

# Counselor's Corner



June 2015, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

*Mrs. Fabina, the counselor for the upper school, and Ms. Schweitzer, the counselor for the Elementary School, collaborate to provide regular information regarding counseling related activities in the school and community. Below find information about social skills training, special events, and other topics of interest.*

## Social Skills Training in the Elementary School

Although social learning happens on a daily basis on all levels, social skills training as a class takes place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades parallel to the computer course. Topics are planned by Ms. Schweitzer in advance but will remain flexible so that other important current topics can be integrated or expanded upon. The topics will be taught through role play, group discussions, worksheets, games, and reading materials. Some of the goals are to strengthen the group, to develop empathy and conflict resolution skills, to recognize and deal with feelings, to strengthen a sense of respect and responsibility, and to recognize and prevent bullying. Please read more general info on bullying here: <http://www.safefrombullies.com/WhatIsNotBullying.aspx>

<http://www.safefrombullies.com/WhatIsBullying.aspx>

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we recently spoke about the importance of admitting when we have made a mistake and apologizing for that mistake. The children learned that we all make mistakes and that no one is expected to handle everything perfectly all the time. However, when it comes to mistakes we make with people, an apology is often the first step in making things right again. We discussed why a simple "sorry" is sometimes not enough and what we could do to make the other person feel that we truly regret our mistakes. The students agreed that an apology should have 3 parts: the actual apology ("I'm sorry" or "I regret"), followed by stating what exactly you are apologizing for ("that I said you were stupid", "that I ignored you when you were feeling sad."), and lastly, a promise or commitment to make it right ("I promise I won't do that again.", "If you want, I can help you with your problem now."). Using different scenarios, the students were asked to practice such apologies and then encouraged to remember to do this in their daily lives as well. By using these more precise apologies, the students will be able to better acknowledge the other person's feelings, while also showing that they really understand what they did wrong and how they can fix it.

In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, we recently spoke about functioning as a group to achieve goals. We defined the word "cooperation" and discussed what it means to cooperate in school, at home, or with friends and when it is necessary that we do. We also discussed the benefits of working together as a group to solve issues or to get work done and what behaviors or habits make working with others more difficult. In order to put these ideas into practice, the students were put into groups and faced with a hypothetical dilemma: They received a large sum of money and having to choose from several options how to spend it.

The students had to come up with a solution that all parties in their group would be able to accept. After completing this task, we discussed what type of communication was used in their groups, what conflicts had taken place, which methods were used to remedy the conflict, and which roles the students took on during the discussions. The goal was to familiarize the students with the idea of group work and cooperation while also teaching them how to work out differing opinions and arguing their point in a respectful manner.

- Ulrike Schweitzer, Elementary School Counselor

### Book Recommendations:

*"Sorry!" by Trudy Ludwig*

*"Just Kidding" by Trudy Ludwig*

*"Betty Bunny Didn't Do It" by Michael Kaplan*

*"Teamwork Isn't My Thing, And I Don't Like to Share" by Julia Cook*

## The time has come...

The end of the school year often brings with it a wealth of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, there is gratitude and relief that the seemingly endless homework, exams, corrections, meetings, and projects are over and it's time to relax over the summer vacation. However, the fact that some students and staff will be leaving the school for good is very hard to think about. For many, the end of the school year will mean the end of their time at the DSW. This year, we are proud to announce that our "US/Canada college crowd" has accepted offers of admission from such prestigious programs as Tulane University, the University of Maryland, Williams College, McGill University, George Mason University, and UCLA. Regardless of where the coming year takes you, I would like to congratulate all our graduates on their achievements. You have paved the way for a bright future and I wish you every happiness and success. To all the families and staff that are leaving us, I hope that the next chapter in your lives is a happy one. You have enriched our community in countless ways, and I hope that you will find fulfillment and joy wherever you go. No matter where the road takes you all, I hope that you will stay in touch and visit often.

*Farewell and Auf Wiedersehen!*



## College Admissions workshop – An evening with Potomac Oak Tutoring

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 the German School welcomed Potomac Oak Tutoring, who offered our students and parents information on the redesigned SAT as well as a step-by-step approach to the college application process. Co-founder and instructor Mr. Alex Roschke, a former student at the GLC (German Language Courses), and Mr. Jason Begun spoke about the changes that students taking the SAT in 2016 or later can expect. Ms. Elisa Chen, J.D., Ms.Ed. gave a detailed overview of the various aspects of college admissions that will be important to families preparing to embark on the college process. If you were unable to attend the workshop, you may find information about Potomac Oak Tutoring at [www.potomactutoring.com](http://www.potomactutoring.com) or you may stop by my office and pick up one of the information folders that were passed out that evening. Please stay tuned for more information on upcoming events and SAT prep courses that we will be offering in the fall.

