

UUAA 10.27.19

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

October 27, 2019

As the end of the first trimester approaches, teachers, students, and parents alike tend to pay more exacting attention to grades. Of course grades themselves are only one measure of a student's achievement, but they do have value in highlighting progress and illustrating opportunities for improvement.

St. Michael's rigorous academic program is no cakewalk, and children succeeding at a consistently high level deserve plaudits. Those students in grades 5-8 maintaining a B+ average with no D's and no more than one C+ in any core subject will be named to the **Head of School Honor List**. Those students in grades 7-8 (only) maintaining an A average and no C's in core subjects will be named to the **Creswell Scholars List**. These distinctions will appear on report cards, and certificates will be sent home at the start of summer for students maintaining that level of achievement over the entire school year.

Students in grades 7-8 are also eligible to apply for the **National Junior Honor Society**. In addition to fulfilling certain community service hours, students must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.70 in core classes to qualify. Señora Van Straalen coordinates the NJHS program for the school and can answer any questions about participation in it.

This past summer we made the decision in the Upper School to shift the assessment of enrichment classes (Art, Music, Band/Choir, P.E., Computers, and Grades 5-6 Religion) from an ABC grade scale to an ESN scale. As such those classes will not contribute to grade point average calculations. The decision does not in any way reflect a lessening of the value and esteem of those courses but instead an attempt to reduce the focus on grades and encourage the study and appreciation of those subjects for their own sake.

In Other News

St. Michael's has been a champion for **environmental stewardship** for many years, as seen in our solar panels and the massive water cisterns anchoring the

Student Center. Our lunch program coordinator, Kelly Dewey, has brought that ethic to the materials we use daily for meal service. Starting November 1st we will have eliminated single-use water bottles as a choice for drinks at lunch. (We will still have our chocolate and white milk options, and we have multiple water stations on campus serving chilled, filtered water for reusable water bottles.) In addition we are transitioning to 100 percent biodegradable and recyclable containers and compostable, plant-based utensils. As soon as we have finished using the existing containers we previously purchased, we will begin using our new, environmentally friendly products. I can't tell you how excited I am for this much anticipated change!

Also, with the cooler mornings many students are beginning to wear sweatshirts and jackets to school. Please make sure that this outerwear follows the same school **uniform rules** for shirts: they must be fire-engine red, navy blue, or white, and they must not have large, non-St. Michael's logos (bigger than a postage stamp or so). I have several clean sweatshirts from the clothing exchange to lend out if needed.

Events This Week:

- **Halloween is Thursday!** Students are allowed to wear costumes that otherwise follow relaxed dress rules (closed-toe shoes, no spaghetti straps, no bare midriffs or short shorts/skirts, nothing offensive), while masks can only be worn briefly for pictures. The costumes can't get in the way of participating in normal classroom activities. Students should have minimal homework to complete that night.

- As always, please encourage your child to bring mass donations on Thursdays. Student Council has voted to donate our October and November mass collections to **Meals on Wheels**.

- Please come to our monthly Coffee Corner this Friday before school. Following Coffee Corner you are invited to join St. Michael's parent Holly von Guillaume in Tankersley Hall at 8:15 a.m. for a presentation about the 5% Back Program at **Melaleuca.com**. Melaleuca is an online store where families can save time and money shopping for "Better, Safer, Smarter" products.

- Our annual **Día de los Muertos** chapel will be held on Friday, November 1, at 10:00 a.m. in the church. Don't miss this beautiful celebration, performed by

our eighth graders as well as members of the Spanish Club, and filled with song, poetry, and tributes to those who are no longer with us. Eighth graders can start getting their faces painted for the ceremony as early as 7:00 a.m.

● The annual **Kindergarten Car Wash** is scheduled for the morning of Saturday, November 2, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. It raises money for the **Canned Food Drive**, which kicks off Monday, November 4, and runs until Monday, November 25. Non-perishable items collected during the Canned Food Drive are given to the St. Michael's Parish food program, and cash donations are sent to the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona.

Events Beyond This Week:

● Our seventh and eighth graders will attend the Arizona Theatre Company's play "**Silent Sky**" at the Temple of Music & Art on Tuesday, November 5. We will leave campus around 9:00 a.m. and return between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. Transportation will be provided via hired buses, not parents.

● Friday, November 8, is **Field Day.** Students may wear athletic clothing and are highly encouraged to bring lots of sunscreen and water, and to wear a hat. It is also a half day with noon dismissal and the end of the first trimester. The following Monday, November 11, is a grading day as well as Veterans Day (no school). Report cards will be issued toward the end of that next week.

● Our **sixth graders** are asked to bring in a dozen peeled, hard-boiled eggs the morning of Friday, November 8, to support sandwich-making for Casa Maria. The next group to miss school time for eighth grade community service is **Team Four**, who will be spending the morning of Tuesday, November 12, at Casa Maria.

● The Vaqueros' **Golf Tournament** is Saturday, November 9, from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Forty Niner Country Club. Tee it up to support the athletics program at St. Michael's!

● New intramural rotations (volleyball and basketball) and middle school sports (co-ed soccer and girls' softball, assuming sufficient demand) begin after the Veterans Day weekend.

That's all for now...

Best wishes,

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Links of Note:

[Main School Website](#)
[School Facebook page](#)
[School Instagram page](#)
[PlusPortals](#)
[Eagle Express Blog](#)
[Google Classroom](#)

[McGraw-Hill ConnectEd Textbook Login](#)
[School Uniforms](#)
[Hot Lunch Ordering](#)
[Student-Parent Handbook](#)
[SMA Volunteer Page](#)

[Main School Calendar](#)
[5th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[6th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[7th Grade Test Calendar](#)
[8th Grade Test Calendar](#)