

LIGHTNING STRIKER

Laurence School
Fall 2022-2023

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

By: Olivia H. '23

Most 1st-6th grade students will remember the old play structure, Sport Court, and gym. This October, students were thrilled to be able to hang out on a brand new playground, and play on the re-done Sport Court and in a freshly-painted gym.

A lot of thought and planning went into these renovations. Mr. Stern, COO and Director of Grades 3-6, alongside Mrs. Wolke and Laurence's Facilities Team, decided it was time to upgrade our school's athletic facilities over the summer. "The PAC underwent a significant renovation," says Mr. Stern, "from redesigning the gym floor to reflect Laurence's team colors, to repainting the entire gym with colorful, aesthetically pleasing designs. The gym floor was painted and refinished to reflect the brightness with which our Laurence Lightning athletes shine."

Their goal was to create an even more beautiful and inspiring place where kids could have P.E. and home games, hold school-wide assemblies, and house theater productions. Overall, I think I can speak for all students when I say how nice it is to be able to represent the "L" playing sports in our new gym!

Boasting high new structures, two new slides, ziplines, and monkey bars, the new playground has it all! Sixth grader, Oliver S., says, "My favorite thing was the suspense and eventually playing on the play structure," he said. "The old one was not too fun and lacked excitement as we got older, but this one has so many new things!"

The Sport Court has also been transformed, and updates feature a safety-enhanced court surface for basketball, volleyball, pickleball, and kickball. Additionally, the Sport Court now has a brand new stage for outdoor assemblies and several new trees to recreate the shady spaces that our beloved mulberry tree once provided. The new state-of-the-art, colorful playground equipment reflects a contemporary, adventurous theme, where Laurence students of all grade levels can play, climb, and create lasting memories.

All of us extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to Jeff Huberts and Alvin Galstian (Laurence School parents) for leading the way on this transformative project. Mr. Huberts and Mr. Galstian were the leaders and driving force behind the renovation projects! The 4-month process of transforming and renovating the Sport Court area was truly a labor of love and a dream come true. The unwavering passion, vivid imagination, teamwork, and tireless dedication of Jeff Huberts, Alvin Galstian, Mrs. Wolke, and the entire Facilities Team resulted in an incredible playspace that will provide treasured memories for Laurence students for many years to come! Go Lightning!

CELEBRATION ALL AROUND

By: Alexia A. '23 and Cambria D. '23

Laurence School goes above and beyond to celebrate diversity on campus. Not only do we celebrate various heritages, we celebrate all the different communities represented on campus. Pride Month, Women's History Month, and Black History Month are just a few of the times we celebrate members of our Laurence family.

Each month, our faculty, staff, and students, highlight different cultures and dedicate time to learning all about different groups of people, from their history to their traditions. Over the past few months, we have celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, Filipino American History Month, Diwali, and Indigenous Peoples' Day. Looking ahead, January 22nd will mark the beginning of Lunar New Year, a Chinese holiday that honors household and heavenly deities and ancestors. Throughout the month of February, we will celebrate Black History Month, to recognize the amazing African Americans who have done so much for our nation. We look forward to Armenian Heritage Month in April, during which we will honor the vibrant Armenian culture. During Asian American and Pacific Islander Month in May, we will celebrate the culture, traditions, and history of the AAPI community in the United States.

In addition to all of the cultures Laurence has paid tribute to this year, there are more special celebrations to look forward to. Women's History Month highlights the achievement of women both past and present who have helped mold this country. We also recognize Pride Month in June, a joyous time to celebrate all members of the LGBTQ+ community and to honor those who worked and fought hard to secure equal rights. Laurence School has a very inclusive and diverse community. We are always open to celebrating various heritage months and holidays, because it gives us an opportunity to celebrate ourselves and each other. No matter where you come from, we want you to know you belong at Laurence!



70TH ANNIVERSARY

By: Sydney K. '23

This year at Laurence is extra special—we're celebrating our 70th anniversary!

Since 1952, our school has built a strong community and grown tremendously in size. From just a few small classrooms, to over 20, a new playground, Sport Court, PAC, even an entire 6th grade village! Our campus has grown from one small class, to over 300 students! This school has evolved so much!

To celebrate this momentous year, the whole school has come together. First, we returned to the PAC and held an unforgettable 70th anniversary performance at our annual Represent the "L" assembly. "I thought all of the props made the assembly more fun—especially when they flipped the 7 from the 70 into an "L" for Laurence," says Paxton B. '25.

During the assembly, we recognized and paid homage to each decade since the opening of the school in the 1950s through music and dance.

The kindergarteners performed the song "Shout," 1st graders sang "Do You Believe in Magic," 2nd graders were proud to show off their vocals during "We Are Family," 3rd graders sang "Wake Me Up Before You Go Go," 4th graders grooved to "Everybody Dance Now," 5th graders belted "Firework," and 6th graders sang "Levitating."

Everyone really loved the assembly, which got us excited about celebrating all year! "This assembly was so much fun, I can't wait to see all the fun we have throughout the year!" said Harper M. '25.

Over the remainder of the school year, the student body plans to celebrate each decade with its own dress-up day and special snack bar—including a special Founders' Day celebration in January.

Laurence School has come so far. With each new decade, we have solved, evolved, and moved forward, bringing creativity and innovation. Our incredible teachers and diverse community have made Laurence what it is today, and we can't wait to see how much the school grows over the next 70 years.



