Countryside Trees

NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SCHOOL ALUMNI

Spring 2023

Letter from the Head



Krystal Young

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Countryside! What a busy year we have had celebrating Countryside School's 30th anniversary. I know that many of you who receive *Trees* were part of those early years that created the place and programs that we still benefit from today. On behalf of everyone here today – THANK YOU!

We cannot recognize our past or its importance without also recognizing Susan Richardson. Susan will retire later this spring. She has given her professional life to Countryside, and it is no exaggeration when I say that I still can't picture what it will be like without her here. I am so excited for Susan to have more time to follow her many passions, but I will miss her. However, before I'm allowed to miss her, I want to celebrate her and thank her for what she has given to our school.



8th graders in NYC with record rainfall

I invite all of you to join us on **May 31 from 6 - 7:30 p.m.** to give Susan Richardson well wishes as she embarks on the next chapter.

Each year when I write this message, I think about my personal highlight reel of the year. This year is no different. Although we continued contending with Covid (several thousand more Shield tests completed), we were able to start new activities like Scholastic Bowl. We were also able to bring back pre-pandemic events like celebrating Chinese New Year at the Champaign Public Library and having a variety of field trips.

We did silly things like having spirit week, learning the Thriller dance and performing it at the Halloween celebration (teachers included!) And let's not forget the dunk tank that made its appearance on Field Day last year. Rumor is that it will be out there again in a couple of weeks. I love seeing the creative ways our faculty bring joy in learning to our school.

The class of '23 is getting ready for graduation. We have returned from their class trip to New York City, wrapped their class theatre production, and begun working on the speeches each graduate will give. This year's graduation is especially monumental for me. My youngest daughter is part of the graduating class. After a decade of watching my children be supported and loved at this special place with these amazing teachers, I will soon be the only Young left in the building. I try not to get overly sentimental at Countryside graduations because our students will go on to have so many more unique and memorable experiences. Still, this one is hitting me in the feels.

I wish you a summer of unforgettable moments!

All the best,
Krystal Young
Head of School

Big News

- We Established Scholastic Bowl teams
- We switched to Mask-optional and had a "normal" school year
- We are bidding farewell to Ms. Richardson

Inside this issue:

Alumni Reunion - Brunch & Basketball	2
Alumni Spotlight - Max Libman	5
Alumni Updates	8
Medallion Club Honors	11
Q&A with Susan Richardson	16
Alumni Spotlight - Daniel Borup	18
College Bound	19

Winter Alumni Reunion - Brunch and Basketball

Following a pancakes and bagels brunch on our new lunchroom tables, the alumni took to the gym to play knockout, dodgeball, and a basketball scrimmage.

This year we also included our 8th graders since the original plan was to host a basketball tournament and our youngest alumni could then have teams with their friends. We ended up just shy of enough teams so switched to the other games with lots of gift cards won as prizes. See additional photos here:

www.countrysideschool.org/alumni



Eleanor Laufenberg (the overall dodgeball winner) takes out Coleman Clougherty



L to R: David Konicek, Will Miller, Shinjian Song, Landon West, Henry Carpenter, and Muskaan Garg take part in dodgeball.



4th row: Landon West, David Konicek, Jack Braun, Susan Richardson (Associate Head)

3rd row: Stacy Kirby (1st grade), Sam Laufenburg, Henry Carpenter, Will Miller, Shinjian Song, William King

2nd row: Wilson Tian, Ezra Bernhard, Coleman Clougherty, Suhani Garg, Eleanor Laufenburg, Bre Patten, Muskaan Garg JJ Lee

Front row: Krystal Young (Head of School), Erika Mennig (Music), Jo Bross, 8th grader Kaitlyn, 8th grader Kathryn, Lucas Braun, Mallory Young, Binky Bognar (former Administrative Assistant), Gail McWilliams (former Spanish)

Our Newest Alumni

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

Minna Adoni	Centennial
Oren Akresh	Academy
Ana Alvarez Wyman	Urbana
Julianna Balogh	Central
Ella Frerichs	DePaul College Prep
Shreya Haran	undecided
Sophia Kalantzis-Cope	Central
David King	Academy
August Lancaster	Central
Hannah Libman	undecided
Alleigha Nelson	Mahomet-Seymour
Christina Peng	Mahomet-Seymour
Roy Wang	undecided
Kathryn Williams	Centennial
Ian Yao	Central
Kaitlyn Young	Mahomet-Seymour

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

Philip Chen	Amanda Pate
Emily Dossey	Mattox Pugh
Abigail Makela	Nathaniel Sharpe
Sophia Makela	Layla Zong

Scholastic Bowl

We have started Scholastic Bowl! Our middle school science teacher, Amber Barker, and 4th grade teacher, Gabe Bielenberg, are coaching our crew of 15 fabulous middle schoolers. The team trains twice a week, won several matches, and even handed Next Generation their first loss in over a year! Even better, our JV team was undefeated!



Service Projects



As part of giving back to our community, our students spend time on service projects. Our middle schoolers also have a service hours requirement of three hours per trimester. They earn hours by helping at the school or donating time to outside charities.

