

# THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL

## NEWSLETTER

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## Natural Is the New Pretty A Journey into Regenerative Landscaping

by Erika Gonzalez

I am on a journey, through a world I never saw, noticing things I never paid attention to: landscaping plants. I've wandered through the land of natives and perennials into a new realm where people throw out words like "Oudolf" and "Tallamy," and others nod knowingly. Here is the world of regenerative landscaping, and it is good.

By way of background, let me just state the irony in my obliviousness: My husband is a botanist. My father was a landscape architect who spent his retirement volunteering at a botanical garden. I, however, am a "black thumb" — even succulents die in my care. With full awareness of my shortcomings in this area, as I stepped into the director of facilities role, I sought to hire a guide, if you will. Okay, a landscaper, but it had to be the right kind of landscaper because we are Paideia. We want beauty in keeping with our neighborhood, but we aren't a golf course or a wild meadow, and we need to find the middle ground between the two.

Apparently, it is called regenerative landscaping and it's kind of a big deal right now. This school of landscaping prioritizes using the land we own in a sustainable way, building good soil, planting to hold the soil in place, keeping the water that falls here from running off, growing native plants where possible, allowing plants to reseed the area naturally as well as growing edible and medicinal plants to support our learning objectives.

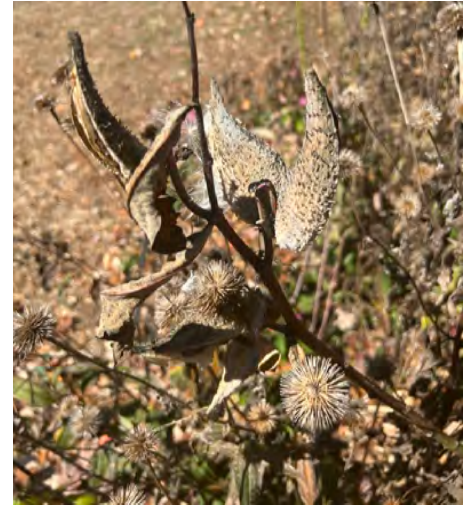
Why are we doing this? Why not just have rolling green lawns everywhere? Paideia is unique and dynamic, and it is important for our campus to reflect who we are, both fundamentally and as we

grow and change. We are a place of learning and work to make that learning active and engaged. Our science programs take advantage of the robust Urban Ag classes we host at Paideia Farm within a setting that displays tangible evidence of biological concepts. Within a fully functioning farm, elementary students plant, grow and compost; high school biology classes study plant cycles; and the Medical Botany classes assess plants that can be used medicinally. Through these experiential-learning activities, our faculty is able to enrich the curriculum and offer something new, different and quintessentially Paideia.

Paideia's Framework of Values states, "The school should introduce children to the complex interrelatedness of people and the environment. We should encourage our students to take responsibility for their own immediate environment and for advocating preservation and protection of the natural world."

With that in mind, I looked for a landscaper who held that value as well and found a community partner in Roxy from Shades of Green. When I met Roxy, I asked her how we can live our sustainability values and stay pretty. She said it depends on how you define "pretty." And that's when it clicked. We are going to have to help people see the beauty in the natural choices we are making. In collaboration with our sustainability coordinator, Korri Ellis, Roxy and I have implemented some changes to ensure our campus looks good and does good.

I invite you on this journey with me. Let's help our community look at a flower going to seed and not think, "It's dying. It should be removed," but rather, "It's going to seed, which helps wildlife reseed the area naturally." When we see distinct



spaces around plants, rather than worrying about filling in space, let us think of students needing access to work in and around the plants as part of their curriculum. And when you see clover and dandelions in the grass? Think not just of nitrogen-fixing but also of Brian Smith teaching his students about the earliest bloomers or maybe even just walking his class pet lizard (on a leash, of course) on a stroll for fresh greens!

Our community has an amazing commitment to enriched learning and environmental stewardship. Let's spread the word that natural is the new pretty.

