



FIREBIRD GAZETTE

FIREBIRD NATION

OCT 2022 • VOLUME 2

WELCOME BACK

BY: LAUREN CORDERO

Welcome back Firebirds! As the summer comes to a close and back-to-school season commences, here are a few things to remember for the upcoming year:

For those who are new to the school, welcome to Doral Academy. While there is a lot to learn as far as the campus, programs, and policies, make sure to stay informed on the Doral Academy website and our pertaining social media accounts such as our Instagram @doralacademyprep.

Remember to abide by Doral Academy's uniform policies, wear your school-issued IDs at all times, and stay alert to the changing schedules every other day. Doral Academy is divided into "A" and "B" days with alternating schedules, but there are always resources to look to if clarity is needed. We are very excited to have everyone back for this new year and ensure a safe, and structured environment for the students. For our returning students, we hope this school year brings you all the success you are striving for. For the Class of 2023 Seniors, welcome back to your last year at Doral Academy. It has been an incredible journey, especially for those who have been in Doral since 6th grade or even freshman year. It is the beginning of the end and we could not be more excited for all that is to come this school year. Seniors, make sure to make this last year count. Stay informed on all that pertains to college admissions and testing if you are planning ahead for the future, and don't be afraid to seek help from our faculty and staff if needed. We are ready for what this year has in store, and we hope to make this year as memorable as the ones that came before.

CALENDAR



October 3-7
Homecoming Week

October 3
FSPA District 6 Competition

October 5
NO SCHOOL

October 6
Pep Rally

October 6
Homecoming Football Game

October 8
Homecoming Dance

October 10
Columbus Day

October 12
Senior SAT

October 25
Hoopin' Halloween

October 27
Fright Night

October 31
Halloween

NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH

BY JORDAN VELASQUEZ

Choosing Kindness, Choosing Responsibility

October marks the beginning of National Bullying Prevention Month, a month dedicated to the stopping of child bullying and the spreading of kindness and inclusion. As students, we are faced with many challenges on a daily basis. Pressure from classes, from extracurriculars, from parents.

However, sometimes the most difficult trials that we may face come from our peers at school. Nowadays, bullying has become a much more prevalent issue in schools than in the past. With the ever-evolving invention of the internet and social media, bullying has branched out and often finds a place outside the classroom. Kids post mean comments, spread nasty rumors, or send rude messages to other kids. The result? Students who have been bullied report that these negative interactions have led to a drop of self-esteem, a disinterest in social interactions, and a drop in school performance. In severe cases, students often develop symptoms related to depression and anxiety, as well as other mental health problems.

In 2015, 21% of students ages 12-18 reported having been subject to some form of bullying, may that be online, verbal, or physical.



Clearly, bullying is not some bygone problem, but a current issue that we must prevent and fix.

So how do we prevent bullying? How do we make sure that our students are not facing unnecessary pressures, and that they can get the most out of their learning? The answer is to choose kindness, and to choose responsibility. Bullying is not a one-person problem, it is everyone's problem, and therefore it is up to everyone to strive for a solution. As students, we must encourage an environment of respect and goodwill, one where everyone is treated with decency. It is up to us to choose kindness. And when we see a group or a person who is not choosing to be

kind, it is up to us to choose responsibility. Do not let mean acts go unnoticed. It is our responsibility to stand for those who have a hard time standing up for themselves. Only by doing this, can we do our parts in preventing bullying in schools.



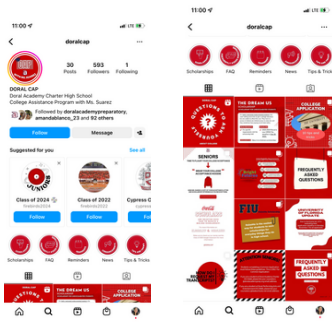
NEW COUNSELORS + CAP COUNSELOR INSTAGRAM SPOTLIGHT

BY JENNIFER GIRALDO

This year at Doral Academy, we're starting fresh and on a pretty high-tech note. New gadgets, new programs—even new wifi! From holograms to security measures we seem to be the futuristic take on an American school; even introducing new faculty to not only keep us safe but to support our mental health as a means of helping ourselves and others around us. These would be the newest recruits to Doral Academy's team of academic counselors- Mrs. Camejo, Mr. Perez, and Ms. Jimenez.