Middle school service hours have been earned packing food for the Feeding Our Kids program; knitting hats for The Nest Postpartum through Carle Hospital; sorting items at Salt and Light; making blankets for the Humane Society; cleaning up the Boneyard Creek; playing games with seniors at ClarkLindsey; working with DREAAM; and volunteering at events like Taste of India, to name a few.

Our middle schoolers collected over $1,200 for the Cunningham Children's Home Caminos service project – in addition to DVDs, art supplies, and soccer supplies. The Caminos program's mission is to "serve young people temporarily while they are going through immigration court and awaiting placement with family members, sponsors or foster parents currently living in the United States."

Our K/1 class hosted their always-popular bake sale and raised over $1,200 for the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. Our 2/3 class collected food items to create food baskets at Thanksgiving for the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club. Our 4/5 class collected donations as entrance to their musical *We Come from Everywhere* to donate to The Refugee Center.

Thank you for all your community support!

WE ARE ON:

FACEBOOK

INSTAGRAM

LINKEDIN

YOUTUBE

Alumna Joins Us in New School Counselor Position

We are adding a school counselor/learning support specialist position next year. Leslie (Cooper) Gascoigne (2000) will join our team in this position. She is our first Countryside alumna to return to work *full-time* for her alma mater!



Leslie (Cooper) Gascoigne

As our new counselor, she will help identify and respond to student psychological and emotional challenges through short-term counseling, crisis intervention, and program development.

Ms. Leslie graduated from Aurora University with her Bachelor of Social Work and received her Master of Social Work from the University of St. Francis. She comes to us from Piatt County Services for Seniors where as the Program Director, she managed the Senior Information Service Program and assisted clients applying for services.

Previously, Ms. Leslie worked as a therapist providing diagnostic and therapeutic services to children, adolescents, and adults. In addition, she has worked in client scheduling, case management, and agency referrals. She loves spending time with her greyhound, Maisie, as well as her cats Memphis and Chan. She also enjoys reading and creating digital art. Fun fact: She just got married in April!

Welcome back to Countryside!

WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER DIRECT TO YOUR INBOX?
SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Mrs. Kirby Changing Roles at Countryside

For over 25 years, Stacy Kirby has been positively impacting our students as our 1st grade teacher. With the retirement of Susan Richardson next month, Stacy Kirby will become our new Associate Head.



Stacy Kirby

Mrs. Kirby graduated from Centennial High School in Champaign and graduated Magna Cum Laude with her B.S. in Elementary Education from Valparaiso University. In addition, she minored in Reading and is a Reading Specialist.

As one of our founding teachers, Mrs. Kirby played an essential role in creating the basis of the curriculum and community on which Countryside stands today. She became our Elementary Team Leader in January 2020, supporting elementary faculty and working closely with the Middle School Team Leader to write a comprehensive K-8 curriculum for the school.

She and her husband are the proud parents of two Countryside alumni who are now in college. She enjoys spending time with her only "child" left at home, her beloved border collie. She enjoys dining out, walking, reading, gardening, and spending time with friends and family.

We look forward to Mrs. Kirby working in this new role!

Alumni Spotlight - Max Libman

Max Libman (2020) has been busy. Not only has he achieved success through middle school and high school as a filmmaker, but he has also founded and hosted an international film festival and was recognized recently at Ebertfest.

Max founded the CU International Film Festival (CUIFF) which held its inaugural gala in October. The festival featured eight short films from around the globe by independent filmmakers and students in high school and college. Beyond the actual festival, the mission of CUIFF incorporates outreach including free filmmaking workshops for students and taking filmmakers to speak at local schools.

One of the films screened at the CUIFF festival, "Club Alli" by filmmakers Julien and Justen Turner, was featured at Ebertfest in April as part of their new short film program. Max and the filmmakers spoke at that screening. In addition, Max served as a panelist at the opening Ebertfest Symposium discussing "Cinema and Violence in Challenging Times".

While at Countryside, Max presented both a documentary he created, and a short film made from a screenplay he wrote based on his great grandmother's experience escaping Poland during the Holocaust. In addition, he created a documentary for Countryside about life as an 8th grader when the pandemic hit. Max is finishing his junior year at Academy High.



Max Libman
photo credit: CUIFF.org

View the short documentary he created for Countryside here:

tinyurl.com/8thGradeDocumentary

"Replacement" Alumni Trip to Chicago

Last June Countryside hosted an alumni trip to Chicago for two classes of high school alumni. This special weekend was for our classes graduating in 2020 and 2021who had their 8th grade trips cancelled due to the pandemic.

The fifteen alumni who were able to join us enjoyed a lakefront Segway tour, bowling, swimming, a trip to Starbucks Reserve on Michigan Avenue, and a Chicago architectural tour!

It was lovely to see the young adults they have become.



Right: Alumni from Class of 2020 and 2021

8th Grade Trip: New York City

This year's 8th grade trip was an adventure in New York City. The class flew to NYC and spent time visiting Central Park, The Met, Empire State Building, 9/11 Memorial, and Ellis Island. They also saw a Broadway show and ate bagels - **lots** of bagels. Additional stops included the Brooklyn Bridge, Chinatown, Little Italy, and Times Square.

