

THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

SUMMER 2022

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THE MISSION OF THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL is to improve the fabric of society by graduating compassionate, well-educated individuals capable of independent thinking and innovative ideas. To this end, the school attracts, nurtures, and challenges students whose commitment to truth, knowledge, and honor will prepare them not only for the most rigorous college programs, but also for productive lives.



Altamont Mandarin students applied their language and cultural knowledge in a variety of special activities this spring, including making paper lanterns.

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Altamont student Alexander Skowronski has organized multiple international online events to introduce the school community to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Learn more in A View From the Hill.

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The Altamont School magazine was printed using environmentally safe UV ink and varnish and recycled paper.

New Altamont Head of School Envisions Partnerships That Serve Students, Birmingham



The Altamont School's new Head of School feels like he has come home. Chattanooga, Tennessee, native Cecil F. Stodghill, Jr., wife Kim and son Cameron were in New York for three years as Stodghill led the Doane Stuart School through accreditation, growth and the COVID-19 pandemic, but his extensive previous experience of educational leadership was in the Southeast.

Now returned to a spot near his Tennessee kin, Stodghill also finds a new family at Altamont, and is excited for his wife (principal of her own independent college counseling firm) and son (finishing his senior year of high school in New York) to become active with him in the life of the school. "I've never felt as welcomed anywhere as I do here," he said as he officially began his service in July. "I feel like I've found my people again." Stodghill said this cultural affinity adds extra inspiration to work hard to help Altamont evolve. To best serve students, he said, every school must adapt to generational values, new understandings about effective education, and changing expectations of parents beyond traditional academic work. "We want to make

sure that when a family chooses The Altamont School, they're choosing that their children and family will have an experience, that they will be engaged as a family, and that they will be in a partnership," he said.

The Altamont experience, Stodghill said, should not only prepare graduates for higher education, but also help them discern their calling and sustain them in every part of their lives. Serving families in that way requires partnerships outside of the school community, and Stodghill sees that Altamont is ideally situated for building those relationships. "We're sitting on a gold mine, in terms of global education and practical experiences, right here in Birmingham," he said. Taking full advantage of those opportunities would be good for the school's families as well as the city, he observed. "My goal is to create a cultural shift by which we become not just an independent school in Birmingham, but *the* school in Birmingham, not just because of our college matriculations or our AP scores, but because of the impact we truly have in this community."

"Any student who can walk across our stage and receive a diploma, with practical experience of anything that they want to pursue, is going to be more marketable and successful," Stodghill said. Refining interests in this way before college also can help students avoid higher education stops and starts that can be costly in terms of both tuition and time. So, in Stodghill's vision, an Altamont student dreaming of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology should be enriched by summer research experience at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. A student called to teach should find inspiration and opportunities to shadow local faculty in the city's diverse educational settings. Stodghill knows that, in a city of this size, there is not much limit to the ways students could explore their callings. "I think that will serve not only the Altamont community, but also metro Birmingham," he said. He noted that some of those opportunities can arise from an invigorated alumni network that links students with mentors in their fields of professional interest.

Beyond these enriching off-campus experiences, Stodghill said preparation for rapidly changing college and professional expectations also must include helping students develop the intellectual tools they need to thrive anywhere. Digital fluency, understanding community needs, and the ability to navigate in cultures ranging from rural Alabama to the world's largest cities are only some of the tools that help education grow and serve students beyond the basics. "It has to be academic, social and emotional," Stodghill said. "We need to address mental health. We need to be more mindful of learned and expected behaviors, including executive functioning. Those things are part of the experience, and I think we have to balance traditional school with progressive learning and living." Specific programs can support all that, he said, but the commitment must be deeper. "It needs to be a cultural shift, and that will help us initiate the next 50 years of the Altamont legacy."

MEET OUR NEW FACULTY AND STAFF!

The Altamont School welcomes 13 additions to our family, including our new Head of School, new staff, and teachers in multiple disciplines and grades.



Allison Abney

Alumni Relations Specialist

Allison Abney has an M.A. in arts administration/nonprofit management from the University of New Orleans, and a B.F.A. in studio art and M.S.

in marketing from The University of Alabama. Before coming to Altamont she managed development communications for the Dallas Museum of Art and external affairs for the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans, and served as communications director for the Alabama Statewide AHEC Program.



Stephanie Alexander Brooks

Director of Advancement

Stephanie Alexander Brooks is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CRFE) with a B.A. in general studies/journalism from Southeastern

Louisiana University and an M.A. in philanthropy and development from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. She has worked in all aspects of nonprofit management but especially enjoys working in the field of education. Her previous work includes service with Birmingham Zoo, The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, Woodlawn Foundation and Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation.



Julie Camp

Earth Science and Environmental Science Teacher

Julie Camp has a B.S. in biology from the University of Montevallo, and an M.S. in education from

Arkansas State University. She has worked as an animal rehabilitation specialist, environmental educator, director of a nature-based preschool, and, most recently, as an early childhood training specialist for educators across Alabama.



Sandreika Floyd

Administrative Assistant of Athletics

Sandreika Floyd has an M.A. in Elementary Education, a B.A. in Social Psychology, and a B.S. in

health education from The University of Alabama at Birmingham. She worked as a kindergarten teacher for over 15 years. At Altamont, she serves as Vice-President of Altamont Parent Association, Grade Council Coordinator, and Volleyball Team Representative for all three teams. She formerly served the school as Middle School Athletics Committee Chair and Team Representative.



Sean Flynt

Director of Communications

Sean Flynt is a writer, photographer and public relations professional with almost three decades of experience in education, including

work with higher education and education policy organizations as well as service as an English language teaching assistant for schools in Krems, Austria. He has an academic background in history, English and education, and is the author of the medieval coming-of-age novel *Little Hammer*.



Jess Heine

11th-Grade AP American Literature and 12th-Grade Senior Seminar Teacher

Former Altamont English Department head Jess Heine returns to the school

after teaching at Mountain Brook High School last year. She has a B.A. in English and an M.S.Ed. from Samford University, and an M.A. in English from the University of Alabama-Birmingham.



Lynn Kalchik

Science and Physics Teacher

Lynn Kalchik has a B.S. in civil engineering from Michigan State University. She worked in engineering for 10 years before earning her

teaching certificate in science, and has brought that real-world knowledge to classrooms in Alabama, Texas and Slovakia.



Katie O'Neal

AP Chemistry and Psychology Teacher

Altamont alumna Katie O'Neal '16 earned a B.A. in psychology and a B.S. in biology at Samford University, and recently completed a master's program in biomedical and health sciences at the University of Alabama-Birmingham. As an Altamont student, she participated in the Miree Center's leadership program and was a member of our varsity basketball and volleyball teams.



