

CONNECTION

**Living
our mission
every day as
an inclusive
community
of learners**



Our diversity makes us stronger as a community—and today, it plays a critical role in empowering students with dyslexia to become academically skilled, confident, lifelong learners. On each campus, our educators embrace and live our mission so that our students thrive.

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Carroll School Mission Statement



Carroll School empowers children with language-based learning differences, such as dyslexia, to become academically skilled students who are strong self-advocates and confident lifelong learners. Carroll is an inclusive community committed to embracing diverse strengths, identities, and lived experiences in order to give each child what they most need to thrive.

Message from Dr. Renée Greenfield, Head of School

Carroll School has long been a champion of educational diversity: we empower students who learn differently to become lifelong, passionate learners.

We want our students to enter the world with confidence, self-advocacy skills, and a willingness to embrace all the opportunities life has for them—and our alumni are dynamic proof that our approach works, and has worked for more than a half-century.

Today, we recognize and acknowledge there's much more we can do as a community to engage in our inclusion, equity and diversity practices at Carroll. We are a school with long-standing and innovative ways to educate students with dyslexia, and we are able to do so through a social justice lens.

We want our students to have all the opportunities available to them, including the civil rights that come with being able to read, write, and communicate. We want them to be prepared to engage in critical, complex conversations, in order to better understand others' perspectives.

We use our mission to guide all that we do at Carroll. This mission is a symbol of our intentional and thoughtful journey over the last five years, including welcoming Osamagbe Osagie as our Director of Equity and Inclusion, and creating a more culturally, ethnically, racially, and economically diverse community.

Further, our educators engage in professional development, open dialogue, and develop teaching and learning experiences that integrate DEI practices. Our mission guides us along, as we learn and grow as a community.

As the new Head of School, I am committed to our community, which values, appreciates, and celebrates difference on every level—not just in how we think and learn, but how we live as a supportive, inclusive community. The integration of diversity and equity into our existing mission shows our commitment to this work.

I'm honored to be a part of this incredible community, and to share all the ways we're putting our mission into action—with the goal of truly giving every child what they most need.

We are a school with long-standing and innovative ways to educate students with dyslexia, and we are able to do so through a social justice lens.



LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE LOWER SCHOOL

Exploring Identity Through "Team Time"



**Molly McKeever,
3rd Grade Teacher and
Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator**

In the third grade this year, we're focusing on concepts of identity in our new bi-weekly "Team Time" block. "Team Time" is dedicated to a series of all-grade group projects and diversity, equity and inclusion activities—part of the larger work we've been doing on DEI at Carroll. We began with identity because having a sense of both personal identity and group identity provides children with a sense of belonging—an essential step in setting our students up for academic success.

Osa Osagie, Director of Equity and Inclusion, shared with us that, "for 53 years Carroll has done a great job of looking at DEI through the lens of learning, access to education, reading, and the power of literacy. But we also need to understand that our learners come from a variety of different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, various family structures, and lived experiences." This helped me focus on how best to meet the diverse needs of our students: their language-based learning differences and their distinct backgrounds.

The identity curriculum includes six units, each linked to a children's book. We started the year by exploring external factors of identity: ourselves, our family, and our community. We read the story *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, and considered ways to describe ourselves and our families. For younger students,

it's too complex to jump directly to speaking about personal identity. Instead, we start off with very concrete external examples of identity—what things look like, our skin tones, hair type, family structure, etc.—and then build from there.

In the second half of the year, we've focused on internal concepts: not simply what people, families, and communities look like *physically*, but how they are unique *internally*. We may look the same on the outside, but we're different on the inside—and conversely, we may share common experiences or similar internal qualities, despite appearing different on the outside.

We wrote our own learning stories, which we began by reading and listening to the stories of people from different walks of life. I have dyslexia, so I shared my personal learning story with my class, and what dyslexia looks like for me. The students then wrote and illustrated their learning stories, sharing key things that shaped their experience along the way.

Our goal is to build empathy; when students understand who they are on the inside, what can shape them on the inside, and what creates bonds between them, we can guide them through perspective-taking—a process they will hopefully continue in future grades, and for the rest of their lives.

Lily Durant, 3rd Grade Student

"Team Time" is when we think about our community, and the communities around us. Ms. McKeever has an awesome collection of books that we read, and then do a project on each one. We talk about different perspectives and putting ourselves in other people's shoes, to see things from their point of view. It's important to have diversity—life would be boring without it!

