
FALL 2026
GEORGETOWN DAYS
2026 GIVING REPORT
HEALING ACROSS DIVIDES
Dr. Adam Goldstein '98
p.68
TORI JUEDS
TAKING the LEAD
p.28
MIAMI

WHERE STUDENTS LOVE TO LEARN AND LEARN TO CHANGE THE WORLD

FALL 2026

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Tori Jueds

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In this Issue

2 A MESSAGE FROM TORI JUEDS

4 COMMUNITY COUNTS

14 2026 GRADUATION

22 AROUND CAMPUS

28 **FEATURE**
A New Chapter for GDS: Tori Jueds

42 ATHLETICS

50 ARTS + PERFORMANCES

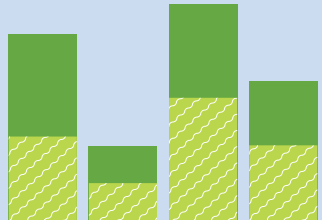
56 FACULTY

68 ALUMNI

SPECIAL SECTION

After p.76

GIVING REPORT
Honoring the extraordinary support that fuels our community every day





This Must Be the Place

A Message from Tori Jueds



PHOTO BY DAVID GILLESPIE

→ Hooked on Community: Sharing a laugh with the Fishing Club.

When I was interviewing for the head of school role, I was delighted by the range of questions that GDS students asked me. By middle and high schoolers alike, I was asked about very weighty topics like AI, journalistic independence, and access to buildings for disabled persons. But I was also asked which house I would be in at Hogwarts (Ravenclaw), what would be my personal mascot if I had a mascot like the school has the Hopper (a condor), whether we can have a football team (sorry!), and what's my favorite color (green, naturally).

That taught me a lot about GDS, right then and there. These are students who understand that we all have the responsibility to work together to make the world a better place. But they are also kids with a healthy sense of silliness and fun. They—and we—need both of those things. A good school teaches young people about grave aspects of the human experience that need our attention; a great school does that even while it engages them in the joys of being human.

GDS is a great school. We encourage students to dream big about changing the world,

↓ Tori going all-in on Hopper Pride!



PHOTO BY CORY ROYSTER



PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

↑ Engaging in fun and silliness on "First Friday.

intentionally expanding their spheres of concern throughout their years here. Programming through the Impact Lab, for example, is designed to lead them from work on the self and identity in Lower School, to the community and city in Middle School, to the nation and world in High School. And yet from the beginning, students are encouraged to embrace both the fun and the serious. A few days into the new school year, I visited a second-grade classroom in which the children were talking about their hopes and dreams and setting goals for the year. One student had written "get better at math" on his worksheet, but he had also written the all-important word "play." His neighbor, likewise, had "fun" on her worksheet. But she also vowed to learn both French and Twi this school year. It made me a little wistful to think that as she grows up, she will learn about some of the things that constrain our goals, like the limited number of hours in any given day!

But I am heartened by the fact that while we teach judgment, proportion, and realism, we never teach that ambition itself is naïve. At the High School Club Fair a few days later, new and returning endeavors were geared towards important and lofty ambitions like curing cancer, promoting dialogue across cultural and ideological differences, and ending domestic violence and human trafficking.And right next to those groups was the cheese club, the purpose of which is… to eat cheese. Across the field was the fishing club, dedicated to the joy of skillful and responsible fishing. Potential new members of the fishing club were lured in (pun intended) by a little plastic fishing toy that amplified the sense of fun.

I feel indescribably lucky to have joined a community in which we teach children about the world as it actually is without educating out of them the imagination, ambition, and playfulness that will enhance their ability to make it better.

That matters so much these days. Children today encounter genuine reasons for seriousness: technology risks, political division, war and violence, inequitable institutions, and environmental problems. Growing up necessitates acquiring a clear understanding of reality. But it should never entail a smaller sense of possibility or less access to joy. In these pages, you will find ample evidence that GDS gets it. You will find students engaged in activism on gun violence and an alumnus promoting Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, but you will also find monsters. Enjoy!

Tori



→ Whimsical monsters in hand.







Country Market Day and Sports Saturday

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

The threat of a nor'easter did not dampen enthusiasm at Country Market Day and Sports Saturday on September 26. The event, usually held later in the fall, was free for the first time. Hoppers of all ages enjoyed games, rides, arts and crafts, a (first-ever) reptile exhibit, and live entertainment on the LMS campus, while spectators cheered on the varsity soccer teams on the High School field. Led by committee co-chair parents Kelli Baron and Ateesha Lacoste, the event delighted young and old, who departed with tasty treats from the Sweet Shoppe, new reads from the Used Book Store, and happy memories.

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ





























Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day

APRIL 24, 2026

On April 24, the Lower/Middle School was buzzing with excitement as students welcomed hundreds of cherished guests to campus for Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day. This annual tradition offers students a chance to open up their daily world to some of the people who love them most. Guests—some of whom were once GDS parents—traveled from across the country and around the globe to get a firsthand look at school life. They visited classrooms, participated in some lessons, and enjoyed musical performances. Many opted to take the stairs between floors, getting a step-by-step feel for just how much ground our students cover each day!

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ



























→ (Right) Third-grade teacher Todd Carter helped launch Fancy Sparkly Day.

Fancy Sparkly Day

MAY 1, 2026

A new tradition took hold in the spring of 2023 when two third graders—Mary Katherine Mulvihill '32 and Samyuktha Naryan '32—wanted their classmates to dress in their glittery best for a day. Their teacher, Todd Carter, helped them dream big. And just like that, Fancy Sparkly Day came to life, featuring a parade that encourages everyone to join the third graders and wear something that makes them feel beautiful—especially if it shines.

The celebration became such a hit that Todd applied for official recognition from DC Mayor Muriel Bowser. She obliged, proclaiming May 30, 2025, as Fancy Sparkly Day across the city.

The tradition continued on May 1, 2026, with a spirited turnout just outside the LMS building at the corner of 42nd and Ellicott streets. Faculty from all divisions—and at least one DC police officer–joined the merriment. Janney Elementary School held a similar parade on its campus.

PHOTOS BY DAVID GILLESPIE













STEAM Day

APRIL 15, 2026

The annual Lower/Middle School STEAM Day on April 15 featured workshops and activities led by faculty, GDS parents, and outside experts. The school paused classes for the day so that students could build, code, experiment, and innovate. The workshops featured everything from fossil excavation and sensory tables for the Lower School. The offerings for older students included making and experimenting with slime, using AI for construction projects, learning about 3D printing, an escape room in the library, and much more.













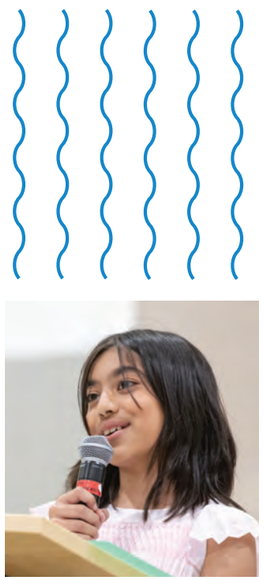
4th Grade Promotion

JUNE 4, 2026

Memories of Lower School abounded at the 4th Grade Promotion Ceremony on June 4, 2026. Lower School Principal Christy Diefenderfer spoke about a memory she cherishes from the Class of 2034 trip to Manidokan Camp in Maryland. From atop a hill overlooking the field where the class had gathered, she witnessed how inclusive, creative, and helpful the students were. "I will always close my eyes and see the class of 2034 running around on the field, demonstrating their wonderful collective qualities," said Christy. The students who shared memories of their Lower School experience during the ceremony were Ben Greenstein, Enaaya Saif, Gabriel Suarez, and Mishil-Neliah Thach Smith.

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ











8th Grade Closing Ceremony

JUNE 4, 2026

Middle School Principal Kelsey Twist Schroeder encouraged the Class of 2030 to choose courage over certainty when encountering challenges or moments of doubt. At the 8th Grade Closing Ceremony on June 4, she advised the students to remember three short words: "Do it anyway." Student speakers Siri Garin, Faisal Hasan, and Dylan Kim reflected on how they grew individually and collectively during their middle school years. "Every small success, every time we tried and failed and tried again—these moments didn't disappear. They became part of who we are now," Dylan said.

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

















Senior Walk

MAY 8, 2026

The Class of 2026 basked in the glow of a campus-wide celebration during Senior Walk on May 8, their final day of school. Clad in the t-shirts of their future colleges, seniors paraded through the halls and fields of each division. Lining the route were fellow students and faculty, who greeted them with cheers, rustling pom-poms, and hand-made congratulatory signs. Fists were bumped and tears were shed as seniors passed through a pool-noodle archway formed by faculty on the high school field, marking the official end of the festivities.

PHOTOS BY DAVID GILLESPIE















Celebrating the CLASS of 2026



PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ





SPEAKERS





"I urge my fellow graduates to be cautious, but not to be scared. Do not look at what is wrong in the world and become paralyzed. Instead, understand that this is an opportunity for immense positive change. I hope that you will speak up for what you believe in, even if you are the first to do so, even if your voice is shaking, even if you are told it would be easier to stay silent."

Sarah Sakr '26, class speaker

"The world will need you and your example, but the truth is, so will we. When you can, find the good and praise it; learn from everyone, and please, please keep sending us your dispatches from the curious life. Be our best teachers."

Franklin Foer '92, author and parent speaker

"Life isn't just about fitting in; it's about becoming who you are meant to be. …You get to decide the path you travel."

Chris Levy, interim high school principal and administration speaker







The GDS community gathered on June 7, 2026, to celebrate the commencement of 137 seniors, who filed into the Lower/Middle School gymnasium to the roaring cheers of family, friends, and faculty. Two hours later, they left with their tassels turned, their diplomas in hand, and their pride sky-high.

A lineup of cherished voices anchored the event. Head of School Russell Shaw delivered a poignant final commencement address after 16 years of leadership, followed by remarks from Interim High School Principal Chris Levy. Director of Student Community Programming Bobby Asher then took the stage as the faculty speaker before author Franklin Foer '92 (father of Theo '26 and Sadie '23) offered a warm, generational perspective as the parent speaker. Bringing the program home, Sarah Sakr '26 and Henry Fragale '26 closed out the addresses with reflections on what GDS meant to them.

Throughout the ceremony, musical performances by student ensembles added to the festive atmosphere. Afterward, the celebration moved outdoors for a sunny reception, where graduates and guests gathered to linger, share hugs, and snap photos.







"Understanding. That is the best way I can summarize what GDS has given me: a better understanding of how the world works and a lasting memory of the people who helped me understand."

Henry Fragale '26, class speaker

"In a world where more than ever people live and work alone, where texting has replaced talking, and online is more frequent than in person, your ability to connect is your superpower. Make it a habit."

Bobby Asher, director of student community programming and faculty speaker

"My hope is that GDS has helped you to set your compass, not by telling you what to think, but by surrounding you with people who challenged you to think more deeply, by giving you freedom and trusting you with it, by teaching you how to sit with really hard questions, and by helping you discover not just what you're good at but also what you care about."

Fifth Head of School Russell Shaw

Class of 2026



Nico Max Schule Abbate

Suleiman A. H. Ajmeri

Paul Alle-Koffi Junior

Tessa Satya Antonipillai

Sosena Audain

Benjamin Joseph Bellavia-Cortezi

Raghav Belle Trichur

Corina Mei Bellermann

Andrew Michael Bennett

Dominic Arthur Edward Bloch-Prime

Alexander Edmond Iwegbu Bobo

Kyle D. Britton II

Charles David Brooks

Nakeyia Laticia Michelle Brunson

Robert Joseph Bulman

Helene Marie Burwell

Sebastian Butts

Jaden Willie Carnegie

Sukanya Divya Chandra

Lauren Michelle Claggett

Lina Morouj Mahdi Colla

Jacob Robert Curtis Contee

Poppy Jemima Davies

Bodi De

Teresa Dean

Sanae Genicot Debgupta

Alec Donath

Aden Mariam Allana Ebert

Avery Eva Ekua Eshun

Ethan Saul Hardy Farber

Tessa Marie Fergusson

Anya Finkelstein

Emiko Pollard Fitzgibbons

Theodora Safran Foer

Gianluca David Fontaine

Henry Jasper Fragale

Tristan Gabrielle Fulton

Madeleine Cloud Genia

Charlotte Jane Glendinning

Benjamin Reid Gold

Sophie Violet Gresens

Ambar Kaur Grewal

Jordyn Damoni Hammonds

Ella Ann Higday

Sabine Mildred Hletko Wood

Parker Joseph Holland

Kihika Mwamba Obonyo Hyera

Nura Eve Idriss

Leo Thomas Johnson-Goldfrank

Zuri Sanaa Jones

Thomas Roosevelt Jones IV

Alexandra Mae Kanarek

Benjamin Meyer Kanter

Cole Alexander Kaplan

Georgia Elizabeth Swain Kaufman

Sander Kearns

Simon Ali Kessler

Grace Meade Khuzami

Noah Spencer Kolker

Carter William Kunz

Molly Frederica Kurtzer-Ellenbogen

Violet Alexandra Landberg Fernandez

Charlotte Anya Lee

Mad Elle Lee

Rachel Wen Lee

Gavin Xavier Leonard

Andrew Leopold

Sikai Li

Ryan Skyler Libby

Marc JS Liebowitz

Eric Jiayang Liu

Sasha Parker Lowit

Julian Perkins Lucas

Zoe Abramson Maas

Tatum Parker Mach

Aarav Ved Malhotra

Oliver Malkin

Anjali Hazel Martin-Shanker

Franco Nabil Martorana

Esmé Julianna Mazo

Fiona Lucille McDermott

Iman Noel McNeil

Finley Foster Meyer

Mkazoya Viyanda Mghenyi

Caitlin Olivia Mohr

Aron Kleber Moldabek-Machado

John Conrad Morsberger

Arohi Narayan

Lia Rose Oremland

Helena Oscherwitz

Ares Manuel Osorio

Khalin Utpal Patel

Winifred Harding Penniman



Emilio Alejandro Perez

Oliver Harry Perl

Theo Gus Perl

Eloise Perry

Marshall Lee Piper

Annabel Sherman Price

Lucas Yujia Qi

Caitlyn Quint

Adam Ramzy

Emma Dellyn Renigar

Nathan Ryan Ridl

Alexander Rider Rohrbaugh

Natasha Grace Rubinson

Rachel Mae Sachs

Sarah Sakr

Nicholas Salehizadeh

Aline Rami Salib

Ivy Qun-Zhen Sand

Sabrina Maimoona Sandhu

Eleanor Rena Schneider

Quinn Michael Shields

Finn Shima

Brady William Shipe

Mirabelle Silla

Paul Robert Smith

Avery Wallace Snyder

Alexandra Chase Solomon

Asher Steiner

Nicole Alexandra Stutson

Ahseob Lomahn Sun

Henry Tran Tam

Amit Rama Tate

Lucia Calvet Tirado

Julian Morris Turim

Ucheoma Moses Ukaoma

Nikhil Frederick von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg

Henry Isaac Wachs

Patrick Weaver

Mikhail Johan Westelius

Gabrielle Hunter Wigglesworth

Oliver Samuel Wolin

Samuel Henry Wood

Nathaniel Zia

Jonah Seymour Zucker





Where are they now?







Agnes Scott College

Amherst College

Barnard College

Bates College

Boston University

Bowdoin College

Bowie State University

Brandeis University

Brown University

Bucknell University

Carleton College

Case Western Reserve University



Claremont McKenna College

Colby College

Colgate University

Colorado College

Colorado School of Mines

Columbia University

Dartmouth College

Denison University

Dickinson College

Drexel University

Duke University

Emory University

Fairfield University

Florida Atlantic University

Fordham University

George Washington University

Harvard University

Haverford College

Howard University

Lehigh University

Loyola Marymount University

Macalester College

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

McGill University

Middlebury College

Morehouse College

New York University

North Carolina A&T State University

Northeastern University

Northwestern University



Oberlin College

Occidental College

Penn State University

Pitzer College

San Diego State University

San Francisco State University

Santa Clara University

Santa Monica College

Spelman College

St. Lawrence University

Stanford University

Temple University

The Ohio State University

Tufts University

Tulane University

Union College

University of California (Los Angeles)

University of Chicago

University of Colorado (Boulder)

University of Maryland

University of Miami

University of Michigan

University of Pennsylvania

University of Pittsburgh

University of Richmond

University of Southern California

University of St Andrews

Sewanee: The University of the South

University of the South

University of Toronto

University of Utah

University of Vermont

University of Virginia

University of Washington

University of Wisconsin

Vanderbilt University

Virginia Tech

Wake Forest University

Washington University in St. Louis

Wesleyan University

William & Mary

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Yale University



the Post-GDS playbook

Class of 2026, meet the Class of 2026.

As GDS High School grads settle into their first semester of college this fall, two GDS alumni who earned their university degrees this same year reflect on their four-year journey and share the hindsight they wish they'd had on day one.



"Optimize your Curiosity."

Nolawit Elias '22

Stanford, BA in Bioscience, 2026

Nolawit is an investment analyst at a private equity firm in San Francisco

"Don't just optimize your resume, optimize your curiosity. I entered college with a rigid plan: to major in bioengineering, work in multiple labs, go to medical school, and become a physician. I worked in three different bioscience labs and took all the pre-med courses I could. But instead of being excited by all these opportunities, I was just going through the motions. That's when I realized I needed to take a step back and look at what else the institution had to offer. I took some creative classes and joined a consulting club. I explored healthcare and pharmaceuticals from a business perspective and became interested in how to bring new drugs to the market and make them accessible to the communities that need them most.

"It was scary to walk away from an identity I spent years building. Changing direction can feel like starting over, but it's really about learning something new. It's important to say yes to the class that intimidates you, the professor whose work fascinates you, or the opportunity that simply makes you curious. Curiosity will take you further than certainty ever will."



"Allow yourself to explore & see where the detours lead you."

Julian Galkin '22 (a.k.a. Julian Harper)

New York University, BFA in recorded music, 2026

Julian is writing and producing his own album while interning at a Manhattan music studio.

"Sometimes, there's an expectation to follow a linear path. For me, many of the best things that happened in the past four years happened because I veered off that path. Allow yourself to explore and see where the detours lead you. Sometimes the detours can be the right course, and if they're not, that can be just as valuable because you will learn from that, too.

"For instance, I led the Five O'Clock Shadow a cappella group at GDS, but I did not plan to continue with a cappella in college until a friend goaded me into auditioning because one of the groups needed lower voices. I got in, and four months later, I became the president. I spent the last three years leading this group, and it was the most special part of my college experience. I got to sing in Radio City Music Hall four times and at Yankee Stadium. I met so many of my forever friends doing this. I realized that all the lessons I learned in GDS clubs, choir, and theater never left my brain and ended up dictating so many of the choices I made."

CROSS-CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

The Imagination Exchange

High School Artists Bring First-Grade Visions to Life



↙ Will Pittleman '37 loved his ceramic beast, Banana. "It's huuuuge," he said.

↓ JP Walker '37 drew "Willie" with six arms, and Kihika Hyera '26 spent hours making a ceramic version



↙ Maya Esparza-Biang '37 said her spotted "Boolgal" looks like a "monster dalmatian." Alex Rohrbaugh '26 told her "a whole bunch of high schoolers" wanted to sculpt it because it was "so cool."





> "I wanted them to think about how art can be used as a tool to connect communities."
> **HS Visual Arts Chair Sarah Riley**

↙ Valerie Appiah '37 fittingly named her monster 67





As he was leaving the first grade classroom, Kihika Hyera '26 spotted his young "client" staring in dismay at a broken clay limb. It belonged to the six-armed ceramic monster Kihika had sculpted. The first grader's heartbreak was matched by Kihika's guilt as he wondered if better craftsmanship could have spared the boy's disappointment.

