

Southridge Wednesday

14-15

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Head of School

New Habits, New Thinking

This is the time of year when we are inclined to make a New Year's resolution or two. Typically, resolutions lean toward making positive changes - either eliminating bad habits, forming new (good) ones or a little bit of both. I was recently reviewing some course material devoted to why habits are so hard for us to break. I thought it related really well to New Year's resolutions, and so I have decided to share some of what I learned in this edition of the *Wednesday*.

The title and premise of the book is that *We are Not Our Brains* - outlining a clear distinction between our brains and our minds. According to the authors, Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Gladding, we unwittingly receive "deceptive brain messages" that are beyond our control. These deceptive messages can best be described as inaccurate thoughts or unhelpful and distracting impulses that take us away from our goals and intentions. Often backed by strong emotional sensations and supportive/habitual actions, the messages can be very powerful indeed. When the emotions and habitual actions are either felt or repeated over and over they become ingrained, and our brains become wired to support a habit.

For example, if a student has a deceptive brain message that s/he is "not good enough" a backing emotion may be a "pit" or unsettled feeling in his/her stomach and the habitual response (or action) could be overachieving, striving for perfection or seeking reassurance from someone that s/he is okay. If enough attention is devoted to this pattern of thinking and focus is passively applied in an unconstructive and repetitive way, unhealthy habits get wired into the brain making them very difficult to break.

Unfortunately, positive self-talk and willpower alone are sure-fire ways to become discouraged and disappointed when trying to break a bad habit because the reality is that our brains generate our misleading brain messages - not our minds - and none of us has any say in when or where the deceptive messages will show up. Drs. Schwartz and Gladding liken this process to when something shiny glints in the sun - we don't cause the object to shine but if our eye catches it, we look. It's natural and automatic . . . and not under our control.

But what *is* under our control, and what *can* help us untangle ourselves from bad habits, is our ability to choose. Interestingly, research is showing that there is a gap of about 3 seconds between noticing a misleading brain message and choosing how to respond to it. The short gap interval allows our minds to consciously focus our attention on healthy and beneficial actions. Just like in the formation of bad habits, when enough mindful, rational and purposeful attention is devoted to constructive responses it helps us rewire our brains in positive ways. It also helps us break our bad habits by *not* acting on brain messages that are harmful to us. We have a choice in our habits, it seems, and our success is directly related to how aware we are and how mindfully we respond.

Old habits sure do die hard, and if we try to will them away they'll hardly die at all. Free choice allows us to respond to messages in our environment that could otherwise cause us to form unhealthy habits. Choice is freedom and so we are free to choose our habits - both healthy and unhealthy. Good luck with your New Year's resolutions!

Have a wonderful week!

Mr. Drew Stephens
Head of School

Important Dates			
Event	Date	Time	Location
Jump Rope for Heart	Friday, Jan 30 th		Junior School
Casual Day	Friday, Jan 30 th	All Day	Both Schools
Senior School Student-led Conferences	Wednesday, Feb 4 th	12:40 - 8:00 p.m.	Senior School

Pro-D Day	Friday, Feb 6th	All Day	Both Schools
BC Family Day	Monday, Feb 9 th	All Day	Both Schools
Half-term Holiday	Tuesday, Feb 10 th	All Day	Both Schools
Junior School Student-led Conferences	Thursday, Feb 19 th	Noon Dismissal	Junior School
Kindergarten Parents - No school	Friday, Feb 13 th	All Day	Junior School - Kindergarten only

Junior School News

The Art of Knowing Yourself - Simply Articulating Your Thoughts

A few days ago I had to contact the Ministry of Education about a question I had that was percolating for some time. When I did connect with someone and spoke my peace, they simply paused, and stated that they would really appreciate my feedback and suggestions in writing. Writing is not often an easy task - but when something is percolating for a while; the outpouring of writing it down can be very simple and somehow cathartic. When I put the pen to paper, clarity and organization of thoughts can occur, especially when writing for an audience.

