

Spring 2022

PROVIDENCE DAY

magazine

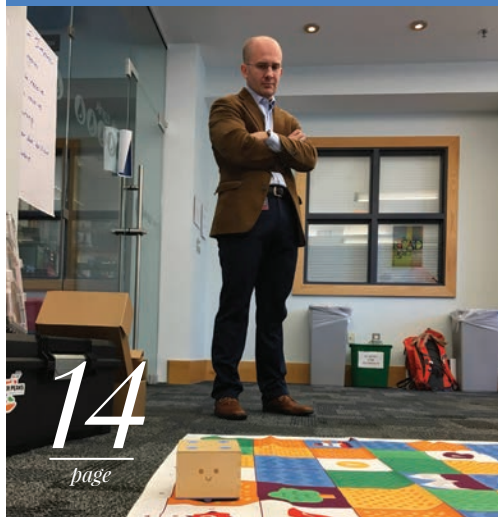
The next phase

**Dr. Glyn
Cowlshaw is
set to lead
PD's 2030
strategy**

a look inside

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Brief



IDEAS@PD Faculty discuss the school's focus on Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Analytics, and Sustainability in a new curricular approach.

Health & Wellbeing



On Gratitude The Student Services Team offers a lesson on ways to reflect and feel thankful.



On the Cover

Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw in his Head of School residence, spring 2022.

Photo by Mike McCarn.

Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging



Connectivity Jana Dorsey describes the school's clubs and affinity groups and how they contribute to a sense of belonging for all.

Jim Cerbie PD's longtime baseball coach reflects on a recent honor.

Our Faculty & Staff



Campus Environment



New Improvements on the Way From arts to dining to STEM to sports, improvements are on the way to many areas of campus in the coming months.

Resources for the Future



A Home Run for Softball After a new baseball batting cage debuted on campus last year, the Cicoletti family stepped forward to help make sure softball got its due, too.

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PROVIDENCE DAY SCHOOL

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Winning the *Congressional App Challenge*

Since 2019, PD students have been entering the 12th District Congressional App Challenge, sponsored by members of Congress to showcase the work of local students. This year Katherine Wahr '23 won first place with an app called Crazy Number Cards! Winners are showcased during a festival in the U.S. Capitol Building and have either virtual or in-person opportunities to meet their Representatives and interact with other app enthusiasts. PD students have performed well in the awards each of the past three years. For more on the effort, see teacher Rebecca Roemer's story on p. 20.



Photo by Sara Riggsby

a Scholarly Achievement



Photo courtesy of Pavan Thakkar

A PD sophomore, Pavan Thakkar '24, has published two pieces of original research in peer-reviewed scientific journals, helping to advance knowledge of COVID-19 in the school setting. Thakkar was inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic to research the impacts of the disease in schools, so he collected local data and published two papers in the *Journal of School Health* and *Pediatrics* in February. He was assisted by The ABC Science Collaborative, an initiative coordinated by the Duke Clinical Research Institute, and worked closely with Dr. Ibukun C. Kalu, M.D., medical director of pediatric infection prevention and assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Duke University School of Medicine, as well as other researchers. Pavan conceptualized and designed the studies, drafted the initial manuscripts, reviewed and revised the manuscripts, designed the data collection instruments, collected data, and carried out the initial analyses. Find links to the studies in the PD Communications section of the school's website.

Ikem “Ickey” Ekwonu ’19

heads to NFL's Carolina Panthers



Ikem “Ickey” Ekwonu was Homecoming King in fall 2018. Photo from the Charchives.

On April 28, the PD community cheered on Ikem “Ickey” Ekwonu ’19, a star player for North Carolina State University, as he was chosen No. 6 overall by the Carolina Panthers in the 2022 National Football League draft. He spoke to his former math teacher, Neely Porter Gutierrez ’92, in the weeks leading up to the draft, expressing gratitude for his time at PD: “I had a huge advantage coming in from PD. The academic rigor prepared me for my college classes and allowed me to exempt tutoring required for other athletes,” he said. As for the brewing NFL news, he added: “I feel great! I’ve worked hard for the past seven years, at PD with (former) Coach Hastings, Coach Moore and their football staff, and then at NCSU. Having the opportunity to play a different sport every season in high school helped me at the next level. My relationships with my wrestling coaches – Coach Burnam, Coach Tadeo, and Coach Racano – and my track coaches, Coach Lawrence and Coach Hovis, mean a lot to me. At PD I always knew my teachers and coaches were supporting me!”

PD in Action

PD’s Parents’ Association has launched a new committee, Social Responsibility and Community Engagement (SRCE), with the goal of making the school’s social responsibility mission a top priority throughout the PD community. The effort kicked off in February with a three-week event series, PD in Action, with sponsorship from Hendrick Luxury Group. Hundreds of parents and students participated in events targeting Freedom School, Samaritan’s Feet, composting awareness, local creek cleanups, the Red Cross, and more. Events culminated with the “Freedom Bowl,” a football clinic for Lower Schoolers led by the Varsity team that raised school supply donations for all Freedom School sites in Mecklenburg County.



Freedom Bowl 2022. Photo by Emerson Smith ’24.



the Head of School plans for 2030 & Beyond

By Leigh Dyer '88

On the first day of school in August 2011, the PD community witnessed something for the first time: the new Head of School, Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw, standing beside the school's carpool drop-off area known as the Ferryboat, greeting young students and escorting them to their classrooms alongside the rest of the faculty and staff.

At Providence Day, Heads of School had traditionally done most of their work in offices and behind the scenes. Cowlshaw, as the sixth person to hold the position at PD, brought a new visibility. And soon, he took it to a different level entirely.

That November, to the delight of Lower Schoolers, he dressed as a turkey - complete with a red wattle dangling below the beak - for the fourth annual Turkey Trot, raising food bank donations in honor of beloved late coach Gil

Murdock. It was the first of many, many eye-catching costumes and outfits he'd wear - from ringmaster of the TK Circus to Halloween superheroes to ugly holiday sweaters - as he joined with students to punctuate special occasions throughout the year.

"He is willing to put on a costume for students, but what that also told me is he really understood and understands the very complex dynamics of a community spanning ages four or five to ages 18 or 19," said Kimberly Paulk, who was the parent of a third grader that first year, and now chairs the Board of Trustees as alumni parent to Ethan '21.

"That's huge. It's hard to find a person who truly grasps the nuances and can put on a turkey costume and then change and go to a middle school performance and interact with students and then put on a business suit for a formal meeting."

It was the first of many signs that Cowlshaw was weaving himself into the community in new and groundbreaking ways, from launching a tradition of regular attendance at Parents' Association meetings to joining global organizations including Round Square and Global Online Academy to enabling PD to become the nation's first independent school hosting a Freedom School site.

"I could tell that Glyn was going to be the right leader to move us forward because he has the kind of personality that inspires people to follow him," said Lee Tappy '94, now Head of Middle School and parent to Brannon and Izzy '28. "I also have appreciated that he has such a great sense of humor, which has been a great connection for the two of us. Glyn is not scared to put himself out there, and I have admired that about him for as long as I have known him."

Monique Allen, vice chair of the Board of Trustees and parent of Justin '22 and Austin '18, credits Cowlshaw's energy and enthusiasm for raising the school's profile. "It's authentic and beyond inspiring - it's transmissible," she said. "I've learned that Glyn's tireless enthusiasm genuinely emanates from his profound passion for the PD community." Brooks Aker '10, president of the PD Board of Alumni, agreed. "Dr. Cowlshaw is an outstanding listener. The importance for the leader of an institution like PD, with so many different constituents, to possess such a skill can't be understated," he said. "He never ceases to impress me with his ability to blend humor and gravitas so effortlessly."

In 11 years, Board of Trustees members say, Cowlshaw's leadership has combined significant growth and change with respect for PD's long-standing beloved traditions. And now, following a strong vote of confidence from the Board of Trustees, he's positioned to continue leading the school toward its 2030 goals - which will include another comprehensive campaign in the coming years, to follow the successful \$27.8 million Charging Forward initiative.

It's all being guided by the Strategic Framework adopted by the Board. "The framework is to help us evolve the school and be flexible enough financially to prepare our students and our school community for whatever's to come," said Paulk.

Added Allen: "Glyn's role will be to continue to honor and promote the collective voice of PD and permit that voice to drive the strategic vision of the community onward."

Glyn's role will be to continue to honor and promote the collective voice of PD and permit that voice to drive the strategic vision of the community onward."

DECADE-PLUS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Among the school's many accomplishments over Cowlshaw's decade-plus of leadership, Board of Trustees members point to the growth of the school's endowment - from a last-place-among-peers \$5 million when he joined the school, to more than \$22 million today, with a Strategic Framework goal of reaching \$55 million by 2030.

"When we're building the endowment, we're building the foundation for future Providence Day students," said Paulk.



The campus has also physically transformed over the past decade, adding more than 100,000 square feet of new space. The improvements began early with the Overcash Stadium field and infrastructure, and spanned Lower School renovations with new lighting, ceilings and floors; Ridenhour gym renovations; science laboratories; improvements to McMahon Theatre; and the construction of the DeMayo Gateway Center, parking deck, and four-story Academic Center.

Along with campus transformation has come a rising profile among scholar-athletes, with top-ranked PD teams in both boys' and girls' sports and across all seasons becoming commonplace within the North Carolina Independent School Athletic Association. The Wells Fargo Cup, a year-long barometer of overall athletic performance awarded by the NCISAA, has gone to Providence Day in seven of the last 10 years and eight times overall. Upper School athletes have maintained average GPAs between 3.6 and 3.9 each of those years.

"I'm so excited that the performing arts, theatre, and athletics have all increased their levels of excellence, but at the same time, so have our academics," said Cowlshaw. "That for me is the alchemy of Providence Day School. Excellence in all areas."

Left: Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw on the roof of McMahon Fine Arts building. Photo by Mike McCarn.

Above: The first day of Ferryboat in 2011. From the Charchives.



This costume turns up each year at the time of the Gil Murdock Turkey Trot. From the Charchives.

The school has also seen an uptick in students attending historically Black colleges and universities over the past decade, as well as a much broader and deeper pool of internationally top-ranked universities tracked by College Guidance. “College acceptances are not just going coast to coast - that used to be the big deal - now they’re going global,” Cowlshaw added. Merit scholarships awarded to graduating seniors since Cowlshaw’s arrival have topped \$117 million.

Cowlshaw’s leadership has also overseen a deepened connection to alumni. “He has rekindled the spirit and engagement of the alumni in such an unparalleled manner; he makes us all feel like we still attend Providence Day, cheering on each other’s successes,” said Shawn Smith ’88, a member of the Board of Alumni and the 2021 Commencement speaker.

Long-serving faculty point to other changes under Cowlshaw’s leadership. “Some of the biggest changes, along with the visibility of the Head of School, have been the growing enrollment and a commitment to providing a PD education to as many people as possible, as well as a more diverse PD family,” said History Department Chair Ted Dickson, who joined the faculty in 1991.

Saundra Robbins joined PD in 1990 as its first Black faculty member and remains a Lower School PE teacher. She also served as the first director of PD’s Freedom School site when it launched in 2012, which she names

as a favorite memory of her tenure. “The other day I was looking at my Kindergarten class, thinking ‘This is beautiful’ - it was just awesome to see the diversity,” she said. “I don’t think we’ve lost the feel of the family. As you grow, things change. That’s one thing I hope we continue with, our administration and our leaders really encouraging the family-oriented feeling.”

Dr. Chris Mullis ’90 served as Board Chair for a term spanning the successful conclusion of the Charging Forward campaign - which included four seven-figure gifts to the school - through the first year of the pandemic. During the 20-21 school year as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and major systems around the nation learned remotely, Providence Day students continued learning safely in person.

“There has never been a more challenging time to be in education than the pandemic; never a time more systematically crisis-driven,” said Mullis. “We were very fortunate to have an extremely experienced leader at the helm. We had to create a solution to a problem that’s never been seen or solved. He has a team that got it done.”

As further support for the school’s leadership, Mullis points to the significant number of school leaders who have moved on from Providence Day to become top leaders or Heads of School at other institutions - including Derrick Willard, now leading Augusta Prep, and Cecil Stodghill, now head of the Altamont School.

Cowlshaw and the Board are overseeing ongoing visible improvements, from construction of the McMahon Fine Arts and Dining Hall project transforming more than 22,000 square feet, and Dickson-Hemby renovations, launching the new IDEAS@PD initiative, which stands for Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Analytics, and Sustainability.

“The IDEAS@PD renovation is inspiring, encouraging, and what the future of teaching and learning will look like,” says Ryan Welsh, PD’s Chief Design Strategist and a key part of the new initiative. “I’m super excited about the space and even more excited about being able to recognize that our students are doing really interesting, innovative things.”

Students are sharing in the excitement. “I really like the science programs at our school; I like how interactive they are,” said Rex Rokahr ’23. “The new renovations in Dickson-Hemby will really help us to fully access all those materials. And every day I eat snack with the TK students and I like to imagine what it will be like for them in 10 years. I’m really excited for the next generation to come through.”

"It's so crazy how much has changed on campus - it's like Disneyland, how things pop up," adds Hope Kerrigan '23, who's most excited about the improvements in Fine Arts spaces. "I really do attribute a lot of that to the leadership of the school. I love Dr. Cowlshaw, and I love the faculty here so much. All they've been able to push for and make happen."

Pavan Thakkar '24 is one of the students who received the coveted auction prize of becoming "Head of School for a day" as a fourth-grader, and has continued to keep in close touch with Cowlshaw. "Over the past few years, I've enjoyed seeing the growth of PD on many fronts, from the new Academic Center to the increases in the class options and extracurricular activities available," he said. "Looking forward, I'm excited to see the opening of the Fine Arts building extension, as well as the new IDEAS@PD department, and continued improvement in community and inclusion!"

MORE IMPROVEMENTS AHEAD

More new improvements are still in the planning stages, such as a comprehensive TK through 12th grade enhancement of learning spaces. Cowlshaw and the Board are eyeing the dated Overcash Lower School building as the first to potentially see new improvements.

"As part of our Strategic Framework, we're committed to bringing all the buildings on campus, of course with a special focus on Lower School, up to the teaching and learning standard that we have with our newest buildings," said Paulk.

In preliminary work with architectural consultants, school leaders have been asking provocative questions, notes Michael Magno, Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. "How might we provide students with more of an opportunity for learning and connectivity with a sense of adventure that doesn't only exist in classrooms - that exists in other areas and throughout campus? What if coming to school every day meant a new adventure?"

Erin Harper, Head of Lower School, is looking forward to this reimagining of Lower School spaces. "We need more new learning spaces for Lower School students that aren't necessarily the traditional classroom," she said. "Dr. Cowlshaw understands how important physical space is. Glyn's proximity to Lower School (in his office) has really been in our favor because he's been so immersed in our everyday life; when we've had a need, because he's so immersed in our division, he is really set to go for it and dream big."

PD's decade-plus of accomplishments:

- **First independent school to host a Freedom School**
- **LEED certification of the Academic Center**
- **Establishment of The Center for the Art & Science of Teaching and Learning**
- **Establishment of Charger Gardens**
- **23 Blumey Award nominations, 2015–2021**
- **Eight Wells Fargo Cup wins**
- **Membership in Round Square international network of schools**
- **Only Charlotte member of Global Online Academy**
- **73 nationalities represented on campus**
- **Record-setting Admissions with 98 percent family retention rate and wait pools of 100+ families**

Looking ahead to 2030, Cowlshaw already has a tenure that stands out among Head of School trends measured by the National Association of Independent Schools.

