



Dear Wellspring Families and Friends,

It is hard to believe that 2019 has arrived and the second semester of the 2018-2019 school year has begun. I hope your children's days away from their daily routines were pleasant yet productive. As we joyfully look forward to all the excitement and challenges of 2019, I would like to share some of the school's current accomplishments and aims for continuous academic and non-academic success during the remaining school year.

### **Class of 2019**

Wellspring is very proud to announce that one of our students has just received an early admissions acceptance into the Medical Laboratory Sciences program at The American University of Beirut (AUB) as a Sophomore. Another member of Wellspring's Class of 2019 has been nominated for the prestigious Lester B. Pearson International Scholarship at the University of Toronto. Best of luck to all members of The Class of 2019 who have applied for early admissions. Our senior students have sent 55 applications to 7 US universities, 4 Canadian universities, UK and France along with AUB, LAU and Université De Balamand – Académie Libanaise Des Beaux-Arts.

The Class of 2019 will hold its annual graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 8 at AUB's Assembly Hall. All Wellspring families are cordially invited.

### **Improving our Future: examination results and entrance to university**

Wellspring continues to focus on equipping our learners with the necessary skills and knowledge required to be successful when it comes to standardized testing, official government exams and the rigors of individual subject knowledge needed in the MYP and DP. All efforts are being made to support students who are struggling or need extra time with one of their teachers. Our dedicated faculty members are generously offering extra support on Wednesday afternoons and appointments during lunch breaks and free periods. More than 40 individualized support plans have been shared with students along with individual meetings and suggested material for review. SAT Math prep classes for Grades 11/12 resume in January 2019. Your child's SAT success also depends upon your support, enthusiasm and encouragement to fully attend all supplementary SAT classes.

- The Homework Club at CCC offers individual tutoring services from 3 pm until 5 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays for a minimal fee. Subject teachers from Arabic, math, physics, biology and chemistry are available. Students are welcome to join for one or more days per week.
- SAT English Afterschool Course (optional) resumes in January 2019.

### **Wellspring's Grade 9 Brevet Class**

Our Grade 9 Brevet students have been working hard over the break with their official exams preparation. We are very proud of their dedication and positive attitude. Once Grade 9 students sit for their MYP mid-year exams, Brevet prep classes go into "full speed" with the specific focus on



preparation. Wellspring is very proud of our 100% success rate and we know this year's class will have several "Bien" and "Trés Bien" remarks. Best of luck to this year's Brevet class.

**Official Brevet Exams: June 12, 13, 15, 17**

### **Career Guidance and University Counseling**

Applying for the right university is usually a stressful yet exciting experience for parents and students. Making just the right university decision, preparing all the necessary paperwork and the application itself with the important deadlines, is challenging at best. Under the leadership of Wellspring's university counselor, over 9 universities made individual visits to the City Centre Campus and two large university fairs from UK and US based universities were held during this past October. So far, this year, Wellspring students have had the opportunity to chat with over 35 university representatives.

### **PreSat Testing for Grades 10 and 11**

Our first year of pretesting students with SAT Exams (for university entrance) netted interesting and positive results for this new initiative. According to the benchmarks set by the US firm College Board, both Grades 10 and 11 scored well within the expected boundaries and even above in English reading and writing which is positive news. With the additional support and study strategies during the school year, students will continue to develop their testing skills explicitly taught to improve their scores.

Students who plan to enter fields of specialized medicine, science, math or engineering at US based universities both here and abroad, must at least have SAT scores of between 1200 -1400. All SAT scores can be improved with more explicit practice and mock exams. Rarely is it possible for a senior student to earn a high SAT score without extra practice and support outside of regular school. Earning high SAT scores depend on test taking abilities and strategies rather than just content knowledge. The best way to prepare for the SAT is through lots of practice and reading!

