

M.I.L.K.

Mustangs, Issues, Lifestyles, and Knowledge



Mill Springs Academy Robert Moore Building Photo Credit: Real Image Pros Photography

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Mill Springs Academy: How We Got Here

Sitting down with veteran teachers to talk about our history

by J. Maclean Tadlock

Mill Springs Academy is a unique school with a unique purpose - not to help students learn the way they are taught, but to "teach the way students learn." **Susan Sanders**, **Chelsea Michelson**, and many other faculty members can speak to this legacy. From the early 1980s to the present, Mill Springs has continued to serve its purpose as a school for students with learning differences.

Tweetie L. Moore, the founder of Saint Francis School and Mill Springs Academy once said, "...if a student can't learn the way we teach ... we should teach the way a student can learn." **Emily Suárez**, a junior at Mill Springs Academy, had this to say about her MSA experience: "The special thing about Mill Spring[s] [is] that they want to hear how you are doing in class. They want to hear from [their] students to make sure that they understand [...]. The teachers are creative so if a student doesn't understand, the teachers will think of new [ways] to explain the information [...]."

In the early 1980's, **Moore** and **Dr. Drew Buccellato** founded Saint Francis School. After a few years, **Moore** and **Buccellato** found that their philosophies for schooling were different. This resulted in the splitting of the founders, which is how The New School came to be. However, the students hated the name The New School, so a contest was held: the name Mill Springs Academy won.

As Mill Springs grew, they relocated from Sandy Springs to the current location in Alpharetta. Along with the change in location came a change in mascots. According to MSA Athletic Director **James Sampson**, “[...] we were the Knights initially, followed by Warriors, and then [the] Mustangs.” When asked about the importance of a mascot, MSA Dean of Faculty, **Susan Sanders** said, “...Mascots have been traditional in colleges and other institutions for years [...] it’s that common symbol [...] that people can rally around.”



Senior **Maclean Tadlock** interviewing Director of Communication Arts **Chelsea Michelson** (right) and Dean of Faculty **Susan Sanders** (left) Photo Credit: **Caila Prestidge**

Mill Springs continues to have a powerful purpose along with strong school pride. From a small two-building school to an 80-acre campus, Mill Springs Academy has continued to thrive and “teach the way students learn.” For nearly 40 years, MSA has grown to serve students from 50 different zip codes across the state of Georgia. There is no doubt that MSA is continuing to move in a positive direction.



MSA Founder **Tweetie L. Moore**
Photo Credit: **Pinterest**

DESPITE A PANDEMIC, BAND CLASS SOLDIERS ON

Regardless of challenges presented by the hybrid model, band director **Tia Roper** is able to maintain a fun and instructive environment where students can thrive.

by **Sarah Palmer**, Editor in Chief

A new teacher this year, Band Director **Tia Roper** has managed to seamlessly become a part of the Mill Springs community. Between virtual learning and socially distanced in-person classes, students have been able to continue their musical instruction under her knowledge and expertise.

Though students cannot play woodwind instruments while in person, they definitely are not staying idle on in-person class days, taking up piano or drums when not at home.



Senior **Isabella Rousseaux** playing keyboard in **Tia Roper's** band class Photo Credit: **Caila Prestidge**



Left to Right: Senior **Christopher Carey**, Eighth Grader **Leo Stormont**, Senior **Isabella Rousseaux**, Senior **Jacob Beck**, and Senior **Ridge George** playing in **Tia Roper's** band class. Photo Credit: **Caila Prestidge**

This year, band looks a little different as students are branching outside of their comfort zones in a course **Roper** christened Adventures in Music (AIM). Different activities and exercises implemented this semester include the use of the keyboard, percussion instruments, and the occasional drum circle.

