

Eye to Eye

A Mentoring Program for the 1 in 5 Who Learn Differently

Paint, plaster, and magic markers are not exactly what come to mind when you think about learning differences and ADHD, but some Upper School students here at Cannon are looking to change that. They serve as mentors for Eye to Eye, an award-winning national program that pairs high school-aged students with learning differences with middle school-aged “buddies” who have been identified as having similar disabilities. Through the universal language of art, mentor and mentee gather after school once a week and connect while creating projects together. By opening conversations in this environment, the younger students can learn to see their own strengths by connecting with a buddy who has been through a similar situation.

This is the inaugural year for the Eye to Eye program at Cannon, which Upper School Learning Specialist Tere Hurtado discovered after seeing a TED talk featuring founder David Flink. This past summer, Lydia Pinto '19 and Will Zandhuis '20 spent a week at the Young Leaders Organizing Institute, held at Brown University, to be trained as chapter leaders. Since then, they've led their first



Will Zandhuis '20 and Lydia Pinto '19 lead Cannon School's Eye to Eye program.

group of Upper School mentors and Middle School mentees through the program—with great success. “The kids ask us, ‘Did you have this program when you were growing up?’ It’s great for us to tell them that although we didn’t have it, it’s a great opportunity for them to one day become leaders like Will and me,” said Lydia.