In my favorite project, we made self-portraits with words that describe us. It was a "flip-up": first, you see a portrait of me, then you flip the page to see the words that describe me, followed by a hand drawn portrait of me. We talked about invisible and visible traits, so I described myself as kind, caring, dyslexic, intelligent, and loving—and I love music.

In the book, *The Oldest Student* by Rita Hubbard, we learned about a woman who lived to be 121 years old. I love her life story. She started in slavery, then she became free and learned to read. It was one of my favorite books so far. I like the collage art in the illustration, too—it's very poetic.

We have been learning a lot about slavery in class, and I've been telling my mom how awful slavery is. I wanted to express

Black Rose

The trees in the forest and the
trees in the meadow all sway
to our rhythm as we protest.
The soft light of freedom
flickering like that of long ago.
Like the sound of a wild rose
in the ever so soft wind.
It sways in the direction of north
where slavery is against the law.
And so, we protest, we protest
a peaceful protest.
We are torn away from home.
Today true home is just a memory.
Like that of the black rose

myself, but I felt like it wasn't enough. Ms. McKeever told us that she entered a poem into a contest when she was young and won, and that inspired me to write a poem about slavery called "Black Rose."

IDENTITY

Perspective-taking

The ability to understand how a situation appears to another person, and how that person is reacting cognitively and emotionally to the situation.



DIVERSITY

The DEI Coordinator is a newly formed volunteer role that started at the Lower School this year. We sat down with Abby Zwetchkenbaum, 5th Grade Language Arts Teacher, 5th Grade Team Lead, and DEI Coordinator, to hear about how this role is making an impact at Carroll.



What is a DEI Coordinator?

Abby: The DEI coordinator position began as a way to ensure we have someone in every grade level at the Lower School thinking of ways to include diversity, equity, and inclusion in our curricula. Together, the DEI coordinators make sure each grade includes all kinds of holidays, talking points around current events, and opportunities for social justice conversations.

Why is this work personally important to you?

Abby: I became a teacher because it was an actionable way for me to connect with students and make a difference in their lives—making sure all my students felt valued, safe, and included. Before taking on my role as a DEI coordinator, I worked to incorporate equity and inclusion into the activities and projects I was planning. What books are we

LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE LOWER SCHOOL

Building Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Lower School

choosing? Whose stories are we reading? How do we include a diverse mix of voices into the Language Arts curricula?

In my work as DEI coordinator, and in our faculty learning groups this year, we have also been thinking about inclusive vocabulary. What do all these terms mean, and why are they important?

All of this work aligns with my personal mission to make the world a better place through how I educate my students.

How does your work as a DEI Coordinator play out in the classroom?

Abby: Last year, our 4th and 5th Grade students took a class in social justice. This year, the Lower School added a schoolwide “Team Time” class to focus on DEI topics and conversations. In the 5th Grade, we did a project on heritage, through which we invited students to think about their own heritage: where they come from, the story behind their name, and so on.

Our goal was to have each student consider their own identity before we moved onto activities around perspective-taking. It’s important for our students to know who they are before they can understand others.

How do you see the school’s mission in this work?

Abby: We’ve spent a lot of time over the past three years focusing on diversity with our faculty and staff, and now it’s filtering into the classrooms. We’re better able to infuse this focus into the School’s mission and culture when we’re intentional about ensuring different people’s voices and perspectives are heard.

I think this work also gives teachers permission to design curricula to ensure we’re seeing things



in the most inclusive way possible. We are asking “Who is included when I plan this lesson?” versus “How do I teach this lesson?” It’s a shift in perspective that makes all the difference.

What have been some highlights of your role as DEI coordinator?

Abby: One of the highlights has continued to be getting together as the DEI coordinator group, brainstorming different curriculum ideas, and thinking about ways to deal with certain situations.

I have also enjoyed incorporating DEI activities into our morning meetings and “Team Time” blocks in a more intentional way. In February, for Black History Month, we spent time spotlighting different black people—not just those who overcame strife, but brilliant people doing brilliant things. These are conversations we should be having all the time, though—not just for one month.

What do you love about this work?

Abby: School is a beautiful place to talk to young people—to help them to think about things critically, and to show them ways to be inclusive. When they have these conversations as children, it helps them to become more empathetic later in life—and to become people who make a real difference in the world around them.

LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE LOWER SCHOOL

How the Lower School is Building Community—one Caught Ya! at a time



Michele Hales, 4th Grade Teacher and Team Lead, and Elizabeth Quansah, 4th Grade Teacher and Alumna of The Angela Wilkins Program for Graduate Studies in Education

The Lower School's values of **ERIK** (empathy, respect, inclusion, kindness) is a grounding way to concretely talk to students about the ways we should act in a community with one another. We introduce these values throughout the school year through books, videos, and engaging activities that help define what each value means, and what it looks like in action.

Elizabeth described, "One of my favorite books is *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig, which touches on kindness and inclusion. At the start of the story, the boy is drawn in gray because everyone is leaving him out. When the other kids start including him, the illustrations add a little more color each time someone does something nice for him. Visually, the story really clicked with my students. They could see the images change but also see the different ways the boy was being affected by the other kids' actions."

INCLU

Michele shared, "Recently, my 4th Grade class has been talking a lot about tone of voice, and being aware of those you are interacting with. We showed videos to the students with the sound muted, asking them to describe people's body language and facial expressions. In one video, two people were saying the same exact words but their tone and body language portrayed an entirely different meaning. This work all lends itself to another activity we've been doing this year: the Caught Ya! Board."

Elizabeth started the Caught Ya! Board last year in Mrs. Holland's 4th Grade class as part of a graduate school inquiry project. Her goal was to solve a problem, or find an area where Carroll could grow. "I thought it would be great to focus on activities that reinforced the ERIK values. What do these words actually mean? How can we teach students about these values in an understandable way?"

We opened it to the whole grade this year as a way to both teach ERIK, and to build our community. Each day, a student in each 4th Grade classroom is chosen to "notice" ERIK happening throughout the day. They complete a Caught Ya! card for a fellow student they see displaying empathy, respect, inclusion, or kindness. This could mean picking up a classmate's jacket at recess, helping a teacher, including a classmate in play—or whatever they recognized as being part of the ERIK values.

At the end of the day, the "noticers" present the Caught Ya! Cards to the students they witnessed showing ERIK. Often the kids receiving kudos don't even realize what they did had such an impact on those around them.



Getting a Caught Ya! card feels nice—someone is appreciating me! It feels good when someone sees me for me, and recognizes what I do. *When it's my turn to catch someone showing ERIK, I want to catch everyone in action... not just my friends."*

Julia Reeves-Kroff • 4th Grade Student

While it's easy to recognize your best friend, part of this project is to help students to look beyond those they have already befriended. Michele shared, "A few months into the year, there was a boy who was really struggling, and at one point he asked me, 'How come I never get any Caught Ya! cards?' Another student overheard, and began to watch this student really carefully throughout the day. At the end of the day, she gave him a card. It wasn't something I asked her to do, but it was a perfect example of ERIK shining through."

After the cards are presented to the students, they get added to the Caught Ya! Board in the 4th Grade hall. "The kids love seeing their cards displayed. And it's really nice for the community," Elizabeth said.

The Caught Ya! Project, our ERIK principles, and our work to help students understand different perspectives are all critical ingredients in making Carroll a safer place. We're reinforcing values that are essential to who we are as a school community—and our students will take those values into the rest of their lives.



SION

LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Evolving Our Professional Development to Meet Today's—and Tomorrow's—Needs



Alissa Benway,
Middle School Assistant
Division Head and
ELA teacher

The Hall Copacino Institute of Professional Study courses were created to help identify and train teachers for the different aspects that make a successful teacher at Carroll. All educators take part in professional study each year and over their time as educators, they take all five courses: 1. Orton-Gillingham, 2. The Whole Child, 3. Data-Informed Instruction 4. Pedagogy: The Science of Teaching, and 5. New Teacher Course.

As the Assistant Division Head for the Middle School, I'm involved in developing and providing pedagogy courses at Carroll. The Carroll courses started as a way to train staff to be successful teachers at Carroll.

We developed the core professional development courses 5 years ago, for focus

on identifying the social/emotional needs of our students, and all the ways an educator can meet those needs. We looked closely at how students and teachers speak to each other, how we can encourage and thoughtfully redirect students, and how we can help students recognize where they are in their learning, and overcome their anxiety about certain tasks.

It's important that these courses continue to evolve each year, and that we remain committed to improving the content to meet the needs of our educators and our students.

Our Pedagogy class has recently been transformed to create a more interdisciplinary experience for our students. During the pandemic, we had teaching teams working in pods—a shift that led us to recognize that

there was a benefit for our students in having a combined experience across subjects.

