

May 29, 2020

Dear Parents,

We hope that this email finds you safe and well, and that your son's start to summer has been good thus far. It certainly has been a different start to the summer, as the change has felt less dramatic than usual, and your children may well be missing the structure and camaraderie of school more than they ordinarily do this early in the summer.

Academics

We are writing to you today in order to share with you some updates relative to our planning for the Fall. Please know that you will be hearing from us regularly throughout the summer as these plans evolve, and that we will be inviting your feedback along the way. For the past month, a committee of administrators and teachers has been meeting to plan for the start of school in August, based upon the latest guidelines we have received from the county and state, and our own thinking about how we can best deliver a high quality Jesuit education to your sons, while caring for him as an individual, and keeping everyone as safe as possible. On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, the entire faculty and staff met to talk about this thinking, and also to engage in professional development regarding what we have learned about online instruction, assuming that this will continue to be at least a part of how we teach for some portion of next year. It would be premature to announce any formal plans just yet - but know that our plan is to provide in-person instruction as much as we safely and reasonably can do this coming school year. We imagine at this time that there will be a blend of in-person and remote instruction next year, with students likely experiencing some of each most weeks, until such time as we are allowed to have everyone return to campus. As this is a dynamic situation, we will share more as we are able over time.

Beyond the Classroom

We understand that activities that occur outside the classroom are also incredibly important to your son's full-person education, and we are working just as hard to restore those activities when we are able! As you might have read in the news, some athletic activities are getting close to being able to resume, but they have not yet been approved. Know that our athletic department is tracking these developments carefully, and when the time is ready, they will have a robust approach and guidelines to how teams can safely return to conditioning, and eventually to play. Similarly, our other co-curricular programs are anxiously preparing for their return to working together, while simultaneously considering how they can maximize engagement with your sons during the "new normal" that we may experience in the Fall. We also know that summer is a time when many students like to work on their Christian Service requirements. We are working with those who oversee our service program in order to consider what opportunities and requirements will look like in the coming year, and will communicate more information with you about this soon. In the meantime, we encourage you to help your son think creatively about how he can be a man for and with others while he is sheltering in place. We'd love to hear your ideas!

Parenting While Sheltering in Place

We understand that this summer is unlike any we have experienced before. We wanted to share with you a couple of resources that we thought you might find of interest. First, [COMMONGROUND](#) is providing virtual events on June 4th and June 9th, the first of which is "Strategies for Coping with a Structure-Free Summer During the Pandemic" and the second of which is "Navigating Tech with Kids and Teens During COVID-19". As a reminder, all CommonGround events are free to you as Bellarmine parents.

Secondly, we wanted to remind you that [BELLARMINE SUMMER SCHOOL](#) is online this summer, and offers a wide array of opportunities to keep your children (summer school is co-ed, grades 1-12) engaged during the summer months. There are a great many enrichment courses, ranging from 1-6 weeks, that your children might enjoy.

Additionally, our library has put together reading suggestions for teens that you can **FIND HERE**.

Celebrating our Students!

We wanted to share with you the exciting news that, although they were not able to enter into an in-person competition, Bellarmine's robotics team, Team 254, won the very prestigious "Chairman's Award" (the highest honor given) at the Central Valley Regional Tournament this year. This is an award that ordinarily only goes to teams once, but this marks the third time that Bellarmine's team has been given this honor.

Below are examples of some of the amazing art that our students have created during this pandemic. The sculpture is by Samuel Avila-Vallejo '21. The middle picture is a self-portrait by Colin Richardson '20, and the picture of the graduate is by Iker Mendiburu Perez '22. These last two were the top vote-getters by their peers and faculty members for the final projects of the Photo 2 and Photo 1 courses.

We hope you are doing well and staying safe in these early days of summer, and look forward to our ongoing communication in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to either one of us at any time.

Sincerely,

Chris Meyercord
President

Kristina Luscher
Principal