



METAIRIE PARK
COUNTRY DAY

State of the School Report

2024



Academics *First Things* BY G. HOWARD HUNTER, ACADEMIC DEAN

Every society has a golden age. Ours is intertwined with a creation myth, and it goes something like this. Ralph Boothby, the founding headmaster of the Metairie Park Country Day School had a vision of education based on the principle that ideas come from experience rather than the other way around. In the formative years of the school, he inspired like-minded faculty and students to do extraordinary things. According to a 1969 report by the education committee of Country Day, in the 1930s and 40s the school was awash in creativity. For example, upper school literature students became interested in world religions and produced a choral work on the commonality of faiths called “Flames of the Same Fire.” In a 1936 social studies project, students drove through the South and parts of Appalachia to study the effects of the Depression on rural people. The apotheosis was a chronicle of the trip entitled “Blue Denim and Red Clay,” a journal of writings, illustrations, and photographs. Tenth-grade biology students took an annual camping trip to Dolphin Island to observe wildlife and collect lab specimens. In their 1936 class report, they stated not only was the purpose to study flora and fauna but also “to learn better how to live together in harmony and cooperation.” Field trips were so integral to student life in those salad days that one of the more pointed criticisms of the 1969 educational committee missive was that by the 1960s off campus learning had become “rare” at best.

The statement by the education committee to the Country Day Board of Trustees was essentially a revanchist manifesto calling for a return to the golden age. But there was no going back — the school had expanded, and the Soviet launch of

Sputnik in 1957 ushered in more structured math/sciences curricula across the country. Advanced Placement courses followed. And while progressive education was the darling of idealists and modernists in the 1920s, there were flaws in the system that we have either willy-nilly or purposefully corrected over time. While Boothby railed against “rote memorization” as barbarous and antiquated, we have found that content is essential for placing material in a proper context, and some memorization is exigent for learning. We have also found that critical thinking, a skill coming out of the progressive model, requires that the student have something to think about. According to our teachers who have adopted pedagogies based on the Mind-Brain Education model, current research suggests that even the project method, the jewel of progressive education movement going back to 1918, requires front-loading of content if it is to be effective.

Nevertheless, we have not abandoned experiential learning. Students in grades 8 through 12 take class trips to distant locales in the American Southwest and North Carolina to take in natural wonders and practice “living in harmony and cooperation” through team building activities. In the 2023-2024 academic year, Country Day students K through 12 took over 60 field trips, hardly a “rare” occurrence. The seniors alone visited 11 sites to complement the New Orleans focus of their humanities requirement, including those places that make our lives possible, like the 17th Street Canal Pumping Station. Experiential learning is alive and well within classrooms and labs as students are producing podcasts and building robots.



It would be fair to say that Boothby was ahead of his time. In a 1929 speech to a business organization, he posited, “No one can say what things our children may need to know 25 years hence. We can only equip them with the tools of knowledge and give them successful experience in their use...A constant reexamination of and appraisal of life and reworking of the curriculum is a result of our rapidly changing civilization.”¹ Bingo. When we talk about the importance of developing nimble minds to navigate a society with exponential change, Boothby hit on it almost 100 years ago. Of course, the current issue of concern is that AI will get ahead of us, rendering our current academic structure obsolete. Nevertheless, we are finding ways that AI can actually serve both faculty and students in productive ways for engaging material. As aforementioned, the work faculty are doing with MBE (mind-brain-education) utilizing neuro-research in pedagogy also shows great promise for navigating the future.

Boothby believed that aesthetics should play a role in educating for life. While we continue to have a superb program in visual and performing arts with robust productions, concerts and art shows, students are also exposed to art, drama, music, and architecture throughout the academic disciplines in pre-K through 12. From exploring the Fibonacci sequence to students creating art projects to complement the study of historical epochs, aesthetics is still essential to a Country Day education.

Most importantly, Boothby believed the school should exist as a mini democracy. Good citizenship should be fashioned in an environment based on cooperation and mutual respect. Not only is citizenship the theme of the coming academic year, but we are instituting a program whereby students in lower and middle schools engage the notion of what it means to be a citizen through service learning while our upper school students develop a deeper understanding of issues that affect New Orleans and the nation.