SPORTS



DOWN, SET, BUCKET GAMES

By: Averie P. '23

TOUCHDOWN! Each year, the school community comes together to cheer on our Sixth Graders in the Golden and Titanium Bucket Games. The Bucket Games showcase all that the 6th graders have worked for during their time on Laurence Sports teams. A boys' team and girls' team were formed, and the faceoff was against Valley Beth Shalom.

Athletes, students, and their families meet at the Harvard-Westlake upper school campus to cheer on their favorite Lightning players. Over its history, Laurence has competed against V.B.S., and for the most part, has been victorious. "Not to brag, but we do crush them almost every single year. So when you are in 6th grade, the pressure is on!" says 6th grader Averie P.

This year, the Titanium and Golden Bucket took place on December 1st, with the first game kicking off at 5:45 PM, only a few weeks before winter break. Parents, students, and alumni were encouraged to come support.

The event was made more special when Laurence sixth grader Cambria D. sang the national anthem. "I think the Titanium Bucket is a great experience because it's our last year at Laurence and it's a memory we will never forget."

6th Grader Chaplin B. says, "I feel very proud that I got to play in it this year. I was excited to try a new sport and was hopeful that we would win against V.B.S. I knew that we would have a lot of fun!"

Did you know that the Titanium Bucket wasn't always called that? Previously, the Titanium Bucket had been referred to as the Platinum Bucket, while the year before, it was called the Bedazzled Bucket. The sixth grade girls have put a lot of effort into finding a name that truly represents the grit, sportsmanship, and athleticism their team has to offer. They collaborated, voted, petitioned, and presented their proposal to the Laurence coaching staff—who assisted with getting the name officially changed.

While it's not all about winning, the boys did take home a 22-6 victory against VBS, and our newly-named girls' team tied their game. The sixth grade class feels so lucky to have the support of their Laurence community behind them. So keep fighting, Lightning, and don't forget to represent the "L"!



NEW WALL OF FAME

By: Averie P. '23

Some of you may have noticed that the Wall of Fame has temporarily disappeared. All that is left is an empty navy blue wall. The Wall of Fame is getting redone, and there are going to be new white banners instead of blue.

The banners will be displayed in chronological order, and will include every year since we started the tradition. The Wall of Fame was created by Coachie, and the very first class of the Wall of Fame had only two recipients. Since then, the program has really grown and many students make it a goal to have their name permanently displayed in the PAC. Coach Ross says, "With the growing number of participants, it's getting harder and harder to find wall space, which is a great problem to have."

The Class of 2022 had 39 recipients, breaking a school record. We can't wait to see the new and improved Wall of Fame!



TANZANIA, WOLF TRIBE, LAURENCE

By: Eden B. '23 and Simon T. '23

Coach Laiser is such an empowering person to learn about. He has a fascinating background and inspires many people both inside and outside of the Laurence community. Coach Laiser has only been here for a short time, but is already a very important part of our school. He is an assistant coach and leads engaging lessons amongst the upper grade students. His outstanding activities mean so much, as they focus on teaching the importance of being a great role model. They also teach how to be successful in life. Some of his best advice has been simple but wise—he tells us to always smile, to always greet people, and to always follow your values.

Coach Laiser's background and culture are captivating. He was born and raised in Tanzania. He comes from a family of four siblings, with two sisters and a brother. Throughout his life, when faced with any challenge, he's found the best way to get through is to "work hard, keep your head up high, respect everyone, and ask for support when needed." Since moving to California, one of his jobs included being a counselor at Wolf Tribe for 4 years. Wolf Tribe is a camping ground open to schools to visit and have their students go on overnight trips. Laurence 6th graders have made the trip for many years and went again this fall. The trip spanned 3 days and 2 nights and was so much fun! Having Coach Laiser there with us made it even more special.

Laurence hired Coach Laiser because he was so fun, interactive, and respectful. Coach Laiser shows us what it means to succeed by remembering his core values which include respect, kindness, and service. Values mean a lot to him and he follows them wherever he goes. Coach Laiser works with 6th graders periodically and prepares interesting activities that are beneficial to students as we learn more about our own values. For example, we once teamed up with the other class and worked to get across a minefield that had one correct path. Among other lessons, this reminded us about the importance of teamwork and respect. Another example is when he tasked the entire class with lining up in order of birthdays without talking. This shows the sixth graders how important it is to think of creative ways to succeed.

Since joining the Laurence community at the start of this school year, Coach Laiser has really made a significant impact. He has definitely made a difference in Laurence's community!



SPORTS



BIKE SAFETY

By: Dante R. '25

Back in September, during the 4th grade camping trip at El Capitan, I, Dante R. '25, experienced something really scary. While riding my scooter with my friends, I hit a rock and lost control. I was going too fast, and crashed hard. I went over my handle bars, spinning in the air, and I somersaulted head first to the ground. I hit the back of my head hard enough that my helmet shattered. Aside from the road rash along the whole right side of my body, and a few scars, I am okay. The doctor told my dad that if I had not worn a helmet, my injuries would have been much worse.

Bike riding is a lot of fun, but accidents happen! According to KidsHealth, wearing a helmet that fits your head protects not only your head, but your face and brain as well! Be sure to wear a well-fitting helmet whenever you ride.

I'm so grateful for my helmet because I know it saved my life. Even though sometimes it may seem like no big deal, wearing a helmet is the single most important thing you can do when riding any scooter or bike. Since this experience, I've become passionate about encouraging others to take their safety seriously.

A NEW LOOK

By: Simon T. '23 and Eden B. '23

Did you notice that your Laurence athletes have been wearing different jerseys? The Laurence coaches designed new jerseys for all of the Laurence athletes.