And it rained and rained and rained - in fact, Central Park recorded more than a month's worth of rain with 5.20 inches of water falling in 72 hours. Then the flight home was cancelled due to weather, requiring an unexpected Uber ride - to leave from a *different* airport, on a *different* airline, on a *different* day. At least the trip was memorable!

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

Below: 8th graders Ian, August, Oren, David, and Roy





Above: Bethesda Fountain in Central Park with 8th graders Ana, Sophia, Julianna, Minna, Kaitlyn, and Alleigha

Below: 18th grade class with Mr. Antonsen and Mrs. Young in Soho (indoor photo because: rain)



ALUMNI & FORMER FACULTY:
GRADUATION
MAY 25
6:30 PM

Use Our Alumni Network

Young Alumni: When you are applying to colleges, please contact us so we may connect you with older alumni who can answer your questions about universities they attended!

Email our Director of Alumni Relations, Kristin Feddersen, if you would like us to help you make this connection.

feddersen@countrysideschool.org

Golf Outing & Trivia Night

We are adding a Trivia Night to our Annual Golf Outing & Raffle to benefit Countryside! Join us on **Saturday, June 3.**

You could win a Yeti cooler in the raffle! Tickets available online.

Golf Outing	12 noon
Trivia Night	5:30 p.m.
Raffle	need not be present to win

To register or purchase raffle tickets:
www.countrysideschool.org/golf-trivia
Deadline is Friday, May 19

In Memoriam

Wendy Shields Bauer - parent of an alumna, former board member, and longtime Countryside supporter - passed away on February 12, 2023. She was the mother of Countryside alumna **Katie Bauer** (2005) and wife of former board member Bob Bauer. Wendy herself served on our board from 1998-2003 and also graciously provided us with pro bono legal advice. In addition she founded the school's first Brownie and Girl Scout troops. Our thoughts are with her family.

View her obituary here:

tinyurl.com/WendyBauer

Alumni Shout Outs

Congratulations to **Lin Gilbertz** (2020) on her lead role as Sandy in *Grease* at Centennial High School. We loved seeing **Gavin Sheppard** (2020) on stage in it too!

Several Countryside alumni performed in CU Ballet's *The Nutcracker* at Krannert Center in December - **Erin Gelke** (2005), **Alexandra Warwick** (2006), **Taylor Feddersen** (2012), **Janaki Raj-Underhill** (2022) and **Quincy Payton** (2023). Four of them also performed in CU Ballet's *The Sleeping Beauty* this month at the Virginia Theatre - and we loved seeing **Ray Scifres** (2020) on stage in that too!

8th grader Minna and alumna **Noreen Adoni** (2020) were peer mentors for Champaign Urbana Theatre Company's *The Penguin Project* - "Pure Imagination" - a musical featuring children & teens with special needs.

Congratulations to the Uni Scholastic Bowl team and Countryside alumnus **Shawn Syed** (2020) on their State Championship!

Alumnae **Caroline Hartmann** (2019) & **Olivia Dempsey** (2021) made it to IHSA State in swimming. They swam for Champaign Central in both the 200 medley & 200 free relays.

James Braun (2018) and **Max Braun** (2020) took 3rd at IHSA State in tennis last May. Shout out to **Ben Kirby** (2018) and **Ezra Bernhard** (2020) who also competed at State!

Simon Hamilton's (2022) art entitled "Spinning" was recognized as a District winner in the Congressional Art Competition!

30 Years Logo Winner

Congratulations to **Kayla Israel** (2016) who won our 30th anniversary logo contest! Kayla is finishing her junior year in industrial engineering at the University of Central Florida and is finishing an internship with Disney World.

We used her fabulous logo this entire year. It adorned t-shirts and sweatshirts; was used at our Admissions events and slide shows; displayed in the school, and turned into thank you cards.

Special shout out to our runners up: 5th grader Reynard, 8th grader Kaitlyn, and alumna **Cornelia Ye** (2023). Their designs were also turned into thank you cards used by the school this year.



Kayla Israel wearing her award-winning logo

SEND US YOUR "SHOUTOUTS" FOR SPORTS, THEATRE & ACADEMICS

Alumni Updates

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

ALUMNI:
PLEASE SEND US YOUR UPDATES!

WE'D LOVE TO FEATURE YOU

Rachel Walsh (1997) is busy writing science curriculum, coaching gymnastics, and with her husband, raising a young daughter.

Alyssa (Emily) Green (1999) is doing investigative research for a bank, and with her wife, raising two young daughters.

Nate Graham (2001) was recently elected a member of the board of directors of KDE e.V. - an international nonprofit dedicated to producing free and open source software which is being used as the Steam Deck gaming console's desktop mode, among other places.

Michael Belmont (2003) is an attending physician at Northwestern Hospital in Lake Forest, IL. He enjoys his role as a hospitalist caring for in-patients in the hospital for various diseases.