Both Kihika and his client, JP Walker '37, were equally invested in the art, and that was the point. In art class, the kindergartners used their imagination to invent monsters, guided by lessons on forming shapes and conveying intent through detail. After drafting four sketches, each student selected a favorite to hand over to their high school peers in the ceramics and sculpture program. The older students then set to work, shaping the images into clay sculptures as part of their culminating project for the 2025-26 school year.

Ultimately, the partnership was designed to shift the focus of the art room from individual expression to a shared experience across the school's divisions.

"I wanted [the high school students] to approach the first graders as clients because I wanted them to think beyond their own ideas," said HS Visual Arts Chair Sarah Riley, who initiated the project. "It's a deeper level of thinking that goes beyond technical skills to taking inspiration from someone else's work. I wanted them to think about how art can be used as a tool to connect communities."

Ashley Ortiz, an LMS visual arts teacher, said the final reveal carried emotional weight. Some first graders marveled at the physical scale of the monsters. Others, new to the concept of sculpture, expected plush toys. And many relished the embellishments. One student drew her monster holding a mound of popcorn and was delighted when her high school partner crafted a classic red-and-white popcorn container in the monster's hand.

"With art in general, it can sometimes feel like it belongs to you because you made it," said Ashley, who partnered with LMS visual arts teacher Jenn Heffernan on the project. "This process really helped the kids understand that when you make art, other people can have their own interpretation."

That sense of shared ownership between the artists is precisely why Kihika invested many hours across multiple studio sessions to craft a physical manifestation of JP's imagination. It is also why, instead of walking out the door, the teenager pivoted to comfort his younger partner when the appendage snapped off, assuring him that it could be mended. "A little hot glue should return it to exactly what it was," Kihika said.

While Sarah could not have predicted this exact mishap when designing the collaboration, the disruption provided a lesson more profound than any technical instruction. "It's an opportunity for care," Sarah said. "Seeing how a high schooler stepped into that moment and showed up with a sense of empathy is entirely in the spirit of this project."

PARTNERS IN INNOVATION

Beyond the Math Worksheet

Bridging abstract concepts with technology to build a new era of mathematical thinkers



↑ Roya Woods '31 (right) and Hunter Seymour '31, brainstorming and prototyping bridge and tower designs

↓ Thomas Bottum '32 focuses on Maker Math project



Welcome to the new era of Middle School math–part drafting studio, part data lab, and part engineering zone. By integrating weekly innovation and computer design classes into the math curriculum, fifth- and sixth-graders are no longer just solving for X.

For instance, the fifth graders studied Frank Gehry's iconic designs and then drafted their own home blueprints by hand before transitioning to modern computer-aided design software. In another unit, they engaged in data analysis by overlaying a coordinate grid on a map of DC to plot supermarket locations. The pattern that emerged was striking: An abundance of stores in Northwest DC compared to very few in Southeast.

"Instead of us feeding them information about food inequity, they used basic math tools to reach their own conclusions," said LMS Innovation and Computer Science Department Chair Chris Coogen. The GDS Impact Lab followed up by introducing the class to local groups working to combat the problem.

Chris launched the Maker Math program with MS Mathematics Department Chair Daniel Schweikhard in the 2025-26 school year, and they're working to refine the partnership this academic year. "This project-based model really appeals to students by engaging them in creative ways that get them excited about the curriculum," Chris said.

In the sixth grade, friendly classroom competitions to engineer durable structures were a big hit—including one that required using a limited amount of cardboard and glue to build a bridge that could hold as much weight as possible over a two-foot gap. After doing some research, Colin Williams '31 and his partner, Martin Mondragon '31, recognized that the ends and sides of a bridge were naturally robust, so they focused their energy on reinforcing the middle, the most vulnerable spot. The strategy paid off: their design emerged the winner, withstanding 16 pounds of weight.

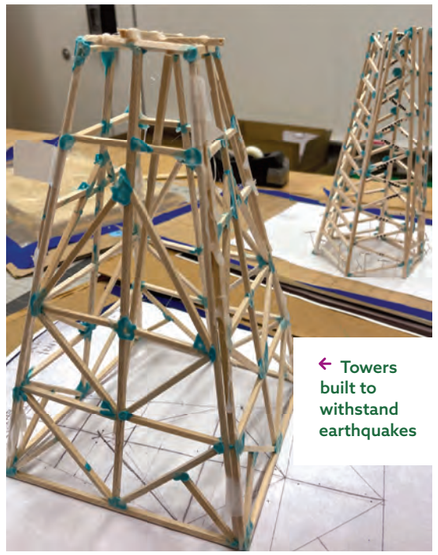
"It was my favorite project because you could use your creativity," Colin said. "It was hard but fun. Months later, I am still thinking of how I could improve that design."

Each project brought a dose of frustration. "It was a lot of trial and error," said Roya Woods '31 about the challenge of building an earthquake-resistant tower out of cardboard and balsa wood pieces. "It was a lot of calculations. The measurements had to be exact when you were putting all the pieces together. If it was just a centimeter off, the pieces wouldn't connect properly. It was 'ugh' when it didn't fit together."

Roya concluded it was a lesson in math, architecture, and resilience.

The same challenge taught Benjamin Kligerman '31 about how force transfers down a structure, he said, and what types of trusses hold the most weight. But it also opened his mind to the possibilities. "It helped me understand how math can feed into a lot of innovation," he added.

In the end, all the towers withstood the tremors of the earthquake simulator—a reminder of how numbers don't just sit on a page; they build, solve, and create.



← Towers built to withstand earthquakes

SPOTLIGHT



Math Wiz Noah Kravitz

Noah Kravitz '16 spends his time trying to solve previously unsolved math problems.

That's how he boils down his current work as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oxford, where he specializes in combinatorics. This branch of mathematics involves what one British scholar described as "selecting, arranging, and counting objects" to solve complex problems—such as the number of possible Sudoku combinations or whether there are 37 Londoners with the exact same number of hairs on their heads.

"I study questions that people haven't been able to answer, or haven't looked at from a certain angle, or haven't thought to ask at all, and I try to find resolutions that explain how the underlying phenomena work," Noah said. The questions may seem esoteric, but the field has massive real-world applications in computer science, cryptography, and connections in social networks. "The solutions can be complicated," he added, "and it's not just about the answer, but how you got there and the techniques you developed along the way."

Noah can't recall when his love of math started. But he credits former GDS teacher Andy Lipps for "teaching me the possibilities of math beyond the classroom," as Noah wrote in 2021 when he won an honorable mention for the Morgan Prize, awarded for outstanding undergraduate research. He was a Yale student at the time and later earned his PhD in mathematics at Princeton University.

For Noah, the beauty of math still lies in its endless possibilities. "There's a perception in K-12 that math progresses in a linear track toward calculus, but that's not the whole story," he said. "The field can take you in so many different directions. Math encompasses everything about which you can reason in an airtight, logical way, not just numbers and equations."

September 11 Reflections*

To mark the 25th anniversary of 9/11, we share reflections from across the GDS community—honoring the perspectives of longtime faculty, an alumna, and a current student born into the world that followed.



"I had divided my 9th-grade class into groups for an activity, and I was about to have one or two groups work in the hall to free up space. I noticed that [then-HS Principal] Paul Levy and other administrators had gathered all the seniors there, and they looked serious. I felt something was wrong. I saw a senior boy place his hand on Paul's shoulder, like a comforting gesture. That moment stuck with me."

– Lisa Rauschart, HS history teacher



"I was a freshman at Bowdoin and had stopped by the coffee shop after my biology class. That's when I saw the TV, dropped my coffee, and ran back to the dorm. I knew what I had to do. There were two other GDS alumni–Aimee Douglas and Brady Kirchberg–at Bowdoin. We had not been particularly close at GDS. But on that day, we sought comfort in our shared history, and we were there for each other. This lesson still remains true: whether younger or older than me, by a year or a decade, I know someone who went to GDS will get it."

– Jess Berenson '01



By noon, the [LMS] was empty, and we learned that Flight 93 had crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. When I finally left school, my own children in tow, Washington, DC, felt eerily deserted. Helicopters circled overhead, and smoke from the Pentagon was visible.

– Michael Desautels, MS science teacher



"It was picture day for our pre-K students. I was walking through the lobby with my nine little ones behind me when a colleague whispered to me that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center buildings. By the time we were done, the second plane had hit. Quietly, [then-LS Principal] Gloria Runyon told us to go back to our classrooms, pull down our blinds, and stay put. For our kids, that meant snack time and play. They were confused when mom or dad came to pick them up early. The looks on the parents' faces were downright frightening. They were just coming in raw."

– Jody Welsh, kindergarten teacher



"My dad was a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserves, living in Washington, DC, and he told me he knew it was a terrorist attack when the second plane hit the tower. He knew he'd have to deploy, and two weeks later, he was sent to Jordan. For the next 15 years, he was engaged in counterterrorism work for the U.S. government. I always knew the facts of the tragedy, but hearing my parents talk about 9/11 gave me a more sobering understanding. It was a normal day, like any other, until everything suddenly changed."

– Jack Gresens '28, who interviewed his parents as a 9th grader in Topher Dunne's history class

**Portions of this compilation reprinted from* Georgetown Days' *80th Anniversary edition*

ADVOCACY & CHANGE

Speaking Out Against Gun Violence

Why two determined students founded Students Against Gun Violence—and took their message straight to the DC Council

Nate Zia speaking in front of the DC Council



Nate Zia '26 testified before the DC Council in December 2025 to support a measure designed to combat gun violence in the nation's capital–a cause he's championed with his GDS peers since his sophomore year.

Nate told the council's Judiciary and Public Safety committee that the issue hit close to home. He cited the 2022 shooting of GDS security guard Tony Harris, who survived life-threatening injuries after a gunman opened fire while Tony was directing afternoon carpool traffic at Edmund Burke School, just a few miles from GDS.

"We will not accept the band-aid solution to gun violence that emphasizes a stronger police presence in the city," said Nate, one of the youngest speakers at that hearing. "Instead, we recognize collectively that gun violence stems from a lack of proper mental health resources, education systems, and job opportunities."

Local Influence, National Reach

Nate spoke on behalf of Students Against Gun Violence, which he launched with Andrew Leopold '26 under the umbrella of GDS's Student Action Committee in 2023. That year, FBI data showed a two-decade peak in DC's homicide rate alongside sharp jumps in gun assaults, robberies, and carjackings. Despite a steep decline in gun violence since then, the District's per capita firearm homicide rate remains elevated compared to most major cities.

Determined to make a difference, Nate and Andrew mobilized their peers to rally under the tagline "Lift our voices. Lift our city." The effort quickly gained traction.

In June 2024, Students Against Gun Violence hosted a summit at a DC public library that attracted youth from all over the city. The summit–funded by a $3,000 grant from the DC government–featured three victims of gun violence who shared their stories. Attendees brainstormed ways to move towards a safer and more interconnected DC.

Nate's testimony last year marked another milestone. He told council members that the Evidence-Based Gun Violence Reduction and Prevention Act–which proposed a community-based, data-oriented approach to tamping down the city's gun violence–was a "meaningful start." Alas, the measure stalled in committee.

Undeterred, he and other GDS students joined a Georgetown University chapter of Students Demand Action for a lobbying day on Capitol Hill in March 2026. They met with staff in the offices of DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin '79 to express their support for the GOSAFE Act, which would restrict possession of certain firearms.

To keep the issue of gun violence front and center, the group holds an annual 5k run and hosts on-campus events featuring outside speakers. In April 2026, a group of students met via Zoom to hear from historian Dominic Erdozain, whose 2024 book *One Nation Under Guns* examines the role of guns in a functioning democracy.

Maintaining Momentum

Before they graduated in June, Nate and Andrew worked to identify the next generation of leaders for Students Against Gun Violence. Last year, they set up a booth at Eco Market Day and other events to recruit new members.

Zoe Wolin '28 said she stands ready, eager to take part in what she described as the most active group within the Student Action Committee. "We're excited to continue the group's focus on advocacy and taking action," Zoe said.



PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

TORI READS TO STUDENTS DURING COUNTRY MARKET DAY AND SPORTS SATURDAY IN SEPTEMBER

a NEW CHAPTER *for* GDS

Tori Jueds

On July 1, Tori Jueds stepped into her role as Head of School, ushering in an exciting new era for GDS—one guided by a leader whose life and career have been shaped by an adventurous spirit, a deep intellect, and an unwavering commitment to students.

In this special feature, Tori reflects on key milestones of her career, while a few of her close friends weigh in with insights on how her journey unfolded.

One of those friends, Russell Weatherspoon, was Tori's high school teacher at Phillips Exeter and later her colleague in the school's summer program. "Tori has a deep well of love in reserve for people in general and young people in particular," Russell said. "She's always been able to deeply listen, engage, and clear space for people to pursue ideas and express themselves."

TRACING

TORI'S

PATH *to* GDS

IN HER OWN WORDS

BRIEFLY, LAW

"I didn't go to law school with any intention of becoming an attorney. I was very politically active and social justice-oriented after college, so I went to work on a number of political campaigns in the Seattle area. But I was only ever hired to be the volunteer coordinator or the office manager, even though what I really wanted to do was take on policy issues. (Incidentally, almost every campaign I worked for lost. Apparently, I had the opposite of the Midas touch.) I realized I needed an advanced degree, and I thought a JD would better position me to do more interesting work in public policy.

"I loved law school. I loved legal procedure in particular, and the art and science of legal reasoning and writing. It's a way of organizing your thinking to ensure thoroughness and fairness, and I was fascinated by that. To my own surprise, that inspired me to try some traditional career moves.

"I clerked for a wonderful federal judge in Philadelphia, Louis Pollak, and then I worked in impact litigation during a fellowship at the Center for Reproductive Rights before joining the DC office of Jenner & Block. The work at Jenner included really interesting civil liberties matters like representing Terri Schiavo's husband in the landmark right-to-die case. It felt meaningful, and the people were brilliant, supportive, and excellent in every way. This was as good as practicing law was going to get. And yet I was still really unhappy practicing law!"



TORI EARNS HER J.D. FROM HARVARD

2001
J.D., HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

2001-2002
LAW CLERK, HONORABLE LOUIS H. POLLACK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

2002-2004
CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE LAW AND POLICY (NY)

2004-2006
ASSOCIATE, JENNER & BLOCK (DC)

MOONLIGHTING IN EDUCATION

"While at Jenner, I was teaching on the side. I taught first-year law students at George Washington University Law School. I also had volunteer teaching gigs, including a class in constitutional law at Planned Parenthood and coaching a moot court competition at the Thurgood Marshall Academy [a DC charter school]. I woke up one day and realized that these side hustles made me more excited than my day job, so I quit the day job.

"I took a long-term substitute gig teaching seventh-grade English and drama at Maret School and then a five-week summer school position teaching ethics to rising eighth and ninth graders at Phillips Exeter Academy, my alma mater. I taught at Exeter summer school for five summers in a row, starting in 2006. Even after I was hired at Princeton in 2007, I saved every vacation day I accrued so I could go back to Exeter to teach in the summer. That's how much I loved it. I gave up the position in 2010 only because I needed a vacation!"

2005-2006
PROFESSORIAL LECTURER IN LAW, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL (DC)

SUMMERS 2006-2010
TEACHER, RESIDENT FACULTY, DORM HEAD, ADVISER, TRIP CHAPERONE, PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY SUMMER SCHOOL



RUSSELL WEATHERSPOON WAS TORI'S HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER AT PHILLIPS EXETER AND LATER HER COLLEAGUE IN THE SCHOOL'S SUMMER PROGRAM.

THE PIVOT TO LEADERSHIP

"I made my way from the classroom to administrative work almost by chance. During my first summer at Phillips Exeter, a disciplinary recommendation came before the full faculty for a vote. I raised several issues, and I guess that made an impression because they asked me to draft the program's first academic integrity policy and appointed me to the discipline committee the following summer.

"The discipline committee work was eye-opening. Because of my legal training, I knew what good process looks like, and I quickly saw how important good process is to building trust in a community. The task of supporting the community by upholding its standards felt heavy but deeply meaningful. And I was very moved by the opportunity to work directly with kids at very tough moments in their lives, when they need the most support and guidance. That led me to apply for an assistant dean position, focused on student conduct work, at Princeton University.

"I stayed at Princeton for 10 years. During that time I had three jobs with increasing levels of scope and responsibility, all centering around work with undergraduate students in both the academic and residential spheres. I loved it. But two factors attracted me to head-of-school work. One was that I missed younger kids. Undergrads are great, but they're more fully cooked. Second, I knew that being a head of school would allow me to help grow and evolve an institution's culture and program as well as serve that institution in a community-wide way. Princeton had a wonderful culture, but I could only influence that culture around the edges in the roles I had."

2007-2017
ASSISTANT DEAN OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

ASSOCIATE DEAN OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY (NJ)



TORI PRESENTS THE COVETED "GOLDEN BROOM" TO THE WINNING PRINCETON TEAM AT THE 2010 RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE QUIDDITCH TOURNAMENT





2017-2021
HEAD OF SCHOOL, WESTTOWN SCHOOL (PA)

2021-2025
DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LABORATORY SCHOOLS

THE OTHER SCHOOLS

"My first head of school position was at Westtown School, a wonderful pre-K through 12 Quaker school near West Chester, Pennsylvania, about two hours from DC. While it's a little smaller than GDS and includes a high school boarding program, Westtown shares the same commitment as GDS to hands-on learning and social justice. Quaker education is very much like progressive education, with a bit of a spiritual bent. I loved my years there and still keep in touch with my colleagues.

"I was not looking for a job when Lab [the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools] called. When I spoke with the chair of the Lab Board, I shared my reluctance and told him the timing wasn't right, but he made a very convincing case for why the school would be a great cultural fit for me, and he said something Yoda-like to the effect of: The right time is the time when the right thing happens.

"Lab has a lot in common with GDS, culturally and programmatically. Lab kids and GDS kids would get along. They tend to be poised, articulate, and independent for their years. They're curious and invested in their own learning. They're aware, engaged, and funny. Both schools have strong academics, strong arts programs, great extracurriculars like an excellent student newspaper, and a commitment to building a culture of belonging. Lab is a terrific place, and I was proud of my work there—but if I hadn't left, I wouldn't have had the extraordinary good fortune to come to GDS. GDS, to me, is the brass ring."

TOP LEFT: **TORI AT WESTTOWN SCHOOL DURING THE COVID-19 ERA, CELEBRATING FIFTH GRADERS WHILE NAVIGATING A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS.**

TOP RIGHT: **RECEIVING A COMMENDATION FROM SENIORS DURING THE 2025 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LABORATORY SCHOOLS**

TORI JUEDS

THE FUTURE AT GDS

"I have arrived at GDS at a time of extraordinary disruptions in politics, culture, and technology. Navigating turbulent times always reminds me of the scene in *The Right Stuff* when Chuck Yeager finally breaks the sound barrier. As the plane accelerates towards Mach 1, the turbulence is intense, to the point where it feels like the plane is going to break apart. But Yeager is determined, and when the plane reaches Mach 1, suddenly the turbulence smooths out and the flight calms. We are still in the thick of the turbulence, but the answer is not to slow down or retreat; it's to move forward purposefully and with integrity.

