

SUMMER CONNECTIONS ENRICHMENT PLAN (15 June 2020)

Our newly-created Academic Team has developed a comprehensive plan to keep our community connected and informed over the summer. We have a heavy load of planning for the fall, but feel a real need to nourish and grow the interpersonal connections that make Grace the special place it is.

Our summer connections includes both parent and student components. We realize that parents need support now more than ever, and that students need to know they are part of something bigger.

FOR PARENTS

Part 1: Community Summer Learning Project

We encourage all Grace adult community members -- parents, faculty, staff -- to listen to the 1619 Project podcast (in 5 episodes, wherever you get your podcasts or [here online](#)) and discuss it over the summer break. For our faculty and staff, this will be a continuation of our February professional development session with Grace parent and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) specialist Denise Robinson.

The 1619 Project is an ongoing initiative from The New York Times Magazine that began in August 2019, the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery. It aims to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative.

We are excited to create space to discuss each episode together every other week starting **June 29**. More details about days and time to come as we receive responses to our survey (link at end of letter).

Part 2: Head of School calls continue

Jen Danish will continue to host calls every other week over the summer, starting the week of **July 6**. All Grace parents are welcome to join at any time to discuss whatever is on their minds! We will hold two "Community Town Hall" sessions in which we'll share how our planning is progressing for the fall. More details about days and time to come as we receive responses to our survey (link at end of letter).

Part 3: Bonus site resources

We will continue to update our [Distance Learning Bonus Resource site](#) over the summer. This remarkable reference site includes everything from parenting seminars to anti-racist reading and action lists, to online resources for your children and helpful daily planning suggestions. It is an open resource, so please feel free to share with friends or anyone whom you feel might benefit from it.

FOR STUDENTS

Part 1: Student summer connections enrichment

Our faculty and staff will be offering a 3 week series of summer enrichment connections / affinity groups for our students during the weeks of **July 13, 20, and 27**.

These 40-minute Zoom meetings will have a specific focus: legos, reading, crafts, movement, STEM, and other fun activities.

We are currently working with our faculty and staff to decide on the subjects and will let you know more the week of June 29.

These summer connection sessions will be offered free of charge to all students enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year. They are not required, or meant to be a replacement for summer camp. They are freely offered as a way for students to feel connected to their community: peers, teachers, and other staff members. They are also a way to make sure that we are warmly welcoming all our new Gryphons for 2020-2021!

Part 2: Summer learning suggestions for students

Although there may be a temptation to try to fill this particular summer with content, please remember that your children need a break to rest, explore, and follow their own interests -- time to be children.

As always, we recommend wide and enthusiastic reading: independent reading, read-alouds with a parent, or preferably a combination of the two. This is a summer to really dig in to books that center diverse voices and Black and Brown characters, and there are a ton of resources to help you find them. You can start with [We Need Diverse Books](#), [Black Books Matter](#), or the [Diverse Book Finder](#). If you have the resources, you might consider subscribing to [The Conscious Kid Library's](#) curated selection of books. Go to your local library, if you can, and see what's there. Re-read an old favorite and see what new things you discover. Follow your child's interests, and bond over the joy of books!

Please take 2 minutes to fill out [this survey](#), which will give us valuable guidance on scheduling!