

Asha Ahn named to 20 under 20

Asha Ahn '23 was named to the 20 under 20 list compiled each year by *Intown and Reporter Newspapers* that recognizes students for outstanding volunteer work and civic engagement.

Every week for the past three years, Asha has been a volunteer tutor at New American Pathways (NAP) working with middle school students in DeKalb County. During the pandemic, she increased those hours to help students struggling with academics, specifically math, while trying to learn from home.

Students also called Asha outside of her tutoring time to ask questions and she made time to help them.

Asha is a longtime UNICEF volunteer, creating multiple fundraisers for international humanitarian efforts specifically for COVID vaccinations and to support Afghanistan refugees. She recently completed a fundraiser called "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" where she sold candy grams at school and raised almost \$1,000.

Current Family Offers Matching Gift Challenge

Thanks to several transformative gifts and the support of many Paideia families, we are almost 90 percent of the way to our goal of \$25 million. This means we are 90 percent of the way toward our goal of campus improvements for every level of the school: a new home for the junior high, a renovated learning center for STEAM programs, and an increase in our endowment. Thank you to all the families and friends who have helped us reach this milestone!

One of these gifts includes a **challenge from a Paideia family who will match any gift to the campaign from current families, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$500,000.** If you have not yet made your commitment to the campaign, now is the perfect time to maximize your charitable gift to Paideia. For more information, contact **Claire Hegarty** in the Development Office at hegarty.claire@paideiaschool.org or 404-270-2337. Thank you for helping us reach the finish line.

The Auction Is SOLID GOLD

Saturday, March 12 • 6-11 p.m.
The Stave Room, 199 Armour Dr. NE

Get ready to dance the night away at SOLID GOLD, the 2022 Paideia School Annual Auction to benefit financial aid.

We are planning our largest benefit ever, and we have a lot to celebrate! It's Paideia's FIRST in-person auction since 2019! Come enjoy delicious food and drinks, and live music performed by Saved By the Band, Atlanta's premier cover band. Bid on incredible items to benefit Paideia's financial aid program.

This school year, \$3.4 million in financial aid will provide support for tuition assistance, textbooks, Pi Bites, transportation, and tutoring, allowing students to make learning the focus of their lives.

If you would like to donate an item or have ideas and connections to auction items, we would love to hear from you. Please reach out to auction@paideiaschool.org with ideas or questions.



BPO Hosts a Photographic View of Black Education History

Shortly before the holiday break Paideia's Black Parent Organization hosted a discussion led by author Andrew Feiler at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights Dec. 16. Feiler is the author of *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America*. The book examines the program created by Rosenwald and Washington to build what came to be known as "Rosenwald schools" across the segregated American South and border states to educate Black children.

Parents and students attending the discussion learned about the author's 25,000-mile journey delving into the richly textured history of the schools, their communities, teachers and students. Feiler's photographs, which were exhibited at the Center, were the backdrop for the discussion. The late U.S. Congressman John Lewis, who attended a Rosenwald school in Troy, Ala., wrote the book's introduction.



Moving from photograph to photograph Feiler explained how Rosenwald, a prominent Mid-West retail executive, and the former slave and Black American educator Washington came together to build the network of modestly built schools that were architecturally designed to avoid drawing undue attention. Of the nearly 5,000 schools, a small handful of the surviving 500 remain in use today, but most are in disrepair, Feiler told the group. He said

that the schools generally played a key role in their communities often doubling as community gathering places. Former students often returned as teachers and administrators.

Feiler was introduced by Paideia alumni parent and grandparent, former Atlanta mayor **Shirley Franklin**. The program was attended by parents and students. BPO co-chairs are **Keri Hill** and **Felicia Prease-Dixon**.

Paideia Founder Bette Turlington Remembered

Bette Turlington passed away in late December. Once Paideia gained enough traction so that it was perceived as viable, there were more than a few people who claimed to be one of the founders of the school. I know, I was there and heard them. Bette Turlington actually *was* a founder.

The idea to start a school sprang from conversation between Bette and **Susan Brachman**. They were driving back from Athens where they had gone to a conference on school reform. As parents, they, along with a few others, were frustrated by what they experienced as rigidity and intransigence in the DeKalb County public schools. The age-old American impulse kicked in: build your own barn, head west, gather a community to move forward, dream. The result was Paideia that opened 18 months later in September 1971.