Students seem to have adjusted to the new guidelines put in place for Band. **Katherine Hellerstein**, a junior at Mill Springs Academy, said when asked about the practice of woodwind instruments now used only at home, “You’re expected to have your instrument at home, especially if you are a woodwind or brass instrument... you can’t play [woodwinds at school] so you’re just playing piano or drums. And for me, it’s just bringing in my bass guitar and playing it at home.”

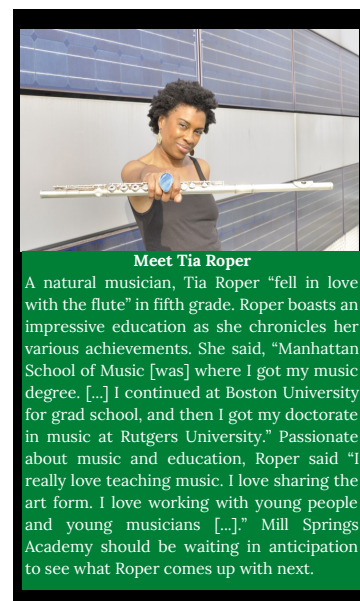
Eighth grade student, **Sam Copple-Goodman**, plays saxophone. This year, he has taken to playing both piano and drums at school.

When asked which instrument he prefers, **Copple-Goodman** said, “I guess the piano because it’s most like the saxophone. I can easily translate songs from my sax onto the piano and vice versa.”

Though Zoom has limitations when used to host a class like Band, **Roper** has figured ways around the little glitches and difficulties experienced online. **Roper** said, “When I do have them play together, I have them on mute, so that the sound is not fighting against one another. I might play something on the piano and have them play along with me, but they’re muted so that they don’t hear one another. So they’re basically just hearing themselves, and me accompanying them on piano.”

As a community, Mill Springs Academy has persevered through the onset of a global pandemic, not letting outside obstacles prevent students and faculty alike from maintaining the normalcy of a school year.

All Band students seem very excited about the year so far and what time with their teacher **Tia Roper** will yield. MSA, keep your ears peeled for a recording of all band students playing together Duke Ellington’s “C Jam Blues”, what is bound to be a fun performance showcasing some of the unique talent that can be found at Mill Springs Academy.



Meet Tia Roper
A natural musician, Tia Roper “fell in love with the flute” in fifth grade. Roper boasts an impressive education as she chronicles her various achievements. She said, “Manhattan School of Music [was] where I got my music degree. [...] I continued at Boston University for grad school, and then I got my doctorate in music at Rutgers University.” Passionate about music and education, Roper said “I really love teaching music. I love sharing the art form. I love working with young people and young musicians [...]” Mill Springs Academy should be waiting in anticipation to see what Roper comes up with next.



Baseball Coach **Brad Smallwood** (left) with 9th grader **Matthew Carlson** (right) Photo Credit: **Jaden Longley**

Behind the Scenes: MSA Sports in COVID

Baseball, Cross Country, and Tennis are finding their success.

by **Jaden Longley**

The pandemic has affected all sports players everywhere by threatening their ability to play. However, a week after the start of school, some of the sports coaches of Mill Springs Academy announced practice would begin. Now the practices have started and the teams are looking for members. This is an outlet made to help keep students healthy, and while it might look different, it is still a key part of MSA.

The sports that are available are Baseball, Tennis, and Cross-Country. Each sport will have practices from 3:30 to 5:30 every Monday through Thursday unless the coach says otherwise. Cross Country also practices on Fridays from 3:30 to 4:30. So for those who want a lot of exercise, cross country is for you. When asked if new athletes need any prior experience to join the team, Cross Country Coach **Angela White** says, “You just need to be able to run! You don’t have to be fast or have a lot of endurance because we help our athletes build these things during practice.”

Mill Springs coaches are working to help students get the most out of their sport experiences, but we still don’t know what’s coming next. The coaches are doing their best to abide by the CDC guidelines and keep students safe. Students are doing their practices despite the challenges the hybrid school system poses. Students can look out for sports events coming soon.