Golden Ages do not exist, but we create them to draw sustenance. As historian Mark Lilla argues, “We suffer because we live in the Age of Iron, far removed from our origins in the Age of Gold. If we are good, perhaps one day the gods will smile down and return us to the world we have lost.”² But we haven’t lost that world. While we no longer teach 1930s regional folk dancing, nor do we as readily sing Depression era ballads, our Portrait of a Graduate is in keeping with the original mission of the school. Character, citizenship, curiosity, and critical thinking are pillars that our founders would agree are worthy of our most noble efforts. Our academic program has been fueled over the past 95 years by a marvelous combination of idealism, realism, and a healthy respect for intellectual inquiry. As we evolve into the second quarter of the 21st century, my thinking is that our best years are still ahead.

1 Speech of Ralph R. Boothby to the Recess Club at the St. Charles Hotel, May 29, 1929.

2 Mark Lilla, “From Luther to Walmart,” essay in *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction*, (New York, 2016), 68-69.

The Arts

BY KATIE ANTIS, ARTS DEPARTMENT CHAIR

With more than 50 art-related activities available each academic year across all divisions, there are limitless ways for students to explore and develop their artistic identities! Here is a glimpse into the arts world at Country Day during the 2023-2024 academic year.

TALENTED MUSICIANS

DISTRICT HONOR BAND

Elementary Honor Band: Emerson Zink ‘30, Izzy Grass ‘30

Junior High Honor Band: Iskra Jurkovic ‘27

Senior High Jazz Honor Band: Paul Curry ‘26, Xander Roniger ‘25

DISTRICT JAZZ BAND

Paul Curry, Xander Roniger ‘25

Paul was ranked the #1 drummer in the District, Xander was ranked the #2 trumpet player.

DISTRICT HONOR CHOIR

Charlie Antis ‘25, Anne Marie George ‘25, Isaac Herzenberg ‘26, Clovis Layrisson ‘25

Elementary Honor Choir: Cjay Peiffer ‘31, Susanna Frischertz ‘31, Vivi Filson-La Graize ‘31, Antoine Banks ‘30, Reese Scruggs ‘30, Charley Coatney ‘30, Maya Ammari ‘30, Eva Lau ‘29, Harper Emmet ‘29, Ezra Miley ‘29, Camille Thionville ‘28

LOUISIANA ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA

Charlie Antis ‘25, Phillip Antis ‘24, Mason Kwon ‘25



LOUISIANA ALL-STATE CHOIR

Tenor-Bass Choir: Charlie Antis ‘25

Treble Youth Choir: Sophia LeBoeuf ‘27, Ansley Spruill ‘29, Sophia Curry ‘29

Mixed Youth Choir: Ezra Miley ‘29

Children’s Choir: Elise Marsac ‘30

LOUISIANA ALL-STATE JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Xander Roniger ‘25

NATIONAL SCHOOL ORCHESTRA AWARD

Phillip Antis ‘24

LSU STATELY OAKS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Charlie Antis ‘25, Anne Marie George ‘25, Constance Goldenberg ‘25, Mason Kwon ‘25, Clovis Layrisson ‘25, Oliver Parsi ‘25

THE JOHN PHILIP SOUSA AWARD

Sarah Heebe ‘24

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHORAL AWARD

Minnie Mae August ‘24



LIGHTS, MUSIC, LAUGHTER: A LOOK BACK AT OUR SCHOOL’S THEATER SEASON

During the 2023-2024 year, the Upper School had an incredible season of performances in Weinmann Auditorium, showcasing the diverse talents of our students through three exciting productions. In the fall, we brought *Peter and the Starcatcher* to life, a whimsical Peter Pan origin story that featured over 100 roles, offering opportunities for everyone to shine. This imaginative play, one of the most produced in the country, captivated audiences with its creative stagecraft and charm. Our winter production was the Teen Edition of *Six: The Musical*, a modern retelling of the stories of Henry VIII’s six wives, reimagined as a pop concert. With energetic performances and the addition of an ensemble. The show marked an exciting milestone for our program as we performed this Broadway hit. Finally, our spring musical was the timeless and hilarious *Once Upon A Mattress*, an adaptation of “The Princess and the Pea,” filled with quirky characters, fun songs, and a bustling ensemble. This classic comedy brought joy and laughter to the stage, wrapping up a remarkable year of theater in Weinmann Auditorium.



