



Family Partnership Charter School Sponsors
'Steps to Your Future'
with Mari Jo Parks, M.Ed., Career & College Coach



A Special Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

I have talked with numerous parents this week about the anxiety they are feeling and how overwhelming the last few months and year have been. The main question is 'How Do We Help Our High Schooler?'" There are no simple answers and each student and family is different but here are some of my thoughts and those of others who have been down this path.

First, STOP Stressing!!! I know that is easier said than done but you must find ways to relax and enjoy this time together. The reality is that stressing is not changing anything. In fact, it might be getting in the way. So, as Spring arrives think of ways to change it up. Go for walks, read a book, daydream!!! Most of all hug yourself and your high school student!!! One parent I worked with started a hug a day with her teen last week and she said it was like putting herself back together and being reconnected.

Second, change your perspective. So many parents are looking at all the things that have not been done and forget to appreciate all the things that have been done. Step back a moment and appreciate how many things your teen has handled over the past year. If you are still on speaking terms, then you have done a GREAT job!!! Ask a friend how they see your teen, you maybe be surprised how impressed they are with them. And remember they are impressive because of you!!!

Third, stop comparing your teen to others. Each teen is on their own path and development. What is right for one person is not right for the other. Your teen is going to live to be over 100, they will have lots of time to find themselves and accomplish so many wonderful things.

Fourth, write notes. Write your high schooler short notes. Leave a note on their favorite food, on the car steering wheel, on the mirror, even in their sock drawer. Do not do them all at once but occasionally. They may think it is corny but in the long run they will like them. It really made a difference with my own sons.

Fifth, this is a good time to do a reflection journal of your thoughts. Keep track of the good moments, record some of the struggles and reflect on your child's amazements!!! We can get so caught up in the day to day that we forget to see the big picture. Remember you have done a wonderful job helping your child get to this point. Try to see the golden moments. A reflection journal is also a way to express your frustrations without saying them out loud. One mom said it really helped her get through some intense times with her teen.

Sixth, remember you are not alone. Parents around the world are going through similar things. Reach out and talk with your friends, family, or someone in your circle that will listen. You don't need answers your just need someone to listen. Your pet might even be that perfect listener!

Family Partnership wants you to know you are not alone!!! They have contracted with me to assist through these tough times. We continue to offer seminars and to give you important information on financial aid, college selection, high school opportunities and more.

In the past month in only three hours I helped a senior who was 'stuck' planning his future realize he did want to go to college. I assisted him in the section of 3 schools and the application. He is relieved and feeling positive about the future. Another student worked with me to come up with an enrichment plan for the summer that will help him when he applies to college. And a third client realized she just want to work next year so she is looking for short term training that will lead to a job that will give her opportunities for future advancement.

Again, know that you are not alone! Family Partnership and I are here for you. Please reach out and let us know how we can help.

I hope this helped and that you have a great week! *Mari Jo*