



PRINCIPAL CORNER for November 16th

Screen time

Last month, I attended the showing of *Screenagers, Next Chapter* at the Pavilion Theatre organized by Raising Resilience, a local nonprofit organization that supports parents in providing a healthy living and learning environment for their children. SCCS was one of the sponsors for this event. Many St. Cecilia parish and school families attended the showing.

The gist of the documentary was that teens are experiencing increased anxiety and depression, in large part due to isolation they experience from spending so much time alone in front of screens. The average amount of time 8-18 year olds spend on screens, outside of the school day, is 7 hours. When children and teens are on screens for so much of their day, what gets displaced is **sleep, interacting with others, helping others and being helped.**

The Parent Guide created by the Dr. Delaney Ruston who wrote and directed the documentary provides the following ways to build skills for stress resilience:

Prioritize Sleep: The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends 6-12 year olds get 9-12 hours of sleep a night and 13-18 year olds get 8-10 hours a night. Keeping phones and others devices out of their room at night is important.

Empower Problem Solvers: Rather than jump in to try and fix their problems, ask, *"Do you have any solutions in mind?"* or *"Let me know if you want any input from me."*

Talk About Your Emotions: Let your teen know about how you work to handle stress and other difficult emotions.

Prioritize Face-to-Face Time: Find more ways teens can have screen-free time with peers, younger kids, and adults of all ages.

To read the complete Parent Guide and access additional resources go to www.screenagersmovie.com.

Judgment and empathy are developed in the frontal lobe of the brain from birth through age 25. If a child, teen or young adult is looking at a screen during most of the day rather than interacting with others, the impact on their development is profound.

This school year, we adopted the **Away for the Day** policy with cell phones. If students absolutely need a cell phone for after school purposes, they must leave it in my office for the day. On the bus, the cell phones stay in a bag at the front of the bus. It is remarkable how present and focused students are able to be when their phone is completely out of the room and out of the picture throughout the school day.

With joy,
Susan Kilbane