

THE EQU^UESTRIAN

Mill Springs Magazine
& Annual Giving Report



MISSION

Mill Springs Academy is a values-based educational community dedicated to the academic, physical and social growth of those students who have not realized their potential in traditional classroom settings.

*“... if a student can't learn the way we teach ...
we should teach the way a student can learn.”*

TWEETIE L. MOORE, FOUNDER

MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Atlanta Area Association of Independent Schools
Georgia Independent School Association
Georgia Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children
International Dyslexia Association
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Dear MSA Community,

As we work to return to our pre-pandemic lives, it's exciting to see the activity happening on and off our campus. The number of events we've been able to bring back is uplifting: from student productions in our amphitheater and indoor theater, to athletics on and off our campus, to community building events from volunteer beautification days led by our PVA to on-campus celebrations during and after the school day. We are so grateful to be able to celebrate our exceptional students together again.

This year, we are taking the time to evaluate and strengthen our connection with our students, faculty, parents, and community. We all feel a sense of loss from the last few years of COVID restrictions, and we believe it is essential to understand this and work to reclaim that wonderful sense of community and Mustang Pride throughout Mill Springs. We look forward to the many future celebrations and events we have planned.

As we move forward, we are excited about the continuing growth we see at MSA. From welcoming new students and families to updating and caring for our amazing facilities to continuing to strengthen the academic rigor and support of our programs, we could not do any of this without you. Your time, talent, and treasures are vital to our students' experience, and we wouldn't be able to do it without you.

As we continue to reconnect and celebrate all of the amazing people and experiences at Mill Springs, we look forward to working together to support our students as we help them thrive in school and in life.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra M. Orr". The script is fluid and cursive.

Debra M. Orr
Head of School

Welcoming Back our Alums

On Thursday, December 15, 2022, Mill Springs welcomed our alums back to campus for the first time since COVID began. Over 70 former students and 20 current and former faculty and staff members attended the get-together hosted in the Great Room of Slayden Hall. Attendees enjoyed a spread catered by Taco Mac, a playlist of favorite songs from the years attendees graduated, and spent time reminiscing while playing foursquare and Uno. The best part of the night was witnessing alums and faculty members reconnecting and catching up. We always love to hear what our alums are up to, so please let us know at millsprings.org/alumni!



Assistive Technology at MSA

Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that helps people who have difficulty speaking, typing, writing, remembering, pointing, seeing, hearing, learning, and many other things. Last year, Mill Springs implemented three important assistive technology programs to assist students in reaching their full learning potential.

Read&Write



MSA invested in the Read&Write assistive technology suite due to its “all in one” toolbar approach to accessibility. Students can use a variety of tools to support their learning, such as read aloud, speech to text, word prediction, highlighting, screen masks, and more. Our students are using the Google Chrome extension, and we also have the Windows software on our laptops.

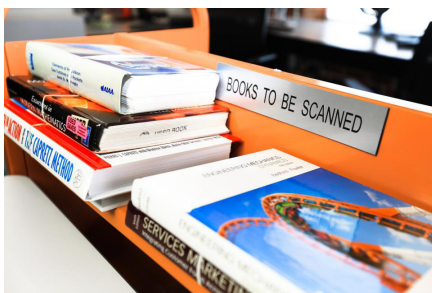
www.texthelp.com/products/read-and-write-education



Learning Ally

The Learning Ally app is designed to support literacy for students with dyslexia. Students at MSA have access to thousands of audiobooks through Learning Ally. Teachers can assign reading, track progress, and more using this tool. Many of the audiobooks come with the e-book so that the student can visually follow along while they listen.

<https://learningally.org/>



Digital Textbooks

MSA uses Georgia Tech’s Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation membership program to digitize our textbooks. The program converts any print textbook into an accessible PDF that can then be read aloud using our Read&Write assistive technology tools.

<https://cidi.gatech.edu/>

Upper School Building Suffers Water Damage

Over Winter Break, Slayden Hall (which houses the Upper and Communication Arts communities) experienced a burst pipe and subsequent flooding due to the freezing temperatures. MSA's Facilities Technician, Cooper Neff, drove to the school to cut off the water and survey the damage. Faculty members Judy and Jim Norris headed straight for the coral lab to try and save as many fish and coral as they could manage. The school is grateful to have connected and secured a contract with Full Circle Restoration to assist in restoring and rebuilding much of the inside of Slayden Hall.

Upper School students' return to campus for the spring semester was delayed by a few days in order for faculty and staff to move and set up new classroom spaces around campus. When students returned, they were given tours of the classroom locations, and everyone settled into the new schedule.

