

# POOR RICHARD'S GAZETTE

A Publication of the Ben Franklin Academy

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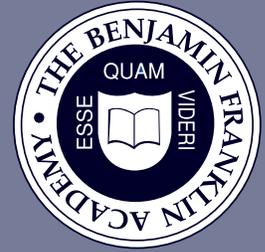
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## Note from the Head of School

Dear Friends,

The spring semester of the 2023-2024 school year was outstanding in so many ways. Students achieved academically and socially. Benjamin Franklin famously wrote, "Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What is a sundial in the shade?" This year our students certainly let their talents shine! Their academic successes were acknowledged on Awards Day for ninth, 10th, and 11th graders, and at graduation for the 52 seniors in the Class of 2024. The BFA students displayed their athletic skills in Golf, Ultimate Disc, and Latin Dance. The Franklin Players drama ensemble shone brightly on stage during the spring play. Students' artistic talents were on display at the BFA Art Show as well as at several city and state competitions. Our musicians stepped into the spotlight to deliver a smashing performance of Jazz, Blues, and Rock favorites at the spring concert. BFA poets shared their writing talent in the annual William H. Izlar, Jr. Poetry Contest. The many talents of our students were also evident in their participation in our school clubs as they tended gardens, created artwork, designed and programmed robots, and gave generously of their time and resources to help multiple nonprofit organizations across our city.

As members of the Class of 2024 walked across the stage at Emory University's Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church to receive awards and diplomas, they were radiant with happiness and promise for the future. This year's Commencement Speech, by author Rich Cohen, is included in this issue. He provided wonderful advice to our graduates -- delivered in a witty and encouraging tone -- on how they could continue to share their talents with a waiting world. This semester's Poor Richard's Gazette captures many of the remarkable achievements of this year's student body as they brought their talents forward into the light for all to see. We congratulate our students on their successful school year!

In gratitude,

Martha B. Burdette, Ph.D.  
Head of School



# Graduation



On Saturday, May 18, Ben Franklin Academy celebrated the Class of 2024. The Graduation Ceremony took place at Glenn Memorial Church where the fifty-two BFA Seniors and their families and friends heard from speakers, received their well earned awards and were handed their diplomas. Rich Cohen, non-fiction author and editor, was the keynote speaker. He spoke about taking chances and working hard, along with other advice for the graduating students. The 2024 Valedictorian was Katie Thompson, and the 2024 Salutatorian was Ian Greenbaum.

Students were honored with special awards including the Austin Botts Art Award, for Excellence in Art; the Carol Feldman Psychology Award, for outstanding work in AP Psychology; the Dameron Black, Jr. Entrepreneurial Award, for outstanding commitment and advancement in a Work-Study position or community volunteer work; and the Emory C. Black Service Award, for outstanding service to Ben Franklin Academy. Aila Cason was awarded the Austin Botts Art Award; Lauren Meltzer was awarded the Carol Feldman Psychology Award; Ian Greenbaum and Lukas Eichhorn were awarded Dameron Black, Jr. Entrepreneurial Awards; and Katie Thompson, Humphrey May and Finn Murphy were awarded Emory C. Black Service Awards. Many of our students also received the President's Award for Academic Excellence or the President's Award for Academic Achievement.

The BFA Class of 2024 showed remarkable perseverance in finishing their high school courses and in applying to colleges. The Seniors earned 221 acceptances to 112 different colleges. BFA students will attend 26 different colleges (55% out of state, 45% in-state) to include Emory University's Oxford College, University of Notre Dame, Brandeis University, Syracuse University, and New York University Shanghai, among many others. The Class of 2024 was awarded merit scholarships with a four-year total of \$10,373,236, and 94% of the Senior class qualified for the HOPE or the Zell Miller Scholarship. Congratulations to the Class of 2024! We look forward to hearing more exciting news from our newest group of BFA Alumni.



