

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this week's letter finds you well.



To mark the start of Black History month, the artwork shared in collective worship this week was by Gordon Parks, a black American photographer. It was a photograph called 'First Aid' taken in 1943 (above) and the music was a piece called Homeless, by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, a South African choral group.

The theme of collective worship this week was Being A Global Citizen and this tied in with International Language Week, as well as Black History Month. The Languages Department ran activities in form time to promote foreign languages; this is something that I would like to build on next year as part of a wider celebration of different cultures.

Whilst we celebrate diversity in all its glory, we recognise the importance of Black History Month to our school community. Through the month of October, there will be displays on our plasma screens around school from different Teaching and Learning Areas, collective worships, form activities and physical displays in the two dining areas, all focusing on Black History Month and highlighting the important contribution that people of African and Caribbean descent have made to society over many centuries. I am looking forward to seeing these displays and discussing them with your children; over the next few weeks, please ask them about what we are doing.

If you know of anyone with a child in Y6 who is thinking about coming to St Mary's, please make sure they are aware of our Secondary Transition Page (<https://st-maryshigh.herts.sch.uk/online-open-evening/>) which has lots of information from staff and students about the school, as well as a virtual, self-guided tour. You are welcome to have a look round yourselves; for some of you it may have been a while since you were able to see around the school in this way!

Ms Papadopoulos and the team in Art have been impressed with their students this year. I know that they have had a fantastic start to the term, impressing us with their resilience and positive attitude towards their learning. Here is a collection of some stunning artwork by Y10 (Maria, Fardos, Rebecca and Shanese), Y11 (Summer, Shaloma and Renae) and Y13 (Deborah).

WE BELIEVE EVERYONE IS EQUAL: EVERYONE DESERVES THE BEST

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There are some great examples of their work below, and to view more art please visit our St Mary's Art Twitter page on @stmarysart.



Sport across schools is very limited at the moment – there are no matches being played between schools and no training or practice clubs going on. Therefore, it was a real pleasure to find out that one of our Y11 students, Sam Tinubu, was selected to play for Stevenage FC first team on 22 September in a cup game against Southampton. This is a massive achievement for anyone, let alone a 15 year old, and we are very proud of him. Sam was on the subs bench and did not get called to play at this match. However, he experienced a first team professional football match at a professional football club and no doubt will get opportunities to play in the future. One of our governors, and vicar at St Mary's Church, Fr Eugene, is a long-standing Stevenage fan and he met Sam when he came in to school the other day. They enjoyed a long chat about the team, its history and the different players. I know you will join me in wishing Sam the very best of luck with his future games, and I will keep you updated about his progress.

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Through lockdown the St Mary's Aspire Business and Enterprise Academy was busy facilitating our students' participation in the Telos Partners, in association with Young Enterprise, leadership essay competition addressing sustainable success. The competition was open to those between the ages of 14 and 18. Six students from St Mary's, ranging from Y10 to Y13 made the decision to participate and challenge themselves. The competition required an individual essay, of up to 2,000 words. The students wrote their own thoughts, ideas and experiences about what they believe the qualities are of a leader in a company for not only short term but also long lasting sustainable success. This was not an easy brief to meet, however each student managed to produce their essays with incredible insight, including a great clarity of their own experiences therefore confirming a range of interpretations. Mrs Johnson said that reading each essay was easy as they were stimulating and thought provoking where they challenge you to think about what they are saying and what leadership and success actually mean. She went on to say it was fascinating to see that whilst the students all managed to identify leaders in society, they all provided some great foresight, strong statements and quotes of their own. Some of their quotes are:

*"A leader inspires, motivates, and innovates. Leaders see greatness in others, therefore encouraging them to reach their full potential."*

*"Great leaders don't set out to be leaders... they set out to make a difference."*

*"I have found while motivation and inspiration can make leaders stronger, it's the action that ultimately drives the respect and trust needed to be effective."*

*"Leadership is not a rank. Leadership is not position. Leadership is a decision."*

Being a national competition there were many entries, and whilst on this occasion, St Mary's students did not progress as finalists, the feedback from a Telos Partners representative stated "I can say that I read every single entry this year and they were all of a very good standard and interesting to read." The St Mary's Aspire Business and Enterprise Academy will continue to provide multiple opportunities for our students to develop their business comprehension and to build our leaders of the future. Many congratulations to our amazing students who all demonstrated they have clear potential to successfully lead in their futures Aimee, Hakeem, Kirubeal, Luke, Ruby and Yaren.

Whilst we are on news from our Business Academy, a team of Y12 St Mary's students have achieved an outstanding success in the 2019/20 Young Enterprise North and East Herts Area competition, gaining an Innovation Award and winning the Best Trade Stand Award. The team created their own business called DoLyttle with a very catchy strapline of 'Do it the easy way'. Together they created their mission of 'Equality & Beyond' where they wanted to use their platform to help empower women and their choices to be whatever they want to be. The product the team created was innovative and incredibly useful: the MagniStrap has a trusty, rubber slap-band that is 100% latex free with a high quality metal coil, and this holds a strong magnet which is able to hold pins, screws, needles, bobby pins as well as other small metal items. Such a useful product for use by hairdressers, machinists, dry cleaners, builders and generally anyone, and all for only £4.99. To promote the product the team created and ran an Instagram page where they gained over 160 followers. At the start of the competition the team sold shares to gain capital and then raised funds by selling cakes, and Christmas pots. This enabled them to purchase the materials to make their product. During the competition they faced various difficult and challenging situations, including changes in team members, lack of suppliers and the coronavirus pandemic. However, they showed great resilience to bring their product to life and their competition submission to fruition.

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The team were supported throughout the competition by Dave Wilson, a Young Enterprise Business Advisor, and he confirmed “This year’s team had some considerable hurdles to overcome but when the pressure was on they pulled together, created a product and associated collateral and were a credit to themselves and the school.”



*Congratulations to our awesome students Aimee, Tolani, Yaren, Deniz, Richard, Nazli and Blaine.*

As always, I am delighted with the successes of the students at St Mary’s and am grateful to the staff for their efforts to provide these opportunities.

Finally, I will end with a reminder about Harvest Festival. We are supporting the local food bank again this year and ask that you send your child in with any tins of food, bottles of orange squash, cartons of UHT milks or packs of dry pasta you can, to support this worthy cause.

Please stay safe, encourage your children to do the same, and follow the HANDS – FACE – SPACE guidance [here](#).

As always, I wish you good health and a lovely weekend.

Nicholas Simms  
Headteacher

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