A renovated Slayden Hall will be ready to welcome back students for the 2023-2024 school year. Follow MSA on Facebook and Instagram for updates on the renovation process.



Q&A with the **COLEMAN** Family

Q. When did you join the MSA family?

Brady started at Mill Springs in the fall of 2021 as a 6th grader. While restrictions were beginning to lift, we were still very much in the height of Covid protocols w/ masking and contact tracing. It's hard for kids to begin again with an all-new school and friend group, but MSA welcomed all new students with open arms.

Q. What brought your family to MSA?

Brady had an IEP through elementary school that was very helpful and positioned him for success from K-5. His school was small and he had equally small classes and a wonderful teacher/student ratio. We were not going to have the same circumstances in our local middle school. We knew we needed to make a change before 6th grade began and reached out to several friends who had friends or neighbors who attended MSA.

Q. What was your first impression of MSA?

We loved the small classes and the involvement of each teacher in the child's academic success. The administration took the time to get to know Brady and our family to make sure it would be a good fit. Brady's shadow day was especially helpful in providing Brady with a sense of what MSA would be like.

Q. As parents, what are your favorite parts about MSA?

Brady has never been super sporty, but with all the options and encouragement of staff and classmates, not only did Brady participate in track for the first time last spring, he is also doing yoga and is a current member of the rock climbing team (and loves them both). Last year Brady really enjoyed art w/ Miss Janet and hopes to be able to work on some theater set productions in the future.

Q. What does Brady enjoy about MSA?

Brady enjoys feeling like he's part of the MSA family. Everyone knows everyone, is encouraging and holds each other accountable. Brady enjoys being able to be himself and knowing there are friends and classmates who face similar challenges, and they are all there for each other.

Q. What do you value about MSA and/or your child's educational experience?

Someone told me shortly after I had kids that, "You're only as happy as your least happy child. Brady is so happy here at MSA, and that makes our entire family happy as well!"

Q. Why do you feel it is important to donate to MSA?

Giving to Mill Springs is important to us because without generous donations from others, there would not have been such a wonderful place for any of us to send our children. Many before us believed in what the MSA mission was and donated to help that become a reality for so many deserving kids. Mill Springs has made Brady feel confident, smart, and a part of something wonderful!



Fine Arts Spotlight

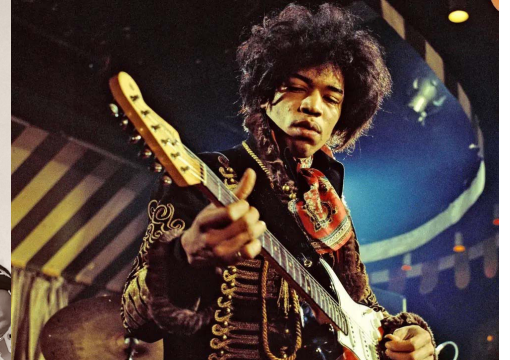
Mill Springs' Fine Arts Program is second to none! Throughout the year, our amazing Fine Arts teachers work with our talented students to bring music, theater, paintings, drawings, ceramics, and more to life. Here's a look at a few of their recent creations.

The SpongeBob Musical Spring 2022





**Band Students Recreating
Photos of their Favorite Artists**



**Fine
Arts**



**In the
Classroom**





Flag Football Team Wins AAC Flag Football Championship

On April 28, the Mill Springs Academy football team faced off against The Cottage School (TCS) in the flag football AAC championship. This is considered the Super Bowl of the league. MSA hit the field well aware that TCS was the defending champions and had not lost a game in two years.

The game started with TCS scoring immediately in what they hoped would set the tone for the rest of the game. The Mustangs, however, had a different idea. Instead of falling into the mind-set of trying to stop TCS, they played a game that forced the opposition to stop the Mighty Mustangs.

As the game progressed, the Mustang defense followed a strong game plan and was able to critically frustrate The Cottage School's offense. This allowed the Mustang offense to play their own game and take the lead at the end of the game. Ultimately, time ran out, and the Mill Springs Mustangs became AAC champions.

There was a great celebration, and the Mustangs behaved with grace and appreciation. All the coaches agreed this was the best game of the year and would rather have a close game come down to the wire instead of a blowout.

Congratulations to the players and the coaches on a fantastic championship season!

Varsity Soccer Team Wins AAC Soccer Championship

Mill Springs' varsity soccer team won the 2022-2023 AAC Soccer Championship against Tapestry Charter School on Monday, October 24. The game was tied 1-1, forcing the teams into overtime and a penalty kick shootout. The Mill Springs Mustang won the shootout 2-0!

