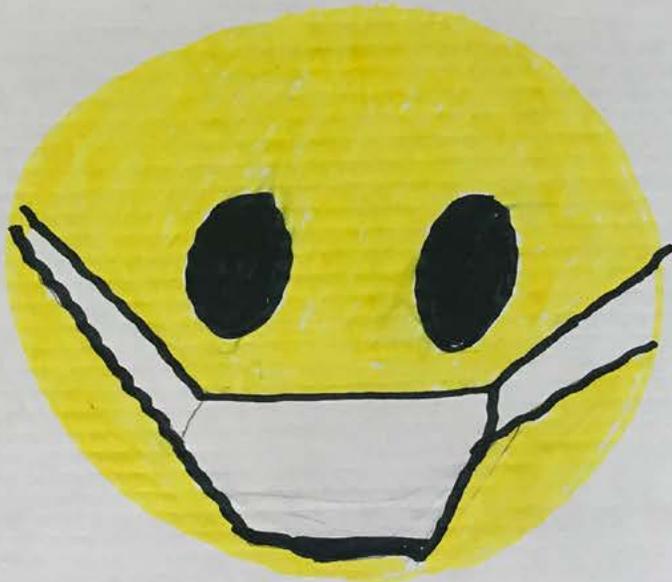


THE EQU^UESTRIAN

2020-2021 Mill Springs Academy
Magazine and Annual Report



happy



happy



We are in this
together

IN THIS ISSUE

Mill Springs Academy is a values-based educational community dedicated to the academic, physical and social growth of those students who have not realized their potential in traditional classroom settings.

**“... if a student can’t learn the way we teach ...
we should teach the way a student can learn.”**

TWEETIE L. MOORE, FOUNDER

MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools
Georgia Independent School Association
Georgia Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children
International Dyslexia Association
National Association of Independent Schools
Southern Association of Independent Schools
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

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Cognia
Southern Association of Independent Schools

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Dear MSA Community,

The 2020-2021 school year saw another year of COVID learning for Mill Springs Academy. We welcomed students and faculty back with masks, temperature checks, and social distancing. We navigated the challenges of supporting student learning in the classroom and at home.

However, throughout it all, our community rose to the challenge. We worked together to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our community while remaining committed to providing our students with a challenging and supportive educational environment. Once again, our community embodied the true spirit of #MSAstrong.

While our school was primarily closed to everyone outside of the faculty and student community, we continued to reach out online through band videos, theater performances, school-wide Zoom meetings, even holding our Senior Projects online. We worked hard to share the Mustang spirit with those who were not able to be with us in person and on our campus.



As we continue to navigate these times, we are grateful for the support of each and every individual, family, and organization listed on the following pages. The stories and people throughout these pages make this community so great. Your time, talent, and treasures are critical to the experience of all of our students. We wouldn't be able to do it without you.

We have proven time and again that at Mill Springs Academy, together, we can face and overcome any obstacle that stands in our way. We will continue to work together to provide a place where students with learning differences thrive.

With gratitude,

Debra M. Orr *Head of School*

COVID Task Force

Mill Springs Academy's COVID Task Force, a team composed of parents and medical professionals, have worked throughout the pandemic to guide and advise the school's response with the goal of keeping our community healthy and safe.

Working in collaboration with CDC and Georgia Department of Health guidelines, they have helped to implement many safety procedures, precautions, and best practices. Thanks to them and the dedicated response from our Mill Springs families, we have been able to provide on-campus learning for the 2020-2021 school year.



Task Force Members

Michael Gerber Mr. Gerber, an MSA parent, has worked in global public health for over 30 years across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. With a background in public health, epidemiology, and international development, he has worked with the CDC, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations to address public health challenges.

