

THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

SUMMER 2018



THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

SUMMER 2018

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Chris Durst

EDITOR

Julie Beckwith

DESIGNER

Derek Gaylard

SEND CONTACT INFORMATION CORRECTIONS TO:

Lindsey Chitwood
The Altamont School
4801 Altamont Road South
Birmingham, AL 35222
lchitwood@altamontschool.org



On September 15, 2017, Altamont celebrated the grand opening of its new athletics and wellness facilities, including Patton Gym.

© 2018 The Altamont School.

The Altamont School magazine is published annually.

All rights reserved.

4801 Altamont Road South

Birmingham, AL 35222

altamontschool.org

205-879-2006

The Altamont School admits students of any race, color, creed, gender, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions practices, employment practices, or other school-administered programs.

THE MISSION OF THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2017-18

Lyn Bradford '71	John Lacey
Karen Carroll	Geeta Lakhanpal
Brooke Coleman '87	Margaret G. Livingston,
Houston Cook '83,	Lifetime Trustee
Treasurer	Matt Lyons '87
Mike Denniston, President	Chris Nicholson '99,
Bruce Denson '68,	Secretary
Ex Officio	Dottie Pak
Marilyn Hulsey Dixon '90	Giles Perkins
Liz Edwards,	Elizabeth Pharo '96
Vice President	Jay Pigford '89
Art Freeman '91	Carolyn Sloss Ratliff '74
Will French '86	Michael Rediker '99
Brantley Fry '91, Ex Officio	Andria Robinson
Rita Goyal	Deak Rushton
Gina Joseph	Parvez Sultan
Charles C. Krulak	Camille Underwood

ALUMNI BOARD 2017-18

Heather Alby Arceneaux '87,	Brooks Marks '96
Secretary	Laura McCraney '07
Patrick Brannon '00	Joyce Butterworth
Anne Epstein Brisendine '05	McKinnon '03
Frank Chitwood '07	Dan Monroe '78
Jeanne Classé	Ashley Morris '93
Buck Crowe '00	William Morrow '89
Catherine Phillips Crowe '99	Chris Nicholson '99,
Burton Dunn '90, Treasurer	President
Cathleen Elliott Ellington '97	Biddy Ager Osburn '65
Priscilla Fowler '89	Ralph Patton
Carolyn Kezar Galgano '04	Donald Robinson '98
Jack Gray '03	Kat Drennen Rogers '98
Leeth Grissom '86	Carolyn Green Satterfield '60
Terry Taylor Hamilton '65	Emily Schultz '01
Francis Hare '78	Sherwood Silliman '81
Sam Haskell '96	Leigh Sloss-Corra '76,
Liz Hawley Hodges '70	Vice President
Linda Diethelm Holman '71	Carolyn Smallwood
Anna Johns Hrom '05	Hilthy Hazzard St. Denis '98
Daniel Jones '99	Lillis Taylor '98
Lynn Joseph '61	Marliese Thomas '99
Steve Kelly '94	Chance Turner '89
Glenn Kinstler '90	Ann Vrocher '67
Praveen Krishna '96	Penny Whiteside
Cece Lacey '08	Sarah Whiteside
Katie Baker Lasker '76	
Sandra Allen Lynn '78	

Bold- honorary alumni

Rising 8th grader Sid Doppalapudi advanced to the finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. See the story on page 19.

THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

SUMMER 2018

FEATURED

2 Meet New Head of School Chris Durst

On July 1, Chris Durst became Altamont's fifth head of school since Altamont was formed in 1975 through the merger of Birmingham University School and Brooke Hill School. Get to know him a little better as we ask him some key questions.

6 Altamont Techies

The Silicon Valley is teeming with Altamont alumni. Learn about some of the exciting things they are doing in this feature story.

12 Augmented Reality

Virtual tools bring science to life with Altamont's student- and faculty-built Augmented Reality Sandbox.

27 Altamont Gala in Honor of Sarah W. Whiteside

Altamont hosted its most successful Gala to date in honor of retiring Head of School Sarah W. Whiteside.

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 A View from the Hill

14 Student Spotlights

23 Alumni Spotlight

New York Times bestselling author Danny Wallace returned to the hill to see the Altamont musical theatre production of the play based on his novel Big Fish and to speak to Altamont students about the value of appreciating your history.

ecoPRINT™
ENVIRO-FRIENDLY PRINTING

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

SUMMER 2018

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

CHRIS DURST



On July 1, 2018, Chris Durst became Altamont's new head of school—the fifth since Altamont was formed in 1975 through the merger of Birmingham University School and Brooke Hill School. He served previously as upper school principal at Holy Innocents' Episcopal School in Atlanta, Georgia, and brings more than 29 years of diverse experience in independent schools as a teacher and administrator to his new position at Altamont.

What was your first job?

I got my very first job when I was 17 as a maintenance person at an apartment complex. That wasn't a great summer! My first job in education was as a 7th grade geography teacher, varsity boys soccer coach, jv boys basketball coach, and middle school baseball coach at Columbus Academy in Columbus, Ohio.

What is one thing you hope students know when they graduate?

I want them to know so many things! Fundamentally, I hope students know the difference between knowledge and wisdom, and that they have a sense of humility and empathy.

What is one of your favorite memories from middle or high school?

Our high school opened a new theater, and I had the lead role in the first play, *Caine Mutiny Court Martial*. We were so excited to have that new space. It was a big moment for the school and to be a part of that was special. We also won a state baseball championship when I was in high school, which was a very big moment.

What is the best advice you were given and by whom?

The best advice I was given came from my high school baseball coach: "The more you give of yourself, the more you will love what is left." I have thought of that at so many different points in my life.

What is one thing you hope to accomplish in your first year at Altamont?

Honestly, to get to know everyone's name! I want to be able to recognize and greet every person I meet in the hallway.