## **Academic Initiatives for 2019-2020**

### **Socio/ Economics Track added to Wellspring's Lebanese Baccalaureate Program**

Wellspring is pleased to announce that our Lebanese Baccalaureate students who are currently in Grade 10 will be able to choose between two different official BACC programs of either Life Sciences or Socio/Economics for 2019-2020. The school's DP Coordinator is currently asking all Grade 10 students in the IB or Lebanese program to select which Lebanese track or IB courses suit their university and career paths. Parents are always partners in the child's education and Wellspring values each family's decision for the two-year cycle of education.

### **2019 Curriculum Review for MYP**

As part of Wellspring's ongoing 5 year strategic plans for academic improvement for 2019, the school will be inviting outside subject specialists, local examiners and the school's curriculum



mapper to reevaluate the horizontal and vertical content alignment, academic deliverables and learning expectations in each MYP subject area of English, math, and the sciences.

Local language experts and our Arabic subject leaders at both Mathaf and CCC continue to review and align the school's Modern Standard Arabic language deliverables and expectations needed for our local Lebanese students who are required to sit for the Brevet or qualify in the future for Arabic Language A (DP) (once official) or the BACC tracks of Life Sciences and Socio/Economics.

### **IB Diploma Programme Equivalence for Lebanese Students**

Wellspring is anxiously waiting for an announcement from the Ministry of Education offering the IB DP equivalence to Lebanese students entering Grades 11 and 12. Kindly note that the Grade 9 Brevet official exams will continue to remain a prerequisite for all Lebanese students regardless of their choice to apply for the IB equivalence or continue at Wellspring in one of the two Lebanese tracks. The final decree regarding the IB equivalence rests with the new government with a potential announcement for next year. Wellspring will keep you updated.

### **Improving English Writing Skills with Lucy Calkins Writer's Workshop - Mathaf**

Our PYP students are becoming more confident writers with the implementation of the Lucy Calkins writing program. Grades KG2-Grade 5 students are producing narratives and informative pieces of writing "on demand" by using specific strategies from each writer's workshop session. Each unit and genre of writing has a specific checklist that highlights important qualities required for successful writing. These common checklist tools, rubrics and common language of learning, conferencing, coaching and reflecting empower students to systematically support, develop and improve their own writing skills. The next unit of writing will focus on opinion writing as the program moves into the second semester.

To improve reading and writing, **additional online programs of RAZ KIDS Reading A-Z and RAZ KIDS Science Leveled Reading A-Z** have been added to augment and challenge reading at the elementary level.

### **Developing Better PYP Math Skills By Using the Online Platform "Mathletics"**

Your child is using **Mathletics** as part of their homework and mathematics program. Mathletics is a targeted, rewarding and captivating **online learning resource**, which is aligned to improve math skills along with differentiated learning and challenging activities. Your child has home access to **Mathletics** which they should be using on a regular basis. The extra Mathletics practice at home will empower your child's success in math. Please become familiar with the use of **Mathletics** and challenge your child to achieve a weekly target of 1000 points to earn certificates at each level. Our elementary students are having lots of fun by challenging their classmates and peers online!

### **Coding and Technology at Wellspring**

Wellspring continues to offer a variety of technology and coding activities to students from KG2-Grade 8 outside of the school curriculum where students can stretch their understanding and



broaden their exposure to 21<sup>st</sup> century IT and computing skills. On December 3-9, Mathaf students joined the worldwide “online” **Hour of Code** competition and learning celebration. Over 10% of students from around the world celebrated Computer Science Education Week by competing at their local schools. Because coding is a vital part of Wellspring’s PYP IT curriculum, our students, teachers and parents were invited to take part in this world-wide event. Wellspring’s after school list of after school IT activities continues to grow with classes offered in Vex Robotics, Coding and Logical Thinking, Drones and Virtual Reality Coding, Mechatronics and Junior Programming. Wellspring will be sending two teams of competitors to the annual Vex Robotics Competition at NDU’s Faculty of Engineering on Saturday, March 2.