There are many differences between the jerseys this year and last. Some of the biggest differences are the back. This year, each and every jersey has the kid's last name. This is a very big deal because now everybody knows who is who! The style has also changed. The new jerseys feature a new lightning bolt and updated font. The last major difference is the shorts. This year they are Nike and in my opinion, more comfortable. They have no holes and have a sleeker look. The fabric and material are higher quality.

Some people, including Tyler M. '23, a sixth grader, say that the new jerseys are better because the material isn't as thick as the old ones. This plays a big role in jerseys as it makes them easier to exercise in. Hayden C. '23, another sixth grader, says that she also likes the jerseys because they have our last names on the back. Some people strongly disagree. Simon T. '23 says that he doesn't like the design of the new jerseys as much. Even though it has his last name, he prefers the logo bigger and more prominent. Katie K. '23 also prefers the jerseys from last year because she found them to be more comfortable.

The change in the uniforms has been a big one and will hopefully be appreciated by Laurence students for years to come. The coaches put a lot of time and effort into the redesign of the jerseys and have loved seeing athletes in their new gear. Remember to represent the "L"!

WORLD CUP

By: Olivia H. '23, Sydney K. '23, Chaplin B. '23, Alexia A. '23, Averie P. '23

The World Cup is a momentous occasion that only happens every 4 years. Star athletes from all over the globe train year-round and try to qualify for the competition. The qualifying regions include Europe (13 teams), South America (5 teams), North and Central America and the Caribbean (4 teams), Asia (5 teams), and Africa (5 teams). According to USA Today, "the competition dates back to 1930 in Uruguay. Twenty-one World Cups have been played."

The US Men's National Team has never won a World Cup, but the team started strong in the competition this year at the games in Qatar. In their first game, they tied with Wales because of a show-stopping goal from Tim Weah. They then went into a game against England, tying again 0-0. After this, they went into a must-win game against Iran, coming out with a win. The game was 1-0 with a goal from Christian Pulisic. Unfortunately, USA lost in their first game in the knockout round against the Dutch.

The World Cup proved to be very interesting to the Laurence community. There were countless lunches in the science and technology labs cheering teams on. Students from fourth, fifth, and sixth grade were constantly talking about the excitement of the everyday games. 6th grader Marcus S. says "the best part is watching all of the teams at such a high level, and it inspires me to be a better athlete."

IT'S ABOUT BALANCE

By: Eleanor L. '24

So many Laurence students love sports. Many of them participate not only on Laurence teams, but on club teams off campus as well. "I play on Laurence sports teams because I love to Represent the 'L' as a Laurence athlete," says Eleanor L. '24. "I play basketball in the fall, soccer in the winter, and volleyball in the spring. Competing against other schools and being on teams with my school friends has been such an amazing experience." From home games in the PAC and on the Lightning field, to away games where we get to take the bus, teammates have the opportunity to bond in new ways, and they always have a good time.

"We are so lucky to have incredible coaches at our school. It's an honor to Represent the 'L' on Laurence sports teams," says Addison B. '24.

While we are proud to wear our Laurence uniforms, many of our student athletes also play sports outside of school. "My favorite sport is soccer," says Eleanor. "I am on a club soccer team called LA Breakers and play for a flight one 2012 team. Soccer inspires me to always do my best. I have learned about commitment and dedication and how to always persevere. I enjoy the challenge and sportsmanship I experience, too. Playing sports teaches you to solve and evolve.

Sports aren't always about winning or losing. The most important part of sports is having fun. Win or lose, there are two important questions to ask yourself as a team, "did we play our hardest?" and, "did we have fun?" At the end of the day, these are valuable experiences we will hold onto forever.



FOOTBALL GIRLS

By: Emme S. '25

Laurence School is so excited that more girls are playing football! In the past, young girls may have felt discouraged to try new sports, like football, because it is stereotypically a boys' sport, but really, girls can do ANYTHING! What matters most is the effort they put into it.

For fourth graders who just started playing Laurence sports, the idea that they won't have support in a typically all-boy sport can be intimidating. However, the Laurence community always "Keeps Kind in Mind" and supports all of their athletes, no matter what gender. Gray S. '25 learned this. She says, "The crowd will always cheer you on."

Fifth graders have had a year of sports under their belt, so it can be easier for them to branch out and try new things. Mila L. '24 told us that she has "had experiences where the boys on a team weren't kind, but [she] knows these guys and they always treat [her] like a part of the team."

Ruby C. '24 also plays for the fifth grade football team. "Basketball wasn't my sport, so I am happy I have the chance to play something I enjoy," she says.

While we are so proud of our Laurence ladies for breaking down gender stereotypes, we should also be proud of our boys teams for embracing their new teammates! "As a team, we value anyone who works hard, and gives their best effort," says Coach Ross of his football team.

In sixth grade, the girls on the football team have been able to form special bonds with all of the players on their team. Averie Pierce '23 says, "The boys have learned to respect me." At first, they may not have realized how good she was, but now that they have played together for a few years, they all agreed, they are grateful to have her as a teammate.

Over the years, several girls have chosen to play football instead of basketball. It is so important that so many girls are being leaders by playing the sport. It gives younger students girls to look up to, and encourages them to try something new, too.

ARTS

STUPENDOUS SOUTHALL

By: Sydney K. '23

Mr. Southall is such a spectacular dance teacher. In 2021, Mr. Hogenson introduced him to our school. When he met our performing arts team, he knew he had to join them. He was drawn to the Laurence community and loved the students' enthusiasm about dance.