Senior Baseball Player **Jacob Beck** practicing his swing
Photo Credit: **Jaden Longley**

While the hybrid model makes it difficult for students to attend consistently, students are still making an effort to arrive on time. To abide by the CDC guidelines, access to the water fountains and ice machine are prohibited, mats will be disinfected and cleaned after use, and social distancing must be maintained. The coaches are keeping everything disinfected and safe for use just in case students need to use the equipment. Each coach is trying their best to abide by the CDC guidelines while still hosting their respective sport. COVID is a pain, but coaches and students are making it work.



Presidential Candidates **Joe Biden** and **Donald Trump** Photo Credit: **Patrick Semansky**

Election Day and the Future of MSA

Election day is around the corner, but students are not invested.

by **Matthew Kuhn**

It is no secret that the elections are coming up fast, and with this could come changes for the education system. Depending on policies implemented, school could either be kept running or shut down. In about three months, the country will either select a new leader or keep the one we already have. The question is, how does the student body at Mill Springs feel about it?

People appear not to be excited about the election. “I don’t like either of the candidates: they both say incredibly stupid things that make the country look bad,” says Mill Springs Junior **Galton Schobloher**. This sentiment appears to be shared by students at Mill Springs. “The election is a giant mess. Everyone on the left is insane and hyper focuses on the right and everyone on the right is insane and hyper focuses on the left. The media is so duo-tone that the general public has lost the ability to see issues from more than one side,” explains Senior **Jody Cleveland**. However, it’s important to objectively look at each candidate’s policies, despite personal biases. Take, for example, education reform.

According to the Joe Biden campaign website they want to “support our educators by giving them the pay they deserve.” They also want to increase funding for public schooling. There is little information available on **Joe Biden’s** plan for private education. This could signify little change in the situation that Mill Springs faces at the moment.



Presidential Candidate **Joe Biden**
Photo Credit: **David Lienemann/The White House via Getty Images**



Presidential Candidate **Donald Trump**
Photo Credit: **Shealah Craighead - White House**

Meanwhile, **Trump’s** education plans revolve around school choice, which is a positive for Mill Springs seeing as it is a private school. Trump also wants to reopen schools. “We believe many school districts can now reopen safely, provided they implement mitigation measures and health protocols to protect families, protect teachers, and to protect students,” **Donald Trump** explains in a release from WhiteHouse.gov in August, 2020. This has caused controversy as the pandemic ravages America. With over six million cases in the US alone, the pandemic shows no signs of stopping. People do not appear excited about the new elections, they don’t really want to go out to vote. The candidates’ policies appear to be in contrast with one another. Where **Biden** is not focused on private education, **Trump** is. Both seem to want to reopen the economy, which leaves one question: Are we ready? How exactly will each candidate effect the education system?

With spirits low and COVID cases high, there is curiosity to see how voter turnout will be affected this year.

NEW FACULTY: HIGHLIGHTS

WELCOME TO MILL SPRINGS!

We are so excited to welcome our new faculty to our Mill Springs family! If you see them around campus, be sure to say hello!



NATALIE KUTSCHER

Speech and Language Pathologist

Previous Job: Speech Language Pathologist in the transitional kindergarten class at Atlanta Speech School

Current Subjects: Speech and Language Pathologist for Lower School

What Entertainment do You Enjoy?

"I love to watch TV with my husband at the end of a busy day...we also have music playing in the background throughout the day."

Best Advice for Pandemic: "Take time for yourself and practice gratitude. It's not easy to do, but so important. Exercise, meditate or read a book: even 15 minutes to yourself can make a world of difference. I've been most grateful for slowing down and spending so much quality time with my family."



HOLLY COUCH

Pre-Upper/Upper School Science Teacher

Previous Job: Mindfulness and Yoga. I am also a Life Coach, Reiki Practitioner, horse rescuer and entrepreneur (current)

Current Subject: Mindfulness and Yoga

What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "I love comedy, hiking, music, and going to the symphony."