"Anyone who has any knowledge of what's happening in the independent school world hopes against hope that such a talented head of school will stay with them as long as Glyn has been with our community and continues to stay with our community," said Paulk.


"I think he's fallen in love with Providence Day. He completely bought into preserving what makes Providence Day special while also helping lead us toward being even better together. He's a Charger. I think that's why he stays, because he's home." 



Photo by Mike McCarn

Q + A

with Glyn Cowlshaw

During what would have been Glyn Cowlshaw's 10th anniversary in his role, the school was still wrapping up its own year-long 50th anniversary celebration, as well as grappling with the challenges of the global pandemic. So in a slight twist on tradition, Cowlshaw sat to reflect during his 11th year, with an eye toward discussing the future.

Q | What are some of your early memories after joining Providence Day in 2011?

What a hotbed of academic excellence! First, one of my first memories, having spent 14 years at another school, is that in my first faculty meeting, I got the name of the school wrong. Took me seven years to be forgiven for that! Another early memory was just how beloved the school is, with alumni and alumni parents. I was just blown away by that. Just a passion here that I had not experienced in any other school to this level.

One of my first thoughts when I got here was 'Wow, this commitment to legacy is so incredible at this school.' My wife Darlene, to this day, says, 'We loved our previous school. But I wish our kids had gone here. I wish they'd had the experience to be alumni at this place.'

Q | A lot of parents saw you for the first time in the Ferryboat on the first day of school. What do you remember from that?

I thought we had used maybe the Disney corporation to organize it. Because it ran with such an amazing mechanical efficiency, like a Disney line, but it's one of the special places for me. That's where the TK through 12 magic would often start the day, with fourth graders coming in with their older siblings or their older friends and everybody together. That alchemy of PD, that TK through 12 'special sauce.'

No matter how that space may change - look how it's changed already, we close it during the day now so it becomes a safe space - but there will always have to be a Ferryboat, long after you and I have gone. It's legendary.

Q | What are some of the biggest changes at PD in your time here?

When I arrived there were 1,500 students, and now there are more than 1,830. The growth in student diversity in that time has also been significant, and now we have more to go with faculty diversity, which we're addressing with our new Teaching Fellows program and other initiatives.

I think PD did a great job before I got here and we've done a strong job since, with equity, inclusivity, and belonging. That's always been a central thread running through everything else.

Q | Is there anything you would have done differently?

I shouldn't have tried to introduce cricket in year one (laughs). But in seriousness, ten or 11 years ago, we weren't as ahead, I don't think, of the mental health piece, health and wellbeing, which is now part of the Strategic Framework.

And as much as we push and push for excellence, we could have stopped and celebrated and focused a little bit more in that area.



Conducting the "train" during Lower School's exploration of Canada. File photo.



Dr. Cowlshaw was “wrapped” for a 2018 faculty exercise. From the Charchives.

Q | You’ve now been at PD as long as many of our “lifers.” How has it changed you as a person?

It actually has changed me radically. PD’s commitment to excellence; to equity, inclusivity, to belonging; it’s cool to love school. It’s OK to be excellent in Latin while you’re pursuing your excellence in dance. The fact that so many of our students pursue excellence in so many arenas, I think, has rubbed off on me.

I read a much wider branch of literature because I’m at PD, I’ve become more globally aware because I’m at PD, I’ve become more socially aware because I’m at PD, and that list just goes on and on. It’s a humbling experience because PD – faculty, staff, students, parents – is such a rich reservoir.

Q | What does the future hold for PD?


One of my most important goals here is that Lower School students should all speak with a British accent. (laughs)

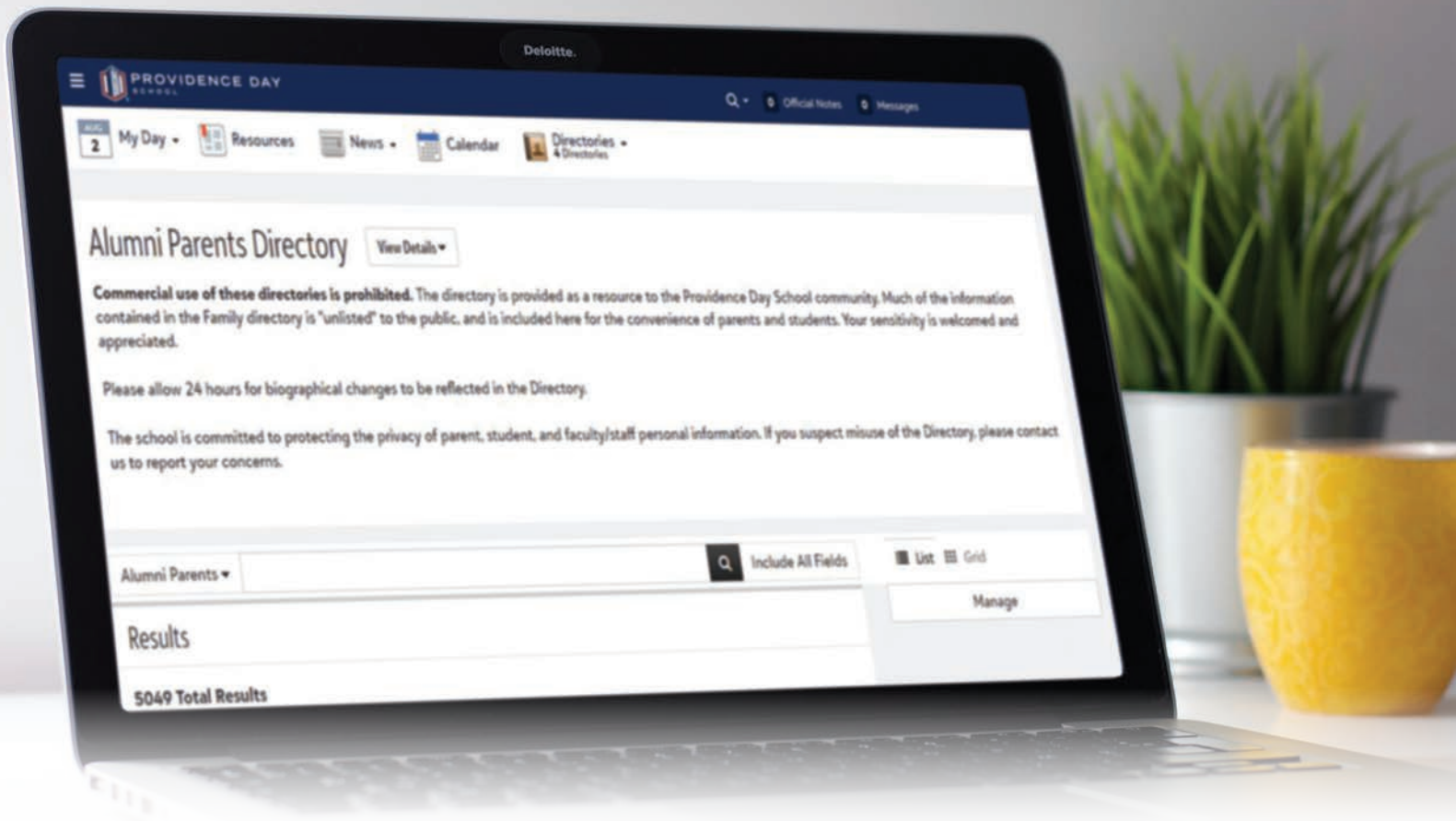
In seriousness, I’m excited for what the future holds. Over 10 years, we’ve had an average of 150 graduates per year. That’s 1,500 alumni, 3,000 alumni parents, 6,000 alumni grandparents. That’s when you get the idea of the global network of Providence Day School. Imagine how exponentially it grows.

We need the technology, we need the entrepreneurship, we need the innovation. We need the next level of Global Studies. And we do need the world class facilities piece as well.

That takes place in grades TK through 12, but the obvious place to

start is Lower School, and particularly the Overcash Building. It’s been here since the 1970s. It serves this community remarkably well, but what an amazing opportunity for all of us to reimagine what the next phase of our campus looks like.

The ambition, the scope, the vision known as Providence Day School will always continue to improve, which I think speaks volumes for the place. One of the things I have learned is you can dream big, but at Providence Day School, you dream big and those dreams can and will become a reality. 



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Questions? Contact Rachel Ellis at (704) 887-7058 or Rachel.Ellis@ProvidenceDay.org

INNOVATION
DESIGN
ENTREPRENEUR
ANALYTICS
SUSTAINABILITY

TION *IDEAS@PD* RENEUR ICS VIABILITY

In recent months, the school's leadership has moved forward to create a new approach to innovation at PD, in both the curriculum and the space where it's taught in the Dickson-Hemby Technology building. Courses taught under names including Computer Science, Social Entrepreneurship, and Personal Finance are joining the IDEAS@PD framework. Read on to hear from three key faculty members involved in creating this new approach.

Designing BIG Ideas at PD

*The story of how Welsh
came to be a leader in
design thinking*

By Sara Riggsby

Ryan Welsh proudly wears the badge of “Provocateur in Chief” for Providence Day. His 14-year trajectory at PD may have had fairly traditional origins, but it has led him to become Chief Design Strategist, a position that is ever more integral to PD’s path moving forward.

HOW IT BEGAN

Welsh joined the school 14 years ago as an Upper School English teacher but sought out a new challenge at PD while he completed a Ph.D. in curriculum instruction specializing in literacy and English studies. At that time, Derrick Willard, former Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw, Head of School, began ideating for the new Academic Center building which would serve as a replacement for the “West Wing” portable classrooms. Questions about how the space would look and be occupied rose to the surface.

Willard reached out to an outside agency to start the process of answering those questions. “We contacted a firm (that doesn’t exist anymore) called Wonder by Design to do design work and ethnographic research watching the ways people live on campus at PD,” explains Welsh. “They also designed and facilitated a





professional development experience for five of us teachers in the West Wing, considering, ‘What if we thought of classrooms as an ecology of spaces instead of an owned classroom and what would it mean to develop as professionals in a cohort?’”

“Over the course of the year, we learned a lot about design thinking,” says Welsh. Those three classrooms were redesigned so each one accomplished different goals, and based on what each teacher focused on in a given day, spaces were swapped out between the five of them. The teaching cohort also attended **Big Ideas Fest**, a three-day gathering focused on creating solutions and taking action within an inspiring and immersive design environment. The team came back from that experience ready to use design thinking as a mode of developing new and innovative pedagogy and curriculum.

Welsh was inspired. “Within the first hours of working with Wonder by Design I said to Derrick, ‘This is what I want, I want to be a designer,’” he recalls. “Because of the rate of change and complexity of the change...what if I started thinking of myself as an educator/designer? What would it mean to be constantly reiterating, developing, and changing new and different work that more closely attends to the particular needs of these students in this class in this semester?”

The final report delivered by Wonder by Design served as a catalyst for PD to think differently about how to grow and evolve the school. Dr. Cowlshaw and Willard considered the possibility of creating a design firm embedded in an independent school, and in partnership with Matt Scully, PD’s Director of Digital Integration & Innovation, a new department was born.

One of the first and most memorable collaborations as an in-house design firm took place with Michael Magno, Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, seven years ago. As Welsh recalls, Magno reached out to him and said, “I’ve got a faculty that thinks maybe sixth graders don’t need to sit (for) a two-hour exam in every one of their classes at the end of the year. Is there a better, interesting, more meaningful end-of-the-year learning opportunity that isn’t a two-hour seated exam?”



Photo by Sara Riggsby

By then, Welsh and Scully had learned a lot about human-centered design and engaged in additional learning from **Stanford's d.school**. They also worked with IDEO, a global design company famous for helping Steve Jobs invent the computer mouse.

"There's something really fundamental to design work where instead of starting with the problem, you start with the people," he explains. "You get really smart about the people so that you better understand the problem. That leads to better results when it comes to water systems in the developing world or innovative curriculum in urban school districts."

When Magno approached Welsh and Scully on a Thursday to ask if they could design and facilitate a discussion for a team of collaborators the following Monday, that group came up with the idea of a capstone project, which is now an essential part of the Middle School experience.

"That's a good example of one of the very early moments where we developed an experience with support and scaffolding based in design thinking that helped people find a better way." An article on **institutionalizing innovation** using capstone as an example was published through NAIS, the National Association of Independent Schools.

"I was the Dean of Students when I started capstone," says Magno. "It was the year before I became Head of Middle School. It was just for sixth grade at first, and then we added seventh and eighth grades."

Capstone presentations are designed to provide collaborative, problem-solving experiences for students to apply knowledge and skills they have acquired and



Photo by Sara Riggsby

practiced throughout the year, and take the place of end-of-semester exams for participating students.

Welsh credits Magno for his support of the in-house design firm. "Michael has been a champion since the beginning in part because he trusted us early and we collaborated successfully. It's taken seven or eight years, but I would put our design work up against anyone's design work, internal or external. We have a design firm that's embedded in an independent school."

Although Welsh loves his job enough to claim, "I have the best job on campus," he admits that being the most curious person on campus often makes people uncomfortable. "It took a really long time to build up the credibility we needed to be a design firm internal to a school," he says. "There's a reason why people hire external firms, because oftentimes innovation is painful and miserable and people are opposed to it. You have to provoke people."

IDEAS@PD

Around five years ago, the leadership and design teams began asking, how might we institutionalize innovation? "We like the paradox of that," Welsh says. "We like how once it's institutionalized it's by definition not innovative. And if it's innovative it won't fit within the institution. We think that's the right tension."

This question has led PD to a new curricular focus, IDEAS@PD – which stands for Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Analytics, and Sustainability. The process of designing the curriculum made that paradox apparent.

A team of PD members across disciplines went through the early design thinking process under the guidance of Welsh and Scully. Architects hired to renovate the Dickson-Hemby building needed to know what items to reflect in the plans; the design process for IDEAS@PD identified what really mattered most to the school. While the design firm offers clients a design thinking service, the architect said to Magno, “We would have never gotten to this place if we had to do that for PD.”

“When we were looking at the new space and looking at the language to explain IDEAS@PD, one of the tracks is called computing and innovation,” says Magno. While it might imply that innovation happens there exclusively, “It happens everywhere. Where we want to be is where innovation takes place anywhere and anytime.”

That’s the principle that helped drive the team to create an open layout. “We want to create a space where kids want to go hang out, where they can pursue their interests outside of the classroom,” Magno says. “What are you really interested in and excited about? What’s your question? Do you have an idea and need someone to help?” During the school day, a faculty member will always be available to work with students utilizing the new space.

“IDEAS will help us conceptualize what it means to be a department without isolating topics from each other,” says Welsh. “The goal is to take inter-disciplinary departments and people from different concentrations together, and consider the possibilities. The renovation in the Dickson-Hemby building is a prototype attempting to physically manifest more of the innovative practice we want to see.”

WHAT’S NEXT

In the past 12 to 18 months, Welsh and Scully have fielded numerous calls from other schools asking how PD has maintained its current position, as the school has not only stayed open but thrived during the pandemic. “What’s our secret? I don’t think it’s any profound discoveries we’ve made in the past 18 months,” explains Welsh.

