

Personal Reflections

3/12/2020

Dear IMSA Family,

I have yearned to write and send you this Personal Reflection after my last one, which was early in January. What has prevented me from writing and posting a new one? Loss.

On February 9, 2020, I received a text and engaged in several phone calls with my 30-year old daughter, Daniella, from an emergency hospital room in Glen Burnie, Maryland. Her mother, my first wife of 19 years, was undergoing an emergency procedure. I arrived at the hospital by 11:30 a.m. to find my ex-spouse unconscious. She passed away just after 1:00 p.m. My other two sons, Corinno and Simon, ages 33 and 32, landed in Baltimore in a later flight from O'Hare. When they arrived their mother had already passed away. I am helping my adult children deal with their loss.

Some of you might be thinking, wow, this is TMI (too much information). My point in sharing all of this is to say that life is short, and none of us are guaranteed a long life. Also, at my first wife's memorial, which my daughter insisted we call "a celebration of life," I commented that it's too bad that a person has to die before we "celebrate their lives." My second point is to encourage you to celebrate your life and that of those who are near you. And, let's celebrate their lives while they are alive and with us!

Celebrating life amid loss is the message I want to leave you with today. Let me turn to more celebrations.

Last Friday and Saturday, March 5 and 6, 2020, our Titan Robotics Team successfully competed in the Midwest Regional tournament at UIC's, Credit Union 1 Arena. They will be moving on to the World Championship in Detroit, MI, from April 29 to May 2, 2020. Titans



have not been to the World Competition since 2012! We're very proud of our student-led team and sincerely appreciate the many hours that staff and volunteers invested in supporting the team. Now we need your help. The team needs to raise \$20,000 to cover their travel and costs. **Please donate** and select "First Robotics Fund" in the drop down menu to help them make their dreams become reality.

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This week, we're celebrating CoTH (Clash of The Halls), our friendly and fierce annual competition between residence halls that incorporates competitive games, a talent show, a pep rally on Thursday with drills by each Hall, and so much more. Clash offers all of our students an opportunity to recover from the stress of academics at IMSA before our spring break next week.

And we're celebrating spring break next week.

As I mentioned, we're celebrating life amid loss. I need to end this Reflection by returning to it.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) represents a kind of loss. We are losing some sense of security and safety. Depending on what happens in the next period, we may lose even more.

Earlier this week, you received a message regarding our emergency preparations at IMSA. In addition to collecting travel plans for spring break from our students, we have advised our staff, including faculty, of our expectations regarding communicating their travel plans with us. Also, we informed them regarding traveling to warning level 2 and 3 countries, as identified by the CDC. Our goal is to keep our IMSA community healthy and free from the virus. We plan on doing some additional deep cleaning during spring break (please thank our custodial and maintenance staff, who will engage in these efforts) while many are on break.

We are asking anyone who is exposed and experiencing symptoms to isolate themselves, put on a mask, if available, and contact your local health department for instructions on testing.

Governor JB Pritzker declared a state of emergency for Illinois on the evening of Monday, March 9, 2020. Rush Copley Medical Center, our health care provider at IMSA, is preparing for a surge in COVID-19.

In preparation, we canceled off-campus travel for SIR and internships this week (March 11, 2020). We are reviewing upcoming travel plans for all students and staff to determine any restrictions. We are planning for temporary or extended closures if the situation at IMSA changes. We are vigilant in tracking all visitors in the main building and the residence halls. We are also evaluating hosting (and attendance) at large gatherings from now until the end of the school year.

Please note that you can find the information we have shared as well as the CDC, IDPH, and the recommendations of our health partners, Rush Copley Medical Center and the Kane County Health Department, on the [COVID-10 page of the IMSA website](#).

Finally, I want to encourage you to be diligent in washing your hands. Download the latest version of our [LiveSafe App](#) through which we will communicate during this crisis. Remain



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flexible as this is an evolving situation, and we are working to keep IMSA students and staff, including faculty, safe and healthy in these uncertain times.

These times call us to be wise and prudent. On the one hand, let's not overreact, panic, and over heighten our anxiety and that of others. On the other hand, let's not be naive, underreact, and not take precautions.

Stay well.

Respectfully,

José M. Torres, Ph.D.
President