MERRY MEETING

Kindergarteners took the stage in the spring for the Merry Meeting Production of “Squirm” which put smiles on all of the faces in Weinmann Auditorium.



3RD AND 4TH GRADERS PERFORM BROADWAY BEAT

The 3rd and 4th graders put on two amazing performances of Broadway Beat. The audiences learned about the history of Broadway musicals while humming and dancing in their seats to hit after hit! The 4th graders wore costumes from several popular musicals and said their lines with expression and poise! We are so proud of these two grades and their strong stage presence.

HOLIDAY CONCERTS SPARKED JOY ACROSS CAMPUS

December’s many performances shared the joy of children’s voices raised in song. The 7th- to 12th-grade choral groups treated us to impressive performances, filling the auditorium with beautiful music sung by many talented singers. The 7th- to 12th-grade students again displayed their musical talents in the joy-filled Instrumental Concert. The 6th Grade Musical Extravaganza combined band, orchestra, and choral performances.

The busy holiday concert season concluded with the return of the Lower School Winter Holiday Concert. This hallmark performance brings our community together to be a part of the collective joy that is Lower School. What an excellent way to wrap up our holiday season and a year in the Arts on campus.



PIN RIVERS: WATERSHEDS AND SUSTAINABLE ART

This signature learning experience, “Pin Rivers: Watersheds and Sustainable Art,” was a cross-disciplinary collaboration between middle school science and art classes. Students explored the importance of watersheds in global civilizations, their natural changes, and human impact, while connecting these concepts to sustainable art and environmentalism.

Students engaged in hands-on activities, including creating large-scale watershed models using sustainable materials and pins, inspired by Maya Lin’s work, and painting watercolor riverscapes inspired by the Hudson River School artists. The lesson incorporated science presentations on watersheds and art discussions on Maya Lin’s sculptures, blending multiple modalities such as slideshows, videos, and group discussions.

By experimenting with roles like researching, directing, and painting, students worked collaboratively to produce and share their knowledge through an interactive art installation. They reflected on their learning and practiced artistic techniques, such as watercolor methods, to deepen their understanding of landscapes and environmental storytelling. The experience highlighted the intersection of science, art, and environmental awareness while fostering creativity and teamwork.



Athletics

STUDENT ATHLETIC TRAINERS

Athletic Trainers: Sarah Ramirez and Hijiri Sano

GOLF

Head Coach: Doug Gordon

BOYS

District: 2th,

Regionals: 6th

State Participant:

Tullis Gambel



BASEBALL

Head Coach:

Chris Chetta

Assistant Coaches: Sam Dozier,

Mark Drago

Overall Record: 10-15

District Finish: 3rd Place

All-District First Team: Sinnott Bland, Owen Marchal, Cam Rizzi

All-District Second Team: Maddox Moss

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Sinnott Bland, Jay Brady, Jack Davidson, James Rogers, Cooper Woods

SOFTBALL

Head Coach: Rob Ennis

Assistant Coach: Maddy Livaudais

Overall Record: 18-5

District Record: 1-2 (3rd)

LHSAA Class 2A Results:

Lost in Bi-District Playoff Round to Glenmora

LSWA 2A All-State Team

Honorable Mention: Mia Ennis

All-District First Team: Alaya

Bodden, Mia Ennis, Addie Lund, Maggie Schneider

Nola.com All-Metro Team:

Mia Ennis

SWIMMING

Head Coach: Shawn O'Neil

Assistant Coach: Kelly McGeehan

GIRLS

8th in State, 3rd in District

For individual swimming results visit mpcds.com/athletics/swimmingresults

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Head Coach: David Mosley

Assistant Coach: Joseph Mitchell

Overall Record: 3-16

District Record: 3rd Place

LHSAA State Results: 20th Seed;

Lost in First Round

All-District First Team: Mia Ennis, Addison Launey

All-District Honorable Mention:

Evelyn Rivas

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Evelyn Rivas

CHEERLEADING

Head Coach: Maddie Oberfoell

Pin It Forward Award:

Nicole Kazour

UCA All-American

Team Qualifier:

