

Countryside Trees



NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SCHOOL ALUMNI

Spring 2022

Letter from the Head



Krystal Young

Dear Friends,
Greetings from Countryside! When I wrote this piece for *Trees* one year ago, I imagined a very different year than the one we had. I had the delusion many of us believed - that

after one year of COVID, we would return to 'normal.' Instead, we returned to Countryside in masks and with the knowledge and power to perform the SHIELD Illinois saliva test, again creating our own 'normal.' In total, we have completed nearly 10,000 saliva tests. Those tests allowed us to protect our faculty, staff, and students, keep our school doors open, and continue to learn. Our entire community was thankful to have that resource to use when so many other schools in the country did not.

Beyond COVID, we have had such a magical year at Countryside. We welcomed three new classroom teachers: Mrs. Whitley, our new kindergarten teacher (remember Mrs. Cox moved to second grade!), Mr. Bielenberg in fourth grade (finishing his first year of teaching-EVER), and Mr. Butler



Weekly SHIELD Illinois COVID saliva testing

teaching fifth grade. All three have transitioned seamlessly to Countryside and each bring an energy and excitement to our elementary students every day.

Not to be left out, middle school also had several changes this year, including a revamped advisory program allowing us to work with grade-level students on skills specific to their developmental needs. We also began THE Advisory competition. Each advisory is pitted against the others for different challenges during the year. The victors win a flag to hang in their advisory classroom. Reigning champions are the Stambaugh advisory and gaga ball will determine who ends the year victorious!

Countryside took their first eighth grade trip by plane. If you follow us on social media, you saw my takeover posts as Mr. A and I took the Class of '22 to Washington DC. It was a wonderful trip, and we feel so fortunate to have had that experience to cap off their time at Countryside.

On May 6 we kicked off Countryside's 30th Anniversary, or birthday as I like to call it, with our students. It was a great day to have our first (and last) assembly of the year. In addition to the anniversary, we took a few moments to talk about the departure of Ms. Binky and Ms. Stambaugh. Students spoke, and tears were shed. It's always difficult to lose members of our community, but we wish both of them well as they are off to other adventures.

Speaking of adventures, I wish all of you a summer full of them!

All the best,
Krystal Young
Head of School

Big News

- WE RETURNED TO ENTIRELY IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION!
- WEEKLY COVID-19 TESTING KEPT US SAFE AND ALLOWED THE RETURN OF MANY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS
- WE ARE BIDDING FAREWELL TO BOTH MS. BINKY AND MS. STAMBAUGH

Inside this issue:

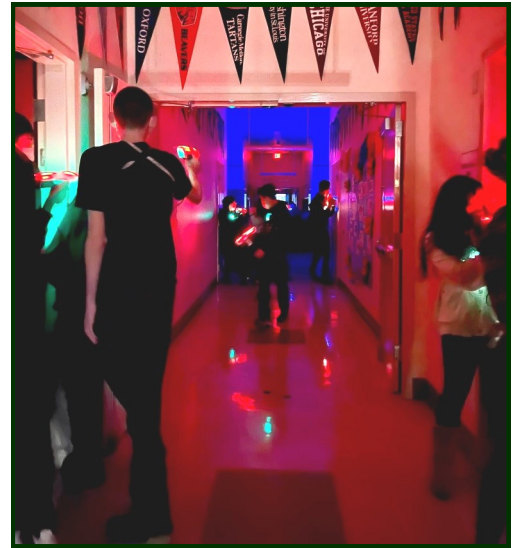
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Countryside Trees

Winter Alumni Reunion - Laser Tag

What could be more fun than running through the entire school in the dark? After a year off due to COVID, we welcomed back our alumni for this year's winter reunion - Laser Tag!

Over 40 alumni joined us as we entered Winter Break. Following several rounds of Laser Tag, the group enjoyed pizza and time to chat.



Above: Laser tag throughout the darkened building

Left: Charlotte Chesser, Anna Williams, Eleanor Laufenberg, Hadley Siena, Lin Gilbertz, Ray Scifres



Back row: Sam Laufenberg, Staz Smith-Provezis, David Konicek, Andres Bross, Dillon Jones, Hadley Siena

4th row: Will Miller, Marco Lu, Madeleine Keenan, Yoon Freund, Cassie Patten, Anna Williams, Lin Gilbertz, Charlotte Chesser, Eleanor Laufenberg

3rd row: Suhani Garg, Ray Scifres, Lorenzo Pantano, Madison Young, Chloe Noronha-Hostler

2nd row: Lauren Feddersen, Esha Mehta, Nate Jones, Nicholas Bodony, Ryan Wang, Emily Chen, Emma Donnini, Sophia Libman, Caroline Hartmann

Front row: Angela Xu, Gavin Sheppard, Max Libman, Ethan Cho, Aaron Cho, Matthew Cho

Our Newest Alumni

Our 8th graders to be honored at graduation will attend these high schools:

Alaia Ahmad	Park Tudor (IN)
Mona Allen	Lakota West (OH)
Muskaan Garg	Academy
Cameron Hamilton	Undecided
Simon Hamilton	Undecided
Aiden Harms-Aronoff	Academy
Adelaide Kota	Undecided
JJ Lee	Urbana
Elliot Neault	St. Thomas More
Breanna Patten	Undecided
Siddhant Pramod	Princeton High (NJ)
Janaki Raj-Underhill	Centennial
Vidya Sinha	Wheeler Magnet (GA)
Shinjian Song	Central
Landon West	Central
Lily Yang	Undecided
Mallory Young	Mahomet-Seymour

Students matriculating as sub-freshmen at University Laboratory High School:

Lucas Braun	Liona Pettijohn
Joanne Bross	Lucas Tosi
Jordan Perry	

We also say farewell to a 7th grader who attended Countryside since Kindergarten and is moving away. We will miss you!

