

BWS MAGAZINE

WHEN SCIENCE & ART INTERSECT

Scholarship met sculpture, and students better understood the complexities of cancer.

FALL 2024





Brentwood School Magazine

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Brentwood School inspires every student to:
Think critically and creatively.
Act ethically.
Shape a future with meaning.

Core Values: Trust, Respect, Responsibility,
Honesty, Caring, Diversity, Community



A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to our new, improved, and reimagined magazine! I hope you enjoy the variety of features and the cleaner design.

In this issue you will find a wide range of stories, each representative of our deep program and caring community. You can read about two employees who competed in the *New York Times'* American Crossword Puzzle Tournament, then peruse highlights from 50-plus years of graduation speeches. You will see how art and science intersect beautifully in a collaboration about cancer between the BCIL and the Ellison Institute.

You will also be introduced to Brentwood's fifth Head of School, Dr. Tim Cottrell. Our Board of Trustees deserves huge credit for conducting such an exhaustive and thorough search. I have had the pleasure of spending time with Tim during the interview process and, subsequently, as we plan for his transition. I am beyond impressed and am confident he will continue Brentwood's long tradition of excellence and take our school to the proverbial next level.

Enjoy!
Dr. Mike

On the cover: Sam R. '26 was among the students collaborating with Ellison Institute of Technology to learn about cancer. His mobile shows the progression of lung cancer, from genetic mutation to relentless cell growth.

Left: Brentwood School's East Campus

Right: Kelley Lonergan '06 and Joon Kim traveled to New York for a crossword showdown.



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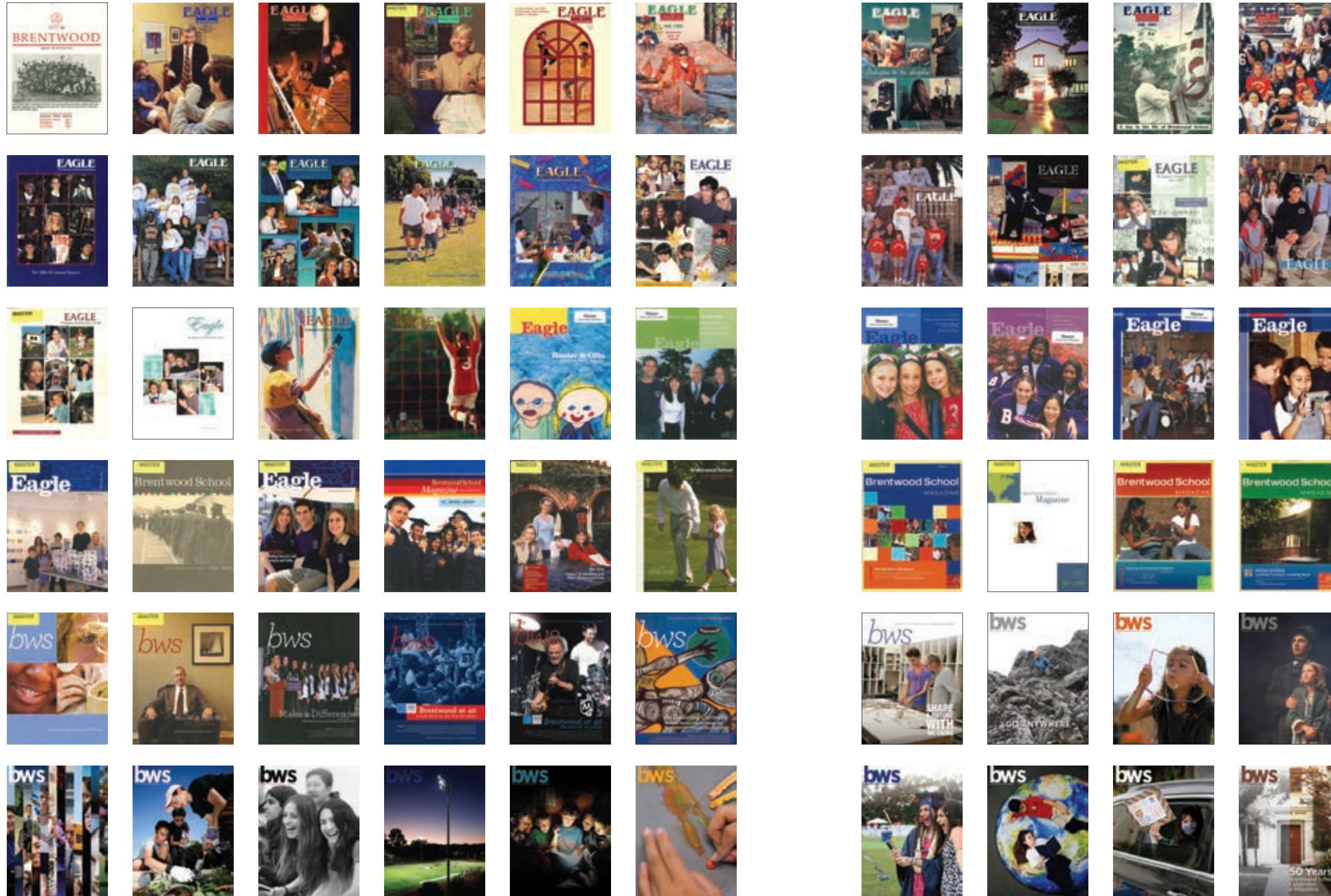
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OUR 50th COMMENCEMENT

Hats off to the Class of 2024: We celebrated the Class of 2024 and their keynote speaker, beloved longtime faculty member Hank Koransky, on June 1. Wondering who else has delivered keynotes to our graduates over the past 50 years? See “Look Who’s Talking” on page 44.

Photo by Danny Moloshok '00



SOARING THROUGH THE YEARS

Introducing the new *BWS Magazine!* When a school is as vibrant as ours, we have compelling stories to share.

Since 1987, Brentwood's magazine has kept you informed. It has changed titles, from *Brentwood*, to *Eagle*, to *Brentwood School Magazine*, and finally — since 2009 — to *BWS*. It has varied in fonts and styles and frequency, but its intent has always remained the same: to engage the people who know how special Brentwood School is, and to remind them with news, features, and glimpses into the heart of the school and its families.

With expert guidance from WE MUST BE BOLD on design, we have reimagined *BWS Magazine*, with an emphasis on helping all of you understand the school today while getting to know our alumni. Inside these pages you will meet several alums — a political consultant, a public school superintendent, and an obsessive crossword puzzler (along with the teacher who competes with her). You'll read about a partnership between Brentwood's Belldegrin Center for Innovative Leadership and Ellison Institute of Technology that brought art and science students together to learn about cancer. And you'll find excerpts from many of our commencement speakers over the years. Plus school news, class notes, and other items that we hope spark your curiosity.

If you have any feedback, ideas, or letters to the editor, don't hesitate to contact us at communications@bwscampus.com.

— GAIL FRIEDMAN,
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
BWS MAGAZINE EDITOR

INTRODUCING OUR NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

A Q&A with Dr. Timothy Cottrell

Photo by Tracy Wright-Corvo



In late June, Brentwood School's Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Dr. Timothy Cottrell as the next Head of School. His term begins after Dr. Mike Riera steps down on June 30, 2025.

Dr. Cottrell is in his 13th year as Head of School at 'Iolani School, which serves 2,200 K-12 students in Honolulu, HI. We look forward to celebrating Dr. Mike's accomplished and pivotal 14-year tenure at Brentwood while also welcoming Dr. Cottrell and his wife, Hiroko.

Dr. Cottrell answered a few questions for *BWS Magazine*:

What do you most enjoy about being a Head of School?

There is a lot to enjoy. The engineer side of me enjoys that the role involves a lot of problem-solving and creativity in navigating our rapidly changing world. The teacher in me enjoys working with faculty, staff, and parents as we share in the partnership of educating young people's heads and hearts. On the

leadership side, I mainly view the role as serving every member of a school community to create the best experience and opportunities possible for students and teachers. Every time you get a chance to help someone, in any way, within a school community, it is rewarding and enjoyable. And then there is also the spark you see when you have the opportunity to renew or further a connection with or between alumni. There is a lot of purpose in all these things, and that makes them enjoyable for me.

How does your own experience as a student shape your approach as Head of School?

My education is a story of two lives. As a child and young person, I worked on the family farm and in my father's standardbred horse-racing stable. My mom's family owned the farm, and life was very work-oriented; work ethic was the measuring stick.

Horse-racing is like any succession-based business. Most of the kids I grew up with dropped out of high school and went into the business; however, my father would not allow this. Suffice it to say that while I went to school and did well enough to attend a good college, Syracuse, education was not a high priority for this part of my life. Once at college, a love of learning, and years later in graduate school, teaching, became the focal points of my life. My experience with education was quite non-linear, and this does affect my approach as a Head of School.

I don't see education as a stairway to ascend over a long period of time with concern about missing a step here or there. I view it more as a path on which there are ups and downs, and the role of a school is to provide branches on the path that inspire young people to find their authentic selves and a passion for learning in whatever areas most interest them.

What impressed you about Brentwood during your interview process?

My wife Hiroko and I both were struck by the warmth of the people and community, as well as by the commitment they showed toward the school. Neither of us has lived in LA, although we have seen plenty of portrayals in series and movies. What we experienced was a "small community" feeling from people lovingly engaged in support of the school. This was a very influential part of our decision to pursue the position and this next adventure of our lives.

Can you help us understand why 'Iolani School was awarded Best Workplace in Hawaii — what led to that success?

This is an unusual accomplishment for a school. The size qualified 'Iolani in the large employer category, and the decision-making process was entirely based on employee feedback. It is unusual because schools are such relational workplaces that there is almost never a time when there is the kind of alignment of employee experience required to win such an award.

Schools are collections of highly passionate and wonderfully opinionated individuals who share a passion for teaching and education but also many different views on how to do the work. Great schools create the space for this diversity to safely thrive.

In the case of 'Iolani's recognition, in my opinion, the pandemic served as a shared experience that created a kind of alignment of experience and purpose that resulted in the award. We remained on campus throughout the pandemic with very little change to our academic schedule. This was a daily shared experience, and going through it together, supporting each other, and overcoming the fears and challenges led to, in my opinion, remarkably high morale.

How would you describe your philosophy of educational leadership?

There are many ways to be successful as a school leader. Some folks lead from a kind of political framework — making decisions that are most widely approved of and thus maintaining harmony — and some from a values basis, making the "correct" decision based on the values of the school community.

While not always the most popular, I've found that values-based decision-making provides the consistency and integrity required to build and maintain trust within a school community. Community-wise, trust is the foundation on which all else is built. Also, for a school to be student-centered, leadership must use a student-first lens to view operations and strategy — a core value of "what is best for the students."

Perhaps the most challenging leadership task is leading change. Change is difficult for schools, and school leaders need to lean into this discomfort with conviction and empathy. Great schools become comfortable with a relationship to change that allows them to dynamically embrace the goal of educating students for their future and not for the past.

What are you most looking forward to?

Hiroko and I are very much looking forward to getting to know the school's culture, community, and people from all of its constituencies. I am also looking forward to understanding the school and working with the administration, faculty, and staff to identify ways to advance programs and create opportunities that best serve the student body. The bedrock of my career remains teaching, and as such, I look forward to teaching classes in the Upper School and getting to know many Brentwood students.

— GAIL FRIEDMAN,
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

FAREWELL, WITH DEEP GRATITUDE, TO DAWN CUNNION

By Dr. Mike Riera,
Head of School

Brentwood celebrates a leader, mentor, and friend who had enormous impact on the school over 27 years.

“Say more.”

Those two words say a lot more than they seem to. And they sum up Dawn Cunnion — a colleague who, with kindness, always got to the heart of any matter. She was deeply devoted to the school and to every employee and student. Personally, she was a true partner, and she made my 13 years at Brentwood less daunting and more successful than they might have otherwise been — and infinitely more joyful.



Dawn retired in June after 27 years at Brentwood, first serving as director of the Lower School (which she helped build) and in recent years as associate head of school. It was rare to walk by her office overlooking the South Quad and not see her deeply engaged in conversation. People flocked to Dawn to consult on just about everything. That was not accidental. Her expertise overflowed in so many areas, from personnel and hiring

to academic excellence to simply being a good human. I’m certain that last one was why her office was such a popular place.

People got used to Dawn greeting a question or complaint or story with, “Say more,” as her face softened and she waited for you to take the lead. Those words were powerful: they told people they were being listened to intently and that they could craft their own message, without someone jumping in and telling their story. “Say

Dawn seldom told people what to do; she would help them figure it out for themselves.

more” meant “I’m listening and I want to understand.” Dawn seldom told people what to do; she would help them figure it out for themselves. To me, that sums up good leadership.

When Dawn retired, we compiled a video of Brentwood employees speaking to her from the heart. The word “mentor” popped up over and over. In one comment indicative of Dawn’s impact, a teacher remarked that she had “grown up as a teacher” under Dawn’s leadership. Another said what we all came to recognize: that, somehow, Dawn could simultaneously be kind and also tolerate no nonsense. She commanded respect. Personally, I knew if Dawn disagreed with me before she even said a word; that symbiotic, honest relationship resulted in a multitude of productive brainstorming sessions, often producing creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

In our video, one longtime administrator urged Dawn to write a book titled, *What Would Dawn Do?* I can see why. We could all use that kind of guide to life, one guided by compassion and reason, one characterized by deep listening, respect, and joy. It would be a guide to how to lead a school with grace and conviction, but also a guide to how to be a better person.

Thank you for everything, Dawn — Brentwood misses you!



From top: Dawn, in costume, with Madison S. '31

Cece Karz, Dawn, and Laura Dudley

Spanish teacher Mili Urdaneta, left, and Dawn

Head of School Mike Riera, Dawn, and Lower School Admissions Director Adrienne Agena

A Beloved Influence on Our Lower School

By Olga Nelvin,
Lower School Music Teacher

When Dr. Dawn Cunnion first became the director of the Lower School, we were in our third year of existence. With her razor-sharp focus, extraordinary work ethic, and commitment to creating an elementary school curriculum balancing academics, arts, sports, and a community of caring, Dawn was able to have a profound impact on the school.

She guided us with integrity, care, and enthusiasm, fully immersing herself in every detail of our curriculum and embracing Lower School traditions. Her presence at every school event and her personal support to all members of our community provided constant comfort and encouragement. As a music teacher at the Lower School, I was thrilled to work with a director who had a genuine appreciation of the arts and who understood the value of a vibrant music program.

Dawn’s steadfast leadership was tested many times, but 9/11 alone defined her as a true leader. She showed up for both the faculty and the shaken parents, handling that day with courage and compassion, determined to provide the normalcy everyone needed so much.

During the challenging COVID years, she adeptly managed safety protocols and oversaw the meticulous planning of a new Lower School building.

Beyond her professional achievements, Dawn’s playful spirit brought immense joy to our community. Whether it was Donuts with Dr. Cunnion, imaginative Halloween costumes, her yearly spirited appearances as a reindeer during the 5th grade performances, or her competitive spirit on display during Field Day, Dawn’s infectious laughter and joyful participation made her beloved by all.



Photo by Kaelan Barowsky

CHICAGO ROCKS THE PANTAGES

The cast of the Upper School musical, *Chicago*, performed “Razzle Dazzle” at the Hollywood Pantages Theater during the Jerry Herman Awards, a regional competition honoring excellence in Southern California high school musical theater.

Chicago was one of only four productions invited to reprise a musical number. Additionally, Ethan R. '25 and Gabriella Varo '24 joined nominees from 34 schools in the category for Best Actor and Best Actress. Brentwood School’s stagecraft teacher and technical director, Arshak

Khachmanyany, was nominated for Best Scenic Design.

The evening began with students filing through the backstage door of the Pantages to dressing rooms marked with “Brentwood School” inside the classic Hollywood star. They worked with industry professionals to iron out technical details, then did vocal warm-ups, went to hair and makeup, and waited for their cue.

“Seeing Ms. [Lauren] Hall’s choreography on the Hollywood stage and watching our students thrive alongside student artists

from all over the city was awesome,” said Upper School theater teacher and *Chicago* Director Kala Savage '96. “It has been our mission to give students a first-rate arts education and a taste of what it is to be working at the top of their potential. To bring [our production of *Chicago*] to the stage at the Pantages surrounded by other schools who value the arts as much as we do was incredibly moving for our students and for our faculty.”

— MEREDITH STORRS,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Right: Veteran Horace Russell and VCRE trainer Paul Radenberg

PILLAR OF STRENGTH

U.S. Air Force Veteran Horace Russell regained his mobility with the help of Brentwood’s Veterans Center for Recreation and Education (VCRE).

When U.S. Air Force Veteran Horace Russell first came to the Veterans Center for Recreation and Education (VCRE), he couldn’t walk or even get out of a chair.

“If not for this gentleman,” Russell said, gesturing toward VCRE trainer Paul Radenberg, “I could not even lift my head up.”

With Radenberg’s gentle prodding and focused exercises, Russell reached the point where he could walk. He even traveled to Israel with a family member, navigating the cobblestone streets there. Said Radenberg: “We just kind of pushed him past his comfort zone and started to see results.”