Claire Cannella, Jane Thompson

TENNIS

Head Coach: Buckner Heebe

Assistant Coach: Chep Morrison

Coordinator: Robyn Schwarz

GIRLS

Regionals Singles:

Semifinalist: Elizabeth Patin

Quarterfinalist: Caroline Schmidt

Regionals Doubles:

2nd Place: Evelyn Rivas & Bea

Schwarz

Semifinalists: Lulu Hayes & Parker

Leopold, Claire Cannella & Amelie

Ventola

State Singles:

2nd Round: Elizabeth Patin

1st Round: Caroline Schmidt

State Doubles:

Semifinalists: Evelyn Rivas & Bea

Schwarz

1st Round: Lulu Hayes & Parker

Leopold, Claire Cannella & Amelie

Ventola

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Pellegrina Cimini, Melissa

Morrison, Evelyn Rivas

LHSAA All-Academic Composite

Team: Claire Cannella

BOYS

Regionals Singles:

Semifinalist: John Hereford

Quarterfinalist: Webre Barlow

Regionals Doubles:

Champions: Jojo Hereford & Porter

Sinnott

Semifinalists: Charlie Kazour &

Cole Koppel

Quarterfinalists: Eli Franco & Will

Marsiglia

State Singles:

Quarterfinalist: John Hereford

1st Round: Webre Barlow

State Doubles:

Semifinalists: Jojo Hereford &

Porter Sinnott

Quarterfinalists: Charlie Kazour &

Cole Koppel

1st Round: Eli Franco & Will

Marsiglia

GIRLS' SOCCER

Head Coach:

Raquel Bueno

Assistant Coaches:

George Cano, Victoria Cano,

Lindsey Landry, Aimee Leachman

Overall Record: 9-10-1

District Record: 3-2

LHSAA Division IV State Results:

Lost in Bi-District Round to Calvary Baptist (0-2)

All-District First Team: Olivia

Cano, Gigi Dazet, Marygrace de la

Cruz, Lilly Welch

All-District Second Team: Vivian

Bordelon, Bea Schwarz, Louise

Stewart, Adeline Weidner

LHSCA All-State Team: Olivia

Cano

LHSAA All-Academic Composite

Team: Mary Lucy Charbonnet,

Marygrace de la Cruz



FOOTBALL

Head Coach:

Chris Chetta

Assistant Coaches:

Troy Baglio, Mark Drago, Austin

Duncan, David Mosley

Overall Record: 2-8

All-District First Team: Casey

Rizzi

All-District Second Team: Sinnott

Bland, McAllister Callejo, Brody

Cummings, Hagan Mimeles

All-Metro Team: Casey Rizzi

All-State Honorable Mention:

Casey Rizzi

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Sinnott Bland, William Singer,

Zachary Spangler

BOYS' SOCCER

Head Coach:

Raquel Bueno

Assistant Coaches:

George Cano, JP Ferrand

Overall Record: 12-11-0

District Champions

District Record: 5-1-0

LHSAA State Results: Lost in 2nd

Round to Holy Savior Menard (1-2)

All-District First Team: Isaac

Herzenberg, Noah Kaplan, Simon

LaGraize, Christian Myers, Hughes

Schneidau

All-District Second Team: George

Blessey, Soren Christensen, Charlie

Kazour, Max Mills, Henry Swope

All-State First Team: Isaac

Herzenberg

All-State Second Team: Noah

Kaplan, Simon LaGraize

LHSAA All-Academic Team: Jacob

Boelte, Simon LaGraize, Max Mills,

Henry Swope



TRACK & FIELD

Head Coach:

Jason Rouser

Assistant Coaches:

Troy Baglio, Maurice DuCarpe,

Susan Lee, Dom Maley

GIRLS

2nd in District, 2nd in Region, 6th in State

LHSAA All-Academic Composite

Team: Marygrace de la Cruz

LHSAA All-State Team: Lia

Beverly, Greer Bouza, Marygrace

de la Cruz, Stella Fuselier, Lily

Galliano, Constance Goldenberg,

Lorraine Goldenberg, Renee

Morantez, Jo Smith, Louise

Stewart

For individual track and field results, visit www.mpcds.com/athletics/trackandfieldresults

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Head Coach:

Mike McGuire

Assistant Coaches:

