

# The Ridge



**SAGE RIDGE**  
SCHOOL



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Cover Image: US Boys and Girls Soccer Teams on the pre-season trail run.





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Background Image: Grade 6 at the Marin  
Headlands for Outdoor Education.



# NEW STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Kira Romberg  
Staff Writer

The transition to a new school can be daunting for any kid, especially when coming to Sage Ridge. As our new students came into their first quarter, they likely felt uncertain, or even a bit worried about what was to come.

## OUR LITTLEST SCHOLARS

For many of our newest students to the third and fourth grades, their main worries were about making friends. After all, feeling like you are part of a community is one of the most important things to any student. That certainly includes the new fourth grade boys, who have already made a lot of friends in their class. They called it “easy” to do so, and they were especially excited about going out to recess on the playground to play gaga ball. Well, they were at least more excited to be doing that than being interviewed by a high schooler.



Sage Ridge's first-ever Third Grade class on the first day of school.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

In the seventh and eighth grades, students were a bit more worried about the workload than those students in the fourth grade. Making friends happened pretty easily for them too, but homework was certainly more daunting in middle school. So far, according to the students, the workload has been entirely manageable. As Michael Tian ('23) from the eighth grade said, school is “going smoother than [he] expected.” Since they have already finished a fourth of their schoolwork for the year, this seems to be a really good start to what should be an exciting year.

## NAVIGATING THE UPPER SCHOOL

The introduction to freshman year at any high school is

something that can be a bit chaotic. For many of our students, this transition is made easy. Returning students, even if they may be getting new teachers, are still going to the same buildings every day and seeing the same friends. However, for the new students who came into the ninth grade this year, some even coming from other parts of the globe, that sense of comfort was not already present. Worries about how to navigate the work at Sage Ridge, or even FACTS/Renweb, were definitely present. After a few weeks with their new peers, the new work became a lot easier to navigate. Overall, they say that having other students support them is what really has made their experience easy. Lexi, one of our newest students from out of the country, said that “everyone is really nice” to her, and that this has made her entry into Sage Ridge smoother.

## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

From kids in the third grade all the way through high school, new students at Sage Ridge come in with the same worries. Whether their worries are about new friends, or about new schoolwork, becoming part of an established community can be hard, especially when students are getting adjusted to schoolwork demands and new classes. However, what seems to happen, no matter what grade a student enters, is an immediate feeling of assimilation with the Sage Ridge community. The support that a new student feels is one of the greatest things about Sage Ridge, and it is clear that our new kids are becoming an integral part of our community.



Members of the incoming freshman class set up their new lockers.



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# US SWIMMING: THE EXPERIENCE

Ethan Vicks  
Staff Writer

At the end of my freshman year, I decided that I would force myself to do a Spring sport since I hadn't done any other sports the whole year. I had to choose between Boys Golf, Boys and Girls Track and Field, and Boys and Girls Swimming. For a while I thought that I was going to join the golf team because it seemed to be the least amount of work. Surprisingly, my last pick was the Swim Team behind the Track Team because I had never swam before. It was getting close to the time by which I needed to decide, and I still wasn't fully sure what sport I was going to do.

## AN IMPULSIVE DECISION

At a town meeting where they announced the sign ups for Boys and Girls Swimming, my friend and I impulsively decided to join the swim team. It just seemed like the best sport at the time of

before. When the time came for the first practice, I met the coach of the Swim Team, an alumna named Morgan Johnston.

## COACH MORGAN

One of the reasons my swim experience was so much fun was because Morgan was such a fun, chill, and good coach. Meeting Morgan made me a lot less nervous because I knew that even if I sucked, which I did, she would not punish me and make my life miserable. We then left the school to make the long trip to Carson City where we had practice every day. I did not mind the 30-45 minute van ride at all, and, in fact, it became my favorite part of swim practice. The best part was when Morgan would let us go to Starbucks after practice. I bonded so much with my fellow teammates every commute to practice and back.



The SRS Swim Team competes in a Fernley swim meet.

the meeting because I knew that I would have someone else on the team who was inexperienced like me. When I got home that day, I began to regret my decision because I totally didn't think about how hard it would be and what it would be like to actually compete against other people.

## FIRST PRACTICE

When the day of the first swim practice arrived, I was very nervous because I had no idea how it would go. Although I was nervous, I was excited when I found out that a few of my other friends were on the swim team who had also never swam

## DIVING INTO THE UNKNOWN

When we actually had to get in the pool, I immediately realized that I was not good at all. I cried internally when I found out that there was such a thing called a flip turn that you do every time you reach the end of the lane. I had also forgotten about the concept of diving and how you have to do it every time you enter the pool. Not only did I have to worry about drowning, I also had to worry about turning and entering the pool. Needless to say, I was really intimidated and scared.

