



**Convent &
Stuart Hall**
Schools of the Sacred Heart San Francisco

June 4, 2020

A Message from Dr. Ann Marie Krejcarek, President of Convent & Stuart Hall

Dear Convent & Stuart Hall Community,

This Past Week

Since the horrifying images of the killing of George Floyd were made public, our school has engaged in powerful conversations with our students and the adult members of our school community. These conversations focused on how we can do more -- individually and collectively -- to support the education of our students so that we might create a fair and just society. Members of our community shared resources appropriate for each of our student age groups and, once again our teachers rose to the occasion of delivering critical and impactful learning experiences.

I have heard that some parents would like to join in these types of conversations, so I am pleased to share that at the start of the new school year, we will open sessions for parents to be trained in the **Essentials of Dialogue** with Generation Global. We hope this training and subsequent conversations will open doors to a deeper understanding of the overall community experience.

Building a Just and Fair Society

Schools of the Sacred Heart San Francisco is deeply committed to building a fair and just society -- inside our school community and in the city, country and world in which we live. The Religious of the Sacred Heart **are committed to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation** and through the Goals and Criteria charge each of its schools to the following:

Goal III. Criteria 1

1. The school educates to a critical consciousness that leads its total community to analyze and reflect on the values of society and to act for justice.

Goal IV. Criteria 2, 3 and 4

2. *The school promotes a safe and welcoming environment in which each person is valued, cared for and respected.*
3. *Adult members of the school model and teach skills needed to build community and practice clear, direct and open communication.*
4. *The school has programs that teach the principles of nonviolence, conflict resolution and peacemaking.*

Additionally, Convent & Stuart Hall's Strategic Plan identifies and is delivering on initiatives that engage these charges from the Society in the lives of our students and community.

As you've read in previous communications, over the last two years, the school has engaged **Generation Global** to train our community - students, faculty and staff-- in the skills of dialogue. A critical aspect of this training is to provide space for each voice and each perspective, withholding the tenets of debate and declaration, so that we might deeply listen to one another.

We have identified a week each year (*Cor Unum* Week) where we focus on building skills and joining in dialogue around a topic that prepares us to engage with the challenging issues that are so in evidence to us in the killing of George Floyd.

This past April, we forged ahead (in a virtual environment) with our second annual *Cor Unum* week and hosted Dr. Jerry Kang who is Vice Chancellor at UCLA for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Dr. Kang offered a presentation to our entire community on implicit bias, and we spent the week working with the topic of bias, using the dialogue skills we had been trained in by Generation Global. If you did not get a chance to view Dr. Kang's presentations, they are available to our internal community and we encourage you to request the link and password via **this form**. I encourage you to take the time to view Dr. Kang's presentations.

Together we can make a difference, and in fact we are called to do so as members of the global Sacred Heart community. The Society has called us to raise our voices against injustice and the sin of racism. Respecting the dignity and sacredness of all God's creation, we believe that black lives matter.

Sincerely,
Ann Marie

A Message from Angela Taylor, Head of Convent Elementary

Dear Convent Elementary Families,

This is not how I envisioned my last official Thursday Notes of the 2019–20 school year going. I had planned to offer my sincerest gratitude and appreciation for being able to partner with so many talented colleagues and families over the 20 years I have worked at Convent & Stuart Hall. I had wanted to talk about how much this school has meant to my professional growth and how I would not be the leader I am today without the mentorship of Gerry Grossman, Jaime Dominguez and Ann Marie Krejcarek. This bittersweet moment of transition was supposed to be a normal one. But, it is not. We are living in a time that is anything but normal. Against the backdrop of a worldwide pandemic, our nation is literally erupting with collective pain, frustration and rage.

I have been grappling for the last two weeks with how best to respond to this most recent lynching of an unarmed black man at the hands of a police officer. Watching the video of George Floyd's last moments on this earth impacted me at a cellular level. He could have easily been my husband, my cousin, my nephew or even me. For me, this is not an intellectual exercise.

As a black woman working in a predominantly white, independent school, I have been grappling with how to grieve, how to varnish my anger, how to lead and how not to allow myself to slip into despair. Aside from my deep faith, the only thing that is keeping me bolstered is that in my role as an educator, I get to touch the future through every teacher and student I impact.

Citizens across this country are protesting not only the death of George Floyd but police killings of black and brown men over the course of centuries and it is young people who are taking the lead. When you chose to send your child to a Sacred Heart school, you were not only joining the Convent & Stuart Hall community here in San Francisco, you were also immediately in community with a global network of schools. I was heartened with the swift and unequivocal condemnation and solidarity statement put out by the Society of the Sacred Heart:

"The Society of the Sacred Heart in the United States and Canada strongly condemns the gross violation of human dignity that we, along with millions of others, witnessed in the video of George Floyd's last minutes. We are outraged at yet another killing of

an unarmed African-American man, and stand in solidarity with all people of color who are at risk of violence in our country.

We also call for a quick and fair legal process to ensure accountability and justice. Each of us is created in the image of God, brothers and sisters, united and equal in God's eyes. The reality is that people of color in the United States are living every day with what all of us watched in the George Floyd video. We pledge to raise our voice in opposition to acts of racial discrimination and to fight tirelessly against the sin of racism.

We stand with the U.S. bishops' pastoral, Open Wide Our Hearts, in calling for a "genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society."