Alec Robinson scored the first goal with a free kick with an amazing shot from behind half-field. Matthew Clifton and Sawyer Hahn took charge of the Mustang defense and shut Tapestry's offense down. Adler Hahn and Thomas Bayman had some amazing passes and ball handling in the midfield. Adler Hahn and Alec Robinson both scored the winning penalty shots.

Joaquin Campos was named MVP of the 2022-2023 AAC Tournament. Campos was amazing to watch in action and regularly had "ESPN-worthy" goal saves. He is a 2-year captain, leader, and personal help to his coaches.

Congratulations to the players and the coaches on a fantastic season!



Reimagining Fairy Tales

Students in Ms. Marlena's English class created their own versions of fairy tales this semester. They were taught about Dramatic Structure, and tasked with creating a short fairy tale that consisted of a story juxtaposing the protagonist and antagonist roles. In essence, they wrote stories on the villain becoming the hero. Each student's fairy tale book included an altered title to reflect the perspective of the new protagonist, similar to the children's book "The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs." Each story incorporates an abstract, table of contents, dialogue, and a host of literary elements. Below are excerpts from three of student's fairy tales

Gothel

By Luis Acosta

"I am what many in this kingdom call a witch: a filthy "creature" who abducts children, steals their eyes, and throws them into my cauldron for my latest batch of potion. Well, I'm here writing in this book to tell you, my friend, that I am not what they say I am. I don't have much time, for my life is at its end, so please, read this and don't disregard.

My story begins many moons ago, on a particular night when my rapunzels were greener than the emeralds hidden in caves. I was simply strolling along when out of the darkness came a figure. It was a man, one who was trespassing on MY property. He looked scared while doing so, as if he would faint at the slightest nudge.

Suddenly, he spotted me and, like everyone in the kingdom, became riddled with terror. "Oh dear merciful witch please don't hurt me," he begged pathetically. He continued with his plea, "I was only picking some rapunzels from your beautiful garden. My wife has become addicted to them and I couldn't find anywhere else where it grew so fresh. Please, forgive me!"

He must have laid out his entire life story that night, trying desperately to gain sympathy so that I wouldn't steal his eyes. It turned out that he had stolen from me before in the name of feeding his wife's cravings. She was important to him, clearly, not only because of love but also for the child in her womb."



Scar's Adventures

By Mila Belcastro

"Scar saw Mufasa at the top of Pride Rock, and he walked up there to talk to Mufasa. Before Scar could talk to Mufasa, Mufasa said, "Go away Scar. We have nothing to talk about." But Scar said, "Mufasa, we may have differences, but we are brothers." Mufasa just walked around the corner of Pride Rock.

Scar just looked on with sadness, but he just went back to his cave. Scar went back to his cave so that he could think about Mufasa and how they had grown apart over the years."



The Good Witch

By Thomas Bayman

"The witch lived in a house called a gingerbread house. The gingerbread house was brown, and it was darker than the color of graham crackers. The gingerbread house had white frosting on the edge of the roofs, one green lollipop on the left side of the front door, and one green lollipop on the right side of the door. There were two purple lollipops on the left side, and two purple lollipops on the right side. The four purple lollipops were in the front yard of the gingerbread house."



Are you interested in supporting the students of Mill Springs Academy?



The Fund
for MSA

Strong Roots, New Branches

Open your phone's camera and align it with the QR code. Then click the pop up link to support our school.



Nicole Thomas '16

Nicole Thomas is an entrepreneur, and a proud graduate of Mill Springs Academy. We recently had the opportunity to catch up with Nicole to learn more about her journey after Mill Springs.

After graduating from MSA in 2016, Nicole attended Piedmont College where she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a degree in mass communications. During her senior year at Piedmont College, Nicole recieved the public speaking and debate award for the Mass Communications Department.

Recently, Nicole added the title of entrepreneur to her name by starting her own business, ConnexSocial. ConnexSocial works with local businesses on social media management and content creation, flyer design, brochure design, and business card design.

Nicole credits the phenomal teachers along with taking theater classes at MSA which allowed her to express herself, and gave her confidence to speak in front of other people. She honed her speech writing and public speaking skills while at MSA by giving speeches at student orientations and speaking at graduation.

"The confidence and skills I got helped me after high school graduation. I used these skills when I competed in public speaking competitions in college, had my own radio show in college, was interviewed about my business, ConnexSocial, by Business Radio X (a business radio show) and gave a presentation about my business in front of other business owners at 1 Million Cups (an educational program for new businesses)."

