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GEORGETOWN

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FROM COVID



JASON PUTSCHÉ

OUR MISSION DRIVES ALL THAT WE DO.

Georgetown Day School honors the integrity and worth of each individual within a diverse school community. GDS is dedicated to providing a supportive educational atmosphere in which teachers challenge the intellectual, creative, and physical abilities of our students, and foster strength of character and concern for others. From the earliest grades, we encourage our students to wonder, to inquire, and to be self-reliant, laying the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

We welcome submissions from all Georgetown Day School community members.

Please contact agrasheim@gds.org to learn more. Alumni are encouraged to send their news with photos to alumni@gds.org for inclusion in the Georgetown Days magazine.

FALL/WINTER 2021—22 GEORGETOWN DAYS

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Russell Shaw

Assistant Head of School for Curriculum and Instruction

Laura Yee

Chief Advancement Officer

C. Lynn McNair

MAGAZINE STAFF

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Alison Grasheim

Storyteller

Danny Stock

Magazine Design

Think (think804.com)

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Image on front cover:

Our 4th graders cheer on middle schoolers taking the field.

Image on back cover:

LMS librarian Hadeal Salamah reads to 1st graders in the LMS library.

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FROM WHERE

I STAND

Outside my window, on the plaza in front of our new building, our youngest students are painting pumpkins, crafting, bowling, and playing bingo, squeals of laughter echoing through the crisp fall air. It is Fall Fest for our youngest students in grades PK—1(at right). High School students have walked across the street to serve as bingo callers, help reset bowling pins, and in other ways participate in and support the festivities. And this is new. And it is wonderful. For years, we have dreamt of the possibility of One GDS, of the chance to forge connections between Hoppers of different ages. The geography of our two separate campuses, of course, made the logistics too daunting to take on, except on rare occasions. This school year, we are beginning to experience the richness that comes from having buildings that are hundreds of feet apart rather than several miles.

Perhaps the first and most memorable such moment fell on the afternoon of September 29, when we held our first-ever in-person all-school assembly (page 29). Students from PK—12th grade gathered on our new field, where they enjoyed a dramatic visit from our Hopper mascot, danced in an all-school



Russell Shaw, Head of School

Cha-Cha Slide, batted beach balls in the air, and saw what our full school community looked like in one place. The assembly concluded with our seniors forming a tunnel using pool noodles, and our Lower School students joyfully running through it with music blaring and accompanied by cheers from their older schoolmates. There is a magic that comes from a seven-year-old seeing a seventeen-year-old and thinking, “Some day, that’s going to be me.”





While the assembly was big and flashy, it's in countless smaller moments that I've noticed the impact of One GDS. Each morning, High School volunteers open car doors, helping to expedite the dropoff of our youngest students. At a varsity soccer game, Middle School students cheer loudly for the team that they hope to join in a few short years. And when a Middle School team takes the field, Lower School students, like the 4th graders watching from the Kamal Nashid Memorial Terrace, cheer them on (cover). Our buddy program has taken off this year after a hugely successful end-of-year celebration last spring (page 28). Hundreds of students from all three divisions participate in an initiative matching Lower School students with mentors from Middle or High School. The "big kids" feel pride in serving as role models and guides.

And this is just the beginning. Plans are underway for High School students to visit Lower School classes and read aloud to our youngest readers. The arts, athletics, language learning, and more will benefit from cross-divisional partnership. Faculty and staff who previously worked on separate campuses are forming new relationships through spontaneous encounters at the coffee urn or in the lunch line. These relationships are planting seeds of collaboration that will strengthen our community for years to come.

At our best, GDS is a vibrant, mission-driven learning community. Being together means that our community is more expansive, more connected, more alive with promise and possibility. The early days of One GDS are thrilling. I can't wait to see what's yet to come.

Russell

Learning Stability

Across the Curriculum and Across Divisions, GDS Teachers Bring Balance to Learning

Just 20 meters across the Lower/Middle School (LMS) B2 vestibule from each other, students in 4th grade P.E. and an 8th grade dance class watched their teachers as they—separately, and unbeknownst to each other—demonstrated the importance of a well-balanced stance. On the gym side, LMS P.E. teacher William Miezan shifted his weight to his front leg and extended his arms for a stable bump hit during the volleyball unit. In the dance studio, LMS dance teacher Felipe Oyarzun Moltedo shifted his weight to his front leg and rotated 360 degrees, reminding his students not to leave a stable plié position when performing turns. Just days before, he taught students safe lift techniques. Elsewhere across our unified campus this fall, students and teachers explored stability and instability in both physical systems and figurative ones.



Five flights up in the LMS and also on the second floor of the High School, student chemists studied molecular structure and the stabilizing effect of chemical bonding. In the Middle School, science teacher Michael Desautels continued his introduction of orbitals to 8th graders. Students learned to plot electrons on a two-dimensional plane and identify charges based on the periodic table of elements. Students in Greg Dallinger's Upper Level (UL) Chemistry II course considered delocalized bonding in the polyatomic anion carbonate to develop an understanding of three progressively complex bonding theories. Ultimately, to account for energy levels in a molecular system, they'll learn molecular orbital theory. While overlooked in the AP curriculum, it's included in GDS's UL course because it's foundational for college-level chemistry and essential in organic chemistry.

In High School physics, where a tiny added weight or careless nudge can throw a system out of balance, science teacher Chris Oster's students worked in teams with pulley systems. Later in the semester, they will construct elaborate meter-stick structures, using their understanding of torque to balance weights far off the center of gravity.



This year's 1st graders have waged daily battles with gravity, building tall towers of magnetic tiles. Teacher Andrew Berman sent out an all-staff request to borrow extra. "My students are CRAZY about Magna-tiles™ this year and want to build towers 'bigger than ever,'" he wrote. It's no accident that the 1st grade science curriculum includes an engineering unit this winter! Still, the Kindergarten classes couldn't spare their tiles as their own tippy towers were growing so tall already.



In 7th grade history, students continued their study of revolutions. Beginning with Haiti, they've considered the factors that contribute to a society's stability and the triggers of unrest through a lens of power. Before the Power Project showcase in the spring, they'll expand this study to Indian Independence and Partition as well as the Iranian Revolution.

Revolution was on the minds of scores of High School students in the theater program this fall as they prepared to present *Marie Antoinette*, a contemporary take on the final days of the young queen of France, whose reign provoked the French Revolution. Student crew members constructed six-meter-long set-piece columns for the palace, which stood resolute even as the French monarchy collapsed and the imprisoned Marie, played by both Ava Blum '23 and Jacqueline Metzger '23, literally crumpled to the floor of *la Conciergerie*. Elsewhere in High School performing arts, acting class students put their best foot forward in showcases for their peers, notably from *The Crucible*, in which the opposing binaries—stability and chaos—are central.



Of course, actual chaos has no place in school, especially during an ongoing pandemic. The student wellness team, including the counselors, has worked tirelessly to support students and families. Counselors have led lessons in the Lower School on mindfulness in addition to helping homeroom teachers set up calm corners in classrooms and emotional check-in times throughout the day. Students have learned mindful breathing techniques and read *Charlotte and the Quiet Space*, a story about coping in an overstimulating world. Our 9th grade health classes have also been learning coping strategies, plus self-care, positive visualization, and meditation. In Middle School physical education and health classes, students learned breathing techniques and yoga. The counselors, in partnership with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, have continued to offer timely virtual Parent Connect sessions each month, including a preparing-for-the-holidays session in November.



In their commitment to teaching the whole child in joyful, meaningful ways, teachers remain unfaltering, especially in studies of stability.



MIDDLE SCHOOL INNOVATION CURRICULUM: IDEATION TO CREATION

Imagine being asked as a young student to choose your own topic to study. You can dive into any subject of interest to you, and you'll be asked to show your learning in a portfolio or presentation later.

Sounds compelling, even enjoyable. But would you know where to start? How do you turn an interest into an action? Why is this even an important skill?

In the grand tradition of helping students learn to learn, a new program at the GDS Middle School is helping students discover how to pursue inquiry for the sake of curiosity and an eagerness to find out. Then, as part of their personal reflection, they have the opportunity to talk through their process with peers and faculty partners. Hopper Studio (grades 5 and 6) and Hopper Quest (grades 7 and 8) are new, partnered offerings from the LMS computer science and innovation team aimed at building student agency and skills, and ultimately, creative independence.

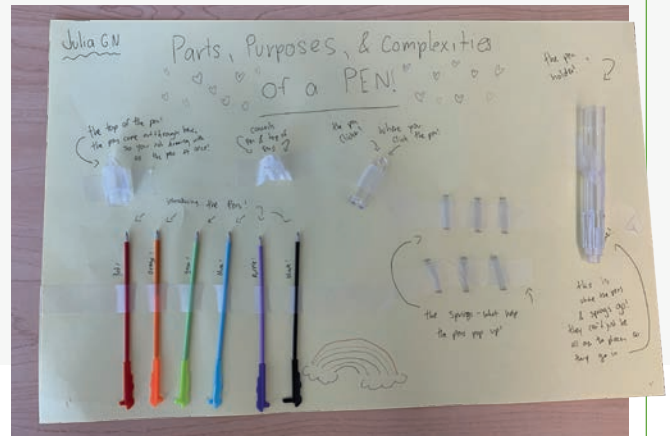
Fifth and 6th graders have dedicated time weekly across six station rotations in Hopper Studio: computer science, digital storytelling, graphic design, digital fabrication, "take

apart," and textile technology. These stations represent skills, tools, technologies, and thinking strategies that can help students make choices about how to learn about a topic and then share knowledge with others.

"We wanted students to get experience with a bunch of the core skills of making and creating so that when we ask them to pursue a passion project, they can use them," said LMS innovation & computer science teacher Elvin Peprah. **"These hard skills can be used in multiple classes throughout their schooling career."**

For instance, in the take apart station, students start by disassembling a ball point pen. After carefully labeling each part and understanding its purpose, some students take the next step of putting it back together, in working order. "When you reverse engineer, you see the parts and how they connect, and so learn their purpose," said LMS innovation & computer science teacher Elvina Tong. "This experience will serve students later if they want to build something. They can say to themselves, 'If I want something to happen in a build, I need to think backward and think about what parts I can use to make it happen.'"

In the graphic design station, students were learning how to build effective posters. "We really get a chance



to express our creativity,” said Cassidy Holmwood ’29. “It also feels like a more relaxed time during the school day.”

“Having control over what we design is great,” said Carter Evans ’29, who was enjoying using Vectr to design an object for the laser cutter in digital fabrication. Molly Kaplan ’29 agreed: **“These are fun activities during school. And we have a lot more responsibility.”**

Middle School Principal Debby Previna noted that student control and responsibility lead to more engagement: “We know that if there isn’t engagement, learning doesn’t happen as easily. This program gives students structure but allows them to have a voice in their learning and develop personal expertise.”

Once students get to 7th and 8th grade, the plan is for them to have the skills under their belts to pursue a passion project in Hopper Quest. This part of the program is modeled after the High School’s Senior Quest held each May, as well as last year’s Hopper 45 Middle School club (see sidebar). As a pilot for this year, some Upper Middle School students chose to use one of their athletic periods to pursue topics of interest not necessarily covered in classes.

In the Fall 2021 semester’s first iteration, students employed an inquiry-based approach to pursue an interest: writing a children’s book, identifying ways to give back to their communities, or creating video tutorials teaching kids how to play the double bass. In these student-owned endeavors, students are learning critical thinking skills as well as learning how to manage and plan their own projects.

Director of innovation and technology Tim Lyons is excited about the dedicated time students are getting in Middle School for innovation and notes that all of this work matters in the long term. “I hope that kids start to refine their sense of passion for a specific topic or area of interest and start diving into that because they intrinsically want to, not because their teacher or school tells them that they have to. Moving from gathering skills (Hopper Studio) to pursuing individual ‘passion projects’ (Hopper Quest) affords kids, ideally, a kind of cognitive or academic independence and offers actual agency in their learning.”

According to Elvin, being a creative problem solver or thinker isn’t some innate talent. “Creativity is a result of knowledge you build and experience you gain,” he said. The skills gained from classes like Hopper Studio and Hopper Quest are ultimately tools students can use in their schooling—and life—going forward. Perhaps more importantly, these skills will support them as they build their interest and creative capacity to change the world for the better.

The Middle School has been experimenting with student-led passion projects in the past few years. In **Each One, Teach One**, the Middle School hosted a day where students had an opportunity to teach or attend workshops led by their peers. In last year’s **Hopper 45** club, Middle Schoolers explored topics of interest to them during asynchronous Wednesdays during the pandemic. These breadcrumbs ultimately led to the **Hopper Studio** and **Hopper Quest** programs in place today. “In experimenting with creating a space for student agency to happen, we realized we wanted to integrate it fully into the Middle School experience,” said Previna. “Our students have a variety of interests, and they are full, interesting human beings. Creating lifelong learners starts here.”

ORGANELLES & WARNING BELLS

WHERE STUDIES IN SCIENCE ARE VIBRANT AND VITAL

Each issue of this magazine includes sections titled “Where Students...Love to Learn” and—if you flip a few pages ahead—“Where Students...Learn to Change the World” after our School’s tagline. So often, though, stories of teaching and learning at GDS defy easy categorization into one section or the other. Many, like the GDS experience itself, reside in both—that’s why it’s our tagline, after all. The story in this article—about three 7th grade science units and their connection to a High School computer science class—is one such example of a story about joy in meaningful learning and the intentional nurturing of future changemakers.

For most of October, an eye-catching bulletin board showcased a selection of hilarious 7th grade science promotional materials. There were calls to audition for *Cells Got Talent*, online dating apps for cells (“Find your Cellmate!”), advertisements for online couples therapy for cells (turns out some types of cells are pretty incompatible), and even lists of selected “Netflix” originals, including *To All the Membrane-Bound Organelles I’ve Loved Before* and *How to Get Away with Free-Floating DNA*. You could even find eukaryotic and prokaryotic cells engaged in a rap battle. Students solidified their understanding through these self-directed, creative projects even while they used other more traditional strategies to learn how to differentiate between the types of cells.



Elise Magnell '27 said, “I really liked looking under the microscope and telling the difference between prokaryotic cells [for example, algae and bacteria] and eukaryotic cells [containing a nucleus and membrane-encased organelles] and then later between plant and animal cells.”

Right beside those fun projects, 7th grade science teachers Louise Micallef and Jon Vanegas (also Science Department chair), posted a collection of student-written and

-researched biographies about “Scientists You Should Know But Most Likely Don’t.” The stories of scientists marginalized throughout history were prominently displayed to promote discussion and better representation. The project allowed students to learn about some important scientists at the same time as they developed a better understanding of how systemic inequities and bias marginalized them. Students profiled pediatrician and activist Dr. Helen Rodríguez Trías, paleontologist Mary Anning, agricultural biochemist George Washington Carver, mathematician Alan Turing, biochemist Dr. Marie M. Daly, astronomer Vera Rubin, and pediatric neurosurgeon Alexa Canady, among others.

In the midst of a global pandemic, the 7th grade—which traditionally studies viruses and transmissible diseases anyway—had the opportunity to ask, “What can we learn from previous pandemics? What is the impact of ignoring science? What could’ve been done better during each of the outbreaks?” Their study of pandemics allowed them to explore bioethics and privilege around public health, including clean water, housing, education, and access to healthcare services. Students made public service announcement posters and videos for the time period.

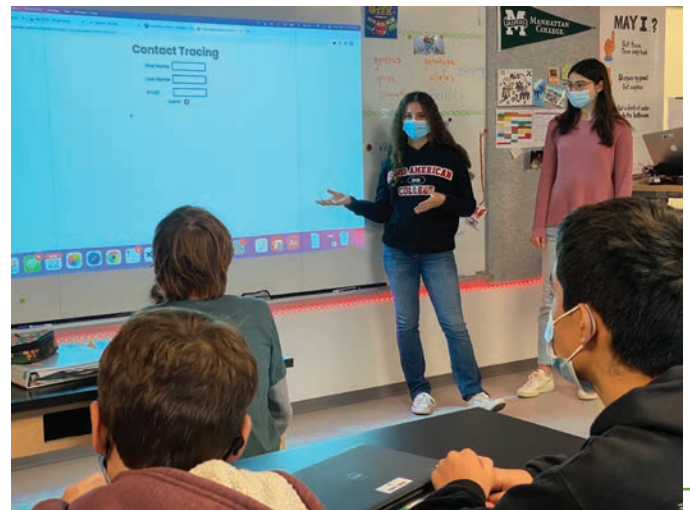
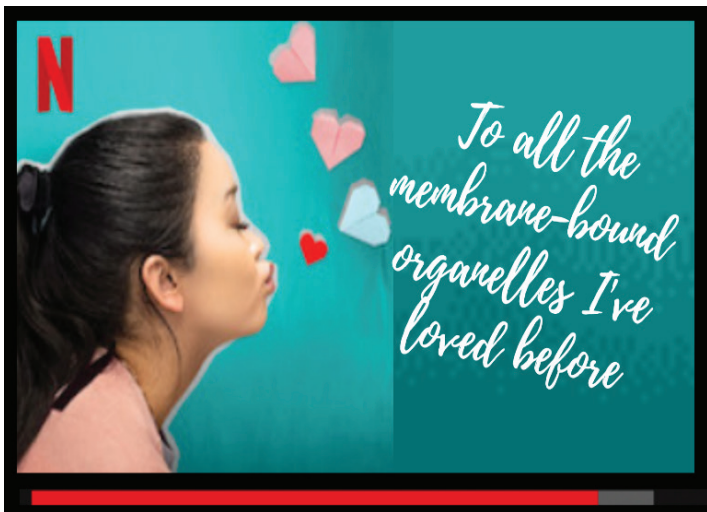
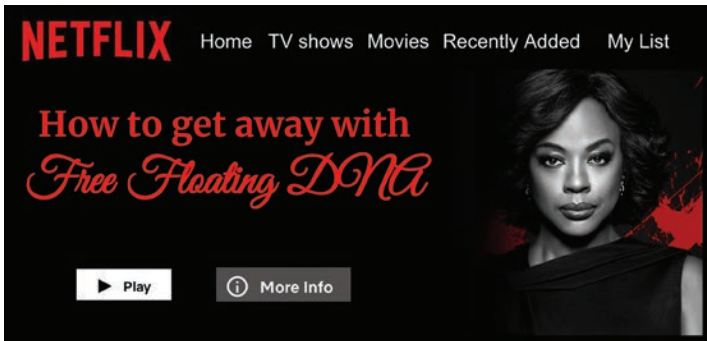


Matias Sevak said, “I enjoyed editing the PSA video and making the poster to tell people what they needed to do, like washing your hands a certain way or social distancing. We made the video like drug ads are usually made, showing symptoms, ways to protect yourself, and a lot of happy people.” He and his

partner Ryan Taybi were the happy PSA actors on screen addressing the “Spanish Flu” influenza outbreak of 1918.

Finally, as students transitioned from learning about cell types, macromolecules, and “diseases through history” to genetics, they had the chance to hear from pediatric gynecologist Dr. Veronica Gomez-Lobo about chromosomal abnormalities and oncologist Dr. Anne Favret about the

difference between normal cells and cancer cells. They learned about the legacy of Henrietta Lacks and the uses of HeLa cells. Elise described that lesson as “cool and creepy” and noted the importance of learning how useful HeLa cells have proven to modern medicine, but also how unethical their harvesting was, without Lacks’s knowledge, consent, or compensation.



As part of the School community’s pandemic preparedness, GDS Director of Strategic Programs Vinita Ahuja reached out to the technology team about a contact tracing solution with the shift to winter indoor dining at the High School. Computer science teacher Andrew Heine’s class had been learning HTML, CSS, and JavaScript to build apps and games, so juniors Sadie Foer and Noor Ramzy elected to build a contact tracing app. They introduced their app to a 7th grade science class, connecting the students’ studies of past pandemics to the use of technology to make our community safer now. They showed the user interface as well as the administrator view in which they can track a student’s close lunchtime contacts. Scannable QR codes were placed in each dining location at the High School (classrooms, the Forum, etc.). “Designing and creating the app was unique because there are real stakes and outcomes,” Sadie said. “If it works well, it can have an impact, but the same goes if there are bugs, which makes the process that much more exciting.”

Around Campus

WHERE STUDENTS LEARN TO CHANGE THE WORLD

CHILDREN IN THE WOODS



"...The most moving look I ever saw from a child in the woods was on a mud bar by the footprints of a heron. We were on our knees making handprints beside the footprints. You could feel the creek vibrating in the silt and sand....The look said: I did not know until now that I needed someone much older to confirm this, the feeling I have of life here. I can now grow older, knowing it need never be lost..."