Amber Quinn

Photography Teacher

Amber Quinn has a B.A. in studio arts from the University of Montevallo and an M.F.A. in studio arts from The University of Alabama. She most

recently worked as the Arts and Sciences Student Services Coordinator at Samford University. Her art practice consists of digital photography, audio, film and cyanotype imagery.



Sam Ripley

Eighth-Grade Civics and 12th-Grade AP Economics Teacher

Sam Ripley has a B.A. in history education from Brigham Young University and is a certified teacher

of English as a second language (ESL). She is originally from Alabama, but also has lived in Arizona, Utah, Washington D.C. and France. This is her fifth year as a secondary teacher, with experience including civics, geography, U.S. history, Utah history and ESL.



Eric Royer

Science Teacher

Eric Royer has a B.S. in environmental geology as well as an M.A. in teaching from the University of North Carolina

at Chapel Hill, where he conducted research on curriculum design to close racial achievement gaps in middle school science classrooms. He previously taught biology and earth and space science at Calera High School, where he also coached cross-country and track teams.



Cecil Stodghill

Head of School

Cecil Stodghill brings to the Altamont School extensive experience in independent schools as a teacher, coach and administrator. Most recently,

he served as Head of School for The Doane Stuart School in Rensselaer, New York. His distinguished career also includes service to Providence Day School, Academy Prep Foundation, Berkeley Preparatory School and the McCallie School in his native Chattanooga, Tennessee. He is an alumnus of the McCallie School, and earned a B.B.A in marketing from the University of Miami and an M.Ed. in educational leadership and administration from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.



Anna Way

Fifth and Sixth-Grade

American History Teacher

Anna Way has a B.A in history and a B.A in political science from Appalachian State University. Her areas

of academic expertise are American history, American public policy and the English Reformation. She also has professional experience in banking and photography.



Marilyn Williams

Ancient and Medieval

History Teacher

Marilyn Williams earned a B.A. in classical studies from The University of Chicago and is currently pursuing

her M.Sc. in ancient worlds (classics and archaeology) from The University of Edinburgh. She has taught history, both ancient and modern, in New York City and Cairo, Egypt, and has also taught in China, Colombia, Andorra and Kentucky. Most recently, she led an afterschool and summer educational program for students in Birmingham's West End neighborhood.

Students Explore Birmingham's *Past, Present, Future*

By Laine Williams

For one week each October, Altamont's doors swing open and the world becomes our classroom. A beloved tradition since the 1990s, project venues have included such places as Chicago, Washington, D.C., Sweden and Rome. This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we developed an experiential learning week in our hometown, utilizing partnerships with local organizations to teach our students what makes Birmingham unique.

While we have had local trips previously, this was the first year all grades were focused on creating experiences that highlighted Birmingham's past, present and future. "There is something special about this city," said Beth Dille, director of Altamont's C. Kyser Miree Center for Ethical Leadership. "Students need to understand the role they play within Birmingham. It's our job as educators to teach students about the value and significance of their hometown with the purpose of making their city even better in the future."



Birmingham's Past

The first step on this journey was acknowledging Birmingham's history. Altamont's ninth-grade students visited the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the 16th Street Baptist Church (shown here) and Kelly Ingram Park on an educational tour created by Lisa Daniels, a history teacher at Altamont. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding of the significance of civil rights developments in Birmingham. Now part of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, the 16th Street Baptist Church served as a meeting place for the organization of marches and other civil rights activities. In 1963, a bombing at the church resulted in the death of four young Black girls: Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, Denise McNair and Carole Robertson. This devastating event led the federal government to take action on civil rights legislation.

In conjunction with the 16th Street Baptist Church (shown here) visit, Altamont had the honor of hosting Carolyn McKinstry, an eyewitness and friend to the girls killed in the bombing. A survivor of the civil rights struggle, she is an author and speaker on the topic of racial reconciliation. Her message encouraged and challenged our high

school students to make Birmingham's future one of peace and understanding. After her visit, McKinstry shared these words: "I enjoyed the young people more than you could ever know. My hope is in the youth of tomorrow. I believe that they will soar far beyond where we are today."

Altamont's 11th and 12th-grade students participated in a Southern Stories tour created by teachers J.P. Hemingway, Joni Wiley and Andrew Nelson. Prior to the trip, the students participated in two lessons asking, "What is our community?" and "Who tells our stories?" This trip began at the Birmingham Public Library archives where Jim Baggett, archivist of the city of Birmingham, showed students artifacts such as "redline" city maps and the Birmingham jail docket that included Dr. Martin Luther King's name. The students then toured Lynn Park and Kelly Ingram Park to see the civil rights monuments. Finally, they ended at the Birmingham Museum of Art, where the *All Things Bright and Beautiful* exhibit showed people using artwork to tell their stories. "My favorite part of the trip was realizing that there is no singular story of Birmingham," said 11th-grade student Margaret Schedler. "The multitude of stories we encountered cemented Birmingham as the city that it is, neither good nor bad, just a reflection of the people that call it home."

Birmingham's Present

Students also learned about how to serve modern Birmingham through local partnerships with Jones Valley Teaching Farm, West End Community Garden, Black Warrior Riverkeepers and Rise Against Hunger.

Our 10th and 11th-grade students worked with Jones Valley Teaching Farm, which creates opportunities for academic exploration, environmental stewardship, personal growth and leadership and pathways to employment. Ninth grade students worked with West End Community Garden to weed and clean up local gardens. They learned what it means to build community partnerships, and affirmed the need for nutritious food for all people.

Our seventh and 10th-grade students worked with Black Warrior Riverkeepers to pick up 643 pounds of trash at East Lake Park and near Valley Creek.



Students also discussed the vital need for the next generation to be involved with restoring Alabama's waterways.

Our seventh and eighth-grade students packaged over 10,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger, a global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives and responding to emergencies. These meals will be distributed worldwide to those in need through a network of community partners. "My favorite activity during Fall Project Week was packing rice for the Rise Against Hunger, said seventh-grade student Tylan Floyd. "One thing I learned is that helping others makes me happy."

Students also participated in a service day in the areas directly around Altamont, clearing overgrown vegetation on the city roads and the community trails behind the school. Seventh- and eighth-grade students learned that, as part of a city, Altamont has a responsibility to contribute and help out wherever it can.

Birmingham's Future

The culmination of the week was educating Altamont students to become compassionate leaders, creating a better Birmingham and world. Partnerships with Alaquest Collaborative for Education (ACE), NewGen Peacebuilders, Red Mountain Theatre and McDowell Environmental Center focused on Birmingham's future.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students participated in ACE's leadership, empathy, inclusion and trust workshops. Students practiced these skills through group interactive discussions and activities. With NewGen Peacebuilders, an award-winning peace education, training and mentoring program that equips young people to build and repeat peace, students learned how to actively resolve conflict, build bridges and create innovative solutions for change. At Red Mountain Theatre, students sharpened their ability to create and to collaborate. The theatre's mission is to create powerful experiences that enrich, educate and engage audiences—nourishing the human spirit, fostering valuable life skills and cultivating a deeper sense of community.

