Feb. 20, 2020

The Grocery Cart
Values/Who We Are/What You Do When All and None are Watching

Good Morning, Lower School Community,

HONOR
Personal integrity and devotion to the truth, which makes one trustworthy, forthright, responsible and fair.

LOVE OF LEARNING
A creative spirit that promotes intellectual and personal growth through exploration, inquiry and openness to change.
EXCELLENCE
A sustained commitment to meeting high standards of character, achievement and personal accountability.

RESPECT
Fundamental regard for the dignity and worth of each individual.

COMMUNITY
A commitment to responsive and compassionate citizenship and service on campus, in the local community and in the broader world.

These are big words and important ideas. I am sure you all have discussed them in your classrooms, JK-4th Grade.

I was thinking about these, our core values, and about the way I could come up with a small moment to illustrate them. Do you know what an illustration is? Yes, and not always a drawing.

So I was hoping for the small moment to illustrate these big ideas in action for you. I hope this works and look forward to hearing your feedback — the opinions of others — because guess what? I get better with feedback. We all do!

So how many of you have been to a grocery store before? How many of you have used a cart to shop in the grocery store? What happens when you are done with the cart? Well does everyone always put their cart away? When we are finished shopping, we are on a bit of an honor system. There aren’t grocery store police who stand and make sure we return our carts are there?

No, we are on the honor system to return our carts so that the next shopper, maybe someone we know and maybe another citizen, can easily take a cart and enjoy a safe shopping experience.

Honor – and doing what is fair and right helps make the store work well and builds community.

Love of learning – How many of you get jobs when you go to the grocery store? Holding the list, pushing the cart? Unloading the cart, helping your parents or caregivers shop? How many of you have learned that begging for sweets and not so nutritional food will not get us what we want? Well, this is a love of learning and will lead you to an
independent and giving life where you can help teach others and model for younger and older people. I learned to shop with my parents and how to put the cart back where it belongs. This love of learning continues; in fact, I am still learning my way around new grocery stores in this town, my new home and where to put the cart back!

Excellence – The high standards of being your best self keep all happy throughout the grocery store. If, when taking an orange to put in your cart, it falls on the ground, you need to pick it up and put it back. If you munch on something while shopping, you need to be honest and pay for it when you check out. If you notice something that needs attention, such as a spill or broken item, you should find a worker in the store and help them make sure the right thing happens, so no one gets hurt and that their excellence is maintained. It takes all of us pulling together to keep and grow excellence, just like it does here in our own dining hall.

Respect – When you go to the grocery store, it takes patience. Some people move slowly, push their cart down the middle of the aisle and need help. No one is just the same and, as such, we should remember that we are just one of many shoppers and citizens in this community space. The person checking us out might have a better day with our please, thank you and asking him or her about their day. A smile can go a long way, and respecting their job and place of work will help keep that space wonderful. We should respect the shoppers who come after us and the workers, and put the cart back in the cart return area. This way, we are leaving things the way we found them, if not better. This is respectful and a wonderful way to show that you care, when all and none are watching.

Community – Citizenship on campus and beyond is a Collegiate expectation, and although Mrs. Miller and your teachers aren’t at the grocery store, or at least not always at the grocery store when you are there, we want you to think about these values and being your best self. This shows your understanding of community and the bigger world to which we belong. At Collegiate, we want you to show good citizenship and strong character when all and none are watching. As such, returning that grocery cart, picking up that piece of trash on aisle seven, holding the door for someone else, turning in someone’s lost item, and waiting patiently are all small moments that add up to the big and important values we care so deeply about as Cougars.

At the start of the year when we celebrated Convocation, I asked you to courageously observe, to understand and go forth as responsible citizens. I used the letters in Cougars. What I hope is that you will watch those around you and your own behaviors and live a life that makes our world and, yes, our grocery stores, better places. So the
next time you go shopping, think about reminding your caregivers to return the cart and offer to help them. It helps me to remember Ansley, my Cougar pup, giving me a high-five when I do those things and I know she’d love to give you one as well.

Thank you for having me today and for living our values here, at home and in the wider world, just as our founder, Ms. Baker, asked us to do — be good citizens in the widest sense.