Class of 2018 College Acceptances & Matriculations

Agnes Scott College
 American University
Appalachian State University
 Auburn University*
 Bard College
 Baylor University
Belmont University
Berea College*
 Berklee College of Music
Birmingham-Southern College*
 Boston University
 Brandeis University
 Brevard College
Brown University
 Case Western Reserve University*
 Colorado College
 Colorado State University -- Pueblo
Cornell University
Dickinson College
 Drexel University
 Emerson College
 Emory University
 Emory University-Oxford College
 Fordham University*
 Fort Lewis College
Furman University
 George Washington University*
Georgia Institute of Technology*
Gonzaga University
 Hampden-Sydney College
 Hillsdale College
Hollins University*
 Howard University*
 James Madison University
Johns Hopkins University
Kenyon College
Lehigh University
 Loyola University Chicago
 Loyola University New Orleans
Marion Military Institute
 Mercer University
 Mississippi State University
 Murray State University
New York University
 Northeastern University*
 Oberlin College
 Purdue University
 Randolph College
Rhodes College*
Rice University
 Rollins College
Samford University
Sewanee: The University of the South*
 Southern Utah University
Stanford University
 Stetson University
 Temple University
 Tulane University
University of Alabama, Birmingham*
University of Alabama*
University of California, Berkeley
 University of California, Irvine*

University of California, Davis
 University of California, Los Angeles*
 University of California, San Diego*
 University of California, Santa Barbara
 University of Colorado, Boulder*
University of Georgia
 University of Madison, Wisconsin
 University of Maryland, College Park*
 University of North Alabama
 University of North Carolina, Asheville
 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
 University of San Francisco
 University of South Alabama*
University of Southern California
Villanova University
Washington and Lee University
 Westminster College
 Wofford College
Yale University

bold - matriculation

* - more than one student accepted



Altamont's International Monarch Waystation

Last summer, The Altamont School became the first school in Birmingham registered as a certified International Monarch Waystation. This project grew out of a long-term interest of Altamont science teacher Dr. Mary Williams. "I teach my students about monarch migration in connection with a variety of topics: pollinators, plant reproduction, climate change, endangered species, and interesting animal migrations. Because monarchs come through Alabama, I have wanted, for years, to start an official waystation. It's finally happened!"

Monarchs are in danger. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Habitat loss and fragmentation has occurred throughout the monarch's range. Numbers of monarchs have decreased significantly over the last 20 years." However, the agency suggests that projects, such as Altamont's waystation, can help save the monarch: "In the United States, there is a massive effort to provide habitat for monarch butterflies, imperiled bumble bees and other pollinators. There is no one group or agency responsible for providing habitat needed for monarch conservation. All organizations, agencies and individuals must work together to improve, restore and create habitats to save monarchs."

Altamont's waystation was started, in partnership with Dr. Williams, by a former Altamont student, who has passed the project on to current students. Using certified seeds from Monarch Watch, students have germinated and planted almost 200 pots, or over 600 seeds, in Dr. Williams' classroom and in the Altamont greenhouse.

The seeds were then transferred to a totally organic garden behind the school. Included in Altamont's garden are zinnia, Mexican sunflower, salvia, joe-pye weed, blanket flower, French marigold, black-eyed Susan, butterfly bush, phlox, purple coneflower and three types of milkweed: common, swamp and butterfly. "Monarchs lay eggs on milkweed and need the other plants mostly for nectar," said Dr. Williams. "It's important to plant the correct milkweed. One of the types of milkweed most commonly found actually carries a parasite, which has hurt conservation efforts."

In addition to planting and cultivating the garden, it's no small task to keep the plants watered during an Alabama spring and summer. Students are helping with this effort as well. Dr. Williams hopes that the monarch waystation will continue to grow as even more students become involved in the work. Currently, Altamont's "Knight and Monarch Waystation" is one of only a handful in the Birmingham area.





Dr. Mary Williams



Altamont Techies: HELPING WRITE THE CODE OF THE FUTURE

Since Altamont launched its computer science curriculum two years ago, Altamont students' interest in all things techie has exploded. On the inaugural Silicon Valley Fall Project Week trip in the fall of 2017, a group of 20 students had the opportunity to explore the tech world firsthand and were lucky enough to meet with several impressive Altamont alumni who are making names for themselves in the Bay Area. We hope you enjoy meeting these Altamont Techies, and watch out for news about current students who are sure to change the face of technology.



David Goldenberg

David Goldenberg '97

Writer & Business Guru at MinuteEarth
www.minuteearth.com

What is the name of your company and how long have you been there? What other tech companies have you worked for?

I work for MinuteEarth, a YouTube channel featuring animated videos about science. I've worked there for two years. Before that, I ran a music trivia app called Lyricle.

What is your company's "mission"?

We use YouTube to tell educational stories about the world to a broad audience.

What's the most exciting project you've worked on?

We worked with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to tell stories about the importance of using technology to solve public health problems.

When/how did you become interested in computer science or tech?

I used the writing skills I developed at Altamont to get a job at *Wired* magazine, which sparked my interest in how technology shapes our world.

Where did you study? And did you mainly study computer science or a different field?

I studied anthropology at Yale.

Who's someone in the tech industry that inspires you?

Stewart Butterfield, the founder of Slack, tries to solve problems first, then builds businesses around those solutions.

What would you say to a current student who is interested in a career in tech?

Come out to the Bay Area!

Do you think a student needs to have a firm coding understanding/background in order to be successful in the tech world?

You definitely don't need to be a coder, but it helps to understand how code works and how engineers think.

Describe Altamont in 2 words.

Life Prep.

What is a favorite memory from your time at Altamont?

No one loves teaching as much as Mr. Palmer. I loved when he got so excited about a short story he would start screaming "Malabar!"

Matt Lyons '87

**Chief Financial Officer at
LinQuest Corporation
www.linquest.com**

What is the name of your company and how long have you been there? What other tech companies have you worked for?

Currently I work for LinQuest Corporation, which I founded. Previously I have worked for Titan Corporation, ADC Telecommunications, Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) and the U.S. Air Force.

What is your company's "mission"?

We design and operate space systems.



Matt Lyons

What's the most exciting project you've worked on?

I worked on the Milstar system in the 1990s. It was the first processed satellite communications system with a mission to provide strategic communications between the President and our military forces.

When/how did you become interested in computer science or tech?

I have always enjoyed designing/building things, as well as solving complex problems.

Where did you study? And did you mainly study computer science or a different field?

I studied Systems Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania. Systems Engineering is the branch of engineering that focuses on the high-level requirements for a system and performs the trade-offs between other engineering disciplines (e.g. if you make the antenna on a satellite bigger, the satellite will perform better, but it will be more difficult to launch because of the additional weight).

Who's someone in the tech industry that inspires you?

Elon Musk. With SpaceX he has taken on the status quo and shown that other business models work.

SpaceX has completely changed how government decision makers think about space.

What would you say to a current student who is interested in a career in tech?

Study engineering or computer science in college because either degree will qualify you for the jobs that exist today as well as jobs that will be created in the future.

Do you think a student needs to have a firm coding understanding/background in order to be successful in the tech world?

I think it is great that Altamont is doing more in this area. Even if you don't plan to go into technology, it is important to have an understanding of how coding works. You don't necessarily need to be able to write code, but you need to be able to think in terms of processes and algorithms that someone else can code. I learned to code in Pascal and COBOL, which are not really used today, but having a coding background allows me to design software that other people can implement in current coding languages.

What is a favorite memory from your time at Altamont?

Learning about art in Giotto and our college trip to the Northeast.

Locke Brown '10

Co-Founder & CEO of NuID nuid.io

What is the name of your company and how long have you been there? What other tech companies have you worked for?