About 2,200 registered VCRE members visit the facility an average of 500 times per month. Many work out in the open-air gym or play basketball or tennis, while others come for training, sometimes sent by physical therapists after their health benefits are exhausted.

Russell, an amputee, dutifully visits the VCRE twice a week, after dialysis appointments at the West LA VA Medical Center. Adversity has followed him — from a house fire that forced his family into a shelter when he was a boy to a public bus accident that injured him —



but he remains full of gratitude and optimism. He wrote a book, *Reflections from a Storm Passing Over*, sharing his experiences and philosophy on life. A former security specialist in the Air Force, Russell earned a master’s in social work and practiced for many years. Now, at 72, he is in seminary school, planning his next chapter.

Stagnating is not an option. “In the soldier’s term,” he said, “you just keep on marching.”

— GAIL FRIEDMAN,
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

DID YOU KNOW?

Each month, Veterans visit the VCRE athletic facilities approximately 500 times. Others take Brentwood-sponsored classes and attend events.



Above: Jessica L. '27 with her chinampas

Ancient Aztecs Inspire Climate Refugee Solution

The BCIL's Impact Challenge is inspiring students to find solutions to global challenges.

Congratulations to Jessica L. '27, who won the 2023 Impact Challenge, a Belldegrun Center for Innovative Leadership (BCIL) competition that inspired students to find solutions to the environmental refugee crisis.

Jessica proposed a version of a modernized Aztec *chinampas*, also known as "floating gardens." These buoyant farms leverage halophytes — crops capable of thriving in saline environments — and can rise and fall with the ebb and flow of ocean tides, providing resilience against flooding and serving as a protective barrier against coastal storms. They could also deliver a reliable food source in areas susceptible to rising sea levels.

In her presentation, Jessica explained that her idea aims to create jobs for local

unhoused climate refugees, provide food immediately, and offer a long-term solution to the severe freshwater droughts caused by global warming. Most importantly, it would keep climate refugees in their homeland rather than moving them internally or across borders.

Through the BCIL, Jessica continues her research into the viability of commercially cultivated halophytes in various regions of the world. Working with BCIL Fabrication Innovator and Collaborator John Wan and BCIL Assistant Director Zach Chien '13, she plans to develop a prototype and move toward small-scale implementation and testing.

— DARLENE FUKUJI, BCIL DIRECTOR

GIRLS ON THE GRIDIRON

When students want to build a new team, the Athletic Department listens.

Reilly Robinson '24 was determined to play on a school football team before she graduated, and she approached Brentwood's Athletics Department with an idea. The school rallied around it with enthusiasm, and the first girls flag football team launched last fall.

"I am so excited that we got a team of such amazing girls together to make history," Reilly said. Though she has graduated, the team started its second season in September.

The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) adopted girls flag football as a varsity sport last fall, aimed at providing equitable high school team opportunities for female athletes. "As someone who played flag football on the all-boys team in 4th grade," Reilly said, "this was something I was really looking forward to during my final year at Brentwood."

— DARA ERESHENA LAPREASE, DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGER



Reilly Robinson '24

STEPPING UP FOR THE STAND DOWN

The Greater Los Angeles VA Stand Down, an event that places a vast array of services for Veterans in one location, is an annual event supported by Brentwood School. Every year, adult and student volunteers serve food, guide veterans, and share information about the educational programs Brentwood provides for Veterans. The November 2024 Stand Down was the first held at Brentwood School, but Brentwood has been an organizing partner for several years.



Above: Board of Trustees Vice President Laura Dudley and Head of School Dr. Mike Riera at the 2023 Stand Down



Photos by Danny Moloshok '00



TYPE 1 CLUB: Advocates in Action

When three Brentwood School students with Type 1 diabetes started an Upper School club, the local chapter of Breakthrough T1D (formerly the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) took note. Rose M. '25, Asher B. '25, and Dillon Newman '24 impressed the foundation so much that it created a video featuring the Brentwood students and showed it at a gala last fall.

The club began in 2022. “We wanted to spread awareness to our peers about what it is because it’s so misunderstood,” said Asher. “Everybody knows Type 2 but they don’t know Type 1.” The club’s three pillars are advocacy, education, and fundraising. Among other outreach, the members write handwritten letters and cards to newly diagnosed children, little pep talks on paper.

Asher was diagnosed at 13, Rose at 5, and Dillon at 15. In the video, Dillon said he avoided discussing his disease at first: “I was very isolationist. I didn’t want to talk to anybody. I didn’t want this to be part of my life at all.” Then one day Dillon noticed that Rose was also wearing a CGM (Continuous Glucose Monitor). He lifted his sleeve to show her his device and said, “Hey.”

Realizing he was not alone was pivotal. “Once he met Rose and Asher,” said Dillon’s mother, Anne Weintraub, “his life really changed.”

Above: Asher, Dillon, and Rose

SCHOOL HOSTS VA ADAPTIVE SPORTS INVITATIONAL

In September 2023, Brentwood School partnered with the West LA VA to host the VA Greater Los Angeles Health Care’s first Adaptive Sports Invitational. Veterans from all over the area competed in a wide range of sports at the VCRE (Veterans Center for Recreation and Education) at Brentwood School, from baseball and pickleball to cornhole and goalball, a game for the visually impaired. All skill levels were welcome, and participants ranged from Veterans in their 20s to those in their 80s. Brentwood 8th graders volunteered.

Adaptive sports are modified for the needs of people who are differently abled; in this case competitors were primarily Veterans injured while serving our country. This year’s event is again at the VCRE, on November 15.

Below: A Veteran tosses the winning shot in a lively cornhole competition.

Bottom: Baseball was a popular choice for adaptive sports participants.



STUDENTS DANCE WITH LITTLE AMAL

Last winter, 15 Middle and Upper School students danced with a 12-foot puppet whose name means “hope.”

Little Amal was on a 6,000-mile journey across the United States, bringing awareness to the hundreds of thousands of global refugees and displaced peoples — half of them children — who need a safe home. Performers from dance and music troupes across Los Angeles welcomed the puppet, whose name means “hope” in Arabic, last November in a community performance choreographed by Debbie Allen and produced by the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. Upper School Performing Arts Chair Lauren Hall was thrilled when Debbie Allen’s team reached out. “Students get to work with a dance icon, try a new type

of performance — an outdoor large-scale parade — and it’s all for a great cause,” she said. Teaming up with Middle School dance teacher Nora Francis, they invited dancers to join.

“We as younger people have a chance to make a difference, to give back to the community in some way, and dance is an important way we express ourselves,” said Shia W. ’28. “It’s important for us to come out into the world and support communities who can’t share how they feel.”

— MEREDITH STORRS,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS



When a Bot Flips Your Pancakes

A uniquely talented Brentwood pancake chef was turning out edible artworks — and not one was the round griddle cake we’ve come to expect. This was no ordinary pancake breakfast.

At a February Middle School breakfast, a special guest — PancakeBot! — made its debut around the corner from the traditional griddles. PancakeBot took programmed designs and churned out pancakes in shapes that delighted students. “Oh, it’s Grogg. Baby Yoda!” “I see it. It’s a kitty cat!”

Using the PancakePainter application, I traced over images with the batter line tool and then used the batter fill tool. The designs are then saved to an SD card, which is inserted into the machine. Press play and the machine goes to work, using positive and negative pressure to control the flow of the batter onto the griddle.

There are lots of variables to work on, so the pancakes were far from perfect. But a little syrup, chocolate chips, and whipped cream covered up the flaws.

Still, as I see it, the purpose of the PancakeBot is to make people smile in wonder. And that was definitely achieved.

— BOB KAHN,
MIDDLE SCHOOL ED TECH SPECIALIST



WORM MAGIC

The Lower School's first Compost Harvest Day, in late May, celebrated over a year of food scrap collecting that reduced waste and taught children how leftovers can greatly enrich soil.

The 944 pounds of food scraps collected took a full year to transform, and students saw the metamorphosis. Thousands of worms and microorganisms, high temperatures, water, and time — like magic

— changed a full, six-foot-tall container of food waste into half a container filled with roughly three feet of compost.

After we ceremoniously cut the ribbon and opened the container, we planted a head of lettuce in the compost, reminding us of the impact of composting.

— WHITNEY ABRAMO,
LOWER SCHOOL SERVICE LEARNING DIRECTOR



Remembering the Holocaust

During a commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Last Generation Coalition founder Emma Blankstein spoke to Upper School students, encouraging them to fight antisemitism.

Inspired by a Holocaust survivor she had met when she was 12, Emma filmed a documentary showcasing the woman's story of escape and indomitable spirit and began Last Generation Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to Holocaust, genocide, and human rights education.

Emma explained that antisemitism is not only hatred but an adaptable collection of conspiracy theories to fit the era. "Antisemitism shapeshifts and manifests in different times to different people," she said. For example, in Communist regimes, Jews were called capitalists; in capitalist societies, they were labeled Communists.

Emma encouraged students to fight antisemitism meaningfully and "understand the difference between symbolic actions, where we are raising awareness or sharing our perspective, versus actually putting pressure on government officials and asking for institutional and systemic change."

Above: Noah Hamid '24,
speaker Emma Blankenstein,
and Abby Goldberg '24



KYONGGI SCHOOL VISITS BRENTWOOD

Welcoming South Korean students to experience Los Angeles

For ten days in January, Brentwood's Lower School welcomed 4th and 5th grade visitors from Kyonggi School in Seoul, South Korea. This international visit — Kyonggi's 9th to Brentwood — was a beloved experience prior to the pandemic and one the school was eager to revive.

The Kyonggi students and teachers spent their days primarily with 4th and 5th grade classes, but visited other grades. They also took field trips, with

the 4th grade to the Grammy Museum, with the 5th grade to the Petersen Automotive Museum, and with the 1st grade to Underwood Farms; toured our East Campus with members of the Upper School Asian Student Alliance; and enjoyed other Los Angeles cultural experiences during the weekend, such as Disneyland and Universal Studios.

— MEREDITH STORRS,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Hundreds gathered in late September for food, fun, and festive performances, plus a special visit by the Rainbow Book Bus, at the All-Family Celebration of Diversity. Thanks go to Brentwood's Equity and Inclusion Office and our parent and student affinity groups!



Veteran Partnership In Action

A WARM WELCOME

The Class of 2027 helped assemble and load welcome kits for unhoused Veterans who were moving into new housing at the West Los Angeles VA Campus, and will be building more kits as new housing opens this year. Kits included essential items, supplied by Brentwood School, such as towels, bathmats, pots and pans, lamps, household cleaners, and toiletries. Each kit included a handwritten welcome note from a student.

STUDENT GOAL: COMPANIONSHIP FOR VETS

Brentwood students meet monthly with Veterans who live at CalVet on the West Los Angeles VA Campus, over lunch, thanks to an initiative by Ashley F. '27, who voiced concerns to Director of Veteran Education Dr. Susie Lyons about isolated or lonely Veterans.

VETERANS NEEDED COMPUTERS, SO EDDIE '27 BUILT THEM

Eddie O. '27 knew Veterans needed computers, so he taught a team of students how to build them, with support from Brentwood School and the Rotary Club. Computers completed so far for the West LA VA campus: seven, and 10 more in the works!

CARING FOR VETS' PETS

Brentwood School and Found Animals sponsored pet services, where Veterans lined up with their furry companions for free vaccines, spaying and neutering, ID microchips, flea and tick treatments, deworming, and grooming, as well as pet food and essential supplies. A Labrador Retriever named Tank even received free critical care for a life-threatening condition. Through the Veterans Center for Recreation and Education (VCRE), Brentwood helps Veterans care for their pets.



BCIL SYMPOSIUM: INNOVATION ON DISPLAY

The third annual BCIL Symposium featured over 100 diverse projects from BCIL-designated courses, class projects, independent studies, and other BCIL programs. Students from grades K-12 showcased a wide range of work, from research to creative prototypes to awareness campaigns.

Attendees enjoyed Middle School Probability Carnival games, sampled products, and learned about topics from AI and sustainable batteries to redesigning our cities and the power of music. Students from every division demonstrated their ability to tackle real-world challenges through design thinking and project-based learning.

Among the highlights: 2nd graders presented solutions for Sunset Boulevard traffic, 5th graders showcased accessible playground prototypes, and 7th graders shared infographics on food deserts in Los Angeles. Upper School projects from BCIL-designated courses and independent studies explored how art and science can combine to understand cancer's molecular structure (see page 34), music and emotional resonance, sustainable fashion, ants' ability to sequester carbon dioxide, and other topics.

— DARLENE FUKUJI,
BCIL DIRECTOR

Rousing Performances Honor MLK

A powerful and moving assembly, featuring performances by poet and author Alexander James and singer Maiya Sykes, celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in January. James commanded the room with an energetic performance of his original work, "Crown," inspired by Dr. King's life and legacy.

His words were saturated with themes of selflessness and service: "Who are you willing to sweat for, to speak for, to reach for, to do for, to try for, to cry for, to hold with?"

Now a wizard of the spoken word, James stuttered badly from ages 6 to 16. He described a teacher who nearly destroyed him after he stuttered through a reading in 9th grade, but another who encouraged him to write his first poem and changed his life. "I think there's a poet underneath that muscle," she told him.

Sykes, who has competed on "The Voice," followed James' poetry with three songs in honor of Dr. King: "Lift Every Voice and Sing," "Feeling Good," and Stevie Wonder's "Happy Birthday," which was written to prod Congress to create the national holiday in the civil rights leader's honor.



Above: Maiya Sykes



BIG IDEAS FOR REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES

Congratulations to Olivia C. '25 and Capri C. '25, who took the top prize in the Beldegrun Center for Innovative Leadership's 2024 Innovation Challenge with their carpool app, GreenRide. Special recognition goes to 6th grader Jackson A. '30, whose idea, Smart Ocean, won the community vote. The Innovation Challenge was judged by a panel of experts: Shakira Gagnier '97, operating partner at LightBay Capital; Karoline Hilu, health tech consultant; Brian Lee, entrepreneur and co-founder of BAM Ventures; and Scott Stanford, co-founder of Sherpa Capital and ACME Capital and tech financial advisor.

One-fifth of determining points were allocated to community votes. Here are the finalists and their outstanding projects:

- ⚡ **Olivia C. '25 & Capri C. '25: GreenRide**
An app for schools and companies that want to incentivize carpooling
- ⚡ **Jackson A. '30: SmartOcean**
A device that detects the early stages of harmful algal blooms and eradicates them
- ⚡ **Eric G. '26 & Jolie F. '26: Telebot**
A robot that turns mental commands into physical actions

- ⚡ **Devan G. '28 & Jack G. '28: Archangel**
An AI system for improving recovery from natural disasters, assessing damage, calculating future environmental risk, and creating recovery plans and reconstruction blueprints
- ⚡ **Grant F. '25: Dream Launch**
A financial literacy education program to empower youth to navigate the financial world when they become adults
- ⚡ **Angelina Lin '24: Algae NanoTextiles**
A new fabric combining sustainable materials with nanotechnology

Over 300 students participated, all with innovative ideas that strive to address one of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Winners earned a spot in the BCIL Independent Study program, access to a patent attorney, \$2,000 to fund start-up costs, and a chance to pitch to real investors, among other perks. More important than the prizes, these students accumulated valuable skills that will benefit them on their future entrepreneurial journeys.

— DARLENE FUKUJI,
BCIL DIRECTOR

Brentwood Receives Awards for Service to Veterans

Brentwood School received a national award along with US Vets, Village for Vets, and AyZar Outreach for launching and sustaining Care, Treatment, and Rehabilitative Services (CTRS), which assists Veterans in their transition from unhoused to housed on the West LA VA campus.

The collaboration was one of three award recipients — along with Syracuse (NY) VA Medical Center and the VA West Palm Beach (FL) Healthcare System — out of 45 submissions in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) National Community Partnership Challenge. At an awards ceremony, Robert Merchant, interim Med-

ical Center Executive Director of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, stressed that community partnerships are essential because "the job is too great and too hard to do alone."

In addition, Assistant Head of School Jennifer Yoshimaru, who runs the vast array of programs that Brentwood School provides for Veterans, and Director of Veteran Education Susie Lyons, who coordinates classes for Vets and student service opportunities, received the Above and Beyond Award from the Greater LA Veterans Health Administration's Center for Development & Civic Engagement.



Above: Above and Beyond Award winners Jennifer Yoshimaru and Susie Lyons

Impressive Research at the 8th Grade Energy Symposium

Eighth graders' passion for sustainable solutions ignited when they explored topics like solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, and nuclear energy. They dove into scientific databases to research papers on the past, present, and future of energy sources around the world, then presented abstracts to judges at the 8th Grade Energy Symposium in April.

Among the topics: Brooke D. '28 researched plastic pyrolysis in India; Asher E. '28 took on geothermal energy in Indonesia; Mary-Claire R. '28 studied nuclear energy; Maki L. '28, hydrogen power; Jed S. '28, hydroelectric power in Japan; and Alex F. '28 presented a paper titled "China: the Poster Child of Solar Power."