When asked about his favorite style of dance, Mr. Southall said he loves hip hop. He really enjoyed dance when he was in third and fourth grade, but didn't really take it seriously until college. He went to Cal Poly Pomona College in Pomona, California. In his freshman year, he was on a competitive team for his college.

Mr. Southall actually started at Laurence only a week after graduating from college! Before joining Laurence as a dance specialist, he enjoyed working independently on various projects, including an advertisement for Nike. He's also taught at dance studios all around Southern California, including in Westlake and Santa Monica.

Not only does he love teaching dance, but he loves the people he teaches with, too. After meeting Mrs. Evans, they became the most powerful dance duo in the whole school! Every assembly, Mr. Southall and Mrs. Evans come up with an epic dance. They help set the tone for the entire assembly and get everyone excited to participate. They impressed the whole community by coming up with all seven dances for students in kindergarten to 6th grade for the Represent the "L" assembly.

Mr. Southall is also responsible for choreographing several dance numbers for the Upper Division Musical, High School Musical JR.

Currently, he is teaching a routine for "We're All in This Together." Along with Mrs. Evans, he will be working on the show throughout the whole year and helping out with all the dances. From what we've seen so far, I can only imagine how great the final performances will be!

He's only been at Laurence for a few months but he plans to stay as long as possible. He said, "My favorite part about Laurence is each and every kid is so unique and creative in their own way. Every day is a different experience with a different class." He loves Laurence so much and loves all the students.

All in all, Mr. Southall has so much experience to bring to our community and he loves working at Laurence. We're so lucky to have him and can't wait to see all of the fun dances he teaches!

BRUNS RUNS THE SHOW

By: Olivia H. '23

Mrs. Bruns is stepping up and taking charge of this year's musicals and absolutely crushing it! This year is her first as the Performing Arts Chair, and we've loved seeing her in her new position.

"I am thrilled to be directing the Upper Division Musical, High School Musical JR, this year!" Mrs. Bruns gushed. "This will be my eighth Upper Division Musical at Laurence and I'm excited to be stepping into a new role this year."

"I can't compare to other years because this is my first time in the play, but I've noticed she's done a good job organizing," sixth grader Jake M. said. Jake plays Ryan in the Darbus cast of HSM. "For the past couple of weeks, Mrs. Bruns has been separating us into groups. We've been doing separate scenes and learning songs that may only feature certain characters. That speeds up the process and she's managing the rehearsal time really well."

It is a little known fact that the show chosen for the Upper Division Musical is usually based on a rotation to ensure that we don't see repeats of the same show. Mrs. Bruns, being the new director, made the executive decision to do High School Musical JR. This decision was not made on a whim; Mrs. Bruns has her reasons for putting on HSM. Mainly, she felt like it was the perfect time to do a musical about bringing people together following the separation we all experienced throughout the pandemic. Mrs. Bruns described coming across HSM while looking at possible musicals as a "total 'aha!' moment." She said, "I didn't even realize it had been made into a musical for stage." She immediately asked her team for their opinion on doing the show and the decision was unanimous.

Mrs. Bruns shared, "The musical is a total team effort. Putting on a show is hard work, but it's so rewarding and a ton of fun! I was also excited for the kids to work with our new dance teachers, Mrs. Evans and Mr. Southall. They are amazing dance educators and I knew they would be able to bring so much creativity and fun to the show." One of her final reasons is that HSM bridges the gap between generations beautifully! "To put it into perspective," Mrs. Bruns explained, "I enjoyed watching the original movie in my 20s in 2006, Mr. Southall enjoyed it when he was in grade school, and now present-day Laurence students are still enjoying it. It's timeless!"

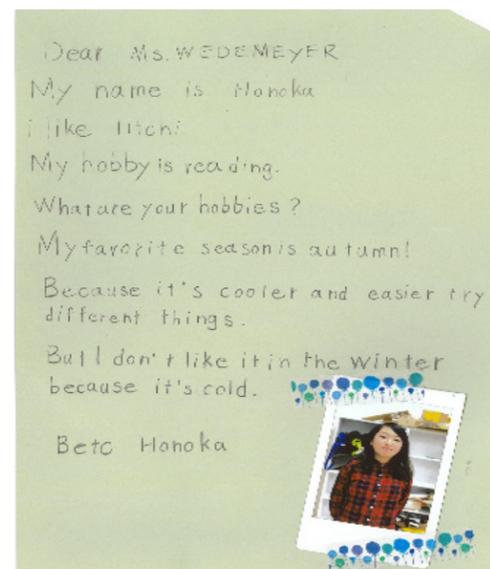
If you are part of the cast of HSM, or are just a huge fan, you can thank Mrs. Bruns for the stellar idea to have our shot at becoming the characters we know and love.

FRIENDS IN FARAWAY PLACES

By: Ms. Wedemeyer

The mixed media art class has been busy making mail for their pen pals abroad! Laurence continues to collaborate with the Sorai Kids Dome after-school program in Japan, sending letters back and forth to learn about each other's countries. Each student describes their city or town, favorite hobbies, and what they would like to be when they grow up. The Laurence artists have already mailed their letters and the students in Japan were overjoyed to open them. We can't wait to receive our mail from Japan and learn about our pen pal friends!

LAURENCE SCHOOL



SORAI KIDS DOME

ARTS



HSM BEHIND THE SCENES

By: Alexia A. '23

"The curtain opens in five minutes! Everyone get to your spots now." From the audience's point of view, a musical is just a bunch of performers on stage, acting, singing, and dancing, but when we look behind the curtain, there is a whole other world. Behind the scenes, there are millions of rehearsals, outfit changes, cues, and much more. To really learn about the behind-the-scenes, I interviewed the casts' leads, the stage crew, and some of the teachers in High School Musical JR. Lights, Camera, Action!

