

THE OAKRIDGE SCHOOL

# OUTLOOK

VOLUME 37 • ISSUE NO. 2

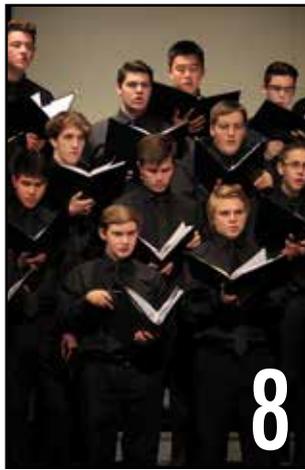


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## A Focus on Fine Arts

Every day, great artistic expression is taking place in every corner of the Flavin Fine Arts Center. Take a journey through this building while learning more about the choral program, AP Art, and Fine Arts Night.



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## Senior Spotlights

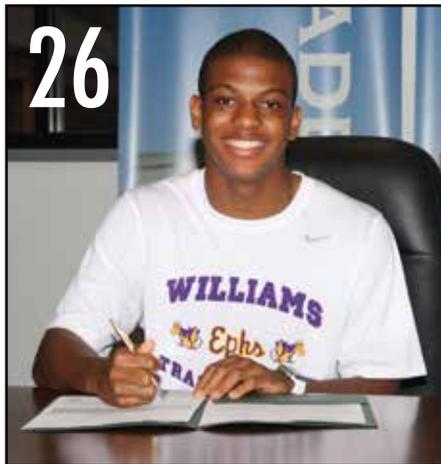
Our five National Merit Finalists for the Class of 2017 share where they're headed to college and the faculty member who inspired them the most.



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## Walk to the Future

Learn the story behind one of Oakridge's most treasured traditions, as kindergarten students make their walk to "the big school" in preparation for first grade.



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## LLI Southwest

Educators from 53 schools representing 11 states spent two days on the Oakridge campus at a conference about innovative teaching practices and student-centered learning.

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An Oakridge head coach hits 400 wins, eight seniors sign letters of intent, and a team of brothers compete in the relay.

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## Owls in STEAM

Owl Alumni working in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) share how their time at Oakridge prepared them for the future.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



The Class of 2017 included four legacy graduates (sons and daughters of Oakridge alumni). They were (l to r) Caleb Badgley, Anna Kate Broadus, Caroline Broadus, and Michael Cendrick.

Earlier this year, The Oakridge School co-hosted a Common Ground speaker series with other independent schools in Dallas and Fort Worth. Our group welcomed Dr. Shimi Kang, whose book *The Dolphin Way: A Parent's Guide to Raising Healthy, Happy and Motivated Kids Without Turning Into a Tiger* was central to her presentation about helping kids and families find balance. At Oakridge, we strive to encourage that same balance. I think of our mission and words like “academics, the arts, and athletics” and “challenging and nurturing.”

In this *Outlook*, you will see a balanced cross-section of school news. Our Upper School faculty and leaders have developed a customized block schedule being implemented in Fall 2017. Also in the Upper School, students presented

academic papers at the *Frankenstein* Colloquium this spring, and campus wide, our faculty and staff presented at the LLI Southwest Conference, co-sponsored by the Lausanne Learning Institute and The Oakridge School, and hosted here on our campus. Middle School students shared their creativity with Lower School students for World Read Aloud Day, and kindergarten students “Walked to the Future” from the state-of-the-art Quinn Kindergarten Center.

Meanwhile, exciting things continue to happen in the arts and athletics. You can read about the choral program, the first AP Art Show, and how the Flavin Arts Center keeps pace with the rest of campus with its daily use. Our youngest children got on trikes to raise money for St. Jude, and some of our oldest children excelled in SPC athletics. Eight

of our seniors have committed to college athletic participation.

All the while, we aim to offer an outstanding and balanced independent school education while preparing our students for college and life. A recent conversation with alumni in STEAM careers has emphasized the continued importance of keeping a close eye on college and beyond.

It is an honor to present our second *Outlook* of 2017, another tribute to the quality of the Oakridge student body and the parents and faculty who guide them.

*Jonathan M. Kellam, Head of School*

*On the Cover: (l to r) Seniors Evan Skinner, Ryan Tan, Caleb Badgley, and Brock Knott perform in Seussical, the Oakridge spring musical.*

# CAMPUS NEWS

## Upper School Moves to Customized Block Schedule

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, the structure of an Upper School student's day will undergo a big change. In a process that began almost two years ago, The Oakridge School has created a new schedule that will fit the best interests of its students.

The decision to change the Upper School schedule started with a Research & Design Group focused exclusively on scheduling – one of six formed in January 2016 to consider school-wide initiatives. This group, led by technology teacher Matt Knauf, looked at various schedule configurations at other independent schools and weighed the advantages of each. With the list narrowed to a few options that best fit the mission and philosophy of Oakridge, they continued to tweak the schedule during the 2016-17 school year until one was created that uniquely met the school's needs.

The new schedule was unveiled this spring to students and parents. Under a block schedule, students attend only four classes each day. Classes meet every two days, giving students the opportunity to take a total of seven classes (with the eighth period being a study hall). Classes last 80 minutes instead of the usual 45, which provides more time for in-depth study, peer collaboration, interdisciplinary and team teaching opportunities, and one-on-one time

between teachers and students. At the end of each day, "Initiative Time" can be dedicated to public speaking, college advising, club meetings, or writing skills.

As a result of this new schedule, Oakridge students take two electives or one of the new semester-long seminars: pass/fail courses offered by faculty on passion-based topics. With the addition of Initiative Time and the seminars, the character development aspect of the Oakridge mission statement is better integrated into the day.

"Now, a student's day more closely mirrors a college schedule, which better prepares them for that next transition," said Mr. Knauf. "The process of developing this schedule allowed us to consider what's best for our students, and to better align our minutes with our mission."

## A SAMPLING OF THE NEW UPPER SCHOOL SEMINAR TOPICS

PHILOSOPHY  
CURRENT EVENTS  
MODERN PHYSICS THEORY  
EFFECTIVE WRITING  
NUTRITION  
MATH TEAM  
SCI-FI IN MEDIA  
SPORTS STATISTICS  
SAT/ACT MATH PREP  
INDIE PUBLISHING  
DEBATE



The new schedule allows more time for mission-directed initiatives like programs presented by the College Advising office. One of these is the Alumni Panel in January.

## Colloquium Brings 14 Area Schools to Campus

On January 30, The Oakridge School hosted a colloquium to examine Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* 200 years after its original publication. This was the fifth annual DFW-area colloquium and the third to be hosted at Oakridge. Students from area schools were invited to submit papers, 2D art, and film. On the day of the colloquium, more than 200 guests visited campus from 14 different schools, and 72 students presented papers.



Oakridge faculty member Jared Colley introduces student presenters at the *Frankenstein* Colloquium.

The tradition started on the Oakridge campus five years ago when the English department decided to host a student-centered conference on James Joyce's *Dubliners*. Both Cistercian and Greenhill have hosted similar events, and this year Oakridge was thrilled to bring the tradition back home.

"It's hard to explain the excitement that is experienced by students and faculty alike when coming together to share insights, ideas, and questions about such a timeless text," said event organizer and Oakridge English Department Chair Jared Colley.

The day started with a commencement ceremony featuring Dr. Richard Enos, Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at TCU and Oakridge Regent, and a performance by the Oakridge A Cappella Choir and Orchestra. Students attended three blocks of sessions

where they could choose to see dozens of student speakers, attend a screening of student short films, or participate in a theatre workshop focusing on a stage adaptation of *Frankenstein*. Dr. Anne Frey, Professor of English at TCU and an expert on literary Romanticism, was the keynote speaker for the event.

At the end of the day, students from Oakridge and other participating schools came away with a deeper understanding of the text as well as a greater sense of confidence. Landry Levine '13, who presented at the first colloquium five years ago, described the student experience of being part of the larger academic community as exhilarating: "For the first time, I was writing not for a grade and not because I had to, but because I had something to say. And miraculously, when I presented my paper at the colloquium, I discovered that there were other students out there who were interested in what I had to say."

Mr. Colley notes the effect this academic community has on a student's work. "When students write for a teacher and the instructor is the only one who will see it, they might think, 'well, why make it great?'" said Mr. Colley. "But when we write for a community of peers, students rise to the occasion accordingly, demonstrating their best work while experiencing the joys of being heard by an audience."



Junior Funmi Solano presents her paper, "Almost Human is Anything But," to her peers.

# CAMPUS NEWS

## Sharing the Joy of Reading

On February 16, Middle School students came to school dressed up as animals, fairy tale characters, food, and more. No, it wasn't Halloween; it was World Read Aloud Day. Millions of people around the world celebrate World Read Aloud Day, calling attention to the importance of reading and sharing stories.

Leading up to this day, students elaborately decorated their study hall doors according to a theme. Dressing up and decorating doors may not seem like typical Middle School activities, but the Middle School wanted to make Read Aloud Day special for the Lower School students.

