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THE OAKRIDGE SCHOOL

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# OUTLOOK

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FALL 2020 • VOLUME 40, ISSUE 1

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The Oakridge School is an independent, coed, college-preparatory day school for students in preschool (age 3) through grade 12. The Oakridge School admits students of any race, color, sex, religion, physical ability, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The Oakridge School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, physical disabilities, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admissions policies, financial aid, and other school sponsored programs.

# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



Should we all take a collective breath? Whew! What a season we have experienced. We are living through what we can only hope is a once-in-a-lifetime moment, one that – as I firmly believe and have said many times – requires patience, flexibility, and grace. In early spring, we were driven physically apart and forced to re-engineer the way we socialize, work, and learn. Everywhere we turn, the familiar has been replaced and we are living lives that have been — and continue to be — fundamentally changed.

Although there is great unpredictability due to the global pandemic, so much of who we are and who we will be is indisputable. Whether face-to-face or screen-to-screen, utilizing pen and paper or new technologies, our team of dedicated educators continues 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. That is our mission plain and simple. It is who we are.

In this issue of *Outlook*, we'll celebrate the Class of 2020, which demonstrated a patience rarely required of teens concluding their high school careers. Thanks to the flexibility and creativity of hardworking and dedicated faculty and staff, our seniors were able to experience many meaningful moments in the

midst of COVID-19. You'll also read about current students and alumni making a difference in the fight against the coronavirus. We'll talk to our director of technology and modern learning about the steps that were taken to help prepare our educators and families for the challenges of at-home and on-campus learning. Since we are currently unable to welcome visitors to campus, we'll show you what safety measures have been taken and what health considerations were made in deciding to open our doors. You'll meet new teachers who traveled diverse paths and interesting doctoral journeys to get here. We'll also thank the supporters who dug deep to show spirit and philanthropic support for our community. The adage, "I can show you better than I can tell you" rings true as we check in on a most unusual arts and athletics season.

You might have noticed the new look and feel of this *Outlook*. We'd love to know what you think. Share your thoughts or submit a story idea for the next issue at [www.theoakridgeschool.org/news/media-inquiries/submit-a-story-idea](http://www.theoakridgeschool.org/news/media-inquiries/submit-a-story-idea). Through everything we are encountering, together and with great resilience, we thank you for your commitment to The Oakridge School. We are... Oakridge!

*Jonathan M. Kellam, Head of School*

# PANDEMIC, POMP, AND CIRCUMSTANCE

In the end, they'll always have... Live! By Loews.

Unexpected endings were the theme of the year for the Class of 2020, and while the ending they received was perhaps not what they would have chosen, they handled things with grace and gratitude.

When the senior class left in early March for Spring Break, little did they suspect that it would be their last time on campus as Oakridge students. But of course, COVID-19 changed all of that, and life under this new normal forced change on everyone. It was difficult for all, but uniquely so for seniors, who saw time-honored traditions of the latter



parts of senior year postponed, altered, or cancelled outright. Gone was prom, and with it one last parade in formal attire. Senior dinner was at first postponed and then merged into the also delayed graduation ceremony. While

both of those were customarily held in mid-May, quarantine and caution moved them to late July. And though the seniors may at times have worried that their moments of celebration might never come, or that they had been forgotten



somehow, in the end those moments arrived, and along the way different celebrations – on smaller scales – took the place of the traditional.

Before the end of the year the new had begun to replace the old. In late spring, faculty delivered caps, gowns, and gifts from Food 4 Life to the homebound grads. Not long after that, each senior was “adopted” by an Oakridge faculty or staff member, and another delivery happened: this time, along with a small gift from each adult, there was also a gift from Ms. Triebwasser’s integrated media students. The uniquely designed yard signs, celebrating each senior and his or her college choice, were a new addition to the Oakridge graduate celebration.

The events of spring culminated in an unusual – and unusually wet – “drive-through graduation” on May 16. On that day – the original graduation date – seniors and their families drove through a rainy Oakridge campus, where stations along the way had been set up to share moments of celebration and tokens of remembrance. They started at the ECC with Mrs. Garton and Mrs. Morgan, truly “memory lane” for Owls who arrived in preschool. The Fine Arts Department was represented, with Mr. Stewart



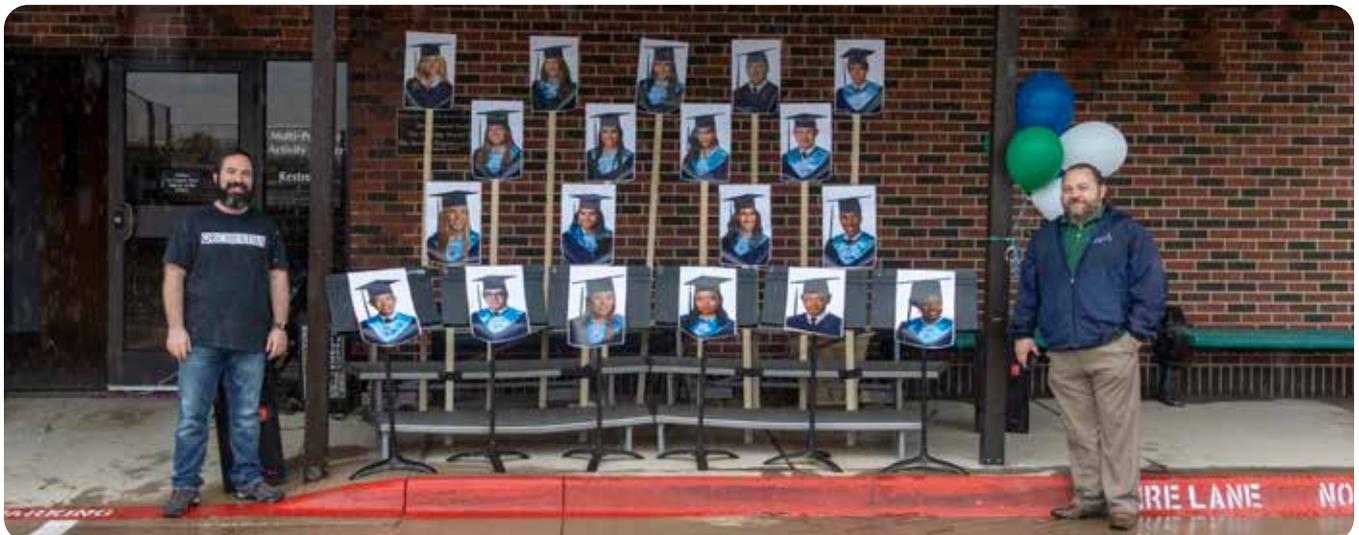
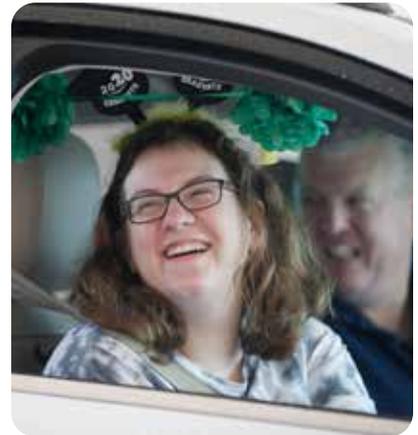
and Mr. Jamieson on hand to wave and the recorded choir’s song “May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You” on a loop. The back door to the Flavin Fine Arts Performance Hall was also opened, and students were able to see – and pick up – artwork. There was another station with a snack bag from Food 4 Life. College Advising was damp in body but not in spirit, cheering on the graduates as they drove by. Finally, administration was there to grant the students a replica of their actual diploma.