Dr. Paul Murphree Dr. Murphree is the Vice President of Medical Outcomes at WellStar Hospitals and a current MSA parent. He is responsible for the development of the COVID-19 policies for the hospital system. He is a graduate of Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

Dr. Cyrus Shahpar Dr. Shahpar is the Director of the Prevent Epidemics Team at the Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies. He serves as the Director of the Epidemic Intelligence Unit and Chief Science Officer for their COVID-19 response. He completed his residency in Emergency Medicine at Johns Hopkins Hospital and is a graduate of the Epidemic Intelligence Service at CDC.

Dr. Robert Slayden Dr. Slayden was a founding member of MSA working with Tweetie L. Moore to create the Community/Levels System. Dr. Slayden received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, and he is a founding partner of Atlanta Area Family Psychiatry Clinic, P.C. Dr. Slayden is a member of the American Psychiatric Association, which recently awarded him Life Membership status.

Bringing the Joy Back to Campus

The beginning of the 2020-21 school year was an extra special one as we welcomed new and returning students back to campus after remote learning to end the 2019-20 school year. With the help of our amazing faculty, families, and our COVID Task Force, we were able to spend the majority of the 2020-21 school year in-person and on campus!

We were thrilled to have students walking the halls again and our campus filled with laughter and joy, and we cannot thank our community enough for the support they provided during this time. #MSAStrong



Alumni at Work

We interviewed three of our MSA alums about what it was like to return to work at Mill Springs Academy. Here's what they said!

Maritza Silva, Class of 2015**Q. What did you do after graduation?**

After graduation, I attended Young Harris College for a year. Then I went on to start working. I worked at Sprouts Farmers Market for almost 2 years before entering the education field. I started as an assistant preschool teacher at Crabapple Academy and ended as a lead teacher in a 4-year-old room after a year of working there. I was then offered a position as a PE paraprofessional for an elementary school in Kennesaw. Sadly after a year that school closed, and another door opened at MSA. In between working, I have traveled a good amount.

**Q. What made you want to come back and work at MSA?**

I enjoyed my time at MSA, and I never felt like I left the MSA community after graduation. It almost felt natural coming back to work at MSA. The perfect entry position opened up, and I saw an opportunity for growth.

Q. Has the school changed since you graduated? If so, how?

Yes, drastically. I think there is far more structure and academic rigor now as opposed to 2014/2015. Things were very relaxed and leisurely when I was a student. There are more appropriate rules and policies put in place to protect students and help them stay focused on school. Adding the position of dean of students is something huge that we did not have when I was a student. Discipline has been streamlined, and I think that is amazing. There are legitimate expectations for students and staff. I think current graduating seniors are far more prepared for academic life after high school.

Q. What advice would you give to current seniors?

The advice I would give to current seniors and to enjoy each day of your senior year. I'd like them to know they have time, do not rush into life or rush into a career. Life will present you with the right path, as long as you have the courage to follow it. Knowing it's okay to feel lost, do not compare your journey to others. Once you graduate and enter the adult world, everyone is on their very individualized journeys.

SUCCESS IN SCHOOL...

SUCCESS IN LIFE

Jack Hurtsellers, Class of 2019**Q. What did you do after graduation?**

After graduation I decided to go to Reinhardt College to major in musical theater. As much as I thought it was fun and all, I didn't think college was the best fit for me at that time. So I moved to Tennessee for a while and worked on a farm ranch to find out that I really like hard labor jobs!

Q. Have you always wanted to work at MSA?

No and yes. I didn't want to work at MSA since I never thought I could do it, but I've always held the school close to my heart, I've had some of my favorite memories from this school as well some of my closest friends. Some of us in my class have always wanted to come back and teach! I'm extremely lucky!

Q. Has the school changed since you graduated? If so, how?

Absolutely. It's changed academically, and that makes me super happy since I think all mill springs students are incredibly smart, and the school should use those strengths to make things more academically challenging. I also think school is a lot bigger since I attended, it kind of makes me jealous!

Q. What is your favorite thing about working at MSA?

Hmm, that's a hard question. I think the best thing is seeing the kids go through the same things I went through, take the same classes, and have the same teachers. It makes me smile that even though it may be hard than in there, their methods worked. I also love how many crazy things happen at the school that I only think can happen at a place like this. In my class, we called it Mill Springs moments!