During study hall on Read Aloud Day, the Lower School students picked a room to visit (if the room's theme was



Fifth grader Sophie Hoang shares a story with fourth grader Cody Widup.



In a Dr. Seuss-themed room, sixth grader Alex Lopez reads a book with third grader Harrison Parvin.

animals, all of the books would be animal-based), sat next to a Middle School student, and read together. The plan was to read to the kids; however, because of the love many Lower School students have for reading, some Middle School students let the Lower School students read instead.

The Middle School students thought that Read Aloud Day was a great way to interact with the Lower School, which otherwise doesn't happen on a typical day.

Anna Builta '21

## CLASSROOM THEMES FOR WORLD READ ALOUD DAY

*Animals (fiction and non-fiction)*  
*Biography/History*  
*Dinosaurs*  
*Dogs*  
*Dr. Seuss\**  
*Fact Books*

*Fairy Tales*  
*Food*  
*Geography/Travel*  
*Jokes\**  
*Monsters/Aliens*  
*Movies Based on Books*

*Poetry*  
*Sports*  
*Superheroes*

*\*First in Show door decorations*

## A Royal Book Fair

A terrific way to witness the exceptionally supportive and invested Oakridge community is to visit the school's annual Scholastic Book Fair in January, presented by the Oakridge Parents' Club (OPC).

Oakridge is one of five schools in Tarrant County that has been selected to host what is known as a Scholastic "Signature Fair." This type of book fair is customized to offer clients more scope and depth of books, classics, and teacher and student requests, and is only offered to schools that demonstrate a campus-wide support of literacy.

Each year, the Oakridge Book Fair is more successful than the last. Co-chairs Cindy Pettigrew '89 and Jennifer O'Connor '89 began the planning phase of the 2017 fair last summer, committing to transforming the library to fit the year's theme and spending countless hours orchestrating the week and half-long event. Mrs. Pettigrew and Mrs. O'Connor maintain that, "It takes a dedicated and caring Oakridge village to make our school events so beneficial. We are so proud of how our students and parents participated in helping to grow our Oakridge Library."

This year, the theme "Reading is Royalty" celebrated reading as magical and dynamic. OPC parents sponsored two Donuts for Dads events that were brimming with Oakridge family members, with many maintaining that it is their favorite school event. Students were delighted by the wide variety of books, the decorations, and the



*The Library staircase was transformed into Rapunzel's tower.*

excitement that infused the library.

As a result of this commitment to reading, the school library reaps many benefits. This year, hundreds of new, award-winning, high-demand, and educational books will be added to the library collection. Additionally, maker kit supplies, STEAM materials, technology for student use, and new furniture will be purchased over the summer in an effort to encourage all members of the community to utilize the beautiful Oakridge library space and its range of resources.

*Patricia DeWinter, Librarian*



*Oakridge dad Dino Jack shops the Book Fair with his daughters at Donuts for Dads.*

# CAMPUS NEWS



At the Early Childhood Center's annual Easter Egg Hunt, kindergarten student Emma Whitman raced across the playground to fill her Easter basket.



Mrs. Gaspar's Pre-K class celebrated the 100th day of the school year by wearing their pajamas to school.



Integrated Media students Zaki Farooqui and Will Gehring (both sophomores) interviewed Fort Worth chef Marcus Paslay at his restaurant Piatello.

# CAMPUS NEWS



The Sophomore class visited the University of Arkansas along with two other universities on their class trip.



As Lower School wrapped up Living History on Westward Expansion Day, third grader Anna Trimble toasted a marshmallow.



Eighth grader Nicholas Miller took first place at the Oakridge Geography Bee and went on to compete at the Texas Geographic Bee against students from across the state.



At the Private Schools Interscholastic Association (PSIA) district academic competition, sixth grader Chloë Polit celebrated her first place ribbon in vocabulary with faculty member Linda Hoffer.



## *A Focus on Fine Arts*

In this issue of the *Outlook*, Oakridge attempts to explore all that our Fine Arts program has to offer, but truthfully, it only scratches the surface. Every day, great artistic expression is taking place in every corner of the Flavin Fine Arts Center. In the following pages, discover the work of our talented student-artists under the roof of the Flavin.

# MANY VOICES, ONE SONG

As the final note of the A Cappella Choir's performance echoed through the opening ceremony of the Lausanne Learning Institute (LLI) Southwest Conference on the Oakridge campus, one of the almost 200 guests was heard whispering, "Wow." The choir had just performed a tribal welcome song from the indigenous people of New Zealand, providing an uplifting and energizing start to the day.

This performance is one of many illustrations of the connection our students make with the broader human community through music and art. The focus of the Oakridge music education programs at all levels is music literacy and appreciation, but also important is learning about the role music plays in society to connect people across religions, nations, races, and time.

The Upper School choir program is the culmination of years of music education in every division. It all starts in the Early Childhood Center, where students learn the concepts of music through play. The act of play and creation continues in Lower School as the students are exposed to folk songs, dances, and instruments



*Dianne Findley conducts a group of seventh and eighth grade singers.*

from cultures all over the world. It is here that they begin to discover concepts of music construction like rhythm, pitch, and form.

As students approach Middle School, emphasis is placed on good vocal technique. That continues in fifth and sixth grade, where choir students discuss the anatomy and physics of the voice as they prepare more challenging music with multiple vocal parts. By seventh and eighth grade, students have the skills to start competing as a choir in state level contests. This requires that students begin to understand musical expression and relating to an audience through the poetry of a piece as well as demonstrating competency in singing by sight. Students who choose to focus on voice take part in a combined seventh and

eighth grade choir that then expands to participation in a ninth - twelfth grade ensemble once they reach Upper School.

The Upper School A Cappella Choir works tirelessly throughout the school year to prepare concerts, auditions, solos, competition sightreading, and literature, along with music for special events on the Oakridge campus. More than 40 Upper School singers take part in our private voice studio program where they work one-on-one with accomplished voice teachers during the school day. Many use this time to prepare for solo competitions and college auditions where they may gain entry or even scholarship to participate in a university choir. Most notably, the breadth of experience and training result in biannual invitations

to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City, where our Oakridge students always impress with their preparation, discipline, and demeanor.

The hard work Oakridge students do for the choir program does not go unrewarded. The Oakridge School choral program has a long history of success in both group and individual competition. Throughout most of its existence, Oakridge Choirs have received Superior ratings at competition (the highest achievable). Coupled with an ever-growing number of students selected to Region and State honor choirs (25 Region, seven All-State, and two TMEA All-Staters in 2017), the choral program has developed a statewide reputation among independent schools for excellence in vocal music. In addition, as the choral program has grown to approximately 200 students, longtime Lower School music teacher Dianne Findley will be transitioning to Assistant Director of Choirs, a new position at Oakridge.

The biggest reward for our students doesn't come in the form of a medal



*The A Cappella Choir celebrates after receiving straight 1s at competition this spring.*

or a trophy, but rather in the impact a shared experience like singing makes. Stevie Wonder once sang, “Music is a world within itself, with a language we all understand.” There is something truly special about the act of creating beauty with so many other people and sharing it with an audience. When your unique voice blends with the voices and experiences of so many others, you discover a broader understanding of our shared humanity. Despite our many differences, there is something common to all of us: We belong to something bigger and greater than ourselves.

The words of the song the A Cappella Choir sang at the LLI Southwest opening ceremony were a fitting welcome for our guests from all over the country, but the words also embody the impact music makes on our students at Oakridge:

“I have heard the voice of welcome greeting me, welcoming me as a part of the wider world.”

*Andrew Stewart, Director of Choirs and Chair of the Fine Arts Department*

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## AP ART: A YEARLONG JOURNEY

On April 26, the AP Studio Art students proudly displayed the results of their year of hard work at a special show and reception. Seniors Julianne Carroll, Benny Du, Syd Fagan, Ellyn Marr, and Sam Mitchell had been challenged from the beginning of the school year to create a thematic body of work that reflects who they are as artists and individuals.

The AP Studio Art class offers seniors a more intensive collegiate learning experience of drawing and two- and three-dimensional art and design. As senior Syd Fagan put it, “If you want to be a serious artist, this is the class you should take.”

The value of the course goes beyond simple preparation for art school or even learning art at a higher level.

Because the workload is too large to be completed during class time, students need to develop a strong work ethic and properly budget their time in preparation for their end of year group show.

When asked what the most beneficial part of the class has been, students collectively answered critiques. The ability to discuss

ideas and artwork freely with one another “allows us the opportunity to see each others’ perspectives,” said senior Julianne Carroll.

So often, students feel blind as they create, and critiques help alleviate confusion by giving overall clarity to the work, which adds meaning and value. This emphasis on group reflection encourages the students to ask questions and push the boundaries of their work, whether that be scale or material. These moments are when true learning takes place.



*AP Art students Benny Du, Julianne Carroll, Ellyn Marr, Syd Fagan, and Sam Mitchell.*

Given the freedom this year of designing their own learning experience, each senior has worked diligently to develop a positive classroom environment, making the class a reflection of who they are and what they are passionate about. The next step in their journey is submitting a portfolio of their work to the College Board that will be evaluated for an AP exam score.