Nicole fondly remembers many Mill Springs teachers, but particularly Ms. Shilpee, Ms. Janet, Ms. Kate, and Mr. Patrick. Ms. Shilpee taught her literature classes, which she credits as strengthening her writing and presentation skills. My favorite teachers were Ms. Sherry, Ms. Shilpee, Ms. Kate, Mr. Jamie and Mr. Patrick. Ms. Kate and Mr. Patrick taught Nicole theater, which helped build her confidence and helped her express herself in front of other people.

Nicole also had some advice for current MSA students imploring them to make the most of their opportunities at Mill Springs as they'll gain valuable skills and have memories to cherish.

We look forward to seeing what Nicole and all of our wonderful graduates accomplish next!



Congratulations to the Class of 2022!

College Acceptances

Appalachian State	Morehouse College
Beacon College	Muhlenberg College
Belmont Abbey College	North Georgia Technical College
Belmont University	Oberlin College
Beloit College	Oglethorpe University
Berry College	Piedmont University
Brewton Parker	Reinhardt University
Chattahoochee Technical College	SAE Institute
Columbus College of Art & Design	Savannah College of Art and Design
Connecticut College	School of Visual Arts
Dayton State University	Toccoa Falls College
Eckerd College	University of Alabama
Emory and Henry College	University of Alabama at Birmingham
Federation University	University of Arizona
Melbourne	University of Connecticut
Flagler University	University of Iowa
Furman University	University of Kentucky
Gardner Webb University	University of Mississippi
Georgia Gwinnett College	University of Missouri
Georgia Highlands	University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Georgia State Perimeter College	University of North Georgia
Georgia State University	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Georgia Trade School	University of Tennessee Knoxville
Gwinnett Technical College	University of West Georgia
High Point University	Western Carolina University
Hunter College	Wingate University
Kennesaw State University	Winthrop University
Lanier Technical College	Wofford
Lawrence University	Young Harris College
Louisiana State University	
Mercer University	
Mississippi State University	



2021-2022 ANNUAL GIVING REPORT

THE FUND FOR MSA

The Fund for MSA is Mill Springs Academy's highest philanthropic priority and the primary way our parents, grandparents, alumni, past parents, and friends can support the school. Mill Springs relies on all members of its community to make a gift each and every year. Contributions to the Fund provide flexible unrestricted revenue that supplements the operating budget, supporting several ongoing priorities. Robust support of the Fund for MSA ensures a strong future for our students and our school.

Areas Supported by the Fund for MSA

1. **General Operations:** provides necessary funds to Mill Springs Academy's areas of greatest need.
2. **Faculty Retention & Development:** provides compensation and professional growth opportunities that attract, retain, and develop talented teachers.
3. **Technology & Innovation:** provides continuous integration of advanced resources and assistive tech in the classroom to increase learning opportunities.
4. **Fine Arts:** supports a fine arts curriculum of visual arts, music, and drama to facilitate creative and collaborative learning.
5. **Athletics:** prepares student-athletes for competition and the developmental learning that accompanies being a team mate.
6. **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** creates a welcoming environment for all students, faculty, and staff.

The Fund for MSA operates annually from July 1 through June 30.

ANNUAL FUND TOTALS

Primary Constituents	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Board of Trustees	69,380	48,710	53,325
Parents	171,777	126,146	192,032
Faculty & Staff	21,374	13,701	13,060
Grandparents	30,825	26,915	37,990
Matching Gifts	6,400	4,650	6,500
Friends of MSA	97,275	65,946	48,035
	397,031	286,068	350,942

2021-2022 INCOME AND EXPENSES

Revenue

Tuition and Fees	7,178,509
PPP Grant	1,131,986
Contributions	505,179
Transportation Services	256,931
Other Operating Revenues	112,886
Parent Volunteer Association	98,303
Total Revenues	9,283,794

Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	6,015,569
Other Operating Expenses	2,300,948
Transportation Services	219,080
Information Technology	203,248
Parent Volunteer Association	132,727
Other Non-Operating Expenses	10,491
Total Expenses	8,882,063



Tuition and Fees 77%
 PPP Grant 12%
 Contributions 6%
 Transportation Services 3%
 PVA 1%
 Other Revenue 1%

Salaries and Benefits 69%
 Other Operating Expenses 25%
 Transportation 3%
 Information Technology 2%
 PVA and Other Expenses 1%



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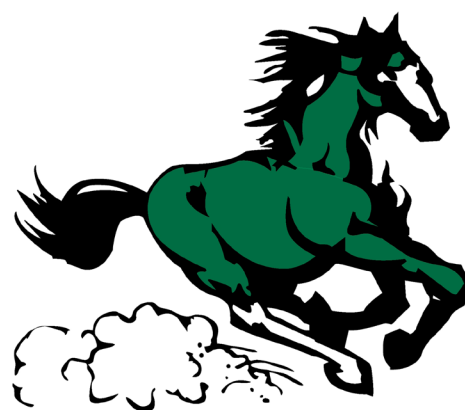
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PARENT VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION (PVA)

The Parent Volunteer Association (PVA) is comprised of the officers, committee chairs, school representatives, and parents who wish to join the PVA. Due to the generous support of many individuals and families who supported our various fundraising efforts during the 2021-2022 school year, the PVA was able to make significant contributions to Mill Springs.