**Zach Skinner, Class of 2014****Q. What year did you graduate from MSA?**

I graduated in 2014, and I got hired to my current position at Mill Springs 2 weeks after I graduated college.

Q. What made you want to come back and work at MSA?

Mill Springs has always been my second home.

Q. Has the school changed since you graduated? If so, how?

I see that the school has changed in many ways for the better but the core ideals of this institution still remain the same.

Q. What is your favorite thing about working at MSA?

Getting to know all the students!

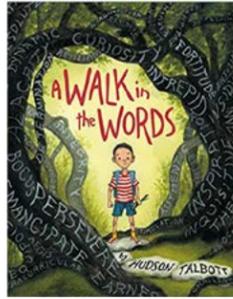
Q. What advice would you give to current seniors?

Make sure you attempt everything you do with maximum effort. It may not seem like it now but giving it your all will always give you the best result.



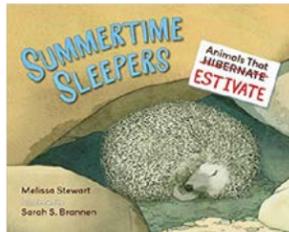
MSA Recommends

Looking for your next great book or graphic novel to read, picture book, or maybe an audiobook to listen to? We asked our Media Specialist Brittany Emge for a few recommendations.



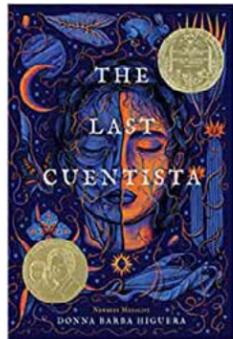
A Walk in the Words by Hudson Talbott

This beautiful picture book about a young boy's determination to overcome dyslexia. We love the messages like "Slow readers savor the story!" and the "Hall of Fame" at the end noting famous faces that were diagnosed with dyslexia. A Schneider Family Honor Book. Grades K-3. *Picture Book*



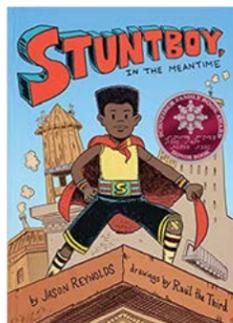
Summertime Sleepers by Melissa Stewart

You've heard of animals who hibernate, but have you heard of animals that estivate? This engaging non-fiction book for younger readers teaches you all about a lesser-known part of the animal world. Grades K-3. *Young Readers Non-Fiction*



The Last Cuentista by Donna Barba Higuera

Sci-Fi, strong awesome female lead, folklore, and fighting to save the fate of humankind? Sold! This Newbery Award winner is a great choice for lovers of middle grade fantasy and sci-fi. Ages 10-14. *Middle Grade Novel*



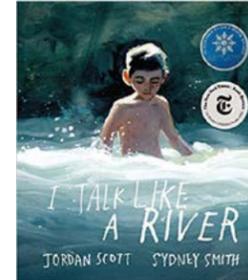
Stuntboy, in the Meantime by Jason Reynolds

Part graphic novel, part chapter book, this heartfelt superhero story revolves around Portico Reeves and his powers to keep everyone safe. Using his superhero name "Stuntboy," Portico navigates life and the anxiety that comes with it. Ages 7-12. *Middle Grade Illustrated Novel*



Allergic by Megan Wagner Lloyd

In honor of all our MSA dogs, here's a graphic novel all about adopting your furry best friend. Maggie finds out she's severely allergic to dogs and has to find a way to make her dreams of owning a pet come true. A great story about family, friends, pets, and accepting when things aren't perfect. Ages 8-12. *Middle Grade Graphic Novel*



