



TECH PARENTS NEWS

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Here Comes Summer!

Marc Williams - Assistant Principal of Student and Parent Engagement



So I went on a road trip during Memorial Day weekend. While it wasn't a trip with my immediate family, it was a trip with

members of my extended Tech family...the Brooklyn Tech Boys Step Team. We went to Harrisburg, PA to compete in the National Step Competition. One of my favorite highlights was seeing a set of Tech parents who had driven to Harrisburg to see their son participate in the competition. That was a great image. Of course, their son spent more time with his friends with his family, but that's normal for a teenager. And that was understanding of his parents. But I do hope they get to spend some quality family time as we approach the summer vacation. That thought got me to think about how parents and their teens should prepare for the vacation. So here are some excerpts from articles that I thought would be helpful.

The National Parent Teacher Association conducted a survey in late March, 2006, to determine the top summer health concerns parents have for their adolescents. Here is that list, along with the percentages of parents noting concern about those issues:

** Almost all parents -- 95% -- said they want their child to be active and*

fit over the summer.

** Nearly a quarter said their child doesn't get enough exercise over the summer.*

** About half said their child spends too much time watching TV or playing video games.*

** Other concerns: exposure to alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, wearing inappropriate or revealing clothing, hanging out with friends parents don't approve of.*

HOW DO I HAVE THE BEST SUMMER POSSIBLE?

_ KNOW THE WHO, WHAT AND WHERE your adolescent has been on the internet! There are many programs you can buy that track virtually everything your adolescent does online. Especially if they are at home alone for some periods during the day, it is better to be safe than sorry. You are not intruding on their privacy...you are keeping them safe. Keep in mind that 1 in 5 adolescents have been sexually propositioned on the internet. Discuss internet limits and boundaries with your teen before summer begins, so you both start off on the same page.

_ Often, adolescents will eat when they are bored, especially in the summertime. Keep healthy food choices at home, so your adolescent is less inclined to graze on junk food.

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_ Discuss ground rules at the beginning of the summer regarding what is appropriate for activities and what is expected of your adolescent. If they know ahead of time what the limits, boundaries and expectations are, there is typically less opportunity for problems as the summer goes on. It may be beneficial to have family meetings throughout the summer to stay in touch and discuss any issues that come up. Family meetings are not a time for discipline or punishment. They should be viewed as an open forum for everyone to discuss and be heard. Often during the summer, they can be a great way to connect with the family and "check in." Many families often do activities as a family after meetings to spend family time and keep in contact.

_ Know who your adolescent's friends are! If you do not like someone whom they are hanging out with, let to know them. If you still don't approve, tell your adolescent and be up front about your concerns. As a parent, you CAN forbid your adolescent from hanging out with someone you don't approve of. Yes, it may cause an argument and be uncomfortable, but trust your gut in-

stinct.....it could stave off many problems in the future.

_ If you have a concern that your adolescent may be using alcohol, drugs or cigarettes, ask them. Be up front and let them know your concerns. If they are not open and honest with you, they will know that you are "on" to them and most often sooner rather than later, you will find out the answer. Again, discuss rules and boundaries with your adolescent before summer starts. Let them know what the consequences will be for serious problems.

_ Be very specific about what kind, style and type of clothing you approve of for your adolescent. As a parent, you DO have the right to throw something away that you disapprove of, even if you didn't buy it!

_ Have a rule that your adolescent checks in with you whenever the change locations when they are out with their friends. This way, you will know where they are at, who they are with and have more peace of mind.

While we have not reached the vacation yet, I want to thank you all for a great year and I wish for you a great summer vacation!



If you're interested in receiving **Mr. Williams's Daily Announcements via e-mail**, please sign-up by contacting him at mwilliams@bths.edu - It is loaded with vital information of your child's ongoing concerns at Tech!

Summer Tips for Teens



by Amy Lindgren

Hey kids, are you ready? Summer's just around the corner. Here are four ideas for a more productive and interesting summer, even when money is tight.

» *Work. Of course, this is the Big Idea for every teenager. You know all the steps already, but here's the refresher:*

*Make a résumé that shows your skills, as well as volunteer or paid work you've done.
Take your résumé to places you'd like to work; dress neatly and be ready to fill out applications.
Try some online job search if you must, but remember that the direct approach is faster.
Tell everyone that you're looking for work.*

» *Volunteer. Yup, teenagers today know all about volunteering. They've been pressed into community service since they were tots. A few ideas:
Think local. Who do you know on your block who needs help? You may not like cleaning the garage or doing laundry at home, but it's actually kind of fun to do it somewhere else.
Think small business. Your family probably knows someone who runs a one- or two-person business. Can they use some help even one day a week? For this to work, you need to really con-*