We began by looking at the skills taught in English Language Arts and those taught in History, and where we could potentially teach these skills in unison in a diagnostic and prescriptive way. We came up with essential questions that our students could focus on across partner subjects, as well as ways that writing projects could be more aligned within the ELA and history curriculums.

How do we read this article and then write about it? What does note-taking mean for a 6th Grader, for a 7th Grader, for an 8th Grader across disciplines? What are some of the different ways to analyze information? Are students going to be writing a descriptive article, and what kind of graphic organizer are they filling out? We wanted to guide our educators toward teaching in a more systematic way, using a shared vocabulary, and creating content connections between the subjects.

We did the same for Math and Science by exploring how our teachers could collaborate to align the learning in both subjects: where we could integrate greater repetition and scaffolding, and move students more wholly from the unknown to the known—a core concept in Carroll pedagogy.

One of the most important pieces of the new interdisciplinary approach is to have the students focus on inquiry. In a lesson, students may explore one or two meaningful questions to be answered using novels, historical information, or math and science concepts. The end goal is to build critical thinking skills while students stay in the flow of what we're teaching and what they're learning.

I see highly motivated teachers coming to work at Carroll because we help them hone skills that really help students—not just in terms of *what* they learn, but *how* students can become more independent in their skills.

Because we are intentional every step of the way, our students are better able to become independent learners and thinkers.



The teachers at Carroll will advocate for you and they are very engaging. They help you if you need help and the projects we do make learning fun. It's not like they just hand you a piece of paper and you do work; there are fun projects like the cell project we're doing in science."

Alex Bloch • 8th Grade Student



EDAGOGY

LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

How our 6th and 7th Graders Worked Together to Accomplish Team Challenges... in the HAWKS Nest

Emma Creeden,
7th Grade English
Language Arts
Teacher and 7th
Grade Team Lead



Every grade at Carroll forms a really nice community amongst themselves, but I had noticed there was not a lot of interaction between our grades. We have so much wonderful space on campus, and the ability to adjust our schedules to create time for meaningful activities and pursuits to educate the whole child—and I saw an opportunity.

That's how the HAWKS Nest project came to be.

I had a meeting with Mike Copacino, the 6th Grade Team Lead, to brainstorm ways to connect our 6th and 7th Graders. We asked ourselves, "How can we make sure the sixth graders in the Copacino building are engaged and part of the same community as the seventh graders in the Storrow building?" We decided to become more deliberate about forming those connections, and growing the mentoring skills of our 7th Graders.

It's developmentally appropriate for adolescents to be very inwardly focused, in their own

bubbles, but now we've built in time to discuss what community means and what it means to be part of one—a springboard to the work Carroll is doing around perspective-taking and inclusion.

Building on Carroll's popular hawk mascot, we created the HAWKS Nest. We paired small cohorts of 6th and 7th Graders together to collaborate, to design, and to solve specific challenges. Through the process of working together, we hoped students would get to know each other, and then find a few more faces around campus to say "hi" to during the day. For the 6th Graders, we hoped it would help them see themselves as peers to the older students—and in turn, the 7th Graders would have an opportunity to mentor and build critical leadership skills.

Our pilot HAWKS Nest program included three challenges, one per trimester, that last 2-3 days in length. For the first challenge, the students built hawk nests using a specific set of materials in small, mixed-grade groups of 4-5 students.



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What I've liked about HAWKS Nest is being able to see 6th Graders and to talk to them personally and hearing how their first year of middle school is going—how they're feeling and what's working out for them. One thing I learned about myself is that I enjoy helping and mentoring the younger kids."

Mateo Saldana • 7th Grade Student

The first day, the students introduced themselves, got to know each other, and brainstormed ideas for how they might approach the challenge. On the second day, the groups gathered on the lower fields to build their nests.

We purposely designed the challenge to be physical—no computers—and to have lots of space for ideas, making mistakes, and learning through communication. We hoped that it would provide opportunities for students to take on different roles, like being a leader or an idea generator, and to work together and form connections with others. It wasn't about the end product—it was about building skills.

The challenge ended with a set of questions designed to guide reflection: What went well? What surprised you? What would you do differently next time? What roles did you take on? Did everyone participate? How can you help others to participate? We were thrilled with what we saw and heard, and hung the hawks' nests around campus as a symbol of a unified, connected community.

For the second activity, the students were challenged to use a string "grabber" to pick up and reconfigure plastic cups into multiple different structures, with each participant holding an end of the string during the whole challenge. Students stayed in their same groupings, and by building on the connections they'd started

and being connected physically, we saw the barriers fall even more.

