

Mercy High School
Counseling Department

GOOD NEWS

January 2020



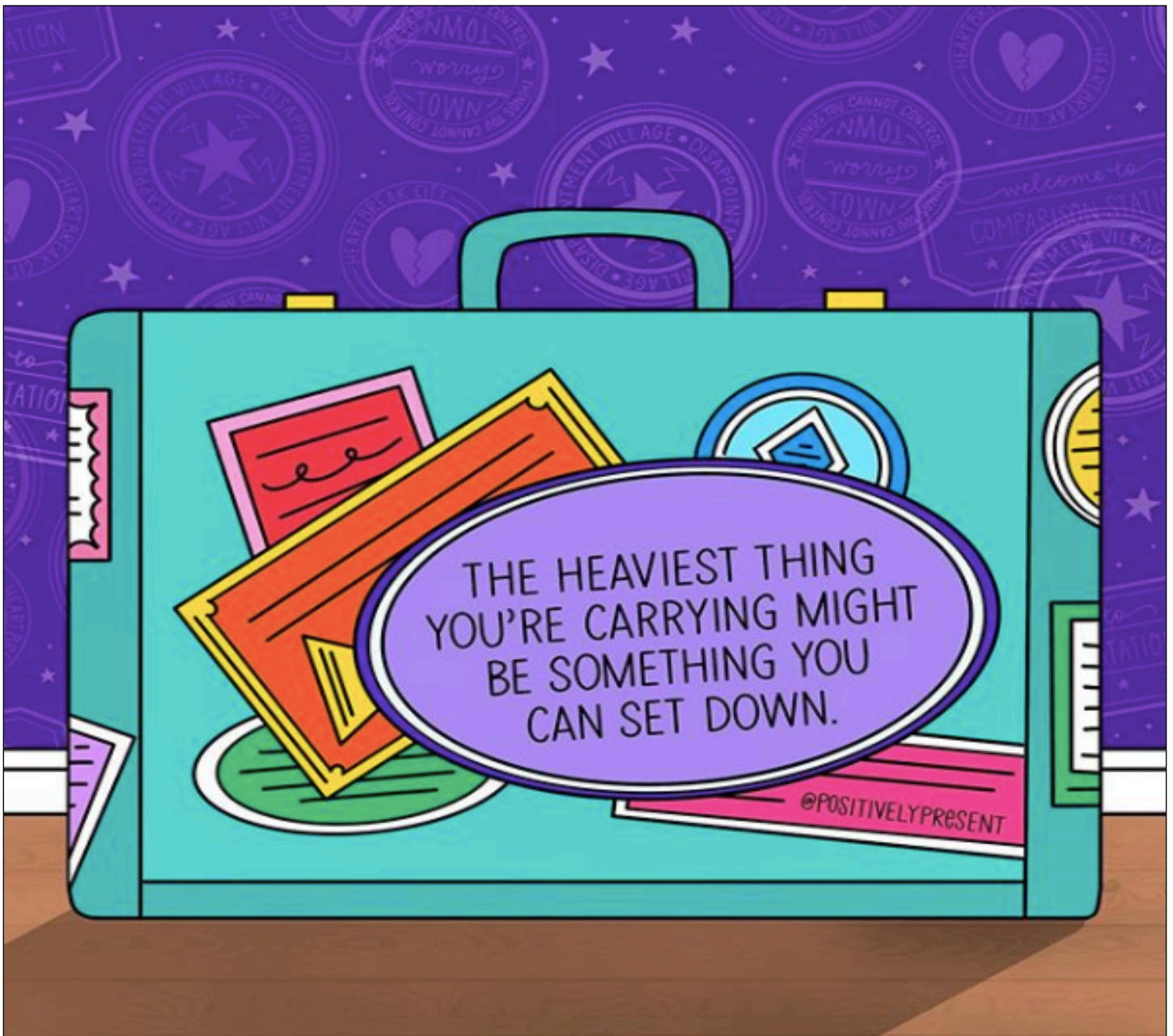
A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

January 2020

Mercy High School Counseling Department

Good News

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IMPORTANT JANUARY DATES

JANUARY 6TH

2nd semester begins, all classes meet

JANUARY 7TH

Day 1, unscheduled hours begin

JANUARY 9TH

Semester 1 Final Grades reported

JANUARY 15TH

Last day to change schedules/add courses

JANUARY 16TH

9th Grade: Link Crew Monthly Meet Up during Adviser Group

JANUARY 17TH

No school

JANUARY 20TH

No school

JANUARY (SPECIFIC DATES TBD)

Sophomore Career & Personal Planning Communication (Classroom Presentations on this are coming in February!)

Why mercy?

I remember as a High School student, feeling this complicated love/hate relationship with my High School. There were aspects of daily High School life that I truly enjoyed, much that made me feel good, and lots that I looked forward to. There were also pieces of my High School experience of which I dreaded, days when I asked myself: “Why do I keep showing up here!!??”, and periods of time when I wished I could just walk away from it all and never return.

Can you relate?