Mental health is far too often a topic we choose to overlook. During school assemblies, we tend to zone out and get bored to avoid the discomfort of the discussion. But truth be told, we hardly ever think about just how much it affects us. The people you see in your daily life all have different upbringings, which results in a different mentality for each and every one of them. And behind every one of these mentalities comes a story—something big happened as a child and because of that event, they developed a learned way of doing things.

Because these instincts eventually become natural we often experience discomfort when we are told they are not healthy. The rippling domino effect eventually leads us to where we are today- in a constant disregard for the lifeboats offered to us when we're drowning and don't even know it.



For this reason, Mrs. Camejo (Middle School Counselor Last Names I to P), Mr. Perez (High School Counselor Last Names Q-U), and Ms. Jimenez (High School Counselor Last Names A-C) chose to pursue a career in which they offer help to young students who too often overlook their own issues as "not being important enough." Their purpose has been applied with great success, and every day more students are encouraged to utilize their resources. After all, a good grade isn't as well-deserved without peace of mind to go

along with it.

But of course, in a digital era, we often get so lost on social media that we forget who we are, what we want, and even what's important to us. To battle this increasing problem, the Doral Academy Counselors have made a page that isn't about flaunting the things we don't have, but about what we are capable of doing by applying ourselves. Most notably, the Doral College Assistance Program has amassed over 500 followers on Instagram through posting content on scholarships, FAQs, and college essay tips.

In addition to my research, I had the opportunity to interview the CAP Counselor Ms. Luisa Suarez today to ask how the counselor that helps with a high schooler's biggest decision dealt with her own. Being a Firebird since 2014, she started off as an academic counselor and eventually took the leap to specialize in college assistance. However, her path was not always so set in stone.

After high school, Ms. Suarez majored in International Finance and Marketing despite her distaste for it, being that she couldn't envision a life suited for her in a bank

NEW COUNSELORS + CAP COUNSELOR INSTAGRAM SPOTLIGHT

BY JENNIFER GIRALDO

cubicle. From there she decided to venture into her passions- studying at New York's prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology. Not even two years later she graduated and came back down to Miami to start a business, dedicating herself to entrepreneurship for 3 years before re-examining the question of what her purpose was in life.

It finally took her very best friend to casually come up with a fateful proposition... "You should try going into a classroom." To which she responded "Oh god, I don't want to be a teacher."

The rest as we know is history. Ms. Suarez fell in love with teaching and quickly earned her certification to teach ESOL for Middle School soon after.

Her story is one of patience, but most importantly, one about trusting the process and knowing that no matter where life takes you, the important thing is to keep on moving forward.

"You have to keep going. You have to keep moving. Nothing is ever lost. Everything is part of that journey. And if you keep moving and keep changing- which is perfectly ok- you're going to be doing what you're meant to do. Just keep moving forward"

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

BY MELISSA RUIZ

Mental health is one of the most important aspects of a person's emotional, mental, and ultimately physical wellbeing. One's mental health status can affect their everyday living such as relationships, school, and physical health. Many institutions such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the National Institute of Mental Health were made to bring awareness to any experiencing any mental health issues. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 adults experience mental health problems each year. In

2020, the National Institute of Mental Health reported that 14.2 million adults in the US had a serious psychological condition. Everyone is susceptible to mental health conditions regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, or income. Factors such as social environment, income, and education can affect a person's mental health.



The National Alliance on Mental Illness established Mental illness awareness week in order to educate and increase awareness about any mental illness. In 2022, Mental Illness Awareness week was October 2nd through October 8th. Everyday during the week there are themes, giving voices to anyone struggling and how they can receive help. This year's themes were as follows: October 3rd was stigma, October 4th was medication, October 5th was therapy, October 6th was disclosing, and October 7th was caregiving. These themes were universal throughout

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH CONTINUED...

BY MELISSA RUIZ

anyone struggling with their mental health and were aimed at giving people a voice to speak about their problems and allow them to recover.

October also includes World Mental Health day which, similarly to Mental Illness week, aims to raise awareness on mental health issues and help mobilize efforts on awareness around the world. This day gives opportunity to destigmatize mental health issues and discussions about it.

World Mental Health Day also gives a place for everyone to discuss their issues and steps that can be taken worldwide for advancements on mental health care.