Mrs. Bruns explained that as the director, she oversees the production from start to finish. "I'm proud of the students and how invested they are in the show," she shared. "Everyone is working so hard and trying their absolute best at every rehearsal."

Mrs. Woodford wears many hats. "I have many roles in High School Musical JR—designer, builder, production coordinator, head of stage crew, show runner, hair and makeup, and general assistant to the PA department."

"This show has a lot of big dance numbers, so we have been very busy! I'm proud of how everyone has come together to work as a team," Mrs. Evans, the show's co-choreographer, gushed. Mr. Southall shares the job of choreographing the show. "A challenge we've faced has been creating choreography with multiple parts. In dances like 'Stick to the Status Quo,' not everyone is doing the same dance. In each section, each individual character has to know their individual part in the dance."

The students are equally excited to get started. "I got Gabriella Montez. It felt amazing, especially since I knew professional singers and actors outside of school thought I was good for the role of Gabriella," says Cambria D. '23. Hayden C '23, plays Gabriella Montez in the other cast. "I'm thankful that I got the role of Gabriella Montez because the character really resonated with me," she says.

Lucas R. '23 plays Troy Bolton. He says, "I love being Troy because I've been waiting a very long time to be in a leading role. For me, the biggest challenges are memorizing lines and knowing all of the songs. My favorite part is how everyone, no matter how big their role, gets to work together to make an amazing musical." The other Troy Bolton, Jack D. '23 said, "I love being Troy Bolton because I get to be involved in all the scenes and I have so much fun working with my friends."

From the audience's point of view, actors come on and off stage, but the stage crew is also making magic in between scenes. Chaplin B. '23 is the stage manager. "I am Ms. Woodford's right-hand woman and if anyone needs help and she can't assist them, they come to me."

Behind the curtain, there are millions of different things happening at once to make sure everything goes smoothly in the real performance. The curtain has been opened, so look inside.

TECHNICALLY THEATRE

By: Isla S. '23

There is a new class in town this school year! Brittany Woodford, one of the newest additions to Laurence's Performing Arts Department, is teaching a brand new class, Technical Theatre Production.

In Technical Theatre Production, students essentially get to have the stage crew experience. They get to build sets for school productions, assemblies, or just decorations to be used around campus. For example, students have been making flyers for the school's production of High School Musical JR, and some have been lucky enough to work on major props, too. On top of all that, many students (especially the older ones) get to learn how to use tools like drills and sanders. This class can be very beneficial to a student's life as it teaches them how to responsibly use these tools, and to their experience at school as they participate in creating items for major productions.

In addition to the hands-on experience, there is also a more academic aspect to the class. The students get to learn about lighting, sound, and the many other parts that go into putting on a great show. Students have really enjoyed the way Ms. Woodford incorporates lessons about the more technical components of a production while keeping the class fun and engaging. Technical Theatre Production has been a quick hit and students look forward to it weekly, eager to see what they get to work on during each class. Emory T. '23 said, "The class is awesome. Just awesome. It is a fantastic addition to my last year at school."

Ms. Woodford said, "The class is really cool. The school gets to have great decorations, sets, and props, and they are all made by the students." Students have really enjoyed having the unique opportunity to get creative and have their work displayed on campus and utilized for shows. Every student who has participated in this class has been having the time of their lives! We can't wait to see what they make next!

BOLTON CAST LEADS



DARBUS CAST LEADS



NEW TEACHER, NEW CLASS

By: Roxie M. '25

As most people know, Ms. Woodford is a new teacher at Laurence who specializes in technical theater! She found out about Laurence from her dear friend who actually went to Laurence as a kid.

So far, Ms. Woodford is LOVING Laurence, and knows she will make lifelong friends. She is so excited to come to Laurence every day! She is constantly thinking of new ways to add to the Laurence community.

This year, Ms. Woodford has made a big commitment to make her class exactly how she wanted it to be! Before she worked at Laurence, Ms. Woodford had many different jobs, but she always had a lot of experience with set-making and backstage work.

Lately she has been very busy with the upper division play and her awesome set design class! The goal is to have her class be a part of the performing arts curriculum for years to come.

While she hasn't given us any hints yet, Ms. Woodford told us that the sets she is creating for High School Musical are going to be on the next level! We are all very excited to see!

IT'S A GLEE THING

By: Alexia A. '23

Me, me, me, me, me. Just a typical voice warm-up for Glee Club! Our very own Mrs. Bruns runs the Glee Club, an extracurricular activity where you learn, memorize, and perform songs at assembly chosen by either Mrs. Bruns or the performers themselves! Glee is all about putting yourself out there and performing to your greatest extent.

As always, Mrs. Bruns was genuine and full of heart when speaking about the Glee Club. When asked why she loves Glee, she told us that she loves it "because it gives everyone a chance to work together as a group to create fun music. All are welcome no matter if they've sung on stage many times or whether it's their first time singing."

Being in Glee for six years and watching as kids graduate and come in new, everyone is special and it is known by all. Once you walk through the door you are no longer just a Laurence student, but a singer, too.

Cambria D. '23 told us excitedly that she has participated in Glee for two years straight, "and my favorite thing about it is how we all work together to sing so that all of our voices are heard." Even after being a member of Glee Club for six years, I still have so much fun! It's a dream come true to be in the spotlight, doing what I love, and working with one of Laurence's best teachers.