Cornelia Ye	Ithaca, NY
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Krystal Young, Head of School

Photo credit: Robin Scholz, *The News-Gazette*

Check out *The News-Gazette* interview with our Head of School, Krystal Young:

tinyurl.com/CS-NewHead

Service Projects



As part of giving back to our community, our students spend time on service projects. This year Countryside added a service hours requirement for our middle schoolers. They earn hours by helping at the school or donating time to outside charities.

Middle school projects have included cleaning up the Countryside grounds this spring; packing food for the Feeding Our Kids program; helping our club sports for younger students; sewing blankets for the Humane Society; unpacking and setting up shelving for the Mary E. Breault Memorial Library, and cleaning up local bodies of water to name a few.

In addition, our middle schoolers donated for the chance to put a pie in the face of faculty or staff at Fall Day. Our 8th graders selected Crisis Nursery as the recipient of the \$225 raised. Mrs. Young, our Head of School, received the final pies - and her wonderful reaction may be seen here:

tinyurl.com/FinalPies

Our 2/3 class raised over \$1,150 from their Ukrainian Egg service project to benefit the people of Ukraine and donated food baskets at Thanksgiving to the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club.

Our 4/5 class collected donations as entrance to their play on Newton's Laws to support C-U at Home (our local homeless shelter) and #TeamSeas to remove trash from the ocean. And this month, our Chinese classes held their 4th annual Bubble Tea sale to benefit the Champaign County Humane Society.

Thank you for all your community support!

WE ARE ON:

[FACEBOOK](#)

[INSTAGRAM](#)

[LINKEDIN](#)

[YOUTUBE](#)

Countryside Trees

30th Anniversary Kick Off

On May 6 we kicked off our 30th Anniversary Celebration year! At our annual Founders' Day celebration, we honored Ms. Binky and Ms. Stambaugh who are both leaving Countryside.

Looking to the future, each class donated an item to a time capsule to be opened in ten years when our 30th Anniversary class (next year's kindergarten class) graduates. In addition, Marty Stambaugh's Mosaics Encore class presented a mosaic of our new logo to be displayed in the Mary E. Brault Memorial Library.

We held a dance party hosted by our mascot, Kirby the Comet, and enjoyed a catered lunch from Rainbow Garden (thanks to the Song family!) We documented the day with an all-school photo of everyone present at the celebration. For the full-sized photo:

www.countrysideschool.org/extras2022

Stay tuned for additional information about 30th Anniversary events! Enter our anniversary logo competition (see contest info on page 7), and mark your calendars for Saturday, August 20 for our Homecoming/Fall Picnic! Everyone is welcome!

Right: Founders Vicky & Greg Smith, Binky Bognar

Below: Marty Stambaugh with her Mosaics Encore class who created our new logo in mosaic for display in the Mary E. Brault Memorial Library



Top: Our Countryside community

Above: Middle schoolers helping 1st graders with their time capsule contribution



ALUMNI:
BE SURE WE
HAVE YOUR
EMAIL
ADDRESS TO
RECEIVE
INVITATIONS

Katherine Omo-Osagie - Miss Texas' Outstanding Teen

Congratulations to **Katherine Omo-Osagie** (2018), on 2nd runner up to Miss America's Outstanding Teen! She **won** Miss Texas' Outstanding Teen in June 2021 to then compete nationally in Miss America's Outstanding Teen.

Kat is a senior graduating from The Colony High School in Texas and is earning her Associate Degree alongside her high school diploma. She has been on the varsity cheer team and has a background in competitive gymnastics. She is also a 2X USAG Level 10 National Trampoline Champion.

Her platform for Miss Texas Outstanding Teen is Stop the Cycle of Abuse, in particular, the importance of education and teaching acceptable vs unacceptable behaviors. Katherine states, "I want to be remembered as the MTOT that fought to be the voice of unheard people in abusive situations, and I will collaborate with shelters and other various organizations in an effort to Break the Cycle of Abuse within Texas Communities."

Kat is headed to University of Alabama in the fall. We are proud of you, Kat!



Katherine Omo-Osagie

Photo credit: Miss Texas Scholarship Organization

Watch Katherine crowned as Miss Texas:

tinyurl.com/MissTexas

And Katherine's incredible life story:

tinyurl.com/CreatingHerOwnPath

And visit her Miss Texas webpage:

www.misstexas.org/miss-texas-outstanding-teen-katherine-omo-osagie.html

High School Alumni Lunch

We invite our high school alumni back each October for lunch on a day when Countryside is in session, but high schools have the day off. Alumni enjoyed sandwiches and conversation with teachers and spent time with their friends still at Countryside. The gathering ended this year with Mr. A reading to them aloud from *Sinbad and Me*, a perennial favorite.



Coleman Clougherty, Cassie Patten, Anna Williams



Emily Chen, Yoon Freund, Sierra Freund, Ms. Binky Bognar, Madeleine Keenan

Countryside Trees

8th Grade Trip: Washington DC

This year's 8th grade trip was an adventure in Washington DC. The class flew to DC and spent time visiting the usual historical sights including the US Capitol, White House, Library of Congress, Supreme Court - and, of course, the monuments and memorials on the mall.

They spent a somber day exploring Arlington National Cemetery and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. The students also visited the Smithsonian Museum of African American History & Culture and the International Spy Museum, which focuses entirely on espionage!

