



THROUGH FAITH AND LEARNING

# BLUE & WHITE

WINTER 2019

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## Principal's Message by Sue Moench, Class of '72

MSA continues to be a hub of activity for our school community. Since the beginning of our school year in September, our students have engaged in a variety of activities both in and outside of the classroom. The volleyball season is always a highlight of the beginning of our school year. Our students did well on the court, but most notable was their outstanding sportsmanship. Elementary students participated in a number of afterschool activities which included Builders Club, Jump to be Fit, Art Club, and Football. Our middle school students engaged in an exciting day of science, engineering, and math when we celebrated National STEAM Day on November 8. The activities saw our students participate in diverse learning experiences that stimulated their senses and engaged their thinking. Spearheaded by Lisa Stevens, IT Teacher, and Laurel Burgess, Middle School Science teacher, and the Middle School teaching team, students worked through activities which included robotics, design, gardening, and rocket manufacturing. The day ended with students working in teams producing a poster related to the days activities.

Leading up to the Christmas season, MSA students continued the tradition of producing a Christmas concert—"Miracle on Bethlehem Street". This is always an exciting time in our school as we enjoy watching our aspiring actors, actresses, and dancers perform like they are on Broadway. This event always brings back great memories for those of us who once occupied the stage when we were students here. Many thanks to our teachers, students and parents who made this event successful. I wish to acknowledge Sophia Sontag, our music teacher who produced the performance and managed the musical portion, and Doreen Palmer who assisted with the acting roles. Our concert would never be complete without the Tableau which is arranged by Karen Wicks, Grade 12 homeroom and Religion Teacher, and performed by our Grade 12 students. As we all know, the Grade 12 students consider this to be an important and significant highlight of their graduation year.

In January, our Board of Governors together with the Administration Team, collaborated on the development of the new Strategic Plan which will guide the school over the next five year. The process was led by Greg Unruh. Mr. Unruh, who is a Bermudian living in Washington State, has extensive experience planning within

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## New Assistant Principal Designates

It's been a very thought-provoking, fast-paced and revealing five months, in the new position of the Assistant Principal Designate role. I've appreciated getting to know MSA from an administrator's perspective. One of the highlights of this transition process has been the ability to participate in a few professional development opportunities. There have been two such opportunities that have been very beneficial. I have been able to glean knowledge from them and immediately implement what I've learned into my daily responsibilities at school.

The Restorative Practice Workshop held on September 8th and 16th 2018, was my first professional development opportunity as a school administrator. Hosted by the group, Restorative Practices Bermuda, the aim of the workshop was to train educators interested in implementing restorative practices in their schools. This program has been shown to dramatically reduce discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, promote positive mental health and responsible behavior. I found this workshop very insightful and relevant. It was beneficial to work with other local educators and share ideas about how restorative practices would function in our schools. As a direct result of this workshop, I've been able to introduce the process to some of our classes and apply the restorative circles strategies to help students solve the conflict and build better relationships. Our aim is to visit homerooms at least twice a semester, not only to inspire students to foster healthy relationships among each other, but also to maintain a positive connection between administrators and students. While still in its introductory phase, the feedback from students thus far has been encouraging.

Another professional development opportunity for me was participating in the Leadership Essentials Workshop, held in Edmonton, Alberta in November 2018. This workshop was geared towards school administrators in the first years of their careers. One of the breakout sessions entitled, "Creating a School Culture Focused on Wellness", instantly caught my attention. Having had fifteen years as a physical