Michael Rickman



Aila Cason



Humphrey May,  
Katie Thompson,  
and Finn Murphy



Katie Thompson  
and Ian Greenbaum



Lukas Eichhorn  
and Ian Greenbaum

# Commencement Address



Rich Cohen is the author of the New York Times bestsellers *Monsters: The 1985 Chicago Bears and the Wild Heart of Football*; *Sweet and Low*; *When I Stop Talking, You'll Know I'm Dead* (with Jerry Weintraub); *The Sun & the Moon & the Rolling Stones*; *The Chicago Cubs: Story of a Curse*; and *Pee Wees: Confessions of a Hockey Parent*. His new book, *When The Game Was War: The NBA's Greatest* was published this fall by Random House. He is a co-creator of the HBO series *Vinyl*, an Editor-at-Large at *Air Mail* and a columnist at *The Wall Street Journal*. He has written for *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *Harper's Magazine*, among other publications. Cohen has won the Great Lakes Book Award, the Chicago Public Library's 21st Century Award, and the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for outstanding coverage of music. His stories have been included in *The Best American Essays* and *The Best American Travel Writing*. He lives in Connecticut.

## Mr. Cohen's Commencement Address

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I can tell you what the future is going to be like, but I'd be lying. I don't know, and you don't know, and your teachers don't know, and your parents don't know. And that's the beauty part – the fun part. The not knowing. None of us, not one, has any idea what's going to happen, when it will start, or if it has started already. All I know is this: most people spend their lives waiting for their life to begin when, of course, they are already in the dead center of the thing.

This is an age of conspiracy theories. You can blame the internet, or the collapse of institutions or whatever, but the result seems to be clear. To quote my very short Grandma Esther: "All of a sudden, everyone is an expert."

I find, as a reporter and writer, the best answer to most questions is this: "I don't know." To learn, you must first admit you are dumb, that dumb can be better than smart, that, in the right situation, inarticulate can be better than articulate. You must remind yourself to say: "I don't know." Admitting that is the first step to enlightenment.

Back to conspiracy theories. I'll tell you my favorite. It's a weird one. There are scientists in Russia who believe, way back in the middle ages, that a group of religious leaders got together and, for whatever reasons, added three hundred years to the calendar. This would have been like the change to Day Light Savings that comes every April. Only, instead of adding an hour to the clock, they added three centuries. According to this theory, today, the day of your high school graduation, is not May 18, 2024. It's May 18, 1724.

Why do I love this theory? Because, though factually wrong – I think – it is poetically true. Here's what it says: Forget about where we are – we don't even know when we are. "I don't know."

That should be your answer to those who ask where you'll be in five years, or how you'll make a living, or what you will do with your life. You have to be curious to be successful, broad instead of narrow, open instead of closed. You have to learn to change your mind, reverse your course, improvise, play jazz. You have to learn to say, "I don't know."

(Continued on the next page.)

# Commencement Address Continued

Don't be quick to choose a major, a career, a life. There's an old saying: "Man plans. God laughs." Try to enjoy the laughter. It's what you get in return for certainty.

Let me tell you how I got my first job. I wanted to be a writer, so I sent a resume – this was spring of my senior year in college – to the world's greatest magazine, The New Yorker. Somehow, though I really knew nothing about the magazine, I got a job interview for the typing pool – a title that seems about as ancient as blacksmith or jester. The interviewer said she had called me in out of mere curiosity because no one like me ever applied for a job at the magazine. My grades were mediocre, my resume thin. Under work experience I had camp counselor and my job at the Winnetka park district, where I cleaned dead animals off roads after storms. In other words, my all-important first job interview came about by dumb luck. It was a fluke.

The interview went really well. When the interviewer, Justine Cooke, asked me a question that I could not answer, I said, "I don't know." And she liked that. As an answer, it was just as unusual as my resume. (My father says this thing: "A nose that can hear is worth two that can smell." By which he means, be different, be weird.)

