

UUAA 11.3.19

Up Up And Away - Notes from the Upper School Director

November 3, 2019

With the first trimester winding down, students may be asked to reflect on work habits as they set goals for the new term. Balancing homework and extracurricular commitments is hard enough. When the lure of digital distraction is added to the mix, the time crunch becomes even more crunchy. Thus it was with alarm but not surprise that I read a recent report by Common Sense Media (summarized [here](#)) on the ever-increasing quantity of time adolescents spend staring at screens: five hours for pre-teens and seven hours for teenagers on average every day, not including screen-time for school.

Sifting through the vast number of studies on the impact of digital media on child development can feel overwhelming as a parent. Some studies (such as [this one](#)) highlight the differences between passive use and active use. Other research (summarized broadly [here](#)) has looked at how screen time is linked negatively with sleep, anxiety, and academic struggles. St. Michael's is looking into opportunities for families to engage in conversations on challenging topics like this. Watch this space for further details.

In the meantime here are a few suggestions based on my own observations of the evolution of devices and social media. (The first iPhone was released at the end of my fourth year teaching at St. Michael's.) If your child has access to internet-linked devices, consider keeping them out of his or her bedroom, especially at night. If your child has social media accounts, "follow" those accounts. If your child uses devices at home during the school week, develop reasonable time limits, perhaps commensurate with other activities like outdoor exercise or reading (both of which have been decreasing in recent years). And if your child does not yet have a smartphone, consider researching and even joining the [Wait Until 8th](#) movement.

In Other News

As the trimester closes it's also a good time for students to take stock of their stuff. Our **Lost and Found** collection, which this year is stored in the bench

inside the gate by the sixth grade lockers, is overflowing. I will set out unclaimed clothing, lunch boxes, water bottles, and other items on the tables outside by office this week. Please feel free to stop by and sort through the hidden gems!

On another front, updating something I mentioned last week, students in grades 7-8 are 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 **3.50** in core classes over the first two trimesters of the school year to qualify. We have reduced that figure from 3.70 this year since enrichment courses no longer factor into GPA calculations.

Events This Week:

- Our Coed Soccer season "kicks off" this week. Practices will be held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. in the park behind the school. We have a large number of kids interested in playing soccer, and so we will divide the kids into "A" and "B" teams. Mike Peyton will again coach the soccer team. His wife, Bridget, will also be coaching this year.

New intramural rotations (volleyball and basketball) begin after the Veterans Day weekend for students in grades 4-5.

- The annual **Canned Food Drive** begins this Monday and runs through Monday, November 25. Cash donations will support the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, and non-perishable items collected will supply the church's food pantry program. Please support the drive in any way you "can"!

- 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. Students must wear the official school uniform: **red tops and khaki bottoms**.

- Friday, November 8, is **Field Day**. Students may wear athletic clothing (including the Field Day t-shirts being sent home this week), 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.

● 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**.

● 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!

Events Beyond This Week:

● The next "fee dress" (\$2) day is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13. Proceeds support the eighth grade community service program, specifically meal preparation for Primavera Men's Shelter.

● Our annual **Career Day** (for grades 6-8 only) is scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, November 20, which is also a **noon dismissal** day. The Fifth Grade will participate in another art session with former St. Michael's parent Audra Scovil that morning.

That's all for now...

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](#)
[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](#)