

Countryside Trees



NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SCHOOL ALUMNI

Spring 2020

Letter from the Head



Krystal Young

Dear Friends,
Greetings from virtual Countryside! I think it is fair to say we have had a year for the history books. In January I became the Interim Head of School. In March, the COVID-19 global

pandemic that has affected everyone in some way prompted us to translate our mission of *Joy in Learning and Excellence in Education* into an e-learning platform that represents the Countryside experience.

As we sit here, grateful for our health and safety in the time of a worldwide crisis, it is impossible not to reflect on some of the highlights of the 2019-20 academic year both electronically and on campus.

The elementary school has had many standout moments. This includes one of my favorites from e-learning. K/1 teachers 'traveled' to the moon with the help of Snapchat to teach students about space. When 2/3 students were on campus, they learned about money, business, and community engagement by creating bracelets to open a 'store' to raise money to donate to a local charity. The 4/5 classroom carried on their tradition of a Living History Museum, allowing students to research someone famous/influential that they could portray for parents and students.

Middle school teachers and students are always busy and engaged in learning. The middle school students were able to attend the annual campout and take a trip to the Shakespeare Theater in Chicago. Most impressively, students were able to put on a virtual Maker Faire!

All of the students were given the opportunity to present their chosen project via Zoom and then publish an article with photos to share throughout our Countryside community - such an impressive group of students.

Although the 8th grade show has been canceled and graduation and the 8th grade trip have been pushed back, it gives us all something to look forward to, and for that I am grateful. I am also hopeful to see many of you return for the fall picnic or one of the alumni events we are hopeful to host next year.

Wishing you a healthy and happy summer filled with memories.

All the best,
Krystal Young
Interim Head of Administration

Our 8th graders who will be honored at graduation scheduled at a later date:

Ezra Bernhard	Central
Max Braun	Centennial
Charlotte Chesser	Central
Suhani Garg	Centennial
Lin Gilbertz	Centennial
Ellie Laufenberg	Academy
Max Libman	undecided
Sophia Libman	undecided
Nassreen Ouzidane	Centennial
Cassie Patten	Academy
Ray Scifres	Academy
Gavin Sheppard	Centennial
Hadley Siena	Centennial
Wilson Tian	Centennial

Students matriculating as subfreshmen at University Laboratory High School:

Noor Elbanna	Meher Ghotra
Deven Galvez	Isabella Hernandez

Accolades

- OUR TEACHERS SUCCESSFULLY SWITCHED TO E-LEARNING IN MID-MARCH DUE TO COVID-19
- ALUMNA INDUCTED INTO CENTENNIAL ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME
- ALUMNA NOMINATED FOR NEWS & DOCUMENTARY EMMY AWARD

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Countryside Trees

Great News from the Past Year



Our kindergarten through 8th grade Chinese classes celebrated the Lunar New Year by performing at the Champaign Public Library. The event showcased traditional historical attire, dragon dance (above), lion dance, fan dance, poetry, songs, drumming, and stories.

In January our middle schoolers attended Chicago Shakespeare Theater's *Comedy of Errors* at Navy Pier. Our 6th and 7th graders have presented scenes from that play this year at Showcase of the Arts.

Our middle schoolers participated in our Maker Faire where each student works on projects they have never tried before. The projects included learning wood carving, learning to crochet, painting in the style of Bob Ross, making lip gloss, creating the electronic game Simon, making cosplay wings, building a chess board, creating a comic book, and building a guinea pig cage – to name a few. Although the prep was done at school, the students presented their projects virtually due to the school building being closed due to COVID.

8th grader and filmmaker, Max Libman, presented his powerful short film and moving documentary on the Holocaust to over 200 community members. Based on the life of his great-grandmother, Max's talk emphasized the importance of remembering what hatred can do. Max's presentation and WCIA interview: tinyurl.com/StudentFilmmaker

Our MathCounts team placed 3rd overall at Chapter competition with 7th grader Davis qualifying for State in individual competition!

6th grader Alaia was chosen to attend and present her project "Help Stop Racism" in Rome, Italy at the Children's Global Summit hosted by the Vatican.

Our choruses performed at the Junior League *Festival of Trees* in November.

Our school completed our annual food drive to support the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. Our classrooms and afterschool clubs held fundraisers including selling friendship bracelets, art and cookies. They donated to Habitat for Humanity, Cunningham Children's Home, and Heifer International.

7th grader Isabelle and 6th grader Jordan were featured in *The News-Gazette* Design and Ad Showcase and 6th grader Cameron won his grade division!

6th grader Helen won our Pi Day celebration with the recitation of pi (3.14159265...) After starting with 10 contestants, she beat out Ms. Binky by reciting pi to the 150th digit!

In elementary P.E. we introduced First Tee Golf incorporating golf skills with an emphasis on 9 core character values which coincide with our Character Building Qualities program.

We hosted our 1st Annual Comet Golf Outing last June at Legends Golf Course.



