

# COUNSELOR CONNECTION

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## SPRINGING FORWARD



As our second trimester comes to a close, we look forward to spring and the home stretch of the school year. In this edition of our newsletter, we are excited to introduce to you our newest team member, Cara Graham. Cara has been hired by MIYFS to join our team as a full time school-based therapist. With the addition of another mental health practitioner, we are eager to expand our services and enhance avenues of support across our school community. Speaking of support, it's registration time and we need parental support in helping get our rising 7th and 8th graders ready for next year. Look out for more information, coming home with your student next week. Lastly, we wanted to share a mindful technique to help your student recognize that they are more than their emotions. We all know adolescence can be a bumpy ride, but in the PNW, we hope you will embrace the rain and remember that your IMS counseling team is here to support our students through all kinds of weather!

## SPOTLIGHT on CARA GRAHAM: MIYFS Therapist

Cara Graham is grateful to be joining the team at Islander Middle School as a full-time Mercer Island Youth & Family Services school-based therapist! Cara is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Child Mental Health Specialist who has enjoyed working with children, teens, and families for 20+ years. When not at IMS, Cara can be found running around with (or, trying to find ways to rest from) three active kids and two 80-pound dogs. She enjoys traveling, sailing, creative art/projects, apocalypse movies, and has a useless talent of being able to identify any radio song from the '70s, '80s, and '90s from a few notes, but only when not put on the spot to do so.



## 7th & 8th GRADE REGISTRATION



All our current 6th and 7th grade students are going to start registering for their electives for next school year on **March 20th**. Students will be given a packet in their Gator Time class with all the important dates, elective information, a registration worksheet and directions on how to register in Skyward. Students must BOTH register in Skyward and turn in their signed worksheet to their Gator Time teacher by **Monday, April 3rd**. It's important to note that registration is only available in the student's Skyward login, not the parent login. Please watch all the informational videos available on the registration website.

## LET IT RAIN!

We've all had an experience when someone you know is upset about something and you want them to FEEL BETTER....like, now! So, you say something like: "It will be okay," "At least it wasn't worse....," or, "You'll feel better tomorrow." And maybe you're right....So why aren't they smiling and calmly thanking you for those wise words?

The initial response to uncomfortable and difficult emotions is to suppress them or avoid them. Sometimes we minimize them. And sometimes we feed them. **Emotions are powerful communicators, if we pause and listen.** Being aware and present in this moment is a mindful practice and a skill that can be exercised by remembering the acronym: **RAIN**. We are, after all, in the Pacific Northwest! Where many people try to avoid the rain or hide from it, or use it as an excuse, we Pacific Northwesterners accept that rain can simply just be our stylist in determining which shoes to wear :)

You are not your emotions. Through **R**ecognizing the emotion, we establish that our subconscious is trying to tell us something. By **A**ccepting the emotion fully, we open ourselves to understanding. By **I**nvestigating the emotion, we learn what it has to say. **N**on-identification falls naturally from this. As the emotion passes, we are still here, the emotion is not.



## PARENT EDGE UPDATES AND INFORMATION

- ✦ We welcome the opportunity to partner with our Parent community. As such, knowing that the last Parent Edge event (**The Self Driven Child**) was a big success, we wanted to share a link to the **RECORDED VIDEO** session in case you missed it. If you can make time to watch, we think you'll learn some useful strategies to support your middle school student. Visit <http://www.miparentedge.org/> to access the recording.
- ✦ **COMING SOON: Cannabis- the Role Parents and Community in Prevention.** March 30 @ 7pm on zoom. Visit the Parent Edge website for more information or see flyer attached to our email.
- ✦ **SUPPORT GROUP OPPORTUNITY: Guiding Good Choices-** A program to help guide preteen and teen behavior and decision making. For parents of 6th and 7th graders. 5 week series on Zoom. Mondays from 6:30-8:30pm, April 17-May 15th. Free. Register @ [www.MIHealthYouth.com](http://www.MIHealthYouth.com).

## LOOKING AHEAD

Standardized testing time is coming. Please be mindful of the following dates and do your best to ensure that your student is in attendance on these testing dates.

- ✦ SBAC testings will take place on **May 8,9,11,12**
- ✦ 8th grade WCAS **May 16-17** (in Science class)