One of the highlights of the trip was touring Mount Vernon (George Washington's estate) during the annual Revolutionary War reenactment!

Mrs. Young took over our social media - both Facebook and Instagram - to document the adventure. Check it out: #CSinDC

Note: The pandemic may have delayed the trips for the Classes of 2020 and 2021, but they are not forgotten! Their adventure will occur in early June when 15 alumni will join Mrs. Young and Mr. A in Chicago for a Segway tour and an architectural tour.



Right top: 8th graders at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial

Right middle: 8th grader Janaki with a Revolutionary War reenactor at Mount Vernon



8th graders Cameron and Shinjian with Mrs. Young at the International Spy Museum



8th grade class at the US Capitol

HOMEcoming
FALL PICNIC
SATURDAY,
AUGUST 20
AT THE
SCHOOL

In Memoriam



Jim Turpin speaking to the Countryside 4th/5th grade class on a field trip to the WDWS radio station in September 2008

Jim Turpin passed away on April 10, 2022. He was the father of our retired PE, performing arts, & 4th/5th grade teacher, **Chris Lukeman**, and grandfather of our alumna **Kendall Hermsdorf** (2003).

Turpin hosted the "Penny for Your Thoughts" radio show for years. The longtime "Voice of the Illini" welcomed our 4/5 class on many occasions to the WDWS radio station for a tour. Our thoughts are with the families. View his obituary here:

tinyurl.com/JimTurpin

Prakash Thopiah, alumnae parent and longtime supporter of Countryside, passed away on January 27, 2022 following a battle with ALS.

He was the father and uncle to our alumnae **Megan, Melanie, & Ashley Thopiah** (2003, 2004 & 2011) and **Gauri Shankar** (2013). Our thoughts are with the girls and Prakash's sister, Shaku. View a wonderful story of his amazing life here:

tinyurl.com/PrakashThopiah

Logo Contest - 30 Years

Remember our 25th anniversary logo?

Now we need a 30th anniversary logo, and we are holding a design contest!

We would love to feature YOUR logo design on a t-shirt and other 30th anniversary print and digital materials.



Logo used for our 25th Anniversary

What: 30th anniversary logo contest

Who: Open to anyone in our community

Entry deadline: June 30, 11:59 p.m. CT

Prizes: Grand prize includes your logo featured on a t-shirt and our other anniversary promotional items, a \$200 Amazon gift card, and other Countryside swag. Runner up prize is a \$50 Amazon gift card.

For rules and entry instructions:

www.countrysideschool.org/logo-contest

ENTER OUR
30TH
ANNIVERSARY
LOGO DESIGN
CONTEST

¡Felicidades!

Congratulations to 13 middle schoolers who took the National Spanish Exam and won awards. In Level 2 we received one gold medal, two silver, and one bronze as well as six honors. In Level 1 we received one silver medal and two honors.

Our 4th and 5th graders also rocked the National Spanish Challenge with 11 being honored for excellent or outstanding achievement.

Countryside Trees

Alumni Updates

Please note: Students are listed by “affiliated class year” - the year the students graduated 8th grade or would have graduated had they remained at Countryside.

ALUMNI:
PLEASE SEND US
YOUR UPDATES!

WE'D LOVE TO
FEATURE YOU

Aliyah Warwick (1999) got married last October and currently lives with her husband in Iowa. She is working on an MFA in creative writing.

David Kaplan (2000) and his wife Leigh were thrilled to welcome their first child, Rebecca, born on December 1, 2021 in Austin, TX. Rebecca loves smiling and putting everything she can grab into her mouth!

Arthur Baker (2002) finished his second semester of teaching Transactional Skills 1 as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Miami School of Law. “While exhausting, I really enjoy the balance of serving clients at my law office and serving future lawyers at the University.”

Rachel Kaplan (2003) is completing her advanced fellowship in cardiac electrophysiology this summer (8 years of training after medical school). She is thrilled to join the cardiology department at the Medical University of South Carolina as a full-time clinical cardiac electrophysiologist with an Assistant Professor appointment.

Alexandra Warwick (2006) is graduating with a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Illinois and is completing her third year of co-teaching at University Primary School. This June she will travel to Ecuador to participate in a Fulbright-Hays bilingual curriculum development project and study the Kichwa language.

Freddie Stavins (2009) is working as a tax accountant at Deloitte in Seattle, WA while his wife is completing her residency at the University of Washington.

Julie Strauss (2009) is engaged to Brian Ciardiello and their wedding is being planned for June 2023 in Chicago, IL. Countryside alumnae **Bailie Roy** and **Kelsey Gallivan** will be co-maids-of-honor. Brian

and Julie are both graduates of the U of I business school and work in accounting in Chicago.

Natalie Bina (2010) is now working as a Financial Analyst at Penguin Young Readers, which is the YA and children's division of Penguin Random House.

Chelsea Edwards (2010) is working on her PhD in chemical engineering at the beautiful UC Santa Barbara, with a focus on colloids and soft matter; co-teaching a math course; and getting married to Jared Persellin on June 5th in Los Angeles!

Robert E. Welch (2010) works with children with autism at the University of Washington Autism Center. He will matriculate into the Seattle University nursing program this fall and is looking forward to going to Italy for a month-long trip beforehand.

Tristan Antonsen (2011) is entering his third year living in Chicago and continuing his journey into the design and manufacturing engineering world. He's a Senior R&D Engineer at Fast Radius, working with cutting-edge 3D printers and all sorts of other machines to make cool, new products.