- Barry Lopez, "Children in the Woods"

In early November, our 3rd and 4th graders (the latter of whom missed this trip last year) ventured into the woods in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. Students and teachers alike stood astride the sandy shallows of a stream, spotting raccoon prints and catching crayfish together. They scooped up acorns from around the bases of majestic oaks and counted the lobes (one, two, or three) on sassafras leaves. Wrapped in winter coats and scarves—arms wrapped around the trunks of tulip poplars—wrapped in all the splendor and the subtleties of nature, the preciousness and importance of protecting our natural spaces was as perceptible as their breath on the chilly air.



TOP 5 FOR KINDERGARTENERS

Meet our top 5 “A GDS STUDENT WILL...” skills for a kindergarten changemaker-in-training!

1 BUILD NETWORKS

If you have the privilege to step into a Kindergarten classroom, there’s a good chance you’ll find students working and playing together. A few scenes from Fall 2021: A group of students sat building a train track, deciding together which train cars to couple for a bridge crossing. While reading *My Three Best Friends and Me*, Zulay, Kindergarten teachers Jody Welsh and Sam’n Iqbal stopped reading and said, “Turn to your neighbor and tell them about a connection you are making.” During “Question of the Day,” students connected around who has a pet, a sibling, a favorite food, and more. Whether in a structured, goal-directed collaboration, a teacher-guided activity, or free exploration, students in GDS Kindergarten develop empathy, respect for one another, and the relational skills to function as a diverse team. Teachers guide students to look for connections and give compliments to their peers. Finally, teachers emphasize interactions with adults in the building as the students learn about jobs and responsibilities within and beyond GDS.

2 SELF-ADVOCATE

The Me Box and the family tree projects—two annual stalwart projects—gave this year’s Kindergarteners a platform to share their story to a (mostly) attentive audience. Those are powerful opportunities, not only for learning about each other, but also to affirm and claim ownership of their identity. From that growing self-confidence, they learn to advocate for themselves and attend to—or ally with—their peers’ self-advocacy. Sometimes that means being mindful of the impact of their actions (for example, not leaving a mess behind for someone else to clean up) and elsewhere it means lending their voice in solidarity.

3 COMMUNICATE CLEARLY & POWERFULLY

During a November game of “Splat” in math, students had important conversations about their strategies and different points of view with their classmates and teachers. Listening for different ideas and trying to understand new ways of doing math has far-reaching benefits for interpersonal relationships, civic engagement, and, as named above, building networks. Also, whether in imaginative play in the classroom or at “The Floor Is Lava” Climbing Zone of the playground, students learn to communicate expectations for the game and add new story threads in ways that ensure the group will stay unified.

4 TACKLE PROBLEMS

This October, stretched out in a long line on the LMS field, Kindergarteners in Bianca Santos and Michelle Levy’s class passed mini pumpkins from one end of the line to the other, either overhead or between their legs, as quickly as they could. Of course, passing pumpkins can be wildly exciting when you want to see what’s happening elsewhere on the line—but then, “Oops! You aren’t in position for your pass!” After the challenge activity, students and teachers discussed strategies that worked and talked about some of the breakdowns in teamwork. Even at a young age, you have to be able to depend upon your teammates.

5 LEARN ACTIVELY

A hallmark of a progressive education, active learning involves more than just movement and manipulatives. Student choice, frequent feedback, measuring progress, and reflection are all critical pieces of experiential learning, even in a Kindergarten classroom. This fall, students have acted out pumpkins “rolling out of sight” and a wailing wind for a Halloween poem; they’ve interacted to present the day’s schedule and weather report; and they’ve learned to self-edit simple sentences—collaboratively at the whiteboard or individually with pencil and paper—in order to convey their favorite ideas or most important statements.



IN REAL LIFE

Middle School Community Engagement and Experiential Learning Ventures

Perhaps you've felt it, too. The joy of getting out there once again. The chance to have new experiences with real, three-dimensional people—safely—beyond the far-too-familiar confines of your home or office. What a difference it makes!

The emergence of the Middle School community engagement and experiential learning (CEEL) program from the pandemic—like your own reemergence—has mirrored the ever-widening

arc of the CEEL program itself. Students in 5th grade begin at “home”—right here on our unified campus—and it's been great to get them outside to learn about local green initiatives. By 6th and 7th grades, they'll venture further afield to explore the eight wards of Washington, DC, and then broadly in the whole DMV region, respectively. Our 8th graders engage with national issues through the lens of citizenship.

Our first excursions this fall have reengaged the heart in ways you've probably felt yourself. The experiences have been invigorating, perspective-shifting, and impactful. Students' emotional connection to the topics has fueled their learning about what matters most and how to build a better future. Later this year, when students begin doing world-changing work based on these initial excursions, these experiences will guide them toward more ethical, inclusive, sustainable, and long-lasting choices.

GREEN CORPS

5th Grade

At the end of the summer growing season, students harvested tomatoes and beans from the Not-So-Secret Garden beside the Spike Memorial Sprint Track. They toured kale and collard green production at a local farm and spent a day learning about land heritage from Hope Butler-Khodaei and Rico Newman of the Piscataway Nation. They constructed and seeded a hydroponic garden in their science classroom, learned firsthand from organic hydroponic greens gardeners, and held their own first homegrown classroom harvest just days after our first snow flurries of the season. This environmental justice foundation is the springboard from which future engagement is built.





6th Grade

EXPLORATION CORPS

Our 6th graders kicked off their visits to DC wards with excursions to Wards One and Six. In Ward One, they honed in on the evolution of African-American culture in the city when they stopped at St. Augustine African American Catholic Church, sometimes called the “Mother Church of Black Catholics,” as well as the African American Civil War Museum. There they learned about the history of U Street and “Black Broadway.” They also considered socioeconomic trends in Ward Six as they interviewed seafood vendors from the municipal fish market and—to add nuance to the narrative—met with wharf developers. The multidisciplinary approach is enhanced with connections to 6th grade seminar identity study and math units on demographic change.

CONSERVATION CORPS

7th Grade

Our 7th graders spent the day along the Anacostia River, where conservationists like National Park Foundation consultant Akiima Price are working to engage local residents in park sustainability efforts. GDS

parent Josh Burch (Carina '29) taught students about his work restoring streams in poor health for the DC Department of Energy and Environment’s Watershed Protection Division. Students took a boat tour with the Anacostia Watershed Society and Anacostia River Keeper, during which all the cascading effects of wastewater, stormwater, and invasive species growth became both more discernible and less forgettable.



ADVOCACY CORPS

8th Grade

Our 8th graders took their “heart excursions” to a dozen locations following the throughline of a single policy issue from multiple viewpoints. Those studying the Second Amendment visited with the TraRon Center, which strives to help those affected by gun violence heal through the arts, while the Freedom of Speech Track met with the Anti-Defamation League. Those students exploring reproductive justice engaged in lively discussion with family health and birth center Community of Hope and a certified full spectrum doula. Thanks to the Policy Institute Waging Life Track’s initiative (see page 14), the economic inequalities group has been able to dig more deeply into their study with a focus on affordable housing with help from Friendship Place’s Community Engagement Associate Alan Banks. Eighth graders will submit their constitutional papers midyear, partake in Hill Day in February, begin lobbying training in early spring, and launch action projects before Summer Break.





Policy 2021 Institute

Each summer, students accepted into the GDS Policy Institute immerse themselves for four weeks in one of five critical issues impacting families in the Washington, DC, area and communities around the world. This article highlights some of the key exposure experiences they had, key points in their areas of immersion, and the actions cohorts have taken since as part of their ongoing engagement.

Exposure. Immersion. Action.



Addressing Sexual Assault and Consent

EXPOSURE

Met with victim and survivor advocates, lawyers from the Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Department of the U.S. Attorney's Office of DC, and a civil rights lawyer. Experienced mock trials, preliminary court hearings, and arts initiatives for healing.

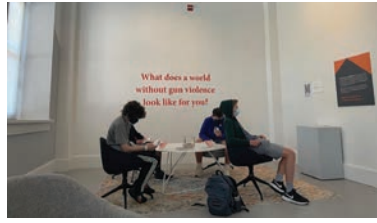
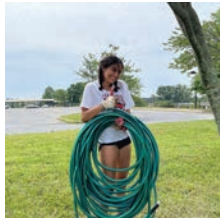
IMMERSION

Study and discussion around intersectionality, consent on college campuses, and existing systems that either perpetuate or combat sexual abuse culture.

ACTION

Hosted the GDS Consent Summit. Shared consent lessons with the MS health curriculum developers.





ALL PHOTOS BY GDS POLICY INSTITUTE FACULTY AND MAX GROSMAN '22

Environmental Justice

EXPOSURE

Met with local conservation leaders, water management experts, Piscataway Nation educators, and directors of a youth-focused land trust in Ecuador. Learned about invasive species management and visited an archeological dig at the site of a 9,000-year-old indigenous settlement.

IMMERSION

Real-world impact of environmental policy, wastewater in our communities, and restoration efforts.

ACTION

Led a 7th grade Conservation Corps assembly and planned that grade level's first excursion.

Gun Debate

EXPOSURE

Met with student activist groups, artists, and docents at military history museums and sites. Visited the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, the USS Constellation, and the Baltimore Museum of Military History. Experienced rap at the intersection of guns and hip-hop culture.

IMMERSION

Discussed gun violence, healing from trauma, the history of weapons, and the psychology of arming soldiers.

ACTION

Created an online decision-making simulation with data-driven gun policy outcomes.

Life Resettled

EXPOSURE

Met with Piscataway Nation educators, *Huffington Post* journalist and refugee Igor Bobic, and local immigrant chefs, including Chef Ibrahim Smahri, who works in GDS's new dining facility. Took part in a canoe trip, cooking traditional Moroccan dishes in the GDS kitchen, and a discussion of how to effectively tell someone else's story.

IMMERSION

Discussed indigenous rights, resettlement stories, and the history of community landmarks like GDS alumni family-owned Ben's Chili Bowl.

ACTION

Produced a cookbook containing immigration stories and recipes from fellows' own families and the GDS community.

Waging Life in the DMV

EXPOSURE

Met with food bank managers, affordable housing directors, coordinators at shelters for locals experiencing homelessness, and small business owners. Stocked supply boxes for local food-insecure senior citizens. Took a culinary exploration and an Arlington walking tour.

IMMERSION

Discussed housing displacement and the implications on income disparities, healthcare access, food insecurity, and the pandemic impacts on all of the above.

ACTION

Created and pitched an "Economic Inequality Track" for 8th grade Advocacy Corps (page 13).

Graduation & Community Events Celebrating Seniors

REUNITING TO CELEBRATE THE CLASS OF 2021

The celebrations marking the graduation of the GDS Class of 2021 coincided with the gradual reopening of a world isolated by the COVID-19 pandemic for more than a year. In many ways, the events honoring the seniors' completion of High School felt like reunions for our community.

SENIOR WALK

In April 2021, GDS held our first all-school event on the newly unified campus, and launched a brand new tradition—the Senior Walk. Seniors paraded through the entire campus and past cheering pre-kindergarten to 11th-grade students waving handmade signs and pompoms. High School faculty showered crown-wearing seniors with bubbles as they crossed the field.

“The Senior Walk provided us a chance to relive our 12 years at GDS in a one-hour walk,” said senior Mack Dixon. “Nothing made me more grateful than seeing the proud faces of some of my earliest teachers as we got ready to graduate.”

Senior Bryce Savoy said, “I really enjoyed seeing the whole GDS community united in one place to appreciate all the seniors and our journeys—especially after not seeing people for a whole year.”



SENIOR ATHLETICS & ARTS

In May, the School celebrated athletics and the arts with two different events: first, an event to honor the record 13 senior athletes making commitments to play in college and then, a few weeks later, the opening of the High School Spring Art Show as an interactive online gallery. The hybrid Senior Athletics Recognition Event streamed in-person speeches from the coaches and the seniors signing their college athletic intentions to a live, all-community audience. The art show showcased many of the first pieces created on campus since the start of the pandemic. As the senior class was the first to return to campus en masse, many of their pieces in the gallery came to life in the High School studios.

SENIOR QUEST

Senior Quest Night felt like the best of vintage virtual. As seniors presented details of their monthlong pursuits in various Zoom rooms, many assembled parents took the opportunity to connect with each other casually as they hadn't had the chance to do since the winter of 2020. Many seniors—now fully vaccinated—quested: they traveled, created, and had adventures together in that small window of time between the end of High School and the DC exodus to attend colleges, universities, and gap years around the world.

SENIOR SEND-OFF DRIVE-THROUGH

The Senior Send-off Drive-Through, a remnant of lockdown days, brought many parents to campus—and this time outside their vehicles—for the first time since campus closed in March 2020. Balloon-wielding faculty and staff cheered the arrival of each decorated vehicle; seniors and their families hopped out for photos along the parade route.



CEREMONY

The Class of 2021—the 50th High School graduating class—gathered on the field for the only on-campus graduation ceremony in the School’s 75-year history. Head of School Russell Shaw (1) welcomed the seniors and their families, who sat distanced behind them, as extended family, friends, faculty and staff, and classmates watched live online. He shared a story about when things inevitably go sideways in life—using the family shorthand “the wrong Ethan,” about the wrong pre-kindergarten classmate who showed up for a playdate. (Comically, the universe responded just minutes later when the power went out on the whole city block in the middle of the ceremony.)

Russell urged the Class of 2021 to own the narrative of their stories, especially to stay resilient in difficult times. “These stories matter because they inform how we step into new situations, new challenges, new opportunities,” he said. “Narrative is a powerful tool. Use it so that it doesn’t use you.”

Russell also engaged in his annual tradition of reading a selection of testimonies from seniors as they reflected upon what they planned to carry with them when they left GDS. The students’ words spoke of self-respect, of well-developed academic and advocacy abilities, and of a deep sense of responsibility to their communities, the environment, and each other.

“GDS has affirmed for us that our voices matter,” Anoushka Chander said. Ashton Brubaker said, “Knowing that my voice would be heard was transformative.”

The seniors also told of lifelong friendships. They shared memory upon memory of feeling connected to a vibrant, caring community of learners.

“When I move on into what our parents call ‘the real world,’ I will be sure to create caring, connected spaces for myself and others,” said Marleigh Ausbrooks.

High School Principal Katie Gibson and Bobby Asher (2), director of student life and wellness, who was selected to speak for the faculty by the students, both spoke of reunions. Katie shared her hope that a global rebound from the pandemic would lift the Class of 2021 to new heights and allow them to rebuild lost social connections. Bobby asked the seniors to “look up and look out,” using a family mantra that means being aware and appreciative of the people around you. He asked them to seek the “cooperative advantage” that is possible when we are present with others and build community through dialogue, collective strategizing, and empathy.





JASON PUTSCHÉ



JASON PUTSCHÉ



JASON PUTSCHÉ



GDS student musical groups the 42nd Street Singers and Prague Rock offered pre-recorded performances of Dolly Parton’s “Light of a Clear Blue Morning,” a song celebrating a hopeful reemergence from troubled times, followed by GDS senior Adam Mendelson’s original composition “Old Montauk Highway.” Given safety precautions, in-person musical performances were not yet permitted.

Student speakers Ella Farr (3) and Jeremy Margolis (4) each remarked upon the depth of caring, the resolve, and the unity of their class. “Perhaps more important than any of [our] talents and aspirations, though, is the fact that everyone in this class cares deeply about each other and this community,” Ella said. She shared examples of collaboration and a shared commitment to effecting positive change. She said, “If my future is going to be in the hands of anyone, I am glad that it is [all of you].”

Jeremy reflected upon a class-defining moment from Senior Community Day, a day he said was “an effort by the School to get us all together after a long year apart.” He described how the class spontaneously gathered on a corner of the field at the close of the day’s events and began to share stories about their years together (5). “We care about each other and know that part of the reason that we are who we are is because of each other,” he said.

Graduation speaker Jim Shelton (6), father of senior Justice and Jameson ’27, works in social impact investing and education, focusing broadly upon the realization of human potential. The COVID-19 pandemic, as “gut-wrenchingly painful” as it has been, he said, teaches us how “nothing can be taken for granted. Everything good—everything—must be fought for and defended vigilantly or it can slip or be taken away.” That good fight, Jim explained, bends the oft-quoted “arc of the moral universe,” which does not bend itself. “It is bent every time you choose not to look away, step over, or run away from something that is wrong—big or small,” he said. “And, when you decide to solve a problem and bring all your talent, energy, and resources to bear, it bends from the sheer effort.”

As much as the celebrations of the Class of 2021 felt to seniors and families like opportunities to reconnect, graduations are also about sending young people out into the world. Speaking for the parents, Jim said, “You will envision and create a world that we could not imagine. This is why we made you. That is why we love you. That is why you are already the realization of our and all of your ancestors’ dreams.”



WHAT'S NEXT, CLASS OF 2021?

At the beginning of the college process, students start with a world of possibility and often have a few ideas of their preferences for college. The Class of 2021 began their senior year in a way that no one had imagined. Entirely virtual, and amidst a global pandemic, their last year of high school was utterly upended. Through hours of Zoom meetings and virtual connections, they forged ahead, making the most of a difficult time and engaging with thought and intention around their next steps after high school. Our philosophy of college counseling is that the pathway through the college process is of the utmost importance—even more so than the admissions decisions or the final destination. The Class of 2021 showed that they can work hard, persevere, and most importantly, remain hopeful even when the future looks so uncertain.

The Class of 2021 spent their first semester largely learning from home

and investigating college options virtually. While their meetings with their college counselors were on Zoom, they still built connections, dug deeply to craft compelling essays, and pushed themselves to reflect on their values and goals. More than ever, they centered on their values and made choices that were best for them.

At the end of the day, the Class of 2021 (130 students) enrolled at 76 different colleges and universities across the United States, Canada, and the UK. They are studying music performance, engineering, and fine art, among other academic pursuits. They have chosen colleges in small towns and in major cities. Each year, a number of students choose to delay their enrollment and take a gap year, and the Class of 2021 was no different in that regard. From travel to service, students found creative ways to spend their year off.

The college process at Georgetown Day School is about students:

- Believing in their own ability to navigate a complex process
- Articulating who they are (in flux) and who they want to become
- Developing goals for the college experience beyond admission
- Making decisions grounded in their own values
- Building skills for success beyond high school and college such as self-reflection, resilience, and decision-making
- Celebrating good matches and each other's individual choices

FACTS ABOUT THE CLASS OF 2021



130
STUDENTS



APPLIED TO
176
different colleges
and universities



ENROLLED AT
76
different
schools

A

American University
Amherst College

B

Barnard College
Bates College
Boston College
Boston University
Brown University

C

Carleton College
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Colby College
Colorado Mesa University
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Cornell University

D

Dartmouth College
Duke University

E

Emory University

G

Georgetown University
Georgia Institute of Technology
(Main Campus)
Gettysburg College
Grinnell College

H

Harvard University

I

Indiana University (Bloomington)

J

James Madison University

K

King's College London

M

Macalester College
Middlebury College

N

New York University
Northwestern University

O

Oberlin College
Occidental College

P

Parsons School of Design
at The New School
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Pratt Institute
Providence College
Purdue University (Main Campus)

R

Reed College
Rice University
Roger Williams University

S

San Diego State University
Santa Clara University
Savannah College of Art and Design
Swarthmore College
Syracuse University

T

Temple University
The New School
The Ohio State University (Main Campus)
The University of Texas at Austin
Towson University
Tufts University
Tulane University of Louisiana

U

University of British Columbia
University of California (Berkeley)
University of California (Davis)
University of California (Los Angeles)
University of Chicago
University of Denver
University of Maryland (College Park)
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
University of Pittsburgh (Main Campus)
University of Rochester
University of San Francisco
University of Southern California
University of Toronto
University of Virginia (Main Campus)
University of Wisconsin (Madison)
Vanderbilt University

W

Wake Forest University
Washington University in St Louis
Wellesley College

Y

Yale University

**27****STATES**

plus the District of Columbia,
the United Kingdom, and Canada

DISTINCTIVE MATRICULATION CHOICES:

Women's Colleges
Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU)
Art Schools – Visual and Performing
Recruited Athletes

THE BEAUTIFUL CRACKS IN OUR BUCKETS

Lower School Graduation 2021

In June 2021, we celebrated then-4th graders with a gathering of families, friends, and faculty for a virtual Lower School Graduation. Head of School Russell Shaw opened the ceremony with a powerful story about the strength hidden in our perceived flaws.