Luckily, I was not alone. There was a small group of kids in my grade who also just started and were equally scared and



intimidated. We got our own lane, which would eventually be called the “Slow Kid Lane” because, well, we were slow. Even though we were in the slower lane, we still worked very hard at our endurance, flip turns -- which took us a while to master -- and our dives. Through this hard work, practice became super fun and the highlight of my day each day.

Unfortunately, going to practice was not the only thing we had to do -- we also had to compete in swim meets on the weekends. The actual swimming part was not very hard compared to practice, but the anticipation was terrible. Standing on the starting block waiting to dive was probably the most nerve wracking thing I have ever done. One of the best feelings in the world was knowing that I had no more events left to compete in at the swim meet, so I would be able to relax. At the end of each swim meet, even though I did not win a single heat, I felt accomplished for improving and finishing.

### **ACHIEVING IMPROVEMENT & CONFIDENCE**

I ended up not qualifying for regionals, but I did improve a lot and had a lot of fun. I was awarded Most Improved which was a great way to end the season. I look back at my swim experience with a lot of joy, and I am proud of myself for trying a new sport. I would definitely recommend joining the Swim Team to try a sport you have never played because it's a chance to try something you would otherwise never have tried.



The SRS Swim Team competes in a Douglas swim meet.



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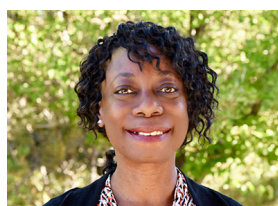
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# WELCOME OUR NEW STAFF

Luxi Sun  
Staff Writer



## BIOGRAPHIES

### Jay Howard

#### Head of Advancement

Chief Advancement Officer in many schools, raised over \$50 million during his career | Went to Sidwell Friends School in Washington DC and the University of Richmond

### Debbi Lehr

#### Director of Development

Attended UNLV | Enjoys the great outdoors with her dogs and horses | Volunteers at the Junior League of Reno, Therapeutic Riding Programs

### Melissa Kirkwood

#### Grade 4 Teacher

Reno native | Has traveled through Europe and studied Spanish and Italian at UNR | Loves fishing and riding dirt bikes | Has three dogs and a horse

### Dominic Vitale

#### Music teacher

Studied Music Education from West Chester University of Pennsylvania | Has served as the Director of Contemporary Worship at a congregation | Has a Cat | Plays various instruments

### Michael Cvetich History Teacher

Has coached many sports and created his own philosophy class in Sacramento | Taught on island of Nantucket | Is a fan of movies, reading, and more

### Gary Porper Math Teacher

Worked as an analyst and technical writer for Lockheed Martin and Intel | Taught in California where he grew up | Enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons

### Ellen Tyrell Math Teacher

Born and raised in Alaska | MA in Teaching from the University of Alaska Southeast | Has previously taught in Japan, Massachusetts, Alaska and China.

### Aurora Santangelo Physics Teacher

Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY | Graduated from Williams & Mary with Honors in Physics and a minor in Anthropology | Has worked in Yellowstone National Park

### Brian Arnold Computer Science Teacher

Majored in Math/Computer Science in college | Worked at several Silicon Valley companies | Has spent time as a sound designer behind the scenes for theatre | Performed music overseas

### Vandela Bratt Grade 3 Teacher

Likes kayaking, hiking and gardening | Earned a BS from UNLV in Early Childhood Education and has a M.Ed. in Special Education

### Sheila Lindsey Academic Support

Served in the United States Air Force as an air traffic controller and United States Naval Reserve as a journalist | Was a self-employed home daycare provider Loves ballroom and Latin dancing



## MS. AURORA SANTANGELO

### Q: Where did you grow up and what was it like?

I grew up in Brooklyn, New York. It was interesting to live in the biggest city in the world. My neighborhood was right by the water, there was a pier nearby and it was interesting to have a microcosm that is a little separated from the bigger city-- until I decided to go to high school in Manhattan.

### Q: Music that you most recently listened to?

Robyn's music. She's a Swedish artist. I saw her at a concert in New York, and it was very ethereal.

### Q: What other cities have you been living in the past?

I went abroad to Nantes, France during high school. I missed my first semester of sophomore Chemistry because of this and to this day I still don't like Chemistry because I struggled so much in that class. But later I found physics!