I did lie about one thing, though. This being a typing job, Justine Cooke asked if I was ready for the typing test. I said I was ready, but I was, in fact, not ready. I did not know how to type – I mean, not at all. I still don't. She left me sitting a computer terminal with a page torn from a book. Then left. I had three minutes to get down as much as I could. I remember the passage. It was the opening of the great E.B. White Essay "Here Is New York."

The first paragraph ended with a sentence I've never forgotten: "No one should come to New York to live unless he is willing to be lucky." In fact, I did more reading than typing in that room at The New Yorker. Justine Cooke was dumbfounded when she looked over my work. I had gotten maybe two or three sentences onto the screen, and even those were filled with mistakes.

"Do you know how to type at all?" she asked. I said "No." She asked: "What did you think would happen when I left?" The answer I gave, because it was honest and unexpected, got me a job at the magazine, though not in the typing pool. Because I could not type, I started as a messenger. I said: "I don't know." Then added: "I thought the ability to type might come to me. I've heard about things like that happening."

I am from Chicago. I grew up in the 1980s. These two facts have determined my personality more than my religion, identity, gender or politics. I relax when I meet someone who grew up there and then. I know that person will not want to bicker about this or that but will instead ask me questions and tell me things and be content to hang out and enjoy the laughter part of creation.

And so I was conflicted when I got that job offer. It meant leaving Chicago for New York. I did not want to leave Chicago. I did not want to live in New York. I took my best friend Spitz aside.

(Continued on the next page.)

# Commencement Address Continued

I said, “Hey, Spitz. I’m moving to New York. But I don’t want to. I hate New York. But you know how a thing can lead to a thing. So, if I get there, and a few years go by, and I seem happy, please, remind me that I am not happy, and that I need to move back to Chicago.”

And though he nodded yes, here I am, 35 years later, still living within the orbit of New York, a city that I now love. Last year, realizing this, I called Spitz and gave him the business.

“You promised,” I said. “Why didn’t you remind me? He thought for long a moment, then said, “Sorry, man. I forgot.”

I have four kids. The second oldest is close to your age. He goes to Emory. His name is Nate. One year, on his birthday, I asked, “What do you want to do now that you’re five.” He said, “Pour my own milk and read magazines.”

To me, that’s about as close to a description of the good life as you will ever get. I used to bribe him with candy. I would say, “If you go to sleep without a fuss, I will give you candy in the morning.” And that worked.

Then, one night, after Halloween, when he was maybe 8, when I offered him the usual bribe, he said, “No deal. I’ve got my own candy now.” That’s a story about independence and power. And candy.

As you head into the rest of your lives, I will give you the same advice I give my kids. Go out. Have fun. Meet new people. Don’t sell yourself short. Don’t swim for thirty minutes after eating. Never run on a slick surface, or wear a wet bathing suit under your pants. Never join a mob. Zig when they zag. If it feels wrong, don’t do it. Call your parents and tell them you’re safe. Follow the golden rule. Rescue America. Be good. And, most importantly, and this is advice prized from my own terrible experience: never chew peanuts with gum.

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## The Class of 2024

Every year, BFA provides yard signs for our graduating Seniors to help them celebrate this milestone! Check out some of our Seniors showing off their signs:



Drew Patterson



Finn Murphy



Taiga Shimuzu



Bella Dibba



Isabel Damiani

# Special Activities

## Senior Luncheon

Our Spring Semester Senior Luncheon took place on Friday, January 26. This event is one of the many ways we recognize and celebrate our Seniors and their accomplishments at BFA. Senior students and faculty members gathered in the Carriage House on the bottom level of the Junior House to enjoy food, games, and the company of their peers.



Seniors Enjoying the Luncheon

Students ate pizza, salad, and desserts including treats brought in by families. While eating and chatting, students played games including an icebreaker where they wrote a fun fact about themselves, and the group had to guess which person wrote the fact, and they played Jeopardy. The categories in Jeopardy were Ben Franklin Academy, College Admissions, Senior Year in High School, Popular Apps, and Graduation Requirements. Students were able to select prizes from a basket of goodies that included stickers and fidgets. For the higher point values, students receive Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, or Amazon gift cards. Our Senior Students enjoyed a wonderful celebration of the start of their final semester at BFA. Thank you to the families who donated to this wonderful event!