Each day, he said in his retelling of the tale, a woman carried two buckets across her shoulders along a dirt path to gather water, and each day she would return home having filled both buckets. While the left hand bucket remained full, the right hand bucket had a small crack and would arrive only half full each time. The right hand bucket felt worthless, flawed, and broken. Not so! When the woman asked each bucket to look down and describe what they observed along the pathway, the left hand bucket saw only a barren dirt path. Yet, the right hand cracked bucket looked down for the first time and was amazed to see many-colored wildflowers all along the path.

"I'm sorry you thought you were broken—a failure," said the woman in the story. "This beautiful path is the most wonderful place in my whole world. What is amazing is that precisely the thing that you thought made you broken was exactly the thing that made you so powerful. What you thought was your greatest flaw was exactly what I needed to make our world a more beautiful place."

"You probably each have a thing about yourself that feels like a crack in your bucket—something that is not quite right or not good enough," Russell explained to the Lower School graduates. "That crack in your bucket might be a wonderful source of strength. We believe in each and every one of you, even with the cracks in your bucket—especially with the cracks in your bucket."

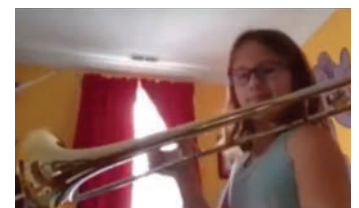
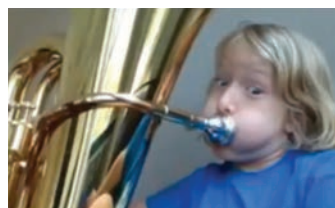
Russell shared his great pride in the students, his wonder at their many talents, and his gratitude for the wonderful things they've done in Lower School and will surely do in Middle School.

He also thanked then-Principal Kimberly Beck for the care and commitment she brought to our community over her three-year tenure as leader of the Lower School.

Kimberly and Lower School Assistant Principal Denise Jones read Peter H. Reynolds's book *Say Something aloud*, and used

the story to encourage students to use their authentic voices to speak empathetically, collaboratively, and ethically about what matters most to them. They invited students to reflect on the challenges, bonds, and changemaker skills they forged throughout their Lower School years as they consider how they will think creatively in the future to build a more just and equitable world.

The 4th grade teachers shared several words of wisdom, including reminders to keep open minds, use kindness, persevere, practice courage, and listen to others as they tell you their story. Before the presentation of diplomas, attendees enjoyed a virtual band performance from the graduates themselves and viewed slides each student had made to celebrate Lower School highlights and express gratitude. They waved their diplomas proudly and prepared to dive into the goodie bags the Lower School team had prepared for the occasion. Before closing with Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger," graduates were officially welcomed to the Middle School by Principal Debby Previna and Assistant Principal Mayra Diaz.



8th Grade Closing Ceremony, 2021

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU, CLASS OF 2025!

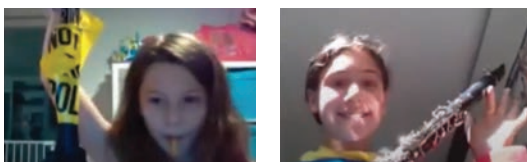
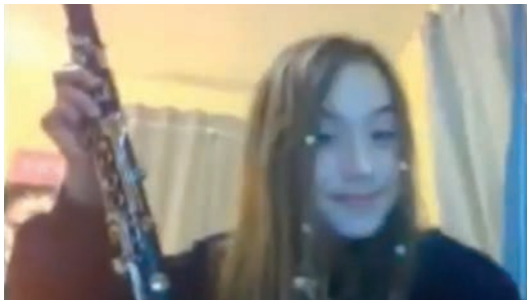
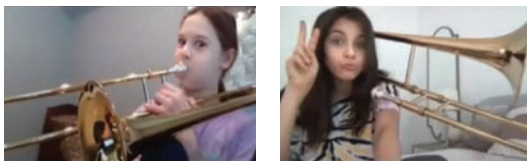
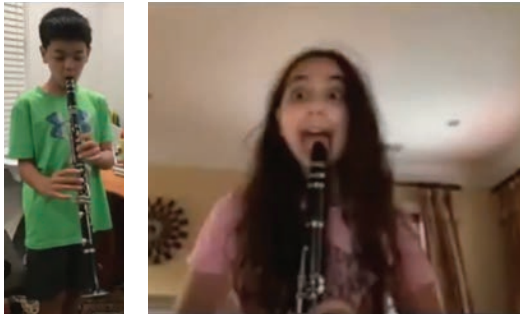
The entire 8th grade class gathered in June 2021 under the soft purple glow of the Flexible Performing Arts Space lights for an in-person filming of their promotion to High School. The recordings were later added into a beautiful broadcast of the ceremony, which included live remarks from the Head of School Russell Shaw and Middle School Principal Debby Previna, speeches by four student speakers, musical interludes, and a commencement of graduates, not to mention a virtual dance party.

Eighth grade pianist Isaac Seiken set the mood with a beautiful rendition of Claude Debussy's "Prélude VIII, La Fille aux cheveux de lin," the music washing over his classmates seated just feet away. Later in the program, our 8th grade chorus and dancers collaborated to present a moving, physically distanced performance of "You Will Be Found," from Dear Evan Hansen by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul.

Debby spoke from the heart, elevating the many distinctions of this 8th grade cohort across the entirety of their Middle School tenure. This class showed their ability to take initiative in creating and leading new clubs, hosting and supporting workshops with their peers, and leaning in bravely to help shape their Middle School experience. She noted the numerous ways they have shared their artistry—from art shows and drama productions to choral events and band concerts—and found levity even in difficult times.

With great pride, Debby observed the way the graduates weathered emotional challenges, showed up for each other courageously, and forged relationships with those they hadn't yet met in person. Debby said her role allows her to observe students making poor choices and then growing—learning to take full responsibility and to make better decisions the next time. She watched students face their school life with gratitude and begin to construct what she described as the "first draft of your adult self...part of a journey to uncover what is possible for you and set the foundation for the future you."

Student speakers Callie Solomon, Caleb Murphy, Dhilan Desai, and Lindsay Lamken each took their turn at the podium.





Callie spoke of the important growth in her classmates' confidence, describing her own terrified self arriving at GDS as a kindergarten applicant. "Because of GDS, we have the confidence to identify how we want to advocate for justice and make meaningful improvements in society," she said.

Caleb reflected on the ways teachers and students make GDS a welcoming place, saying, "I was new to GDS in sixth grade, and I was so nervous that I wouldn't be able to make friends...But, on my first day, my whole life changed. Within two hours, I had received at least ten hugs, tried Cookies and Cream Milk, which is delicious, and I had some hilarious conversations with the people who would become my closest friends."

Unlike Callie and Caleb, Dhilan did not have any pre-COVID introduction to GDS, making light in his speech about his virtual welcome to the School and musing that people might not recognize him up at the podium. Yet, soon after his first on-campus experiences, Dhilan found himself delighted in the collaborative learning, experiential opportunities, and the feeling that "we were all in this together." He said, "As the uncertainty of the world swirled around us, I found comfort in our group, where we were encouraged to express ourselves and expand our minds!"

Lindsay performed an original poem entitled "And to Think That I Saw It at Georgetown Day School," in which she retold cherished memories from each grade of her ten years at GDS, including academic endeavors, performances, special events, and rights of passage. With a sly nod to the typical after-school interactions between parents and students—"What did you do today?" "Nothing."—Lindsay looked ahead from June to the fall of 2021 in the final lines of her poem. She rhymed, "This summer, when I get my vaccine from Pfizer / And I'm older and smarter and even

more wiser / If someone asks, when I'm out by the pool, / 'Hey, what are you looking forward to next year in high school?' / I'll respond in a flash—I won't even think, / 'Nooooothing,' I'll say with a smile and a wink."

In his closing remarks, Russell shared three stories in order to pass on three important life lessons to the graduates.

"Do not limit yourself," he said, telling the story of a novice ninth grader, who struggled to make it through a two-mile run in high school, went on to win the NCAA 10,000 meter track and field championships. "Try new things, take risks, and be open to possibilities."

Veteran sailors in lifeboats during WWII survived where young sailors were dying because their focus on caring for others provided the strength and stamina needed to make it through crisis, Russell explained. "By looking beyond yourself and thinking about others, not only will you be a better friend, classmate, and community member, you'll also be a happier and healthier individual," he said.

Finally, Russell told the students that holding onto something unpleasant can hold us back. He related a story about a lingering grudge against a friend who moved away. "Forget and move on," he said. "People change...Give your peers the room to become someone new, just as you give that same space to yourself."

The 8th grade promotion ceremony, produced by the 8th grade dean and LMS dance teacher, Felipe Oyarzun Molledo, closed with a video montage of the 8th graders through the years, from their Chesapeake Bay Trip to a Lower School Dance Assembly. High School Principal Katie shared her excitement to welcome the class of 2025—just across the street.

2025



SPRING EVENTS

8th Grade Jubilee

The Middle School hosted an evening of fun for the class of 2025 to celebrate their promotion to High School. Giant board games, mini golf, and inflatable bounce structures were set up on the LMS field.



Lower School Field Day

Safe and splashy favorites like Fill-the-Bucket and Balloon Toss were joined by new, physically distant options, including Dance Party, Shoe Toss, Scooter Relay, and more. What a joyful end to a challenging year!



Ropes Course Fun

Middle School engaged in a far better kind of zooming in May 2021 while enjoying the ropes course at Bretton Woods. In addition to the zip lines, they also tried their hands at archery and giant slingshots.



Buddy Program Celebration

Nearly 120 buddies joined the in-person 2020—21 Buddy Program celebration year-end event, after a year of mostly virtual one-on-one meetings. Students from every grade level, PK—12, got out of the June heat to meet in the LMS gym for games, music, and joy most of all.

See more online!

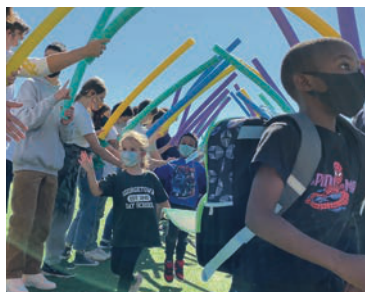


FALL EVENTS

WELCOME BACK ASSEMBLY

On the site of the former Safeway parking lot (now the LMS field), GDS students, faculty, and staff assembled to celebrate our full return to our unified campus. Head of School Russell Shaw spoke briefly about the GDS origin story, the previous homes of the School, and some of what we have to look forward to as One GDS. Suddenly, the Mighty Hopper rocketed in on a golf cart, GDS flags waving, and the Cha-Cha Slide dance party began! Seniors from the class of 2021 ran forward to create a colorful pool-noodle tunnel that Lower School students dashed through.

Experience the Assembly!



Art All Night @ GDS

At the end of September 2021, more than two thousand people—GDS community members, Tenleytown neighbors, and DC art enthusiasts—made their way to our three GDS-hosted venues between 7 p.m. and midnight as part of the citywide celebration of the arts.

With a live mural project by GDS alum Jay Coleman '90, an Identity Art show gallery, spoken word poetry slam, T-shirt making with the Civic Lab at GDS, and student musical performances in the Triangle Park at Wisconsin Avenue and Ellicott Street, attendees had plenty of ways to enjoy GDS-connected artists!



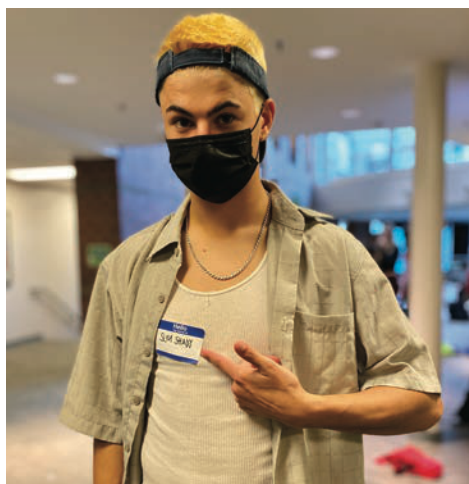
FLAG FOOTBALL

September afternoons don't get much better than blue skies and flag football. Female-identifying students competed for grade-level glory, while their rowdy fan sections kept forgetting to stay off the field.



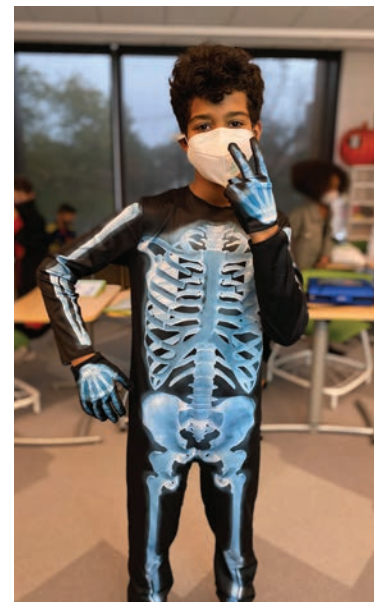
Halloween

On a rainy Friday, the GDS LMS celebrated Halloween with a rousing indoor costume parade! Middle School announced the winners of their spooky doors contest, voted upon by 4th graders, and painted pumpkins during Fall Fest. High School students had some great costumes and enjoyed the men's volleyball tournament, flag football's counterpart.





REID ALEXANDER '22





CHARACTER & COMMITMENT

CELEBRATING HIGH SCHOOL SPRING ATHLETICS

Against a backdrop of pandemic restrictions and limited play through March 2021, GDS Hopper Athletics rose to achieve some of its most stellar results in the School's history. Student athletes demonstrated extraordinary character and commitment. Once DC Health permitted competitive play, they delivered championship-level performances.

Read on for spring highlights, including **outstanding performances**, student-athletes' **resilience**, **leadership** from older athletes, full team photos, upcoming young stars, and seniors' **commitments to college** teams (13 athletes!). Join us in celebrating GDS #HopperStrong Athletics!

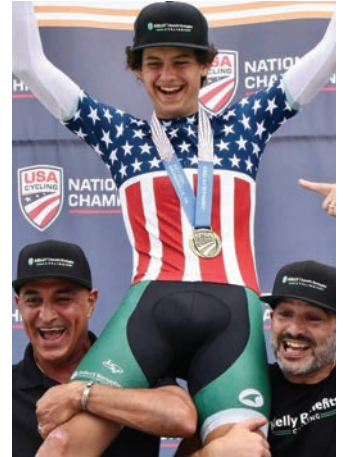
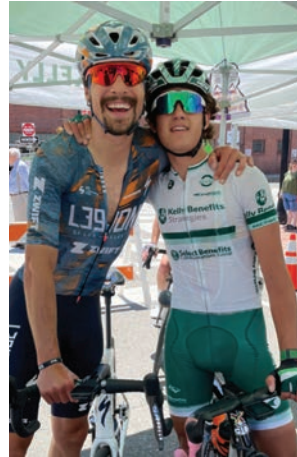
STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

The 2021 Varsity **Baseball** team was one of the strongest in recent memory, despite COVID-19. Seniors Alex Gulino, Jeremy Jensen, Felix Passman, and Kyle White committed to play in college—the highest number ever—and led the team to beat a historically dominant Flint Hill for the first time in 13 years. GDS also made a strong entrance into the DCSAA State Tournament with a no-hitter home game win.



ROLLING FAST

In spring 2021, Jonah Killy '21 claimed two Junior National Championship **cycling** titles in the Men's 15–18 kg Time Trial and the 15–18 kg Team Pursuit! Earlier in the year, he began reaching the podium in adult professional races. Jonah raced at Chasing the Wild Boar in Virginia, where he finished fifth in the junior time trial and 11th in the Pro criterium—the Pro criterium race was won by fellow GDS alumnus Sam Boardman '14. Jonah was invited to train and race in Europe with L'Amical Vélo Club Aix-en-Provence before he starts college at Colorado Mesa University.



SIR-COLIN FRANKLIN

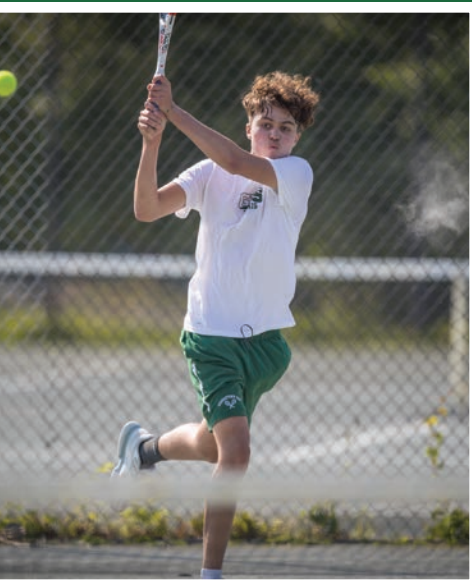


NETTING A BIG WIN WITH WOMEN'S LACROSSE

The Women's Varsity **Lacrosse** team had an outstanding season, notching victories over both St. James and St. Andrews, and culminating in a Senior game win over rival Sidwell Friends.



CORY F. ROYSTER



SERVING UP BIG WINS

The Men's Varsity **Tennis** team smashed some big wins against St. James, St. Andrews, and Maret. DC State Tennis Tournament third-seeded player Haidyn Green '22 took home the bronze. Seniors Haidyn and Nick Penniman will lead a strong team in spring 2022.

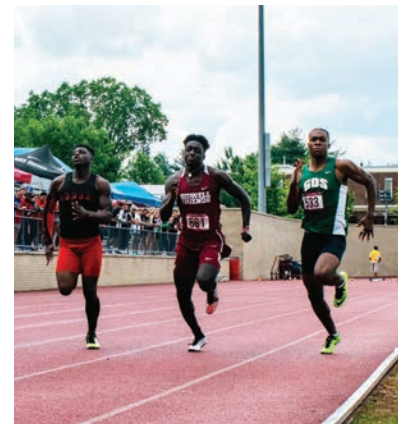


SPRINTING TO VICTORY

The **Men's Track and Field program** took on the strongest teams in our conference and sprinted to victory over rival Sidwell Friends, showing depth with eight athletes breaking five-minute miles. Senior captains Jalen Friday and Chandler Marshall led a team that surely would have been in a great position to bring home the banner had the league championship been held last spring.



Jalen Friday '21 (right) set a new school record in the 100-meter dash (11.22 seconds), edging out the old record of 11.23 by fellow senior Matthew Mintzer, who was unable to defend his title due to injury, but whose younger brother, Nathaniel '24, posted an impressive 11.26 in the preliminaries.



Spring MVP **Charlie Baar '22** (middle) finished second in the 3,200-meter race.

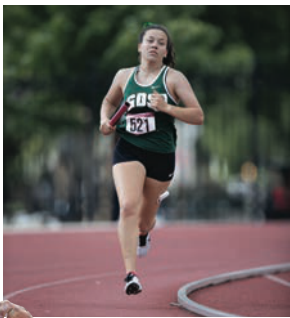


PHOTOS BY CORY F. ROYSTER

CORY F. ROYSTER

The women's team was led by top performances from the senior captains, Camilla Salwen, Ella Gillespie, and Ruby Kaplan (pictured below). Pilar Holder '23 had great performances in the short sprints, and Nadia Fairfax '22 filled big shoes as the most experienced sprinter on the women's team. Ellie Kessler '24 impressed in the high jump, hurdles, and the mile.

The team's seniors, a deep and committed group who missed their junior spring season and their senior indoor season (and had a truncated senior spring competitive season), truly gave the next generation a gift by passing on the culture, expectations, and attitude that breed champions. Despite all the challenges faced over the past 15 months, the 2021 Spring Track team "Ran Good!"



Ruby Kaplan '21 (left) showed her versatility, anchoring the 4x800-meter relay squad to a third-place finish, finishing third in the 3,200-meter individual race, and—10 minutes later!—anchoring the 4x200-meter relay team in a surprise seventh-place finish!

CORY F. ROYSTER

BRONZE MEDALS ACROSS THE BOARD

for GDS's Top Relay Teams:



Men's 4x200

Nathaniel Mintzer '24, Chandler Marshall '21, Zach Kovner '24, and Jalen Friday '21



Men's 4x100

Nico Greene '24, Nathaniel Romine '24, Zach Kovner '24, and Nathaniel Mintzer '24



Men's 4x800

Benji Fleurence '21, Thomas Ogada '24, Luke Cohen '23, and Daniel Otto-Manzano '22



Women's 4x800

Ellie Kessler '24, Ella Gillespie '21, Lucey Holley '24, and Ruby Kaplan '21



NICO GREENE '24

CHANDLER MARSHALL '21

ZACH KOVNER '24

PILAR HOLDER '23

NADIA FAIRFAX '22



CORY F. ROYSTER



SWEEPING UP

AT THE MAC & ISL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sixty-seven GDS runners competed on the slightly soggy fall 2021 day at the Agricultural History Farm Park, in Derwood, Maryland, when the team spirit was anything but overcast.