Christine Ko (2011) After completing her cardiology pharmacy residency training in June, she will be starting her new position as a Cardiology Clinical Pharmacist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Valerie Makri (2011) graduated with her Master's in structural engineering from University of Illinois - Chicago. She just became Assistant Department Manager of the Transmission Line group of the Burns & McDonnell Chicago office while still continuing her technical design and consulting work as a structural engineer. Valerie says, “I have so many fond memories of Countryside and all the amazing teachers and staff that helped pique my curiosity, artistic hobbies, and love for learning.”

Pierre Viallant (2011) graduated with a business administration degree from Pepperdine University and has taken over his

Alumni Updates

grandfather's business - Advanced Electro Dynamics, Inc. He currently resides in Hollywood, CA.

Maddie Brown (2012) is program director for MakerGirl, a not-for-profit startup in Chicago that uses 3-D printing to promote STEM education for middle school and high school girls.

Isaac Freund (2012) is finishing his Bachelor's degree at RWTH Aachen in Germany and has been employed for over a year now by a South African branch of a US company developing cutting edge secure database technology.

Kenny Miller (2012) lives in Dallas, TX and is working toward his MBA at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Katie Bostaph (2013) is still in Tempe, AZ. She is working at an agency that provides support to individuals with mental health issues, and she loves it. She hopes to go to graduate school for psychology in the next year or two.

Toby Antonsen (2014) has travel plans that were put on hold due to the pandemic, but Juneau, Alaska, was his first leap and a big success. He plans more travel soon and enjoys his work in Champaign.

Austin Chen (2014) is graduating from New York University with a double major in finance and applied mathematics. After graduation,

he will stay in New York City to work as an associate in the Software Strategy Group at EY - Parthenon.

Ayaan Khan (2014) will graduate from University of North Texas next year majoring in psychiatry and neuroscience. He loves philosophy as well and plans to pursue a PhD.

Julia Miller (2014) is graduating from Miami University with a BA in Public Health: Human Disease and Epidemiology. She was recently inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. In the summer she moves on to Nashville, TN. She will then start graduate school in the fall to earn her MSN degree in the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner specialty at Vanderbilt University.

Megan Bostaph (2015) is graduating from Ithaca College this semester with a degree in English and minors in art history and media literacy. She will be moving to New York City this summer to pursue a career in publishing!

Sophie Brown (2015) is a rising senior in the University of Illinois School of Social Work.

Lauren Feddersen (2015) earned 2021 Scholar All-American in swimming - ranked 8th in the nation in NCAA Division III 200 breaststroke! She will spend this summer in London at the Royal Veterinary College doing genetic research on fracture risk in thoroughbred horses.

Dante Freund (2015) is finishing his junior year at Baldwin Wallace and is beginning to

**RECENTLY
GRADUATED
COLLEGE?**
LET US KNOW
YOUR FUTURE
PLANS

Snow Day after Snow Day after Snow Day

Thirteen inches of snow and a wind from the north led to **three** consecutive snow days (February 2-4, 2022) for Countryside. We even had to move our **virtual** Elementary Information Night to the following week!

Although we *could* switch to remote learning easily, students still need to feel the joy of waking up to a snow day! In addition to lots of time in the snow, our middle school hosted a sledding event. See video here:

tinyurl.com/MSsledding



Countryside Trees

Alumni Updates Continued

Alumni Updates continued from page 9

look into graduate programs in which he can continue pursuing violin performance and composition.

Ginny Kirby (2016) is at Miami University in Ohio, but she has changed her major to anthropology. She has also added two minors in archaeology and statistical methods. This summer Ginny will study abroad at an IFR field school entitled India: Himalayan Myths and Reality. She will study ethnohistorical archaeology in the Kullu Valley of India and will be using non-invasive archaeological techniques to study 9th century temples.

Teddy Sammons (2017) has enjoyed his first year at Brandeis and will be traveling in Australia this summer.

Holden Siena (2017) completed his freshman year at Augustana College where he competes for the Viking swim team and is a Presidential Scholar.

Colette Tichenor (2017) is loving life in New Orleans. She will be a sophomore at Tulane University majoring in biochemistry and minoring in Mandarin.

Andy Brown (2018) is graduating from Uni High and will be a freshman in industrial engineering at the University of Illinois.

Maddox Dempsey (2018) is headed to Indiana University where he will major in secondary education with a focus in English Language Arts. This summer he will coach the swim team at Indian Acres and work as a camp counselor for his 4th year there!

Yoon Freund (2018) is off to Beloit in the fall and has spent many hours this past year skateboarding, creating art, and working at Pandemonium donuts.

Jared Hastings (2018) is graduating with honors - from Jay M. Robinson High School's Academy of Engineering and Automation in Concord, NC. He will receive honors from the National Technical Honor Society, the National Honor Society, and the Beta Club. He plans to attend North Carolina State University to study electrical engineering.

Abeya Khan (2018) is graduating high school with a 4.0 and will attend the University of Texas at Dallas as a chemistry major. With Dual Credit Program credits, she should get her Bachelor's degree in the next two years and plans to go to pharmacy school.

Kevin Lu (2018) is graduating from high school and is going to enroll in computer science and economics at UIUC this fall.

Jake Regenwetter (2018) is headed to Brown University and will swim for their NCAA Division 1 men's team.

Frances Warrior (2018) graduated from Acellus Academy with Honors and will be attending Iowa State University to study elementary education with a specialty in special education.

Sophie Zerrouki (2018) will attend Emory and play volleyball. Go Eagles! She is currently undecided but is interested in neuroscience and behavioral biology.