Over 100 grandparents and friends attended our Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day in October. The celebration included performances by our chorus and our 4th and 5th grade classes. **Above:** 5th graders August and Hannah (as Dolly Parton's character from "9 to 5")

Great News from the Past Year

5th grader August clocked a Rubik's Cube time of 9.63 seconds at a University of Illinois competition. Interview: tinyurl.com/AugustInterview

6th grader Noor took 3rd in the Interscholastic Equestrian Association's competition in December in flat (walk, trot, and canter).

Our 4th and 5th graders enjoyed their traditional day of hiking and journaling at Turkey Run State Park. On this annual trip, the students receive a journal to write in as they sit by the river. These journals are used by a different student each year, so they enjoy reading the entries from previous students.

In October our wonderful families provided an all-school pizza lunch in honor of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, and in January our amazing families provided an all-school lunch featuring pizza and Chinese food in honor of Chinese New Year. We love these traditions and our multicultural school!

5th grader Kathryn won Senator Scott Bennett's Earth Day Art Contest.

8th grader Ezra's article, "A Brief History of Pasta" was published in *Stone Soup*, a national literary magazine that publishes art and literature by students aged 8-13.



Last May we hosted our 2nd annual Color Run with over 100 students and parents participating. Color stations were sponsored by local businesses. Due to schools being closed, this year's run was not held. **Above:** 7th grader William (now at Uni) gets doused in blue powder

Interim Heads Introduction

With the resignation of Head of School Stephanie Harman in December, Countryside now has three interim heads.

Krystal Young, parent and former board member, is the Interim Head of Administration. **Chris Antonsen**, current middle school Literature and Writing Workshop teacher, is the Interim Head of Middle School, and long-time 1st grade teacher, **Stacy Kirby**, is Interim Head of Elementary School. See the bios of our interims: tinyurl.com/HeadBios

They will serve in these capacities while a head search is completed for our permanent Head of School.

Classroom Highlights

Remember the Kapok Tree or hiking at Turkey Run? How about the Middle School camp out?

Kindergarten/1st grade performed their Kapok Tree play and attended field trips to Krannert Center and the Champaign Public Library. Unfortunately, Space Night was cancelled.

2nd/3rd grade trick or treated at Evergreen Place assisted living, attended performances at Krannert Center, and planned and rehearsed their American Revolution musical, which was unfortunately cancelled.

4th/5th grade hiked at Turkey Run, attended performances at Krannert Center, presented their Fractured Fairytale and Living History performances, celebrated Decades Days, hosted a Matter Magic Fair to teach our K/1 class about non-Newtonian fluids, chemical reactions, and density.

Middle School went camping at Turkey Run, attended performances at Krannert Center and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, participated in their Maker Faire, hosted their fall dance, and had their spring dance, 8th grade show, and 8th grade trip all cancelled.

THIS
NEWSLETTER
IS IN COLOR
BY EMAIL AND
ON OUR
WEBSITE!

Countryside Trees

Homecoming/Fall Picnic Photos

We love seeing returning alums! This year's celebration featured an alumni bags (corn hole) tournament along with the usual food, inflatables, and cotton candy. For more alumni event photos: tinyurl.com/CSalumniphotos2019-20



Top left: Mrs. Eckstein (retired 5th grade teacher), Nina Galvez, Esha Mehta, Ginny Kirby, Angela Xu

Top right: Jyoti Sundaram, Lauren Lumetta, Shelby Pitts

Middle left: William Ding, Colette Tichenor

Middle right: Holden Siena, Anthony Carpenter, Andrew Chen

Bottom: 7th grader James, Grafton Hoffmeister, Ian Weible, Nicholas Bodony, Teo Sehitoglu, Forrest Robeson, Ryan Wang, Kevin Lu



**HOMECOMING
FALL PICNIC**
SATURDAY,
AUGUST 22
AT THE
SCHOOL
(IF PERMITTED)

Switch to E-Learning

In late February our faculty and staff began preparations to move to remote learning if needed due to the impending COVID-19 pandemic. On March 12 we announced we would switch to e-learning upon return from spring break, and the Illinois governor soon closed all schools, first for two weeks and then extended that order through the end of this school year.

Our students and faculty have utilized Google Classroom, Zoom discussions and meetings, and recorded videos for school work. We have incorporated Zoom office hours and Zoom middle school ‘hangouts’ to play virtual games.

Check out some of the amazing ways we have engaged our students for the final ten weeks of the year:

Kindergarten - Astronaut Mrs. Cox reports from space tinyurl.com/AstronautMrsCox

Performing Arts Contest - Even families are involved! Mrs. Williams recited the fastest version of “Poemsicle” by Shel Silverstein tinyurl.com/WinningPoemsicle

8th grade performing arts - Pass the Pen thank you to our essential workers tinyurl.com/PenPassThanks



One evening in April, every homeroom/ advisory teacher placed a personalized yard sign in their students' yards.

College Gear Photo Days

“Congratulations to our Class of 2020” will rotate with our other messages on our sign.