Congratulations to the GDS men's cross country team on their clean sweep of the three Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAC) Championship races.



CORY F. ROYSTER

All five scoring GDS Varsity runners finished in the top 10 to claim the MAC Championship banner, last held by GDS in 2014.

Left: Third-place finisher Luke Cohen '23 leads the GDS charge with Charlie Baar '22 finishing fourth, just 12 seconds behind.



CORY F. ROYSTER

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In the 9th/10th-grade race—which Mac Penniman '25 won on this home-stretch sprint (left)—all seven GDS runners placed in the top 15.

.....

The men's Varsity B race was dominated by GDS's 35 runners—more than 40% of the field—who held five of the top 10 spots, including second-place finisher Liam Zeilinger '23.

Right: Noah Shelton '22, Liam, and Nate Bazemore '24 led the big GDS pack.



KAIDEN YU '23



KAIDEN YU '23

.....

In the women's Independent School League (ISL) Championship races, congratulations to the GDS women's team for its sixth-place finish in the Varsity A and B competitions within a 15-team league.

Ellie Kessler '24 (left) finished sixth out of the 91 varsity runners and helped carry a strong, and young, varsity team. Ellie, Sadie Boyle '25, and Audrey Leff '25 were named All-League athletes.

A SEASON OF BIG FIRSTS

FOR GDS WOMEN'S VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Women's Varsity Volleyball achieved a **first**-place ranking in Washington, DC; entered the DC State Tournament as the **first**-place seed; and reached the finals of the Independent School League (ISL) Championships and the DC State Tournament, all for the **first** time in the program's history.

The team's success was the product of strong senior leadership. The seven seniors on the team have all been involved in high-level volleyball for several years, and many have been at GDS from at least Middle School. Through much of the pandemic, the team maintained a rigorous training program.

Down on the court the fall 2021 season, there were no gaps in strength, no holes that presented an opportunity for the opposing team. Plus, "the offense is more well-rounded than it has ever been," head coach Brandon Wiest said during the season. Other teams tend to have one or two strong hitters, but with this GDS team, any one of the offensive team members might have been striking for a kill. In fact, three GDS players—Claire Cooper '22, Pallavi Bhargava '22, and Jada Aksu '25—were selected for the ISL AA All-League Team, just 12 total players from the eight member schools. It's the **first** time GDS has had more than one player selected to the team and the **first** time a GDS 9th grader has been named. The American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) ranked GDS eighth in the entire Mid-Atlantic region, spanning Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. A final **first**? Coach Brandon Wiest was named an AVCA High School Region Coach of the Year.

The players understood the history of the program and the legacy they were each a part of, Brandon said. "We [had] a larger varsity team this year with the intention of the leadership passing down the culture to the younger group," he said.



PHOTOS BY CORY F. ROYSTER



JAMES COOPER





Co-captain **Lizzie Rosenman '22** said, "When I was a freshman, the seniors always put emphasis on team bonding. [It] has allowed us to have great relationships with each other, on and off the court, and with the alumni, who we're still close with."



Co-captain **Pallavi Bhargava '22**:

"The volleyball team works so hard around the year to foster a positive yet competitive and hardworking environment....The school community has really rallied around sports as a whole in the past few years."



JAMES COOPER

Co-captain **Claire Cooper '22**:

"I truly believe that this year is the beginning of a long streak of dominance in the ISL....Despite the fact that GDS has been seen as a purely academic school with weak athletics, our team, and many other GDS teams, have proven that this is not the case."



the
**Hopper
Fund**

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SCAN ME

YOU are part of this community that celebrates individuality, abhors bigotry, and inspires curiosity. Celebrate and strengthen our beloved community by making a gift to The Hopper Fund today! All contributions to GDS are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Visit gds.org/giving



OLIVIA BROWN '24

GDS Theater's In-Person-but-Still-Virtual Spring Production of *Spring Awakening*

GDS theater is known for an intentional pendulum swing between light-hearted, broadly appealing shows and more sophisticated selections. “I do appreciate how GDS theater pushes the envelope and challenges us with an emotional responsibility to the art,” said recent theater alum Caleigh Vergeer '21. The careful rollout of a show, the conversations about the mature themes, and the thoughtful decisions for a tasteful, artful presentation are part of what makes challenging theater such fertile ground for growth.

Last spring, GDS theater was twice challenged—first with a difficult and sensitive piece of musical theater and second with the task of staging it virtually. Ultimately, High School theater students broadcast a recording of an in-person filming of their take on Broadway's 2006 reimagined rock musical *Spring Awakening* by Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik.



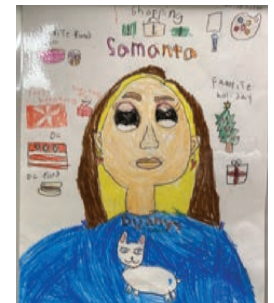
Hallway Art BY US and ABOUT US

The hallways of our no-longer-new Lower/Middle School building came alive this fall with artwork by—and about—our students.

PORTRAITS

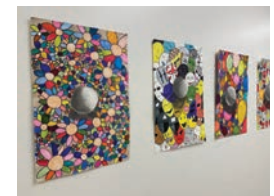
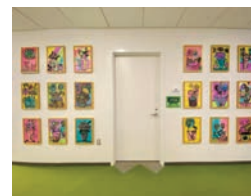
Two years after their 2nd-grade Identity Project—and just down the hallway from where current 2nd graders displayed their family portraits—these now 4th graders returned to an in-depth study of identity. Taking their lead from Frida Kahlo's self-portraits, in which the artist surrounded herself with symbols and artifacts representative of her identity, our 4th graders created two different styles of portrait—but with an important twist. To strengthen their empathy skills, students learned about each other and drew portraits of and for a partner rather than of themselves.

Middle School art students learned printmaking techniques by making self-portraits.



DOTS AND FLOWERS

A burst of color—and joy—began welcoming staff and students to our LMS Café in September. An annual 1st-grade project, these flowers brought the outside in. Upstairs, students from across the Lower and Middle Schools created dots inspired by Peter H. Reynolds's *The Dot*, which reminds our students that anyone can be an artist. Each unique dot expresses individual creativity, and the display intentionally represents unity for our Lower/Middle School visual arts community.



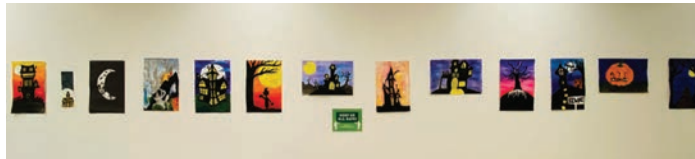


DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

To commemorate the Day of the Dead, staff and students contributed to altars located in both GDS buildings. High School history teacher Ricardo Carmona, High School world languages chair Maribel Prieto, and Lower/Middle School art teacher Ashley Ortiz spearheaded the projects. At the Lower/Middle School, students contributed traditional *calaveras de azucar* (sugar skulls), *papel picado* (Mexican paper cuts), painted or folded flowers, and LED-candle-lit ceramic pinch pots. Community members added photographs of loved ones no longer with us to the altars in both buildings, and many commented on the meaningful emotional impact of the displays.

SEASONAL ART

A rotation of fall leaves and haunted Halloween scenes graced the second and third floors, thanks to our student artists and the quick work of our Lower/Middle School art teachers, Ashley Ortiz, Jenn Heffernan, and John Headley. warm/cool color-study pieces watched over our PK students as they watched the Halloween parade.



DETAILED DRAWINGS

Middle School artists produced still-life pencil sketches as they developed shading techniques and Takashi Murakami-inspired drawings in the detailed manga/anime-style of the artist. Their carefully detailed sneaker sketches capture their individual personalities and invite passersby to “walk in their shoes.”



High School Spring Art Show 2021

In May 2021, GDS community members toured an exhibition hall no one had ever set foot in—and never will. On display: more than 200 original works of art by GDS High School students representing a wide range of media, including photography, painting and drawing, ceramics, film and animation, digital media and graphic design, and 3D modeling and design.

Some of the works displayed in the virtual gallery represented students' responses to the pandemic and the Capitol insurrection. Other pieces took viewers far from those topics, escaping instead into the careful study of a still life, into an intricate lighting construction, or to the grounding physicality of a well-thrown ceramic dish.

Many thanks to the 2020-21 High School Studio Art Department—Michelle Cobb (Chair), Adrian Loving, Tuan Nguyen, Nick Ryan, and Laura Tolliver—for skillfully guiding our student artists to create these works despite the challenges of the pandemic.



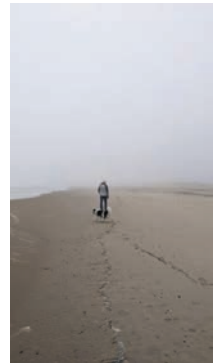
STILL-LIFE PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, AND MIXED MEDIA: *At Least They Had Been Visible* by Annabel Williams '22; *People on The Train* by Ally Brangham '23; *Multicolor Still-Life* by Nava Mach '23; *Blue Teapot* by Anoush Keinath-Esmail '22



A collection of digital illustrations and mixed- and multi-media collage spotlighted **INSPIRING WOMEN:** Iranian racing driver Laleh Seddigh (*Isabella Martorana '24*), the only female emperor in Chinese history (*Phoenix Zhang '24*), fashion designer and businesswoman Coco Chanel (*Max Kaminski '23*), and Queen Liliuokalani, last monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom (*Maya Raman '23*).



Among the many dozens of pieces in the **CERAMICS AND SCULPTURE** wing, visitors could view *Clown Bowl* by Maya Lucia Boyer '21, *Incense Trinity* by Lily Singh '21, *Ocean Mobile* by Trey Nordberg '22, and *Sock Contrast Circle* by Brock Davis '22.



Many of the pieces in the **PHOTOGRAPHY** gallery captured the experience of solitude, including *Fireworks* by Leah Li '24, *The Canopy*, *Reflected* by Adam Leff '22, *Untitled Portrait* by Dylan Posey '21, *Reflection* by Ella Gillespie '21, and *Mist* by Jack Farrell '24.



Among the various political posters, logo designs, and magazine covers, visitors to the **DIGITAL MEDIA & GRAPHIC DESIGN** gallery took in a piece inspired by Mitski's studio album *Bury Me at Make Out Creek* by Jake Markarian '22, *Near Future - The Innovator's Magazine* by Luke Fedorchak '24, *Washington Warriors* by Zachary Kovner '24, and a Kamala Harris political poster by Luke Flyer '22.

WORLD DANCE IN LOWER SCHOOL

This fall, our 4th-grade students visited the Philippines, South Africa, and Cuba via New York City. They also traveled back in time and returned to the present no older than when they left—just wiser and ready to dance. Lower School dance teacher Joan Ayap guided students through a newly developed world dance curriculum that introduced the four key concepts of modern dance through traditional dances as well as each dance’s historical context. Students focused on rhythmic timing, directionality, armwork, and footwork while learning tinikling, isicathulo, and salsa.

Despite its oppressive Spanish colonial era legacy, **tinikling** is a reclaimed cultural dance in the Philippines that is said to mimic rice farmers protecting their crops from tikling birds, native olive-brown rail birds. After learning the history, students focused on a three-four time signature rhythmic pattern and footwork imitating the movements of the birds and the stepping between growing rows of rice plants.

Isicathulo, also known as gumboot dance, originated in noisy mines in South Africa where Black workers, prohibited from speaking, communicated through stomped codes; it is considered the ancestor of modern stepping. After watching some examples of traditional gumboot dancing and modern stepping, students focused on call-and-response patterns and improvisations. They also learned to use their hands and feet as percussion instruments.

Salsa dancing, with its African and Caribbean rhythmic roots, arrived on the New York City scene in the Cuban exodus following the Revolution of 1959. Students learned the Afro-Cuban clave rhythm and the timing of a basic eight-beat pattern.

Lower School instructional coach Azureé Harrison (see page 56 for more on instructional coaching), who collaborated with Joan as she developed each unit, said: “This curriculum fosters an authentic appreciation for styles of dance by providing students with a window into its cultural significance and history. They learned why salsa dance is cherished—not just what the dance steps are. Joan was intentional in making the learning goals clear by using student-friendly wording that reinforced content-specific vocabulary in each lesson.”

After learning each dance, 4th graders created their own choreography to showcase all they had learned about the style and the four fundamentals of modern dance.





Former Head of School Gladys Stern passed away on November 14, 2021 at the age of 104. Gladys gave so much to Georgetown Day School, and we invite you to join us in celebrating her life in the following ways:

**SAVE THE DATE FOR A
CELEBRATION HONORING
GLADYS STERN**

Sunday, April 24, 2022
(during Alumni Weekend)
On the GDS Campus located at
4200 Davenport Street, NW in
Washington, DC.
More information to come.

**SHARE YOUR MEMORIES
OF GLADYS**

We know so many of you have memories of how Gladys changed your life, and we want to be sure your story is captured. Share your memories or photos of Gladys, which will be collected into a remembrance booklet distributed during the Celebration.

Deadline for submissions is
February 28, 2022.

www.GDS.org/GladysMemories

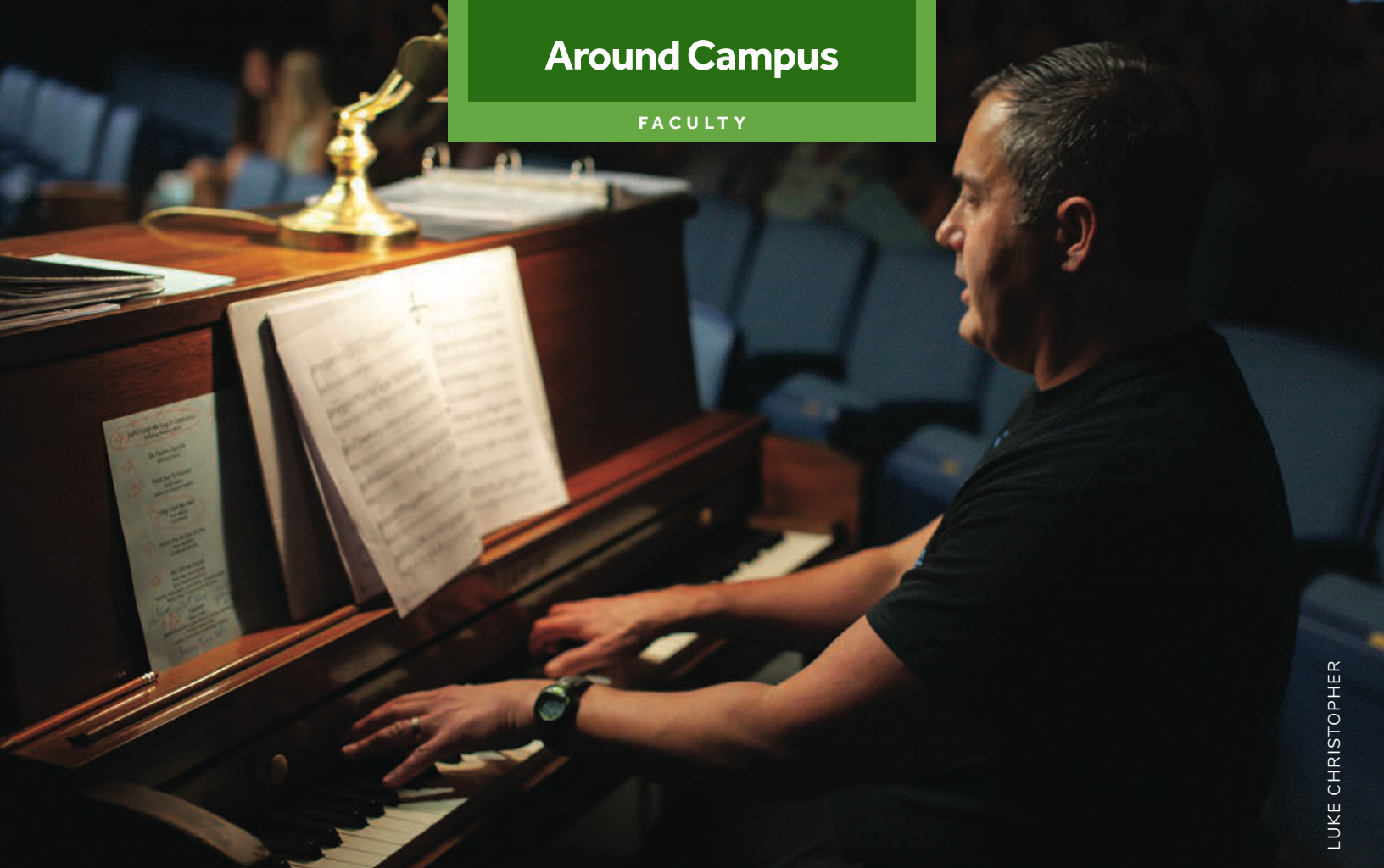
**DONATE IN HONOR
OF GLADYS TO THE
GLADYS M. STERN
FINANCIAL
AID ENDOWMENT.**

In 1996, GDS established the Gladys M. Stern Financial Aid Endowment.

Make a gift and honor her commitment to enhancing access to a GDS education, regardless of a family's ability to pay.

www.GDS.org/GladysGiving





LUKE CHRISTOPHER

GDS MUSIC ENRICHES OTHER COMMUNITIES

The professional work of Lower/Middle School music teachers John Barnes and Keith Hudspeth (chair of the LMS Arts Department) had a mission-aligned impact beyond the School in summer 2021.

Musical Nourishment

Since 2017, Lower/Middle School Arts Chair Keith Hudspeth has taught a summer youth choral program in Rappahannock County, Virginia, where the public schools have no choral program.

Now the program's director, he has helped grow the program fivefold. He has also increased gender and ethnoracial diversity, and brought healthy singing habits and a creative ensemble experience to children eager and yearning to sing. For two weeks each summer, Keith leads students ages nine to 18 through playful mash-ups, Broadway blockbusters, and songs that broaden their worldview.

Keith's expertise in music and in culturally relevant pedagogy, gained through GDS professional development diversity training,* enriches the students' educational experience. He focuses on encouraging students to sing in ways that produce a fuller, richer sound. He also adds diverse voices into the standard repertoire, including female composers, Black poets, and many more. In selecting pieces, Keith looks for quality text and music that speaks directly to students.

In summer 2021, Keith selected a beautiful arrangement of Langston Hughes's "Hold Fast to Dreams," one of those rare pieces that manages to appeal immediately to children and also nourish them musically. Music colleague John Barnes explained that often, musical pieces are either like craveable candy—appealing but with little learning value—or like healthful vegetables, helping to develop musical tastes, challenge skills, and introduce new perspectives. In Rappahannock County, as at GDS, Keith serves up balanced musical meals.

He has also been able to share GDS's resources, including xylophones—to the delight of the students—and musical scores for use during his summer course. Keith said, "The program reinforces how fortunate we are at GDS," where students participate in the arts multiple times per week and their teachers have access to the best pedagogical materials.

The summer choral program also gives back to GDS. It has afforded Keith the opportunity to "test-drive" many of the new pieces he has in mind for the GDS choral program and fine-tune his teaching approach. Despite the lost year in 2020, this year's 36 singers performed for more than 200 community members during the culminating concert, and Keith is working to bring back as mentors students who have now aged out. The summer program is a part of the Headwaters Foundation, a nonprofit seeking to foster cooperative spirit and educational excellence.

Elevating Skills



For four weeks in summer 2021, John Barnes reunited with music teachers across the country during what he called "that magical month in July," when, for a brief period, it seemed as though the pandemic was coming to a close. In two-week sessions, he taught the recorder portion of Orff Schulwerk certification courses for music teachers who came together at George Mason University and at Lakeland University in Wisconsin.

Orff Schulwerk is the philosophically aligned, developmentally appropriate approach to music instruction embraced by GDS, and all LMS music teachers are Orff certified. The approach seeks an integrated approach to the arts; celebrates voice and choice for students; and prioritizes fluid improvisation between dance, music, and theatrical disciplines. Certification encompasses courses in basic pedagogy, performance skills, area-specific pedagogy, and more. Though each of the three in-depth certification levels takes a summer to complete, some GDS teachers have gone beyond the three levels and now teach or present at American Orff Schulwerk Association (AOSA) conferences. Keith, for example, has taught supplemental courses for teachers honing their craft in creative choral programming and will present at the AOSA national conference this year.