But that was only a replica, of course, as the real graduation had been moved to late July. Changing circumstances forced a merging of Senior Dinner and Graduation into a luncheon held at Live! by Loews. The huge ballroom there was utilized to

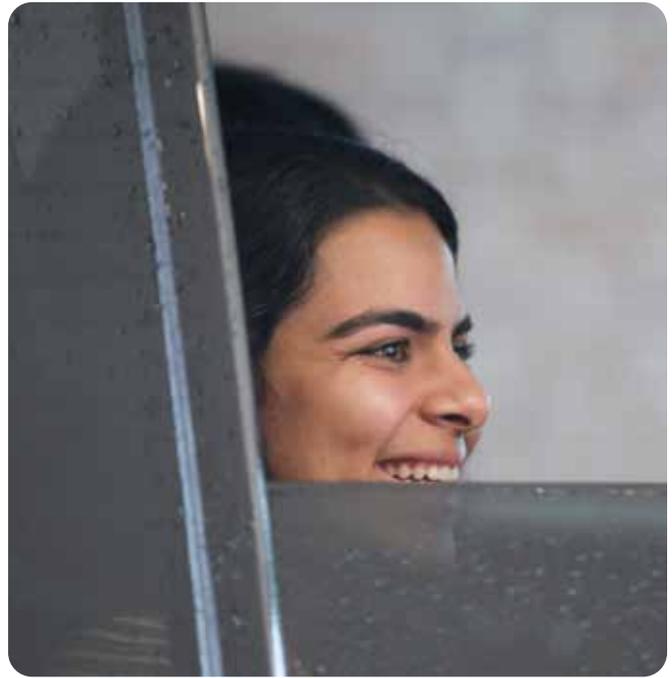
its fullest extent, as each family was seated at a socially-distanced table. Lunch was served, the masked and gowned seniors got their individual moments in the sun (which was beautifully streaming through the open ballroom doors), and in the end, they were – finally – graduates.

While the ending to their senior year was neither what the Class of 2020 expected nor desired in early spring, certainly the resulting celebrations will be remembered by them all. With gratitude for their leadership and calm, Oakridge wishes them well in their collegiate endeavors and reminds them that they will always have a home here. As Mr. Kellam likes to say: “Come back, often!” Though, perhaps, wait until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.









# PIVOTING DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

At The Oakridge School, faculty, staff and administrators serve here because they are committed to educating children and families. Generally speaking, each person who plays a role in a school was specifically trained for that job. An English teacher's background and specialization connects to university-level English coursework. The chief financial officer is a certified public accountant. The athletic director was a collegiate athlete. Besides the school nurse and the athletic trainers, health is not a typical employee's speciality. Fast forward to fall 2020, and all who learn, teach and work in the Oakridge community have become conversant in pandemics, public health, and risk management, just to name a few.

It was evident in late spring, when the state closed all schools, that reopening in fall 2020 would require careful thought and planning as well as extreme flexibility and grace.



Head of School Jon Kellam, in partnership with school and volunteer leadership, developed the structure that would enable preparation to begin. A Campus Reopening Committee composed of board members and administrators was appointed, and the planning began in earnest. From the beginning, The Oakridge School had an advantage. Class sizes were

already small on an expansive physical campus.

“Teachers and families were sharing that our community wanted to be reunited in the fall,” Mr. Kellam said. “The number of people willing to lend their expertise to the process reinforced that we were headed in the right direction. I also knew that we had the facilities and the enrollment to make reopening plans realistic.”

Everything from personal protective equipment (PPE) to learning models, and bus transportation to fire drills, became a part of the daily conversation. Once a full list of items to consider was developed, the administrative team broke into six task forces: Health & Wellness; Learning & Teaching; Facilities & Operations; Communication & Technology; School Events & Calendar



**COVID-19 TASK FORCES:**  
Health & Wellness  
Learning & Teaching  
Facilities & Operations  
Communication & Technology  
School Events & Calendar  
Networking & Resources

& Calendar; and Networking & Resources. Task forces included faculty, staff, administrators, and regents. Families were surveyed twice: first to elicit feedback from distance learning and second to gather data about reopening. The faculty was also surveyed to gauge concerns and gather input and ideas.

“It was an honor to serve on a task force this past summer,” said Second Grade Teacher Jana Kurrasch. “I knew from the very first meeting that we were in capable hands, as the best interest of our students was always in the forefront of every decision made.”

## “THE REOPENING COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCES KEPT SIX WORDS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THEIR DIALOGUE: CREATIVITY, CARE, COLLABORATION, CUSTOMIZATION, CONNECTIVITY AND COMMUNITY.”

Though the goal from the beginning was to open for face-to-face education, there were two moments during the summer that impacted task force work. First, the parent survey reinforced that the majority of families wished to send their children for in-person schooling. Second, the county order on July 22 restricted most schools from opening for on-campus instruction. By July 29, the state overturned the county, thus allowing private and public schools to make decisions that best fit their communities.

More than 60 people worked together, dissecting every possible

scenario the school might face in August. The school also leaned upon outside legal and medical expertise along the way. It would not be an understatement to say that thousands of hours were invested in the collective effort.

“My most sobering realization was the staggering number of essential services our students and their families depend on. Nothing could be overlooked,” said Fine Arts Chair Andy Stewart. “How do we maintain a bus service? Can students still take advantage of our wonderful playground spaces? How do we consolidate a bathroom policy

for the multiple divisions? No question could be left unanswered in our planning.”

Nurse Kim Campbell-Martinez added, “Our collaboration with healthcare professionals in Tarrant County allowed our task force to better impact the overall health of our Oakridge community. Our healthcare team has worked tirelessly to exceed all COVID-19 guidelines, school recommendations, and training efforts. My biggest priority has always been the health and wellness of the students, faculty, staff and the families that they all go home to.”



The reopening committee and task forces kept six words at the forefront of their dialogue: creativity, care, collaboration, customization, connectivity and community. They additionally focused on excellence at home and excellence on campus. Whatever local circumstances dictated or families decided, Oakridge wanted the educational model to be true to the school mission and strong – no matter where the student was sitting.

If the Oakridge community has learned one thing in the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that it is resilient. Faculty, staff, students and families have united to educate children. All have proven that school change – though sometimes challenging – can happen with very little advance notice. It is this ethos that allows the school to move forward each day in 2020-2021 with a spirit of optimism.

*by Mrs. Sarah Kramer  
Assistant Head of School*

# PARTNERING TO STAY HEALTHY

Before Oakridge reopened for the 2020-2021 school year and the community worked to remain as safe as possible, Head of School Jon Kellam asked faculty, staff, and students to commit to The Owl Promise. The goal is to limit COVID-19 spread. Special signage was created to remind faculty, staff, and students to stay properly distanced, to wash their hands frequently, and to wear a mask. Families signed a Health and Wellness agreement, while faculty signed The Owl Promise, pledging to demonstrate social responsibility, mutual respect, and personal integrity.



## THE OWL PROMISE

*Working together for the benefit of the Oakridge community*

To limit COVID-19 spread in our Oakridge community – both on campus and off – faculty, staff, students, and families will demonstrate...



### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

#### I WILL

- wash my hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer
- monitor myself for the symptoms of COVID-19
- stay home when I am sick
- do the right thing for the greater good



### MUTUAL RESPECT

#### I WILL

- maintain appropriate physical distancing
- wear a face covering to protect myself and those around me
- clean my personal belongings and shared spaces
- be kind to others



### PERSONAL INTEGRITY

#### I WILL

- read and follow instructional signs and directions across campus
- follow all school and safety requests
- report any COVID-19 positive test result to the school
- abide by my commitment while on and off campus





# FIVE QUESTIONS WITH MICHELLE VAUGHN

While we all faced what many consider a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence, and had to make changes to the way we work, study, and learn, teachers navigating the pandemic were trained to deliver a solid education through a number of modalities. In this edition of Five Questions, Director of Technology and Modern Learning Michelle Vaughn discusses how she and her team helped teachers prepare and adapt.

## **1. Not many secondary schools have a technology and modern learning team. What is your department's primary role?**

The department's primary role is to provide support for faculty, staff, students and families. For faculty and staff this includes ensuring infrastructure, hardware, and software are in place and training to use the tools. For teachers specifically, there is a focus on best practices for learning and teaching. The team also provides support for students and families whether that be face-to-face or at-home.

## **2. How did your department help teachers to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year?**

As we prepared for this unique school year, the professional development time was spent training teachers on tools to support a hybrid learning environment to support face-to-face learners in the classroom and remote learners at home.