What: High School Class of 2020 photos
When: May 26 to June 6

Stop by the school in your college gear, take your photo at our corner sign or our sign by the flagpole, send to:

alumni@countysideschool.org



High school Class of 2019: **Alex Shilts** (2015), **Sarah Windelborn**, (2015) and **Lauren Feddersen** (2013) posing in May 2019 in their college gear

National Merit Congrats

Albert Lee (2015), now finishing his freshman year at Johns Hopkins University in bioengineering, was selected last May as a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. Congratulations, Albert!

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High School Drop-In Days

Each fall we offer a Drop-In Day for our high school alumni to join us for lunch. It is typically in October when our local high schools do not have school because of teacher conferences, but Countryside is in session.

We provide lunch for our alumni. They are invited to join their former teachers and friends over lunch in the MPR, go to recess with their friends, and join in DEAR for a story after lunch.

ALUMNI:
BE SURE WE
HAVE YOUR
EMAIL ADDRESS
TO RECEIVE
INVITATIONS



Above: 8th grader Charlotte chats with alumnus Teo Sehitoglu

Below: 6th grader Will greets alumnus William King



Below: After lunch, alumni join Mr. A's class for DEAR with Mr. A reading to the class



High School Drop-In Days



Back: Grafton Hoffmeister, Teo Sehitoglu, Danny King, Sophie Zerrouki, Sam Laufenberg

Middle: Max Harman, Cassie Colmenares, William Ding, Madeleine Keenan, Shannon Weible, Sierra Freund, Forrest Robeson, Priya Haran, Emily Chen, Ryan Wang, Nate Jones, Aditi Adve, Noreen Adoni, Claire Keenan, Anna Williams

Front: Marco Lu, Coleman Clougherty, Shawn Syed, Ian Weible, Dan Yang, William King, Emma Donnini

Spotted on Instagram

James Bond connection: Actor Pierce Brosnan posted a photo of himself wearing a shirt designed by our own alumnus, **Bálint Bognár** (1999).

In addition, Bálint's designs were also worn by actor Daniel Craig in the James Bond film *Spectre*.



Alumni Visit



Matthew Zhang (2013), a junior at University of Illinois in mechanical engineering, stopped by while out scouting for testing locations for his Illini Formula Electric race team.

Countryside Trees

Alumni Updates

Please note: Students are listed by “affiliated class year” - the year a student graduated 8th grade or would have graduated had he or she remained at Countryside.

ALUMNI:
PLEASE SEND US
YOUR UPDATES!

WE'D LOVE TO
FEATURE YOU

Eric Smith (1995), who attended Countryside middle school, is married with three children and lives near Redmond, WA. Eric is the Microsoft expert on privacy issues.

Zsolt Bognár (1996), pianist and host of a show about classical music in New York called "Living the Classical Life", had his entire calendar year of performances, festivals, and filming canceled. However, because of the online nature of some of his work, he is being asked to host the newly virtual Mainly Mozart Festival in Miami, interacting with guests and introducing their performances from afar in his living room in Cleveland, OH. Other festivals and podcasts are in the works as well. Artists are often used to solitary confinement to begin with, so he wishes you all health, patience, and inspiration!

Rodney Burton (1996) is married with four children and is living in Ann Arbor, MI. He is a postdoc molecular biologist at the University of Michigan.

Kali (Smith) Monma (1998), a founding Countryside student, is a stay-at-home mother of a 6 and a 2-1/2 year old. Her family lives in San Jose, CA. Kali found a wonderful school in nearby Los Gatos that has a philosophy much like Countryside School. Check out Hillbrook!

Alice Burton (1999) is living in Chicago and

working in the development office of the American Library Association.

Rose Kearns (2000) is living in Queens, NY. She received her undergraduate degree in creative writing at Columbia University in NYC. Her adaptation of Jane Austen's *PERSUASION* will be produced Off Broadway by the Bedlam Theatre when the theatre season resumes.

Michael Belmont (2003) A 3rd year internal medicine resident in training, he works in Chicago in emergency rooms, clinics, and hospitals. Currently, he is in the Medical ICU taking care of severely ill patients. In the midst of the COVID outbreak and the PPE shortage, he like so many other front-line workers continues to be super careful and resourceful.

Jackie Hedeman (2003) is currently living in Lawrence, KS, where she is the grant writer at the Lawrence Arts Center. In her spare time, she co-writes and voices a character on the sci-fi fiction podcast *The Pasithea Powder*. In her spare-time, she is also at work on a memoir, thanks in large part to the support of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity (where she was taking part in a writers' retreat when travel restrictions began to take effect), and the Charlotte Street Foundation in Kansas City, where she is a 2019-2020 Studio Resident.

Erika Belmont (2006) As a 3rd year medical student in Chicago, she currently takes her school classes online during the pandemic shutdown. She volunteers to do COVID-19 testing at homeless shelters in a city-wide effort to prevent COVID outbreaks.



Director of Alumni Relations

Kristin Feddersen is your Director of Alumni Relations. She also has been Countryside's Director of Communications for the past 13 years and is the parent of two alumnae - Taylor (2012) and Lauren (2015).