Fifteen finalists showcased their research to the entire Middle School and a panel of distinguished judges: BCIL



Assistant Director Zach Chien '13, Upper School science teachers Jeff McLeod and Laura Feucht, and Brentwood alum Danny Steiner '06 of Oklo, a company developing fission reactors. Every student spoke eloquently about the complexities of their research. For their science teachers, Dr. Katie Gerrans and Polly Kim, it was a moment of immense pride.

Choosing the winners proved monumental, as each student's project

stood out for its depth and insight. Congratulations to first-place winners Maki (hydrogen power) and Mary-Claire (nuclear power), second-place winner Devan G. '28 (nuclear energy), and third-place winner Brooke (plastic pyrolysis in India and its potential in the U.S.).

— GIANNA VARGAS,
BCIL MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM INNOVATOR



Left: Enikia Ford Morthel '94 at a Congressional hearing on antisemitism in K-12 schools

A PORTRAIT OF GRACE AND FORTITUDE

By Kelley Loneragan '06

Berkeley School Superintendent Enikia Ford Morthel '94 stands firm on her values — whether addressing parents, colleagues, or Congress.

Every C track during her junior and senior years, Enikia Ford Morthel '94 gathered in the theater with the other members of the Brentwood Theater Company. Her teacher, Judith Lyons, would assemble the group into a circle on the black box stage, creating a safe and welcoming space for the day's activities before diving into carefully memorized lines and stage blocking.

In May of 2024, Enikia found herself on a very different stage. This time, she wasn't performing in Shakespeare in the Quad or *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; instead, she was acting as herself, Ms. Ford Morthel, superintendent of Berkeley Unified School District. And she wasn't in the Brentwood theater, but on screens across the country, testifying about

antisemitism before a House committee on Capitol Hill.

How did she get there?

Enikia points to her theater circles at Brentwood and the encouragement from Ms. Lyons that initially led her to take center stage, becoming the first Black member of BTC. "Ms. Lyons celebrated who I was, my Blackness, all the things

that were uniquely me," said Enikia, or Nikki to those who know her well. "But she also challenged me to take on roles that I would have never seen myself in, and really pushed me to expand my idea of who I was and could be."

Just as she had never considered theater before BTC, Enikia did not initially consider a life in teaching. Prodded by professors and peers, she earned both her B.A. and master's in education at UC Berkeley and, after graduating, taught 3rd grade at an elementary school in Hayward, where she later became principal. A new act in her life had begun, and much as she did with her audition for BTC, she took to her stage and crushed it.

After nearly 20 years ascending the Bay Area educational ladder, from classroom teacher to principal to chief of schools to assistant and deputy superintendent, two years ago Enikia landed her current role as the Berkeley Unified School District superintendent. Now, instead of her early days of ABCs and 123s, she spends her time discussing and writing policy, workshopping lesson plans, and continuously working to adjust and propel all the moving parts of a large school system, while centering the city's vision of educational equity and inclusion. Not an easy feat.

But Enikia finds joy in her work. As superintendent, she is able to blend her love of the classroom, of people (especially her "babies," as she calls Berkeley students), and of social justice. "I do see my work as social justice in action," she said. "A huge part of the work that I do is fighting and addressing all the 'isms' and all the things that exist to prevent our babies from being their fullest selves."

At the U.S. Capitol, Enikia fought one of those "isms" head on. Along with two leading educators from New York City and Maryland and a representative from the ACLU, she was called to Congress to discuss growing antisemitism in American K-12 public schools, and in Berkeley. Similar to the treatment of university presidents who testified late last year, Enikia and her peers were grilled by members of Congress.

"That was a really hard experience," she said. "I've had many in my career, but that was probably the hardest."

A theater in its own right, the hearing was full of supporting characters, sometimes loud and interrupting, and overall not welcoming to Enikia. Amid heated questions, Enikia kept her composure. "My goal was not to make Congress happy," she said, "My goal was to represent the values of Berkeley."

Meeting with a co-leader of Berkeley High School's Jewish student union two days before the hearing, Enikia tried to prepare for what was coming. "You are going to walk in there and be yourself," the student told the superintendent. "Just be human." Enikia went into the hearing with Berkeley pride, stressing that antisemitism is not pervasive in Berkeley schools and that when antisemitic acts do occur, "we take action to teach, correct, and redirect our students." While pushed and badgered by lawmakers, she left with her principles intact.

With the hearing behind her, Enikia is back to focusing on her "babies," providing them with the best education possible by using her own educational background as a model of both academic rigor and joy. Having attended K. Anthony's, a small



Enikia in the 1994 yearbook

school in Inglewood, before Brentwood, Enikia straddled two different educational worlds and quickly learned that education is not always fair and equitable. Brentwood allowed Enikia to learn what a good education could look like, and those experiences continue to inform her work.

"At Brentwood, it was always this idea that you're supposed to do or be something, and contribute something to the world," she explained. This sense of purpose drives Enikia. "I want babies to know that they have a calling, something they're supposed to do in the world."

For her final Brentwood Theater Company production, Enikia chose to perform Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Woman:"

*Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.*

Thirty years later, her monologue still resonates. In her roles both on and off the stage, Enikia has shown herself to be an inspirational powerhouse. A phenomenal woman, and a phenomenal Eagle.

Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

ADVOCATE OF THE PEOPLE

By Gail Friedman

For Alex Haskell '04, a Brentwood student boycott became a valuable lesson in coalition-building and political action.

It was 2004 when a student boycott bubbled up on Brentwood's campus. Seemingly overnight, the administration had pulled caffeine from the cafeteria and vending machines. Coffee? Gone. A can of Coke? Expelled. Mountain Dew and other offenders? Banished.

"There was no process; there was no meaningful explanation," recalled Alex Haskell '04. "We were basically just told that caffeine was bad for kids, that it was now gone. It was time for my first foray into using political power to make things right!"

From January 2021 until last March, Alex served in the White House, in roles including Special Assistant to President Biden and Chief of Staff in the Office of Legislative Affairs. But in 2004 he was a prefect — and he took his leadership role seriously. Alex gathered the other

prefects and a group of disgruntled, caffeine-deprived students and master-minded not only a boycott of the cafeteria, but a mini food service.

They bought snacks and drinks from Costco and sold them from a table in the South Quad. They brought in pizza one day, tacos the next, and other lunch items. With the cafeteria virtually empty for at least a week, the administration acquiesced. Mission accomplished: caffeine was back, and energy levels climbed.

Little did Alex realize that these acts of disobedience would influence his political career. He called the boycott "a valuable lesson in coalition-building and action. Nobody in a position of power should simply dictate terms without explanation or process," he said, "and if they do, there are ways to force them to change course."



Photos courtesy of Alex Haskell

Alex's political interests took root long before he started at Brentwood in 7th grade. "My family was very political," he said. "My parents took me to knock on doors for candidates when I was a kid." One of the first candidates for whom he canvassed was the late Senator Dianne Feinstein. Alex was 6. Twenty-six years later he was working for the Senator, his first job on Capitol Hill.

Recognizing the privileges he enjoyed, Alex pegged politics as the arena in which he could give back and make a difference. "As my career progressed, I realized that working in the federal government and in politics was how I could have the most impact on the most people," he said.

An attorney, Alex began at the White House as senior deputy associate counsel shortly after President Biden moved in. In that role, Alex vetted hundreds of candidates for high-level, Senate-confirmed positions — "the undersecretaries, deputy secretaries, some of the most senior political appointees across government" — as well as for the Supreme Court seat now occupied by Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.

"We undertook a very rigorous process to identify people who have shown themselves throughout their careers to be honest brokers, hard workers, people of integrity — and as a result have the respect of enough Senators to get confirmed," he explained.

Vetting also meant looking for professional experiences that might — fairly or unfairly — prevent individuals from being confirmed by the Senate. For example, Alex explained, someone who led the effort to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act would not likely get the support of many Republican Senators, and someone who worked closely with controversial Chinese companies would rarely proceed on either side of the aisle.

In May 2022, Alex moved to the Office of Legislative Affairs, where he served as chief of staff and developed a reputation as upbeat and relentlessly can-do. In a March *Politico* article, former Director of

Legislative Affairs Louisa Terrell said, "When one option seemed doomed, Alex was there with two other ways to get the job done." In official statements, Director Shuwanza Goff praised Alex's judgment and expertise and said she "relied on his advice and knowledge every single day," while Counselor to the President Steve Ricchetti, one of Biden's longest serving and closest confidants, emphasized Alex's role in the passage of 400 bipartisan bills, including the CHIPS and infrastructure bills, saying, "He is an excellent problem solver, quick on his feet, and most importantly a good colleague who has your back."

"As my career progressed, I realized that working in the federal government and in politics was how I could have the most impact on the most people."

Alex says his inspiration — and his ability to try and try for compromise despite extreme polarization — came from the top. "The president has been deeply committed with great success throughout his entire career to reaching across the aisle to get things done for the American people," Alex said. "My office — the Office of Legislative Affairs — was tasked with achieving the president's agenda by finding reasonably minded members of Congress, people who prioritized bettering the lives of folks in their states and in their districts, rather than partisan politics." Alex and his team did just that.

Among the across-the-aisle accomplishments in Biden's first term, with Alex and his colleagues' behind-the-scenes prodding: passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law; the Inflation Reduction

Act, which combatted climate change and lowered the costs of prescription drugs; the CHIPS and Science Act, reinforcing America's leadership in microchip manufacturing and artificial intelligence; the PACT Act, improving Veterans' health care; and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which Alex called "the most significant gun safety legislation in decades."

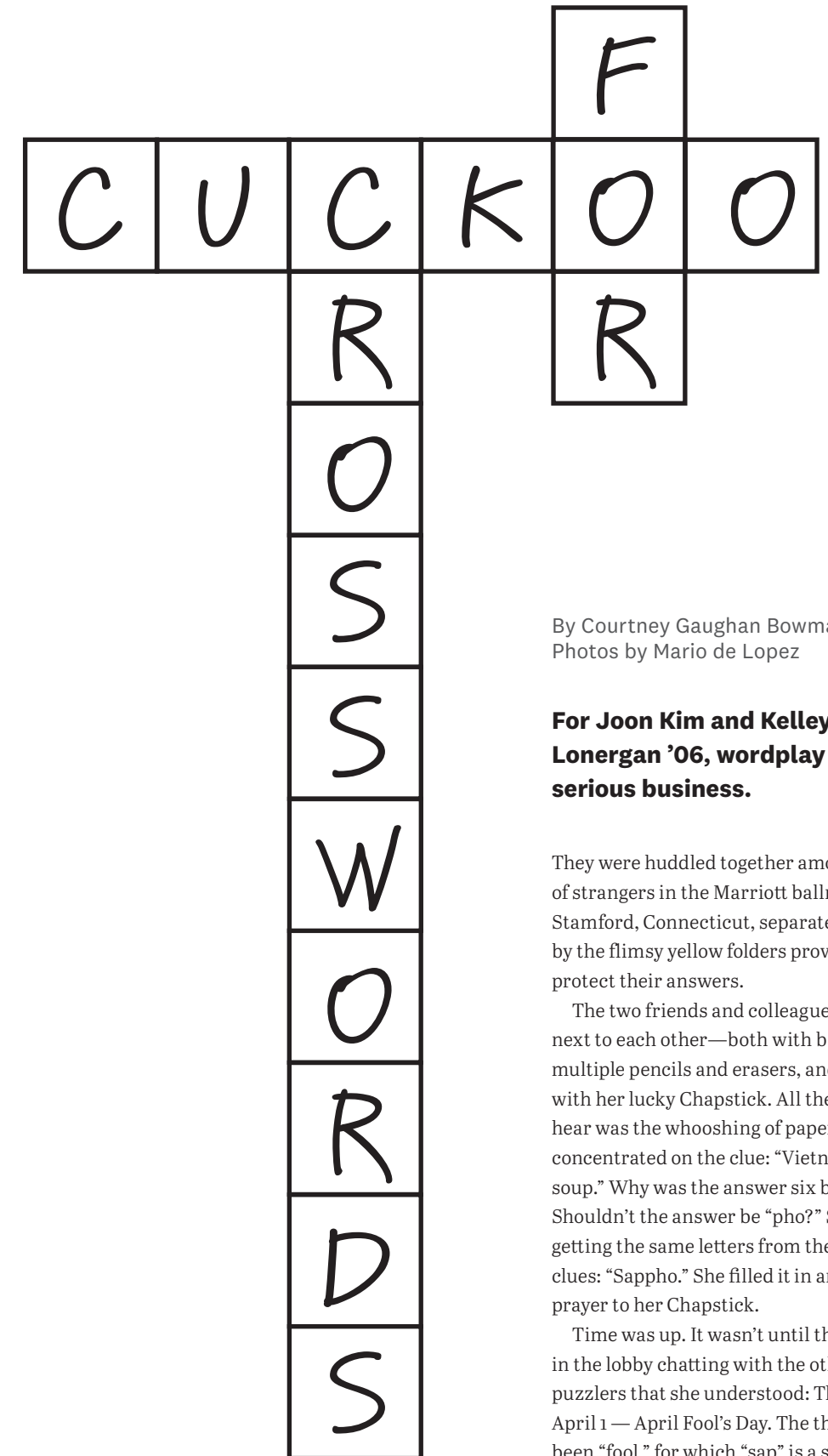
But that was during the 117th Congress, before divided government rendered Congress far less functional. "We didn't have the same legislative success that we did when both the House and the Senate were controlled by Democrats," Alex said. "Divided government is challenging. That said, we still were able to repeatedly fund government, avoiding deeply harmful shutdowns. We successfully raised the debt limit, which avoided catastrophic economic consequences." He also pointed to long-awaited funding for Ukraine, approved in April.

"You have to be creative and you have to be flexible," said Alex, who is now Head of Global Affairs for the AI company ElevenLabs. "And you have to just keep going until you reach a compromise because at the end of the day, the failure to compromise is the most harmful thing to the American people." Even more harmful than a lack of caffeine.



Alex in the 2004 yearbook

Cross-eyed:
Kelley Lonergan '06
and Joon Kim



By Courtney Gaughan Bowman '06
Photos by Mario de Lopez

For Joon Kim and Kelley Lonergan '06, wordplay is serious business.

They were huddled together among rows of strangers in the Marriott ballroom in Stamford, Connecticut, separated only by the flimsy yellow folders provided to protect their answers.

The two friends and colleagues sat next to each other—both with beverages, multiple pencils and erasers, and she with her lucky Chapstick. All they could hear was the whooshing of paper as she concentrated on the clue: “Vietnamese soup.” Why was the answer six boxes? Shouldn’t the answer be “pho?” She kept getting the same letters from the across clues: “Sappho.” She filled it in and said a prayer to her Chapstick.

Time was up. It wasn’t until they were in the lobby chatting with the other puzzlers that she understood: The day was April 1 — April Fool’s Day. The theme had been “fool,” for which “sap” is a synonym.



Still don't get it? Well, that's why we weren't there. Instead, the honor went to two of Brentwood's very own faculty and staff: my friend and fellow alum Kelley "Kellkell" Lonergan '06, the Constituent Database Manager in Brentwood's Advancement Department, and distinguished teacher Joon Kim (Mr. Kim), the Computer Science Chair of the Upper School.

If you think those positions sound too cool for crossword puzzles, you're wrong! On March 31, 2023, Kelley and Mr. Kim traveled over rugged mountains and treacherous waters (in a plane) to attend the 45th annual American Crossword Puzzle Tournament (ACPT).

In this three-day event hosted by Will Shortz, the crossword editor of the *New York Times*, mortals compete with their pencils as swords to win a grand prize of \$7,500 and a giant golden bowl trophy. Puzzlers work individually against a timer. The shortest and easiest puzzle is 15 minutes, and the longest and most challenging is 45 minutes. The competitors are separated into three divisions, based on past performance.

The top player of each division competes in the championship round-up on a stage with a whiteboard of the puzzle grid. These finalists wear headphones blaring classical music (what else?) so they can't hear the crowd as the audience

attempts to solve alongside them. This year, the winner triumphed by a mere second.

Our Brentwood puzzlers watched this culminating event. "It was unbelievable — so fast, so accurate, so friendly," said Mr. Kim. Kelley described it as "intense." Both of them admitted that it changed their lives forever (in a dream I had).

Above: Mr. Kim and Kelley solve crossword puzzles in the Upper School Library.