Best Advice for Pandemic: "My best advice [...] is acceptance and mindfulness. Accept what we don't have control over, and practice yoga, mindful breathing, or download a guided body scan meditation to help you relax your mind and your body. Stress management is so important."



KATE MALONEY

Upper School Math Teacher

Previous Job: Engineer at the company she founded; invented materials science robotic systems

Current Subjects: Algebra II, Advanced Decision Making, Pre-Calculus

What Entertainment do You Enjoy?

"Books! My bedroom has stacks next to the full 3 bookshelves!"

Best Advice for Pandemic: "Give yourself and everyone else grace. This is hard in so many ways, and we really never know all of what someone else is going through ever, but especially in this pandemic. So, take a lot of deep breaths, ask for help ANY TIME you need it, and know that when we come out on the vaccine side of this crazy virus, we're all going to have gained a lot of unexpected things."

NEW FACULTY

WELCOME TO MILL SPRINGS!

We are so excited to welcome our new faculty to our Mill Springs family! If you see them around campus, be sure to say hello!



JOHN FINDLEY

Upper School Principal

Previous Job: High School Principal at Notre Dame Academy
Subjects Taught: American History, World History, Economics, Government, World Geography, AP U.S. and AP World
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "Old movies and reading mysteries"



NADIA ROBINSON

Administrator

Previous Job: Director of Finance
Current Position: Administration
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "Movies, comics, books, and music"



JIM BENNETT

Upper School Math Teacher

Previous Job: Primarily science, math and art teacher for 18 years
Current Subjects: Algebra II and Geometry
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "Watching nature, particularly birds, and hiking in the woods"



LIZ NELLI

Pre-Upper School Math Teacher

Previous Job: Teacher at St. Francis
Current Subjects: 7th and 8th grade math
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "I love movies and reading!"



TIA ROPER

Band Director

Previous Job: Band Director at a private school; classical flutist
Current Subject: 7-12 Band Director (AIM: Adventures In Music)
Which Entertainment do You Enjoy? "I love travel; live theater and performances of all genres: jazz, opera, plays; I love the museum."



MICHAEL THOMPSON

Pre-Upper/Upper School Science/Math

Previous Job: Computer, STEM, and Robotics teacher at Fellowship Christian School
Current Subjects: 7th grade Life Science and 12th grade Physical Science
Which Entertainment do You Enjoy? "I prefer music and television."

ADDITIONAL STAFF WELCOMES:

Kathleen Bukowski, Phil Chacon, Melanie Sugar, and Lanard Fletcher

NEW STUDENTS

WELCOME TO MILL SPRINGS!

We are so excited to welcome our new students to our Mill Springs family! If you see them around campus, be sure to say hello!

ELIZABETH BUNDY

Current Grade: 9th

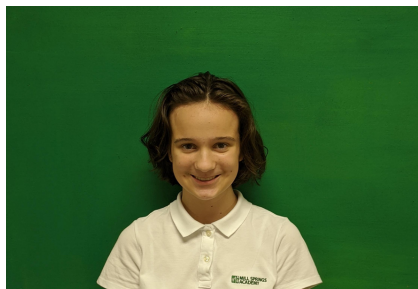
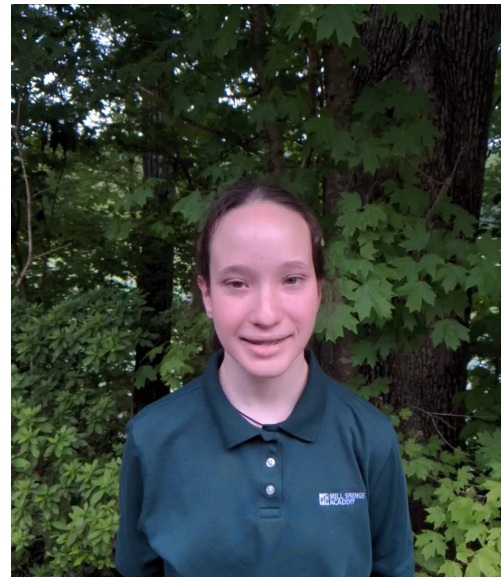
Previous School: Swift School

Favorite piece of entertainment/ art: "Art and music is calming to me."

