



June 2022

*"It simply isn't an adventure worth telling if there aren't any dragons."*

- J.R.R. Tolkien

## St. Cat's Counseling

### Letter to Families

A favorite comparison of mine to a teenager's life is that of Bilbo Baggins. In teens, you often see deep feelers without the ability to think abstractly, resulting in a sensitive human with a beautiful and eager spirit waiting to come out. We encourage adventure, while we know that there will be dragons ahead. Tolkien must've known about teenagers.

Because COVID was one large, "dragon" and because we are in the long process of making up for deficits, I began this year with many new classroom goals: teach our students the strength of a belly breath, teach them how anxiety and bravery go hand in hand, and perhaps most importantly, teach them the value of reflection. As a fortunate receiver of Jesuit education, I like to impart the values of being a "contemplate in action" to our kids, even if in the slightest ways. Through this action, we find beauty even in the dark, awkward, or fear-filled moments, and find out why God gifted us with a plethora of emotions. For me, I stumbled upon my most valuable reflection of the year as a timeless hit was playing at the dork dance at Warm Beach with our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. That song? Of course, it was "Sweet Caroline."

This song shows up in so many of our best memories: weddings, dances, or Cubs games after a win. But why did this song mean so much to me when I watched those 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders dancing like fun-loving dorks during camp? Because it was a chance to see how perfection has grown out of this messy COVID situation that this 8<sup>th</sup>-grade class has emerged from. They took what was difficult and turned it into growth and love.

I have seen this in so many of our students this year. Resiliency is not just throwing dirt on the wound and moving forward. It is absorbing what is challenging, (or a dragon, if you're Bilbo Baggins), and choosing to move forward as a new person. What inhibits adventure? Trying to please, defensiveness, fear, lack of knowledge, or a lack of vulnerability comes to mind. We inhibit adventure and growth when we avoid challenges and ignore active contemplation. Don't ignore the dragons, or you might miss out on a grand adventure.

We have come to the end of the year, a time when we all need a rejuvenation. Find it outside, in new arenas, by contemplation, through tough challenges and adventures with dragons and without fear. Have a blessed summer and I will see you next year!

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Dork Dance experts:  
Quinn & Darragh.

## Updates From My Office

- **Thank you to our Career Day Volunteers!** - From finance to healthcare, coaching to fence building, we had a fantastic representation of careers at career day. Students are still talking about how much they loved learning from each and every one of you. I look forward to next year and can't wait to see who will join us!



**Summer Small Group:** This summer I have the opportunity to offer a *new* counseling and social skills small group for *incoming grades 3-5*, happening here at St. Catherine! The need for child and adolescent counseling has never been higher than right now, as it is a major challenge to find providers in the Seattle area. Although I am unable to meet with our students outside of school during the school year, I am thrilled to provide this option to work with your children outside school hours during the summer months. This small group will be a ton of fun and have many different aspects to it. We will learn emotional regulation skills, participate in group sharing, and play many games.

Sessions will take place each Monday from 9-11:30 am beginning on July 11<sup>th</sup>. Our last small group session will take place on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each session is \$50, but I am very open to discussing a sliding scale. Reach out soon if you would like your son or daughter to participate!

- **Saying goodbye to Mr. Botello:** It has been a pleasure to have our school counseling intern, Jesse Botello with us from Seattle Pacific University for the last few months. The world needs more counselors like Jesse, so we were incredibly grateful for his presence at our school. Mr. Botello taught classes, met one-on-one with students, and developed impactful relationships along the way. Thank you, Mr. Botello!



## Resources of the Month

- In response to the tragedy in Texas:
  - [Caring for Kids After a School Shooting - Child Mind Institute](#)
  - [How to Talk to Kids About School Shootings | Common Sense Media](#)
  - [SEL Toolkit: Family Engagement - Move This World](#)
- [Little SPOT Emotions Book](#) - another tool for emotional literacy!
- [Parenting Tool: Validation](#) - another helpful tool for validation from Seattle Children's. *Nothing* is more important in helping your child develop healthy emotional experiences.
- [Choose Your Summer Career Experience](#) - thoughts on how to pick the right camp for your child. And below, you'll find some ideas!
  - [Seattle Parks Camp Finder](#)
  - [Seattle Summer Camp Guide](#)
  - [The Great Big List of Seattle Summer Camps 2022](#)
  - [Mountaineers Summer Programs](#)
  - [Taking Your Kids Camping](#) -encouragement to take some outdoor trips this summer!
  - [Outdoor Nature Scavenger Hunt](#)



Click on the picture to hear "Weirdos Make Great Superheroes," a fun anthem to help kids embrace what makes them awesome.

- [Easy-To-Use Calming Strategy](#) - Tips from the Mindful Dad. He may not be the best on camera, but he gives great advice!
  - [Self-Care Through Self-Compassion: My ADHD Journey](#)
  - [Faster Than Normal Podcast](#) - a podcast made for kiddos with ADHD, by someone who was once a kid with ADHD.
  - [The 7 types of rest that every person needs](#) - interpreting needs about rest. Summer is about adventure, but also rejuvenation! Besides a great nap, how do we rest?
  - [1 Phrase to Avoid When Comforting a Disappointed Child](#) - When watching *Inside Out* with the middle school kids this week, I was reminded of the deep value of validating sadness.
  - [Teaching Children Compromise](#) - especially tough for siblings in those summer months!
  - [What to Say When Kids Ask Hard Questions](#) - an article that can help with those tricky subjects such as overseas wars, pandemics, death, and more.
- **Mental Health Professionals Resources:** If you are struggling to find mental health resources in the city, you are NOT alone! Mental health resources are in high demand these days, but you can still put your name on waiting lists, and check in periodically for new resources. Here is my updated list:
    - [St. C's Mental Health Referrals](#)
    - Low cost from NAMI Seattle: [Low Cost and Sliding Scale Psych Providers](#)
    - Emergency lines from NAMI: [NAMI Helplines](#)

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[School Counselor Home Page](#) – My page on the school site is the place I house all these resources and more.

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*As always, remember that it shows strength and courage to ask for help or advocate for someone else's mental health. You can save these numbers to be prepared:*

Crisis supports are available if your student is concerned for themselves or others. [Teen Link](#) can be reached daily from 6-10 PM at 1-866-833-6546; the following resources can be reached 24/7 365 days a year: [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 800-273-8255 / Worried about someone on social media? [Support on Social Media - Lifeline](#); the [24-hr Crisis Line](#): 1-866-427-4747; and the [Crisis Text Line](#) can be reached via SMS 24/7— simply text "HEAL" to 741-741.

If you have any questions, concerns, or you think someone needs help, please reach out to me and we can discuss how and when to reach out.