Clued In at Brentwood

A Crossword Puzzle by Joon Kim and Kelley Lonergan

ACROSS

1. German sausage, for short
5. Start to most URLs
9. Brentwood mascot since the '70s
14. Popular free swag, or a floppy alternative to a backpack
15. Black-and-white cookie
16. Plants that soothe sunburns
17. Unconscious state
18. A popular Ivy for BWS students, for short
19. Mr. Knight's stained art medium
20. Beloved (and extremely difficult!) English teacher who taught from 1986 to 2011
22. Watch out! They may be electric
23. Your master of ceremonies
24. When you fail, do this again
25. In history, what Dark and Middle can describe
27. High school not far from Uni and Pali
30. Sticky maple syrup source
33. Head of School surname (2011-2015)
34. Makeup of a *Wizard of Oz* character?
35. Enjoy a good tearjerker
37. Laudatory poem written by Keats or Ovid
38. With 38-Down, famously feared maritime novella assigned by 20-Across
40. La Brea ___ Pits
41. "Wanna-," or pretenders
42. "A", to Marisol or Juan
43. Citizens of Glasgow and Edinburgh
45. Comes after a bump, but before a spike
47. Student refuge during an earthquake drill
49. Comedian Kevin or teenage witch Melissa Joan

DOWN

1. Progeny of Ms. Lyons, for short
2. With "class-," location where learning occurs
3. Dispensers of \$20s
4. Ms. O'Hanlon or Mr. Svec, for example
5. Often coupled with dreams
6. Rewards for rolling over, maybe
7. Hamilton's notes
8. Every little girl's birthday wish
9. Totally ready to begin!!!
10. Places for spares, strikes, and turkeys
11. Shout at a US soccer game

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
	20				21					22				
				23					24					
	25	26				27	28	29			30	31	32	
33						34					35		36	
37						38	39					40		
41						42				43	44			
	45		46		47			48		49				
				50	51			52	53					
	54	55				56	57					58	59	
60						61					62			63
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

12. What's more, some say
13. Beginning of senior year?
21. Civil rights activist Parks
24. NYC award bestowed upon *Matilda* and *Kinky Boots*
25. Helpers in a kindergarten classroom or on Capitol Hill
26. They migrate in a gaggle
28. Greek god with the world on his shoulders

29. A "cool" amount of money, in slang
31. Denzel or Salma
32. Head of School surname (2001-11)
33. Mr. Michelson by another name, for short
26. There are 4 of them in HS
38. See 38-Across
39. End to serpent?
43. Type of cocoa butter

44. Old school weapons, or multiples of 60-Down
46. Head of School surname (1982-2001)
48. Cute and cuddly animals that are not actually bears
51. Spanish for "tables"
53. CTRL + P
54. Country of interest to 33-Down
55. Haphazard way to run

56. Palindromic '70s band of Swedes
57. Orb between Earth and Jupiter
58. "Two for me, none for you" sloganer
59. Fowl providers of a dozen in a carton
60. First name in AP Physics from 1987 to 2008
63. Never-been-used





Still Puzzled After All These Years

Kelley Lonergan '06 has been cuckoo for crosswords since she was a Brentwood student. Here she admires her first published puzzle — in an issue of the student publication Valhalla. Courtney Gaughan Bowman '06, who wrote this BWS Magazine story, was the Valhalla editor at the time!



“Unless Will Shortz is feeling feisty, crosswords only have one answer, and I love that. They are artistic and creative, but finite.”

— Kelley Lonergan '06

Most normal and totally sane people look at a bunch of empty boxes and do not have a sudden irresistible urge to fill them with letters. Such has never been the case for our heroes.

Mr. Kim has always been fascinated by the crossword puzzle. “It’s part knowledge, part wordsmithing, and part 2D design and data structures,” he said. “It encourages you to play with language and to think of words in unusual contexts and meanings. I love how the words intersect and depend on one another. And underlying the entire puzzle is a 2D grid or boxes (cells or elements). It is both biological and computer science-related, two disciplines that I have studied and loved my whole life.”

Kelley similarly finds herself entranced by the puzzle’s ambiguous beauty: “Unless Will Shortz is feeling feisty, crosswords only have one answer, and I love that. They are artistic and creative, but finite. It’s like the humanities united with math in perfect harmony.”

Lured by the siren call of the crossword, it did not take long for these puzzlers to join forces. Three years ago, Mr. Kim started a crossword club on campus for students who were interested in puzzles and wanted to meet like-minded individuals and solve puzzles in a group. “I also wanted to solve crossword puzzles during the school day,” he admitted. So did Kelley, and together they led students through crosswords

and other puzzles for the 30-minute activities period.

For a while, these two were happy and extremely powerful (at puzzle solving). But something was missing. Something giant and golden bowl-like. Both Mr. Kim and Kelley had heard whispers of the ACPT. Mr. Kim was first captivated by the competition through the documentary *WordPlay* and a subsequent *New York Times* article detailing the weekend. Kelley was part of the Puzzling Association at her alma mater, Brown University, and Will Shortz hosted a few competitions there.

After a Brentwood presentation on the Pratt Grant — a source of funding for Brentwood employees to follow personal passions — Mr. Kim and Kelley both thought of the ACPT at the same time. This was their chance to turn their fantastical dream into reality. They put their brilliant noggins together and schemed their way to the top of the candidate list for the sake of fame and glory. Or, as Mr. Kim puts it, “for the people, the puzzles, and the challenge to try something new and fun.”

Upon entering the competition room at the Stamford Marriott, they were not

disappointed. Mr. Kim describes the other puzzlers as a diverse group spanning different generations and professions with only one thing in common: “a love for crosswords.”

Kelley describes them as a bunch of nerds. “I went to dinner with some puzzle constructors and editors for both the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*,” she said. “I had never encountered so much wordplay in my life. They literally spoke in puns.”

So did our heroes win the championship, or was it rigged against them? Though neither came home with a giant bowl, according to Mr. Kim, “the fun is in the solving, and I never want to lose that. I love to sit with a puzzle and linger, enjoying the challenge and the clues.”

Meanwhile, the ACPT is considering opening a team competition as part of the tournament — sounds like a perfect opportunity for our dynamic duo!

Clued In At Brentwood Answer Key



“The fun is in the solving, and I never want to lose that.”

— Joon Kim



UNDERSTANDING CANCER: When Art and Science Intersect

By Darlene Fukuji
Photos By Danny Moloshok '00

Like mobiles, effective
cancer treatments rely
on achieving balance.



①

The Beldegrun Center for Innovative Leadership (BCIL) invited biology and drawing students to explore cancer through scientific and artistic lenses.

The initiative, supported by Ellison Institute of Technology (EIT) and inspired by the sculptures of Alexander Calder and Ruth Asawa, challenged students to design and construct mobiles that symbolize the complexities of cancer treatment. Like mobiles, effective treatments rely on achieving balance.

In March, Dr. Kian Kani, Director of Education and Outreach at EIT and Assistant Professor of Research Medicine at USC's Keck School of Medicine, introduced the "Molecular Hallmarks of Cancer" to 100 Brentwood students. Students in Dr. Dawn Roje and Jessica Blumberg's biology classes submitted proposals based on in-depth scientific research, and Alyssa Champagne's drawing students brought the proposals to life in the studio. Art students worked

with teacher John Wan in the fabrication lab, using materials such as paper, wire, and laser-cut plexiglass. As they created and researched, several students were inspired by loved ones' cancer battles.

Students toured EIT in April, installing and explaining their mobiles. On the following pages are a few examples of their work, with edited passages from their project statements.

① FLYNN R. '26 (ART), CONNOR Y. '25 (BIO), AND GOLDIE K. '25 (BIO)

Using nature to illustrate how cells multiply, break down, and regenerate: A flower growing acts as a metaphor for cells splitting and multiplying, starting at the top as a seed, becoming a bud, then a bloom, and finally a full flower. The four seasons represent regeneration: two flowers representing summer, a flower losing its petals in fall, a dying flower in winter, and a spring flower starting to bloom again.

② ALEXIS LOW '24 (ART), ROSE M. '25 (BIO), AND NAIA G. '25 (BIO)

Visualizing glioblastoma: A mesh wire mask represents the customized masks

that keep radiation on the tumor and away from healthy cells. Blue beads represent cancerous cells and pink beads healthy cells. Tumors protrude from the head to emphasize their impact on a person's life. One of the student's uncles had recently been diagnosed with glioblastoma, and this project helped her understand his condition.

③ ISABELLA K. '26 (ART), MAYA H. '25 (BIO), AND CLAIRE K. '25 (BIO)

Breast cancer cell formation: A growing tree's extended roots and unique cell clusters symbolize cancer's growth, while asymmetry illustrates cancer's dangerous path. Colors of bark symbolize what occurs in cancer cells when the wrong amino acids are added. Beads are tumor cells, and wire displays their molecular structures.

Previous page: Students describe the concepts and science behind their mobiles to classmates and Ellison Institute staff.



②



③



④ **HASSIEL R. '26 (ART) AND PETER D. '25 (BIO)**

Illustrating the presence of the Bcl-2 protein family in cells and its overexpression in cancerous cells: Coiled wire represents anti-apoptotic proteins, and straighter wire the pro-apoptotic proteins. The plexiglass circle in the middle represents the only healthy cell — it has more pro-apoptotic proteins than anti-apoptotic proteins — while other cells are messy and mutated.



⑤ **LOGAN G. '25 (ART), NIA M. '25 (BIO), AND SAM M. '25 (BIO)**

The scientific process of apoptosis in a leukemia cell: Different lengths of wire show the progression of cancer growth, with pink beads representing red blood cells, which darken in color as the cancer progresses. Blue beads depict other cells in bone marrow, such as platelets, which also darken in the mobile to demonstrate the cancer's growth. Purple beads, leukemia cells, eventually take over.



⑥ **TALIA H. '26 (ART) AND REESE K. '24 (BIO)**

Lung cancer and the metastatic process: the mobile depicts the lung, trachea, and bronchi, along with the MEST and VCP proteins (red and green) and cancerous tumors (purple).

Several students were inspired by loved ones' cancer battles.



⑦



⑧



⑨



⑩

⑦ **AUSTIN B. '26 (ART), JACK T. '25 (BIO), AND WILLIAM B. '25 (BIO)**

Displaying varying effects of the P53 protein: This protein can suppress some cancers, such as lung and ovarian cancer, but can have the reverse effects when mutated. The top of the mobile represents the p53-grabbing lungs, and the various colored objects represent proteins that can resist or advance cell death.

⑧ **PALOMA P. '26 (ART), LILY G. '25 (BIO), AND TARA D. '25 (BIO)**

Explaining BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes: An alteration in these tumor-suppressing genes usually leads to cancer. Colorful, coiled wire represents the structure of the BRCA gene; mirrors, cut in the BCIL fabrication lab, are intended to demonstrate how tumors can reflect off each other, divide, and spread.

⑨ **SABRINA D. '26 (ART), ALEJANDRA T. '25 (BIO), AND TARA M. '25 (BIO)**

A depiction of myeloid cell leukemia (MCL-1): The hands represent apoptosis, bluish-red clumps of beads on the fingers are leukemia symptoms, red wires bloodstreams and veins, and purple-and-white clusters the cancer. Strings of white beads differentiate cancerous cells from non-cancerous, while wire creates a disorganized, chaotic look, alluding to the difficulty of grasping cancer.

⑩ **TAYLOR S. '25 (ART), EMANUEL A. '25 (BIO), AND MARCOS I. '25 (BIO)**

Depicting HDGC (Hereditary Diffuse Gastric Cancer), a rare stomach cancer: This abstract representation shows the process of a cell becoming cancerous, beginning with genetic changes that cause cells to lose control over their growth, leading to tumors and potential spread. The cells (beads) go from normal (pink) to cancerous (red and brown).

Right: Students at the Ellison Institute learn about cancer beside a Jeff Koons sculpture



Lightweight, malleable materials allow dynamic movement of the mobile and reflect cancer's ever-changing qualities.

WHAT IS THE BCIL ALL ABOUT?

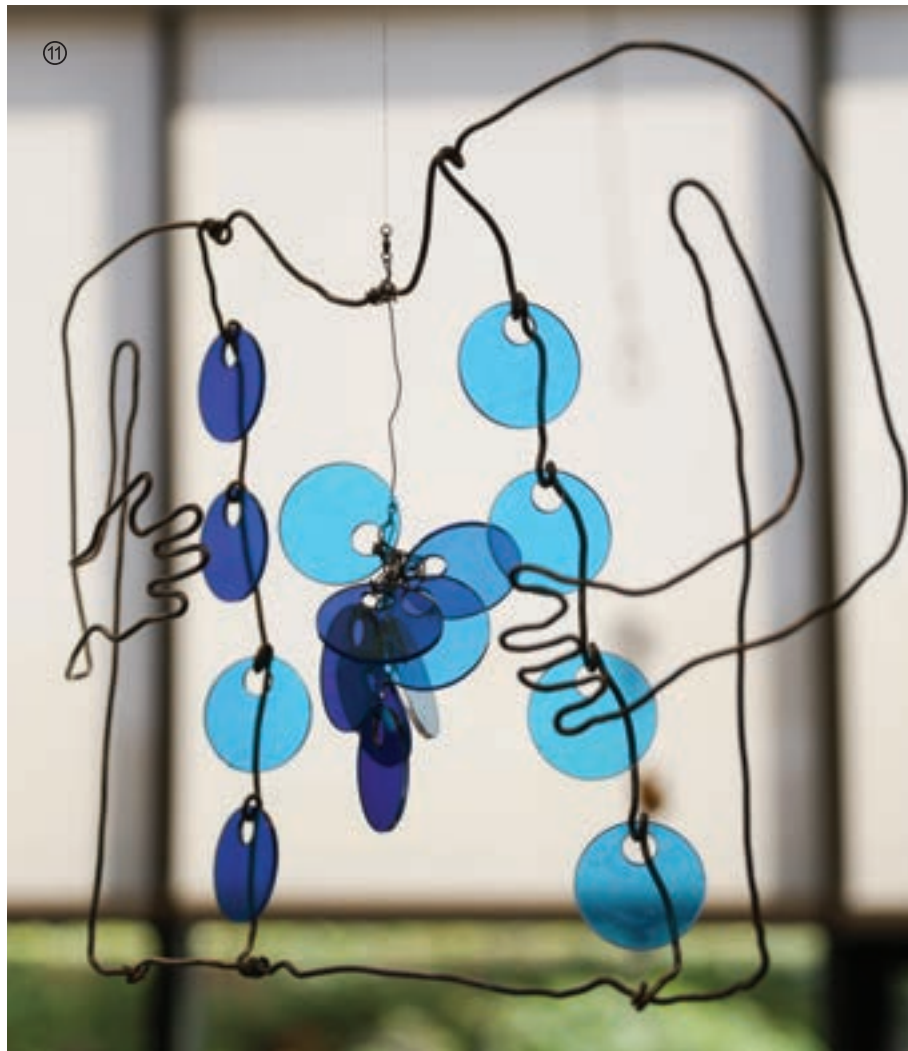
The Beldegrun Center for Innovative Leadership prepares future leaders to engage with real-world problems. The BCIL team works regularly with classes, developing innovative thinkers at every grade level — from kindergartners to seniors. Students are encouraged to follow their curiosity beyond the textbook and develop leadership skills.

In the Lower School, grade-specific projects build the necessary skills and mindset needed for problem-solving.

Upper School students can select BCIL-designated courses, such as Entrepreneurship, Engineering & Design, or Marine Biology, or tackle passion-driven independent study through four pathways: Applied Science, Design & Fabrication, Entrepreneurship, or Arts & Humanities. The BCIL's peer tutoring program trains students to share their expertise, building leaders, while Eagle to Eagle pairs Middle and Upper Schoolers with incoming students to ease the transition to Brentwood.



The BCIL is always looking for speakers, mentors, and volunteers. Please email bcil@bwscampus.com.



11 SAM R. '26 (ART) AND JOHN V. '25 (BIO)

The progression of lung cancer, from genetic mutation to relentless cell growth: Circular cancer cells surround the tumor, while dangling elements symbolize cancer's spread. Lightweight, malleable materials allow dynamic movement of the mobile and reflect cancer's ever-changing qualities. Subtle variations in size and shape suggest the irregular growth patterns of cancer cells.

12 ZENAIYAH R. '25 (ART), MAVERICK A. '25 (BIO), AND ASHER L. '25 (BIO)

Leukemia through literature: The mobile is an artistic representation of *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, the story of a little girl who contracted leukemia from the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan during World War II. Before her death at 12, she folded paper cranes every day, inspired by a Japanese legend that if a person folds 1,000 cranes, they would be granted one wish. The mobile represents how Sadako's hope decreased along with her health; red blood cells shrink as the blue grow.

Zenaiyah '25 with her mobile, inspired by the story of a young girl with leukemia

12





Class of 1994
graduates

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

Five Decades of Commencement Speakers

Since the first graduates accepted their Brentwood diplomas in 1975, impressive and memorable keynote speakers have joined student orators to entertain, guide, and inspire.

Brentwood Commencement speakers have been educators and entrepreneurs, politicians and performers. They've told stories and reminisced, shared wisdom and delivered punch lines. In 1988, faculty speaker Sally Wallace led listeners through an art exhibit that imagined every single graduate inside the works of renowned artists like Titian and da Vinci.

While the times have changed, the themes have endured — embrace failure, know your power and use it, remember empathy. The world needed saving decades ago, and it still needs saving today. Consistently, we look to our graduates with hope and expectation that they might get us out of this mess.

We've gathered a few of the keynote speeches — please enjoy these excerpts, a snapshot of some of the messages delivered over the years.

— GAIL FRIEDMAN,
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



**1990 | BILLY CRYSTAL
ACTOR**

“There’s a moment in one of my favorite films that I think summarizes the feeling that all of us parents have in the audience. The movie is *Kramer Vs. Kramer*. There’s a moment when Dustin Hoffman, a single parent, is teaching a son to ride a bicycle in Central Park, and the boy, 7 years old, has been falling. He can’t quite get up. No training wheels on the bike, first time. And then finally, Dustin pushes him. The son goes off pedaling furiously ...