“We started building capacity for institutional innovation three or four years ago.” In close partnership with NAIS and under the leadership of Dr. Cowlshaw, PD hosted an NAIS Strategy Lab in 2018 with several other schools located east of the Mississippi River. That experience covered ways to do strategic planning and how to incorporate innovative problem solving using design thinking.

Looking to the future, PD is well poised to handle both adaptive and technical challenges. “A technical challenge is a problem you’ve faced in the past and there might be a few variables that have changed but you know how to execute a solution to that problem. We are aces at grappling with technical challenges at PD,” explains Welsh.


“The other kind of challenge or problem is an adaptive challenge which has unknown variables, has probably not been seen before, and will absolutely necessitate a mode of problem solving that is different. It’s not that design thinking is the only way to address and adapt to a challenge, it’s just a really good one.”

Design thinking is powerful for its ability to land in a different place than would have happened trying to solve new problems with old methods. “It’s not like the ‘field of dreams.’ If you build it, they might not come,” Welsh says. “I think the design strategists have to prototype the future of what it’s going to mean to be an educator because the future of education will look profoundly different than what it does now.”

PD continually tests and looks to the future with its physical spaces as well. When the second floor of the Thompson-Jones library was updated with glass enclosures, these served as prototypes for the Academic Center, which was in the planning stages at the time.

The same applies to the Dickson-Hemby IDEAS@PD renovations. “It’s not the end to innovation and technology,” says Magno. “We want to see if it’s what we want in the future. Maybe there is a building, another space or expansion of another building, and we know it works. Or, it doesn’t and we’re going to try something else.”

“The IDEAS@PD renovation is inspiring, encouraging, and what the future of teaching and learning will look like,” says Welsh. “I’m super excited about the space and even more excited about being able to recognize that our students are doing really interesting, innovative things.”

Welsh also believes that success with IDEAS will rely on systematizing, programmatizing, and institutionalizing relationships. He says, “If we systematize the relationship building, institutionalizing innovation will be easy. We don’t suppose that once we get this right then we’re done. I think our job is to stay curious.” 

Preparing Students *for the Future of* Computer Science

"Sometimes it only takes one person to believe in you to change your life forever." –Author Alice Feeney

By Rebecca Roemer

This was my experience upon meeting my Professor of Physics, Dr. Ronald Brown. His teaching philosophy was summed up in three letters: F-U-N! Dr. Brown taught with such enthusiasm and passion while connecting technology, hands-on experiences, and real-world applications. His mentorship and passion led me to where I am today.

I began my educational journey at a small university in New York, State University of New York at Oswego. I teach both Middle and Upper School computer science at Providence Day. This is my 21st year in education and my 11th year teaching computer science.

Growing up in the dot-com era, I have lived through many technology transitions including dial-up to high-

speed internet, wall phones to cell phones, cassette players to streaming music, and today where everything is accessible from one device at your fingertips.

Thinking back to my early career in the classroom, the thought of integrating technology was still an emerging concept. I could sense the macro vision of how technology was changing our lives outside of the classroom, the pervasion of cell phones being a lasting example.

As we were living through this massive technological revolution in the late 1990s, where northern Virginia was considered the Silicon Valley of the East Coast, digital implementation seemed like more of an impediment. While society (and seemingly the world) was swirling with shiny new technologies, our teaching methods remained antiquated.

When I examined how we spent our time in the classroom, I asked myself, 'How will this prepare our students for the future?' In comparison, we were working in a model that was similar to what I experienced in school years before; most schools were equipped with one computer lab and would require a reservation to use the lab during the week.

I knew change was inevitable and I wanted to be at the forefront of this technological revolution! My goal was to leverage technology so that students could have the opportunity to explore their dreams, desires, and interests in a digital space. I was excited about seeking out and learning how to implement digital tools, and continually worked to revise the structure of my curriculum.





Photo by Mike McCarn

I also realized the enormity of the task. Knowledge and expertise centered around teaching with technology existed, and I wanted to be a part of it. I was excited. I was motivated. I knew I needed support, a community, a cohort of teachers that could work towards expanding the current boundaries. I researched several universities in the northern Virginia area and found what I was looking for. I completed my master's in Technology and Instruction from George Mason University.

I have spent more than a decade working as a computer science teacher. Twelve years ago, I discovered a program called Berkeley Logo, a simple software program that was created by the University of California at Berkeley, to teach and motivate students to code. Students were immersed in an environment in which they coded a turtle to move around a screen by writing out simple commands. With this fairly easy concept, students learned how to create basic programs and had fun with them.

I then discovered Alice 3, an animation software in which students could create and build their own 3D stories and games. In an effort to

bring their imaginations to life, we discovered many bugs along the way (and still do!).

The Alice software project continues to pick up momentum, evolve, and improve and is widely adopted in schools and universities. Duke University offers a course for freshmen as an introduction to computer science, as well as Carnegie Mellon University where the project was initiated.

Debunking the old stereotype that to be a computer programmer you needed to be a “nerdy” math genius, Berkeley Logo and Alice 3 have effortlessly created a coding space for students to be creative, without getting bogged down with formulas and calculations.

This year, we are experimenting with the VR (virtual reality) version of Alice 3. Imagine a software where you can build and code your own story or game, immerse yourself in that world, and actively be the character in your story! Transcending your ideas into a virtual space has never been more exciting and attainable.

I had read articles about Providence Day School and understood that their focus on digital engagement and



Photo by Mike McCarn

future innovations was a priority and reality. I applied to be a computer science teacher because I wanted to join a community of educators who recognized the importance of logical reasoning, critical thinking, and digital competence.

I cannot be more thankful to be working with such an incredible team. James Reeder, Todd Johnson, Carol Lawrence, and I collaborate often and support each other through our evolving curriculum. We strive to focus on the innovation and future of computer science and prioritize what best practices for our students.

Having a community of educators by my side who are professional, focused, driven, and respectful of each other, and who recognize students' unique values and customize instruction to unlock individual potential, makes Providence Day an exciting place to work. I've also been fortunate to find a community of educators, including Dr. Susan Rodger from Duke University and Vu Nguyen from Carnegie Mellon, who



Photo by Mike McCarn

continue to support my efforts in bringing relevant, purposeful learning to students. Eric Brown, Director of Alice at Carnegie Mellon, has expressed gratitude for our collaborative efforts to improve the Alice program over the past ten years. I have learned early that you have to surround yourself with people who provide knowledge pieces because there is always so much more to learn.

A recent classroom scene: I hear an emphatic 'YES!' and look up to see two students high fiving, smiling hugely, and letting out a sigh of gratifying relief. Collaboratively, they have spent the majority of the class period coding and troubleshooting an app to work properly. Their celebration of teamwork and success is not rare, but rather a continuation of their learning process in our AP Computer Science Principles class.

AP Computer Science Principles is an Upper School course that not only teaches students how to code but about how to creatively address real-world issues with the

tools and processes of computer science. Students are challenged to create, design, and code an app that could potentially be submitted into a prestigious competition, the Congressional App Challenge.

Intending to highlight the value of computer science education, this competition is offered to all students in grades six through 12. We have had several students from Providence Day place in this competition in which students are awarded prizes for their app creations, and the first place winner is invited to Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress along with software developers and sponsors. Coding and computational thinking are an integral part of our world. The skills students develop and practice in this course will provide students with limitless opportunities and infinite possibilities.

"Everyone in this country should learn how to program because it teaches you how to think." –Apple Founder Steve Jobs

Loud squeals of excitement are heard often in our EV3 Robotics class to celebrate successes. If you visited our classroom, you would be greeted with a brief hello, and students would

invite you to join the class, but would return to intensely focusing on the task at hand. Students spend time building, coding, and interacting with their bots. While students are focused and engaged in assembling robots, they are sharing tips and tricks to get their structure, motors, and sensors to all work together most efficiently and to be the "coolest" bot in the room.

Discussions are facilitated by asking questions "If you had a robot, what would you like it to do?" and "Do you think robots will take over the world one day?" By the end of the course, students are responsible for building multiple autonomous robots that complete a variety of tasks. During the fall semester, students spent time with Todd Johnson's Upper School CAD class to design and develop a theme park ride.

The design process included prototyping and building a structure that could detect a signal and respond with movement, and designing and printing an embellishment from our 3D printer to attach to the structure. Accuracy and precision were imperative and students learned quickly the concept of scaling. The culmination

of the project included a theme park ride display for all of their peers and teachers to see. Students were filled with pride and a sense of accomplishment as their peers crowded around the display.

Broadcast Media is a new elective this year and is quickly gaining popularity. Students are immersed in filming techniques including capturing the best camera shots and learning how to use editing software to produce the most epic videos.

It is gratifying to see students' creativity and excitement when given the opportunity to share their perspectives and interests. We laugh (a lot), have honest conversations about trending topics, and students learn how to deliver information in the most sincere and entertaining way. Students realize the amount of work and dedication that goes into production, and a student recently expressed to me, "This is my favorite class! I look forward to it all day."

Throughout my educational journey, I have realized that it is the people who make a "job" not feel like work. The unconditional support from our computer science team, and our administrators, Michael Magno, Lee Tappy, Eric Hedinger, and James Reeder, takes effort and does not go unnoticed. Accepting invitations to class events, visiting our classrooms,



Photo by Mike McCarn

helping us to scout and obtain resources, and sharing in our student's excitement and successes is a bonus to our students' learning.

Most recently, with an exciting renovation project for IDEAS@PD in the works, I was asked, "If this computer science space was to undergo a makeover, what do you envision? What would you need to make your teaching experience the most impactful for our students?" This question illustrates PD's commitment to empowered learners.


I pause to think about the question, "Why do you teach?" My pause reflects the many reasons why but one thing that stands out is student connections and witnessing their "aha" moments. The questions that motivate me and help to refine my teaching strategies are, "What are the infinite possibilities? What are we doing now and how far can we go? How can I meet a student at their level and unlock their potential?"

I want students to skip into my classroom ready to be inspired, challenged, and motivated to learn. I hope that when students leave

my classroom, they are pondering the task for tomorrow and feel confident that they have the tools and resources to advance towards a solution.

The golden moments of my day include real conversations with students about how they are processing and thinking about solving an issue and hearing the explanation from students about techniques they have already tried, and what the next steps will be. Watching students work to configure and reconfigure, witnessing collaboration, and guiding students to make real-world connections continues to motivate me.

I heard recently from a parent who works at Providence Day, "You unlocked a side of my son that I've never seen before; I'm so excited to see where this goes."

It's awesome. I smile about that and I look forward to our new IDEAS@PD space! 



PD NetWORK

Established by the Office of Institutional Advancement, PD NetWORK engages the Providence Day community to provide internship and mentorship opportunities in a range of industries for our alumni to develop their professional experience.

Interested in learning more about internship opportunities with PD NetWORK? Scan the QR code to the right!



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT & PRIDE FOR PROVIDENCE DAY

The Providence Day School Heritage Society recognizes those members of the PD community who have included PD in their estate plans. Heritage Society giving includes planned gifts such as life insurance policies, bequests, and real estate.

Gifts to the Heritage Society are generally designated toward the endowment and secure the future of PD for generations to come. Its members are listed in our annual Report on Philanthropy and included in our donor recognition programs and events. Each new member also receives a set of commemorative coasters to show their “PD pride.”

For more information contact Jeffrey S. Appel, Associate Head of School for Institutional Advancement, at (704) 887-6038 or jeff.appel@providenceday.org.



Creative Problem-Solving one “HACK” at a time



Photo by Matt Spence

By Sara Riggsby

Hack·a·thon, /'hakə THän/

Noun, informal.

An event in which a large number of people meet to engage in collaborative problem solving.

The first-ever Providence Day School Hackathon welcomed over 170 PD students to campus on a Saturday last October. Small groups of participants in the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools had fewer than three hours to answer a prompt, provided the morning of the Hackathon, which challenged students to produce a solution. The problem to solve: a specific underlying factor that contributes to homelessness in Mecklenburg County.

Students gathered outdoors across campus to begin brainstorming - or ideating in Hackathon terminology - with their teams about the myriad opportunities to design, innovate, and establish an entrepreneurial plan addressing the issue of homelessness in Charlotte. The success of the school's event, with its large volunteer turnout and support, immediately led to plans for creating another Hackathon open to the greater Charlotte community this spring.

"I would have considered it a success if we had 20 or 30 people because it was our first Hackathon experience," says Dr. James Edge, the Hackathon organizer and Upper School Social Entrepreneurship Coordinator, English Teacher, History Teacher, and tennis coach. "The school community has shown that there's not just an interest, but an obligation to make sure we feed that interest and continue bringing really thoughtful people to campus who are attached to trying to solve some of these problems."



Photo by Matt Spence



Photos by Matt Spence



Edge was impressed by how hard-working the groups were. “Every time I walked around campus, I saw that students were dedicated to arguing through their points and making sure they found an example to clarify them.” During the initial Hackathon experience, the age of entry started at fourth grade, and the younger students were often the most dedicated to the task.

The pilot program provided learning to build a larger and better experience for the Charlotte-wide Hackathon on April 30. For the first Hackathon, “we were lucky to have people tied into helping the homeless to try to solve this problem, but one of the biggest gaps was that we should have included people who had also experienced homelessness and had their circumstances altered,” Edge says. “It would have been a really useful perspective for our students to get someone with firsthand experience to say, ‘This is why I might not have pursued what you are talking about or thought through five years ago.’”

Ultimately, judges crowned 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams in each of the Lower, Middle, and Upper divisions. Students' answers to address various root causes of homelessness included educational partnerships and vocational training; transportation support to address immobility; addiction treatment partnerships; school-supported community aid drives; community kiosks and monitors for booking nightly lodging; business clothing drives, distribution, and interview workshops; and one-to-one shoe drive partnerships with national organizations.

In the second Hackathon, team sizes were capped at groups of three - smaller than the first experience - to

give students more leadership opportunities. Organizers streamlined the schedule with lessons learned from the first event.

Moving forward, PD plans to have one Hackathon each semester. The fall event will be open to PD students and the spring event to schools across Charlotte, with an eventual goal to open the Hackathon to other schools in the region and nation, making PD the destination for determining solutions to important problems. “It’s not just about getting money in your pocket [as a business], but solving a social good and making an impact providing a larger benefit to your stakeholders or to other people in the community,” Edge says.

Parents often ask Edge how to prepare for Hackathon events. From a curricular standpoint, the Lower School Tech Tank opens the door to innovation for the youngest students on campus. Beginning in the fall of 2022, Middle School will offer a course that is a series of short “design sprints” that act as six mini-Hackathons over the course of the semester. Students will receive support material and texts that facilitate more effective ideation with plenty of time to practice for the culminating pitch. Moving forward, students in both Middle and Upper schools will have the opportunity to take a growing number of courses that offer a social entrepreneurship approach.


After completing this class, students will have a solid knowledge of startup methods that may result in stronger ideas. “Or,” says Edge, “they might decide they want to go back to the third Hackathon they did in Middle School, think deeper, and put that into practice now.” 



Photo by Sara Riggsby



Photo by Sara Riggsby

Connecting at PD

By Jana Dorsey

Connectivity is at the core of the Providence Day School experience. Student clubs and affinity groups are vital to our community. All three divisions boast spaces and opportunities for students, faculty and staff to link and have meetings, discussions, and events.

