Happy Father's Day

Father! - to God himself we cannot give a holier name.
~William Wordsworth

We wish you a sunny, happy and blessed Father's Day on June 20th, from all the staff here at St. Teresa School!

Are You Moving?

We ask any family who will be moving out of the area for the 2021-2022 school year to contact the office. This helps us in the organization of classes for next year.

Your assistance with this information is greatly appreciated as school organization changes with enrolment.

Important Dates

Report Cards - Final Report Cards will be going home on Monday June 28th.

Last Day of School - is Tuesday June 29. The First day of school next year is Tuesday, September 7th at 8:35 a.m.
Grade 8 Graduation

Congratulations are extended to our students of the 2020-2021 graduating class!

Graduation will be virtually again this year. In attempts to keep it as special and memorable as possible, a pre-recorded graduation ceremony will be our format again this year. The pre-recorded Graduating "Ceremony" will be released on June 24 through Google Classroom at 6:00 pm. Please note there will not be an online video meet to replace the reception this year. Special Grad boxes are being created. These will be available for pick up on June 24th. We ask students not to open their boxes until the "ceremony" is released so that award winners will be surprised.

Best wishes are extended to our graduates as they continue their studies at High School.

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Confirmation

Unfortunately due to COVID protocols and the timing of reopening Confirmation for June 17th has been postponed to the fall. A date has not yet been selected.

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Umbrella Project

Congratulations to our May winners for Integrity. You did an outstanding job of modeling this skill. Students are taught to align their actions with their words and do what is right, even when no one is watching. It means being honest, living by a set of strong moral principles and treating others with care.

Our May winners are: Nethan, Lucas, Madison B., Ellie G., Michelle, Kayla H., Skyler, Liam, Lucy, Noah G., Emma H., Callie, Reid & Alex W.
Dear St. Teresa of Avila Families,

In the fall 2020, there was a merger of the Waterloo Region Catholic School Foundation Inc. and the Catholic Community Foundation of Waterloo Region. The new organization, The Catholic Community Foundation of Waterloo Region Inc (CCFOWR), has a mandate to support the Catholic community, with a continuing focus on Catholic schools and families. In response to the needs created by the year-long pandemic, the CCFOWR will be supporting school families through a gift card program.

These free gift cards are intended to help our school families during this difficult time. Nutrition For Learning has also donated some grocery gift cards to schools in order to help our local families. Please contact Mrs. Flynn at 519-669-8843. Requests of these cards will be kept confidential.

2020–2021 Yearbook

The school year of 2020-2021 has continued to be an interesting year with many changes. We have decided to continue with the yearbook this year as a way of capturing our history and making a time capsule that students can look back through when they are older.

If you are interested in sending a picture for the yearbook please send it to st.teresaelmira@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2021. By submitting a picture (JPEG) to this email there is assumed consent for us to use the picture in the yearbook. All pictures that are sent to this address will be deleted after the yearbook is complete. Submissions could include messages or well wishes, reflections, celebrations for a birthday, or even pictures of your favourite space during remote learning.

Once the yearbook is complete there will be an opportunity for families to purchase yearbooks on School Cash Online. We will be asking for a fall delivery date.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact either Amy Flynn at amy.flynn@wcdsb.ca or Jolene Lance at st.teresaelmira@gmail.com
Welcome to June and Mastery month in The Umbrella Project. Mastery is a great way to wrap up the year because it requires us to use many of the skills we have learned about over the year. Mastery is our ability to work towards excelling at something - our craft, our relationships, our jobs and many others. The early stages of mastery requires many of our Umbrella Skills to push through the boredom, fear, impatience and other difficult emotions of the learning journey. Over time, we build strength and confidence and are able to accomplish great things.

“Everyone holds his fortune in his own hands, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure. But it’s the same with that type of artistic activity as with all others: We are merely born with the capability to do it. The skill to mold the material into what we want must be learned and attentively cultivated.” — Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Help your child discover their natural inclinations and curiosities

The best masters start with a deep interest and curiosity in the area they are working towards mastering. The journey to mastery requires time, patience and overcoming obstacles so this interest (see intrinsic motivation skill tips) is paramount in persevering through the learning process. You may have a vision for your child but if this doesn’t align with their personal interests it is unlikely that they will go on to master this path while building their well-being. Trying to master something you don’t care about is arduous, requires lots of will power and depletes our energy and happiness.

When you start with your child’s natural interests, they are much more likely to engage with the process of learning and mastering their chosen activity. Start by helping your child notice the subjects they are most engaged in and the problems they most want to solve. Try to be specific when having these conversations ie. What unit in science did you like the most and why instead of what subject do you like... For example, this year my daughter noticed that she really loved learning about energy in science and is also concerned about the environment which led her to thinking about the jobs that might exist in sustainable energy. She is far from having to make these types of life decisions but reflecting on things that peak interest will help her engage and learn when opportunities present themselves.