Ms. Santangelo poses with Luke and Princess Leia

## MR. BRIAN ARNOLD

### Q: What was it like for you to work in Silicon Valley?

It was a long time ago, back in the 1980s through the early 2000s. I had several wildly different experiences. I worked in small companies with just 3 people and huge corporations with thousands of engineers. In small start-ups, people usually need to do many different things, wear a lot of hats, just like at Sage Ridge. So, the experience really depends on what kind of field you're in and the size of the company. Basically, it was a lot of hours, a lot of hard work and working with a lot of smart, talented people, all committed to some cause.

### Q: What's your favorite book?

The Last 100 Days. This book describes a series of events that happened all throughout Europe during the last one hundred days of WWII. It is a fantastic book because it shifts between high-level events with Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt, down to foot soldiers, civilians, and everywhere in between. Overall, it's a memorable book because it reveals many poignant, horrifying, and endearing stories during that chaotic time in history.

### Q: What's the TV show or movie that you most recently watched?

On Netflix, Queen of the South. I'm currently on season 3. No spoilers, please.



Mr. Arnold poses in the innovation lab.

## MR. GARY PORPER

### Q: You lived in California for a while -- do you miss California? What do you miss most?

Yes. I really miss our old house, the weather, the ocean, the sports teams (Warriors and Giants), farmers markets, and food. I miss driving up to my house. We used to live in the hills and we could see The Bay Bridge connecting San Francisco and Oakland, and it was really beautiful.

### Q: If you were able to travel anywhere in the world, where do you most want to go?

Spain. My grandfather is Spanish and there's a town in Spain called Colunga, and that's his last name. He was always very proud of his heritage and when growing up he was like a father to me. I would like to visit Colunga as well as all the coastal cities and towns with my wife and boys. Unfortunately, my wife Sofia and the boys never got a chance to meet him.

### Q: What music did you most recently add to your library?

Mass Destruction by Faithless, May We All by Florida Georgia Line, and I Don't Care (feat. Justin Bieber) by Ed Sheeran.



Mr. Porper steadily prepares and grades students' work in his classroom.



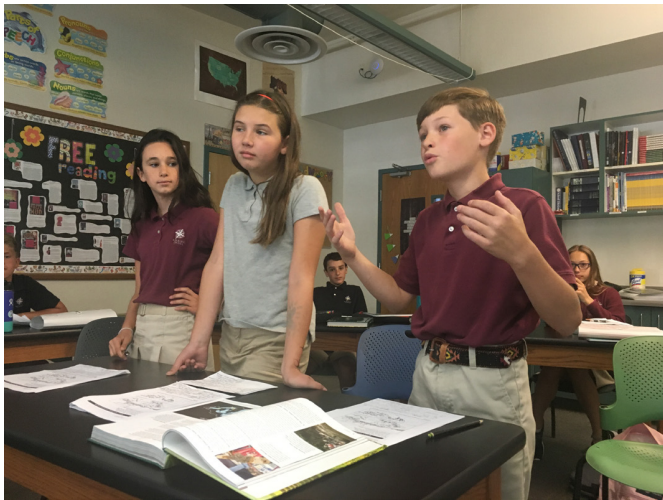
# THE NEW SCHEDULE

Anne Thompson  
Staff Writer

As everyone is certainly aware of by now, this year Sage Ridge has adopted a new daily schedule rotation to organize all of our classes. The most fundamental changes are that the length of each class went from 50 minutes to an hour; we drop two classes every day, and now we are taking a total of eight classes versus the previous seven.

## BETTER THAN I THOUGHT

As with anything new, students and staculty have had to adjust to the new schedule whether or not they agreed it was a good idea. Personally, the transition has not been as rough as I was entirely expecting it to be. Especially towards the end of last school year, I was mildly concerned with how the new schedule would affect our experience at school. I was definitely not excited for the hour long classes in particular. That concern seems to have been for nothing, as the extra ten minutes simply feels normal at this point.



Students have slightly longer classes for more involved discussions!

## THE 8TH CLASS

One thing I do definitely appreciate about the new schedule is our ability to take another class during our H period in the Upper School. It creates an opportunity to learn about something other than the core subjects that we have a vested interest in and has very real world applications. This includes Media Arts, Greek, Coding, Engineering, Mixed Media, Theater, and Fitness. Before the addition of this new period, it would have been impossible for the school to accommodate an extra class like this for a student without forcing the student to give up their study hall period, which is not extremely appealing.