We'll do exactly that by continuing to honor our roots—our founding legacy, our mission, and values. We're going to keep prioritizing our founding commitment to diversity. I'm thinking about socioeconomic diversity in particular, which is an incredibly important issue in this time of increasing income and wealth inequality. Like every other independent school in the area, we have to balance rising costs with our commitment to keeping GDS accessible for a wide array of families. We also need to think about diversity in other dimensions, including not only diversity of identity and background, but also diversity of viewpoint and opinion. At every grade level, we want young people to learn to disagree respectfully and productively, centering the humanity in each other.

"I know that my arrival represents a big change after 16 great years under Russell's leadership. My top priority is to listen and learn, to understand our culture, traditions, program, and operations. Instead of launching major new initiatives, we'll sustain momentum on existing work and advance our Strategic Vision, which lays out the priorities the community collectively identified three years ago. For one thing, we will take a fresh look at our facilities to make sure that they will serve us in the years to come. We also need to carefully assess the implications of AI for teaching and learning and for our students' futures. This won't mean giving AI a starring role in our classrooms; in many of our classrooms, it won't play any role at all. The goal is to adjust to the dramatically different context in which we are delivering teaching and learning, so that we're preparing kids not just to adapt to technology but to lead a world in which technology serves humanity.

"On that note, I offered the faculty and staff a theme for this year: hope. The Stanford historian Caroline Winterer once said to me: 'Children and teens *breathe* hope.' That's right, and it is our obligation to give them confidence that with their agency and ability, good things will come. GDS students are admirably informed about and aware of the world around them, but at present, it seems that they may be imbibing more adult anxiety than is necessary or helpful. The author and Georgetown professor of international affairs and government Charles King has warned that mourning our own times as 'uniquely bad' can be a recipe for 'paralyzing despair.' We can't let that happen; we owe these kids a hopeful vision of their future, one in which they can solve problems and create change. I believe in that vision. That's what GDS is about, and has been from the very beginning."



PHOTO BY DAVID GILLESPIE

Keeping It Weird

On paper, Tori Jueds' journey includes degrees from Harvard College and Harvard Law, a stint in legal practice, and a rich career in education. Beyond those impressive credentials, however, are the personal details that make her who she is. Some of these details she proudly labels "weird," in keeping with our "Keep GDS Weird" unofficial motto. "We need to ensure that we remain a school where young people can be their unique and special selves, where students feel comfortable being idiosyncratic and authentic," she said. Tori is determined to lead by example–citing her fondness for obscure British comedies, her penchant for reading Marcus Aurelius for pleasure, her dedication to her manual transmission car, and her fascination with a particular reptile. "If there's been an alligator attack anywhere in the world," she said, "you can bet that I will know all about it."

What follows are a few more things to know about our new Head of School, gathered from Tori herself and some of her closest friends: Sam Sankar, her co-clerk in the chambers of Judge Louis Pollak in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in 2001; Sue Perez, who has known Tori since they attended grade school together in London; and Carla Ellis, Associate Director of Schools at the Laboratory Schools of the University of Chicago.



TORI PERCHED ON HER FATHER'S LAP IN A 1974 FAMILY PHOTO

RAISED IN NEW JERSEY, BUT A LONDON PUNK-ROCKER AT HEART.

Tori was born in South Florida, but the family moved to New Jersey shortly thereafter. "It was a quiet and leafy place to grow up," Tori recalled.

A few years later, the family relocated to England, and Tori attended the American School in London from the second through seventh grades. Though she didn't then have the words to describe what she saw in 1980s London, she found herself intrigued by counterculture, instinctively sensing the tension between the powerful and the rebellious, the conventional and the creative. On what side of that cultural divide did she land? Although she has always outwardly presented "more like Margaret Thatcher than Boy George," Tori joked, "my sympathies lie with people who stand a little sideways to our dominant culture and question our assumptions."

TORI (FAR LEFT) REPRISING HER FIFTH-GRADE PERFORMANCE IN *H.M.S. PINAFORE*, THIS TIME IN THE SEATTLE GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY'S 1996 PRODUCTION.



NOT EXACTLY TOP 40.

It was as a child in London that Tori first discovered a love of the Victorian-era operettas of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. Her first foray into G&S was performing in a school production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in fifth grade, and other productions followed in college and beyond. After law school, she discovered a fellow G&S devotee in Judge Pollak, for whom she clerked. Sam, her friend and co-clerk at the time, recalls: "I'd suddenly hear the two of them singing a silly Gilbert & Sullivan song. They'd be palling around, doing dances and songs. That's the kind of person he was, and the kind of person she is. It was a good year."



TORI WITH HER GOOD FRIEND AND FORMER CO-CLERK, SAM SANKAR

HER JEDI PARTY TRICK.

Tori readily owns that she has a number of decidedly mainstream enthusiasms, too, including Bruce Springsteen and the original *Star Wars* trilogy. But even these have unexpected manifestations. Sam can attest to the depth of her attachment to the original 1977 *Star Wars* movie: "You can name any line of dialogue from that movie, and Tori will give you the line before and the line after it." That was certainly true back in her law clerk days, Tori confirms. She claims to be a bit rusty now, but she can still recite entire stretches of dialogue verbatim.

TORI PERFORMING WITH ALUMNI OF THE PRINCETON NASSOONS AT HER 50TH BIRTHDAY PARTY IN CHICAGO



AND SHE CAN ACTUALLY SING.

From childhood, Tori has had serious vocal pipes. "Aside from always being so smart, steady, and confident, Tori also had an amazing singing voice. It's a superpower," said Sue, her classmate from elementary school in London. "She's been singing since at least third grade, when we were in choir together." At age 13, Tori started formally training in the *bel canto* style. She sang in her high school's chamber choir, the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum in college, and volunteer choral ensembles wherever she lived. She even sang with the all-male Princeton Nassoons after gaining honorary status in the a cappella group during her time at Princeton. The Nassoons got word that the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Students could sing, wrote a custom arrangement for her, invited her to solo at one of their concerts, and featured the solo on an album. "She was their fairy godmother," Sam said, "so much so that some of them packed into a car and drove out to her 50th birthday party in Chicago."

TORI WITH HER GODSON, JOSIAH, NOW 12



A SMALL BIOLOGICAL FAMILY AND A BIG CHOSEN FAMILY.

The former Nassoons are part of what Tori calls her vast chosen family. "There were always signs that I would choose not to marry and have kids of my own," Tori said, recalling her childhood fixation with the Greek goddess Artemis. She was especially delighted by the goddess's origin story as told in *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths.* As a little girl, Artemis asked her father, Zeus, for permission to never marry so she could always roam the woods with a pack of hounds and a court of nymphs. That was "telling," Tori said. But "not having kids of my own has never meant not having kids in my life. I love other people's kids. They fill my heart every day." That includes her GDS brood, she said, and her godson Josiah, now 12. After all, Artemis was also known to be a fiercely protective guardian of the young.





TORI WITH HER FAMILY'S FIRST DOG, FLUTEY, IN 1980 IN LONDON'S PRIMROSE HILL (FAR LEFT)

FERDY AND WEDNESDAY (LEFT)

LIFE REQUIRES A DOG.

Tori has had a canine companion by her side since she was a kid, and regards having one as more of a necessity than a preference. Ferdy was roughly 12 weeks old when he joined her household in February 2026 after the loss of her previous dog, Phoebe. Even her first-ever cat, Wednesday—an abandoned kitten rescued by a colleague during Tori's time at Princeton—is basically an honorary dog, she says.



TANZANIA, 2004

MOROCCO, 2012 (INSET)

A WORLD TRAVELER, BUT NO GROUP ITINERARIES, PLEASE.

Tori attributes her loves of traveling solo to what she calls her "pathological independence." It's not that she never travels with others; she does. But she prefers autonomy to prescribed activity. (While in Brazil, she bailed early on a yoga retreat to take surfing lessons in Florianópolis.) Sue, her childhood friend, recalls Tori visiting her in India. "India is not for the faint-hearted, and Delhi is one of the toughest cities to land in, but she showed up by herself," Sue said.



TWINNING IT WITH CARLA ELLIS, TORI'S COLLEAGUE FROM UCHICAGO LAB SCHOOLS

TWINS BY ACCIDENT, FRIENDS ON PURPOSE.

"If by chance you come to work wearing the same color as me, we are taking a picture," Tori said. "That's just what happens." Carla, Tori's co-worker at UChicago Lab Schools, can vouch for that. She said the "twinning activity" became part of the senior leadership's team culture at Lab once Tori got it rolling. Colleagues who barely knew each other got in on it. "When Tori left, she gave the entire leadership team a book of twinning photos," Carla said. "We still send her photos when we're twinning, so the tradition continues."



SPIRITUAL ECLECTICISM, BUT THREE DECADES ON THE MAT.

Before becoming a head of school, Tori considered pursuing a graduate degree in religious studies and even completed coursework in Biblical Hebrew and Ancient Greek. But she does not have a denomination, creed, or religious tradition. "My spirituality defies easy classification," Tori said. "I cannot stay in one lane." One of her many lanes has been Hatha yoga, which she discovered during law school and has pursued ever since. She considers it part of her physical and spiritual well-being. "It's never a chore," she said. "My practice is rigorous. A great week is five days a week. Four is good. Three or less, and I start to miss it a lot."

'26 Athletes

Congratulations to these mighty Hoppers from the Class of 2026, who took their athletic prowess to the collegiate level this fall.



PHOTO BY PAUL HIGDAY

VOLLEYBALL

Tessa Fergusson
TUFTS UNIVERSITY



SOCCER

Corina Bellermann
AMHERST COLLEGE



PHOTO BY HARRISON ROHRBAUGH

CROSS COUNTRY

Simon Kessler
COLORADO COLLEGE



SOCCER

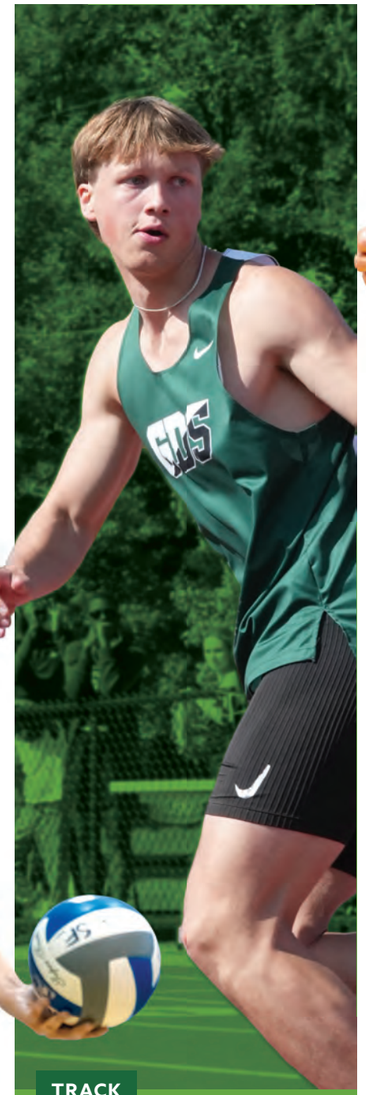
TJ Jones
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

PHOTO BY PAUL HIGDAY



VOLLEYBALL

Fiona McDermott
COLBY COLLEGE



TRACK

Andrew Leopold
CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

PHOTO BY PAUL HIGDAY



VOLLEYBALL

Gigi Wigglesworth
DENISON UNIVERSITY



INSIGHT

Ziyah Holman '20

Advice for College Athletes

Ziyah Holman '20—the GDS track phenom who became a viral sensation as a University of Michigan freshman—did not just survive the college grind; she dominated it.

At Michigan, she secured five Big Ten titles, shattered school records, and earned All-American honors as a premier 400-meter runner. She graduated early and spent her final year of eligibility at the University of Texas at Austin, earning a certificate in strategic communication. As for that viral moment, it happened when she surged past two opponents to erase a four-second deficit in the last leg of a 4x400-meter relay. The finish thrust Ziyah into the spotlight and led to brand partnerships with CVS, Kinlo (tennis star Naomi Osaka's skincare brand), and others.

After two years of independent competitive running, Ziyah is now focused on leveraging the powerful brand she built during her college years to forge a career as a digital content creator at the intersection of sports, wellness, and lifestyle. In April, she visited GDS to discuss with students the reality of life as a college athlete. She went into further detail in an interview with *Georgetown Days*, offering these tips for navigating the transition to college sports:

→ Ziyah returned to GDS in April to speak with students about life as a collegiate athlete.



Turn to Your Teammates

When you just don't feel like "it," lean on your teammates. Whether that be early morning wake-ups, braving the snow to class, or tackling a brutal practice, they can help you push through it. "My collegiate teammates were my 'why' at some points," Ziyah said. "Venting to people who understand your reality makes everything easier, and even kind of fun."

Diversify Your Circle

Socialize beyond the athletic bubble. "Learning how to communicate with a variety of people with different interests is a skill you need for the real world," Ziyah added. Build bridges early with other students and your school's alumni network. These connections might enrich your life, or even advance your career.

Protect Your Body

"Your performance as an athlete is dependent on what you put into your body," Ziyah said. Keep that in mind when parties and temptation come your way. "When you have practice and competitions around the corner," she added, "know when it's time to leave and get some sleep."

Be Honest with Yourself

The life of a college athlete is not for everyone. It requires prioritizing your sport and making sacrifices (see above). "Be honest with yourself about how committed you are," she said. "I made sacrifices because I absolutely knew what I wanted to accomplish."

Own the Alternate Calendar

While your non-athlete peers go home for holidays and breaks, you will sometimes need to stick around for practices and games. "Take a look at the calendar with your family and devise a plan so that you know when you will be seeing each other again," Ziyah said.

Tap into Resources

Tutors, therapists, trainers, and nutritionists offer much-needed support for time-strapped, stressed-out athletes who are pushing their bodies to the limit. All you have to do is ask. "I had bad anxiety before races, and being able to talk to a therapist was everything for me," she said. Most universities and colleges offer a support squad for their athletes or under the umbrella of general student services.

Master the Clock

Ziyah gave a shout-out to GDS for sharpening her organizational skills. "Giving us a GDS planner, free blocks of time, and off-campus lunches taught us how to manage our time and navigate our environment," she said. "My [GDS] high school friends all agree that we had a head start in college because of that."

Master the Classes

"Athletics only lasts so long," Ziyah said. "Your degree is forever." Your studies require at least as much time and discipline as your athletic training. Plus, the two are deeply intertwined: If you can't pass, you can't play.

Protect Your Brand

The new-ish "name, image, and likeness" (NIL) rules allow NCAA athletes to profit from their personal brand. These sponsorships and endorsements are a major responsibility. "It's like having a third job at school, in addition to the jobs of being a student and an athlete," Ziyah said. Look for campus resources or training to learn about NIL laws and business practices.

Build an Internship Game Plan

An athlete's schedule may not allow for other resume-building opportunities, such as summer internships. "I attended job fairs and explained my situation to various representatives and asked them for similar opportunities during the school year," she said. "Many were open and receptive."

RESILIENCE

How Brock Davis '22 Earned His Duke Uniform

Brock reflects on his long road to the roster



↑ Brock snips his piece of the net following Duke's ACC Championship win.

The Blue Devils' fandom went nuts when a mystery player appeared on the bench as Duke took on the Florida State Seminoles in the ACC Tournament quarterfinals on March 12.

"WHO IS THIS???" posted one fan on X—raising a question that dominated online chatter as the game unfolded. While national college basketball sleuths were scrambling for answers, that unfamiliar face was instantly recognizable at GDS: Brock Davis '22, a former four-year varsity player for the Mighty Hoppers.

The Duke senior—son of two-time Duke national champion and NBA veteran Brian Davis—was a Blue Devils practice squad member before he went viral. He had dreamed of playing for the Blue Devils for as long as he could remember. Fast forward to three days before Duke's ACC tournament opener. After injuries sidelined two starting players, Brock was suddenly elevated to the active roster.

"It was surreal sitting on that bench," said Brock, who learned about the online stir when a team manager handed him a phone showing the viral posts. "I appreciated the love, but the attention was a little uncomfortable. I was the 15th man, and I didn't want to distract my teammates from what was important: winning a national championship."

Duke went on to win the ACC title, though the team's postseason run ended in a crushing Elite Eight loss to UConn. While Brock never checked into a game, his story in Durham is not over. Thanks to remaining eligibility from his years on the practice squad, the newly minted Duke graduate headed back to campus this fall—this time to pursue his Master's at the Fuqua School of Business and suit up for the Blue Devils for one more season.

His return to the program marks the ultimate payoff for a player whose path to the roster was defined by determination and resilience. As a Duke freshman in 2022, Brock arrived on campus without a recruitment offer letter. He tried to walk onto the team, setting off a long sequence of "no's" before he got his "yes."

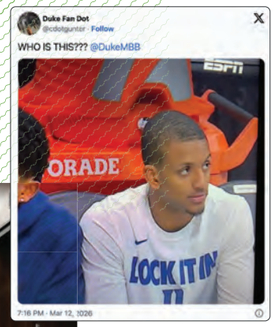
> "I think subconsciously, I always believed it could happen."
>
> **Brock Davis '22**

"I was turned away my freshman year after two tryouts," he said. "I was shattered. But I think that pain fueled me to work on my craft, physically and mentally. Athletes have to deal with constant pressure and self-doubt. You have to work on building internal self-confidence so that you know you can do it and that you can keep getting better."

That first year, Brock put in the work alone—building physical strength, sharpening his ball-handling, and putting up shots before running hour-long scrimmages at the campus recreational center. In his sophomore year, he joined a club basketball league and thrived, rebuilding the confidence he needed to chase his dream. Yet, as the new season approached, he was not even granted a tryout.

Brock turned to his backup plan: studying abroad for his junior year in Brazil and Portugal. But basketball remained top of mind. In Lisbon, he arranged to train with Roberto Fortes, a Lisbon resident and former Angolan national team star who now works with elite international basketball players. (Brock had met him when Fortes appeared on a friend's sports podcast.) In the summer months leading up to his senior year, Brock further honed his skills in DC with trainer Idan Ravin, whose client list includes NBA stars Steph Curry and Kevin Durant.





↑ Fans react online after Brock unexpectedly joins the active roster.

← Brock speaks with a reporter in the locker room before Duke's March Madness Elite Eight game

Finally, he got a break. After a two-week trial period in September of his senior year, he made Duke's practice squad, which helps prepare the active roster with on-court simulations, workouts, and film room work. "It was a big deal, and word got around campus fast," Brock said. "But I was initially disappointed because I thought I was going to graduate without fulfilling my dream. Still, I put my head down, did everything I was supposed to do, and tried to help my teammates and coaching staff in the best way possible."

Roughly 30 games into the season, on the eve of March Madness, Brock got the call from Assistant Coach Mike Schrage informing him that he'd been added to the official roster and would travel with the team to Charlotte for the ACC Tournament.

"I was in shock," said Brock, adding that he felt emotional when he spotted his No. 50 jersey waiting for him in the locker room. "It was my mother's birthday that day, too. It was just pure joy."

What fueled him through all those years of waiting was a recurring vision that refused to fade. "I know this sounds crazy, but I kept seeing myself in a jersey, playing in a game," Brock said. "This image kept coming to me over and over. I think subconsciously, I always believed it could happen."

Twice as Nice

Celebrating championships on the diamond and the track

Claiming the MAC

In a surprise upset that delighted both the team and coaches, the GDS Men's Track and Field Team won the spring 2026 Mid-Atlantic Conference Championships. Entering the two-day meet, the Hoppers were expected to finish a distant second to longtime rival Sidwell Friends. But the team ended up with a banner after strong performances across 17 different events. "From the youngest runners to the most experienced seniors, everyone–starting with the developing runners who dominated the Varsity B meet earlier in the week–performed at the top of their game," said Head Coach Anthony Belber.