Throughout October, the Doral Academy School counselors worked on

events throughout the school to honor Mental Illness Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day. Throughout bathrooms in the school, the counselors put up encouraging messages such as “I can manage anything” and “All my emotions are valid and welcome” in order to validate all emotions Doral Academy students might be feeling. Along with that, the counselors created a “Take What You Need” bulletin board full of positive and encouraging messages for all students.

All in all, It is important to remember that your mental health is a delicate balance between different activities, social life, and home life. If you ever need help please do not hesitate in reaching out to your counselors as they are always available and wanting to help.



SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

BY MIA RAMIREZ

There is an epidemic sweeping our nation. A tragic force with an eternal consequence, one that is, unfortunately, taking lives all too soon. Suicide.

Suicide is the leading cause of death in the United States, having claimed 46,000 lives in the year 2020 alone, with over 1.2 million attempts. But how can we prevent these drastic losses of lives? How can we help those who have reached such a dark, terrible place in their lives that they see no way out but out?

This September is Suicide Prevention Month. When someone is suicidal, their mind has usually reached a dark place to the point where they see no reason to live anymore. Reasons for this can be things such as mental illness, personal situations, substance abuse, or a culmination of things. There isn't just one reason for suicide.

Whereas most people go throughout their lives looking forward to something and continuously pushing themselves despite struggling, those who are suicidal have completely given up on life. What they are feeling- pain, turmoil, emptiness-

has gotten to such an extreme point that the only way to truly feel better and escape it all is to kill themselves, in search of anything but life.

Even if you don't do so, most people have contemplated suicide in their lives. With this comes a sense of shame- in the world we live in today, wanting to kill yourself is seen as being ungrateful for the life you have, and towards those in it. However, this viewpoint does nothing but shame those who are already in such a dark space and trivialize their feelings. While suicide is never the answer, it is not right to simply dismiss those who feel suicidal as "ungrateful" or "cowards." Chances are, they're dealing with more than you ever will, which takes a great deal of strength.

A good way to prevent suicide is to recognize the warning signs. These include suddenly acting very withdrawn socially and in other aspects of life, not having an interest in things that they previously enjoyed, talking about wanting to sleep and never wake up, saying that the world would remain unchanged if they were not in it, etcetera.

More immediate signs are said person suddenly becoming calm and positive, as if they have a sense of clarity and serenity after a long struggle, giving away their possessions, and saying things that resemble goodbyes. These are all good indications of someone who is dealing with suicidal thoughts, or is planning on committing suicide in the near future.

If you recognize any of these signs in someone you know, it is best to contact someone you trust, such as a parent, teacher, or counselor, or recommend them to get help from a therapist or psychiatrist. If you know of someone who has an immediate plan, take direct action and tell them to go to the emergency room, as this is considered a medical emergency. You can also contact a psychiatric mobile response team to help- unless urgent, calling the police generally isn't too helpful, as they are not trained to deal with mental health and can at times put the person at risk.

It is important to keep in mind that it is impossible to know what's going through someone's head.

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH CONTINUED...

BY MIA RAMIREZ

We never know the thoughts someone is having, what can be the one thing that sends them over the edge, the one thing that makes them check off another reason why not to live, the one thing that leads to a life lost. Nowadays, kindness is a rarity, but more importantly, understanding. Try seeing life from another's point of view, and you may find that their life is more difficult than you imagined.

If you yourself are having suicidal thoughts, do not be afraid to ask for help. Make

sure to reach out to someone you trust. If you don't have anyone to reach out to, you can call or text a hotline (numbers are listed below.) Suicidal thoughts tend to cloud judgment and make everything seem more heightened than it is. If you think you are an immediate harm to yourself, and that you cannot be alone, go to the emergency room or ask a friend or family member to keep you company until you get help. Keep yourself away from objects that may cause harm to you.

Suicide, unfortunately, isn't an issue that will go away anytime soon. But there are ways we can help prevent it from taking more and more lives- through compassion, understanding, and recognition, we can overcome this epidemic, and start to see the light.

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:
988

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

BY LEONARDO GALINDEZ

Happy Hispanic Month Firebirds! As we celebrate from September 15th to October 15th, we recognize the impact of Hispanics on history and today. From their cultures and champions who've both rose and fallen, our Spanish, Mexican, and South American ancestors who've pushed forward despite all odds. Celebrate the occasion by enjoying some traditional



The 2022 theme for Hispanic Heritage Month:
"Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation"

Latin American dish and supporting Latin/Hispanic-owned businesses! September 15th is the anniversary for the official independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence on September 15th and 18th.



