

CCSA TODAY



The latest happenings from
Chester Charter Scholars Academy
to **you** | Summer 2021

Cultivating Connections

"Providing a safe and constructive learning environment where my students can express their feelings and expand their mindset is what guides my teaching daily," said Michelle Freeman. A veteran member of the CCSA staff as well as a CCSA parent and Chester resident, Ms. Freeman taught literacy and creative writing to rising fifth through ninth grade students this summer. On the first day of the program, she provided each group of students with a choice of books and novels to read together.



Michelle Freeman pictured with rising 5th grade students

This summer middle school students were excited to read two books from one of their favorite authors, Karen English. Ninth graders delved deeply into pertinent issues and themes of racial injustice in their reading of *This is My America* by Kim Johnson. Ms. Freeman and her students were overjoyed by the opportunity to return to in-person learning and rekindle friendships and connection.

"I find that our students are more engaged when they know that their opinions and voices are heard."

~Michelle Freeman
Summer Program Teacher

Honoring Donald W. Delson: Founding CCSA Board President and Friend



Don Delson has been a driving force for CCSA from the beginning. As the founding CCSA Board President, Don drove the Building Bright Futures Capital Campaign, resulting in our beautiful K-12 campus in Chester. After completing his 9 year board service in June 2021, Don remains co-chair of CCSA's K Through Life Endowment Campaign and serves on the finance and facilities committees. We are honored to name Don trustee emeritus and appreciate his strong leadership and fearless advocacy.

CCSA Establishes the K Through Life Endowment Campaign

CCSA Foundation is excited to announce the \$10 million From K Through Life Endowment Campaign for the benefit of Chester Charter Scholars Academy. Ted Peters, former CEO of Bryn Mawr Trust Co., is the honorary chair of the Campaign.

A \$1 million leadership gift played a vital role in raising the endowment commitment to \$4.3 million during the quiet phase of the campaign.

The Endowment Campaign, co-chaired by Donald and Cordelia Delson, has benefited substantially by 100% participation by the boards of the CCSA Foundation and Chester Charter Scholars Academy. Board giving has been bolstered by a \$500,000 gift from Dr. Barbara Klock and her husband Salem Shuchman.



While annual funding to the school supports programming, the \$10 million endowment will ensure that the students who attend CCSA will have access to a high quality arts-integrated education for generations to come.

To learn more about the K Through Life Endowment Campaign please contact Chris Hanlon at chanlon@ccsafoundation.org.

Math in Focus

Enhancing CCSA's math instructional support is a key focus this coming academic year. We will welcome a full time math instructor who will work closely with our students and teachers. Donor support has been critical in allowing similar programs to support the growth of our students since our opening in 2012. Now, as we address some of the learning gaps due to the pandemic, we are enthusiastic about this enrichment program and the impact it will have on our students.

Preparing students for success with **your** support!

School's IN for Summer

This summer, CCSA welcomed a record number of students, from our incoming Kindergarten students through our rising seniors, for in-person academic and enrichment programming. In response to the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on learning, the program was expanded beyond our traditional focus on early literacy available to our youngest students. This year, students in all grades were provided a robust academic enrichment experience.



"I've had so much fun with my friends, especially in science where we solved problems with circuitry to create robots that can spin and draw. I am so happy to see my friends at CCSA after only seeing them on a computer screen for most of last year."
~ Ta'Jani, rising 7th grader

In addition to strengthening literacy and STEM skills, the summer session provided an opportunity for students to unplug from electronic devices and socialize with each other.

Darlington Arts, a longstanding community partner of CCSA, returned to teach music, dance and theater while a new partnership with a local initiative, **Chester Cultural Arts and Technology Center**, led mindfulness through dance. **The Build Something Different** curriculum allowed students as young as second grade to learn coding and website design.



Sixteen of CCSA's young alumni returned this summer as teaching assistants, giving them valuable work experience and an opportunity to act as mentors to CCSA students. CCSA's doors are always open to our graduates as we continue to strengthen our alumni network and provide ongoing support during their transition to postsecondary life.

Theatre Students Earn Accolades



CCSA's High School Theatre Elective class won the "Outstanding Documentary Theatre" award at the West Chester Theatre Festival for their documentary entitled *Don't Shoot*.
Don't Shoot was conceptualized, filmed, performed, and edited by the high school students as a response to recent public focus on racial justice. With the support of theatre teachers Alyssa Franklin and Jennifer Camp, each student in the class interviewed two people on the topic and, as a group, edited the interviews into a script. The students reenacted the powerful interviews, playing the parts of the interviewees. The adjudicators of West Chester Theatre Festival were very supportive of the original piece calling it a "very mature and exciting work". They are eager to see more from our students and hope that this topic can be converted into a live performance.

"I want to take the time to thank the Foundation and the donors because even though we, the students, don't always personally know you, everything you do for us is greatly appreciated. You are the ones who believe in us and keep this school going."

-Aris Burrell, Salutatorian, Class of 2021

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Thanks to the generosity of a small group of anonymous donors, CCSA Foundation launched a "Countdown to Graduation" social media fundraising campaign offering a dollar-for-dollar match, doubling the impact of each donation. During the ten days leading up to graduation ceremonies on June 16, 44 donors came together to raise \$36,289 in honor of the Class of 2021! Funds raised through this campaign will provide support for CCSA's high-quality academic program and ensure future students have access to the resources needed to follow in the footsteps of our 2021 graduates.

Meet 2021 Salutatorian Aris Burrell

When she's not singing, dancing, drawing, practicing photography, or working as a teaching assistant for CCSA's summer program, you can probably find Aris Burrell designing her dorm room. "I am SO excited," Aris exclaimed when talking about her upcoming college experience.

With the guidance of her mom and older siblings, Aris decided that Howard University, an HBCU in Washington, D.C., was the perfect fit for her to earn a pre-med biology degree and propel her towards her goal of becoming a neurosurgeon.



Aris credits her interest in the medical field to CCSA's Health Science Elective Program (HSEP). She appreciated how Ms. Ellis, the program coordinator and teacher, had a variety of people in the medical field visit the school to talk to the class about their experiences. Through the HSEP, Aris even had the opportunity to shadow a neurosurgeon.

She dreams of opening up her own practice someday and volunteering whenever she can. When asked about what drives her to achieve her goals, Aris stated, "learning is my motivation. I just love learning." She also hopes to make her family proud by becoming a first generation college graduate.



Aris pictured with College & Career Readiness Coordinator Melissa Mamigonian

Aris is also passionate about working with kids. Whether it is spending time with her niece, babysitting neighbors, or now, working with our incoming kindergarten students, Aris finds joy in nurturing young minds. She excitedly stated, "people don't realize that you can learn from kids, too. They can teach you so much."

We can't wait to see all that Aris accomplishes at Howard and beyond, and we will be cheering her on every step of the way.