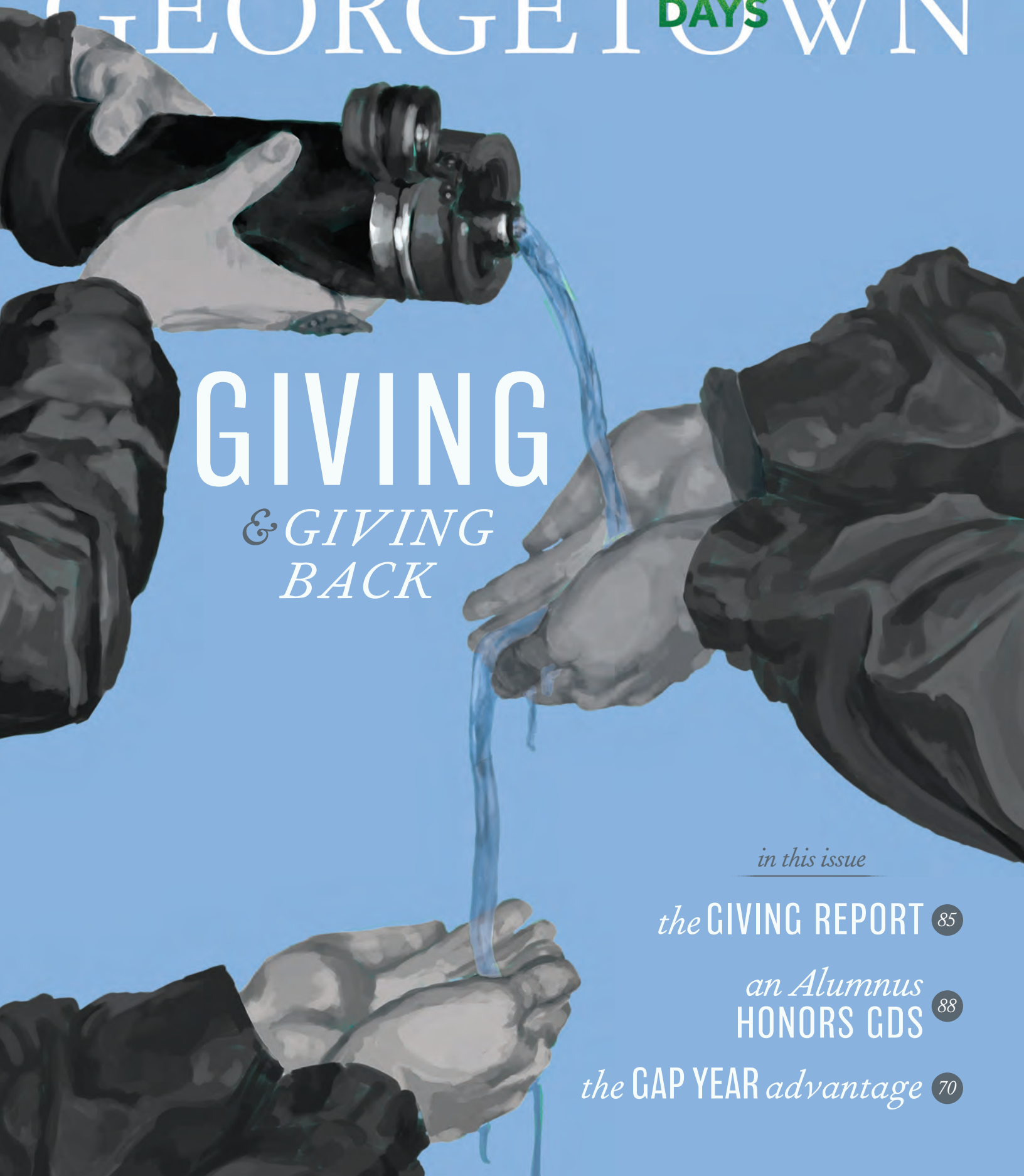
FALL *2023*

GEORGETOWN DAYS



GIVING *& GIVING BACK*

in this issue

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JASON PUTSCHÉ

OUR MISSION DRIVES ALL THAT WE DO

GEORGETOWN DAY SCHOOL honors the integrity and worth of each individual within a diverse school community. GDS is dedicated to providing a supportive educational atmosphere in which teachers challenge the intellectual, creative, and physical abilities of our students and foster strength of character and concern for others. From the earliest grades, we encourage our students to wonder, to inquire, and to be self-reliant, laying the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.



JASON

We welcome submissions for *Georgetown Days* magazine from all GDS community members.

Please contact dina@gds.org to learn more.

Alumni are encouraged to send their news with photos to alumni@gds.org.



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FROM WHERE I STAND


JASON PUTSCHÉ

Russell Shaw,
Head of School

I HAD MY FIRST SUMMER JOB when I was 10 years old. My big brother (who was 12) and I got the idea that we wanted to open a store. We reached out to a local day camp, and they agreed to let us set up a cart outside the entrance where we sold sodas, candy, chips, and fruit. Our family had visited Washington, DC the summer before and, inspired by what we had seen, my brother and I decided to name our enterprise, "The Smithsonian Snack Shop."

I have vivid memories from that summer: taking the bus from my house to the camp each morning; retrieving our supplies from a storage closet and wheeling them out to our sales location on our skateboards; negotiating with a camper's parent over the price of a peach; breaking my arm while trying to jump my skateboard off the curb when business was slow.

Most of all, I remember a sense of purpose. Although my brother and I were just kids, we tracked our supplies, ensured that our drinks stayed cool, managed our cash box, and provided what seemed to be a valued service for campers and their families. We felt remarkably accomplished at the end of the summer when we deposited several hundred dollars of earnings into our newly opened bank accounts.

Georgetown Day School has always been about purpose. We believe in young people and know that when they are invested in something that they care about, learning is a joyful, engaging act rather than a chore. Each year, our first grade authors read their carefully crafted books at Authors' Brunch, owning the spotlight with confidence and pride. Our eighth graders study constitutional issues and demonstrate their knowledge in meetings with experts on Hill Day. Our High School students construct sets for plays, run countless student organizations, direct a cappella groups, captain sports teams and more. GDS students are invested in what they're doing because their work is authentically theirs, and it matters to them.

A longitudinal study from the Stanford Center on Adolescence found that young people who feel a sense of purpose are happier, have better relationships, learn more deeply and can more effectively manage their stress. Bill Damon, the Center's Director, says that "People don't worry about the right things. The biggest problem growing up today is not actually stress; it's meaninglessness. …Working hard for something they didn't choose themselves, and don't believe in, is counterproductive to long-term health and fulfillment. It is simply not sustainable. A purposeful life, by contrast, can unleash tremendous energy, creativity, exhilaration and a deep satisfaction with efforts and accomplishments."

In this issue of *Georgetown Days,* you will read stories of purpose. Hoppers who are performing service through our Community Engagement and Experiential Learning (CEEL) program. Students who are interning with GDS alumni, or pitching social ventures through our Hopper Tank. Curriculum and special programming that resonates with students through its deep connection to our founding mission. Faculty who extend their mission-driven work through volunteerism outside of school.

One way that GDS community members demonstrate purpose is through their philanthropy. Each year, I'm inspired by the generosity of our community. Current parents, parents of alumni, alumni, grandparents, faculty and staff, and even students contribute their own resources to GDS, supporting financial aid, faculty innovation, programmatic growth and more. This issue of the magazine includes our Giving Report, in which we celebrate the breadth and depth of GDS community members supporting our school and ensuring that we have what we need to thrive.

The world needs the purposeful engagement of our young people. It is through their creativity, their activism, their collaboration, and their commitment to building a better world, that our School's mission is made manifest and our deepest hopes are realized. We are fortunate to be a community of purpose. May our shared work continue to engage and inspire the students in our care.


KAIDEN YU '23

East at Joe's
a cappella group

First grade authors at Author's Brunch



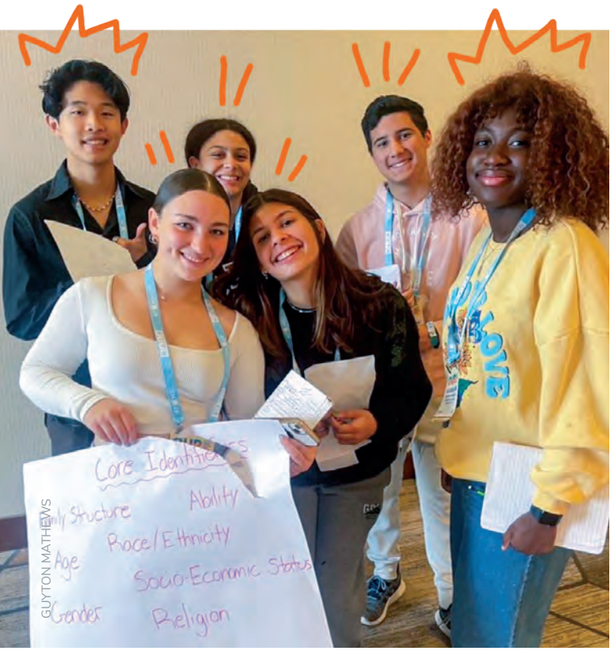




For annual Hill Day field trips, students meet with government officials to discuss everything from environmental policy to immigration.



Russell



GUYTON MATHEWS

GDS's SDLC representatives: (back row from left) Cole Huh '24, Sloane Holder '25, and Julian Montes-Sharp '24; (front row from left) Mackenzie Wiliams '23, Asha Adiga-Biro '23, and Jacqueline Metzger '23.

SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE CAPACITY TO TRANSFORM

Students honor and reflect on the work of social justice activists

FOR A TWO-DAY STRETCH IN FEBRUARY 2023, GDS Middle and High School students participated in nearly 70 workshops on campus as part of the School's Social Justice Teach-In Days. The annual event, which takes place in lieu of classes, honors the work of social justice activists and encourages students to reflect on how they can make a difference in the world.

New York City-based dance troupe Ladies of Hip Hop performed on the first day of the event. GDS parent Shamil Idriss, CEO of Search for Common Ground, delivered a keynote address describing how his organization works to stave off international conflicts. And the GDS community was invited to attend a documentary directed by vocalist-composer Sara Serpa, who melded imagery, text, and live music to tell the story of Portugal's refusal to confront its oppressive colonial past in Africa.

Marlo Thomas, Assistant Head of School for Equity and Inclusion, said this year's program was designed to explore the interconnectedness of humanity with an emphasis on peace. "We wanted students to know that it is our ability to see each other's humanity that allows for transformative and meaningful change," Marlo said.

Students, parents, and others brought their expertise and world views to the workshops, including the three featured here.

How Self-Love Promotes Compassion

Six High School students–Asha Adiga-Biro '23, Sloane Holder '25, Cole Huh '24, Jacqueline Metzger '23, Julian Montes-Sharp '24, and Mackenzie Williams '23–led an interactive workshop at each division designed to explore struggles with personal identity.

These students based their sessions on skills and exercises they acquired as GDS student representatives at the 2022 National Association of Independent Schools' Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC), held in San Antonio, Texas.

In Middle School, they guided students through a speed dating-type activity that involved a series of two-minute, one-on-one conversations with their peers. The conversation prompts included questions such as: "What does the word 'ability' mean to you?" and "Have you ever been treated differently because of your gender at GDS?" The students then reflected on strategies for improving gender inclusivity in recess games and raising awareness of visible versus invisible disabilities.

At the High School, the workshop leaders called on participants to physically situate themselves along a spectrum–ranging from agree to disagree–in response to statements, such as: "My sexual orientation is completely respected by my teachers and peers" and "Everyone should go to therapy." They also shared their views on family structure, ageism, gender-affirming clothes, and elevator access for all–practicing how to express themselves and how to listen to others.

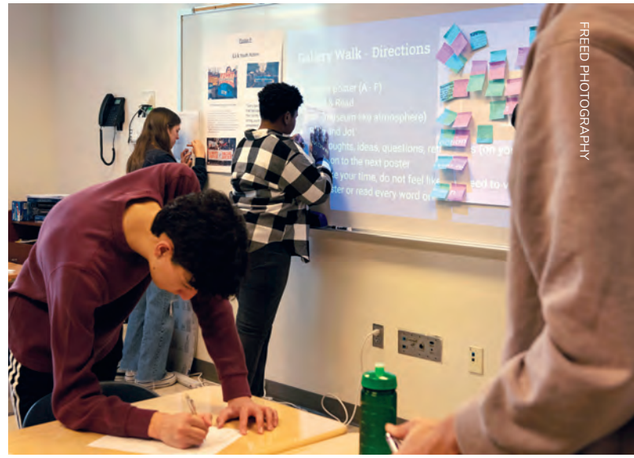
Why Green Issues Are Civil Rights Issues

GDS parent Jared Fox held environmental justice workshops that encouraged students to explore the outsize impact of pollution on marginalized communities.

Jared set up stations with maps of Washington, DC showing air quality variability across the wards, pollution hazards within the city, and present-day tree coverage layered over outlines of formerly redlined neighborhoods. The stations also included information about Robert Bullard (the "father of environmental justice"), current youth climate activism movements, and the 17 principles of environmental justice. At each stop, students jotted down their thoughts and reactions so that they could revisit the group's collective notes at the end of the session.

For these sessions, Jared borrowed from his previous work as an environmental science teacher in Manhattan, where he developed a decades-long partnership with We Act for Environmental Justice that introduced students to environmental stewardship and activism.

"I saw my expertise in social justice as a way to give back to the community," said Jared, father of Benji '35, Ollie '32, and Poppy '30.



FREED PHOTOGRAPHY

Students participating in Jared Fox's workshop engaged in a "gallery walk" activity, which encouraged them to move around the room, discussing diagrams, posters, and ideas with their peers.

Why Small Businesses Matter

During their workshop, 8th graders Alexis Rayford and Chloe Newkirk asked students to invest in their communities by supporting small businesses, which tend to create local jobs, rally behind community initiatives, and foster personal bonds with their customers.

Alex and Chloe learned about what qualifies as a "small business" under federal guidelines and compiled a short list of independently owned retailers that might pique the interest of fellow students. Among them: Proper Topper (which began as a small hat shop in 1990), Captain Cookie & the Milkman (which sells fresh-baked cookies), and Confetti Story (an ice cream cafe, bakery, and event venue.)

"We wanted our session to be informational, but we also wanted it to be fun," Alexis said.

The duo presented a slideshow and then challenged the attendees to brainstorm new business ideas. (Ice cream made from cereal milk, anyone?) Alex and Chloe also quizzed students on the slideshow information. The winning group got first dibs on cookies from Captain Cookie & the Milkman.

"We didn't want our message to be: 'Shop at small businesses only,'" Chloe said. "But we wanted people to look at small businesses first and then larger businesses."

Alexis Rayford '27 and Chloe Newkirk '27, co-leaders of a workshop focused on local small businesses for Middle School





LS Assistant Principal Denise Jones (left) with Carrie Barry and Aisha

BABY AISHA TEACHES EMPATHY

Kindergarteners learn about labeling emotions and "perspective-taking"

TO THE TUNE OF "LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN," about two dozen kindergarteners sing softly as their guest of honor enters the classroom: "Hello, baby Aisha. How are you? How are you? How are you?" Cradled face forward from her mom's belly, Aisha wiggles her toes and smiles as she passes each student lined up along the edges of a massive lime green blanket, eager to touch her tiny feet in greeting.

It's May, and the class knows Aisha well, for she's been stopping in with her parents–Carrie and Mamadou Barry–once a month during the 2022-23 school year. Her 30-minute visits are part of a program called Roots of Empathy, which uses the infant-parent relationship to model social and emotional competencies for children.

Lower School Assistant Principal Denise Jones underwent the Canada-based program's rigorous training in Washington, DC and then Toronto before bringing the curriculum to the kindergarten class taught by Michelle Levy and Bianca Santos Channell.



Aisha gets up close and personal with (from left) Benji Fox, Josephine Biswese, and Sage Harrison.

"By building a bond with an infant and observing how that infant interacts with a parent, the students don't just learn how to care for a baby," Denise said. "They begin to learn how to name emotions, how to express their own needs, and how to think about the emotions that they, their classmates, and their parents feel."

Aisha came to the class for the first time as a four-month-old baby, and the students have tracked her physical milestones ever since. But it's the study of Aisha's vulnerability, feelings, and intentions that has generated some of the program's most powerful moments, said Carrie.

Carrie remembers the time Aisha started crying because she was not allowed to crawl off her lime green mat. "That turned into a lesson about sadness and discontent and not having control over a situation," Carrie said. "Some kids talked about how it made them sad that their parents are not living in the same home, or about losing someone they cared about. The kids spoke their truth, and we just sat in those moments."

From that talk came yet another lesson: "We learned that just as we would not judge a baby for what she's feeling, maybe it's a good idea not to judge each other when we feel the various emotions that all human beings feel," said Carrie, whose children Maimouna '27, Kadiatou '31, and Adam '35 attend GDS.

A key aspect of the program is to work on "perspective-taking" as a means of developing sympathy and empathy, an approach that's been shown in studies to significantly lower aggression and bullying in children. Denise is trained to weave questions into the lesson plan that relate the baby's experience back to the students' world.

During this May session, the kids let out silent cheers (shaking their hands) when they see Aisha take a few steps, a trick she's learned since her last visit. "When we first met Aisha, could she stand, or crawl, or sit up by herself?" Denise asks the class. "Now look at her, she's walking. Is falling down part of learning to walk? … You know what's interesting about babies? They keep trying again and again. That's called persistence."

Carrie said she can feel the energy level change every time she and Mamadou enter the room with their baby girl. The kids have become so enthralled with her, she added, that they sent her handmade get-well cards when she had to skip a lesson due to illness.

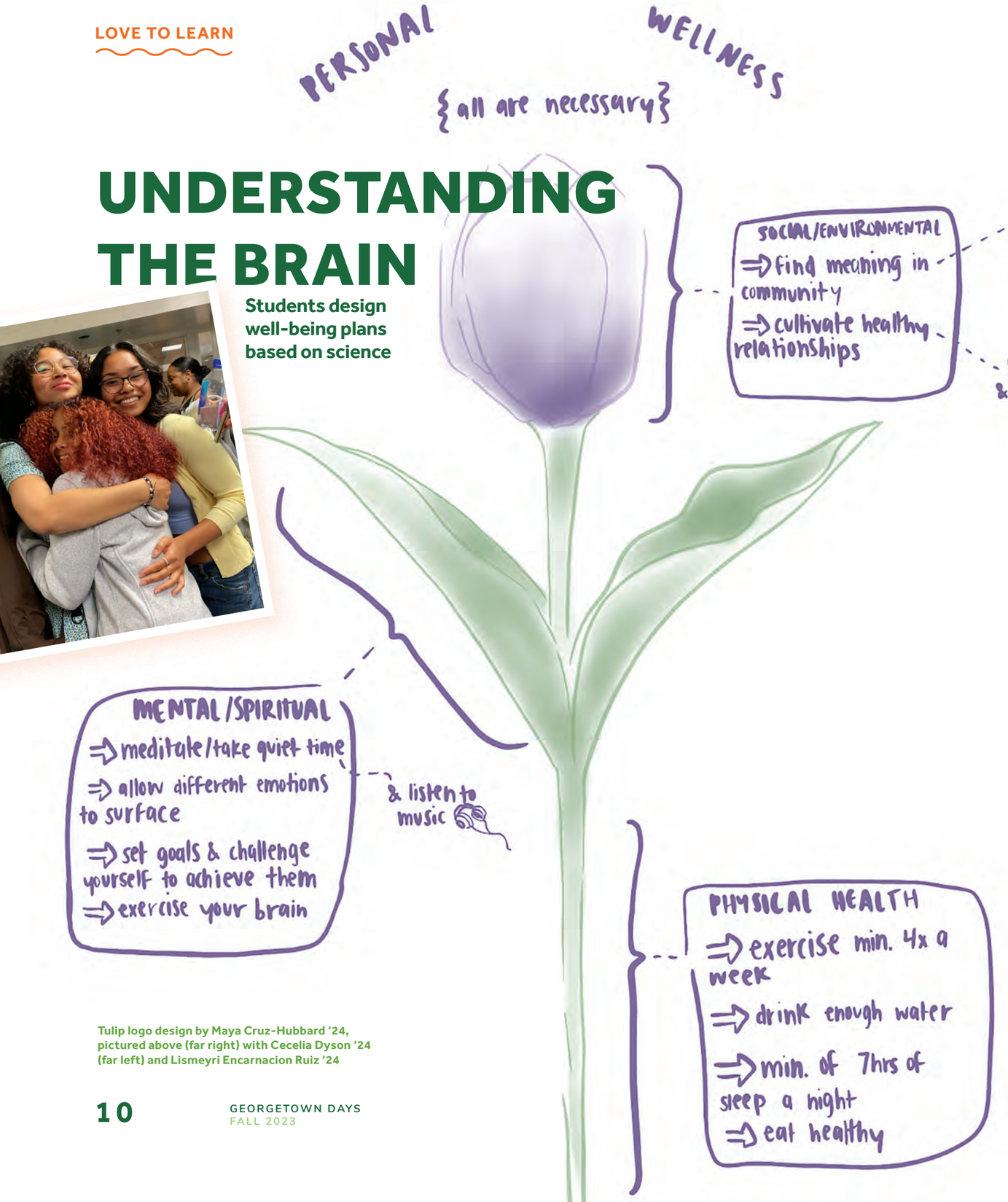
As the visit wraps up, and before the class presents Aisha with a photo album and certificate to thank her for sharing her first year of life with them, Denise prompts the students with a question: "What are some of the things you hope for Aisha?" she says.

