

“More” Notes for Parents



**November 19, 2008
2nd Marking Period Progress Reports**

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at St. Thomas More School! We wish everyone a happy and festive holiday season.

From the Dean of Students Office:

We can tell winter is on its way! We've had nights in the low 20's and wind chills in the teens. The only thing we're missing is the snow.

This is the last mailing of 2008. Between now and the next mailing, your son will have had two vacations, concluded the second marking period, participated in Study Fest and studied for and take mid-term exams. The veteran students know all too well that time flies once the vacations begin. That said, it is very important for your son to remain focused and disciplined in his studies and decorum.

Vacations are a great opportunity to 'recharge' the batteries. It is important for your son to come back well-rested and not needing a vacation from a vacation. Although we want your son to relax and rest, there are some school-related tasks he can be working on...:

- All students have an English novel to read. Vacations are always a great time to catch up and/or read ahead in the novel.
- All post-graduates and seniors have college essays to write and applications to fill out. Have your son take some time over break to work on these items.
- International students should get in the habit of reading something in English everyday (newspaper, magazine, internet).

December is an exciting and busy time for our community. The students will be treated to a nice Christmas feast by the faculty. We will hold a student versus faculty basketball

game and alumni versus students hockey game. Fr. Gross is planning an enjoyable Christmas Celebration assembly and a tree-trimming night for the lads.

The new Wednesday schedule has been well-received by the students and faculty. It has allowed us time to create and implement clubs and have residential life and all-school meetings. The chess club is by far the most popular club; the students are enjoying the opportunity to beat Mr. Riggs and Mr. Schnaidt. The Presidential Election Discussion club has given way to the Social Movement Film Society. This club will examine social and political movements through the context of film. The club time has become a nice respite for everyone in the midst of a busy week.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason.

Sincerely,

Tim Viands, Dean of Students

Maura Howard, Assistant Dean

From the Academic Dean's Office:



“Family faces are magic mirrors. Looking at people who belong to us, we see the past, present, and future.”

~Gail Lumet Buckley

Heading into the holiday season is a time when academic performance may begin to slip for a variety of reasons. Reasons can range from procrastination, difficulty of work and the preparation for exams to continued adjustment to the school environment or the “vacation blues.”

The good news is that as of the 2nd Progress Report, we have more students on track to make the Honor Roll than we have had all year! I attribute this phenomenon to the students’ commitment to stay focused and their desire to have a successful school year. I also salute their teachers, advisors, coaches and dorm parents for setting high standards and providing even higher levels of support.

In spite of the success that your son has achieved, you may still observe some of the symptoms I mentioned earlier. In an effort to keep these symptoms from becoming larger issues, I offer some suggestions below that have proved helpful for me in the past.

- **Academic pressures may begin to build due to procrastination, increased complexity of work, and possible lack of confidence in ability.**
 - *Suggestion: Be supportive and remind the student of the faculty and staff who are available to help them daily. See the Student Handbook for specifics.*

- **Feelings of anxiety may increase because of feelings that he should have adjusted to the school environment by now.**
 - *Suggestion: Again, be supportive. Remind him of the campus resources which are listed in the Student Handbook. Share some of your struggles in adjusting to new situations. Being unsure or anxious is okay.*
- **Nervousness and or guilt may increase as semester examinations approach and papers are due. Remember that feeling?**
 - *Suggestion: Remember the pressures on students at this time of year. Everyone is expected to be carefree and happy, but this can also be a very stressful time. Tolerance for their irritability and letting them know you care can help both of you survive this end-of-a-semester period. Don't forget that nothing eases stress like 'doing something about it.' Your son has an STM Master Planner and he should have all of his long-term projects listed along with a plan of action for each project. If not, it provides a great bonding opportunity.*
- **Finally, be aware of the "vacation blues" where students may realize that the bonds between them and their friends at home have faded. They may not feel as though they fit anymore.**
 - *Suggestion: "Quick to listen and slow to speak" is a good rule of thumb. Be responsive to the child's possible feelings of shock, loss, mourning or denial. Even for young men, the question, "Where do I belong?" usually translates into, "Who really loves me for me?"*

I hope some of this is helpful. Most of all, I wish you a very enjoyable holiday season.