Fifth and sixth-grade students participated in McDowell Environmental Center programming that increased awareness and understanding while encouraging a sense of responsibility for the environment. With the goal of connecting people to the natural world, this hands-on science program focused on topics such as Plant it Earth, Forest Connections, Farm

Fauna, Radical Raptors, Art in Nature, Geology, Survival Skills and Team Building. "My favorite part of Camp McDowell was how you were constantly learning and having fun. You also got to participate in a lot of hands-on activities," said fifth-grade student Caroline Perkins. "My favorite thing was learning about all of the different adaptations that animals have."

Exploring and investing in Birmingham challenged and empowered Altamont's students to become better leaders both in our city and in the world. "The meaningful conversations and real-world community service provided by students will continue to shape them far past this week," said Joni Wiley, Altamont's geography teacher. "I am grateful that the students have the opportunity to engage with a city we all call home in an intentional and meaningful way."





Students Combine Business Education, Service Leadership

This spring The Altamont School's three sixth-grade math classes completed an interdisciplinary project that combined lessons in running a nonprofit business with the school's emphasis on service leadership.

The classes collaborated with sophomore students Sarah Patrick Barze, Karen Raymundo-Vega and Riley Pierce to produce and sell t-shirts inspired by service projects the students developed through the school's C. Kyser Miree Center for Ethical Leadership. Select students work with the center to create and implement multi-year projects based on individual interests that serve a need in the greater Birmingham community. The students also complete over 80 hours of community service, attend 12 cultural events, and successfully defend their leadership experiences in order to earn the Miree Commendation on their Altamont diplomas.

Math teacher JoAnna Laney said the sixth-grade students also worked with Ann Trondson (Altamont's photography teacher and co-director of a local nonprofit), learned about sales and marketing from Holly Blalock (Strong Automotive Merchandising) and Jeff Hickam (ForMotiv), collected and used information from Julie Clanton (Homewood Sporting Goods) to make decisions about pricing, and explored website design and vector file creation with Rob Dominguez (Altamont's director of education technology). Miree Center director Beth Dille helped coordinate the older students' participation in the project.

At a special event in May, the sixth-graders announced that they sold a total of 76 t-shirts, collected 58 individual donations, and received an additional generous donation from Julie Clanton. Altogether, the three classes raised more than \$2,300 to support the Miree projects.

DANIELS, GARRETT, ARELLANO Earn Faculty, Staff Honors

The school honored three employees at its End of Year Awards Assembly in May.

Dorothy Pak, secretary of Altamont's Board of Trustees, presented the James C. Barton, Jr. Faculty/Staff Leadership Award to history teacher Lisa Daniels and Student Assistance Counselor Lauren Garrett for their leadership in innovation, community service and advancement of mission.

Interim Head of School Tom Bendel presented the Edna Earle Mullins Endowed Teaching Prize to Spanish teacher Eva Arellano. The award—given in honor of the dedication and devotion to education of a former head of the Brooke Hill School—recognizes outstanding achievement in teaching and leadership.

Lisa Daniels brought to Altamont her expertise in government, Africana studies, civil rights and education policy and leadership. In addition to her teaching, she sponsored Altamont's Junior United Nations team and the Black Student Union, and brought to the school many guest speakers. "With her tireless service, she certainly has advanced the school's mission of cultivating compassionate, well-educated individuals capable of independent thinking and innovative ideas," one person wrote in her nomination for the award.



In addition to her counseling service, Lauren Garrett teaches character education, heads advisory programming, coordinates student education about substance use and social media, and is an integral member of the Student Support Team. "She is dedicated to the well-being of our students, and she brings her whole heart to work each day," a nominator wrote of her. "Especially in the face of a national teen-mental health crisis, having someone as capable and caring as Lauren in her role is true gift."

Eva Arellano teaches and leads Altamont's Spanish Club with high expectations, exceptional organizational skill, and close attention to students and colleagues. "She is always willing to go the extra mile," Bendel said, "whether that means teaching a student one-on-one, preparing materials for students to study over the summer, or mentoring other teachers."



A Shared History

Celebrating the Centennial of Birmingham University School

Birmingham University School (B.U.S.), founded in 1922, merged with the younger Brooke Hill School to form The Altamont School in 1975. Historian, alumnus and longtime Altamont teacher Christopher Thomas '90 documented our oldest founding school's story of adaptation and endurance in his book *A History of the Birmingham University School*. We turn to that work as we reflect on the legacy of the school in its centennial year.

B.U.S. represented the individual vision of Kentucky native Basil Parks, a veteran U.S. Army officer and Marion Military Institute teacher who saw that the city of Birmingham needed an exceptional private academy to serve the sons of the families driving the city's rapid physical, financial and cultural growth.

Parks' big idea started small, packed into a Highland Ave. house with the Margaret Allen School, which offered essential introductions and

endorsements in Birmingham society. The new school's military discipline and focus on college preparation attracted enough students to maintain itself until it merged with University High School in 1925. The growing school then relocated to a purpose-built facility on 28th St. South. In spite of the school's success in attracting new students and sending its graduates to college, it struggled to maintain enrollment through graduation. Through the 1930s and 1940s, this challenge and the effects of the Great Depression, WWII and the improving quality of local public schools eroded demand for B.U.S. The school finally regained its footing in the mid-1950s, as a new home on Montclair Road helped it compete with growing local rivals.

The racial integration of public schools increased demand for private schools through the civil rights era, and B.U.S. benefitted from that change, growing from 40 students in 1952 to 173 in 1959. The dramatically increased enrollment allowed

expansion of the new campus, the addition of interscholastic athletics, and the growth of a faculty that now included the school's first female teachers.

The school thrived through the 1960s and became both coeducational and racially integrated in the early 1970s. By that time the school needed a new campus, and a proposed merger between B.U.S. and Brooke Hill School promised solutions to that and other challenges. The institutions combined as The Altamont School on Brooke Hill's campus, with Brooke Hill teacher Margaret M. Gage as Dean of Faculty and B.U.S. teacher Martin Hames as Dean of Students.

B.U.S. is reflected in The Altamont School's academic emphases, in the indelible influence of its early leaders and teachers, in the names of current students, and in the names of the former students and teachers—Neal, White, Rushton—memorialized in some of our school's top honors. We are inextricably bound to it, and proud to celebrate its centennial!

BUS CENTENNIAL 1922 - 2022

The Birmingham University School Centennial Celebration will continue this fall with the placement of a historical marker at the site of the school's 28th Street campus and a special dinner at the Altamont School Sept. 10 at 5:30 p.m. We're grateful to Centennial Chairman Tim Callahan '66 for his tireless efforts in bringing the celebration to fruition, and to Bruce Denson '68 for generously hosting the dinner.

Visit www.buscentennial.com for event details.