## Underclass Luncheon



Gabby Ames  
and Charlotte Groton

On Friday, February 23, we celebrated our underclass students with the Spring Semester Luncheon. Students enjoyed pizza, salad and desserts while chatting and playing games. Games included “BFA Jeopardy” and a “Get to Know You” game in which students had to find peers who meet certain criteria like being a Scout, having an older sibling or having traveled to five or more countries. Students were able to enjoy lunch while learning more



Ethan Frost-Boyce

about their peers and school. The winners of these games won prizes including gift cards, many of which were donated by families. Thank you to all families who donated to this event!

## Teacher Appreciation Luncheon

Every February, close to Valentine’s Day, the BFA community recognizes and appreciates our teachers with a Teacher Appreciation Luncheon. This year, we held this event on Friday, February 16. Along with singing their praises, the administration treated our BFA teachers to delicious Chinese food, which included sesame chicken, cashew chicken, fried rice, white rice, spring rolls, egg rolls and so much more. While we always appreciate our teachers and the hard work they put into our students’ education, we want to show an extra bit of love in February with this special treat. Thank you, BFA teachers!

# William H. Izlar, Jr. Poetry Contest



Emily, Elise, Peter, and Lauren

Every April, Ben Franklin Academy celebrates National Poetry Month with the William H. Izlar, Jr. Poetry Contest. This annual poetry contest was established by the Mary Ryan and Henry G. Kuhrt Foundation in memory of BFA's great friend and former longtime Overseer, Bill Izlar. Bill was a lifelong lover of poetry, making this event all the more meaningful and special for our community.

Students submitted one or two poems for consideration. Awards were announced and presented on Thursday, April 25. First Place went to Senior Lauren Meltzer for her poem "My Friend." Second Place went to Junior Peter Green for his poem "Leviathan." Third Place went to ninth grader Elise Porter for her poem "Back to Nature." Fourth Place went to tenth grader Emily Hughes for her poem "Wings of Inspiration: BTS." Thank you, students, for all of the submissions; our teachers and staff always enjoy reading these creative works of poetry!

## Nature/Green Club



Isabel Damiani and Michael Wu

Throughout the spring season, you can find our BFA Nature/Green Club hard at work enhancing our BFA garden. Along with our two club advisors, Dameron Black and Dr. Edward Ellis, students can be found cultivating seeds and pulling up weeds in the garden outside the Jr. House Carriage House. Early spring, students learned how to create "seed bombs," which are little balls packed with seeds that can be planted easily to beautify our surroundings. One of our students led this workshop and helped others learn the best methods for creating these sprouting balls of seeds, pictured here.



Ellie Harrison, Dameron Black, and Michael Baker

Along with working on the BFA garden, our Nature/Green Club members have continued to support and improve the recycling program at BFA by helping to collect recyclable materials and educating the community about what is and is not recyclable. Students also continued their field trips to the Emory University's Farmers' Market to learn about sustainable farming and planting. Not even the spring pollen could stop our Nature/Green Club students from continuing their hard work in gardening, recycling and educating!

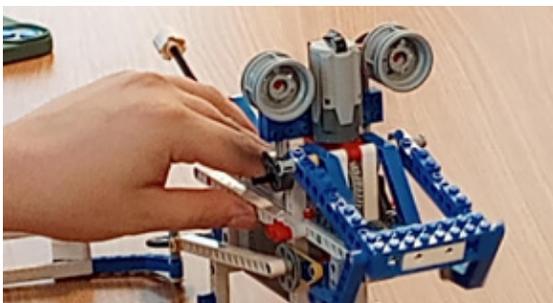
# Ancient Cultures Club

Students at BFA learn about various ancient cultures in the Ancient Cultures Club with Club Advisor, Max Dudukovich. With a focus on Ancient Western Civilizations such as Greece and Rome, students learn about the languages spoken, the arts created, and the beliefs shared in these communities. Students play “The Royal Game of Ur” and draw and color images of Greek and Roman gods while learning more about what each god represents and the beliefs surrounding the gods. While many students tried to recreate what these images might have looked like to the Greeks and Romans, some students have recreated these gods in a more modern light, with brightly-colored hair and in modern clothes.