I've been at NuID since its inception about a year and a half ago. I interned at Google in 2013 and worked (although not tech explicitly) for Bill Gates' personal investment office from 2014-17.

What is your company's "mission"?

To enable trusted digital identity by returning data ownership to the individual. NuID aims to remove the need for businesses to store user credentials and other authentication data, thereby eliminating the risk of widescale credential breaches.

What's the most exciting project you've worked on?

Building NuID from the ground up.

When/how did you become interested in computer science or tech?

I've always been fascinated by computing and technology and then started getting really interested in crypto space in 2013 when I started mining bitcoin

Knights in the Valley

Altamont students visiting Silicon Valley during Fall Project Week had the opportunity to meet with several alumni working in the tech industry and tour their companies. Students returned to Altamont captivated by what they saw and learned.



Hammond Guerin '00

Data Science Lead at Vungle vungle.com

Vungle uses machine learning algorithms to determine which ads to serve to users as they play games on mobile devices. Hammond Guerin '00 designed Vungle's first machine-learning based ad recommender system while completing his MBA. He built the company's data science team from scratch, combining data scientists, machine learning engineers, analysts and interns, and he developed Vungle's real-time recommender system that handles hundreds of millions of ad requests daily, choosing between thousands of candidate ads per request.

in my dorm room (free power!).

Where did you study? And did you mainly study computer science or a different field?

Claremont McKenna College. I studied math and economics (and also received a master's degree in finance).

Who's someone in the tech industry that inspires you?

I'd have to say Bill Gates.

What would you say to a current student who is interested in a career in tech?

Take math classes, polish your people skills/EQ, learn to write well. You can stand out by offering a polished skill set other than programming. Code is a tool, how you think about designing code is important.

Do you think a student needs to have a firm coding understanding/background in order to be successful in the tech world?

You don't need to be able to code well, but you need a firm grasp of the concepts and how things work.

Describe Altamont in 2 words.

Enabling. Fun.



Locke Brown

David Hall '04
Co-Founder & Principal
Researcher at Semantic
Machines, now part of
Microsoft
www.semanticmachines.com

David Hall '04, co-founder of Semantics Machines, a company that was acquired by Microsoft in May 2018, talked with Altamont students about the work that he's doing with conversational Artificial Intelligence; he even demonstrated his group's software to help them find a Mexican restaurant for dinner! David received his Ph.D. in computer science from the University of California Berkeley and a B.S. and M.S. from Stanford University, both in Symbolic Systems. He is the recipient of numerous awards,



including the 2012 Google Ph.D. Fellowship in Natural Language Processing and an NSF graduate research fellowship.



Ryan James teaches the programming language Scratch to Iman Zuberi, Mason Coleman and Madeleine Beckwith.

Technology at Altamont

Since Altamont's computer science curriculum was introduced two years ago, there has been an explosion in interest at the school, with almost a third of the student body registered for a computer science class in the fall. There are even two new student organizations: Girls Who Code and Computing For Everyone (C4E).

Ryan James, Altamont's computer science teacher says, "We focus on problem solving skills and

computation thinking practices in every computer science class. Teaching students how to code is not enough, as some of the technology will be obsolete before they graduate from college. They start off with block-based programming languages like Scratch and Snap! before moving into traditional text-based programming languages. Research has shown that students better understand what they are doing and building when it is presented to them as a block in their younger years. In addition to teaching programming in Python and Java, our

students build websites with HTML and Javascript, create databases with SQL, create their own Linux operating system, and use 3-D printing.”

Computer science classes start in 5th grade as a quarter rotation, and semester electives start in 7th grade. By the time they get to upper school, students have two opportunities to take computer science at the college level with AP Computer Science Principles and AP Computer Science A.

“Our goal is to help students develop the skills they need for the jobs that they will go on to create; jobs that don’t exist yet. Our desire is to have alumni that are a step above the rest of their peers when they go to their respective universities and to equip them with everything they need to succeed,” says James.

Along with expanding curricular offerings, Altamont also launched a 1-to-1 laptop program this past