educator before taking on this new post, I was eager to discover effective ways to apply my previous knowledge to my newfound passion. The presenter, Chris Good, who was a principal at a K-5 school, shared ideas and strategies that encouraged students to take a more active role in their health. He talked about a program called "BOKS", in which the students participated in a before-school physical activity program. There are many studies that show that physical activity increases student learning and so, physical activity before school seemed like a no-brainer. A plan was quickly formulated to make this idea a reality at MSA on my return. Subsequently, with the assistance of another dedicated teacher, we recently started a before-school walk-run program. We piloted the idea to elementary students, who for the month of December would come to the school field at 8:00 am and walk or run around the field for about 20 minutes twice a week. Involvement in this activity was purely optional and students, along with a few parents, didn't hesitate to join in. To our delight, we averaged about 30 students a session. The students were happy, some walked, some ran, and others played chasing games that they made up at the spur of the moment. We conducted a survey of the participants at the end of seven sessions and are in the process of tallying the results. At first glance of the results, however, we can see that the clear majority of those who participated, felt more energized and focused after running or walking and on starting their morning classes. They also reported that they wished to see this as a daily option in the New Year, weather permitting, we have made this a reality.

In closing, it can be said that professional development is a key component in the success of an educator's career. Educators should take advantage of opportunities to further their knowledge in their field. This can be accomplished by attending local or overseas conferences, reading educational articles, or even listening to an educator's podcast. It's important to become lifelong learners and connect with other educators to discuss and explore the latest best practices in education. Then, we can move mindfully in a positive direction that brings about the best outcomes for our students.



### Did you know?

In 1915....A handful of children lived too far away from Hamilton to be able to commute to class every day. These children boarded at the school, arriving for class on Monday morning, sleeping during the week nights in the school's dormitory and then heading home on Friday afternoons.

# Canadian Universities Tour

This is the 10th year that Mrs. Charlene White has coordinated the MSA's tour of Canadian Universities and Colleges. The first tour in 2008 included 9 students and 2 chaperones. This year's 10-day tour included 16 grade 11 students and 3 chaperones. Since grade 12 students submit applications to post-secondary institutions early in the school year, visits to these institutions a year earlier in grade 11 enables students to make a more informed decision about their post-secondary choices. It provides them with some direction at the beginning of this decision-making process. Mrs. White says, "coordinating and chaperoning this tour is always extremely gratifying and a highlight of my years at MSA."

The post-secondary institutions visited as part of the tour are generally located in the Maritimes, Ontario and occasionally Quebec. Each year, the exact stops on the tour depend upon the interests of the group. This year the list of post-secondary institutions included:

The Maritimes: Dalhousie University, St. Mary's University, NS College of Art and Design, Mt. St. Vincent University, Acadia University, St. F.X. University, Mt. Allison University, University of New Brunswick, and St. Thomas University

Ontario: Queens University, Loyalist College, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Niagara College, Brock University, McMaster University, University of Western Ontario, University of Kings' College, Brescia University, Fanshawe College, Humber College, University of Toronto, and Ryerson University.

Past tours have also included: University of PEI, Holland College, McGill University, University of Waterloo, Laurier University, Bishops College, Seneca College, and York University.

The tour provides a glimpse of life at university. Students have the opportunity to compare programs,

campuses, residences, and cafeterias. After experiencing the atmosphere



at numerous institutions they will know whether they prefer a smaller or larger university or college, in a city or a small town. Information sessions with international recruiters provide the opportunity for students to ask questions and provide program information and academic requirements. One of the highlights of the tours is meeting with MSA graduates attending the universities or colleges on the tour. It is truly heartwarming for the teachers and administrators to see these young men and women thriving in their new surroundings. It is also reassuring to know that our curriculum prepares them well for the academic rigors at university and college.

The schedule is very busy with plane rides, bus rides, and early morning wakeups. However, there is also time for some fun. We include a visit to Canada's Wonderland and a few group dinners in the cost of the tour. All of the group indicated they enjoy getting to know their classmates better during those bus rides but not everyone is a fan of the early morning wake ups! When asked what their favorite university or college, students are able to make their selection based on the programs offered, the environment and the facilities. One student's comment "...it just felt right" reflects the significance of visiting the campus and experiencing the environment. Another benefit is getting to see what their potential future residence options may

be for their first year away from home. Despite the colder temperatures, most students in the group this year indicated that they plan on attending university or college in Canada.