# Paideia Cross-Country Teams Qualify for State

Photos by Dan McCauley

At our region championship meet on Oct. 25, our varsity girls' cross-country team won, the boys' varsity team took second, and both qualified for the state championships!

The Python Varsity Girls were led by **Megan Walter**, who was 3rd place overall, and four of her teammates joined her on the top-ten podium. **McKinley Hales** was 5th, **Sisi Elkinson** 6th, **Baikal Miller** 9th and **Ella Dameron** 10th. **Anika Hofmeister** and Kathryn Hales were 13th and 21st, respectively. The Paideia girls won with an overall team score of 33 points. The second-place team, Mount Vernon, had 72 points.



## Booked on Campus

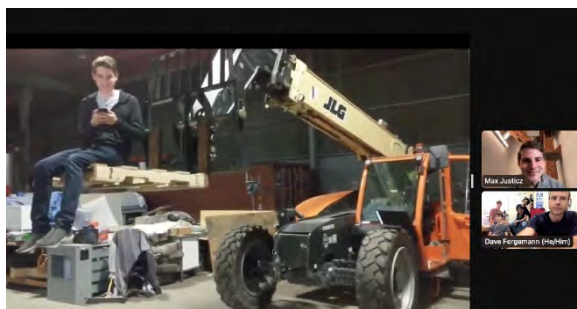
**The book:** *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann (both the original edition and new Young Reader adaptation)

**Who's reading it?** High School Book Club

**What's the story?** In the 1920s, more than 20 members of the oil-rich Osage Nation in Oklahoma were murdered in what was eventually discovered to be a loose conspiracy of wealthy white ranchers, guardians, bankers and even family members, in a bid to gain control of a victim's share of the oil money. This true-crime narrative centers on Osage woman Mollie Burkhart, whose family was targeted, and details the newly formed FBI's investigation, led by former Texas Ranger Tom White, that identified many of the villains and sent some to jail. The author's own research uncovered new evidence and expanded the story beyond all that was previously known.



- Major congrats to **Brent Douglas '98** on being honored as one of the Daily Journal Corporation's 2022 Top Labor and Employment Lawyers in California. Brent was selected from a group of California lawyers for their work as lead counsel in the past two years in labor and/or employment issues.
- **Devin Mashman '14** and **Camille (Jones) Mashman '14** were married on May 21, 2022. The wedding party included **Connor Mashman '16**, **Emma Jones '18**, **Carly Mashman '18**, **Cameron Futral '14** and **MaryKathryn Terry '14**. Congratulations, Pythons!
- This September, **Dave Ferguson's** robotics class got a visit from **Max Justicz '13** to talk about his startup, Charge Robotics, which is building giant robots to build solar farms. Dave also held a virtual STEMinar with **Jenny Middleton '06** titled "Reading the Ocean's Diary: Unlocking the Climate Secrets Recorded in Deep-sea Sediment."



## SPOTLIGHT Mark Your Calendars

# Manuel's Tavern Holiday Party

**Monday, Dec. 26, 8-10 p.m.**

Join your fellow alums in reminiscing about all things Paideia with food, drinks, prizes and more! If you would like to volunteer, please email [alumni@paideiaschool.org](mailto:alumni@paideiaschool.org).

## An Interview with Amanda Styles '96, Senior Solution Architect at Salesforce

**First off, tell us a little bit about your background. What have you been doing since you graduated from Paideia, and where are you now?**

I attended Paideia for my junior and senior years of high school, and even though that's not a long time, it made a huge impact on me. After Paideia, I went to Warren Wilson College near Asheville, North Carolina, and majored in social work. I also worked in the development office as part of my work-study, which set me up well to become a fundraiser. I worked for several nonprofits in Asheville and Orlando before moving back to Atlanta to work for Paideia in 2004. I actually worked for Paideia longer than I attended! These days I live in Decatur with my wife, Megan, our eight-year-old daughter, Addie, and dog, Grits.