Time was also spent partnering with teachers exploring and discussing tools and resources allowing at-home learners to experience synchronous learning alongside the face-to-face learners. In partnership with the teachers, we practiced lessons and brainstormed best practices for this hybrid learning environment.



## **3. What would you recommend other schools or educators consider before offering at-home learning?**

Prior to selecting at-home learning, it is essential that families make sure they have enough bandwidth to support all devices that access the Internet, have a dedicated location in the home for the student to “attend school,” such as a table or desk located outside of the student's bedroom. Another essential is for the student to have access to a printer in the event there's a need to print materials posted online. Additionally, students experiencing the most success have access to a minimum of two devices: One device dedicated to “attend class” via Zoom/Google Meet and another device to access and view online materials.

## **4. What steps has your department taken to make sure Oakridge is equipped with enough bandwidth to handle the challenges of educating students at-home?**

During the first few months of school, we contracted with a new internet provider and installed an internet pipe that was five times

the size of the one we previously had. In addition, we equipped each teacher with individual hotspots as backups to ensure they could Zoom with our at-home learners.

## 5. What has this experience taught you?

This experience has taught us it is imperative to show each other, our faculty, students, and ourselves, grace as we navigate an unprecedented school year. Oakridge is blessed with an outstanding teaching faculty that continually shows grace and creativity with students, each other, and themselves during this journey.

## RESOURCE CORNER

- The Technology and Modern Learning team continues to look to national standards, professional organizations and networks, including but not limited to ISAS (Independent Schools Association of the Southwest), ATLIS (Association for Technology Leaders in Independent Schools) and ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education).
- In addition to regularly sharing resources, websites, and tools with teachers the department maintains a curated website for faculty to access.

## POINT OF VIEW

The start of the 2020-2021 year meant adapting to hybrid classrooms for most teachers. For Early Childhood Center educator Kendra Talley and the Lower School's April Benjamin, it meant a complete shift to focusing only on at-home learners. More in this POV.



*Ms. April Benjamin teaches in the Lower School.*

**AB:** At-Home Learning has been a series of firsts for me. This year marks the first time I have taught two grade levels at once, used an iPad as a document camera, and taught lessons synchronously. My students and I are having a great time exploring this new territory together, and we are handling the adjustment with grace. At-Home Learners have taught me not to fear change. I've had to think outside the box, be creative, and use problem-solving skills to create and teach innovative lessons to my students. This process

has allowed me to grow and strengthen my skills as an educator. I'm learning new things every single day!



*Ms. Kendra Talley teaches in the Early Childhood Center.*

**KT:** I have thoroughly enjoyed the start of school this year teaching nine kindergartners who are learning from home. The flexibility, grace, and tenacity they have shown throughout this time has been inspiring. This experience has pushed me to find new and creative ways to engage students through a screen, build relationships and community with my students, and find best practices to teach and differentiate virtually. It certainly has been a challenge, but the progress my students have made and the joy on their faces while they are singing and dancing to our "Morning Meeting" songs warms my heart. My students are thriving and happy and that's all that matters.

# OAKRIDGE WELCOMES NEW TEACHERS

As the COVID-19 pandemic intensified in late spring and early summer, schools across the U.S. shut their doors to curb the virus' spread. Upon reopening in the fall, some schools were forced to lay off educators. Oakridge retained the majority of its faculty and staff, plus it welcomed three new energetic and inspiring leaders to campus.



**Michael Sowa, Ph.D.**, is the Upper School's new chemistry teacher, but don't expect a conversation with him to focus solely on the classroom. He spent a large part of his early career in corporate America. "I became a teacher after a rewarding, but less fun, 12-year

career as a pharmaceutical research engineer," said Dr. Sowa. "I want to help students to feel the joy of learning about the physical and natural worlds, to become informed citizens of the 21st century, and to develop a lifetime ability to learn and problem solve!"

Dr. Sowa's path to Oakridge included teaching positions at Montgomery Township Public Schools in Montgomery, NJ, Stuart Country Day School in Princeton, NJ, and St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Austin. When he received the invitation to join Oakridge, he could not say no. "The Oakridge School struck me as a welcoming community with strong academics in a great part of the country where I can teach science at a variety of levels in classes of a comfortable size."

Dr. Sowa holds a doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Delaware, a master's degree in environmental engineering and toxicology from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Lehigh University. He and his wife, Patti, who is also an engineer and teacher, have two adult daughters and a spirited cat. When he is not working, Dr. Sowa turns his attention

to running, the stock market, and trying to learn guitar.



**Niki Holzapfel, Ph.D.**, is the Upper School's new freshman English teacher. She has a passion for studying diverse texts, and under the umbrella of Global Literature, early on introduced her students to authors like Stephen Chbosky, Tatiana de Rosnay, Khaled

Hosseini, Lucy Tan, and Margaret Walker. She hopes their voices will expand her students' worldviews and develop their critical thinking. "Our class will read widely across genres, cultures, and time periods," she wrote in a letter introducing herself to her students' parents.

Dr. Holzapfel's own journey to Oakridge is academically and geographically distinctive. In addition to living and working in Scotland and Ireland, she studied for a semester at the University of Oxford (Oxfordshire, England). Dr. Holzapfel earned her Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh, her master's degree is from the University College Dublin, and she holds both a bachelor and master's degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Prior to Oakridge, she worked in the Thesis and Dissertation Services Office at Texas A&M University. When the call of the Owls came through, she answered. "The faculty exuded a warmth that came across so clearly, even over Zoom interviews," she said. "I knew I would feel at home with such enthusiastic educators. Oakridge also attracted me because of the emphasis it places on creativity and the joy of learning."

It may come as no surprise that during her leisure time, Dr. Holzapfel likes venturing to new places! She enjoys exploring local coffee shops and independent stores, discovering new music and good creative nonfiction.



**Brandi Freeman** didn't have to trek far for her next great adventure. The Fort Worth native and University of Texas at Arlington alumna already had a presence at Oakridge when opportunity came knocking. She coaches the Middle School and Varsity Cheer Teams, and now serves the school's youngest stakeholders as

a kindergarten teacher in the Early Childhood Center. She chose education as a career because of the chance to positively influence the lives of our children.

"The littles, in particular, always make you feel wanted and loved," Ms. Freeman said. "I accepted this position because I truly bleed green and blue. I fell in love with Oakridge six years ago and nothing has changed. The traditions here are some of my favorite things about campus."

Ms. Freeman previously served at High Point



Academy. She earned her bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Criminal Justice and Sociology from the University of Texas at Arlington. When she is not teaching or being a dog mom to Wrigley and Cole, she loves to immerse herself in cooking and baking television programs.

## NEW OWLS

Unable to host its traditional in-person New Parent Dinner this year, administrators and a few staff members delivered a welcome letter, welcome gift, and Oakridge yard sign to the porches of new Owls. Here are just a few of the friendly faces we found at home when we stopped by.



# WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

As we began the 2020-2021 school year, we did so with 106 (and counting) new, wonderful students. Like everything else this year, their admissions process called for flexibility during COVID-19. Many of our new families made the enormous leap of faith to enroll their children despite never stepping on our campus, meeting any of us face to face, and getting to “feel” what it was like to stand in the quad and witness a teacher reading to her class, peer down from the second floor of the Fine Arts Performance Hall and catch a choir class singing in the beautiful, acoustic perfection of our lobby, or see and hear the sound of balls bouncing and children laughing during PE in the Student Activity Center. Instead, through narrated drone videos, I met with many of our new families while sitting in my home, while they were in theirs, sheltering in place. I conducted virtual tours and told them the stories of you all, our wonderful community. I spoke of the amazing, rigorous, but balanced and developmentally-appropriate curriculum that prepares 100 percent of our graduates to gain acceptance (and millions of dollars in merit-based scholarship offers) to four-year universities. I told stories of amazing educators who pulled off the most amazing feat of education last spring and kept the learning going in the midst of our collective shell-shock in the pandemic’s earliest days. I conducted Zoom meetings, division heads conducted Zoom



interviews, the technology department helped me schedule virtual classroom visits, and the list of mental and logistical gymnastics continues today. Thankfully, one new parent told me, in reference to my question of what has surprised her most about her daughter’s Oakridge experience, thus far, is:

*“How much it is a family and all the communications we receive. How well the teachers are handling the teaching virtual and in-person and allowing the kids to interact. It was weeks before we realized the friend our daughter talked most about was virtual while our daughter is in person. They still have not met in person, yet, but talk all the time.”*

I often tell prospective families that we, as a school, are as strong as the families who partner with us. Every family has a role to play at Oakridge, and each one contributes something special. This new group of families is special, indeed, and we are certainly stronger for their presence.