SGA SPOTLIGHT: THE INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW YEAR

BY LAUREN CORDERO

As the new school year begins, it is important for the student body to stay informed on what is to come this year. SGA, the Student Government Association, has been planning events to make sure all firebirds return to a thrilling and unforgettable year. When asked about how it felt officially being back, president Brandon Martin noted "although I feel a lot of pressure to do things a certain way, it feels amazing to be back with no Covid restrictions. I'm excited for a year full of school spirit." After Covid-19, it has not been easy to regain the school spirit firebirds had so much of years prior. Making it their mission to restore that firebird pride, SGA members have taken the roles very seriously. "To us, having this role and being able to represent the student body comes with great responsibility. We are able to guide younger generations and start new traditions this year that really strengthen the firebird pride in the school."

While being a part of SGA is an experience like no other, board members have a lot on their plate as well. Most, if not all, board members are involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities that take up a lot of their spare time. Whether it be sports or clubs, managing their time has proven to be a complex task.

"We've been managing our time mostly by setting boundaries for ourselves. We know with all the things we're involved in, we have to manage ourselves in accordance to the things we have committed to, meaning finding an efficient way of allocating our time to get things done correctly. With all the activities going on this year, it is important for each of us to make sure we're not falling behind," commented SGA Historian Corina Bullos. When asked what advice they could lend to others struggling with time management, they replied, "the best thing we can say is to set your priorities straight and know what things demand more of your time. Do what works for you and what helps you the most. For some of us, planning and using agendas works best, while for others, it is merely just setting reminders for each assignment/extracurricular." Everyone works differently and while time management may not be an easy challenge to overcome, it is definitely something that can be managed, and something numerous students go through.

With big school events right around the corner, SGA has had their hands full taking care of various aspects that go into the planning of these dates, making sure all firebirds are guaranteed a great time. Right now, the things

they have been most focused on consist of "... the student section, Homecoming, raising school spirit, and brainstorming events that bring in participation. We want to make sure the students enjoy this year and every event we host." After getting the chance to speak with each board member, there are countless things to be on the lookout for. When asked about one event the board thinks will really excite the firebirds this year, Vice President Brianna Paliz made sure to mention, "Students should be on the lookout for the upcoming games and opening seasons. We hope students are as excited as we are for the new student section - the flame - as we are and really go all out for the themes we have planned. We are highly encouraging more inclusion this year regarding the student enthusiasm and increased athletic support in all sports." Not only did they elaborate on what's coming soon in sports, but, as everyone knows, homecoming is a firebird favorite at Doral and with every ounce of eagerness, students are anticipating all the possibilities as far as Spirit Week and the reveal of the homecoming theme. But... as a gift to the senior class, Secretary Andrea Colon, along with the rest of the board, decided to release a small hint regarding what is to come for homecoming week.

SGA SPOTLIGHT: THE INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW YEAR CONTINUED...

BY LAUREN CORDERO

“While we can’t say much, something we can tell you guys is that although spirit week is only a four-day week, Wednesday being a Teacher Planning Day, expect the Firebird spirit to last all five days of the week.”

To finish it off, just like everyone else, SGA hopes to leave Doral Academy with the pride of a job well done. “What is the one thing you guys want to accomplish before graduating? One goal we have to accomplish before graduation this year is reestablishing the meaning of “Firebird Pride”.



Student Government Association (from left to right): President Brandon Martin, Vice President Brianna Paliz, Secretary Andrea Colon, Historian Corina Bullos, and Treasurer Grace Wong.

Without trying to sound like a broken record, we feel that Covid took a major toll on the school spirit we once had. Reestablishing that spirit before graduation would mean the absolute world to us, as it is our way of leaving our mark on the Firebirds”.

For more information on where to stay informed on what is to come, make sure you are following us on all of our platforms @doralacademy Preparatory.

REMEMBERING 9/11

BY MARIAN NAVARRO

8:14 AM. September 11th, 2001. This was the day America was shaken to its core by the Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. 2,977 people were killed, 25,000 were injured, and 285 million were never the same. The question we hear most on its anniversary is “where were you when it happened?” We often forget that events like these happen when we least expect them, when we’re at our most vulnerable; Adults starting their day at their 9 to 5 jobs, children settling into their desks preparing to learn their multiplication tables.