Please email her with updates about what you are doing. So often we know where you are headed to college and what you *might* major in, but we never hear when those plans change.

Contact Kristin at feddersen@countrysideschool.org.

Alumni Updates

Ben Suslick (2006) recently graduated from the University of California Berkeley with a PhD in chemistry and is returning to Champaign to begin a postdoctoral position in the Professor Jeffrey Moore research group working on polymer chemistry.

Alexandra Warwick (2006) After living abroad for three years - first in Eswatini (Swaziland), then in Italy - Alexandra returned to Champaign last fall to pursue her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in bilingual education. She will be attending Middlebury College's Italian graduate program this summer (now online due to COVID-19).

John Kearns (2007) earned his B.S. in mechanical engineering at Notre Dame and his M.S. at Georgia Tech. He worked at an engineering software company in San Jose for several years. Most recently, he has started a PhD program at Monash University near Melbourne, AU.

Julie Strauss (2009) is working as a CPA at EY (formerly Ernst and Young) in downtown Chicago. She is living on State St. with her boyfriend and their puppy Coconut - a Mini Bernese Mountain dog/mini poodle mix - a "Berniedoodle". She is an officer in a charity called The Gift of Adoption, which holds fundraisers at restaurants and bars to raise funds for people who want to adopt and cannot afford to do so. She lived several years with **Bailie Roy** (2009) her buddy from babyhood and fellow Countryside student. They see each other on Zoom at the moment and her parents are happy this important friendship has lasted a lifetime!

Juliana Trach (2010) was recently awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for her Ph.D. research project "Resource scarcity as everyday cognitive load: Differential effects of cognitive load on learning across the socioeconomic status spectrum." Currently manager at the Baby Lab in the Department of Psychology at Princeton University, Juliana will be entering the doctoral program in psychology at Yale University in fall 2020.

Christine Ko (2011) graduated from the University of North Carolina Eshelman School of Pharmacy with a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree and will be completing postgraduate training as an acute care pharmacy resident at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro, NC.

Christopher Bauer (2012) graduated from the University of Illinois, majoring in mechanical engineering and with a minor in technology and management. He plans to work at Credit Suisse in New York City as a securitized products analyst.

Maddie Brown (2012) graduated from Miami University (Ohio) with a degree in American studies and a minor in economics. She has started a job at Wayfair in Boston, as an associate buyer.

Arthur Campello (2012) graduated from Cornell University in physics and economics. He will enroll at Stanford University as a PhD student in the applied physics department.

Taylor Feddersen (2012) graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.S.E. in computer science and two minors - the International Minor for Engineers and multidisciplinary design minor. In August she will start work as a software engineer for Microsoft in Seattle.

Aarthi Lakshminarayanan (2012) is graduating from UCLA in June and going to Georgetown's School of Foreign Service in the fall for her master's degree.

Abby Potesman (2012) is graduating from the University of Pennsylvania with a double major in physics and math. She is headed to a PhD program in computational and applied math at the University of Chicago in the fall.

Lyle Regenwetter (2012) is graduating from the University of Illinois with a BS in mechanical engineering, a BS in electrical engineering, and a minor in computer science. He will be attending MIT next year where he will pursue a PhD in mechanical engineering.

Ailín Valdivia-McCarthy (2012) graduated from Barnard College in environmental sciences in 2019 and now works in Chicago (Elmhurst) with McMaster-Carr. She is working remotely from her place in Chicago and from Champaign.

**RECENTLY
GRADUATED
COLLEGE?
LET US KNOW
YOUR FUTURE
PLANS**

Countryside Trees

Alumni Updates

Katie Bostaph (2013) is still in Arizona and taking online classes to finish the semester at Arizona State University. She will be a senior next year and is planning on pursuing a graduate degree in psychology after graduation.

Abbie Driver (2013) completed her junior year at Indiana University where she is majoring in law and public policy with a minor in Mandarin Chinese. She has been selected for the Washington Leadership Program - a semester long program in D.C. - where she will complete an internship and coursework in the fall.

Carl Guo (2013) is a junior at Illinois. He is taking classes online and plays piano every day. Carl will virtually intern at Amazon this summer, so Amazon is shipping a computer and other devices to his home. Carl's family is helping by making masks for Carle Hospital and is glad the family can help the community during this unprecedented time.

Maanasa Narayanamoorthy (2014) is a sophomore at University of California Berkeley, studying chemical biology and toxicology. She is also an undergraduate

researcher in the Zhang Lab at Berkeley where she is working on understanding and disrupting the pathways for tuberculosis.

Grace Qiu (2014) is a sophomore at University of California Berkeley, double-majoring in data science and business at Haas. She is excited to join Oracle this summer as a product manager intern.

Megan Bostaph (2015) returned from Ithaca College (NY) to complete her freshman year via online classes. She is majoring in English and minoring in art history and possibly music.

