



BAYPORT BLUE-POINT DISTRICT COUNSELING NEWSLETTER



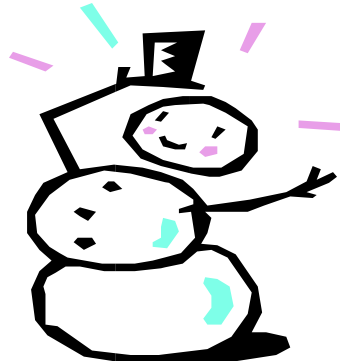
DECEMBER 2010

Greetings from the Counseling Department

Dear Community,

We want to wish all a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season!

The Counseling Center has been extremely busy processing college applications. As you may be aware, with the coming of the electronic application, students are applying to more colleges than in years past. This fact is not only a Bayport statistic but a national one as well. With that said, we caution all students to be extremely careful on how many applications they send out. We would like them to limit the number to only those that they consider 1st choices. In other words, they would not mind going to any other of the schools they applied to. Many times, students will apply blindly and then decide to visit or do more investigation about the college. We discourage this course of action. First of all, there is an application fee in most cases that averages around \$50. That amount of money spent on dare is not a wise investment. In addition, colleges want to know of the student's genuine



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!

interest in their institution. You may have noticed on some applications, there is a section that asks students where else they have applied. This is for the college to ascertain in some cases, the real interest of the student in their institution. They will also check to see that students have visited their institution, answered e-mails or made contact with admissions or the state college representative. Simply, they need to know if the student really wants to enroll. A happy student's decision is a better student on campus. In other words, they want to make sure they are making a good investment.

On another matter, when your children return

from the winter break they will be meeting with their counselor, individually, to plan their next year's schedule. Shortly, the Course Offerings Guide will be on the district website. We will not be mailing the books home this year. We would ask that you spend part of the winter break with your child exploring elective courses, as well as those that are needed for graduation. Your interest in their course selections gives them confidence that they are on the right track. If we may suggest, please have your child understand that challenging courses best prepare them for college work. The more they do now the easier it will be in the future. Unfortunately, there are no short cuts. Please be aware that colleges are looking at students carefully. Those that demonstrate mastery (85 or better in a class) are the ones they will pursue. If your child is able to attain that mark, he/she should be held to that standard.

Again, we wish you a Happy Holiday and a great New Year!!!!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST...

- PSAT Results will be handed out before winter break
- Every student that is planning on attending college in the fall, should apply to at least one school prior to break
- Don't forget to send all test scores to colleges prior to the break
- Mark your calendar—**Financial Aid Night** is at the high school on January 13th.
- Holidays can be stressful. Counselors are here if you need to speak with one of us.
- The Long Island food pantries need your help around the holidays, this year more than ever.



Character Building

Encouragement: You can encourage your children with words or simply by showing faith in their positive potential. For the boy who is acting selfish, you might say, "I'm going to stop reminding you to share because I know you can do it on your own." You can also actively notice your children's behavior when they do something positive. For example, when you see your daughter share her toys with another child, you might just say, "Hey, I noticed you let Joannie play with your special toy." .

Character feedback: Most parents, us included, find it natural to give negative character feedback to our children. If a child is easily angered and reactive, we forget that she only sometimes is angry and mean, and so we tend to say things

like, "Why do you have to be so mean?"

Unfortunately, when we repeatedly focus on the negative with our children, they may begin believing us. So, the girl who acts angry begins to define herself as "an angry girl." You can see how important it is to notice when your children behave kindly and to give them a positive character building statement such as, "You're the kind of girl who knows how to be nice to her friends."

Dishonesty: Children are often tempted to lie about their misbehavior. This isn't an easy problem, but one strategy that works is to separate the misbehavior from the truth or lie. In other words, when children are honest about the

rules they've broken, they can receive "truth bonuses." Or, if they lie about breaking a rule, then they suffer two separate consequences, one for the misbehavior and one for the lie.



Good works: Volunteering to help at food banks, helping coach younger children, giving money to a family-chosen charity - all these efforts instill important habits in your children. Join them, and have a talk afterwards. Character development begins at home.

Over the years we've had many parents ask us how to help their children develop positive personal qualities. We've heard questions such as: "My son is so selfish, how can I teach him to be generous?" "My daughter is always so angry and mean to her friends. What can I do to help her see that she should treat others with kindness and respect?" and "How can I get my child to be more honest?"

When it comes to character development, there is no more foolish philosophy than the old saying, "Do as I say, not as I do." Along with Aristotle, we believe your children first need to see virtue in action in order to try out their virtue-wings. Parents, relatives, siblings and childcare providers give children their first glimpses of courage, honesty, generosity, fairness and respect.

It's not enough for your children to see you and other important adults and peers behaving virtuously. They also need encouragement, praise and character feedback.

Sports Can Help to Build Character Values...

Two different types of character values exist and are evident in sport: **social and moral.**

Typical social character values include loyalty, dedication, sacrifice, teamwork, and good citizenship, while moral values include honesty, fairness, fair play, justice, and responsibility.