*tribute and not expect to be entertained. Volunteering this year can turn into an actual job next year.
Think hotline. Almost every community has some sort of hotline or database to help you find volunteer jobs that fit your interests and skills.*

» *Organize. Not every summer activity has to be work-based. Think of something you like doing and find ways to organize activities around that. Suppose you enjoy biking. What if you chose a different trail to ride every Friday and spent the rest of the week getting trail maps, enlisting other people to ride along and convincing a parent to haul the bikes for you?*

» *Learn. What about just learning something that interests you? Maybe you'd like to take apart engines or learn to use Photoshop or cook Thai food. Think of things that you'd like to learn, then think about who would be able to teach you those things. Check the listings for community education and online classes too, as they can be a good value.
Whatever you end up doing this summer, take a minute to write it down when September rolls around. Some of the things you do will look good on a résumé later and may help you explain your skills to an employer.*



Parting College Observations

by Giancarlo Malchiodi, Coordinator of College Services/Advisement

As some parents have heard, my position in the College Office not been renewed (with the goal of bringing in an additional full-time Guidance Counselor to the office). Thank you for the individual support shown to me by past and present PTA Boards, and for the general support to the College Office. I now have an opportunity to reflect a bit on these years of service and want to use this final column to share some observations for the benefit of parents of Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors.

It has been an absolute pleasure working with and for your young people, and to helping them understand that there is a world of opportunity open to them in terms of the colleges to which they choose to apply. One of the greatest frustrations, however, is that the students restrict those opportunities so much and are never really fully "open" to many of them. The reasons for these restrictions are many, and do have some value behind them, but with just a little research, open-mindedness, and parental cooperation so much more could be possible for your children.

College Restriction #1: Geography/Distance

Our students remain mostly in the Northeast. Financial expenses and the quality of the SUNY/CUNY systems are a key reason for this, but another is that both parents and students have a concern about going "too far" for college. Since the cost of a few round-trip plane tickets during an academic year is minimal when compared to tuition and housing costs for private and out-of-state public institutions, the distance is more of an emotional concern. Is your child "ready" to live independently and take full responsibility for his or her behavior and academic achievement? Has your child earned your trust? Is your child willing and able to embrace a new environment that is further away and all the options that environment will offer? Only a conversation between child and parent can try to answer these questions so please have that conversation at the appropriate time.

Keep in mind that most colleges strive for something known as "geographic diversity" so reaching outside the Northeast can have tangible benefits if the college does not get many applications from New York City! America is a large country with thousands of worthwhile colleges to consider. With more than 700 members of the Class of 2010 limiting themselves to colleges in New York State, another 100 in other Northeast States, and only 126 outside of the Northeast I think it critical that parents and students open themselves up to other opportunities.

College Restriction #2: Academic "Reputations" and

"Quality" of College

Brooklyn Tech students have to work much harder than the majority of their local and national peers in order to academically succeed. Because of this effort and the achievement that hopefully goes with it, our students too often aim only "high" when applying to colleges because they believe their effort merits consideration by only the most competitive institutions. This is understandable, and every student should have some (relatively) more competitive schools in their mix of applications. But remember that other highly successful students from very challenging high schools are also applying to those same competitive colleges which can only admit, at best, a few thousand new students each year! But it is not just the students who have this unrealistic expectation. Often it is the parents who insist that their child apply only to the "best" schools, ignoring the realities of a student's transcript, GPA, test scores, and other achievements and also ignoring the actual admissions statistics of the schools in question. Many of these are parents who came to this country with or without higher education and who want the lives of their children to be easier and better, the goal of every parent.

The unrealistic expectation that only a small handful of schools are worth attending, and that only a degree from one of this handful will result in success for their child, is a grave mistake. If we judged success by those who get into the Ivy leagues or similarly competitive schools-- less than 10% of all applicants to those schools-- then most of us would be considered "failures."

To ignore the hundreds of other worthwhile schools that offer great education and opportunities and for which the student is a more appropriate academic match creates outcomes that are disappointing and painful for the student and parents. A realistic portfolio of colleges will cut down on that disappointment and result in a higher success rate and more good news in April when the results come in.

College Restriction #3: Finances and Costs

Few households can support the full attendance cost of any private institution (tuition + housing and food + expenses), and even the lower cost of SUNY schools can be burdensome for some households. Few students can afford to attend a private

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institution without a combination of scholarships, grants, and, yes, loans. Many students and parents use the attendance cost as a factor to not even apply to a given college. This is a mistake.

If the school is "right" for the student in every other way, then submitting an application represents no commitment whatsoever (except for Early Decision). If, upon acceptance, the financial burden to the household is more than the household can comfortably commit to, then the student will simply decline that school. But to reject the opportunity to even apply for admission because of the cost when you cannot possibly know about scholarships, grants, and government aid ahead of time is to deny a student the possibility. This is never a good idea.