**With regard to your work at Salesforce, tell us about what led you to this path.**

I had always loved the data side of fundraising — reporting, mail merges, figuring out how to raise more money based on people's interests and what they had given

in the past. Eventually, I had the realization that I could focus just on that piece and move to enabling fundraising offices rather than making the asks myself. I was working at Atlanta Legal Aid as the grants manager when I first learned about Salesforce. I requested donated licenses and set up the system to track the grants and the capital campaign I was managing. I was hooked. My next role was database manager at Literacy Action, and then I became a consultant working with nonprofits.

**What do you most enjoy about your time there?**

I love that I get to help these national and international nonprofits raise more money and have more impact. I also love that there is always something new to learn. The technology is growing all the time, and I feel like I am constantly learning more about consulting and architecture, especially as a career-changer.

**If you could go back in time and give the high-school version of yourself advice, what would it be?**

Go ahead and be enthusiastic about the things that excite you. Everyone won't

understand, but it's better to go deep in the things that you love and that you are good at. When I first got into the Salesforce ecosystem, I made the decision to go all in. I led the Atlanta Nonprofit Community Group. I went to Dreamforce. I watched a lot of YouTube videos to start learning, and I did a lot of Trailhead for training once it came out. It confused people, but it's totally how I ended up where I am now. I wish I had realized back in high school that I didn't have to (try to) play it cool.

**Any favorite teacher(s) you want to give a thank-you or shout-out to?**

It's so hard to pick. I would say that Donna Ellwood's Revolution and Society class has stayed with me and influenced me deeply even now. John Capute also made a huge impact on me — teaching me that I had something original to say and challenging me to really share that in my writing. And Kathy Brown's AP chemistry class was where I truly found community as a new student at Paideia, and I'm forever grateful.

# THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL

1509 Ponce de Leon Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia 30307

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THE PAIDEIA SCHOOL is nonsectarian, serving families with children ages three through 18. Paideia does not discriminate in employment or in admissions. It actively seeks racial, cultural, and economic diversity in its student body. The ancient Greek word *Paideia* conveys the concept of a child's total education: intellectual, artistic, and social. The Paideia School Newsletter is published 10 times a year. The deadline for the newsletter is the 1st of the preceding month. Send all correspondence to Caroline Driebe, Editor, at Paideia School, 1509 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307. Phone number is 404/377-3491, ext. 339; e-mail address is [driebe.caroline@paideiaschool.org](mailto:driebe.caroline@paideiaschool.org). For information about sports schedules and upcoming events visit our web site at [www.paideiaschool.org](http://www.paideiaschool.org)

## Annual Campaign: Why I Give?

*By Derek Mize and Jonny Gregg*

This is our second year here at Paideia. Our daughter Simone is in Half Day and our other daughter, Isabella, is nine months old. Being two dads raising kids in Atlanta, a place we had no connection to when we moved here three years ago, we desperately wanted a school environment that would embrace us as a family, and we immediately found that at Paideia. Our entire family was eagerly welcomed by students, faculty and staff. Simone has thrived in Half Day, where she is learning, growing and, most important, seen and cherished for who she is every single day.

We can confidently say that Paideia is unlike any other independent school in Atlanta. From the student-centered approach to the learning experiences at Paideia Farm to the buddy system that exists between older and younger students, Paideia places community, connection and belonging at the forefront of the education experience. Even as a four-year-old, Simone brings these values home, where they positively impact our family and the interactions we have with our friends and community to make those experiences and relationships richer and deeper.

So, why do we give? We give to support the Paideia community. We donate to enable the teachers who teach Simone about kindness, sharing and inclusivity to have more tools to bring those lessons to life. We give so that faculty can continue developing unique curricula that will impact how our girls see the world. We give because our daughter loves going to school and is a little reluctant to leave. We give because our entire family has benefited from being members of the Paideia community.

Please join us in donating to the Annual Fund today so that our tomorrows continue to be filled with learning, laughter and joy.



[www.paideiaschool.org/  
givenow](http://www.paideiaschool.org/givenow)