Erika Belmont (2006) is a second-year internal medicine resident at University of Chicago. Working crazy hours (sometimes 28-hour shifts) but learning so much. She hopes to do a fellowship in oncology/hematology after residency.

Jenny Cooke (2007) got married in October 2022 and began a new job with Google in Atlanta, GA in November 2022.

Petra Rantanen (2009) is graduating this summer with her M.D. from the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY and starting an internal medicine residency at Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

Julianna Trach (2009) is living in New Haven, CT and working on her PhD in Cognitive Psychology at Yale University. Her research examines learning and decision making in children and adults. Inspired by many amazing teachers that she has had over the years, she is also doing a teaching certificate through her program. Outside of the lab, she spends time cooking and going for long walks with her dog, Ruby.

Brandon Cooke (2011) works for Northrop Grumann in Melbourne, FL, but he will be leaving shortly to begin his MBA at Duke University in Durham, NC this summer.

Ashley McFarquhar (2011) is graduating with an M.D. from Baylor College of Medicine and will begin her internal medicine residency training at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center this July.

Carolyn Cai (2012) is getting her Master of Human Resources and Industrial Relations Degree at the University of Illinois. She is also co-president of the school's professional organization, Student Society of Human Resource Management. Carolyn will be interning this summer in Houston, Texas for bp (British Petroleum).

Mac Dressman (2012) is working at a non-profit organization in Chicago, Sarah's Circle, that provides shelter for homeless women. His role involves communication with many different constituents and fundraising efforts.

Taylor Feddersen (2012) moved to Seattle this past year and is continuing to work as a software developer with Minecraft Education at Microsoft.

Ailín Valdivia-McCarthy (2012) is graduating from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business with an MBA.

Isaac Freund (2013) remains in Aachen Germany, finishing up writing a bachelor's thesis in computer science and working full time online for the same company he has been with for a few years now. He especially enjoys Aachen's music scene and is in no hurry to return home, so his family is making the most of visiting him there when they can!

Gauri Shankar (2013) is graduating from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine in May and will be starting her residency in Internal Medicine at Loyola University Medical Center this summer.

Matthew Zhang (2013) has become a Scanner Expert Engineer at ASML San Diego, travelling all over the world to support

Alumni Updates

companies like TSMC, Samsung, Intel, and Micron to name a few, all in the quest to enable the ever-growing world of advanced semiconductors.

Adam Woodard (2014) is graduating from the University of Illinois having completed a double major in Communications and Classical Civilizations. He is finishing work on a feature length documentary that he directed and edited. He plans to stay in Champaign-Urbana for the time being to build upon his media production skills and pursue a career in the field.

Lauren Feddersen (2015) received a summer research endowment in microbiology to research how thyroid hormone affects cornea development. This fall she will continue at Illinois Wesleyan for a 5th year to continue research, complete her biology degree, and compete in swimming. She was named Illinois Wesleyan's MVP in women's swimming and CCIW All-Conference Swimmer of the Year.

Dante Freund (2015) is graduating from Baldwin Wallace and is returning to the University of Illinois for a masters in violin performance, and his family is so thrilled that he will be back in town!

Nina Galvez (2015) has been studying biomedical engineering on the pre-medicine track while minoring in global health studies at Northwestern University. This year she

Alumni Updates continued on page 10

Alumni Highlight



Ryan Mondak and Emmaline at the premiere of the film *Sweetwater* at Warner Bros. in Los Angeles

Ryan Mondak (2011) plays guitar on the soundtrack of the recent film *Sweetwater*, accompanying actress and vocalist Emmaline. In June, Ryan and Emmaline will be performing concerts in Phoenix, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

Ryan is also the producer of his brother Chris's new instrumental jazz CD "Blank with Colour," scheduled for release by Summit Records in October.

Note: Ryan and Emmaline performed at Countryside's 25th Anniversary gala in February 2018.

RECENTLY GRADUATED COLLEGE?
LET US KNOW YOUR FUTURE PLANS

Ms. Binky's Farewell Reception

In June last year, our wonderful Ms. Binky Bognar retired from Countryside. She has since been able to travel to see family. Photos of her lovely farewell reception and videos of the speakers (including Ms. Binky) are available at the following links:

tinyurl.com/BinkyCelebrationPhotos

tinyurl.com/BinkyCelebrationVideos



Right: Binky Bognar with Cathie Webber at Binky's farewell reception in June 2022

Alumni Updates

Alumni Updates continued from page 9

presented her research at the Biomedical Engineering Society Conference, started working as an Emergency Medical Technician, received the Lyle F. Mockros Outstanding Student Award from her department, studied abroad for three months in South Africa working on design projects and learning about their healthcare system, and has recently published her research in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. She is graduating with honors in June and will take a year off to work as an EMT at a hospital closer to home. She plans to attend medical school in the fall of 2024.

Agustina Flores Pitton (2015) is finishing her fourth year of a five-year civil engineering program at the University of British Columbia. She just returned from the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon competition where the team she led, Third Quadrant Design, placed third in the Build Challenge. Her team designed and built a nearly net-zero embodied carbon building on UBC's campus which will serve as a living lab for student collaboration and testing on solutions to climate change. She is currently an intern at Associated Engineering in Vancouver where she is working on various bridge design and rehabilitation projects across Canada.

