



BY JIM MORRISON

TRAVEL WEEK 2021  
BRINGS THE WORLD  
TO OUR DOORSTEP

Purposeful and immersive travel is a cornerstone of the Nueva experience. The places we go, the people we meet, and the way we reflect on our experiences as an entire community reaffirms and develops our understanding of the world. Travel—and the studies, preparation, and sense of shared responsibility that precede it—helps us to live up to our mission of developing informed and engaged global citizens.

At the heart of those travel experiences has always been the imagination, resilience, and tireless efforts of the deans, teachers, and administrators responsible for planning our local and global treks. The 2020–21 trip planning team—led by Dean of Student Life Hillary Freeman and Eighth-grade Dean Cynthia Kosut—and the grade-level deans took on the challenge this spring of “traveling” during a pandemic.

During the week of May 17 through 21, Nueva students engaged in five days of virtual travel. Students and their faculty chaperones visited museums, met with experts from around the world, entered the homes of indigenous people across three continents, attended cooking classes, and toured schools, sanctuaries, and remote locations around the world. Many of these experiences were live on Zoom, and hosted by our travel partners from past, in-person trips.

“Built on the foundation of why we travel, we worked on the design of an immersive academic and cultural experience for each grade for our middle and upper school students,” Cynthia shared in her first letter introducing the travel week program to middle and upper school families. “So, why do we travel? Collectively, our trips develop a sense of global citizenship and expand our students’ comfort zone, academically, socially, and emotionally.”

While the experiences at each grade level were uniquely tied to the distinctive, year-long thematic foci, all of the 2021 trips were built around the pillars of the Nueva experience, including environmental citizenship, design thinking, social justice and equity, and social-emotional learning.

New this year, as well, was one common theme throughout all of the trips: diaspora.

“We wanted to use this opportunity to magnify our goals and build unique

experiences that ignite learning and enhance understanding,” Cynthia explained. “To that end, we chose an underlying theme for all grades: how the concept of diaspora (from the root ‘to spread’) relates in the context of the focus for each grade’s particular exploration.”

In grades 6 and 11, students explored the American experience, examining the migration of African Americans from the South to the Northeast for manufacturing jobs. Eighth graders looked at the movement of people from rural communities to urban centers in Japan, China, and Spain.

Cynthia added, “We saw many opportunities to make the connections necessary in facilitating critical thinking and empathy.”

With this theme in mind, faculty chaperones were asked to identify how this theme of diaspora connected to the content they already have planned. Just like in normal years, the goal was for our community to share in authentic and informed travel experiences.

“This year required a pivot into parts unknown,” Hillary reflected. “Because of our collective ‘yes, and’ and can-do spirit, our cohort of Nueva educators made the magic happen. My sincere hope is that each person involved will reflect on their own personal learning and recognize it when it appears over and over again in their lives.”





05.19.2021

# JUST PLANE AWESOME

AURA M., NINTH GRADE

When I first heard that Nueva was doing a virtual trips week, I was somewhat apprehensive about how well the experience of traveling and experiencing a new country could be replicated in a meaningful way on Zoom.

What I didn't realize was that the trips team hadn't just planned a series of talks on video calls. The interactive sessions—most notably building and learning to play a cajón, pottery workshops, and a cooking class on *sopa seca*, a traditional dish—gave me the opportunity to experience some of the wonders of Peru from my very own house!

I just can't describe in words how amazing and awe-inspiring the virtual flight over the Nazca Lines was. The excitement of flying—a refreshingly new perspective in a reality in which I'm stuck at home and barely aware that the rest of the physical world exists—coupled with the thrill and wonder of learning about the unsolved mystery of these lines was an experience I will never forget. I think this might be my favorite activity so far on the Peru trip...It's definitely the activity that I was least expecting to be so excited about, at any rate.

↑ Ninth grader Sam M. builds his cajón drum as part of the Peru trip experiences.



↑ Ninth graders experienced a virtual flyover of the Nazca Lines, seeing footage taken from an airplane.



8TH GRADE PROJECT  
 "Today's virtual travel day was fascinating and I enjoyed it very much. We began with an excursion in Beijing—it was interesting to see interactions with locals, daily life, and the contrast between old and new Beijing (the modern vs past), then learned how to make noodles with Jiang Laoshi (it was very fun and I'd even do it again on my own)."

Rachel Y., eighth grade (pictured above)

*What was most exciting to me is that this year, rather than focusing only on Cusco, students got to experience a much wider geographical area, view the beauty and diversity of the country, and learn about the fascinating and, at times, challenging history.*

Jo Newman, ninth-grade dean

5-18-21

# THE WORLD IS OUR OYSTER

SEBASTIAN DEERY, 12TH GRADE

After a two-hour drive across the Golden Gate Bridge, through San Francisco's Presidio and Marin's seaside eateries and kayak shops, the winding roads came to a stop at an unassuming dirt lot. The ocean air cleared our disorientation from the long drive and we were greeted by Gary Fleener, our expert for the day in anything and everything intertidal.

Gary led us to the seashore and taught us about the symbiotic beauty found on the beach in the region where the ocean tides fall and leave moist sand cluttered with small crabs, washed-up jellyfish and oysters, and partially burrowed clams among the stranded sea kelp. (And trust me when I say, depending on your taste, he came equipped with the best and worst sense of dad humor one might expect from an oyster expert...but I digress.)

After a brief drive farther north, we arrived at Hog Island Oyster Co., a prominent local oyster producer, and we learned firsthand how it relies on the natural harmony of Tomales Bay and intertidal areas to farm millions of oysters each year. We even got our hands dirty and learned how to shuck open an oyster or two (or a half dozen in the case of some avid Nueva shuckers).