Robby Ballard with his 6th grade history class

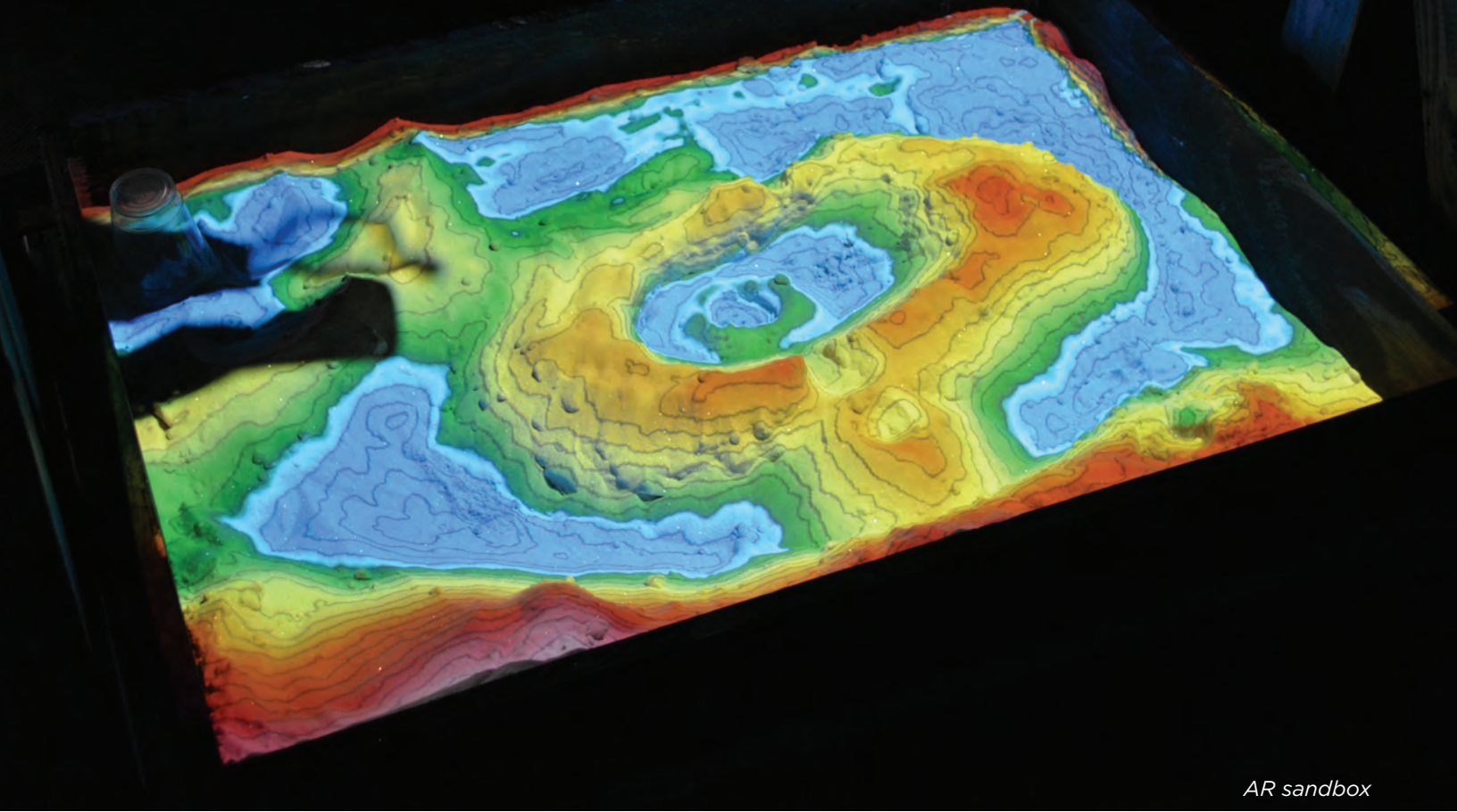


This picture highlights a project of rising eighth graders Noah Warren and Bud Gidiere who are working on a wearable computer. They are designing a 3D print to attach the computer, which is a Raspberry Pi, to their arm.

school year with students in 5th and 6th grade, expanding to encompass students in 7th grade during the 2018-19 school year. Altamont’s 1-to-1 laptop program aims to create an authentic learning environment that enables teachers to deliver more personalized content to students, boosting students’ technology skills, and empowering students to do more complex, creative and collaborative work. Teachers are thrilled with what they are seeing in the classroom. Fifth and sixth grade history teacher Robby Ballard ’03 says, “Even though they have computers in front of them, I have never seen my students more focused on class discussions. Because they are actively engaged, they maintain interest in in-depth, high-level conversations.”

The laptop program relies on Office 365 and Microsoft OneNote digital notebooks, strengthening students’ competence with software they will use throughout their lives and career. Altamont has been selected as a Microsoft School and is working toward becoming a Microsoft Showcase School. Rob Dominguez, Director of Education Technology, is a Microsoft Innovative Education Expert, and Eddy Dunn, Director of Technology, is a certified Microsoft Innovative Educator. By the 2022-23 school year, all Altamont students will be rolled in to the 1-to-1 laptop program.

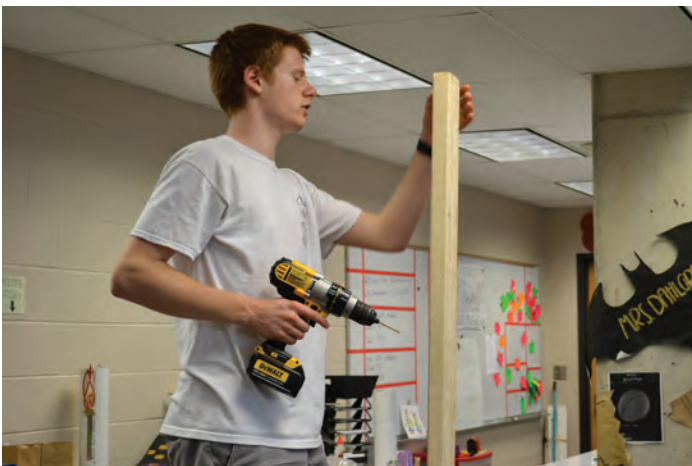
Virtual Tools Bring Science to Life at Altamont



AR sandbox

For Rob Dominguez, Altamont's Director of Education Technology and 7th grade geography teacher, an augmented reality (AR) sandbox is the perfect amalgam of his work with students. An AR sandbox is a 3-D visualization tool that teaches geographic, geologic and

hydrologic concepts by allowing users to create topography models by shaping real sand. A literal sandbox is augmented in real-time with an elevation color map, topographic contour lines and simulated water using a 3-D camera, powerful simulation and visualization software and a data projector.



David Niederweis

"I saw an AR rig about two years ago and thought it would be a pretty lofty goal to have one at our school," said Dominguez. An upper school Fall Project Week trip to the Silicon Valley that he co-led last fall changed his mind. "After seeing how engaged our students have become since our trip to Silicon Valley, I thought it would be not only possible, but fun to enlist some of them to help build our own AR sandbox. And the students were ready and eager." The typical cost of purchasing an AR sandbox runs between \$6,000 and \$8,000. Mr. Dominguez and his Altamont team built one for less than \$300. Most of that cost was in the sand. "Our director of technology donated a projector, the history



Working under Mr. Dominguez's close supervision, rising Altamont seniors Henry Chang, David Niederweis and Hampton Walker helped physically construct the rig. They also played a lead role in setting up the software and calibrating the equipment (see story on page 14). Dominguez says, "The sandbox is a great example of the Altamont experience coming full-circle; students, who once were in my class as seventh graders, now helping to enrich the education of younger students while simultaneously gaining knowledge in computer science."

Q&A with Rob Dominguez

Why are 3D tools so useful?

The opportunity for students to visualize their own creations in three dimensions is engaging and empowering. The ability to look at, touch, and manipulate something that was once an idea in their head enables them to strengthen their knowledge of the content we're working on.

What are some of the things your students learned?

My 7th grade geography students completed a study of the different types of islands in the world. Working in groups, they created one of three types of islands, all of which vary widely in physiography and climate, via a thematic paper map that focuses on elevation. From there, they recreated their group's idea in the sandbox. We took that sand-model, created a 3D model in the computer, and exported it to a 3D-printer. Students worked in their groups to paint different climate zones over the 3D topographical island they've created.

What did students who worked on the rig learn?

It was an opportunity to show them what the real world of software and hardware development is like: an interactive, collaborative process that is dependent on soft skills like communication and empathy to succeed. We used an industry-standard model to illustrate what workflows should look like, how to forecast deadlines, and how to meet goals. More than anything, it was important that they understand that success is built on failures – nothing is perfect from inception. A lot of hard work went on behind the scenes in making the AR rig a success, and people really only see the end-product.



Rob Dominguez

department paid for the wood, the director of finance chipped in for the sand, the software is open-source, and the camera was purchased by an anonymous donor." Altamont also took advantage of on-campus brain power, borrowing engineering, construction, and software know-how from facilities director Jon Vann, physics teacher Katrina Dahlgren, and computer science teacher Ryan James.