Lauren Feddersen (2015) finished her freshman year at Illinois Wesleyan University in biology. She swims for the Titans and broke two school records in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke.

Lucy Potesman (2015) is finishing her first year at Northwestern University. She is planning to major in English and statistics.

Vicky Smith (founding board member) is active with her woodworking. She greatly misses the grandchildren during this pandemic. She and Greg are otherwise somewhat enjoying the slower life while hiding from contagion.

**ALUMNI
REUNION
WINTER BREAK**

**DATE TO BE
DETERMINED**

Featured Alumna

Michelle Lu (2012)

I graduated from Stanford University almost a year ago, and so much has happened since then. I moved to San Francisco, founded a startup called Viralspace.ai, hired three employees, and built a product that's now used by marketers at large companies like Ogilvy, Minted, and Chubbies.

As part of the startup experience, I've gotten to participate in accelerators by Village Global, Lightspeed Venture Partners, and Plug and Play, raised a seed round of funding, and met really incredible people in Silicon Valley. We've had to adapt to the challenges of COVID-19, but we're making the most of it by helping our clients shift their marketing strategies and releasing free tools to the public.



Michelle is willing to chat with alumni about remote work or adapting their businesses to COVID-19. Feel free to contact her at michellelu400@gmail.com.

Spotlight on COVID-19

During this unprecedented time, our students and alumni are involved in helping during the pandemic.

Our alumni are working in COVID intensive care units; volunteering as a virtual English tutor to children of doctors and nurses in Wuhan, China; obtaining much-needed PPE for first-responders; and doing COVID testing in homeless shelters in Chicago.

Our alumni and alumni families are making masks, supporting the Eastern Illinois Foodbank, and providing groceries and meals to seniors who are shut in during the pandemic. **Read what our alumni are doing in the Alumni Updates section.**

Thank you, students, alumni, and alumni families for being the helpers. We need you.

Featured Alumna

Dr. Rachel Kaplan (2003)

As the number of ICU teams required in the hospital has tripled over the past month, some of us cardiology fellows at Northwestern have volunteered to help out our pulmonary colleagues and staff a COVID ICU team. While this is not what I had expected for the final few months of my general cardiology fellowship, we're all in it together and the camaraderie with the nurses and residents is truly remarkable.

Dr. Rachel Kaplan between patient rooms (without gown, gloves, or cover mask) on her COVID ICU rotation.



MEMORIES:
SEND US YOUR
STORIES AND
PHOTOS!

Share with Our Students - Alumni Lunch Speakers

If you are planning to be back in Champaign-Urbana, contact us and we will set up time for you to visit a group of students here so you can share your interests and experiences with us. We can set up an informal lunchtime discussion, a presentation, or chat with a specific class.

Contact Kristin Feddersen, Alumni Relations at feddersen@countysideschool.org.

Taylor Feddersen (2012) talks to our middle schoolers about computer programming and summer internships at Minecraft and Xbox at Microsoft. If you would like to chat about working in gaming or at Microsoft, email Taylor at: tfedd@umich.edu



Countryside Trees

International Trip: England - Stories and Destinations

Countryside celebrated its 2nd international school trip! Last June our middle schoolers enjoyed a week in England chaperoned by our literature teacher, Mr. Antonsen, and performing arts teacher, Mrs. Chesser.

In exploring the rich historical and cultural aspects of England, they visited Shakespeare's Globe (the reconstruction of the Globe Theatre) in London, Canterbury Cathedral, Bodiam Castle in East Sussex, and Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. They also experienced the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace and the London Eye Ferris wheel and saw "Aladdin" in the West End.

Moving north, they toured Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare; saw the Royal Shakespeare Company perform "The Taming of the Shrew"; experienced a trampoline park; and hiked the Eyam Moor.

**ALUMNI &
ALUMNI
PARENTS:**
SHARE YOUR
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ADDRESS
WITH US



Above: Phone box humor with Mr. Antonsen and his wife, Robin, in Sheffield

Below left: the group at Blenheim Palace

Below right: Marco, Ian, Richard, Conrad, and Davis enjoy Bodiam Castle



Shakespeare's Globe in London

Retiring and Relocating Faculty

Each year we hold a Farewell Reception for our departing faculty. Unfortunately, due to the quarantine, we are not holding it this year. We wish you all the best and know we will miss you!

Amy Chesser - Performing Arts



Mrs. Chesser has taught Performing Arts at Countryside for four years. She led a Readers' Theater club and introduced the idea of students learning Stagecraft to assist with shows. She also started an Improv Club.

Where are you headed? I will spend at least a year focusing my energy on supporting my family. Then, I might write a book. Or audition for a play.

Favorite memories: all involved laughing with students of all ages.

Please keep in touch: amy@achesser.com

Nicole (Heckman) Martin - 3rd grade



Mrs. Martin has taught 3rd grade at Countryside for three years. She also coached our girls' basketball and volleyball teams.

Where are you headed?
Murfreesboro, TN.