Social values, which are highly esteemed in our society, are about the real world and how society views the importance of social character.

Moral values stand by themselves; if we violate any one of these, we violate people directly.



Social values are positive assets but must be tempered by moral values.

Sportsmanship/fair play means playing as a good sport and following the moral values of honesty and justice. The player plays by the rules and is fair and honest to his/her opponents.



7 Strategies To Avoid The College Trap printed in Kiplinger.com

Is it worth it to pay \$200,000 for a liberal arts education, especially if it means taking out loans? As important as education is today, families need to find more affordable ways to pay for it. Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of FinAid.org and FastWeb.com, has calculated that total student-loan debt exceeds revolving credit (mostly credit-card debt).

Save as much as you can. It's never too late to start, especially if you live in a state that gives you an income-tax break for contributions to state-sponsored 529 plans. Plus, money withdrawn from 529 accounts and used to pay for qualified college expenses is tax-free.

Don't let the total cost of college discourage you. If it seems intimidating, aim for a more manageable goal -- such as saving enough to pay first-year expenses or one-third of the total cost. Remember, every dollar you save is a dollar you won't have to borrow.

Be straight with your kids about what you can afford. Have the "college talk" with your teenagers before they start their search so that they know what fits into your budget and how much they'll have to contribute. At a minimum, kids should be expected to earn their own spending money.

Choose schools strategically. You're looking for colleges that deliver good value -- a high-quality education at an affordable price. That might mean a state institution, or it could mean a pricey private school that offers a generous financial-aid package. To better their chances for a scholarship, students should focus on schools at which their GPA or other achievements would make them a standout.

Think outside the box. Students can start at a lower-cost community college and then transfer to a four-year school. More colleges are offering online classes to keep costs under control. Taking AP classes in high school can slice a year off your child's education and cut your expenses by 25 %. Uncle Sam will help pay the bill if your child joins the military. You could also take advantage of the growing number of colleges offering accelerated, three-year degree programs.

Or, here's a thought: Your child may be better off passing up college for a year. Not everyone is ready for college at 18. It might literally pay if your child takes a year off to mature, earn some money and figure out what he really wants to study. Education and training are critical in today's economy, but rather than spend time and money on a degree from a four-year institution, it might be more appropriate to consider a one- or two-year certificate program from community college in health care or engineering.

Borrow smart. If your family must borrow to pay the bills, stick with Stafford loans for students and PLUS loans for parents (or a home-equity line of credit, if you qualify). Current interest rates on government loans are 6.8 percent for students (lower if you're eligible for financial subsidies) and 7.9 percent for new PLUS loans (StudentLoans.gov). With that combination, you shouldn't have to resort to more-expensive private loans.

Pick a marketable major. Majors that are most likely to yield an immediate job offer after college are accounting, business administration, computer science, engineering and math, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. But students can still major in liberal arts and make themselves attractive to potential employers by choosing subjects that are marketable.

I always counsel budding journalists who are majoring in something as general as "mass communications" to add a minor or a concentration in another subject -- business, health or computer skills, for instance.

If your daughter is majoring in economics, she should take accounting. If she's studying history or government, she could learn a foreign language. An English major could take classes in technical writing. Then she'd have a better shot at landing a well-paying job to help pay back those college loans.



College Daze



Questions to Ask (or not) on a Campus Tour

Do ask: 1) What the transition is like from high school to college.

2) About the food, residence halls, and class...

3) About campus safety..

4) Whether the campus has wireless Internet a

"Ask about campus safety."

Could ask: 1) About the tour guide's personal experience at the school.

2) *Why the tour guide chose the school..

3) The tour guide what they would change about the school.

4) About the local town and what is it

like to live in the vicinity.

5) About the academic and career services available to students.

Avoid asking: 1) personal finance questions.

2) Very personal questions of the tour-guide.

The College Personal Statement

A personal statement that reads like a laundry list of a student's accomplishments is bound to be feeble, and a personal statement that makes sweeping generalizations about the same applicant's goals and expectations will be equally unconvincing. One way to add weight to a personal statement is to support ideas with specific examples. If a prompt asks applicants why they want to attend a university, a decent response might mention the fact that the school has a "good college of education". But a savvy candidate knows that detail makes a difference: "Gamma University offers a special education certification program for bilingual educators, which fuses my foreign language skills and career goal of teaching English language learners." If a prompt asks a potential student about his or her most salient trait, a passable essay might broadly discuss that applicant's compassion. A great essay, on the other hand, will talk about how the applicant's four-year volunteer stint at an Alzheimer's care facility informed his ambition to help the elderly as a geriatric psychiatrist.