Sincerely,
Mr. Steven A. Davis, Academic Dean

From the School Counselor:

In the weeks since the beginning of the academic year, the entire Saint Thomas More community has been working extremely hard with academics and after school activities that include academics, sports and community programs. It was also during this time that many of our students received positive acknowledgement for their involvement in academics, athletics, and community related services. Our students did exceptionally well with all these commitments, especially our after school activities that included after school study hall, Peer-Tutoring, tennis, intramural sports, sailing, weight training, cross training, and a host of team sports such as cross country, football, and soccer. It was amazing and impressive to see outstanding sportsmanship, individual talents and overall great athleticism amongst our students. Also, with equal excitement, it was wonderful to see our students achieve academic success, with 120 out of 166 students making honor roll or better on the second quarter progress report. **GREAT JOB and CONGRATULATIONS!!!!**

The major focus of the school counselor's office is to provide sound guidance to assist students in maintaining an overall positive attitude both academically and socially. This idea is important in contributing to an individual's overall developmental well-being by

providing a positive space to talk, share and express their ideas, concerns and future endeavors. It is also during visits to my office that students have the opportunity to redirect their negative feelings and attitudes towards being positive and productive in the academic or social activities on campus. My thoughts and comments are mutual knowledge by other staff and most importantly our students, especially with 11 young men who were selected to be Resident Assistants. These young men have provided a great resource for the staff as well as other students for their words of encouragement, guidance and support. These young men have been insightful and proactive when handling dorm-related matters. I want to thank these young men: Wei-Chia Chen, Scott Delaney, Kojin Hoshiba, Sung Tae Kim, Kuan-Chun Lai, Sang-Jun Lee, Tae Ho Lee, Po-Cheng Lin, John Lyons, Remy Menard, Bryan Philippon, and Justin Thomas. Also, I want to acknowledge four young man who have proven their academic excellence and have chosen to assist other students by tutoring and mentoring fellow students who are struggling academically: Nick Fournier, Sung-Hun Kim, Sang-Jun Oh, and Jong-Seo Ki. Keeping students happy and productive are just a few good reasons why our students are successful. Our excellent teaching staff and supportive group of administrators all strive for academic excellence.

We can all take these great experiences and memories with us into the high holiday seasons to share during our family gatherings or during private conversations with our parents. It is for some people that these wonderful times provide a reason or a purpose that keep some people going from day to day. Included with all the holiday greetings and joy, there are a host of people who feel blue because of lack of family, parent or parents are deceased, chemical imbalance from the change in seasons or a host of other physical, emotional and mental health concerns. The

holiday season is a time of mixed emotions for many people. Ideally we think of these times as happy occasions and the most festive of times. But, in reality the few months between Thanksgiving and the New Year can be the most stressful, where we find ourselves, shopping for holiday gifts, preparing holiday meals, expecting family members to descend on one's household, traveling through long traffic lines or in busy airport terminals. I think we all get a good picture of this for most. And interestingly enough, this is just an adult's perspective; just imagine what our young people go through on a daily basis. Young people cope and handle life's stresses very differently. Stress not addressed properly may lead to various forms of depression. Depression is very different for young people than it is for adults.

Did you know that as many as one in thirty-three children have clinical depression and one in eight adolescents suffer or experience depression as reported by the Child Welfare League of America (2006)? In recent surveys, 29 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 have reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day out of a two or more week period during the year (Child Trends, 2006). These numbers reported continue to change as young people are expected to grow-up more quickly and are exposed to many socially compromising situations that rob them of their innocence. This is a volatile time in young people's lives where they are in a state of physical, emotional and mental flux as they develop into adulthood.

I hope you found this information insightful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions and/or concerns about your son.

Sincerely,
Mark Allen, School Counselor

From the School Chaplain:

The Big Brother Program is providing a great experience for both the St. Thomas More “big brothers” and the “little brothers” at the Oakdale Elementary School. There is a full contingent of 25 Chancellors participating in the program with a third going every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday!