Favorite memory:
This is so hard! I

would have to say that my favorite memory was playing different games at recess with my current 3rd grade class (sharks and minnows, line tag, lava monster).

What will you miss most? I will miss my students the most! They were always so kind and made me smile!

Please keep in touch:
njmartin0706@gmail.com

Katrina Widholm - Visual Arts



Ms. Katrina has taught visual arts and several after school art clubs at Countryside for thirteen years.

Where are you headed? My daughter Sofia and I will be moving this summer to Busan, South Korea, where

I will be the new K-12 Maker Space/Design teacher.

What will you miss most? I will miss the smiles of my students the most.

Favorite memory: I have way too many favorite memories to list, but I think that being a part of the annual "Trashion Shows" with my Art and Design Club is one of my favorites.

Please keep in touch with me via Facebook or email: katrinawid@yahoo.com

CSA Happenings

Countryside School Association sponsored several events for the school including the incredible teacher lunch during fall conferences - and with no spring lunch, gave restaurant gift cards for teachers and staff as a thank you following our switch to e-learning this spring.

Family events included our Fall Picnic/Homecoming in August, the Family Roller Skating Night following our P.E. roller skating unit, the Winter Ice Skating Party and the book fair at Barnes & Noble.

Although events like our end of the year Hessel Park gathering had to be cancelled, our school would not be the special place it is without our CSA. Thank you, CSA volunteers!

IF YOU DID **NOT**
RECEIVE THIS
NEWSLETTER BY
EMAIL, WE DO
NOT HAVE
YOUR EMAIL
ADDRESS

Countryside Trees

Winter Alumni Reunion - Pizza Party

In December over 30 alumni, alumni parents, faculty and former faculty attended the Winter Alumni Reunion at the school. The reunion featured a pizza party. Alumni wrote messages to faculty and former faculty on their whiteboards, perused old yearbooks and chatted with friends! For more photos:

tinyurl.com/CSalumniphotos2019-20

WANT THIS
NEWSLETTER
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Above: looking at yearbooks with Jaden Lee and Zach Swanson-Linville



Left: writing messages to teachers with Shannon Weible and Caroline Hartmann



Top row: Andrew Kim, Nate Jones, Zach Swanson-Linville, Jaden Lee, Chris Antonsen (MS literature), Gloria Arizaga (Spanish)

Third row: Nick Bodony, Sam Laufenberg, Forrest Robeson, Ian Weible, Teo Sehitoglu, Kate Ferreira, Aarthi Lakshminarayanan

Second row: Amy Chesser (performing arts), Emma Donnini, William King, Shannon Weible, Coleman Clougherty, Mrs. Stambaugh (MS science)

Bottom row: Stacy Kirby (1st grade), Jyoti Sundaram, Grace Kahler, Caroline Hartmann, Anna Williams, Lauren Feddersen

Young Alumni Shout Outs!

Olivia Gunn (2016) and **Angela Xu** (2016) both competed for Centennial at IHSA State in tennis and were named to *The News-Gazette* All Area Girls' Tennis Team.

Teddy Sammons (2017) completed his "remote" junior year at his high school in Princeton, New Jersey. His summer plans may include some work on a natural language processing project.

Holden Siena (2017) a junior at Centennial, is looking forward to his first job as a lifeguard and swim instructor at Indian Acres this summer (pandemic permitting). Both Holden and his sister Hadley (2020) are involved with family efforts to provide groceries and meals to seniors who are shut in during the pandemic.

Henry Laufenberg (2018) represented Uni High for a second year on the varsity cross country team. Last fall, they placed 6th at State. Henry has been training through the pandemic by running about 60 miles/week.

Sam Laufenberg (2018), sophomore at Academy High, has begun his second year of mowing lawns and donated 20 percent of his April income to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank to support families during the pandemic.

Andrea Torelli (2019) competed for Uni at IHSA State in swimming on the 200 free relay.

Shannon Weible (2019) earned the rank of Star Scout in February 2020 and is completing her freshman year at Academy High (online).

Marco Lu (2020), subfreshman at Uni, published a blog series related to sci-fi on the website of *Stone Soup*, a national literary magazine that publishes art and literature by kids aged 8-13. During COVID-19, Marco has been volunteering as a virtual English tutor for the children of doctors and nurses in Wuhan, China.

Fraser Smith (2020) and his baseball team competed in the Cal Ripken World Series last summer. Fraser pitched the strike out to win the championship game and make it to the World Series!



Ian Weible (2019) earned the rank of Eagle Scout in December 2019. He is completing his freshman year at Academy High with online classes.

Faculty Congratulations

Marci (Warren) Kyung (current 4th grade and former 3rd grade teacher) and her husband James are expecting a baby this fall!

Former 4th grade teacher, **Janet Brickey**, will fill in during Mrs. Kyung's maternity leave.

Spotted in the NY Times

Sindha Agha (2007), a Los Angeles filmmaker, is featured in the New York Times Op-Docs (award-winning short documentaries by independent filmmakers).