Alex Swanson-Linville (2015) is graduating from the University of Illinois in Computer Engineering and will be starting a software engineering position with Bloomberg in NYC in July.

Esha Mehta (2016) completed her junior year at Loyola University Chicago. She is pursuing a major in Cognitive Behavioral Neuroscience and a minor in Psychology. She is also the president of Loyola University Chicago's Dance Marathon - raising awareness for pediatric illnesses and raising funds for Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago!

Holden Siena (2017) is a sophomore at Augustana College. He continues to enjoy swimming and was delighted to contribute to the Vikings CCIW 2023 men's swim conference championship win. Holden was named to the Dean's List and the 2023 CCIW Academic All-Conference honor roll.

Natalie Martinez (2018) has lived and grown up in Mexico since her time at Countryside. She has recently returned to the US to study international politics at Reed College, OR.

Zachary Swanson-Linville (2018) is finishing his first year at Lawrence University where he is a member of the men's soccer team and planning on double-majoring in Russian Studies and Chinese.

Yoon Freund (2018) has finished their first year at Beloit and has declared anthropology as their major. This small school has been a really good fit and gave Yoon a chance to revive their love of dance after they were cast in several pieces this year for a modern dance show.

Danny King (2019) is currently finishing up his first year at Parkland College majoring in Aviation. Over the summer he will be training for his Commercial Multi-Engine Rating.

CHECK US OUT ON INSTAGRAM
@COUNTRYSIDEK8

Director of Alumni Relations



Kristin Feddersen is your Director of Alumni Relations. She also has been Countryside's Director of Communications for the past 16 years and is the parent of two alumnae - Taylor (2012) and Lauren (2015).

Please email her with updates about what you are doing. Often we hear where you are headed to college and what you *might* major in, but we rarely hear when those plans change.

Contact Kristin at feddersen@countrysideschool.org.

Medallion Club Honors



Over 20 years ago, Countryside established the Medallion Club to recognize our graduates who attend Countryside from Kindergarten through 8th grade. The honorees receive a medallion at graduation. Out of over 1,000 students to attend Countryside, **only 73 have earned this honor.**

Stop by the school to see your name hanging in our front lobby! Cheers to all those listed here. We honor you!

Medallion Club

Honoring students who attended Countryside from Kindergarten - 8th grade

2002
Reed Boskey
Devin Richardson

2003
Stephanie Beck
Sarah Korellis

2004
Maria Nelson
Melanie Thopiah
Ali Webber

2005
Lila Berlin
Brian Pitt
Jason Pride
Anne Kingston

2006
Umesh Batura
Kathleen Rowland
Kendrith Rowland

2007
Mary Cimakasky

2008
Milee Nelson
David Weisbaum

2009
Madelyn Gunn

2010
Liam Nelson
Jason Omo-Osagie
Colin Pitt
Robby Welch

2011
Jordan Gunn
Morgan Standley
Ashley Thopiah
Elena Zimmerman

2012
Taylor Feddersen

2013
Abbie Driver
Jacob Lo
Gauri Shankar
Matthew Zhang

2014
Elizabeth Guenther
Dylan Gunn
Daniel Konicek

2015
Sophie Brown
Lauren Feddersen
Mary Ann Ha
Julian White

2016
Olivia Gunn
Nicholas Gunn
David Kanfer
Ginny Kirby
Eli Lo
Esha Mehta

2017
Cassie Colmenares
Edward Sammons
Jyoti Sundaram

2018
Eve Freund
Bennett Kirby
Samuel Laufenberg
Zachary Swanson-Linville
Jordan White
Sophie Zerrouki

2019
Sierra Freund
Forrest Robeson
Lola Wright

2020
Max Braun
Charlotte Chesser
Lin Gilbertz
Ellie Laufenberg
Max Libman
Sophia Libman
Ray Scifres

2021
Staz Smith-Provezis
Conrad Tichenor

2022
Muskaan Garg
Mallory Young

2023
Minna Adoni
David King
Hannah Libman
Roy Wang
Kathryn Williams
Kaitlyn Young

ALUMNI:
PLEASE SEND US YOUR UPDATES!

WE'D LOVE TO FEATURE YOU

Alumni Give Back to Countryside

ALUMNI: WANT TO GIVE BACK? WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU SPEAK TO OUR STUDENTS



Maddie Brown (2012) brought the MakerGirl Goes Mobile team to Countryside last summer. Maddie is the Manager of Campaigns & Events at MakerGirl in Chicago and brought the team to facilitate a 3D printing workshop. Students ages 7-10 learned about 3D printing, created objects in TinkerCAD, and received their 3D printed creations.



Dylan Gunn (2014) returned as a guest instructor in Arabic for our middle school Travel Cultures class. Dylan was finishing his degrees in History and Religion with minors in Arabic and Classical Languages (Ancient Greek) at the University of Illinois. Dylan discussed both introductory phrases in Arabic and culture among the countries where Arabic is spoken.