Before that final step, though, the AP Art Show was an opportunity to share their hard work with friends and family. The evening was a special celebration of differing artistic styles and interests as the artists displayed their works side by side.

*Frances Allen,  
Upper School Faculty*



*Students examine the work of their classmates while enjoying sparkling cider at the end of year AP Art Show.*

# UNDER THE ROOF OF THE FLAVIN



The Fine Arts Performance Hall, the heart of the Flavin, is one of the most heavily-used spaces on campus. In any given year, it is host to many events, including:

33 concerts and performances including choir, orchestra, musical theatre, drama, and Lower School and ECC music.

15 ceremonies celebrating students including academic awards ceremonies, National Honor Society, Ring and Pin, and sports banquets.

12 student public speaking events for Capstone (eighth grade) and Senior Speeches

15 college visits, career day, or college prep meetings

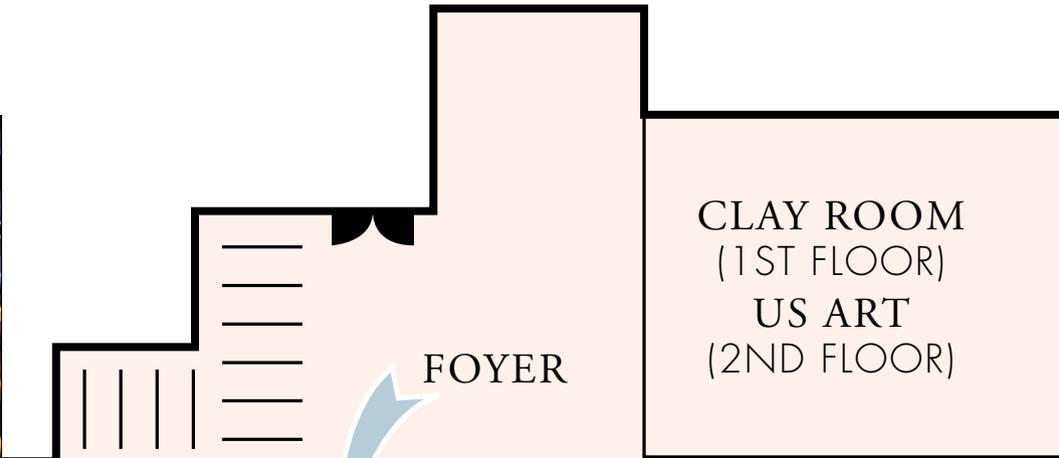
10 faculty meetings

5 spelling and geography bees and quiz bowls

2 talent shows



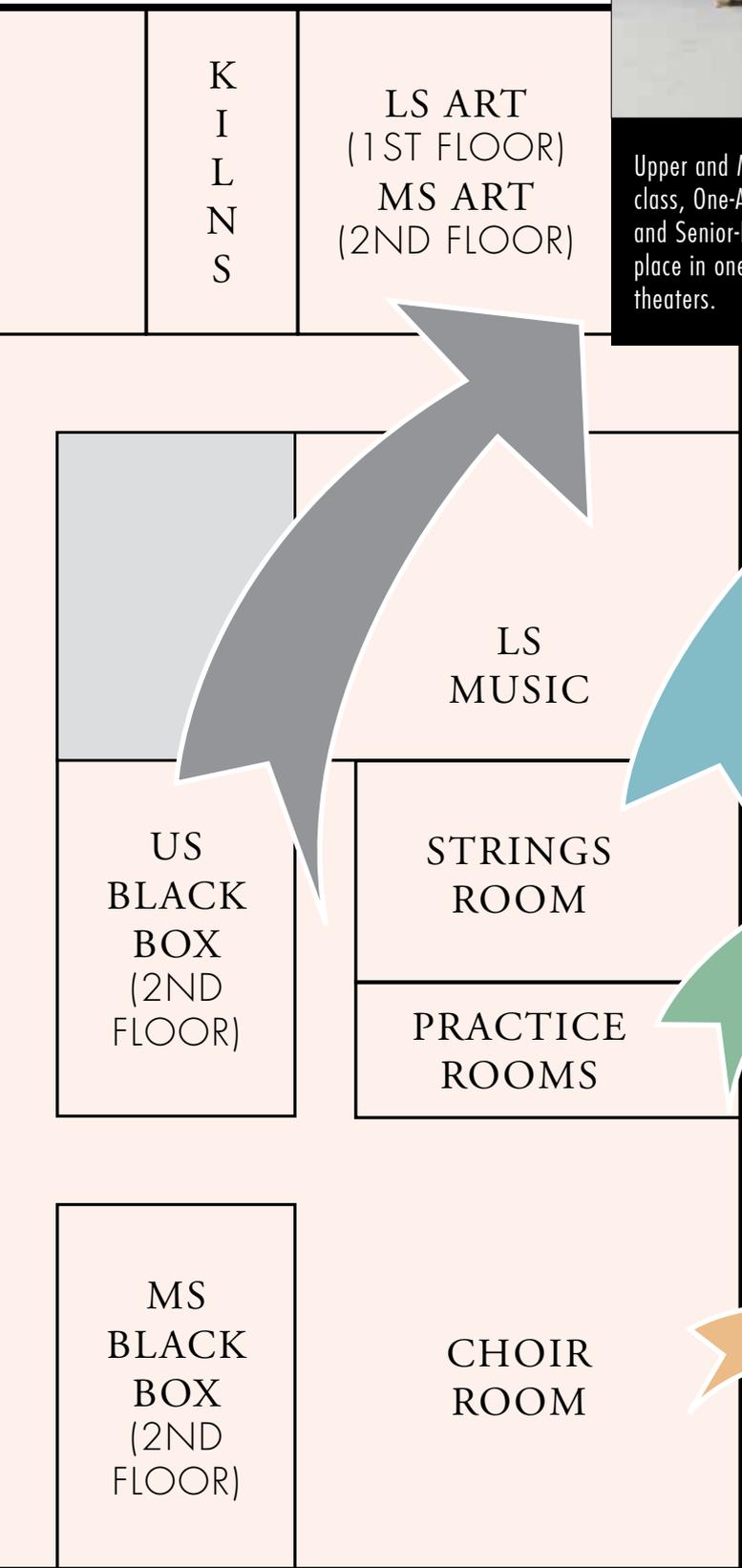
PERFORMANCE  
HALL



The Foyer serves as a rotating gallery of student artwork throughout the year as well as a space to host receptions.



The clay room and three kilns are used by all art students in Lower, Middle, and Upper School.



Upper and Middle School drama class, One-Act Play performances, and Senior-Directed Plays take place in one of two black box theaters.



The strings room is home to strings/orchestra class for Upper School orchestra, Upper House Middle School, and fifth and sixth grade strings.



More than 50 students take private strings or voice lessons and another 30 take piano lessons after school in the practice rooms.



The choir room is home to choir class for Upper School, Upper House Middle School, and fifth and sixth grade choirs. Drumline also sometimes rehearses here.

# FINE ARTS NIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS AT OAKRIDGE



*Sophomore Eric Pham gives a solo vocal performance on the Bridge.*



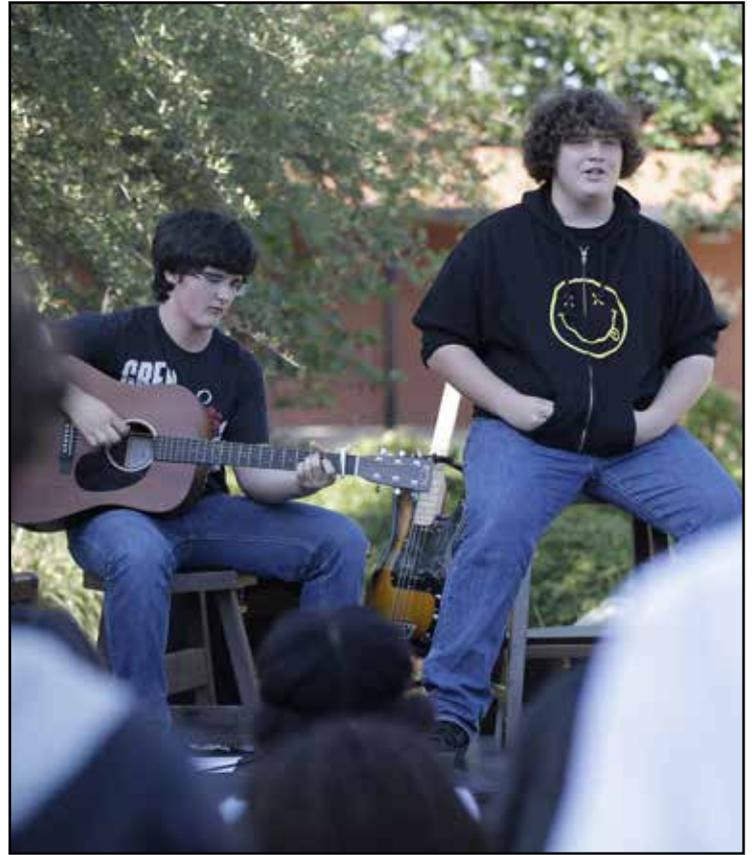
*Live music entertained attendees in the Quad as they enjoyed dinner from Ruthie's food truck.*



*Senior Noah Gladden as Dracula in the student-directed play "Almost the Bride of Dracula," directed by senior Caleb Badgley in the Black Box.*



*Eighth grader Olivia White and her family explore art on display in the Flavin Fine Arts Center.*



*In the quad, eighth graders Matthew Martin and Ayden Rodriguez perform with their band.*



*Freshman Yuna Liu performs Camille Saint-Saëns "The Swan."*



*Freshman Gracie Snyder models her wearable art project.*

# GETTING TO KNOW THE HUMANS OF OAKRIDGE

At a spring meeting of the Humans of Oakridge Club, the countdown to graduation was the topic at hand. Senior Amy Zhang led a brainstorming session on future subjects to interview for the club's social media platforms.

