

THE HERALD



This Issue

COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

A conversation about leadership, service, and the future of St. James'

Edited by Jules Leyser

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Pictured to the left
Mr. Reinke takes up the
2nd grade's jump rope
challenge!

Dear St. James' Community,

The last 18 months have certainly been challenging and memorable. Our Episcopal philosophy, grounded in service, empathy and civic purpose, has provided a tremendous framing for navigating this pandemic and fostering community wide discussions around social justice and engaged citizenship as we press the question, in our Constitution, who is “We the People?”

As you read through the pages of our Summer Herald, you'll see that through the last year, our sense of community, connection and civility allowed us to continue to provide students with an excellent education and a profound awareness of their obligations to our complicated but beautiful world.

In this issue there is a rich tapestry of perspectives around civility, connection and community. During this year where Zoom reframed so much of how we communicate, solve problems and relate to one another, Dr. Bryan Sanders, our STEAM Department Chair and Educational Technology Teacher has penned a must-read piece on construction and connection in which he conveys how creativity and student agency are vital in learning.

Alexa Laffen, who leads our mentor teacher program, and Director of Admission and Student Engagement, Emmy Gilliam, discuss the philosophy of RULER, the Yale-based socio-emotional language program used throughout our classrooms to discuss feelings. At St. James', we embrace that celebrating one's feelings - whatever they may be - is a prerequisite to ensuring everyone is seen, heard and understood.

Ed Hermeno, our 3rd-6th grade math strategist explores strategies for math differentiation, including his excellent minimum wage/social justice project for our older grades. Along those lines of social justice, Chenelle Geoffrey-Lindsey, our new 5th grade teacher and wonderful Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, reports back on how our school deepened its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion through rich faculty book clubs and affinity group space, where self-identified groups meet, celebrate their voices and reaffirm our school's commitment to making our beautiful but complex world an even more vibrant place.

During an interview over Zoom in March, our inaugural Class Cabinet President and Vice President, Ethan Rudzinski and Harper Monroe explore servant leadership at St. James' and what service and leadership look like to these two exceptional young citizens.



Welcoming you back home.

Terry, off to Harvard Westlake in the fall, enjoys our spring tradition of “Head of School for a Day!”



“Most importantly, this year reminded all of us of the vital need of community...”

—Peter Reinke, Head of School

Lastly, you’ll also find some wonderful tributes to our retiring teachers Mrs. Vermette and Mrs. Kammula who we will miss enormously in the coming year; our beloved Nancy Vermette, Paru Kammula and Jim Casey have moved onto new adventures - we will miss them so much but are comforted by the fact they remain connected to us. Jim is a member of our parish, Nancy’s extended family continues to be an important part of St. James’ and Paru lives just around the corner - so we hope to see all of them soon and often.

This summer, as we explore possible titles for our parent fall book club, I note that over the last three years, our book selection has focused a great deal on the importance of resilience and grit in raising children who are joyous and lifelong learners. Certainly the pandemic provided us with these opportunities to encourage our students to innovate and experience learning in new ways. Importantly, those parts of our philosophy most sacred to us, servant-leadership, celebrating difference plus the fundamental cornerstone of our work - that true academic excellence comes through joyous, rigorous and creative experiences grounded in a sense of purpose - continue to inform our work at St. James’.

As our class of 2021 celebrates a historic year for matriculation into the best independent middle schools in the city, it’s clear that St. James’ offers a vital and effective program for our children. Most importantly, though, we are raising a generation of young people who see themselves as servant leaders - ready to roll up their sleeves to build a more nurturing and kind world.

We often share with our students that this past year is so impactful that they will discuss frequently with their children and grandchildren - but I think most importantly, this year reminded all of us of the vital need of community and that our Episcopal traditions served as a marvelous walking stick for our students, families and staff to go through our world with confidence, curiosity, empathy and joy.

All my best,

Peter Reinke

Head of School

St. James’ Episcopal School

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KRP student, Sidney, takes a closer look

Construction and Connection

Arrange and rearrange materials in pursuit of an idea...

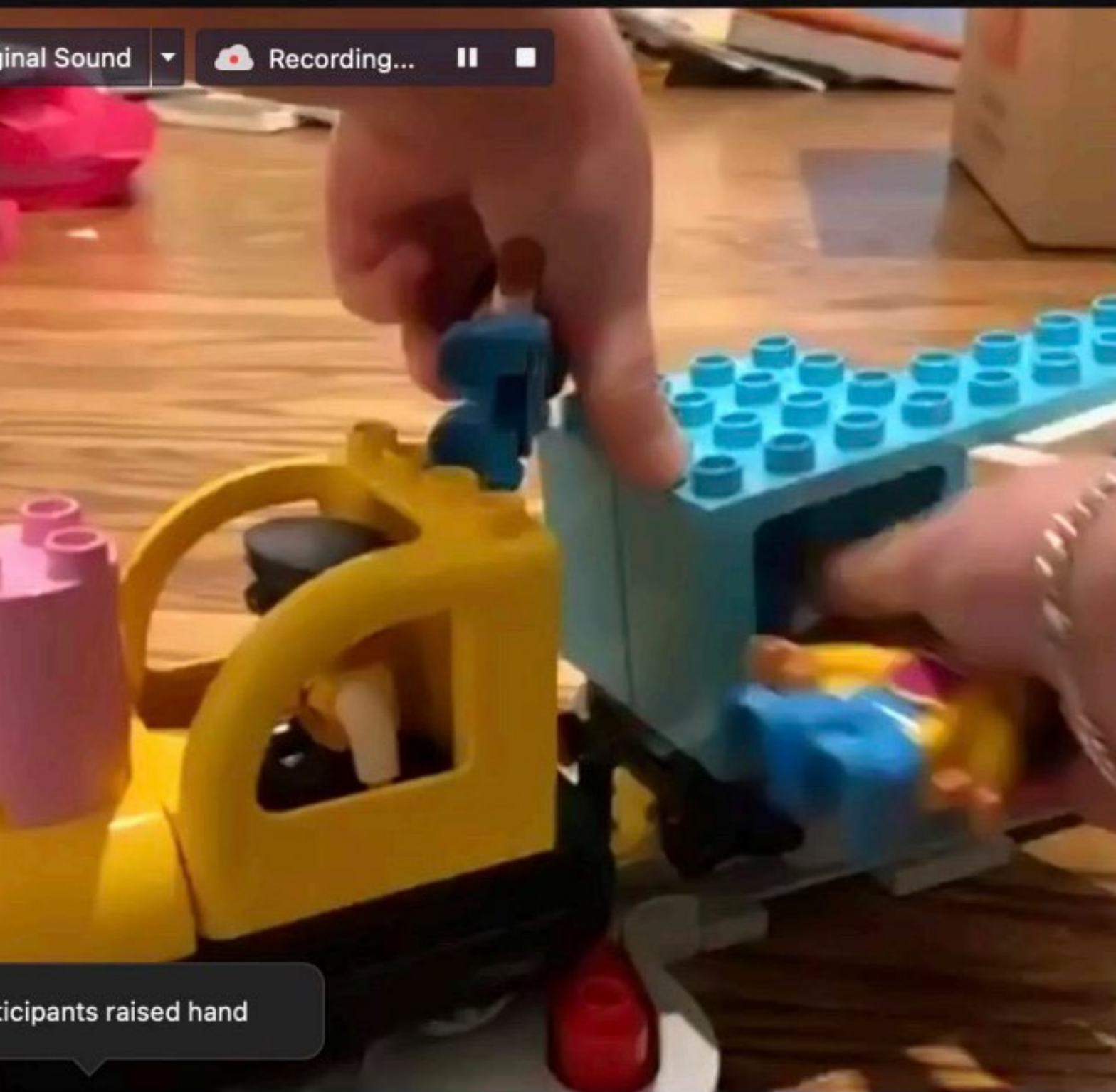
By Dr. Bryan Sanders

Pictured to the right
Dr. Bryan Sanders teaches remote learning class, putting invention guides to work.

The work of children is play. Families and educators know this. A ball, a bat, a rope, some chalk, some obstacles, some building blocks: it's pretty simple. Add the Internet, a few hundred computers, and a busy household, and it becomes complicated -- quickly. With this in mind, we made conscious decisions with technology at St. James' to shepherd our students through meaningful experiences focused on construction and connection.

Children rely heavily on their hands to arrange and rearrange materials in pursuit of an idea. To observe children playing with various configurations is to receive the gift of observing a mind at work. And as they go through this trial and error process, they often narrate their thoughts and come up with specialized language to describe and label along the way. This is especially true in the younger grades, where we selected large LEGO building blocks, touchscreen tablets, and the large programming blocks of ScratchJr and TynkerJr. The emphasis in these two grades is to tell stories with LEGO and computer programming.