In educational circles, blogging has become an important part of professional development as it forces educators to reflect honestly on their practice, also acutely aware that those who read educational blogs are usually educators themselves. It often feels like an online university class where you really need to substantiate your reflection with support of best practice and research. Blogging is not fulfilling a desire for validation of one's ideas - trust me, when I blogged several years ago, I was the recipient of a few stinging comments that are not for the faint of heart. But verbalizing your ideas is important, a deed of professional articulation, which is essential to share with the community.

Our Director of Community Relations, Debbie MacDougall, understands acutely the importance of blogging, and has asked several members of our faculty to blog. The task is daunting and makes me feel somewhat vulnerable, but I agree with her wholeheartedly. So this week, I will grasp the proverbial pen, aka keyboard, and put her request into practice. From my amazing repertoire of teachers and rich student experience at Southridge, there is an abundance of material for the context of my thoughts. Off we go.

Have a great week.

Mrs. Laurel Middelaer
Assistant Head/Head of Junior School

Pro-D Day, BC Family Day and Half Term Holiday

As a faculty, we greatly value time together for professional collaboration and growth. On Friday, February 6th, 2015 we will have a professional development day so there will be no school for the students. February 6th is a collaborative Pro-D day with all the ISABC (Independent Schools Association of BC) schools, and we look forward to our time together. Thank you for your support of our faculty's growth. The following Monday is BC's Family Day holiday and Tuesday will be our half-term holiday, so please enjoy this extended weekend with your family.

Student Led Conferences: Thursday, February 19th, 2015 (noon dismissal)

Throughout the school term, students have been actively selecting their own pieces of work to secure in a portfolio. These pieces reflect many different subject disciplines and should demonstrate their own personal growth as a student. On Thursday, February 19th, 2015 we will be holding student-led conferences so that the students can share their portfolios with their parents. This opportunity is empowering for students as they can share their own journey as a learner and actively reflect on each piece. Please also be aware that there will be a 12:00 noon dismissal on that day to accommodate the conferences.

Kindergarten Parents - No school on Friday, February 13th, 2015

Just a reminder to our kindergarten parents that there will be no school for their children on Friday, February 13th, 2015 due to entrance testing for prospective kindergarten students. Thank you for making alternate arrangements for your children on that day.

Casual Day Friday, January 30th

Thank you very much for your fund-raising efforts for Jump Rope for Heart. All donations are due this Friday, please, and are in lieu of the usual \$2.00 donation. Also remember to send your children dressed in pink and/or red for the Casual Day for a fun day of jumping in PE or DPA. He or she may also wear a heart to honour a special family member or friend affected by heart or stroke conditions.

Mrs. Jo-Ann Murchie
Grade 2 and 4 Teacher

Join the Southridge School Sun Run Team!

Let's get started and let's get moving! The Vancouver Sun Run is just around the corner. This year's event will take place on Sunday, April 19th. We had a large school turn out last year and we are hoping for an even bigger one for 2015. Our rock star team will include participants from both the Junior and Senior Schools. All ages are welcome to take part in this fun and fit community event. Whether your goal is to walk the full 10K, to run it, or to take part in the 2.5K Mini Sun Run, we would LOVE to have you join us on the Southridge team.

Please note: This is not an official Southridge excursion so families will need to arrange their own transportation and supervision.