Amy had the idea to start the Humans of Oakridge Club after admiring the way popular blog Humans of New York featured insight into the lives of ordinary people on the street.

"I thought it would be interesting to bring that idea

to Oakridge," said Amy. "All the students at Oakridge go to school together, but we don't always know our classmates outside the classroom setting. We should get to know each other as more than what classes we take or what sports we play."

After conferring with faculty advisor Melissa Triebwasser on how to get the idea off the ground, Amy posted flyers around school advertising the club's first meeting in late October and was surprised by the large turnout. Fans of Humans of New York were curious about Amy's

plan to adapt the idea to the Oakridge campus.

With a blog, Facebook page, Twitter handle, and Instagram account started, club members began interviewing and photographing their subjects. Amy remembers that the first post was typically the most difficult for club members, herself included. At one of their meetings, she showed a video about the Humans of New York founder, in which he describes his process and the types of questions that he asks.



*A sampling of Humans of Oakridge subjects includes students of all ages and even a faculty member couple.*

“You just start talking to the person,” said Amy, “and you generally find what you want the post to be about along the way.”

At the start, her goal was one post per week, but with the help of club members, that number increased. Then she was able to introduce series based around events, like Valentine’s Day and the Talent Show. In addition to students, faculty and alumni were also occasionally featured.

Amy hopes the club continues next year with new leadership, as she heads off to college at Carnegie Mellon University. A National Merit Finalist and co-valedictorian with an interest in computer science, Amy admits the creation of Humans of Oakridge wasn’t necessarily a resume builder, or even about getting recognition.



*The Humans of Oakridge Club.*

“It was a personal goal of mine to just explore this other side of myself,” said Amy. “I wanted to get to know people, and in doing so, get people interested in getting to know each other. I think when I look back on my time at Oakridge, this club is going to be one of the highlights.”

Visit the Humans of Oakridge blog at [humansofOakridge.wordpress.com](http://humansofOakridge.wordpress.com).

*Amanda Harrier,  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator*

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## SERVING THE COMMUNITY WITH KEY CLUB

In the summer of 2016, seniors Brock Knott and Bailey Spates could have been relaxing and enjoying their time off. Instead, they were thinking about community service.

“We participated in a lot of service projects through Student Council at Oakridge, but we wanted to start a club that could do more,” said Brock.

The answer was founding The Oakridge School’s first Key Club. Affiliated with Kiwanis International,

Key Clubs provide service opportunities for high school students. Brock and Bailey spread the word to compile a list of prospective members, contacted the local Kiwanis to connect with a mentor, and gathered the charter funds.

When the school year started, the Club hit the ground running with letters and lunch with the Arlington Police Department in September and fundraising car washes in October. The group raised \$1,000 that month for the Kiwanis “Eliminate Project,” which

works with UNICEF to provide vaccinations to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus. They also planned a winter Spirit Week before the holidays to raise money for Angel Tree gifts. With \$1,500 in hand, they selected their angels and bought gifts for 15 children.

But the partnership Brock is most proud of is the one the Oakridge Key Club has formed with Rankin Elementary students. They visited at Christmas and again at Easter to work on craft projects with the first graders.

As the relationship developed, the Club decided to adopt the students for the year ahead.

Arlington Kiwanis member Jeremy Normand is the mentor and advisor for the Oakridge Key Club, but notes that he hasn't had to be as hands-on as your typical Key Club advisor. "The Oakridge Key Club practically started itself," said Mr. Normand. "The club leadership was so eager that they are actually ahead, in terms of membership and service, than many well-established clubs. The Kiwanis Club of Arlington is proud to call the Oakridge Key Club one of 'our' Key Clubs."

At a meeting in late March, with spring fever in the air and the end of the school year in sight, the group was still brainstorming service project ideas for the months ahead. The current year's officers along with the incoming leadership were also focused on the annual Key Club convention in Dallas in April.

"It'll be our first time to attend, so we're really looking forward to seeing what it's all about and getting ideas from other clubs," said faculty advisor Susan Knott.

Brock won't be here when many of those ideas get put into action, though. He'll be attending Chapman University in California where a Circle K Club, the collegiate level of Key Club, has already piqued his interest. At Oakridge, he leaves behind an enthusiastic club with an eye for supporting the community in any way they can.

"I'm excited with the progress we've made and all that we've done this

year," said Brock. "I can put a call out for a service project on a Friday and we have 15 members signed up by Monday. It's a really strong group, and I'm proud of that."

*Amanda Harrier,  
Marketing and Communications  
Coordinator*



*Key Club members Emilio Martinez '20, Rachel Clark '19, and Camryn Clegg '19 volunteer at Mission Arlington. Photo by Taylor Alexander '17.*



*The 2016-17 Oakridge Key Club*

# CLASS OF 2017 SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



**NOAH GLADDEN,  
NATIONAL  
MERIT FINALIST**

Owl since  
Kindergarten  
Attending  
University  
of Southern

California to study aeronautical  
engineering

*Who has been your favorite teacher  
at Oakridge?*

Dr. Liu, my Chinese teacher. She  
cares so much about teaching people  
about Chinese language and culture,  
and that love of the language has  
transferred to me. Because of Dr.  
Liu, I intend to study abroad in  
China and continue to take courses  
in Chinese while I'm in college.



**EVAN SKINNER, SALUTATORIAN,  
NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST**

Owl since Seventh Grade

Attending Purdue University to study actuarial  
science

*Who has been your favorite teacher at  
Oakridge?*

By far Mrs. Findley – she helped me discover  
my passion and talent for theatre in middle school, and has been  
one of the kindest and most thoughtful teachers I have ever had.



**MARK WRIGHT,  
CO-VALEDICTORIAN,  
NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST**

Owl since First Grade

Attending Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology to study physics or engineering  
and play football

*Who has been your favorite teacher at Oakridge?*

While I've enjoyed many of my teachers, Mr. Irons has been the  
most influential because his class helped me find a passion for  
physics and gave me the desire to pursue physics at MIT.



**RYAN TAN,  
NATIONAL MERIT  
FINALIST**

Owl since First Grade

Attending Stanford  
University (*"I'm keeping  
an open mind on a major,  
but I'm interested in*

*psychology, English, and theatre."*)

*Who has been your favorite teacher at  
Oakridge?*

I've learned something (beyond  
academics) from every teacher I've had  
the privilege of knowing. If I had to  
pick, I'd say my English teachers, Mr.  
Colley, Mr. Coe, and Mr. Renshaw. They  
have been some of the most passionate  
and engaging people I've known.



**AMY ZHANG,  
CO-VALEDICTORIAN,  
NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST**

Owl since Seventh Grade

Attending Carnegie Mellon  
University to study computer  
science

*Who has been your favorite teacher at Oakridge?*

Mr. Irons. He is really passionate about what he does, and  
it's nice to have a teacher who believes in you more than you  
believe in yourself.

Laura Nobles Bright's Kindergarten class leads the parade toward the "Big School."



# WALK TO THE FUTURE: AN OAKRIDGE TRADITION



*Students line the road cheering as the Kindergarteners make their walk.*

For all who have experienced it, Walk to the Future is an unmistakably special day on The Oakridge School campus. Every student gathers for a singular purpose – to celebrate the Kindergarten class as they prepare to make their transition to the “Big School.”

With the location of the Early Childhood Center at the opposite end of campus from the cluster of buildings where the Lower, Middle, and Upper School students attend classes every day, this transition means that these young Owls are making a big leap in their journey, not just figuratively, but also geographically.

“The Early Childhood Center is apart from the rest of the school, but we want

those students to feel like they are part of the whole Oakridge experience,” said Dr. Richard Enos, member of the Board of Regents who was on the committee that brought about the idea of a “Walk to the Future” more than 10 years ago. “It’s important to have a formal moment when they make this transition to the Lower School.”

To prepare the students in the days leading up to the event, their teachers explain what will happen that morning and the meaning of the walk they’re taking. As they make their journey, the entire student body lines their path to cheer for and welcome them.

“This event means a lot to the older students too,” said Dr. Enos. “It shows them their role in the life of the school. That kind of mentoring is powerful in building community.”