Four summers ago, John enrolled in an AOSA apprenticeship program to become an Orff certification program instructor. Now in his work teaching teachers, John has found that his work across multiple grade levels at GDS—currently 2nd through 8th grades—has equipped him to be a successful trainer. At least a portion of every Orff teacher training course is taught as though the participants are children themselves; and while the three levels of Orff certification are not age specific, John has vast experience in the rhythmic and harmonic development of students at each stage.

GDS curriculum development has been a great side benefit to John's summer professional work elevating other teachers' skills. "You can't teach music teachers something that you have not previously explored with students," John said. "In preparation to teach these courses, I had the opportunity to look critically at my own work, taking lessons I'd developed and redesigning for each of the three levels."

Longtime director of the George Mason program Joyce Stephansky said, "The best decision of any that I made this year was the decision to hire John Barnes. Five years ago, when I knew our previous person was going to be leaving, I knew that I wanted John. He has a way with people that both puts them at ease and excites them at the same time. He can charm a group or redirect a group without making them feel like they don't know what they're doing. His large group classes were beautiful, [demonstrating] perfect process for how to teach a dance or a canon—seamlessly building upon the materials from the basic training in his recorder classes. I have evaluations saying John was the favorite part of the day and that he changed the way people thought about teaching."

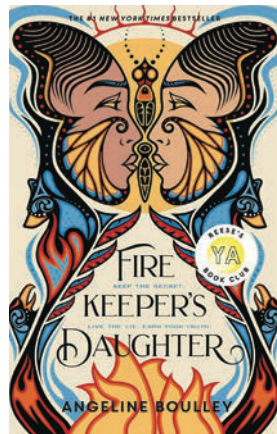
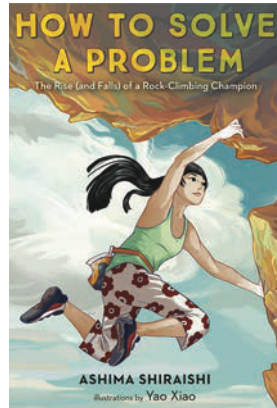
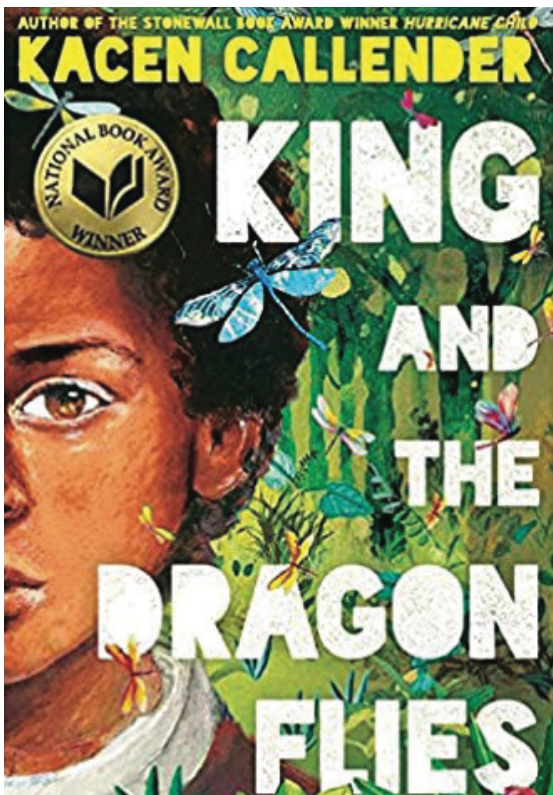
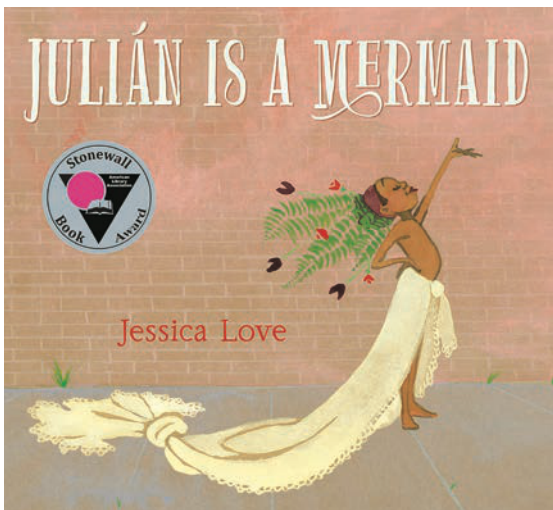
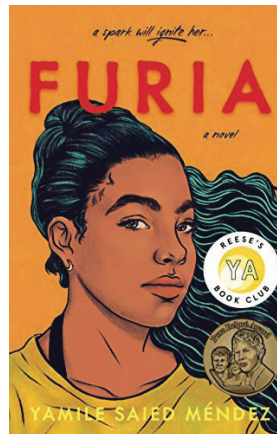
He has a way with people that both puts them at ease and excites them at the same time. He can charm a group or redirect a group without making them feel like they don't know what they're doing.

The closing day of each two-week course is unforgettable. There are musical performances, collaborations, and reflections—just the kind of community that was missing in 2020. "It was so meaningful to be with other music teachers after a traumatic year, a year when nothing resembled music pedagogy as we know it must be," John said.

John and his students returned to the classroom this fall and have been able to sing and play instruments safely together; albeit masked, distanced, and facing forward only. While it's still a far cry from ideal instruction, the chorus is ensemble again and music is back in the building.

*Keith and John have both participated in the National Diversity Practitioners Institute in addition to their regular engagement with the AOSA conferences.

Not a Single Story Bookshare Group



In April 2021, the GDS librarians launched Not a Single Story bookshare group for GDS faculty and staff, referring in their title to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2013 TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story," which explored the harms caused by monolithic narratives for diverse identity groups.

Inspired by GDS professional development workshops with Dr. Bettina Love, Dr. Anneliese Singh, and Dr. Ghody Muhammad, our librarians seek to support teachers' work expanding their individual cultural competencies and, as Dr. Singh described it, "catching [themselves] in the flow of racism." They also hope to support teachers in becoming familiar with a broader range of newer literature by and about underrepresented identities.

Each month, the group invites readers to explore collected fiction and nonfiction titles around a particular identity or intersection of identities. Discussions focus on the messages students may receive from the books, including affirming messages, as well as concerns including misrepresentation, stereotyping, and exceptionalism. So far, the group has focused on fiction featuring Americans of East Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry; titles about gender identity, including nonconformity and trans identity; and titles about being Latinx. Discussions are forthcoming about books featuring Black boys, Black girls, Indigenous Americans, immigrant stories, and people of South Asian descent.

20
21

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22

MEET THE NEW TRUSTEES

We were pleased to welcome three new Board members to the Georgetown Day School Board of Trustees for the 2021—22 school year: Julie Fernandes, Marc Lindsey, and Sasha Fombrun-Rene. They join a thriving Board composed of parents, alumni, and other members of the GDS community focused on strategic planning, campus planning, and financial goal-setting. As it has since its founding by seven families in 1945, the GDS Board is committed to ensuring the short- and long-term financial health of the School and to safeguarding the School's founding purpose.

All members of the Board also serve on at least one of 10 Board committees. For more information about other members of our Board, go to www.GDS.org/Board.



Julie Fernandes

Julie Fernandes currently serves as the associate director for institutional accountability and individual liberty at the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) and brings to the GDS Board a “professional career focused on issues of racial and social justice and equity,” she said. Julie works to “encourage the active participation of citizens in government, seeks to make government and private institutions more

accountable and responsive, and supports efforts to ensure that individuals’ rights and liberties under the Constitution are protected,” according to RFF’s website.

“I have thought and read a lot about what it takes to create a truly multiracial, thriving, and inclusive community, and I am excited to engage with GDS leadership around these knotty and important questions,” she said. “After 11+ years in the GDS community, I am happy to have the chance to work with the GDS leadership and other parent volunteers to help the school grow, improve, and thrive.”

GDS’s focus on a diverse community, coupled with the School’s purposeful work building students’ sense of belonging and community and as their identity as independent thinkers, are what drew Julie and her family to the School in the first place. “I love that GDS works hard to challenge our kids intellectually, while supporting them in becoming curious, independent, joyful people. I also love GDS’s intention around creating a multiracial community and that the School

recognizes that creating a multiracial community where every child can thrive is hard work.”

Prior to joining the Rockefeller Family Fund, Julie served as advocacy director for voting rights and democracy at the Open Society Foundations, as a deputy assistant attorney general in the civil rights division of the Department of Justice in the Obama administration, and as special assistant for domestic policy to President Bill Clinton.

From 2002 to 2008, Julie was the senior counsel and senior policy analyst at the Leadership Conference for Civil Rights, where she led federal advocacy efforts on a variety of issues, including the successful campaign to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act in 2006.

Julie received both her JD and AB degrees from the University of Chicago and clerked for the Honorable Diane P. Wood at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. She lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with her husband and two sons, including Avram Shapiro ’24.



Marc Lindsey

There is no more winning endorsement of GDS than new Board member Marc Lindsey's, when asked what he loves most about the School: "I love that GDS has given our son [Maceo '28] a school community that he loves and that sees him; challenges him; nurtures his emotional and intellectual development; and has cemented his desire to learn, succeed, and engage in solving big problems."

Marc couples that love of GDS with an impressive background of legal counsel, Board service, and entrepreneurship.

From all of his experiences, he said, "I understand and appreciate the distinction between governance and management" and "I have developed an approach to identifying and resolving challenging problems and charting new pathways to optimal outcomes through constructive conflict, attentive engagement, collaboration, and persistence." He's excited to join the Board and "contribute to the vital work ahead—work that will drive GDS's continued success through the coming challenges, shape our children's future, and empower them to change the world for the better."

Marc is a partner at the law firm of Levine, Blaszak, Block & Boothby LLP (LB3) in Washington, DC, where he leads the firm's technology practice. Marc structures and negotiates complex IT transactions for Fortune 500 companies and other large organizations in connection with outsourcing, digital transformation, cloud computing, managed services, and enterprise software. He also helps LB3's

clients assess and mitigate risks arising out of their adoption and use of new digital platforms.

In 2014, Marc co-founded and now runs a startup venture, Avenue4 LLC. Avenue4 provides professional services and a digital platform that enable companies to manage, buy, and sell internet assets. He is also a founding Board member of Beacon Properties Inc., a nonprofit organization that invests in and develops real estate projects to promote social justice, provide affordable housing, and improve the lives of the marginalized in Washington, DC.

Prior to law school, Marc was a systems engineer with General Electric, where he specialized in software engineering and systems integration. He received a BS in electrical engineering from Howard University, an MS in systems engineering from the University of Pennsylvania, and a JD from the University of North Carolina School of Law.



Sasha Fombrun-Rene

Passionate about both education and inclusiveness, Sasha Fombrun-Rene currently assists DC Public High School students with their college applications through a local nonprofit organization. "My current work with high school seniors and first-generation college students of various economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds provides me with a lens with which to view our School from a macro level that naturally melds with the micro level experienced by a parent of a GDS child," she said.

This unique experience, along with her diverse background and life experiences—both personal and professional, including previous roles volunteering with GDS, in particular with the PSA—allow her to "bring a unique global perspective to the GDS Board," she said. "I am eager to participate in furthering our mission for years to come."

Sasha names the GDS community as her favorite thing about the School. "It's difficult to come up with one thing I love most about GDS, but if forced to do so I would choose the incredible sense of community that abounds. Not only have my daughters felt supported and accepted by teachers, staff, and classmates, but as a parent, I feel so fortunate to have connected with so many wonderful members of the GDS community throughout the years," she said.

Previously, Sasha worked as a trial attorney for the Department of Homeland

Security (DHS), where she represented the United States government before U.S. immigrations courts. Upon leaving DHS, Sasha entered private practice as a partner at a law firm specializing in immigration law. She represented clients with their immigration petitions, visas, and general immigration issues.

Recently, Sasha mentored a child in the foster care system as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. She has also served as a guardian ad litem through the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project and currently serves on the Board of MentorPrize and DC Futures.

Sasha graduated from Emory University and obtained a JD from Nova Southeastern University. She and her husband, Alex, are the parents of two GDS students, alumna Ella '18 and current senior Isa. Sasha is fluent in French and Haitian Creole and proficient in Spanish.



THE NEED TO PREPARE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CIVIC LEADERS HAS NEVER BEEN MORE URGENT

The Civic Lab at Georgetown Day School aims to create a space where young people can learn and practice the skills of effective civic leadership for necessary social change. We start with a belief that young people already are engines for change—and our mission is to equip them with the skills, opportunities, and networks to address the most pressing social challenges that undermine the health of our democracy.

1 Have better dialogue.

The ability to have better dialogue—not only despite our differences, but also about those differences—is the starting point for better problem-solving, better collaboration, and better outcomes. The Discussion Lab (see feature on next page), our first learning lab pilot at the GDS High School, explicitly builds young people’s dialogue and listening skills so that they can effectively lead and navigate conversations about our necessary civic work.

2 Solve real problems.

The Civic Lab creates immersive experiential learning opportunities that give young people the platform to engage with real-world issues, undertake community-informed problem-identification, and innovate solutions. The Civic Lab Speaker Series (see sidebar on next page) features individuals who are addressing a range of civic challenges

in new ways. The Venture Lab (see feature on next page) supports young entrepreneurs who are developing market-based approaches to complex social problems.

3 Take collective action.

The solutions to some of our most complex societal challenges will come from coalitions drawing from many spheres, including advocacy, public policy, government, nonprofit enterprises, business, and other realms. We therefore focus on building strategic partnerships to promote collective action to bring young people at the Civic Lab into direct engagement with others who share our social impact goals.

Please visit our website for future updates and event registration: www.CivicLabGDS.org

INTRODUCING OUR LEARNING LABS

These learning labs will be piloted at GDS throughout 2022.

THE DISCUSSION LAB

A foundation of the Civic Lab's commitment to equip the next generation of civic leaders is the need to teach better models for dialogue and discourse than we typically encounter in this highly polarized era. The disintegration that we have witnessed in the nation's political discourse over the past decade represents arguably one of the greatest threats to our democracy, and the Discussion Lab presents a model to promote more civil dialogue by offering a scaffolded approach to building speaking and listening skills among diverse groups of youth. Our aim is for young people to develop their dialogue "toolkit" with approaches drawn from extensive research and practices to support civil dialogue, in addition to frameworks drawn from diversity, equity, and inclusion practices that facilitate the ability of individuals to enter conversations not only despite their differences, but also about those differences.

THE PATTY ABRAMSON SOCIAL VENTURE LAB

The Venture Lab's goal is to nurture future generations of GDS social entrepreneurs by providing the skills, mentorship and, in some cases, seed money (aka "Patty Grants") to create and incubate social ventures. Recognizing that bringing an idea to life requires support, mentorship, cheerleading, technical training, and financial acumen, the Venture Lab is intended to serve as an incubation hub for young entrepreneurs at GDS who have transformative ideas for social change. The Venture Lab connects directly to one of the Civic Lab's aims, which is to cultivate innovative problem-solving among young people looking to solve urgent societal challenges. Inspired by the legacy of Patty Abramson, a venture capitalist focused on investing in women (Patty was also a former member of the GDS Board of Trustees, alumni parent, and grandparent), the Venture Lab will be open to all young people regardless of gender identity. And, given Patty's life work of trying to even the playing field for female entrepreneurs, it will feature an intentional focus on nurturing future generations of female entrepreneurs by ensuring that young women are at least 50% of the Venture Lab's participants, grant recipients, and mentors.

THE ART & ACTIVISM LAB

As a youth civic engagement hub, the Civic Lab recognizes the crucial role that the arts have historically played in narrating our cultural histories and driving social change movements. The Art & Activism Lab will engage young artists/activists from across the DMV to bring their voice to the civic conversation by developing creative campaigns, public and/or online art exhibitions, publications, or other forms of media that connect the arts to social justice issues. Featuring site visits, visiting artists, and the opportunity to develop networks and partnerships with a range of arts organizations, this program will place young creatives at the forefront of developing the strategies for promoting social justice in community spaces, education institutions, and partner organizations both regionally and nationally.

CIVIC LAB SPEAKER SERIES

Confirmed for 2021—22

- Tiana Epps-Johnson, Founder and Executive Director, Center for Tech and Civic Life
- Simon Isaacs, CEO, TaskForce PR
- Ellen Patterson, COO, EVERFI
- Katie Eder, Founder and Executive Director, Future Coalition
- Alec Karakatsanis, Founder and Executive Director, Civil Rights Corps
- Kate Goodall, Co-Founder and CEO, Halcyon
- Negar Tayyar, Director, Global Whole Being Fund
- Josie Naughton, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Choose Love
- Hahrie Han, Director, SNF Agora Institute and the P3 Lab at Johns Hopkins University
- Dr. Julie Amaon, Medical Director, Just the Pill
- Dr. Debra Duardo, Superintendent, Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Sarah Rosen Wartell, Executive Director, Urban Institute

* Venture Lab Featured Speakers

Ellen Patterson, COO of EVERFI (Nov 19)
Kate Goodall, CEO of Halcyon (Feb 10)



INSTRUCTIONAL



Assistant Head of School for Curriculum and Instruction Laura Yee and Lower School instructional coach Azureé Harrison share their hopes for growth during a start-of-school video for students

Easily the most striking feature of the new paradigm for instructional coaching at Georgetown Day School is what is at its heart: the students. This new model, set in motion by Laura Yee, Assistant Head of School for Curriculum and Instruction, places student success front and center. In so doing, it marks a momentous shift from the way most schools conceptualize instructional coaching. It is not a teacher evaluation. It is not a one-day workshop, not a to-do list item to be checked off for continuing education credits. Rather, Laura affirmed, it is **“sustained, systematic, and job-embedded”**—it’s professional development that supports student learning.”

So what does this mean, practically speaking, for instructional coaching? Laura dove into each of these words.

“Sustained,” in that this focused work takes place between a teacher and their coach over time, rather than a meeting or an observation once per semester. A teacher receives prompt and ongoing feedback, which they can then immediately put to use in the classroom. The results of the coaching—whether a diverse, student-centered classroom library or a rethinking of where a teacher tends to position themselves most often in their room—should always be ultimately visible in student experience. Over the course of several conversations with Laura and with GDS’s instructional coaches for the Lower, Middle, and High Schools, the foundational goal of this program became clear: to enable teachers to notice their own patterns and to break those patterns when called for.

Such reconfiguring of behavior can really only take place through this kind of sustained coaching, all the stronger because it is **“systematic: an actual process, with steps that become familiar,”** Laura elucidated.

Cara Henderson, Jana Rupp, and Azureé Harrison (instructional coaches who are **embedded** at the High, Middle, and Lower Schools respectively) explained the logistics of the coaching for each division. In the High School, new this year is the requirement for all teachers to meet with Cara every (or every other) week, for about eight meetings

per semester. Half of the faculty will do so this fall, and the other half between January and May. This is an expansion of the program from the past few years, when coaching in the High School was required only for second-year teachers and those new to GDS, and overseen by High School English teacher Katherine Dunbar.

Cara sees this adjustment as an exciting pivot for veteran teachers, some of whom have mentioned that “this is the first time in a long



Middle School instructional coach Jana Rupp listens as science teacher Michael Desautels describes his plans for a new Social Justice in Chemistry unit

COACHING at GDS

by Jordi Rozenman

time they've felt like they're growing, or that there are tangible developments in their practice they can meaningfully point to," she said. Laura emphasized, as well, that although this "huge shift" may understandably produce some hesitation in teachers, at its core this model "allows teachers to be more seen." She continued, "you don't evaluate kids into being better students, and in the same way, you don't evaluate teachers into being better teachers. You have to coach."

"You don't evaluate kids into being better students, and in the same way, you don't evaluate teachers into being better teachers. You have to coach."

Attending to growth requires consistency, and, as Cara highlighted, "building trust between teacher and coach" that happens over time.

In the Middle and Lower Schools, meetings with the coaches take place on a voluntary basis, and there is a great deal of enthusiasm around the program. Kyle Money, a 7th-grade English teacher new to GDS this year, keenly praised the work he has been able to do with the help of Jana this year. More than once, he mentioned that the effectiveness of this coaching model comes in large part from its immediacy.

After a lesson via direct instruction (i.e., a lecture, which Kyle says he does not often employ as a teaching method), he emailed Jana for some guidance. He felt the lesson had not been as clear or as engaging as he would have liked. He was able to meet with Jana during his planning period directly following that lesson. They talked through its strengths and weaknesses, and she gave him on-the-spot feedback—which he promptly put into practice in the next period. "An hour later!" he exclaimed. "There was no waiting a week. Within an hour, I was able to deliver the same lesson more effectively to the next classes, and I can revisit the material with the first class. And it wasn't just verbal feedback. Jana followed up with emails and hand-picked, hand-delivered resources."

