

American School of Douala TALKING DRUMS

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From the Director's Desk by Michael Breece

The Importance of Eating Together

Movies often portray idyllic family dinners in which everyone is sitting around a table, sharing stories of their day and enjoying a meal together. However, as parents, we know that this is not always as simple as it seems.

The Washington Post published an article in 2015 that highlighted the work of Anne Fishel, a professor at Harvard Medical School and co-founder of The Family Dinner Project. The article, titled, "The most important thing you can do with your kids? Eat dinner with them", discussed recent research into the effects that having dinner together as a family can have on child development. The article breaks down how dinnertime is good for the brain, the body, and the soul.

According to data collected by Fishel's team, for younger children, dinnertime conversation increased vocabulary more than being read aloud to. The reason given for this is that the variety of words

you use in everyday conversation is greater than the words typically found in children's books that you may read to your child. Furthermore, the study found that for school aged children, regular family mealtimes has a greater effect on high academic achievement than time spent in school, doing homework, playing sports, or doing art. For teenagers, eating meals together as a family between 5-7 times a week, leads to students earning A's more than twice as much as students who report eating dinner with their families fewer than 2 times a week.

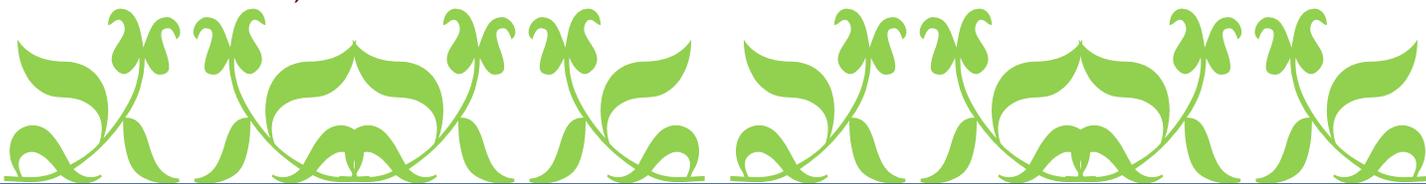
In addition to being good for the brain, eating together as a family also has shown to be good for the body. Numerous studies, including those conducted by The Family Dinner Project, have found that children who eat together with their families regularly eat more vegetables, fruits, vitamins, and micronutrients, as well as less soda and fewer fried foods. A family dinner is a great

opportunity for parents to model healthy eating habits and discuss with children the importance of eating a well-balanced diet.

The final area addressed by Ms. Fishel's article is the development of the soul, which includes personal and social development, as well as the ability to make good choices. Numerous studies have linked regular family dinners to lowering behaviors such as smoking, violence, and school problems. In many families, the dinner table is the one place where everyone agrees to meet at a particular time each day. It is an opportunity for the family to connect, share stories of their day, and bond with one another. It is a great place for children to learn good manners, as well as how to be a responsible member of the family by helping to prepare the meal and cleaning up.

Mark Your Calendar

PTA Bake Sale	May 10
Progress Reports	May 10
AP Exams	May 13-14
Board Meeting	May 14
PTA Meeting	May 15
NHS Ceremony	May 16



Counselor's Corner

by Nika Bowens

May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

Mental Health Awareness Month was created by Mental Health America, a U.S. based mental health organization, in 1949. In recent years, many non-profit organizations have contributed to promoting Mental Health Awareness Month.

Throughout this school year, students in kindergarten through 12th grade have participated in social-emotional classroom lessons. Based on needs, many students have had additional individual counseling meetings and small group counseling lessons. As with the other two counseling domains, academic development and university/career development, my goals are to help students understand and identify their current challenges and to then develop perseverance strategies. For

the social-emotional development counseling domain, a crucial component to overcoming challenges is teaching students healthy coping mechanisms, and providing additional guidance when they face adversity.

Since many students may have difficulty expressing challenges they are having, or may not even understand their challenges, it is important for both educators and parents to pay attention to warning signs. The Mayo Clinic provides a clear summary of what to be mindful of [here](#).

In addition to resources that may be available locally, there are also many online mental health options for kids and teens:

Mental Health Screening Tools (should be used for informational purposes, not to diagnose)

[Mental Health](#)

[America](#)

[Behavioral Health Evolution](#)

[MindWise](#)

[Online Therapy](#)

[Teen Counseling](#)

[Better Help](#)

[Live Health Online](#)

[Breakthrough](#)

[Regain](#)

[Thrive Talk](#)

[Talk Space](#)

[Turn 2 Me](#)

[Apps](#)

[Code Blue](#)

[Breathe2Relax](#)

[Big White Wall](#)

[SAM](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

[Headspace](#)

[Calm](#)

[Recovery Record](#)

[Grief: Support for Young People](#)

[Dragon in the Attic](#)

[PTSD Coach](#)

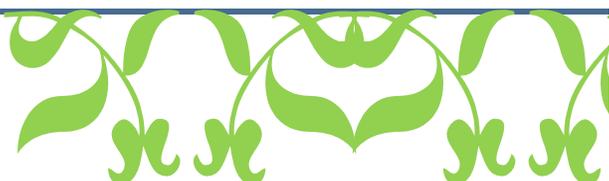
[MindShift](#)

[iCouch CBT](#)

[Cognitive Diary CBT Self-Help](#)



May is
Mental Health
Awareness
Month



Senior Feature: Kimberly

Name: Kimberly

Years you've been at ASD: 5

Favorite memory of ASD: Visits to the orphanage

Favorite teacher: Mr. Elive

What do you love most about ASD: The events

College/University attending: Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)

Major/course of study: Architecture and possibly Engineering (as a double major)

Where do you see yourself in 5 years: In the US (not sure exactly where), having my first official job and getting ready to go to graduate school (possibly University of Virginia).

What advice would you give younger students: You should enjoy being young and live life to the fullest. However, you must devote yourself to your studies as it is important for your future. Do not take any class for granted.



Freedom of Speech *By Kimberly*

Freedom of speech is having the right to express his/her own opinion freely. I personally believe that having the right to speak freely helps develop a person's own persona and their character too. In a school, it is often encouraged because students tend to act shy and sometimes close in when they encounter people they usually are not familiar with. I say speak out and don't be afraid to let your voice be heard.



Cameroon National Day *By Brandon*

Cameroon National Day is quickly approaching. The 2019 Cameroon National Day is occurring this year on Monday, 20 May, which is therefore considered a public holiday in all of Cameroon and there will be no school. For those who do not know, the holiday commemorates President Ahmadou Ahidjo's abolishment of the federal system of government in favor of a united country, which occurred on the 20th May, 1972. It is a particularly special Cameroonian holiday which is acknowledged every year. Enjoy the day off with your families!

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The week following National Day will be Cameroon Week, in which we learn about the different regions of Cameroon and their traditions.



26 days

