 84 percent of teen cell phone users have slept right beside their phone, and teens send an average of 34 texts per night after going to bed); exercise; radical downtime; unstructured child-led play; and the real-life, face-to-face social interaction with friends and parents that is such a powerful antidote to stress.
- Technology appears to lower empathy. (It's through conversation and face-to-face interaction that we learn intimacy and empathy.)
- Technology offers easy access to pornography, leading to a more violent sexual culture.

How to Limit Technology

Here are some of the authors' best tips for teaching your child (and perhaps yourself) how to tame the techno-beast:

- It starts with you.
 - You have to model responsible use of technology. Talk to your kids about the universal struggle to regulate technology use, including your own. Offer tips that have worked for you or other people you know. Give your kids permission to call you out when you check your phone when they're trying to talk to you. Apologize. Show them you're working on it.
 - Recognize that you may very well have unhealthy habits when it comes to technology—most people do.

- Seek to understand. Showing an interest and being knowledgeable will help you to effectively negotiate limits and intervene if problems arise. We're much better able to influence our kids when they feel respected and emotionally close to us. Learn about their interests for these reasons, but most importantly, because doing so matters to them.
- Get back to nature. The Japanese have a term for this: shinrin-yoku or "forest bathing." Walking in nature "cleans" the pre-frontal cortex of its clutter, calming us, centering us, and allowing us to perform better on tasks and tests that demand working memory.
- Inform rather than lecture. One of the best things you can do is express confidence in your child's ability to regulate her own technology use and offer to help. As a consultant, you don't need to pass judgment; you get to inform and make recommendations.
- Collaborate on a solution.
- Understand your leverage.
 - Always know their password, and let them know that you will always know it. If you're paying for their data plan, you can make that contingent on their respectful use of technology. If they won't put away the phone at night, you don't pay the bill.
 - Most importantly, let your high schoolers know that although you're looking forward to their getting an excellent education, you won't be sending them off to an expensive college until they can demonstrate that they can regulate their technology use well enough to be successful. Otherwise it will be a waste of their time and your money.
- "How much screen time is reasonable?" → There is no one right answer here, but we do have some guidelines. For starters, encourage everyone in the family to make a technology-use plan. It is helpful for you to do this together with your children, so that they will see you monitoring your own use. Suggest that they start by mapping out the number of hours they need to sleep; how much time they want to spend on sports or other non-tech leisure activities; and how much time they need to spend on schoolwork, dinner, chores, and getting ready for school and for bed. This will make it easier to think about how much tech time will fit comfortably in the daily or weekly schedule. What we can do is plan for the things we know are important and work backward.
- It's okay to say no, even if other parents say yes.
- You can't do two things at once if they require conscious thought, so multitasking is really a misnomer. If you try to focus on two or more things at once, what you're actually doing is rapidly shifting between tasks. Multitasking compromises the quality of learning and

performance. It's highly inefficient, as many people make many more errors and, in the end, perform much more slowly. Multitasking also limits opportunities for deep thought and abstraction and for creativity and invention.

- Kids who are at most risk for developing addictive relationships with games, social media, or the Internet commonly have certain characteristics, such as impulsivity, low social competence, low stress tolerance, cognitive inflexibility, and social anxiety.

CHAPTER 10 ("EXERCISING THE BRAIN AND BODY")

- Exercise #1: Set clear goals.
 - Mental contrasting, designed to help students set realistic goals
 - The first step of mental contrasting is to ask your child to set her own goal. It should not be a group goal, and it should not be influenced by you. The goal has to be something that is feasible and challenging.
 - Step #2 is to encourage your child to write down several words about the hoped-for outcome. They should not edit themselves during this process, but rather should feel free to write whatever comes to mind.
 - Step #3 is to ask your child to consider inner obstacles to that goal. Note that you are not asking them to think about external barriers. Again, ask them to take pen to paper and to write down those obstacles, considering how they will be affected and what they can do when they surface.
 - Seeing yourself get better at something is enormously rewarding. The truth is, you're never too young to set a personal best goal, or too old.
- Exercise #2: Pay attention to what your brain is telling you.
- Exercise #3: Practice Plan B thinking.
 - Plan B thinking ("What are some other things you could do if it doesn't work out as you hope?") is key to maintaining a healthy approach to potential setbacks.
 - Plan B thinking helps you put things into perspective. By envisioning alternate futures and creating backup plans, kids (and their parents) learn that if Plan A doesn't work, the world won't come to an end.
- Exercise #4: Talk to yourself with compassion.
 - Teach your kids to be as supportive of themselves as they are of their best friend. Third-person self-talk is much more powerful