Savannah hopes she grows a lot of teeth. Clark hopes she can remember stuff, the way he remembers how to make pancakes because his dad taught him how to do it. Zoe hopes she grows up to be a good person. And then Lucas expresses a hope that elicits more silent cheers all around: "I want her to come to GDS," he says.



Aisha during her first visit to GDS in October 2022

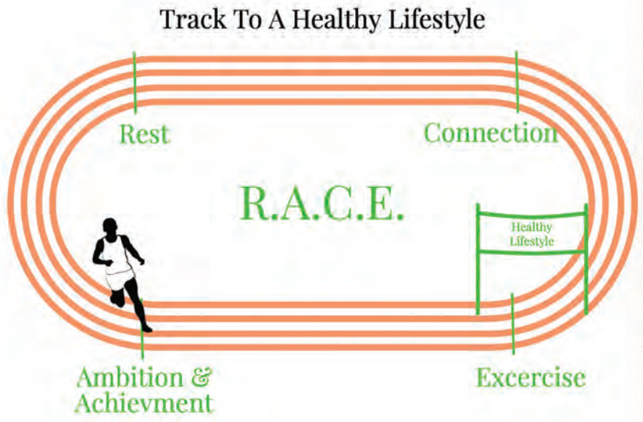
Aisha during her May 2023 visit to GDS



UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN

Students design well-being plans based on science

Tulip logo design by Maya Cruz-Hubbard '24, pictured above (far right) with Cecelia Dyson '24 (far left) and Lismeyri Encarnacion Ruiz '24



For Luke Cohen '23, each 100-meter mark on his logo represents a component of his wellness plan.

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED in the High School's Neuroscience class is that happiness and well-being are not one in the same, a theme reflected in the "personal well-being plans" that students crafted for themselves as part of the course's year-end assignment.

Bobby Asher reinforced the message while co-teaching the course with Bill Wallace. While Bill focused on teaching foundational neuroscience, Bobby exposed students to research and theories in the mental health field, introduced them to how the chemical composition of the brain affects moods, and then had them apply what they learned to their individual plans.

"I wanted each of them to figure out what balance looks like for them because well-being is specific to individual needs," said Bobby, who also serves as the School's director of student life and wellness. "It's not about being happy all the time. That's not real or healthy. It's about managing your emotions."

The assignment required students to write a short paper specifying their chosen wellness strategies and create a logo that would visually capture those everyday goals. Luke Cohen '23, a GDS runner, created a running track-themed logo with each 100-meter mark representing a component of his plan: Rest, Ambition & Achievement, Connection, Exercise (R.A.C.E.).

In keeping with the assignment, Luke explained how brain functions and science relate to his goals. For instance, he wrote about how ambition and achievement keep him focused on his goals, and how dopamine receptors in the prefrontal cortex influence cognitive functions associated with reaching one's goals, such as solving problems and overcoming obstacles.

"This class taught me how we have to make a conscious effort to care for our brain and our mental health," Luke said. "We need to embrace happiness and enjoy it while it lasts, and we need to embrace the negative feelings because that's how we can start to deal with them."

Maya Cruz-Hubbard '24 drew a tulip logo. The stem, which supports and distributes water to the flower, represents her desire to nurture her physical health. The leaves are a reminder to tend to spiritual health, in part through meditation, which helps calm the nervous system by activating the vagus nerve, she said. And the petals, which attract pollinators, signify her quest to cultivate community and relationships, which helps the body release oxytocin, also known as the "cuddle hormone" because it is associated with intimacy, safety, and trust.

"By learning about how the brain functions, I was better able to understand myself and other people," Maya said. "I can now see patterns in how our experiences shape us and influence our actions."

Bobby said the assignment was not designed to be a heavy lift for the class, which is dominated by seniors. Rather, it was meant as an opportunity to embrace self-care at a busy time of year when seniors in particular are dealing with major life transitions.

"I've had a couple of former students tell me that they put [the logos] in their rooms to help center them," Bobby said. "The visual representation is a reminder of what they've learned. They know there's no magic bullet, but maybe they'll remember that if they're feeling anxious or fearful, they need to take a few slow breaths because their amygdala is ramped up."



(From left) Sasha Pierce '30, Penelope Cooper '34, and Zora Lawson '30 paint flower pots.

"THIS EXPERIENCE HELPS THEM THINK ABOUT THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF THEMSELVES." BRYAN WILLIAMS



DISPARITIES IN FOOD ACCESS

Fifth & first graders make an impact

FIFTH GRADERS learned about urban gardening and food justice while bonding with their first grade peers during their year-long Community Engagement and Experiential Learning (CEEL) project, also known as Green Corps.

In Middle School, each grade tackles a pressing social justice issue through on-campus learning and off-campus fieldwork in their respective corps, overseen by the CEEL office. The Green Corps offers fifth graders insights into how and why some communities lack access to healthful foods while others are wasting the food they've got. It also encourages students to examine what they can do in their households and on campus to combat the problem.

The class kicked off the year with a visit to Miller Farms in Maryland to learn about growing and distributing produce. They did some gardening in and around the campus greenhouse. And they made sandwiches with first grade students before delivering the food to Martha's Table, a nonprofit food pantry that also provides an array of services to DC families.

The culminating project involved cooking a meal and donating it to N Street Village, which offers services to women experiencing homelessness in DC. The fifth graders made pulled chicken, mixed green salads, and chocolate-covered strawberries with parent volunteers in the HS Internet Cafe and included a handwritten note with each meal for the recipients.

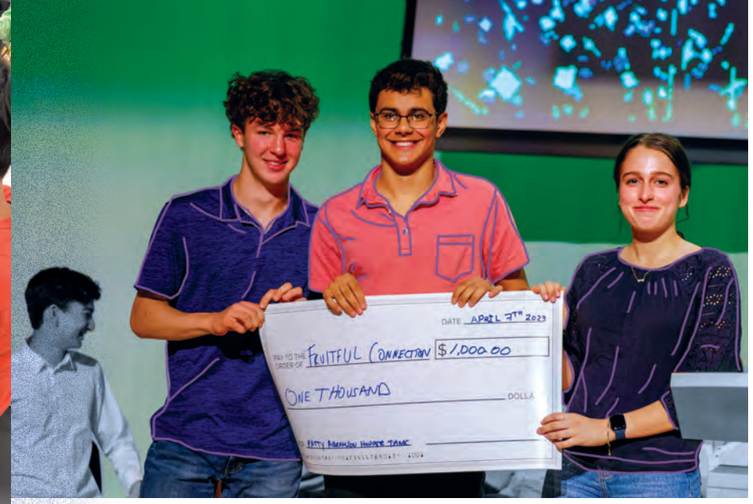
"Sometimes, as a 10-year-old, you don't realize the kind of agency you can have in terms of impacting your school or the wider community," said MS math teacher Bryan Williams, a Green Corps coordinator. "This experience helps them think about the world outside of themselves."

Jake Teitelbaum '30 said he was pleased with the outcome of his class's effort. "I feel like we did a really good job preparing everything, and I think we made a lot of people happy," Jake said. "Some of the people who got the food might live in a place that is food insecure, so money might be tight and they might not have places to buy food. I thought that the food we made would be a really good meal that would make their day happier."

Jake also enjoyed the interaction with the first graders, particularly Paxton Kaufman '34, whom Jake and classmate Ethan Pan befriended. "When I see Paxton these days, I say 'hi,' and he seems very happy to see me," Jake said. "The entire [fifth] grade was excited to teach the younger kids about what we're learning."

Ella McKenzie '30 said the year-long experience made her more conscious of food waste, both at home and at school. "It made me think about how much food I put into the trash and how much goes into my body," Ella said. "A lot of food that is dumped people can actually use. Food is a really valuable thing."

Delivering sandwiches to Martha's Table also helped Ella appreciate how some people don't have access to foods that others take for granted. "At Martha's Table, one of the people mentioned that sandwiches are a favorite of the community because they don't receive a lot of sandwiches," Ella said. "I thought we made a huge impact there because everyone seemed really happy that we donated food, and they were really surprised that we made it all ourselves."

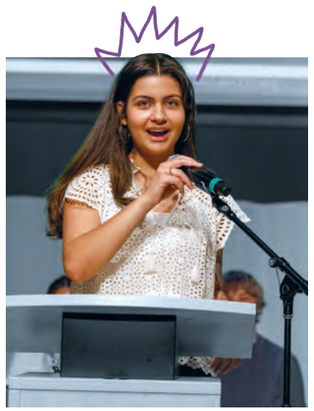


(Left to right) Winners Nate Zia '26, Peter Kumar '25, and Nora Sachse '25 accept the $1,000 prize for Fruitful Connection. (Teammate Grace Zia '25 not pictured.)

GDS ENTREPRENEURS COMPETE FOR $1,000 PRIZE

BUDDING HIGH SCHOOL ENTREPRENEURS pitched ideas for purpose-driven businesses at April's Hopper Tank competition. The students developed their ideas with mentorship and coaching from GDS's Patty Abramson Social Venture Lab, a 12-week extracurricular program with a focus on how to develop a financially sustainable start-up and sell it to an audience. The prize: $1,000 to invest in the winning idea.

The event took place at a Middle School assembly, where the audience heard six *Shark Tank*-type proposals. They included an AI-assisted emergency room logistics app; a business that addresses social isolation among the elderly; a youth employment marketplace portal; a website to connect young aspiring poll workers with voting locations; an app that drives parent engagement in schools; and an online platform called Fruitful Connection that helps combat food waste and food insecurity.



Hopper Tank student organizer Lydia Kabiri '23 kicks off the competition

After voters cast their gold coins (or Patty Bucks), Fruitful Connection emerged the winner. The venture–created by Peter Kumar '25, Nora Sachse '25, Grace Zia '25, and Nate Zia '26–would match restaurants and other food providers that have leftover food with organizations that need food, such as soup kitchens.

"We decided to tackle this issue because we worked with the [GDS student-led] Environmental Task Force last year to help distribute the GDS cafeteria's extra snacks, and we experienced the problems in the donation system firsthand," Nora told the audience.

Jenny Abramson '95 created the Venture Lab in honor of her mother Patty, widely credited for founding one of the nation's first venture capital funds devoted to investing exclusively in women-owned businesses. Lydia Kabiri '23 and Laila Bapna '25, last year's competition winner, helped organize the event.

"It is incredible to see GDS students, with the help of expert coaches, create businesses to tackle our society's greatest challenges," Jenny said. "And, if you think *Shark Tank* judges ask tough questions, you haven't pitched GDS Middle School students yet! My Mom would think this was fabulous."

In spring, kindergarteners celebrated a year of learning by dressing up as their favorite changemakers, parading through the Lower School, and giving speeches in character.



CHANGEMAKERS IN FOUR VIGNETTES

AT EVERY STAGE OF LEARNING, the GDS curriculum encourages students to explore how they can give back to their communities and the world at large. It's a concept that teachers return to with increasing levels of complexity as students progress through the grades, introducing them in creative fashion to changemakers and innovators who have challenged the status quo to help solve a social problem.

These are just a few of the ways that GDS students learn to discover the issues they care most about, develop a sense of social responsibility, and find opportunities to make a difference in the world.

KINDERGARTEN:

Going Deeper in Social Studies

Last year, a happy accident aided the expansion of the kindergarten "Changemakers" unit to a yearlong study of people positively impacting their communities. When a mistaken order of half-sized, hardback sketchbooks arrived at the School, kindergarten teachers Bianca Santos Channell, Sam'n Iqbal, Michelle Levy, and Jody Welsh repurposed them as a creative way for students to catalog their learning about champions, trailblazers, and leaders. They also expanded literacy skills and connected to annual calendar events like Hispanic Heritage Month and International Women's Day.

By the end of this year's study, students anticipated their teachers' guiding questions as they learned the stories of each changemaker: How did this person use their voice to make a positive change in their own communities? What change did they make and why do you think they did that? And, with each new entry in their booklets, the students improved their artistic skills—accurately representing features and skin color—as well as their understanding of the ways the changemakers made their mark.





(top)Max Maragh as Duke Ellington, (middle) Poppy Fox as Misty Copeland, (bottom) Eva Blum as Simone Biles



(top) Patrick Lara as Steve Jobs and (bottom) JJ Levien as Bo Jackson





FIFTH GRADE

Part Research, Part Performance

For two weeks in May, as they have done each year for more than four decades, dozens of luminaries—from van Gogh and Gabby Douglas to Grace Hopper and Stephen Hawking—appeared to walk the GDS hallways, telling their stories. Traveling Biographies, a signature program of the 5th grade curriculum, is part research project and part performance. During English and library time, students read biographies about their chosen famous person and wrote a first-person monologue that was conspicuously missing the actual name. During the traveling weeks, 5th graders dressed in character and performed their monologues in various LMS classrooms and offices, ending each presentation with some form of "Who am I?"

Students, though anxious during their first classroom visits, enjoyed living into their characters, choosing just the right props and costume pieces to help them be a convincing Keith Haring, Queen Latifah, or Charles Darwin. As LMS history teacher Judy Brown (who oversaw the program for many years) noted, students' comfort level and self-assurance grew each day of presentations. And the 5th graders weren't the only ones who enjoyed the project; the hosts—from kindergarten classrooms to the Head of School's Office and, finally, parents during the culminating Living Museum event—loved learning about the different visitors. First graders' hands shot up for the chance to say, "You're Jane Goodall! We just learned about her!" and 3rd graders couldn't wait for the chance to double fist-bump Muhammad Ali's boxing gloves.



8TH GRADE:
Crafting Arguments and Writing Letters

Reading *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was a jumping off point for 8th grade English students this year as they learned the power of advocacy in affecting change.

The book did more than teach students about the life and times of an internationally known civil rights activist. It served as an anchor for a broader project in which students wrote letters asking decision makers to honor select changemakers. They worked to craft an argument rooted in research, develop a voice on paper, and form ideas in a format other than the usual essay.

Among the picks chosen by students: Megan Rapinoe for her impact in both soccer and the LGBTQIA+ communities, restaurateur José Andrés for his disaster relief efforts, and Alice Walker for her contributions to literature and social justice.

In June, the students walked en masse to a mailbox near GDS and sent their missives to a host of people in positions of power, including President Biden. Sam Gross asked the president to honor voting rights activist Stacey Abrams by changing the name of the proposed John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to the Lewis-Abrams Voting Rights Act.

"Mr. President, … Stacey Abrams should be honored not only because she is part of the reason you are sitting where you are today, but because she represents a true American, one who organizes and advocates for the betterment of America, and inspires people like me to make America a better place for all people," Sam wrote.

Eighth Grade English Teacher Caitlin Vanderwolf hopes the project inspired all the students. "The assignment was our way of conveying to them that they are not learning in a vacuum," Caitlin said. "They are gaining knowledge, doing research, and writing effectively so that they can do good in the world."



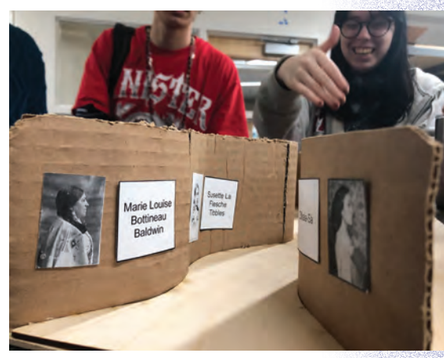
Eighth grade English students mailed letters asking decision makers to honor changemakers. Zora Howard (above) wrote to U.S. Rep. Yvette Clark (D-N.Y.) asking her to recognize Shirley Chrisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress.





This maze prototype honors literary figures and incorporates flowers, in keeping with a Victorian-era tradition in which flowers had meanings/messages that could not be spoken aloud.

Clara Wartell '24 with a monument to indigenous women important to the suffrage movement.



11TH GRADE:
Which Stories Do We Remember?

Students flexed their creative muscle while learning about the suffrage movement in Julie Stein's 11th grade "American Studies: Focus on Gender" class, where students worked in small groups to design a monument that would honor the movement.

The suffrage unit has always focused heavily on the role of racism and the stories of women of color who were overlooked in the traditional narrative, many of whom did not fully gain the right to vote until decades after the 19th Amendment was adopted.

A few years ago, Julie added the monument idea to the unit in response to the controversy surrounding the initial design of the suffrage sculpture in New York City's Central Park, which was heavily criticized for ignoring Black women's contributions to the movement. The sculpture was redesigned before it was installed in 2020.

The final sculpture added Sojourner Truth alongside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton–even though the three women did not work together closely. In effect, the sculpture prioritized the appearance of inclusiveness over accuracy, Julie said, obscuring the history of suffragists of color. For students, the challenge was to find a balance between both as they designed a new suffrage monument that would tell a more historically accurate *and* inclusive story about the fight for voting rights.

One group focused on literary activism, designing an intricate hedge maze (above) that leads to four gardens, each with an open-book sculpture displaying portions of poems, speeches, and other written works of pro-suffrage writers. Another created a card game that teaches players about under-represented people, events, and roadblocks in the suffrage movement, delving into the lives of activists such as Zitkala-Sa and Mabel Ping-Hua Lee. The students designed a 3-D model of a gazebo where visitors could play the game.

"I was so impressed by my students' creativity," said Julie, who described the class's monuments as "complex" and "historically nuanced."

Kate Hlinko '24 and Priya Grab '24 work on their women's suffrage monument design.



MAKING HISTORY "COME ALIVE"

Students visit legacy civil rights movement sites



Seniors (Class of 2023) with Andy Lipps at the National Memorial of Peace and Justice in Montgomery, a memorial to those who were lynched in the South

Each year, a select group of GDS students visit Alabama to learn about major civil rights events, including the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, which riveted the nation and led to the passage of landmark legislation that removed many of the barriers that blocked Black Americans from voting.

The four-day trip, open to juniors and seniors, includes stops at legacy civil rights movement sites, including the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, where state troopers violently attacked peaceful demonstrators; the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, where four young Black girls were killed in a 1963 bombing; and the Dexter Avenue Church in Montgomery, where Pastor Martin Luther King Jr. preached.

"I struggle to put into words the impact of what we saw and learned," said Bryan Chapman '23. "I went on this trip twice to try and absorb the history and information. It was a very emotional experience."