The walk can be a little intimidating at first, but by the end of the journey when they’re eating cookies in the Quad with their junior class big siblings, the future first graders feel right at home. “We tell them this is your day,” said ECC Director Betty Garton. “We are showing them the support that they will have for the rest of their education.”

*Amanda Harrier,  
Marketing and Communications  
Coordinator*



*As the Kindergarteners arrive in the Quad, the senior class is the last to greet them.*



*A conference presenter introduces fourth graders Charlie Witherington and Landry Ford to Cubelets in a session about robotics.*

# OAKRIDGE HOSTS LLI SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

For the past four summers, a group of Oakridge teachers have traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to attend and present at the Lausanne Learning Institute (LLI) summer conference. The conference focuses on implementing technology into the classroom in practical, effective ways that put students at the center of the learning process.

The partnership with Lausanne continued to grow, and in 2016, Oakridge was recognized as the most innovative independent school when it was named the LLI Spotlight School. A shared vision of hosting a conference that centered on practical ways to make innovative teaching visible led to the creation of LLI Southwest (LLISW), which Oakridge hosted for the first time on February 23-24.

To bring this vision to life, conference organizers knew that Oakridge students had to be part of the journey, so they developed “fishbowl” sessions. During these sessions, held on day one of the conference, educators from 53 schools representing 11 states observed teachers and students from the perimeter of classrooms as they engaged in lessons encompassing hands-on, authentic learning strategies. Following the lesson, the teachers were given time to debrief, pose questions, and share best practices.

On day two, the entire faculty joined the conference and heard from two prominent educators: Zac Chase and Diana Laufenberg. Diana currently has over a million views on her TEDx video about learning from our mistakes, and Zac was the lead author on the 2016 National Technology Plan through the U.S. Department of Education. During their



*Oakridge students and Upper School Art Teacher Frances Allen work with an art teacher from All Saints Episcopal in Tyler.*

keynote presentation, Zac and Diana shared strategies on how to allow students to guide the learning process, inquire, and curate their own knowledge.

Following the keynote, everyone chose from almost 50 general session topics throughout the rest of day. The topics ranged from Authentic Learning, to Creating an Elementary MakerSpace, to Design Thinking and everything in between. More than 20 Oakridge teachers presented during both the fishbowl and general sessions.

Not only was the conference a success for the educators, but the students also enjoyed the opportunity to learn from guest instructors during an unusual and exciting school day.

Oakridge will host LLISW again next year on February 22-23. In partnership with Lausanne, Oakridge looks forward to another innovative, hands-on conference that will bring educators from across North America to campus once again.

*Ashley Read '05,  
Learn21 Specialist and  
Fourth Grade Teacher*

# MRS. G'S NEIGHBORHOOD: THE QUINN KINDERGARTEN CENTER



*Students pass by the Quad on their way from the main ECC building to the Quinn Family Kindergarten Center.*

This fall, the seventh group of students to “live” in the Quinn Family Kindergarten Center neighborhood will start their school year. As they embark on the next step of their Oakridge journey, the *Outlook* decided to take a look at the original intent behind the kindergarten facility.

Though the building was constructed in 2011, Oakridge parent Stacey Quinn was having conversations with Early Childhood Center Director Betty Garton and Head of School Jon Kellam a couple years earlier.

“The family wanted to do something that would

draw people into the early childhood area,” said Mrs. Garton, fondly known as Mrs. G. to the Oakridge family, who worked closely with architect Alan McGee on the design of the new building. The first consideration was for the need for space in a typical classroom.

“When we first started Oakridge, we had two tables, 10 chairs, a kitchen center, and one bookshelf,” said Mrs. G, “and those classrooms were very roomy.”

As the program evolved, classrooms contained so much more: easels, more bookshelves, all kinds of

furniture. Quite simply, classrooms needed to be bigger. Mrs. G. knew that the students and teachers needed more square footage, natural lighting, and easy access to the outside.

“Oakridge is a neighborhood. It’s a community, and that’s what I wanted to form,” said Mrs. G as she and the architect landed on the neighborhood-themed building.

To create that theme, each classroom has a bright door and a front porch with a light. Stepping inside the classroom, it is evident that each space was designed with learning

in mind. Classrooms have large storage closets and a bathroom. Counter space with a sink and storage, cubbies, and special areas for learning round out the basic design.

It's the small touches, however, that truly define the Quinn Kindergarten Center. One such element is the sunken area in the corner of each room, diagonally placed from the classroom door. In this space, students and their teacher have morning meetings and other important conversations.

"I wanted to establish an area in our kindergarten that was different from the reading lofts but that was conducive to gathering," said Mrs. G of the pits, "and that is why I equate



*Mrs. G equates the sunken areas in each classroom to a kitchen table where students gather for meetings and camaraderie.*



*The outdoor STEAM space allows room for creativity. "We have to provide those hands-on, authentic experiences without rules and regulations, where they have the freedom to design," said Mrs. G.*

it to the kitchen table. They have a lot of camaraderie in that space."

Since 2015, one space in the building has been focused on STEAM – science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. There are both inside and outdoor spaces where students can explore and learn. An ideal STEAM space has access to water, access to the outside, space that is carpeted and space that is tiled, and ample storage – all qualities that this room possesses. Rounding out the building is the Quinn Multipurpose Room, a large meeting space that students and families can use as a gathering place.

Ultimately, when looking at the Quinn Kindergarten Center, it is evident that the Oakridge mission was a key to successful design. Mrs.

G summed it up: "It's a nurturing, engaging space. A space that allows individuality. A space that involves creativity and imagination, where teachers and students can collaborate freely. I wanted to establish comfort and safety in this building."

"I remain humbled and grateful to the Quinns and the other families who helped us build the Kindergarten Center," said Head of School Jon Kellam. "Through their generosity, the school was able to craft a student-centered environment that will benefit children for generations to come."

*Sarah Kramer,  
Assistant Head of School*

# SENIOR ATHLETES SIGN LETTERS OF INTENT



*Eight members  
of the Oakridge  
Class of 2017  
committed to  
play collegiate  
athletics this year.*



TRENT HALL  
TRACK,  
WILLIAMS COLLEGE



MICHAEL CENDRICK  
FOOTBALL,  
HARDING UNIVERSITY



DANIEL JACKSON  
FOOTBALL,  
SOUTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY

*Congratulations!*



HADEN BRANCH  
BASEBALL,  
VERNON COLLEGE



ALEXA PRESSLEY  
VOLLEYBALL,  
LINDENWOOD  
UNIVERSITY



MADISON MCCARTY  
VOLLEYBALL,  
IOWA LAKES COLLEGE



MARK WRIGHT  
FOOTBALL,  
MASSACHUSETTS  
INSTITUTE OF  
TECHNOLOGY

NOT PICTURED: BRONSON BOYD, FOOTBALL, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

# ATHLETICS BRIEFS

## Oakridge Coach Reaches 400 Wins

Coach Kerry Kajihiro was recognized this spring by the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association for achieving 400 wins as a head coach.

Coach Kajihiro just wrapped up his first year at Oakridge and his 23rd year as a head baseball coach. Before coming to Oakridge, he coached at DeSoto High School, where he took the team to two state championships, and at high schools in Irving, Mansfield, and Nacona.



Coach Kajihiro receives his 400 wins award from the president of the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association.

“It’s a great honor to receive the award, but it’s not just me,” said Coach Kajihiro. “It goes back to the kids and the assistant coaches. As a head coach, you’re the one who receives the award, but it’s not just you that makes it happen.”

Under Coach Kajihiro, the Oakridge team played more public school opponents in tournament play, and rose to the challenge as they climbed the Texas Private School baseball rankings. They ended the season with a great showing at the SPC state tournament, placing 6th (read more on page 28).



Kindergarten students Libby Caldwell and Grace Gulley ride with Officer Harris.

## ECC Students Ride for St. Jude

On April 28, the students at the Early Childhood Center wrapped up their Trike-a-Thon riding toy safety week by practicing their new skills at a riding toy party. Students brought their bicycles, tricycles, and scooters to school and rode them while wearing helmets and considering safety first.

This special annual tradition at the ECC is in its 27th year, and has raised almost \$100,000 cumulatively for the children at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. The total for this year’s Trike-A-Thon is just over \$7,000.



Preschool students Coen Anders and Micah Coakley prepare to ride in the Trike-A-Thon.

# ATHLETICS BRIEFS

## Owls Compete at State Tournaments

Oakridge sent athletes from all four winter sports to the SPC State Tournament in early February: swimming, wrestling, girls soccer, and boys basketball.

Junior wrestlers Graham Stanush and Zane Ahlfinger placed 1st and 3rd, respectively, in their weight classes. Graham also placed 1st at the Texas Prep State Wrestling Championship the week before, earning a bid to the National Prep Tournament at Lehigh University on February 24-25. He is the first Oakridge wrestler to place 1st at Prep State.



