



Family Partnership Charter School Sponsors 'Steps to Your Future'

with Mari Jo Parks, M.Ed., Career & College Coach



This week's Steps to the Future I thought would be a good time to check in and see how you were doing?

Special Note: I am available through your allotment to work with you/your student. E-mail me at future.inc1@gmail.com or text me at (907) 354-5405 to set up a time to talk.

Parents and students have been reaching out to me asking how they should deal with college applications, financial aid and scholarships. Here is some of my advice...

1. Are you keeping a Log Book or Journal
 - Now more than ever you want to document when you contacted people and what the subject was that you were dealing with. Be sure to put the date, the person you are contacting and the format you used to contact them (phone, e-mail, letter). In a time of mass change and chaos many things do not get done, responses are slow and confusion can create problems.
 - If you have been keeping the Log Book go back and review it. What needs to be readdressed? Who do you need to reach out to again?
2. College Applications and Information
 - How many colleges have you applied to? What have your results been?
 - If you are still applying to colleges keep applying. Pay attention to due dates and any new information that may be changing due to the closure of the school.
 - If you have been accepted to the college or colleges and are not sure which one you actually want to attend there are a few things you could be looking at. Contact me for the list of things to be considering to help make your final decision.
 - Now is a good time to be paying attention to how the school is responding to the pandemic. Go to their website and read what is happening. Pay attention to how they are helping students' deal with the ever constant change.
3. Are you checking your e-mails? Colleges are staying in touch via e-mail so do not miss important information. Create an e-mail folder to put the information in one place so you can locate it later.
4. Have you applied to the FAFSA? Do this as soon as possible and share the results with the schools you are applying to. Check your e-mail for your Estimated Family Contribution – EFC.
5. How are your Grades??? Grades continue to matter and will be a factor in your application but colleges know how hard learning is right now. Many colleges will ask you how Covid 19 affected your grades. Be ready to tell them. One of my students just got accepted to her college of choice and is offered a \$10,000 for the 4 years, in spite of the fact that her grade point average has been hurt by the distance learning.
6. If you have applied to a college there is a good chance you have received a Financial Aid package or offer. It will come to you through your e-mail. Make a copy of it and put it in your records. You will compare it to other offers. And if it is not enough you will be able to ask for more assistance in the spring. If your family is experiencing financial hardship you need to document your family's dates of unemployment, or other factors that have impacted you as a family.
7. Scholarships will be available for application starting in January. I will be dedicating a lot of my future newsletters to scholarship information. In the meantime, if you have extra time over the break you could start writing your essays. Here are some essay prompts. They should be between 300 and 500 words. I am available to help with essays!

Essay Prompts:

- Write a one- page essay about your educational and career goals. What do you want to do with your life?
- How have your personal experiences made you who you are today?
- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- How have your personal experiences made you who you are today?
- Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

If you are not sure what you want to do next year, that is understandable. Your options are expanding not being limited. You have time to explore.

Are you able to stay positive? Here are some things you can do to stay positive:

- Read good books. There are some great recommendation on the internet.
- Listen to music.
- Learn to cook or draw or sew or build something or play music...
- Decide on a subject and research it, learn about it, enjoy it. Learning Origami could be fun!
- Reach out to someone - an elderly person, or a child or a loved one and spend time with them via Facetime or Zoom or even a phone call. Read them a story, share pictures, draw together, etc.
- Teach someone via the internet or phone.
 - An example my 16-year-old neighbor is teaching me how to use Instagram (We have had a few laughs over my learning curve.)

Is a Gap Year a good idea? I think a Gap Year can be very beneficial if done with a purpose. To not go to school and work at the local store does not provide much learning. But working at the store to learn about business management, logistics, teamwork, and much more is excellent. I can help you look at your options and reasons to use a Gap Year to better prepare you for your future.

Do not forget I am available and would like to hear from you. What topics would you like me to be addressing?

Have a good week!!! Mari Jo