## CONSISTENCY

Another thing about the new schedule that I am grateful for is that it repeats itself every ten school days. The previous schedule was more chaotic to figure out in advance, especially if you were planning ahead for a day where you had to miss school.

## CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

However, that is not to say that the new schedule is completely flawless. I am not in favor of dropping two classes a day, although it does give us a little bit of a homework break each night. In addition, for cumulative classes like foreign languages, it is very helpful to have class four out of five days a week, if not all five. Personally, I think that learning a language is very centered on repetition based learning, and that is hard to do when you only have class three times a week, and I could see it potentially affecting our ability to move at a consistent pace throughout the year in a language class. Classes alternate being in your daily schedule from three to four times a week. Teachers are losing a significant number of class periods this year, which has forced them to sacrifice some elements of their curriculum, which is not completely ideal.

## CHANGE IS OPPORTUNITY

Ultimately, whatever opinion students may have of the new schedule, it is going to stick around until the end of the year, and unless any major problems present themselves, probably for the next couple of years. It is important to keep in mind that we should not look at the schedule as something to complain about, but rather, something we can take advantage of as an opportunity to learn to be adaptable and to grow.



The new schedule also gives Science classes more time to do Labs!



# WHY STAY AT SRS?

Eric Albregts  
Staff Writer

When you reach the eighth grade, you are presented with the choice of whether you want to stay here or not. If you need help deciding whether you want to stay or not, it really depends on who you are and what you want to be.

## WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

First, ask yourself, what do you want to get out of high school? If your goal is to study hard and power through high school to get into a good college, I would definitely go to Sage Ridge. Sage Ridge makes it easier for you to achieve that goal because of the teachers and the academic portfolio. Every day the teachers will go out of their way to help you reach your goal. They challenge you every day so that you can learn educational skills that will help you for the rest of your life. Also, when you reach your last two years of high school, Mr. Lamb will help you figure out which college you want to go to and will help you put together the best application possible. Mr. Lamb writes letters of recommendation to colleges about why you should be accepted. It is very helpful especially at a small school like Sage Ridge. He also helps you write your entrance essays.

If your goal is to get the “big” high school experience or your main goal is to get clout from sports, then maybe Sage Ridge is not your best fit. At bigger schools, since there are more people at public schools, the social aspect is going to be a lot bigger. You get to know a lot more people, whether they are friends or enemies. If you are good at a sport, then sports at big schools are going to be much more fun simply because there is more competition and more school spirit. At the same time, this is something we are always growing at Sage Ridge.

## PROS AND CONS

In my opinion, the best skill in life is to learn how to talk to people from adults to little kids and build relationships with people around you. Sage Ridge offers the perfect place for you to learn this by promoting one on one conversations with your teachers as well as making announcements during town meetings.

If you go to a public school, the teachers have to teach more kids and they can not focus on individuals unlike the teachers at Sage Ridge. The main thing you learn at public schools in Reno is that one must have a strong desire to succeed if they want to be successful. However, if you have that strong drive to succeed in yourself, then you will.

A common misconception at Sage Ridge is that public schools give less work than Sage Ridge does. This is false. All of my friends at public schools still have the same amount of work. However, the work at Sage Ridge is all meaningful and will challenge you to do better.

I have appreciated the choice to stay at Sage Ridge because this year at Sage Ridge is going pretty well. One of the good parts about Sage Ridge is that you get to be friends with people who are in different grades than you. I started hanging out with some other kids in the school and it has made life a lot more fun. Also, being challenged every day may not feel good in the moment, but in the long run it is.



There's no passing period, but teachers are understanding so that is okay!





# Community







# Content





# COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS

## ALASKA

Emerson Evans  
Grade 6

I could hear the doors of other balconies open and close as the Alaskan cruise ship peacefully glided along the glaciers. The sun sparkled in the deep blue ocean water. The breathtaking lush green mountains tangled over me as I sat in a blue weaved porch chair, wedged between two metal armrests. I laid my thighs on the circular metal table and crossed my legs. I could feel my sweatshirt warming my body as the cool breeze blew my hair back out of my face. I stared out of the tinted blue glass railing in front of me, lost in the sharp icy glaciers in front of my very own eyes. It felt like I was in a whole new alluring world. I watched the sun slowly drift to the back of the mountains, the very last few beams illuminating the light blue, cloudless sky.

## LATVIA

Luxi Sun  
Grade 12



I was in University of Latvia for two weeks to study Linguistics and Logic. Riga reminds me of a quiet and laid-back town though it's the largest city in the Baltic region. The highlight was definitely having coffee or drinks with friends in those beautiful patio cafes.

