

COUNSELOR CONNECTION



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WARM WINTER WISHES

2020 is a year that we won't soon forget, but likely one we will not be disappointed to see come to an end. As we head off into our winter break, we hope that everyone finds the time to be together as a family, in a zoom-free environment. In this month's newsletter, we share some secrets of resilient families and some strategies for "coping forward." We're including information about ways to give back this holiday season, as well as some ideas for purposeful conversations about gratitude and forward thinking within your family structure. Lastly, we highlight some important dates related to 9th grade registration for our 8th grade families. Your IMS Counseling team wishes you all a restful break and all the very best for health and happiness in the new year!

FIVE SECRETS FROM RESILIENT FAMILIES

[Link to the Parent Map Article for full article](#)

Scientific studies reveal the five things that strong families do everyday:

1. They spend quality time together.
2. They put on their rose-colored glasses.
3. They work on their emotion regulation skills.
4. They foster open communication channels.
5. They show appreciation for each other.



Use the link to the Parent Map article to read the full descriptions of how to put these five ideas into practice.

COPING FORWARD

Support your student by teaching the **STEPS -A, Self-Soothe Skills** and **IMPROVE** the moment. *"Crisis survival strategies are used to get through a bad situation without making it worse. Self-soothe is using movement plus the five senses (vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to do something comforting, kind and gentle for oneself. IMPROVE the moment means replacing negative events with **Imagery, Meaning, Prayer, Relaxing actions, One thing at a time, Vacation, and Encouragement.**"*

All of us have challenging moments, when our children need support in developing strategies to get through the rough patches. When shifting from remote learning into the holiday break one idea to support your child during their time off is to **Cope Forward** by having them create a **Crisis Survival Self-Soothe Kit**. This is a container filled with items that trigger soothing sensory experiences: **Vision** (a photo or a short video they can access), **Hearing** (music, laughter, sounds), **Smell** (scented lotions, candles, baking), **Taste** (small candies), **Touch** (a squeeze ball or a soft piece of fabric, or bubble wrap to pop). Plus, **Movement** (stretches, exercise) activities they can do on their own. Have a wonderful break from remote learning and keep **Coping Forward!**



WAYS TO GIVE BACK THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Tis' the season....Below is a list of ideas for how you and your family can give back during the holidays/cold winter months. Click on the underlined portion of each bullet point to be directed to a webpage with more info.

- ◆ **Donate unwanted items**- Use this free time to declutter. Gather unwanted items that have a lot of life left in them and donate them to organizations in the area.
- ◆ **Ask a neighbor if you can help** with yard work and/or pick up garbage in your neighborhood.
- ◆ **Make blankets for Seattle Humane Society**. Create fleece or knit blankets for cats awaiting adoption. Help out so the cats in their care receive a blanket or towel to make their cubby more comfortable. For a video and written tutorial on how to make no-sew blankets visit their website.
- ◆ Send **Paracord Bracelets**. These bracelets get sent in care packages to our troops and first responders. The bracelets are used to save a life in an emergency situation.
- ◆ **Write letters**- Sign up to become a **Letters Against Isolation** volunteer and send senior citizens around the world handwritten letters filled with joy.
- ◆ Contribute to **Operation Santa**: Spread joy by adopting letters from individuals or families.
- ◆ Get involved with the **Pandemic of Love** and help patrons in need connect with those who can help.

9th GRADE REGISTRATION- IMPORTANT DATES

- January 11: Registration Information Video becomes available and Skyward online registration opens
- January 19/20: Q & A Zoom Sessions hosted by the MIHS Alpha Counselors
- January 21: Virtual Curriculum Fair hosted by MIHS Department Heads
- January 31: Skyward online registration closes

** More information about all of these events will be shared with 8th grade families in early January. **

GRATITUDE

The Sources of Strength virtual gratitude campaign was a huge success! Check out these links to see what kinds of things our IMS students are appreciative of this year.

[6th grade Gratitude Board](#)

[7th grade Gratitude Board](#)

[8th grade Gratitude Board](#)

It might be fun to review these links as a family, as a means to open up a dialogue about gratitude and its value as a daily practice. Check out this link for additional ideas related to gratitude activities.

[Holiday Gratitude Activities for Families](#)

CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR FAMILIES DURING BREAK

- What do you want to do when the pandemic is over?
- What important lessons have you learned since March and how do you plan to adjust your life when the pandemic ends?
- Is it better to give or receive? Why?
- What are some ways, we as a family, can give back to our community this holiday season?

ANOTHER IDEA FOR FAMILY FUN

This was shared with students on Schoology, but we thought it might be fun to include here too. Good luck and have a wonderful winter break! SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!!!!

Winter BINGO

TRY OUT A NEW RECIPE	BUNDLE UP & TAKE A WALK OUTSIDE	MAKE A WARM BEVERAGE FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE	GIVE YOURSELF ONE NIGHT OF QUIET	DONATE FOOD OR CLOTHING TO A LOCAL CHARITY
JOURNAL FOR TEN MINUTES	CREATE A CALM SPACE WITH CANDLES, MUSIC, ETC.	DO 25 RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS	ASK A FRIEND HOW THEY'RE DOING AND REALLY LISTEN	LEARN HOW TO SAY, "HAPPY HOLIDAYS" IN THREE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES
SET A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION THAT FOCUSES ON STRENGTH	BAKE COOKIES FOR A NEIGHBOR	PUT ON FUZZY SOCKS	MAKE A HOMEMADE GIFT FOR A FRIEND	CREATE A NEW FAMILY OR FRIEND TRADITION
MAKE A PILLOW FORT	TEST OUT COCOA & CIDER RECIPES	TAKE A BREAK FROM SCREENS	VOLUNTEER AT A LOCAL PET SHELTER	CREATE A WINTER FEEL-GOOD PLAYLIST
MAKE PAPER SNOW FLAKES	WRITE LETTERS OF GRATITUDE TO THREE PEOPLE WHO GIVE YOU STRENGTH	COZY UP WITH A GOOD BOOK	HELP OUT A NEIGHBOR	HOST A VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEAL WITH YOUR FAMILY OF CHOICE