Her most recent film is about coronavirus quarantine and how to be alone. tinyurl.com/NYHowtobealone

In addition, her short film, "Birth Control Your Own Adventure," was nominated for a 2019 News & Documentary Emmy. tinyurl.com/NYTadventure

**HAVE A
SHOUT OUT?
SEND IT
TO US!**

Countryside Trees

Current and Former Faculty Updates

**ALUMNI &
ALUMNI
PARENTS:
SHARE YOUR
E-MAIL
ADDRESS
WITH US**

Maureen Beyt (former 2nd and 3rd grade teacher) After sixteen years of teaching, I can't believe I will have my own 2nd grader in the fall! Both James (7.5 years old) and Scott (5 years old) are eager learners and love playing outside. Our home is surrounded by the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina which provide fantastic opportunities for our family to hike, enjoy waterfalls, and experience incredible views. Though teaching through remote-learning has its challenges, my love for teaching my 2nd graders remains strong. I miss my Countryside family and think about you often. Love & hugs from Mrs. Beyt!

Eileen Chen (current Chinese teacher) I miss our Chinese classroom, but I really admire our Chinese students' flexibility to continue their Chinese learning journey online. I am amazed that we could do so many online learning activities and projects. Seeing their Chinese progress after a year's learning is always astonishing and inspiring. I hope you all continue staying safe and healthy during this uncertain time.

Sharon Henson (retired 4th grade teacher) Hello to all of my favorite alums from yesteryear! It has been awhile since we hung out together in the 4/5 classroom at Countryside School, but I fondly remember each one of you. I am still in Florida where we have spent another winter. However, I am sheltering at home rather than going to parks and beaches as I usually do. Our villa is on a

lake under huge old live oak trees, so it is a pleasant place to shelter. We will wait to return north until the nasty virus subsides.

Stacy Kirby (current 1st grade teacher) Hello Countryside alumni students and families! Adapting our K-1 curriculum to online learning has been an adventure. Thank goodness for technology. Recently 1st graders enjoyed watching & listening to an astronaut in space reading the book, "If I Were an Astronaut." I am incredibly thankful for how supportive my current families have been. What incredible Countryside alumni they will make in the future. My silver lining has been endless family dinners with my (almost) 15 year old and my 18 year old. Take care, everyone!

Gail McWilliams (retired Spanish teacher) I miss seeing Countryside students and staff and look forward to subbing again next year. I've been busy with projects at home, and my husband and I have been hiking on trails at county forest preserves to get a dose of nature as often as we can. Homer Lake visits remind me of the lively field trips with 4/5 last year - fun despite the weather. I still enjoy making jewelry. I'll really miss teaching jewelry camp at Cside this summer and seeing all that student creativity. I'm also trying to get beyond being a beginning knitter, but that will take a while. My very best wishes and congratulations go out to the graduates and those moving on! I'll miss you!

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Social Media



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College Bound

Congratulations to our alumni headed to the following universities: If you are not listed here, we do not have your contact information. Please let us know your post high school plans.

Samantha Bateman	Columbia University
Emi Brown	Illinois - computer science
Jennifer Chen	Illinois - electrical engineering
Veronica Chistaya	University of Rochester - data science
Raja Choi	Illinois - physics
Haley Driver	undecided - vocal performance and Spanish
Nick Gunn	Illinois Wesleyan - economics
Olivia Gunn	Illinois - psychology and journalism
Kayla Israel	University of Central Florida - industrial engineering
David Kanfer	Illinois - nuclear, plasma and radiological engineering
Ginny Kirby	Miami University (Ohio) - biochemistry and anthropology
Sophia Liu	Brown University
Esha Mehta	Loyola University (Chicago) - cognitive & behavioral neuroscience
Sri Narayanamoorthy	U Penn - Wharton - environmental policy and management
Dominic Petruzzi	Illinois - physics
Alexander Rushing	Illinois - history
Estella Samii	Parkland College - elementary education
Joanne Wang	Cornell University - neuroscience
Christina Wu	Illinois - business
Angela Xu	University of Illinois Chicago - GPPA - dentistry

**NOT LISTED
HERE?
LET US KNOW
YOUR POST
HIGH SCHOOL
PLANS**

New Logos



**COUNTRYSIDE
SCHOOL** **K ▶ 8**



After more than 25 years, it was time for us to update our look. We worked hard to design a look that reflects the forward-thinking philosophy of Countryside School and in addition, we updated our athletic Comets logo.

We acknowledge “new” feels different to our alumni, but we are still the same incredible school you attended!

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Continued from page 16

Rich Morton (former middle school social studies teacher) The Morton Family has been doing well up in the burbs. Cheryl and I are both enjoying our classes and getting used to e-learning. Ellie is just over 14 months and loves to run around, laugh, play games with her family, and steal mom and dad's phones while giggling mischievously. Her favorite words are "mama, gogo, and uh oh." We miss our Countryside family terribly and can't wait to reconnect. Hope everyone is staying safe and enjoying their time with family!