Participants raised hand

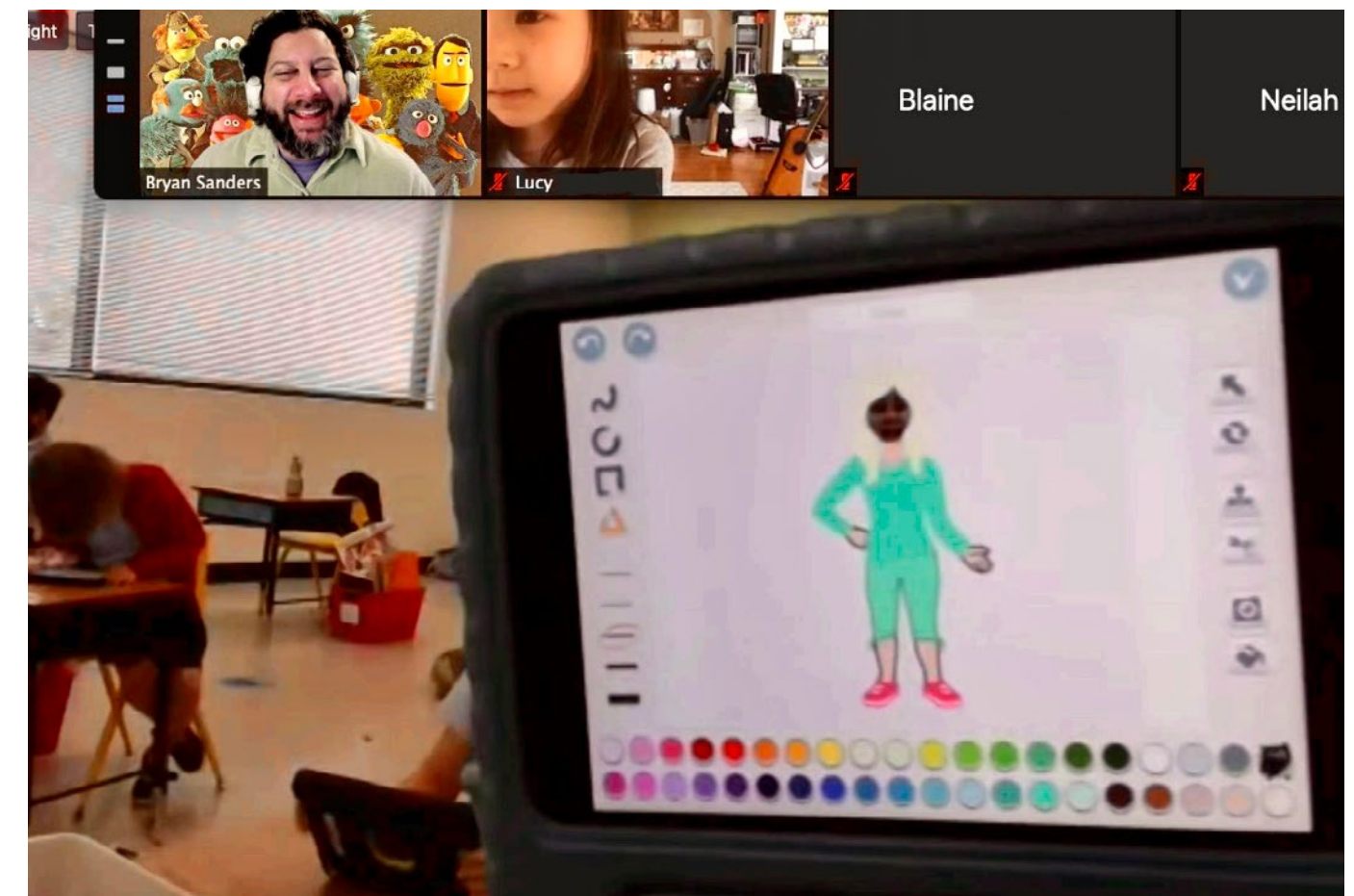


Student imagination and invention guides the work, which allows them to retain ownership and agency in their play. As a result, students develop deep learning relationships to complicated curricular content. When they share their robots, their builds, their narratives, and their programmed games with peers in real time and asynchronously via Internet connectivity, together we consciously participate in a positive community relationship with technology. Instead of accidentally finding strangers on the Internet, we tune in to each other. It's our own channel. Seesaw is now HuskyTube! Students record, edit, and publish videos and photos of themselves and their work for their school peers to view and comment. This approach fosters connection about student construction, and it is woven into how all grade levels work in our programming, robotics, and game design course (PRGMD).

In second grade and up, the building materials get a bit smaller, the details get a bit more complicated, and the work gets bigger. The community and connectivity also grow

exponentially as we add Minecraft: Education Edition to the curriculum. Minecraft is the largest LEGO set ever created, and it serves as our immersive three-dimensional collaborative digital workspace. Nearly anything that can be imagined can be built in Minecraft, especially since a modified version can be programmed by students inside of Tynker to achieve their goals. Student connectivity within a Minecraft world energizes their cognitive development and creative spark. They see each other and work together there in real time as a class -- and all of the negotiations, collaborations, dilemmas, and triumphs found in the playground offline are also found online. With their teacher present, students have opportunities to practice and develop digital social emotional and citizenship skills.

Over time, the work we do together inside of a single class-specific Minecraft world significantly develops to reflect students' burgeoning skills and familiarity with content in robotics, computer science, history, mathematics, science, engineering, language arts, and culture. The intent is to have



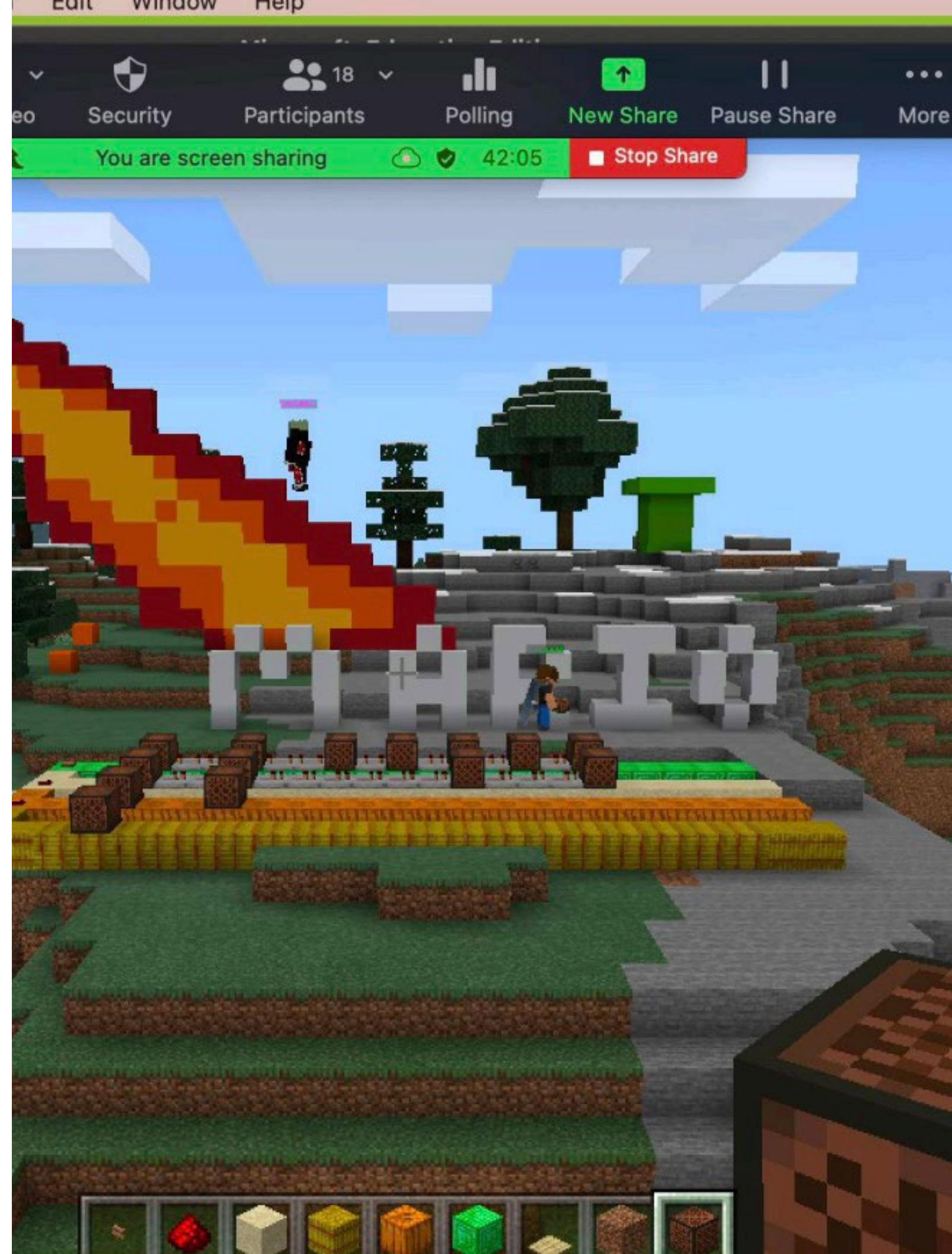
students work for many years in a single Minecraft environment, as this allows them to engage in a constructivist model of school where students build for the sake of the project, instead of a traditional model where students “turn things in” to meet an artificial deadline.

Inside of Minecraft, students create and test prototypes for robots, machines, games, and architecture that they can potentially build outside of Minecraft. And going the other way is also part of our work, as students model in Minecraft what they made with their hands. This happens directly with all of the STEAM and robotics kits, as students develop fluency and fluidity in moving from their ideas to their hands-on materials to the computer and back again in natural patterns that match their work. Through the wealth of experiences that students have in our constructivist approach to education with technology, we consciously position the computer in school as an object-to-think-with and not a place to sit passively and consume junky potato chip content.

Come fifth and sixth grade, this work and play continues with two significant changes. The robotics kits shift from the LEGO paradigm to the Hummingbird, for it offers more flexibility and openness. It allows students to use sensors and motors and

programming to create projects without relying on any LEGO parts. The principles of robotics and engineering exist in many contexts and students benefit from learning how to weave technology into real-life use with everyday objects. The other change in the upper grades is a shift towards community and leadership with our work with Minecraft and programming. We participate in large-scale projects that ask teams of our students to construct urban developments that uphold the United Nations 2030 goals for sustainability or to build unique public buildings that allow humans and animals to work and thrive together in an effort to reimagine how we might put the world back together after Covid-19.