.....
See the AR Sandbox in action at
vimeo.com/260265549

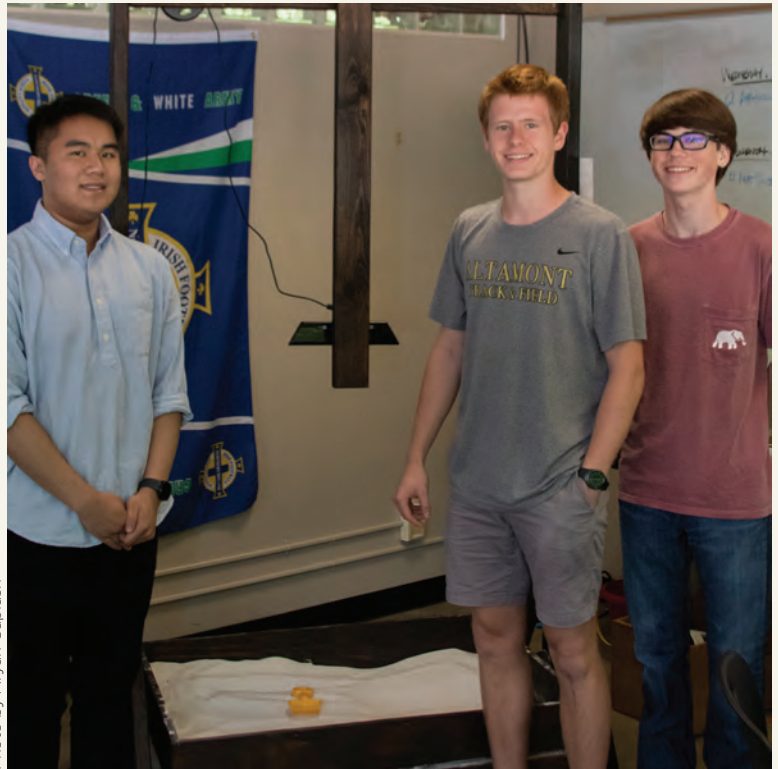
STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Henry Chang

What was the most challenging part of working on the sandbox?

The construction of the AR sandbox can be separated into two different parts: the hardware and the software. The hardware required us to design the pit, and the most challenging part of this step was making sure we could easily maneuver the sandbox through different hallways while ensuring that the projector is mounted at the optimal height. To accomplish this, we had to make multiple adjustments to our original designs. The software required us to set up calibration according to the physical position of the projector, which can change depending on who set it up. Mr. Dominguez and I also spent several days making sure the AR sandbox boots up efficiently on startup so teachers who wish to use the sandbox do not have to worry about setting it up. Our team was helpful and fun to work with, and we managed to finish the entire process efficiently.

Photo by Aryan Caplash

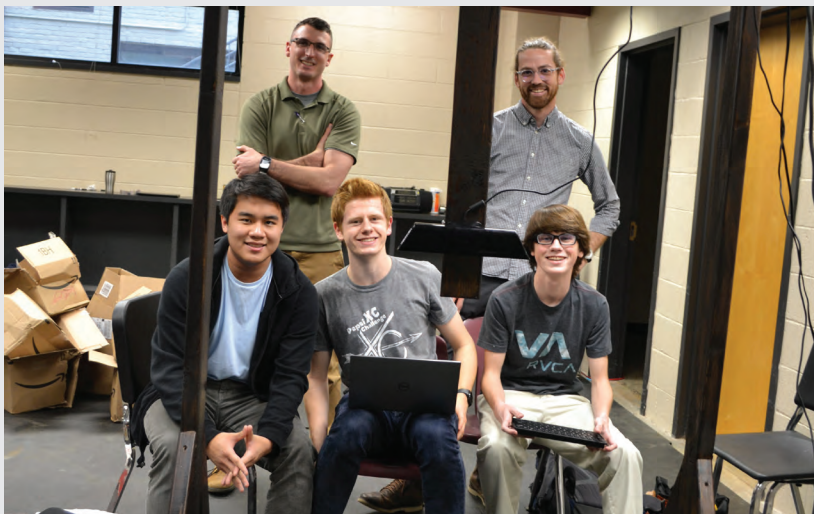


Henry Chang, David Niederweis and Hampton Walker

David Niederweis

How did your Altamont education aid your work on the sandbox?

The programming and calibrating process of the AR Sandbox was easier conceptually because of all the technical knowledge I gained from AP Computer Science. Altamont can be tough because of the assignments we have, but it teaches you to stay organized. Altamont also teaches you persistence, which helped me not give up when we were trying to figure out errors.



Back row: Rob Dominguez and Ryan James

Front row: Henry Chang, David Niederweis and Hampton Walker

Hampton Walker

What do you hope the AR sandbox accomplishes?

I wanted to make learning geography easier and more fun for students, especially those in middle school. The AR sandbox project expanded my knowledge of coding and helped bring a positive learning atmosphere to the school.

Pritchard Receives National Recognition for Cancer Research

Alexandra Pritchard, a rising senior, was chosen last spring as one of only 100 high school students from across the country and one of only four students from the state of Alabama to receive the prestigious Emperor Science award. The Emperor Science Award, sponsored by PBS and Stand Up to Cancer, is an initiative designed to encourage high school students to explore careers in science, specifically cancer research and care, through a unique mentoring opportunity.

As an award winner, Alexandra conducts cancer research with Dr. Jessy DeShane of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her work in the lab, which began last summer and has continued through the school year, has yielded results that are both complex and fascinating. Her research explores the protumorigenic effect exosomes have on the polarization of M2 macrophages, specifically in lung cancer. Building on existing research that shows M2 phenotype macrophages promote tumor progression, Alexandra's results indicate that exosomes increase polarization of M2 phenotype. Therefore, exosomes promote tumor proliferation, by increasing M2 phenotype polarization.

Alexandra presented her research, "Exosomes and Macrophage Polarization in Lung Cancer," at the state-level Alabama Science and Engineering Fair, held in early April, at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), where she received numerous awards including 3rd place: Biomedical and Health Science; Special Award: Boeing Engineers; 1st Place National Youth Science Foundation; and 1st Place Society for In Vitro Biology. She was also chosen to represent Alabama at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Pittsburgh, PA.

Alexandra's interest in cancer research is personal. "Preventing and curing cancer would save lives and bring relief to all those fearing, suffering, or grieving the loss of a loved one from cancer. I lost my grandmother to cancer in 2015, and my aunt was diagnosed with breast cancer. Having my family repeatedly affected



Photo by Aryan Caplash

Alexandra Pritchard

by this disease inspired me to join the fight against cancer," she said.

In addition to her accomplishments in science, Alexandra is also an SGA class officer, plays on the soccer and basketball teams, and is actively involved in the school's theater program.

A Girl Who Codes

Rising senior Amrita Lakhanpal is no stranger to the spotlight. During the month of April alone, she took to the stage multiple times to receive national and state-wide awards for her computer coding work with two Birmingham city elementary schools: EPIC and Central Park. She was one of only six students in the state of Alabama to receive the Prudential Spirit of Community Distinguished Finalist Award, and she was named Student Volunteer of the Year by Hands On Birmingham and United Way of Central Alabama during their Ignite Awards ceremony.

