

## **UUAA 9.2.19**

*Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director*

September 2, 2019

During the opening week of school, I discussed with our Upper School students my “Core Four” values, which I believe best exemplify the qualities we are hoping to instill: integrity, compassion, creativity, and grit. Compassion in particular is imbedded in the very fiber of St. Michael’s, both in our parish and our school. Students take on community service work and fundraising throughout the year. Our eighth graders will soon begin rotating through four projects (Primavera Men’s Shelter, Casa Maria food preparation, Casa Maria food service, and the Community Food Bank) in small groups. Our Canned Food Drive in November generates thousands of dollars and non-perishable items, and is soon followed by our Christmas Giving project. Our Community Service Day in January sends out all Upper School students to work with one of several nonprofits and service organizations for the whole morning.

I would like to make a brief plea for a small but essential component of our work to infuse compassion into our daily habits: Mass money! Our Student Council identifies a different organization each month to support with donations collected during our Thursday Mass service. We have funded groups ranging from Youth on Their Own and the American Red Cross to Doctors Without Borders and the Humane Society. This month, Mass money will support the World Wildlife Fund, one of the world’s leading conservation organizations.

I would encourage parents not only to send in a few coins or bills to add to the collection basket, but, better yet, to urge your kids themselves to identify creative ways they might donate money they have earned. I’m a big fan of allowances as a way to build both fiscal and personal responsibility in children, and having kids decide for themselves how to allocate their earnings can lead to valuable conversations and habits. Please support our Mass money efforts and remind your children to set aside any amount, no matter how small, each Thursday morning so we can practice compassion--and help our world. Thank you!

## Where Are Those Grades?

We have made it far enough into the opening trimester that most core teachers have begun posting grades to our PlusPortals grading program. However, it may appear at first that no grades are there! There is a somewhat circuitous route for seeing the grades in PlusPortals, one that I am hoping will soon become simpler once I work through some things with the vendor. For now, this is what you need to do:

Log in to [PlusPortals](#). (If you are unable to do that, please let me know.) Once you've logged in as a parent, on the main student screen near the top center (just to the left of Upcoming Events) is a button to click for "More". Select that, and it will take you to a new screen with "Recent Scores" along the right side. You can scroll through all graded assignments that have been published to date. However, to see a summary of any individual course, click on the square-and-arrow button in the top right corner of the "Recent Scores" window. That will take you to yet another screen view with a drop-down menu for each course your child is taking. By selecting a subject, you can then see the current grade as well as a detailed summary of individual assignments and category averages. I would be glad to follow up with anyone individually if that somewhat convoluted explanation doesn't yield success!

### Events This Week:

- The first rehearsal for the cast of *Into the Woods*, our St. Michael's Musical, will be held in the Music Room this Tuesday, September 3, from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. It will be a read-through of the entire script, and it is for the full cast.
- This upcoming week features the first games of the year for our **Flag Football** and **Girls' Volleyball** teams, as follows:

Tuesday 9/3:

Co-ed Flag Football: **home** against Leman East (A team 4:00; B team @ 5:00)  
Girls' Volleyball: A team **home** against Calvary @ 4:00; B team **home** against Gregory @ 5:00

Thursday 9/5:

Flag Football away at Lemay Marana (A team 4:00, w/ 2:25 early release; B team @ 5:00)

Volleyball away at TCDS (A team 4:00 w/ 3:00 early release; B team @ 5:00)

Intramurals for 4th and 5th grades (which will consist of soccer for the first several weeks) begin this week as well.

● The Upper School **Math Club** for grades 4-6 begins this Thursday after school. Contact Jenn Gould (jgould@stmichael.net) with any questions.

### Events Beyond This Week:

● The first round of **Renaissance Star 360** standardized testing (Reading & Math) will be completed during the week of September 9-13. Being well rested and nourished is ideal for maximizing performance on such tests--and for good health in general (though that's a sermon for another day).

● Our Upper School **Back-to-School Night** will be held **Thursday, September 12**, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Parents are highly encouraged to attend.

● **Seventh graders** are requested to bring a dozen peeled, hard-boiled eggs for Casa Maria on Friday, September 13.

● There is a half day with **noon dismissal** on Wednesday, September 18.

Lastly, it looks like daily high temperatures will begin dipping into the 90s at long last by next week. We are making some adjustments to our routines during recess and P.E. in the meantime. In addition, please send your child in with a refillable water bottle. There are several water stations around campus that offer chilled, filtered water. We are encouraging students to hydrate as often as possible. Hats and sunscreen are always a good idea too!

Best wishes,

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Upper School Division Director  
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**Links of Note:**

[Main School Website](#)

[School Facebook page](#)

[School Instagram page](#)

[PlusPortals](#) (for students and parents)

[School Uniforms](#)

[Hot Lunch Ordering](#)

[School Calendar](#)

[Student-Parent Handbook](#)

[SMA Volunteer Page](#)