The camera doesn’t focus on the boy because that’s not the moment. The moment is with the parent looking at his son, pedaling furiously, thrilled, thrilled that he’s able to ride by himself. No training wheels, but he’s got a look in his eye knowing that he’s really happy, but yet he’s afraid that he may fail, but also knowing that at that moment the son doesn’t quite need the parent like he used to.”

Billy Crystal also delivered the keynote Commencement address in 1995.

**“The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world it creates for its children.”
- Rabbi Leonard Beerman**

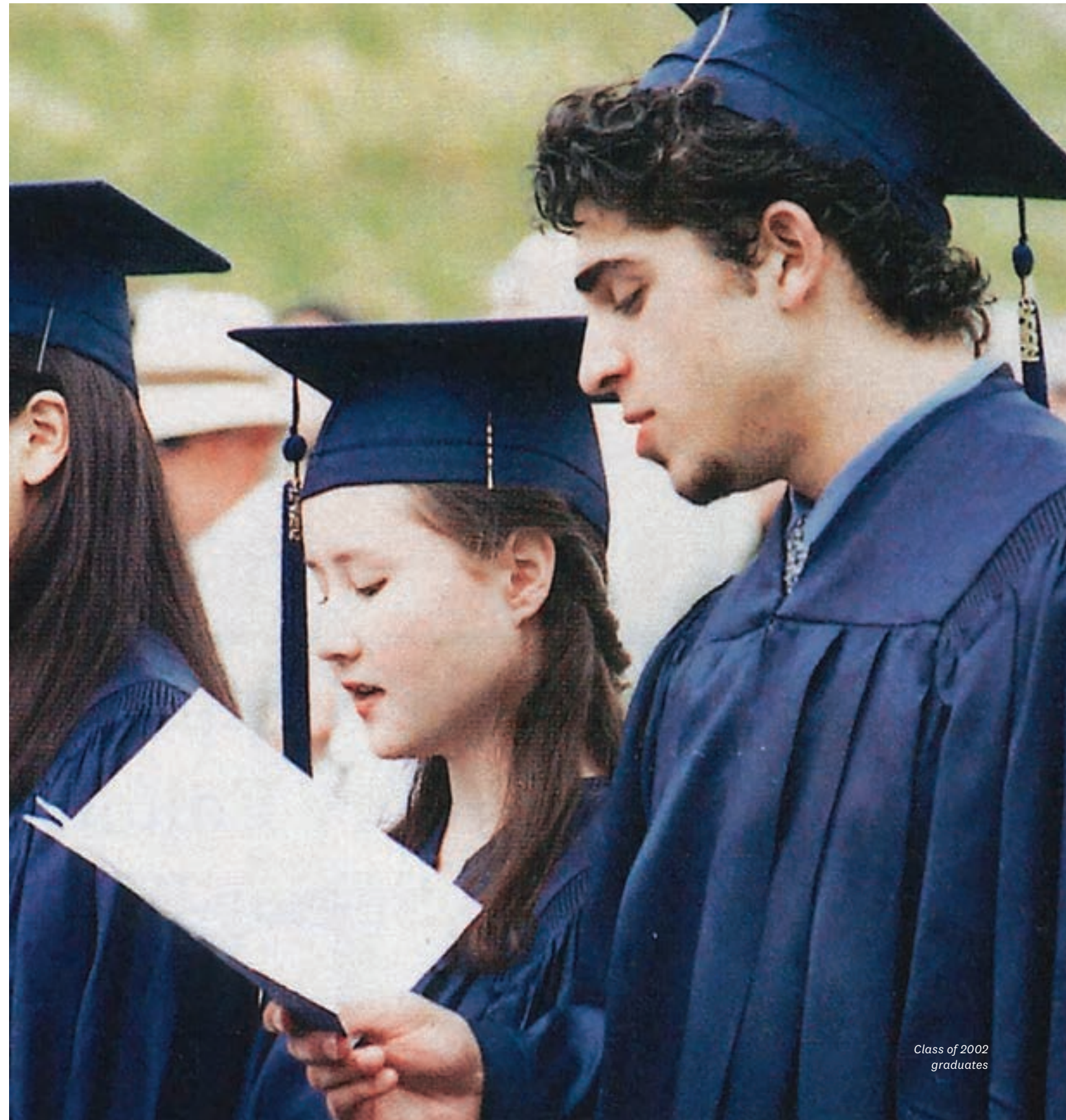


**1996 | RABBI LEONARD BEERMAN
SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVIST**

“I see that all of this is taking place in an open field set in one of the most beautiful sections of our city ... but it is open and connected to the world, the real world, the crazy, mixed-up, complicated world. The graduates and all of us are fated to live out there. Waiting for us are some haunting questions. How shall we know the good and the tenderness when we live on a precarious planet where a small, affluent elite perches fearfully on top of three continents of hungry peons? And in our own country, a small, affluent elite perches on top of 40 million poor.

How shall we know beauty when there are so many humiliated? How shall we experience the rhythm, the music of life, when it is our fate to live in a time of confusion and crisis and persistent conflict and violence? I look out at you, and I see young people whose well-being has been a priority for their parents. One would think that the first priority of any civilization would be the care of its children, to prevent needless suffering, and the ranks of the most vulnerable and the most blameless and give them, guarantee them, wholeness of life. The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world it creates for its children. ...

It is only by awakening an awareness of the common ties, the ties of humanity itself, that we can hope to produce a more peaceful, more livable earth. For the future lies with the woman and the man who can live as individuals, conscious of their solidarity with others.”



*Class of 2002
graduates*



Class of 2007 graduates

“Instead of doing my schoolwork, I was busy drawing guitars and amplifier set-ups and actually practicing my autograph. I kid you not.”
- Graham Nash



**1997 | GRAHAM NASH
MUSICIAN**

“I have in my wallet, right here in my pocket, a ticket for a concert that I attended. It was my first rock-and-roll concert, in September of 1958. It was a Bill Haley and the Comets concert, and I’ve carried the ticket with me since that day ... It was at that time that I decided that I wanted to become a rock-and-roll star. Not a rock-and-roll musician, but a rock-and-roll star.

I was going for the big time right off. Instead of doing my schoolwork, I was busy drawing guitars and amplifier set-ups and actually practicing my autograph. I kid you not. So you must find something in your life that you’re passionate about, because that’s when you learn the fastest and the deepest way ...

I realize that there’s too much mediocrity out there, and I beg you not to add to that. Make yourself a promise that if you’re going to do anything at all, make sure that you’re doing it the best way that you know how. You owe it to yourself and everybody who helped you get here to this very moment.”

Graham Nash ended his speech by singing his hit song “Teach Your Children.”



**1998 | TOM GORDON
HEALTH CARE EXECUTIVE,
BRENTWOOD BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR 1995-97,
CURRENT TRUSTEE**

“Don’t be afraid to take risks because that’s what it’s all about. If you win, you will be happy — you’ll be thrilled! If you lose, you will only be smarter and wiser. Don’t be afraid to admit failure. Winston Churchill said that success is ‘going from failure to failure without the loss of enthusiasm.’ Don’t be afraid to think foolish thoughts ...

Most people like the comfort of regularity and sameness. But if you shake your fears of the new and embrace the unknown, you will be able to think creatively. And that is part of what life is all about ...

Maybe the most important thing is to cherish your friendships, hold on to them, and keep them very near and dear to your hearts ... The people around you believe in you as much as you believe in yourselves. These people have undoubtedly borrowed your clothes, borrowed your CDs, borrowed your homework (and have probably never returned them). But as your life goes on, these friendships that are with you here today might arguably be the most important ones in your lives ...

Don’t forget the most important thing of all: don’t take it all so seriously. Someday you might be standing in front of a graduating class, standing at the podium, giving advice to another graduating class, and you might look back at this day and say, ‘What did that guy say at my graduation?’

Well, if I’ve done my job correctly, you won’t remember. You’ll be too busy living. You’ll be too busy making choices. And most importantly, you’ll be too busy listening to your own voice. Because that’s the voice that counts.”

“The point is this: failure is not final. You will fall down and fail and break things and make a mess, but you will also rise, and you will learn, and you will find your voice, your vision, your mission.”

- Simon Kinberg '91



**2009 | SIMON KINBERG '91
FILMMAKER & SCREENWRITER**

“When I graduated, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. But I knew what I loved doing — and that was read and write and watch movies. I thought the only real writers were the ones who wrote novels. So that’s what I set out to do. I tried to be a real writer, in college, after college. But the truth is: I wasn’t very good at it. I got rejection letters from literary journals, publishing houses. I even got rejected by an online publisher who sold space on his site. I literally couldn’t pay to be published.

But I looked for a lesson in all of it. And I found something in one of the letters: an editor said my writing didn’t feel like a novel; it felt like a movie (which is pretty much the meanest thing an editor can say to an aspiring novelist). But I couldn’t stop thinking about it. There was something in his words that felt true to me. So I followed that path. I enrolled in film school. And as soon as I got there, as soon as I started writing scripts, I knew he was right. I knew I’d found my first language — something I may never have found if not for all those rejections ...

The point is this: failure is not final ... You will fall down and fail and break things and make a mess, but you will also rise, and you will learn, and you will find your voice, your vision, your mission. And hopefully, hopefully, you’ll save all our asses in the process.”



**2010 | RICK CARUSO
BUSINESS & CIVIC LEADER**

“As you sit here today, you have been given a gift. You can’t see it, touch it, or unwrap it. But you have it.

Because of the education you received, through the generosity of your parents, you have been given the gift of opportunity. Ninety-nine percent of men and women your age have never been given the opportunity you have.

The most powerful part of opportunity is choice. You have the ability to make choices. Most of the world cannot exercise choice. Most men and women your age wake up every day doing what they are told to do or what they must do to survive and provide for themselves and their families.

But with this gift of choice comes great responsibility. You have the opportunity, the choice, to make your life truly meaningful ... As you pursue your individual paths, I would suggest that you are obligated and have a responsibility to give back to your community; to lend a hand in making someone’s life better.

The people I most admire are the ones who give back and are glad to do it — who remember where they came from and how much they owe to others ... The biggest, saddest waste of life’s opportunities is to keep them for yourself. It shows an ungrateful heart, and it can weigh on a person like an unpaid debt — because that’s exactly what it is.”

Class of 2007
graduates



The Class of 2012
listens to Timothy
Leiweke's speech.



“What Brentwood does is they simply prepare you. That’s it. They prepare you. It is your decision what to do with it.”
- Timothy Leiweke

**2011 | IRVING BLUM
ART DEALER**

“I recently chatted with a student about conceptual art. Contemporary painting is conceptual in the sense that the effect it aims to create takes place in the viewer’s mind and not on the canvas. That’s not to say some curious and difficult things don’t have to happen on the canvas to produce the desired effect.

The viewer completes the work, as Marcel Duchamp famously said. But he or she doesn’t complete it in just any old way. The artist cannily and explicitly shows you how. Art is fueled by human experience, from aesthetic to political to apocalyptic, the job of art is to let new things through the door ...

I remember first visiting the studio of Andy Warhol in 1961 ... In this little townhouse on Lexington Avenue there was a corridor with two or three soup-can paintings leaning against the wall. I remember thinking the experience completely odd and unfamiliar. My familiarity was really with first-generation painters — Pollock, Rothko, Kline, de Kooning, and on and on. Why three paintings of soup cans? ‘Part of a group,’ he said. ‘I’m going to do 32.’

All I could think of to say was, ‘You’re kidding.’

‘No,’ said Andy, ‘there are 32 varieties: tomato, chili bean, chicken noodle...’

I decided to run with it and asked if he had a New York gallery. ‘No,’ he said.

‘Well what about showing them in LA?’ He hesitated, and I could see he was thinking they were made in New York, his friends lived in New York. And so I took his arm and said, ‘Andy, movie stars come into the gallery. Let’s do it.’

He said, ‘Of course.’ It was a lie; movie stars never came into the gallery. It’s important, certainly, not to lie. But if you must, try to lie creatively.”



**2012 | TIMOTHY LEIWEKE
SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT EXECUTIVE**

“Success is up to you. Now I am not the poster boy for a guy that should go out and do commencement addresses at high schools or colleges. I did not go to college. So everything that I’ve earned, I’ve earned without college ...

What Brentwood does is they simply prepare you. That’s it. They prepare you. It is your decision what to do with it. You can be humble, hardworking, have a great attitude, be enthusiastic about life, see it as a great adventure each and every day, and never give up. And if you do that, then what you’re going to learn is with that preparation, you will master your life ...

Trust me, you get intimidated when you walk into a boardroom at the end of the day and you look around that room and realize, I’m the only one in here that didn’t go to an Ivy League school. But what you learn quickly is all those other attributes — being humble, hardworking, great attitude, enthusiasm (which is the world’s most contagious disease) — that is special.

And if you combine that with what you now have, this education and where you’re about to go, it’s like Coachella. You’ll be intimidated the first week, but by the end of that college period, you will be unbelievable because of how well prepared you are.”



Class of 2016
graduates



**2015 | ANGELLA NAZARIAN
CO-FOUNDER OF VISIONARY WOMAN & AUTHOR**

“A common question that is asked by aspiring students is, ‘What should I do with my life?’ or ‘What is my life purpose?’

I think what they really may be asking is: ‘What can I do with my time that is important?’ ‘What am I willing to struggle for?’ Fulfillment often entails trial and error, failure and learning.

These kinds of questions give us pause, make us think, and the answers slowly reveal themselves as we ask these same questions at different points in our life.

Believe it or not, Class of 2015, your parents here today may be asking these very same questions for themselves as they see a shift in their family dynamics. You may be the first, second, or last kid in the family to leave the nest, and this change calls for a shift of some sort. The good news to you parents is that this may be the beginning of a new journey of discovery for you, too. And you may give expression to a different dimension of yourself that brings another kind vitality in your life.

Graduates, as you go forward from here today together, you will continue to write the story of the Class of 2015.

If you remember anything from my speech today, I hope you will remember your school motto — it’s a good one. It says: ‘Start Curious. Stay Curious. Go Anywhere.’ And I will add one thing to that — remember the people that sparked your curiosity as you walk into your future.”

**“Remember the people that
sparked your curiosity as
you walk into your future.”
- Angella Nazarian**



**2016 | FRED SAVAGE '94
ACTOR**

“The greatest lesson I’ve learned in adulthood is that every day is the worst day of someone’s life, and the greatest day of someone’s life, and we’re not going to know which is which. So we need to be kind. We need to be warm. We need to love the people around us, friends and strangers ...

Your job now is to open yourselves to the world and embrace both the unbridled joy and unbearable sadness of each day because that’s what makes for a fuller life and richer experience. The highs and the lows. So seek them out; it might not always be so obvious, but try to look for them, every day. Put yourselves in positions that challenge you and get you out of your comfort zones. Enjoy yourselves to the point of hysterical laughter. Be moved to the point of tears.

If you take anything away from my remarks today ... it’s that I scored a touchdown at Homecoming my senior year. If you can manage to take away two things, it’s open your heart. Even when it’s hard. Jimmy Valvano was the basketball coach for North Carolina State University when I was a kid, and he said, ‘If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that’s a full day. You do that seven days a week, you’re going to have something special.’ You guys have all the tools you need for the years ahead of you. Now, go do something special with them.”



2017 | ROBERT A. MCDONALD
U.S. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS 2014-17

"I suspect many of you have seen Steven Spielberg's movie *Saving Private Ryan*. As you may recall, Captain John Miller, played by Tom Hanks, gave his life in combat to save the life of Private Ryan. In that last scene of the film, the aged Private Ryan kneels reverently in front of Captain Miller's grave. Ryan says to Miller, and by extension, speaks to all the fallen: 'I've tried to live my life the best I could. I hope that at least in your eyes, I've earned what all of you have done for me.' That's a hard, hard way for someone to judge his or her life.

It's a hard way for us to judge our lives ... Have we earned all that's been done for us by Veterans ... the ones who've defended our freedom? They're the ones who've preserved our opportunities to prosper. They're the ones who defended those inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ...

They're still serving, they're still fighting, and they're still dying. They're still leaving behind their widows, their widowers, and their orphans ... When I visit any national cemetery, I imagine myself saying to every Veteran resting there: 'I hope that in your eyes, I've earned what all of you have done for me.'

Indeed, we'd all do well to kneel at any Veteran's headstone and repeat Ryan's words. We'd all do well to ask any Veteran: 'Am I earning it?' It's a tough question. It's a really tough question. But asking it is about holding ourselves responsible and accountable."

“I wish I had known then to speak up and to speak out, because I always think you grow more from discomfort than from comfort.”
- Eric Garcetti



2018 | ERIC GARCETTI
LOS ANGELES MAYOR 2013-22

"I'm a product of this city. I'm your average Mexican-American-Jewish guy with an Italian last name. You can't get elected mayor with that. I remember at my graduation being one of only a couple of Latino students graduating in my class. I'd gone to an amazing school. I felt that the education I received in the world that I was in made me at once both an insider and an outsider.

