

GMS Counselors' Blast



Gunston
MIDDLE SCHOOL

October 2018
First Quarter Edition



Meet the Counseling Staff

Introducing our new staff . . .

Eric Jefferson is our new 6th grade counselor. Mr. Jefferson is a recent graduate from Marymount University and has some previous experience in college admissions.

Lindsay Carr is our new 8th grade counselor. Ms. Carr was a former English teacher at GMS and also worked as an educator in Pennsylvania.

Takiya Jackson is our new School Psychologist. Ms. Jackson is a recent graduate from Howard University and has worked with students in Loudon County and the District of Columbia Public schools.

Hiwot Gizachew is our new Interlude Therapist. Ms. Gizachew has worked in an outpatient treatment program and with students in a residential setting.

Changing Roles . . .

Marlene Cordero is our new HILT counselor. Ms. Cordero has been at GMS as a school counselor and Bilingual Parent Liaison.

Returning Staff . . .

Briana Milton
Director of Counseling Services

Samantha King
6th grade Montessori Counselor & Program Counselor

Sharon Kolody
7th grade Counselor

Colleen Greenwood
School Social Worker

Vanessa Zuniga
Substance Abuse Counselor

Cynthia Sturdivant
Registrar

How We Support Students . . .

- ◆ Social Emotional Learning
- ◆ Individual Counseling
- ◆ Group Counseling
- ◆ Classroom Lessons
- ◆ Academic Planning
- ◆ Transition Support
- ◆ Student-centered parent conferences
- ◆ Collaboration with teachers, parents, and community resources



Ready, Set, RAMP!

The GMS Counselors submitted their application on October 15 to become a Recognized (American School Counselor Association) Model Program. What does that mean? The GMS Counseling program will be recognized as a comprehensive, data-driven program that:

- ◆ Aligns with the ASCA National Model,
- ◆ Looks at the effectiveness of our counseling activities and makes changes to support students' needs, ,
- ◆ Increases skills and knowledge for all students, and
- ◆ Enhances our program's efforts that contribute to student success.

Thank you for your support on our journey to RAMP!



News & Tips for Parents



What's Happening

◆ Bullying Prevention Week (Oct 1 - 5)

Monday

Blue Up—Wear blue
Positive Post Day

Tuesday

STOMP Out Bullying

Wednesday

Take What You Need . . .
Leave What You Don't

Thursday

#See Me

Friday

New Friend Friday

◆ Bullying Prevention Lessons (Oct - Nov)

◆ Signs of Suicide Lesson (8th Grade only-- Oct 31)

Stomp Out Bullying at GMS!

October is *National Bullying Prevention* month. *Stomp Out Bullying* is a national organization and resource for students that seeks to change the culture within schools by reducing and preventing all forms of bullying and by teaching solutions that bring positive change. In addition to promoting acceptance and equality for all students, the program offers strategies for students who may be at risk for suicide as a result of bullying. Check out their website at Stomp Out Bullying.

To kick off things, *Bullying Prevention* week was October 1 - 5. Students participated in activities during TA and lunch. There was a schoolwide challenge where students worked in teams with their TA to create a PSA encouraging the Gunston Community to "Stomp Out Bullying".

Counselors will be presenting lessons in classes throughout the month of October and November.

SOS: Signs of Suicide (A Prevention Program)

As part of APS efforts to support the emotional well-being of students, the *Signs of Suicide* curriculum was given to 8th graders. It is an evidence-based program that discusses the warning signs for suicide and decreases the possibility of suicidal attempts. Students will gain knowledge and tools on how to support themselves or other students who may be considering suicide and get tips from mental health professionals. Students will be given an exit survey to inform counselors if they are considering suicide and may need additional support.



Parent Resources

HOW TO HELP IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

- ◆ Ask open-ended questions to get more accurate information about what is happening.
- ◆ Discuss some conflict-resolution skills that include ignoring, distracting, redirecting, negotiating, reporting, and assertive responses.
- ◆ Work with your child's counselor and administrator to resolve the issues and create a plan that makes your child feel more comfortable.

HOW TO DISCUSS THE TOPIC OF SUICIDE WITH YOUR CHILD

- ◆ Communication is important! Talk to your child about suicide to determine their knowledge or thoughts about it. Research shows that talking about it does not necessarily give ideas.
- ◆ Respond to your child's thoughts with a calm and open mind.
- ◆ Contact your child's school counselor or other mental health professional if your child has thoughts or may be considering suicide.