Earlier in the spring, she was also selected as a 2018 National Honorable Mention (NHM) recipient of the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing. NCWIT received more than 3,600 applications for this award. Amrita was one of only 350 NHM recipients nationally, and one of only 8 NHM recipients in the state of Alabama.

Amrita raised \$12,000 to purchase computing equipment for EPIC and donated another \$13,000 to Central Park Elementary to help with their technology needs. She also gives of her time, teaching a five-week coding class this summer at EPIC and running Altamont's Girls Who Code club (which she started) during the school year. Amrita is eager to expand her "Screens for Schools" program by raising funds to send students to coding camp and hosting additional camps of her own, including one for students on the autism spectrum.

"My goal is not to simply get computers to these schools, but to continue the computer education that started Screens for Schools in the first place," Amrita said. "I would love for members of the community to volunteer and help continue educating these students."

At the state-level Alabama Science and Engineering Fair (ASEF) held in early April at The University of Alabama in Huntsville, Amrita's project "Computational Analyses to Identify Genes Disproportionately Affected by NFKBIA Deletions and Implicated in Breast Cancer and Glioblastoma Tumorigenesis" won 3rd place in Biomedical Engineering/ Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, a Special Award from Boeing Company, Honorable Mention from the National Youth Science Foundation, Honorable Mention from the U.S. Army Science and Engineering Awards Program, and was chosen to represent the state of Alabama at the International Science Fair in Pittsburgh, PA.



Amrita Lakhanpal



*David Zell and Isabel Coleman
with their NDCA team and
individual awards*

Altamont Students Win National Debate Title

The 2018 National Debate Coaches Association (NDCA) National Championship was held April 14-16, at Marist School in Atlanta, Georgia. Altamont's team of Isabel Coleman and David Zell swept the ballots to capture the NDCA tournament title and become 2018 National Public Forum Debate champions. David and Isabel were also first and second place speakers respectively at the tournament.

This victory culminated a year of success, in which David and Isabel steadily climbed the ranks of national forum debate. They were one of the first teams in the country to earn three bids to the Tournament of Champions (TOC)—the nation's most prestigious speech and debate tournament.

Dr. Sim Butler of the University of Alabama College of Communication and Information Sciences says, "Isabel and David are legitimately one of the top debate teams in the nation. The most impressive part is that they are consistent from tournament to tournament and topic to topic, which is really hard to do without a big team sharing the workload."

"There are thousands and thousands of students competing in Public Forum debate every day in this country. Isabel and David's hard work has put them, and Altamont, on the national stage," said English and debate teacher Katherine Berdy. "In addition to their personal success, they coach fellow teammates three days a week and led a free, weeklong summer debate camp. Their dedication to the art and science of logic, argumentation, and rhetoric is astounding."

"On college applications, where they ask, 'What is your proudest achievement? What meant the most to you about your high school experiences?' Building up the debate program at Altamont is always my answer," says Isabel, who will continue her education this fall at Yale University.

David agrees, "I realized that debate is the culmination of all the things I am interested in: research, politics, public speaking, argumentation. It was my keystone activity at Altamont." He was selected for the prestigious University Fellows Experience, part of the Honors College at the University of Alabama, where he will be an entering student this fall.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Altamont Scholars Bowl Team Second in Nation

Altamont's scholars bowl team of Vivek Sasse, Asher Desai, Sameer Sultan, and Kuleen Sasse placed second in the nation at the National Academic Championship (NAC) Final Four held June 15-17, 2018, in Orlando, Florida. Vivek, Asher, Sameer, and Kuleen went undefeated through the preliminary rounds of the competition. In the finals, they lost by just a few questions to Plano West, a team they defeated in the prelims.



Altamont's team, which is coached by Lindsey Motlow, qualified for the NAC Final Four by capturing the New Orleans phase of the championship, held May 26-28, 2018. The varsity team of Suneeti Chambers, Henry Chang, Vivek Sasse, Asher Desai, Sameer Sultan, and Kuleen Sasse entered the playoffs ranked No. 4 with a 5-1 record. In the early rounds of the playoffs, Altamont defeated Bishop Kelley (OK) 405-170 and No. 1-seeded St. Martin's Episcopal (LA) 335-320. Altamont faced Clinton (MS) in the final game, where the team won by a final score of 360-295.

Rising senior Vivek Sasse was named MVP of the Orlando tournament.



Isabel Coleman

National Merit Scholar

Isabel Coleman was one of only 36 students in the state of Alabama to be awarded a \$2,500 National Merit scholarship. Earlier this spring Isabel, along with her classmate Matthew Hamrick, was distinguished first as a National Merit semifinalist, then as a finalist. After being selected as a finalist, Isabel competed against more than 15,000 students nationwide to earn the Merit Scholar title.

The nationwide pool of finalists represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors. About 1.6 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2016 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as the initial screen of program entrants.

Three Altamont Students Earn Perfect ACT Scores

Matthew Hamrick, Asher Desai and Sara Catherine Cook all earned a 36 on the ACT, the highest possible composite score. This marks the third year in a row that an Altamont student has achieved this rare accomplishment (Lucy Pless-2016, Robert Denniston-2015). On average, only one-tenth of one percent of all test takers receive the top score. Among U.S. high school graduates just 2,760 out of the more than two million students who took the ACT reached a composite score of 36.



Matthew Hamrick



Asher Desai



Sara Catherine Cook



Photo by Scripps Bee

Sid Doppalapudi competes in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, televised on ESPN2.

Doppalapudi Excels in National Spelling, Math Competitions

Sid Doppalapudi, a rising eighth grader at Altamont, competed on ESPN2 on May 30, 2018, as a finalist in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Eleven million students nationwide participate in school-level Bees. That pool narrows with district, regional, and state Bees.

The national competition began at Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, on May 27 with 515 spellers. The number of participants was a substantial increase from last year's 291 spellers due to a new program implemented by Scripps, the RSVBee. RSVBee provides an additional path for spelling champions to experience Bee Week and compete in the National Finals through an application and invitation process. Sid qualified as an RSVBee speller, as did the 2018 winner of the Scripps Bee, Karthik Nemmani of McKinney, Texas.

Sid was one of only 41 students to make it to the televised finals, correctly spelling "listerism." He went out in the first round of finals on the word "amyloid."

Sid was also a finalist in the national MathCounts Competition. He qualified for the tournament by placing second in the state round of MathCounts, earning one of four places for Alabama students to compete nationally against middle school students from across the U.S. This was his second time in the MathCounts national competition.

Sid placed in the top 30 percent of 244 students at the national competition, held in Washington, D.C., May 12-15. The Alabama team placed 16th in the nation.



