National School Counselor Week
February 4th to 8th

National School Counselor Week is a national week set aside to raise awareness about Comprehensive School Counseling Programs.

The goal of the Comprehensive School Counseling Program at Castlewood School is to address the needs of all students by helping them to acquire competencies in personal, academic and career development domains. Students need skills in these domains to succeed in school and in life. While parents often do a great job in teaching many of these skills, it is nice to have reinforcement at school as well.

Castlewood School District’s Comprehensive School Counseling Program is made up of classroom guidance, small group activities, individual counseling, and college and career planning.

Every grade participates in classroom guidance. Students learn about many topics during guidance. Some include: self-esteem, respecting others, bullying, friendship, conflict resolution, drug, tobacco and alcohol prevention, career awareness, career readiness and post-high planning. Other topics are also addressed on an as needed basis. It is important to be flexible to meet the changing needs of our students.

As part of the school counseling program, the counselor also offers groups. This year kindergarteners and first graders are participating in a social skills group. The seventh grade girls also just began the Salvaging Sisterhood group. This group is about knowing how to handle friendship problems.

Individual counseling is also offered at school. Students are referred by teachers or parents. If you want to learn more about these programs, or individual counseling feel free to contact Stacy Solsaa at the Castlewood School.

Behavior Modification 101

Have you ever wished you had a magic wand to make your child behave just the way you want them to? Many parents feel that way from time to time. While there is no magical answer to changing your child’s behavior, there are some strategies that can be helpful.

One strategy is having family rules. You are probably thinking that is nothing new, we have rules at our house. I am sure that is true, but do you have those rules posted? From my experience working with families, I can tell you that unless your rules are posted their existence is questionable. During family counseling, parents and children will share their family rules, but they rarely matched perfectly.

Tip: Have two to four household rules, discuss...
Parents often want to have good relationships with their children, but sometimes it can be difficult to know where to begin. Life is busy and it is difficult to even find the time to think about improving your relationship with your children. What does a parent do?

One of the biggest keys to a good relationship is spending time with your children. Sharing in fun brings people closer together. It is important, even in the busy world we live in, to set time aside for your children. Start today and make family night a regular occasion in your house.

When kids are young there is nothing better than spending time with you, their parents. Here are a few ideas on how to fit quality time in with your kids.

- **Homemade Pizza Night:** This is fun for kids, parents can roll out the crust and each person in the family can put the toppings of his/her choice on a personal size pizza.
- **Game Night:** Take one night a week or one night a month and make it game night. Kids love to play games and they learn sportsmanship at the same time.
- **Movie Night:** Take one night a month and make it family movie night. Let a different person select the movie each night, pop some popcorn and hang out in the living room together.
- **Family Fun Bag:** Sit down and make a list of all the fun things you want to do together. Write each one on a sheet of paper and place them in a bag. Draw one slip out each week or month and do what is on the slip on family fun night/day.

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**Building Blocks of Communication:**

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**Behavior Modification 101 Continued:**

them with your children, explain the consequences for not following the rules and then post them some place that you can refer to them when needed. A quick reminder is always good. "What are the rules in this house?"

A second strategy is having consequences for your child's behavior. Don't forget that consequences are both positive and negative. If your child's behavior is negative, the consequence is negative. If your child's behavior is positive then the consequence is positive. Parents often wonder why they need to use positive consequences. The main reason to using positive consequences is to encourage your child to continue to do that behavior. After all if you boss tells you how they appreciate you staying late to help finish a project, you are more likely to do it again.

**Tip:** Use things your child enjoys as positive consequences. Play a game with him/her, let her/him chose what you will have for dinner. Spending time with your child is a great positive consequence. Negative consequences also work best if you take away something that is meaningful to your child, such as a favorite toy or a cell phone.

**Tip:** Be consistent. It is important to try to be as consistent as possible when giving consequences. The more consistent you are the faster you can shape your child's behavior.

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**Caring Kids Project/Blood Drive**

With the help of the Castlewood Education Foundation the National Honor Society started the Caring Kids Project. Students in grades five and six were invited to join the project.

The fifth and sixth graders who joined the group have worked hard to make a gift basket for the residents of the Castlewood Assisted Living Center. They made several tie blankets, bookmarks, jewelry, and pictures for the care package. They were also able to purchase a few small games and puzzles for the residents.

On Monday March 17th students delivered the care package and had a snack with the residents.

**Blood Drive:**

The National Honor Society will be sponsoring a community blood drive on March 27th from 9:00 to 2:00. If you would like to schedule an appointment please contact Stacy Solsaa at the Castlewood School at 793-2351 or via e-mail stacy.solsaa@k12.sd.us.
Helping Your Child Plan for Post-Secondary School:

Planning for post-secondary school is not something students do when they become a senior. College planning begins in elementary school. When children are young, parents should encourage them to be enthusiastic about school. Parents can also help children develop study skills and a strong work ethic.

As students move into junior high parents should allow them to take more responsibility for their studies and encourage career exploration. At this age students get excited about their future and like to think about when they grow up.