Fifteen years ago as a junior in high school, I served as the President of the Black and Hispanic Awareness Club at my alma mater, a small all-girls independent school in New York.

Flash forward to 2022, and I have the honor and privilege of serving the Providence Day community as a member of the Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging team. At the age of 16, I never would have imagined that my experience as a student leading affinity groups in high school would help me in my career later in life. Yet, I find myself drawing on that experience often. This work is on a continuum and consistently evolving. For me, a genuine sense of belonging and safety for our students remains to be the catalyst for what we do and why we are here.

This year, I have had the honor of serving as a faculty advisor for AMEMSA (Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian Affinity Group), as well as helping new affinity groups launch and working with already established groups to help them continue to flourish. Affinity groups are spaces in which individuals share a common identity; clubs are spaces in which individuals share a common interest and/or serve as allies.

The Board of Trustees recently established this work as one of the top priorities for the school in its Strategic Framework, where it recognized that “each individual has unique needs to be successful and to fully benefit from a PD experience.”

Established in 2019, Kaleidoscope is a club for fourth and fifth grade students with a shared interest in equity and social justice learning. On a monthly basis, roughly 30 students meet for a facilitated discussion and activity with Lower School Diversity Coordinators Kristie Oglesby and Jean Little. Lower School also has a Black/African-American affinity group and an Asian Affinity group.



Photo by Mike McCarn




Photo by Sara Riggsby



Photo by Sara Riggsby

In Middle School, students established the Diversity Club in 2018. This school year, the Jewish Student Association (affinity group) and the Rainbow Alliance (club) have launched. In Upper School, there are nine affinity/allyship clubs and groups. And the sense of connectivity extends to families, as we host meetings for the Black Families Network and the Hispanic/Latino Families Network.

The Student Diversity Council serves as a liaison between students and administrators to ensure the needs of students are being met and to propose ways to make PD more inclusive, equitable, and a community of belonging.

For students interested in launching a new affinity group or club, please reach out to Jana Dorsey at jana.dorsey@providenceday.org or your divisional Diversity Coordinators. 

Upper School Affinity Groups and Clubs include:

- (AMEMSA) Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian Affinity Group
- Asian Affinity Group
- Black Student Union (BSU)
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA)
- Hispanic/Latinx Affinity Group
- Jewish Culture Club (JCC)
- Multiracial Affinity Group
- Students Promoting Equity Awareness and Knowledge (SPEAK)
- Students Advocating for Gender Equality (SAGE)

Working toward
Well-Being
at PD



Photos by Mike McCarn



Jenny Montague Gould '96



Margot Brinley



Lisa Bernard



Joyce Harris



Claire Bell



Marissa Kohn

By the Providence Day School counseling team

In the recently introduced strategic framework developed by the PD Board of Trustees that sets priorities for 2030 and beyond, one of the school's six goals states: "We will support the health and well-being of the PD community – students, their families, faculty, and staff."

Well-being is an intricate topic; one that is actively discussed in our society today. Given the multi-dimensional nature of wellness, the process of defining well-being for an individual or community is complex. It cannot be a one-size-fits-all model.

As change agents in pursuit of building a healthy school community, the PD counseling team has conceptualized well-being into three components: emotional, physical, and academic. The interplay between these components for each individual is nuanced. Balanced well-being for one individual looks different for another. Counselors honor this differentiation by working with students, families, faculty, and staff to provide support.

In an effort to open and continue communication, the PD counseling team shares monthly newsletters with our community that provide support and education around relevant topics that are arising in counseling spaces.

The goal of the monthly message is to increase family communication around topics such as navigating friendships, establishing healthy habits, and encouraging reflection as a family unit. The hope is that by empowering families with these strategies, students are practicing these skills both at school and at home.

The PD counseling team values partnership with our families and stakeholders throughout campus. Over the past few years, the counselors have partnered with groups including the Parents' Association; learning specialists; division administrators; the Office of


“ Our goal as a school was to create a place where we recognize well-being is more than success in academics, athletics, college admissions, and such, and to the best of our ability support the whole person. It is about creating an environment and giving our students the life skills and tools they need to achieve enduring well-being, both today and tomorrow.”

— Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw, Head of School

Equity, Inclusion and Belonging; and faculty. These partnerships have led to presentations, conversations, and training that address topics specific to students' developmental stages and current experiences.

Foundational to the work of the PD counselors is direct support of students through individual sessions, advisory groups, and classroom lessons. Building relationships with students and teaching social and emotional skills are the hallmarks of their work. Through direct service, counselors work with students to address thoughts and feelings, which impact emotional well-being.

PD counselors know that thoughts and feelings may be in alignment or, at times, incongruent; they are constantly in flux and evolving. Empowering students with the skills to understand and communicate their thoughts and feelings fosters well-being within the student. Continued introspection and reflection are powerful tools to help individuals positively impact their emotional well-being.

As the PD counselors envision well-being moving forward, the goal is that community well-being becomes a cultural cornerstone, not attached to one particular department or place on campus, but rather a way of being that we all embrace. Well-being is a shift in mindset for all places and people so that we may holistically serve our children and the PD community. 

Turn the page to see a recent letter from the counselors ►

Families taking time to pause, reflect and be grateful may seem basic; but, actually, they offer great moments for students to share successes, bond with family members, and appreciate the hard work they have been doing.

First, let's pause. It's become so difficult to slow down in our fast-paced, technological world. In the words of a student, "I just don't know when it will slow down." This quick pace, while great for a running race, sometimes supports us in missing things.

Perhaps we forgot an item at home, or didn't hear a question from a friend, or forgot to say hello to a classmate. Take a minute today, maybe right now even, to take a deep breath, look around and appreciate one thing in your environment.

Reflection is a key element to growth. This technique helps students to examine themselves, their experiences, and their actions. Your student likely spends time in their classrooms reflecting on the lesson that they learned, so it's only natural that they would spend time reflecting on their thoughts, behaviors, and actions. Take a moment to reflect on your thoughts from the day: were they positive? Supportive?



Finally, let's practice gratitude! We love to talk about gratitude as a coping skill and love to learn that research shows that gratitude even has health benefits! Amy Morin, in her Ted Talk, *The Secret of Becoming Mentally Strong*, talks about how mentally strong people eliminate bad habits and lean into good habits, such as gratitude to be mentally strong.

Christina Costa talks about the gratitude expression of kissing your brain and how expressing gratitude helps us build resiliency, a stronger immune system, even



enhances our mood by triggering the release of dopamine and serotonin in our brains. So how will you express gratitude? You may think of three things that bring you gratitude while you wait in a line, or share them with your family at mealtimes, you may say thank you to the person who held the door open for you or even write that thank you note you've been meaning to write.

So after a pause, and reflection on the past few months, we thank you for your partnership. As the African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child," and we are so grateful to be a part of your village.

PD PARENTS' ASSOCIATION SPRING PARTY & AUCTION

TOGETHER *Under the Stars*

The Providence Day Parents' Association would like to thank the sponsors, volunteers, and faculty & staff who made the spring 2022 party & auction a record-breaking success!

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JIM CERBIE

Hits a Grand Slam for PD

by Sara Riggsby

Coach Jim Cerbie's baseball coaching career to date has resulted in over 480 wins, eight Charlotte Independent Schools Athletic Association (CISAA) conference championships, three North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association (NCISAA) state championships, "Coach of the Year" awards from The Charlotte Observer and the American Baseball Coaches Association in 1998, and over 40 student-athletes continuing their baseball careers at the college level.



Jim Cerbie started his teaching career in the early 1980s at Alief School District in Katy, Texas. It was there that he met his wife Mary and had an ideal experience as an educator for the first three and a half years. When the

oil industry tanked, things took a turn for the worse in the Houston area, and a teaching friend of his decided to move to Charlotte for a job at Charlotte Country Day School. Shortly afterward, Cerbie joined him as an assistant coach for the Country Day baseball team.

The transition was not easy for Mary. “I had to pull over because my wife was bawling at the Texas border,” he recalls. “She missed the Texas sky and the first year was challenging in Charlotte, so when I got here in ’86 I didn’t think it would be a permanent move.”

In 1987, PD Athletic Director Bill Rogers met Cerbie during a game between Country Day and PD. They stayed in touch and Cerbie soon came to coach football, baseball, and teach at PD. “When I first got here I taught Lower School PE but for the last 30 years I’ve been doing Middle School PE,” he says. He also ran Summer at PD baseball camps for over 30 years. Today, in addition to coaching the varsity baseball team, he teaches one sixth-grade coed PE class and one seventh-grade boys’ PE class.

Cerbie’s son James ’08 and daughter Melissa ’14 graduated as PD lifers and last spring, Mary finished her 35th year teaching PE to Lower School students at Charlotte Latin, where she has coached a variety of sports.

Staying at PD was an easy decision. “Once my kids started going to school here and I realized how well prepared the kids are going to be at the next level, it was a no-brainer,” he says. “I loved what I was doing, the guys I was working with, the kids that were here, and Charlotte was home by that time so I had no desire to move anywhere else.” Cerbie speaks with pride about James’s health and fitness business Rebel Performance and Melissa’s work at The Nest at Charlotte Latin.

As Cerbie developed as a coach, the field and facilities developed around him. “The facility has come a long way,” he says. “If it rained, I told [former fellow coaches] Larry Butler and Gil Murdock to take my class so I could get the field ready. I had to dig a hole at the first baseline and put a bucket in it to drain the water, then fill it back up before the game.”





“It was a very big surprise to me winning that award. As a coach, I’m thinking the game is supposed to start in a couple of minutes, the pitcher is warmed up, and then Nancy picks up the mic and starts talking. I’m thinking, let’s pick up the pace or my pitcher is going to have to warm up again. Then she called Mary and Melissa out, so I knew something was up.”

— Jim Cerbie



From Left: Athletics Director Nancy Beatty, Jim Cerbie, and Head of School Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw at the “Jim Cerbie Home Dugout” celebration in spring 2021. Photos by Mike McCann.

“The first year I was here was the first time we played on the current field full time,” he says. “My third year, the infield was so low that any rain would drain to first and third baseline on the playing surface. Two dads on the landscaping crew brought in dirt to raise the pitcher’s mound so water could run off to the side and also added dirt to right-center field.”

In the spring of 2021, Head of School Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw thanked donors and the Charger Club for their support in the renovation of the baseball facility. Enhancements included a newly paved concourse with fresh landscaping, an improved sitting area for fans, a new lighted batting cage, and a renovated home team dugout. To Cerbie’s surprise, Athletic Director Nancy Beatty presented him with a plaque that named the home dugout in his honor. This recognition was made possible through the support of his current and alumni players and their families. After thanking the crowd, Cerbie threw out the first pitch at an impressive 95 mph.

“It was a very big surprise to me winning that award,” he says. “As a coach, I’m thinking the game is supposed to start in a couple of minutes, the pitcher is warmed up, and then Nancy picks up the mic and starts talking. I’m thinking, let’s pick up the pace or my pitcher is going to have to warm up again. Then she called Mary and Melissa out, so I knew something was up.”

“I’ve been so fortunate to have Brick Smith [Middle School history teacher] with me for 25+ years, Jeff Lucia [Upper School math teacher] all 34 years, and Chris Wallace [former Upper School art teacher] until he retired,” he says of his treasured colleagues and fellow coaches. “It’s been amazing continuity. You learn over the years to hire the right people, give them the responsibility to do a job, and let them do it. Don’t over-coach, don’t try to do too much, and let them play.”



Jim Cerbie during a happy moment on the home field. Photos by Mike McCarn.

That sentiment is returned. “Coach Cerbie has impacted thousands of students and athletes in his tenure here at Providence Day, and he has formed lifelong friendships with many of them,” says Smith. “He has been a stabilizing force in the physical education department as well as the baseball program. He’s an exceptional role model, and I am truly grateful that he’s my friend.”

Nancy Beatty agrees. “Coach Cerbie is one of the most passionate PD coaches both for his sport and in his life. Throughout the years, Coach has stayed student-centered in his coaching philosophy,” she says. “He understands the time and effort it takes to build a successful baseball program at PD, and I would also add that no one else can give a more detailed game recap than Coach Cerbie! He truly loves the game of baseball and his players.”

“I’ve been Jim Cerbie’s assistant coach for all 34 seasons he’s been at Providence Day,” says Lucia. “Throughout his time he’s been as concerned with the development of young players in the Middle School program as he has with the

Varsity team, believing the way to build consistent success is to have players advance through levels from Middle School to JV to eventually earning their spot on the Varsity team.

“Jim is the guy who does the work no one else sees: continual phone calls with other coaches and umpires to build the schedule for all three teams and to reschedule games on the fly when rainy weather interferes, hopping over to the school on a Sunday afternoon because a handful of Varsity players want to take some extra batting practice, and throwing that batting practice until his right arm is about to fall off. Suffice to say, Jim has been my close personal friend over the years, and I’m proud to have been a part of the PD baseball program under his leadership.”

Winning the 1997 and 1998 state championships stand out as special memories over his career. “In ’97 we were up against a pitcher who had not lost a game since his freshman year and was now a senior,” he recalls. “We were down 6-3 going into the last inning. Will Black ’98 hit one


home run in his high school career and that was it to tie the game. I jumped 10 feet in the air. The ball was inches from going foul and that area sank in recent storms, so it was so close. We won 7-6."

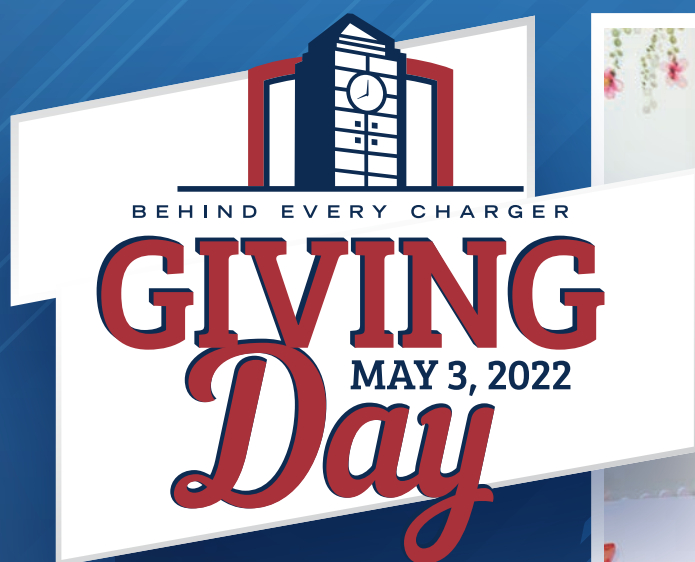
The following year PD played Charlotte Christian in the state championship and Steve Bondurant '98, now PD's Director of Alumni Relations, was pitching. "We had a 5-1 lead going into the last inning," Cerbie says. "The bases were loaded with one out, 5-2, and a kid gets a base hit to center. Steve had nothing left, but they flipped their first and third base coaches and that changed things up." PD got a double play and the game ended. "Those two back-to-back games stand out, but we've had so many good kids come through here."

Bondurant, who went on to play at the University of South Carolina and then for the Oakland Athletics, reflects fondly on his 25-year relationship with Cerbie. He's now a Varsity assistant coach. "Coach Cerbie was not only my coach in high school and a great one at that, but he also taught me how to grow as a person and be a better man," he says. "Now I'm able to coach alongside him and teach

those same things to the current generation of Chargers. A big part of who I am today is because of Coach Cerbie and I'm grateful for that."

