

Parent Newsletter

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EACH month our administrative team wants to give you information relevant to your child's experience at Wheaton Academy as well as to talk about key issues that we face as we seek to partner in helping students know Jesus better, develop a biblical worldview, discover their gifts and prepare for God's call on their life.

This month we want to talk about these topics:

- Students Serving with Kids Alive
- Family Chat
- Off-Campus Learning Day
- Upcoming PSAT
- Senior Service Day
- Nurse

We are thankful for our community at Wheaton Academy – we truly have a wonderful group of students and families. It is a privilege to work with you and your child in the year ahead.

The mission of Wheaton Academy is to nurture growth in students through relationships, excellence and service to the glory of God

Wheaton Academy Students Serving with Kids Alive

Over the past several years, Wheaton Academy has engaged in a thriving partnership with Kids Alive International. **Each month the students of Wheaton Academy raise \$1000 to support 25 orphans in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Above and beyond this monthly campaign, the students have been able to donate \$20,000 which will provide 30,000 meals to feed 170 children in Haiti throughout this fall season.** Wheaton Academy was recently featured in the Kids Alive monthly magazine as this partnership continues to grow.

Students from Wheaton Academy will travel to these two locations in January for Winterim. Val Gregersen, who will continue to lead the trip, describes the rich partnership: “Our relationship with Kids Alive allows our students to see ways God is working in another culture and helps to develop the understanding that followers of Christ are to take care of the vulnerable, poor, and orphans. The Kids Alive missionaries and staff model and teach this concept, and God uses the relationships the students build with the children sponsored by Wheaton Academy to develop it on a personal level. We have had students intern with Kids Alive and other mission organizations as a result of these experiences. They then share with their families, fellow students, and churches their personal experiences which help to educate others about holistically meeting the needs of vulnerable children around the world. Wheaton Academy students’ hearts become more like the heart of Jesus Christ as a result of this partnership.”

Family Chat

Last Monday in our Community Time, we talked with our students about vaping since this is an increasing threat to students and to the culture of Wheaton Academy. Brad Thornton shared:

“We are sitting today for a family chat – sometimes we need to gather in the living room, not because there’s an emergency or because anyone’s in trouble, but because we need to address something serious together as a school family.

Today that topic is vaping. We have already addressed the serious nature with which we are approaching violations when we talked through our Student Handbook. We are treating vape like any other illicit substance on campus, so our stance is a serious one. But we are not going the route of many schools in responding to what has become an epidemic in high schools across the country. We are not shutting down bathrooms and restricting student use to one; we are not installing vape detectors in

hallways, classrooms, or bathrooms as are so many schools. No, we are seeking to preserve and protect our culture and what makes WA feel different. We want you to feel this way as well.

The narrative that vaping is harmless is simply not true. Vape often contains highly addictive amounts of nicotine. And though marketed as an alternative to smoking, a way for heavy smokers to work toward quitting, the reality is that companies like JUUL are targeting you aggressively with sleek products, fun flavors, and social media brilliance. Their goal is to make vaping seem commonplace, rebellious, and appealing. They want nothing more than to take your dollars in exchange for filling your lungs with hot chemicals and addictive nicotine so that you keep coming back for more. I would beg you to be wise and recognize that behind the marketing, behind the appeal, is nothing more than greed with no regard for your well-being.

Also, as I already appealed to protecting what we have here, please understand that the vape culture collides directly with the values of our school culture, one that celebrates unity, growth, cohesion, fun, and loving kindness, all under the celebratory nature of the gospel and grace found in Jesus Christ. The sneaky and rebellious nature of vaping only steals and damages what we are so desperately seeking here. In a school that seeks to be counter cultural in so many ways, we conform to worldly patterns when we let vape culture infiltrate talk at the lunch-table or even infiltrate hangouts with friends.

Please be wise, and please recognize that we speak to you as people who truly, honestly want what's best. If vaping is a problem for you, please talk to someone. Thank you for hearing me out, and we are going to close our family chat like I do at home, in prayer."

Thank you for partnering with us as we seek to help our students make wise and healthy choices for their lives.

Off-Campus Learning Day

As Wheaton Academy is committed to preparing students for learning in different types of scenarios that they will face in both the present and the future, periodically during the year we have "Off-Campus" learning days when teachers are involved in professional learning and growth. In the past, when teachers were learning on campus, students had a day off, but because of our technology and 1:1 initiative, we can take advantage of this day for learning. This practice not only maximizes our instructional time but also teaches students valuable skills in preparation for the possibility of taking an on-line class in the future.

We have given our teachers instructions on ways to structure these learning days, and they will communicate specifically with students about their respective classes. **However, in our partnership, we would ask you as parents to honor that this is a school day in non-traditional form. Students should expect to spend 6-8 hours during the day in "learning activities,"** and while they do not necessarily need to happen between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and will not happen on campus, we wanted you to know for your planning purposes.

Thank you for your partnership and support as we endeavor to help students learn in new and innovative ways on Friday, September 21.

Upcoming PSAT

On Wednesday, October 10, our school will administer the PSAT 8/9™ to all freshmen and the PSAT/NMSQT to all sophomores/juniors. These exams focus on the classroom skills and knowledge your child will need to be successful in college. The PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT will assist Wheaton Academy to help your child in several ways.

- Test results show your child his or her strengths, work needed to be college-ready, and ways to stay on track from 9th through 12th grade.

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- After the test, your child can strengthen essential skills and knowledge for the PSAT/SAT with free personalized practice on Khan Academy®.
- Online reports are provided to students and educators, allowing them to act on test results and access additional practice in areas that need improvement.
- Scores qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program via the PSAT/NMSQT (Junior year).
- Scores connect students to potential scholarships via the PSAT/NMSQT (Junior year).

Colleges and universities accept both the ACT and SAT for admissions purposes. Some students prefer to take either the ACT or the SAT; others take both exams and see which score will serve them better for admissions and scholarships. Wheaton Academy is now a test center for both the ACT and SAT examinations at various points throughout the year.

As you approach the October 10 testing date, you can support your child in these important ways:

- Make sure your child is on time to school this day, is well rested, and has a good breakfast.
- Explain to students the value of this test both for now and the future as you seek to navigate the college admissions process.
- Encourage students to do their absolute best on the test.

On October 10, we will dismiss school at 12:30 p.m. after the testing is complete. This day, although only a half-day of school, is critical not only for Wheaton Academy to gain valuable data on ways to continue to support our students' achievement, but also for each individual student as this test will be valuable in preparing students for the college admissions process. Thank you in advance for your support in having your child at school and ready for this important day. If you have questions, please feel free to contact any member of our Student Services or Administrative team.

Senior Service Day

While our freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will be taking the PSAT on October 10, our seniors will have the opportunity to serve in the community. The vision for the day is that our seniors will be able to pursue their passion and find opportunities where they can serve for this day. We will be providing opportunities as well for students to sign up and travel as a group to serve, but as we seek to launch our seniors, we want them to have a vision for finding opportunities and making service a part of their life when they leave Wheaton Academy. **Jeff Brooke will be sending a letter home to parents to communicate all the details for the day.** Please pray for our seniors as they learn in different ways by serving others on October 10.

Nurse

During the 2018-19 school year, we have new Health Office hours from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **While a registered nurse is on campus for emergencies, the school nurse will not arrive and be available to dispense medicine until 10:00 a.m.** If your child is feeling ill in the morning, please consider keeping him/her home. Thank you for your partnership with us in communicating this scheduling information.

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