I always think that the most interesting space is not across borders, but on borders where we navigate that gray space ... whether it's between anxiety and excitement, between cultures, between moments in our lives like we have here today. I remember in high school those tough moments when I didn't fit in, or when a classmate, thinking I was just Italian-American, cracked an anti-semitic joke, or poked fun at immigrants — not knowing that they were causing pain to the person right next to them.

Maybe I regretted sitting silent there ... and passing. I wish I had known then to speak up and to speak out, because I always think you grow more from discomfort than from comfort. And I would advise each one of the graduates of this class to stay comfortable in discomfort."



2019 | ANGELA REDDOCK-WRIGHT '87
EMPLOYMENT MEDIATOR & ATTORNEY

"The eagle soars above all other birds, generally at 10,000 feet or higher. They have powerful vision — four to eight times greater than the average human. They are fearless and tenacious.

Yes, the eagle is a powerful bird, and it is befitting that the eagle is the Brentwood School mascot.

As Brentwood Eagles, we have been called to soar. We have been provided a wingspan and opportunities that others may never have — not because we are better or deserve it, but to do good.

We have been provided insights, vision, and exposure to things others may never know. We have been called to be courageous, fearless, tenacious, and to speak out. We have been called for a higher and more meaningful purpose — not just for ourselves but for all human and living kind. We have been called to use the power and opportunities we have had as Eagles to do good and to make the world a better place."

“When your beliefs are challenged, as they will be in college, whether in the classroom, in the quad, or in your dorm, you will begin to find out which beliefs you hold strongest and what kind of person you are becoming as an adult.”

- Hank Koransky



2024 | HANK KORANSKY
RETIRED HISTORY FACULTY & ATTORNEY

"Thinking about college of course takes me to my experience as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin from 1965 to 1969, when protesting the Vietnam War was part of the curriculum ... We were protesting for what we believed was right for this country, and we knew we influenced change in people's attitudes ...

And here you are, Class of 2024, about to walk into who knows what protest next fall. How are you going to handle that? Actually, how you handle yourself is the most important thing. What you believe about an issue is personal, but how you handle yourself when your beliefs are challenged will be what sticks with you ...

Part of going to college and becoming an adult is learning where to draw the line ... I was fortunate enough to spend a semester of study in Europe ... While in Wales, we hitched into London twice, and one time we joined an anti-war protest outside the American embassy. The bobbies ... exploded out into the crowd swinging their billy clubs wildly at anything they could hit. The guy next to me got hit in the head and went down ... The freedom to protest freely in the United States did not feel as safe in a foreign country. I did not change my belief in the wrongness of the Vietnam War, but I did begin to examine how my actions were defining me in a way that I did not like. When your beliefs are challenged, as they will be in college, whether in the classroom, in the quad, or in your dorm, you will begin to find out which beliefs you hold strongest and what kind of person you are becoming as an adult."



Class of 2017 graduates

A CHRONOLOGY OF KEYNOTE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS

From entertainers to politicians, from educators to athletes, our commencement speakers have shared a wide array of ideas and perspectives.



Brentwood's archives don't have any early keynote speeches, but check out the school's very first commencement speech, by valedictorian Steve Oliver in 1975.

1975 | WALTER ZIGLAR
Brentwood School Co-Founder

1976 | CHARLES Z. WILSON
Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs, UCLA

1977 | DR. WILLIAM S. BANOWSKY
President, Pepperdine University

1978 | CARLA HILLS
U.S. Secretary of Housing & Urban Development

1979 | JOHN BOWLES
President, Rexall Drug

1980 | GLENN COATES '80
Valedictorian (no outside keynote speaker)

1981 | DR. STEVEN A. LOY
Assistant Headmaster

1982 | CHARLES DOWNES
Headmaster

1983 | UNKNOWN*

1984 | PAUL GIBSON
Faculty / Administrator

1985 | HAL LINDEN
Actor

1986 | EDWARD J. COSTELLO JR.
Chairman, Board of Trustees

1987 | STEPHEN D. MOSES
Political Fundraiser

1988 | PETER VIDMAR '79
Olympic Gymnast

1989 | LIONEL CHETWYND
Screenwriter

1990 | BILLY CRYSTAL
Actor

1991 | JAY WOLPERT
TV Producer / Screenwriter

1992 | REV. ZINA JACQUE
Pastor

1993 | PETER VIDMAR '79
Olympic Gymnast

1994 | DR. DAN CALDWELL
Professor / Author

1995 | BILLY CRYSTAL
Actor

1996 | RABBI LEONARD BEERMAN
Social Justice Activist

1997 | GRAHAM NASH
Musician

1998 | TOM GORDON
Board of Trustees Chair, Healthcare Executive

1999 | ANDREW FRUMOVITZ '88
Attorney / Entrepreneur

2000 | GRAHAM NASH
Musician

2001 | REBECCA BELLDEGRUN
Board of Trustees Chair / Business Executive

2002 | JOHN LITHGOW
Actor

2003 | SIR KENNETH ROBINSON
Author / Educational Consultant

2004 | STEVEN ROSS
Professor

2005 | PHIL MCGRAW
Talk Show Host

2006 | BESS ARMSTRONG FIEDLER
Actor

2007 | CALEB FRANKLIN '01
Entrepreneur

2008 | ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Actor, 38th Governor of California

2009 | SIMON KINBERG '91
Filmmaker / Screenwriter

2010 | RICK CARUSO
Business & Civic Leader

2011 | IRVING BLUM
Art Dealer

2012 | TIMOTHY LEIWEKE
Sports & Entertainment Executive

2013 | THEODORE B. MILLER '95
Public Housing Advocate, San Francisco Mayor's Office

2014 | MARCUS BUCKINGHAM
Author

2015 | ANGELLA NAZARIAN
Author / Nonprofit Founder / Trustee

2016 | FRED SAVAGE '94
Actor

2017 | ROBERT A. MCDONALD
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

2018 | ERIC GARCETTI
Los Angeles Mayor 2013-22

2019 | ANGELA REDDOCK-WRIGHT '87
Employment Mediator & Attorney

2020-22 | DR. MIKE RIERA
Head of School (no outside speaker during pandemic)

2023 | KATY TUR '01
Broadcast Journalist

2024 | HANK KORANSKY
Brentwood Teacher 1997-2023 / Attorney

**Some suggested that faculty member Bruce Belt spoke in 1983, but BWS Magazine could not confirm this.*



HOW DID WE CHOOSE THESE SPEECHES?

We excerpted keynote speeches that are in the school archives. If you have a commencement speech in any format — perhaps an old audio or video recording — please email communications@bwscampus.com.



VIVA BRENTWOOD!

Hundreds gathered at Sony Studios in March for Viva Brentwood, the All-School Benefit — a night full of music, food, and fun.

As soon as they arrived, partiers were greeted by an elaborately dressed woman on stilts and another wearing a hoop skirt covered in champagne glasses. It was “Welcome to Las Vegas,” Brentwood style!

Thanks go to Benefit Chairs Tony Chu and Jen Prakash; Head of Auction

Melissa Erickson; Auction Chairs Dina Cohen, Jessica Ghadir, Carrie Rifkin, and Claudine Shokouhi; our generous underwriters; and of course Parents Association Co-Chairs Kimm Agam and Allison Schwartz.

Top right: The Brentwood community sends huge gratitude to volunteer extraordinaire Allison Schwartz, whose term recently ended as Parents Association Co-Chair for the West Campus. Allison, second from left, is pictured with Head of School Mike Riera, benefit Co-Chairs Jen Prakash and Tony Chu, and PA West Campus Co-Chair Kimm Agam.

Center: When party-goers saw a greeter with a champagne-filled skirt, they felt the Vegas vibe.

Bottom right: Sarah Kim, Stephen Kim, Namrita Puri, and Dennis Puri (with Vegas friends!)



THANK YOU TO OUR UNDERWRITERS

WINNER TAKES ALL

Alexis & Tim Byk Family Foundation

LUCKY SEVEN

Brooke & Barry Josephson, Shannon Rotenberg & Michael Rotenberg, Scott & Obaida Watt

ANTE UP

Leila & Faryan Affi, Holly & Albert Baril, Kavitha & Sunny Bhatia, Masha & Scott Chase, Marina & Adam '89 Cohn, Adam & Haley Fisher, Shireen Lee & Ezra Perlman, Hillary & Lance '94 Milken, Sabina & David '94 Nathanson, Hedy & Benjamin Nazarian, Eden & Steven Romick, Leah & Steven Yari

FULL HOUSE

Naeem & Rashida Arastu, Brinah & Roy Bank, Jonathan & Sunny Barach, Krisena & Scott '96 Borenstein, Maliha & Adam Fakhri, Erik Feig & Susanna Felleman, Angela & Daniel Feiner, Daniel Garcia & Charlene Choi Garcia, Faisal & Aimee Gill, Liz & Patrick Gilligan, Kelly & Justin Griffin, The Joshi Family, Kristen & Jay Langan, Stacey '95 & David Lubliner, Betsy Katz Sandler & Scott '92 Sandler, Brett '96 & Jake Smith, Douglas & Margaret Spencer, Hila & Jeremy Wenokur

DOUBLE DOWN

Anonymous, Anish & Pooja Aswani, Jon & Ashley Cassir, Baldwin & Nancy Chin, Judy Dickinson, Scott Friedman & Catherine Gopaulsingh, Jerry & Laura Gallagher, Rusty & Allison Hill, Ellie & Simon Javaheri, Brian & Laura Joseph, Scott '95 & Dana Kaufman, Jeanine & Kevin Kay, Jeffrey & Jane Kikuta, Deanna & Eric Kripke, Rodney & Carla Liber, The Mandelbaum Family, Bradley '97 & Jodi Meadow, Paul & Takako Neuner, Cheryl & Horst Osterkamp, Abhijay & Jen Prakash,

Namrita & Dennis Puri, Rebecca & Matthew '98 Rich, The Riera Family, The Rossi Family, Allison '97 & Matt Schwartz, Ricky Seung '93, Corey Spound & Cheryl '87 Karz Spound, Scott & Nina Stanford, The Temple Family, Julie & Jason Wallace, Thea & Jay Wolf, The Yoshimaru Family

ALL IN

Anonymous, Kimm & Nathan '95 Agam, Frances & Kyle Armantrout, Erika Aronson & Adam Stern, The Ba Family, Dominik & Courtney Bauch, Arda & Craig Berberian, Lydia '98 & Steve '98 Bergman, David Bolno & Stacy Pineles, Robert & Alyssa Brakey, Valerie & Patrick Callaghan, Aphrodite & Mike Camello, The Chiasson Family, Devon & Sean Corrigan, Nahal & Kevin Danesh, Laura & Randy Dudley, Bob Durham & Alexandra Nehme, Elizabeth Elson-Birnbach '92 & Michael Birnbach, The Elzein Family, Alex & Karin Evans, The Factor Family, Jane & Craig Gering, Jason '89 & Catherine Gordon, Ryan & Josh Gutierrez, Ben & Hayley Haefele, Tom & Pooja Hollenberg, Tamara Horwich & Gerry Lipshutz, Linda & Kyle Hoshide, Kate & Tim Ivers, Craig & D'Lynda Kaplan, Alim & Sara Kassam, Gina & Stu Katz, Robert Kessel, Bob & Stephanie Lakin, Carmel & Manuel Lastra, Lindsay & Steven Lilien, Kelly & Leila Logue, William & Courtney Mack, Morgan Mallory '01, The McLean Family, Colleen Mintzer, Mieke & Spence Neumann, Dana & Brian '97 Nussbaum, Victoria & Paul Orlin, Elise Perer & Jeffrey '86 Kohn, Jillian & Bryan Robinson, Mykesha A. Robinson, Lisa & Richard Rosenblatt, Matt & Sarah Schefflen, The Sharma Family, Sarvenaz & Farhad Sigari, The Smith-Davis Family, Matt & Tal Taylor, Motoki Tomatsu & Miho Suzuki, Jennifer Tsai, Carlye Wayne '06, Julie & Rusty Weiss, Kirk & Eva Williams, Lauren '01 & Robert Windom, Darwin & Lucinda Wong, Tracy & Sam Yadegar



A LETTER FROM THE ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

It is a true honor for me, along with our alumni engagement team of Flor M. Cruz and Angela Song, to share the highlights from our alumni program in this magazine. In addition to the myriad events hosted by our hard-working Alumni Association, we are thrilled to feature profiles of Enikia Ford Morthel '94 and Alex Haskell '04 (see pages 22 and 24), along with a very fun crossword feature with Kelley Lonergan '06 and longtime faculty member Joon Kim (see page 26). Thank you also to the remarkable alumni who contributed to the ever-popular Class Notes section!

Looking out over Layton Drive as I write this letter, I remain ever grateful that the Brentwood School community continues to be my anchor. I celebrated my 30-year

reunion as part of the great Class of 1994 in June, and I am now the parent of a Brentwood 7th grader — who has Mr. Bob Ingram as her advisor and Mr. Len Magier as her English teacher. It is also my privilege to greet Mr. Mike Knight every morning as he heads to teach his 51st year of stained glass.

As much as our alma mater has changed and evolved, it is still the people — our community of students, faculty, alumni, parents, and staff — that make Brentwood extraordinary.

Thank you for reading today; I hope these articles make you proud to be a part of our alma mater. I would love to see or hear from you soon.

— EMILY MANNING ELLIS '94,
DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2024-25

Jeffrey Ehrenpreis '95
President

Shakira Gagnier '97
President Elect

Diana Gonzalez '14
Co-Chair, Alumni Diversity Committee

Danielle Taylor '07
Co-Chair, Alumni Diversity Committee

Nathan Ament '04
Co-Chair, Professional Connections Committee

Jared Cohen '94
Co-Chair, Professional Connections Committee

Bryan Hudson '09
Past President

Wednesday, August 28, 2024 | The Beach Club, Santa Monica

Alumni Summer Cocktail Party

1. Ryan James '99, Jennifer Newman '00, Scott Worswick '99, Cozette Csoke '00, Caitlin Pilla '00, Kirsten Housel '01, David Gordon '00, and Stephanie Hayes-Jackson '00

2. Olivia Penfold Pearson '08, Jordan Sholem '11, and Sabrina Bral Attias '11

3. Alex Landy '06, Mia Hutcherson '06, and Malcolm Henderson '06

4. Sergio Hernandez '02, Jesse Martinez '02, and Noel Heard Arzu '02

5. Matthew O'Hanlon '00, Allie Geller Brown '00, Jonathan Geller '04, Marissa Shipp Geller '05, and Cameron Wald '00

6. Alumni mingled at the Summer Cocktail Party at the Beach Club.

Left: Dave Velasquez, Flor M. Cruz, Emily Manning Ellis '94, Kelley Lonergan '06, and Angela Song





Thursday, May 23, 2024 | Home of Scott '96 and Krisena Borenstein
Alumni Donor Thank You Celebration

1. Jessica Liberman, Greg Liberman '90, Pia Rosen, and Gary Rosen '91
2. Host Scott Borenstein '96, Mike Karz '85, Mike Riera, and Lance Milken '94
3. Nicole Glantz Kagan '11 and Joely Gerber Glaswand '11
4. RJ Wynn '06, Jaren Boczan '04, and Kelley Lonergan '06
5. Alex Winnick '96, Adam Weinstein '12, and Ron Tzadzik '96
6. Alumni gathered in support of Club 1972 and the Alumni North Quad Society



Wednesday, March 13, 2024 | Harvard-Westlake
Alumni Tech Summit

7. Sophia Khan '09 representing Brentwood School at the Alumni Tech Summit on the development and future of AI, along with alumni from Campbell Hall, Harvard-Westlake, Milken, and Oakwood
8. Danielle Taylor '07, Sophia Kahn '09, and Nathan Ament '04
9. Alumni offices unite! Angela Song, Aubrey Rakoski, Ivy Bunnack, Sam de Castro Abeger, Emily Ellis '94, Ross Mankuta, Sammy Lawrence, Chloe Sabbah, Flor M. Cruz, and Christie Guevara



Thursday, November 2, 2023 | Cork & Batter, Inglewood
Cocktails and Conversations
 Hosted by the Alumni Association Diversity Committee

10. Johanna Middleton '07, Bryan Hudson '09, guest Sydney Hutcherson, and Austin Hutcherson '09
11. Guest Miguel Lapuerta, Imani Shackelford '17, Asako Kurosaka-Jost, Alexis Boyd-Holling '17, and guest Lee Melbourne-Weaver
12. Natalie Gomez '16, Selah Shackelford '15, and Albert Acosta '16



Thursday, February 8, 2024 | China Live, San Francisco

Bay Area Reception

1. Alumni gathered at China Live in San Francisco
2. Rachel Melman '01, Jeff Cooper '94, and Emily Ellis '94
3. Evan Landstrom '08, Teddy Newmyer '11, Katie Funk '10, and Jana Christie
4. Ryan Leidner '98, guest, Marko Trapani '15, and Lindsay Timmerman '17



Wednesday, May 1, 2024 | Brentwood Country Club

Brentwood Connect

5. Azz Finley '05, Michael Goldfarb '03, Antoine Grant '03, and Taylor Levin '08
6. Cameron Hickman '14, Shakira Gagnier '97, Diana Gonzalez '14, and Nigel Lifsey '02
7. Melissa Cruz '16, Lona Tehrani '16, Emily Baytalsky '18, and Gabie Yacobi '18



Tuesday, January 2, 2024 | Brentwood School

Young Alumni Luncheon

8. Julia Fink '22, Donovan Southall '22, Brandon Melamed '22, Michelle Shirzadnia '22, and Jacob Galant '22
9. Maelis P. '25, Hasani Sinclair, and Yang Peng '23
10. Sydney Mitchell '22, Emma Dudley '23, and Brooke Friedman '24
11. Sierra Houegban '21, Lily Blue Simmons '24, and Evan Kerr '24
12. We loved welcoming alumni back to campus for the 33rd annual Young Alumni Luncheon.