For Bryan, one powerful moment took place at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, where he and his classmates sat in a dark room watching a video of Sarah Collins Rudolph talk about losing her eye and her 14-year-old sister Addie Mae during the 1963 bombing. Then there was the interactive flatscreen map in the Legacy Museum, where Bryan tapped on its color-coded pinpoints, drilling down by state and county to learn the names of some of the more than 4,000 lynching victims in the South.

"That place really made all the tragic stories come alive," Bryan said. "Walking through the museum, I had to sit down at least five times to collect my thoughts."

The first GDS visit to Alabama took place in 2015, organized by Andy Lipps, who was eager to attend the 50th-anniversary commemoration of the Selma march. Andy, an HS math teacher at the time, had seven students join him. Together, they boarded a bus chartered by Andy's then-GDS colleague Paula Young Shelton and her church group. Two years later, Andy and Paula started co-teaching a civil rights course called "From Freedom Rides to Ferguson," and they organized a repeat trip that became an annual tradition. In each of the past two years, so many students have wanted to attend that the School arranged two trips, one for seniors and another for juniors.

Associate Director of College Counseling Darius Pardner, who has attended two trips, said the trip rounds out the GDS experience for upperclassmen, who tend to be most cognizant of GDS's history as the first racially integrated school in the District and its embrace of social justice and antiracist efforts.

"Some have described the trip as a really good bookend when leaving GDS because of the roots of the School and what it stands for," said Darius. "It's an amazing way to experience the power of the civil rights movement and understand what it was all about."

HS Learning Specialist Meredith Chase-Mitchell, who has attended several trips, said she and her fellow chaperones marveled at how comfortable the students were conversing with the Selma foot soldiers they met and questioning the tour guides, particularly at the state capitol. "These guides were getting questions from teenagers who sounded like NPR reporters," Meredith said. "They made us so proud."

The trip will take place as usual in the 2023-24 school year, but without Andy, who recently retired (see page 49). Andy said he believes the trip is the most meaningful contribution he made during his 23 years at GDS because it leaves an emotional imprint on students that they can't possibly get from books alone.

"The students may forget in a few years how to take a derivative, and they may not recall the details of what we studied in Constitutional Law," Andy said. "But they will long remember how people only a few years older than they have changed the course of history in the United States."

MEET THE NEW TRUSTEES



We are pleased to welcome three new Board members to the Georgetown Day School Board of Trustees for the 2023-24 school year: María Gómez, Greg Selfridge, and Viyas Sundaram.

They join an active board composed of parents, alumni, and other members of the GDS community who collectively oversee the financial health of the School and reinforce GDS's commitment to an equitable and inclusive community. The Board's dedication to policies that combat systemic racism, bigotry, and oppression is in line with the founding principles of the seven families that established GDS in 1945.

All members of the Board also serve on at least one of 10 Board committees. For more information on all the Board members, go to www.GDS.org/Trustees

MARÍA GÓMEZ

María, a longtime healthcare executive, founded Mary's Center in 1988 to provide healthcare services to immigrant women fleeing war and poverty in Central America. Under her leadership, the nonprofit center grew to serve 60,000 patients in the DC region. María, who stepped down in 2021, embraced an integrative approach to care, ensuring that the center provided medical, dental, and behavioral services alongside social services, family literacy, and job training.

María's vision was informed by her early years as a nurse (mostly at various area hospitals and the DC Department of Health) and her move from her native Colombia to the District with her mother at age 13. In 2012, President Obama presented María with the Presidential Citizens Medal, the nation's second-highest civilian honor.

María earned a BS in Nursing from Georgetown University and an MPH from the University of California, Berkeley. She and her husband Miachel Rexrode have a daughter, Amalia, who is finishing a dual degree in medicine and business at the University of Michigan.

What attracted you to joining the GDS Board?
I have always admired the School's unwavering commitment to building an equitable and inclusive community despite the overwhelming obstacles in our society, and I want to safeguard the principles of the School's founding families. Now more than ever, we need to build a community around our children that emphasizes and promotes social justice, even if it means challenging entrenched systems and people who accumulate power.

In what ways will your expertise serve the Board? I was a parent at and served on the board of another independent school, so I am very familiar with the array of issues that need constant vigilance by the Board in partnership with a school's leadership team. Having led a nonprofit organization for several decades, I have gained expertise in governance, fundraising, finance, human capital, and other areas. I hope to apply what I have learned to my work on this Board.

What is one of your proudest accomplishments, personal or professional? Raising with my husband, Miachel, a daughter who is a proud Washingtonian, humble about her tremendous privilege, and fully committed to social justice and guiding other young women to live their dreams.



GREG SELFRIDGE

Greg is a Managing Partner at NOVO Properties, a multi-family and mixed-use real estate development company based in DC. At NOVO, Greg has overseen the acquisition, rehabilitation, and management of more than $350 million in multi-family real estate assets, including project repositioning, mixed-use, and ground-up development.

Prior to joining NOVO, Greg served as a mayoral appointee on the District of Columbia Zoning Commission, where he oversaw large-scale developments throughout the city, including planned unit developments, campus plans, and master planned developments. Greg also participated in and helped direct the first major rewrite of the District of Columbia Zoning Code since the code was enacted in 1958. Earlier in his career, he was a federal lobbyist.

Greg, a DC area native, earned a BS in Finance from the University of Maryland. He and his wife, Tonya, joined the GDS community in 2015 when their daughter, Sophie '25, entered third grade.

What attracted you to joining the GDS Board? I was referred to the Board by a fellow GDS parent. The position opened up at a good time for my family, and I am pleased that I will now have the opportunity to be much more involved with the GDS community. We are grateful to GDS for helping our daughter Sophie grow to become an independent thinker with a strong work ethic. We're so pleased with how she's developing, not just intellectually, but as a person.

In what ways will your expertise serve the Board? In the real estate business, you have to take the long view on a project, consider the concerns of all the parties involved, and weigh them carefully. You have to be able to manage risk and think strategically. I am bringing that expertise to my work on the Board.

What is one of your proudest accomplishments, personal or professional? I am most proud of our family and the life we have built together. My wife and I enjoy a genuine partnership, and we are blessed with intelligent, unique, and loving kids.

"THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ON THE GDS BOARD IS A WAY TO BEGIN REPAYING THE IMMENSE DEBT OF GRATITUDE OUR FAMILY HAS TO THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY." VIYAS SUNDRAM



VIYAS SUNDARAM

Viyas is an entrepreneur with more than 25 years of experience growing and operating technology organizations. Currently, he is Chief Executive Officer of GoCanvas, a platform of customizable apps that connect data from the field to a company's office operations.

Previously, Viyas held leadership positions that helped secure funding at RapidSOS (a provider of emergency data/911 solutions) and Snagajob (a marketplace for hourly workers). As a senior vice president at mindSHIFT Technologies, Viyas helped with the company's successful acquisition by Best Buy in 2011 and Ricoh in 2014. He is also the Founder and Executive Chairman of Xperience Holdings, a portfolio of businesses in the luxury spirits market.

Viyas, a Chicago native, serves on the Board of Governors for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. He earned a BA from Emory University and an MBA from the University of Maryland. He and his wife, Jaya, and their daughters, Elina '31 and Mila '35, have been part of the GDS community for the past six years.

What attracted you to joining the GDS Board? Outside of our home, the GDS community is the largest influence in helping our daughters grow emotionally, mentally, and physically. The opportunity to serve on the GDS Board is a way to begin repaying the immense debt of gratitude our family has to the school and the community.

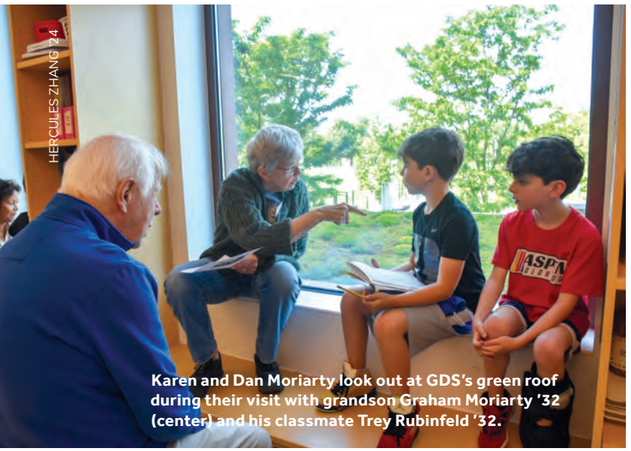
In what ways will your expertise serve the Board? I am hopeful that my background in digital strategy, entrepreneurship, governance, and fundraising will provide value to the needs of our Board. Specifically, our children and our community are facing an unprecedented new reality in the digital world—a digital world that provides both tremendous opportunities, but also challenges for our children. I aspire to leverage my background in building and scaling tech companies in conjunction with driving governance and resource development for a large nonprofit to help serve my role on the Board.

What is one of your proudest accomplishments, personal or professional? The obvious one for me is marrying my wife Jaya, as without her, the memories that we have created with our two daughters over the past 10 years would have never happened. Besides that, I would say my proudest accomplishment is when I retired in 2018 to help raise our girls, who were 1 and 5 years old then. While my retirement turned out to last only a couple of years, the time I spent prioritizing my children over my career has forever placed family above all else for me.



Eloise Baker '34 and her grandmother Pam Baker stopped by the LMS Lobby.

GRANDPARENTS' AND SPECIAL FRIENDS' DAY



HERCULES ZHANG '24

Karen and Dan Moriarty look out at GDS's green roof during their visit with grandson Graham Moriarty '32 (center) and his classmate Trey Rubinfeld '32.

AFTER A THREE-YEAR, PANDEMIC-RELATED hiatus, more than 400 grandparents and special friends came to the unified campus in May, many visiting the new Lower/Middle School building for the first time. A portion of the day featured songs by grade-level groups, including the runaway favorite, "Grandma, Grandpa, I Love You!" performed by PK/K students.

Teachers also hosted classroom visits to offer guests a window into life at GDS. The Lower School students played games, proudly showed off their classwork, or engaged in a creative project with their loved ones. Guests of Middle School students had the chance to "audit" classes. Some grandparents observed learning in progress, while others dove right in and tried a new word in Chinese or contributed to the visual analysis of political cartoons in history class.



HERCULES ZHANG '24

Ahren Sidhu '27 with his grandparents Indu and Rakesh Arora in history class.



ZAIRA CHOWDHURY '23

Grandma Ansa visited Bastion Baatin '34 for an art project.



Our youngest chorus performed "A Little Seed" by Mabel Watts and Mary Lou Siegal.



Asher Fang-Friedman '35 brought his grandmother Y.Y. Fang to a cozy spot in the LMS Library.



HERCULES ZHANG '24

Special friends Lydia Baculo (left) and Javier Sparks visit with Taylor Buck '33 and Kyla Osholowu '33.

Second graders performing the Village People's "YMCA"



Andrew Zhang '36 dances to Baha Men's "Who Let the Dogs Out."

DANCE ASSEMBLY

IN FEBRUARY, the Lower School Physical Education Department celebrated the return of its annual Dance Assembly. Throughout the month-long dance unit, students developed physical skills, spatial awareness, and—most importantly—a sense of joy in daily exercise, the central learning goal of their curriculum.



Third graders dance to Shakira



First graders (left to right) Ella Bea Howe, Kian Sangani, Cole Crowley, and Adrian Shanor ambush 1st grade teacher Andrew Berman during their rescheduled Water Blast Battle.





Sixth graders Marlowe Mulvihill, Livvy Wachs, and Tessa Bash help pull their 5th/6th tug-of-war team to...a narrow loss on MS Carnival Day. Penalty! Adult players on the field!



Eli Leveton '30 and Lawson Friedman '29 at MS Carnival Day

FIELD DAYS

WILDFIRE SMOKE SWEEPING SOUTH from Canada wasn't on our year-end bingo card, but GDS met the unexpected curveball with grace. LMS faculty and staff brought the fun of Field Day indoors while the DC area was under a "Code Purple" air-quality warning. Teachers innovated with jumping, throwing, and balancing games down the hallways; the P.E. team hosted groups in the gym for bounce-house obstacle courses; and there was a midday movie screening. The following day, air quality had improved enough that the 1st grade took to the field for their rescheduled annual Water Blaster Battle. Also, the Middle School's Carnival Day combined wacky outfits, popcorn, and a bit of clowning around with games and inflatable battles of their own.



Jackson Carmen '30 battles a classmate during MS Carnival Day.



Nathan Ireri '25 strapped in for "Bubble Soccer"

HOPPER HOLIDAY

SURPRISE! High School classes were canceled spontaneously for the afternoon in mid-March, and GDS served up activities on the field, trivia games, and a movie. Students enjoyed races and soccer while tucked inside huge inflated spheres, providing ample opportunities for cushioned crashes and hilarity.

Charlotte Glendinning '26 inside the "Gerbil Wheel"



Seniors Jaia Wilensky (left) and Dionne Harris cuddle a kid.



JUICE BOX DAY



IN THE PANTHEON OF MADE-UP HOLIDAYS, this one takes the…juice box. High School student members of the Peer Leadership Program invented a day of silliness and fun to bring the community closer together. In mid-April, they handed out juice boxes at morning arrival, hid golden juice boxes around the school for the chance to win big prizes, and even surprised their peers with a petting pen of farm animals! Kids loved it, we kid you not!

Seniors Andrew Mikhail and Isadora Evers welcome students to the High School on Juice Box Day.



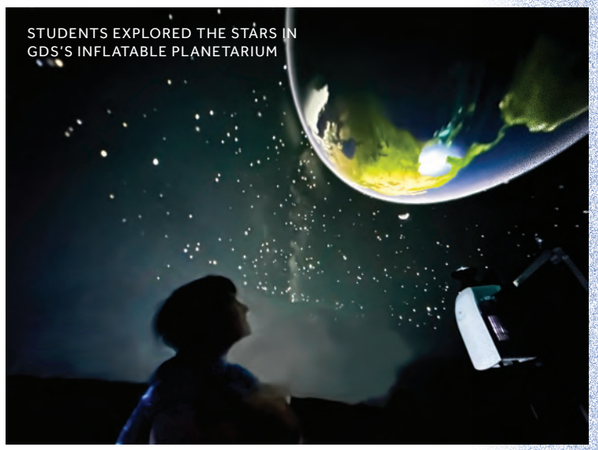
(Left to right) Third graders Celine Belayachi, Claire Rubinfeld, and Karter Harris launch model planes as they test in-flight trim and balance.



Seventh graders Asa Previna (left) and Michael Bobo learned about freezing points and the states of matter while making ice cream in a bag.

STEAM DAY

MODEL PLANES weren't the only things to take flight during the annual Lower/Middle School STEAM Day. There were also parachutes lifted by wind turbines and clay pots with MS student-designed padding dropped to shatter—or survive!—from 30 feet above the gym floor. GDS parents and alumni who work in the STEAM field joined the fun, sharing their knowledge alongside teachers through workshops and lectures.





Garland Gantt '30 introduces the nominees for "Best Picture Book with a Focus on Food." Mmm!

Fifth graders hold the 2023 Hopper Award-winning books.



HOPPER AWARDS

FORGET THE PULITZER. The GDS Hopper Awards is where it's at.

For three months, 5th graders used their weekly library classes to curate a list of their favorite books in special-themed categories based on their studies of publication and reading trends. In March, they unveiled their picks and invited all Lower/Middle School students to vote for their favorites.

"We encouraged everyone to read the books, but we made a point of reading them to the Lower School students during their library time," said Lisa Fall, the LMS school library department chair.

For each category of nominees, the 5th graders picked five books based on a theme: food-focused picture books, fiction books that are part of a graphic novel series, and nonfiction books of Greek mythology. Why are Greek myths considered nonfiction? "In our library, as in many others, books that retell the myths best fit in the nonfiction category of 'Philosophy and Religion' because the Ancient Greeks shared these myths as part of their system of beliefs," Lisa said.

And the winners are: *The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog!* by Mo Willems (picture book), *Wings of Fire* by Tui Sutherland, adapted by Barry Deutsch and art by Mike Holmes (fiction), and *The Trojan Horse* by Warwick Hutton (nonfiction).

They're easy to spot in the LMS library (when they are not checked out!) because each has a medallion created by Helena Barrett, whose design was selected by her 5th grade peers in a grade-wide competition.



GDS parent and student volunteers helped set up an apartment for an Afghan family of three–a single mother and her two adult children.



Several members of the Faculty & Staff Appreciation team set up a Valentine's Day-themed spread. (From left, lead coordinator Laura Higday, Jennifer Yu, Rashida Holman-Jones, and Robin Friedman)

GDS PSA EVENTS

THE GDS PARENT SERVICE ASSOCIATION (PSA) directly supports teachers, staff, and students by hosting a wide variety of activities, from division-specific projects and community service work to networking and social events. Every GDS parent is automatically a member.

Under the leadership of the 2020-23 Co-Chairs Des Bouadi and Nicole Vikan, parent volunteers ran the LMS Bookfair; hosted Family Fun Nights and an after-prom gathering; organized service days with community service partners, such as Homes Not Borders; and doted on GDS employees with monthly faculty & staff appreciation events. They also helped recruit parent volunteers for Country Market Day and Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day.

We welcome 2023-24 PSA Co-Chairs Jenny Silversmith (LS), Cheryl Curtis (MS), and Rory Quint (HS). GDS simply cannot operate successfully without the volunteer efforts of our dedicated parents. Thank you all!



JENNY ABRAMSON '95

Bingo! Spike Cooper '34, Ella Maas '28, Alex Maas '34, and Sidney Quirk '34 enjoy LMS Bingo Night.



SKYLAR RAMPERSAUD

Students and teachers browse the LMS Book Fair as parent volunteers provide support.



JESSICA AHN

Russell Shaw offers an ice cream treat to new PK student Nico Contreras.

ICE CREAM WITH NEW FRIENDS

IN MAY, the Admissions Office hosted ice cream socials for families who would be joining the GDS community in the 2023-24 school year. Head of School Russell Shaw handed out the tasty treats on the LMS patio while the children explored the playground and parents connected with each other.

New Lower School students stay cool in the shade of a balloon ice cream cone.



JESSICA AHN

Fourth graders explained the meaning of the items on the Passover Seder plate.



PASSOVER

NEARLY 80 YEARS after Jewish and Black families banded together to create Georgetown Day School, the School continues to value the diverse mix of cultural and religious traditions that each student brings to the community. The retelling of the Passover story is one of those traditions, embraced by Lower School students each year in an assembly that celebrates the preciousness of freedom and the dangers of indifference to human suffering.

Third graders act out the Israelites' exodus from Egypt.





KAIDEN YU '23

GDS students delight in the tossing of colored powders.

Celebrating the happy hues of Holi



KAIDEN YU '23



Members of the HS South Asian Affinity Group

GDS CELEBRATES HOLI

AS THEY HAVE DONE EACH YEAR SINCE 2018, members of the High School South Asian Affinity Group hosted a celebration of Holi, the Hindu festival of colors that welcomes the arrival of spring. Before participating, High School students learned how Hindus commemorate Vishnu (who vanquished the demon king Hiranyakashipu) and exalt in the triumph of good over evil. The traditional throwing of colored powders is a much-loved part of the celebration.



Class of 2031

CEREMONY CELEBRATES
4TH GRADE PROMOTION

THE GDS COMMUNITY gathered to celebrate the 4th grade class's promotion from Lower School on June 6, a ceremony that lifted the voices of the students, their teachers, and renowned poets whose work imparts valuable life lessons.

In opening remarks, Head of School Russell Shaw remembered growing up in Southern California just a few blocks from the home of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, who succinctly captured the value of being yourself when he wrote: "Today you are You, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is Youer than You." Russell urged the 4th graders to embrace Dr. Seuss's words. "Being the you that you are, that's a lifetime's work," Russell said. "There's a reason that this idea, of being yourself, is written about again and again and again. It's because it's so hard and yet so important."