Emily Hughes and Max Dudukovich

# Robotics Club



For our students interested in engineering and computer coding, Robotics Club is a wonderful club option. Club Advisors, Kecia May and Paula Riefkohl, teach them the intricacies of robotics. Students spend time building robots. Some of the robots' extremities function as arms and legs, which can be programmed to lift boxes, hold items and even perform unique dance moves. Students have begun to learn the coding that is used to program robots to perform tasks from our coding, math, and science teacher, Kecia May. Students had a great time this semester learning about and playing with robots!



Colin Pan

# Philanthropy Club



Dameron Black, Owen Stockton, Henry Reilly, Sanchita Pamidi, and Edward Ellis



Donations

Each semester, the Philanthropy Club holds a donation drive for either Fulton County or DeKalb County Animal Shelter. This school year, students donated items to the Fulton County Shelter in the fall and to the DeKalb County Animal Shelter in the spring.

BFA's Philanthropy Club worked hard all semester to help those in need with the support and guidance of our club advisors, Asefeh Hemmati, Dameron Black, and Dr. Edward Ellis. One of the first projects our students jumped into this semester was creating care packages for those experiencing homelessness in and around the Atlanta area. Students raised funds for necessities for the care packages by holding a bake sale. Club members bought and baked a variety of cupcakes, brownies and other treats that were sold to students and faculty at BFA. The proceeds were used

to purchase necessities like toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand sanitizer and socks. Students assembled 20 care packages donated to those in need.

Students then began the annual Book Drive. BFA families, students, and staff members brought in new and gently used books, which were donated to the Boyce Ansley School. The Boyce Ansley School is a tuition-free, private elementary school serving families experiencing homelessness.

To round out the Spring Semester, students collected animal supplies for the local DeKalb County Animal Shelter. Students collected animal beds, collars, cat litter, food, treats and toys.

# Game Club

With Club Advisor, Ryan Cottrill, students in Game Club learn new games and play some old favorites. They play games like "Chess" and "Magic: The Gathering." The latter is a Trading Card Game (TCG) in which players create a deck of cards to weaken their opponent by challenging their cards and characters, gathering resources and playing card interactions. Students can be found teaching each other different games, learning new strategies, and practicing the essential skills of sportsmanship while enjoying the companionship of their friends.



Michael Taylor

# BFA Student Art Exhibit

Each Spring Semester, BFA hosts families and friends of the school for a virtual and in-person Art Show. This semester, our two visual arts teachers, Robin Olson and Katy Stallfus, hosted a Zoom show on Thursday, May 2, to exhibit and explain their students' art work. Robin and Katy explained the process of creating these art pieces - from idea to final piece. On Friday, May 3, community members were invited to the BFA campus to view these pieces of art and speak directly to some of the student artists and to the Art teachers.

Along with the BFA Spring Art Show, four BFA students' works were accepted into the Atlanta High School Arts Exhibition at the Atlanta (AHS AE) Dogwood Festival in April. The student artists are Aila Cason, Audrey Schmidt-Davis, Neo Hooper and Avi Belcher. Images of their work were judged against entries from students across 12 regional Atlanta counties. Instructors are encouraged to submit unique, nontraditional as well as traditional work created by their students. Submissions are pictured below.