One special annual event that happens on a Saturday in the spring before playoffs is the alumni reunion pitting alumni players against the current Varsity team, Cerbie's favorite day of the year. "We have quite a few guys who come back, people bring their families, and we have a lot of laughs. The alumni almost always win!" he says. "We watch these kids grow up, go to college, get a job, get married."

"The baseball is fun, but it's the relationships you create 10, 15, 20 years down the road that's most rewarding," he says. "How fortunate I am to have guys like Brick and Lucia and Chris Wallace and now having Bondo and Danny [Mehigan] on the coaching staff who put an incredible amount of time into what they do; they love the kids and they love the game. It makes it more fun for me having these guys around because they do such a nice job with the kids." 



**Thank you for a successful Giving Day on May 3rd!
We are grateful for all those in our community who
came together to support the PD experience and show
appreciation for those *Behind Every Charger*.**

the *PD Bookshelf*

By Janna Miller



Photo by Mike McCarn

Janna Miller has been a lower school librarian at PD for 15 years. She currently teaches library to grades 3-5 and a maker space class to 2nd grade. In addition to sharing books and research skills with Lower School students, she runs a lunchtime book club for 3rd and 4th grades and co-runs the Elementary Battle of the Books programs for 5th grade with Maria Blackburn. She loves Book Fair in the fall and the bathtub book exchange program in the spring. Basically, Miller loves her PD family and each child she has taught along the way!

Miller is also a current parent and alumni parent to Autumn '20 and Isabelle '24. She loves reading, sadly expensive crafts, and writing short stories.

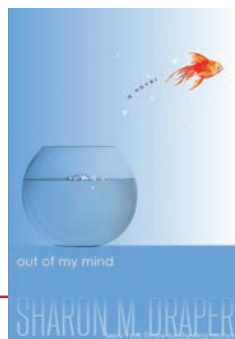
Even after fifteen years, sometimes I walk into the library and am just awed by the scope of the building and the books and services it contains. On its own, it is an inspiring space, but when the students arrive for classes, it turns into a wholly different form of magic. Helping students explore this creative space and find books that speak to them is a joy that can't be understated.

To the right are a few recommendations that have been written for middle-grade readers, but are adult favorites too!

A PAIR TO READ AND SHARE:

1 **OUT OF MY MIND AND OUT OF MY HEART BY SHARON DRAPER**

Until given a machine that allows her to speak, Melody hasn't been able to communicate with her family. They had no way of knowing that she has a photographic memory and is usually the smartest one in the room. *Out of My Mind* follows Melody during a dramatic school year and *Out of My Heart* is set a year later, as she navigates summer camp. Melody's voice is clear, brave, and shining with honesty.



ON TV AND IN PRINT:

2 **THE MYSTERIOUS BENEDICT SOCIETY BY TRENTON LEE STEWART**

In the last year, Disney filmed a fabulous adaptation of this book, opening the popular classic series up to new readers. It chronicles four children who pass a nearly impossible test and go on to uncover secrets at The Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened. If they can't figure out what the school is hiding, danger looms not for the children in the school, but includes a worldwide conspiracy that threatens everyone. Full of quirky, relatable characters, this smart story highlights the sometimes unrecognized brilliance of childhood.



TO READ AND DISCUSS:

3 **FRONT DESK BY KELLY YANG**

Now a trilogy, *Front Desk* follows Mia, who manages the front desk of the Calivista Hotel while her family cleans. When they let other immigrant families stay in the empty rooms, Mia has to help hide the evidence from Mr. Yao, all while chasing her dream of becoming a writer. A tall order for a 10-year-old whose first language is not English. Poignant, real, and ripe for discussion, this book is consistently on "best of" lists.



ACTION, ADVENTURE, HISTORY, MYSTERY (AND IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT DOWN):

4 **THE BLACKTHORN KEY BY KEVIN SANDS**

Full of puzzles, codes, explosions, and mayhem, Christopher Rowe must uncover the clues to the death of his mentor before others befall the same fate. He and his friends travel through constant danger in 15th century London, delving through layers of chemistry, alchemy, and a touch of fantasy. This page-turner just released the fifth book in the series.





Photo by Mike McCarn

Q + A

Carol Lawrence reflects on 15 years of
teaching and coaching at PD

by Sara Riggsby

Q | What roles have you had at Providence Day?

I taught Computer Apps for Lower and Middle School, and then I taught Graphic Design for Upper School. In Computer Apps they learn how to type, how to use a computer, how to use apps. All of the business applications. Now I teach AP Computer Science Principles, Web Design, Web Applications, Computer Apps, and AP Computer Science Principles.

On the athletic side, I started as an assistant coach. Eventually, they decided to split the track program, so Ben Hovis '96 took the boys and I took the girls. Before, Ben did distance and I did everything else. When they split the program we started winning state championships year after year. The 2021 spring season was eight straight wins for the girls and seven straight wins for the boys.

Q | What was your path to working at Providence Day?

Prior to my life in the U.S., I was a young teacher back in Jamaica. I was 17 years old and teaching high school math, PE, and grade 4. I think those were the best years of my life. I taught in a very poor area and made sure every kid had food. I didn't have to worry about paying rent because I was living at home so I used all of my money as a teacher to make sure the kids had everything they needed.

While I was a teacher in Jamaica, I was also a den mother to Cub Scouts. They would come to my house on weekends where they learned to



Carol Lawrence with her daughter and alum Arielle Massillon '13. Photo courtesy of Carol Lawrence.

cook, sew, and iron. I was running track there and I got recruited for college track with a scholarship at the New York Institute of Technology where I studied information systems.

I worked in the corporate world for 15 years. My last stint was at JP Morgan Chase on Wall Street where I was working as a server engineer. I worked for many years on Wall Street and my bosses were great. I supported the UK and Hong Kong so I'd go to work at 6 a.m. and my mother was so wonderful, she would get my daughter Arielle [Massillon '13] ready to go on the school bus.

We lived close to Jones Beach [off Long Island] so we spent a lot of time there in the summertime and it was a great balance. Some nights when I had to put the servers up she would come back to work with me, and she

thought it was great when I gave her a screwdriver and let her play with an old hard drive.

The year before I decided to move to Charlotte was when 9/11 happened. I happened to take the day off from work and took my daughter to school. Each day, we trekked from Long Island to Brooklyn and that was an hour's drive. I would take her to school, park, jump on the subway, and take the train to Wall Street. But on this day I said I need to do some work on my house, paint some rooms, so let me take her to school and then I'll head back home.

It was on the way back home that I heard the news of what was happening. And I thought wow, that's right down the street from where I work. Her school ended at 3 p.m. and it took me until 9 p.m. to get her because no one could come in and out of Brooklyn. It was crazy.

It took me a good four years of putting the ball in motion and researching what's next and I decided Charlotte would be the place. My whole goal in moving to North Carolina was to be a teacher and not work in corporate anymore. I really loved those two years I had teaching as a teenager and I knew it would make a difference.

I walked into PD off the street in August with my resume and said, 'Hi, my name is Carol Lawrence, do you have any openings?' I was willing to teach anything. Sarabeth Kinery

was at the desk and she gave the resume to [former Head of School] Gene Bratek who said as soon as something opens I'll let you know. I asked if I could go speak with the athletic department and met [former Athletic Director] Barbara Fricke and Sue Fitzgerald. Let me tell you, they were the nicest people I ever met. And I thought if anything opens I will definitely take a job here because they are nice people.

Soon, Barbara said we have a position for a JV field hockey coach and an assistant track coach so I said, 'OK, I'll start there.' I got a position at Providence High School as an assistant teacher and then I came here and coached in the evenings. That worked well. I applied for and got the position of a retiring computer science teacher, so in 2008 I was in the classroom at PD.

Q | How has Providence Day impacted you and your family?

The school has let me be who I want to be. My whole philosophy is that it takes a village.

I'm a mother and I love teaching, but from me, it's tough love. When Sam Caudill was the Head of Middle School, I had a student who wasn't trying. I told him if you keep being as lazy as you are you're going to be sweeping McDonald's floors. I put that on his report card.

Sam said, 'Carol, you can't do that,' but I said, 'Sam, it's true, he's not doing the work.' That student just graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill and he came back to visit, and his mother said, 'Carol, every time I see you I laugh!' That's what I'm used to. He



Photo courtesy of Carol Lawrence

came back two summers ago to visit me and said, 'Coach Lawrence, do you remember when you said that?' I said, 'I remember!' I will always remember that story.

My daughter built great relationships with great people when she was here. Arielle did sixth and the first half of seventh grade at South Charlotte Middle School and then came over to Providence Day in the middle of seventh grade. She fit right in. I was her field hockey and track coach so we got to work together. When she left here and went to Villanova for track, it was an easy transition because PD prepares you well. The same work ethic she had here went to sports and everything at school. She was in leadership on the team, and now she's a program manager for Dick's Sporting Goods. She's so young doing all of that. 'That's the captain in you,' I said, bringing it over to corporate.

Q | What are some of your most memorable moments at PD?

Mine is watching kids learn how to make tea! The first week of class I introduce it. They bring in teacups, come in and make tea, sit at the table, and sip quietly. We have little tea packets, hot water, a little sugar, and two kettles. It's the first time many of them have tried tea and some of them get hooked on it. Some kids graduating from college now are still drinking tea.

The tea idea came from my student Becky Goins '14 who is now in medical school. She would not sit still and she'd talk a mile a minute. So I got her some tea, and that's how it started. I teach my advisee group how to cook so I have my hot plate. They also learn how to sew and iron their clothes. It's home economics during advisory and I teach them life skills. One of the unique things about the



Photo courtesy of Carol Lawrence



Photo by Mike McCarn

students here is that the majority really embrace learning and they aren't scared to learn new things.


Q What do you enjoy doing outside of PD?

I have a team in Jamaica that I adopted and have the Lawrence Sports Foundation where I find teams that need help. I send them equipment, get shoes for the kids, and teach them how to coach. I met the principals and taught them about the SATs and how to help the kids get ready for college because they really don't know – it's in a rural area – so they aren't privy to a lot of information that the city schools are. On Sundays, I get on a two-hour call with coaches to help them set up a program for the rest of the week. Last November I went there and met the coaches and the kids in person.

I'm also an avid gardener now.

It's beautiful and I like doing it. I don't really have much spare time because on the weekends I often work with kids who want to work on their hurdles or something else, so I'm always coaching. I make sure I coach the kids who want to do it in college and help them get some good opportunities by matching their personalities with the school and the coaches who will be there. I make it happen based on where they get accepted. I am my daughter's 'Momager' and I tell the kids, 'I'm not your mom but I know where you will belong.'

I spent 15 years in the corporate world, 15 years in teaching, so what's my next chapter? I'm looking for that now. This is my last semester here but I want to make sure I'll be able to coach in the evening. I have a lot of kids in the pipeline that will do well at the next level and I see that they are ready and I don't want to walk away.

Every year I act like they're my kids to put through college and I am being Momager for them, too. Arielle is my inspiration now. I got her through and now she's pushing me to go ahead. 

Among many outstanding scholar-athletes, Lawrence was coach to Anna Cockrell '16, who became PD's first Olympian last year. Read about Cockrell on pp. 60.

More room to **Work & Play**

*Multiple campus
improvements on
the way for PD*

By Sara Riggsby





It's impossible to miss the physical transformation taking place at the Sardis-facing side of campus - but more changes taking place a little further behind the scenes will improve even more ways students learn and play at PD.

From arts to dining to STEM to sports, improvements are on the way to many areas of campus in the coming months.

"It's an example of how strong our community is to see the Board, administration, and faculty working together to continually improve our physical campus," says Kristen Kral, Assistant Head of School for Finance & Risk. "We have a world-class physical campus to support our world-class faculty. We wouldn't be able to do that if our parents didn't continue to support all of us. It says a lot about our community."

The most visible project lines Sardis Road where the McMahon Fine Arts Building and Brinkley Family Dining Hall are undergoing 14,000 square feet of new construction and 8,600 feet of renovations. The new and updated spaces will open in the fall of 2022.



McMahon rendering by Little Diversified Architectural Consulting



Rendering

“The McMahon Fine Arts and Brinkley Family Dining Hall expansion construction impacts academics for grades TK through 12,” says Michael Magno, Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. “The changes include dining, but go significantly beyond that.” With the dining expansion, age-appropriate dining areas provide additional seating for younger students in a space of their own along with additional seating that will be shared by Middle and Upper School students.

In the updated building, all Lower School visual and performing arts classrooms will move to the first floor. This switch involves Lower School music moving downstairs and Middle School art moving upstairs, with both of these classroom spaces adding square footage following the renovation. The large band practice room will enjoy additional room for storage and increased office space.

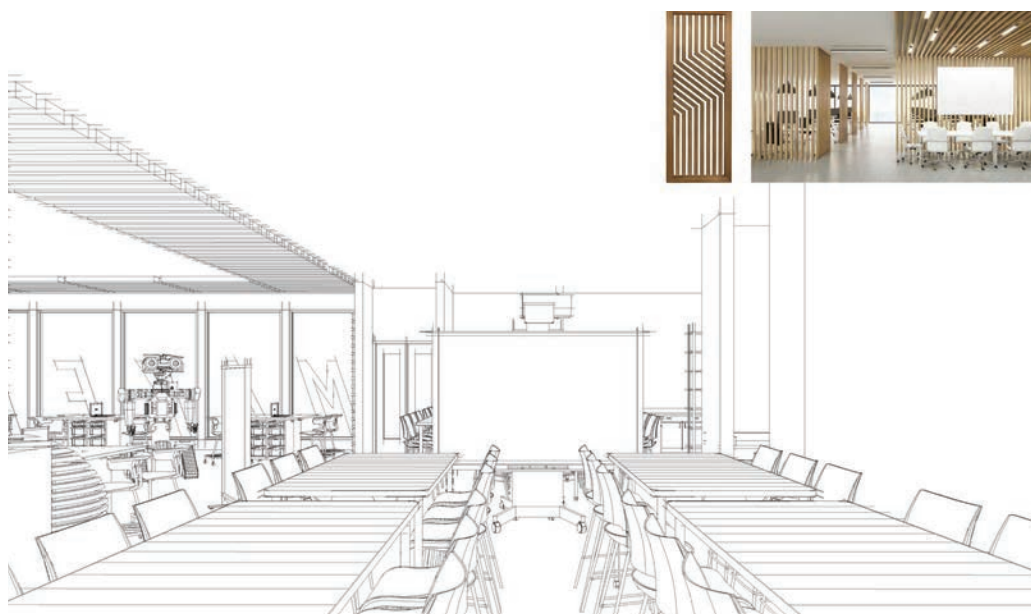


Diagrams of the IDEAS EXchange space underway in the Dickson-Hemby Technology building, by Little Diversified Architectural Consulting.

The biggest changes on the second floor include an added orchestra room and a new chorus room, both filled with light from large windows. Currently, the Black Box space is shared by orchestra and theatre, but each discipline will soon have its own distinct space. The new chorus room offers larger classroom space, more storage, and additional offices.