A few of the 4th graders shared Lower School memories. Tyler Lin spoke about feeling supported by other students in the 2022-23 school year, his first at GDS. Raffa Herbozo Khatri remembered the effort his 2nd grade teachers put into connecting him with his peers via Zoom during the coronavirus pandemic. Sophie Greenstein recalled a "protest" organized at recess with her 1st grade peers, and Solon Chhabra spoke of moments during her five years at GDS that made her "smile, cry, and laugh."

Lower School Counselor Meryl Heyliger praised the 4th grade for taking on a greater leadership role during the Great Kindness Challenge, a global campaign. "They led our assembly and helped plan activities for a week in January where we really elevated our focus on kindness, gratitude, empathy, and more," Meryl said.

The challenge gave rise to a new GDS tradition, in which the 4th graders leave a gift for the Lower School on their way out. "This year, our gift is a Buddy Bench," announced Jade Foster '31. "If someone is feeling lonely or looking for someone to play with at recess, they can sit on the Buddy Bench, and other kids will come to play with them. … We hope it's always a reminder for Lower School students to be kind and inclusive."

The ceremony included singing by the 4th grade chorus, a slideshow that captured moments in the students' journeys thus far, and parting advice from the 4th grade teachers, who reinforced Russell's message of staying true to oneself and learning from the stories of others.

Just before each student received their promotion certificate, four 4th graders read passages from Amanda Gorman's poem, *The Hill We Climb*, ending with Gorman's message of courage: "When day comes, we set out of the shade, Aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it, For there is always light, If only we're brave enough to see it, If only we're brave enough to be it."



Class of 2027

MOVING ON FROM
MIDDLE SCHOOL

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADUATION in June featured reflections from student speakers about lessons learned during the worst stretch of the pandemic as well as the sources from which they drew inspiration, Winnie the Pooh included.

William Cromer spoke about how the pandemic posed challenges for the class of 2027, and urged his classmates to consider the lyrics of the rapper Drake, who said: "No matter how dirty your past is, your future is still spotless." William urged his peers to "Take that quote to high school. Ninth grade is our second chance to grow and learn, a brand new start. …Let us learn from our mistakes, trust the process, and stay optimistic."

As for mistakes, Willa Wible provided her own take, recalling how she promptly started erasing an error marked in red on a first grade assignment only to have her teacher stop her. "Never erase your mistakes," her teacher said. "Instead, use them as a way to learn." The words stuck with her. "How can you turn that mistake into a learning opportunity that changes who you are, or what you stand for, or how you will respond in the future?" Willa said. "These are the questions we are taught at GDS to ask ourselves."

Alicia Kim spoke of the Zoom classes, the awkward camera angles, and later, the social distancing and lunch outdoors in the cold. "Our class, and our Middle School experience, although imperfect, have been made special by our achievements and our struggles," she said. "…The next four years of our lives are not going to be easy, but like the iconic Winnie the Pooh said, 'Life is a journey to be experienced, not a problem to be solved.'"

MS Principal Debby Previna (who moved to a new all-school role this year) and outgoing MS Assistant Principal Mayra Diaz (who served at GDS for more than two decades) expressed pride in what the eighth graders accomplished. "I am struck by your brilliance, tenacity, and, most importantly, your resilience." said Debby, who urged the students to "Claim space in the world."

The ceremony was interspersed with music from 8th grader Joseph Xu, who performed Bach's Cello Suite No. 2 in D Minor, and the 8th Grade Wind Ensemble, which played music from *Carmen*.

Head of School Russell Shaw offered students advice for living a happy life: exercise, sleep, go outside, smile, be grateful, invest in your relationships, forgive, be of help, set goals, and believe in something. Russell also gave the class its last MS homework assignment: "Find your parents or grandparents or aunts and uncles and say thank you," he said. "They've invested time and hard work and more so that you could sit here today."



Nathaniel Romine ‘24 cheers for teammate Kovan Smith ‘24 just after passing the baton in the 4x100 meter finals at the MAC

GDS SPRINTERS WIN BIG



Nathaniel Mintzer ‘24 accelerates after receiving the final baton pass from Zach Kovner ‘24 in the 4x100-meter race.

GDS MEN’S VARSITY SPRINTERS spearheaded a superb spring 2023 season, competing in sharper form than the team has shown in nearly a decade. High-performing jumpers, hurdlers, and distance runners delivered not only dominant performances but also added depth essential for big team wins, including the Mid-Atlantic Conference (MAC) Championship title that GDS claimed in May. After missing the top of the podium at the MAC Championships by only two points the year before, GDS’s full team came together and pushed through a rainy Saturday to claim that title by an unassailable 89-point margin.

During the season, GDS sprinters broke the School record in the 4x100-meter dash *five times*, including during a qualifying heat of the hallowed Penn Relays in Philadelphia in April. The GDS record board currently displays the 43.21 seconds it took the team of Zach Kovner, Kovan Smith, Nathaniel Romine, and Nathaniel Mintzer from the Class of 2024 to win the MAC Championship race, beating out the mark set in 2014 by nearly a full second. At the same meet, anchor runner Nathaniel M. set a new School record in the 100-meter individual race during a preliminary round. Earlier in April, GDS sprinters also broke school records in the 4x200-meter relay and the 1600-meter sprint medley event.

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The quartet of Nathaniel M., Zach, Kovan, and Nate Bazemore ’23 teamed up in the 4x400 to win the prestigious “Prep School” race at the Penn Relays in 3:27:87, just one second shy of the School record. Their performance earned them a coveted Penn Relays plaque, GDS’s first ever. And in May, a reconfigured team of four—with Roshan Natarajan ’23 and Abe Badji ’24 joining Zach and Kovan—won the MAC Championship race to close out the banner-winning day.



Christian Freeman ’23 (foreground) and Milo Borek ‘23 at the MAC Championships

Though GDS missed the win in the 400-meter individual race, Kovan, Abe, and Zach cleaned up with second-, third-, and fourth-place finishes, respectively.

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Also at the MAC championships, GDS nearly swept the 110-meter and 300-meter hurdles races thanks to the efforts of Christian Freeman ’23, Milo Borek ’23, and Ashok Tate ’23, who finished first, third, and fourth as well as second, first, and fifth, respectively. The hours they spent scheming and motivating each other over several weeks via group chat paid off: They outmatched their slightly faster-on-the-ground rival with superior leaping technique over the hurdles. Christian used that powerful hop again to win the triple jump event alongside teammates Samson Lowenstein ’25 (second place) and Abe (fourth place).

***

Several runners credited the psychological “momentum” and the camaraderie of the GDS running team for contributing to the Mighty Hopper’s success during the season. Milo explained that the 4x100-meter team’s record-breaking performance boosted the hurdlers’ confidence and added excitement to the team’s attitude—and the likelihood of more personal records (PRs)—at the championships.

“Seeing everyone PR before you really made you feel like you could do it, too,” said Luke Cohen ’23, who finished second in the 1600-meter and third in the 3200-meter races at the Championships.

“Personally, breaking the GDS 4x100 school record and bringing home the first-ever plaque won by GDS at Penn Relays are just small victories for me,” Nathaniel M. said. “My big win is that I was able to compete at a high level with my fellow relay members, some of whom are my closest friends. Witnessing my friends progress and falling in love with the sport is all I can ask for. They inspire me to be my best self on and off the track.”

Many of GDS’s strongest sprinters, juniors in spring 2023, will be returning with confidence and big dreams as seniors in spring 2024. Until then, we have rising stars (men) and the reigning champions (women) to cheer for during the fall cross-country season. Run good, Hoppers!

PHOTOS BY KAIDEN YU ‘23

Thomas Ogada ‘24 leads Luke Cohen ‘23 and Andrew Bennett ‘26 in the 1600-meter race at the MAC Championships.



ATHLETES COACHING ATHLETES

Several GDS coaches bring their personal journeys in collegiate sports to bear on the way they lead, support, and motivate the players on their respective GDS teams. Their experience as athletes during their college years enriches the GDS athletic program, complementing what coaches already bring to the table: sport-specific technical expertise, an understanding of effective coaching strategies, and a commitment to developing meaningful relationships with athletes beyond their life in sports.


KAIDEN YU '23

COACH ANTHONY BELBER draws upon his 23 years of experience coaching GDS runners and his time as a college athlete as he debriefs with the Women's 4x400-meter relay team. • Anthony leads the pack as a cross-country runner at Haverford College.



High School P.E. teacher **AMY HEINZELMANN**, who coaches JV women's soccer, Varsity women's basketball, and strength & conditioning, gets a kick out of her students in the GDS Fitness Room. • Amy captained the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Team at the University of Connecticut during her senior year and scored exactly 1,000 points for the Huskies over the course of her college career.


PAUL HIGDAY

In 2022, Varsity volleyball coach **BRANDON WEIST** guided the team to its first DCSAA title and was named All-Met Coach of the Year. • Brandon played volleyball at the University of Delaware, where he helped the team reach the Sweet 16 of the National Collegiate Volleyball Federation tournament.


CORY ROYSTER

MITCHELL LAYTON

Varsity basketball coach and associate athletic director **PAM STANFIELD** brings big energy and experience from her college athlete days. • Pam played basketball at American University.


DEREK BRUNN

Since 2005, **KATIE REDMOND** has led the GDS women's varsity soccer team to success, including victories in the 2023 A division season and tournament championships. • Katie played soccer at Purdue University.


KAIDEN YU '23

Assistant running coach and GDS alum **LAUREN SILBERMAN '08** has brought care, humor, and mentoring to the record-setting, championship-winning GDS cross-country and track teams for five years. • Lauren ran cross country at Macalester College.



GRAYSON SHEPPERD '11 (right) and GDS Administrator **CHRIS OSTER,** coach the varsity wrestling team. The team took home the Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference championship banner in 2023 for the second year in a row. • Grayson and Chris wrestled at Princeton University and the University of Chicago, respectively. Grayson finished second at the prestigious Wilkes Open, and Chris was a two-time Conference Champion.

LMS P.E. teacher **PEG SCHULTZ,** who coaches MS volleyball and softball, has been helping young Hoppers fall in love with sports for 20 years. • Peg (with the MS Girls 2022 A Volleyball Team) was a four-year scholarship volleyball player at George Washington University.


DEREK BRUNN



Eighth graders vying for the 2023 pickleball championship.

PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT ON THE FLY

In May, the Middle School deans organized the second annual pickleball tournament for 7th and 8th graders. The idea started spontaneously last year when Shanez Benyoucef '27 noticed pickleball nets on the field during track practice. She and her friends knew little, if anything, about the game, but they pleaded with the coach to let them give it a try. Students had such a good time that Shanez rallied the support of faculty to serve up the first tournament.

"This year's tournament was influenced by the willingness, engagement, and enthusiasm that we saw last year," Shanez said, adding that the most recent turnout exceeded last year's showing.



Juju Jinich '24 (foreground)

GDS SQUASH PLAYERS SMASH IT

RACQUET SPORTS ARE ON THE RISE—we see you, pickleball—and young squash stars at GDS are turning heads.

This year, 24 eighth grade students joined the GDS Middle School interscholastic squash team—a record number. "Not every kid wants to play basketball, wrestle, or run track, so we've been offering squash—and boxing—for students who like to challenge themselves individually within a team sport," said Assistant Athletic Director Pam Stanfield. Squash is also a club sport at the High School.

Jameson Shelton '27 said learning the sport with friends was a worthwhile endeavor because the rules are simple enough and the games are fun. "Getting better together was an amazing experience," he added.

Outside of school, four GDS students have been serving, lobbing, and volleying their way to high individual achievement in the competitive squash world.

In May, 4th grade twins Ali and Zayd Mansi-Schmitt—who had been playing for less than a year and a half—were ranked number one and two, respectively, in the National Capital Region for the boys under 11 (BU11) division. Nationally, they were 16th and 29th within their division.

Fifth grader Eric Tang attained a United States No. 2 ranking in the BU11 division before aging up to BU13, where he held the 17th position as of May. In the British Junior Open, Eric achieved an impressive sixth position in January 2023.

Juju Jinich '24 reached a sixth place ranking in the National Capital District BU17 and 20th among all men in the District. Nationally, he is ranked 62nd among all BU17 Juniors. "When I was younger, squash was important because I would always play with my brothers [Alan '17 and Sami '20] and my dad," Juju said. "I became obsessed with being able to beat them, which is why I started dedicating more time to training and practicing. Now, it is important to me as a way to exercise, compete, and also meet new people who share the same interest as me."

Eric Tang '30 with his older sister Isabella and their second place awards at the U.S. Junior Open in December 2002.



CELEBRATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDIO ARTS

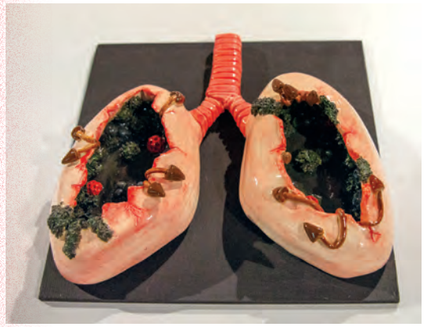
A dozen ceramic, wood, and wire sculptures rested on white pedestals, including a pair of clay lungs overrun by blooming fungus, a deconstructed book reconstituted as a paper wasp nest, and a ceramic hand hovering over piano keys.

STEPPING OUT OF THE STAIRWELL into the third-floor exhibition space at the High School, guests of the Spring 2023 Art Show found more than one hundred student artworks from classes in ceramics, sculpture, photography, drawing/painting, film and animation, as well as 3D and graphic design.

The show featured one piece from every student taking a High School Studio Art class. For all the hours the artists spent working in the studio, the opening reception was a welcome chance for the community to gather to celebrate studio arts.



Dhilan Desai '25



Elodie Fleurence '25



Anna Scharfenber '25

Maya Raman '23



Avery Ludlow '24



Exemplary mixed-media pieces from seniors in Master Studio Art, including a cloth and flora-mixed media composition depicting a traditional South Asian wedding, a tribute to two grandmothers, and a paper collage illustrating the artist's experience inside a GDS classroom.

Emery Jackson '23



Still life paintings.

Jack Farrell '24



Ella Schneider '26



Tristan Fulton'26



Quinn Sheilds '26



Photography was featured as well.



Sasha Lowit '26

Rachel Sachs '26



Mikhail Westelius '26





OLIVER WITH A TWIST

PHOTO CREDITS JERI TIDWELL



GDS HIGH SCHOOL THEATER brought Lionel Bart's Tony Award-winning adaptation of Dickens's novel to the Blackbox Theater in April 2023—with a twist: audiences were transported to New York City tenements in 1890.

Gone were the cockney accents, the governors, and London Bridge of *Oliver Twist*, the novel. Instead, the closer-to-home setting of GDS's *Oliver!* allowed former theater director Laura Rosberg to diversify the ages, genders, and ethnicities of the players. Our Oliver (Posy Brown '24) was expelled from a parochial workhouse; Nancy (Rachel Schneider '24) was murdered on the Brooklyn Bridge; and the Artful Dodger (Izzy Auerswald '23) and Company made their home in Lower Manhattan. Student set and costume designers were inspired by the dark, dense slums captured by photojournalist Jacob Riis in *How the Other Half Lives*.

Yet what remained were the elements that have made Bart's *Oliver!* a masterpiece: optimism rising out of the grime; the juxtaposition of kindness and cruelty (Wesley Brubaker '24 gave a terrifying turn as Bill Sikes); and unlikely love (Josh Reynolds '24 and Ava Blum '24 were a hilarious pair as Mr. Bumble and Widow Corney). GDS actors delivered spirited company dance numbers, stunning vocals, and raw emotional performances. Behind the scenes, crews seamlessly orchestrated scene and costume changes, created dramatic theatrical lighting, and constructed sets that thrust the stage out into the audience, creating an immersive experience for the packed house.

The success of *Oliver!* was a bittersweet finale for Laura, who retired in June after 44 years at GDS. Students pulled out all the stops—not to mention a few all-nighters—to breathe life into their "Oliver with a Twist." How fitting it was that Laura's final GDS show featured an eclectic group of young people singing about family and the power of inclusion! "Consider yourself at home," the Artful Dodger sang with her band of urchins. "Consider yourself one of the family." Laura, *Oliver!* alumni, and theater itself will always have a special home at GDS.

ARTS

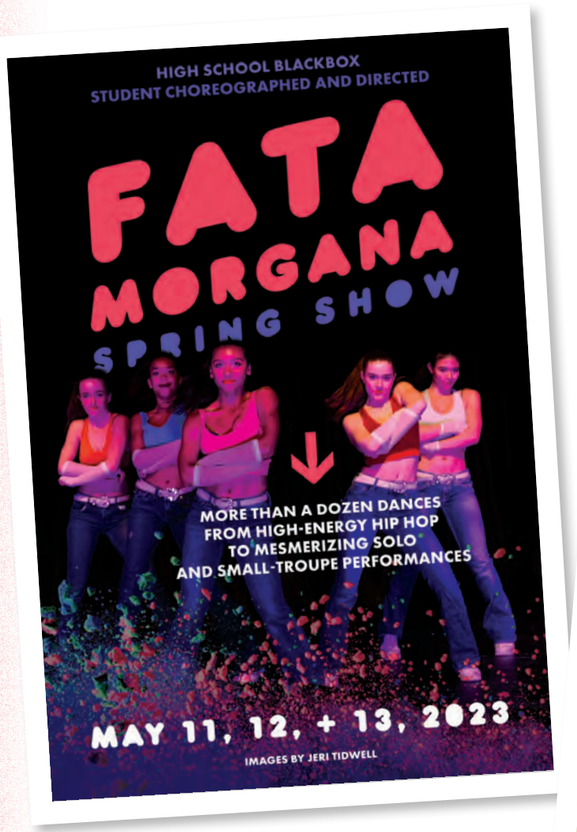


STEP RIGHT UP TO THE GDS BOX OFFICE!

GDS PROUDLY PRESENTS
the shows of the 2023 spring performing arts season, shining a spotlight on High School theater and dance as well as Middle School music and drama.







SPRING PERFORMING ARTS



SEASON'S HOTTEST SHOWS!


JASON PUTSCHÉ

Laura swings a truncheon from the Blackbox balcony.


OLIVIA BROWN '24

TEACHING THE TORCHES TO BURN BRIGHT

GDS Theater Legend Laura Rosberg Retires


KAIDEN YU '23

Laura recieves an on-stage ovation after her final GDS show.

HIGH SCHOOL THEATER DIRECTOR LAURA ROSBERG retired in June, closing the curtain on a 44-year GDS career. She chaired the High School Performing Arts Department for three decades; taught English, directing, and theater production; served as an advisor; and directed more than 100 shows—from Shakespeare to Sondheim. In those four decades, Laura has gifted generations of her students with the keys to careers and confidence in the creative arts and beyond.

And she remembers every show, especially the work of the designers and crews on the "dark side" of production: The turntable drilled into the gym floor without permission for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. The stink of *The Great Dismal Swamp*. *Arabian Nights* in the parking lot, *Hamlet* on Zoom. She remembers a young Kevin Sheekey '84 crying as the sets were disassembled each night and carried down beneath the gym floor of the old MacArthur Boulevard building. The adorable dog on stage in *The Miracle Worker* that inspired her decades-long tradition of inviting canines to company meetings.

And so, in Laura's words, "Bring a friend, bring a dog," as we look back, tell her story, and honor her GDS legacy.

Laura Rosberg with Emily Alpern Fisch '07



(from left) Gambrill (Hollister) Wagner '88, Laura Rosberg, and Alexa (Johnstone) Stone '89



"Who's there?"

SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET*, ACT I SCENE I

Third Head of School Gladys Stern hired Laura in 1972 to teach 8th grade English and direct shows from out of the High School's first makeshift home in Keegan's Hardware on MacArthur Boulevard for one year. After several years touring in Michigan as the first managing director of Young People's Theater, Laura returned to GDS for what she thought would be another year-long commitment.