Sierra Freund (2019) decided to move in January to Monticello High School, where she

CHECK US OUT ON
INSTAGRAM
@COUNTRYSIDEK8

Director of Alumni Relations

Kristin Feddersen is your Director of Alumni Relations. She also has been Countryside's Director of Communications for the past 15 years and is the parent of two alumnae - Taylor (2012) and Lauren (2015).

Please email her with updates about what you are doing. Often we hear where you are headed to college and what you *might* major in, but we never hear when those plans change.

Contact Kristin at feddersen@countrysideschool.org.



is enjoying being a part of a larger community. She continues to play violin and will soon head once again to a 6 week summer camp at Kinhaven in Vermont.

Ian Weible (2019) advanced to Sectionals in cross country while running in Academy High's first season in the sport in Fall 2021.

Shannon Weible (2019) obtained the rank of Eagle Scout in Fall 2021.

Marco Lu (2020) picked up sculpture during the pandemic and his sculptures received Regional Gold Key and Silver Keys at the 2022 Scholastic Art Contest.

Hadley Siena (2020) recently completed her sophomore year at Centennial High School. She enjoys competitive volleyball and various artistic pursuits. She was selected to attend an international CISV (Children's International Summer Villages) Step-Up camp in Austin, TX this June with teens from 12 other countries.

David Konicek (2021) is enjoying his first year of high school, for the most part, but surprisingly it was not a big jump from 8th to 9th grade. "I think all my teachers prepared me for high school but specifically, Mr. A and Ms. Stambaugh." He also recently started working at Salt Fork Paintball in St. Joseph.

Conrad Tichenor (2021) will be a sophomore at Academy High. He enjoys participating in track and cross country.

Dillon Jones (2021) is finishing his freshman year at Academy High where he created Academy's golf team with a fellow freshman, went to state in Science Olympiad, and is taking Drivers Ed this summer!

Daliah Noven (2023) is doing well in Maryland at her new school and is excited for 7th grade to be over soon. "I've made friends, but I miss all of you at c-side ❤️ good luck with graduation!"

Millie and Rosie Cochrane (2024 and 2026) are enjoying life in the sunshine in Florida, where they still do lots of diving, tennis, soccer and horse riding. The family has started to travel again and enjoyed a trip back to the UK for the first time in 4 years and also going on safari in South Africa. They hope to visit Champaign again soon!

Alumni in the News



Jeopardy! host Mayim Bialik with Samantha Wells

Samantha Wells (2009) competed on *Jeopardy!* As a graduate student at University of Illinois in social work, Samantha discussed her work at a domestic violence shelter:

tinyurl.com/Jeopardy-Samantha

Ali (Webber) Griffin (2004) founded her company – Alma Kitchen, specializing in gourmet botanical shortbread – during the pandemic. They have already sold over 40,000 BEAUTIFUL shortbread cookies. In addition, Alma Kitchen has a commitment to sustainability and giving back. The amazing story was covered by Today.com:

tinyurl.com/Today-Ali

Max Braun (2020) took first at IHSA State in tennis! Also competing at State: **Zachary Donnini** and **Lucas Wood** (both 2017), **James Braun** (2018), and **Ezra Bernhard** (2020). Max was also named All-Area Player of the Year by *The News-Gazette*. Previous Players of the Year: **Alex Mestre** and **Edo Roth** (both 2009) and our former Athletic Director and PE Teacher **Chad Simpson**. Read more about the Braun brothers:

tinyurl.com/BraunBrothers

Read about Ezra's quiet tennis success:

tinyurl.com/EzraTennis

Check out "Even Before You Were Born", a new children's book by alumni parent Terrill Martinez and illustrated by our extremely talented alumna **Sanaiya Luthar** (2019):

tinyurl.com/EvenBefore

ALUMNI:
PLEASE SEND
US YOUR
UPDATES!

WE'D LOVE
TO FEATURE
YOU

Countryside Trees

Alumni Give Back at Countryside

Shout out to our **anonymous alumni** who provided a WONDERFUL lunch from Sun Singer for our faculty and staff in March! Thank you so much!



Taylor Feddersen (2012) facilitated two Minecraft: Hour of Code sessions in December - one for our 4th and 5th graders and one for our middle schoolers. Taylor is a software developer for Microsoft's Minecraft: Education Edition. She has run virtual sessions of this introduction to computer science across the United States and Canada covering over 7,000 students. The session at Countryside was the **ONLY in-person** session that Microsoft hosted across the country this year!



Matthew Zhang (2013) returned to Countryside to speak with our middle schoolers in March. Matthew graduated from the University of Illinois with his Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering. He spoke to our students on bio-fuel energy conversion and a bit about his work with the Illini Formula Electric team. Matthew works as an engineer with ASML, a semiconductor manufacturing company in San Diego, CA.

**ALUMNI
WANTING TO
GIVE BACK?
WE WOULD
LOVE TO
FEATURE YOU**



Dylan Gunn (2013) taught two introduction to Arabic classes for Mrs. McWilliam's Travel Culture course for our middle schoolers. Dylan is at the University of Illinois double majoring in history and religion, with minors in Arabic and Ancient Greek. We love when our alumni return to share their passions and skills.

