

CPMS Teachers and Staff,

Three years ago, my family was preparing to become first-time Leopards. I was a little nervous for my child – would she be able to meet middle school expectations for independence and ownership of learning? How would she respond to social dynamics? What would happen to our parent-child relationship as she turned into a teenager? As it turned out, we have had challenges with all those issues and will continue to for the foreseeable future.

But what took me by surprise was how amazingly well our child's teachers were able to navigate through all those challenges to both encourage and support her and also nudge her toward greater independence and ownership of her learning... *and help her parents do the same.* The latter is especially impressive since middle school teachers and parents do not have the same opportunities for the frequent and more in-depth interaction that can happen at the elementary level. That first year, I shared my great appreciation for our child's teachers, but I did not write a thank-you note to all CPMS staff. I simply didn't really know much beyond our sixth-grade team and felt a bit shy to write as if I did. But another year of wonderfully supportive, encouraging, caring teachers and a chance to interact with more teachers through mentoring made it easy for me to share my thanks with all of you at the end of last school year. Each year, a theme for what I am thankful for just presents itself. This year, it happened pretty quickly. As early as December, there was just one word that came to my mind when I thought of the CPMS teachers and staff: **LOVE**. At first, that seemed pretty sappy and not a very concrete expression of my appreciation, but that word would not be held at bay. It kept resounding in my mind and in my heart, "LOVE. I have this deep and tremendous love for the teachers and staff of CPMS."

I've realized this feeling is something akin to a Band-of-Brothers love. We have been through something tough and challenging together. We have shared a mission and worked toward the goal of helping a child – more than one child – navigate her way as a student and as a person through a challenging transition period. Whatever the ultimate outcome will be, the bond I feel for you is forged through the countless efforts I have witnessed you make, the support you have offered our child (and so many others) and us parents, the good you put into the world, the rapport you forged with our child, and the gentle humor and honesty you used to guide her. I have known for a while that however our child finished her final semester at CPMS (well enough, it seems), it would not change my love for you. Your presence in our lives these past three years has been a good and heartening presence – one that, at times, has made both my heart and my eyes well with appreciation.

I hope that knowing you have touched many lives in profound and positive ways and knowing that your work – and the passion and compassion you put into it – are truly appreciated... I hope knowing those truths can help replenish, at least a little, the stores of grace you have shared with us this year. My family leaves CPMS for a bit, but we expect to return. For now, I hope you will carry with you our deep and abiding thanks for all that you – this wonderful teaching community at CPMS – have done for ours and many other families.

A CPMS Family
2017/2018

With  Thanks