Cultivating the capacity for uncertainty and resistance

We joke in our house that physical and mental discomfort is “iron body training”, strengthening and toughening our body and minds. While this is a funny frame we can put on difficulty there is a lot of science behind this idea. We aren’t going to feel great all the time. Difficult situations and feelings are a normal part of the package of being human.

When we seek only pleasure in life, we spend much of our time looking for ways to short-cut through or distract ourselves from anything difficult. Living with this mentality is actually doing ourselves quite a disservice as it is precisely the challenges we are avoiding that give us the “iron body” required to take on life challenges and mysteries on our path to mastery. These skills are critical for adapting to changes, learning from failure, tolerating boredom and pushing through to our goals and dreams. When we stay within the confines of easy and comfortable we quit easily and miss the chance to grow and expand.
Here are some common examples of iron body training to share with your children:
— Accepting boredom as part of the journey to mastery
— Feeling anxious about trying something new and doing it anyways
— Taking on a challenge when the outcome is uncertain
— Purposely facing small versions of your fears

There are so many ways we can encourage our children to face and adapt to the difficult and even see this as strength. Start by helping them expect these challenges along the way and explain how iron body training works. Then celebrate the power and strength that comes when they get through these tough spots. This will cultivate their capacity for overcoming uncertainty and set them on a trajectory towards mastery.

Use timed intervals of practice to improve mastery

In working towards mastering anything, deliberate focused practice plays a critical role. Robert Greene, world renown master in the subject of mastery, emphasizes this important idea:

“This process of hardwiring cannot occur if you are constantly distracted, moving from one task to another. In such a case, the neural pathways dedicated to this skill never get established; what you learn is too tenuous to remain rooted in the brain. It is better to dedicate two or three hours of intense focus to a skill than to spend eight hours of diffused concentration on it. You want to be as immediately present to what you are doing as possible.”

In a generation plagued with infinite distraction, how do we create space for focus and hard wiring of skills?

One great way to help children accomplish distraction free work is to have them work in manageable blocks with intentional rest in between. Start with 20 minute intervals of practice/work with 10 minute rests and adjust according to your child’s current capacity (maximum 1 hour of work before a break). Instead of a long and distracted work session, this will allow for shorter focused bursts of work with anticipated breaks in between… a much better strategy for learning.

Here are a few tips for creating focus:
— Set a timer for the work and rest intervals
— Turn off notifications on computers, set phones to airplane mode or put them in another room if your child has their own devices
— Encourage your child to get water, go pee or take care of any other distracting needs that may come up
— Use headphones if the environment is noisy
— Have your child get the work ready to go in advance so there is no set up prep
— Have your child plan what will happen in the rest intervals - ie. go outside, dance around the house, get a snack etc.

Teach your children to value focus and practice this skill regularly.
Want to learn more? You can watch this short video I recorded for you.
Encourage learning over proving yourself

One of the biggest mistakes we make in learning is to imagine we need to impress people and prove ourselves instead of being able to accept that we don’t know everything… That’s why we are learning. It is distracting and tiring to feel that we need to be constantly proving how much we know and undermines the actual learning process. Kids who feel this way are likely to quit at first sign of failure or when someone comes along who is more experienced as if that person or experience is a threat to their identity.

To help your children master skills with an open mind and humility, teach them “The Terrible 10 Rule”, which is as follows: expect the first 10 times you try something new to be terrible.

A simple but a clear message about expectations for the learning process. Why would we expect to be good at things we haven’t learned or practiced yet?

By setting our expectations of ourselves as absolute beginners it allows our egos the space to relax through the first few attempts at anything new. It also allows us to learn from those around us with more experience instead of finding ourselves in a mental competition for who is better. Explain to your children that time and experience are the critical ingredients to mastery, not some natural talent we are simply born with and ready to display on the first attempt.

I explain more in this summary video.

Until next time,
Dr. Jen, The Umbrella Project
May 19, 2021

Dear Parish Community,

We hope that this letter finds you safe and well. We know that this has been a trying time for you and your loved ones and we want you to know that you are in our thoughts and in our prayers.

We have been hearing that some people have been struggling with this third wave of the pandemic. We understand your frustration at this time as we are experiencing it as well with many of our normal faith celebrations having been suspended.

As our Easter Season is finishing with Pentecost, we can ask for God’s grace. As Christians we believe in the hope that was given to us at Easter. We believe that this hope will lead us to a time when we will again be able to gather as family, friends and church community.

Please know that if you have any pastoral needs that Father Peter is available. Please do not hesitate to contact Father at any time through the Parish Office at 519-669-3387 or by email at StTeresaofAvila.Elmira@rogers.com.

Know that you are all in our prayers and we look forward to seeing you face to face in the coming months.

With kind regards from the Parish Team and Parish Pastoral Council,

Father Peter Meyer
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