Mission

Provide support for the students and staff to carry out the mission of Mill Springs Academy.

In recognition that Mill Springs accepts and is grateful for volunteer support from all of our constituents – alumni, past parents, grandparents, friends and businesses, as well as our amazingly generous current parents – the Parent Volunteer Association (PVA) is becoming the Mustang Volunteer Association (MuVA). You'll see the name change in future publications and digital outreach.

For information about leadership and committee chair roles, as well as other volunteer opportunities, please email millspringsPVA@millsprings.org.



HONORARY SCHOLARSHIPS

The following honorary scholarships are currently active and awarded at the end of each school year to recognize individual students for their achievements and individual contributions to the Mill Springs community. For more information or to contribute to a particular fund, please contact MSA's Development Office.

BRUCE BROWNLOW SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Established in 2013 by anonymous donors in honor of retiring Upper School Principal, Bruce Brownlow. The purpose of the Fund is to provide a \$1,000 scholarship to an Upper School student, which is applied toward the cost of that student's tuition during the following school year.

ERROL SANDERS SCHOLARSHIP

Established in 2020 by Dan and Angel Murr in honor of long-time PreUpper School literature teacher, Errol Sanders. The purpose of the fund is to provide recognition and support for a returning Mill Springs Academy PreUpper students or rising Upper student in the form of a \$1,000 scholarship applied to the cost of tuition.

MARK RAFUSE LEADERSHIP IN ATHLETICS AWARD

Established in 2020 by Nancy Rafuse in honor of her late husband, Mark Rafuse. The purpose of the fund is to provide a \$10,000 scholarship for tuition assistance to an exceptional rising Upper School student.

SHERRY ROBINSON AND PHIL HANSON SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Established in 2013 by anonymous donors in honor of retired Upper School English Teacher Sherry Robinson, and Coach Phil Hanson. The purpose of the Fund is to provide two \$500 scholarships to an Upper School student, which are applied toward the cost of that student's tuition during the following school year.

OTHER FUNDS

Gifts in Kind

Andrew Bayman
Michael Griffeth
Katy Kane
Brenda Wallace

Errol Sanders Scholarship Fund

Dan and Angel Murr

Mark Rafuse Leadership in Athletics Award

Nancy Rafuse

Restricted Gifts

Bright Wings Foundation
Jae and Lee Ann Early



WAYS TO GIVE

BY CHECK

Please make checks payable to Mill Springs Academy. Be sure to indicate in the memo field or in an accompanying letter if your gift is for the Annual Fund, a particular capital project, or other special designation. If you have any questions regarding a donation by check to MSA, please call our Advancement Office at 678-893-7033

Send check to:

Mill Springs Academy
13660 New Providence Road
Alpharetta, GA 30004-3414

BY CREDIT CARD

Gifts made via MasterCard, Visa, and Discover are gladly accepted and recognized at their full value. If you wish to make a credit card gift, the information you provide will be used solely for processing your gift and verifying contact information. To make a secure, online gift, please visit www.millsprings.org/AF.

GIFT OF STOCK AND OTHER APPRECIATED SECURITIES

A gift of appreciated securities that you have held for more than one year is frequently the most tax-wise way to give securities. For detailed information about transferring securities to Mill Springs Academy, please contact Kristin Wapole in the Development Office at 678-893-7777 or kwalpole@millsprings.org.

PLANNED GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

Planned gifts and bequests allow you to support Mill Springs Academy while realizing financial and tax benefits for you and your family. Please contact Kristin Walpole in our Advancement Office at 678-893-7033 or kwalpole@millsprings.org to explore myriad of ways to apply your gift.

PLEDGES

Mill Springs Academy encourages pledge commitments to support fundraising priorities. Pledges to the Annual Fund must be paid in full by June 30. Capital pledges may be made over a period of three to five years, in consultation with the Development Office. You can make a pledge to our Annual Fund online at www.millsprings.org/AF.

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MILL SPRINGS ACADEMY

Advancement Office
13660 New Providence Road
Alpharetta, GA 30004



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