ALDERSON, WILLIAMS, YOUNGSON Named National Merit Finalists

Altamont seniors Alan Alderson, Audrey Williams and Jeffrey Youngson were named National Merit Finalists this year. Williams was further honored as a National Merit Scholar. Alderson was awarded The University of Alabama's National Merit Finalist Scholarship.



Over 1.5 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2020 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as the initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, representing fewer than 1% of U.S. high school seniors, included the highest-scoring entrants in each state. Ultimately, only about 15,000 Semifinalists advanced to Finalist standing.



Doppalapudi, Youngson Earn Perfect ACT Scores

Altamont senior Jeffrey Youngson and junior Sid Doppalapudi earned perfect scores of 36 on the ACT this year.

On average, only one-tenth of one percent of all test takers receive the top score. Among recent U.S. high school graduates just 2,760 out of the more than two million students who took the ACT reached a composite score of

36. The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science, each scored on a scale of 1-36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores.

During the past six years, 16 Altamont students have earned a 36 on the ACT.

Eberle, Riley Earn Top Honor in Robotics Competition

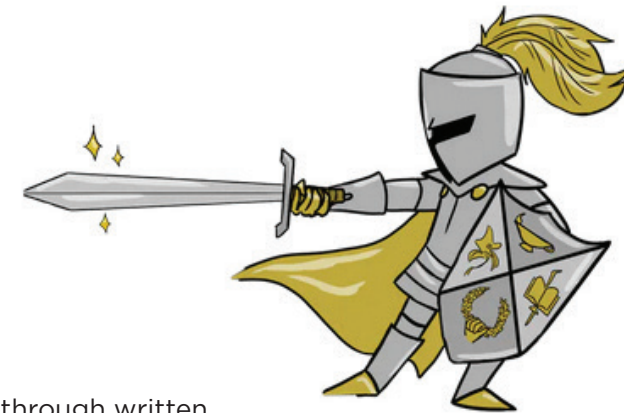
Ivan Riley and Camille Eberle made exceptional showings in robotics competitions this winter. They were undefeated in the qualifying rounds of the VEX Robotics Competition in February, won the design award and finished second in the skills competition. That performance qualified them for state level of the competition, where they earned the top honor. They also qualified for the VEX Robotics World Competition in May.



Student Journalists Earn Top National Award

Altamont student journalists and adviser Dan Carsen earned a top national honor in the American Scholastic Press Association's 2021-2022 annual Newspaper Review and Contest. Their newspaper, *Acta Diurna*, won a first-place award in the category of small private school student newspapers.

The Altamont School embraces the importance of student voice through written and visual works, and provides a safe environment for student self-expression through three regular publications – *Acta Diurna*, *The Beacon* and *The Dragon*.



DEBATERS SHINE at Regional, National Tournaments

Altamont's debaters had great success this year. JV debaters Parker Denson and Johnny Stumpff earned the champion title at the national Heart of Texas tournament.

Wesley Sudarshan and Pranav Goli were the champions of the Samford University Bishop Guild Debate Tournament, and Sudarshan was named third speaker.

Sophia Sultan and Iman Zuberi were quarterfinalists at Samford, and Zuberi was named eighth speaker. Emma McLain and Isaac Horwitz also competed in the event with strong performances at their first varsity tournament.

Altamont qualified six debaters for the National Speech and Debate Tournament, and Sudarshan and Goli ultimately represented the school in the June tournament. The duo debated qualified teams from districts across the nation and won seven out of 12 ballots, just one ballot short of placing in elimination rounds. They also were the highest scoring team from Alabama.



Goyal Honored by Kiwanas Club of Birmingham

Senior Meghan Goyal earned the Kiwanis Club of Birmingham 2022 Youth of the Year Scholarship Award in April. She was selected as a finalist and scholarship recipient based on her academic achievement, citizenship, leadership and service experience.

Students Earn Junior United Nations Honors

Sixth- and eighth-grade students served as delegates for Egypt and Nigeria at the Junior United Nations Assembly of Alabama Convention at Birmingham-Southern College in March.

The Egypt delegates included Mayri Carsen, Grace Crescenzi, Zayna Glover, Tricia Maddux, Margaret Overton and Elle Sellers. The Nigeria delegates included Alden DuMontier, Holman Gray, Paine Gray, Zahid Issa, Joseph Porter, Aubrey Sanders and Maddie Winslett.

The students’ hard work helped them earn multiple honors, including:

Outstanding Nation Honorable Mention: Egypt

Outstanding Nation: Nigeria

Most Prepared: Nigeria

Outstanding Boy Delegate: Aubrey Sanders (Nigeria)



FRENCH CONVENTION HONORS

Altamont students earned 15 awards at the Alabama State French Convention in February.

Individual Oral Competitions

Level II Alden DuMontier – Très Bien award

Level III Valeria Blanco – Supérieur award
Raju Sudarshan – Très Bien award
James Myers – Très Bien award

Advanced Madeleine Beckwith – Très Bien award
Temple Coleman – Très Bien award
Lauren Rogers – Très Bien award
Savitri Sasse – Très Bien award
Jeffrey Youngson – Très Bien award

Written Test

Advanced Annagrace Parmer – Bien award.

Choral – Solo/Duet

Jeffrey Youngson – Supérieur award.

Scholarship Competition

Jeffrey Youngson – Supérieur award and \$500 for extemporaneous essay and oral interview in French.

Program Cover Design

Madeleine Beckwith – Très Bien award and \$50

Visual Art

Temple Coleman – Très Bien award.
Savitri Sasse – Très Bien award.

National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society Induction

The Altamont School inducted new members into the National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society in a March ceremony. Admission into the honor societies is based on a cumulative grade point average of 90 or higher over several years in full-credit classes in the five core subject areas of English, history, math, science, and world languages. Students must also have attended The Altamont School for a full academic year. Inductees included:

National Junior Honor Society

Ninth Grade

Akshay Gaddamanugu
Andrew Herrin
Ivan Riley

Caitlin Cornelius
Kirstan Davie
Parker Denson
Lillian Dyson
Mollie Elgin
Travis Franklin

Frances Overton
Shreya Patel
Riley Pierce
Karen Raymundo-Vega
Eliza Riley
Lauren Rogers
Chloe Sheffield
James Stephens
Ryan Vance
Olivia Vanlandingham
Katherine Grace Whatley
Claudia Williams
Ethan Wilson

National Honor Society 2021-22

10th Grade

Sarah Patrick Barze
Lucine Carson
Mason Coleman

Edward French
Maggie Langloh
Kate Lowe
Whitnie Melonas
Kate Nichols



11th Grade

Mia Dunlap
Mimi Frei
Michael Neiman
Caroline Reddington
Priya Soni
Anne Strang

12th Grade

Sam Choun
Chase Hoover
Maggie Huffman
Austin Lyall
Jolie Stumpff

Altamont Announces Poetry Competition Winners



The Altamont School’s annual poetry competition is its oldest tradition. In English classes, all students select poems, introduce them to their peers, and explain the personal appeal of the works. Winners of the class-level portion of the competition advance to the semifinals. Semifinalists read their poems to a panel of Altamont judges, who select students to advance to the finals.