Kevis Anderson, Ronald Atmore,

Justin Napoli, Andrew Stoma

Overall Record: 21-14

District Runner-Up

LHSAA State Results:

Quarterfinalists

All-District First Team: Hermon

Dyson, Maddox Moss, Brennan

White

All-District Honorable Mention:

Phillip Antis, Andrew Nelson

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Phillip Antis, Jack Davidson,

James Rogers

CROSS COUNTRY

Head Coach:

Maurice DuCarpe

Assistant Coaches:

Haley Fayette, Susan Lee,

Dom Maley

BOYS

Regional Champions, State

Champions

Division IV Top Ten: Christian

Myers, Harry Odem

All-Regional Team: Charlie

Kazour, Christian Myers, Harry

Odem, Mason Zink

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Phillip Antis

GIRLS

3rd in Region, 2nd in State

All-Regional: Greer Bouza, Stella

Fuselier, Constance Goldenberg,

Lorraine Goldenberg, Louise

Stewart

LHSAA All-Academic Composite

Team: Marygrace de la Cruz



VOLLEYBALL

Head Coach:

Julie Ibieta

Assistant Coaches:

Myra Bordelon, Dana Launey,

Lauren Leaumont

Overall Record: 27-9

STATE CHAMPIONS, DISTRICT

CHAMPIONS

All-District First Team: Lia

Beverly (MVP), Gigi Dazet, Evelyn

Rivas, Maggie Schneider, Leila

Washington

All-District Second Team:

Addison Launey, Jane Gambel,

Julia Henry, Elle Nunez

District Coach of the Year: Julie

Ibieta

Division V All-State Team: Lia

Beverly, Gigi Dazet, Jane Gambel,

Addison Launey

Most Outstanding Player

Division V State Championship

Game: Jane Gambel

Division V Player of the Year: Gigi

Dazet

All-GeauxPreps Volleyball

Small Schools Team: Lia Beverly,

Addison Launey

All-Metro Team: Lia Beverly, Gigi

Dazet

All- Metro Honorable Mention:

Maggie Schneider, Leila

Washington

Metro Coach of the Year: Julie

Ibieta

LHSAA All-Star Team: Gigi Dazet

LHSAA All-Academic Team:

Pellegrina Cimini, Evelyn Rivas

MONTGOMERY AWARD

The award is given to any senior who has earned 9 or more varsity letters in separate seasons during their high school athletic career. Winners will have their names appear on the Robert Montgomery plaque, which is on display in the lobby of the Reily Recreation Center.

2023-2024 Recipients

Phillip Antis, Gigi Dazet, Simon LaGraize, Addie Lund, Maddox Moss,

Evelyn Rivas, Casey Rizzi, Jane Thompson

CARISELLA AWARD

The James "Jay" Carisella Award is awarded to two student-athletes who genuinely demonstrate outstanding character, dedication, team pride, and leadership, and create a positive, encouraging experience for the team. These students' names will be displayed on a plaque located in the lobby of the Reily Recreation Center.

2023-2024 Recipients

Phillip Antis, Marygrace de la Cruz

STEPHEN T. VICTORY AWARD

The award is given to recognize and honor those students who have committed themselves academically and athletically to the philosophy of the school. The criteria for the award is any senior who participated in two (2) sports in separate seasons during his or her freshman and sophomore years, who lettered in two (2) sports in separate seasons during his or her junior and senior year, and who has a cumulative rank in the top 20% of his or her class at the end of the first semester of their senior year. These students' names will be displayed on a plaque located in the lobby of the Reily Recreation Center.

2023-2024 Recipients

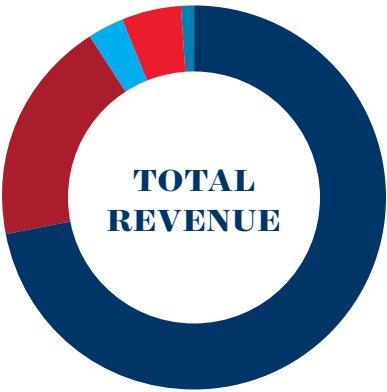
Sinnott Bland, Claire Cannella

Financial Statement 2023-24*

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Metairie Park Country Day School has an annual operating budget of \$19.8 million. The annual operating budget is funded through four major sources: Tuition; Auxiliary Services (Dining, Early Childhood, Summer Programs); Charitable Giving, such as the Country Day Fund; and Annual Endowment Draw.