## **More Experiential Learning for 2019**

### **Week Without Walls-City Centre Campus - Grades 6 - 11**

Wellspring is extremely excited about our first annual **Week Without Walls**. This year all experiences are scheduled to take place from **April 11 – April 17, 2019**. Experiential learning continues to be a major part of Wellspring’s curriculum and vision for making “real” connections to everyday life.

The purpose of Week Without Walls (obligatory week of attendance), is to provide students an opportunity to “become confident, resourceful, creative, caring, responsible and thinking citizens prepared to contribute in meaningful ways toward improving society, both locally and internationally”. The week is not a week of vacation but rather a chance to learn about a different culture, study a country’s past, practice a foreign language, help understand and support the needs of others, support the environment, focus on technology or earn a week of valuable work experience from a local business or profession. Please see the finalized trips mentioned below.

- Turning Disability into Ability (local)
- Sustainable Natural Environment (local)
- Natural and cultural History of Lebanon (local)
- Robotics in Today’s World (local)
- Investigative Advocacy (local)
- Short Film Making (local)
- Surf and Serve (local)
- Technology in Today’s World (local)
- Language Practice Trip to France,
- Culture and Heritage Trips to Turkey, Jordan
- Nepal Service Trip

### **Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) at Wellspring**

Caring for others is woven into the fabric of Wellspring and it begins in Early Years. During the month of December, students at both Mathaf collected toys, clothing and school supplies for a local orphanage Home of Hope while Grade 9 students worked with the Lebanese Food Bank to provide



47 boxes of food to be distributed to local families. Grade 7 students joined up with Advanced Car Rental and Carbon Free Journey by planting over 450 trees in Joub Janine. The car company and Wellspring's math department took experiential learning a step further by planning and using their classroom calculations in the forest! Many of our Grade 11 and Grade 12 students continue to volunteer at Animals Lebanon, Beit Atfal Asumoud, Food Blessed and the Big Blue Ramlet El Baydah beach cleanup.

### **Celebrating 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**

On behalf of Wellspring Learning Community, I would like to thank Mr. P Sasi Kumar from the Indian Embassy for the informative documentary presented on November 29 to our Grade 10 students. Wellspring is grateful for the time and effort taken to give our students a closer look at the country of India, the culture, national dance and the life of Mahatma Gandhi. The Embassy's donation to the CCC library was greatly appreciated.

### **Model United Nations (MUN) Conferences**

Our Wellspring MUN teams have the opportunity to travel and attend two different Model United Nations (MUN) besides the annual LAU MUN Conference held on February 2 and 3. This year's [Change the World Model United Nations](#) conference will be held in Rome from February 6-10. CWMUN is a world-renowned MUN conference, bringing together some of the best MUN student teams from around the globe. Opening Ceremonies of the conference take place at the Italian Parliament, an excellent experience for our students. This conference is open to students in **Grades 9-12**.

The second opportunity for our Wellspring MUN student team is to attend the [American International School Model United Nations](#) conference in Cairo from March 22-25. AISMUN is a student-run conference that attracts students from around the globe and is sure to inspire our own student leaders. This conference is open to students in **Grades 7-12**.

### **Expanding Wellspring's Back into Our Own School Community**

Students at the Mathaf and City Centre Campuses are working collaboratively in an assortment of Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) activities. Senior students are volunteering to support other Wellspring students and events. CCC students helped WPAC during their Story Telling evening event and have organized small events for Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 students. A group of Grade 11 students launched their own behavior mentorship and support group under the guidance of the Assistant Principal and University Counselor. Working within the PBIS framework, students will be helping other students when issues of behavior pop up.



## **Just for Parents**

### **Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)**

The practice of PBIS seeks to improve school climate and student behavior. Positive behavior enhances student performance and the general relationship between classroom peers and teachers. Students can be given more autonomy and agency when good behavior becomes a routine. Unwanted behavior affects directly and indirectly everyone in the classroom or on the playground. Wellspring does publish a yearly **Student Handbook** that all parents have been sent electronically. The aim of the behavior part is to reconfirm with parents how the school approaches behavior using PBIS. Our vision for acceptable behavior has not changed over the years, yet this new approach and framework has been added. For those parents who would like to know more about school expectations or how unwanted behavior is approached at Wellspring, please refer back to the school's October 2, 2018 email. For more general information about the PBIS approach, please contact Ms Maha Frangieh or Mr. Brett Warfield for details.