Taylor Feddersen (2012) facilitated a Minecraft lesson on sustainable agriculture for our 4th and 5th grade students. She spoke about computer science and shared what she does as a software developer for Microsoft's Minecraft Education. The students then worked through a module about the impact of farming on climate change.

Alumni: Will you be visiting the area?

Let us know in advance. We would love to have you come speak to a class or to a group over lunch! Let Kristin Feddersen know:

feddersen@countrysideschool.org

Generous Families Thanks

Thank so much to the **anonymous alumni family** who provided a WONDERFUL lunch from Biaggi's for our faculty and staff in April! Thank you so much!

Thank you to our wonderful families in October who provided an all-school pizza lunch in honor of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights. The parents explained that diyas are lit to commemorate the victory of light over darkness.

Thank you to our wonderful families in January for providing a pizza lunch to our students to celebrate Chinese Lunar New Year!

Thank you to our wonderful families who provided a "Bingo and Bundt Cakes" event at lunch in February in honor of Black History Lunch. Our students played a special version of Bingo learning about important and influential Black Americans and enjoyed cupcakes from Nothing Bundt Cakes, a local Black-owned business.

30th Anniversary Celebrations

In May last year, we kicked off our 30th Anniversary year with our Founders' Day celebration. We even established a time capsule to be opened in ten years when our 30th Anniversary class (this year's kindergarten class) graduates.

Each week our social media featured a Throwback Thursday photo with a bit of history. Check out our posts in Facebook and Instagram: **#CSis30**

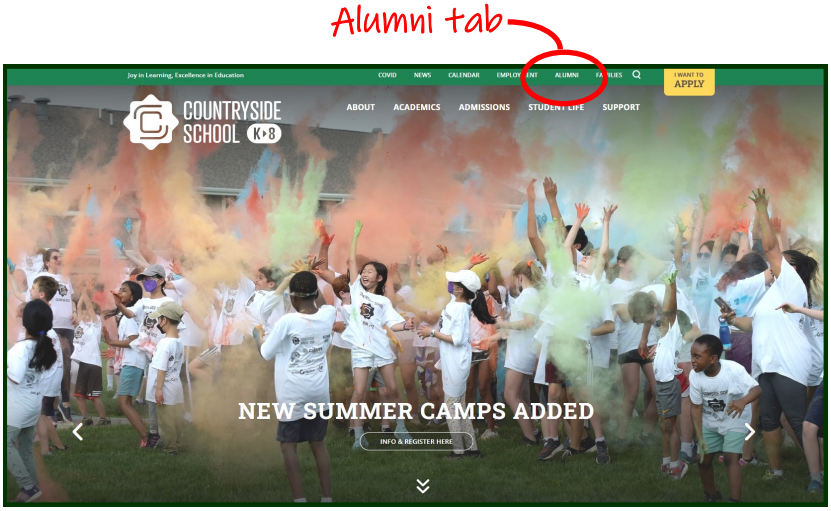
We ended our year of celebration with a drone photo and video of our current students and faculty. **For the short video:**

tinyurl.com/30thDroneVideo



Students, faculty, and staff from our 30th year!

Alumni Center on our Website



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

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

www.countrysideschool.org

Like us on Facebook for updates and event info **@CountrysideK8**

Follow us on Instagram **@CountrysideK8**

Connect with us on LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/countryside-school

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

Welcome to our new position

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

Great News at School

Our middle schoolers rocked the University of Illinois' Engineering Open House catapult competition! The goal was to build a cost-effective catapult to launch a penny the farthest distance from materials provided. Each group also gave a presentation about the design and cost analysis. Our teams won 6 of the 7 awards including Overall 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, Furthest Distance, Most Cost-Effective Design, and the Theme Award (representing the EOH theme "The Future, Today").

5th grader Reynard received a national gold medal in Math Kangaroo, the international competition in mathematics! Reynard achieved a National Rank #1/Gold Medal with a perfect score!

Congratulations to our mathletes (Aiden, Christina, Oren, and Roy) who took 3rd place in the team competition at the MathCounts chapter competition! Shout out to Roy who was a top 12 individual finisher and advanced to the semifinals (final four) of the head-to-head Countdown round.

5th grader Joshua received a Special Award for "Most Fearful" in the Student Art Competition at the UIUC's 40th Annual Insect Fear Film Festival for his work entitled The Horror Movie of Flyswatters".

Our students studying Mandarin performed at the Champaign Public Library for Chinese New Year.

¡Felicidades! Congratulations to 20 middle schoolers who took the National Spanish Exam and won awards. Despite being in middle school, our students often do well beyond "8th grade level" Spanish. In Level 1 (1st year high school level), we received one gold medal and one honors. In Level 2 (2nd year high school), we received four silver medals and three honors!

Our 4th and 5th graders also rocked the National Spanish Challenge with all 17 being honored for excellent or outstanding achievement!

CSA Happenings



Countryside School Association kicked off the year by providing box lunches to the faculty during in-service in August. They then organized and hosted our annual all-school Fall Picnic/Homecoming event. CSA also coordinated the much-appreciated potluck lunches for the faculty during parent-teacher conferences.