We have spent more time together online in this past year than ever before. And while we are likely burned out on Zoom, we are thriving in student connection about student construction. In the hands of our students, the computer provides them with enormous power in bringing their ideas to life. Screen time when our students are making things is vastly different from mindlessly watching the screen. In this fluid cycle at St. James’ of robotics, Minecraft, and programming, we are trailblazing while constructing and connecting. Our students are hard at work in their play.





*Leading with a
Servant's Heart...*

Ethan R. & Harper M. Interview

*Interview between 6th grade
Class Cabinet President Ethan
R. and Vice-President Harper M.*

Pictured to the left
Class president Ethan
R. and Vice-President
Harper M.

In the Fall of 2020, St. James' mirrored what was happening on the national stage by holding an election for Sixth Grade Class Cabinet positions. After pitching their campaign strategies school wide, the race was tight but Ethan R and Harper M prevailed as President and Vice President respectively. After they were sworn in, they met early one morning over Zoom to discuss their successful campaigns and their new cabinet positions.

Harper: So what is your favorite part of the cabinet?

Ethan: My favorite part of the class cabinet is working with everybody else to make a decision. I love working with you, my Vice President, my Secretary and my Treasurer to make a decision that would either help the school or make the school even better than it is already. We've already had our hot chocolate meeting with Mr. Reinke and we've introduced Laney, our therapy dog.

Harper: What do you think makes us seem like role models to the younger students?

Ethan: I think being responsible is one of the biggest

traits for us being role models. Being knowledgeable about what we're doing and making sure that the other students love our decisions. I think they like our ideas because obviously they voted for us, and they got to see our campaign videos so they know a bit more about who we are. I think the biggest thing is being responsible, knowing what we're talking about, and they look up to us for that.

Tell me a little bit about yourself and the experiences you've had that makes you a great Vice President?

Harper: I like to try a lot of things. I've tried many different leadership experiences such as girl scouts, dance class and sports. I know a lot about St. James' since I've been here for a very long time. I know the teachers and many of the little kids who I hang out with a lot. Some of the campaign ideas that I had came from leadership programs that I've been in over the years. I've also tried a lot of different summer camps and things that might help me with leadership skills.

Ethan: So who are your role models in real life?

Harper: Definitely Kamala Harris because we were elected Vice President around the same time. I think a lot of my role models are older people that have been doing a lot of similar things that I'm doing right now; I look up to them for help. Sometimes I read books about them just to learn.

Ethan: What qualities about yourself make you a good Vice President?

Harper: Some of my best qualities are that I am funny, or so I say! I like to take care of other people, so I am very protective of a lot of my friends. I love to read and I also love to learn new things. I like to come up with ideas and listen to other people's ideas and compromise, if possible. I like to hear a lot of ideas other people have.

Harper: Why did you run for the class cabinet position?

Back Row: Diane K, Yeon Ah R, Lucas C, Michaella A, Keira S, Jace F.

Seated: Rebecca L, Stella P, Ji In P, Harper M.



Second Row: Biloxi W, Waller M, Sophia L, Terry O, Tim G.

Front Row: Theo H, Henry F, Ryan C, Nelson L, Elliot Y.



Sixth Grade Class Cabinet: Treasurer, Biloxi W., President, Ethan R., Vice-President, Harper M., Secretary, Yeon-Ah R.

Ethan: This is my eighth year at St James' school and I ran for the position of Class Cabinet President because I have great leadership skills. I'm responsible, I'm kind and I love working with a team. I had the idea to adopt a therapy dog for the school, which would be so beneficial to the community and the kids. It would hopefully increase study habits and make people feel comfortable. I really thought I had a shot at becoming President and it happened. It was a really great experience.

Harper: Do you have much experience in terms of leadership?

Ethan: I have lots of leadership experience because I have my own charity called Project Visible. I'll tell you a brief summary of my story: my mom and her friends started the charity when I was four years old and I went along with them while they delivered backpacks with food to homeless kids on Skid Row in Downtown LA. We did it every weekend and we came back one day and there was nobody there, so we were confused. We found out that there was a new system where each homeless person went into their own foster

home. We couldn't really deliver backpacks to hundreds of homes across LA County so that's when it kind of broke apart. But in fifth grade when we started the soup kitchen, I remembered that experience so I told my mom that I would like to restart the charity. Instead of delivering food we now deliver items of enjoyment: either books, school supplies, games - anything to make the kids really happy. We've done a Christmas drive where we've gone to motels and delivered Christmas presents to all the kids. We've delivered dozens and dozens of backpacks to kids and it's made them so happy and was such a rewarding experience.

Another thing is that I've been playing soccer for basically my whole life and I've been the captain of my soccer team for a while. I tell the other players what to do on the pitch and so I'm kind of the leader to them. Those are the two experiences that really sparked my leadership as a person.

Tell me why you think your platform resonated with other students at the school?

Harper: I think my platform resonated because I have a lot

Members of the Sixth Grade Class Cabinet

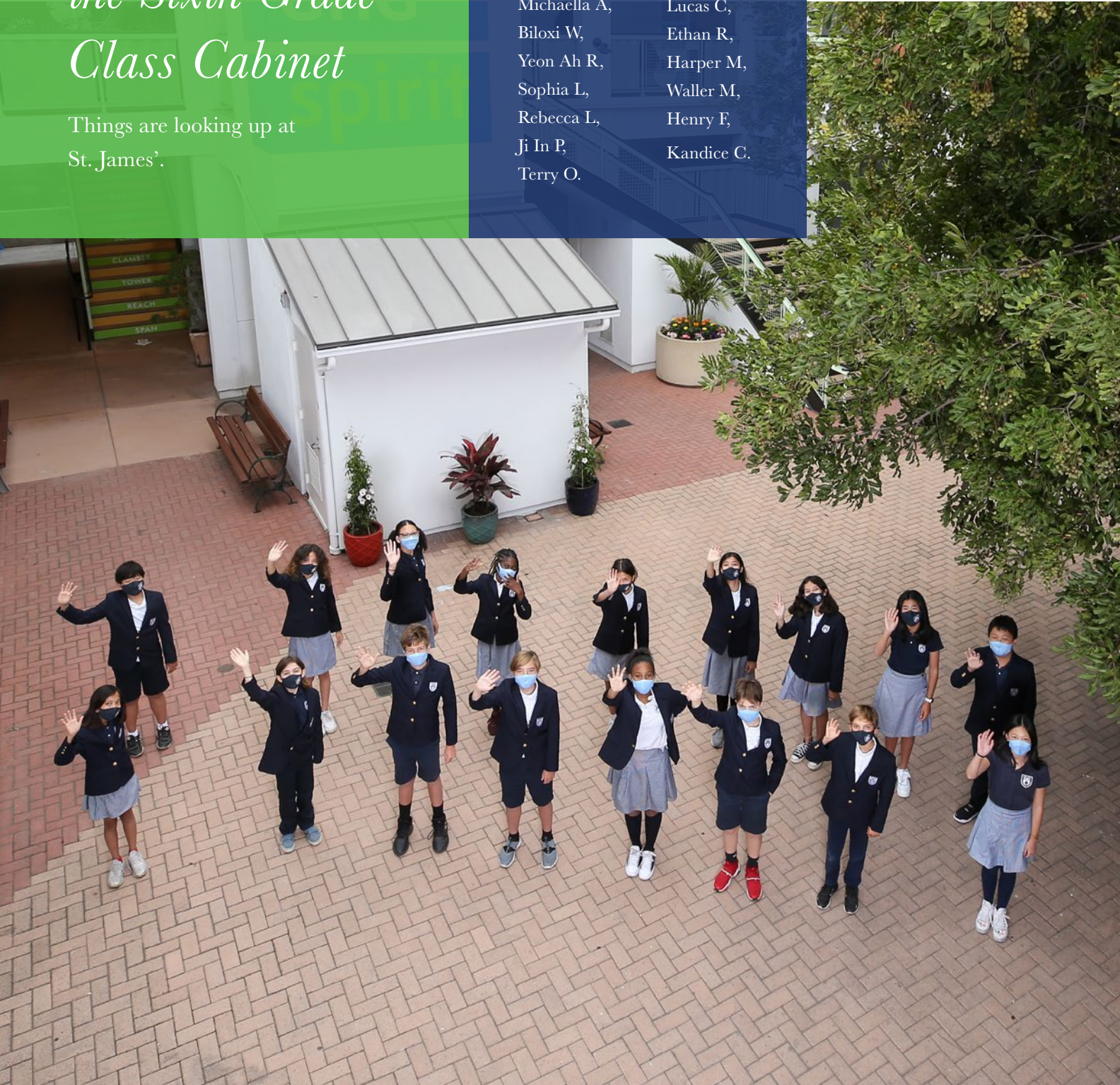
Things are looking up at
St. James’.

Back Row

Ryan C,
Keira S,
Michaela A,
Biloxi W,
Yeon Ah R,
Sophia L,
Rebecca L,
Ji In P,
Terry O.

Front Row

Stella P,
Theo H,
Lucas C,
Ethan R,
Harper M,
Waller M,
Henry F,
Kandice C.



of experience with leadership. I have mostly been quietly leading so not a lot of people knew that I could lead because I haven’t been very open about it. I was a bit shy and I think that resonated because I tried to make it so that a lot of people had a voice in my video. I also tried to make it so that it was something that the older kids and the younger kids could enjoy by including the hot chocolate program. A lot of the younger kids I know like hot chocolate and featuring that made them relate to my campaign a little bit more because I felt that if I had a normal campaign video, not a lot of the younger kids would understand exactly what was going on.