AHSAE Winners



# Arts and Crafts Club



Ellie Harrison

Art Club members also made cards that were added to bags of donated goods for those experiencing homelessness, which the BFA Philanthropy Club organized. They also enjoyed needle felting using wool and special needles to shape and craft small creations of various objects and creatures. BFA students created a leaf with a ladybug on it, small mice, and even a small dog in a sweater. Our Art Club students are learning and mastering different crafting techniques while creating beautiful crafts.

Jan Bedol and Debby Keenan advise the BFA Arts and Crafts Club, which provides a space for students to explore their creativity and create beautiful works of art. Many of these creations are STEAM projects. For example, in the Spring Semester, students work on terrariums. Students make both open and closed terrariums, filled with self-sustaining plants and decorations. This project is a much beloved one and helps students better understand the connection between the arts and sciences.



# The Franklin Players



Franklin Players

Influenced by the myth of the vampire rabbit of Newcastle and the wonderful stories of Bunnica, created by authors Deborah and James Howe, we produced a piece about inter-species relationships and misunderstandings. We built a flying vampire bunny with magical powers and created a cartoon stage set with a bunny door and bean-bag furniture. Actors played one to three parts each and benefited from knee and elbow pads in this highly physical piece. In the end, the bunny maintained his secret power, but everyone else learned an important lesson from each other.

Ben Franklin Academy's Theatre Program, home to the Franklin Players, is devoted to immersion into the study of drama (the script), performance (the delivery method), and theatre (the profession). With a three-show season each year, we try to balance experimentation with classic foundations. Following up on SPYDER, the original seven-character company-developed script we produced fall term, the ensemble began our winter project working with a smaller acting pool and a larger-scale ambition. We used an existing script as our lab study for story arc and comedic values, and borrowed concepts from it to investigate puppetry, double casting - as an element of humor - and soundscapes as characters.

# Band

On Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons, BFA was alive with the sound of music, thanks to our own BFA Band. Led by music teachers, Norm Ficke and Joe Gransden, students learn new instruments, practice ones they have mastered and work together to create a cohesive sound. This semester, we had students playing a variety of instruments including guitars, bass guitars, pianos, and even a harmonica!

One of the biggest events we have each semester is the Sports and Activities Awards Banquet, where coaches acknowledge students for their hard work and dedication to their music. The BFA Band also performs at this event each semester, and students show off what they have been working on all semester. The band performed “One Big Holiday,” by My Morning Jacket; “Just the Two of Us,” by Bill Withers and Grover Washington, Jr.; “Sir Duke,” by Stevie Wonder; and “Spain,” by Chick Corea, among several others. The BFA Band performed beautifully at the Spring Semester Sports and Activities Award Banquet, demonstrating their wonderful musical abilities.



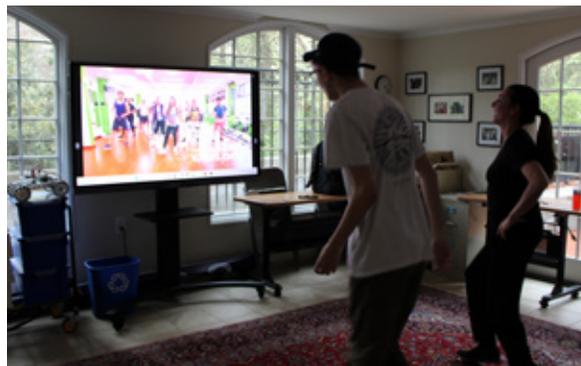
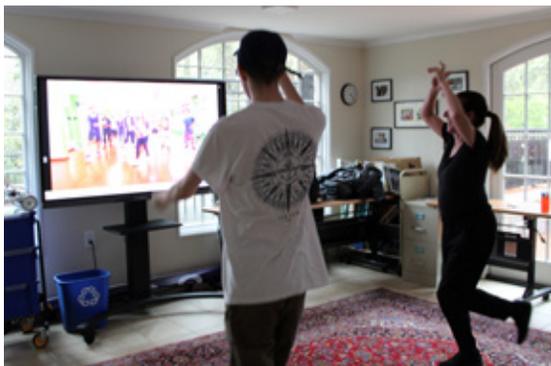
Finn Murphy, Bobby Tong, and Peter Green