Bette remained on the original board of trustees for several years and was our original office manager. She later moved on to policy positions in the Atlanta Public Schools.

Join me in honoring gratefully Bette's initiative, her dedication, and her wise leadership those first few years.

— Paul Bianchi

FACULTY NOTES

Elly Bookman Poem Published

Junior high homebase teacher **Elly Bookman** has a poem published in *The New Yorker* magazine's Dec. 27, 2021 issue. The poem entitled "Dark" is Elly's third poem to be published in the magazine.

High School Robotics Team Wins Tournament

One of Paideia's four high school robotics teams won the NCCA VEX VRC Tipping Point Qualifier Robotics Tournament in Covington in early January. Members of the team are **Brendan Brown**, **Nicholas Fuenzalida**, **Felix Graves**, and **Quinn Dyer**. A member of the ninth-grade team, **Sebastian Elwood**, qualified for the state championship in the robot skills competition. Other members of the ninth grade team who helped build and program the robot are **Jason Bariteau**, **Andre Nahai**, **Finnley Sinnaeve**, and **Roman Karamesic-Kelley**. The teams are coached by STEAM coordinator **David Fergemann**.

- **Anna Schwartz '00** writes, “My wife **Nichole**, our 15-month-old son **Jakob**, our dogs (Otto and Yoshi) and I moved back to Atlanta this summer from San Francisco to be closer to family — Jakob is a COVID-baby so he hadn’t met my parents in person until we moved! I’m currently VP and chief counsel for strategy at **Brex**, a late-stage fintech startup, and Nichole is research manager for Global Commerce at **PayPal**. We’re excited to be back and to explore all the awesome new restaurants (including **Andy Lorber '00's** **RedBird**) and fun stuff Atlanta has to offer.”
- **Daniel Sperling '15** writes, “I co-founded a startup in 2020, **Heartwood LLC**, that is working to help small to medium sized businesses achieve their sustainability goals. Whether a company wants to fully offset their carbon footprint or take a small step to mitigate their impact, we can meet them wherever they want. We aim to build a coalition of like-minded businesses that want to take steps to decrease global carbon emissions.”
- **Houston Shrader '16** graduated from **Emory University** with a bachelor of business administration with a concentration in finance. He is currently a master’s candidate studying speech-language pathology at the University of Central Florida.

SPOTLIGHT: Launching the 2022 Alumni Fund!

Chaired by **Whitney Brown '03**, the mission of the Alumni Fund is to support 100 percent financial aid at Paideia in the here and now. What matters most is that every alumni fund gift gives someone the opportunity to become a Paideia kid. Help us reach 100 percent alumni participation with YOUR gift today. www.paideia-school.org/support-paideia/give-now.

“Your World Will Get Much Bigger”

An interview with **Miranda Lewis '08**, Senior Product Manager at Amazon Future Engineer

What have you been doing since you graduated Paideia, and where are you now?

I got my career start working in social enterprise in Nairobi, Kenya, where I worked for a company focusing on healthy sanitation - a huge problem in much of the developing world where access to clean toilets is not a given. The company I worked for was a small start-up with really big goals, which gave me an opportunity at the start of my career to explore different sides of the business. I got to try on many different hats there, and the one that stuck was developing internal tech platforms. This will be no surprise to my Paideia teachers or classmates, but I had never identified as a “STEM” person up to that point so I was surprised to find that I loved working in tech. The rush of having a problem and then getting to fix it using technology felt like magic! The skills I picked up in that first job eventually carried me back to a tech start-up in the U.S. Up to that point, Kenya was the only place I had ever had an “adult” job, and that gave me a bit of an outsider’s perspective on the culture of U.S. companies: one of the things I recognized right away was the lack of diversity in the tech field. After a few years building my own career in tech, I started looking around for ways that I could combine my tech skills with my passion for social impact to make a difference in the diversity of the tech industry. That search led me to the program I work on now, Amazon Future Engineer.

How does the Amazon Future Engineer program work?