Ethan: So has this experience made you think about running for office as an adult?

Harper: Yes, it has made me think about it a lot. Actually when I was younger I used to think ‘how do people become

Presidents?’ and I was very confused with the process. Until recently I had no idea how everyone voted and I’ve been thinking recently, maybe I might want to run for President or Vice President when I get older. It’s just a thought, so maybe. Have you thought about running for office as an adult?

Ethan: Yes, I’ve been inspired by Joe Biden. He’s such a calm person and he knows society, he knows what’s going on in the world and he’s really responsible about everything. I think because of Covid we paid special attention to the election, and I think a lot of us learned how elections work in general and more information about that topic. So yes, I would really like to run for President when I’m an adult.

A job well done to all who ran!



Members of the Sixth-Grade Class Cabinet

The Lives of Pi

Math Differentiation at St. James' (Grades 3-6): A Multi-Faceted Approach

By Ed Hermeno

Pictured to the right
Ed Hermeno enjoys a discussion with sixth grade students

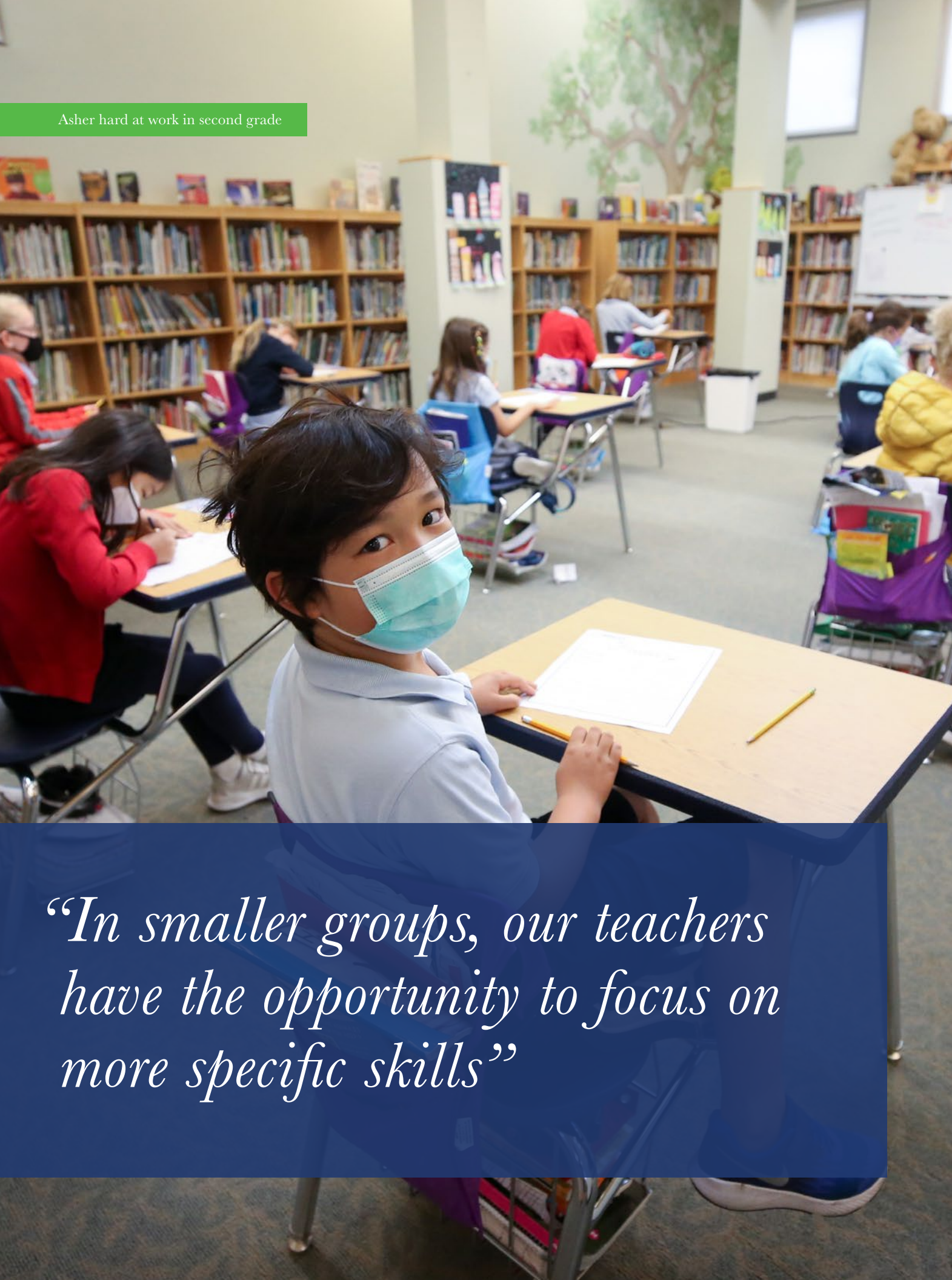
Differentiation is one of the key buzzwords in education today, and we thought it would be helpful to our school community to discuss math differentiation at St. James' in grades 3-6. As our Math Strategist, I have had the privilege of working with our excellent math teaching staff for many years, and I have been able to see the varied and creative strategies they use to engage our young learners. An author of one of the seminal works in this field, Carol Ann Tomlinson notes, "Differentiation consists of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners in the classroom. Whenever a teacher reaches out to an individual or small group to vary his or her teaching in order to create the best learning experience possible, that teacher is differentiating instruction." Over the past few years, our math professional learning community at St. James' has met many times to work on pedagogy that supports the tenets of differentiation. According to Tomlinson ("Reading Rockets"), differentiation relates to the following:

"Differentiation consists of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners..."

—Ed Hermeno, Math Strategist



Asher hard at work in second grade



“In smaller groups, our teachers have the opportunity to focus on more specific skills”



Celine and Paige collaborate

- A) Content – what the student needs to learn or how the student will get access to the information;
- B) Process – activities in which the student engages in order to make sense of or master the content;
- C) Product – culminating projects that ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a unit; and
- D) Learning environment - the way the classroom works and feels.

With regards to content, our St. James’ math teachers have all worked extensively over the last year to develop math curriculum maps, in which we critically analyze class content for the entire year. For each grade, we have developed an outline of specific learning expectations, skills, essential questions, assessments and activities. Our maps are the backbone of our curriculum, and throughout the year teachers continue to meet and refine these maps in grade-level and vertical (i.e. across grade level) teams.

In terms of process and product, our teachers in grades 3-6 use a variety of techniques to support our learners. In smaller groups, our teachers have the opportunity to focus on more specific skills, whether it is to strengthen the foundation of basic multiplication facts, to review fraction and decimal operations, or to calculate measurement, rates and ratios. Our teachers use a range of techniques when working with these groups, including white-board exchanges, math games, and using manipulatives. In these small groups, teachers also have the opportunity to reinforce and reteach foundational skills. Moreover, teachers can provide enrichment opportunities for our more advanced math thinkers. When assessing student achievement, students are asked to reflect their learning incorporating different modalities to meet the needs of students with differing approaches to learning or learning styles; students reflect their understanding using an algorithm, written explanation, and a model.

All of our math instructors in grades 3-6 work to create a nurturing and supportive classroom environment. Even though



Alexandra diligently checks her work

math is the academic content, we are attuned to the social-emotional needs of our students. I have been fortunate to spend considerable time in grades 3-6 math classes this school year, and I see students' smiles, laughter and excitement when they play math games, participate in activities, listen to music and dive into projects.

A component of differentiation includes helping students make interdisciplinary connections between math and other topics, such as the environment, writing, personal finance, history, and social justice. For example, our older students have been working on a Minimum Wage/Social Justice project. To build empathy, each student created a fictional person who is earning minimum wage. They considered many personal attributes of the person, including education (8th grade, high school diploma), immigrant status/documentation, disabilities (physical or mental), age, medical condition, dependents (children, elder), socioeconomic Status (SES), and the hiring bias with identifying factors, such as race, LGBTQ+, gender, and religion.

Our students tracked this person's weekly, monthly, and annual income. Then, they developed a monthly budget for them that includes "needs and wants" that we all have and included items such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation, utilities, entertainment, etc. For this project, students also calculated their take-home pay and taxes paid. Students then looked at a range of apartments and calculated the mean, median, and range of them. To support differentiation, students add additional layers to the project. Their final project can be presented as a video using special effects or a live Powerpoint (or Prezi) presentation. They also must add two interdisciplinary areas that are organic to the project; these areas include, but are not limited to making some artwork, assembling an ad for an apartment, creating a collage of the person's neighborhood, writing a journal entry from the person's point of view, performing within the presentation, creating a skit and writing/performing a song.

Finally, to further support math differentiation at St. James', we have developed and are continuing to develop opportunities in



Elijah paying close attention to the lesson

“To build empathy, each student created a fictional person who is earning minimum wage”

our Beyond School program to meet our diverse learner needs. For example, our Math Magic class has been developed to support foundational math in older grades, and our Number Ninjas and Algebra/Pre-Algebra All Stars classes have given students additional math challenges as they prepare for math in middle school, high school and beyond.