Sid Doppalapudi with state MathCounts trophy

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS



Altamont Senior **Trinity Perdue** was named a 2017 QuestBridge College Match Scholarship recipient. Trinity will enroll this fall as a QuestBridge Scholar at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. College Match is an extremely competitive process. From a pool of 15,606 applicants, only 918 outstanding students were selected.

Students chosen for College Match are “matched” to one of QuestBridge’s highly selective college partners, which means they were admitted early with a guaranteed full, four-year scholarship, including tuition, room and board, and other expenses. QuestBridge’s college partners include top liberal arts colleges and exceptional research universities.

Two Altamont Students Sign Letters of Intent



Breland Morrisette signed a letter of intent to play NCAA Division I volleyball for the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. A 6-foot-1 middle blocker, Breland plans to major in biomedical engineering.



Evan Poole signed a letter of intent to play NCAA Division III soccer for the Sewanee Tigers.

Chang Named Semifinalist in National STEM Competition

Fion Chang was one of only three students in the state of Alabama to be named a semifinalist in the Siemens Foundation Competition—the nation’s premier competition in math, science and technology for high school students. The prize, launched by the Siemens Foundation in 1999, was established to increase access to higher education for students who are gifted in STEM. This competition seeks to recognize and build a strong pipeline for the nation’s most promising scientists, engineers and mathematicians.



Abby Lee was a finalist in the World of 7 Billion national student video contest. Her stop motion video “Drip Irrigation Can End World Hunger” was chosen from more than 3,000 entries. Watch it on YouTube!

How did you produce the video with clay animation?

I’ve been making stop motion videos since I was 13 and love it. The making of this video seems complex but was composed of nothing but a few sheets of white paper taped together and some modeling clay I bought at the craft store. Claymation is simple but you have to be very precise. You have to move the subject in each frame. If you move it too slightly, it will be difficult to see the movement in the final product but if you move the subject too drastically, the movements will not be fluid. Having multiple subjects is fun because the video becomes more dynamic but requires a large amount of time. I think I used a total of about of 1,500 pictures.



Drip irrigation is a great idea to fight poverty and hunger, how did you come up with that idea?

When thinking about solutions for the video, I considered the fact that most of the food consumed in developing countries comes from small farms and is often not commercially grown. Corporations have ample resources to grow crops to mass distribute, but if you are trying to grow food in a developing country where there are limited water sources and mostly arid land, it is important to not over-irrigate your land and save as much water as possible. My environmental science teacher brought up drip irrigation in a lesson one day. I thought that this was a great solution to prevent drying out land and reducing water usage.

What’s next for you?

The Altamont School has prepared me very well for what’s next after high school, and this summer I am headed to Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, to study and work alongside researchers in their STEM scholar program. I plan to major in biochemistry.



Presidential Scholars

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, established in 1964 by executive order of the President, recognizes and honors some of our nation’s most distinguished graduating high school seniors. Approximately 4,000 seniors were nominated nationwide as 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholars candidates with 95 from Alabama. Two of those 95 seniors are Altamont students Helen Tynes and Matthew Hamrick. Application to the prestigious program is by invitation only; students are invited to apply based on their SAT or ACT scores or their nomination by a Chief State School Officer.

In April, the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews the applications of all candidates. The Commission then selects up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars each year. All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during the National Recognition Program, held in June in Washington, D.C. Altamont is proud to have produced two Presidential Scholars: David Goldenberg in 1997 and Rakesh Goli in 2012.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Community Service

Altamont students volunteer countless hours in the local and regional community through Service Corps, Miree, and participation in the annual Students Today, Leaders Forever “Pay It Forward” Community Service trip over Spring Break. Please visit altamontschool.org/academics/leadership and the news section of our website to learn more!

Rising senior Daniel Elston raised money to buy five Radio Flyer wagons for Children’s Hospital of Alabama, where he serves as a volunteer. He presented the wagons to Children’s CEO Mike Warren on May 23, 2018.



Altamont’s talented art and photography students won numerous state, national, and international awards. Please visit the news section of our website at altamontschool.org for multiple stories.



Altamont’s orchestra traveled to the National Adjudicators Invitational in Atlanta, Georgia, where they received a score of “Excellent” from the judges.



Big Fish, Daniel Wallace '77 at Altamont

More than 40 Altamont students involved in the production of *Big Fish: The Musical*—actors, dancers, singers and technicians—worked for months to bring the smash Broadway show to life at The Cabaniss-Kaul Center for the Arts this spring. The 2014 play is based on Altamont alumnus Daniel Wallace's novel *Big Fish* (1998) and the Tim Burton-directed film adaptation. Mr. Wallace is a *New York Times* bestselling author of six novels, including his most recent *Extraordinary Adventures* (2017), and is J. Ross MacDonald Distinguished Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He was in the audience for the final performance. Although Wallace has seen the show performed in cities around the world, this was his first time seeing a student production of the play. "It was wonderful to have my first experience of a student show on an Altamont stage," said Wallace.

Wallace spoke at a school-wide assembly, encouraging students to value their time at Altamont and to always be observant. "Over the course of time, when I was wiser and able to see where true value lies, it was in my own experiences, here, at Altamont. Pay attention to what is going on in your life. That is where the magic happens," said Wallace. "I truly believe in the magic we make for ourselves."



Elizabeth Coleman '77, Daniel Wallace '77, and Sarah Whiteside

State Champs!

The Knights are the Girls 2018 Class 2A Outdoor Track & Field State Champions! The girls team captured the school's 11th state title, while the boys team was the 2nd place runner up in 2A. Individual state champions are Kalia Todd (triple jump and 300m hurdles), Darian Sanders (triple jump), James Dixon (800m), Cole Hall (pole vault), Sophie Cornelius (pole vault), and the boys 4x400m relay (Cole, Darian, Jack Engel, and James). There were many other podium finishers and school records broken, please see Altamont's website for all of the results. The entire team trained very hard all year to get to this point, and it was a spectacular end to the season.



Volleyball Caps Season with Top Four State Tournament Finish

For the second year in a row, Altamont's varsity volleyball team advanced to the Alabama High School Athletic Association 2A State Championship. The girls defeated Ariton in the quarterfinals to advance to the semifinals, where they lost a hard-fought match against St. Luke's Episcopal in four sets. St. Luke's eventually went on to win the state title. The Knights finished the season in the top four at state and with a 31-8 record. Leading up to the state tournament, the Knights defeated St. Bernard Prep and Fyffe in the Girls 2A Varsity Volleyball North Super Regional Tournament. They were also the Area 10 Volleyball Tournament champs.



Top Four State Finishes for Cross Country Teams

Altamont's cross country teams capped off a strong season with top finishes at the 2017 AHSAA 1A/2A Cross Country State Championship. The boys team placed 3rd with 78 points, 1 point away from Cold Springs and a runner up trophy. The girls team finished 4th, but were separated from a runner up trophy by only a few points.



