



Thursday Notes Message Archive

March 19, 2020

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

Dear Convent & Stuart Hall Community,

I hope you all have had a good start to our virtual learning program. I am very grateful to our faculty and staff who have embraced our new remote design and environment, and are learning new electronic delivery systems and holding engaging classes throughout the day with their students. It has been incredibly comforting to see the students in class again, albeit in a different setting.

I want to thank all who helped me in the design process; many hours of iterative and dynamic design led us to where we are today. Please know we intend to continue to iterate and enhance the learning experience for our students, as we learn each day how we can further maximize this virtual experience for our students and families.

I hope this Thursday Notes communication finds you well -- and for any members of your extended family or community needing our prayers, we offer them every day for the well-being of our community and the world.

Sincerely,
Ann Marie

A Message from Angela Taylor, Head of Convent Elementary

Dear Convent Elementary Families,

As our second day of remote/distance learning is still in progress, I am finding myself becoming more comfortable with our new reality. My husband and I have begun to get into a bit of a routine. After our morning run and breakfast, Shaw hunkers down to work in the living room and I have staked out a perch in an upstairs room with a window seat with two walls of windows.

From my new vantage point, I can see and hear my neighbors with young children outside happily playing and going for walks. At the same time, I get to see and hear the happy and engaged faces and voices of our K-8 Convent Elementary students in our new Zoom classrooms. As I have walked the virtual "hallways" so far, I have seen our youngest learners doing yoga, morning meeting, calendar time, spelling, read-a-louds, math, Spanish and PE. Our older students are immersed in learning about everything from algebraic equations to the Gilded Age to writing persuasive essays.

It would be quite tempting to think that we have seamlessly been able to pick up where we left off last week. But, that would be inaccurate. This new school experience has required all of us to engage in a community-wide design thinking process. Our design question has been, “How might we create a virtual school experience that is developmentally appropriate for all of our students K–12 that provides for student engagement, deep learning and connection?” I would like to underscore that we have asked a lot of our faculty, students and all of you in this transition. Please be patient with us and one another. Daily, hourly and truly by the minute, we are taking risks, trying new tools/platforms and gathering feedback. We are then taking that feedback and honing, refining and trying again.

Thank you, as always, for your partnership. With this new arrangement, our home/school collaboration is more important than ever because many of you are having the “opportunity” to be closer and more involved with your children’s education than at any other time since they started formal schooling. While supporting them, we are asking you to continue to allow us to stretch your children. They may be experiencing some initial frustration and we ask that you help them to lean in, trust the process and to work directly with the teacher.

We will continue to send Thursday Notes each week during our closure. Please continue to check [SFCorConnect](#) for school- and division-wide communication, and SeeSaw (Grades K–4) and Blackbaud (Grades 5–8) with your daughter(s) to keep up with classroom communication. Do not hesitate to reach out to the Convent Elementary office (415-292-3136) or to one of the administrative team members via email at any time.

Best,
Angela

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

Dear Stuart Hall for Boys Families,

I hope this note finds your family healthy and finding peace during this time of uncertainty. Our family is adjusting to sheltering in place and working and learning in the same space. This brings with it both opportunities and challenges, as I am sure you are finding in your own home. Our family conversations center on how we might give each other the support and space we need to make the most of our current circumstances. I encourage you to initiate/continue dialogue at home as together the adults and children recognize needs and requests during this adjustment period.

As we rolled out our remote learning platform over the last two days, we have found several ways in which teachers and students are able to connect similarly to the classroom environment. Likewise, we have identified challenges that require patience, flexibility and workarounds. Teachers are making adjustments daily to address these needs. I would like to take this opportunity to commend our faculty as well as our students and parents for the ways in which everyone has partnered to make this work.

We ask that you continue to support your son behind the scenes and empower him to engage, ask questions and reach out to teachers if clarification or additional support are needed. The Zoom sessions and Zoom office hours are offered to the students and should not include parent/teacher meetings or conferences. We ask parents in Grades K–4 to use SeeSaw (once fully up and running next week) to

communicate with teachers and prompt your son with questions to ask during Zoom sessions and open hours.

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Kind regards,
Kevin

A Message from Rachel Simpson, Head of Convent High School

I hope that you and your family are adjusting well to this strange new time of life:work adaptation. I feel deep gratitude for all -- faculty and students and parents -- as we incorporate school life into our home setting. Over the last two days, I have enjoyed dropping into class sessions to see how teachers and students are faring, and I am incredibly gratified to see our students and to hear their questions and the guidance of their instructors. At an end-of-day debrief last night, one of our faculty reflected she had been nervous about online delivery, but very early in the experience, realized “she was just teaching!”

As Ann Marie noted in her message, we will continue to build on this week’s launch, and look forward to continuing the design process to make this the best it can be for everyone. I hope that you are well and able to enjoy some bursts of fresh air as we shelter in place.

Please keep referring to [SFCorConnect](#) for updates and additionally you may call Jeanne Asdourian between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. (415-292-3122) with a question that isn’t housed on SFCorConnect. Jeanne will help locate the best person to answer.

I wish you all peace and rest and continued health. I leave you today with [the inspiration of this beautiful poem](#) that Dennis Estrada shared with faculty this week. Be well, and sending you my best,

Rachel

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

And so this interesting period continues. I have had the privilege of visiting our virtual classrooms these past two days, and while it is a tonic to see our students in little boxes on a screen (*Hollywood Squares!* *The Brady Bunch!*), I look forward to the day when we are back together again in person on campus.

As I learned about parthenogenesis in IB Biology today, I couldn’t help but think about how great it would be if we could clone the school community experience, too. While we are trying (Ms. MacGarva’s seniors have a theme day for each class ... tomorrow is “dress for an online job interview” theme), it is the nut that we will continue to try to crack ... the delivery of curriculum is looking pretty sound, because we have

strong teachers and we had a brief opportunity to plan. The community? Vamos a ver (“We shall see” in Spanish ... I’m getting quite a renaissance education thanks to Zoom).

Please keep referring to [SFCorConnect](#) for updates, and in the meantime, I invite you, when you have a moment of peace, to look [at this link to a lovely poem](#) by the late John O’Donohue. Dr. Ann Marie Krejcarek shared it with us this morning and it gave me some comfort; I pass it along with the hope that it does the same for you.