In math class we often use the analogy of a “math tool belt”

where students work to have many resources at their disposal for approaching problems and situations. As teachers who encourage the mantra of “Never Stop Learning” in our classrooms, we know that we can never stop learning as well. In the near and distant future, the St. James’ Teaching and Learning Institute will continue to provide us staff with even more opportunities to add to our own differentiation tool belts. We are excited to see what we and our students will build together.



Leo enjoying class

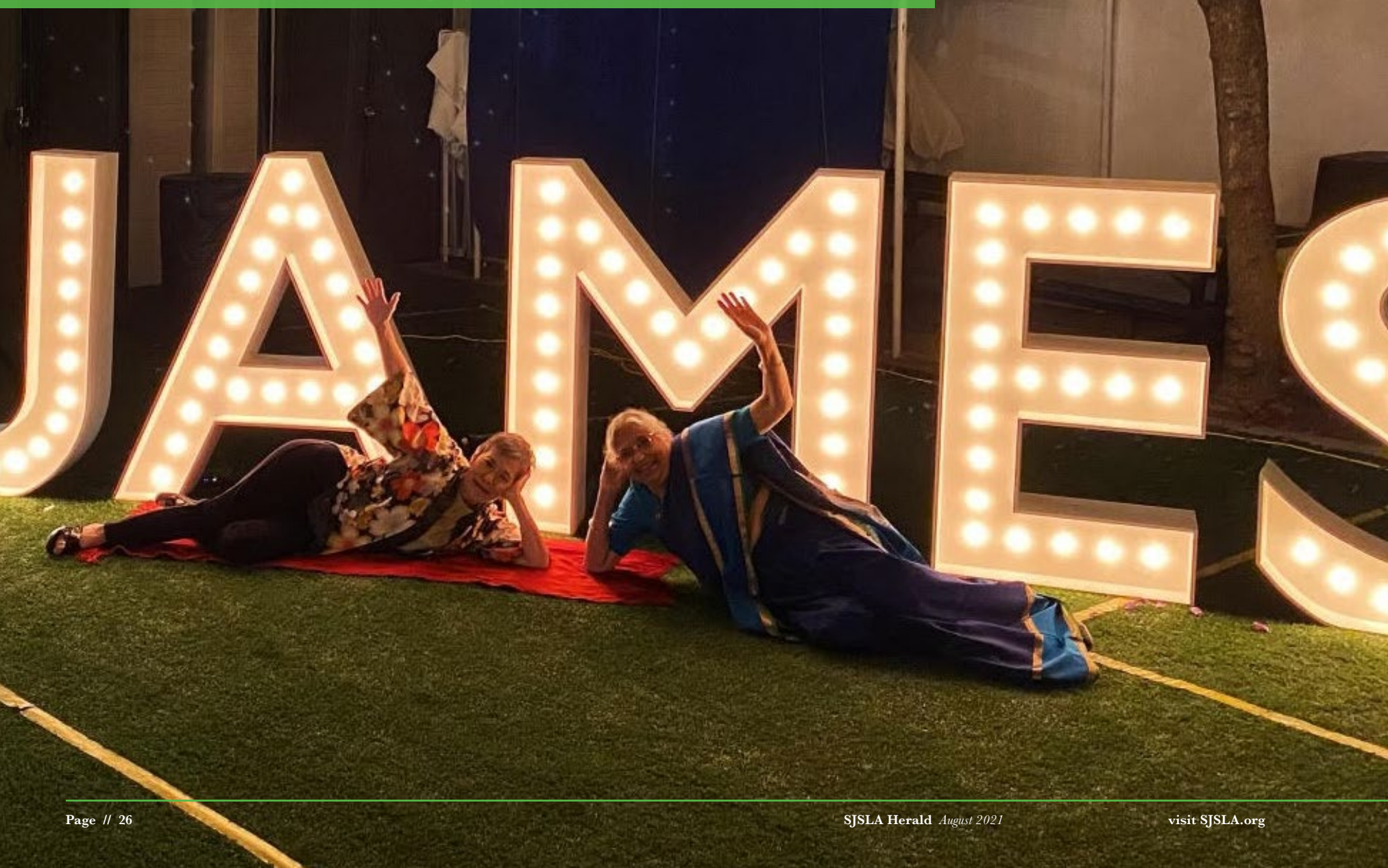


St. James’ Math Strategist Ed Hermeno

“We’re excited to see what our students will build together”

“If there was a Hall of Fame for Educators, Paru and Nancy should be in it...”

—Rev. Charles Rowins



Retirement Tributes

A tribute to the service and dedication of our beloved teachers.

Pictured to the left
Nancy and Paru at the
Back to Life Gala.

An excerpt from the remarks offered by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. James' School chapel service on Friday, June 11, 2020, honoring Paru Kammula and Nancy Vermette on their retirement after decades of service.

“If there was a Hall of Fame for Educators, Paru and Nancy should be in it. Thank you both for decades of service to thousands – yes, thousands - of families. Today's recognition is well deserved.

There has always been an incredible sense of family about this parish and its day school. Love and respect abound. People not only carry out their professional assignments, but enjoy and contribute to one another's sense of well-being. In good times and sometimes sad times, people care for one another.

You two have been anchors for this family. You are an important part of the fabric of this community, a fabric that is a wonderful synthesis of individual fabrics. What a fascinating mix this place is. Really a model, and you two have played a major role in its growth.

Today's lesson is about Jesus teaching in the Temple at age 12. Age 12. The age of St. James' graduates, well on their way to additional schooling and then service to



Peggy Vodrey, Paru Kammula, Ruby Dummett, Nancy Vermette



Rev. Charles Rowins



Paru in the Classroom



Nancy on School Trip

their communities and nation. But guess where these 6th graders developed their reading and writing and social skills? Guess where their preparation was given a kick-start? That's right. Kindergarten and first grade.

Of course, the strength of this school is not just at its beginning levels, but throughout the grade levels and all the other areas of the St. James' experience. People understand that what one person does impacts what others do. Yes, separate grade levels and classrooms, but a common goal. You build on the contributions of others, and others build on your contributions.

Retirement is well-deserved, but it won't be easy for these two individuals. Between them there is plenty of talent and creativity and straight-out love to be shared. But share it they will. Because that's their nature. A nature that has been on display at this good school for many, many years.

Congratulations to you both. "Thank you for your service" is hardly sufficient to describe your contributions to this community.

One of the things I learned was that Kindergarten and first grade are not for everybody. When I had these students for religion class for maybe 30 minutes at most each week, I was exhausted. These two, on the other hand, have devoted decades to giving children a wonderful foundation for life-long learning. They have a gift that they have shared and that keeps on giving. A real tribute to a critical profession.

Paru and Nancy, you have shared your gifts and talents with this good school, and provided the gift of a strong beginning to a life of learning and service. Who knows how many thousands of people will be impacted by those whom you have taught. Truly a blessing for all.





*“Equally at home in a
Halloween costume or in
chapel”*

—Michelle McCormick Class of '88



Let me close with the Prayer attributed to St. Francis. It's a remarkable and timely description of good teachers, people like Paru and Nancy, and, I might add, the rest of us when we're at our best:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

where there is hatred, let us sow love.

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.”

Dropping into Mrs. Vermette's class for either reading aloud to her students or to crack “knock-knock” jokes was always a high point of my class visits - and a welcome respite from budget and personnel discussions. Nancy is a thoughtful and caring teacher, and her classroom was grounded in creativity and a deep love for her students. I once asked Nancy who inspired her teaching philosophy. She replied that she couldn't remember her Kindergarten teacher, but that she was nurtured and cared for by the wonderful Mrs. Pillow, a large and jolly first grade teacher who gave a little 6 year old Nancy big hugs and a lot of encouragement to love learning. At our goodbye party for Nancy, when I referenced Mrs. Pillow in my remarks, Nancy called out “I'll never forget her!” The same is true for Mrs. Vermette; she lives on in the hearts of generations of St. James' graduates - and faculty - for her fluency in the language of five year olds and her love for her colleagues and St. James'. I hope that Nancy will visit us often - we still have unfinished business between her beloved Dodgers and my Oakland A's.

—Peter Reinke, Head of School.

While there are horse-whisperers and dog-whisperers, Nancy Vermette is a true Kindergarten-whisperer. Her ability to communicate so beautifully with such little people simply defies description. Whatever the magic, I'd love to have the recipe for her patented "secret sauce." Is it maybe a little good humor, lots of hearty affection, and a good bit of respect for the dignity and worth of every 5-year old she meets? Does she add a dollop of common sense, and a drizzle of something sweet? Is it a drop or two of something tart at the end to keep it from becoming saccharine? Whatever it is, it's unique to Nancy Vermette and I've never seen it replicated.

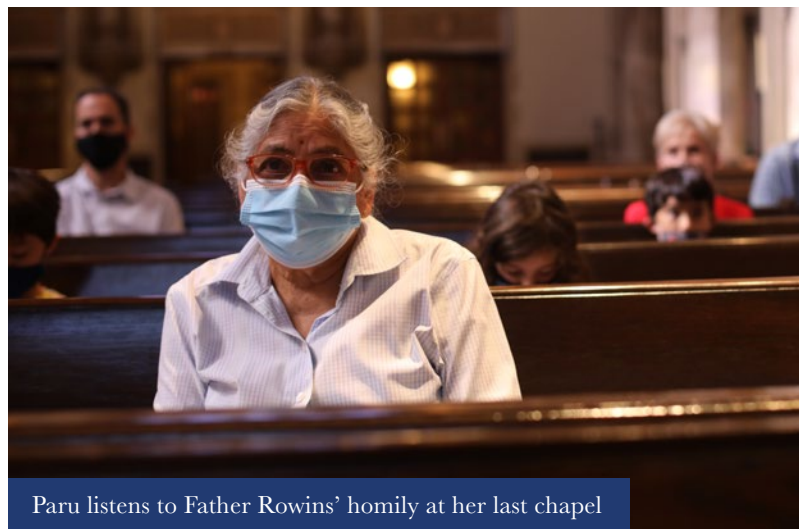
—Debbi David, Former Head of School

I've heard it said, "Teaching is the only profession where you can run into someone who is 45 and they will call you by your name

and tell you something you did many years ago that changed their life." I have been lucky enough to witness endless encounters with Mrs. Vermette and St. James' alumni returning to express their gratitude while sharing their moments in appreciation. One lesson at a time, Mrs. Vermette changed her student's lives for the better, and I too feel lucky enough to count myself as one whose life is changed for the better having known Mrs. Vermette. I will be forever grateful for having such an incredible mentor, trusted colleague and beloved friend.