*by Mrs. Amy Wilson  
Director of Admissions*

## DID YOU KNOW...

- We enrolled more new students for 2020-2021 than since 2016
- We added a FOURTH Kindergarten section
- The Class of 2020 was our THIRD largest senior class ever
- We have SIXTY-ONE Legacy students - our highest enrolled ever

# A NEW SEASON

New and familiar faces returned to campus August 26 for the start of the 2020-2021 school year with coronavirus safety measures in place, that included: students wearing masks, having their temperature taken, and following physical distancing guidelines. On opening day, 26 percent of Owls were learning at home. Here are a few photos from the first day.



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# 2020-2021



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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It's not every day that a person gets called a hero, but Justin Smith '21 earned that title this fall. The senior was named the Honored Hero for the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Fort Worth Take Steps Walk in October.

Diagnosed with Crohn's disease at age 12, Justin works tirelessly as an ambassador helping to raise funds and awareness in an effort to find a cure for the disease. He has previously held larger walks, but had to hold a smaller than normal walk this season due to COVID-19 restrictions. In addition to other recognition, Grand Prairie's mayor presented a proclamation declaring October 18, 2020 as "Justin Smith Day" in the city.



## CINDERELLA CHARITY BALL

Lilly Deane, '21 was a 2019-2020 Cinderella Candidate in the 60th Annual Cinderella Charity Ball, earning second runner up. The campaign, which raises money for Boys and Girls Clubs of Arlington, typically runs for seven weeks, yet because of COVID-19, 20 young women, including Lilly, spent nine months working to give back to their community and raise needed dollars for the clubs.



ARTS



# STEWART SINGS ON NEW CD

Fall may still be in season, but Oakridge Fine Arts Chair and Director of Choirs Andrew Stewart is already feeling the joy of Christmas. A music CD that Mr. Stewart recorded with the professional group, Taylor Festival Choir, was recently released. “So Hallow’d the Time” features original works by two distinguished American composers: Brian Galante and the late Stephen Paulus, whose many choral and orchestral compositions have been performed by the country’s leading choirs and orchestras.

“Beyond that, singing with other professionals always reminds me just how connected we are as artists. The desire to produce something truly beautiful with other humans washes away any religious, political, or cultural differences and you just focus on giving something wonderful to the world.”

The Taylor Festival Choir has gained international recognition since its inception in 2001 as one of America’s finest professional choral

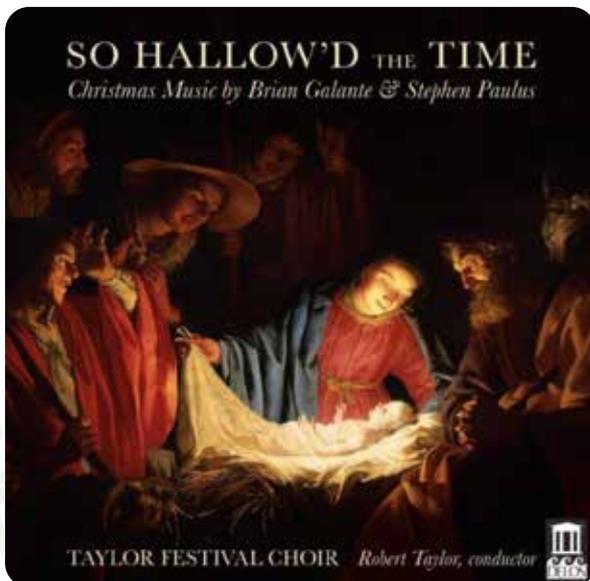
“WE LEARN SO MUCH BEING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONDUCTOR’S PODIUM AS THE PERSON SINGING IN THE CHOIR INSTEAD OF LEADING IT.

Mr. Stewart recorded the Christmas music in May 2019 in Charleston, South Carolina, and sang in the tenor section. “A voice from Oakridge’s past is also on the album, as previous choir director Robert Ward is singing in the bass section,” said Mr. Stewart, who is in his ninth year at Oakridge.

ensembles. Of its latest CD, *Charleston Today* said, “Within seconds of hearing their first a capella notes, it was clear that we were in for a special performance. The clarity of the voices, the resonance of the sound, the depth of emotion that filled the church—and the precision of the whole thing.”

“I think being a practicing artist is essential in our line of work. We learn so much being on the other side of the conductor’s podium as the person singing in the choir instead of leading it,” he says.

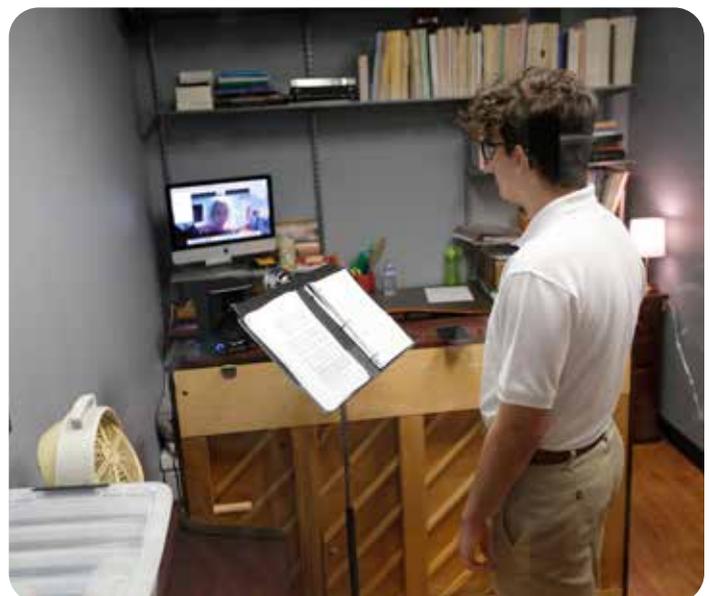
The CD, “So Hallow’d the Time,” is available on Taylor Music Group’s website or via Apple or Spotify.





## US ARTS

The Upper School fine arts faculty cultivates an atmosphere of trust and seeks to inspire artistic risk-taking, while developing a lifelong love of the arts. It's something that was made even more important as fall 2020 involved students learning to create and perform together, while apart.





## MS ARTS

Middle School students experienced fine arts in a new way. In addition to collaborating with classmates digitally, shifting to arts classes in the John P. Flavin Fine Arts Center marked a rare opportunity for on-campus students to leave their COVID-19 social pods.