On Day One, they were a bit reserved and shy as the students became reacquainted. On Day Two, they encouraged one another, they shared stories, and they showed more openness toward one other.

For the final challenge of the year, the students will be sharing ideas as a way to help them be invested in the experience—and we can't wait to grow the program further. Some of the ideas we're exploring are integrating smaller, less structured activities—during lunch/recess, and so on—to allow students to hang out, see each other casually so those friendships can form more fully. That's where relationships are built.

The Middle School
values **HAWKS**

Honesty
Accountability
Work Ethic
Kindness
Safety

COMMUNITY

ORTON GILL

//

In the AOG class, students are learning the underlying structure of language, which is important for comprehension whether you're in sixth, seventh or throughout life.

They are acquiring strategies for when they encounter unknown words, so they'll have a whole arsenal of ways to understand that word."

**Stephanie Crement • ELA-Humanities
Co-Department Head and Advanced OG Teacher**

Carroll educators are constantly assessing and considering new approaches and strategies to ensure we fulfill our mission to give each student what they need to succeed academically. This rings true even at the core of Carroll's academic program—Orton-Gillingham focus areas.

In our Middle School this year, we added Advanced Orton-Gillingham (AOG) into our offerings. Focus area classes are designed to give students additional skills support in an area where they are struggling. For many students, this is Orton-Gillingham (OG), but

**Joanne Nimmo,
Head of Middle
& Upper School
Tutoring and
Jenny Talentino,
6th Grade ELA
Teacher**

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IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Taking Orton-
Gillingham to
the Next Level
to Fulfill Our
Mission**



LINGHAM

there are also focus areas geared towards writing, reading, comprehension, and math.

Until this year, we offered a fluency focus class that concentrated on rate, accuracy, and expression skills. Students who had solidified some of their skills at the early levels of OG but who needed to build fluency were placed in this focus area class. The English Language Arts (ELA) and Tutoring teams realized that, for some students, there was a gap in their understanding of higher level OG, even though they felt comfortable reading, and were reading at a relatively good rate.

AOG has been created to use the structured, multisensory and prescriptive approach to teach a more advanced OG for students ready to move from a phonemic approach (sound symbols) to a morphological approach (word parts). The morphological approach ties to what students are learning in their ELA classes and to how we teach structured word analysis: vocabulary, prefixes, suffixes, recombining forms, etc.

We also put a great deal of thought into how we prepare students for more challenging vocabulary and text as they progress through school. Down the road, they will need the skills to decode content-specific and sophisticated vocabulary they'll encounter in higher level education courses. Through AOG, students learn Latin roots and work with prefixes and suffixes to change the meaning of words—which helps them to uncover those word meanings when encountered in complex text.

Though AOG goes back to the core of OG, it is not a rigidly structured course. As with all of our classes, and most notably in tutorials and focus areas, the OG practitioner assesses the students daily and adjusts lessons as they progress and master skills. That means the AOG class may start to incorporate more writing or comprehension to meet the needs of the students as the year unfolds. The OG piece is always there—but how much of it is emphasized is determined by what the students need.



I'm definitely seeing progress in skills development with my Advanced OG students, without question. The other positive outcome of this new class is deeper collaboration among AOG teachers and tutors, who share their expertise and ideas for developing lessons; and deeper collaboration with other content-area teachers."

Jenny Talentino • 6th Grade ELA Teacher and AOG Tutor





The beauty of Orton-Gillingham is that it's not just the technical part of learning that we focus on; we want to unlock the English language, and the potential for reading as a transformative thing. My hope is that exploring these ideas in the midst of tutoring right now will open my students' minds—for life.

LIVING OUR MISSION
IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Integrating Diversity into Orton- Gillingham Tutoring

Sarah Napier,
Middle School
Tutor

Carroll's diversity and inclusion work is deeply important to me, both in my work as an educator, and personally.

When I began working at Carroll five years ago, the school was just beginning DEI training with faculty. Recently, the Middle School has moved towards integrating that work in the classroom with the Foundations for Brave Conversations curriculum. As an advisor and homeroom teacher leading these conversations, it inspired me to think about how to incorporate more diverse books into my tutorials.

Reading is a transformative way to learn about different people, different perspectives, and different places in the world. I have seen how reading helps people become critical thinkers who understand diverse ideas, who empathize with issues that people face, and who can consider perspectives outside of their own.