### **New Approach for Early Years Applicants and family Interviews - Mathaf**

As new families begin to think about where to enroll their Early Years children for 2019-2020, Wellspring has changed its new student interview process to be more child friendly by using a typical classroom setting with several learning stations happening at the same time. The focus of observing each child's interest and their interactions demonstrated in a small group setting of peers rather than the more traditional "one on one" style of interviewing is being implemented. Wellspring believes this approach is geared more in the direction of a typical school day in the IB PYP programme. Before each interview, families are informed about the process and expectations. Hopefully, this new process will lessen some of the "pre-interview" stress new parents face.

### **ProtectEd Parenting Workshop Targets the Home Use of the Internet**

Kidproof joined forces with Wellspring on November 19th by offering our first parenting workshop for the 2018-2019 school year. The workshop tackled the risks and dangers that our students face with today's exposure and use of the Internet: cyber addiction, risks related to gaming, sexting, cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content online. The workshop provided parents with positive parenting advice, self-esteem building tips, guidelines on how to improve the child's sense of responsibility and self-reliance, all in order to ensure a strong parent-child relationship with positive lines of communication within the family. Wellspring thanks all parents who attended this first event.

### **Coffee Mornings at CCC**

The City Centre Campus, the school's assistant principal and principal have started a practice of "Coffee Mornings" with parents. The first coffee morning was with Grade 6 parents on December 12. Grade 7 parents enjoyed the December 19 meeting. The meetings will continue after the Winter break. The school believes that these meetings help create stronger bonds between parents and school and such bonds will definitely improve our students learning experiences while keeping



parents abreast of changes happening at school. This is also a venue for parents to share their feedback and ideas.

- Grade 8 parents on January 16
- Grade 9 parents on January 23

### **Love to Read? Join the next CCC book club**

A book club was started by our assistant principal. Eleven parents and 2 staff members are currently reading: **“The Gift of Failure: How The Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed”** by Jessica Lahey. Parents from both campuses were invited to join. Please email [brettw@wellspring.edu.lb](mailto:brettw@wellspring.edu.lb) for more details regarding the second book.

### **New Parent Communications Policy and Procedure**

The school prides itself on our open relationship where parents, staff and students are welcome to share feedback and voice opinions. As Wellspring grows, our daily communications become more numerous, complex and more time consuming for the front office.

Wellspring aims to “streamline” communications between the school and parents by initiating a step by step procedure where parents will be able to directly contact those members of the Wellspring community who will be able to assist in a more expeditious manner. Wellspring has recently installed a new phone system where there is now direct dialing between all departments at both campuses thus “freeing up” more incoming lines for parent calls. Once the new policy is in effect, you will be requested to fill out an interactive form where the communication will be documented and sent to the appropriate staff member. Please watch for an official school announcement and school policy around April 2019 when the new interactive system will be in operation.

## **Students Having Fun**

### **After School Activities Remain Popular at Mathaf and CCC**

Almost 500 students with nearly 100% attendance, participate in a variety of after school activities. Mathaf offers a wide selection of sports, painting and sketching, gymnastics, dancing, singing, chess and Taekwondo. Mathaf’s Saturday program offers tennis with more selections available next term. Basketball, football, swimming, table tennis, badminton, Bildits, and tennis continue to be popular with our older students at CCC.

### **Wellspring Parent Advisory Committee (WPAC) “Story Telling Night”**

By all accounts, WPAC’s first evening event was an enjoyable night of games, activities and watching a movie “under the sky”. On November 3, armed with pajamas, sleeping bags, blankets and pillows, PYP students under the supervision of WPAC members, enjoyed a memorable evening. Wellspring has a wonderful parent organization and the school thanks them for their hard work and continuous support.