# LS ARTS

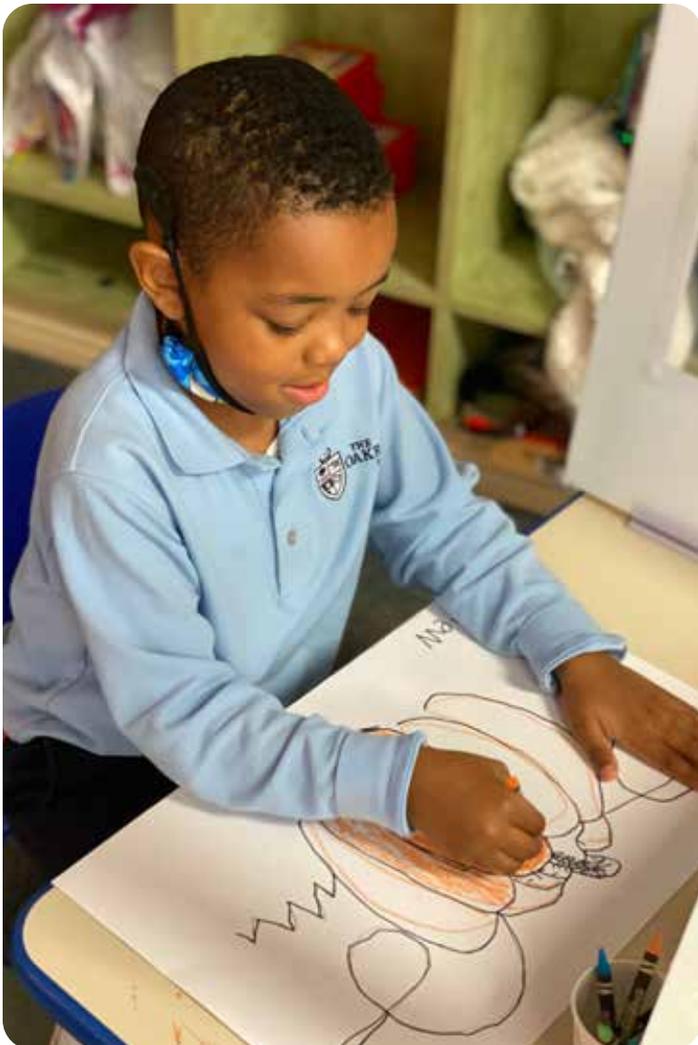
Lower School arts students, on-campus and at-home, were introduced to a variety of art forms this fall through thoughtful and fun lessons that challenged them creatively and collaboratively.





## ECC ARTS

The fall brought fun with the teachers and the magic of pumpkins through creative art lessons.



# FALL PLAY FIRSTS



Before the 2020 school year started, a looming concern was hanging over me and the acting students at The Oakridge School: would there even be a fall play? I wanted to celebrate my tenth year at Oakridge by restaging the first show I had ever done here, *The Masque of Beauty and the Beast*. Unfortunately, with the state of the world, I had begun to prep myself for disappointment. I emailed our Head of Upper School Jim Andersen and Assistant Head of Upper School Christine Metoyer, and asked for a meeting about the fall play. They asked that I come up with options, but were enthusiastic about the idea that this event could be done and done safely.

After a couple of weeks of research, looking to see what other active theatres were doing, two options lay in front of us: either we cancel the fall play and hope the spring would work out better for us or we pursue an outdoor venue, rehearse in masks and then at performances, keep the audience at a distance in their own spaced-out squares. The decision was the latter and The Oakridge Theatre Department began to work on its first ever off-campus main stage show and the results were beyond our expectations.

Students learned to design and build the set, but for the first time in school history, Upper School technical theatre students also learned to design a traveling show.

More than 450 people attended the play over three nights at the wonderful open-air venue, The Lot, in downtown Mansfield. Our students were outstanding and I could not be more proud of them. Here's to another 10 years for me, and maybe at year 20, we will visit this fairy tale again.

by Mr. Brad DeBorde  
Upper School Drama

“ WE HOPE THE  
MEASURE OF YOUR SMILE’S  
INCREASED, BY THIS, THE  
MASQUE OF BEAUTY AND  
THE BEAST.

– *Narrator, The Masque of  
Beauty and the Beast*



*Students performed The Masque of Beauty and the Beast over three nights, October 22-24, at The Lot in downtown Mansfield. In addition to performing, students learned to build, transport, and reassemble a set in the Oakridge Theatre Department’s first off-campus main stage show.*





# ATHLETICS

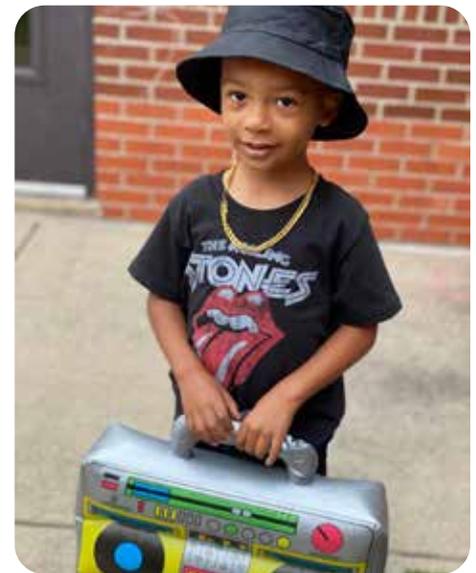


# HOMECOMING 2020

Congratulations to the Oakridge Owls, who ended Homecoming 2020 with a 42-0 victory over Trinity Valley. Our defense team pitched the shutout, with P.J. Novak and Cooper Long both getting defensive scores. It was a homecoming unlike any other in school history with attendance at the varsity football game limited to student-athletes' families, Class of 2021 seniors, and a few others in the general Upper School student body able to get a ticket, the limitations due to COVID-19 safety and physical distancing guidelines.

Homecoming activities earlier in the week saw no traditional parade, but students did participate in Spirit Week, which meant fun dress days that included the following themes: I Love the 80s Day; Skittles Day; Texas Day; Captain Crunch Day; and, Vintage Homecoming Shirt Day.

Friday of Homecoming Week also meant fun field games for Upper School students, and mums along with face masks were on full display.



# SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

Due to the pandemic, the Southwest Preparatory Conference in late August announced the cancellation of the fall SPC athletic season. Oakridge chose to play an abbreviated season and followed strict safety protocols. Owls that did engage in sports learned about resilience and perseverance as 2020 unfolded. Our thanks to student photographers who contributed to this section.



# SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS



*Congratulations to Tank Thomas, a freshman defensive tackle, invited this year to participate in the Football University (FBU) All-American Bowl in Naples, Florida. The game showcases the nation's best freshman football players and will be shown live December 21 on NBC Sports.*

# OWL CLUB ALLOCATIONS

The Oakridge School would like to recognize The Owl Club for its efforts to support our many athletic programs. We are grateful for your contributions and appreciate your commitment. The Owl Club was not able to host the annual Golf Classic fundraiser in 2019-2020 due to COVID-19. However, The Owl Club proudly allocated the following:

## OWL CLUB ALLOCATIONS 2019-2020: \$23,683.34

- Angel Fund
- Oakridge Athletic Complex
- Baseball/Softball Complex - 4 Wheeler, 2 Pro L Screens, 4 Fungo Screens, Drag Mat, Nail/Spike Drag, 2 Portable Ball Carts, Pitching Machine
- Oakridge Athletic Complex pledge (final payment)
- Early Childhood Center - End of Year Spirit Merchandise for Kindergarten (drawstring backpack and water thermos)



**Save The Date**  
**Oakridge Golf Classic**

**Monday, May 3, 2021**  
**Walnut Creek Country Club**



# OAKRIDGE PARENTS' CLUB

Despite all the challenges that have been put before them, students, faculty, and staff are working hard to make this year successful and I think they're off to a great start! The Oakridge Parents' Club is attempting to operate with some sense of normalcy, though many of the safety protocols in place have significantly changed the way we support Oakridge families and teachers. This summer, we missed seeing everyone at our annual Back-to-School Fair and Family Picnic, and we didn't get to pass out hugs and high fives at the Cheers & Tears event we typically host on the first day of school. We have managed to host a few successful, physically distanced and masked, mostly outdoors uniform resales at the OPC Building, and we plan to have a few more throughout the year. Many of our on-campus events have had to be canceled, but we are working to see if we can bring some encouragement and enjoyment to our families with some reimagined events.



One thing we are trying to focus on this year is taking care of the faculty and staff. We recently put together a survey to ask them how we, as an organization, can help support their work in the classroom, as well as their emotional well-being off campus. We look forward to receiving their feedback and finding new and inventive ways to say "Thank You" for all their hard work.

In the past, OPC has supported the school in many ways, not only with activities, but financially as well. We average about \$45,000 a year in our giving, and we have been able to provide the school with almost \$1 million in allocations over the last 20

years. The funding has gone toward school needs ranging from new classroom furniture and playground equipment to media equipment for the fast-growing Integrated Media Studio. OPC recently began providing funds for the Office of College Advising's annual Deans' Panel. This event brings deans, academic officers, and admissions officials from colleges and universities across the country to our campus for a multi-day event. It is a unique opportunity that allows our families to take the steps necessary toward finding a college or university that is a great fit for their child.