“The Fine Arts expansion is very exciting to both the performing arts

and the visual arts teams. We are all extremely grateful for the new space we will occupy in August,” says Choral Director and Performing Arts Chair Libby Tilson. “The Performing Arts department is happy to be able to spread out a little more and better accommodate our growing number of students. Not only will there be a larger rehearsal space for the chorus classes and the orchestra classes but all of our department classes will gain additional small rehearsal spaces.”



Diagrams of the IDEAS EXchange space underway in the Dickson-Hemby Technology building, by Little Diversified Architectural Consulting.

"I will be the most excited about having a permanent space with windows," says Assistant Orchestra Director Ashley Flower. "Also, there will be areas for our instruments and cases that are away from the high-traffic walking areas of the classroom. I think that will help the students focus and settle in for class."

Specific to visual arts, a new photo lab, spaces for printmaking, and a second kiln are included in the plans for the McMahon Fine Arts Building renovations. "We are very happy that the Middle School art room will be moving to the second floor – it will be nice to have both Middle School and Upper School on the same floor," says Richard Dewey, Visual Arts Department Chair. This Middle School art room combines a Lower School classroom and former chorus room into one larger space. Additionally, "we will have a dedicated printmaking space that students can use, rather than moving the rolling press from classroom to classroom."

Another exciting renovation is starting in May of 2022 inside

the Dickson-Hemby building. The second-floor science labs will move toward a hands-on, inquiry-based layout much like the Middle School labs on the first floor of the building updated three years ago. Where a current biology classroom and environmental studies classroom meet in the middle in a shared lab space, there will now be two larger classrooms with the flexibility to function as a standard classroom or a lab with flexible furnishings and a larger space.

The first floor of the Dickson-Hemby building will bring you into the EXchange space from IDEAS@PD which stands for Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Analytics, and Sustainability. "It is a space where we have an exchange of ideas," Magno explains.

"The space is the IDEAS EXchange with a capital X as in ideas (x) change, which is the product when you exchange ideas."

Entering the new space, you will find floor-to-ceiling glass allowing a

view straight through the far wall. There is a digital studio with a soundproof podcasting booth, teachers' hub, storage, a traditional classroom, and multiple green screens. Courses and activities supporting broadcast media and entrepreneurship will take place there.

Beyond that is the "Fab Lab" which will house routers and computer numerical controlled machines that control the operation of machine tools. This next iteration of the Makerspace includes large-format printers, sinks, and acrylic walls that create borders while maintaining an open floor plan. Between spaces is a garage door that rolls up, so it can function as an independent classroom or a large robotics and mechatronics lab.

All of these physical changes are supported in the curriculum and class offerings for the 2022-23 school year. "The program in the course of study is IDEAS@PD as a new department with two strands; one is more focused on computing and innovation tech and one more on design and entrepreneurship," Magno says.

The final changes to the Dickson-Hemby building in this round of renovations include transforming the current Lecture Hall into two classrooms for added flexibility and potentially creating an outdoor lab facing Sardis Road. As Magno says,



Photo by Mike McCarn

“We are going to make space for what we may have in the future.”

Athletics also looks forward to several other campus projects. In a joint effort between the Charger Club, softball families, and the school, the softball field is undergoing renovations including new fencing, a batting cage, and a new concourse similar to the work done on the baseball field last year. The school also plans to renovate the upper field, between Extended Day and Sardis Road, to create an additional competition-ready space with synthetic turf and lights. Additionally, two tennis courts now have new overhead lighting to allow nighttime match play. It's all about aligning PD's physical campus with the strategic framework adopted by the school's board.

Director of Athletics Nancy Beatty is excited about the updates. “Our softball field is located in the ‘landlocked’ south end of our campus and was in desperate need of improvements. I am so grateful for the generosity of the softball families, Charger Club, and the PD administration for supporting them,” she says.

“Creating a way to improve our upper field for our students and student-athletes has been on the to-do list for a very long time. Improving the upper field will bring much joy and excitement to our entire PD community,” she adds. “We also have spent an enormous amount of time in improving our tennis facility over the last five years including

the addition of shade structures and an improved playing surface. Lighting two of our tennis courts is a great addition to this already amazing facility!”

With a continued focus on safety and security, the school has or will do several more projects. They include: continuing to invest in improving pedestrian safety; building a perimeter fence, going from the front entrance on Sardis, around the updated McMahon Fine Arts Building and Dining Hall, and up to the back gate; and reworking the front entrance to improve safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

At the same time, the school has two vision team projects in motion focusing on the library and the Lower School campus. The vision team is looking at the spaces on campus, knowing that enrollment will continue to increase and PD is an urban school which impacts how that space is used. “All of this has been driven by our strategic framework and the Board and administration



Rendering

working together and looking toward the future,” says Magno.

Kral knows PD is proud that, “during these challenging COVID times this leadership team between the Board, administration, and faculty have been able to look forward and take us into the next 50 years.” 



Rendering



L-R: Debbie Hyde Ricks '02, Lee Taylor, Collin Ricks '02, Amanda Golmont Schneider '04, and Philip Schneider. Photo by Mike McCarn.

A Community of Volunteers

*The Secret to
PD's Success*

By Lucy Drinkwater



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Shi



Photo courtesy of Chris Rosbrook



Photo courtesy of Jamal Dawkins

Perhaps no one knows the impact of a Providence Day education more than Charger alumni. For Board of Alumni members Mahari Conston Freeman '12 and Amanda Golmont Schneider '04, who serve as Alumni Giving Co-chairs, volunteering gives them the opportunity to reconnect with their alma mater and express their gratitude for the experiences they had at PD.

"I remember all of the amazing experiences I had as a student," said Freeman. "Although I did not realize it at the time, many of these experiences that helped mold me into the person I am today were made possible by the Annual Fund. As an alum, it is my duty and pleasure to pay this forward for existing and future PD students by volunteering and giving."

Freeman, Schneider, and other alumni are among the volunteers - who also include parents, alumni parents, grandparents, Golden Chargers, faculty, and staff - who form the backbone of support for Providence Day's Annual Fund. Each year, the school asks the entire community to support the fund, which raises over \$1.4 million each year to support teaching and learning. The

vital philanthropic support of the fund empowers faculty and staff to create transformative learning experiences for students every day.

"The Annual Fund could not be what it is today without the support of our volunteers," said Jeffrey Appel, Associate Head of School for Institutional Advancement. "We are so grateful for their support and work on behalf of Providence Day's mission."

Each volunteer may have a different reason to support the Annual Fund and serve as advocates for the campaign among their peers in the PD community. But they're all inspired to give back because of the impact the school has had on them or their families.

"When you serve as a volunteer at PD, every gathering is positive and uplifting," said Schneider. "Each gathering involves laughing about someone's PD memory or because Dr. Cowlshaw's energy is contagious, you feel good about giving your time," she said.

Throughout Providence Day's history, the partnership between the school and families has been critical to the success of students and is one of PD's core values. Parents find volunteering to be a great way to

meet other parents and learn more about the operations of the school while making a meaningful difference in their child's education.

For many parents, their support of the Annual Fund is an expression of gratitude and support for PD's outstanding faculty. "For me, volunteering for the Annual Fund is a tangible way to acknowledge and celebrate the commitment of our faculty," said Chris Rosbrook, Chair of the 2021-22 Annual Fund campaign. "Not only does it provide me an opportunity to meet their hard work with efforts of my own, but it also raises funds that enhance our school and provide faculty enrichment."

"PD has a very strong leadership team with a great Board of Trustees who work extremely hard for the school to develop in all aspects," said Rebecca Shi. "The Annual Fund is one critical factor to turn those plans into reality. I volunteer with the Annual Fund because I believe volunteers could help to secure the fundings for the school's future."

Jamal Dawkins views his volunteering as a way for his family to partner with faculty as well as demonstrate social responsibility in action. "The [PD] mission



L-R: Lula Daba, Martha Odom, Susan Menkhaus-Jaffe, Chris Rosbrook, Jim Kaspar, Rebecca Shi, Jamal Dawkins, and Kristin Auerbach. Photo by Lucy Drinkwater.



Photo courtesy of Elaine Largen

speaks of creating a sense of social responsibility in our kids, and as parents, we constantly encourage our kids to be courageous and stretch,” said Dawkins.

“It was important to serve in this capacity because I’ve never done anything like this before and, yes, I was a bit anxious when I first learned of the opportunity,” he said. “But what a great way to model courage for my son. It was also important to show my social responsibility to the teachers and faculty, who worked tirelessly to educate our kids during the pandemic, that the entire community was in the boat and ‘rowing’ with them.”

Serving as volunteers isn’t just about making calls or sending texts and emails. Parents are able to make connections with other parents in their child’s grade level and beyond. “My husband Peter and I believe that education is the most important

gift we can provide our children, so supporting the Annual Fund is a very tangible way to support their education,” said Kristin Auerbach, New Parent Committee Chair for the 2021-22 Annual Fund.

“Aside from feeling overwhelmingly proud to be able to help in such an important way, I enjoy all the parents I have spoken to through volunteering for the Annual Fund,” she said. “When I started volunteering for the Annual Fund, we had just moved to Charlotte from NYC, and I received so much advice from fellow parents about where to go and what to do with my kids.”

Melissa Gut views getting involved as an Annual Fund volunteer as an opportunity to get connected while also demonstrating to her daughter their family’s value of volunteerism. “This is our first year in Charlotte and at Providence Day School, and volunteering has been a great

opportunity to make friends and connect to the school community,” said Gut. “Our family values include giving back to the community; by volunteering, we demonstrate to our children examples of how we as adults continue to make this a priority.”

For Elaine Largen and Bill Swayne, who serve as the Grandparent and Alumni Parent Division Co-Chairs, staying involved at PD remains as important now as when they first joined the community.

“I never dreamed when we were giving to the Annual Fund when Katie [’91] was a student that someday I’d have a grandson enrolled at Providence Day benefitting from those gifts as well,” Largen said. “The thing that inspires me to get involved is my grandson. I want to be where Ben is, just the off chance that I get to see him while I’m on campus. It lets him know, ‘Hey buddy, I’m here

because I love you.' And I love the school."


Added Swayne: "We have been involved with Providence Day since 1980. Back then, volunteer help from parents was essential for the survival of the school. Without these early volunteers, there would not have been a Providence Day School. I found that my passion for the great education our daughters [Lisa Swayne Proud '91 and Heather Swayne Burns '93] received enabled me to share my experiences with others and ask them to contribute financially to ensure that other PD students and future students would have similar great opportunities." 



Photo courtesy of Bill Swayne



PROVIDENCE DAY SCHOOL
ANNUAL FUND

Providence Day is more committed than ever to creating impactful and joyful learning experiences for every student. Your support for the Annual Fund helps PD be ready to respond to both opportunities and challenges when they arise. Visit www.providenceday.org/annualfund to support the 2021-22 Annual Fund. Together, we can ensure PD remains ready for what's next!

Leading the Charge for Softball

Cicoletti family helps ensure improvements for the sport

By Sara Riggsby

After a new baseball batting cage debuted on campus last year, a PD family stepped forward to help make sure softball got its due, too.

Chris and Michelle Cicoletti and their daughters Annabelle '24 and Elizabeth '26 joined the PD community 12 years ago. Among many favorite extracurriculars, softball played a big part in the family's life after Annabelle joined the team in sixth grade.

Softball typically fields a smaller team than other spring sports, so tryouts open up to younger students. As a young softball player, Annabelle formed a close relationship with softball coach and mentor Kristie Oglesby, known as "Coach O."

Annabelle regularly meets with Coach O for extra practice and comes home with advice Coach O gave her about softball or life in general. "I love that," says Michelle. "It takes a community to raise children, and I really appreciate it when the girls have those kind of people in their lives."

The family enjoys other extracurriculars at PD, too. Both Annabelle and Elizabeth actively participate in band with Dr. Michael Hough and received all-district band honors this year, one of only a few times siblings have earned this honor in the same year.

Photo by Mike McCarn





Renovations were well underway during Spring 2022. Photos by Sara Riggsby.

Over the years they have enjoyed participating in a variety of other sports for PD including volleyball, lacrosse, basketball, and cross country. One of the family's earliest campus memories was on the football field when an older cheerleader took the two little girls wearing their own tiny cheerleader uniforms under her wing and out on the field to cheer for Providence Day during a game.

So the family followed developments in athletics at PD with great interest. Following extensive baseball field renovations during the 2020-21 school year, Michelle inquired to Coach O about when the softball team would have access to the new batting cage. But with three PD baseball teams competing for time in the batting cage, the softball team

was left with few options to enjoy the new amenity.

The Cicolettis quickly recognized there was a need for a similar upgrade benefiting the softball team, which prompted them to start discussions with administrators about how to make that a reality.

"Softball and baseball are two sports where boys and girls don't share the same facilities," says Chris Cicoletti. "Normally when there's a project undertaken it benefits everybody, but because of the uniqueness of the sport, they don't

share the same facilities."


"A big part of our fundraising effort talking to other families is, this isn't just supporting softball, it's supporting girls in sports and making the girls feel as valued as the boys," says Michelle Cicoletti. "Once we started talking to the school they were very supportive."

The Cicolettis worked with Associate Head of School Jeff Appel to structure the fundraising campaign similar to the one conducted for baseball. They made the lead donation and were then able to talk to other families and the Charger Club about joining them in their goal of raising \$150,000, which the school met and then exceeded.

The improvements include the new batting cage, still to come, upgraded fencing, a new brick-paved concourse, and changes to the stands so spectators sit behind home plate. This will create a different experience



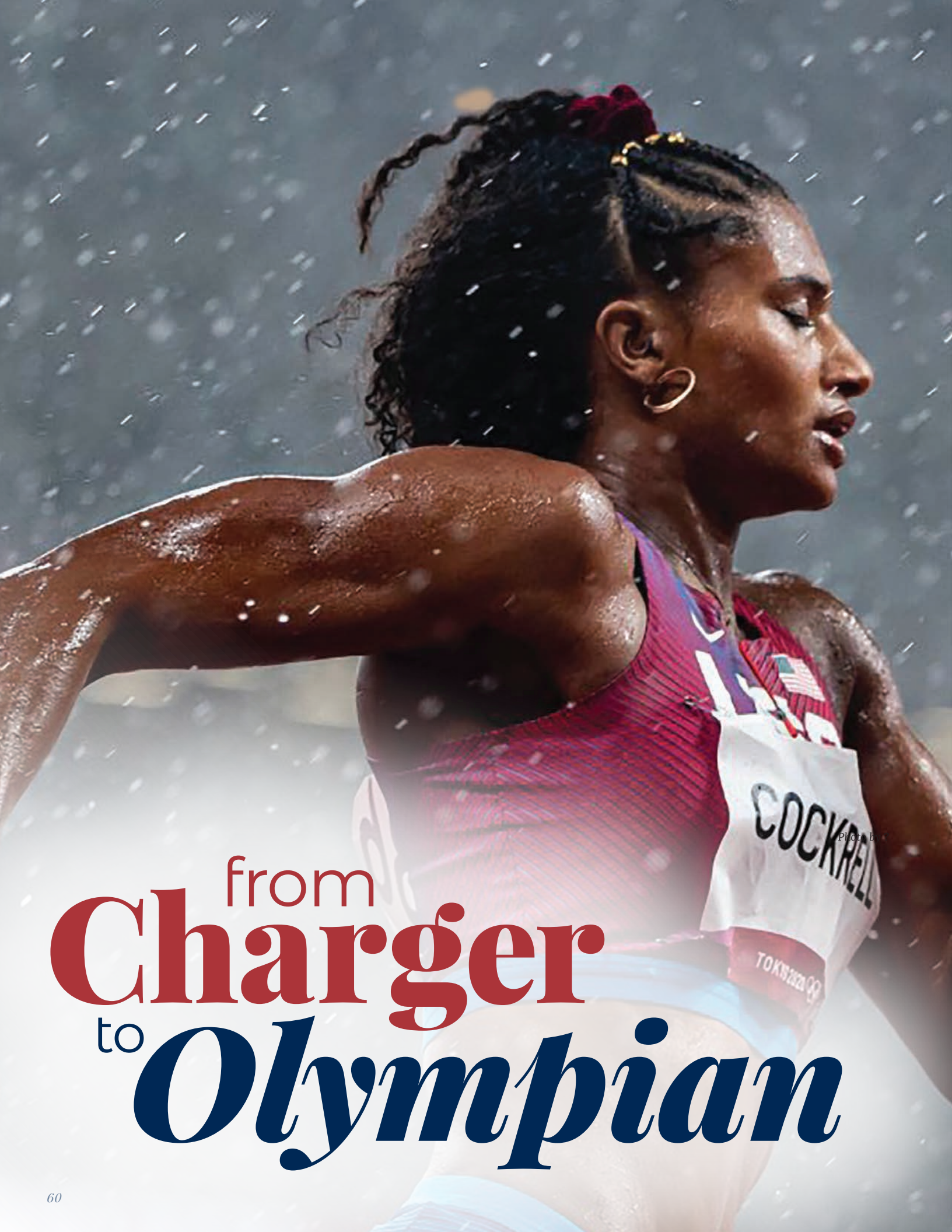
for the home and visiting fans with a better view of the field, plus room for people to congregate on the stands or with their own chairs.