How do we live up to this very high bar set by the sisters? How do we lean into our promise of nurturing the transformational leaders of tomorrow? These are difficult questions that many believe they have the answers to, but I would caution that instead of debating if we have done enough to date (because resoundingly I can say no school, no organization and no government body has), I think the focus needs to be on moving forward together. Moving forward in a way that makes space for all voices to shape the path and then diligently working shoulder to shoulder to build a better nation with justice for all.

Convent & Stuart Hall will always have a special place in my heart. I wish I could say goodbye to all of you in person but know that I am sending you virtual hugs! Have a safe and relaxing summer break.

Be well.
Angela

A Message from Kevin Brenner, Head of Stuart Hall for Boys

Dear Stuart Hall for Boys Families,

It's hard to believe we're wrapping up our last full week of this academic year. It's also difficult to wrap my mind around all that is happening around the world and in our country at this time. I start by sharing the incredible hope I have in our students as children of the Sacred Heart. As I shared with our graduating 8th graders this week, our students are equipped and empowered to love and transform. I see this happening

throughout the Stuart Hall for Boys student body, from students writing poems and letters demanding action to seven-year-olds articulating with great confidence and awareness the truth that all humans are equal and should be treated as such. I am grateful for our children and that they are learning life lessons in this Sacred Heart community.

These are incredibly trying times. The continued presence of institutional racism and as a result, the suffering people of color face in the United States, is tragic and unacceptable. I agree wholeheartedly with the Religious of the Sacred Heart who wrote in their May 29, 2020 Statement on Racism: “The reality is that people of color in the United States are living every day with what all of us watched in the George Floyd video. We pledge to raise our voice in opposition to acts of racial discrimination and to fight tirelessly against the sin of racism.” I pray that out of this devastation we will emerge steps closer to each other as individuals and as a society, accepting the truth that we are all equal. As called out in the strategic plan and articulated in the context of our *Cor Unum* work, we work continuously “to develop structures for input and communication that support the full membership of each member of the school community” (from the current Strategic Plan “Looking Forward with 2020 Vision”).

As we journey together through the remaining days of the 2019–20 academic year, please pay close attention to information regarding dropping off and picking up items from campus. This will take place next Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The assigned schedule and details regarding this process are included in the K–8 All School Notes below. We will send summer checklists for Gr. K–4 and 5–8 in mid-June. Lastly, thank you for the warm welcome you extended to my family and me this year. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this community and look forward to the important work we will do together moving forward.

Kind regards,
Kevin

A Message from Rachel Simpson, Head of Convent High School

To conclude the school year on Tuesday and in light of recent events, it was important to make ample space on Tuesday for prayer, for reflection, for dialogue and for the setting of intentions as we make the transition into summer. Echoing Ann Marie’s message, we are most aware at this time of the charge of Goal 3 of the Goals & Criteria of a Sacred Heart Education: educating our students to a social awareness that impels to action.

Recognizing also on Tuesday the Sacred Heart tradition of “Prize Day,” we hosted a Prize Day Zoom, complete with flower crowns (mostly virtual backgrounds, but some homemade!) and recognition of student achievement in academics and in service. The Prize Day assembly also included time for more intentions for the great suffering going on in our country.

Tuesday’s closing event was a virtual prayer vigil for our students at 8 p.m. that evening, intentionally coinciding with the time of the city-wide curfew. While there was music, and there were words and intentions, there was also a great deal of shared silence. Thank you to Mr. Farrell for hosting the evening vigil.

With the Society of the Sacred Heart’s foundational mission in mind, we believe that our students will be a transformative force for good, and we recognize the ongoing work we must undertake in order to meet our commitment to Goal 3.

Some last business before we sign off from Thursday Notes for the summer:

- On Wednesday, June 10 through Friday, June 12 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., we will be inviting students to drop off school material (library books, sports uniforms, etc) and pick up any student belongings left behind.
- Seniors: Please return all borrowed materials at this time.
- Please continue to read Dr. Krejcarek’s updates on plans and preparations for the new school year.
- Look for our summer checklist in your email in-box toward the middle of the month. Summer information will include updates on summer assignments, and on course schedules and course materials for next year, including necessary health forms and information for new school year entry.

A Message from Tony Farrell, Head of Stuart Hall High School

It was with heavy hearts and troubled minds that we convened our student body for our final assembly on Tuesday. It was important to make ample space on Tuesday for prayer, for reflection, for dialogue and for the setting of intentions as we make the transition into summer. Tradition recognizes the event as “Prize Day”... and we included prize elements with warm acknowledgements and accolades of achievements. We focused also on offering intentions for the great suffering going on in our country while referencing Friday’s [statement from our province](#). Echoing Ann Marie’s message, we are

most aware at this time of the charge of Goal 3: educating our students to a social awareness that impels to action.

The prize assembly typically is our final moment together, but this year it seemed fitting to hold a virtual prayer vigil for our students at 8 p.m. that evening, intentionally coinciding with the time of the city-wide curfew. We shared music, words and intentions, and also a great deal of silence.

We are called to educate our students to be agents of transformation. The work ahead requires wisdom, courage, grace and grit.

If you have any suggestions for elegant ways to move to communicating to-do lists in this context, I welcome them. In the meantime:

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- Look for our summer checklist in your email in-box toward the middle of the month. Summer information will include updates on summer assignments, and on course schedules and course materials for next year, including necessary health forms and information for new school year entry. And please continue to read Dr. Krejcarek's updates on plans and preparations for the new school year.