Glee is a lot more than just singing. Glee requires working, memorizing, practicing, and even more. Glee is about letting your voice take the reins and soar. We get to work as a group to bring joy to others through our voices.

Glee is my favorite extracurricular by far, and I hope you give it a shot, too. Glee you later!

STUDENT

WEREWOLF GALORE

By: Olivia H. '23

Last year, Mrs. Hooper made an exciting announcement at the elective assembly. Her announcement? The new elective, Games Galore! The idea was quite simple; students would get to play fun games during their elective period. After the class kicked off, one game in particular became really popular. AOOOOOO AOW AOW AOOOOOO! You may have guessed it: Werewolf.

When asked about coming up with the idea for this elective, Mrs. Hooper said that she and Mr. Romano both love to play games and decided to make a fun space where students can play a wide variety of games together. Cooper B. in sixth grade remembers how great the elective was. "I had a really fun time. My favorite game was definitely Werewolf, but there were multiple rooms with great games."

Mr. Romano and Mrs. Hooper certainly did not expect the game to blow up like it did. "Originally, we planned to offer Werewolf as an option, but it was not meant to be the focus of the elective," Mr. Romano explained. "However, it became so popular that all 47 students in our elective always start out by playing Werewolf!" As students get eliminated, they can play one of the other games that are offered.

Fourth grader Paxton B. shared, "There are two groups playing Werewolf at a time. Even though you get to play other fun games once you're eliminated, Werewolf is the best by far. It's a fun elective!"

Jonah M., who's also in fourth grade, added "Werewolf is always in 3A. A teacher acts as the narrator and hands out cards with different roles written on them." There are many different roles you can get like ghost, witch, werewolf, villager, and seeker. Each role has a different job and things you do in the game. Jonah's favorite role is the ghost because "the ghosts have the voice to help the villages vote out the werewolf or help the werewolf win by giving letters/initials."

"I think Werewolf is so popular because each time you play, it's a completely different experience," said Mrs. Hooper. "It involves a lot of strategy, but your strategy also changes depending on the role that you are assigned."

The popularity of the game resulted in Werewolf becoming the elective's main focus—a choice students have been very happy about. Even though most kids just play Werewolf, Mrs. Hooper and Mr. Romano offer a wide variety of games as well including Mastermind, Traffic Jam, Connect 4, Chutes & Ladders, and Uno. Charlotte H. '25 totally recommends the elective for people who just want to have fun!

THIS IS HALLOWEEN

By: Hayden C. '23

Every year, a favored Laurence tradition takes place... The Halloween Carnival! Our sixth graders were beyond giddy to make our annual Halloween Carnival a great one.

At each carnival, the parents are super helpful in providing the special Halloween treat bar, and creating the grade level booths. The fifth graders also lend a helping hand, running all of the booths for the excited Laurence students. But it is tradition for the sixth graders to lead the way, choosing a spooky theme for the main event, the Haunted House.

Cambria D. '23 told us, "I think it's awesome that we get to run the carnival because we pick out the theme at the Haunted House, and we can really be creative and carry out our own ideas." She was excited to be in the carnival because she loves acting, and she'd never been in a horror scene before.

The sixth graders have experienced many carnivals in their years at Laurence, so they had a lot of ideas when it came to planning their Haunted House. Some ideas included: a haunted hospital, haunted television, and even a haunted body where you "shrink" down and go inside a "body." There were so many ideas to consider, but we ended up choosing Willy Wonka's Haunted Chocolate Factory.

This year, the Haunted House extended outdoors with an entrance from the outdoor stage behind the PAC and decorations throughout the Edible Garden, where students waited their turn to see the carnival's main attraction. The PAC stage had been transformed to look like a haunted candy factory, and the 6th graders were almost unrecognizable in their costumes and makeup. They definitely set the bar high for years to come!

The Halloween Carnival is definitely one of the students' favorite events on campus, and the culminating moment is being able to participate in organizing it as a sixth grader!

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: THEUS

By: Genevieve E. '25

From doing codables to grading papers, Mr. Theus has done it all. As the newest 4th grade homeroom teacher, he brings humor, and always puts a little fun into learning.

"I feel like I'm working at a wonderful school, and I can be here for a very long time," said Mr. Theus about working at Laurence.

Mr. Theus started at Laurence as a member of the tech team where he helped Mr. Tennyson teach technology classes to the younger grades. Mr. Tennyson shared, "A lot of times someone in our class needed help and it was nice that one person could teach the technology class while the teacher could help."

Now, they still get to work with each other during electives. "I miss sharing a class with Mr. Theus because he's a good partner, so I'm glad I still get to work with him," said Mr. Tennyson.

When asked about transitioning from a technology teacher to a homeroom teacher, Mr. Theus said, "I feel like I'm back at home where I'm supposed to be." He has taught at five schools, and most recently the Hollywood Schoolhouse. He has taught both 4th and 5th grade. He says, "I don't have a favorite grade to teach, but kindergarten is fun."

A couple of Mr. Theus's favorite hobbies are listening to music and playing basketball. He's also the father of a two-year old son. Together, they like to play with dinosaurs and practice numbers and letters. As a student, it's been so cool to get to know Mr. Theus. He is a great teacher and we hope he will work here for years to come.



MAKE WAY FOR MOMO

By: Addison B. '24 and Violet N. '24

Here at Laurence, it's "Bring Your Dog to School Day" every day! Mrs. Wolke's new puppy Moe has been visiting campus often over the past few months.