College Restriction #4: Immigration and Citizenship

Many parents illegally entered the United States with their young children. This makes no difference for elementary and high school education since every child is enrolled in a NYC school regardless of their status. But for college applications being undocumented can cause many complications to a student and will deny that student all government need-based financial aid and many merit-based scholarships and grants. My heart is broken every year when I encounter a young person who has done everything "right" in terms of academic and extracurricular success, volun-

teer service, and outside learning opportunities but who is prevented from applying to or attending the schools she most desires because of undocumented status. And, by Senior year, it is largely too late for a family to do anything about it.

Parents in this situation: Please take the necessary steps NOW to legalize your children. This is a lengthy and complicated process that we in the school cannot assist with, but proper representation may be able to do so. If we still believe in this "land of opportunity," and I definitely do, then undertaking the process to legalize your children will give them many more college opportunities than they otherwise would have. One reason you came here is surely for their benefit, so attend to this responsibility.

I fully believe that these items are a challenge you and your children will face during the college application process, with the possible exception of number four. It is my hope as I leave my position that you will remember these four items and the guidance I have provided. By being "open" and involved as a parent you will be doing your child the greatest favor during this stressful time.

Continued success!

With Appreciation and Optimism

Mike Tang - Editor

Another school year is quickly coming to an end. We joyfully entered a new era, as the "heart and soul" of Brooklyn Tech, Mr. Marc Williams was appointed Assistant Principal of Student and Parent Engagement. He embraced his new duties with such fervor and optimism. His impact was immediately felt as he loaded up our answering machines with pertinent updates; keep the calls coming Mr. Williams! Meanwhile, Mr. Asher continues to inspire with his boundless energy, resulting in Tech entrenched with a more prominent foothold in academic excellence. Gentlemen, keep up the great work!

Sadly, the news has come down that Mr. Malchiodi will no longer serve as a College Adviser next year. On behalf of all the parents and students you have served, thank you so much for all your contributions Mr. Malchiodi!

I would also like to extend a special thank you to the columnist of the new Q&A section in our newsletter, Roweena Singh. She diligently prepared such an elegant column every month. I would also like to thank the panelists of the Q&A column: Mr. David Belmont, Mrs. Harriet Epstein, the aforementioned Mr. Giancarlo Malchiodi and Mr. Marc Williams. Thank you as well to Webmaster Mr. Michael Edwards, Parent Coordinator Mei Chan, Barry Ritter, Carrie Ho, Theresa Law, Enid Febus and Judith Hertzberg for their support of the newsletter.

Congratulations to all the senior parents! Your perseverance has been rewarded with your child moving to a new and exciting chapter in their lives. You can look ahead with confidence that they are well equipped to face their new challenges.

Have a wonderful summer everyone!



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Full page	\$200

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CLASSIFIED ADS

Tech parents, faculty and administration members may submit classified ads at free of charge, e-mail to: stratm3@yahoo.com

Q&A

The PTA is committed to assist all parents by simplifying their Brooklyn Tech experience and providing need-to-know information. Thanks to all of the parents who have submitted questions for the panel.

Submit your questions to pta.asktech@gmail.com and they will be promptly answered. We will also publish the answers in our Q&A Column. Remember, you will be providing a service for your fellow parents, as many of us have the same concerns.

BROOKLYN TECH PARENTS ASSOCIATION

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June Calendar

June 2, 2010

- **3:00 PM - 6:00 PM:** The Annual BTHS Science Fair

June 3, 2010

- **3:00 PM - 6:00 PM:** SGO Induction Ceremony
- **7:00 PM - 9:00 PM:** PTA Meeting

June 4, 2010

- **4:00 PM - 6:00 PM:** Beta Induction Ceremony
- **4:00 PM - 6:00 PM:** Chamber Choral Concert
- **4:00 PM - 8:00 PM:** Lights Out Dance

June 5, 2010

- SAT Exam

June 7, 2010

- **4:00 PM - 8:00 PM:** Culture Day

June 8, 2010

- **6:00 PM - 10:00 PM:** Academic Awards

June 9 - 14, 2010

- Final Exams

June 10, 2010

- Brooklyn/Queens Day - School Closed for Students

June 11, 2010

- **6:00 PM - 10:00 PM:** Service Awards

June 14, 2010

- End of 6th Marking Period

June 15 - 24, 2010

- Regents Exams

June 18, 2010

- BTHS Senior Prom

June 21, 2010

- Grades Due

June 24, 2010

- BTHS Graduation

June 25, 2010

- Report Card Distributed

June 28, 2010

- Last Day for Teachers
- Last Day of School For All Students

June 29, 2010

- **10:00 AM - 2:00 PM:** Freshman Orientation: Class of 2014