During Teacher Appreciation Week, the teachers and staff were treated to massages, a breakfast buffet, a Candy Bar, a fabulous potluck lunch provided by our parents, and a Trivia Contest for the faculty/staff to guess which coworker gave a particular answer to one of 25 questions. For example, whose response is this: Which fictional character's wardrobe would you love to have? *Violet from Bridgerton*

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

In Case You Missed It

Last fall we brought in David and Ellen Lin of Regent Ballroom to teach a couple of dances to our middle schoolers. We love this version of Michael Jackson's Thriller Dance:

tinyurl.com/CS-ThrillerDance



Trivia answer: Stacy Kirby

Ms. Richardson's Retirement Reception

Please join us in celebrating **Susan Richardson**, our Associate Head of School, who will be retiring at the end of this academic year.

The event is Wednesday, May 31 from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the gym.

We will have a basket for cards at the reception. **You may also send cards or well wishes to:**

Susan Richardson
c/o Countryside School
4301 W. Kirby Ave.
Champaign, IL 61822



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

Our Corner Sign Is Baaaack!

Our beloved corner sign returned in August after an 8-month hiatus. On a cold December night, a drunk driver destroyed our sign when they missed the turn at the intersection. Thankfully, the driver and passenger were able to walk away from the accident.

Our sign has now returned to its usual upbeat and humorous self, and we receive compliments from people who say they always look forward to what the sign says.



Right: December 2021 **Below:** August 2022



RETIREMENT RECEPTION
WEDNESDAY
MAY 31
AT 6 P.M.

Q & A with Susan Richardson



Susan Richardson

Our beloved Associate Head, Susan Richardson, will retire in June after an amazing 29 years at Countryside! She has been with the school since its days in the storefront next to what is now County Market at Duncan and Kirby. She also had the wonderful privilege of having her own daughter attend Countryside for nine of those years. Susan kindly took a few minutes to relay some of her memories and advice to us.

What are some of your favorite Countryside moments? So many it is really difficult to pick. These memories are from the first 15 years or so. If I included all of my fantastic memories, there wouldn't be room for anything else.

Walking around the roughed out "new" building with Cathie Webber imagining the possibilities in 1996. Watching our chorus concerts directed by Julie Gunn. Taking the 8th graders to the Museum of Funeral Customs with Bill Fallon. Working our single spotlight in the back of the MPR for performances on our "portable" stage. Portable is in quotes because the stage sections were so heavy, they defied the definition of portable!

Also playing a cutlery character of a knife in Chris Lukeman's rendition of "Be Our Guest." Playing Frenchie in "Beauty School Dropout." By the way, a student said my performance was better than the Broadway version she had seen. Mrs. File's Magical Musical Suite Shoppe Show. Meeting approximately 1,000 students in 29 years. Making Mary Breault laugh. My daughter's graduation speech.

What do you love most about working in a school? The people and the creative energy

What do you love least? Worrying about everyone and everything.

What is your favorite word? unfettered or indefatigable

What is your least favorite word? stupid

Outside of working in a school, what profession would you like to attempt? Librarian

What will you miss most about the school? The people

What are you most looking forward to in the next year? unfettered time

Thank you, Ms. Richardson! We will certainly miss you and the incredible impact you have had on this school.



Ms. Richardson with her daughter Devin Richardson (2002) in 1995

Fall Picnic/Homecoming 2022

Our Homecoming/Fall Picnic event was in full swing this year with inflatables, face painting, balloon animals , and an alumni bags tournament with prizes. Congratulations to our tournament winners Aditi Adve and Grafton Hoffmeister. So good to have so many of you return!

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, August 26** from 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. for **Homecoming 2023!**



Maher Adoni, Gloria Arizaga (Spanish)



Adelaide Kota, Elliot Neault, Alaia Ahmad, Janaki Raj-Underhill, Breanna Patten

HOMECOMING
FALL PICNIC
AUGUST 26
4 PM - 6:30
AT THE
SCHOOL



Back row: Wilson Tian, Ezra Bernhard, Coleman Clougherty, Ryan Wang, Nate Jones, Ray Scifres, Grafton Hoffmeister

Middle row: Emma Donnini, Emily Chen, Avery Hoffmeister, Suhani Garg, Aditi Mehta

Front row: Max Libman, Priya Haran, Noreen Adoni, Sophia Libman

Alumnus Continues National Anthem Pursuit

In January **Daniel Borup** (2005) once again sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" at an Illini game – this time in Minnesota where he now lives. He has come full circle. What began by singing at an Illini volleyball game in 2011 when he was a student at the University of Illinois, has turned into something spectacular.



Daniel Borup with his wife, Hannah, at a University of Minnesota hockey game where he performed

Through Daniel's time at Illinois and then through graduate school at Stanford, he added many more performances of our national anthem. In fact, he has performed it at Illini volleyball & basketball games, the NHL Stanley Cup playoffs, the NCAA "Elite Eight" tournament game, and for the Oakland A's on MLB opening night - just to name a few.