Beat the rush and sign up by February 12th to enjoy an 'early bird' rate of \$22.00 per student and \$33.00 per adult! To register:

- go to www.vancouver.sunrun.com
- at the top of the page select 'Register'
- click 'Register for a Team'
- type "Southridge School" into the search bar and then click "Join Team"
- On the next page you will be asked to type in our team access code which is "*leteveryspiritsoar*".
- fill out the registration information
- choose between the 2.5k Mini Race or the full 10K
- proceed to the checkout

Please E-mail Ms. Fretter mfretter@southridge.bc.ca or Dr. Bepflug kbespflug@southridge.bc.ca if you have any questions about the event or registration. Good luck to everyone and happy training! ☺

Your Southridge Team Captains
Megan Fretter & Dr. Kevin Bepflug

Senior School News

Impressive Student Voice

Last week we were visited by the architects that are involved in our Strategic Plan specifically dealing with a Campus Master Plan. Prior to this visit, they were here last November to learn about all aspects of the School and about how our future campus can enhance our mission and programs. The purpose of this last visit was to share three options that they had formulated from all of the information gained and to receive feedback.

Every student from Grade 5 - 12 had the opportunity to provide their voice in the feedback process. Initially, I wasn't certain as to how successful this process would be. I carefully planned grade opportunities throughout the week, some during classes and others at lunch time to ensure each student in the Senior School had a formal opportunity to learn about the options that the architects presented and give feedback. While I am the first person to believe that our students have the ability to think critically and ask questions, I wondered quietly to myself whether this particular situation would engage them to show these skills.

On Tuesday morning, prior to the students' arrival, the 21 presentation boards were set up in the Alan Brown Great Hall. What happened throughout the next three days showed how incredibly special our students are with regard to how they view their place in our community!

As students arrived, they immediately were drawn to the presentation set up and went to explore what it was all about. Small groups spoke about their ideas and thoughts, often times debating the merits of one option over another or

formulating an excellent question to gain further clarity about a particular aspect of a plan. These informal learning occurrences happened throughout the three days. One benefit of this was that when the students' formal time with the architects occurred, they had formulated questions and ideas and were able to give fantastic and meaningful feedback.

The architects were so impressed with the student level of engagement and continually let me know after each session, whether it was our Grade 12's or Grade 8's. The feedback the students provided was insightful, respectful and critically framed. The depth at which they delved into looking at the three options very much portrayed how seriously they take their responsibility as members of the community and stewards of Southridge! I was extremely proud of them!

Upon reflection of the week and in writing this submission, I realized how important it was to allow the students an opportunity to have a voice in their learning and experiences at Southridge. It was so apparent how appreciative they were and the realization of the responsibility that they were being given in the process. They responded so impressively with their maturity and insightfulness and provided incredibly valuable feedback for the architects. It was another reminder for me of the power and positive influence that adolescents bring to our community and the modeling they can provide for all of us.

Have a great week!

Mr. Doug Palm
Head of Senior School

Course Selections for 2015-16

In the coming weeks I will be talking to students about their course selection options for the next academic year. There are limited choices for students currently in grade 8, but an increasing range of elective courses as students move into the senior grades. I will be speaking to the grade 8 and 9 students in school on February 2nd. Mr Weaver, Ms. Livingston and I will present to the grade 10s on January 27th and to the grade 11 class on January 29th. Students will complete course selection sheets in their HCE and Planning classes prior to entering their selections into Naviance - the data base system that we use to record and manage their choices. The course selection sheets are attached here for your convenience (they are also available on the parent portal) and to allow you to discuss the various options with your children. The closing date for students to enter their choices on Naviance is Friday, March 6th.

Parent Information Evening on Thursday, February 12th

We will also be holding an information evening on Thursday, February 12th. The first part of the evening from 6:30 - 7:15 pm will be directed at choices for our current grade 8 and 9 students, and the later part of the evening from 7:15 - 8:15pm will cover the options available to our students in grades 10 and 11. Of course everyone is welcome to attend the entire presentation. There will be time for questions throughout the evening, but you are also encouraged to consult with myself and our University Counsellors Mr. Weaver and Ms. Livingston about specific future options for your sons and daughters.

The timetable for 2015-2016 is built from the students' choices and we strive to create a schedule of classes that will deliver the optimum choices for the most students. However, it is highly probable that we will not be able to satisfy the elective choices of all students. For this reason it is imperative that your son or daughter clearly identify his or her first, second and third choices. Every effort will be made to give students their first choice, but students may be placed in their second or third choice options in order to avoid timetable conflicts or to balance class size.