MoMo is 7 months old. He was born on March 3, 2022, and has been an adorable addition to the Wolke family and the Laurence community alike. Mrs. Wolke already had a furry friend at home, but she decided to introduce a new dog because she "thinks every school should have a school dog." She wanted Laurence students to be able to "share joy," and thought that Moe would give the teachers and the children happiness and support.

Moe got his name from Mr. Wolke's Uncle Morris. MoMo is actually his nickname. Although he is quieter at school, MoMo is a very loving and warm dog. Mrs. Wolke says, "he loves to play ball and fetch and snuggle. He likes adults, but he is still getting used to kids."

MoMo is definitely more comfortable with adults at this point. In order to help his transition into a school environment, MoMo has a special trainer working with him. The goal is that he will become more comfortable with little kids coming up to pet him!

Usually, MoMo stays in Mrs. Wolke's office, or enjoys walks around campus with an adult friend. Mrs. Wolke says the best thing about Moe is that he loves to sit on her lap.

We are so excited for MoMo to get more comfortable with all of us. Make sure to say hello to Moe while he walks around campus, but remember to be kind and gentle with him.



A NEW PURSUER OF ART

By: Hayden C. '23

Teacher Sam is an amazing art teacher, which many students without a doubt would agree with. Want to know more about them?

Teacher Sam grew up in Los Angeles and attended Willamette University. Before they began working at Laurence full time, Teacher Sam ran a psychology lab that studied symptoms of depression in high schoolers, and every summer they worked at Laurence Camp!

In college, Teacher Sam studied developmental psychology, women and gender studies, and of course, studio art. How did they study all of these things simultaneously? "I was really passionate about making the most of my time, and reading books, and studying was something I did for fun," Teacher Sam explained. If all that wasn't enough, they were also on a dance team AND played rugby in college!

When asked about how they got into art, Teacher Sam shared, "My dad was an artist, and he used to sculpt people using sand at the beach, so that inspired me to start art in elementary school." Carrying on the family hobby, they pursue art here at Laurence School, and do a really great job!

When asked about how they like Laurence, they said, "I love Laurence. Every student is really cool and interesting, and the staff is super nice." Teacher Sam truly is a remarkable art teacher. If you want to know more about our fantastic art teacher, feel free to pop by the art room!



GRADE TRIPS

By: Cambria D. '23

One of the most memorable traditions at Laurence are the annual trips. From field trips, to family glamping trips, to 5th and 6th grade overnights; each grade level has made lasting memories students will never forget.

These trips vary for each grade level. For example, students in grades K-4 traditionally partake in 2 local field trips each year. These field trips correspond with what they are learning in the classroom. While third graders enjoy a trip to the Chumash Museum, 4th graders spent an afternoon on Olvera street learning about the Mexican influence in Los Angeles. Upper grade students in 5th and 6th grades have the privilege of participating in overnight trips for class bonding and team building.

This year, fifth graders went to AstroCamp, and sixth graders went to Wolf Tribe. I asked Ruby C. '24 what her overall experience was like, and she said, "it was really fun, and overall a great experience." Brody I. '23 really enjoyed Wolf Camp this year. He said, "it was awesome seeing new things, and cool to have such a beautiful view. We had a lot of bonding activities, and had so much fun."

One of the newer Laurence traditions is the family-led glamping trips organized throughout multiple grade levels. Just recently, the first graders went on a trip to Flying Flags. Collette A. '28 says, "It was the best time ever! There was a scavenger hunt, and we made hats. It was really cool."

Additionally, grades 2, 3, 4, and 6 spent weekends away at El Capitan this year. Alexia A. '23 told us, "It was really nice, I loved getting to bond out of school just to have a great time. It is definitely a memory I will never forget, especially since it was our last year going."

In conclusion, grade level trips mean a lot to Laurence students and families. It helps students bond and learn how to get outside their comfort zone. Laurence always makes everything entertaining, while also being educational. We're grateful to be part of this community!

BUDDY FAMILIES

By: Catherine N. '25

This year, students in 2nd-4th grade are getting to know each other in buddy families. This means the A classes are together (2A, 3A, and 4A), the B classes are together (2B, 3B, and 4B), and the C classes are together (2C, 3C, and 4C). The buddies have already completed many fun activities together including obstacle courses, relay races, scavenger hunts, and creative projects.

"I have been very excited to try out the new buddy style. After we found out about 2A, 3A, and 4A teaming up, I went to work making some awesome buddy trios. I'm lucky enough to have taught so many of the older kiddos, and I love matching up kids with similar interests, personalities, or sometimes ones that just have the same name," said second grade teacher Ms. Oakley.

"It's a unique opportunity to get a group of students together from three different grade levels. Each student has something to bring to the table that they can teach the others," says Mrs. Casillas, a 4th grade teacher.

In addition to the activities the teachers come up with, Laurence also has special buddy traditions. Beginning with Planting Day and ending the year with a yearbook signing event, all buddy pairs and families have a great time growing together.

What is most important continues to be the relationships that are formed. Nyla RW '26 said, "I'm glad that I have a little buddy, and I love learning things from my big buddy."

6TH GRADE ADVICE

Having been here for seven years, the sixth grade class has become experts on all things Laurence. Before they move on to the next phase, the sixth grade class would like to pass on some pearls of wisdom...

3rd Graders:

- » Electives! Choose different classes and have fun with this great opportunity!
- » Writing! You will write your first 5 paragraph essay—be sure to manage your time, it is a very important skill!
- » Little Buddies! And your first year as a big buddy! Be patient and kind.
- » Chromebooks! Make sure you walk while holding your device, and be responsible with food and drinks.
- » New lockers! Make your space unique like you.