As an adult, I have found this to be true as well, of my relationship with many other situations in life, including my job here at Mercy. There are days or periods of time as an educator when I feel completely drained, discouraged, underappreciated, or even helpless. I also have an enormous list of reasons why I absolutely **love** my job. What I realized a few years ago, during a particularly challenging school year, is that even during those times when things are not going well, the items and factors on my list of loves still exist; it is just significantly more difficult to *see those things* or bring them to the front of my mind, during tougher times.

So, here is what I decided to do with this information...

I do not have a choice in regards to whether or not I work-my job helps to fulfill my family's financial needs and I truly feel a personal calling to do what I do. With that said, I have made a daily choice, throughout each of the 12 school years I have worked here, to continue to dedicate my career to Mercy, instead of another High School or work environment.

But why?

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I decided a while back, to look at my career through that same lens as I once viewed my High School experience; as a long-term relationship. Relationships can be complicated and will have ups and downs; relationships are not perfect and so perfection cannot be expected; relationships challenge us and they evolve.

So, to better cope with the rough days and challenging times, I have chosen a mindfulness practice to help me keep the good stuff in the forefront of my brain.

2 school years ago, I began starting each work day by reminding myself of *why I continue to show up here*. I literally pause in the parking lot every morning, and before exiting my car, I either think to myself or say out loud, one or more reasons why I love my job, why I do this work, or why I've chosen Mercy. This has allowed me to carry positivity into the building and keep it with me, even on the most difficult of days. And this little ritual has made a huge difference in my ability to maintain a healthy relationship with my career.

Try it!

If you need a way to better cope with the ups and downs of your High School life, there are other ways that you can try this. For example, at a recent Staff Meeting, we were asked to work in groups and list on paper, the many positive things that our school has to offer, of which we felt we could brag about to those in the community. The act of talking with others and creating these lists, then stepping back and viewing the items on our lists really did allow us to *intentionally focus our attention* away from our gripes and stressors. If checking in with yourself each morning is not

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your style, you too, can make a “Why Mercy?” list. Just as it did for our Staff, the act of creating this list may shift your focus in a positive direction and keeping this list handy, may help you better cope with the tougher days (because there will be tough days!). You could even establish a weekly practice where you add one positive observation to a list, or on little slips of paper that you add to a jar of positive thoughts about Mercy. The key to using such a mindfulness tool successfully, is laying the groundwork (creating the list, mantra, habit, etc.) when you are in a more positive state of mind, so that those positive items are easier to access (versus doing so when you are frustrated and can only see the negative). You can take this idea and make your own as well! There really is no wrong way to use this skill.

The point is to:

1. Intentionally look at a situation (your Mercy experience or otherwise) through realistic eyes and accept that your relationship with said situation will have both ups and downs.
2. Find a way to take the positive aspects of your situation and record them for future reference.
3. Formulate a plan of how you will regularly utilize your created collection of positive thoughts, keeping a mindful connection to those ideas, as a way to better cope with those more difficult days.

If you are struggling to get started, stop by Counseling and we can help you create your list of Mercy loves!

“Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of thier minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.”- William James

Written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Trish Brown

This year, and particularly this month, let us pause and take in some of the inspiring and important words expressed by

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

on topics of education, justice, hope, and perseverance.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”-*from Strength to Love*

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere....whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”-*from Letter from Birmingham, Alabama Jail*

“The time is always right to do what is right.”-*from Oberlin College commencement speech*

“Be a bush if you can’t be a tree. If you can’t be a highway, just be a trail. If you can’t be a sun, be a star. For it isn’t by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.”-*from speech before a group of students at Barratt Junior High School, Philadelphia*

“We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn’t matter with me now because I’ve been to the mountaintop...I’ve looked over and I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight we as a people will get to the promised land.” -*from “I’ve Been to the Mountain Top”*

COLLEGE CORNER

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR APPLICATION HAS BEEN DEFERRED

During this time of the school year, students begin receiving admissions decisions from prospective colleges. One of the decisions one may receive is that an application has been “deferred”.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE DEFERRED ?

If you apply Early Action or Early Decision to a college, you may be admitted, denied, or deferred. A deferral is a college’s way of saying “maybe.” They weren’t able to say “yes” yet, but they weren’t ready to tell you “no” either. They want to review your first-semester senior year grades and any new accomplishments and evaluate you again in comparison to the regular decision applicant pool. You’re not in, but it’s not over yet, either. The door is still open to you. So, what do you do about it?

NEXT STEPS

Step 1 (Now):

Do not immediately react and contact the admission office. Although tempting to want to dive into “what do I do now?” mode, it is best to wait until January. Instead, try and stay focused (and excited) about the other colleges you’ve applied to, or maybe even been admitted to. Don’t let this “maybe” distract you from the other opportunities you do have.

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Step 2 (Now):

Read the deferral letter carefully. Some colleges automatically place you in the Regular Decision pool, while others require you to fill out a form or click on a link for you to indicate if you would like to remain in the regular pool. Make sure to fill out the form or click a link if the college is asking you to. Some schools will also ask if you'd like to be considered or shift into the Early Decision II pool; make sure to discuss with your counselor if this option makes sense for you.