The purpose of the Oakridge Parents' Club is to assist the administration, faculty, staff, and Board of Regents in providing for the educational enrichment



of the students; to promote the fellowship of the families and staff of The Oakridge School; and to raise funds to accomplish these objectives. We aim to do this the best we can each year despite any challenges that arise. No one knows what the next several months of the school year will look like, but OPC will work hard to find ways to support our staff, our families, and our students.

*by Mrs. Shelley Hodges  
OPC President*



# ANNUAL FUND 2020-2021



We are honored to chair The Oakridge School 2020-2021 Annual Fund. We have been a part of the Oakridge family since 2007. We have three Oakridge alumni in our family: Landry '14, Delaney '16 and Joey '19. We only have one Owl left in the nest, Mia, who will graduate in

2022. As you know, the Annual Fund is crucial for the financial needs of our school. We have seen first-hand the impact The Oakridge School has had on our children and their future. We are so proud to be a part of this family and excited about the future of this great school. This year, your contribution is more important than ever, as our school is burdened with many additional costs on top of the traditional operational expenses. As always, we know The Oakridge Family will rise to the challenge of generosity.

What is the Annual Fund? The Annual Fund is Oakridge's top philanthropic priority and it supports the daily operating budget. It is essential to our school and we could not operate without it. All independent schools are faced with the same need: to bridge the gap between tuition dollars and the actual cost of a private education. The Oakridge Board of Regents deliberates thoughtfully on setting tuition, considers what is affordable while staying competitive, and offers the best value. The Annual Fund generates the funds that make up the difference. Tuition, Annual Fund, and the Super Supper & Auction make up the revenue stream for our school. However, unlike other fundraisers, 100 percent of your tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund goes directly back to the school.

Who benefits from the Annual Fund? Your children benefit directly from your gifts. Oakridge is able to recruit, train and retain talented faculty and staff, as well as, explore new ways to educate

our students, creatively and forwardly, in the classroom, on the field, and on the stage. The students are provided cutting-edge technology and new equipment in a top-notch, safe environment and facility.

What does the Annual Fund pay for? Oakridge invests its greatest dollars in the people who make up our talented, dedicated and caring faculty and staff who touch your children's lives every day. The Annual Fund pays for all the visible and invisible, tangible and intangible things that make our school unique.

Why should you participate? When you participate, you are automatically part of something big and it feels good. Our school's success depends on EVERYONE'S participation and EVERY GIFT MATTERS, no matter the size. Diversity is a big part of what makes Oakridge stand out above the rest, and the diversity of means is no exception. Your gift, large or small, makes a difference.

How and when do I make a gift? NOW or LATER! It is easier than ever for you to participate. You can:

- Write a check
- Use a credit card online
- Schedule a recurring monthly payment online
- Send in cash
- Transfer stock options
- Make a pledge online

Please remember that matching gift programs are available at many of your places of employment. Check with your human resources department to see how you can double your gift! Our goal this year is twofold: to raise \$450,000 and to achieve 100 percent schoolwide participation!

Amid and beyond the pandemic, let's seek the good and keep going together. We thank you in advance for your gifts and are confident this will be a record year for our Annual Fund giving.

*John and Kay Petersen  
2020-2021 Annual Fund Chairs*

# SEEKING GOOD TOGETHER

The success of North Texas Giving Day is proof that with the support of our Oakridge family and friends, we seek the good and keep going together. On the annual day of giving, The Oakridge School received 441 gifts to the Annual Fund for a total of \$208,028 in donations.

We are so grateful for the continued generosity of our parents, alumni, grandparents, Board of Regents, faculty, staff, and friends who support the enrichment of education for our students.

Special thanks to our 2020-2021 Annual Fund Chairs, Kay and John Petersen and their Owls, Landry '14, Delaney '16, Joey '19, and Mia '22.

Communities Foundation of Texas' North Texas Giving Day is an 18-hour online giving event designed to empower every person to give back to their community by supporting local nonprofits and causes they care about in one easy-to-use platform. The Oakridge School is proud to be a part of this community effort.

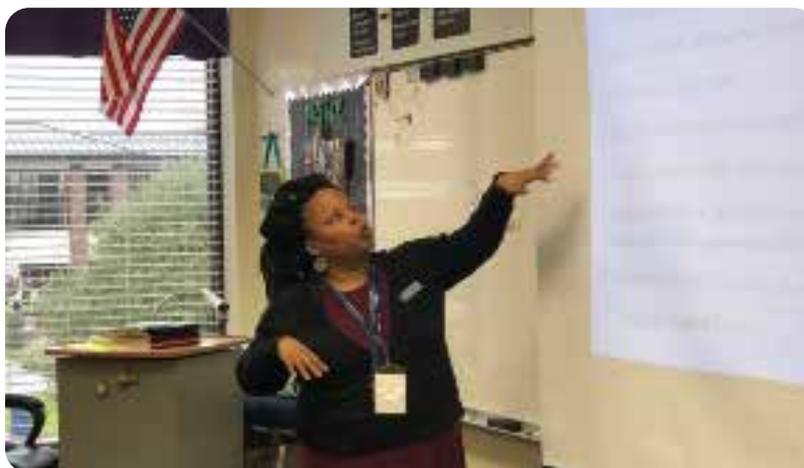
On behalf of The Oakridge School, THANK YOU for your commitment to our students and for your generosity.

*Alisa Hunter  
Development Communications Coordinator*



# TEACHER'S NEW ROLE

Mrs. Kymberly Ayodeji, a Computer Science and Math Teacher in the Oakridge Upper School, was this year named a member of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Development Committee for Computer Science. In all, there are eight members from high schools and colleges from across the U.S. serving on the 2020-21 committee.



According to AP Central, the educators represent a diversity of knowledge and points of view in their fields and, as a group, are the authority when it comes to making subject-matter decisions in the exam-construction process.



"I am honored to be a part of the College Board committee," said Mrs. Ayodeji, who joined The Oakridge School faculty in 2018. "With my background in public,

international, and now independent school teaching, I believe I can make a meaningful contribution."

The College Board, an association of more than 6,000 universities, colleges, schools, and other educational institutions, connects students to college success and opportunity. It is best known for its college entrance examination, the SAT, and the Advanced Placement (AP) program.

Congratulations, Mrs. Ayodeji!

## DEBORDE NAMED A "TOP TEACHER"

*Fort Worth Magazine's* 2020 list of Top Teachers includes Brad DeBorde, an Upper School theatre teacher at Oakridge.

In addition to theatre, DeBorde writes professionally and teaches a seminar course on independent publishing. A dozen of his students have had their work published and he considers it cool that they can enter a college interview and say, "Here's my novel." Despite coming from a family of educators, DeBorde sees a lot of parallels between himself and his students. He acknowledges they're all growing together.

"Those first five years as a teacher ... you think you know everything," he told the magazine. "Then you settle in and realize, 'Oh, teaching is also a lifelong learning position.' So, like your students, you grow and you mature." In all, the magazine honored five private and five public school teachers who the writers said, "share an immense passion for what they do."





# ALUMNI



# ALUMNI NEWS

## CLASS OF 1999

### Chandry Buck Manzke '99

is the chief operating officer of Victory Awning, a Fort Worth-based company specializing in all aspects of metal and fabric awning production



– from conceptualization and design to manufacturing and installation. Their most recent work involved producing shade structures for the Oakridge Athletic Complex.

During the pandemic, Victory Awning converted its sewing department's production to making non-surgical masks and donated them to organizations in need. The company has provided more than 1,000 masks to local organizations like IDEA Public Schools, James L. West Dementia Care – a long-term care facility in Fort Worth for elderly patients with dementia or Alzheimer's, the Weatherford Police Department, Safe Haven of Tarrant County, and Texas Child Protective Services (CPS) of Tarrant County workers.

KTVT-TV/CBS11 (Dallas-Fort Worth), in its "Today's Ones for Texas" segment, highlighted Victory Awning and Chandry for their inspiring act of kindness in mass-producing masks for local organizations.