Pictured above are senior members of the Spring 2026 Men's Track and Field Team: (back row, from left) Oliver Wolin '26, Charlie Brooks '26, Nate Zia '26, Ucheoma Ukaoma '26, Adam Ramzy '26, Ares Osorio '26, Head Coach Anthony Belber, Sander Kearns '26, Suli Ajmeri '26, Paul Smith '26, Andrew Leopold '26, Leo Johnson-Goldfrank '26

(front row, from left): Jacob Contee '26, Andrew Bennett '26, Noah Kolker '26, Simon Kessler '26, Amit Tate '26, Mikhail Westelius '26

A Banner Year for Women's Softball

In May 2026, the GDS Varsity Women's Softball team captured an Independent School League banner, sharing the championship in a three-way tie with Holy Child and Stone Ridge. "The three of us all had the same 5-1 record at the end of the season, and our only losses were against each other," said GDS Head Coach Donna Stallworth. "We knew it wouldn't be handed to us. We had to work for it, and we did. We were prepared to compete coming into this season."



(Back row, from left): Assistant Coach Charles Rosser, Assistant Coach Bryan Williams, Zoe Stutson '28, Evy Gilroy '28, Rachel Hellman '28, Avery Synder '26, Isabella Yip '27, Lindsay Fuzesi '28, Abigail Orseck '28, Assistant Coach Peg Schultz, Head Coach Donna Stallworth

(Front row, from left): Lia Oremland '26, Tatum Mach '26, Ellie Synder '28, Natalie Ogden '27, Joelle Botel '29, Nia Jones '29

Hopper Athletic Accolades

A huge shoutout to the Hopper athletes who earned conference honors and DC all-state titles* for their outstanding accomplishments!



Lawson Massey '27

Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAC), Independent School League (ISL), District of Columbia State Athletic Association (DCSAA)

Andrew Bennett '26
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Caleb Clark '27
DCSAA Baseball Second Team All-State, Infielder

James Fitzgibbons '27
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Ryan Granowitter '27
MAC Men's Lacrosse All-League Team (Honorable Mention)

Sander Kearns '26
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Rohan Le '29
MAC Men's Tennis All-League Team

Andrew Leopold '26
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Eric Liu '26
MAC Men's Tennis All-League Team (Honorable Mention)

Tatum Mach '26
ISL Softball All-League Team

Lawson Massey '27
DCSAA Baseball First Team All-State, Catcher

MAC Baseball All-League Team (Honorable Mention)

Marlowe Mulvihill '29
DCSAA Girls Lacrosse All-State Team, Attack

ISL Women's Lacrosse All-League Team

Natalie Ogden '27
ISL Softball All-League Team

Zoe Phelps '29
ISL Track & Field All-League Team

Adam Ramzy '26
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Matii Robi '27
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Ellie Snyder '28
DCSAA Softball Second Team All-State, Designated Hitter

ISL Softball All-League Team

Daniel Stern '28
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Amit Tate '26
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team

Nate Zia '26
MAC Men's Track & Field All-League Team



The cast of 22 included seven seniors, among them Brady Shipe '26 (below, seated center) playing Dr. Scott and Ethan Farber '26 as Dr. Frank-N-Furter (far right). The costumes crew was headed by juniors Brett Carer '27 and Gilly Lyons '27



↑ The play explores themes such as gender expression, eccentricity, and conformity with "ideals." The Frankenstein-like character Rocky Horror (Dex Canavan '28, left) is intended to represent the ideal heterosexual man, who is killed at the play's end. "I'm going to give you some terrible thrills," sings Usherette (Joy Edwards '27, right) in the opening number.



↓→ Brad and Janet are a naive young couple (below) who get seduced by a transvestite mad scientist, Dr. Frank-N-Furter (right).





SPRING PRODUCTION

Rocky Horror Picture Show, a Hilarious Romp

An age-appropriate adaptation strikes right balance

Conveying the humor without the bawdiness of *Rocky Horror Picture Show* might seem like a tall order. But the high school student performers rose to the challenge in the April production, thanks to the helpful guidance of director János Szász and choreographer Maria Watson.

The play tells the story of a naive young couple, Brad and Janet (Sean Keeley '27 and Natalie Ogden '27), who arrive at a strange castle seeking help after their car gets a flat tire. There, they encounter the mad scientist Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Ethan Farber '26) and a literal cast of characters, including Riff-Raff the butler (Mark Eilperin-Light '29) and Magenta the maid (Finley Meyer '26), who challenge the couple in numerous ways.

GDS approached the play's provocative content through developmental and educational lenses, helping students understand the work's historical context and explore how performance can invite reflection, conversation, and growth. Although the societal and gender norms upended by the play have changed significantly since its 1975 London debut, the questions it raises remain relevant today.

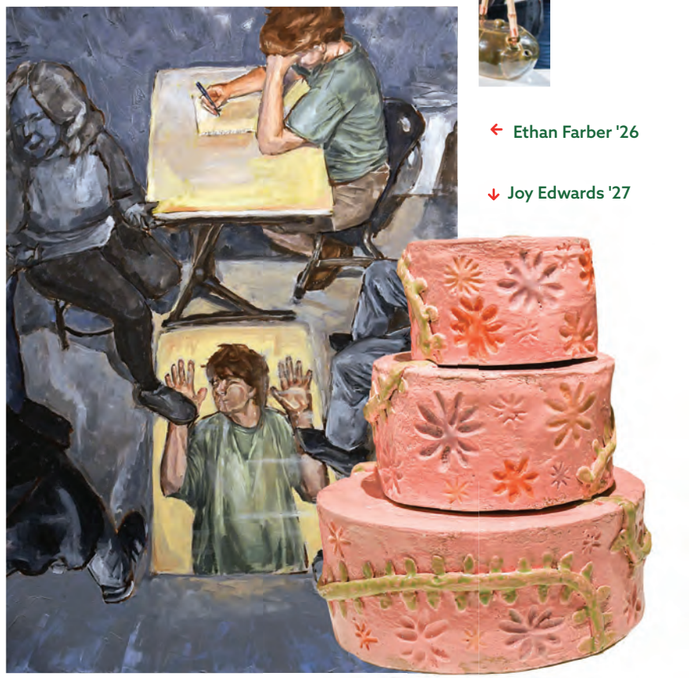
"The students made a brave show," said János, "and we maintained a constant dialogue with parents throughout the process."

HIGH SCHOOL

Spring Art Show Offers New Perspectives

Fresh takes on old(er) works were a focus of the High School Spring Art Show in April. A digital photography display featured re-creations of groundbreaking album covers and movie posters. A reinterpretation of a 1900 Alphonse Mucha lithograph depicted the four seasons as monsters in an era of climate change. And a ceramic tower adorned with iron-oxide illustrations represented a 100-year-old lighthouse in Baltimore Harbor. Together, the variety of artworks in multiple media showcased the ingenuity and introspection of high school students.





← Ethan Farber '26

↓ Joy Edwards '27





↑ Charlotte Glendinning '26

← Rowan Magnell '27



← Dez Lechliter '29

↓ Charlie Butcher '29







↓ Foundations in Digital Photography students



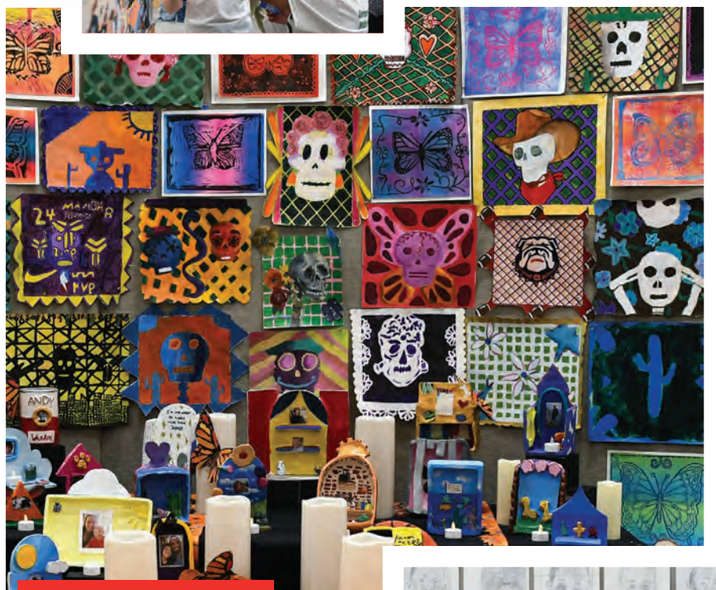
↙ Theo Foer '26





MIDDLE SCHOOL





7TH AND 8TH GRADE



Exploring AI's Implications

The Middle School's community production in May, "Splintered Realms," explored the complexities surrounding artificial intelligence. The students in the show tested an AI tool that taps into their minds, creating their thoughts and dreams, but then suddenly malfunctions, separating the kids into different worlds. The students must then navigate their way back to reality. "We are always fascinated by the students' ability to conceptualize and create a compelling story with a thorough plot from scratch," said Marcel Smith, Middle School theater teacher and director of the production. "We are just along for the ride as their guides," he added, referring to co-director Regina La Valley, LMS music teacher.

Art Show Features Many Forms of Realism

The artwork on display at the 7th- and 8th-Grade Art Show in April explored various forms of realism and showcased diverse artistic techniques. Through dazzling mosaic treatments, ordinary objects like a strawberry, a baseball cap, and a basketball took on new dimensions. A wall of pencil portraits of "Timmy," an unknown middle schooler, showed how students mastered the grid system to add proportionality to the human face, before creating their own self-portraits. Photos of their own sneakers inspired colored-pencil drawings in which students demonstrated their understanding of color and shading.

MIDDLE SCHOOL







HIGH SCHOOL





Spring Choral Concert Showcases Young Voices

Both traditional and contemporary tunes soared to the ceiling of the LMS flexible performance space during the Middle School's chorus concert in May. All emphasized the freedom and joy that come from singing. The students sang the traditional Zambian folk song "Bonsa Abe," whose lyrics convey that all people who sing, regardless of their background, are free. The folk favorite "Nine Hundred Miles" gave way to a medley of 1980s rock songs, chosen to mark GDS's 80th anniversary celebration.

FATA Morgana Dance an Energetic Extravaganza

The energy, athleticism, and grace on display at the FATA Morgana spring dance in May were immediately apparent as dancers took the stage. The opening number, performed to "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns N' Roses, set the tone for the evening, ushering in a variety of dance styles that illustrated the performers' range and expertise. Against the dark backdrop of the High School's black box theater, the moves mesmerized and amazed the parents and friends in the audience.

PHOTO BY JERI TIDWELL

Choir Receives Top Recognition in Hawaii

In March, 22 students and four faculty members traveled to Honolulu to take part in a choral competition sponsored by World Strides, an educational travel company. They arrived in the midst of a Kona low storm, which foiled other competitors' travel plans and scuttled some of the planned activities. As rain pounded the ceiling of the performance space, the GDS choir members' voices soared, earning them a Division 1 ranking, the highest possible. In between rain showers, the group enjoyed beautiful weather, time on the beach, and wandering the streets of Honolulu. For Performing Arts Department Chair Christian Stallworth, "Bringing Keith Hudspeth, the Middle School Choral Director, on the trip was a wonderful opportunity for high school students to see the collaborative spirit that connects the arts across GDS."

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Fresh Lens on Learning

How trips to Reggio Emilia inspired GDS educators to deepen inquiry, honor student curiosity, and reflect on their practice

BY SARAH TIAMIYU
Lower School Instructional Coach



Lower School Instructional Coach Sarah Tiamiyu (left) with Lower School Principal Christy Diefenderfer after a day of training at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre in Reggio Emilia, Italy

"Wait, GDS sent teachers to *Italy? Why?*"

That's the reaction I usually get when I mention Reggio Emilia. Most people don't realize that this northern Italian city gave rise to a world-renowned approach to early childhood education. Over the past two years, a handful of GDS teachers and administrators–myself included–traveled there, immersing ourselves in a living laboratory of child-led learning.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy took root following World War II, when local parents developed an approach to teaching that aimed to foster critical thinking instead of obedience. Led by educator Loris Malaguzzi, they believed that children are naturally curious and capable of shaping their own learning. Nurturing hands-on discovery was high on Malaguzzi's agenda. He treated young learners as citizens with the right to make choices, express ideas, and participate meaningfully in society.

If that sounds familiar, it should. GDS prides itself on being a place where students love to learn and learn to change the world. It encourages them to wonder, inquire, and grow confident in their own voices. That mission attracted me to the school three years ago, when I joined as a Lower School instructional coach, working alongside teachers to elevate student learning.

> "In Reggio Emilia, children belong to everyone. Teachers. Families. Chefs. Gardeners. Neighbors. All spoke about children with the shared understanding that raising the next generation is a communal responsibility."
>
> **Lower School Instructional Coach, Sarah Tiamiyu**

Having encountered the Reggio Emilia approach earlier in my career, I began to wonder if aspects of it could offer a fresh lens for our work at GDS. Could it help us refine our intentions? Gain deeper insight into how our youngest learners construct knowledge? Better understand the school we already are?

Eventually, those questions led us to Italy in the summer of 2025, the first of three trips–supported by Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning Debby Previna and Lower School Principal Christy Diefenderfer.

We did not go there because we wanted to transform GDS into a "Reggio school." Contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing outside of Italy. Instead, schools around the world draw inspiration from the Reggio approach and adapt its philosophy to fit their own communities.

We visited the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre, a training hub featuring "ateliers" modeled after the creative spaces in Reggio Emilia schools. These spaces are designed to engage a child's every sense by offering interesting materials, tools, and "provocations"—open-ended invitations that spark curiosity without prescribing an outcome. (I couldn't help but think of the giant woven net in our Lower/Middle School lobby and how it invites exploration and play.)

We toured the internationally recognized Remida recycling center, where discarded materials are distributed to schools and reimagined as sources of artistic expression. We collaborated directly with leading Reggio Emilia experts from around the globe. And we visited the municipal schools where this work began decades ago.

What impressed me most was the trust adults placed in children.

In one school, I watched a young student carry a glass pitcher to the lunch table. No one rushed to help. No one urged him to be careful. His classmates simply waited as he poured water into glass–not plastic–cups, before eating off ceramic dishes instead of disposable ones.



Children as young as three helped prepare lunch alongside adults. They harvested vegetables from gardens they had planted. They carefully sliced fruit. Everywhere, they cared for their spaces. They even placed their coats on hangers inside closets instead of tossing them on hooks, integrating self-reliance, self-regulation, and executive functioning into a real-world context.

Perhaps the most powerful lesson was not inside the schools, but within the broader community. In Reggio Emilia, children belong to everyone. Teachers. Families. Chefs. Gardeners. Neighbors. All spoke about children with the shared understanding that raising the next generation is a communal responsibility.

So yes, GDS sent teachers to Italy. We went because, as educators, we remain curious. We embrace the same lifelong love of learning that we instill in our students. And when we are empowered to learn and grow, it is our students who benefit most.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Being in Reggio Emilia: A "Game Changer"

Why some lessons can only be learned in person

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ



Kindergarten teachers Michelle (center) and Mandy taking note of their students' observations

Sometimes, professional development can happen anywhere–whether it be in New York or San Diego–without losing a shred of value. But other times, the setting is everything, as kindergarten teacher Michelle Levy tells it. Before joining a small group of GDS educators in Reggio Emilia, Italy, last summer, Michelle had toured local Reggio-inspired schools with her colleagues.

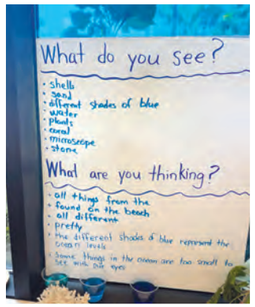
"It was good to visit other schools in DC, but to visit schools in Reggio Emilia? Game changer," Michelle said. "When you learn about the history and see how it took shape in real life, it's so impactful. A lot of people might say, 'Why go there? Why do this?' And I say: 'Why not grow? Why should I want to teach the same thing, the same way, all the time?' Schools all around the world are doing amazing things, and we need to learn from them."

The pilgrimage to Reggio Emilia–the Italian city famous for its early childhood education approach–aligned with GDS's strategic goals for faculty on many fronts, said Debby Previna, assistant head for teaching and learning.

It empowered GDS educators to embrace the same sense of joy and love of learning that they are asked to cultivate in students. It prioritized a team experience that gave teachers a shared mission and vocabulary, ensuring new ideas would gain traction and collective buy-in. And it opened up opportunities for collaboration across divisions and within disciplines across campus. Case in point: High School art teachers redesigned their studios, inspired by a faculty session featuring insights from Michelle and kindergarten teacher Mandy Cole following their trip to Reggio Emilia.

"These immersive, place-based experiences allow for a different layer of teaching by intriguing us and opening our minds to the possibilities," Debby said. "The direction these experiences give us informs how we can enrich our students' lived experience, which is the end goal."

As for the cost, it was surprisingly modest. "It wasn't extravagant," Debby said. "Believe me, it can cost more to send teachers to a conference in New York, San Diego, or any other major U.S. city for less time." Bonus: the five-day summer experience that Michelle and others attended dovetailed with a compelling international education conference nearby.



Teachers track what students are saying to inform future lessons



Off-limits spaces are on display to spark intrigue about future activities.

PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ



In the Painting and Drawing studio, students now share easels and get designated storage boxes for their supplies to encourage stewardship of common spaces

"Provocations" in Practice

GDS's kindergarten teachers returned from Reggio Emilia with an appreciation for "provocations"—the practice of using objects, classroom layouts, and open-ended questions to spark wonder and self-directed learning.

"My takeaway from Italy is that a kindergarten classroom should be a place where everything piques the kids' curiosity," said kindergarten teacher Michelle Levy. "I now step back a little, see where they lead the unit, and learn with them."

To that end, Michelle and co-teacher Mandy Cole kicked off the school year with a simple question: What do you want to learn beyond reading and math?

After brainstorming five topics, the kindergartners put their heads down for a secret vote. The next morning, on a low platform table in their meeting space, they found a piece of coral, seashells, stones, seaweed, cups with varying hues of blue liquid, and a microscope. As the kids explored, Michelle jotted down their reactions, a core Reggio practice designed to inform future lessons. They were most intrigued by the coral, blue water, and seaweed. One said he eats dried seaweed at home.

Slowly, it clicked: the students were looking at their winning choice, sea animals.

Michelle and Mandy decided the next weekly lesson might focus on which sea animals consume seaweed or inhabit coral reefs. "We build the lessons based on what we hear from them," Michelle said. For other units this school year, the teachers have already set up portions of their classroom for exploration, including a newly built reading loft. But those zones are off-limits for now, serving as visual teasers to capture student interest.

Rethinking the Room

The High School art faculty spent part of their summer reimagining the painting, drawing, and photography studios after attending a mini-workshop led by the kindergarten teachers late last school year.

Sarah Riley, chair of the High School Visual Arts Department, said she was struck by the Reggio-inspired "third teacher" concept that her Lower School colleagues discussed. This concept holds that the physical learning environment is a student's "third teacher," after their parents and teachers, respectively.

In the kindergarten classroom, the layout provided predictability, Sarah said. Supplies were thoughtfully organized in one portion of the room and placed within the students' easy reach. Students knew that certain spots were reserved for certain activities or future projects. "The organization of the physical space allowed for a predictable routine, which in turn created room for spontaneity and novelty," Sarah said. "We started wondering: Can we do the same for our art students?"