Step 3 (Now through Late January):

Update your Naviance student to indicate that you've been deferred. Your counselor will then send an updated transcript (called a Mid-Year Report) to your college. This is how the college will see your academic progress. The updated transcript will be sent to the school in mid to late-January.

Step 4 (Mid to Late-January):

If you have new information/important updates to your application since you submitted it, you will want to let the college know by writing an email to your admission officer or the admission office's general email. Remember to include your name and applicant ID number in the communication. A sample email will be provided here.

Keep in mind some schools have specific instructions about how they want to be updated and with what information. Make sure you follow their guidelines and requirements. For some schools, there is a designated place to share updates on their portal.

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When writing the email, be thoughtful about what to share. Remember that colleges have your application on file, so there is no need to duplicate the information that you previously submitted. However, there are a few pieces of information that may be new for colleges to consider:

- Grades - Once your 1st-semester grades are available, you'll want to share those. As mentioned above, your counselor will handle sharing the actual transcript, but if there is any grade or progress you are particularly proud of, it's appropriate to highlight this in the email.
- Test Scores - If your SAT or ACT scores have improved since you submitted your application, you'll want to update these with the school.
- NEW, important information about activities and/or involvements - For example, if you were recently elected captain of the basketball team, earned a role in the spring musical or if your English paper was accepted for publication, those are things you might want to include.
- Level of Interest - At this phase in the process, it is very helpful to colleges to hear (an honest) show of interest. If this is truly your top choice school, then tell them this! Also, make sure you communicate this to your counselor as well. If the admission officer were to call the school to inquire about you and your level of interest, it is helpful if we are all on the same page.
- Unless a college specifically requests one, DO NOT send additional letters of recommendation. If they want to receive extra letters of rec, they will ask for one.

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Sample Email

Here's a sample email for you to draw inspiration from. Of course, make sure to write it in your own voice and style. Letting them see you as an individual here is important!

Hello, Mr. Greene –

My name is Mercy Marlin and I'm writing to follow up on my application to Notre Dame. While I was disappointed to be deferred during Early Action, I'm still very excited about the possibility of attending this fall.

I've requested that my counselor send in my Mid Year Report, which she did last week. In addition, I have a few updates to share:

- I switched from AP Biology to Microbiology for the 2nd semester. Given the time commitment of my spring dance schedule (approximately 20-25 hours per week), I needed to adjust my course schedule in order to create more balance between my academic and extracurricular responsibilities.*
- I worked hard this semester and received five A's and two B's.*
- My volleyball team made it to states this season and we won the Division 1 State Championship! We've been building our team over the last four years, so it was pretty exciting to see all of our hard work pay off!*

I appreciate your careful consideration of my application. If there is any other information you need, please don't hesitate to email me at mmarlin@gmail.com or call me at 248-476-8020. Notre Dame is my top choice for college and there's no other place I'd rather be next fall.

Sincerely,

Mercy Marlin

Applicant ID: 8161999

*(*If you don't have an applicant ID, list your birth date. *)*

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Contact Information

Michigan State

*Your email letter should be addressed to Ms. Maureen Shagonaby

*Send via email to shagona2@msu.edu

University of Michigan

*Your email letter will be uploaded to your U Mich Portal and content is limited to 250 words.

Other schools:

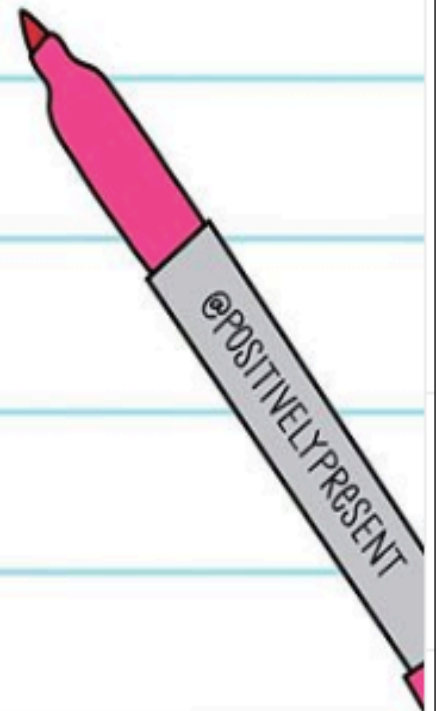
If you have a specific admissions contact for the college already, you may submit directly via the contact information you have. If you are unsure whom to contact or if you have further questions regarding this, please see your counselor and she can walk you through the process for your particular school.

**Modified with permission from our friends at College Wise,
written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Kristen Casey**

STILL

a lesson i need to learn:

GIVE MORE ATTENTION
TO WHAT YOU WANT
THAN TO WHAT YOU
DON'T WANT.



JUST IN CASE
YOU NEED THIS TODAY:

You are loved.

YOU ARE NOT A FAILURE.

YOU ARE NOT A WASTE OF SPACE.

YOU ARE WANTED.

I BELIEVE IN YOU.

YOU CAN DO IT!

JUST IN CASE
YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE NEEDS THIS:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1800-273-8255

Okay2Say:

okay2say.state.mi.us

To Write Love on Her Arms:

twloha.com