Rich Morton with his wife Cheryl and daughter Ellie (now 14 months old)

Michele O'Brien (former middle school social studies teacher) I remain in Nashville at The Harpeth Hall School and am currently teaching U.S. History and Civics in the 7th grade. To celebrate this year's centennial anniversary of the 19th Amendment, I wrote a short piece on the life of one of our alumnae, Anne Dallas Dudley (tinyurl.com/RememberingADDudley), and designed a project for our 7th graders (tinyurl.com/ADDudleyStory) to learn about Nashville's pivotal role in ratification. During these strange and unpredictable days of COVID-19, I have been helping my students and their families navigate our new normal and living - as best I can from a distance - my school's motto: *Let us Lift Up the Mind and Spirit.* Life

here is filled with family, art, music, work, and now, of course, a new normal of political strife and COVID-19. So I'm hoping a few of my Cside students remember our lessons of patience, awareness, and critical thought.

Maya Payne (former 2nd and 5th grade teacher) We left Countryside and headed to Texas, but just 6 months later, my husband was offered a job working on Fortnite. In January 2019 we packed up and moved to North Carolina! We love it here! It is beautiful. I am working as a 5th grade teacher. We are so happy!

Bill Rowe (former Interim Head of School) Margaret and I are doing fine, even with the pandemic restrictions. Our son Matt has temporarily moved back in with us and has his own space and computer, from which he teaches his 4th grade class every day. Our daughters are also working from their homes, Elizabeth for Webster University and Emily for the Missouri History Museum. Grandchildren Logan (13) and Maddie (6) are "distance-learning" for school. Since outdoor recreation is still OK, we get out for weekly hikes, and I go birding a lot. Then there is reading, volunteer activities, Zoom meetings, or Netflix in the evening! We know these times are much more stressful for many others than for us, and we hope to see normal life resume before too long.

Marty Stambaugh (current Middle School science teacher) I enjoyed seeing the creative solutions that students engineered for the at-home version of the "Titanic with a Twist" Trimester Challenge. While some students chose to share videos they shot of their test, others did live testing from home while the rest of the class cheered them on via Zoom. What fun.

When she is not teaching in front of a computer, Ms. Stambaugh is enjoying her solitary time pulling weeds from her gardens and recently tromping around the woods at Kickapoo hunting morel mushrooms. Her cat, Clovis, especially loves having her at home, enjoying extra treats, and her warm lap for his afternoon nap.

**8TH GRADE
GRADUATION**
TBD THIS
SUMMER

Featured Alumna

Dr. Payton (Johnson) Schmidt (2001)

Payton started at Countryside in 2nd grade. In high school, she swam for Centennial where she was a 3-time IHSA State champion in the 100 butterfly and still holds 6 records on Centennial's swim record board. This past January she was inducted into the Centennial High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Payton graduated from the University of Michigan in biomedical engineering in 2009 and Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago in 2014. Following her residency in OBGYN at University of Michigan, she is currently finishing her fellowship there in Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (also known as Urogynecology).

When asked about her records set 19 years ago still standing: "I actually don't know what records are still there. My college coach always used to tell us that we wouldn't necessarily remember all the records and wins we had during our swimming career, but more about the experiences. I didn't really believe it at the time, as I was so goal oriented. But all these years later, he was



Dr. Payton Schmidt

absolutely right. I obviously remember big accomplishments, but the things that stick out to me more are the people and the process."

Favorite Countryside memory: "I remember looking forward to school so I could see and play with my friends! The small classrooms I think made it always feel like going to school with extended family."

COLLEGE
GEAR
PHOTOS AT
OUR SIGN

MAY 23 -
JUNE 6

Featured Alumni

Brian Eckstein (2001) completed his Ph.D. in organic chemistry at Northwestern University in November 2019. He is now doing postdoctoral research in materials chemistry at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado and enjoying the nearby mountains.

Brian attended Countryside from 1998-2000, having just moved to the C-U community with his family. He has memories of interesting and challenging Middle School coursework, and there is no question about the great joy of making friends for life at the same time.

Photo from 2018: **Eric Treworgy** (2000), **Brian Eckstein**, and **Asher Danziger** (2001) who have been friends for over twenty years, since meeting at Countryside School!





Countryside School

Joy in Learning, Excellence in Education

NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SCHOOL ALUMNI

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We don't want to lose contact!

**Please send us your email address:
alumni@countrysidesschool.org**

We Need Your Pennant

We LOVE displaying pennants from all our alumni's colleges and universities. Although we have about 75 on display, we are still missing several. Drop us an e-mail if you can provide us with a pennant (12" x 30") or to ask if we already have it!

alumni@countrysidesschool.org



Mark your calendars:

High School "Class of 2020" photos at the corner sign
Graduation
Summer camps
Homecoming/Fall Picnic
Virtual Class Reunions
Winter Alumni Reunion

May 26 - June 6: just stop by
TBD - closed ceremony for 8th grade families only
cancelled for 2020
August 22 - if permitted
beginning this fall via Zoom
TBD - December 2020/January 2021