One challenge tutors face is selecting books that offer a high interest level, but also are at

LIVED EXPE

the appropriate reading level for our students, are appropriate for a school, and are not going to take the whole year to read. Once a book is chosen, we'll pull out vocabulary and dialogue from each book for the fluency part of our lessons. Because we're tasked with planning multiple lessons per week, we often let students choose books where this work has already been done.

With the heightened interest in the tutoring department to diversify our library, and with the incredible support of Osa Osagie to help us identify relevant and relatable books, I set out to create lessons around three diverse books and authors that included tutorial materials and supporting resources.

I started with *Ghost*, the first book of Jason Reynolds' Track series—a story told from the point of view of one member of an urban track team. I chose Jason Reynolds not only because he is an award-winning young adult (YA) author of color but also because of his life experiences. The lesson includes videos from Jason Reynolds talking about his experiences as a student, which helps our students relate more personally to what they're reading.

In one video, Reynolds shares that he never completed a fiction book until he was 18 years old because he felt the books in school didn't have much to do with his life. As a writer today, he has a rule that his stories must capture kids' attention in the first few pages. When you only have 20 minutes of time devoted to reading during tutorials, capturing the student's attention is an important factor!

The book is written in a conversational style that alternates between long and short sentences. In creating the fluency part of

the lesson, I pulled out the long sentences and broke them into shorter phrases, as well as fluency phrases for students to practice. This experience with modern, everyday dialogue gives our students the tools and strategies to use when they encounter it in the young adult books they'll read in high school, or for fun. I also added discussion questions to gauge understanding, and to encourage conversation. Now I see my students asking more questions, especially about the perspectives of the characters, and they're more engaged in the lessons.

School should be a place that feels welcoming to all students; a place where teachers are helping students understand different perspectives that they take with them into the world. Middle schoolers, especially, are in the process of discovering who they are, what they believe, and what they care about. It's a great time to have the brave conversations we talk about, and to explore the world through books.



RIENCES

LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Will Close '11 on Activating Learning in Bounders

David Johnson,
Middle School
Bounders Teacher



Carroll alum Will Close '11, recently shared with me that "Multis"—the arts, physical education, outdoor education programs at Carroll—helped set him on a path to become a lifelong learner.

It wasn't just writing papers or doing projects in our classrooms that activated his learning. Rather, he discovered his love of education in the Bounders Woods, in the Arts & Innovation Center, in the gym, and on the rock wall. "Using my hands, mind, and heart... that was the combination that helped me to become a lifelong learner," he says.

"It awakened and activated a passion in me for learning and finding solutions: hurdle jumping,

developing confidence in my differences, and having the time and space to find my way in this non-dyslexic world." says Will.

"Bounders taught me stewardship of the land, what it means to be a member of a community, and most importantly, the ethics and passion I needed to keep learning. These are all very real things that have stuck with me."

"In public school, they told me I wasn't good enough at writing. Every day I would go home to draw and sculpt. Getting into college to pursue my art degree was 50% writing/reading... but the other 50% was my dyslexic advantage in action: solving problems creatively, and thinking outside the box.

DYSLEXIE



I think a lot of students when they first get to Carroll put themselves down, thinking they are not smart enough or not as capable. It's really empowering and inspiring to hear from alumni about their dyslexia journey and how they've reached success."

Isa Huang • 8th Grade Student

As Carroll would say, give each child what they need. For me, that was the space, the encouragement, and the instruction to activate my gifts," says Will.

As a recent college graduate, Will points out that his generation is faced with big problems to tackle like overpopulation, climate change, and political tensions. "Meeting the needs of our society is going to require an aptitude for information thinking, multidisciplinary learning, designing and leading group/community based projects, and sustainability and ethics."

After graduating from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in May 2021, Will has returned to Carroll as an assistant teacher in the Bounders program, where he shares his passions for nature, art, and the dyslexic advantage.

Will is a talented artist and a natural teacher, and very patient and purposeful. Whenever he teaches a lesson, he strives to tap into the multisensory aspect for our dyslexic learners.

He creates clear and captivating visuals and props that students can hold in their hands, such as a foldable 3D block of wood to demonstrate the inner workings of how a

tree grows, and how to carve wood along its grain. He uses storytelling to activate student learning, such as sharing the Swedish history of wood carving. Will even created a 'Weather Board' with working knobs and a working thermometer to engage students in the weather forecast.

I have been beyond thrilled to have the opportunity to work alongside Will. He has been instrumental in teaching Bounders classes with me, and deepening the curriculum for our students.