—Neilah Fleisher, Visual Arts Teacher

The image of Nancy walking into the kindergarten classroom everyday with orange juice and a pack of chips or Cheetos is etched in my memory. I secretly thought, "How does that combination taste?"



Paru listens to Father Rowins' homily at her last chapel



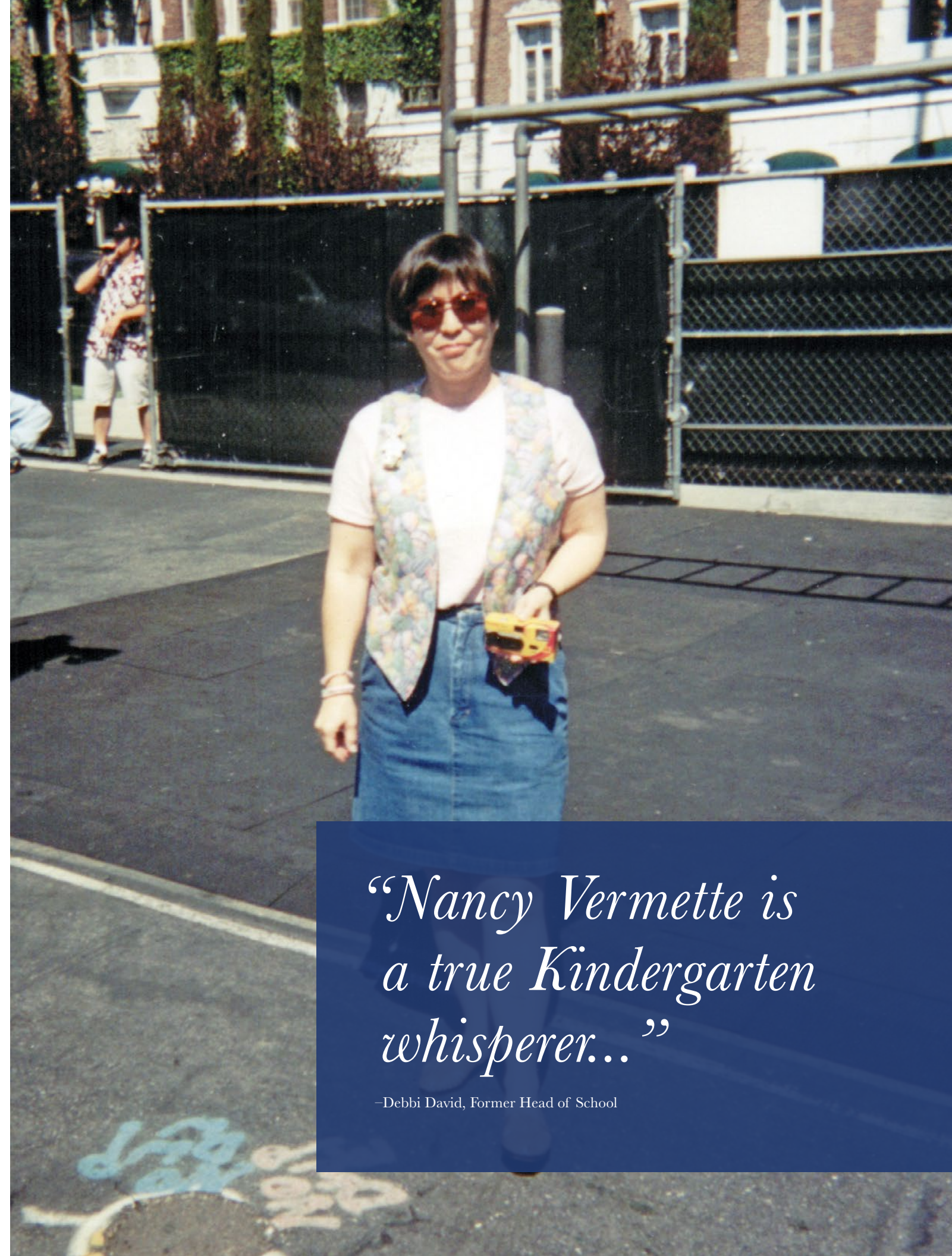
Nancy in the Classroom



Paru Portrait



Nancy and Class



*"Nancy Vermette is
a true Kindergarten
whisperer..."*

—Debbi David, Former Head of School

I enjoyed working with her so much in Kindergarten. I am maybe one of the few who remembers her with long hair. She embodies hard work, cooperation and optimism.

We made a great team. We had so much fun creating hands-on projects for the children. She enjoyed making the paper mache pigs and organizing the Fashion Show in kindergarten (now, Career Day). We culminated the year with the Kinder Circus which was the highlight of the year.

Now, with retirement, it is the beginning of a new chapter, with more time to pursue her creative talents, joining sewing clubs and visiting quilt shows.

—Paru Kammula, Retired 1st Grade Teacher

This quilt was made in honor of an all round educator. Not just one who has mastered teaching some of our youngest huskies, but one who imparts her knowledge to any who seek it out. This quilt is by no means perfect. There are many mistakes and small imperfections. But that is ok, because I have learned from this wonderful woman that as long as you do things with joy

and determination, that things can come out beautifully. That when things are done with love and passion, that their beauty will always shine in the end. It has been an honor to learn from this master educator who has taught and helped me in so many different ways.

—Nicole Hamilton, 2nd Grade Teacher

Happy Retirement, Nancy! We had many creative encounters, and I have enjoyed teaching alongside you. I had so much fun teaching ASE classes with you for Pioneer sewing where students sewed a faux 'coonskin cap, vest, string tie, bonnet, apron, drawstring bag, and cute "critters." We also collaborated for the Around the World celebration teaching your kindergarten class and my third-grade class Japanese folk dances using the "uchiwa," round fan, and "kachi kachi," Japanese castanets. My favorite time was when you came to the third-grade classes on Pioneer Day and shared your knowledge about hand quilting. Then we divided the class into small groups and you were able to teach students how to hand quilt. Each student took home a self-quilted handprint for their souvenir. What a rich and wonderful



The early days...



Retirement quilt for Nancy



Nancy on a field trip to the Fire Department

experience the students had. Congratulations on your retirement, may your wildest wishes come true!

—Your sister, Alice (Alice Kuramoto, 3rd Grade Teacher)

My husband and I were delighted when we found out that our son's teacher for Kindergarten was to be the legendary Mrs. Vermette. Felix may have been in her classroom on a daily basis but I was also her student and like many parents, learned a huge amount from her. She talked to the Kindergarteners like people, not babies, choosing language and a tone of voice she would use when talking to anyone. Watching Nancy helped me to understand how you teach children to learn; not by being spoon-fed but by stretching minds. Nancy had all the fun of the paper mâché pigs and the Zero The Hero calendar but what she also had in droves was respect for these little people and they responded with their eyes, ears, minds and hearts. What a gift to start your journey through education with someone like Nancy Vermette. Enjoy your well deserved retirement Nancy. You will be missed!

—Jules Leyser, P'25

It seems like yesterday I was sitting in Mrs. Kammula's kindergarten classroom making a paper mache pig along with 20 other classmates - messy, smiling and loving everything kindergarten. With Mrs. Vermette by her side, I was unaware of the magic brewing and the incredible connection I would keep for decades to come. Returning to St. James with my own children, I couldn't wait for them to experience those same classrooms led by two of the greatest teachers of all time. With a combined 70 years of teaching, Paru Kammula and Nancy Vermette have remained throughout the years the backbone and foundation of our extraordinary school. Their unwavering dedication to our students will forever serve as a part of our community's blueprint. We wish them love and continued support in their retirement. Rest assured that each of us will be forever indebted for their devotion, encouragement & love.

—Elisha Hall, Class of '90



“I’m not sure what we’ll do without you...”

—Peter Reinke, Head of School



Paru in the Pope Mobile

It's no secret at St. James' that if you want something from Peter, go to Paru. Brand new furniture for 1st grade classrooms? Send Paru. Extension on narrative comments? Paru will make the staff's case... Cancel the faculty meeting - who better to convince the administration to postpone - leave it to Paru. Mrs. Kammula has had me firmly under her thumb since I came to St. James; her humor, kindness, deep love of children and reverence for this calling that we call teachers is an inspiration for all of us. And many an evening, or an early morning, my work has been eased just a bit by that smile and those twinkling eyes popping in to catch up. So much of St. James' has benefitted from the skilled hand of Mrs. Kammula; our Diversity & Inclusion Program, mentorship of countless faculty and school leaders and rich church-school synergy. I was enormously moved when Paru shared at the end of her year how vital chapel had been to her all these years in allowing time for contemplation and peace. Paru, I'm not sure what we will do without you - we'll soldier on - but we eagerly await your return as a substitute teacher!