## THE SHORE

Sophia Soran  
Grade 7





## SUMMER VACATION

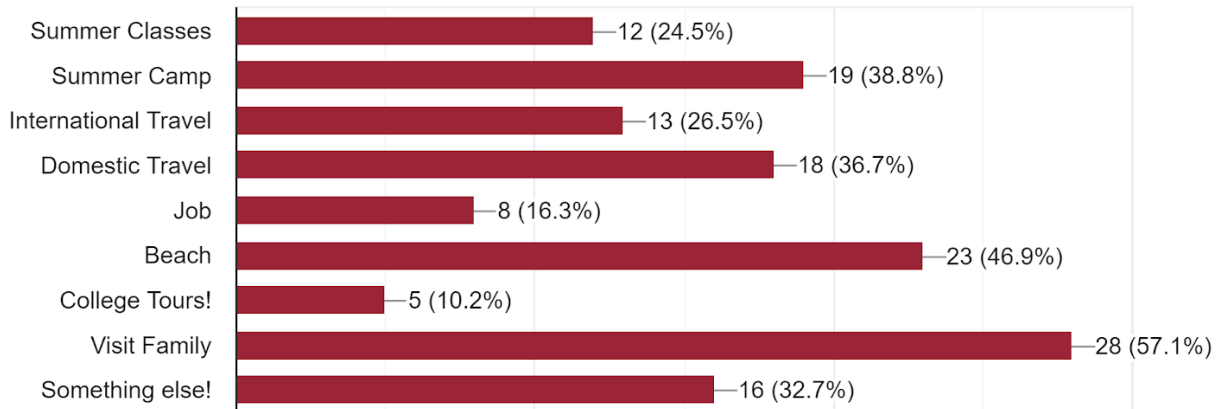
# SUMMER MEMORIES

The Sage Ridge Community

All Grades

Everyone had a different experience during summer break. From traveling, going to summer camp, and taking summer classes, to taking on a job or simply relaxing, everyone did something different. So, how did the Sage Ridge community spend their summer vacations, and what are some of the most memorable moments?

## HOW DID THE COMMUNITY SPEND THEIR SUMMER VACATIONS?



## FAVORITE MEMORIES

"Going to National JCL in Fargo was absolutely amazing. I was able to make a lot of new friends, and overall just had a fantastic week. Debate camp was also awesome, and I would definitely recommend going for anyone who is interested in policy debate. I made so many new friends, and I was able to learn so much." -- Kira Romberg ('22)

"I babysat this kid named Mustafa. He is a 3 year old with Down Syndrome. He is my favorite kid and even though he has that [condition] he is still a very cute and very playful baby. One of my favorite things was when I asked him if he wants my phone he was like 'yaaaa' or 'giv ma!'" -- Aayan Sheriff ('26)

"This summer I was hired by Renown Health's PMO as an IT intern. It was a grueling schedule, especially during the summer, but during this internship I met some incredible people and made invaluable contacts. I took great pride in the projects I was involved with and the projects I was able to lead. I would recommend taking a job during your break as it doesn't just show responsibility, but the schedule will keep you prepared for when school starts in August." -- Max Sierzenski ('20)

"Going to San Diego for Surf Cup, a prestigious soccer tournament with hundreds of college coaches watching." -- Nate Mulvaney ('21)

"Sleeping" -- Ngoc Tran ('22)

## *Lulu's Pet Grooming*

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"What a wonderful change!! Everyone here loves dogs, the other dogs were all greeted by name & the people seem to care about the dogs! I got all this before I left my dog there. I picked her up and got a lot of info about her visit, she looks wonderful and wasn't all nerves after we left..." -- Paige B., Yelp

"We have been taking our sheltie here for a couple of years and just LOVE Lulu's! They're great with our dog, wonderful staff that is so welcoming and know us when we walk in." -- Maria Y., Yelp