than first-person self-talk. If your daughter refers to herself by name, she is more likely to take the more distanced, supportive-friend stance than to act as critic in chief.

- Effective self-talk allows her to hold on to the notion that she's capable—definitely not stupid—but simply made a mistake. She can then investigate what went wrong. This gives her agency by suggesting that there is an explanation for what went wrong and thus something in the process that she can work on and change.
- Exercise #5: Practice reframing problems.
 - Reframing involves looking at our own thoughts with care and actively redirecting them. This is the basis of cognitive behavioral therapy.
 - A simple way to help kids avoid catastrophizing is to teach them to ask themselves whenever they're upset, "Is this a big problem or a little problem?" If it's a little problem, the first line of defense is to use self-soothing mechanisms, like a cool-down spot, deep breathing, or Plan B thinking, to calm themselves down. For most problems, these tools will be enough. When problems feel too big, we want kids to seek help.
- Exercise #6: Move your body and/or play.

CHAPTER 11 ("NAVIGATING LEARNING DISABILITIES, ADHD, AND AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS")

- Throughout our decades of work, we have seen that when children with ADHD, dyslexia, or other learning difficulties are given all the information necessary to make a decision and don't feel forced, they are extremely capable of choosing thoughtfully. They are still the experts on them. They want their lives to work, and they will often welcome the help that is offered to them and the accommodations that will enable them to learn and perform better.
- Brains develop as they're used, and we don't want any child to develop a brain that's accustomed to chronically fighting attempts to be controlled. We know it's stressful to struggle at school or have problems with impulse control. We know that a sense of control combats stress and encourages healthy brain growth. If we want kids without special needs to have these advantages, then it's all the more important that kids with special needs have them, too.
- Learning Disabilities
 - Parents and teachers have to walk a tightrope between providing enough support to address academic needs, while encouraging kids' autonomy and trying not to force help down their throats.

- Fight homework that isn't necessary.
- Encourage self-understanding. Help your child understand his learning challenges as well as his strengths.
- Offer (but don't force) help.
- ADHD
 - We recommend that parents of kids with ADHD voice their understanding that the child is doing the best he can and encourage him to be patient with himself. This is a good message of hope and confidence and one likely to foster a growth mindset.
 - Margaret Sibley's STAND program ([Click here to learn more.](#))
 - ADHD does not prohibit self-knowledge, discipline, and self-control. It's not easy being a kid with a short attention span, with limited ability to focus on anything that's not highly interesting, or who has trouble sitting still and behaving appropriately. And it's not easy to raise kids like this. But it's easier for everyone if we remember that, like all kids, children with ADHD need a sense of autonomy to be happy and to function optimally.
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
 - Kids on the spectrum find all but the most familiar environments and interactions stressful and unpredictable.
 - Kids on the spectrum benefit greatly from strategies that reduce novelty and unpredictability, and that increase their sense of control.
 - "If you've met one child with ASD, you've met one child with ASD." Because the spectrum is so broad, parents should feel emboldened to tailor their approach based on their kid.
- When our kids are struggling, most of our work as parents is really on ourselves. That's why the authors' most fundamental message is to focus on being a non-anxious presence.