"GDS became a home and family for me more than for most people," Laura said. Her husband, Gerry, has spent most of his career working in New York City and abroad, and their adult child is raising the grandchildren overseas. "It's not only that my colleagues have become like my brothers and sisters, but the kids are like my own," she said. "Each day, they came 'home' to tell me their stories."

The job also provided Laura with a degree of autonomy, which enabled her to expand the Performing Arts Department by hiring professional tech directors, a dance teacher, and vocal and instrumental music teachers. "I've had the honor of being able to call my shots, which is so rare," Laura remembered, while also naming how much of an uphill battle theater decisions could be, at times, even in "the early years" under Gladys. "I've always felt that I was well-respected for what I could offer. Boy, is that a gift."

"Which dreams indeed are ambition"

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET*, ACT II SCENE II

When asked about Laura's legacy, Avram Shapiro '24 said, "One of the things I love about Laura is that she's so ambitious. She always says, 'This can be done!' She always finds what's important about the show…We need to make sure that we're always saying something. Ultimately, that's what pushes us to be better people and a better theater company."

Laura's dreams for what students could create, both at GDS and in their lives beyond, are, indeed, a kind of ambition. She has managed to manifest those visions for generations of students through the program's structures, the trust she offers them, and sheer will.

In a tribute to Laura, Swedish actor Hannes Meidal '97 wrote, "It is to me still a miracle how Laura always succeeded in intertwining educational challenges with such great artistic professionalism. I remember the school theater as a feast of creativity, trust, and cooperation. I have never met a teacher with such a unique capacity to bring out the best in her students…I am quite certain that without her, I would never have chosen theater and drama as my career."

"Make just a ripple…Next time a wave."

STEPHEN SONDHEIM'S "EVERYBODY SAYS DON'T" FROM *ANYONE CAN WHISTLE*

Laura has always loved shaking it up a bit by bringing progressive, ahead-of-their-time, and sometimes controversial shows to GDS. But most of the time, she chose a play or musical because it was the "right show at the right time for the right people," she said. She chose *On the Town,* for example, when she had dancers who could do the Dream Ballet (Fosse Thornton '16 and Danny Thimm '16).

At GDS, Laura developed a guild model for the theater program, through which younger students apprentice with more experienced students who have taken on leadership roles, as both a pedagogical decision and a practical one, she explained. Under Laura, everything in GDS Theater was intentionally homegrown

JASON PUTSCHÉ



The cast and crew of *Twelfth Night*

1987 GDS Yearbook



and collaborative, from the talent on stage and backstage to the zero-based budget with which they began every season. "We took pride in the fact that we didn't get money for shows from the School," she said. Student producers and box office managers raised the money for each show through advertising, ticket sales, and more. "We took pride in teaching students the biz of the Biz," Laura added.

Students graduate from the program with the know-how to go on making a splash—or as Sondheim wrote it, "finishing a hat"—in all their chosen endeavors. They've garnered prestigious theater accolades, including Tony nominations and Drama Desk Awards; but well beyond that, they routinely credit Laura's influence for the success and fulfillment they've found in business, politics, education, and elsewhere outside the theater world.

"What would we do without you? How would we ever get through?"
STEPHEN SONDHEIM'S *"SIDE BY SIDE"* FROM COMPANY

"No one in theater education does it better than Laura," said long-time GDS theater collaborator "Bio Bill" George, who served as Laura's guest director for 35 years. "Her dedication, passion, and commitment astound anyone who has seen her rehearse or work with student technicians and designers…First and foremost, Laura's goal was for her students to develop their skills."

Through fall shows, winter one-act plays, and spring musicals, she has given direction and delivered notes with positivity and humor, instinctively threading the needle between nurturing and what off-Broadway director Conor Bagley '12 appreciatively called "laying down the law."

"Laura has mastered the balance of tough love," said Ava Blum '23. "She creates space for discipline and dreaming… She radiates warmth and inclusion."

Scott Renschler '88, now a clinical psychologist, treasured both the tough love—"Don't hold out for the lead," he recalls Laura telling him once—as well as the way he felt deeply seen as a young person when he needed it most.

That's "the duality of Laura," Grey Papageorgiou '23 said. Laura could show up strict in a tech rehearsal when that was needed, and then later circle back to praise students for the great work they were doing. "She knows so well the roles that she needs to play in order to support her kids because that is her ultimate goal," Grey said.

For Laura, it has always been about the students, who she affectionately refers to as "kiddlewinks."

Though our revels together now are ended, Laura left us with such stuff as dreams are made on. And she'll surely visit upon the morrow.

JASON PUTSCHÉ



"TO HAVE A TEACHER LIKE HIM SAY YES TO YOU AS A STUDENT REALLY MAKES AN IMPRESSION." KIRIN SINHA '11

ANDY LIPPS:
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GDS EQUATION

Math Teacher Retires after 23 years

ONE OF THE OFT-REPEATED TALES about Andy Lipps' 23-year career at GDS involves a medical scare that turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Andy (as he tells it)—and for the School.

"I could never have imagined, when I had a mild heart attack in 1997, that I would look back at that as the best thing that ever happened to my career," Andy said. "But it definitely was."

Andy had been practicing law for 24 years, first as a DC public defender and then at a DC law firm, when the heart attack prompted a career switch. Convinced that his stressful job contributed to his heart condition, Andy left the legal profession and pursued a master's degree in mathematics, just for fun, not knowing what he would do with it.

"Then, in November of my second year at [George Washington University], a lawyer friend of mine called to say that her son's

math teacher at GDS had left, and I should consider applying," said Andy, who was a math major in college. "The position had been open for a while. As I've said a million times, that's probably the only reason that the School would hire an old guy like me with no teaching experience."

Clearly, the arrangement worked out. Andy went on to distinguish himself as a math teacher and coach of the School's math team, which he created and built into a national powerhouse. Within the past decade, he added to his course load by expanding into other departments. He started teaching a constitutional law class and helped teach two classes in Latin, his favorite subject in high school. He also team-taught a civil rights course and developed a related annual field trip to Alabama that epitomizes the social justice ideals of GDS. (See page 16)

History teacher Richard Avidon, a longtime friend of Andy's, describes his former colleague as "part of the soul of GDS" because his passions seamlessly aligned with the vision of the School's founders. "I think Andy found GDS to be surprisingly special for him," Richard said. "He got caught up in the mission and the personality of the place."

Not Just a Math Teacher

Andy's passions manifested themselves in all sorts of ways around School. When the Arab Spring uprising erupted in 2010, he successfully pushed the administration to cancel classes and organize a half-day "teach-in," which involved inviting GDS-affiliated experts (mostly parents and alumni) to speak to students about the complexities of the Arab world.

Walk the High School's math hallway, and hanging on its walls are portraits of mathematicians, all of them pieces that Andy commissioned from GDS art students. He did not dictate a vision for the art, but rather encouraged the students to do some research and apply their perspective to the piece.

As for the signature field trip to Alabama, it started as a somewhat impromptu journey with seven students on the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March in 2015. And it gave rise to a civil rights history class (called "From Freedom Rides to Ferguson") and an annual excursion that Andy described as his "proudest achievement" at GDS.

Lee Goldman, chair of the HS mathematics department, said Andy's enthusiasm for engaging students on many different fronts speaks to his deep interest in a wide array of topics as well as his teaching philosophy. "He truly believes that our job as teachers is to raise ethical human beings," Lee said, "not just to teach them polynomials."

But if anyone wanted to talk about that kind of thing, Andy was up for that too. Outside of class, he would organize gatherings to discuss number theory with students during his early days with the math team, and they'd show up and chat for hours. "He did this in his free time," Lee said. "He really enjoyed getting kids excited about what they were learning."

Student Interest + Teacher Support = Success

To appreciate how much Andy affected his students, consider the unsolicited praise he's received from them over the years.

Abby Martin '07 was a senior at Williams College in 2011 when she nominated Andy for the college's George Olmsted Jr. prize, awarded to high school teachers who played an influential role in the lives of Williams students. Andy won after Abby wrote to the judges about how he refused to settle for "middling performance" from her in his AP BC Calculus class just because she had chronic vision problems at the time. Instead, he worked to get her the accommodations she needed and showed her "the rewards of perseverance" during tough times.

LAYLA COYNE '25



Andy with one of the portraits he commissioned from GDS art students

Abby did not pursue math as a field of study. But she continues to appreciate how Andy's zeal for complex mathematical problems was rivaled only by his passion for social justice. "He would take a few minutes at the start of each class to talk about current events, not in a killing time type of way, but in a way that taught us to care about humanity," Abby said recently. "To this day, I still gravitate toward people who think about the broader world and don't walk through life with blinders on."

Noah Kravitz '16, who is pursuing a PhD in math at Princeton, credits Andy with inspiring him to explore a career in math academia. "I always knew I liked math," Noah said. "But Andy made me think: 'Huh, maybe this is something I'd like to do for a very long time.'"

That's why Andy immediately came to mind when Noah won an honorable mention for the 2021 Morgan Prize, which honors outstanding math research by an undergraduate student. In accepting the prize, Noah recognized Andy for "teaching me the possibilities of math beyond the classroom and taking the time to challenge me with a near-constant stream of interesting problems."

Leaving a Lasting Impression

Andy now lives in the Berkshires in Massachusetts. He said he's going to miss the excitement of working with students, and the fun they generated. Among his many fond memories are the escapades of the math team, which he oversaw from 2001 to 2016, and the achievements of the many students who sustained it. There was Ben Gunby '12, who won a gold medal at the prestigious International Mathematical Olympiad in 2010 and then again in 2011. And there was Kirin Sinha '11, the sharp, dynamic team captain who expanded the small team to 50 students under her watch. During her freshman year, Kirin pushed Andy to enroll the team in regional and national events, not just local ones.

DARIUS PARDNER

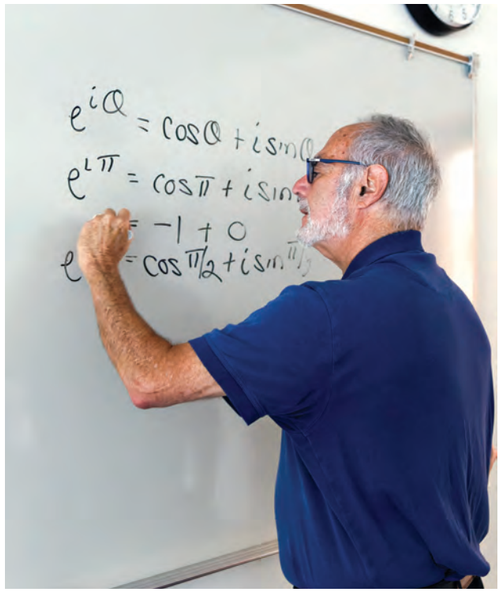


Andy with students on a trip to Alabama

Andy recalls how Ben emerged the winner of one of those events in 2011, and Kirin ranked as the top girl and the 9th student overall. When it came time for Ben and Kirin to take the stage and collect their prizes, "I could hear one kid from another team ask his friend; 'What does GDS stand for?'" Andy said. "His friend answered: 'Goddam smart.' True story."

Kirin, who attended MIT, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics before earning an MBA at Stanford, said that Andy stands out as a "champion of new ideas" among all her teachers and professors. "He was the kind of

LAYLA COYNE '25



teacher who would react to a student's idea by saying: 'Yes, let's make this happen. Let's get you what you need,'" Kirin said. "To have a teacher like him say yes to you as a student really makes an impression. It helps you believe in yourself and opens you up to the possibilities in life and how you view opportunity."

Other Andy-isms endeared him to students: the way he would wax rhapsodic about Euler's Method and the logic of a mathematical proof; his love of "Calculus Carols" at Christmas time; and the way he humanized famous mathematicians by sharing stories about their personal lives, such as the duel that killed Evariste Galois in 1832 or the friendship that blossomed between Albert Einstein and Kurt Gödel. And his can-do attitude did not go unnoticed by students or faculty given how he juggled his courseload with time-consuming extracurriculars, such as Harvard Model Congress, filled in for the math department head when needed, and came in early and stayed late on a regular basis.

"He was the kind of guy who made things work," said Marcus Boorstin '13. Marcus recounted a story he'd heard about how the math team was making its way back to GDS by bus from a meet in North Carolina when traffic came to a standstill in the streets of Washington.

Andy jumped out of the bus and began directing traffic, eager to help students thoughtfully navigate their way to their next stop.



TO BETTER THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

***Honrando el retiro de* Maribel Prieto**


Maribel, 1985 yearbook

DURING HER 29 YEARS AT GDS, Maribel Prieto taught every level of Spanish at the High School, chaired the HS Language Department, and infused an appreciation of the Latin culture and its people in all that she did.

"When I teach, I don't only teach language or culture," Maribel said. "I teach my community's struggles, my peoples' struggles. I help [younger] generations learn to respect, reflect, and give back to better the world we live in."

What Maribel brought to the school captures her training and passions. Raised and educated in Cuba, Maribel already had experience teaching college-level Spanish in the U.S. and training as a dancer and choreographer when she joined GDS as a long-term substitute teacher in 1994. After landing a permanent position at GDS, she completed a doctorate in Spanish while teaching full-time. She helped build the School's Spanish curriculum, create the first Upper-Level Spanish course, and expose her students to Latin American culture and the contributions made by indigenous peoples spanning the African Continent and the Americas.

But her influence reached beyond the classroom. Maribel served as the faculty advisor for a Spanish conversation club and HOLA, a club for Hispanic and Latine-identifying students and allies. Alongside her husband, Eduardo Gonzalez, who retired from GDS in 2022, Maribel also developed the former Latino Arts Assembly, which for 21 consecutive years, introduced Latin music and dance into the High School.

"She opened vistas on Latin America for the entire school and facilitated constructive action on questions of discrimination and suffering from natural disasters," said former World Language Department Chair Gail Massot. "Her passion for social justice and service was a beacon for all around her to bring those at risk safely to shore."


GDS trip to Cuba with Maribel (center) and her husband Eduardo (kneeling)

Connecting Their Learning to Their Lives

Maribel prided herself on establishing a rapport with her students by opening a dialogue with them so she could help link the materials they were studying to issues that mattered to them. "You must get to know students and know what moves them," she said, adding that this connection ensured real learning.

And students noticed. Claire Pires '09 remembers how Maribel always spoke to her outside of class—often multiple times a week—no matter how busy she was. "I always looked forward to our chats together, and I always felt so thankful that I had someone to talk to in between the hustle and bustle of classes," Claire said.

Brock Davis '22, who was in Maribel's class for three years, sensed that she was deeply invested in his learning. "When Maribel worked with me, I knew she cared about my progression," Brock said. "I miss our conversations after class when we would discuss a variety of topics: societal issues in Central and South America, the bravery of Rigoberta Menchu in Guatemala, and music in the Caribbean."

Rowan Bianchi '16 fondly recalls many of the topics covered in Maribel's class and the way she managed to connect Rowan's interests in art and history through Spanish language study. "While I may not remember every vocabulary word I learned in Language and Culture class, I remember how Maribel made me feel so valued, both academically and personally," Rowan said.

Imparting a Love of Spanish

Jonathan Panuthos '96 speaks Spanish at home every day with his Colombian wife of 19 years and their two young children. He in part credits Maribel's persistence for his fluency in the language. "I did not study as much as I should have and found myself without completed homework quite often," Jonathan said. "But somehow Maribel found a way to get through to me."

Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid Chris Levy, who worked with Maribel in his former role as HS Assistant Principal, noted her tireless work to ensure students received all the support they needed. "I've observed her helping students gain more comfort in Spanish by making the learning experience less intimidating and more accessible," Chris said.

In Maribel's class, even the sometimes-dreaded parts of language learning became exciting and enjoyable because of Maribel's enthusiasm for the topic and her feedback on projects, said Izzy Evers '23. She also encouraged students to ask any question, Izzy said, even about a Spanish phrase or tense they think they should already know.

Maribel said that the moment of complete comprehension, when students would grasp a complex topic, gave her work meaning. "Nothing else gives you that sense of accomplishment as an educator than that moment," Maribel said. "That 'Aha!' is your paycheck."

Maribel said that she's proud to have spent a sizable part of her career in a school where she felt that her work had purpose, where teachers had the autonomy to explore multiple viewpoints, and where her students went on to make a difference in the world, just as she had always hoped.

Former GDS Spanish teacher Larry House, who worked closely with Maribel for 27 years, said that she can't think of enough wonderful things to say about her former colleague's work ethic and dedication to her students. "She has been deeply loved and admired by her students and her colleagues," Larry said. "Maribel gave her heart and soul to GDS. Her retirement is a huge loss to the school, but she will long be remembered with the greatest affection and gratitude."

In her retirement, Maribel expects she'll always remain connected to education and service in her community. "I'm not leaving this place sad," Maribel said in June 2023. "I've had such fulfillment at GDS in all the roles I've had."

Bill Wallace with the 2023
UL Research in Biology class



BILL WALLACE TAKES OFF

But Don't Call It Retirement

THIS SEPTEMBER, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 26 YEARS, Bill Wallace was not at GDS welcoming students to one of his High School science classes. Right about now, he and his Swedish-born wife, Eva, are probably settling into their apartment in Stockholm before taking off for a visit to South Africa, where their oldest son now lives with his family.

In retirement, Bill is basically doing what he could not do during the confines of the school year. But calling it "retirement" gives the wrong impression, he said, for it implies an end to his teaching career when in fact he plans to remain quite active in the science education field. In the years to come, expect to see Bill launch all sorts of ventures and collaborations that build upon the work he's done with GDS students.

"I like to think of it as retiring *to* something rather than retiring *from* something," Bill said.

"I WANTED TO INFLUENCE THESE KIDS AND SHOW THEM HOW FUN SCIENCE COULD BE."
BILL WALLACE

Before GDS, a Lab and a Crew

Bill, a neuroscientist, trained as a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Nobel Laureate Paul Greengard before accepting a faculty position in 1986 at what is now known as the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. During his six years there, Bill pursued his interest in the molecular biology of the human brain. When his wife, a pediatric oncologist, accepted a job in Washington, Bill went on to work for another six years at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he ran a lab and churned out research on Alzheimer's disease.

Then he got restless.

"As a researcher, you reach a certain point where you're taken out of the lab to direct other people," Bill said. "I had about half a dozen people in my lab, and I was directing research on their experiments instead of doing my own. I'm not the type to sit behind a desk, so I started thinking about a career change, about what I most enjoy doing."

His fascination with designing and analyzing experiments combined with his love of teaching led him to apply for a job at GDS in 1998. "As part of the interview process, I spoke to a class about my research, and they asked such great questions," Bill said. "I really got great vibes from GDS, and I knew immediately that's where I wanted to be. I wanted to influence these kids and show them how fun science could be."

Keevan Kearns '23 said Bill's work experience and his relationships with world-renowned scientists served as an inspiration to her throughout high school. "Talking about a disease like Alzheimer's with a teacher who has published research papers on the topic and made discoveries is just an amazing opportunity," said Keevan, a freshman at Pomona College.

Former GDS High School Principal C.A. Pilling credits Bill for introducing his students and the School to a more hands-on approach to science. "Bill's push for us to teach students how to 'think like a scientist' rather than just content has left a lasting mark on the Science Department's approach," said C.A., who is now an HS environmental teacher.

In 2012, Bill was honored with the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, an award that recognizes teachers nationwide who display deep knowledge of their subjects and an ability to motivate students. President Obama described Bill and his cohort as "the best of the best."



Bill, the Brainchild of Three New Classes

At GDS, Bill initially taught Advanced Placement Biology until the School stopped offering AP classes in 2018, a development that Bill applauded. He'd grown disillusioned with the course because of its emphasis on standardized testing and memorization at the expense of in-depth and hands-on learning. The types of classes he wanted to teach are the ones he eventually designed: Physiology, Research Methods in Biology, and Neuroscience (which he co-developed and co-taught with Director of Student Life and Wellness Bobby Asher, see page 8).