One goal was to reduce friction in the art studios. Previously, one teacher would set up a space a certain way, only for the next to rearrange it to suit their own class's needs. Within a single class, transitioning between a slideshow, independent work time, and a group critique meant constantly shifting furniture.

That changed over the summer. The art faculty decluttered each studio, set up dedicated zones for different experiences, and created opportunities for collaboration and reuse of materials. In the painting and drawing studio, for instance, there is now a large gathering table that seats an entire class. Students started sharing easels. Each has their own storage box and ready access to an organized supply area that they're responsible for maintaining. As they advance through class levels, students can earn their way to their own permanent stations.

The overarching goal is for students to feel as much ownership of their space as they do their art, Sarah said. "The teacher is no longer the holder of all the materials and knowledge," she added.



RETIREMENT

Peg Schultz: 22 Years of Energy, Fun, and Kindness

As a physical education teacher and dedicated coach, Peg touched every corner of GDS

Peg Schultz was one of those rare educators whose presence was felt across campus–a self-described extrovert who relished connecting with people and building community.

During her 22 years at GDS, Peg was head of the Lower/Middle School Physical Education Department, a coach for players of all ages, an enthusiastic greeter at morning carpool, and the embodiment of the Lower School's wildly popular annual dance assembly. After 16 years of balancing her department leadership role with teaching Middle School health and Lower School physical education, she returned to teaching Lower School PE for six years before retiring in June 2026.

"Peg was the one who brought the energy and the excitement to any community event," said former GDS Athletics Director Chair David Gillespie, now an HS visual arts teacher. "Everything she did, she knew how to make it fun."

As William Miezan put it, Peg had "many tools in her bag" when it came to teaching. "She was always thinking about new activities," said William, a Lower School physical education teacher and Peg's colleague since 2004. "She loved to come up with new ideas that the kids would get excited about, and she knew exactly how to manage the class. She was a master at getting their buy-in."

Born to Teach

As a youngster, Peg was a natural athlete, with a wiffle ball and bat in hand by age four. She played on several softball and basketball teams growing up in Glen Burnie, Maryland. In high school, she added volleyball to the mix, and recruiters at George Washington University noticed. She received a scholarship to play for the university's Division I team and majored in physical education.

"I only explored colleges with good education programs because I knew I wanted to be a teacher and coach," Peg said. "I couldn't imagine doing anything else. That's the essence of who I am. It's in my DNA."

Peg started her teaching career at the collegiate level, first as an assistant coach for the women's volleyball team at the University of Massachusetts (while earning a graduate degree there) and then as head coach for nine years at Columbia University, where she also taught physical education to undergraduates.

When National Cathedral School hired her to lead its athletics and physical education department in 1996, Peg returned to DC. Eight years later, she was at GDS, heading its LMS Physical Education Department, back when the school was on two campuses. Determined to meet as many students as possible, Peg took on early morning carpool duties and stuck with it for years, greeting the school's youngest members with the pep and enthusiasm that became her trademark.



Peg (third from right) catching up with her former students during GDS's 80th anniversary gala in May 2026

In Their Corner

Ben Kanter '26 remembers Peg being "super energetic and uplifting," which is why he was thrilled to win an outing with her to a Capitals game through a school auction. Ben, who was an LS student back then, still considers it the most fun experience he's ever had at a sporting event. They both wore puck-shaped hats, drank red Gatorade to match the team's jersey, and talked sports.

"But what I like most about Peg is she is very, very kind to every single person," added Ben, now a freshman at the University of Vermont. "I had a lot of energy and a lot of things to say. She was able to match that and not make me feel like I was doing too much."

Peg's colleagues witnessed her magic at work. Erin Lee, a second grade teacher, remembers the PE running drills. Peg would gather with students at the finish line to cheer on the final runners, shouting: "Clap them in! Don't forget to clap them in!" She brought the same unwavering support and can-do attitude to every team she coached–as head coach of MS volleyball, basketball, and softball, and most recently, as an assistant coach for HS varsity softball. Her favorite catchphrase at softball games: "String the beads"—her way of telling players to focus on one play at a time. She kept actual beads and a string. "Every time the team made a successful play, she would add a bead," recalled head coach and Middle School PE teacher Donna Stallworth.

That instinct to know what each student needed is why Peg's impact runs so deep, said Sydney Wright-Schaner '09, whom Peg coached for volleyball. "I recently reread the comments Peg wrote on one of my report cards, and I was really touched to see how well she understood me," Sydney said.

The report card had arrived via email from Peg herself, who attached a note that perfectly captured her characteristic warmth: "I keep all of my grade reports...currently writing for this season and stumbled across yours! Thought you might like a stroll down MS volleyball lane! I'm still in your corner!"

Creating Core Memories

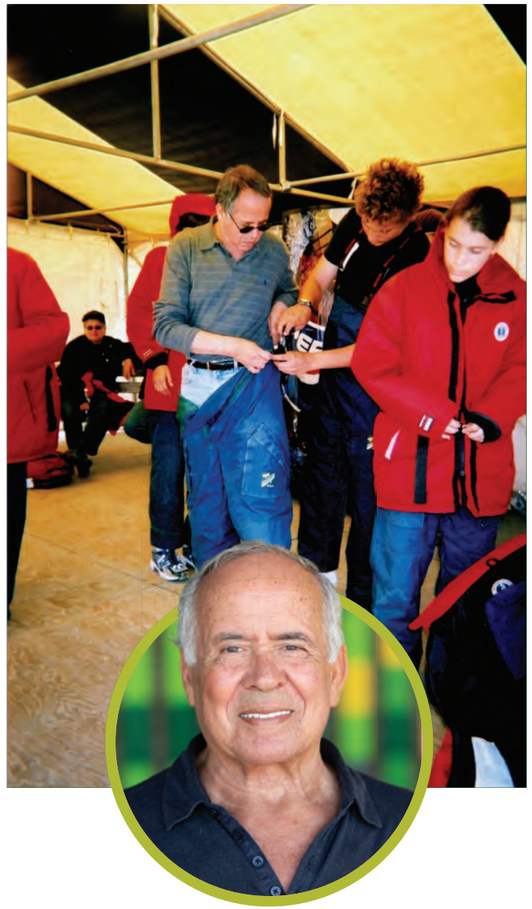
For Peg, one of the greatest joys of her time at GDS was watching students evolve and reach key milestones, from losing their first tooth in Lower School to receiving college acceptance letters in High School.

That front-row seat to their growth inspired her to put her all into GDS traditions—whether volunteering for the Rubber Duck Regatta at Country Market Day, going all out with costumes for the Halloween parade, or emceeing the legendary PE dance assemblies, which she transformed into one of the highlights of every school year.

Under her direction, the dance assembly, featuring PreK–5th–grade students, evolved from Hokey-Pokey-type energy into an electric performance with a theme and dances that took hours to perfect. It was a celebration of PE in its purest form, teaching foundational movement skills and collaboration while bringing students–and all who watched–a surge of joy. For many, the event became a core memory, as she was reminded when she caught up with several of her former students at GDS's 80th anniversary gala in May 2026.

"Many of them and their parents still remember the dance assemblies," Peg said. "Sometimes, you wonder if what you taught a first- or second-grader will stick, and it's so meaningful when you realize they remember."

This fall marked the first time since kindergarten that Peg hasn't been tied to the academic calendar. She misses the daily camaraderie of her colleagues and the infectious energy of the students, she said. But she's excited to explore what's next. Probably travel with her wife Terry, volunteering, and more time in her garden. She's not quite sure, and she likes it that way. "The good thing is you don't have to have an agenda," Peg said. "You can just wake up and say: Wow. I wonder what's going to happen today!"



RETIREMENT

Nooman Kacem: A Legacy Built on Connection

Nooman leaves behind 40-plus years of wisdom and conversation.

↙ ↓ Nooman on a visit to Canada with former 8th-grade French students



As a school that prides itself on preparing students for "the great conversations of life," GDS found a kindred spirit in Nooman Kacem. The longtime world languages and history teacher retired in June 2026 after more than four decades on the faculty.

"The thing I loved most about Nooman's classes is that there were always conversations," said his former student Juju Jinich '24, who spoke at Nooman's on-campus retirement gathering in June. "He never lectured. It was always about really great discussions."

During a distinguished GDS career that began in 1984, Nooman was renowned for engaging meaningfully with students, colleagues, and parents alike on a range of topics. The Tunisian-born educator taught French and history at the middle and high school levels, chaired the Middle School World Languages Department for 22 years, and served as a classroom advisor and varsity men's soccer coach for more than three decades.

Beyond his official titles, he was a GDS parent (daughter Rimal '05 was a GDS lifer) and a faculty spouse (his wife of 40 years, Aicha, is an LMS French teacher). Along the way, he created a Middle Eastern Studies course–a class closely tied to his legacy–that provided space for GDS high school students to engage in thought-provoking and sometimes fraught conversations under his steady guidance.

Lisa Rauschart, a high school history teacher, saw that course's impact through her work advising Student Voices, a student-led current events group that meets weekly. "Almost every session we had, students would bring up something they had discussed in Nooman's Middle East class," Lisa said. "They would talk about how important it was that even though they didn't always agree with him, they got to speak, and they were heard."

Nooman proved equally captivating when he guest-lectured for an international relations class that Sue Ikenberry taught four years ago. In an informal end-of-term survey, students ranked his presentation higher than those given by the esteemed journalists, academics, and advocates who also spoke to the class, said Sue, a high school history teacher.

"I've known Nooman for a long time, and he's been the best companion," Sue added, "a witty, observant, and knowledgeable person on any subject you might want to discuss."

From the Sorbonne to GDS

Nooman arrived in the United States in 1973 after nine years in Paris, where he earned his graduate and undergraduate degrees in history at the Sorbonne before teaching it at a local high school. But he wasn't happy there and jumped on the opportunity to travel to the DC when his brother offered to buy him a round-trip ticket, just for a change of scenery.

"A good friend of mine was a professor at Georgetown University, and she said, 'Stay here. There's nothing for you to do in Paris,'" Nooman recalls. "It was as casual as that. Getting a visa was easy, so I stayed."

It wasn't long before Nooman landed an administrative position at Washington International School (WIS), where he worked for nine years before briefly returning to Europe to try his hand at public relations and foundation work. But he missed teaching, came back to DC, and contacted then-GDS Head of School Gladys Stern, whom he'd met during his WIS days. She hired him to teach a French class and transitioned him into a full-time position a few weeks later.

"When Gladys found someone she thought would contribute significantly to the school, she'd hire them, often on the spot, and then figure out what their job was," said former Associate Head of School Kevin Barr. "In Nooman's case, Gladys saw someone who knew what he was talking about and seemed to love and respect kids–her essential requirements."

Nooman quickly established himself as a trusted teacher with a passion for face-to-face human connection–long before the push to unplug gained traction, Kevin said. "I'm not entirely sure Nooman even knows how to use his cell phone," he quipped. "If he does, he's one of the few people whose fingers and nose are rarely glued to it."

Broadening Horizons, Deepening Bonds

For Nooman, building the connection between the classroom and the wider world was one of his signature contributions. When the Arab Spring broke out in his native Tunisia, he was one of the featured panelists at a school-wide assembly held in lieu of classes to help students make sense of the revolution.

Abby Kanter '22, who took Nooman's French and history classes, remembers that his passion for his home country was so intense at the time that a few high school students launched an online petition nominating him for president of Tunisia. As usual, he took it in stride, appreciating the lighthearted gesture.

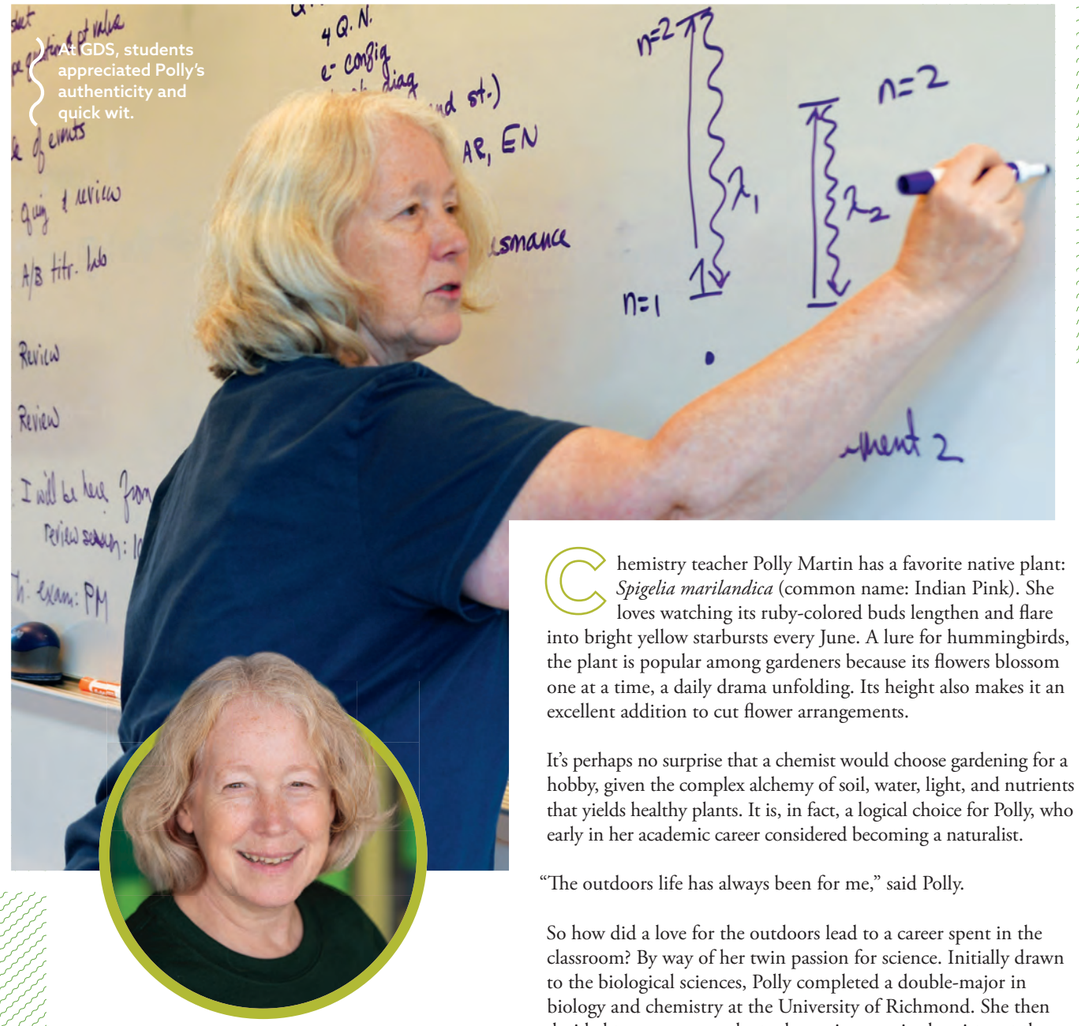
In fact, it was Nooman's sense of humor and idiosyncrasies that endeared him to students, even if they weren't designed to elicit a laugh. Abby can still hear his exasperated reprimand when she tried his patience in MS French class: *"Abby, I am going to throw you out zeee window!"* His handwritten tests, his scribble on the chalkboard–never the whiteboard–were part of his charm, she said.

Yet, he approached every aspect of teaching with a seriousness of purpose. "I don't think I ever learned as much as I did in his French class," Abby said. "He taught us songs and poems. We read books, never the textbooks, just books. I felt he actually cared about what we were learning, not just what a textbook wanted us to learn."

For 20 consecutive years, Nooman also led a group of rising GDS freshmen to Quebec, where they could brush up on their conversational French skills. Ben Stern '23 remembers his 13-year-old self, a little reserved and lacking in confidence, blossoming on one of those trips. Nooman did not hover or do much hand-holding, Ben said. Instead, he gave his students plenty of autonomy, a profound gesture of trust.

Over the years, Nooman was a household name in the Stern family, having coached one of Ben's older brothers in soccer and taught French to another. Ben continued to lean on him for help with French during high school and took his Middle Eastern Studies class. Gradually, Nooman stepped into the role of a mentor, reinforcing the self-assuredness he had fostered in Ben during the Quebec trip.

"He had confidence that we would handle ourselves properly, and that helped us build confidence in ourselves," Ben said. "Over time, he just taught me so many life lessons by pushing me out of my comfort zone. He's probably one of the most important teachers I've had in my life."



At GDS, students appreciated Polly's authenticity and quick wit.

RETIREMENT

Polly Martin: Beyond the Beaker

Polly looks to cultivate her garden and volunteer in the wild

Chemistry teacher Polly Martin has a favorite native plant: *Spigelia marilandica* (common name: Indian Pink). She loves watching its ruby-colored buds lengthen and flare into bright yellow starbursts every June. A lure for hummingbirds, the plant is popular among gardeners because its flowers blossom one at a time, a daily drama unfolding. Its height also makes it an excellent addition to cut flower arrangements.

It's perhaps no surprise that a chemist would choose gardening for a hobby, given the complex alchemy of soil, water, light, and nutrients that yields healthy plants. It is, in fact, a logical choice for Polly, who early in her academic career considered becoming a naturalist.

"The outdoors life has always been for me," said Polly.

So how did a love for the outdoors lead to a career spent in the classroom? By way of her twin passion for science. Initially drawn to the biological sciences, Polly completed a double-major in biology and chemistry at the University of Richmond. She then decided to pursue a graduate degree in organic chemistry at the University of Texas at Austin. While completing her master's, she came to an uncomfortable realization that a life spent in a research lab was not for her.

"I finally admitted to myself that it wasn't what I wanted to do," said Polly, who retired in 2026 after 24 years of teaching at GDS. "I think I always knew it, but I had put so much time and effort into going down that path that it felt like I should finish it."

From the Lab to the Classroom

Some gentle prodding from her parents persuaded Polly to give teaching a try. She was living at home while contemplating what to do next. After a year went by without a job, "My father kicked me out of the nest," laughed Polly, "but he gave me direction—to go into teaching."

> "There's not a single thing she wouldn't be able to explain to me. I was really struggling in that class and considered dropping it, but Polly helped me believe in myself and remember what kind of student I was."
>
> **Charlotte Lee '26**

Her first teaching job was at a private school in San Antonio, where she arrived in the middle of the school year and dove straight into the deep end. She bounced between teaching AP chemistry and an introductory-level course and between middle school and high school students. "It was a good place to get my feet wet. There wasn't a lot of support, and I had to figure things out on my own," she said.

The kids were bright and challenged her to see the course material in new ways: "You go in there with a lot more knowledge than they have, but they're still going to ask questions that you didn't see coming." It was in these early years of teaching that Polly learned how to prepare multiple explanations for the same concept, so she could find the one that would resonate with a particular student.

After an eight-year stint at a boarding school in upstate New York, Polly came to GDS in 2002. She immediately fell in love with the school's vibe and, in particular, its intentional fostering of constructive relationships between teachers and students. And, she adds, "I felt like I could be myself."

Telling It Like It Is

Polly's authenticity is the attribute that has most endeared her to students and peers alike. "She is real and unapologetically herself," is how Brad Linde, High School jazz and instrumental music teacher, put it. "She is very relaxed and chill, and that makes her very approachable."

Polly and Brad held adjacent advisory groups, and Brad laughingly recalled how the students often abandoned his sessions for Polly's—and it wasn't just because Polly brought better food. "Students have a natural affinity for Polly because of her sarcasm and quick wit," explained Brad.

"What you see is what you get with Polly," said World Languages Department Chair Belinda Lartey. "The kids know that too," she added.