Klara Fabina, Main Building, Room 15

## Learning Begins with Self-Discipline at Home

When teachers have to stop teaching to handle discipline problems, valuable learning time is lost. That's why the discipline your child learns at home is so important for her success at school. To build your child's self-discipline:

-Be clear about the behavior you expect. Explain that teachers also have expectations for classroom behavior

-Enforce consequences

-Be consistent. Rules are meaningless if you enforce them one day and ignore them the next

## Be Alert for Signs of Stress

After-School activities can be fun, stimulating and great learning experiences. But when kids are overscheduled, those activities can also lead to stress-related behavior issues.

Instead of saying "I'm too tired for soccer", for example, your child might simply act cranky, moody or irritable. So look beyond the behavior to its roots. Eliminating an activity may be the solution.

## Your Child May Simply Need Your Presence

Something appears to be bothering your child, but he won't talk about it. What do you do?

Sometimes, kids just don't feel like discussing why they're down in the dumps. But this doesn't mean they want to be left alone- they simply don't want to talk about it. Respect that.

You can help by just being there. Suggest something you can do together- you might shoot some hoops or bake cookies. Your company may be all the support your child needs right now.



## Summer Program

Although the number one goal of your summer should be relaxation, I would like to urge the “college group” for next year to use the time over the summer vacation to seriously think about where you will be applying and to visit as many campuses as you can. This truly helps in narrowing down the list of colleges that offer both a stimulating academic program and an atmosphere that promotes an all-around positive college experience. Remember: You will be spending several years at your chosen institution – make sure your choice is well-founded. Also, please make sure that you meet with me at the beginning of the 2015/2016 school year to complete the applications and discuss recommendation letters, essays, extracurricular activities, etc. A summer internship can really make an impact on an application! Make use of the tools that are available to you through the internet. Below are a few sites that you and your parents might find helpful.

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-parents#>

<http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2012/09/25/focus-on-7-strategies-to-get-into-college>

<https://www.internmatch.com/blog/late-10-summer-internships-apply-now>

One final reminder to all students grade 9-12: It is never too early to start planning for college. Remember that your grades from 9<sup>th</sup> grade on will appear on your secondary school transcript, which U.S. colleges will be looking at when you apply. Your academic profile is one of the most important pieces and often **the** most important piece of information you will send to a college. Graduating from the German School Washington D.C. is certainly a bonus and it will help you but it cannot outweigh a weak academic profile. Colleges are becoming more and more competitive and grade point averages that used to be good enough may not “cut it” anymore. So keep your grades up every year, participate in extracurricular activities, do your social service hours, and be an integral part of our school community.

However, for now, I wish you some well-deserved relaxation. Enjoy your summer and I will see you next school year!

Klara Fabina, Counselor for grades 5 though 12



# Workshops and Summer Camps

## PEP Parent Workshops

<http://pepparent.org/classes-programs/parenting-school-age-children/>

June 22	7:15 PM – 9:30 PM	Monday	This Isn't a Hotel and I'm not your Maid
June 25	7:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Thursday	When Parents Disagree on How to Parent
July 9	7:30 PM – 9:30 PM	Thursday	"You Can't Make Me Do That!" Power Tools for Power Struggles
July 16 – July 30	7:30 PM – 9:30 PM	Thursdays	Managing Anger: A Parent's Guide
July 23	7:30 PM – 9:30 PM	Thursday	Getting Organized: Where Do We Start?
July 27	7:30 PM – 9:30 PM	Monday	Motivating Children to Do Their Best
July 29 Parents	7:30 PM – 9:30 PM	Wednesday	Managing Stress and Pressure: A Guide for Teens, Tweens & Parents
August 18 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 PM – 9:30 PM	Tuesday	Back to School Basics: Helping Kids Take Responsibility

## JSSA

[https://www.jssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Workshops\\_Groups\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.jssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Workshops_Groups_Brochure.pdf)

[https://www.jssa.org/service/workshops-and-groups/?utm\\_source=infoslider1](https://www.jssa.org/service/workshops-and-groups/?utm_source=infoslider1)

### **McLean School of Maryland Summer Camp: Building and Fostering Friendships (MD)**

- Entering Grades 1-6
- **Handling Angry Feelings (MD) – Ages 8-9 and 10-11**
- **K-Prep Social Play Skills- Ages 4-5**

[Building & Fostering Friendships Camp – Grades 1-2](#) Details: Pre-registration is required for this two-week camp for children grades 1-2 aimed at developing and maintaining positive relationships with peers.

Workshops

[Building & Fostering Friendships Camp – Grades 3-4](#) Details: Pre-registration is required for this two-week camp for children grades 3-4 aimed at developing and maintaining positive relationships with peers.

Workshops

[Building & Fostering Friendships Camp – Grades 5-6](#) Details: Pre-registration is required for this two-week camp for children grades 5-6 aimed at developing and maintaining positive relationships with peers.

(Montgomery County may announce a summer workshop schedule soon as well, information can be found here:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments//parentacademy/workshops.aspx> )