

BRIARWOOD

FALL 2018



*Did We
Make a
Difference?*

BRIARWOOD, A School for Children with Learning Differences

THE TUTTLE SCHOOL, A School for Children with Intellectual Disabilities



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THE SENIOR EXPERIENCE

What can we say! It's tough to say goodbye! Each year Briarwood bids farewell to another graduating class, each full of big personalities, talents, deep friendships, dreams, and expectations. And every year, although the graduates are ready to spread their wings and soar, it's never easy to see these young adults grow up and move on! One thing that brings us solace is that they go forward prepared, ready to take on new adventures, and even challenges, and there's nothing better than learning about their journeys. **Did Briarwood make a difference** in the lives of these young graduates or graduates from the past fifty years? Read on for more insight...

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Community Outreach Helps Students Beyond Our Walls

Last Fall, Briarwood welcomed executive function expert Sarah Ward. Ward provided practical strategies to help children of all ages improve their function skills, strengthen working memory, use better impulse control, practice cognitive flexibility, and improve organizational skills.

Over 250 language therapists, teachers, and counselors attended the day seminar, spanning the entire Houston area, and beyond. In the evening, Briarwood welcomed over 100 attendees, including many parents from throughout the community.



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Briarwood is the Greatest School on Earth



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► *Special thanks to Kian Chance of Elegant Portraits and Briarwood's talented Photography students for photos included in this publication.*



THE BRIARWOOD School

NEWSLETTER FOR THE BRIARWOOD & TUTTLE SCHOOLS | FALL EDITION 2018

BRIARWOOD, A School for Children with Learning Differences

THE TUTTLE SCHOOL, A School for Children with Intellectual Disabilities

12207 Whittington Drive | Houston, TX 77077
www.briarwoodschool.org
281.493.1070 tel | 281.493.1343 fax

The Briarwood School & Tuttle School admits students of any race, gender, color, national or ethnic origin. The school selects students who are interested in completing their education and who need a prescriptive educational program.

Briarwood is a publication of The Briarwood School & Tuttle School. Briarwood is published annually and sent to alumni, present and past parents and friends.

Did We Make a Difference?

The end of a school year gives us reason to pause, reflect and to share a story or two.

“The spirit of Briarwood is still here. It never changes, and I am so thankful.”

In my moments of reflection, I pause to give thanks for the times I have had the honor of spending with Yvonne Tuttle Streit, our Founder. I cherish the hours we have spent together, for it has taken me back to the genesis of Briarwood, our reason and purpose for being, the opportunities we have every day to make a difference, to change a life for a lifetime.

While asking the question, ‘Did we make a difference. . . a difference for a lifetime’, we have paid homage to our longevity and to our Mission. From the very beginning, Briarwood has provided the necessary and intense remediation to each and every child who enters our doors. It is

through our diagnostic-prescriptive approach with structured and multisensory instruction that we set the stage for change. Our students are taught specific strategies throughout their years with us. We ‘scaffold’ strengths, build on successes and restore confidence. Resilience stands on the shoulders of confidence. Academic programs, along with an emphasis on social-emotional learning, build a solid pyramid for learning.

Over the past several months, many of our alumni have come by to visit and to share their journeys. As their stories unfold, we hear words of thanks for the solid academic program they were afforded. Moreover, our alumni express their thanks for the ‘intangible’ supports. **Anthony Nocella**, Class of 1995, and a graduate of The University of St. Thomas and Syracuse University, recently returned to Houston after having been away for 17 years. When he arrived for our visit, one of his first comments was **“the spirit of Briarwood is still here. It never changes, and I am so thankful.”** Although ‘Spirit’ might be considered intangible and is often a challenge to articulate, we do live it every day at Briarwood. Immediately, when Anthony was asked to describe ‘the Spirit of Briarwood’, quickly and with no hesitation, his words flowed. **“For me, it was the Spirit of Hope. I knew that Briarwood believed in me and, finally, I had hope for my future.”**



As our former students return, we see that they accepted, owned and often celebrated their differences. Our graduates, including those who have transitioned to other schools prior to graduation, are confident, caring and compassionate. We have many who have joined the ranks of educators – passionate to give back the ‘take-aways’ from Briarwood. Our graduates, too, want to make a difference; they are changing lives every day.