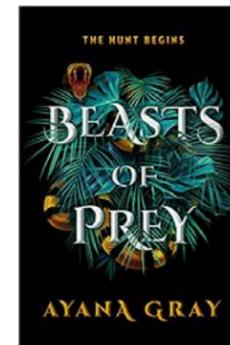
I Talk Like a River by Jordan Scott

The audiobook comes highly recommended for this award-winning picture book about a boy learning to overcome stuttering. Sometimes all you need is a different perspective, and we love that. Grades K-3. *Audiobook*



Gone to the Woods, Surviving a Lost Childhood by Gary Paulsen

This is the backstory behind Gary Paulsen's famous survival novel Hatchet. This autobiography leads readers through Paulsen's turbulent but ultimately inspiring story to becoming a famous writer. Grades 7 and up. *Young Adult Non-Fiction*



Beasts of Prey by Ayana Gray

This exciting Pan-African fantasy novel is full of action, adventure, and great storytelling, and it comes highly recommended for teens. Ages 12-18. *Young Adult Novel*



Run, Book 1 by John Lewis

The sequel to the acclaimed "March" series, this graphic novel continues John Lewis' journey during the Civil Rights Movement. This was completed before his death in 2020, and it is powerful telling of his legacy. Ages 13 and up. *Young Adult Graphic Novel*

CLASS OF 2021



Life After MSA

MSA 2021 graduates were accepted to 60 colleges and universities in 18 states.

Agnes Scott	Dalton State	Johns and Wales	South Georgia Technical
Albany State	Elon University	Charlotte	University of Tampa
Allen University	Full Sail University	Kansas State	University of Alabama
Appalachian State	Georgia College & State	Kennesaw State	UAB Birmingham
Art Institute of Chicago	Georgia Gwinnett College	LaGrange College	UNC Asheville
Auburn	Georgia Highlands College	Lynn University	UNC Charlotte
Aviation Academy	Georgia Southern	Mercer University	University of North Georgia
Beacon College	Georgia State University	Middle Tennessee State	UT at Chattanooga
Berry College	GSU at Perimeter	Morehouse College	University of West Georgia
Campbell University	Gordon State University	Northwestern College	University of Vermont
Chatham University	Hampton University	Piedmont University	Utah State
Chattahoochee Tech	Hofstra University	Pratt Institute	Valdosta State
Coastal College of GA	Jackson State University	Queens University	Western Kentucky
Columbus State	Jacksonville State	Savannah State	Wingate University
Cornell College	Johnson and Wales	SCAD	Young Harris

We wish the class of 2021 all the best. Please come visit soon, and often.
You will all always be a part of Mill Springs Academy.



2020-2021 ANNUAL GIVING REPORT

ANNUAL FUND

Chair
Angel Murr

Staff/Faculty Chair
Carissa Nelson

Mill Springs' Annual Fund is the cornerstone of our school's development program and contributes directly to the quality of education that takes place at the school. Gifts to the Annual Fund from parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, friends, and alumni are used to keep annual tuition increases to a minimum.

The growth of the Annual Fund reflects great trust in the mission of the school and has established a vital culture of giving as we move forward with our plans for expansion. Great commitment from our parents, volunteers, Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and friends of the school has created an exceptional acceleration in the Annual Fund. Continued support of the Annual Fund will ensure a strong future for every student at Mill Springs Academy.

The following are just a few ways in which Annual Fund dollars are spent:

- **Keep tuition increases down**
(annual tuition increases at MSA have remained at 3% over the past 5 years; much lower than the national average of 7%)
- **Allow us to attract and maintain valuable staff**
(through competitive salaries and benefits like 401k, insurance, continuing education)
- **Fund our Scholarship Endowment program**
(5% of the monies raised each year are set aside to help fund our scholarship endowment program)
- **Broaden our Fine Arts curriculum**
(giving students full access to program in art, theater, chorus, band, and media)
- **Provide funds for various classroom enhancements**
- **Covering unanticipated operating expenses**
(unscheduled repairs, etc.)