"She has an authentic warmth about her. She's funny and blunt in a refreshing way," said Charlotte Lee '26, who took a chemistry class with Polly her sophomore year and then chose her for her advisory group teacher the last two years of her high school career.

In addition to feeling Polly's genuine care, Charlotte knew she could rely on her ability to explain complex concepts. "There's not a single thing she wouldn't be able to explain to me," said Charlotte, describing how Polly helped her succeed in an upper-level chemistry course with another teacher. "I was really struggling in that class and considered dropping it, but Polly helped me believe in myself and remember what kind of student I was," she recalled.

An Adventurous and Generous Spirit

In addition to spending more time gardening during her retirement, Polly plans to continue traveling for wildlife. That's how she describes how she selects travel destinations: she goes where there's a species she wants to see in the wild. In the spring of 2026, she went to Chile to see pumas; after retiring, she plans to visit Sri Lanka to see pangolins and fisher cats, then Mongolia for snow leopards and pallas cats. She's also considering a trip to Nepal for tigers and red pandas. And then perhaps South Africa.

Polly often combines travel with volunteering, joining local scientists conducting on-the-ground research on endangered species or habitats. Volunteer labor is a great way for scientists to reduce their research costs, Polly explained, and for travelers, "you have an experience that is very different from the typical tourist."

Volunteer projects are just one example of Polly's generosity of spirit. Whether it's lending a hand to weed a colleague's garden, helping a student prepare for tests in another teacher's class, or loaning an inherited car to a family in need, Polly's big heart doesn't stay hidden for long. "As bold and tough an exterior as she sometimes has, there's a soft and squishy side to Polly," noted fellow High School science teacher Cori Coats. "She is going to be missed."



"Calm and composed" Nick has a flashy side, as evidenced by his love for Corvettes, including his own 2005 convertible

RETIREMENT

Nick Prout: A View from the Front Desk

Nick retires after 34 years of dedicated service on the GDS security team.

If you think about who knows GDS the best, the head of school might come to mind. Or a longtime faculty member. Or perhaps a recent graduate who was a GDS "lifer." While all of those people certainly know GDS very well, few have had a longer, better-informed perspective on the place than Nick Prout, who retired in June after 34 years on GDS's security team, most recently as director of high school security.

According to his colleagues, "That's typical GDS" was one of Nick's most frequent utterances while on duty, often accompanied by a shake of the head and swiftly fading smile.

Nick began working at the school as a contractor in 1992, while still a detective sergeant with the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department. He heard about the position from Leo Wilson, who had established the security unit at GDS while working as a desk sergeant in MPD's First District in the early 1990s. "I'd see Leo from time to time, and one day, we were talking, and he mentioned needing someone to help with security at the GDS Lower/Middle School," recalled Nick. "Leo asked, 'Would you be interested in a part-time job working with me?'" At that time, security officers at GDS were contractors instead of staff.

With his prior experience as a school resource officer at H.D. Woodson High School in DC's Ward 7, Nick was a natural choice for the assignment. He had a distinguished career in the police department, where he supervised a squad of 15 detectives investigating a wide array of cases numbering in the hundreds each year. "It's not like on TV where they focus on one case at a time until it ends," Nick explained. "We had to keep working on different ones simultaneously." He eventually retired with the rank of sergeant, then worked for the U.S. Marshals Service while also working part-time at GDS.

> "He's a listener in a world in which so few people want to listen. He truly cares about people. He's humanity personified."
>
> **Director of Student Programming, Bobby Asher**

Making Connections

During his two years at the security desk in the former LMS building on MacArthur Boulevard, Nick got well acquainted with young children's inquisitive natures. "They were constantly asking questions, and their interest was never quite satisfied," recalled Nick. "Sometimes, when I showed up in [my MPD] uniform, kids would ask me, 'Why are you here?' I'd answer, 'For your safety.'"

That inquisitiveness forced Nick to be quick on his feet, answering in a manner that kids could understand without talking down to them or making them fearful. A student once asked him why he carried a gun. Nick responded without missing a beat, "Because I'm assigned to the security department and required to."

In 1994, Nick transferred to the High School building at 4200 Davenport Street. There, students weren't as upfront with their questions; "They assume they know what I do," said Nick. But he enjoyed engaging them in conversation about sports or the colleges they hoped to attend.

"One special thing about Nick is that he's always looking to connect with people," said Director of Student Programming Bobby Asher, who also teaches science at the high school. "We've chatted every morning for the past 30 years. When I entered the [high school] building, he never just gave me a nod, but asked, 'How's your family? How are your daughters?'"

"There's an earnestness and depth to Nick," Bobby added. "He's a listener in a world in which so few people want to listen. He truly cares about people. He's humanity personified."

Constantly Learning

"Calm and composed," which Bobby cited as two of Nick's professional attributes, are not traits associated with a flashy sports car. Nevertheless, Nick is passionate about his 2005 Corvette, a deep red convertible with a tan top. He's a member of one of the region's oldest premier car clubs, the Metro-Vettes, and enjoys tinkering with the car in his spare time. It's considered an antique because it's more than 20 years old, and Nick is constantly working to upgrade various parts. He enjoys watching drag races because of the speed involved, as well as games played by his favorite sports teams: the Chicago Bears for football and the Golden State Warriors for basketball.

The 'Vette will feature prominently in retirement, as will cruises in the Caribbean and to Alaska. Although he's looking forward to being retired and undertaking new adventures, "It's disheartening to leave GDS after all this time," Nick admits. "I've enjoyed seeing the students come in as unpolished gems, then watching them progress through high school and talking to them as seniors."

"I've grown during my time here," continued Nick. "I've learned how to deal with people. And I've learned as much from the older kids as they may have learned from me. The educational process is ongoing; I'm constantly learning things."

Nick's colleagues in the security department know they have big shoes to fill. "Nick has left a good blueprint for me to follow and has been a great example for me," said Tony Harris, security staff member. "If I become half the man that he is, Georgetown Day School will be okay."

ASK AN ALUM

Adam Goldstein '98

Israeli and Palestinian doctors join forces to save lives, placing humanity above hostility



Dr. Adam Goldstein serves as the director of the Wolfson Medical Center's trauma division in Holon, Israel



Adam at GDS in 1998 with his buddies

Adam Goldstein '98, a trauma surgeon in Israel, never considered a career in medicine until he studied abroad in Ethiopia during his senior year at George Washington University.

Unlike several of his friends who went to medical school, Adam was never a stellar student in high school or college, as he put it. He kept an open mind about where life might take him when he moved to Israel after graduating from GDS. One year later, he returned to DC to attend GW, where he majored in geology and creative writing.

It was in Ethiopia that a twist of fate led him to his calling. While enrolled as an exchange student at Addis Ababa University, a campus strike halted his classes. To fill his free time, he volunteered nearby at Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, assisting at a center that cared for the destitute and dying.

There, he learned about a medical program dedicated to social medicine and underserved populations at Israel's Ben-Gurion University. "I knew right then that's what I wanted to do," Adam said.

When the university rejected him, an advisor suggested that Adam enroll in a master's program to bolster his academic record. Instead, he took a more direct route: attending a medical school in Mexico. After a standout year, he was accepted into Ben-Gurion, eventually completing a surgical residency in Tel Aviv and a trauma fellowship at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Today, Adam is director of the Wolfson Medical Center's trauma division in Holon, just south of Tel Aviv. He is also co-founder of Operating Together, an initiative based at Wolfson that brings Israeli and Palestinian medical professionals together for joint trauma training.

Adam recently spoke to *Georgetown Days* from Holon about his work in Israel and how the Hamas-led attack of October 7, 2023, has shaped his experience as a physician. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



↑ Adam Goldstein sees the operating room as a working model of shared humanity

Q What prompted your decision to move to Israel?
My dad [a former GW professor] did a three-month sabbatical at [The Weizmann Institute of Science] in Rehovot when I was five years old. That may have left an impression, I guess. But I was drawn to the people and the culture during high school, when I spent a summer in Israel as part of an outdoor youth program. It felt comfortable, a place where I could see myself living. So the summer after high school, when all my friends were getting ready for college, I immigrated to Israel. I lived on a beautiful kibbutz by the ocean to learn Hebrew and worked in a concrete factory. I remember we'd pick up workers from Gaza every morning. It was a time of relative peace and co-existence, and the borders were pretty open.

When an illness cut short my required military service, I returned to DC to take summer classes at GW in 1999.

Q What was it about your time at Mother Teresa's that first sparked your interest in medicine, and how did that evolve into an interest in trauma surgery?
The volunteers were in charge of changing dressings for homeless people with chronic wounds and keeping those wounds clean. The patients came twice a week, and they were so appreciative of the care they received. They were the poorest of the poor in that area. They didn't have any of the privileges or options I grew up with. I wanted to help people who needed it the most, and that's what inspired me to get into medicine.

Initially, I thought I'd go into pediatrics, but I don't like sitting down. I like working with my hands. I was really attracted to trauma surgery because you have to be ready for anything at any moment.

Q You joined Wolfson three years before the October 7 attack. What was happening in your hospital as the crisis unfolded?
It was a Saturday morning before 7 a.m., and everyone got a missile alert on their phones. That hadn't happened in years. I thought it was a drill. I started making coffee, and then air raid sirens started going off. I then saw the social media footage from the festival. Rockets started falling in central Israel [where Wolfson is located]. I went straight to the hospital and stayed there for three or four days straight.

The festival took place about 50 miles away from us. We heard about the casualties flooding into the hospitals in the south. It took about five or six hours before patients started showing up at our hospital–in taxis, buses, cars. The whole ambulance transport system was out of whack.

Everyone was on the phone with their families throughout the day. Israel is such a small country, so a lot of people on our staff were personally affected in some way. Many of our colleagues had friends or relatives who died. People on reserve duty were called to service, some of them that very first day. We were short-staffed because people were getting called up for reserve duty all the time. One of our physician assistants in the ER died while working on reserve. It was such a sad time, and everything changed after that.

Q When the first Israeli hostages were released seven weeks after the attack, you were one of the doctors who treated a few of them. What was that experience like for you?
We received five elderly women, and because I was head of trauma, I was one of the physicians who cared for them. We kept it very private and cleared the top floor of the hospital for them. No residents, no students, no media. The only photographer was the hospital photographer. We arranged for their

families to be waiting for them in their rooms; in one case, the family dog was there.

As you can imagine, it was very emotional. Everyone was in tears, including the doctors, nurses, and social workers. Everyone who was there was very affected by it. One of the [former hostages] said to me: "I'm sorry to make you work on a Friday." That's what she said after all those weeks underground. I couldn't believe it.

Q You co-founded Operating Together in 2021, before the war began. How did that initiative take shape?

The last year of my surgical residency, as I started focusing more on trauma and emergency patients, I wanted to identify and address a pressing medical need. A friend put me in touch with a Palestinian physician, thinking we'd hit it off. We started talking about the lack of trauma training in Palestinian hospitals. So we set up a trauma course in 2021 using one grant to train 10 Israeli and 10 Palestinian doctors. It was the type of required training that Palestinian doctors could not easily access.

We saw it as an opportunity to build the robustness of the regional trauma system while also building connections between healthcare professionals. The goal was to save lives together. We wanted it to serve as an example of humanity for the rest of society. We've now trained more than 500 people and extended our courses to nurses.

Q Did the war dampen enthusiasm for this collaboration?

Not at all. We published a study [in May 2025] with the results of anonymous questionnaires that we distributed to 200 physicians taking our courses before the outbreak of the war and during the war. Half were Israeli and half Palestinian. About 94 percent said they wanted to continue cooperating with the health initiative before and after the conflict. More than three-quarters of them said they wanted to participate in social events together. It was amazing to see this kind of commitment persist even after the worst war of our lifetime. We're building this grassroots community, and after a few years, that will change the fabric of the regional culture as more and more people participate. These are the kinds of initiatives that deserve our resources and our energy.

> "I have seen my Palestinian colleagues navigate three-hour roadblocks just to treat Jewish patients (among others). I have seen Jewish maintenance staff helping elderly Arab men into their gowns with the tenderness they would show their own fathers. At these moments, all of these people are the same religion, sex, race, politics—the same exact human biochemistry. Life is precious and fragile; we don't have to destroy it if we focus on trying not to. … [I]f we choose humanity, peace will prevail."
>
> **Adam Goldstein, *The Times of Israel*, April 20, 2026**

Q In *The Times of Israel*, you wrote about having coffee with a friend six months into the war, and her "limitless hope and love" had been eroded to the point where she said, "I don't care what happens to them anymore." Do you feel that sense of hope can ever be recovered?

It made me sad because I understood that was the reality now. Everyone was so shocked, hurt, and traumatized. But it still broke my heart to hear her say that. Hope is the one thing I'm determined to hold onto, and that's why we decided to continue with our program even after the war broke out.

Three months after October 7, we had another training course. We were scared out of our minds. When in history have people from the opposing sides of a war worked together to save lives? Everyone knew someone who had been killed. And during that first course, sirens went off and everyone had to go to a bomb shelter together. Still, everyone persevered.

At the end of the day, Palestinians and Israelis are integrated into our healthcare system, and our job as physicians is to save lives. The operating room is a melting pot, with everyone working together. We don't care who is on the operating table, whether they're good or bad, rich or poor. We don't have time to make judgments, and we're not here to talk politics. I don't think there's anything that embodies teamwork better than trauma care. We're obsessed with preserving human life.

To learn more about Operating Together, email Dr. Adam Goldstein at adamg.barefoot@gmail.com or visit www.operatingtogether.org

Alumni Gatherings

ENDURING CONNECTIONS

APRIL 17, 2026

Decades of school history filled the High School library on April 17, when the school hosted a lunch that brought together current GDS parents who are alumni (CPALs) and former faculty and staff. GDS icons—including Richard Avidon, Kevin Barr, and Bruce Vinik—mingled and reminisced with former students. Guests heard from Director of Student Programming Bobby Asher (himself a 35-year GDS veteran) and Impact Lab Director Leigh Tait, capping off an afternoon that underscored the enduring bonds between faculty and the alumni community. A huge thank you to CPAL Committee organizers Liz Levine '02, Carolyn Rosenthal '05, and Rachel Winnik Yavinsky '01.



↓ (from left) Alison Taylor, Lynn Kneedler, David Marlin, Jackie Marlin, and Bruce Vinik. All are former faculty and staff except for David Marlin, spouse of Jackie



↑ CPAL Committee members Liz Levine '02 (left) and Rachel Winnik Yavinsky '01





→ (from left) Carolyn Rosenthal '05 (CPAL Committee member), Justin Bernstine '95, Olivia Peskowitz Suter '05, former GDS teacher Charles Psychos, and Doug Rosenthal '00

ALUMNI RUN

AUGUST 22, 2026

The tradition–now in its 24th year–continues! GDS alumni gathered at Fletcher's Boathouse for the annual Two-Mile Alumni Run/Walk along Washington's C&O Canal. The August event, organized by Cross Country and Track and Field Coach Anthony Belber, attracted plenty of former and current GDS runners. Teachers, staff, and family members cheered them on or joined in!



Alumni Reunion

MAY 1-3, 2026

The three-day GDS Alumni Reunion kicked off on May 1 with a luncheon honoring our "Golden Graduates." For many in the Class of 1976, the visit was their first time on the unified campus–a sweeping departure from the MacArthur Boulevard location that they called home. Beyond the 50th-anniversary celebrants, the gathering drew in Hoppers from 1949, 1961, and 1962—all of whom left GDS before the high school was established—alongside alumni from the classes of 1972 and 1973.

Gathered in the high school library, the attendees heard from then-Head of School Russell Shaw and gained a student-eye view of the school from *The Augur Bit*'s top editors.

The nostalgia continued into the evening as alumni from classes ending in '1 and '6 gathered for their respective off-campus dinners. The festivities opened up to all alumni the following day with an on-campus barbecue, and the good cheer continued into the evening at the National Portrait Gallery, where the broader community celebrated GDS's 80th anniversary. The weekend wrapped up on Sunday with the Black Alumni Brunch at Ben's Next Door, providing a final moment of sustenance and reconnection.

$149,542
raised by 10 Reunion Classes

68 **Total reunion year alumni donors**

Friday, May 1

GOLDEN GRADUATES LUNCHEON
GDS High School



PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

(Top) Class of 1976 celebrated their 50th anniversary alongside alumni from across the decades. (Left) *The Augur Bit* managing editors Jacob Blane '28 and Annabelle Garland '28 spoke at the event.

CLASS OF 1976 DINNER
Graham Georgetown Hotel







CLASS OF 1981 DINNER
Home of Jennifer Randolph '81



CLASS OF 1986 DINNER
Home of Rebecca Fishman '86





CLASS OF 1991 DINNER
Home of Lee (Spragens) Irwin '91



CLASS OF 2016 DINNER
Hunter's Hound in Chevy Chase, MD

Saturday, May 2

ALUMNI BARBECUE
GDS High School

Brendon Chu '28 plays tour guide.



PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

Former GDS teacher and parent Mike Kirchberg connects with guests



Sunday, May 3

BLACK ALUMNI BRUNCH
Ben's Next Door in Washington, DC





Wrapping up the weekend was the Black Alumni Brunch at Ben's Next Door, owned by the Ali family, a multi-generational presence at GDS.

2026-2027 Alumni Board

President
Julie Fanburg '89

Vice President
Amy Oberdorfer Nyberg '91

Secretary
Alex Wortham Hirschhorn '01

Mac Andrews '15

Issa Braithwaite '07

Paul Brunell '86

Sarah Downie '99

Batya Feldman '07

Brian Hennessey '00

Ayoka Jack '86

Stephanie Migdail Kiefer '08

Alejandro Rosenberg '98

Mike Schaffer '91

Danielle Soto '19

Gabriela Tobal '87

Alumni Board Update

Meet the newest members of the GDS Alumni Board! We are grateful for their commitment to giving back to the community and supporting our graduates



Danielle Soto '19

For nearly two years, Danielle has been an associate in the New York office of FGS Global, a strategic communications and consulting firm. She earned a bachelor's in government from Wesleyan University, where she played on the women's soccer team and completed a writing certificate. Danielle attributes her collaborative and leadership skills, her curiosity, and her embrace of diverse perspectives to her time at GDS, where she started in pre-kindergarten.



Mac Andrews '15

Mac's professional experience in higher education fueled his appreciation for the impact engaged alumni can have on the institutions they care about. For the past two years, Mac has worked in the Development and External Affairs department at Southern Methodist University–most recently as assistant director of alumni engagement. He is also pursuing an MBA with a concentration in finance at SMU's Cox School of Business. Mac's development work inspired him to join the GDS Alumni Board and give back to the community he called home from first grade through senior year. At GDS, Mac was a captain of the varsity baseball team, played multiple other sports, and took part in Winter One Acts. In 2024, he returned to GDS to help coach the varsity baseball program, continuing his longstanding connection to the school.



Stephanie Migdail Kiefer '08

Stephanie, a GDS lifer, credits the school for inspiring her lifelong passion for helping others. After earning a bachelor's degree from Pitzer College, Stephanie went on to teach with Teach For America. She later earned an MEd from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and a JD from the University of Maryland. She currently serves as an investigator with the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she handles civil rights complaints. Stephanie lives in Dupont Circle with her husband, son, labradoodle, and pomapoo. She enjoys traveling, baking, physical fitness, and exploring DC with my growing family.

Interested in joining the board or have questions?

Contact
alumni@gds.org

The Georgetown Day School Alumni Board supports GDS and its mission of academic excellence, educational innovation, and social justice within a diverse school community. The board aims to build a community of alumni, facilitating their connection to each other and the school. Board members also serve as ambassadors to the school on behalf of alumni.