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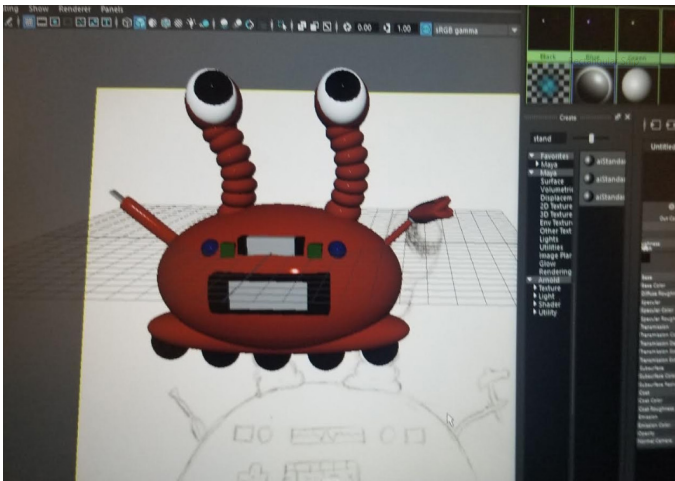


# A GRAPHIC DESIGN SUMMER

Tessa Mendez-Leal  
Staff Writer

In the summer of 2019, I went to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to pursue my passion of animation and graphic design, and attempt to learn the basics of the skills required in those fields. For our very first class, we were introduced to a software called Autodesk Maya, which is a 3D modeling software that would give us a grip on the very basics of modeling before we jumped into animation. With Maya, we were asked to design a robot of our choosing, drawing it on paper beforehand, and displaying it in Maya so that we could properly model it in tune with our original proportions. I didn't struggle too much with this assignment, as it was simple geometry and reasonably easy to copy off of an image that I had created, but learning how to color proved to be the challenge of the assignment.

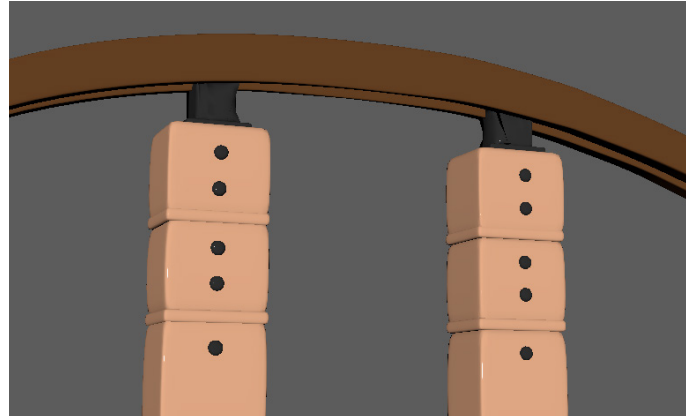
The picture below is what my robot looked like when put into a software called Unreal Engine, which allowed me to play with my robot and do basic maneuvers with it (forward, backward, jump, etc.) but you'll notice that, though it looks nice, it looks very fake, and lacking in texture beyond solid color, which became our next challenge, something we would master in steps over the next 3 days.



## TRANSLATING THE REAL WORLD INTO DIGITAL

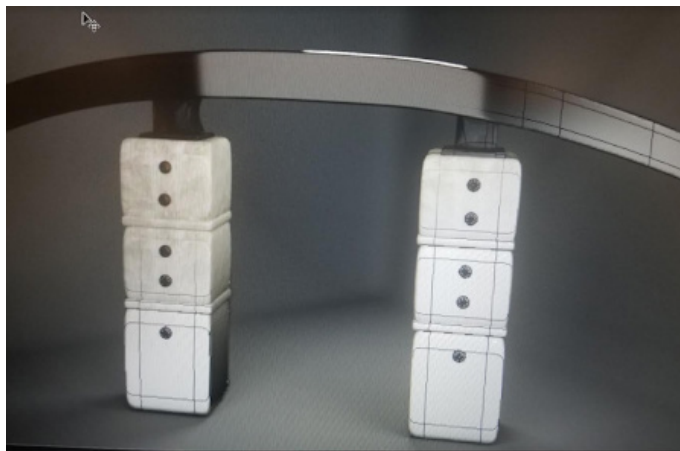
The challenge was to go outside and pick something around the campus of UCLA to make into a model and import into our Unreal game. I picked an archway. For this challenge, we had to take into account the different basic shapes that made up our object and manipulate it into the form we wanted. At first I had trouble making the archway, but I quickly figured out that the way to do it was to split and bend a rectangle. Making the basic model was not enough, however, and our instructor wanted us to be able to take the model and start applying

realistic textures. In my first attempt at putting the archway into Unreal, this is what happened.