ANNUAL FUND TOTALS

Primary Constituents	2020-2021 Participation	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Board of Trustees	100%	48,710	53,325	29,747
Parents	86%	126,146	192,032	144,707
Faculty & Staff	100%	13,701	13,060	16,464
Grandparents		26,915	37,990	39,535
Matching Gifts		4,650	6,500	10,741
Friends of MSA		65,946	48,035	45,924
		286,068	350,942	287,118

2020-2021 INCOME AND EXPENSES

Revenues		Expenses	
Tuition and Fees	\$6,863,504	Salaries and Benefits	\$5,998,412
PPP Grant	\$1,106,400	Other Operating Expenses	\$1,569,303
Contributions	\$356,005	Transportation Services	\$182,267
Transportation Services	\$214,015	Information Technology	\$153,983
Other Operating Revenues	\$82,774	Parent Volunteer Association	\$35,206
Parent Volunteer Association	\$27,518	Other Non-Operating Expenses	\$15,483
Total Revenues	\$8,650,216	Total Expenses	\$7,954,654



Tuition and Fees 89%
 PPP Grant 13%
 Contributions 4%
 Transportation Services 3%
 PVA and Other Revenue 1%

Salaries and Benefits 75%
 Supplies 13%
 Repairs and Maintenance 4%
 Utilities and Insurance 3%
 Transportation 2%
 Information Technology 2%
 PVA and Other Expenses 1%



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OUR 2020-2021
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 Graydaze Contracting, Inc.
 GroGreen Solutions Georgia, LLC
 Halftime Sports, LLC
 Hartmanlaw, LLC
 Hemma Concrete
 Jantize
 Joe Matthews
 Chris McCarren
 Plateau Excavation, Inc.
 Glenn Shaw
 Dan Smith
 SOAR
 Solo Commercial LED Lighting
 John & Amanda Southall
 Southern Environmental Services, Inc.
 Roger Taylor
 TEC The Erosion Company
 Therapy & Learning Center of Georgia
 Whale Ventures, LLC
 Winston's Removal & Landscaping, LLC
 Xeritech, LLC

PARENT VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION (PVA)

The Parent Volunteer Association (PVA) is comprised of the officers, committee chairs, school representatives, and parents who wish to join the PVA. Due to the generous support of many individuals and families who supported our various fundraising efforts during the 2020-2021 school year, the PVA was able to make significant contributions to Mill Springs.

Mission Provide support for the students and staff to carry out the mission of Mill Springs Academy.

OFFICERS

Erin Harvin and Lesly Huffman, Co-Presidents • Beth Haun, Secretary • Julia McClure, Treasurer

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Chick-fil-A Lunch

Valerie Davis
 Susan Kaufman
 Ann Liu
 Kode Kaufman
 Dennine Applbaum

Communication

Stacy Canino-Rooks

Staff Appreciation

Marianne Borden
 Suzanne Gaines

Used Uniform Shop

Ruth Rousseaux

Starbucks Coffee

Karen Adair

Level Reps

Laura Johnson (Lower School)
 Lori Mashburn (Middle School)
 Dennine Applbaum (PreUpper School)
 Brenda Wallace (Communications Arts)
 Hillary Keskonis (Upper School)



HONORARY SCHOLARSHIPS

The following honorary scholarships are currently active and awarded at the end of each school year to recognize individual students for their achievements and individual contributions to the Mill Springs community. For more information or to contribute to a particular fund, please contact MSA's Development Office.

BRUCE BROWNLOW SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Established in 2013 by anonymous donors in honor of retiring Upper School Principal, Bruce Brownlow. The purpose of the Fund is to provide a \$1,000 scholarship to an Upper School student, which is applied toward the cost of that student's tuition during the following school year.

ERROL SANDERS SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 2020 by Dan and Angel Murr in honor of long-time PreUpper School literature teacher, Errol Sanders. The purpose of the fund is to provide recognition and support for a returning Mill Springs Academy PreUpper students or rising Upper student in the form of a \$1,000 scholarship applied to the cost of tuition.