A panel of three independent judges selected his year’s finalists in April. Winners included:

Middle School

- First place: Maddie Winslett “To All My Friends” by May Yang
- Second place: AJ Gallitz, “15, Maybe 16 Things to Worry About” by Judith Viorst
- Third place: Belen Cunill, “Trash Talk 929” by Naomi Shihab Nye
- Honorable Mention: Maddy Grier Hinds, “Reading Fear” by Ciaran Carson

Upper School

- First place: Nivedha Goli, “Unwritten Letter to My Immigrant Parent” by Muna Abdulahi
- First place: Karrington Manley, “Good Grief” by Amanda Gorman
- First place: Johnny Stumpff, “I Am the People, the Mob” by Carl Sandburg
- Honorable Mention: Isla Steinman, “Backwards” by Warsan Shire

Students Win Top Awards in University of Mississippi Writing Competition

Seventh-graders Payton Daniels and Ali Lejeune, and eighth-graders Joe Porter and Isabelle Taylor, earned top honors in the University of Mississippi Writing Competition.

In the middle school essay category, Porter won first place with “The Discovery of an Automobile Industry Superpower” and Daniels won third place with “Discovering the Deinos Sauros.”

In the middle school short story category, Taylor won first place with “God Given” and Lejeune won third place with “Forgiving My Homeland.”



Carsen, Taylor Lead SCHOLASTIC AWARDS

In addition to the 19 regional Scholastic Art and Writing honors Altamont students earned this year, Lucine Carsen and Isabelle Taylor advanced to the national stage of the 2022 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. Carsen, a rising junior, won a silver medal in the personal essay and memoir category for “Mirror, Mirror.” Taylor, a rising freshman, won a silver medal in the humor category for “Euphemisms, My Mother, and Other Absurdities.” Founded in 1923, the prestigious Scholastic competition is the nation’s longest-running contest for creative teens. Each year, hundreds of thousands of works are judged by luminaries of the visual and literary arts worlds. The judges look for works that best exemplify originality, technical skill, and the emergence of a personal voice or vision. Their choices from Altamont included:



Writing Awards

Jack Boehm

Gold Key, Short Story, for “How Mac Henderson Rose to the Top”
Silver Key, Short Story, for “What It’s Like to be a Battery”

Lucine Carsen

Gold Key, Personal Essay and Memoir, for “Mirror, Mirror”

Cruz Cunill

Silver Key, Flash Fiction, for “Every Day is Like the Next”
Silver Key, Flash Fiction, for “The Scar”

Payton Daniels

Silver Key, Flash Fiction, for “A Deadly Royal Romance”
Silver Key, Short Story, for “The Rainy Life of the Weather Named Stormy”

Gillian Goodrich

Silver Key, Short Story, for “The Snatcher”
Gold Key, Short Story, for “Thoughts of the Weapon”

Jonas Haren

Silver Key, Short Story, for “The Day in a Life of a Ceiling Fan”
Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “The Story of Thunder Man and his Thunder Dog”

Maddy Grier Hinds

Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “Nebula Metro”
Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “Witches of Saint Rensburg”

Alex Kirksey

Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “The Story of the Witch”

Hill McCluney

Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “An Unexpected Visitor”
Gold Key, Short Story, for “Life as a Diary”

Benjamin Poczatek

Silver Key, Humor, for “Netflix CEO Supports Trans Hate?”
Silver Key, Short Story, for “What is, MLK Edition”

Joseph Porter

Silver Key, Humor, for “A Sea of Red”
Silver Key, Critical Essay, for “Just Think about a World Where Everyone Plays a Sport”

Izzy Sellers

Silver Key, Poetry, for “Silent Screaming Pleads”
Gold Key, Poetry, for “The Perfect Student”
Silver Key, Poetry, for “The Perfect Student, Part 2”
Silver Key, Poetry, for “Alive or Living”
Silver Key, Poetry, for “Falling in Love”
Silver Key, Poetry, for “Narcissus”

Will Sawyer

Honorable Mention, Flash Fiction, for “Journal Entries for August 2005”
Gold Key, Short Story, for “Shooting Stars”

Wyatt Sawyer

Silver Key, Short Story, for “The Stories of Colors”
Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “Time is Relative”

Abbey Sellers

Silver Key, Short Story, for “Living with Harold Domes”
Silver Key, Short Story, for “Manuel and Soccer”

Isabelle Taylor

Silver Key, Science Fiction and Fantasy, for “All Hallows Eve”
Gold Key, Humor, for “Euphemisms, my Mother and Other Absurdities”
Silver Key, Short Story, for “The Storm”
Silver Key, Humor, for “Waffle House Torture Plan”

Maddie Winslett

Silver Key, Short Story, for “Superior Species”
Honorable Mention, Humor, for “The Government’s Secret”

Art and Photography Awards

Temple Coleman

Silver Key, Digital Art, for “Azure Afternoon”
Honorable Mention, Painting, for “Burning Out”
Honorable Mention, Digital Art, for “Creator of Color”

Ava Muller

Silver Key, Photography, for “Grief”



Theatre Thrives With New Plays and Trumbauer Festival Honors

Altamont theatre is thriving, with students returning to the stage as the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed. Highlights included “Fame The Musical Jr.,” “Clue” and “Disney’s The Jungle Book Kids” this spring. Theatre students also made a strong showing in competition with 1,500 other students at the state level of the Walter Trumbauer Secondary Festival, sponsored by the Alabama Conference of Theatre at Troy University in December. Participating Altamont students included Johnny Stumpff, Cricket Davis, Karleigh Watts, Ajani Salvary, Kaavya Karthikeyan, Olivia Vanlandingham, Lilith Dyson, Jeffrey Youngson, Lucine Carsen, Jimmy Sears, Justin Lewis, Karrington Manley, Kirstan Davie, Dima Reem Gambino, Madeleine Beckwith, Ingrid Smyer, Valeria Blanco, Margaret Schedler, Katie Soong, Sarah Whitley, Lizzie Maxey, Bud Gidiere, Andrew Herrin, and Jeremy Doster.

Individual awards included:

Kirstan Davie – First place in Solo Classical Musical Theatre (Dramatic) and All-Star Cast honor in the One-Act Festival for her performance as Ms. Gretta Bell in “Fame The Musical Jr.”.

Lucine Carsen and Jeremy Doster – Second place in the State in Duet Classical Acting (Dramatic).

Jeffery Youngson – All-Star Cast honor in the One-Act Festival for his performance as Schlomo in “Fame The Musical Jr.”.

Jeremy Doster – Superior Medal in Solo Classical Acting (Dramatic).