Alumni Board Activities

* Serve as liaisons between school and alumni
* Link alumni with opportunities between students and teachers
* Support the planning of activities for alumni with each other and current students
* Lead alumni fundraising efforts for Hopper Fund

The Augur Bit is turning 50!

Saturday,
November 28, 2026

2:00 – 5:00pm
Program begins at 3:00pm

The Platinum Suite
3236 Wisconsin Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Insight: Panel Discussions
History: Decades of *Augur Bit* Archives
Community: Mix & Mingle

Come Celebrate our Golden Anniversary

Join us as we commemorate half a century of student journalism. Alumni from every era are invited to reconnect and look back at five decades of *The Augur Bit.*

RSVP
Scan the QR code or email Julia Fisher at jfisher@gds.org



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Chief Advancement Officer

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Advancement Associate, Annual Giving

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Advancement Associate, Operations

JOYCE DEPASS
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Publications Content Editor

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DANI SEISS
Advancement Officer, Communications

ELVINA TONG
Advancement Officer, Digital Communications & Analytics

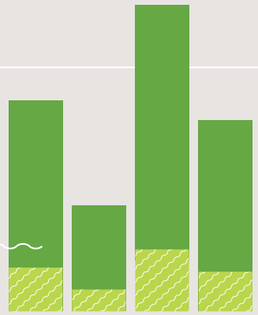
2026

GEORGETOWN DAY SCHOOL

Giving Report

CONTENTS

02 — Leadership Perspectives
04 — By the Numbers
06 — Dan Hamilton ’85 on Paying It Forward
07 — A Constant Presence: Nancy Bernstine
09 — One Family; One GDS The Rosenthals
10 — Q&A With MaryAnn Jones
12 — Donor List



CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

THE POWER OF
Our Community

IT IS MY HONOR TO SHARE with you our 2025-26 Giving Report, a tribute to the generosity of GDS parents, alumni, grandparents, faculty, and friends. As we spent the past year celebrating our 80th anniversary, the power of the GDS community was impossible to miss. It showed up in every interaction, at every event, and with every gift given.

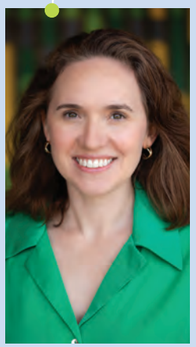


PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

As the Chief Advancement Officer at GDS, I had the privilege of witnessing this power up close: the people, the moments, and the generosity that carried GDS through its first eight decades—and that now guarantee the experiences and impact of the decades still to come.

More than 4,500 people came together this year in celebration and camaraderie: alumni returning to campus, parents reconnecting with old friends, and generations of Hoppers rallying around our audacious mission. During the 2025-26 school year, this community gave more than $8 million in support of all that GDS is today and all that it will become tomorrow. Bolstering both of these numbers, in true GDS fashion, were more than 1,000 volunteer hours that fueled philanthropy, community, and growth.

This Giving Report recognizes the supporters who power GDS every day and reflects the community's confidence in the GDS approach, our mission, and one another. Thank you for showing up. Thank you for giving. And thank you, always, for coming home.

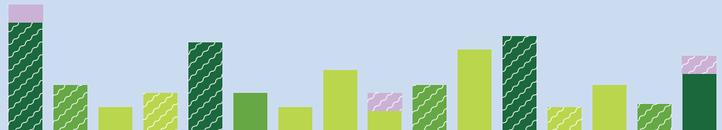
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT,

MARYANN JONES
Chief Advancement Officer

4,500
HOPPERS ENGAGED

$8.7M
RAISED IN 2025-26

1,000
VOLUNTEER HOURS



FROM THE TREASURER

A YEAR OF
THOUGHTFUL STEWARDSHIP

AS TREASURER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, I'm happy to share that GDS remains in a strong financial position. We've stayed focused on three priorities: keeping tuition increases as modest as possible for families, ensuring competitive faculty and staff compensation, and expanding access through financial aid. Thanks to the work of our Board Investment Committee, our endowment and quasi-endowment returned 17.6% this year.

Financial aid is how we make good on our commitment to socioeconomic diversity. In 2025-26, GDS awarded aid to 24% of students, with an average grant of $34,800. Your continued support makes this possible, and it's what allows us to attract talented students regardless of their financial circumstances.

Great schools are built by great people. Compensation, benefits, and professional development make up the majority of our operating budget. In a region with a high cost of living investing in the people who show up for our students every day is essential.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your generosity and continued partnership. This community makes GDS what it is, and we're deeply grateful for it.

WARMLY,

MARC LINDSEY
Board Treasurer



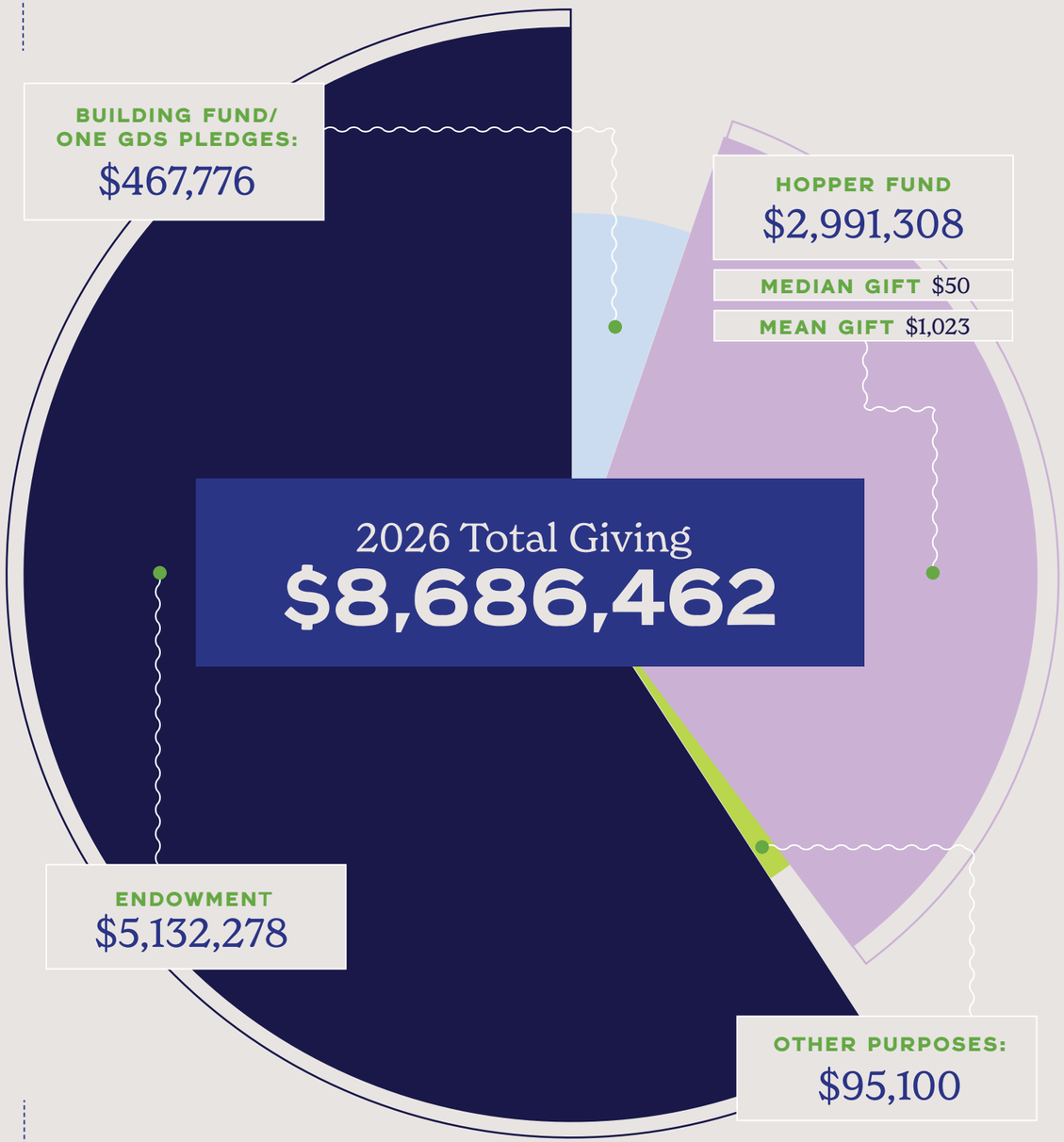
FINANCIAL AID

$59.7 million
RAISED FOR **FINANCIAL AID***
*Endowments and current use

24%
OF STUDENTS RECEIVED
FINANCIAL AID

$34,800
AVERAGE AID
AWARD

BY THE NUMBERS



HOPPER FUND

204
NEW **DONORS**

TOTAL
DONORS
1,391

DONORS WHO
INCREASED
THEIR YEAR-OVER-YEAR GIFT
48%

68
TOTAL
REUNION YEAR
ALUMNI DONORS

REUNION 2026

RAISED BY
10
REUNION CLASSES

$149,542



DAN HAMILTON '85 (FOURTH FROM LEFT) AT A BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN CONCERT IN 2023. (L-R) ALEX VIORST '85, KELLY AUCOIN '85, LANE BLUMENFELD '85, DAN, ERIK SMULSON '85, BEN MANKIEWICZ '85, AND GDS ALUMNI PARENT GREG MARCHAND

Dan Hamilton '85

Paying It Forward with a Matching Gift

ASK DAN HAMILTON '85 what drives his support for GDS, and he reels off the names of leaders who steered the community with vision, legendary teachers who captured his imagination, and the lifelong friends he made there.

"My commitment to the school has everything to do with the people there," said Dan, former dean of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas law school. "Everyone says they went to GDS in its heyday, but we really did go to GDS in its heyday."

Gladys Stern was Head of School when Dan arrived as a 6th grader. She led GDS for 21 years and still looms large in the collective memory of his class for championing the joy of learning. Following Peter Branch's stellar run, Russell Shaw took up that mantle, unifying the school on one campus before completing his 16-year tenure last year. Dan expressed his gratitude for the school's leadership through his giving. Most recently, he pledged to match up to $50,000 in alumni contributions to the Russell Fund for Community Impact. Donors blew past that goal, raising $97,814 on their own in June–bringing the grand total to $147,814.

Dan speaks with equal reverence about his teachers. He recalls former High School English faculty–Kevin Barr, John Burghardt, and Gary McCown–plus retired HS Theater Program Director Laura Rosberg. They ignited his love of literature and passion for the arts, he said. Today, Dan carries that legacy forward as a board member for the Shakespeare Theatre Company in DC, routinely welcoming GDS students and alumni to local shows–as he will again in October.

And then, of course, there are the lifelong friends.

They include his basketball teammates and his coach, Harold McNeill, who founded the GDS athletics program. There are the peers who elected him student government president. And there is Kelly AuCoin '85 of *Billions* and *The Americans* fame—who Dan insists stole every leading role right out from under him in high school.

Decades later, that tight-knit circle remains as close as ever–whether coming together to see "The Boss" at Capital One Arena in 2023 (above) or, more recently, gathering to honor the distinguished career of fellow Hopper U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin '79.

Dan said he hopes that other alumni will translate their own fond memories into active support. "GDS is still a young school, and alumni can really have an impact with a consistent commitment to giving," he added. "It's crucial for us to continue being part of the life of the school."

A CONSTANT PRESENCE

Nancy Bernstine

Parent, trustee, grandparent–and decades-long champion of GDS

PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ



NANCY BERNSTINE (WITH HER GRANDCHILDREN, OLIVIA '38 AND ISAAC '40) HAS SUPPORTED GDS FOR 39 CONSECUTIVE YEARS—A DEDICATED MEMBER OF THE AGGIE O'NEIL CIRCLE, WHICH HONORS 10+ YEARS OF LOYAL GIVING.

TWO FACTORS IMPRESSED NANCY BERNSTINE when she visited GDS to check it out for her daughter, a rising kindergartener: the school's steadfast commitment to diversity and that welcoming vibe that made it feel like home.

"I remember walking into the school for the first time and thinking: I've never been any place where children are so happy," Nancy said. "It was such a good feeling."

Forty-six years later, that joyful environment proved to be fertile ground for her family. Her daughter, Quincy '92, is now an award-winning actress. Her son, Justin '95, is American University's Deputy Dean of Students. And the GDS legacy continues now that Justin's children–Olivia '38 and Isaac '40–are also Hoppers.

This academic year, Isaac returned from his first day of school and declared it "amazing." That word alone, Nancy said, also captures her GDS experience.

By the time her children were in high school, Nancy joined the GDS Board of Trustees to help safeguard the inclusive culture that made her family feel cared for and valued. "I wanted to do what I could to ensure that other children of color would have the same wonderful experience," she said. "That was extremely important to me."

The school's physical campus has changed, and its enrollment has grown. But its commitment to its founding values has remained the same, she said. That's why Nancy has supported GDS with a gift every year for the past 39 years—a streak driven by her wish to keep the school accessible to a wide range of students.

Her confidence in her choices hasn't wavered as she assesses her family's journey at GDS. "I am surrounded by proof every day that GDS is one of the best decisions I made as a parent," she said. "I still show up at the school as much as I can."

the Hopper Fund
SUPPORT OUR MISSION IN ACTION

EVERYTHING.
EVERY DAY.
FOR
EVERY HOPPER.

That's the Power of The Hopper Fund.

The Hopper Fund, GDS's annual giving program, supports the school's daily operations–everything from programming to faculty salaries–and ensures that our financial aid program continues to broaden access to a GDS education.

Your gift to the Hopper Fund sustains a culture that encourages students to wonder, inquire, and evolve into catalysts for social good.

Empower our students and faculty—donate to the Hopper Fund today

Visit GDS.org/Giving or email annualgiving@gds.org to learn more.



PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

ONE FAMILY. ONE GDS.

THE ROSENTHALS

When Rosie '40 enrolled in GDS, she became the most recent addition to a multigenerational Rosenthal family legacy. Rosie's mother, aunt, and uncle all walked the halls of GDS–and now she's following in their footsteps, alongside her older brother and four cousins. These six cousins get to enjoy a shared experience their parents never had: a unified campus where they can learn, grow, and thrive within one vibrant community.

"Even though GDS was not on one campus when I graduated, the school's vibe still feels so familiar. Carolyn and I both ran at GDS, and Coach Anthony Belber still puts so much effort into helping each kid focus on getting the best out of themselves. When I sent my oldest, Teddy, to kindergarten last year, I was delighted to find that the school still fosters that ethos; you're encouraged to reach your full potential, and everyone cheers you on. Being on one campus, where Teddy can see and cheer on his cousins every day, amplifies that culture and allows for so many more connections."

DOUG ROSENTHAL '00, PARENT OF TEDDY ROSENTHAL '38



"GDS really embodies the idea that education is more than a transfer of knowledge. It's a formation of character. Yes, you will learn to read, add, and multiply. You will eventually gain a broad worldview about a range of topics. But you will also learn to be empathetic, curious, and a critical thinker. And you will belong to a community. One of the most impressive aspects of unifying GDS on one campus is the Buddy Program. Not only do my kids see their cousins, but they get to create connections with students from across the divisions. And there's nothing more important, at every age, than feeling that sense of belonging."

CAROLYN ROSENTHAL '05, PARENT OF WILL PITTLEMAN '37 AND ROSIE PITTLEMAN '40

"I feel nostalgia for the old campus on MacArthur Boulevard. But being on one campus has lots of benefits. I was running late for pickup the other day. I just texted my ninth-grader, and he picked up my fourth-grader. My high school kids also love running into their kindergarten or seventh-grade teachers while walking out for a free period. It reinforces their positive feelings for the school. Overall, the student body feels more connected. When I served on the Alumni Board, I used to hear that students entering GDS at the high school level didn't feel ties to the other divisions. Now, everybody has the opportunity to interact, which brings everyone closer."

STEPHANIE ROSENTHAL '98, PARENT OF CHARLIE MEISLER '28, ALEX MEISLER '30, AND DANIEL MEISLER '35

PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

ADVANCING GDS

Meet MaryAnn Jones

WHEN MARYANN JONES joined GDS as our Chief Advancement Officer in May 2025, she brought with her a resume that reads like a tour of the Mid-Atlantic.

MaryAnn's professional journey began with fundraising and development work at the Delaware Theatre Company. She then took her expertise to The Philadelphia Orchestra and Widener University. In 2017, she arrived in Baltimore, where she spent years navigating the complex worlds of Johns Hopkins—first driving major gift efforts for the School of Medicine and later overseeing fundraising operations for the Carey Business School. Most recently, MaryAnn led the advancement team at Garrison Forest School.

This path often mirrored her husband Kyle's academic milestones, from their time together at The College of William & Mary to their postgraduate work in Scotland and his PhD studies in Delaware. Now that he's a professor at the University of Baltimore, and their two children (Bethan,10, and Malcolm, 7) are settled in, MaryAnn said their wandering days are over. "He is tenured," she says, "so we can never move!"

MaryAnn recently spoke to Georgetown Days about everything from her philanthropic giving philosophy to her childhood roots among the cattle and Blue Ridge Mountains of Central Virginia.

WHAT DREW YOU TO ADVANCEMENT WORK? My interest started during my early days as a student caller for William & Mary's Phonathon. That introduced me to fundraising, which is a big part of advancement work, but it isn't the whole story. Advancement encompasses all the activities in a community that support and further a mission—such as community engagement, communications, events, and alumni relations. It's what takes an institution from simply existing to thriving. The way I see it, effective advancement taps into a person's love for an institution.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO TAP INTO THAT AT GDS AND ENSURE THAT EVERYONE FEELS THEY HAVE A STAKE IN THE SCHOOL'S FUTURE? What stands out to me about GDS is that people make philanthropic investments here because they are big champions of our mission. They put the School's values front and center. We saw it so clearly when the government shutdown and layoffs impacted many of our families. We asked the community to step up and support those who were struggling, and the response was overwhelming—with gifts of all sizes adding up to make a big difference.

That same energy fuels the Annual Fund. I've always believed that annual giving is the most democratic form of philanthropy because it offers everyone an equal opportunity to participate. Broad participation from all our families provides the foundation for the exceptional education and experience GDS provides.

DOES YOUR WORK AT GDS DIFFER FROM YOUR TIME AT UNIVERSITIES AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS? In some of my past roles, fundraising often had a very specific, almost transactional focus. In cultural, medical, or higher-ed fundraising, you were funding a particular slate of performances, a single medical condition, or one department within a massive university. In those situations, people often give to impact a subset of people whose experience mirrors their own. But the GDS ethos is inherently more generous. You're giving to open up opportunities for students whose journeys might be totally different from your own, just because you value that growth for someone else.

MARYANN JONES



PHOTO BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

"WHAT STANDS OUT TO ME ABOUT GDS IS THAT PEOPLE MAKE PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENTS HERE BECAUSE THEY ARE BIG CHAMPIONS OF OUR MISSION. THEY PUT THE SCHOOL'S VALUES FRONT AND CENTER."

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING "NO" YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED? Honestly, I don't often hear an outright "no." I think that's because I approach most conversations as an opportunity to learn, not a pitch. If you don't go in with a rigid idea of what someone needs to do, and you're truly open to the path the conversation takes, the outcome might not be the "yes" you anticipated—but it's rarely a door slamming shut. Advancement work is really about finding the right fit for the person and the school.

