



## October 2, 2020: Frayed Edges

Dear CDS Community,

This week we began reopening our physical learning spaces as some kindergarten students reunited with their teachers while other kindergarteners remained online with their new teacher, a familiar face to many of our students, Jamie Turner.

This week also offered us all the opportunity to reflect upon our goals for our students in the context of our current trio (at least) of crises. We look at health (both mental and physical) in the context of a pandemic, poor air quality due to local fires, a tumultuous political climate, and a myriad of complexities large and small. One thing is for sure: this is not business or life as usual.

Our family has been watching the 1970s TV show *M\*A\*S\*H*, which I do not recommend as it is problematic on many levels. It does, however, offer us opportunities to discuss feminism, sexism, and racism, and use our knowledge of Korean culture, language, history, and geography to reflect on the storylines. This is particularly interesting for us, as our children only started their learning of US history with their arrival at CDS. Prior to that, history was grounded in Korean perspective or the broader context of the world that teachers from all over the world brought to their classrooms. Imagine learning history from a lens that was not US-centric!

What I *have* appreciated is the way that the characters – all running a medical unit during the Korean War – face their crisis. They operate in extreme conditions without the necessary supplies and are forced to wing it rather than follow predictable plans and structures. I wonder why this resonates with me right now. While we are not quite winging it and we are not doing surgery, we are being forced to figure things out as we go. We use all the available information and must continue to make the best decisions along the way. I have said a few times this week, “we will know how to do this and do it better in our next global pandemic.” Hopefully, we do not get the chance to test that.

However, Colonel Potter does offer leadership lessons in how he shows up with curiosity

about the folks he is supporting and then works to creatively solve problems while continuing to evolve even in the midst of a crisis. The team comes together, each knowing their role and facing each challenge head-on with optimism, hard work, collaboration, and a good dose of humor day after day, with few breaks and little sleep. They work rapidly figuring out what needs to be done, doing it, and then revisiting and doing it again as necessary. This reminds me of a line in the first paragraph of our mission: “*always asking how we can do this better.*” Although I might not let the senior admin and board operate on me, I do feel privileged to work with them each day. I also appreciate the flexibility the faculty bring as we evolve our program to meet the needs of our community. The essential work being done to support the physical and mental health of our students is critical.

Another component of *M\*A\*S\*H* that I appreciate is the way they utilize everything — reusing and repurposing again and again. One of my grandmothers was a dedicated seamstress, sewing everything from my mother’s wedding gown to my childhood clothes to an entire wardrobe for my Barbies. She also made sure that our favorite clothes were usable for as long as possible. Frayed edges were darned and patched and, interestingly, those areas never tore again. These frayed edges were so much stronger from the repair she gave the garment, outlasting the unmended areas.

We are all a bit frayed now and it is crucial that we look for ways we can mend and darn these frayed edges. I think if we do, we will all emerge stronger as individuals and as a community.

Warmly,  
Shelly