We are delighted that there are eight students in this year’s Confirmation Class; a couple of them are also preparing for the Sacrament of Baptism. The class meets about every other week on Wednesday evening. Msgr. Thomas Bride, Vice General of the Diocese of Norwich, will officiate at the Confirmation service in the spring at St. Thomas More School. The Tuesday evening dorm Masses, which are held at the Chaplain’s house, provide the opportunity for a small group of students to take time to focus and reflect.

There will be two special assemblies in the weeks ahead. The annual Thanksgiving Service (November 20th at 9:40am) and the Christmas Service (December 17th at 9:40am) are wonderful celebrations in which the whole community gathers with song, prayer and special music. Our community has such great diversity and talent and these occasions provide the opportunity to focus and celebrate these gifts. On Monday December 8th, at 9:40am, there will be a Mass to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. To mark the beginning of the Advent Season there will be a “Christmas Tree Trimming” on Wednesday December 3rd, at 6:00pm. All are most welcome to join us for these special celebrations.

Sincerely,
Fr. Richard Gross, SJ

Parents of Seniors & Post-Graduates:

Just prior to vacation, your son received his access code to the school’s college placement website. Mr. Quinn and Mr. Riggs have asked the students to explore the website over vacation. The website offers valuable resources and aids in the college placement process. Please contact Mr. Quinn (jquinn@stmct.org) or Mr. Riggs (driggs@stmct.org) with any questions on this new web-based application.

Upcoming Events & Dates:

- November 30th- Thanksgiving Break Ends @ 7:00pm
- December 6th- SAT Testing @ STM
- December 16th- Christmas Dinner for Students
- December 17th- Christmas Program @ 9:40am

- December 18th- Faculty vs. Students Basketball Game
- December 18th- Alumni vs. Students Hockey Game
- December 19th- Christmas Break begins @ 11:30am
- January 4th, 2009- Christmas Break Ends @ 7:00pm

Athletic Team News:

Varsity Ice Hockey:

The Ice hockey team has worked hard during the fall season to get themselves in shape for the upcoming season. The team has many new faces that will help lead the Chancellors in a tough New England Prep Division II schedule. Chuck Shenberger and Kyle Quinn will look to lead the Chancellors up front on offense. Returning starters Remy Menard, Bryan Philippon, Joe Cardarelli and Mark Brothers will bring much needed experience and familiarity with the schedule and team expectations. Defensively, Nick Fournier should bring some stability at the blue line. In-between the pipes this year is Paul Knudsen who has made a nice transition into the starting role and will be looked upon to grow and mature as a first time starter. Other newcomers who should add depth and youth to the lineup include Taylor Penman, Mike Cowee, Tom Kooris, and Chase Penman. Please feel free to contact me at bcolumbus@stmct.org.

Post-Graduate Basketball:

The post graduate basketball team once again has a competitive schedule. They will be competing in five showcases, two tournaments, while also playing twelve league games. The team, comprised of fourteen talented players, should all see playing time this season. The Chancellors do not have the explosive talent as some of the most recent teams, but will make up for it with strong team chemistry, defense, and a positive attitude. Thirteen of the fourteen players started the year strong by achieving academic honor roll in the first quarter. Coach Jere Quinn begins his 31st season at Saint Thomas More and is excited about this year's talent. Joining him on the staff are veteran coaches Tom Alquist and Ron Schlageter, and first year coach Matt Quinn. Matt returns to his alma-mater after graduating from Bucknell University four years ago. The team is hoping for strong support from students, faculty, and alumni during the upcoming season. Please feel free to contact me at mquinn@stmct.org.

Important home dates: Peace-Players International Showcase (Dec. 5th and 6th) and Founder's Tournament (Jan. 16th and 17th).

Varsity Basketball:

The Varsity basketball team has been selected and is off and running!! Returning players Justin Thomas, Collin Foster, Jelini Giddings, and Ian Murray will look to lead the team to another finals in the improved SENE conference. A great crop of newcomers, including Kevin Brown, Zachary Pierce, Jonathan Louis and Jabbare Benford will add a new look the team hasn't had in three years, a true point guard and three big men. With this extra size and leadership the team will look to rebound from a disappointing year when the team underachieved during the 07-08 season only winning 14 games. Other players who will also contribute are Bilal Pankey, Andrew Lai, Da'Quan Grant, Justin

Rankowitz, Lee Grey, and Bernard Bennett. Please feel free to contact me at jhastings@stmct.org.