Daniel started keeping track of the announced attendance at each game where he sang. Incredibly, as of his most recent performance at a University of Minnesota hockey game, he has performed the National Anthem at 122 games and to **over 847,672 fans!** His goal now: to hit the "1 million people" mark.

"I honestly started it as sort of a 'joking' goal for my own amusement," says Daniel. "The numbers reported are often just tickets sold, so I'm sure the number of people who have actually *heard* me is much smaller. But even so, it's been a fun thing to track (especially looking back at over 10 years of gigs now) and a fun milestone to approach."

Daniel and his wife, Hannah, live in Rochester, MN where he works as a freelance engineer and data scientist.

ALUMNI:
SHARE YOUR UPDATES WITH US

Young Alumni (High School) Updates

Hadley Siena (2020) is a junior at Centennial High School. She is a member of the National Honor Society and will compete at state as co-captain of Centennial's Science Olympiad team. She enjoys volleyball, music, art, and travel. Hadley was selected to attend a CISV (Children's International Summer Village) village in Manila, Philippines this July as a junior counselor.

Siddhant (Pramod) Bhat (2022) is finishing his freshman year in high school in New Jersey. He placed top ten out of 175 in a JV cross country meet, top five in a varsity track meet, and qualified for AIME. Unfortunately, he missed the USA Biology Olympiad semifinals by half a point and injured his back during spring track and missed the first two races. He plans to continue with both running teams as well as progressing with his biology and mathematical skills.

Dillon Jones (2021) is wrapping up his sophomore year at Academy High. He has recently competed in State for Science Olympiad, got his first job at Lincolnshire Fields Country Club, and continued to competitively race go-karts in Indianapolis.

Muskaan Garg (2022) made High Honor Roll, is a varsity midfielder on her school's soccer team, had her art showcased in a conference competition, and played her first college showcase game at the University of Illinois. She plans to continue training for soccer with IFC and U of I, travel, attend training to be her school's girls' basketball team manager, volunteer at Carle, and continue to draw! "I'm so grateful to Countryside for bringing me this far and preparing me to hopefully accomplish more things in high school."

College Bound

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

Aditi Adve	Northwestern - Radio/TV/Film
Samu Balogh	Illinois - undeclared
Nick Bodony	Michigan - computer science
Melody Breg	Illinois - mechanical engineering
Benjamin Chang	Illinois - engineering
Emily Chen	Princeton - Chemical and Biological Engineering or Public and International Affairs
Emma Donnini	Yale - biology and global health
Sierra Freund	Boston Conservatory at Berklee School of Music - violin performance
Caroline Hartmann	Illinois - biochemistry with minor in Spanish
Daniel Heumann	University of Connecticut - dual degrees in Theatre Studies and Human Rights, minor in American Sign Language Interpretation
Grafton Hoffmeister	Illinois - actuarial science
Nate Jones	Stanford - mechanical or civil engineering
Andrew Kim	Wisconsin - computer science
Danny King	Parkland College - aviation
Amy Liu	Cornell - electrical and computer engineering
Forrest Robeson	Illinois - science/pre-med and music
Teoman Sehitoglu	Illinois - business
Andrea Torelli	Illinois - business
Ryan Wang	Illinois - biochemistry
Shannon Weible	Augustana College - Scandinavian studies
Ian Weible	Augustana College - geology
Clara Wood	Northwestern

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

Former Faculty Updates

Sharon Henson (former 4th grade teacher)
We continue to enjoy being snowbirds, spending our winters in central Florida and our summers in eastern Iowa.

Marty Stambaugh (former science teacher)
I am starting a new life adventure as I leave Champaign and move to Oklahoma City, OK. I have purchased 2.6 acres with a horse barn and home, where I will be helping take care of Paige's horse. What takes me there? My niece, Paige, will be close and attending the University of Oklahoma, in Norman, OK, studying biology to prepare for med school and become a pediatric anesthesiologist.

I will dive back into teaching junior high science at a public school for the first time in nearly 25 years. Highland West Junior High in Moore, OK will be my new professional home. I have missed spending my days with students since leaving Countryside a year ago. I can't wait to jump back in.

Please stay in touch and come by for a visit if you are in the area. Hugs to you all.

Marty Stambaugh
12212 Edwin Road
Oklahoma City, OK 73165
marty1963@gmail.com

Countryside School

Joy in Learning, Excellence in Education

NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SCHOOL ALUMNI

Countryside School
4301 W. Kirby Avenue
Champaign, IL 61822

217.355.1253
E-mail: alumni@countrysideschool.org

We don't want to lose contact!

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

We Need Your Pennant

We LOVE displaying pennants from all our alumni's colleges and universities, and we have over **125 pennants on display!**

Drop us an e-mail if you can provide us with a pennant (12" x 30") or to ask if we already have it! alumni@countrysideschool.org



Mark your calendars:

Graduation	May 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the gym
Ms. Richardson's Farewell Reception	May 31 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the school
3rd Annual Golf Outing	June 3 at Legends Golf Course
Trivia Night	June 3 at the school
Homecoming/Fall Picnic	August 26, 4:00 - 6:30 on our back lawn
Winter Alumni Reunion	TBD - December 2023/January 2024