Something off her bucket list: "Make more friends and get good grades."

If I could master any skill in the world, no matter how outrageous, it would be: "To be able to read minds, because that would be very handy to figure out what people are saying about you."

If I could have any superpower, I would choose: "[To be] invisible or time travel because it would be handy to fly through time and fix any mistakes I made or just to become invisible to have fun and to work on things without people knowing I'm there."



SLOAN POSTLEWAITE

Current Grade: 9th

Previous School: Sutton Middle School

Favorite piece of entertainment/ art: "Webcomics and antiquarian lit, and I also like some cool games and music."

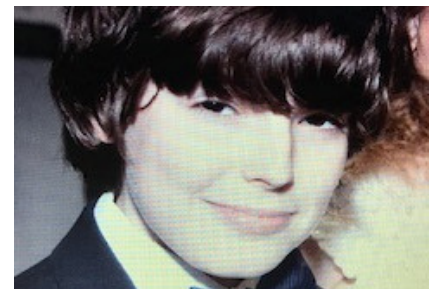


JOHN SCHLICH

Current Grade: 9th

Previous school: Eaton Academy and Jacob's Ladder

Favorite piece of entertainment/ art: Blue Bloods



TRISTAN GARRETT

Current Grade: 11th

Previous school: Sequoyah High School

Favorite piece of entertainment/ art: "Video Games"

ADDITIONAL STUDENT WELCOMES:

Luis Acosta, Virginia Baker, Mila Belcastro, Justin Bryan, Ryan Collins, Dale Haase, Adler Hahn, Sarah Hoffmann, Aidan Karpinski, Charles Lacy, Jaden Longley, Jackson Meador, Topaz Robinson, Rayna Doniparthi

MEET THE NEWSPAPER STAFF

WELL-WRITTEN CONTENT FOR THE MSA COMMUNITY

We are so thrilled to be covering all the goings-on of our Mill Springs community and world! Feel free to reach out if YOU want to be featured in our next edition!



SARAH PALMER
Editor in Chief, Op-Ed Editor

What do you like to do outside of school? "Outside of school, I enjoy creative writing, playing with my dogs, and doing musical theater."
What do you enjoy about Newspaper? "I enjoy getting to write and working as a team."
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "I like watching movies and TV! Right now, I'd say my favorite TV show is Avatar: The Last Airbender."



MACLEAN TADLOCK
Sports Editor

What do You Like to Do Outside of School? "Watching the sports ball move across the television screen and listening to music."
What do You Enjoy About Newspaper? "Writing about things I care about."
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "Watching teams I love win, and teams I hate lose."



MATTHEW KUHN
Reporter, In-Depth Report Editor

What do You Like to Do Outside of School? "Play tabletop and video games, relax."
What do You Enjoy About Newspaper? "I like writing so this came naturally."
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "Video games easily."



JADEN LONGLEY
Feature Editor, Chief Photographer

What do You Like to Do Outside of School? "Game, eat, watch movies travel and sleep."
What do You Enjoy About Newspaper? "Photography"
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "Brawlhalla, Ark, and movies."



CAILA PRESTIDGE
Advisor, Layout Editor

What do You Like to Do Outside of School? "I like to be with friends, read, write, and be outside!"
What do You Enjoy About Newspaper? "I love getting to see how students are engaging with the world around them and put their observations into writing."
What Entertainment do You Enjoy? "I enjoy TV shows, old or classic movies, and reading."



YOUR NAME

We would love to feature YOUR writing in our next issue!

Contact Caila Prestidge at cprestidge@millsprings.org with a sample of your writing and we will discuss next steps to get published!