	(Amts in '000)	
Tuition, net of Financial Assistance (\$3,570)	\$14,280	72%
Auxiliary Services: <i>Dining, Early Childhood, and Summer Programs</i>	\$3,840	19%
Annual Endowment Draw	\$550	3%
Contributions	\$970	5%
Other*	\$190	1%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$19,830	100%
* Includes governmental funding through American Rescue Plan Act program for early childhood centers.		



The largest expense in this operating budget is salaries for our faculty and support staff, which are the foundation of the strong and nurturing learning environment we build at Country Day. The remaining funds go toward funding our Instructional and Student Support Programs, including our impressive arts and athletics programs, providing financial aid, and maintaining our beautiful campus.

	(Amts in '000)	
Salaries, Taxes, and Benefits	\$13,480	68%
Instructional and Student Support Programming	\$1,700	9%
General and Administrative	\$2,460	12%
Plant Operations, including Debt Service	\$2,220	11%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$19,860	100%



* The 2023-24 fiscal year ended June 30. Internal reporting for the operating fund has been prepared, as shown above. The auditors will present the final financial statements with all required audit adjustments as part of the audit report as directed by the Board of Trustees and Audit Committee.



Development

THE 2023-2024 COUNTRY DAY FUND

The Country Day Fund is the School’s most important annual fundraising priority. It provides unrestricted funds that directly support the annual operating budget. Every year, approximately 4% of the operating budget is funded by the Country Day Fund. The cost of a Country Day education is significant, but tuition alone does not cover the entire cost of educating a Country Day student. Thus, every student actually receives a subsidy made possible through annual giving to the Country Day Fund.

Thanks to our generous donors and volunteers, the 2023-2024 Country Day Fund campaign broke numerous fundraising records for our school!

100%

Participation from
THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES

100%

Participation from
THE ALUMNI
BOARD

100%

Participation from
FACULTY
AND STAFF

70%

Participation from
PARENTS

We raised
\$864,230
exceeding our
\$800,000 GOAL
for the Country Day Fund

Over
75
VOLUNTEERS
for the
Country Day Fund

COUNTRY DAY FUND
CO-CHAIRS
Kristin and
John Stewart

COUNTRY DAY FUND
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COUNTRY DAY FUND
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Country Day Fund: Donors Report

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- » A full-spectrum athletics program
- » An enriched student life
- » Advanced technology
- » An exceptional campus and facilities
- » A culture rich in tradition

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Campus Enhancements

Bart Cottage Gains New Learning Areas and Enhanced Outdoor Spaces

Bart Cottage, home to our Pre-K students, underwent significant development this year thanks to a generous donation from Dathel and Tommy Coleman. This expansion underscored Country Day's unwavering commitment to fostering community and creating innovative learning environments that benefit our students for years to come.

The project, which began in the spring of 2024, added approximately 500 square feet to Bart Cottage by enclosing a portion of the existing Woodvine-side porch. This thoughtful development ensured that our Pre-K program could operate within a single building, providing flexibility to adapt our educational spaces to the evolving needs of each new Pre-K class. Upon completion, Bart Cottage featured four separate yet interconnected learning areas, four student bathrooms,

and a faculty bathroom, all designed to support a variety of educational activities.

Throughout the project, we remained steadfast in our commitment to preserving the original integrity of Bart Cottage while seamlessly blending indoor learning spaces with outdoor educational environments. A section of the Woodvine-side porch was retained, featuring tables and a new, second ADA-compliant ramp. An additional shade station was elegantly installed between Bart Cottage and Woodvine to enrich our outdoor learning spaces, providing increased shaded areas.

The doors to the newly expanded Bart Cottage opened for the Class of 2038 at the commencement of the 2024-2025 academic year.



Honoring Legacy and Progress: The Unveiling of Freedom Field

On Thursday, June 6, the Caroline and Bo Reily family, alongside other generous supporters, marked a momentous occasion: the groundbreaking of Freedom Field, a state-of-the-art turf athletic facility at Country Day. The Reily family has also graciously gifted a new scoreboard to Freedom Field, a tribute to their beloved son, Jack Reily '11.