4th Graders:

- » Sports! Be sure to communicate with your teammates.
- » Student Leadership! This elective brings so many incredible opportunities. Take it seriously, it means you are a leader at our school.
- » Little Buddies! Not just one, but two little buddies! Be sure to be a strong role model.
- » Upper Division Musical! Be a part of the show or stay behind the scenes, give it your all!
- » Tirbe Challenges! Cooperate with your team and learn how to work together, you'll have new teams in 5th grade.

5th Graders:

- » House Challenges! This is a huge perk of being in 5th grade. Be patient—you won't always win, but you will always have fun.
- » New Little Buddies! Be sure to make lots of memories with them, they will remember you their whole Laurence career.
- » Writing! This is the year to really grow your writing skills. You will have many projects, be sure to manage your time!

From all of the sixth grade, be sure to value your time with friends, grow your skills, and make lasting memories. Before you know it, your time at Laurence will be coming to an end, but you will have so much to look back on with a smile.

FEATURES

FIVE STAR READS

By: Chaplin B. '23

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory- Recommended by Eden B. '23

A great book for kids who are easing into reading. A wonderful story that makes you laugh and will always make you smile when you hear the title. Written in 1964 by Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is about a boy that wins a special golden ticket to visit the amazing candy maker, Willy Wonka. This book's themes include greed, kindness, and wealth versus poverty among others. There's a reason this book has been a treasured children's novel for so long.

The Giving Tree- Recommended by Hayden C. '23

Another classic book written by Shel Silverstein and first published in 1964, The Giving Tree, about a boy who grows old with a tree. The tree gets smaller and smaller because the boy asks so much of it, but they will always be the best of friends. This book teaches children to help people in need. This is one of the most beloved children's books.

The Wings of Fire Series- Recommended by Olivia H. '23

The Wings of Fire Series is a thrilling and moving series with lovable characters and interesting and twisting plots. The series currently includes 15 books. Wings of Fire takes place in the future, where there are very few humans and a lot of dragons. They now call the continent Pyrrhia and 7 tribes of dragons are peacefully coexisting... well, not so peacefully. There are three main parts of the series: The Dragonets of Destiny, Jade Mountain Academy, and The Lost Continent. The first part of the series starts when the tribes are at war with each other and it's up to 5 dragonets mentioned in a prophecy to save the world from further destruction. The second part takes place after the war is over and the prophecy fulfilled. Finally, the third part takes place after the Jade Mountain crisis and introduces new characters from new tribes. However, towards the end the new characters team up with old favorites for an awesome finale.

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus- Recommended by Katie K. '23

After interviewing a select group of people, Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus has gotten quite a reputation as an amazing book that has made people happy when they were feeling sad or lonely. Written and illustrated by Mo Willems, author of the Piggy and Gerald and the Pigeon series, this book was published in 2003. It's about a pigeon whose dream is to feel big and drive a bus. The theme of the book is responsibility. Overall, this book is a children's classic that will always bring a smile to children's faces.

HAVE A LAUGH

By: Eden B. '23 and Aiden A. '23

Q: Why do bees have sticky hair?

A: They use a honeycomb!

Q: What is the best thing about Switzerland?

A: I don't know, but the flag's a big plus!

Q: What do you call it when a snowman throws a tantrum?

A: A meltdown!

Q: What do you call a magic dog?

A: A labracadabra!

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COMING SOON BY 6TH GRADE

By: Katie K. '23

This year's sixth graders are excited to rock the school during their last year on campus! During this trimester the sixth graders are participating in all sorts of traditions including sports and birthday chants. We've had some huge hits, and I know that the sixth graders are so excited to share new songs they come up with throughout the year.

Sixth grader Alexia A. says that she is so thrilled to be a sixth grader and feel like a leader. "Being the leaders on campus feels empowering because it is nice to be the oldest on campus and see little kindergarteners looking up to us. On the other hand, it is sort of overwhelming because I want to make sure I am a good role model for the younger students on campus," she says. Alexia is the perfect example of a role model, and someone who wants to Represent the "L" wherever she goes.

Fellow sixth grader Hayden C. loves the privileges that come with the 6th grade village. "I am really grateful that we have a new sixth grade area where we can hang out. I think it looks really nice." I have to agree—I really love the Sixth Grade Village and think it's the best part of the whole school.

Sixth graders Peyton G. and Melia N. really enjoy being a big buddy to their kinder buddies. "I look forward to seeing my little buddy every week. It helps take my mind off everything else we have going on in sixth grade," says Peyton. Melia loves the chance to be a role model for her little buddy and that she gets to look out for them, during any activities. She wants to make sure she is someone they will always look up to.

And of course, we are all eager for our special CAPS presentations, a time in which we get to showcase all that we have learned throughout the year, and our many years at Laurence!

While we're all having fun, it is sad to think that this is our final year at Laurence. Sydney H. '23 says that she is really happy with all that she has accomplished during her seven years at Laurence. That being said, she is also excited to make new memories at a new school next year. She will definitely be taking the memories that she made here at Laurence with her.

All in all, I know that everyone in sixth grade will be so sad to leave Laurence, and I know that I will be sad to have to leave all of my friends. I find it helps me to think about what all that our futures hold, the amazing new memories we'll get to make, and really trying to appreciate the time we have left. We can't wait to see what the rest of this year will bring!

COMIC CORNER

By: Chaplin B. '23 and Alexia A. '23