“The experience is going to translate to the girls feeling that the spectators are excited to watch them,” says Michelle. “I’m really looking forward to how the games will feel and the importance the girls will feel playing ball.” 

Watch for more from “Coach O” – PD faculty member Kristie Oglesby – in the fall 2022 issue of Providence Day Magazine!



Photos by Mike McCarn



from
Charger
to
Olympian

Q + A

with Anna Cockrell

By Leigh Dyer '88

Anna Cockrell '16 had a big year in 2021: She won two national championships in 100 meter and 400 meter hurdles competing on the University of Southern California track team. Then, it was on to the summer Olympics in Tokyo, where she represented Team USA and won two heats to make it to the 400 meter hurdle finals.

In the fall, she found time to visit the PD campus during Homecoming before moving to Texas to turn professional. She took some time this winter to share a little more about what the last year was like, and what the future holds.

Q | We all cheered you on last summer during the Olympics and national championships. What has your life been like since then?

I don't even know how to describe it. I feel like it's been nonstop since the month of June. I took about a month off after the Games and just hung out at my parents' house and really didn't do anything while I was finalizing my contract negotiations to run professionally (for Nike). And then I pretty much up and decided I was going to move to Texas. I moved during September and have been out here in Fort Worth since then, just training, getting acclimated. A lot of change, a lot of transition, but all good stuff.

Q | How do you like Fort Worth compared to Charlotte?

I had been in Los Angeles for five years. So to go from that to Fort Worth was definitely a shock. I'm really only about 40 minutes outside of Dallas. Surprisingly, I really enjoy this slower pace.

Q | What does your future hold, both near term and longer term goals and plans?

This is a really strange cycle for track and field because the pandemic kind of threw off all the meets and major championships. So normally there'd be an off year at some point, but instead for the next three summers, there's a major international championship every year.

This summer is the World Outdoor Championships in Oregon. There's another World Outdoor Championships in 2023 (in Hungary). And then the (2024) Olympic year in Paris. The goals right now are oriented around training and getting to do some really cool stuff with Nike. Long term, competing and slowly adding more things into my life beyond running as I get used to it.

Q | What else beyond running?

I feel like this is so lame, but I don't do much right now. Practice is so long. I'm out of my house around 9:30 a.m., and I don't come back until after 4:00 p.m. I don't do all that much outside of practice and then obligations I have now as a pro. There's some stuff I slowly want to get into as I learn to manage all of this, but nothing yet.

(laughing) I got super into coffee and so now I have a French press and I make my own flavored syrups to put in my coffee. I'm like, this is my personality now: coffee.

Q | Can you share some of your inside perspective on the Olympic experience?

A lot of people had this perception that it was completely empty in the stadium. And I mean, it was far from full, but you still had press, you still had coaches, you still had athletes who weren't competing on that day in the venue. So it wasn't like dead silence or crickets or anything like that. I think I was probably pretty well prepared for that just because during the NCAA season, most

of that was either no fans or limited numbers.

It still felt like the biggest meet of my life, even though I kept telling myself, 'Oh, it's just another meet. There's no reason to be super nervous.' That all kind of goes out the window when you get out there and you're in the uniform!

Q | What are your standout memories from the experience?

I think my favorite part of all of it was I just really enjoyed all of my suitemates. I knew one of the girls in the suite with me. She's also from Charlotte, Gabbi Cunningham. She went to Mallard Creek. We raced in high school, but we never really had a chance to get to know each other.

Q | Is there something that stands out from your memories of Providence Day that prepared you for everything you experienced over this past year?

My relationship with Coach (Carol) Lawrence and how detail oriented she was. She just set me up so well to be able to handle the intensity and the workload that it takes to get to the next level. When I went to college, I just had an unbelievable base of being able to do different movement, being able to run different workouts. It was easier to acclimate because I had learned so much from her. I still train with her every time I'm at home, she's always out there at practice for me. Anytime I need a track or I need a set of eyes on me

or I need someone to hold the watch for me at practice, I've always had a home at PD and a home with her.


Q | Who else stands out in your memories?

Mr. (Ted) Dickson is way up there as one of my favorites. I've always loved history and he was such a phenomenal teacher. Señor (Jay) Barron accompanied me on guitar for my senior year when I performed at the last assembly. I have a lot of good memories of Providence Day teachers. I want to make sure I give a shout out to Freddy Cotton, because he still comes out to see me practice when I'm in town. I don't know if there's a meet that Freddy has missed since I was at Providence Day.

Q | What's your message to PD's current students?

There are really a lot of great individuals at Providence Day who are really open, able, and willing to

be a mentor. I would just say, take advantage of that. There are a lot of people who are willing to go above and beyond. Whether you're an athlete like I was, or if you're asking Señor Barron to play guitar for you, there's a lot of talent and a lot of resources.

High School and Middle School are inherently embarrassing times because you're going through a weird phase of life and you're trying to be an adult, but you're not quite there yet. And there's so much you don't know. One thing I've realized is that you're never really going to know everything that's going on. Every scenario can be potentially embarrassing. And so if you just let that go and do the things you really want to do, pursue what you want to pursue, and ask for help when you need it, you'll be amazed at how far you can go and the people who will join you on the journey along the way. 



Anna Cockrell '16 in the 2021 Tokyo Summer Olympics, courtesy of Anna Cockrell.

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This annual tournament, hosted by the PD Alumni Association,
generates funds that support the Alumni Endowment Fund.

PD's Pet



Entrepreneurs

A Class of '09 Connection Leads to a New Pet-Care Business

By Sara Riggsby

Coleman Russell '09 and Maggie Ruff '09 find themselves together a lot these days, but that's nothing new. An alphabetical connection that kept them side-by-side during their PD years led them to a new idea that has made them business partners in a pet-care sector that's growing by leaps and bounds.

"The first really funny thing about Maggie and me is that our names bump right up against each other" alphabetically, says Russell. "So at every PD event, we were next to each other. In our senior bus photo, we're standing in the bus looking outside the window and we're right next to each other."

"It's crazy because Coleman and I were friends and we weren't super close, but we were always close to each other," agrees Ruff. "I just went through our old yearbooks and our senior spread is of us side by side."

Though their lives after commencement took them on more distant separate paths, in recent years they've reconnected to launch Shinyu, a



Charlotte-based premium pet-care app that offers walks, check-in visits, pet sitting, and private boarding all conveniently booked through the app. All services are insured and bonded and all caregivers go through a vetting process.

Initially after PD, Russell worked in Houston as a power pricing analyst to pursue a career as an energy trader. He attended Tulane for a Master of Management in Energy degree and then worked at CitiGroup's oil derivatives desk for a few years, but realized it was not the career for him. "I learned that a lot of that world is waiting," Russell says. "To be a good trader you have to be patient and wait and for me, when something is going wrong, I want to take action. I knew I wanted something different and to start something new."



Photos courtesy of Maggie Ruff '09

Ruff, meanwhile, pursued a pre-med degree from Florida State in order to attend Physician Assistant school. While working at a local hospital intensive care unit in Charlotte and studying for the GRE exam, Ruff began walking dogs on the side as a way to get outside and away from the computer. “One day when I was with a client’s dogs I thought to myself, ‘The Ruff Life.’ How about I use that and see if I can get some more dog walks? It took off from there.”

She then had to make a difficult choice between pursuing graduate school or building her business. “Luckily, I made the right decision. If you find your dream job you hold onto it,” she says. “When my parents asked if I see myself walking dogs in five years, I said no, I see myself creating something bigger than you can ever imagine right now.”

The Ruff Life was extremely successful, but Ruff pursued a career change to event marketing in January 2020 to better accommodate necessary changes based on major life events. “I had gotten engaged, moved in with my husband, and I couldn’t keep as many dogs anymore,” she recalls. “So I tied up the business to pursue a new career path, but that dissipated really quickly when COVID hit.”

The former classmates had not spoken in at least a decade when Russell reached out to Ruff about joining him as a business partner, but the rapport was immediately there. “It was like no time had passed because we spent our childhood and teenage years together,” he says. “It helps us work together and we have that common bond.”



The idea for the company began when Russell lived in New York. “There are two main other pet care apps, and in the local publications in New York there were frequent [stories] about how dogs were hurt, mistreated, or even died on the watch of those companies,” he says. “It really upset me because they claimed to vet their caregivers but they obviously didn’t. Our pets deserve our best, and we felt those companies were doing things the wrong way and we knew that people deserved a pet company that did things the right way, with integrity.”

The Shinyu app was created in November of 2019, marking the beginning of the company. “It was supposed to take four months and ended up taking a year and a half,” says Russell. “I knew that I had no background in pet care so it was critical to add someone with that experience.”

Ruff completely agreed with the mission of the company from the start. “I thought, ‘This is brilliant,’” she says. “I told Coleman that when I was trying to make that huge shift in my life I felt lost, I lost my purpose and job and what I wanted to pursue. Coleman’s visions lit my fire again, and now I have a purpose, I feel driven and motivated and have a passion. I’m right back where I need to be.”

Shinyu’s mission is to make it easy to be a pet parent, which starts with convenient access to professionally vetted caregivers. The two are drawing from personal experience - Ruff with her rescue Happy, a lab/husky/pit mix, and her Boston terrier/pug mix Dexter, while Russell has a Burmese cat, Steve Smith.

Currently, the company focuses on basic pet care needs such as walks, visits, and overnight care in the Charlotte area. Looking forward, they want to help pet parents connect with great businesses and services such as trainers, groomers, pet-related small businesses, and dog parks, with consideration for geographical expansion. “We’ve got a novel take on how to do that,” says Russell. “For now we’re keeping those plans under wraps but stay tuned.”

They’re tapping into a pet care market that took off while people stayed at home during the pandemic and is continuing to expand - analysts including Fortune Business Insights predict the sector will grow from \$223 billion in 2021 to nearly \$326 billion in 2028.


“We really want people to know that we are a quality-first company and we’re a service-first company,” Russell says. “We are committed to doing less business but better business. A lot of the competition focuses on just getting the job done and we want to get the job done extremely well.” Russell and Ruff work hard to understand each client’s needs and personality to create the best match with Shinyu’s team of caregivers.

“A lot of people don’t realize this is something you can do full-time as a career,” says Ruff of Shinyu’s pet caregivers. “You can make money off of this and do well if you do it the right way.” They work to provide the right support and resources to build the pet care community so a balance can be achieved during peak seasons and holidays for pet caregivers to take time off for themselves. “If I’m not available I know that there are many other people who are wonderful because I vetted them.” This provides peace of mind for the caregivers and the pet parents.

The vetting process is intense, but Shinyu has still seen an overwhelming interest in employment. Applicants fill out a series of questions and go through a lengthy online exam, followed by an in-person meeting with Russell and Ruff.

During this meeting, applicants practice using the app and go on a “mock walk” with Ruff and her dog. “A lot of applicants have said, ‘This isn’t what I expected it to be, but I like it so much better,’” she says. “People deserve a chance to show themselves in person because not everyone is good on paper or comfortable bragging, but we meet them and think they are fantastic! It’s just something that couldn’t shine through on paper.” All applicants also go through an extensive background check.

The Shinyu team is very grateful for the ongoing support of the Providence Day community. “I have to say thank you to Providence Day because there was an article about me in the Charlotte Agenda [a local digital publication, now Axios] that the PD community re-shared, and from that point on my Ruff Life business took off,” says Ruff. “The first question from the PD community is always ‘How can I help, what can I do for you?’ That’s our alma mater and we want to give back, so any way we can stay involved is wonderful.”

“Starting a business is really hard and you will be discouraged,” says Russell. “In those moments it makes me think back to PD and people like Bobby Thompson, [former Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs] Derrick Willard, Randy Sienkowski, Lee Taylor, [former Upper School Dean] Jon Downs, Eric Hedinger, and many more who believed in me. Whenever I’m discouraged or facing a tough challenge it’s great to think back to those people who took an interest in my life and who believed I had great potential. The PD community really has been crucial and I couldn’t be more grateful for it now.” 



Scan the QR code to the left to visit the **Shinyu – Pet Sitter and Walkers** app in the App Store to learn more.

For another entrepreneurial PD connection, scan the QR code to the right to learn more about a dog-walking business operated by current PD fifth grader Sasha Williams '29, ‘Woof Woof Walkers.’



Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News

1979

1 **Walter Bridgeman** is the CEO at Remedics Restoration Carolinas and recently became a fully licensed general contractor. The business is expanding with an office opening in Greenville, SC and plans for Raleigh, NC in 2023.

1986

2 **Hunter Yurachek** and **Chris Spencer '85** caught up after 35 years during halftime of the Arkansas-LSU football game in Baton Rouge, LA. Hunter is the Athletic Director for the University of Arkansas and Chris is President of the United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana.

1988

3 **Chris Porter** recently started 1014 Leatherworks, a leather goods company crafting handmade items out of leather. Inspired by a journal he received at a leadership conference, Chris bought a cowhide and never looked back. He produces a wide range of leather items from corporate level gifts to custom bags and purses. Check out his work on Instagram at [@1014leatherworks](#).

1989

4 **Mike Sellers** was recently promoted and started a new position as Southeast Power Sales Manager at IBM in Raleigh, NC.

2007

5 **Colby Anderson** started a new position as Brand Manager at Novant Health in January 2022. Colby will oversee brand governance across the organization and work to bring the brand's story to life.

6 **Ashley Butler** was recently promoted to partner at Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP in their New York office.

2009

7 **Colby Olliver**, who is employed by Cleary Zimmerman Engineers as a Mechanical Designer, recently opened the firm's newest office in Austin, Texas.