Head of School, Rob Hereford, articulated the project's impact, declaring, "This is an extraordinary moment in the history of Country Day. Thanks to the generosity of the Reily family and friends, our School will now have a state-of-the-art field where our student-athletes can play and train year-round. This versatile field will accommodate multiple sports, including football, boys' and girls' soccer, boys' and girls' track and field, as well as our physical education programs across all divisions."

Named Freedom Field, this facility pays homage to the pioneering words of Country Day's founding Head of School, Ralph Boothby, who championed freedom in personal development and underscored the vital role of physical education. This field epitomizes the school's dedication to offering superior facilities and fostering student growth through the dual pursuits of academics and athletics.

On Friday, October 4, 2024, Freedom Field and the scoreboard were unveiled during the inaugural home football game against Patrick Taylor. Before kickoff, Rob Hereford reiterated the field's significance and acknowledged the project's generous donors. Bo Reily '78 then led the stands in a rendition of the National Anthem, setting the stage for the Cajuns' triumphant 20-0 victory.



Looking Forward

BY ROB HEREFORD, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Spend even a moment on the Country Day campus during a school day, and you'll feel it—the vibrant, palpable energy everywhere. From Freedom Field to Chandler Circle, students are fully present, diving into rich growth experiences with their peers and faculty that enhance their skills, build their knowledge, and develop confidence in themselves. You'll find eighth graders bringing science to life as they design and build roller coasters in Physical Science, upper school artists bending wire into meaningful sculptures in Metals class, and PreK students discovering movement and balance in PE with wide-eyed wonder. Every corner of campus hums with growth, curiosity, creativity, and the quiet magic of students discovering their potential, one moment and day at a time.

These vibrant, transformative experiences are born from our distinguished faculty's imagination, passion, and dedication. Each Country Day teacher brings care, creativity, and expertise into every classroom on our campus, helping our students cultivate talents that, in many cases, no one else knew they had—unlocking a profound sense of self-confidence that empowers them to take healthy risks, to try new things, and to grow into the people we want them to become.

Teaching is a profession filled with both challenges and incredible rewards. Over the last few years, the role of an educator has evolved in ways none of us could have imagined. From navigating the unimaginable hurdles of teaching during a pandemic to assessing the impacts of the rapid rise of artificial intelligence in the classroom or battling the magnetic distractions of social media's ever-present pull on students, teachers face a far more challenging landscape than ever before. There are countless stories about the struggles that schools face to attract and retain strong faculty members in this complicated time.

And yet, despite these obstacles, we still have a diverse array of incredible teachers at Country Day who continue to work hard to provide signature learning experiences for our

students each day. This commitment to nurturing young minds isn't new to Country Day—it's woven into our history. If you spend time in our community, you'll hear countless stories of teachers who have left a mark on our students' lives, shaping them into thoughtful, curious, and compassionate adults. These teachers, from past generations to those in our classrooms today, are the lifeblood of our school. They create the experiences and relationships that make our community special, that transform a school into a home filled with purpose and connection.

At the same time, these are exciting times for Country Day. The recent dedication of Freedom Field and the development of the natural grass PE field on the site of the former Big Shot bottling plant on the northeast corner of campus are just the beginning. These successful projects represent the first steps of our Campus Master Plan, a twenty-five-year vision of the future of Country Day's facilities. This plan is more than just a blueprint for new buildings; it's a foundation for the next century of Country Day, ensuring our facilities grow to meet the needs of our students and our mission. But, we must pause and recognize that while essential, this plan contains only a fraction of the formula essential for Country Day to thrive well into its next century.

But as we look to the future, we must never lose sight of what has always been the soul of Country Day: our outstanding faculty. These individuals are the ones who breathe life into our classrooms, who inspire curiosity, who foster critical thinking, who guide our students to become citizens of character and compassion. Without them, our new facilities would be mere empty structures. Investing in our faculty is our most vital responsibility as a school—ensuring they feel supported, valued, and empowered to continue their life-changing work.

I think my big question at the end is - so what will we be doing for faculty alongside the master plan? How are we investing in them to ensure they remain the heart of our school - and how will that be different than before?



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