Teacher Accolades

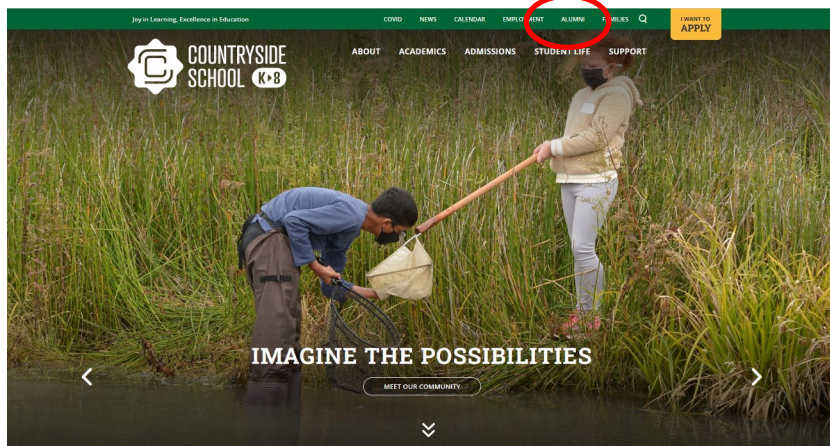


Our wonderful middle school math teacher, **Tara Santiago**, was featured as *The News-Gazette's* Teacher of the Week! This award is bestowed to a teacher who is nominated by their students!

tinyurl.com/TaraSantiago

Alumni Center on our Website

Alumni tab



Although our website is designed with prospective families in mind, we hope you will check out our Alumni tab and maybe see some familiar faces in the photos.

Through the Alumni tab you can access our archive of Trees newsletters, see photos of alumni events, read about alumni in the news, and update your contact information. Connect with us! www.countrysideschool.org



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CONTRIBUTE
TO OUR
LIBRARY IN
HONOR OF
MRS. BREault

Mary E. Breault Memorial Library



Mary Breault's former literature classroom is becoming our first-ever dedicated library space.

Remembering our beloved **Mary Breault** who passed away in 2020 following a two-year battle with cancer. Mary taught Literature and Writing Workshop from 1999-2008.

Our Mary E. Breault Memorial Library is slowly taking shape in the space she taught in for many years. Now that we have shelving, the Mary Breault Memorial Fund can provide us with books to expand the middle school collection she started. Help us add books to this wonderful space in her memory!

To donate: Send checks made out to Countryside School with "Mary Breault Memorial Fund" on the memo line. Mary's husband, Mike, will be notified of your donation (although not the amount) unless you specify it to be an anonymous donation.

Countryside Trees

Great News at School



Both of our 4th/5th grade Rube Goldberg teams rocked the local competition and went to the State competition at the UIUC Engineering Open House! The machines' goal is to flip a pancake using many steps.

The students gave an oral presentation to the judges in addition to demonstrating their machines. This project caps their study of forces, energy, motion, and simple machines this year. For slow-motion video of these machines in action:

www.countrysideschool.org/extras2022

8th grader Shinjian played at Carnegie Hall in New York City in April. He performed W. A. Mozart's *Rondo Alla Turca* (Turkish March) on the piano as part of the American Protégé competitions.

4th grader Reynard was again named a national winner in Math Kangaroo, the international competition in mathematics. Reynard is ranked #3 in the United States!

3rd grader Bella appeared in *Matilda, Jr.* at The Virginia Theatre in Champaign.

7th grader Ava took 1st place in the open division at Jefferson Middle School Invitational cross country meet.

8th grader Janaki appeared as Clara in *The Nutcracker* at the Krannert Center. In addition, 6th grader Lahori and kindergartener Alison also performed. Alumna **Taylor Feddersen** (2012) returned to dance the role of the Sugarplum Fairy. The older dancers were also featured in *The Little Mermaid* at The Virginia Theatre in May.

7th grader Lucas appeared in *Moana Jr.* at The Virginia Theatre and in *BORDERLINE* at the Station Theatre in Urbana.

CSA Happenings



Family Movie Night

Countryside School Association has been hard at work returning events to their former glory following the pandemic. (A huge thank you to Melissa Hartman who has chaired this organization through the pandemic.)

The CSA sponsored and manned our wonderful Fall Picnic/Homecoming in August. They hosted an outdoor movie night in October with the choice of *Luca* or *Raya and the Last Dragon*, and they provided popcorn!

Our teachers LOVED the potluck lunches provided by CSA during parent-teacher conferences. (Always enormously appreciated.) And then during Teacher Appreciation Week in May, the teachers and staff were treated to a wonderful breakfast buffet, box lunches from Piatto, and a daily Trivia Contest with prizes. (Trivia: What profession did Rosa Parks have when she infamously refused to give up her seat on the bus?)

CSA also sponsored our Color Run - they were in charge of the "yellow" color station.

Our school would not be the special place it is without our CSA. Thank you, CSA volunteers!

Trivia answer: seamstress

**CURRENT
FAMILIES:**
TELL US YOUR
CHILD'S
"GREAT NEWS"
TO SHARE

Ms. Binky's Farewell Reception

Please join us to celebrate **Binky Bognar**, our beloved administrative assistant, who will be retiring at the end of this academic year.

To put it simply, she is part of the fabric and soul of this school, and she always will be. Hundreds of Countryside students and their families have been impacted by the heart and force that is Ms. Binky. Although she is looking forward to traveling with her family, she wants everyone to know how much she will miss Countryside.

She is currently traveling with family but will be back for graduation. Countryside is hosting a farewell reception on June 1 at 6 p.m. Please join us to celebrate Ms. Binky! We will have a basket for cards at the reception. **You may also send cards or well wishes to:**

Ms. Binky Bognar
c/o Countryside School
4301 W. Kirby Ave.
Champaign, IL 61822



Binky Bognar with flowers from the CSA (our parent teacher organization) in appreciation for helping with the faculty/staff luncheon during parent teacher conferences.