*The girls golf team of Kennedy Turner, Hope Lancarte, Christa York, Macy Moody, and Raegan Lane finished in 5th place.*

The Oakridge swimmers had a great showing with many best times. Junior Corrina Sullivan placed 5th in the 100 breaststroke and 8th in the 100 fly, and the girls 200 medley relay team placed 8th and 200 free relay team placed 9th.

Boys basketball placed 6th after defeating St. Andrews in round one, and girls soccer lost the second of their two

games in penalty kicks in a nail-biter against Houston Christian.

In the spring, another group of athletes competed at the State Tournament: the golf, track, baseball, softball, and boys tennis teams.

The Oakridge boys and girls golf teams kicked off the SPC tournament week in Houston. The girls team finished in 5th place, with sophomore Kennedy Turner earning a top-ten individual overall score.



*Junior wrestler Graham Stanush placed 1st at SPC and Prep State.*

At the main state tournament in Dallas, Oakridge was well represented for track and field with both boys and girls qualifying for the meet throughout the year. Team members reached many individual personal records during the meet. Senior Trent Hall placed 2nd in the 200 meter and 3rd in the 100 meter. The 4 x 100 meter relay team of brothers Trent and Trevor Hall and Chris and Nicco LaRovere placed 6th (see Racing Brothers), and Tyler Fuller placed 7th in the 110 meter hurdles.

The softball team capped off their season by earning a number five seed for the SPC tournament. The girls ran into a feisty John Cooper team, and dropped their opening game to the eventual runners-up.

# ATHLETICS BRIEFS

The baseball team also qualified for the SPC tournament as a number four seed. The Owls opened the tournament with a come-from-behind win over Houston Christian, which earned them a quarterfinal match-up with the number one seeded Kinkaid Falcons. After an epic four-hour game, Kinkaid squeaked out a victory and the Owls placed 6th.

Boys tennis earned a 5th place finish at the tournament after losing to the eventual champions Greenhill in a hard-fought match in the quarterfinals. Read more about the growth of the Oakridge tennis program on page 31.

Shawn Meadows,  
Athletic Director

## RACING BROTHERS

This year's varsity track 4 x 100 relay team consisted of two pairs of brothers: Nicco LaRovere '18, Chris LaRovere '18, Trent Hall '17, and Trevor Hall '18. As a team, they broke the school record twice and competed at the Texas Relays in Austin, where they shared the track with NCAA athletes and Olympic hopefuls.

After this year, this dynamic team won't be replicated, as Trent goes on to run track at Williams College. As they wrapped up their season, we asked them each the question: What is it like to run the relay with your brother?

*Chris: It's good and bad. On the bad side, if you mess up, you're not just letting your team down, you're letting your brother down. So it's that much more important to do well. On the good side, you have that person right there to talk to and be honest with you.*

*Nicco: We have a different bond with each other than most teams – we're closer. We also mess around a lot more – we roast each other, and we know when the other is nervous. If we mess up, we get on each other more than your typical teammates, but when we're successful, we're more proud of that success.*

*Trent: It's great knowing you can trust your brother, that you can always count on him. And we can talk about it at home, so it's a bonding experience too. Sometimes the sibling rivalry comes between us, but we all come together eventually.*

*Trevor: My brother is faster than me, but I've been getting better. This is our second year as a team, but this year was different. We came together and got a lot closer. The chemistry was different, so when we went out for our first meet, our time dropped a lot. That was new to me and it felt good.*



The Oakridge 4 x 100 relay team of brothers Trent and Trevor Hall and Chris and Nicco LaRovere.

*Seventh grader Presley Bertrand is part of the growing Middle School tennis program.*



# A HOME COURT FOR OAKRIDGE TENNIS

The 2017 Oakridge tennis team members anticipated another exciting and successful season with the addition of promising young talent from the Middle School. Varsity team captains Shivan Ahuja '17, Jon Patel '17, and Avery Pennywell '18 helped lead the fight on the boys' side, while captains Kyndall Bertrand '17, Abby Brown '18, and Clair Levisay '18 led the varsity girls into battle. Pre-season practices revealed some great potential from many other players. Each of these players are a necessary part of the team, as they round out the run to the state tournament.

Quality players are only one part of the team's success. Having tennis courts on the Oakridge campus has made a huge difference over the last several years. The team is able to have longer practice sessions, which translates into better and more efficient improvement overall. A concession and bathroom facility, along with additional parking for the



*The varsity boys tennis team after placing 5th at SPC.*

tennis courts, are currently under construction. These items should help with the ever-increasing crowds that gather to watch our tennis athletes.

One of the problems that a coach faces is filling holes once seniors leave the team at the end of the season. Therefore, opening the Middle School tennis program a few years ago has enabled a crop of young players to grow so that they may step into varsity spots upon their arrival in 9th grade. Coaches George Meyer, Arthur Ivo '08, and Jason Kern have done a special job training and developing these young athletes in preparation for

the Upper School level. Coaches Ivo and Paulo DaSilva '05 have also worked with the Upper School skills squad players in hopes of moving some of those players into viable spots on the roster. Upper School Coaches Chris Henderson and Nick Lane '08 worked tirelessly to prepare the varsity and JV squads for rigorous matches.

There are many parts to this puzzle, but those pieces are all starting to fit together. As a result of all this hard work, the varsity boys tennis team qualified for the SPC state tournament this spring, earning a fifth place finish after defeating The John Cooper School and St. John's School. Congratulations to all our teams on a great season, and we look forward to another one in 2018. Go Owls!

*Chris Henderson,  
Varsity Tennis Head Coach*

If you're interested in making a gift to support the tennis program, naming opportunities at the Oakridge Athletic Complex include three tennis courts, six spectator benches, two player benches, and the tennis complex as a whole.

Visit [www.theoakridgeschool.org/oac](http://www.theoakridgeschool.org/oac) to learn more.

Sophomore James Burnett at the Oakridge Iron Championships.



# POWERLIFTING GROWS STRONGER

The Owls powerlifting team has grown a great deal since its inception and celebrated its tenth year as a club sport at Oakridge this spring.

The program started with just three lifters and one coach and now consistently has around 20 lifters each year. The powerlifting team continues to have lifters advance to the regional meet in Chico, Texas, and represent the school well.

The powerlifting program has expanded to include both boys and girls over the past three years, and this year included three female members of the team. The girls now compete in two meets each year: the Oakridge Iron Championships and the Cedar Hill Girls Invitational Meet, and they went on to win medals at each competition they lifted in. This year, Danielle Bowling was the first female powerlifter to win the Most Outstanding Lifter Award. With more interest from girls in powerlifting, the Owls look to add more meets for them to compete in to the schedule. In addition, the boys lifted

in four meets, competing regularly against 5A and 6A public schools, and won medals in very tough competition.



*Senior Danielle Bowling was the first female powerlifter to win the Most Outstanding Lifter Award.*

Each winter, the Oakridge powerlifting team hosts the Oakridge Iron Championships. The first event was held in 2009 and included a small number of schools competing against each other. Each year the meet has grown to include more teams and more platforms. In its current rendition, the Owls host a meet that has 10 boys teams and five girls teams, bringing a large number of schools to campus for the day.

The parents of the powerlifting team are an

integral part of making the Oakridge Iron Championships a success, as they help with the set up and take down of the

meet and provide the hospitality rooms for the coaches, judges, and volunteers. Their support truly makes this event the best in the region. The Oakridge Athletic Department supplies the volunteer shirts that all who work the meet get to proudly have and wear. Each year, Oakridge has more inquiries about participating in the meet than can be accommodated - a great problem to have.

As a result of these initiatives, the powerlifting program has become a part of the Oakridge tradition of excellence, both in the classroom and on the platform.

*Matt Knauf,  
Varsity Powerlifting Head Coach*

# OWLS IN STEAM

The Oakridge School continues to evaluate ways to ensure curriculum and choice are relevant for the myriad paths its graduates will travel. Continued emphasis and dialogue have centered on modern learning and a foundation in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). The *Outlook* caught up with six alumni to hear how STEAM influences their daily professional lives.

**Sylvia Atsaves '12** studied brain and cognitive sciences at MIT and now works as a Life Science Consultant in Boston, combining science and business. Sylvia will work with a client, understanding the scope of a project and then facilitating secondary research to help with product launches or other projects. These are the building blocks for her next step, Harvard Business School, where she is considering an MBA with a focus on public health.

With his BFA in Broadcast and Design from the Savannah College of Art & Design, **Parker Strode '06** has forged a multi-faceted path in technology. On a daily basis, he might work on one project that requires design and then another where he uses math and



*MIT graduate Sylvia Atsaves '12 works in life science consulting.*

GPS. “The challenge of the job is figuring out how all those pieces connect” said Parker, “and that’s what keeps me hooked.”

**Courtney Wong '08**, who earned her PharmD from University of Southern California, works as a clinical pharmacist at UT Southwestern and uses her technical expertise every day to help patients addressing heart or lung issues. She sees patients, reviews their medications and labs, and makes necessary changes to their treatment protocol. Her educational background focused on understanding how drugs work in the body and the science behind them. “Although science is used indirectly in my day-to-day work life, I wouldn’t be able to safely make medication changes for my patients if I didn’t know the science behind how each drug works and the



*Mike Lavi '07 credits Oakridge with preparing him for the college workload.*

side effects they cause,” said Courtney.