- [Grade 9 Selection Sheet 2015 - 2016](#)
- [Grade 10 Selection Sheet 2015 - 2016](#)
- [Grade 11 Selection Sheet 2015 - 2016](#)
- [Grade 12 Selection Sheet 2015 - 2016](#)

I would encourage all students to talk to their teachers, parents and counsellors to gain as much knowledge as they can in order to make informed choices as they move forward with their academic goals. I think it is also important to stress that students should follow those courses in which they have a genuine interest or passion, remembering that excellence usually comes from optimism, engagement and commitment.

Jan Holt
Senior School Academic Program Director

Distance Education and On-Line Learning Options: A Cautionary Note

The growing number of courses available to students on-line in BC and globally continues to present attractive options for students. We have moved into a world in which students have access to ever widening spheres of knowledge and a multitude of educational providers and surely that must be a positive development? In many ways it is, but there is also need for caution and concern.

From the perspective of a Southridge student there may be courses that we cannot provide that the student may wish to pursue. Advanced Placement Computer Science or AP Psychology; Art History or Textiles for example. Perhaps there is a desire to learn another language, or gain credit for a language already spoken – Russian, German, Mandarin come to mind. These are commendable goals, but parents and students should weigh carefully the additional time and academic stress that this extra-loading can bring. However, there are clearly cogent reasons for the choices students make and are, of course, free to make. However, Southridge does impose restrictions on the use of those on-line or summer school courses in pursuing their Southridge education. We are a university preparatory school and our students need to be taught in an environment, and to a degree of mastery, that will allow them to be successful in their post-secondary studies. For example, a student, who takes Physics 11 or Pre- Calculus 11 on-line, or in a 6 week summer school program, will be precluded from taking Physics 12 or Pre- Calculus 12 at Southridge. Our academic course policy indicates that students should take courses that are offered at Southridge in our classrooms with our well qualified faculty.

We do this because we need to maintain the integrity of our programs and to emphasize the educational benefit of the teaching and learning that we provide. It is evident from the rapid and spectacular growth of on-line courses that they are of variable quality and academic rigour. The integrity of the assessment practices is also, in some cases, of significant concern and we are beginning to see the universities looking much more circumspectly at the marks achieved. Currently Simon Fraser University is following students who have completed Pre-Calculus 12 on-line (by far the most frequently taken on-line course) as they are concerned that the standard of learning may be inadequate to meet their program requirements and or result in high dropout rates. UBC is actually collecting data to track the results of students who have completed on-line courses as there is now considerable concern over their performance in first year mathematics. It should also be noted that the universities to which our students apply also recognize the high level of learning that our students achieve. Understandably, as concerns about university acceptance rise, students sometimes seek to take on-line courses because they hope to achieve higher marks, but if that higher mark comes at the expense of a deeper understanding, it may be a very short- term gain

Without wishing to sound an alarmist note or denigrate the many very valuable on –line courses available, it is clear that Southridge can only stand by the quality of instruction and content that we provide. As the Academic Program Director I am proud of our knowledgeable, committed and resourceful faculty; confident in our thoughtful and innovative approaches to learning, and determined to ensure that our students are as well prepared as possible for their academic futures. On-line learning can provide a valuable contribution to, and extension of, a student's educational development, but it is not, I believe, a substitute for the face to face interactions, the 'in the moment' questioning and reasoning, the collective discussion and personal attention that our classrooms and faculty provide.

Jan Holt
Senior School Academic Director

Student-led Conferences on Wednesday, February 4th from 12:40 - 8:00 p.m.

Student-led conferences continue to be a valued part of Southridge's approach to education. These 20 minute presentations take place between the advisor, advisee and parents. They allow the student to celebrate his or her accomplishments, reflect on past experiences and set goals for the future. This is also an excellent opportunity for our senior grades as many universities are moving toward a broad-based admission model which places less emphasis on grades and more focus on a student's ability to answer similar kinds of reflective questions.