XIA

LIVING OUR MISSION IN THE UPPER SCHOOL

Tackling Brave Conversations at the Upper School

Kate Collins,
Upper School
Division Head



At Carroll, DEI is all about “GECing” our students, and meeting them where they are. However, in the 8th and 9th Grade, they are still trying to understand who they are, let alone everyone else.

It’s easy for our students to forget about being open-minded, and to forget to consider who other people are, and how to engage with them. Our work in diversity has to be centered on us knowing our kids... and then “Carrollizing” how we deliver the critical work we’re doing around identity.

On one hand, we have some “social justice warriors,” while others are at very different places in their self-exploration—yet each group is exactly where they are supposed to be. That’s what I love about the DEI work at Carroll; there is no, “you need to be here on this day... or the bus is leaving without you.”

Recently in Foundations for Brave Conversations, we were talking about stereotypes and biases, unpacking the language and morphology of the words—again, “Carrollizing” how we approach this challenging topic. We discussed the biological nature of stereotypes, and how they exist in all of us as a way to make sense of the world. In our discussions, we’re not saying

“don’t do it”—but rather that it’s important to be aware of your biases, and the stereotypes you embrace.

We’re reading and discussing scenario stories with our students so they can understand how stereotypes look in today’s society. In a real and authentic way, we’re also trying to teach perspective-taking... but not explicitly. We want our students to imagine being someone else, how they’re feeling, and what they would do in situations.

At one point, a student bravely shared that they often did what the person in the scenario was doing to stereotype another person. I thanked them for being comfortable enough to recognize that, and vulnerable enough to share their experience as a part of our close community.

With DEI work, you have to be willing to make mistakes, and we have a culture at Carroll that is open to mistakes; it’s how we build trust and safety. The idea that “you’re not perfect and you don’t have to be,” extends from our academic approach into the work we do to build our community—and that’s what helps our students to become their best selves, even when mistakes are a part of the equation.

We asked Upper 9 students to describe Foundations for Brave Conversations (FBC). Here's what they told us:

Alexander Choi: FBC is a time to sit down and talk about really different topics that are all very relevant today. Some people might call them uncomfortable topics. But because you're in a group and not alone in your uncomfortableness, it makes it much easier to engage.

Peyton Brown: I think they're a little uncomfortable just because a lot of people try to avoid them. But by talking about it more, everyone's in the same boat—they're learning just as much as you are. So it gets less uncomfortable the more you're talking about it and the more open you are with it.

Falone Gustafson: When we first started FBC, it was a little bit uncomfortable because of the subjects that we were talking about. It was hard. But if you need time out, the teachers always let you step outside, take some deep breaths, come back in, do whatever you need to do to help yourself to be okay, because we have to talk about these things.

Alexander Choi: The American Dream Game is not information I've never heard before, but looking through the lens of the person you're playing, definitely adds a level of understanding. There is an emotional level to it that maybe is missing if you just have a regular conversation about it.



BRAVE

CONNEC

Esther Long joined Carroll's Upper School this year as a tutor. Here are a few of her thoughts on teaching at Carroll.

Before I came to Carroll, I was tutoring as an independent contractor at another school. I was *trying* to support my students, but because of their structure of the tutoring schedule, I wasn't able to give them the full support they needed.

At Carroll, Orton-Gillingham training is a priority, in the way tutoring is built into the students' schedules and how I have the freedom to craft lessons specific to my

students. I liken it to "juice boxes" that market to children but really are only 3-4% juice; here, we are offering *pure juice*. Tutoring is given the same priority in each student's schedule as other academic classes.

Students come to Carroll with varied school experiences—connecting with them and establishing a rapport is critical to building trust. I spent a lot of time in the first part of my year building relationships. It takes time, yes, but it pays off in the long run.

My life experiences have prepared me for the students I work with here. I have three children

**Esther Long,
Upper School
Tutor**

LIVING OUR MISSION
IN THE UPPER SCHOOL

Tutoring at Carroll: "Pure Juice" for Students



of my own who are all neurodiverse—one with a language-based learning difference. The advocacy skills I taught my own children are ones that I try to encourage in my students. I also have many students who share my experience of being adopted from a country outside of the US, and being raised here.

Those students share things with me about their identity and experiences that they likely don't with other teachers, and it's a unique way to form connections with them. I feel like I've grown in my own journey of how I see myself as a result.

I have worked with Middle School students for many years, and you need flexibility to give older students exactly what they need. I may think, "this is what I'm going to focus on today," but then realize when I'm into the lesson that there are other basic skills that need to be solidified first.