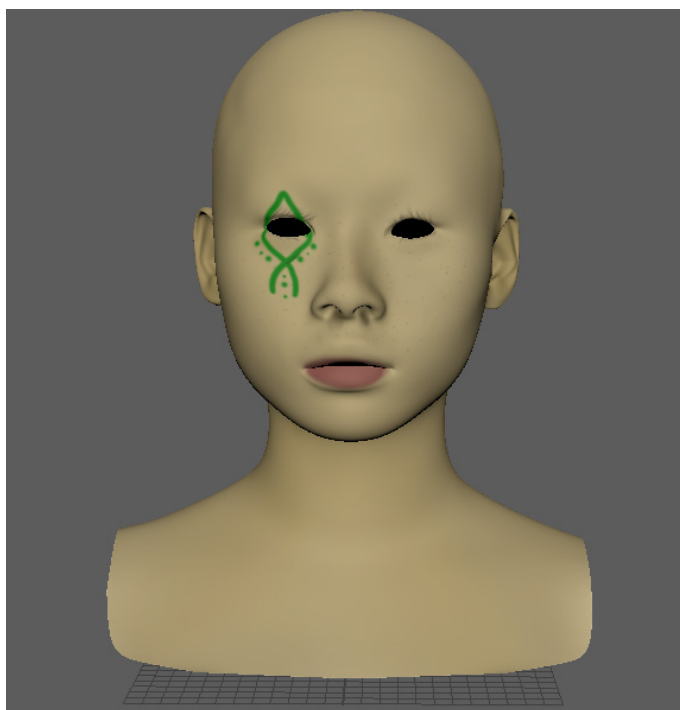
The marble and wood and metal look a lot more realistic than they did in Maya, but it's still flat and lacks body. Thus, we learned how to use adobe photoshop to make repeating textures. We had to modify the width and height of the image we wished to use in the texture to powers of two, and then create an alternate version of it to put as the underlayer and give the texture body before applying it in Maya and by extension Unreal. We also learned how to frame our work by literally taking professional pictures of it in Maya and positioning lights to get it to look exactly how we want. We took one picture of the model as it was like that, and another picture with the same coordinates of the model in wireframe, to properly show off both our geometry and our artistic creation. The final result is seen on the next page.





## REPRODUCING FLESH

Lastly, we learned how to texture more precisely with skin, as well as UVing. UV, in contrast to all of our guesses, did not stand for Ultra Violet, but instead were just axes of their own in which to measure the layout of an object. Our instructor showed us how to properly cut and sew the layout of UV to get it organized on both simple objects like cubes, and more complex objects like the face seen in this document. Once the UV layout had been made, we were shown how to put it into photoshop and paint on our own texture. I made eyelashes, skin color, lips and a tattoo, and then applied it to the head that you see below.

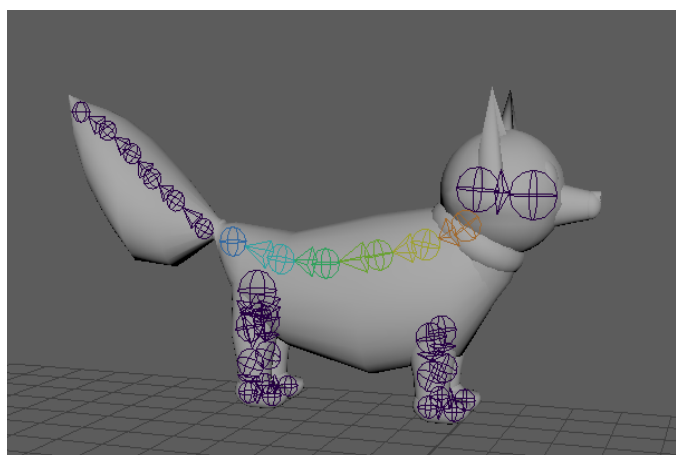


## THE FINAL PROJECT

For the final week, we were assigned a final project. Our project was to make a video game in a week, with a team of people whose skills were spread out depending on what we had learned in the week prior. We had named our game

FoxTale, as the premise was that the player plays a fox who is on a mission to get to a key that opens the door to the outside world. The key is bound to Non-Playable-Characters that we made such as a heron and a bunny. My job was to model the fox and attempt to animate it for the game, which proved to be incredibly difficult, but the job got done. I also modeled the key and helped with concept art and textures, as well as being a guide of UV to my teammates. The overall experience was incredibly eye opening to the whole world of animation, and introduced me to the strengths and challenges that I had naturally in terms of this field. I am incredibly grateful that I got to go and learn all of these skills, and I know I will be pursuing these skills further in the future.

The pictures below show the final result of this project: our character and an in-game screenshot of the product.