Michael Gennaro, Class of 2014, is living his passion by serving our country. Never wavering from his goal, Michael, now Senior Airman, joined the Air Force and recently was awarded The Air Force Achievement Medal for Outstanding Achievement for his bravery in saving a life. Michael’s heroic actions took place near his base (Holloman Air Force Base) in





Senior Airman John M. Gennaro Honored by US Air Force

Senior Airman John M. Gennaro distinguished himself by outstanding achievement while assigned to the 49th Maintenance Squadron, 49 Maintenance Group, 49th Wing, Hollman Air Force Base New Mexico on February 4, 2018.

On this date, Airman Gennaro responded to an incident involving aggravated battery with a deadly weapon while driving near Laboreita Canyon Road in New Mexico. Airman Gennaro engaged and calmed an armed offender all while utilizing his training from the Air Force. This training enabled him to render life sustaining aid to the victim. Airman Gennaro's actions that day led directly to the de-escalation of a deadly dispute and ultimately saved another person's life. Airman Gennaro was honored and awarded for this outstanding achievement on June 19, 2018 by Major Kevin Manis of the US Air Force.

Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Our alumni are giving back every day. We hear their heartfelt words of thanks with every visit – “Briarwood changed my life. You believed that I could learn, and you gave me the gifts of curiosity, thinking critically, and, especially, the gift to make a difference for others.”

A Briarwood education is always Mission-based. As we move into the 21st Century, the Mission will remain. We circle back to Briarwood's humble beginnings and give thanks to our Founder for making a decision, through faith, to carry the torch of learning for those who struggle to learn. Every day we have the opportunity to make a difference, to give back and to change a life for a lifetime.

professional development

Check out
what we've
been up to!

HBIDA Spring Conference – FEBRUARY, 2018

Keynote: Joan Sedita – Keys to Literacy

Topic: Literacy/Comprehension/Note-Taking

HBIDA Fall Symposium – OCTOBER, 2018

Keynote: Richard Lavoie, M.A., M.A.T.

Topics: "The Impact of LD On the Family" & "It's So Hard To Be Your Friend"

William Van Cleave – AUGUST, 2018 – Two day In-Service Training for Lower & Middle-Upper teachers focusing on Writing/Vocabulary

LETRS (*Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling*)

LETRS trainer and Head of Lower School, Ms. Landi, trained Briarwood's newest faculty members in LETRS in June. In June and July, Ms. Landi also provided training to dyslexia specialists who represented four independent school districts.

Just Words – Head of Lower School, along with three Intermediate teachers, were trained in JUST WORDS through the Region 4 Educational Service.

Speech Collaboration – FALL, 2018 – Speech & Language therapists will integrate into Lower School classes (Primary through Sixth) once a week as well as Tuttle School classes four hours twice weekly within specialty classes, and specific Unique Learning System classes.

Purpose: Increase oral and written language development and paragraph writing as the foundation for reading comprehension and writing.

Gow Leadership Retreat – JUNE, 2018 – Head of School Carole Wills and Lower School Counselor Jill Wiseman spent three days in June at the Gow School's fourth annual Leadership Retreat for Heads and Administrators who lead private schools serving students with diagnosed learning differences. The highly acclaimed Retreat welcomed the leadership of approximately 80 LD schools across the country. The goals of the leadership retreats are to identify, nurture, and develop the next set of leaders in our types of specialty schools.

Tuttle School

- Beverly Brinkmeyer, Director of Lower Tuttle School and Lauren Krocak, Director of Upper Tuttle School, along with Cindy Thomas, Kay Easton and Ruth Wilson, Tuttle School teachers, attended the four-day International Down Syndrome Congress in **JULY, 2018**.
- Teachers will attend the World Autism International Congress in November in Houston.

Security & Safety

With security and safety being of utmost importance, HPD Sr. Community Liaison Stephen Daniels addressed all of the administrators, faculty and staff of Briarwood/Tuttle Schools in **JANUARY, 2018**. The topic of Mr. Daniel's presentation was 'How To Survive an Active Shooter'.

Most recently, Scott Poland, Ed.D., Co-Director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office at Nova Southwestern University, addressed the administrators, faculty and staff in a three-hour presentation on 'School Violence and Suicide Prevention and Response'. The audience of 160 represented twenty-four private school administrators and counselors, as well as four public independent school districts. **Plans are underway for Dr. Poland to return to Briarwood in early January, 2019, for a presentation to parents.**

THE ANNUAL BENEFIT

★ THE GREATEST SCHOOL ON EARTH ★

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THE MOST FANTASTICAL CELEBRATION OF ALL TIME



Tigers, bears, hurricanes...oh my!