## CLASS OF 2003

**ERIC BALCH '03** is an author who recently published *Assault on Devil's Den*. "I have been writing for many years now, but it was only recently I completed my first book. I hope that the success of it will inspire me to greater efforts and more exciting titles in the future," Eric says. He received his Bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University and previously co-owned a successful business where he sold homemade dog treats and dog food. Eric and his fiancée, Jennifer, own three dogs: Merlin, Kerry, and Smidgeon.

*Assault on Devil's Den* is available on eBook for Nook, Bookmate, Booktopia, Kobo, and the Apple Books app. It is also available in paperback at Barnes and Noble, Booktopia, Bookshop.org, Books A Million, Books Inc, and Tattered Cover. Follow Eric on Facebook @ericbalchauthor and visit his website <https://ericbalch.com/assault-on-devils-den-now-available/>.



Fort Worth Magazine featured **CHRISTINE READ DA SILVA '03** in the city's best physicians issue. Christine is a board-certified physician assistant with a special interest in medical and cosmetic dermatology. She graduated with honors from the University of North Texas Health Science Center with her Master's in Physician Assistant Studies.



She is dedicated to making a difference and has learned the immense rewards of disease treatment and prevention for future health and happiness. Christine lives in North Richland Hills with her husband **Paulo Da Silva '05** and two Legacy Oakridge Owls, Addison (K) and Aiden (Pre-K).

Christine says she chose Northstar Dermatology because she wanted to be part of a team that demanded excellence, skill, and compassion in the pursuit of patient health. [www.northstardermatology.com](http://www.northstardermatology.com)

**BILLY LIN '03, MD**, graduated from the Family Medicine Residency Program at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in July 2020. Dr. Lin completed his undergraduate degree at Austin College with a Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry and Asian Politics & Society before completing his medical degree at St. Matthew's University School of Medicine in 2014. Dr. Lin took the American Board of Family Medicine certification exam in August. We are excited to announce he has earned board certification by the American Board of Family Medicine.



## CLASS OF 2005

**TRAVIS DURANT '05** is the founder of The Durant Method – a fitness method driven by understanding your why and the steps and actions to achieve your goals. Travis offers multiple coaching options that can be virtual or one on one to fit your lifestyle. Follow him on Instagram @thedurantmethod or visit [thedurantmethod.com](http://thedurantmethod.com) to learn more.



**KAYLEE PERRY '05** and Christopher Land were married in a small ceremony in Paradise Valley, Arizona in September. Christopher is a certified general appraiser and Kaylee joined Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty as a global real estate advisor. She serves Tarrant, Dallas, Denton, and Johnson counties specializing in luxury real estate. The couple plans to formally celebrate their marriage with friends and family at a reception in late 2021.



## CLASS OF 2007

In March, alumnae **ANNIE DEL VALLE OLIVA '07** and **AVERY DEL VALLE '10** celebrated the grand opening of their family-owned Brazilian restaurant called Blaze Brazilian Steakhouse at Toyota Music Factory complex in Las Colinas. "We are all so proud of Blaze," said Annie. At Blaze, you can get a taste of Brazilian hospitality and feast on a pleasing array of skewered grilled meats presented tableside by their gaucho chefs. As the pandemic continues to impact the family-owned restaurant significantly, they now offer eleven different "Blaze Dinner Packs for Two" dishes to choose from as a seamless option when you want to stay home along with pickup and delivery available through GrubHub, Doordash, and UberEats. Follow Blaze Brazilian Steakhouse on Instagram @blazebsh, Facebook @BlazeBrazilianSteakhouse, or visit online at <https://blazebraziliansteakhouse.com>.



# ALUMNI NEWS

## CLASS OF 2008

**TARAN BOWMAN MCGOWEN '08** is a licensed professional counselor, therapist, and owner of Thrive House Therapy, PLLC, located in Las Colinas. She works with children and adults, specializing in young adults and middle-aged adult life transitions, anxiety, depression, and couples. Taran says she loves being able to walk with clients through the seasons of life, continually supporting through prayer, providing solutions and interventions to help clients reach their desired future. Taran lives in Arlington with her husband Jordan McGowen, and their four-year-old daughter Rhian, a Legacy Owl. You can schedule an appointment at [www.thrivehousetherapy.com](http://www.thrivehousetherapy.com) and follow @thrivehousetherapy on Instagram and Facebook for updates.



## NICK LANE '08

married Upper School Art Teacher Lindsey McCartin on November 30, 2019, at the Marty Leonard Community Chapel. A reception followed at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.



## CLASS OF 2009

### NATALIE BROWN

**RATLIFF '09** and husband, Robert, are expecting their first child in the spring.



### DAX MOORE '09

qualified and competed in February with his team at Wodapalooza (WZA), a Crossfit Sanctioned Event and feeder competition to the largest annual competition, The Crossfit Games. "This is a huge milestone for any athlete or competitor, and something I will be proud of for the rest of my life," says Dax. The WZA Miami Fitness Festival is an annual celebration and competition held in Miami's Bayfront Park and brings together thousands of athletes and spectators to celebrate fitness, community, and life.



## CLASS OF 2010

**ROSS APO '10** graduated from Brigham Young University and is currently living in Utah with his wife and daughter, Taya Jade Apo, born on February 9, 2020. Ross has a training business, MILE-WR, specializing in football training, and recently launched a supplement company, HAVOK Supplements. Follow him on Instagram @havoksupplements.



## CLASS OF 2011

**TYLER PFURSICH '11** married Mykayla Gunderson on July 12 at Mount Vernon Canyon Club in Golden, Colorado. Tyler is the head soccer coach at Livingston High School, and Mykayla is a pediatric ICU RN. The newlyweds live in Arlington.



**GUESTON SMITH '10** graduated from the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Architecture in 2015. Today, Gueston is the Lead Designer and Head of Operations at Kubed Living. This startup company designs and coordinates the construction of luxury shipping containers all over the United States. Additionally, Gueston designs logos for entrepreneurs by taking their vision, ideas, and business outlook to create a brand identity that closely expresses their vision. "It's so rewarding to witness how excited my clients get for their own business after receiving their logo," said Gueston. "What sets me apart is my willingness and curiosity to try new things, to explore and to learn a skill, and ultimately learn more about myself."



Voyage LA Magazine (Los Angeles), in its "LA's Most Inspiring Stories" segment, highlighted Gueston Smith of Guesscreative in South LA for his creative talents and entrepreneurship.

Follow Gueston on Instagram @guestoncordae or visit his website [www.guesscreative.com](http://www.guesscreative.com).

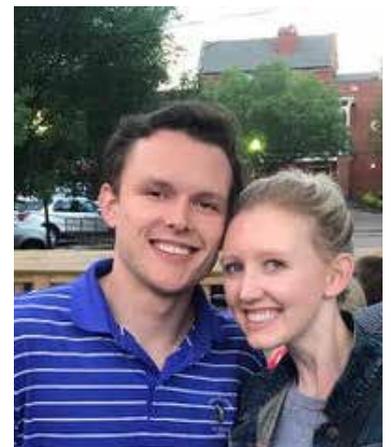
## CLASS OF 2012

**KATHY BUCKALEW '12** graduated from New York University School of Law with a Juris Doctor degree in May 2019. Kathy works at the Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office in Miami, Florida.



## CLASS OF 2013

**MADISON MCWITHEY '13** graduated from Boston College School of Law in May 2020 with Pro Bono Excellence and was honored as a Public Interest Designation Fellow. Madison will work at Udashen Anton Law Firm as a criminal defense attorney in Dallas.



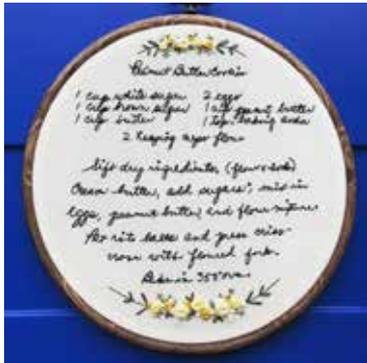
# ALUMNI NEWS

**HANNAH OGLE '13** and **JAMES VINSON '10** married August 22 at Anthony Chapel at Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs, Arkansas.