Opening the little mollusk is easier said than done, requiring the right technique with a knife more so than raw brute strength ("Finesse, not force," Gary told us), but the process is certainly worth it! For our efforts we could eat the raw oyster inside, and got to experiment enjoying it with lemon juice, spicy sauces, or a delicious garlic and citrus juice—or as Gary liked to put it "fiesta en la boca" (translated as "party in the mouth").

I think I speak for everyone when I say we left Point Reyes and Hog Island Oyster Co. with a newfound appreciation for the effort put into the production of oysters: harnessing the complex relationship the animal shares with its ocean environment and, through understanding it, cultivating an efficient oyster farm—although, admittedly, some of us left with more than just fond memories, bringing bags of several dozen oysters for the ride home.



Sebastian Deery '21 and his classmates visited the Tomales Bay intertidal zone and then learned to shuck oysters at Hog Island Oyster Co. as part of their Food Cultures trip.



5-21-21

# A DEEP-DIVE INTO PUEBLO CULTURE

RAYA I., FIFTH GRADE

During Travel Week 2021, the fifth graders were able to experience the culture and beliefs of the ancestral Pueblo people firsthand, through a multitude of activities and lessons.

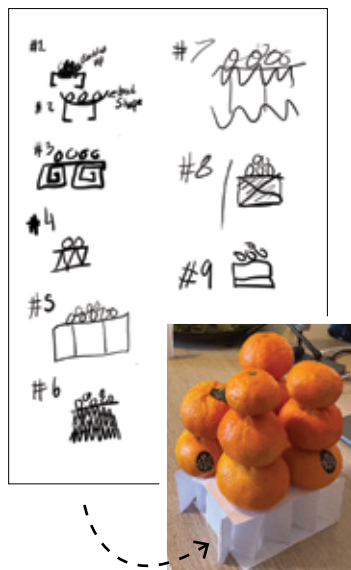
**Archaeological Dig with Zubin:** We would know nothing about the lifestyles of the Pueblo people if it were not for archaeology and digging. With Zubin, we journeyed down to Crocker Road to try and dig up clues of the past and unearth the mysteries that have been there for a long, long time. We got to use metal detectors and giant magnets to search the hillside for clues. My group didn't discover anything momentous but this dig simulated some of the struggles and rewards that real archaeologists face in trying to dig up clues of the past.

**Hogan Making with Zac & Louis Williams:** Some could say that the entire essence of all of these activities a classes ties back to humanities, and I would agree. In all of this, we are learning about a culture and applying it to our modern life. We are taking information from long ago and absorbing it, using it, interpreting it in new and creative ways. For the humanities portion of travel week, we were visited by Louis Williams, a member of Navajo Nation, and, along with Zac, learned about the history of the Navajo hogan, which means home in Navajo. We learned about the different types of hogan, male and female, and then constructed our own using pretzels and cream cheese frosting mixed with confectioner's sugar. It was harder than you would expect, and the history was fascinating!

The fifth-grade travel week was a deep exploration of the ancestral Pueblo culture. Through all of our activities, we journeyed back in time to try and infer what life might have been like back then. Though we were not really at Crow Canyon, it was fun, enlightening, and humbling to participate in these classes just the same.



**6TH GRADE PROTOTYPE PROJECT**  
Using two sheets of paper and no adhesives (glue, tape, etc.), sixth graders were challenged to design a way to raise as many clementines off the table as possible. Sofia Z. applied engineering techniques she learned from Dan Sweeney of the MIT D-Lab to sketch and then build her idea in nine steps. Her final result was a success, with her two sheets of paper holding up 11 clementines!



*We have the power to discover and learn, to question and explore ... to be humbled by the Pueblo people and what they did to bring us right here, right now. We should embrace that power, and we should use it wisely.*

Raya I., fifth grade (pictured above)



**11TH GRADE TRIP**  
A group of 11th grade students visited the National AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park as part of their trip focused on the AIDS Movement. Led by Alegria Barclay, Rachel Dawson, and Allen Frost, students walked the grove, had the chance to view panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt up close, and heard from quilt conservator and "Mother of the AIDS Quilt" Gert McMullin, who has had a hand in sewing all 48,000 panels.



## APPRECIATIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

“ Thank you so much for some of the most amazing two hours I’ve ever had! Seeing, hearing, and, above all, learning about all the wildlife in the cloud forest ecosystem was absolutely amazing. I loved it!

CHARLOTTE A., 10TH GRADE

I learned that when you are trying to solve a problem you should experience it yourself so you have a better understanding on how to help.

JULIA C., SIXTH GRADE

I hope I can speak for everyone in my travel group when I say that this week almost felt like a return to normal, and I am very thankful that after this past year of challenges we could close out our senior year with an experience this enriching and straight out filled with fun.

ALEX CHEN, 12TH GRADE

I really enjoyed making the tapas, dancing, decorating fans, making tiles, and talking with all the cool teachers and leaders. I learned so much about Spanish culture and I especially enjoyed learning about how different cultures influenced what today is known as Spanish culture.

TATIOLA S., EIGHTH GRADE

A memory I have from the week is making blackberry couli and spilling 20 percent of it on me right after I took it off of the stove.

NIKHIL S., SIXTH GRADE

My favorite experience was learning the traditional way of painting using ‘Mao bi’ (a calligraphy pen used throughout most of Chinese ancient history). Because of my passion for art, it was really fun to experiment with this medium.

BRENDAN W., EIGHTH GRADE

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