Beyond the fact that his students will receive vibrant, compelling instruction, Kyle is thrilled that they are able to see him demonstrate exactly the kind of learning habits he would like them to develop. "I want to learn, I have the energy, but I am not a master of anything. Taking that feedback and responding—I can model this for them."

Because the teachers are the ones driving the content of each meeting, they can maximize the benefits of the program. The sessions may range in focus from curriculum and assessment design to teaching philosophy and values, and often to topics of self-care. "This year especially," remarked Cara, as we return to some sort of life as we knew it, "meetings have focused on **work-life balance.**"



High School instructional coach Cara Henderson with science teacher Greg Dallinger

Frequently, this includes discussions of grading and of how to strategize to best plan the week so that teachers and students feel energized and invested. Cara explained that the coaches see themselves "not as supervisors, but as guides." Azure, the Lower School coach, added that part of the goal is to help make teachers aware of "what they can't see from where they stand." It's a strengths-focused and growth-oriented process.

Whether teachers are working with coaches on developing units, integrating self-care, or reflecting on some new part of their practice, the enthusiasm shared by the coaches across the divisions and by Laura is infectious. The mission, to ask teachers "to consider their decisions intentionally" (as Laura put it) so that every student can benefit, is clear, and has already begun to spark new ideas in classrooms across GDS. "I'm so grateful to the administration," Laura said, "and I'm so excited—I know the research, and I know it's going to work." From the way teachers are talking, it's working already.

What We Learned From COVID-19

During the strangest two years of our lives, we've adjusted numerous times to surreal and sometimes tragic circumstances. We've cried, we've waited, we've laughed together on Zoom or on lawns and in driveways—six feet apart from each other, of course. We have found ways to rejoice. We've discovered hobbies, paths through the woods, and truths. We have, on occasion, emptied the grocery stores of toilet paper and chocolate chips. And, we have undoubtedly learned a few things. As we continue to move toward some semblance of normalcy, we ask, what have we learned from COVID-19? Here are some answers from the GDS community.



JASON PUTSCHE

"Kids are so resilient. Watching them power through everything has given me the extra momentum to show up each day."

— Asher Bianchi, Lower School Science Support (pictured above)

"I learned a lot about teamwork during COVID-19. I got to do chores. I got to learn a lot about my parents and hang out with them more, and I got to walk my dog. Now, at school, I can share the work if I have a partner for an assignment. I can say, 'I'll get your iPad, while you start the assignment, and then I'll continue the assignment while you do the work with the iPad.' COVID-19 was tough and it's still a hard time, but at least I got to be with the people I love most in the world, my parents."

— JJ Levien, 4th Grader

"I learned to practice self-care in many ways during the pandemic, as I was forced to adjust to new school schedules, changes in my gym and soccer routines, and a cutback on socializing. I've also learned that being alone isn't always bad; I spent a lot of time in quarantine thinking that all the alone time was scary. As time went on, I realized all the things I could accomplish in my extended free time."

— Lulu Tirado, 8th Grader

"I discovered a profound sense of self-advocacy. I pushed myself to personal limits I wouldn't have known had this tumultuous time not pushed me to discover them. I completed a master's degree, took care of a three-year-old, and worked full time—if I can do all those things simultaneously, I can do anything!"

— Darius Pardner, Associate Director of College Counseling

"We don't know a lot about ourselves that we thought we knew. I actually enjoy baking!"

— Kendall Bullock, Senior





— **Nitya Raman,**
4th Grader

“I learned the importance of hygiene for keeping each other safe. If we don’t wash and keep things clean, more of this can happen and more people can get hurt. You have to do things that help yourself and help other people, too.”



— **Bennett Rapaport,**
Kindergartener

“I learned that you need a COVID-19 shot and you have to wear a mask. I learned the special things in my life are my parents and my sister and my brother. I hug them a lot and give them kisses to show them that I love them. I think other people should show love to their families.”

“Seeing my mom after not seeing her for 16 months made me realize how important it is to be in the presence of the people you love. Even though we’d been talking and FaceTiming, nothing comes close to being together in person, to hug, hold hands, and share space.”

— **Lynn Klaiman, Lower School**
Learning Specialist

“COVID-19 made me learn that I could really focus myself—but I do better with in-person activities. It was lonely not being able to see people that weren’t just my family.”

— **Carmen Gitchell, Senior**

“We learned that: (1) Different people react differently to similar stresses; (2) transitions toward old ‘normal’ can be challenging; (3) socializing is critically important; and (4) we need each other.”

— **A Teacher**

“I’m stronger than I was led to believe. I get to choose my happiness. And humans are like plants: we need sunlight.”

— **Fatmata Koroma, Associate Director**
of College Counseling

“Online school is even worse than I ever could have imagined; the things that make a school great are actually in the building, a shared world. Pixels don’t do people justice. In a pandemic and always, we should arm ourselves against loneliness and boredom. Luckily, a school is a great fortress against loneliness and boredom.”

— **Julia Fisher ’09, English Teacher**

“I learned to cherish the small social interactions. Conversations in the hall with old teachers, catch-ups with acquaintances in the library, introductions to friends of friends: all mean so much more to me than I knew.”

— **Julian Galkin, Senior**

“We learned the important role that physical education and athletics play in the health and well-being of our students. The COVID-19 break from traditional athletics gave coaches and athletes a renewed appreciation for their teams and competition.”

— **David Gillespie,**
Athletic Director

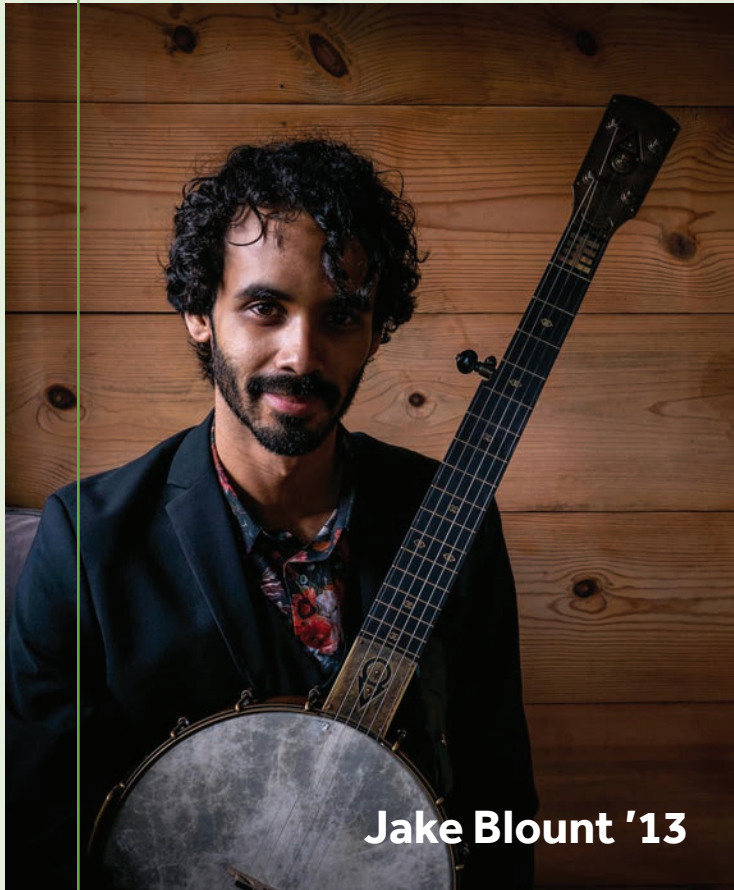
“In the past year, I have been reminded to have a deeper awareness of many things. I choose not to participate in anything that does not bring me joy or strengthen me. I have a right and a purpose in this world that needs no approval from anyone. I take a moment to reflect on my legacy and note how I can grow. I wake up with a purpose to mend the moments I was not my best self and do all things with love.”

— **Michelle Levy, PK Teacher**

“I have so many ‘What I have learned’ from last year. Be kind to people, because you have no idea what they are going through. Families trust us with their children every day; we are responsible for someone’s entire heart. Take time for yourself— all of the work will still be there when you return. And the days aren’t coming back: do what makes you happy and live in the moment.”

— **Meredith**
Chase-Mitchell,
High School
Learning Specialist





Jake Blount '13

MICHELLE LOTKER

SPIDER TALES AND REPARATIONS

Meet Jake Blount '13, award-winning banjoist, fiddler, singer, and scholar

Jake is the 2020 recipient of the Steve Martin Banjo Prize, a board member of the nonprofit Bluegrass Pride, and one half of the internationally touring duo Tui. He is a two-time winner and many-time finalist of the Appalachian String Band Music Festival (better known as Clifftop); he is also the first Black person to make finals in any category. In 2017, Jake received a BA in Ethnomusicology and released the EP Reparations. He specializes in the music of Black and Indigenous communities in the southeastern United States, and in the regional style of Ithaca, New York. His debut solo album, Spider Tales, released on May 29, 2020, to wide critical praise and positive coverage from NPR, Rolling Stone Country, Billboard Pride, and AV Club. Spider Tales later appeared on “Best of 2020” lists from NPR, Bandcamp, the New Yorker, the Guardian, and elsewhere.

Jake learned to play electric guitar at age 12, sang in the Middle School chorus led by Keith Hudspeth, and played in bands outside of school with his peers for several years. But he dropped music in High School and found community elsewhere at school through junior education programs and Rainbow Connections, the gender and sexuality alliance group. Still, a growing affinity for acoustic music continued outside of school.

As a High School junior in 2011, Jake attended the Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC) and became one of the student leaders of Thursday Teen Corps, a service program supporting middle school students from DC Public Schools.

“If I have [a life-changing experience], it was SDLC, for sure,” Jake said. “Going to the conference was a really big paradigm shift for me. It really made me feel empowered to do a better job with my life than I was doing. So many of the extracurricular things that I did that wound up shaping how I engage with community,” he explained, were through work with the GDS Diversity Office at the time.

When Jake took a leadership role, he perceived that the social justice-focused curriculum of the Thursday Teen Corps tutoring program wasn’t working for the middle schoolers or the High School mentors. Jake said it felt problematic for privileged private school kids to be teaching DC Public School kids about marginalized communities. Experts engaged in community work every day, he explained, were better qualified to teach the middle schoolers about those social justice issues. Instead, he steered the mentoring program toward science instruction.

“I somehow prevailed upon the science department to allow me—with supervision to—perform this experiment [precipitating bismuth metal from Pepto-Bismol] and explain it for those students,” he said. Hydrochloric acid in hand, he proceeded to explain chemical bonding while breaking the bonds within the bismuth subsalicylate and forming a heavy metal.

Jake has thought repeatedly over the past several years about the way the supervising teachers responded to his lesson. He recalled, “Both came up to me afterwards and said, “You are a great teacher and you should think about



Jake Blount '13 with his sister Julia '08 in 2018 at their fifth and tenth GDS reunions, respectively. Julia, herself an educator, currently serves as Director of Upper Elementary (4–6) and Justice Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) at Echo Horizon School in Culver City, California, while continuing her studies as a doctoral student at USC Rossier Graduate School of Education. Previously, Julia taught Middle School history at GDS, where she helped develop the annual 7th-grade Power Project (see page 4, *Learning Stability*), and served as a co-advisor of *Community Production*, the annual show conceived, written, performed, and directed by Middle School students.



In November 2019, Jake Blount '13 performed and spoke in Middle School.

that.' I consider myself someone who did not really find his skills until after he was an adult, so those moments, when someone in a position of evaluating me expressed such confidence in what I was doing, were really meaningful."

Even as Jake built his musical acumen with lessons and bands outside of school, his GDS High School experience added enriching harmony to the score. He got his feet wet as an educator, developed leadership skills in community engagement, and learned to take ownership of his own narrative.

Storytellers as Educators

Each of the teachers Jake recalls the most have added important threads to the stories he weaves with his music today. C.A. Piling's ecology and field biology—"easily the best and coolest class I've ever taken"—brought him into contact with Appalachia for the first time. "She took us to a mountaintop removal site in West Virginia, where we met Larry Gibson, who'd been really instrumental in the fight against mountaintop removal, even testifying in front of the U.N." Now with his close musical ties to Appalachia, he spends a lot of time there. "I lean on the ecology elements of that class all the time now in conversation," he said.

Former GDS English teacher Stanley Lau was determined to create a "welcome and rewarding environment for students of color and queer students," Jake remembered. jon sharp helped shake up Jake's complacent thinking, exploring a range of ideologies, radical politics, and also Queer Theory, "which wound up being really central to what I would do later in life," he said.

Mike Wenthe's English class read *Beloved* and *Paradise Lost*. The study of religious canon, folklore, and Black literature resonated deeply for Jake. Mike, also a musician, knew the medieval folk balladry that Jake was so taken with at the time and played a duet with him in a school talent show. (See Mike's story about working with Jake in the sidebar on the next page).

"I feel like it's important to do education and performance alongside one another," Jake reflected, looking back just weeks before a mid-October 2021 solo appearance at the Kennedy Center. At this apparent crossroads—a moment of increased awareness of historical disparities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national reckoning on race—Jake explained that people in any field must acknowledge and explore historical inequities in their fields. "There's an urgency to that now and [it] hasn't always been respected in the past. I'm presenting this folk music and I have to teach about the folk people to understand the folk music. We all have an obligation to ongoing learning and education."

Weaving Tales and Traditions Together

Jake received his first banjo lessons from Dr. Lydia Hamessley at Hamilton College in the fall of 2013 and, according to his website,

“started to structure a course of study around the early traditional music of Black communities in the United States.” Jake took up the fiddle in the summer of 2014. He went on tour after graduation and soon received an offer for a 2019 Oceania tour that slingshotted his career. He and fiddler Libby Weitnauer formed the duo Tui (pronounced TOO-e) and put out their debut album, *Pretty Little Mister*, with material they developed between shows in Australia and New Zealand. He’s known for regendering old tales in new lyrics and strives, as he said, “to be visible and present,” foregrounding the experiences of queer people and people of color in his work as a musician who identifies as a queer and multiracial Black person.

In fall 2021, he finally had the opportunity to take his debut solo album, *Spider Tales*, on the road, as the COVID-19 pandemic waned, with a full backing band. For that album and the music he has been developing since, Jake has proceeded with a singular mission: reweaving all the diasporic threads of music from the American South back together.

“All these different genres that we have, like bluegrass, country, folk, blues, and old-time music, which is really the stuff I’m known for playing, all of those used to be considered one genre, one variegated musical landscape in the American South,” Jake said. “They got broken out into different categories, not because of the way they sounded, but because of the races of the people playing.”

The music industry recorded blues for Black musicians and “hillbilly” music for White musicians. Jake explained, “Despite the fact that White early country musicians also played blues songs and had learned a lot of their technique and repertoire from Black people, and despite the fact that a lot of the Black folks, who were playing jazz and blues at the time, could also play string band stuff, there was a lot of crossover that didn’t get recorded.”

In a reclamation of the common roots of this music—and against that historical backdrop of what he called a “weird capitalist racist endeavor,”—Jake released *Spider Tales*, which he said “sits in a cool place between all of these genres to break down those boundaries that aren’t rooted in the music or in the sound.”

Like Anansi the Spider of Akan mythology, from which *Spider Tales* takes its title, Jake stands visible and present at the crossroads of all the tales and music traditions he’s weaving together. His stories, in music or spoken in the interludes of a live show or workshop, instruct, transport, and, at times, take your breath away.

Mike Wenthe’s Story

I met Jake Blount at the beginning of my first day as a teacher at GDS. He was a student in first-period English 12, so he was part of the oldest cohort of GDS students that I know. I can still vividly recall conversations with him in class discussions, in hallway encounters, in Senior Paper conferences. Jake routinely brought a fierce moral intensity to bear alongside his fine interpretive acumen, and I think that combination corresponded with his wider experience as an artist and activist.

Already at that time, Jake was starting to combine his musical endeavors with activism around identity and justice; I remember his excitement when he told me about debuting an original song at an activist event. A few years after his graduation, I ran into Jake performing outside the Tenley/Friendship Library as part of a musical outreach program. He demonstrated his expanded reach as a multi-instrumentalist—banjo and fiddle were now central to his playing—and he talked about his important research to excavate the work of under-acknowledged voices in what’s sometimes called old-time music.

For nostalgic reasons, I wish that one instrument still had a prominent place in Jake’s repertoire: the musical saw. Jake was originally going to use his Senior Quest to learn how to play the fiddle; of course, he did learn fiddle eventually, but he switched gears for the Quest after reading about Luster’s fascination with the musical saw in *The Sound and the Fury* (part of our spring-semester reading in English 12). I’m not sure if Jake was more amused by Luster’s infatuation with the saw in the novel or intrigued in his own right by the realization that the instrument is literally just a saw that you play musically, with a bow. So for his Senior Quest, Jake learned to play the musical saw! He invited me to accompany him on guitar for part of his Senior Quest performance, but the highlight of that evening was surely his duet, with a fellow student on piano, of an Adele hit that he renamed “Sawmeone Like You.” Little did I know that his future musical career would be so vital and accomplished, but given his drive, his talent, his intelligence, and his fierce commitment, I am not surprised to see and hear him thriving as an artist and lifting up other artists alongside him.

Jill Delston '01

ORIGIN STORIES

Jill Delston '01 on philosophy,
advocacy, and microinequities

AUGUST JENNEWAIN

"If you ask people their professional origin stories, so many will answer that a teacher told them they had skill or talent and that tiny little interaction changed their entire trajectory," said Dr. Jill Delston, professor of philosophy at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL), author of *Medical Sexism: Contraception Access, Reproductive Medicine, and Health Care* and co-editor of the textbook *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach*.

Jill's own origin story has its roots at GDS through a close read of *Dealing with Dragons*, an introduction to philosophy, a community of caring educators, and a collection of well-placed microaffirmations. Her GDS story continues to inform the teacher, researcher, and advocate she is today.

Dealing with Dragons And A Love of Philosophy

A young female protagonist stands out from a predominantly male cast—she studies ancient languages, elucidates the nature of our most deeply entrenched systems, breaks down barriers, and learns to be of service to those in need—and, but for the wizards and dragons, her story reflects much of Jill's current-day story. Instead, it's a description of Patricia Wrede's *Dealing with Dragons*, assigned by Jill's 5th-grade teacher, Warren Miskell. The book captivated Jill, exposed her to feminism, and sparked her love of philosophy, academic study in ancient texts, and advocacy. It's a sort of keystone memory around which at least some of her Lower/Middle School experience is framed.

"That book had a really big impact on me, and Warren did, too," Jill said. "He was such a charismatic teacher and created an incredible community in our class."

Jill remembers loving the exchange of ideas, opportunities for thoughtful persuasion, and the mix of contemporary and

historical texts at GDS. She recalls her 7th-grade teacher, Kali (Douglas) Diallo '88, hosting legal mock court cases, where students worked collaboratively then clashed as lawyers and jurors over legal matters. "It made the material come alive for me," she said. "In philosophy, we argue for a living so that, too, had a big impact on me."

From Sue Ikenberry in High School history, Jill learned not only about U.S. government and politics, but also how to be an interested scholar of history. "I continue to use the skills that I learned in her class all the time," Jill explained.

"Jill's work and interests are so GDS—feminism, abortion rights, environmental ethics, and the subject of her recent book, *Medical Sexism* [about systemic gender inequalities in health]—and they are also such great, important topics," Sue said. "I like to think that [GDS teachers] pique students' interest in important issues that they then use within their chosen field."

Jill was fascinated by her 4th-grade study of Greek mythology—now 4th graders study ancient civilizations in Mali, China, India, and Greece—and later went on to learn ancient Greek in college and graduate school. Her study ultimately influenced her PhD dissertation. "I like that GDS teachers introduced me to it and I could continue learning at every level," Jill said. "Even now, when I teach it, I'm returning to some of the same material."

In junior year English, Jill read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" for the first time. Now she teaches it every year to her college students and features a discussion of the letter in her textbook.



GDS alumni Alex Hirschhorn '01, Clara Changxin Fang '01, Dr. Ayesha Delany-Brumsey '01, Jill Delston '01, Jackie Puretz '01, and Dr. Josh Grochow '01 at Jill's wedding.

"I've always loved philosophy, starting at GDS," she said. "When you're interested in philosophy, you end up being a teacher because...there isn't a philosophy factory to go into," she finished jokingly, referring to a well-known meme. "A love of philosophy often leads to becoming a college professor."