# MS OUTDOOR ED REFLECTIONS

Grade 5

“On our first day of Outdoor Ed my class went to a place called Trippy Rock with two people, Breen and Mike, from a company called Project Discovery. Trippy Rock has three climbs that we were allowed to do. They were ranked by difficulty: easy, medium, and hard. Obviously I chose to go on the easy climb first, because it was my first time climbing. The easy climb was about 20-25 feet and I was the first one to get to the top of the easy climb! The medium climb was about 40 feet and with the little time I had left to climb before we would go to lunch, I made it to the top and therefore finished 2 whole climbs in one day!

After that I was so proud of myself! I couldn't believe it! The feeling of getting to the top of a climb is exhilarating. Finishing made me feel triumphant and accomplished. There was one more climb I wanted to do: the hard one. It was 60 feet high and would've been super fun to climb, but we didn't have enough time because we had rappelling, which took FOREVER to set up.

At first I said I wouldn't do either rappel. I ended up trying a much smaller rock face that was only about 15 feet high. It was kind of scary. I actually liked the climbing part more than rappelling. I'm glad I didn't do the 60 foot rappel, because it was too high for me, but I still had a fun time. In order to climb I had to use a couple of tools like courage, equipment, focus, strength, and trust. All of those tools were essential to my success on the climbs and to my safety. In conclusion, this was one of the best field trips ever and I hope to go back there someday. This experience was amazing and exhilarating which are the things that made it fun. Now I know

that I like rock climbing and will probably try this sport again.”  
--Owen Heaphy

“Rock climbing was breathtaking! You could see Lake Tahoe and the trees around it and you could see mountains. Then you got to climb Trippy Rock, which at the highest was 60 feet tall.



I thought I did fairly well rock climbing. I am not terribly fond of heights and my goal was to do the hardest face first. There were three faces. The first was the easiest, the second was not very hard and the third was the hardest.

Though I did not make it to the top, I reached my goal of climbing the hardest rock first. After I did the easiest climb, which was very fun, I did the “James Bond”, where we jumped off the rock with the harness on. I also “spidered around”, which meant that we climbed around the face like a spider. It was extraordinary.

Some tools I used included the equipment, my belay team, my focus, and my perseverance. I was not mentally prepared, but I was able to trust Mike, our instructor, and I used courage.

My classmates were very helpful at the easiest climb by belaying me and cheering me on.

Buzz Dolan (“27) rock climbs for the first time ever!

Despite my original fear, I felt very safe and very excited. Our instructors were Mike and Breen, and Breen came from Arizona just to help us. It amazed me that he would do that. Breen was very nice and so was Mike. When we were rappelling I did the “easiest” first, but Breen told me it was the hardest because of all the ledges and plants.



My experience rock climbing was altogether amazing. I would, if offered, definitely do it again.”  
--Buzz Dolan

“Last week, as a part of the Outdoor Education week, we visited an organization called Project Discovery at Trippy Rock to climb and rappel. Before we started to climb, our instructor explained to us that not only did we need the right gear, but we also needed other tools to be successful in climbing. He said that we needed to trust our belayers because if we did not trust them, we could have possibly fallen to our death. Another tool we needed was confidence because if we did not have confidence we probably would not make it that far. We also needed focus, because in rappelling, you belay yourself and if you let go of your rope, you could fall.

We first started climbing and I put all my strength to my legs instead of arms, just as they explained it to us. We do this because we have more muscles and strength in our legs. While I was climbing, I was finding cracks, footholds, and handholds to grab onto. This required a lot of focus and a positive attitude at the same time. It took many of us a long time to get close to the top. At one time, I slipped and hung on my rope. This helped me trust my belayers and know that they wouldn't let me fall.

Then came time to rappel. Once at the top, looking down at the rock, my first thought was that maybe I would pass out. At the same time, though, I wanted to do it so badly that I managed to build my self confidence and face my fear. We were ready to rappel, everyone had their gear on and we started rappelling. Rappelling is going down a cliff while attached to a rope and belaying yourself. You also will have somebody holding your ropes at the bottom of the cliff. When we started rappelling I slipped a little bit, but got back up again until I got the hang of it and remembering to not let go of the rope and use all the tools the instructor said. I focused and trusted myself to do it right.

This was a cool experience because I got to learn about climbing and faced my fear of rappelling. It was a good lesson because I think this courage can apply to everything everyday, to try new things and be brave. I think that this activity was fun! Doing it with my friends made even better. We were able to share tips on how to do certain things, especially while we were rappelling. I can not wait to do it again with my friends somewhere, someday soon.”  
-- Nathan Brodsky



The sixth graders belay their fellow peers!