Physiology focused on a different disease each year–everything from sickle cell anemia to HIV to COVID. Bill would teach the students how to use clinical reasoning to diagnose a

disease, as a physician would; how to gather data about a disease and spot trends the way an epidemiologist would; and how to apply the science they learned toward making the world a better place. At year's end, for instance, he might ask students to create a persuasive video that motivates people to get vaccinated for COVID.

Thomas Heist '19 took the class his junior year and still marvels at Bill's devotion to it. "He not only designed the curriculum, but he wrote his own textbook for the class and designed his own lab experiments," said Thomas, who is pursuing a PhD in tumor biology at Georgetown University.

Thomas enjoyed the lab portion of the class so much that he asked to work with Bill on an eight-week-long experiment the summer leading up to his senior year. The experiment, an extension of work done in class, involved treating flatworms with various antiparasitic drugs and watching their ability to regenerate after an injury. "That summer, Bill gave me what felt like my first meaningful scientific experience," Thomas said. "He showed me how to read academic papers, how to justify results using previous research–basically all the scientific skills that I use every day and will continue using for the rest of my career."

Ben Hoffman '09 said Bill was the first teacher he connected with in a meaningful way about his love of science. "It's been a very special relationship for me," said Ben, a physician-scientist who completed a PhD in neuroscience, Bill's specialty. "I bounced ideas off him about my course of study in grad school, and to this day, he remains a tremendous resource for me."

Ben, now a cardiology fellow in California, particularly admires Bill's teaching style. He has the ability to communicate very complicated scientific concepts in a way that makes them feel accessible to anyone," Ben said. "As I've progressed in my career, and had the opportunity myself to teach, I realized how special and unique a trait that is."

For his part, Bill credits the students with keeping him young. "I had to keep up with what they were doing and what they were reading. I was always learning along with them," said Bill, who also coached GDS men's JV soccer from 2000 to 2005, starting when his son, Steve '04, played on the team.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Bill considers himself lucky because he pulled off a career switch that he found meaningful and energizing. The camaraderie he developed with his co-workers and the charge he got from working with intellectually curious students keeps him wanting more.



Bill's travels, taking him far away from GDS

"I would like to continue actively promoting science education in the DC-area schools," Bill said. To that end, he's working to establish a DC chapter of the National Science Teachers Association and an alumni group consisting of DC teachers, like himself, who have previously won the presidential award honoring top science and math educators.

Through these groups and other collaborations, Bill would like to introduce neuroscience classes to more area high schools and model them after the one he taught with Bobby. (Bill taught the nuts and bolts of the brain while Bobby tackled how the brain affects mental health issues.) Bill also wants more students to learn science by doing science, which is why he's toying with the idea of creating a nonprofit group that would encourage students to engage in more scientific research inside and outside the classroom, as he did in his Research Methods in Biology class.

Bill is no stranger to launching new initiatives. At GDS, he created a STEAM Conference Day that attracted hundreds of students from public and independent schools throughout the DC region. The event, held at GDS, featured talks from leaders in the science, technology, engineering, art and math fields. It also showcased special student-led projects, such as robotics investigations, and activities hosted by various science education organizations. Bill ran the event for years, calling it "a labor of love."

"Looking back, it's clear that teaching science at GDS is a dream," Bill said. "The School is not scared of innovation. … We're all so spoiled here."



CFO KATHY CHERY STEERS FINANCIAL SUCCESS



Kathy and husband Josny with daughters Mona (middle) and Lia.

NEW CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER KATHY CHERY, an expert in education and nonprofit management, comes to GDS from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), where she served as the Assistant Vice President for Financial Strategy and Planning. Throughout her career, she has stewarded school finances into surpluses, developed systems efficiencies, and managed teams and budgets of up to $170 million. Kathy looks forward to advancing GDS—one of the youngest schools she has worked with—into its next chapters in mission-aligned ways.

A Strong Start

In her first job as a charter school business manager at age 24, Kathy managed a $4.5 million renovation. An accountant by training, she assembled a team of experts and collaborated with architects and builders to make the best decisions for the school. She ensured the project was completed on time and even orchestrated a seamless campus relocation.

Turning Around Turn-of-the-Century Schools

In addition to her work at RISD, Kathy has helped shape the finances of other storied schools, all founded between 1860 and 1909, including: the Cambridge School of Weston and the Chestnut Hill School (both in Massachusetts) and the Westover School of Connecticut. Kathy reversed one school's operating deficits, developed a 20-year strategic capital spending plan at another, and innovated financial aid policies to draw in students from all economic segments. Her financial aid plan was singled out for its excellence by a top leader of the National Association of Independent Schools at a national conference for business officers.

Beyond School

When not at School, Kathy enjoys spending time with her husband, Josny, and their two children, GDS Hoppers Lia and Mona. Kathy and her daughters watch high school and college basketball together. When she's feeling creative, she sometimes makes soaps and lotions at home. As they settle into their new home, Kathy and her family look forward to exploring DC's monuments and museums.

FIVE WAYS
OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IS COOLER THAN YOURS



NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL KELSEY TWIST SCHROEDER has served as an independent school administrator on both coasts, lectured on education nationally, and trained teachers in teaching leadership at the Gardner Carney Leadership Institute, where she remains a faculty member.

Kelsey, who was born and raised in Baltimore, earned her BA and an MEd in Education at Stanford University. While teaching at a Baltimore high school, she completed an EdD in Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Kelsey joins GDS after serving as middle school division head at The Hamlin School, an all-girls institution in San Francisco serving students in grades K-8. She is a parent of four (plus a dog) and a passionate gardener.

On Life in Athletics

As a 16-year-old, Kelsey played on the U.S. women's under-19 lacrosse team that won a World Championship. A gifted varsity athlete, she was recruited by colleges for both lacrosse and basketball. Kelsey went on to captain the Division I lacrosse team at Stanford University and played on the school's practice team for basketball.

Athletics taught her that effort matters as does winning (or losing) graciously, a mindset she applied to other aspects of her life. She remembers her father saying: "Sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn."

On Parenting

Kelsey's children with her spouse Jamie Lee (a radiologist and former Olympic rower) range in age from two to 14. "We get to be in all these different phases of parenting at once," Kelsey said. Watching her children act in generous, inclusive, and loving ways towards others is her greatest joy. As both a parent and an educator, she appreciates the tension between allowing children to develop their independence while also protecting them from harm.

On Lifelong Learning

As a child, Kelsey spent nine weeks of every summer with her family at the Chautauqua Institution, a 150-year-old cultural and spiritual lakeside retreat in New York devoted to intellectual inquiry and self-improvement through the arts, education, religion, and recreation. It's where she had the chance to hear from world-renowned lecturers, sing in operas with professionals, and dash around a picturesque community on her bike with friends. Her time there helped shape her views on learning as an integral part of life. Kelsey now serves on the institution's youth and family advisory council, and her children attend every summer.

On Middle School

Kelsey's doctoral thesis at the University of Pennsylvania focused on cultivating leadership competency skills in early adolescents, which piqued her interest in middle school. Her research with students at that age illustrated for her how much they deserve to be celebrated. The "moody teens" narrative needed replacing. Apart from infancy, she said, the middle school years are the most exciting, transformational, and often overwhelming period of growth in life.

On Gardening

Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, Kelsey and her family moved from downtown San Francisco to a house in the city's Presidio neighborhood, where she had easy access to an organic community garden. "It was a blessing beyond compare," she said. When COVID hit, Kelsey started working from home after Hamlin shifted to virtual learning. She said that caring for her vegetable plot marked a pleasant transition from her work day to her family life. She discovered that gardening resembles teaching in that it can be a meditative and celebratory experience (think first harvest!) that requires a long-term investment in an outcome that is not immediately foreseeable.



SEVEN WAYS
FACULTY & STAFF GIVE BACK

GDS faculty and staff give their time and expertise to the School every day. Many of them also give back to the broader community and special causes through volunteerism, which is consistent with the School's commitment to promote public purpose and take meaningful action to better the world we live in.





Fifth grade history teacher **Judy Brown** (1) has worked with DC metropolitan area high school students through her chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. For years, Judy has helped fill and distribute student backpacks, arrange college fairs and scholarships, organize talent competitions, and instill confidence in youth.

HS History Teacher **Topher Dunne** (2) has donated blood–nearly 14 gallons of it–to the Red Cross. He's been giving since 1985, even at the height of the coronavirus pandemic, inspired by his grandfather, who regularly donated blood until his health deteriorated.

Michelle McKeever (3) and **C.A. Pilling** (4) work with senior citizens. **Michelle** (CEEL program associate) volunteers at We Are Family DC, which provides DC seniors with companionship and free services, such as grocery deliveries. **C.A.** (HS science teacher) delivers meals to homebound seniors once a week through Meals on Wheels, chatting with people on her route and monitoring their living situation to identify other services they may need.

For more than a decade, Operations and Systems Engineer **Walid Nazari** (5) has cooked and donated food for people in need and organized community food drives (typically four each year) through his father's catering business, Fine Cuisine Catering.

Lower School P.E. teacher **Peg Schultz** (6) has volunteered with Project Giveback for 12 years. The group delivers Thanksgiving food baskets to more than 4,000 families, delivers backpacks and school supplies to students in need every August, and provides food to people in need during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in conjunction with We Feed Our People.

In June 2023, a team of seven current and former faculty members (7) walked nearly 18 miles overnight in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's "Out of the Darkness" event and raised $11,779. **Meryl Heyliger** (LS counselor and Counseling Services Department Chair), **Denise Jones** (LS Assistant Principal), **Liz Spratley** and **Julia Tomasko** '05 (4th grade teachers), **Laura Howell** and **Reed Thompson** (former LMS teachers and alumni parents), and **Laura Yee** (former assistant head of school) formed Team Walk, Talk, Love/Hope, in part because all of them had personal connections to people who died by suicide.

Brooke Coleman (HS math) and **Bobby Asher** (Director of Student Community Programming and HS Science) supported their Special Olympics DC adult basketball team (8) to victory in the league's lower-division championship. Once a week for ten weeks as "partner players," they helped their athletes find success on the court. "Best night of the week by far," Bobby said.



KAMAL NASHID REMEMBERED

IN MEMORY OF BELOVED COMMUNITY MEMBER KAMAL NASHID, GDS has installed a new mural along the hallway to the Kamal Nashid Terrace, an outdoor learning space at the Lower/Middle School building that serves as a reminder of Kamal and the many ways he instilled wonder and joy in all that he did.

In June 2019, shortly after completing 8th grade, Kamal was taking a run near his home to prepare for the High School cross country team when he was struck and killed by a car. Since then, the GDS community has been determined to connect Kamal's spirit to the School, especially during what would have been his high school graduation year. Head of School Russell Shaw took a moment during the 2023 commencement ceremony to honor Kamal's memory and read a note from Kamal's father, Salim.

"I vividly remember how happy and proud Kamal was when he participated in the 8th grade closing ceremony four years ago," Salim wrote to Russell. "He was so looking forward to attending high school where he could continue to challenge himself."

Kamal's mural, completed just before graduation day, was initiated by the Office of Community Engagement and Experiential Learning (CEEL) to enhance the area around Kamal's namesake terrace. Five of Kamal's classmates from the class of 2023—Ava Blum, Elly Robinson, Emery Jackson, Grey Papageorgiou, and Maya Raman—spent nearly 100 hours creating the 12-by-4-foot acrylic and oil mural under the guidance of High School Studio Arts Chair Michelle Cobb.

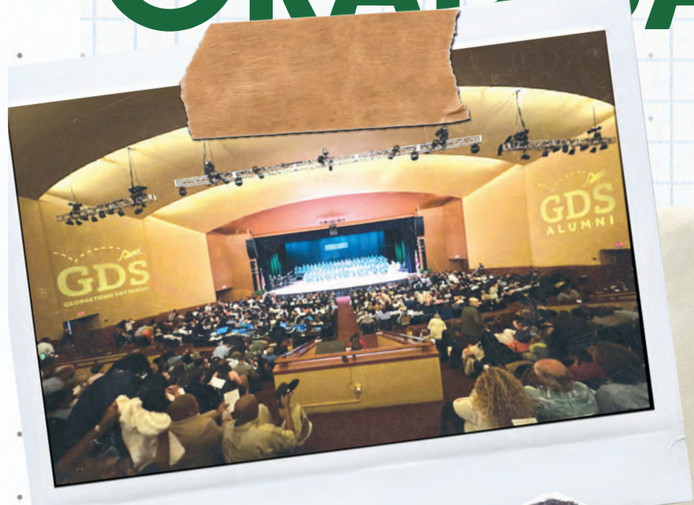
The artists incorporated the design wishes of Kamal's family and ideas from their classmates. Early on, during the 2021-22 school year, they also solicited suggestions from the fifth grade class because of the class's proximity to the Terrace and its year-long focus on the school community as part of its CEEL curriculum.

Three of Kamal's closest friends–seniors Bryan Chapman, Roshan Natarajan, and Kofi Pobee–shared some of their favorite stories about Kamal with the 5th graders in November 2022. That afternoon, the class weeded the Terrace, decorated it with brightly painted stones, and contributed ideas for the mural, including Kamal's smiling face, a big yellow sun, and a ribbon connecting all his favorite things.

Some of the elements of the mural that were suggested by seniors include Kamal running on a track, music flowing from his saxophone, and lanterns representing friendships. The silhouette of a boy–sitting atop a cloud–reading aloud to a young child was a detail requested by the Nashid family to commemorate Kamal's work mentoring the children at CentroNía's Early Childhood Center and the time he spent with his little brother Jibril '27, the youngest of the four Nashid children.

Many thanks to the students, Kamal's friends and classmates, the Nashid family, and to CEEL Director Leigh Tait, who stewarded what Assistant Head of School for Curriculum and Instruction Debby Previna called a "powerful manifestation of love, care, and celebration of Kamal."

GRADUATION 2023



The GDS community gathered on June 11, 2023 to celebrate the graduation of 125 seniors at George Washington's Lisner Auditorium. The ceremony was filled with song, dance, and words of wisdom and insight from speakers representing key GDS constituencies.

Head of School Russell Shaw and High School Principal Yom Fox spoke on behalf of the administration; English teacher Nadia Mahdi represented the faculty; Drew Cowan '23 and Andrew Mikhail '23 served as class speakers; and *Politico* Editor-in-Chief Matthew Kaminski '90 (father of Ella '20 and Max '23) took to the podium as this year's parent speaker.

The high school journey for the Class of 2023 then came to an official end with a simple directive from Russell: "Seniors, you may move your tassels from the right to the left, transitioning you from GDS students to GDS alumni."



Nadia Mahdi

Russell Shaw

Yom Fox



Matthew Kaminski '90



Andrew Mikhail

Drew Cowan

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

QUESTION

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU?

Toward the end of every school year, Head of School Russell Shaw invites seniors to write to him about what they will take with them from GDS and shares a few of their responses on graduation day. At the most recent commencement ceremony, Russell added that he hopes GDS graduates will take and treasure their friendships.

"As you're finding your way in life, your friends won't be able to provide you with a roadmap to your destination," Russell told the class of 2023. "…But they may provide you with a compass, by helping you to discern what's most important to you and then holding you accountable to those values. And most importantly, your friends will give you someone to travel the road with, and that will make your heaviest burdens just a little bit lighter and the transcendent moments, like this one, even more joyful."

In their written responses to Russell, some seniors explained that the relationships forged at GDS made them feel "unconditionally loved," "wiser," and "trusted and respected," all of which should prepare them well for the road ahead.



"In Middle School, one day I decided to put on a pair of yellow rain boots and never seemed to take them off, and no one seemed to bat an eye. … At GDS, one can be who they are and still be unconditionally loved. And although I might not always find that embrace in every space and community I enter, if I am myself, with or without the yellow rain boots, I can be the start of a culture that celebrates differences."

Asha Adiga-Biro

"I will take a lifelong eagerness to ask and embrace questions; an open mind that is ready to listen, respect, and grow from divergent viewpoints; and a passion for learning in every sense: learning from teachers, learning from life, learning from peers, and learning from myself."

Ava Blum



"GDS allowed me to be me. I frequently walked the halls with wet hair, straight out of the shower, after working out in the middle of the day. I walked the halls wearing clothes that made me feel comfortable, not what I thought others would appreciate seeing me wear. … I did things for me. I am confident in who I am because of GDS."

Daria Kabiri

"When I first toured GDS, the carpet was the thing I noticed. In previous schools the cold tile had upset my senses. … But the GDS carpet felt soothing. … Amidst a riveting English discussion on the Africanist presence in Edgar Allan Poe's stories or on a sweaty walk from the gym to grab my calculator still charging in the library, the soft feeling of my feet on these carpet-lined treks made me want to revel in them."

Isadora Evers

"GDS has taught me the importance of love in all forms. I came to understand the tradition of loving those around you so much that they become your family. GDS did that by filling itself with open-minded and open-hearted people who taught me that I was worthy of love."

Jacqueline Metzger





"I will be taking lifelong mentors and friends who are caring and empathetic, hardworking, and curious. I have friends who I argue with and who make me wiser. I have teachers who send friendly emails on a Saturday morning, saying 'this article made me think of you,' and who had faith in me when others were skeptical."

Nora Smulson



"I will take from GDS the value of thinking through questions from a variety of different lenses. I used extensions to fully rewrite essays once I had finished, realizing that I wanted to argue the other side. I will take with me the ability to think critically and meticulously."

Lucy Perl

"The most important things I will take from my decade at GDS are understanding how to have difficult conversations, appreciating and taking an interest in other cultures, learning how to work independently, and the confidence to approach my teachers when I need their help."

Pierson Cooper

"The teachers and students at GDS have taught me so much about standing up for what I believe is right, advocating for myself, and feeling confident enough to challenge those around me. I have learned that my voice has power."

Mackenzie Williams







"GDS helped me grow as an American citizen, not only by familiarizing me with the country's history but also by inspiring in me a sense of school pride that's been like practice for patriotism. A few more specific things I will take away from GDS: A love of the sport of running, and with it a life-altering confidence boost for a kid who once feared fields and courts. A love of words and literature. And yes, true to that good old mission statement I've heard for years—what I expect will be a lifelong love of learning."

Ethan Wolin



"Coming from a middle school where everything was run by the clock, the independence I gained at GDS was refreshing. I felt trusted and respected, and that helped me to develop a sense of responsibility that I know will serve me well."