I actually love the challenge of working with older students because each student is unique. They're like a puzzle: I have to figure out exactly what they need right now, and what needs prioritizing today. I'm thankful that Carroll provides the freedom and independence to meet my students exactly where they are at—I think it's what helps us be successful, together.

I really enjoy working with all my students this year and seeing them thrive. One student, in particular, has made more progress than any student I've had in my 15+ years of tutoring. It's so exciting to see—and it makes me incredibly thankful to be here.



I see a strong community in the Upper School. I think all the teachers are a united front, they're always here for every kid, no matter what they're going through. And I think that's really important to them."

Peyton Brown • Upper 9 Student

Facilitating Social-Emotional Learning at the Upper School



An Interview with Teresa Lacks, Upper School Counselor

How would you describe your role as a counselor to someone who doesn't know Carroll's culture well?

Teresa: Typically, students have a less-than-positive association with counselors, where they only meet them in a disciplinary way. At Carroll, the role is very different. There are four key responsibilities as a Carroll counselor: consultation with teachers; meeting with students one-on-one or in small groups; observing students in the classroom; and designing community activities related to social-emotional learning.

How do you get to know your students?

Teresa: I check-in with each student regularly in order to build rapport and connectivity. Whether I'm working with them closely or I see them occasionally, it's important for me to know each student so I can support them in the way that fits them best.

I typically touch on these three areas when I check in:

1. **Social:** Are you developing friendships with others? Do you feel healthy? Do you need advice?

2. **Personal Mood:** How have you been feeling the past two weeks? Have you been able to ward off anxious thoughts? Are you able to manage your stress?
3. **Academics:** If you're feeling stressed, is it because you have too much work? Are there adjustments that we can make to learning at school, or at home?

If I hear from a few students who are facing the same challenges, I may pull together a small group to work on skills to meet that challenge. In those groups, we work on listening and reacting to what others say—which is core to social-emotional skills.

What does social-emotional learning look like at the Upper School?

Teresa: Our teachers and leaders incorporate social-emotional learning into the classroom in many ways.

In my role, I try to build on the identity work we're doing in our Foundations for Brave Conversations class. I talk to students about how we all identify as human and that one thing humans all have are emotions and feelings.



A frequent reminder I share with my students is that we all feel anxious sometimes—something that's too easy to forget. They might be anxious about presenting in class or worried that everyone will think they are stupid—yet when I ask that student what they would think about a fellow classmate presenting, they will say they see them as “strong” and “proud.”

The realization that we all have these thought cycles and feelings—that builds connections between our students.

We also do “Community Time” events, which are dedicated to social-emotional learning as a school community. I try to take feedback from teachers about what is happening in the classrooms, and then I create activities to respond. Recently, Kate Collins led a “Man Box” group that explored masculinity—defining the traits that are traditionally considered masculine, and exploring the wider range of traits of the male students in the group.

I also worked with a 9th Grade group of female students to explore social navigation and conflict in friendships. Another group explored humor and sarcasm, and when those go too far and negatively affect other people.

Tell me about the new Affinity Groups at the Upper School.

Teresa: We introduced three Affinity Groups in the second half of the year: one for individuals who identify on the LGBTQ+ spectrum, one for students of color, and one for white allies. We did a lot of previewing of the three groups in FBC. We defined affinity groups as a safe space for people who identify with a certain trait that may have been marginalized or, in terms of the white allies group, a safe space for people

who want to discuss their white privilege and how to better support people of color.

If we can give our students safe, healthy opportunities to talk about where they're at, they'll be more open to learning where other students are at.



Just the presence of the affinity groups, even if the students are not attending yet, matters. I know beyond a doubt, having been an LGBT teenager myself who never would have gone to an affinity group meeting, that creating the message that kids belong here and we're here to support them... it matters.

Kate Collins • Upper School Division Head



CONFIDENCE



45 Waltham Road
Wayland, Massachusetts 01778

**Carroll is looking to
a bright future—a future
where we continue to
live our values out loud
across our community**



Guided by our mission

We are a community of diverse learners who recognize the power of the dyslexic advantage—yet our diversity as a community extends beyond how we think and learn. Carroll is a place where everyone is welcomed and valued, regardless of their race, culture, identity, or socioeconomic background. With your support, we can continue having Brave Conversations, we can continue supporting our DEI journey, and we can make Carroll more accessible for families.

The Annual Fund makes all these things possible.
**With your support, we can do this together.
Give today!**

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