



School Counseling Newsletter

Restructure of STCS' Counseling Department

It is hard to believe that we have already begun our second trimester of the 2022-2023 school year. Time has flown and we are very busy working to make this year great and successful for all of our students.

In an effort to dedicate more time and attention to the whole student body, STCS has hired a second full time school counselor for the Middle School, Mrs. Jocelyn (Joy) Elagio. Together, we work as a team to support the social-emotional development of our students social-emotional and academic development. Mrs. Elagio has been a great addition to our department and we encourage all Middle School parents and students to reach out to her with any questions or concerns.

Welcome to STCS Mrs. Elagio!

Elementary School Counseling lessons

I have had a busy and productive first trimester of lessons with all grades K-5.

- **Kindergarteners** have had lessons on the role of a school counselor, personal space, and general expected behaviors in school. My lessons covering social emotional competencies of self and social awareness have addressed topics about the importance of being aware of our own emotions and those of others around us. We will keep talking about these important life and social emotional skills that are fundamental for interpersonal relationships at all ages. Listening skills and whole body listening are also topics that we have addressed with Kindergarten and will continue to teach using different scenarios and strategies.
- **First grade:** We have focused more on friendships founded on our faith. During our most recent lesson, the students were able to learn the different characteristics they look for in a friendship, and what they can also offer back to their friends. They worked on a "Friendship Soup" with delicious "ingredients" like love, honesty, joy, helpfulness, trust, respect, etc.
- **Second graders** have had practice on "filling each others' buckets" with kind words of encouragement for each other. We have addressed the uniqueness of each child of God and how we need to see and treat everyone with respect and compassion.
- **Third grade** has been focusing on our virtues as the most important habits that every child of God should practice. We will start to talk about bullying during the second trimester. The students will be able to look at a situation from the points of view of the target, bystander and bully through the reading and discussion of a great series of books that address this universal and critical topic in schools.
- **Fourth graders** have been focusing on community, inclusion and exclusion from the stand point of our Catholic faith. They viewed Dr. Seuss' video of *The Sneetches* and establish parallels with the story *The Stonecutter*, a tale that talks about a man in search of a "better life", only to realize that the life given to him by God, is the perfect life for him.
- **Fifth graders** enjoyed the reading and discussion of a fable about friendship, name calling and forgiveness.
- Both, **fourth and fifth grade**, watched a movie about bullying in schools that we will discuss in details during our next two lessons. They will also learn the difference between the concepts "mean, rude and bully", as well as "tattling vs reporting". One of the main goals of this lesson is to empower our students to responsibly report bullying, mean and rude behaviors when they see them.

Counseling Team:

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More from Ms. Figueroa:

As always, I see students in my office when the student requests to see me or if referred by a parent, teacher or administrator. Parents are always welcomed to make an appointment for consultation regarding academics, behavior at school or home, and any other concerns regarding the student. I also visit the classrooms to offer support when needed. For more detailed information on the school counseling services at STCS and to view some resources for parents, please visit the Counseling Services page in the school website.

*God bless,
Elsa*



Your New Middle School Counselor...at your service!

I would like to extend my warm hello to all our new and returning STCS students and families and to thank everybody as well for welcoming me as the new STCS Middle School Counselor.

Time flies so fast and first trimester is already over. I have been giving classroom lessons with the middle school students during their Religion class teaching ***Social Emotional Learning***. I started my lesson with the ***Getting to Know You*** and introduce the ***Social Emotional Learning*** and it's ***5 competencies aligned with our Catholic Identity by including lessons about the 10 Commandments of God and Virtues***. In October, I presented the first competency of Social Emotional Learning, ***the SELF-AWARENESS***. We discussed on the importance of ***Identifying One's Emotions and how we can process them properly***, The middle school students enjoyed the activity about ***"How I See Myself, How Others See Me"*** because they were able to rediscover themselves. I also give short presentations on ***Empathy, Inclusion, and Friendship*** giving more attention to the 6th graders because of their transitioning from elementary to middle school. ***SELF-MANAGEMENT***, the 2nd SEL competency was also introduced to the 6th & 7th grade students last November. It will be presented to the 8th graders sometime in January. Other activities such as ***How to start a Conversation***, and ***All about Perspective*** were also given to the 6th grade students. ***Individual Counseling*** is ongoing for all middle school students while ***Individual Check-Ins are available if needed***. ***Group counseling*** and ***mediation/intervention*** are administered through referrals from the teachers and administration.

My office is strategically located in the Elementary wing, in front of Room #206 (4A) and in between Room #205 (4B) and Room #211 (K-5 Science Lab), away from the hustles of the "on-looker" students while giving services to the middle school students.

I invite you to visit our School Counselor Services page found on our STCS website for more information. I will be posting relevant topics and lessons that can assist our students in making wise decisions.



"A word, a kindly smile, will often suffice to gladden a wounded and sorrowful heart."

From St. Theresa's spiritual autobiography, "Story of a Soul"