**Mike Lavi '07** also uses STEAM principles on a daily basis. “Structural engineering is just a combination of many of the STEAM categories all blended together,” said Mike. “We use physics, chemistry, statistics, algebra, calculus, technology, and some people even refer to structural engineering as an art.”

**Sarah Stair '08**, also an engineer, concurred: “The five components of STEAM work well together, and in some respects, they rely on one another.” Sarah completed a PhD in mechanical engineering at Baylor University, which was funded by a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and supported by Sandia National Laboratories.



Sarah Stair '08 defended her dissertation June 6, earning her PhD.

## The Oakridge Influence

Though Mike knew he wanted to be an engineer when he was a kid, he credits Oakridge with preparing him for the college workload (BS in civil engineering from UT Austin and Master of Engineering from UT Arlington). He gained time management skills that helped him succeed in college and get him through every busy workday. Likewise, Sylvia cites her zero-hour

computer science course – early mornings, discipline, and learning how to learn – with getting ready for college, though MIT truly influenced her STEAM choice, as it included job fairs, industry opportunities, and the like.

**Blake Messer '08** traces his STEAM interests to an uncle and credits his parents' investment in an Oakridge



Blake Messer '08 recommends students take AP classes if they are considering engineering.

education to his readiness for college and career. "Without their investment in my education, and sending me to school at Oakridge, I'm not sure I would have been prepared enough and had the foundation to tackle the degree that has allowed me to enter the fields I've worked in," said Blake, who earned a BS in engineering technology with a minor in Spanish from Texas A&M University.

He also reminds students to take AP classes in physics, statistics, and calculus if they are considering engineering. "The classes that cause most people to leave an engineering career path are those entry-level physics and calculus classes. Three-quarters of the people who start out in engineering aren't usually there to walk the stage with you four years later."

Parker attributes some of his career choice to senior English teacher Chris Renshaw who always kept students abreast of Apple OS updates and challenged them to understand chess. "I find that interesting, because my career revolves around developing software for Apple Projects, and there are a wealth of problem-solving skills that come from playing chess, which I still play often."

Sarah said, "I appreciate the well-roundedness of my Oakridge education. During my years at Oakridge, I was taught to think critically while keeping in mind the bigger picture, whether it was in relation to language arts, science, or mathematics, and these are the key components of being a good engineer."

## ALUMNI IN FOCUS

Sylvia Atsaves '12, Life Sciences Consultant, Navigant Consulting, Inc., Boston, MA

Mike Lavi '07, Project Engineer, JQ Engineering, LLP, Fort Worth, TX

Blake Messer '08, Process Engineering Manager, North American Service Centers, Weir Oil & Gas, Fort Worth, TX

Sarah Stair '08, Research & Development, Mechanical Engineer, Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, NM

Parker Strode '06, Application Developer and IT Director, GM Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Arlington, TX

Courtney Wong '08, Clinical Pharmacist, UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX

Courtney also pointed to the balance among academics, arts, and academics as aids in her ability to handle a rigorous curriculum. “Even now as a clinical pharmacist, the ability to balance work and multitask effectively has allowed me to succeed in my career, and this all began during my years at Oakridge.”

“Oakridge also provided me with the opportunity to explore many of the different science fields prior to entering college,” said Courtney. “Oakridge was full of very supportive teachers and staff who challenged their students but were also patient and encouraging when needed.”

## Reimagining Upper School

When reimagining what an Upper School could look like, based upon their own career choices, several alumni had great insight.

“Invest in soft skills,” said Blake. “I cannot tell you how much that will help....It doesn’t matter how smart you are if you cannot communicate effectively.”

“The Upper School should be all about technology and content delivery,” said Parker. “The faster students can receive and look up information, the better.”

Sylvia also recommended that Oakridge foster deeper relationships with universities. Beyond focusing on guest speakers, the school could think about the continuum from high school to

“DURING MY YEARS AT OAKRIDGE, I WAS TAUGHT TO THINK CRITICALLY WHILE KEEPING IN MIND THE BIGGER PICTURE, WHETHER IT WAS IN RELATION TO LANGUAGE ARTS, SCIENCE, OR MATHEMATICS, AND THESE ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF BEING A GOOD ENGINEER.”

– SARAH STAIR '08

college to career. “Help students understand at a more hands-on level what they can experience in college,” said Sylvia.

Courtney echoed this and suggested a resource center focused on inspiring student interest in specific fields that might include shadowing and internship opportunities, and online lessons or curricula that would simulate problem-solving situations in STEM fields. “As a high school student, it is sometimes difficult to connect what you are learning in the classroom to a real-life career,” said Courtney. “Providing this type of resource to the students would give more exposure to how classroom learning translates and applies to a career in a specific field and could help inspire students to enter STEM fields early on.”

“I make it a goal to attend as many conferences and webinars as I can to learn about new trends and techniques,” said Parker. “Wouldn’t it be interesting if students or classes could attend webinars?” Parker added that teaching students the basics of programming is “well worth the effort” since it “changes the way you tackle day-to-day problems and the thought process that goes behind it.”

Sylvia also applauded schools that cultivate a Maker mindset: “You can drive your own education. It’s completely up to you, and you’re as much a part of your education as your teachers are.”

And along those same lines of hands-on learning, Mike talked about the benefits of drafting class for students who might pursue careers in engineering or architecture. “This would allow these students to have a step up on their college courses, because they would have a basic knowledge of drafting and 3D computer modeling.”

This type of alumni feedback is not uncommon, and it provided the impetus for last year’s Research & Design work focused on school schedule, course offerings, and college credit models. In 2017-2018, in fact, the Upper School is implementing a customized block schedule (see story on page 2) that will respond to student needs and choice in a college preparatory environment.

*Sarah Kramer,  
Assistant Head of School*

# ALUMNI NEWS

## Class of 2000

**Kyle Haase '00** began a new job in April as a Storyboard Revisionist at Marvel Entertainment. He also recently celebrated his one-year anniversary as a Disney (parent company) employee.

## Class of 2007

**Marissa Belske Ivo '07** and **Arthur Ivo '08** have a new baby. Alexa Belske Ivo was born on April 9 and measured 19.5 inches and 7.48 pounds. The beautiful family is happy and doing well.



## Class of 2008

**Ashley Frank Klesmit '08** (married to fellow alum **Ryan Klesmit '08**) is beginning a Master's Degree at the University of Notre Dame in the Department of Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics this August.

## Class of 2010

**Corinne Queenan '10** graduated from the Texas A&M University

School of Law. She was joined by **Shelby Frazier Lamon '11** and **Hayley Cox '10** at graduation.



**Hayley Cox '10** graduated from the FastBACC program at Baylor University Louise Herrington School of Nursing and will be working at Dallas's Parkland Hospital in the emergency department. Hayley, pictured below far left, began a critical care nurse residency on June 19.



**Sara Gordon '10** graduated from Notre Dame School of Law and joins fiancé Anthony McQuillen as a Notre Dame law alum. She was

joined at graduation by her brother and fellow Oakridge alum **Eric '07**.



## Class of 2011

**Alex Buck '11** graduated from Georgetown University with a Master of Arts in Security Studies. She has taken a job with the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. Her sister **Lauren Buck '15** joined her at graduation.



## Class of 2012

**Joshua Atkinson '12** graduated from the University of Tulsa, and he had quite a final football season. When Josh caught a 30-yard pass in the Miami Beach Bowl, he hit 1,000 yards as a wide receiver. Because he and his teammates (a 3,000-yard

# ALUMNI NEWS

passer; two 1,000-yard rushers; and another 1,000-yard receiver) were the first group to accomplish such milestones in NCAA history, they were featured at the Collegiate Hall of Fame and were recognized on the floor of the Oklahoma State Senate. Josh also received an invitation to participate in the Dallas Cowboys area tryouts. There, he reconnected with Oakridge friend and fellow alum **Calvin Garrett '12**, who works as a scout for the team.



**Miles Wilson '12**, graduate of Claremont McKenna College and currently employed as District Director for Texas State Representative Chris Tucker, came back home to Oakridge to speak



at the National Honor Society induction ceremony. He inspired the kids during his visit, and took a selfie with Library Assistant Jackie Pressley.

**Katie Raper '12** has recently been accepted to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas, and will begin her studies in July. This is a wonderful complement to her undergraduate degree in Occupational Therapy from The University of Texas at Arlington.



## Class of 2013

Salutatorian **Amit Narawane '13** graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with degrees



in Biomedical Engineering and History (with High Honors). He will be attending Baylor College of Medicine in the fall.

**Jeffrey Wingate '13** and his wife, Erica, had a baby girl named Emma Kay. She was born on April 18, weighed in at 8 lbs 4 oz, and was 20.75 inches long. The happy family is doing well.