### **Mathaf Winter Book Fair**

The school's librarian hosted Mathaf's annual Winter Book Fair during December 11-14. Local book publishers offered a wide range of reading material and educational games to suit and develop the love of reading. As in past years, 2018 was no exception, students, teachers and parents supported their individual reading tastes while fund raising for additional books to be added to the Mathaf library. The total credit netted for Mathaf's library was \$1,400 worth of new books. A big thank you to all who continue to support this annual event.

### **Expanded play areas - Mathaf**

Our long anticipated "roof top" enclosed multipurpose play areas are receiving the final touches with the installation of side curtains, roof top covering, basketball hoops, special lighting and special "indoor" court flooring. January 10 was the official opening of the first roof top playground and it has been a really welcomed addition to Mathaf. If all goes according to plans, students will be able to enjoy the second new facility by February 1. Congratulations to all!

## **Upcoming Action and Dates to Remember**

**Kindly note that this coming Saturday, January 19** will be a full make up day for all Grade 6-10 students. School buses will run both in the morning and afternoon at the same time as your son or daughter usually rides. The class schedules will be a Tuesday schedule with the campus being open at 7am. The second day of MYP make up classes will be on the following Wednesday, January 23 that was originally scheduled as a reading day.

### **The Wizard of Oz - 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CCC Musical**

This year's Annual Musical "The Wizard of Oz" will take place on March 24, 25 and 26 at the newly renovated theater in Chiah which is in walking distance of CCC. Ticket reservations using Eventbrite will open at the beginning of March. Notification for the event and the Eventbrite link and details regarding both performances will be sent to all parents via Info.

### **Important IB Dates for Programme Evaluation**

Our first five years of offering the IB Diploma Programme, Middle Years Programme and the Primary Years Programme have been rewarding in many ways. As parents, you have witnessed the amazing ways in which our students continue to demonstrate creativity, self-reliance, higher level thinking skills, research, presentation and reflection skills.

As in any authorized school curriculum or accreditation membership, review, reflection and forward thinking become an exciting time where visiting teams of academic colleagues and organization membership visit for a regularly scheduled assessment of school practices. As in the past, Wellspring stakeholders have become valuable members of self-study committees, survey or interview participants. Evaluation visits are always exciting, challenging yet rewarding. Wellspring looks forward to our upcoming IB 5-year Evaluation visits.





**IB DP - March 2019**

**IB PYP - March 18, 19 and 20, 2020**

**IB MYP - April 1, 2 and 3, 2020**

**Mock Exams for Grade 12 Lebanese Program**

- Grade 12 Lebanese BACC Life Sciences will have their first “mock” exams on January 14 - 18
- Additional mocks on April 8 - 12 and May 6 - 10.
- Official BACC exams will be held on June 18, 20, 22, 24 and 25.

**Mock Exams for Grade 12 DP**

- Grade 12 IB DP students will have their “mock” exams on April 1 - 10
- Official DP exams are from May 3 - 24

**Mid-Year Exams for Grade 11 LB/DP**

- January 30 - February 5
- Reading/study (no school) day for Grade 11 students - January 29

**Mid-Year Exams for Grades 6-10**

- January 25 - February 1
- Reading/study (no school) days for MYP students - January 29, 31

**2019-2020 Vacation Calendar**

Wellspring’s new school calendar was released at the end of November 2018 and published on the school’s website. As promised, the school year has 180 teaching days which facilitates 10 more days of learning than in past years. The Administration aims to move most annual parent meetings to Saturdays for more convenience and parent participation. Please find the calendar attached to this email.

As head of school, I would like to thank all of our dedicated teachers, staff and parents who understand the value of education, encourage hard work and the pursuit of knowledge. From behind the scenes, I have the great pleasure to witness the daily rewards, accomplishments and sometimes frustrations that make our students, teachers and staff special. Wellspring is a unique community where we encourage success, reflect often and always aim for improvement.

I wish you and your family, a healthy 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Battah'.

**Kathleen A. Battah**  
**Head of School**