These days, her list of courses runs the gamut from graduate level to honors college classes and introductory lectures to independent studies. Jill teaches Present World Problems (a course in applied ethics that uses her own textbook); Medicine, Values, and Society (bioethics); Environmental Ethics; and courses on feminism and gender.

As Jill noted, the field of philosophy skews toward professorship; and yet, she added, "There is always an applied component of my field." Part of that, she explained, is making philosophy more accessible to a wider audience.

Community and Advocacy

Jill runs three philosophy groups at UMSL, two of which are intentionally focused on stewarding underrepresented groups into the field and supporting them once they are part of the community.

"Women in Philosophy is part social, part mentorship, and part outreach to people in this male-dominated field who may not feel otherwise comfortable in a male-dominated class," she explained. Although she is a White woman, she also runs Minorities in Philosophy with similar goals, in the absence of other more suitable leaders from her department. Additionally, she runs Engaged Philosophy, which typically hosts activists and advocacy-centric speakers who show the ways in which philosophy can be used in our everyday lives to make a difference.

In her Environmental Ethics class, she's asked the students to use the course materials to help them identify a real-world problem, design a solution, and measure their impact.

In many ways, the undergraduate project is not unlike the GDS Middle School Community Engagement program or the High School Policy Institute, where students work with experts and community partners around environmental justice issues (or one of the other key issues) to design an action plan. In past semesters, Jill's students have designed apps, written letters to political representatives, started community gardens, and gone vegan or trash-free. According to Jill, learning about ethical violations and then taking action "allows us to incorporate that learning into our lives in ways that lead beyond the classroom, beyond the semester, and much longer—hopefully to a lifelong love of learning and a love of philosophy."

Beyond the classroom and the academic community, Jill promotes feminism in her personal life, whether volunteering for Planned Parenthood, attending protests, or participating in community issues. "I view these as extensions of my role as a philosophy and ethics professor," she said.

With two young children, she hasn't been out in the community as much during the pandemic. Instead, she has reconnected with some of her "lifelong friends from GDS," including Dr. Ayesha Delany-Brumsey '01, who oversees the Behavioral Health Division at the Council of State Governments Justice Center, which seeks to break the cycle of incarceration, advance health equity, and use data to improve justice systems. "[Ayesha and I] have been talking about the ways in which our scholarship overlaps and how we need to coauthor something, but we are both busy and that paper hasn't gotten written yet," Jill said. "It's funny to think that we met when we were so young and ended up working in such similar fields now in adulthood."

"Nearly two years into this pandemic, the health inequities have grown painfully apparent, if not profoundly exacerbated. Jill said, "Ethics is such a big component of how we are going to get through this pandemic. We need this approach to eliminating sexism and eliminating racism to get through it. We need bioethics to get through it."

"Ethics is such a big component of how we are going to get through this pandemic. We need this approach to eliminating sexism and eliminating racism to get through it. We need bioethics to get through it."

The Dynamics of Microinequities

"I remember a day in High School English when Chris Thompson noticed that all the students were looking out the window," Jill recalled. "He said, 'Let's all face the window.' So we turned our chairs from the U-shape toward the window,

and we listened to him as we watched the trees blowing in the wind. I loved that he was responsive to the students in that way and really thought about their autonomy, not just what he wanted to accomplish in the classroom. That's so hard to do. It's so hard to let go of control to follow the lead of silly teenagers. Instead he thought about how to use that." As a professor, Jill strives to replicate a classroom experience that is respectful of student autonomy, is attentive to the ways in which they are affirmed, and honors their development. Those efforts have led her to unpack more systematically her interactions with students. For example, despite her efforts to teach to the whole room—including walking around and cycling students through the front row—she felt she was having more interaction with those seated in front and found that a disproportionate number of those front-row students were choosing philosophy as their major.

Because she was already interested in studying microaggressions—a term coined by psychiatrist and educator Chester Pierce and defined by social scientist Dr. Derald Wing Sue as “brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their membership in a marginalized group” (2007)—Jill began to think more about “the flip side” of microaggressions. Through her study of microinequities and her own classroom teaching, Jill understood intuitively that comprehensive mattering and thriving required more than the absence of negative, discriminatory experiences. Students, for example, need to experience authentic, positive interactions, feedback, and opportunities, including the presence of affirming environmental signals, in order to do more than just survive school—microaffirmations.

Some of these microaffirmations are described by Dr. Mary Rowe as “tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening” (2008). In March 2021, *Philosophy of Management* published Jill's article “The Ethics and Politics of Microaffirmations,” in which she elaborated upon Rowe's description in order to capture the hierarchy noted in Sue's microaggressions work and differentiate microaffirmations from mere compliments. She defined microaffirmations as “signals that a recipient belongs to some valued status or class.” These, she explained, “lead individuals to gain a sense of confidence, belonging, and merit” through explicit or implied association with a favored group.

Interestingly, Jill's work illuminates some of the counterintuitive harms microaffirmations can cause through connection to an assumed elevated status, by specific acts or omissions, especially as they relate to personal well-being or group inclusion/exclusion. Letters of recommendation for men, for example, include statistically higher numbers



Jill celebrating the publication of Medical Sexism with her family.



Jill with sister Rachel '98

of positive “standout adjectives” than for women, leading men to an inflated status—and access to better career opportunities. Declarations of “You're so skinny!” may confirm an association to a desired status for someone with an eating disorder and be an obstacle to good health.

“I think they often do have a positive impact on people, and GDS does a really good job of that,” Jill said. “I'm really interested in the unjust distribution of microaffirmations,” which is the subject of one of her current research projects. “Even if we could eliminate microaggressions—get rid

of them entirely so that they never existed—we still wouldn't solve this problem; microinequalities would endure," Jill said.

The Tools to Succeed

Jill and her older sister, Dr. Rachel Delston '98, attended GDS together. Jill loved that teachers would know her as Rachel's younger sister and that Rachel included her in school activities whenever she was able.

"We were both in Middle School and High School at the same time—my freshman year was her senior year—and later got our PhDs from the same school at the same time," Jill said. "Going to school with her had a huge impact on my experience at GDS. Her respect for her education as a serious student rubbed off on me. Learning for learning's sake is really important to me. GDS really prepared us for college and gave us the tools to succeed."

Today, Rachel, who Jill described as a true hero, is working to cure cancer as associate director at the immuno-oncology research group Arch Oncology, where she studies anti-CD47 antibodies as a novel treatment. Jill said, "Rachel has this incredible moral compass and shows leadership in whatever she does through that lens. I admire the way she lives the ethical life that I'm just studying. She does that in the ways she has devoted her life to curing cancer, through mentorship in the male-dominated sciences, as a parent, community leader, and scientist. Now, she lives about a mile away from me and we are raising our kids together. We're just so grateful for that."

Origin stories begin with a vague sense of prologue—an indeterminate feeling of being or belonging—followed by an emphatic "And then!" GDS graduates regularly recount small moments of lasting significance: a single exchange with a teacher, a learning experience, a realization, or a success that marked the start of something new. In sharing her origin story and the journey since, Jill, and others, infuse into the School's collective memory a deeper understanding of what matters most in a GDS education. And as origin stories go, we'll take one with dragons any day.

Purchase Jill's book *Medical Sexism: Contraception Access, Reproductive Medicine, and Health Care* from your favorite bookseller or from Rowman & Littlefield with coupon code: LXFANDF30



Jillian Roberts '11

ANDREY LYLE PATINO

**“Know what sparks
the light in you.
Then use that
light to illuminate
the world.”**

— Oprah Winfrey

Sparking a Love of Learning—and Teaching

Jillian Roberts '11 on inspiration, audacity, and the importance of dance

Before Jillian Amadi Roberts '11 became a dance teacher, choreographer, and elementary school educator, she remembers being a new-to-GDS 6th grader who didn't quite know what to do with all her curly hair. That's middle school in a nutshell: all those beautiful strands of hope, ambition, talent, and daring springing out every which way, willing a person messily through adolescence. But Jillian found her way rather quickly—and not only through the haircare wisdom of her Middle School advisor and Spanish teacher, Mayra Diaz. From Mayra and more than a dozen GDS teachers that followed, she found her calling and a life of purpose as an educator.

Right from the start of her GDS journey, Jillian felt seen by—and saw herself reflected in—Mayra. Others remarked on the resemblance, too, but what Jillian remembers most is the connectedness she felt under Mayra's care.

"Relationships are the most important part of teaching," Jillian said. "When I think back about the teachers that I loved the most, do I remember what they taught? ...Maybe a little bit?" she laughed. "I do remember the relationships they built with me. Mayra understood that as a member of the school community, what I did or needed inside the classroom, in the hallways, in someone else's classroom, and even at home was something to take an interest in. I've tried to do that for my students now because I know what it's like to be that student that

needs the teacher to talk to them to show them they've got their back, to show them that they don't need to feel alone because they have a teacher on their team."

"Jillian Roberts," Mayra mused. "The name alone brings a flood of wonderful memories from my very early years as a 6th-grade teacher and advisor at GDS. Of Jillian, I remember joy—yes, the fried plantains lesson was real, as was the Spanish class video we recorded to the tune of Lou Bega's song, 'Mambo No. 5.' I'm fairly certain there was dancing involved, though I cannot take credit for Jillian's afán for dance or the beginnings of her talent. I remember seeing her in the Blackbox as an 8th grader dancing stylishly and I wondered, from where had these skills risen? I did not know, but I was certain they were not from our Spanish class."

Jillian is now in her fourth year as a PK-5th grade dance teacher at New Bridges Elementary in Brooklyn's Crown Heights, where she brings a special focus to dances that exist as a result of the African diaspora. Her students, the majority of whom are Black and Brown, learn to use movement and dance as tools of self-expression and self-empowerment. Her youngest dancers develop an awareness of the ways they impact their surroundings and are, in turn, influenced by them. In Jillian's classes, students learn the joy of dancing to uplift a diverse community and recognize the bright light they shine through the arts. Even as they

study dance in the context of history and cultural heritage, they also develop a sense of the power they have to change the world around them.

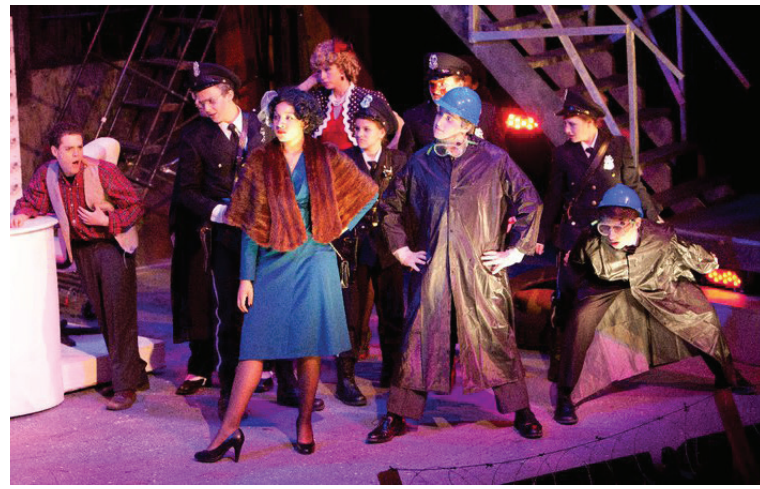
"GDS truly paved the way for me to even think that way," Jillian said. That she has found a school that, at its core, treasures social justice work, prioritizes joyful self-expression, and values a diverse community, is no accident, Jillian explained. "Every teacher at GDS, whether they'd been at the School for 25 years or five years or two years, understood the mission of the School and did their best to embody that mission in whatever space they [occupied]. The point was to bring together people with so many different experiences, not navigate around that. To have them learning about each other and celebrating each other was something I always loved and appreciated about GDS."

The love and appreciation was mutual, especially if you explore Jillian's GDS performing arts lineage.

"In addition to being adept at different styles of dance, Jillian had patience, good humor, and initiative, three qualities that made her an ideal dance captain [for GDS musicals] and innovative choreographer for *Fata Morgana*," said HS dance teacher Maria Watson. "She always came ready to work, whether teaching, choreographing, or polishing dances."



Fata Morgana directors Sasha McNair '10 (left) and Jillian.



Jillian in Urinetown as Mrs. Millennium in 2011

Jillian was a Fata Morgana director during her sophomore through senior years and a dance captain through each of the musical theater shows during that time: *Odyssey*, *Pippin*, and *Urinetown*, in which she played Mrs. Millennium.

Like Mayra before them, Maria, theater director Laura Rosberg, and former acting teacher Jim Mahady all made Jillian feel looked after, seen, and valued. “They took me under their wing,” she said, as she explained the ways Laura saw her, from the start, as far more than just “[Class of 2009] Jordan Roberts’s younger sister” and how Jim inspired her with the confidence to perform multiple roles within a single show.

As an alumna in 2016, Jillian joined her GDS theater castmate Jared Sprowls '12 to put on his off-Broadway play *Bridget Bishop Presents: The Salem B*tch Trials*, which featured four drag queens, all of whom went on after the production to feature in *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. “I thank Maria, Laura, and Jim for [imparting] the courage, the audacity, and the skills to do that,” Jillian said.

Jillian remembers the late GDS music teacher Lonel Woods, whose impact as a Black teacher on her older brother reverberated for her once she arrived

in Middle School. She loved Keith Hudspeth’s “good energy” and the way he inspired students to give it back in kind, with “oomph,” good stories, and attentiveness to technique. In the High School, former vocal director Katie Evans and former vocal teacher Ben Hutchens took her first a capella group, *Notified*, on a trip to Chicago, where they sang at the House of Blues. All these teaching models, and the many roles they played beyond the classroom as mentors, trip leaders, and advisors, informed the kind of educator Jillian saw herself becoming.

In 2008, Jillian joined her Black girlfriends from the class of 2010—Kelly Wilkinson, Jes Christian, Sasha McNair (who was also her co-director in *Fata Morgana*), and others—when they founded *New Soul*, the coed GDS a capella group focused on R&B rather than traditional a capella music. In addition to her engagement in *Fata Morgana*, *New Soul* was a place where her work in the arts was self- and peer-directed. It allowed her to develop the directorial skills she uses regularly now, both in the classroom and professionally.

Outside the performing arts, she also found community through basketball—though she acknowledges it was never with quite the level of talent she had in the performing arts. She recalls being “attached at the hip”

with Bri Brown and a student of pedagogy under “awesome basketball mentor” Bobby Asher, who gave her the skills to be a coach and counselor.

Even before coaching adults and children in dance, Jillian was a beloved camp counselor for years at GDS summer camps. Director of Strategic Programs Vinita Ahuja, who as auxiliary program lead used to direct GDS camps, tapped into Jillian’s performing arts expertise to help develop dance and drama camps. Jillian fondly remembers the full-circle experience of teaching Mayra’s daughter, Gabrielle, in camp.

With Jillian, Mayra, too, felt the warp of time. “I fondly considered Jillian a proverbial mirror of myself; in 6th grade, I loved school just as much as she did,” she said. “She showed up ready each and every day and exhibited a serious commitment to her job as a student. Again, I wish I could take credit, but the gift of Jillian as my student emerged from her own devotion to being the best she possibly could. To be able to witness her trajectory today is a gratifying assertion that from our Middle School, students can truly rise as leaders. Jillian always held her eyes high and her focus poised upward. GDS was fortunate to have her as a student.”



Jillian singing with Notified group mates Ebony Chuukwu '12 (middle) and Hannah Untereiner '11 (right)

Now at New Bridges, Jillian and performing arts colleague Alice Tsui strive to honor individual creativity and culture. “Jillian is a loving, caring, hardworking teaching colleague and friend,” Alice said. “She always wants the best for our students and advocates for them to use their voices and bodies through dance.”

Alice also noted the way Jillian nurtures empathy and boosts students’ ability to communicate across difference. She said, “Jillian creates that space not only for dance but to discuss, debate, and question the world we live in.”

She said, “Jillian creates that space not only for dance but to discuss, debate, and question the world we live in.”

If that sounds an awful lot like GDS, it’s just the spark of a lifelong love of learning—carried forth by an alum educator—igniting the flame in the next generation.

Check out Jillian’s work as a hip-hop educator through her website, <https://jillianamadi.com/>; YouTube channel with instructional videos, <https://www.youtube.com/c/jillianrobertsdance>; and Instagram, <http://instagram.com/jillyjillzzz>.



ANDREY LYLE PATINO



Jillian Roberts '11 with her brother Jordan '09 at the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. Jordan lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he serves as a senior brand manager on Secret Deodorant at Procter & Gamble. He received an MBA from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. As a GDS senior, Jordan was honored with the Dorothy Jackson History Award, which is given “to a student who shows a keen dedication to learning, an innate intellectual curiosity and an abiding generosity of spirit.” Like his sister, he sang with GDS a capella groups and participated in theater productions.

GDS Alumni Celebration 2022 "HOME AGAIN"

COME ON IN, YOU'RE HOME



SAVE THE DATES

April 22-24, 2022 | Registration coming March 2022 at www.GDS.org/Reunion

After staying inside for most of 2020 and not having the opportunity to connect with friends and family, it feels great to be "Home Again." Alumni Celebration 2022 will be special for many reasons. In addition to celebrating fellow Hoppers from the class years ending in 2s and 7s, this year's festivities will be the first time that we've been together, in-person, since 2019.

DON'T MISS THE BIGGEST HOPPER PARTY OF THE YEAR! HERE ARE THE TOP 5 REASONS TO "COME HOME" FOR ALUMNI CELEBRATION 2022.

- 1** Food and drinks are on us! If you've attended a GDS Alumni event before, you know we know how to have a good time.
- 2** We're back in person! While there will be a limited number of virtual events leading up to the weekend, class reunions are Zoom-free events (pandemic permitting). See you on the dance floor Saturday night!
- 3** Connect with former teachers! Dozens of teachers have stopped by in previous years to say hello.
- 4** Reconnect with classmates and friends from GDS. Along with the class reunions, Alumni Celebration will be jam-packed with many opportunities to reminisce about your days at GDS with your favorite Hopper alumni!
- 5** There's something for everyone! Don't miss out on our Affinity Space events (Black alumni, former student athletes, and more), where you can connect with old and new friends who share similar interests and experiences!

REPORT ON PHILANTHROPY

2020-21

GEORGETOWN DAY SCHOOL



2020–21

What a roller coaster the 2020–21 school year was. We began the year at home and ended on our beautiful unified campus. In between, there were myriad ups and downs, but throughout, our community banded together to support each other and, most importantly, support our students and teachers. In conversations with school leaders around the country, it became clear that 2020–21 was the most challenging school year any of us had ever faced.

It was a year that required relentless flexibility, becoming “experts” in the ever-changing COVID landscape, an acknowledgment of the impact the past year would have on our children’s socialization and our school community’s mental health, and endless amounts of patience. We felt not only a tremendous sense of relief as the school year ended, but also a sense of joy and pride in the resilience of our GDS community. We learned to value our connections with each other and our community more than ever.

This report highlights the impact of your generosity in the 2020–21 year. By investing in technology and innovation, we were able to deliver on our commitment to academic excellence—even in a most extraordinary year. Your gift to The Hopper Fund allowed us to deliver on the strongest academic program possible and to continue to evolve our 21-st century curriculum.

Your philanthropic support allowed us to navigate this extraordinary year and nimbly adjust our plans to meet the challenges in front of us, and I am extraordinarily grateful. I am proud to present the Report on Philanthropy for the 2020–21 school year. Thank you for your continued support of our community; it is more important now than ever.



Russell

Russel Shaw
Head of School

I write this as a bit of normalcy has returned to our lives, and we can really begin to see the promise of our unified campus fulfilled. Our kids are back in school full time, they’re competing on our pair of athletic fields, and they’re using all of the specialized rooms in the new LMS building as they were intended to be used (art, music, library, dance). High School kids are jumping out of buses in the morning, donning “Hopper Helper” badges, and helping the youngest kids out of cars. Students, teachers, and administrators are getting to campus on foot, by bike, bus, Metro, and even electric skateboards—and the number of cars coming to campus is dropping. I can see the day—not too far off, I hope—that interdivisional and whole-school activities can begin. It may not be the way we expected to get to know our new campus, but it is really happening. Slowly, we’re getting back together as a community.