IF YOU DID **NOT**
RECEIVE THIS
NEWSLETTER BY
EMAIL, WE DO
NOT HAVE
YOUR EMAIL
ADDRESS

Ms. Binky's Farewell Reception

Join us to celebrate our beloved Ms. Binky!

What: Ms. Binky's Farewell Reception

When: Wednesday, June 1 from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Where: at the school

Our Corner Sign Will Return Next Month

In the middle of the night in December, we lost our beloved corner sign to a drunk driver. Taking the turn too wide, they hit the sign and threw pieces of the brick pillars more than 50 feet. Thankfully, the driver and passenger were able to walk away from the accident. Our local TV station, WCIA, even covered the story.

Our sign should be back to its usual upbeat and humorous self in June. Stay tuned for our "Chalkboard Humor" and "Strange but True" messages again.



Countryside Trees

Q & A with Marty Stambaugh

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ADDRESS



Marty Stambaugh

After 34 years of teaching (23 of them at Countryside), our wonderful middle school science teacher will be leaving Countryside. Marty Stambaugh kindly took a few minutes to offer advice and words of wisdom:

What are your favorite Countryside moments? Graduation is always a special moment for me. The 8th grade students I have watched grow and mature stand in front of a crowd and give such well-delivered speeches. They become young men and women at that moment for me, and I feel privileged to have been a part of their education and life story.

What are the most profound things you have learned from a student?

1. You don't have to be a perfect teacher to be a great teacher. Kids accept you despite your flaws and mistakes.
2. I have learned how to forgive more deeply and let go of personal slights more easily. I always try to say I'm sorry and apologize to a student when I am in the wrong. Almost always, I am met with a forgiving attitude and gentle response.
3. Don't limit yourself by believing you know more than your students. Maybe the teacher knows more about the subject, but kids often teach you how to be a better human.

What do you love most about teaching?

Witnessing the exponential academic and social-emotional growth that occurs from the time students enter 6th grade until 8th grade graduation. It is very exciting to see a student work hard and accept advice and feedback.

What do you love least? Grading papers and always doing or thinking about school even when you are not at work.

What is your favorite word? That's easy. It's not a favorite word, it's a favorite sound - children's laughter.

What is your least favorite word? well... "technically". Students use this word to try to get around the rules or make comments that are argumentative and irrelevant.

What profession other than teaching would you like to attempt? I would like to repair cars or copy machines. Unlike humans, they are logical, have no hormones, and are easier to fix than broken people, but I'm sure I would be bored to tears.

What will you miss most about the school? I will miss having fun and interacting with students every day. Middle schoolers are fun and unpredictable, so there is never a dull moment.

What are you most looking forward to in the next year? I am looking forward to NOT having my own homework most nights, which includes lesson planning and grading assignments. I have been doing "homework" for 55 years, and it is time that Sunday afternoons and evenings were more relaxing.

For more on Ms. Stambaugh:

www.countrysideschool.org/extras2022



Marty Stambaugh as Professor Sprout (from Harry Potter) for Fall Day 2022

Fall Picnic/Homecoming 2021

We happily welcomed back our Fall Picnic/Homecoming this past August after a year's hiatus due to COVID. We asked that masks be worn when not with your family (although since outside we allowed removal for photos), and instead of a potluck, we asked families to bring their own picnic dinner. Our alumni competed in a disc golf tournament and enjoyed inflatables.



Top: Cali Cooper, Helen Fu, 8th grader Mallory

Bottom: Hadley Siena, Charlotte Chesser



Top: Ezra Bernhard, Wilson Tian, Coleman Clougherty, Max Libman

Bottom: Andrew Chen, Ryan Wang, Ian Weible, Forrest Robeson

**SEND US YOUR
THROWBACK
PHOTOS:**

SEND TO

FEDDERSEN@

COUNTRYSIDESCHOOL.ORG

Call for Throwback Photos

Send us your photos! In celebration of our 30th Anniversary, we would LOVE to add to our collection of historical photos!

For instance, here are our students at the simultaneous *nationwide* reading of the Gettysburg Address in honor of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday on Feb. 12, 2009.

We are collecting historical information about the school, as well as any photos or stories you have about the early days.

Please send this info to Kristin Feddersen, Director of Communications at:

feddersen@countrysideschool.org



L to R: Ashley Thopiah, Ellie Zimmerman, Morgan Standley, social studies teacher Michele O'Brien, Sonya Kumpuckal, and Kyle Knox

Countryside Trees

Current and Former Faculty Updates

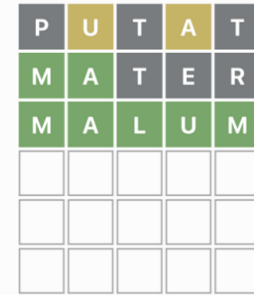
**FACULTY &
STAFF:
SHARE YOUR
UPDATE
WITH US**

Dee Chapman (former computer programming teacher) In July 2021 our family embraced adventure and moved from our beloved home since 1990 to take a job in Austin, TX. We've enjoyed discovering the area and especially have appreciated the mild and sunny winter months! In August I started a full-time job as an administrator and instructor at Griffin School, a college preparatory school in Austin and have loved learning about the community and getting to know all the students and families.

Sho-Yin Chen-Berry (former Chinese teacher) This is my eighth year teaching Chinese to middle and high school students at Binghamton City School District in New York State. I am enjoying their energy and creativity! I miss my Countryside friends!