Jimmy Sears – Superior Medal in Solo Classical Acting (Dramatic).

Lucine Carsen – Superior Medal in Solo Contemporary Acting (Dramatic).

Valeria Blanco – Superior Medal in Solo Contemporary Acting (Comedic).

Cricket Davis –Superior Medal in Solo Contemporary Musical Theatre Up-tempo (Dramatic).

Kaavya Karthikeyan – Superior Medal in Solo Contemporary Musical Theatre Up-tempo (Dramatic).

Johnny Stumpff – Medal of Excellence in Solo Contemporary Musical Theatre Ballad (Dramatic).

Lilith Dyson – Medal of Excellence in Solo Contemporary Musical Theatre Ballad (Dramatic).

Students Earn Art Awards

Altamont student Simone Daniels’ digital artwork earned second place in the Green New Deal for Birmingham Art Contest sponsored by Greater-Birmingham Alliance to Stop Pollution (GASPI!). Artwork by Altamont students Mia Dunlap, Savitri Sasse and Zoe Winslett was selected for the Alabama Art Education Association’s virtual art exhibit. Dunlap and James Stephens also were honored by the selection of their artwork for the 2022 Statewide High School Juried Art Exhibit.



The Year in Music

Altamont’s music programs were busy as always this year. Winter and spring concerts featured the Middle School Jazz Band, Upper School Jazz Band and Orchestra, which includes students in all grades.

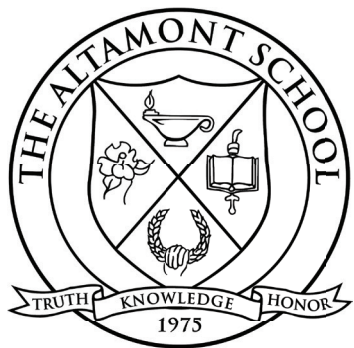
Interim Head of School Tom Bendel joined the Upper School Jazz Band onstage as it played for fifth- and sixth-graders in the Knights Den in February. The Upper School Jazz Band also performed at the Knight for the Arts event in April as part of the school’s celebration of art, photography, theatre and music.

Individual students showcased their talents off-campus, too. Claudia Williams participated in the University of Alabama at Birmingham Honor Band in December. Lilith Dyson, Travis Franklin and Claudia Wilson participated in the Samford Honor Band in January.

Lilith Dyson participated in the Montevallo Honor Band in March. Dara Jindapon, Aaradhya Kyanam, and Claudia Williams were selected for All-State Orchestra.

Music teacher Landon Rogan prepared for a new year of music with Beginner Band try-outs in March and Beginner Band Camp in June. “Students learned how to put their instruments together, read music, play some notes, and even play one of the tunes from the Pep Band!,” Rogan said. “They did a great job.”





Annual Honors

Adele Benson – Co-winner, Joseph Wheeler Sewell Award, Global Seal of Biliteracy in French

Josiah Brock – Clarice Locke Award

Arden Campbell – Allene Benners Martin Cup

Lucine Carsen – The Smiley Award

Sam Choun – Paul Nii-Amar Amamoo Award

Nish Doppalapudi – Eighth-grade John Wallace Johnston History Award

Anna Foweather – Hispanic Honor Society, Global Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish

A.J. Gallitz – Sarah Ward Whiteside Cup

Dima Reem Gambino – Margaret Matthews Gage Prize in American History

Meghan Goyal – Brooke Hill Cup

Nandhini Gutti – Francina Benejam French Award, Warren R. Splitt Award

Carson Hicks – Margaret Gresham Livingston Leadership Award, Hispanic Honor Society

Reese Jeffrey – Lynn Clark Creative Writing Scholarship

Kaavya Karthikeyan – Donovan Award

JoJo Kelly – Global Seal of Biliteracy in French

Justin Lewis – Speech Arts Club Award

Jack Langloh – Co-winner, The Joseph Wheeler Sewell Award

Austin Lyall – Hispanic Honor Society

Norra Maxey – 12th-grade John Wallace Johnston History Award

Lila Mitchell – Bausch and Lomb Junior Class Science Award

Ava Muller – Lily Cup, Gainey Arts & Humanities Award, Hispanic Honor Society, Global Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish

Sophie Mrug – Eighth-grade Most Outstanding Mandarin Student Award

Jolie Stumpff –12th-grade Mignon Comer Smith Book Award

Jack Nichols – Co-winner, Joseph Wheeler Sewell Award

Greyson Parham – Hallie Porter Shook Cup

Annagrace Parmer – Altamont Citizenship Award, Jeanne Classé Armes de Paris Medal, Global Seal of Biliteracy in French

Beverly Head Perkins – Faculty Cup

Davis Reese – Hispanic Honor Society

Aubrey Sanders – Debardeleben Neal Award

Margaret Schedler – Ackermann Scholarship

Isla Steinman – Carver-Gorgas Senior Science Book Award, Hispanic Honor Society

Isabelle Taylor – Ackermann Scholarship, Eighth grade Mignon Comer Smith Book Award

Andrew Watson – Katharine Ireland Mitchell Award

Claudia Williams – Katharine Ireland Mitchell Award

Audrey Williams – David Hart White Spanish Award, 12th grade Most Outstanding Mandarin Student Award, Hispanic Honor Society, Global Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish and Mandarin

Maddie Winslett – Pignarre Cup, Robert L. Johnson Math Award

Jeffrey Youngson – J. Frank Rushton Cup, Sophia Mize Clifford Music Award, Susan M. Hulse French Prize, Global Seal of Biliteracy in French

President’s Volunteer Service Awards

Adele Benson – 2020 Gold

George Benson – 2020 Gold

Zoe Browning – 2022 Bronze

Siddharth Doppalapudi – 2020 Gold

Nivedha Goli – 2022 Gold

Braden Hoke – 2020 Gold

Jeff McLane – 2022 Gold

Lila Mitchell – 2020 Gold

Annagrace Parmer – 2021 Bronze, 2022 Gold

Riley Pierce – 2021 Bronze, 2022 Bronze

Bud Riley – 2022 Bronze

Lauren Rogers – 2020 Gold

Wesley Sudarshan – 2021 Bronze, 2022 Bronze

Iman Zuberi – 2020 Gold, 2021 Bronze, 2022 Bronze

TENNIS COURT RENOVATIONS

to Honor Coach Susan Keith, Support Award-Winning Teams

A dramatic renovation of The Altamont School’s tennis facilities will honor 34 years of service by PE teacher, middle school basketball coach and girls tennis coach Susan Keith, and support a new generation of award-winning Altamont tennis players. The \$400,000 project, led by ASBA Certified Tennis Court Builder Lower Bros., will include:

*Complete rebuild of the bottom four courts
(built in 1977)*

Resurfacing of the upper two courts

New perimeter fences

Restroom improvements

New posts and nets

New player benches

New bleachers

New lighting

New backboard

New pathways

New landscaping

The school expects the work to be completed in time for the 2023 season.