## A Student's Perspective

*by Cailey Longworth*

Every year the grade 11's embark on a university tour to Canada and this year it was my turn. The majority of our time between visiting approximately 20 colleges & universities was spent on buses bonding, listening to music, and watching movies together. In 10 days we fit a lot in our schedule, visiting up to three colleges & universities a day sometimes.

I was excited to visit all the campuses, however on the first stop I immediately knew the university was not for me. I thought I should keep an open mind going through the tour as each college & university offered something different. The tours were very informative, we visited classrooms, spoke to professors, saw amenities that each college offered. However, in the end I knew that Mount Saint Vincent in Halifax was the best fit for me.

The University Tour was an amazing bonding experience. I got to know my classmates better and it was really fun to get to know our teachers outside of the school environment. I would recommend that anyone who is thinking of going to university/college take advantage of this tour, being on a campus, speaking to students who are presently attending the university/college, really gives you the feel of what is the best fit for you.



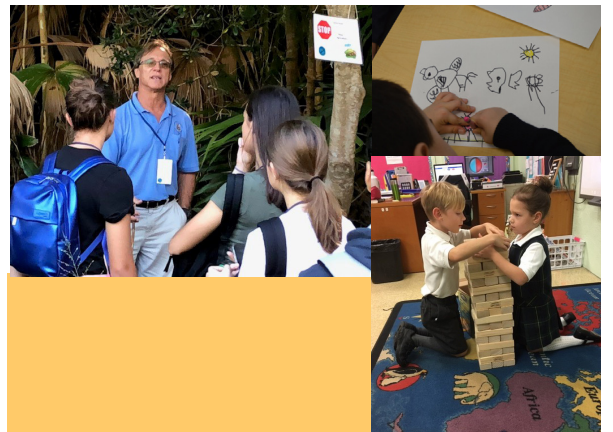
# CAPTURED MOMENTS



Spirit Day



STEAM Day



Sports





# Principal's Message cont.

Catholic organizations and other philanthropic groups. Mr. Unruh spent a week in the school meeting with staff, students and parents before he led a day-long planning session involving the Board members and the Administration team. We look forward to having a vibrant and workable plan which will give direction for the school under its new leadership.

Part of my role as Principal is to ensure that we have well equipped and enthusiastic teachers ready to greet our students each day. Also, along with this is the preparation of our new Administration team. These new leaderships will begin their journeys when Margaret DiGiacomo retires in June 2019 and I retire in June 2020. As I visit classrooms each day, it is easy to see that our Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies are being well implemented. Classrooms are filled with engaged students working cooperatively in their groups making the most of their learning experiences. Teachers have had the benefit of continued Kagan training

as well as other resourceful instruction and dialogue in how to manage student behavior effectively. The new Assistant Principal designates, Anna Machado and Kim Raymond are taking every opportunity to become involved in the administration of the school as well as to enhance and expand their own practice. It is very rewarding for both Mrs. DiGiacomo and myself to mentor these ladies and observe their development. MSA is in for some exciting times ahead as we continue to challenge ourselves to be the best!

Please keep the MSA community in your prayers. We look forward to the Spring filled with adventures and journeys as our students are challenged to reach their potential.

## MSA Launches Rotary Interact Club by Julia Pimentel

On November 1st, Mount Saint Agnes celebrated the inauguration of their very own Rotary Interact Club! Rotary Interact is an international club that allows students to organize and participate in service projects for their immediate community as well as the larger world. Leadership skills, communication, and friendships all develop in Interact Club. Today, many of our youth forget how blessed they are. Interact Club widens the eyes of students by reminding us that not all individuals in the world are as fortunate as we are.

Our club consists of 12 students who are passionate about serving others. They volunteer their time and talents to make a difference. We hold weekly meetings on Mondays after school. At Christmas we organized a schoolwide shoebox drive to collect toys for the children of Bermuda's foster care for Christmas. Interact Club isn't only about major projects, we realize that the little acts of kindness are just as important. We will be working on smaller projects throughout the school year to promote respect and positivity in the school.