Sharon Henson (former 4th grade teacher) I am thankful to have stayed safe from COVID for another year! My husband and I continue to winter in Florida and spend our summers in my hometown of Central City, Iowa. Our summer travel plans include a trip to Yellowstone National Park to spend time with our son Seth, his wife Christy, and our grandchildren Owen (age 11) and Leah (age 9). Miss Harper, former fifth grade teacher at Countryside, will probably be joining us at our rental house in Island Park, Idaho.

Michele O'Brien (former middle school social science teacher) It's my 10th year with Harpeth Hall School in Nashville, and I still love the campus, my students, and the joys (and challenges) of teaching Middle School Social Studies in the south. This year, I had a chance to teach a "Weird History" enrichment class, created a project that incorporated podcasting and video creation, and dipped my toes into Minecraft Education. While I have not travelled in the last year, live music has returned to Nashville, and we are home to a minor league baseball team, a major league baseball team, parks for hiking, and the National African American Music Museum - so I am able to play the tourist quite a bit in my own backyard.



Verble - Patrick Neff's Latin game based on the *New York Times'* Wordle

Patrick Neff (former Latin teacher) Since leaving Countryside ten years ago, I have been teaching high school Latin in Bedford, PA. Over the last year, I dedicated almost all of my free time to learning the fundamentals of software development. I decided to create Quintilianus, an online platform of Latin games and study tools which allows users compete with other users. Since students and faculty alike are always playing Wordle, I figured I would code a Latin version of Wordle, and so the concept of "Verble" was born. The Latin word for "word" is "verbum." I hope to expand the games and tools offered on the application and eventually open it up to everyone, including, I hope, students at Countryside. For a complete description of Mr. Neff's Verble journey: www.countrysideschool.org/extras2022

Gail McWilliams (former Spanish teacher & current Travel Culture teacher) I find myself back at Countryside teaching the class Travel Culture in middle school and substitute teaching for all grades. Students never know where I might show up! It's nice to be back again, and I look forward to hearing the adventures of our Countryside alumni.

Natalya St. Clair (former middle school math teacher) It is such a joy to read about the wonderful things you are doing each year, and I miss working with you in the mathematics classroom. I am still in the Bay Area and now have children of my own, Lizzy (4.9) and Danny (2.9), who are curious and love school. I'm now in my sixth year working

College Bound

Congratulations to our alumni headed to the following universities: If you are not listed here, we do not have your contact information. Please let us know your post high school plans.

Ned Brockenbrough	Santa Clara University - finance
Andrew Brown	University of Illinois - industrial engineering
Jake Cox	DePaul University - English
Maddox Dempsey	Indiana University - secondary education
William Ding	New York University
Yoon Freund	Beloit College
Ekam Ghotra	University of Wisconsin (Madison) - computer science
Max Harman	Miami University (Ohio) - games & simulation
Jared Hastings	North Carolina State - electrical engineering
Madeleine Keenan	Yale University
Abeya Khan	University of Texas (Dallas) - chemistry
Bennett Kirby	High Point University - physics
Morgan Lee	University of Illinois
Kevin Lu	University of Illinois - computer science & economics
Natalie Martinez	Reed College
Katherine Omo-Osagie	University of Alabama
Lorenzo Pantano	taking a gap year
Jake Regenwetter	Brown University
Zachary Swanson-Linville	Lawrence University - computer science, Chinese & Russian
Frances Warrior	Iowa State University - elementary education
Lily Weaver	Princeton University
Jordan White	University of Illinois - political science
Sophie Zerrouki	Emory University

**NOT LISTED
HERE?**
LET US KNOW
YOUR POST
HIGH SCHOOL
PLANS

Like the links to videos and news articles? ALL the links are available on this page:

www.countrysideschool.org/extras2022

at a STEM education technology nonprofit, The Concord Consortium, and I study how students work with data. I presented some research (virtually) in Portugal, Boston, and Japan this year! When I'm not chasing small children or writing, I've been playing board games, knitting, and hiking. I hope everyone is doing well!

Lizzy White (former 3rd grade teacher) moved to the Bay Area last August, and is enjoying the change in scenery! She is currently teaching 3rd grade at Woodland

School in Portola Valley, CA. She also *finally* got married last summer and is living with her husband and two cats, Larry and Marcy.

Katrina Widholm (former visual arts teacher) I am currently teaching art full-time to PreK - eighth grade students at Holy Cross School in Champaign, and I teach design and Maker Space at Academy High part-time. I love teaching at Holy Cross where I have my own classroom and a kiln! Sofia and I enjoyed living in Busan, South Korea last school year. It is nice to be home close to family and friends!



Countryside School

Joy in Learning, Excellence in Education

NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SCHOOL ALUMNI

Countryside School
4301 W. Kirby Avenue
Champaign, IL 61822
217.355.1253
E-mail: alumni@countrysideschool.org

We don't want to lose contact!

Please send us your email address:
alumni@countrysideschool.org

We Need Your Pennant

We LOVE displaying pennants from all our alumni's colleges and universities. Last summer we had the funding to double the number of pennants we have on display to nearly **125 pennants!** Drop us an e-mail if you can provide us with a pennant (12" x 30") or to ask if we already have it! alumni@countrysideschool.org



Mark your calendars:

Graduation
Ms. Binky's Farewell Reception
2nd Annual Golf Outing
Homecoming/Fall Picnic
Winter Alumni Reunion
30th Anniversary Gala

May 26 at 6:30 p.m. in the gym
June 1 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the school
June 4 at Legends Golf Course
August 20, 4:30 - 6:30 on our back lawn
TBD - December 2022/January 2023
TBD - February 2023