I’m pleased to report to you that, even as we were separated and each of us was challenged to find new ways of doing routine things, the work of managing GDS and its finances went on, such that the school’s financial condition is strong. The school maintains adequate reserves, runs a balanced budget, and regularly receives clean financial audits. The endowment, while still modest for a school of GDS’s size, is invested wisely, used judiciously, and is growing. The unified campus project was completed within budget, and the MacArthur campus sale to DC Public School system was completed. As a result, debt was paid down and the balance sheet of the school

Impact of Philanthropy at GDS: **The Power of Individual Giving in Our Community**

When we reflect on the 2020–21 school year, it’s easy to focus on what we missed. As we reweave the fabric of our community and transition to living in our new reality, we at GDS are choosing to focus on what we gained (see “What We Learned From COVID-19,” page 58). As we Zoomed in from home, we gained a renewed appreciation for our faculty and their relentless commitment to our students. We realized the importance of simply connecting in the hallway or the dining hall. We saw the fortitude in our students as they transitioned back into a classroom that looked quite different from the one they had left months earlier. The 2020–21 school year saw our first virtual Grandparents and Special Friends Day, our first All-School Senior Walk on our unified campus, our first Virtual Welcome Back Assembly, an in-person Graduation Ceremony on our unified campus. More than 300 students participated in our cross-divisional Buddy Program, meeting both virtually and in person. **And none of it would have been possible without your philanthropic support.** Thank you for your support of our students, our community, and our mission this year. We simply couldn’t do it without you.

TREASURER'S REPORT

de-leveraged ahead of the original plan laid out when the unified campus project was conceived.

Of course, none of this could have happened without you! Your support of The Hopper Fund, the One GDS Campaign, One GDS Community Crisis Fund, and gifts to support financial aid all contribute to the success of the School. Each and every gift, large and small, makes a difference. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank all of you who gave (and that's most of you)!

When approving the annual operating budget, the Board prioritizes financial aid in order to support and expand access to GDS by students across a wide range of socioeconomic means. Today, 24% of our students receive financial aid, with an average award of just over \$30,000. In all, GDS awarded \$7,430,635 in financial aid for the 2020–21 school year. Providing this level of financial aid takes a real commitment, since tuition covers just 89% of the cost of educating each student. The difference is largely funded by generous donations to The Hopper Fund, gifts to financial aid, and an annual draw on GDS's modest endowment.

The unified campus is a reality, the buses are running, the cafeteria is cooking, and the School's finances are in order and running according to plan. Most importantly, our kids are learning

from the fabulous GDS faculty, and the School's future is bright. The mission lives on, and the hard work continues.

It is an extraordinary pleasure to work with the talented and dedicated professionals who guide the operations of Georgetown Day School. Together with the full Board of Trustees, we are committed to ensuring the health, efficiency, and mission alignment of the institution's finances.

A sincere thank-you to each and every one of you for your generous support in that effort.

Sincerely,



Jeff Blum
Board Treasurer (2020–21 school year)

P.S. - This letter marks my last act as Board treasurer. The job now rests in the talented hands of Parent-Trustee Ciera Ashley.

TOTAL NUMBERS OF DONORS 2020–21:

1,516

NUMBER OF HOPPER FUND LEADERSHIP DONORS:

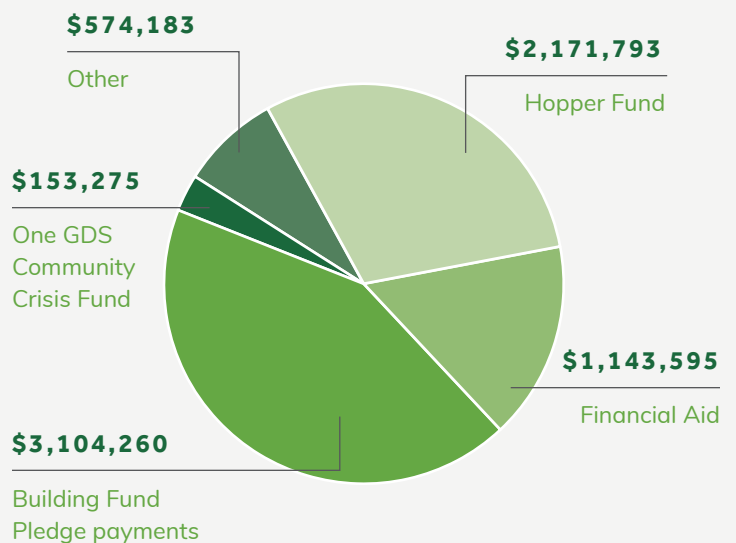
288

NUMBER OF NEW DONORS:

124

Total Cash Received 2020–21:

\$7,147,106





SUPPORT OUR MISSION IN ACTION

The Hopper Fund continues to provide vital support for GDS, accounting for 6% of our overall operating budget. Unrestricted support gives us the power to be flexible and nimble in meeting the needs of our students and teachers, which proved vital once again in the 2020–21 school year.

COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The Hopper Fund is critical to GDS’s ability to provide an educational experience grounded in academic excellence, social justice, and the unparalleled bond between our exceptional faculty and students. GDS believes that the educational development of the whole person requires comprehensive study of academic subjects, in-depth exposure to the arts, regular opportunities for physical education and athletics, and involvement in extracurricular activities and community service. As a school, we seek to cultivate a program aligned with our founding mission, principles, and values while also staying current with best practices for teaching and learning. We know we must continually learn and grow in order to best serve our students and school. As part



of our ongoing commitment to academic excellence, in 2020–21, we developed an all-school document, “Vision for Teaching: Philosophy and Descriptions of Mission-Fit Practice”, to guide our faculty through professional growth and to honor the complexities of teaching and learning through our attention to both the art and science of each. Your support of The Hopper Fund makes that possible.



We became a GDS family in 2014, when our son Maceo enrolled in Nichelle and Barbara’s PK/K class. After considering several other DC independent schools, we landed firmly on GDS. GDS’s commitment to creating a supportive, diverse school community and its focus on lifelong learning, critical thinking, social justice, and student agency made our choice obvious. Maceo’s deep enthusiasm for GDS after his PK playdate cinched our decision. Although we later learned that a bright red truck heavily influenced our son’s thinking, his instincts were perfect. Eight years in, Maceo loves his school! The Hopper Fund is a philanthropic priority for our family. We want to do our part to help ensure that GDS is affordable and accessible to a socioeconomically diverse mix of families. The wonderful experiences and opportunities that GDS offers should not be limited to the wealthy.

— Sharon and Marc Lindsey, Current Parents



GDS is the village that helped me raise my son—it will always be on the top of my charitable giving list. My commitment to GDS is only surpassed by its commitment to excellence and diversity in education, in curriculum, extracurricular activities, and its student population, and I will continue to support GDS. I knew in 1990 that GDS was a great place when I first went through the front door. Seeing so many children going through the hallways—smiling, talking, laughing, engaging—told me that GDS was a vibrant educational environment where I wanted my son to be. I will always support GDS so other children can experience this remarkable place!

— Linda Jackson, Parent of Alumni and Former Trustee



TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Investment in technology was a critical priority in the 2020–21 school year, ensuring that students had equitable access to technology and that faculty had the resources necessary to navigate Virtual Campus, HyFlex, and in-person learning. Three major areas of investment in 2020–21 were student devices and connectivity, outfitting classrooms, and teacher training.



STUDENT DEVICES AND CONNECTIVITY

Prior to the pandemic, GDS provided personal devices to each 3rd through 8th grader, with a “shared device” environment in grades PK through 2nd. With the necessary pivot to distance learning, it was immediately clear that we needed to consider grades PK through 2nd and 9th through 12th, to ensure that every student had the equipment they needed to learn remotely. Resources provided by The Hopper Fund produced two fast and clear results: 1) We purchased an iPad and accessories for each PK through 2nd-grade student, and 2) We provided support to families in the High School by subsidizing computer purchases pro rata with their existing financial aid awards for tuition. This was the first time in the school’s history that we were able to say for certain that each student had consistent and dedicated access to a computer at home.

Equitable device distribution was a huge institutional priority and wouldn’t have been possible without your generosity or without the herculean efforts of the Technology team and the Transportation team. The Technology

team procured and configured these devices in record time, and the Transportation team delivered hundreds of devices to doorsteps in the days leading up to the 2020–21 school year. It was an all-hands effort that epitomized the flexibility, creativity, and hard work that were the hallmarks of the 2020–21 school year.

Students with laptops needed viable and robust internet connections to fully participate in Virtual Campus, and your support also allowed the School to provide LTE hot spots (wireless broadband connection points) to families in need and cover the monthly service charges to keep them connected throughout the school year.

OUTFITTING CLASSROOMS

As we began to bring students back into the buildings, the prospect of making HyFlex teaching a reality, with some students at home while some students were in the classroom, was daunting. Our teaching spaces hadn’t been designed to function in a hybrid instructional environment. Once

again, thanks to your support, we were able to transform 89 classrooms into fully hybrid learning spaces, as well as nearly 20 other spaces not previously designed as classrooms (gymnasiums, fitness rooms, etc.). This work included installing ceiling-mounted microphones, webcams, and control systems for the equipment in each classroom, as well as preparing instructional materials and training sessions so that our teachers would be able to use this equipment seamlessly.

TEACHER TRAINING

The roles of our LMS Innovation and Computer Science teachers evolved significantly during 2020–21, taking on the task of developing myriad in-house professional development learning opportunities for GDS teachers and staff so everyone could engage, work, and stay connected during distance learning and working and hybrid instruction. Many of these training materials were captured on a website built to be a one-stop shop for learning resources.

COVID-19 SAFETY AND THE RETURN TO SCHOOL

The Hopper Fund provided critical resources necessary to bring students, faculty, and staff safely back to campus throughout the 2020–21 school year. From upgraded ventilation and air purifiers in each room to weekly testing and lots and lots of hand sanitizer, your support made the return to in-person learning possible. The Hopper Fund also allowed GDS to hire additional staff to accommodate smaller cohorts and class sizes.

Our Anti-Racist Work

In addition to the incredible adaptability and tireless efforts on behalf of teachers to continue learning how to teach in a HyFlex environment, the entire GDS staff leaned into the anti-racist work with a joint read of *The Racial Healing Handbook* and welcomed inspiring educators at our opening days and in-service days throughout the year, including Dena Simmons, Bettina Love, Gholdy Muhammad, Ki, Eddie Moore Jr., John Igwebuike, and Anneliese Singh.

Each of these sessions inspired us to reconnect even more deeply with our anti-racist school roots, listen and care for each other and our students in more intentional ways, and push ourselves on the path of continuous improvement even while managing during a pandemic. Throughout the 2020–21 school year, the Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) team worked in close partnership with our counselors and wellness teams, led by Assistant Head of School Laura Yee and Director of Student Life and Wellness Bobby Asher, to develop much of our anti-racist programming for faculty, staff, students, and parents.

From the development of new affinity groups to the launch of our schoolwide DEI audit and powerful keynote speakers during in-service days, this renewed commitment to anti-racism was a critical priority as our community, navigated last year. Our journey continues as we work to become a more just and inclusive community and your gift to The Hopper Fund helped make this critical work possible.

AT GDS WE CURRENTLY HAVE THE FOLLOWING NUMBER OF AFFINITY GROUPS:

3

FACULTY/STAFF GROUPS

7

PARENT GROUPS

2

MS STUDENT GROUPS

15

HS STUDENT GROUPS



COVID-19 SPENDING IN 2020-21:

\$1,144,557



CLEANING SUPPLIES,
PPE, BUILDING SIGNAGE:

131,195



LOWER/MIDDLE SCHOOL
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT:

275,197

COVID-19 TESTING
AND HEALTH SCREENING:

\$445,835



GDS has given back to me in many ways throughout my life, shaping the person I am and the way I show up in the world. Its legacy lives on in every student it has educated, many of whom are effectuating major change in our country and around the world.

— Samantha Holloway '99



We love the teachers and other staff who work together and with us to educate and care for our son. Their flexibility, resourcefulness, and responsiveness have provided peace of mind about our son's present and deep optimism about his future.

— Sue Liu and Raul Gonzalez, Current Parents



I choose to support GDS as a way to honor my father's memory and thank him for introducing me to GDS and the amazing people I've met there. Thanks to GDS, I've known and stayed connected to my dearest friend, Dari Malloy, for 50 years.

— Cordenia Paige '83, Alumni Board President

A SNAPSHOT OF NEW COURSES DESIGNED

for

2020-21

Support for The Hopper Fund gave faculty the resources to design 14 new courses as we continue expansion of our dynamic High School course offerings. A sample of new High School courses designed in 2020-21 includes:

AutoCad: AutoCad is a computer-aided design program that is the industry standard for architecture, engineering, and theater design, as well as many other professions.

Identity, Art & Resistance: This is a multimedia course that focuses on important historical movements of the 20th and 21st centuries and how artists and musicians such as Grace Jones, David Bowie, Keith Haring, Billy Porter, Billie Eilish, Ai Wei Wei, Lady Gaga, and Beyoncé have expressed their creativity in response to race, gender, identity, and politics. Beginning with the Harlem Renaissance and spanning more than 100 years of American and world history, the course covers the 1969 Stonewall Riots, Woodstock, the AIDS crisis, the Berlin Wall, and La Movida as well as the present-day LGBTQ, Black Lives Matter, and #MeToo movements.

The Empire Writes Back: Hybridity Within the Postcolonial World: “If a lion does not tell their story,” a Nigerian proverb states, “the hunter will always be glorified.” Which stories have been falsely told? What mysteries connect hospitals in Algeria to universal pre-kindergarten in DC; Haitian food traditions to hunger strikes in Ireland? By exploring the colonial pasts of countries such as Nigeria, Haiti, and Ireland, students will become familiar with the complicated and fractured histories that exist in these geographically and culturally diverse locations.

Hip-Hop and Social Justice: This course places at its core the dismantling of White supremacy and all other forms of discrimination as they are represented through individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural forms of oppression. This course will highlight the strategies of resistance used by hip-hop performers in order to provide prominent examples for our students to emulate and build upon.



Energy and Resources: Science, Technology, and Culture:

This course explores how humans have harnessed energy and resources throughout history and how cultures have developed around their use.



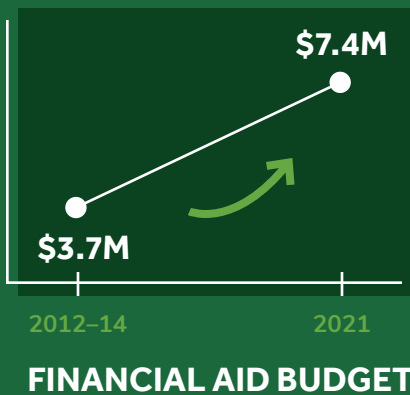
My husband, Roger, and I give to GDS because—through its extraordinary teachers, faculty, and community—GDS has given our three children the intellectual rigor and emotional and social support they have needed to develop and thrive. We also give to GDS because of its unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion. Giving to GDS allows us to play a role in enabling future generations to benefit from the GDS community and mission.

— Lisa Fairfax
President, Board of Trustees

FINANCIAL AID

Support for financial aid continues to be a mission-critical priority for the School. In the 2020–21 school year, GDS provided \$7,430,635 in financial aid support to 24% of our students. The average award amount has grown to \$30,645. Thanks to the philanthropic support of our community and excellent stewardship of resources by our Board of Trustees, we have been able to increase the amount of financial aid awarded at GDS by nearly \$5 million in the last decade. Your gift to financial aid at GDS has made that possible and has an impact beyond just the students receiving financial aid.

This increased commitment to financial aid has made a GDS education more accessible to families while also increasing the economic diversity of our student body. The growing heterogeneity of our school community catalyzes richer experiences for faculty and students engaging in intellectual pursuits. Leveraging our resources to support financial aid strengthens and benefits GDS as it helps families access all that our school has to offer.



\$30,645
AVERAGE
FINANCIAL AID
AWARD AMOUNT



24%
OF STUDENTS
RECEIVED AID IN '20

AWARD RANGE:

\$500
to full tuition



15%
OF LEGACY
STUDENTS
RECEIVED AID IN '20

Our Report on Philanthropy provides a glimpse into what your generosity helps us accomplish, this year and beyond. We are deeply grateful to the alumni, parents, Trustees, parents of alumni, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends whose generosity makes our mission possible for generations of GDS students.

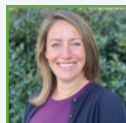
GDS DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Jeffrey Delozier
Associate Director of
Development
jdelozier@gds.org
202-295-6239



Miriam Laing
Advancement Systems &
Data Reports Manager
mlaing@gds.org
202-295-6238



Ashley Doherty
Director of Annual Giving
adoherty@gds.org
202-295-1070



C. Lynn McNair
Chief Advancement Officer
lmcnair@gds.org
202-296-1060



Lindsey Jacobson
Associate Director of
Development
ljacobson@gds.org
202-295-1061

THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

We recognize with gratitude the donors who made our mission possible in 2020-21, listed in alphabetical order. We are deeply grateful for your support and for the role you play in strengthening the philanthropic spirit of the Georgetown Day School community.

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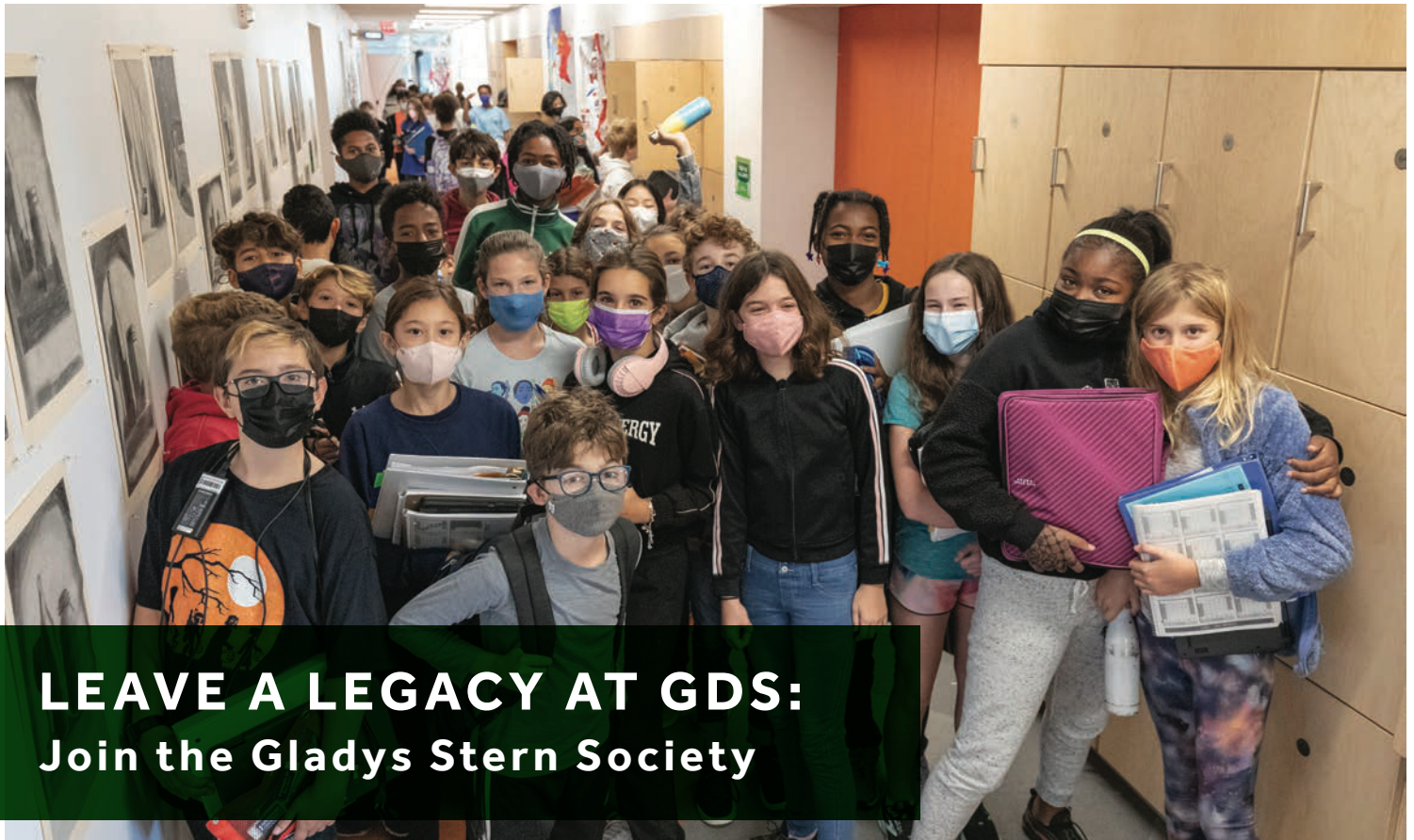
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lmcnair@gds.org
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Jeffrey Delozier
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jdelozier@gds.org
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Senior Philanthropic Advisor
dwhite@gds.org
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