I am so excited for what the MSA Interact club has in store and the impact it will have on the community. I feel that the youth have many intentions to eradicate the pressing issues that prevail in our troubled world but often do not know where to start. The club is a great place to start. It allows the students' intentions, ideas and visions to formulate into action. If you are looking to make a change in the community, MSA Interact is the place to be!

As president, I am extremely grateful to be part of such an awesome team. Thank you for helping us change the world, one step at a time!

Members: Caroline Amaral, Arianna Baptista, Maya Leighton, Cailey Longworth, Analia Machado, Nia-Rene Outerbridge, Corinne Pelletier, Julia Pimentel, Jasmine Scaife, Morgan Madeiros, Chance Anthony, and Sha-Lae Richardson.  
Teacher Advisors: Kristine Amaro and Kelly Exell



# LESSONS FROM FRANCE by Maya Leighton

This summer I spent a month in France on a scholarship with L'Alliance Française des Bermudes and IP International. I went to France with three other Bermudian students and can say without a doubt, this trip was the experience of a lifetime. Not only did I get to use and expand my French, but I also learned many valuable lessons.

For three weeks, I lived with a host family in Anglet and attended school in Biarritz. Traveling can seem to take forever sometimes, especially with multiple flights and an extra layover, and some confusion can be expected at times. When we finally arrived and connected with our host families it was time to get to know our new surroundings. Biarritz, also known as the surf capital of France, is on the southwest Basque coast of France, right next to Spain. My host family actually lived in Anglet, not Biarritz, which was farther away from everything, but we made it work.

A typical week included attending school on weekdays, but we also went surfing and exploring. IP provided fun activities and there was also time to relax. In the evenings we would either go home and do things in Anglet, or we would go back to Biarritz to meet up with everyone at the beach. On Saturdays we took day trips with IP – one week we went to Bordeaux and another we crossed the border to San Sebastián, in Spain. Sundays were left free to spend time with new friends that we made from all over the United States and Europe from places including Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Turkey, Belgium, the Netherlands, Russia, Norway, and Switzerland.

After the first three weeks, the Bermuda crew headed to Paris where we stayed in a

small flat at the center of Paris. We did a lot of typical touristy things like sightseeing, eating good food, and shopping. We visited the Eiffel Tower, the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Louvre, and the Palace of Luxembourg; I attended Mass at the Sacred Heart Basilica; watched the end of the Tour de France; took a train to Versailles, where we visited the Palace of Versailles; ate escargot and frog legs; and shopped in a massive mall called the Galeries Lafayette, as well on the Champs-Élysées.

Two major events that I'll probably never forget were Bastille Day and the World Cup. It was so much fun to be in France when they happened! When France won the World Cup, everybody was out on the streets celebrating, yelling and blowing air horns, drivers were blaring their car horns. The festive atmosphere was irresistible, everyone joined in.

While I was away, I did a lot of speaking in French and also made a ton of friends. There were many lessons learned, but of those, there are three major lessons that I would like to share. The first: don't panic when you get lost. This applies to getting physically lost but it also applies when you're feeling mentally or emotionally lost too. We got physically lost a lot – I learned that panicking won't help anything. Just stop, gather yourself, and ask for help. Second: try new things. This can apply from trying new things while speaking a new language, trying new foods, or going to new places. You won't learn anything if you don't try. Third: have confidence. Having confidence won't hurt your experience, it will enhance it. If you just have a little confidence, you will learn a lot about yourself and the world, try so many new things, speak to so many

people and strangers, make so many friends and have a lot of fun.

In conclusion, if I had the chance, would I do it all again? Yes, in a heartbeat. Was it worth it? Absolutely. Would I go back to Biarritz and France? For sure. Would I do another French immersion? I plan to. Should you do something like this if you have the chance? Definitely, you won't regret it! The Bermudians: Daria Simmons, Ywione Darrell, Maya Leighton, and JP Didyk.