Mila Noshirvani

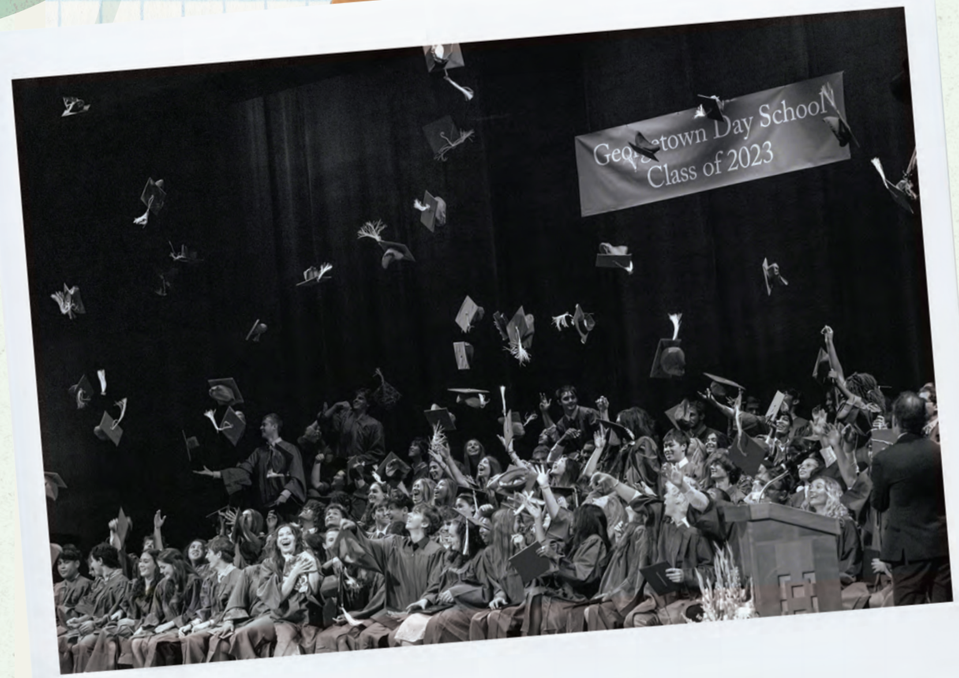
COMPOSITION BOOK

C/o 2023

where they are headed

Asha Adiga-Biro
Ranja Andriamananjara
Robert Anopolsky
Rose Atwood
Izzy Auerswald
Nate Bazemore
Deepa Bhargava
Ava Blum
Nande Bond
Milo Borek
Lila Boyle
Ally Brangham
Sophie Bronner
xGriffin Brown
Wesley Brubaker
Tate Buchwald
Andrew Burke
Janel Butler-Roberts
Edie Carey
Ben Carter
Alexandra Caskin
Bryan Chapman
Mia Chévere
Zaira Chowdhury
Luke Cohen
Hannah Cohen-De La Rosa
Pierson Cooper
Drew Cowan
Nell Cox
Elsa Cutler
Helena Dobbs
William Edwards
Isadora Evers
Daniel Farber
Aidan Fine
Lila Fishman Harris

Sophia Flyer
Sadie Foer
Daniel Ford
Elena Forlini
Christian Freeman
Alex Gerson
Jacob Getlan
Ryan Gilbert
Alana Goldstock
Ben Goldwyn
Gigi Gore
Adam Harris
Dionne Harris
Peter Harris
Pilar Holder
Emery Jackson
Zachary Jager
Lucie Johnson
Daria Kabiri
Lydia Kabiri
Max Kaminski
Keevan Kearns
Damien Kelliher
Anna Khoury
Sophie Klein
Sarah Leary
Victoria Levi
Katie Lim
Susan Lin
Tenaya Lin







Percival Liu
Nava Mach
Riley Maurer
Mimi Mayorkas
Jacqueline Metzger
Ben Meyer
Lucy Mezey
Andrew Mikhail
Nick Mohr
Roshan Natarajan
Tatiana Nazlymov
Mila Noshirvani
Katelyn Oliwa
Daniel Otto-Manzano
Grey Papageorgiou
Arjun Pathiyal
Luca Pedroni
Lucy Perl
Lauren Petrilla
Leo Pivato
Kofi Pobee
William Pressler
Charley Quillian
Maya Raman
Shiv Raman
Noor Ramzy
Madi Rawls

Malvika Reddy
Ella Robinson
Ian Rothfeld
Maya Ryu
Waleed Saleh
Cam Salehizadeh
Tass Selman
Sofia Sevak
Adina Siff
Victor Singh
Aydin Smolover-Bord
Nora Smulson
Lina Stensland
Benjamin Stern
Andrew Steves
Lucas Sullivan
Gabi Swamy
Alex Swisher
Ashok Tate
Max Wang
Barbara Weaver-Barros
Jaia Wilensky
Mackenzie Williams
Sophie Wohlstadter
Ethan Wolin
Alex Wood
Katie Young
Kaiden Yu
John Yuan
Liam Zeilinger
Jamie Zimmermann



BY EMILY LIVELLI
GDS DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

Mind the GAP

A gap year between high school and college can help boost confidence, improve communication skills, and teach self-reliance.

No wonder more colleges encourage it.



Asha Adiga-Biro '23 (right) cooking for guests at an eco-hostel in Groningen, Netherlands

WHEN WE BEGIN OUR COLLEGE COUNSELING MEETINGS with juniors, it is customary for our team to ask each student to talk about whether they want to go to college and why. It typically throws the student a bit off guard (and it can terrify some parents!), but that's exactly the point. In a community where 99% of graduates go on to college, it's important to interrupt assumptions and dig into the "why" behind that choice. Just running from one checkpoint to the next does not set young people up to make mindful decisions about their futures. We want them to slow down and consider all of the possibilities–including whether they want to go directly to college after high school or whether they want to consider a year off, or a gap year.

Most years, between seven and 10 GDS seniors opt for the gap year. (Out of a class of 130, that's not an insignificant number!) They use the time to immerse themselves in travel, work, community service, and a host of other activities that help them recharge and develop key life skills. What we hear back from these students is overwhelmingly positive. Many of them report that the experience boosted their confidence, improved their communication skills, and taught them how to be more flexible and self-reliant, especially when challenges arise.

Taking the less charted course can sometimes feel uncomfortable. Students worry about veering off the conventional path, and so do their parents. And they're anxious that taking a gap year means "missing out" on the first year experiences that their peers are having, which is natural. But the feedback we receive from gap year alumni and the emerging research on the topic does not bear out these concerns.

In fact, several studies suggest that students who take a gap year thrive in college in terms of motivation and grades. Researchers at Middlebury College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that students who took gap years at both institutions had higher grade point averages than their non-gap year peers. A more recent study at both schools found that gap year students' GPAs exceeded expectations when compared with projections based on their past academic record. And the positive effects continued throughout their college years, according to an online post by Bob Clagett for the Gap Year Research Consortium (GYRC), which consists of college admissions deans and researchers who are gathering data on gap year outcomes.

"On average, most students who take a gap year end up performing at *higher* levels than would have been predicted," wrote Clagett, the GYRC coordinator, who previously held high-level admissions jobs at Middlebury and Harvard University. "Other studies have shown that they are also not only more likely to return to an academic track after their gap years, but they are also more likely to engage meaningfully with their college courses."

The precursor to the gap year was the "Grand Tour" of late 17th century England, during which aristocratic teenage boys explored art, history, and culture in Europe as an extension of their formal education, Joe O'Shea wrote in his book, *Gap Year: How Delaying College Changes People in Ways the World Needs*. The modern-day concept of a gap year took off in the United Kingdom in the 1960s and then Australia and the rest of Europe before gaining traction in the United States within the past decade.

Of course, the coronavirus pandemic helped further popularize that option as many incoming freshmen chose to take gap years rather than start college online. Their younger peers took notice and leaned into the gap year possibilities, which include robust offerings that range from pricey structured programs to more moderately-priced (or even free) experiences.

Asha Adiga-Biro '23 opted for the latter. For the first semester of the 2023-24 school year, Asha is working on organic farms in the Netherlands, Greece, France, and Italy in exchange for room and board, an arrangement brokered through an organization that connects volunteers with farmers in order to promote more sustainable farming practices. "It was a way for me to explore different countries without having to pay a lot of money," she said.

Asha had been thinking about a gap year since her junior year after speaking to GDS alumni about their experiences and seeing online posts about their adventures. What Asha hopes to gain from her travel is a sense of independence. She wants to prove to herself that she can tackle challenges on her own, outside her comfort zone. "I wanted more time to figure out who I am and what I'm capable of," said Asha, who is headed to Bowdoin College in fall 2024. "I think a gap year will help me feel more prepared and less anxious about college."

Jacob Ali Korde '22, who recently completed his gap year, said he definitely experienced moments of loneliness as he watched his GDS friends post online about college life. But the moments were fleeting, and he has no regrets. After four long years in the demanding GDS environment, Jacob wanted a break and a taste of the "real world," he said. For six months, he worked at GDS as a Technical Assistant at the Lower School's tech bar, helping students and teachers with their tech needs. He later traveled to New Zealand and then Vancouver to visit his grandmother before taking another job at the Strathmore Music Center. "Taking a gap year made me more excited to go to college," said Jacob, now a first year student at Macalester College. Working made him more organized, he added, and having to fill his down time in the evenings or between jobs forced him to think about his interests and what makes him happy.



Maddie Feldman '23 (right) with friends at a waterfall in Yilan in northern Taiwan

> When you spend a year traveling, working, volunteering, there are different expectations, and you end up developing muscle memory on how to address problems.
>
> T. Peaches Valdes
> Wellesley College Administrator

What Colleges Are Saying

At GDS, we've found that colleges generally support, and sometimes even encourage, a gap year. Some may want more information than others about precisely what the student plans on doing with that time. But most seem to recognize that they will get a more mature and eager freshman through their doors if they allow applicants to defer for a year.

"Gap years enable students to build a more practical toolkit in order to better troubleshoot or solve problems," said T. Peaches Valdes, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid at Wellesley College. "When you spend a year traveling, working, volunteering, there are different expectations, and you end up developing muscle memory on how to address problems."

The University of Michigan is also open to gap year requests from admitted students. "I don't think there's ever a situation where I would advise against it," said Jody Gore, the university's Assistant Director of National Recruitment and Alumni Relations. And for decades, Harvard's letter of admission has proposed that students take a gap year. On its website, the university says it "encourage[s] admitted students to defer enrollment for one year to travel, pursue a special project or activity, work, or spend time in another meaningful way," adding that between 90 and 130 students choose to defer each year.

Some universities and colleges even add financial sweeteners to entice students to go that route. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offers an $8,000 stipend for its selective Global Gap Year Fellowship. At Duke University, students can request $5,000 to $15,000 to support a gap year; at Princeton University, a select number of newly admitted students can take part in a nine-month, tuition-free overseas program; and at Florida State University, any student who applies for a gap year is automatically considered for a scholarship of up to $5,000.

O'Shea, author of the *Gap Year* book and dean of undergraduate studies at Florida State, is a huge fan of the gap year, arguing that it has the potential to expand a student's known universe and challenge their understanding of themselves and others in ways that even the best-intentioned classrooms cannot. "Often you see students who struggle in higher education because they don't have a sense of purpose and direction," O'Shea told *U.S. News & World Report* last year. "Gap years–because they give students a broader sense of the world and their place in it and how they can contribute–help to supply and empower students with the kind of motivation and purpose that can animate their entire college experience."

Maddie Feldman '22 vouched for that. Through a U.S. State Department program, Maddie spent a year studying Mandarin in Taiwan–on Uncle Sam's dime–before starting her freshman year at Princeton this fall. After taking the program's Mandarin classes during high school, she wanted to build on what she had learned in order to enrich her studies in college, where she hopes to major in international relations or information technology. "I did not expect to gain the qualitative skills that I ended up gaining, such as patience and flexibility," Maddie said. The language barrier forced her to get creative when conveying her needs. ("I had to communicate with body language and emotions in ways that are more than just what's coming out of my mouth," she said.) And the cultural norms and local bureaucracy sometimes tried her patience. ("I learned to go more with the flow, which is tough for me," she said.)

In today's fast-paced society, pausing and asking "why" is a powerful practice. We want our students to ask themselves why they want to go to college, what they hope to gain from that choice, and how they can maximize their experience when they get there. Sometimes the right answer is to stop, pause longer, and spend a year off the educational track. Sometimes it isn't, and going directly to college is the best next step for a student. Either way, developing a practice of reflection can benefit students at all stages, and we are thrilled to see so many students embrace the path (slightly) less traveled.







Class of 2003



Alumni Party



Black Alumni Gathering



Class of 1993



ALUMNI WEEKEND 2024!

Keep an eye on your inbox for details on next year's alumni weekend, which will celebrate the classes ending in 4 and 9. Remember, all alumni are welcome to join regardless of graduation year. Email alumni@gds.org to learn about how you can help.

MUSIC & REVELRY AT ALUMNI REUNION

HOPPER ALUMNI swarmed the GDS campus, and a few outside venues, during the GDS Mixtape Reunion Weekend in May. The reunion celebrated the classes ending in 3 and 8, though all GDS alumni were welcome to attend.

Many attendees kicked off the weekend at their respective class parties before participating in official reunion festivities on campus, including: a cookout on the LMS patio; the Black Alumni Happy Hour at the High School's third-floor art gallery; and a gathering in the Forum with Laura Rosberg, who retired from GDS in June after a 44-year career that included more than three decades as chair of the High School Performing Arts Department.

A music-themed evening party at the HS library brought the reunion to a close, with playlists that harkened back to the classes' high school days.

The alumni earned bragging rights this year and demonstrated their commitment to future alumni, with reunion classes collectively contributing more than $121,500 to GDS through the Hopper Fund. Each reunion class set a dollar goal based on its past giving. A special shout out to the class of 2003 for being the first to exceed its goal and the class of 1983 for fulfilling its match challenge and having the highest participation rate of any class!

Laura Rosberg Gathering Inside the Actor's Studio



Class of 1983 Gathering







Michael Schaffer '91



Paul Brunell '86



Alejandro Rosenberg '98



Gabriela Tobal '87

NEW GDS ALUMNI BOARD MEMBERS

The GDS Alumni Board works to build community among the School's former students and keep them connected to life on campus. We welcome the Board's newest members.

PAUL BRUNELL '86, a DC native, recently relocated to Washington after more than two decades in California. He joined GDS in the 5th grade, graduated from Texas A&M University, and briefly returned to DC to work as a programmer for the Federal Reserve Bank before moving to California to pursue a career in the information technology field. In California, Paul has worked in the commercial/wholesale technology side of Wells Fargo since 1988. He currently serves as a Lead Engineer and Technology Manager for the bank, where he is responsible for full stack technology teams that help customers fight internal and external fraud. Paul, father of Geoff and Lauren, is now an empty nester. After so many years on the West Coast, Paul is hoping to reconnect with his DC roots, reacquaint himself with the GDS community, and assist on the Alumni Board as a way of giving back later in life.

ALEJANDRO ROSENBERG '98 credits GDS for instilling in him a concern for the greater good, empathy, critical thinking, and "looking out for the little guy"–qualities that have affected his career choices. As an attorney at the Federal Trade Commission since 2013, Alejandro has helped people recoup losses suffered from run of the mill scams to violations of their privacy. He currently serves in the agency's Division of Privacy and Identity Protection, where he focuses on the intersection of law and technology. Previously, he was counsel to the bureau director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, after spending eight years in that bureau's Division of Enforcement. Before joining the FTC, Alejandro practiced at two Manhattan law firms and clerked for Judge Leonard Sand in the Southern District of New York. He earned a JD from the George Washington University Law School and a BA from Emory University. Alejandro, who joined GDS starting in 8th grade, served on the 20th and 25th reunion committees for his GDS class. He lives in the District with his wife and two daughters.

MICHAEL SCHAFFER '91, a journalist and writer, has covered local, national, and world news. He is the author of the 2009 book *One Nation Under Dog*. Michael spent 10 years as editor-in-chief of two Washington publications, *Washington City Paper* and then *Washingtonian* magazine, which was recognized as the best city magazine in the country two times during his tenure. These days, Michael writes *Politico's* "Capital City" column and hosts the podcast *City Cast DC*. He earned an AB in history from Columbia University and spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar in Sri Lanka. Michael and his wife, Keltie Hawkins, live in the District with their two daughters (who are both at GDS) and their dog (who has thus far not been admitted).

GABRIELA TOBAL '87 built a career in the life sciences that has spanned research, business development, venture capital, and alliance management. Currently, she serves as Vice President of Business Development for Endeavor Biomedicines, a clinical stage biotech company in San Diego, where she lives with her 16-year-old son Jack. Gabriela joined GDS in 3rd grade and took the values and lessons learned at the School to the University California, Santa Cruz, where she earned a BA in Marine Biology. She also has an MS from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego. After a number of years as a researcher, Gabriela went back to school for an MBA at the University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business. She is passionate about fostering collaborative work environments and mentoring students and young professionals in the life sciences field.

IN 2023, THE CEEL OFFICE CONNECTED 47 STUDENTS WITH ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE DC REGION, A RECORD NUMBER.

SUMMER 2023:
SWEATING IT OUT AT WORK

EVERY YEAR, the Community Engagement and Experiential Learning (CEEL) office places select GDS students in internships that provide them with meaningful work experiences the summer before their senior year.

In 2023, the office connected 47 students with organizations across the DC region, a record number. The phenomenal results are in large part due to the efforts of alumni and parents of current or former GDS students who work at host organizations. We want to thank everyone who has contributed to the program's success for giving back to GDS in this valuable way.



Josh (left) got an insider's look at the music biz working with Will.

LIFE IN THE DC MUSIC SCENE

WILL SUTER '02 has hosted GDS students for the past three years at All Things Go, the DC music festival that he co-founded with friends in 2014. "I'm so happy to offer GDS High School students exposure to the music industry, which is something I wish I had when I was in the same position two decades ago," Will said. "We're not New York, Los Angeles, or Nashville. But there's a tremendous amount of traditional music based in DC. Being able to provide students with experience and mentorship locally has been really cool."

JOSH REYNOLDS '24 wants to pursue a career in music, perhaps singing or working in the industry's business side, so he was thrilled to land this internship. And the line-up for this year's festival at Merriweather Post Pavilion included some of his favorite artists, including Lana Del Ray and Beabadoobee. "I gained so much insight into how record labels and record companies operate and about how the venue side of things works, like what it takes to book artists," said Josh, who helped explore how to effectively promote the festival through social media. "I'm a huge fan of All Things Go, and I'm so happy with this experience."



Dave (right) and Shaan at a worksite in Anne Arundel County

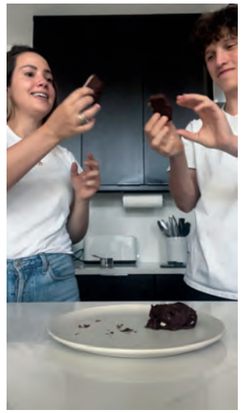
Interested in hosting a GDS intern for summer 2024? Email CEEL Office Director Leigh Tait at ltait@gds.org

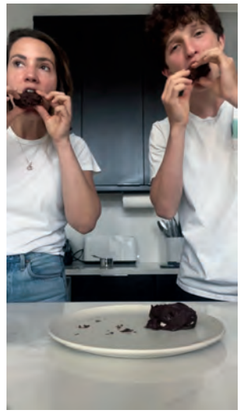
BUILDING A CAREER IN ARCHITECTURE

DAVE FISCHER '01, a senior project manager at SEI Architects, credits GDS for teaching him the critical thinking and time management skills that served him well professionally. "When I saw the email about the need for internship [host organizations], I thought it was a great opportunity for me to give back to a community that meant so much to me," Dave said. SEI is a decades-old firm that specializes in educational design, mainly school buildings in the K-12 public school market throughout Maryland. Given that architecture is a very specialized field, Dave said, "I envisioned a shadow-type experience for someone who wants to learn about this type of work."

SHAAN DESAI '24 joined Dave on site visits, including one that involved adding a classroom to Crofton Middle School in Anne Arundel County. Shaan found many similarities between the firm's design and building process and the work he's done on the GDS robotics team, which intrigued him. "There's a lot of collaboration and brainstorming, which I really enjoy," he said. "Even the software is similar." An added bonus was the face time Shaan got with people in the office, from recent architecture school graduates to highly experienced architects. "I got to ask them about their college majors, whether they enjoyed their work, how long it took them to find a job," Shaan said. "The experience was great. Everyone has been super nice and welcoming."

Lucy and Juju testing peanut butter ice cream bar recipe.







MIXING FOOD & FUN

LUCY DANA '09 needed another set of hands to help manage One Trick Pony, the peanut butter company that she launched in 2022 with her brother Andrew Dana '04 and his wife Dani. (Andrew and Dani were busy running their other endeavors–Call Your Mother Deli and Timber Pizza.) Finding an intern made sense, and turning to GDS was a no-brainer. "Having gone there myself, I knew an intern from GDS would be a self-starter, a hard worker, and a fast learner who would not need me to hold their hand," Lucy said.