Sam San Miguel

# Latin Dance

On Tuesdays and Thursdays after school during both the Fall and Spring Semesters, students could be found dancing out their stress and anxieties in Latin Dance with Club Advisor, Alex Correa. This fun form of exercise focuses on bringing up one’s heart rate with cardio and learning some new and unique dance moves. Students follow along with various Salsa and Zumba-inspired instructional videos in this fun group setting. Many students participated in this club as a form of physical activity and enjoyed this unique form of exercise while chatting with their peers about the school day.



Owen Moore and Alexandra Correa

# Underclass Awards

On Tuesday, May 21, the Underclass Students and teachers gathered in the Founder's Courtyard to celebrate their achievements throughout the 2023-2024 school year. Students were recognized for their hard work in their AP, Honors, and College Preparatory classes.

Along with the academic awards, seven of our Underclass Students were recognized with special awards including the Ted Sizer Franklin Scholar Award, the Alec Lansing Technology Award, and the Dr. C. Michael York Service Award. The Ted Sizer Franklin Scholar Award is given to students who have met all the aspects of the ideal Ben Franklin Academy student. The winners of the Ted Sizer Award for the 2023-2024 school year were Juniors, William Forrest, Olivia Ge and Julia Goode and Sophomores, Neo Hooper and Emily Hughes. The Dr. C. Michael York Service Award was established by Mrs. York and recognizes a student who has provided service to the school and/or the community. The winner of the 2023-2024 Dr. C. Michael York Service Award was Junior, Julia Draper. The Alec Lansing Technology Award is awarded to a BFA student who demonstrates great interest in and excels at technology, including engineering, coding, and/or computer science. The winner of this year's Alec Lansing Technology Award was Junior, Abby Crutcher.



Abby Crutcher



Award Winners



Julia Draper

# Code Wars

On Saturday, March 2, our BFA students competed in the 2024 CodeWars Competition with the support and encouragement of coach and teacher, Kecia May. This competition pits coding students from across the state of Georgia. Students work to solve computer code-related problems as fast and as correctly as possible.

This is the second year that BFA students have participated in this event, advancing in their understanding of coding and the skills necessary for this competition and beyond. We are so proud of our students for taking on this challenge, especially on the first Saturday of our Winter Break! Way to go, BFA Coders!



Finn Murphy and Abby Crutcher

# Spring Sports

## Ultimate Disc



Ultimate Disc Team

One of the most popular sports at BFA is Ultimate Disc, especially this year with our biggest team ever! Our team begins training the second week of the Spring Semester and practices take place on Mondays and Wednesdays all semester. Ultimate Disc is a team sport where teams of seven players compete to bring home as many goals as possible by whisking the frisbee (disc) across the field to their teammate waiting in the end zone. Players must throw the disc

to one another to advance on the field and cannot run while holding the disc, though there is much running to get into position. Our co-ed BFA participants spend practices working on their disc throwing, conditioning for the running needed in the sport, learning strategy including how to form a stack, and playing defense to guard opposing players from being able to catch the disc. Our BFA team has been practicing in Lullwater, just a short walk away and located on Emory University's campus. Ultimate is a fun, non-contact sport that requires many skills.

This year, along with our Head Coach, Dr. Edward Ellis, we had two new coaches. Our first addition to the coaching team was Allie Fridkin, who grew up in Atlanta and played for the Paideia Ultimate Team in high school. She then went on to Carleton College and continued to play Ultimate on their Division One team called "Syzygy." Syzygy was ranked first in the country in 2020 before COVID-19 prematurely ended their season. Our second new coach was Brendon Lyster. Brendon is a BFA Alum who graduated in 2019 and played on the BFA Ultimate Team while he was a student. He also played Ultimate while in college. Along with these big changes in our coaching staff, our student-athletes wore new, snazzy uniforms.