MARK RAFUSE LEADERSHIP IN ATHLETICS AWARD

Established in 2020 by Nancy Rafuse in honor of her late husband, Mark Rafuse. The purpose of the fund is to provide a \$10,000 scholarship for tuition assistance to an exceptional rising Upper School student.

SHERRY ROBINSON AND PHIL HANSON**SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

Established in 2013 by anonymous donors in honor of retiring Upper School English Teacher Sherry Robinson, and Coach Phil Hanson. The purpose of the Fund is to provide two \$500 scholarships to a Upper School students, which are applied toward the cost of those students' tuition during the following school year.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Based on receipt of federal financial assistance through a Paycheck Protection Program loan administered through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) under the CARES Act, Mill Springs Academy acknowledges its obligation to prohibit discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, citizenship status, genetic information, handicap or disability in admissions, access, employment, tuition assistance, educational policies, or other school administered student and employee programs and activities. Questions regarding the School's compliance with the application and administration of the School's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to Patsy Beckwith, Human Resource Director, 13660 New Providence Road, Alpharetta, GA 30004, (404) 210-0838, pbeckwith@millsprings.org; or Taniah Jones, Dean of Students, Section 504 Compliance Officer, 13660 New Providence Road, Alpharetta, GA 30004, (678) 789-8600, tjones@millsprings.org; or to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) or to the SBA. Please refer to the School's SBA Non-Discrimination Compliance Policy on the School's website for information on how to file complaints with OCR or the SBA.

This notice will remain in effect until the School has satisfied and paid off the SBA Paycheck Protection Loan.

OTHER FUNDS**Gifts in Kind**

J.P. and Caroline Watson

In Memory of Errol Sanders

Danny and Sally Hood

Lori Kotarba

Gregory and Jessica Nagle

Susan Sanders

Todd Sentell

Jack and Joan Sentell

Don Sentell

Joel and Rachel Weitnauer

Blake and Meredith Weitnauer

Errol Sanders Scholarship Fund

Angel and Dan Murr

Mark Rafuse Leadership in Athletics Award

Nancy Rafuse

Restricted Gifts

Jorge and Alice Blanco

Bright Wings Foundation

Jae and Lee Ann Early

FACTS Management Company

John and Rebecca Falco

Mike and Jean Klaber

WAYS TO GIVE**BY CHECK**

Please make checks payable to Mill Springs Academy. Be sure to indicate in the memo field or in an accompanying letter if your gift is for the Annual Fund, a particular capital project, or other special designation. If you have any questions regarding a donation by check to MSA, please call our Advancement Office at 678-893-7033

Send check to:

Mill Springs Academy
13660 New Providence Road
Alpharetta, GA 30004-3414

BY CREDIT CARD

Gifts made via MasterCard, Visa, and Discover are gladly accepted and recognized at their full value. If you wish to make a credit card gift, the information you provide will be used solely for processing your gift and verifying contact information. To make a secure, online gift, please visit www.millsprings.org/AF.

GIFT OF STOCK AND OTHER APPRECIATED SECURITIES

A gift of appreciated securities that you have held for more than one year is frequently the most tax-wise way to give securities. For detailed information about transferring securities to Mill Springs Academy, please contact Leila Smith in the Development Office at 678-893-7777 or lsmith@millsprings.org.

PLANNED GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

Planned gifts and bequests allow you to support Mill Springs Academy while realizing financial and tax benefits for you and your family. Please contact Chris Fleming in our Advancement Office at 678-893-7033 or cflaming@millsprings.org to explore myriad of ways to apply your gift.

PLEDGES

Mill Springs Academy encourages pledge commitments to support fundraising priorities. Pledges to the Annual Fund must be paid in full by June 30. Capital pledges may be made over a period of three to five years, in consultation with the Development Office. You can make a pledge to our Annual Fund online at www.millsprings.org/AF.

STAY IN TOUCH



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Advancement Office
13660 New Providence Road
Alpharetta, GA 30004-3413



Success in School . . . Success in Life