JUJU JINICH '24 said that he was attracted to One Trick Pony because it combined two of his top interests: food and entrepreneurship. The company sells its peanut butter in stores and online. A typical day can consist of creating recipes for Instagram, responding to online customer inquiries, and cold-calling stores to promote the product. Juju did all of the above as well as research on which stores to pitch based on their proximity to One Trick Pony's online customers. (Lucy adds that Juju closed some deals!) "I've done a ton of outreach to individual stores," Juju said. "Lucy has taught me a lot. ...She really wanted me to get as much out of the experience as possible."



COURTESY OF LYNN FRENCH

Lynn C. French in 1st grade at GDS's Grasslands campus

FAMILIES, HOMES, AND A HELPING HAND

Former Black Panther and DC Homelessness Czar Lynn C. French '63 on building strong communities

"GDS WAS A LOVELY, STRONG ENVIRONMENT FOR ME." LYNN C. FRENCH

LYNN FRENCH '63 remembers GDS Head of School Aggie O'Neil walking into her third grade classroom to announce a landmark Supreme Court decision that hit particularly close to home for Lynn's family of trailblazing educators and civil rights stalwarts.

"Today, the Supreme Court realized what we've known all along was right," Lynn remembers Aggie saying that afternoon of May 17, 1954, as she told the class how the nation's highest court had just ordered the desegregation of public schools in the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

Aggie explained that GDS understood the virtues of educating students of different races and religions together, which is why it was the first integrated school in DC when it opened its doors nine years before the historic Supreme Court decision.



Lynn's kindergarten class at the Garden of Children.



Lynn holds the diploma after her father, Dr. David French, graduates from Howard Medical School.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LYNN FRENCH.

"I'll never forget that day," said Lynn, who has devoted her adult life to the values that GDS and her family instilled in her from an early age. For six decades, she's worked as a civil rights advocate, a lawyer, and a public servant dedicated to lifting marginalized people.

GOOD BEGINNINGS

Lynn grew up acutely aware of how educational barriers excluded Black families from fully participating in American society, a concept that agitated and ultimately motivated her grandmother, Dorothy Howard, to launch in 1929 the first integrated nursery school in DC.

Garden of Children, based out of Mrs. Howard's home, initially served fewer than a dozen pupils. But it grew to average about 44 children a year, including children of diplomats, university presidents, and at least one Nobel laureate before it shut down in 1961, according to *The Washington Post*. Among them were Lynn's mother Carolyn French, who grew up to be an educator, Lynn herself, and three younger siblings.

When it came time for Lynn to enter 1st grade, her parents did not want her to attend a segregated school, which left her with two choices: GDS or Burgundy Farm Country Day School, the first school in Virginia to racially integrate. Her family opted for the former in part because of their familiarity with the School.

"A pattern had evolved of children who finished my grandmother's nursery school going to Georgetown Day School," Lynn said. She remembers her brief stint at the School's Nebraska Avenue Grasslands campus as a very happy time. "We wore pants (dungarees), unheard of in those days to go to school, and called the teachers by their first names. It was a lovely, strong environment for me. Most of all, I was able to work at my own pace," she said.

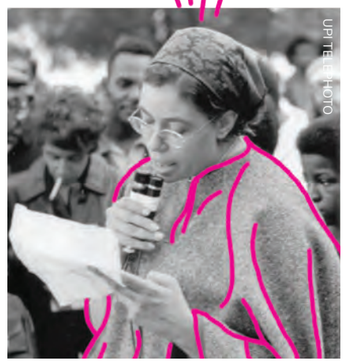
Lynn spent a year at GDS, moved to Boston for a year, returned to GDS for third grade, and then left for Detroit, Michigan, where her surgeon father Dr. David French established a private practice.

The family returned to DC midway through her middle school years, and since GDS did not have a high school division back then, Lynn ended up at Immaculata Preparatory School with some of her closest GDS friends. Living on the 1700 block of S Street, one mile from Howard University, the family was attuned to and supportive of the fledgling years of the civil rights movement.



Lynn with her grandmother Dorothy Howard.

COURTESY OF LYNN FRENCH



Lynn reads a statement on behalf of the Chicago Black Panthers in 1969.

UPI TELEPHOTO

THE U-HAUL INCIDENT

When Lynn graduated from high school, she was a self-described "rebel" who recoiled from the limited career opportunities for Black women in the still-segregated city: "You become a school teacher, a secretary, or you marry somebody who will take care of you," she said. None of those options appealed to her, and she took off for Western College for Women in Ohio, hoping to find another path.

As Lynn was winding up her first year in college, the national Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee announced it would recruit and train volunteers on her campus to help register Black voters in Mississippi. Lynn wrote home to her parents, informing them that she would head to Mississippi that summer. The effort in 1964, known as Freedom Summer, would be met with violent response from the Ku Klux Klan.

After her last exam that year, she found her mother and grandmother in front of her dorm frantically throwing her belongings into a U-Haul. "My mother said, 'Somebody's child is gonna get killed this summer, and it's not going to be my child,'" Lynn recalls. "That's the last time I just said, 'Okay, Mama.'"

By the following year, her father was helping organize health care for civil rights marchers as part of the Medical Committee for Human Rights–a calling that he credited Lynn for inspiring. Dr. French cared for voting-rights protesters during the 1965 marches in Alabama, as well as the 1966 March Against Fear in Mississippi. Lynn's mother drove the family van, which Dr. French had converted into an ambulance, along the protest route during the 1966 march.

JOINING THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Lynn didn't continue her college education for two years, still reeling in a temporary "funk" between wanting to go to college and wanting to be part of the Movement. Her father tried to entice her to go back to school during a visit to Chicago, where her aunt lived. But the appeal of community activism lured her to the Black Panther Party instead, which emerged as a force in Chicago's West Side in 1968. No U-Haul rolled up to bring her home this time.

"What appealed to me about the Black Panther Party was the Ten-Point Program," Lynn said. "The first of the ten points—'We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our black and oppressed communities.'—always did and always will speak to me. Also, within the Party, women had equal status as men."

Though the Party's militant image is most etched in the public consciousness, she said, its community service programs had a significant and sustained impact on families. "When people think of the Black Panther Party, they think of people with guns—and we did believe in self-defense, but pretty much what made the Party were the programs that benefited the community," Lynn said. "And that's where I was able to express myself."

Lynn spent more of her time running the Party's programs behind the scenes. She played a key role in starting a daycare for low-income families in Chicago, organizing food and clothing giveaways, launching a free breakfast program for school children, and beginning the Party's Free Busing to Prison Program, which aimed to keep families connected to loved ones who were incarcerated, many of whom were Black.



Lynn (left) with her daughter Tania Jackson in Manhattan, January 2020



LOWELL SCHOOL

Lynn C. French at a Lowell School event with civil rights leaders in 2019.

Lynn also helped establish the Party's free medical center and a roach-and-rodent eradication service for infested apartments. But it was her involvement with precedent-setting legal cases through the Party's work with the People's Law Office of Chicago that got her thinking about school again. The office represented people who were arrested in protests, and its work ignited her interest in becoming a "people's lawyer."

In 1973, she left the Black Panther Party to return to school.

FROM LAW SCHOOL TO CITY COUNCIL

Lynn was accepted at Wellesley College on a full scholarship, graduating magna cum laude, and then received her law degree from the University of Virginia. After practicing at two law firms, Lynn joined the public sector and worked as a staffer for the DC City Council.

In 1986, she helped Council Member Frank Smith draft the Homestead Housing Preservation Act in response to a housing bust that led to a spike in foreclosures and evictions in the city, establishing herself as an expert on the housing needs of the city's most disadvantaged families.

For two decades, Lynn continued to work alongside DC lawmakers and federal housing authorities to help give the city's low-income residents a shot at homeownership, despite political pushback and legal hassles. As the Homestead Housing Program Administrator for the city's Department of Housing and Community Development, Lynn oversaw a popular housing lottery that helped families reclaim abandoned housing. And as the city gentrified, pushing poor families out of housing, Lynn coordinated the District's efforts to meet a federal plan to address homelessness in the city–a task that aligned with her passion to prioritize building homes that could transition families out of homelessness.

Some council members sought an approach that focused on changing the face of DC real estate. "They were trying to make an argument that the blemish of a boarded-up property would go away faster if they could have the properties rather than sell them to people," Lynn said. "But what we saw ourselves doing was investing in the citizens of the District of Columbia."

When she retired in 2006, Lynn was asked to serve on the board of Hope and a Home, an organization dedicated to empowering low-income families with children in DC to create stable homes. In 2010, Lynn assumed the role of executive director and has led the organization's efforts in transitional housing, education support plans, access to higher education, and food security programs ever since. The organization owns 19 units of housing scattered around the District and only accepts families with children.

"Our big goal is to break the cycle of poverty," Lynn said. "There's a lot of personal gratification in the work that I do in helping families. It's not something you do to get rich."

"...I THINK GDS HELPED ME KEEP AN OPEN MIND ABOUT THE VARIOUS CAREER PATHS I MIGHT TAKE..." ELI SPEVAK

ELI SPEVAK

BUILDING CHANGE ONE SMALL HOUSE AT A TIME



AFTER GRADUATING FROM SWARTHMORE COLLEGE, Eli Spevak '89 headed west to Portland, Oregon to pursue his growing passion for building affordable housing.

Three decades later, he's still in Portland and still building affordable homes, with an emphasis on community and climate-friendly design. Eli's work is turning heads, gaining media attention, and winning awards. His company, Orange Splot LLC (named after the children's book about a man who repaints his house and breaks with the conventional norms on his street) won a prestigious American Institute of Architects award in 2017 for Cully Grove, the multi-generational community where Eli and his wife Noelle live with their two children.

"I really had no idea coming out of college that land use was even a field," Eli said. "Looking back, I think GDS helped me keep an open mind about the various career paths I might take, and gave me confidence to go after what interested me."

Spevak discussed the guiding philosophy that dictates how he lives and what he does for a living with *Georgetown Days*. This interview has been edited for clarity and space.

IN COLLEGE, YOU MAJORED IN PHYSICS AND MINORED IN PHILOSOPHY, SO HOW DID YOU PIVOT INTO HOUSING DEVELOPMENT?

After I graduated, I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in West Philadelphia for the summer because I enjoy working with my hands. I learned a lot about carpentry from my mom, and I knew how to use woodworking tools. I expected that I would eventually get into renewable energy development, maybe wind turbine design. But I loved construction, and I ended up being really good at leading residential projects. What I found most gratifying was meeting low-income home buyers and giving them the keys to their new house.

I wanted to continue with Habitat, but somewhere near the backcountry because I enjoy backpacking. I had spent a summer during college at a research lab in Oregon, so I decided to go to Portland. After working at a Habitat



Eli Spevak from 1989 yearbook

chapter there for a year, I shifted to managing larger income-restricted apartment projects for other nonprofits. Interspersed with that work, I got a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University. I then took a break to work as a backcountry ranger. But after a decade developing affordable housing, I missed the hands-on work at construction sites. So I started my own company, Orange Splot, in 2006.

WHAT ARE THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOMES YOU DEVELOP AT ORANGE SPLOT?

Community and green design are the big drivers that set my projects apart. I don't build isolated single family homes, only clusters of relatively small homes with shared elements. For instance, a larger project of 23 homes on 1.5 acres includes a substantial common house where the community can gather to share meals, watch movies, and host friends and family in the two guest bedrooms. All the projects, regardless of size, have shared outdoor areas for gardening, kids play, and just relaxing.

Since going out on my own, I've built or significantly renovated over 80 homes across nine communities. About a decade ago, I shifted to building homes powered entirely by electricity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve indoor air quality, and reduce utility bills for buyers. I locate the communities in walkable neighborhoods, close to amenities, so that people don't need cars for every little errand. This allows me to limit the number of off-street parking spaces and make homes more affordable. I also build smaller homes on existing lots, using building materials that last a long time, such as hardwood floors. What I'm trying to do is provide examples of how to build sustainably so that people can live their values.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TAKE ON THESE KINDS OF PROJECTS?

Partly my parents, particularly my mom, who really cared about the environment. But it was also sparked by my frustration with the home building industry, which keeps building huge, inefficient, homes that consume a lot of energy to construct and consume exorbitant amounts of fuel to heat and cool. The average size of a single family



Cully Green, Eli's latest community project

home today is about 2,500 square feet compared to roughly 980 square feet in the 1950s, when family sizes were bigger. There's a demographic mismatch between the kind of housing that zoning codes typically support and the kind of housing we need.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDING SMALLER HOMES IN EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS?

Historically in Portland, racial covenants recorded on property deeds routinely barred non-White people from owning or even renting in certain areas of town. The covenants eventually became unenforceable, but zoning laws that restricted residential land use to one single-family home per lot had a similar effect: pricing people out of certain neighborhoods by income rather than excluding them by race. This type of restriction basically wiped out accessory dwelling units (A.D.U.s) in portions of Portland and many other cities. Accessory units, sometimes known as "granny flats," are self-contained homes that share a lot with a larger primary home. They were fairly common and served as relatively affordable housing in more upscale neighborhoods.

In more recent times, the lack of accessory units has left few choices for seniors and younger people who want to live in smaller homes they can afford and maintain in the neighborhoods that they love.

I'm trying to bring back accessory units in Portland and nationwide because they're discreet and inexpensive with small carbon footprints. Also, the best antidote to rising housing costs is to have more homes. The A.D.U. concept is now catching on in many states, and the economics of it work well. Homeowners can rent out A.D.U.s, make them available to family members, or move into them and rent out their primary residence.



Eli with daughter Ozora, wife Noelle, and son Sidney.

ELI SPEVAK

RESIDENCE
Portland, Oregon

EDUCATION
BA, Swarthmore College , 1993

MA, Portland State University, 1998

Loeb Fellow, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2013-2014

OCCUPATION
Residential Developer

A FAVORITE GDS MEMORY
Lunchtime doubles chess matches



Eli at a climate march in Oregon.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR SMALLER, MORE SUSTAINABLE HOMES?
In 2010, I led the charge to make it easier to build A.D.U.s in Portland. We waived fees, simplified zoning, led bike tours of existing A.D.U.s so people could look inside and get inspired, provided training for real estate agents on legal options to build them, and launched the accessorydwellings.org website to share best practices. A.D.U. development has ramped up from about 20 per year to more than one per day in the past few years.

Two years later, I was selected as a Loeb fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, which allows people to study issues in their field so that they can advance solutions for urban challenges. That was my chance to step back and think about all the zoning obstacles to smaller homes. I wrote a sign-on letter that led to the formation of a new organization and an advocacy campaign that successfully pressured Portland to re-write the rules of residential development. The effort gained momentum. Now, all cities in Oregon allow up to four homes on a lot, subject to size constraints, and the industry has responded by building more affordable homes in existing developments.

I also serve as a consultant to AARP, which works nationally to rally support for smaller and more affordable housing for seniors, and I've helped found an initiative called Electrify PDX to help people to power their homes with 100% clean, renewable electricity.

DID SKILLS GAINED AT GDS PROVE USEFUL IN YOUR CAREER?
Everything I learned from my history teacher Sue Ikenberry about social movements and the power of organizing really made an impression on me, even if I didn't realize it back then. I drew from all that knowledge when I decided that we needed to change the rules of the game for residential neighborhoods in Oregon. I also appreciate that GDS put an emphasis on critical thinking and writing concise and powerful arguments that are meant to influence people, all of which continue to be essential in my advocacy work. I can't tell you how many ways that skill has helped me in writing persuasive policy papers.

HAS YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE AFFECTED YOUR LIFESTYLE?
I'm one of the rare developers who actually lives in the communities I've built. My first foray into development after leaving the nonprofit sector was when a friend and I bought a 1938 courtyard-style building with seven apartments and converted it into a co-housing community with six condominiums and one common area. We later tore down the building's two garages and replaced them with three more units, a shared bike room and a guest room. This community allowed me to have my own front door while also living near friends. It's where my wife and I met and where we had our first child. Community living was nice for me as a single person, but the benefits multiplied with kids.

We now have a second child, and for the past 10 years we've lived in half of a duplex on a two-acre, 16-home cohousing community that I co-developed called Cully Grove. The homes wrap around the site perimeter, and a shared common house is in the middle, with shared bike parking, a community garden, an on-site well for irrigation, a tree grove, a playground, and space for bees, chickens, and sometimes ducks. All the homes have solar water heaters. Now my neighbors and I get to live in a multi-generational community with everyone from toddlers to grandparents. It's a treat to make a living developing places like this and to live in them with my family.

FINAL THOUGHTS

GDS HIGHLIGHTS

ALUMNI

Lauren Taylor '75 was honored by the DC Commission on Human Rights for working to end gender-based violence since 1978.

New books from GDS authors: **Suzanne Berne '78** (*The Blue Window*); **Jennifer Miller '98** (*Rising Class: How Three First Generation College Students Conquered Their First Year*); and **Lindsay Lynch '09** (*Do Tell*)

Melissa Gilliam '83 was named Boston University's 11th president.

Dr. Tamara Wilds Lawson '92 is the new president and CEO of the Washington Area Women's Foundation, which works to improve the economic security and well-being of women and girls of color in the DC region.

Dr. Amber Douglas '93 was named new associate head of school at Hotchkiss, an independent boarding school in Connecticut.

Alex Berger '98 serves as executive director of *Quantum Leap*, a revival of the old hit show.

Arjun Pathiyal '23 made the U.S. Under-18 National Team in Whitewater Canoe/Kayak Slalom. In August, Arjun represented Team USA at the World Championships in Krakow, Poland and in an International Canoe Federation Ranking Race in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Former *Augur Bit* Editor-in-Chief **Ethan Wolin '23** won the Journalism Education Association's D.C. Journalist of the Year award, which recognizes the top high school journalists.

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STUDENTS

Elodie Fleurence '25 won a Scholastic National Gold Medal for her ceramic piece "Tea-ntacles," and **Carter Kunz '26** won two Scholastic National Silver Medals for his photography. As the teachers of national medalists, **Nick Ryan** (ceramics with Elodie) and **Tuan Nguyen** (photography with Carter) were honored with Scholastic Educator Awards.

The National Literary Competition for deaf youth hosted by Gallaudet University's Youth Programs honored **Molly Kaplan '29** with second place in two categories: written poetry and creative writing.

Brian Liu '32 performed at the Dubai Opera in June, an honor bestowed on winners of a piano contest hosted by the International Association for Musically Gifted Children. Brian won third place in Dubai.

FACULTY & STAFF

HS history Teacher **Topher Dunne** presented at the Partnership of Schools with a Public Purpose (PPSP) Conference, covering the GDS Policy Institute, CEEL programs, and more.

Emily Livelli was named "Counselor of the Year" by the Potomac & Chesapeake Association for College Admission Counseling.

HS studio arts teacher **Adrian Loving** was commissioned by the Southwest DC Business Improvement District to beautify traffic boxes.

Tim Lyons, Director of Operations & Innovation, was elected to the Tenleytown Main Street Board of Directors.

Chris Oster, who manages environmental stewardship and campus commuting, was awarded DDOT's goDCgo "School Transportation Coordinator of the Year" for providing sustainable commuting options at GDS.

HS Performing Arts Teachers & Department Chair **Jason Strunk** successfully defended his dissertation.

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ASK A TEACHER



ADRIAN LOVING
HIGH SCHOOL STUDIO ARTS TEACHER

HOW DO YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL INFLUENCE YOUR APPROACH TO TEACHING?

This summer, I spent two weeks in Spain at a drawing and painting workshop in Barcelona. It was a portrait-focused workshop that taught us about form and composition, color and painting application, and academic painting styles.

A general rule of thumb for me, as an art teacher, is to live the experience. You can't just teach art; you have to go out and live the art. You have to learn new methods and see how different people teach. That process of becoming a learner is a valuable one in that I have to be open minded, attentive, and willing to embrace teaching styles that are different than my own. All of that takes patience and helps me appreciate the learning process that my own students go through every day.

Being in Spain added another dimension. I was attempting to use a new language and adapting to cultural sensitivities and approaching new situations with a genuine curiosity. But no matter where I am, I'm always trying to make connections from my personal world into the School world, and I think that's valuable for my students.