**Lukas Groves '13**, son of Upper School Head Butch Groves, graduated from the United States Coast Guard Academy on May 17. Ensign Groves received his Bachelor of Science degree in Operations Research and Computer Analysis, and he received a commission from President Trump. Lukas is assigned to the U.S. CGC Mellon and reported for duty on June 25.



# ALUMNI NEWS

**Madison McWithey '13** graduated from the University of Virginia in May. She double majored in English and History and minored in Spanish. While at UVA, Madison chaired UVA Homecomings, was named Counselor of the Year by the University Judiciary Committee, and served as Secretary and Social Chair of her sorority, Chi Omega. In the fall, Madison plans to attend Boston College Law School. Her brother **Judge McWithey '16** just completed a successful freshman year at University of Mississippi where he has pledged Kappa Sigma.



## Class of 2014

**Colton Davis '14** is studying Chemistry at Texas Tech University. Colton was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, Mortar Board, and has received two very prestigious awards: Outstanding Performance in Analytical Chemistry and the Craig Memorial Endowed

Scholarship from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Texas Tech University.



**Alex Schies '14**, a member of the Texas Women's University golf team, earned the title of Sooner Athletic Conference Women's Golfer of the Year for the third year in a row. She also won the 2017 SAC individual women's golf championship this past April. Pictured with Alex is Kevin Millikan, head coach of the TWU women's team and current Oakridge parent to a rising fifth grader. (Photo credit: Josh Lacy of *The Rambler*)



## Class of 2016

**Chase Woody '16** completed his freshman year at Auburn University. He competed on the Auburn Water Ski team and set a personal best this season.



## JOIN OAKRIDGE CONNECT

Oakridge Alumni are now participating in an exciting new platform called Oakridge Connect. This closed group of over 1,500 alums allows members to communicate, network, share pictures, and post event information. The dynamic database helps maintain contact despite graduation, moves, and job changes. Alumni also have the ability to search for each other by class year, city of residence, university affiliation, Greek affiliation, industry, and company. Sign up at [oakridgeconnect.org](http://oakridgeconnect.org).

# SUPER SUPPER AND AUCTION – HAVANA NIGHTS



The 38th annual Super Supper & Auction - Havana Nights in March welcomed over 350 guests to Howell Family Farms in Arlington. Event chair Kristy Kundysek along with her husband Mark, parents of Dawson '18 and Garrett '19, hosted a fantastic fundraising event. Guests arrived wearing their island best attire, enjoyed Cuban cuisine, and danced the night away to the tunes provided by Trey and the Trey Tones.

This year's Super Supper and Auction provided a truly spectacular evening for those who attended, as well as for The Oakridge School. The ultimate success of the event would not be possible without

the tireless work and dedication of all of those involved. Through these efforts and the donations of items and services, along with the participation of those who purchased items and attended, Oakridge raised over \$225,000.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the guests who attended the gala as well as the donors and bidders who supported the auction. We are so fortunate to have such a generous community of families, friends and businesses. With the help of many, we are able to improve the educational experience for all the students at The Oakridge School.



A tent at Howell Family Farms was transformed into old Havana.



Mark and Kristy Kundysek



Tuition raffle winner Shelley Hodges

Special Thanks to our Sponsors

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and Peterson/McGraw

Kristy and Mark Kundysek

Ronda and Richard Lane

Esther & Eduardo Martinez



# OAKRIDGE PARENTS' CLUB

As we come to the end of another school year, I'd like to say thank you to the OPC Executive and General Board and all of the parent volunteers. You have done an amazing job and provided the students, faculty, and families of Oakridge with a wonderful year. The school is so fortunate to have such a great group of volunteers. I have truly enjoyed my time in serving as OPC President.

OPC enriches the experience of Oakridge children by organizing classroom and divisional parties; hosting Owlfest, Book Fair (see page 5), and Holiday Treasures Gift Shop; providing Test Snacks; and hosting the After Prom Party.

OPC provides opportunities for families to meet with each other and school faculty and staff through the Back to School Fair, Meet and Greet - Cheers and Tears Event, the Parent Ambassador program for new families, and Faculty and Staff Appreciation Luncheons.

OPC raises funds through membership dues, Uniform Resale, Box Top collection, and primarily through our largest fundraiser, Magazine Sales. The success of this year's fundraising allowed the OPC to provide and host all of their events and activities and still give back generously to the school at year-end.

I am proud to share with you all of the allocations for the 2016-2017 school year from the Oakridge Parents' Club.

*Ronda Lane  
OPC President 2016-2017*



*Second graders Austin Jones and Skye McGraw in costume at Owlfest.*



*Volunteer Lorraine Sealey helps third grader Joelle Batrice complete her shopping list at Holiday Treasures.*



*Parent volunteers at the Middle School Dessert Party.*

# OAKRIDGE PARENTS' CLUB ALLOCATIONS

\$3,500	The Oakridge School General Endowment
\$1,500	The Angel Fund
\$3,500	Early Childhood Center – Turf grass around sandboxes, awnings, art mural, and/or tables and benches for the Wetlands
\$5,000	Lower School – Flexible seating furniture for classrooms
\$5,000	Middle School – 21st Century Classroom furniture
\$5,000	Upper School – 21st Century Classroom furniture
\$1,500	Integrated Media Lab – Video/digital production equipment
\$1,000	Middle School Franklin Lab (Maker Space) – Robotics and Maker Space equipment
\$1,000	Campus-Wide – Phone and tablet charging station (First Floor Library)
\$2,000	Campus-Wide – College Advising Dean's Program (Visit with College Deans from across the country that will share the value of an independent school education, how universities evaluate students, and success of students in college from independent schools. Open to all families, faculty and staff, and students.)
\$6,000	Campus-Wide – Visitor Management Software System (Automated scanning system to check in visitors to campus. Check-in systems will be located in ECC, LS, US, and the Information Center.)



OPC members kick off the Cheers and Tears event on the first day of school.



ECC teachers enjoy lunch during the November faculty appreciation luncheon.



Middle School students celebrate the start of the new school year at the Back to School Fair and Family Picnic.

# OAKRIDGE GOLF CLASSIC

*Special Thanks to our Sponsors*

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<p><b>FACULTY/STAFF/COACH SPONSOR</b></p> <p><b>ALEX DURAN</b> <b>KEVIN LINCH</b></p>	<p><b>LUNCH SPONSOR</b></p> 	

The 33rd Annual Golf Classic was a great success. Golf chairs Amy and Bryan Key welcomed golfers, and golf carts started rolling out for a beautiful afternoon at Walnut Creek Country Club on May 1. Chairing for the second year in a row, Amy and Bryan, parents to Ethan '22 and Bryce '24, are enthusiastic supporters of The Owl Club, athletics, and the physical education programs at The Oakridge School.

Aside from playing golf, many other activities took place throughout the day. Players enjoyed lunch provided by J. Gilligan's, shopped the raffle and silent auction items, pressed their luck buying tickets for the Helicopter Ball Drop, tapped their foot to the

music from Brad Thompson, and ended their day with a dinner and cold beverage during the awards dinner. Special thanks to Mayor Jeff Williams for speaking about Texas Live at the dinner portion of the evening.

A special addition to the Golf Classic this year was three time Guinness Book of World Records holder Michael Furrh. Michael entertained players with his trick shots and helped raise money for the Golf Classic through his Cheat for Charity program.

This event would not be possible without the generous support of the sponsors, donors, participants, and volunteers. Thank you to everyone!

# OUR MISSION

To inspire students to seek their full potential in academics, the arts, and athletics in a challenging and nurturing environment that cultivates social responsibility, mutual respect, and personal integrity.

# OUR VISION

To attain national recognition as a college preparatory school that provides educational excellence grounded in responsible character development and ethical leadership.

# PHILOSOPHY

We believe the role of The Oakridge School is to provide a challenging educational program that emphasizes the total development of each child, encompassing basic skills as well as cultural, emotional and physical development, which prepares students for higher education and life.

We believe an environment that employs a variety of teaching techniques and learning activities best enables each student to achieve as an individual and as a member of a group.

We believe an orderly environment stressing personal and academic self-discipline provides an atmosphere most conducive to success.

We believe in academic excellence, in high moral and ethical standards, in honor, in the respect of the opinions and the rights of others, in the realization and acceptance of the consequences of an individual's actions, and in the pursuit of knowledge as a lifelong experience.

We believe the graduates of The Oakridge School should be men and women of good character who have developed a healthy respect for self, and awareness of the privileges and obligations of citizenship, and a keen sense of empathy for and responsibility to fellow human beings.



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**The Oakridge Parents' Club**

**Liaison:** Mrs. Ronda Lane

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## *2016-2017*

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To Parents of Alumni:

If this magazine is addressed to a son or daughter who no longer uses your home as a permanent address, please email his or her address and contact information to [tfoster@theoakridgeschool.org](mailto:tfoster@theoakridgeschool.org).

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OAKRIDGE CLASS OF 2017



100% OF OUR 72 GRADUATES ACCEPTED BY 141 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
\$7.8 MILLION IN MERIT-BASED SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS

5 NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS  
5 NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED  
8 COMMITTED COLLEGE ATHLETES