As Houstonians picked up the pieces from the devastating effects of Hurricane Harvey, Briarwood embraced the motto, "the show must go on." Although the obstacles were significant, a tireless Benefit Team stayed focused and pulled off a triumph "Under the Big Top" and proved once again that Briarwood is **The Greatest School on Earth!**

Hotel ZaZa in Memorial City was transformed into a whimsical Big Top Circus for Briarwood's Annual Benefit on March 23—netting over \$439,000!

Special thanks to ring leaders, Missy and Joe Allaire, and Kristin and Davis Mayfield (Benefit Chairs), Al Farb (Master of Ceremonies), and Ernie Manouse of Houston Public Media (Auctioneer). Bestowing the title of *The Greatest School on Earth* is only possible because of the greatest people on earth, *thank you.*



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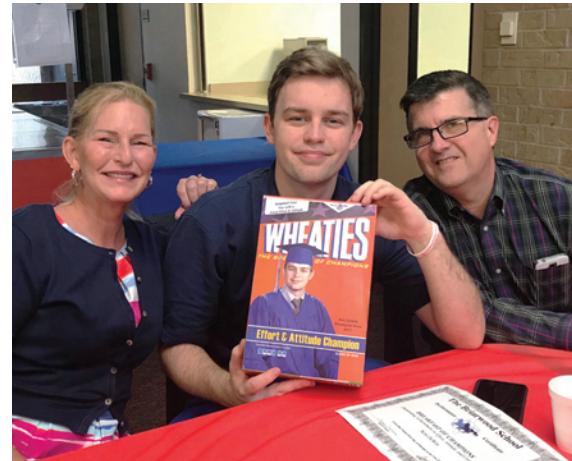
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please contact Kim Black
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281.493.1070 or at
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MIDDLE UPPER SCHOOL SPORTS





ALLEY THEATRE TAKES ON BRIARWOOD

The Alley Theatre Partner School Program, now in its fourth year, has brought an added dimension of excitement and opportunity for Briarwood high school students. Alley actor-educators brought workshops in Greek theatre, Shakespeare, and modern theatre to our English classes, while our Language classes created their own slam poetry, personal narratives, and plays. In March, juniors **Grant B.**, **Kate M.**, **Jacob S.**, and **Natalie S.** represented Briarwood at the **Alley Theatre Spring Teen Poetry Slam**. In April, twenty-five of our high school drama students toured backstage and enjoyed an improvisation workshop at the newly-renovated Alley Theatre downtown. In May, professional actors read an original play by senior Cole Johnson at the Alley Applied Theatre Celebration For Partner Schools. Cole was one of a group of seniors who created original 10-minute plays under the guidance of playwright Brendan Bourque-Sheil in the Playwriting 360 workshop. For the first time, two of our rising sophomores, **Joshua F.** and **Jaye M.**, were selected to participate in the five week Summer Conservatory Program for High School students. This intensive program gives students from many Houston schools an opportunity to collaborate with Alley Theatre actors, directors, and playwrights to create, produce, and perform an original ensemble theatre piece. We are so proud of our Mustangs!

SPOTLIGHT SENIORS

The Alley Play Committee praised seniors **Cody H.** and **Henry B.** for their outstanding works.



Making memories...

LOWER SCHOOL



SUMMER REMEDIATION PROGRAM

The Briarwood School Summer Remediation Program was launched in June, 2013 following a visit to Baylor University's Camp Success in 2012. The goal of the program is to provide language and literacy intervention to students from kindergarten through sixth grade who present

with language based reading impairments. Almost 100 students have participated in the program since its inception with positive outcomes noted in both post-testing results and parent feedback relative to student performance during the following school year.

In keeping with the mission of the Briarwood school, students enrolled in the program are provided with research-based intervention designed to empower them in reaching their maximum potential. Students attend both individual and group sessions during the sixteen days of the program. Both oral and written language areas are addressed using direct multi-sensory instruction. Each of the four sessions that students attend is directed by a speech-language pathologist or classroom teacher who has been trained in the program methodology. At the conclusion of the program, students are provided with strategies and tools referenced in their summer portfolio for ongoing learning.

The 2018 program ended with an informational presentation for parents of students, a parent guide with an explanation of strategies that were introduced during the summer program, and home activities to facilitate generalization of these skills.

ENROLLMENT

begins in January. Details can be found on the Briarwood School website or by contacting the Speech-Language Department.





School

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Way to go
C O !

