

MCNEAL SAMS COLLEGE CONSULTING

NEWS AND NOTES

SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Check** your email and your portals regularly. This is CRITICAL.
- Search** for scholarships! Now that you are done with your college admission applications, don't forget about maximizing your potential scholarships. Check out our "[Tips](#)" sheet and ask your consultant for an Imagine Scholarships code.
- Schedule** a mock interview! If you expect or hope to be offered an interview, we suggest you practice for it! Team member Elizabeth Schnell prepares our students beautifully. Please plan ahead; she books quickly.
- Update** any schools you were deferred from in an early round about what you have been doing since you applied in the fall.
- Inform** your school counselor AND your consultant about your outcomes. Don't forget to let us both know about scholarships and honors programs too!

JANUARY ... NEW YEAR, NEW FAFSA

If you are planning to apply for financial aid, please note that the FAFSA is now available. We want to share some important information about need-based financial aid (which is awarded by colleges after the student indicates they are applying AND you have submitted all required forms AND the college has determined that you qualify for it).

There are many colleges that award merit aid (not based on need but used as a way to recruit the student) based on the student's application (some require additional writing that the student would have been prompted about in their Common App or through their student portal).

And, finally, there are thousands of outside scholarships available. These are monetary awards that are given by any of a number of organizations to students that meet specific criteria and, typically, require the student to complete additional work.

As in all things related to need-based financial aid, details and deadlines are key. While you complete your FAFSA, you must also research each of your colleges on their Admissions and Financial Aid page to learn their requirements (details) and required submission dates (deadlines). Read all information carefully and take good notes about the tasks you need to complete and write down (and heed!) their deadlines. Don't forget to take a look at the process to be considered for "extra" scholarships at each of your schools. Supporters of the schools often donate moneys to fund scholarships. In most instances, these scholarships will require that you submit additional paperwork to be considered. Go to each school's financial aid pages on their website to learn more.

Scholarships:

- Many of you have taken advantage of our partnership with [Imagine Scholarships](#). If not, give it a try! It's easy to navigate and there are no ads. You can learn more here on their FAQ page.

Please contact Nelie at nelie@mcnealsams.com for your link to the Imagine Scholarships database. We pick up the cost of this for our families - savings for you of over \$200!



CONTACT YOUR CONSULTANT: NAME@MCNEALSAMS.COM

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TALK AROUND TOWN

Some items we find interesting this month:

Article: Dialogue versus Debate

As seniors contemplate the key criteria that will help decide among their college options this spring, many may care how a campus community navigates and learns from controversial or even divisive issues. The United States Institute for Peace offers a short pdf that could provide food for thought, on the hallmarks of dialogue versus debate:

Book: How to Build a Happy Life

is the latest from Arthur Brooks of Harvard Business School, who has specialized in teaching high achieving entrepreneurs and leaders how to find more balance and satisfaction in life. This time he collaborates with Oprah Winfrey, writing for a general audience. (For more from Brooks, you can also check out his columns and podcasts about happiness in Atlantic Monthly.)

Podcast: Originally on NPR, "How I Built This" features storytelling by accomplished people about their innovations that often reveals non-linear and serendipitous paths, along with creative, interdisciplinary thinking. It provides an entertaining, accessible route to discussing and contemplating a variety of career fields.

KINDNESS CORNER: THE HAPPINESS FACTOR

What's a remarkably effective way to lower your stress level?
It's absurdly simple: deep breathing.

Taking the time to breathe slowly and deeply does wonders for your nervous system, ability to focus, and capacity for handling difficult situations.

Try this exercise: inhale for 3 counts, hold for 4 counts, exhale for 5 counts. As you do, breathe from your stomach - as though you're trying to fill your entire upper body with oxygen. Don't limit your intake to your lungs. Feel the air fill you from your nose to your abdomen!

Deep breathing exercise (DBE) has been shown to lower blood pressure and stress. You don't need special equipment to do it. And it's free!
So the next time you feel yourself tensing up about any of life's many challenges, pause for a moment and take a few deep breaths. It works!

PARENTS: THE TRANSITION

Mom and dad, you have almost weathered the storm called the college choice experience. We know it is a long process and at times has felt like it would never end. We also know that as with most arduous journeys, knowing the finish line is just around the corner can sometimes make it feel like it will never end. You are as ready to be done as your student is ready to be done.

To take your mind off the how time progresses between now and the end of March when all decisions arrive, we have some reading suggestions for you to help you prepare for what comes next...the transition to college. We hope you enjoy and find our suggestions helpful. Click on the thumbnail below for more information. And, as always, know your college consultant is here to support you, too.