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Contributions can also be submitted online: [www.msa.bm](http://www.msa.bm) under "Support US".

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Donations can be made through the International  
Charitable Fund of Bermuda which is a 501 © (3) entity. ☐ Corporate Matching Gift Available



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**MAR**

March 2nd: STEAM Olympics  
March 3rd: MSA's 129th Birthday  
March 4th: MSA Prayer Service  
& Open House

March 5th: H&S Shrove Tuesday Family Breakfast  
March 6th: Ash Wednesday Mass, St. Theresa's  
March 11th: MSA St. Baldrick's  
March 15-17: MSA D. of E., Silver & Bronze Expeditions  
March 19th: St. Joseph's Feast Day Mass, St. Theresa's  
March 23rd: H&S White Elephant Sale



**APR**

April 1-12: Spring Break  
April 19th: Good Friday  
April 22nd: Bazaar Reward Holiday  
April 25th: Elementary Spelling Bee



**MAY**

May 3rd: Elementary Sports Day  
May 10th: Mothers' Mass, St. Theresa's  
May 24th: Bermuda Day Holiday  
May 30th: National Honor Society  
Induction Ceremony



**JUN**

June 1st: Prom  
June 8th: H&S Golf Tournament  
June 17th: National Heroes Day  
June 27th: Graduation Mass, St. Theresa's  
June 28th: Last Day of School



## Did you know?

In 1915....The children came to school on the bus. They had a bus that was drawn by one horse and a mule.

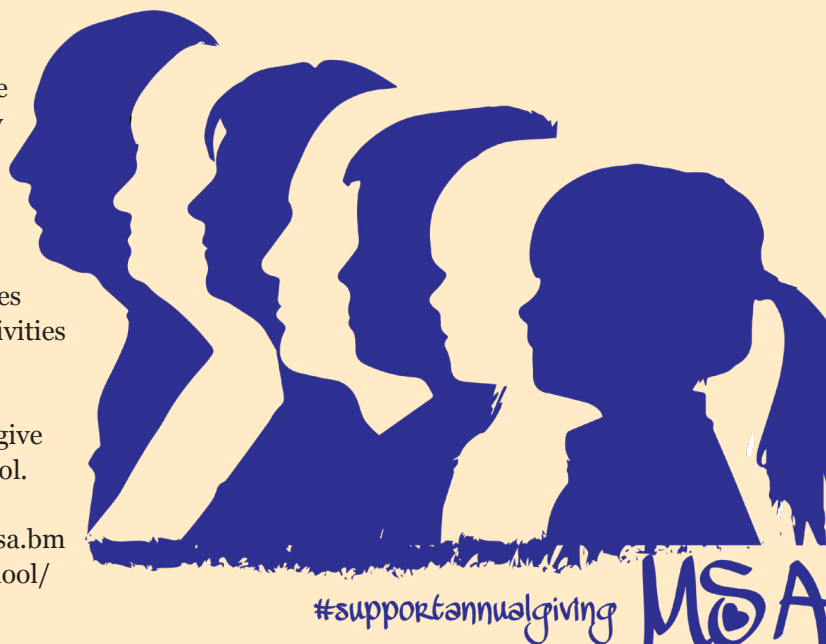
# SUPPORT ANNUAL GIVING

As a member of our MSA family, you know the benefit of an MSA education. Please consider contributing to the Annual Giving Program (AGP) to assist with our bursary program or designate your funds to assist with other project areas.

The AGP aims to support the renewal and improvement of our school for our students through sustained upgrades to our facilities, technology, and student enrichment activities as well as financial aid.

Every gift is a meaningful contribution, we ask that you give what you can to support the ongoing success of our school.

To find out more, please contact Laura Lyons [llyons@msa.bm](mailto:llyons@msa.bm) or via our website <http://www.msa.bm/support-our-school/donate>



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