All gifts are most welcome, and the project offers multiple sponsorship and naming opportunities, including:

Upper Competition Courts	\$100K/each
Lower Competition Courts	\$50K/each
Knights Backboard	\$25K
Bleachers	\$15,000 each
Players Benches	\$10,000 each
Net Sponsor	\$5,000 each

Donors will be recognized on a Donor Wall, located near the courts.



To make a multi-year pledge, please contact Director of Advancement Stephanie Brooks at sbrooks@altamontschool.org or (205) 879-2006 ext. 1225.

To make a single gift in support of this important project, please mail a check to the school or give online by visiting www.altamontschool.org/giving and designating “Tennis Court Renovation” as your project of choice.



Porter Named State All-Star as Tennis Teams Shine

Altamont's tennis teams earned impressive honors this season. The girls' team earned first place at the sectional tournament, while the boys' team was first runner-up. Both teams competed in the AHSAA State Tournament, where Katherine Grace Whatley earned first place in the No. 6 seed singles. The girls finished in fifth place among the 16 teams at the state tournament, and earned the Team Sportsmanship Award by vote of all the teams. Rising senior Sydney Porter was later chosen for the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) All-Star North tennis team in addition to earning second place at the sectional tournament.

Track and Field Teams Earn State Honors

The varsity indoor track and field teams capped their season with medals at the AHSAA 1A-3A state meet in February. Carson Hicks was state champion in 60m dash, and she captured silver medals for both the 400m dash and the long jump. Merritt Fulmer was the state champion in pole vault, setting a new school record of 9' 9". The team of Alan Alderson, Ajani Salvary, Jack Nichols, and Jack Langloh was state champion in the boys 4x400m relay. Jack Nichols was Second Place in 1600m and third place in 800m. Harris Strang was third place in 1600m and 3200m. Parker Denson was third place in pole vault. Overall, both the boys and girls teams finished in fourth place in the state.

The outdoor track and field team wrapped its 2022 season in great style in May, with the girls finishing as 2A state runner-up and the boys finishing in fourth place in a close race for the top at the AHSAA State Championships. Jack Nichols was state champion in 3200m and second place in 1600m. Carson Hicks was state champion in 200m and long jump, second place in 400m, and 3rd Place in 100m. Merritt Fulmer was second place in pole vault and surpassed the 2A state record. Frances Overton was second place in 1600m, and third place in 800m and 3200m. Jack Langloh was second place in 110m hurdles. Harris Strang was third place in 3200m.

All-Star Runners Lead Cross Country To Fourth Place Finish

Altamont's varsity cross country teams wrapped their season at the AHSAA State Championship in November. Freshman Harris Strang finished atop the podium with a third place finish. In addition to being named All-State, Harris broke Asher Desai's school record in the boys' 5K (16:22). Jack Nichols also earned All-State honors with an eighth place finish and a time of 16:59. Nadeem Johnson, Jack Langloh, and George Benson finished out our top five scorers, each running sub-19:00. In the girls' race, Frances Overton was All-State with a sixth place finish and a time of 20:06. Mary and Laura Spann, Adele Benson, and Leslie Mitchell rounded out our top five scorers, all sub-21:40. Both teams placed 4th in the state in the final 3A standings, with 18 of our 20 runners setting personal records.

Golfers Earn Sectional Honors

Our golf teams opened their season in the Chesley Oaks Invitational, then went on to compete against Locust Fork, Cold Springs, Southeastern and Holy Spirit (boys only) before advancing to sectional and sub-state tournaments. The boys had their best team effort to date, and won their sectional tournament for the second straight year. The girls finished third overall.

Young Volleyball Team Posts Key Wins Over Rival

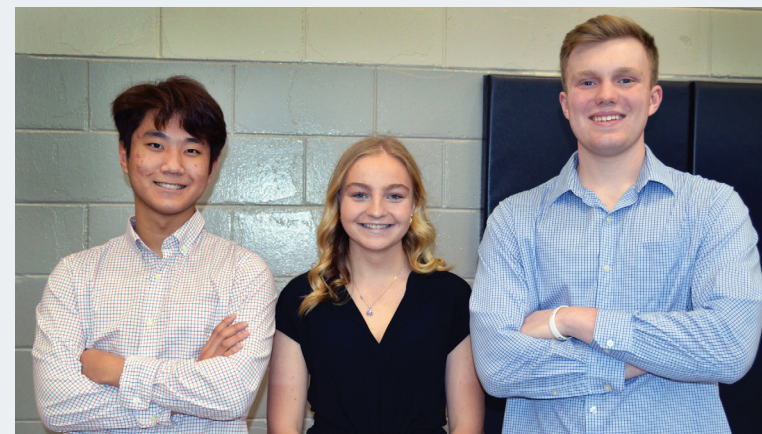
Our young varsity team—consisting of freshmen, sophomores and one junior—worked hard all year. They won two times against rival Indian Springs, with scores of 25-5, 25-21 and 25-12 for the first game and 25-5, 25-13 and 25-9 for the second game. Their final record was 20-12-1 and their Area 9 record was 5-3.

Baseball Is Area Champion

Our baseball team took on Westminster, Ider, Wenonah, Midfield and Center Point on the way to becoming the 2022 area champion.

Soccer

Our soccer teams competed against Westminster, Ramsay, Donoho School, John Carroll, Parker, Indian Springs (girls only) and Gardendale.



Choun, Hoover, Marshall Sign Collegiate Athletics Letters of Intent

Altamont seniors Sam Choun, Chase Hoover, and Abigail Marshall are headed into collegiate athletics after signing letters of intent this spring.

Choun will fence for Brandeis University. He has had multiple podium finishes at local, regional and national tournaments, including a gold medal in the Division III Men's Epee event at the 2021 U.S. National Fencing Championship.

Chase Hoover will play basketball for Millsaps College. He played power forward/center for Altamont and was team captain this year. He also has competed on multiple club teams, and he coached a middle school city league team.

Abigail Marshall will compete on Lees-McRae College's cycling team. In 11th grade she won all five National Interscholastic Cycling Association races and was JV state champion. She also is the youngest female to finish the 65-mile Skyway Epic Mountain Bike Endurance race.

“Remember the Humanity of Others,” Rains Tells Students

The Altamont School welcomed home distinguished alumnus Thomas Rainses '00 as the 2022 eighth-grade commencement speaker. Rains recalled the positive influence of Altamont teachers and friends, and the academic exploration that led him to Boston University, Columbia University and his current service as Executive Director of the Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. Institute. The institute is a non-partisan voice that shares the stories of the U.S. Constitution and Judiciary through programs that illuminate issues and perspectives, foster thoughtful and civil discourse, and inspire the national community in its never-ending pursuit of a more perfect union. Rains encouraged the students to take advantage of the same opportunities and experiences, and to use the privilege of their education “to do well and to do good, because the most important thing you can do, above all, is to maintain your integrity and remember the humanity of others.” He offered the model of Frank M. Johnson, a federal judge who made transformative rulings in landmark civil and human rights cases in spite of threats of violence against him. The progress gained through

Johnson’s rulings was not inevitable, Rains said, but depended on the judge’s personal courage in upholding the Constitution without regard to personal differences. “He never strayed from doing right,” Rains said of Johnson. “What always stands out to me is the respect for the humanity of those involved in the cases he heard.”