CLASS OF
1984



CLASS OF
1994



CLASS OF
2004



4



CLASS OF
2014

5



CLASS OF
2019

1. Class of 1984, 40-Year Reunion
Saturday, June 8, 2024
Alumni Walk of Honor

2. Class of 1994, 30-Year Reunion
Saturday, June 8, 2024
Layton Drive Front Lawn

3. Class of 2004, 20-Year Reunion
Saturday, June 8, 2024
Brentwood School North Quad

4. Class of 2014, 10-Year Reunion
Saturday, June 8, 2024
Brentwood School South Quad

5. Class of 2019, 5-Year Reunion
Friday, May 31, 2024
The Buffalo Club, Los Angeles



We welcome updates from our fellow Eagles.
Please submit news to alumni@bwscampus.com.

EMERITI

Keep up with faculty and staff who served 15 years or more at Brentwood.

COACH PATRICK BROWN hasn't spent as much time traveling this past year, but spending time with his grandsons is what he looks forward to. Coach Brown and his wife Vicki did take their two oldest grandsons (Mason, 8, and Sonny, 6) to Kentucky to visit their great-Nana who is 95 years old. He describes it as one of the best trips ever! Fishing, riding quads, mowing Nana's ¾ acre property on the John Deere, eating some delicious Southern comfort food, singing songs, sitting on the front porch looking at the Appalachian mountains, and the most important part, visiting with great-Nana. Coach Brown looks forward to taking his youngest grandson, Luka (4), along with Luka's two cousins to his first Angels game. The age of their dog Rudy (17 ½ years old), who has developed separation anxiety, has limited their travels. They don't like to leave him too long because he requires almost full-time attention. This past year has also brought its share of sadness. The passing of one of his long-time friends, **COACH LEON BROUSSARD**, has been extremely challenging. Coach Broussard and Brown played football together at the University of Wyoming, coached football together at Brentwood for 25 years, and lived less than two miles away from one another, enjoying many vacations together, planning parties, and enjoying many meals. There isn't a day that passes that he doesn't think of his good buddy and just wishes he could hear

"Hey Brownie" one more time coming from that giant of a man. Coach Brown would like to congratulate recent emeriti **HUMBERTO VALLEJO, DAWN CUNNION, ERIK BECKER, LEE HERZOG, TERRI GRUENTHAL, GINNY LEON**, and his dear friend **ELLIE NOVAES**, whose unexpected death was devastating. He can't imagine the school without you.

JUDITH BEERMAN O'HANLON is relishing her second year of retirement, spending more time with her grandchildren, traveling, reading, and coming once a month to school to meet with an enthusiastic group of students during lunch to discuss poetry and the eccentricities of the English language. A highlight of the year was officiating at the wedding of **MASON MOSS '08** and **KATIE FUNK '10**. She always looks forward to seeing her former students at their reunions in June and is delighted that her granddaughter, Isla, will be joining the kindergarten class next fall!

COACH "COPO" PORTER is staying busy, now eight years retired from Brentwood. He is traveling (went to Ireland last summer), fly fishing, still coaching the game he loves, and also officiating volleyball on occasion. Also, he welcomed grandkid #6 in April, Callan, son of **KELLY MCINTOSH PENROSE '04**.

DONNIE TODD has been living in Rancho Mirage for a little over a year. She has successfully weathered the wind and sand and a mini hurricane last summer. Her son, **EVAN KRENZIEN '04**, designed the interior of her home and her yard. So far, she has played pickleball, bocce ball, Mexican Train, has taken part in karaoke, danced at the clubhouse's version of stagecoach, has made sooooo many new friends, has taken

advantage of the Palm Springs International Film Festival, arts festivals, fashion week, exercise classes, and has found her way to the pilates studios outside of her HOA. She also volunteers for The Ophelia Project—a woman-led, volunteer mentoring program for young adolescent girls at Rancho Mirage High School. She also has hiked, climbed rocks in Joshua Tree, and other outdoor activities (when the temperatures of the desert are below 85). She loves running into alumni when visiting Los Angeles. Needless to say, she enjoys her retirement and her new home. She knows many of you come to the desert (not just for Coachella or Stagecoach). Send her an email when you do. She would enjoy connecting.

EMILY ELLIS '94 in the Alumni Office recently connected with legendary teacher **SALLY WALLACE**, who taught at Brentwood from 1977 - 2007. Sally reports that she and her husband, at 85 and 86, are living comfortably in an Orange County retirement community. She still wears a sweater on occasion that Brentwood students used to love. The sweater was named by one of her senior students as "Homage to the 405 Freeway." Fast forward to 2024; people around her are still in awe of it!

1. Coach Brown sharing some laughs with Coach Broussard at the Emeriti celebration in 2021

2. Sally Wallace still wears her "Homage to the 405 Freeway" sweater!

3. Donnie Todd enjoys hiking in her retirement.

4. "GrandPo" with Callan



1980s

1980

GEORGE “GLENN” COATES expresses his regrets for not being able to attend the last class reunion. “I am retired now, and living in Asheville, NC, where I am building a retirement home in the Blue Ridge Mountains. I also hope to build another retirement home in Sedona, AZ where I have land. My wife of 23 years (Karen) and I hope to retire between those places and our beach home in NC. We have 3 grown children: Erica (34, married), Blake (30, married), and Preston (21, single), all college graduates. The two older children also have graduate degrees (MS social work and PhD Chemistry, respectively). Our youngest just finished his double major in Spanish and International Finance.” Glenn also remarked “I have kept in touch with **DR. SALLY WALLACE** and **ESTEBAN CACICEDO** through the years and was close to **DR. BRUCE BELT** until his death years ago. I have visited with **MARK ALJIAN** many times over the years since he lives in NC. Shout out to Mark, Arthur, Roddy, Noah, Don, John, Jeff, Danny, and everyone in the class of 1980. I hope all are well and happy, as we are at this time. Please, everyone, know how saddened I was to miss the reunion. I hope to come in the future to see you all again.”

1981

MEL POWELL has nothing interesting to report other than that his little humor podcast, “Tales of the Wise Fools of Chelm,” continues on, one quick story each week. But he so desperately doesn’t want a blank space for Class of 1981 notes that he’s writing in just to remind everyone that he’s boring.

1984

DANIELA PACHER has lived in the Hudson Valley since 2020 where she works for Today’s Students Tomorrow’s Teachers. The non-profit mentors and trains students of color for eventual entry into the teaching profession. Daniela enjoys the many benefits of dating a professor at the Culinary Institute of America, and best of all, her daughter Belinda just graduated from the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Belinda will be a regulatory vet protecting race horses from within the industry.

ADAM RESNICK shares that lifelong friends from the class of 1984 get together regularly. In December, **PETER CORRIGAN**, **JEFF KABOT**, **PAUL HADDAD**, and Adam shared a holiday dinner at the Smokehouse in Burbank. In March, Adam joined **DAVID FINK** and **ANDREW LEVEY** for a hike up Temescal Canyon, a spot they’ve been visiting since high school. They caught up on careers, kids, and shared memories from the old days.

1985

TEDDY GEDEBOU ended up back in Ethiopia and opened a surgical center performing plastic surgery and encaustic painting.

1986

WHITNEY HARRINGTON (HINDERER) writes, “Class of 1986! Class Notes have become different for sure!” Whitney’s daughter, Kalynn, got married on May 4, 2024 in the beautiful area of Trinidad, CA under the redwoods. It was a magical day. Whitney and Marc still live in Agoura Hills and are of course still surrounded by horses! Whitney is practicing real estate and still riding her horses daily.

1987

Fresh from her sold-out show, *This Time with Feeling* at the PIT Theater in New York City, **MICHELLE RODINO-COLOCINO** is celebrating 55 amazing years on Earth and five years back in theater. Michelle first fell in love with theater the summer before 7th grade in a class at Brentwood School with **MS. VAL MICKISH**. Where is the time flying? This summer in State College, PA, Michelle will share her first short play, *Presents*, about family dynamics at a Hometown Voices event where writers get feedback on their theatrical works. She just ended a short run of a local production of *The Good Body* (by V, formerly known as Eve Ensler) having had the pleasure of performing a monologue close to her heart, of an Italian woman and survivor who had plastic surgery as a teenager. Michelle also does lots of improv. She is presently working to bring her solo show to more locations, including a local one, and looks forward to another performance with a soloist friend in New York. *This Time with Feeling* also hews close to Michelle’s heart, about moments in her life where she turned off and turned away from herself instead of feeling the feelings in the present. Michelle wishes her old classmates, teachers, and the Brentwood community good health and all of the feels. Show news on her Instagram account @rocofem.

Please see the memorial tribute to Valerie Mickish on page 82.



We welcome updates from our fellow Eagles. Please submit news at [bwscampus.com/alumni/class-notes](https://www.bwscampus.com/alumni/class-notes) or email alumni@bwscampus.com.

1. Glenn Coates '80 and family: son Blake, daughter-in-law Clare, wife Karen, son Preston, son-in-law David, and daughter Erica at Christmas last year

2. Teddy Gedebou '85 en route to his next destination

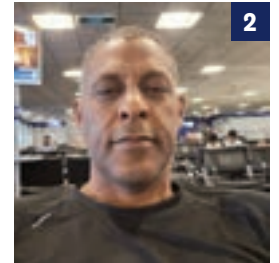
3. Michelle Rodino-Colocino '87 performing her solo show, *This Time with Feeling*, at the PIT Theater in New York City

4. David Fink, Adam Resnick, and Andrew Levey (all '84) enjoy a hike up Temescal Canyon in March.

5. Belinda, daughter of Daniela Pacher '84, on her graduation day

6. Adam Resnick, Paul Haddad, Peter Corrigan, and Jeff Kabot (all '84) enjoy a holiday dinner at the Smokehouse in Burbank.

7. Whitney Harrington '86 and her daughter Kalynn on Kalynn's wedding day



1990s

1991

RANDY BALIK and Noelle Balik continue to enjoy life in Hermosa Beach with their sons Braden (13) and Drew (nearly 10). All is well these days!

JASON GOLDBERG is excited to report that the Class of 1991 had four of their classmates' children graduate on June 1, as part of the Class of 2024! Congratulations, Abby, daughter of Jason, Toby, son of **SIMON KINBERG**, Christian, son of **TOREY FAVAROTE**, and Maverick, son of **MATT EPSTEIN** and **AMY EPSTEIN '94**.

1994

KEN MARIASH became CEO of Sinaptica Therapeutics, which has developed a major breakthrough for Alzheimer's. Sinaptica's patented, personalized brain stimulation therapy achieved unprecedented, published, peer-reviewed, randomized controlled Phase 2 clinical trials results, which show it can slow the disease of Alzheimer's by an astounding 82% (www.sinapticatx.com). Sony and **SCOTT SHANE** are investors. Ken and company are looking forward to initiating Phase 3 clinical trials in 2025.

1995

KIYOSHI YAMAZAKI is a non-operative sports medicine physician with experience in specialized, minimally invasive procedures and the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of musculoskeletal ailments and injuries. Over the past decade, he has served as a sideline physician for multiple professional, collegiate, high school, and Olympic-level athletes, and continues to help weekend warriors, industrial workers, outdoor enthusiasts, and athletes return to their active lifestyles.

Kiyoshi currently lives in the greater Denver area in Colorado with his wife Jenny and two boys, where they take advantage of the outdoor opportunities around them. Kiyoshi coaches basketball for both of his boys and helps on the sidelines at their other sports. The close proximity to California via Southwest Airlines allows frequent back and forth to get family and beach time in Los Angeles.

1996

ELISSA MEADOW PHILLIPS and her family are finishing up their first year in Singapore. She and her family have already visited seven other countries in Southeast Asia and she is planning more trips for next school year. Elissa is enjoying having extra time to work on her tennis game which she has mostly ignored since playing for Brentwood. She's happy to offer any travel tips for those visiting Singapore or neighboring countries.

1998

ALEX BRAVERMAN debuted his first feature film *Thank You Very Much* about celebrated comedian and performance artist Andy Kaufman. The film premiered at the 80th edition of the Venice International Film Festival in Italy, where it took home the prestigious Venice Classics award for Best Documentary.



1. Ken Mariash '94 with a rendering of Sinaptica's breakthrough brain stimulation therapy for Alzheimer's
2. Toby Kinberg '24, Simon Kinberg '91, Jason Goldberg '91, and Abby Goldberg '24 at the Brentwood Class of 2024 Commencement

3. Elissa Meadow Phillips '96 and her family in front of the Taj Mahal
4. Kiyoshi Yamazaki '95 with his wife Jenny and sons Caden and Connor
5. Alex Braverman '98 won the Venice Classics Award for Best Documentary at the 80th Venice International Film Festival.



2000s

2000

NILE NASH is living in San Francisco with her husband, Noah, and two young boys, Leo (6) and Shea (4). Nile runs her private practice, Mama Lion (www.mamalion.org) as a nurse-midwife offering in-home clinical postpartum care, serving families during their “fourth trimester.” She also teaches all things pregnancy, child-birth, and parenting and facilitates new mother circles at Natural Resources in the Mission. Nile was overjoyed to finally get to hold her Momma Susan’s memorial service this summer on Kauai. Susan died in September of 2020.

CAMERON WALD and his wife, Ashley, are elated to announce the birth of their son, Hudson Cooper Wald.

2001

JONATHAN BERRY is managing partner at Boyden Gray PLLC, a law and strategy firm in Washington, DC, advising clients on matters of constitutional law and labor. Jonathan has argued cases challenging the legality of NASDAQ’s board diversity quotas and suing Target for failing to disclose risks associated with its ESG and DEI commitments. He has assisted with transition efforts of a potential second Trump administration. Jonathan and his wife, Meghan, are blessed with eight children and reside in a Catholic community in Maryland.

2002

MORGAN FIRST published *Rebel School of Wine: A Visual Guide to Drinking with Confidence* with HarperCollins. It was the number #1 new Wine Book on Amazon.

MICHAEL KOHL reports that after spending his [REDACTED] birthday hiking a remote

trail in Japan, he brought his interactive video game concert experience Extra Lives on tour to Europe—11+ shows across seven countries in 16 days. Fun was had.

2003

MIKE GOLDFARB is thrilled to have recently joined the prestigious real estate company Coldwell Banker in Los Angeles. Mike combines his deep understanding of the city with a meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that each client’s needs are not just met but exceeded. Affectionately dubbed the “Real Estate Sherpa,” Mike works with everyone from first-time home buyers to clients seeking luxury listings. Reach out to Mike at mike@mikegoldfarb-properties.com.

2004

CLANCY MCCARTY is now a certified nurse-midwife, after completing her master of science in nursing at Frontier Nursing University in March 2024. She will begin her doctorate in the summer of 2024.

TYLER STYPINSKI would like to share that, when asked how he felt about **ALEX HASKELL’S** glowing profile in these pages, he quoted Shania Twain: “That don’t impress me much.” He then muttered under his breath that Alex couldn’t “stained glass his way out of a stained-glass-off if his life depended on it...not like *that* was going to make it into that ‘fluff’ piece.” When asked for further comment, Tyler seemed confused that the editor heard him, but he nevertheless volunteered to copy edit his own quote and in so doing removed a meandering stream of consciousness that can only be summarized as “deranged.”

2005

VICTORIA ROSE and her partner Alec Paul happily welcomed their first child, Charlie Paul in October 2023.

2006

DANNY STEINER lives in Los Angeles with his 2 year old identical twin boys, Jude and Milo, his wife, Morgane, and his dog, River. He works at an advanced nuclear fission company called Oklo, still plays soccer every weekend, and continues to regularly see some of his friends from Brentwood. *Editor’s note: The Belldegrin Center for Innovative Leadership at Brentwood would like to thank Danny for participating as a judge in the school’s first 8th Grade Energy Symposium this past April.*

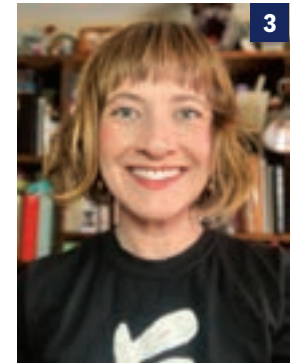
2008

ELI BELLER has lived in Chicago since 2021 and currently works at Latinx Talk Therapy. In this position he does therapy with Latino populations and conducts migration evaluations, providing psychological support to folks applying for legal protection.

2009

ADAN ACEVEDO attended the Brentwood graduation of his sister **BRENDA ACEVEDO ’24** in June! What a gift to see her in her last BTC show, perform with Drill Team, participate in Candlelighting, and cross the stage to get her diploma.