Amazon Future Engineer is focused on making computer science education accessible to underserved and historically underrepresented students. We first focus on building activities that allow students of any age to explore computer science – often tied to things they might already be interested in, like music or robotics. We also offer opportunities to explore Amazon through virtual tours or classroom visits. Next, we focus on helping Title 1 schools (schools that serve primarily low-income students) get access to the tools they need to start offering computer science courses – schools get access to free curriculum, professional development for teachers, and a Teacher of the Year award program. And finally, we offer a four-year, \$10,000 per year college scholarship plus internship program to students interested in majoring in computer science in college.

I specifically focus on our college program, and I have the great honor of getting to work directly with the brilliant recipients of the scholarship award. One of our students who won the award the first year, **Jailynn**, is a terrific example. **Jailynn** is from a small town in South Carolina and taught herself how to code in high school. She got into **Howard University**, but wouldn’t have been able to afford it without college scholarships. Winning the Amazon Future Engineer scholarship helped, but paying for school is only one piece of it – she also needed to gain confidence about her ability in the tech industry in order to thrive . . . she pushed through and really impressed her team at Amazon in that first year. She’s now a junior, will be coming back for a third internship at Amazon, has (well-deserved) confidence, and she’s even mentoring others.

Who can apply to Amazon Future Engineer?

High school seniors who want to pursue a major in computer science should apply to the college scholarship – you don’t need to be 100 percent sure that computer science is your “thing” yet, but if you’re excited about trying it, you should apply! The award is also

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THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL

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THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL is nonsectarian, serving families with children ages three through 18. Paideia does not discriminate in employment or in admissions. It actively seeks racial, cultural, and economic diversity in its student body. The ancient Greek word *Paideia* conveys the concept of a child's total education: intellectual, artistic, and social. The Paideia School Newsletter is published 10 times a year. The deadline for the newsletter is the 1st of the preceding month. Send all correspondence to Jennifer Hill, Editor, at Paideia School, 1509 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307. Phone number is 404/377-3491, ext. 339; e-mail address is hill.jennifer@paideiaschool.org. For information about sports schedules and upcoming events visit our web site at www.paideiaschool.org

Miranda Lewis '08 *continued from page 3*

needs-based, so students should only apply if they have a financial gap to fill for college.

Why do you think this is important right now?

Computer science skills are some of the most in-demand in today's economy – and wages for these jobs are more than twice the median annual income for other jobs, but the people in those jobs today are not as diverse as the country. To me, it's not just about making sure that everyone has access to high-paying jobs— it's about having a seat at the table. Computer science shapes every part of our society at this point: our governments, our healthcare systems, the way we communicate with each other and the way we express ourselves.

A few years ago, I worked with the non-profit Code.org to develop a database of schools in the U.S. teaching computer science. Despite the fact that computer science is such an in-demand field, we found that less than half of U.S. public high schools teach computer science. 2021 was the first year that the numbers went just above 50 percent - that's exciting progress, but we need to move much faster. We also need to pay attention to which schools have access: our report showed that access was much higher in wealthier, less diverse schools. The exciting thing is that despite these access gaps, students are equally interested in computer science across demographic groups. If we can help students ac-

cess computer science, and remove barriers from them getting into higher degree fields, we'll start to see a tech workforce that looks a lot more like the diversity of the country. Personally, I want to live in a world where students like Jailynn are building the technology that shapes our lives.

What advice would you give your high school self?

Given what I do now - I would tell myself to go back and pay more attention to math, because math is really a foundational skill to learning computer science!

If I can sneak in a second piece of advice, I'd remind myself that high school is only four years of your life, and your world will get *much* bigger after this. I was a Paideia lifer and had two younger sisters at Paideia too, so I'd either had a teacher or knew them through my younger sisters. While there was certainly a comfort in knowing the world of Paideia so well, I often got caught up in thinking that this would be my world forever. I think my high school self would get some hope and a healthy dose of reality if she knew that her world will get a lot bigger after high school.

Any favorite teacher(s) you want to give a thank you or shout out to?

I'd have to thank my art teachers, especially **Ginger [Birdsey]** and **George [Mitchell]**, who gave me a space to explore creatively and be myself. I'd also thank **John Greene**, who inspired a love of writing at an early age—that has proven very useful throughout my career.