HOW DID YOUR THEATER STUDIES AT WILLIAM & MARY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW PREPARE YOU FOR ADVANCEMENT? That background has given me a high level of comfort with people and conversations. Relationship management is about finding connections, much like theater is about finding the nuances in a text to understand a character's motivations. You learn to listen for what someone is saying—and what they aren't saying. That training stays with you; it's a process of reading and reacting that feels natural to me now and comes in handy in every aspect of advancement.

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN THEATER? I grew up in a small town in Central Virginia, and my mother was an English teacher at the only high school in the county. I became one of the go-to child actors every time the high school productions needed a kid. I was also a regular in the local Parks and Recreation productions. I did several musicals, which is crazy because I can't sing. I even did one commercial for a local optician.

DID YOU CONTINUE ACTING AT WILLIAM & MARY? I often joke that I was burnt out on acting by the time I got to college, so I did more producing and directing. The last time I acted was the summer before my junior year, when an English professor cast a group of us for the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh. Kyle and I were cast opposite each other. Apparently, we were unconvincing as a couple. To make it work, we decided to actually start dating. I guess we were too "method" about the whole thing.

It didn't hurt that Kyle was a great built-in guide; his parents are from Scotland. They live in Arlington, Virginia, now. When he first offered to show me around Edinburgh, I thought he was just an American tracing his genealogy—until he said, "Seriously, we can stop by my grandmother's house."

WHERE IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA DID YOU GROW UP? I grew up on a tobacco farm turned cattle farm in Amherst—halfway between Lynchburg and Charlottesville. My family is still there, so my kids have grown up with the cows and blue mountains, although they're complete city kids.

2026

DONOR LIST

We are deeply grateful to everyone who made Georgetown Day School a philanthropic priority. Your collective generosity does more than inspire us—it directly powers our mission every day.

PHOTOS BY JASON PUTSCHÉ

The 1945 Society

We extend special recognition to members of the 1945 Society, a group of philanthropic leaders whose annual gifts of $2,500 or more sustain the heart of the school. Named for the year GDS opened its doors, the 1945 Society honors the vision, courage, and enduring ideals of our founding families. Each fall, we celebrate these stewards at a reception hosted by the Head of School and the Board of Trustees.

278 MEMBERS

Aggie O'Neil Circle

We also recognize those whose steadfast dedication shapes GDS year after year through the Aggie O'Neil Circle for loyalty giving, which bears the name of our first Head of School. This circle honors donors who have supported GDS for at least 10 consecutive years.

326 MEMBERS

GDS's Advancement Office strives to ensure the listing of donors' names in this report is accurate and complete. If there are errors or omissions, please accept our sincere apologies and contact Kemah Brock, advancement associate of operations at kbrock@gds.org. Kemah can also provide a copy of the FY2025 donor list upon request.

Founders Circle
$50,000+

Anonymous (2)

Dina Al Sabah and David Alden

Judy Areen and Richard Cooper*

Michael Berenson '62 and Carol Berenson*

Lammot du Pont

Anabel and Christian Genetski

Daniel Hamilton '85

Sharnikya Howard

Larry Kanarek

Caleb Kramer '87 and Ryan Allen*

Molly Levinson and Josh Wachs*

Laura and Timothy O'Shaughnessy

Diane and Arnold Polinger*

The Schattner Foundation

Andrew Steinman '00 and Julia Sandler

The Vogt Family

Patrice Wolfe and Jon Bazemore

Head of School Circle
$25,000–$49,999

Anonymous

Jenny Abramson '95 and Jake Maas

Alexis Albion and Shawn Chen

Jonathan Cooper '01 and Kate Heinzelman

Karen Dunn and Brian Netter

Julie Hong and Julian Kim

Elizabeth and Michael Keeley*

Yool Kim and Gregory Mallory

Kara McCabe and Andrew Leblanc

Alexis Mitchell '92 and Sarah Mitchell*

Adele Mouzon and Mark Perry*

Robin and Gary Orseck*

Jaclyn Cohen Rapaport '03 and Will Rapaport

Elizabeth and Thomas Saunders

Susan Schaffer and Michael Rogan

Les Silverman*

Anupama and Matthew Tate*

Justice Circle
$15,000–$24,999

Anonymous (2)

Katherine Borsecnik and Gene Weil

Kate and James Garland*

Emily and David Glendinning

Julie and Daniel Kahn

Laura and Michael Kaufman

Leslie and Bruce Lane*

Karen and Ethan Leder

Elizabeth Lewis and David Fahrenthold

Sharon and Marc Lindsey*

Harriet Lipkin and Chris Sautter*

Jed Nussdorf '98 and Sarah Nussdorf*

Helen Rhee and Tarik Taybi*

Andrea Lebbin Rubinfeld '98 and Michael Rubinfeld*

Michael Sachse '95 and Erin Segal

Jennifer Silversmith and Paul Schockett

Sandra Stonesifer and Neal Humphrey

Donald Vieira

Laura Wertheimer and Andrew Pincus

Green and White Circle
$10,000–$14,999

Anonymous

Anne and Ronald Abramson

Nora Abramson '97 and David Nathan*

Ciera and Trevor Ashley*

Heather Bamford and Sam Gallimore

Jessica Zolt-Gilburne Berenson '01 and Mark Berenson '00*

Natalie Bookey-Baker and Michael Baker

Marney Cheek and Bruce Hirsh

Bonnie and Louis Cohen

Irene Cortese and T. Christopher Borek*

Ryan and Tony Craig

Lane Dilg and Brian Nelson

Amy Dixon and Gregg LoCascio*

Nicole Erb '85 and Henry Farrell*

Franklin Foer '92 and Abby Greensfelder*

Andrei Greenawalt and Brin Frazier

Brenda Gruss and Daniel Hirsch*

Laila Haider and Niklas Westelius*

Katherine and Nicholas Hailey

Julie and Harish Hemmige

Nancy Herman

Ann and Darrin Holley

Katherine and Mark Holloway

Deneen Howell

Shana and Todd Jacobus

Alexandra Klingenstein '05

Barbara and Michael Lissner

Rebecca and Samuel Lissner

Yang Liu and Chungang Li

Marina Lukoshko and Uladzimir Matsveyeu

Ronay Menschel*

Sabina Menschel and
Bill Priestap*

Elaine and William Miller*

Melanie Nussdorf*

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Viji Rangaswami and
Atul Pathiyal*

Amy Raskin and
Joel Saferstein

Laura and Gerald Rosberg

Michael Rosenman '85 and
Mary Beth Cisneros*

Alissa Starzak and
Andrew Ferguson

Shira Stutman and
Russell Shaw*

Meaghan and
Joshua VerGow

Capitol Circle

$5,000–$9,999

Sanaa Aijaz and
Saif Ahmad

Miriam and Sanford Ain

Erin Gistaro Akman '12
and Alex Akman

Mishima Alam and
Vikas Kumar

Elissa Alben and
David Fragale

Magda and Safi Bahcall

Prudence Beidler Carr
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Sylvia and Stephen Burwell

Erin Davis and
Jonathan Etter*

Yin Du and Simon Xuan

Nicole Elkon and
Neal Wolin*

Jessica and
Oren Falkowitz

Paul Friedman

Jamie Gardner and
Jonathan Stern*

Margaret Gerety and
Amias Moore Gerety

Neal Glickfield*

Isley and Kieran Gostin

Sandy Grace

Nienke Grossman '95
and Ezequiel Steiner

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Nicholas Penniman

Nancy Hardy and
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Christina and Richard Kim

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Daniel Kolker '88 and
Cara Spencer

Peter Kolker*

Sophia Lalani and
Ali Cumber

Meredith Kopit Levien

Joan Bialek Levitt
and Louis Levitt

Avivah Litan and
Stephen Stein

Kathryn and Jeremy
Malhotra

Aimee Mavragis and
Jennifer Smira

Linda Oramasionwu-
Leverette and Todd
Leverette

Molly and Bryan Patten

Ned Quint '87 and
Rory Quint*

Narissa Rahan and
Narayanan Raman

Nikki Reeves

Michael Reilly and
Jeffrey Blum*

Cynthia Richman and
Jason Snyder

Beth and Scott Ross

Sarah Rueven '05 and
Daniel Rueven*

Katie Schenk and
Dov Grossman



PHOTO BY DAVID GILLESPIE

Alison Schneider and
Richard Avidon*

Ami and Arjun Shah

Daniel Sharfman '97
and Dana Mazo*

Gretchen Sierra and
Brandy Price

Carlla and Thomas Smith

Virginia Solomon '99

Catherine, Tom and
Kaitlin '20 Strong*

Olivia Peskowitz
Suter '05 and
William Suter '02

Erin and Michael Tollini

Valeria Van Brummelen
and Chris Newkirk*

Robert Wagner

Michael Ward '82*

Elizabeth Westfall
and Scott Wiener*

Jill Wilkins and
Jonathan Kaplan

Katie Wood and
Valerie Hletko*

Barbara Yellen and
Phil West*

Stefanie Yoselle '03

Karim Zia*

Gretchen and
Jeremy Zucker

Davenport Circle

($2,500–$4,999)

Anonymous (2)

Asya Akhlaque and
William Kandel

Hulya and Esat Aksu

Michele Altemus and
Joseph Cullen

Allyson Baker and
David Kligerman

Anita and Bikram Bandy

Prudence and Francis Beidler*

Diana and Joshua Blumenfeld

Cora Bock

Rebecca Brown and
Thomas Wood

Rachel and Christopher
Brummer

Cynthia Bryant and
Benjamin Simmons

Sarah and Jorge Castro

Chang Choi and Byung Yoo

Marcy and Neil Cohen

Virginia Grace
and Eli Cohen

Antoine Colaco '90*

Debby and Bob Cooper*

Rachel Cotton and
Philip Trout

Janie and Mark Davis*

Laurie Davis and
Joseph Sellers*

Sandhya and Robert Davis

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David Newman

Danielle and Andrew Dixon

Katherine Dube and
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Andrianna and
Kelly Dunbar*

Cynthia Dunbar and
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Afet and Halil Dundar

Anita Dunn and
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Ashley Durmer and
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Jeffrey Dygert and
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Anne-Marie Fendrick
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Christina and Jon
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Sasha Fombrun-Rene
and Alex Rene*

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Anastasia Gekis
and Alvaro Piris

Leah and Myles Getlan

Elizabeth Goitein and
Gerald Hauser

Sarah Goldfrank and
Aileen Johnson*

Maria Gomez

Tracey and Timothy
Gronniger

Thu Ha and Ngoc Chu

Lisa Hamerstone

Alex Hirschhorn '01*

Ziyah Holman '20

Rashida Holman-Jones

Julie Hudson and
Steve Holden

Anjali Kataria and
Vinay Bhargava*



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Sara and Marcus Koblitz

Renata and John Kossow

Irene and James Koukios*

Jean Lee and
Andrew Gossett

Amy and Jay Leveton*

Sue Liu and Raul Gonzalez

Johannah Cornblatt Lowin '05
and Jeremiah Lowin*

Yongrong Lu and
Takashi Sato

Wendy and Chip Lunde

Marna and Thomas
McDermott*

Alanna Tievsky McKee '03
and Benjamin McKee

Katharine and
Gregory Meyer

Harrison Miller '04
and Julie Miller*

Suzanne and Yuichi
Miyamoto

Jeannie Mun and Benjamin Schall

Victoria Murray Baatin and Rahsan Baatin

Elizabeth Nelson

Lainey and David Nexon

May Ng and Gilles Alfandari*

Benjamin Nussdorf '00 and Inna Dexter*

Leslie and John Oberdorfer

Aya Okajima and Sven Dharmani

Linda and Nicholas Penniman

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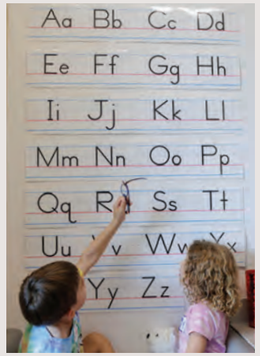
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Samuel Schachter '09

Michael Schaffer '91
and Keltie Hawkins

Ambassador
Teresita Schaffer

Christopher Schatz '99

Barnet Schecter '81*

Jennifer Scher '86

Joshua Scherr '89

Laura Schiller

Emily and James
Schmidt Massey

Cecilia and Philip
Schneider

Stefanie Schneider
and David Alpert

Karen and Milton
Schneiderman

Lisa Schneiderman

Naomi Schoenbaum
and David Fontana

Barbara and Eric Schone*

Nina Schooler

Kelsey and Jamie
Lee Schroeder

Peg Schultz and
Terry Meehan*

Jill Schwartz and
Leon Rodriguez

Joanna Schwartz '90*

Miranda Scott '88

Maya Seiden and
Sean Maloney

Dani Seiss

Sook Seo

Sahar Sepehri and
Mohammad Sarfarazi

Rima Shaffer-Meyer

Ann Shalleck and
James Klein

Baoping Shang and
Jinghua Wangling

Ellen Shapiro '99

Wendy Sharp and
Patricia Montes*



Adam Shear '89

Kevin Sheekey '84

Gloria and Nico Sheets

Justice Shelton '21

Gail Shepherd-Smith
and Rudolph Smith

Beverly and Harlan Sherwat

Clay Shields '84 and
Sonia Stoszek

Suzanne and James Shipe

Tara Shirvani and
Romain Pison

Sarah Shohet and
John Mikhail*

Niharika Shukla and
Salvatore Messina

Ellen Shurman and
Daniel Finkelstein

Francis Siaya

Nancy Sierra

Justin Silver '97*

Darren Silvis

Jessica and Neil Sitron

Gretchen Skidmore
and Craig Leff*

Shaw Skurnick '93

Edwina Smith and
Sam Simmens*

Kathryn and Timothy Smith

Erik Smulson '85 and
Jennifer Smulson*

Sahar Soleimani and
Mehrdad Ghoreishi

Diana Solomon '88

Matthew Solomon '90*

Tracy Solomon '77*

Julie Somers and
Benjamin Schafer

Sarah Lichtman
Spector '90 and
Edward Spector*

Doris Spencer

Eli Spevak '89

Tom Spilsbury

Silvia Spring

Ingrid and
William Stafford

Pam Stanfield*



Nancy Starr

Anndrea and
Michael Starzak

John Steever '85

Alison and Ed Stern

Dominique and
John Stevens

Maunica Sthanki
and Saeed Mody

Suzanne Stutman and
Jon Wilkenfeld*

Yojairy Stutson

Ximena Suarez-de-Cornejo

Deirdre Schwiesow
Sumida '85*

Apple and Michael Sussmann

Daniel Suzman '01

Sheryl Swankin '75

Jennifer Swedish '97*

Kristin Swedish '97

Reem Sweiss and
Karim Belayachi*

Leigh Tait

Julie Taitsman and
Matthew Tureck

Joan and Mark Tannenbaum

Jonathan Tannenwald '02*

Danielle Tarantolo '97

Sally and Alan Tassler

Akshay Tate '21

Rayshawn Tate

Amy and Simeon Taylor*

Jeffere Taylor*

Michael Taylor '01

Reyna Pijanowski
Taylor '97

Karyn Temple

Janet Tersoff '78

Jerry Tersoff '73*

Will Thayer

Vassili Thomadakis '92

Ernestine Thomas and
Charles Sunwabe

Marlo Thomas

Elizabeth Thornton
and Geoffrey Graber

Kathi Thurston

Jan and Seth Tievsky

Dacque Tirado

Vikki Tobak and Bijan
Salehizadeh*

Gabriela Tobal '87*

Kathryn Tolbert and
Robert Dohner

Mercedes Horst Tolve '97*

Julia Tomasko '05*

Laura Tomasko '02*

Petia Topalova and
Shawn Cole

Francis Torres

Damali Neal Totress '91

Aaron Tracy '98*

Lan Tran and Henry Tam

Allison and Bill Treanor

JT Trembly*

Karen Trister Grace '87
and Peter Grace

Eri Tsutsui and Etibar Jafarov

Jay Tucker*

Richard Tuckerman

Jill Tuennerman and
Michael Kirk*

Jennifer and Andrew
Tulumello

Brenda Turnbull and
Robert Tomasko*

Allison and Daniel Turner

Elizabeth Hayman Turner '75

Elsie Turner

Judith and Lester Turner

William Turner '95 and
Alana Hackshaw

Claudia and Joseph Twist

Beth and Sanford
Ungar*

Hannah Untereiner '11

Diane Vaughn and
Prakash Patel

Sandra Velvel '89
and Martin Price

Jennifer and Paul
Verbesey*

Aaron Vernon '94*

Nancy Foltz Vest '62

John Vibert '89

Annie Vinik '97 and
James Lawrence '97*

Judith Viorst

Nicholas Viorst '81

Claudia Vitale

Isabelle Von Kohorn
and Josh Rising

Meredith and Henry
Von Kohorn

Karen and Darwin Walker

William Wallace '05*

Cristina Padrao and
Eduardo Wallentin

Shuting Wang and
Ruifeng Zhang

Allison Warren

Deb and Michael
Warsaw

Shoshana Waskow '85

Cristina Watson

Evelyn and Douglas Watson

Anne and Stephen Watters

Colleen Wealton-Mailander

Jacqueline Webb

Adam Wegner '83 and Susan Wegner*

Janet and Hans Wegner

Lauren Wetzler and Stephen Fuzesi

Tamara Wexler and Peter Aaron

Jackie White and Michael Mathieson

Wendell White

Kathryn Whitfield and Adam Fotiades



Stacy Sherwat Weinberger '89*

Ali and Jeffrey Weinstein

Jan Weinstock and David Feldman

Susan Weinstein

Arthur Weiss

Bridget and Dustin Weiss

Rachel Weiss '04

Jody Welsh*

Leila Wenthe

Marti and Richard Weston*

Kimi Wetterauer and Michael McTiernan

Nancy and Rick Whitfield

Marna and Tom Whittington*

Rosemarie Whyte

Tara and Derrick Wigglesworth

Jocelyn and Jason Wiles

Wendy Wilk Markarian and Tom Markarian*

Margarite Willenbucher and Paul Wexler

Suzy Willhoft

Carolyn Williams

Colleen and Bryan Williams*

Jacqueline Williams

Priscille and Sean Williams

Sarah and Jeremiah Williams

Tracey Williams

Georgia Willie-Carnegie and Shafee Carnegie

Clare Wilson '61

Mary Jane Wilson-Bilik

Carol and Michael Winer

Gail Wise

Lindsay Wise '97 and David Hanlon '97

Wendee Wolfson

Jeremy Wolsk*

Allison and Russell Wood

Anne Woodley '76 and Robert Stoney '76

Carolyn and Randy Woolridge

Leah Wortham and Eric Hirschhorn

Katherine Wray and Michael Korns

Diana Dryer Wright '65*

Laura and Darien Wright

Maria Wright and Vincent Fuller

Miles Wyner '18

Shari Murphy Wynn '79

Zinan Xie and Xudong Guo

Zhongqin Yang

Idil and Tolga Yaveroglu

Cynthia and Merrill Yavinsky

Florrie Yee and Richard Kennedy

Audrey Yiadom '01 and Kofi Appiah

Linda and Tom Yoder

Janice Yoo and Jovial Wong

Rebecca York '14

Shari Yost Gold and Jason Gold

Nancy Youssef and Vijay Ravindran

Yan Yu and Yuan Liu

Babyrani Yumnam and Raju Huidrom

Kinney Zalesne and Scott Siff*

Paola Zapata

Judith Zauderer

Li Zhang and Yu Wang

Longmei Zhang and Tianlun Liu

Ling Zhu and Shu Yu

Miriam Zimmerman*

Laura Zuckerman and Glen Donath

Patricia Zurita and Fidel Tamayo

Ivana Zuzul '00