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**LAUREN WHEAT '13** is a scenic designer, props designer, and freelance artist who has worked at several theaters across the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, including Dallas Children's Theater, WaterTower Theater, and Stage West. She obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Baylor University with a major in Theatrical Scenic Design and a minor in Studio Art. Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, Lauren is supplementing her time creating beautiful custom embroidery hoops. She has a special interest in embroidering handwriting samples, favorite illustrations, flowers, and sayings that will make a great personalized gift for the holidays. Follow her on Instagram @lernwheat and visit her website laurenwheat.com.



## CLASS OF 2014

**KASEY MUCHER '14** earned a Doctor of Pharmacy from Ohio Northern University - Raabe College of Pharmacy. Kasey will complete a PGY1 Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Residency with University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio, this coming year.



## CLASS OF 2015

**GRETCHEN LEFFLER '15** is moving from Florida to Portland, Oregon, to join the LAIKA team. LAIKA is a feature film animation studio founded in 2005 and was awarded a Scientific and Technology Oscar® for its innovation in 3D printing in 2016. Gretchen will work on LAIKA's seventh film as a junior digital fabrication artist on the Puppet team.



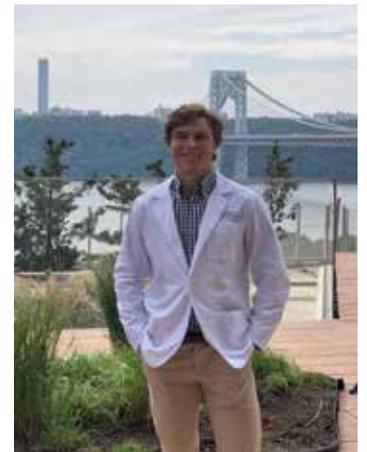
## CLASS OF 2016

**OLIVIA DUKE '16** graduated magna cum laude from the University of Mississippi in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Accountancy with a double minor in Spanish and International Studies. Olivia will continue her studies at Ole Miss to earn a Master in Taxation and Data Analytics at the Patterson School of Accountancy.



.....

**TATE HUNTER '16** graduated from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology in May. Tate is one of 88 new students admitted in the Class of 2024 at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine.



.....

**JUDGE NASH MCWITHEY '16** graduated cum laude from the University of Mississippi in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Accountancy. Judge is pursuing a Master's degree in accounting at Ole Miss, and upon successful completion, has a job waiting at a top accounting firm in Dallas.



## ELIZABETH THOMPSON

'16 graduated from Washington and Lee University in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience. Elizabeth is starting post-bachelor work studying COVID-19 and its relationship to other diseases at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.



science and heart rate variability. Her team has developed an automated algorithm that can detect interbeat intervals and analyze the result from the heart signals at low cost using one electroencephalography (EEG) device on the chest.

## CLASS OF 2019

**OLIVIA MCLEAN '19** tied for second place in a highly competitive internship and co-op experience challenge for engineering and computer science students. Olivia is a sophomore Industrial and Systems Engineering major in the College of Engineering at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro.



## CLASS OF 2017

**BAILEY SPATES '17** is a senior at Pennsylvania State University at University Park, majoring in Health Policy and Administration. Bailey has a new fitness/health page called "The Spark Spot." She hopes to improve the mind, body, and spirit by building a consistent and healthy mindset to achieve personal goals. Bailey hosts virtual Zoom workouts, boot camps, individual training, and provides meal plan options. Follow Bailey on Instagram @thesparkspot\_.



## SUPAKJEERA

**THANAPAISAL '17** is a senior at the University of Texas at San Antonio, majoring in Computer Science with a concentration in Software Engineering. Supakjeera is a former school ambassador and volunteered as a tour guide for prospective students. She has served as vice president of the Computing Machinery Association - Women's Chapter at UTSA, where she organized and planned the career development workshops for STEM students.



## CLASS OF 2020

**MACIE MOODY '20** cheered at her first football game with Stephen F. Austin State University with the 2020-2021 Cheer Team.



Today, she works as an undergraduate research assistant at UTSA. Her department's current project relates to data

# MAKING AN IMPACT

When hospitals worldwide had a shortage of personal protective equipment for medical staff while caring for novel coronavirus patients, **Ryan Klesmit '08**, **Ashley Klesmit '08**, and their daughter Ava, answered the call.

The Klesmits used their 3D printers to create hundreds of washable and reusable plastic face masks to donate to doctors, nurses, nursing homes, veterans' groups, and others. While fundraising to help cover some of the expense of making the masks, the couple said, "As we self-quarantine, we felt like we needed to do something to help those on the frontline who are risking their own health and safety." They had been using their own supplies to create the masks, but needed to purchase elastic bands, sealer, and filters. WFAA-TV/ABC 8 (Dallas-Fort Worth) featured the family's remarkable story in April.

The Klesmits are celebrating their sixth wedding anniversary and live in Dallas, Texas.



Follow Creation Bay, the Klesmit's family-owned 3D printing business, on Etsy at [www.etsy.com/shop/CreationBay](http://www.etsy.com/shop/CreationBay)



# MAKING AN IMPACT

As the COVID-19 panic began to set in across Texas, **Jessica Jose Wauson '03** and her mother, Susan Jose, saw an opportunity to fill a critical gap.

The mother-daughter duo collaborated and started Masks for Meals. They wanted to do their part to help protect the community, feed frontline workers, and help keep local restaurants serving food during unprecedented times. So, for a \$20 donation, customers would receive a handmade, vintage fabric mask lined with 100 percent cotton tight weave fabric and elastic sides. Susan sewed, and Jessica organized the orders and scheduled deliveries.

“We sold over \$6,000 in masks and delivered meals to the John Peter Smith Hospital COVID-19 Unit/ER and a pandemic response anesthesia group at Harris Downtown,” said Jessica. “People were ordering 10-20 masks at a time, so it got a little crazy, but made us feel like we were able to do something for our friends in the restaurant industry when they were shut down and for those working the hospital frontlines.”

All proceeds were used to buy meals from local restaurants and delivered to Fort Worth hospital workers.



Follow Cocoon Living Interiors on Facebook @cocoonlivinginteriors





# ONCE AN OWL, ALWAYS AN OWL.

*Stay connected through all of life's best moments.*

Do you have news you'd like to share?

Submit information for Alumni News to [theoakridgeschool.org/alumni/updateinfo](https://theoakridgeschool.org/alumni/updateinfo)  
or email [alumnirelations@theoakridgeschool.org](mailto:alumnirelations@theoakridgeschool.org).



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# 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 intellectual and social skills as well as cultural, emotional, and physical development, thus preparing 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 succeed 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 and in the pursuit of knowledge as a lifelong experience.

We believe in high moral and ethical standards, honor, and mutual respect.

We believe The Oakridge School functions most effectively with the involvement of students, parents, faculty, staff, and members of the community.

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



## *Board of Regents 2020-2021*

**Mr. Jim Haddock**  
*Chairman of the Board*

Mrs. Kelly Broadus

Mr. Don Duke

Dr. Rich Enos

Mrs. Cathy Handy

Mr. Michael Heiskell

Mr. Scott Howell

Mr. Mark Jones

Mrs. Lorraine LaRovere

Dr. Victoria Myers

Ms. Nancy O'Shea, Lifetime Member

Mr. John Petersen

Mr. Charles Pierson

Mrs. Dana Queenan

Mr. Don Starnes, Lifetime Member

Mr. Ron Widup

Mr. Matt Worthington

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## *2020-2021 Administrative Staff*

**Mr. Jon Kellam, Head of School**

**Mrs. Sarah Kramer,**  
**Asst. Head of School**

Mr. Jim Andersen

Mr. Phillip Farhat '93

Ms. Kathy Gamill

Mrs. Lori Lane

Mrs. Lauren Matocha

Mr. Shawn Meadows

Mrs. Christine Metoyer

Mrs. Nicki Morgan

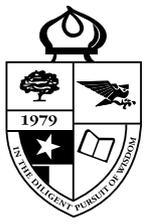
Mrs. Reda Petraitis

Mr. Britt Robinson

Dr. Sarah Schecter

Mrs. Michelle Vaughn

Mrs. Amy Wilson '92



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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).