“Remember the humanity of others, whether they are a peer or an adult or someone you have known your whole lives or have just met,” Rains urged students. “Remember to be kind and just. Take the time to get to know people, and you will discover that, just like you, they have their own strengths and passions and challenges and fears. You will find you have something in common, and your lives will be richer thanks to those relationships.”



SPRING FUN!





CLASS OF 2022 ACCEPTANCES

Albany College of Pharmacy & Health	Hamilton College	Tufts University (4)
Amherst College	Hampden-Sydney College	Tulane University
Art Center College of Design	Harvey Mudd College	Tuskegee University
Auburn University (18)	Haverford College	University of Alabama (11)
Auburn University at Montgomery	Howard University	Univ. of Alabama, Birmingham (4)
Bates College	Knox College	University of Alabama, Huntsville
Belmont University	Lees-McRae College	University of British Columbia
Berea College	Louisiana State University	Univ. of California, San Diego (2)
Berry College (2)	Loyola University Chicago	University of Chicago
Birmingham-Southern College (4)	Loyola University Maryland	University of Georgia
Boston University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Iowa
Bowdoin College	Michigan State University	University of Michigan
Brandeis University	Millsaps College	University of Mississippi (5)
Brevard College	Mississippi State University	University of Montevallo (4)
Brown University	Northeastern University	UNC, Charlotte
Bucknell University	Northwestern University	University of Notre Dame (2)
California College of the Arts	Oberlin College	University of Pennsylvania (2)
Carleton College	Ohio State University	University of Rochester (2)
Carnegie Mellon University	Piedmont University	University of South Alabama
Case Western Reserve University (2)	Reed College	University of South Carolina
Clemson University (3)	Rhodes College (5)	University of Southern California
Colby College	Rice University	University of Victoria
Colorado State University	Ringling College of Art and Design	University of Virginia (2)
Cornell University	Samford University (2)	University of Washington
Dartmouth College (2)	Savannah College of Art and Design	Vanderbilt University (2)
Davidson College	School of Visual Arts	Virginia Tech
DePaul University	Sewanee: University of the South (5)	Wake Forest University (2)
Dickinson College (3)	Skidmore College	Washington and Lee University
Drew University	Southern Methodist University (3)	Wellesley College
Drexel University	Spelman College	Wofford College
Duke University	Spring Hill College (2)	Yale University (2)
Elon University	Texas Christian University (2)	
Emerson College	Trinity College	Bold = matriculation
Franklin & Marshall College	Trinity University	Number of acceptances in parenthesis
Furman University (2)	Troy University	
Gettysburg College		

The View From the Hill

STUDENTS SEEK WAYS *to Help Ukraine War Refugees*



The Altamont School is giving its students unique insight into the war in Ukraine and seeking ways for the community to show solidarity with those the war has disrupted or displaced.

Ninth-grade student Alexander Skowronski sparked community-wide engagement with the crisis after his family's Fortuna Clinical Foundation launched an initiative to aid refugees from Ukraine. The foundation is soliciting aid for the regional hospital in the Ukrainian town of Ivano-Frankivsk and the refugee center in Yazlovets, and is partnering with the Polish Universal Reading Foundation to purchase Ukrainian language children's books for distribution to refugees.

Skowronski said his family was deeply moved by the humanitarian crisis surrounding the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan last year. That

developed quickly, and the family regretted that they were not able to find a way to immediately provide help to Afghans. When Russia invaded Ukraine, they did not want to miss another opportunity to help, especially in a region of deep personal importance to their family. The Polish family has ties to the Ukrainian town of Ivano-Frankivsk, where current dangers echo a troubled past.

More than 3.5 million Ukrainians have fled to Poland since the start of the war, and the Skowronski family is providing direct, personal relief by using a residential property they own there to shelter a mother and two children while their husband and father serves in the Ukrainian army in the Donbas region. The plight of such children—either living as refugees or still in a war zone—is of special concern to Alexander Skowronski. "Today, they should be worrying



about the math test they have next week,” he said. “Instead, they’re worrying about their friends and family—will anybody be injured? For those who have fled, they’re worrying about those they’ve left behind.”

As the war began, Skowronski was thinking of his own academic work and preparing a multi-year service project in conjunction with the Altamont’s School’s C. Kyser Miree Leadership Center. Center director Beth Dille expedited his admission to the program when Skowronski proposed Ukraine refugee relief for his project.

Dille explained that selected ninth-grade students develop leadership projects through the center and commit to them for the remainder of the their time in Altamont’s upper school. “The goal is always to be very conscious of sustainability or, if it isn’t going to continue, a responsible exit plan,” she

said. Skowronski might continue the work when he transitions to college, Dille said, or he might pass it along to another Altamont student who shares his passion for helping refugees.

For now, Skowronski is raising awareness about the needs of displaced Ukrainians through media interviews and special events at The Altamont School. He organized an April online event featuring Ukrainian physician Katia Zahorodnia, psychology professor and police lieutenant colonel Alexey Serdyuk, humanitarian aid workers Josh and Meg McClug, and Ukrainian teens Veronika Velichko and Nastya Kuchmiy, all of whom offered important personal perspectives.

Skowronski and Dille have worked this summer to find other ways to connect Altamont and Birmingham-area students to their Ukrainian counterparts. They worked with Ukrainian teacher

Olena Viktorova for an online June 22 event (shown here) in which American and Ukrainian students shared stories about themselves—the ordinary stuff of school, pets and hobbies. Having this contact as the war disrupts traditional educational exchange opportunities will help Ukrainian students cope with stress and build long-lasting relationships with their international peers, Viktorova said. “We can really feel your support and empathy.”

Dille said other exchange opportunities might include online gaming and a virtual pen pals initiative that could offer socialization for all as well as service credits for local participants.

Niko Tsivourakis, Altamont English teacher and director of the school’s Global Initiative, developed a related project with the help of rising eighth-grade student Ben Poczatek, whose cousin Pawel Galewicz will provide a recorded description

of how his own community in Poland is serving refugees. Tsivourakis said students in grades 5-7 also worked on a short story writing project to share with the refugees in that community. All of the work reflects The Altamont School’s globally-conscious values and culturally diverse community. “Engaging our students in authentic ways is always our priority,” Tsivourakis said. “This is one of those wonderful opportunities in which school can extend beyond our classrooms, connect us with real people and become a catalyst for good.”

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