—Peter Reinke, Head of School

Grace, thoughtful, generous, warm hearted are just a few words to describe Mrs. Kammula. Being her grade level partner for 16 years has been the most wonderful work relationship I have ever had. I remember when I suggested that we start taking the first graders to see theatre productions at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre. She was all for it until I mentioned that we should walk. There was a moment of... are you crazy Mrs. Leonard but it quickly faded to I'm in... when do we go?! Over the years we marched down Wilshire with Mrs. Kammula in her tennis shoes leading our little people in hot and cold weather - even one year in the rain! She was always down for a new educational experience - anything for the children. Her guidance and advice were priceless. Happy Retirement!!!

—Mei-Ling Leonard, 1st Grade Teacher

Our oldest daughter was fortunate to spend her first-grade year in the caring hands of Mrs. Kammula. When visiting the classroom, we witnessed an environment that perfectly balanced structure, individuality, and fun. She demanded the children's attention but

was quick with a funny observation or to laugh at any one of the many absurdities that come with a room full of 6 and 7-year-olds. In our first parent meeting with Mrs. Kammula, she brought us to tears with her keen observations of our daughter's personality and learning style. We couldn't believe, in such a short time, our daughter's teacher could truly see her. Mrs. Kammula's openness and caring will be missed. She is truly part of what makes St. James special and we are proud to be part of the community that will carry on her legacy.

—Erica Hansen & Ike Barinholtz

Congratulations Mrs Kammula on your retirement! I was in your very first class at St James' (when we were on Gramercy Place) so I have never known St. James' School without you. You have been an incredible teacher to so many students over the years. I love telling my patients who are or were your students that you were my teacher. They can't believe it. I think it is so wonderful that we have taken care of so many children together over the years. Thank you for your dedication to teaching, for the care and love you have shown your students and for all the fun! Your laughter will remain with me forever. I wish you the best in your retirement. St James' will miss you!

—Dr. Neville Anderson Class of '87

Dr. Neville Anderson (middle row far right)



Mrs. Kammula is the true embodiment of St. James. She represents everything that is great about the school, stressing academic achievement and caring about the world. As the only member of the school whose tenure has spanned its entire history, she is a living legend. She has touched so many lives throughout her career, and there is not a soul that wouldn't smile as they remember her as their teacher and a mainstay at the school. We are so fortunate to have had her be a part of our lives.

—Dr. Augustine Chung, Class of '93 P'25 & '27

Mrs Kammula was a once in a lifetime teacher; equally at home in a Halloween costume or in chapel, at Back-to-School night or teaching virtually in a year that many counted as lost. But not on her watch! The devotion and dedication to her students was more evident than ever. Rising to the occasion in an unprecedented teaching environment, Mrs Kammula focused on her students and enveloped them in her love for teaching and the school. Mrs Kammula has the unique ability to make everyone feel incredibly special, even through a computer screen. Countless alphabets and apples later - we are honored to have been part of the hundreds of children nurtured with her radiant joy. Her tenor spanned multiple generations in our family- giving us the unique opportunity to know her through the lens of parent, student and even grandparent.

—Michelle McCormick, Class of '88



Paru Kammula



“Mrs Kammula is a living legend”

—Dr. Augustine Chung, Class of '93

Paru will be greatly missed by so many students, parents and faculty. I had the honor of working with Paru when I started teaching at St. James in 1989. Hearing of her retirement I could not help but think of what she will be leaving behind. So many years, so many memories and most of all the young students she had taught and sent on their way through their years at St. James. Not only was Paru a gift for the students. She was a gift to the faculty. Her knowledge of the history of St. James School helped us to understand St. James School and its community.

Thank you Paru for your many years as a teacher at St James and I know you will be missed and never forgotten.

— Diane Sherwood, Former St. James' Teacher

You will be greatly missed.

Although
we were
apart, we
were always
together in
spirit...

Thank you parents, teachers, staff, and
students for braving through an incredibly
trying year. We are overjoyed to participate
in chapel in-person this fall



ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



Back to Life Gala

*St. James' community
comes together after fifteen
months apart.*

Pictured to the right
Back to Life Gala held
on campus at St. James'

On June 5th, 2021, our St. James' community had the opportunity to come together in person for the first time in fifteen months at the Back To Life Gala. The Spring Gala Committee, chaired by Jina Park, with committee members Perrine Bakhshay, Caroline Choe, Erin David, Lenore Douglas, Yolanda Felton, Teresa Keith, Luci Kim and Sarah O'Brien pivoted from planning a virtual gala to an in-person event in just a few short weeks. As did our amazing emcees for the night, Sally Pressman and Ike Barinholtz, who, dressed in their Covid-19 garb, had us laughing before they'd uttered a single joke!

The night was a huge success both in terms of fun and fundraising. We raised over \$60,000 in live donations for the Greening of St. James' project and the silent auction raised over \$70,000!

Enormous thanks to all of the volunteers who helped make the gala happen. From class basket organization and assembly to set up on the day of the celebration itself.

*The night was
a huge success!*

continued on next page





Brian Curran, Sandra Lee & Connie Yang enjoy the show

*A truly inspiring night.
Looking ahead to the future
of St. James'*



Erin David, Luci Kim, Jina Park, Jules Leyser, Caroline Choe, Lenore Douglas, Yolanda Felton, Susannah Laracy and Teresa Keith



Mr. Reinke presents Nancy and Paru with retirement clocks



Nancy Vermette with Ashley and Tim Fletcher

*A very special thanks to our Gala Sponsors. Their generous gifts
will fund the 2021-2022 Beyond School program.*

Ki & Hyung Kim
EJ & Tae Hyun Shin
Tom Swan & Joe Townley
Jake & Katie Ahn
Eric Andersen & Jeet Sohal
Ike Barinholtz & Erica Hansen

Rich Chisholm & Lois Perrin
Talita Choudhury & Josh Neuman
James & Jessica Chu
Caroline Choe & Jin Chun
Allan Edmiston & Jennifer Lin
David & Marina Goyer

Brian Curran & Kevin MacLellan
Ester Chang & Matthew Hanna
Richard & Tricia Hoffman
Eric & Juliet Kwon
Noah & Susannah Laracy
Brian & Diana Ra Lee

RULER's Edge

*Using RULER to Give an Edge to
our Emotional Intelligence*

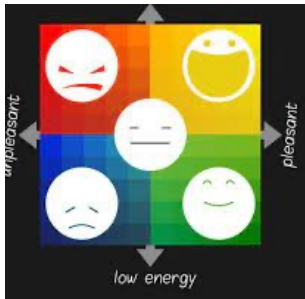
By Alexa Laffen and Emmy Gilliam

Pictured to the left
Kayla expresses her
emotions through art

You can imagine a scene on the playground: a child uses unkind words against another, or doesn't play nicely during handball. Big feelings take both children out of the game, tears are shed, and a teacher notices the plight. With the RULER program, the teacher has a toolbox to help children process these exchanges, name their own feelings, understand the feelings of the other person, and find ways for the children to not just apologize for their part, but also to make amends for the harm that he or she has caused. With the appropriate interception, teachers ensure that children can return to their play in better spirits and better interpersonal skills. St. James' has proudly been working on incorporating into the fabric of our daily curriculum the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER program, which is designed to help us learn, teach, and practice understanding and communicating feelings to improve our relationships. RULER is an acronym for the skills we practice to increase our emotional intelligence.

R stands for recognizing emotions,
U stands for understanding emotions,
L stands for labeling emotions,
E stands for expressing emotions and
R stands for regulating emotions.

*Giving an edge to
emotional intelligence*



RULER mood meter

One of the first things our classes do every day is gather in our Morning Meeting, which is a prime opportunity to check in with each other, learn about each other's lives, and share ideas about news in our school, community, and world. We use the Mood Meter to enrich our Morning Meeting discussions while we learn to recognize and honor how we are feeling in the moment. The Mood Meter is a four-quadrant graph, with the x-axis representing one's pleasantness and the y-axis representing one's energy. The four quadrants are colored and have matching facial expressions to help students recognize and categorize

different emotions: red for anger, blue for sadness, green for calmness and yellow for happiness. Once a student can recognize different feelings in themselves and others, they can then begin to recognize the nuances and complexities of emotions and how we can respond to them in a healthy way. We use this as a tool to teach empathy, self-reflection, and relationship-building. In practice during Morning Meeting, it is impressive to see that a student might express that they are feeling sad and share their need to stay in that space for the time being. And it's even more impressive when that same child may say that they would like help to move out of their sadness and into the green or yellow quadrant to a more positive feeling.



Mackenzie at play



“The RULER program has allowed teachers at St. James’ to become more intentional with social emotional work.”

—Emmy Gilliam, Interim Director of Admissions and Dean of Students

The RULER program has allowed teachers at St. James’ to become more intentional with social emotional work. The incorporation of these principles are infused throughout the day, whether it be labeling the emotions of a character in a novel or allowing us to express our emotions through conflict resolution. Recently, the second graders read the book, *Trouble With Chickens*, and discussed how the main character, Moosh, expresses her anxiety when her chicks go missing. The students identified her body language and facial expressions, and they showed their empathy when they made text-to-self connections with Moosh. By the end of class, the students recognized that the character’s feelings of nervousness and worry, which are often considered negative feelings, were good for Moosh because they resulted in helping her find her chicks afterall.

The goal of the RULER program is to bring the principles of emotional intelligence into K-12 schools like St. James’. The program is designed to address all of the members of the school community: to help students learn, to help teachers teach, to help administrators lead, and to help families support each other, all through the lens of emotional intelligence.