I look forward to hearing about what resonated most for you from these chapters. Next week, I'll share with you my highlights from the final three chapters of the book—Chapters 12, 13, and 14. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Cara Henderson
Head of Upper School

Doodle for Google Art Contest

Calling all students who are interested in participating in the [Doodle for Google Art Contest](#)! This year's theme is "When I grow up, I hope . . ." and we can't wait to see the fantastic wishes or practical plans our ninth-grade students come up with. Anything you dream up is fair game, whether it's sky cities, teleporters, cleaner water, pizza trees, time machines, edible clouds, or Earth-cooling fans.

Artists, here's what to do:

1. Complete the [entry form](#).
2. Create your Doodle using any materials you want.
3. Write an artist statement that describes the drawing and how it represents something that inspires you. Be sure to also fill out the rest of the required information and sign the entry form.
4. **Submit your Doodle to either Mrs. Chandler or Mrs. Tennant by Monday, March 4.**

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, January 21

- *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*: School holiday
-

Tuesday, January 22

- *Day 5 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
- *Pajamarama Ingathering Begins*
- *Swim Practice*: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club
- *Chapel*: 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House
- *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice*: 4:15-5:45 p.m.

Wednesday, January 23

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Pajamarama Ingathering*
 - *US Student Ambassador Opportunity: 5:30-7:00 p.m. in Crum Gym*
 - *Girls Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m. in Crum Gym*
 - *Boys Basketball Game: 5:45 p.m. in Crum Gym*
-

Thursday, January 24

- *Day 1 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Pajamarama Ingathering*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Chapel: 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House*
 - *Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
 - *Boys Basketball Game: 5:30 p.m. in Crum Gym*
-

Friday, January 25

- *Day 2 Schedule*
 - *Pajamarama Day*
 - *Pajamarama Ingathering Ends*
 - *Girls Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m. at The Village School*
 - *Boys Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Saturday, January 26

- *Swim Meet: Time TBD at Emmons Natatorium*
-

Monday, January 28

- *Day 3 Schedule/Regular Uniform*

- *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Tuesday, January 29

- *Day 4 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Chapel: 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House*
 - *The Fontaine Center Parent Meeting: 12:45-1:45 p.m.; campus location TBD*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Wednesday, January 30

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
 - *Winter Parent Education Program: Dr. William Stixrud, co-author of *The Self-Driven Child*, speaks at 11:00 a.m. (Lunch and Learn session) and at 6:30 p.m. in the FAC on the Main Campus*
-

Thursday, January 31

- *Day 6 Schedule/Regular Uniform*
 - *Swim Practice: 6:35-8:00 a.m. at the Houston Racquet Club*
 - *Chapel: 9:50 a.m. in the Andrews House*
 - *Boys and Girls Basketball Practice: 4:15-5:45 p.m.*
-

Friday, February 1

- *Day 1 Schedule/SFES Spirit Dress*
- *Girls Basketball Game: 4:30 p.m. at St. Agnes Academy*
- *Boys Basketball Game: 5:00 p.m. at Frassati Catholic High School*

Church

Outreach Sunday Is February 3

St. Francis is a generous community, and we love to show it in a big way on Outreach Sundays! Held each fall and spring, these parish-wide outreach events offer activities for all ages so that everyone can participate in serving others. This spring, Outreach Sunday will be held on **February 3 at 10:00 a.m. in the Wheatcroft Parish Hall**. Join your parish family for a fun time of service together as we make sandwiches, snack packs, and more to share with those in need in our city.

Join Us for New Member Orientation on March 2 or 3

If you started attending St. Francis Episcopal Church within the last two years and have not made your membership official yet, we invite you to become a member of our family by attending one of our New Member Orientation classes! Join Father Bates to learn about our church, our mission, and how membership in Christ's Body at St. Francis can help you deepen your relationship with God.

- **Saturday, March 2, from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the Hogan Board Room** (Snacks and refreshments will be served.)
- **Sunday, March 3, from 12:30-2:30 p.m. in the Hogan Board Room** (Lunch will be served.)

Please RSVP to Amy Homer via [e-mail](#) or at 832.325.2983.

Discovering Christian Meditation

An opportunity for silent prayer at the church is 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.