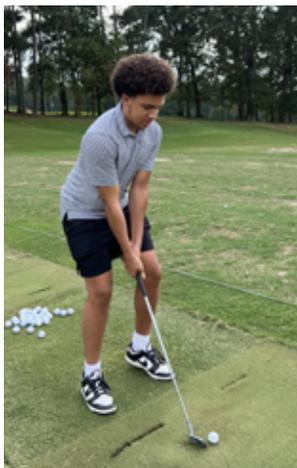
Lucas Koh-Maitre  
and Chandler Etson

Dr. Ellis and the two Assistant Coaches helped our students develop a love of the game and the skills needed for Ultimate success. This year, we had students who had experience in the sport as well as those who had never played. Our coaches noted that our veteran players supported and guided our newer team members, exhibiting the wonderful camaraderie we see and love at BFA.

The team competed in a number of matches against other schools in the Atlanta/Decatur area and showed wonderful perseverance, attending and competing in many weekend matches. As always, we admire our BFA students for their hard work, respectful attitude toward competing teams, and the support they show one another.

# Spring Sports - Continued

## Golf



Drew Patterson



Asa Barfield

The 2024 BFA Golf Team was made up of a mix of team veterans who have played for several years and new players, including those new to the team and to the sport of golf in general. A couple of Seniors played on the team for the fourth consecutive year and guided the newer members of the team.

The team met at Charlie Yates Golf Course every Tuesday to practice their long game on the range while chipping and putting in the short game area. On Thursdays, the team met at Candler Park to play 9 holes in preparation for the matches against

other high schools including Midtown High School, Galloway, and Drew Charter School. The “Season-Ending 18-Hole Area Tournament” was played with other schools in our region at Lake Oconee Golf Course. Our players did a great job representing BFA as students and as athletes. We look forward to the continued success of our BFA Golf Team next spring.

## Student Signing Days

During the 2023-2024 school year, BFA celebrated two of our fencing students who signed to continue the sport at their respective colleges.



Ian Greenbaum

Ian Greenbaum, graduating Senior and BFA’s 2024 Salutatorian, signed to attend and fence at Notre Dame for the 2024-2025 school year on Tuesday, February 20. With his friends, teachers, coaches and family by his side, including his sister, Ella Greenbaum, 2023 BFA Alumna and current Notre Dame student and fencer, Ian signed to join the Fighting Irish for the upcoming school year.



Lukas Eichhorn

On Thursday, May 2, Lukas Eichhorn, graduating Senior, signed with Boston College to be a member of the 2024-2025 Fencing Team. Surrounded by his family, coaches, friends and teachers, Lukas celebrated this great milestone in his life and looks forward to being a Boston College Eagle!

# Annual Fund Volunteers

Ben Franklin Academy expresses our sincere gratitude to those who have volunteered their time and resources to serve as Annual Fund volunteers this year. Our dedicated group of volunteers has helped BFA fulfill its mission as we work to secure Annual Fund support for the Wood Smethurst Scholarship Fund and technology enhancements. We are grateful for their commitment to the Ben Franklin community. Thank you to our wonderful Annual Fund volunteers!

## Co-Chairs

Sonja and Jeff Greenbaum,  
*Current Parents*

## Committee Members

Laura Palickar and Wally Curran,  
*Alumni Parents, and  
Immediate Past Annual Fund Co-Chairs*

Ioana Bonta, *Alumni Parent*  
Jackie Conley, *Alumni Parent*

Amy and Gabe Damiani,  
*Current Parents*

Daniel Eberly, *Alumni Parent*

Lisa Gunther, *Current Parent*

Patty King, *Alumni Parent,  
Board of Overseers*

Fluffy McDuffie, *Alumni Parent,  
Board of Trustees*

Lei Shan and Ron Stockton, *Current Parents*

Tricia Warren, *Alumni Parent,  
Board of Overseers*

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