Junior Varsity Basketball:

The Chancellor's JV basketball team has begun to bond well over the first week of practice. At the center of the team is a strong group of returning players and upperclassmen who will provide the team with leadership and experience. This core is combined with an infusion of athletic and talented young players to create a JV squad with the potential to do very well this season. The season kicks off on December 3rd at 3:30pm with a home game against the Putnam Science Academy. Please feel free to contact me at lhaman@stmct.org.

Thirds Basketball:

The boys certainly have been busy since the start of the season. Over the course of the first weeks of the season we have been working hard on improving basic skills, the fundamentals of the game and understanding different basketball terminology. The theme of this season is coming together and becoming a family. In the coming months I look forward to our team's success. Our season's tip-off is December 8th. I look forward to hopefully seeing you at some of our games. Please feel free to contact me at ejelani@stmct.org.

Judo:

The judo team is looking at what could be a very promising season with all the members of the spring 2008 team returning. The addition of George Shaw and James McDowell adds talent and enthusiasm to the group. Currently, several scrimmages and a local tournament are scheduled this winter. Please feel free to contact me at ptar@stmct.org.

STM on the Web:

Please visit www.stmct.org to find out more information about your son's experience. The school's website features updated athletic, academic and residential life information. Under the PARENT & STUDENT portal, parents will find a detailed school calendar, school news, dining hall menus and nutritional information, special events, and the athlete of the week announcement.

Contacting Faculty and Staff:

Every faculty and staff member has an email address and voicemail extension. Links to all email addresses can be found on our website- www.stmct.org. Feel free to contact your son's teachers, coaches, dorm parents and advisor.



Enclosed with this mailing you will find....:

- Your son's second marking period progress report and comments from his teachers.
- Supplement from the Health Office

Supplement from the Health Office

Hello, I hope everyone has a restful and happy Thanksgiving. The boys have been talking about getting home, seeing their families and reconnecting with old friends. I am hopeful that they return to school rejuvenated and ready for the second half of the second quarter of school. The flu shots have been completed and I am hoping that we stay ahead of winter colds here on campus. I have found a wonderful summary of health tips for the winter that I would like to share with you.

The reference for the information below is:

Illinois Department of Public Health
535 West Jefferson Street
Springfield, Illinois 62761
Phone 217-782-4977

WINTER HEALTH TIPS

The mention of winter evokes images of sparkling snowflakes and skaters gracefully gliding across the ice. But winter can also be a time of illness and injury, if people fail to take adequate health and safety precautions.

Colds

More than 100 viruses can cause colds, the world's most common illness, so few people escape being exposed to at least one of them. In the United States, most people average about three colds every year.

Once it enters the body through the nose or throat, the cold virus begins to multiply, causing any of a number of symptoms: sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, aches and pains, mild fever, nasal congestion and coughing. A cold usually lasts a week or two.

The best way to treat a cold is to take a mild pain reliever, avoid unnecessary activity, get as much bed rest as possible and drink plenty of fluids, especially fruit juices. Over-the-counter cough and cold remedies may relieve some of the symptoms, but they will not prevent, cure or even shorten the course of the illness.

While there is no vaccine to protect you from catching a cold, there are ways to lessen your chances of coming down with the illness. Keep up your natural resistance through good nutrition and getting enough sleep and exercise. Turn your thermostat down and keep the humidity up in your home. Dry air dries out the mucous membranes in your nose and throat and causes them to crack, creating a place where cold viruses can enter your body. Avoid direct contact with those who have colds and wash your hands frequently.

Influenza

A contagious respiratory infection, influenza is not a serious health threat for most people. However, for the elderly or those who have a chronic health problem, influenza can result in serious complications, such as pneumonia.