This year the conferences will take place on Wednesday February 4th, 2014 from 12:40 - 8:00 p.m. Families sign up for their conference via the Parent Portal on the Southridge School website. Please use the *Senior School Student-led Conferences* link on the top, right side of the page. After logging in, you will be asked for the student number and birthdate. After confirming this information you will see the available time slots. If unable to make any of the time slots, please contact your advisor directly. We look forward to seeing you!

- [Student Led Conference Guidelines](#)
- [Student Led Conference Reflective Questions](#)

Mr. Norman Dods, Lower Division Coordinator and
Ms. Nolan Wood, Upper Division Coordinator

Mini We Day 2015: A Volunteer Fair

Mini We Day is coming up next Friday, January 30th. Mini We Day is an event that showcases charities and organizations in our community to show students how they can make a positive difference in our community. For the past two years we have run Mini We Day similar to the We Day event put on by the Kielburger brothers. This year we have decided to change things up. At lunch on January 30th charities will have set up stalls in the school. People can walk up and have a chat with them and learn as much as they wish about what the charity does and how they can help. It will be like a university fair where students can be engaged and learn about service in a more personal way.

Amrit Athwal
Grade 11 Student

Long-term School Trip Plan

Southridge believes strongly in the value and benefits of contextualized experiential learning - and with our international learning program, the world literally does become our students' classroom. There is something magical and transformative about immersing oneself completely in a different culture, so our trips are designed to take full advantage of this opportunity. In order to help you plan for these options, we publish a [5-Year Trip Plan](#) each year, which is located on the Parent Resources section of the school website. If you have any questions, please contact me by email at dweaver@southridge.bc.ca or 604-542-1796.

Mr. Daryl Weaver
Assistant Head of Senior School/Director of Experiential Education

Australian Exchange Update: Adriana Dobbie's Blog

Six of our students are currently in Australia on exchange, and two more will be leaving later this term for Melbourne and Quebec City. To get a sense of some of the spectacular opportunities these students experience, Adriana Dobbie, who is at Central Coast Grammar School outside Sydney, has agreed to share her blog with our community.

To have a look at it please [click here](#). We still have spots available for Quebec City & the Doon School in India for the next academic year. Please contact Mr. Weaver if you are interested at dweaver@southridge.bc.ca or 604-542-1796.

Guest Speaker - Dr. Vanessa Lapointe Coming to Southridge!

Dr. Vanessa Lapointe will be coming to Southridge as a guest lecturer on Wednesday, February 18th at 7:00 p.m. She will be talking to parents about "Anxiety, Anger & Aggression: Understanding Your Adolescent's Development". The talk will take place in the Junior School Great Hall and is complimentary to Southridge families. More details about the lecture are to follow in the Southridge Wednesday next week.

Ms. Natasha Bains
Senior School Counsellor

Photos Can Now Be Shared! Welcome to Vidigami!

We've found a solution to a problem we have had for years; how to share school photos with our families and how can families contribute to the school photo archive?

Southridge has partnered with Vidigami to provide our school community with a secure and private website to store and share Southridge school memories. From now on, this is where Southridge will be storing and sharing all of our photos.

You now have a place to share the many photos you capture on field trips, sporting events and performances for both your child and the families of all the students who are part of your child's class. Vidigami is also a place where school captured photos can be shared with our families. Once photos are collected in Vidigami, the system intelligently uses its facial recognition to help you tag students thereby organizing all those photos by student - just for you.

You will receive an email invitation from Vidigami today to allow you to set up your account. Please follow the steps in the email and enjoy the world of photographs that await you. [Click Here](#) for online help and great tutorials.