“Life can change in the blink of an eye. Adults rushing in their cars to pick up their kids, children watching their teachers draw the shades over the windows.

Our country will never fully recover from this day, which is why thousands visit New York’s September 11th memorial, why 9/11 is taught to children of all ages. We must never forget the day our nation was under attack and thousands lost their lives. But a lot can be learned from a tragedy like this. While many recall the burning buildings and terror-stricken faces, they also recall the



feeling of community that surfaced that day. First responders putting their lives on the line to help those trapped in the towers, adults helping calm frightened children, people trying to regain control of the hijacked planes. In the time following the attack, people of all backgrounds united to help put their world back together again as best they could. Fear is a powerful emotion, but so is love. Love of your fellow man, love of your home. We remember September 11th to honor those who have been lost and to remind ourselves that we must stick together as Americans, as human beings.

FINDING COMPANY IN SOLITUDE: A SPOTLIGHT ON NATIONAL GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

BY ISABELLA BELLO

August 30 marks the annual National Grief Awareness Day, a day dedicated to giving support to those suffering through loss and shedding light on the different ways to cope.

Grief is a complicated emotion, a whirlwind of feelings that makes one think as though they're feeling everything in the middle of a wave of nothingness. It's an all-consuming sea of sadness, anger, guilt, and eventual acceptance. Many people who experience grief may feel as though they're misunderstood, as it's easy to sympathize with someone going through grief, but to empathize with them is notoriously difficult.

For any scenario in which anyone you know is experiencing grief, rather than flood them with countless "it's okay"s, here are some ways to help.

Give them a space to talk

A lot of people suffering through grief usually bottle their feelings up, which may inhibit them in the long run and only elongate the healing process. By giving them a safe space, it allows them to verbalize their

emotions and in turn process them more effectively. Be sure to not spring the conversation on them, ask first if they are comfortable with talking about it-some people don't feel comfortable talking about it with most people. Be sure to be patient when this happens, everyone grieves differently.

Try to refrain from saying "it's okay" and other potentially invalidating phrases

Though many of us mean the best, saying "it's okay" or "At least you're not _____, some people have it worse," can make the person grieving feel badly about their feelings. Instead of feeling appreciative for having more than those less fortunate, they feel guilty about their emotions due to other people having it worse. The use of "it's okay" takes light away from the sentiment that, to them, it's not okay. So by acknowledging that their situation is not okay there is a safe space to let out all their negative feelings.

Be comfortable with not saying anything

Sometimes people just need someone to listen, it's hard

to give advice on something you're not experiencing and can't imagine going through. In that case, just letting the other person vent and being comfortable with silence can be beneficial to them. You do not always have to have something to say, and sometimes it'll make the other person feel better by just saying, "You can talk and I'll listen if you'd like."

Offer support

Be sure to offer to help them in any way you can, whether that be helping them focus on studying for their big test coming up or doing an errand they don't feel motivated enough to do. Helping out in these ways can help them keep up with their lives, and not make it so difficult for them once they start feeling better.

Be patient

Progress is not linear, and it will take a while for them to feel okay again. The best thing you can do is be there for them in the meanwhile, whether it takes days, weeks, or months. Patience is key in these situations, keep in mind that grief is

FINDING COMPANY IN SOLITUDE: A SPOTLIGHT ON NATIONAL GRIEF AWARENESS DAY CONTINUED...

BY ISABELLA BELLO

processed in stages, and there is no specific time limit as to how long, or how many times, each stage will occur.

Watch out for signs of depression

Be sure to stay vigilant for any signs of a depressive episode, as grief is a very common trigger of depression. Look out for signs of disassociation, neglect of usual passions, neglect of personal hygiene, inability to show emotions, and expressions of hopelessness.

If the person who is grieving is a child

Help them understand what is going on and the complicated emotions they might not understand. Try to refrain from misleading comments like saying "Mommy went on vacation," an open and honest conversation about death will help them understand and not build up any hope that may make them feel worse later on. Be sure to provide a support system for them as they navigate this all too difficult subject at such a young age.

Source:
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief/helping-someone-who-is-grieving.htm>

If you or someone you know is struggling with grief and/or depression, do not hesitate to reach out to the resources below.

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline: (800) 662-4357

Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio: (888) 628-9454