Baseball

Altamont's baseball team finished the 2018 season with a 13-3 victory over Cornerstone. Ben Gerety pitched 4 innings for the win. Grey Laney picked up a long save in three innings of relief, the defense recorded its second triple play of the season, and Wyatt Trammell had an officially scored inside the park home run.



Cole Hall

Indoor Track and Field

Altamont boys and girls indoor track and field teams competed in the 1A-3A AHSAA State Championship held at Birmingham CrossPlex. The boys team finished eighth in state, led by James Dixon with a state championship in the 800m and a fourth-place finish in the 400m and Cole Hall with a fourth-place finish in the pole vault. The girls team finished ninth in state with top ten performances by a number of individual athletes. Complete results from the state meet are on our website.



Basketball

The girls varsity basketball team was crowned Area Champs, and both boys and girls varsity teams advanced to Subregional games. A highlight of the girls' season was senior Cat Harris scoring her 1,000th point as an Altamont Knight.



Anna-Julia Kutsch

Swimming

Anna-Julia Kutsch repeated as state swimming champion in the 100-yard freestyle at the AHSAA Swimming and Diving Championships. She recorded the fastest time in the state across all classifications in this event and set a new A-5A record. Anna Hoyt earned top five honors for A-2A swimmers, and the boys 200 freestyle relay of Daniel Kutsch, Hampton Pak, Billy Hoyt, and Joey Brown qualified for A-5A finals.





Golf

Altamont's girls varsity golf team won the sectional championship, played at Cross Creek Golf Course in Cullman, by a margin of 46 strokes. The win at Sectionals earned the team a forth straight trip to sub-state at Arrowhead Country Club in Montgomery. The team finished their regular season 5-1. The boys varsity golf team placed third at sectionals to earn a trip to sub-state at Heron Lakes Country Club in Mobile. The team ended the regular season with a 4-3 record.



Tennis

Altamont boys and girls varsity tennis teams both won their sectional tournaments and advanced to the state tournament, which was held at Point Mallard Park in Decatur. The girls' tennis team won the Sportsmanship Trophy, which is voted on by other teams, at the State 1A-3A Tournament. The boy's tennis team finished 3rd in State. Complete results from the tournament are on our website.



Boys Soccer Advances to State Final Four

Altamont's boys varsity soccer team advanced to the AHSAA State Final Four in Huntsville, where they were edged out 4-3 in the semifinals by West Morgan in a tough match. Both boys and girls varsity soccer teams were area champs.



*Mrs. Whiteside and her former Latin students
in attendance at the 2018 Gala.*

Altamont Gala Sets Fundraising Record

The 2018 Altamont Gala, honoring retiring Head of School Sarah Whiteside for 40 years of service and devotion, was a record setting event both in attendance and in funds raised. Held for the first time at Haven in Birmingham's Lakeview district, the event featured a seated dinner for more than 400 people, a live and silent auction, two video tributes to Mrs. Whiteside, and a presentation of a book and portrait in her honor. Between the auction items, contributions to the Whiteside Scholarship, and tickets sales, nearly half a million dollars was raised in support of the school and its mission.



*Tommy Angelillo '01, David Murvin '01, Alec Grant,
Rosey Angelillo*



Jeff and Shannon Lisenby, Susan and Ryan Walley



Marilyn Dixon '90



*Nii-Amar Amamoo '97,
master of ceremonies*



*Melissa McNeil '97, Bebe Barnard '91 (Gala Auction
Chair), Head of Upper School JP Hemingway '91,
Head of Middle School Ally Leonard*



Sarah Whiteside

The Sarah Whiteside Legacy Scholarship

After 40 years of service and devotion to The Altamont School, Sarah Whiteside retired June 30, 2018, but she leaves behind a legacy of compassion that will support deserving students for years to come. The Sarah Whiteside Legacy Scholarship will be awarded to students who emulate Mrs. Whiteside and her values: students who inspire and care for others, who strive for excellence, who listen with respect, and who devote themselves to being and doing their best.

For greatest impact, Altamont has a two-fold plan for the Whiteside Scholarship. A portion of the scholarship will be endowed as a permanent legacy under the school's investment policy. And, a portion of the scholarship will have more flexible terms so the school can access additional funds to support students when the need for financial assistance is greater. The school intends to support a minimum of three exceptional, need-based students – who may not have otherwise been able to pursue their academic goals at Altamont.

Every year, a minimum of five children are unable to attend Altamont because their financial needs cannot be met.

Donations of \$1,000 or more can be payable over a two-year period. Please contact Charlotte Russ at cruss@altamontschool.org or 205-445-1225 for more information, or you may make your gift online at altamontschool.org/giving.

Learn more about the Whiteside Scholarship at vimeo.com/267859000

For a wonderful reflection on Mrs. Whiteside visit vimeo.com/267856825

New Scholarship Opportunities

Several new and recent scholarships make an Altamont education available to an even wider range of students. Please contact Charlotte Russ at cruss@altamontschool.org or 205-445-1225 if you would like additional information. You can also give online at altamontschool.org/giving.

Madame Classé Scholarship: Named in honor of Jeanne Classé, who devoted 44 years to the teaching of French language, history, and literature, this award goes to an upper school student dedicated to fluency in the French language.

Bunnie Tent Service Scholarship: Named after beloved Altamont math teacher Margaret "Bunnie" Tent who inspired and encouraged hundreds of students during her 17-year tenure, this scholarship will be presented to a rising senior who is a true leader in discovering the strength and beauty of service to others.

Nelson Scholar Award: Established in 2016 by Henry and Marlene Nelson and their children, Sean '05 and Jon-Marc '01, this monetary award is given annually to a rising senior in recognition of merit and notable contributions to the school.

Hornak Family Scholarship: Established by Robert, Bentley and Emily Hornak, this scholarship supports students who contribute to the vitality of the Altamont community. The Hornak family wishes to further the mission of The Altamont School by supporting deserving students who may not otherwise be able to attend.

The Benevolent Fund is made possible by an anonymous Altamont family who wants to "pay it forward" by giving the gift of education to others. The Benevolent Fund helps families who have encountered life-changing circumstances.

Alabama Accountability Act SGO: In November 2017, Altamont joined the Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) Renaissance Scholarships, Inc., organized under the Alabama Accountability Act, which gives children zoned for failing schools the opportunity to attend a better school. Altamont is proud to partner with SGO Renaissance, and we encourage families to visit the Renaissance Scholarships website renaissancescholarships.org/parents to see if they meet the Alabama Accountability Act criteria.



ALTAMONT ALUMNI

Holiday
PARTY

SAVE THE DATE!
DECEMBER 22, 2018

The Altamont School
P.O. Box 131429
Birmingham, AL 35213

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #3179
Birmingham, AL

May Day 2018



THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

Please visit us online at altamontschool.org or follow us on social media.