We've started sharing our photos on Vidigami - please join us by sharing your photos. The more you share, the more others will share and the greater the experience for everyone. Just drag and drop photos from your desktop or upload directly from your iPad or iPhone via the Vidigami mobile app. An android app is coming in 2015.

If you have any questions about Vidigami (how to use it, or about the program), please contact me at amcinnnes@southridge.bc.ca.

Alan McInnes
Manager
Web and AV Services

News for Both Schools

Math for All Update

After much thought, we have decided to extend this offer to Southridge students in both the Junior and Senior Schools, from Grades 4 to 12. Now, along with the general public, our students can come by to get more time working on their math.

As a reminder, this is not a tutoring service, but a place that offers more structured collaborative time with experts (a peer student) sitting at each table (each table is dedicated to a specific grade). [Click Here](#) to sign up.

Mr. Max Sterelyukhin
Senior School Mathematics Teacher

Advancement Update - Gala Proceeds

Thank you again to all our generous families and friends that contributed to *The Great Gatsby Gala* in November. As we reported earlier, 50% of the funds that we raise at the gala are earmarked for important capital items at the school, like athletics equipment and uniforms, library acquisitions, lab equipment, art supplies, building improvements and upgrades. The other 50% of the funds are used for special projects, items and initiatives that are identified through a comprehensive budget process.

This year, one of these initiatives was the purchase of an electric gator for our facilities team. The ‘gator’ arrived last week and our very grateful facilities team had two words to say to our parent community: “THANK YOU!” The gator will be used on a daily basis to transport items and equipment across the campus, paint lines on the fields, etc.

Thank you again for your generous support of Southridge! Stay tuned for additional updates!

Ms. Christiane Hodson
Director of Advancement

Annual Fundraising Campaign Update

Thank you to all our parents who have already made their annual donation to Southridge this school year! To date we have raised \$41,000.00 towards our Greatest Need fund, Arts, Athletics and Service projects as well as \$39,000.00 towards the Alan Brown Memorial Endowment fund and the Carol E. Levy Memorial Endowment fund.

If you have not made your donation yet, there is still time! In fact, we still need to raise an additional \$1,500.00 towards Athletics in order to purchase a new high jump mat for our Junior School track athletes for use this spring! We also still require an additional \$3,000.00 to purchase tubular bells for the Senior School music program. Your gift to each of these areas would be most appreciated by our teachers and students.

Contributing to the Greatest Need fund allows Southridge to use your donation where it is needed most. The books we purchase for the library each year, all our science and lab equipment, sports uniforms and PE equipment... all these items are supported by undesignated donations to the school. If you have not yet made a donation to Southridge this year, please consider supporting the Greatest Need fund today. Our goal is to raise an additional \$49,000.00 towards our most pressing needs.

Finally, directing your gift towards our endowment funds allows us to offer bursaries to students who would otherwise be unable to attend Southridge. This is a remarkable way to make a real impact on a student’s life. Contributing to either the Carol E. Levy Memorial Endowment Fund or the Alan Brown Memorial Endowment fund also allows us to be more accessible to a broader socio-economic family population, which is one of our strategic priorities.

We are asking you to make one gift to Southridge this year. Please consider an area at Southridge that you would like to support and [make your gift online today](#).

Please contact me at chodson@southridge.bc.ca if you have any questions at all! Thank you again for making a donation to Southridge this year!

Ms. Christiane Hodson
Director of Advancement

Uniform Shop News

Mrs. Barb Collett will be leaving the Southridge Uniform Shop in March 2015 to pursue new opportunities.

Southridge would like to take the opportunity to thank Barb for her direction and leadership in taking our Uniform Shop to the next level. Barb accepted the challenges of implementing a point of sale and inventory system; of transitioning to a new uniform supplier while maintaining quality and price; and of sourcing and introducing new items for our school community. Her energy in collaborating with many members of the Southridge staff on special purchases while working with her great group of volunteers to deliver friendly and efficient customer service to students and families has set the uniform shop up for success moving forward.