College planning becomes most important as students move into high school. Students need to understand that their grades, courses, participation in co-curricular activities, volunteer opportunities and work experience all play a role in post-secondary education.

It is also important that students understand that technical colleges and two-year programs are becoming more difficult to get into all the time. These programs are limited to how many students they can admit, so they often fill up fast and have strict criteria for admissions.

Here are a few things parents can encourage their children to do:

- Take the right course work
- Do your best in all your classes
- Get involved in activities
- Acquire study skills and use them
- Volunteer
- Come to school regularly
- Complete homework
- Explore careers and options
- Ask your School Counselor questions

Guidance Central:

If you have not investigated Guidance Central yet, don’t waste another minute, log in now. Guidance Central is an excellent on-line career exploration and post-high planning tool. Since it is on-line students and parents can access it from school and from home.

All junior high and high school students will be using Guidance Central this year. There are four parts to Guidance Central: Choices Explore, Choices Planner, The Ability Profiler and TestGEAR. Using these four tools students can find out information about careers, take quizzes that give them suggestions about careers that fit their interests, search for colleges that have programs they want, study for the ACT test and much more.

This year seventh graders have done some career exploration using guidance central. Eighth graders will soon do some exploration as well. Freshman have completed the South Dakota Career Assessment Program, which consists of an interest inventory and an aptitude test. Sophomores will soon be using the interview and job skills tools. The Juniors have started to consider colleges or look for careers of interest to them. They have also used TestGEAR to prepare for the ACT test. Seniors have also use Guidance Central to explore colleges.

Parent accounts can be created by visiting http://www.sd.bridges.com. Select Castlewood from the pull down menu, then parent account and fill in the required information.

Financial Aid Basics:

Seniors should now be thinking about financial aid. All students whom are planning to attend a post-secondary school next fall need to complete the FAFSA form. The FAFSA is now web based and students are encouraged to use the online application. Students can print off a FAFSA on the web worksheet, which is helpful to fill out prior to completing the FAFSA on the web.

No paper applications were mailed to high schools this year. However if parents would like one, their school counselor an call for a paper application.

In order for students to complete the FAFSA form, both the student and their parents will need tax figures from 2007. The FAFSA on the web can be found at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Don’t forget to register for a PIN number when going to the FAFSA web site

Scholarships are another way for students to obtain help with paying for college. There is a scholarship page on the school web site at www.castlewood.k12.sd.us. Click on information and then on scholarships.

Last, be aware of scams, never pay for someone to complete your FAFSA for you or for financial aid or scholarship information.
In Their Own Words

Quotes From the 5th grade.

• If kids have something they don’t like or something they don’t want to talk to anyone else about a counselor can help that person.
• Counselors help people get along better with others and help them make new friends.
• I think we should have a counselor because she could help you if you were really angry at somebody and she teaches you how to be respectful, helpful and much more.
• Counselors help you when you are troubled or when you are nervous.
• It is good to teach students how to say no to smoking.

Quotes from the 7th Grade

• I think it is important to have a counselor because some kids don’t feel comfortable talking to a family member. They need someone to talk to. The could be going through a tough time and need help.
• Counselors are great people to talk to and they teach you important skills.
• If you didn’t have a school counselor and you were having problems at your house you could talk to friends but what if it is personal. You can’t rely on friends when planning for college, they would be as clueless as you, no matter what grade you are in you need a school counselor.

Quotes from the High School

• Having a school counselor in our school helps out in so many ways. They teach us about who we are and how we can do almost anything if we put our mind to it.
• A counselor is always someone to talk to and they always have an open door for you. It’s a great feeling when you don’t feel alone in this world and being close to your counselor helps you out in so many ways.
• Counselors prepare you for the biggest lesson, the biggest test, a class you have to take, life.
• As a senior looking to go to college next year, I have found that having access to a guidance counselor at all times has eased the process considerably.

In the Classroom

Many topics have been covered this year so far in classroom guidance. Student in Kindergarten have learned how a good student acts, how to feel good about themselves, what feelings are and the difference between tattling and telling.

First graders just finished the No Bullying curriculum and meet Sheldon, a member of the Green Team. He is helping them learn about self-esteem.

Second graders are currently talking about families. They learned that their class is like a family in many ways. They also learn how every family is unique.

In the third grade we just completed some lesson on stress. Parents may have seen some stretching homework come home. While not a lot of third graders have high stress, it is good for them to learn how to cope with stress before they actually have a lot of it. They also made worry boxes. Many of them seemed to identify with worrying. They can put their worries in the worry box and let the box worry for them.

Junior high students have been exploring careers the last month. The eighth grade is participating in the Real Game. They have learned about the education needed for specific jobs and they have also done some budgeting activities.

Sophomores have been learning about the world of work. They made pocket resumes, filled out job applications, and started an activities resume.

Juniors have been “good sports” about the ACT prep we have been doing in the classroom. This is helpful even if students don’t take the ACT. Most post-secondary schools require some type of test. The ACT prep will help prepare them for many testing situations.