One tactic that students don't think of is to invigorate their personal statements through precise word choice. Clichés come easily when writing about goals and experiences—but consider how many admissions committees have already read essays about an "experience of a lifetime" or about students who have "learned the hard way". On the other end of the spectrum are applicants who are so afraid of slipping into clichés that they attempt to cover all of their bases by vague, uncommitted language: very, a lot, really, probably, maybe. Think of a personal essay as an extension of the résumé. A resume which uses simple, declarative sentences and strong verbs in place of clichés—as a result, it is concise, apt and focused. The candidate who writes that he "had a really interesting life-changing experience as a missionary in Africa" isn't going to get as much attention as the candidate who "confronted his faith in the face of racial inequality and poverty in Kenya." Avoid stale figures of speech and most forms of "to be"—is, was, were, etc.—and focus instead on verbs that give vitality and a strong sense of ethos to the personal statement.



ALLOWANCE & MONEY MANAGEMENT



Giving your children an allowance is a great way to teach them the value of money. But, how much should you give? How do you make sure your kids take the lessons to heart? Find out the bottom line by reading more below.

Here are tips for giving your children allowances...

When to Start: Most experts think kids should start getting an allowance when they are 5 or 6 years old. By this time your child is starting kindergarten and should understand the concept of money. They should be able to count, as well. If they are capable of grasping these 2 ideas, then they are old enough to begin learning how to spend, save, invest, and donate money.

How Much to Give: The purpose of an allowance is to teach your child about financial responsibility. As Janet Bodnar, author of *Dollars & Sense for Kids*, puts it, “When setting an allowance, you should give enough so that your children can squander it, but no so much that you’ll be upset when they do.” Decide what you expect your child to purchase with his or her allowance: snacks, movie tickets, etc. Older children should have more to pay for with their allowance than younger children. A reasonable guide might be a weekly allowance that’s equal to half the age of your child. Therefore, a 6-year-old would get \$3 a week and a 12-year-old would get \$6 a week.

Paying for Chores?: Most experts discourage giving an allowance in exchange for completing regular chores. Kids should do chores such as cleaning their room and doing the dishes to feel like they are a vital part of the family

What to Use the Money For: Help your kids learn what the allowance is for by following some professional advice. Help your child divide the money he or she earns or receives. Use 4 separate labeled containers that say, “10% Charity,” “30% Quick Cash,” “30% Medium-term Savings,” and “30% Long-term Savings.” Teach your kids to donate with the Charity jar and pick the charity of their choice. The child can use the Quick Cash for items that you have agreed he or she will pay for and instant gratifications. The Medium-term Savings is for 1-6 month periods of saving for something special. The Long-term Savings is for future goals like college. The percentages represent how much of the child's allowance should go to each jar.



It's one of the few rites of passage in the American culture. A time of exhilaration for teens, a mixture of relief and dread for parents. And no matter how intense the anticipation or anxiety, it is an inevitable step for both parents and teens - teen driving.

While many teenagers can't wait to sit behind a steering wheel signifying more independence, many parents try to delay handing the car keys to their son or daughter. This step is fraught with emotions and can quickly become a less than positive experience for both parents and teens.

While nothing will solve all the issues or salve all the emotions related to teen driving, some common sense approaches by parents can help assure their children's safe transition through this period. Whether your children are toddlers or teens, consider the following ideas:

1. **Decide on your approach to teen driving and talk about it with your children long before they reach permit age.** This enables parents to set the limits without the pressure of having to make quick decisions, and the children to know what their limits will be once they begin to drive.
2. **Model good driving habits daily.** Children, young and old, imitate their



TEEN DRIVING

parents' behavior-good and bad.

3. **Try not to tie the driving permit stage to reward or punishment.** A driving permit is for the purpose of training and learning what will help teens become better drivers. Restricting that time, or cutting it short, as punishment may get your child's attention, but it will also cut short his or her opportunity to learn safe driving habits with another adult-usually you-sitting beside them.

4. **Pay attention to studies that offer guidance for teen driving limits.** Research shows that the following factors are keys to teen road safety:

Driving at night puts inexperienced drivers at risk. Teen accident rates increase after 10 p.m., and even more dramatically after midnight.

The more passengers in the car, the greater the risks for the young driver.

Younger drivers are more likely than more mature drivers to drive when drowsy.

5. **Learn the laws in your state,** but beyond that base the limits you set on your teen's driving on expert advice and common sense, not what other parents are doing.

More than 20 states have enacted a graduated licensing system that begins with a learner's permit at

age 16, through a provisional permit and license with restrictions, to an unrestricted license at age 18 based on the youth's meeting all the test, supervised driving, and other requirements.

At least 10 states restrict the number or age of passengers who can ride with new teen drivers.

At least 28 states have driving curfews, most beginning at midnight, although New York imposes a 9 p.m. curfew on drivers under age 18.

6. **Underage drinking is a problem common to all areas of the country, as is substance abuse.** Explain as often as necessary how your zero tolerance plan works. There is no such thing as a teenage "designated driver." Not only should your teen not get near alcohol, but neither should anyone who rides in their car.

Parents who take the time to thoughtfully prepare for this important stage of their children's lives, will help ensure that their young people are ready for the road!