Symptoms of the flu usually develop suddenly, about three days after being exposed to the virus. They include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, and soreness and aching in the back, arms and legs. Although these are similar to those caused by cold viruses, flu symptoms tend to be more severe and to last longer. Abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhea symptoms of what is commonly called stomach or intestinal flu do not accompany influenza.

The flu is highly contagious and, if it occurs in your family or community, there is no practical way to avoid exposure to the virus. Bed rest, a mild pain reliever and lots of fluids are the best treatment. (**Caution:** Unless advised by a physician, a child or teenager with a flu-like illness should not take aspirin. Its use in the presence of a flu infection is linked with an increased risk of Reye syndrome. Instead use another mild pain reliever that does not contain aspirin.) **Antibiotics are not effective against flu viruses.**

Flu vaccines, while not always effective in preventing the illness, do reduce the severity of the symptoms and protect against complications that could develop. The shots are strongly recommended for persons 65 years of age and older and those who suffer from such chronic health problems as heart disease, respiratory problems, renal disease, diabetes, anemia or any disease that weakens the body's immune system. Infants, children and young people up to 18 years of age who are receiving long-term treatment with aspirin should also get a flu shot. Persons allergic to eggs or who have a high fever, however, should avoid or postpone getting a flu shot.

Because influenza vaccine is only effective for one year and viruses vary from year to year, it is necessary to get a flu shot every year. In Illinois, the flu season usually begins in November and lasts until around the middle of April. If you plan to get a flu shot do so early since it takes about two weeks to develop full immunity. However, even a shot in January may protect against a late winter outbreak.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia a drop in body temperature to 95 degrees or less can be fatal if not detected promptly and treated properly. In the United States, about 700 deaths occur each year from hypothermia.

While hypothermia can happen to anyone, the elderly run the highest risk because their bodies often do not adjust to changes in temperature quickly and they may be unaware that they are gradually getting colder. The condition usually develops over a period of time, anywhere from a few days to several weeks, and even mildly cool indoor temperatures of 60 to 65 degrees can trigger it. If you have elderly relatives or friends

who live alone, encourage them to set their thermostats above 65 degrees to avoid hypothermia.

When the body temperature drops, the blood vessels near the surface of the body narrow to reduce heat loss. Muscles begin to tighten to make heat. If the body temperature continues to drop, the person will begin to shiver. The shivering continues until the temperature drops to about 90 degrees. Temperatures below 90 degrees create a life-threatening situation.

Signs of hypothermia include forgetfulness, drowsiness, slurred speech, and change in appearance (e.g., puffy face), weak pulse, slow heartbeat, and very slow and shallow breathing. If the body temperature drops to or below 86 degrees, a person may slip into a coma or have a death-like appearance.

If you notice these symptoms in a person, take his or her temperature. If it is 95 degrees or below, call a doctor or ambulance or take the victim directly to a hospital. To prevent further heat loss, wrap the patient in a warm blanket. A hot water bottle or electric heating pad (set on low) can be applied to the person's stomach. If the victim is alert, give small quantities of warm food or drink.

There are several things you should not do to a hypothermia victim. Do not give alcoholic beverages. Do not give a hot shower or bath, since it could cause shock. Generally, do not try to treat hypothermia at home. The condition should be treated in a hospital.

Frostbite

The parts of the body most affected by frostbite are exposed areas of the face (cheeks, nose, chin, and forehead), the ears, wrists, hands and feet. Frostbitten skin is whitish and stiff and feels numb rather than painful. When spending time outdoors during cold weather, be alert for signs of frostbite and, if you notice any, take immediate action.

To treat frostbite, warm the affected part of the body gradually. Wrap the area in blankets, sweaters, coats, etc. If no warm wrappings are available, place frostbitten hands under the armpits or use your body to cover the affected area. Seek medical attention immediately.

Do not rub frostbitten areas; the friction can damage the tissue. Do not apply snow to frostbitten areas. Because its temperature is below freezing, snow will aggravate the condition.

As always if you have any comments or questions on the information I have provided do not hesitate to contact me at school 860-859-1900 ext. 136 or via email lcole@stmct.org .

Sincerely,
Lynn Cole, RN