After three years investing in food technology startups at ZX Ventures, the corporate venture fund for ABInBev, **EVA (GURFEIN) BORGE** made the jump to accept a leadership role at a venture-backed startup in April 2024. Eva joined Cauldron, a global biomanufacturing company based in Australia. As Head of Marketing, Brand & Communications, Eva is defining Cauldron’s external positioning in the fast-evolving biotech industry. Cauldron is on a mission to realize the full potential of precision fermentation by unlocking price parity for commodity and mainstream bio-manufactured products.



1. Mike Goldfarb '03, now at Coldwell Banker

2. Eva Borge '09 at Cauldron’s commercial demo biomanufacturing facility in Orange, New South Wales

3. Nile Nash '00 in her studio

4. Jonathan Berry '01 at Boyden Gray PLLC

5. The Acevedos at Candlelighting – Eusebio and Lorena, Louisa, Brenda '24, and Adan '09

2010s

2010

MELISSA GRUENTHAL and **BRYAN JOVEL** tied the knot surrounded by the warmth of their loved ones on March 26, 2023 with a wedding party adorned with Brentwood School alums and family. They were honored to have their close friend and fellow alum **ERICK MACK** officiate their wedding. Following the ceremony, they embarked on a two-week honeymoon in Japan. Now celebrating their one-year anniversary together, they continue to cherish their lifelong adventure together. Their wedding party included fellow alums **RAYE RODRIGUEZ '11**, **TAYLOR CASWELL**, **CHUCK BLACK**, **MICHAEL STONE**, **NELSON JOVEL '98**, **MITCH GRUENTHAL '12**, **CHRIS HAHN**, and **TEVIN BISHOP**.

2011

ELANA NACHSHIN married Lucy Turner on October 22, 2023 in a private ceremony in Central Park surrounded by family and friends.

COLIN PAK got married on February 18, 2024 to Sophia Lee. The two met in college at Johns Hopkins. Brother **GAVIN PAK '13** was a groomsman and **SAM LICKER**, Colin's fellow Brentwood and Hopkins graduate, officiated the wedding ceremony!

2012

REMI ZIMMERMAN launched a new tableware and events company called The Nosh Table. She designs dinnerware and holiday accessories inspired by her Jewish and Italian roots. Remi previously worked as a Designer and Luxury Hotel Consultant for international brands like Marriott and Montage Hotels & Resorts, and channels her creativity and business background into her new business venture.

2013

NIKKI TABIBIAN secured an attorney position at NBC Universal, a career goal she could not have achieved without the professional support of the Brentwood alumni network.

2015

Nine years after graduating in the same class at Brentwood, **ERIN MIZRAKI** and **MICAH ROSEN** both graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School!

MARKO TRAPANI currently works as a Technical Support/Solutions Engineer at database software startup, Redis, after a couple of years at Google. He is also exploring a career change towards the field of medicine and has volunteered at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center for over 200 hours!



1. Melissa Gruenthal '10 and Brian Jovel '10 on their wedding day
2. Newlyweds Elana Nachshin '11 and Lucy Turner



3. The wedding ceremony of Colin Pak '11 and Sophia Lee
4. Nikki Tabibian '13 Esq.
5. Erin Mizraki '15 and Micah Rosen '15 at their graduation from Harvard Law
6. Marko Trapani '15 has also become somewhat of a cold plunge fanatic in recent years...!
7. Remi Zimmerman '12 catering a special event and designing the tablescape for her new business, The Nosh Table

IN MEMORIAM

We honor the lives of our alumni who passed away too soon.



JON LANDAU '78



STEPHEN CORD '79



MICHAEL FRUMOVITZ '87



BRIAN RUSSELL '93



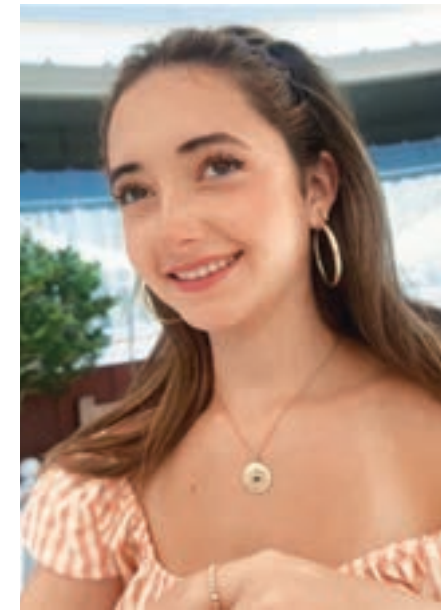
SCOTT KENYON '02



LOUIE NADEAU '16



At the first home football game, the cheer team wore sweatshirts emblazoned with Sami Liber's artwork, marking her place with flowers while Coach Hasani Sinclair delivered a tribute.



REMEMBERING SAMI LIBER '26

May 27, 2008 – August 8, 2024

By Rod Liber

The first thing you might want to know about Sami is she had plans, lots of plans. In the coming school year, she was excited about editing the school yearbook and had already started a cool new design. She was also excited about varsity cheer and brushed off the scrapes and bruises from summer practice. She had her eye on Tulane University, where she hoped to advance her skills in art and graphics and join a sorority. After college, she thought about a job in design and about getting married, having two or three kids — the names were already picked out — and they would all live in a modern farmhouse, with chickens! The only thing slightly out of place in that picture would have been the Ferrari F8 Spider in the garage.

Samantha Rose Liber was born on May 27, 22 months after her sister Ava.

Something everyone noticed about Sami during her early years was her infectious laugh and smile. She thought everything was funny. Sami loved to play with Ava and they soon became a team, dancing to the latest pop hits, watching kids' shows, or setting up lemonade stands in the driveway. They walked together down Bowling Green Way to attend Brentwood Lower School.

Sami thrived at Brentwood, especially enjoying all the extras like Pancake Day, the amazing Ms. Nevin's curated performances, Halloween, and of course, El Capitán. "I can still picture her on stage, playing a bird as a kindergartner in *Baby Elephant* — sweet, gentle, and so little," said Ms. Nevin. "In what seemed like a flash, she was playing the muse Erato in *Achilles Heel*, more grown up, graceful and confident but still carrying that same sweetness and gentleness."

Sami's artistic side presented early, and she could often be found working with watercolors and pastels. "Sami was already a talented and confident artist on day one, but still wanted to improve her skills by asking questions and talking about visual details," said art teacher Shane Sahadi. "She had an artist's eye and was inspiring to the class." She inspired beyond art as well. Lower School teacher Tiffanie Gilder recalled that Sami spearheaded a kindness campaign in 4th grade that inspired others to commit random acts of kindness. "Sami had a beaming smile and a gentle disposition that brightened my classroom every single day," she said. Middle School teacher Betsy Katz Sandler remembered fondly when Sami would visit after school. "She liked to catch up on the day and share her experiences," she said. "She inspired her classmates and teachers to make each day meaningful and special." Math teacher Keith Sarkisian noted her "infectious spirit" in 9th grade geometry. "While my heart aches, I still smile when I think of her in that class," he said.

Sami had her passions, and music was her jam. Even on the shortest car rides, she always had a playlist ready. Lana Del Rey topped her charts and it was a fun coincidence that she ran into her — and got the requisite selfie — at Belwood Bakery. Love for travel was another defining aspect of Sami's life. She made each family trip more memorable by poring over the internet to find picturesque destinations and the best local dining. Two summers ago, she topped off a trip to Italy with a jump into Lake Como. In 2023, she saw Paris and Cannes and danced on the tables at La Guérite.

Sami's last summer was filled with new friendships and new beginnings. She created oil and charcoal art with her Brentwood summer class and was practicing on Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator so she could make the yearbook the best it had ever been. Before school started, she pleaded for a short vacation and chose Jackson Hole as the perfect destination to have some outdoor adventures and maybe scout out the farmhouse she would one day live in.

Although Sami's promising life was cut too short, she will forever be in the hearts and minds of her family and the Brentwood community, who knew her for nearly all of her 16 years.

To learn more about Sami, please visit www.samiliber.com.



Sami Liber '26 with her family on summer vacation at the Louvre Museum in Paris

ELLIE NOVAES



Shortly before we went to press, we learned of the tragic and unexpected death of longtime Brentwood teacher Ellie Novaes. Ellie considered Brentwood School her home for 32 years and was always grateful for the opportunities she had to teach, coach, encourage, and cheer on so many Brentwood School students. She retired last year and was honored at

our Emeriti Farewell Celebration in early June.

When we informed the community of her passing, her daughter, Areanna '14, asked us to end with what she thought her mom would want to express: Go Eagles!

Please watch for a full tribute to Ellie in the next issue of *BWS Magazine*.

VALERIE MICKISH

We fondly remember Valerie Mickish, an English and drama teacher at Brentwood from 1979-83 who breathed life into the school's theater department.

The Class of 1982 dedicated the yearbook to Ms. Mickish, and their write-up shows the depth of her impact on Brentwood students. It reads:

"In a short time Ms. Mickish, or 'Ms. Mick' as she is fondly referred to, has

taught not only senior English, but also dramatics. Ms. Mick has almost single-handedly created Brentwood's drama department and has served as a teacher, director, and inspiration to all who have participated in or simply seen a Brentwood School production.

Moreover, Valerie Mickish has become the senior class' teacher. She is a lady who not only teaches 'we' the proper use of pronouns, but also teaches us about ourselves. She always seems to be able to make us laugh and to pull us through rough times. She is a teacher we regard as a friend and one we can always trust.

We only hope that we have become as special to her as she has become to us."



JON LANDAU

Many have remembered Jon Landau '78 for his remarkable success as a Hollywood producer — he won an Academy Award for *Titanic* and earned nominations for *Avatar* and *Avatar: The Way of Water*. But at Brentwood we are also remembering him as a coach. Jon served as a varsity football and softball coach and a JV baseball coach in the late '70s through the early '80s, just after graduating with the Brentwood Class of 1978.

Coach Patrick Brown fondly recalls the Jon Landau Athletic Award, presented to the Brentwood student who demonstrated the most hustle each year. And former Upper School administrator Steve Loy remarked that Jon had one of the most energetic and magnetic personalities among the faculty and staff at the time.

Jon cared deeply about his Brentwood classmates and colleagues. He always went out of his way to make sure his class reunions included a special event or Hollywood screening for everyone. He was also scheduled to serve as a guest speaker at Brentwood's 50th Commencement, but was unable to attend due to his prolonged illness.

Jon, you will be dearly missed.

REY "HUMP" HUMPHREY

Brentwood's beloved coach, Rey Humphrey, passed away suddenly on January 2, 2024 at age 53, sparking an outpouring of emotion for a man who mentored, motivated, and challenged students to do their very best. Story after story described a coach who went out of his way to step in when students needed support, on and off the field. It is no exaggeration to say that he made a difference in the lives of every single student he coached.



Coach Hump joined the school in 2015 and over the years coached football, track, and basketball. In 2022, he took on the additional role of athletic administrative assistant. Reliable, good-natured, and always ready to help, he became a close friend to many Brentwood faculty and staff over the years.

On January 27, love for Coach Humphrey filled the gym as Brentwood School hosted a celebration of his life, welcoming

mourners from our own community as well as many who knew the coach from his years at Santa Monica High and Malibu High. In addition, at a special memorial assembly for the Upper School, students shared stories that showed how deeply Hump had touched their lives.

Coach Humphrey loved Brentwood, and we loved him back. May he rest in peace.



LEON BROUSSARD

by Coach Patrick Brown

Coach Leon Broussard and I played football together in the late '70s at the University of Wyoming and met again in 1985. I was coaching football for the Eagles and looking for a defensive coordinator, and from that point on — for the next 25 years — Coach Broussard was a member of the Brentwood football family.

One year the seniors selected Coach Broussard to be the faculty speaker at

what was then called the senior/faculty dinner (now the Senior Celebration). He was extremely passionate about coaching, and that passion resonated with the players. He loved his players! When Coach Broussard spoke, he had everyone's attention.

Coach Broussard was a big part of seven CIF championship games, with the Eagles winning four CIF titles — in 1988, 1992, 1993, and 1995 (and runner-up three other times, in 1994, 1997, and 2007). Coach Broussard died on April 22, 2024. He was a giant of a man who was loved by anyone who ever had the pleasure to know him.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that before Brentwood School opened its doors in 1972, the property was home to the Urban Military Academy? Apparently the boys had quite the marching band.



These photos are in Brentwood School's archives. If you have additional information about any of them, please email communications@bwscampus.com. Thank you!

BRENTWOOD ANNUAL FUND

Brentwood Annual Fund donations are spent on every aspect of our student programming. They provide financial support to 19% of our students, and ensure competitive compensation for our extraordinary teachers.

Give now to support another fantastic year!



TOGETHER, FROM SEPTEMBER 2023 TO JUNE 2024, WE ACHIEVED...

\$4.4 M+ raised from **1,793 donors**, the most in our history!

30% of families increased their gift

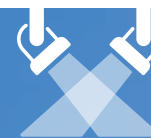
Lower School families reached **100% participation**

99% employee participation

6 grades reached **100% participation**

AND TOGETHER, WE SUPPORTED...

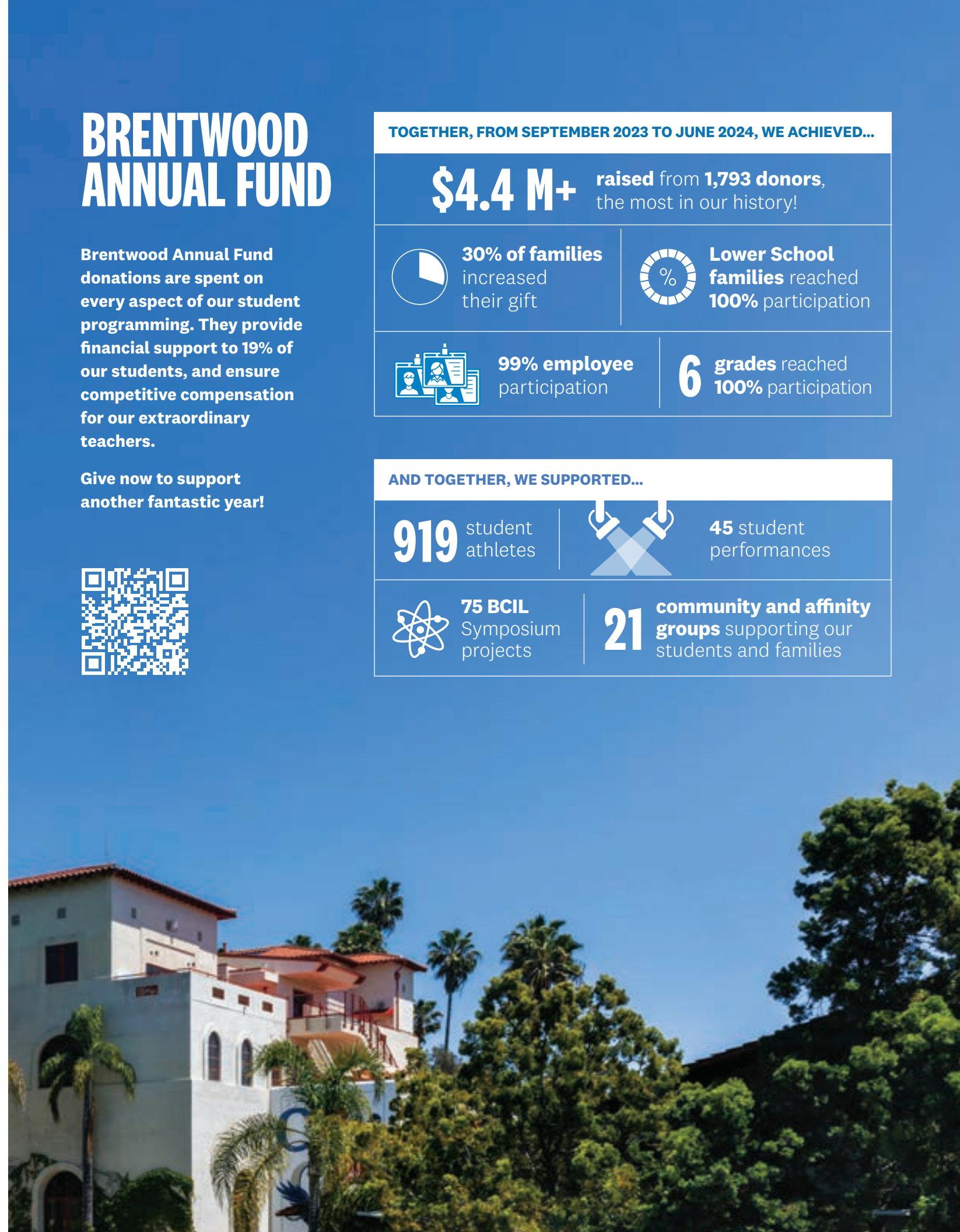
919 student athletes



45 student performances

75 BCIL Symposium projects

21 community and affinity groups supporting our students and families



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*Behind the scenes
with two crossword
wizards who competed
in NYC. See "Cuckoo
for Crosswords" on
page 26.*