

## Update Two- Friday July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

Greetings from St. Thomas More School,

We've just completed the first week of the Summer Academic Camp and I could not be more pleased with the progress of the students. During my talk to the students on opening day, I told them that we promise great grades to everyone 'if' they keep an open mind and let our system work for them. From all accounts, we're off to a great start.

Over the past few days, the campers have had many new experiences: Nightly Study Hall, Academics in the Summer, Inner Tubing, Kayaking, Canoeing, Ultimate Frisbee, Room Inspection and many others. Most students have found a lot of enjoyment on Gardner Lake... the water temperature is an amazing 79 degrees. Beach Volleyball has also been a favorite activity.

The nightly study hall is a new entity for most of the campers. The older campers seem to be adjusting nicely to the study hall and are finding ways to manage their time and complete their tasks. The younger campers are having a slower transition; having a little difficulty remaining focused the entire time.

In the classroom, our teachers have been covering a lot of content, while focusing on the necessary study/learning skills to help your son become an independent learner. School wide, our teachers are focusing on three main techniques. Power Note-Taking is an outlining strategy that is best utilized in previewing / reviewing a concept, section or chapter. K-W-L-+ is a metacognitive strategy that assesses 'what the student know', 'what the student wants to know', and 'what the student learned.' Finally, Author's Craft is a technique that helps the student understand 'how' to use a textbook. Besides these three main strategies, all teachers are employing various other techniques that create and active and engaging classroom.

On Wednesday June 30<sup>th</sup>, the camp went to play Laser Tag. I am not sure who had more fun- the campers or the staff. It was a great time all around. Sunday, the camp will be going to Six Flags New England; it has some of the most thrilling land and water rides on the East Coast. Next Wednesday, we will travel a short distance to Ocean Beach- a local beach in New London, CT. There, the campers will have the opportunity to use the water slides, swimming pool and arcade games.

Time is going to fly by. Progress Reports grades are due on July 13<sup>th</sup>. They will provide you/us with a snapshot of how your son is doing; however, our 'safety nets' are already active. Extra help is held daily and an additional study hall is available in the afternoon for students who fall behind.

For parents who are interested, our admissions office is still accepting applications for the fall. Financial aid is available, but it is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Over half of last year's summer academic students returned in the fall and all of them had outstanding school years. Please contact me if this is a consideration for you; as we can discuss the specific advantages as they relate to your son.

All faculty members have voicemail extensions. Please do not hesitate to contact your son's teachers / advisor at any time. Likewise, my lines of communication are always open. I look forward to an outstanding next few weeks and I will be back in touch next Friday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Viands". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "V".

Tim Viands, Director