8 **Malcolm Pittman** was selected to The National Sports Forum's 2022 Business of Diversity in Sports & Entertainment (BDSE) cohort. This distinguished award recognizes 31 rising stars and leaders with diverse backgrounds in the sports industry and provides special access to the 2022 National Sports Forum in Austin, Texas.

9

Jocelyn Ruark is earning her MBA in the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. She will be a Global MBA Intern at Anheuser-Busch InBev specializing in the Brewers Collective, AB InBev's North America craft business unit this summer.

2010

10 **Brooks Aker** transitioned out of public accounting and joined Crowder Constructors Inc. as Assistant Controller in August 2021. Crowder provides commercial infrastructure construction services throughout the southeastern United States and is headquartered in Charlotte, NC.

11 **Allie Ruark** will earn her MBA with a concentration in Investment Banking & Corporate Finance from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business in May. While at Darden, she was Vice President on the board of the Darden Finance Club and was a Portfolio Manager at Darden Capital Management, a fund that invests part of Darden's endowment in the stock market. After graduating, she is moving to New York City to start her new role as Industrials Associate in the investment banking division at Wells Fargo.

2011

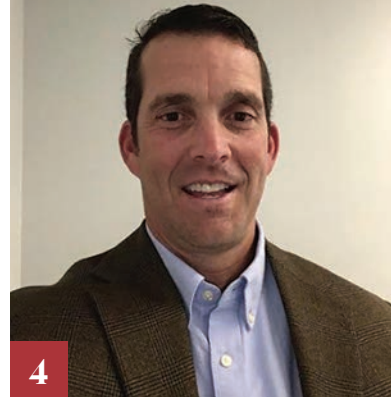
12 **John Grainger** received the Department of Defense (DOD) Joint Civilian Service Commendation Medal for his accomplishments as a China Air and Air Defense Analyst and member of the Aksai Chin Border Crisis Team while working at the Indo-Pacific Command Joint Intelligence Operations Center in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He recently started a new position as Defense Analysis with the DOD in Charlottesville, Virginia.

2013

13 **Sarah Johnson** started a new position as Art Director at Erich and Kallman advertising agency in San Francisco, CA.

2014

14 **Jaylin Counts** is the Owner & Founder of Charlotte Quality Control, a mobile detailing business that services dealerships, fleet companies, and personal vehicles, in Charlotte, NC. They currently have four sponsored dealerships and were a suggested black-owned business by Charlotte Axios in February 2022.



Submit a Class Note: Weddings, births, promotions, anniversaries, retirements or awards... Let us know about your major life events! Send them to Steve Bondurant '98 at steve.bondurant@providenceday.org.

Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News *cont.*

2014

1 Nate Nalibotsky started a new position as Care Strategy Associate at Charlie Health, a digital health platform focused on providing group therapy for individuals with mental illness.

2015

2 Sandie Bonwinkor started a new position as Commercial Associate in Global Commercial Banking at Bank of America in Washington, DC. In this role, she supports Healthcare, Education & Not-for-Profit institutions in the Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia areas.

Emma Burri has been hired for a Federal Appellate Judicial Clerkship for The United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, D.C. She will be clerk to The Honorable Kara Farnandez Stoll, who was appointed to the Appellate Court for the Federal Circuit by President Barack Obama. She will clerk with the Federal Circuit Appellate Court until 2025.

3 Anish Gondhalekar recently started a new position as Investment Associate at TowerPoint Capital, a digital infrastructure and real estate focused investment firm, in Atlanta, GA.

4 Vienna Lunking is in her first year studying to earn her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) at the North Carolina State University College of Medicine. In her first year, she is learning the anatomy of dogs, cats, horses, cows, goats, and pigs and will be doing research at the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) this summer. Vienna will be part of the class of 2025, which consists of around 100 students.

Hadley Nelson began a new job as a pediatric nurse at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in the Surgical NeuroScience Unit in St. Petersburg, FL.

2016

5 Grant Henderson obtained his NC Real Estate License in August 2021 and started a new position as Field Research Analyst at CBRE in Charlotte, NC.

6 Ryan Michocki received his Masters in Structural Engineering in December 2021. He started a new position as a Structural Engineer at HKS Architects in Dallas, TX.

2017

7 Delaney Emerine is a Creative Licensing Coordinator at Round Hill Music, a full service creative music company, in Nashville, TN. She works in the Nashville music publishing division on the creative licensing team which specializes in securing song placements for film, advertising, TV, trailers, sports, and video games.

8 Caroline Kurani earned her degree in Psychology and a minor in Business from Vanderbilt University in 2020. She will be attending Harvard Law School this fall to earn her JD.

9 Claire Miralia is an Audit Analyst in the Corporate Audit Analyst Program at Bank of America in Boston, MA. She is currently in her first rotation on the Global Compliance and Operational Risk Management team.

2018

10 Chloe Appleby will be graduating this spring with a degree in English and a minor in Communications Studies from Davidson College. Upon graduating, Chloe will be starting a new position as Associate Writer in the Launch Program at Red Ventures in Charlotte, NC.

11 Kameron Cummings was selected as the 2022 Outstanding Senior in the College of Science at Virginia Tech. She is an Honors College member who will be earning her degree in Psychology with minors in Disability Studies and Sociology.

2018

12 Noah Dolgoff will be graduating this spring with dual degrees in Economics with a concentration in Biopharmaceuticals and Healthcare as well as Advertising & Public Relations with a minor in History from UNC Chapel Hill. Upon graduation, he will be starting a new position as an Associate Consultant at Putnam Associates in Boston, MA.



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Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News *cont.*

2018

1 Emma Goldean was recently named All-Big Ten Second Team as well as NFHCA All-Region Second Team as part of Ohio State's Women's Field Hockey team.

2 Ajay Hassani is currently working as a Tax Preparer at Parsec Financial while attending school at Clemson University. This summer, Ajay will be an Audit Intern at Cherry Bekaert LLP in Charlotte, NC.

3 Shelby Jane Vaughan was a Summer Planning Intern at Belk in Charlotte, NC last summer with a focus on merchandise planning. Shelby will be graduating this spring from Wofford College with a degree in Business Economics and Spanish and a minor in Film Studies. She has been accepted into the Masters of Science in Management program at Wake Forest University and will start in Summer 2022.

4 Kevin Wolf graduated last year with a BS in Business Administration with a concentration in Operation and Supply Chain Management. He's currently pursuing a Masters of Science in Business

Analytics at SMU in Dallas, TX. Upon completion of his MSBA degree in May, he will be joining GE Aviation as part of the Operations Management Leadership Program (OMLP), a two year rotational program gaining supply chain experience, leadership development, and important certifications such as lean six-sigma green belt.

5 Kyle Wood will be starting a new position as Investment Banking Analyst at Wells Fargo in New York, NY following training this summer. He will be working for the Mergers & Acquisitions group, which specializes in advising clients on various strategic transactions.

2019

6 Kenneth Cochell will be working this summer as a Summer Analyst at Bank of America in their Finance Management Analyst Program in Charlotte, NC. In the program, he will be put in the CFO Group where he will be presented with opportunities to utilize the practical application of skills learned in his Corporate Finance and Accounting coursework.

7 Ikem Ekwonu was recently selected as unanimous consensus 1st team All-American by The American Football Coaches Association, The Associated Press, Football Writers Association of America, The Sporting News, and The Walter Camp Foundation as part of the NC State football program. See page 5 for more recent news.

8 Jacqueline Ives will be working this summer as a Global Sourcing and Manufacturing Business Analyst Intern with Nike at their global headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon.

9 Marc Sturisky will be working this summer as a Customer Strategy & Innovation Intern with United Airlines at their headquarters in Chicago, IL.

2020

10 Nandita Balaji, Shreyas Bhasin, Kevin Kaspar, and Zoe Sherman, co-founders of InfernoGuard LLC, recently won the \$100,000 Climate Change Prize sponsored by Breakthrough Energy at the Arizona State University Innovation Open Finals. This prize will help InfernoGuard reach their mission of supporting landowners who need it most during the wildfire season.

11 Audrey Burri is in her second season on Notre Dame's Division I Women's Rowing team. She is a sophomore majoring in Marketing at the University of Notre Dame in the Mendoza College of Business.

12 Maddie Henderson was recently selected for the Anchorage, Alaska Global Immersion Elective (GIE) program with the UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Multiple Years

Will Brinley '21, Tyler Campbell '21, Victor Chu '19, Kaila Dawkins '20, Kayla Furney '20, Connor Hammond '18, and Molly Kerrigan '21 were part of the Young Alumni College Forum Panel in January sharing their experiences and insights with the PD Administration and boards as well as the current Junior class.



Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

Marriages & Engagements

2007

1 **Christine Solitario** and **Locke Bell** were married on October 23, 2021, in Charlotte, NC. The wedding included several PD alumni: **Marian Barrett '10**, **Zach Boylston**, **Matt Cox**, **Clay Jones**, **Rebecca Pope McGoogan**, **Frank Sanders**, **Catherine Schenck**, and **Elizabeth Solitario '10**.

2 **Briana Wozniak** married Samuel Brannan on August 15, 2020 with a celebration on the one year anniversary with friends and family on August 14, 2021 at Belk Chapel with the reception at Myers Park Country Club. PD Alumni in attendance were **Katherine Fehring**, **Kate Hussmann '06** (co-maid of honor), **Meghan Newman '06**, **Robbie Saclarides** (bridesmaid), and **Drew Wozniak '03** (groomsman).

2009

3 **Dan Smith** married Aspen Kissell on October 22, 2021 at the Chesapeake Bay Beach Club in Stevensville, MD. PD Alumni in the wedding party were **Philip James**, **Christian Rautenstrauch**, **Michael Smith '11**, **Patrick Walsh**, and **Andrew Yavorski**.

2010

4 **Sofia Di Iorio** married Ryan Wirkus on November 13, 2021 at St. Peter Catholic Church, with the reception at Carmel Country Club. Wedding party members who are PD alumni included **Ali Di Iorio Stringfield '08**, **Patrick Di Iorio '12**, **Chandler Field**, and **Sophie Stramm**.

2011

5 **Caroline James** married Matthew Coffin on October 23, 2021 at Providence United Methodist Church in Charlotte, NC. PD Alumni in attendance were **Alex Richards Spence** (Matron of Honor) and **Natalie Jones** (Bridesmaid).

2013

6 **Landon Rudd** and **Shana Thomas** got engaged on December 26, 2021 on Providence Day School's campus in the same spot where they met at 12 years old.

2014

7 **Charlie Burgess** and **Jack Willen '13** were married on November 6, 2021 at Lonesome Valley in Cashiers, NC. PD Alumni in the wedding party were **Ben Burgess**, **Tori Cassell**, **Christian Cichan '13**, **Gunner Guelli '13**, **Caroline James Coffin**, **Morgan Mosack**, **Brenna Willen**, **Caitlin Willen '12**, and **Maeve Willen '16**. Other PD Alumni in attendance were **Marcos Alberto**, **Cole Blum**, **Linley Busby '13**, **Mackenzie Busby '13**, **Hayden Clay '18**, **Meredith Clay**, **Chase Ferguson '13**, **Jessie Chadwick Ferguson '09**, **Nick Giordano**, **Tessa Giordano '18**, **Jonathan Henry '13**, **Corey Michocki**, **Braxton Mosack '13**, **Parker Mosack '17**, **Madeline Rodgers**, and **Caroline Smith**.

8 **Margaret Foushee** married Collin

Whetstone on January 15, 2022 at the Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, VA.

9 **Jimmy Messmer** got engaged to Manisha Mishra on November 27, 2021 in Central Park in New York, NY. The couple met in London where they were both on summer fellowships while at UNC-Chapel Hill.



Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

Births

1993

1 Stephanie Preston-Morcos and husband Ken welcomed a son, Stephen Reid Preston-Morcos, on June 26, 2021. His brother Nathaniel Moss welcomed him with love.

2000

2 Reggie Love and Kat Conlon welcomed a daughter, Navy Elise Love, on July 7, 2021 at Duke Hospital in Durham, NC.

2001

3 Jim Eubanks and wife Komal welcomed a daughter, Ava Marie Eubanks, in June 2021. Jim is Chief Resident in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC).

2003

4 Colin Webb and wife Kelly welcomed a son, Thomas Joseph Webb, on September 30, 2021 weighing 7 lbs 2 oz. Thomas is named after his two great grandfathers. Thomas joins siblings Bennett (4) and James (2).

2004

5 John Williford and wife Ali welcomed a son, John "Court" Williford IV, on February 10, 2022. Court joins older sisters Kate (4) and Lizzie (2.5).

2006

6 Kristen Johnson Fields and husband Brandon welcomed a daughter, Parker Elizabeth Fields, on December 2, 2021, weighing 6 lbs 8 oz and measuring 19 inches long.

2008

7 Anne Sauvain Spencer and husband **Jack Spencer** welcomed twins, Anderson Montgomery Spencer and Eloise Anne Spencer, on November 2, 2021.

8 Michael Theobald and wife Kaitlin welcomed a son, Drew Philip Theobald, on November 25, 2021 in Atlanta, GA.

2009


9 Tommy Murrell and wife Deven welcomed a son, Thomas "Teddy" W Murrell V, on February 12, 2022. Teddy weighed 7 lbs 4 oz, measured 20 inches long, and let out a cry loud enough to shatter the windows.

10 Henry Stapp and wife Morgan welcomed a daughter, Avery Grace Stapp, on October 17, 2021 weighing 8 lbs 7 oz and measuring 21 inches long.

2012

11 Abbi Ditesheim Frick and husband Eric welcomed a daughter, Mia Helen Frick, on November 28, 2021 weighing 8 lbs 1 oz.





PROVIDENCE DAY SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Homecoming

Weekend • Sept. 23–24, 2022

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FRIDAY, September 23rd
Alumni Zone BBQ, Tours, &
Varsity Football vs. Christ School

SATURDAY, September 24th
Alumni Day of Service

More details provided through #AlwaysACharger e-newsletters, social media, and PD Connect at Alumni.ProvidenceDay.org.

Questions? Contact Steve Bondurant '98 at Steve.Bondurant@ProvidenceDay.org or (704) 887-6039.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU AND PD

Gift planning is the art of designing your charitable gift so that you realize your philanthropic objectives while minimizing your after-tax costs.

In addition to fulfilling your philanthropic goals, you can generally expect some or all of the following benefits depending on the kind of property you contribute and the type of arrangement you select:

- ☒ Income-tax savings
- ☒ Avoidance of long-term capital-gains tax
- ☒ Stream of income for life
- ☒ Increased cash flow
- ☒ Reduced costs and time in estate settlement

For more information about creating your own gift plans contact Jeffrey S. Appel, Associate Head of School for Institutional Advancement, at (704) 887-6038 or Jeff.Appel@ProvidenceDay.org.

Disney
101 Dalmatians
KIDS



DREAMWORKS
Shrek
The Musical JR.



XANADU



**The show must — and did — go on for
PD's theatre department! Congratulations
on an exceptional season!**

Lower School Musical: 101 Dalmatians, Dec. 3-4, 2021

Middle School Musical: Shrek Jr., Feb. 10-12, 2022

Upper School Musical: Xanadu, April 20-22, 2022



PROVIDENCE DAY
SCHOOL

5800 Sardis Road
Charlotte, NC 28270

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