The next steps of our implementation include providing our entire staff with the necessary professional development to use RULER in their practice, and inviting our families to learn more about this program to support them better at home. As educators, we are learning to embrace all of the emotions of our students, all the positive and the negative, to meet each student where they are, and to support each one in their emotional lives as well as their next stages of learning.

Alexa Laffen

Teacher Mentor & Co-Director of Beyond School



Emmy Gilliam

Interim Director of Admission & Dean of Students



DEI & Equity Team Initiatives

*DEI & Equity Team
Initiatives by Chenelle
Geoffroy-Lindsey*

Pictured to the right
List of DEI book club
selections dealing with
race, culture, and
identity.

During the 2020-2021 school year, amidst a global pandemic, our teachers managed to juggle a number of new responsibilities, as well as the continued blurring of their home lives and work lives. All the while our Equity Team and teachers continued to prioritize tasks and initiatives regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and social justice. Some of these initiatives included professional development, book clubs, Staffulty Affinity Groups, and Equity Partnerships.

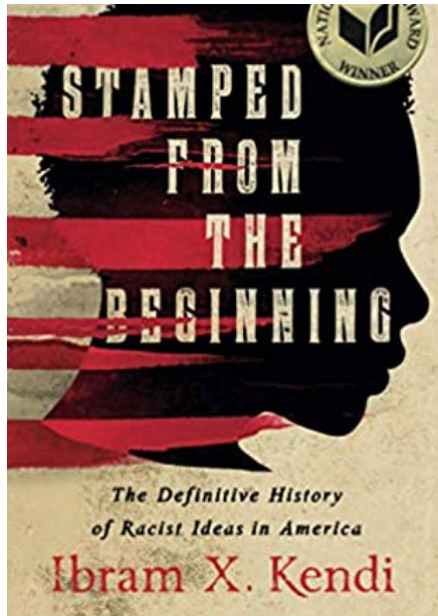
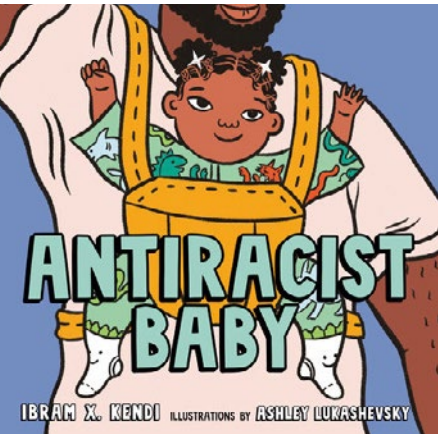
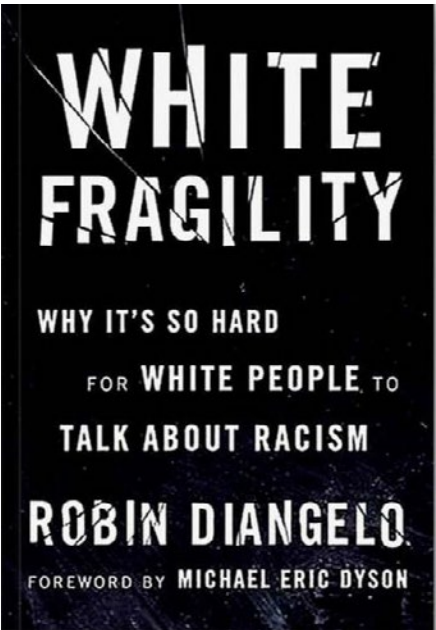
The Equity Team is a group of educators volunteering their time to ensure that equity and inclusion continue to be woven into every aspect of school life, as established in the school's mission statement. Each team member is dedicated to continuing education and is tasked with leading in-house professional development for staffulty, as well as serving as a constant support and resource for teachers. For our newest initiative, called Equity Partnerships, each team member partnered with a teacher to develop and implement at least one lesson around any DEI topic. What started as a simple exercise in curriculum development quickly grew into an incredible display of collaboration and idea-sharing. With the

assistance and guidance of an Equity Team member, teachers grew even more confident and, as a result, were compelled to challenge themselves and evolve their curriculum to examine topics like identity, family, stereotypes, and activists and activism. This new program proved so successful that it has been installed as a permanent exercise for teachers to engage in every trimester.

In addition to Equity Partnerships, staffulty participated in book clubs where we read *Stamped From the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, and *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. During this school year, we also launched Staffulty Affinity Groups. Affinity Groups are safe spaces where individuals can celebrate and explore their racial identity and engage in conversation with others who identify as they do. In addition to being best practice for DEI work in Independent

Schools, Affinity Groups give participants a space unlike any other in the school community, where their voices can be heard and their experiences and feelings can be validated. This practice serves the needs of our teachers, which in turn allows them to serve the needs of students as best as possible.

Looking ahead to the 2021-2022 school year, the Equity Team aims to include members from St. James' Preschool, to introduce new and relevant options for book clubs (with a focus on topics such as AAPI and gender identity), and to offer Family Affinity Groups. We are excited to partner with the Parent Association to sponsor speakers to support our work in building affinity group space for our families and to support and frame healthy gender identity for our students.





Congrats Sixth Grade Graduates!

Our extraordinary sixth grade students enjoyed a week of graduation celebrations at the end of a very challenging year.

Sixth Grade Graduates:

Pictured to the left

Front to Back: Terry O,
Stella P, Ji In P, Atlas T,
Ethan R, Yeon Ah R,
Randall S.

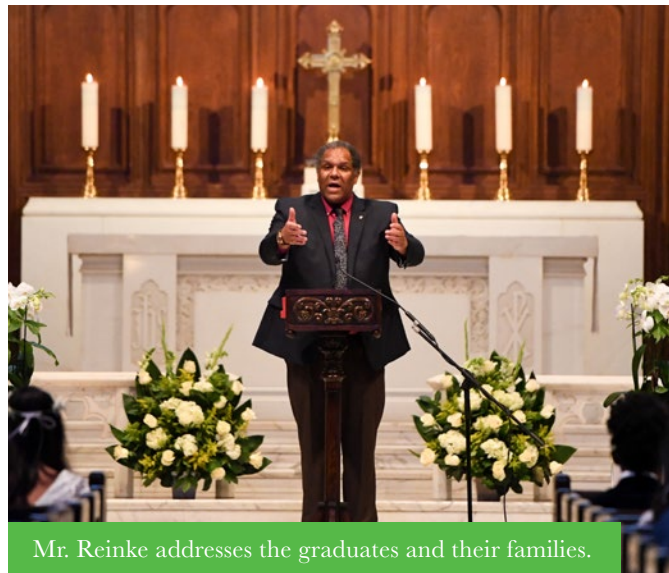
Michaela A.	Rebecca L.
Livingston (Xander) B.	Harper M.
Olivia C.	Waller M.
Ryan C.	Clare M.
Kandice C.	Sarah M.
Troy C.	Terry O.
Lucas C.	Ji In P.
Jace F.	Stella P.
Henry F.	Ethan R.
Timothy G.	Yeon-Ah R.
Abbie H.	Joseph (Randall) S.
Theo H.	Keira S.
Dayoung K.	Atlas T.
Nelson L.	Biloxi W.
Jean L.	Elliot Y.
Sophia L.	



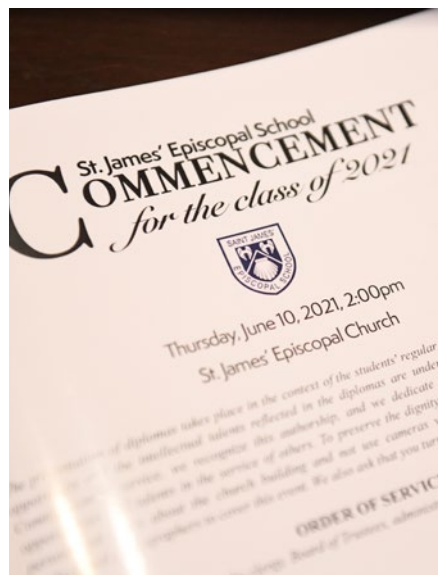
Jean L, Sophia L, Harper M, Keira S, Elliot Y, Waller M.



Ryan C.



Mr. Reinke addresses the graduates and their families.



Ryan C, Kandice C, Lucas C, Abbie H.



Randall parading through school before the Commencement Ceremony

*A job well done to
all the graduates.*

Congrats Kindergarten Readiness Graduates!

*Congratulations to all our
KRP students*

Pictured to the right
A KRP student
graduates

Congratulations to all our KRP students who have graduated from Preschool! During their graduation ceremony, each child shared a snapshot of what they were thankful for, what they wanted to be when they grow up, where they hoped to travel, what they were proud of or what they would do if they were given \$100!

Celina C.	Jordan L.
Neala H.	Alexander M.
Mason H.	William M.
Frances J.	Stella M.
Ryder K.	Ramsay O.
Alina K.	Cooper O.
Simone K.	Manel O.
Summer K.	Devon P.
Hannah K.	Gavin P.
Moussa K.	Loretta S.
Riley L.	Mackenzie S.
Hazel L.	Annabel S.
Sydney L.	Dante V.



William is ready for Kindergarten!



Rebekah Sarver presents Alina with her certificate



Jordan gets a fist bump from Mr. Reinke



Congratulations Mackenzie!



Devon Jisoo graduates!



Stella is a happy graduate!



Dr. Pat Thomas and Peter Reinke celebrate the KRP graduates



Congratulations Loretta!



ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

